

Children in Care (CiC) Outside of Barnsley

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Wherever feasible, Children's Social Care and Safeguarding Services aim to place children in care (CiC) with carers within the borough. Local placements provide continuity for the children and ensure that they are cared for within a familiar and known environment. It also enables children to retain their cultural identities, social relationships and family attachments as much as possible. Equally, placing children within the borough ensures that services delivered by key partner agencies, such as health and education, are more consistent due to close partnership working.

1.2 In some circumstances however, there can be several reasons why children may be placed outside of Barnsley, including:-

- Children placed with carers who are relatives living outside of the borough
- Children placed for adoption
- Children with complex needs that cannot be addressed within the borough and require placement in specialist, joint funded provision (Children's Social Care, Health, Education)
- Children placed in secure accommodation where facilities are not available locally
- Children placed in commissioned placements due to a lack of appropriate and available in-house placements within the borough

1.3 All children placed in care outside the borough will be provided with the following safeguarding assurances:

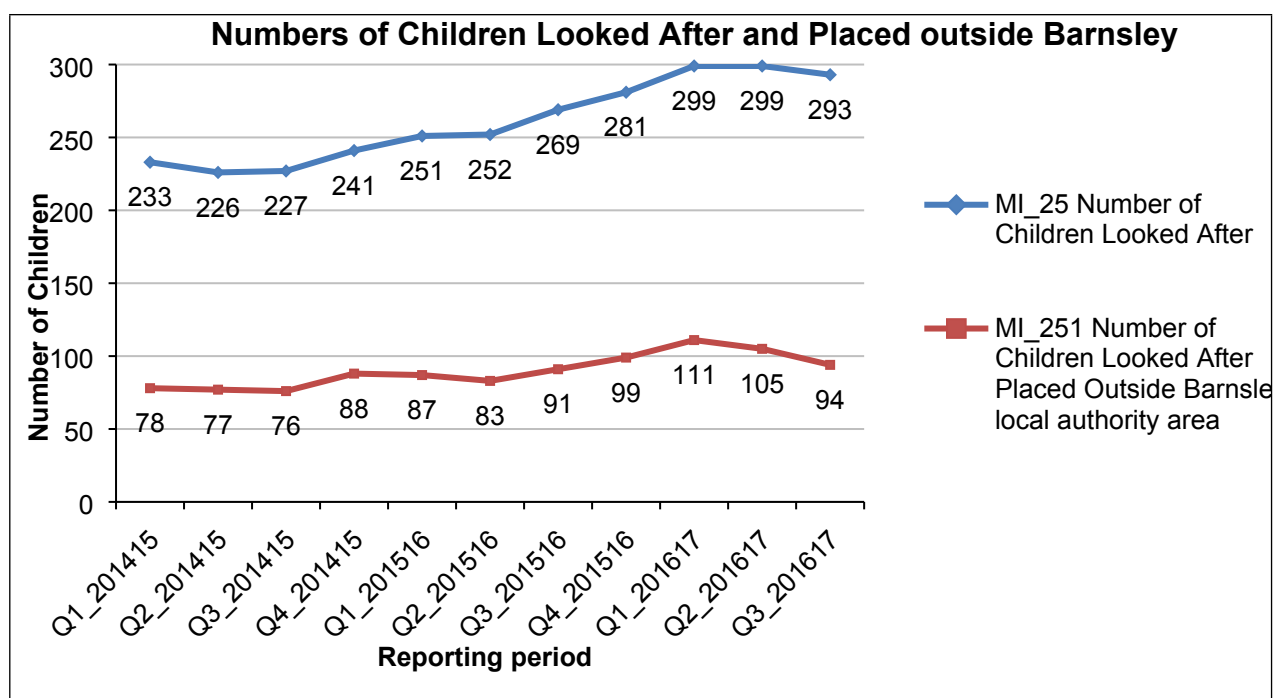
- No child in care will be placed in an unregistered, unapproved placement
- All children placed in care will have a named, allocated Social Worker who must visit the child/young person, as a minimum, within one week of the start of any placement and at intervals of not more than 6 weeks thereafter. It should be noted that this is over and above the requirements set out in the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010 and the Care Planning and Fostering (Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) Regulations 2015
- The Social Worker will visit the child more often if needed and must always talk to the child on their own, as well as ensuring that the placement is meeting all of the child's needs
- A named Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) will be allocated to the child, who will chair the child's statutory review meeting, which are held within 28 days of the child coming in to care; at 3 months and thereafter every 6 months. Statutory review meetings are attended by the child, the carer(s), appropriate birth family and key professionals, all working together to promote the child's best interest
- The IRO is responsible for monitoring the child's care plan, ensuring that the local authority and other key agencies are meeting the child's needs in a timely manner; promoting the child's well-being; ascertaining and promoting the views of the child within the care planning and review process. This involves the IRO seeing the child on their own outside of the review meeting

- The child's Social Worker will work with the Looked after Children's (LAC) Virtual Headteacher and the carers to ensure that the child is provided with appropriate education. The Virtual Headteacher's role is to champion the needs of CiC in schools and look for ways of tackling the barriers that many CiC experience
- The child's Social Worker will work with the Designated Nurse for Looked After Children and the carers to ensure that the child is registered with a Dentist, GP and is referred to any other required health provision to meet their needs
- The child's Social Worker will ensure that there are up to date Placement and Care Plans for the child, which will set out the day to day care arrangements, the child's needs and how and who will be responsible for meeting these
- The child's Social Worker will ensure that the child has regular contact with their family members, as/where appropriate
- The child will be advised of how and who to contact if they wish to make a complaint and be offered an Independent Visitor, who will act as an advocate
- Irrespective of where the placement is, Barnsley Council remains legally responsible for Barnsley CiC placed outside of the borough

2.0 Current Position

2.1 Number of Children In Care (CiC)

As can be seen in the chart below, the total number of Barnsley's looked after children (LAC) numbers have increased in recent years, before starting to fall slightly towards the end of 2016. This trend is mirrored by the number of CiC placed outside the borough, with 94 children being placed outside of Barnsley at the end of quarter 3 (2016/17).



2.2 Most CiC are placed in Barnsley or neighbouring authorities. As of 31st March 2017, 25 children are placed more than 20 miles away from their homes address in Barnsley. The breakdown of these is shown below:

- 7 are placed for Adoption
- 3 are in residential provision

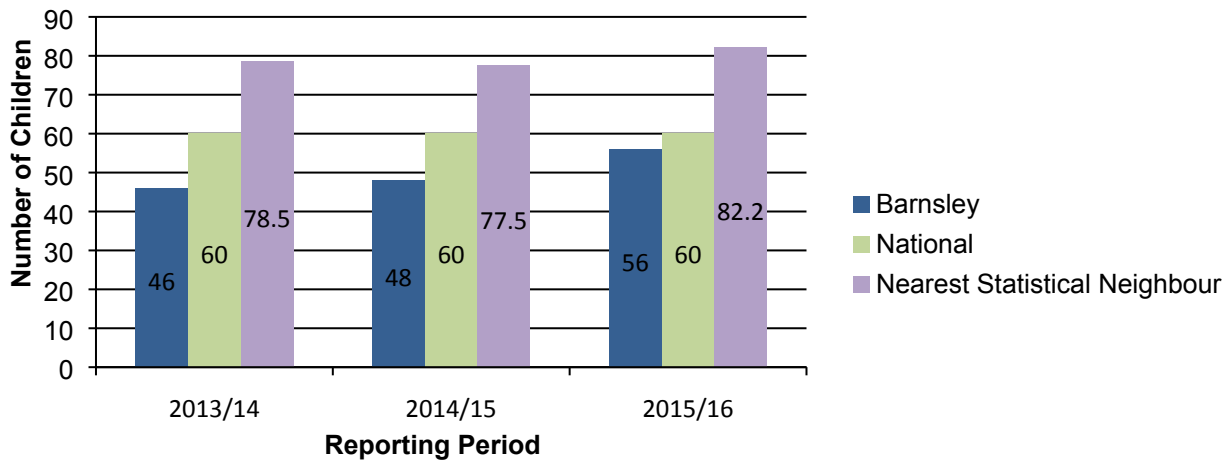
- 1 is in a specialist residential school
- 11 are in Foster Care
- 3 are on Remand

Those placed for Adoption and on Remand outside of the Borough are for legitimate reasons. Similarly Barnsley does not have the specialist centres/provision required by some children.

2.3 Comparator Data

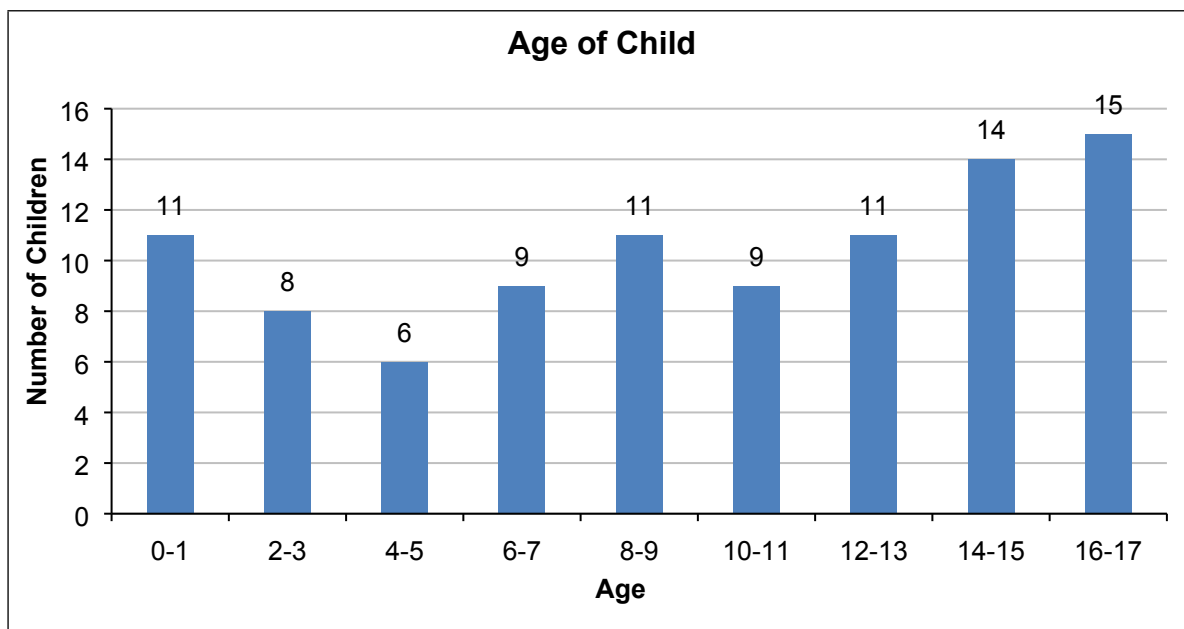
Barnsley has historically had lower numbers of LAC than our comparators. There are many hypotheses as to why this might be the case, among them the effectiveness of some of our family support interventions, the use of evidence-based approaches and the strength of family and kinship networks, rooted in closely-knit communities. All of these hypotheses are, by definition, difficult to prove but until relatively recently fewer children were considered to be in need of admission to care than was the case with our statistical neighbours. In 2013/14, Barnsley had 46 LAC per 10,000 children aged under 18. At the same time, the national rate was 60 per 10,000, with our statistical neighbours higher again at 78.5 per 10,000. By 2015/16, our rate had increased to 56 per 10,000, much closer to the national average (60 per 10,000) but still some way below our statistical neighbours (82.2 per 10,000).

Number of Looked After Children per 10,000 Children



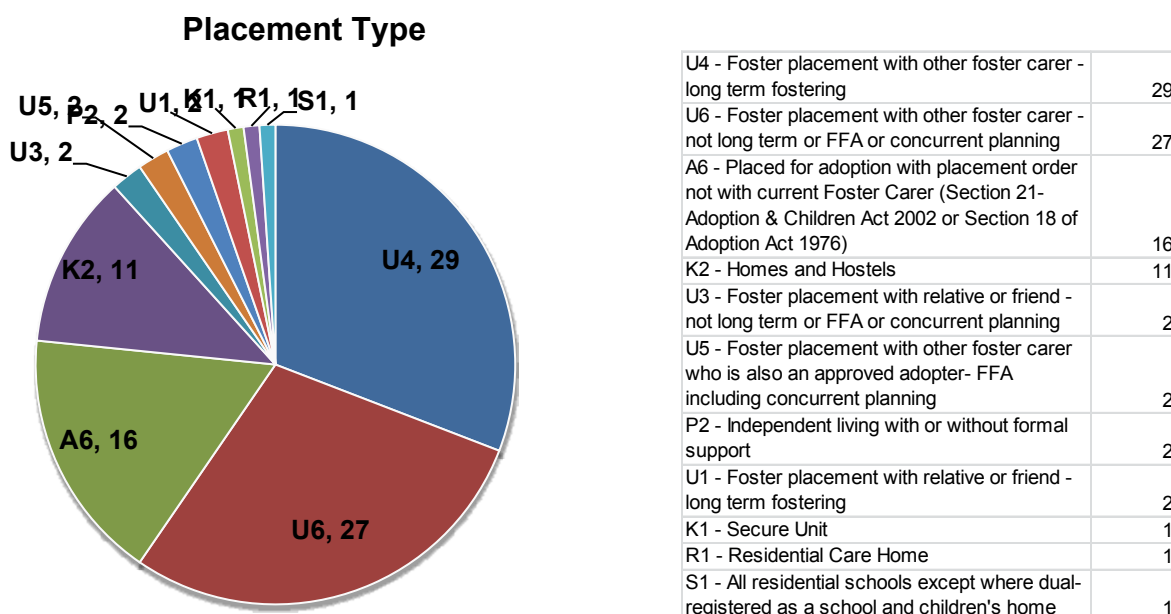
2.4 Age Profile of Children Placed Outside the Borough

This chart shows the age profile of the 94 LAC placed outside the borough at the end of quarter 3 (2016/17). This shows a higher proportion of older children placed outside the borough, along with slightly higher numbers for children aged under 2, as well as those aged 8 to 9 and 12 to 13. This is due to our requirement for more in-house carers for adolescents and as such older children may have to go where placements are available. The reason for children aged under 2 being out of the Borough is due to them being placed for adoption.



2.5 Placement Types

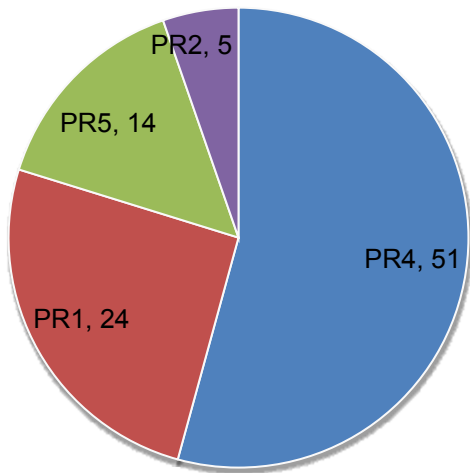
The chart and table below provide an overview of the placement types for LAC placed outside the borough at the end of quarter 3 (2016/17). Of the 94 children placed outside the borough, the largest group of LAC are in either long-term or short-term foster placements (66%). A much smaller proportion have been placed for adoption (17%) or in homes or hostels (11.7%).



2.6 Placement Providers

Linked to the previous chart, the chart and table below provide an overview of the most common providers of placements for LAC placed outside the borough at the end of quarter 3 (2016/17). This highlights that the majority (54.3%) of children are in privately provided placements. The next largest group are in placements supported by the council (25.5%), with smaller proportions in voluntary/third sector placements (14.9%) and placements supported by other local authorities (5.3%).

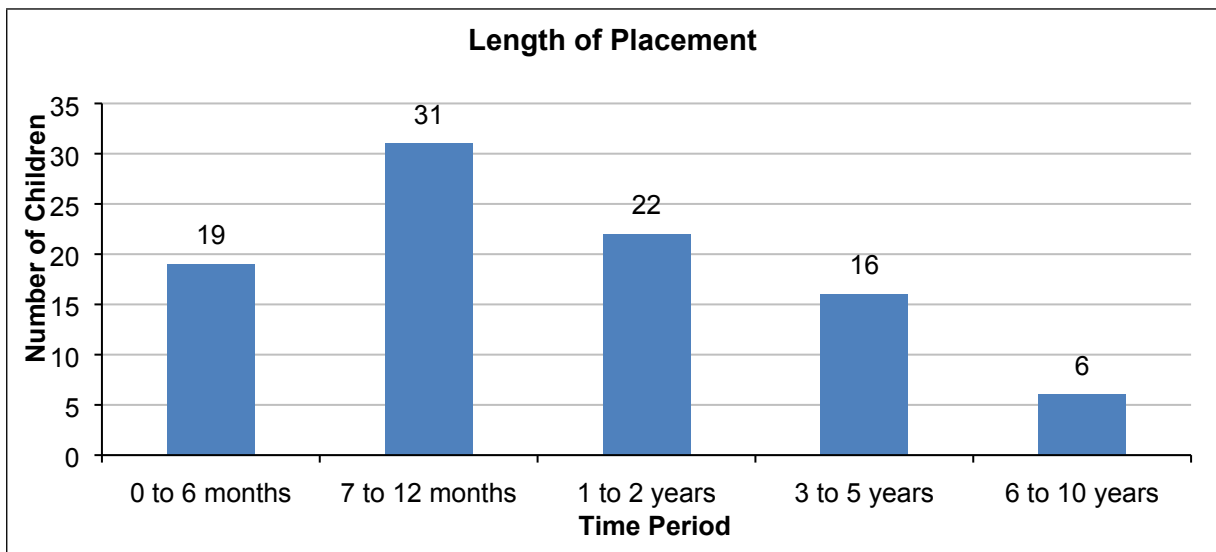
Placement Providers



PR4 - Private Provision (Non BMBC)	51
PR1 - Own Provision (BMBC)	24
PR5 - Voluntary or Third Sector Provision (Non BMBC)	14
PR2 - Other Local Authority Provision (Non BMBC)	5

2.7 Length of Time in Placements

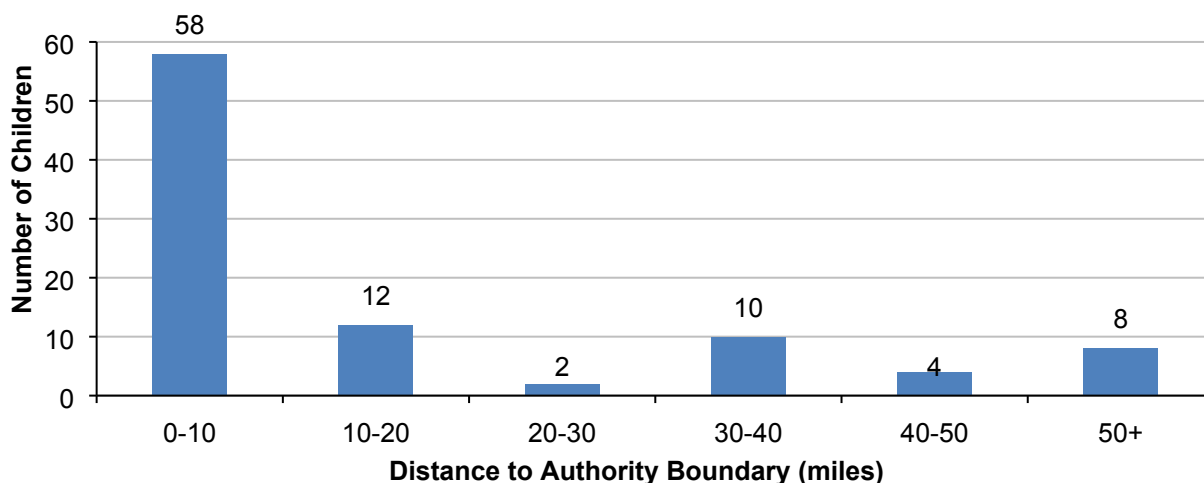
The following chart shows the amount of time LAC placed outside the borough at the end of quarter 3 (2016/17) have been in their current placement. Compared to the overall cohort of LAC, those placed outside the borough in quarter 3 were more likely to have been in their current placements for less than 12 months. Also, a much smaller proportion have been in their current placements for between 6 and 10 years, when compared to the whole cohort.



2.8 Placement Distance

Where children are placed out of the borough, the majority are not placed significant distances away from Barnsley. The chart below shows that 61.7% of LAC placed outside the borough at the end of quarter 3 (2016/17) were placed within 0 to 10 miles of the borough boundary. Very few placements (8.5%) were located more than 50 miles from the borough. These would have been those young people placed for Adoption or on remand.

Placement Distance



2.9 Where children are placed Partnership engagement for CiC is considered to be strong at both strategic and operational levels. The Corporate Parenting Panel receive regular performance reports setting out how progress is being made by Children's Social Care and the wider children's partnership, in improving children's outcomes. The Multi-Agency Officer Group track and drive the implementation of the Continuous Service Improvement Plan which sets out our aspirations for CiC.

3.0 Educational Support for CiC

3.1 The Virtual School recognises the importance of supporting all its LAC, regardless of where they are placed geographically. All children in the care of BMBC are supported to fulfil their educational potential through high quality personal education planning. The termly personal education planning procedures (TPEPs) ensure that the education plans for each child are monitored closely and linked to effective use of any CiC Pupil Premium funding (additional funding granted by the government for publicly funded schools in England to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils of all abilities and to close the gaps between them and their peers).

3.2 There are rigorous quality assurance processes in place to ensure that TPEPs are of a high quality, monitored regularly and match the identified personalised learning needs of each child in care. This procedure is the same for all pupils whether placed in or out of the authority.

3.3 Designated teachers in Barnsley schools receive regular training and professional development through the designated teacher network. As designated teachers outside the authority do not always have access to this training, bespoke training is offered to each school as and when a child is placed in the school. In addition, all schools with children placed by BMBC are offered support from the Virtual School and know that they can call an education review meeting at any time should one be required.

3.4 Where possible, when a child has complex needs, the Virtual Headteacher will meet with the school prior to the child starting to ensure the school has a good level of information about the child's needs and can ensure appropriate support is in place. For children with special education needs and disability (SEND) placed outside the authority, the Virtual School works in partnership with BMBC's SEND Assessment and Review Team to ensure that every child is visited during the course of an academic year and the suitability of the education placement reviewed.

In practice this means the Virtual Headteacher will conduct the visit and share information with the SEND team or the reviewing officer will visit and share information with the Virtual School. In very complex cases joint visits are undertaken. BMBC's Virtual School Education Advocate also attends statutory review meetings as required regardless of where a child is placed.

- 3.5 Through termly data collections, the Virtual School monitors the attendance, exclusions and achievement of all its children. To increase the flexibility and ensure a timely response for children out of area, the council have commissioned Welfare Call, a company specialising in the collection and analysis of data for LAC, to collect daily information on attendance from May 2017.

4.0 Health Support for CiC

- 4.1 When a child in care is placed out of Barnsley, the Social Worker alerts the relevant health service and lead health professionals (Health Visitor, School Nurse, Designated Nurse (within the local Clinical Commissioning Group [CCG] and responsible for strategic decisions) to ensure that counterparts in the receiving area are notified.

- 4.2 The movement of children out of the authority is logged by a Named Nurse (responsible for operational health decisions affecting the child) and is followed up within the space of 2 weeks to ensure the following:-

- that the child is registered with a GP in the receiving area
- that the receiving area is fully aware of the child and their needs, and that the School Nurse/Health Visitor and the Looked After Children Health Team received transfer information to continue care
- that ongoing specialist health needs and care have been transferred to the appropriate service

The Named Nurse also liaises with the child's Social Worker in the receiving area to establish the status of the out of area placement and long-term plans.

- 4.3 Currently the majority of health assessments for CiC placed out of Barnsley are completed by the receiving area (exceptions are when the child attends school in Barnsley and the receiving area feel it is not appropriate for them to complete the assessment, and when an adoption report is also due, in which case a Paediatrician completes a joint assessment with the receiving area). However, due to increasing pressures of the financial climate within the health service, some authorities will no longer complete health assessments for children placed within their area. This has impacted upon the workload for local health services and could prove problematic in the future. All assessments that are completed by the receiving area are quality checked by the Named Nurse and any shortfalls are addressed to ensure that all the child's needs are being met. Additionally, if the child in care is approaching leaving care status the Named Nurse completes a Leaving Care Health Summary and sends this to the young person.

- 4.4 A child placed out of Barnsley remains registered with local services and their electronic health record remains active. The Named Nurse ensures that all new incidents and health needs are dealt with appropriately and a number of professionals share information and concerns to ensure that appropriate support is given to resolve these issues.

5.0 Police Support for CiC

- 5.1 When a looked after child is placed in another area, the police district where the child resides owns the risk relating to that child, unlike Social Care, who maintain responsibility wherever the child may be placed. Therefore, if a child is placed outside of South Yorkshire and goes missing, but is not believed to have run back to Barnsley, South Yorkshire Police (SYP) would potentially have no involvement or even be made aware of the issue.
- 5.2 However, if a child is placed outside of Barnsley, but remains within South Yorkshire, then the area in which the child resides, whether that be Doncaster, Sheffield or Rotherham, own the risk, and would investigate any missing episodes. Therefore as a county wide Police Force, SYP continue to manage the investigation of any missing episodes and play a key role in the safeguarding of CiC.
- 5.3 Should there be clear evidence that the child has run back to Barnsley from wherever they are placed, as is often the case, then a discussion would take place between senior officers in the respective Police District / Force, and if appropriate the management of the missing episode would be passed back to Barnsley at that stage for investigation.

6.0 Future Challenges & Priorities

- 6.1 In house placement capacity for adolescents and children requiring long term placements and high cost commissioned placements have been identified as issues for Barnsley Children's Social Care services. To alleviate this pressure, the recruitment of in-house, Barnsley foster carers is a key priority for the service. The Placement and Sufficiency Strategy sets out ambitious targets for recruiting and retaining more Barnsley foster carers for Barnsley children, in a highly competitive market. Achieving this will simultaneously provide local, family placements for our CiC, whilst reducing the financial pressure of external, commissioned care placements.

7.0 Invited Witnesses

- 7.1 The following witnesses have been invited to today's meeting:

- Rachel Dickinson, Executive Director - People Directorate, BMBC
- Jon Banwel, Head of Service Children In Care, People Directorate, BMBC
- Sharon Galvin, Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children, Barnsley CCG
- Andrea Scholey, Named Nurse CiC, 0-19 Children's Community Nursing Service, Public Health, BMBC
- Liz Gibson, Virtual Headteacher for Looked After Children, People Directorate, BMBC
- Detective Inspector Gary Askew, South Yorkshire Police
- Cllr Margaret Bruff, Cabinet Spokesperson - People (Safeguarding), BMBC

8.0 Possible Areas for Investigation

Members may wish to ask questions around the following areas:

- What strategies are being adopted to target and recruit new foster carers in Barnsley and are we on track to achieve the ambitious targets?

- What happens if a child encounters an issue between meetings/reviews?
- Are placement and care plans up-to-date for all children and how effective are they?
- How much influence do the children have upon the decisions that affect them directly?
- How strong are relationships and information sharing with partners in the private, voluntary and third sector?
- How do we ensure that children in care out of the borough achieve their full potential in terms of education, training and employment?
- To what extent are health services in other areas effective in providing appropriate support and meeting both the mental and physical health needs of Barnsley Children in Care?
- What is in place across South Yorkshire Police to ensure the safeguarding and appropriate management of children in care who they come into contact with?
- What impact does placing a child outside of the local area have on them, can there be both positive and negative aspects and are these taken into account?
- Is there a trend in the complex needs of children in care and would it be more economical to address the issues by commissioning services locally?
- What is being done to ensure that the service continually improves the outcomes for children placed outside the borough?
- What actions could be taken by Members to support Barnsley looked after children placed out of the area?

9.0 Background Papers and Links

- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/959/pdfs/uksi_20100959_en.pdf
- The Care Planning and Fostering (Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) Regulations 2015
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/495/pdfs/uksi_20150495_en.pdf
- BMBC Placement & Sufficiency Strategy for Children in Care 2016/19
<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/media/4475/placement-and-sufficiency-strategy-20162019.pdf>

10.0 Glossary

BMBC –	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
CiC –	Children in Care
CCG –	Clinical Commissioning Group
CSC –	Children’s Social Care
FFA –	Fostering for Adoption
IRO –	Independent Reviewing Officer
LAC –	Looked After Children
SEND –	Special Education Needs & Disability
SYP –	South Yorkshire Police
TPEP –	Termly Personal Education Plan

11.0 Officer Contact

- Anna Morley, Scrutiny Officer (01226 775794)
- Mel John-Ross, Service Director, Children’s Social Care & Safeguarding (01226 773665)

21st April 2017