Sufficiency Statement

Looked After Children & Care Leavers
Foreword by Meredith Teasdale, Service Director, Strategy and Commissioning, Cambridgeshire County Council.

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

The Children Act 2008 defines Sufficiency as “a whole system approach which delivers early intervention and preventative work to help support children and their families where possible, as well as providing better services for children if they do become looked after. For those who are looked after, Local Authorities and their Children’s Trust partners should seek to secure a number of providers and a range of services, with the aim of meeting the wide-ranging needs of looked after children and young people within their local area.”

As an Authority, we need to look at how we commission provisions, and intend to work together with service users and providers to ensure we meet the needs of children and young people. This document considers the funding pressures faced by Local Authorities at present. We want to work collaboratively with you to meet these challenges and continue to provide quality care and accommodation for Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

Meredith Teasdale
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Cambridgeshire County Council
1. Purpose of Sufficiency Statement

1.1 The purpose of this document is to set out how Cambridgeshire County Council will meet the placement needs of Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Leavers, and improve their outcomes, in light of our understanding of their needs and current provision.

1.2 This Sufficiency Statement also aims to outline for service users, commissioners, providers and other stakeholders what services already exist and where, and what might be possible in the future. It describes:

- The Council’s picture of current supply & resource
- The Council’s predictions of future demand, identifying key pressure points
- Models of practice the Council and its partners will encourage
- The likely future level of resourcing
- The support the Council will offer towards meeting its identified model

1.3 This sufficiency statement should be read in conjunction with Cambridgeshire’s Looked After Children Strategy which outlines the broader strategic themes for future development.

1.4 The LAC Strategy sets out 5 outcomes for Children & Young people’s services across Cambridgeshire:

- Families are supported to stay together
- Risk is managed confidently and intensive support is provided for families at the edge of care
- Children remain in Education
- Placements for children in care are in county and within a family setting when it is right for a child or young person.
- Children are moved through the care system in a timely way

1.5 The LAC Strategy lays out key objectives for Children & Young people’s services across Cambridgeshire; summarised these are:

- To reduce the rate of Looked After Children per 10,000 to 29.3 by 2021 (currently 40)
- To reduce the cost of the care provided to Looked After Children over time.
- To provide the right placement at the right time at the right cost
2. Summary

2.1 Overall there are two key themes within this document; increased need (both an increase in population and an increase in need for more specialised provisions) and reduced resources (decreasing budgets, and reductions in support services for young people).
3. **Cambridgeshire’s population**

3.1 The LAC population in Cambridge has increased significantly in recent years. Risk factors most prevalent in contributing towards this increase include:

- Mental health needs of parents/carers
- Neglect
- Domestic abuse in household
- Emotional abuse
- Drug misuse by parents
- Homeless 16+ young people

3.2 As of June 2016 the LAC population in Cambridgeshire was 614, this is an increase of 11.6% based on June 2015’s figures (550).

3.3 At the time of publication the LAC population is 626 (30/08/2016).

3.4 Currently Cambridgeshire has

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![Figure 1](image1.png)

**Looked After Children per 10,000 child population**

- England
- East of England
- Statistical neighbours
- Cambridgeshire

![Figure 2](image2.png)

**Legal Status of Cambridgeshire LAC**

- Full Care Order: 276
- Placement Order Granted: 67
- Section 20 Accommodation: 192
- Interim Care Order: 77
- Under police protection: 1
- On remand: 1
- Under supervision: 1

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a LAC number of 40 per 10,000; this is still lower than that of our statistical neighbours [41.6] and far below the national average [60] (fig. 1).

3.5 Section 2.4 of the LAC Strategy sets targets for the reduction of the LAC population. Despite these targets, the LAC population has increased by 64 over the last 12 months.

3.6 At June 2016 over 56% of Cambridgeshire’s LAC population were subject to a Care Order or Placement order, therefore securing their future as a Looked After Child. A further 12.5% are subject to Court proceedings, and 31.3% are accommodated without an order and with parental permission (Section 20) (fig. 2). This demonstrates Cambridgeshire’s need for a mix of short term and permanent placements to meet the needs of these children and young people.

3.7 Between July 2015 and June 2016 723 referrals for placements were made. These referrals were overwhelmingly for fostering, supported accommodation, and children’s homes, with very few additional referrals for supported lodgings and parent and child fostering (fig. 3).

3.8 From the referrals at 3.6 662 placements were made (this does not include kinship placements, pre-adoptive placements, or those young people who are Looked After and accommodated at home). These placements were largely fostering, supported accommodation and children’s homes (fig. 4). Of these placements, 397 purchase placements were made; these are placements made with external foster care agencies, residential children’s homes, residential schools, secure

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**Figure 3**

**Figure 4**
accommodation and supported accommodation providers (fig. 4).

3.9 Cambridgeshire has a high proportion of LAC placed out of county. This is for a variety of reasons including:

- Limited specialist residential provisions in county
- Too few foster carers in county for the growing population
- Our practice of keeping sibling groups together
- Towns close to our borders (i.e. St. Neots, Wisbech, Ely)
- Our strategy to place young people in a family home rather than in residential provision

The LAC Strategy prescribes targets to reduce the number of young people placed more than 20 miles from home, and out of county (32%). Currently Cambridgeshire has 45% of LAC placed out of county, and 25.9% are placed more than 20 miles from home and out of county (by comparison, the National average is 13%). This is a reduction of 3.6% compared to the number of young people placed more than 20 miles from home, and out of county as at March 2015.

3.10 The age range of Cambridgeshire’s LAC population has remained steady over recent years. At the end of June 2016 the number of LAC aged between 0 – 15 years had remained consistent compared to July 2015’s demographic. Contrary to this, there has been an increase of 43% in the number of LAC aged 16+ (fig. 5). At June 2016 young people aged 16+ made up 28% of Cambridgeshire’s LAC population; this is particularly of note when one considers that this ‘age bracket’ consists of 2 year groups and is therefore far out of proportion when compared to the rest of the population.

3.11 As of June 2016 Cambridgeshire had 64 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and Young People (UASC) in placements. This represents 10.4% of the total LAC population. The
UASC population in Cambridgeshire has grown significantly in the last 12 months (fig. 6).

Currently, these 64 UASC are placed in Supported Accommodation [52] provisions, with in house foster carers [6], with external foster carers [5], and in house residential children’s homes [1].

Other Local Authorities have seen similar and even greater rises in UASC population; this has led to Cambridgeshire needing to develop a contingency plan should a large number of UASC require placements.

3.12 Key Figures:
- Increasing LAC population (40 per 10,000) despite targets to reduce this.
- Majority of Cambridgeshire’s LAC population aged 10 – 17 years (67%). Mix of placements needed to meet these young people’s needs.
- High proportion of LAC accommodated via Section 20 parental agreement, thus demonstrating need for short – medium term provisions as well as long term and permanence.
- Too many out of county placements – Cambridgeshire seeks to place young people in county whenever possible, and in the best interests of the young person. Greater capacity across all service types are needed within Cambridgeshire to meet this need.
- Cambridgeshire has a rapidly increasing UASC population. Specialist provisions needed to
meet the needs of these children and young people.

4. Budget

4.1 In the 2016/2017 financial year the LAC Placements & Supported Accommodation budget is £12.5 million. This budget is responsible for external fostering placements, external residential placements (including children’s homes, specialist residential homes for young people with disabilities and/ or challenging behaviour and some residential education provisions). See fig. 7 for a breakdown of the budget.

4.2 In addition to the LAC budget, there are other spending streams across Children’s Social Care which provide services for LAC and those young people on the edge of care (fig. 8). These include in house fostering & residential provisions, adoption & Special Guardianship Order allowances, Family Group Conference and Specialist Family Support Services & Supervised Contact.

4.3 The LAC Placements & Supported Accommodation budget has reduced significantly over past years, and this is expected to continue, in line with Local Authority savings and reductions to overall LAC numbers, and the proportions in purchase placements (fig. 9).

4.4 As per 3.3 the LAC population continues to rise despite significant work to reduce the LAC population. When comparing previous years spend against budgets, and forecasting these figures, we
see a significant spend gap across that LAC budget for the coming years (fig. 10). This spending gap totals £9.5 million for the close of the 2020/2021 financial year.

4.5 Key figures:
- Anticipated reductions in budget over coming years, in line with LAC Strategy and associated targets, expected to leave £9m spending gap.
5. FOSTERING

5.1 Cambridgeshire is part of the regionally commissioned rolling select list for Foster Care provision (ER4). Currently Cambridgeshire have 44 providers on contract. This current contract is due to end in September 2017. The option to extend the current arrangement for 15 months (in line with provisions granted by the contract) is currently being explored. Following this decision, Cambridgeshire will to review options for a replacement Framework.

5.2 In addition to contractual arrangements, Cambridgeshire have an in house fostering service. At June 2016, Cambridgeshire’s in house service had 109 households offering 222 beds, with 180 children and young people in placement.

5.3 Between July 2015 and June 2016 372 fostering placements were made to fostering. This includes placement moves and young people placed in an emergency, but does not include young people placed with kinship carers or young people placed with prospective adopters. Of these 372 placements, 145 were made to IFA carers (fig. 11). It is Cambridgeshire County Council’s policy to place with in house carers ahead of IFA carers for emergency and permanent referral requests. This is outlined in the referral process within the Contract.

5.4 As at June 2016 379 children and young people were in foster care placements; 229 of which were with IFA carers (60%). 59% of these IFA placements are for boys, and 49% of placements are for children aged 11 – 15 (fig. 12). More placements are needed for the 11 – 15 years age group.

Figure 11

Figure 12
group to meet need.

5.5 Additionally, 44 young people were placed in Kinship foster placements with relatives and friends.

5.6 In the 2015/16 financial year Cambridgeshire spent over £9.6 million on external fostering placements. Spend for the current financial year is currently expected to be approximately £9.3 million; this far exceeds the £7.1 million accounted in the budget.

5.7 **Future Direction**

- Cambridgeshire have recently undertaken efforts to grow our in house fostering service, and it is expected that this will continue.

- The regional fostering framework Cambridgeshire is party to has seen significant savings made (both via discounts offered and the benefits associated with shared procurement) – pending approval from Committee it is expected that this contract will be extended. Following this Cambridgeshire expect to explore future opportunities for regional tendering.

- Cambridgeshire may be developing our Supported Lodgings offer over the next 12 months.

5.8 **Key figures:**

- 379 young people currently placed in foster care; 150 in house, 229 Independent Foster Care Agencies.

- On average 12 placements per month are made with IFA providers.

- Spend on external fostering for the previous 3 years has exceeded £9 million each year.

- Based on current figures, for external fostering placements there is a spending gap of over £2.2 million.

- Increased number of placements needed for young people aged 11 - 15.

6. **Residential**

6.1 Cambridgeshire have a Residential Children’s home contract which has recently been extended, and is due to end in December 2017. Consultation is currently underway to consider future options once this contract expires. There are 21 providers are on this Framework.

6.2 Additionally, Cambridgeshire have two residential in house Children’s Homes, offering 10 placements and an emergency solo provision. This provision is currently under review.
6.3 At 30/06/2016 42 young people were in placements in Children’s Residential Homes; 5 in house, 37 external provision. This equates to 6.84% of the total LAC population. This is below the national average of 9.6% (CIPFA data 2015).

6.4 Of the above 37 external placements, are general children’s homes (some of which provide education) [14] specialist mental health / sexualised behaviour provisions [2], secure welfare provision [1], a 52 week residential schools (which could have been provided by a children’s home with education) [6], independent specialist education provisions [9], specialist provisions for children and young people [5].

6.5 As at June 2016 Cambridgeshire purchase 22 placements for Children and Young People in residential home settings (excluding those young people with a disability and Education, Care & Health Plan placed in a residential provision or placed in a secure welfare provision) (fig. 13).

6.6 The average cost of Cambridgeshire’s residential placements is £3016 per week (excluding secure provisions). By comparison, the national average weekly cost is £3,400.

6.7 Cambridgeshire currently expects to spend £4.7 million on these residential placements for the 16/17

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**Age of young people placed in purchased residential provisions**

![Pie Chart](image)

Figure 13
financial year. This exceeds the £4.1 million budget for 2016-17.

6.8 Future direction
Cambridgeshire is currently reviewing how best to meet need for Residential provisions. Options currently being considered include:

- Virtual beds: a block funded contract which sees providers give Cambridgeshire access to a specified number of beds but not necessarily at specific locations. For example access to 4 beds within Cambridgeshire borders. Void beds are liable to move from home to home, but the agreed number must always be available.

- Residential hub: a central provision offering emergency and short term provision, with a multi-agency team supporting children and young people most likely to either return to their family or community or move to supported accommodation.

- Framework: A framework which would mirror the current arrangement. This could be to support any of the above options, or instead of the above.

- Cambridgeshire has experienced significant difficulty identifying move on provision for our young person in secure welfare accommodation with no providers currently on our Framework able to offer a placement. This is a current identified gap in provision.

6.9 Key figures:

- 42 young people currently placed in Children’s Residential homes; 37 in external provision, 5 in house provisions.

- Currently 6.84% of LAC population placed in residential provision, down from 10% at June 2015.

- £600k overspend for current financial year.

- Cambridgeshire has 1 young person placed in Secure Welfare Accommodation.

- Future planning is expected to focus on reduced costs and clear links to ‘step down’ provisions.

7. Supported Accommodation

7.1 Cambridgeshire currently have a framework for this service, with 12 providers. This Contract expires in July 2018, consultation will commence next year to review options for future contractual arrangements.
7.2 Additionally, Cambridgeshire’s ‘Housing Related Support for Young People aged 16 – 25 at Risk of Homelessness’ Contracts provide access to 284 benefit sustainable provisions across 13 providers.

7.3 At June 2016 there were 92 young people placed in Supported Accommodation; 69 male & 23 female (fig 14). This is an increase of over 100% compared to the previous year.

7.4 50 of the 92 young people placed in Supported Accommodation provisions are Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People (54%).

7.5 Cambridgeshire is currently expecting to spend in excess of £3.5 million on supported accommodation and housing for Looked After Children this financial year. 50% of this spend is for the Housing Related Support block contracts, and the remaining 50% for Supported Accommodation provisions. This is £500k over budget, and sees a continued trend towards spend exceeding budgets.

7.6 Future directions

- Housing related support strategic review – Current Housing Related Support contracts have recently been re-tendered or extended to align end dates to allow Cambridgeshire to undertake a strategic review of housing related support provisions. It is expected that this will inform decision making for future commissioning activity.

- A housing related support manager post has been
recruited to for 12 months to lead on this work.

- Cambridgeshire expect to retender the Framework for Supported Accommodation. Further information will be available via Contracts Finder in due course.
- Cambridgeshire are currently undertaking a pilot project utilising Local Authority owned properties which are to be re-purposed for use as Supported Accommodation provisions. This project is in its early stage, but expectations are that savings will be delivered to the Supported Accommodation budget as a result. Pending a successful pilot, there may be scope to expand this project.

7.7 Key figures:

- 92 young people currently placed in Supported Accommodation
- £500k over budget for 2016-17
- 54% of Supported Accommodation population are UASC.
- Supported Accommodation placements have doubled since 2015.

8. Disabled Children & Young People

8.1 There are 40 LAC who are open to Cambridgeshire’s Disabled Children’s Services. In addition, there are a further 7 young people who have a disability and are open to other social care units, giving a total of 47 disabled children and young people. This equates to 7.7% of Cambridgeshire’s LAC population.

8.2 The number of children with disabilities is increasing as a result of demographics, reducing infant mortality rate due to medical advances and the association between disability and poverty.

8.3 Cambridgeshire recently commissioned services for Short Breaks and Shared Care services for disabled children and young people across 3 homes in county. These contracts replaced the services previously provided by Cambridgeshire’s in house provision.

8.4 19 of Cambridgeshire’s disabled children and young people access specialist residential homes and schools. This includes 8 young people who are Looked After and access Shared Care and Short Breaks services via Cambridgeshire’s Short Breaks provider. A further 29 young people are placed in foster care, with in house and IFA
providers, and a small minority with kinship foster carers.

8.5 An additional 3 young people who are aged 18, are currently accessing residential homes and schools. They have ceased to be looked after though arrangements for disabled children and young people see funding for placements continue until the young person’s 19th birthday.

8.6 Future Directions

- Placements are needed for children with challenging behaviour which has led to family breakdown, for children with complicated support needs as well as for younger disabled children who have experienced neglect.

- The higher proportion of disabled young people in residential provisions (compared to non-disabled young people) (40% compared to 6.84%) demonstrates a need for an increased number of foster care placements for disabled young people.

8.7 There is a lack of local, in county provision that is able to meet children and young people’s education, health and social care needs, especially for children with autism and challenging behaviour alongside significant learning disabilities. More local provision is needed.

8.8 Over 50% of placements for children and young people with disabilities are out of county. This almost 10% more than the proportion of Looked After Children (not placed with family or in pre-adoptive placements) who are placed out of county (42%).

8.9 Key figures

- 47 LAC with a disability; 19 LAC with a disability placed in residential provisions, 28 placed in foster care.

- Need for increased number of foster care placements for children and young people with disabilities.

- High proportion in residential and out of county compared with non-disabled children and young people.

9. Models of Practice that the Council Welcomes

9.1 Cambridgeshire aim to increase the proportion of in county placements. It is widely regarded that in county placements are preferable for young people unless there are specific reasons why that young person might be placed out of county for their own safety. Additionally, in county placements seek to meet savings targets prescribed to the Local Authority in reducing travel costs for all
professionals and access to local education health and support services provided by the Authority. It is also in line with CCC Adult Services drive to bring young people back into their communities.

9.2 Cambridgeshire have recently developed a ‘Creative Care Panel’ which seeks to develop alternative care packages for Looked After young people. These packages are as an alternative to more traditional placements for Looked After Children, and aim to reduce spend over the lifetime of a young person’s Looked After status, and /or reduce Cambridgeshire’s LAC population.

9.3 In line with steps to reduce the overall LAC population, Cambridgeshire welcome practices which develop community & voluntary resources. Similarly, preventive services, including those provided by our in house services (such as the Alternatives to Care & Specialist Family Support Services teams) are welcomed in that they seek to provide support to families and young people on the edge of care, and reduce the need for children to leave their families and communities.

10. Resources

10.1 Reductions in government funding have significantly impacted Cambridgeshire’s overall looked after children budget. Cambridgeshire are looking at preventative and early help services to support targets for reduction in spend. The Strategy for Children, Families and Adults Services, and the LAC Strategy outline ways by which these targets can be met.

10.2 Both strategies recognise the impact early help measures can have in supporting families to stay together, and therefore improving outcomes for looked after children.

10.3 The LAC Strategy refers to weekly reviews of all placements, with particular reference to the Top 50 [most expensive] placements. Fortnightly reviews are held with the intention of ensuring placements are tailored to the needs of young people, and are effectively meeting those needs. Heads of Service (across Social Care and Strategy & Commissioning) Group Managers for Social Care Units, Independent Reviewing Officers, and members at the Access to Resources team participate in reviewing purchase placements on a fortnightly basis.
11. Conclusion

11.1 Cambridgeshire will continue to share this strategy with all key stakeholders and partners and ensure that it is regularly updated in line with revisions to service priorities and the latest available data. An updated version will produced in February 2017.

11.2 Cambridgeshire has seen a 11.5% increase in Looked After Children numbers over the last 12 months at a time when budgets for services for Looked After Children are being reduced.

11.3 There is a significant increase in the number of Supported Accommodation placements and the number of 15, 16 and 17 year olds who are Looked After.

11.4 There will be significant commissioning activity over the next 12 months to deliver creative solutions to the needs of Looked After Children, specifically around UASC, residential provisions (both long term and emergency) and supported lodgings.
Internet Links

The Children Act 2004

Building Family Resilience Looked After Children Strategy 2015 – 2021

Corporate Parenting Strategy: Looked After Children

Cambridgeshire Housing Strategy 2013-18

Cambridgeshire Council Economic Development Team

Contracts finder

LGSSProcurement portal