

Author	S SCOTT	Classification (must be either UNCLASSIFIED, PROTECT or RESTRICT)	UNCLASSIFIED	Date of First Issue	APRIL 2013
Owner	SCS	Issue Status	FINAL	Date of Latest Re-Issue	
Version	1	Page		Date approved by IGB	
				Date of next review	APRIL 2015



A Sufficiency Strategy for Enfield Looked After Children (2013 – 2016)

Introduction

Enfield Council believes that for most children and young people, the best place to live is with their family of origin. However, there will be some children and young people who need to live, either short term or permanently, with substitute carers. The purpose of this strategy is to set out the developments in place to improve our threshold of care services and to ensure the current and future placement needs of our looked after children.

Background

Over the last sixteen years there have been a number of legislative programmes aimed at improving services for vulnerable children with a particular emphasis on looked after children. The Quality Protects initiative, Every Child Matters and Care Matters were all designed to improve outcomes for looked after children by improving placement choice and stability, delivering excellence in education and providing dedicated health services. Despite these high ambitions and a shared commitment for change, the outcomes for looked after children and care leavers have not improved sufficiently and there remains a significant gap between their life chances and those of other young people.

The current difficult economic context has been made more difficult in Enfield as result of the welfare reforms. This seen an escalation in the numbers of families in crisis, more children requiring child protection plans and an increase in the numbers of looked after children. The introduction of the 2012 Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act confers looked after status to all young people remanded through the courts and will further increase the numbers in care. The Department for Education (DfE) anticipated that this would increase the numbers of looked after children by 8% with an increase of 3% in the leaving care population. However, given the profile of the young people remanded in Enfield, we have seen that the increase in the leaving care numbers has mirrored the 8 % growth of the looked after children population.

This continued pressure on services, at a time of reducing Council budgets, calls for an holistic commissioning response which will support children to remain with their families wherever possible and which will provide a range of effective options for those requiring alternative care arrangements.

Adoption Reform

The Children and Families Act 2013 covers a range of areas. Its provisions on adoptions complement the Family Justice Review and are designed to increase the number of children placed in adoptive families and also the speed within which this is achieved. The Coalition Government outlined a series of measures all intended to transform the current system. Implementing the introduction of a 26 week time limit for care proceedings, a shorter adopters' assessment period, a concurrent planning requirement and less emphasis on ethnic matching will require significant service reshaping by all local authorities.

Commissioning and Sufficiency

Commissioning can be described as the process for deciding how to use the total resource available in order to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families in the most efficient, equitable and sustainable way. Since April 2012 there has been a 'sufficiency duty' on all local authorities to secure sufficient local accommodation and services to meet the needs of all their looked after children for whom a local placement is the most suitable option. Securing sufficient accommodation that meets the needs of looked after children is a vital step in delivering improved outcomes for this vulnerable group. Having the right placement in the right place, at the right time, is a vital factor in improving placement stability, which in turn is a critical success factor in relation to better outcomes for looked after children.

The following primary legislation governs our commissioning in relation to looked after children

1. Children Act 1989 & 2004
2. Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
3. Care Standards Act 2000
4. Adoption and Children Act 2002
5. Children and Young Persons Act 2008
6. Statutory Guidance on Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children 2010
7. Guidance on the Provision of Accommodation for 16 & 17 year old young people who be homeless and/or require accommodation 2010
8. Care Planning Review and Regulations 2010
9. Promoting the Educational Achievements of Looked After Children: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities 2010
10. The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012
11. Children and Families Act 2013 Section 2 Fostering for adoption
12. Staying Put Guidance 2013
13. Care Act 2014

Locally this strategy should be read in conjunction with the Children and Young People's Plan, the Supporting People Strategy, the Housing Strategy and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

In Enfield the Children's Services Division holds lead responsibility, on behalf of the Schools and Children's Services Department and the Council, for the delivery of Local Authority services to protect children. The Division has a crucial role on the Local Safeguarding Children's Board, working with partner agencies to implement early help and child protection policies. The majority of families who become involved with the Division's Children in Need services have complex needs and may require a range of support and monitoring interventions. Services are focussed on promoting the welfare of children and supporting their families to care for them wherever possible.

Building Resilience

Enfield's transformative Building Resilience programme incorporated a comprehensive review of all School's and Children's Services to ensure that they are easy to access and use and that problems are identified and addressed as early as possible. The programme's priorities are to:

- Preserve family life wherever feasible
- Narrow achievement gaps
- Protect children from significant harm, prevent crime and anti social behaviour and reduce social exclusion
- Encourage participation and engagement
- Deliver value for money services
- Get it 'Right First Time'

The Single Point Of Entry (SPOE) provides a front door, multi agency/multi disciplinary response to all professionals making referrals and allows services to be coordinated and targeted, preventing escalation of need. The staffing, governance and information sharing protocols have been agreed and the model has been operational since October 2012.

A wide range of targeted and specialist services are available to help prevent the need for children to become looked after.

- The Adolescent Support team provides focused, time limited support aimed at preventing admission to care.
- The Children's Centre programme provides targeted, specialised family support services for young families to prevent escalation of need. These include services targeted to those experiencing domestic violence, teenage pregnancy, problems with welfare benefits and newly diagnosed children's disabilities. Support with child development, speech and language issues and the emotional well being of both children and their parents are provided through integrated working arrangements with health colleagues.

- A Hidden Harm service has been commissioned to minimise the impact of parental substance misuse on children and a specialist worker works alongside other professionals to provide a bespoke response to this growing problem.
- Multi Systemic Therapy is available to provide very intensive support to help maintain young people in their families.
- Family Group Conferences are used to identify family based solutions to difficulties which may otherwise require admission to care.
- Over 100 parent champions have been recruited to work alongside families particularly those in hard to reach communities.
- The Joint Service for Disabled Children comprising, health, education and social care provides a range of support and short break services. Services are designed to promote family life, preventing family crisis. Support needs of disabled children and their families vary. Some families will require more because of the nature of their child's disability and its severity. Others may require more intensive support because of their unique family circumstances. The aim is to provide the right level of support at the right time thus minimising family breakdown.
- The Housing Support Service for homeless 16/17 year olds reduces the number of homeless, socially excluded young people (aged 16-17) living in temporary accommodation and/or becoming Looked After children by enabling successful reintegration into their communities. The service adopts an integrated holistic pathway offering a number of varied interventions including mediation order to meet the needs of those vulnerable 16/17 year olds at risk of homelessness.
- The service has expanded its mediation service to those young people in young offenders' institutions, offering opportunities to engage with young people and their parents prior to release back to Enfield. A significant number of young people when leaving YOI return to Enfield and live with their parents. The homeless young people steering group has recognised that these arrangements are not always robust and mediation can reduce the risks of homelessness and improve relationships between the young person and their parents.
- The Community Parent Support Service provides early help to families to improve life opportunities for all children, young people and families through 1:1 clinical case work. The service delivers a duty telephone and face to face service ensuring no child falls between the gaps in service in developing a right first time, no wrong door approach.
- All Parent Support Advisors are trained to empower change primarily applying practical strategies within a solution focused framework.

- The national Troubled Families initiative has supported the development of a number of new or enhanced local support options, designed to keep families together through an holistic approach to problem solving.
- The Homeless Families Service provides support and accommodation to families with no recourse to public funds, ensuring that homelessness does not lead to the accommodation of children who would otherwise be able to live with their family of origin.
- A service for young people who run away from home or care is now firmly embedded in the Borough. This service was developed in partnership with the local police and offers family mediation to prevent repeat episodes of running away and signposting to relevant support services.
- The Parenting Support Service facilitates a range of Parenting Support Programmes, which are designed to equip parents with advice, skills and knowledge to help make parenting easier. Enfield offers parents the opportunity to access FREE parenting training programmes. The Community Parent Support Service works in partnership with a number of agencies, including voluntary and community organisations, to deliver the following parenting programmes every school term:
 - Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities – a 13 week programme, three hour sessions, once a week.
 - Escape – a 6 week programme, two hour sessions, once a week.
 - Speakeasy – an 8 week programme, two hour sessions, once a week.
 - A three year Parenting Strategy 2012 -2015 is in place. Enfield has many agencies, groups and centres that offer a vast range of parenting support. The “Promise to Parents” booklet has been written for parents, telling them what they can expect from local services, schools and organisations, whether they are a mother, father or anyone else in a parenting role. The aim is to support parents to seek advice and guidance as early as possible as it can make a difference for the whole family.
- Enfield’s Parent Engagement Panel (PEP) is a network of local parents that meet on a regular basis and play an active role in local children’s and young people’s services. The PEP provides parent-to-parent information, advice and positive help to any parents who need some additional support.
- The overall aim of the PEP is to build resilience by engaging positively with and empowering Enfield parents and their children in our wards who often face complex challenges and are at risk of getting into difficulties as a result. There are many families that are isolated and do not normally engage with others outside of their communities. Parent

Champions bridge the gap between the community and targeted professional support.

The PEP and specifically the Parent Champions engage across communities and within communities supporting parents and keeping children and young people safe by:

- Identifying ways to ensure that parents participate in service planning and delivery within the Borough.
- Developing a structure for specific safeguarding training and ongoing support to local voluntary Parent Champions.
- Challenging discipline methods and improving child protection through awareness within communities.
- Increasing low level parent to parent support within communities.
- Strengthening community roles in reducing Anti-Social Behaviour and Offending.
- Improving parents and young people's aspirations and life opportunities and thus contributing directly to reducing Child Poverty.

All these interventions seek to maintain family life wherever possible so that the children and young people who do come into our care are those for whom there is no positive alternative. When children and young people do come into the care of Enfield Council, their experiences, progress and outcomes are closely monitored and actively supported.

Looked After Children

The Association of Director's of Children's Services has described the purpose of the care system as incorporating the following elements:

1. **To protect children from harm** by providing a place of safety and stability in which children and young people can flourish – either by helping families to build capacity to resume care for their children, or away from the family where necessary.
2. **To improve the outcomes of children and young people who are vulnerable** by meeting the specific and individual needs of each child and young person. The system must provide support for as long as it is needed, responding to changing circumstances.
3. **To address a child's basic need for good parenting** by introducing and planning effective substitute parenting to perform the fundamental role of steering and supporting a child through his or her formative stages of development.

When a child or young person does become looked after by Enfield Council they will receive a high quality service and be kept safe from harm. This includes children placed outside the local authority boundary, those who are remanded to youth detention accommodation and those who are looked after by virtue of being unaccompanied child migrants or asylum seekers. We

believe that the following principles are paramount in carrying out our responsibilities as good corporate parents.

1. Put the voices of children, young people and their families at the heart of service design and delivery.
2. Deliver services that are tailored to the individual and diverse needs of children and young people by ensuring effective joint commissioning and integrated professional working.
3. Develop services that address health and well being and promote high quality care.
4. Encourage warm and caring relationships between children and young people and their carers that nurture attachment and create a sense of belonging so that the child or young person feels safe, protected and valued.
5. Promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination based on age, disability, gender, gender identity, faith or belief, ethnicity, race, religion, language and sexual orientation.
6. Ensure young people are prepared for and supported in their transition to adulthood.
7. Support children and young people to participate in the wider network of peer, school and community activities to help build resilience and a sense of belonging.
8. Ensure children and young people have a stable experience of care and education that encourages high aspiration and supports them in meeting their potential.

Placement Needs Analysis

A needs analysis is a way of estimating types of need and prevalence across a given cohort. This assists with planning and commissioning services to meet predicted demand and helps to ensure that appropriate services are available to meet the range of needs of the looked after children population.

National Context

The most recent statistical release provides national information about looked after children who have been looked after continuously for twelve months as of March 31st 2012. The figures are based on data from the SSDA903 returns from all local authorities in England.

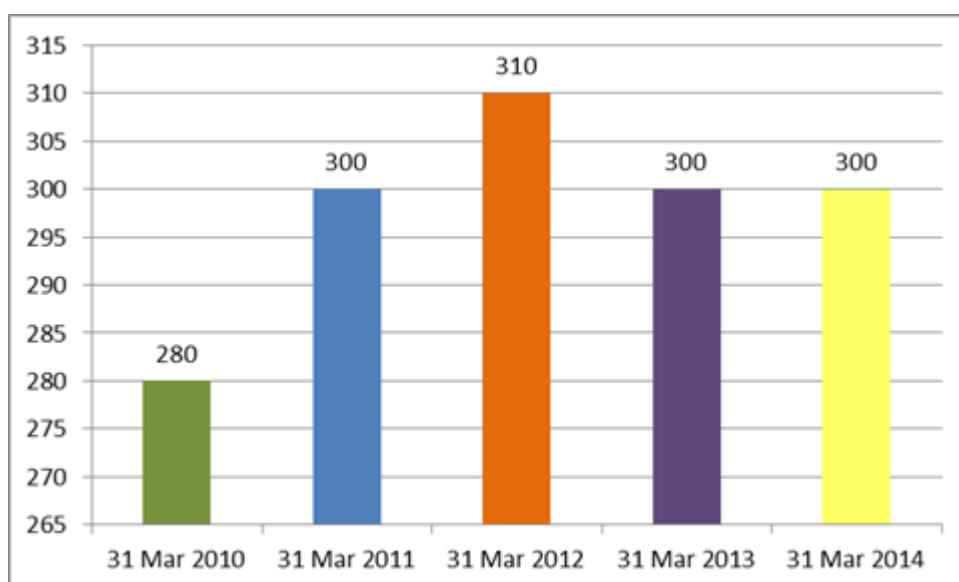
Key Points from this release are;

- There were 67,050 looked after children at 31st March 2014, an increase of 1% compared to 31st March 2013 and an increase of 7% compared to 31st March 2010.
- 30,430 children started to be looked after during the year ending 31st March 2014. This is an increase of 5% from the previous year's figures and an increase of 8% from 2010.

- 30,430 children ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31st March 2014. This was a small increase of 6% from the previous year and an increase of 20% from 2010.
- 5,050 children were adopted during the year ending 31st March 2014 – an increase of 26% from 2013 and an increase of 58% from 2010. Although the number of looked after children adopted fell between 2010 and 2011, the number of these adoptions has since increased and is now at its highest point since the start of the current collection in 1992.

The local context

While the size of the Borough's own looked after children population dipped in 2013 and 2014, current figures are again increasing. As at 31st October 2014 the Council had 323 looked after children, suggesting that the figures for the full year 2014/15 are likely to be higher than the peak of 2012.



While the growing range of preventive services is undoubtedly helping to maintain more children in their family of origin, it is expected that the overall number of looked after children will continue to rise albeit slowly, over the next three years. While future numbers of looked after children are notoriously hard to predict, particularly when the impact of new drivers is yet to be tested, it is anticipated that the growth in local demand will not be completely offset by the increased range of support services available. In Enfield, a significant increase in the numbers of children subject to a child protection plan, new legislation and the predicted impact of the welfare reform changes is likely to be reflected in more children and young people requiring admission to care. Enfield's child population has increased significantly and according to Department for Education estimates stood at 81,400 at the end of March 2014. The number of looked after children per 10,000 stood at 39.7 as at the end of October 2014.

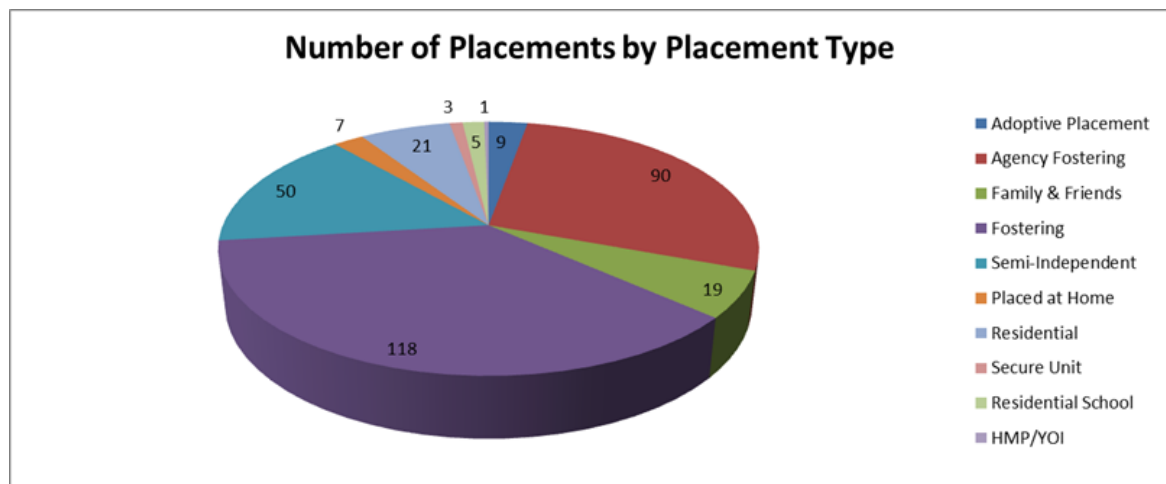
Our aim is to ensure sufficient local placements for children while improving outcomes and value for money. Enfield, like all London Boroughs, covers a small geographical area and local placements, where children and young people can maintain their community links, can be found outside the Borough boundaries. Our aim is to place children, whenever possible, within the Borough boundary or in the neighbouring boroughs/counties of Barnet, Haringey, Islington, Waltham Forest, Essex or Hertfordshire.

Any efficiencies released will allow the Council to invest further resources in preventive services and help deliver the Council’s budget reduction. In Enfield, weekly placement panels are held, chaired by the Assistant Director for Children’s Services and attended by the senior managers from services for commissioning, fostering, looked after children and children in need as well as specialist representatives from health and education. This panel manages all non emergency admissions to care, ensuring a consistent approach to decision making. The panel ensures that placements are made in accordance with care plans and that any child moving outside the Borough boundary will have arrangements made for immediate access to health and education services This panel, together with the monthly multi agency complex issues meeting, has a key role in identifying evolving need and any gaps in provision which then inform our commissioning activity.

The Current Cohort

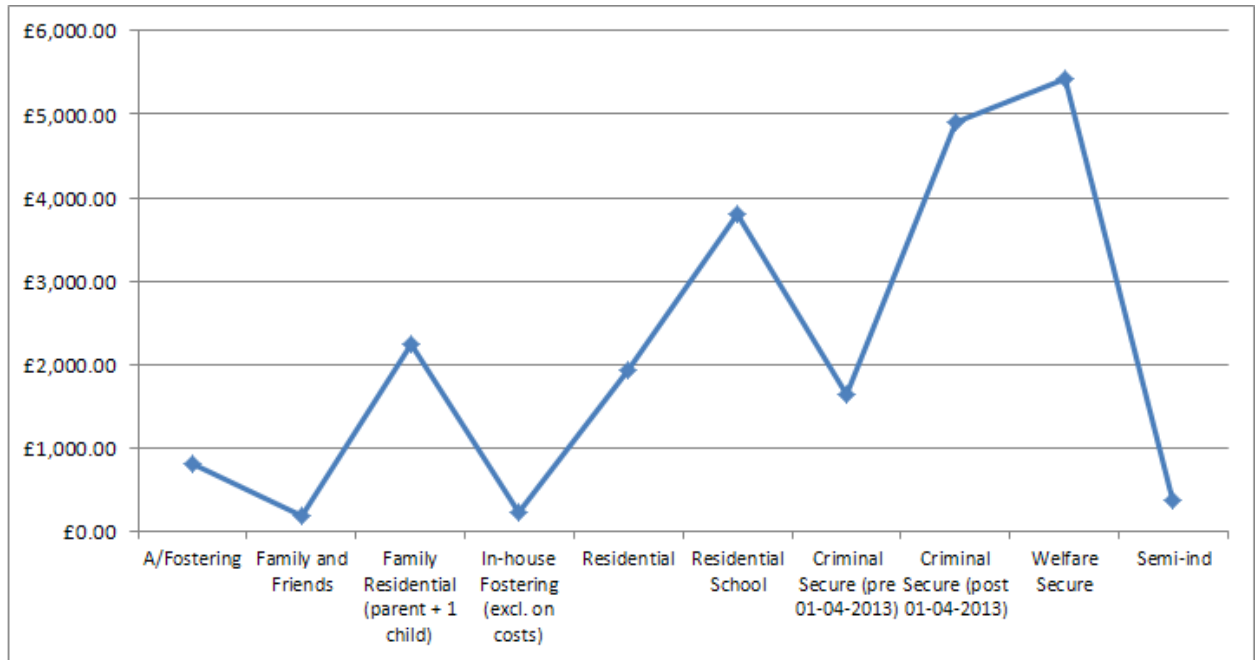
Figures from October 2014 show that Enfield had 323 of its own looked after children. Of this figure 49.8% were placed in borough, 64.4% were placed in borough or in a neighbouring borough and 35.6% were placed out of the locality. Enfield’s Looked After Children are placed in a number of settings depending on need and capacity – internal and external foster placements, residential homes, semi independent units, mother and baby placements and secure units

Placements of Enfield Looked After Children January 2013



The costs of the different types of provision vary enormously and average figures are shown below

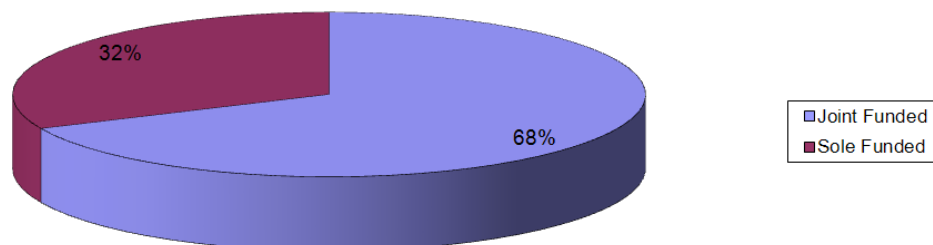
Costs of different types of provision



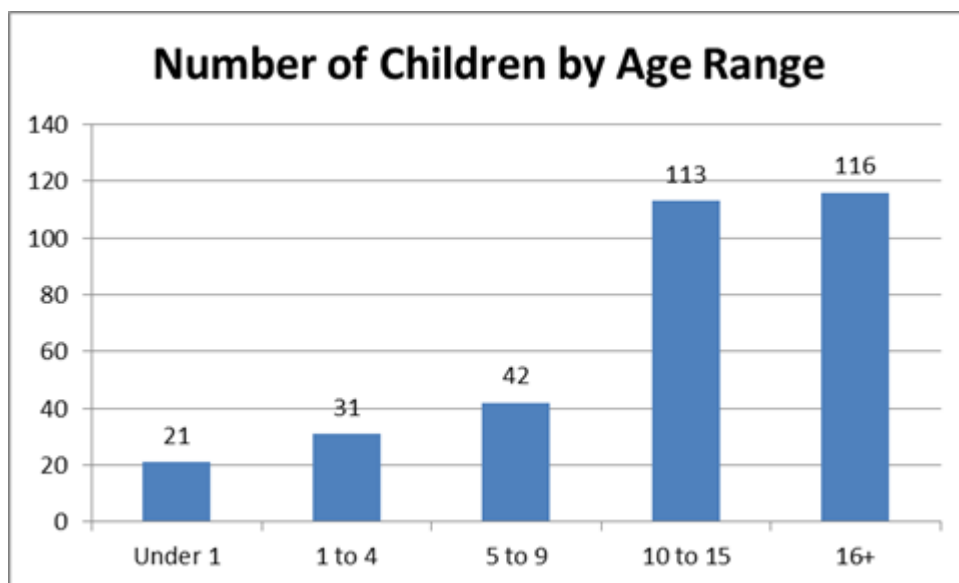
The numbers of children in residential care remains low at 9% (January 2013) and the majority of these young people have complex needs which cannot be met within a family setting or in a non specialist provision. Improved integrated planning with health services has increased the number of children in bespoke residential care whose placements are jointly commissioned and reviewed. The chart below shows the proportion of residential placements which are jointly planned and funded.

Residential Placements – Single and Joint Commissioning

Residential Placements Funding Analysis



Age breakdown of care population as at 31st October 2014



Disabled Children

The number of disabled children in care has always been low in Enfield and this is attributable to the comprehensive, multi agency family support work undertaken by the Joint Service for Disabled Children. 815 disabled children, young people and their families are in receipt of short breaks and family support services. Of this cohort, 19 children and young people are currently looked after. This is an increase on previous numbers and an analysis has been undertaken to determine the cause. Of the 19, 9 children are subject to Care Orders for reasons not specifically related to their disability but through abuse and neglect. The recent increase in the numbers of disabled looked after children mirrors the national picture, reflecting the increase in the number of disabled children population. Children are being diagnosed earlier and living longer. The increase in the number of disabled adolescents being accommodated was noted and casework analysis shows that this is indicative of the exhaustion families with children who have very complex needs may experience as their children become young adults. This is particularly problematic when young people show aggressive and challenging behaviours which overwhelm their families.

The Early Intervention Strategy for Disabled Children and Young People, which forms part of the local offer, targets those families in greatest need – ensuring that their health, education and social care needs are effectively coordinated and delivered.

Adolescents

The number of older adolescents becoming looked after has fluctuated since 2008-9

% of children starting a new period of care during the year who were aged 15-17 at the period start date												
Age	2008-09	%	2009-10	%	2010-11	%	2011-12	%	2012-13	%	2013-14	%
15	17	11.7	16	9.40	25	12.40	21	12.10	16	8.10	35	17.90
16	14	9.70	14	8.20	20	10.00	16	9.20	11	6.60	33	16.80
17	10	6.90	14	8.20	5	2.50	8	4.60	14	8.40	23	11.70

In the first seven months of 2014/15 **sixty-six** young people aged between 15 and 17 were accommodated. There has been a significant increase in the number of 15-18 year olds coming into care last year and so far this year. This is mainly attributable to the impact of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 and an increase in the numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. The factors that combine to bring a young person into care as a teenager correlate highly with those that put them at risk of abnormally high levels of problematic behaviour.

The Southwark judgement, mandating children's services to provide accommodation and support to vulnerable homeless 16 and 17 year olds, has changed the profile of the post 16 care population. These changes have been further complicated by the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act which has conferred looked after child status on all young people who have been remanded through the courts since November 2012.

Sufficiency Strategies

Enfield has adopted a range of strategies in response to the increase in numbers and the change in profile of its looked after children and further action will be taken to ensure that the Council is able to continue to meet its sufficiency duty in the years ahead.

Action taken to date has included

- Ongoing development of the internal fostering service, both in terms of capacity and skill mix. Active recruitment has resulted in 57 new carers over the last three years
- Funding has been secured to coordinate and deliver a comprehensive training programme for internal foster carers. This has ensured a growing confidence among the Council's own carers to offer care to the most challenging young people who would otherwise have needed placements with external fostering agencies or in residential care.
- Training is provided to local private providers of residential and semi independent accommodation as part of a market management programme to ensure consistent, high standards of care for children placed locally.

- Additional, formal interventions to support internal placements have been commissioned from the Health and Education Access to Resources Team, to help prevent disruptions and bespoke support from other agencies is spot purchased as required.
- The Access to Resources team commissions all placements for children who do not move to internal foster carers. The team has increased its market management function to encourage new providers into the Borough and to support existing providers to diversify as needs evolve.
- While the number of children in residential care remains low, enhanced multi agency planning has meant that the majority of these placements are jointly agreed and funded to meet the holistic needs of the most complex children
- Active involvement in the work of the North London Adoption and Fostering Consortium has led to the sharing of vacant placements, allowing more children to remain close to their communities. The consortium is currently working on remand foster care, mother and baby fostering placements and the foster to adopt project
- Enfield is a member of the North London Efficiencies Programme which aims to develop a sub regional response to sufficiency. A contract exists between the members of the Efficiencies Programme and a select list of independent fostering agencies with local capacity.

It is important to note that while some children do have to be placed out of borough because of a lack of local capacity, there are many other reasons why a looked after child may be placed away from Enfield as part of their Care Plan.

- Safeguarding concerns for the child if they remain in the Borough
- Specialist resources available to meet very complex needs (disabled children, sexually harmful behaviours, complex health/ education/care combination)
- Lack of specialist, high quality provision in Borough (a regional presence is more cost effective for specialist providers)
- In the hierarchy of a child's needs, being local may be assessed to be less of a priority than other, more crucial, factors.
- An excellent match out of Borough would be preferable to a poor match in Borough

[Moving Forward](#)

While it is expected that the Council's Building Resilience Framework will support more families to care for their own children it is still anticipated that the numbers of looked after children will increase marginally over the next three years. The following table sets out **predictions** for the numbers of children in care over this period based on current trends, new national pressures and the growing positive impact of our early intervention work.

Year	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016
Looked After Children	309	310	315	310

While this predicted increase is small, the evolving demographic of the looked after children population will require new commissioning solutions to ensure that Enfield can continue to meet its sufficiency duty. Particular challenges will include having appropriate placement options for young people remanded to the Local Authority, the shortage of available housing stock resulting from the expected population shift from inner London and the increasing difficulty of securing local independent foster placements where supply already falls far short of demand. There are currently 257 looked after children from other boroughs placed in Enfield, most of these with independent foster carers and this has a significant impact on the availability of local placements for Enfield's own looked after children. Maintaining family life and improving outcomes for all children in care will remain at the heart of our work

An analysis of placement stability for Enfield LAC completed in 2014 identified that young people who enter the care system as adolescents are already exhibiting disruptive behaviour. Of particular concern is the area of sexual vulnerability in relation to girls in the older age group. These young people came from chaotic backgrounds, were beyond parental control and all had behavioural problems.

Our analysis suggests that with a more effective early response to problems, up to 20% of those aged 11+ could achieve better outcomes without fracturing their relationships with their families.

The Family and Adolescent Support Hub (FASH) will be a multi-disciplinary, rapid reaction service providing early help and support to vulnerable 11-17 year olds in, on the edge of care, or returning home from care, and their families. Many of these young people have a complex range of needs that can be addressed earlier and more effectively.

The FASH will build on our existing Family and Accommodation Support Team and bring together a wide range of professionals and services, including two newly established teams: a CSE Prevention Team and a Reunification Team which will support young people returning home to the care of their families once it is assessed to be safe to do so.

Enfield has identified three priority objectives to ensure it can continue to meet its sufficiency duty. The following action plan sets out the work to be completed to meet these objectives with timescales for completion. This plan will be reviewed and updated annually during the life of this strategy.

1. Ensure that more families are able to care for their own children through an increased focus on support services			
ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE	COMMENT
To develop the Family and Adolescent Support Hub as a result of the DfE Innovation Fund grant	Assistant Director and Heads of Service	Operational by 2015	
In partnership with Health develop a specification for a bespoke Sleep Service to be delivered from April 2016 onwards	Head of Service – Joint Service for Disabled Children	April 2015 - March 2016	
A restructure has taken place in the Children in Need Service and additional resources have been identified for the SPOE and Enfield's Troubled Families programme.	Assistant Director for Children's Services and Head of Service		
Proactively engage in the development of a 6 bed therapeutic service based in Islington with 5 other London boroughs	Director of Children's Services and relevant Heads of Service	2014/15	
Retendering the service for Families on the Edge of Care and resettlement	Lead Commissioner for Family Support	2015/16	

2. Ensure that all Looked After Children are in an appropriate placement which meets all their needs and promotes the best possible outcomes. Increase the capacity and range of local options to allow more children and young people to be placed in our close to the Borough			
Increase the number of foster carers willing to take adolescents	Assistant Director Children's Services	April 2016	
Recruit 10 additional foster carers on top of the baseline number	Service Manager/ Manager Fostering Service	April 2016	
Commissioned Ernst Young to review current capacity for fostering and a delivery model for the future	Head of Service	April 2016	
Complete a feasibility study into the development of a supported lodgings scheme	Service Manager/ Manager Fostering Service	January 2016	Outstanding
Complete a retendering exercise for the semi-independent accommodation including provision for those young people of 18+	Access to Resources Team	March 2016	
3. Improve market management of placements and secure better value in terms of quality, price and outcomes			
Improve value for money in the commissioning of external placements through proactive work with the cross borough NLCEP and with providers.	Head of Children's Commissioning	September 2013	Undertaken and on going