

Hertfordshire Sufficiency Statement: The Accommodation of Children & Young People Living Away from Home



2017 – 2020

**Children and Young People's Commissioning
Service: Children Looked After and Safeguarding**



Executive Summary

The Children Act 1989 requires local authorities to take steps that secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the Authority's area boundaries 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').

When assessing 'sufficiency', Hertfordshire County Council takes into account:

- the condition of the local market, including the level of demand for specific types of providers in a particular locality and the amount and type of supply that currently exists
- the development capacity of local providers
- the current resource and overall budget priorities of the council.

This Hertfordshire Sufficiency Statement reports achievements in 2017/18, current levels of demand, priorities for 2018/19 and our capacity to respond to demand.

Section 1

1. Introduction

This report provides a summary of progress against our priorities for 2017-2018, our commissioning intentions for 2018-2019 to further improve service delivery and how we will address some of the challenges that Hertfordshire faces in delivering services for children who are looked after.

A children and young people's sufficiency statement will be published in 2018 and shared with Hertfordshire children looked after, written by Hertfordshire Young Commissioners (including members of the Children in Care Council).

Since the last Annual Sufficiency Statement, Hertfordshire has developed and is embedding an outcome framework across all Children's Services in order to measure the distance travelled by individual children receiving services, and to shape how we commission services. These are entitled the 'Outcome Bees' which have been co-produced by families, providers, professionals and young people. These are based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, namely 'Be Happy', 'Be Safe', 'Be Resilient', 'Be Ambitious', 'Be Healthy' and 'Be Independent'. A quarterly performance group with multi-agency professionals across Children's Services, the CCGs and the Virtual School will review and contribute to CLA commissioning intentions, reflective of the outcome framework.

Hertfordshire County Council continues to host the Children's Cross Regional Arrangements Group, demonstrating commitment to regional working and reducing inefficiencies through sharing of monitoring and fee increase negotiations nationally.

Section 2: Strategic Position 2017/2018

As at 31st March 2018, we had 903 children in care (including unaccompanied asylum seekers) who make up slightly under 10% of the overall population. At the end of November, we had 618 CLA placed in county (66.5%) and 312 placed out of county (33.5%) out of our total of 930 CLA. Of the 312 placed out of Hertfordshire's borders, 229 are living in Local Authorities whose borders touch Hertfordshire and 83 are at a distance. Living in a border county can mean, in some instances, the child is closer to their originating community than if they were to live, for example, at the opposite side of Hertfordshire to where their family reside.

Where possible, we aim to keep children within their communities where it is safe to do so. However, we are facing increasing challenges in placement location, availability and choice. This is mainly due to age, urgency of placement needed, presenting needs and risks, the national shortfall in people wanting to foster and the residential market feeling under pressure and unable to manage the more complex children referred to them.

Needs

Recently, iMPower have worked with us to promote needs and outcomes led commissioning. Workers will complete a tool to enable the placement service to better identify appropriate placements and negotiate placement cost according to level of need. The tool has been used to review 256 cases helping us to identify prevalence and trends:

- needs around identity and self-esteem are more prevalent for 0-9 year olds
- needs relating to safe decisions around drugs, alcohol and sexualised behaviour are more prevalent for 8 – 16 year olds and increase with age
- assessed learning disability/difficulty is more prevalent for 7 – 16 year olds
- there is a clear trend showing severity of need (average needs score) and number of identified needs increasing with age
- ages with the highest average number of needs are 7 and 12 years olds
- ages with the highest average needs score are 12, 8 and 9 year olds
- needs relating to emotional health (diagnosed/undiagnosed mental health), understanding life story and managing emotions and responding to stress were the most commonly identified and some of the highest scoring (i.e. the most severe)
- children placed outside of LA boundaries have a significantly higher than average needs scores than those placed within
- those placed in private provision, including residential schools and care homes, have the highest needs on average, by placement type
- on average, there is minimal difference between the needs score of boys (271) and girls (253); however, needs relating to physical and emotional health and management of emotions are more prevalent for girls, while needs relating to educational progress, assessed learning difficulties/disabilities and engaging in social activity are more prevalent for boys.

2.1 Hertfordshire Children Looked After (CLA) Strategy

Children's Services is continuing to co-ordinate the range of preventative support available with a clear focus on supporting families to stay together wherever it is safe to do so, thus minimising the need for children and young people to come into care, and supporting a timely return to their extended family network. In order to continue working towards achieving the CLA Strategy targets, placement and financial, the 2017/2018 sufficiency audit reflects the need to:

- maintain the number of in-house residential placements
- increase the number of in-house foster placements
- reduce the number of independent foster placements used
- reduce the number of independent placements outside Hertfordshire
- increase the level of support to families who are in crisis to prevent family breakdown and/or to support children and young people to return home post breakdown
- reduce the number of 16 year olds coming into care through more timely mediation and support for families.

2.2 Children Looked After (CLA) Population Data

The number of CLA (including UASC) has continued to reduce to 903 as of March 31st 2018 from 974 in September 2016. This represents a decrease in the rate to 34.4 from 39.3 two years ago and places us in the top quartile nationally.

The number of CLA excluding UASC has reduced to 816 and remains well ahead of the target of 941 in the 'Reducing the Number of CLA Strategy'.

	Aug 17	Sep 17	Oct 17	Nov 17	Dec 17	Jan 18	Feb 18	Mar 18
Under 1	36	37	33	31	32	32	32	33
1 to 4	91	92	81	76	77	73	75	70
5 to 9	142	148	152	155	145	147	143	142
10 to 12	180	179	178	179	176	174	169	168
13 to 15	219	224	221	218	219	229	237	241
16 +	257	259	265	267	270	263	253	249

During 2017/18, numbers have most notably reduced in the 0-9 years age group, which is reflected in the last quarter for 2017/18. Numbers in the 16 years plus include unaccompanied asylum seeking children. It has been noted that in the last 3 years the number of 16 years plus coming into care has reduced year on year.

There is a continued decrease across all age groups apart from the 10-15 year olds where those coming into care has remained relatively steady. Those coming into care aged 10-12 years had increased by 10 in the last 7 months but steadied in April 2018. The range of family support including the family safeguarding model and support for teenagers on the edge of care is continuing to have an impact on the overall numbers. It is also noted that the teenage population in care have

increasingly complex needs and we therefore have to consider future commissioning intentions to ensure services are fit for purpose. We have noted that teenagers in particular are presenting with a range of needs which require health as well as social care intervention so it is critical that we work jointly with our colleagues in CAMHS to ensure we meet need.

Section 3: Key Achievements in 2017/18

Robust contract management of 16+ semi-independent accommodation and support framework with a transparent pricing schedule to reduce the costs of placements.
Ongoing reduction in the number of 16+ young people coming into care for the first time by launching the prevention of homelessness service providing intensive support to work with the young people and their families to enable them to return home.
Providing 2 practice flats to enable the young people to develop their skills as they transition through from fostering, residential or semi-independent services to independent living.
Providing quality accommodation for families that have no recourse to public funds and 18+ young people seeking asylum ensuring value for money is achieved.
Herts Practical Parenting, Wrixon Care and other support agencies have continued to contribute to reducing the number of children and young people coming into care by working with just over a 150 children.
Procurement of local placements for fostering through IFAs and providers offering support packages to work alongside families to stay together, with detailed pricing schedules to ensure value for money and transparency over cost
An increase to 65 young people from the Young Commissioner programme being actively involved in commissioned activities, working cohesively with the Children in Care Council (CHICC) to shape service delivery (CLA and Safeguarding)
Inside out: Successful Regional DFE bid to develop a coaching programme to step down children in residential care
Credo Care: DFE bid to keep children with disabilities in local foster placements
Commission of solo residential provision for children with complex needs
New supported accommodation for 16 plus UASC CLA

Section 4: Demographics

4.1 Gender

There are a slightly higher proportion of males to females within the CLA population; however, this has evened out to 58% of males from 63% in the previous financial year.

4.2 Ethnicity Data

Of Children Looked After, 28.1% are from Black and Ethnic minority groups (2.1 percentage points higher than in 2016).

The ethnic profile of children and young people in Hertfordshire as at March 2017 (next update due July 2018):

	Population	Referrals	Children in care
	(all ages 0-17) Census 2011	2016-17	at 31 Mar 2017
TOTAL WHITE	82.8%	69.0%	71.9%
TOTAL MIXED	5.9%	10.5%	12.1%
TOTAL ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH	6.6%	5.9%	4.8%
TOTAL BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH	3.5%	7.5%	7.0%
TOTAL OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS¹	1.2%	1.7%	4.3%
TOTAL NOT RECORDED	0.0%	5.3%	0.0%

4.3 Care Leavers

The number of care leavers per annum as a total has increased in the 12 months Dec 16 to Dec 17 from 513 to 528.

The percentage of care leavers aged 19-21 in suitable accommodation has risen from 88.9% to 93.4% in the past year.

4.4 Length of time in care

The percentage of children looked after with three or more placements in the last 12 months was 12% as of Mar 31st 2018. Long term stability (*children who have been looked after for 2.5 years or more and remained in the same placement for the last two years*) has decreased to 67.2%.

4.5 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

¹ This includes Chinese, south east Asian, and middle east ethnicities.

The percentage of UASC as at Mar 31st 2018 was 9.63% of the overall CLA number. This group of children are more likely to be placed out of area due to cultural matching of placements. The majority of UASC originate from Eritrea, Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan. Hertfordshire is part of a regional scheme accepting new arrivals on a rota basis.

Section 5: Placement Information

5.1 Placement Stability

Performance in this area will require on-going focus to ensure that stability for children in foster care continues to improve.

As at March 2018, there were 12% of CLA population who have at least 3 placements. This is a 1% decrease from March 2016 across the whole CLA population. Work continues to reduce this figure further reduce to 11.5%.

The percentage of children looked after with three or more placements rose to 13% in January but has decreased to 12% as at end March 2018. This equates to 108 children, compared with 106 in 2016/17. Performance has been strong in the last three months with only an additional 20 children entering a third placement compared with 31 in the same period in 2017. Whilst change has now taken place in relation to operational activity to reduce the likelihood of a placement move, this has not yet fully impacted upon the performance indicator due to poorer performance earlier in the year.

We are aware of the increasing complexity of need of children coming into care and behaviour remains the main reason for placement breakdown. A range of training programmes and support packages are offered to carers to increase resilience within carer households.

5.2 Summary of all Placements

Below is a summary of placement types for Hertfordshire children and young people over the last year. As at December 2017, placement types were as follows:

- 573 in-house fostering plus family and friends placements (including 31 UASC)
- 24 in-house residential placement
- 172 Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA) (including 22 UASC) plus 11 0-25 placements
- 49 Independent Residential Placements
- 100 semi-independent (including 36 UASC)
- 3 secure welfare
- 5 residential parenting assessments
- 4 in residential special schools. Of these, 3 are also education funded and one is over 18 and currently social care funded only.

Although the numbers have reduced significantly, the categories of placement types are relatively unchanged.

5.3 Location of Placements

Ensuring that children and young people are placed within Hertfordshire continues to be a challenge for commissioners. This remains a key priority for commissioners going forward to commission more local provision.

There has been a 2% rise since last year to 92% of all CLA being placed in Hertfordshire or neighbouring authorities.

Section 6: Types of Provision

In House Services

6.1 In House Fostering Service

Fostering enquiries have reduced in quantity due to a specific focus on targeting groups who are most likely to have the skills, experience and attributes required to meet the needs of our current CLA population. Direct campaigns focusing on our service priorities for carers for teenagers, sibling groups, children with disabilities and children requiring specialist or long-term carers have resulted in fewer enquirers, but improved conversion rates with enquirers more likely to go on to have initial visits, attend Skills to Foster training and progress to assessment.

As at end March 2018, there were 467 children placed in in-house placements and 88 aged 18+ in staying put arrangements. There were 27 new fostering households approved by 31st March 2018. All of these households are registered to take children within our priority groups, with a potential to take up to 38 new placements.

For Quarter 1 2018/19, there are already 10 assessments booked to panel, with a potential of 14 new placements in target groups. Future campaigns include Foster Care Fortnight with the launch of a recruitment film. The strategy group continues to encourage foster carer led local community events, as well as more general promotional activities within the community. A priority going forward is working with the web team to improve the content and appearance of the fostering pages on the website; further improvements have been made in March 2018 for better signposting to key recruitment information.

6.2 Staying Put Arrangements

As at 31st March 2018, 92 young people over the age of 18 were in (former) fostering or supported lodgings placements under 'Staying Put', an increase of 10 in the last year.

'Staying Put' represents a significant challenge both financially and in recruiting additional foster carers as young adults remain in placement. However, Hertfordshire County Council is committed to ensuring young people are able to 'Stay Put' wherever possible.

6.3 Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) and Adoption

The percentage of children exiting care through adoptions is 12% (12.7% at Q3) and Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) is 13.5% (12.2% at Q3).

The percentage of CLA adopted within 12 months of the decision is now 81.8%. The best performance was in February at 83.9%.

The number of new SGOs during 2016/17 to the end of February was 94, which is an increase of 82 during the year.

6.4 Residential Homes

In-house residential have a total of 21 beds available. ARC has 3 six week 'families together' beds for children where the plan is to return home and short break provision. Over the past year, the average occupancy level was 93%. Occupancy for February 2017 was 97.1%. The number of independent residential placements has increased slightly from 46 in February 2017 to 49 in April 2018.

The cost of in-house provision continues to remain lower than that of the independent sector. In-house residential have maintained good occupancy levels and at the time of writing, 3 homes are Good, 2 Requires Improvement and the short breaks service is Outstanding. It is acknowledged that there may be a need to think about creating more specialist provision and options will be explored to maximise the potential of the current service.

6.5 ARC services

Hertfordshire operate multi-agency therapeutic provision through the delivery of the ARC model.

The services are working well and achieving strong outcomes as outlined below:

- demand is high on outreach, short breaks and families together programme
- short breaks is effective in keeping children with their families
- outreach support is effective in building relationships and moving families forwards
- Sexually Harmful Behaviour service pilot-capturing service data/addressing the needs of those deemed to be at high risk/working with NCATs to provide appropriate assessment and intervention. This service is in place whilst a broader strategy is developed.

Waiting lists are a challenge in relation to need to respond in crisis when child is on the edge of care. Options will be explored in September / October regarding any possible reconfiguration of services.

6.6 Harmful Sexual Behaviour Team (HSBT)

The HSBT have worked with 33 young people supporting them to remain in their family or their placement.

Since September 2016 to date, ARC have worked with 38 children with HSB (Brook Traffic Light Tool): 18 Red, 12 Amber and 8 Green and referred on 4 to NCATS (all Red).

6.7 Short Breaks

A weekend residential short breaks service under Section 17 to support teenagers to remain in the family home. The Springs have worked with 62 children in 2017/2018.

6.8 Families Together Programme

This is a 3 bed provision providing residential support over 6 weeks for young people where the plan is to return them to their families. From April 17 to January 18, FTP worked with 16 families and 75% of those children returned home.

6.9 Outreach across ARC Service

ARC outreach works with about 55 families at any one time. The aim is to maintain children in their family unit.

Section 7: Review of Residential Provision

7.1 Externally Commissioned Services - Commissioning Intentions

The following commissioning arrangements are underway to meet the sufficiency for residential accommodation:

Hertfordshire County Council is part of a block contract arrangement with the Cross Regional Partnership and currently purchases 5 beds. This contract is currently being recommissioned, with a view to the new service being mobilised by 2019. The partners who are involved in this project are Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxford, Milton Keynes and Reading. We are looking to commission a provider who can work with children and young people with complex needs and behaviours that challenge. The key outcomes we are looking to achieve from this project are:

- improved individual outcomes for children
- reduced care costs
- reduced staff costs
- access to additional property
- additional investment by the provider

Commissioners have been in consultation with local authorities who are part of the Children's Cross Regional Arrangements Group, which has included Essex / Luton / Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire with a view to joint contractual arrangements.

This is still within the pre-procurement phase, however, Luton are committed to block purchasing a local residential home with Herts, with a view to growing the market over the next 2-3 years. The other local authorities have expressed an interest in soft purchasing the provision that we have set up. The advantage to Hertfordshire leading the commission is that we can decide upon the location of the new provision, and potentially sell on any vacancies in order to reduce the financial risk to HCC and achieve better matching.

Our plans are to deliver the following projects in the coming 6 months:

- 2 bed emergency provision at Hudnall Park (72 hours – 6 weeks)
- 4 bed residential unit (block purchase agreement with Luton)
- 1 solo placement in Bedford

Regional Commissioning

Re-tender of the regional residential block purchase arrangement currently with Keys. Hertfordshire purchase 5 beds.

Section 8: Department of Education Innovation Bids

8.1 Introduction

Hertfordshire Commissioners have been working alongside regional colleagues on innovative models in order to attract DfE funding. As of July 2017, HCC was notified that both applications were successful.

8.2 Essex, Herts and Norfolk Intervention Model

This bid was written in response to the Narey Report (2016) regarding to his findings of the residential market, and looked to address some of the wider issues that contribute to placement breakdown and poor outcomes for children/young people. A cohort of Hertfordshire young people will be supported during the second wave of this project with the aim to step down from residential to fostering or family back into Hertfordshire.

Inside Out Project

Hertfordshire is a partner to a successful application to the Children's Social Care Innovation Programme 'Inside Out'. The project is being led by Essex County Council and is also partnered with Norfolk County Council. The Children's Social Care Innovation Programme has awarded the project £3.1M over the life of a 3 year project.

The basis of the project is to reduce the financial burden for each LA of purchasing high cost placements which are not achieving better outcomes for children. The premise of the project is to 'step down' the level of support required for the child either into less intensive provision or reunification with families.

Progress:

- The Children's Society has been commissioned to provide the coaching programme.
- The Tavistock Clinic is carrying out an evaluation of the project.
- regular update meetings including lessons learned to date
- Hertfordshire 'go live' in the second phase in early 2019. We are beginning to look at a possible cohort of children for early 2019 and what resources will need to be in place to enable the project's success.

8.3 Credo Care Bid

This bid is between Credo Care (a specialist foster care service for disabled children), Staffordshire LA and Hertfordshire. The concept was to recruit effectively and then train individual foster carers in the needs of a particular young person with a view to them being looked after by someone who was able to meet all of their needs. The bid has the benefits of potentially stepping down young people from residential care into foster care, and also for those who have just come into care and can be welcomed into a family home.

Section 9: Diversion from Care

9.1 Externally Commissioned Edge of Care Contracts

The number of children supported under Diversion from CLA from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 was 197. To sustain a reduction in CLA numbers there is a need to continue with support packages.

We commission 6 agencies to provide a range of support including parenting programmes for child to parent abuse, support to children who have high needs and high risk behaviours where parents are struggling to manage and keep them safe, positive intervention for children who are not engaging fully in education and whole family support where relationships have become strained and parents are requesting their child to be looked after.

Out of the 197 support packages provided, only 20 children in this cohort have become looked after, meaning nearly 9 out of 10 have remained with their families.

Support often starts off intensively and may be daily in the first instance reducing over time. The average cost of a support package is between £5k and £7k. Parents and children report positively about the support received.

Section 10: Accommodation and Support for Young People Aged 16+ Years

10.1 Introduction

The framework for the 16+ semi-independent market has provided some local regulation of this demanding and challenging sector. A new structure within the commissioning team provides robust contract management of provision in order to safeguard young people within the unregulated sector.

The Housing Related Support contracts for the provision of supported accommodation for 16 – 25 year olds continue to be delivered by Registered Social Landlords across the 10 districts. A cohesive working relationship fostered through the Strategic Partnership Accommodation Board between HCC and District Housing leads has enabled a more flexible package of support to meet housing needs. Working closely with our district council colleagues we have commissioned a 16+ preventing homelessness service, offering mediation support and crash pad accommodation. We have noted positive outcomes in the numbers of children returning home and accessing appropriate accommodation avoiding care. Herts Young Homeless (HYH) and YMCA were successful in their bid to run the Hub.

During the first year of this contract, there has been a huge increase in referrals for 16/17 year olds and this has been evidenced throughout the year. Overall, we have received 615 referrals for April 2017 – March 2018. For the same period last year, 495 referrals were made. Progression to Section 20 requests did not take place in 90% of referrals.

Over 18s Accommodation and associated costs

10.2 Bed and Breakfast/Hotels

In exceptional cases, bed and breakfast or hotel accommodation is used only when the alternative for the young person is street homelessness and whilst more appropriate accommodation is sourced. Commissioners have sought rental accommodation to reduce the use of emergency bed and breakfast accommodation and to provide better quality provision through quality monitoring visits. The average cost per person per night was £58.31 per night as opposed to £68.85 per night in the previous financial year.

10.3 Families with ‘No Recourse to Public Funds’

A key priority was to provide suitable accommodation for families with no recourse to public funds whose children are therefore ‘children in need’. Rented accommodation has been sought and currently supports 41 people. No families are currently living in bed and breakfast accommodation.

10.4 Tender for accommodation post 18 former UASC

Pre-market engagement discussions are underway, with a view to tendering accommodation in September 2018.

Section 11: Cost of Provision

Average weekly Cost of Placements 2017/2018

	Actual Average weekly costs 2017/18 (£)
Independent Placements - Social Care	
Residential Homes IP	3,810
Residential Schools	3,235
Secure	3,412
Semi-Independent Living	1,115
Fostering IP	915
Independent Placements - Disability	
Residential Schools	2,192
Fostering IP	1,265
In-house	
In-house Fostering	414
In-house Residential	3,046

We have noted a marked increase in the cost of independent provision over the last 12 months.

With the implementation of the valuing care needs analysis, we are hoping to achieve better matching and negotiate cost according to need.

Section 12: 0 – 25 Integrated Commissioning Service

The 0-25 SEND Commissioning Team undertakes a wide variety of activity to establish integrated commissioning arrangements and processes around children and young people with additional needs. The team works with partners in the CCGs to improve co-ordinated packages of support, promote co-production, align processes, reduce duplication, but above all, improve outcomes for those children and young people.

The vision in supporting children and young people with additional needs is set within the overall vision for all children and young people in Hertfordshire, as part of both Children's and Adult Services across education, social care and health strategic planning.

12.1 Short breaks

Short breaks form part of a continuum of services which support disabled children and their families in universal and specialist services. In response to feedback from parents and disabled young people, Hertfordshire's Children's Services commissioned community based services resulting in a wider variety of services, providing increased individual choice for children, young people and their families. Each family will be entitled to 40 hours per year of short break activities without the need to have an assessment carried out by a social worker.

The local authority funded overnight short breaks units are able to meet the needs of a number of children with complex health needs. Hertfordshire County Council and both CCGs are negotiating a financial mechanism to create funding for nursing support to the existing overnight projects.

The council also has a Shared Care service comprising both paid and volunteer carers who support over 100 children and young people with disabilities, providing support and breaks to their family.

12.2 Commissioning Intentions 0-25 SEND

12.2.1 Overnight Short Breaks (OSB)

Utilisation of HCC OSB has fallen significantly over the last four years from 380 children and young people using these services in 2011-12 to 110 children and young people currently using these services in 2017/18. In 2018/19 financial year numbers will increase. HCC is purchasing 120,778 hours in order to accommodate approximately 150 children and young people, including young people where a decision has been made by Herts Valley Clinical Commissioning group to cease funding an overnight nursing provision and there is a need to source suitable alternative overnight short breaks. In response to this and under a Section 75 pooled budget agreement the Council and both CCGs are working with parents, carers and children to develop integrated health and social care provision with a proposal to increase the beds available at the current West Hyde short breaks resource.

In 2018, there is a project to review all allocated overnight short break packages. This will involve speaking to each family to understand their current needs, and discuss whether their provided over-night package is still the most effective way of meeting their needs. This project will include a community navigation approach, signposting families to community provisions which add value to their commissioned packages.

HCC providers are reporting through their contract review meetings that there is an increase in the complexity of health / challenging behaviour needs of children and young people being referred to the service and is reflected in the percentage of hours that are used through bed blocking.

12.2.2 Complex Needs Residential Resource

The service will provide a children's residential facility for those with complex needs including autism and behaviour that challenges, so that children and young people can continue their education in local special schools in Hertfordshire and not be placed out of area. The service will provide a dedicated local residential resource for children and young people with complex needs aged between 11 and 18 years. There will be four permanent beds, with a fifth bed available for emergency placements. The service will be delivered by MacIntyre Care at an existing building located in Wynchlands Crescent, St Albans.

In 2017/18, Hertfordshire led a tender process to secure a provider for this service. The tender process is approaching completion. The mobilisation plan states that the service will be operational by September 2018.

12.2.3 Divots Place

0-25 Commissioners are working with colleagues in ACS to develop a service providing supported living for young people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities to have year-round accommodation in conjunction with attendance at a local Hertfordshire college and engagement with an extended curriculum to help develop independent living skills. The provision, based in Hertford, will provide accommodation for up to 8 young people.

12.2.4 Domiciliary Care

In 2018, Hertfordshire County Council is undertaking a procurement exercise to recommission Domiciliary Care. HCC are commissioning this through a Lead Provider model. The purpose of this approach is to make domiciliary care more resilient. These new contracts will be in place from July 2018, and will be mobilised by September 2018.

At present, there are approximately 162 children and young people receiving domiciliary care. If there is increased pressure on the overnight short break provision, then it is possible to forecast an increase demand for personal care in the home.

Section 13: Specialist Provision

13.1 Secure Accommodation

Criminal secure placements are a consequence of offending behaviours. Welfare secure placements are used for the most vulnerable teenagers who, without a period in secure, would be at risk of serious harm. There is currently no secure provision nor a demand to develop it in Hertfordshire. Hertfordshire County Council sources placements through a central unit. There were 5 placements made in 2016-17 and a further 5 for 2017/18.

13.2 Youth Offending

The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO) introduced a change to the legal status of young offenders who are remanded into custody and such young people are now children in care. If they remain in custody for 13 weeks or more they are entitled to leaving care services. The policy direction is for young offenders to be managed in the community unless there is a serious concern for public safety. Between January and March 2018, there were 12 looked after children living in Hertfordshire who appeared before court and received an order. The majority were aged between 15 and 17 years with the youngest being 11 years. Theft and assault were the most common charges.

There is currently one designated foster carer and one semi-independent bed for remands and transfer from police custody. The beds are used as a bail bed and we also commission bail beds where necessary. We are looking to increase capacity for emergency beds as part of our review of in-house services, which will offer further choice of beds in Hertfordshire or neighbouring authorities.

Section 14: Young Person's Voice

14.1 Introduction

Young Commissioners have worked alongside the Commissioning Team (CLA and Safeguarding) on multiple project works, inputting within all elements of the commissioning cycle. Young Commissioners are actively involved in scrutinising reports for the Hertfordshire Corporate Parenting Board and the quality and amount of input they have been enabled to provide is reflective of their active involvement in project work. There is clarity of roles between commissioners and YC Hertfordshire to actively support young people to shape service delivery.

14.2 Key Outcomes Achieved by Young Commissioners

- commissioning of return home interviews (including interviewing staff)
- co-design and delivery of the Fostering and Support framework
- input into CSE workshops (boys and men) with specific project on sharing knowledge of social media to CLA providers
- the first child and young people's sufficiency report for Herts
- inception and delivery of practice flats
- quality assurance visits
- tender for Wynchlands Crescent

The Cross Regional Partnership will be utilising the skills and expertise of the Young Commissioners in their recommissioning of regional residential beds. Young Commissioners are also working alongside CCRAAG to input into regional projects and to provide opportunities for young people to learn key business skills to support their own personal development.

Conclusion

There has been a range of activity this year both to look at supporting children on the edge of care to remain with their families and work with the provider market and regional colleagues to create more local placements to meet the needs of the current CLA population. Along with colleagues nationally, we are currently facing a challenge in sourcing local placements to meet the needs of teenagers and sibling groups especially, but with the planned activity and links with regional partners over the coming year we are hoping to begin to address this, so that all children are in the right placement to meet their needs.

Section 15: Key Findings

1. There is a need for more local provision across fostering and residential care particularly for teenagers, young people with challenging behaviours and autism.
2. Intensive support packages into families have reduced the children looked after population
3. Teenagers are presenting with increasingly complex needs with common factors: ADHD/ASD, EHCP, history of neglect, presenting in crisis in hospital A&E/136 suite, undiagnosed mental health needs, known to multiple services, self-harm and harmful sexual behaviours. Young People coming later into the care system increasingly have challenging behaviours and mental health needs (this has been noted by all agencies and local authorities nationally).
4. There has been an increase in the numbers of young people where there are concerns or a risk of child sexual exploitation leading to some young people moving to out of county placements for their protection in the short to medium term while action is taken to remove offenders.
5. There has been a reduction in the number of 16+ coming into care for the last 3 years due to broader range of services and increased joint working with district councils.
6. Cross regional residential commissioning is a good model and is increasing placement choice
7. There is a need for more specialist fostering provision for children with complex needs supported by CAMHS colleagues.
8. There is a shortage of local emergency provision.
9. Short break provision at the ARC unit has been successful in the prevention of care.
10. Practice and support for young people in semi-independent provision has improved due to increased scrutiny and provider workshops.
11. Increasingly teenagers with complex needs require a joint health and social care approach
12. Supported shared provision for Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers has proved successful.

13. There needs to be an increase in specialist residential provision local to Hertfordshire.
14. The importance of a range of support to prevent breakdown of placements
15. Providers and in-house services need to work to a standardised set of outcomes to ensure value for money and good quality care.

Section 16: Key Priorities in 2018/19

Broaden the range of support available to children and their families
Re-commission cross regional residential contract
Monitor the delivery of the prevention of homelessness hub. We have a number of KPIs to measure the success of the service including the number of young people who returned home successfully and the number who accessed appropriate accommodation and support.
Create 1-2 bed emergency residential provision
Commission of a medium term solo residential provision
Regional commission of 4 bed local residential provision
Work with Credo Care to deliver local specialist foster placements for children with disabilities.
Implement Inside Out project in conjunction with regional partners
Deliver the 18+ accommodation tender
Use the needs analysis tool to inform outcome based commissioning and value for money placements
Staying close: exploration of post 18 provision for those in in-house residential
Work with CCrag partners to further develop the outcomes framework
Meeting with 27 other LAs to look at children we place out of area. Herts to be notified when non Herts children placed in county move on, so that we are aware when placements are freed up.
To develop and stimulate the home care provider market to increase the number of homecare providers to effectively meet the need of children and young people and their families as part of a wider package of care and support.
Opening of local residential provision for children with Autism/challenging behaviour.
Continue to develop the 0-25 pathway for disabled children to enhance and improve transition arrangements.
Recommission community short breaks