

Cabinet

Wednesday, 5 December 2018

Additional Information

Agenda Item No. 8

References from Other Council Bodies -
Corporate Parenting Advisory Board and
Health and Wellbeing Board

Appendices 1 to 7

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Appendix 1

Swindon Borough Council's 'making the Looked After Children and Care Leaver Strategy a Reality' 2018-2020

Corporate Parenting Advisory Board Date: 24th September 2018

Author:	Trevor Moores, Interim Head of Looked After Children and Care Leavers' Service
Wards:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 To seek the Corporate Parenting Board's approval for this Implementation report for the draft Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy report which was presented to the previous Board on 3rd July.
- 1.2 The draft Looked After Children and Care Leaver's strategy presented to the previous committee was a priority outcome of Swindon's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy which prioritised that all children and young people in Swindon deserve the best start in life. The Strategy also links to the Council Plan 2016-2020 which sets out vision for Swindon. Priority 4 of the plan outlines the Council's commitment to ensure that every child is given the support they need to grow and thrive. We want them to enjoy life, establish healthy relationships, achieve, stay safe from harm, be healthy and grow up to reach their full potential making a positive contribution to society. The quality and responsiveness of children's social care can transform the life chances of the most vulnerable children in Swindon. It can offer every child who has had a difficult start the promise of a brighter future, with every prospect of success.
- 1.3 The Board accepted the Strategy as a draft but required that children in care and young people should be consulted on the strategy and that a robust action plan to demonstrate how objectives and aspirations were to become real services with measurable outcomes. The revised report should then be presented to the Board at the next meeting.
- 1.4 An anonymous online survey has been conducted with children in care and the Care leavers group was consulted on the guiding principles of the draft strategy. The responses to the questionnaire which was completed by 28 children and young people and are being analysed. However, initial results are reported in the report presented today as are the connections to the changes we have made to the operational plan. The survey reported high levels of satisfaction with their placements and carers, emphasised the importance they give to education and employment as their way forward in life and how relationship with their families were so important to them.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Phillipa Lamb, 07818510484, plamb@swindon.gov.uk

Swindon Borough Council's 'making the Looked After Children and Care Leaver Strategy a Reality' 2018-2020

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1.5 The department has implemented a Director-led Service Improvement Plan based on six pillars of improvement for a whole service improvement. The pillars focus on the workforce, ICT improvements, developing Partnerships, improving the Quality of Social Work practice, Early Help and troubled families and Children Looked After and Care Leavers. Each pillar has a detailed action plan for senior managers to lead and which will be overseen by the executive group led by the director. Rather than manage several different improvement plans such as fostering, care leavers, education and health, the strategy is to incorporate them into one improvement plan which is mostly encapsulated in Pillar 6. This improvement plan therefore becomes the vehicle for translating the aims and objectives of the draft strategy into operational reality. The plan is iterative and developing as actions are completed and redefined. The plan will be reviewed and monitored by the executive group and progress examined by the Corporate Parenting Board as such intervals as the Board decides.

1.6 Children growing up in care and care leavers must have equal life chances to all children growing up in Swindon as set out in Swindon's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2017-2022) and the Council Plan (2016-2020). This operational report aimed at making the strategy a reality converts our aims and objectives into actions to improve outcomes for our looked after children and care leavers over the next 2 years.

2. Recommendations

The board is recommended to:-

2.1 Approve the Swindon Borough Council's draft Looked After Children and Care Leavers' report and this Operational Plan 'Making Looked After Children's and Care Leavers Strategy a Reality' 2018-2020 as final reports.

2.2 Recommend to cabinet that it adopts the Swindon Borough Council's draft Looked After Children and Care Leavers' report and this Operational Plan 'Making Looked After Children's and Care Leavers Strategy a Reality' 2018-2020.

3. Detail

3.1 When a child comes into care, Swindon Borough Council becomes the Corporate Parent. This means the council, elected members, employees and partner agencies all have collective responsibility to safeguard and provide the best care for the children who are looked after or have left care. Every member and employee of the Council has statutory responsibility to act for that child or young

Swindon Borough Council's 'making the Looked After Children and Care Leaver Strategy a Reality' 2018-2020

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person in the same way that any good parent would act for their own child informed

- 3.2 The statutory responsibilities of councils are set out in the Children Act 1989, including amendments made by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and the Children and Families Act 2014. The Children and Social Care Work Act 2017 made additional provisions for care leavers, and outlined in law for the first time what it means for a local authority to be a good corporate parent. Section 27 of the Children's Act 1989 also places a duty on health, housing and education authorities to assist Children's Services in carrying out functions under the Act. This includes assisting in the Corporate Parenting function and providing joined up services that best meet the needs of children and young people.
- 3.3 The next steps are for the operational groups such as the CSMT, Fostering Improvement group and the Care Leavers' partnership to drive their component parts of the action plan to full implementation ensuring outcome are achieved within timescales. Senior managers will oversee progress, the achievement milestones and timescales for delivery.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 There are no suggested alternative options. The draft Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy and this operational Making the Looked after and Care Leavers' Strategy a Reality' reports are the main drivers to improving the life chances of our children and young people in care and care leavers.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The Council already provides resources to fund looked after children and care leavers. No further financial resources are being sought at this time.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 Legal and Human Rights considerations have been taken fully into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the recommendations of this report are compatible with Convention Rights

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 None have been identified at this stage

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Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.4 The Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy will positively impact on vulnerable children and young people living in Swindon's community.

Risk Management

- 5.5 No specific risks have been identified at this stage for this report

6. Consultees

- 6.1 Corporate Director of Children's Services (DCS), Interim Head of Children's Social Care, Interim Head of Looked After Children and Care Leavers, Head of Transitions, Head of Finance (Children's), Members of Care Leavers Partnership and Delivery Group, Children's Management Team, Children's Strategic Leadership Team
- 6.2 The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and the Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Swindon Borough Council's 'Making the Looked After and Care Leavers Strategy a Reality' 2018-2020
- 8.2 Appendix 2 - Swindon Borough Council Children Looked After and Care Leavers Draft Strategy 2018-2020



Swindon Borough Council

Looked After Children and Care Leaver's Strategy 2018-2020

Our vision is to ensure that every child is given the support they need to grow and thrive (Swindon's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-2022).

June 2018

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1. Introduction

Swindon is a vibrant, diverse and growing town where we believe everyone should have the opportunity to live a long, healthy, safe, fulfilling and independent life supported by thriving and connected communities. Swindon's Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2017-2022) outlines our ambition for improving health and addressing health inequalities across the borough. The strategy drives and influences the delivery of health and social care. One of the key outcomes is that every child and young person in Swindon has a healthy start in life. All children and young people in Swindon deserve the best start in life and we want them to enjoy life, establish healthy relationships, achieve, stay safe from harm, be healthy and grow up to reach their full potential making a positive contribution to society.

Our Council Plan 2016-2020 sets out vision for Swindon and the priorities we are trying to achieve for our residents and the borough of Swindon. Priority 4 outlines the Council's commitment to ensure that every child is given the support they need to grow and thrive. The quality and responsiveness of children's social care can transform the life chances of the most vulnerable children in Swindon. It can offer every child who has had a difficult start the promise of a brighter future, with every prospect of success. The Council has made specific pledges around increasing the percentage of care leavers going into employment, education and training, and increasing the percentage of looked after children who are placed inside the Borough boundaries or within 20 miles of their home address

Our aim is to improve the life chances of our children and young people in care and care leavers by:

- Intervening early to give them the best start in life and promote wellbeing
- Ensuring children and young people are protected from harm
- Ensuring that they have access to an excellent education and achieve their potential

Children growing up in care and care leavers must have equal life chances to all children growing up in Swindon as set out in Swindon's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2017-2022) and the Council Plan (2017-2022).

2. The Corporate Parent

When a child comes into care, Swindon Borough Council becomes the Corporate Parent. This means the council, elected members, employees and partner agencies all have collective responsibility to safeguard and provide the best care for the children who are looked after or have left care. Every member and employee of the Council has statutory responsibility to act for that child or young person in the same way that any good parent would act for their own child.

The statutory responsibilities of councils are set out in the Children Act 1989, including amendments made by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and the Children and Families Act 2014. The Children and Social Care Work Act 2017 made additional provisions for care leavers, and outlined in law for the first time what it means for a local authority to be a good corporate parent. Section 27 of the Children's Act 1989 also places a duty on health, housing and education authorities to assist Children's Services in carrying out functions under the Act. This includes assisting in the Corporate Parenting function and providing joined up services that best meet the needs of children and young people.

This strategy is linked and informed by the following documents:

- The Looked After Children and Care Leavers Placement Sufficiency Strategy (in development)
- The Corporate Parenting Pledge to Children and Young People in Care
- SBC's Children's Service Strategic Business Plan(DH)
- SBC's Children's Services Plan (JR)
- CLA Health Improvement Plan
- Virtual School Improvement Plan
- A plan to increase the number of young people aged 16-18 (25 for Learners with an Education Health and Care Plan, Care Leavers) participating in learning, and completing learning to move into employment (2018 – 2020)
- Swindon & Wilshire (LEP) Apprenticeship Growth Strategy 2017-2020

3. Strategic Drivers

The key drivers informing the priorities of Swindon's Children Looked After and Care Leaver's strategy include:

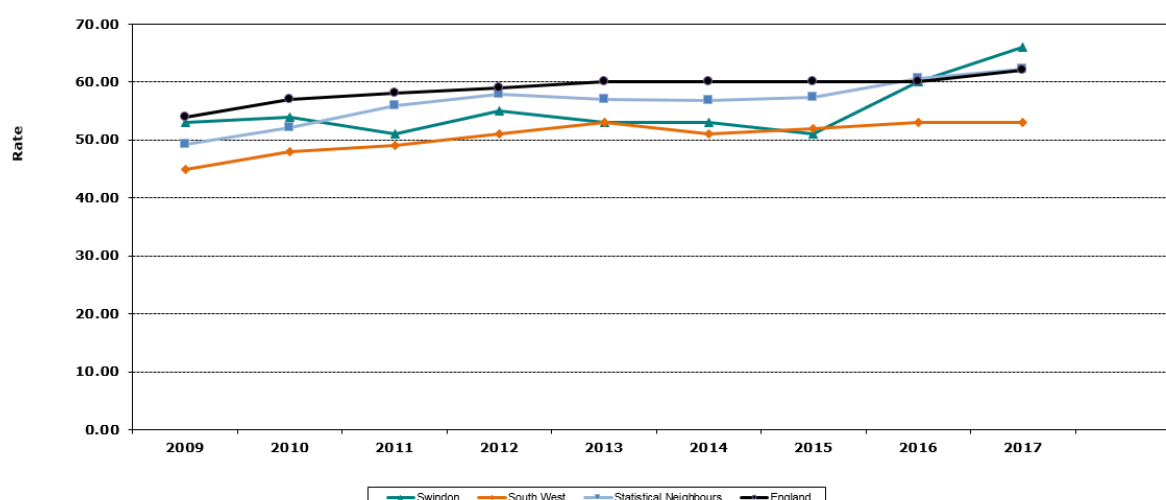
- Ensuring children looked after and care leavers are aspirant to achieve their full potential and that their outcomes are as good as those of their peers in all aspects of their lives so that they achieve a successful transition to independence as young adults
- Ensuring the voice of children looked after and care leavers is integral to service design and delivery
- Having a shared vision and agreed priority objectives for those working with children looked after and care leavers including partners in health, education and housing services.
- Ensuring services for children looked after and care leavers provide best value in terms of cost, are evidence based and demonstrate a positive and tangible impact on their lives
- Deliver the Children and Young People Looked After Pledge and the Care Leavers Promise

Our looked after children and care leavers play a key role in helping to shape and influence the services that they receive and their views are reflected in our Strategy. Central to this Strategy, and to Swindon Borough Council and our partners' work, is our pledge to children and young people looked after and the care leaver's offer in Swindon. We would like thank the young people in the Children in Care Council for their contribution to this. We will deliver on our pledges to Children and Young People Looked After and Care Leavers as set out in appendix 1.

4. The Needs of Swindon Looked After Children

In Swindon, there were 359 children looked after at the end of March 2018 (an increase from 292 at the end March 2016). The rate of children looked after per 10,000 is 73.27 which is above both the national average (62) and the average for our statistical neighbours (62.2). As at March 2018, Swindon had accommodated 25 unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.

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



We recognise we need to do more to improve outcomes for looked after children and care leavers in Swindon. The council is committed that by 2022 our performance will be in line with or better than the national average across the outcomes measures for looked after children and care leavers.

The council recognises the importance of looked after children being placed in a family environment. 69.1% of children live in foster care; 36.5% with Independent Fostering Agencies and 32.6% with In-house foster carers. Of the remaining 30.9%, 16% live in families with connected persons i.e. relatives or family friends; and only 9% live in residential care or supported living. Swindon has no in-house residential capacity and faces a national shortage of residential placements which impacts on all local authorities. The department is embarking on a recruitment drive to expand its number of In house foster carers. This is part of our emerging Sufficiency Strategy to improve placement choice.

We aim to offer ever increasing stability as the foundation for future life chances. Latest data shows too many of Swindon's looked after children are experiencing placement breakdowns. During 2017/18, 11.7% of children looked after had 3 or more placements (national average 10% and statistical average 10.5%) and 51.85% experienced long term stability placements (national average 68% and statistical average 67.8%). We recognise placement stability impacts on all areas of a young person's life including educational achievement. We need to ensure we are better at meeting their psychological and emotional needs. We recognise we are also placing too many children and young people 20 miles or more away from home. As at March 2018, 23.12% of children were placed 20 or more miles away compared to the national average of 13% and statistical neighbour average of 11.9%. This has implications for the child and family in terms of maintaining contact and for social work practice and oversight. It also means that in our role as a Corporate Parent, we have less control over the support offered to our children and young people including education and Children and Adolescent Mental Health services (CAMHS) provision.

Due to the significant increase in Children Looked After (2016-18) and insufficient local placements, some of our long term looked after children have experienced limited social work contact. Their care and pathway plan reviews have not always been timely, and work is underway to make plans more specific to include clear targets and timescales with greater input from the young people themselves. As at March 2018, 56.26% of children looked after had an up to date assessment, and 89.4% of looked after children reviews were completed on time.

The quality of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) is also being addressed to ensure they drive good outcomes. Case file recording has been of variable quality but management oversight is supporting improvements so the rationale for decision making and the child's journey is more easily understood. Currently

The recent rise in the number of our children coming into care is in line with national trends, further exacerbated by a legacy of a lack of timely interventions. In addition, Swindon currently lacks an 'alternative offer' to support children and families at times of crisis and this has led to more children coming into care. In conjunction with this, the recruitment and retention of in-house foster carers has been insufficient to meet demand and we have had an over-reliance on Independent Fostering Agencies and private providers of children's residential care homes which has resulted in too many young people being placed some distance away.

We know we need to do better to prepare our children in care and care leavers to live independent and fulfilling lives. As at March 2018, 18.52% of pathway plans were in place for 16-18 year olds. We are focussing our efforts on ensuring all our young people have a pathway plan in place by their 16 birthday. Personal advisers (PA) and social workers will keep in touch with young people to monitor their pathway plan, as well as flag any potential risks so they can be addressed.

We will ensure care leavers receive financial support for education, training and employment as well as help with accommodation, food and clothing. Compared to family authorities, we have fewer young people remaining looked after until their 18th birthday or taking up the 'Staying Put' offer' which enables looked after children to continue to live with their foster carer after their 18th birthday. We will encourage more the young person and carer to take up the staying put arrangement where appropriate.

5. Our Strategic Priorities and actions to be taken

This strategy has been informed by national and local policy, views of stakeholders and professionals, and good practice. The strategy proposes the following strategic priorities for 2018-2021 for children looked after and care leavers. They are informed by the service improvements we intend to make over the next 3 years to improve outcomes for Children Looked After and Care Leavers. These priorities will have a positive impact on children during their childhood and improve their ability to lead successful and happy lives as adults:

Priority 1- Ensure looked after children and care leavers have suitable and stable placements and accommodation so they are able to make and sustain safe, nurturing and enduring relationships

Priority 2 –To improve the emotional wellbeing and physical health of looked after children and care leavers

Priority 3 – To improve educational progress and attainment and narrow the gap between the attainments of looked after children and their peers.

Priority 4 – To improve support and opportunities for care leavers to increase the number and proportion who are in meaningful Education, Employment or Training (EET)

Priority 5 – To listen to looked after children and care leavers to ensure that their voices influence their own care and pathway plans as well as wider service delivery and development.

The Priority Actions for 2018/19 to 2019/20

These priorities will form the basis of our action plan for implementing the strategy. An action plan will be developed and published within 6 months detailing the actions, responsible officers for each action, milestones and timeframe for delivery. The headline actions are set out below.

In order to achieve all these outcomes we will ensure all looked after children up to the age of 18 have an allocated qualified social worker and that all young people over 18 will have an allocated personal advisor (PA). All staff will be supervised and all care and pathway plans reviewed at a multi-agency review meeting by an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) who will be a qualified social worker.

Priority 1- Ensure looked after children and care leavers have suitable and stable placements and accommodation so they are able to make and sustain safe, nurturing and enduring relationships

All evidence shared by the DFE indicates the best outcomes are achieved by children and young people who are helped to remain in a stable and consistent placement that provides them with the opportunity to have long standing relationship with adults and peers. We will always aim to place children in family based settings so we need a pool of foster carers able to provide a wide range of placement types, from emergency / short-term care through to long-term placements of a number of years.

Numbers and % of LAC by Placement Type

	Swindon	Stats Neighbour 2017	England 2017
Fostering	79.8%	70.3%	73.5%
Placed for adoption	2.6%	3.9%	3.5%
Placed with own parents	5.6%	6.8%	6.0%
In lodgings, residential employment or living independently	5.3%	7.3%	4.3%
Secure Unit	0.0%	8.8%	10.9%
Other Residential Setting	5.6%	2.7%	1.5%
Residential School	1.2%	0.3%	0.2%
Other Placement	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%

Number and % of children placed more than 20 miles from their home

Number and % of children placed more than 20 miles from their home	31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018
Swindon	22%	23.1% (Provisional)
Stat Neighbour average	12.7%	
England average	14%	

Stability of placement

	31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018	Statistical Neighbour (2017)	England (2017)
% of Long Term LAC placements stable for at least 2 years (NI063)	70%	51.85%	72.7%	70%
% of LAC who have had 3 or more placements – rolling 12 months	12%		9.5%	10%

We will provide a range of placement options to ensure that the right child is available for the right child through our sufficiency strategy and our placement service. For some children permanence and stability will be found by returning home to their parents or to family members under Special Guardianship arrangements after a short period in care. For others remaining in care with a long term foster family or moving on to adoption will provide the route to permanence.

In 2016, 67% of care leavers in Swindon remained looked after until their 18th birthday which is lower than England (70%) and statistical neighbours (74.5%). 83% of care leavers in Swindon were in suitable accommodation in 2017 which is a similar level to England and statistical neighbours.

Headline priority actions:

- To develop Sufficiency Strategy and Plan to increase our own placement provision and reduce reliance on independent fostering agencies and residential placements to address the needs of children and young people in relation to race, religion, language, culture, gender, disabilities and emotional/psychological difficulties.
- Implement the Foster Carer recruitment campaign and equip carers with the skills and strategies necessary to manage the myriad challenges that fostering can present by providing regular training, supervision and practical support.
- Work closely with Adoption Thames Valley to ensure children are placed with adoptive families without delay.
- Support children and young people to maintain family, education and community links where that is deemed appropriate in line with the statutory guidance 'securing sufficient accommodation for looked after children'.
- Work with young people, partners and commissioners to expand and enhance the accommodation offer for Care Leaver's ensuring it is flexible, appropriate and affordable.
- Implement Swindon's Care Leavers Accommodation and Support Framework to ensure the five stages are fully embedded in the young person's pathway plan as they begin their journey to leave care
- Implement and embed the Joint Housing protocol to ensure housing needs for Care Leaver's are jointly assessed by social care and housing and support and the opportunity to secure tenancies is always considered where appropriate.
- To actively promote young people remaining with their foster carer's post 18 years on Staying Put Arrangements, allowing young people to remain in

secure and stable homes until they are ready and able to make the transition to independence.

- Work with partners on the LSCB Missing persons and CSE subcommittee to protect and support vulnerable looked after children and young people.

Impact measures 2017

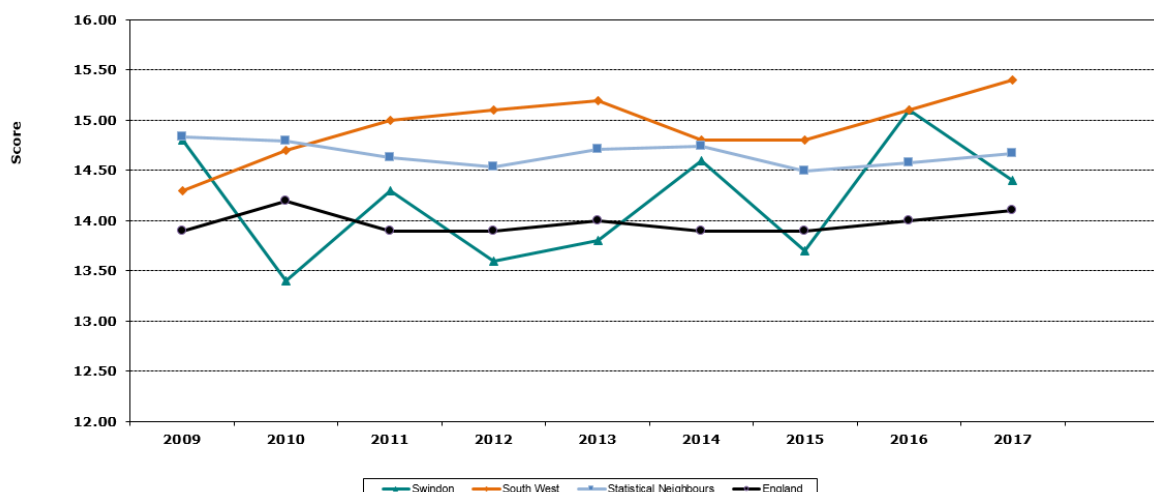
- A. 12% of looked after children had three or more placements compared to 10% nationally and 9.5% for the statistical neighbour
- B. 70% of looked after children were in the same place for at least 2 years compared to 70% nationally and 72.7% for the statistical neighbour
- C. 22% of looked after children were placed more than 20 miles from their home compared to 14% nationally and 12.7% for the statistical neighbour.
- D. there were 225 approved foster carers in Swindon in 2017, a reduction of 45 compared to the previous year
- E. 36.5% of children are placed with Independent Fostering Agencies (2017/18)
- F. Percentage of children who more than one LAC episode
- G. 78% of children leaving care over the age of 16 remained looked after until their 18th birthday compared to 71% nationally and 71% for the statistical neighbour
- H. 83% of care leavers are in suitable accommodation compared to 84% nationally and 82.7% for the statistical neighbour.
- I. 20% of care leavers aged 19 or 20 remained with their former foster carer compared to 25% nationally and 29.5% for the statistical neighbour

Priority 2 -To improve the emotional wellbeing and physical health of looked after children and care leavers
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The Statutory Guidance 'Promoting the health and well-being of looked after children' (DOH 2015) sets out to guide local authorities collaborating with the Clinical Commissioning Group and health providers to reduce the health deficit for children looked after and care leavers.

Just as children looked after and care leavers often have a difficult start in life; they also tend to have higher physical, psychological and emotional ill health than their peers. About 60% of those looked after in England have been reported to have emotional and mental health problems, which is four times the rate for children generally. Many children looked after and care leavers have experienced early trauma including conditions such as foetal alcohol syndrome and attachment disorders, which can lead to behaviour problems and conduct disorders. Delays in identifying and meeting their emotional wellbeing and mental health needs can have far-reaching effects on all aspects of children's lives, including their ability to engage in education. As a result their chances of reaching their full potential as adults are hampered. The emotional and behaviour health of looked after children is tracked through the Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire. The graph below shows the score for Swindon has reduced from a score of 15.10 in 2016 to 14.4 for 2017 which brings us more in line with national and statistical benchmarks.

Emotional and Behavioural Health of Looked After Children



The health and well-being of children looked after and care leavers requires a holistic approach encompassing physical, mental, emotional and sexual health. It also demands respect for their ethnicity, cultural and religious beliefs and should achieve a sense of well-being that is meaningful to them. It is essential to promote healthy lifestyles and use resources creatively to address issues including drug and alcohol misuse, smoking, self-harm, safe relationships and sexual health. Everyone involved in working with children looked after and care leavers has an active role and possesses opportunities in improving their health and well-being. This is supported by the Children Looked After Health Team.

Young people must feel that their cultural beliefs are respected and supported. Young people in care need help to maintain their identity and sense of belonging to one family while making attachments and relationships with another. We will be better at evidencing diversity and equality considerations are taken into account in all decision making and this is reflected in assessments, plans and reviews.

Improved self-esteem, social skills and recognition of healthy and loving relationships are crucial as a young person moves through childhood and adolescence.

Headline priority actions

- Develop clear pathways to ensure Children Looked After and Care Leavers receive timely and appropriate interventions to address social, emotional, mental health and behaviour health when identified e.g. high scores for Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ).

- Ensure looked after children and care leavers are supported to access online resources (e.g. courses and mobile apps) to support their mental health and wellbeing
- Health care assessments, health plans and reviews are comprehensive and timely and readily shared with professionals and parents as appropriate
- Diversity and equality considerations are taken into account in all decision making and reflected in assessments, plans and reviews
- Health and wellbeing are key components of Looked After Children and Care Leavers assessments, plans and reviews
- All children leaving care have a health passport
- To establish clear pathways to support effective Transition Planning which enables vulnerable care leavers who don't meet the adult mental health or learning disability criteria to access support

Details of how these actions will be addressed are documented in the Children Looked After Team Service Improvement Plan.

Impact measures (2017)

- 54% of LAC have had their dental checks on time, compared with national average 57% and statistical neighbour 56.5%*
- 53.5% of LAC have annual health check, compared with national average 62% and statistical neighbour 62%*
- Annual immunisation: x% of SBC LAC have had their annual immunisation on time, compared with national average % and statistical neighbour x%*
- 8% of LAC (approximately 14-16 young people) were identified as having a substance misuse problem compared with national average 4% and statistical neighbour 3.63%*
- Emotional and behavioural health SDQ score (strengths and difficulties questionnaire) is 14.40 compared with national average of 14.10 and statistical neighbour of 14.67*
- Number of Looked After Children accessing the independent advocacy service.*

Priority 3 – To improve educational progress and attainment and narrow the gap between the attainments of looked after children and their peers.

The majority of children in care and care leavers start from a position of increased vulnerability and disadvantage that needs additional support to overcome. The educational attainment of Swindon's children looked after against the performance of all pupils nationally, show that gaps in attainment and progress are not closing quickly enough. Poor attainment, in addition to other barriers, makes it more difficult for our children looked after to move successfully into further education, training and work.

Swindon has a Virtual School Head (as set out in the Children & Families Act 2014) to champion the education of children in the authority's care, as if they all attended the same school. Our Virtual School Head tracks and monitors the attainment and progress of our Children Looked After looked. These children have personal education plan (PEP), and access to one to one support, including personal tuition where appropriate (using the Pupil Premium). Our Virtual Head champions the educational needs of our Children Looked After across Swindon including those children placed out of authority, and maximises the learning opportunities for all care leavers up to 25 years

Headline priority actions

- Ensure all looked after children and previously Looked After children have the highest priority within all mainstream schools admission arrangements
- All looked after children age 3-18 have an up to date personal education plan (PEP) in place and there are robust procedures to monitor the attendance and educational progress of the children
- To ensure pupil premium is targeted appropriately to effective interventions to improve educational outcomes for looked after children and care leavers
- To ensure schools and other settings understand the importance of helping identify looked after children's emotional and mental health needs to enable them to receive better educational support
- To encourage and support social workers, carers and personal advisers to have high expectations in helping looked after children and care leavers to achieve their full potential in education (from preschool to post-16 education), employment and training
- Whenever a child moves school, there is a timely and informed discussion about the choice of school that will best meet their needs
- Ensure looked after children and care leavers have the IT they need to learn, have fun and maintain friendships
- Extend reach of VS – early years, post 16. Post 18 and edge of care

Impact measures 2017

- A. *93% of termly Personal Education Plans (PEP) completed within timescale (Jan-March 2018).*
- B. *5.9% absence from school of children who have been looked after continuously for at least 12 months compared to national average of 4.3% and statistical neighbour of 4.33%*
- C. *KS1 outcomes: 50% reached age related expectation in reading compared to 51% nationally; 50% reached age related expectations in writing compared to 39%*

nationally; 57% reached age related expectations in mathematics compared to 46% nationally

- D. KS2 outcomes: 40% reached age related expectation in reading compared to 45% nationally; 60% reached age related expectations in writing compared to 47% nationally; 60% reached age related expectations in mathematics compared to 46% nationally; and 40% reached age related expectations in reading, writing and maths compared to 32% nationally.*
- E. KS4 outcomes: 31% achieved grade 4 and above in English and maths compared to 17.4% nationally; 17.1 was attainment 8 score compared to 19.3 nationally; -1.20 was progress 8 score compared to -1.18 nationally; 7% of children achieved grade 5 and above in English and Mathematics*
- F. 4% of looked after children with 1 fixed term exclusion compared to 11.44 nationally*

Priority 4 – To improve support and opportunities for care leavers to increase the number and proportion who are in meaningful Education, Employment or Training (EET)

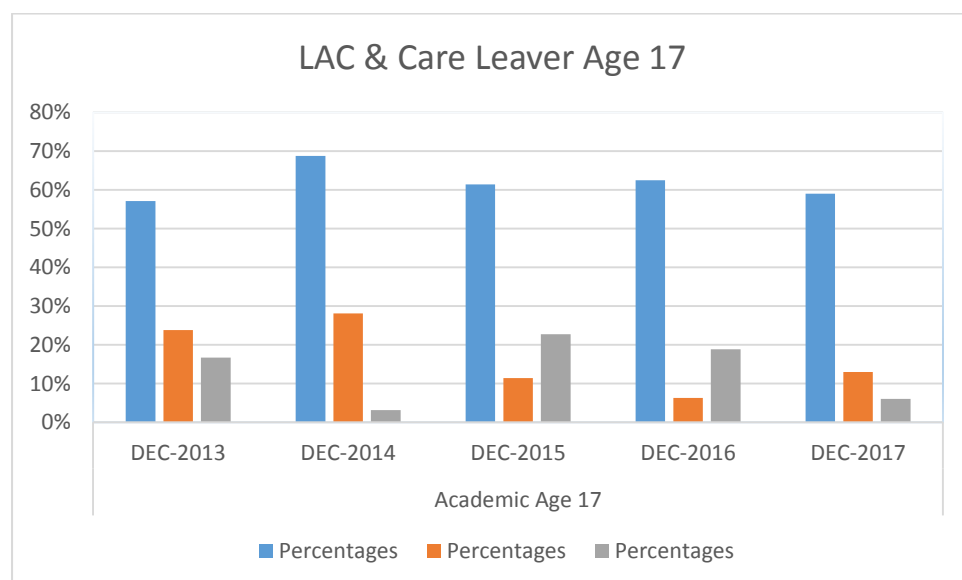
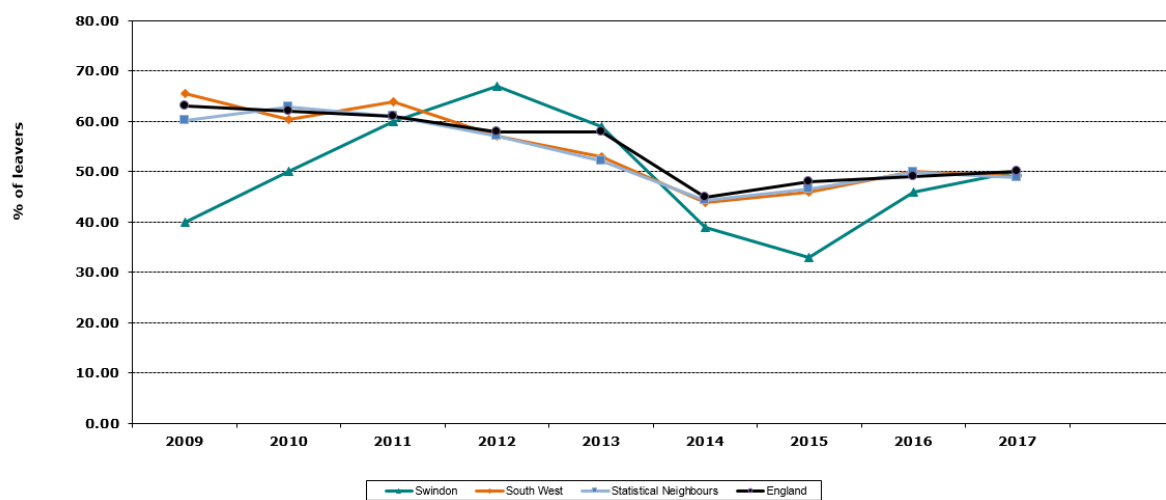
We will provide our care leavers with consistently good support and guidance on their journey into adulthood to ensure they are able to fulfil their aspirations and meet their full potential. Like any good parent, we will assist our young people in acquiring and developing independence skills across all aspects of their life. We will support them to access higher education, employment or training opportunities and ensure that they have somewhere suitable to live once they leave their care placement. We achieve this by:

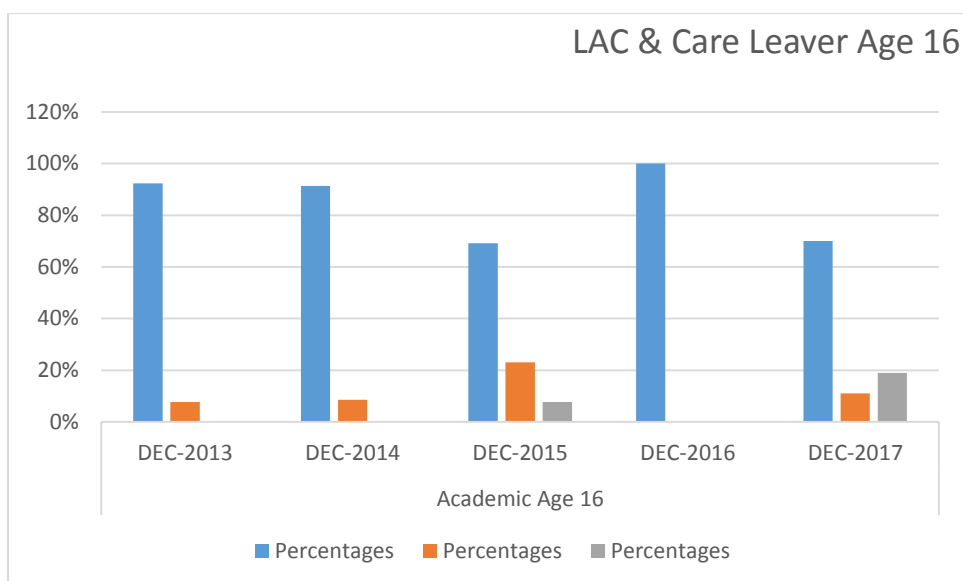
- providing every care leaver with a personal advisor to advise, assist and befriend them
- ensuring every 'eligible' young person has a needs assessment completed before 16th birthday and a Pathway Plan, based on that assessment and including the young person's views, completed and reviewed by an IRO within three months of their 16th birthday
- working with other agencies to help the young person gain access to wider support services and reduce the risk of social isolation.

We welcome the Government's publication of 'Keep on Caring' in 2016, and endorse the new duties set out within the Children and Social Work Act 2017. In the last year we have seen a decrease in the number of children looked after and care leavers in learning. We have seen an increase in the number of children looked after and care leavers in employment without training. In 2017, the overall "in learning" rate for children looked after/care leavers declined from 84% to 60%. There are currently five care leavers at university and one care leaver completing an Open University Course. In order to increase the number of care leavers entering into learning outcomes, we are developing streamlined processes in collaboration with stakeholders to ensure that outcomes for children looked after and those leaving care have similar targets and aspirations as their peer cohorts. This priority is supported by the Swindon Skills and Employment Strategy and the Councils

Supported Employment Strategy 2018-2022 which set out our commitment to ensure children in care have the right skills and support to access work.

Care Leaver- Education, Employment or training (%)





Headline priority actions

- Develop and implement our Local Offer collaboratively with care leavers
- Expand the care leavers service to ensure the service is extended to all care leavers up to 25 years of age in line with the service improvement plan
- Clear corporate ownership to provide looked after children and care leavers with opportunities for work placements, internships, apprenticeships and employment within the council.
- Increase opportunities across the business community in Swindon to offer employment opportunities for looked after children and care leavers including supported internships, apprenticeships, traineeships and work based learning
- Work collaboratively with Adult Services to develop an effective Transition Planning process so vulnerable care leavers who are eligible for adult services experience a seamless transition
- Implement the plan to increase the number of young people aged 16-18 (25 for Learners with an Education Health and Care Plan, Care Leavers) participating in learning, and completing learning to move into employment (2018 – 2020)
- Implement the Swindon & Wilshire (Local Enterprise Partnership) Apprenticeship Growth Strategy 2017-2020

Impact measures 2017

- *50% of care leavers are in Education, Employment or training compared to 50% national and 48.8% for statistical neighbours.*

- *48% of care leavers were not in education, training or employment compared to 39% nationally and 39% for statistical neighbours*
- *79.38% of Care Leavers had a contact in April 2018, 94.48% were recorded as having the minimal statutory bi monthly contact.*
- *26 Care Leavers attended work ready programme*
- *3 care leavers in external apprenticeships & 1 internal apprenticeship*

Priority 5 – To listen to looked after children and care leavers to ensure that their voices influence their own care and pathway plans as well as wider service delivery and development

Central to this Strategy, and to Swindon Borough Council and our partners' work, is the pledge to Children Looked After and Care Leavers in Swindon. The work of the Children in Care Council is a good example in terms of designing the Pledge and good account being taken of their views. There is also successful participation of children in care taking part in the recruitment of new staff in Children's Social Care. We also have a participation group for care leavers which meets monthly and encourages open and flexible membership.

Arrangements are in place to actively seek the views of children and their families through surveys for all those who have received services, including those who have attended Child Protection Conferences. The Children in Care Council meets regularly with the Corporate Parenting Board ensuring that members hear their views and experiences of the care system, increasing their ability to influence and improve the services they receive from us as corporate parents. The Council has commissioned Coram Voice to provide advocacy and independent visitors to ensure children in care and care leavers have their voices heard.

It has been recognised that the Children in Care Council is not sufficiently representative of the views of all children and young people in care in Swindon; although these meetings are regular, they are only attended by a small group of those in care about 21%. There are currently 3 participation (children in care councils) groups running in Swindon. One is the JCICC for children between the ages of 7- 12yrs, a SCICC for Children and young people between the ages of 12-18yrs. The final group is The ICE Team (In Care Experienced Team). This group is made up from a selection of the other two groups which contain those children and young people who wish to be more vocal about the issues that they face whilst being in care. They drive forward the issues of the two councils and inform decision makers of their views and how they can help to make their care journey better as well as highlighting good practice.

There is a notable absence of those children with a disability and those from Black or Minority Ethnic groups and unaccompanied asylum seekers, although there has been attendance by young people in these demographics, it is not as well representative as other demographics.

Swindon has a strong commitment to celebrating children's achievements as demonstrated by the annual Children in Care Awards, which has grown year on

year. The awards event now includes all care leavers to celebrate their achievements and this in turn helps with raising the aspirations of those children and young people still in care here in Swindon.

Headline priority actions

- Involve looked after children and care leavers in our recruitment model and the training offer for social workers, foster carers and personal assistants
- Ensure the voice of Children Looked After and Care Leavers from minority groups and children with disabilities are represented
- Merge the IRO challenge group with the children in Care Council and broaden the membership and fully engage the group in service reviews and re-design
- Undertake an annual survey to track performance against Our Children and Young People Looked After Pledge
- Social workers, PAs, foster carers and residential staff will talk to young people about their hobbies, interests, leisure, culture and sporting activities and will positively promote their engagement with the relevant local activities and services.

Impact measures

- **Percentage of LAC satisfied with the service received as judged against the Pledge**
- **Percentage of LAC participating in their reviews**
- **Number of complaints made by children in care**
- **Percentage of children supported by the independent advocacy service**

6. Key Service Improvements

To achieve our strategic priorities, we need to improve service delivery and standards of practice by focussing on:

- Stability and Consistency in both placements and the workforce
- Compliance and quality of social work practice
- Increased and enhanced management oversight at all levels
- Better co-ordination across internal and external partners
- Better use of performance information and quality assurance processes to ensure outcomes for children are improving.

Progress in these areas will be reviewed on a quarterly basis.

7. Placement Sufficiency

We need to be able to place the right children in our care in the right placements at the right time. This is supported by Swindon's Placement Sufficiency Strategy for Children Looked After and Care Leavers 2018-2020.

As mentioned previously, we recognise the increasing numbers of Children Looked After and Care Leavers in Swindon. The number of children in care has increased by a third from 252 in March 2014 to 359 at the end of March 2018. These figures put Swindon above the national average and those of comparable Local Authorities.

To meet this demand and provide an range of placement offers, we will be developing our Sufficiency Strategy to develop capacity particularly in family based provision in or close to Swindon whilst ensure we have suitable high quality provision to meet needs young people with highly complex needs. The sufficiency Strategy will link the Demand Management work stream of the Swindon Programme with the Early Help Strategy and LAC/Care Leaver's Strategy.

We aim to ensure we only have the 'right' children in our care and that they are put in the 'right' placements at the 'right' time. To this end we are conducting an independent review of our placement process, structure and commissioning design to ensure we can work quickly and effectively to locate the best and most suitable placement for each child.

8. Workforce Development

We recognise that developing our workforce is the most effective way of improving service quality across the board. We work closely with the Children's Services Recruitment and Retention Strategy and the Workforce Development strategy to retain our current workforce and increase the number of permanent recruits to the service. We are actively recruiting newly qualified social workers who want to begin their careers in Swindon whilst also recruiting Personal Advisors and Managers. We are reviewing the Training and Development needs of the staff group based on an assessment of the development needs of the social workers and managers. We intend to build a strong culture of excellence based on the professional commitment to provide high quality services for children and young people.

9. Oversight and Governance

The Management team will develop a detailed action plan alongside this strategy setting out how we will work in partnership with looked after children and young people and our key stakeholders to ensure the successful implementation of this strategy. We will also set specific, measurable, and realistic local targets for improving outcomes for Children Looked After and Care Leavers. The management team will report regularly to the Corporate Parenting Board, Council committees, relevant partnership boards and the Children in Care Council on its effectiveness in meeting its targets.

Our Children and Young People Looked After Pledge

- We promise to do our best for children and young people in care
- We will listen to your views and try to give you choices in all decisions about your life
- We will provide foster carers that treat you kindly, respect you and help you to achieve your goals
- We will make sure you can see your family and friends or tell you why you can't
- We will make sure you have a social worker and know how to contact them. We will try not to change them
- We will try to provide a place at a good school that can meet all your needs, help you if you get excluded and keep your (PEP) plan up to date
- We will help you to take part in activities in your free time that you enjoy
- We will tell you how much pocket money you should get and make sure you get it.
- We will always tell you why you are in care when you want to know
- We will ask you about your health needs and make sure you get the right help. We will recognise your right to privacy about your health
- We will hold regular Reviews; listen to what you tell us about how to make good plans for you. We will try very hard to keep the plan and tell you why if it changes.
- We will make sure that every one of you have someone who is independent to talk to and to help you if you are not happy
- We will tell you what support you can get when you move on from Care and help you with work, college or university
- We will not keep secrets from you



Swindon Borough Council

Making the Looked After Children and Care Leaver's Strategy a Reality:

The operational plan

2018-2020

Our vision is to ensure that every child is given the support they need to grow and thrive (Swindon's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-2022).

September 2018

Contents

1 Introduction

2 Children Services Improvement Plan

3 Participation

4 Governance

5 Consultation

6 Recommendation

7 Appendices

1 Introduction

The draft Children in Care Strategy report was presented to the board at the last meeting on 3rd July. The members expressed the wish that consultations should take place, especially with children and young people in care, on the objectives of the proposed strategy and be taken into account in the final strategy. The Board was further concerned that the final strategy should indicate how the objectives will be achieved so defining how ambitious objectives would become real services improving the lives of children in care.

Since then we have consulted children and young people in care, care leavers, departmental staff and senior managers and strategic partners on the objectives and the most effective ways of delivering services to achieve them. The proposal presented to the board today is that by incorporating the strategy within the overarching departmental improvement plan of the Six Pillars, the Strategy becomes anchored in the children's services department's priorities for service improvement and development.

The Sufficiency strategy which is being presented to the Board today describes the areas from which children enter the care system and the main reasons why children enter care; namely deprivation, disability and patterns of child abuse and neglect. The services provided for children in care are also fully described and how we are striving to meet the needs of children in care and care leavers. This report describes the actions the department will be taking in order to achieve the aspirations we have set out to improve the opportunities and life chances of the children in our care and those leaving care.

2 CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Service Improvement Plan is built on Six Pillars:-

1. WORKFORCE
2. ICT
3. PARTNERSHIPS
4. QUALITY OF PRACTICE
5. EARLY HELP AND TROUBLED FAMILIES
6. CLA AND CARE LEAVERS

The diagramme of the Six Pillars is below in Appendix 1.

The original priorities in the Strategy report below are fully maintained within the priorities of Pillar 6 of the Six Pillars apart from Priority 5 'To listen to Looked after children' is reflected in Pillar 4 (Quality of practice) will ensure a fully joined up approach to engaging children and young people in their care plans and the services they receive.

The original 5 priorities:-

Priority 1- Ensure looked after children and care leavers have suitable and stable placements and accommodation so they are able to make and sustain safe, nurturing and enduring relationships

Priority 2 –To improve the emotional wellbeing and physical health of looked after children and care leavers

Priority 3 – To improve educational progress and attainment and narrow the gap between the attainments of looked after children and their peers.

Priority 4 – To improve support and opportunities for care leavers to increase the number and proportion who are in meaningful Education, Employment or Training (EET)

Priority 5 – To listen to looked after children and care leavers to ensure that their voices influence their own care and pathway plans as well as wider service delivery and development.

The Pillar 6 service improvement plan – Children Looked After and Care Leavers

The full Service Improvement plan accompanying these priorities is below in appendix 2

<p>1) Increase the choice of placement options to meet the individual needs of our children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the Placements Team is appropriately resourced, has the right roles and skill set to deliver an effective and efficient placement function • Implement an operational framework to ensure an outcomes based approach to meeting the needs of Children in Care and ensures value for money. • Implement an effective strategic commissioning approach to meeting the needs of Children in Care. • Increase the number of children 'staying put'
<p>2) Develop and maintain a strong pool of local foster carers who are fully supported to care for our children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the Fostering Team is appropriately resourced, has the right roles and skill set to deliver an effective and efficient fostering function • Review and improve our financial offer, therapeutic care, training and support for our foster carers • Review and develop our foster carer recruitment plan targeting specific communities and addressing specific needs.
<p>3) Improve the permanency and resilience of placements for our children so they are able to make and sustain safe, nurturing and enduring relationships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a permanency strategy throughout the Service and wider Council • Create and implement a mandatory training programme with our learning partners • Redesign the service to create Children in Care teams. • Implement more timely permanency solutions, including adoption, for children in Swindon through early intervention. • Improve the quality of practice and processes to support permanency planning and placement stability
<p>4) Improve the outcomes for Children in Care and Care Leavers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the number and quality of care plans and pathway plans for Children in Care, and offer (support, intervention, inter-connectedness and wider offer) to Care Leavers • Improve attendance (and reduce exclusions), educational attainment, training, apprenticeships and employment for Children on care and Care Leavers • Improve the health and emotional wellbeing of Children in Care and Care Leavers, and review the sufficiency of commissioned health provision and services

3 PARTICIPATION

Priority 5 of the original strategy - To listen to looked after children and care leavers to ensure that their voices influence their own care and pathway plans as well as wider service delivery and development – is now found in Pillar 4 of the Improvement Plan. Please see Appendix 3 below for the Voice of the Child / Participation aims and objectives.

The main difference in the in the draft strategy and the Pillar 6 improvement plan is that the Pillar 6 plan expands the range of priority action areas whilst developing more thorough set of service improvement actions which will drive forward change and against which the department can be held accountable. For example:-

- A) We express the determination to develop a sufficiency strategy to improve placement choice to meet children's needs but in the Pillar plan we go on to state that we will improve the decision making upon entry to care by developing a Care Panel chaired by the Assistant Director to preside over these key decisions in a child's life. Placement choice is then more closely matched to the child's needs. The review panel focusses attention on the 'Top 20' most complex cases to avoid drift and promote good practice.
- B) In both plans we aim to increase the option of fostered children 'Staying Put' with their foster carers but in the Pillar plan we identify actions such as staging briefings throughout the service raising awareness of 'staying put' and Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) being required to report to senior managers if the 16th birthday Pathway Plan does not record that 'Staying Put' has been addressed with fostered children and their carers.
- C) Both plans wish to promote care leavers access to apprenticeships, the Pillar plan sets targets for increasing the number of young people in care and care leavers taking up apprenticeships in house from 1 to 5 per annum and within the business community from 4 to 10 per annum.

Specific areas requiring more detailed implementation planning and oversight identified in this Pillar 6 plan will be the focus of a set of task and finish groups such as the Fostering Improvement plan, the Care Leavers Partnership group and the Top 20 placement improvement project. These groups will vary over time but will all deliver their results to the Children in Care and Care Leavers Executive group chaired by the Director.

4 GOVERNANCE

The Governance of the work of all the six pillars is simplified and clarified by the new structure. All six pillars of improvement report to executive groups chaired by senior managers who in turn report to the Children's Senior Leadership team (CSLT) and then to the (CMT). The Elected Members preside over the improvement work through the Cabinet and committee structure which will be able to hold senior managers to account for progress on the improvements achieved across all six pillars.

The proposal also includes changing the name of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Board to the Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) in line with best practice. The Board holds the officers and the Council to account as a corporate parent ensuring separate and diverse services act cooperatively and coherently to provide for the diverse needs of our children on care.

The diagrammatic representation of the Governance role of the Corporate Parenting Board is found in Appendix 4

The benefits of the pillar approach to whole service improvement are that:-

- governance is much clearer with pathways providing clear 'lines of sight' from members to practitioners within each pillar
- duplication is avoided so lead managers are identified as are the actions which fall under each pillar
- cooperation is built into the system as the interrelation between pillars is required for lead managers to achieve their objectives for example The 'Local Offer' for care leavers requires support from ICT (pillar 2) to achieve the portal, most casework practice depends on good partnerships as a supporting structure (pillar 3) and the voice of the child in care is enhanced by the work in (pillar 4) building participation amongst children in care to increase their voice in decisions on their future. Pillar 5, Early Help contains priority aims and objectives in relation to Edge of Care preventative strategies directed at finding alternatives to children entering care.

5 CONSULTATION

The Board wished to be assured that children and young people in Care had been consulted on the priorities and objectives in the plan as much as possible in the time available. Since the last Board, we have carried out an on line survey of key priorities and the Director has met with the Care Leavers group. Team managers have also undertaken a consultation exercise in placement improvement.

The on line survey was carried out on Survey Monkey and was completely anonymous. The full questionnaire and results are to be found in appendix 5 below. Some of the headlines from the survey and their impact on the Improvement Plan are:-

1. 27/28 correspondents were happy in their placements, felt safe and wanted to remain which appears to just as true of residential care as foster care.
2. 26/28 knew who to talk to when worried and care staff, foster carers and social workers featured prominently.

The provision of stable placements in or around Swindon with reliable key staff is clearly a top priority. The value of building up these relationships and providing access to their families is reflected in their responses above.

Improvement actions include:-

- Reviewing the 'top 20' placements to stabilise children and reduce change
 - Tracking new entries to care to achieve timely planning and interventions
 - Expanding the recruitment of Foster Carers to develop our in house supply
 - Reshaping the Placement Finding team to improve the matching of children to appropriate placement to reduce placement breakdown
3. 27/28 said they were fit and well and 16/28 had a health passport.
 4. Happiness was measured from 1-5 with 12 reporting 5, 7 reporting 4, 6 - 3, 2 - 2 and one child reported 1.
 5. 8 reported not to be EET and some had many leisure activities some had few.

Improvement actions include:-

- Prioritising the roll out of health passports to all children in care
- Contact with families is important and so parents will be invited to LAC reviews unless it is counter-productive to do so
- We will include access to leisure activities in the Local Offer and place emphasis on recreation in LAC reviews and care plans

Finally, in response to what is important? Respondents came up with a range of answers but education/school/college was included in 12 answers and was the most

frequently referred to. Only 5 respondents were either not in school or not doing well in their own eyes.

Improvement actions include:-

- Ensuring all children in care have up to date PEPs
- The Virtual School head working with local heads to reduce exclusions, targeting the pupil premium to best effect and giving looked after children the highest priority

These are initial responses to the on line survey which will be analysed in greater depth and a short report sent to all children in care with our actions in relation to their responses. The participation action plan from Pillar 5 sets out a plan to conduct focussed surveys throughout the year as part of a continuing programme of consultation and participation.

The Care Leavers group have been consulted during the year and a number of their concerns are addressed in the plan:-

- 'Transitions to adult health are confusing' –
Action 15.8 Develop clearer pathways to adult health services especially for mental health services
- 'Accessing mental health and counselling services can be slow' -
Action 15.2 Improve emotional and mental well-being by improving access to counselling and mental health services
- 'There is no website containing all services for care leavers' –
Action 14.9 is to launch the Local Offer.
- Clearer financial guidance was called for which as with many other requests for advice raised is covered in the Local Offer.

The care leavers group will continue to meet and play an active role in participation and consultation throughout the year.

The participation Aims and Objectives, Pillar 4, in Appendix 3 contains the strategic priorities of future surveys, consultations and events throughout the year.

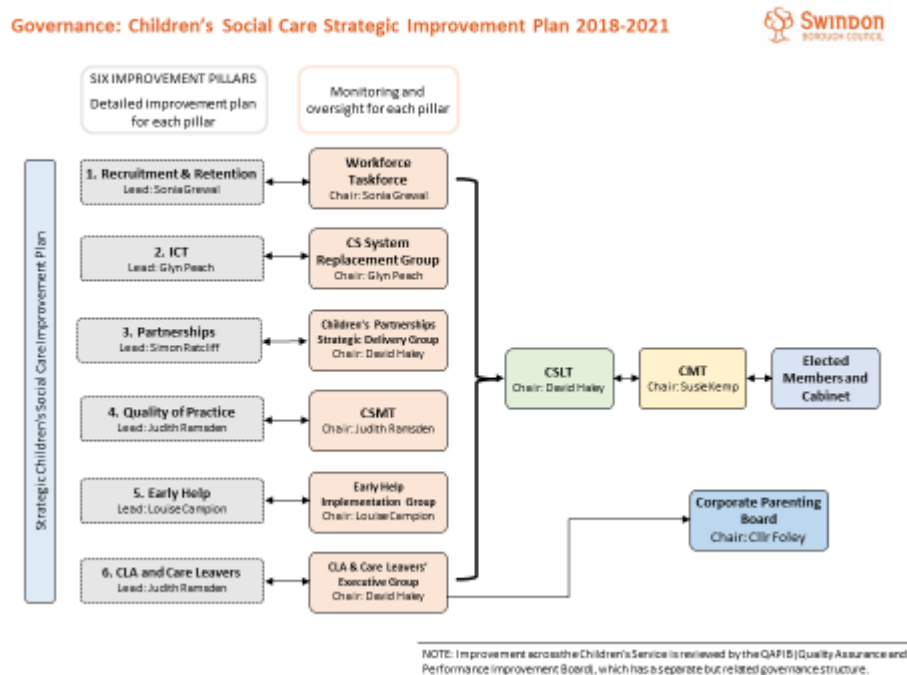
6 RECOMMENDATION

The Service Improvement plan represents a way forward for the department with Pillar 6 focusing on all aspects of improving the lives and opportunities for our children in care. We have consulted with children in care and care leavers in this process and will continue to do so in the forthcoming implementation.

These detailed action plans are part of an iterative process focussed on change and improvement rather than a descriptive document of 'business as usual'. They will develop and change over time as new challenges are confronted. This is the first version of this plan which is recommended to the Board for approval.

7 Appendices

Appendix 1 Service improvement Plan - Six Pillars



Appendix 2 –Pillar 6 Action Plan – Improving Outcomes for Children in care



Pillar 6 Improvement Plan 180918.zip

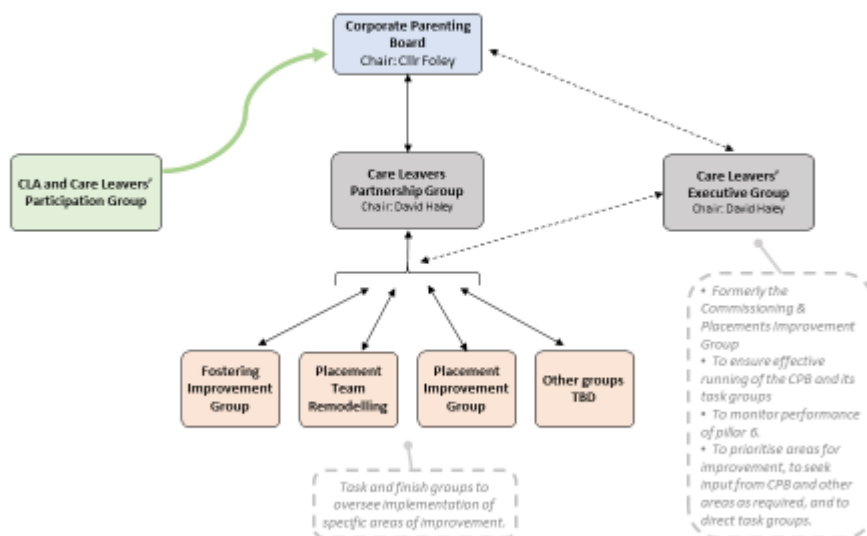
Appendix 3 – Participation Aims and Objectives – Pillar 4



Participation Pillar 4 appendix.zip

Appendix 4 = Governance structure of the Corporate Parenting Board

Governance, reporting and relationship to other groups
Pillar 6: Improve outcomes for CLA and Care Leavers



Appendix 5 – Survey Questionnaire

Priority 1- Ensure looked after children and care leavers have suitable and stable placements and accommodation so they are able to make and sustain safe, nurturing and enduring relationships

- Are you happy where you're living
- How long have you been there and do you want to stay?
- Do you feel safe
 - What does safe mean to you?
- Are we doing enough to help you?
 - Is there anything you think we should do?
- If you live with a foster family, do you feel part of a family?
- If you live in a flat or lodgings, are we doing enough to help you to manage yourself?

Priority 2 -To improve the emotional wellbeing and physical health of looked after children and care leavers

- Are you happy or sad
- Are you fit and well
- Do you have your health passport?
- If you needed to talk to someone about something troubling you, would you know where to go?

Priority 3 – To improve educational progress and attainment and narrow the gap between the attainments of looked after children and their peers.

- Are you getting the education you need to learn?
- How do you think you are doing?
- Is there anything we could do that would help you with school/college?

Priority 4 – To improve support and opportunities for care leavers to increase the number and proportion who are in meaningful Education, Employment or Training (EET)

If you are a care leaver complete this section:

- Are you in sixth form or a college and are you getting enough help to learn?
- Are you in an apprenticeship or internship or working and are you getting enough help to make the most of it?
- Are you unemployed and is there anything that we could do to help you get into work or college?
- When you are in work or college, how do you like to spend your time?

Priority 5 – To listen to looked after children and care leavers to ensure that their voices influence their own care and pathway plans as well as wider service delivery and development

- Are you on the children in care council?
- Are you in the challenge group?
- Are you in the care leaver's participation group?
- Would you like to hear more from us or meet other care leavers?
- Would you like to have your voice heard?
 - You can do this by emailing

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Swindon Borough Council's Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2018-2020

Corporate Parenting Advisory Board

Date: 24 September 2018

Author:	Phillipa Lamb, Strategy and Development Manager on behalf of Trevor Moores, Interim Head of Looked After Children and Care Leaver Service
Wards:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 To seek Corporate Parenting Advisory Board's approval of Swindon Borough Council's Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2018-2020.
- 1.2 All Local authorities have a duty to ensure sufficient accommodation for its Looked after children and young people. This is referred to as the 'Sufficiency Duty' as laid down in Section 22G of the Children Act 1989. This duty of 'sufficiency' requires Local Authorities to ensure that there is sufficient placements which meet the needs of children and young people in care, and to take steps to develop and shape service provision to meet the needs of all children and young people in care at a local level, as far as is reasonably possible.
- 1.3 Securing sufficient accommodation requires a whole system approach which delivers early intervention and prevention services to support children in their families as well as better services for children if they do become looked after.
- 1.4 This strategy has been prepared to respond to the duty by formalising the approach in which Swindon Borough Council will commission children in care placements. A short term strategy covering the period September 2018 to March 2020 has been developed in recognition that SBC is in the process of undertaking detailed work around demand management and financial modelling to improve the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection as well as manage cost pressures. The strategy will be refreshed once this work is complete. Our refreshed Sufficiency Strategy will support Swindon Council's Demand Management Programme and our improvement journey to secure better outcomes for children and families across universal, early help and statutory services.
- 1.5 This strategy is informed by a high level analysis of need of children and young people in care. A more detailed needs assessment of children and young people is planned for early 2019 which will consider the likely changes in the overall care population as we model future services to support the delivery of our demand management and service improvement programmes. The strategy takes into account the ambition to improve preventative and early help services, increase the number of children for whom permanency is secured, and ensure children

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Phillipa Lamb, 07818510484, plamb@swindon.gov.uk

Swindon Borough Council's Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2018-2020

Corporate Parenting Advisory Board

Date: 24 September 2018

are matched to the right placement to meet their needs. Securing sufficient, high-quality accommodation to meet the needs of children and young people looked after by the local authority is a vital step in delivering improved outcomes for this vulnerable group.

- 1.6 The strategy 2018-2020 sets out our approach to ensuring we have a sufficient number and range of accommodation providers in the area to meet a variety of needs. Our ambitions in respect of sufficiency is based upon best practice
- 1.7 The actions for implementing the sufficiency strategy are provided in the Children's Improvement Plan, known locally as the 'Pillar Plan'. The Pillar Plan provides the detailed activities, timeline and leads alongside measurable and realistic targets to track the impact of our improvements. The Pillar Plan is monitored and progress regularly reported to relevant management boards as well as council committee meetings.

2. Recommendations

The Board is recommended to:

- 2.1 Approve Swindon Borough Council's Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2018-2020 (attached as Appendix to the report), and support the ongoing commitment to improve the life chances of our children and young people in care and care leavers.
- 2.2 Recommend to Cabinet that it adopts Swindon Borough Council's Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2018-2020

3. Detail

- 3.1 Detailed information on analysis of need, commissioning direction, market position and sufficiency, contract management, quality assurance and key priorities are provided in the attached appendix.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 There are no suggested alternative options. Swindon Borough Council's Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2018-2020 is key to improving the life chances of our children and young people in care and care leavers.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The Council already provides resources to fund looked after children and care leavers. No further financial resources are being sought at this time.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Phillipa Lamb, 07818510484, plamb@swindon.gov.uk

Swindon Borough Council's Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2018-2020

Corporate Parenting Advisory Board

Date: 24 September 2018

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 Legal and Human Rights considerations have been taken fully into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the recommendations of this report are compatible with Convention Rights

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 None have been identified at this stage

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.4 Swindon Borough Council's Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2018-2020 will positively impact on vulnerable children and young people living in Swindon's community.

Risk Management

- 5.5 No specific risks have been identified at this stage for this report

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The officer preparing the report must consult appropriate Corporate Directors, Directors, Heads of Service, other officers, and relevant partners on the purpose, content, and recommendations of the report before submitting the draft report. The Corporate Director of Children's Services (DCS), Corporate Director of Adult Services, Assistant Director (AD) / Head of Children Families and Community Health (interim), Head of Looked After Children and Care Leavers, Head of Transitions, Head of Finance (Children's), Children's Management Team, Children's Strategic Leadership Team have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix - Swindon Borough Council's Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2018-2020

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Swindon Council Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy

2018-2020

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 All Local authorities have a duty to ensure sufficient accommodation for its Looked after children and young people. This is referred to as the 'Sufficiency Duty' as laid down in Section 22G of the Children Act 1989. This duty of 'sufficiency' requires Local Authorities to ensure that there is sufficient placements which meet the needs of children and young people in care, and to take steps to develop and shape service provision to meet the needs of all children and young people in care at a local level, as far as is reasonably possible.
- 1.2 This interim strategy has been prepared to respond to the duty by formalising the approach in which Swindon Borough Council will commission children in care placements. An interim strategy has been developed in recognition that SBC is in the process of undertaking detailed work around demand management and financial modelling to improve the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection as well as manage cost pressures. A new director of children's services (DCS) has recently been appointed and he is starting to recruit a new management team. The council has committed an additional £7.5m to support improvements. An improvement plan is being developed. This strategy covers the period from September 2018 to March 2020. The strategy will be then be refreshed and developed further once a full needs analysis has been completed. Our refreshed Sufficiency Strategy will support Swindon Council's Demand Management Programme and our improvement journey to secure better outcomes for children and families across universal, early help and statutory services.
- 1.3 This strategy is informed by a high level analysis of need of children and young people in care (see appendix 1). A more detailed needs assessment of children and young people is planned for early 2019 which will consider the likely changes in the overall care population as we model future services to support the delivery of our demand management and service improvement programmes. The strategy takes into account the ambition to improve preventative and early help services, increase the number of children for whom permanency is secured, and ensure children are matched to the right placement to meet their needs. Young people leaving care are some of the most vulnerable young people in our Society. Care Leavers generally face having to be independent much younger than their peers. They need a support network and safety net as they move to independent living which most of their peers will automatically get from their family. The sufficiency of the support and accommodation provided for them will also be considered.
- 1.4 Securing sufficient, high-quality accommodation to meet the needs of children and young people looked after by the local authority is a vital step in delivering improved outcomes for this vulnerable group. Where commissioning for these children and young people is already working well elsewhere in the country, we see examples of choice of placement options, reduced placement breakdown,

better links with universal and specialist services, lower numbers of children coming into care and reduced costs.

- 1.5 Securing sufficient accommodation requires a whole system approach which delivers early intervention and prevention services to support children in their families as well as better services for children if they do become looked after.
- 1.6 The strategy 2018-2020 sets out our approach to ensuring we have a sufficient number and range of accommodation providers in the area to meet a variety of needs. Our ambitions in respect of sufficiency is based upon best practice.

2. Background

- 2.1 Swindon is a fast-growing population which is forecast to rise to around 250,000 by 2030. The current population is 217, 905 (2016) of which approximately 49,924 are under the age of 18 which is 22.7% of the total population. As with any predominantly urban area, Swindon faces challenges around inequality and disadvantage. There are extremes of high and low levels of deprivation. Eight of Swindon's Local Super Output Areas (LSOA) score in the bottom 10% in the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). Walcott East north west, Pinehurst west, Penhill north and Penhill Central have more than 40% of their children living in poverty. The most deprived LSOA in Swindon is Penhill north in Penhill and Upper Stratton Ward. Approximately 14% of the local authority's children aged under 16 years are living in low income families. Swindon has a diverse and growing population of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) families. School census figures show an increase of BAME pupils of 20% in January 2014. 18.8% of children in primary schools and 14.4% of children in secondary schools speak English as an additional language. Swindon has been a dispersal area for asylum seekers for several years. Domestic abuse, alcohol and substance misuse alongside socio-economic factors all impact on the volume and complexity of needs presented by children and young people. The rate of children looked after in Swindon is higher than the averages for both national and statistical neighbours.
- 2.2 One of the greatest challenges for Swindon is improving the outcomes for the small cohort of the most highly complex children and young people. 62.6% of looked after children have special educational needs/disabilities (SEND), of which 28.1% have an education, health and care plan (EHCP). These children often have multiple needs and display highly challenging behaviours.
- 2.3 This sufficiency strategy details our key developments to address the volume and type of placement demands. It is recognised that, as an organisation, we need to be more agile in responding to these challenges going forward. We need to improve our market engagement and management, develop more effective provider relationships and implement robust contracting and quality assurance processes if we are to be able to meet the needs of our children locally.

3. Vision

3.1 In line with Swindon's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2017-2022) and Swindon's Council Plan, the over-arching ambition of this strategy is to ensure that every child and young person in Swindon is given the support they need to grow and thrive, and that wherever possible, this support should be within the Swindon area. Children growing up in care and care leavers must have equal life chances to all children growing up in Swindon. Our aim is to work better together across the Children, Families and Community Health Service to become One Children's Service which is consistently good everyday by:

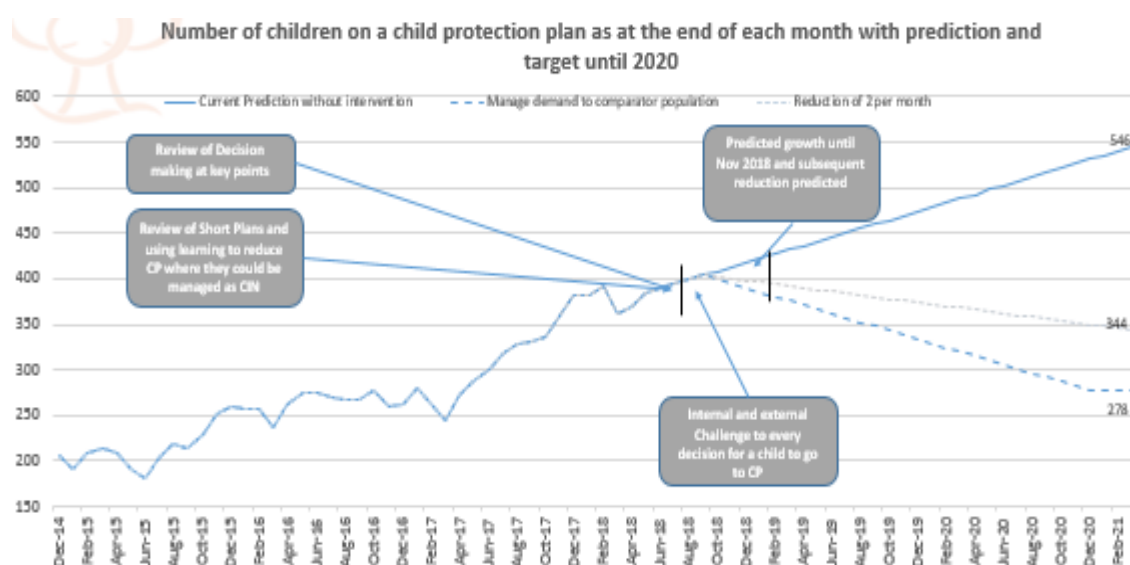
3.1.1 Ensuring Swindon children are protected from harm and their welfare protected

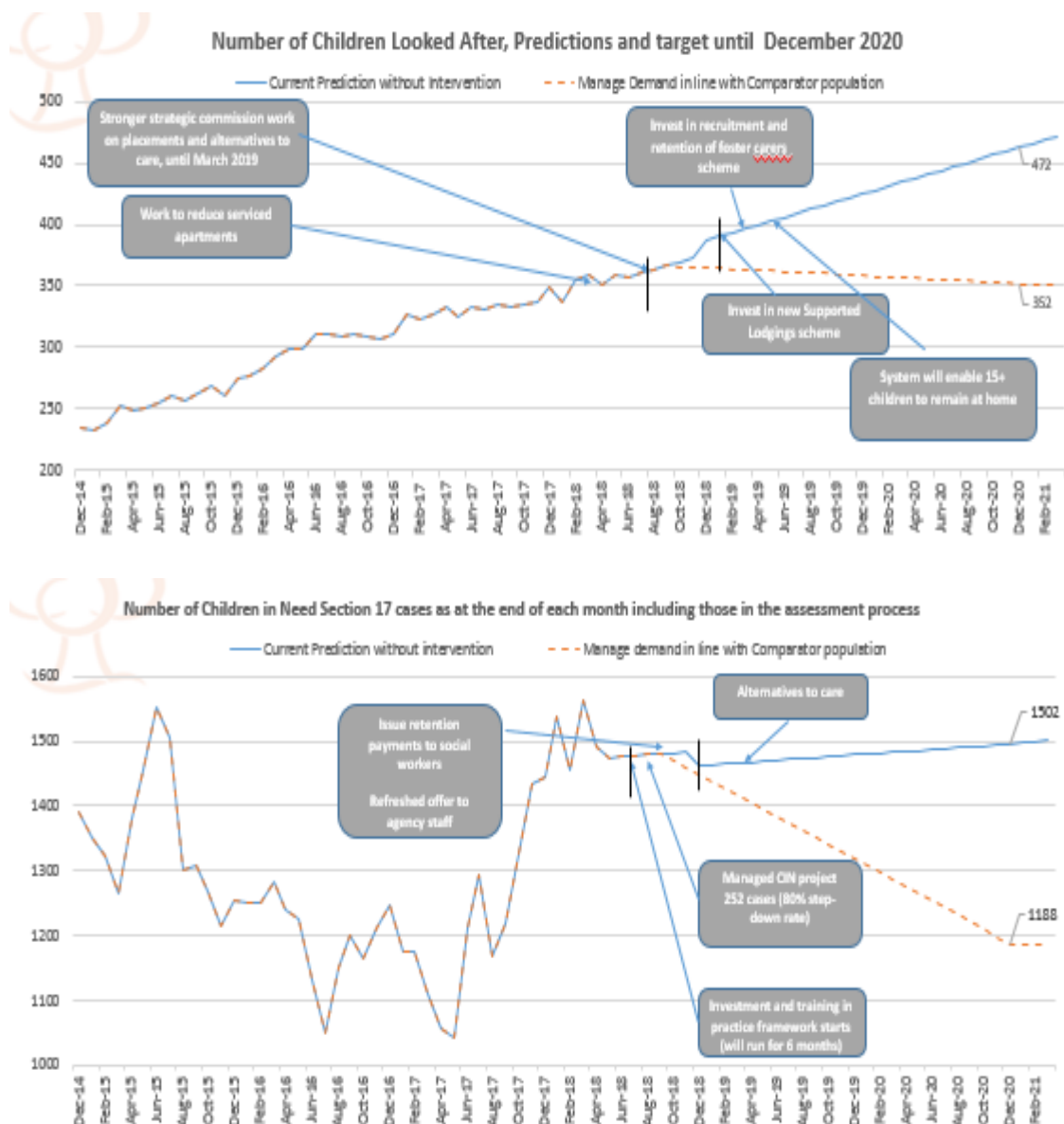
3.1.2 Remaining child centred with a whole family approach

3.1.3 Working quickly and effectively towards reunification or permanency for those children who become looked after

3.1.4 Helping all vulnerable young people develop personal and social skills to live successfully and independently and be happy

3.2 The detailed analysis of need in appendix 1, alongside a number of independent diagnostics and service reviews, have identified several key challenges that we face in achieving sufficiency (see graphs below). We recognise there are too many looked after children in the care of Swindon council. Inconsistency in decision making and not identifying the right intervention at the right time, alongside more complex need, has impacted led to more children becoming looked after. There is a need to ensure that the local authority has provision that enables children's needs to be met, and that prevention and early help are in place to support children where appropriate to remain within their family





3.3 Too many children in care are placed out of the council area. We need to offer more local accommodation, preferably in a family setting, so children and young people in care and care leavers are able to continue to live within or close to the Borough. For young people leaving care, we need to actively encourage them to remain looked after until they are 18 where it is appropriate. For those in foster placements, we will help them to ‘stay put’ in their placement after they are 18. Where this is not possible or appropriate, we will ensure that we have sufficient accommodation locally to meet their needs including support to enable smooth transition to independent living. We need to work with key providers of specialist provision, and, in doing so, it is essential we achieve much better value in terms of quality, price, unit costs and outcomes across all provision.

3.4 The key areas we have identified to address our sufficiency needs include:

- Adopt a more holistic approach to commissioning and procurement across universal and specialist services to provide a greater scope for innovation,

improve placement choice when a child needs to be looked after, and reduce costs.

- Actively managing the external market to increase placement choice and provide the opportunity to negotiate costs and effectively target placements to meet assessed needs
- Using soft block placement contracts with fostering and residential providers as well as local and regional frameworks to support more creative and efficient commissioning arrangements
- Developing comprehensive and robust quality assurance and contract monitoring processes to ensure placements are good quality and focussed on delivering outcomes.
- Developing more robust financial management processes to scrutinise value for money and budget management ensuring true costs of placements are tracked
- Adopting a personal budget approach to fund more creative placement solutions for the most complex placement requirements
- Increasing local placement capacity by growing the internal foster care resource and improve the support and offer to foster carers in Swindon
- Strengthening children's role in influencing placements and commissioning decisions.
- Strengthening and support practice, so the right children at the right time are in our care
- Further integrating commissioning arrangements across Health, Education and Social Care
- Providing edge of care support for families as an alternative to care including overnight crisis accommodation to prevent the child/children becoming looked after
- Providing more placements locally for children and young people who present with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs and challenging behaviour, children who are at risk of exploitation, and children who repeatedly go missing from care
- Providing more placements locally for unaccompanied asylum- seeking children
- Providing placements that can access and support the young people to move successfully to independent settings post 18.

3.5 To respond to the challenges we face, we have identified the following five priorities which will inform our commissioning intentions going forward:

3.5.1 **Families will be supported to enable them to care for their own children including enabling children to return home from care where this is in the child's best interest** – we will be better at targeting effective and timely early help to support children and young people to stay with their parents or extended family so they only come into care where it is absolutely necessary and in the best interests of the child or young person.

- 3.5.2 **To Increase the capacity and range of local placement options so that more children who need to be looked after, do so within or close to the Swindon** – this will require the recruitment of more in-house foster carers as well as providing and commissioning more local placements
- 3.5.3 **Improve the quality and consistency of practice and support to meet the needs of children looked after, to achieve permanence and improve their care experiences and outcomes**– we will ensure decisions are timely and appropriate and secure permanence at the earliest opportunity. Our practice will be outcome focussed and consistently good everyday
- 3.5.4 **Improve market engagement and management of placements and secure value for money in relation to quality, price and outcomes** – we will review all our commissioning arrangements and ensure that all placements comply with legal duties and responsibilities, meet regulations and national minimum standards/quality standards as they relate to fostering, adoption and residential placements.
- 3.5.5 **Improve transition planning so children looked after who are eligible for adult services experience a seamless transition** – we will focus on the development of more creative packages of support to meet the needs of those children who are looked after and will be eligible for adult services to successfully prepare them for adulthood.

Our Sufficiency strategy is underpinned by the following principles:

- Wishes, feelings and meaningful participation of children will be sought and children and young people will be involved in placement decisions
- There is a diverse range of universal, targeted and specialist services which work together to better meet the needs of looked after children including the provision of preventative and early help services to support children to remain living with their families
- Children are placed within the local authority area where it is reasonably practical and where this is consistent with a child's needs and welfare
- Mechanisms are in place to ensure that professionals involved in placement decisions have sufficient knowledge and information about supply and quality of placements and availability of all specialist, targeted and universal support services in the area
- Continuously reviewing our commissioning approach to meet the most complex needs including health and therapeutic needs.
- Work collaboratively with neighbouring authorities through regional and sub-regional arrangements to plan the market and commission placements with independent providers to drive best value in terms of cost and outcomes.

- Promote permanence planning for all children from the start of the child's journey.
- Offer a range of accommodation options to care leavers who do not remain in 'staying put' arrangements including supported lodgings, support housing, semi-independent and independent living arrangements whilst ensuring young people have the right skills to manage the transition to adulthood successfully
- Support the market to deliver adequate quantities and more appropriate placement provision locally to respond to current and predicted demand
- Review the sufficiency strategy on an annual basis to ensure its adequacy and effectiveness to meet current and projected demand and how effectively children are being supported to return home when this is in the child's best interest.

4. Corporate Parenting Pledge

Swindon's corporate parenting pledge sets out its commitment and responsibilities as a corporate parent, which is to provide the best possible care and protection for children and young people in care. Every member and employee of the council has a duty to act for that child or young person in the same way that any good parent would act for their own child. This includes enhancing the quality of life of our children in care as well as simply keeping them safe.

5 Commissioning Direction

5.1 Approach

Swindon Borough Council (SBC) will adopt a whole systems approach to the commissioning and procurement of placements. To ensure choice and diversity, SBC will operate within a mixed economy of internal and external provision, commissioned through frameworks, spot and block purchasing arrangements. Regional and national framework tenders will be sought. All commissioning will be strategic and needs led with robust procurement and contract management processes embedded.

Placements will be made according to what placement can best meet the needs of the child or young person. The priority will be to drive up quality as well as ensure we intervene early to maximise the opportunity to de-escalate levels of need and provide greater stability and better outcomes for our children and young people.

We will work with independent reviewing officers and social workers to understand the individual needs, wishes and feelings of children and young people for each individual placement search. We will work directly with the Children in Care Council and the Care Leavers Group when undertaking commissioning or development activity to ensure their views inform decision making.

5.2 National and Regional Collaboration

SBC will build strategic relationships with other local authorities to identify opportunities for tactical based commissioning using frameworks and block contracts to drive efficiencies. SBC will maximise the use of regional forums to share best practice and seek creative solutions to meet placement needs and improve outcomes for children and young looked after who have complex needs and are difficult to place.

5.3 Local Placements for Local Children

The priority is for children and young people to remain living locally so they can maintain contact with family, friends, school, as well as health and social care professionals. The ambition is for at least 90% of all children looked after to be placed within 20 miles of Swindon. The current proportion is 75%. Swindon will work collaboratively with the provider market and with regional authorities to ensure that the use of local placements for local children is maximised. There are currently 73 in-house registered households in Swindon and there is a recruitment drive to increase the numbers. We will also look at the opportunity for small scale block contracts to increase local placement capacity as well as undertake broader market development to improve co-ordination and placement planning locally.

6. Market Position and Sufficiency

6.1 Market Development Approach

To effectively shape the market, SBC will maintain a strong visible presence and consult directly with the market, providing a clear direction for what is required internally and externally to best meet the needs of our children and young people.

The market must be:

- Composed of a range of providers from across the sectors to achieve variety, sustainability and encourage competition
- Dynamic, flexible, creative and responsive – proactively adapting to changing demand and need
- Child-centred and outcome-focussed
- Efficient, effective and provide value for money

Swindon Borough Council will support the care market development through:

- Adopting an outcome-based approach to commissioning services and working with providers to develop and deliver person centred services
- Working with providers to ensure that they offer continuously improving, high-quality and innovative service provision supported by a highly-trained workforce
- Ensuring that local commissioning practices and services delivered comply with the legislative requirements

- Working with providers and wider stakeholders to develop a sustainable market for care and support
- Encouraging a diversity of providers and different types of services to meet a range of needs and to deliver a range of outcomes
- Having due regard to the sufficiency of provision, in terms of capacity and capability, to meet anticipated needs for children and young people requiring care and support
- Understanding the market through an increased knowledge, understanding and awareness of providers' businesses.

The provision of high quality care and support is a key outcome. It is important, particularly at a time when financial pressures are increasing, that the issue of quality is not overlooked. We recognise that the financial climate is a challenge too for providers and therefore we are committed to working collaboratively with providers to build relationships and trust in which honest and open support and challenge can take place. We will actively work with providers through our commissioning arrangements to strive for the highest standards of services. We will engage with provider forums to promote and develop quality and standards. Our approach to quality monitoring will be to openly challenge as well as offer support and solutions.

6.2 Targeted Early Intervention

Greater targeted and skilled intervention and support for parents who are struggling is required as there are increasing numbers of children coming into care in the last twelve months, many of whom would have benefitted from an edge of care service. Our aim in Swindon is to ensure that only those children come into care for whom this is the right decision, and this decision is made in a timely manner. When appropriate, other children will be supported at home through the provision of a step-up/ step down service to prevent family breakdown.

Although most councils have designed this to take place in the family home, short programmes of intensive help outside of the family home also provide good results. Academic and professional studies have shown that the maximum amount of time for edge of care to take place is 60 days. During this period, professionals working with the family can provide the necessary skills and structure to ensure a young person is able to remain at home or for those in care there is a focus on re-unification through building relationships and increasing parenting capacity. As part of stepping down from care services, the council has recently commissioned floating support for young people using the councils supported housing provision. This is proving to be a useful supplemental service for social workers and uptake is being promoted.

Swindon Family Service

The Family Service in Swindon supports families with children aged 0-19 years (or up to 25 for young adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities). It brings together the work of family centres, Early Help Hubs (including Youth Support

Services) and the Supporting Troubled Families Programme to provide a joined-up, whole-family service to those who are most in need, but who do not meet the threshold for statutory social care. Work is underway to further develop our use of Family Group Conferencing to better engage with families at the earliest opportunity to build resilience. Work is also underway to ensure processes are in place to support earlier identification of children on the edge of care.

Butterflies Family Centre

Butterflies Family Centre is commissioned by SBC to provide targeted support to Swindon families. The aim is to engage with families at the earliest possible identification of a problem to prevent escalation to more intrusive and costly statutory services. Butterflies undertakes extensive outreach work across Swindon to help children, young people and families build resilience and self-reliance and ensure the right help is given at the right time and the right place. It provides a range of services including one to one family support, groups for both parents and children and a range of parenting courses.

Edge of Care

SBC is considering a number of options for working with third parties to enhance our edge of care offer. This service will be key in helping to support children to remain at home. The edge of care service aims to build resilience within the family where it is possible and appropriate / safe to do so, thus preventing family breakdown.

6.3 SBC Placement Provision

Swindon Council is committed to maximising the effectiveness of internal provision and securing the best possible placement for every child and young person. Application of processes and standards will be consistently applied across internal and external provision.

Fostering

At 31 March 2018, 32.6% (117) of children looked after were placed with Swindon council foster carers. SBC has set a target to increase the number of foster households by 100 over the next 5 years. It is anticipated that this will enable more children to be placed locally. This will make it easier for the child to maintain contact with family and peers where appropriate, enable the child to access to local health and support services, and make management oversight and practice for both social workers and the virtual school less resource intensive. It is acknowledged that achieving the target will be challenging and take time. Interim external commissioning arrangements will therefore be progressed to secure local foster placements. SBC has a foster care improvement plan that outlines our approach to deliver our ambition. We recognise 'word of mouth' is one of the most effective recruitment strategies, so in Swindon we are promoting foster carer advocates, just as many local authorities, regularly involving existing carers in recruiting other carers. The Swindon offer to foster carers includes:

- Competitive remuneration and training
- Personal development through progression through 4 levels

- Peer support
- Foster carer caravan facility

In 2018/19, SBC is developing The Mockingbird Family Model (MFM) to support the development and retention of quality foster carers and to increase placement stability. This model is made up of six to ten homes in a constellation that are built around a hub home, which contains an experienced caregiver who can offer respite care, peer support, regular joint planning and social activities. The constellation provides a community of support and friendship for both the young people and the foster carers. Each constellation has its own supervising social worker, known as the liaison worker, who is the hub carers' main source of support, but they also act as the supervising social worker for everyone in that constellation. Simple issues such as respite are managed within the constellation and are referred to as "sleep overs", thus normalising the support being more like a family or friendship group.

Residential provision

SBC has only one residential home, which provides placements for severely disabled children. Swindon's demand for this type of service has meant that the provider enjoys full occupancy most of the time, with 1 place available from time to time. There are no other residential units within the borough. Consideration is being given to establishing a number of small group homes to offer short-term and long-term care to support children and young people with complex needs as well as enabling them to remain within their local area.

Transitions

The transition from a child to adult can take up to 9 years (according to associated legislation) and there is a need to start planning early to ensure a smooth transition to adult life. A more systematic joint approach needs to be taken.

Swindon Borough Council Adult Services, Health and Children's Services are working together on a 14+ Transitions Project, led by Adult Services. The focus is on identifying the needs of the cohort of young people likely to transition to a service in Adult Social Care at age 18 over the next 5 years to inform commissioning requirements to meet those needs. A Transitions Commissioning Strategy and Commissioning Outcomes Framework will be developed, with the purpose of commissioning services and placements that don't 'end' when a young person turns 18, and which could be jointly commissioned, and potentially jointly registered with CQC and Ofsted. Placements and services for young people age 14+ should include a clear focus on Preparing for Adulthood outcomes and where appropriate offer opportunities for preparing for work, employment and training. The work of the 14+ Transitions Project is focused on the development of an operational model or range of models of provision for transitions, so that young people can aspire to fulfilled lives, contribute to society and have reduced placement moves and disruption to their lives.

Analysis is being undertaken of placements of young people who transfer to Adult Social Care at 18. From this analysis, we are able to focus on the development of

more creative packages of support in order to meet their needs and prepare them successfully for adult life. This is supported by the introduction of Planning Live, a strength based 'discovery conversation' that captures the young person's voice, informs planning for the young person, and is being introduced incrementally across Swindon.

Adult Social Care have developed a Goal Planning Document to enable providers to set out the steps for a person's progression in a service, which can then be monitored and developed through the review process. This could be adapted to reflect Preparing for Adulthood outcomes for young people age under 18 in receipt of services.

Adult Services Commissioning are commissioning outcome based Supported Living Framework for people with Learning Disabilities, and are managing the price being paid for these services, whilst also attracting higher quality and a broader range of service provision. As part of the Framework, providers will be required to harness community assets and develop stronger networks in communities for people in receipt of those services. There is an opportunity that these services could be used for young people age 16+ who would not be transitioning to a service from Adult Social Care but who would benefit from this approach.

Staying Put for those leaving Care

In response to the duties within the Children and Families Act 2014, Swindon's Children's Services enable care leavers aged 18 to remain living with their former foster carer under 'staying put' arrangements. Care leavers have the opportunity to 'stay put' under these arrangements until their 21st birthday as 'former relevant' care leavers. Foster carers become former foster carers under these voluntary arrangements and the local authorities promote and support arrangements between the parties. There are no conditions that the young person must be in education, training or employment to access supported lodgings, however if they are completing an education or training course, the arrangement may continue until the completion of the course.. All young people will receive support in entering meaningful activities preparing them for education, training and employment. Swindon currently has 10 staying put arrangements in place.

The Swindon Leaving Care Team currently works with 170 care leavers and provides support to a further 93 young people aged 16 -18. Our Leaving Care Service is working to improve pathway planning and partnership working,

Fee paid foster carers do not receive a skills fee once the young person is 18 years old. For those placements within independent fostering agencies, there is negotiation around funding post 18 as current contracts do not define arrangements. In both cases, if the young person is eligible to claim housing benefit they are expected to do so in order to contribute towards the cost of the staying put arrangement. The impact of changes in legislation for young people means that Staying Put is an attractive option as they are supported financially for a longer period of time. National research has identified that care leavers often take longer to achieve successful independent living and will often return to education and training as they get older (*"Staying Put " Arrangements for Care Leavers aged 18*

and above to stay on with their former foster carers. Ref: DFE-00061-2013)

6.4 External Placement Provision

The external market meets a significant proportion of Swindon's placement needs. The local authority does not have any block contracts except for Key2 so the majority of placements are purchased through spot purchasing arrangements. The Placement Service is responsible for procuring and quality assuring placements as well as managing the contracts. A greater focus is needed on engaging and managing the external market, building relationships with providers, better targeting and monitoring of placements, and feedback mechanisms to enable children to voice their views on their placements.

South West Sub Regional Consortium

Swindon is a member of the North Region of the South West Fostering consortium which procured a framework contract for standard, complex (primarily disability and health issues), and parent and child placements. This framework does not cover short breaks for disabled children. Bristol is the lead authority and has led on the commissioning and procurement for this contract. Swindon has not been an active partner and needs to participate more actively with the consortium to benefit from the lower prices on the framework.

Swindon is also a member of the South West Regional Residential Care consortium. This is a dynamic purchasing system for the procurement of independent residential child care. It does not include residential provision linked to schools. Swindon Council is required to sign its own framework agreement contract with each provider and is responsible for managing and monitoring the providers we use directly. Information from monitoring is shared with the consortium. The DPS opens at 6 monthly intervals to allow new entrants to the market place.

Children's Cross Regional Arrangements Group (CCRAG)

Swindon is a partner of the CCRAG hosted by Hertfordshire County Council. Members commit to working together to develop and implement effective and consistent working practices. The partnership maintains the CCRAG Provider's Database, which supports the sourcing, contracting, monitoring and annual fee negotiations for children's placements. The database provides a facilitated market place for residential childcare, IFAs and residential schools with registered children's homes as their means of providing accommodation. The database holds information about providers such as prices, vacancies, Ofsted registration and grade, quality assurance information, insurance and maps and distance ratings to support local authorities to find provision local to their area/region. Local Authorities use the database to undertake a search for a placement and then spot purchase directly from the provider. It provides a platform to support placement decisions and get best outcomes for children and young people. SBC needs to make better use of this resource going forward.

Semi Independent provision

Children's services have a block contract with Key2 which provides 10 semi-independent Placements. Additional placements are also available from the block

contracts commissioned by Adult services for Supported Housing. Adult services also commission floating support for young people and young person's outreach. These services provide support to young people in their own homes to either sustain independent living or move to more appropriate housing in a sustained way. As at March 2018, there were 45 care leavers receiving support from these services. SBC is also planning to further expand the Shared Lives/ Supported Lodging Carer Model. In order for young people to be successful in this type of provision, it is important that planning and gaining skills and capabilities to live independently are gained as teenagers and this becomes a focus of earlier in care placements.

7. Contract Management

An Individual Placement Agreement (IPA) is issued for all commissioned placements and this forms a contractual agreement between the local authority and the provider. The IPA provides details on specific aspects of the placement, the expected outcomes, fees and consenting signatures from the local authority and the provider.

Meetings should be held with all providers of commissioned placements at least every six months and consider the following areas: contract and compliance monitoring, performance management, business development, individual placements, feedback from social care, health and education, young people, opportunities for improvement/increased value for money and negotiations on the level of support being provided. The children's placements team has not been monitoring placements due to a lack of capacity and expertise. This is being rectified by senior leaders.

8. Quality Assurance

Through robust commissioning and quality assurance processes, SBC will ensure that all children looked after are accessing well matched, high quality and value for money care placements. Quality assurance visits will be proportionate to risk and informed by performance, business viability, inspection judgements, history, complexity of current placements and cost. Placement feedback will also be gathered from social workers, independent reviewing officers, and children and young people to support the quality assurance processes. Clear improvement plans will be required by the provider when quality concerns are identified.

It is Swindon Borough Council's ambition to only place with Ofsted judged 'Good' and 'Outstanding' providers. Service specifications will detail the standards for what constitutes good practice as set out in Ofsted inspection schedules for quality placement. Providers who wish to apply to care for Swindon's children and young people will be required to meet these standards.

9. Adoption

In June 2015, the Government set out provision for the creation of Regional Adoption Agencies (RAAs) to deliver adoption services across multiple local authority. The RAAs would provide for the recruitment, matching and supporting of adopters with

local authorities preparing the way for the children to be adopted. Swindon chose Adopt Thames Valley (ATV) as its shared service partnership and joined Bracknell Forest, Oxfordshire, West Berkshire, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Wokingham and Reading) and two Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAAs) PACT and Barnardo's. The service is hosted by Oxfordshire CSD and Swindon is served by their North team Oxfordshire. The team maintains a presence at the Lyndhurst Centre. The Permanence team provides post adoption (and in future SGO) support to adoption families. The service is overseen by the partnership board currently chaired by the DCS West Berkshire.

In previous years adoptions were fairly low but last year 2016/17 43 children were allocated with ATV social workers for adoption and family finding. This year 4 children have been adopted, 14 have been matched and placed, 11 children are unlikely to be adopted for various reasons and 19 are in various stages of family finding. It would be reasonable to assume that Swindon is likely to have 20+ children in various stages of family finding for the foreseeable future. ATV have resourced the family finding from amongst their teams and progress will be monitored at quarterly monitoring. The cost of this level of family finding and placement is subject to scrutiny by ATV and Council representatives. An internal analysis of children with placement orders indicates 11 children can be withdrawn from ATV's family finding caseload; they are predominantly placed with foster families and the orders can be revoked.

10. Key Priorities and Actions

We intend to increase the percentage of children currently in care for whom coming into care is the right decision at the right time. This means investing in the right support at the right time for children and families across early help and on the edge of care. It is our intention to develop and commission a range of preventative and support services/interventions to deliver on our four strategic priorities set out below. These priorities have been informed by national and local policy, views of stakeholders and professionals, evidence of good practice and the local needs analysis.

Priority 1 - Families will be supported to enable them to care for their own children including enabling children to return home from care where this is in the child's best interest.

Priority 2 - To Increase the capacity and range of local placement options so that more children who need to be looked after, do so within or close to the Swindon

Priority 3 - Improve the quality and consistency of practice and support to meet the needs of children looked after, to achieve permanence and improve their care experiences and outcomes

Priority 4 – Improve market engagement and management of placements and secure value for money in relation to quality, price and outcomes.

Priority 5 - Improve transition planning so children looked after who are eligible for adult services experience a seamless transition

The priority Actions for 2018/20

The actions for implementing our sufficiency strategy are provided in the Children's Improvement Plan, known locally as the Pillar Plan. The Pillar Plan provides the detailed activities, timeline and leads alongside measurable and realistic targets to track the impact of our improvements. The Pillar Plan is monitored and progress regularly reported to relevant management boards as well as council committee meetings.

Appendix 1

The Profile of Children Looked After in Swindon

Understanding the profile of Swindon's children looked after population and forecasting future demand is integral to ensuring we provide appropriate services to meet the needs of children in care. The following analysis has been prepared to inform market development, re-shape our in-house provision, develop effective commissioning arrangements with external market (frameworks, block contracting and spot purchasing), and establish robust contract management and Quality Assurance arrangements (IPAs, IPCs, performance, business viability, inspection judgements, history, complexity of current placements, visits). Using the profile of needs of Swindon's children looked after will help us to consistently get the best placement, at the right time, in the right place.

Children in Care Rate per 10,000

Number of CLA per 10,000 under 18 population

	31 st March 2016	31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018
Swindon	60.0	66.0	73.27
Stat Neighbour average	60.6	62.2	-
England average	60.0	62.0	-

The number of looked after children per 10,000 under 18 population in Swindon is high when compared to statistical neighbours and England averages.

Age Distribution

Number of Children Looked After in Swindon by age group

	2015/16				2016/17				2017/18			
	Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
U1	7	53.85%	6	46.15%	8	44.44%	10	55.56%	13	61.90%	8	38.10%
1 to 4	23	52.27%	21	47.73%	22	44.00%	28	56.00%	29	47.54%	32	52.46%
5 to 9	24	50.00%	24	50.00%	35	50.72%	34	49.28%	35	46.05%	41	53.95%
10 to 15	59	51.75%	55	48.25%	75	60.48%	49	39.52%	74	61.16%	47	38.84%
16+	42	57.53%	31	42.47%	39	59.09%	27	40.91%	44	54.32%	37	45.68%
TOTAL	155	53.08%	137	46.92%	179	54.74%	148	45.26%	195	54.17%	165	45.83%

Percentage of Children Looked After in Swindon by age group

	Under 1	1-4	5 - 9	10 -15	16 & over
Swindon (2018)	5.5%	17.2%	21.6%	33.6%	22.1%
Stat Neighbour average (2017)	5.0%	12.4%	17.5%	39.6%	25.4%
England average (2017)	5.3%	12.6%	19.4%	39.3%	23.4%

There has been a noticeable increase in the number of children aged 1- 4 years and 5 to 9 years looked after since 2016. The percentages of looked after children in the 1-4 age group is above the averages for statistical neighbour and England overall. The likelihood of returning children in these age groups to their birth families or achieving permanency through adoption or special guardianship is greater than for the older children.

Ethnicity

Ethnic profile of children looked after

	31 March 2016	31 March 2017	31 March 2018	Stat N 2017	Eng 2017
White	82.2% (240)	78.6% (257)	77.0% (281)	77.7%	74.7%
Mixed	6.2% (18)	6.1% (20)	5.2% (19)	6.2%	9.1%
Asian	6.8% (20)	6.4% (21)	7.7% (28)	3.4%	4.7%
Black	3.4% (10)	2.8% (9)	6.0%(22)	5.5%	7.2%
Other Ethnic Minority	0.7% (2)	1.5% (5)	4.1% (15)	5.9%	3.4%
Other / Not Recorded	0.7% (2)	4.6% (15)	0.0% (0)	1.3%	0.9%
Total	100.0% (292)	100.0% (327)	100.0% (365)	100.0%	100.0%

There is an over representation of ethnic minority looked after children compared to the local population. Children and young people from minority ethnic groups account for 14% of all children living in the area, 23% of children looked after are from different ethnic minority groupings. The highest percentage of children are Asian, and 2018 has seen a rise in the number of children from the black ethnic grouping.

Legal status

Children looked after by Legal status

	31 March 2016	31 March 2017	31 March 2018	Stat N 2017	Eng 2017
Interim Care Order	14.7% (43)	16.2% (53)	11.5% (42)	12.7%	13.3%
Full care Order	33.9% (99)	39.8% (130)	39.9% (146)	47.2%	52.1%
Placement Order	6.5% (19)	10.7% (35)	10.9% (40)	7.7%	7.0%
Section 20	43.5% (127)	32.7% (107)	35.5% (130)	21.7%	21.3%
Child Protection Grounds	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.2% (8)	0.0%	0.1%
Youth justice Legal Status	1.4% (4)	0.6% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.2%	0.3%
Total	100% (292)	100% (327)	100% (366)	100.0%	100.0%

There is a larger proportion of children subject to Section 20 compared to the statistical neighbour and England averages. Under section 20 the parent has no access to legal advice, the child does not have a guardian, and the attachment between the parent and child is likely to be compromised over this period. There are also a high number of children on placement orders and the length of time these children have been subject to a placement order is too long.

Children looked after with a legal status of S20

Length of S20	S20's as at 31/03/2018							
	N1	N2	N3	N4	N5	N6	N8	Grand Total
Less than 6 months	37.7%	22.2%	50.0%	27.3%	33.3%	40.0%	41.7%	36.2%
6 to 12 months	29.5%	11.1%	50.0%	18.2%	22.2%	40.0%	16.7%	24.6%
12 to 18 months	13.1%	0.0%	0.0%	18.2%	11.1%	20.0%	4.2%	10.8%
18 months +	19.7%	66.7%	0.0%	36.4%	33.3%	0.0%	37.5%	28.5%

Category of Need	Description
N1	Abuse or neglect – children in need as a result of, or at risk of, abuse or neglect
N2	Child's Disability – children and their families whose main need for services arises out of the child's disabilities, illness or intrinsic condition
N3	Parental illness or disability
N4	Family in acute stress – children whose needs arise from living in a family going through a temporary crisis such that parenting capacity is diminished and some of the children's needs are not being adequately met
N5	Family dysfunction – children whose needs arise mainly out of their living with families where the parenting capacity is chronically inadequate
N6	Socially unacceptable behaviour – children and families whose need for services arises primarily out of their children's behaviour impacting detrimentally on the community
N8	Absent parenting – children whose need for services arises mainly from having no parents available to provide for them. Children whose parents decide it is in the best interest for the child to be adopted would be included in this category

The majority of children who have had a section 20 for 18+ months fall under the need category of child's disability (N2).

Admissions

Number and % of Children becoming Looked After in Swindon by age group

Age Group	31 March 2016	31 March 2017	31 March 2018	SN 2017	England 2017
U1	25 (14.0%)	29 (16.2%)	31(17.1%)	18.1%	18.2%
1-4	36 (20.1%)	40 (22.3%)	41 (22.7%)	18.7%	18.3%
5-9	30 (16.8%)	38 (21.2%)	34 (18.8%)	15.6%	17.7%
10-15	69 (38.5%)	54 (30.2%)	48 (26.5%)	27.7%	28.6%
16+	19 (10.6%)	18 (10.1%)	27 (14.9%)	19.9%	17.2%
TOTAL	179 (100%)	179 (100%)	181 (100%)	100%	100%

Between March 2016 and 2018, there has been an increase in the proportion of babies and young children becoming looked after between birth and 4 years. An increasing proportion of 16 and over year olds have also become looked after rising from 10.6% (19 young people) to 14.9% (27 young people). Early permanence planning is key for securing permanent alternative care for babies and young children. Although all age groups would benefit from an edge of care service, the older age groups are often targeted for edge of care support. By providing 'edge of care support', professionals can work collaboratively with the families to develop the necessary skills and structure to secure re-unification into the family home.

Returning children to their birth or extended families is a good outcome when it is safe to do so. Following a decline in 2017, more children in 2018 have been discharged to their parents or Special Guardianships. Permanency arrangements through adoption have improved since 2016 but remains lower than the average for statistical neighbours and England overall.

Length of time in care (by age group)

Length of time in care	Age range										Grand Total	
	U1		1 to 4		5 to 9		10 to 15		16+			
Under 1 month	2	9.5%	1	1.6%	1	1.3%	3	2.5%	3	3.7%	10	2.8%
1 to 3 months	8	38.1%	7	11.5%	12	15.8%	11	9.1%	7	8.6%	45	12.5%
4 to 6 months	6	28.6%	10	16.4%	4	5.3%	6	5.0%	4	4.9%	30	8.3%
7 to 12 months	5	23.8%	10	16.4%	15	19.7%	13	10.7%	6	7.4%	49	13.6%
13 to 18 months	0	0.0%	13	21.3%	4	5.3%	8	6.6%	10	12.3%	35	9.7%
19 to 24 months	0	0.0%	5	8.2%	14	18.4%	14	11.6%	7	8.6%	40	11.1%
2 to 3 years	0	0.0%	12	19.7%	15	19.7%	22	18.2%	13	16.0%	62	17.2%
3 to 5 years	0	0.0%	3	4.9%	6	7.9%	17	14.0%	15	18.5%	41	11.4%
5+ years	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	6.6%	27	22.3%	16	19.8%	48	13.3%

Reasons for children coming into care

Measure	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		National Indicator 2016/17
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	%
Abuse or neglect (N1)	159	54.5%	195	59.6%	223	61.9%	62%
Child's Disability (N2)	18	6.2%	13	4.0%	16	4.4%	3%
Parental illness or disability (N3)	13	4.5%	13	4.0%	19	5.3%	3%
Family in acute stress (N4)	36	12.3%	37	11.3%	31	8.6%	8%
Family dysfunction (N5)	46	15.8%	42	12.8%	38	10.6%	15%
Socially unacceptable behaviour (N6)	5	1.7%	6	1.8%	6	1.7%	2%
Absent Parenting (N8)	15	5.1%	21	6.4%	27	7.5%	7%
Grand Total	292	100.0%	327	100.0%	360	100.0%	100%

The main reasons for children being in care in 2017/18 was due to abuse or neglect (62%). There are 64 more children in care due to abuse or neglect compared to 3 years ago.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers (UASC)

Swindon has been a dispersal area for UASCs for several years. The number of unaccompanied asylum seekers accommodated has increased from 13 in March 2016 to 25 in March 2018.

Child Exploitation

Swindon has 9 young people in care or care leavers who have been assessed as being at risk of or have been subject to child sexual exploitation (CSE). The ages of this cohort are 14 years (1), 16 years (4) and 17 years (4). Five of these young people are in placements outside Swindon.

Swindon has 7 young people in care or care leavers who have been assessed as being at risk or have been subject to criminal exploitation (CE). Five of these children are 16 years old and two are 17 years old. All these children are in placements in Swindon.

Placements profile

Children looked after by placement type

Placement Type	31 March 2016	31 March 2017	31 March 2018
Connected persons fostering	12.67% (37)	12.84% (42)	15.88% (57)
In-house fostering	51.4% (150)	44.9% (147)	32.6% (117)
IFA	19.5% (57)	24.2% (79)	36.5% (131)
Residential	7.2% (21)	7.9% (26)	8.9% (32)
Placed with parents	3.1% (9)	5.5% (18)	2.8% (10)
Independent Living	3.4% (10)	2.5% (8)	2.8% (10)
Placed for adoption	2.0% (6)	1.5% (5)	0.3% (1)
Secure	0.7% (2)	0.6% (2)	0.3% (1)
Total	100% (292)	100% (327)	100% (359)

The breakdown of placements by type indicate the vast majority of children looked after are placed in foster care (85%) which is consistent with SBC's commitment to place children in family-based arrangements. Of the 85%, 32.6% are in-house placements (including connected people, relatives or friends) and 36.5% with independent fostering agencies. 9% of children are placed in externally commissioned residential placements. A higher number of placements are with external providers than within the council's internal provision. Placements with external providers are significantly more expensive and therefore we are focussing on ways to broaden internal services to meet demand for placements. There are currently 76 in-house registered in-house foster carers and there is a recruitment drive to increase the number to reduce dependency on commissioned placements.

Children with disabilities by placement type

Placement Type	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018 to date	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Connected Person Fostering	2	6.90%	3	9.68%	5	11.9%	4	9.52%
In-house fostering	13	44.83%	9	29.03%	13	30.95%	10	23.81%
Independent fostering Agency	7	24.14%	9	29.03%	11	26.19%	10	23.81%
Residential	7	24.14%	10	32.26%	9	21.43%	12	28.57%
Placed with parents	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	3	7.14%	5	11.90%
Independent living	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	2.38%	1	2.38%
Placed for adoption)	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Secure	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Grand Total	29	100.0%	31	100.0%	42	100.0%	42	100.0%

Location and distance from home

Number and % of children placed more than 20 miles from their home

Number and % of children placed more than 20 miles from their home	31 st March 2016 [31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018
Swindon	19%	22%	23.1%
Stat Neighbour average	13.2%	12.7%	-
England average	14%	14%	-

When compared with statistical neighbours and the rest of the country, too many looked after children are placed more than 20 miles away from their home. This has implications for the child and family in terms of maintaining contact, accessing health and support services, as well as impacting on oversight and practice for both social workers and the virtual school.



Age breakdown of children placed more than 20 miles from their home	31 st March 2018 Count	31 st March 2018 %
Under 1	7	8.4%
1 to 4	9	10.8%
5 to 9	14	16.9%
10 to 15	35	42.2%
16+	18	21.7%

Gender breakdown of children placed more than 20 miles from their home	31 st March 2018 Count	31st March 2018 %
Female	31	37.3%
Male	52	62.7%

Duration of CLA breakdown of children placed more than 20 miles from their home	31 st March 2018 Count	31st March 2018 %
Less than 1 month	2	2.4%
1 to 3 months	9	10.8%
4 to 6 months	5	6.0%
7 to 12 months	8	9.6%
1 to 2 years	18	21.7%
2+ years	41	49.4%

Placement Stability

Stability of Placements

	31 st March 2016	31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018 (provisional)	Statistical Neighbour (2017)	England (2017)
% of Long Term CLA placements stable for at least 2 years	61%	70%	51.85%	72.7%	70%
% of CLA who have had 3 or more placements – rolling 12 months	11%	12%	10.5%	9.5%	10%

The best outcomes are achieved for those children and young people who remain in a stable and consistent placements. This provides them with the opportunity to have long standing relationship with adults and peers. Although children who have experienced three or more placements is in line with national and statistical neighbour averages, long term stability continues to show signs of decrease. Capacity issues within the social work service, lack of in-house foster care provision, and a lack of locally commissioned external care for children with challenging behaviour has affected long term stability.

Episodes of Care

There were 519 young people who became looked after between April 2015 and March 2018, of which 34 had more than one episode of being in care over the three year period (6.5%). 64.7% of those who have had more than one episode of being in care are males (22 out of the 34).

The health of Children Looked After for more than a year

Data	Year ending 31/3/16		Year ending 31/3/17		Year ending 31/3/18
	Swindon data	National %	Swindon data	National %	Swindon data
Number of children looked after for more than a year on 31 st March	169	N/A	202	N/A	229
% of children who had a review health assessment completed	89% (150)	90%	87% (177)	89%	79.4% (182)
% of children who had a dental check completed	90% (152)	84%	90% (182)	83%	82% (188)
% who have immunisations up to date	87% (148)	87%	79.5% (161)	84%	87.3% (200)
% of Strength and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQ) completed for eligible children	85%	68%	82%	76%	81%
Average SDQ score	14.6	13.9	14.3	14.1	15

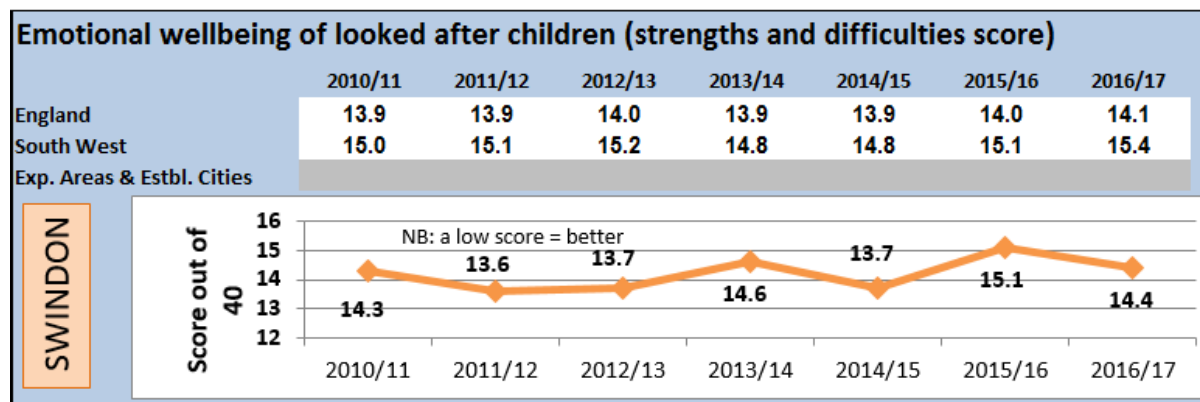
The percentage of children with completed health reviews and dental checks has declined but uptake of immunisation has increased since 2016.

Delays in identifying and meeting the emotional wellbeing and mental health needs of looked after children can have far-reaching effects on all aspects of children's lives, including their ability to engage in education. As a result, their chances of reaching their full potential as adults can be hampered. The emotional and behaviour health of looked after children in Swindon continues to have a higher average SDQ score than England. The new contract with Oxford Health for Child and Adolescent Services should address the mental health needs of looked after children going forward. The commissioning by Swindon CCG of Kooth (an online resource) to support the emotional well-being of children should also have a positive impact.

Every child is expected to have an initial health assessment within 20 working days of coming into care. This ensures a child's health needs are known as soon as possible so that a health care plan can be put in place to address these needs. There has been a significant improvement in children having timely assessments with 83% of health assessments being offered within 20 working days of health being informed, and 83% completed within 20 working days. Performance is affected by late notification from social workers that a child has become looked after, and carers not bringing the child for their appointment.

Mental Health

Mental health difficulties for children in care aged 4 -17 years, are monitored nationally using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) to screen for mental health and emotional wellbeing levels. (The lower the score the less likely that the child is suffering from mental health or emotional problems. Score 0 -13 low need, 14 -16 borderline, and 17 – 40 high need.)



STEP Therapeutic Service

This service provides support and life skills development / learning opportunities for children & young people who have considerable vulnerabilities, including; sufferers of physical / emotional abuse and / or neglect, primary family carers, self-harmers, those in care, with mental health issues, experiencing poverty and deprivation, as well as isolation and exclusion due to either circumstances or behaviour. During 2017/18, the service supported eight looked after children and following intervention their SDQ scores lowered to an average of 12%.

TaMHS

Number of TaMHS involvements opening in the financial year where the CYP was LAC or became LAC during the TaMHS involvement

Year	Involvements
2016/17	82
2017/18	62
2018/19 (01/04/2018 to 04/09/2018)	31
Total 01/04/2016 to 04/09/2018	175

Number of TaMHS involvements opening where the CYP was LAC or became LAC during the TaMHS involvement by Primary Involvement Reason, 01/04/2016 to 04/09/2018

Reason	Involvements
Aggression	27
Anxiety	25
Attachment	24
Autistic Spectrum Presentation	8
Behaviour	21
Bereavement / Loss	4
Deliberate Self Harm	18
Development	4
Domestic Abuse/Violence	7
Eating	1
Family Breakdown	10
Hyperkinetic	1
Learning Needs in School/SPLD	1
Low Mood	3
Low Self Esteem	3
Parenting	2
Sleep	1
Traumatic Life Event	15
Total	175

Number of TaMHS involvements opening where the CYP was LAC or became LAC during the TaMHS involvement by Age, 01/04/2016 to 04/09/2018

Age at involvement open date	Involvements
1	3
2	1
3	2
4	8
5	4
6	9
7	7
8	6
9	18
10	10
11	14
12	22
13	18
14	21
15	14
16	9
17	9
Total	175

Swindon CAMHS LAC data (Jan 16 to June 18)

Referrals with LAC alert Jan 2016 to June 2018 by year

Year	Referrals
2016	80
2017	63
2018 to 30 June	41
Grand Total	184

Referrals with LAC alert by "referral reason", Jan 2016 to June 2018

Reason*	Referrals
Anxiety	1
Assessment	94
Eating Disorder	1
Gender Discomfort Issues	1
In Crisis	71
Neuro Developmental conditions	3
Relationship difficulties	2
Self harm behaviours	5
Treatment	6
Grand Total	184

*Referral reason is added by administration staff and not frequently amended later by clinicians.

The current caseload for Swindon CAMHS as at 1 July 2018 with a LAC alert is 53

Discharges from Care

Reason for care ceased	31 March 2016	31 March 2017	31 March 2018	Stat N 2017	Eng 2017
Placed with parent	44.9% (62)	29.7% (44)	33.6% (51)	22.8%	29.1%
Child Arrangement Order	3.6% (5)	6.8% (10)	5.3% (8)	3.0%	4.1%
Special guardianship	8.7% (12)	12.8% (19)	15.8% (24)	11.6%	12.6%
Adopted	4.3% (6)	12.8% (19)	10.5% (16)	15.7%	14.9%
Independent Living	3.6% (5)	1.4% (2)	2.6% (4)	26.0%	15.6%
Residential	2.9% (4)	4.1% (6)	7.2% (11)	2.7%	1.9%
Custody	2.2% (3)	0.7% (1)	2.0% (3)	1.1%	1.4%
Other	29.7% (41)	31.8% (47)	23.4% (35)	17.1%	20.4%
Total	100% (138)	100% (148)	100% (152)	100.0%	100.0%

Returning children to their birth or extended families is a good outcome when it is safe to do so. Following a decline in 2017, more children in 2018 have been discharged to their parents

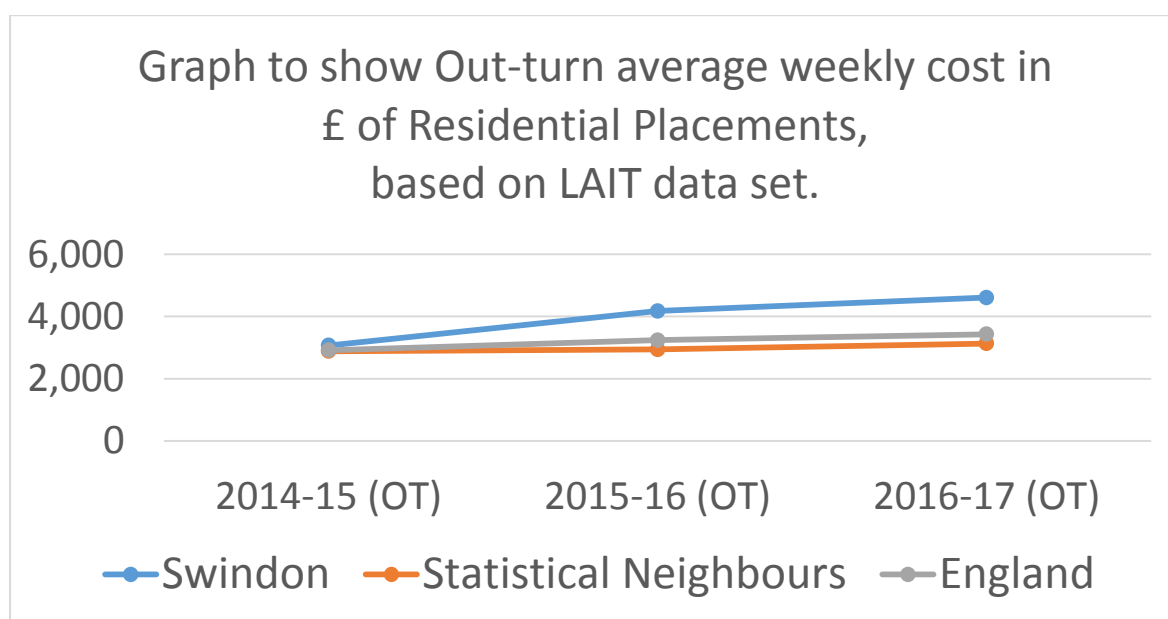
or special guardians. Permanency arrangements through adoption has improved since 2016 but remains lower than the average for statistical neighbours and England overall. However, timeliness of adoption has improved with an average of 569 days between a child coming into care and being placed for adoption.

Care Leavers

The Leaving Care Service is currently working with 170 Care Leavers and providing support to a further 93 young people aged 16 -18.

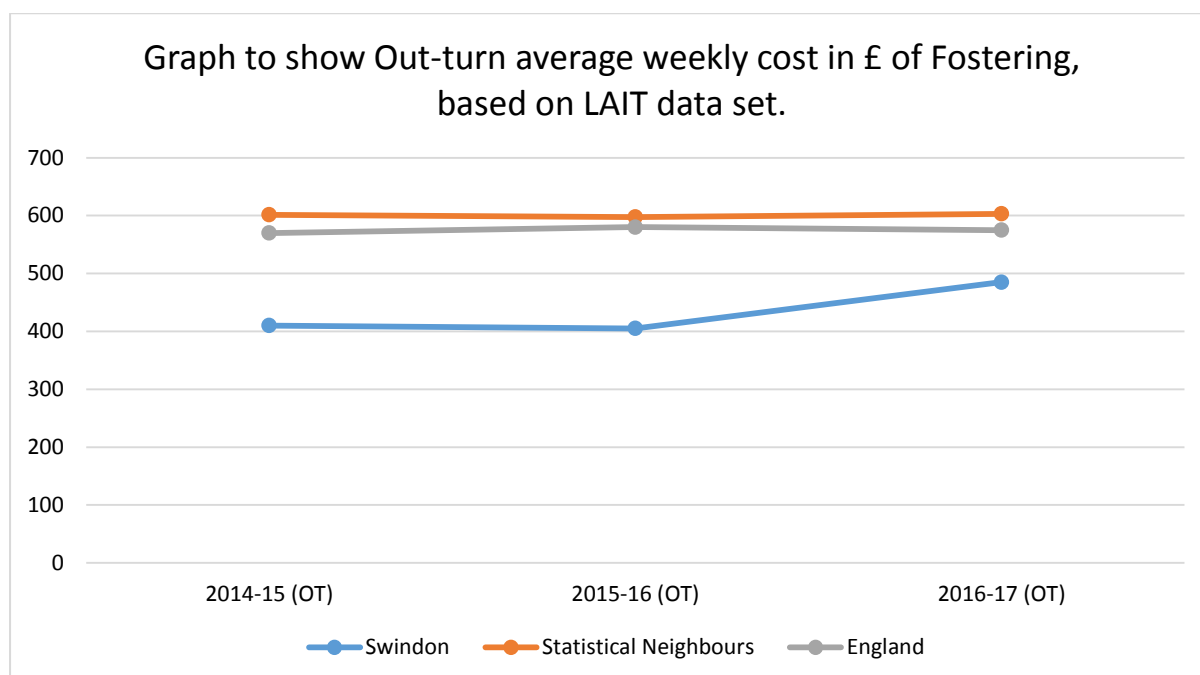
Financial Benchmarking

Residential Costs



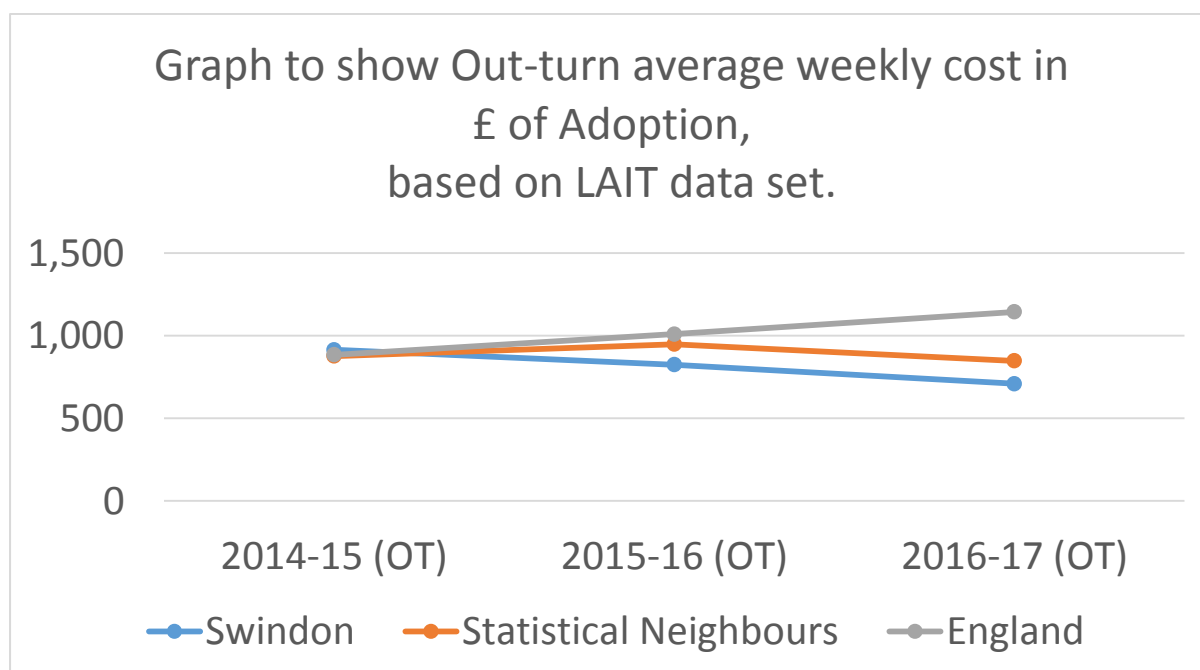
Swindon is an outlier for residential care weekly unit costs compared to both England average and statistical neighbours. For 2016/17, Swindon's costs were 12th highest compared to all authorities at £4,610 per week, England average was £3,430 and South West average was £3,685.

Fostering costs



Swindon is one of the lowest in the South West and is lower than the average for England for weekly unit cost for fostering (includes in-house and external fostering).

Adoption Costs



Swindon is at the lower end for adoption weekly unit cost when compared to the average for England and statistical neighbour.

Swindon Borough Council's Supported Employment Strategy

Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 10 October 2018

Author: Councillor Oliver Donachie and Councillor Brian Ford

Wards: All

Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 To seek the Health and Wellbeing Board's approval of Swindon Borough Council's Supported Employment Strategy 2018-2022 and to recommend that both Swindon Borough Council's Cabinet and the CCG Governing Body adopt and implement it.
- 1.2 Swindon Borough Council can play an important role in helping people with additional health and care needs who are in receipt of social care to find and maintain a job. Studies have shown a consistent association between paid employment and better physical and mental health (Public Health England 2018). Our Health and Wellbeing Strategy demonstrates a commitment across the partnership to ensure that everyone in Swindon lives a healthy, safe, fulfilling and independent life and is supported by thriving and connected communities. Many people will achieve this with minimal support, but some people will need help to do so. We recognise work plays a pivotal role in defining an individual's quality of life and should be an integral part of a person's overall life experience. With the right support, employment is an achievable goal for both people with care and support needs and young people leaving care. Our aim is to support these people into real jobs with the same terms and conditions as everybody else including pay, equal employee benefits, safe working conditions and opportunities for career advancement. We recognise that successful outcomes depend on strong and flexible partnership working and some significant cultural change ensure opportunities are available and to enable young people leaving care and adults with care and support needs to explore employment as a way of improving their quality of life. A copy of the strategy is attached as Appendix 1.
- 1.3 This strategy links to:
 - 1.3.1 Priority outcome 2 (adults and older people in Swindon are living healthier and more independent lives); Priority 3 (to improve health outcomes for disadvantaged and vulnerable communities, including adults with long term conditions, learning disabilities, physical disabilities or mental health problems); and Priority 4 (to improve mental health, wellbeing and resilience for all) as set out in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy
 - 1.3.2 Priority 2 (Offer education opportunities that lead to the right skills and right jobs in the right places) and Priority 4 (to help people to help themselves while always protecting our most vulnerable children and adults) outlined in the Council's 2016-2020 Plan: 'Vision for Swindon: How are we going to get there?'

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Phillipa Lamb, 07818510484, plamb@swindon.gov.uk

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- 1.3.3 The overall aims and objectives for ensuring vulnerable people are able to access employment is outlined in Swindon's Skills and Employment Strategy 2017-2020.

2. Recommendations

The Board is recommended to:

- 2.1 Approve Swindon Borough Council's Supported Employment Strategy 2018-2022 (attached at Appendix 1 to the report), and support the ongoing commitment to promote the benefits of employing people with additional health and care needs and Care Leavers for both the individual and the employer.
- 2.2 Recommend to Cabinet that it adopts Swindon Borough Council's Supported Employment Strategy 2018-2022.
- 2.3 Recommend to the CCG Governing Body that it adopts Swindon Borough Council's Supported Employment Strategy 2018-2022.

3. Detail

- 3.1 Supporting people with a disability into paid employment is both a national policy and local priority. The Government has committed to support 1 million more people with a disability into work over the next 10 years. The Government's Green Paper (October 2016) 'Improving Lives' highlighted that only 43% of working aged people with disabilities are in employment; 60% of working-age people with learning disabilities say they want to work – only 20% do; the number of people living with disabilities is rising; and working people are healthier.
- 3.2 National research has identified that people who start off working by volunteering or in a sheltered workshop, get stuck in those settings and rarely – if ever – progress into real, paid employment. Evidence also shows there are a range of benefits connected to being in employment including increased independence, improved mental health, and the ability to learn and develop.
- 3.3 National policy proposes a model of meaningful paid employment that uses individual's skills and talents and provides progression. Individuals with care and support needs are placed with an employer with training and support. Support is also available for the employer.
- 3.4 The need for key cultural and transformational change is highlighted and a drive to be more ambitious for disabled people (particularly those with Learning Disability). This includes raising aspirations from a young age and improving transition from education to work is a key area of focus, providing pathways and ensuring good preparation.

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- 3.5 Engagement and gaining commitment from employers – public, private, voluntary sectors is key to achieving the national ambition. There is also a drive to provide more effective employment support for people with disabilities.
 - 3.6 Many Local Authorities, including SBC currently invest in services for some groups. A number of Local Authorities are testing new supported employment models through the Innovation Fund.
 - 3.7 The Council's overarching vision is to increase the number of Swindon residents with health and care needs (particularly people with special educational needs/disabilities and care leavers) who gain and retain paid employment. The aim is to align Swindon's supported employment offer with the principles of the Government's Work and Health Programme. This means:
 - 3.7.1 Creating a climate of high expectation and aspiration of paid employment for Swindon's vulnerable residents. This requires shared corporate ownership and action from a range of key players from across the local authority.
 - 3.7.2 Ensuring there is effective transition from education (between 16-25 years) into employment and that young people are well prepared for work and have the appropriate support to sustain their employment.
 - 3.7.3 Ensuring there is a robust outcome focused approach to commissioning education, training, housing and support services that address the current barriers to employment, and leads to increased independence and improved employment outcomes.
 - 3.7.4 Engaging with the local business community to ensure that employment opportunities are available for Swindon residents with care and support needs and care leavers across a range of employment sectors, and employers have access to the support needed to ensure employees are successful
 - 3.7.5 Ensuring residents and the workforce have good quality up to date information on the employment services and support available, and that there are well understood pathways into employment in place.
 - 3.7.6 Ensuring the provision of a sustainable supported employment solution which aligns to the Council's priorities and maximises opportunities to use external and funding sources more creatively to deliver best value in terms of cost and outcomes.
 - 3.8 The strategy has been informed by national and local policy, views of stakeholders and professionals, and evidence of good practice from effective supported employment approaches for people with additional needs. It outlines a clear direction of travel in supporting Swindon's residents who have additional
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health and care needs into employment. These five objectives will form the basis of our action plan for implementing the strategy:

- 3.8.1 **Objective 1** - Ensure people with care and support needs have direct support to gain and sustain employment and clearly outline the role of Swindon Borough Council and other partners to deliver this
- 3.8.2 **Objective 2** - Ensure job seekers are prepared, confident and motivated to find work
- 3.8.3 **Objective 3** - Ensure employers are confident to employ people with care and support needs
- 3.8.4 **Objective 4** – Ensure the transition process from age 14 fosters a culture of high expectations and provides high quality person centred planning with clear pathways to employment
- 3.8.5 **Objective 5** – Ensure the workforce has the skills, knowledge and competencies to effectively deliver the supported employment offer
- 3.9 The strategy provides detailed headline priority outcomes for each objective which will support the delivery of Swindon's Supported Employment Offer.
- 3.10 The draft strategy was consulted on widely across the partnership and views from users, carers and young people were sought via Swindon SEND Families Voice and the Learning Disability Partnership Board. Overall feedback was positive and the strategy was welcomed, although it was recognised that changing the mind-set to deliver the strategy would be a challenge. The consultation report is attached as an appendix 2.
- 3.11 Enterprise Works (which included an element of supported employment and supported internship) was reviewed against the model outlined in the strategy to support individuals into meaningful paid employment that uses their skills and talents and provides progression. The decision was made to transfer the 'Supported Employment and Supported Internships' arm of Enterprise works to SBC's Skills and Employment Team who have responsibility for implementing Swindon's Skills and Employment Board Strategy. This includes the Building Bridges programme which supports unemployed people make their first steps back to employment. The next phase of work includes the development of a sustainable business model for Enterprise Works to increase income, deliver goods and services efficiently, and to adopt an approach that aligns with the Supported Employment strategy and helps individuals to progress to open paid employment.
- 3.12 A detailed action plan is in development to sit alongside the strategy setting out how we will work in partnership with our key stakeholder to ensure successful implementation. We are in the process of setting specific, measurable, and

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realistic local targets which will be monitored and reported regularly to the relevant partnership boards and council committee meetings.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 There are no suggested alternative options. This Supported Employment Strategy is key to delivering better outcomes for individuals living in Swindon with additional health and care needs as we as reduce demand on adult services.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The Council already provides resources to fund Supported Employment provision. Plans are in place to reduce the cost of such services to the Council and maximise the use of external funding. No further financial resources are being sought at this time.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 Legal and Human Rights considerations have been taken fully into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the recommendations of this report are compatible with Convention Rights

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 None have been identified at this stage

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.4 A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) has been completed as part of the Adult Social Care Demand Management Programme. No adverse or other significant issues were found. The Supported Employment Strategy will positively impact on vulnerable adults and Care Leavers living in Swindon's community.

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5.5 Risk Management

Risks and mitigating actions have been identified in the Project Plan – SF to confirm terminology. Risk Description	Risk Category	Impact of Risk Being Realised	Impact Score	Probability Score	Risk Index Rating	Risk Realisation Date	Mitigation
Project not delivering the required savings or staying within cost envelope	Commercial / Financial	Replan how to achieve savings	4	2	8	27/06/2018	Regular meetings and close monitoring
Projected income not claimed	Commercial / Financial	Replan how to achieve savings	4	2	8	27/06/2018	Regular monitoring
Project not delivering against milestones	Schedule/Delivery	Delay in benefit realisation	3	2	6	27/06/2018	Regular meetings and close monitoring
Project not delivering against outcomes	Schedule/Delivery	Replan how to achieve savings, Increase in costs to ASC	3	2	6	27/06/2018	Regular meetings and close monitoring
Referrals of priority residents not forthcoming	Schedule/Delivery	Reduction of impact to adult social care costs	3	2	6	27/06/2018	Regular monitoring, engagement plan with teams

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The strategy has been consulted on widely with stakeholders from across the partnership (see consultation report in Appendix 2 for complete list). Key stakeholders who have provided input include: Swindon Borough Council's Corporate Management Team, Director of Adult Social Care, Director of Adults (DASS), Director of Public Health, Head of Social Work, Head of Commissioning (Adults), Head of Transitions, Regulated Services Manager, Head of Finance (Adults), Corporate Director of Children's Services (DCS), Healthwatch and the

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Voluntary Sector, LD Partnership Board, Swindon SEND Families Voice, Councillor Brian Ford, Councillor Oliver Donachie.

- 6.2 The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and the Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 The Council Plan 2016-2020
- 7.2 The Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- 7.3 Swindon's Skills and Employment Strategy 2017-2020

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 - Swindon Borough Council Supported Employment Strategy 2018-2022
- 8.2 Appendix 2 – Supported Employment Strategy Consultation Report

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Supported Employment Strategy for Swindon 2018-2022

Our vision is that all young people and adults living in Swindon have the opportunity and support to gain sustained paid employment or volunteering

September 2018

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Supported Employment Strategy 2018-2022 sets out Swindon's ambitions for supporting young people and adults with care and support needs to secure and retain employment. Councils can play an important role in helping people with a disability who are in receipt of social care to find and maintain a job, at the same time as managing future demand for council-funded social care and helping employers to benefit from a more diverse workforce.
- 1.2 We recognise work plays a pivotal role in defining an individual's quality of life and should be an integral part of a person's overall life experience. Studies have shown a consistent association between paid employment and better physical and mental health (Public Health England 2018). Research into the cost-effectiveness of supported employment for adults with a learning disabilities has shown that supported employment (but not voluntary work experience) is cost-effective in helping people in paid work (National Development Team for Inclusion 2014) With the right support, employment is an achievable goal for both people with care and support needs and young people leaving care. Our aim is to support these people into real jobs with the same terms and conditions as everybody else including pay, equal employee benefits, safe working conditions and opportunities for career advancement. We recognise that successful outcomes depend on strong and flexible partnership working to encourage young people leaving care and adults with care and support needs to explore employment as a way of improving their quality of life. Appendix A provides more information on how we aim to secure an effective supported employment model across Swindon using the evidence based model recommended by the British Association for Supported Employment (BASE: www.base-uk.org), and Appendix B outlines the 'Top Tips on Supported Employment' developed by ADASS and BASE. This strategy outlines six ambitions to help more young people and adults with care and support needs to gain and retain paid employment in the open market, or gain another meaningful employment related activity by:
 - 1.2.1 Creating a climate of high expectation and aspiration for achieving and sustaining paid employment for Swindon's residents with care and support needs and young people leaving care, through shared corporate ownership and action from a range of key players from across the local authority.
 - 1.2.2 Ensuring there is effective transition from education (between 16-25 years) into employment and that young people are well prepared for work and have the appropriate support to sustain their employment.
 - 1.2.3 Ensuring there is a robust outcome focused approach to commissioning education, training, housing and support services that address the current barriers to employment, and leads to increased independence and improved employment outcomes.
 - 1.2.4 Engaging with the local business community to ensure that employment opportunities are available for Swindon residents with care and support needs and care leavers across a range of employment sectors, and employers have access to the support needed to ensure employees are successful.

- 1.2.5 Ensuring residents and the workforce have good quality up to date information on the employment services and support available, and that there are well understood pathways into employment in place.
 - 1.2.6 Ensuring the provision of a sustainable supported employment solution which aligns to the Council's priorities and maximises opportunities to use external and funding sources more creatively to deliver best value in terms of cost and outcomes.
- 1.3 Primarily, this strategy is concerned with improving employment opportunities for care leavers and people with care and support needs who are eligible for social care. We will also signpost young people and adults who have additional needs but not reliant on specialist services, to organisations that can support them into employment. We will work with partners to ensure mainstream services are more accessible and effective in supporting individuals who are disadvantaged into employment.

2 National and Local and context

Legal Framework

- 2.1 There is a range of specific laws which provide a backdrop to the council's approach to supporting individuals with care and support needs into employment. The Disability Discrimination Act (2005) and the Equality Act (2010), the Care Act (enacted 2014, updated 2016) set a framework for local authorities and employers to take active steps to consider disabled people's rights, and prevent them from experiencing discrimination in their everyday life and access to meaningful activity. This includes at work, when applying for jobs, and when using services.
- 2.2 The Welfare Reform Act (2012) introduced a wide range of reforms to make the benefits and tax credits system fairer and simpler. It aimed to create sustainable incentives to encourage more people to work.
- 2.3 The Government has also introduced a number of frameworks for improving the lives and life chances of care leavers. Care leavers are one of the most vulnerable groups in our society. The Care Leaver Strategy 2013, Staying Put duty 2014, Keep on Caring: Supporting people from Care to Independence 2016, and Children and Social Work Act 2017 focus on improving support so care leavers get the right support at the right time to help them make the transition to adulthood and independent living. There is a new duty, in effect from April 2018, to provide Personal Advisor support to all care leavers up to age of 25 when required. The Special educational need and disability code of practice: 0-25 years (2015) outlines how children and young people with SEND special educational needs/disabilities (SEND) and their parents or carers will be fully involved in decisions about their support and what they want to achieve. Importantly, it states that aspirations for children and young people will be raised through an increased focus on life outcomes, including employment and greater independence.

National policy context

- 2.4 People with disabilities are considerably less likely to be in employment than those without disabilities; currently employment rates for disabled people are 31% lower than for non-disabled population (Commons Library Briefing, January 2018). Over the

past 10 years, increasing employment and personalising public services have been key objectives of Government policy. Specific policies include Access to Work, Work Choice and the Work Programme as well as work schemes such as those offered by Job centre Plus. The Government's recent work, health and disability green paper: 'Improving Lives' announced a new Personal Support Package for providing better employment support to people with care and support needs to help them move closer to the labour market and into employment.

- 2.5 National indicators (NHS Digital 2017) show that the proportion of working-age adults with learning disabilities who are receiving long-term social care support and are also in paid employment has fallen every year over the last three years, from 6% in 2014/15, to 5.8% in 2015/16, and then 5.7% in 2016/17. There is also a big variation in reported employment rates between local authorities. Although volunteering and sheltered employment can provide a stepping stone to paid work, national research has identified that people who start off working by volunteering or in a sheltered workshop, frequently can get stuck in these settings and rarely – if ever – progress into real, paid employment. Evidence also shows there are a range of benefits connected to being in sustainable paid employment including increased independence, improved mental health, and the ability to learn and develop.

Local policy context

- 2.6 This Supported Employment Strategy supports Swindon's vision as outlined in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy that everyone lives a safe, fulfilling and independent life and is supported by thriving and connected communities. Three of the priority outcomes for action set out in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy relate to this strategy:

2.6.1 Priority 2: Adults and older people in Swindon are living healthier and more independent lives;

2.6.2 Priority 3: Improved health outcomes for disadvantaged and vulnerable communities (including adults with long term conditions, learning disabilities, physical disabilities or mental health problems)

2.6.3 Priority 4: Improved mental health, wellbeing and resilience for all

- 2.7 The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Swindon (JSNA 2016/17) helps us understand the current health and wellbeing needs of local people, how their needs are currently being met, what their future needs are likely to be and how these can be best met going forward. It also highlights health inequalities and the social factors that have an impact on people's health and wellbeing. These are key to informing our Supported Employment priorities and plan. The full JSNA is available on the website: <http://www.swindonjsna.co.uk/dna>

- 2.8 The overall aims and objectives for ensuring vulnerable people are able to access employment is also outlined in Swindon's Economic Strategy and Swindon's Skills and Employment Board Strategy 2017-2020 and includes the following:

2.8.1 Support the social inclusion agenda by reducing the proportion of young people who are not in education employment or training (NEET) and increase the number of vulnerable residents including Care Leavers and those with

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) accessing education, employment and training.

2.8.2 Support Adults with Learning Disabilities to access employment.

2.9 Swindon Borough Council is committed to ensuring people are able to live as independently as possible with the support they need, and people have the right skills and support to access work. This is set out in the Council's 2016-2020 Plan: 'Vision for Swindon: How are we going to get there?'

2.9.1 Priority 2: Offer education opportunities that lead to the right skills and right jobs in the right places;

2.9.2 Priority 4: to help people to help themselves while always protecting our most vulnerable children and adults.

2.10 Swindon Borough Council has pledged to increase the percentage of adults with learning disabilities who are in employment (Pledge 29), and to increase the percentage of Care Leavers who are in education, employment or training (Pledge 27).

2.11 The number of people with learning disabilities, and the number of care leavers who are in paid employment in Swindon are lower than in many other areas of the country. We want to help more care leavers and people with learning disabilities to get into paid employment. We recognise the need for an employment culture shift amongst social care workers, education workers, providers and other frontline staff to be more ambitious for both people with disabilities and care leavers. This includes raising aspirations from a young age, raising expectations of family parents/carers, improving transition from education to work, providing pathways and ensuring good preparation. We also need to actively engage and gain commitment from employers – public, private, voluntary sectors to achieve our ambition. Current performance and targets for the areas that have been prioritised for improvement over the next five years are given in the table below:

Target Group	Target for March 2022	SBC Performance as at March 2018
Adults with Learning Disability	Increase the percentage of Adults with a Learning Disability who are known to Adult Social Care in paid employment to 10% by March 2022.	At March 2018, 5.6 % of Adults with a Learning Disability known to Adult social care who are in paid employment
Care Leavers	To increase the percentage of Care Leavers in education, employment and training to 75% by March 2022.	March 2018, 64.46% of care leavers are in a positive destination, 36% of care leavers are not in education, employment or training.
Young people 16/17	To increase the percentage of 16 and 17 year olds in learning to 95% by March	March 2018, 92% of 16 and 17 year olds are in learning.

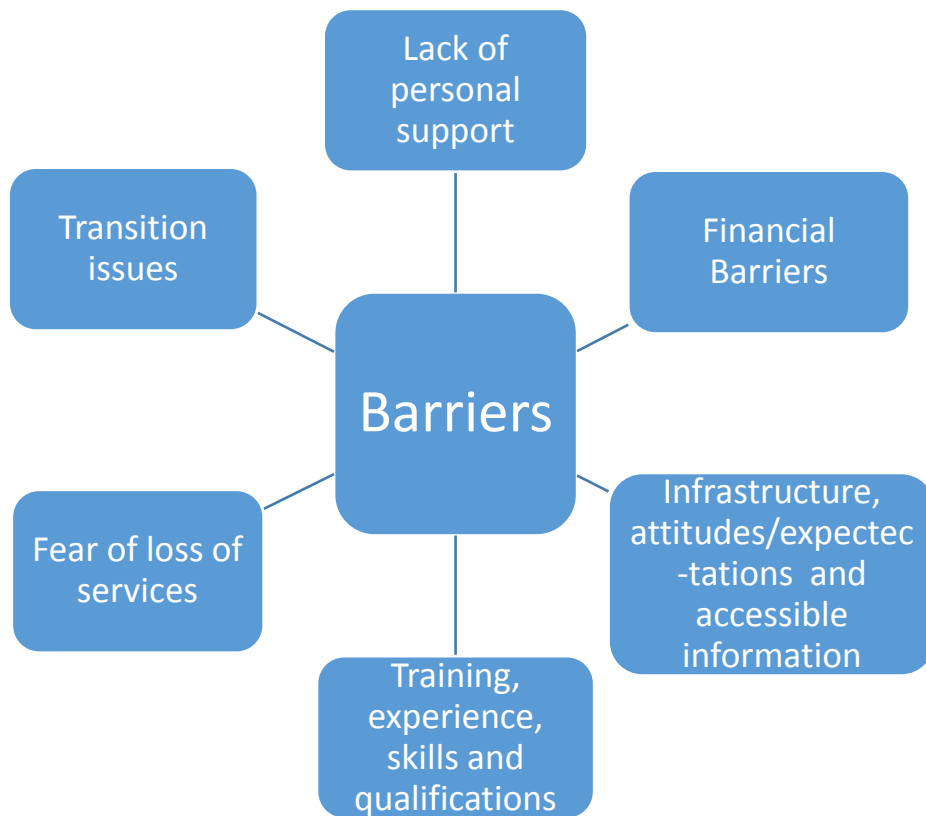
	2022 (reduce number not in education, employment or training NEETs/unknowns)	
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Swindon Borough Council's Supported Employment Model

- 2.12 Swindon Borough Council currently invests a total of £463K to support adults with care and support needs to gain employment, of which £299K funds Enterprise Works, and £164K funds the Supported Employment Team. These services were transferred from SEQOL to Swindon Borough Council in October 2016.
- 2.13 Enterprise Works provides Supported Employment opportunities to those individuals who have a disability (physical or mental). It offers opportunities for trainees to gain workplace experience through a structured training and support programme, with the aim of progressing into paid employment in the wider workplace. Enterprise Works is presenting a significant cost pressure to the Council, it is not currently targeting the Council's priority cohort for supported employment (care leavers and people with care and support needs who are eligible for social care). The current model is not proving to be effective in progressing individuals to obtain and retain open paid employment. A review of operational arrangements and options for a future business model is currently underway to reduce costs and position Enterprise Works to support the delivery of the Council's Supported Employment Offer as set out in the strategy.
- 2.14 Until July 2018, the Supported Employment Team operated alongside Enterprise Works. The Supported Employment Team delivers Supported Internships and Building Bridges (an ESF funded programme that supports individuals with job searching, training and employment). Historically, the Supported Employment Team has not targeted those adults eligible for social care support and care leavers. As a Council, we recognise better co-production with partners to support individuals to gain and retain paid employment is essential within the context of decreased funding, more children coming into care and the projections of increasing numbers of people living with a learning disability or poor mental health. Future spend on supported employment must deliver best value in terms of cost and outcomes. Our aim is to introduce a supported employment model that provides meaningful paid employment, builds on individual's skills and talents, and provides progression opportunities. Our goal is to achieve a mainstream job outcome at the going rate of pay with support for both the individual and the employer so the position can be sustained.

3. Barriers to Employment

- 3.1 Research has been undertaken at both a national and local level to understand the barriers that vulnerable young people and adults with care and support needs face when seeking paid employment. Consultation with stakeholders has identified six themed barriers to employment. These are relevant to the majority of disadvantaged individuals irrespective of their particular need or disability, although it was recognised that some barriers are more closely felt by particular groups of people than others. More detail on the specific barriers are provided in appendix C.



- 3.2 We have consulted with Swindon stakeholders to find out what they want from a Supported Employment Offer with the support of the Learning Disability Partnership Board and Swindon Advocacy Movement (SAM). Feedback was focussed around three key themes: personal support; practical support; and training, experience and skills.

Personal Support

- ✓ Skilled and compassionate advisers or support workers
- ✓ Personalised support that addresses the individual's barriers and issues, with appropriate signposting to other service where necessary
- ✓ Support that is holistic and flexible and enables the individual to choose from a range of activities or support options (e.g. one to one, online advice) to suit their particular needs
- ✓ Good trusting relationships between the individual and the adviser or staff supporting them who understands their condition or disability
- ✓ The availability of more intensive one-to-one support for those individuals further away from the labour market to help them look for and apply for jobs
- ✓ Individuals are enabled to live independently and support themselves as appropriate

Practical Support

- ✓ Practical help with finding job opportunities
- ✓ A quick response to requests for support
- ✓ Advisers to help the individual liaise with employers as well as help prepare CVs, job applications and covering letters
- ✓ Good financial assessment of the benefits of an individual moving into work, raising awareness of options such as part-time and flexible working.

Training, experience and skills

- ✓ Activities that develop relevant skills for employment (e.g. training or education and volunteering opportunities) with appropriate support to ensure progression
- ✓ The opportunity to participate in training and education and volunteering as these are important in the journey towards work e.g. signposting learners to appropriate courses that link with their interests and will be beneficial to their prospects.
- ✓ Recognition that learning can help mental wellbeing and lead to softer outcomes such as improved confidence, motivation, time-management skills and commitment which are beneficial for employability.
- ✓ Volunteering being seen as a useful route towards work for some people as it enables people to experience different environments, builds their confidence before entering the workplace, can provide a means for people to get their 'foot in the door', and helps develop transferable skills.
- ✓ Volunteering viewed as a stepping-stone and not an end goal, with individuals encouraged to progress further where this is possible

4. Employment Support Provision Available in Swindon

- 4.1 There is a range of supported employment providers currently operating alongside Enterprise Works and SBC's Supported Employment Team. Current views from those working in adult and children's services is that there is a lack of clarity around what is available locally, the differing goals between providers, the incentives and target audiences for each provider, how support can be accessed, and lack of knowledge around the recent changes to the benefit system.
- 4.2 Local 'partner' providers have been analysed for the purpose of this strategy to provide a reference point. Appendix D provides information on the providers, type of need targeted, and type of support provided. However, we recognise there are gaps in the existing provision and most funded provision has strict eligibility criteria and lacks flexibility.

5. Our vision for Supported Employment

- 5.1 Our primary focus is to support care leavers and adults with care and support needs who are eligible for social care and want to work. We will also signpost young people and adults who have additional needs (but are not reliant on specialist services) to organisations that can support them into employment. We aim to support individuals to gain employment or work in the open labour market that is paid the prevailing wage or self-employment. Training, education, volunteering or work experience may be essential elements for driving this aim if they are part of a genuine pathway to real work.

Vision: all young people and adults living in Swindon have the opportunity and support to gain sustained paid employment or volunteering (*Swindon's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-2022*)

5.2 Our supported employment offer will:

- ✓ Primarily target care leavers and individuals with care and support needs who are eligibility for support from social care
- ✓ Deliver evidenced based outcomes so the individual's journey towards employment can be tracked, progress measured and services continually improved to meet needs
- ✓ Provide or support access for the individual to become work ready, access employment and sustain their job.
- ✓ Provide or support access to a range of innovative employment options and meaningful activities to meet the employment needs of the individual
- ✓ Deliver a sustainable supported employment service that levers in alternative funding streams and minimises any duplication to services available in the community
- ✓ Applies good practice models of supported employment e.g. individual Placement Support and Supported Employment Models to suit the needs of the individual
- ✓ Provide a service which is organised and located to facilitate maximum referrals from relevant professionals and easily accessed by service users
- ✓ Forge effective operational partnerships with other internal and external employment support services to ensure individuals access appropriate and available resources and services to meet their employment needs

5.3 To achieve this goal we will focus on what we can do as a Council, working with partners and local communities, to achieve the ambition of supporting more people from disadvantaged groups into employment.

The Council will.....	Benefits
Ensure employment is viewed as a realistic aim for all individuals and that their needs are assessed to determine their future job and career aspirations and the skills needed to gain employment through Planning Live. This will be part of their personalised care and support plans (including Education Health and Care Plans)	Children, young people and adults with care and support needs will have the same aspirations about taking on paid employment as everyone else. Any assessments and reviews inform a plan that includes preparing for the world of work A culture shift from 'doing to' to 'doing with'
Target and prioritise supported employment services to care leavers and individuals with care and support needs who are eligible for social care support (have a care package) and	Service users' independence and income is maximised and self-confidence and self-esteem have improved

tailor support to meet their individual needs	
Facilitate better working across the partnership (e.g. adult social care, Transitions Team, Leaving Care Team, Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service, and Routes to Employment) to identify individuals who will benefit from supported employment services and ensure we utilise opportunities effectively including support from existing mainstream supported employment services e.g. Jobcentre Plus Programmes, Adult and Further Education	Individuals are able to get jobs which utilise their skill, qualifications and ambitions, regardless of their disability or vulnerability
Utilise opportunities from supported internship schemes and apprenticeships and promote these to employers	Supported internships and apprenticeships lead to sustainable paid employment as the individual has been equipped with the skills they need for work, through learning in the workplace
Work with employers to secure employment opportunities through developing and participating in existing employer networks, and providing advice and support to encourage appropriate opportunities for employment for people traditionally excluded from the workforce	Successful relationships with local public, voluntary and private sector businesses provide inclusive work opportunities and more employers are recognised as being Disability Confident
Ensure individuals have developed skills to enable them to gain employment	Service users will be assisted through all stages of a support plan towards employment and will understand their employment related skills and development needs
Ensure individuals are assessed and referred to the most appropriate supported employment related service that meet their needs	Service users are able to make an informed choice about their employment options and are equipped to carry out job and working interviews

6. Key objectives and actions to be taken

- 6.1 This strategy has been informed by national and local policy, views of stakeholders and professionals, and evidence of good practice from effective supported employment approaches for people with additional health and care needs. The strategy proposes the following strategic objectives for 2018-2022:

Objective 1 - Ensure people with care and support needs have direct support to gain and sustain employment and clearly outline the role of Swindon Borough Council and other partners to deliver this

Objective 2 - Ensure job seekers are prepared, confident and motivated to find work

Objective 3 - Ensure employers are confident to employ people with care and support needs

Objective 4 – Ensure the transition process from age 14 fosters a culture of high expectations and provides high quality person centred planning with clear pathways to employment.

Objective 5 – Ensure the workforce has the skills, knowledge and competencies to effectively deliver the supported employment offer

The priority Actions for 2018/19

- 6.2 These objectives will form the basis of our action plan for implementing the strategy. An action plan will be developed and published within the next 6 months detailing the responsible organisations and officers for each action, milestones and timeframe for delivery. The headline actions are set out below.

Objective 1 – Ensure people with care and support needs have direct support to gain and sustain employment and clearly outline the role of Swindon Borough Council and other partners to deliver this.

- 6.3 It is the intention of the council to commission the most effective employment service to provide direct support to Swindon residents with care and support needs to enable them to gain and retain paid employment.

Headline priority outcomes:

- 6.3.1 To review and cost delivery models for a specialist employment support service and identify the preferred option for launching in 2018. This will include the review of the role of Swindon Borough Council and the contribution of other stakeholders and agreeing the Enterprise Works delivery model moving forward.
- 6.3.2 Review and create effective referral pathways and ensure all professionals can make quick and easy referrals
- 6.3.3 Ensure individuals are assessed and that they are referred to the most appropriate service to meet their needs
- 6.3.4 Establish protocol to ensure that all eligible young people and adults have a clear route to access professional support if required

- 6.3.6 To ensure the supported employment service has staff with the right training and skills required for delivering customised employment support and welfare advice, as recommended by BASE
- 6.3.6 Consolidate employment pathways for care leavers and adults with health and social care needs and maximise access to these pathways for individual's to achieve employment outcomes.
- 6.3.7 Supported internships provide meaningful opportunities in open employment.

Objective 2 – Ensure job seekers are prepared, confident and motivated to find work

- 6.4 It is evident that service users and professionals lack an awareness of the organisations providing employment support and advice and a lack of understanding between organisations of the roles each play and what they could offer. To create confident job-seekers we need to offer people correct, timely and tailored information so they can pro-actively consider employment and plan their career. We also need to ensure people progress to meaningful employment.

Headline priority outcomes:

- 6.4.1 Improve information on the Council's website so we have updated information and advice on employment support, finding jobs, volunteering, work experience opportunities and apprenticeships.
- 6.4.2 Embed employment aspirations and experience of the world of work into care pathways and plans (e.g. Early Help Records and Plans; Care Management Plans; Education, Health and Care Plans) so individuals are appropriately guided and supported to access training and employment to meet their particular needs
- 6.4.3 Retrain the social care and education workforce to understand employment as a viable option for young people and adults with care and support needs
- 6.4.4 For Assessments, Education Health and Care Plans, Support and Care Plans to include specific goals for supporting progression to employment from an early age.
- 6.4.5 Conduct 'travel to work' risk assessments and support eligible individuals to receive travel training where appropriate so they can travel to work independently

Objective 3 – Ensure employers are confident to employ people with care and support needs

- 6.5 The Council will work with all stakeholders, in particular local employers, to promote the benefits that employing people with care and support needs bring to the business and to understand any barriers to recruiting and retaining people such needs as employees.

Headline priority outcomes:

- 6.5.1 Work with DWP and other stakeholders such as existing employer networks to raise employers' awareness of the benefits of employing young people and adults with care and support needs with a particular focus on learning disability
- 6.5.2 Raise awareness of the support services that are available to employers such as Access to Work

- 6.5.3 Create case studies that demonstrate the benefits for employers and the support that they can access
- 6.5.4 Identify and share good practice from 'supportive' employers
- 6.5.5 Encourage employers to adopt recruitment and selection approaches that support individuals with additional needs e.g. use working interviews and work trials rather than formal interviews
- 6.5.6 Ensure that Supported Employment Services used have good employer engagement resources and specialist in-work support staff so that sustainable employment can be achieved

Objective 4 – Ensure the transition process from age 14 fosters a culture of high expectations and provides high quality persons centred planning with clear pathways to employment.

- 6.6 The Council will work with partners to help young people aspire to, and explore employment as a way of improving their quality of life as they prepare for adulthood

Headline priority outcomes:

- 6.6.1 To ensure robust and effective personalised transition planning is in place to encourage and support young people to move from education to employment
- 6.6.2 To ensure employment features strongly in information provided to young people and families/carers when they are planning their post-school future.
- 6.6.3 Provide more opportunities for open work experience and apprenticeships for care leavers and school and college students with health and social care needs
- 6.6.4 Support care leavers and young people with special educational needs to understand and realise their aspirations and ensure the right support is put in place for them

Objective 5 – Ensure the workforce has the skills, knowledge and competencies to effectively deliver the supported employment offer

- 6.7 The Council will ensure that the providers and services that are funded to delivery of the supported employment strategy will have well trained people who are knowledgeable, aspirational and skilled to make progression into paid employment a reality.

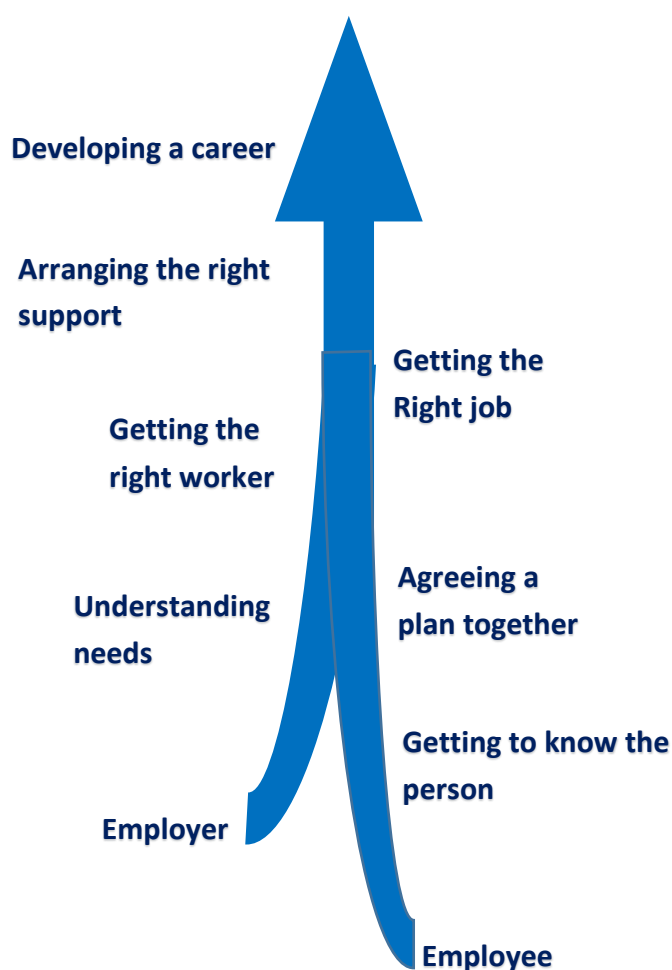
Headline priority outcomes:

- 6.7.1 Explain and promote understanding about what Supported Employment means, what support is available, and the established referral and employment pathways
- 6.7.2 Develop staff to ensure people have the right skills and knowledge and the right tools available to deliver the Supported Employment Offer
- 6.7.3 Support staff to work collaboratively with partners to understand each other's roles in making employment an achievable goal for both people with disabilities and young people leaving care

7. Next steps

- 7.1 A detailed action plan is in development to sit alongside the strategy setting out how we will work in partnership with our key stakeholder to ensure successful implementation. We are in the process of setting specific, measurable, and realistic local targets which will be monitored and reported regularly to the relevant partnership boards and council committee meetings.

Supported Employment Model (BASE)



Support for Individuals not in employment

- **Participant engagement** to raise the employment related expectations of individuals their families and relevant professionals
- **Vocational profiling** to identify aspirations, skills, needs and job preferences to inform job search
- **Job match and application support** to increase the likelihood of suitable and sustainable employment
- **Employer engagement** to establish relationships with employers and overcome traditional recruitment barriers
- **Referrals** to external employment support organisations

Support for Individuals who are about to enter or are currently employed

- **Job coaching** to prepare the individual for the duties and commitment of employment
- **Supported training** including inductions to the workplace and supervised learning and development
- **In-work assistance** that is individually tailored and acts to ensure that employees are fully supported in their roles
- **Guidance and advice** for both employee and employer to manager expectations and support the relationship
- **Referrals** to external employment support organisations

Support for Individuals for whom employment is not the first or most suitable option

- Support into volunteering and community engagement as a means of progression



Top tips on Supported Employment

To help councils provide the best possible support, ADASS has produced the following checklist of top tips:

1. **Ensure consistent engagement with local employers.** Ideally, engagement with local employers should be cross-service (pan disability) to prevent fragmented approaches. A good starting point for getting people with disabilities into work is to set up supported work placements, working with local employers to offer meaningful work experience which aligns with DWP regulations and gives people the experience and confidence to move into paid employment. It is also important to make sure employers are aware at the start of their involvement of the support that is available to enable people with disabilities to work, for example the Access to Work scheme.
2. **Strengthen the commissioning of employment services.** To be good commissioners, council teams need to have a good understanding of the evidence base for supported employment. Providing specialist training for council staff and signposting to information sources would help with this. With a more thorough knowledge of the evidence base, commissioners will be better able to specify the outcomes they require from providers and monitor the quality of internships and supported employment schemes. For example, there is strong evidence that fidelity to Supported Employment and the Individual Placement and Support model achieves better employment outcomes for people. Assessment and review provides an excellent opportunity to plan alternative pathways into employment, utilising the strengths, ambitions and interests of people. It is also worth considering strategic joint commissioning with other authorities, as this may widen the employment opportunities available to disabled people across a shared geography.
3. **Model good employment practices.** There is a good deal you can do to lead the way in showing what good practice in employing people with disabilities looks like. Do not be afraid to be innovative and offer flexible routes into employment in your own organisation. Given the difficulty of transferring learning from one context to another, strategies like working interviews, job carving and inclusive apprenticeships are a vital route into work, but councils are too often reluctant to move from highly bureaucratic recruitment processes which may exclude people with a learning disability. You could also offer more supported internships, but with a view to having a paid job at the end of the placement.
4. **Ensure co-ordination between education, children's and adult services.** The message you give out at the point of transition from children's to adult services needs to be 'employment first'. Young people with disabilities can aspire to, move towards and enter into employment as a natural sequence each and every time. To make this aspiration a reality make sure that schools and colleges are giving consistent, high quality careers guidance, to Gatsby Standards (see <https://www.base-uk.org/knowledge/benchmarking-careers-guidance>); that colleges are considering the ongoing support needs of young people who become employed through supported internships and that you are clearly specifying what colleges should be delivering to receive Element 3 funding. Make it a policy to offer better off in work calculations to families when young people are starting vocational courses.

5. **Make sure that funded services employ a well-trained workforce.** Individual Placement and Support specialists, employment advisers and job coaches require specialist skills and training to be able to do their jobs well. It is important that any services your council funds are employing well trained people and are not simply adding employment support onto support worker job descriptions (see www.base-uk.org/nos for the skills and knowledge required).
6. **Be clear about the desired outcomes and cost benefit case for investment in employment services.** There is evidence that supporting people with disabilities into employment can be cost effective, in that employment improves health and wellbeing and reduces reliance on health and social care services (for example, NDTI 2014; <https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/what-is-ips>). It is a good idea to model the outcomes you hope to achieve from funding a supported employment service and to translate these into financial savings, to make the case for continued investment. It is also helpful to use grants for their intended purpose, for example Section 31 education grants
7. **Make use of the Social Value Act in contracting across the council and its supply chains.** The Social Value Act provides an opportunity for councils to create jobs and training opportunities via contracting in their own supply chains. You could use the leverage you have as an agency contracting with third party service providers to encourage and indeed insist that those contracts always include specific commitments aimed at advancing the opportunities for adults in receipt of social care to compete for and win employment opportunities.
8. **Improve information and online support.** Make sure that the information you provide about routes into employment for people in receipt of social care services is clear and user friendly. Consider using a variety of ways to communicate with people who may want to take up employment support, for example by improving the navigability and content of local offer

Websites and hosting online discussion forums and peer support groups. In particular, make sure that you have clear and accessible information on preparing for adulthood and the employment support that is available as part of your local offer.
9. **Raise the profile of Supported Employment and Individual Placement and Support within Local Enterprise Partnerships and economic regeneration teams.** Employing more disabled people – a talent pool that is currently largely wasted – can help Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) to achieve their local economic growth targets. Building links with LEPs and with your own economic regeneration teams will help you take a strategic approach to supporting people with disabilities into employment.
10. **Support job retention, progression and career development.** The support you provide should not stop when someone gets a job. The employment services you provide or fund could play an important role in facilitating progression for disabled people within their current or to new employers. At the moment it may seem that there is no advantage to the council in doing this, yet helping people to progress may help reduce the need for people to use council-funded support and help manage demand for social care services. People who are supported to achieve in work are good ambassadors for the future employment of people who have a disability. They also help to challenge restrictive assumptions about ability in our communities.

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Barriers to Employment

Lack of personal employment support

- People felt there was a lack of personal, tailored support available from both employers and employment support services in supporting people with additional needs into getting and retaining employment
- Job application forms are not always available in accessible formats which can prevent some people applying
- Some job requirements exclude people with certain impairments
- Some care leavers don't have a good sense of their strengths and weaknesses or knowledge about how to apply for a job (possibly due to frequent school or placement moves)

Financial barriers

- Some people were unwilling to seek or take up employment as there is a fear they will be financially worse off if they come off benefits.
- Employment can leave care leavers financially worse off than being on benefits which doesn't incentivise them to get into work.
- Some care leavers do not know they can access financial support from their local authority to fund smart clothes and travel costs for interviews.
- Apprenticeships, particularly in the first year, are not paid well.

Infrastructure, attitudes and accessible information

- Many people reported that there was still a lot of discrimination and stigma towards people with health and social care needs and care leavers. In particular, people noted that recruitment processes can be discriminatory and stigmatising.
- Few employers have the DWP Disability Confident Quality Mark
- Difficulty with transport including high costs
- Physical accessibility can also be a significant barrier to people with health and social care needs accessing work
- Poor housing, either because it is temporary or unsuitable, impacts on being able to hold down a job.
- Poor physical and mental health makes it harder to maintain jobs when extra time is needed for appointments
- Some people conceal mental health problems from their employers because they fear losing their job, or looking weak.

Training, experience, skills and qualifications

- Many people identified a skills gap (e.g. IT skills, literacy and numeracy) and highlighted the need for additional training and skills support mentioning the opportunity for work placements, apprenticeships, advocacy, peer/buddy support, job coaching and further education opportunities
- People mentioned having low levels of confidence and self-esteem
- Although apprenticeships are seen as a good employment option for young people, the GCSE entry requirements can be a barrier.
- There is limited provision outside of the traditional college setting

A fear of loss of services

- Some people and their families fear the loss of their services or benefits if they enter into employment

Transition issues

- Sometimes there is inadequate support for young people and their families to understand and realise their aspirations for adulthood including employment
- Sometimes there is a lack of support planning or person-centred planning to help young people think about work before they leave school, and many young people with a disability do not have the opportunity for quality work experience
- Some young people have not had the opportunity to develop key social, emotional and employability skills, attitudes and behaviours and not had the experience of work through a part-time job.

Appendix D

Analysis of the Current Supported Employment market in Swindon

Provider Name	Programmes delivered	Web	Address
InnerFlame	CV writing workshops, mock interviews, SHINE Mentors, Guest Speakers. Courses such as: Get on Tack, First Tracks, Princes Trust Team Programme (12 week course) to develop essential skills required for employment & life. SHINE	https://innerflame.org.uk	The Shaftesbury Centre, Percy Street, Swindon. SN2 2AZ
SAM (Swindon Advocacy Movement)	Advocacy for SEND, IMCA Advocacy, IMCA DoLs Advocacy, Parent Advocacy, BUDDIES project: walking grp. maths & English peer support, men's grp., eating out grp, short courses on: cookery, confidence, and computer skills. Get Connected introduction to the internet promoting, self-help, volunteering, employment, independent living.	www.swindonadvocacy.org.uk	Sanford House, Sandford Street, Swindon SN1 1QH
Swindon MIND	Be Active Prog. 14+ (swimming, yoga, netball football cost is either free or up to £3., Employment- Job club, counselling for self-harm (Self Harmony)Volunteering, Youth Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)	www.swindonmind.org	Swindon Advice & Support Centre, Sandford House, Sandford Street, Swindon. SN1 1HE

Richmond Fellowship	Help people look for & apply for work. Voluntary work, training. Stress management within the workplace. Advice to employers employing people with mental health problems.	www.richmondfellowship.org.uk	Swindon Advice & Support Centre, Sandford House, Sandford Street, Swindon. SN1 1HE
IPSUM Care (formerly SWADS)		-	
DHI	Info, Advice & Brokerage, Families & Carers Services, Housing & Support. Drug & Alcohol Harm Reduction, Support Planning & Direct Payment Services, Patient Support (Social Prescribing), Drug & Alcohol Structured Intervention, Naloxone & 'Save a Life' Training, Employment & Training. Volunteering roles in Community Wellbeing Projects, Young People's Drug & Alcohol Support	www.dhi.org.uk	Swindon Support & Advice Centre, Sandford House, Sandford Street, Swindon SN1 1QH
PLUSS	Traineeships, Work Trials, Ongoing training, Job coaching, Personal Development, Benefits advice	www.pluss.org.uk	Suite A, 1st Floor, Wiltshire Court, Farnsby Street, Swindon. SN1 5AH

TWIGS (therapeutic work in gardening in Swindon) & The Olive Tree Café	Gardens, Crafts & Café therapeutic, confidence building, self-esteem & to learn new skills	https://twigscommunitygardens.org.uk	Twigs, Manor Garden Centre, Cheney Manor Industrial Estate, Swindon, SN2 2QJ
Phoenix Enterprises	Support, Training & Employment opportunities with adults experiencing short or long term mental health problems, 24 hr. emergency phone service. 1:1 training prog. In wp, budgeting, life skills, CV writing, maths & English improvement & IT. A Day Centre. Wk. with local companies to bring in contracts so members get genuine wk. exp. in mails services, packing & assembly services	https://www.phoenixenterprises.co.uk	Phoenix Enterprises, Unit A4, Stepenson Road, Groundwell Industrial Est., Swindon. SN25 5AX
SMASH	Voluntary based mentoring (with goals - personal, academic or social) confidence building. Memory Makers for children 8-12, (mtg. their mentor once a fortnight & help them build happy childhood memories, i.e. a movie trip, eating out or fun activity)	www.smashyouthproject.co.uk	Pinetrees Community Centre, The Circle, pinehurst, Swindon. SN2 1QR

STEP (Swindon 10-18 Project	Volunteering. Programmes delivered are for young people aged 10-18 (or 7-9). Having difficulties with bullying, friendships, struggling at sch., anger, anti-social behaviour, making unsafe choices. There are 3 groups Therapeutic Service (9-18 yr. olds) 6-8 pm. Junior STEP (7-11 yr olds) 6-7.30pm. Saturday Grp. specifically for young people with disabilities (10-18 yr olds) every 2nd Saturdays. The grps. involve activities - art, drama, sports, games, cooking etc.	www.swindonstep.org.uk	Swindon 10-18 Project, Nythe Centre, The Drive, Swindon. SN3 3RD
Wise Ability	The Ucan Project arranges volunteering opportunities, support with applications & interviews, job coaching, in week support. Mental Health recovery services, Reintegration of ex-offenders through training, emp. & other services.	www.wiseability.co.uk	Temple Street, 2 Temple Chambers, Swindon SN1 1SQ
Green Labyrinth	Study Programmes, (educational prog. For SEN, mild learning difficulties & behavioural issues, other barriers to learning), Work Placements, Traineeships, Apprenticeships, Care Academy, Professional Courses, Online Courses		Temple House, Commercial Road, Swindon SN1 5PL or Bowman House, Whitehill Industrial Estate, Whitehill Lane, Royal Wotton Bassett. SN4 7DB

Pennyhooks Farm	Step by step work based training, 1 to 1 support learning through adapted Open Colleges Network (OCN) Countryside Skills Course, modules in animal care, woodwork, horticulture, rural crafts, conservation & cooking. (specialist woodwork teacher & skilled support workers) Student produce & sell a range of quality products in the farm shop, craft days & local outlets. Volunteer by: helping out on the farm, providing woodwork skills & stewards on open days.	www.pennyhooks.com	Pennyhooks Farm, shrivenham, Wiltshire. SN6 8EX
D.A.S.H. Swindon	Walk in Service Tuesday 2-4pm. Young adult Social Grp (18-30) meets at Oasis Leisure Centre Mon eve., (badminton, board games, reading, general socialising) Allotment grp. 1.30-3.30 every Wed... Volunteering Available	www.dashswindon.com	DASH Sandford house, Sandford Street, Swindon SN1 1HE
UTURN	U-Turn is a specialist service providing help/guidance to young people (& their families) who have alcohol and/or drug problems encompassing all illicit substances, solvents & prescribed medication with skilled staff delivering: cognitive-behavioural interventions, motivational interviewing, specialist prescribing, individual one-to-one work, harm reduction advice, family work.	https://www.thedockswindon.co.uk/organisations/uturn	Uturn, Restorative Youth Services, Clarence house, Euclid Street, Swindon. SN1 2JH

Headway Swindon	Brain Injury Rehabilitation Centre offering a : Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy Programme: in: Specialist Computer Software, Speech & Language Sessions, Singing Therapy, Cookery Classes, Conversation/ discussion groups. Art Therapy. Quiz Group. Reading Group. Gardening Group. For service users & their families to enable them to lead as independent lives as possible.	https://headwayswindon.org.uk	Headway Swindon Ground Floor Avocet House The Dorcan Complex Faraday Road Dorcan Swindon SN3 5HQ
NSPCC Swindon	As well as our nationwide services like Childline and the NSPCC Helpline, we work directly with children & families. Provide therapeutic services to help children move on from abuse. Supporting parents & families in caring for their children. We help professionals make the best decisions for children, across the UK. NSPCC Swindon Service Centre offers: Hear & Now Letting the Future In (An adapted version for children with learning disabilities) Parents Under Pressure Pregnancy in Mind	www.nspcc.org.uk	5 Little London Court Albert Street Swindon SN1 3NH

Willows Counselling	<p>Counselling Service in Old Town, Swindon offering help on the following range of issues:</p> <p>Relationship Difficulties. Bereavement & Loss. Redundancy. Major Life Changes. Childhood Trauma or Abuse. Dissociative Disorders. Trauma. Self-harm. Identity Issues</p> <p>Separation. Abandonment Issues. Retirement. Depression. Sexual Abuse. Attachment Issues</p> <p>Low self-esteem. Addictive Tendencies. Work-related Stress.</p> <p>Training: starting at Level 2 & continuing to Level 4.</p> <p>CPD training is also offered for counsellors.</p> <p>Training days & short courses for those involved on counselling & caring professions & those involved in church pastoral care.</p> <p>Willows offers a training programme for individuals interested in becoming counsellor.</p>	<p>https://www.willowsscounselling.org.uk</p>	
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InnerFlame	Volunteer in in areas such as: CV writing workshops, mock interviews, SHINE Mentors, Guest Speakers. Courses such as: Get on Tack, First tracks, Princes Trust Team Programme (12 week course), SHINE	https://www.innerflame.org.uk	The Shaftesbury Centre, Percy Street, Swindon. SN2 2AZ
VAS & Disability Experts	Runs or helps administer some major networks/projects i.e. Swindon Sports Forum, Swindon200, Sanford House, Involve Swindon & SAIL Project		1 John St., Swindon SN1 1RT
Swindon Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)	Help, advocacy with, Benefits, Work, Debt & money, Family, Housing, Law & Courts, Immigration, Health, and Consumer. YOU CAN VOLUNTEER		Sanford House, College Street Entrance, Swindon. SN1 1HE (main office), Cavendish Sq, Park south, Swindon SN3 2LZ & Pinetrees Community Centre, The Circle, Pinehurst, Swindon SN2 1QR
Richmond Fellowship	Help people look for & apply for work. Voluntary work, training. Stress management within the workplace. Advice to employers employing people with mental health problems.	www.richmondfellowship.org.uk	Swindon Advice & Support Centre, Sandford House, Sandford Street, Swindon. SN1 1HE

Dial a Ride	Shopper bus, minibus hire, dial a ride car, community transport, day trips, holidays, Volunteering, MiDAS training for Volunteer Drivers (min. req. 2 years driving, clean licence) volunteer fundraising.	https://dialarideswindon.org.uk	Swindon Dial a Ride, Newcombe Drive, Hawksworth Trading Estate, Swindon. SN2 1DZ
The National Trust	Vol. In NT house, gardens, coast & countryside (potentially leading to employment), become a member for £6.40 per month & have free access over 500 places, Support Groups,, Travel expenses paid for vol. wk., training provided for certain vol. roles. Rewards for vol. wk. such as Christmas Party, Summer BBQ promotion of volunteer through local press or publications. Work experience.	https://nationaltrust.org.uk	Heelis, Kemble Drive, Swindon. SN2 2NA
Building Bridges	Programmes supporting people across Swindon & Wiltshire gaining skills, access to education & employment, Volunteering, Sponsored Employment. Practical help to address Barriers	https://www.buildingbridgessw.org.uk	c/o Community First, Unit C2 Beacon Business Centre, Hopton Park, Devizes. SN10 2EY
Great Western Hospital NHS	Work Experience for Year 10 & above but at least 14 years plus. (Cannot work in certain department such as A&E, SCBU etc.) Placements typically a week. very popular usually 4-6 months' notice required. Volunteering where Induction & Volunteer Training given age 17+.	https://gwh.nhs.uk	Marlborough Road, Swindon. SN3 6BB

STEP (Swindon 10-18 Project)	Volunteering. Programmes delivered are for young people aged 10-18 (or 7-9). Having difficulties with bullying, friendships, struggling at sch., anger, anti-social behaviour, making unsafe choices. There are 3 groups Therapeutic Service (9-18 yr. olds) 6-8 pm. Junior STEP (7-11 yr. olds) 6-7.30pm. Saturday Grp. specifically for young people with disabilities (10-18 yr olds) every 2nd Saturday. The grps. involve activities - art, drama, sports, games, cooking etc.	https://swindonstep.org.uk	Swindon 10-18 Project, Nythe Centre, The Drive, Swindon. SN3 3RD
SWADS	Talking Therapies, Creative Music Therapy, Creative Arts & Crafts therapy Programmes. Volunteering	www.swads.org.uk	SWADS 13 Milton Road, Swindon, Wiltshire. SN1 5JE
Pennyhooks Farm	Step by step work based training, 1 to 1 support learning through adapted Open Colleges Network (OCN) Countryside Skills Course, modules in animal care, woodwork, horticulture, rural crafts, conservation & cooking. (specialist woodwork teacher & skilled support workers) Student produce & sell a range of quality products in the farm shop, craft days & local outlets. Volunteer by: helping out on the farm, providing woodwork skills & stewards on open days.	https://pennyhooks.com	Pennyhooks Farm, Shrivenham, Wiltshire. SN6 8EX
Volunteer Rangers Swindon Borough Council	Carry out a variety of tasks in our local country Parks, as well as manual you can get involved in helping to run, organise & deliver events e.g., guided walks, wildlife workshops, wildlife surveys.	https://swindon.gov.uk	The Ranger Centre, Coate Water Country Park, Marlborough Road, Swindon SN3 6AA

D.A.S.H. Swindon	Walk in Service Tuesday 2-4pm. Young adult Social Group (18-30) meets at Oasis Leisure Centre Mon eve., (badminton, board games, reading, general socialising) Allotment grp. 1.30-3.30 every Wed... Volunteering Available	https://www.dashswindon.com	DASH Sandford house, Sandford Street, Swindon SN1 1HE
Headway Swindon	Brain Injury Rehabilitation Centre offering a : Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy Programme: in: Specialist Computer Software, Speech & Language Sessions, Singing Therapy, Cookery Classes, Conversation/ discussion groups. Art Therapy. Quiz Group. Reading Group. Gardening Group. For service users & their families to enable them to lead as independent lives as possible.	https://headwayswindon.org.uk	Headway Swindon Ground Floor Avocet House The Dorcan Complex Faraday Road Dorcan Swindon SN3 5HQ
Volunteer Swindon	Volunteer Swindon is Website based & is a place where any organisation from all over Swindon can post details of opportunities, & ask for volunteers to help with vital work they are doing. It aims to work with local residents to help them make improvements to their local communities. Opportunities are listed on the Volunteer Opportunity Search.	https://www.volunteerswindon.org.uk	Volunteer Swindon Civic Office Euclid Street SN1 2JN

Swindon Libraries	<p>Free Courses: Internet for Beginners, IPad for Beginners & MS Office for the Workplace. Visually Impaired reading groups at central Library once a month. Writing Groups & Reading Groups. Story & Rhyme Sessions for under 5's (check local library for times) HeadSpace: teen areas 12+ years available in North Swindon & Central Libraries (graphic novels/magazines. DVD's to hire & Free computer time). Health & Wellbeing Ambassadors: free & confidential service (6 one to one sessions) covering a variety of issues. Safe Place Zone; for people who require additional support when out including being safe from bullying. Extended Access: out of hours access to the library 16+ years, a library member for at least 3 months, & undertaken an Induction.</p>	www.swindon.gov.uk/libraries	<p>Central Library Regent circus Swindon SN1 1QG</p>
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