

APPENDIX A

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

PLACEMENTS COMMISSIONING STRATEGY

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1. INTRODUCTION

In Family Friendly Barnet there is a belief that for most children and young people, the best place to live is with their family of origin. However, there will be some children and young people who need to live, either short term or permanently with substitute carers.

We have high aspirations for, and expectations of, the children in our corporate care and want them to be able to confidently say “I have, I can, I am”. Historically, outcomes for children who have been in care have been comparatively poor compared to their peers. Research has shown that, as adults, they do less well educationally; they are over represented in the criminal justice system; have poorer health outcomes including an increased risk of suffering from mental health difficulties; have an increased likelihood of becoming homeless and experience economic and relationship difficulties in their own families.

Statutory guidance requires local authorities to take steps to secure sufficient accommodation for looked after children within the authority’s area, which meets their needs (‘the sufficiency duty’). The purpose of this strategy is to set out how we will meet this duty. It focuses on assessing the demand and supply of placements for children who are looked after or leaving care and supports the delivery of the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

The scope of this strategy is not restricted to making good quality placements. It builds on service-wide approaches already in place:

- In line with the overarching Family Friendly Barnet vision, our ambition is that all families in Barnet, including birth, foster, adoptive and other family types, are able to bounce back from stress and adversity, taking on new challenges that lead to better outcomes for children and their families. This is being realised through the resilience model which has been introduced across the partnership.
- Within Family Friendly Barnet, there is a focus on early intervention and prevention with three guiding principles; i) Intervene as early as possible; ii) Take a whole family approach; and iii) Use evidence based monitoring systems. These aim to reduce the numbers of children and young people entering care and requiring local authority accommodation. This approach is consistent with Barnet’s belief that investing in services that are able to promote change within families and build resilience is frequently more effective and efficient than removing children and placing them in alternative care.
- ‘Every Day Counts’ places a focus on reducing drift and delay and ensuring that children don’t stay a day longer in care than they need to with the aim of improving outcomes and managing costs.

The complexity of market forces and a changing local demographic create a challenge in confidently predicting supply and demand; however the collation, analysis and systematic refresh of local qualitative and quantitative evidence helps us to understand

these dynamics and plan for the future. The strategy outlines our current profile of looked after children, our current placement mix and sets out how LB Barnet will achieve sufficiency over the period 2016-2020.

2. NATIONAL AND LOCAL CONTEXT

2.1 National Context

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

- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Care Standards Act 2000
- Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Statutory Guidance on Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children 2010
- Guidance on the Provision of Accommodation for 16 & 17 year old young people who be homeless and/or require accommodation 2010
- Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Promoting the Educational Achievements of Looked After Children: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities 2014
- The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012
- Associated legislation, regulations and statutory guidance

Over the last five years Local Authorities have had to consider their planning in line with a number of major legislative programmes aimed at improving services for vulnerable children with a particular emphasis on looked after children.

- The introduction of the 2012 Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act confers looked-after status to all young people remanded through the courts and has further increased the numbers in care
- The Children's and Families Act 2014 covers a range of areas and its provisions on adoptions are designed to increase the number of children placed in adoptive families and also the speed within which this achieved. The current government has outlined a series of measures all intended to transform the current system. Implementing the introduction of a 26 week time limit for care proceedings, a shorter adopters' assessment period, a concurrent planning requirement and less emphasis on ethnic matching. This has required significant service reshaping by all local authorities.
- In June 2015, in its Regionalising Adoption paper, the Department of Education set out proposals for new regional adoption agencies ("RAAs") to speed up matching, improve adoption support and achieve cost efficiencies. The paper invited councils and Voluntary Adoption Agencies ("VAAs") across England, to

submit Expressions of Interest in becoming part of new regionalised arrangements. In response, the Association of London Directors of Children's Services (ALDCS) submitted a high level London proposition that was subsequently approved by DfE.

- The Children and Social Work Bill 2016 - Power to test different ways of working. Eileen Munro showed in 2011 how regulation can get in the way of social workers putting children first and the power to test different ways to working is about confronting this challenge and aims to empower those in the frontline to tell government where things don't work and give opportunities to test and build new approaches in a controlled and carefully monitored setting.

National information (Characteristics of Children in Need: 2015 to 2016) about looked after children who have been looked after continuously for twelve months as of March 31st 2016 states that:

- There were 70,440 looked after children at 31 March 2016, an increase of 1% compared to 31 March 2015 and an increase of 5% compared to 2012. The rise this year reflects a rise of 1,470 in unaccompanied asylum seeking children, compared to a rise of 970 in all looked after children.
- In 2016 the number of children in foster care continued to rise; of the 70,440 looked after children, 51,850 (74%) were cared for in foster placements
- In 2016 the number of looked after unaccompanied asylum seeking children increased by 54% compared to last year's figures, up to 4,210 children at 31 March 2016 from 2,740 in 2015 and up from a low of 1,950 in 2013.
- At 31 March 2016, unaccompanied asylum seeking children represented 6% of the looked after children population
- 32,050 children started to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2016; an increase of 2% from the previous year's figure of 31,340 and an increase of 13% from 2012.
- 31,710 children ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31st March 2016. This was a small increase of 1% from the previous year.
- 4,690 looked after children were adopted in 2016, down 12% on a high of 5,360 in 2015 which followed a period of growth since 2011.

2.2 Local Context

In Barnet it's essential that our children & young people are placed locally in order for them to be close to their families/communities and have access to local resources that can promote resilience and support them achieving good outcomes e.g. educational/health attainment, re-unification work and securing permanency and placement stability. There may be exceptions to this if it is deemed not to be in the child's/ young person's interest to be placed locally.

We want the same things for the children and young people in our care as any good parent would want for their child. We want our children to be healthy and happy in childhood, to feel valued for who they are and to feel loved. It is important that they benefit from their experience in school and enjoy learning. We want them to grow into well adjusted, emotionally balanced individuals who will experience positive relationships, be responsible citizens, fulfil their goals and ambitions and ultimately provide good parenting to their own children.

2.3 LAC Population

In Barnet the number of looked after children has remained relatively stable over the past 5 years, with a similar inflow and outflow each year. However, as at January 2017 the number of LAC is at 352, which is the highest it has been in 6 years and is not in line with population growth, predominantly due to the increase in UASC. There are also more children starting to be looked after than there are ceasing to be looked after which is the first time this has happened in the last 4 years.

Figure 1: Number of LAC @ 31.03.2016

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Barnet 0-18 population	89,193	90,298	91,655	91,021	92,610
Barnet per 10,000 rate	36	36	36	34	35
Numbers of LAC	300	305	310	305	315
Children starting to be looked after	155	170	170	175	180
Children ceasing to be looked after	165	170	170	185	175

2.4 Age, Diversity & Disability Dimension

In Barnet, the ethnic breakdown for children looked after has varied little since 2011. Nationally and in Barnet, the highest number of LAC are from a white British background. Barnet's percentage of White LAC is significantly lower than England's however this is in line with Barnet's population. The percentage of mixed ethnicity LAC is significantly higher in Barnet than it is nationally; they are also disproportionately represented compared to the Barnet population of mixed ethnicity 0-19 year olds (10.6%). The "any other" ethnic group cohort in Barnet is also larger than the cohort nationally this is due to the increase in UASC.

The highest proportion of children is within the 10-15 age bracket and the lowest proportion is under 1. There is a slight skewing of the looked after population towards males however this is a consequence of two specific cohorts; UASCs (whereby 95% are male) and children with a disability and or SEN (of whom 74% are male). Once these two cohorts are accounted for, the gender profile is more balanced. The largest ethnic group in the looked after population is White British, followed by those identifying as Mixed. It is important to note that one of the most

prominent religions within Barnet is Judaism, with approximately 15% of the population being Jewish. However this is not reflected within the looked after children population as only 4% of this cohort are Jewish. This is in part due to the fact that Jewish families often have large extended families, community networks and an established and effective voluntary sector which means that they may not need to depend on social care services as often.

2.5 Adolescents

There was a notably higher proportion of children aged 16+ in Barnet's care compared to the national average (+9% as at March 2016) but the rate is in line with overall London figures and reflects the numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASCs) placed within London. We currently have significant increases in numbers of adolescents entering care with high level complex needs. This is mainly due to the increase in Remand/serious youth Crime, Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, the increase in gang violence and the over 16s who entering care due to family relationship breakdown some of whom are at risk of child sexual exploitation, homelessness and or exhibiting significant anti-social behaviour

A high percentage of young people falling within 16+ age group are placed with specialist semi-independent units or children's homes. Capacity within Barnet's in-house fostering scheme and two children's homes are fully utilised. This places significant pressure on available resources particularly in regards to response to placement requests requiring careful search in identifying appropriate placements that meet need. The challenge then becomes to place them in the right placement, keeping them local and preventing the escalation into residential care due to the lack of sufficient foster carers.

Therefore given increase in LAC population, Barnet future challenge is one of achieving right placement mix providing options for 16+; with creative care plans providing opportunities for young people to increase confidence/resilience to enable them to aspire and achieve and successfully make the transition towards adulthood

2.6 Remand/Serious Youth Crime

The key features of this group are young men who are gang affiliated some of whom are either victims of violence or known to Barnet's Youth Offending Team (YOT). Young people who pose a risk to others therefore requiring additional support/risk management via remand/secure unit or specialist semi-independent provision and gang affiliated members requiring out of borough/distance placements based on YOT information and police intelligence

In April 2016 Barnet established their Serious Incident Reporting Protocol (SIRP) setting out processes for providing multi-agency response to serious incidents involving young people who are either victims or perpetrators of serious youth violence. SIRP's panels takes place within 24 hours producing safety and risk

management plans which are then reviewed within 5 working days. During 2016/17 the SIRP Panel deliberated on total 23 cases, out of these cases four related to LAC Children involved in violent incidents e.g. stabbings, shooting or incidents resulting in hospitalization.

In terms of remand cases, Barnet had 15 children remanded to secure accommodation pending court cases of which 3 children were on care orders that received sentencing and remained looked after to local authority care.

The challenges are that remand placements are beyond the control of the Local Authority. Who comes in, when and where they go is non-negotiable and at the discretion of the courts, it is therefore difficult to negotiate costs or block booking. Work is being undertaken on prevention and ensuring good bail support packages

2.7 Child Sexual Exploitation

During 2016/17 period 34 cases were presented at MASE Panel linked to CSE. The analysis shows that the largest risk factor associated with CSE cases was not attending a mainstream school (177 times greater risk compared to the general population), and being a looked after child (LAC 98 times increased risk compared to the general population). Many CSE victims have had more than one missing episode in the last 12 months and almost all (97%) of CSE victims are known to the Local Authority; many coming from a troubled family or being raised in care; both requiring local authority support. A large proportion of CSE involved 'grooming' meaning that the victim did not necessarily recognise the exploitative nature of the relationship(s) they were in. Very often, alcohol and drugs were involved and the abuse would take place whilst the victim was under the influence of those substances. Friends, gang affiliation and associates played a role, with evidence suggesting that some CSE victims are introducing other young people to potential abusers.

2.8 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

Barnet has seen significant increase in UASC numbers with referrals rising from 46 (2014/15) to 61 (2015/16); this is mainly attributed to high percentage of unaccompanied minors placed in London. Also DfE have set a target on numbers of UASC referred to local authorities' equivalent to 0.007% of child population. The implications being that Barnet is expected to support up to 65 children for 2017/18. Given the level of vulnerability, emotional trauma, isolation, language barrier and lack of access to family/support networks experienced by unaccompanied minors, support packages are developed in conjunction with Education, Health, YOT and Housing in recognition of complex needs surrounding this group.

A key practice challenge is determining age and ensuring careful matching with other children accommodated in fostering or care homes; being mindful that some may present significantly younger than the actual age stated on arrival. An age assessment is carried out where age is questioned, taking approximately two weeks to complete.

The response to UASCs (16+) has been to place them in semi-independent provision but with the numbers increasing this is becoming more challenging. Barnet have responded by arranging block booking with a local semi-independent provider in anticipation of anticipated increase in numbers.

For those young people unsuccessful in securing re-unification with birth relatives, our core offer needs to be robust with particular emphasis on targeted support in order to help integration in mainstream education and provide clear care planning to support leaving care transition

2.9 Unborn Children at Risk

In Barnet the numbers of unborn children at risk has increased significantly during last 12 months. This rise has necessitated an increase in the use of residential mother and baby units and mother and baby foster care placements.

The challenges are that there is a need to strengthen pre-birth assessments and planning in order to make decisions on risk and put in place support packages before the baby is born. This would reduce the need to undertake high cost assessments whilst in residential or foster placements with decisions around community placement or adoption having already been made. Currently Barnet's family finding performance is good in relation to permanency planning and timeliness e.g. length of time taken in matching and placing a child with an adoptive families

2.10 Progress

In reviewing progress against key actions highlighted within 2015 Placements Commissioning Strategy, main headlines are as follows:

- A new West London Alliance (WLA) approved list for Semi-independent provision was launched in April 2016. This was accompanied by market engagement activity and the intention is to re-open this list in 2017, so as to enable additional providers to join.
- The WLA has developed Careplace, a web based, e-Brokerage tool for facilitating placement referrals. This tool will provide a secure, web-based platform for brokering placements via the DPS – Dynamic Purchasing System. The system also enables reporting on market activity and insight into demand on a local and regional basis which can be used to inform further market development activity once it is available.

- Barnet have made significant savings by reducing numbers of children placed out of borough with private/voluntary children homes and through improving care planning/ “step down” arrangements e.g. to fostering, semi-independence placements or re-unification work. Over 2015/16, 8 children were “stepped down” from residential care to either reunification with their families or to semi-independence and fostering.
- Our recently developed placements dashboard brings together data and financial information to enable better budget management. Specifically, managers will be able to identify what proportion of any over/under spend on placements is attributable to volume, unit cost and / or income.
- The 2016/17 Barnet Fostering Communication Plan outlined key deliverables for increasing numbers of new approved carers. This included marketing and recruitment campaign initiative e.g. join Our Barnet Family Campaign, Teenage Foster Carer Recruitment Drive, Outreach to Faith/Community Groups, Social Media and Press & Radio Promotions. As of December 2016 Barnet fostering households had increased from 97 households (2015/16) to 104 households (2016/17).
- The fostering service have received 6 applications for loft conversions with the focus on fully utilising our in-house fostering households for adolescents and sibling groups and reducing spend on IFAs - Independent Fostering Agencies.
- Nationally, statutory and independent fostering agencies are struggling to recruit enough carers. The London operating environment is particularly challenging with local authorities competing with over 100 independent fostering agencies across the capital.
- Barnet is part of the North London Consortia (6 neighbouring local authorities) engaged in consortia wide campaign initiatives aimed at recruiting more carers. A further review of campaign strategy will be undertaken to improve placement mix and expand in-house options for supporting unaccompanied asylum seeking children, teenagers, sibling groups and parent and child placements.
- In consolidating and enhancing our support offer to Barnet foster carers we have commissioned PACE (Playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy) therapeutic training model which will enable carers to become more confident and resilient. This will in turn support good outcomes for older children/young people with complex needs e.g. including embedding therapeutic practice and increasing placement stability
- The new Permanency Planning Panel (PPP) has been introduced to provide senior level oversight and scrutiny on care plans and permanency planning for children on edge of care or accommodated. The PPP has a central role in ensuring plans are appropriate/child centred; resulting in timely decision making and purposeful practice that promotes step down from residential placement to fostering or re-unification with families.

Barnet is investing in a Resilient Futures project which uses a combination of resilience based interventions and practice tools for supporting “step down” plans for children placed in residential settings. It is envisaged that the project which will include a virtual team, will result in improved placement options and better outcomes for children.

- Barnet continues to fully utilise the Adoption Support Fund to enable children to live locally where appropriate with their birth relatives. Funding is used to undertake direct therapeutic work with carers/children or develop wrap around support packages to build confidence, strengthen resilience and maintain placement stability.
- Barnet has been successful in placing children with adopters using the inter-agency fee to ensure timely linking and matching with locally approved adopters and those approved and available via North London Consortia. A further review of adoption recruitment strategy is needed in view of impact arising from pan-London regionalisation work and government withdrawal of inter-agency fee to support matching with consortia approved adopters.
- The capital bid for development of new premises for the Meadow Close children’s home has been approved and plans are currently being developed to create a “hub” to host the virtual team as part of the resilience futures programme.
- The overall benefits of the WLA Children’s Programme are showing that during 2014/15 and 2015/16 the programme achieved savings of £2.4 Million. Barnet made 93 new IFA placements in 2015/16 of which 52 were placed through the WLA framework and 41 through LCP or spot purchasing. This equates to 56% being placed through the WLA and 44% on other Frameworks. Savings are being made through cost and volume and sibling placements.

2.11 Going Forward

A continued pressure on services, at a time of reducing Council budgets, calls for a holistic commissioning response which will support children to remain with their families wherever possible and which will provide a range of effective options for those requiring alternative care arrangements. Due to the continuing change in trends it is difficult to predict accurately future needs.

A placements model has been developed to enable us to refocus as needed, help track progress against placement aspirations, including number of placement days, unit costs and income (such as health and education contributions to placements). The quality of support to children and young people will be monitored through the Family Services quality assurance cycle including through audits, practice observation and feedback from children and young people. Over time, if the strategy is successful in building resilience it is anticipated that the placements mix will change.

LB Barnet's comparatively low rate of children in care provides an opportunity to build on the strengths within the service to ensure the right children are looked after at the right time. Detailed cohort analysis shows that outcomes for specific cohorts of children in care, or on the edge of care, could be improved, and care averted, with the use of targeted, evidence-based interventions. Specific issues include:

- Poor adult mental health is very often a significant factor in the decision to look after younger children who enter care;
- A comparatively high proportion of Barnet's looked after children are placed in secure units, children's homes and hostels when compared to all England LAs. As at 31 March 2015, only one other England LA had a higher proportion of children residing in these types of placement;
- A limited range of early help accessible to the families of children with disabilities and / or SEN;
- There is a high level of turnover amongst children aged 0-5 and young people aged 15-17
- Barnet has seen an increase in the total number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and young people (UASC) requiring support over the past five years. This reflects an increase in UASC applications nationally and the closing of the Calais Camp
- There is an Increase in the number of care leavers (32% of the Looked After cohort 16+ - based on 31st March 2016 data). There will therefore be an increased number of Semi-independent placements and this will continue to increase.
- There is an increase in the numbers of young people with gang affiliation, complex needs and CSE which will increase the demand on placement provision for the 13+ age group e.g. semi-independent supported lodging and specialist foster care placements.

For further details and information please see the Strategic Needs Analysis.

Based on the Needs Analysis of children and young people in care (annex 2 and 3), the following four priorities have been identified to support this work and a detailed action plan will be developed to drive this forward.

- Permanence is everybody's business and is secured at the earliest opportunity and families are reunified where this is in the child's best interests
Children in care achieve permanency as quickly as possible. Wherever it is in the child's best interests, this will be within a family environment and may include reunification with their birth family, long-term fostering, special guardianship or adoption. Carers are well-supported and have access to high quality professional development opportunities. Children experience stability in

their relationships with adults through thoughtful placement planning and careful matching. Consideration for permanency should be across the whole system, starting at the front door. We will clarify management expectations on achieving permanence in the best interest of the child

- Our placement mix meets local need and provides value for money
Through the development of existing partnerships and increased use of in-house provision, we provide and commission a mix of high quality placements that help children and young people thrive and develop resilience. We do this as cost effectively as possible, commissioning for value and quality.
- Young people are supported from care to independence
Young people in care are supported in the transition from care through the provision of high quality leaving care services which support care leavers to find and maintain suitable accommodation arrangements, including 'staying put' and 'staying close' where appropriate.
- Highly skilled, stable workforce building respectfully curious relationships with families and children
Achieving sufficiency for looked after children, young people and care leavers is dependent upon our workforce development strategy. We will recruit staff that are committed to our vision of a resilience based model of practice and create an environment and systems that empower staff to be in control of their work. We will challenge and support the workforce, creating a dynamic learning organisation where good practice is shared across the service and with partners.

ANNEX 1 - DEFINITIONS

Commissioning and Sufficiency

Commissioning can be described as the process for deciding how to use the total resource available in order to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families in the most efficient, equitable and sustainable way. Since April 2012 there has been a 'sufficiency duty' on all local authorities to secure sufficient local accommodation and services to meet the needs of all their looked after children for whom a local placement is the most suitable option.

Looked After Children

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

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

Placement Needs Analysis

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

ANNEX 2 – STRATEGIC NEEDS ANALYSIS

Looked After Children in Barnet: Comparator Profile

This section provides an overview of Barnet’s population of looked after children compared with England, inner London and outer London averages, and is based primarily on 31 March snapshot data released by the Department for Education on 8 December 2016.

LB Barnet has notable variance from comparators on the following metrics:

- LB Barnet has a very low comparative rate of children in care
- LB Barnet’s proportion of young people aged 16+ and in care is higher than the England average but in line with London comparators
- In 2015/16, only two London boroughs had a higher proportion of children entering care as a consequence of a disability than Barnet

The subsequent section provides a more in-depth analysis of these factors

Figure 2: Rate/Number of LAC

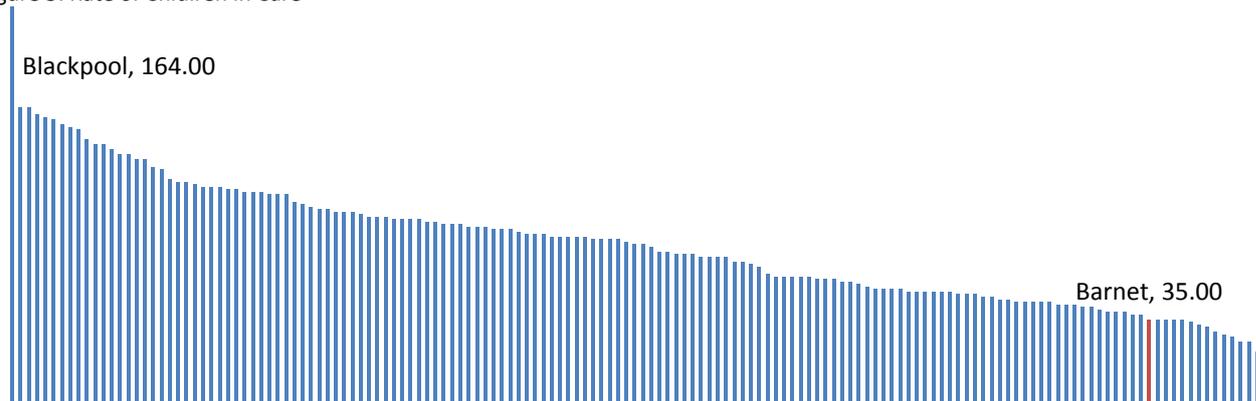
Rate of looked after children per 10k under 18 population, 2012-2016					
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
England	59	60	60	60	60
Outer London	49	48	48	47	47
Inner London	70	66	64	60	56
Barnet	36	36	36	34	35

LB Barnet has one of the lowest rates of children in care in England. Real terms growth has followed our more conservative estimates.

The rate of children in Barnet’s care reduced from 36 to 34 per 10,000 of under-18 population over 2012-2015 before rising slightly to 35 per 10,000 in 2016; the rate remains significantly below the England average and London average. In 2016, the average rate of looked after children across Barnet’s statistical neighbours was 43.3 per 10,000; statistical neighbours with a lower rate included Redbridge (28 per 10,000) and Kingston-Upon-Thames (30 per 10,000). There were only 10 local authorities across England with a lower rate of children in care.

In regards to the number of children in care, figures have remained relatively stable over the past 5 years, with a similar inflow and outflow each year; however this is the highest it has been in 6 years and is not in line with population growth. This could be due to the increase there has been in UASC.

Figure 3: Rate of Children in Care



Age of Children in Care / Entering Care

The age profile of children in Barnet's care as at 31 March 2016 broadly mirrored the England profile.

There was a notably higher proportion of children aged 16+ in Barnet's care compared to the national average (+9%) but the rate is in line with overall London figures and is likely to reflect the numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC's) placed within London and issues of youth homelessness within the capital

Figure 4: Age Profile of Children in Care

Age profile of children in care, LB Barnet / England, 31 March 16	Under 1	Age 1-4	Age 5-9	Age 10-15	Age 16+
England	5%	13%	20%	39%	23%
Outer London	4%	9%	15%	38%	35%
Inner London	4%	8%	14%	40%	34%
LB Barnet	4%	9%	14%	40%	32%

For children who started to be looked after in 2015/16, the Barnet age profile of care entrants broadly mirrored the London profile, with the exception of a lower proportion of children aged 16+ entering care (-3% compared to all outer London boroughs).

Gender

Across England and London there is a slight skewing of the looked after population towards males; in Barnet this ratio is 61% male and 39% female.

This skewing towards a male population is a consequence of two specific cohorts within Barnet: 1) unaccompanied asylum seekers, of whom 95% are male (June 2016) and 2) children with SEN and or have a disability, of whom 74% are male (June 2016). Once

these two cohorts are accounted for, the gender profile of children in care as at June 2016 was more balanced, with 54% male and 46% female.

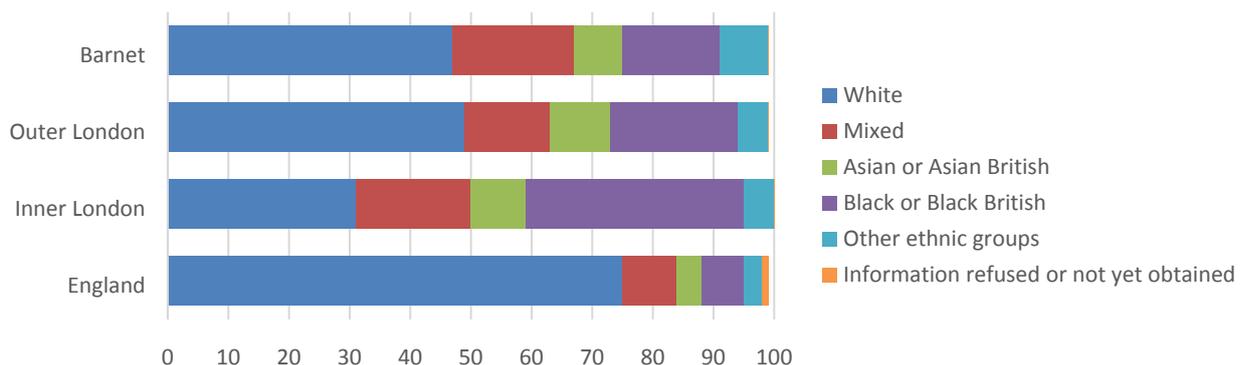
Figure 5: Proportion of children who started to be looked after during 2015/16 by sex and area



Ethnicity

As at 31 March 2016, the ethnic profile of children in Barnet's care was broadly in line with the outer London profile, with slightly more children identifying as 'mixed' in Barnet (20%, Barnet, 14% outer London) and slightly less identifying as Black or Black British (16%, Barnet, 21% outer London). The number of Black or Black British looked after children in is line with Barnet's population however the number identifying as 'mixed' is slightly higher compared to Barnet's population (11%).

Figure 6: Proportion of children looked after as at 31 March 2016 by ethnic origin and area



Episodes of Care

Exiting Care: 35% of those who entered care in 2015/16 also exited in the same year (n=61). The age profile of those children is shown below.

Figure 7: Episodes of Care – children who entered and exited in the same year (2015/16)

Children who entered and exited care in the same year (2015/16)				
Age at entry to care	Number of children entering care in 2015/16	% of all entries to care	Number of children exiting care in the same year	% of age cohort who entered and exited in the same year
Under 1	18	10%	8	44%
Age 1-4	27	15%	7	26%
Age 5-9	26	15%	7	26%
Age 10-15	60	34%	19	32%
Age 16+	45	26%	20	44%
Total	176	100%	61	35%

Of the children who entered care over 2015/16, 15% had been in care at some point previously (n=23) and the majority of these were aged 14+ (n=14). This mirrors the 2003-2013 profile; over this period 13% of children had more than one episode of care. Less than five children had two or more episodes of care within the 2015/16 year.

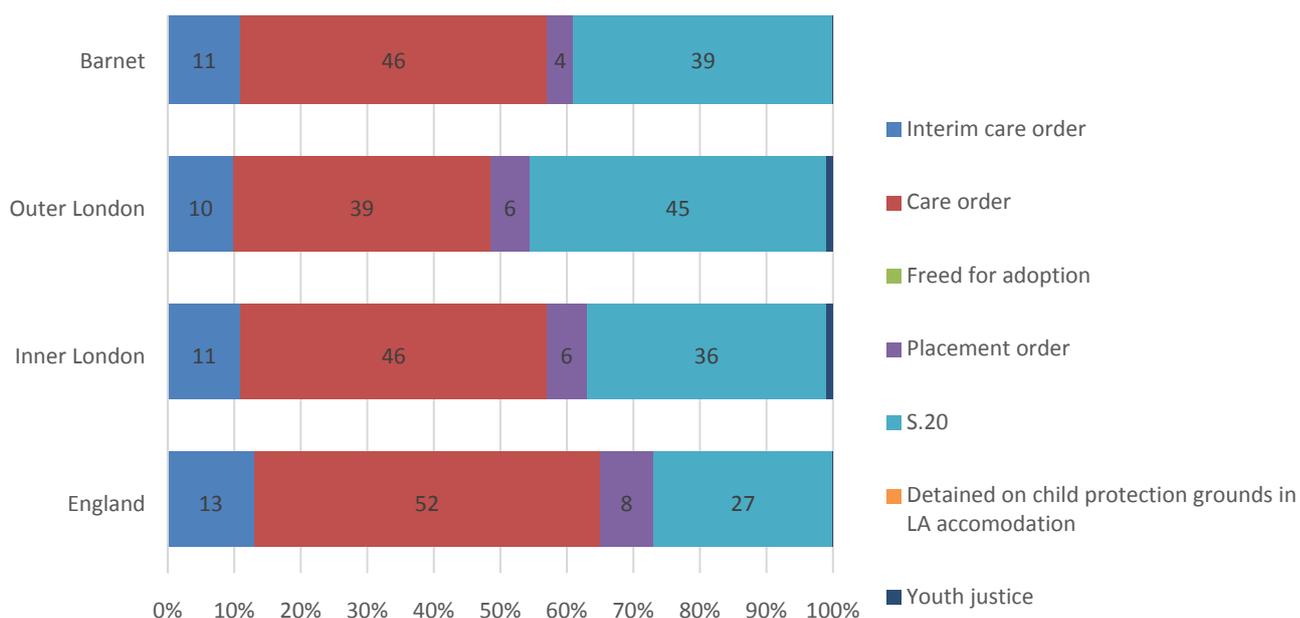
Over October 2013 to September 2016, 241 children left Barnet’s care and returned home; of these 14% had subsequently re-entered care (n=34) by September 2016. However as this figure includes recent exits it potentially makes the reunification breakdown rate look artificially low. [DfE analysis](#) found that at a national level, of those children who returned home from care in 2006/7, by 2012, 64% had experienced at least one failed return and a third had oscillated in and out of care twice or more.

Legal Status

Detained on child protection grounds in LA accommodation includes police protection, emergency protection

As at 31 March 2016, the proportion of children in Barnet looked after under an interim care order was broadly in line with comparators. Compared to the England average, a smaller lower proportion of Barnet’s looked after children were subject to a care order but the Barnet rate was in line with inner London and higher than outer London. The use of s.20 in Barnet was lower than the outer London average by 6% points but higher than the inner London and England averages. As at June 2016, 56% (n=59) of looked after young people aged 16+ were voluntarily accommodated; of these 22% (n=13) had been looked after under s.20 for 2+yrs

Figure 8: Proportion of children looked after by legal status and area, 31 March 2016



Looked After Children in Barnet: Detailed Local Profile

This section provides a deeper analysis of Barnet’s looked after population and includes qualitative evidence from family services’ managers, detailed data analysis and audit findings.

Factors with a significant influence on our local approach to sufficiency include:

- A recent rise in the numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children with significant growth forecast for this cohort;
- A relatively high rate of exit for children who entered care over 2015/16 aged 0-5 and 15-17
- A very low rate of exit for children with disabilities, coupled with a comparatively high entry rate
- A significant proportion of children aged 0-10 who enter care, in part, as a consequence of parental mental illness.

Three of these young people had SEN and / or a disability

Religion

The table below sets out the stated religious affiliation of children who entered Barnet's care over 2015/16. 'Not stated' and 'no religion' combined account for 43% of care entrants; the most commonly cited religions for this cohort was Christian (18%) and Muslim (18%) followed by Roman Catholic (9%). Over half of all UASC who entered care in Barnet over 2015/16 were Muslim. Only 4% of the children who entered care over 2015/16 are stated as Jewish, which is significantly different to the Barnet population whereby 15% are Jewish

Religion	Total number of children	Number of UASC
Atheist	x	x
Buddhist	x	x
Catholic	x	0
Christian	31	x
Church of England	x	0
Hindu	x	0
Refused	x	0
Ismailia Muslim	x	0
Jehovah Witness	x	0
Jewish	7	0
Muslim	31	15
No Religion	21	x
Not stated	55	5
Pentecostal	x	0
Quaker	x	0
Roman Catholic	16	0
(blank)	x	x
	176	27

Figure 9: Religion

Care Entrants 2015/2016

In 2015/16, a total of 177 children became looked after by Barnet. Key characteristics of those children are summarised below. The age profiles exclude children with a SEN and / disability or who were Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children; their profiles are set out separately.

Children with a special educational need and / or disability (n=16, 9% of all care entrants in 2015/16)

- Nearly 70% of these children entered care aged 11 years or older
- Of the 14 children who entered care with a disability (with or without SEN), only one exited care in the same year.
- Snapshot profiles of children looked after in January 14 and June 2016 show a decrease over time in the number of children looked after with a disability and / or SEN.

Figure 10: Children Looked After by Disability and SEN

Children looked after	Jan-14	Jun-16	Variance
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Disability and SEN	33	24	-9
Disability, no SEN	9	7	-2
No disability, with SEN	31	26	-5
No disability, no SEN	231	261	+30

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (n=27, 15% of all care entrants in 2015/16)

- Most of these young people are male (n=24) and nearly two-thirds are recorded as age 16 or 17 when entering care. Over half are Muslim (n=15).
- Four assessments of these children cited trafficking as a factor
- As at 31st March 2014, 24 unaccompanied minors were looked after by LB Barnet; this increased by 46% to 37 as at 28th June 2016

Figure 11: Total Number of UASC Supported in Barnet

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Under 18 years	25	30	35	46	61
18 years and over	56	46	42	49	58
Turned 18 during the year	5	10	10	11	21
Unique total	76	66	67	84	98

Figure 12: Care Entrants in 2015/16

Age range/number	0-5 (n=97)	6-10 (n=35)	11-14 (n=92)	15 – 17 (n=95)
Police Protection Order (EPO)	14	6	9	7
Interim Care Order (ICO)	19	8	0	0
Voluntarily accommodated S20	21	5	27	53
Entered care in 15/16 and left care within 12 months	24	8	31	19
Exited care to family – no order	19	8	25	16
Presenting issues	Parental mental health was cited as a factor at the end of assessment for nearly 60% of these children. Parent subject to domestic violence and parental drug misuse were the next most frequently cited factors.	Parental mental health was cited as a factor at the end of assessment for nearly 60% of these children. Parent subject to domestic violence was the next most frequently cited factor.	Parent subject to domestic violence was the most commonly cited factor at the end of assessment for these children. Child’s mental health, parental alcohol misuse and child subject to domestic violence were the next most frequently cited.	‘Socially unacceptable behaviour’ was the most commonly cited factor at the end of assessment for over 40% of these children. ‘Drugs misuse’, ‘gangs’, ‘child’s mental health’ and ‘missing’ were also frequently cited.
Comments	Nearly two thirds had been subject to a CP plan at or prior to entering care.	Nearly two thirds had been subject to a CP plan at or prior to entering care.	Around half had been subject to a CPP at some point prior to entering care. These children generally had no experience of care.	Nearly one third had no previous referrals and almost another third had 4 or more referrals. Around a quarter had been in care previously.

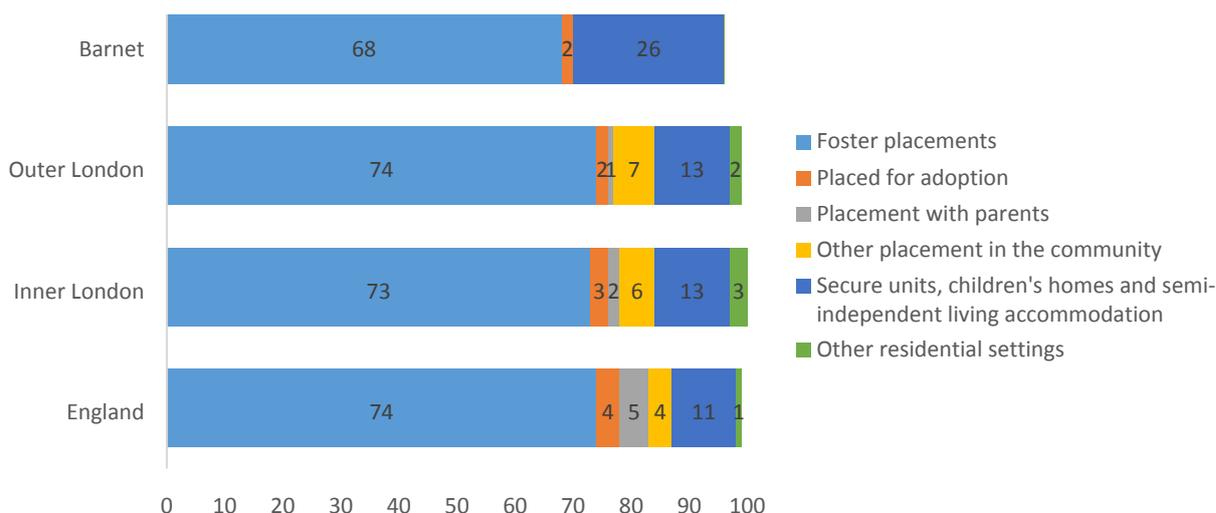
Placement Mix: Comparative Profile

This section provides an overview of Barnet's 'placement mix', including comparative data (31 March 2016 snapshot) and local analysis. Factors that influence our local approach to developing sufficiency include:

- The proportion of children Barnet placed in foster care is notably lower than the England, inner London and outer London averages
- The proportion of children Barnet placed in secure units, children's homes and semi-independent living was notably higher than the England, inner London and outer London averages
- Barnet's foster care recruitment has kept pace with the growth of the looked after population over 2014-16 and has made some small gains in shifting the placement mix to in-house and family and friends provision
- Barnet does well, compared to inner and outer London authorities in placing children locally.

As at 31 March 2016, London Borough of Barnet had a lower rate of children placed in foster care (either Barnet foster care or through Independent Fostering Agencies) when compared to the England, inner London and outer London averages. Only 20 England authorities had a lower rate of children in foster care, placing London Borough of Barnet in the lowest quintile of performance. The lower rate of children placed in foster care and high rate of children placed in residential/semi-independent compared to other authorities is due in part to the increase in young people involved in Gang activity as we are not placing in as many in foster care and are placing more young people in semi-independence and residential

Figure 13: Proportion of LAC by Placement and Area at 31.03.2016

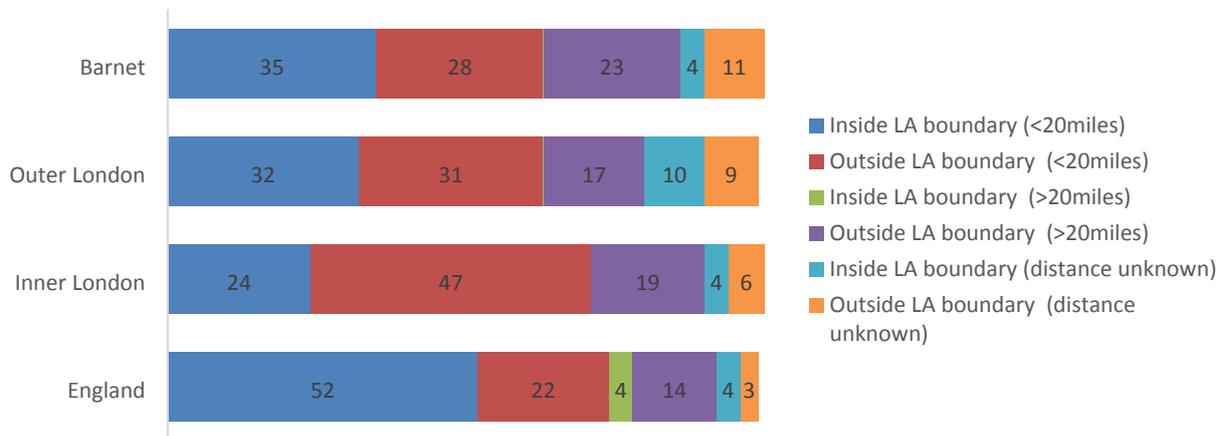


Note that percentages do not add to 100 as figures less than five are unpublished to protect confidentiality.

Conversely, LB Barnet had a notably higher proportion than comparators of children placed within secure units, children's homes and semi-independent living accommodation. Nevertheless, LB Barnet had over a third of its looked after children

placed within the borough as at 31 March 2016, which compares favourably to the outer and inner London averages, although was significantly below the England average. In total, nearly two-thirds of LB Barnet's children in care were placed either within the borough or within 20 miles of its boundary.

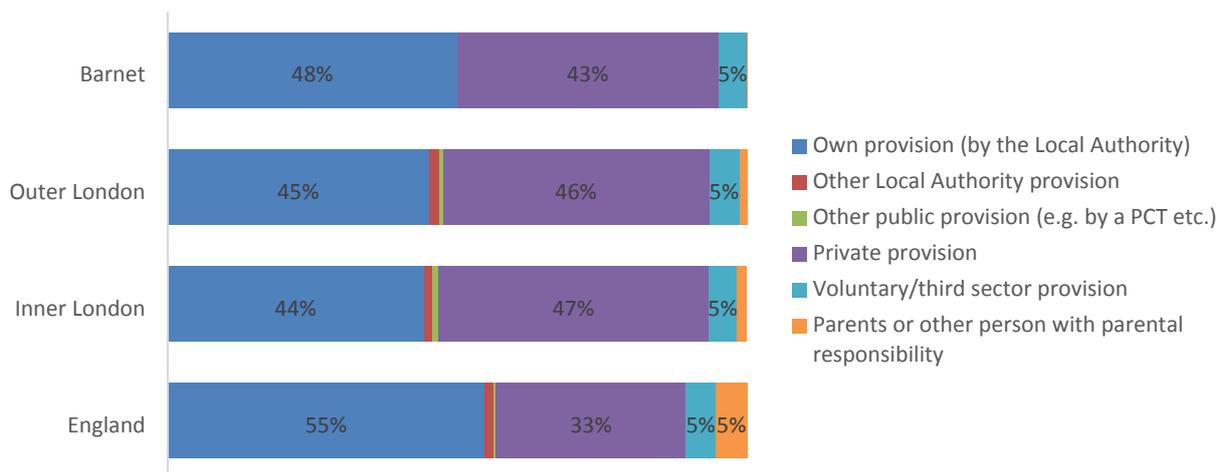
Figure 14: Proportion of looked after children by placement in or out of local authority's area, at 31 March 2016



*Note this group of Placement types reflects data released by the DfE and cannot be disaggregated
Note that percentages do not add to 100 as figures less than five are unpublished to protect confidentiality*

As at 31 March 2016, LB Barnet placed nearly half of the children in its care within its own provision. This again compares favourably with the inner and outer London averages but is below the England average.

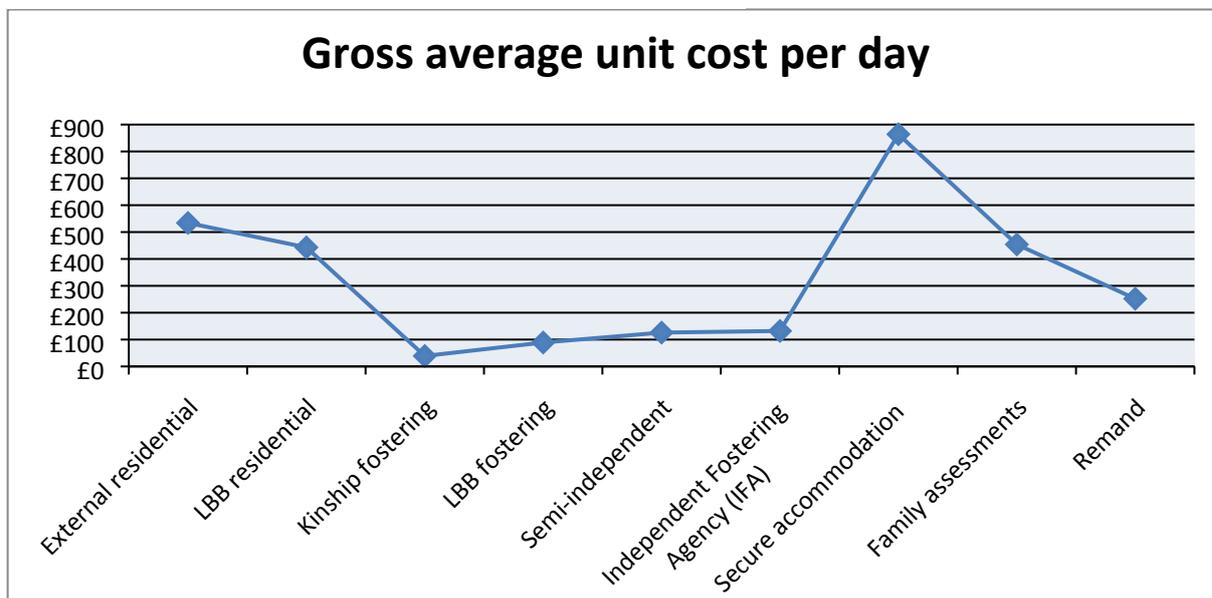
Figure 15: Proportion of children looked after by placement provider, 31 March 2016



Note this grouping of placement types reflects data released by the DfE and cannot be disaggregated

Note that percentages do not add to 100 as figures less than five are unpublished to protect confidentiality.

Figure 16: Gross Average Unit Cost per Day



Placement Mix: Local Profile

The table below sets out the proportion of looked after children living in each placement type as at June 2016. UASC were primarily placed in semi-independent accommodation, with a significant minority also living in IFA placements. This is because if a UASC reports to services that s/he is under 16, then the local authority is required to provide services appropriate to that age. If the authority is concerned that the UASC is older than they report to be, it would not be appropriate to place the young person with minors. Consequently, IFA placements where there are no other children placed are often used while age assessments are being conducted. The Age Assessment process at the Front door (Duty and Assessment) takes up to 2 weeks from point of referral. We do not age assess every UASC. Once an age disputed young person comes in and is settled in an appropriate placement, the social worker arranges for an Age Assessment that involves a second Merton trained assessor, an Advocate and an interpreter. This takes about a week and the Age Assessment is then completed within the following week. The difficulties come in when the young UASC is not age disputed at the initial entry point and then other professionals raise concerns once the young person has already been made LAC or are in another team. Those kinds of arrangements usually take longer as they are not managed at the Front door.

Children with a disability and / or SEN were most often placed in foster care (44%) and around a third were placed in residential schools or children's homes. 18% of 15-17 year olds were placed in residential schools or children's homes (not SEN / disability), while a significant minority of 11-14 year olds were placed with friends and family. The friends and family rate for older teenagers was very low at 7%

Figure 17: Proportion of LAC by Placement Type (June 2016)

Proportion of looked after cohort by placement type, June 2016							
	Friends and family	Placed with own parents or other person with PR	Residential school or children's home	Placed for adoption	Semi-independent	LBB foster care	External foster care
UASC	0%	0%	5%	0%	41%	16%	38%
Children with a SEN / disability	9%	4%	32%	0%	7%	23%	21%
Age 0-5	8%	0%	0%	13%	0%	48%	25%
Age 6-10	16%	5%	2%	2%	0%	44%	30%
Age 11-14	27%	2%	8%	0%	0%	39%	24%
Age 15-17	7%	0%	18%	0%	21%	32%	15%
TOTAL	11%	2%	13%	2%	12%	34%	24%

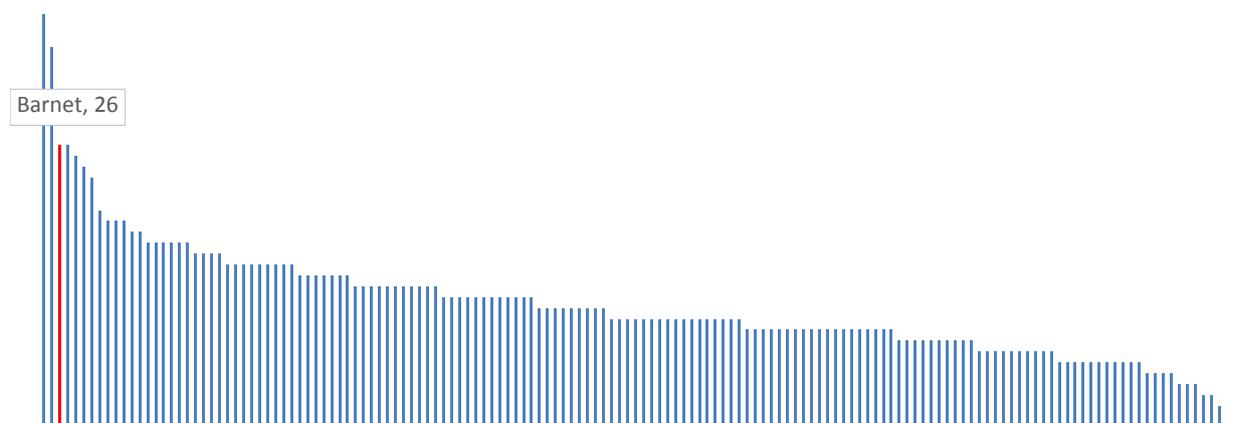
Residential Care

As at June 2016, LB Barnet looked after 42 children in a residential school, children's home, secure unit or a medical provision. Of these children, 45% (n=19) were recorded as having a SEN or disability. All were placed in private provision. The average age was 14 years with a range of 9-17yrs. Eight children had been in their current placement for more than two years while six had been there six months or less.

Of the 23 children placed in a residential school, children's home, secure unit or a medical provision without a disability or SEN (n=23), 70% had been in their current placement for 6 months or less (n=16); of these, six had gone straight to their current residential provision immediately on this episode of being looked after. Less than five had been in their current residential placement 18 months or longer.

LB Barnet has a comparatively high proportion of children placed in in secure units, children's homes and semi-independent living accommodation when compared to the national profile. As at 31 March 2016, only two other England local authorities had a higher proportion of children residing in these types of placement

Figure 18: Proportion of looked after children placed in secure units, children's homes and semi-independent living accommodation, 31st March 2016, all England LAs



This is partially because Barnet, along with most other London boroughs, has on average larger proportions of young people aged 16+ in care, who are the cohort most likely to be placed in semi-independent accommodation. This does not account for the full effect however, as Barnet's proportion of looked after children aged 16+ is lower than other the outer and inner London averages. Another contributing factor maybe the higher than average rate of children who enter Care in Barnet as a consequence of a disability, who may subsequently require specialist residential care. A final contributing factor may be that the average length of stay in residential care. The DfE (Dec 2014) Children's Home data pack set out the average length of time that children spend in a range of placement options. At a national level, more than half of placements in children's homes, residential schools, secure units and unregulated homes and hostels last less than 3 months, reflecting, in part, the use of residential care for children on the edge of care, many of whom will either return home, become fostered, or move on to a more permanent residential placement. 83% last less than a year. The data indicates that LB Barnet may have a much lower proportion of children's homes placements lasting less than one month and a much higher proportion lasting 1-3 months and 6months –2 years compared to the England average. Caution is required as the two datasets are not directly comparable, but this does suggest that the average length of stay in children's homes may be comparatively longer in LB Barnet, which would contribute to an overall higher rate of children placed in residential provision

Foster Care

A greater proportion of children were placed in in-house foster care or family and friends placements in November 2016 than in March 2014. Although the proportional shifts appear small, as the cohort has grown over time, in real terms there were 28 more children in these types of placements and 18 fewer children in IFA placements in November 2016 compared to March 2014. Conversely, the number of children in residential care was only slightly lower in November 2016 when compared with March 2014. There was a significant increase in the number and proportion of children in 'other' types of accommodation; this predominately includes semi-independent accommodation and reflects the increased numbers of UASC looked after by Barnet during this period.

Figure 19: Proportion of LAC by Provision Type

Provision type	Fostering			Residential			Total
	LB Barnet	Kinship	IFA	Private / Voluntary	LB Barnet	Other	
Placement mix (Mar 2014)	99 (31.9%)	35 (11.3%)	81 (26.1%)	34 (11%)	10 (3.2%)	51 (16.5%)	310 (100%)
Placement mix (Nov 2016)	112 (32.5%)	50 (14.5%)	63 (18.3%)	30 (8.7%)	9 (2.6%)	81 (23.5%)	345 (100%)
Difference, 2014 v 2016	+13 (+0.6%)	+15 (+3.2%)	-18 (-7.8%)	-4 (-2.30%)	-1 (-0.6%)	+30 (+7%)	+35

ANNEX 3 – VIEWS OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ON THEIR PLACEMENTS

As part of a WLA consultation exercise, 96 young people from Brent, Harrow, Hounslow and Barnet gave their views on what is most important to get right before a placement or placement move, what is most important in the first few days following a placement and things to consider in the longer term. Feedback from the children and young people is summarised below.

What is most important to get right before a fostering placement?

- To know about their foster carer and for the foster carer to know about them
- To have notice before moving
- To have a say in what's happening

What is most important when first arriving at a new fostering placement?

- To get to know the young person
- To understand their needs and background
- To explain the boundaries and develop a respectful, open relationship

What is most important to get right in the longer term?

- To help the young person to be confident about their longer term plan
- To build a positive relationship and help to manage expectations around contact
- To support the young person at times of transition

WLA arrangements have been influenced by this feedback in the following ways:

- In October 2016, a Barnet care leaving apprentice presented the survey findings, alongside commissioners, to c.130 to IFA, residential and SEN placement providers at a WLA market engagement event
- A summary of the key themes has been included in the service specification for the Dynamic Purchasing System (procurement exercise) across IFA, residential and SEN. This is to provide a clear message to the market on what young people have told us and our subsequent expectations from providers.
- The evaluation questions from the tender focus on a range of areas - safeguarding, management, outcomes for CYP and transition. The views of children and young people will be incorporated in model answers for the evaluation, and providers will be expected to demonstrate how they take on board views of CYP throughout service delivery.
- Once contracts are awarded, ensuring that the views of children and young people are at the forefront of service delivery will be included as part of contract implementation / contract monitoring.
 - Have you considered insurance arrangements?
 - Have you factored cash-flow implications into your costing?
 - If the recommendation is linked to a contract, have the contract procedure rules been adhered to? The report needs to evidence appropriate authorisations have been sought and value of contract
 - If the recommendation is linked to a contract, commercially sensitive

information needs to be included in an exempt report

- For services contracts, have Social Value considerations been taken into account at the pre-procurement stage (see equalities and diversities section below)