

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, EDUCATION & EARLY HELP SERVICES

TO:	ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES & EDUCATION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	6 JUNE 2017	AGENDA ITEM:	9
TITLE:	SUFFICIENCY AND COMMISSIONING STRATEGY FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN READING, APRIL 2017 TO MARCH 2020.		
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SERVICE:	ACCESS TO RESOURCES TEAM	WARDS:	ALL
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#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT / EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to introduce the Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy for Looked after Children and Young People in Reading 2017-20 to Adult's, Children's & Education Committee for approval. The document has been developed by the Senior Commissioner within the Access to Resources Team (ART) in collaboration with DCEEHS DMT. The document has been presented to the Lead Councillor for Children's Services and Families, reviewed by the Directorate Management Team at their meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March 2017 and presented to the Children's Services Improvement Board on the 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2017.

#### 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy for Looked after Children and Young People in Reading 2017-20 be approved.

#### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 According to the NSPCC Looked after Children are four times more likely than their peers to have a mental health difficulty, are less likely than their peers to do well at school and are significantly more likely to have run away than their peers. Children looked after by the Council must be supported in improving their life chances and maximising their potential. The corporate parenting responsibilities of the Council to its Looked after Children are highly regulated, primarily via the Children Act 1989 and subsequent updates in 2015, Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, Children and Young Persons Act

2008 and the Children and Families Act 2014 and monitored via Ofsted. Specifically the Children Act 1989 (Section 22G) requires a local authority to take steps that secure, so far as reasonably practicable, accommodation that is within the authority's area; and meets the needs of the child that the local authority has a duty to look after.

- 3.2 It is essential that all accommodation, support and services provided to these children and young people are effectively secured and monitored for quality, effectiveness, risk and value for money. In order for the Council to ensure that it carries out these duties effectively a Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy informed by an analysis of the needs of this group with a clearly set out plan of achieving the outcomes required must be in place. The Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy is applicable to all external services secured for the benefit of the children and young people looked after by the Council and to all accommodation whether provided externally or by Council foster carers. In addition to setting out the mechanism by which we will effectively secure and monitor services for our Looked after Children, the strategy also sets out what we want to achieve, where we are, how we will build on strengths and close the gaps.

#### **4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

- 4.1 One of the most significant impacts on service delivery since the last strategy has been the Improvement Plan that was created as a result of the full Ofsted inspection which took place in May 2016. Ofsted found the Council's children's services to be inadequate and published their findings on the 5th of August 2016. As a result of the inspection an Independent Commissioner has been appointed to review the Council's ability to address their areas for development. The Council are currently working to the Improvement Plan with an ambition to have continually made substantial improvements so that the Council's children's services are no longer inadequate by the time that Ofsted return. This strategy is aligned with priorities set out in the Council's improvement plan which is based on the recommendations made by Ofsted.
- 4.2 Children's commissioning/ART has made significant progress since the delivery of the Children and Young People's Interim Commissioning Strategy 2016-17 and in line with the Improvement Plan. Some notable progress toward strategic aims have been;
- Sufficiency. The Children's Commissioning team have successfully advertised and set up an open Approved Provider List for care and accommodation for Reading's LAC population aged 16+. The majority of these providers are in Reading and would be our preferred providers. This means that young people who reach 16 and require support to be able to live independently are able to receive this support and accommodation in Reading which evidence shows is the preference of many 16+ looked after children who are from Reading. The recruitment of in-house foster carers is seen as a priority and as such will be invested in. Commissioning will be instrumental in scrutinising the value for money achieved by any investment made in this area and there is the potential for a payment by results method to be implemented. The

Council continue to be part of the South Central IFA Framework which has recently been re-tendered with an extra 24 providers joining the new framework. It is hoped that this will increase foster carer coverage for all involved local authorities. The Council are currently a partner in the Cross Regional Residential Project. This block contract for residential Care, therapy and optional education is due to be re-tendered with a contract start date of January 2019. Reading are likely to be purchasing at least 3 block beds as part of the contract and these will be within 20 miles of Reading greatly increasing our sufficiency of residential placements.

- Quality monitoring. It is the Council's responsibility to ensure that contract management and quality monitoring processes are in place to safeguard children receiving services and to evidence that commissioned services provide best value. A process has been developed to capture relevant information and view it as part of the 'big picture' rather than in isolation. This process involves collecting information from a range of sources such as school attendance, missing episodes, CSE risk and the provider's self-assessment of the placements stability and putting it into a risk matrix which then flags up whether a placement or a provider is high, medium or low risk, based on our own decided thresholds. We are using this for early identification and resolution of issues with our young people and to identify any trends in performance with our providers that may warrant action on our part. It also ensures that the team holds concrete information about providers' performance which will contribute to new placement decisions and market development. Its purpose is not to identify when immediate action should be taken, e.g. safeguarding investigations, urgent placement changes etc. The risk matrix is a flagging mechanism to help Commissioners to see where placements or providers are potentially at risk but it does not necessarily mean that there is a problem or that action needs to be taken. This is for officers to judge using qualifying information. At this time the risk matrix focuses only on residential placements and providers.
- Data and analysis. In order to better inform the commissioning and sufficiency work carried out by the ART a bespoke database has been created to capture all placements and to ensure that the correct best practice procedure was followed in order to make that placement. This database is not intended to be used instead of Mosaic but to be used in conjunction and as an interim measure until Mosaic can meet the reporting needs of the ART. The team has also developed an accurate savings spreadsheet which can demonstrate the savings that the team has accrued. In addition the team have undertaken a full needs analysis of the Council's Looked after Children population. This information has been crucial in creating the strategy and ensuring that it is evidence based and fit for purpose.
- Team structure. A significant change since the last commissioning strategy has been the introduction of the ART from April 2017. This team is currently an amalgamation of the Children's Commissioning Team, some business support and fostering duty. The ART will operate both strategically and on an individual basis. As well as leading on commissioning strategies and managing tenders for services, it will receive referrals from a range of lead

professionals who require a service for an individual child. The ART is described in full within the strategy.

- 4.3 The purpose of the ART and the strategy is to ensure compliance with regulation as described in section 3.1, scrutinised by a single line of management and clear governance arrangements. However, the ART will also be in a unique position to be able to drive up the quality of work carried out by the directorate. Examples of increasing quality include the ART auditing all referral forms that are sent via the team to the market looking for placements and services. The ART ensure that referral forms sent out are of high quality, focussed on the child with their voice at the centre of the referral and that it is clearly strengths-based. In addition the ART record all review and end dates of placements or services made via the team so that they can be flagged to the social worker and taken through the appropriate panel or channels at these points ensuring the ongoing value for money and outcomes are being achieved in each case.
- 4.4 This report and its content outline important contributions to the Council's corporate priorities. The outcomes and commissioning ambitions described in the strategy are aligned with the priorities outlined in the Council's Corporate Plan for 2016-19. Most specifically the outcomes and ambitions are expected to support the following corporate priorities and identified issues:
- **Priority 1: Safeguarding and protecting those that are most vulnerable**  
Key Issues:
    - Ensure that children and young people receive a high quality service which keeps children within their families where it is safe to do so and ensure that permanent and stable homes are found for children in our care
    - Continue to deliver the Children's Service improvement plans and embed improvements in Children's Social Care
    - Children's Services spending is currently above the benchmark with statistical neighbours
    - The integration of Health and Social Care needs to be delivered by 2020 with agreed plans in place by 2017
  - **Priority 2: Providing the best life through education, early help and healthy living**  
Key Issues:
    - Closing the gap in attainment, for vulnerable and disadvantaged children, including those in care and with learning disabilities, is vital to ensure equality of life chances later on
  - **Priority 6: Remaining financially sustainable to deliver these service priorities**  
Key Issues:

- Agree further savings to bridge the funding shortfall and ensure that the commissioning function supports the delivery of DCEEHS services within a reduced funding envelope

The Council's three core values of being fair, caring and enterprising are reflected throughout the strategy. The strategy also supports the corporate aim to promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all.

## **5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 The strategy states that commissioning activity will recognise and value diversity, and promote equality to ensure excluded / vulnerable groups can access appropriate services. This may mean services are accessible to all communities or are targeted to specific groups, e.g. are culturally sensitive. All planning and commissioning activity will aim to narrow the gaps and remove barriers to participation, achievement and well-being. Equality will be embedded in all contract monitoring.

## **6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

- 6.1 Section 138 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 places a duty on local authorities to involve local representatives when carrying out "any of its functions" by providing information, consulting or "involving in another way". In order to meet this duty the strategy places an emphasis on working with representatives from Reading's Clinical Commissioning Groups, Public Health and Education. There is also a commitment within the strategy to involve service users at all stages of the commissioning cycle.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 All commissioning activity undertaken in line with this strategy will be carried out in line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and any EU legislation pertaining to the activity.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 This strategy acknowledges the ongoing reduction in funding to the Council. In response all future commissioning will be carried out with this significant reduction in funding considered. Existing and future contracts will need to evidence ability to deliver a statutory requirement and contribution to service, directorate and corporate aims. Activity carried out by the ART is seen as vital for identifying and delivering a contribution to the savings required and to the stability of delivering services to children, young people and their families and carers in Reading under a significantly reduced budget.

## **9. NEXT STEPS**

- 9.1 An outcomes plan to support the delivery of this strategy has been developed. As part of this action plan a series of projects will be undertaken to ensure that the outcomes are delivered on time as described. The Outcomes plan will be subject to monitoring via DCEEHS DMT.

## **7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy for Looked after Children and Young People in Reading. April 2017 to March 2020.
- Appendix A ART Project Plan
- Appendix B Looked After Children Sufficiency Needs Analysis October 2016



**Reading**  
Borough Council  

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Working better with you

# Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy for Looked after Children and Young People in Reading.

April 2017 to March 2020.

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# Part 1 - Strategic Vision

## Section 1 - Summary and Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

Part 1 of the Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy for Looked after Children and Young People in Reading sets out our strategic vision.

The intentions and drivers which underpin the strategic vision are set out and summarised in section 2.

A summary of the Looked After Children Sufficiency Needs Analysis and how it must inform our strategic direction is included in section 3.

Section 4 sets out the strategic direction and introduces the Access to Resources team.

### 1.2 Purpose

This strategy aims to set out what we want to achieve, where we are, how we will build on strengths and close the gaps.

The Strategy draws together the needs of current and future Looked after Children and Young People (LAC) and care leavers in Reading. It describes how the Council intends to deliver flexible services that are responsive to individual needs and choice and that are targeted appropriately to meet the needs of our current and future LAC population.

The strategy acknowledges the Council's statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient placements within their geographical area to meet the needs of LAC and care leavers and details how this duty is intended to be met.

The strategy and Needs Analysis has been developed by the Council's Children's Commissioning Team. It recognises that to achieve the outcomes set out in this strategy close working between Council directorates will be crucial. The Council is committed to working closely with Reading's Clinical Commissioning Group, Public Health and Education to ensure that resources are used effectively and collectively.

### 1.3 Commissioning for Looked after Children (LAC)

The term Children Looked After has a specific legal meaning based on the Children Act. A child is looked after by a local authority if he or she has been provided with accommodation for a continuous period of more than 24 hours, in the circumstances set out in sections 20 and 21 of the Children Act 1989, or is placed in the care of a local authority by virtue of an order made under part IV of the Act.

The majority of children who are looked after by the local authority are placed with foster carers as it is believed to be best for children to live within a family environment. For some children however, residential care may be more appropriate.

Commissioning is the process by which a Local Authority plans the services that are needed by people that live in its local area within the financial envelope available. The

Council must ensure that services are available for the children, young people and families of Reading and that they are of high quality, appropriate to their needs, secure the outcomes needed and give value for money.

Strategic Commissioning is the process of long term planning which ensures that resources are used in the right way at the right time to meet demand and need. This involves the use of accurate information to measure current need and predict future demand, informing the design and delivery of local services.

## Section 2 - Intentions and Drivers

### 2.1 Ambition

The Council is committed to improving the life chances and maximising the potential of children, young people and families in Reading over the next three years, from 2017 to 2020. This strategy set out the way this will be done for our children looked after by the Council. The Council is committed to ensuring that each child for whom the Council has responsibility as corporate parents will to achieve their maximum potential. The Council is committed to meeting our legislative duty in respect of sufficiency of accommodation for current and future Looked after Children and Young People and care leavers. The Council will also ensure that commissioning activity undertaken to secure services and accommodation will be compliant with Contract Procedure Rules and Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

### 2.2 Values

#### ➤ Outcomes

Our primary focus is on the delivery of improved outcomes for children and their families and we will therefore commission only provision that delivers our priority outcomes.

#### ➤ Service user focussed

The Council will seek opportunities to actively involve service users in commissioning and procurement. "The Voice of the Child" will be central to commissioning activity.

Decommissioning or other service changes will only take place after full consideration of the impact on service users. Community and Equality Impact Assessments will always be developed at the earliest opportunity.

#### ➤ Equal opportunities

Commissioning activity will recognise and value diversity, and promote equality to ensure excluded / vulnerable groups can access appropriate services. This may mean services are accessible to all communities or are targeted to specific groups, e.g. are culturally sensitive. All planning and commissioning activity will aim to narrow the gaps and remove barriers to participation, achievement and well-being. Equality will be embedded in all contract monitoring.

#### ➤ Needs assessment and evidence based commissioning

Commissioning will be based on a sound evidence base, ensuring detailed and relevant information and intelligence is used to inform all commissioning and service delivery. For Children's Services commissioning, this means commissioners and in-house services need to have a good knowledge of communities in Reading in order to respond effectively to the needs of children, young people and their families, especially those who are most in need of help, care and protection, including looked after children and care leavers. Up to date information will be sought through the local JSNA and Sufficiency Statement, service monitoring data and user consultation, combined with effective partnership working will ensure a full and accurate picture of need. This will be used to identify our most vulnerable groups, priorities and outcomes for commissioning.

#### ➤ Governance and Transparency

Our commissioning processes and decisions will be underpinned by principles of transparency and fairness. We will continue to develop provider and market fora to enable open dialogue and will inform providers of the reasons for our decisions. Commissioning decisions will be undertaken in an open and transparent way and will be compatible with EU and UK law and Reading's Contract procedure Rules. Commissioning activity will take

place within an agreed and accountable framework with clear reporting, monitoring and review arrangements. Commissioning activities will also be coordinated and scrutinised to ensure the policies and strategies are developed and implemented as planned and that all decisions are based on strategic vision and priority.

➤ **Working in partnership with other commissioners**

All commissioning activity will maximise partnership working wherever possible to reduce duplication, enhance effectiveness and produce better outcomes for users. In order to achieve this joint working in a safe and effective way we will seek advice from Legal, Finance and Procurement colleagues as appropriate.

➤ **Relationships with providers & market development**

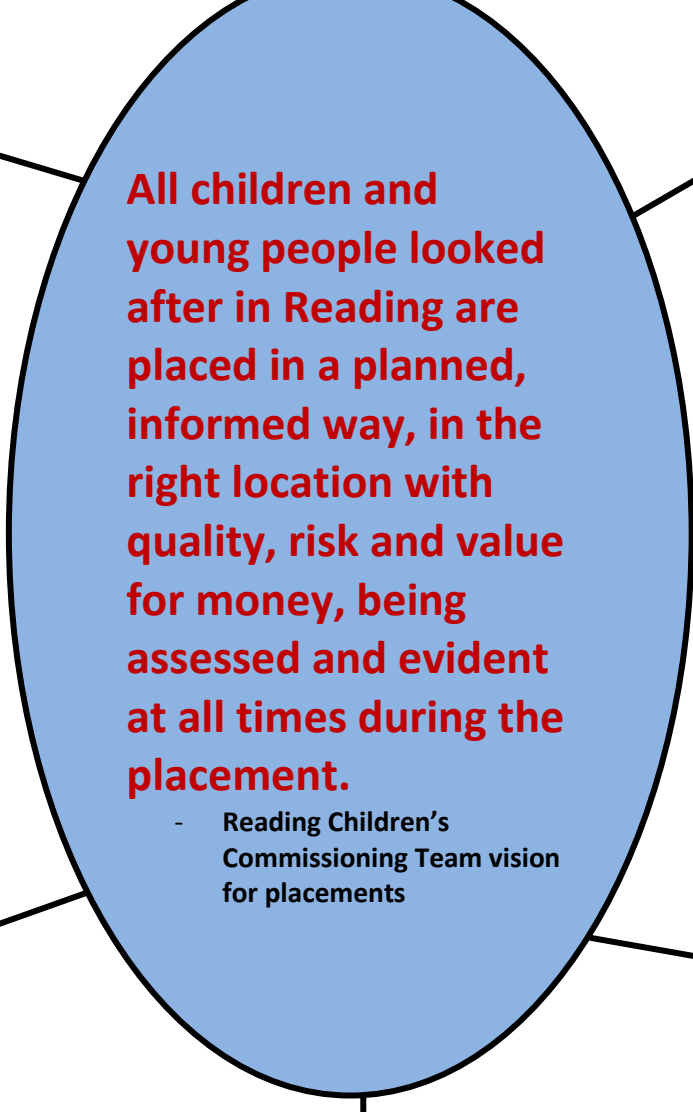
There is a commitment to working in partnership with a broad range of stakeholders including provider organisations and we recognise that many providers are experts in their service area and can make valuable contributions to service redesign. A collaborative culture is encouraged so that providers can learn from one another as well as work together effectively to achieve sustainable improvement in outcomes. Arrangements will ensure that an appropriate level of skills, expertise and capacity is available throughout the market and where required will entail developing a workforce strategy or market development plan. The added value some providers bring e.g. resources, volunteers, local knowledge is recognised and we aim to encourage more diverse provider markets in order to stimulate quality, choice and greater value for money.

➤ **Applying best practice and quality standards.**

All our staff will have the appropriate skill, experience and knowledge to apply the priorities and principles within the strategy. We will apply intelligent commissioning, meeting legislative outcomes and use benchmarking information from other Local Authorities. We will seek to carry out self-assessments and encourage internal challenge to improve learning.

### **2.3 Sufficiency and appropriate placements.**

Detailed below is Reading Children's Commissioning Teams vision for placements and sufficiency and how it will be assessed.



**Value for money** – Where possible we have pre-agreed contractual arrangements and costs with providers through block or framework contracts. This ensures that the cost of the placements is based on the need of the child or young person and the outcomes that have been achieved by them in their placement. Regardless of whether a pre-agreed contractual arrangement and/or cost has been determined prior to a placement being sought, an assessment of the value for money for each placement takes place on a regular basis and no less than quarterly.

**Planned** – All placements and securing of services for the Council's Looked after Children (LAC) are made in a planned way. There is a good knowledge of how a placement is progressing with clear indicators of whether outcomes are being achieved and whether there are any risks to the placement breaking down. This prevents the majority of sudden placement breakdowns and if a placement does need to end there is time for a suitable alternative to be found. Where there are unavoidable instances of urgent placements being required, the Council have access to an emergency bed available within Reading that has a high level of support where the child or young person can stay whilst we complete the same process that we undergo for every non-urgent placement.

**Quality and risk assessed** – Within our contract for each service we set out the minimum requirements that we expect in terms of quality. We have agreed mechanisms in place to be able to review placements for quality, risk and adherence to contracts. Where we believe that a provider has defaulted on their contract we take immediate action to review and secure the safety of the child or young person and then work with the provider to either achieve better results or to move the child or young person into a better suited placement. We ensure that we keep up to date with the outcomes of Ofsted inspections and have a robust informed set of minimum standards which we apply to non-regulated services for providers of 16+ provisions.

**Informed** – An up to date referral form is available for all placement searches and fully details the child or young person's needs and history as well as their strengths, interests and successes. All placements are made following a full exchange of information between the Provider, Commissioning Officer, Social Worker, IRO and any other partner organisations involved. Crucially the placement is made with the view of the child or young person informing all decisions. Where possible the child or young person has the opportunity for visits to the placement prior to the final agreement being made.

**Right location** – In line with legislation and research it is our intention to place every looked after child or young person within 20 miles of their pre-LAC address. If we require the young person to be placed further than 20 miles or no suitable accommodation is available within that boundary then the decision to place is undertaken following a risk assessment and consultation with the Social Worker, IRO and any other partner organisations involved.

## 2.4 Local Context

### 2.4.1 Corporate plan

As described in section 1.3, the Children's Commissioning team are committed to take an approach of commissioning for outcomes. Appendix A of this document contains the outcomes that Reading's Children, Education & Early Help Services require. These outcomes have been developed to meet the needs of all children and young people in Reading. The outcomes and commissioning ambitions described in this document are aligned with the priorities outlined in our Corporate Plan for 2016-19. Most specifically the outcomes and ambitions are expected to address the following corporate priorities and identified issues:

- **Priority: Safeguarding and protecting those that are most vulnerable**

#### Key Issues:

- Ensure that children and young people receive a high quality service which keeps children within their families where it is safe to do so and ensure that permanent and stable homes are found for children in our care
- Continue to deliver the Children's Service improvement plans and embed improvements in Children's Social Care
- Children's Services spending is above the benchmark with statistical neighbours

- **Priority: Providing the best life through education, early help and healthy living**

#### Key Issues:

- Closing the gap in attainment, for vulnerable and disadvantaged children, including those in care and with learning disabilities, is vital to ensure equality of life chances later on.

- **Priority: Remaining financially sustainable to deliver these service priorities**

#### Key Issues:

- Agree further savings to bridge the funding shortfall and ensure that the commissioning function supports the delivery of DCEEHS services within a reduced funding envelope.

As well as the corporate plan described above the Children's Commissioning Team are committed to working with Reading's Local Safeguarding Children Board, Health and Wellbeing Board and Reading's Children's Trust when applicable.

### 2.4.2 Ofsted

In May 2016 Ofsted carried out a full inspection of the Council's services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and a review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Ofsted found the Council's children's services to be inadequate and published their findings on the 5th of August 2016. As a result of the inspection an Independent Commissioner has been appointed to review the Council's ability to address their areas for development. The Council are currently working to an Improvement Plan with an ambition to have continually made substantial improvements so that the Council's children's services are no longer inadequate by the time

that Ofsted return. This strategy is aligned with priorities set out in the Council's improvement plan which is based on the recommendations made by Ofsted.

### **2.4.3 Financial considerations**

The international, national and local financial situation has led to a programme of austerity and consequently we are operating within a context of significant funding reductions, which is likely to continue for some time. It is clear that the range of services delivered by the Council or externally procured will decrease and some previously delivered work will end. The Directorate of Children, Education & Early Help Services will need to make difficult decisions about ceasing some services previously delivered, finding alternative ways to provide support and carefully targeting resources to create most impact on outcomes.

Partners must work together in new and innovative ways that will maximise outcomes within increasingly tighter financial constraints. The nature of children's placements is that they are very high cost, therefore the management of the placement market is crucial to ensure cost effective placements that achieve the best possible value for money. There are also potentially significant gains to be made by increasing the proportion of provision that the in-house fostering service delivers. To deliver this agenda in a sustainable way, whilst still delivering the outcomes set out in the Children and Young People's Plan, provision will need to support a smaller number of children and young people through more effective targeted intervention that prevents children coming into care by supporting them better in their communities and families. This objective underpins the commissioning and sufficiency strategy. The implementation of the strategy will support continued improvement in value for money for services for children and young people in care and will inform the financial planning process for future years.

## **2.5 National Context**

### **2.5.1 Background to Sufficiency Duty**

All local authorities have a statutory duty to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the authority's area which meets the needs of its LAC. This is referred to as the 'Sufficiency Duty' as set out in Section 22G of the Children Act 1989.

This duty should be undertaken within the context of the planning and co-operation duties which the Children Act 2004 Act places on partners in order to improve the wellbeing of the children in the local area. The Act defines sufficiency as "a whole system approach which delivers early intervention and preventative work to help support children and their families where possible, as well as providing better services for children if they do become looked after. For those who are looked after, LAs and partners should seek to secure a number of providers and a range of services, with the aim of meeting the wide-ranging needs of looked after children and young people within their local area."

The guidance also requires that the commissioning standards on securing sufficient accommodation for looked after children, also apply to children in need who are at risk of care or custody (referred to as children on the edge of care). This is important since it is preferable, where it is in the best interest of the child, to provide support to avoid the need for them to become children in care.

This document meets the needs of the sufficiency duty as described in the 'Statutory Guidance for the Sufficiency Duty' issued in 2010. The regulations require a strategy that describes how Local Authorities intend to provide sufficient care placements for its children looked after. The guidance also sets out the importance of high quality assessments, care

planning and placement decisions as the essential building blocks of an effective commissioning strategy for placements for children and young people in care.

### 2.5.2 National Acts and Guidance

The following Acts and guidance provide a reference for key activity undertaken to achieve the outcomes set out in this strategy.

- Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000
- Children's Act 2004
- The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services 2004
- Care Matters Time for Change, 2007
- Children and Young Persons Act (CYPA) 2008
- Continuing Health Care Framework (2010)
- Planning Transitions to Adulthood for Care Leavers: Statutory Guidance on the Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010
- Sufficiency: Statutory guidance on securing sufficient accommodation for looked after children 2010
- Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010
- Short Breaks Duty and Regulations 2011
- Health and Social Care Act 2012
- Working together to safeguard children 2013
- Improving Children and Young and Young People's Health Outcomes 2013
- School and Early Years Finance Regulations 2013-14
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Care Act 2014
- Care Planning Regulations
- Children's Homes regulations
- Fostering Services Regulations
- Ofsted inspection guidance
- Every Disabled Child Matters
- Direct Payments

### 2.6 Intentions and drivers considerations for strategic direction.

It is essential that when carrying out commissioning activity, the Council:

- Meet our legislative duty in respect of sufficiency of accommodation for current and future Looked after Children and Young People and care leavers.
- Ensure that commissioning activity undertaken to secure services and accommodation will be compliant with Contract Procedure Rules and Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
- Commission only provision that delivers our priority outcomes.
- Seek opportunities to actively involve service users in commissioning and procurement.
- Narrow the gaps and remove barriers to participation, achievement and well-being.
- Commission based on a sound evidence base, ensuring detailed and relevant information



and intelligence is used to inform all commissioning and service delivery.

- Have a good knowledge of communities in Reading in order to respond effectively to the needs of children, young people and their families.
- Develop provider and market fora to enable open dialogue and will inform providers of the reasons for our decisions.
- Maximise partnership working wherever possible to reduce duplication, enhance effectiveness and produce better outcomes for users recognising that many providers are experts in their service area and can make valuable contributions to service redesign.
- Ensure that an appropriate level of skills, expertise and capacity is available throughout the market, encouraging more diverse provider markets in order to stimulate quality, choice and greater value for money.
- Find alternative ways to provide support and carefully targeting resources to create most impact on outcomes.
- Ensure that commissioning staff have the appropriate skill, experience and knowledge to apply the priorities and principles within the strategy.
- Make sure that all children and young people looked after in Reading are placed in a planned, informed way, in the right location with quality, risk and value for money, being assessed and evident at all times during the placement.
- Address the recommendations made by Ofsted.
- Maximise outcomes within increasingly tighter financial constraints such increasing the proportion of provision that the in-house fostering service delivers.

## Section 3 - Summary of Needs Analysis

### 3.1 Introduction

The following section provides an analysis of the current population and anticipated projections for the coming years as well as analysis of services used. It identifies the impact any population change may have on future demand for services. The analysis covers the whole population of potential Looked after Children (LAC), including Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC). This section also highlights particular aspects of the population; for example, by geography (which wards have high deprivation and poverty) and by nature (ethnicity, disabilities et cetera). The full Needs Analysis has been included in Appendix B.

### 3.2 LAC population.

#### Population Profile 0-19 years

The population of 0-19 year olds has increased from 34,100 in 2001 to 38,300 in 2011, an increase of 12%. During that time period annual estimates have indicated continued population growth. The 0-19 population is highest in the 0-4 years age group.

At the end of October 2016, there were 263 Looked after Children (LAC) in Reading. The rate of LAC in Reading per 10,000 young people under the age of 18 was 60 at March 2016, which is the same as the national average rate and lower than that of our statistical neighbours at 65.

Since March 2016 we have seen around a 19.5% increase in the number of children becoming looked after. In addition there has been an increase in the number of UASC and we expect to see an increase in the LAC population due to the national dispersal scheme in the coming months.

There is a fairly even split of male and female LAC in Reading, with 105 males (51%) and 100 females (49%) at 31 March 2015, and the same proportion at October 2016 (unpublished data).

#### Population projections

The number of babies born to families living in Reading in 2014 was 2,554 (ONS, 2015). The general fertility rate (GFR) for Reading has been constantly higher than the national and regional averages. This means that more babies are born in Reading's authority area, on average, when compared nationally and regionally. Commissioning and allocation of related services should therefore match the increased need locally if the very young are to be given the best start in life.

According to the Office of National Statistics, at its peak in 2025, the 0-19 population in Reading is projected to be 7.6% higher than at 2016, and by 2032 to be 5.7% higher than at 2016.

Estimations show a steady decline in the LAC population from 263 in October 2016 to 242 in March 2018. The LAC population is expected to continue to decrease until autumn 2019 when it will begin to plateau.

Of our current LAC population of 264 (with 62 being 16+) roughly 117 (44%) are placed in fostering with IFAs and 14(5%) are in residential care. Reports allowing us to compare the % breakdown of placements of LAC are not available historically so it is not easy to determine whether this breakdown of placements of LAC is indicative of the general breakdown over time or whether it could have been affected by season or an unaccountable and sudden change in breakdown. If the breakdown is applied to estimated figures in March 2018 then the demand on the market place will be as follows: 106 in IFA fostering, 12 in residential.

#### Ethnicity Profile 0-19 years

Information from Reading's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) tells us that in 2011 the largest proportion of the population (66.9%) identified themselves as 'White British'. This proportion had decreased from 86.8% in the previous census and was considerably lower than the national figure of 80.9%, suggesting greater diversity in Reading in recent years and in comparison with other local authority areas.

While 46.2% of the 0-19 population belongs to an ethnic group other than White British, this percentage increases to 50.6% for the school population, compared to 25% in England overall.

Reading has a slightly higher proportion of LAC who identify as being BME compared to the Berkshire average, the South East and England, but a very similar percentage compared to our statistical neighbours. In Reading UASC make up 2% of the LAC population while in England they make up 6%.

### **Immigration**

International migration is a key driver of population growth in Reading, and the number of people coming to live in Reading is considerably higher than in neighbouring boroughs. Consequently, Reading has a higher proportion of residents born outside of the UK than the South East and the UK as a whole.

### **Deprivation and Poverty**

There is a substantial body of evidence of a strong association between family poverty and the likelihood of a child experiencing abuse or neglect. L.H. Pelton recently concluded in his review of more than 30 years of studies, 'There is overwhelming evidence that poverty and low income are strongly related to child abuse and neglect as well as to the severity of maltreatment.'

Reading has the second highest percentage of children from low income families in Berkshire, based on the number of children in families receiving working tax credit or child tax credit. However, at 17.8% this is slightly below the national average. This figure has remained relatively stable since 2012, ranging between 18.8% and 17.8% during this period.

Whilst Reading benefits from high employment and high earnings, there are some areas in the borough that are experiencing high and rising levels of deprivation. Between the 2001 census and the most recent census in 2011, two areas in South Reading (the far south of Whitley ward and to the south of Northumberland Avenue in Church ward) fell into the 10% most deprived areas in England. The most recent IMD data was produced in late 2015.

Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) mapping suggests a concentration of low deprivation in the north of the borough (Mapledurham, Thames and Peppard wards) and high deprivation in central and southern areas (Norcot, Battle and Abbey wards in the centre and Whitley and Church wards in the south).

Key areas of high deprivation in Reading are found:

- in the far south of Whitley ward and the Northumberland Avenue area in the south of the borough;
- throughout Abbey ward and around the town centre;
- around Dee Road in Norcot ward;
- around Coronation Square in Southcote ward; and
- around Amersham Road in Lower Caversham.

Analysis of looked after children's 'pre-LAC' addresses tells us that the highest number of Reading's LAC come from Abbey, Whitley and Battle wards, while the lowest number come from Park, Redlands and Peppard wards.

### **Entrants into Care**

In October 2016, 69% of LAC in Reading were being provided with a service due to being abused or suffering neglect. 10% were looked after due to their family being in acute stress and 8% due to family dysfunction. Abuse or neglect is consistently the most likely reason for a child in Reading to become looked after, which is also the case for England. The percentage of LAC in care due to abuse or neglect in Reading is consistently higher than England's average; however the percentage in care due to family dysfunction is consistently lower.

Reading's numbers of new LAC entrants per year are higher than the Berkshire average, however significantly lower than the average of our statistical neighbours. Reading's numbers dropped between

2012 and 2014 and have increased every year since then. 3% who were looked after between October 2015 and October 2016 had been looked after previously and returned to care.

### **Exiting care**

68% of LAC at October 2016 had spent less than 3 years in care with 36% leaving care within a year. 6% spend more than 7 years in care.

### **Placement stability**

Placement stability is good, and the large majority of children and young people who are looked after live in foster or residential placements that meet their needs. Placement stability figures are either consistent with or significantly above those of statistical neighbours or the national averages. Of 193 children looked after in fostering households at the time of the inspection, 87 had been in the same placement for over a year.

### **Looked After Children with Disabilities**

11% of LAC in Reading are recorded as having a disability. This includes children and young people who are looked after as a result of their disability.

There are more male looked after children with a disability than female. 15 (63%) are male and 9 (37%) are female. 14% of all male LAC and 8% of all female LAC have a disability. The percentage of LAC with a disability is fairly consistent across all age groups with the exception of those under the age of 1 (when it is less likely that a disability will have been identified). Therefore as the highest number of LAC fall into the 10-15 years age group, this is also the case for children with a disability. 15 (63%) are white and 9 (37%) are from a BME background, the majority of which (7 (78%)) are from a mixed background.

### **Looked After Children Aged 16 and over**

21% (49) of LAC at March 2016 were aged 16 or over. The majority (74%) of LAC aged 16 or over are in long-term or short-term foster placements. The council has a duty to ensure that all Looked After Children are found suitable accommodation when leaving care. Data shows that in 2015 79% of 19 year old and 83% of 21 year old care leavers were in suitable accommodation. The proportion of 19 year olds in suitable accommodation is below the national and regional averages, and also below the average of our statistical neighbours. The proportion of 21 year olds in suitable accommodation is higher than that of our comparators, however it should be noted that there was a relatively high proportion of 21 year old care leavers in England (38%) and the South East (20%) for whom there was no information so this could have affected the figures, as Reading had a very low percentage of care leavers with no information.

### **Outcomes for Care Leavers**

Overall, care leavers are less likely to be in education, employment or training than their peers. The NSPCC states that in 2014 34% of care leavers were not in education, employment or training (NEET) at age 19 compared to 15% of the general population.

At October 2016, 59% of Reading's care leavers were in education, training or employment compared to 61% across England and 64% across our statistical neighbours. Care leavers in Reading are more likely to be NEET than elsewhere in England. However, 9% of Reading's care leavers were in higher education compared to 6% nationally and 7% across our statistical neighbours.

## **3.3 Services**

### **Types of Placements**

Reading is broadly in line with the South East and England for its use of different types of placements. Reading is above the South East and England in the number of children placed for adoption and those in other residential settings, and below in the number that are placed in secure units. It can be seen that the number of foster placements has dropped between 2012 and 2015 and the rate of adoption has risen.

### **Location of LAC Placements**

At March 2016, 30% of LAC were placed within the Reading boundary, the numbers have been similar since 2012, with a large proportion of placements being made outside of Reading's boundary. The most recent published data (March 2014) indicates that nationally the average percentage of LAC placed

within 20 miles of their home address was 77%, so Reading is performing below the national average in this area.

A number of Reading's placements are being used by LAC from other local authorities. In 2012 this was 17%, in 2013 this was 28% and in 2014 (most recent published data) this was 35% so these numbers saw an increase between 2012 and 2014. Data is not yet available after 2014, however as only 30% of Reading's LAC were placed in the area, which is a similar (slightly smaller) percentage than in previous years, it seems likely that the trend has continued. The national figure for LAC placed within their local authority area in 2014 (the most recent published data) was 58%.

It is usually in the interest of looked after children to be placed as close to home as possible, although there are exceptions. Over half of Reading's LAC are placed within 10 miles of their home address, and 66% are placed within 20 miles of their home address. 18% are placed more than 50 miles away. Reading currently places in 51 different local authority areas and 29 (57%) of these areas accommodate only one of Reading's looked after children. Only 30% are placed in Reading, although 56% are placed within Berkshire.

Reading is over dependent on placements outside of Reading. This is partially to be expected, as Reading is a small unitary covering a main town. It is one of 6 unitary authorities which make up Berkshire. Under the definitions used by the Government any placement outside Reading and not in an adjoining authority (Wokingham, West Berkshire or Oxfordshire) is considered to be a 'distant placement'. Reading is competing with 7 other authorities for placements within a 20 mile radius. This is not consistent with the situations of some of our statistical neighbours, who may be competing with a single larger county authority on their boundary. In Reading a distant placement can easily be within 20 miles of the child's home. 48% of placements were distant placements at October 2016 but only 34% were more than 20 miles away.

#### **Average Costs**

Reading is paying, on average, around 12% more than the South Central Framework average rate for foster placements through IFAs. This amounts to approximately £551,200 per year based on the current number of IFA placements. Our greatest spend is with IFAs. 60% of Reading's LAC are living in either in-house or independent foster care, and 64% of those are with IFA registered foster carers. It costs significantly less to place children with in-house foster carers. At October 2016 Reading had 82 sets of in-house foster carers with a total of 9 vacancies. Reading is implementing a Foster Carer Recruitment & Retention Plan to increase our number of in-house foster carers.

Reading is paying, on average, around 7% more than the national average rate for residential homes, which amounts to approximately £183,872 per year based on the current number of residential home placements. However, as £3,000 is stated to be the average cost nationally for a residential placement, including LDD placements, it appears that Reading is paying, on average, significantly more than other local authorities. If LDD placements are included in the total, Reading is paying around 11% more than the national average cost per placement. Reading pays significantly more than the average cost for some placements and less for others. The cost of a child's residential placement depends on the needs of the child; however these high cost placements should be reviewed regularly to ensure value for money.

#### **Quality of placements/providers**

80% of the providers we are using are rated Outstanding or Good, and none are rated Inadequate. 84% of Reading's LAC (who are in an Ofsted registered placement) are placed with a provider that is Outstanding or Good. There are two IFA providers which have not yet been inspected and a total of 4 LAC are placed with them.

### **3.4 Service user feedback**

#### **Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire**

Local authorities are required to assess the emotional and behavioural health of all Looked After Children between the ages of 4 and 16 who have been in care for over a year. This is done through the strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ). A score under 14 is considered normal, scores between 14 and 16 are a borderline cause for concern and scores of 17 or over are considered a cause for concern. 53% of children who have completed an SDQ have a score that is a cause for concern. The highest score

was 36. 12% have a score that is a borderline cause for concern and 34% have a score which is considered normal. The highest proportion of young people with a score of 17 or more is those aged 10-15 years. 27% of LAC aged 4-16 do not have an SDQ score. It should also be noted that 78 (63%) of SDQ in Reading are overdue. The proportions are similar to the national average, where 50% of children have a normal score, 13% have a borderline score and 37% have a score that is a cause for concern. These proportions have remained generally consistent in England since 2013. The results tell us that children who are looked after are more likely to struggle with day to day life challenges and experience poor mental health than other children. Achieving stability and permanency for these children as quickly as possible is crucial to their wellbeing.

### 3.5 Needs Analysis considerations for considerations for strategic direction.

#### Bridging the gaps

- The number of 0-19 year olds is increasing but LAC populations are estimated to initially decrease and then plateau. The Children's Commissioning Team need to increase joint working with social work teams to understand trends and future needs. This will help to build a bespoke local market based informed by the volume of need, driving down costs and increasing sufficiency.
- The Needs Analysis also highlights the need to ensure that the local market can recognise and support ethnic identity and can respond appropriately to the 1 in 10 LAC who have a disability.
- The local market needs urgent attention which is evidenced by poor levels of local placements and the fact that over a third of placements in Reading were being used by other Local Authorities in 2014 which is the latest data available.
- Reading is paying, on average, around 12% more than the South Central Framework average rate for foster placements through IFAs and, on average, around 7% more than the national average rate for residential homes. This shows that a greater emphasis needs to be placed on recruiting in-house foster carers and where in-house foster placements are not available that the South Central Framework needs to be utilised more frequently. Where residential accommodation is required, the Council need to place a greater emphasis on framework or block provision either individually or collaboratively and/or exploring the option of establishing its own provision.
- Local data is unreliable meaning that the Children's Commissioning Team don't have enough information on what is spent and where.
- There is currently a lack of collated information on children's views regarding their placement experience and their views on the service they have received from the Council. More could be done to use children's views to influence the way we commission services. Work is being done, however, to capture children's views on their LAC reviews and to encourage an active forum of looked after young people.

#### Building on strengths

- Placement stability is good and the Council need to maintain this via good contractual management, providing high quality assessment and planning, better retention of experienced carers and better liaison and more provision between education and child and adolescent mental health services.
- The proportion of 19 year olds in suitable accommodation is below the national and regional averages, and also below the average of our statistical neighbours. As a result we have established an Approved Provider List and now have a good level of sufficiency which is increasing. Now sufficiency of 16+ accommodation and support has increased we need to work on the fact that 59% of Reading's care leavers were in education, training or employment compared to 61% across England and 64% across our statistical neighbours. Care leavers in Reading are more likely to be NEET than elsewhere in England.
- Reading is broadly in line with the South East and England for its use of different types of placements. Reading is above the South East and England in the number of children placed for

adoption, the Children's Commissioning need to understand the reasons for this and support the systems which make this the case.

- 84% of Reading's LAC (who are in an Ofsted registered placement) are placed with a provider that is Outstanding or Good. This reassurance of the quality of providers needs to be maintained through robust monitoring and recording.

## 4 - Strategic Direction

### 4.1 Strategic priorities

What we want to achieve and where we are now have been described in the Sections 2 and 3. This information has been used to develop 12 key requirements:

### 4.1.1 Key Requirements

1. One skilled, experienced and knowledgeable team who are a single point of contact during office hours for all LAC/SEND internal and external resource needs. The team will have a clear governance and accountability structure which will provide scrutiny and control.
2. Increased placement stability/permanence for children.
3. The majority of placements/services are within 20 miles of the pre LAC/home address achieved via excellent relationships and knowledge of the local market with opportunities for joint working and forums to develop provision.
4. Improved individual and service contract management increasing quality, reducing risk and ensuring value for money.
5. Greater choice of placement/options with placements agreed on the basis of need not availability.
6. More time for Social Workers to be carrying out work directly with families.
7. Reduced average cost for all types of placement/resource, optimum spread of placements across type to secure the best outcomes and spend for all LAC and the delivery of agreed savings identified across 2017-2020. These will be achieved via a savings/cost avoidance strategy which will address commissioning decisions such as spot, block or framework contract options, mechanisms to recover funding if outcomes have not been achieved, spend to save options such as the investment in prevention services, step down of LAC placement types and increased recruitment of in-house foster carers.
8. One system that provides an accurate and true record of placements, resources secured, spend and forecasted of spend and need for LAC and SEND children and young people.
9. Clearly recorded processes which are adhered to by all, available to all, state who is responsible for what and cover all key business of the ART.
10. All contractual arrangements to be compliant with the councils Contract Procedure Rules and Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
11. A strategy to implement a Young Commissioners programme in Reading which will ensure that children and young people have a voice, get involved and influence the commissioning and delivery the services available.
12. An annually updated suit of commissioning documents determining our priority outcomes to include a Market Position/Sufficiency Statement including strategy to develop the market to improve sufficiency in line with forecasted needs, Needs Analysis, Commissioning strategy, procurement strategy and Foster Carer Recruitment Strategy.

### 4.2 Access to Resources Team (ART)

The strategic priority for ensuring the 11 Commissioning Products are in place to achieve the 12 key requirements by March 2020, is to firstly realign all elements of the commissioning and business processes into a co-located, single team responsible for managing the existing disparity of processes and spend and providing an expert knowledge on local resources available to our LAC population. This will be



achieved via the introduction of an Access to Resources team (ART). The ART is expected to commence from the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2017 and a Project Plan is included as appendix A.

The ART will be operating under a 'supermarket model'. Essentially on the shelves will be access to a wide range of services for example: child minding, domiciliary care, outreach, mentoring, foster care, residential services. It is not reasonable to expect lead professionals working with children to have up to date information regarding the range of provision available. As such the ART will maintain this in-depth knowledge of a range of services available in the local area and neighbouring authorities and maintain relationships with these services utilising various contractual arrangements where appropriate. This knowledge and strong (contractual) relationships with a range of services is essential for increasing sufficiency and driving down costs.

The ART will operate both strategically and on an individual basis. As well as leading on commissioning strategies and managing tenders for services, it will receive referrals from a range of lead professionals who require a service for an individual child.

### **Individually**

In relation to placement finding, the ART will consider the referral, working closely with lead professionals to ensure that referral information is strength-based, accurate and useful with the voice of the child at its core. The ART will then be creative and resourceful in providing a choice of placements / services that will meet the child's individual needs. All referrals are unique and referrals will range from seeking a temporary for a child with relatively low needs to co-ordinating a multi-agency team to identify a specialist residential placement for a child with extremely complex needs within a critical timescale. The complexity of the child's needs and the time available are the key factors in finding the most appropriate placement. The most appropriate placement for a child will be based primarily on their presenting need underpinned by the requirement to place them as close to the borough as possible whilst achieving the best value for money. The decision regarding which is the most suitable placement for a child will rest with the Social Worker and their Team Manager and the authorisation of placements will be strictly overseen by those who have the delegated financial authority. The same process will be applied to all referrals and each referral will be 'project managed' by a member of the ART team.

### **Strategically**

The ART will be responsible for leading on market management, co-ordinating and administering referrals, negotiating terms and conditions, invoicing and contract management, dispute resolution and general provider / purchaser enquiries. The ART will be monitored on the basis of achieving the key requirements set out above via the identified commissioning products.

### **Benefits**

It is anticipated that the ART will free up capacity for Social Workers to concentrate on the Social Care part of the role therefore making a significant difference to their work and this has been evidenced elsewhere where an ART is in place.

In order to develop a knowledgeable, experienced, qualified and effective ART team, a number of existing posts will need to be transferred into the team, for example officers from: commissioning, finance, and business support. Some 'New' funding may be necessary to recruit additional team members in order to achieve the statutory outcomes expected of the ART. Any additional investment will be offset against savings that can be made by the functioning ART team and it is anticipated that the cost of the team will be more than covered by the savings that it will achieve.

Currently the Council faces challenges in relation to capturing information about the quality of placements for use in the management of contracts and service development activity. The ART will develop a robust, systematic performance and risk monitoring system that will ensure that they are aware of successes in achieving outcomes or otherwise and the stability of a placement which will ensure that additional services can be provided if necessary or funding negotiations can take place.

## **PART 2**

# **Children and Young People's Interim**

# Commissioning Strategy April 2016 to March 2017

## Outcomes Plan

This plan describes the outcomes to be achieved by the Access to Resources Team (ART) in order to achieve the Commissioning Products and Key Requirements identified in Strategy, maximising the potential of children, young people and families in Reading over the next three years, from 2017 to 2020.

The ART is a new team expected to commence from the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2017. The team will be resourced through existing staff within Reading Borough Council. A SMART action plan to achieve the outcomes described in this plan will be developed and carried out by the new ART.

In May 2016 Ofsted carried out a full inspection of the Council's services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and a review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Ofsted found the Council's children's services to be inadequate and published their findings on the 5th of August 2016. As a result of the inspection an Independent Commissioner has been appointed to review the Council's ability to address their areas for development. The Council are currently working to an Improvement Plan with an ambition to have continually made substantial improvements so that the Council's children's services are no longer inadequate by the time that Ofsted return. This outcome plan is aligned with priorities set out in the Council's improvement plan which is based on the recommendations made by Ofsted.

Key Criteria	Outcomes	Completed by:
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ART functions are available at all times during office hours.</li> <li>There is a clear governance structure in place which assesses on a quarterly basis the performance and quality of the ART and its outcomes.</li> <li>There is a clear ART structure with defined roles and responsibilities with each member of the team aware of their own remit and taking accountability of the performance of their area.</li> </ul>	August 2017
Placements /Services for individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 100% of placements/services, review dates and end dates are recorded. At these points all placements/services are reviewed for outcomes achieved and whether the placement type could be 'stepped down', brought closer to Reading or the cost negotiated down. In addition those reaching age 16 are identified for staying put or semi-independent arrangements.</li> <li>Less than 25% of placements or services are secured under 'emergency' procedures.</li> <li>In 75% of placement breakdowns, evidence can be provided as to how the breakdown was attempted to be avoided by ART and/or Social Care colleagues and the impact on the child/young person was minimised.</li> <li>80% of Placements or services secured are within 20 miles of the YPs (pre-LAC) address.</li> <li>In 75% of complex needs cases the decision to place a YP and who to place them with has multi-agency input and decision making from SEN, YOS, Virtual Head, CAMHS and social care staff plus any other relevant professions.</li> <li>75% of foster placements are made with the Council's in-house foster carers or with neighbouring authorities foster carers.</li> <li>75% of External placements and services secured via the ART are via pre-made contractual arrangements such as frameworks or block contracts.</li> </ul>	April 2019
Relationships/Joint working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% of referrals received by ART are quality checked prior to being sent to Providers from all sectors with regards to the accuracy of assessment, and that the criteria and specification is presented in a way that is meaningful with desired outcomes included.</li> <li>Evidence can be provided of the ART supporting and working to Council and directorate policy, procedure and processes.</li> <li>90% of social care staff feel that they understand the remit of the ART, how they can secure the services of ART and their own role within the ART process.</li> <li>100% of social worker inductions include training on the ART process.</li> <li>Evidence can be provided of exploring options of collaborative working with other LAs both in terms of contracting and best practice. Where the option exists a formal arrangement is drawn up.</li> <li>A programme of developing Young Commissioners has been developed which ensures that children and young people have a voice, get involved and influence the commissioning and delivery of services.</li> </ul>	September 2018
Cost /Savings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 90% of placements or services for individuals initial given costs (not pre-agreed under contract) have been negotiated and brought down.</li> </ul>	December 2017

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of savings/cost avoidance achieved by ART are recorded on a shared database.</li> <li>• The ART have a clear, evidence based savings/cost avoidance strategy which is co-produced and written by all members of the ART.</li> <li>• ART have regular meetings with finance to ensure that both departments share the same data and have the same access to up to date financial information.</li> <li>• 100% of placements or services secured have been subject to review of whether health contributions should be made.</li> <li>• The ART is able to evidence an awareness of the budget(s) within which they are working and report on a monthly basis the spend and where appropriate the residual budget.</li> <li>• In 100% of cases where it is retrospectively found that partner contributions should have been made there is evidence of the recovery of funds being requested and management alerted if the funding is not forthcoming.</li> </ul>	
Business Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each month a report covering ART activity, outcomes, data and forecasting is provided to DMT</li> <li>• 80% of placements, services and providers are set up on Mosaic by the end of the following working day after the request has been received.</li> <li>• 100% of placement searches and sourcing of services for LAC/SEND individuals and family are conducted following recorded, clearly set-out best practice processes and procedures which are available to all.</li> <li>• 100% of Live spreadsheets used by the ART will be audited for completion and accuracy on a fortnightly basis.</li> <li>• 100% of LAC/16+ and SEND children and Young People are recorded on an ART spreadsheet which contains all information required in order to effectively report on ART activity undertaken on their behalf.</li> <li>• 80% of invoices are processed within 2 working days of receipt.</li> <li>• 80% of invoices are checked against the contract and ART can evidence that it only pays for actual services provided</li> <li>• A current, annually updated business continuity plan is in place for the ART with clear process maps for all critical business.</li> </ul>	March 2018
Quality monitoring /Risk Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of Placements or services secured are subject to a quality monitoring and risk assessment process which provides a 'warning' when placements or stability of LAC is at risk leading to an Increase in planned placements and reduction of emergency or urgent placements.</li> <li>• 100% of placements or ongoing services secured are reviewed for quality and value for money no less than every three months in conjunction with social care staff and partners where appropriate.</li> </ul>	November 2017
Market relationships /development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ART are aware of 100% of the LAC/16+ bed spaces available within 20 miles the borough and are aware when beds are available.</li> <li>• 100% of known (potential) providers in the LOCAL market for our LAC/16+/SEND children and YP are invited to a forum(s) to discuss current and forecasted need and field developments.</li> <li>• 100% of the services for LAC/16+/SEND YP within 20 miles of the borough have had positive contact initiated</li> </ul>	September 2017

	<p>by ART within the previous 3 months.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation and needs analysis are used to understand the types of services and placements required by LAC/SEND and the ART have a catalogue of providers able to deliver these services with pre-agreed costs and terms where possible.</li> </ul>	
Contract Management /Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of contracts will have an agreed contract monitoring schedule that is adhered to and evidences service delivery and the achievement of outcomes</li> <li>• 100% of procurements are carried out in line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and (inter)national statute.</li> <li>• 100% of procurements are carried out with value for money as a key criterion for qualification/award.</li> <li>• All new contracts and specifications have been standardised where possible with a focus on safeguarding and outcomes.</li> <li>• 0% of contracts are 'rolled-over' unless there is a solid business case decision to do so which has been agreed by the DCS and it can be done under the terms of the contract.</li> </ul>	April 2019
Needs analysis and strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ART understand the needs of LAC/16+ children and YP in the Borough via a comprehensive annually updated LAC/16+ needs assessment which is informed by the local JSNA.</li> <li>• The ART can demonstrate a good knowledge of the local market for SEND children and YP and their families based on a comprehensive annually updated SEND needs assessment which is informed by the local JSNA.</li> <li>• The ART will have an annually updated Market Position Statement which is a published document and will have an annually updated market failure response.</li> <li>• The ART can demonstrate that all of their work is carried out in line with an ART strategy and all activity can be directly linked to the achievement of ART outcomes, including those recommended by Ofsted.</li> </ul>	April 2018

# Appendix A

## ART Project Plan

### 1. Overview

The mandate for this project is a collective need for cost avoidance and improvements to the directorate as described and explored as follows:

- CMT paper written by Ann Marie Dodds and delivered on the 12<sup>th</sup> of November 2016
- Budget sub agreement on the 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2016
- Ofsted report August 2016 and resulting Children's Services Learning & Improvement Plan
- Commissioning Team Needs Analysis October 2016
- Budget Proposals 2017-2020 to Narrow the Budget Gap – Rachel Musson – Policy Committee 05/12/2016.
- Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy for Looked after Children and Young People in Reading - March 2017.

The key features of the project are the creation of a single co-located Access to Resources Team realigning all elements of the commissioning and business processes into a co-located, single team responsible for managing this disparity of processes and spend and having an expert knowledge on local resources available to our LAC and SEND population.

The project will commence with immediate effect and conclude on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2017.

### 2. Objectives and key requirements

*Objective:*

The realignment of functions across Children's Services and Commissioning into a single team with a clear governance and accountability structure that addresses permanence for children within the financial constraint of the Local Authority whilst delivering value of spend across children's services.

*Key requirements/Outcomes:*

1. One team who are a single point of contact during office hours for all LAC/SEND internal and external resource needs.
2. Increased placement stability/permanence for children.
3. Reduced average cost for all types of placement/resource.
4. Optimum spread of placements across type to secure the best outcomes and spend for all LAC.
5. Majority of placements/services within 20 miles of pre LAC/home address.
6. Greater choice of placement/options with placements agreed on the basis of need not availability.
7. More time for Social Workers to be carrying out work directly with families.
8. The delivery of agreed savings identified across 2017-2020.

9. Improved individual and service contract management increasing quality, reducing risk and ensuring value for money.
10. One system that provides an accurate and true record of placements, resources secured, spend and forecasted of spend and need for LAC and SEND children and young people.
11. All contractual arrangements are compliant with the councils Contract Procedure Rules and Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
12. Children and young people have a voice, get involved and influence the commissioning and delivery the services available.

In May 2016 Ofsted inspected the Council's services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and subsequently published a report on the 5th of August 2016 which stated that they found these services to be inadequate. Following the Ofsted report a Children's Services Learning & Improvement Plan was developed to address the recommendations within the report. The ART project is expected to support the delivery of the following recommendations on achievement of the above key requirements/outcomes:

1. Reading Borough Council will secure a permanent and competent children's services workforce to deliver responsive and safe services. (Recommendation 1)
2. Good quality management oversight will ensure that children and their families are not subject to delay and achieve positive outcomes. (Recommendation 7)
3. There are sound arrangements to plan for and achieve permanency where the decision is that a child will not be able to return home. Looked-after children have access to high quality care planning, review and support. (Recommendation 12)
4. The Placement Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy is effective in ensuring the local authority has sufficient breadth and quality of placements to meet the needs of children looked-after in Reading. (Recommendation 14)
5. All children and young referred to Reading Children services will receive a timely, appropriate, and consistent response that meets their individual needs. (Recommendation 2)
6. All children and young people living in private fostering arrangements are assessed by the local authority and are in receipt of appropriate levels of support. (Recommendation 11)
7. Care leavers have the skills and emotional resilience to move to independence, and are able to successfully access education, employment, training and safe housing. (Recommendation 16)
8. All children and young people who are in the care of the LA are provided with high quality care and support.



Reading Borough Council functions as an effective corporate parent.  
(Recommendation 13)

### 3. Approach and schedule

The project will be broken down into 4 parts:

#### *Step 1 – Storming 06/02/2017 - 31/03/2017*

- Co-locate and integrate processes for fostering and residential placements so that there is one referral, search and recording process for all placements.
- Confirm roles and responsibilities of those involved with the project and provide a briefing to all.
- Identify the users and suppliers of the current Children's Services and Commissioning functions that will be used to set up the ART services for **LAC**. Collate their processes, the data they hold and current resources.
- Make proposals for immediate process changes to address efficiency and effectiveness of **LAC** spend within the current resources and locations of ART suppliers.
- Establish our baseline against the outcomes and products to be delivered so that the impact of the ART can be assessed.
- Map current resources to those needed to achieve ART outcomes.
- Workshops with senior suppliers and senior users to establish their ART requirements and outcomes.
  - Establish a process for co-locating an ART effectively resourced from all suppliers.
- Find suitable location for ART

#### *Step 2 - Forming 01/04/2017 - 31/07/2017*

- Co-locate ART team members
- Identify the users and suppliers of the current Children's Services and Commissioning functions that will be used to set up the ART services for **SEND**. Collate their processes, the data they hold and current resources.
- Make proposals for immediate process changes to address efficiency and effectiveness of **SEND** spend within the current resources and locations of ART suppliers.

- Workshop with ART to develop new processes/ establish leads for developing new (evidence-based) processes to build on the baselines identified for all **LAC** products with a particular emphasis on the savings/cost avoidance strategy.
- Workshop with ART to develop new processes/ establish leads for developing new (evidence-based) processes to build on the baselines identified for all **SEND** products with a particular emphasis on the savings/cost avoidance strategy.
- Consult with affected teams to produce new structure chart and commence recruitment/JD changes.
- Agree the ART accountability for spend/savings against targets given by DMT across the directorate.
- Brief ART users of new proposed processes and agree mutual expectations and dependencies in order to secure the successful delivery of the service.
- Ensure that ART processes and procedures are on Tri-X.
- Ensure any new resources/infrastructures needed in terms of mosaic/fusion/oracle and training etc are in place in order to provide performance dashboard.

*Step 3 - Norming 01/08/2017 - 31/10/2017*

- Business as usual with restructured, co-located team providing a regular performance dashboard for scrutiny by governance group.

*Step 4 - Performing 01/11/2017 - 31/12/2017*

- Review of ART.
- ART will produce evidence of products being in place.
- ART will provide evidence of outcomes increasing.
- The ART savings/cost avoidance and projections plan will be scrutinised.
- Challenges will be made by the governance board and a response time and action plan provided by ART within an agreed timeframe.
- Agree a programme of regular ART reviews.

#### **4. Major Deliverables and key milestones**

*Major deliverables/Products:*

1. One skilled, experienced and knowledgeable team with single line management and a clear governance and accountability structure which will provide scrutiny and control.

2. Tighter control of placement and resource budgets via a single recording process used for all internal and external spend and identifying or recovering funding from external sources.
3. A clear performance dashboard with analysis of all spend, placement data such as type and location and forecasting of need and spend.
4. A new single process for effectively sourcing, negotiating and recording all internal and external placements.
5. A new single process for effectively sourcing, negotiating and recording all internal and external additional resources such as short breaks or home care.
6. New processes for effectively providing administrative and business support such as invoice processing and managing the mosaic/ART interface.
7. A new single process for effective management of all placement and service contracts including monitoring of quality and risk and assessing value for money
8. A savings/cost avoidance strategy which will address commissioning decisions such as spot, block or framework contract options, mechanisms to recover funding if outcomes have not been achieved, spend to save options such as the investment in prevention services, step down of LAC placement types and increased recruitment of in-house foster carers.
9. An annually updated suit of commissioning documents determining our priority outcomes to include a Market Position/Sufficiency Statement including strategy to develop the market to improve sufficiency in line with forecasted needs, Needs Analysis, Commissioning strategy, procurement strategy and Foster Carer Recruitment Strategy.
10. Excellent relationships and knowledge of the local market with opportunities for joint working and forums to develop provision.
11. A strategy to implement a Young Commissioners programme in Reading.

## **5. Scope**

The Project will be responsible for:

- ✓ Providing a clear brief of the project and what the ART team will be expected to deliver.
- ✓ Identifying a baseline from which efficiencies and savings are required to be made including data on internal and external LAC and SEND placements and services, resources, processes and spend.
- ✓ Identify immediate efficiencies and changes that are not dependent on the ART co-location.
- ✓ Establishing a co-located Access to Resources Team consisting of existing Council staff who are currently responsible for an element of the ART process but potentially sit in different teams.
- ✓ Establishing ART outcomes and ensuring that the resources available are sufficient for the outcomes to be achieved. Where it is unlikely that resources available will match those that are needed the project manager will ensure this has been clearly flagged to the project board.

- ✓ Ensuring the ART has developed processes that will effectively and accurately record and monitor spend, and value for money against outcomes for internal and external LAC and SEND placements and services.
- ✓ Ensuring the ART has the resources required to effectively conduct analysis of need and develop strategies to address those areas of need such as the sufficiency strategy or foster carer recruitment strategy.
- ✓ Acknowledging the savings that have been set against the creation of an ART team to be achieved incrementally until and including the 2019/20 financial year and provide an action plan covering how the savings are expected to be achieved.

The Project will not be responsible for:

- ✗ Developing a provision that can deliver out of hours placements.
- ✗ Making savings or achieving ART outcomes as a direct result of the set-up of an ART. The savings will be achieved through the outcomes efficiencies and best practice delivered by the ART.
- ✗ Performance of teams or individuals who work with or under the remit of the ART. This responsibility will remain as per current arrangements until consultation and restructuring has been completed at which time responsibility will change to reflect the new structure but again will not be the responsibility of the project.
- ✗ Setting budgets or agreeing to spend outside of the designation of the roles with the ART - decisions regarding spend will not be undertaken by the ART but proposals will be made as to how spend can be reduced or recovered against existing budgets and assurance will be given that value for money is being achieved against ongoing spend.

## **6. Organisation, roles and responsibilities**

The following is a list of the major project roles, who will be undertaking them and the extent of their responsibilities.

- **Executive: Ann Marie Dodds** – Ultimately responsible for the project.
- **Project Board and Project Assurance: Directorate Management Team (including Finance and HR), Graham Wilkins** – Has the authority to direct the project, make decisions, allocate resources where necessary and be able to represent the wider organisation and is responsible for ensuring that communications are effective between stakeholders.
- **Project Manager: Michelle Tenreiro Perez**– Has the authority to run the project on a day-to-day basis on behalf of the project board within the constraints laid down by them.
- **Project Team: Michelle Tenreiro Perez, Jenny Quinn** – carries out day to day work on the project and coordinates communication.
- **Senior Users: Ali Matthews, Andrea Keddo-Powell, Karl Davis, Jean Ash, Martlie Swart, Grace Fagan, Siobhan Egan, Gina Carpenter, Deborah Hunter, Corrine Dishington, Lisa Wilkins, Sheila Reynolds, Clare**

**Houlton, Dan Neal, Myles Milner, Gill Dunlop, Theresa Shortland** – The senior users are responsible for specifying the needs of those who will use the projects products, for user liaison with the project management team and for monitoring that the solution will meet those needs within the constraints of the business case in terms of quality, functionality and ease of use.

- **Senior suppliers: Michelle Tenreiro Perez, Jenny Quinn, Paula Ward, Paula Gledhill, John Littlefair, Stephen Saunders, Sue O’Bradovich, Pauline Lennox, Maryam Makki** – Represent the interests of those designing, developing, facilitating, procuring and implementing the projects products. The senior suppliers are responsible for the quality of the products delivered and the technical integrity of the project.

## **7. Assumptions**

The following is a list of the assumptions that have been used in preparing the project plan.

- The savings to be made and objectives to be achieved will remain the same.
- Teams will be able to extrapolate the time spent on ART activities and provide a resource.
- Key staff will remain within the organisation and will be available to the project.
- A location for the ART will be available.

## **8. Implementation strategy**

The project deliverables will have a phased beginning with LAC processes, data and current resources being collated and assessed for efficiencies and effectiveness first. This assessment will inform the resources needed within the ART for effectively addressing LAC spend.

The project GANTT chart will further detail the implementation of the ART.

## **9. Risk and issue management**

Initial risk considerations:

- This project is dependent on many different teams within the directorate understanding the aims of the project and sharing responsibility for its implementation and success. The project board have a strong role in this and need to be able to provide the backing needed to effect change. Similarly without regular scrutiny and support from DMT the project is at risk of slippage or scope creep which are likely to affect its outcomes.
- There is a risk of the scope changing as the project progresses. As those involved increase and workshops are held to establish what the ART can achieve for its users the opportunities an ART can provide may not be compatible with the resources available. There will be a number of estimates within the project in terms of time taken to complete tasks and volumes of future work and these represent a risk.

- The main deliverable of this project is change management. The Council work within a infrastructure of systems for example electronic systems and cultural systems as well as processes, both political and non-political. These can take some time to change and are subject to barriers which the project must take into consideration.
- Whilst this project is intended to put an ART in place at the Council, staffed by Council employees it is well understood that effective commissioning benefits from the consideration of joint working with other commissioning partners and is dependent on its relationship with the market. Whilst these stakeholders may not directly affect the set-up of the ART they will have a significant impact on its outcomes.
- There is a risk to the project that key project team members will leave. In addition there is potential that the ART team will need to acquire new skills and training which may affect the timeliness of ART outcomes.
- This project has a dependency on electronic system for project management purposes, data collection and analysis and ongoing processes of the ART. Electronic systems are fallible and represent a risk to the project.
- The delivery of this project is reliant on staff time and availability. It can be assumed that all Council staff are working to capacity and as such any time devoted to this project will have an knock-on effect on their day to day work. Staff disengagement in the processor taking longer to respond to requests is therefore a high risk to this project.
- Changes to process and procedure may pose a risk to the current way of working, for example a change in invoice processing may temporarily negatively affect the timeliness of the process.
- The feasibility of the project hasn't been tested and will be assessed on an on-going basis throughout the project. This represents a risk of making assumptions as part of the expected outcomes of the project. This is particularly the case with the savings expected to be made which were agreed prior to the business case or project plan being developed.
- There is a risk that significant changes within the Council may affect the ability of this project to achieve its objective. These changes may be due to the re-inspection by Ofsted and the DFE or the financial position that the Council are currently in.
- Although users of the ART will be heavily consulted as part of the project there is a risk that once in place they feel the ART cannot provide them with the processes or assurances that they need in order to delegate work. This presents the risk of duplication and increased spend.

## **10. Quality assurance and control strategy**

Classification: OFFICIAL

An update will be presented to the Project Board fortnightly via DMT meetings. The update will include all sections within the project plan and GANTT chart.

Classification: OFFICIAL



**Reading**  
Borough Council  

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## Appendix B

# Looked After Children Sufficiency Needs Analysis

October 2016



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## Section 1 - Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose and Structure of Needs Analysis

Children and young people who are looked after by their local authority rather than their parents are among the most vulnerable groups in our society. As corporate parents, it is Reading's responsibility to keep them safe, make sure their experiences in care are positive, and improve their ongoing life chances.

The purpose of this needs assessment is to bring together datasets to build a profile of Looked After Children (LAC) in Reading. The aim is to inform the Commissioning Team about the characteristics and needs of this client group in order to develop appropriate strategies, plans and commissioning arrangements to meet current and projected needs and to effectively target resources. The needs analysis will include information on services that Reading currently uses, provision in the local area and how the LAC budget is being spent. This needs analysis is structured across the following broad areas:

- **Demographics of Reading:** Analysis of a range of information that aims to provide background and insight into external factors impacting on the changing characteristics and profile of Looked After Children in Reading. This includes the demographic profile of the 0-19yrs olds in Reading and data on immigration and child poverty which may impact on the size and needs of this cohort.
- **Looked After Children Profiles:** Analysis of Looked After Children data which will indicate the size and needs of the LAC population and how Reading compares with other areas in England. This section will also look at those on the edge of care.
- **Services Commissioned by Reading:** Analysis of services currently provided, who they are provided to, how much they cost, where and in what volume. This information will be used to inform work on local market development and consider alternative commissioning arrangements where appropriate.
- **What young people tell us:** This section focuses on the feedback we receive from young people about what their needs and priorities are. This includes feedback from review meetings and the result of an Ofsted led national survey.

### 1.2 Comparator Local Authorities

For the purpose of making comparisons between Reading and other local authorities, data from a group of 10 demographically similar local authorities has been used. They have been selected using the LAIT benchmarking tool and all are defined as 'close' statistical neighbours, which is the middle one of five rankings of closeness. Our statistical neighbours are:

- Sutton
- Bristol
- Milton Keynes
- Bedford Borough
- Brighton & Hove
- Sheffield
- Barnet
- Southampton
- Derby

- Hillingdon

### 1.3 Executive Summary

Reading's population is growing, and the 0-19 year old population is increasing more rapidly than the town's general population. 24% of Reading's population is aged 0-19 years and the 0-4 years age group is the largest. 2011 Census data shows a 34% increase in the number of 0-4 year olds in Reading in the last ten years, the second highest rise in the South East. The number of 0-19 year olds is projected to increase significantly over the next 8 years.

Reading's ethnic diversity is increasing, particularly among the child population. The latest School Census records a 51% BME population and live births data shows 43% of babies born in Reading are to mothers born outside the UK. The number of children with English as a second language is over 60% in some schools, and 15% of the total Reading population has a main language that is not English. This diversity is not reflected in the Looked After Children (LAC) population, however, which indicates that there could be an unmet need among BME communities who are less likely to present to Social Services.

The number of LAC in Reading decreased between March 2012 and March 2016, however it has seen an unprecedented increase of around 19.5% in the last six months. The rate of LAC per 10,000 0-17 year olds at 31 March 2016 had decreased to be in line with England's average, though both have seen a small increase in the last two years. Given the projected increase in the 0-19 population, it is likely that we will see greater numbers of children becoming looked after and children on the edge of care who require support to prevent them from becoming looked after. Reading has seen a smaller number of new LAC entrants over the past 4 years than our statistical neighbours, but this number is beginning to rise. We are also likely to see an increase in the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) due to the national dispersal scheme and those arriving from Calais.

Most of Reading's LAC are between the ages of 10-15 years and there are slightly more males than females. 11% of LAC in Reading have a recorded disability, and the most prevalent of these is learning disability. Most are on a full care order, which has consistently been the most common legal status for a looked after child, however the number of children accommodated under Section 20 of the Children Act has seen an increase. UASC are accommodated under Section 20.

The primary reason for a child becoming looked after is abuse or neglect, and this proportion in Reading is higher than England's average. This is also the primary reason for children being assessed to be in need. Most children leave care to move into a family environment, and Reading's rate of adoption is higher than that of our statistical neighbours and the rest of Berkshire.

Children leaving care at age 18 are not always found suitable accommodation. Reading is performing below its comparators in this area. Reading is also performing below its comparators in the number of young people leaving care who are in education, employment or training at age 19.

Placement stability for Reading's LAC is good with 10% experiencing 3 or more placements in 2015/16. The majority of LAC are placed in foster care and most of these are with independent fostering agency (IFA) registered carers rather than in-house carers. IFA placements are more expensive than in-house placements and are less likely to be located

in Reading. Only 30% of LAC are placed within Reading's boundary, which is well below the national average. Reading is also performing below the national average in the number of placements within 20 miles of the child's home address.

In general, Reading pays above the national average rates for LAC placements. This is often due to the lack of availability of lower priced placements and the urgent need to place a child quickly. This is partly due to an under-developed local market and partly due to the fact that Reading is a small unitary authority surrounded by several others who are all competing for the same local placements. More robust contract monitoring of high cost placements could increase value for money and reduce spend. It has also been noted in an independent review of residential childcare in England that local authorities could do more collaborative commissioning work to negotiate better rates for residential placements.

We do not have adequate feedback from looked after children in Reading about their experiences of being in care and what is important to them when making placements. Feedback collected nationally by Ofsted highlights the main themes of what is important to young people within a placement, however this does not cover issues such as placement location, stability, local issues and the service they receive from Reading Borough Council, which would be relevant to commissioning services.

More work needs to be done in Reading to develop the local market and ensure that as many looked after children as possible are placed close to home, in appropriate placements and are assisted to leave care with suitable accommodation, adequate support and a meaningful activity.

## **Section 2 - Demographic Profile of Reading**

This section provides an overview of the changing demographic profile in Reading, focusing on the population growth and population projections for 0-19 year olds, the ethnicity profile for this population group, migration data and information on the number of young people living in poverty.

### **2.1 Population Profile 0-19 years**

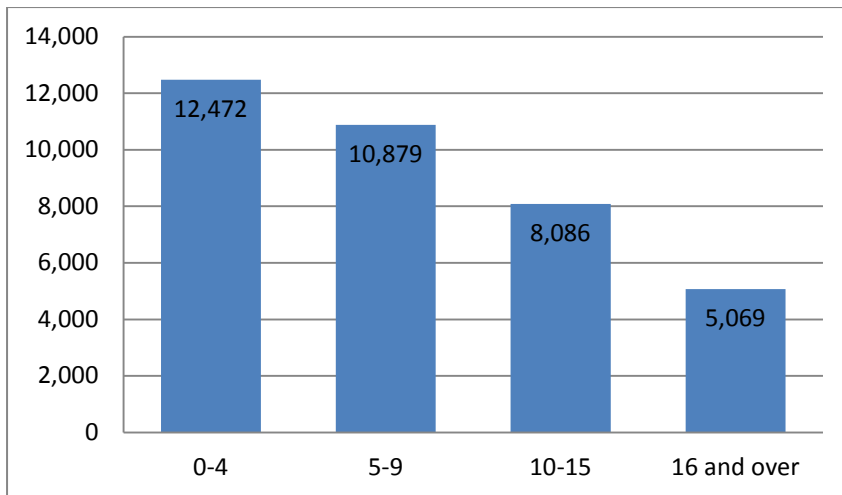
Population growth is a factor that impacts on potential demand for social services. Census data from 2001 and 2011 indicates that the population of 0-19 year olds has increased from 34,100 in 2001 to 38,300 in 2011, an increase of 12%. This is greater than the overall population increase in Reading. 0-19 year olds make up 24% of the population of Reading<sup>1</sup>. During that time period annual estimates have indicated continued population growth.

Figure 1 below shows that the 0-19 population is highest in the 0-4 years age group and it tails off in the older age groups, the greatest drop coming between the 10-15 years age group and the 16+ years age group.

Figure 1: Number of 0-19 year olds in Reading by age group

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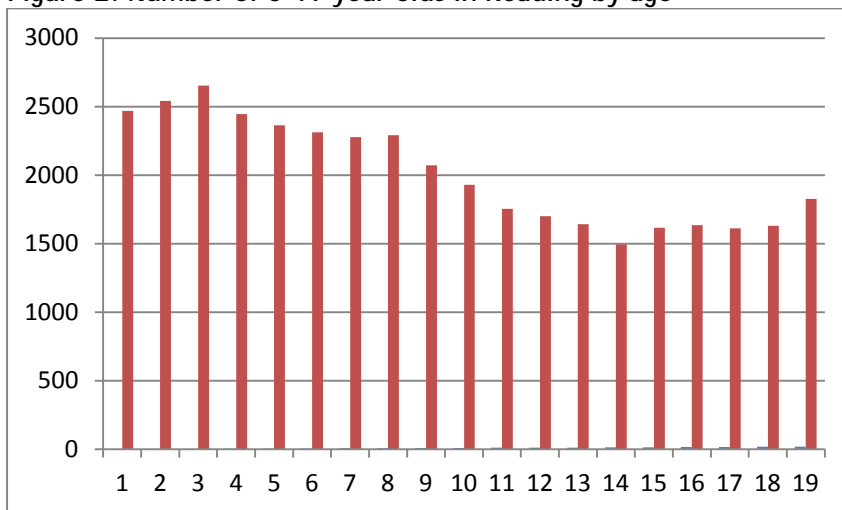
<sup>1</sup> <http://ons.gov.uk/ons/taxonomy/index.html?nscl=Population#tab-data-tables>



Source: ONS mid-2015 estimates

This can be broken down further by year of age. Figure 2 tells us that the 0-19 population peaks in the pre-school years at the age of 4 and is at its lowest in the early teens at the age of 14.

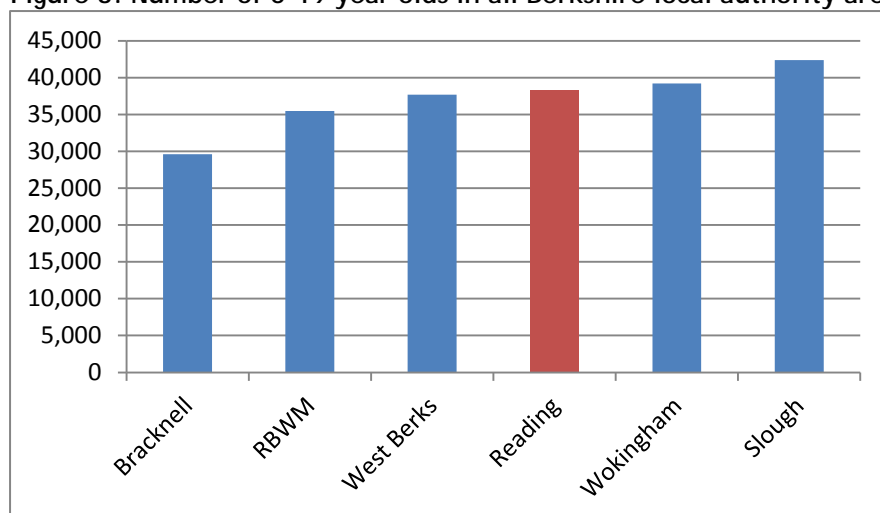
Figure 2: Number of 0-19 year olds in Reading by age



Source: ONS mid-2015 estimates

Figure 3 below compares the number of 0-19 year olds in Reading to the number in other Berkshire local authority areas:

**Figure 3: Number of 0-19 year olds in all Berkshire local authority areas**



Source: ONS mid-2015 estimates

It can be seen that Reading has the third highest number of 0-19 year olds, which is slightly above the average number of 0-19 year olds over the six Berkshire unitaries.

Table 1 below shows the percentage of each Berkshire local authority’s population that is made up of 0-19 year olds.

**Table 1 - Percentage of population made up of 0-19 year olds**

Local Authority	Percentage made up by 0-19 year olds
Slough	29%
Bracknell	25%
Reading	24%
West Berkshire	24%
Wokingham	24%
RBWM	24%

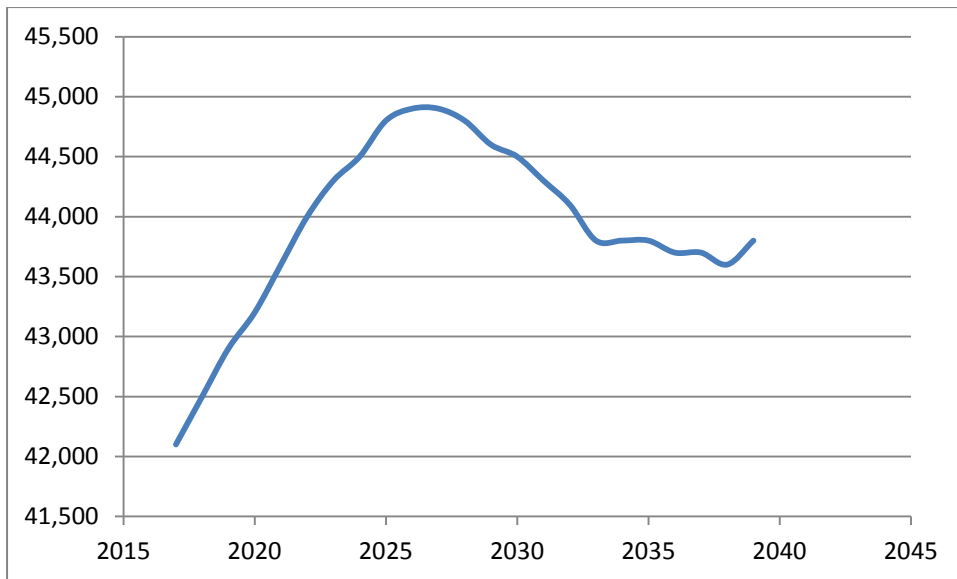
Source: ONS mid-2015 estimates

As can be seen, the percentage of 0-19 year olds in Reading’s population is very similar to that of the other Berkshire authorities, with the exception of Slough.

## 2.2 Population projections

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) produces Subnational Population Projections (SNPPs) which aim to support local authorities in developing future service provision which take account of increasing and/or changing demand. SNPPs are demographic, trend-based projections indicating the likely size and age structure of the future population. They are based on levels of births, deaths and migration observed over a 5-year reference period leading up to the base year. Figure 4 shows the population projections for 0-19 year olds in Reading from 2017-2039. Population growth is forecast for this cohort, reaching a peak in 2026 before levelling off and fluctuating at a lower rate from 2032 onwards.

**Figure 4: 0-19 population projections 2017-2039**



Source: Office of National Statistics

At its peak in 2025, the 0-19 population is projected to be 7.6% higher than at 2016, and by 2032 to be 5.7% higher than at 2016.

### 2.3 Ethnicity Profile 0-19 years

Understanding the ethnic profile of the 0-19 year old population in the borough supports service development and the commissioning of services that need to respond to the growing diversity and complexity of the local population.

Information from Reading’s Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) tells us that in 2011 the largest proportion of the population (66.9%) identified themselves as 'White British'. This proportion had decreased from 86.8% in the previous census and was considerably lower than the national figure of 80.9%, suggesting greater diversity in Reading in recent years and in comparison with other local authority areas.<sup>2</sup>

Changes to Reading's population have been largely driven by international migration. In the 2011 Census, the largest numbers of residents born outside of the UK were born in India, Poland and Pakistan, and these populations are clearly reflected in the ethnicity profile of the population described in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Ethnic profile of Reading

Ethnic Group	Reading 2001	Reading 2011	England 2011
White British	86.8%	66.9%	80.9%
Other White	4.2%	7.9%	4.6%
Mixed	2.4%	3.9%	2.2%
Indian	1.7%	4.2%	2.6%
Pakistani	2.7%	4.5%	2.1%
Other Asian	0.8%	3.9%	2.3%

<sup>2</sup> JSNA 2016-19



Black Caribbean	2.2%	2.1%	1.1%
Black African	1.6%	4.9%	1.8%
Black Other	0.4%	0.7%	0.5%
Chinese	0.7%	1.0%	0.7%
Other ethnic group	0.7%	0.9%	1.0%

Sources: ONS, 2001 Census KS06, SASPAC Version 6, 2011 Table KS201EW

Data from the 2011 Census enables analysis of data by age and ethnicity. Reading's younger population is more diverse than the older population. Table 3 below indicates that there is a higher proportion of residents aged 0-19 years from BME communities compared to residents classified as 'white' than in the general Reading population, and the largest proportion of residents classified as 'mixed ethnic group' is also aged between 0-19 years.

Table 3: Ethnic profile of 0-19 population in Reading

Ethnic Group	Number of 0-19 year olds	Percentage of 0-19 year olds
White British	22,519	53.8%
Other White	2,337	5.6%
Mixed	7,184	17.1%
Indian	1,634	3.9%
Pakistani	2,604	6.2%
Other Asian	1,753	4.2%
Black Caribbean	612	1.5%
Black African	2,029	4.8%
Black Other	465	1.1%
Chinese	344	0.8%
Other ethnic group	381	0.9%

Source: ONS, Census 2011

While 46.2% of the 0-19 population belongs to an ethnic group other than White British, this percentage increases to 50.6% for the school population, compared to 25% in England overall.

## 2.4 Immigration

International migration is a key driver of population growth in Reading, and the number of people coming to live in Reading is considerably higher than in neighbouring boroughs. Consequently, Reading has a higher proportion of residents born outside of the UK than the South East and the UK as a whole.

The JSNA tells us that a range of ONS indicators consistently point to considerably higher rates of net international migration, and people born outside of the UK who are resident in Reading than across the South East and the UK. Figure 5 demonstrates that these are established trends, with the estimated rate of non-British nationals in the population significantly higher in Reading than elsewhere in the South East since at least 2010. Both peaked in 2011 but, following a slight decrease in 2012 and 2013, increased again in 2014.

Figure 5: Estimates of Non-British Nationals per 1,000 Resident Population



Source: Office of National Statistics, Migration Indicators Tool (August 2015)

An estimated 40,000 people living in Reading in 2014 were born outside of the UK, representing 25.3% of the total population<sup>3</sup>. Table 4 below shows the number of individuals born in the EU, the rest of Europe and outside of Europe and as a percentage of the total population.

Table 4 - Reading Population by Place of Birth

Place of Birth	Number in Reading Population (Census 2011)	% of Reading Population (Census 2011)
UK	177,078	75.2%
Other EU	11,696	7.5%
Other Europe	1,274	0.8%
Other	25,650	16.5%

Source: RBC Census 2011 detailed factsheet, JSNA

Local authority level data for Reading suggests that recent population increases have been driven by international migration (49.5%) and natural change (50.5%). Net international migration into Reading in the year to mid-2014 (the latest published data) was 1,583. These additional people accounted for 0.98% of the total population in mid-2014. This compares to 0.38% in the South East and 0.4% in the UK.<sup>4</sup>

Net internal migration for the South East indicates that almost 20,000 additional people were living in areas of the South East in 2014, after moving from other areas of the UK, accounting for almost a quarter of the annual increase in total South East population. In the same period, Reading saw a net decrease in internal migration of 1,493 people, indicating that more people left Reading for other parts of the UK than came to Reading. However, Reading has seen an increase in the number of children in the population,

<sup>3</sup> JSNA

<sup>4</sup> ONS 2015

suggesting that those considering their children's social and environmental conditions may remain within the Borough.<sup>5</sup>

## 2.5 Deprivation and Poverty

For more information, see the Poverty Strategy and needs analysis here:

<http://www.reading.gov.uk/tacklingpoverty>

There is a substantial body of evidence of a strong association between family poverty and the likelihood of a child experiencing abuse or neglect. L.H. Pelton recently concluded in his review of more than 30 years of studies, 'There is overwhelming evidence that poverty and low income are strongly related to child abuse and neglect as well as to the severity of maltreatment.'<sup>6</sup>

The Child Poverty Act 2010 says 'A child is taken to be living in poverty if the child experiences socio-economic disadvantage'. By 'socio-economic disadvantage' the government means 'lacking parental resources and/or opportunities to participate in meaningful activities, services and relationships'. Child poverty can be summarised as a child living in a household that has less than 60% of the national median income.<sup>7</sup>

Reading has the second highest percentage of children from low income families in Berkshire, based on the number of children in families receiving working tax credit or child tax credit. However, at 17.8% this is slightly below the national average. This figure has remained relatively stable since 2012, ranging between 18.8% and 17.8% during this period.

Table 5: Numbers and Ages of Children in Low Income Families

Area	Children in families in receipt of WTC or CTC (<60% median income) or IS/JSA				% of Children in low-income families
	Age of child				
	0 - 4	5 - 10	11 - 15	16 - 19	All Children
England	689,470	680,415	484,125	243,000	18.0%
Slough	2,265	2,435	1,630	795	18.1%
Reading	2,200	2,075	1,375	585	17.8%
Bracknell Forest	885	910	565	235	10.0%
West Berkshire	1,095	1,010	720	365	9.2%
Windsor and Maidenhead	800	815	655	290	8.3%
Wokingham	660	690	495	250	5.9%

Source: Department for Work and Pensions, May 2015

The number of children in each age group shown Table 5 above is broadly in line with the proportion of children in each age group in the 0-19 population overall so, as we may expect, the highest number of children in families in receipt of these tax credits is in the 0-4 age group, as there are more children in this age group in Reading.

<sup>5</sup> JSNA

<sup>6</sup>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265174382\\_The\\_continuing\\_role\\_of\\_material\\_factors\\_in\\_child\\_maltreatment\\_and\\_placement](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265174382_The_continuing_role_of_material_factors_in_child_maltreatment_and_placement)

<sup>7</sup> Child Poverty Act 2010: a short guide, 2014

The Pupil Premium is the additional targeted funding for publicly funded schools in England to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils, closing the gap between them and their peers. Allocation of the Pupil Premium is also used as a proxy to indicate the number of children living in poverty in local authority areas and in schools. 28.4% of Reading pupils are eligible for the Pupil Premium, compared to 22.6% in the South-East and 29.5% for England.<sup>8</sup>

The data that we have on children living in poverty suggests that more children in Reading are at potential risk of abuse or neglect due to their socio-economic status than in many other areas of the South East and, due to the strong link between poverty and the risk of abuse or neglect, that we may experience higher numbers of children becoming looked after as a result.

### **Section 3 - Looked After Children Profile**

The term 'Looked After Children' (LAC) is generally used to mean those looked after by the state and these children will not be living at home.

#### **3.1 Number of Looked After Children**

There were 220 looked after children in Reading at 31 March 2016. The number of LAC decreased between 2012 and 2015 and increased again in 2016. In April 2016 this number was still 6.4% lower than in 2012, showing an overall decrease in the last four years. It should, however, be noted that since April 2016 there has been a significant increase in the number of LAC in Reading, increasing to 263. It is unclear at this point whether this increase is replicated in other areas.

**Table 6 - Numbers of LAC in Reading 2012-2016**

LAC numbers in Reading at year end	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	31 October 2016
Number of LAC at 31 March	235	225	205	205	220	263
Rate per 10,000 0-17 population	71	66	59	58	60	72*
Year on year change	+2.8%	-2.1%	-4.4%	0%	+4.8%	+19.5%

*Source: Department for Education SFR41/2016, Table LAA1*

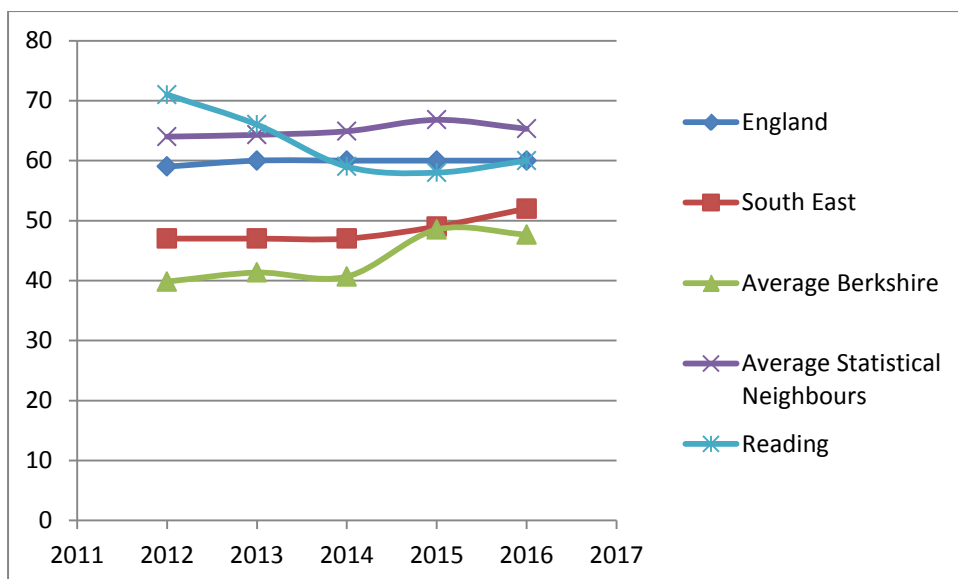
\*Population figure updated at November 2016 to calculate correct rate of LAC. Figure used is 36,400.

The rate of LAC in Reading per 10,000 young people under the age of 18 was 60 at March 2016, which is the same as the national average rate and lower than that of our statistical neighbours at 65. It is higher than the South East and Berkshire's average, but since 2013 has been lower than the average of our statistical neighbours. There is no mid-year data to compare Reading's current rate of LAC with other areas.

**Figure 6 - Rate of LAC per 10,000 aged under 18 years (2012-2016)**

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<sup>8</sup> JSNA



Source: Department for Education 2016, Table LAA1

The numbers above are snapshots at the end of March year by year. Reading has been less consistent in its rate of LAC than our statistical neighbours and the trend over the past few years is distinctly different from any of the comparator groups above.

Table 7 below indicates that there are higher numbers in total of children who are looked after during each year.

Table 7 - Total Number of Children Looked After By Year in Reading

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total number of children looked after (excluding children looked after in series of short term placements only)	335	320	290	290	335
Number of children looked after in series of short term placements only*	10	5	X	X	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>335</b>

Source: Department for Education statistics 2016, Table LAB1

\*Not all local data is available to protect confidentiality

Since March 2016 we have seen around a 19.5% increase in the number of children becoming looked after. In addition there has been an increase in the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children and we expect to see an increase in the LAC population due to the national dispersal scheme in the coming months. The increase is due to higher numbers of care proceedings having to be initiated for younger children, an increase in UASC, and older children who are at significant risk due to child sexual exploitation.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> RBC Performance Team analysis, July 2016

### 3.2 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

UASC are children under the age of 18 who are seeking safety from countries where the state has caused them harm or has been unable to protect them. Table 8 below gives an indication of the numbers of UASC in Reading, Berkshire local authorities and our statistical neighbours, however it should be noted that the data is not available for all authorities in all years for data protection reasons so this information can be seen as a general indication only. It is relevant to note that almost all regions in England have seen a sharp rise in the number of UASC in 2016 compared to 2015. The overall number of UASC in England increased by 53.6% between March 2015 and March 2016 and the highest concentration of UASC is in the South East and London.

One of our statistical neighbours (Hillingdon) has an exceptionally high number of UASC compared to all of the others in this comparator group, which increases the average number significantly. For this reason Table 8 below shows the average for our statistical neighbours both including and excluding Hillingdon.

Table 8 - Numbers of UASC

UASC Numbers	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Reading	5	5	X	X	5*
Average Berkshire	9	8	5	10	8
Average Statistical Neighbours	22	19	21	23	33
Statistical neighbours excluding Hillingdon	11	6	9	14	24
England	2230	1950	2050	2740	4210
South East	430	410	450	680	1350
London	920	880	970	1230	1440
South West	60	60	40	40	80
East of England	190	150	190	290	450
West Midlands	270	190	130	170	370
East Midlands	160	120	140	190	280
Yorkshire & The Humber	90	60	50	70	110
North West	90	60	50	60	100
North East	20	20	20	10	20

Source: Department for Education statistics, Table LAA4

\*Internal data for October 2016 indicates that there are 9 UASC in Reading, which is in line with the trend across the nation.

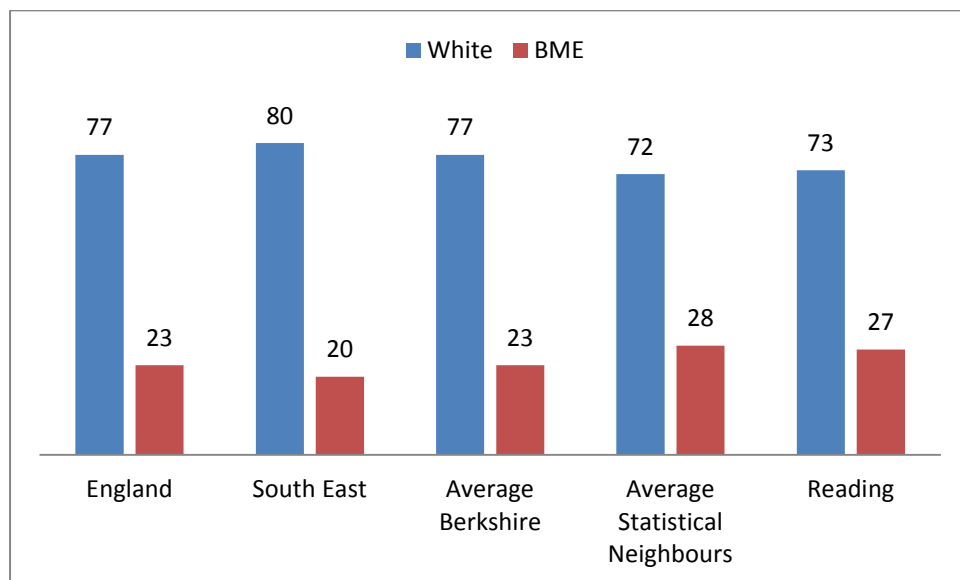
In Reading UASC make up 2% of the LAC population while in England they make up 6%. Reading seems to have a low number of UASC compared to other Berkshire areas and in particular compared to our statistical neighbours (although one area has extremely high levels which has brought the average up) and, contrary to the national and regional trends, Reading's numbers seem to have remained stable. However this information must be viewed with caution due to the unavailability of some local data, and the national and regional trend should be noted.

### 3.3 Ethnicity of LAC in Reading

Reading has a slightly higher proportion of LAC who identify as being BME compared to the Berkshire average, the South East and England, but a very similar percentage compared to our statistical neighbours (Figure 7). The percentage of BME LAC is not representative of the diversity of Reading's community. Reading's BME population is significantly greater than England's average so demographically these figures could be under-representative

locally as BME communities do not always present to children's services. It is possible that this shows an unmet need in terms of young people from BME communities who actually should be looked after locally.<sup>10</sup>

Figure 7 - Percentage of LAC who identify as White British and BME

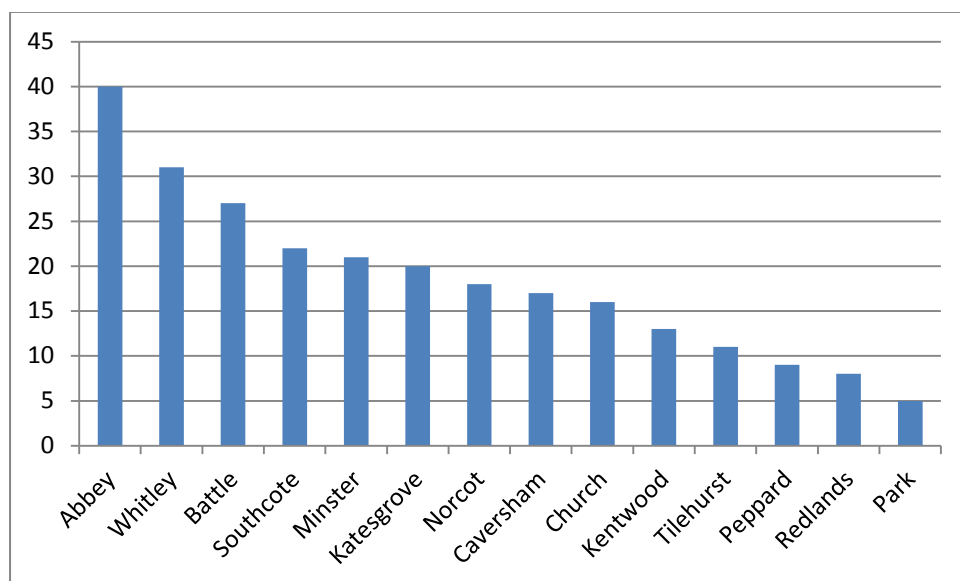


Source: Department for Education, SFR34/2015, Table LAA8

### 3.4 LAC by Ward

Analysis of looked after children's 'pre-LAC' addresses tells us that the highest number of Reading's LAC come from Abbey, Whitley and Battle wards, while the lowest number come from Park, Redlands and Peppard wards.

Figure 8 - Number of LAC by Ward



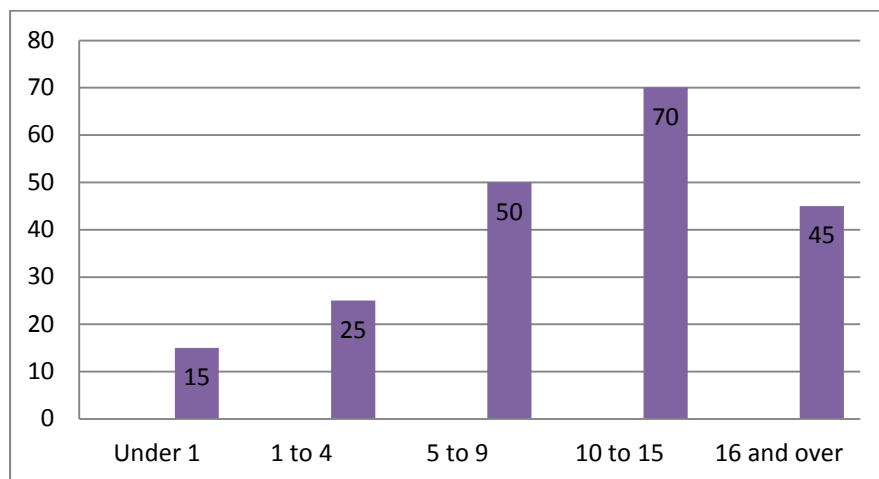
Source: Reading Borough Council Performance Team, October 2016

<sup>10</sup> JSNA

### 3.5 LAC Age Profile

The age profile of children who are looked after at 31 March 2015 has been relatively stable since 2012. The largest age group is 10 to 15 year olds, which made up 34% of looked after children at 31 March 2015. There has been an increase in the percentage of those aged 16 and over, from 13% in 2012, to 22% in 2015. This is likely to be due to greater awareness of the Southwark Judgement which is a piece of case law, made by the Law Lords in 2009, which obliges children's services to provide accommodation and support to homeless 16 and 17 year olds.

Figure 9 - Number of LAC by Age Group



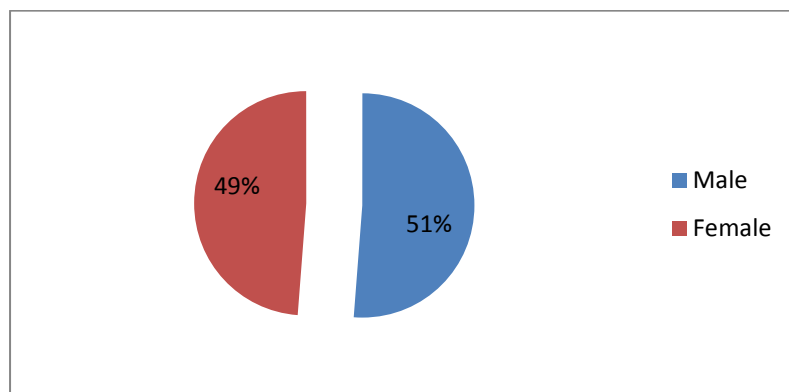
Source: Department for Education, SFR34/2015, Table LAA5

These trends differ from the age breakdown of the overall 0-19 population in Reading, where the highest number of children is aged 0-4 years and the lowest number is aged 10-15 years.

### 3.6 LAC Gender Profile

There is a fairly even split of male and female LAC in Reading, with 105 males (51%) and 100 females (49%) at 31 March 2015, and the same proportion at October 2016 (unpublished data). This is generally consistent with all other areas in England, although there is a slightly higher percentage of female LAC in Reading than in other areas. Across England, 56% of LAC are male and 44% are female<sup>11</sup>.

Figure 10 - LAC by Gender (October 2016)



<sup>11</sup> Department for Education, SFR34/2015, Table LAA5



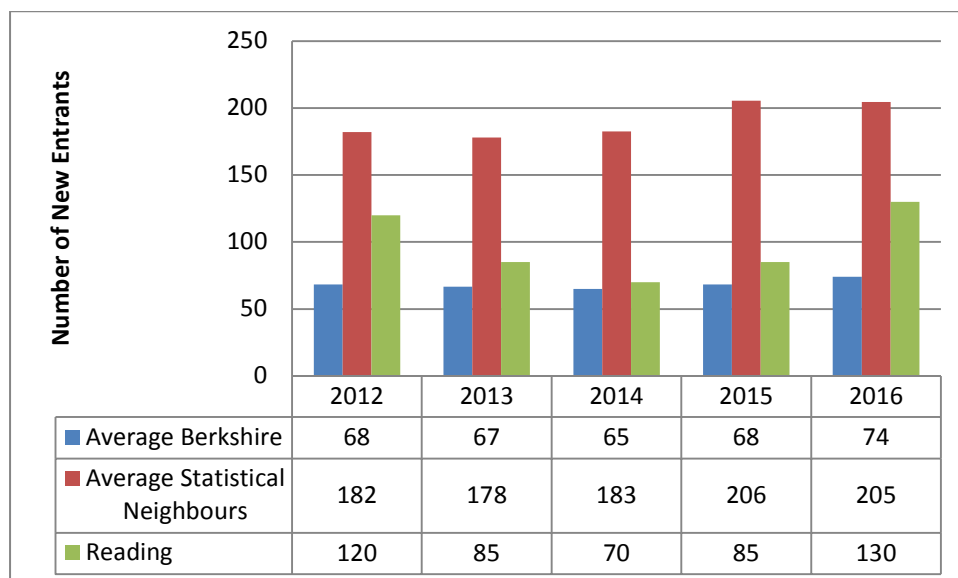
Source: Reading Borough Council Commissioning, October 2016

Since 2012 the proportion of male/female LAC in England has remained very consistent at 55% male and 45% female. Over the same period, Reading's proportions have fluctuated a little, the highest proportion of males being 58% in 2013 and the lowest being 51% in 2015. The proportion of male LAC has always been higher than the proportion of female LAC over this period but in general there has been a slightly higher proportion of female LAC than the England average.

### 3.7 Entrants into Care

Figure 11 below shows the number of LAC entrants per year between 2012 and 2016. It compares Reading to the Berkshire average and the average of our statistical neighbours. Reading's numbers are higher than the Berkshire average, however significantly lower than the average of our statistical neighbours. Reading's numbers dropped between 2012 and 2014 and have increased every year since then, while Berkshire's average has remained relatively stable (though has been slightly on the rise since 2014). The average of our statistical neighbours has generally risen, except for very small decreases in 2013 (4) and 2016 (1).

Figure 11 - LAC Entrants 2012-2016

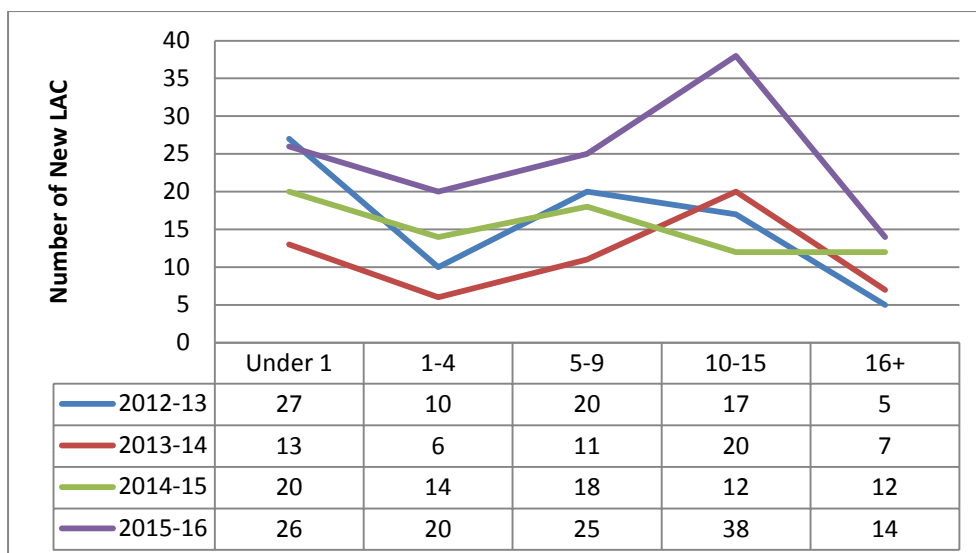


Source: Department for Education 2016, Table LAC1

3% who were looked after between October 2015 and October 2016 had been looked after previously and returned to care.<sup>12</sup>

Figure 12: LAC Entrants by Age 2012-2016

<sup>12</sup> Performance Team, October 2016



Source: Reading Borough Council Performance Team

There has been an increase in numbers for each age category in 2016 (with the exception of a very small decrease in under 1s (1) compared to 2012). The number of under 1s is often higher as this age range is removed from the home whilst the social worker is carrying out the assessment as they are usually too vulnerable to remain. The highest numbers of new LAC in general, however, is in the 10-15 age bracket, which is consistent with the high numbers of LAC overall in this age group. Greater awareness of the Southwark Judgement is likely to underpin the comparatively large number of 16+ young people entering care in 2016 since 2012.

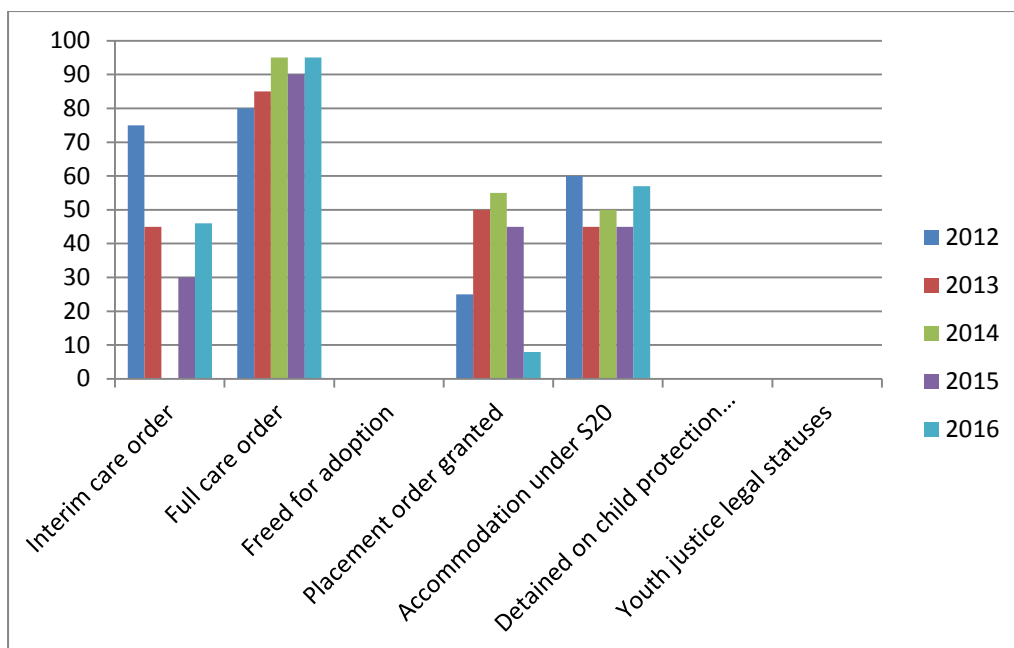
### 3.8 Legal status

A Care Order is an order made under Section 31 of the Children Act 1989 which grants parental responsibility to the Local Authority, who thereafter shares parental responsibility with the natural parent. A Care Order lasts until a child is 18 and a Placement Order discharges a Care Order. All children who are the subject of a Care Order come within the definition of being looked after and must have a Care Plan.

A Placement Order removes parental responsibility from the birth parents and gives it entirely to the Local Authority. The Local Authority can place a child with prospective adopters, but only where the child is the subject of a Care Order or where the threshold criteria for a Care Order apply. A Placement Order continues until revoked or replaced by an Adoption Order. An Adoption Order transfers all parental rights and responsibilities to the adopters.

Section 20 is the section of the Children Act 1989 which states that a local authority must provide accommodation for a child or young person if they have no one who has parental responsibility for them or if the person with parental responsibility is unable to provide suitable accommodation. The local authority may also provide accommodation for a child or young person under section 20 if they believe that doing so will safeguard the child or promote their welfare.

Figure 13 - Legal Status of Looked After Children 2012-2016



Source: Department for Education, Tables LAA2 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15, RBC Commissioning 2016

It should be noted that some data has not been published in order to protect confidentiality, however these numbers will be very small. It should also be noted that the data for 2016 has not yet been published and is from internal Reading Borough Council records at October 2016.

The number of looked after children on a full care order is consistently the highest legal category with those being freed for adoption being consistently the lowest. The number of children on an interim care order has reduced since 2012, although has fluctuated in between (this data is not available for 2014).

Children's legal status at October 2016 can be further broken down into age groups.

Table 9 - Looked After Children's Legal Status October 2016 by Age Group

Age	Interim care Order	Full Care Order	Freed for Adoption	Placement Order Granted	Accommodated under S20	Detained on CP grounds in LA accommodation	Youth Justice Legal Statuses
Under 1	11	0	0	0	2	0	0
1-4	17	3	0	5	5	0	0
5-9	9	20	0	9	4	0	0
10-15	15	55	0	2	23	0	0
16+	1	24	0	0	23	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total %</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>

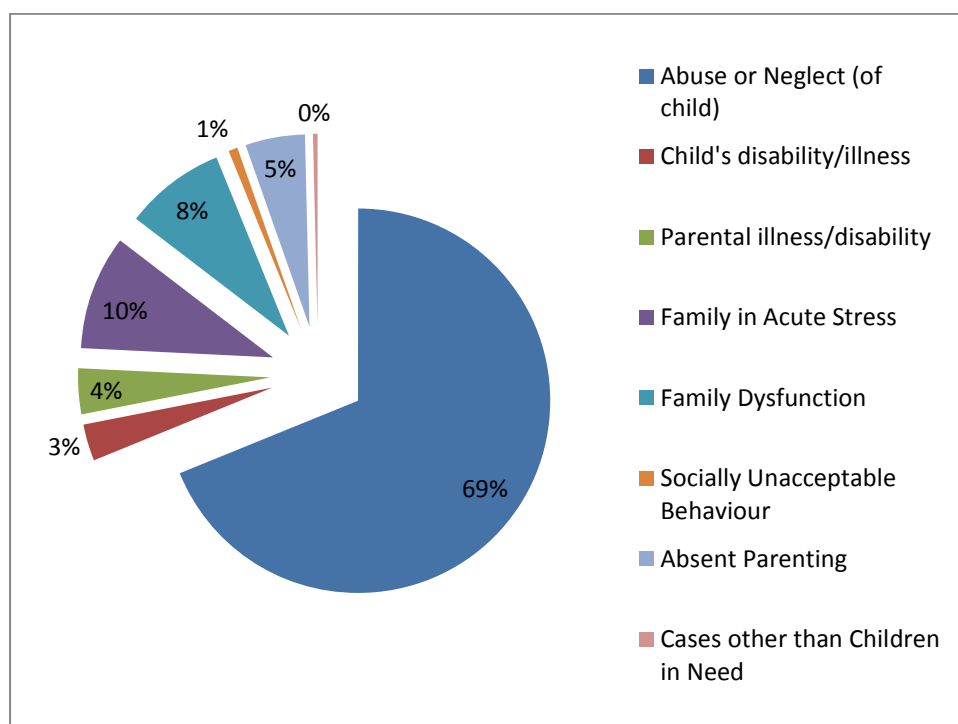
Source: Reading Borough Council Commissioning, October 2016

The highest number of full care orders is for 10-15 year olds, and this legal status also applies to 45% of LAC. Children accommodated under Section 20 are mostly between the age of 10 and 18. UASC are also accommodated under Section 20 and there are 9 in total at October 2016, all between the ages of 13 and 16. This legal status applies to 25% of LAC.

### 3.9 Reasons for Children Becoming Looked After

At October 2016, 69% of LAC in Reading were being provided with a service due to being abused or suffering neglect (see Figure 15 below). 10% were looked after due to their family being in acute stress and 8% due to family dysfunction.

Figure 14 - LAC by Category of Need, October 2016



Source: Mosaic

Abuse or neglect is consistently the most likely reason for a child in Reading to become looked after, which is also the case for England. The percentage of LAC in care due to abuse or neglect in Reading is consistently higher than England's average, however the percentage in care due to family dysfunction is consistently lower. Local data is not available for all categories of need, however the three categories in which the largest numbers of LAC fall are presented in Table 10 below. These figures represent the percentage of new LAC in these categories for each year.

Table 10 - Percentage of LAC by Category of Need for Reading and England, 2012-2015

Category of Need	2012		2013		2014		2015	
	Reading	England	Reading	England	Reading	England	Reading	England
Abuse or Neglect	69%	56%	65%	56%	67%	55%	74%	56%
Family	9%	18%	14%	18%	13%	19%	X	17%

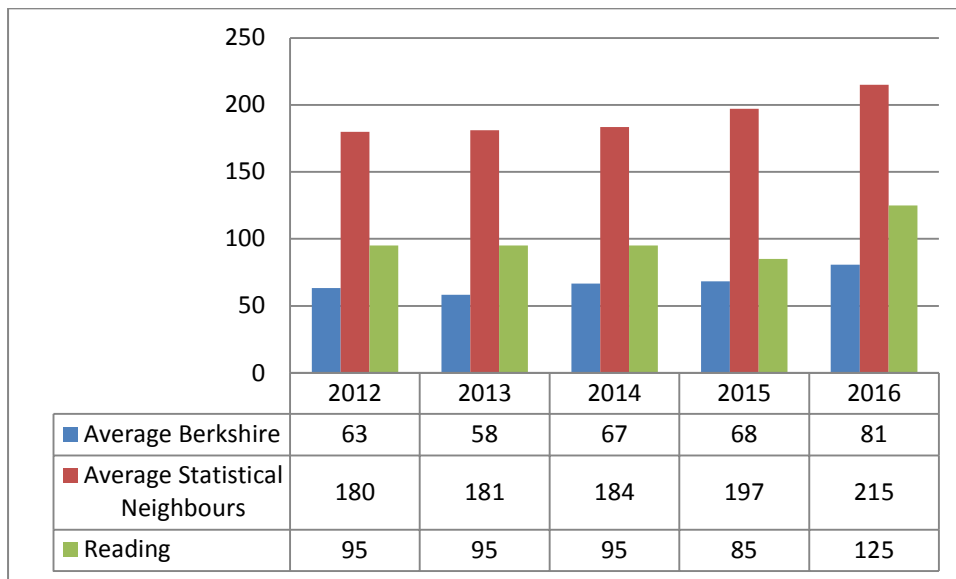
Dysfunction								
Family in Acute Stress	5%	10%	7%	10%	X	10%	10%	9%

Source: Department for Education, Tables LAC4 2012-2015

### 3.10 Children Ceasing to be Looked After

125 children ceased to be looked after during the financial year 2015-16, a significant increase on the previous year during which 85 children ceased to be looked after. However this is in line with the increase in children becoming looked after.

Figure 15 - Number of children who ceased to be looked after 2012-2016

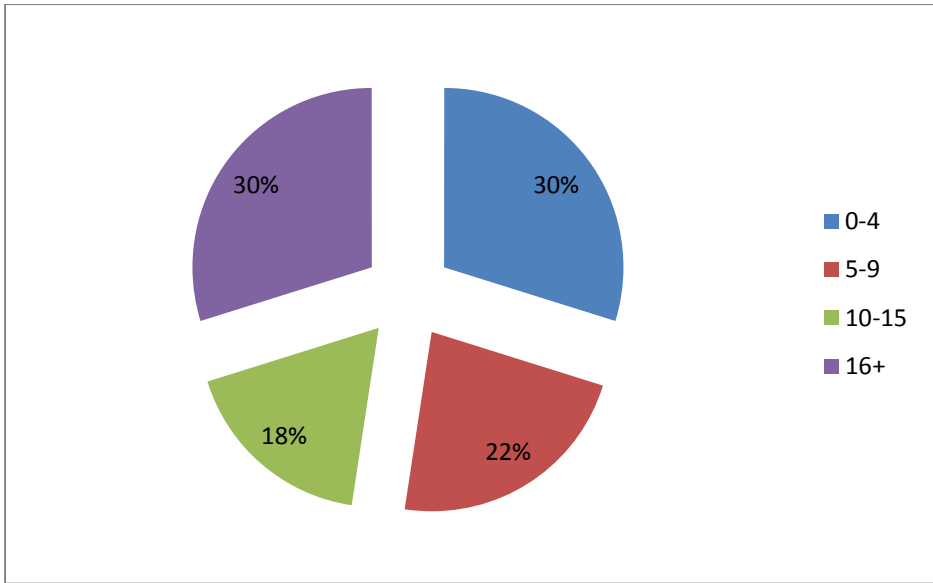


Source: Department for Education SFR41/2016, Table LAE1

On average, our statistical neighbours have greater numbers of LAC ceasing to be looked after, however they also have higher numbers of new LAC entrants (see Figure 11) so this is to be expected.

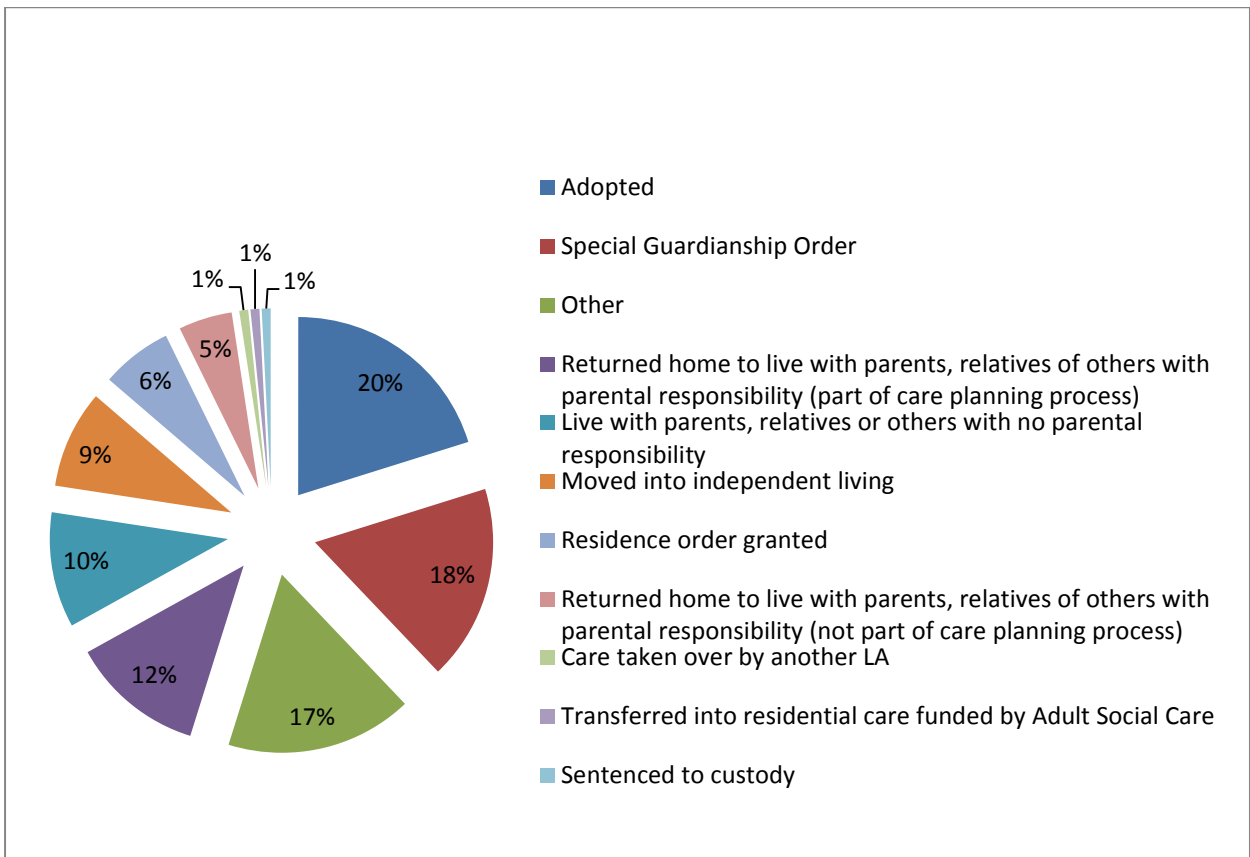
Of those leaving care in Reading, 30% were aged 0-4 and 30% were aged 16 or over (Figure 16).

Figure 16 - Children ceasing to be looked after by age group, 2015-16



Source: Reading Borough Council Performance Team, 2016

Figure 17 - Reasons for exiting care April 2015-March 2016

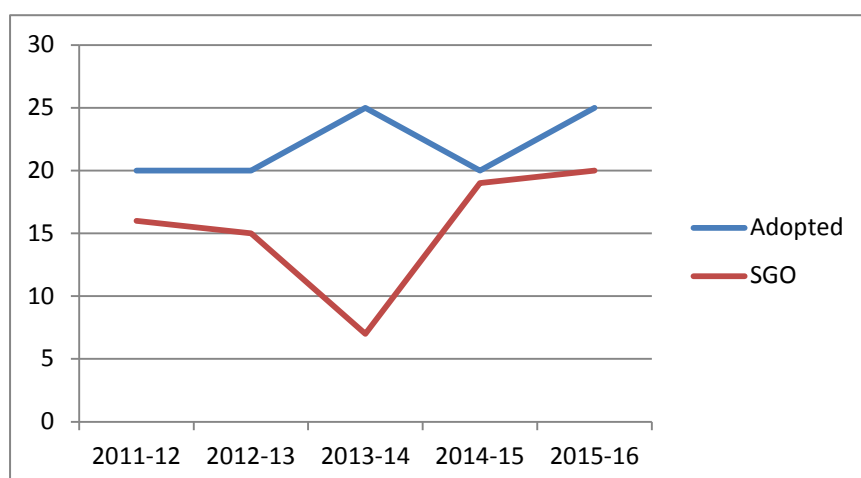


Source: Reading Borough Council Performance Team, 2016

Figure 17 above indicates that most children left care to live in a family environment. There is a relatively high percentage recorded as 'other' so without specific analysis of these individual records we do not know why they left care or where they went.

### 3.11 Adoption and Special Guardianship Orders

Figure 18 - Rate of Adoption and Special Guardianship Orders in Reading 2012-2016



Source: Department for Education, SFR41/2016, Table LAE1; Reading Borough Council Performance Team, 2016

The number of children being adopted has remained fairly stable over the last four years, remaining between 20 and 25 per year. The percentage has ranged between 19% and 27% over this period, which is better than the Berkshire average and the average of our statistical neighbours, which ranges between 12% and 19% over this time period. The number of special guardianship orders dipped during 2013-14, however this coincided with a rise in adoption orders. In 2015-16, 38% of children ceasing to be looked after left either to be adopted or with a special guardianship order.

### 3.12 Looked After Children with Disabilities

11% of LAC in Reading are recorded as having a disability. This includes children and young people who are looked after as a result of their disability.

Table 11 - Number of LAC with a recorded disability

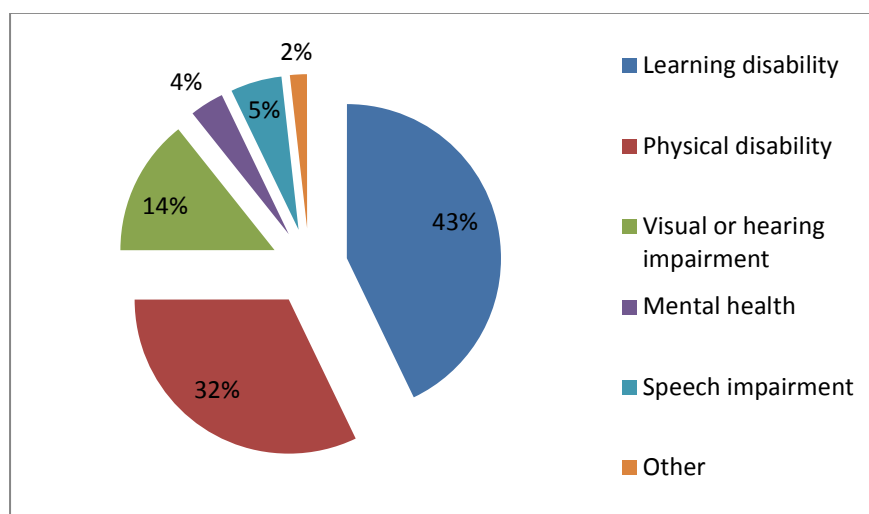
Age group	Disability	No disability	Total	Percentage with disability
Under 1	0	13	13	0%
1 - 4	3	27	30	10%
5 - 9	5	37	42	12%
10 - 15	11	84	95	12%
16 and over	5	43	48	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>11%</b>

Source: Reading Borough Council Commissioning, October 2016

There are more male looked after children with a disability than female. 15 (63%) are male and 9 (37%) are female. 14% of all male LAC and 8% of all female LAC have a disability. The percentage of LAC with a disability is fairly consistent across all age groups with the exception of those under the age of 1 (when it is less likely that a disability will have been identified). Therefore as the highest number of LAC fall into the 10-15 years age group, this is also the case for children with a disability. 15 (63%) are white and 9 (37%) are from a BME background, the majority of which (7 (78%)) are from a mixed background.

The following chart shows the breakdown of the type of disability for these children and young people where this has been recorded. The highest proportion of LAC with a recorded disability had a learning disability (43%) followed by physical disability (32%).

Figure 19 - Types of disabilities in LAC

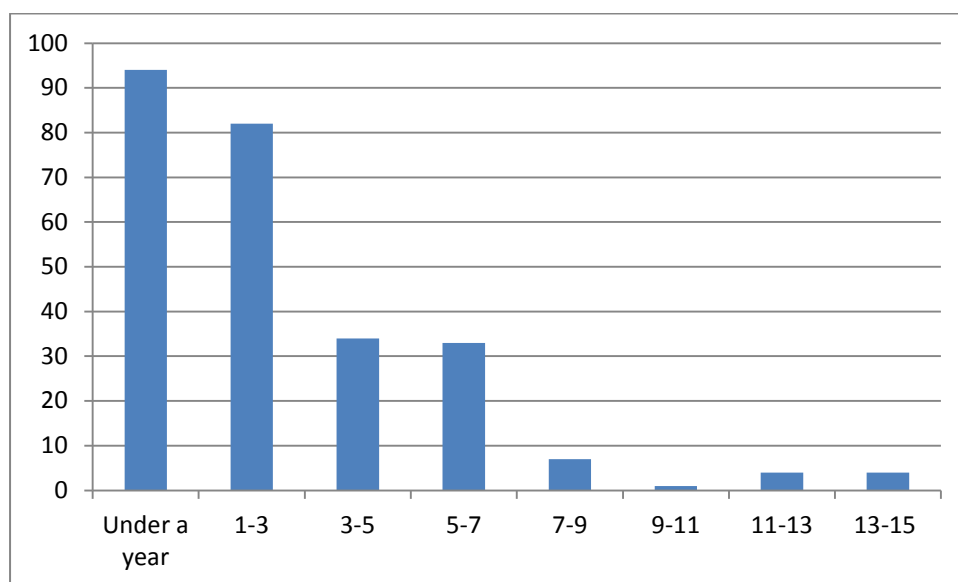


Source: Mosaic

### 3.13 Length of Time Spent in Care

Figure 20 below shows how long Reading's LAC had been in care at October 2016. 68% of LAC at October 2016 had spent less than 3 years in care with 36% leaving care within a year. 6% spend more than 7 years in care.

Figure 20 - Length of time spent in care



Source: Reading Borough Council Performance Team, October 2016

### 3.14 Placement Stability

The stability of placements is measured across two indicators. The first of these indicators is the percentage of looked after children who have had 3 or more placements in one year. At October 2016, 10% of LAC in Reading had experienced 3 or more placements in 2015/16. This is good when compared nationally.

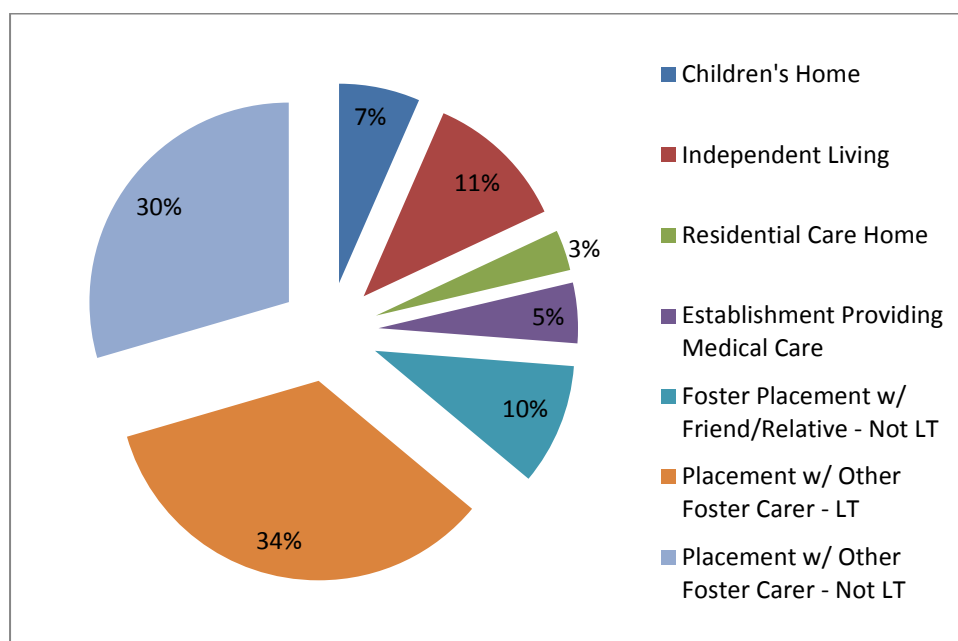


The second indicator of placement stability is the percentage of children in care who have been in care for 2.5 years or more who have been in the same placement for 2 or more years. At October 2016, 69% of LAC in Reading had experienced this level of stability with their placement<sup>13</sup>. Nationally, 68% of children experienced only one placement during 2015-16. While this is not a direct comparison to this indicator of placement stability, it does suggest that Reading is likely to be performing close to the national average in this area.

### 3.15 Looked After Children Aged 16 and over

21% (49) of LAC at March 2016 were aged 16 or over. Figure 22 below indicates the type of accommodation in which 16-18 year old LAC were living.

Figure 21 - LAC Aged 16-18 Accommodation



Source: Mosaic

As can be seen from the chart above, the majority (74%) of LAC aged 16 or over are in long-term or short-term foster placements.

### 3.16 Accommodation for Care Leavers Aged 18+

The council has a duty to ensure that all Looked After Children are found suitable accommodation when leaving care. Data shows that in 2015 79% of 19 year old and 83% of 21 year old care leavers were in suitable accommodation (see Table 12 below). There is no data available for Reading for 20 year old care leavers. The proportion of 19 year olds in suitable accommodation is below the national and regional averages, and also below the average of our statistical neighbours. The proportion of 21 year olds in suitable accommodation is higher than that of our comparators, however it should be noted that there was a relatively high proportion of 21 year old care leavers in England (38%) and the South East (20%) for whom there was no information so this could have affected the figures, as Reading had a very low percentage of care leavers with no information.

Table 12 - Percentage of Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation 2015

	Age 19	Age 21

<sup>13</sup> Mosaic

Reading	79%	83%
Statistical Neighbours	82%	76%
South East	81%	73%
England	83%	77%

Source: Department for Education SFR34/2015, Table LAF3

77% of 20 year olds and 48% of 21 year old care leavers in 2015 were in independent living<sup>14</sup>. Data has been withheld to protect confidentiality for all other accommodation types and no information is available for 19 year olds.

The information above is based on 19, 20 and 21 year old care leavers who were looked after for a total of at least 13 weeks after their 14th birthday including some time after their 16th birthday.

### 3.17 Staying Put Arrangements for Care Leavers Aged 18+

At October 2016 there were 5 young people in Staying Put arrangements and another 5 who are likely to progress to Staying Put arrangements in 2017. The Children and Families Act 2014 stipulates that Local Authorities are required to make payments to ex-foster carers for Staying Put arrangements for young people up to the age of 21 years and up to the age of 25 years if they are in full time education.

If young people choose to Stay Put this will have implications for foster carer supply both in-house and with IFAs, increasing the number of foster carers that will be required. Although some of our young people will choose to move to independence earlier, there will also be additional young people becoming looked after between the ages of 14 and 18 who have not been included in current Staying Put projections.

Not all young people are offered a Staying Put arrangement from their foster carers. Some carers do not want to offer post-18 accommodation, preferring to continue to foster and for others, the financial requirements can be a barrier. There is a Staying Put policy and procedure in Reading.

### 3.18 Outcomes for Care Leavers

Overall, care leavers are less likely to be in education, employment or training than their peers. The NSPCC states that in 2014 34% of care leavers were not in education, employment or training (NEET) at age 19 compared to 15% of the general population.<sup>15</sup>

At October 2016, 59% of Reading's care leavers were in education, training or employment compared to 61% across England and 64% across our statistical neighbours. Care leavers in Reading are more likely to be NEET than elsewhere in England. However, 9% of Reading's care leavers were in higher education compared to 6% nationally and 7% across our statistical neighbours<sup>16</sup>.

### 3.19 Children in Need

A child in need (CiN) is defined under the Children Act 1989 as 'a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled'.

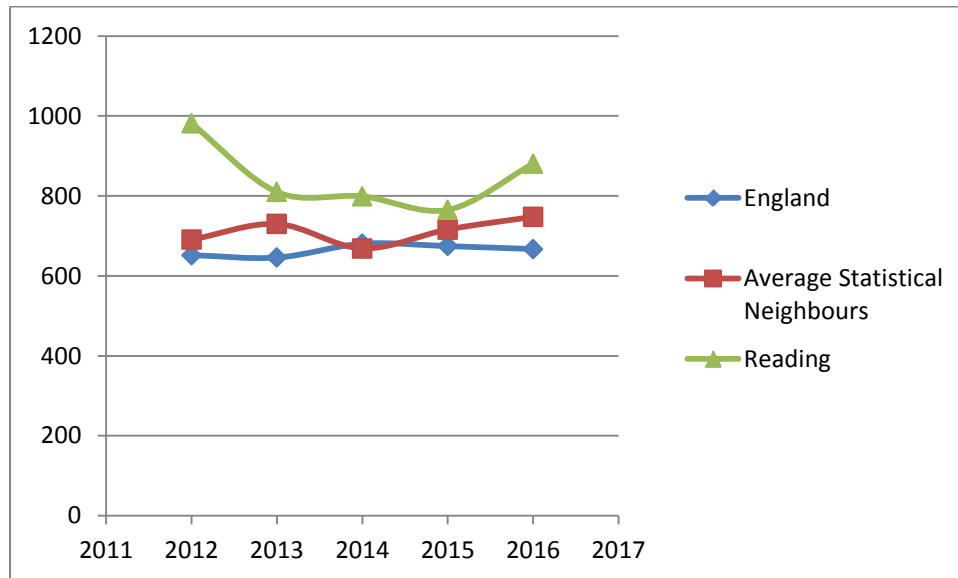
<sup>14</sup> Department for Education, SFR34/2015, Tables LAF2b and LAF2c

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/children-in-care/>

<sup>16</sup> Mosaic LAC Summary, October 2016

The number of children in need who present to Social Services for child protection reasons can have an impact on the number of children who become looked after. Throughout 2015-16 the average rate of children in need per 10,000 children in Reading was 880.5. This is 32% higher than the national average of 674.4 and 17.6% higher than the average of our statistical neighbours.<sup>17</sup> Figure 22 below indicates that Reading saw a sharp increase in the rate of CiN per 10,000 children between March 2015 and March 2016.

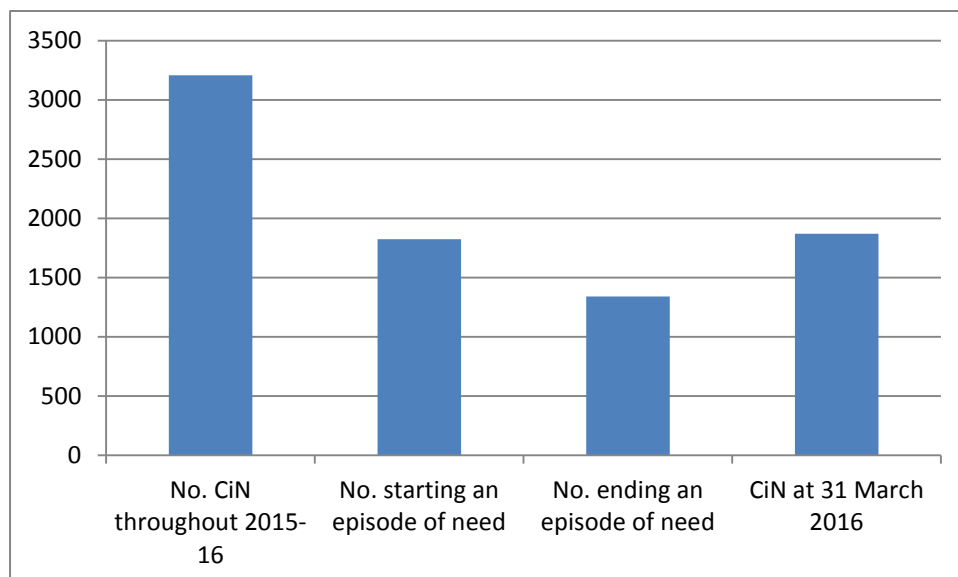
Figure 22 - Rate of Children in Need per 10,000 of population throughout years 2012-2015



Source: Department for Education 2012-2016, Table B1

Although Reading has a relatively high number of CiN, data tells us that in Reading we are effective at getting interventions to children and families to prevent them from going into mainstream child protection services. We are putting in place targeted support for a short period of time, i.e. open and close cases within a year.<sup>18</sup>

Figure 23 - Numbers of Children in Need - 2015-16



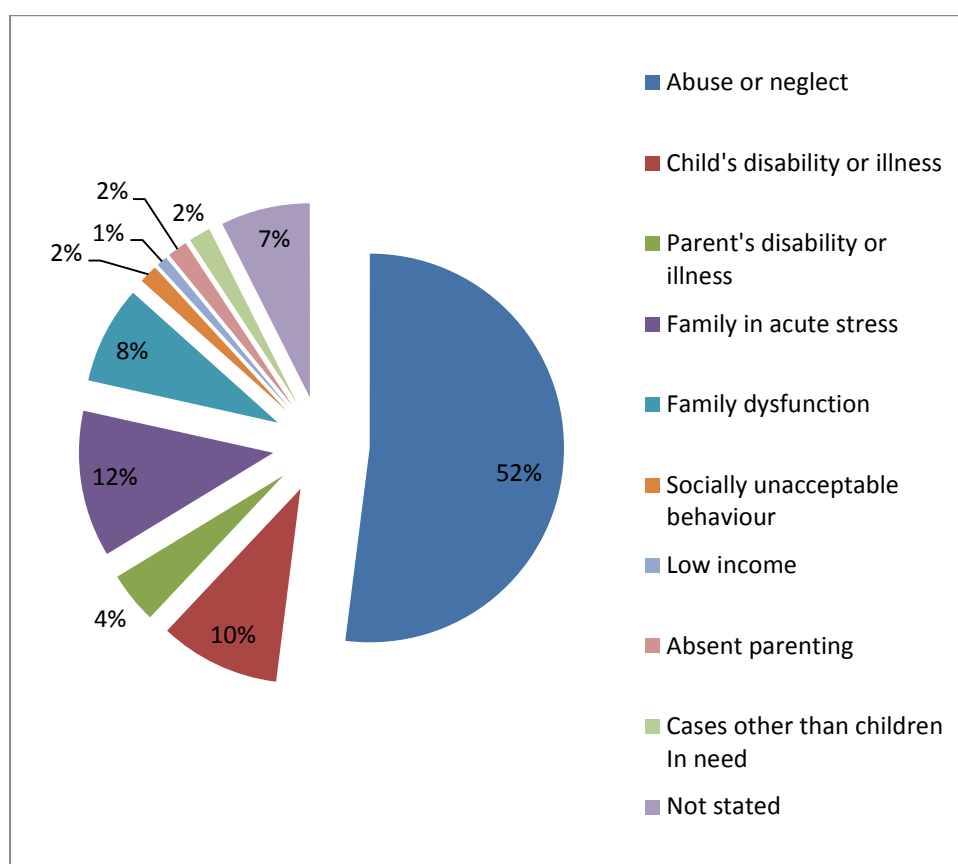
Source: Department for Education, SFR52/2016, Table B1

<sup>17</sup> Department for Education, SFR52/2016, Table B1

<sup>18</sup> JSNA

The primary needs for children assessed as being CiN are shown in Figure 24 below.

Figure 24 - Children in Need in Reading by Primary Need, 2015-16



Source: Department for Education, SFR52/2016, Table B3

Abuse or neglect is the principal single reason why a child may be in need, and is in line with England's average. Family dysfunction in Reading is lower than in England overall. This is also clear from the reasons that children become looked after (see Figure 14). 7% of reasons were not stated so we do not know why these children are CiN.

### 3.20 Children on the Edge of Care

For more information see the Edge of Care strategy here:

<http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/3114/Edge-of-Care-Strategy/pdf/EdgeofCareStrategy.pdf>

'Edge of care' refers to children and young people who are known to be vulnerable and at risk of becoming looked after. Reading has an Edge of Care service that works with vulnerable children and families to try and prevent children from coming into care.

Table 13 - Children on the Edge of Care

	April 2015-March 2016	April-October 2016
Number of children worked with (new referrals since April 2016)	202	185 (89)
Number of cases declined	23	16

Number of cases closed without becoming LAC	162	85
Number of children becoming looked after (of those referred since April 2016)	17	13 (4)
% children becoming looked after (of those referred since April 2016)	8.4%	7% (4.5%)

Source: Edge of Care Team, October 2016

It should be noted that data from April 2016 is unofficial and would not normally be counted until the end of March 2017.

Eight children were pending the processing of their referral at October 2016 and are not included in the numbers above.

Cases were declined due to:

- Procedural reasons - e.g. an inappropriate referral - did not meet criteria or Social Workers failed to follow up with extra info requested, or referrals were withdrawn;
- Issues with the families - e.g. had already been worked with and had been unable to make sustained improvements due to basic capabilities of parents, or due to the family not consenting to work with us.

## Section 4 - Services

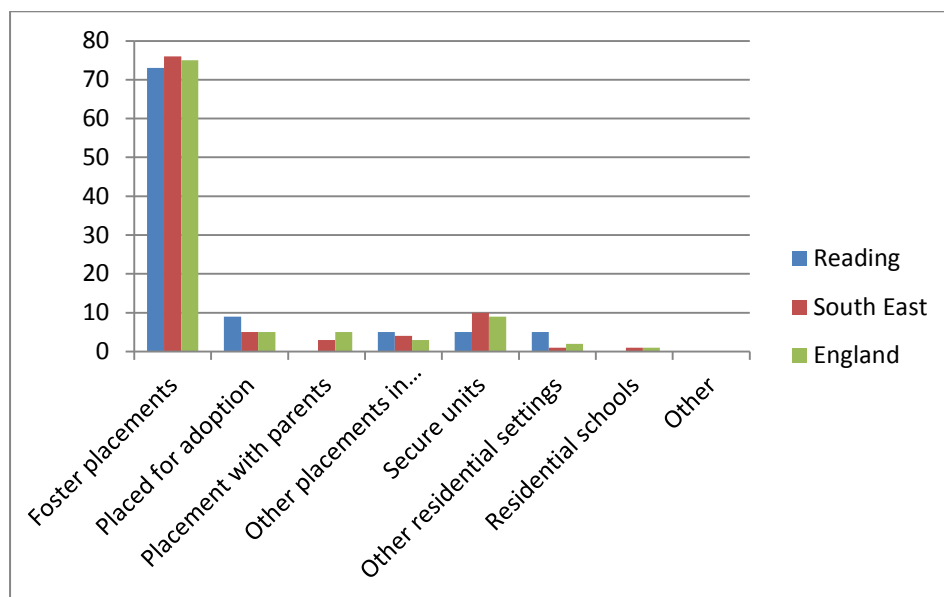
### 4.1 Types of Placements

A child looked after will usually be placed in one of the following types of placement:

- Family and Friends where a looked after child is placed with relatives who have been approved as being able to care for the young person, by a Viability Assessment and then a Regulation 24 (Risk Assessment). Once approved they will receive support from the Fostering Team.
- Fostering in-house where a looked after child is placed with foster carers who have been approved by Reading's Fostering Panel and receive support from Reading's Fostering Team.
- Fostering purchased where a looked after child is placed with foster carers who have been approved by an independent fostering agency (IFA) with whom Reading have a commissioning arrangement.
- Residential home where a looked after child is placed within a community home managed by an independent provider with whom Reading has a commissioning arrangement.
- Residential school where a looked after child is placed in a residential establishment which caters for their education as well as their general living needs.
- Placement with parents where a looked after child who is also the subject of a Care Order is placed at home with their parents prior to the order being discharged.
- Placed for adoption where a looked after child is placed with adoptive parents where the match has been approved by Reading's Adoption Panel.
- Other where looked after children are placed in other situations such as custody, remand or Independent Living.

It can be seen from Figure 23 below that Reading is broadly in line with the South East and England for its use of different types of placements.

Figure 23 - % LAC Placement Types, March 2015

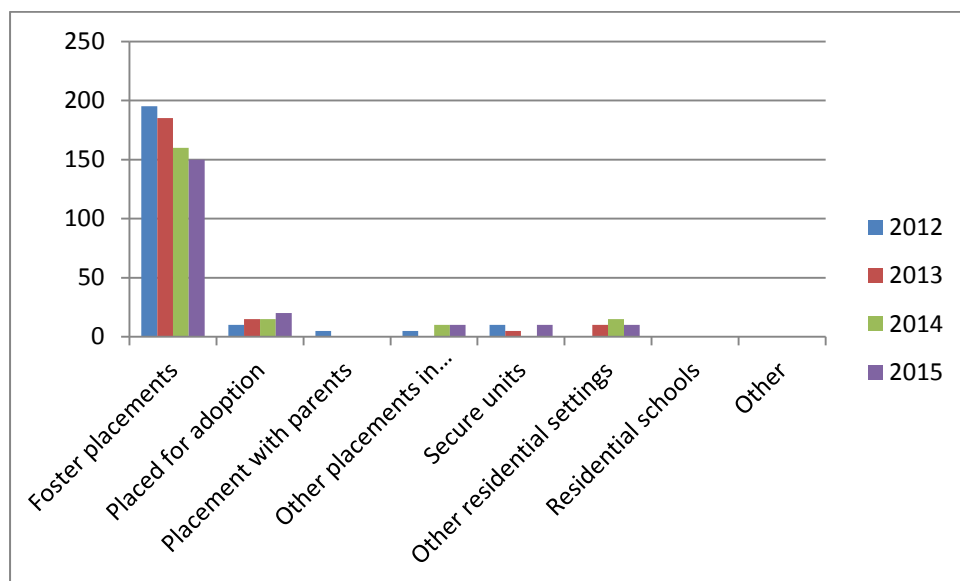


Source: Department for Education, SFR34/2015, Table LAA7

Reading is above the South East and England in the number of children placed for adoption and those in other residential settings, and below in the number that are placed in secure units.

Figure 24 below shows the number of LAC placed in the different placement types at the end of March between 2012 and 2015.

Figure 24 - Number of LAC in Types of Placements, 2012-2015



Source: Department for Education 2012-2015, Tables LAA3

It can be seen that the number of foster placements has dropped between 2012 and 2015 and the rate of adoption has risen.

Table 14 below shows the breakdown of LAC in different placement types at October 2016.

Table 14 - LAC by Placement Type, October 2016

Placement Type	Number of LAC	Percentage
Fostering - family and friends	33	13%
Fostering with no provider	18	7%
Fostering - Independent Fostering Agency	101	38%
Fostering - Local Authority fostering (including other authorities)	58	22%
Children's home	15	6%
Placed with parents or other person with parental responsibility	3	1%
Independent living	9	3%
Placed for adoption	12	5%
Residential care home	6	2%
Establishment providing medical or nursing care	3	1%
Family centre or mother & baby unit	1	0.3%
Young offender institution or prison	1	0.3%
Residential school (not including those also registered as residential homes)	1	0.3%
Temporary accommodation	2	0.7%

Source: Mosaic, October 2016

#### 4.2 Location of LAC Placements

At March 2016, 30% of LAC were placed within the Reading boundary. As can be seen from Table 15 below, the numbers have been similar since 2012, with a large proportion of placements being made outside of Reading's boundary.

Table 15 - LAC Placed Inside and Outside Reading 2012-2016

Year	No. LAC placed	No. LAC placed	No. LAC	% LAC placed
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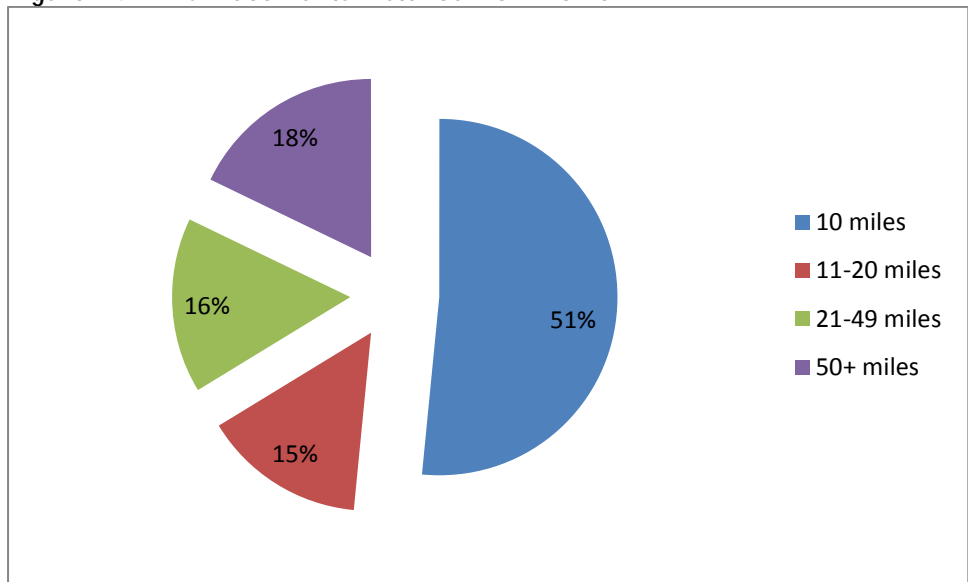
	within Reading boundary	outside Reading boundary	Placement Area Unknown	within Reading boundary
2016	63	152	5	30%
2015	64	140	5	31%
2014	65	130	15	31%
2013	70	145	15	31%
2012	90	135	10	38%

Source: Department for Education 2012-14, Table LAA9, Reading Borough Council Performance Team 2015-16

A number of Reading's placements are being used by LAC from other local authorities. In 2012 this 17%, in 2013 this was 28% and in 2014 (most recent published data) this was 35%<sup>19</sup> so these numbers saw an increase between 2012 and 2014. Data is not yet available after 2014, however Table 15 above tells us that only 30% of Reading's LAC were placed in the area, which is a similar (slightly smaller) percentage than in previous years, so it seems likely that the trend has continued. The national figure for LAC placed within their local authority area in 2014 (the most recent published data) was 58%.<sup>20</sup>

It is usually in the interest of looked after children to be placed as close to home as possible, although there are exceptions. Figure 25 below shows that over half of Reading's LAC are placed within 10 miles of their home address, and 66% are placed within 20 miles of their home address. 18% are placed more than 50 miles away.

Figure 24 - LAC Placements Distance from Home



Source: Mosaic, October 2016

<sup>19</sup> Department for Education 2012-2015, Tables LAA9

<sup>20</sup> Department for Education 2014, Table LAA6



The most recent published data (March 2014) indicates that nationally the average percentage of LAC placed within 20 miles of their home address was 77%, so Reading is performing below the national average in this area.

Table 16 shows in which local authority area Reading's LAC were placed at October 2016.

**Table 16 - LAC Placements by Local Authority Area**

<b>Local Authority Area</b>	<b>No. of LAC Placements</b>
Reading	78
West Berkshire	34
Hampshire	20
Wokingham	18
Kent	17
Bracknell Forest	8
Surrey	8
Oxfordshire	6
Slough	6
Buckinghamshire	4
Northamptonshire	4
Croydon	3
Dorset	3
Southampton	3
West Sussex	3
Cambridgeshire	2
Cornwall	2
East Riding of Yorkshire	2
Milton Keynes	2
South Oxfordshire	2
Stoke-on-Trent	2
Wiltshire	2
Bedford	1
Bournemouth	1
Brent	1
Brighton and Hove	1
Bristol, City of	1
County Durham	1
Darlington	1
Devon	1
East Sussex	1
Enfield	1
Essex	1
Haringey	1
Hertfordshire	1
Lambeth	1

Leicestershire	1
Lewisham	1
Medway	1
Newham	1
Newport	1
Norfolk	1
Nottinghamshire	1
Poole	1
Portsmouth	1
Salford	1
Southend-on-Sea	1
Southwark	1
Staffordshire	1
Sutton	1
Windsor and Maidenhead	1

Source: Reading Borough Council Performance Team, October 2016

Reading currently places in 51 different local authority areas and 29 (57%) of these areas accommodate only one of Reading's looked after children. Only 30% are placed in Reading, although 56% are placed within Berkshire.

Reading is over dependent on placements outside of Reading. This is partially to be expected, as Reading is a small unitary covering a main town. It is one of 6 unitary authorities which make up Berkshire. Under the definitions used by the Government any placement outside Reading and not in an adjoining authority (Wokingham, West Berkshire or Oxfordshire) is considered to be a 'distant placement'. Reading is competing with 7 other authorities for placements within a 20 mile radius. This is not consistent with the situations of some of our statistical neighbours, who may be competing with a single larger county authority on their boundary.

In Reading a distant placement can easily be within 20 miles of the child's home. 48% of placements were distant placements at October 2016 but only 34% were more than 20 miles away.

#### 4.3 Average Costs and what we Spend on external services

What we know about Reading's spend per week at October 2016 is set out in Table 17 below.

Table 17 - Weekly Spend by Provider Type

Provider Type	Weekly total spend	Average weekly spend per placement	National average weekly cost per placement	Difference between Reading and national average
Independent Fostering Agency	£100,658	£923	£826*	+12%
Residential home	£54,038	£3,221	£3,000 <sup>21</sup>	+7%
Residential LDD	£11,944	£3,981	unavailable	unavailable

<sup>21</sup> Children's Home Data Pack (Department for Education 2014)

Source: Mosaic, October 2016

\*Average cost for a placement on the South Central Framework

Residential care for children with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) is generally more expensive than other residential placements; for this reason the categories have been separated in Table 17 above.

Reading is paying, on average, around 12% more than the South Central Framework average rate for foster placements through IFAs. This amounts to approximately £551,200 per year based on the current number of IFA placements. Our greatest spend is with IFAs. 60% of Reading's LAC are living in either in-house or independent foster care, and 64% of those are with IFA registered foster carers. It costs significantly less to place children with in-house foster carers. At October 2016 Reading had 82 sets of in-house foster carers with a total of 9 vacancies. Reading is implementing a Foster Carer Recruitment & Retention Plan to increase our number of in-house foster carers.

Reading is paying, on average, around 7% more than the national average rate for residential homes, which amounts to approximately £183,872 per year based on the current number of residential home placements. However, as £3,000 is stated to be the average cost nationally for a residential placement, including LDD placements, it appears that Reading is paying, on average, significantly more than other local authorities. If LDD placements are included in the total, Reading is paying around 11% more than the national average cost per placement. Reading pays significantly more than the average cost for some placements and less for others. The cost of a child's residential placement depends on the needs of the child; however these high cost placements should be reviewed regularly to ensure value for money.

Sir Martin Narey, in his independent review of children's homes published July 2016, made the statement that in many local authorities *"knowledge and intelligence about the needs of individual children - dependent on good quality care planning - is often not aggregated to inform commissioning. Certainly, too much of what I saw and heard was really about buying places in children's homes, not about commissioning them"*. He also said that there is a *"frequent failure of local authorities to save money by obtaining discounts related to occupancy...I also found that prices obtained through framework agreements were often only marginally better than spot purchase prices (and were occasionally higher)...I believe there is scope for local authorities to obtain significantly greater savings. At the moment they do too little to exploit their combined position as a sole purchaser of beds, and they incur a heavy financial penalty as a consequence"*.<sup>22</sup>

#### 4.4 Quality of placements/providers

All Independent Fostering Agencies, residential homes and residential schools are registered with Ofsted and are subject to regular inspections. There are four Ofsted judgements - Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement and Inadequate.

Table 18 - Ofsted Ratings for Providers

	IFA	Residential home	Residential school	Total No.	Total No. Providers
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<sup>22</sup> Residential Care in England - Report of Sir Martin Narey's independent review of children's residential care, July 2016

Ofsted Rating	No. LAC	No. providers	No. LAC	No. providers	No. LAC	No. providers	LAC	
Outstanding	44	10	2	2	1	1	47	13
Good	42	16	13	11	1	1	56	28
Requires Improvement	11	4	3	3	2	1	16	8
Inadequate	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown	4	2	0	0	0	0	4	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>51</b>

Source: Ofsted, Mosaic

80% of the providers we are using are rated Outstanding or Good, and none are rated Inadequate. 84% of Reading's LAC (who are in an Ofsted registered placement) are placed with a provider that is Outstanding or Good. There are two IFA providers which have not yet been inspected and a total of 4 LAC are placed with them.

Semi-independent and supported living providers for young people aged 16 and over are not regulated by Ofsted.

## Section 5 - What Young People Are Telling Us

Statutory guidance from the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department of Health says that local authorities should make sure that the voices of children and young people are at the heart of informing the commissioning, planning, delivery and evaluation of services for looked after children and young people.

### 5.1 What is Important to Looked After Children

During 2015, Ofsted used online questionnaires to gather views about children's homes, secure children's homes, adoption service, fostering services and residential family centres. 27,715 individuals responded. Five key themes emerged about what children and young people feel is important:<sup>23</sup>

1. Feeling safe and looked after:
  - Most children and young people feel safe inside their home. Children living in children's homes are less likely to feel safe than children living in foster care
  - Children feel less safe outside their home
  - Children feel safe when they can depend on those caring for them
  - Children sometimes do not feel safe because of other children in their home or because of the local area
2. Having staff who put them first. Children say that what makes a good member of staff in a children's home is someone who:
  - Spends time with them
  - Is caring, supportive and respectful
  - Listens and talks to them about their feels or any problems or worries they have

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-care-questionnaires-2015-what-children-young-people-and-adults-told-ofsted>

- Understands why they behave in a certain way and helps them to deal with their behaviour or anger

Children also say that it is important to have enough staff in the home, including enough male and female staff.

3. Feeling like part of a foster family. It is important to children and young people that they:
  - Are welcomed into the family, feeling safe, loved, supported and respected
  - Know that their foster carers are always there for them
  - Feel that they are treated like a member of the family
  - Are able to talk to their foster carers about any problems they have and being helped through difficult times
  - Are helped to make good decisions in life
4. Having fun things to do and good food to eat. Children and young people like:
  - A choice of fun and varied activities and the opportunity to try out new things
  - Making friends and being able to spend time with friends
  - Having their own bedroom and a nice bedroom
  - Having a pet
  - Having a good choice of food that they like, and plenty of it
  - Being able to help themselves to food
  - Reliable vehicles so that they can be taken on trips and activities (for children in children's homes)
5. Independence, responsibility and having a say. This includes:
  - Being able to personalise their bedrooms
  - Being treated like a young adult
  - Being given opportunities to put their own ideas forward
  - Being prepared for when they have to move on and supported to develop helpful skills
  - Being allowed to spend time outside their home and visit friends
  - Being given choices
  - Being involved in decisions
  - Having pocket money and learning how to budget

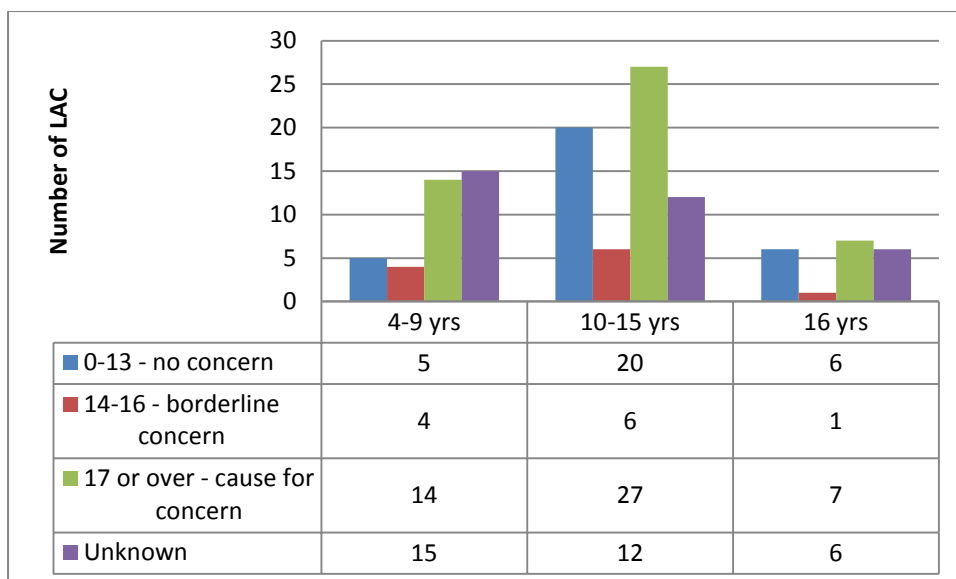
## 5.2 The Voice of the Child

The wishes of children and young people are taken into consideration before making placements. This is discussed at Panel meetings and also captured on the referral form. Children's views on issues such as distance from home and placement stability and their experience of being allocated a placement have not been captured in a way that enables this information to inform the commissioning of services.

## 5.3 Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

Local authorities are required to assess the emotional and behavioural health of all Looked After Children between the ages of 4 and 16 who have been in care for over a year. This is done through the strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ). A score under 14 is considered normal, scores between 14 and 16 are a borderline cause for concern and scores of 17 or over are considered a cause for concern.

Figure 25 - SDQ Results by Age Group



Source: Reading Borough Council Performance Team, October 2016

53% of children who have completed an SDQ have a score that is a cause for concern. The highest score was 36. 12% have a score that is a borderline cause for concern and 34% have a score which is considered normal. The highest proportion of young people with a score of 17 or more is those aged 10-15 years. 27% of LAC aged 4-16 do not have and SDQ score. It should also be noted that 78 (63%) of SDQ in Reading are overdue. The proportions are similar to the national average, where 50% of children have a normal score, 13% have a borderline score and 37% have a score that is a cause for concern. These proportions have remained generally consistent in England since 2013.<sup>24</sup>

The results tell us that children who are looked after are more likely to struggle with day to day life challenges and experience poor mental health than other children. Achieving stability and permanency for these children as quickly as possible is crucial to their wellbeing.

### Section 6 - How Reading Compares to 'Good' Statistical Neighbours

This section compares Reading's rate of LAC, number of LAC per age group and category of need with some of our statistical neighbours who have been rated 'Good' by Ofsted. It should be noted that none of these local authorities have been inspected recently and some are rated under the old grading system, for which a Grade 3 is 'Adequate' rather than 'Requires Improvement'. For this reason comparisons have been made with the average for all of the 'Good' and 'Adequate' statistical neighbours and separately for the average of only the 'Good' ones. Table 19 below indicates which local authorities have been used, their Ofsted grading and when the most recent inspection took place.

Table 19 - Good and Adequate Statistical Neighbours

Local Authority	Ofsted Rating	Date of Inspection
Sutton	Adequate	May 2013
Bedford	Adequate	January 2013
Barnet	Good	January 2012
Derby	Good	December 2012
Milton Keynes	Adequate	July 2012

Source: Ofsted

<sup>24</sup> Department for Education 2015, Table I5b



Reading	60 (75%)	x	x	10 (13%)	x	x	0 (0%)	x
Average all good/adequate statistical neighbours	76 (48%)	10 (6%)	10 (6%)	24 (15%)	25 (16%)	8 (5%)	0 (0%)	21
Average good statistical neighbours	100 (55%)	x	10 (5%)	12.5 (7%)	45 (25%)	10 (5%)	0 (0%)	20

Source: Department for Education, SFR34/2015, Table LAC4

It appears that Reading has a much higher rate of children becoming looked after due to abuse or neglect than our statistical neighbours. This is also the case when compared to the national rate (see Table 10). It follows, therefore, that Reading has a lower proportion of children becoming looked after for the other reasons listed above.

## Section 7 - Looked After Children Forecasts

Based on the findings within this needs analysis it is reasonable to assume that simply based on population growth, the number of looked after children is likely to increase over the coming years. This section looks at four projection models based on different possible trends, including numbers of LAC, age and reason for entry into care. The following should be noted:

- The rate of LAC is usually counted per 10,000 of the 0-17 years population. As projected population data is not available for this age range alone, the rate of LAC has been calculated per 10,000 of the 0-19 years population
- The data used for 2016 is unofficial data from Mosaic at 31 October 2016. This is due to the unprecedented rise in numbers of LAC in the first 6 months of the financial year 2016-17
- Projections by age group are based on the current proportion of LAC in each age group within Reading's population
- Projections by reason for entry into care are based on current proportion of LAC for each category of need

Cost projections are not included due to inaccessibility of the required financial data

### 7.1 Projection Scenarios

There are 4 projection scenarios in this section which include numbers of LAC and the estimated cost to Reading Borough Council.

#### Scenario 1

This scenario is an extrapolation based on the number of LAC per 10,000 of the 0-19 years population (63).

Table 23 - Continue at current rate of LAC per 10k of 0-19 population

	Oct-16	2017	2018	2019	2020
0-19 population estimate	41,700	42,100	42,500	42,900	43,200
Number of LAC	263	265	268	270	272



Rate of LAC per 10,000 0-19 population estimate	63	63	63	63	63
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### Scenario 2

This scenario is an extrapolation based on the average rate of LAC per 10,000 of the 0-19 years population over the last four years (60).

**Table 24 - Continue at average rate of LAC per 10k of 0-19 population over last 4 years**

	Oct-16	2017	2018	2019	2020
0-19 population estimate	41,700	42,100	42,500	42,900	43,200
Number of LAC estimate	263	253	255	257	262
Rate of LAC per 10,000 0-19 population estimate	63	60	60	60	60

### Scenario 3

This scenario assumes that year on year we will see growth in the LAC population equivalent to that which we have seen so far since April 2016 (19.5%).

**Table 25 - Continue at recent rate of growth in LAC population**

	Oct-16	2017	2018	2019	2020
0-19 population estimate	41,700	42,100	42,500	42,900	43,200
Number of LAC estimate	263	314	376	448	536
Rate of LAC per 10,000 0-19 population estimate	63	75	88	104	124

### Scenario 4

This scenario assumes that we will continue to see the same proportion of LAC within each age group of the population in Reading as we have at October 2016.

**Table 26 - Numbers based on percentage of each age group in the 0-19 population that is LAC**

Age group	Oct-16	2017	2018	2019	2020
0-4 (0.44%)	55	54	53	53	52
5-9 (0.39%)	44	44	45	45	44
10-14 (1%)	85	90	95	99	100
15-19 (0.82%)	79	78	78	78	79
<b>Total LAC</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>275</b>

**Table 27 - Comparison of Scenarios (numbers of LAC)**

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Scenario 1	263	265	268	270	272

Scenario 2	263	253	255	257	262
Scenario 3	263	314	376	448	536
Scenario 4	263	266	271	275	275

Table 28 - Comparison of Scenarios (cost)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Scenario 1					
Scenario 2					
Scenario 3					
Scenario 4					

## 7.2 Projections by Reason for Entry into Care

Estimated numbers of looked after children by reason for entry into care have been projected for highest three categories of need individually and for all others together. This is due to the unavailability of individual data for all categories of need as the numbers are too small. These projections are based on the average percentage of LAC for each category of need between 2012-2015. Numbers have been projected for each of the scenarios in Section 7.1.

Table 29 - LAC Projections by Reason for Entry

	Reason	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Scenario 1	Abuse or neglect (69%)	181	183	185	186	188
	Family in acute stress (12%)	32	32	32	32	32
	Family dysfunction (7%)	18	18	19	20	20
	Other (12%)	32	32	32	32	32
Scenario 2	Abuse or neglect (69%)	181	175	176	177	181
	Family in acute stress (12%)	32	30	31	31	31
	Family dysfunction (7%)	18	18	18	18	18
	Other (12%)	32	30	31	31	31

Scenario 3	Abuse or neglect (69%)	181	217	259	309	370
	Family in acute stress (12%)	32	38	45	54	64
	Family dysfunction (7%)	18	22	26	31	38
	Other (12%)	32	38	45	54	64
Scenario 4	Abuse or neglect (69%)	181	184	187	190	190
	Family in acute stress (12%)	32	32	33	33	33
	Family dysfunction (7%)	18	19	19	19	19
	Other (12%)	32	32	33	33	33

## Section 8 - Key Areas for Development

This section looks at the key areas for development based on the key findings in this needs analysis and that have been highlighted during the completion of this work.

### 1. Information Management

- We use Mosaic to manage our social care information, however the data that is extracted is unreliable. This is evident simply by looking at the costs attributed to various placements which, in some cases, are clearly incorrect (e.g. £0 per week for a residential placement).
- Recording on Mosaic is unreliable, elements are sometimes coded inaccurately and not all the required information is provided, which should be used to inform the commissioning of services.
- The Commissioning Team does not have easy access to information on what we spend and where.

### 2. Local Market Development

- We do not currently have strong working relationships with our local children's providers. As a consequence, we do not know much about local capacity. We are lacking commissioning arrangements with local providers, which could contribute to the higher than average costs that we pay.

- We do not know how many placements in Reading are being used by other local authorities (and with which providers) and therefore the scope for more local placements to be made.
- There may be scope for work to be done with other local authorities around residential home placements in order to reduce rates.

### **3. Voice of the Child in Commissioning**

- There is currently a lack of collated information on children's views regarding their placement experience and their views on the service they have received from the Council. More could be done to use children's views to influence the way we commission services. Work is being done, however, to capture children's views on their LAC reviews and to encourage an active forum of looked after young people.