



TRAFFORD  
COUNCIL



## Out of Borough Placements for Looked After Children



## Current Profile of Placements

At the end of September 2018 we had 399 Looked After Children.

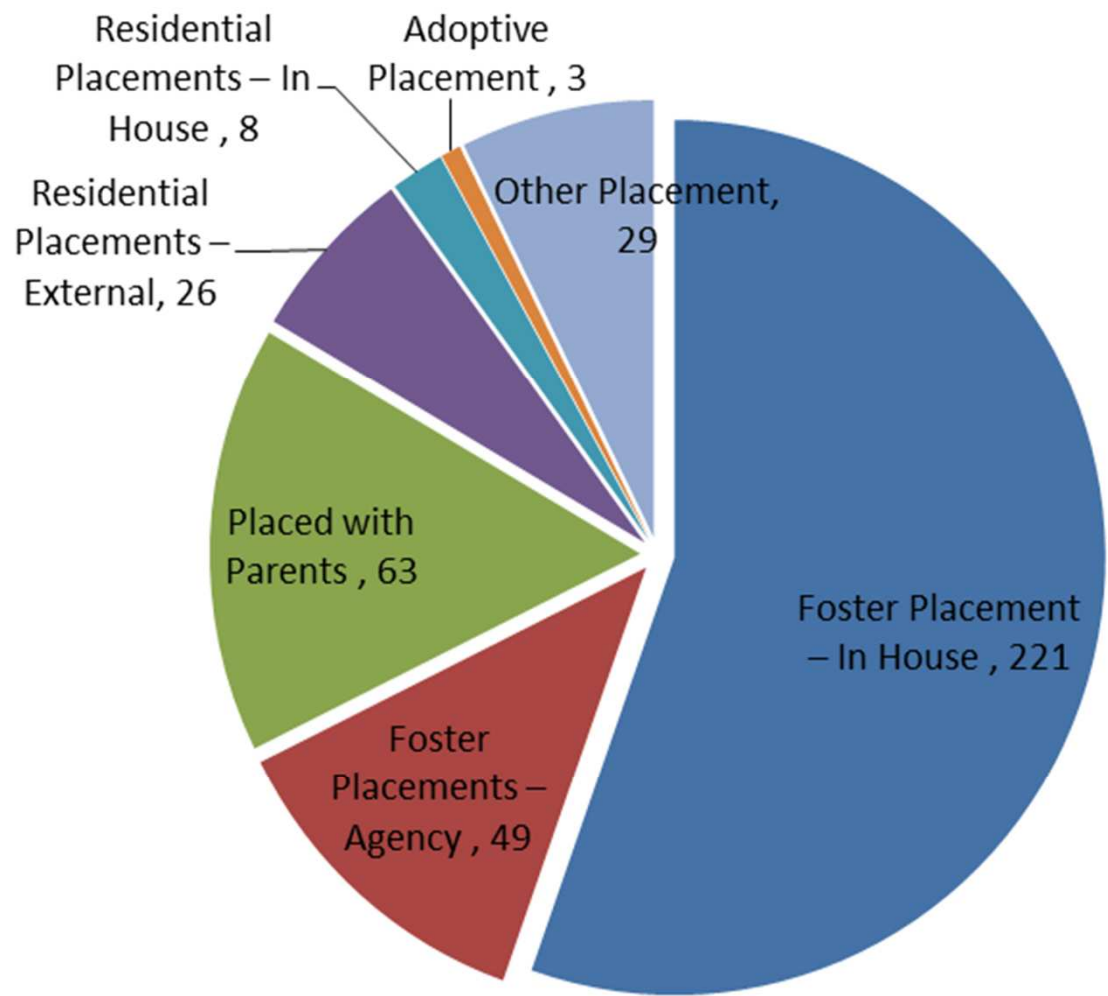
The majority of these children are with in-house foster carers or Placed with Parents under a Court Order.

Some children live in our own Children's Homes, Adoption Placements etc.

There were 26 children living in external Residential Units.

There are 49 children living with Independent Foster Carers (Private Fostering Agencies).

These figures are slightly higher than when we last reported 15 months ago, which fits with the national trend.



## Current Costs and Budget for Placements

The overall budget for placements 2018/19 is £8,222,434.

The average unit costs per child per week are as follows:-

Description	Average Unit Cost per child per week 2017/18 £	Average Unit Cost per child per week 2018/19 £
Welfare Secure (Children in Secure Units)	6,179	6,370
External Children's Homes	3,342	3,618
Long Term residential placements for children with Complex/Additional Needs	3,025	3,404
Independent Fostering Agency (IFA)	823	852
In-house Foster Care	255	339

## Monitoring Arrangements

We monitor all placements carefully with particular attention on the Out of Borough (OOB) Residential and Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) Placements:

We have a weekly Placement Panel to review and track all children who are in external provision.

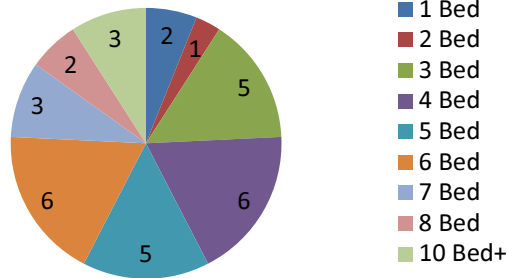
We have monthly Placement meetings with service managers and the children's finance team to review high cost placements and, where appropriate, support planning to move children closer to home, to in-house provision.

We have a Placement Sufficiency Board that meets monthly where we strategically managing use of provision, maximising usage.

**The key strategy to give us alternatives to Residential and IFA Placements is to increase our in-house foster care provision – particularly foster carers willing to take adolescents who have challenges and risks.**



## Accommodation Size



## External Residential Nov 18

There are currently 33 young people in residential accommodation. 9 of these are in Children with Additional Needs (CAN) residential homes. 8 are in Residential Education placements with Special Educational Needs (SEN) funding.

There are currently no young people currently in Secure.

The ages of these young people range from 10 to 17.

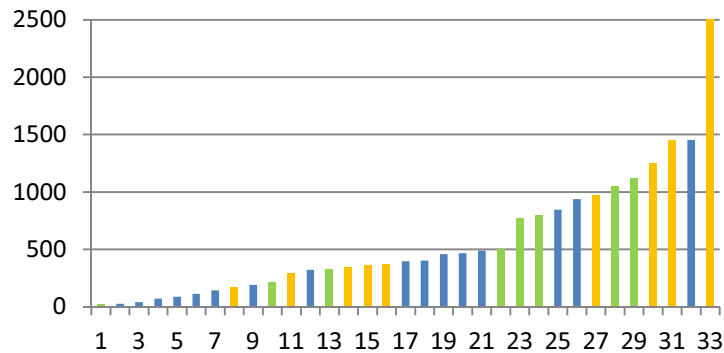
The unit sizes range from 1 bed to over 10 bed. However, provisions registered as 16 bed and 12 bed accommodation are understood to be further subdivided into smaller accommodation.

The placement lengths range from 19 days to 2513 days (6 years and 10 months)

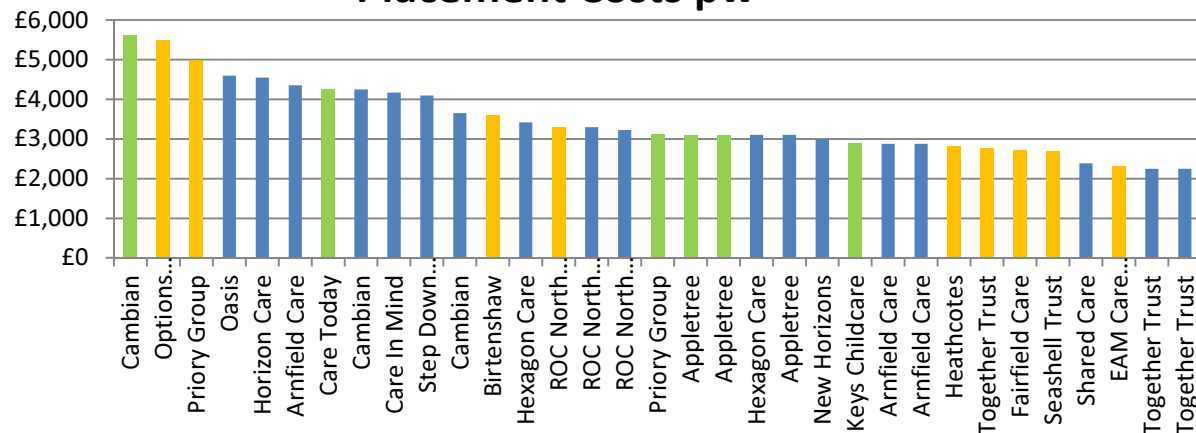
The costs range from £2,250 to £5,604, averaging £3,460  
CAN costs specifically range from £2,310 to £5,500, averaging £3,409

There are 6 young people with dates to step down in provision in 18/19 - 3 of these are due to turning 18.

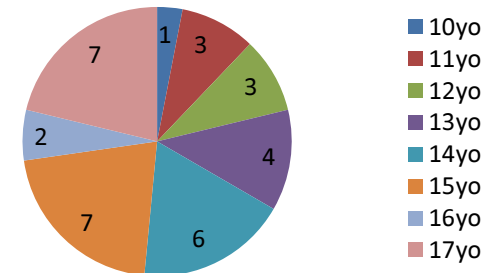
## Placement Length



## Placement Costs pw



## Ages



Orange = CAN; Green = Education



# Increasing In-House Foster Care Provision

To increase in-house provision we have:

- Increased Trafford fostering allowances in line with regional rates

- Introduced a flexible and responsive Fostering Plus scheme to provide short breaks for our foster carers and for children on the edge of care

- Developed a plan to introduce a Specialist Fostering scheme with a high support therapeutic approach to caring for children with complex emotional presentations who may otherwise be placed in residential care

- Refreshed our fostering recruitment materials and further developed our social media presence

- Extended our Refer a Friend scheme to reward all employees as well as foster carers for recommending a friend to foster

- Sought Fostering Friendly Status for the Council to encourage employees to combine work and fostering

- Targeted support to increase foster carer resilience and placement stability

- Enhanced the network of support available to carers by continuing to develop our mentoring support and dedicating a Family Focus resource for foster carers

- Implemented our new procedure for providing financial support to experienced foster carers to extend their accommodation to increase their capacity to provide placements

## GM Innovation Project –No Wrong Door

Trafford has secured innovation funding alongside other Local Authorities in GM. The grant is focused on innovations that improve outcomes for vulnerable adolescents on the edge of care and provide better support for placement stability and within family based settings.

We will re-align and strengthen some existing services. Family Focus team, Fostering Plus carers, and existing Childrens Home provision.

Elements of the No Wrong Door approach:

- No child is 'unfosterable'

- Creating capacity in the system to manage a crisis and not be incident driven that result in long term decision making.



## **Other Work Being Done To Reduce External Placements**

As part of our Transformation Programme we have employed a short-term Review and Improvement Team who are reviewing every external placement and ensuring we use Family based placements wherever we can.

We have a small provision of in-house foster carers specially trained and supported to take emergency placements and children on short breaks to prevent family breakdown.

Our Family Focus Service works with children in the edge of care to prevent care episodes. They also support Foster Carers with challenging placements on the verge of breakdown and will support placements where the child is being stepped down to family based provision.

A separate panel reviews all 16+ provisions to scrutinise the purpose of the provision, adherence to contracts and timely exit plans.

# The Role Of Commissioning In Supporting Sufficiency

## **Improving Outcomes**

Working in partnership with Performance to explore if we can we do more to hold providers to account on their offers of support

Introducing a programme of quality assurance visits to 16+ providers to help improve standards and outcomes for young people

## **Increasing Capacity**

Tendered for a new 5 bed care leaver provision, to be awarded in January 2019

5th bedroom to be added to Forest Court; the existing commissioned care leaver provision

## **Managing the Market**

Ongoing meetings with providers to build relationships, securing priority for local foster carers and residential placements

Facilitating provider events to secure step down placements from residential, offering a different way of working with providers

## **Benchmarking Costs**

Costs are being collated and compared across a GM and regional footprint

By comparison to other LAs, Trafford's negotiation skills are securing the most competitive costs

# The role of commissioning in supporting sufficiency

## **GM Priorities**

A collective approach driving five priority areas;

Returning fostering services to growth

Improving the effectiveness and value for money of placement finding / brokerage systems.

Securing residential capacity which is financially sustainable and meets needs

Achieve a reduction in the use of high cost placements which do not effectively meet needs

Addressing the impact of high numbers of inward placements

## **Placements North West Priorities**

Reviewing , renewing and ongoing governance of purchasing frameworks for fostering; residential and care leaver provision

A regional approach to the quality assurance of external placements.