

**APPENDIX A**

**CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE  
PLACEMENTS COMMISSIONING STRATEGY**

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‘All children and young people in Barnet should achieve the best possible outcomes, to enable them to become successful adults, especially our most vulnerable children.

They should be supported by high quality, integrated and inclusive services that identify additional support needs early, are accessible, responsive and affordable for the individual child and their family.’

*Barnet’s Children and Young People Plan 2013-2016*

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### 1. Executive Summary

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Barnet seeks to ensure that children who enter the care system are given a good start in life, with a stable home and access to education and other support. Wherever possible, we seek to enable children to remain with their families.

Where it is necessary for children to remain in care and to live with alternative carers, we will support them in the most appropriate type of placement and we seek the most appropriate permanence options for children and young people. The availability of high quality support in stable and local placements is integral to supporting our looked after children to achieve good outcomes.

LBB foster placements meet more demand for placements for looked after children than any other single placement type. However, we are increasingly commissioning other types of placement, including IFA and residential placements.

We seek to increase the overall availability of LBB foster placements by increasing the number of approved LBB fostering households and the overall number of placements that our fostering households can offer. We will increase the number of households by attracting high quality word of mouth enquiries and converting more enquiries into approved fostering households. The success of our recruitment strategy is sensitive to a number of factors, including our ability to recruit fostering household that can offer placements to sibling groups and teenagers. We will set ourselves targets and ensure that we regularly review our progress. Some investment will be required between 2015/16 and 2019/20 to grow the in-house fostering service and to achieve the MTFs savings targets for placements. This investment will be managed within the Family Services Delivery Unit existing budgets. However, this is a complex picture and there are a large number of assumptions around achieving these financial savings.

A needs analysis has illustrated that we commission IFA and residential placements to meet particular types of needs. We need to improve the ability and confidence of LBB foster carers to support children with more complex needs, through targeted recruitment of foster carers. Through a consolidation of our core support offer and the development of an enhanced support offer, we seek to offer more placements in-house that would otherwise have been provided for by independent providers.

However, our needs and costs analysis has identified that we need the best mix of placement providers to meet needs, improve outcomes and ensure value for money, and we will continue to work with the market of independent providers to ensure high quality, cost effective independent placements provision locally.

Residential placements are an important element of the continuum of care. The further strengthening of the LBB fostering service will support the next stage of our improvement journey, to prevent looked after children's needs from escalating and seeking to step down children and young people from residential care into foster placements where appropriate.

For some children and young people, their plan of permanence means they exit care and are no longer looked after. We work to support young people back to their families' care wherever possible and are working collaboratively with other services to achieve this. We have seen increasing numbers of looked after children and young people leaving care through Special Guardianship Orders. We will review the use of all permanence options to ensure ourselves that we are securing the most appropriate permanence options for our looked after children.

There are a set of enablers which support our objectives, we will:

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- review our recruitment methods, revise our marketing materials and re-design our journey to assessment processes
- consolidate and enhance our support offer to foster carers and looked after children
- work with other boroughs to develop practice and utilise opportunities to improve quality and provide lower cost services
- review the pathway to independence for our young people to ensure that services, support and placements are integrated and offer high quality support. Central to achieving this is sufficient availability of staying put placements
- review Barnet's housing offer to ensure it supports our prospective and current foster carers, and also supports our looked after young people as they progress on their journey towards independence and their own tenancies. Our young people have told us that availability of housing options in Barnet is a particular concern that they have for their future
- ensure that LBB residential provision is enhanced by the physical quality of buildings by developing a capital bid for Meadow Close to improve the physical environment of the home

### 2. Introduction

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The purpose of this strategy is to set out how the London Borough of Barnet will meet the needs of our Looked after Children by providing them with high quality, cost effective placements, which supports them to achieve good outcomes.

Section 22G of the Children Act 1989 requires 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'). Please see appendix 2 for full wording.

Barnet seeks to take earlier preventative action to support children and their families so that fewer children become looked after. For those children and young people who do become Looked after Children, we want to ensure that needs are fully assessed and that children return to live within their family or broader networks of connected people, where possible. Where this is inconsistent with the child's welfare, Barnet will seek to place children in an alternative family environment, in an appropriate placement that is able to meet their needs.

Where it is in the child's best interests to live with alternative carers, we seek to support our Looked after Children and young people to achieve excellent outcomes. Having the right placement in the right place, at the right time, is a vital factor in meeting the needs of children and in improving placement stability, which in turn is a critical success factor in relation to better outcomes for looked after children. As such, we seek to provide placements which:

- allow the child to live near his / her home (where appropriate)
- do not disrupt the child's education or training
- enable the child and any looked after siblings to live together (where this is in their best interests)
- meet the particular needs of each child
- provide stability across the long-term (where appropriate)
- support a successful transition to adulthood and independence

This strategy is based on a detailed analysis of the needs and demand of Barnet's Looked after Children cohort. This strategy sets out commissioning priorities which support the development of an appropriate supply of placements to meet current and future demand and which support out children and young people to achieve their best possible outcomes. There are benefits of securing a range of accommodation through a number of providers and this strategy will take account of both in-house (LBB) and independent supply of placements.

### 3. Policy Context

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#### 3.1. Local context

Barnet is the second most populous borough in London, with 364,481 residents, of which 85,548 are children and young people aged under 18. Barnet is a place of growth over the next five years, with the greatest growth concentrated in the west of the borough.

Alongside this future growth is the pressure of increasing financial constraints, which makes imperative the need to analyse, plan and deliver cost effective services, both now and in the future. With good planning, cost effective use of resources to support children and young people who are in need, on the edge of care, or are Looked after Children, will provide them with the best possible opportunities to achieve good outcomes and lead successful adult lives.

##### 3.1.1. Corporate priorities

Barnet believes all children and young people should have the opportunity to achieve their potential, to enable them to become successful adults.

The Council's strategic objectives include *supporting families and individuals that need it; promoting independence, learning and well-being*. In seeking to achieve this objective, we aim to create better life chances for children and young people across the borough. For Barnet's Looked after Children, we specifically seek to *ensure that children who enter the care system are given a good start in life, with a stable home and access to education and other support*. A wide and varied supply of placements and integrated support services are crucial to achieving this objective.

##### 3.1.2. Children and Young People priorities

A key cross cutting priority of Barnet's Children and Young People Plan for those children who become looked after is *Keeping Children and Young People Safe; Protecting children at risk of harm and supporting them to achieve their potential*. We seek to *Target Resources to Narrow the Gap*, to support children and young people to achieve at least as well as their peers and to focus on *Preparing young people for Adulthood*.

##### 3.1.3. Policies

The policies underpinning the Council's approach to support and accommodation for Looked after Children are:

- Permanency strategy; Barnet's intention is that no child should be placed in alternative care without a full assessment of their needs. It is important that decisions are made promptly, in line with legislation and with the full consultation of children and parents. Permanence planning must be balanced against the long term effects of a child remaining in a difficult environment. However, children whose lives have been disrupted by coming into care can develop stability, continuity and emotional security through a stable and permanent placement.
- Family and Friends Care policy; Children may live with members of their extended family, friendship network or other people who are known to them

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for a variety of reasons, within a range of arrangements and for varying periods of time. Barnet's Family and friends care policy sets out our approach to promoting and supporting the needs of children living within these alternative arrangements.

- Staying Put policy; This policy sets out how the council will support care leavers to stay in a foster placement, under a staying put arrangement beyond their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### **3.2. National context**

There are currently a significant number of legislative and policy developments in England and Wales which shape the services we offer to our Looked after Children.

#### **3.2.1. Staying put arrangements**

The age of leaving home among the population as a whole is rising. However, Looked after Children often leave care to become independent before the age of 18. Research evidences that where Looked after Children experience an extended transition, their outcomes improve.

The Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers Regulations and Guidance 2010 and the Fostering Regulations and Guidance 2011 (Children Act 1989) both require local authorities to have a Staying Put policy. The Staying Put policy sets out the practical, financial, tax and benefit issues (for both the foster carer and the young people) which impact on the decision to extend care to Staying Put care when a Looked after Child reaches the age of 18 years.

In December 2013, Edward Timpson, Children and Families Minister, announced that he is placing a new legal duty on local authorities to provide financial support for every young person who wishes to stay with their foster parents until their 21st birthday, giving local authorities £40 million over the next 3 years to put the support arrangements in place.

#### **3.2.2. Raising of Participation Age**

The raising of participation age duty is now in place. Care leavers who were born after 1st September 1996 will be required to stay on in education or training beyond 16. (This means if they are due to complete year 11 in 2014 or after, they will need to stay on in learning until their 18th birthday). Employment must include training with the opportunity to gain further qualifications; work is ongoing to ensure there are sufficient opportunities for young people in the local area. Additional work will be required where young people have been in stable placements outside of Barnet and are moving into adulthood in these areas.

#### **3.2.3. Pupil Premium**

Pupil Premium is additional funding from central government for schools to support disadvantaged pupils and close the attainment gap between them and their peers. Looked after Children are eligible to receive the Pupil Premium and the Council can provide guidance about how this is used where an eligible looked after child is on roll.

### **3.2.4. Changes from Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (LASPO) 2012 - Remands**

Section 104 LASPO Act 2012 states that where a young person is remanded to youth detention accommodation, they are to become looked after. This means that if they are remanded they require the same support as any other looked after child. These young people may also become eligible for leaving care services.

### **3.2.5. Family Justice Review**

The Family Justice Review has led to significant changes in the process and timescales for care proceedings. The requirement to complete care proceedings within 26 weeks has an impact on the resources needed to provide adequate assessment of parents and assessment of the potential of family and friends to provide permanent substitute care.

## 4. Looked after Children: Data and Trends

### 4.1. Numbers of Looked after Children

Barnet has a low rate of Looked after Children per 10,000 children under 18 years compared to London, Outer London, England and Statistical neighbour comparisons.

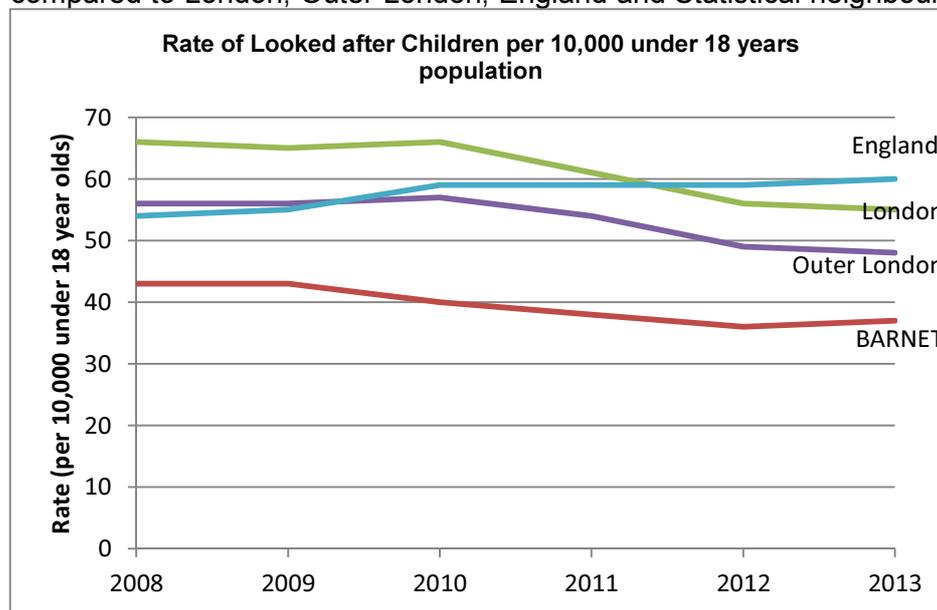


Figure 1: Rate of Looked after Children per 10,000

Despite having a low rate of Looked after Children per 10,000, Barnet has a large population and therefore has one of the highest numbers of Looked after Children among statistical neighbours, as illustrated by Figure 2 below.

The number of looked after children in Barnet decreased between 2009 and 2012, followed by a small increase in 2013. As at 31 March 2014, Barnet has 306 Looked after Children.

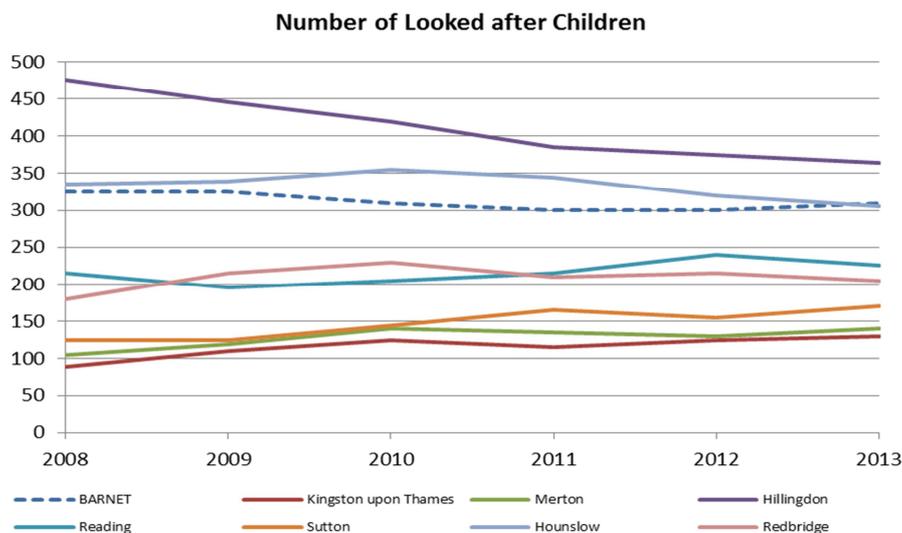


Figure 2: Number of Looked after Children

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As at 31 March	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>Barnet</b>	325	310	300	300	310	306

Figure 3: Barnet's number of Looked after Children

### 4.2. Localities of origin

Of the current Looked after Children cohort (January 2014), Burnt Oak and Colindale wards have the highest proportion of Looked after Children originating from these localities. This has implications for early intervention and 'edge of care' service planning and delivery and is acknowledged as a key element of Barnet's Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy.

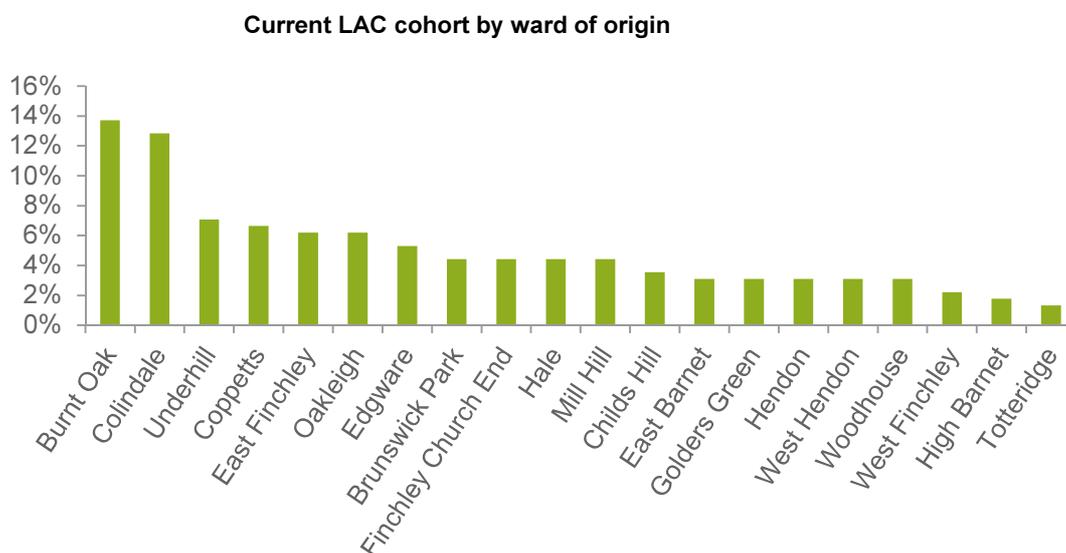


Figure 4: Localities of origin

### 4.3. Episodes of care

In the ten year period between April 2003 and March 2013, 1,710 children had at least one episode of care. Of these, 87% of children and young people had only one episode of care. This data suggests that accurate decision making is taking place for children and young people and very few children are experiencing multiple episodes of care.

Number of care episodes	Percentage
1	87%
2	9.5%
3	2.3%
More than 3	0.8%

Figure 5: Episodes of care

### 4.4. Age of children entering care

Understanding the age of children entering Barnet's care is important to the development and delivery of appropriate placements and other support services. Since 2009-10 there has been:

#### *Increases*

- An increase in the number of 5-9 year olds entering care
- A large increase in the number of 16-17 year olds entering care

#### *Decreases*

- A decrease in the number of 10-15 year olds entering care

This changing age profile is important in our understanding of changing demand as well as reviewing the way we target early intervention services in the borough.

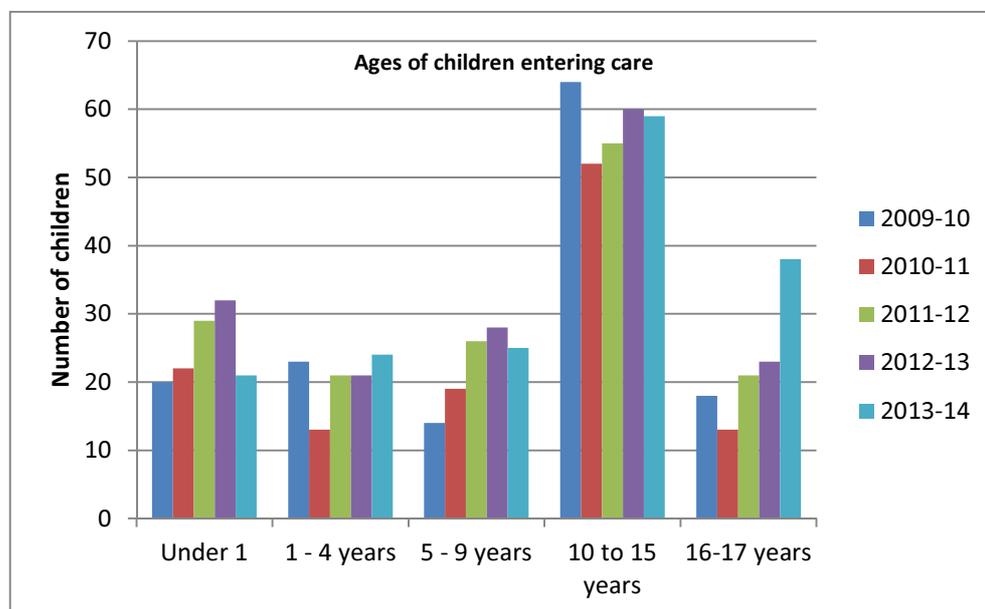


Figure 6: Ages of children entering care

### 4.5. Gender

Barnet has more males than females in its overall Looked after Children cohort and males are over represented in the Looked after Children cohort by 7.5% as compared to Barnet's general under 18 population. However, this is certainly not unique to Barnet and is apparent nationally.

### 4.6. Ethnicity

The ethnicity profile of Looked after Children is difficult to compare directly to Barnet's general population as there is no specific data on ethnicity of the under 18 population. Figure 7 below compares the ethnic profile of our Looked after Children as at 1 April 2013 to census data, by aggregating data and comparing to similar categories.

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White and Indian children and young people appear to be under represented in Barnet's looked after children cohort and Black Caribbean and Black African children are over represented. 'Other' ethnicities also appear over represented; however, this may be misleading due to the difficulty of comparing categories like for like.

In planning placements for Looked after Children, matching takes place based on many characteristics, including ethnicity; and services to support a child's ethnic and cultural needs are considered as part of the support offered to the child. Through intelligent recruitment, Barnet will ensure that we have a range of foster carers who can support the varied needs of Barnet's Looked after Children.

Ethnicity	LAC as at 01/04/13	Variance against Barnet population (2011 census) – percentage points
White	42.12%	-21.98
Black Caribbean	5.47%	4.17
Black African	13.50%	8.10
Black Other	3.54%	0.84
Indian	0.00%	-7.80
Pakistani	1.29%	-0.21
Bangladeshi	0.00%	-0.60
Chinese	0.32%	-1.98
Other Asian	5.47%	-2.43
Other	20.26%	13.96

Figure 7: Ethnicity of Looked after Children

### 4.7. Disability and Special Educational Needs (SEN) of Looked after Children

The 'snapshot' data below illustrates that 24.1% of Looked after Children (January 2014) had a disability, SEN or both. In the general Barnet under 18 population, 20.7% of children are classed as SEN.

Type of need	Number of LAC	% of LAC
Disability	9	3%
SEN	31	10.2%
Both Disability & SEN	33	10.9%
No disability or SEN	231	76%

Figure 8: Disability and SEN needs

The data above does not provide a clear articulation of levels of need, particularly in relation to SEN which is categorised on the basis of children accessing School Action Plus or those with an SEN statement. Other types of needs such as ADHD would not necessarily be reflected in the data set above but would still require specialist support or advice within any placement.

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In seeking to recruit additional LB Barnet foster carers, Barnet will seek to develop the available number of placements which can support disability and SEN needs.

### 4.8. Legal status of children entering care

The legal status through which children enter care has some influence on the most appropriate placement provision for them and we seek to provide children with placements that support their longer term plan.

The number of interim care orders has fluctuated over time but has most recently increased slightly, as have those entering by police protection. The number of entries through section 20 has decreased slightly. Unsurprisingly, since the LASPO Act 2012, the number of children and young people becoming looked after due to remand has increased, therefore requiring more short term placements.

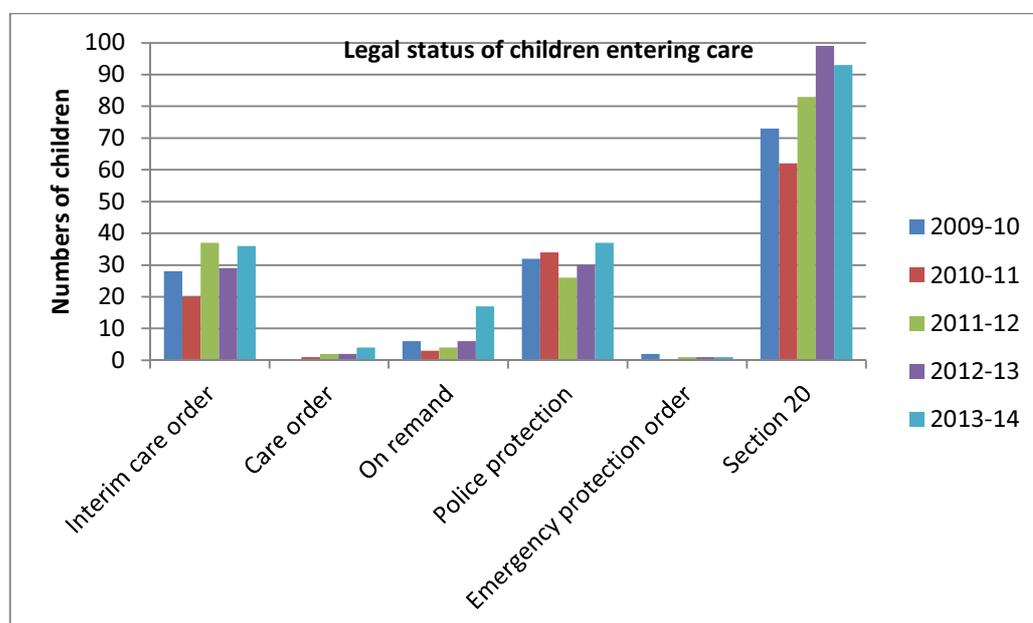


Figure 9: Legal status of children entering care

### 4.9. Unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people

Local authorities have a duty of care to ensure that the welfare needs are met of asylum seeking children and young people, under the age of 18 years, not living with their parents, relatives or guardians in the UK. Although unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people may have particular needs based on their prior experiences, they require the same support and placements to other Looked after Children. Of Barnet's Looked after Children (31 March 2014), 24 were unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people. In developing a supply of appropriate placements for our Looked after Children, we will ensure that the particular needs of unaccompanied asylum seeking children are met.

### 4.10. Projected changes in demand

Based on previous trends of looked after children rates per 10,000 under 18 population, projections indicate that there is a potential increase in the looked after

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children population in Barnet by 2020, see Figure 10 below. A key area for further analysis is whether new growth replicates existing patterns of deprivation (top line); mirrors existing demographics across the borough (middle line), or whether the movement of different populations into the borough may reduce numbers of looked after children (bottom line).

There is a need to build in additional placements capacity in future years according to changing demand to ensure that we have the resources in place to support Looked after Children and to make timely and appropriate decisions about their plan for permanence.

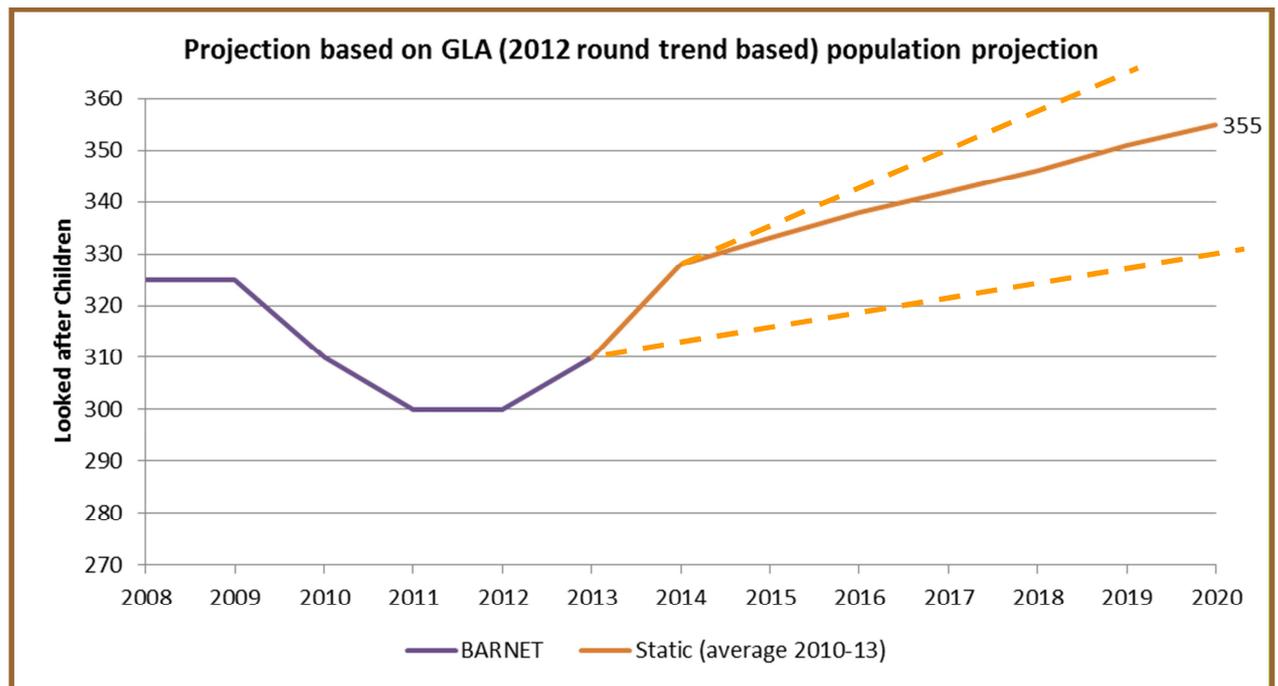


Figure 10: Looked after Children projection

*Barnet will seek to ensure that the supply of placements is appropriate to the needs of our Looked after Children and will continue to monitor changes to the cohort and adapt recruitment as required.*

### 5. Current Placement Provision

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#### 5.1. Meeting overall demand for placements

61% of Barnet's Looked after Children are placed in foster care with non-connected carers (February 2014). Of these, 53% are in LBB foster placements and 47% are in IFA placements. 14.3% of Barnet's Looked after Children are in residential placements. Figure 16 later in this document explores this comparatively to England and London averages.

Provision type	Percentage of LAC cohort in this provision (February 2014)
LBB fostering	32.5% (102)
Kinship care / reg 24. placement	9.6% (30)
IFA fostering	28.3% (89)
LBB residential	3.5% (11)
Independent/private residential	10.8% (34)
Other e.g semi-independent, family assessment, placed for adoption	15.3% (48)
<b>Total</b>	<b>314</b>

Figure 11: Placements provision types<sup>1</sup>

#### 5.2. Placement costs

Barnet will provide our Looked after Children and young people with the most appropriate type of placement according to their needs. To ensure that the placement is provided in the most cost effective way, cost calculations have been undertaken to inform decision making. An average cost per placement week has been calculated by dividing the overall cost by the number of placement weeks, for both LBB and IFA foster placements.

Owen et al (2007)<sup>2</sup> highlighted that there is very little literature relating to the cost of fostering services in the UK. The Fostering Network produced a report 'Update to The Cost of Foster Care' (2010) which outlined the cost overheads associated with providing foster placements. However, the Fostering Network report does not provide a methodology for calculating these overheads. Therefore, Barnet's cost calculation is not necessarily comparable to those of other local authorities. It is important to note that Barnet's calculation includes service and corporate overheads, including Family Resource Centre costs. Unit costs below have been calculated

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<sup>1</sup> SFR36\_2013 DfE

<sup>2</sup> Owen, C., Carr-Hill, R., and Dixon. P. 2007. *Foster Cost Adjustment to the Formula for Children's Social Services*. Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education. University of London

## Placements Commissioning Strategy

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based on 2013/14 data and will be updated periodically, using the 2014/15 data once the Outturn has been finalised.

An overview of the unit costs are summarised in Figure 12 below.

Provision type	LBB unit cost (incl. service and corporate overheads)	Independent / Private unit cost (incl. commissioning overheads)
Foster placement	£646	£901
Residential placement	£3,493	£3,708

**Figure 12: Placement unit costs**

The cost of Barnet's commissioning arrangements for individual placements has been reviewed by Capita procurement as part of the Customer and Support Group (CSG) partnership. This has identified that no further efficiencies can be achieved through better negotiation with independent placement providers, as the rates paid for services are already competitive, whether through Framework arrangements or negotiation on spot purchase. However, there are opportunities to better focus commissioning arrangements on outcomes for young people and opportunities to incentivise providers to deliver services with a sharper focus on outcomes. These opportunities are actively being pursued.

Additional analysis has been undertaken to understand costs against levels of need and demonstrates that, for foster placements in particular, it is more cost effective to commission placements for the highest levels of need from IFAs. For low to medium levels of need, it is more cost effective to provide LBB foster placements with various levels of support. Section 5.4 below provides further exploration of providing foster placements for different levels of needs.

### 5.3. LBB foster care placements

LBB fostering service is judged to be Good by Ofsted and provides high quality of care to children and young people in foster placements, sustaining fostering placements very well through high quality support and supervision. Barnet's children and young people come from diverse backgrounds and they are well matched with caring and competent foster carers.

LBB foster placements are meeting more demand for placements than any other provision type, both in terms of the total number of placements made over a year period and the total number of placement weeks, see Figure 14 below.

Barnet has 90 approved non-connected carers (31 March 2014), see Figure 13 below, in addition to 4 respite only carers and 12 kinship carers. Analysis of 2012-13 year data demonstrates that the total utilisation rate of permanent carers was over 80%. This is higher than the average in house foster carer utilisation rate of 69%

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indicated by benchmarking data<sup>3</sup>. Barnet's total utilisation rate of task centred and specialist carers in 2012-13 year was around 70%. This is around the average in house foster carer utilisation rate of 69% indicated by benchmarking data.

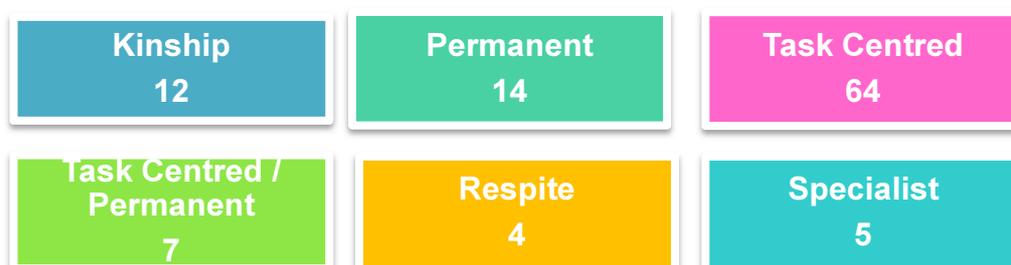


Figure 13: LBB approved carers

The utilisation of LBB foster carers appears to be performing at average levels for task centred carers and above average for permanent carers. However, there is scope to improve this utilisation to make best use of our resources.

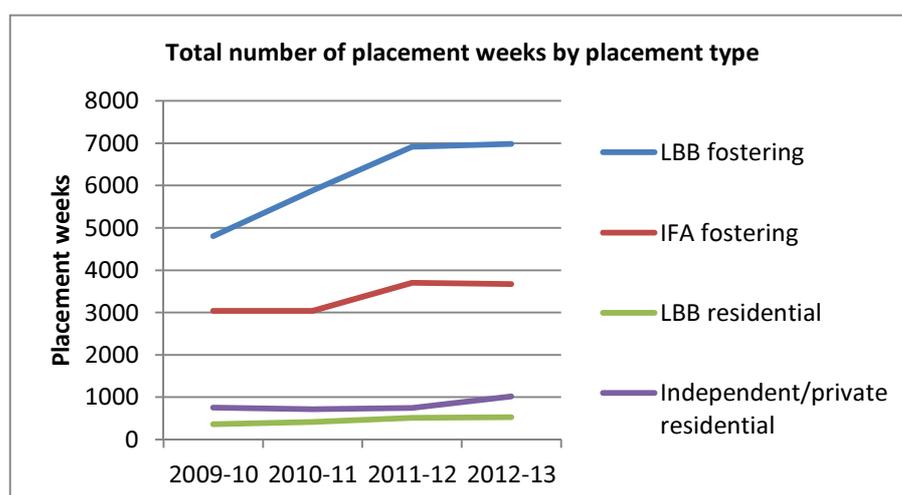


Figure 14: Placement weeks by placement type

Despite LBB foster placements meeting more demand for placements than any other single provision type, there has been an increase over time in the number of IFA and independent/private residential home and school placements being commissioned. To understand the reasons for this increase in commissioning of other placement types, further analysis of children's needs against placement types has been undertaken.

### 5.4. Comparing needs and placement types: fostering

Analysis has demonstrated that placements for under 1 year olds are now almost exclusively provided by LBB foster carers. However, demand from 5-9 year olds and 10-15 year olds for placements is being partially met by LBB and is partially being met by IFAs. Particular types of needs are being met by different placement types.

<sup>3</sup> iMPOWER and Department for Education (DfE) benchmarking data 2012

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For example, the vast majority of Looked after Children with the primary category of need *disability* are in IFA placements.

To better understand why some placement demand is being met by IFAs rather than LBB foster carers, a more detailed analysis of needs of children in IFA placements was undertaken (March 2014). This illustrated that of the 89 children and young people in IFA placements, 16% of them were placed in IFA placements due to a lack of availability in LBB foster placements. For the other 84%, IFA placements were commissioned due to the additional skills and support needed for foster carers to meet the needs of the children.

Over the last 3 years, Barnet has commissioned placements from approximately 60 IFA providers; analysis has illustrated that there are common categories of needs met by these providers;

- Challenging behaviours
- Sexualised behaviours
- Sibling group placements
- Emergency placements
- Placements supported by two full time carers

To ensure that our Looked after Children receive the best possible services, Barnet will only commission a placement from an IFA provider if they are rated good or outstanding by Ofsted. Unit cost analysis of IFA placements against levels of need demonstrates that for the highest levels of need, for example where two full time carers are required to meet a child's needs, it is currently more cost effective to commission IFA placements. However, in making decisions about individual placements, cost is viewed alongside other factors of quality and ability to promote good outcomes. Barnet will continue to work collaboratively with the IFA market (see section 7 below), to ensure sufficient supply of high quality, local IFA placements to meet these needs and to effectively support our Looked after Children.

This needs analysis has demonstrated some clear drivers to develop additional LBB foster carer placement capacity. More than twice as many LBB foster placements are in borough compared to IFA placements; and LBB foster placements last, on average, longer than IFA placements suggesting better placement stability. When viewed alongside unit cost data, it is evident that LBB foster placements are a high quality and cost effective option for our children and young people.

The views of Barnet's Looked after Children and Care Leavers have also confirmed the importance of placements local to Barnet. A peer to peer exercise led by members of the Role Model Army<sup>4</sup> clearly illustrated that the area a placement is in is very important to our Looked after Children; one of their biggest dislikes is distance from school or family networks.

High quality placements to support a range of needs, including higher levels of needs, are available from LBB foster carers. Barnet's focus is to recruit additional LBB foster carers who can support our Looked after Children in stable placements close to Barnet. Recent research with our foster carers has identified that Barnet's biggest asset is the strength of its brand. The vast majority of fostering households come straight to London Borough of Barnet to enquire about fostering, without

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<sup>4</sup> Barnet's Children in Care Council

## Placements Commissioning Strategy

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exploring other agencies; they tell us that this is because they associate the Council with local children. LBB foster carers are, overall, satisfied with the support they receive and 99% of them would recommend LBB fostering to friends or family.

**Did you explore other agencies  
before coming to the London  
Borough of Barnet Fostering  
Service?**

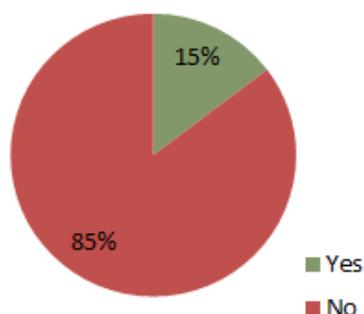


Figure 15: The strength of Barnet's brand

We know that Barnet's current foster carers are engaged in sharing their skills and experiences with their peers and supporting each other. This is a key element of Barnet's fostering community and we will continue to support its development. To achieve our ambition to increase the number of approved LBB foster carers, we will seek to generate higher quality of enquiries from prospective foster carers. We know from other local authorities that word of mouth enquiries from prospective foster carers lead to a higher rate of approval than general enquiries. LBB will seek to encourage word of mouth enquiries to capitalise on the potential to convert more enquiries into approved foster fostering households to support our Looked after Children. We will also review our recruitment and assessment processes to ensure that enquiries can progress down the appropriate path as quickly as possible.

The strengthening of our fostering service is part of an improvement journey which will require flexibility to adapt as we review our progress. The need to recruit fostering households to support particular cohorts of young people, such as adolescents, requires particular focus and we will need to review success and re-target our approach as needed.

***Barnet will seek to recruit additional LBB foster carers, using word of mouth opportunities wherever possible, to enable more children in foster care to be placed with LBB carers, to offer more cost effective, local placements to provide increased stability.***

Barnet's brand is strong and foster carers are, overall, satisfied; however, survey and focus group work with LBB foster carers (iMPower, March 2014) illustrated areas for further service development. Our foster carers have told us that some of the areas they are least satisfied with are; additional therapies and services; speed of access to support services; the flexibility of support to cater for needs; and financial support provided. Section 8 below explores in more detail future models of support to offer more LBB foster placements.

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Survey and focus group work also illustrates that LBB foster carers do not feel able to support the whole cohort of Looked after Children's needs; only 40% of the current cohort of LBB foster carers feel able to support children with a disability, for example. The majority of carers would be happy to consider more complex placements if they felt they had the skills and confidence. As such a development programme will be put in place.

*Consolidate and enhance the support services available to foster carers to enable LBB foster carers to support our Looked after Children in stable placements.*

### 5.5. Residential placements

Barnet has two in house residential homes, each registered to accommodate and support up to six children and young people aged 12 years and above, of either gender with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The overall effectiveness of both LBB residential homes is judged to be good by Ofsted and both homes are providing a high quality of care to our Looked after Children. The ethos and vision of the homes managers mean that the homes work to build strong relationships with young people, supporting them to engage with education. Good links have been made with health agencies and there is a regular presence from CAMHs workers in the homes to encourage the accessibility of this service accessible for young people.

It is Barnet's view that residential provision plays an important role in the continuum of care for our Looked after Children and young people. In line with our permanence policy, for children for whom long term fostering is their permanence plan, we seek to support them in a family environment. However, circumstances arise for some children and young people which mean that, at a point in time, a family environment is not the best way to meet their needs. In line with each child's placement plan and care plan, we will ensure that residential providers, whether LBB or independent, work towards the desired outcomes for each particular child. We will seek to work with a child or young person to support them into a family environment where this is the most appropriate placement choice for them.

Figure 14 above demonstrates that Barnet has been increasingly commissioning more placement weeks from LBB residential provision, achieving a higher rate of utilisation. CIPFA benchmarking indicates that an 85% utilisation rate is average for in-house residential services. This equates to 530 internal residential placement weeks for Barnet and it is evident that in 2012-13 Barnet achieved an 85% utilisation rate.

However, what is also apparent from Figure 14 is the increase in the number of residential placement weeks being commissioned from independent/private residential providers. Figure 16 below illustrates that Barnet has a higher proportion of Looked after Children in residential placements than both the England and London averages, however, a more illustrative picture would be gained by comparing rates per 10,000 in this type of provision.

Work is ongoing to identify young people who can be 'stepped down' from residential placements into lower intensity provisions, in line with their care plans and placement plans. We will work closer with education and skills colleagues to develop educational provision locally to reduce need for long distance SEN placements.

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	Proportion of Looked after Children in homes and hostels	Proportion of Looked after Children in residential schools	Total in residential
England (2013)	8.8%	1.4%	10.2%
London (2013)	10.3%	1.9%	12.2%
Barnet (2014)	11.5%	2.8%	14.3%

Figure 16: Children in residential placements

Over the last 3 years, Barnet has commissioned placements from 50 independent/private residential providers (including schools); analysis has illustrated that there are common categories of needs met by these providers;

- Aggression and challenging behaviour
- Absconding and putting self at risk
- Children with disabilities, in particular Autism
- Sexualised behaviour
- Gang links
- Children and young people who have experienced sexual abuse and sexual exploitation

To better understand the use of independent/private residential provision, the placement journeys of the 45 Looked after Children in residential provision (February 2014), both LBB and independent/private (including schools) were tracked back. The majority of children and young people in residential placements (35) have 'escalated' through provision types over time. The general trend of escalation is from LBB foster placements to IFA foster placements to a residential placement. Barnet seeks to prevent this escalation of need through a consolidation of our support offer available to LBB foster carers and to our Looked after Children, to meet their needs in a stable placement, this is explored further in section 8 below.

However, we recognise that residential homes will be required for some children and young people. The tracking back analysis of placement journeys highlighted that 10 young people had not had a previous episode of care and went into a residential placement as their first placement. Children and young people for whom this is the case have multiple and high levels needs. There are some common themes to these needs:

- Emotional and social difficulties
- Sexualised behaviour
- Drug and gang relations
- Disability – physical
- Disability – learning including autism
- Absconding
- Aggressive and physically challenging behaviour

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The strengthening of the LBB fostering service to provide more stable and local placements for our Looked after Children, and the aim to recruit fostering households that can support particular cohorts of looked after children will support future aspects of our improvement journey. We seek to reduce the need for residential placements, particularly out of borough independent/private residential placements, through preventing escalation of needs, supporting more children to remain in a family environment, and by stepping children and young people down into foster care where appropriate.

Meanwhile we will work with residential providers to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people in this type of placement, using an incentives based approach where necessary. Section 7 below highlights the work that is ongoing with independent providers to develop local sufficiency of residential placements.

*Decrease the number of independent/private residential home placement weeks being commissioned by preventing escalation of needs for looked after children and stepping children and young people down where possible.*

### **5.6. Exit from care and permanence**

Returning home after a period of being looked after remains the most common reason for exit from care in Barnet, accounting for approximately one third of children leaving care over recent years. The Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy recognises those children who are on 'the edge of care' as a priority group and seeks to support children and young people to remain with or return to their families, providing ongoing support to enable families to function successfully in the community.

For those children who do not remain with or return to live with their families, Barnet seeks to provide a long term, stable permanence option. There are a variety of routes to permanence, the most appropriate of which will be recommended for each individual child. Adoption has been the focus of national policy attention over recent years; with Children and Families Bill 2014 bringing in adoption changes. The proportion of children leaving care through adoption has increased in Barnet overall since 2009-10 but has fluctuated, and the overall proportion of children exiting care through adoption decreased between 2011-12 and 2012-13. The actual numbers of children being adopted in Barnet have changed in line with statistical neighbours over recent years, see Figure 17 below.

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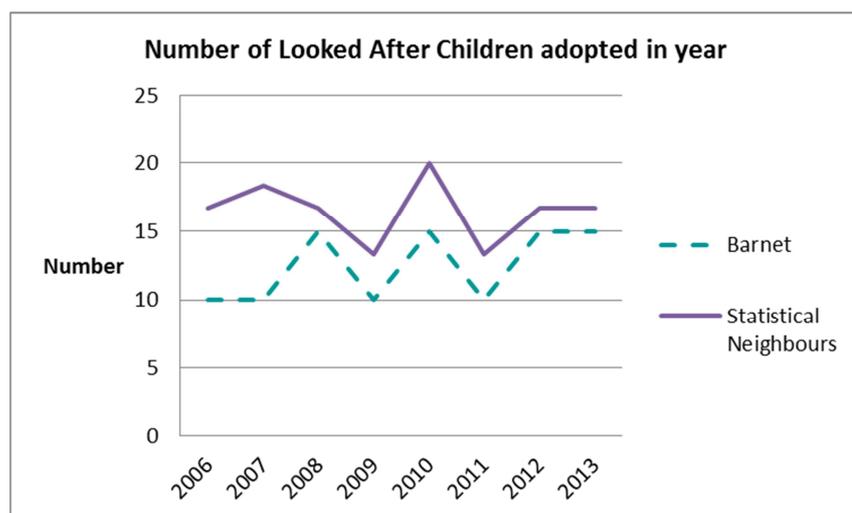


Figure 17: Number of Looked after Children adopted

Barnet is currently working with iMPower to develop insight of the experience of adoptive carers, with the objective of recruiting more carers, who can meet the needs of Barnet's Looked after Children for whom the permanence plan is adoption.

The proportion of children leaving care under a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) has seen a large increase over recent years, see Figure 18 below. We need to understand the growth of SGO numbers and to review this as part of our routes to permanence for our looked after children and young people, to ensure that we supporting them into the most appropriate permanence option and are enabling them to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Of those children leaving care through the formal leaving care at 18 years route, the vast majority leave care with formal support from the leaving care service. We will continue to work to ensure that transitions to independence are supported and smooth for our young people leaving care.

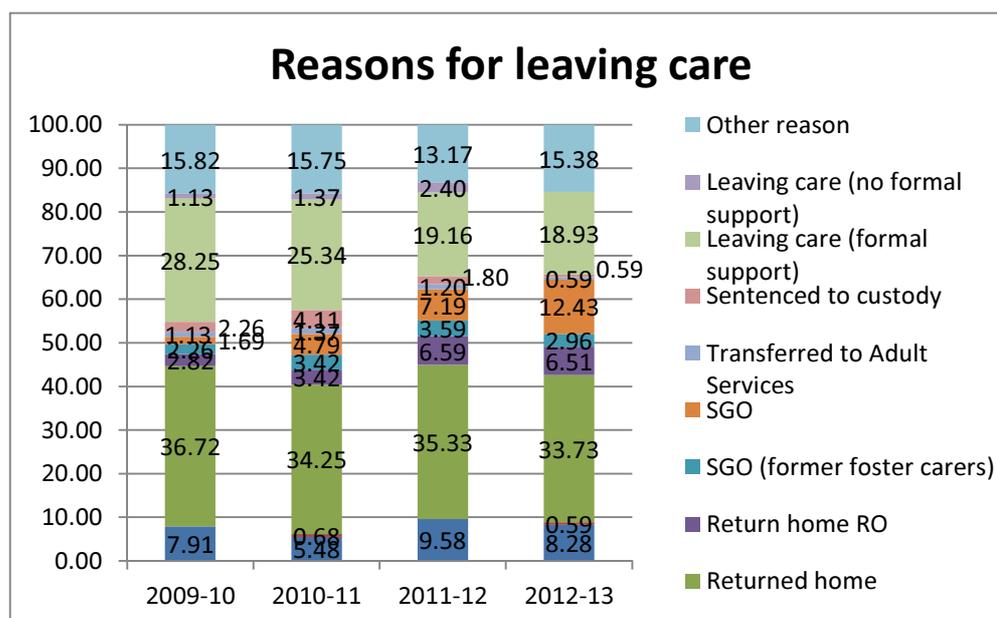


Figure 18: Reasons for leaving care

*Review the use of permanence options, particularly rising SGO numbers, to ensure that we are offering our children and young people the most appropriate permanence options.*

*Continue to focus on the recruitment of adopters to facilitate adoption as a route to permanence for Barnet's looked after children and young people, where appropriate.*

### **5.7. Transition to adulthood and semi-independent accommodation**

The main purpose of the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 is to help Young People who have been looked after by a local authority move from care into living independently in as stable a fashion as possible. Barnet is committed to supporting young people leaving care towards independence at a pace that is comfortable for them. Staying Put arrangements enable young people to remain in their foster placement until their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.

Where young people are ready to move into a semi-independent placement, Barnet will commission a placement with various levels of key work or floating support as part of the package offered to young people, as required by their needs. Barnet has commissioned semi-independent placements from approximately 15 providers over the last 3 years. These providers meet various levels of need from 24 hours supported accommodation, to shared houses with floating support. The cost of semi-independent placements is between £300 - £1,000 per week depending on the level of support required.

As this type of provision is not regulated by Ofsted, there is a key requirement for partnership working between the local authority and providers of semi-independent accommodation. Barnet has undertaken work over recent years to develop the quality of service offered by providers in this market. Barnet is currently working with West London Alliance boroughs to collectively develop the market and the quality of provision (see section 7 below for further details). We know that the quality of accommodation is important to our Looked after Children and young people; the peer to peer engagement exercise led by members of the Role Model Army clearly identified that for our 16 and 17 year old young people, having a *nice house* and a *good room* is important.

One of the main concerns raised by 16-17 year olds and care leavers (18+ years) was the availability of housing options. The needs and views of our young people leaving care need to be captured in Barnet's Housing Strategy, and partnership work with Barnet Homes and other key partners is integral to ensure an appropriate and sufficient housing offer is available to support our care leavers.

*Continue to develop placement pathways and holistic support for young people on their journey to independent living, including the availability of staying put placements.*

### **5.8. Remand**

As a result of LASPO Act 2012, Barnet has seen an increase in the demand for remand placements. However, the overall level of demand for remand placements has not, to date, been as high as initially expected. Following an assessment of their needs, many of Barnet's young people on remand are supported in semi-independent placements, with varying levels of support to meet their needs. Depending on the age of the young person, a remand fostering placement may be

## **Placements Commissioning Strategy**

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more suitable to meet a young person's needs. Barnet is working with North London Adoption and Fostering Consortium to develop the availability of remand foster placements to provide short term care for young people between the ages of ten and seventeen whilst their case is resolved.

### 6. Practice: Matching and Supporting Placements

#### 6.1. Current matching and support

Decision making about the best placement for a child is based on an assessment of a child's needs. Currently, where a foster placement is required, an LBB foster care placement is sought in the first instance; if no LBB foster carer is available, the reciprocal arrangement for sharing vacant in-house carers through the North London Adoption and Fostering Consortium is used. If a placement to meet a child's needs cannot be found through either of these routes, Resources Panel will make a recommendation on whether an IFA placement is to be commissioned, to be approved by Assistant Director for Social Care. Barnet is part of a Framework Agreement for IFA placements through West London Alliance which is used as the first source of an IFA placement (see section 7 below for further details).

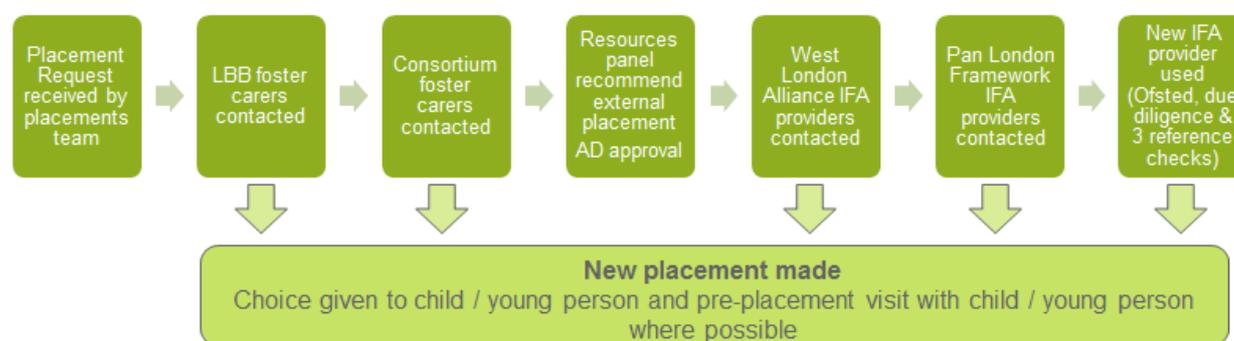


Figure 19: Placement process

Required support is put in place at the start of a placement, and may be increased or decreased on review, depending on how the carer is able to respond to a child's needs over the course of a placement. A strength and difficulties scale could be used to supplement qualitative information and assessment about a child's needs and support requirements. This could be replicated in the monitoring of placements to assist identification of a child's changing needs and to bring more consistency to placement monitoring, regardless of the provider type.

#### 6.2. Views of looked after children and young people

The views of our looked after children and young people have been referenced above, to emphasise particular elements of placements provision. This section seeks to ensure that the full range of messages from the latest peer to peer engagement exercise (February 2014) are captured.

- Older looked after children feel more involved in decision making about placements than 7-15 year olds
- Placement moves need to be minimised
- Some placements are too far from a child's school
- It is important for looked after children to feel welcomed into their foster family
- Future housing options is the only concern raised by 16-17 year olds and care leavers (18+ years) told us that they want more housing options
- 16-17 year olds said they felt involved in their future planning but want more advice and guidance, particularly on employment and financial advice

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We need to continue to involve older children in decision making about their placements and need to work to ensure that younger children have more involvement in decisions about their placements. We recognise the importance of minimising placement moves; the consolidation of support for LBB foster placements will help us to promote placement stability. We know that LBB foster placements are, overall, closer to Barnet than IFA placements. Our objective to develop additional LBB foster placement capacity will help to keep as many looked after children in their current schools as possible.

The training that foster carers receive emphasises the importance of children feeling welcomed into a foster family and part of that family. We will seek to develop ways of further facilitating this, for example, through the development of carer profiles to introduce children and young people to foster carers ahead of a visit or a placement being made.

In respect of future planning for young people preparing for independence, we will take seriously the views that future housing options are an area of concern for those aged 16-17 years and 18+ years; and we recognise the need for an holistic approach to future planning, including the provision of advice and guidance.

***Regularly include the views of looked after children and young people on all elements of their care, including placements, through existing participation forums, supplemented by repeat peer to peer engagement exercises.***

### 7. Market Analysis

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#### 7.1. Collaborative working

Barnet works collaboratively with the North London Adoption and Fostering Consortium, which comprises the six London Boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey, Hackney and Islington to develop practice and to collaborate on service improvements. Barnet collaborates with these boroughs to provide a shared service for adoption recruitment, targeted recruitment of Jewish and Muslim fostering households to meet the needs of our local children; the development of a parent and child fostering scheme and the recruitment of remand fostering households. Barnet will continue to work collaboratively within the Consortium to develop local sufficiency and reciprocal arrangements.

Barnet has worked as part of the West London Alliance, with Barnet, Brent, Ealing, Harrow, Hillingdon and Hounslow to implement a Framework for commissioning IFA placements. This collaboration has enabled us to develop the quality and sufficiency of provision, but also to secure financial benefits such as 0% inflation on contracts. Barnet will continue to seize opportunities through West London Alliance to provide lower cost services that deliver good outcomes for our young people. Barnet may seek to pursue shared approaches for specialist services where the benefits outweigh the costs.

#### 7.2. IFA placements

In July 2013 The London Borough of Hillingdon, on behalf of the nine West London Local Authorities, awarded contracts on the West London IFA Framework to 31 providers:

Lot	Price Band
Lot One - Core Fostering	Age 0 – 16
	Age 16 & 17
	Solo placements
Lot Two – Parent & Child Fostering	Under 18 (Parent)
	Over 18 (Parent)
Lot Three – Specialist Fostering	Age 0 -16
	Age 16 & 17
	Solo Placements

Figure 20: WLA IFA Framework

One of the main drivers for going out to tender and awarding a Framework for the next four years was to develop more local capacity and better quality foster carers in the IFA market. In the short to medium term, Barnet will continue to commission local IFA placements for Looked after Children with the highest levels of need. Barnet will also seek to commission a local IFA placement for looked after children and young people where their needs cannot be best met by LBB foster carers at that point in time.

West London Commissioners are working with providers on the IFA framework to agree a common approach to Staying Put placements to ensure consistency across West London and that this type of placement is made available to all young people turning 18 and wishing to remain with their foster carer.

### 7.3. Residential placements

West London Commissioners have also been working with providers of residential children's homes and have held regular provider forums to communicate our needs and work with the market to build capacity in West London and Greater London. The work of the West London Alliance is exploring spot and block contract options, while developing the quality and capacity of provision available in the local area. Barnet is advocating for an outcome based commissioning approach with providers, which may involve an incentive based reward model. Barnet is working with WLA and London Care Placements to develop this.

While Barnet seeks to utilise its own high quality LBB residential provision, we recognise that a particular specialist need or the combination of needs profiles of young people requiring a residential placement at any one time may make necessary the commissioning of independent/private residential placements. However, Barnet is seeking to reduce the number of independent/private residential placement weeks that we need to commission.

### 7.4. Semi-independent placements

Barnet is currently working with West London Alliance boroughs to collectively develop the market and the quality of Semi Independent provision and are working towards implementing a Select List of semi independent providers. This list seeks to reduce and manage the supplier base using fewer, better quality providers and building up volume to deliver economies of scale, while ensuring a geographical spread of services across West London to provide placements in each local authority area. The list seeks to provide assurance of levels of quality and building a culture of continuous improvement with providers, especially as there is no statutory regulation. A choice of high quality provision for commissioners and young people, which is flexible to the changing needs of young people, will help our care leavers to achieve their best possible outcomes.

*Barnet will be opportunistic in its work with other boroughs and will seize opportunities through to provide lower cost services that deliver good outcomes for our young people*

### 8. Target Operating Model

#### 8.1. Placement mix

The analysis and research undertaken in preparing this strategy has identified that – with considerable activity and effort – the placement mix can be shifted to provide better outcomes for children and young people and reduced cost for the local authority.

Assuming a steady Looked after Children population this would translate to:

Provision type	Current placement mix (%) (March 2014)	Current placement mix (children) (March 2014)	Target placement mix (%)	Target placement mix 2019 – 2020 (children)	Change (children)
LBB fostering	32.5%	102	52.9%	166	64
Kinship care / reg 24. Placement	9.6%	30	9.6%	30	0
IFA fostering	28.3%	89	13.2%	42	-47
LBB residential	3.5%	11	3.5%	11	0
Independent/private residential	10.8%	34	5.5%	17	-17
Other e.g semi-independent, family assessment, placed for adoption	15.3%	48	15.3%	48	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>314</b>	

Figure 21: Placement share

To achieve this, the implementation plan needs to focus on expanding the internal foster care offer and achieving a shift from residential to fostering placements.

#### 8.2. Expanding the internal foster care offer

The in-house foster care service currently provides placements for 53% of children in foster care, with 47% in IFA placements (Percentage of children in LBB foster placements as a proportion of all looked after children in foster placements). An analysis of the complexity of these placements has been undertaken which has shown:

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Level of need	Description	No. of IFA placements	% of IFA placements
1	In IFA placement due only to lack of in-house capacity at the time of placement	14	16%
2	Additional services would be required to offer this placement in-house	54	61%
3	Specialist support needed to offer this placement in-house	20	23%

Figure 22: IFA placements and levels of need

Over time we expect that nearly all placements up to and including those requiring a medium level of additional support would be provided in-house. Highly specialised placements will still be sought from IFA providers.

Increasing the number of placements can be achieved through:

- Generating more enquiries
- Improving the quality of enquiries
- Improving the conversion rate of those enquiries to approved foster carers
- Speeding up the approval process
- Improving the utilisation rates of approved foster carers
- Providing better support to foster carers

The implementation plan will seek to make significant improvements in each of these areas, specifically:

- Increasing the enquiry rate by 10%
- Targeting word of mouth enquiries which have been shown to convert more successfully
- Improving the conversion rate from 4% to 10%
- Speeding up the average approval time to 9 months
- Increasing utilisation from 74% to 80%

For further details refer to the foster care recruitment plan.

By commencing activity in the first quarter of 2014, an improved enquiry rate should be realised from July leading to an improved recruitment rate from April 2015. These assumptions have been modelled to show the impact on the number of fostering households and placements to 2019/20:

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	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
<b>Total households recruited</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>
Total de-registrations	10	11	12	13	13	13
<b>Net gain</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Total no. fostering households	96	107	118	129	129	129
Total placements capacity: year end	144	161	178	195	195	195
Placements utilised: year end	110	123	135	148	148	148
<b>In-house placement share</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>78%</b>

Figure 23: Increase to LBB fostering households

### A detailed picture of success for fostering recruitment

The overall target to recruit a net gain of fostering households has underneath it more detailed success criteria. To enable us to achieve the aim of supporting more looked after children in LBB foster placements, the fostering households recruited must offer placements to a broader range of looked after children and young people than is currently available.

It is evident from the data analysis that has been undertaken that placements for sibling groups aged 5-9 and 10-15 years and placements for teenagers, particularly older teenagers, are in highest demand.

As such, of the total households recruited each year, the profile below would best enable us to offer LBB foster placements to looked after children.

		2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
<b>Total households recruited</b>		<b>16</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>
Placements offered by fostering households recruited	0-4 years	3	3	4	4	2	2
	5-9 years	3	5	5	5	3	3
	10-15 years	6	8	8	9	5	5
	16+ years	4	6	6	6	4	4

Data analysis informs us that one in every three looked after children are part of a sibling group.

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- Therefore, of the fostering households recruited in each year, one third of fostering households recruited need to offer sibling placements

Although a variety of factors are taken into consideration when matching children to placements, religion and culture can play an important role for some of our children and young people. Detailed data on religion is not included in this strategy document. However, analysis has been undertaken which demonstrates that there is a need for Jewish and Muslim fostering households in particular.

- Of the fostering households recruited in each year, one in ten are needed to be Muslim and one in 25 are needed to be Jewish to meet the profile of our looked after children

The profile above will need to be reviewed every six months as the profile of looked after children is liable to change.

### A recruitment pattern and profile

In order to meet our recruitment targets, below are the levels of recruitment activity that will be required. In 2014/15 Barnet is working on a 6% conversion rate. By 2017/18 Barnet will achieve a conversion rate of 10% from enquiry to approval. This will be supported by an increasing number of high quality, word of mouth enquiries.

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
<b>Number of enquiries (of which word of mouth)</b>	280 (85)	290 (90)	260 (90)	240 (90)
<b>Phonecalls handled</b>	280	290	260	240
<b>Initial visits</b>	87	94	94	94
<b>Number of assessments initiated</b>	31	36	37	38
<b>Number of approvals</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>

A detailed recruitment pattern and profile is required for 2018/19 and beyond to identify what the recruitment pattern needs to look like to maintain the number of fostering households once the service reaches its target capacity.

The recruitment profile outlined above in this strategy has informed a set of MTFS savings for Family Services. The following assumptions were included in the calculation of those savings:

## Placements Commissioning Strategy

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- Cases picked up by the internal service will require varying levels of additional support. For every three cases, a third will require no additional support, a third low additional support and a third medium additional support
- Low and medium support cases will cost more than the current in-house service
- A detailed forecast of indirect costs of the in-house service has been completed and added to the direct costs
- A reduction in the proportion of residential cases BUT savings have only been calculated at the IFA to in-house rate. When more work has been done to assess the feasibility of this assumption the savings forecast will be revised

Achieving the MTFs savings targets are based on a number of **significant assumptions**, as set out below. In order to achieve a baseline budget reduction, all of these assumptions must be upheld:

- A stable number of looked after children
- No increase in the number of residential placements required (due to complexity of need)
- No increase in the number of joint SEN and residential placements

The investment figures required can be broken down into two categories:

1. Wrap around support investment – the additional services that will need to be commissioned to provide more foster placements ‘in-house’
2. Other investment – this includes the additional overheads associated with increased volume in the fostering system such as additional Form F assessment costs and additional supervising social workers

### 8.3. Enhancing the support offered to internal foster carers

Barnet’s current foster carers speak very positively of the support they receive and the low deregistration rate is testament to this. However, more can be done to improve the ‘core’ support offer to foster carers and additional, flexible support will be needed to sustain placements of children and young people with more complex needs in-house.

The main elements to focus on to strengthen the universal offer to all foster carers need to be:

- *Peer & professional support*  
There is an overwhelming willingness from foster carers to provide peer support (77% of current foster carers said they would be willing to be involved). Redesigning link work arrangements to create a hub and spoke model would get better value from our social work capacity and capitalise on areas of specialism.
- *Better use of council delivered / commissioned services*  
In particular, the Virtual School.

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- *Clearer communication of the total support provide by the local authority*

Based on an assessment of the individual needs of looked after children, an enhanced fostering model will provide additional support to enable in-house foster carers to sustain more complex foster placements and achieve outcomes as good if not better than if the placement was delivered by an IFA. This should help improve foster carer recruitment, improve placement stability and further improve foster carer retention.

Work is required with foster carers and front-line staff to develop the 'directory' of core and enhanced support services that could be offered by the in-house service but it is likely to include:

- Hub and spoke peer support models
- Attachment, self-regulation and competency support
- Training incl. ability to deliver therapeutic interventions
- Expectation setting and supervision support
- Family worker interventions
- School holiday cover
- Respite
- Managing complex behaviour planning
- Buddying
- Therapeutic interventions for young people
- Independent visitors
- Positive activities for young people (e.g. gym memberships, D of E)
- Shared positive activities with foster carer
- Participation groups
- Mentoring
- Life skills training

The local authority will develop and test hub and spoke support model for the in-house foster care service and consider the role that the in-house residential homes could play in this. The diagram below illustrates the concept:

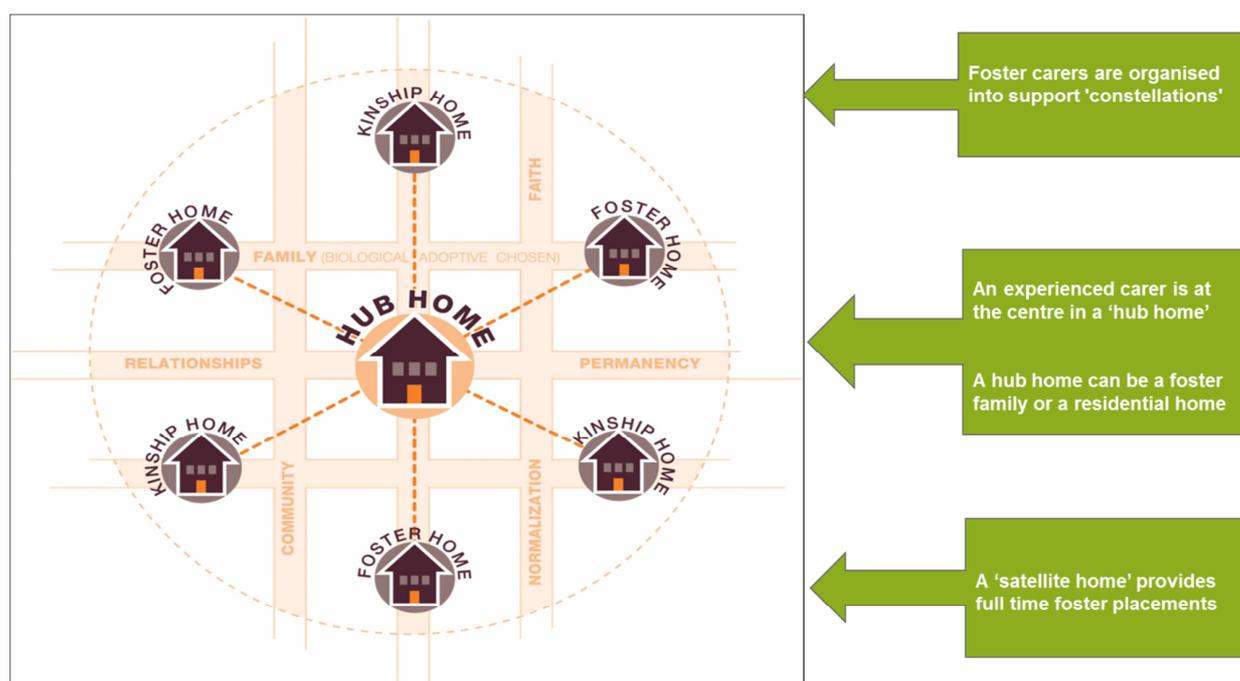


Figure 24: Peer support model

## **Placements Commissioning Strategy**

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Hubs could be locality based or have a specific focus for example supporting teenage placement stability, preparing children to return home or supporting the step down from residential services.

It will be important to provide a clear offer of additional support services to foster carers and children without raising the cost for the current level of service. This will require managing foster carer expectations and working effectively with staff to ensure their practice is consistent and that the support offered is proportionate to complexity.

### **8.4. Reducing the number of external residential placements**

The proportion of external residential placements could – in theory - be reduced in three main ways:

1. *Preventing escalation of challenging behaviours that require a move from foster care to a residential setting.*

The enhanced foster care offer above needs to be used to provide additional support when problems start to escalate in order to sustain as many placements as suitable / possible. Further work needs to be done to identify the types of interventions that will be suitable for different escalations.

2. *Residential settings working more effectively with young people to enable them to 'step-down' to a foster care placement.*

A review of all residential cases will be undertaken to identify the children and young people we would aspire to see step-down to a foster care placement. Individual plans then need to be put in place to help achieve this. These could call upon the enhanced foster care offer above or may involve a more robust planning and monitoring process with providers.

3. *Finding alternative provision for those with specialist needs (often those young people entering care for the first time and moving straight into a residential placement).*

This is not a priority given the other work that needs to be achieved. If opportunities arise through regional or sub-regional working these will be reviewed.

### **8.5. Future of LBB residential provision**

There is an opportunity to re-focus the use of the two LBB residential homes. The options considered are:

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Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
1) 'As is' continue using the two in-house residential homes to support a mix of genders, ages and needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Higher levels of utilisation can be achieved as a broad range of young people can be supported</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A missed opportunity to work more intensively with particular groups?</li> </ul>
2) Re-focus the two homes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One home to work intensively to support a younger age group (10-13 years?) back into foster care</li> <li>One home to support teens into semi-independence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A focus on reducing levels of need for a younger age group will support longer term outcomes for them and may bring financial benefit if some children return to foster care</li> <li>Acknowledges that residential care will be the only feasible option for some young people and focuses on supporting them into adulthood</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transition time into a new model (Meadow Close would be quicker transition)</li> <li>Utilisation may fall if service access criteria is too restrictive</li> </ul>
3) Re-focus one of the two homes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One home to act as a short term assessment unit to identify longer term placement requirements</li> <li>One home to continue to support a mix of genders, ages and needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A focus on moving young people on from residential care wherever possible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples of short term assessment units in other boroughs have created 'blockages' and delay in the system</li> </ul>

**Figure 25: Future of LBB residential provision**

The commissioning intention is to proceed with the as-is approach (option 1).

The quality of service provided by both homes is good, however for the Meadow Close home this is despite the physical location, size and condition of the building and so continuing to explore the use of the capital programme to re-locate this home is desirable.

***A capital bid will be prepared for the development of a replacement premises/ location for Meadow Close.***

**Appendices**

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Appendix 1	Glossary of terms
Appendix 2	Sufficiency duty full wording

## Placements Commissioning Strategy

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### GLOSSARY OF TERMS

<b><i>LBB foster placement</i></b>	a foster placement with a foster carer that LB Barnet has recruited and approved
<b><i>IFA placement</i></b>	a foster placement with a foster carer that has been recruited and approved by an Independent Fostering Agency
<b><i>LBB residential placement</i></b>	a placement in one of LB Barnet's two children's homes
<b><i>Independent/private residential placement</i></b>	a placement in a residential home or school that is run by an independent or private provider
<b><i>Staying put placement</i></b>	an arrangement which enables young people to stay with their foster carers until their 21st birthday
<b><i>Semi-independent placement</i></b>	a placement which has tailored levels of support to enable a young person in the transition to adulthood once they have left foster care or residential care
<b><i>In borough placement</i></b>	a placement that is in Barnet's geographic boundary
<b><i>Out of borough placement</i></b>	a placement that is outside of Barnet's geographic boundary
<b><i>A long distance placement</i></b>	a placement which is more than 20 miles away from Barnet

### APPENDIX 2

## **Placements Commissioning Strategy**

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### **Children Act 1989 “22G General duty of local authority to secure sufficient accommodation for looked after children**

(1) It is the general duty of a local authority to take steps that secure, so far as reasonably practicable, the outcome in subsection (2).

(2) The outcome is that the local authority are able to provide the children mentioned in subsection (3) with accommodation that—

- (a) is within the authority’s area; and
- (b) meets the needs of those children.

(3) The children referred to in subsection (2) are those—

- (a) that the local authority are looking after;
- (b) in respect of whom the authority are unable to make arrangements under section 22C(2); and

(c) whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the authority’s area.

(4) In taking steps to secure the outcome in subsection (2), the local authority must have regard to the benefit of having—

- (a) a number of accommodation providers in their area that is, in their opinion, sufficient to secure that outcome; and
- (b) a range of accommodation in their area capable of meeting different needs that is, in their opinion, sufficient to secure that outcome.

(5) In this section ‘accommodation providers’ means— local authority foster parents; and children’s homes in respect of which a person is registered under Part 2 of the Care Standards Act 2000.”