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children young people families

BARNSLEY CYP TRUST



**PLACEMENT & SUFFICIENCY
STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN IN CARE
2020-2023**

Document revision control

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Document Sponsor: Deborah Mercer, Service Director Children's Social Care (BU3)

Document Owner: Sarah Sinclair, Head of Service Commissioning, Governance & Partnerships (BU1)

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Barnsley's Expectation for Children in Care and Sufficiency

Children in Care are one of the most vulnerable groups in our society. It is the responsibility of the Local authority as corporate parents to support each of them as individuals to enable them to achieve their maximum potential. We take our role as corporate parents very seriously in Barnsley. This is illustrated through Barnsley's Expectations for Children and Young People in Care and our local offer to Care Leavers.

Barnsley Local Authority annually reviews and publishes its 'Expectations for Barnsley's Children and Young People in Care', setting out what young people in care can expect from the Local Authority, how they will be cared for, how they will get a good education, how they will be supported and helped to enjoy life and how they will be enabled to prepare for the future.

The Expectations for Barnsley's Children and Young People in Care are:

- We'll look after you in a safe and caring home
- We'll promote, support and respect your identity
- We'll ensure you receive a good education
- We'll support you to be healthy
- We'll prepare you for the future
- We'll involve you in making it happen

<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/children-families-and-education/children-in-care-and-care-leavers/children-in-care-information-just4u/>.

The TOP 10 MESSAGES to be implemented at the centre of our strategy and practice shared at the Care Experienced Conference 2019 are as follows:

1. We need more love in the care system, including displays of positive physical affection.
2. We want to be seen as individuals worthy of respect much more than we are.
3. Relationships are critically important to us.
4. Instability and loss of continuity in our lives is made worse through no fault of ours by pressure in the care system.
5. Mental health and well-being are our biggest worries and the most important and urgent things that have to improve.
6. The impact of the care experience does not end at 18 or 21, or even 25.
7. Our sense of who we are is important. Our family, heritage and history are uniquely ours and must be protected.
8. Having our say is essential.
9. We have legal rights and entitlements and we are not always being told what they are.
10. Nobody knows more about what it means to be in care than we do.

1. Introduction:

The 2021-2023 strategy has been updated as part of the annual strategy refresh to respond to current and emerging challenges in order to ensure that we can meet the accommodation and support needs of children in care in the most effective way possible.

Placements in Barnsley are well managed and many of Barnsley's performance targets highlighted throughout this document exceed local targets and national averages placing Barnsley in the upper performance quartile in key areas of delivery. This demonstrates Barnsley's ambition for positive outcomes, outstanding services, the commitment of Barnsley's workforce and carers, and our drive for continuous service improvement. Commissioners and Leaders however do continue to face a number of challenges to support the delivery of the promises outlined above.

Challenges:

- To ensure accommodation of sufficient quality and volume which satisfies our ambition to improve outcomes for children in care;
- To ensure maximum value for money in providing accommodation and support amid significant resource pressures and national challenges;
- To ensure the needs of children can continue to be met particularly those children and young people with very complex needs;
- A robust local market position for accommodation and support of children in care that ensures children can be cared for in line with our ambitions and as near to home as possible.

The Children and Young People's Trust is committed to the continued investment in early intervention, prevention and 'edge of care' services; to avoid, wherever possible, unnecessary admission to care and specialist service provision. The priorities identified by all partners are:

- That children and young people are supported to remain with their families and communities wherever possible and enter the care system only when absolutely necessary;
- That children and young people who are admitted to care will receive high quality support to remain in care only for as long as is necessary to ensure successful reintegration to their families and communities and;
- That where children and young people do spend time in care, the experience is a positive one which will help them to realise their potential, achieve successful outcomes, sustain positive health, wellbeing and resilience, throughout their life journey.

Planning for Children in Care (CIC) will continue to be carried out jointly with all relevant partners to ensure we effectively maintain our focus on all aspects of children and young people's lives. We want to improve health and educational attainment outcomes and the numbers of care leavers in education, training and employment. Giving children the best start in life is a fundamental part of keeping them safe and reducing health, social and economic inequalities in later life. Our ambition is that Barnsley Children sustain strong and positive relationships and feel valued by those around them.

A characteristic of the challenge in meeting needs is the complex nature of caring for older children and adolescents. Of the admissions into care in 2020/21, 45 were aged 10 or older (28%, above a 3-year average of 20%). At 31st March 2021 163 of CIC are aged 10 or older (49% of CIC), up from 149 at 31st March 2020 (a 9% increase). An older care cohort often includes some children with more complex needs and therefore requiring more intensive and specialist support.

This Placement and Sufficiency Strategy for Children in Care 2020-2023 identifies how the Children and Young People's Trust will meet these challenges to ensure that children in the care of Barnsley MBC experience the highest possible quality of service provided within the context of achieving maximum value for money.

2. Changes During 2020/21:

Careful analysis of longer-term trends of entry to care and children subject to a child protection plan predicted that our care population would stabilise around a new norm of 300 (achieved but disrupted by the pandemic – post pandemic target 310). One of the objectives of this strategy is to create a system with sufficient resilience to cope with, and mitigate where possible, increases in LAC numbers and to continue to invest in preventing entry into care through developing family support, early intervention and prevention to ensure our care numbers remain stable.

During Q1 of 2020/21 the number of CiC remained consistent, and below our sufficiency target of 300. CIC numbers increased throughout Q2 and Q3, before declining to 333 by then end of Q4. Throughout the year the highest month end number of Children in Care was 352 at January 2021, in comparison the lowest number was 296 at the end of June 2020. Barnsley LA's children in care number is well managed and as a proportion of the population (65.6 per 10,000) compares favourably to statistical neighbour's average rates of 111.4 per 10,000 and is below the national average of 67.0 per 10,000. This is achieved through robust care management and permanency planning for children, exiting them out of the care system where it is appropriate, safe, and demonstrates best outcomes can be achieved.

Barnsley has seen a rise in the number of children that have become looked after, this is consistent with the national picture. This tells us we must continue to work hard as

a children's Partnership to ensure numbers do not increase further. A well-structured approach based on strong performance monitoring and governance is key alongside exception reports mitigating financial impact and performance risk. Low-volume, high-cost specialist and secure welfare placements can impact significantly on financial planning.

The best means of mitigating costs is to ensure we can respond effectively to local demand by improving how we manage placements and the market focusing on the use of inhouse provision. Development and support for carers is a priority in addition to multi-agency partnerships which support complex need. A key purpose of this strategy is that children and young people remain in care only for as long as is necessary to ensure successful reintegration to their families and communities. Children in care numbers have been impacted by delays in care proceedings that have been opened but are yet to conclude.

The pandemic has had, and will continue to have for some time, an impact on children, young people and family outcomes, on schools, settings, care providers and services who have carried out significant work to maintain provision during this difficult period to mitigate risk and impact. Despite extensive support, some families are unable to increase their parenting capacity due to poor mental health, substance misuse, domestic abuse and being overwhelmed, resulting in neglect and a need for care by others, this includes large sibling groups. Multi-agency working in Barnsley is a key strength. Collective action and delivery across our organisations to address the root causes of poor outcomes, keep children and young people safe, maximise recourse, and prevent escalation of need, is now more important than ever and is driven via our daily professional practice and strategy.

Challenges continue with availability of placements for older children and adolescents. This is in the context of the national situation which has seen increasing CIC numbers and high demand on suitable care placements which can lead to high cost residential provisions having to be procured. As numbers in the care system have increased nationally the best means of mitigating costs is to ensure we can respond effectively to local demand.

Barnsley manages complex adolescent risk via strong systems leadership, commissioning, and having the right service provision in place that meets need at every level. Workforce development and multi-agency learning in relation to contextualised safeguarding, and from complex cases is key, alongside understanding placement breakdowns and increased quality assurance of placements against outcomes.

The current profile of placements has also changed from that envisaged in the original strategy. As detailed previously there has been a shift within the cohort towards older CIC this is as a result of children in long-term placements growing older, where an older child comes into care at a late stage, or a long-term placement ends. This places considerable additional pressures on resources and on the placements market,

particularly when trying to secure placements possessing a thorough understanding of adolescent risk. A demand issue which is reflected regionally and indeed nationally.

The situation in Barnsley has been exacerbated by the increase in demand for placements within borough from other local authorities. For a small borough, Barnsley has a disproportionately high number of children in care placed in the borough by other Local Authorities with 252 placed as of 31st March 2021. This has made it more difficult to source independent placements locally and impacts on universal, specialist and targeted service provision within the borough.

Barnsley's performance in relation to in-house foster carers as opposed to the use of Independent Fostering Agencies showed significant improvement in 2021 (an increase from 68% to 71% at yearend), with an in-year month end high of 74%.

Barnsley's excellent performance in terms of adoption and alternative permanence arrangements makes a strong contribution to maintaining the number of children in long-term care at our target of 300. In 2020/21 adoptive placements have been secured for 19% of our children who have left care, this is significantly above the latest national average, of 11% for England in 2019/20. On the 1st January Barnsley, Rotherham, Doncaster and Sheffield joined forces to create the South Yorkshire Regional Adoption Agency (SYRAA). Future performance will be reported through SYRAA mechanisms. A considerable proportion of our children leaving care are placed with their extended family or other connected persons subject to SGO. In 2020/21 21 SGOs were made, 13 fewer than in 2019/20 and 4 fewer than the number of adoption orders made in 2020/21 (25). Supporting extended family members to take on SGO arrangements is often the preferred outcome for children and young people. In total, 75 children left care in 2020/21, subject to Adoption, SGO or CAO (58%)

The ongoing monitoring of demand by the Fostering service indicates that we currently have sufficient carers for short term placements where the long-term plan for the children is often adoption or placements with relatives. The greatest challenge is to recruit foster carers who want to care for children aged 5 and over who need long term placements. Extensive work is being done by the Fostering service to encourage current in-house carers to consider placements for this cohort including offering additional training relating to adolescent behaviours and encouraging new carers to consider long-term placements. All new in-house foster carers are approved without defining by either short or long term.

The Mockingbird Family Model is in its second year of DfE funding. To date there are 2 constellations in Barnsley. The 1st constellation was launched in August 2020 and has 1 Hub Home Carer, 8 satellite families and 13 children. The 2nd constellation launched in February 2021 has 1 Hub home Carer, 8 satellite families and 12 children some of these children have been placed in the family-based constellation from external residential children's homes. Constellation 3 is now being developed.

Throughout 2020/21 the service has managed the level of demand for semi-independent placements below the placement sufficiency target of 5, declining from 5 at the end of April 2020 to 2 at the end of March 2021. Close management and oversight of semi-independent provision has, in 2019/20, contributed to reducing this pressure.

The Yorkshire and Humber Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) Transfer Regional Rota is now in operation. Yorkshire and Humber have seen an increase in spontaneous arrivals of UASC. The area's most acutely affected are local authorities along the East coast where individual and groups of unaccompanied children are arriving at ports. This is leading to a divergence in UASC number across the region.

The rota transfers newly arrived UASC from the 'entry' local authority area which is above its 0.07 threshold to other 'receiving' areas with greater capacity to support UASC. The scheme is based on a simple calculation of the difference between number of UASC already in the area, and the area's 0.07 threshold, and the number of transfers in each 'round' calculated accordingly. Barnsley's distribution by UASC placement capacity is 1 per round.

During 2020/21 the new rota has not increased the numbers of UASC transferred to Barnsley. This strategy however will continue to assume that there will up to 5 young people transferred to Barnsley during 2021/22. Government provides Local authorities looking after UASC with £114 per person per night for each UASC in their care.

3. Summary of Progress:

In our current strategy we identified four key outcomes. Our progress against each of these outcomes is detailed below:

Overarching Performance

- 309 of looked after children were in family placements (93.6%) at the end of 2020/21, increasing from 91.7% in 2019/20 and above Barnsley's 90.7% target.
- Performance for the proportion of looked after children placed within 20 miles of their home address was 91.6% at the end of 2020/21 and above target (84%). Performance is slightly lower than 2019/20 performance (92.1%) but ranks above the 2019/20 statistical neighbour (84.9%) and national (73%) averages.
- End of year data shows that 99.5% of children/young people continue to hold a valid PEP, in line with 2019/20 performance (also 99.5%). TPEP performance increased to 99%, with all but two children having an up to date TPEP. Performance represents an improvement from 2019/20 (95.7%).

- The percentage of looked after children with a Health Needs Assessment in the last year increased to 100% at the end of 2020/21, above the 96% target and above 2019/20 performance (99%).
- 96.9% of looked after children (aged 4-16yrs inclusive) were recorded as having a completed Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire for 2020/21, with performance significantly higher than in 2019/20 (73.9%) and well above both Stat Neighbours and the national average. Based on all local authorities, Barnsley would rank in the top quartile nationally for SDQ performance.
- The percentage of LAC cases reviewed within timescale at the end of 2020/21 was 99.4%. This ranks highest nationally and is above target.
- Performance for LAC visits within timescale was 99.8% for 2020/21 also above 2019/20 performance (98.9%). It should be noted that this is measured using a locally set definition (i.e. six-weekly) to support relationship-based practice and robust corporate parenting.

Reduce the reliance on external foster placements:

The number of children placed with external foster carers increased in Q1 to 82 at the end of June 2020, and decreased steadily during the remainder of 2020/21, to 69 at year end. This is reversing the upward trend seen in 2019/20.

The increased percentage of older children being in Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements corresponds with the overall trend of looked after children becoming older. Of those looked after children with IFA carers 68% are aged 10 or over mostly as a result of being placed long-term as younger children. The Fostering Service is continuing to work on recruiting more in-house carers who can take long-term placements and older children coming into care for the first time

Barnsley continues to work successfully with regional partners through the White Rose Commissioning Consortium to manage, and in some cases reduce, unit costs for the provision of Independent Fostering Agencies placements and have mitigated the impact of inflationary costs through robust contract management procedures.

Continue to increase the number and choice of internal foster placements:

We continue to innovate in our approach to recruiting and retaining local authority foster carers working with an external marketing company to better target and improve campaign reach and as a children's Partnership improve carer support. The number of in-house fostering households has increased from 147 March 2020 to 172. This continued increase demonstrates progress made by the service which prior to 2018 had not exceeded 100 in-house carers for a sustained period. The time taken to carry out foster carer assessments continues to be better than the national average.

Our in-house Fostering service has seen a net increase of 12 placements across 2020/21. Throughout the year, the service has approved a total of 26 new carer households including Connected Persons which equates to 15 general household approvals and 11 Connected Person carer approvals. The service has received 18 resignations mainly 'Connected Persons' who resigned when an SGO was granted.

Maintain placement stability for children in care:

Placement stability has been a focus for the service throughout 2019/20 and 2020/21, and as a result, has had significant high-level governance and oversight. This is not because there has been a sudden increase in placements ending prematurely but rather that a recent decline in the percentage of children in 'stable' placements as defined by MI29 had been identified. In March 2019 64% of placements included in the MI29 cohort were considered 'stable', this declined to 54% by August 2020. The second half of 2020/21 has seen substantial improvements, reaching 67% at the end of March 2021. The cohort linked to this indicator has increased in size significantly over the last three years, from 81 children at March 2018 to 113 children in March 2021. This has exceeded local and regional targets.

The focus for 2021 will continue to be on care planning for all children and young people coming into care to ensure their long-term placement is adoption, SGO or long-term fostering and this is confirmed within the first 6 months of entering care. This will ensure that fewer children will enter MI29 initially as 'unstable' after two and a half years in care and fewer will join it later as long-term placements which have ended.

Placement stability under MI28 remains an area of strength in comparison to other authorities. In Barnsley young people who have had 3 or more placements is 4.5% as at the end of March 2021. This compares positively with both statistical neighbours and national benchmarks, from latest available data, at 9.0% and 11.0% respectively. This is also an improvement on our position in 2019/20 (7.0%). Barnsley would rank in the top quartile nationally for MI_28 performance.

Continue to support the use of SGOs / CAOs as an alternative to care:

There is evidence of good use of SGOs and CAOs with financial support where required. CAO and SGO numbers have continued to be above our 2014 baseline figures, they have also exceeded the KPI target set in the last strategy refresh. A total of 34 additional SGO placements were made during 2019/20. This takes the total number for SGO/CAOs with allowances at end of March 2020 to 439, 7 above our target.

Whilst the payment allowances are much less than the costs of keeping a child in public care, they have exceeded the planned budget and ongoing consideration continues to be given to this area of spend via the Placement Sufficiency Board.

Barnsley have excellent levels of performance in the numbers of children adopted. During 2020/21 we have placed 32 children in adoptive placements and 25 children have been adopted. The percentage of children leaving care to adoption is 19% for 20/21, above the latest national benchmark of 11% in 2019/20. Based on all local authorities, Barnsley would rank second nationally based on latest published data.

Increase independent living provision for care leavers:

Securing staying put agreements for our Care Leavers has been a key priority for our Future Directions team. At March 2021 15 young people were in Staying Put arrangements and this is an increase from 11 at March 2019. The Staying Put Agreement has been updated and measures have been put in place to promote closer working between partners at an earlier stage to secure more future arrangements. Where staying put arrangements are not possible, we continue to explore other options with partners and have developed positive relationships with a small number of trusted providers of semi-independent accommodation.

4. PRINCIPLES & AIMS.

Barnsley Council should be able to demonstrate that it has done all that is reasonably practicable to secure sufficiency for children in care. Barnsley, therefore, has a duty to provide a range of high-quality local placements which meet needs.

The underpinning principle of the Barnsley approach is to ensure that the **right** children are admitted to care, at the **right** time in order to secure the **best possible outcomes for children**.

- We share the same aspirations for Children in Care as any other good parent.
- We will listen to and consider the views of children and young people and ensure that their needs are at the centre of our planning and practice.
- Early Help provision, Child in Need services and Child Protection Plans will be the first consideration in meeting assessed needs and will be promoted to facilitate children remaining within their immediate family network where this is safe.
- Early intervention and family support play an important role in de-escalating family problems, keeping children out of care and we will continue to invest in these services accordingly.
- An underpinning principle of family support is to use strengths-based and restorative approaches that seek to build positive, pro-social relationships in order to develop resilience in families.

- Where children cannot be supported within their immediate family, kinship care arrangements will be explored as a preferred alternative arrangement (see Family & Friends Policy).
- Foster care arrangements will be put in place as a first option where family and kinship care arrangements are not possible, and this is assessed as being the best option for the child.
- Residential care will only be put in place where family and kinship care arrangements are not possible, where foster care arrangements are not able to meet needs and only when residential care is assessed as being the most suitable option for the child.
- We believe in Barnsley carers for Barnsley children and wherever possible, children will be placed in, or very near to, Barnsley to facilitate the ongoing support of family / kinship networks and local services. We believe that placing with Barnsley carers makes best use of our community assets and produces better outcomes.
- Meaningful support will be provided to facilitate the rehabilitation to family and extended family networks from being in care when this is in the best interest of the child.
- Services to promote permanency for children and young people within their families or alternative substitute care will be promoted at the earliest opportunity (see Permanency Guidance).
- We will identify and implement the commissioning actions necessary to ensure that BMBC and children's trust partners can satisfy the duty to provide sufficient accommodation and support to meet the needs of children in the care.
- We will identify the actions necessary to fulfil this ambition in the context of mounting pressures on the resources available across the Children and Young People's Trust (CYPT) and to ensure that resources are allocated in a way that achieves optimum value for money.

5. COSTS & COMPARISONS:

Current Children in Care costs vs existing strategy / plan

The scope of the placement & sufficiency strategy covers the following

- External residential and foster care placements;
- In-house foster carers;
- Placements within BMBC owned children's home; and
- Other placements such as SGOs, CAOs and adoptions.
- Accommodation for Care Leavers

The following table compares actual cost / performance against the revised plan for 2020/21.

	Plan	Outturn	Plan	Outturn
	2020/21	2020/21	2020/21	2020/21
CIC Population as at 31 March	301	333	No. of	No. of
Actual Costs:	£M	£M	Placements	Placements
Fostering	6.466	6.483	231	241
Residential	4.592	4.634	27	21
Others – SGO, CAO, Adoptions	4.795	5.078	571	581
Health, DSG and Education Contributions	-0.631	-0.631		
Other income / grant funding	-0.233	-0.244		
Total Care Costs	14.989	15.320		
Total Care Budget	13.778	13.781		
Variance	1.211	1.539		

Actual net spend on CIC placements is £15.320m for 2020/21, against which a financial pressure (i.e. overspend) of £1.539m has been reported for the year.

Barnsley's overall CIC population at the end of the year was 333 but peaked at 352 in January. This is considerably higher than the increase of 10 that was anticipated in last years strategy refresh. It should be noted that Barnsley's CIC numbers (65.6 per 10k population aged <18) still compares favorably to its statistical neighbours (111.4) and national average (67).

This financial variance to plan is attributable to the following main factors; Firstly, an increase in the number of children placed within fostering placements, 10 placements above projected values in the strategy refresh completed in May 2020 but peaking at 26 above in October. Due to the improved ratio between external and in-house placements, from 1.86:1 in 2019/20 to 2.45:1 in 2020/21, the costs are only £0.017M more than the plan.

Although the number in all residential placements (including secure welfare) as 21 at year end, it peaked at 27 in May and June 2020. This resulted in an overspend compared to plan of £0.042M.

Increasing use of alternatives to public care and less expensive care options such as SGOs and CAOs shows that at 31st March 2021 there were 10 more allowances being paid than planned and peaked at 23 higher than predicted in January 2021. This has resulted in the cost in this area being £0.168M more than the plan. The purchase of more inter-agency adoption placements than planned has resulted in the additional amount of £0.115M.

Unit Cost & Value for Money

The following table compares Barnsley's children looked after unit cost per child per week against the LA group average.

Unit costs £ per child per week (Gross costs)

(source: CIPFA children looked after benchmarking data)

	2019 costs		2020 costs	
	Barnsley	LA Average	Barnsley	LA Average
LA own children's homes	£2,301	£3,373	£2,393	£3,571
External residential	£3,854	£4,201	£4,112	£4,086
LA foster care	£464	£476	£507	£485
External foster care	£861	£937	£860	£996
PAF B8 – overall unit cost	£796	£1,022	£857	£1,012

- Whilst the average gross cost of CIC per week has risen during 2020/21 by 7.7% to £857, this compares favourably to the Local Authority average, which is £1,012 per week, £155 higher. This suggests our commissioning arrangements have mitigated some of the impact of the competitive children's placement market.
- When expressed as spend per head of population (aged 0 – 17) basis, Barnsley's CIC unit cost / spend (£216) is comparably lower than the Local Authority group average (£270). This margin has increased from 17% in 2019, up to 25% in 2020.
- The following table outlines the composition of placements, in percentage terms, of those in either fostering or residential care. This data excludes children and young people who have been placed for adoption or placed with parents / family carers and for whom therefore a foster placement is unnecessary:

Composition of placements (%) – children looked after

(CIPFA children looked after benchmarking)

	2019		2020	
	Barnsley	LA Average	Barnsley	LA Average
LA own children's homes	2%	2%	2%	2%
External residential	6%	10%	5%	8%
LA foster care	68%	58%	67%	58%
External foster care	24%	30%	25%	31%

- Barnsley's data on placements compares favourably with the Local Authority group averages, particularly in external foster care where the proportion of

placements has only slightly increase from 24% to 25% (and is below the Local Authority group average of 31%).

- Barnsley's performance in relation to external residential showed a slight improvement in 2020 (from 6% to 5%). This remains lower than the LA group average of 8%.

Assessing future demand

This strategy assumes that the care population in Barnsley will reduce to 310 by 2022/23 when the impact of the pandemic begins to reduce. A well-structured approach based on strong performance monitoring and governance will be required.

As numbers in the care system have increases nationally, the best and most plausible means of mitigating costs is to ensure we can respond effectively to local demand by improving how we manage placements to achieve a significant increase in local foster carer capacity and the judicious use of local, independent foster care arrangements. We shall use our investment in our in-house carers to produce the placements needed in the right categories. The proposal for an additional local residential 5 bed provision was agreed early this year to increase our placement options locally reducing our placement sufficiency target of 15 out of area placements to 10.

Projected CIC cost 2021 - 2023

The following table shows projected placements numbers as well as the financial costs for the period 2021/22 to 2022/23:

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
	Actual	Plan	Plan
Fostering – in-house	172	176	176
Fostering – External agencies	69	60	54
Residential - external children homes	15	9	9
Residential – Family Assessment	0	1	1
Residential - Secure Welfare	0	1	1
Residential – Semi-independent	2	5	7
Residential - BMBC owned homes	4	10	10
Other placements*	71	53	52
Assumed CIC Population	333	315	310
SGO's; CAO; Stay-put	453	480	507

* includes Shared Lives, adoptions; kinship placements; etc.

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
	Outturn*	Plan	Plan
Projected Costs:	£M	£M	£M
Fostering	6.483	6.302	6.012
Residential	4.634	4.171	4.009
Others – SGO, CAO, Stay-put, Adoption	4.597	4.879	5.371
Health & DSG Contributions	-0.631	-0.350	-0.350
Other Income / funding	-0.147	-0.110	-0.110
Total Care Costs	14.936	14.892	14.932
Total Care Budget	13.442	14.892	14.887
Variance	1.494	0	0.045
Additional Funding Requirement	1.494	0	0.045

*Revised without Adoption inter-agency budget

The following are the key assumptions underpinning 2021/22 to 2022/23 spend projections:

1. The outturn position for 2020/21 has been revised after removing the Adoption inter-agency budget of £339K. This is due to the Regional Adoption Agency launching on 1st January 2021 making that budget now under their control.
2. The budget for 2021/22 has been increased by £1.5M as part of the Council's budget setting process.
3. The budget for 2022/23 includes the reduction of £0.200M for the efficiency saving from the opening of a new residential home in 2021/22.
4. The forecast placement costs in 2021/22 have been updated to reflect the full year impact of placements from 2020/21 (and cost pressures) as well as expected demographic / inflationary growth for the year.
5. The above plan / modelling assumes CIC numbers will be managed over the medium term down from 333 at the end of March 2021 to 315 by the end of March 2022 and to 310 by the end of March 2023. It is envisaged that the effective implementation of the proposed actions (included on pages 18,19 and 20) would ensure CIC numbers are managed down to the assumed range. However, exception reporting in relation to risk and mitigating action against these targets will be a key focus of the Placement Sufficiency Strategy Board.
6. The projections assumed that the number of fostering and residential care placements will remain at 83% of the total CIC population over the medium term.

7. The revised strategy from 21/22 reflects a decrease in external residential care numbers to 10 (from 15) including a secure welfare / accommodation placement per annum at a unit cost of £6,500 per week. The reduction is due to the assumption that during 2021/22 5 children will move from external residential placements to a new in-house residential home.
8. In addition to above, the strategy includes increases to other placements such as SGOs, Adoption Allowances, etc.
9. Current weekly unit cost of residential and foster care placements has been used in calculating future years cost projections, and with a 2.5% uplift.
10. Funding contributions (e.g. health funding) and income related to CIC placements have been adjusted accordingly based on latest information.

Based on the above assumptions, the CIC cost model shows a balanced budget in 2021/22 and an additional funding requirement of £0.045M for 2022/23.

Expenditure on children in care and those who have achieved permanence outside of the care system needs to be considered in total. Barnsley has kept the number of children in the care system at relatively low levels for a number of years. This is partly as a result of having achieved permanence by utilising the strengths of wider family networks through SGOs and CAOs and through adoption. This however also comes at a cost with long term CAO and SGO allowance commitments aligned to fostering payments.

Sensitivity Analysis

The above plan is based on certain assumptions. The table below shows how a variance to the plan can impact on the forecast:

3% increase in the forecast Children in Care number (+9)	2021/22	2022/23
Revised LAC number	324	319
Projected Costs:	£M	£M
Funding Requirement (As shown above)	14.892	14.932
Additional Funding Requirement	0.103	0.106
Total Cost	14.995	15.038

5% increase in the forecast Children in Care number (+16)	2021/22	2022/23
Revised LAC number	331	326
Projected Costs:	£M	£M
Funding Requirement (As shown above)	14.892	14.932
Additional Funding Requirement	0.255	0.262
Total Cost	15.147	15.194

The tables above show that an additional 9 children in care above plan from mid 2021/22 to mid 2022/23 would result an increase to the projected cost of £0.103m in 2021/22 and £0.106m in 2022/23. With an additional 16 children the projected costs would be £0.255m in 2020/21 and £0.262m in 2021/22.

2-month delay in opening the new residential home	2021/22	2022/23
Projected Costs:	£M	£M
Funding Requirement (As shown above)	14.892	14.932
Additional Funding Requirement	0.147	0
Total Cost	15.039	14.887

The table above shows that 2-month delay in the opening on the new residential home would give a projected cost of £0.147M in 2021/22 and no change in 2022/23.

OUTCOMES

Meeting the needs of children in care in the current climate will present some very significant challenges to the Council. In response to this, there is a clear need to improve performance in the following ways:

- Develop the local market to ensure the availability of family placements, including for children and young people with complex needs;
- Reverse the recent trend for the increased reliance on external fostering provision;
- Continue to increase the number and choice of internal foster placements across all age groups;
- Increase the in-house residential capacity to mitigate impact of the challenging external residential market retain our children within our and their communities;
- Development of a new 5 bedded residential home;
- Maintain placement stability and continue to support the use of SGOs / CAOs as an alternative to care;
- Increase independent living provision for care leavers through new approaches and partnerships.

KEY ACTIONS ARISING FROM STRATEGY

1. Prevent entry into care where appropriate by continuing to develop family support and early intervention and prevention services.

2. Ensure wherever possible Barnsley children are placed with a Barnsley family;
 - a. Increase the numbers of children placed with BMBC foster carers;
 - b. We will continue to develop the local IFA market through engaging with providers to encourage Barnsley based families to care for Barnsley children.

3. Continue to Improve and develop the recruitment and retention of BMBC foster carers to ensure more Barnsley children can be placed and remain with Barnsley carers;
 - a. Promote support and develop the BMBC Fostering Approval process so carers can care for all age groups and on both short- and long-term basis.

4. Continue the Implementation of the Mockingbird project; Foster carer hub model;
 - a. Implementation of 3rd and 4th satellite cohorts to continue to offer a high level of support to the constellation carers and a high level of training to enable carers to manage some of the most complex children over time and in the long term.
 - b. Integrate the Mockingbird project within the In-House Fostering service.

5. Implement the Cabinet approved business case to develop a further 5 bedded BMBC children's residential home
 - a. Confirm property Ofsted registration and recruitment of staff.

6. Increase the range of 16+ independent living provision to support transition to adulthood for those in long term care;
 - a. Develop a joint initiative approach between adult and children's social care to incorporate a shared lives scheme for some children in care aged between 16 and 18;
 - b. Develop the mechanisms for quality assurance and future demand for 16+ provision; Berneslai Homes.
 - c. Develop and procure a 16+/semi-independent framework of local providers.

7. Continue to support the development and implementation of the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA);
 - a. Implementation and review of the 1st years operation of One Adoption South;
 - b. Build on the promotion of closer co-operation between the 4 local authority Adoption Agencies in South Yorkshire and the 2 other existing Regional Adoption Agencies in the Yorkshire and Humber area;

- c. Support the RAA in its aim to lead the recruitment of adopters and support in the placement of children for adoption;
 - d. Impact of RAA on placement sufficiency anticipated 2022/23.
8. Work effectively with Partners across the Children and Young People's Trust to meet a wide variety of additional needs including mental health and support to Carers;
- a. Continue to make joint funding requests for packages through the appropriate channels; CRAG/CCC Panel;
 - b. Align annual assessment processes across education, health and care to address resourcing pressures caused by changes to funding or support in relation to re-assessment of need.
 - c. Maintain close working relationship with CAMHS to ensure CIC pathway is effective and supporting our CIC population.
 - d. Publish a revised LAC/CAMHS Pathway agreed via Council and CCG governance routes.
9. Continue to support and develop regional approaches through active membership of the White Rose Commissioning Consortium and alternative mechanisms;
- a. Build on the proposed provider engagement programme to develop positive working relationships with Private Providers.
 - a. Utilise Private Provider forum to generate Best Practice discussions and opportunities for increased understanding around Quality Assurance.

The table below quantifies targets to enable us to deliver our aspiration to further shift the balance away from those placed in external residential or independent fostering placements and into placements with in-house fostering families.

NB The cohort is all children in care who require a care placement, excluding children placed with adoptive parents but where an adoption order is still awaited

Outcome	Impact Measurement	Actual 20/21 Baseline	Target 20/21	Target 21/22	Target 22/23
1. Improve permanency planning / make good use of alternatives to care	Children placed for adoption	32	40	40	40
	Children placed with alternative orders (cost-bearing) - SGOs / CAOs	439	432	461	483

	Care leavers in 'staying put' and "staying close" and 'shared lives' arrangements	15	23	19	24
2. Reduce reliance on Independent Fostering Agencies	Number of children placed in IFAs	69	71	60	54
	Number of children placed in internal fostering	172	160	176	176
3. Increase availability of suitable BMBC foster placements	Net increase in numbers of foster carer households (newly recruited less numbers leaving in period)	7	15	20	20
	Net increase in numbers of available internal foster care placements	12	15	20	20
4. Maintain low numbers of young people in residential care settings	Number of young people in independent residential	15	14	9	9
	Number of young people in BMBC residential	4	5	10	10
	Number of young people in secure welfare placements	0	1	1	1
	Number of young people in semi-supported accommodation	2	5	5	7