Slough Children's Services Trust

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Slough Children's Services Trust Sufficiency Duty Strategy for 2019-22

Strategy Summary

The aim of this strategy is to set out how the Trust will meet the placement needs of current and future children looked after and care leavers, focusing of the right solutions and choices to provide children with the best possible outcome.

A hands-on approach to help children in Slough be
. . . . . . Safe, Secure and Successful

Contents

Forward

Children are central to everything we do at Slough Children's Services Trust, with a vision to make every single child safe, secure and successful.

As corporate parents, the Trust and its staff strive to achieve the best outcomes for vulnerable children, working to improve life chances, while helping them to thrive, supported by the whole community. Ensuring we have the capacity and capability to provide suitable accommodation and placements for our Children in Need, Looked After Children (CLA), Care Leavers and children on the edge of care is a key part of making our overall vision a reality.

Whilst the Trust works to avoid children coming into care where possible, through Intervention and prevention, we also prioritise the provision of a range of suitable accommodation and placements which, for many children, can provide the best outcomes.

Every child is unique and our process for placing them strives to reflect this, ensuring need, identity and culture are valued. When it comes to fostering and adoption, our staff understands the importance of finding the right match for that child's future. The Trust has seen an improvement in placement stability, the number of children placed with permanent foster carers, as well as the stability of our own teams in this area.

We have also seen improved reunification, through better social work, where this is in the best interests of the child. As well as this, our provision for Care Leavers is improving, with more placed in suitable accommodation, and compares well with statistical neighbours'.

We are encouraged by our achievements so far and determined to build on them and continue improving other areas of our service provision, such as the number of placements outside of Slough. Working in close partnership with providers to tackle such challenges will enable us to better shape and transform our services to match our needs. Alongside this, with the same broad aims, we are collaborating with Slough Borough Council on areas including housing.

The voice of the child is at the heart of the Trust and both CLA and Care Leavers can influence services through our children in care council Reachout! In thinking about this sufficiency strategy, we are considering their comments about the quality and range of placements, as well as the wrap-around provision that accompanies them, which are also being looked at by our Joint Parenting Panel.

We are proud of our improvements so far and are determined to build on them to ensure our placement and accommodation provision delivers a high quality, value-for-money service and, most importantly, the best outcomes for every single child.

Background to Sufficiency Duty

Purpose of the Strategy

Every Local Authority has the duty of "sufficiency" that requires it to ensure, through direct provision or commissioned services, a range of placements to meet the needs of the children in their care now and planned for the future. The regulations require a strategy that describes how Local Authorities / Trusts intend to provide sufficient care placements for its children in care and care leavers.

The aim of this strategy sets out how Slough Children Services Trust intends to meet the placement needs of current and future children looked after and care leavers. The strategy will promote supporting positive outcomes through understanding of needs and demands. The strategy outlines the current profile of children supported and assumptions made on changes anticipated in the future so that strategies can be developed to meet future demands being projected.

Legislation and guidance

Policy, Legislation and case law have had an impact on the demands placed on local authorities and their ability to respond through the commissioning of placements from the market.

This strategy has been developed in accordance with, but not limited to the following legislation and guidance;

- The duty to provide or procure placements for Children Looked After (Children in Care) is explicit in the Children Act 1989. This has since been strengthened by the introduction of the Sufficiency Strategy Guidance (2010) and the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations (implementation April 2011).
- Care standards act 2000,
- Children's and families act 2014
- Children's homes regulations
- Southwark Judgement – A duty which obliges children's services to provide accommodation and support to homeless 16 and 17 year olds under Section 20.
- Remand Process – When court refuses bail to a child (10-17 years), they are remanded into local authority care or youth detention accommodation and treated as looked after.
- Staying Put Policy – This enables a young person to remain in their current foster placement after turning 18. The young person may continue in their staying put arrangement until the age of 25.
- Children and Social Care Work Act – The new Act introduced in 2017 outlines the seven principles of corporate parenting which local authorities must abide by for looked after children and care leavers. Significantly, the Act enables local authorities to place children in secure facilities in Scotland and extends the personal advisor role it care leavers up to the age of 25 years, irrespective of their educational status.

This strategy is aligned with Slough Children Services Trust (SCS Trust) Commissioning Strategy **and should be read in conjunction with the following Strategies;**

- **Slough Multi-Agency Early Help Strategy for Children, Young People and their Families 2019-2021**

- **Slough's Corporate Parenting Strategy 2019-2021**
- **SBC and SCST Joint Care Leavers Strategy**

Scope

The following fall within the scope of the strategy.

- Trust IFA
- External IFA
- Semi-Independent Provision
- Staying Put
- Supported Lodgings
- Adoption
- Independent Tenancies for Care Leavers
- Support Placements on the Edge of Care
- Contact Centre
- Advocacy
- Special Guardianship Orders (SGO's)

Context of Slough

Current demographics

- 2016 mid-year estimates of the Census 2011 show that Slough now has a total population of 148,782 residents (approx. 74,844 males and 73,938 females). (Slough JSNA).
- Slough is one of the most ethnically diverse local authority areas outside of London in the United Kingdom in Census 2011.   The Census indicated that 40% of the population was classified Asian or Asian British and 36% White British. Local schools have recorded 117 different languages as the main home language of pupils.

- Deprivation is more than just a poverty of income, it can be a lack of access to adequate education, skills and training, healthcare, housing and essential services, with pockets of high deprivation in Slough, this may also mean exposure to higher rates of crime, a poor environment and many other negative factors.
- Slough's demography shows a high transient population, continuing to attract high levels of refugees and asylum seekers, many of whom have opted out of the formal 'dispersal' system and have chosen not to register for vouchers which would enable them to access benefits and services. This can lead to them becoming more vulnerable and in need of key services.
- Slough is an area that has been built on economic migration, and that continues to attract many people of working age, who come here from other parts of the UK and from other countries to gain employment. As a consequence, Slough has a younger than average adult population, and also a markedly high proportion of children within its overall population.

Table 1: Slough Population by aged group and gender

Age profile of Slough population
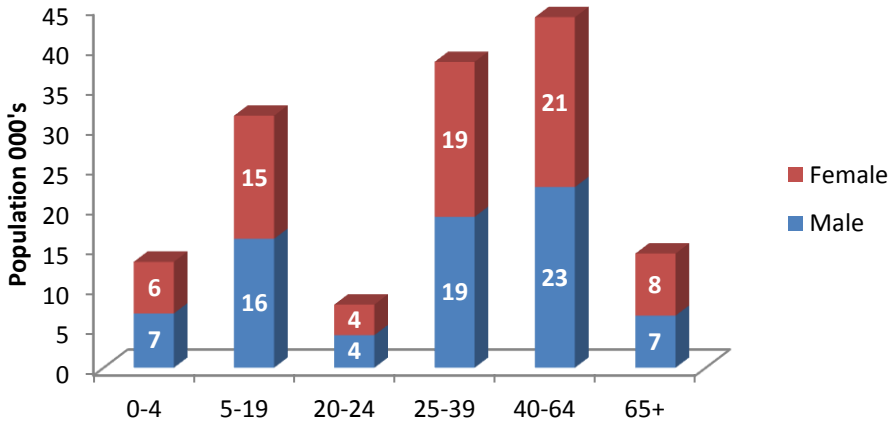
Source: Office for National Statistics (2018); Population Estimates for UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: mid-2016 (revised by ONS in Mar18)

- The Borough has a significantly younger population compared to any of the south east local authorities with around 28% of people being under twenty, and nationally at 21%, the graph above showing 44k children between the ages of 0 & 19.
- The 2011 Census established that 39.2% of all households contained dependent children – the third highest proportion amongst 348 local authority areas nationally.
- Slough has a high proportion of lone parent families (8.9% of all households), and a high proportion of households (15.5%) where English is not their main language.

Projected demographics

- By 2021, Slough's total population is estimated to increase by 18,154 people. The Government Office of National Statistics (ONS) projects that Slough's population will increase by over 13.99% from almost 148,782 in 2016 to around 169,600 in 2036.
- The main reason for the large projected increase in population is that Slough has a high proportion of people aged 30 to 40. Fertility rates are very high, with a Generalised Fertility Rate significantly exceeding the national average at 80.7 compared to just 62.5 across England. There were 2,628 live births in Slough during 2016: half of those babies had both parents themselves born outside of the UK, and three-quarters had at least one parent born outside the UK.
- The majority of age groups are estimated to increase in size, with the older population increasing at the greatest rate. (Slough JSNA).
- Slough's population is expected to continue to grow with the expansion of Heathrow Airport and Cross Rail links to London. The Trust expects the Slough population to change attracting families and professionals to the area. There are plans to transform the town centre into a major commercial, retail and leisure centre, with 7,000 new dwellings, mainly flats. It is anticipated Slough will need over 900 new houses a year to meet its population demands.
- The potential expansion of Heathrow airport will create more jobs for local people.
- Slough's growth could lead to natural migration of families moving out to other areas, it could have a detrimental affect on those Slough families who are disadvantaged, leading to unemployment and deprivation, increasing homelessness, mental health, substance misuse, all of which are contributing factors as to why Children become Looked After.
- The impact of Brexit may lead to a sizeable portion of our residents moving away (about 6% of residents in 2011 were Polish, for example), and the latest mid-year estimates have already reduced the rate of annual growth from 1.2% annually since 2013 to 0.7% between 2016 and 2017
- The birth rate in Slough is high, over the last decade the numbers have stayed at similar levels. Assuming this pattern continues, and taking into account the progression through the years of children as they age we can predict that in 5 years time Slough will have a higher teenage rate than at present. This could create a high demand for looked after placements for this age group. This is profiled in the chart below and shows a 24% increase in 15-19 year bracket;

Projected children numbers to 2023 by age profile
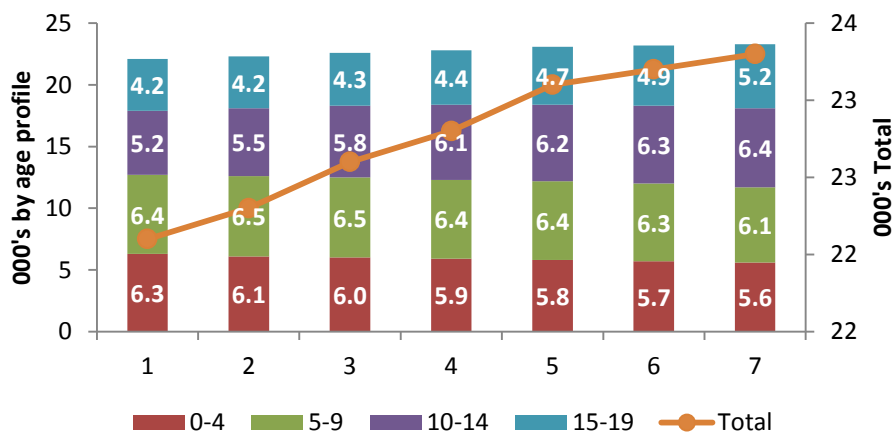
Ethnicity of Children in Slough

There is a higher percentage of Children Looked After who are white, this does not correspond with the BME population in Slough. There could be a number of reasons why the Trust does not receive a higher number of referrals from this ethnic group. Work needs to be undertaken to ascertain why, this work could result in an increase of young people needing support from the Trust.

|	Age 0 to 4	Age 5 to 7	Age 8 to 9	Age 10 to 14	Age 15	Age 16 to 17	Total, all children (under 18)
TOTAL: All categories: Ethnic group	12,777	6,276	3,718	9,034	1,755	3,664	37,224
White: Total	**4,341**	**2,020**	**1,173**	**3,247**	**673**	**1,384**	**12,838**
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	2,889	1,522	925	2,612	561	1,172	9,681
Irish	24	6	8	38	10	14	100
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	27	13	8	25	5	9	87
Other White	1,401	479	232	572	97	189	2,970
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: Total	**1,025**	**433**	**221**	**534**	**108**	**188**	**2,509**
White and Black Caribbean	303	135	74	216	49	91	868
White and Black African	129	63	28	78	11	16	325
White and Asian	361	140	88	152	29	55	825
Other Mixed	232	95	31	88	19	26	491
Asian/Asian British: Total	**5,633**	**2,831**	**1,728**	**3,892**	**707**	**1,616**	**16,407**
Indian	1,776	810	512	1,214	227	517	5,056
Pakistani	3,012	1,596	959	2,086	365	774	8,792
Bangladeshi	78	35	23	49	7	16	208
Chinese	34	20	20	32	8	20	134
Other Asian	733	370	214	511	100	289	2,217
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Total	**1,444**	**790**	**469**	**1,113**	**219**	**372**	**4,407**
African	1,064	550	319	736	157	233	3,059
Caribbean	153	92	56	182	35	94	612
Other Black	227	148	94	195	27	45	736
Other ethnic group: Total	**334**	**202**	**127**	**248**	**48**	**104**	**1,063**
Arab	122	59	37	68	9	26	321
Any other ethnic group	212	143	90	180	39	78	742
							0
BME (not White UK)	9,888	4,754	2,793	6,422	1,194	2,492	27,543
BME (everyone not white)	8,436	4,256	2,545	5,787	1,082	2,280	24,386
BME (not White UK)	77.4%	75.7%	75.1%	71.1%	68.0%	68.0%	74.0%
BME (everyone not white)	66.0%	67.8%	68.5%	64.1%	61.7%	62.2%	65.5%

Census 2011

The above chart shows that 65% of all children in Slough under 18 are BME compared to 47% of children looked after.

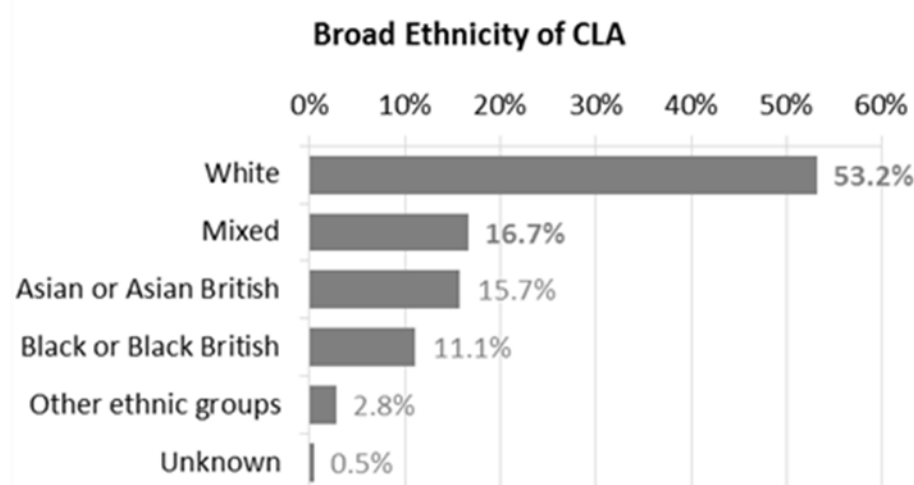## Our Children and Young People

Current demographics

1. At the end of May 2018 Slough Childrens Services Trust was responsible for 212 children looked after, the graph below shows steep increases in 2009-10 and again in 2012-13. The rate per 10,000 population under 18 has risen since 2016 and stood at 49 per 10,000 in 2018, which is lower than the South West and England average.

Children looked after rate per, 10,000 children aged under 18.

Children looked after rate, per 10,000 children aged under 18
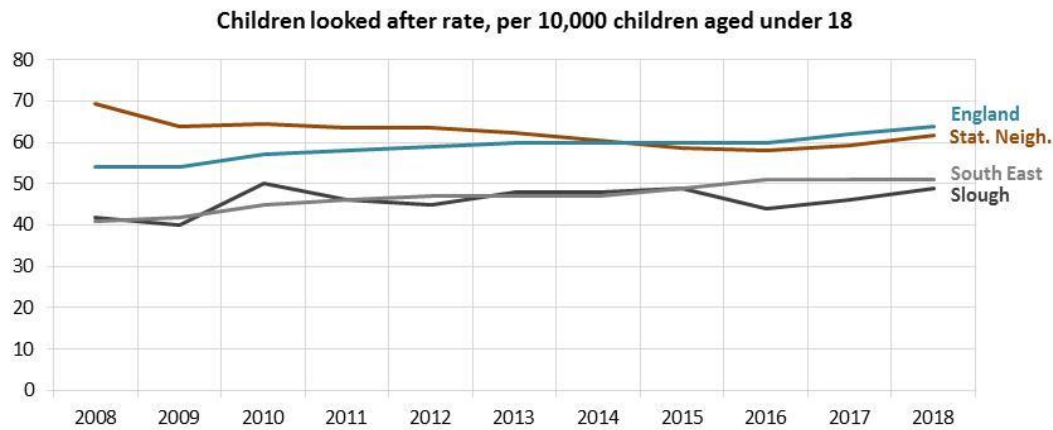
Region	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Slough	42	40	50	46	45	48	48	49	44	46	49
South East	41	42	45	46	47	47	47	49	51	51	51
Stat. Neigh.	69.5	63.8	64.6	63.6	63.7	62.4	60.6	58.8	58.2	59.4	61.6
England	54	54	57	58	59	60	60	60	60	62	64

Ethnicity of Children Looked After

Broad Ethnicity of CLA

White 53.2%
Mixed 16.7%
Asian or Asian British 15.7%
Black or Black British 11.1%
Other ethnic groups 2.8%
Unknown 0.5%

The ethnicity mix of children looked after differs significantly from the overall child population in Slough, the chart shows 53% white compared to a population demographic of 34%

Children looked after gender profile
The chart below shows an even split between male and female children looked after.

Gender mix for children looked after
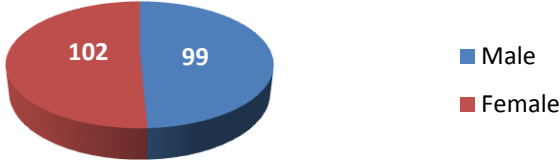
Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC)

Number of UASCs has varied over the last 12 months – being as high as 14 at the start of the year. There are currently 6 UASCs that are Looked After. Slough with its proximity to Heathrow and with its diverse communities attracts asylum seekers. The Trust are looking to find suitable accommodation and support packages for these young people.
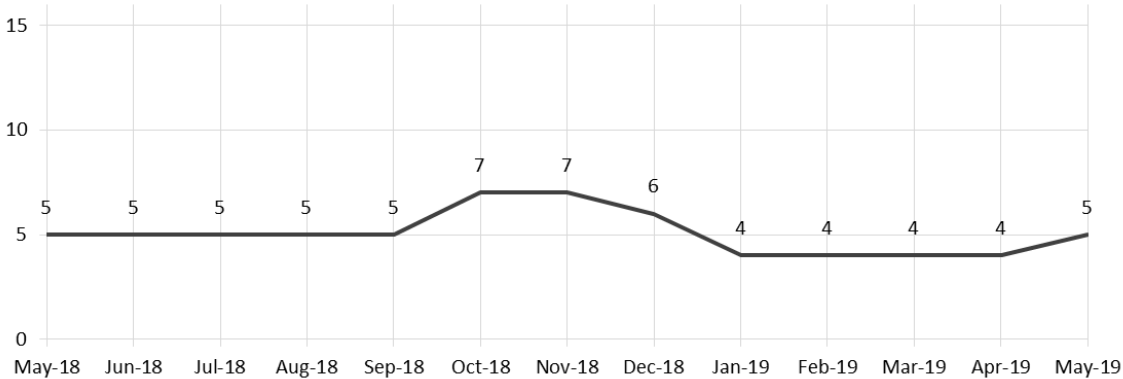
## Children Looked After with Disabilities (CWD)

Age profile CLA with disability
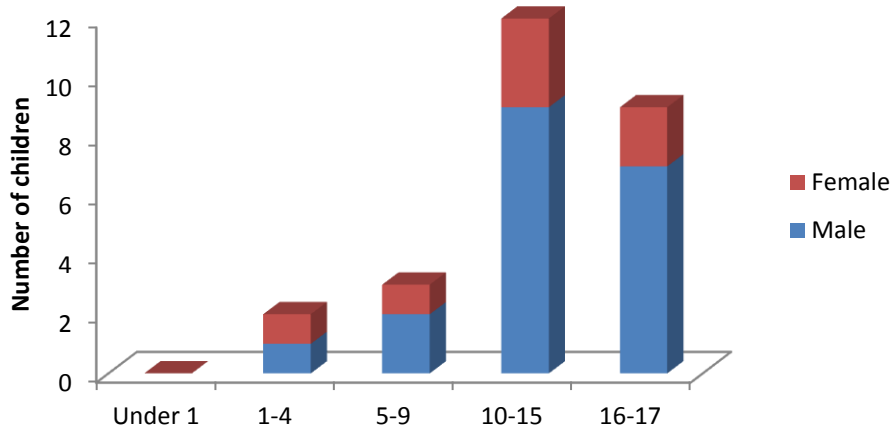
*The number of Children with disabilities who are looked after increases from the age of 10 years. Not necessarily unsurprising that as children increase in age and their disabilities become harder to manage that we see the profile above. The Trust are working on developing strong relations with Health to provide seamless services and relations in the 3rd sector to provide specialist support to provide a variety of respite and short break opportunities for our young people.

Children Looked After Aged 16 and over

22.7% of the children looked after population are aged 16+.
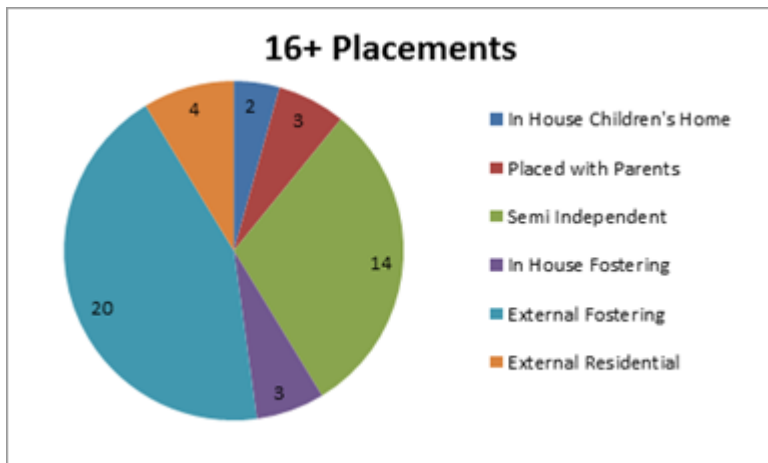
The above chart shows the reliance on semi independence and external fostering, with a large proportion in external placements. This reflects some of the complexity of accommodating a 16+ cohort. The Trust is working on plans to develop the skills with in house carers to be in a position to meet more of this demand in the future.

Placement ratings

The chart below shows the % of placements for Slough children in care as being requires improvement at 48%. It needs noting however 46% of these placements are with the Trust's in house provisions with plans in place to address the issues raised under the inspections.

Ofsted classifications of commissioned placements
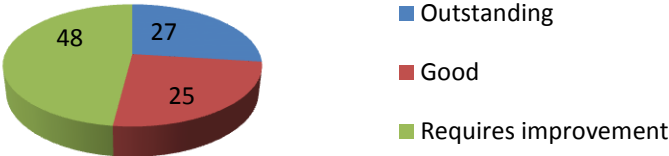
The Trust's policy is to only place in good or outstanding provisions where possible. There are currently 3 placements in external provisions which require improvement 2 of which are long standing and one of those was good at the point of placement. Where a situation arises of a placement being requires improvement or inadequate, the details are escalated and considerations made as to steps to be undertaken. As a minimum the commissioning function will monitor progress being made against actions to address any Ofsted failings. Consideration will be given to whether a placement move is required or not, dependent on the concerns raised through the inspection. Where considering a placement that has a rating lower than good, a risk assessment is undertaken to weigh up the needs of the child compared with the concerns identified.

Geographic placement analysis

Location of placements
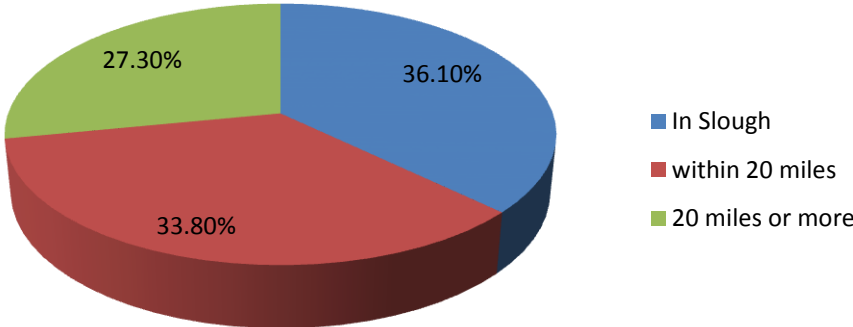
Even though the % of children placed out of Slough is higher than national averages, consideration needs to be given to the small geographic area of Slough, making it difficult to achieve national averages. The chart below shows the close proximity of the majority of our placements to Slough.

Of the children placed outside of Slough, 58.5% of these are within 20 miles of the borough (TPR October 2018). This trend should also be seen within the context of a decreasing number of children in care overall and an increasing complexity in children's needs within care, meaning that a significant proportion are placed for specialist care reasons and issues of safety outside of the borough. The Trust are content the reasons for placing further afield are for valid reasons.

The Trust Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) continues to prioritise the recruitment of more in-house foster carers to provide potential placements in or closer to the borough.

Breakdown of Placement Costs 2017-18

| Department	No.	Net Projected Costs	% of Total	Average Costs per Placment	FTE	Ave weekly costs
External Residential	16	£ 2,442,478	24%	£ 152,655	13.22	£3,544
External M&B	1	£ 46,814	0%	£ 46,814	0.97	£926
External Fostering	96	£ 3,494,113	35%	£ 36,397	67.20	£997
Internal Placement	68	£ 1,894,937	19%	£ 27,867	58.08	£626
Internal Placement F&F	18	£ 125,183	1%	£ 6,955	11.95	£201
Residance Order	16	£ 112,923	1%	£ 7,058	14.16	£153
Special Guardianship Order	142	£ 1,230,632	12%	£ 8,666	144.75	£163
In House - Mallards	2	£ 182,806	2%	£ 91,403	2.00	£3,506
In House - Breakaway	1	£ 227,036	2%	£ 227,036	1.00	£4,354
Asylum Seeker 16-18	3	£ 26,092	0%	£ 8,697	0.58	£858
Asylum Seeker Under 16	0	£ -	0%		-	
Remand Services	4	£ 255,172	3%	£ 63,793	2.28	£2,150
Total	**367**	£ 10,038,187		£ 27,352	316.18	£ 608.90

Breakdown of Placement Costs 2018-19

Department	Code	No.	Net Projected Costs	% of Total	Average Costs per Placment	FTE	Ave weekly costs
External Residential	M28B	21	£ 2,714,544	27%	£ 129,264	14.67	£3,548
External M&B	M28B	2	£ 93,850	1%	£ 46,925	0.74	£2,442
External Fostering	M33B	135	£ 3,792,885	37%	£ 28,095	72.01	£1,010
Internal Placement	M32B	80	£ 1,174,795	12%	£ 14,685	55.60	£405
Internal Placement F&F	M32B	24	£ 144,297	1%	£ 6,012	12.59	£220
Adoption Allowances	M82B	70	£ 602,521	6%	£ 8,607	70.16	£165
Residance Order	M63B	16	£ 116,460	1%	£ 7,279	14.54	£154
Special Guardianship Ord	M63B	142	£ 1,225,273	12%	£ 8,629	144.70	£162
Asylum Seeker 16-18	G77L	3	£ 46,626	0%	£ 15,542	1.41	£636
Asylum Seeker Under 16	G77T	0	£ -	0%		-	
Remand Services	M35B	9	£ 208,322	2%	£ 23,147	1.76	£2,264
Total		**502**	£ 10,119,573		£ 20,159	388.17	£ 500.00

Slough recognise some of the unit costs for placement types are higher than statistical neighbours and national averages, but as a small borough with restricted buying power that is only to be expected. The plans are to be party to consortium arrangements to help improve unit rates with external providers and also provide a bigger pool of placement availability and choice for consideration. This is in conjunction with the expansion of the Trust's in house provision through the development of the fostering recruitment strategy.

Expectation is for the overall unit rate to improve and close the gap to statistical neighbours'.

Entering Care

- The main reason for referrals about children is 'abuse and neglect', mainly children suspected to be at risk of harm, followed by Childs disability and family dysfunction.
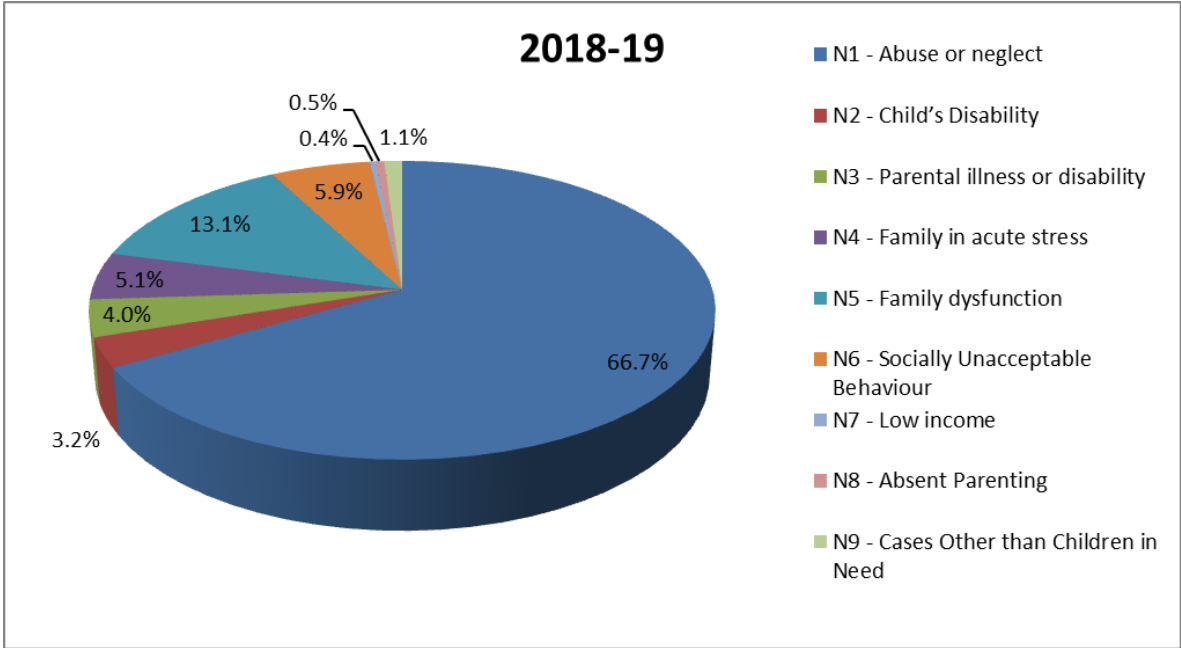
Referrals by Primary Need Reason (2018-19)

- The Trust are running initiatives to address some of the categories above, such as the inspiring family programme to tackle domestic abuse. The results today have been positive showing a considerably lower re-referral rates into care.

- Developing relationships in conjunction with Slough Borough Council with the 3rd sector who can provide support for families to enhance a prevention offer is also targeted to reduce the number of instances of children entering care.

Exiting care

94 Children Looked After left the Trust's care between 01/04/2018 and 31/03/2019.

Reasons for leaving care
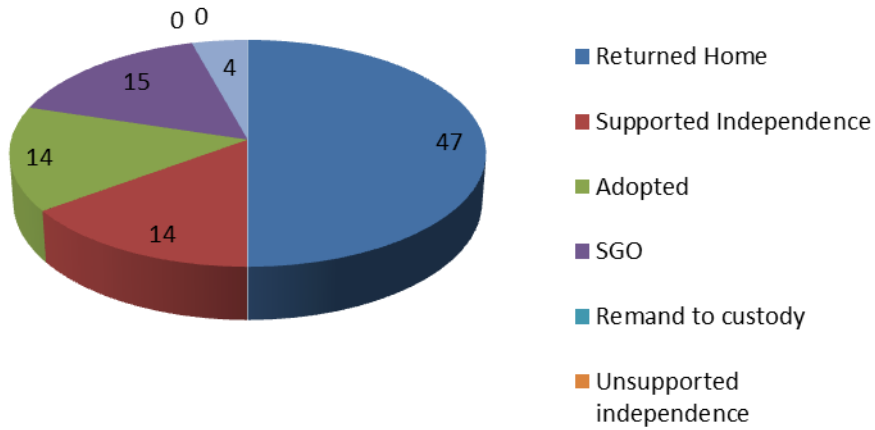
The analysis above shows the concerted efforts for reunification home for any child entering care. Our strategy is always to work with families to try build a stable environment to allow for a child to be safely raised in their own home, as being the driver for the best outcomes in life.

Growth projections

Taking on board ONS projected demographic growth rates for Slough and applying historic trend information, the numbers of CLA have been projected for the next 5 years, showing a steady increase anticipated in numbers. The analysis assumes that the % of CLA per 10,000 population remains the same, the changing factors being the total population and the change in mix of age banding through the years.

Projected growth in CLA
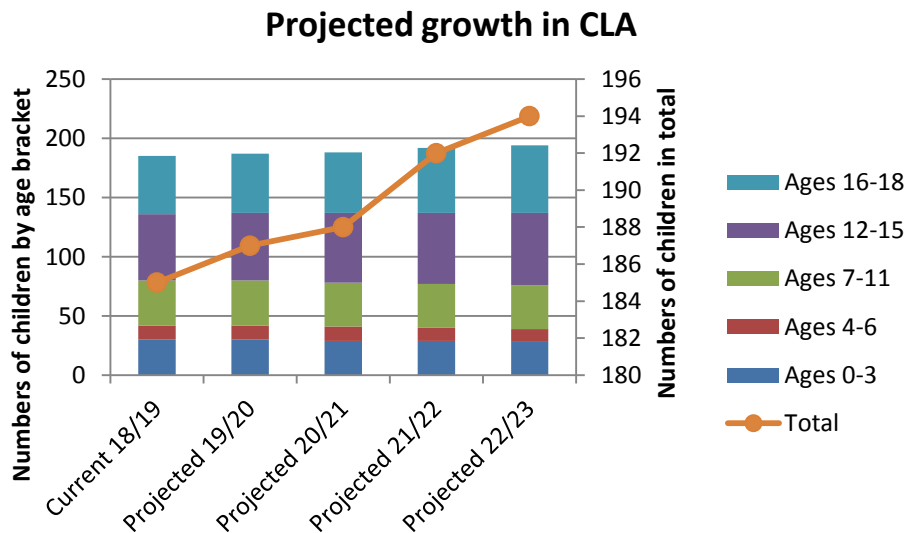
The age banding expected the largest growth is the teenage bracket, with age bands of 12 – 15 & 16 – 18 increasing by 12 % to 118 in total for this cohort.

This age bracket has been a difficult bracket to place, especially with in house carers. Our IFA recruitment strategy is looking to address this through training carers on meeting these needs and ensuring the offer from Slough is an attractive one for the carer, but a cost effective model for the Trust.

Projected placement requirements
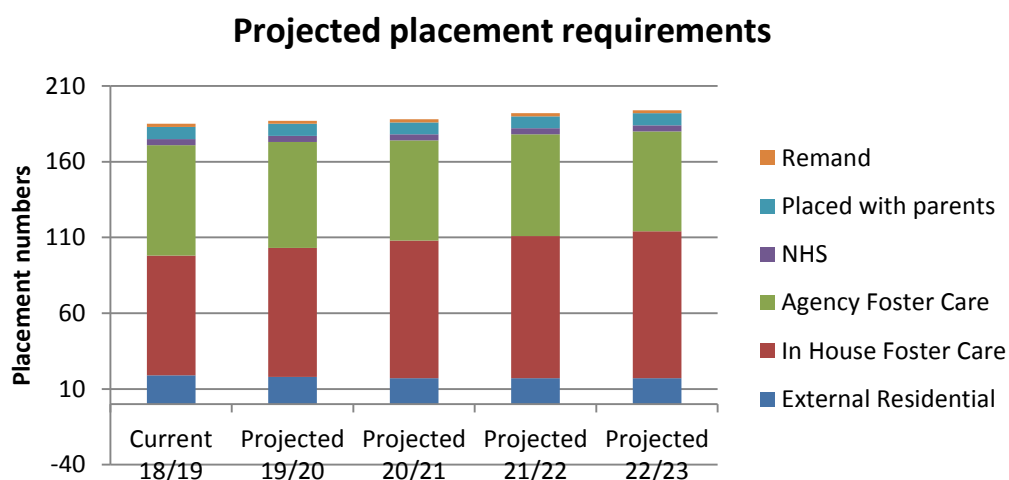
The Trust plan is to develop the recruitment of in house carers to meet future demands and reduce reliance on external provision. The projection is for the increases in demand on CLA to be met through in house placements in the main.

The Trusts Provision

Slough Children Services Trust is committed to promoting the welfare of and protecting the most vulnerable Children and Young People in our Borough. The underlying foundation of any intervention lies in our commitment to ensuring that Children and Young People remain within the families wherever possible.

Where children are assessed to be in need or in need of protection, a range of support may be identified to prevent them from becoming Looked After.

The range of support and resource we are able to offer may include:

- Prevention and Intervention Services ,Troubled families support
- Short Breaks for Children with a Disability
- Sign Posting to community provided services or universal early help services provided by Slough Borough Council
- Rehabilitation
- Permanency Planning

Early Help provided by Slough Borough Council

The need for a revised approach to Early Help for Slough children and families has been developed and is being embedded within Slough Borough Council working closely with the Trust. Slough Multi-Agency Early Help Strategy for Children, Young People and their Families 2019-2021 is a refresh of the original Early Help Strategy 2017-18.

Analysis shows that Police, Schools and Health agencies make up 65% of contacts to the front door over the last 12 months. Historic performance shows only a small proportion of these are referred for social care statutory intervention, however the role of early help is vital in ensuring needs do not escalate and the right support is provided to the family in a timely manner. Building on the strong partnerships already developed through the Family Information Service and Children's Centres, the Early Help Hub has been able to co-ordinate effective support through the team around the family approach to achieve positive outcomes for children and families.

The new front door process has only been in operation for a short period, and success rates to be determined but it is clear that understanding of thresholds across multi-agency partners has improved and the process for the step up and step down of cases between statutory intervention and early help is providing a smooth transition for children and families requiring support. Working in the community with the support of the 3rd sector is seen as a key strategy to reducing escalations of need and maintaining strong family units. Working closely with the troubled family programme within the Trust, areas being considered for exploration are around parenting programmes, to offer support for parents to deal with a multitude of issues arising in the household.

The outcome from the programmes are not only expected to benefit the Trust and statutory interventions, but other partner agencies. Working in collaboration to target a one family approach is seen as a key step to improving outcomes for children and young people.

Trust Intervention and Prevention Offer

As part of an Intervention and Prevention offer, the Trust has engaged Home start for an 18 month period, to provide support to 110 families with children between the 0 – 3 years to reduce the number that become social work cases and provide early intervention to prevent statutory

intervention in family life. As of January 2019,14 months into the intervention, there were 138 referrals. If referrals remain constant it is predicted that 177 referrals will be made across the total period (60% higher than initial expectations).   The intervention is on track to significantly exceed its target of a 20% reduction in re-referrals to statutory services (22 families). The re-referral rate is currently 7% (10 families).

The intervention is marginally below target in reducing de-escalations to statutory care set at 5%. Currently five families have been de-escalated (4%).

The Home Start Slough has been commissioned until June 2019 to allow for work with families to conclude.

Innovative practice

Pause

Pause works with women who have experienced, or are at risk of, repeat removals of children from their care. It aims to break this cycle and give women the opportunity to develop new skills and responses that can help them create a more positive future, this will result in reduced numbers of babies placed for adoption. Pause has been running for over a year now, engaged with 25 women and predicted to have avoided 12 births over an 18 month cycle. The programme not only benefits the Trust in avoidance of babies being removed from families and resulting in adoption, but also benefits partner agencies who will have knowledge of many of these women through drug and alcohol clinics as well as mental health services where activity is expected to have reduced.

Inspiring Families

The Trust has developed the Inspiring Families Programme which works with both the perpetrators and victims when domestic abuse is present within the relationship. The programme is a 10 week course for both parties to understand perspectives from both sides and ensure there is awareness of the impact their actions have on the children in the household. The raising of awareness, acknowledging individual behaviours and providing a network to share thoughts is all aimed at improving the relationships to maintain the family unit, overcome the difficulties and stop the abuse going forward. The programme has seen significant results from the participants to date, with re-referral rates falling for these families. This not only has benefit to the Trust and the Police, but has a significant impact on the wellbeing of the child.

The Trust has integrated the programme into the front door activity, this will ensure the practice is shared across professionals and encourage further take up onto the programme.

Continuing with the inspiring families programme is hoped to continue to limit the number of re-referrals in this area, avoiding children entering care through the prevention programme.

As of the 31st March 2019 67 families (134 Adults) have completed the Inspiring Families programme.

Further 17 families are on course to complete the programme on 24th July 2019 when the current programme will be finishing.

Friends and Family Placements

The Trust to undertake viability assessments on friends and family as required under Regulation 48 of Care Planning Regulations 2010.

To increase the use of Family Group Conferencing.   This will enable families to support children to stay within their families, increasing the number of Special Guardianship Orders and reducing the volume of external foster placements needed.   From July 2017 there were 55 referrals to the service, of a target of 60, 29 Family Group Conferences (FGCs) were held, with 9 reviews.   The referrals were from a number of professionals, including Early Intervention, Child Protection, LAC

team and Court Team.   The Trust will be undertaking a detailed review of FGC to ensure it is delivering in an effective manner. Permanence arrangements through family are seen as a good outcome for a child to provide a close relationship with family, and likely to be a more stable environment longer term. Developing practice to ensure the Trust can maximise utilisation of friend and family placements going forward is a key strategic programme.

New targets will be set, looking to have family network or family group conferences for all children being referred to optimise the use of the wider family, this is not expected to have results in all cases, but has to be the ambition of the Trust to ensure the family setting is the first avenue to be explored to resolve issues. The business case will consider the model for delivery, whether further investment is required into a specialised family group conference service, or all professionals are trained up in process, with the appropriate support.

Home from Home

The Trust's Home from home scheme is a family-based care scheme, where carers look after someone else's child with a disability in their own home. It could be for a few hours a week, a weekly overnight stay, or a weekend once a month.   There are currently 9 active home from home carers however the demands for the service means that more carers are needed to meet the numbers of referrals that are coming through.   This service should be the primary services for families before commissioning external providers. It is run within the Fostering Placement Service, so mirrors the quality assurance process as fostering carers. Home fromHome carer's receive regular supervision, training both mandatory and optional. Their home is checked and monitored for health and safety purposes and risk assessments, agreements and linking procedures are in place. Recruitment is undertaken by an in-house social worker.

The benefit of the Home from Home Service:

Children with disabilities access this service on a referral basis via the CWD team. This provides bespoke packages of care for children reduces the demand of children becoming Looked After, providing   ongoing stability improving outcomes for the child and greater cost effectiveness, and disruption.

The benefit for families is knowing that their children have been placed in day care in a fully approved, safe environment (carer's home). They are able to recharge their batteries with their minds at ease.

Trust IFA Foster Care Placements

The Trust is looking to continue to recruit in-house foster carers, focussing on areas of need and recognises trends in demand such as children aged 13+, emergency short term placements, children remanded into care and sibling groups. The Trust has seen great improvement in the number of in-house carers, in 2016/17 the Trust had 40 foster carers, this had increased further to 45 as of March 2019. This needs to be able to expand further to drive improved economies of scale and close the gap with neighbouring authorities on the proportion of in-house provision. This will be achieved through continued investment in the in-house recruitment and support teams, developing robust support networks and services to our carers to drive retention of carers. The development of a marketing strategy for recruitment and promoting the services from within our own carer base to work towards meeting our targets for new foster carers is underway. We need to focus on three areas: improving general awareness, attracting quality leads for new enquiries and reducing drop out rates, as individuals move towards becoming approved foster carers. There needs to be further consideration to recruiting carers from a targeted wider demographic areas other than Slough. This will enable the Trust IFA to support those children and young people who cannot live in Slough and will reduce the need to spot purchase placements from external IFAs.

Our broad strategy will be to continually promote the need for/benefits of fostering through a range of channels, to raise broad awareness across communities, while persuading target audiences why they should foster   through the Trust (given the challenge of IFA competition, it is imperative that we work to set the Trust apart with a unique selling point). Alongside this, our aim is to get as much insight as possible from each step of the recruitment process, to inform what does and does not work, enabling us to adapt the strategy where needed to maximize recruitment and minimize drop outs.

Reviewing our processes for conversion of enquiries to approval of carers to ensure we do not lose leads. The Trust's IFA Strategy has set a target to recruit 20 beds per year for the next 3 years.

Benchmarking the Trust with other authorities and in house provision shows a best in class authority delivering 80% of provision in house compared to the Trust's 33.7%. The Trust is aiming to close the gap, but recognise scale is not on the Trust's side, therefore the Trust have set a more realistic target of 64% which equates to recruiting 20 beds per year for the next 3 years.

To help support and retain in house carers the Trust has subscribed to the Mockingbird programme. Mockingbird is an innovative method of delivering foster care which uses an extended family model to improve the stability of placements and strengthen the relationship between carers, children and young people, fostering services and birth families. The model features a series of constellations containing 6-10 foster families living in relatively close proximity and a central hub home carer to provide respite care, peer support, training and social activities. The programme is being run in collaboration with the Fostering Network and the first constellation in Slough was launched at the end of June 2018. There is emerging evidence that the programme has a positive impact on recruitment and retention of foster carers, and also improves outcomes for children and young people by giving them a sense of community and belonging and greater stability.

There were 56 placements made to Trust IFA Placements from April 2018 to March 2019, this represents 24.7% of all placements made, in comparison to the same period, April 2017 to March 2018 where 62 placements were made (33.1%).

Placing with the Trust IFA can be cost effective, however when the numbers in placement are small, the unit cost increases making external placements competitive.   Increasing the number of beds will mean that the unit cost remains lower than the market, in addition working alongside providers in the market can also drive down costs.

Developing Foster Friendly

As part of this sufficiency strategy, the concept of a Fostering Friendly Council (FFC) is being considered. An FFC is an accredited scheme, or can be used as a vision, which empowers councils (and trusts) to harness all available resources to recruit foster carers and so increase the number of placements. At its heart, lies the fact that the children in need of a safe home are very much part of our local community and that all key community partners can work together to support the recruitment drive.

An FFC would involve having staff as fostering ambassadors and using all possible marketing channels and space to promote the need for fostering – examples include adverts on council vans and council tax bills. The organisations would also develop fostering friendly employment policies, which local businesses and other partners would be encouraged to adopt over time. It is expected that this immersive concept could help provide better outcomes for local children and greater value for money.

External Fostering Market

The Trust to remain engaged and committed in the development of the South East Consortium, signing up to framework agreements recognising the value they bring to the Trust with greater

buying power and providing a wider reach of carers to meet the needs of our children. Developing a model that can cope with the needs gap from in-house carers, again focussing on children aged 13+, emergency short term placements, children remanded into care and sibling groups.   The South East Consortium manages a joint contract on behalf of local authorities and the Trust, which outlines fixed price agreements with external IFA's.

The Trust are looking at a number of other framework agreements including the West London Alliance; This will enable the Trust to fish in a bigger pond, providing increased options and the likelihood of better matching of the child's needs. Also having wider options available is likely to provide a more competitive market resulting in more cost effective rates.

In recognising the demands, many placements are required out of Borough to disassociate the young person with gang affiliation locally or from exploitation. In 2018/19 there were 5 placements made out of borough specifically for these reasons. The average placement duration was 29 days.

Identifying the right provider is essential to cope with the complexities of the child. There were 2 breakdowns in this type of placement during the year. The ambition for the Trust is to develop specialised quality services to meet this demand.

There were 95 placements made to external IFA Placements from April 2018 to March 2019, this represents 41.9% of all placements made, in comparison to the same period, April 2017 to March 2018 were 50 placements were made (26.7%)

Of the 95 placements above, 20 related to replacement following breakdown of initial placement, highlighting the need for wider supply to increase the chances of improved matching of need. There will be improved placement stability for Children who are Looked After. This will be achieved through the increase in the number of Placement stability meetings taking place when young people are struggling to regulate within their placement.

Residential Children's Homes

Residential Provision is used for those children and young people whose needs meet this threshold. Those children who are able to live within a family setting need to be given the opportunity to be able to do so. Identifying the needs and outcomes required from a residential setting, and ensuring those outcomes are being met is managed through the contracts. Since the creation of the Trust there have been few long term residential placements, most placements have been for a period of time to work with the young person to address needs in order to step down to an appropriate setting with more of a permanent prospect.

Signing up to the Southern Consortium Framework will provide the Trust a wider reach and greater ability to source appropriate places at a more competitive price.

It is likely given the projected increase in number of older children in the next 5 years by 12%, and the cohort rejecting family based settings, the expectation is an increase in residential placements will be required. Development of Edge of Care and Prevention services including Early Intervention services, Short Breaks for Children with a Disability, Sign Posting to community provided services or universal early help services provided by SBC and Block booking of residential beds for high risk young people is being developed.

Analysis shows that 20 placements were required for Residential provision for 2018/2019. Block booking this type of provision could result in guaranteed provision for Slough and at preferential rates. However there is a risk to block booking where costs are incurred when the beds are empty and there are gaps in demand. This can be mitigated by selling of the bed to other authorities when appropriate, however the provision is then unavailable for Slough placements.

There are plans to review Slough's Residential Children's Home "Mallards". The Trust are looking to recruit a permanent manager to the provision with a view to producing a strategy on how the service

can meet the future needs of children requiring residential care.   There is also an opportunity to look at whether the Trust can offer beds to neighbouring authorities.

A strategic review is being undertaken as to whether Mallards offers a viable business model, run in house. An assessment of options will need to be considered as part of the review, but recognising the outcomes from children attending Mallards has been largely positive in recent times.

Breakaway is a respite unit for children with disabilities and additional needs which has recently been extended to a residential unit to house a young people with disabilities, the decision for expansion of services meant the young person(s) was able to remain in an environment that was familiar having previously attended for respite, but because of escalating needs the requirement was for residential care.

A strategic review of Breakaway provision is to be undertaken, looking at whether the model of delivery is effective and provides good value for money.

There were 20 placements made to Residential Placements from April 2018 to March 2019, this represents 8.81 % of all placements made, in comparison to the same period, April 2017 to March 2018 were 14 placements were made (7.5%)

Of these placements, 10 were emergency placements commissioned at short notice. 2 were for children needing to be placed away from Slough for safeguarding reasons.

In-house Residential

There were 8 placements made to in-house residential Provision from April 2018 to March 2019, this represents 3.52% of all placements made, in comparison to the same period, April 2017 to March 2018 were 15 placements were made (8%).

The % of beds filled through 2018/19 was 66.7%, recognising as a 6 bedded unit, it is extremely difficult to match the needs of six similar children and manage safely.

Boarding School Placements for Looked After Children

A briefing paper has been submitted to Heads of Service by the Trust Virtual School, to introduce a DfE initiative to offer children who are looked after places in boarding schools, private and state maintained, partially subsidised by the Boarding School Partnership. These places would benefit children and young people who are academically high achieving.

Ideally working with families on the edge of care, where families require additional support to allow children to stay at home and not become looked after.   The vast majority of private boarding schools will not take children with an EHCP or emotional and behaviour needs, however a few state ones will.

Semi Independent Accommodation

There is a broad range of semi-independent accommodation options available for young people within Slough and the surrounding areas. The Trust aims to work with providers in the region to create standards to work within to ensure all settings are suitable for our young people. Contracting with providers will create greater control for the Trust and deliver improved value for money.

There is not enough affordable accommodation for care leavers, the Trust are working closely with Slough Borough Council to develop housing options for our care leavers to ensure tenancies can be maintained and provide a stable environment for vulnerable young people.

The council have a number of assets which are empty and could be converted as suitable accommodation. Having the ability to manage our own semi independent accommodation provision will start to impact upon the market and effect rates. Average rent payable for semi independent providers currently stands at £412 per week. This compares with private rents available in Slough averaging at £800 per week for a studio or one bed flat. Private rents exclude the provision of security often required for placements of this nature and the potential higher maintenance and repair costs.

Many providers insist on adopting their support services placed within their accommodation which is a cost on top of the rent payable. This varies in level of support, but a basic package averages 5 hours per week at rates of £439 per week. There is a challenge for the Trust in managing whether the full support is offered, whether outcomes are being met and the cost of the support proves value for money.

Developing in-house provision provides greater control and the ability to deliver the support at potentially more cost effective rates. The Trust will also look at reviewing young people's contribution towards their rent to reduce the cost to the Trust.

Whether services are delivered in-house or external, commissioning will be looking to develop contract management measures to ensure the outcomes from support are achieved, that young people have the necessary life skills to maintain independence when leaving semi independent accommodation.

There were 48 placements made to Semi-Independent Provision from April 2018 to March 2019, this represents 21.1% of all placements made, in comparison to the same period, April 2017 to March 2018 were 46 placements were made (24.6%).

The average rates paid for semi independence is £808 as of March 2019, £747 for 2018/19.

There are 2 Semi independent (over 18s) High Cost Placements of more than £1,000 per week as of March 2019, with an average cost of £1,925 per week.

There are 6 Semi independent (under 18) High Costs Placements of more than £1,000 per week as of March 2019, with an average cost of £2,115 per week.

Secure Accommodation

Placement in Secure Accommodation is seen as the last resort. The deprivation of a child or young person's liberty is a serious matter which is closely scrutinised by a court process and Secure Accommodation Orders are only made if all alternatives have been explored and exhausted to keep a young person safe.

Commissioning cannot secure accommodation as the placement is directed by the court, this means that we are unable to secure better rates or enter into block booking arrangements.

There was one secure placement made in 2018/2019.

Bail and Remand

All local authorities have a legal duty under Section 21 of the Children Act 1989 to provide accommodation for all children and young people remanded to local authority accommodation. These young people automatically have children in care status. The Trust IFA to invest and direct its marketing campaigns with an aim to recruit remand foster carers. The Trust IFA is also developing a proposal to train and reward its foster carers to be able to support more challenging teenagers.

The Trust's experience in recent years is that when remand cases come in, there are multiple cases at once. Remand is not consistent and is relatively sporadic making it extremely difficult to plan for effectively. Given the size of Slough and lack of scale using remand on the Southern Consortium

Framework is a cost effective option, however there are very few remand foster carers and this is not a specific group on the framework, local authorities need to approach IFAs to see if they have remand carers and negotiate. The Trust would need to explore joining up with other authorities is an option to consider.

There were 8 remand placements made to Young Offender Institutions in 2018/19. The average rate of these placements is £2,884.88. There were also 2 young people remanded in the in-house residential provision

Staying Put / Supported Lodgings for Care Leavers

Local authorities have a duty to provide sufficient, suitable accommodation for care leavers in their local areas and if needed support to maintain their accommodation. The Trust has a Staying Put policy which encourages carer leavers to remain in their foster placement post 18 to provide continued stability for the young people until the child reaches 25 if required.

On reaching 18 the Trust work with the young people to ensure they are either in education, training or employment. The Trust will ensure they are claiming the necessary benefits which reduces the cost of allowances paid to the carers which is a saving to the Trust but it is dependant on many variables including employment, location, income, property, rent and the child's needs.

The Trust will also look at reviewing young people's contribution towards their rent to reduce the cost to the Trust.

The Government provide a small grant to help contribute to staying put arrangements.

There were 8 Staying Put Placement as of March 2019

The Trust has a number of supported housing providers who will work with our care leavers to develop their independent skills. Supported housing offers a level of greater independence for the young person and makes opportunity of spare beds in homes for families to seek support. The families act as mentors to the young person, helping them develop for independence. This is a cheaper option to semi independent accommodation and an avenue the Trust is looking to develop through marketing the offer for families in Slough and the surrounding areas.

The Trust IFA is currently looking at whether its Home from Home recruitment and Supporting Lodgings recruitment sits within its service.

General Needs Housing Provision for Care Leavers

It is a priority of Slough Borough Council Housing Strategy to enable children living in care to access a range of suitable accommodation. The Housing service work closely with the Trust and Adult Social Care to help deliver effective pathways to support vulnerable children to address both specific housing and care needs. There are joint protocols in place between the homeless team and the Trust to ensure that Children Looked After receive an additional preference on the housing register. However, a tenancy may not be the best option for some care leavers, who may wish to receive a degree of on-going support and prefer shared accommodation and other housing options. The council has committed to developing this housing option through James Elliman Homes.

The council provide an independent living skills programme for care leavers aimed at stabilising tenancies and providing an assured transition into adulthood.

The Trust has developed a clinical offer to care leavers to input into emotional wellbeing.

Adoption

For our younger children in care Adoption is often the best outcome. Recruiting, assessing and training sufficient adopters who can meet the diverse needs of children in Slough is a key priority for the Trusts VAA. There are a number of Slough children requiring placements who are aged under 2, especially where Fostering for Adoption may be a consideration. However, there are also a significant number of children who are older. The Trust's Family Placement Service is reviewing its Adoption Recruitment Strategy.   One of its aims is to increase our number of adopter approvals to 20 adoptive families for 2018-2019 and 20 for 2019- 2020.

An expression of interest has been made led by the London Borough of Harrow as Lead Authority with up to five LAs (including Slough Children Services Trust) to commission an existing VAA to deliver the Regional Adoption Agency Programme.

Contact Centre

The contact service provides a 7 day a week service to facilitate contact with families. The service works flexibly to cater for the needs of all concerned. Commissioning are looking at possibly expansion of the service, to meet growing needs in contact, ensuring sufficient capacity over weekends and evenings. Consideration is also being given to the prospect of expanding the offer to other neighbouring authorities to drive economies of scale.

Commissioning Intentions

- We will continue to review and commission intervention and prevention projects to support families in Slough.
- We will focus on prevention of entry into care, improving the consistency of decision-making and driving the effective use of edge of care services including interventions such as Family Group Conferencing.
- Our ambition is to have the right children in care and to offer more support to enable children to remain safely at home or to return to home where it is in their best interests.
- Establishing a Tripartite panel between SEND, Health and Social Care
- We will further analyse via case studies, reasons why children in Slough enter care and the circumstances that led up to this, in order to identify trends and patterns which could inform future practice with a particular focus on the older children/young people coming into care.
- Effective Commissioning of Residential Services, to include the review of in-house residential provision and future development of 2-3 bedroom children's homes.
- Recognising a changing needs profile, to inform the recruitment of in-house carers.
- A commitment to only place children in good or outstanding provision.
- Development of a Quality Assurance framework to ensure commissioned services are meeting quality standards and we are getting what we are paying for.
- Increase in partnership with providers encouraging them to develop services within Slough to reduce the number of children placed out of borough.
- Development of semi-independent accommodation for 16-18 year olds.
- Develop supported lodgings offerings, as an alternative to semi independent accommodation to provide greater choice.
- Increasing access to affordable housing for care leavers.

Commissioning plan

Strengthen our Edge of Care Offer

Summary:

Prevention and Intervention Projects

Outcomes to be achieved:

- **To reduce number of children being placed in care**
- **Supporting families to stay together**
- **Positive Parenting Styles**

A hands-on approach to help children in Slough be

• • • • • • Safe, Secure and Successful

Ref	Action	Timescale	Lead and Resource	Outcome	Impact
	Focus on prevention of entry into care, improving the consistency of decision- making and driving the effective use of edge of care services including interventions such as Family Group Conferencing and intensive support services for crisis intervention.	December 2019	HOS Front Door	Providing a service to children, young people and families to reduce number of children coming into care.	Children, young people and their families are supported to stay together
	Review and Commission RHI provider.	July 2019	Commissioning	Best Value for money to be obtained for children both in and those who are placed out of Borough.	Children will access good service provision on occasions when missing.
	Monitoring of intervention and prevention projects to ensure a robust front door and compliance with statutory thresholds. Developing 3rd sector provisions to provide required support to families to address needs	August 2019	HOS Front Door	Continuing with an early intervention strategy will help avoid unnecessary entry into the care system, creating a more stable environment for our children, improving the life chances for those children.	Children, young people and their families are supported to stay together
	Joint commissioning of troubled families services, consideration for parenting programmes and other initiatives that could address issues faced by families in trouble.	August 2019	Commissioning Officer	A sustainable model through developing the expertise in house that can provide the required support and input to families in need to assist in the prevention programme and avoid escalations of need.	Parents and Carers within Slough have opportunities to strengthen parenting capacity.

Ref	Action	Timescale	Lead and Resource	Outcome	Impact
	Review of intervention contracts to ensure delivering value for money and providing a valued service to the children and families referred	Mar 2019	Contracts Officer	Assurance of value from the contracts in place and the ability to considering extensions to the contracts.	Children, young people and their families are supported to stay together
	Establish a decision making Tripartite panel between SEND, Health and Social Care, to jointly agree funding for resources for children who have complex needs.	July 2019	Health lead with input from Commissioning HOS and SEND	Joint Panel with agreed funding for resources	Decision for children will not drift and will be implemented more effectively. No child will be less in an inappropriate/harmful provision
	Analysis via case studies, reasons why children in Slough enter care and the circumstances that led up to this, in order to identify trends and patterns which could inform future practice with a particular focus on the older children/young people coming into care	March 2020	Commissioning HOS CLA	Inform the commissioning and sufficiency of future placements.	Ensuring that the right children come into care and that provision meets their needs.
	Short breaks tender process, expanding the number of providers and opportunities available for our children with disability.	April 2019	Commissioning Officer	Providing greater choice and more accessibility for our children with disabilities.	Children and families will have a variety of different short breaks to choose from.

WORKSTREAM 2 – Grow Our Own In-House Provision
Summary: Develop in-house provision to meet the changing needs of children and young people entering care
Outcomes to be achieved: **Increase capacity of in-house provision**   **Develop Foster Carers to be able to meet the needs of children and young people entering care**   **Ensure good safeguarding process**

Ref	Action	Timescale	Lead and Resource	Outcome	Impact
	Improve links between commissioning and operational SW in relation to safeguarding issues	August 2019	SW Operations/ Commissioning	To enable commissioning team to be robust in completing provider checks in line with changing legislation, in challenge of providers should safeguarding matters arise and ensure safe practice across providers for any children placed within a commissioned provision.	To ensure robust safeguarding
	Develop in-house resources – track delivery of fostering recruitment strategy	March 2019	HOS Family Placements service	An increase of in house foster provision targeted to meet a teenage cohort and higher levels of need in close proximity to Slough. This will drive greater choice,	Children will be placed in Slough or surrounding areas, close to their schools and friends.

Ref	Action	Timescale	Lead and Resource	Outcome	Impact
				control and cost efficiencies for commissioning.	
	Recognising the changing needs profile, to inform the recruitment of in-house carers	August 2019	HOS Family Placements service	Increase capacity of in-house foster carers who can meet the increasing needs of children and young people.	Children will be placed in Slough or surrounding areas, close to their schools and friends.
	Develop in-house resources – strategic review of Mallards	June 2019	HOS CLA	In-house provision to provide outcome based services with monitoring and review to ensure value for money and good service provision in line with any provider	Children will access high quality service provision within Slough.
	Develop in-house resources – strategic review of Breakaway	June 2019	HOS CLA	In-house provision to provide outcome based services with monitoring and review to ensure value for money and good service provision in line with any provider	Children will access high quality service provision within Slough.

WORKSTREAM 3 – Improve placement commission from the market

Summary:

Ensure only good and outstanding provision is commissioned for the children of Slough, within the area or in close proximity.

Outcomes to be achieved:

- **Improving service and deliver greater value for money**
- **Reduced number of children in unregulated placements**
- **Reduced number of children in emergency placements**
- **Commissioning and development of specialist provision**
- **Developing the Provider Market**
- **Ensure good safeguarding practice**

Ref	Action	Timescale	Lead and Resource	Outcome	Impact
	Develop a Performance Dash board for all services for commissioned as part of the sufficiency strategy	September 2019	Data Performance/ Commissioning	Enable services to be robustly monitored, reviewed and commissioned	Children will receive a high quality service provision
	Improve links between commissioning and operational SW in relation to safeguarding issues	August 2019	SW Operations/ Commissioning	To enable commissioning team to be robust in completing provider checks in line with changing legislation, in challenge of providers should safeguarding matters arise and ensure safe	To ensure robust safeguarding

Ref	Action	Timescale	Lead and Resource	Outcome	Impact
				practice across providers for any children placed within a commissioned provision.	
	A commitment to only place children in good or outstanding provision.	June 2019	Placements	Placements will be good or outstanding.	Ensuring children and young people received good quality stable placements.
	Reduction in our children placed in independent sector foster placements.	August 2019	Placements	To place in-house where possible or within the Southern Consortium Framework. To reduce off framework placements. Value for money placements. Reduction of spot purchasing enhanced placements.	Children will be placed in high quality placements within Slough or close proximity, close to their schools and friends.
	Effective commissioning of specialised placements through consortium frameworks with consideration for block booking in collaboration with neighbouring authorities.	September 2019	Contracts Officer	Provide assurance of outstanding provision to meet specialist needs identified in Slough to provide the right support for our children and young people, that is in close proximity to Slough	Children and young people will have placements that are able to meet their needs. Children will be able to access these placements close to where they lived previously, ensuring school, contact and friends can be maintained if appropriate.

Ref	Action	Timescale	Lead and Resource	Outcome	Impact
	Joint commissioning with health of tier 4 mental health provision to address needs of children and young people.	March 2020	Commissioning Officer	Working in collaboration with Health to provide a seamless service to young people with mental health issues.	Where there is significant risk to a child through their own mental health difficulties a provision could be sourced expediently to ensure there is no drift and that access to specialist services could be sourced quickly.
	Run a series of market development event with local providers of fostering, residential and semi-independent provision to explore potential for expanding available provision in the local area.	September 2019	Commissioning	Develop good working relationships with local providers to ensure children can access local placements Increase provision to be able to match children's needs with a placement within the locality and out of Borough should this be the assessed need.	Achieve value for money and children to access local placements to use existing community links and networks
	Develop a preferred list of semi-independent provision and Supported Lodging placements for 16-18 year olds	October 2019	Placements	Preferred list of suppliers, who deliver quality and value for money placements.	To enhance placement Stability and transition process
	Joint commissioning with health on continued health care plans, ensuring areas of responsibility are clear and the needs of the child being met.	December 2019	Commissioning Officer	Provide commissioning processes and share commissioning resources	Children to experience smooth transition within services

Ref	Action	Timescale	Lead and Resource	Outcome	Impact
	Embed robust contract monitoring processes to ensure contracts are delivering value and meeting the outcomes and targets set.	August 2019	Contracts Officer	Will drive an improving service and deliver greater value for money	Achieve value for money, improve commissioning and sufficiency planning stability of placements
	Development of a Quality Assurance framework, to ensure commissioned services are informed by the voice and experience of the child meeting our quality standards, and we are getting what we are paying for.	September 2019	Commissioning/ CIC Council	Services will be audited, monitored and reviewed to verify contractual obligations are being met.	Children's needs will be adequately met whilst achieving value for money, improve commissioning and sufficiency planning stability of placements
	Develop provider forums to build and maintain good working relationships. Enabling providers to understand the needs of children, be clear on the expectations from the Trust and enable the Trust to understand providers limitations.	July 2019	Contracts Officer	Enable providers to be market ready. Improve relations with providers will result in improved service offers to the children of Slough and the potential for improved rates.	Children will have secured homes, in quality provision.
	Increase partnerships with providers, encouraging them to develop services within Slough to reduce the number of children placed out of borough.	November 2019	Commissioning	A market which is open and transparent so that providers can develop their business to be able to provide placements which meet the needs of the Trust	Children will be placed in placements that will be within Slough or within close proximity.
	The Trust to produce a Market Provision Statement	September 2019	Commissioning	A published Market Provision Statement which providers will be able to develop their business in line with.	Children will have access to placements that meet their needs within high quality provision.

Ref	Action	Timescale	Lead and Resource	Outcome	Impact
					Children will access good service provision on occasions when missing.
	Development of a Knowledge Hub for the Trust to ensure Social Worker/Hubs produce good quality documents including: Placement request form and guidance notes Individual Placement Agreements and guidance notes	March 2019	Commissioning	Enable SW to complete high quality placement request forms to support a robust matching process and inform individual placement agreements	Reduce placement breakdowns
	Introduce monthly analysis, through data performance and placement activity data.	March 2019	Placements	Highlights areas of development. Allows senior managers overview of placements and a shared understanding to be reached	Informs commissioning and sufficiency strategy
	Commissioning intervention on wider basis. The Trust to be part of a complex LAC project.	November 2019	HOS Commissioning	Increase placements stability, joint commissioning and permanence	Achieve value for money, improve commissioning and sufficiency planning stability of placements
	Support accommodation and Housing project to increase access to affordable housing for care leavers by more joined up working with Housing.	June 2019	HOS Commissioning/ SBC Housing	Enhanced status of Care Leaver for housing, ensuring they are put on the housing register at 16. Named person in housing to work collaboratively with Children who are looked after and Care Leavers.	Those young people who are able to live independently have the opportunity to access affordable housing.

Ref	Action	Timescale	Lead and Resource	Outcome	Impact
	Procurement Strategy to be agreed with Slough Borough Council to enable the Trust to commission new/existing services to maximize its full potential	July 2019	Commissioning	Enable strategic direction for Trust and SBC to align services and strengthen Trust's ability to procure and commission high quality service provision	Achieve value for money, improve commissioning of services for children, young people and their families