



Residential Care Market Position Statement 2018

Introduction

This document is an analysis of Bristol City Council's purchasing needs for residential care for children in our care. Although the need for residential school places is discussed it should be noted that this is only in relation to children in care who require a residential school placement and is not an indication of our purchasing intentions for children who are not looked after or of our Special Education Needs purchasing intentions for the wider independent schools and colleges market.

Our wish is to provide the market with information about our requirements as a foundation to an ongoing conversation with providers about working together in partnership to best meet the needs of children in our care in the City.

We would like to thank the providers who attended our forums in December 2017 and July 2018 and also those providers who have met with us on an individual basis.

Context

Bristol City Council has a duty under section 22 of The Children Act to take steps to ensure, as far as practicable, that we can provide children in care with locally based placements that can meet their needs. We need to ensure there is a sufficient range and number of care providers capable of meeting the needs of children in our care.

Our vision for children and families is that they get the "right response, the right assessment, the right help at the right time"

We are carrying out a system wide transformation of children's services, via our **Strengthening Families Programme** and are investing in our services to carry out a transformational change in response to growing demand and the significant council wide funding gap of £108 million that we face by 2023¹.

As part of this change we are creating an Edge of Care/Custody team to work with children and families at risk of care. The team will focus on working with teenagers and their families with the aim of reducing the number of children coming into care. We are also reviewing our early help services to make them more responsive and to develop our partnership working.

We want children wherever possible to live in a family setting and we aim to only place in a children's home or residential special school when this is the best option to meet their needs. Our Strengthening Families programme will mean our services will be more effective in keeping children in their own families when this is the best outcome for them. The number of children in residential settings fluctuates but has increased from around 45 five years ago to 51 in May 2018, decreasing to 49 in August 2018² and we want to end this increasing trend in the use of residential care.

¹ <https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/documents/s20425/2018-04%20Strengthening%20Families%20Cabinet%20report%20updated.pdf>

² Children's Social Care Performance Report August 2018

We will continue to commission residential care from a mixed market of internal and external providers. Residential placements are high cost and it is important the council plays a role in reshaping the market to ensure placements are suitable, cost effective and deliver the agreed outcomes for children.

Bristol’s City Council’s children’s homes focus on meeting the needs of children with complex and challenging social, emotional and mental health difficulties. We anticipate that the number and profile of children looked after in these homes will remain stable and we wish to work in partnership with the independent sector to ensure the availability of a range of local provision able to meet the varying needs of our care population and provide a choice of high quality, cost effective placements in Bristol or the surrounding area (preferably within a 20 mile radius of Bristol).

As part of our Strengthening Families programme we are carrying out a review of our five children’s homes. Our intention is to have a programme of planned closure of our current homes, replacing them with smaller homes that can offer stable placements for children who need to be looked after in a smaller group setting. We believe this change process will take up to four years.

Bristol has been awarded funding from the Department for Education to pilot Staying Close arrangements in locations close to our children’s homes, with on-going support from their home to broker regional arrangements over the forthcoming 24 months. This will make it possible to use trusted relationships with residential staff to improve support for care leavers moving on from a children’s home.

In 2017/18 Bristol City Council spent £8.74m on external residential placements for children in care including integrated social care, education and health placements and independent residential schools places for children in care; in addition we invest £2.7m in our own provision.

Bristol Children and Young People

A growing population

In Bristol there are approximately 95,590 children under 18 with an increase of around 1,390 children in the last year. In the decade 2005-15, the number of children aged 0-15 living in Bristol is estimated to have increased by 11,700 (16.2%)³.

Bristol Child Population Projections⁴

AGE	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
0-5	37,310	37,344	37,749	38,411	38,986	39,498
6-10	27,322	28,064	28,237	28,270	28,271	28,325
11-15	22,414	23,348	24,389	25,166	25,919	26,559
16-17	8,540	8,322	8,428	8,770	9,166	9,504
Total	95,589	97,077	98,803	100,614	102,342	103,887

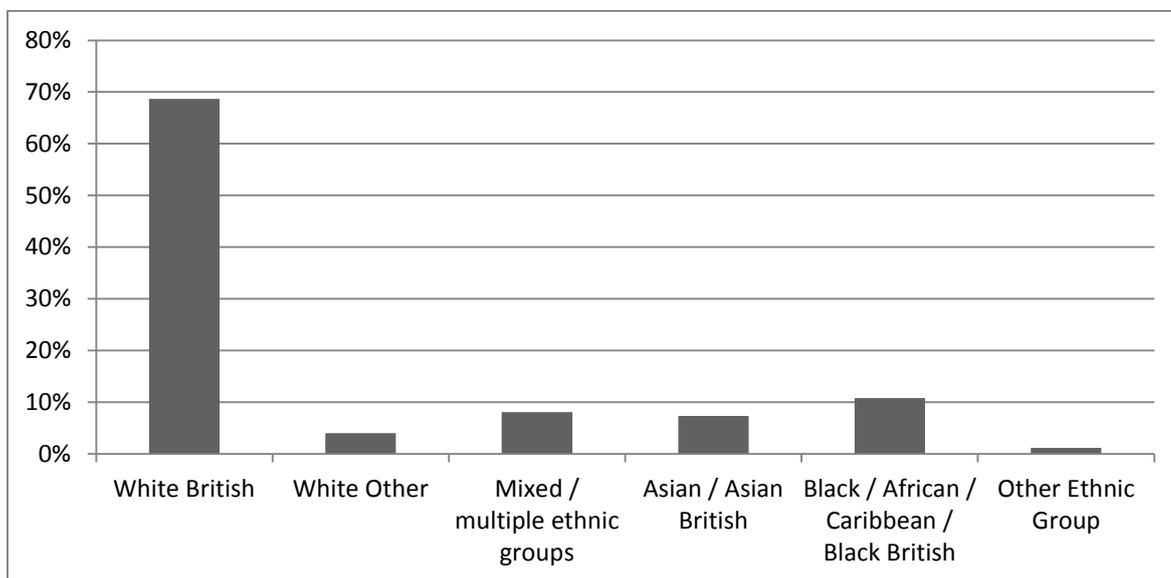
This increase has been largely amongst the under 8 year olds and in particular among the 2-5 year olds (an increase of 36%), and this in turn will lead to an increase in each age category as they grow up. The growth in the number of under-5s in the last decade (+7,100) is the fourth highest nationally.

³ <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/policies-plans-strategies/bristol-jsna-statistics-and-data>

⁴ 2014-based Subnational Population Projections – Bristol, Population Projections Unit, ONS, Crown Copyright 2016

Bristol’s child population (under 16) is rising in all areas of the city, with the fastest rise in the inner city and East Bristol.

An increasingly diverse population



Ethnicity of children 0-17 in Bristol⁵

The Bristol population has become increasingly diverse. 22% of the population are not “White British” and there are now at least 45 religions, 50 countries of birth represented and at least 91 main languages spoken by people living here. Changes to population characteristics have been concentrated in the inner city and inner east areas of the city. Other than White British the largest populations by ethnic group are Non-White British, African (of whom a large proportion are of Somali heritage), Black Other, Pakistani, Caribbean and Indian.

In summary Bristol is seeing a rapid growth in its children’s population and its population is becoming more ethnically diverse, with a changing distribution across the city.

Children in Care

Although the total child population in Bristol has increased the overall number of children in care has fallen from 680 in 2012 to 647 in May 2018⁶. Across the South West between March 2012 and March 2018 the number of children in care has grown from 5440 to 6015⁷, leading to an increase in demand for children’s placements in the region. In England the children in care population grew by over 8% between March 2012 and March 2017.⁸ The rate of children in care per 10,000 in Bristol has fallen over the past 5 years from 78 in 2012 to 70 in May 2018⁹ and our Strengthening Families Programme aims to continue this trend and reduce the total number of children in care.

⁵ Based on Nomis DC2101EW - Ethnic group by age 0-17 (ONS Census 2011)

⁶ Source: BCC Childrens Services Analytical Tool May 2018

⁷ Source: South West Regional Benchmarking Tool May 2018

⁸ SFR36 and SRF50 UK Government Children in Care Statistics

⁹ Source: Childrens Services Analytical Tool June 2018

The following tables provide information about where our current children in care population is placed and an overview of the placements made since March 2016 as well as some information about the age and ethnicity of our children in care. In May 2018 the average age of a child when they were first placed in a children's home was 11.92 years, the youngest child placed was 7 years and the oldest child placed was 17.¹⁰

The number of Children in Care in Bristol by Placement Type May 2018¹¹

Type of Placement	Number
In-house and agency foster care	534
Supported accommodation	20
Independent children's homes	29
Bristol City Council children's homes	13
Placed for adoption	19
Placed with own parents	13
Independent residential school	7
Family centre or parent and child placement	3
Other	4
Independent living	3

¹⁰ BCC Placement Tracker May 2018

¹¹ Childrens Services Analysis Tool June 2018

Total number of new placements made each quarter by type - quarterly snapshot¹²

Total Number of New Placements made Per Quarter	Jan-May 2016 Q1	Apr-Jun 2016 Q2	Jul-Sep 2016 Q3	Oct-Dec 2016 Q4	Jan-Mar 2017 Q1	Apr-Jun 2017 Q2	Jul-Sep 2017 Q3	Oct-Dec 2017 Q4	Jan-Mar 2018 Q1
Bristol City Council Foster Care	79	74	68	70	78	57	65	53	80
Bristol City Council Children's Homes	4	4	1	4	6	7	2	7	2
Independent Foster Care Providers	29	19	24	26	18	22	19	14	16
Independent Children's Homes	7	11	13	9	18	16	12	12	11
Parent and Child In house and Independent Foster Care	6	8	8	6	4	5	5	4	7
Parent and Child Independent Residential Care	4	4	2	1	3	1	1	2	6
Respite Bristol City Council Foster Care	0	1	3	2	4	4	6	1	8
Respite Independent Foster Care	3	1	3	3	0	0	0	0	0
External Supported Accommodation	6	3	4	5	5	2	6	4	2
Other LA	0	0	2	0	1	1	3	3	3
Hospital	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	139	125	128	127	137	115	119	100	135

Total Number of new placements made include:

- New Placements (from home)
- Returns to Care (from home)
- Disruptions / Change of Placement

A respite placement is a placement where a child moves temporarily from their home to a placement with either an in house or independent provider or a placement where a child in care moves temporarily between an in house and independent provider or vice versa.

¹²BCC Budget Working Group 2016 to 2018

Ethnicity of children in children’s homes and residential schools

Ethnicity (ONS Category)	All Bristol Children ¹³	All Bristol children in care ¹⁴	Bristol children in Independent Children’s Homes ¹⁵
White British	69%	67%	75%
Mixed	4%	15%	12.5%
Asian / Asian British	7%	4%	0%
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	11%	8%	12.5%
Other Ethnic Group	1%	5%	0%

White British and Dual Heritage children are over-represented among Bristol children in care. There are small but increasing numbers of Muslim children in care in Bristol as well as children with Eastern European and Somali heritage. However there are currently no Asian/Asian British children in out of authority children’s homes.

Legal status – 68% of Bristol’s children in care are subject to a full or interim Care Order and 26% are voluntarily accommodated under s.20 Children Act 1989 (both figures are similar to national averages).

Gender – The overall ratio of girls to boys among Bristol children in care is 46% female and 54% male (similar to national averages). However for children placed in out of authority children’s homes the ratio is 32% female and 68% male.

Special educational needs and disability (SEND) – 60% of all Bristol children in care have SEND (57% nationally). Between March 2015 and February 2018 52% of children placed in out of authority children’s homes had a Statement or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP¹⁶) at the point that the placement was made.

In House Services

Foster Placements

In March 2018 Bristol had 226 fostering families who are registered to provide 403 placements and there are currently about 367¹⁷ children placed with our foster carers, this is approximately 57% of the total number of children in care. In addition we have 106 kinship carer households caring for 76 children. The number of foster carers and the number of placements we provide has stayed broadly stable over the past 3 years. Bristol City Council aims to recruit more foster carers locally to provide a wider foster care offer and has an ambitious programme that sees Bristol foster carers as the City’s VIPs.

In addition, our foster carers are growing older with over 60% aged over 50. This means some of our most experienced foster carers are approaching retirement. This reflects a national trend that Bristol is keen to address; otherwise the demand for independent foster carers and residential placements is likely to grow as there will be fewer in-house foster carers with the skills to meet the needs of the most complex young people.

¹³ Based on Nomis DC2101EW - Ethnic group by age 0-17 (ONS Census 2011)

¹⁴ Source: Childrens Services Analytical Tool June 2018

¹⁵ LCS May 2018

¹⁶ The Hope Virtual School

¹⁷ Source: Childrens Services Analytical Tool June 2018

Children's homes

Bristol City Council currently has five children's homes providing 24 beds for children in 4 and 5 bed homes. Our homes provide short and long term care to children aged 12-17 and are located throughout the city. As noted there is a work stream in our Strengthening Families Programme to review our in house homes, establishing a change programme over 4 years creating new smaller homes and closing our larger homes. We do not intend to increase the number of beds provided but we intend to create a more flexible service that can meet the needs of our children needing residential care. In addition to these five children's homes we have two more children's homes providing short breaks to disabled children.

Residential schools

Children in care with Special Educational Needs may be placed in residential special schools when a Bristol maintained special school cannot meet their needs. Independent residential schools provide integrated social care, education and therapeutic placements which may be tripartite funded by social care, education & health.

Maintained residential schools: Notton House SEMH Academy in Wiltshire is part of the Learn@ Multi Academy Trust and provides 38 weekly Monday to Friday boarding placements. Notton House takes pupils from a number of local authorities and receives high needs and top up funding. In March 2018 we had 8 children in care on roll; some of these children are looked after in foster care or in Bristol children's home placements when they are not at school.

Independent residential schools: There are over 60 residential schools on the SEN dynamic purchasing system (which is led by West Sussex County Council) where we could place children in care, with 7 of these schools located in southwest region. In May 2018 we had 14 children in care placed in 5 schools. All places are jointly funded by Social Care and Education, through the High Needs Block; some placements also receive a funding contribution from Health.

Independent Children's homes

There are 58 independent children's homes on the sub-regional framework that Bristol City Council is party to. In May 18 we had 24 placements in 22 homes; 8 of these providers are not part of the sub regional framework.

Age and gender of children placed in independent children's homes, including secure children's homes (snapshot ¹⁸)				
Age	Gender	Oct 17	Dec-17	Mar 18
8 to 11	F	-	-	-
	M	2	2	2
12 to 13	F	-	-	-
	M	-	1	2
14-15	F	6	2	2
	M	10	2	8
16+	F	5	4	3
	M	65	6	6
Total	F	11	6	5
	M	17	17	18

¹⁸ Source: placement Tracker Dec 17 and March 18

Distance from Bristol

As far as possible Bristol City Council place children within Bristol or within a 20 mile radius of Bristol; for some children a placement in a neighbouring authority or at a distance is required. This may be in line with the child's care plan or to enable access to a specialist service provider.

There are times when local placements are not available due to a lack of local foster care or residential places where the child's plan is to seek a local placement. This can result in children being placed out of area occasionally at significant distance from the city, which impacts on their school placement, contact with family and peer relationships.

In April 2018 14% of all of the children in Bristol who came into care were placed over 20 miles from home. Bristol's target is 12%, while 84% of the children who were living in out of authority children's homes were situated over 20 miles away from their home address¹⁹ - Four placements were within 20 miles of the child's home and within 20 miles of central Bristol there are 14 independent children's homes and residential schools.

On average the distance from Bristol for independent residential placements was 99 miles (maximum distance 203 miles)²⁰.

Young people's voice

We asked Reconstruct to talk to some Bristol children who were living in children's homes and they sent questionnaires to 8 children.

These children told us what they wanted was a children's home with a stable settled staff team who make time for them, do activities with them, keep them safe, consult with them and give them personal space.

Children emphasised the importance of matching with the other residents and the impact on them of new children coming into the home.

For one child the children's home was a very positive choice after a number of foster homes. This was because she liked living with the other residents who were her own age and the home had a staff team that got on well together and who enjoyed spending time and doing activities with all the residents in the home.

Market pressures

We are aware that the independent children's homes sector has experienced a number of pressures in recent years which have impacted their cost base. The national living wage was introduced in April 2016 and is predicted to increase pay to at least £9 per hour by April 2020. Many providers have increased the salaries of senior staff in order to maintain differentials. Another significant change is the application of the national living wage to 'sleep' shifts which has increased salaries across all children's homes.

Additionally, the buoyant employment market in Bristol provides challenges to recruitment and retention across the sector. Recruitment is also affected by the high cost of accommodation in Bristol and which can

¹⁹ Analysis of postcodes of placement address from LCS Liquid Logic / BCC Tracker 9.05.2018

²⁰ Analysis of postcodes of placement address from LCS Liquid Logic / BCC Tracker 9.05.2018

be a barrier to providers opening new children's homes in this area, particularly if they are unsure about the likely demand for their service.

Ofsted

In 2015 Ofsted introduced the Children Home Regulations and Quality Standards and in 2017 the Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) was introduced.

Bristol City Council only wishes to place children in children's homes that have been judged as 'Outstanding' or 'Good' by Ofsted. Although nationally the number of homes judged as 'inadequate' or 'requires improvement to be good' has fallen from 30% in 2015 to 18% in 2017, in the South West region the figures are 49% to 38% respectively which puts pressure on the number of 'Outstanding' or 'Good' vacancies available.

We know providers are working hard to maintain quality and create a safe environment for children in their care. Accepting children with complex needs (particularly children who go missing, those where there may be concerns about fire setting and those who can present with aggressive behaviours) provides challenges to the provider and may have a negative impact on Ofsted judgements. Matching considerations with established and settled groups can also be a challenge and can result in some children feeling unsettled. This understandably puts pressure on placing authorities so we would welcome a dialogue with providers about how we can work together to meet children's needs in the context of these pressures.

In December 2017 we held a consultation event with stakeholders to help inform our Sufficiency Plan. Provider comments and feedback can be seen in appendix two.

Expenditure

There has been an overall increase in the total spend by social care on independent residential placements from £5.14m in 2015-16 to £6.25m in 2017-18.

The increase in spend across this sector is a pressure to Bristol City Council at a time of austerity and we need to manage this expenditure, as previously discussed in this document. We need to seek a balance by working with providers to pay a fair and transparent fee whilst maintaining quality of placements.

Short term placements have been commissioned to allow long term planning, often when we are not able to place same day or in an emergency with children's home providers. This has impacted the average cost of placements and has meant that children have been placed out of area due to the lack of availability of a suitable local placement and can also lead to placement change which is very unsettling for children. Our wish is to reduce the use of short term placements to provide stability of care to some of our most vulnerable children.

Annual expenditure by social care on out of authority residential placements by type²¹

Annual Spend	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Out of authority children's homes	£3,354,239	£4,186,711	£4,064,491
Out of authority residential schools (for children in care only)	£1,789,266	£1,698,004	£2,181,273
Total out of authority spend	£5,143,505	£5,884,715	£6,245,764

²¹ Source: BCC Finance ABW (whole cost of placements)

Cost of active residential placements per week

Based on the current price schedule for providers on the sub-regional children's home framework average placement costs are £3,991 per week for a standard residential placement, £4,372 per week for a placement with 1:1 staffing, and £5,379 per week for a placement with 2:1 staffing. These costs do not necessarily include costs for education and health packages.

Our actual spend for all placements was on average £4,026 per week; this includes costs for education and health. The lowest cost was £2,750 per week and the highest cost was £5480 per week. In May 2018 nine (24%) placements were spot-purchased from providers who are not on the sub-regional children's home framework; these providers were used when the framework was unable to provide a suitable placement.

It is important to note that each placement is commissioned based on the needs of the individual child and therefore not all placement costs across this sector are like for like.

Bristol City Council needs to ensure value for money in all placement types and will continue to work with providers to undertake regular reviews scrutinising the child's needs and service delivered with a view to stepping down when appropriate to do so.

The needs of our young people

Bristol City Council and other local authorities in the south west are facing an increase in the numbers of children in care with complex and challenging needs including children with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Locally there is a lack of placement availability in high quality residential children's homes which impacts choice and matching. Local authorities are finding it increasingly difficult to commission same day / emergency accommodation to meet the needs of children in crisis that can provide an interim and safe placement while longer term plans are made.

Between April 2015 and May 2018 there has been an increase of younger children placed in children's homes, 15 new placements were made in this period for children aged 11 years and under. The current position is that we have four children aged 10 years and under placed out of authority in specialist children's homes, this is unprecedented for Bristol and highlights the current pressure in the market for both foster and children's home placements and which needs to be addressed through the development of the wider placement market to change the trajectory for these children and support them back into families.

Overall Needs of the 15 children aged 11 and under placed in Out of Authority children's homes between April 2015 and May 2018.²²	
EHCP/Statement in place or being processed at the time of placement	12
EHCP/Statement now in place or at the end of placement	12
Known to CAMHS	10
SEMH	11
Learning Disabilities	4
Child Sexual Exploitation	3
Sexually Harmful Behaviour	2
Gangs	3

²² Source: Case analysis from LCS Liquid Logic April 15 to May 2018

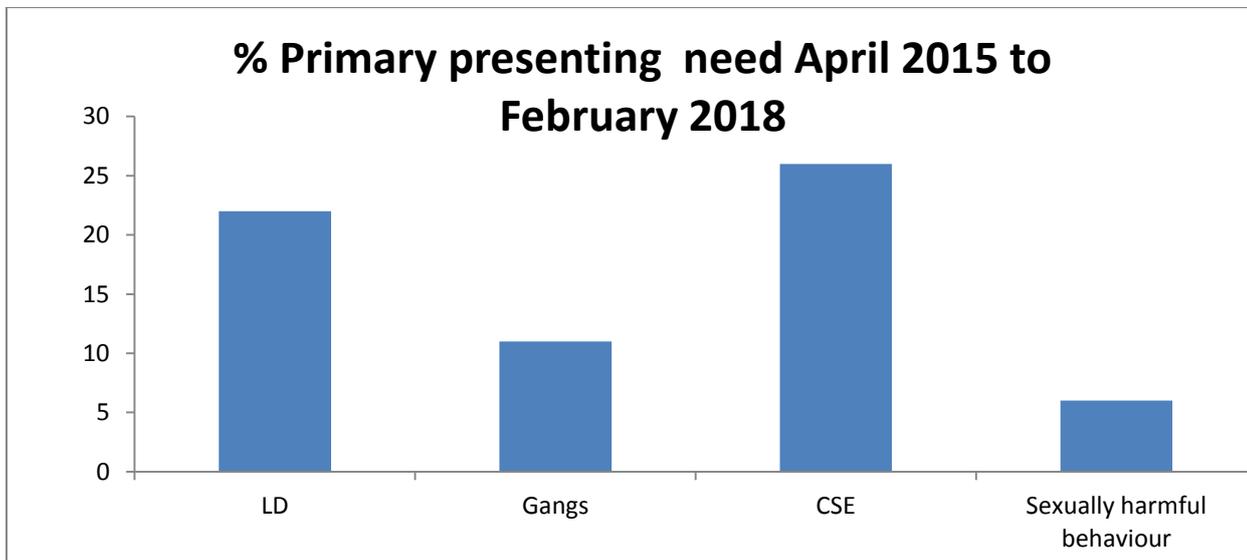
Children 11 and under with Multiple Needs²³

CSE and Sexually harmful behaviour	1
CSE and gangs	1

We found in 2017/18 50%²⁴ of the children that were placed in an out of authority residential placement required the placement because their existing residential placement had disrupted. We are therefore concerned that our most complex group of children are experiencing an increasing level of placement disruption and a lack of stability.

We have reviewed the care needs of the 106 children placed in BCC children's homes and placed in out of authority children's homes between April 2015 and February 2018 to try to understand the complexity of need. All of the children placed in residential care have a range of complex needs; the following graphs illustrate the primary need or needs identified at the time of placement and will provide information to providers about the types of placements we may need to commission.

Overall Needs (106 children) April 2015 to February 2018 ²⁵	Total %
EHCP/Statement at the time of placement	52%
EHCP/Statement in place February 2018 or at the end of placement	72%
Known to Bristol CAMHS	68%
SEMH	72%



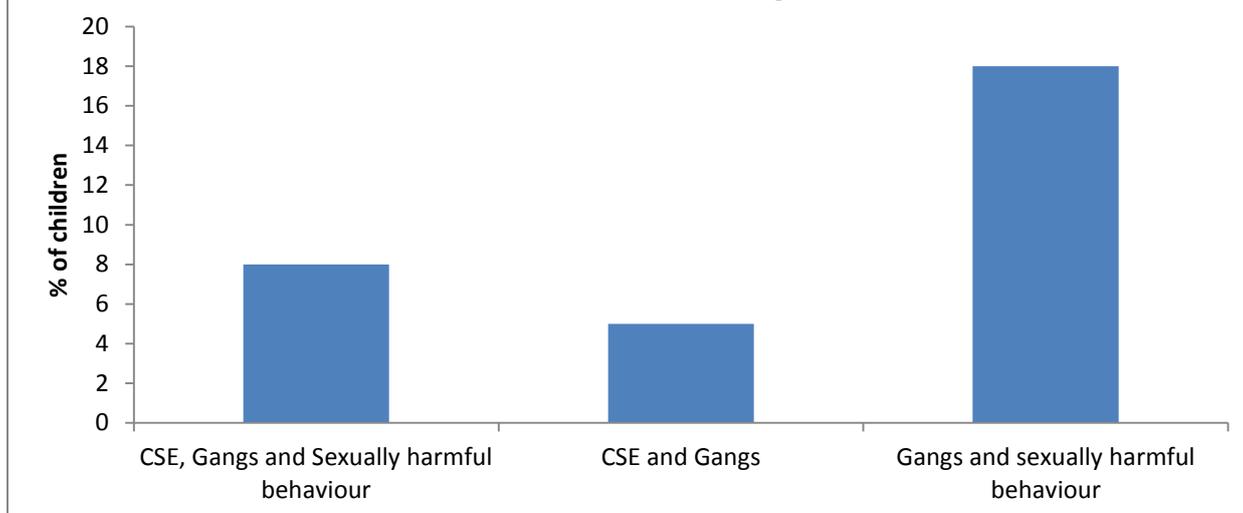
Source: Case analysis from LCS Liquid Logic April 15 to February 2018

²³ Source: Case analysis from LCS Liquid Logic April 15 to May 2018

²⁴ BCC Budget Working Group 2017 to 2018

²⁵ The Hope School and CAMHS

% Children with multiple presenting needs April 2015 to February 2018



Source: Case analysis from LCS Liquid Logic April 15 to February 2018

Age of Child Placed in Out of Authority Placement and Primary Presenting Need/s April 2015 to February 2018

Age at placement in children's home	Sexually Harmful Behaviour	Learning Disability	At Risk of CSE	Concern regarding gangs	CSE and gangs	CSE, gangs and harmful behaviour	Gangs and sexually harmful behaviour	CSE and sexually harmful behaviour
8 to 11	-	4	1	3	1	-	-	3
12 to 13	-	6	2	2	2	1	-	1
14 to 15	3	8	9	1	-	2	-	2
16+	1	2	1	-	-	-	1	1
Total	4	20	13	6	3	3	1	7

Source: Case analysis from LCS Liquid Logic April 15 to February 2018

Challenging behaviour

We believe one key factor the rate of placement breakdown that is experienced by children in care is the increasing needs of our young people.

We are experiencing an increase in the number of children with challenging behaviour, often accompanied by drug and alcohol use, they can exhibit aggressive behaviour in the community and to their carers. These children experience a high rate of placement breakdown, which is reducing the average length of our residential placements. In the above analysis we have identified that we have many children that have multiple care needs that are difficult to meet and who require stable placements in order to fulfil their potential. They often need smaller specialist homes with experienced staff and we would like to like to place locally to enable access to Bristol's services including education and CAMHS and this is one of the aims underpinning our plans around developing our in house children's homes.

Local placements would also make it possible for the social worker and partner agencies to work in partnership with the independent children's home to achieve the best outcomes for these young people.

Sexually harmful behaviour

We have a small but increasing number of children who display sexually harmful behaviour; currently these children are placed in specialist children's homes at a distance from Bristol, to undertake specific programmes with the children to address and manage their behaviour. Whilst these placements are successful the distance creates difficulty in maintaining family and peer relationships that would support young people to return to Bristol and to integrate into further education, employment and housing. We would therefore welcome the development of a specialist home in the Bristol area or to work together to develop an offer based on an existing home that could provide specialist placements for this group of children.

Child sexual exploitation

We regularly place children in out of authority placements that are at identified risk of being sexually exploited or who have experienced exploitation. The majority of these children are placed out of authority in line with their care plan, to keep them safe, however Bristol would welcome more local provision to enable children to access Bristol services including education, CAMHS and where social workers can work in partnership with the provider and children can maintain their relationship with their family.

Learning and Physical Disabilities

In the Bristol area there are a number of providers who provide placements for children with learning and physical disabilities and we are keen to continue to work with them to develop the services they provide.

We need placements for children who have complex communication difficulties and who can present challenging behaviour. We are looking for local providers who will support these children to maintain their local links with their community and enable them to move into adult living.

Although we will continue to require residential school placements we wish to expand the provision of care only placements in Bristol so children can continue to attend their school in Bristol.

We have a smaller number of disabled children who have complex health needs. Generally their care needs are such that they can no longer be cared for in a family setting and they require a care provider with the skills to meet their complex health and emotional needs. For these children we require a range of placements including short breaks, shared care, 38 week and 52 week placements both with and without education.

Over the past three years on average we have had 9 children with these profiles in placement with independent schools and children's homes and we are looking to work with providers who can successfully care for these children and help them transition into supported housing and further education as they reach adulthood. Providers need to offer individual care packages for children, with a range of placement lengths, who can provide transport to education when needed and who will work in partnership with other local services in Bristol.

Mental health

Nationally 72% of children in residential care²⁶ have some level of social emotional and mental health problems and this is similar to our own population in residential care. We would therefore expect all providers to have the experience and resources to support children's mental health and emotional well-being.

²⁶ Promoting the Quality of life of Looked After Children and Young People, NICE Health Guidance 2010

There is an increase in children presenting with complex mental health needs with a potential diagnosis of emerging personality disorder resulting in increasing numbers of requests for residential placements, secure care placements and admissions to mental health inpatient beds. We therefore believe that that numbers are increasing and that this group of children can be difficult to manage and place.

The Police and Crime Act 2017 has amended Section 136 of the Mental Health Act and now children cannot be held for more than 24 hours. We therefore need placements that can be quickly identified when they are experiencing a mental health crisis.

We also have about 6 children per year leaving tier 4 accommodation and although some of these children go home to their families we do not have a local provider who is able to offer places for children presenting with these needs. Therefore they are often placed outside the authority or into supported housing that struggles to meet their needs. We have faced particular difficulty in finding placements that can support this group of young people into education and employment.

We wish to identify residential providers who will work with local services such as CAMHS to offer a service for these children and support them when appropriate to move into less intense services and be able to live as independently as possible.

Step Down Placements

A number of children are placed in residential care to support them to manage the crisis in their lives and benefit from the stability that this can provide. However as Bristol's Sufficiency Plan (<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/305191/Sufficiency+plan+v2/d66f141e-a138-484b-8346-f0259ebfc524>) notes we would like to place children in families where possible. Therefore we would like providers to develop local provision that enables children and young people to step down from crisis placements to a stable children's home placement or into foster care, or to return home.

The Strengthening Families programme is investing in services to support children to return home, we would welcome a dialogue with providers who would be interested in working in partnership with Bristol and/or independent fostering providers to build this type of step down offer. There is a presenting need for younger children who have been placed in specialist residential children's homes and who we would like providers to develop step down packages for to support them back into families.

Short term placements

We wish to minimise the use of short term placements so we can provide children with stability. However there is a need for a small number of children when they are in crisis that would benefit from a short term placement, often at short notice to provide a break and stabilise their behaviour, provide an assessment of need and support transition to a long term placement.

What do we need from providers?

- Small local children's homes that can provide placements to children with complex and challenging behaviour
- Local specialist placements for children who have sexually harmful behaviour.
- Local specialist placements for children who are at risk of being sexually exploited
- Local care placements for children with learning and/or physical disabilities that will support them to remain part of their community and access Bristol special schools and enable them to move onto independent living.

- Local placements for children being discharged from Tier 4 hospital settings and who can provide placements for young people with mental health difficulties
- Step down placements from residential care, particularly for our growing number of younger children
- Short term provision that offer same day and emergency placements that can assess children's needs and support children to transition into longer term placements

How will we buy?

- **Southwest Residential Children's Homes 2016 – 2020 Sub-regional residential DPS/framework²⁷** - We purchase independent residential placements from a sub-regional framework of providers established in April 2016 and that is due to end in March 2020. This framework can open every six months for new providers to join if this is required. Providers on the framework are approached when we wish to commission a residential placement and we currently buy 76% of our independent residential placements through the framework. Off-framework spot purchases are made in exceptional circumstances when there are no offers from framework providers, in such circumstances Bristol's expectation is that these providers will join the framework when it is open.
- **DPS for the placement of children and young people in foster care 2017 to 2021²⁸** - We will purchase independent fostering placements from a sub-regional framework / Dynamic Purchasing System that was established in 2017 and that is due to end in March 2021. Providers on the framework are approached when we wish to commission a foster placement.
- We will continue to place children in care with significant SEMH needs at our maintained residential school (Notton House).
- **Independent Schools and Colleges** - We are currently using a number of approaches to make placements – we have partnered with West Sussex to use their DPS for some placements for children and young people under 16. There are over 60 schools on this framework (7 in the South West Region). We are working with regional colleagues to establish new contractual arrangements for placements with independent schools and colleges up to 25 years of age however this work is in the early stages of planning and in the meantime some placements are still being spot purchased.

²⁷ <https://procontract.due-north.com/Advert?advertId=c6a0a346-1a95-e511-8105-000c29c9ba21>

²⁸ <https://procontract.due-north.com/Advert?advertId=3a874012-daac-e611-8118-000c29c9ba21>

Placement stability (short term) – This is measured by how many children in care have three or more placements in the space of a year. For all Bristol children in care in May 2018 this was 9.5%²⁹ (our target is 'below 10 %') which compares favourably to national averages and statistical neighbours.

Between May 2017 and May 2018. 42% of children placed in out of authority children's homes had no moves and 20% of children had three or more placements.³⁰

Placement stability (long term) – This is measured by how many of all the children in care who have been looked after for more than 2.5 years have stayed in the same placement for at least two years, or been placed for adoption. Bristol has raised this percentage from 69% in 2010 to 74.3% in May 2018. This compares favourably to rates for England and our statistical neighbours.

Education – The education attainment of Bristol children in care is similar to comparable authorities; however there is still a gap in attainment with their local peers which is being addressed. Overall attendance for children in care has improved to 92.1% in 2017/18 (from 90.7% in the previous year).

Care leavers in education, employment or training – At May 2018, 54% of our care leavers were in employment, training or employment.

²⁹ BCC Social Care Performance Report June 2018

³⁰ Liquid Logic LCS May 2018

The following is a summary of feedback from the consultation event with independent residential care providers held on the 13th December 2017

What are the barriers to providing the services that have been identified?

- Recruitment and retention of staff, particularly managers
- Upward pressure on staffing costs due to the minimum and living wage, changes to sleep in payments and the highly competitive local labour market
- Ofsted's attitude to children who abscond and the negative impact this can have on inspection judgements
- Pressure on mental health services and the challenges this causes in getting the right service for young people
- Earlier planning is needed to avoid the need for emergency placements that are very time intensive for providers and often have poor outcomes
- Providers need decisions to be made within agreed time scales
- Clarity about pricing with a shared agreement about what is included and if extra funding will be needed.
- High property prices in Bristol and it is difficult to find accommodation in an urban area
- Bristol needs some very complex placements that are hard to make work

What is needed to make partnership working with the council successful in meeting these needs?

- Clear accurate up to date referrals that identify all the needs of the child, so informed decisions can be made
- The person who knows the child best should to be available to answer questions and share information when a placement is being considered
- Close relationship with commissioners so planning can take place around forthcoming vacancies and demand management can take place
- Providers would welcome Bristol paying a retainer to hold forthcoming vacancies
- Joint planning when placements are breaking down so the new provider can get to know the child and a good transition can take place
- A move away from purchasing through the framework and by spot purchasing with a move towards a mixed model that includes block contracts and the sharing of risks
- Providers would welcome local authorities in the area coming together a fund a mobile team that can respond to the need for emergency placements
- Providers would welcome a forum to share information and plan for situations as well as the opportunity to share best practice. The forum could also support providers to develop shared package of care and liaise with the council about funding
- Providers would welcome Bristol providing a range of training and would be willing to share their training

What opportunities can you see in developing new services in Bristol?

- Providers are keen to work with Bristol to look at ways to make residential care a more attractive career
- A number of national providers have successful models that work in other parts of the country that could be tried in Bristol
- Providers would be interested to talk with Ofsted about developing a crisis model that could use a motorhome or something similar as a base with Bristol coordinating with other local authorities to make sure the demand exists for this service
- Providers are interested to look at a shared team that could deal with emergencies

- A number of providers would be keen to talk about Bristol providing a building and the provider then running the home since this could help to mitigate the risk to them setting up a new home in Bristol
- Some Providers are thinking about opening solo or two bedded children homes in Bristol and post 18 services within 90 minutes of the city
- Providers that already work in the city are happy to talk with Bristol about what they provide to make sure referrals are being made to them