

**BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL
CABINET
26 January 2012**

REPORT TITLE: Draft Children's Specialist Commissioning Plan 2012 - 2015

Ward(s) affected: Citywide

Strategic Director: Annie Hudson

Report author: Ann James - Service Manager
Specialist Commissioning and Services

Contact telephone no: 0117 3534025

Contact e-mail address: ann.james@bristol.gov.uk

Report signed off by executive member: Clare Campion-Smith

Purpose of the report:

This report provides Cabinet with an overview of the needs of the children in care and care leaving population in Bristol as it pertains to the Draft Children's Specialist Commissioning Plan. It highlights progress on the priorities of the current Children In Care Placement Commissioning Plan 2009 - 12, assesses the influence of national, regional and local factors on the population and sets out how Bristol will ensure a sufficient supply of placements within allocated budgets for the forthcoming three years.

Scope of the plan:

- Care placements for all of Bristol's children in care¹ (excluding but linked to short breaks)
- Disabled children in care requiring out of authority residential care placements
- Care leavers (16 and over) requiring semi-independent supported accommodation
- Care leavers over 18 years who remain in their foster placement Specialist foster and residential placements for parents and children (including assessment placements)

RECOMMENDATION for Cabinet approval:

Cabinet are asked to agree the strategic priorities and actions as detailed in the Draft Children's Specialist Commissioning Plan 2012 - 2015, attached as Appendix 1 of this report.

The three priorities are as follows and take a whole systems approach to ensuring that only those children who require the care of the Local Authority receive it and that, where

¹ The term 'children in care' is used throughout this report to describe children in the care of the local authority under an Order of the court as well as those looked after under Section 20 of Children Act 1989

children cannot be safely cared for within their family, that sufficient high quality local placements are commissioned that deliver improved outcomes for children and improved value for money:

- (i) **Support children to remain safely with their families**
- (ii) **Improve outcomes for Children In Care and Care Leavers**
- (iii) **Achieve value for money and reduce spend through effective cost management**

Detailed actions for delivery on each priority area are contained within the Children's Specialist Commissioning Plan (pp 27 - 37 of Appendix 1). These actions focus on sharpening family intervention and preventative work in order to manage the potential increases in the numbers entering care; increasing the number of children exiting care through adoption or special guardianship orders; re-configuring commissioned arrangements to meet the changing needs of Bristol's children and young people; and further developing Bristol City Council's fostering service so that it grows as the service looking after for the majority of Bristol's children in care and continues to provide high quality, best value placements that enable children to remain at their local school and within their home community.

The proposal:

Background

1. Bristol has had a Children's Placement Commissioning Plan since 2005 when it was recognised that such a plan was needed to enable 'an agreed balance between in-house and non-authority sector placement provision founded on assessment of identified needs on the basis of quality, delivery and affordability'.
2. Commissioning is increasingly recognised as the primary mechanism for delivering better outcomes, whilst using resources more efficiently. Over the lifetime of the current plan Bristol has developed its specialist commissioning practice to more effectively manage the market in terms of quantity, quality, range, price and proximity of provision. There is a well developed mixed economy of provision operating within a reasonably mature placements market locally.
3. Bristol's Draft Children's Specialist Commissioning Plan sets out how, having reviewed the current situation in relation to securing accommodation which meets the needs of children in care and care leavers, it will develop its commissioning processes so that all relevant services, including universal services, make a full contribution to meeting the needs of children in care and those leaving care or custody. To do this it will use the commissioning cycle, now embedded in the corporate Enabling Commissioning Framework of analyse, plan, do and review.
4. **The Draft Specialist Commissioning Plan 2012 - 2015 proposes three strategic priorities for the City:**
 - (i) **Support children to remain safely with their families**
Securing sufficient accommodation for children in and leaving care requires a whole-system approach that includes early intervention and preventive services to support children in their families. By effectively focussing on those families most at risk of requiring increasing levels of service provision including care, Bristol will

ensure that only those children who require care receive it.

(ii) **Improve outcomes for Children In Care and Care Leavers**

Children do better in well-matched stable placements. The Draft Children's Specialist Commissioning Plan builds upon the established relationship that exists with the market (both internal and external care providers) to deliver an increased choice of quality placements that are able to meet the needs of children and young people locally.

(iii) **Achieve value for money through effective cost management**

We will listen to what children and families tell us is effective, and work with our partners and the market to deliver more with fewer resources. This will involve achieving efficiencies through working at a local and regional level, as well as on a strategic and operational level, to ensure that the placements we commission deliver improved outcomes more effectively. We will control expenditure, take remedial action where necessary and monitor contracts against outcomes delivery.

National and Local Context

5. **The 'Sufficiency Duty'** was placed upon local authorities in 2010 under the Children Act 1989 and Children and Young Person's Act 2008. It requires local authorities to take steps that secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the authority's area to meet the needs of children in care and care leavers. The Sufficiency Duty requires local authorities to do more than simply ensure that accommodation is 'sufficient' in terms of the number of beds provided. It tells us that we must have regard to the benefits of securing a range of accommodation through a number of providers that is able to meet the assessed needs of children. To achieve this, the Sufficiency Guidance provides us with a Commissioning Standard and requires the local authority to detail how it, and its partners within the Children's Trust, will meet its duties by setting this out in a Commissioning Plan.
6. **Increased numbers of children in and leaving care:** As a City, Bristol has experienced a growth in the children in care and care leaver population. This is broadly in line with, although not as pronounced an increase, as that experienced nationally. Bristol's numbers in care grew by 7% between 2007 and 2011, whereas nationally, the figure is 9%. In terms of the rate per 10,000 of the under 18 population, Bristol's increase is 3.7% half the 7.3% experienced nationally.
7. Since March 2011, there has been a further increase in numbers in care in Bristol, from 684 to a peak in July 2011 of 733. Since that time numbers have plateaued and at the end of November stood at 704, the fourth successive month of reduction.
8. There are a number of factors that have influenced/will influence the growth in numbers:
 - i. **Changes in statutory framework and case law:**
 - more children aged 16/17 who would otherwise have been provided with services under homelessness legislation must now receive services as children in care and as care leavers.
 - greater emphasis placed by the courts on keeping families together in residential or foster care for parenting assessments
 - children remain in care for longer and remain with their former carer beyond

- the age of 18 years
- increased numbers of care proceedings for children under 5 years and particularly under 1 year old, coupled with delays in the court process for adoption, means that children remain in care longer
- a reduction in the number of days short break a disabled child may access in a year before being considered a child in care (from 120 to 75 days)
- Government led consultation is underway regarding proposals that children remanded into custody, become children in care.

ii. Demographic factors:

- The birth rate in Bristol has risen by 30% over the past 10 years, leading to a large increase in the number of children under the age of 5, a proportion of whom will be children requiring the care of the local authority
- increased survival rates amongst pre-term babies with complex health needs will result in an increased demand for packages of care as these children grow older. Allied to this is an increase in the number of children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder, and the requirement to provide care for those with the highest level needs
- Bristol is a more diverse city than it was three years ago with an increased number of first generation immigrant or asylum families. Additionally, there are elevated numbers of adults with enduring drug, alcohol and linked mental health issues. Linked to both these separate factors, are higher than average numbers of children living in informal kinship arrangements with adults other than their parents. Such families are more likely to experience multiple deprivation and children living in such arrangements are disposed to periods in local authority care.

Achievements since 2009

9. Increased placement sufficiency

- Bristol outperforms core cities, statistical neighbours and the national average for the percentage of children placed with foster care. This not only offers the best environment for the majority of children to grow up in but is also the most cost effective form of placement.
- In line with this Bristol has fewer children placed in residential care than its comparators and, through investing in joint commissioning arrangements with health and education, has successfully supported more children with complex needs to remain within their families and at their local school.
- 96% of children's first placements being made within 20 miles of the city in 2010/11, exceeding the target figure by 5%.
- Bristol has a higher than average number of children placed for adoption, with 16% more children adopted in the year to March 2011 than in the preceding year, whilst nationally there was a 5% reduction in the numbers leaving care for adoption.
- Investment in Bristol's in-house fostering service and its transition to a business model of service delivery under a Service Level Agreement has supported it to begin to build capacity and, as of the end of September, there were more placements provided by the in-house service than at any time in the preceding three years.
- Bristol has more young people aged 19 'staying put' with their ex-foster carer whilst they further their education, than any other local authority in the country

10. Delivering value for money

- Average unit costs remain well within target², with gross spend on children per under 0-17 year old, also outperforming core cities and statistical neighbour averages³.
- By managing the market, encouraging competition, undertaking individual fee negotiations and value for money reviews as well as working collaboratively across agencies and the region, Bristol has delivered year on year reductions in the average unit cost of an independent sector foster placement of 6% over three years.
- Between 2010 and 2011 Bristol reduced its social care out of authority placements budget spend by £1 million, and its total spend on the Top 100 most expensive placements by £230k in total.

Challenges

11. Whilst Bristol has more children in foster care than the national average, it also has approximately 4% more children placed with independent fostering agencies than the national average. In-house foster placements offer a different package and are able to meet the needs of the majority of children in care. Reduced capacity in this area, together with increasing numbers in care and staying with their carer beyond the age of 18, has resulted in greater reliance on the independent sector which, at approximately 60% more than an in-house foster placement, has created a structural budget pressure that has grown over the past three years.
12. Whilst Bristol's rate per 10,000 children in care is below that of the core cities average and gap narrowed between Bristol and its statistical neighbours, it is still relatively high.
13. Bristol does not have adequate integrated provision for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and high level needs. This has resulted in some children being placed in residential special school provision at some distance from the city. This in turn results in reduced levels of family contact, prevents holistic assessment and integrated service planning which contributes to the child remaining in an expensive out of authority special school placement due to a gap in local resource provision.
14. Parent and Child Assessment Placements are increasingly directed by the courts before agreeing to separate parent and child. This has brought an exceptional pressure to the budget over the past twelve months and requires both strategic commissioning and case work response.

Meeting the challenges

15. The Draft Children's Specialist Commissioning Plan 2012 - 2015 has a detailed action plan, attached as Appendix 1) aimed at building upon the achievements of the past three years to bring about a step change in placements for children in and leaving care. In broad terms, the plan details what is needed to deliver:

Families supported to care for their children:

16. Whilst demographic trends locally and the legal context nationally will continue to

² KPI 138 (previously PAFB8) target £754, actual £722 2010/11

³ Section 251 Benchmarking data 2011

place an inflationary pressure on the numbers of children in care the Draft Children's Specialist Commissioning Plan takes a whole system approach with the aim of continuing to narrow the gap in the rate per 10,000 children in care with that Bristol's statistical neighbours. Work with partners together with service remodelling as part of the Making the Changes Programme will focus support on those families in greatest need. Edge of Care Services and access to care arrangements are currently under review, and will reconfigure to provide a more integrated and outcomes focused service offer.

Improve outcomes for children in care and care leavers:

17. In line with the national agenda, Bristol will focus on achieving permanent family arrangements through the use of adoption, special guardianship and residence orders wherever possible. Current policies will be reviewed to ensure this option is promoted and any potential barriers removed whilst work will be completed with third sector partner, Coram, to ensure that business processes avoid delay. In this way, we will increase numbers exiting care and improve stability and outcomes for children.
18. For those children for whom long-term care is the right option, there are a number of actions aimed at increasing placement stability and access to a range of cost effective local placements that also offer the best value for money. Central to this is continued investment in Bristol's family placement service as the placement of choice. By supporting the in-house service to continue to build capacity and reducing reliance on the independent sector for all but the most complex of children, Bristol will increase placement sufficiency and contain costs.
19. Children have a right to a family life and whilst this must be our preferred placement type, for some children, residential care offers the best chance of a stable and nurturing placement. This is the most expensive placement Bristol procures, and the Draft Children's Specialist Commissioning Plan lays out how we will review our use of children's home and residential special school provision both in-house and in the independent sector with a plan to further reduce our use of such placements in favour of more cost effective alternatives, such as treatment foster care and high support independent accommodation.
20. Where this is not possible, the Draft Children's Specialist Commissioning Plan sets out the measures to be taken to develop the local market to deliver flexible, integrated packages of care that ensures children stay in touch with their family and in residential care for no longer than is absolutely necessary. As stated, a particular priority is in relation to meeting the needs of children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder.
21. For those young people leaving care and moving to independence the Plan sets out how joint commissioning and pooled budget arrangements with Neighbourhoods will ensure more effective use of resources to deliver a range of suitable accommodation and support. Similarly, the plan sets out how we will work with Health and Social Care to improve transition planning and commission local accommodation, care and support services for those with an adult care need.
22. As a Department for Education Care Matters Pilot Authority, Bristol is in the process of establishing a Social Work Practice. This is a new way of organising social work service delivery to children in and leaving care with the aim of improving outcomes for children by doing things differently. It will be a small and semi-autonomous professional practice of social workers able to respond flexibly and creatively to the

needs of approximately 160 children in long term care. Its focus will be on improving placement stability, family reunification and permanency for the children with whom it works.

Achieve value for money through effective cost management:

23. Whilst allocated budgets in this area remain unchanged, the factors outlined within this report and in the Plan itself have served to increase the pressure upon placement budgets. There are 3 key ways in which the draft Children's Specialist Commissioning Plan addresses these structural budgetary issues:
 - i. It focusses on the development and utilisation of in-house foster care provision as its placement capacity builds. In this way Bristol will contain and target the reduction of independent fostering placements by 5 per quarter, saving an estimated £260,000 over the course of the first year and cumulatively thereafter.
 - ii. It timetables a review of the use of residential provision, including residential special school and independent children's homes provision for children with the highest level needs. The focus will be on delivering integrated packages of high quality care locally and increasing the availability of fostering based alternatives, such as treatment foster care. Bristol will reduce its use of residential provision across the sector by 6, saving an estimated £78,000 in the first year and £104,000 in the second and subsequent years.
 - iii. It sharpens the focus on family intervention and preventative work Bristol will aim to manage the potential increases in the number entering care and, through improved arrangements to achieve permanency will ensure children exit care in a more timely way.
24. The Children and Young People Directorate have initiated a whole service review of parent and child assessments that will report in the Spring and include proposals to reduce the requirement for residential or fostering based assessment placements as well as commissioned arrangements to reduce the unit cost and increase the value of such placements when they are required.
25. Bristol will build upon recommendations from the recently commissioned health check of children's placement commissioning to deliver improved value for money, further reductions in unit cost and reduced spend. By using the Commissioning Standard as detailed in the Sufficiency Guidance the Plan focuses on the areas where efficiencies may be achieved and outcomes improved. This includes recommissioning existing framework arrangements, utilising joint and regional commissioning opportunities to stimulate competition and achieve efficiencies.
26. Commissioning arrangements both on a strategic and operational level that have been successful to date such as individual fee negotiations, cost and volume arrangements, value for money and placement stability meetings, together with outcomes focused monitoring meetings will continue and be built upon to include:
 - exploring opportunities for payment by result
 - continuing to support and prefer the in-house family placement service as the placement of choice for the majority of children and monitor our performance in this regard, taking remedial action where necessary.
 - reviewing Bristol's successful Staying Put scheme for young people remaining with their former carer beyond the age of 18 years, including a review of contractual and funding arrangements
 - implementing a Fair Pricing Tool that is currently being tested by the Specialist

Commissioning Team and Strategic Commissioning and Procurement colleagues, to further reduce spend on Bristol's Top 100 placements.

Consultation and Children's Scrutiny Commission input:

At Children's Scrutiny of 17th November 2011 noted the report. Members asked a number of questions. The responses provided were as follows:

- The Specialist Commissioning Plan 2012-2015 had been designed to complement the Making the Changes Programme.
- The City Council anticipated that the number of children with complex health needs would continue to increase.
- The threshold for short break care placements has recently reduced, so that children exceeding 75 plus days are now considered to be children in care.
- Steps are being taken to seek local education and care provision for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder.
- Currently some children with high needs and challenging behaviour, often on the autistic spectrum are educated and cared for in residential settings outside of the city.
- Whilst such settings can help those with high levels needs to feel more secure, it can also make it more difficult for families to reunify.
- The Intensive Evidence Based Intervention project is aimed at helping prevent children aged 11 to 17 from going into care.
- The Social Work Practice Pilot will work on improving outcomes for children in care.

26 th September 2011	Report to Informal Executive
26 th September 2011	Report to Corporate Parenting Panel - Commissioning Intentions
27 th October 2011	Report to Informal Cabinet
31 st October 2011	Children's Scrutiny Agenda Briefing
17 th November 2011	Children's Scrutiny Commission
18 th November to 30 th December	Web based public consultation Consultation with children in care and care leavers via their respective councils Consultation with staff, wider service and Children's Trust partners
5 th January 2012	Cabinet Agenda Conference
26 th January 2012	Full Cabinet

Risk management / assessment:

FIGURE 1								
The risks associated with the implementation of the (subject) decision :								
No.	RISK Threat to achievement of the key objectives of the report	INHERENT RISK		RISK CONTROL MEASURES Mitigation (ie controls) and Evaluation (ie effectiveness of mitigation).	CURRENT RISK (After controls)		RISK OWNER	
		(Before controls)			Impact	Probability		
		Impact	Probability					
1	There is a risk that children will continue to require the care of	High	High	CYPS wide service remodelling and investment in new ways of working	High	Medium	Strategic Director	

	<p>the local authority in the numbers we currently see.</p> <p>This is a high risk because Bristol's population growth is faster than the national rate of increase, is focused in adults of working age and includes a growth in the under 5s population. This means that maintaining rate per 10,000 of the under 18 population is not an option if we are to reduce our numbers in care.</p> <p>The risk is that there will then be insufficient placements and rising spend, even if unit costs are contained</p>			<p>aimed at maintaining children in their families.</p> <p>We must make prevention of the need for care a corporate priority, supporting children in families must be everyone's business.</p>			
2	<p>There is a risk in attempting to reduce the numbers in care. If we don't get our thresholds for those needing care and our support to children to remain within their families right, a child will be harmed or may die.</p>	High	High	<p>As part of the change programme, we must ensure that our social care workforce is skilled and resources appropriately allocated to achieve the best possible outcomes for those on the edge of care.</p> <p>Bristol has a strong social care workforce with safeguarding practice assessed as good. Social Work Staff are employed permanently, are experienced and vacancy rates are low.</p> <p>Cases are audited by managers and there is a panel system to examine requests for care.</p> <p>The change programme will be project managed and implemented in consultation with the wider children's workforce fully aware of the design and delivery of the managed pathways through services for those in greatest need and/or where there are safeguarding concerns.</p>	Medium	Medium	
3	<p>There is a risk that in-house placement capacity does not build quickly enough or does not result in the recruitment of carers able to meet the needs of Bristol children. This will mean that Bristol will be unable to decrease its use of the more expensive independent sector and will not be able to deliver vfm savings within allotted timescales</p>	High	High	<p>There are early indicators of success with an additional 12 placements and high levels of interest/ongoing assessments that will deliver an additional 20 carers by December 2011.</p> <p>In-house services are reviewing their payment structures, support and training opportunities to make fostering for Bristol the fostering career of choice.</p> <p>We know our care population and are able to recruit and train carers to meet the needs of children.</p>	Medium	Medium	

FIGURE 2

The risks associated with not implementing the (subject) decision:

No.	RISK Threat to achievement of the key objectives of the report	INHERENT RISK		RISK CONTROL MEASURES Mitigation (ie controls) and Evaluation (ie effectiveness of mitigation).	CURRENT RISK		RISK OWNER
		(Before controls)			(After controls)		
		Impact	Probability		Impact	Probability	
1	If the Specialist Commissioning Plan is not implemented, Bristol will not be able to contain its spend on children's placements and the budget overspend will continue to grow in line with the	High	High	Bristol must allocate resources to meet the needs of its children in care and care leavers in line with its statutory duties. Bristol will continue to do this, but without a strategic plan trends will not	High	Medium	

	growth in the children in care and care leaving population.			be addressed and Bristol risks losing its relationship with the market, who will be less clear about Bristol's needs and commissioning intentions.			
2	Without a commissioning plan, Bristol will breach its statutory duty by failing to agree and implement a strategic response to placement commissioning as required by the Sufficiency Duty.	High	High	Bristol must have a placement commissioning plan.			
3	Commissioning Practice will become outdated and will not deliver sufficient placements for children, thereby leaving children in unsuitable accommodation or at risk in family settings	High	High	Bristol will continue to purchase placements to meet the needs of children in care but may well be required to source placements at additional cost and distance from the city, thereby adversely impacting upon outcomes for children.			
4	Children will live in poorly matched placements with placement stability being being adversely impacted upon and costs rising	High	High	Work will be undertaken to secure the best possible match and for social work staff and the 'team around the child' to support poorly matched placements.			

Public sector equality duties:

An initial Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and is contained within the draft Plan.

The Plan is not designed to leave unmet need or to adversely impact upon one sector of the care or care leaving population unequally, rather it is about allocating resources more effectively. Changes to services and commissioned arrangements as a result of any section of the draft plan will be subject to a full Equalities Impact Assessment.

Environmental checklist / eco impact assessment:

The Eco Impact Assessment is appended to this report (Appendix 2) and was completed in consultation with Steve Ransom and Claire King, Environmental Performance Programme, Sustainable City Group.

The summary of impacts and mitigation are as follows:

The significant impacts of this proposal are:

- Proposals to reduce out of authority placements and reliance on children's homes should reduce travel and buildings-related impacts
- The potential use of external service providers will reduce the Council's control over environmental impacts

The proposals include the following measures to mitigate the impacts:

- Any arrangements for commissioned services will include a selection process that ensures providers will take steps to reduce their operational impacts in delivering those services

The net effects of the proposals are:

- It is noted that demographic and statutory factors are likely to place an increasing demand on this service area. This may lead to an increased environmental impact overall, however, it is anticipated that the proposals described will lead to the service being delivered more efficiently.
- The net effect of the proposal is anticipated to be positive

Resource and legal implications:

Finance

a. Financial (revenue) implications:

Bristol's Children's Placements budgets comprise approximately 22% of Children and Young People's Services Core Budget, and amounts to just under £16 million per annum. These budgets cover foster care payments to in-house carers, payments to independent fostering agencies, out of authority children's home and residential special school and allowances for children on Residence and Special Guardianship Orders. It is an area of significant spend for the Local Authority and one where increased numbers has resulted in year on year overspends that mask reductions achieved in average unit costs in the independent fostering agency sector and reducing numbers in our most expensive out of authority residential placements.

The following table shows the average annual cost of a care placement as at November 2011.

	£000
In house fostering	12.2
Independent Fostering Agency	39.2
Out of Authority Placement - children with complex needs (care costs only)	123.2
Residence orders - non-LAC children	7.7

The strategy for increasing the number of in-house foster carers would reduce expenditure by an average of £27,000 per placement.

The period April 2011 - November 2011 saw a net increase of 17 in-house placements at an average full year saving of £459k. However, this saving was offset by an additional 39 looked after children in April & May 2011.

Advice given by Geraldine Mead, Finance Business Partner
Date 21/12/11

c. Legal implications:

The report and plan are lawful.

The relevant legislation is:

S20 - S23 Children Act 1989 which gives the Authority a duty to provide accommodation to looked after children. These could be children in need, children subject to care orders or children remanded to local authority accommodation.

S9 Children and Young Persons Act 2008 which gives the Authority a duty to provide a sufficient level and range of accommodation, so that so far as is reasonably practicable, it is able to provide accommodation for looked after children that is a) in its area and b) meets the needs of the children it is looking after. Statutory guidance has been issued which supplements this section.

The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Bill will, if enacted in its current form, will create new provisions for remanding children in custody.

There will no longer be a distinction between remands to secure (where a child is looked after) and remands to custody, (where the child is not looked after). There will be one mechanism for children to be remanded to youth detention accommodation. The secretary of state will designate whether this is to secure homes, secure training centres and young offender institutions. For all children remanded to youth detention accommodation, including 17 year olds, they will become looked after children.

There are also provisions for the Secretary of state to recover the costs of accommodation and associated costs eg transport, from the designated authority.

Advice given by Nancy Rollason Principle Solicitor, Community Services
Date 20/10/11

d. Land / property implications: N/A

e. Human resources implications: N/A

Appendices:

- 1. Draft Children's Specialist Commissioning Plan 2012 - 2015**
- 2. Eco impact assessment and environmental checklist**

positive contribution

stay safe

enjoy and achieve

economic well-being

be healthy

APPENDIX 1

Children's Specialist Commissioning Plan

2012-2015

DRAFT

Version 1

positive contribution stay safe enjoy and
achieve economic well-being be healthy
it's in our hands



Contents	Page
1. Introduction	3
1.1 Context	3
1.2 Who does the plan cover?	4
1.3 What will our priorities be?	4
1.4 Children and Young People's Plan	5
1.5 Linked Strategies	5
1.6 Children and young people's voices	5
2. Review	6
2.1 Placement Commissioning Plan 2009-12: what have we achieved?	6
2.1.1 Support children to remain within their families	6
2.1.2 Improve outcomes for children in care	7
2.1.3 Achieve value for money and keep unit costs down	9
2.1.3.1 In-house Provision	9
2.1.3.2 Independent sector	10
2.1.3.3 Residential placements and the 'Top 100' children	10
3. Analyse: Assessment of Need	11
3.1 Assessment of Needs	11
3.2 Trends	11
3.2.1 Increased demand for placements	11
3.3 Why have numbers in care grown?	13
3.3.1 Changes in statutory framework and case law	13
3.4 Demographic factors	16
3.4.1 Population growth	16
3.4.2 Growth in numbers of disabled children and those With complex health needs	16
3.4.3 Diversity	16
3.4.4 Kinship care	17
3.4.5 Poverty	17
4. Current Service Provision and contractual arrangements	18
4.1 Foster care: in-house/independent provision	19
4.1.1 In-house foster care	19
4.1.2 Independent fostering agency placements	20
4.2 Residential care: children's homes/ residential special schools	21
4.2.1 In-house residential care	21
4.2.2 Independent residential care	21
4.3 Short break accommodation	22
4.4 Post 16 accommodation	23
4.4.1 Remaining with former carers beyond age 18	23
4.4.2 Supported accommodation	24
4.5 Parent and child assessment placements	24
5. Financial Analysis	26
5.1 Access to Resources	27
6. Bristol's priorities for 2012-2015	27
6.1 Action Plan	29
7. Consultation with young people	40
8. Equalities Impact Assessment	43

1. Introduction

All children require a happy, stable home life if they are to achieve their potential. Children in care are no exception; those children who cannot live with their birth parents do best if they can live with a family member or other person connected to their family. For those children who do require local authority care, a stable, well-matched placement where they can live until prepared and ready to leave, is the single most influential factor in improving children's outcomes and creating the conditions from which they can go on to live successful adult lives.

Children and Young People's Services commission children's foster care, residential care and post 16 supported accommodation placements from a mixed market of internal and external providers. Such placements are high cost and it is important that Bristol manages the market to ensure that placements are cost effective and of the highest quality.

Commissioning is increasingly recognised as the primary mechanism for delivering better outcomes, while using resources more efficiently. The Children's Specialist Commissioning Plan uses the Enabling Commissioning Framework¹ of analyse, plan, do and review as the model to review progress made against the priorities set out in the Children In Care Placement Commissioning Plan 2009-12; to analyse the current placement market and the needs of children in and leaving care; and to set out a plan to meet the priorities identified for 2012-15 and beyond.

1.1 Context

Bristol has had a children's placement commissioning strategy since 2005 when it was recognised that such a plan was required to enable 'an agreed balance between in-house and non-authority sector placement provision founded on assessment of identified needs on the basis of quality, delivery and affordability'².

The Children in Care Placement Commissioning Plan 2009-12, set out its plan of action to deliver on three strategic priorities.

- (i) Support children to remain with their families
- (ii) Improve outcomes for Children In Care
- (iii) Achieve value for money and keep unit costs down

These priorities remain relevant today and, with a little change to include care leavers will continue to be the priorities for this plan.

In 2010, new statutory guidance³ under the Children Act 1989 strengthened the duties upon local authorities in respect of children in care and imposed a new duty requiring local authorities to take steps that secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the authority's area which meets the needs of its looked after children⁴. In so doing, it requires partners in the Children's Trust to co-operate in order that the duty be most effectively implemented.

¹ The **Enabling Commissioning programme** provides a common language and understanding in Bristol for what strategic commissioning is, why it is effective, and how it should be undertaken.

² BCC Strategic Directions 2005

³ Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010, sets out how local authorities should carry out the full range of responsibilities for looked after children. The Statutory Guidance on Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children provides guidance on the implementation of Section 22G of the Children Act 1989, that requires local authorities to take reasonable steps to secure sufficient accommodation within its area – 'The Sufficiency Duty'.

⁴ For the purposes of this plan, the terms looked after child and child in care are used interchangeably and should be taken to mean the same thing.

Delivering sufficient accommodation for children in care and those leaving care must be seen as a core part of how we meet our broader duties to ensure that children's needs are fully assessed, and that effective care planning results in well matched placements able to meet the child's identified needs.

An important mechanism, both in terms of improving outcomes for children and in ensuring sufficient accommodation, is to take earlier preventative action to support children and families so that fewer children become looked after. Effective commissioning will improve placement choice, reduce placement breakdown, support integration between looked after children's services, universal and specialist services; reduce numbers coming into care, deliver value for money and reduce costs.

1.2 Who does this new plan cover?

- Care placements for all of Bristol's children in care (excluding but linked to short breaks)
- Disabled children in care requiring out of authority residential care placements
- Care leavers over 18 years who remain in their foster placement
- Care leavers requiring semi-independent supported accommodation
- Specialist foster and residential placements for parents and children (including assessment placements)

1.3 What will our priorities be?

(i) Support children to remain safely with their families

Securing sufficient accommodation requires a whole-system approach that includes early intervention and preventive services to support children in their families. We must be effective by focusing our work on those families most at risk of requiring increasing levels of service provision, including care.

(ii) Improve outcomes for Children In Care and Care Leavers

Children do better in well-matched stable placements. We will build upon our trusted and confident relationship with the market to deliver an increased choice of quality placements that are able to meet the needs of our children locally.

(iii) Achieve value for money and reduce spend through effective cost management

We will listen to what children and families tell us is effective, and work with our partners and the market to deliver more with fewer resources. We will work both locally and regionally, on a strategic and operational level to ensure that the placements we commission deliver more effectively. Expenditure will be controlled and monitored against delivery of outcomes.

1.4 Children and Young People's Plan

The draft Children and Young People's Plan for 2011-2014⁵ sets out Bristol's key partnership priorities which no single agency can address on their own. It tells us that our performance for children in care has improved through 'robust corporate parenting governance arrangements...and strong involvement of stakeholders, children in care and foster carers'. It recognises that there is 'good stability of children in care placements' and that 'value for money on placement costs for children in care has improved and costs are now considerably lower than in comparator areas.'

From this, the Children's Specialist Commissioning Plan 2012-15 sets out how we will improve our performance for children on the edge of care, those in care and those leaving care by delivering on the themes and priorities of the Children and Young People's Plan:

- Theme 1: Keeping our children and young people safe
- Theme 2: Tackling the causes and effects of child poverty
- Theme 3: Ensuring that all our children and young people achieve to their full potential
- Theme 4: Improving our shared understanding and planning for the needs of our children and young people.

1.5 Linked Strategies

It is not possible to take a systemic or holistic approach to placement planning and commissioning for children in care without recognising that children's needs will change over time and that both before, during and after a child requires the care of the local authority there are linked strategies and plans that lay out how we will meet the needs of the child over its life-time. Whilst not an exhaustive list, some of the main linked strategies are listed here.

- Short Breaks for Disabled Children
- Draft Autism Strategy
- Draft Transitions Plan
- Supporting People High Support Services Draft Commissioning Plan

1.6 Children and Young People's Voices

Children's voices have been central to the work of Specialist Commissioning. Children and young people tell us at their Looked After Children Reviews that they are happy with their placements and with the option to be able to stay with former carers beyond the age of 18 years.

⁵ <http://bristolchildren.wordpress.com/draftplan/>

In March 2010, the Chief Executive and leaders of the City Council signed the Bristol Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers, promising to ensure that children and young people in and leaving care are supported to achieve their potential and to involve them in any decisions that affect their life.

Members of the Children In Care Council have been involved in all aspects of the commissioning cycle from identifying need, to helping design specifications and evaluate tenders, and helping to set the outcomes by which provider's success will be measured.

2. Review

2.1 Placement Commissioning Plan 2009-12: what have we achieved?

2.1.1 Support children to remain within their families

Whilst the number of children in care in Bristol has risen by 7% over the past five years, the investment in Edge of Care Services together with the impact of the Prevention and Early Intervention and Parenting Strategies have meant that Bristol has not seen such large increases in the rate of children in care per 10,000 as that experienced nationally. Figure 1 shows Bristol's children in care per 10,000 against core cities, statistical neighbours and the national average over the past five years.

Figure 1: Children in Care per 10,000 at 31st March⁶

	2006/7	2008/9	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	% change
Bristol numbers	636	666	649	645	680	+7%
Bristol per 10,000 of the under 18 population	80.4	84.6	82.4	80	84	+4%
Statistical neighbours average per 10,000 of the under 18 population	73.1	70.4	72.5	77	79	+8%
Core cities per 10,000 of the under 18 population	88	92.4	92.1	97	96	+9%
England per 10,000 of the under 18 population	55	54.1	55	58	59	+7%

Investment in pooled budget arrangements with health and education has enabled commissioners to procure local packages that support disabled children and their families, and prevent the need for an out of authority residential placement. Such interventions have directly contributed to the continued reduction in numbers of

⁶ Taken from statistical first release local authority data September 2011

children with complex needs requiring such placements by enabling children to attend their local special school and remain in their family. A review of the One Service One Process arrangements effective between April 2009 and March 2011 demonstrated actual savings of £351,205 and potential savings, based on out of authority provision for the remainder of a child's school years, in excess of £1million.

Figure 2: Number of children in care placed in out of authority residential placements.

	Average number of children placed⁷
2008/9	32.8
2009/10	29.2
2010/11	25

Bristol has commissioned services that include family reunification as a measure of success, for example, emergency foster care arrangements with independent fostering agencies and the recently commissioned supported housing assessment cluster for homeless 16/17 year olds.

We have audited our arrangements for children entering and exiting care into permanent families. The 2010 Ofsted inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children's Services found,

'good evidence of safe decision-making regarding thresholds and support to families on the edge of care... managers have reviewed and strengthened the use of residence orders, special guardianship allowances and financial support to enable children in need to reside with friends and family...cases selected at random for this inspection did not identify any situations in which the child or young person had not been appropriately accommodated.'

159 children left care over the past five years following the granting of a Residence or Special Guardianship Order. The numbers of children leaving care in this way peaked in 2009 with 44 children leaving care under such an order in that year.

2.1.2 Improve outcomes for children in care

Wherever possible children should grow up within a family and Bristol has performed well in this regard. Figure 3 overleaf shows Bristol's performance in relation to placement type, compared to the core cities, statistical neighbours and national average. Bristol has exceeded the performance of statistical neighbours and core cities, and is well above the national average for the percentage of children in care placed with a family.

⁷ CHIPS A40 Report: average annual occupancy

Figure 3: % of children within the care population, looked after in foster care.

	2009	2010	2011
Bristol	80	82	78.3
Core Cities Average	72	71	Data not available
Statistical Neighbours Average	76	75	Data not available
National Average	72	73	74

Placement choice and capacity has increased both through implementing a Service Level Agreement with Bristol's in-house Family Placement Service but also through the commissioning of a new fostering framework and implementation of the national fostering contract.

Joint commissioning arrangements with Health and Education that set clear outcomes at the start of the placement, together with 6 monthly Value for Money Reviews have supported improved outcomes for children in residential care, whilst alternative arrangements have been commissioned to support a reduction in overall numbers requiring care of this kind. The independent fostering sector has successfully provided family placements for a number of children with complex needs and challenging or risky behaviour that would previously have resulted in placement in the out of authority residential sector. When such placements are required, the majority are made within the northern sub-region and wherever possible, within Bristol.

Last year we successfully placed more children entering care within 20 miles of their home address⁸. This makes it easier for children to continue at their school and to stay in touch with family and friends. This is something children tell us is extremely important to them.

Increased placement capacity, and therefore choice, has to some extent been consumed by a growth in the total number of children requiring placements and this has adversely impacted upon our ability to make greater progress with placement stability⁹. The Specialist Commissioning Team hold placement stability meetings within five days of any notification of problems in any independent sector placement. This practice is mirrored in the in-house Family Placement Service where a new placement agreement form that focuses on enhancing placement resilience in order to ensure stability, is being piloted.

In terms of the number of children placed for adoption, Bristol has performed well. Whilst the small numbers result in some extreme variance in data, by comparing the year 2009-10 and 2010-11 Bristol can be seen to be going in the opposite direction from the national trend. Between 2010 and 2011, there was a 5% decrease in the number of children adopted nationally, whilst in Bristol the number rose from 31 - 36 a 16% increase. Similarly there was a 2% decrease in the number of children placed

⁸ Performance Indicator CY269 – target of 9% or below, performance of 4.26% in 2010/11.

⁹ We have performed above target % for long term placement stability (NI62/CY263) over the past two years, and above target for number of moves in 12 months in the past year (NI 63/KPI139).

for adoption nationally over the same period, whilst Bristol's figure rose by 75%, from 28 to 49 children.

2.1.3 Achieve value for money and keep unit costs down

The average placement cost per child¹⁰ in care in Bristol rose by 4.6% from £690 to £722 over the three-year period 2009 to 2011. This increase is below both the Consumer Price Index and Retail Price Index rates for the same period.¹¹ This good performance is also reflected in the local authority budget outturn data¹², that shows Bristol mid-table amongst its statistical neighbours and to have the third lowest spend amongst the core cities. Average comparisons are reproduced in figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Average gross expenditure on children looked after, per capita of 0-17 population.

	Bristol	Core Cities average	Statistical Neighbour	National average
2010/11	£327	£379	£334	£262

2.1.3.1 In-house provision

As part of an analysis of in-house services undertaken by a Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership Consultant in conjunction with the Children's Finance Team, a true cost model was developed for in-house services that evidenced the continued importance of Bristol's in-house service in delivering value for money family placements for the majority of children in care¹³. This has resulted in continued investment in the fostering service aimed at improving recruitment and retention of carers. There are early indications that capacity is building with a higher than usual number of fostering assessments underway and requests from carers to transfer into the authority. Figure 5 shows the growth of in-house placement capacity and figure 6 the proportionate increase in children placed with Bristol foster carers.

Figure 5: number of local authority registered foster carers/places.

	April 2007	April 2008	April 2009	April 2010	April 2011	Sep 2011
Registered carer households	226	222	234	237	235	244
Registered places	454	443	418	421	409	422
Registered kinship carer households	49	50	45	45	54	55
Registered kinship places	78	82	70	70	84	85

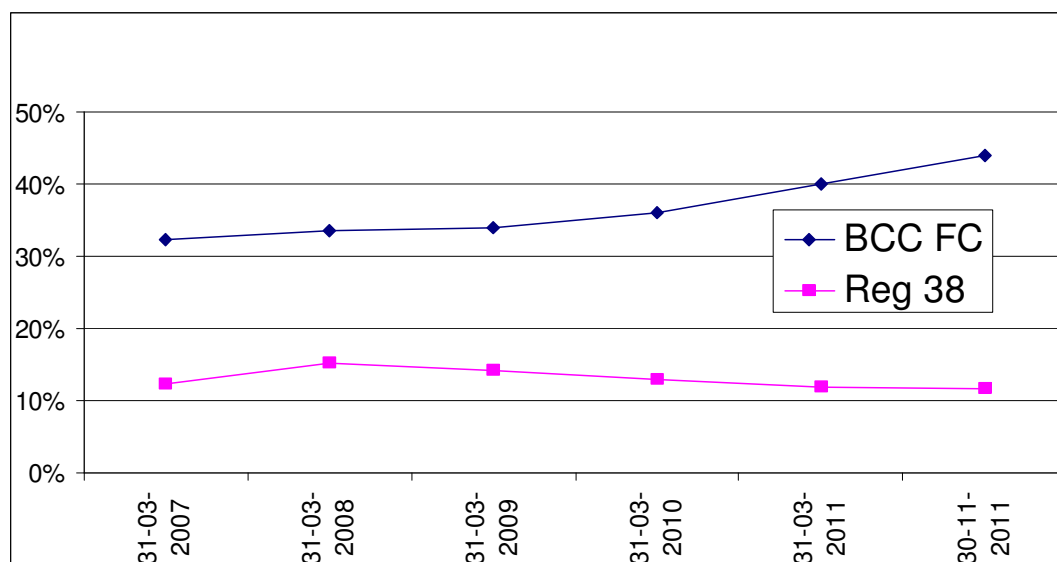
¹⁰ KPI 138 (previously PAF B8) - Average gross weekly expenditure per looked after child in foster care or children's home.

¹¹ Office of National Statistics produce CPI and RPI data

¹² Section 251 Department for Education LA Budget Data for 2010-11

¹³ £350 average unit cost compared with £750 for an IFA placement over the same period – taken from savings model produced by RIEP Consultant November 2010.

Figure 6: Bristol's in-house foster and kinship care placements over time as a percentage of all placements.



2.1.3.2 Independent sector

Within the independent sector, the total spend on independent fostering agency placements has grown as the numbers placed in this sector have risen over the past three years, new commissioning arrangements and individual fee negotiations have delivered year on year reductions in the average unit cost of an independent fostering agency placement (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Weekly average unit cost for a child placed in an independent sector foster placement¹⁴.

	Number of children (and young people over 18 years) placed with IFA	Average placement cost per child per week
2009	134	£816
2010	153	£795
2011	181	£777
Apr to Sep 2011	192	£771

2.1.3.3 Residential placements and the Top 100 children

For the past two years, Bristol has analysed its 'Top 100' most expensive children in order to better understand needs and focus on value for money. Between 2010 and 2011 Bristol reduced its social care out of authority placements spend by £1million and the total spend on the Top 100 by £230k. This has been as a result of active market management including innovative arrangements, such as the commissioning

¹⁴Taken from CHIPS report A31 IFA by provider

of a secure children's home placement for Bristol that not only offers preferential prices, but also enables children to stay close to their home community, in contact with family and friends, and for Bristol services to more effectively assess and plan for the child's future. This, together with individual fee negotiations, value for money meetings and outcomes focused contract monitoring has enabled us to reduce spend in this area.

The Child In Placement System enables accurate budget forecasting and, together with relevant information from the PARIS client database enables accurate analysis of the care population, allowing us to analyse trends and take action to address pressures as they appear. This supports the Specialist Commissioning Team to manage the market actively with providers giving positive feedback on Bristol's analysis of its care population, its understanding of trends and its work to reduce costs whilst developing the market by communicating its commissioning intentions.

3. Analyse

3.1 Assessment of Need

Since 2007, Bristol has undertaken an annual and detailed analysis of its children in care population. This shared widely and is used by Specialist Commissioning to set priorities and develop the market.

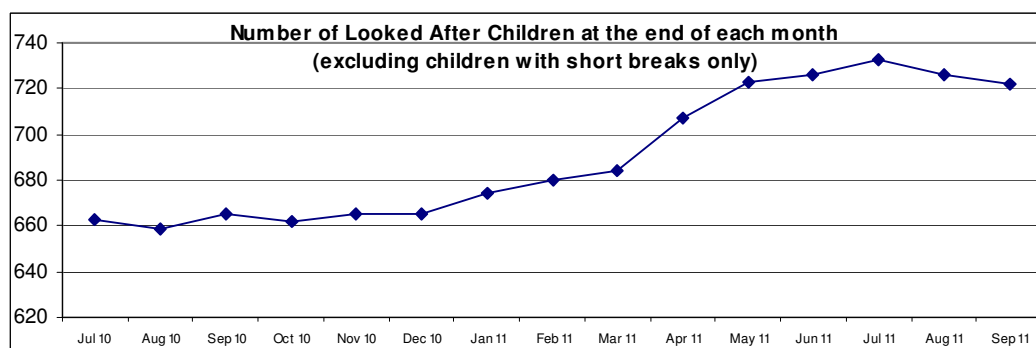
3.2 Trends

3.2.1 Increased demand for placements as numbers in care have grown:

Over the past twelve months Bristol has experienced a growth in its children in care and care leaver population. This is broadly in line with, although not as pronounced an increase as that experienced nationally, with the majority of local authorities experiencing a growth in their children in care population following baby Peter and as a result of law lord rulings such as Southwark. Figure 1 on page 6 shows that over the past five years Bristol has narrowed the gap in rate per 10,000 when compared with the national, core cities and statistical neighbour averages.

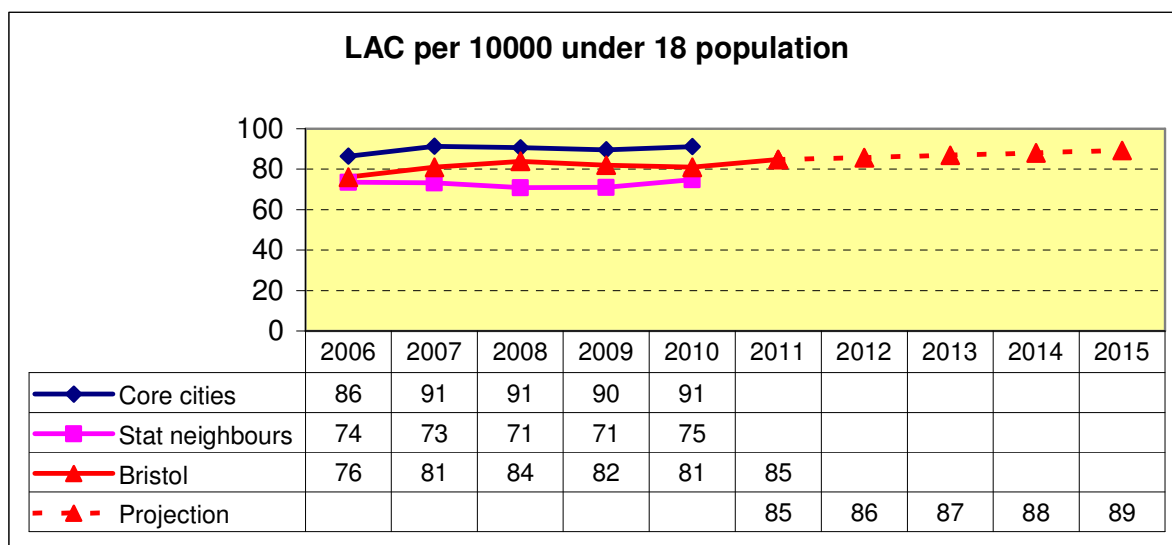
Figure 8 overleaf, shows the more recent growth in the care population in Bristol. Between March and September 2011 the numbers of children in care have increased steeply by a further 6.2%, from 684 to 722, with a peak in July 2011 of 733. Whilst numbers appear to have plateaued and there are early indications that numbers are falling, this increase challenges our ability to ensure placement sufficiency and improve outcomes for children. It underlines the need to intervene early and to take effective action to support children to remain safely within their families.

Figure 8: Number of looked after children at the end of each month July 2010 to September 2011



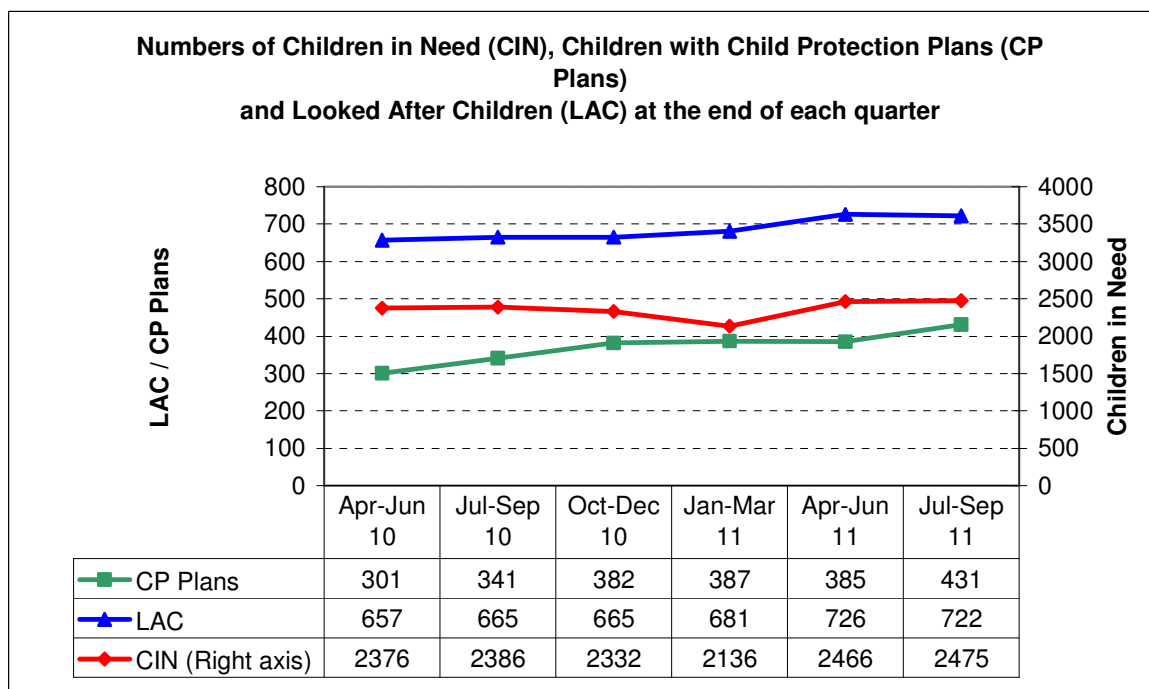
Bristol's numbers in care grew by 7% between 2007 and 2011, whereas nationally the figure is 9%. In terms of the rate per 10,000 of the under 18 population, Bristol's increase is 3.7%, half the 7.3% increase experienced nationally. Figure 9 below projects the growth in the rate per 10,000 to the year 2015. It is based solely on the data of the past five years and takes no account of other factors such as the large increase in birth rate¹⁵ in the City and consequent growth in the population aged under 5 years or changes in statute that will have an inflationary effect on the number of children requiring the care of the local authority.

Figure 9: LAC per 10,000 projection



¹⁵ Birth rate in Bristol has risen by 30% over past ten years.

Figure 10 below shows the relationship between children in need, identified risk in the form of children subject to a child protection plan and numbers of children in care. Again, this is in line with national trends.

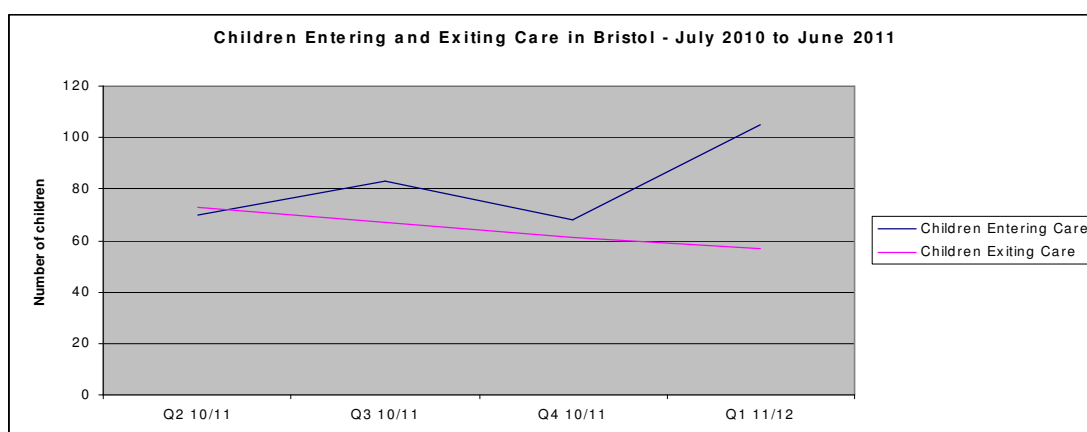


3.3 Why have numbers in care grown?

3.3.1 Changes in statutory framework and case law

Over the past year, more children have entered than exited care in every age group other than that of the 16/17 year old age group, where total numbers have grown but also where more children leave care as a result of reaching the age of 18 years, returning to family or accessing supported independent accommodation. Figure 11 overleaf shows this increase over the past year. Additionally, and in line with national trends, young people stay in care for longer and leave when they are older. Bristol has a successful Staying Put Scheme that allows young people to remain with their former carer beyond the age of 18 to complete their education and preparation for independence. This has resulted in Bristol leading the country with more children remaining with their former carer at age 19 than any other local authority.

Figure 11:



The Southwark Judicial Review Ruling and related Communities and Local Government Guidance means that 16/17 year old young people who would previously have been assessed and provided with services under Part 7 Homelessness legislation must now be assessed and provided with services as a child in care under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989. Between July 2010 and June 2011, 65 young people entered care in this age group, compared with only 15 in the previous year, accounting for 20% of the total entries into care in the year, compared with 6% in 2009/10.

Figures 12 and 13 show the percentage of children entering and exiting care by age group over the past four years. It clearly depicts the growth in 16/17-year-old entries to care:

Figure 12: % children entering care by age 2007/8 to 2010/11

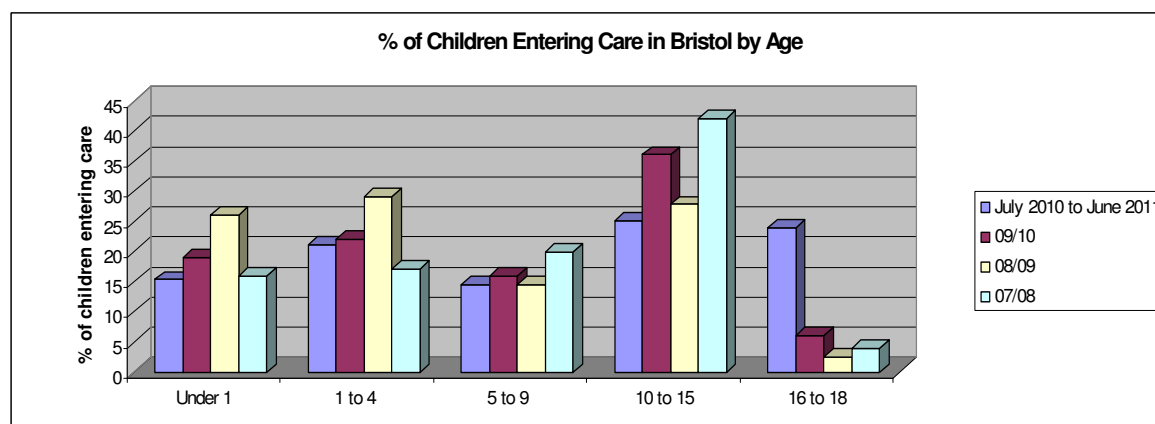
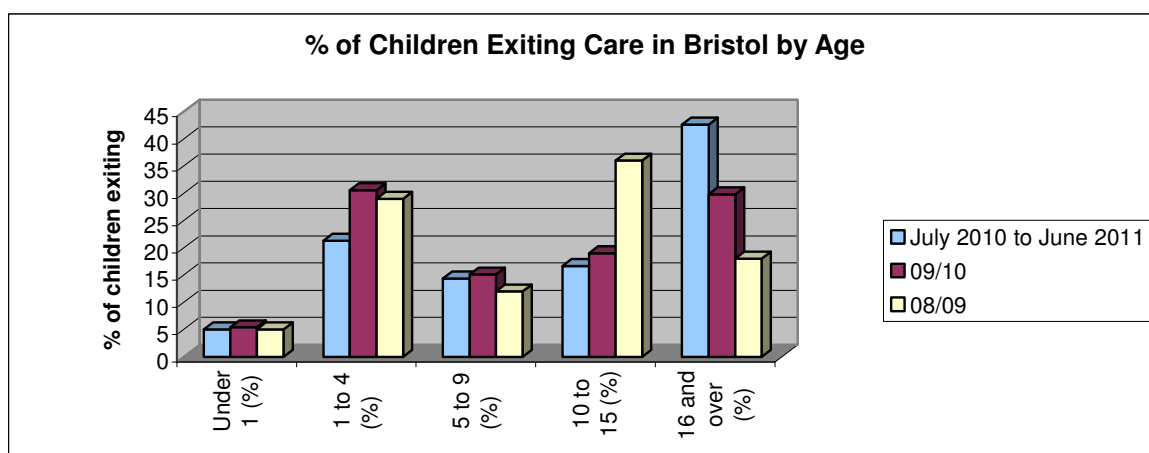


Figure 13: % children exiting care by age 2008/9 to 2010/11



Bristol has seen an increased numbers of care proceedings and placement of children under 5 and particularly under 1 year growing, which, coupled with delays in the court process adversely impacts upon the timescales for children moving to adoption or Special Guardianship.

Children Act Statutory Guidance, of which the Sufficiency Duty is a part, has resulted in an increased emphasis on keeping sibling groups together in care proceedings.

The number of days per annum that a child can access short breaks before becoming a child in care reduced in 2011 from 120 to 75 days. This will increase numbers in care by an estimated 17 children¹⁶.

The courts now place greater emphasis on keeping families together when a parenting assessment is required. Consequently, Bristol's use of both fostering and residential assessments, including those jointly commissioned with Health and Social Care/Safer Bristol for parents recovering from substance misuse issues has increased.

The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Bill heralds a further increase in the number of children in care with its proposal that all young people remanded to custody over the age of 12 years become looked after children regardless of the secure environment in which they are placed. The Bill also makes provision for the full costs of remand placements to be met by the local authority. In Bristol, based on previous year's figures this will increase the number of children in care for at least a part of each year by approximately 40 children¹⁷. For those whose remand and therefore looked after child status ends as a result of a custodial sentence, the child's needs must be assessed upon release to determine whether the child should become looked after by the local authority.

¹⁶ Based on young people accessing short break provision for more than 75 nights p.a. in Sep 10.

¹⁷ In 2009-10 42 young people were remanded in custody. This figure remains reasonably consistent year to year and represents the number of children not currently looked after who would become so under the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Bill.

3.4 Demographic factors

3.4.1 Population growth

Bristol's population continues to rise faster than the national rate of increase. Between 2001 and 2010 the population of Bristol grew by 51,300 or 13.2%. This is 2.5 times higher than the 5.3% growth for Great Britain as a whole, and represents the third highest growth of the core cities¹⁸. This increase is as a result of migration into the city, predominantly of working age people; a consequential increase in births of 39% over the period; and increased life expectancy across the population of the city as a whole.

Of particular relevance for the Children's Specialist Commissioning Plan 2012-2015 is the increased birth rate that has resulted in a substantial increase in the population under 5 years¹⁹ which, coupled with improved survival rates for pre-term babies and those children with the most complex health needs, will result in an increased need for packages of care across a range of placement types.

3.4.2 Growth in numbers of disabled children, particularly those with complex health needs

Linked to increased survival rates for children with complex health needs, is an increase in the number of children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and extremely challenging behaviour who require the care of the local authority through the provision of integrated health, education and care packages. Bristol has utilised specialist residential provision within the region to provide for these children. This has, at times, had an adverse impact upon the frequency and quality of family contact, making plans for family reunification and/or transition to adulthood more difficult to effect and ensuring young people remain in those out of authority placements for the duration of their childhood.

Such packages of care are, by their very nature, amongst the most costly placements that Bristol procures. It is therefore imperative that we address both improved outcomes and placement costs by commissioning integrated and graduated packages of high quality care locally; care that can respond to the changing needs of children as they develop, that supports children to remain at their local special school whenever possible and that can support families to resume the care of their child whenever possible.

3.4.3 Diversity

The population of Bristol is becoming more diverse with 28% of reception age children from a BME background²⁰. The greatest population increases have been amongst Indian, Black African and Chinese populations in the City, all of which have a generally younger age profile than the 'white' population. Notable within the Black

¹⁸ Population Estimates Unit. Office of National Statistics: Crown Copyright 2011

¹⁹ Under 5 population grew by 18.1% between 2001 and 2010, that's 4,200 more children under 5 in 2010 than there were in the City in 2001.

²⁰ JSNA update 2010

African population is the large increase in Somali families, 72% of which contain school age children with one-third living in extended family households²¹. Even more striking is the people of mixed ethnic group in the city, 40% of whom are aged 0-15 years²². The increasing diversity of the City will be mirrored in children entering care and will require new and innovative recruitment and retention strategies in order to continue to reach potential carers from BME communities if Bristol is to provide care placements that are well matched to the children who require them.

3.4.4 Kinship care

In Bristol 1.7% of children live in either formal or informal kinship arrangements. This compares with the England average of 1.2% and is important because we know that, whilst children living in kinship arrangements tend to experience better placement stability and at least as good outcomes as children in non-kinship placements, the pressures of such arrangements predispose children to periods in public care. Kinship carer households are more likely to suffer at least two forms of deprivation than birth parent households, and are more likely to be within asylum seeking or immigrant communities as opposed to second generation or more established communities. Where there are kinship arrangements in more established communities this is often as a result of one or both parents having either enduring mental health or substance misuse issues²³. Given Bristol's changing demographic, these issues are of particular relevance for all services working with children and families and particularly in identifying where services should be targeted to have the greatest impact.

3.4.5 Poverty

There is a high correlation between the percentage of 0-15 year old children affected by poverty in each ward and the rate of looked after children. This suggests that economic downturn in the city may result in increased numbers of children in care.

²¹ Based on Bristol Somali Community Calculator and Bristol Mujtama Survey 2007/8

²² ONS Population Estimates by Ethnic Group: Crown copyright 2011

²³ Nandy S and Selwyn J 2011 Spotlight on Kinship Care: Using Census microdata to examine the extent and nature of kinship care in the UK. Bristol University.

4. Current Service provision & contractual arrangements

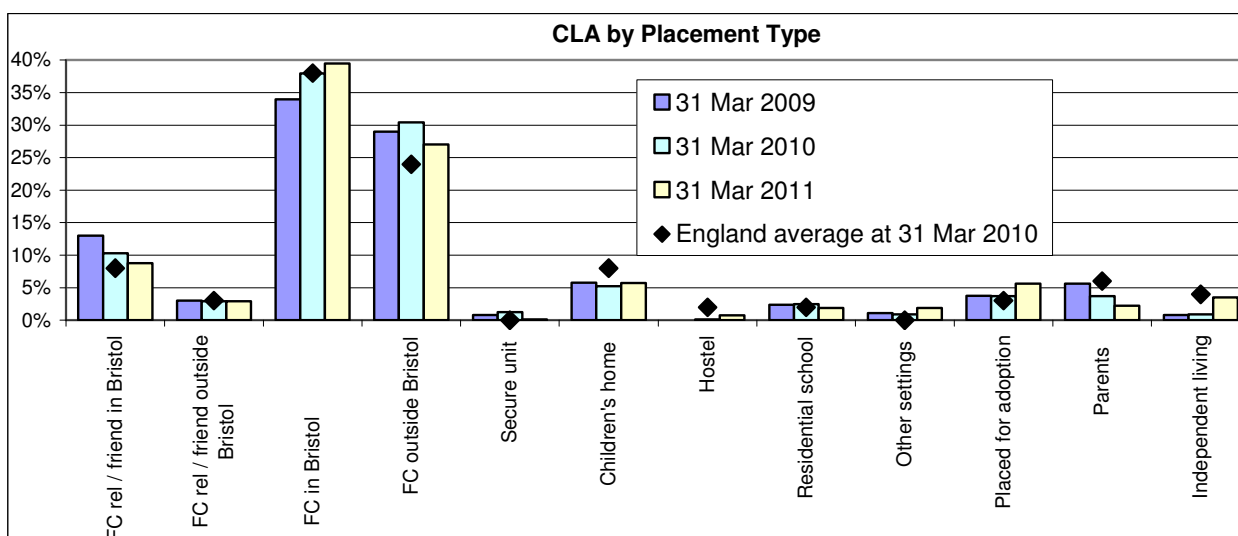
Bristol has a number of contractual arrangements with its placement providers from Service Level Agreement with its in-house services to framework and block contract arrangements at local and sub-regional level. In making any placement, Bristol aims to utilise its in-house fostering service as its preferred provider on the basis that it is able to offer well-matched local placements that support children to remain in education and close to their family or home community at a comparatively low unit cost.

When undertaking placement matching any child in its care, Bristol considers the following factors:

- How best to safeguard and promote the child's welfare
- How best to promote education and achievement and not disrupt the child's education or training placement
- The wishes of the child and family, including consideration of religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural background
- Whether a placement with a relative, friend or other person connected with the child and who is also a local authority foster parent is possible
- Proximity to family home
- Enabling the child and looked after siblings to live together
- Whether a foster family is able to meet the needs of a child or may be able to do so in future
- The ability of any placement to meet the needs of the child and particularly those of disabled children
- Providing accommodation within the local authority's area, unless that is not reasonably practicable.
- The comparative price of the placement and whether it offers value for money

Figure 14 below shows the distribution of children in care by placement type over the past three years and demonstrates Bristol's commitment to children growing up in family placements wherever possible.

Figure 14: children looked after by placement type



4.1 Foster Care: in-house/independent provision

Foster care is the preferred placement choice for nearly all children. Placement types vary according to the task that the foster carer is expected to undertake, for example emergency reception, short term, long term, treatment or bridging to adoption.

As can be seen in Figure 14, Bristol has been relatively successful at maintaining a high percentage of its children in care in foster placements and a relatively low percentage of children in children's homes or residential special schools. Whilst Bristol has more children in foster care than the national average, it also has approximately 4% more children placed with independent fostering agencies than the national average. Figure 3 on page 8 shows Bristol's performance, in terms of the percentage of children placed in foster care as outperforming that of the core cities, statistical neighbours and the national average.

4.1.1 In-house foster care

Bristol has a vibrant and longstanding in-house foster placement service offering a variety of placement types from emergency reception to remand; short and long term placements and bridging to adoption. Ofsted inspected the family placement service in October 2011, and assessed it as a 'good' provision with 'outstanding features'. This helps confirm the long-standing policy of using Bristol carers for Bristol children as the placement of choice offering, as it does, the best value locally. This is important as it means that children entering care can be supported to continue at their local school and remain in contact with family and friends where it is safe to do so.

Between 2010 and 2011 Bristol worked with a Regional Improvement and Efficiency Consultant to analyse the foster placement market in Bristol and to support us in developing a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the in-house family placement service. A 'true cost' model was developed that demonstrated that, in real terms, an in-house placement cost approximately 40% the cost of an independent agency fostering placement. The SLA is now in place and contains target numbers, type, quantity and quality of placements required by Bristol's Children in Care and Care Leavers. The service is asked to deliver an additional 70 placements by 2013 in order to reduce significantly Bristol's use of independent fostering agency placements.

To that end the family placement service reconfigured into a business unit in 2011, and has taken on the placement matching function for its service, responding to all referrals within a specified timescale prior to placement searches being widened to the independent sector or alternative placement types, such as residential care.

Children's placement commissioning issues are closely linked to the capacity of the in-house service to recruit and retain carers with the right availability and skills in sufficient numbers. As can be seen in Figure 5 on page 9 Bristol had lost in-house placement capacity that is only now being recovered. It is this recovery that will support Bristol's drive to become less reliant on the independent sector.

4.1.2 Independent Fostering Agency placements

Bristol's use of independent fostering agency (IFA) placements has grown over the past five years from 134 in 2007 to 192 in September 2011 (Figure 7, page 10). Figure 15 below shows the number of children placed in IFAs as a percentage of the total children in care population. Throughout this period of time, average placement costs have reduced through successful market management, including balancing market share across a number of providers, thereby spreading risk and containing over reliance on one provider. A regional framework is in place for Authorities in the Northern Sub-Region of the South West. These arrangements will be renewed in 2013 but currently provide Bristol with access to 25 preferred providers.

Bristol has successfully run mini-tenders from this larger framework to establish a 'top 10' of IFA providers who meet specific quality, cost and sufficiency criteria, and to deliver an emergency scheme that has as a criteria of its success, reunification with family. Additionally, Bristol utilises cost and volume, block purchase and advance payment arrangements to ensure efficiencies and the benefits of economies of scale are shared between local authority and provider. More recently, Bristol has begun to pilot a payment by results model with one agency, which if successful, will inform future specifications for the market.

Reflecting the generally higher levels of payment, support and supervision to carers, IFA placements cost on average 150% more than an in-house placement. IFAs have successfully offered placements to children whose complex needs and challenging behaviours would previously have been considered beyond the scope of a family placement. IFAs have offered a stable family placement to teenagers with mental health difficulties, extremely challenging and self-injurious behaviour, children who present a risk to others and disabled children with profound and multiple complex needs. This has significantly contributed to Bristol's success in reducing the number of children it has placed in the out of authority children's home and residential special schools sector. Additionally, IFAs have provided parent and child assessment and large sibling group placements, something that has been largely, but not entirely, beyond the ability of the in-house service to provide.

Figure 15 below, shows that between 20 and 24% of children in care in Bristol are placed with agency carers. This was 2% above the national average of 20% in 2010. Over the same period IFA average unit costs reduced by 5% or £39 per week in real terms. The current range of IFA placements cost between £700 and £1150 per week

Figure 15: number of children in care placed in IFAs and as a % of the children in care population

	Number of CIC <18 years	Number in IFA <18years	Number in IFA >18 years	Total number in IFA	IFA as a % of CIC population <18years	Average cost per week
2009	649	122	12	134	19%	£816
2010	645	142	11	153	22%	£795
2011	680	167	14	181	24%	£777

4.2 Residential care – children’s homes/ residential special schools:

Most children in care will go to foster homes - it's the closest thing to ordinary family life, but for some young people, residential care or residential special school offers the best environment from which to achieve good outcomes. This is the most expensive form of care and Bristol works hard to ensure that only those children who require such care receive it. Figure 16 below demonstrates that over the past three years, Bristol has placed fewer children in such care than the national average.

Figure 16: percentage of children in care placed in children’s homes, residential special schools and other residential settings²⁴

	2009	2010	2011
Bristol average	9%	8%	9%
National Average	13%	14%	12%

4.2.1 In-house residential care

Bristol’s in-house residential service offers thirty places across six homes based in residential areas around Bristol. Five of the Homes are currently Ofsted rated ‘good with outstanding features’ and one is ‘outstanding’. The Homes care for children with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, including children with attachment disorder and have a high occupancy rate of 98.5% in the last year. Two thirds of the children placed are aged 15 to 17 years old, the youngest is 11 years old and almost all have experienced multiple family placements before moving into residential care.

For the majority of older young people the next step will be supported independent accommodation, whilst for those who are younger, the plan is usually to work toward a family placement.

4.2.2 Independent residential care

Independent residential placements offer a professional staff team to care for a child, usually with linked education and sometimes a specific therapeutic approach or integrated therapeutic intervention. Such placements are the most expensive form of care funded by the authority and are used for children whose complex needs and often challenging behaviour has been assessed as requiring specialist care that cannot be provided in a foster family. The majority of placements are joint agency funded with contributions from Special Educational Needs (funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)) and the Primary Care Trust.

As detailed in figure 14 on page 18, Bristol’s use of the out of authority independent residential placements has reduced year on year from an average of 33 children in 2008 to 25 children in 2010. Over two thirds of the children placed in independent residential provision are profoundly disabled children, either on the Autistic Spectrum and displaying associated severe challenging behaviour, or disabled children with complex needs including profound and multiple learning difficulties. Whilst the

²⁴ Department for Education Statistical First Release 2011

number of children diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder has grown, Bristol's development of the fostering market, together with preventative measures focussed on maintaining children in their families and home communities has enabled us to ensure that the population in out of authority residential placements has continued to reduce.

Bristol has worked with providers to deliver more flexible packages, for example, commissioning residential school placements on the basis of the number of weeks the child occupies rather than as a 'traditional' specified 38 week or 52 week placement. In 2010 – 11 this approach reduced spend with one provider of £37,000.

That said, and as detailed on page 15 there is insufficient provision locally for those disabled children who do require residential care and education, particularly for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. This results in such children being placed at some distance from home and makes family reunification, transition planning and providing more integrated packages of care that adapt to meet a child's changing needs, more difficult to achieve.

Bristol works closely with other local authorities in the Northern Sub-region of the South West to commission these placements, which are generally of low incidence and high cost. This enables Bristol more effectively to stimulate the market to develop the provision we need locally whilst encouraging competition between providers. There are two preferred provider frameworks in place regionally; one for residential special schools and the other for independent children's homes. There is some cross over between the lists as independent children's homes often provide education at a linked day school.

Out of Authority placements are closely monitored by the Specialist Commissioning Team who undertake regular value for money reviews and monitoring visits. This includes joint agency working to examine standards of care and performance and contribution to the Children's Cross Regional Arrangements Group²⁵ - a partnership consisting of Local Authorities from the East, South East and South West Regions who seek to improve outcomes for children by working together to support the sourcing, contracting, monitoring and annual fee negotiations for children's residential and special school placements.

4.3 Short break accommodation

Bristol has sufficient short break care with a well-developed family link foster care scheme for disabled children and three residential short break units. The residential short breaks provide 15 beds across three units, and offer regular short breaks to over 70 children and their families.

²⁵ The Children's Cross Regional Arrangements Group is a partnership of 48 Local Authorities from the East, South East and South West Regions who seek to improve outcomes for children by working together to support the sourcing, contracting, monitoring and annual fee negotiations for children's residential and special school placements. It coordinates procedures that monitor the quality and costs of placements. It maintains a database of providers of residential care and of special education - the CCRAAG Providers Database - The CCRAAG Providers Database exists to assist placement finding, to promote information sharing between placing authorities and to increase contestability.

In order to meet the needs of disabled children into the future, there is a need to review Bristol's use of residential care and to consider, for example, how extended short breaks, shared care and local care options might be developed through a reconfiguration of existing services to offer families improved choice from a range of local provision that enables children to stay at their day special school and close to family. To this end, in 2011, Bristol worked with an independent residential special school in the city to develop care only and extended short break packages for disabled children.

4.4 Post 16 Accommodation

When young people leave their care placement, the local authority must ensure that their new home is suitable and linked to wider plans and aspirations as detailed in the young person post 16 Pathway Plan. Young people tell us that moving directly from care to independent living is often too big a step and that this transition is achieved more effectively when there is a choice of remaining with a former carer in a supported lodgings type arrangement or of moving to a semi-independent living option with an appropriate level of support.

4.4.1 Remaining with former carers beyond the age of 18

For some time Bristol has offered young people in education, the opportunity to stay with their carer beyond the age of 18 years. This option closely reflects the experience of most young people's transition to independence and is reinforced by research as one of the options most likely to result in good outcomes for the young person, as leaving home is a more natural process occurring when the young person is prepared and ready to go.

In 2008, Bristol became a Care Matters Staying Put pilot authority²⁶, further strengthening its commitment to this option. Bristol utilised this opportunity to build upon its post 18 policy aimed at supporting young people to remain with their former carers beyond the age of 18 years whilst completing their studies. This has been an area of success with up to 80 young people annually, staying beyond the age of 18 with former carers and between 35 and 40 young people living in 'staying put' arrangements at anyone time. Recently published national data shows Bristol to be the leading authority with more young people enabled to stay in such arrangements than any other.²⁷

The spend on this group of young people over the past three years has risen as the numbers staying put has grown from £750,000 per annum to £1,000,000. Measures are in place to maximise income to carers and young people from other sources and thereby reduce pressure on social care placements budget. Additionally, individual fee negotiations for young people placed in the independent fostering sector has resulted in significant price reductions as young people become more independent.

²⁶ The option of staying put with former carers is now enshrined as a post 18 suitable and supported accommodation option in Volume 3 Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers

²⁷ Department for Education, Statistical First Release 2011

For young people who will require an adult care service and who are accommodated in OOA provision HSC, following referral to the Transitions Team accept funding responsibility beyond 18 years. Recently improvements have been made to the reporting of young people at age 16 and who will require an adult care service in order to inform joint commissioning arrangements through into adult services.

4.4.2 Supported accommodation

In Bristol the Housing Support Register is the single point of access for young people who require Supporting People funded accommodation and support services as they leave care or are assessed as requiring such accommodation and support under Section 20 Children Act at age 16/17 years²⁸. The register provides access to a range of provision across the City specifically for young people. The majority of provision is within the voluntary community sector and is owned and supported by Housing Associations, but there are also two local authority schemes offering shared supported housing or supported lodgings²⁹ for up to 35 young people. Support levels and types of accommodation vary from high support hostel accommodation including Bristol Foyer to dispersed accommodation on a shared and self-contained basis. There is specialist provision for those with drug, alcohol or mental health difficulties, single sex accommodation, mother and baby units, and accommodation with 'live-in' or 'round the clock' support staff as well as floating support.

In addition to Supporting People funded provision, Children and Young People's Services spot purchase specialist accommodation and support packages from the independent sector. This independent sector provision tends to be more flexible in its response to the needs of young people who present particular challenges either in terms of their vulnerability, presenting risk, or chaotic lifestyle. Bristol has established close working arrangements with four providers and currently has 16 young people placed in this type of provision.

A joint review of the accommodation and support needs of young people in and leaving care is underway. This will inform joint commissioning plans with Neighbourhoods to ensure a sufficient supply of quality accommodation and support, able to meet the needs of young people and deliver increased value for money into the future.

4.5 Parent and Child Assessment Placements

Bristol City Council's preferred option is for community based, parent and child assessments using skilled and experienced social workers. This type of assessment takes place in the home environment more akin to a normal living situation, closer to the parent's community and provides a more realistic assessment of long term parenting skills and ability.

²⁸ Young people accommodated under the 'Southwark Ruling'.

²⁹ Bristol currently has two supported lodging's schemes – CYPs Branchout scheme for care leavers and a Neighbourhoods scheme.

Over the past year the courts have placed greater emphasis on keeping families together for parenting assessments. This has resulted in an increased use of both fostering and residential assessment placements. In the seven months April to November 2011, 17 placements have been made. This compares with 7 made throughout 2009 and 18 in the year 2010. Whilst the nature of such assessments means that cost and duration can vary widely, the average time in an assessment placement is 90 days at an average cost of £1,906 per week, making the total average cost of an assessment placement £24,508.

For fostering assessments, Bristol applies the same choice criteria as it does for any foster placement, that is, preference is given to an in-house match, followed by independent fostering agencies listed on Bristol's pre-qualified framework. Based on usage over the past year there are insufficient placements in Bristol, which has resulted in the need to use placements offered across the region. This is not ideal as it removes parents from their home communities and any support networks that may exist there, and adds both cost, time and oversight pressures for children's social workers who have to travel greater distances to visit children in placement in order to complete assessments.

This is also true of residential assessment providers, where an individual placement contract has been developed for use across the region but where no pre-qualification arrangements exist. Given the funding context (the local authority being solely responsible for funding court-ordered residential parent-and-child assessments) and the extremely high cost of residential parent-and-baby assessments, the community-based assessment provides far greater value for money. Currently, there is no generic residential parent and child assessment provision in the area. The only specialist residential provision is for parents with learning difficulties in North Bristol.

In response to the pressures experienced in the past twelve months, Bristol has instigated a whole service review of parent and child assessments that will include commissioning services more effectively alongside outcomes focussed work with childcare social workers, the judiciary, legal services and CAFCASS in order to redress the current levels of usage.

5 Financial Analysis

The total annual budget for Bristol City Council, Children and Young People's Services for the current year is in excess of £345 million, with the majority going straight to schools and colleges. Of this, £15.7 million is allocated to the children's placement budgets and a further £858 thousand allocated to supported accommodation and parent and child assessments.

Figure 17: Analysis of CYPS Expenditure 2010/11 (excluding funding to schools)

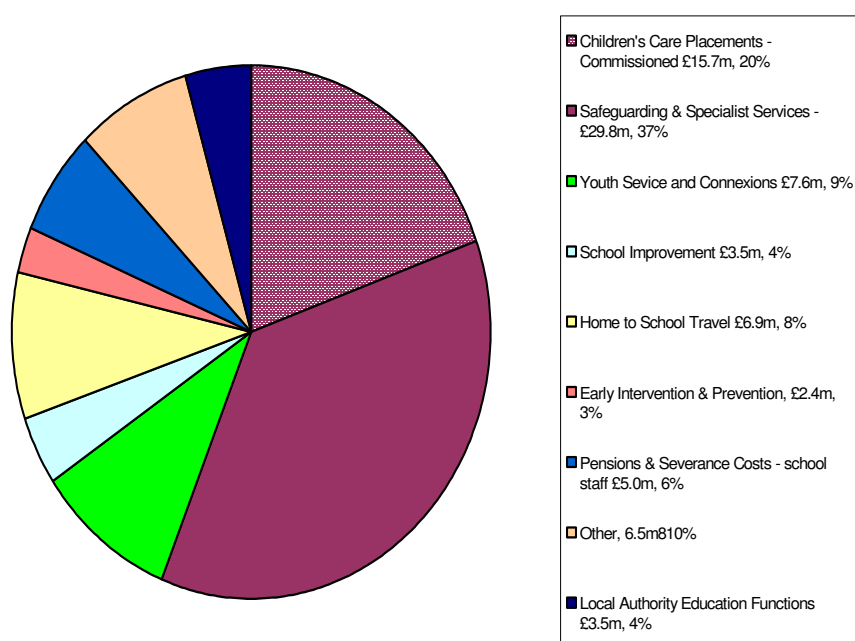


Figure 18: Child in care placements, supported accommodation and parent and child annual budget allocation

Placement type	Budget
In-house foster placements	£5,305,853
Independent fostering agency	£5,900,829
Out of authority residential placements	£2,981,176
Residence Order and Special Guardianship Payments	£1,550,646
In-house supported accommodation	£149,968
Independent supported accommodation	£485,032
Parent and Child Assessments	£185,045
Total	£16,558,549

Figure 19: Average weekly placement cost:

Placement type	Average weekly cost of placement
In house foster care	£320
IFA foster care	£750
In house residential	£2500
Independent residential placement (excluding education/health contributins)	£2200

5.1 Access to Resources

A weekly Access to Resources Panel, chaired by the Service Manager, Specialist Commissioning and Services, considers all requests for placement. The Panel also considers requests where additional resources may be required, for example, continued placement funding, additional services in placement and requests for a change of placement that may require additional funding.

A monthly Joint Agency Panel comprising representatives from the Primary Care Trust, Special Educational Needs and Disabled Children's Service, and chaired by the Service Manager for Specialist Commissioning and Services considers all requests for joint funded, normally out of authority residential, placements for children whose needs cannot be met within existing local provision. Both Panels have a quality assurance role and track placements to ensure that planning is reviewed, outcomes delivered and value for money driven.

Additionally, a baseline audit of children in care is undertaken monthly, and a permanency audit quarterly, to ensure that children's plans are being implemented without delay and that only those children who require the care of the authority receive it.

6. Bristol's priorities for 2012-15

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment update for 2010 tells us that we must 'deliver quality services more efficiently and effectively; making better use of resources and better managing increasing demands'. If we are to do this for children in care, we must focus on improving outcomes across each and every outcome measure for the lifetime of the Plan; we must renew our focus on ensuring children live with their family or another connected person where it is safe for them to do so; we must ensure that children who can leave care and return home or into other permanent arrangements such as Special Guardianship or Adoption, do so in a timely way and with the support necessary for this to be sustained.

The Sufficiency Guidance tells us that ‘securing sufficient accommodation requires a whole-system approach that includes early intervention and preventive services to support children in their families, as well as better services for children if they do become looked after’. It says that the ‘benefits of effective commissioning [for looked after children] can include a choice of placement options; reduced placement breakdown; better integration between looked after children’s services and universal and specialist services; lower numbers of children coming into care and, long term, significantly reduced costs’. We must have regard to a number of accommodation providers able to provide a range of accommodation that is capable of meeting the different needs of children.

From this and our analysis of need the following action plan has been developed:

Action Plan

Strategic Priority 1: Support children to remain safely with their families				
What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who?	By when?	How will we know if we're succeeding? (Outcome measure)
<p>Ensure that service remodelling, for example, Bristol's Pathways Project and the Keep Safe strand within it, focuses on new ways of working aimed at reducing the numbers entering care and increasing the numbers exiting care, so that we more closely reflect the rates of our statistical neighbours.</p> <p>From the Draft Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014 we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • build on the learning from the Total Family pilot, to develop a more joined up approach to working with families so that issues for adults and children within a family are tackled holistically. • promote arrangements whereby including professionals and managers of all services in each of these areas are encouraged to work together consistently, supported by effective data and intelligence about their area and communities. 	<p>Council wide, enabling children to remain with or return to their family whenever safe to do so, will be an explicit priority for delivery in every relevant change project.</p> <p>Work with Morning Lane Associates to deliver a model of social work practice focused on effectively supporting more children to be cared for by their family.</p> <p>Implement the outcomes of the Early Intervention and Edge of Care Reviews so that work is focused on those families most at risk of requiring increasing levels of service provision, including care.</p>	<p>Council wide</p> <p>Senior Management Team, Safeguarding and Specialist Services</p>	<p>From April 2012 to 2015</p>	<p>Rate per 10,000 children in care reduces</p> <p>Reduced gap between rate per 10,000 children in care in Bristol and that of our statistical neighbours</p>
Develop the Access to Resources Panel to ensure threshold criteria for entering care is met and where	Review and redevelop existing arrangements	Service Manager, Specialist	April 2012	Rate per 10,000 children in care reduces as more

appropriate allocating Edge of Care services to prevent the need for placement.		Commissioning and Services		children remain safely at home
Target intensive evidence based interventions on those children and families most at risk of requiring local authority care	Use sound analysis to ensure the Department for Education funded multi-systemic therapy is delivered to those families where such intervention is most likely to prevent reception into care.	Service Manager – Edge of Care Services	April 2014	Rates of prevention of reception into care will be high and sustained
Support parents of disabled children to be cared for by their family	<p>Develop the use of personalised budgets and direct payments so that parents of disabled children have greater choice and control of the support, including short breaks, available to them.</p> <p>Based on successful outcomes achieved, continue investment in the One Service One Process pooled budget arrangements aimed at preventing the need for out of authority placements through commissioning flexible and creative packages that support the most complex children to remain within their home community.</p>	<p>Service Manager, Disabled Children's Services</p> <p>Service Manager, Health Partnerships</p>	April 2015	Reduced need for residential short break and care provision to disabled children.

Strategic Priority 2: Improve Outcomes for Children in Care and Care Leavers

What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who?	By when?	How will we know if we're succeeding? (Outcome measure)
<p>Increase the number and improve the timeliness of children moving from care to permanence through adoption, Special Guardianship or Residence Orders. This will enable us to focus on those children who do require our care and will improve our ability to deliver placement choice, improved matching and thereby enhance stability.</p>	<p>Work with partners across the region and in the third sector to improve access to adopters.</p> <p>Work with Coram to improve systems and timeliness of adoption</p> <p>Review the Special Guardianship Policy and Residence Order Policy to ensure our support for such arrangements is adequate and can be clearly understood by professionals, carers and families alike.</p> <p>Regularly audit performance, taking action where necessary to effect the achievement of outcomes.</p> <p>Work with the judiciary locally to implement the outcomes of the Family Justice Review and improve the speed with which children's cases move through the court process, including to adoption.</p>	<p>Service Manager, Corporate Parenting</p> <p>Service Manager Specialist Commissioning and Services</p>	<p>April 2012 onwards</p>	<p>Exceed 10% target for the % of children in care population exiting care into Special Guardianship or Adoption arrangements</p>

<p>Improve placement stability by ensuring a range of placements are available locally to meet the needs of Children in Care</p>	<p>Always consider family or connected people before placing children elsewhere.</p> <p>Placement Meeting Agreements to be outcomes focussed and support placement stability. Placement stability meetings to be held either by Specialist Commissioning team in respect of any independent sector placements and by the in-house service for fostering/in-house residential placements.</p>	<p>Social Work Area and Assessment Teams</p>	<p>April 2012 onwards</p>	<p>Improve placement stability, exceeding targets over both measures of long-term indicator and number of moves within 12 months.</p>
	<p>Use the Service Level Agreement and Business Plan with our in-house fostering service to deliver a growth in the number and type of foster placements available. Key inputs will be investment in foster carers support and training, together with a review of the payments structure aimed at encouraging carers to see fostering as a career of choice. Key outputs will be increased recruitment and retention of skilled foster carers and increased placement choice able to deliver improved outcomes for children.</p>	<p>Strategy Lead, Corporate Parenting</p>	<p>April 2013</p>	<p>Net placement gain of 70 by end March 2013</p>
	<p>Undertake mini-tenders from the</p>	<p>Service Manager,</p>		

	<p>current independent fostering framework to ensure specialist provision, for example treatment foster care, is developed locally and evidences the ability to deliver improved outcomes for children who require this level of care</p> <p>Review and analyse the need for residential care against the achievement of outcomes for children. This will include both in-house and out of authority provision and will assess alternatives that could deliver improved value, sufficiency and outcomes delivery.</p> <p>Develop our children in care social work services, such as through the Social Work Practice Pilot, to work more creatively and to focus on placement stability as a means to delivering improved outcomes for children.</p>	Specialist Commissioning and Services		
Improve outcomes for disabled children in care	Analyse and plan to meet the need for local integrated services for disabled children, particularly those with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and challenging behaviour, who are currently placed in out of authority residential schools provision.	Service Manager Specialist Commissioning and Services/Disabled Children Service Manager Service Manager, Health Partnerships	December 2012	<p>Fewer children placed in out of authority residential schools more than 20 miles from Bristol.</p> <p>Children return to their family more quickly</p>

		Service Manager Inclusion in Learning		
Ensure young people leaving care, do so when they are prepared and ready to go	<p>Review the existing 'Staying Put' Policy and ensure that children, carers, social workers, personal advisors and Reviewing Officers understand the options for children to remain with their carer beyond the age of 18 or for moving on.</p> <p>We will audit our performance and seek feedback from carers and young people</p>	Service Manager Corporate Parenting/Service Manager Specialist Commissioning and Services/Transitions Manager	<p>October 2012</p> <p>July 2012</p>	£200k reduction in spend
Ensure young people who are ready to move into or live in independent accommodation have a choice of a range of accommodation and support provision able to meet their needs	<p>Work jointly with Neighbourhoods to complete the review and re-commission a range of accommodation and support provision able to support a successful transition to adulthood for care leavers.</p> <p>Increase numbers of supported lodgings placements by a net of 10% per annum</p>	<p>Specialist Commissioning and Services Manager/ Neighbourhoods lead Commissioner</p> <p>Service Manager, Corporate Parenting</p>	<p>April 2013</p> <p>April 2012 onwards</p>	<p>No 16/17 year old young people accommodated in Bed & Breakfast or other unsuitable accommodation</p> <p>Reduce number of evictions of care leavers from supported accommodation.</p> <p>Reduce number of care leavers aged over 18 presenting as homeless</p>

Strategic Priority 3: Achieve value for money and reduce spend through effective cost management				
What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who?	By when?	How will we know if we're succeeding? (Outcome measure)
Prefer Bristol's fostering service as the value for money placement of choice.	<p>All referrals for family placement to be sent to the in-house placement finding service prior to circulating to the wider market.</p> <p>Performance to be monitored and action taken by Bristol's in-house service to ensure that carers are recruited in the numbers required and provided with training and support in order to meet the needs of children requiring placement.</p>		April 2012	An increase (85% ~ an increase of 70 placements) of children in foster care in Bristol will be fostered in an in-house family placement
Reduce average unit costs for children in independent fostering agency placements.	<p>Reduce reliance on the independent sector for all but the oldest and most complex children.</p> <p>When we do use the independent sector, utilise preferred provider frameworks, where quality and price have been assured</p> <p>Undertake annual fee negotiations with all independent sector providers aimed at achieving efficiencies, enhancing value for money and reducing unit costs. This will include cost and volume arrangements, and</p>	Specialist Commissioning Team Manager	April 2012 - 2015	<p>Average Unit cost will reduce.</p> <p>Number of children placed in IFA will reduce by at least 5 children per quarter</p> <p>0% or lower inflationary uplift for 2012/13 and subsequent years</p>

	<p>other discounts.</p> <p>Seek to return children to Bristol provision when this is in line with their care plan. For example, from emergency IFA provision to long-term Bristol carers, or as part of a step down package from residential provision into a linked foster placement.</p> <p>Using a value for money framework to review all placements in the independent sector, particularly those that are high cost or that attract additional funding.</p> <p>Re-commission the independent fostering framework in 2013 based on an evaluation of the impact of the current framework and according to Bristol's ongoing needs, with an emphasis on price and outcomes delivery.</p> <p>Run mini-tenders from framework arrangements to ensure the needs of Bristol's children in care population are met, such as Emergency and Treatment Foster Care.</p>	Specialist Commissioning team	<p>March 2013</p> <p>From April 2013</p>	0% or lower price change as a result of new contractual arrangements
Reduce spend on the Top 100 most expensive placements by reducing	Work with Strategic Commissioning and Procurement Colleagues to	Specialist Commissioning	2012 - 13	Reduced spend on Top 100 of £250k

average unit cost	<p>complete the pilot implementation of a Fair Pricing Tool</p> <p>Re-commission the regional residential children's home arrangements by April 2012. By working regionally, we can achieve greater savings and command increased levels of market attention/competition for what are high cost low incidence placements.</p>	Team Manager/ Strategic Commissioning and Procurement Service	April 2012	Reduce price per placement
Commission placements for children with complex care, health and education needs jointly	<p>Work closely with commissioners in health and education to commission arrangements locally that meet the needs of the most complex children, focusing on preventative interventions wherever possible</p> <p>Review Joint Agency funding and commissioning arrangements to ensure that services deliver value for money and deliver desired outcomes</p> <p>Commission post 16 Further Education arrangements locally so that young people with complex needs are able to choose transitional education and care arrangements in the city as a quality alternative to out of authority residential provision</p>	Specialist Commissioning Service Manager/ SEN Manager/ DCS Service Manager	April 2013	<p>Fewer children placed in out of authority residential special schools at distance.</p> <p>Reduced spend on out of authority residential budget</p> <p>Reported improvements in transitional education and care arrangements for young people leaving residential special schools, with associated reduction in spend evidenced.</p>

<p>Improve joint commissioning arrangements for young people leaving care</p> <p>(Improved joint working arrangements between CYPS and Neighbourhoods to meet the needs of homeless 16 and 17 year olds is in line with the recommendations of the Ofsted Inspection in 2010 and is a priority area in the Draft Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14.)</p>	<p>Develop and implement a commissioning plan based on the joint analysis of housing and support needs of young people leaving care and those accommodated under S20 aged 16/17 years currently being undertaken</p> <p>This includes a 'total' cost analysis of Bristol's spend across Departments and funding streams</p>	<p>Lead Commissioner Neighbourhoods / Service Manager Specialist Commissioning and Services</p>	<p>April 2013 - 14</p>	<p>Improved accommodation pathways for young people leaving local authority care. Improved quality and access to the right level of support and accommodation service. Reduced average unit spend</p>
<p>Review support, including accommodation payments to Former Relevant Care Leavers (those over the age of 18 years)</p>	<p>Allied to the joint review, noted above, Bristol will review payment structures and contractual arrangements for those over the age of 18 who remain with their former carers whilst completing course of further and higher education.</p> <p>Review transitional arrangements and ensure clear and transparent funding arrangements for young people requiring an adult care service.</p>	<p>Service Manager Corporate Parenting/ Service Manager Specialist Commissioning and Services</p>	<p>April 2012 - 13</p>	
<p>Reduce parent and child residential and fostering assessment placement use</p>	<p>Use a commissioning approach to review current use, analyse need, and plan future services:</p> <p>Work with social worker's, legal services, the judiciary and</p>	<p>Safeguarding and Specialist Services Area and Commissioning Managers</p>	<p>October 2012</p>	<p>£500k pa full year reduction in spend</p> <p>(£250k in reduction in spend for half year Oct 2012 – March 2013)</p>

	<p>CAFCASS to analyse trends and identify effective community based alternatives</p> <p>Commission an improved community based parent and child assessment service, so that residential and IFA assessment placements are used only in the most exceptional of circumstances</p> <p>Dependant on the outcome of the review, undertake a tendering exercise to encourage competition and the delivery of more cost effective provision</p>			
Reduce spend and increase value for money on INMS residential special school provision	<p>Commission arrangements in 2012/13 to replace the current Non-Maintained Special Schools Framework Contract – encourage competition and reduce spend</p> <p>Implement latest National Contract</p>	SEN/Specialist Commissioning Service Manager	<p>December 2012</p> <p>January 2012</p>	% reduction in spend
Pilot payment, and other incentives, for the delivery of outcomes	<p>Bristol City Council and a preferred fostering agency to pilot payment by outcomes model.</p> <p>Outcomes incentives to inform future tenders</p>	Specialist Commissioning Team managers	April 2012	Increased value will be achieved through delivery of outcomes. Failure to do so will result in a 5% rebate for those children within the pilot.

Consultation with young people

Officers met with 5 young people from the Children in Care Council on 5th January 2012 to consider the priorities and actions identified within this plan.

The group was mixed in terms of age and gender but all currently lived in foster care, with some having experienced multiple placement moves including living in children's homes.

The group were asked a number of questions, the results of which are provided below:

Priorities

Everyone agreed with the three strategic priorities outlined within the Plan with one person, with one young person saying another priority should be to *"have support on what I decide to do (and) to get help when times are tough"*.

Questions

The group rated the importance of a number of statements linked to the plan using a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 being of highest importance). Comments have also been recorded from the discussion that subsequently took place:

1. Social Workers should identify a family member or someone the child knows for them to live with when they cannot live with their Mum and/or Dad

Average score 4.8

2. Bristol should have a foster family for all children in care (as opposed to, say, a children's home)

The general view was that young people are made to feel more welcome in a foster family but that some children should have the choice to live in a children's home if that better meets their needs.

Average score 4.0

3. Children and young people should have a choice of placement

Young people expressed the view that choice is very important but did not feel they had been offered a choice of placement themselves. Most said they had "great carers" where they had lived for some considerable time.

One young person put forward a different view of her placement that will be followed up outside of the consultation.

Average score 5.0

4. Bristol should do things that support children to stay in one placement rather than move around

“We need stability to avoid emotional damage”.

Average score 5.0

5. It's always a good thing for children and young people to stay at their school or college when they come into care

The young people felt that stability and continuity are important e.g. around GCSE time, although some young people may “like a new start” when they come into care.

Average score 4.4

6. Young people should be able to live with their carers after they reach the age of 18 and until they are ready to leave.

“Only if they want/need e.g. to go to University” was the general sentiment.

Average score 4.0

7. Bristol should place some children at boarding schools like Eton (where David Cameron was educated).

The general view was that this was far less important than “getting where you want to go” to School, i.e. Choice.

Average score 1.4

8. It doesn't matter how much a placement costs so long as it's the right one for the child.

The general view was that everyone needs good quality care from experienced carers, whilst acknowledging some children need “more care” than others.

Average score 4.4

9. Bristol should have placements where siblings can live together

This was felt to be important, as well as knowing “why you can't be together”. One young person commented on the importance of carers having the right skills to be able to understand siblings and meet their differing needs. This was felt to be very important.

Average score 4

10. It matters that I know my foster carer's social worker

The general view was that foster carers' supervising social workers need to know children: "because they are at our Reviews" etc. One young person commented "you might not need to".

Average score 3.4

11. Bristol should pay the same amount of money for each child's placement

One young person didn't agree "as young people might get too much/less".

Average score 4.2.

Finally, the children and young people ranked the following statements in order of the priority we should allocate funds to them:

Statement	Priority
Finding carers for children with different needs	Equal 1 st
Giving young people a say in their placement	Equal 1 st
Training carers	Equal 1 st
Finding foster care placements in Bristol	4 th
Matching placements to children	Equal 5 th
Children's Homes placements	Equal 5 th
Finding move-on accommodation when a young person is ready to leave care	7 th
Funding activities for children in care	8 th
Ensuring young people have the right health and education support.	9 th
Supporting 'at risk' placements	10 th

Conclusions

The young people's comments were balanced and well thought through, with emphasis being placed upon key points in the Plan such as:

- the importance of matching
- choice of placements - including children's homes and schools
- stability and good quality care from all adults involved in their lives
- extra support when the going gets tough
- fairness eg. recognising some children have greater and different needs from others that will require different placement types and skills of carers

Equality Impact Assessment

Name of policy, project, service, contract, review or strategy being assessed (from now on called 'the proposal')

Draft Children's Specialist Commissioning Plan 2012 – 2015

Directorate and Service: **CYPS, Safeguarding and Specialist Services**

Lead officer (author of the proposal): Jean Pollard/Ann James

Additional people completing the form (including job title):

Start date for EqIA: September 2011

Estimated completion date: January 2011

Step 1 – Use the following checklist to consider whether the proposal requires an EqlA

1. What is the purpose of the proposal?

Please summarise what is planned.

This EqlA is for the Children's Specialist Commissioning Plan 2012-15. It lays out Bristol's placement commissioning intentions for the forthcoming three years and includes actions to deliver on the following three strategic priority areas:

(iv) Support children to remain safely with their families

Securing sufficient accommodation requires a whole-system approach that includes early intervention and preventive services to support children in their families. We must be effective by focusing our work on those families most at risk of requiring increasing levels of service provision, including care.

(v) Improve outcomes for Children In Care and Care Leavers

Children do better in well-matched stable placements. We will build upon our trusted and confident relationship with the market to deliver an increased choice of quality placements that are able to meet the needs of our children locally.

(vi) Achieve value for money and reduce spend through effective cost management

We will listen to what children and families tell us is effective, and work with our partners and the market to deliver more with fewer resources. We will work both locally and regionally, on a strategic and operational level to ensure that the placements we commission deliver more effectively. Expenditure will be controlled and monitored against delivery of outcomes.

The scope of the plan:

- Care placements for all of Bristol's children in care (excluding but linked to short breaks)
- Disabled children in care requiring out of authority residential care placements
- Care leavers over 18 years who remain in their foster placement
- Care leavers requiring semi-independent supported accommodation
- Specialist foster and residential placements for parents and children (including assessment placements)

	High	Medium	Low
2. Could this be relevant to our public sector equality duty to:			
a) Promote equality of opportunity	X		
b) Eliminate discrimination	X		
c) Promote good relations between different equalities communities?	X		

If you have answered 'low relevance' to question 2, please describe your reasons

3. Could the proposal have a positive effect on equalities communities?
<p>Please describe your initial thoughts as to the proposal's positive impact</p> <p>The plan is designed to deliver improved support to families so that children who can remain safely within their families, do so. For those children who cannot live with their birth parents, we will improve arrangements for family members or other connected persons to become carers. Research tells us that children living in such arrangements experience greater stability and improved outcomes when compared with children in local authority care.</p> <p>For those who require a local authority placement, the plan details how we will use commissioning to meet the 'sufficiency duty' to provide a choice of high quality placements able to meet the needs of Bristol's children in care and care leavers locally. The plan analyses need and identifies gaps in provision that will be addressed over the forthcoming three years.</p> <p>Good progress has been made over the past three years with regard to reducing unit costs and delivering value for money. Over the forthcoming three years there will be an increased imperative to contain spend on children's placements which are of high cost. A whole systems approach will be required that returns us to the importance of investing in effective family support to prevent reception into care. In addition to this, the plan details how we will improve efficiency through commissioning jointly and regionally where it makes sense to do so, and have the right thresholds for children entering care.</p>
4. Could the proposal have a negative effect on equalities communities?
<p>Please describe your initial thoughts as to the proposal's negative impact</p> <p>Should the plan not deliver what it is designed to do, there will be insufficient placements for children and young people. This will adversely impact upon placement choice and matching which in turn will increase the likelihood of placement breakdown.</p> <p>Should we not manage the market appropriately or share accurate information about the needs of children in care we cannot expect providers to recruit carers and deliver the types and quality of placements that we require. This will result in an inefficient use of resources and will escalate costs whilst failing to deliver improved outcomes for children.</p> <p>We may not, for example, be able to identify placements where siblings can be accommodated together, to match children to placements on the basis of locality, ethnicity and skills of the carer.</p>

If the proposal has low relevance and you do not anticipate it will have a negative impact, please sign off now. Otherwise proceed to complete the full equalities impact assessment

Service director.....Equalities officer
Date

Appendix 2

Eco Impact Checklist

Title of report: Children's Specialist Commissioning Plan 2012 - 15				
Report author: Ann James				
Anticipated date of key decision: 26 th January 2012				
Summary of proposals: The Commissioning Plan analyses trends in the children in care and care leaving population and details placement commissioning arrangements for the forthcoming three years.				
Will the proposal impact on...	Yes/No	+ive or -ive	If yes...	
			Briefly describe impact	Briefly describe Mitigation measures
Emission of Climate Changing Gases?	Yes	+ve	Plan proposes to reduce “out of local authority” placements, more children remaining with their families, use more fostering and fewer care home/ residential school placements. This is likely to reduce emissions from travel and building energy demand.	
		-ive	Commissioning external providers may reduce local authority control over environmental impacts in this service area.	Commissioning specification, selection process and SLA's will include appropriate requirements to ensure that external providers take active steps to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduce their own energy and transport impacts • signpost providers to good practice in reducing their energy and transport impacts. • providers may be required to report their progress in this area.
Bristol's vulnerability to the effects of climate change?	Yes	+ive	Reducing reliance on travel and centralised facilities	

			such as care homes may improve resilience to extreme weather events.	
Consumption of non-renewable resources?	Yes	-ve	Commissioning external providers may reduce council control over environmental impacts in this service area.	Commissioning specification, selection process and SLAs will include appropriate requirements to ensure that providers take active steps to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduce their consumption of non-renewable resources, • signpost providers to good practice in construction works, recyclable materials etc (for any refurbishments)
Production, recycling or disposal of waste	Yes	-ive	Commissioning external providers may reduce council control over environmental impacts.	The specification and selection process will include appropriate requirements to ensure that provider(s) take active steps to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • embrace the waste hierarchy in their own work (i.e. reduce, reuse, recycle waste) • signpost providers to good practice in this area. • raise performance levels of care providers in this area and report their progress.
The appearance of the city?	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pollution to land, water, or air?	Yes	+ve	Reduced travel requirements should lead to a reduction in emissions harmful to local air quality	
Wildlife and habitats?	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
Consulted with: Steve Ransom & Claire King				
Summary of impacts and Mitigation - to go into the main Cabinet/ Council Report				

The significant impacts of this proposal are...

- Proposals to reduce out of authority placements and reliance on children's homes should reduce travel and buildings-related impacts
- The potential use of external service providers will reduce the Council's control over environmental impacts

The proposals include the following measures to mitigate the impacts ...

- Any arrangements for commissioned services will include a selection process that ensures providers will take steps to reduce their operational impacts in delivering those services

The net effects of the proposals are....

- It is noted that demographic and statutory factors are likely to place an increasing demand on this service area. This may lead to an increased environmental impact overall, however, it is anticipated that the proposals described will lead to the service being delivered more efficiently.
- The net effect of the proposal is anticipated to be positive

Checklist completed by:

Name:	Claire King
Dept.:	CYPS
Extension:	9224473
Date:	6/12/12
Verified by Sustainable City Group	Steve Ransom, Environmental Performance Programme Coordinator.