

**Looked after children
& complex needs placements**

Commissioning & Sufficiency Strategy

2014 – 2019

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Chapter 1: Introduction & Vision

- 1.1 Herefordshire's overarching vision for looked after children and those with complex needs is the same as for all of Herefordshire's children and young people – ***that we keep them safe and give them a great start in life.***
- 1.2 In achieving this vision, the primary outcomes we seek to achieve is to support the resilience of families and reduce the need for children and young people to enter into accommodation placements. Our vision is to significantly reduce the reliance on residential accommodation. This can be achieved through effective local early help, child in need and child protection systems and direct work services targeting particular areas of need.
- 1.3 However, where the needs of a child do mean that an accommodation placement is in their best interests, it is Herefordshire's aspiration that, unless specific exceptional needs are identified, children should be able to benefit from living in a family environment and no child or young person will be placed in residential accommodation. We will achieve this by ensuring sufficient appropriate accommodation and support is available locally to enable looked after children, and those with complex needs, to live in a family environment as often as possible.
- 1.4 The Local Authority has a duty to operate a sufficiency strategy to meet the accommodation needs of its Looked After Child population (LAC). Herefordshire's strategy also encompasses those children with complex health, education or social care needs, who are jointly funded by the Council and Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).
- 1.5 This strategy will address the sufficiency and quality of appropriate placement provision, as well as seeking value for money for Herefordshire's looked after children and those with complex needs. It forms part of Herefordshire's overall approach to commissioning services for children, young people and families and represents a key priority area. In this context, 'commissioning' represents the design and implementation of both in-house and externally provided services that are based on an analysis of local needs and evidence of what works well. The types of placements that this strategy considers include:
 - In-house fostering & Family and Friends Carers care for looked after children
 - Independent fostering for looked after children
 - Independent residential homes for looked after children and those with complex needs
 - Independent residential schools for children with special educational needs or complex needs
 - In-house supported lodgings for 16+ looked after children and care leavers
 - Unregulated independent supported accommodation for 16+ looked after children and care leavers

- Emergency accommodation placements, which could include any of the above
 - Placements of young people remanded to the care of the local authority
 - Residential assessment centres for children and/or parents
- 1.6 In addition to ensuring that the care and accommodation needs of looked after children and those with complex needs can be met with appropriate types of placements, the Council and CCG also has a responsibility to operate within the available financial resources. So, to both promote good outcomes for children and young people, and ensure cost effectiveness, the Council and CCG are also working to develop early help and preventative approaches that will help to manage the numbers of children and young people that require accommodation placements.
- 1.7 In Herefordshire we aspire to all of our looked after and complex needs children being provided with the right type of placement and/or support package, which:
- meets their needs
 - provides them with some choice about where they live
 - enables them to benefit from positive experiences similar to those experienced by other children of the same age
 - is found 'first-time' to ensure that it remains stable and avoids further disruption for the child or young person
- 1.8 Where the needs of a child do require them to be accommodated, Herefordshire will seek to ensure that such placements are:
- Of good quality
 - Outcomes focussed and, therefore, cost effective
 - Able to prepare children and young people for transition to a family environment or adulthood with confidence, a strong sense of self worth, and the skills and abilities to thrive, with a diminishing demand on resources
 - As close to home as possible, preferably within 20 miles of home, unless the needs of the child are of a highly specialist nature or there are legitimate safeguarding reasons for making a placement at a greater distance.

Chapter 2: Priorities for 2014/19

2.1 Based on a strategic needs analysis (Appendix 2) of the local Looked After and Complex Needs populations, the Council and its partners will work to achieve the following priorities by 2019. In each of the priorities we will focus on quality and also on the voice of the child in shaping and evaluating services.

- 1) Reduce reliance on Independent Fostering Agency placements**
- 2) Prevent use of residential placements by improving intensive wrap-around support to children with challenging needs and their carers, including reducing the reliance on residential placements by 50%**
- 3) Enable more children with complex needs to remain with their families or, if necessary, be accommodated closer to home**
- 4) Improve the quality and availability of local supported living arrangements for Looked After Children aged 16+**

2.2 Herefordshire is undertaking a Children's Integrated Needs Assessment in 2014. The priorities described above will be kept under review so that they can adapt to any new learning from the integrated assessment or any other additional needs analysis work.

2.3 The governance of this strategy will sit primarily with the Council's Children's Well-being Directorate Leadership Team. Commissioning plans for children with complex needs will also be governed by the Children & Families Joint Commissioning Group, which is a partnership arrangement between the Council and Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group. Delivery of the strategy will also require functional links with housing and adult services in Herefordshire.

2.4 Objectives for 2014/19:

| Objective | What will success look like? |
|---|---|
| <p>1) Increase in-house foster carer capacity & capability In 2013, a regional benchmarking exercise took place to evaluate the cost of in-house fostering services. This showed that Herefordshire's in-house average costs for 'standard' fostering placements is £520 per week, whereas the average standard agency fostering placement is £800-850 per week. There was a clear correlation between investment in in-house services and the Ofsted ratings that they achieved, so as well as increasing Herefordshire's capacity, some additional investment may be required to move towards a 'Good' rating at the next inspection. There appears to be little correlation between cost and quality of agency foster care.</p> <p>Delivering an enhanced in-house fostering service will be developed to move from a two thirds/one third split to an 90/10% split between in-house and agency fostering placements by 2019 or sooner. If the size of the LAC population remains stable over the period, achieving this objective is likely to require an net increase of 21-30 'standard' foster carers by 2019.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Net increase of 'standard' foster carers of 21-30 by 2019 ▪ Rebalancing of in-house/IFA fostering placements from two thirds/one third to 90/10% by 2019. Success will be influenced by changes to the size of the LAC population ▪ Reduction fostering placements made outside Herefordshire |
| <p>2) Re-commission Independent Fostering Agency framework agreement There are emerging plans for a regional fostering framework agreement for the West Midlands from 2015. However, Herefordshire's current framework agreement, which is shared with Worcestershire County Council, will expire in July 2014. Therefore, a re-commissioning exercise will be completed with Worcestershire to ensure that there is a new framework in place from July 2014, but with the flexibility to opt-in to the regional framework at a later date if it is judges beneficial to do so.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New Herefordshire & Worcestershire fostering framework agreement in place by then end of July 2014 ▪ Decide by April 2015 whether, and when, to join a regional fostering framework. ▪ Average cost of IFA placements is reduced from, or at least maintained, at 2013/14 levels |
| <p>3) Deliver a new intensive therapeutic support service model that promotes placement stability and reduces the need for residential placements by 50% by 2019 There are a number of evidence-based interventions that have been found to be effective in improving outcomes for adolescents in other areas. These include multi-systemic therapy (MST), multidimensional treatment foster care (MTFC) and functional family</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Herefordshire Intensive Placement Support service commissioned by September 2014 |

| Objective | What will success look like? |
|--|--|
| <p>therapy (FFT). Following a analysis of Herefordshire's LAC population, it has been identified that there is a gap in current service provision and that could be filled by new intensive and therapeutic approach to supporting those challenging children who are at higher risk of placement disruption, entry into residential care, and those that could be supported to step-down from residential care. This population can include both looked after children and those with complex needs. The needs analysis specifically focussed on the MTFC model for 7-11, being tested by the DfE. While there was much to recommend the MTFC model, the analysis concluded that that it would be too rigid to meet Herefordshire needs, and a more flexible clinical and therapeutic service model is required to meet the needs of children and young people in a wider age range.</p> <p>A local Herefordshire Intensive Placement Support Service (HIPPS) model has been developed, based on experience from other areas, with the intention of procuring a service provider by September 2014. The delivery of this new approach will reduce the number of residential placements made by Herefordshire, including some of those made at a distance for children at risk of sexual exploitation. The success of the approach will be dependent upon access to sufficient 'specialist' in-house foster carers.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rolling capacity of 8-10 specialist in-house foster carers ▪ Reduction in number and cost of LAC and CNS residential placements by 2019 as a result of the HIPSS model. The LAC residential population is expected to reduce to no more than 5-9 placements at any one time. The rate of new entrants to the CNS population is expected to slow, with up to 2 cases per year being prevented from escalating to complex levels. |
| <p>4) Develop accommodation commissioning plan for children with complex needs Work has begun to identify those young people with high levels of need where their presentation suggests that there is a risk of them requiring residential accommodation at a later stage. This is being collected from special schools, paediatricians and the Children with Disabilities Team. Further detailed analysis is required to fully understand the needs of this population and to explore different models that can enable more children with complex needs to remain with their families, or be accommodated closer to home if necessary.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Needs collated April 2014 ▪ Triangulation of information with CWD Team may 2014 ▪ Commissioning plan agreed by March 2015 ▪ Reduction in the number and cost of new CNS placements by 2019 ▪ More CNS children are able to remain at home or be placed close to home by 2019 |
| <p>5) Develop 16+ supported living commissioning plan Further work is needed to analyse the needs of different groups with the overall 16+ population, however, it is known that there are pressures concerning the quality of some supported living arrangements and access to local provision for young people with challenging needs. A commissioning plan will build-on the early work that has already</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased supported lodging capacity ▪ Improved placement stability for 16+ ▪ Improved access to local quality supported accommodation |

| Objective | What will success look like? |
|---|--|
| <p>taken place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The in-house fostering team is seeking to increase its capacity of supported lodgings hosts ▪ The Council has a block contract with a local housing provider for supported accommodation for 16-25 years olds and associated floating support services. The contract is being reviewed to ensure the needs of looked after children accommodated by the provider are understood and can be met. A re-commissioning process will be required in 2019, which will be informed by the needs of the LAC 16+ population ▪ The use of a sub-regional supported accommodation framework agreement has improved local knowledge of the provider market and could help to increase local capacity ▪ The Local Authority Homes & Communities team is keen to work with local housing providers to make suitable accommodation available if the right wrap-around support can be designed and delivered to meet the additional needs of this group. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduced use of emergency B&B placements |
| <p>6) Participate in West Mercia Bail & Remand project Alongside this objectives described above, a West Mercia-wide project is looking at the accommodation and support needs of young people on bail or remand. The learning from this project could help to inform Herefordshire’s plans to deliver an Intensive Placement Support Service, in-house fostering capacity and the 16+ supported living commissioning plan.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ West Mercia bail & remand needs analysis completed ▪ Agree individual authority or West Mercia response to needs identified |

Appendix 1: Review of 2011-2014

1.1 2011/14 Priorities

1.1.1 Herefordshire agreed its first looked after children & complex needs placements commissioning & sufficiency strategy in 2011, with the following strategic priorities:

- i. Provide sufficient, high quality and value for money fostering placements
- ii. Reducing the need for, and cost of, residential placements for LAC and children with complex needs
- iii. Improved preparation for independence through supported, independent and emergency lodgings for 16/17 year olds
- iv. Business systems & processes

1.1.2 Against each of the priorities, an outcomes-based action plan was agreed. The outcomes to be delivered and progress made is summarised below.

1.2 Provide sufficient, high quality and value for money fostering placements

| 2011 Outcomes to be delivered | RAG | 2011-2014 Progress |
|---|-----|--|
| (1) Increase the number of in-house foster carers across the levels of need | | Ongoing. There has been a 33% net increase of in-house fostering households since April 2012 to 121 households by October 2013. However there remains an imbalance in the spread of carers across the levels of need, which the latest carer recruitment strategy is seeking to address. |
| (2) Join Worcestershire fostering framework agreement | | Completed. Achieved in 2011. The framework agreement is due to expire in July 2014. |
| (3) Seek to agree that existing placements with framework providers can move into the new framework pricing schedule | | Completed. Achieved in November 2011. |
| (4) Develop strategic relationships with framework providers to increase understanding of demand and improve local capacity | | Ongoing. Herefordshire holds local provider forums and contributes to similar forums in partnership with Worcestershire and across the West Midlands |
| (5) Develop procurement model for beyond 2013/14, which could | | Ongoing. The framework agreement model has delivered significant benefits for the purchase of fostering placements. The option to |

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| include a joint or sub-regional approach | | extend the fostering framework agreement to July 2014 with Worcestershire has been implemented. Herefordshire and Worcestershire are proceeding with a re-commissioning exercise for a new framework agreement beyond July 2014, as well as considering an option to join an emerging West Midlands framework agreement that could be in place during 2015. |
|--|--|---|

1.3 Reducing the need for, and cost of, residential placements for LAC and children with complex needs

| 2011 Outcomes to be delivered | RAG | 2011-2014 Progress |
|---|-----|--|
| (1) Fewer long-term residential placements are required as a result of innovative solutions designed to support children on the edge of residential care. This could include intensive 'fostering plus' placements or short term residential placements designed to trigger a change in a young person and enable them to enter into a successful fostering placement or return home. | | <p>Ongoing.</p> <p>The number of CNS packages has increased slightly since 2011 and appears to have levelled off during 2013. It should be noted that these are highly complex cases that incur a high cost, so even a small increase in numbers can have a significant impact on resources.</p> <p>The proportion of the looked after population in residential care has fallen over the last three years. There has also been a clear reduction in length of residential placement for LAC. In 2011/12 the average length of stay was 59 weeks, the average for April 2013 to end of January 2014 has reduced to 13.5 weeks.</p> |
| (2) Participate in the development of a regional residential framework | | <p>Completed.</p> <p>Herefordshire participated in a regional procurement exercise in 2012. However, on assessing the tenders received, Herefordshire decided not to join the regional framework agreement at that time and to continue spot-purchasing residential placement as needed. Following a review of residential placement costs in 2013, Herefordshire repeated the decision to continue spot-purchase arrangements. The regional framework is due to be re-commissioned by 2015. Herefordshire will contribute to the procurement process and make a decision on whether to join a new framework agreement once the tenders have been assessed.</p> |
| (3) Consider the options, and identify a preference for the increased provision of complex needs residential placements within or closer to Herefordshire | | <p>Initial needs assessment work suggests that an in-house residential unit might not be the right approach for Herefordshire and may not be cost effective.</p> <p>This position is currently being reviewed. Work is being undertaken to analyse local need in more detail and identify appropriate evidence based service models that can meet the need and demand.</p> |

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| | | Consideration is also being given to what preventative support can be offered at an early stage to families with a high risk of breakdown |
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1.4 Improved preparation for independence through supported, independent and emergency lodgings for 16/17 year olds

| 2011 Outcomes to be delivered | RAG | 2011-2014 Progress |
|--|-----|---|
| (1) Avoid the need for fostering placements of 16 & 17 year olds who enter the looked after system by increasing the capacity for supported lodgings in Herefordshire to support their transition to adulthood | | <p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Herefordshire introduced a staying put policy that has increased capacity of supported living placements and enabled more young people to remain with their foster carers beyond the age of 18 if they want to.</p> |
| (2) Integrate the procurement of externally provided supported lodgings with the procurement of 'supported accommodation & outreaching housing-related support services for young people at risk', being procured by adult social care in 2011 | | <p>Ongoing.</p> <p>The procurement of supported accommodation and outreach support, which was led by the Council's Adult Services, has been completed. It included the provision of 'Foyer' type supported accommodation, but did not include 'supported lodgings'. Herefordshire also participated in a sub-regional procurement exercise with six other authorities which has delivered a new framework agreement for supported accommodation providers, but excludes supported lodgings. The framework has provided access to an increased number of supported accommodation providers, however further work is needed to improve the quality of provision and increase capacity more locally in and around Herefordshire.</p> <p>The Children's Well-being Directorate has implemented plans to develop it's own in-house supported lodging scheme attached to the existing in-house fostering service. Where necessary, the 16+ service has continued to spot purchasing supported lodgings from a local provider. Further work is needed to ensure that contractual and placement terms and conditions are robust for this type of purchasing.</p> |
| (3) Review emergency B&B placement & procurement processes to ensure CYP and families are safeguarded and providers are quality assured | | <p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Herefordshire avoids emergency B&B placements. Where a B&B placement is necessary, full assessments are carried out by social care to ensure that the young person s needs are met, and use known and trusted B&B providers.</p> |

1.5 Business systems & processes

| 2011 Outcomes to be delivered | RAG | 2011-2014 Progress |
|--|--------|--|
| (1) Ensure that external agency foster placements are only used where the needs of children and young people require them. Wherever possible and appropriate, in house fostering placements will be used | Green | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>The increase in in-house fostering capacity since 2011 has been reflected by a reduction in placements made with independent fostering agencies. The latest in-house fostering business development plan will seek to continue the increase of carer household across all levels of need.</p> |
| (2) Ensure that Individual Placement Agreements are completed fully and to a high standard to ensure that the best placement match can be procured to meet the needs of the child | Yellow | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>The quality of IPAs has improved significantly since 2011, with greater involvement of social workers and with an increased focus on achieving outcomes for the child being placed. An 'interim IPA' has been introduced to ensure that there is a basic agreement recorded between the Council and placement providers. Additional work will take place to implement a similar placement agreement process for 16+ placements</p> |
| (3) Ensure placements are reviewed and a transition plan to supported or independent lodgings is agreed by placements panel at an appropriate time for each case | Green | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Both the LAC Placements Panel and Complex Needs Panel have implemented systems to ensure cases are brought forward for review in a timely manner.</p> |
| (4) Refine processes for performance and quality assurance of placement providers | Green | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>A much more robust pre-placement check and approval system has been introduced. There is scope to improve the use of pre-placement visits by social workers to ensure a good match with a child's needs.</p> <p>The Children's Wellbeing Directorate has adopted a Placements Quality Assurance Framework as a working document, which sets out the roles and responsibilities of staff working in different parts of the organisation.</p> <p>A programme of contract monitoring visits to independent placement agencies has been implemented using monitoring tools developed by the West Midlands Children's Commissioning Partnership.</p> |
| (5) Implement a robust system for measuring discounts and savings, targeted at 5% each year for three years, on external placement | Green | <p>Ongoing.</p> <p><u>Spend:</u></p> <p>Despite a 29% increase in the number of in-house & agency placements made between January 2011 and September 2013, overall spend on all fostering, LAC residential, and CNS</p> |

| | |
|-----------|--|
| contracts | <p>placements has risen by only 1%. This has been achieved through increased in-house capacity, better purchasing arrangements and demand management.</p> <p>Projected spend on agency fostering in 2013/14 has fallen by 6% compared to 2010/11, while spend on in-house foster carer fees has increased by 17%. At the same time, spend on LAC residential placements has decreased by 35%.</p> <p>However, projected 2013/14 CNS costs have risen by 28%, since 2010/11 but appear to be levelling off in 2014. However, even a small fluctuation in the numbers of CNS children can have a significant impact on costs. Further work is needed to ensure value for money is achieved and to consider evidence-based alternatives to costly residential placements.</p> <p><u>Cost Avoidance:</u> A combination of changes in social care practice, increased in-house provision, and improved cost management of the agency placements has seen an overall reduction in spend for LAC residential and fostering placements (in-house and agency) since 2011. Use of a fostering framework agreement has been particularly beneficial achieving a 15% reduction of the average weekly cost of agency placements between 2010/11 and 2012/13, avoiding estimated costs of £240k in 2011/12 and £300k in 2012/13.</p> <p>The Placements Team has implemented new placement registers that enable the tracking of costs and discounts. In addition, the two Placements Officers have avoided a further estimated £200k of cost through direct negotiation with providers for spot purchase placements.</p> |
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Appendix 2: Strategic Needs analysis

Introduction

Herefordshire's capabilities to understand the local needs and demands for services has improved significantly since the first LAC sufficiency strategy was written in 2011. This improvement journey will continue throughout the lifetime of the 2014/19 strategy. There is a good level of understanding around LAC fostering and residential needs. Further work will be necessary to develop the understanding of needs and demands for the LAC 16+ population and complex needs population so that improved services can be commissioned to better meet the needs of those children and young people. The intelligence that has helped to inform the following needs analysis includes:

- The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Multi-dimensional treatment Foster Care Needs Analysis
- Centralised performance data
- Service-level performance data
- ONS & Ofsted Data
- The emerging Children's Integrated Needs Analysis for Herefordshire

1. Herefordshire Profile

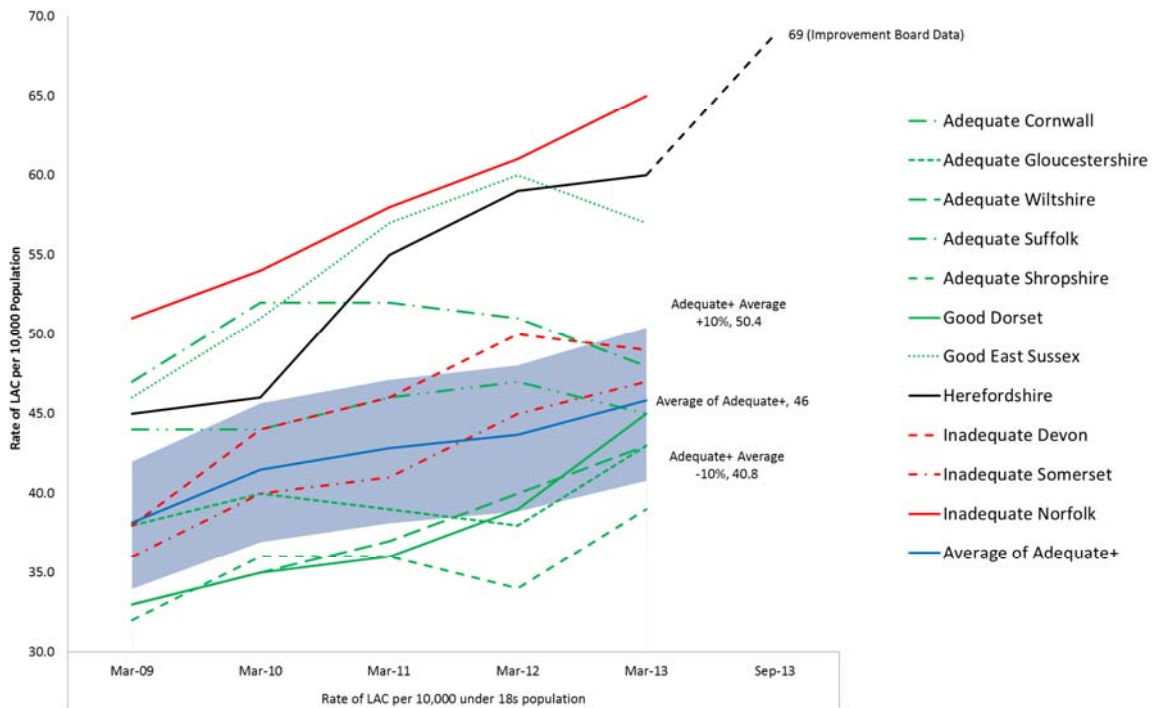
- 1.1 Overall population forecasts suggest that Herefordshire will experience a slight increase in the number of children between 2016 and 2025, peaking at 32,800 before starting to fall again. The last 4 years have seen looked after numbers in Herefordshire rise from 165 to 28 as of September 2013. With a steady rise in the number of child protection cases, and significant rise in repeat child protection plans in recent years, Herefordshire's LAC population is expected to continue to rise in the mid-term.
- 1.2 There are two main populations that may be subject of an accommodation placement. These are Looked After Children, including those aged 16+, and those with Complex Needs (some of whom may also be Looked After). The following sections describe the populations as they are understood in ear 2014, and where possible describe further analysis work that might help to improve the local understanding.

2. The Looked After Population

2.1 **Population size:** Herefordshire's LAC rate per 10,000 has increased significantly in recent years, leading to a significant difference between Herefordshire and the average of statistical neighbours rated as Adequate or better for safeguarding services, as shown below. As shown below, by September 2013, Herefordshire's rate had increased further to 69 per 10,000 :

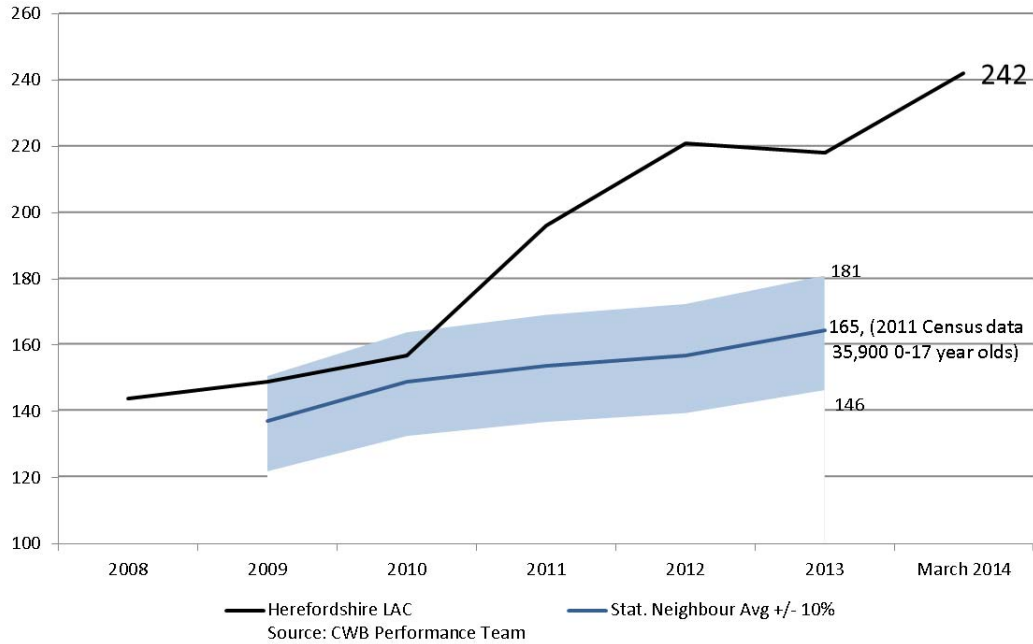
Statistical Neighbour most recent Ofsted Safeguarding ratings & Rate of LAC per 10,000 Under 18 Population

(Produced October 2013)

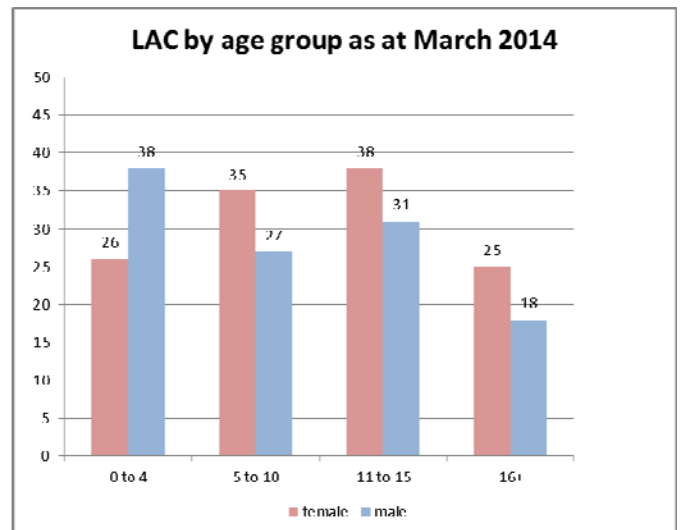
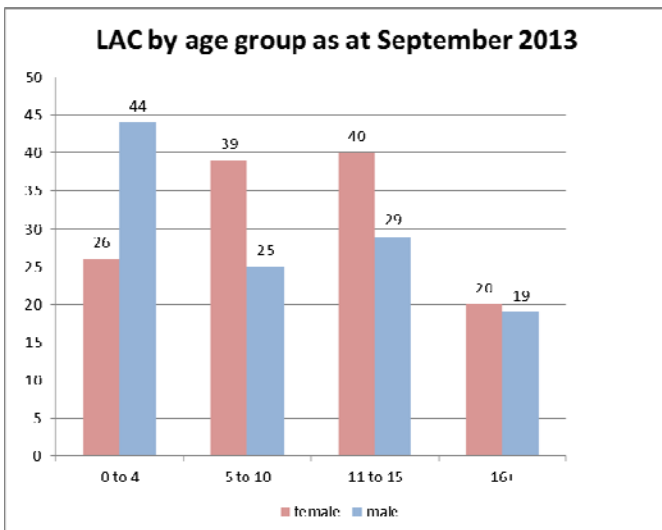


2.2 In terms of real numbers, Herefordshire's LAC population would range 146-181 in 2013/14 if it were on a par with statistical neighbours rated as adequate or better. As shown below, by March 2014, Herefordshire's LAC population stood at 242.

Actual Herefordshire LAC numbers compared to estimates based on Statistical Neighbour averages



2.3 **Gender & Age breakdown:** The following tables provide a breakdown of the LAC population by age and gender over a six-month period. Ongoing monitoring will show any emerging trends in changes to the LAC population to inform commissioning and service-redesign intentions. There are notable variations in gender between particular age groups. The largest fluctuations are in males age 0-4 and females aged 16+.



2.4 Further analysis required:

- An analysis of the trends and needs of the Child Protection and Child in Need Populations could help manage new entrants to the LAC system and inform projections for the LAC population size.
- A comparison of age and gender breakdown with statistical neighbours and national research may help to evaluate Herefordshire's performance and inform service planning around specific age groups
- A more detailed analysis of the individual needs of Looked After Children could help to develop appropriate wrap-around support for children in placement. For example, there has been a growing demand for services to support children at risk of sexual exploitation. Some of this need will be met by a new Intensive Placement Support Service, but other local service developments may be required to prevent such children being placed out of county.
- An analysis of the needs and levels of demand of the 16+ LAC population would help to inform service re-design and ensure sufficient 'Staying Put' and supported accommodation resources are in place
- A detailed evaluation of the outcomes achieved by children in-placement and upon leaving care would help to measure the effectiveness of the placement models used in Herefordshire. A new Children's Integrated Needs analysis is being prepared in 2014, and will help to inform local understanding of outcomes, service effectiveness and service gaps.

3. The Complex Needs Population

- 3.1 The Complex Needs (CNS) population in Herefordshire is supported by a tri-partite funding arrangement that includes resources provided by Education, Children's Social Care and Health. The population is small, but due to its complexity also incurs some of the highest placement costs for any child, ranging from £85k to £235k per annum in April 2013. The needs of the population have historically been met via residential placement, however increased effort has been applied to sourcing community-based packages of support in recent years, that seek to prevent entry into institutionalised residential care. There is little turn-over within the CNS population. Once a child is admitted to the population, they very rarely step-down from it, and often remain within it until transferring to adult services.
- 3.2 In April 2013, the CNS population consisted of 16 residential and 3 non-residential support packages. Ages range from 11 to 19 years. 14 were male and 5 female. Approximately 50% of the CNS population were also Looked After Children.
- 3.3 The CNS population can be loosely broken down into the following categories:

| Category of Need | # of children (April 2013) | Candidates for intensive therapeutic fostering? |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| Offending behaviour (usually with a court order) | 4 | Likely |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|---|----------|
| SLD/ASD/challenging behaviour | 7 | Unlikely |
| Severe Challenging behaviour | 2 | Likely |
| Mental Health ('Tier 3.5') | 3 | Likely |
| Severe medical/sensory | 3 | Unlikely |

- 3.4 Given the wide-range and complexity of needs involved, it would not be possible to design a single placement model that could be commissioned for the CNS population. However it is likely that specialist in-house foster carers linked to wrap-around intensive therapeutic support to promote placement stability in a family environment would meet the needs of a small number of CNS children and prevent their entry into residential care. It is anticipated that this could reduce the CNS residential population by 1 or 2 children per year.
- 3.5 Work has begun to identify those young people with high levels of need where their presentation suggests that there is a risk of them entering the CNS population and requiring residential accommodation at a later stage. This is being collected from special schools, paediatricians and the Children with Disabilities Team. Further detailed analysis is required to fully understand the needs of this population and to explore different models that can enable more children with complex needs to remain with their families, or be accommodated closer to home if necessary.

4. The 16+ population

- 4.1 The 16+ population includes:
- Young people who have been looked after by the local authority and have reached 16-21.
 - 16-17 year olds become homeless
 - Young people who have been remanded into the care of the local authority by the Court
 - Young people presenting as risk to themselves or others, with history of offending, mental health issues or drug and alcohol issues
- 4.2 Securing sufficient 16+ accommodation has been a growing pressure in recent years. Herefordshire's 16+ normally operates a case load of around 200 young people. Out of these 200 on average around 45-50 young people are looked after 16-18 so are in need of a placement. Analysis of the LAC aged 13-15 in March 2014 shows that 28 females and 20 males will become 16+ during 2014/19. Further analysis of the needs of the 16+ population is needed in order to ensure the most appropriate accommodation is available in Herefordshire.
- 4.3 Herefordshire has implemented a Staying Put policy that will build on and improve the existing arrangements for young people in foster care to remain with their carers after the age of 18. The aim is for young people to remain with their former foster carers until they reach 21 years of age (or for a substantial period beyond their 18th birthday). This is conducive to the stability of the placement, and consistent with wanting the young person to achieve economic well-being by offering the young person continuity of support to improve their life chances. This policy, and the demand it creates for extended foster care placements will need to be considered in addition to the current estimates to increase capacity of the in-house fostering service.

- 4.4 The staying put agenda is becoming increasingly popular as young people understand the reality facing them in leaving care looking at approx. It's estimated that 70% will prefer a change of placement type rather than to move from care. The 16+ service has identified gaps in provision for those care leavers post 18 who have left care, and is considering the following possible solutions:
- Multi occupancy SHAC (supported tenancies), which would also address issues of isolation and loneliness identified in new belongings questionnaire)
 - Working with the Council's Housing department and contracted providers to develop a service specification that could provide additional accommodation capacity for care leavers with targeted outreach support. Early discussions have taken place with housing providers to begin developing a service models and good practice examples of similar projects in different local authority areas have been highlighted
- 4.5 The majority of the 16+ population experience good levels of stability. However, some young people present challenging needs that have been difficult to meet. This includes those young people remanded to the care of the local authority by the court. While the numbers are relatively small (see table below), supporting these challenging young people puts additional pressure on resources. A lack of appropriate local accommodation has meant that some of Herefordshire's most challenging or vulnerable young people have been placed out of county.

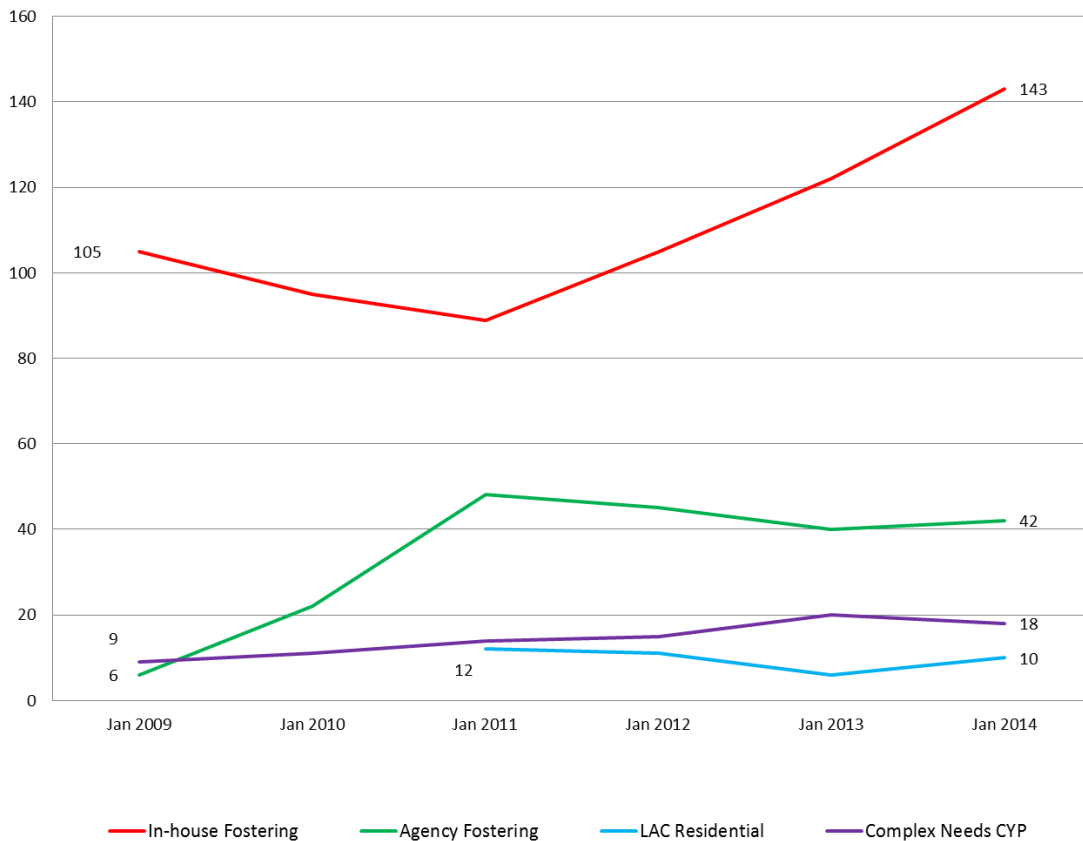
| | Remand Population | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|------|--------------------|
| | 2011 | 2012 | Up to October 2013 |
| Male total | 4 | 5 | 3 |
| Female total | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Male (exc. repeats) | 4 | 4 | 2 |
| Female (exc. repeats) | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Age 13 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Age 14 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Age 15 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| Age 16 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Age 17 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

5. Existing Service Provision (April 2014)

- 5.1 The main types of placements commissioned by Herefordshire are:
- Fostering: Family & Friends arrangements, in-house foster carers and independent fostering agencies
 - Independent residential homes for looked after children and those with complex needs
 - Independent residential schools for children with special educational needs or complex needs
 - In-house supported lodgings for 16+ looked after children and care leavers
 - Unregulated independent supported accommodation for 16+ looked after children and care leavers
 - Placements of young people remanded to the care of the local authority
 - Residential assessment centres for children and/or parents

5.2 **Placements & Packages:** The chart below shows the recent trends in the types of placements made. As can be seen, there is a correlation between an increase in in-house fostering placements and decreased use of independent fostering agencies, which has resulted from an improved recruitment and retention strategy for in-house carers.

Children receiving placement or care package

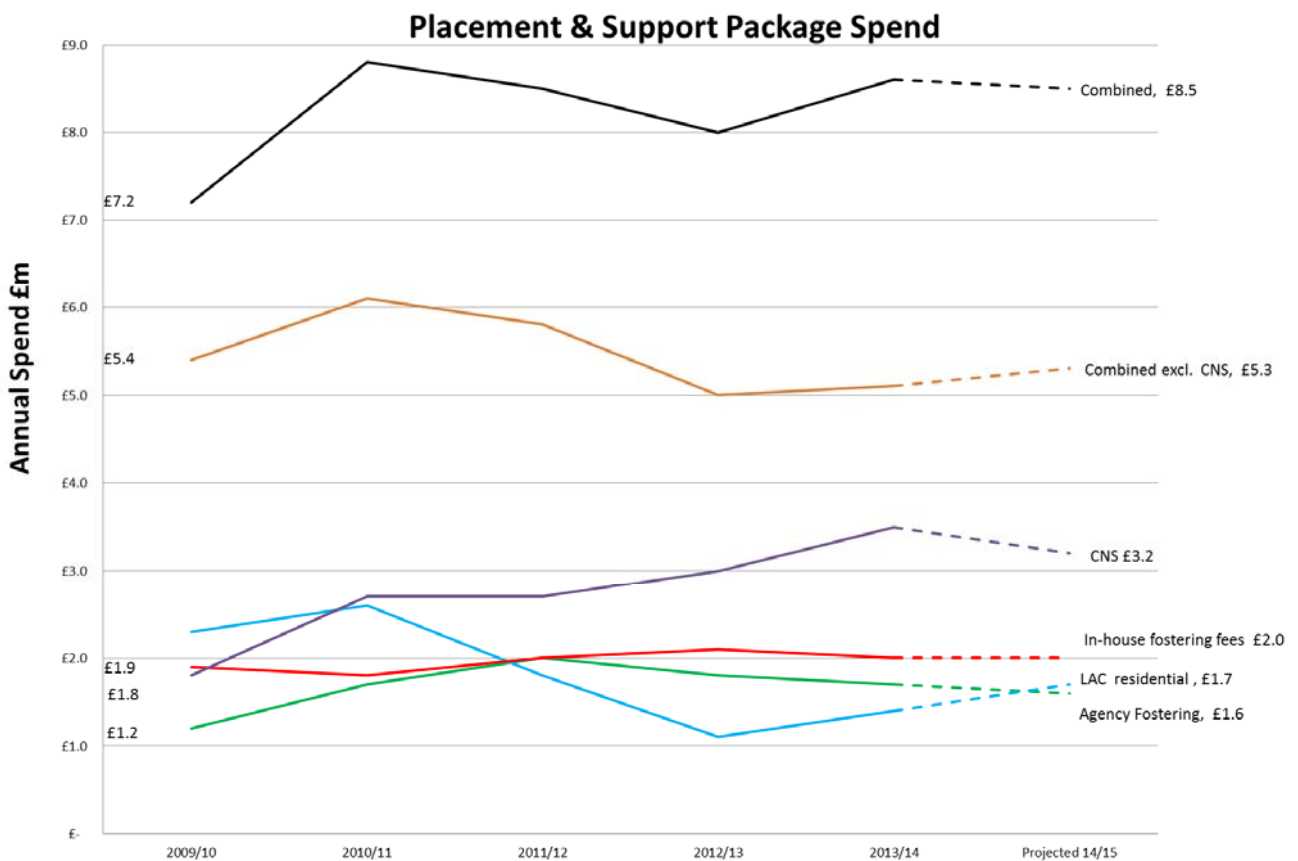


5.3 The table below shows that the residential population (as a proportion of the total LAC population) decreased by a third between 2011 and 2014. CNS packages have gradually increased in recent years, however CNS spend (see section 5.5) has almost doubled in the same period, and remains the highest placement cost due to the complexity of needs involved.

| Snapshot | LAC population | Residential Placements | Proportion |
|-------------|----------------|------------------------|------------|
| 1 Jan 2011 | 196 | 12 | 6% |
| 1 Jan 2012 | 221 | 11 | 5% |
| 1 Jan 2013 | 218 | 6 | 3% |
| 1 Jan 2014 | 238 | 10 | 4% |
| 1 Sept 2014 | TBC | 14 | TBC |

5.4 **Geographical placement:** Robust data regarding the distance Looked After Children are placed from home is unavailable. However, analysis of the LAC placements made with independent fostering agencies and residential children homes shows around 30 children (approximately 12% of the LAC population) are placed outside of Herefordshire. Some of these children are placed out of the County for safeguarding reasons, however some are placed because no in-county provision can be found to meet their needs, either by in-house or agency services. It should be noted that these estimations do not include Looked After Children placed out of county by the in-house fostering service, or into supported accommodation. It's therefore reasonable to estimate that up to 20% of Herefordshire's LAC population (approximately 50 children) are placed out of county at any time.

5.5 **Spend trends:** The chart below shows that spend on agency fostering and LAC residential placements has reduced since their peaks in 2010/11 and 2011/12 respectively. This has been achieved through a mixture of demand management by social care and price management by commissioners, however spend on LAC residential placements has begun to increase again. Spend on complex needs packages has increased to reflect increased demand, which forecasted to begin to decrease in 2014/15. However, even a small change in the CNS population can have a significant impact on costs.



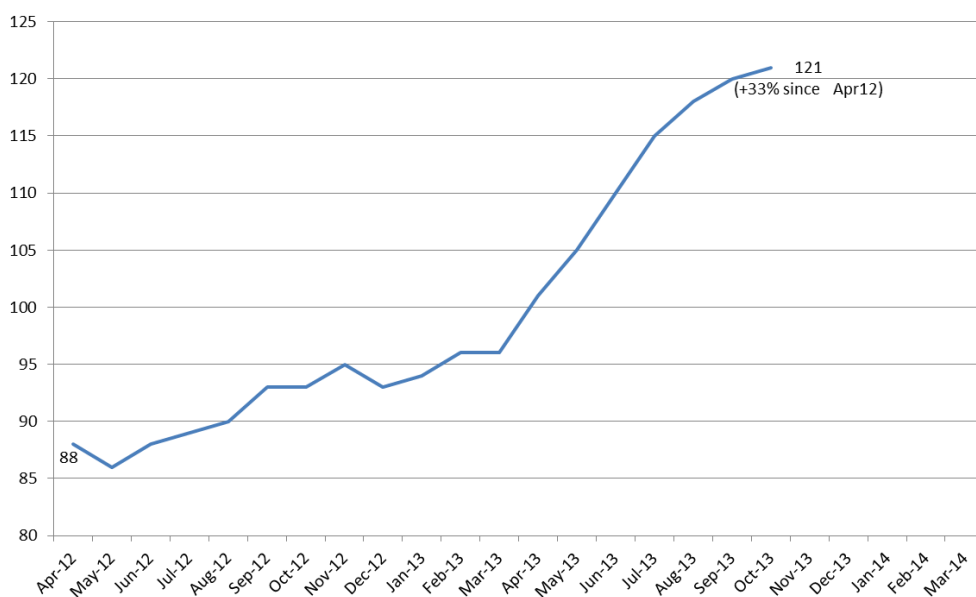
5.6 Analysis of standard placement costs by type in 2013/14 has shown:

- Average in-house standard fostering cost of £520 per week

- Regional correlation of investment & quality of in-house fostering
- Average IFA standard cost across the region of £800+ per week (In Herefordshire £784)
- No correlation between cost and quality of IFA placements
- Average LAC residential cost of £3400 per week

5.7 Re-energised efforts to recruit in-house foster carers are paying-off, as shown below. Analysis of the number of children that in-house carers would normally accept into their homes suggests in-house occupancy on 31st March 2013 was running at 87%. The in-house service operates four levels of foster-care capability. Most current capacity is in the lower two levels, however increases across all levels would be needed to achieve both a reduction in agency fostering placements and a reduction in residential placements.

Total in-house fostering households



5.8 Where placement requirements cannot be met in-house, options are sought from the independent sector via a fostering framework agreement and spot purchasing. A regional benchmarking exercise has identified that the unit cost of 'standard' in-house fostering placements was around £520 per week in 2012/13. In the same year, the average weekly unit cost paid by Herefordshire was £784 for agency fostering placements.

5.9 It would be very challenging for the in-house service to provide sufficient choice alone to properly match the needs of individual children, so there is always likely to be a need to purchase placements from the independent sector. However, in order to change the balance between in-house and IFA placements, it is necessary to first understand which types of placement have not been available in-house, and then recruit or develop sufficient carers based on the analysis.

5.10 In recent years, there has generally been a two thirds/one third split between the number of in-house and agency placements active at any one time. A one-off benchmarking exercise showed that the in-house service delivered 34,293 bed-nights of foster care in 2012/13 (excluding kinship placements). In addition to this, the authority purchased almost 16,000 bed-nights from

independent fostering agencies (IFAs) in the same year. The following table provides a breakdown of the IFA placements made by Herefordshire council in 2012/13.

Agency Placement Duration & Stability - Apr12 - Mar13 based on bednights register

| | Total # individuals (excluding multiple placements) | Total # Placements (including multiple placements) | Placement need | | | |
|----------------------------|---|--|----------------|------------|---------------------------|--|
| | | | Planned | Urgent | Emergency | Need not recorded / pre-placements team |
| 0-4 years | 30 | 41 | 8 | 16 | 12 | 5 |
| 5-10 years | 25 | 30 | 3 | 5 | 9 | 13 |
| 11-15 years | 29 | 39 | 15 | 4 | 10 | 10 |
| 16-17 years | 11 | 15 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 10 |
| Total | 95 | 125 | 28 | 27 | 32 | 38 |
| Upto 28 days | NA | 45 | 10 | 6 | 21 | 8 |
| 29-182 days (6 Months) | NA | 58 | 13 | 19 | 9 | 17 |
| 183-365 days(6-12 Months) | NA | 19 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| 1 year+ | NA | 16 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 10 |
| Total | NA | 138 | 33 | 29 | 36 | 40 |
| Sibling groups | NA | 14 groups | 1 x 2 sibs | 4 x 2 sibs | 1 x 2 sibs 4 x 3+ sibs | 3 x 2 sibs 1 x 3+ sibs |
| Parent & Baby | NA | 12 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 2 |

5.11 The 2012/13 IFA placement data illustrates that:

- Almost 100 children could not be accommodated by the in-house service at the time of their need, although some of these may have later moved to an in-house placement.
- 15905 IFA bed nights were purchased in 2012/13
- The level of demand for IFA placements was broadly the same across the 0-4, 5-10 and 11-15 age bands.
- Where recorded, two thirds of placements were made as an emergency placement (required within 24 hours) or urgent placement (required within 7 days). However, there were particular pressures for emergency and urgent placements for 0-4 year olds, while half of the placements made for 11-15 year olds were planned.
- 20% of IFA placements lasted more than six months, some more than a year, even when the placement was made as an emergency or urgently. This shows that IFA placements can provide stability, and that insufficient capacity or inappropriate match of in-house carers is a cause of IFA placements. However, these placements accounted for 79% of the bed nights cost for the year. Existing and stable placements, such as these are unlikely to simply transfer to the in-house service, but new long-term placements should be able to be provided by an enhanced in-house service.
- 80% of IFA placements lasted less than six months, with around half of these lasting less than 28 days. Requests for this type of short term placement should be able to be easily met by an enhanced in-house service
- There is demand for placements of large sibling groups of three or more children. 28.4% of IFA bed-nights were for siblings

5.12 Reducing the reliance on the more expensive IFA placements will take some time, however the intention should be to move from a two thirds (in-house) / one third (IFA) split to an 90/10% split by 2019. The table below illustrates the impact of such a shift on the number of bed nights delivered, and the additional 'standard' foster carer capacity likely to be required to achieve it. This would be in addition to any plans to recruit 'specialist' foster carers as part of a local intensive placement service.

| | 2013/14 baseline | 2014/16 | 2016/18 | 2018/19 | Total by 2019 |
|---|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------|
| In-house/IFA split | 68%/32% | 75%/25% | 85%/15% | 90%/10% | |
| Approx. # in-house bed-nights (based on 49782 total in 2012/13) | 33798 | 37277 | 42248 | 44733 | 124258 |
| Approx. # IFA bed-nights (based on 49782 total in 2012/13) | 15905 | 12426 | 7455 | 4970 | 24852 |
| Approx. # additional in-house bed nights | | 3479 | 4970 | 2485 | 10935 |
| Net additional in-house carer capacity required (1 FTE carer = 365 bed-nights) | | 7 to 10 | 10 to 14 | 5 to 7 | 21 to 30 |
| Supporting Fostering Swkr capacity required (planned ratio of 17 Carers per 1FTW swkr) | | 0.6 | 0.8 | 0.4 | 1.8 |

5.13 The local authority has access to a range of supported living placements for young people aged 16+, including:

- Supported Lodgings – provided by the –in-house fostering service and an external organisation. Supported lodgings provide young people with semi-independent accommodation, usually in a family home or annex, with support provided by the 'host' family
- Supported Accommodation – provided in Herefordshire by a local housing association and out-of-county via a sub-regional framework agreement with multiple accommodations providers from the independent and private sectors. Supported accommodation usually involves properties of multiple occupancy with on-site support staff. This type of provision is unregulated, and the quality of accommodation and support provided can be variable.
- Supported tenancies – independent accommodation provided by a local housing association with additional support provided by the Council's 16+ team.

6. Service Gaps

6.1 Analysis of the LAC & CNS populations, service capacity and capabilities, and a review of evidence based service models, has shown that there insufficient capacity in Herefordshire's placement provision of:

- (1) **'standard' in-house foster carers**, causing a reliance on more expensive independent fostering agencies
- (2) **'specialist' in-house foster carers** linked to **wrap-around intensive therapeutic support** to promote placement stability in a family environment and prevent entry into residential care
- (3) **local provision** for children with complex needs, including **alternatives to residential care**
- (4) **supported living arrangements**, including supported lodging providers, general supported accommodation and specialist or intensive supported accommodation for young people with challenging needs

Appendix 3: National Drivers

1. The Sufficiency Duty

- 1.1 Section 22G of the Children Act 1989. seeks to improve outcomes for looked after children and young people by requiring local authorities to take steps that secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the authority's area which meets the needs of children that the local authority are looking after, and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the local authority's area ('the sufficiency duty').
- 1.2 The sufficiency duty requires local authorities to do more than simply ensure that accommodation be 'sufficient' in terms of the number of beds provided. They must have regard to the benefits of securing a range of accommodation through a number of providers. The accommodation must also meet the needs of children. These needs can be wide-ranging, in line with the typology which underpins the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families.
- 1.3 A local authority which is taking a strategic approach to securing sufficient accommodation will include in their analysis, planning and delivery, children who are in need and are at risk of care or custody. Meeting the needs of these children will have a significant impact on the ability of the local authority to provide sufficient accommodation for those they look after. This means that securing sufficient accommodation requires a whole-system approach which includes early intervention and preventive services to support children in their families, as well as better services for children if they do become looked after.
- 1.4 Local authorities already have a number of duties towards children within their area which are related to the sufficiency duty. In particular:
 - Section 17(1) of the 1989 Act provides that it is the general duty of a local authority to provide a range and level of services to children in need (as defined in section 17(10) of the 1989 Act) and their families in the local area which are appropriate to their needs.
 - Section 20 of that Act requires local authorities to provide accommodation for children in need within their area who appear to them to require accommodation in accordance with the provisions of that section.
 - Section 21 requires a local authority to accommodate certain children who are either removed or kept away from home under Part V of the 1989 Act or who are subject to a criminal court order.
 - Section 22C(5) requires local authorities to place children in the most appropriate placement available. In determining the most appropriate placement for a child, section 22C(7) requires local authorities to take into account a number of factors (such as the duties to safeguard and promote welfare; promote educational achievement; ascertain the wishes of the child and family; and give due consideration to religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural background).
 - In determining the most appropriate placement for a child, section 22C(7)(a) also requires the local authority to give preference to a placement with a relative, friend or other person connected with the child and who is also a local authority foster parent.
 - Section 22C sets out the additional factors (in no order of priority) which the local authority must take into consideration when deciding the most appropriate placement:
 - allowing the child to live near his/her home;

- not disrupting the child's education or training;
 - enabling the child and a looked after sibling to live together;
 - meeting the particular needs of disabled children; and
 - providing accommodation within the local authority's area, unless that is not reasonably practicable.
 - Section 23(1)(a) requires a local authority to provide accommodation for a child who is in their care (by virtue of a care order).
- 1.5 In order to fulfil these duties, a local authority requires sufficient accommodation (and other services) to provide suitable placements for those children for whom placement within the local area is most appropriate. The sufficiency duty reinforces the duties set out above by requiring local authorities, when taking steps to provide accommodation within their area for the children they look after, to have regard also to the benefit of having:
- a number of accommodation providers in their area; and
 - a range of accommodation capable of meeting different needs.
- 1.6 Existing good practice suggests that meeting the provisions set out in the 1989 Act can best be met through a step change in commissioning practice in which local authorities are active in managing their market and work with their partners to:
- support and maintain diversity of services to better meet the needs of looked after children including through the provision of preventive and early intervention services to reduce the need for care proceedings;
 - place children within their local authority area where reasonably practicable and where this is consistent with a child's needs and welfare;
 - support the market to deliver more appropriate placements and other services locally;
 - have mechanisms for commissioning appropriate, high quality placements and services outside of their local area, which can meet a child's identified needs (this will be necessary in circumstances where it is not consistent with a child's welfare or reasonably practicable for him/her to be placed within the local area); and
 - have in place a strategy for addressing supply issues and reducing constraints over time (methods for doing this might include building their own capacity and expertise, as well as those of local private and voluntary sector providers).
- 1.7 The local authority's duty in section 22G has to be understood in the context of their duty in section 22C of the 1989 Act. In accordance with section 22C(5), the overriding factor is that the placement must be the most appropriate placement available. Next, the local authority must give preference to a placement with a friend, relative or other person connected with the child and who is a local authority foster parent. Failing that, the local authority must, so far as reasonably practicable, in all circumstances find a placement that:
- is near the child's home;
 - does not disrupt his education or training;
 - enables the child to live with an accommodated sibling;
 - where the child is disabled, is suitable to meet the needs of that child; and
 - is within the local authority's area, unless that is not reasonably practicable.
- 1.8 There is no order of priority within the categories listed in the bullet points above. All of these are factors that have to be taken into account.

2. **Staying Put**

- 2.1 Herefordshire's Staying Put Project will aim to build on and improve the existing arrangements for young people in foster care to remain with their carers after the age of 18. The aim is for young people to remain with their former foster carers until they reach 21 years of age (or for a substantial period beyond their 18th birthday). This is conducive to the stability of the placement, and consistent with wanting the young person to achieve economic well-being by offering the young person continuity of support to improve their life chances.
- 2.2 The key aims are:
- Enable young people to build on and nurture their attachments to their carers, so that they can move to independence at their own pace and be supported to make the transition to adulthood in a more gradual way just like the other young people who can rely on their own families for this support;
 - Provide the stability and support necessary for young people to achieve in education, training and employment; and
 - Give weight to young people's views about the timing of moves to greater independence from their final care placement.
- 2.3 The Staying Put Project meets objectives within the Children Act 1989 and the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 to improve the life chances of young people in and leaving local authority care. The guidance of Children (Leaving Care) Act recommends converting foster placements at 18 into supported lodgings. The Staying Put arrangement promotes the Acts main aims to young people, which are:
- To delay young people's discharge from care until they are ready and prepared;
 - To improve the assessment, preparation and planning for leaving care;
 - To provide better personal support for young people after leaving care;
 - To improve the financial arrangements for care leavers.
 - This project also fits within the Public Service Agreement 2 National Indicators 147 and 148, which identify whether:
 - The young person is living in suitable accommodation;
 - The young person is in Education Training or Employment.
- 2.4 Staying Put supports the local Children and Young People's Plan and in particular gives young people who are in stable, supportive placements the opportunity to pursue education, training and employment in order to participate both socially and economically as citizens, without the disruption of having to move into 'independence' during this critical period of their lives.
- 2.5 Both The Green Paper "Care Matters - Transforming the Lives of Children in Care" and the White Paper "Care Matters - Time for Change" refer to the importance for young people of 'entering adult life at the right time'. To remain with foster carers beyond 18 is identified as an area for development.
- 2.6 Many young people who have been looked after by the local authority experience a compressed transition from childhood to adulthood (Professor Mike Stein - University of York), and the option to Stay Put seeks to protract and normalise the young person's experience of moving into adulthood. Staying Put fits within HC's aspiration to be a good corporate parent to all young people to whom it has acted as a substitute family.
- 2.7 The project also provides a framework to allow care leavers at university to return to their former carers during vacation time, and young people who commence basic training with the armed

services to return to their carers during breaks, reflecting the ongoing support which would be available to young people living in supportive families.

- 2.8 Staying Put can also contribute to 'decreasing' the role of the Personal Adviser with these young people, by taking into account the relationship and support provided by the former foster carer to the young person, enabling the Personal Adviser to work with other Care Leavers who may be living independently with less support and in more disadvantaged circumstances.
- 2.9 Staying Put will offer carers improved training opportunities and prepare them to support teenagers into adulthood in a planned and individual way. The training offered will complement the Induction Standards for Children's Workforce training requirements for foster carers. The investment and commitment of the foster carers is acknowledged through better levels of remuneration and support, increasing the retention of foster carers who find their task rewarding and fulfilling.
- 2.10 The Staying Put Project reflects the Government's determination to improve the experiences of children in care, to challenge the poor outcomes historically experienced by young people in care, and to reduce the gap between the quality of life of young people in the care of the local authority and those raised in supportive families.

3. G versus Southwark

- 3.1 G v Southwark is a significant judgement for all those working with young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The ruling has implications on the support these young vulnerable people can expect and from whom. The implications of this are that 16/17 year olds who are accepted as homeless are to be treated as in care under section 20 of the Children Act.
- 3.2 Most of the young people who become children in care due to homelessness will be placed in temporary accommodation commissioned by housing services, supported lodgings, hostel or foyer accommodation as supported living options. These options will continue to be jointly commissioned by Children's Service, Supporting People arrangements and Housing services. Herefordshire endeavours to avoid the use of B&B as a temporary accommodation option for young people aged 16-17 and puts in alternative arrangements as well as promoting appropriate returns to home. Foster placements are sometimes an option in a small number of cases and generally short term pending suitable supported living.
- 3.3 Young people accommodated in supported living as children in care will have their rent and maintenance funded through children's service budgets and will become care leavers entitled to support to the age of 21, or 24 if in education until then. The judgement therefore has significant impact on the need for leaving care services over time. Experience locally and in other areas since the judgement suggests that some young people will opt to accept supported living options independently rather than as children in care, and will then be eligible for benefits rather than leaving care financial support. They will still require support from children's services as young people in need until the age of 18.