



# **Somerset County Council**

## **Sufficiency Statement for Children Looked After and Care Leavers 2018 – 2020**

**April 2018**

*Our vision is that Somerset children and young people are safe, healthy, happy and ambitious for their future and develop skills for life.*

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# 1. Overview and Summary

## 1.1 Vision and outcomes

Our vision, as outlined in Somerset's Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP), is that **Somerset children and young people are safe, healthy, happy and ambitious for their future and develop skills for life.**

The Somerset Sufficiency Statement for Children Looked After and Care Leavers 2018 – 2020 sets out the Council's approach to meeting its responsibilities to provide sufficient, secure, safe and appropriate accommodation to children looked after and care leavers over the three year period.

This document provides an updated needs analysis and shows the current picture in relation to sufficiency of placements. It focuses on changes and new developments in level of need, policy and provision since the previous Sufficiency Statement was published in 2016. Our current approaches to achieving placement sufficiency are outlined, including the types of support and key analysis of the.

The actions identified in this Sufficiency Statement are presented in the Action Plan (Appendix 1), showing the measures that are being used to identify impact and our progress to date. This Action Plan is updated on a quarterly basis and is monitored by the Somerset Corporate Parenting Board.

Somerset's CYPP represents our work across the council to support this vision, and outlines seven improvement programmes to support the delivery of this vision. This Sufficiency Statement primarily focuses on delivering the 6<sup>th</sup> improvement programme:

1. Supporting children, families and communities to become more resilient
2. Promoting healthy outcomes in families and giving children the best start in life
3. Improving emotional health and wellbeing
4. Building skills for life
5. Providing help early and effectively
6. **Achieving effective multi-agency support for more vulnerable children and young people and develop an excellent children's social work service**
7. Embedding a think family approach across the workforce

This sufficiency statement is focused on ensuring we have the right provision, of the right quality and price, and outlines the evidence and actions to be taken to ensure the following outcomes:

- Children and young people are protected from harm and well cared for at home wherever possible
- Children are appropriately resettled in family based solutions
- Children who cannot remain at home safely are offered permanent family based alternative care as quickly as possible – ensuring children and young people can be matched and placed as quickly as possible in the right placement
- All children in care have a safe place to live in which they can grow, thrive and reach their potential
- There is a reduced reliance on residential settings and the ability to place children no more than 20 miles from home where ever this is appropriate to their needs
- We work with providers as our partners, and want to be different from the rest, sharing risk and supporting each other to do the best for our children.

## **1.2 Principles**

The sufficiency of care placements overall has continued to deteriorate both locally and nationally, being driven by rising complex needs and significant market difficulties with increasing competition for 'good' provision. It is therefore essential that the following principles guide the work in this area:

1. A focus on **prevention and early intervention** to ensure there are effective arrangements to manage overall demand for care arrangements and to address the drivers leading to children coming into care
2. Promote good quality matching and placement planning to ensure **placement stability** and provide good quality support and intervention if placements become insecure
3. Undertake creative and innovative market development and work collaboratively with providers to find solutions that work
4. Undertake robust recruitment campaigns to enable a **sufficiency of foster placements** for all levels of need, reducing our reliance on residential provision
5. Ensure we maximise quality and value for money through our **commissioning of the Care Market in partnership** with our health colleagues
6. Create the conditions for good **permanency planning** both for those children where adoption is the plan and for those with complex needs, including where the plan is for appropriate reunification back to their families.

Sufficiency of placements in Somerset requires strong and positive partnerships with independent providers. We need providers who are keen to support the council's financial situation, and want to work with us to find the best, most cost-efficient ways to improve the lives of our children and young people. We need carers who will not give up on our children and providers who will support staff to be skilled and resilient in the face of challenging behaviour.

In return, we will be realistic about costs where we can see the benefits and value of the service provided. We will be swift with our support in challenging situations and we will make our own quality judgments on providers, understanding that the right provision for a child might not always be 'good' or 'outstanding'.

## **1.3 Challenges and needs**

### **Somerset challenges**

The Ofsted inspection in November 2017 returned an improved rating for the authority. Children's Services are now rated 'Requiring Improvement to be Good' and within this, Adoption Services, is now rated 'Good'.

The Ofsted report noted sufficiency as a key issue for improvement, stating: "Most children looked after live in homes that meet their needs well. Fostering services are improving, but there are not enough foster homes for children whose needs are complex. As a result, too many children experience moves before they find the right home. Senior leaders have rightly prioritised investment in resources to improve sufficiency. However, although the local authority has focused on improving commissioning arrangements, this has not yet resulted in all children receiving a timely service and there is little joint commissioning with partner agencies"<sup>1</sup>.

The County Council is operating in the most challenging conditions it has faced to date. Our financial plans continue to be set against a backdrop of uncertainty regarding funding in the longer term. What is certain is the continuing loss of government grants and the increasing level of demand for many local authority provided services. The Council is at a point where only fundamental transformation will ensure a sustainable financial platform on which the council can continue to deliver for its residents.

Somerset has a higher than average number of children placed out of county (20.9% compared to 15% among our statistical neighbours) (see 2.4.3). This is because:

- Good or Outstanding providers in Somerset are full, largely with long-term placements from our surrounding authorities.
- Providers in Somerset who have vacancies are often holding these empty because of a lack of skilled staff, and/or difficulties in matching a new child with settled children already living in the home.

There has been an upward trend in the number of children looked after placed in residential care since the beginning of 2017, from 44 children in Q1 to 70 in Q3 (59.1%). This is because the number of children coming into care has significantly increased (see 2.5.2), particularly in the third quarter of 2017-18, and the recruitment of foster carers has not increased to the same extent. Many more children have needed foster care than before, and were consequently placed in residential because that foster provision was not available. The data in this sufficiency statement shows that over the next ten years, we can expect the number of children in care to increase further, simply due to population increases and without taking into account any potential increases in family vulnerability which could swell the numbers even further.

The use of residential care and related unit costs is higher on average than other similar local authorities due to out of county placements and additional costs incurred, for example social workers time and travel to the placement. Bringing children back to Somerset from out of county is a key priority. Additional costs are often incurred when a child's behaviour has escalated dramatically, so preventing escalation and identifying difficulties early will improve outcomes for our children and keep unplanned for costs down.

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[https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/local\\_authority\\_reports/somerset/059\\_Single%20inspection%20of%20LA%20children%27s%20services%20as%20pdf.pdf](https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/local_authority_reports/somerset/059_Single%20inspection%20of%20LA%20children%27s%20services%20as%20pdf.pdf)

Many care placements are breaking down leading to a number of children to experience difficult and inappropriate moves. A total of 96 foster placements have broken down in the year 2017/18. There are many complex reasons for this, but getting the right placement early and planning well to identify and prevent the potential causes of breakdown are key actions. Insufficient foster placements mean that many children are in residential care when they could be in a family environment, it is therefore crucial we recruit more foster families. Identifying and preventing the causes of breakdown means working closely with providers and amplifying each other's resources to focus on the child's needs.

For those children placed in residential provision we should always include work to support that child to move into a foster family, or semi-independence provision when they are ready and only if it is appropriate. There may also be options to return a child to their family when it is right move for them. These plans should be clear at the outset of a residential placement, and updated as the child develops, so that all children who can benefit from a family environment, or from practicing independence skills before adulthood, are enabled to do so.

#### **1.4 Somerset's Children Looked After needs**

Children with complex needs, challenging behaviour, those with autism and young people who require a specialist placement due to the risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE), are often placed outside the county (out of area). Sometimes a distant placement is a requirement, but often it is because we are unable to find the skills required within the county.

Placement breakdowns are often due to foster carers or residential care workers being unable to deal with extreme and very difficult escalations in behaviour. We need carers who are resilient, highly skilled, and able to commit to a child through their most challenging times.

An increasing number of placements are made in an emergency, where the needs of the child are emerging or escalating. Emergency provision is increasing in Somerset to meet this demand, and we are keen to develop these services further to ensure long term permanence for children who have had disrupted placements in the past.

We believe almost all our children are best placed within a family environment. To make this happen, we need to recruit and train many more foster carers who are highly skilled, very resilient and who has the ability to commit to a child in the face of ongoing challenges. This is a difficult outcome to achieve, but one which must be a priority for our children.

The majority of children looked after in the 16 to 17 age group (69%) became looked after for the first time aged 12 or over. It is often more challenging to find a foster placement for young people older than 12 and this is also when many placement breakdowns take place. Somerset children need resilient, committed family placements particularly during their teenage years.

#### **1.5 What we will do**

Our most valuable providers are the ones keen to work with us to ensure Somerset children can be placed in Somerset homes. Together with our partners, we all recognise that children placed near their communities have better access to supportive friends and family (where appropriate), and can be better supported by their social worker and local services. This improves outcomes for our children, and so is being actively and jointly pursued by the Somerset providers and the local authority.

Due to the high number of placement breakdowns, we are focussing on providers who are able to recruit and retain resilient, skilled staff. We will resist placing with providers who are unable to give our children stability in times of turbulence.

An urgent review of all residential placements by care provider is underway, with the aim of maximising value for money and ensuring that there is effective care planning in place. This will be completed by August 2018.

Since January 2018 we have been piloting a weekly update with our residential providers, so that we can clearly identify placements which are at risk of breakdown, and can share information quickly so that support is discussed and provided in good time. Already this is proving successful. We will roll this out to all residential and fostering providers by September 2018.

Independent care providers have told us they need more support to provide sufficient, high quality care placements for Somerset children. This includes improved relationships with social care professionals and others, shared workforce development, and contracts which provide greater certainty and innovation. We continue to develop a programme of forums and events with our providers to learn and develop good practice together. We will be drawing on the various models developed successfully by other Local Authorities. We are piloting a block contract to see if this kind of contracting produces greater certainty and innovation. We are also prioritising contact with providers so that we take every opportunity to discuss concerns or ideas to improve a child's outcomes.

Work is underway to improve care planning practice, with more effective: monitoring and assessment of the stability of care placements, earlier placement stability meetings and plans, and ensuring support from partner agencies is in place.

In addition to improved commissioning of independent fostering agencies, further work is underway to strengthen the Council's fostering service including innovative recruitment and an improved offer of support and benefits. As a result, we will recruit more in-house fostering families, striving to meet or exceed the national average, and ensuring that we do not place children in residential if they do not need to be there. We will also be undertaking an external review of our in-house service.

We will improve permanency planning, ensuring every child has a long term plan for their care. This work includes a 24/7 rapid response adolescent support service for families in crisis, and a Community Adolescent Team operating across the County to prevent family breakdown and support the return of children to their families.

Our key priorities for 2018/19 will be as follows:

- To recruit 40 new foster carers
- To trial the provision of emergency accommodation with step down procedures from residential to foster care
- To focus on young people in the 12-16 age range
- To focus on permanence and stability
- To explore new models with partners and providers utilising national learning and evidence
- To reduce the use of residential care and increase the use of family based solutions
- Where appropriate, to bring as many children as possible who have been placed in other local authorities back to Somerset, acknowledging that we will not move children where this is not in their best interests.
- Reduce costs by £723,000

## 2. Needs Analysis

### 2.1 Somerset Demography

#### Summary

- By 2030 we should expect to have 29 more children in care, based on population increases alone. Future plans should therefore primarily increase efforts to prevent children coming in to care, as well as take into account a potential cost increase and staffing increase in the social care workforce.
- Somerset's CLA population is lower than our statistical neighbours and our South West neighbours. However, authorities rated 'good' by Ofsted have even lower CLA numbers, and this will be Somerset's target and key comparison going forward. Somerset's CLA population has shown some fluctuation including a significant decrease at the end of 2016, followed by a significant increase at the end of 2017. The reasons for this change will be investigated in order to replicate, if possible, the lower numbers experienced in 2016.

2.1.1. The total population of Somerset in 2016 was 549,447, with 109,657 (20%) aged under 18 (ONS 2016). Whilst the population of those aged over 65 in the county is expected to rise significantly (+61% between 2014 and 2039), the number of young people (under 18) is also expected to grow, though much more slowly over the same period (+9%).<sup>2</sup>

Figure 1: Somerset's population of children and young people by age band

Age range	2016		2039	
	0-25 population in 2016	% of total population	Expected population by 2039	% of total population by 2039
0-4	29,226	5.3	30,266	4.9
5-9	31,235	5.7	31,896	5.1
10-14	29,703	5.4	34,558	5.5
15-17	19,089	3.5	21,982	3.5
18-21	21,526	3.8	22,024	3.5
22-25	21,906	4.2	22,879	3.7

Source: ONS mid-year population estimates, 2016

### 2.2 Children Looked After

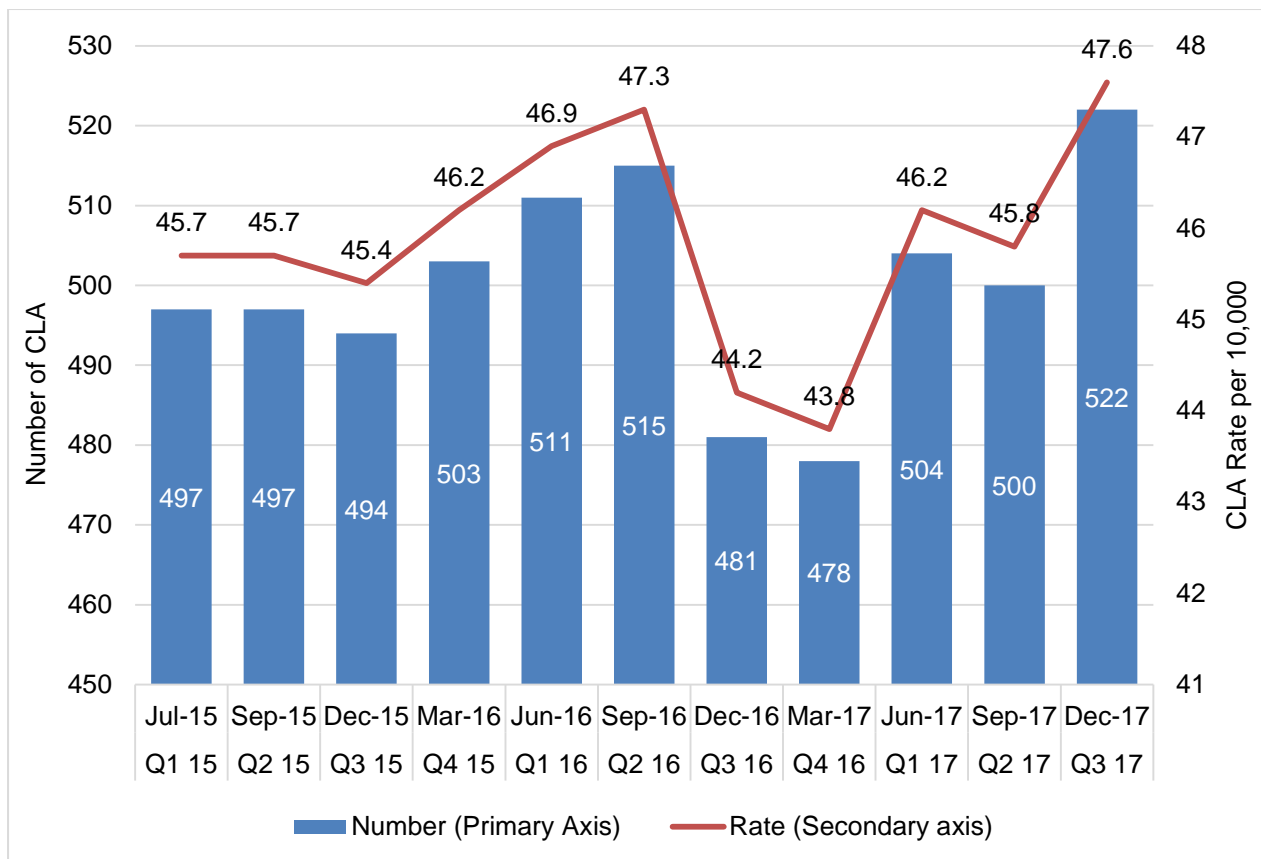
2.2.1 As at April 2018, Somerset had 517 children looked after, an increase from 505 on 31 March 2016 (+2.4%). This equates to a rate of 47.7 per 10,000 children, a slight increase from 46 per 10,000 in March 2016. The rate of our Statistical Neighbours is higher at 54.6 per 10,000. Whilst local authority levels vary significantly, the county rate remains below the national average rate, which stood at 61.7 per 10,000 in 2017. Somerset also has a lower rate than the average for authorities rated as 'Good' by Ofsted, which stands at 55.1 per 10,000.

<sup>2</sup> 2014-based subnational population projections, ONS (May 2016)



2.2.2 The population of children (under 18 years) in Somerset is expected to rise by 5.5% by 2030. A corresponding growth in our CLA population would mean an extra 28 children looked after by 2030.

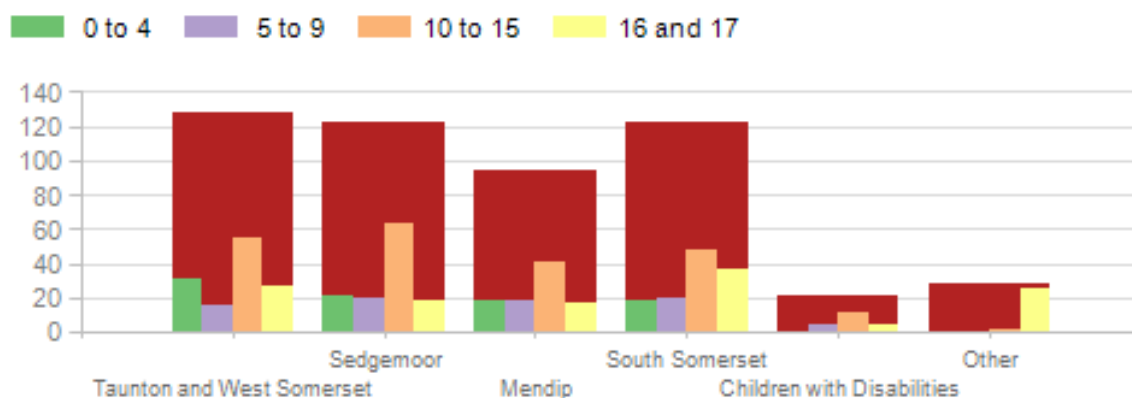
2.2.3 Figure 2 illustrates the quarterly change in the number and rate of children looked after in Somerset over the last three years. The lowest number of children looked after during that time was 478 in March 2017 but since then the total has steadily increased. A comparison of quarter three data from 2016/17 and 2017/18 shows an increase of 8.5%. Figure 2: Number and rate of children looked after in Somerset over time



2.2.4 The current geographical profile of children in care in Somerset shows that the highest number of children looked after come from Taunton and West Somerset (128, 25%). This is closely followed by Sedgemoor and South Somerset with 123 each (24%).

Figure 3: Children looked after by area (April 2018)

**Current Children Looked After by Area and Age**



2.2.5 The majority of children looked after are from White British backgrounds (85.5%), which reflects the overall demographic composition of Somerset's population, where 93.6% of under 18s are White British. White 'Other European' children make up the second largest group of children looked after (3.1%).

Black or Black British African children are over represented in care, with 8% of the Black or Black British African population in Somerset in care. This compares with less than 1% of the White British and 2.4% of the Gypsy/Roma population. The number of unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) resident in Somerset accounts for a significant proportion of this over representation. Data from April 2018 shows a total of 19 UASC children living in Somerset (Asian/Asian British – other Asian = 7, Black or Black British – African = 8, White – other European = 3 and Any Other - ethnic group = 1)

Figure 4: Ethnicity of children looked after compared to total Somerset population

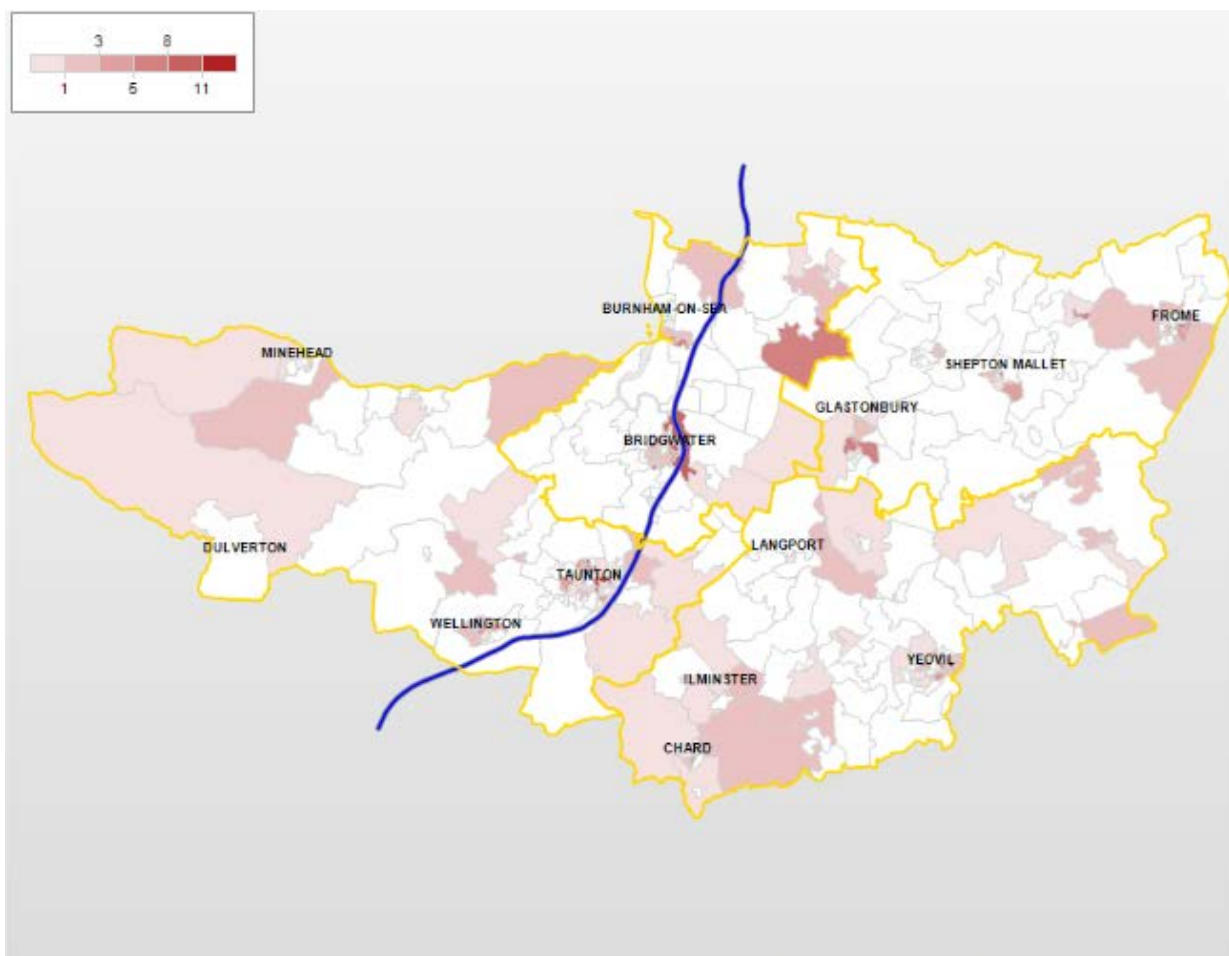
Ethnic Group	Somerset CLA (at Jan 2018)		All Somerset residents aged 0-17 (2011 Census)		% of ethnic group in care
	No.	%	No.	%	
White British	448	85.50%	101,977	93.60%	0.4%
Black or Black British - African	15	2.90%	183	0.20%	8.2%
White - Other cultural background	6	1.10%	2,763**	2.50%	0.8%
White - Other European	16	3.10%			
Asian/Asian British - Other Asian	8	1.50%	477	0.40%	0.7%
Mixed - Other	8	1.50%	412	0.40%	1.9%
Mixed - White and Asian	8	1.50%	757	0.70%	1.1%
Gypsy/Roma	6	1.10%	255	0.20%	2.4%
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	4	0.80%	546	0.50%	0.7%
White Irish, Mixed - White and Black African, Other Ethnic Group*	3	0.60%	633	0.50%	0.5%
Client declined	2	0.40%			
<b>Total</b>	<b>524</b>		<b>108,958</b>		

\*These categories have been combined to avoid the possibility of identifying individuals.

\*\* Census data does not separate the 'White – Other' category into European and other cultural background.

2.2.6 Figure 5 shows the origin of our children looked after, mapped by their home address. There are concentrations in and around our main urban areas such as Taunton, Bridgwater and Frome, but also from more rural areas.

Figure 5: Origin of current children looked after – home address (April 2018)



\* Lower Super Output Areas are population, rather than area dependent, so areas of different size are statistically similar.

2.2.7 The largest group of children looked after are aged 10-15 years (43% at April 2018). The second largest group is those aged 16-17 years (25%). 69% of children looked after in the 16 to 17 age group became CLA for the first time aged 12 or over.

Figure 6: Age profile of CLA (April 2018)

**Current Children Looked After by Age and Gender**

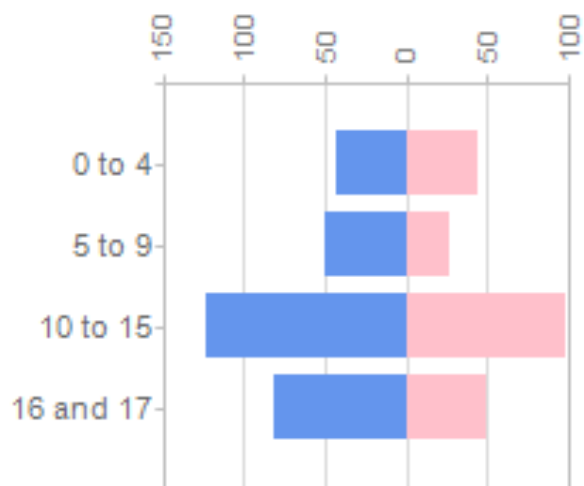
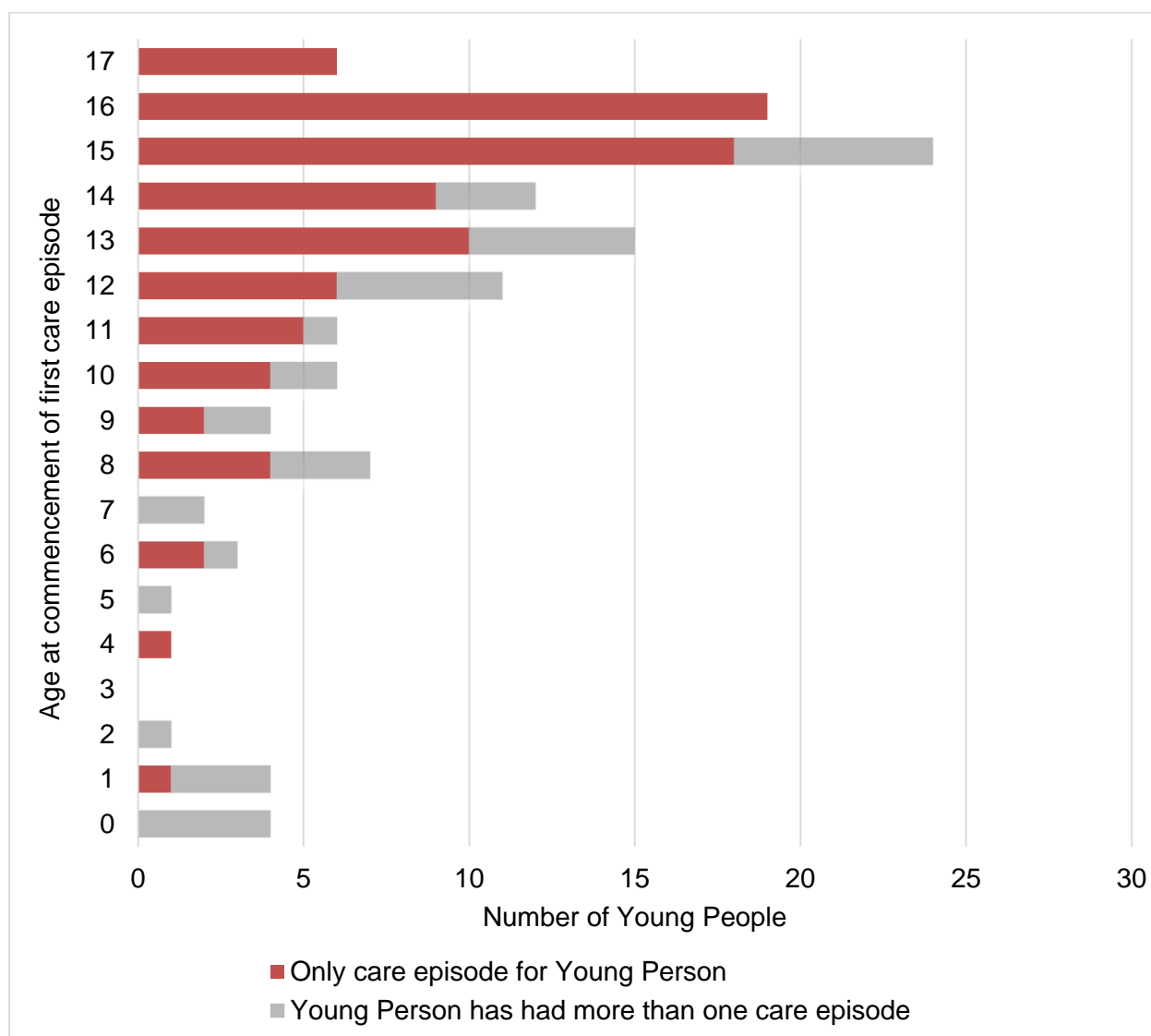
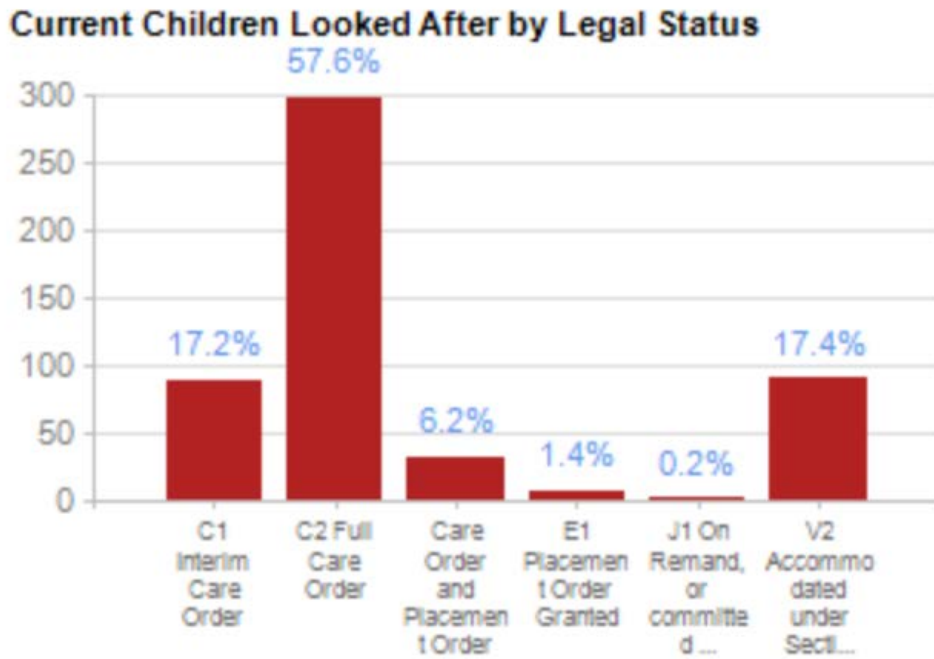


Figure 7: Children Looked After aged 16 & 17 by the age they started their first care episode



2.2.8 The majority of children in care (57.6%) are on a full care order and a further 17.2% are on an interim care order. 17.4% are looked after under Section 20. Section 20 arrangements are usually a short term measure to enable a child to be cared for until a more permanent solution is found.

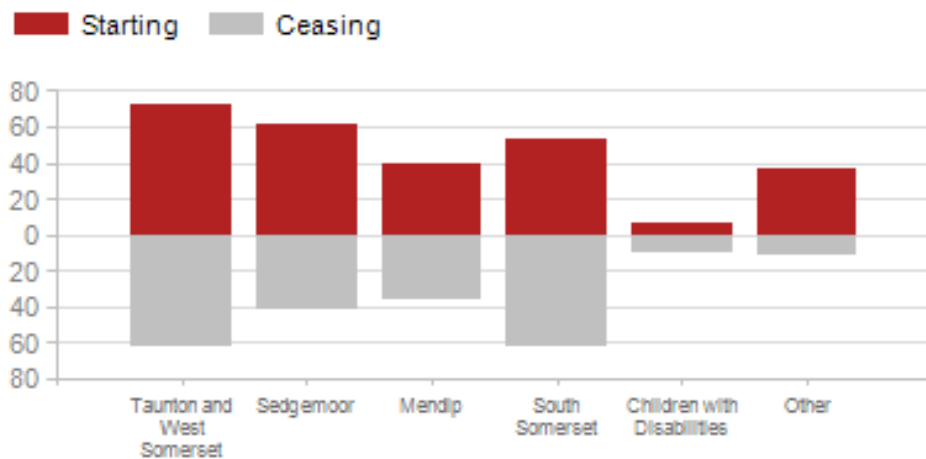
Figure 8a: Children looked after by legal status (April 2018)



2.2.9 In the 12 months to April 2018, 270 children started to be looked after and 222 ceased to be looked after. This compares to 235 children entering care in the 12 months to 31 March 2016 and 242 children leaving care over that period, resulting in a net increase to the number of children looked after. Of those who started to be looked after in the year to April 2018, 107 out of 270 (39.6%) were aged 0-4 years.

Figure 9: Number of children starting and ceasing to be looked after in the 12 months to April 2018

### Periods of Care Starting and Ceasing by Area



## 2.3 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

### Summary

- Somerset has 12 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) in care, and 17 UASC care leavers for whom we are responsible.
- The Home Office expects an allocation of 76 UASCs in Somerset (0.07% of our population). We can therefore expect a further 40 children to be placed in Somerset.
- Most of our UASCs have arrived unexpectedly, and not via the Home Office program.

2.3.1 As at the 26 April 2018 there were 12 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) who were in care in Somerset. This is a substantial increase from previous years, of 1 in 2014, 1 in 2015 and 10 in 2016. Of the 12 UASC's looked after in Somerset, 8 (66.7%) were in foster care.

Figure 10: UASC accommodation type (April 2018)

Accommodation type	UASC looked after (Under 18)
Fostering (long term)	6
Fostering (not long term)	2
Residential accommodation (unregulated 16+)	2
Homes and hostels	1
<b>Independent Living</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>

2.3.2 The original expectation was that Somerset would take 0.07% of our child population as UASC. This would mean we would have 76 in total. The current 36 falls short of that figure but Somerset is still in line with our neighbouring authorities.

2.3.3 The majority of our most recent UASC are classed as unexpected and spontaneous arrivals. It is important that we plan for our UASC and have appropriate accommodation available for them.

2.3.4 Accommodation for our UASC remains a challenge and although we can place our 16+ year olds in shared living and supported accommodation, as is provided by YMCA Mendip and YMCA Somerset Coast, a lot of UASC require a greater degree of nurture and care, and are consequently placed with foster carers. The UASC team continues to promote what is in the best interests of our UASC young people. The majority of the UASCs who come to Somerset want to live in Bristol, London, Manchester or the Midlands, as they struggle to have their cultural and identity needs met in Somerset. The UASC team therefore support some UASC young people outside of Somerset and some distance away.

2.3.5 Somerset County Council has a UASC policy and we continue to monitor and review update this. Additionally work is being done with Avon and Somerset Police to establish a working protocol and practice agreement regarding how we will work together to better meet the needs of our UASC – especially those who arrive unexpectedly. In Somerset we carry out a Merton compliant age assessment and sharing good practice around this is a priority for us.

## 2.4 Placement Stability and Location

### Summary

- Somerset has a higher rate of placement change (children moving more than three times in a year) than our statistical neighbours.
- Somerset has a higher rate of children placed more than 20 miles from home and outside the county than our statistical neighbours

2.4.1 In the 12 months to April 2018, 79 out of 517 children looked after (15.3%) had experienced 3 or more placements within a year. This is an increase from 12.6% of children looked after in the 12 months to September 2016. This compares to a statistical neighbour average of 10.6% (2016).<sup>3</sup> Somerset is working to a target of no more than 11%.

2.4.2 In April 2018, 60% of children looked after for over 2.5 years had been in the same placement for 2 years or more. This is a slight decrease from 61% in September 2016. This compares to a statistical neighbour average of 69.6% (2016). Somerset's target for this indicator is 70%.

2.4.3 The proportion of children looked after placed more than 20 miles from home and outside of the County has increased to 21.9% (April 2018) from 18.3% seen at the same point the previous year. This is also higher than the statistical neighbour average for 2016/17 which was 15%. Further work is being carried out to understand the reasons for out of county placements. Somerset's target for this indicator is 15% (78 children). However, as demonstrated in appendix 2, the majority of those placed outside Somerset are with our nearest bordering neighbours.

2.4.4 The number of fostering placements which broke down in 17/18 is 96.

Figure 11 shows the primary reason for breakdown is at the carer's request due to the child's behaviour. Placements ending for other reasons include carers retiring, or carer ill-health

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<sup>3</sup> Statistical neighbour comparator data sourced from the LAIT tool on 13/2/18  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-interactive-tool-lait>



Figure 11: Foster Placement Breakdown

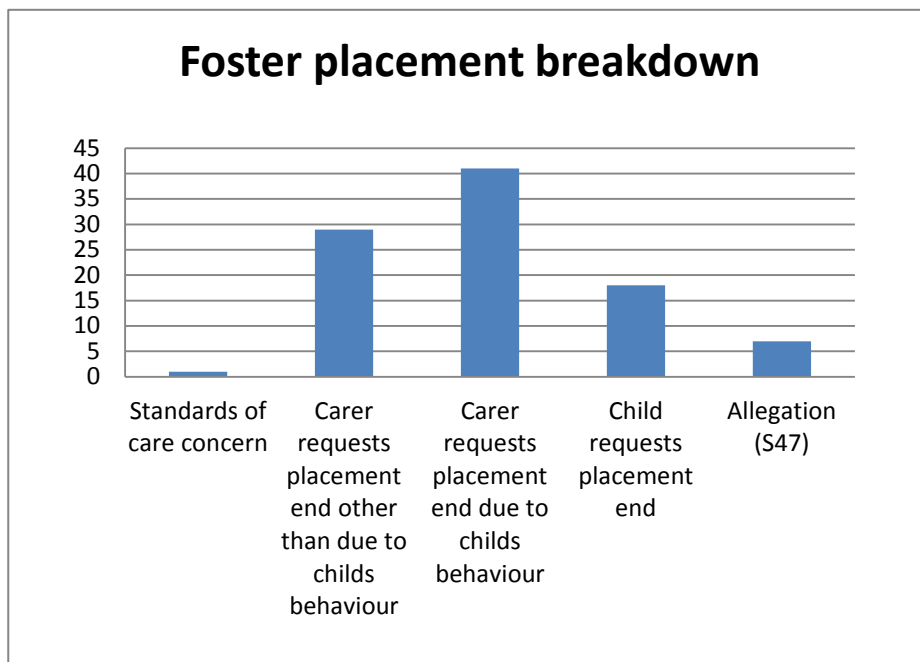


Figure 12: location of placement by area team (January 2018)

Home area	Placement area					Total
	Mendip	Sedgemoor	South Somerset	Taunton and West Somerset	Outside Somerset	
South Somerset	10	15	37	13	48 39%	<b>123</b>
Taunton and West Somerset	9	22	9	53	36 27.9%	<b>129</b>
Sedgemoor	10	48	10	31	32 24.4%	<b>131</b>
Mendip	37	5	25	4	27 27.6%	<b>98</b>
Other	3	3	1	5	11 47.8%	<b>23</b>
Children with Disabilities	3	4	1	5	8 38.1%	<b>21</b>

Figure 13: Percentage of monthly placements made in an emergency

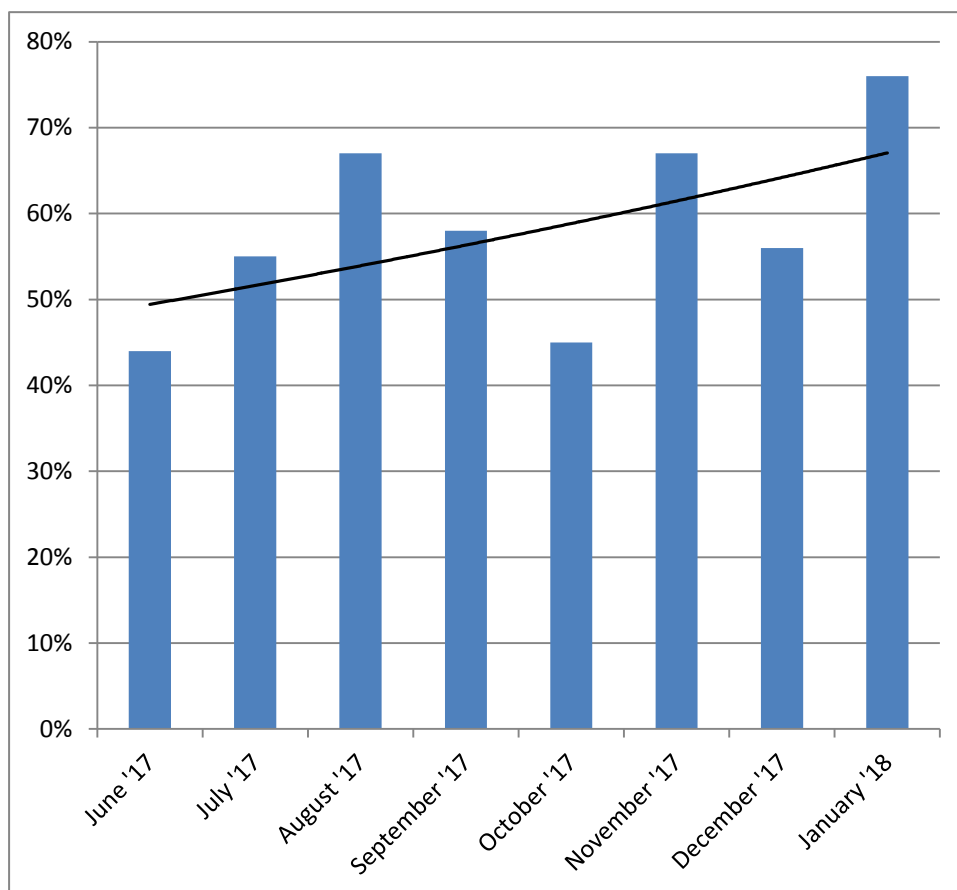


Figure 14: Area and Placed Location

**CSC Area and Placed Location Matrix**

Area	Placement Location				
	Mendip	Outside Somerset	Sedgemoor	South Somerset	Taunton and West Somerset
Taunton	8	30	24	15	51
Sedgemoor	8	29	49	9	28
Mendip	36	28	4	22	4
South Somerset	11	52	14	33	12
CwD	5	5	5	1	5
Other	3	16	3	2	4

2.4.5 The number of missing incidents can also provide an indication as to the stability of placements. Between April 2017 and March 2018 there have been 302 incidents of children looked after missing from placement, of which 180 have had a return home interview

(59.6%). In 2017, there were 57 individual young people who were looked after who went missing from either their foster placements or residential placements (this does not include the looked after young people who were missing from school).

## 2.5 Placement Type

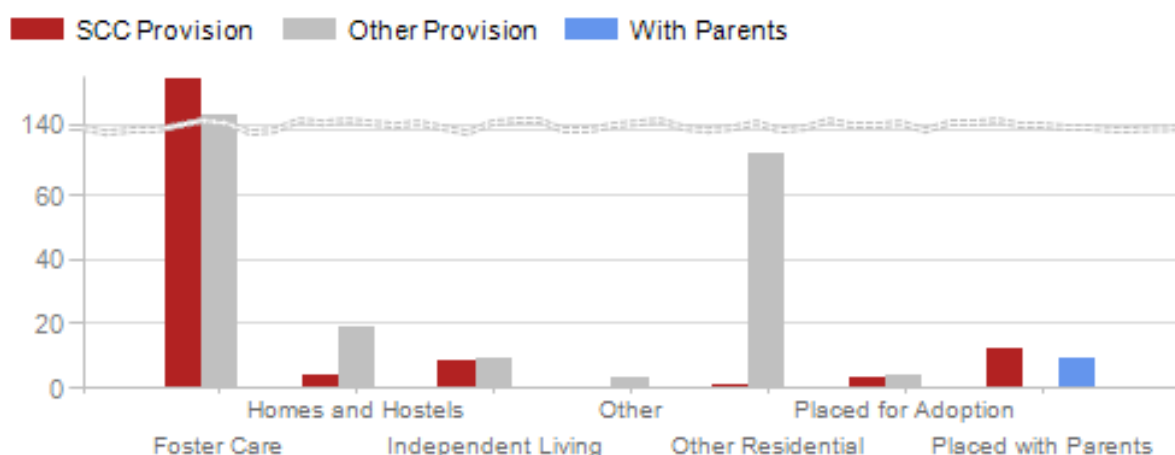
### Summary

- Nearly three-quarters of our children looked after are in foster families.
- Most of the foster placements made are with families who foster for the local authority.
- There are 74 young people in other residential care and 23 in homes and hostels (18% in total (April 2018)). Our statistical neighbours have 13% of children in secure units, semi-independent accommodation, other residential settings and residential schools.

2.5.1 The majority of children looked after are in in-house foster care placements 218 (42.3%). A further 154 (30%) are in placements with external fostering agencies, making a total of 72.3% of Somerset children looked after in foster care. For many children, foster care is the best environment but residential placements are also an important part of placement provision. 97 children and young people (18.8%) were in residential placements in April 2018. This includes residential care homes, mother and baby units, young offenders institutes/prisons and residential schools. Somerset's statistical neighbours have slightly less than this at 13%.

Figure 15: Number of children looked after by placement type and provider (April 2018)

**Current Children Looked After by Placement Type and Provision**

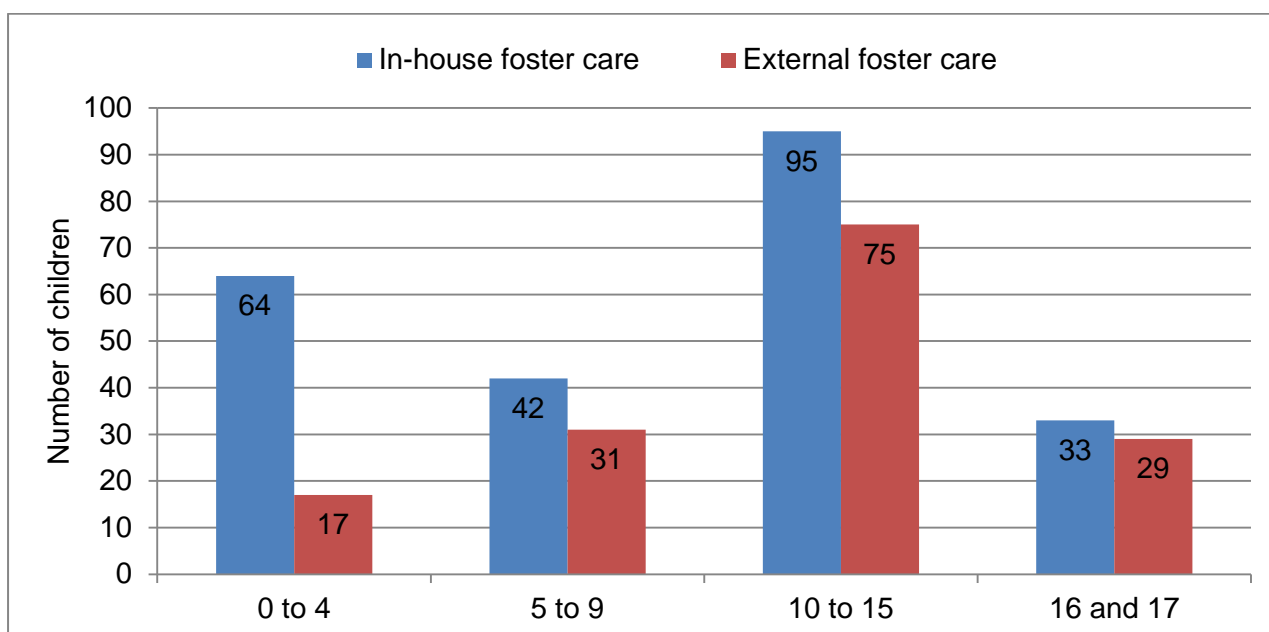


2.5.2 In April 2018, 372 of Somerset’s children looked after were placed in foster care. Of these, 218 (59%) were with in-house foster carers and 154 (41%) were placed with independent fostering agencies.

2.5.3 Somerset currently has 271 approved foster care households (January 2018) but independent fostering agencies are also an important part of our fostering provision. 150 independent fostering placements began during the 12 months to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017.

2.5.4 44% of all children looked after who are in foster care are aged 10-15 years. Across all the age groups, in-house fostering forms the majority of current foster care placements. The majority of very young children (aged 0-4) in foster care are placed with in-house foster carers (79% of this age group currently in foster care).

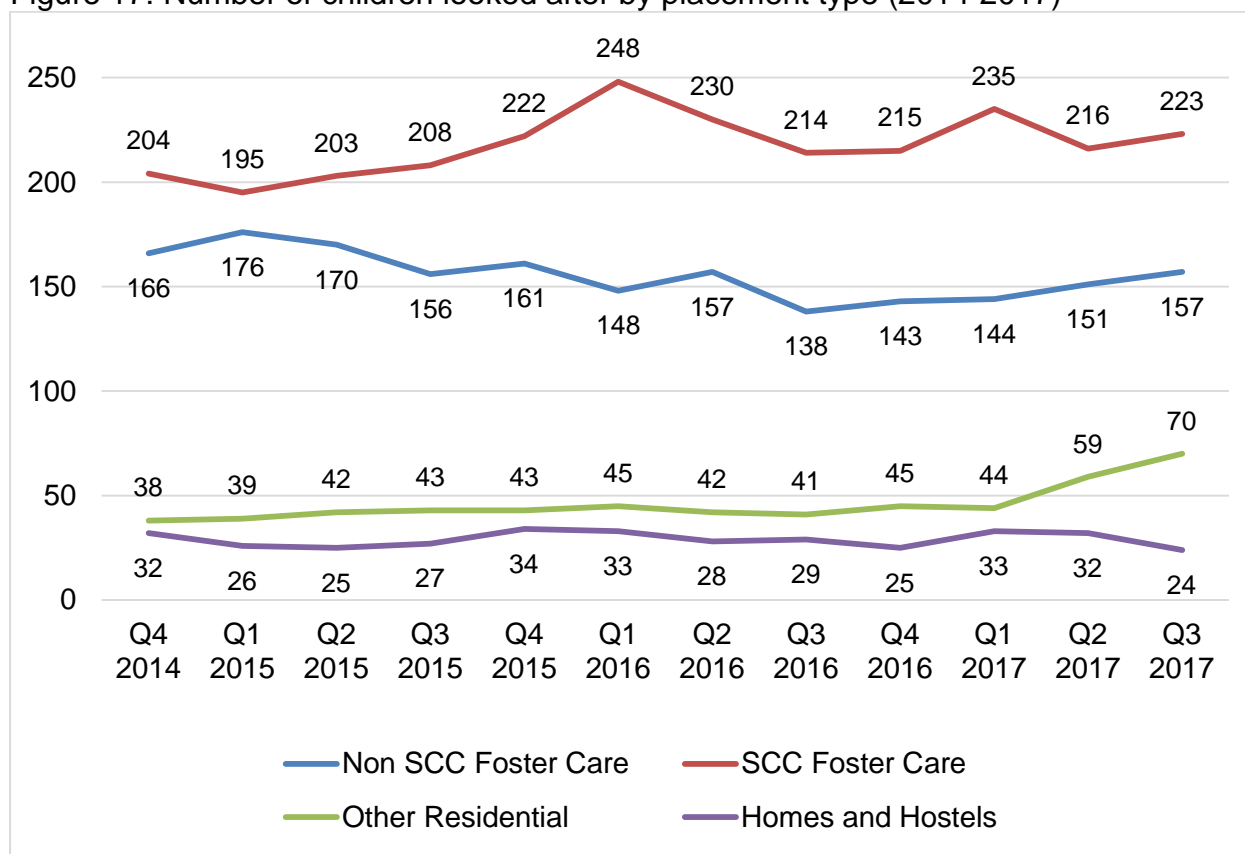
Figure 16: Number of children placed in foster care by age and type (January 2018)



2.5.5 Figure 16 below shows the pattern of placement type over the last 3 years. The number of children looked after placed in residential care has increased since the beginning of 2017,

from 44 in Q1 to 70 in Q3. This includes residential care homes, mother and baby units, young offenders institutes/prisons and residential schools.

Figure 17: Number of children looked after by placement type (2014-2017)



NB. Other residential refers to residential accommodation including those not subject to children’s home regulations, and also including special schools (either on or off site of the residential home), and parent and child placements.

## 2.6 Adoption

### Summary

- Somerset has seen a significant decrease in the number of adoptions made.
- Somerset has also seen a decrease in the number of approved adopters.

2.6.1 In the year to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017, 29 adoption orders were granted. This is a decrease of 43.1% from 51 children adopted during 2015/2016. The majority of children adopted were under 5. 6 sibling groups were adopted during the year.

2.6.2 There has also been a decrease in the number of children placed for adoption.

2.6.3 In 2016 to 17 - 34 Adoptive placements started and in 2017 to 8 – 21 Adoptive placements started.

2.6.4 The difference between ‘Adoption Orders Granted’ and ‘Placed for Adoption’ is that when Orders are granted, the child leaves the care of the LA and the adoptive carers legally become the child’s parents. ‘Placed for Adoption’ is where we have matched children with

prospective parents and they have been placed with them (i.e. living with them prior to an Adoption Order being granted).

2.6.3 15 foster to adopt placements started during the year to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017, an increase from 9 in 2015/16.

2.6.4 30 Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) were granted during the 2016/17 financial year.

2.6.5 A total of 27 adopters/adoptive households were approved to adopt 2017. This is a decrease of 6 from 2015/16.2.7

## 2.7 Care Leavers

### Summary

- 95% of our care leavers are in suitable accommodation
- The numbers of care leavers who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) is high, but has reduced over the past year.

2.7.1 A Care Leaver is defined as a person aged 25 or under, who has been looked after by a local authority for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14; and who was looked after by the local authority at school leaving age or after that date.

2.7.2 As at February 2018, there are 375 young people eligible for support as care leavers in Somerset.

Figure 18: Number of Care Leavers by type<sup>4</sup> (February 2018)

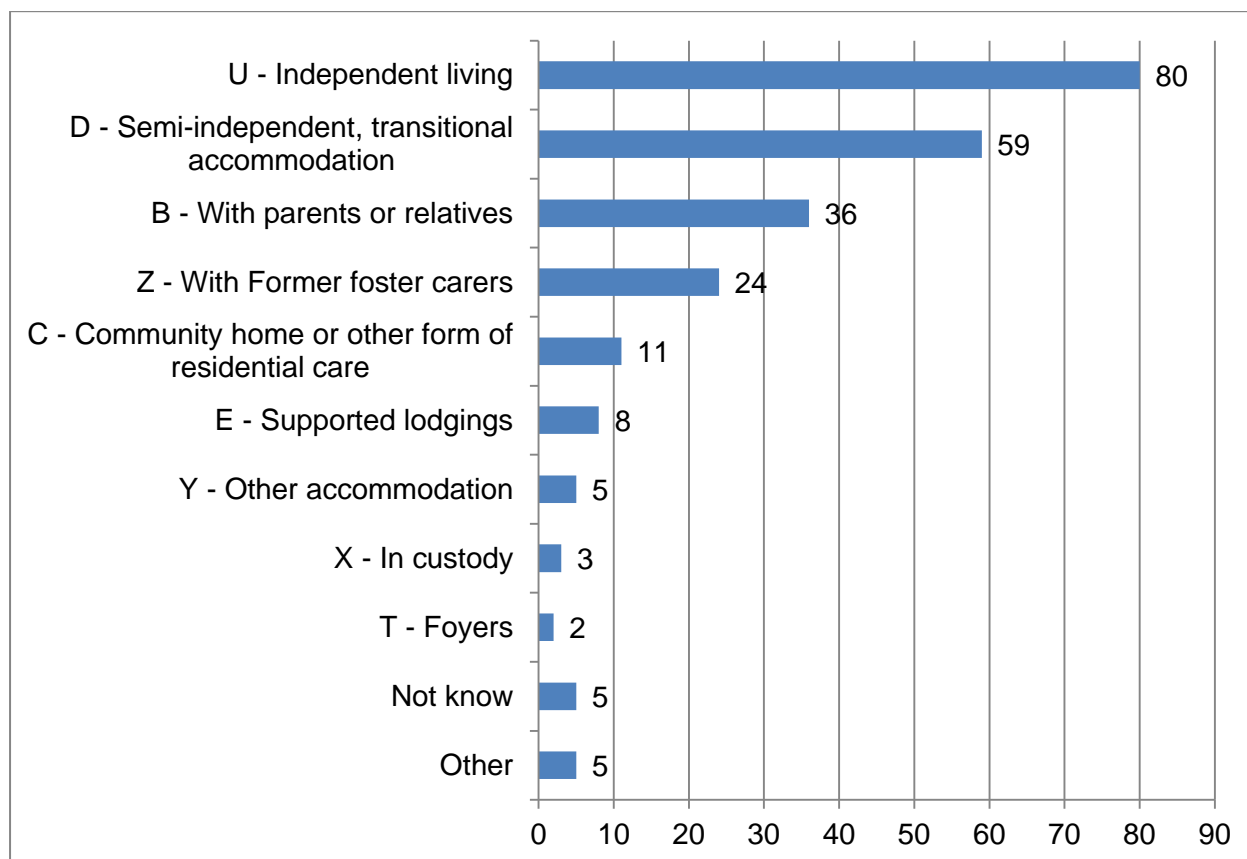
Former Relevant - These are young people who have reached the age of 18 but not 21 and were either eligible or relevant children before becoming 18. If these young people are being helped with an agreed education or training programme, they remain former relevant children to the end of this period even if this extends beyond the age of 21.	180
Eligible - These are 16 or 17 years of age who have been looked after by the local authority for a period of 13 weeks after reaching the age of 14 and are currently looked after. The total of 13 weeks need not have been continuous.	117
Qualifying – These are aged between 16 and 21(25 if still in full-time education), were looked after by children’s services on, or after, their 16th birthday and no longer looked after and spent less than 13 weeks in care since 14th birthday, i.e. do not fulfil criteria for eligible or relevant child.	43
Care Leaver 21+ - A Former Relevant young person over the age of 21	32
Relevant - These are young people who were previously eligible children but who are no longer looked after but are still under the age of 18. This does not apply to children who have been successfully returned home and have been settled for at least 6	3

<sup>4</sup> For definitions of each Care Leaver type see [The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations: Volume 3 Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers](#)

months. The category of relevant children also includes care leavers who meet the defined criteria who are young parents and young people detained in hospital.	
<b>Total</b>	<b>375</b>

2.7.3 Somerset County Council has a duty to ensure that all care leavers aged 18+ are in suitable accommodation. In February 2018, there were 238 care leavers aged 18+ in Somerset, 94.9% of whom were considered to be in suitable accommodation.

Figure 19: Accommodation type of Care Leavers aged 18+



2.7.4 'Staying Put' arrangements enable young people to remain with their former foster carers beyond the age of 18, to help ensure they are adequately prepared for adulthood. Staying Put is actively encouraged for all young people in a foster placement as a first choice when completing their pathway plans. It is an expectation that foster carers providing a permanent foster placement will commit beyond a child's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and that they will support them into adulthood as they would a birth child. In the year to December 2017, 53 children looked after left care aged 18. Of these, 18 (34%) started Staying Put arrangements with their former foster carers.

2.7.5 The potential negative impact of leaving care too early and living independently without the right support has been well documented nationally and by our own care leavers, via Somerset Leaving Care Council (SLCC). Leaving care too early can make a young person feel isolated and lonely and care leavers are over represented in statistics relating to poor outcomes. The percentage of Somerset care leavers who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) at age 18+ remains high at 36.8% in January 2018 but this has decreased from 42.5% in 2016.

## 2.8 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

2.8.1 As at February 2018, 103 (19.7%) of our children looked after had an SEN statement or Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The majority of these (56%) are for social, emotional and mental health reasons. In addition, there are a further 177 children looked after with SEND but no statement/EHCP.

Figure 20: Percentage of children looked after with Statement or EHCP by type

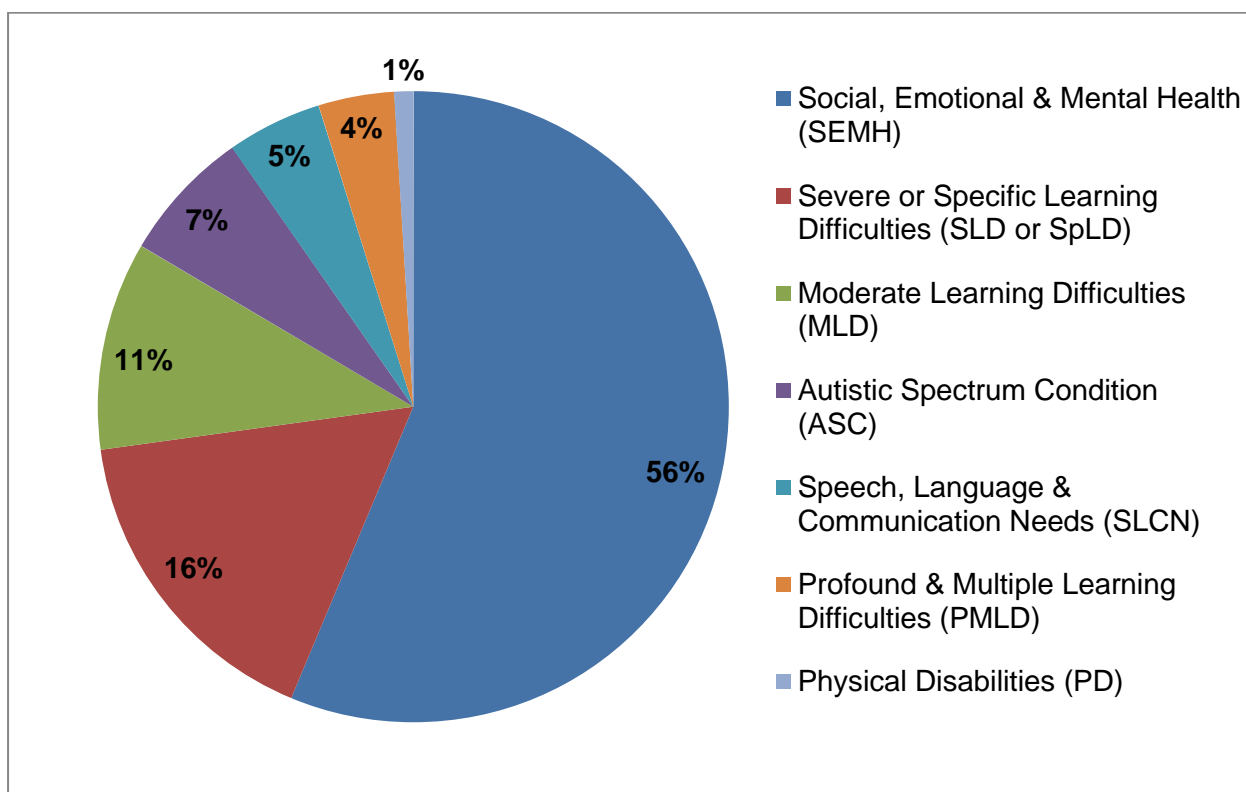
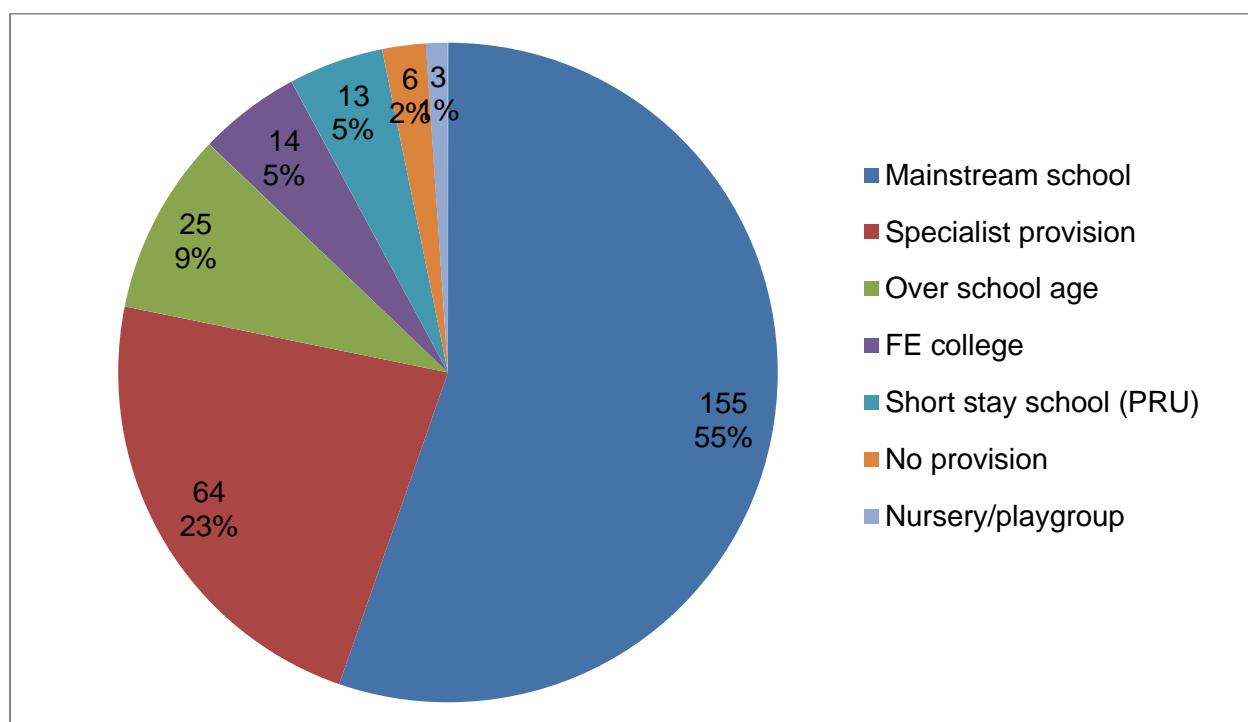




Figure 21: Number of children looked after by school provision type



## 2.9 Child Protection Plans and Child Sexual Exploitation

2.9.1 As at April 2018, 431 children in Somerset had a Child Protection (CP) Plan in place. This is an increase from 371 in November 2016 (+16.2%).

2.9.2 In 17% of these cases, all 3 harm factors - the 'toxic trio' of substance misuse, mental illness and domestic abuse - are present. The largest category of CP plan is neglect, accounting for 51% of all plans. In the 3 months to April 2018, Somerset received 1,049 referrals due to abuse and neglect (86.1% of all referrals).

Figure 22: Percentage of CP Plan cases where toxic trio factors are present (substance abuse, mental illness and domestic abuse) (January 2018)

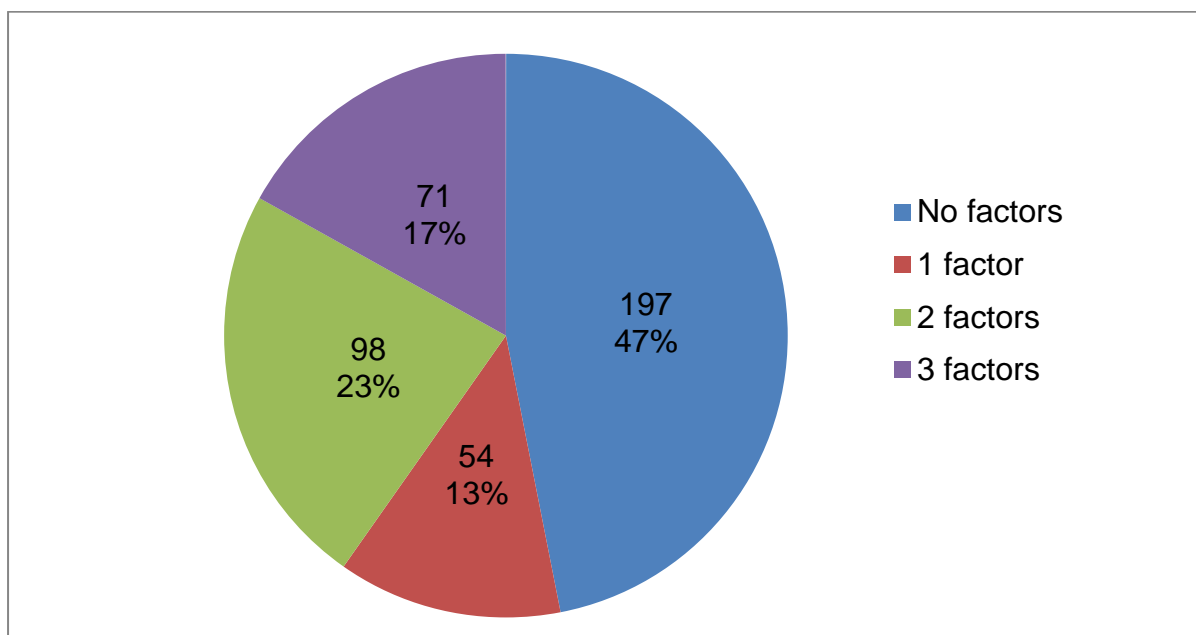
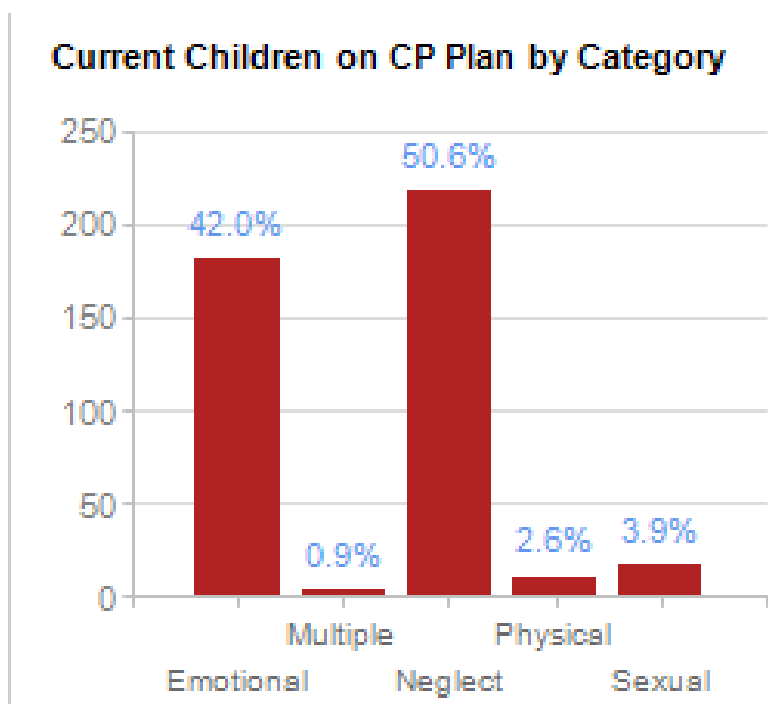


Figure 23: Number of CP Plans by category (April 2018)



2.9.3 As at April 2018, there were 64 children and young people known to us where child sexual exploitation (CSE) is an issue or risk. Of these, 16 (25%) had a child protection plan in place and 32 (50%) were children looked after.

## 3. Meeting our Sufficiency Duty

This section outlines Somerset's current approach to meeting our sufficiency duty including Early Help, Edge of Care services and Pathways to Independence (P2i).

### 3.1 Early Help

3.1.1 The Somerset Early Help Strategy 2016-2019, has been developed with partners through the Somerset Children's Trust (SCT) and the Somerset Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) and aligns with Somerset's Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The delivery of the strategy and intended impact is overseen by the SCT.

3.1.2 We are clear the best place for children to grow up is with their families, and within the seven improvement programmes aligned to the Children and Young Peoples Plan, we will do everything we can to support and build resilience in families. The Early Help Strategy also supports the delivery of the seven improvement programmes of the CYPP, in particular:

- Programme 1 – supporting children, families and communities to become more resilient
- Programme 5 – providing help early and effectively
- Programme 7 – embedding a think family approach across the workforce

3.1.3 Our focus is on keeping children safe and we are committed to providing support that minimises risk for children on the edge of care, improving family relationships and enabling them to remain at home where it is appropriate to do so. Some children and families experience more difficult situations and this is when they need some extra help. This is what is meant by early help; supporting families as soon as a problem emerges. Early help can include providing appropriate advice and support from a single agency, through to a coordinated, multi-agency and intensive support, sometimes from specialist services.

3.1.4 Somerset's Children & Young People's Plan includes a commitment to develop early help 'hubs' in order to provide a focus for multi-agency and multi-professional support. Over 2018/19 and 2019/20 SCC will integrate the existing getset (children's centres and targeted family support), health visiting and school nursing services to create a Family Support Service providing universal and targeted support. These teams will operate across Somerset from a range of venues including specially developed family centres in some of Somerset's most disadvantaged areas.

### 3.2 Family Group Conferencing (FGC)

3.2.1 Following pilot and implementation phases, the Somerset Family Group Conferencing Service has been fully staffed and operational from December 2017. Referrals are taken only from Children's Social Care with the priorities being those families where children are at risk of entering care, or where there is the possibility of them leaving care to return to their families. The process empowers families to find possible solutions to the issues that may prevent them from caring for their children. In some cases the child may still need to be cared for by the Local Authority but the plan developed by the family may improve the child's experience and outcomes and may consequently allow an earlier return to the family than would otherwise be possible.

### **3.3 Edge of Care**

3.3.1 'Team 8' is the edge of care service working alongside Children's Social Care in Somerset. Recent developments have seen the team increase in size as they moved to become three mini-teams within the overall structure. Based in Shepton Mallet, Bridgwater and Taunton, the South Somerset (Yeovil area office) area is currently covered on an in-reach basis.

3.3.2 Team 8 offers a Rapid Response overnight service on Saturday and Sunday nights to prevent children and young people being taken out of home on powers of police protection, or to support parents to keep children and young people safely at home until day services can re-engage.

3.3.3 A further development is the instigation of the Team 8 Community Adolescent Team (CAT) which aims to sustain change made for children and young people who have previously been involved with CSC level 4 services, and to prevent escalation into CSC for all but the most high need family issues. This team is currently under recruitment and development, with a go live date later in April 2018.

3.3.4 From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018, Somerset County Council is grant funding a charitable organisation called Safe Families for Children (SFFC) with a view to reducing the number of children in care in Somerset, reducing demand on Child in Need services, and adding to our Early Help offer. SFFC work with many local authorities across the country and they have had good results in reducing the 'flow' of children into care – on average by 11%.

3.3.5 Safe Families for Children received money from the Department for Education Innovation Fund and an evaluation report published in July 2017 highlighted its potential to provide low cost support to vulnerable families, including those on the edge of the care system. The Safe Families for Children model works on volunteers providing 3 services:

- Befriending – Volunteer(s) provides support to parents, general listening/informal advice, some practical help, e.g. collecting children from school/nursery. Aims to build parental advice and community support networks;
- Short stay hosting (planned and emergency) – The majority of breaks are for 2 nights (usually weekends) but can be up to 14 days if needed longer;
- Donations – database of volunteer contacts for donations of basic goods and services if a need arises, e.g. child's bed, a washing machine, or assistance with DIY.

3.3.5 Safe Families will be supporting up to 72 families across the Mendip and South Somerset areas over the 18 month period of the grant. Referrals will be passed to them via Children's Social Care and getset service teams in those two areas.

### **3.4 Pathways to Independence – P2i**

3.4.1 The Southwark Judgement 2009 clarified the responsibility of Local Authorities to assess the needs of a young person who presents as homeless and to provide accommodation under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 if that young person is assessed as a "child in need". In all but the most exceptional cases, 16 and 17 year olds who present as homeless are, by nature of their homelessness status, children in need. An assessment must determine whether they need to be accommodated under section 20. Where this is not appropriate or the young person refuses, they will be considered as a child in need and offered services and support as required.

3.4.2 The P2i service has been recommissioned and the new service is more targeted towards care leavers and the most vulnerable young people who find themselves in housing

need. The accommodation and support prioritises the most vulnerable and sometimes more challenging young people. From the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017 the service provides 168 supported accommodation beds in small units, 11 emergency beds, 44 host family beds and floating support to 90 young people at any one time, which all contributes to our offer to care leavers and older children in care who have been assessed as suitable for semi-independent living. In addition to the core P2i offer, a new mediation and early intervention service will be established to ensure young people who are able to return home can do so in a sustainable fashion.

- 3.4.3 This range of accommodation forms a critical part of the housing and support options available to young people in transition from foster care and residential care to independence. The challenge therefore is to ensure that the right accommodation and support is available to meet the assessed needs of the young person and ultimately achieve the required outcomes, allowing the young person to successfully live independently as an active member of their community.

### **3.6 SEND Placements**

- 3.6.1 Approximately 1,270 children in Somerset have a Statement of Special Educational Need (SEN) or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). All children in receipt of SEND high needs funding have been assessed. The aim of these assessments is to be clear about each child's needs and ensure that they have an (EHCP) in place. Children looked after are being prioritised in this process.
- 3.6.2 Sourcing highly complex SEND placements can be challenging, particularly for children with health and educational needs. There are extra pressures for children looked after because if a foster placement breaks down it can be difficult to find an alternative which enables their education placement to be maintained.

## **4. Accommodation Offer for Children Looked After**

### **4.1 Accommodation Approach**

- 4.1.1 Somerset County Council makes use of a range of provision for children looked after and care leavers and the needs of the child or young person are central to the decision about their accommodation offer.
- 4.1.2 For many children and young people, particularly the youngest in our care, in-house fostering is the first port of call when seeking a placement. Figure 21 below illustrates the options we have available to us when placing a child or young person and the typical order in which we explore them.

Figure 24: Somerset's accommodation approach

### **Children 0–16**

- In-house Fostering
- Independent (Agency) Fostering
- Independent sector residential provision

### **Young People 16+**

- In-house fostering
- Independent (Agency) fostering
- Independent sector residential provision
- Supported lodgings

4.1.3 Children and young people with assessed complex needs may be offered a specialist residential placement in order to meet their needs and realise assessed outcomes. These placements are sometimes outside of Somerset and in these cases children and young people will usually have a plan to return to a more local placement.

4.1.4 There are 244 children placed in Somerset (as of February 2018) by other Local Authorities which increases competition for placements within Somerset. Other Local Authorities who place a child in Somerset are obliged to advise us that they are placing a young person; however they do not always advise us when they leave, and so keeping accurate data is difficult.

## **4.2 In-House Fostering**

4.2.1 Somerset's in-house fostering service currently has 271 approved fostering households and 61% of all our fostered children are placed with an in-house carer. The Fostering Service is continuing to develop and improve practice to meet the needs of children looked after in Somerset. Foster carers in the service have a diverse range of skills and experience, providing services ranging from short breaks and respite for children and their birth parents and carers, preparing a child for permanence through adoption, return home or placement with family members, or providing permanence through a longer term placement which will support a child through to independence and beyond.

4.2.2 Recruitment of foster carers is a continuing challenge and the Fostering Service carries out marketing activity to ensure we attract new carers. The Fostering Service also supports connected persons, family members or friends of a child who are temporarily approved as carers.

## **4.3 Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs)**

4.3.1 In addition to our in-house fostering provision, Somerset County Council works with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) to access placements for children and young people. Somerset is part of the Peninsula Framework with Cornwall, Devon, Plymouth and Torbay through which we can purchase high quality individual foster placements that meets the needs of individual children and young people. The new framework comes into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 and runs until March 2022.

4.3.2 Relationships with the independent sector are key to ensuring availability and quality of placements. Regular dialogue through individual meetings and larger provider events allow local needs to be met and issues to be addressed early. Work to strengthen these relationships is a priority.

## 4.4 Residential

- 4.4.1 Despite the large number of residential children's homes within Somerset, the local authority still finds it challenging to secure placements for some of our children within Somerset. Children with complex needs, challenging behaviour, those with autism and young people who require a specialist placement due to child sexual exploitation (CSE), are often placed outside the county (out of area). Placements out of area also require additional social worker resource, in terms of time and travel costs, and can complicate the input of other services such as CAMHS. Moving those young people who are able return to Somerset back within the area is a priority.
- 4.4.2 With the exception of Beech Trees, The Elms and The Lodge which are short break units for children with a disability, Somerset County Council does not operate any residential provision for children looked after or care leavers. Residential provision is sourced through the Peninsula Framework or via spot purchase arrangements with providers based on the needs of the child.
- 4.4.3 Residential placements are more costly than foster placements (see section 4.5 below). Although the level and complexity of need of some of our children may contribute to high costs, we are confident that by working more proactively with the market we can secure better value, whilst maintaining the quality of placement. Many of these specialist placements will be joint-funded with the Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), due to the emotional/mental health needs of the young people. The Multi-agency Children with Complex Needs Panel is the decision making forum for joint funding for children in specialist placements. Work continues within the Commissioning and Placements team to secure data in this area enabling a better understanding of the potential beds available and movement of providers coming into the market or exiting.

## 4.5 Placement Costs

4.5.1 The tables below illustrate the differences in average price for different types of placement. An in-house fostering placement cost Somerset County Council £549 per week on average in 2016/17; this includes the fees and allowances paid to foster carers and the cost of the staffing to run the service. This is 34% lower than the average cost of an external fostering (IFA) placement for the same period (£827). The cost of residential placements is substantially higher, at £4,102 per week over the same period.

**Figure 25: In-House Fostering (full cost including staffing)**

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Average projected costs excl. income (based on placements to Sept 2017)
<b>Number of days</b>	78,490	79,039	87,496	77,664
<b>Value</b>	£5,769,300	£6,570,460	£6,859,420	£6,228,200
<b>Average weekly cost</b>	£515	£582	£549	£561

**Figure 26: External fostering costs**

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18 Current Cohort Projection
<b>Number of days</b>	57,814	52,989	49,476	49,024
<b>Value</b>	£6,747,247	£6,202,998	£5,845,915	£5,922,721
<b>Average weekly cost</b>	£817	£819	£827	£846

**Figure 27: External residential costs**

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18 Current Cohort Projection
<b>Number of days</b>	9,468	13,735	17,484	18,752
<b>Value</b>	£4,177,599	£7,054,316	£8,794,580	£10,987,539
<b>Average weekly cost</b>	£3,089	£3,595	£3,521	£4,102



## 5. Pathways out of Care

### 5.1 Returning Home

5.1.1 Somerset is committed to ensuring that children can live and grow up in their own families whenever possible, this forms a central tenet of the Children and Young Peoples Plan 2016-2019. As part of this work we are focusing on enabling children who have come into care to return to their families, whenever it is safe and appropriate to do so. Any return home is supported by a robust support plan to enable the return home to be successful and permanent.

Support could include:-

- Early Help
- getset
- Family Group Conferencing
- Team 8 Community Adolescent Team

We continue to look creatively at all care and support packages available and will support families with Respite care placements as/if necessary.

### 5.2 Adoption

5.2.1 Somerset is committed to securing permanent alternative arrangements for children who are unable to live with their families. This includes adoption, in particular for younger children, but we have also had considerable success in making adoption placements for some hard to place children who are over 10 years or who have complex needs.

5.2.2 The number of children placed and adopted in 2017-18 increased from the previous year by 3 from 24 to 27 (march 2018 figures). Though, it is worth noting that the process of these placements can cross two financial years.

5.2.3 Adoption rates for children under 5 years are good and in line with or better than our statistical neighbours, but permanency planning for children who are older, have complex needs or sibling groups is poor. Data on our children looked after shows a significant number of adolescents amongst the population, and a new challenge, for Somerset being the number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and Young People (UASC) requiring placements in Somerset, and their associated complex physical, emotional and health needs.

5.2.4 There has been a reduction in the number of adopters approved and enquiries for the first 3 months of 2016 are less than the previous year. The recruitment strategy prioritises fostering for adoption and adopters for older children and sibling groups. It is possible that the national reporting about adopters waiting is affecting recruitment in addition to more targeted and focused recruitment campaigns we have shown our commitment to developing our practice in Early Permanence in a number of ways including using the expertise of Coram/BAAF to develop our knowledge. We have increased the number of fostering for adoption placements made and for the small number of children for whom it is suitable this means they have been placed with their adoptive families earlier. Another central development has been the launch of the Permanence Pathway aimed at securing stable and permanent care arrangements as soon as possible for children who cannot remain with their parents. The Adoption Service has contributed to this approach by:

- Recruiting carers for our priority children as described above;

- When we have been unable to identify Somerset County Council fostering for adoption carers we have linked with other adoption agencies to make an inter-agency placement where this is the right plan for the child;
- The recent development of linking adoption social workers with childcare social workers to support the delivery of adoption plans for children;
- The introduction of family finding social workers;
- The delivery of training about early permanence planning including fostering for adoption both in-house and via Coram/BAAF to Children's Social Care including our legal teams and the judiciary in Somerset

5.2.5 The DfE Regionalising Adoption paper published in June 2015 set out the government's vision for Regional Adoption Agencies. The intention of a RAA is to improve outcomes for children and adopters. The outcomes for children include timelier matching, reduced delays and increased choice of adopters and outcomes for adopters include enhanced adoption support and reduced matching delays

5.2.6 Somerset was confirmed as a member of AdoptSW in 2017. The other members are two voluntary adoption agencies, Barnardos and Families for Children together with Devon County Council, Torbay Council and Plymouth City Council. For Somerset this was felt to be our most natural link as we work closely with the other local authorities to commission children's placements and these authorities are also part of the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership.

5.2.7 The South West Adoption consortium (SWAC) consists of 12 local authorities and 5 voluntary adoption agencies in the south west who have worked together for a number of years. SWAC provides opportunities for regional family finding via a link book and adoption exchanges; sharing and development of good practice with regular meetings for key adoption staff including managers and medical advisors. When SWAC was established Somerset (funded by all member agencies) undertook the contract and provided the role of coordinator and administrator. With the retirement of both these staff Somerset gave notice on the SWAC contract and from October 2015 it transferred to Clifton Children's Society however Somerset has continued to be a member. The SWAC half yearly report shows there were 264 prospective adopters and 66 children registered with SWAC; Somerset registered seven children requiring a placement and 23 adopters ready to adopt.

### **5.3 Accommodation for Care Leavers**

5.3.1 All young people in care are prepared for adulthood and living independent lives where appropriate. The care plan and pathway plan sets out the needs of the young person, alongside their aspiration for continuing in education, training or employment post-18 years when they leave care. There are a range of services used to support a young person leaving care at 18 years and leaving care workers offer ongoing support to prepare a young person for independence and provide a smooth transition to independent living.

5.3.2 As young people are starting to think about moving on from foster or residential care, the Leaving Care service offers advice about the types of accommodation available. Options available are:

#### **In a family home:**

- **With foster carers**

Young people may wish to remain with their foster carers when they are 18, potentially until the age of 21. Over the age of 18 a young person cannot be legally 'looked after', and, if it is agreed that they remain beyond 18; it is referred to as a 'Staying Put' arrangement.

- **Stepping Stones**

Somerset has a small scheme where a care leaver has a room of their own in the home of a family or person, and usually shares the kitchen and bathroom facilities. Young people contribute from their earnings, benefits or allowances for utilities and some food. The family/person will offer advice and support but may not be around to the degree a foster carer might due to their work or other commitments. There are approximately 15 of these providers spread across the county and they may be accessed for care leavers when they are over school leaving age.

- **Other Lodgings**

Sometimes young people are able to rent a room in the home of someone they know or via a college. Agreement and funding for such an arrangement will depend on age, the degree of support being provided and other individual circumstances so it will need some planning.

### **Supported accommodation:**

- **Shared houses**

The Leaving Care Service manages 3 shared houses and support young people who live in them. There are two houses in Taunton one with 7 rooms and another with 2 rooms, and one in Bridgwater with 5 rooms. Young people share kitchen and bathroom facilities. Care Leavers can access this when they are aged over 18 years old. Young people need to pay a contribution for utilities and rent. Leaving Care staff visit the building regularly between the hours of 8.00am and 10pm to offer support.

- **Somerset Pathway to Independence (known as P2i)**

The P2i provides a hub in each of the 4 areas where young people aged 16-25 across the county can go for advice about all forms of accommodation and related support. Care leavers can access P2i provision from the age of 18. Young people need to pay a contribution for utilities and pay their rent

There is a range of provision run by Somerset Coast and Mendip YMCAs, each with differing levels of support. The idea is that young people are matched to the type of provision that best suits them and that they then progress through the Pathway until they are ready to access their own independent tenancy. Young people are offered and encouraged to attend training to help them prepare for the responsibilities of living on their own.

### **Independent housing:**

When young people are 18 they are legally able to hold a tenancy and can access accommodation of their own. In that situation young people are responsible for their rent, and paying all the bills, although they will be offered advice, guidance and support to manage their tenancy by their leaving care worker and, if in Somerset, P2i staff. This is sometimes referred to as 'Floating Support'.

- **Social Housing**

Some Housing Associations and landlords are 'registered' and provide the most reliable independent option for people as the condition of the property and its affordability have

already been checked out. This accommodation is accessed by registering on the District Council Housing Register 'Homefinder Somerset'. Care Leavers are a priority group for this sort of housing but more people want this sort of provision than there are places so it can take some time to find what you want where you want it.

- **Private Housing**

This is where young people rent from a landlord who isn't registered, either through a Lettings Agency or directly. The safety of the property, its physical condition and cost all need careful checking to make sure it is suitable. There can sometimes be problems with Landlords not accepting people who are on benefits or in college, and also wanting someone responsible to act as a Guarantor for the rent and for any damage caused.

### **Emergency Accommodation:**

If for any reason, at any time a young person finds themselves homeless, or at risk of being so, there are a small number of emergency beds in each of the areas across the county that can be used until whatever the problem is can be resolved.

For all types of provision above, young people will need to evidence that they will be able to manage and will pay their rent or contribution regularly and abide by the rules or conditions that are attached. Most care leavers start off with supported provision before they move into independent living.

For all types of supported accommodation young people will need to attend an interview with providers before being offered a place and once accepted, they may need to wait for a place to be available.

## Glossary

SCC	Somerset County Council
CLA	Children looked after
CL	Care leavers
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
PRU	Pupil Referral Units
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
P2i	Pathway to Independence
IRO	Independent Reviewing Officers
IDACI	Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index
LSOAs	Lower Super Output Areas– Lower Layer Super Output Areas are a geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales
ONS	Office of National Statistics
CIN	Children in Need
CP	Child Protection
CPP	Child Protection Plan
EHCP	Education Health and Care Plan
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SLCC	Somerset Leaving Care Council
SCICC	Somerset Children in Care Council
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
SCT	Somerset Children’s Trust
SSCB	Somerset Safeguarding Children Board
FGC	Family Group Conferencing
CSC	Children’s Social Care
IFA’s	Independent fostering agencies
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
CYPP	Children and Young Person Plan
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
HMIC	Her Majesties Inspectorate Children
TYS	Targeted Youth Support
RHIs	Return home interviews
MAPIGs	Multi Agency Practice Information Group
SCC	Somerset County Council
NWG	National Working Group
SOS	Signs of Safety
ARC	At Risk of Care Panel
MCCNP	The Multi-agency Children’s Complex Care Needs Panel
SGO	Special Guardianship Order
ASF	Adoption Support Fund
RAA	Regional Adoption Agenda
SWAC	South West Adoption Consortium
SMT	Senior Management Team
LSCB	Local Safeguarding Children’s Board
PSHE	Personal Social and Health Education
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
SEND	Special Educational Needs /Disability
Coram/BAAF	Independent Adoption Agency
DfE	Department for Education

## Appendix 1 – Children Placed Outside Somerset

