

## **CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

### **AGENDA**

**Meeting to be held in the Civic Centre (Committee Room 2) on  
Monday 16 April 2018 at 5.30pm**

#### **Part I**

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1. <b>Apologies for Absence</b>	
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Minutes of Meeting held on 29 January 2018 (copy attached)	
4. <b>Change Council Update</b>	-
Report of the Change Council (copy to follow).	
5. <b>Health of Looked After Children</b>	11
Report of the Safeguarding Children Lead Nurse (copy attached).	
6. <b>NTW Sunderland Looked After Children Data</b>	13
Report attached.	
7. <b>Leisure and Cultural Offer for Looked After Children and Care Leavers</b>	21
Report attached.	
8. <b>Local Offer to Care Leavers</b>	27
Report attached.	

**Contact:** Gillian Kelly, Principal Governance Services Officer Tel: 0191 561 1041  
**Email:** gillian.kelly@sunderland.gov.uk

Information contained within this agenda can be made available in other languages and formats.

9.	<b>Sufficiency Strategy for the Accommodation of Children Looked After and Care Leavers 2017-2020</b>	39
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Report attached.

ELAINE WAUGH  
Head of Law and Governance

Civic Centre  
SUNDERLAND

6 April 2018

## **CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 29 January 2018 in Committee Room 2,  
Civic Centre, Sunderland at 5.30pm**

### **Part I**

#### **Present:**

#### **Members of the Board**

Councillor L Farthing (in the Chair)	Washington South Ward
Councillor B Francis	Fulwell Ward
Councillor I Kay	Millfield Ward
Councillor L Lauchlan	Washington Central Ward
Councillor C Marshall	Doxford Ward
Councillor P Smith	Silksworth Ward
Councillor W Turton	Houghton Ward

#### **Young People**

Blaine Richardson  
Rhiannon Parkinson

#### **Also in Attendance**

Councillor P Gibson	Silksworth Ward
Councillor M Turton	Copt Hill Ward

#### **All Supporting Officers**

Debra Patterson	Director, Children's Social Care, Together for Children
Sharon Willis	Service Manager, Together for Children
Sheila Lough	Service Manager, Together for Children
Gavin Taylor	IRO Service, Together for Children
Kim Roberts	IRO Service, Together for Children
Annette Parr	Support and Intervention Officer, Together for Children
Loren Nergaard	Participation and Engagement Officer, Together for Children
Maurice Davis	Foster Carer
Kay Dixon	Foster Carer
Janet Thomson	Assistant Director, NTW
Angela O'Dell	CYPS NTW
Kelly Haslem	CYPS NTW

### **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Davison and Oliver.

### **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **Minutes**

11. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2017 be agreed as a correct record.

#### *Change Council Update*

Councillor Smith queried the progress regarding looked after children accessing activities as this had been flagged up for some time.

Debra Patterson advised that officers had been working hard on this matter and a new, invigorated approach was being developed across the 12 North East local authorities for a similar offer for looked after children. Sheila Lough had been working on this and it was intended to bring a report forward for the next meeting. Information had been pulled together about what was already on offer, the provider had not been willing to provide free gym access but discussions were taking place with the Council as they were the commissioners of the service.

Councillor Farthing said that she and Councillor Kelly, the Portfolio Holder, had met with the Change Council and had been negotiating with the Leisure Joint Venture around getting free passes. It was a question of looking at what the actual demand was as not all young people wanted gym provision.

Blaine commented that Max Cards which foster carers received offered more than what was available through Everyone Active and may be more cost effective.

#### **Change Council Update**

Blaine Richardson presented the report of the Change Council and advised that the second regional children in care conference had been held on 3 November and had been a very successful event. Sunderland had led a workshop on mental health and the care system which had been well received. The Chair commented that she had attended the conference and been very proud of the professionalism of the young people involved in the workshop.

The Regional Children in Care Council had been nominated for the Children and Young People Now award and Billy, Loren and Donna had travelled to London to

attend the award ceremony. Although they returned empty handed, they were very pleased to have attended the event.

The second LAC Celebration Event had been held on 8 December 2017 and had been another great success. Over 200 people had attended and there was excellent feedback from carers, young people and social care staff.

Mark from Washington Mind had been invited to attend the Change Council meeting and he had started a drop in at the Next Steps building for young people who wanted to talk or if they were on a waiting list for CAHMS/CYPS. Mark would attend some Change Council meetings to provide updates and advice.

A Mental Health Conference had been held at the Stadium of Light on 16 January and during the event, the Mental Health Charter mark which had been supported and designed by Sunderland Youth Parliament was launched. Blaine and Loren presented the mental health workshop which had previously formed part of the regional children in care conference.

The Change Council was pleased to welcome some new members to its January meeting which had focused on revisiting the Change Council Agreement and working on the annual action plan. Themes and actions to focus on included:

- Finance
- Accommodation
- Storage units
- Mental Health services
- Training for newly qualified social workers
- Apprenticeships for care leavers
- Fostering training
- Access to files
- Local offer for care leavers
- Promises/commitments (formerly known as the Pledges)

12. RESOLVED that the information be noted.

### **Future Work Programme 2018/2019**

A proposed work programme for 2018/2019 was presented to the Board. Debra Patterson highlighted that issues had been grouped together in themes in line with the suggestions made by the Change Council.

Additions could be made to the work programme as matters were raised with the Corporate Parenting Board during the year.

13. RESOLVED that the proposed future work programme be noted.

## **Health of Looked After Children**

The Safeguarding Children Lead and the Designated Doctor for Looked After Children submitted a joint report providing an update on health activity for looked after children.

There had been a steady improvement in compliance with the requirement for Initial Health Assessments to be completed within 20 days of a child becoming looked after. Compliance had been 80% in Quarter 1, 90% in Quarter 2 and 98% in Quarter 3. Compliance with Review Health Assessments had dropped from 94% in Quarter 2 to 87% in Quarter 3. This was due to children who had been placed outside of Sunderland not having their health assessments completed within timescales by the host LAC health teams.

Councillor Smith queried if there were major differences in how local authorities dealt with health assessments and Debra stated that Designated Nurse and her colleagues worked hard to get the assessment information from other areas, however some localities were not as robust in their processes as Sunderland. If health assessments were not completed following two requests from the Sunderland LAC team to the host area, cases would then be escalated to the Head of Safeguarding at City Hospitals Sunderland and the Designated Nurse to investigate other means of completing health assessments.

The first two quarters of 2017/2018 had shown 100% compliance for the issuing of health passports, however this had dropped to 73% in Quarter 3. There had been a total of 11 health passports due to be issued, eight had been completed but three were not due to young people refusing to attend appointments. Follow up appointments had been offered.

A Consultant Child Psychologist was providing half day weekly sessions for professionals in residential care homes to offer scaffolding, support and guidance. This was proving to be successful and was greatly valued by the staff.

14. RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.

## **CYPS Data Dashboard**

The Board received a report presenting the data for looked after children currently accessing services from CYPS.

In relation to the referrals received, it was highlighted that referrals which were not accepted were referred back to managers to confirm the decision. Following the initial referral, secondary referrals identified that pathway for each client and it was noted that an individual may have more than one secondary referral.

The Chair commented that it would be useful to have more information about what each pathway was and Councillor Kay added that further information about diagnosis and treatment offered would also help the Board to understand the issues. He also

asked what the trigger point would be for an urgent referral and representatives from NTW undertook to provide a copy of the priority criteria.

The Board were provided with a breakdown of the age groups accessing CYPS and it was noted that the greatest proportion of clients were from the 6-13 year old age range. Turning to the waiting bands, it was reported that there had been an increase in young people waiting between 18-30 weeks from referral to treatment. Over the summer period there had been staffing issues in CYPS, however two new clinical psychologists had been recruited purely for looked after children.

Councillor Kay commented that there was a good breakdown of quantitative data available now for elected Members but in order to move forward more qualitative information was required to understand more about the reasons for referrals and the treatment programmes available.

Debra Patterson stated that if along with the reasons why a young person had been referred to CYPS, it would be good to know where that young person was living, i.e. in foster care or residential accommodation. She noted that for young people living outside of Sunderland, they would be referred to another CYPS service and the CCG would be recharged. It would also be interesting to know how many young people were being supported outside of Sunderland. Janet Thomson stated that Margaret Clouston was meeting with commissioners and may be able to get this data.

The Chair said that it would be helpful the Board to know what sort of treatment was available. She had recently taken part in an 'attachment' workshop at the CAMHS conference and felt that something like that would be useful for elected Members.

15. RESOLVED that the information be noted.

### **Supported Accommodation for Care Leavers**

The Strategic Service Manager submitted a report providing the Board with an update on supported accommodation for care leavers.

The range of accommodation available had remained unchanged since the last report and there were currently 11 vacancies across all provision. The Board were advised that commissioned provision at Harbour View, Holmewood and Lewis Crescent had previously been funded by Adult Services as part of the housing contract but this had ended in July 2017. Together for Children had agreed to continue to commission this provision for a further twelve months and all of the current commissioning arrangements were due for review in July 2018.

In addition to the available accommodation, spot purchases could be made from the YMCA and Centrepont and at the present time there were two young people who had chosen to access YMCA provision due to its location.

The Commissioning Officer undertook monthly monitoring visits to all commissioned providers and Sharon Willis advised that she chaired a weekly panel to consider all

referrals. Northumbria Police and the Missing, Sexually Exploited and Trafficked (MSET) Coordinator attended the panel meetings on an ad hoc basis.

Work was taking place with the Communications Officer to advertise the supported lodgings scheme to generate interest from young people. The Board were informed that the Trainer Flat Scheme was now back in the management of Together for Children and was running more smoothly as a result. The trainer flats were currently full and young people were able to convert their tenancies to general leases if feedback was positive.

Young people had been asked to provide feedback on their accommodation and comments were overwhelmingly positive.

Councillor Francis asked if attendance at the panel meetings was good and Sharon advised that it was, and that if providers could not attend then they would submit a report.

Councillor Kay noted the joined up work with the Police and the MSET Coordinator and expressed his concern about children who were not from Sunderland but where placed in the city and to what extent the local authority worked with the Police to keep them safe. Sharon stated that at panel meetings, each provider would run through an update for each young person in the provision so the commissioner would be aware of any issues and would potentially contact the young person's local authority commissioner. Even if the Police or the MSET Coordinator were not in attendance, intelligence shared at the meeting would be passed on.

16. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

## **Virtual School Performance**

The Board received a report outlining the activity of the Virtual School and the unvalidated 2016/2017 educational outcomes for Sunderland looked after children. The performance data was for those children who had been in care continuously of the local authority for a period of at least 12 months.

Annette Parr, Support and Intervention Officer, was in attendance to present the report and informed the Board that during the 2016/2017 academic year it had been agreed to implement a Governing Body management structure for the Virtual School. It had been felt that governance arrangements needed to be strengthened and the first meeting of the Governing Body had been held in November 2017.

Details of the population of looked after children in the city were set out within the report and it was highlighted that 540 children had been in the care of the local authority during the academic year. However, 220 children and young people in the cohort were in care for at least one year as of 31 March 2017 and between the ages of five and 16 and this number was therefore used for statistical purposes.

Section 7 of the report outlined the Virtual School Roll and its characteristics including the Ofsted categories of schools which were attended by looked after



children. The Chair noted that some children were attending schools which were judged to either 'require improvement' or were 'inadequate' and asked if this was appropriate.

Annette Parr advised that one of the key elements of visits to schools from the School Improvement Service was provision for looked after children and sometimes it was found that the support given in schools which 'required improvement' was very positive.

In March 2017, 58% of Sunderland's looked after children attended schools in the city. 24% of the cohort had Special Educational Needs with an Education and Healthcare Plan and approximately 59% had Special Educational Needs which was significant in terms of challenges to services and schools in terms of attainment and progress. 11.5% of the primary school cohort attended a special school and 26.8% of secondary school age children were attending specialist provision.

Turning to attainment and progress, six out of seven children in the Early Years Foundation Stage had achieved a good level of development and the phonics screen had showed a three year improving trend with the pass level standing at 66% against the national average of 84%.

At Key Stage 1, the expected standard in reading had dropped but there was an increase in pupils achieving greater depth. Work was taking place to analyse and create profiles for every Year 2, Year 6 and Year 7 child and the Virtual School staff were receiving a lot of training looking at raising expectations of what children should be doing.

Improvements were being seen in KEY Stage 2 and attainment had risen in reading, writing and maths. Progress rates for children in Sunderland had been better than those for the looked after population nationally.

Key Stage 4 was a significant issue for the Virtual School and the local authority as a whole. Of the Year 11 cohort, 58% had Special Educational Needs. The report showed the previous three year performance trend, however this was not comparable with the 2017 outcomes as GCSE gradings had been changed. Annette stated that Level 2 was equivalent to grade C and above and Level 1 grade D and below. Data on the Progress 8 measure would be reported when available.

Of the young people currently in Years 12 and 13, 13.5% were identified as not being in employment, education or training, this was in comparison with the estimated national average of 33%. All of the 'NEET' young people are supported and encouraged to re-engage with education and training in collaboration with social workers, foster carers and semi-independent or care home staff.

The Board were informed that in 2016/2017, 39 looked after children had been subject to fixed term exclusions from school. There had been a decrease in the number of fixed term exclusions (82) but an increase in days lost (219). Protocols had been reviewed in order to support young people and the Virtual School had intervened to reduce the chance of permanent exclusion. There were a number of

challenging young people in Key Stages 3 and 4 and the Virtual School Headteacher attended the complex placement panel to advocate stable educational placements.

The Virtual School had subjected Personal Education Plans (PEPs) to regular quality assurance and the number of PEPs judged to be of high quality was improving. The new ePEP was to be introduced during January 2018 and further training would be planned for this as it was rolled out.

During the academic year the Virtual School had been delivering a pilot tutoring offer to ten young people which aimed to support the PEP process for these looked after children. Relevant stakeholders would receive monthly updates on pupil progress and feedback would be provided to all pupils and tutors to improve the quality of tuition.

Young people from the Virtual School had also take part in the Choices Together Programme operated by the North East Raising Aspiration Partnership which allowed young people to find about what Higher Education could offer them. The Virtual School was involved in partnership projects, the Cultural Pledge for looked after children and apprenticeship placements.

The recommendations for development for the 2017/2018 academic year were as follows: -

1. Refresher training to be arranged for designated teachers on target setting and the use of Pupil Premium funding and, for those for whom it is relevant.
2. To make more effective use of data collated on a termly basis.
3. To further refine and quality control PEPs.
4. The Virtual Headteacher would continue to work more closely with local organisations to raise awareness of the value of the ePEP, the Pupil Premium funding in identifying needs, targeting resources and monitoring outcomes and how to support learning at home.
5. Refine attendance monitoring by the implementation of “welfare call” to provide daily attendance analysis.
6. Close the attainment gap with peers of children looked after and young people within Sunderland by collating on a termly basis pupil progress data from the ePEP to inform robust conversations with schools on the outcomes for looked after children.
7. Ensure that the newly established Virtual School Governing Body provides greater support and robust challenge to the Virtual School Head.
8. Ensure the effective use of Pupil Premium in raising the standards of attainment and progress for all looked after children.

The Chair thanked Annette for the comprehensive report and commented that the DfE had recently issued a consultation about virtual headteachers and queried the response which had been made by Sunderland. Annette undertook to check this.

The Board therefore: -

17. RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.

## **Regulation 44 Visits**

The Independent Reviewing Officer Team Managers submitted a report providing the Corporate Parenting Board with an update on findings in relation to Regulation 44 visits.

It was a statutory obligation for monthly Regulation 44 visits to be made to all five of the Sunderland's Children's Homes by an 'independent person'. Within Together for Children there were two Foster Care Review/Reg 44 Officers who took responsibility for conducting the visits to children's homes.

Gavin Taylor guided Board Members through the report highlighting the current Ofsted ratings for each home and the outcomes of the Regulation 44 visits. The first of these was Colombo Road which was judged to be outstanding in three areas by Ofsted and had consistently demonstrated evidence of good practice. The Regulation 44 visits also looked at the internal and external fabric of the home, as well as any incidents which had occurred over the period, including 'missing' incidents and use of restraint. Within the reporting period there had been no recommendations from the Reg 44 officer and it was particularly highlighted that two of the five young people engaged in education within the home had achieved 100% school attendance.

Monument View continued to be a stable home which had been judged to be outstanding at its most recent Ofsted inspection. This home had also demonstrated good evidence of practice, although recommendations had been made relating to the external maintenance of the home and the need for a fire drill to take place.

Grasswell House had been through a difficult time in recent months and had moved from a 'good' to 'inadequate' Ofsted rating. The home had recently been judged to be 'good' but requiring improvement in some areas and the Reg 44 Officer was working intensively with the home manager and staff to address outstanding issues.

Eight recommendations had been made during the reporting period, there had been one sanction applied and nine critical incidents. Three young people in the home were engaged within education and three were in work based training.

Councillor W Turton highlighted that there was some land adjacent to the home which needed some attention. The Chair suggested that the local ward members should monitor this.

Revelstoke Road had one Ofsted judgment of 'good' and two of 'requires improvement' and the Reg 44 Officer had made 21 recommendations during the reporting period.

Sea View Road was a short break residential care home which had received a 'requires improvement' Ofsted rating in two areas in 2016 and 'inadequate' in one area which had all moved to 'improved effectiveness' in 2017. A full inspection had taken place recently and the setting had been judged to be 'good'. Seven recommendations had been made during the reporting period and these had been acted upon by Management and achieved.

Gavin highlighted that the scope of Regulation 44 visits had been considered and it was noted that elected members had been involved in visits to the homes and it was queried whether one councillor should be linked to one specific home.

The Chair stated that Members had undergone training in the past and they might like to think about what they wanted to do. It was her view that local ward members should have a general awareness of what was happening at the home in any event.

Councillor Smith commented that she had been linked to Revelstoke Road for a number of years and had found this meant that she could pick up on changes more easily because she was so familiar with the home. Sharon Willis added that a lot of different people visiting the home could have a negative impact and it was preferable to have some consistency in visits.

The Chair suggested that elected members be invited to take up Reg 44 training and that this also be offered to new councillors after the election in May.

A number of areas had been highlighted for service development including: -

- To consolidate and use the skill and experiences of the new Foster Carer Review/Regulation 44 Officers.
- Strengthen the use of advocacy for young people in residential services.
- To develop a schedule of themed audits in order to enhance the rigour of the independent visit.
- To revisit the Reg 44 report format and use SMART recommendations that evidence the impact of the Reg 44 visit.
- Support all five homes to their journey to achieve a good to outstanding rating from Ofsted.
- Support residential managers in meeting and exceeding the implementation of Ofsted and Reg 44 recommendations.

Having thanked Gavin for the detailed report, it was: -

18. RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.

(Signed) L FARTHING  
Chair

**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

**16 APRIL 2018**

**HEALTH OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

**1. Purpose of the report**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on health Looked After Children (LAC) activity to Sunderland Corporate Parenting Board.

**2. Compliance data for health assessments quarter 3**

**2.1** Local Authorities are responsible for making sure a health assessment of physical, emotional and mental health needs is carried out for every child they look after. Initial Health Assessments (IHAs) must happen within 20 working days of the child becoming looked after. In order for the health team to ensure compliance with statutory timescales it is imperative they are advised of the child becoming looked after and consent for health assessments received in a timely manner.

**2.2 Table 1**

LAC IHAs	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Compliance IHAs	80%	90%	98%	60%

**2.3** As can be seen in table 1 there has been a decline in compliance with IHAs for quarter 4, this has been due to late notifications caused by the migration of data from CCM to Liquid Logic. There was a total of 24 late notifications, it is anticipated that these problems will be resolved for the next reporting period. Due to poor weather conditions 2 children were unable to attend and 3 children out of area have not had their assessments completed.

**2.4** The RHA must happen at least every six months before a child's 5th birthday and at least once every 12 months after the child's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. Table 2 depicts the compliance rate.

**Table 2**

LAC RHAs	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Compliance RHAs	90%	94%	87%	96%

**2.5** As can be seen table 2 demonstrates there was an increase in compliance with RHAs for quarter 4; the 4% non-compliance was due to children placed out of area not having health assessments completed on time.

### 3.0 Health Passports

- 3.1 The improvement activity around issuing of health passports was described in a previous report. Table 3 demonstrates there has been an improvement in compliance for quarter 4.

**Table 3**

Health passports issued	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Compliance Health passports	100%	100%	73%	100%

### 4.0 LAC Health Team

- 4.1 The Named Nurse LAC has been on long term sick leave since November 2017, contingency plans are in place to cover her absence. The LAC clinics have been reorganised in order for the LAC doctors to undertake the RHAs which would have been undertaken by the Named Nurse. The Children and Young People's Nurse is 'acting up' as Named Nurse LAC during the period of sickness.
- 4.2 Dr Kim Barrett, who has undertaken the role of Designated Dr for LAC for a number of years, has stepped down from the role. Dr Sarah Mills has been recruited to the role and is currently being inducted to the post which will involve spending time within the CCG and across the partnership.
- 4.3 The Designated Nurse LAC is currently working her notice and will be resigning from the role at the end of June

### 5.0 Recommendations

- The Corporate Parenting Board is asked to note the content of the report.

*Anne M Brock*

**Anne Brock**  
**Safeguarding Children Lead**  
**Nurse and Designated Nurse LAC**

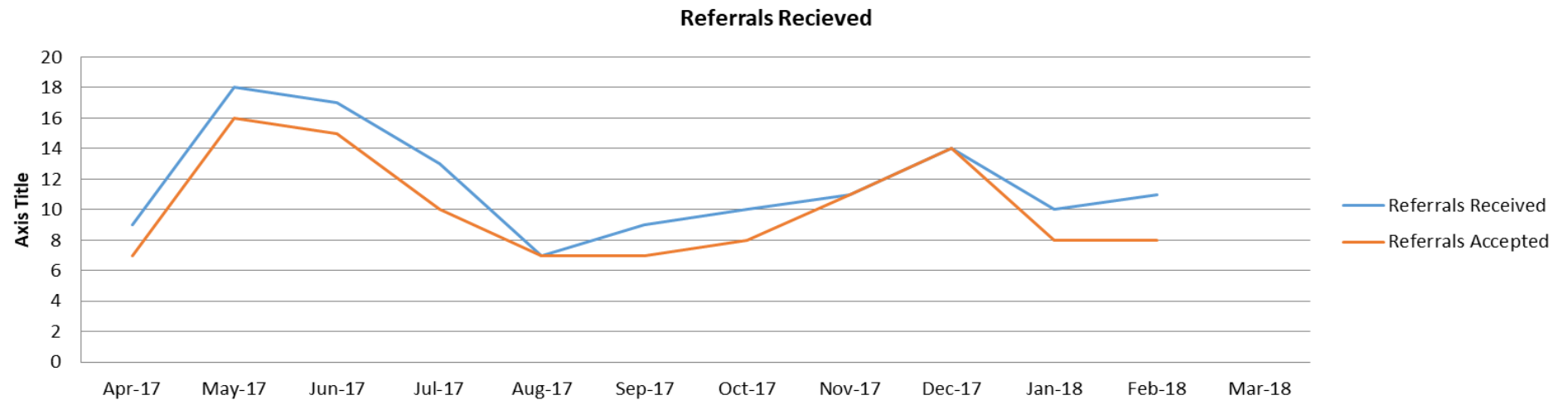
# NTW Sunderland LAC Report

## February 2018

## Sunderland LAC Report - February 2018

### 1. Referrals

<b>Referrals</b>	Apr-17	May-17	Jun-17	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17	Oct-17	Nov-17	Dec-17	Jan-18	Feb-18
Referrals Received	9	18	17	13	7	9	10	11	14	10	11
Referrals Accepted	7	16	15	10	7	7	8	11	14	8	8
% Accepted	78%	89%	88%	77%	100%	78%	80%	100%	100%	80%	73%



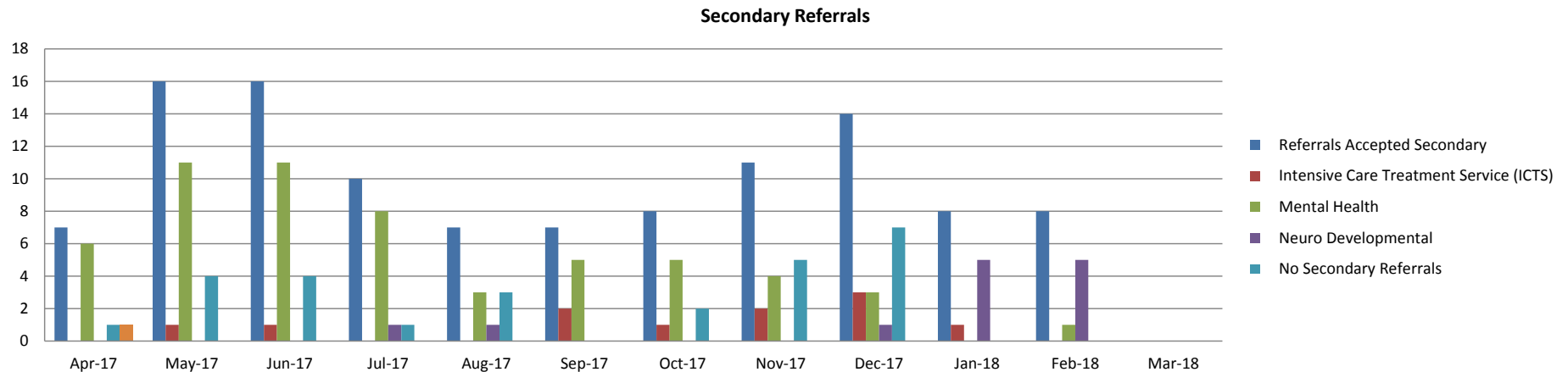


## 2. Referrals to Clinical Pathways

The Secondary Referrals below directly relate to the Accepted Referrals in the Reporting Period.

Please note that a client may have 1 or more secondary referrals. Thus the sum will not necessarily tally with the Total of the Referrals Accepted.

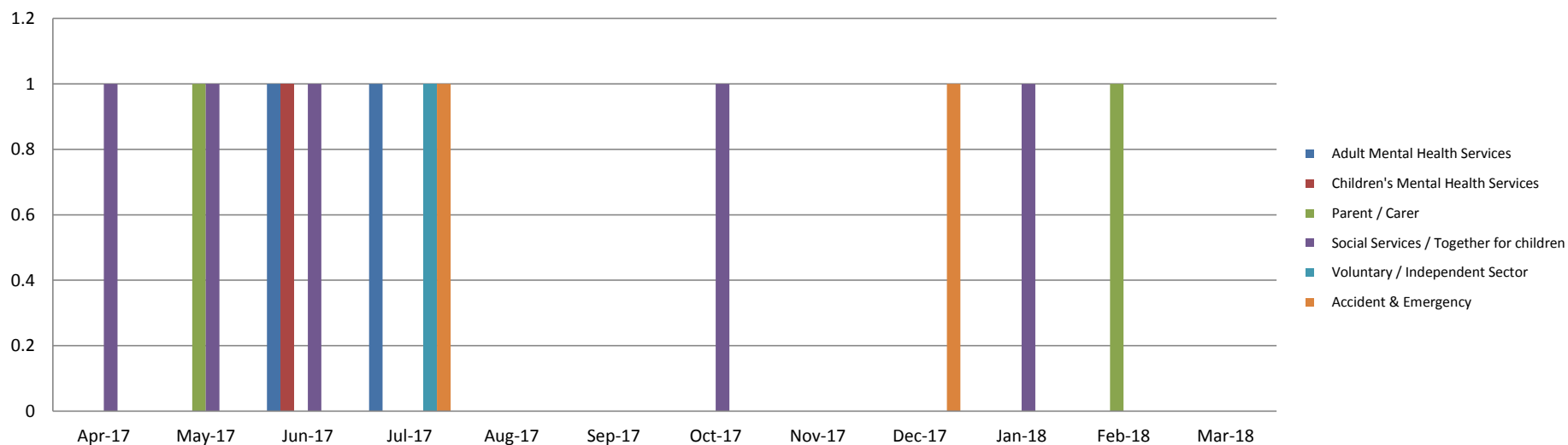
	Apr-17	May-17	Jun-17	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17	Oct-17	Nov-17	Dec-17	Jan-18	Feb-18
<b>Referrals Accepted Secondary</b>	7	16	16	10	7	7	8	11	14	8	8
Intensive Care Treatment Service (ICTS)	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	2	3	1	0
Mental Health	6	11	11	8	3	5	5	4	3	0	1
Neuro Developmental	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	5	5
No Secondary Referrals	1	4	4	1	3	0	2	5	7	0	0
Eating disorder	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2



### 3. Urgent Referrals

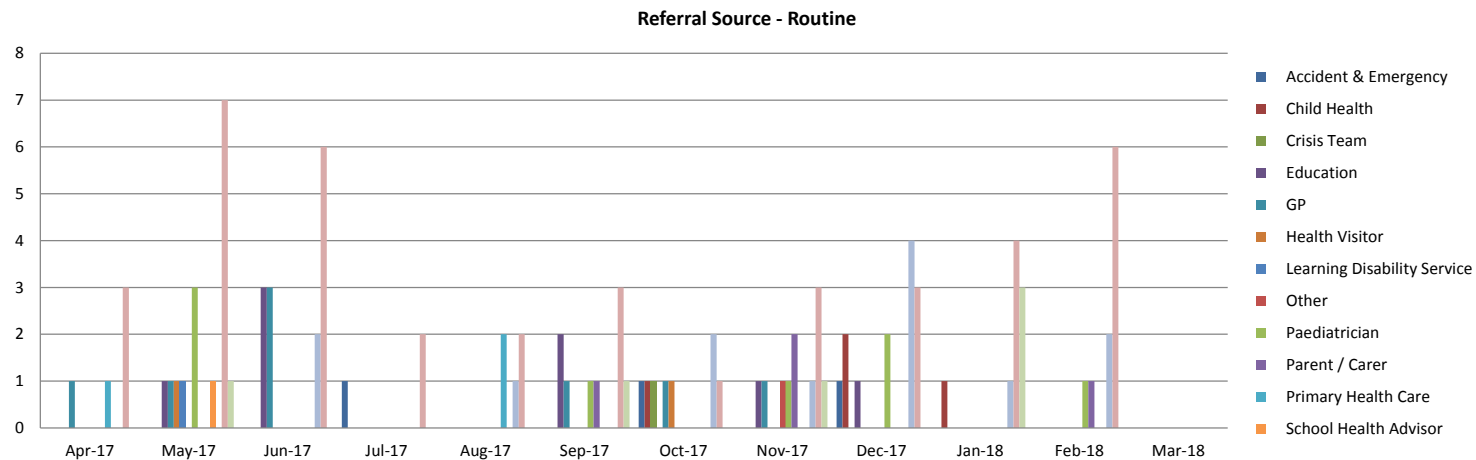
Referral Source URGENT	Apr-17	May-17	Jun-17	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17	Oct-17	Nov-17	Dec-17	Jan-18	Feb-18
Adult Mental Health Services			1	1							
Children's Mental Health Services			1								
Parent / Carer		1									1
Social Services / Together for children	1	1	1				1			1	
Voluntary / Independent Sector				1							
Accident & Emergency				1					1		

Referral Source - Urgent



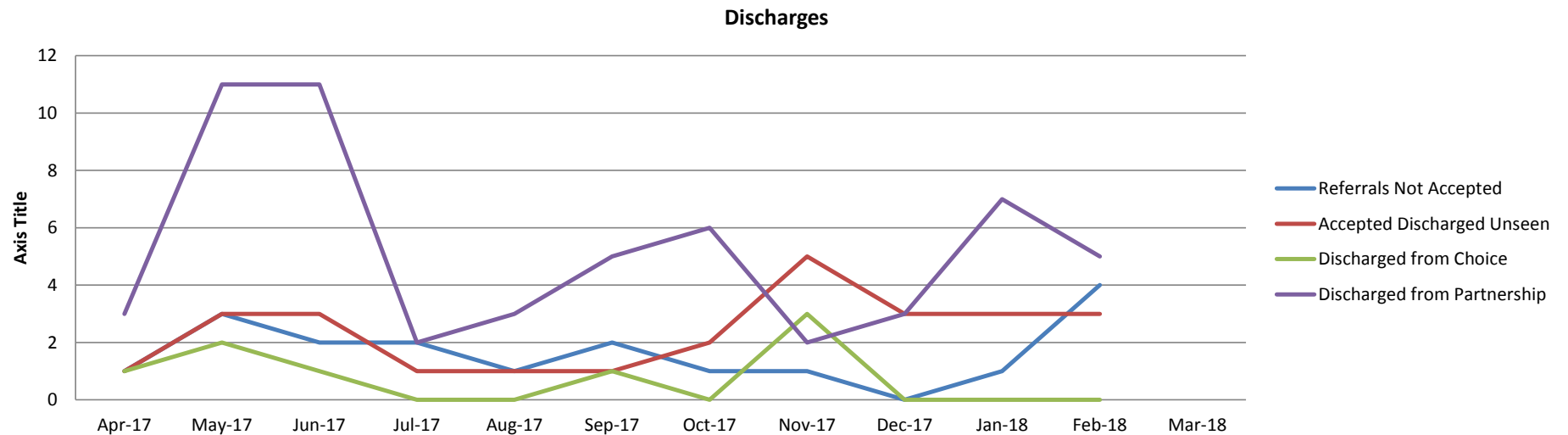
## 4. Routine Referrals

Referral Source Routine	Apr-17	May-17	Jun-17	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17	Oct-17	Nov-17	Dec-17	Jan-18	Feb-18
Accident & Emergency				1			1		1		
Child Health							1		2	1	
Crisis Team							1				
Education		1	3			2		1	1		
GP	1	1	3			1	1	1			
Health Visitor		1					1				
Learning Disability Service		1									
Other								1			
Paediatrician		3				1		1	2		1
Parent / Carer						1		2			1
Primary Health Care	1				2						
School Health Advisor		1									
Single Point of Access			2		1		2	1	4	1	2
Social Services	3	7	6	2	2	3	1	3	3	4	6
Youth Offending Team		1				1		1		3	



## 5. Discharges

Discharges	Apr-17	May-17	Jun-17	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17	Oct-17	Nov-17	Dec-17	Jan-18	Feb-18
Referrals Not Accepted	1	3	2	2	1	2	1	1	0	1	4
Accepted Discharges Unseen	1	3	3	1	1	1	2	5	3	3	3
Discharged from Choice	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0
Discharged from Partnership	3	11	11	2	3	5	6	2	3	7	5
Total	6	19	17	5	5	9	9	11	6	11	12



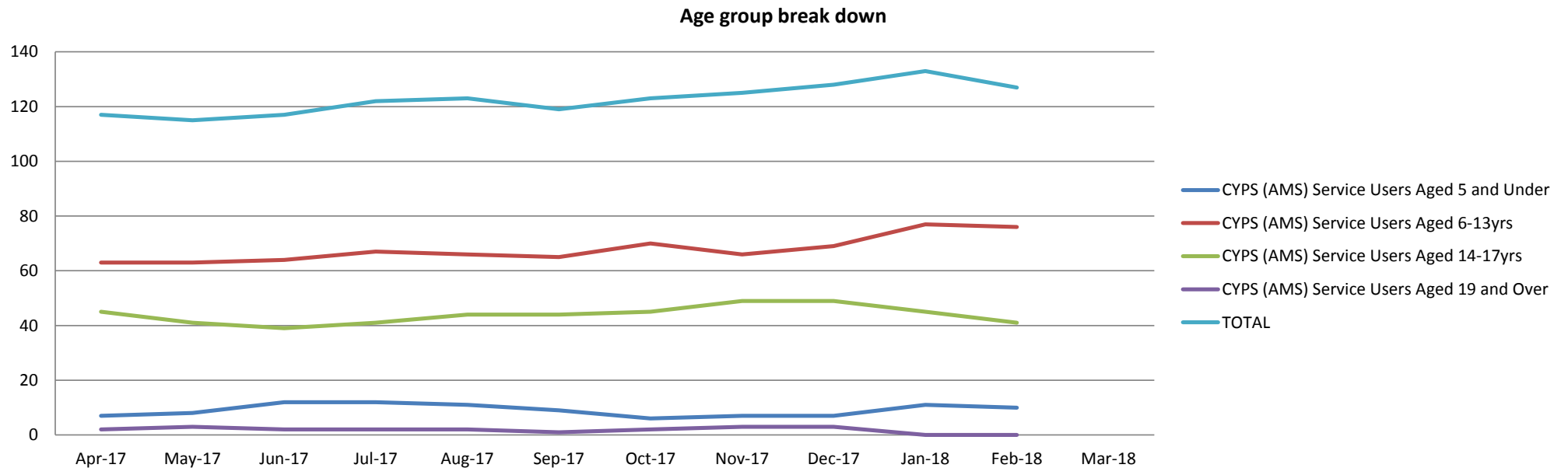
## 6. Waiting List

PMF Reporting Waiting Bands	Apr-17	May-17	Jun-17	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17	Oct-17	Nov-17	Dec-17	Jan-18	Feb-18
Number of CYPs Incomplete spells waiting 0 - 4 weeks from Referral to Treatment	8	12	14	9	7	4	9	8	13	9	9
Number of CYPs Incomplete spells waiting 4 - 6 weeks from Referral to Treatment	5	8	4	4	2	3	3	1	3	2	3
Number of CYPs Incomplete spells waiting 6 - 8 weeks from Referral to Treatment	1	2	3	10	5	3	2	5	2	6	2
Number of CYPs Incomplete spells waiting 8 - 10 weeks from Referral to Treatment	2	3	8	1	5	2	2	1	1	3	2
Number of CYPs Incomplete spells waiting 10 - 12 weeks from Referral to Treatment	3	1	1	3	5	5	4	1	4	1	6
Number of CYPs Incomplete spells waiting between 12 - 18 weeks from Referral to Treatment	8	4	5	9	12	13	10	8	5	6	4
Number of CYPs Incomplete spells waiting between 18 - 30 weeks from Referral to Treatment	4	8	10	12	9	11	15	13	19	11	13
Number of CYPs Incomplete spells waiting more than 30 weeks from Referral to Treatment	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	6	5
Number of CYPs Incomplete spells waiting more than 12 weeks from Referral to Treatment	12	12	15	21	23	24	25	22	24	23	22

PMF Reporting Waiting Bands	Apr-17	May-17	Jun-17	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17	Oct-17	Nov-17	Dec-17	Jan-18	Feb-18
Number of CYPs Incomplete spells waiting 0 - 4 weeks from Referral to Treatment	26%	32%	31%	19%	15%	10%	20%	21%	28%	20%	20%
Number of CYPs Incomplete spells waiting 4 - 6 weeks from Referral to Treatment	16%	21%	9%	8%	4%	7%	7%	3%	6%	5%	7%
Number of CYPs Incomplete spells waiting 6 - 8 weeks from Referral to Treatment	3%	5%	7%	21%	11%	7%	4%	13%	4%	14%	5%
Number of CYPs Incomplete spells waiting 8 - 10 weeks from Referral to Treatment	6%	8%	18%	2%	11%	5%	4%	3%	2%	7%	5%
Number of CYPs Incomplete spells waiting 10 - 12 weeks from Referral to Treatment	10%	3%	2%	6%	11%	12%	9%	3%	9%	2%	14%
Number of CYPs Incomplete spells waiting between 12 - 18 weeks from Referral to Treatment	26%	11%	11%	19%	26%	32%	22%	21%	11%	14%	9%
Number of CYPs Incomplete spells waiting between 18 - 30 weeks from Referral to Treatment	13%	21%	22%	25%	19%	27%	33%	34%	40%	25%	30%
Number of CYPs Incomplete spells waiting more than 30 weeks from Referral to Treatment	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%	3%	0%	14%	11%

## 7. Current Caseload

Age group break down	Apr-17	May-17	Jun-17	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17	Oct-17	Nov-17	Dec-17	Jan-18	Feb-18
CYPS (AMS) Service Users Aged 5 and Under	7	8	12	12	11	9	6	7	7	11	10
CYPS (AMS) Service Users Aged 6-13yrs	63	63	64	67	66	65	70	66	69	77	76
CYPS (AMS) Service Users Aged 14-17yrs	45	41	39	41	44	44	45	49	49	45	41
CYPS (AMS) Service Users Aged 19 and Over	2	3	2	2	2	1	2	3	3	0	0
TOTAL	117	115	117	122	123	119	123	125	128	133	127



**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

**16 April 2018**

**LEISURE AND CULTURAL OFFER FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND  
CARE LEAVERS**

**1. Purpose of the Report:**

This Report is to advise the Corporate Parenting Board of the Local Leisure and Cultural Offer for Looked After Children and Care Leavers drafted April 2018.

**2. Introduction**

The aim of the leisure offer is to promote healthy and active lifestyles, for the children and young people in our care.

**3. Everyone Active's Proposed Leisure Offer includes;**

Working with Everyone Active (leisure provider) the young people would be able to use their facilities at Sunderland Aquatics Centre, Washington Leisure Centre, Silksworth Community Pool, Tennis and Wellness Centre, Houghton Sports Centre and Wellness Centre, Silksworth Sports Complex and Ski Slope, Bunny Hill Wellness Centre, Raich Carter Sports Centre and Hetton Community Pool and Wellness Centre with their card and Everyone Active would be able to produce a report on usage and invoice the council based on a reduced rate and on actual usage.

In widening the leisure offer to activities such as the gym and holiday activities, Everyone Active have confirmed that there will be a cost implication to this and it will be necessary to implement a fee.

**4. Gym Memberships**

Everyone Active could provide a discounted gym membership price of £150 per child (if 10 or more were purchased). To demonstrate £150 as being value for money, it currently costs a child concession £4 to use the gym per session. If the gym is used twice a week for a year the actual cost would be £416.

There has been a discussion at the leisure board that SLM have agreed to provide a number of **free passes for the gym**, the number is yet to be confirmed but the hope is that 50 will be provided. There will be an agreement that the service area and Everyone Active would work together to monitor usage as part of the agreement.

## **5. Holiday Activities**

Everyone Active could provide a discount of 20% off actual prices if children are members

- All centre activities are available once the person reaches 16 years
- Soft play is from 4-8 years
- Holiday camps is from 5-14 years
- Gym junior sessions 11-15 years

## **6. Coaching Sessions**

Everyone Active could provide a discount of 25% off all coaching sessions, gymnastics, football, active antz, if children are members

New member's sessions are run regularly and are available as and when required.

## **7. Free Swimming**

Everyone active provides free swimming to all children and young people who are looked after under the age of 18 years. If the child is under the age of 8, then a carer would need to be present and they would also go free.

## **8. Data:**

112 looked after children have an Everyone Active card as of February 2018 to access free swimming. The Everyone Active card has been issued since November 2016, in this period of time there has been 137 visits by children and young people who have a card.

## **9. Next Steps Leisure and Cultural Offer**

The Next Steps service has the following policy regarding social and leisure activities for care leavers aged 16-18:

It is a maximum of £10.00 per week which is a maximum of £520 per year.

Where appropriate and dependent on an assessment of need Children's Services will pay for the membership of a hobby or leisure club and contribute towards the cost of equipment or special clothing/fees or contribute towards the cost of a social activity. This could include the cost of trial sessions and a contribution to travel costs. Social workers should assist young people to obtain a Sunderland Life Card (Leisure Pass). Young people should be encouraged and assisted to explore the leisure facilities that accept the Life Pass.



Financial assistance provided to pursue hobbies, leisure interests and social activities should be governed by the principle that these activities can be afforded by the young person at the age of eighteen, when they take over financial responsibility for their own affairs.

Where young people live outside of the Sunderland area, assistance will be provided to obtain a local Passport to Leisure (Life Card/Leisure Pass).

Young people should have access to at least one leisure/hobby/sports activity per week to ensure social inclusion.

## **10. Young People Leisure Requests**

Young People have identified the following areas of activity in addition to gym passes or swimming that they would be interested in;

- Cinema
- Bowling
- Football Clubs
- Rugby Clubs
- Arts and Craft sessions
- Martial Arts
- Boxing
- Quaser Lazer
- Pool
- Climbing Wall

## **11. The Virtual School**

Sunderland Virtual School staff share a statutory responsibility to support the transition of looked after (eligible) young people from Year 11 of secondary school into their chosen pathway of education until the age of 18. By working co-operatively with Next Steps and Connexions in the ELEET Team we also work to support young people as they transition into adulthood and the adult social care system.

The services and support offered by the Virtual School include, but aren't limited to;

- Year 11 early transition planning for young people in conjunction with school and all relevant professionals
- Support and guidance to find the right education or training placement and course to give each young person the best chance of achieving their potential
- Support, early intervention and advocacy when things become challenging, and at disciplinary meetings to ensure retention and completion of courses by liaising with training, education and relevant professionals at times of personal crisis

- Advice and help to develop CV's, job, course and apprenticeship searches, fill in applications and prepare for interviews
- Socio-emotional support to develop the skills and techniques needed to deal with challenges in a healthy, positive manner
- Monitoring educational and training progress via each young person's Personal Education Plan and other related meetings.
- Ensuring the young person's voice (views, desires and plans) is properly represented in their on-going education or training planning
- Working creatively with partners to explore apprenticeship and training opportunities with selection processes devised to allow each person to showcase their skills to the full
- Seeking out and quality assuring potential opportunities and education and training providers to give the best possible choices to our young people

We see each one of our young people as unique, with different skills, abilities and experiences, by working with all professionals involved in their support we work creatively, involving them to try to meet their individual needs and help them achieve to their full potential. We try to give each young person the level and type of support and information required to give them choices about their future without taking away their voice or restricting their independence and right to decide.

## **12. The Participation and Engagement Offer**

The main focus of the participation and engagement service is to support the personal, social and emotional development of young people, raise their aspirations and build their resilience to prepare them for better transition to adulthood. This is achieved through a range of group based positive activities, individual mentoring, activities which promote youth participation in civic and community life, targeted group based activities, employment readiness and personal capacity through social action and volunteering programmes.

Participation and Engagement service have experienced, skilled and knowledgeable workforce in different project areas that coordinates and delivers services to our target group such as looked after children and LGBT+ young people.

**Change Council:** after school engagement for Looked after children and care leavers. This group is the voice of children and young people looked after and leaving care and work towards improving the care system in Sunderland for all young people.

**LGBT+:** a forum for young people LGBT+ to work on issues within Sunderland.

**Youth Parliament:** Voice of young people to decision makers they meet every

Wednesday and represent the views of young people on major boards and panels in the council. There are four members known to Children and Families with 2 young people who are looked after.

**Sunderland Young Inspectors:** A group of young people trained to inspect services in Sunderland.

**Children and Young People's Advisory Network:** an advisory group of children and young people who support the priorities in the children and young people's plan.

**Takeover Challenge:** Takeover Day is a national event promoted by the Children's Commissioner that offers young people the opportunity to take over some or parts of specific adult work roles for the day. Looked after children and young people are always given preference to participate. The experience ensured that young people opinions were valued; it also improved their confidence, self-esteem and career aspirations for the future.

### **13. Arts, Culture and Music**

- Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens
- Sunderland Empire Theatre
- Sculpture Trail
- Royalty Theatre
- Keel Square
- Arts Centre Washington

### **14. Parks and Open Spaces**

- Herrington Country Park
- Mowbray Park
- Rainton Meadows Nature Reserve and Joe's Pond
- Sunnyside Gardens
- Washington Wetland Centre

### **15. Libraries**

- Family tickets for LAC, with no fines.
- Children/ YP can use our computers for free for 2 hours.
- Free printing for homework up to about 10 copies.

### **16. The Max Card**

The Max Card is a discount card for foster families and families of children with additional needs. Families simply show their Max Card upon entry to a venue in order to obtain free or discounted admission.

TFC have bought 350 cards in May 2017 and 316 have been issued to date. The max cards are £2.50 +vat and last for 2 years. The Max card is available for looked after children up to the age of 25.

The scheme is designed to help these families save money on great days out at castles, zoos, bowling alleys and more.

We aim to provide a sense of community through stimulating learning experiences and enjoyable days out for everyone.

We work with local authorities and selected charities, who administer the cards to eligible families in their areas.

### **17. Tall Ship Ambassadors**

In Sunderland we have the Tall Ships arriving in July 2018, in the build up to the event TFC sponsored three looked after young people to act as ambassadors leading up to the race. The aim is to raise the profile of Looked after children and also dismiss the stigmas associated with being looked after. Along with the ambassadors we have had 21 children and young people who are looked after on voyages throughout the years.

## CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

16 April 2018

### Local Offer for Sunderland Care Leavers

#### 1. Purpose of the Report:

The DFE issued guidance for Local Authorities in February 2018 which requires each Local Authority to consult on and publish a local offer for its Care Leavers. The local offer should provide information about all the services and support that is available to Care Leavers from the Local Authority, including information about both their Statutory entitlement as well as any discretionary support that a Local Authority chooses to provide.

#### 2. Details of the services and support that should be included:

The local offer should include details of the services and support that may assist Care Leavers in, or moving to adulthood and independent living that the Local Authority provides in relation to:

- Health and Wellbeing.
- Relationships.
- Education and Training.
- Employment.
- Accommodation.
- Participation in Society.

Once Local Authorities have published the local offer it should be reviewed regularly to ensure that the services on offer reflect what Care Leavers need most. There is an expectation Local Authorities update the offer at least every two to three years following further consultation with Care Leavers.

The local offer should be easily available and accessible to all Care Leavers in the Local Authority area. This may mean that it is made available in a number of formats, including printed hard copies, online, digital copies. There is an expectation that Personal Advisors share and promote the local offer with Care Leavers they work with and to make sure they are aware of it and the services they are entitled to.



## CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

16 April 2018

### Local Offer for Sunderland Care Leavers

#### 1. Purpose of the Report:

This Report is to advise the Corporate Parenting Board of the Local Offer for Sunderland Care Leavers drafted April 2018.

#### Introduction

The aim of Together for Children's Local Offer is to tell you about all the support that we have in **Sunderland** for you as a care leaver. We know that it is a big step when you move out of care and start living on your own or with friends.

Just because you are leaving care, or have already left care, we haven't stopped caring about you. We want to make sure that you feel safe and supported and know where and who to go to for advice and help.

Local care leavers have helped make this leaflet. We will continue to listen to your views to make sure the services we offer are what you need. We have written this leaflet with the care leavers' forum.

To be able to get the support set out in this leaflet, you must have been in care for at least 13 weeks between the ages of 14 and 16 (including your 16<sup>th</sup> birthday) or for 13 weeks after your 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. If you are not sure whether you qualify for support, then ask your personal adviser.

Your personal adviser will talk with you about the information in this leaflet.

#### Corporate Parenting Principles

The Corporate parenting principles set out seven principles that local authorities must have regard to when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and young people as follows:

- to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing of those children and young people

- to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- to take into account the views , wishes and feelings of those children and young people
- to help those children and young people gain access to and make the best use of, services provided by the TfC and its relevant partners
- to promote high aspirations and to seek to secure the best outcomes for those children and young people
- for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives relationships and education or work, and
- to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

## Health and Wellbeing

Below are some of the ways our Next Steps team can support you to stay healthy and look after your physical and mental health. We can:

- Give information on healthy living
- Give information on getting help to pay for prescriptions
- Support you to register with a GP
- Support you to move from CAMHS/ CYPS to adult services
- Signpost you additional support for both mental wellbeing and physical health
- Give information about counselling services that are available locally
- Give you help with transports costs when attending health appointments
- If you are a young parent, take an interest in your child/ren and support you to do the best for them. We will help you arrange childcare, if this is what you want.
- Offer free or subsidised access to the leisure centres we run include leisure offer hyper link or information?
- Give you information about health drop-in centres
- Work with you to make a 'health passport' containing key information from your childhood (for example, when and if you have had immunisations) and your current health needs.



## Relationships

### A Personal Adviser

Following changes introduced through the Children & Social Work Act 2017, you will be able to ask to have support from your personal adviser up to the age of 25 whether you are in education or training or not. This is to try to make sure care leavers receive similar support to young adults who live with their families.

Your personal adviser is there to help you to prepare to live independently and to offer advice and support after you leave care. Personal advisers get involved in discussions about your needs and your pathway plan.

Your pathway plan is written by the TfC after consultation with you and important people in your life. It sets out your needs, views and future goals, and exactly what support you will receive from us. We review your pathway plan with you regularly so that it is kept up-to-date.

We will try to let you keep the same personal adviser, though this will not always be possible. The amount of support that you receive from your Personal Adviser will depend on what you want and your circumstances.

The Next Steps Team will consider with you what extra support you may need. You might, for example, need extra support because:

- You have special educational needs or a disability.
- You are an unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child (UASC) and your immigration status is unclear.
- You are in or leaving custody or you have had contact with the criminal justice system;
- You are a young parent; or
- You are going through a difficult time in your personal life.

### Advocacy

- Your right to be heard and taken seriously
- You have a right to be involved in all decisions about your plans for leaving care. You have a right to support from an independent advocate if you are

thinking about challenging decisions about the care we give you.

- Independent advocates can inform you about your rights and help you to be heard in meetings. They are separate from social services.
- As well as support from a Personal Adviser, we may be able to offer you additional practical and emotional support, such as through:
- Where appropriate, continuing to support contact with the 'Independent Visitor' you had while you were in care;

Help to maintain or regain contact with people special to you or who cared for you in the past, like former foster carers or social workers

Mentoring project? Look at a potential to have something like this for our care leavers

### **Education and Training**

We want to make sure every young person leaving care has the support to achieve their goals in life.

The law says we must provide you with assistance with expenses linked with employment, education and training. In particular:

**Choices Together** Years 10 and 11 is the perfect opportunity to find out all about being a university student and what Higher Education could offer you in the future. It doesn't matter if you haven't thought about college or university – everyone is welcome!

You will get the chance to explore Newcastle University, Northumbria University, the University of Sunderland, Durham University and Teesside University and take part in some great (free!) activities. Our current university students will be with you every step of the way to help you out, answer questions and make sure you are having a good time.

**Choices Together** Years 8 and 9 This is a new series of events as part of our Choices Together programme for Looked After Young People. We are offering students, their teachers and carers to join us on a university campus to find out what university is all about. This will be an interactive, informal day- feel free to attend one or all three!

Pathway planning process will cover educational options, if at any point during this process Higher Education is identified as a potential route a joint visit to young person should take place with Social Worker / PA and Re –engagement worker where appropriate. During visit Re-engagement worker will provide young person, carers ect more detail around the support that will be available which includes –

**Next Steps Higher Education bursary** – This amounts to £6000 per academic year for a maximum of 4 years more info can be found in the Next Steps finance policy

**Post 16 Peps** – Regular reviewing of current education will take to ensure young people or gaining the support they require to achieve their education goals supporting the transition from Further Education to Higher Education.

**UCAS application** – Social worker / PA will monitor the progress of applications and ensure the appropriate support with this task is identified, young people should be introduced to tools such as Propel website which provides details of support offered from Higher Education establishments for care leavers, young people should be encouraged to tick the care leaver box on application to make establishments aware of care leaver status to ensure extra support is offered. Next Steps will cover the cost of UCAS application.

**University Open days / Interviews** – Young people will be offered support from Social Worker / PA should they wish to attend Open days to Higher Education establishments they have expressed an interest for, where young people do not wish to attend with Social Worker / PA Next steps will provide finance to cover travel costs. During these visits young people should be encouraged and supported to introduce themselves to welfare services and care leaver support teams if available within the establishment. The same process will take place for attending interviews.

**Accommodation** – Social Worker / PA will discuss accommodation options during pathway planning process and support young person in securing accommodation at this point staying put should be discussed for young people in foster care who wish to return to carers during holiday periods and be incorporated within the pathway plan. Many Higher Education Establishments will offer Care leavers guaranteed halls of residence and 52 week a year contracts.

**Support during university** – PA will continue to support young person in all dimensions of their pathway planning process and continue to maintain support visits, the visit pattern should remain at least one home visit every 8 weeks. However it is recognised that not all young people will be comfortable with PA visits at student accommodations and where this is identified by the young person alternative

arrangements will be made and agreed within the pathway planning process. Young people should be encouraged to sign information sharing agreements with their Higher Education establishment to support communication between support services however as an adult this will remain the choice of the care leaver. If struggles are identified during studies PA should encourage and support young people to access support services within the educational establishment.

**Graduation** – Upon graduation young people will be provided a one off graduation grant of £1000 to support the transition from education. PA should establish who will be attending the graduation and where no one is identified offer to attend. PA should ensure a plan around accommodation is in place following graduation.

## **Employment**

### **Apprenticeships for Care Leavers**

Together for Children are developing an apprenticeship offer in consultation with our Care Leavers which will ensure priority is given to them in a variety of service areas.

## **Accommodation**

### **Leaving care before turning 18**

We will encourage you to stay in care until you are 18. Most young people still live at home with their families at this age.

If you choose to leave care before age 18, the law says we must provide you with suitable accommodation.

Supported Lodgings is a scheme which provides accommodation for 16-21 year old Care Leaver's within a home environment. The aim is to offer a supportive, safe environment to help young people develop their self-confidence and independent living skills and prepare for their future.

Each household is different and for this reason we carry out introductory home visits and a matching process takes place to allow the young person and the householder to get to know one another and so both are clear about the expectations within the placement. We would always cover the 'house rules' and ongoing support would be offered through the Supported Lodgings Scheme and the young person's Next Steps worker.

<https://togetherforchildren.org.uk/children-and-young-people/supported-lodgings>

If you are aged over 18, your personal adviser will help you to find suitable accommodation). This might involve:

- Working with Housing Services to come up with suitable housing options for you, including supported accommodation if you are not ready or don't want to have your own tenancy.
- If this is what you and your foster carers want, supporting you to remain with your foster carers under what's called a 'Staying Put' arrangement. This can last until you are 21
- Support to access different housing options including social housing (this is accommodation managed by us or a housing association)
- Advice about holding down a tenancy, including avoiding rent or Council Tax arrears, paying bills and budgeting. We know it can be very hard having your own place for the first time. We will do whatever we can to ease the pressures on you
- Care Leavers are exempt from paying council tax in Sunderland.
- Helping you to claim housing benefit/universal credit.
- Practical support with moving into and furnishing your new home.
- Supporting you if you have a housing crisis, including helping if you are threatened with or lose a tenancy **[NB: care leavers aged 18-20 are treated as a priority need group in homelessness legislation]**.
- Storage of furniture will be considered on an individual needs basis

## Participation in Society

We want our care leavers to be active members of society, and to have all the chances in life that other young adults have. We can help you participate in society in the following ways:

- Providing information on groups and clubs you may wish to join
- Informing you about relevant awards, schemes and competitions you can enter, in line with your talents and interests
- Encouraging and helping you to enrol on the Electoral Register, so you can vote in elections
- Offering work experience within TFC, Sunderland City Council and Partners

- Informing you about voluntary work that we think you may be interested in
- Informing and possibly helping with the cost of leisure activities
- Giving you advice and helping you to challenge any discrimination you face as a care leaver.

## Finances

We will try to help you financially, in a similar way to how parents would support their own children. Our help includes:

- Providing a leaving care (setting up home allowance) grant to help you buy essential things when moving into your own home
- Giving you exemptions to or discounts on paying Council Tax
- Providing or telling you about relevant money management courses? Can we do this are they available?
- Information on how to access your Junior ISA,
- Support to open a bank account.
- Support to gain important identification documents, such as a passport and/or provisional driving licence, before your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday
- Support to get your National Insurance number.
- Exceptional financial support in emergencies
- Providing a financial gift at birthdays and Christmas or other celebrations in line with finance policy.

## Additional Support

Key contact numbers for:

- **Next Steps Team:** 0191 561 7109 (duty)
- Housing advice
- Designated doctors/nurses

- Education, employment or training support
- TFC leadership e.g. the Director of Children's Services, Lead Member
- **Change Council:** 0191 561 7430 or email [loren.nergaard@togetherforchildren.org.uk](mailto:loren.nergaard@togetherforchildren.org.uk)

### **Relevant universal services**

- YDAP
- Information about further or higher education
- Relevant youth clubs/groups/activities
- Parenting support groups
- Youth Offending Service
- Citizenship Advice Bureau





# Sufficiency Strategy for the Accommodation of Children Looked After and Care Leavers 2017 – 2020



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# 1. Introduction and Background

The aim of this strategy is to outline how Sunderland intends to meet the Sufficiency Duty as laid down in section 22G of the Children Act 1989. The strategy should be read in conjunction with TfC and partners' relevant service plans and strategies including:

- TfC Commissioning Strategy 2017-2020
- MALAP Looked After Children Strategy 2017-2020
- TfC Foster Carer Recruitment Strategy
- TfC Fostering Statement of Purpose 2017
- TfC Adoption Statement of Purpose 2017
- TfC Business Plan 2017-2020.
- SEND Self Evaluation
- JSNA

Sunderland City Council in consultation with the Department of Education commissioned TfC to deliver holistic services to children, young people and families. TfC was established on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 as a Company in its own right with a vision and ambition to provide excellent services across the City.

**'Together for Children will improve the lives of children and their families, keep children safe from harm and ensure they have the opportunity to fulfil their potential.'**

Increasing the quality and stability of placements for children looked after (CLA) is a major driver in our improvement activity. The sufficiency duty is a core part of how we will meet our broader duties to ensure that children looked after have their needs fully assessed and that they receive well-matched placements. We are also driven to ensure that children and young people get the help and support they need to achieve a sense of self efficacy; family and that they know that they belong.

TfC is committed to ensuring that we have high quality services and provision which meets the needs of our children looked after and care leavers.

The principles of our Sufficiency Strategy are:

1. The voice of children and young people is central to our strategy and delivery.
2. As ambitious Corporate Parents we will only look after children who need to be looked after and will expect the best for them. To achieve this we will provide a range of support services as a Company and as a partnership to support children and young people to stay with their family when it is appropriate to do so.

3. We aspire to a 'no disruption' principle, and will ensure that placement stability is at the centre of our planning for children, including stability of placement, education provision and consistent health services.
4. We want to ensure that children are cared for in a family setting wherever possible.
5. We will ensure that we have high quality services and a range of placements for all our children and young people in Sunderland to ensure sufficient choice in the local area.
6. We will work with all our services and providers to ensure that services are child focused, high quality and represent value for money.

Our Sufficiency Strategy outlines our intended activities to develop and strengthen our "Edge of Care" support to children and families, our range of placement services so that children, young people and their families benefit from good matching and the range of support services that meet their individual needs and the needs of their carers.

This strategy also intends to keep our children and young people close to home when that is in their best interests.

As a Company TfC is committed to ensuring that we make best use of our resources and invest in "what works" for children and young people. Focusing our attention on developing TfC's Fostering Service, Residential Services and being an active partner in the new Coast to Coast Regional Adoption Agency means that investment in our own services, and effective commissioning arrangements as a partnership will enable us to make savings in areas of high cost and poorer outcomes. As a result of this we will evidence that we are providing best value for the Company and the Council.

## **2. The Sufficiency Duty**

The Sufficiency Duty as laid down in section 22G of the Children Act 1989 requires local authorities, so far as is reasonably practicable, to ensure that there is sufficient accommodation for those children who are looked after by the local authority and for care leavers. The duty specifically requires local authorities to ensure that provision meets these needs and is located within their local authority area. As part of the sufficiency duty, local authorities and their partners should seek to secure a number of providers and a range of services with the aim of meeting the individual needs of children in care and care leavers. This duty also underpins the arrangements for effective corporate parenting which is a shared responsibility across the Company, Council and City for all services for children.

### 3. Sunderland Children Looked After and Care Leavers Profile - Summary

A full needs analysis of the profile of looked after children in Sunderland is included in Appendix 1. The data provided within this strategy is accurate as 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 unless otherwise stated. A summary is provided below:

- There are 72,670 children and young people looked after in England; an increase of 7,170 since 2010-2011. *Section A Table 1*
- There are 541 children looked after in Sunderland. The number of children in care in Sunderland increased by 185 between 2011-2012 and 2014-2015 but has dropped by 29 over the last two years. *Section A Table 1*
- Sunderland City Council and TfC has had a consistently high rate of children looked after. TfC is 37.6 points higher than the England average and 5.3 points higher than the statistical neighbour average. *Section A Table 1*
- 289 (53%) of children looked after in Sunderland are male and 252 (47%) are female. *Section A Chart 1*
- A high proportion (96.2%) of our children looked after are white British (520) with 12 (2.2%) mixed race, 5 (0.9%) Asian or Asian British and 4 (0.7%) recorded as other. *Section A Chart 2*

#### Age and Legal Status of our Children and Care Leavers

- We have a high number of children looked after aged 9 or under; with 44 children aged under 1 (8%); 100 aged 1–4 (18%) and 119 aged 5-9 (22%). There are 193 children aged 10-15 (36%) and 85 young people aged 16+ (16%). *Section A Chart 3*
- Our CLA are cared for under the following legal orders:  
205 young people – 37.9% are subject to a full care order  
24.7% (134 young people) are accommodated under an interim care order  
24.6% (133 young people) are accommodated under section 20  
12.8% (69 young people) under a placement order. *Section A Table 2*

#### Location of our Children Looked After

- 68% of our children looked after (366) live in Sunderland. A further 23% (128) live within 20 miles of their home address, 9% (47) live further than 20 miles from their home address.
- 63.3% (342) of our children looked after are placed with Together for Children Sunderland carers; 14.2% (77) are placed with independent fostering agencies (IFAs); 4.8% (26) are in adoption placements; 4.4% (24) are placed in supported accommodation; 4% (22) are in TfC residential children's homes; 6.8% (37) are in externally commissioned residential placements; 1.7% (9) are placed at home and 0.8% (4) are placed in hospital or a secure unit. *Section A Table 3*

- 100% of young people placed in an externally commissioned residential placement are in a setting that has received a good or outstanding inspection judgement by Ofsted or equivalent regulatory body.
- TfC has four residential children's homes. Two are rated as 'outstanding' and two are rated as 'good'.

## **Reasons Why Children Become Looked After**

The majority of our CLA entered care due to abuse or neglect (387 young people – 71.4%), with 23.8% (129 young people) due to family in acute stress. The remaining children came into care due to absent parenting, breakdown of the adoptive family, child at risk of harm from own behaviour (including child beyond parental control) or parental illness and disability *Section A Table 4.*

## **Views of Children and Young People**

### **Viewpoint – views of children looked after in Sunderland**

- 79% of children aged 4-6 say they feel okay where they live now, as do 83% of children aged 7-9 and 81% of young people aged 10-15.
- 93% of children aged 4-6 say they feel safe where they live now. 100% of children aged 7-9 feel safe where they live now and 88% of young people aged 10-15
- Only 4% of young people say they do not feel safe where they live now. No children and young people in the other age categories do not feel safe where they live now
- The majority of children and young people in all age categories say that it is easy to talk to their foster carer or key worker, though 14% aged 4-6, 21% age 7-9 and 16% of young people aged 10-15 said that it was sometimes difficult
- 86% of children aged 4-6 and 95% of those aged 7-9 said that their foster carer helped them
- 50% of children aged 4-6 did not visit their friends where they are living, 11% said sometimes and 39% said they did
- As children and young people get older a greater proportion say they see their friends as much as they want – 46% of children aged 7-9 and 50% of young people aged 10-15 say they see their friends as much as they want
- 68% of children aged 4-6 said they saw their family as much as they want. However only 23% of young people aged 7-9 said they did. 62% of young people aged 10-15 said they did or just about did

## **Supporting Children to Stay with Their Own Families**

TfC have made a commitment to develop a range of Edge of Care services which supports children, young people and families in crisis and allows them to get the help and support they need. These services include:

- Early Help has developed a neglect toolkit and suite of supporting documents and practice guidance to support families.
- Family Group Conferencing Service
- An Intensive Intervention Service delivered by Children North East to provide effective intervention to meet the complex and diverse needs of children and families to improve outcomes and negate the need for statutory intervention. This service targets families requiring support at levels 3 and 4 of the Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board's Thresholds of Need. It is based on a crisis intervention model. This 'crisis' is usually the possibility of a child or children entering care, though it could also be them actually becoming looked after or being made subject to a child protection plan. The service provides solution-focused, intensive, time-limited interventions of up to 6 months, unless it is clearly identified through planning and review processes that longer involvement is required
- Evidence-based interventions tailored to a family's specific circumstances will address problems such as domestic violence, parental substance misuse and poor physical and mental health. Examples include the BIG Programme; a domestic violence perpetrators' programme and the Incredible Years and Triple P Teen parenting programmes, which target families open to Children's Social; Care and Early Help
- Joint commissioning with Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group and Public Health of CAMHS Tier 2 support will ensure that children subject to abuse and neglect receive timely and appropriate mental health interventions. The improved joint commissioning of mental health support responds to the estimated prevalence of mental health disorders in children and young people aged between 5 and 16. In Sunderland, this is 10.4% and therefore higher than both the regional (10.0%) and national (9.3%) prevalence.



## 4. TfC's Services for Children Looked After and Care Leavers

### 4.1 TfC Fostering Sunderland

**On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017, the local authority's fostering service transferred to a new Independent Fostering Agency – Together for Children Fostering Sunderland.**

- TfC Fostering Sunderland has 298 approved foster carers, including connected carers.
- There are 342 children placed with TfC Fostering Sunderland carers (including connected carers). This means that 63.3% of the children and young people placed in foster care are with TfC Fostering Sunderland carers *Section B Table 1*
- Fostering households vary and comprise of carers that are married, cohabiting, single and same sex couples.
- Foster carers range in age from 20–65+. However, 47.4% of Together for Children Sunderland foster carers are aged 55+. 6.5% are aged 20-34; 15.3% are aged 35–44; 30.8% are aged 45–54; 36.7% are aged 55–64 and 10.7% are aged 65+ *Section B Table 3*
- 98.3% of TfC Fostering Sunderland's carers are white British; 0.7% are white Irish; 0.3% are mixed white and black African and the ethnicity of 0.7% is not recorded.
- TfC Fostering Sunderland recently launched a new training programme and is looking at effective ways of managing and recording carers' training and development plans and records.
- At first sight Sunderland's weekly fees to Level A and Level B foster carers are significantly lower than that paid by other North-east local authorities *Section B Table 4*. However, this reflects a basic rate, which is supplemented by additional enhancements. Work is underway to develop a fee structure for TfC foster carers, which increases the weekly flat rate; bringing this in line with neighbouring areas but ceasing to offer top-up payments.

The TfC Fostering Sunderland Strategy is nearing completion. This will detail plans for recruitment evenings and other recruitment activity as well as TfC's recruitment targets. It will comprise specific activity regarding recruiting carers for solo placements, parent and babies placements and the placement of teenagers and sibling groups. Moving forward, TfC will make a more intelligent use of our data, for example conducting exit interviews with foster carers who resign or retire and analyse what this information is telling us. Support for foster carers will increase following the completion and implementation of the strategy including foster carers forums, a new training strategy and the measurement of its impact. The number of foster carers completing standards, the quality of our foster carers' reviews and the compliance of foster carers will also be closely monitored.



## 4.2 Connected Persons

Together for Children Sunderland has 87 Connected Persons (Regulation 24 of the Care Planning, Placement and Review Regulations 2010) who have been approved as foster carers. This figure did not increase between 2016 and 2017. The use of connected persons is a positive feature of the fostering placement complement. It indicates strong extended family networks, good social work practice and enables children and young people to be maintained in their own families and communities. Increased numbers of connected persons placements adds additional work for TfC Fostering Sunderland staff in undertaking assessments and for the Fostering Panel undertaking the approvals of connected carers. It is envisaged that the current use of connected persons placements may increase as a result of the further development of the Family Group Conferencing Service.

## 4.3 Independent Foster Placements (NE7)

Seven local authorities (Sunderland, Newcastle, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Northumberland, Gateshead and Durham) collaborated to establish a framework of approved Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs). This agreement has standardised contracts, price, process, monitoring and evaluation with a list of approved agencies responding to the tender. It has offered TfC improved placement choice and increased the likelihood of achieving a 'best match'. TfC has achieved efficiencies on placement price and benefitted from shared quality monitoring arrangements including a process whereby providers who fail to meet minimum standards of delivery are suspended. All IFAs receive a quality monitoring visit annually from their link officer. These reports are shared amongst the consortium and there are clear processes to ensure that there is an appropriate safeguarding check being undertaken prior to placing a child or young person in a resource that is not managed directly by Together for Children Sunderland. There are also processes in place in relation to children who are placed in an IFA which subsequently becomes rated by Ofsted as requiring improvement or inadequate.

An options appraisal has been completed which explores the possibility of the two existing collaborative arrangements coming together in a single collaborative solution which would be utilised by all 12 North East Local Authorities. This would mean a single regional solution, taking into consideration the benefits for providers such as harmonised terms and conditions, standardised call-off procedures and documentation and collaborative monitoring.

There are 77 young people placed with independent fostering agencies. This equates to 14% of our looked after population. Of these 51% (39) are children aged 10 years and under and 49% (38) aged 11-17 *Section B Chart 1*. The number of children in Sunderland requiring externally-commissioned provision has remained relatively stable in recent years, ranging from 65-76 IFA placements. Of these 77 young people, 5.6% are placed with an IFA due to their need for a solo placement because of risks to them or their challenging

behaviour; 55.6% are part of a sibling group and there was no capacity to place them together with a TfC foster carer; and 38.8% are placed with an IFA because there was no capacity to place them with a TfC foster carer or in a TfC residential home.

Work is underway - supported by robust planning to meet the needs of the young person - to offer alternative in-house provision. An analysis of internal and external foster care provision identified that the cost of external foster care is substantially more than the cost of our own provision. By moving some young people from external placements to placements with TfC carers, savings can be created and invested elsewhere.

The majority of new IFA placements being made are for teenagers (35% - 7). Parent and baby assessment placements (20% - 4), sibling groups (25% - 5) and solo placements (20% - 4) account for the rest *Section B Table 6*. Targeted recruitment of foster carers with the ability to offer placements to sibling groups, disabled children and adolescents is particularly difficult in a market where demand already outstrips supply but will be undertaken.

One of the new developments within Sunderland in response to the lack of placements for parent and baby assessments was the opening of the Hope Springs. Hope Springs is a charitable organisation that currently supports vulnerable CLA on the verge of exclusion. The company provides a wide range of integrated education and therapy approaches for young people with complex needs.

#### **4.4 TfC Residential Children's Homes**

Together for Children Sunderland has four Children's Homes offering 6 placements each; Colombo Road, Revelstoke Road, Grasswell House and Monument View.

All of the homes are targeted to meet the needs of young people aged 12-17 with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) and a permanence plan of long-term residential care. The homes' statements of purpose mean they cannot accommodate children under the age of 12.

To ensure greater consistency around occupancy and appropriate matching of young people, TfC also intend to register as a provider with NE12 under Lot 19 – residential children's homes in geographical area, Band 3 – three-bed homes and larger. All four homes are rated as good or outstanding meaning that we are in a prime position to appeal to other providers who wish to place with us.

## 4.5 Independent Residential Children's Homes

37 young people are accommodated in external residential homes; 63% of the total residential placement population. *Section C Table 1*

In the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, 22 new placements were made in external residential children's homes. Of these 4 (18%) were aged 5–9; 15 (68%) were aged 10–15 and 3 (14%) were aged 16+. *Section C Table 2*

The majority of the external residential placements are for those young people with complex behavioural issues who require specialist support or who need an out of area placement due to risks associated with CSE, substance misuse or associating with negative peer groups. Specifically, 13% were placed to protect them from a negative peer group; 13% to protect them from CSE; 13% needed therapeutic support due to placement breakdown; 6% required support for self-harming and 6% were placed to manage their aggressive behaviour. The remaining 31% of CLA have a disability. There will always be a requirement to externally-commission a proportion of residential placements for looked after children due to the need for specialist interventions (for example, therapeutic placements for children displaying harmful sexual behaviour) and to keep them safe from harm.

The number of children in Sunderland requiring externally-commissioned residential and foster care provision has remained relatively stable in recent years, ranging from 35-45 residential placements. Therefore targets to deliver a reduction must be set a realistic level and be supported by robust plans to offer alternative in-house provision where possible. Since December 2016 there has been a significant increase in the number of children aged 10 and under being accommodated in external residential provision outside of the Sunderland area. Work is underway to open a fifth TfC children's home within the Sunderland area. This home will be registered with Ofsted to accommodate up to 3 children aged under 11 years at admission. A suitable property has been identified at Nookside, Sunderland. The staffing structure will mirror that of the 4 other TfC homes. Given the intention to provide care to a younger age group of children, this will enable the high level of support and supervision necessary to provide consistent and safe care to young people who will have complex needs and challenging behaviours.

## **4.6 Residential School and Care Placements (NE12)**

On 1<sup>st</sup> February 2018, NE12+ went live for:

1. Placements in Department for Education registered, non-maintained and independent special schools and colleges; 52-week residential, termly boarder, weekly boarder and day placements. All placements in these settings for children and young people aged 0 – 25 years (inclusive)
2. Placements in Ofsted registered, independent children's residential homes for children and young people 0 – 18 years
3. Residential short-break services for children and young people 0 – 18 years.

Sunderland children and young people who access residential short-break services do so to provide support and respite to their families and enable them to remain within the family home rather than being accommodated.

NE12+ has the benefits of a ten-day call-off period thus enabling commissioners to make planned placements and a core offer and capped price for all placements. The flexible solution currently has 38 providers with the window opening regularly during 2018 and 2019 to encourage more to join.

TfC attend bi-monthly NE12+ officers meetings to ensure the flexible solution benefits from on-going improvements. They met with regional colleagues in October 2017 and February 2018 to evaluate providers' bids and will be part of this process again in May 2018.

33 Sunderland children and young people are day pupils in a residential school and 10 are residential term-time boarders. 6 children have 38-week residential placements. 2 children have 52-week residential placements. All 1,300 Sunderland children with a statement had this transferred over to an Education Health Care Plan by March 2018.

The Virtual School head teacher attends the fortnightly External Placement Panel and offers support and challenge to ensure young people are placed appropriately. The next steps are to determine a common policy that is shared between Education and Social Care for raising and escalating concerns regarding individual pupils and to analyse the outcomes of transition reviews to identify young people who are supported into independent living.

## 4.7 Leaving Care Provision

Together for Children - Sunderland has 3 supported accommodation provisions – Chester Road, Elwin Terrace and Burlington Close - that are staffed by the Support to Independence Team and offer a total of 14 beds to care leavers aged 16-21 years and vulnerable homeless 16 and 17 year olds. These provisions assist young people to develop practical, emotional, relationship, resilience and financial skills to achieve a successful transition from care to independent living and supports young people to manage a tenancy agreement. Young people are supported to participate meaningfully in education, training and employment activities.

In addition to this there are 10 supported lodgings providers and 13 trainer flats that offer move on options for young people to prepare them for independent living.

Supported Lodgings provides accommodation for care leavers aged 16-21 years old who would benefit from support within a home environment and is a particularly valuable resource for young people who may struggle within a shared accommodation setting and who are not ready for independent living. Supported Lodgings also provides an alternative option for those care leavers who may not have been able to 'Stay Put' with their foster carers but still seek living within a 'home' environment. TFC Sunderland currently has 10 supported lodgings providers and a recruitment campaign is underway to attract more providers including those that can take emergency placements.

We have an additional three provisions that are commissioned – Lewis Crescent, Harbour View and Holmewood. The contract for the three provisions was extended to March 2019 to factor in the Government's consultations on housing costs for sheltered and extra care accommodation and housing costs for short-term supported accommodation and to bring them in line with the other housing-related support contracts. When the impact of this is understood, firm decisions around future commissioning intentions can be made.

Regular consultation exercises are undertaken with our young people to ascertain their views on the type of provision that they feel would best meet their needs in preparing them for independent living. The most recent consultation showed that 21 young people were requesting supported accommodation as their move on option. 64 young people still need to confirm their preference *Section D Tables 1 and 2*. If they all chose supported accommodation, the current TFC and commissioned provision of 69 beds could not meet this need. However, there would be capacity within the spot purchase provision and it is unlikely that they will all choose this accommodation type. Consideration also needs to be given to those vulnerable 16 and 17 year olds that may present as being homeless.

Placements are made with external supported accommodation providers when the capacity within internal provision is not available. Work is underway with these providers to ensure they offer a quality service - using the 'Other Arrangements' framework - to meet the individual needs of our young people and achieve cost effectiveness.

## 4.8 Permanence and Adoption

A key priority for TfC is to secure permanence for children looked after in a timely and child-centred way. We delivered a reduction of almost 13% in the number of children subject to section 20 voluntary care arrangements between March 2016 and March 2017. More children are subject to Interim and Full Care Orders with increases of approximately 11% and 3% over the last year. *Section A Table 2*

TfC is committed to children achieving permanence in a placement that meets their needs and the needs of their carer. There has been an increasing use of Child Arrangement Orders and Special Guardianship Orders. These permanency order options are being used creatively by TfC to ensure the best outcome for the child and family with the most appropriate legal intervention. In 2014/15, there were 41 Special Guardianship Orders granted, 10 Child Arrangement Orders and 48 children Adopted. In 2015/16 there were 29 Special Guardianship Orders granted, 31 Child Arrangement Orders and 37 children Adopted. These numbers increased significantly in 2017 as 54 Special Guardianship orders were granted, there were 56 Child Arrangement Orders and 47 children Adopted.

Together for Children provide in certain circumstances financial support to Special Guardians, who care for children previously looked after by Together for Children Sunderland. This financial support compliments but does not duplicate financial support available through benefits and tax credit systems. Eligibility for financial support is determined as part of the Assessment for Special Guardianship Support Services in line with The Special Guardianship Regulations 2005. Work is underway to ensure that all families receiving SGO support still care for a child. Where this is no longer the case or the family's circumstances have changed and the payment is no longer needed, this funding can be redirected to supporting new Special Guardianship Orders.

The three-year average time – for the period 2013 to 2016 - between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family is 539 days. This is above the threshold by 113 days but is lower than England three-year average of 558 days. The 3-year average time for this period between the local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family is 201 days. This is above the threshold by 80 days but below the England 3 year average of 226 days. 8% of adoptions during 2012-16 were children aged 5+. This is higher than the England average of 5% for the same period. In Sunderland, more children have been placed for adoption between Apr-Nov 2017 compared to the same period last year, but delays in the court arena have meant that fewer children have been adopted to date. If court delays are expedited, an additional 19 children currently placed for adoption will be adopted by end March 2018. Closer liaison with family courts will increase the number of children who are adopted within 16 months of entering care, where this is in line with their permanence plan.

As of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 there were 46 approved adopters for TFC Sunderland with 17 children who have a placement order and 15 with a SHODPA (should be placed for adoption decision has been made). As with TfC foster carers, work will be done to identify the skills and experience of adopters and enable them to offer an adoptive placement for 'harder to place' children, including those who are older, disabled or part of larger sibling groups. As of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, 50 Sunderland children and young people were awaiting adoption; 17% of the regional figure.

In Q1 and Q2 of 2017-2018, 28 children were 'matched' at the twice monthly Adoption Panel with approved adopters. 24 (86%) were aged 0-4 and 4 (14%) were aged 5-8. There were no children aged 9-13 or 14+. 23 of the children were matched with Together for Children Adoption Sunderland adopters and 5 were matched with adopters from external agencies, namely ARC Adoption and Barnardo's. 4 sibling groups were matched with adopters in this period as were three sibling groups of 2 and one sibling group of 3. 27 children were white British and 1 was mixed/white/Asian. During this period, there were no disrupted placements. However, TfC has a clear policy and procedure in place to manage such a situation.

Foster to Adopt allows those who want to adopt children to foster them while they are waiting for the court to decide if adoption is the right plan for the child. This provides continuity of care for the child, as they do not have to be placed with temporary foster carers. When children are placed under these arrangements it is unlikely that the child will be rehabilitated to birth parents. However, all adopters approved under Foster to Adopt are trained and understand the expectation of them supporting the child and working with professional to rehabilitate the child to the care of their birth family if required. In Q1 and Q2 of 2017-2018, 5 adoptive families were approved under Foster to Adopt; 4 couples and 1 single adopter.

Concurrency is routinely explored with prospective adopters when they are being assessed for our very young children. Concurrency is aimed at avoiding delay for those children who are in the 0 – 24 months age range. Concurrency does come with elements of quite high risk as there is potential for a child to be reunited with birth family following conclusions of social work assessments. Taking this into consideration concurrency is not a route that many people are willing to consider. This should be perceived as a positive factor as it demonstrates the insight people have into their own emotional resilience. In Q1 and Q2 of 2017-2018, no children were matched under concurrency. However, this has not limited early permanence planning for children as Foster to Adopt placements have increased during this period.

Together for Children Sunderland Adoption attended a DfE event in October 2017 outlining their intention to expand the Regionalising Adoption Agency programme and followed this



up with a notice of intention to submit a proposal with Cumbria County Council, Durham County Council and other partners. The new Coast to Coast Regional Adoption Agency will focus on improving the effectiveness of adoption services for children and their families and focus on areas of best practice and innovative practice, in particular around Early Permanence Planning for children and improved effectiveness of family finding and matching. Grant funding commences on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.

Adoption Match offers an integrated high integrity low cost solution for every Regional Adoption Agency to optimise child-led searching at a regional and national level. On 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018, Adoption Match had 1,094 children on the adoption register; a decrease on the previous month of 2% (20). It noted a mismatch between the children available and the children adopters are prepared to consider. For example, only 38% of children (419) on the adoption register were seeking a single placement, whereas 74% of the families (440) on the adoption register were seeking a single child placement. The national average for days on the register for children active in February was 177 days. There were 594 families active on the register; a decrease of 13 compared to the start of February 2018. In 2016/17, the adoption register generated 233 matches, through exchange days (126), regional business partner searches (99), adopter-led searches (5) and practitioner searches (3). This is a 32% increase compared to the 2015/16 figure.

In February 2018, TfC had 7 active children on the adoption register; 9.3% of the North-East figure. All were white British. Five were single children and 2 were siblings. Within the North East, 69% of the children are part of a sibling group and only 31% of the children are to be placed alone. The North East is above the national trend where 62% of children on the Adoption Register are part of a sibling group. 74% of families on the Adoption Register are looking for single children. Three of the Sunderland children were under four years of age. 55% of children on the register from the North East are under 4 years.

1 Sunderland child was referred to the adoption register in February 2018; 12.5% of the North-East total. There are no Sunderland families currently registered with the adoption register. As at 1<sup>st</sup> February 2018, Sunderland children were active on the register for an average time of 203 days and on hold for an average of 273 days. Together for Children recently matched a sibling group of three children.



## 5. Finance and Value for Money

TfC operate within an agreed financial envelope from the Council for the period of the service contract. This forms the majority of TfC's income. Through the business plan and transformation agenda, TfC will continue to develop a sustainable business model and consider opportunities to grow the Company to allow re-investment back into high quality services for children.

A budget development process took place during 2016/17 to consider the baseline costs for the services that TfC delivers. A programme of budget reductions was initially agreed for the first 3 years of operation to March 2020 to address the future challenging financial climate and reflect the impact of the improvement journey. However, most of the budget reductions were predicated on a forecast of reducing demand and demand has risen in the last year. In addition to rising demand, there have been further pressures in the system such as agency social worker costs and SEN transport costs. In recognition of this position, the Council are proposing to increase the budget for 2017/18, with ongoing funding for 2018/19 and beyond.

	2017/18	2018/19
	£m	£m
<b>TFC Budget</b>	90.210	88.114
<u>Funded by:</u>		
Sunderland City Council	51.077	52.664*
Dedicated Schools Grant	34.497	30.648
Other Grants/Contributions	4.637	4.802
	<u>90.210</u>	<u>88.114</u>

\*This amount is the contract sum currently agreed for 2018/19. Work continues jointly with the Council to look at ways of how the Company can deliver the contract safely and more efficiently. The contract sum as identified in the table above is indicative at the time of submitting this plan for the Board and the Council to consider and approve in principle.

The full year cost (2016-2017) of all placements for Children Looked After and Care Leavers was £23.9m. The resource available in 2017-2018 to support Children Looked After and Care Leavers is £21.8m.

## 6. Innovation

Together for Children will find new and better ways of doing things to support our transfer and improvement journey. Sunderland has an excellent track record of innovative practice.

The BIG project responded to the lack of voluntary perpetrator programme places in Sunderland; meaning that men often only received help to change once they had entered the criminal justice system. Now males whose children have a Child Protection Plan are prioritised. Male domestic violence perpetrators begin the 26-week programme with a 1-1 assessment to assess their suitability and motivation and start the process of engagement and trust, disclosure and examination of abusive behaviours which are essential before effective work begins. As well as attending four motivational sessions they will undertake seven core modules.

Together for Children value the voice of our young people and we commission both MOMO One and MOMO Express to facilitate this. MOMO One enables young people to create a structured statement of their views in relation to events and situations they encounter while in care or receiving support from social care services. This could include LAC Reviews, PEP meetings, Child In Need Reviews, Child Protection Conferences, Family Group Conferences, Pathway Planning, Requesting a change to care, raising a problem or complaint or sharing good news.

MOMO Express is designed specifically for younger children and those with learning difficulties or disabilities, the app can help children and young people have their voice heard in their Education Health Care Plan. Sunderland has commissioned MOMO Express for one year.

The Mind Of My Own (MOMO) application is improving communication between young people, their social workers and IROs to increase participation with their care planning. In May 2017 Together for Children won the 'Most Improved' Award at the national MOMO Awards. The award recognised the increase in the number of young people and workers using the app since the previous year. In addition to winning the award, members of staff from the participation and engagement team, one of whom is a care leaver, were invited to present at the Annual MOMOcon event, speaking and sharing their experiences about the importance of engaging with care leavers.

TfC will expand its use of the Mind Of My Own (MOMO) app to hear our young people's voice particularly around requesting a change to care or raising a problem. We will improve the existing professional feedback form that enables social workers and IROs to share their views around the suitability of a young person's placement including amending this to include the views of our young people.

Together for Children also aspires to develop and implement a genuine ‘think family’ approach across the city of Sunderland, which recognises and supports the role of the parent in future family and community resilience. To do this, TfC needs to promote the mind-set that the role of the good parent is the cornerstone of family resilience and fundamental to achieving the key aims of Together for Children and the Children’s Strategic Partnership. To this end, TfC intends to develop a Training Academy which will enable the city to:

- Develop the children’s and adults’ workforce, third sector and community partners, parents, family members and the wider community to respond to identified needs at the earliest opportunity using a multi-disciplinary, ‘every contact counts’ model
- Raise awareness of the importance of good parenting in future community resilience
- Build and maintain community social responsibility across the City
- Develop the skills of all partners in the project to deliver parenting support at all levels
- Manage demand for statutory services through the distribution of responsibility to all agencies and partners
- Enable statutory and third sector partners to become multi-disciplinary and offer multi-dimensional services
- Offer structured career progression in the field through volunteering, apprenticeships and further and higher qualifications

The Training Academy and the offer to families will be developed and supported through research in partnership with Higher Education establishments both nationally and internationally. It is our intention to commission a longitudinal study over a period of at least 10 years to measure the short and medium-term impact of our work. Towards the end of this research period we will investigate the merits of extending the research to cover birth to 16 years for a cohort. The project forms part of TfC’s “Together in the Community” transformation programme to build sustainable holistic services for children and families.

TfC commissions Safe Families for Children to match at least 75 families per annum who are experiencing difficulties with a volunteer to provide tailored help and ‘wraparound’ care. This service can prevent children from going into care. The Service works in partnership with TfC to identify those at greatest risk; develops joint plans for supporting individuals; works with children and young people, their parents or carers to deliver the plans; builds capacity in the community to provide early and effective support; focuses on shared goals and outcomes and ensures that 50% of the referrals made as part of an Early Help plan make measurable progress on their plan.

TfC are exploring participating in a regional Pause programme, building on the outcomes evidenced by Newcastle City Council’s current project. As part of this proposal, the

regional Pause programme would provide bespoke, specialist interventions for up to 8 women from Sunderland to break the destructive cycle of repeat removals by intervening at a point when the women have no children in their care and supporting them to reflect and develop new skills and responses.

## **7. Summary and Next Steps**

Together for Children's ambition for our children looked after is reflected in our priorities:

- Priority One: Successfully delivering an intensive family support service to support children and young people to remain at home
- Priority Two: Increasing the numbers of foster carers within Together for Children
- Priority Three: Investing in our own services and creating placements closer to home
- Priority Four: Co-ordinating Education and Social Care so that children and young people are placed appropriately
- Priority Five: Meeting care leavers' expectations
- Priority Six: Securing permanence in a timely and child-centred way.

Details of actions, milestones, deadlines and responsible officers can be found in the Action Plan for the Accommodation of Children Looked After and Care Leavers 2017 – 2020.

## 8. Forecasting for 2018-2019 and Beyond

The England rate of CLA increased in 2016-2017 *Section A Graph 1*. The statistical neighbour average rose in 2016-2017 whilst the rate of CLA in Sunderland fell. This brought us closer to our statistical neighbour.

The Sunderland rate of CLA for 2018-2019 and beyond cannot be predicted with certainty. However, as we are aware, there are increases in demand nationally, regionally and statistically. Therefore, it is likely that we will see an upward trend in Sunderland.

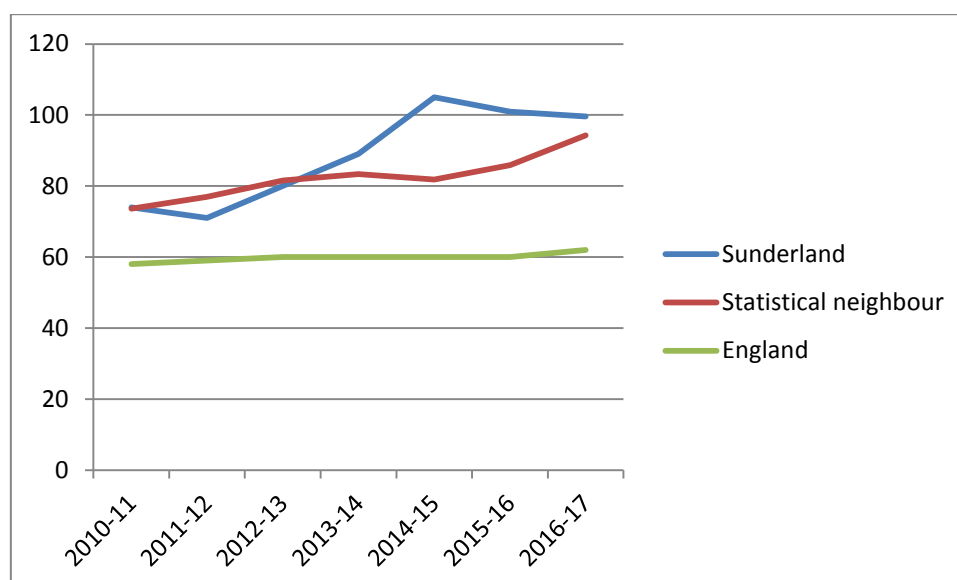
## Needs Analysis

## Section A - Sunderland Children Looked After Profile

Table 1: Numbers of Children Looked After

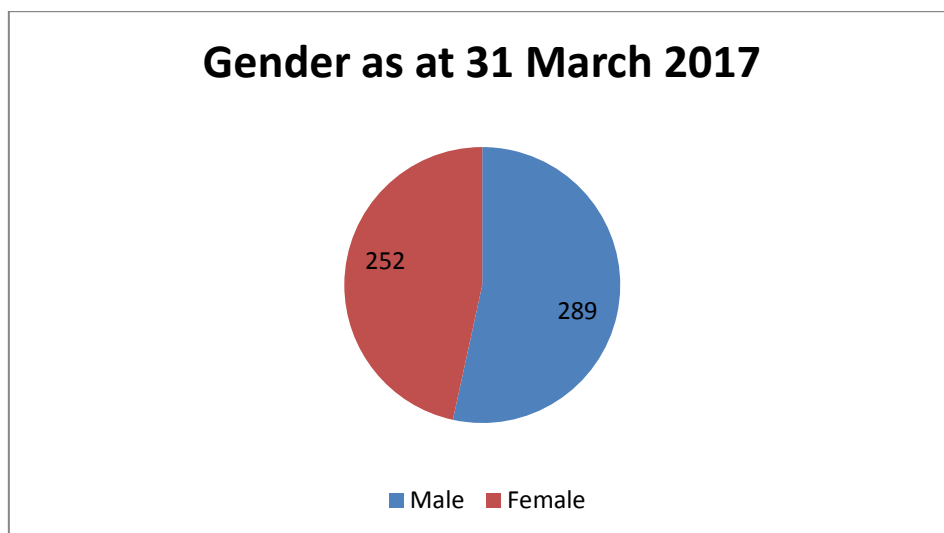
Number of CLA	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Sunderland	410	385	435	490	570	548	541
England	65,500	67,070	68,070	68,820	69,500	70,450	72,670
Rate of CLA	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Sunderland	74.0	71.0	80.0	89.0	105.0	100.9	99.6
Statistical neighbour	73.6	77.0	81.6	83.4	81.8	85.9	94.3
England	58	59	60	60	60	60	62

Graph 1: Rate of Children Looked After in Sunderland, the Statistical Neighbour and England



**Chart 1: Children Looked After by Gender, March 2017**

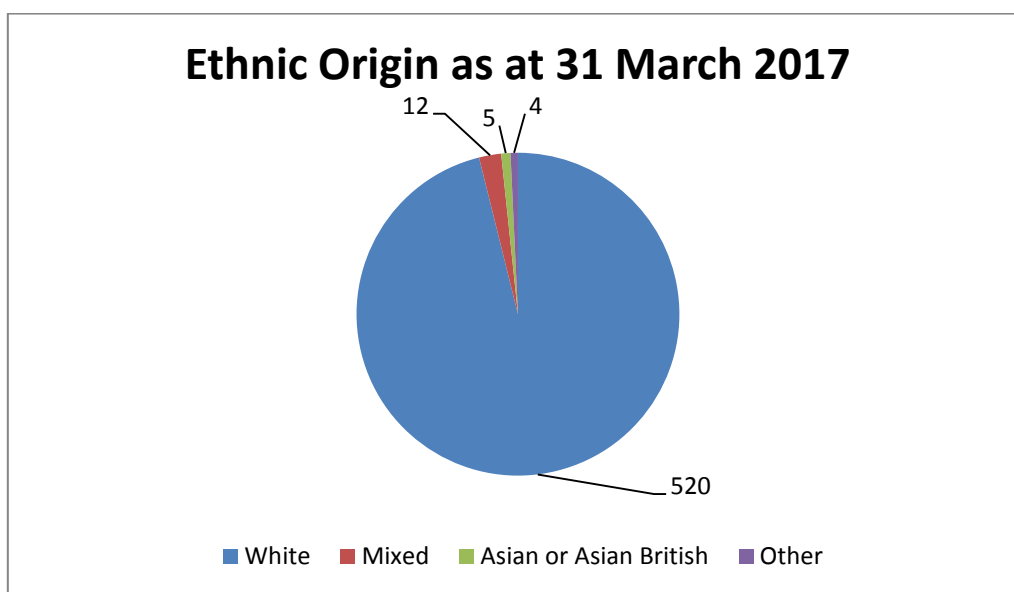
	Number	%
Number	289	53%
Female	252	47%





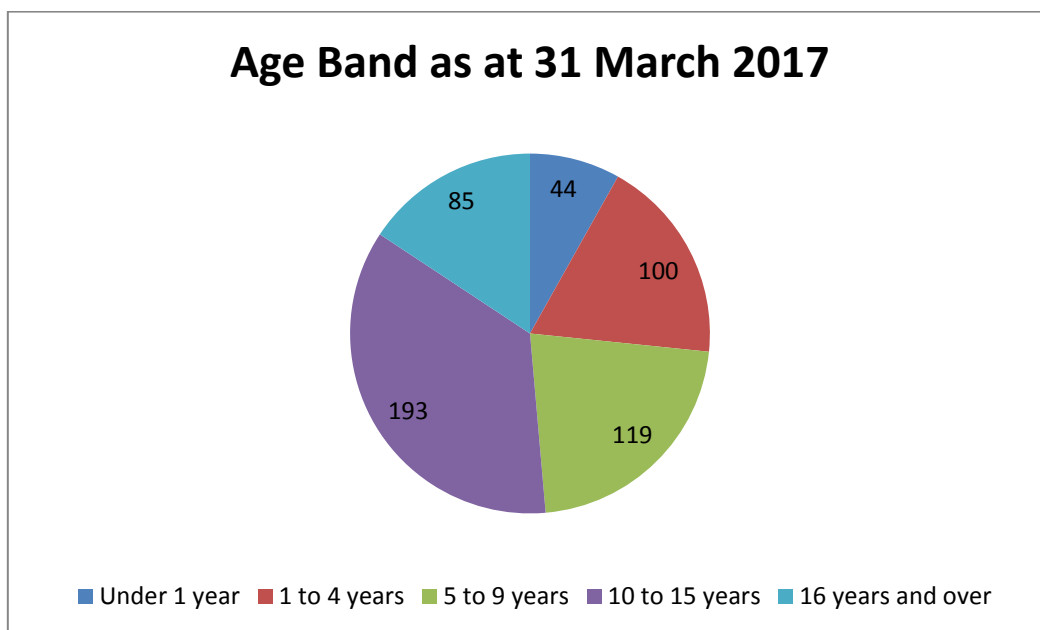
**Chart 2: Children Looked After by Ethnic Origin, March 2017**

	Number	%
White	520	96.2%
Mixed	12	2.2%
Asian or Asian British	5	0.9%
Other	4	0.7%



**Chart 3: Children Looked After by Age Band, March 2017**

	Number	%
Under 1 year	44	8%
1 to 4 years	100	18%
5 to 9 years	119	22%
10 to 15 years	193	36%
16 years and over	85	16%



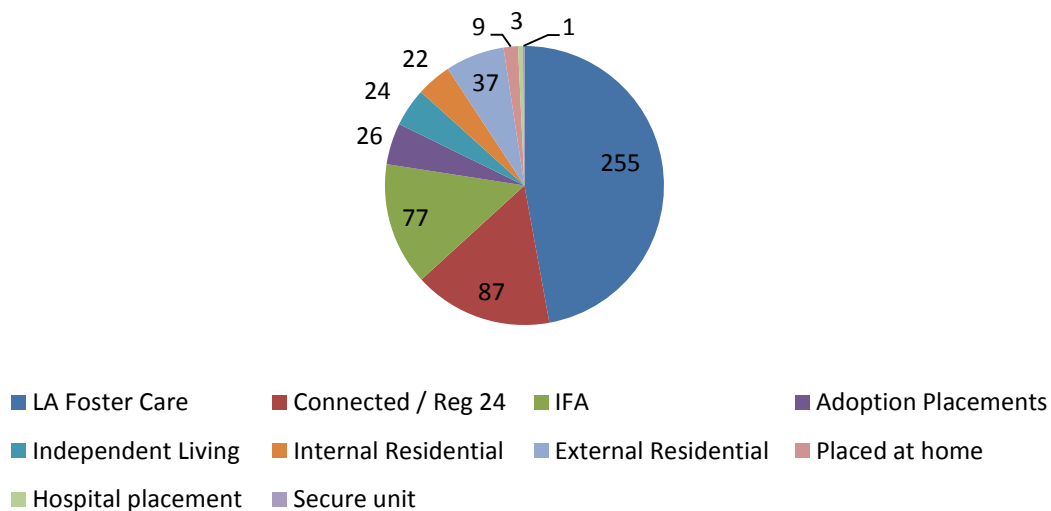
**Table 2: Children Looked After at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 and 2017 by Percentage of Legal Status**

	Interim care order	Full care order	Placement order granted	Accommodation under section 20
<b>Number</b>	76	192	75	205
<b>Percentage</b>	13.8%	35%	13.7%	37.5%
<b>Number</b>	134	205	69	133
<b>Percentage</b>	24.7%	37.9%	12.8%	24.6%

**Table 3: Children Looked After at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 by Placement Type**

	Number	%
<b>LA Foster Care</b>	255	47.1%
<b>Connected / Reg 24</b>	87	16.2%
<b>IFA</b>	77	14.2%
<b>Adoption Placements</b>	26	4.8%
<b>Independent Living</b>	24	4.4%
<b>Internal Residential</b>	22	4%
<b>External Residential</b>	37	6.8%
<b>Placed at home</b>	9	1.7%
<b>Hospital placement</b>	3	0.6%
<b>Secure unit</b>	1	0.2%

**Placement as at 31 March 2017**



**Table 4: Reason for Children Entering Care at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Number of Children</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Absent Parenting</b>	4	0.7%
<b>Abuse Or Neglect</b>	377	69.6%
<b>Adopted Child - Breakdown Of Adoptive Family</b>	3	0.6%
<b>Asylum Seeker - Unaccompanied</b>	2	0.4%
<b>Child Abandoned Or Lost</b>	1	0.2%
<b>Child At Risk Of Harm From Own Behaviour (Including Child Beyond Parental Control)</b>	6	1.1%
<b>Child Has Been Abused/Neglected</b>	10	1.8%
<b>Family In Acute Stress</b>	129	23.4%
<b>Looked After By Other LA</b>	3	0.6%
<b>Parental Illness And Disability</b>	3	0.6%
<b>Short Breaks Disability</b>	3	0.6%
<b>Grand Total</b>	541	

## Section B – Foster Placements

**Table 1: Fostering Placements; March 2016 and March 2017**

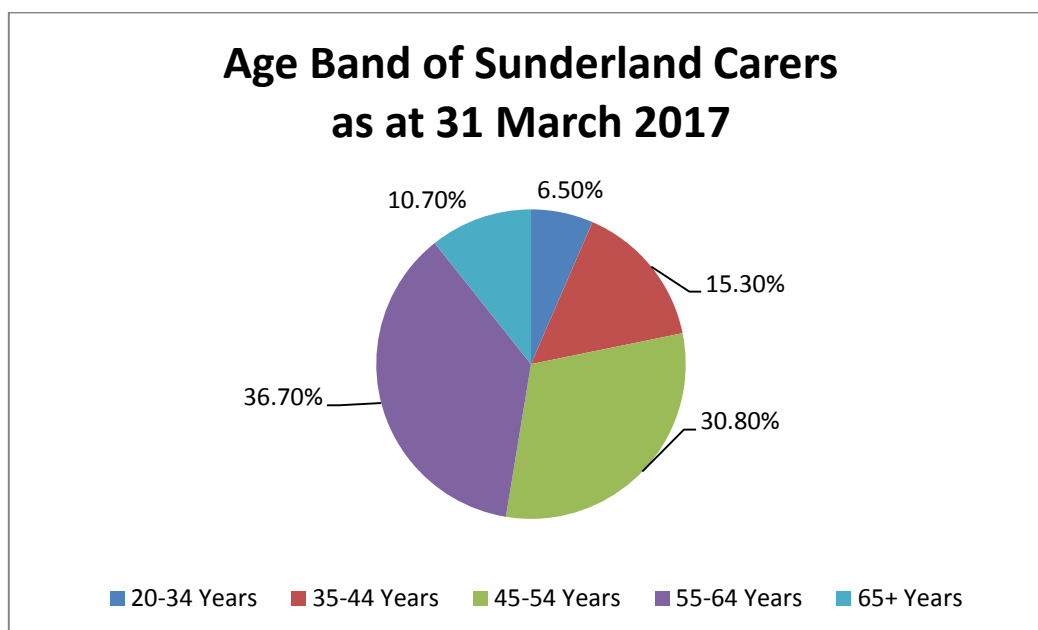
March 2016		March 2017	
Fostering Placement Type	No of children and Young People Placed	Fostering Placement Type	No of children and Young People Placed
In-House Foster Carer	280	In-House Foster Carer	255
Connected/Reg.24 carer	87	Connected/Reg.24 carer	87
IFA	72	IFA	77
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>419</b>

**Table 2: Comparison Data of All Foster Placements**

Fostering Type	Sunderland 2016 (% of Fostering)	Sunderland 2017 (% of fostering)
In-house Fostering	64%	61%
Connected Carer	20%	21%
Independent Fostering	16%	18%
<b>Total Fostering</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3: Local Authority Foster Carers by Age Range, March 2017**

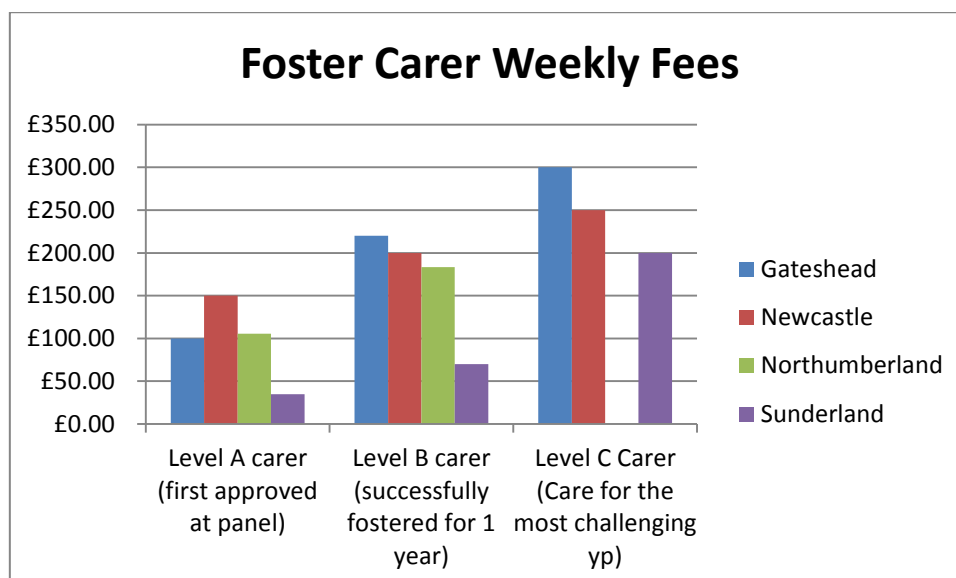
20-34 Years	35-44 Years	45-54 Years	55-64 Years	65+ Years
6.5%	15.3%	30.8%	36.7%	10.7%



**Table 4: Foster Carer Weekly Fees in Comparison To Neighbouring Authorities**

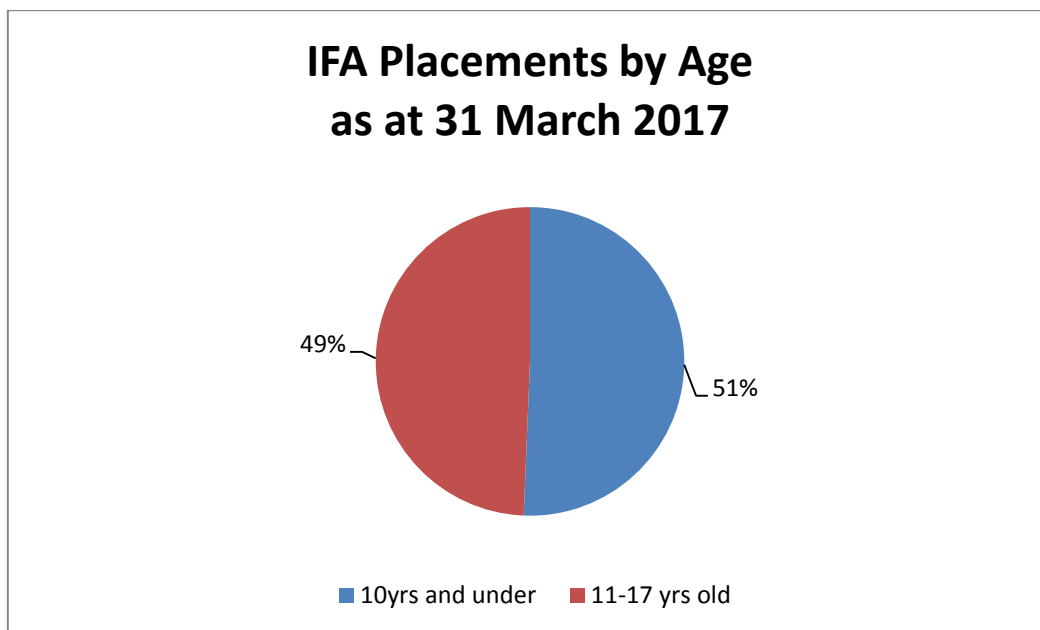
	Level A carer (first approved at panel)	Level B carer (successfully fostered for 1 year)	Level C Carer (Care for the most challenging yp)
<b>Sunderland</b>	£35.00	£70.00	£200.00
<b>Northumberland</b>	£105.49	£183.47	n/a
<b>Gateshead</b>	£100.00	£220.00	£300.00
<b>Newcastle</b>	£150.00	£200.00	£250.00

*Sunderland's figures represent a basic rate that does not include additional enhancements for foster care workers, long-term placements etc.*



**Chart 1: IFA Placements by Age Band, March 2017**

	Number	%
Aged 0-10	39	51%
Aged 11-17	38	49%





**Table 5: IFA (NE7) Standard Weekly Fees and Retention Fees**

<b>Level 1 – Mainstream Placement</b>	<b>Standard Weekly Fee</b>	<b>Element Provider Pays to Carer</b>	<b>Retention Weekly Fee</b>	<b>Element Provider Pays to Carer</b>
Age 0 – 4	£680.00	£380	£340.00	£170
Age 5 – 10	£700.00	£380	£350.00	£175
Age 11+	£730.00	£380	£365.00	£182.50

<b>Level 2 – Mainstream With Additional Needs Placement</b>	<b>Standard Weekly Fee</b>	<b>Element Provider Pays to Carer</b>	<b>Retention Weekly Fee</b>	<b>Element Provider Pays to Carer</b>
Age 0 – 4	£740.00	£380	£370.00	£185
Age 5 – 10	£760.00	£380	£380.00	£190
Age 11+	£820.00	£380	£410.00	£205

<b>Level 3 – Intensive Support Placement</b>	<b>Standard Weekly Fee</b>	<b>Element Provider Pays to Carer</b>	<b>Retention Weekly Fee</b>	<b>Element Provider Pays to Carer</b>
Age 0 – 4	£900.00	£400.00	£450.00	£225.00
Age 5 – 10	£980.00	£440.00	£490.00	£245.00
Age 11+	£980.00	£440.00	£490.00	£245.00

<b>Specialist Placements</b>	<b>Standard Weekly Fee</b>	<b>Element Provider Pays to Carer</b>	<b>Retention Weekly Fee</b>	<b>Element Provider Pays to Carer</b>
Parent And Baby	£1,200.00	£600	£600.00	£300
Parent And Baby Assessment	£1,500.00	£750	£750.00	£375

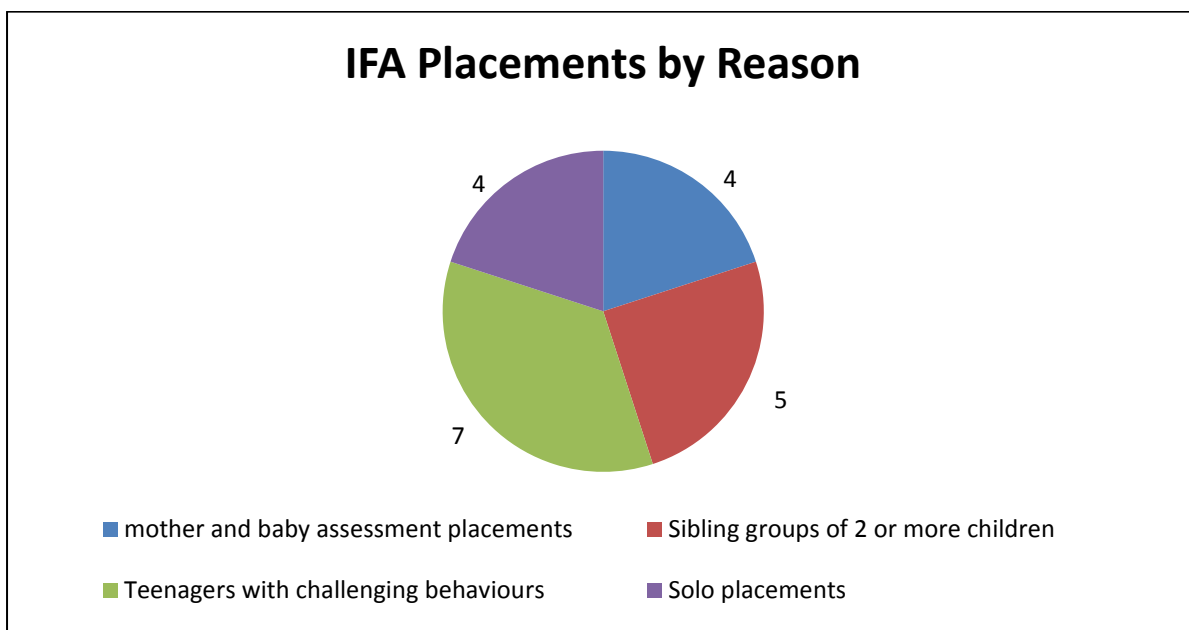
<b>Specialist Arrangements</b>	<b>Standard Weekly Fee</b>	<b>Element Provider Pays to Carer</b>	<b>Retention Weekly Fee</b>	<b>Element Provider Pays to Carer</b>
Staying Put	£340.00	£200	nil	nil
Solo Placements where a 'bed blocking' situation occurs	1 x equivalent pricing fee identified against the assessed needs of the child / young person, as set out in 1.6 of the Pricing Schedule  +  Plus the equivalent of the Foster Carers element only at band level one for each Void Placement (up to the maximum of	50%	50% of total weekly fee as calculated in 1.6 of the Core Cost Specification.	50%

	two) at the time the Solo Placement is to start.			
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*Retention fees will only be paid on written confirmation from the Purchasing Authority that the placement will proceed and a retention fee will be paid.*

**Table 6: Reasons for placements made with IFA's April 2016 – March 2017**

Reasons for external IFA placements	Number of placements made
Parent and baby assessment placements	4
Sibling groups of 2 or more children	5 (20 children and young people)
Teenagers with challenging behaviours	7
Solo placements	4



## Section C – Residential Placements

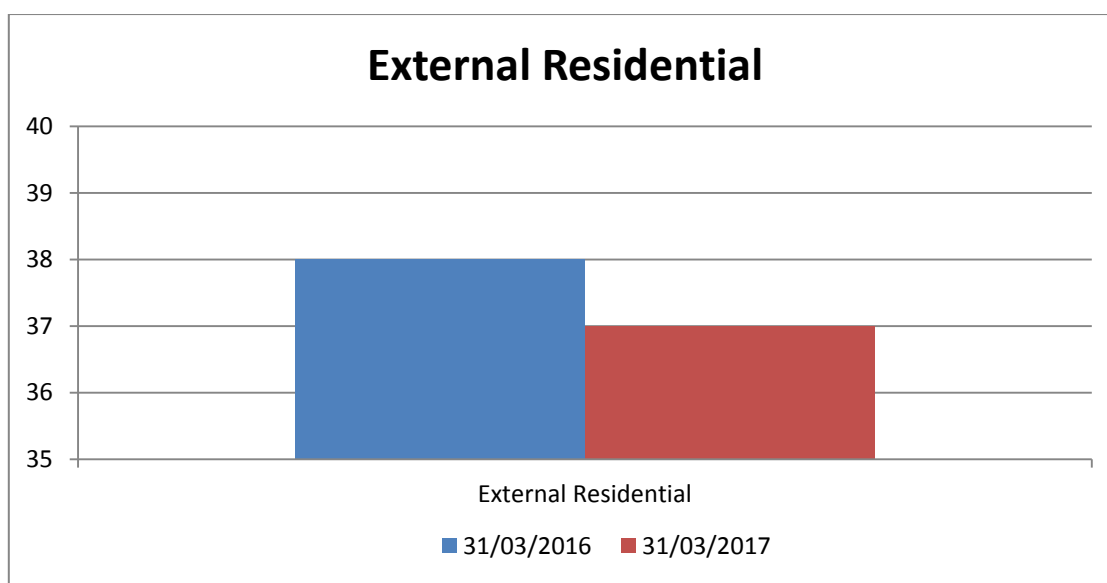
**Table 1: Residential Placements; March 2016 and March 2017**

March 2016		March 2017	
Residential Placement Type	No of children and Young People Placed	Residential Placement Type	No of children and Young People Placed
TFC Sunderland Residential Children's Home	21	TFC Sunderland Residential Children's Home	22
Private Residential Children's Home	38	Private Residential Children's Home	37
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>59</b>

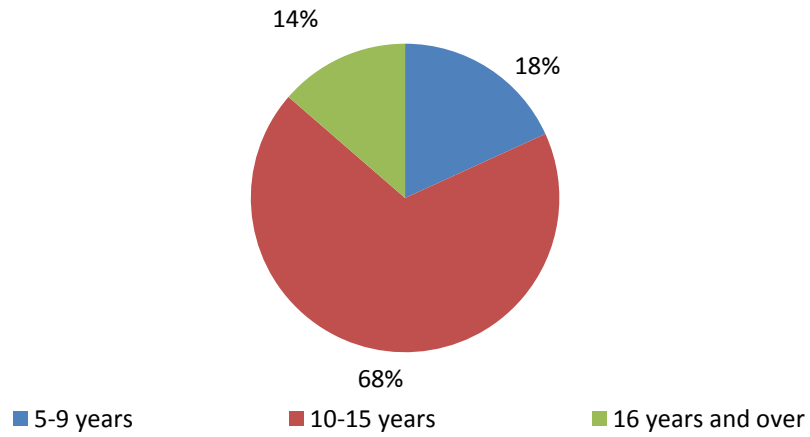
**Table 2: New Independent Residential Placements by Age 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017**

Age	No of children and Young People placed
5-9 years	4
10-15 years	15
16 years and over	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>

**Chart 1: Independent Residential Placements; March 2016 and March 2017**



## New Independent Residential Placements by age 2016 - 2017



## Section D – Leaving Care Provision

**Table 1: Number of Children and Young People aged 15-17 years**

*(Information correct as of 30.11.17)*

15 year old	45
16 year old	42 (2 living already in SA)
17 year old	43 (10 living already in SA)
	130 (118)

**Table 2: Move On Accommodation Requests and What Is Identified in Young People's Pathway Plan**

Staying Put	17
Supported Accommodation	21
Supported Lodgings	4
Transition to Adult Services/Shared Lives	7
Rehabilitation Home	4
Student Accommodation	1
TBC	64
	114

# Action Plan for the Accommodation of Children Looked After and Care Leavers 2017–2020



**Priority One: Successfully delivering an intensive family support service to support children and young people to remain at home**

March 2017 Baseline	Action	Milestone	Deadline	Responsible	RAG Rating
n/a	Commission an intensive family support service	Issuing of tender documents	February 2018	Chris Cummings	
		Evaluation of bids	March 2018	Chris Cummings	
		Award of contract	March 2018	Chris Cummings	
	Deliver an intensive family support service to successfully mean there are 20 less CLA children and young people	Contract begins	April 2018	Laura Johnstone Emma Stewart Jessica Moore Children North East	
		40 families referred	April 2019	Laura Johnstone Emma Stewart Jessica Moore	
n/a	Develop an innovative funding bid, which supports staff and families to develop parenting capacity	Bid submitted	April 2018	Sharon Clutton-Dowell	
<b>KPIs:</b> Percentage reduction in the numbers of children looked after					



## Priority Two: Increasing the numbers of foster carers within Together for Children

March 2017 Baseline	Action	Milestone	Deadline	Responsible	RAG Rating
298 TfC Fostering Sunderland approved foster carers  342 children placed with TfC Fostering Sunderland carers	Increase TfC Fostering Sunderland foster carers	New fee structure for TfC foster carers developed to increase the weekly flat rate and bring TfC in line with neighbouring areas	May 2018	Sheila Lough Emma Stewart Angela Dowkes	
		Create a new fee structure for TfC foster carers to ensure we remain competitive within the market	July 2018	Sheila Lough	
		Implement the recruitment strategy for foster carers (Please refer to the TfC Foster Carer Recruitment Strategy for all actions across the recruitment of specific foster carers)	April 2018	Sheila Lough	
		Recruit an additional 20 TfC foster carers	March 2020	Sheila Lough	
<b>KPIs:</b> Percentage increase of children looked after placed with TfC foster carers Percentage increase of children looked after placed within 20 miles of home					

### Priority Three: Investing in our own services and creating placements closer to home

March 2017 Baseline	Action	Milestone	Deadline	Responsible	RAG Rating
39 CLA aged 10 years and under are placed with IFAs	Open a TfC residential children's home for 3 young people aged under 11 at admission	Suitable property identified	December 2017	Sharon Willis Emma Stewart Angela Dowkes	
		Site survey completed	April 2018		
		Works agreed	June 2018		
		Recruitment complete	December 2018		
		Home opens	March 2019		
37 CLA in external residential homes	Reduce the number of external placements outside Sunderland by returning CLA to Sunderland in a planned way	Ensure that current semi-independent provision is maximised through continual review of placements to ensure transitions happens swiftly and we maximise placements in Sunderland	March 2019	Emma Stewart Sharon Willis Sheila Lough	
	Increase responsiveness to the voice of CLA	MOMO used to request a change to care or raise a problem	December 2018	Jane Wheeler Emma Stewart	
		Amend the professionals' feedback form to also include CLA views	October 2018	Emma Stewart Jane Wheeler Kim Roberts	
		Launch the amended feedback form	December 2018		

83% TfC residential homes occupancy	Maximise usage of residential provision within Sunderland by becoming an NE12 provider under Lot 19 Band 3	Register with NEPO as a provider	March 2018	Sharon Willis	
		Submit appropriate forms	April 2018		
		Acceptance onto NEPO	May 2018		
<b>KPIs:</b> Increase in children looked after aged under 11 placed in a TfC residential children's home Number of children looked after who return to Sunderland in a planned way Reduction in external placements spending as children looked after return to Sunderland in a planned way Percentage of children looked after using MOMO in their reviews					

## Priority Four: Co-ordinating Education and Social Care so that children and young people are placed appropriately

March 2017 Baseline	Action	Milestone	Deadline	Responsible	RAG Rating
33 day pupils in a residential school 10 are residential term-time boarders 6 children with 38-week residential placements. 2 children with 52-week residential placements	Pre-16 and post-16 educational placements, residential children's home and short breaks placements are made on the NE12 flexible solution	Evaluation of NE12 providers	October 2017	Laura Johnstone	
		TfC make call-offs on NE12	February 2018	Emma Stewart	
		Evaluation of NE12 providers	February 2018	Laura Johnstone	
		Evaluation of NE12 providers	May 2018	Laura Johnstone	
	Education offers support and challenge to ensure young people are placed appropriately	Virtual School head teacher attends External Placement Panel	September 2017	Trish Stoker	
	Hear children and young people's voices in their Education Health Care Plan	Commissioning of MOMO Express	January 2018	Jane Wheeler	
	Revise the shared policy between Education and Social Care for raising and escalating concerns regarding individual pupils who are CLA as part of the commissioning monitoring process	Senior leaders meet to agree a process map	May 2018	Debra Patterson Trish Stoker Annette Parr	
		Process is shared with all professionals working with a young person	July 2018		
		Establish a monitoring and evaluation process to demonstrate the impact of actions	October 2018		

	Outcomes of transition reviews are analysed to identify young people who are supported into independent living	Senior leaders meet to agree a process map	July 2018	Alison Armstrong Eirini Zochiou Marc Noble Liz McEvoy	
		Process is shared with all professionals working with a young person	October 2018		
		Establish a monitoring and evaluation process to demonstrate the impact of actions	December 2018		
		Mapping of young people's needs and current accommodation	February 2019		
<b>KPIs:</b> Increase in call-offs made using the NE12 flexible solution Number of children and young people with an EHCP utilising MOMO					

## Priority Five: Meeting care leavers' expectations

March 2017 Baseline	Action	Milestone	Deadline	Responsible	RAG Rating
21 young people requested supported accommodation as their move on option. 64 still to confirm their preference	Firm decisions made around future commissioning intentions	Lewis Crescent, Harbour View and Holmewood contracts extended to March 2019	February 2018	Chris Cummings Emma Stewart Sharon Willis	
		Hold a number of market development events with providers	July 2018		
		Housing-related support commissioned	February 2019		
	16-21 year olds consulted about preferred move on options	Survey agreed	July 2018	Chris Cummings Emma Stewart Sharon Willis Jane Wheeler	
		Consultation completed	September 2018		
		Data fed into tender documents	November 2018		
<b>KPIs:</b> Percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation Percentage of care leavers who report they are happy with their accommodation					

## Priority Six: Securing permanence in a timely and child-centred way

March 2017 Baseline	Action	Milestone	Deadline	Responsible	RAG Rating
54 SGOs granted 56 Child Arrangement Orders 47 children Adopted	Launch of the Coast to Coast regional adoption agency	Completion of notice of intention to DfE to develop a regional adoption agency with Cumbria and Durham LAs	October 2017	Sheila Lough Kathryn McCabe	
		Proposal submitted	November 2018		
		Service begins	September 2019		
<b>KPIs:</b> Timeliness of adoption improves against Adoption Leadership Board national benchmark Placement stability improves					





## CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

16 April 2018

### Sunderland's Guide to Corporate Parenting

#### 1. Purpose of the Report:

This Report is to advise the Corporate Parenting Board of the Statutory Guidance that was issued to Local Authorities in February 2018 about applying Corporate Parenting Principles to Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

#### 2. Background:

The role that Councils play in looking after children is one of the most important things they do. A strong ethos of Corporate Parenting means that sense of vision and responsibility towards the children they look after and their Care Leavers is a priority for everyone. They recognise that Looked After Children have the same needs to be loved, cared for and feel safe as other children. Also that there are unique challenges that Looked After Children and Care Leavers face. 60% of children become Looked After due to abuse and neglect and they have poorer educational and health outcomes than their peers. Local Authorities that have a strong Corporate parenting ethos recognise that the care system is not just about keeping children safe, but also to promote recovery, resilience and wellbeing.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduces Corporate Parenting Principles which comprise of seven needs that Local Authorities in England must have regard to whenever they exercise a function in relation to Looked After Children or Care Leavers. The Corporate Parenting Principles are intended to secure a better approach to fulfilling existing functions in relation to Looked After Children and Care Leavers and for the Local Authority to facilitate as far as possible secure, nurturing and positive experiences for Looked After Children and Young People and enable positive outcomes for them.

The Corporate Parenting Principles are not new requirements but provide a framework to help Local Authorities understand and fully comply with existing duties across the whole of their services as they discharge those duties to Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

### **3. The Principles:**

In order to thrive, children and young people have certain key needs that good parents generally meet. The Corporate Parenting Principles set out seven principles that Local Authorities must have regard to when exercising this functions in relation to Looked After Children and Young People as follows:

- To act in the best interests and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing of those children and young people.
- To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.
- To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people.
- To help those children and young people gain access to and make the best use of services provided by the Local Authority and its relevant partners.
- To promote high aspirations and seek to secure the best outcomes for those children and young people
- For those children and young people to be safe and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work, and
- To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

The principles intend to ensure that all Councils have high ambitions for the children in their care. In doing so, the application of the principles must respond to the individual needs, vulnerabilities or disadvantages of Looked After Children and Care Leavers. This will assist in securing that such children and young people are not placed at significant disadvantage when compared with the support of non-Looked After Children or a young person may receive from their family.

The Corporate Parenting Principles do not replace or change existing legal duties, for example in relation to the provision of accommodation for Care Leavers aged 18 years and over. The detail of what Local Authorities must do to effectively care for Looked After Children and Care Leavers is addressed through existing legislation, regulations and accompanying Statutory Guidance. The Corporate Parenting Principles are intended to inform how a Local Authority carries out those existing responsibilities, whether that is about assessing a Looked After Child's needs or listening to and taking account of the wishes and feelings of Care Leavers. The principles are intended to encourage Local Authorities to be ambitious and aspirational for their Looked After Children and Care Leavers.