

# Fostering Adoption Placement & Child in Care Service

## Market Position Statement

June 2016



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# 1. Introduction

This Market Position Statement is aimed at both existing and potential providers of placement and support services to children in care (Leicestershire's term used for Looked after Children) and those young people who have left our care. The evidence provided in this document will help the Council and its commissioning partners to take a strategic approach to understand and meet the needs of Leicestershire's children and young people.

We believe that all children and young people in care should have the opportunity to live and thrive in family-based care determined by their needs and wishes. We are committed to providing services that are focused on promoting positive relationships, the best outcomes and permanence. Where children and young people cannot remain within their own families, alternative homes should be within Leicestershire and close enough to their local communities to maintain their schools, friendships and other networks.

Adoption should be a consideration for every child or young person who cannot return home. Where adoption is not appropriate, permanent care with Leicestershire foster carer will be sought.

For a small number of children and young people, residential care will be needed for a period of time. However, the aim will always be to return children and young people to family based care within Leicestershire.

The increase in demand for social care and a reduction in the availability of public funding present significant challenges for commissioners and providers alike. This document summarises an analysis of current and future need. It describes strategic direction for the Fostering, Adoption, Placements and Children in Care Service going forward.

## Our Vision

Leicestershire is the best place for all children, young people and their families

## 2. Key National and Regional Messages

The Council delivers services to children and young people in accordance with statutory duties under the Children Act 1989. This Act requires the provision of services to those children and young person's deemed 'Children in Need' and those at risk of significant harm.

After a series of national child protection tragedies between 2008 and 2009 all local authority children's social care services experienced a profound increase in the demand for social care intervention. This intensified local and national focus on meeting demand, consistency, and equity of services and integrated working. The efficiency agenda introduced a new challenge which required the Council to be innovative in the way we design services and ensure that services provide value for money.

Other pertinent drivers include:

- The overall distribution of resources across family support and kinship care
- Targeting effective points and methods of intervention that meet the needs of children and young people at risk of entering care
- Improved quality of placement and support services for CiC and Care Leavers, leading to improved outcomes
- Reducing inequality for the most vulnerable CiC) through the provision of appropriate services, including placements, education provision and access to mental health services.
- Joint commissioning relationships and arrangements to promote best outcomes for CiC and efficient practice.
- Improved post adoption support to adopted children and those living in kinship arrangements.

### Our Mission

Children and young people in Leicestershire are safe, and living in families where they can achieve their potential and have their health, wellbeing and life chances improved within thriving communities

<sup>1</sup> Kinship carers or "family and friends carer" are relatives, friends or other persons with a prior connection with somebody else's child who is caring for that child full time. An individual who is a "connected person" to a looked after child may also be a family and friends carer.

## 3. Strategic Direction

Our strategy for fostering, adoption, placements and CiC is focused on the following key messages:

- Increasing market share in Leicestershire's fostering provision including our 'in-house' foster carers, kinship and connected carers and supported lodgings.
- Increase the number of specialist foster carers to enable children and young people's return to their family's care or local provisions.
- Recruitment of specialist short-term foster carers who can work with young people with emotional-behavioural needs and their parents to promote positive relationships
- Introduction of dedicated support to promote positive relationships between young people and their carers, stabilise placements and improve community integration
- Improved outcomes through promotion of an all service-all provision focus on the 'Golden Triangle' and in doing so ensuring that our children and young people are safe, achieve and enjoy good health-wellbeing
- Making best use of our resources through improved commissioning arrangements across social care, health and education.

### Evidence Base

#### Predictive Intelligence

We use demographic analysis of the region's current and future population and our CiC population, applying prevalence and performance data to help forecast need.

#### Improvement Intelligence

We monitor performance quality and outcomes for children through the County Council's Quality Assurance Improvement Framework (QAIF), which monitors and coordinates improvement activity.

#### Practice Intelligence

We will use our relationships, processes and performance information to inform individual decisions for children and young people and also to inform business development.

#### System Intelligence

We maintain links with a wide range of organisations through our contractual arrangements and through our Corporate Parenting commitment across a range of organisations and voluntary sector relationships. We engage children and young people in strategic oversight through the Corporate Parenting Board and CiC Council.

## 4. The outcomes we aim to achieve

- Children and young people in care are protected from harm and live in stable and supportive environments which support their education and promote their health.
- Children and young people in care reach the end of their formal educations as confident, aspirant and qualified individuals, ready for adulthood and employment.
- Improved school attendance and reduced exclusions for children and young people in care.
- Narrowing the achievement gap between children and young people in care and 'all' pupils.
- Children and young people in care and care leavers are supported to manage changing relationships
- Care leavers are in suitable accommodation
- To enable opportunities for education, employment and training for care leavers
- To hear the voice of children and young people in care and care leavers
- All care leavers are supported to develop their own beliefs and values which they are proud of.
- All CiC with complex needs will have a shared education, health and social care assessment that inform a joint commissioning decision about the package of care that child needs.

# 5. The targets and activity we aim to achieve during 2016

- Increase in-house provision of foster carers by 70 (net) over the next 3 years
- Improved placements stability (current 12.55%; target 9%)
- % Children in the same placement for 2+ years or placed for adoptions (current 67%; target 70%)
- % of Care leavers in suitable accommodation (current 66%; target 75%)
- Implementation of a 16+ years framework for placements
- Implementation of a post permanence (adoption and kinship orders) framework for provision of therapeutic services
- Improved timeliness of post adoption support assessments (40 days)
- % of children in care who have had dental checks (current 78%; target 79%)
- % of children in care who have health checks (current 86%; target 86%)
- % of children in care with up to date immunisations (current 87%; target 88%)
- Key Stage 2 – Level 4+ Reading/Writing/ Maths (current 55%; target 60%)
- Key Stage 4 – 5A\*-C GCSEs (English/ Maths) (current 7%; target 12%)
- Children and young people's participation in CiC Reviews (current 92%; target 95%)

## Ways of working:

- We know that improved outcomes for children young people and families cannot be secured by the Council alone. We are part of a wider network of interlinked partner agencies and we will use our influence to provide leadership across the whole system to build on strengths and drive improvement in outcomes.
- Closer working with health partners, including the development of 'co-commissioning' arrangements is led through the Better Care Together programme and reported to the Health & Well-Being Board
- We will make sound decisions based on the principles of outcomes based commissioning to determine where we spend our resources. This will include options appraisals of different delivery models that take into account factors including: effectiveness in achieving outcomes, quality of service delivery, safeguarding risk, financial risk, reputational risk, value for money and sustainability.

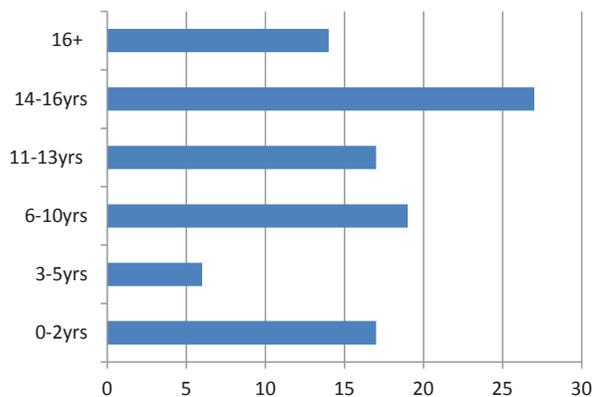
# 6. Needs Analysis - The Local Context

## What do we know about Leicestershire's population?

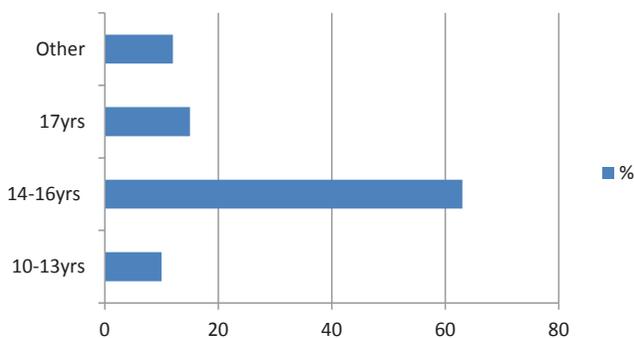
In 2013 Leicestershire has an estimated resident population of 681,600 people. The population of Leicestershire is growing, and it is predicted to reach 753,100 people by 2037, an increase of over 96,000 from 2012. The children and young people aged 0-24 years population cohort, is predicted to grow by 7% from 194,800 to 208,800 people.

On 31 March 2016 there were 466 children in care. There were more boys in Leicestershire's overall care population than girls (58:42%), and significantly more boys in residential care (81%) when taken as a discreet cohort. The largest CiC age group across the overall CiC population and those in residential care is young people aged 14-16 years.

**CiC age demographic**

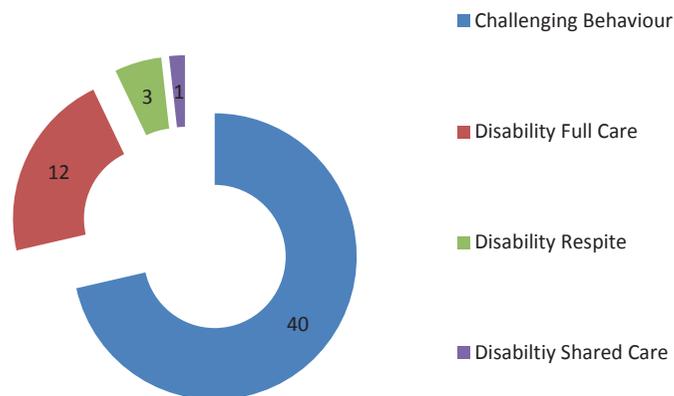


**Age range of young people in residential care**



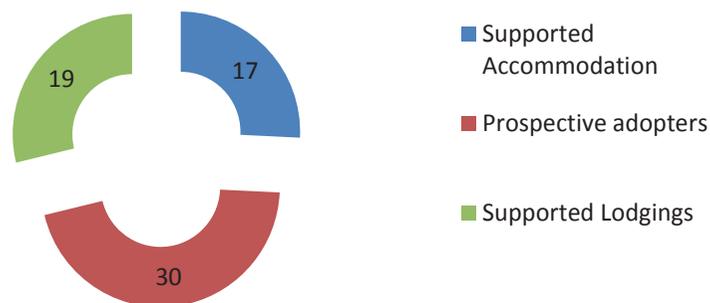
On the 31 March 2016 of the 466 children in care, 113 children were living in Independent Fostering Agency placements, 77 in kinship/connected placements and 60 in residential care (incl. internal residential care of 4). Other children were placed in in-house fostering provision, supported lodgings or under placement with parent regulations. The residential analysis by type of need and number of children is shown in the graph A below (excludes those young people placed in the in-house residential homes):

**A. Use of external residential care by need and number**



Use of other types of provision is summarised in the graph B below (excluding in-house foster carers and placement with parents):

**B. Number of children/young people by provision type (excl. in-house foster carers and placement with parent)**



CiC performance information indicates that older children are at the greatest risks of placement instability. This is likely to be as a result of their developmental needs, the impacted on by their experiences of trauma and emotional vulnerability. The percentage of children with 3 or more placements during the year<sup>1</sup> was 13%, which places Leicestershire in the fourth quartile nationally and indicates a specific departmental focus to ensure that CiC young people have the right emotional support at the right time and that carers have the knowledge, skills and support the children and young people in their care. In a recent survey sent to all of Leicestershire’s ‘in-house’ carers the following areas of priority support was identified:

- Increased and regular visits from both the child’s and foster carer’s social worker
- Increased focus on the needs and outcomes of the children/young people during visits to the foster homes
- Increased attachment training and support
- Improved access to CAMHS for advice to carers.

Leicestershire County Council is responsible for a Local Authority Adoption Agency. It undertakes statutory and regulated responsibilities relating to adoption and has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Rutland County Council. In the period 2014-15, 51 children were presented to the Agency Decision Maker<sup>1</sup> for an adoption plan. Of the 51 children considered by the Agency Decision Maker, 90% met the National Minimum Standard timescale of coming to panel within two months of adoption being agreed as the plan. Those out with the timescale are due to technical reasons acceptable under the regulations. The requirements of the Restrictions on the Preparation of Adoption Reports Regulations 2005 were fully met. 40 children were adopted by Leicestershire County Council approved adopters, 11 via the inter-agency process. Of the children placed, there has been considerable but not complete success in matching ‘harder’ to place children to adopters. Further work is needed to improve performance of adoption of children with disabilities and older children (none of the children aged 3+ years were older than 5 years). The table below provides an overview of adoption placements made for children with more complex needs or care requirements:

| Type                    | Number | Placed |
|-------------------------|--------|--------|
| Sibling Groups of 2     | 13     | 12     |
| Sibling Groups of 3     | 5      | 4      |
| Sibling Groups of 4     | 2      | 2      |
| Child with Disability   | 1      | 0      |
| Age 3+ when plan agreed | 19     | 19     |

<sup>1</sup> Agency Decision Maker

# 7. How healthy are Children in care in Leicestershire?

A Health Needs Assessment (HNA) was undertaken last year by Public Health to determine the health needs of CiC across Leicestershire and Rutland. A series of recommendations were made from this HNA and agreed at public health day in March 2016 to take the recommendations forward. The key health issues for CiC identified in the HNA are listed below:

- Mental and emotional health needs: Local and National research is lacking, but it is widely recognised that CiC have a particularly high level of mental and emotional health problems. The largest study undertaken nationally (conducted in 2001) showed that 46% of CiC had at least one psychiatric diagnosis, compared to 15% of children living in deprived private households.<sup>2</sup>
- Lifestyle and behaviours: Local data collection suggested rates of overweight and obesity were not significantly different from rates in all children, though this does not necessarily reflect a healthy and balanced diet. The largest national study showed that smoking, alcohol use, drug use and sexual activity was more common amongst CiC aged 11 to 17 than

amongst those in care.<sup>3</sup> Both national and local data suggested these behaviours were more common amongst those in children's homes, though this at least partly reflects the older age group in this setting. A recent local report looked at opportunities and barriers to smoking cessation in children's homes in Leicestershire. This highlighted possible concerns that smoking placed children in vulnerable situations related to bullying and/or exploitation.

- Key health services for CiC: There have been recognised issues in terms of accessibility of sexual health services for all service users, though these may have a greater impact on vulnerable groups like CiC. Local strategies are being developed for sexual health services which will help to address these concerns.
- The importance of timely access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services<sup>4</sup> (CAMHS) and greater availability of services to prevent mental health problems was an issue particularly highlighted by specialist nurses for children in care. They also raised concerns about access to CAMHS for children with unstable placements, though local CAMHS services state this is not a barrier to access.

<sup>2</sup> Meltzer et al (2003). The mental health of young people looked after by local authorities in England. London: ONS [Online]. Available from: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/psychiatric-morbidity/mental-health-of-young-people-looked-after-by-local-authorities%2F2002-survey%2Fmental-health-of-young-people-looked-after-by-local-authorities-in-england.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Meltzer et al (2003).  
<sup>4</sup> CAMHS

The corporate parenting responsibilities of local authorities include having a duty under section 22(3)(a) of the Children Act 1989 to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children they look after. This includes the promotion of the child's physical, emotional and mental health and acting on any early signs of health issues. The following table provides health performance information for children in Leicestershire<sup>5</sup>:

|  | 2016 | %     |   | 2015 | %     |
|--|------|-------|---|------|-------|
| In care for over 12 months at 31 March   | 310  |       |   | 304  |       |
| Number of children with health surveillance checks up to date (age 0-5)          | 52   | 91.2% | ↓ | 54   | 93.1% |
| In care for over 12 months at 31 March age 0-5                                   | 57   |       |   | 58   |       |
| Number of children immunisations up to date                                      | 245  | 79.0% | ↓ | 268  | 86.5% |
| Number of children their teeth checked by a dentist                              | 204  | 65.8% | ↓ | 239  | 77.1% |
| Number of children who have had their annual health assessment                   | 281  | 90.6% | ↑ | 263  | 84.8% |
| Number of children identified as having a substance misuse problem               | 16   | 5.2%  | ↓ | 19   | 6.1%  |
| Number of children who received an intervention for substance misuse problem     | 11   |       |   | 9    |       |
| Number of children who were offered an intervention for substance misuse problem | 4    |       |   | 7    |       |
| Number of children with an SDQ score   | 93   |       | ↑ | 44   |       |

<sup>5</sup> Based on 310 children and young people who have been in care for at least 12 months at 31 March 2016

A social care, health and virtual school review of CiC priorities were completed in 2016. The meeting concluded that the following was done well to improve general and emotional health outcomes for CiC:

- Early years Personal Education Plans (PEP) with an early identification of need and intervention.
- There is evidence of good use of 2 year old nursery funding (15 hours p/w) to promote development (Free early education entitlement – FEEE)
- Use of Education, Health and Care Plans to meet the emotional and behavioural needs of CiC
- Child in care Nurses offer foster carers advice and support regarding behaviour management, continence and constipation, dental care, drugs and alcohol misuse, weight management, smoking cessation and sleep
- Child in care Nurses offer training on the ‘Impact of Neglect’, managing eating behaviours, healthy eating and sexual health
- Child in care Nurses have a particular focus on Child Sexual Exploitation<sup>6</sup> (CSE) and work as part of a multiagency team around the young person.
- Delivery of training to foster carers on three pre-agreed topics/areas of need e.g. attachment and trauma

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6 CSE guidance

- Training on the impact of neglect and managing eating behaviours
- Health Visitors support carers using the Solihull Approach<sup>7</sup> when needed.

At this social care, health and virtual school review of CiC priorities, the following areas of development were identified:

- **Multi Agency Training Timetable:** a shared cross-agency training timetable to focus on priorities and remove duplication.
- **Improve Foster carers attendance on training:** through improved communication and engagement with foster carers, the use of a newsletter and focused foster carer support groups.
- **Improved Stability Meetings:** using Signs of Safety involving whole family, where possible, and focusing on outcomes for the child or young person.
- **Communication with the Child in Care teams:** Improved and consistent use of health passports.
- **Improved multi-agency working together:** through quarterly meetings to review priorities, progress, case studies looking at best practice.
- **Monitoring quality of care:** with a particular focus on Out of County Placements

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7 Solihull Approach

What does this mean? Leicestershire’s social workers, foster carers and health colleagues are working hard to identify complex health issues early and to provide the necessary advice, support and training. In areas of general health such as dental care and immunisation rates, performance has declined and further improvement is needed in the completion and use of SDQ to inform care plans. Some of the issues relate to processes that capture completion, other issues relate to workforce development and consistent use of the ‘Golden Triangle’ in practice.

# 8. How well are our children in care doing in school, college and in other areas of attainment?

In an effort to narrow achievement gaps over time for CiC, the Children and Families Act 2014 stated that every local authority must have a Virtual School Head (VSH) for CiC in order to:

- Discharge the local authority's duty to promote the educational achievement of children in care
- To work in partnership with all agencies to ensure appropriate education provision
- Ensure quality Personal Education Planning (PEP)
- Manage the Pupil Premium Plus funding for CiC.

The virtual school for CiC in Leicestershire has been named The Fox Academy by Leicestershire's CiC and care leavers.

2014 Key Stage Test and Examination Results for CiC in Leicestershire were as follows:

## Foundation Stage (age 5)

- The percentage of CiC achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) is 30% which represents an increase of 19% against the 2014 figure of 11%. This increase is above both the national rise of 5.9% for all pupils and the local increase for all pupils in Leicestershire of 5.5%.
- This is a fluid cohort, reflecting the mobility that exists in early years with regard to CiC.

What does this mean? Significantly more children in care age 5 years are reaching Good Levels of Development than in 2014.

## Key Stage One (age 7)

- The percentage of CiC achieving the Phonics benchmark at Year 1 is 40% (4 out of 10 pupils) - one more child than 2014 achieved this measure (3 out of 10 pupils).
- There have been good improvements on 2014 in reading, writing and maths- 72.7% (8 out of 11) achieved Level 2 in reading, writing and maths and 1 child achieved a Level 3 in reading. These achievements are particularly pleasing as none of these 11 pupils achieved GLD at the end of the Foundation Stage.

What does this mean? Whilst gaps against pupils' achievements national remain significant, they are narrowing slowly and there is some pleasing achievement for one individual at Level 3.

## Key Stage Two (age 11)

55% (10 out of 18 pupils) of pupils achieved Level 4+ in Reading, Writing and Maths. Whilst gaps between all pupils local and national remain wide, the number of Leicestershire's CiC achieving Level 4+ in Reading, Writing and Maths rose by 1.8% (from 53.8% to 55.6%). This is similar to national and local levels for all pupils.

Level 5 achievements have improved with one child achieving Level 5 in Reading, Writing and Maths and two children securing Level 5 in Reading and Maths. One child achieved Level 6 in Maths.

What does this mean? Overall the percentage of pupils making expected progress in English and Maths overtime and in relation to their starting points, is good.

## Key Stage Four (age 16)

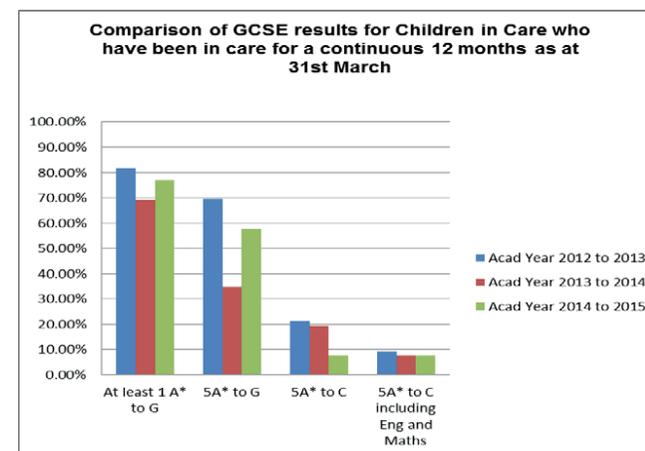
7.7% (2 out of 26 pupils) achieved this measure. This is the same result as the previous year. Locally, 56.8% of all pupils in Leicestershire achieved this measure – a rise of 0.30% from 2014

34% (9 out of 26 pupils) pupils achieved 5A\*- DEM against 6 out of 26 in the previous year.

54% (14 out of 26 pupils) pupils have special educational needs or disability (SEND). No SEND young people achieved above Grade C at GCSE and 5 were working below GCSE level.

11% (5 out of 47 pupils) achieved 5A\*-C which is in line with schools' predictions.

What does this mean? 10.7% of Children in Care aged 16 achieved 5A\*-C. Whilst this is in line with the school's prediction, the attainment gap for Children in Care at Key Stage 4 remains high.



## Key Stage Five (age 18)

The virtual school cohort for Key Stage (KS) 5 results are drawn from a range of schools, colleges and settings and cover a wide range and level of qualifications. There have been some very pleasing individual results and achievements this year with two young people going to university and two young people studying Higher Education at college.

Of the ten young people who had 3 or more placement moves since entry into care:

- In English four achieved level 4 at KS2 and one achieved level 5, yet none of them achieved GCSE English Grade C+.
- In maths, four achieved level 4 and one achieved level 5 at KS2 but only one achieved GCSE maths Grade C+.

Of the six young people who had 3 or more placement moves in Year 10 or Year 11:

- In English three achieved level 4 at KS2, yet none of them achieved GCSE English Grade C+.
- In maths, two achieved level 4 and one achieved level 5 at KS2 but only one of them achieved GCSE maths Grade C+.

What does this mean? We are very proud of our young people who have gone to university and college, however, for those young people who have had more placement moves, especially those who move in Year 10 and 11, do less well at this age. It is a priority for us to ensure that placements are stable and well-supported to help our young people do the best they can.

The Leicestershire NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) level at the end of March 2016 was 2.9%, representing 598 young people aged 16-19 years from a cohort of 21,284. Leicestershire is in the first position amongst statistical neighbours for NEET and compares well against the region and nationally. Of Leicestershire's Care Leavers at the end of March 2016, 43% were NEET.

# 9. What do our Children in Care and our Care Leavers say?

These are the promises that we are making to all children in the care of Leicestershire County Council, wherever they are placed, and to all young people who qualify for a 16+ service from Leicestershire County Council. **The Pledge reflects the views of children and young people in the care of Leicestershire County Council.** The following is a selection of the promises we have made:

## Coming into care and changing placements

- We will explain to you why you are coming into care, or why you have to move somewhere else, and we will let you know how long we expect that you will be in care and living in that placement
- We will try to find you a placement as close as possible to your family and school unless there is a good reason not to do so. We will explain this reason to you
- We will place you with your brothers and sisters wherever possible
- We will respect your feelings about having to leave home
- We will take you to visit a foster or children's home before you move in except in very exceptional circumstances

## Listening to you

- We will take young people's views into account in our planning of services for children in care via the Children in Care Council
- We will involve young people in the interviewing of all key staff
- We will involve young people in the training of foster carers
- Our fostering panel will include a care experienced young person
- A Support Worker post within the Corporate Parenting Team will be ring fenced (reserved) for a care experienced young person.

## Keeping you healthy

- We will expect your carer to offer you a healthy diet
- We will expect your carer and health professional to support you in stopping or reducing your smoking, drinking or drug misuse and to encourage a healthy lifestyle
- We will provide you with information and advice regarding health and safety issues such as contraception, sexual health, e-safety and bullying

## Supporting your education and personal development

- We will ensure that you have a school place
- We will ensure that you have access to education either at school or with the support of the Education of Children in Care Service
- We will ensure that you are allocated a Connexions Personal Adviser from year 9
- We will not change your placement during years 6 or 11 except in exceptional circumstances
- We will not disrupt your learning by asking you to come out of the classroom to attend meetings unless it is of the utmost importance
- We will encourage, support and facilitate your post 16 learning
- We will support you in learning to read and to enjoy reading
- We will encourage you to have hobbies and take part in activities outside school hours

**(The full Pledge can be found as Appendix 1)**

# 10. Current Supply

The Council uses a range of providers to meet the placement and care needs for young people, including foster carers, independent fostering agency carers, Leicestershire’s residential home, independent residential homes and semi-independent lodgings for older young people.

On 31 March 2016, 70% of children were placed in family based placements. 130 Leicestershire foster carers provided homes and care for 30% of our children in care; 17% (77) of our children were placed with family and friends as connected foster carers; 24% (113) with foster carers through agencies; 10% (60) in residential care and 293 children were supported through Special Guardianship Order or Residence Order allowances.

The Council has one ‘in-house’ (internally commissioned) children’s home- Welland House, registered with Ofsted as providing services for children with Emotional/Behavioural Difficulties. The Ofsted inspections of Welland House over the past three years has been consistently good or better, setting out that the quality of support offered is considered outstanding, children are deemed safe and their outcomes good.

The current annual budgetary commitment for Welland House is £600,000.

Services for young people aged 16+: Supported accommodation for a range of vulnerable young people (16+) is currently provided through a number of different providers either through block contracts or spot purchasing for individual young people, dependent on their needs or presenting circumstance. There are different contract lengths and end dates for the various contracts. 2015 procured provision is set out below:

|   | Type of Provision                                      | Beds | Value of Contract |
|---|--|------|-------------------|
| 1 | Accommodation and Support 16+                          | 30.  | £500,000          |
| 2 | Care Leavers Flats                                     | 10   | £135,200          |
| 3 | Emergency Provision (12 weeks)                         | 6    | £134,874          |
| 4 | USAC 18+   | 6    | £85,728           |
| 5 | USAC Emergency Beds                                    | 2    | £75,408           |
| 6 | Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children aged 16-18 years | 4    | £78,912           |

It is the Council’s intention to move towards a framework in 2017.

# 11. Resources

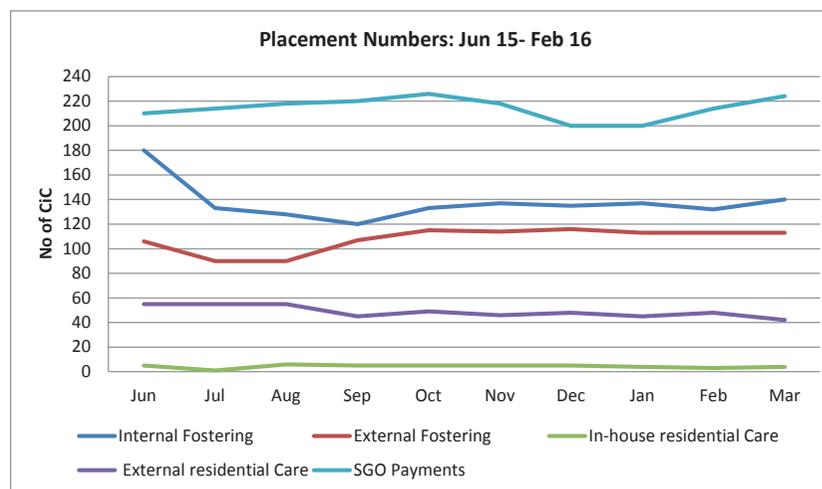
The mid-year forecast for social care placements in 2015/16 was an overspend of £5.9m. Management actions during 2015/16 included improved commissioning, the introduction of more robust decision making processes and a focus on contract management reduced the overspend to £4.6m at year end. Overall as a result of wider management actions, including the early delivery of 2016/17 savings, the final budget position for the department was an overspend of £2.47m. Budget growth and savings have been included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy<sup>8</sup> to address this position.

Leicestershire's numbers of CiC is lower than both statistical neighbours and nationally as demonstrated in the following table;

|                        | Children in Care per 10,000 population |
|------------------------|--|
| Leicestershire         | 35.0                                   |
| Statistical Neighbours | 47.8                                   |
| East Midlands          | 53.0                                   |
| National               | 60.0                                   |

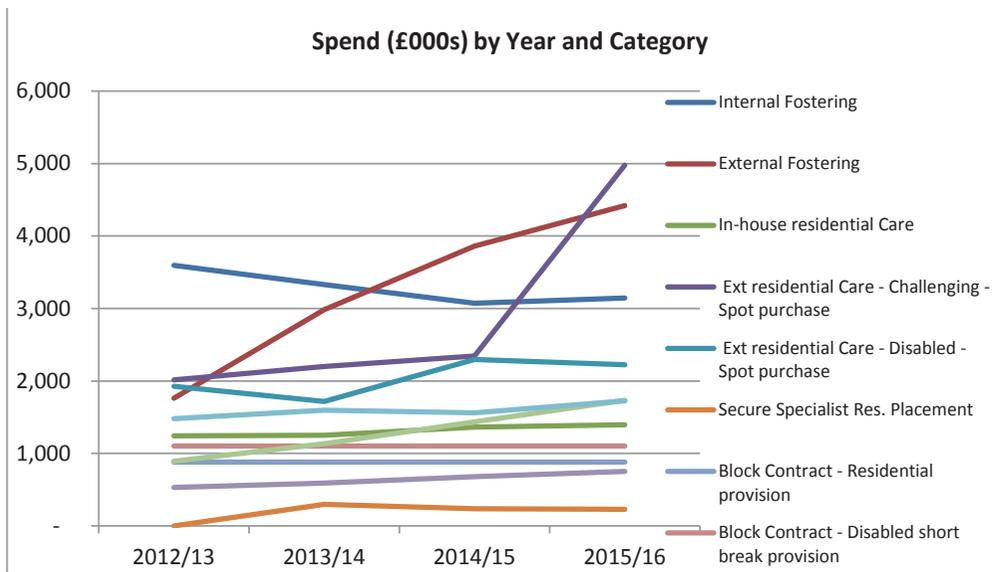
Additionally the rate of growth of CiC is slower in Leicestershire at 3.2%. The East Midlands rate is 4.8% and national rate 6%

Whilst numbers of CiC have remained relatively stable, the mix of provision has changed and a small increase in numbers of CiC have had their needs met within the higher cost residential and Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA) as demonstrated in the following charts.



The chart above sets out the movement in types of placements over 2015/16 but masks the financial impact of high cost placements which can be seen in the following table which sets out annual expenditure for each category of care;

<sup>8</sup> Medium Term Financial Strategy



The budget pressure continues for small numbers of children whose complex needs continue to require high cost provision. Analysis has shown that in 2015/16 13% (60) of the total number of children in such placements cost over 50% (£8.9m) of the 2015/16 placements budget. A very small increase in numbers can have a severe impact on the budget.

What does this mean? Net growth in budgets in social care placements has addressed the issues identified in 2015/16; it cannot however be certain that there will be no further financial issues in 2016/17. Risk surrounds some of the savings areas and any high profile child protection issues both locally or nationally can affect the number of children in care and have an associated impact on the budget.

# 12. Workforce

The Children and Family Services Workforce Strategy, 2016/17 sets out the actions we intended to take as a department to ensure that our workforce is supported through this period of change and that our staff have the confidence and competencies to embrace new ways of working and to continue to deliver high quality support resulting in the best outcomes for children, young people and families in Leicestershire. It will play an important part in ensuring that we are able to respond to an evolving agenda and have a coordinated and planned approach to workforce planning. It is broad and inclusive in scope, and in the context of the strategy, the 'workforce' is taken to mean those directly employed by the department. However, the strategy recognises that the delivery of our vision for children, young people and families in Leicestershire is only possible through an increasing collaborative and partnership working approach. Therefore, actions within this strategy have been developed so that where appropriate we are developing strategies to ensure that we are supporting and influencing the 'wider' workforce working with children, young people and families in Leicestershire.

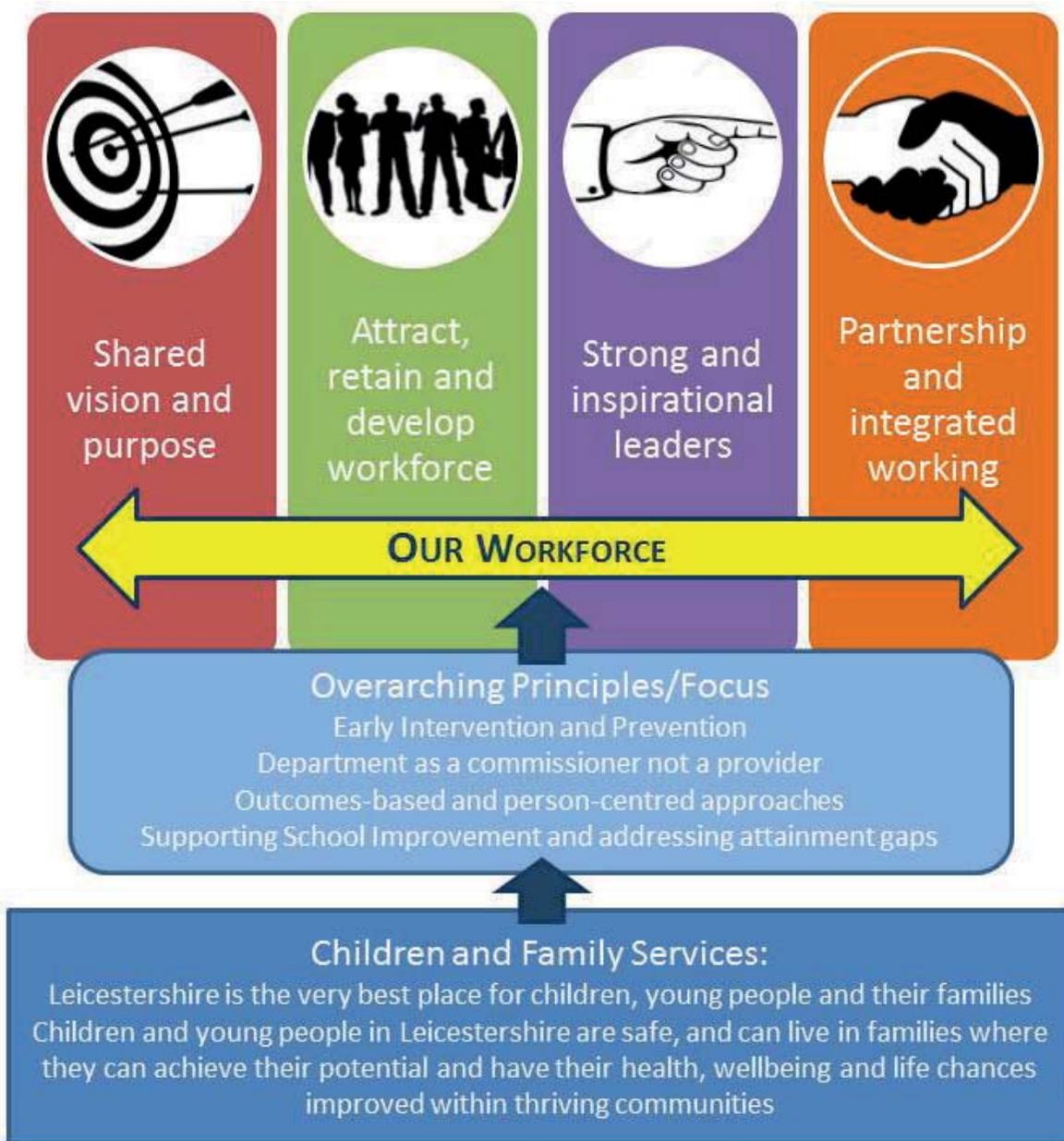
At a general level, the Children and Family Service's Workforce Strategy, 2016/17 acknowledges that building a workforce for the future is influenced by a number of factors and has two distinct strands:

- We must create and lead opportunities for generating and sharing new knowledge about how best to tackle the delivery and workforce challenge of Local Government changes over the next few years (as captured in our departmental commissioning strategy and commissioning plans)
- We will need to continue to deliver high quality training and learning opportunities to our workforce (both those we directly employ as well as considering how we can support training for those staff who are employed by our partners or those from whom we commission services and who it is advantageous or necessary to provide training to) and which directly relates to the work we are doing now and will be delivering in the future
- Within our workforce there are strong, inspirational and visible leaders. Our managers are able to support and motivate teams during change and work across organisational boundaries
- Our workforce is embracing new ways of working, in particular partnership and integrated working. This includes using existing and exploring new opportunities to develop our workforce in conjunction with that of our partners, such as Health and the Police (such as joint training initiatives and shared development opportunities).

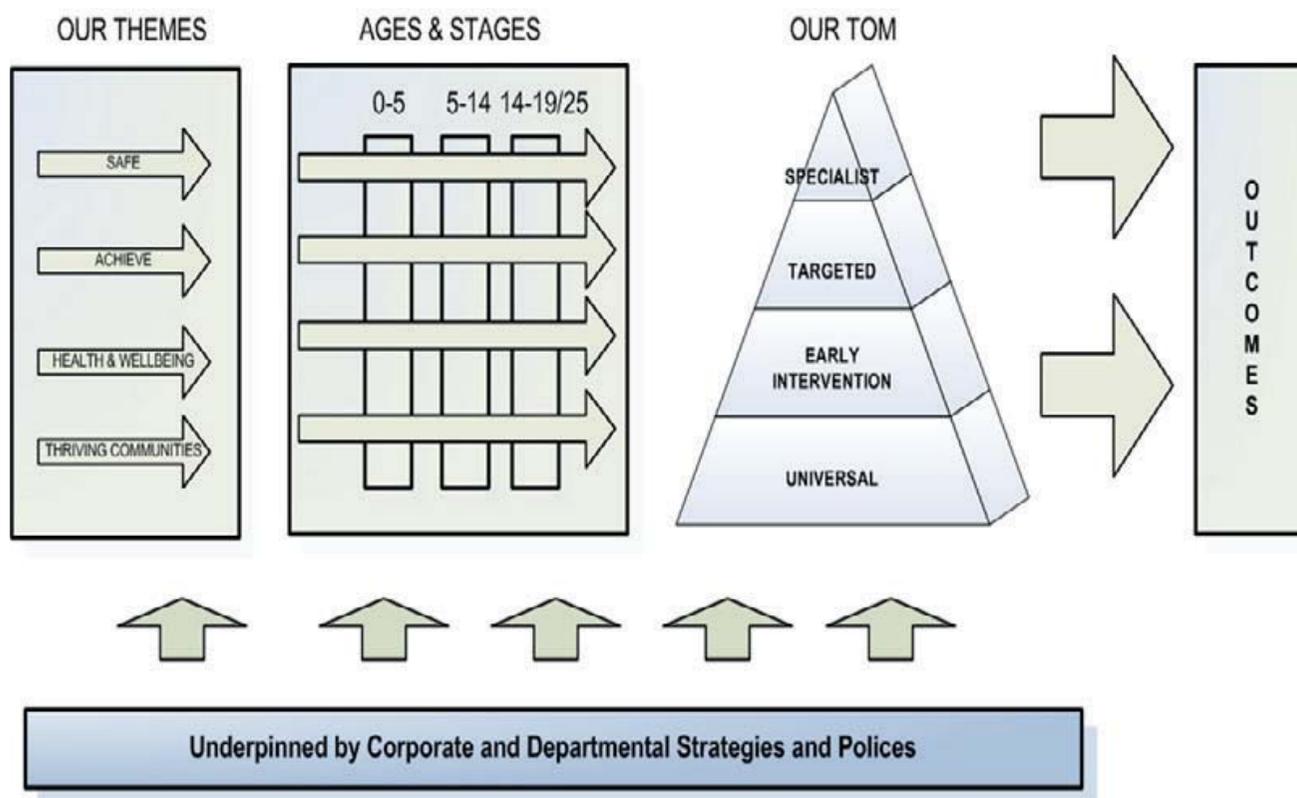
It is around these four outcomes that the recommended actions forming the core of this Workforce Strategy are structured. Below is a diagrammatic representation of the way in which these four outcomes for our Workforce link to the departments vision and mission and the principles embedded in our department commissioning strategy and commissioning plans:

Therefore, it is hoped that the Strategy will lead to the following outcomes:

- articulate the department's vision, priorities and desired outcomes for children, young people and families in Leicestershire
- We are continually seeking ways of ensuring that we attract, retain and develop our workforce. We want our workforce to feel confident, competent, healthy and valued and fully-supported to do the job that they need to do.



# 13. Operating Model



## 13.1 Delivering Priorities

Sitting beneath this departmental Commissioning Strategy are three Commissioning Plans which outline our more specific commissioning intentions and required outcomes – Children’s Social Care; Early Help for children, young people and families and Education, Learning & Skills. These are supplemented by specific plans for internal delivery and external procurement agreed upon the principles of ‘outcomes based commissioning’ with options appraisals of whether to procure or deliver services.

All external procurement will be subject to the council’s required Contract Management arrangements. Where it is decided that services will be delivered by the Children & Family Services department then individual services will produce Delivery Plans with clear outcomes and specific targets monitored by Service Managers. The needs analysis work undertaken by the department, combined with the national evidence base suggests council resources should be focused on whole family support with an emphasis on key stages of the life cycle where early intervention can be most effective.

The council’s target operating model is reflected in the departments planning with a clear intention to focus resources on prevention and early intervention as well as meeting our statutory duties.

## 13.1 Approach

The departments Commissioning plans will aim to align our practices and commissioning activity across the Department in line with the significant 'ages and stages' milestones in a child and family's life and will focus on the outcomes secured for children and young people. In this context the concept of 'readiness' is used to mean being ready and able to manage adversity, and to adapt and cope with challenges or difficulties in life.

We describe these key milestones as:

- **Ready for school**

Children begin school as confident, capable and curious individuals, ready to learn and ready for school.

- **Ready to choose**

Children and young people enjoy engaging, relevant and memorable learning experiences which equip them with skills, knowledge, opportunities and attitudes to make a successful transition to adulthood.

- **Ready for Adulthood**

Young people reach the end of formal education as confident, aspirant and appropriately qualified individuals, ready for adulthood and ready for employment.

We will aim to improve outcomes for our children and young people through an all service-focus on the 'Golden Triangle' to ensure that they are safe, achieve and enjoy good health-wellbeing.



### 13.3 Provision of Services

Leicestershire has a two tier system of local government. The Council is a public service body responsible for strategic functions and services such as education and social care where as districts and boroughs provide more local services. The Council currently delivers children's social care, targeted early help and education services through internal provisions within the Children and Family Service Department (C&FS). Children's Social Care services are delivered through a number of teams with specific functions:

- Safeguarding - Identification of priority need and child protection
- Corporate parenting- services for children in care
- Sufficiency - Placement provision and family finding

We deliver services through the following provisions, all of which have a role and responsibility in relation to CiC or informing demand/need for the provision of CiC specific services:

**Safeguarding Improvement Unit (SIU)** – Key objectives of the SIU include ensuring continuous improvement in practice and developing sector leading excellence. The SIU is involved in managing and coordinating responses to a number of high profile complex abuse investigations, including contributing to strategic and

operational developments to improve the local response to child sexual exploitation (CSE), trafficking and missing children. The service includes corporate parenting, anti-bullying functions and a traded service income.

#### **Leicestershire's single 'front door' First Response**

**Children's Duty** – This is C&FS 'front door, that is, first point of contact for children, young people, families and professionals seeking advice as to how best to improve circumstances for families with complex needs, or seeking to engage intervention services from children's social care or early help services. The team's priority is identification of the most vulnerable children i.e. those at risk of 'significant harm' (Children Act 1989) or those who without support services are likely to be at risk of significant harm and those for whom there is a statutory duty e.g. adopted children, young carers, parent carers and children with a disability.

#### **Strengthening Leicestershire Families (SFS\_ Social**

**Work Teams** – this service provides preventative action to tackle emerging and existing problems and minimise risk factors for children and young people aged 0-19 (including pre-natal interventions), their families and groups known to be most vulnerable, with additional and/or complex needs which cannot be met by community and universal services working in the locality.

The SFS is made up of multi-skilled locality based teams. Three teams of Social Workers and Child in Need Support Workers are embedded in the service to undertake specific statutory responsibilities and preventative work. Their priority service user groups are:

- Children in Need
- Children at risk of needing child protection plans
- Children on the edge of care

**Child Protection Service** – 'Child protection' is an umbrella term used to describe the complex system of overlapping services that promote and safeguard the welfare of children and young people. The system aims to protect children from maltreatment, prevent damage to their health and development, ensure that they grow up in a safe environment and enter adulthood as successfully as possible. Leicestershire has eight Child Protection Teams based within localities (5 in the North of the county and 4 in the South) that hold responsibility for the protection of children at risk of harm and those who require protection through legal mechanisms. They ensure that the welfare of the child or young person is paramount by strengthening the resilience and safety of the child or young person's environment. The workers in these teams draw on the strengths and resources of the family, the community in which the child or young person lives and that of agencies such as health, school, the police, probation and the voluntary sector. Where this is not possible, these teams seek to safeguard children through legal mechanisms.

**Children in Care and Leaving Care** - Children, who have a care plan of permanence in Leicestershire's care, are supported by workers in Child in Care teams. These teams work in localities and support children and young people up to 21 years of age unless the young person remains in education when they will be supported until the end of their course, or the age of 25. Care leavers can return for an assessment of need should they choose to return to education up to the age of 25. Care Leavers will be enabled to make choices before they are 18 which allow them to make mistakes and learn, secure in the knowledge that they have not jeopardised their ability to maintain independent living through social housing.

The children and young people supported by the Children in Care Service:

- Subject to a Care Order where the local authority holds parental responsibility
- Are voluntarily in care (Section 20, Children Act 1989)
- Young people who have left care (known as Leaving Care)
- Unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people.

**Disabled Children's Service** – Children and Family Services has one service comprising two teams (the

Disabled Children Team and Occupational Therapy Team). This is a countywide service responsible for families who require a service to meet the continuing care needs of their disabled child where the needs cannot be met within their community through universal or targeted services, or Supporting Leicestershire Families Services.

**Integrated Adoption, Fostering and Placements Service** – the functions of an adoption, fostering and placements service have been brought together under one service to promote a shared understanding and ownership of the child's placement needs. Within the new service there is a strong emphasis on commissioning the right placements for children based on robust assessment of the care, educational and relationship needs. The Placements Team Manager and Senior Brokerage Officer will ensure that robust processes for brokerage of internal and external provision are developed to ensure placements are sourced are the best quality and best cost to meet individual young people needs. The Team Manager will use placements intelligence to identify gaps in local provision and work with the Service Manager to develop a strategy for engaging with the external market to increase local provision. The Contracts & Quality Manager will ensure a consistent framework for performance and quality is embedded and that all internal and external placements are quality assured. The Brokerage Officer will source internal and external placements and monitor/quality assure all external provision. We are committed to maintaining a child within their local community or as close to their

local community as possible, giving the child access to supportive relationships, networks and familiar services. In-house fostering provision remains the placement model of choice for most children in care. As such the Integrated Fostering, Adoption and Placement Service will seek to increase the number of in-house foster carers and reduce dependency on independent fostering agencies. Efforts will be focused on meeting the demand and supporting carers to help children and young people reach their full potential. To this end, new processes have been developed from the government's commissioning standards to meet the sufficiency duties for both children in care and CiC:

- Individual assessment and care planning
- Strategic needs assessment
- Placement commissioning decisions
- Market Management
- Collaboration and securing services.

**Virtual School, The Fox Academy** – The primary aim of the Leicestershire Virtual School is to promote educational achievement and positive outcomes for all CiC to Leicestershire, regardless of where they are living in the country, in an effort to support schools to narrow the attainment gaps between CiC and their peers. We have a unique, specialist and strategic perspective on our children's education which we use to:

- Advocate on their behalf and champion their right to the best education
- Nurture recovery and progress over time
- Understand their needs and promote understanding of these in others.

The Virtual School collaborates with key partners including social care and offers up-to-date information, advice, guidance and training. All Leicestershire CiC have a dedicated Education Improvement Officer (EIO) to work alongside the social worker, carer and schools ensuring education is tailored to specific needs. The Virtual School should be involved in all decisions which will impact on the education of CiC to Leicestershire.

Early Years– 0-5 Learning Service ensures that CiC who are aged 2, 3 and 4 years attend a high quality funded provision. A personal education plan is written for the child to help them with their learning whilst at the provision. The plan identifies three targets that can be supported at the provision and at home. The plans are reviewed regularly to see that children have made progress. If a child is 3 or 4 years of age, then they are entitled to Early Years Pupil Premium. The Senior Improvement Advisors and Improvement Advisors will ensure the Early Years Pupil Premium money is effectively used to support the child in making good progress. In the summer term before the child starts school, a further Personal Education Plan meeting will be arranged. A member of Virtual School attends to ensure transition plans are in place and the child is well supported to start school.

# 14. Top Supply Issues, Commissioning Priorities & Developmental Opportunities

- Enabling children to remain within Leicestershire by increasing Leicestershire's 'in-house' foster carer households
- Enabling children to remain in Leicestershire by increasing the number of foster carers approved for children aged 12-16 years, particularly for boys.
- Establishing a network of foster carers and placements for unaccompanied asylum seeker children
- Creating a network of Supported Lodgings for young people with emotional needs or learning difficulties
- Market development for appropriate good quality value for money local provision
- Recruitment of adopters for children with health needs, disability or sibling groups
- Creating a framework for Post Adoption Support therapeutic services and support for other permanence arrangements
- Improved partnership arrangements for Post Adoption Support and other permanence arrangements
- Improved therapeutic provision for children in care
- Creating links and shared support/training provision across services e.g. routine engagement of adopters, kinship and foster carers with Children's Centres programs like the Solihull Approach<sup>9</sup>
- Enabling care leavers to remain in the accommodation in which they lived whilst being in care, e.g. by converting a foster placement to a post-18 arrangement or under Staying Put<sup>10</sup>
- Supported lodgings and accommodation, other than with their former carers, including opportunities for education, training and employment for care leavers
- Trainer flats where care leavers can 'practice' living more independently without compromising their future housing options;
- Specialist accommodation, for example self-contained accommodation with personal assistance support or therapeutic placements for you with specific support needs such as disabilities and mental health difficulties.
- Improved supervising social worker and foster carer training, focused on the 'Golden Triangle' outcome and how best to support carers to achieve best outcomes for our children and young people

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<sup>9</sup> About the Solihull Approach  
<sup>10</sup> About Staying Put

# Appendix 1:

## **Pledge to Children in Care and Young People Leaving Care**

**These are the promises that we are making to all children, including disabled children, in the care of Leicestershire County Council, wherever they are placed, and to all young people who qualify for a 16+ service from Leicestershire County Council**

### **Coming into care and changing placements**

- We will explain to you why you are coming into care, or why you have to move somewhere else, and we will let you know how long we expect that you will be in care and living in that placement
- We will try to find you a placement as close as possible to your family and school unless there is a good reason not to do so. We will explain this reason to you
- We will place you with your brothers and sisters wherever possible
- We will respect your feelings about having to leave home
- We will take you to visit a foster or children's home before you move in except in very exceptional circumstances
- We will make sure that the expectations of you in a foster home or Children's Home are not unreasonable. We will also make sure that any house rules are made very clear to you right from the start and that your own special requests are also taken into account. We will try to do this and to sort out any paperwork before you move in
- On the day you move in, we will make sure that most important thing is helping you to feel welcome and to help you settle in
- We will ensure that a social worker phones or visits you within 24 hours of moving in and wherever possible we will hold your Placement Agreement meeting within 3 working days of you moving in
- A good experience of being in care
- We will expect your contact with family members, including members of your extended family, to be supported and encouraged by your carers and your social worker where this is safe and appropriate
- We will respect your feelings about your family members
- We will help you to keep in touch with your friends, if possible and if it is safe to do so
- We will ensure that you are able to follow the religion of your choice and that you do not have to follow the religious beliefs of your carers
- We will respect your sexual orientation
- A social worker will visit you at a frequency agreed in your care plan. We will take your views about this into account
- If your social worker is unable to visit you as arranged, we will ensure that you are informed and another appointment made
- We will make sure that you have contact details for your social worker, your IRO (Independent Reviewing Officer) and the Children's Rights Officers
- We will continue to talk to you about why you are in care and to consider the possibility of a return home, if this is safe and appropriate
- If you are in a long term placement, your carer will be able to give consent to overnight stays with friends unless there is a good reason for this not to be the case
- We will provide you with your own suitcase
- We will celebrate your achievements

## Listening to you

- We will take young people's views into account in our planning of services for children in care via the Children in Care Council
- We will involve young people in the interviewing of all key staff
- We will involve young people in the training of foster carers
- Our fostering panel will include a care experienced young person
- A Support Worker post within the Corporate Parenting Team will be ring fenced (reserved) for a care experienced young person
- Your IRO (Independent Reviewing Officer) will offer to talk to you privately before your placement reviews take place so that they know what your views are and which issues are important to you
- We will listen to your views about contact issues, placement issues, which school you should attend and any other issues affecting your life. We will take your views seriously and we will always take them into account
- We will ensure you are able to contribute to your Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting

- A Children's Rights Officer will act as an advocate for you if you wish to make a complaint about any aspect of your care or if you need support in making the points that you want to make or in having your views taken fully into account

## Keeping you healthy

- We will arrange for you to have a full medical assessment once per year if you are over 5 years of age and every 6 months if you are under 5 years of age
- We will ensure that you are fully registered with a GP and have access to a dentist
- The health professional will ask where you want to have your health assessment and will, where possible, try to meet this. The health professional will ensure that your privacy is protected
- The health professional will explain what is involved in your health assessment and ask for consent before providing health care
- We will expect your carer to offer you a healthy diet 12
- We will expect your carer and health professional to support you in stopping or reducing your smoking, drinking or drug misuse and to encourage a healthy lifestyle

- We will provide you with information and advice regarding health and safety issues such as contraception, sexual health, e-safety and bullying

## Supporting your education and personal development

- We will ensure that you have a school place
- We will ensure that you have access to education either at school or with the support of the Education of Children in Care Service
- We will ensure that you are able to travel to the school which is the most appropriate for you
- We will ensure that you are allocated a Connexions Personal Adviser from year 9
- We will not change your placement during years 6 or 11 except in exceptional circumstances
- We will expect your carer and your social worker to take an active interest in your education
- You will have a PEP (Personal Education Plan) meeting at least once per year to review your PEP. A member of the Education of Children in Care team and your Connexions Personal Advisor, if you have one, will attend your PEP meeting whenever possible

- We will ensure that you have access to a computer at home if you are in year 7 or above. We will provide you with a lap top computer if you are in further or higher education and have no other access to a computer at home
- We will ensure that your £500 Personal Education Allowance is used to support your specific learning needs as identified in your PEP.
- We will try to provide you with a mentor if you need help in re-engaging with education during school years 9, 10 and 11
- We will not disrupt your learning by asking you to come out of the classroom to attend meetings unless it is of the utmost importance
- We will encourage, support and facilitate your post 16 learning
- We will support you in learning to read and to enjoy reading
- We will encourage you to have hobbies and take part in activities outside school hours

### **Preparing you for leaving care, independence and adulthood**

- We will listen to your views about when would be the best time for you to move on to independence

- We will provide you with a full independence programme before you move on from supported living. This will include cooking, shopping, budgeting, having a bank account, cleaning, form filling, basic DIY
- We will obtain a N.I number and passport for you
- We will provide financial support towards the cost of learning to drive
- We will ensure that full safety checks are carried out on any flat or other accommodation we provide for you
- We will provide you with additional support during your first month of living independently and will decide on the level of this contact in discussion with you
- We will support disabled young people into adulthood through our Transitions service
- We will offer you opportunities for work experience from the age of 14
- We will support you in identifying suitable jobs, applying for jobs and preparing for interviews
- We will encourage your participation in further or higher education
- We will provide you with financial support if you attend university and ensure you have accommodation during the holidays

- As Corporate Parents we will provide a variety of working opportunities or apprenticeships within the 'family business' of Leicestershire County Council
- We will ensure you have the contact details for your social worker and for the Children's Rights Officers
- We will provide out of hours emergency contacts for support when you need it
- We will ensure that you are aware of your consumer rights and will help you to make a complaint if you feel that you have not been dealt with fairly

**This Pledge reflects the views of children and young people in the care of Leicestershire County Council.**