



TRAFFORD  
COUNCIL

# Children's Placements Savings Proposals

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Report detailing the service approach to placements including stepping up and stepping down of placements. How savings could be achieved from high-cost placements in 2023/24 and how the demand led nature of the service can influence the attainment of potential savings.

**Glen Perryman – Head of Service, Provider Services**

# Introduction and Context Setting

- External Placement Budget Overview
- Commitment and Savings
- Demand and Pressure
- Trafford's current position
- Challenges of delivering future Savings
- Long Term Plans for improved internal sufficiency

# Overview of Placement Budget 2023/24

Children's Placement budget 2023/24 as at Period 8	£
External Children's Homes	2,648,412
Agency foster care	1,854,737
In-house foster care	1,914,392
Connected Persons foster care	1,691,216
Asylum Seekers	-185,658
Special Guardianship	1,967,179
Child Arrangement Orders	21,444
Aftercare Section 23	1,701,655
Supported Lodges/Staying Put	668,371
Adoption allowance expenditure	257,069
Children with Additional Needs	4,332,363
Other Budgets (including income)	3,628,991
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20,500,171</b>

- Includes 5.5% inflation
- £1m demography
- £580k for pressures seen in 22/23
- £1m savings target
- 12.5% uplift for foster carers allowances as set by NMA.

# Commitment of budget

- Budget 23/24 is set for existing children who are already cared for.
- Any new children coming into the system would be offset by either children exiting current placements or reduction in the current costs.
- There was £1.440m budget for new children at P8 in 2022/23.
- We have 12 children with additional needs who are currently cared for in high cost placements are likely to remain there until adulthood due to their complex physical and learning needs.
- 2 of the children have plans of step down to fostering, but due to their level of needs and complexity this will be a challenging fostering search. The other 10 children are likely to remain in current provisions till adulthood.

# Savings

- The savings achieved for the last three years are:
  - 2020/21 £1.611m
  - 2021/22 £1.500m
  - 2022/23 £1.358m
- £1m savings target included in the 23/24 budget
- Identified £1.291m of savings as at P8

# Demand and Pressure

- External residential placement costs £5,381 per week and on average £272k per year. The cost of our most expensive placement currently is £14,700 per week.
- The average IFA placement costs £889 per week and on average £46,335 per year.
- There has been a reduction of the number of internal foster carers over the past 2 years in Trafford and across GM. Foster carer recruitment and retention is challenge currently.
- There are limited vacancies within the market which means that most placement searches result in IFAs not being able to offer a placement or the time required to find a placement extending to several weeks, sometimes months.
- Finding the right match locally has been challenging's resulting in consideration of options beyond GM. IFAs report the same difficulties recruiting and retaining carers as LA fostering services do

# Current Average Placement Costs

- We currently have 12 Children with additional needs in external residential placements which cost on average £272k per year.
- We also have a further 19 children in external residential placements costing £3.676k
- If we were to move a child/young person from an external residential into an external fostering placement this could save £258k (full year effect)
- A further £24k could be saved if the child young person were to move to an internal fostering placement – overall saving of £282k – which demonstrates the need for a robust and successful fostering recruitment and retention strategy.
- If we were to be able to convert long term fostering arrangements or connected carers to Special Guardianship Orders then there are further placement cost savings which could be achieved (£8,237 and £4,192 respectively)

	Night £	Week £	Year £
External residential	833	5,831	304,045
External fostering	127	889	46,355
In-house fostering	60	420	21,900
Connected persons	49	343	17,855
Adoption	19	135	7,024
Supported lodges	48	334	17,416
SGO	38	263	13,663
CAN	747	5,229	271,890

# Impact of increase in provider fees and an overview of the approach being taken locally and regionally to manage this



In a market where demand outstrips supply, the power balance shifts in favour of providers who can charge increased fees because they know they can fill a residential bed several times over.



We aim to develop positive relationships with a number of providers to build trust and goodwill which allows space for negotiation in some cases.



We challenge uplift requests, reviewing cost breakdowns to understand the rationale for increased fees.



Regionally, PNW is implementing a standard approach to fee uplifts across all sectors (except 16+) which will be based on a set figure each year.

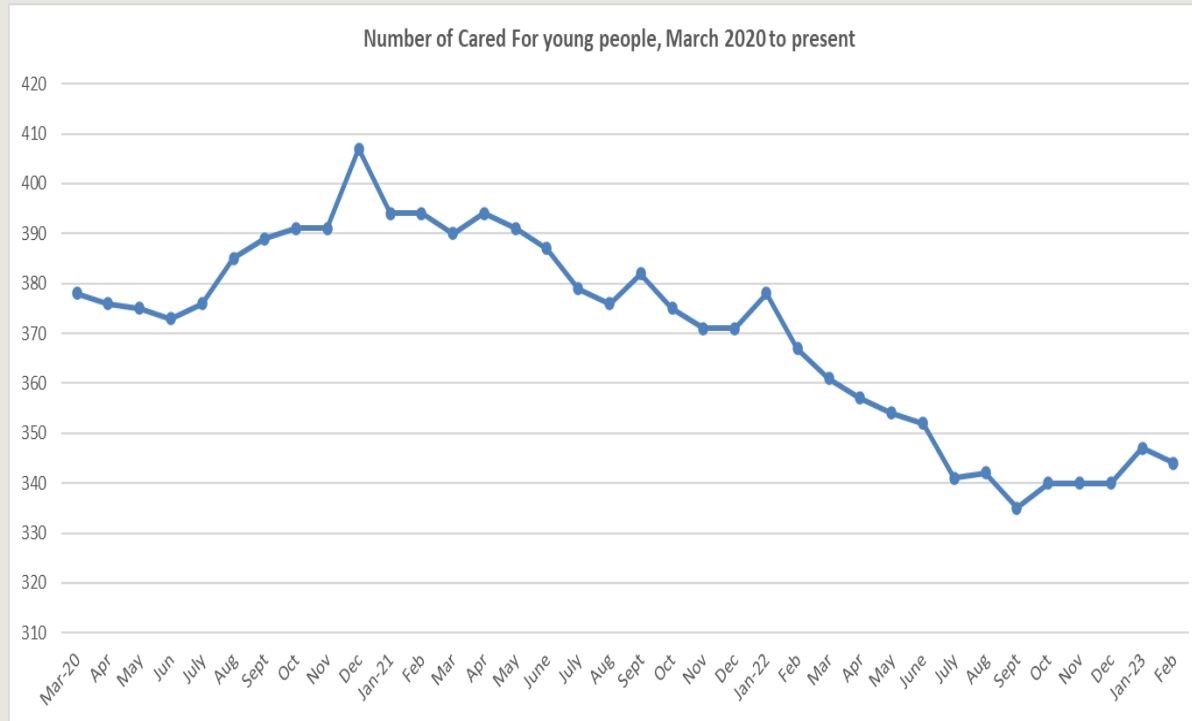


# Budget Management Controls

We have a number of controls in place to monitor and analyse spend of the placement budget:

- **High Cost Placement Clinic** – A monthly meeting chaired by Director of Children Services with LA (service and commissioning) and health partners to review all high cost placements and consider step down where appropriate, care planning and budget forecasting.
- **External Placement Panel** – All requests for external placements, additional staffing and increase in costs are presented at the panel for HOS oversight and agreement. Panel TOR are currently being refreshed to incorporate multi agency approach.
- **Placement Budget Monitoring** – Regular meeting with finance to review the placement budget to enable accurate forecasting and monitor spend against savings.

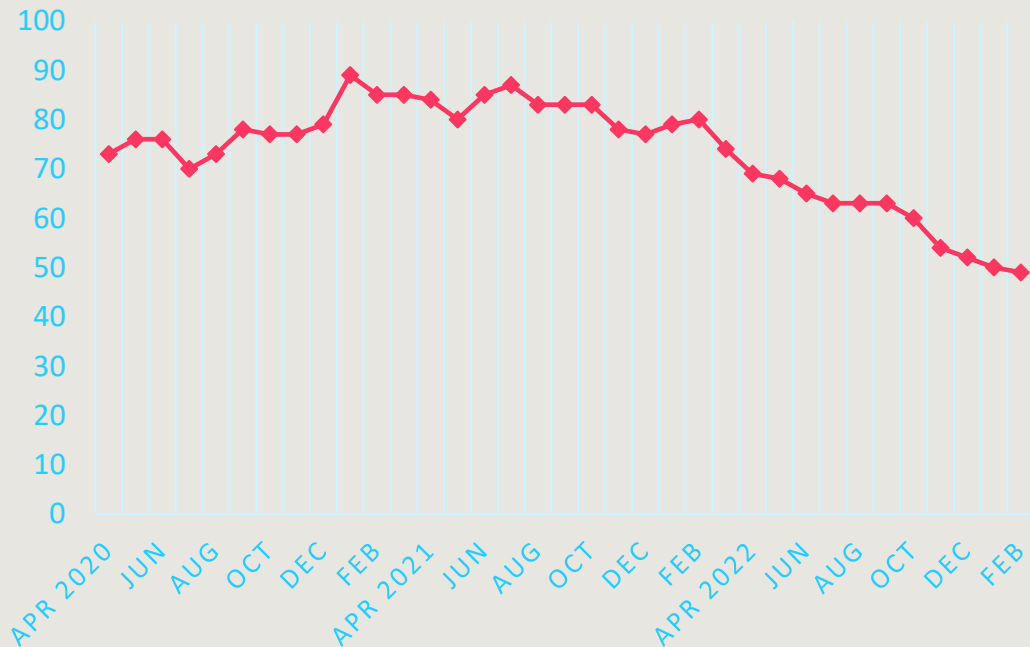
# Cared For Children and Young People



- From the high of around 410 at December 2020, we have seen a generally steady reduction in the number of young people Cared For, currently 345.

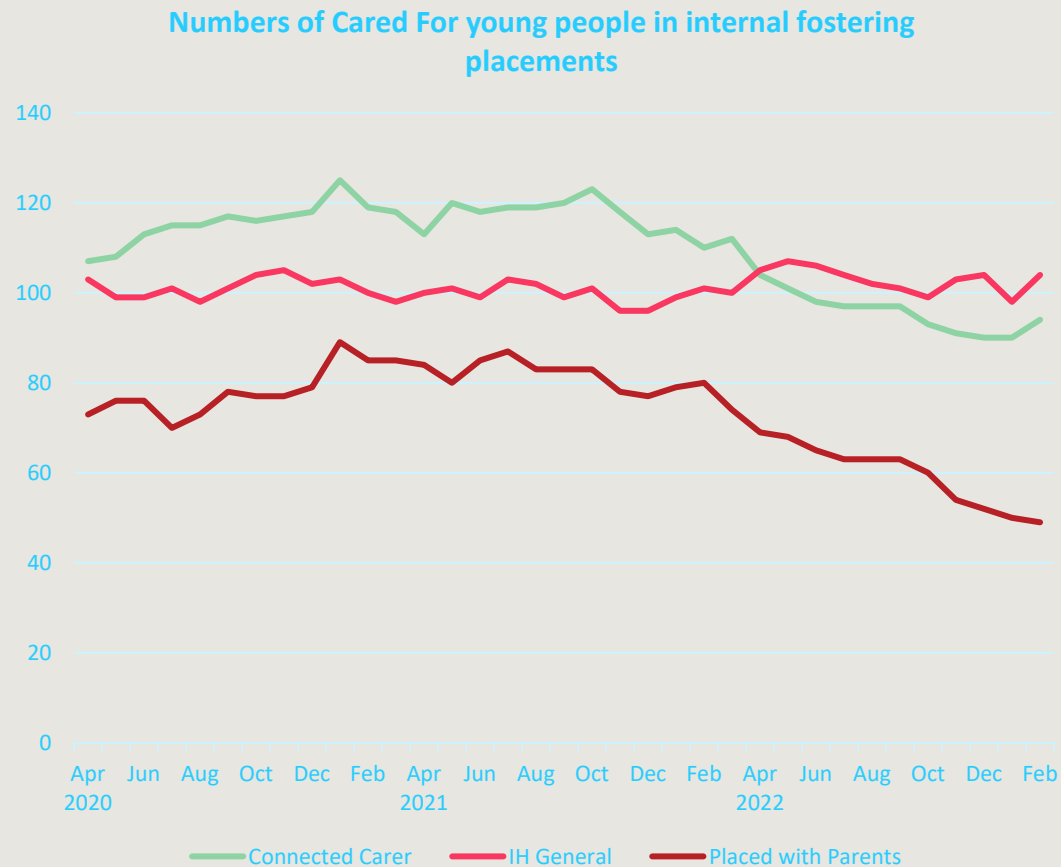
# Placed with Parents

## NUMBER OF CARED FOR YOUNG PEOPLE 'PLACED WITH PARENTS'



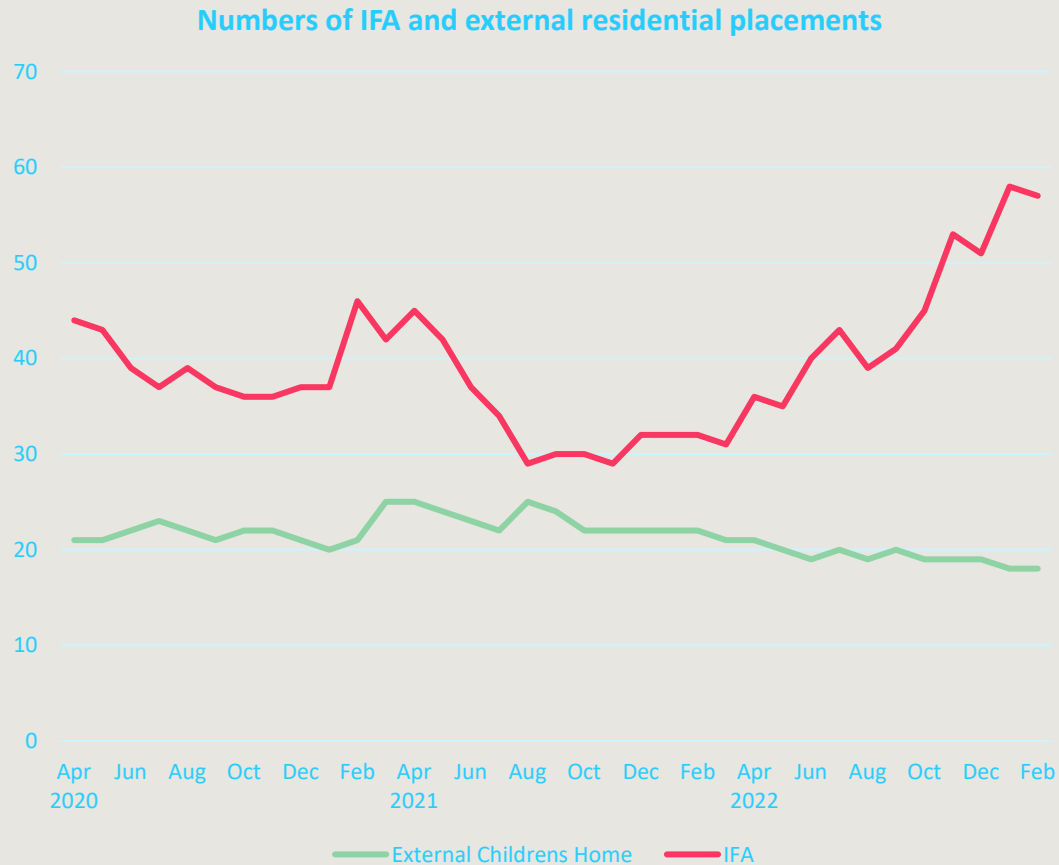
- The proportion of Cared For young people who were 'Placed with Parents' has been the highest in the country in the last two sets of national data, at around 20%.
- A long-term programme aimed at addressing this is now showing results. Reduced from 89 to 50. The proportion is now down to 14%. This is still high in comparison to national average which was 7%, but it is much closer to the regional figure of 12%.

## Total number of children placed internal fostering placements.



- The chart shows the number of in-house fostering placements has remained generally stable over time, at around 100.
- The number of young people placed with connected carers has declined over the last year due to increased number of SGO's being secured – 23 last year, 14 to date this year

# External Placements



- **Use of IFAs declined until about 18 months ago since which time it has increased to beyond the levels we saw 3 years ago. This is due to a reduction in house foster carers**
- **Use of external children's homes is declining, albeit very slowly.**

# Current Placement Type

- The majority of the cared for children are living with internal approved foster carers.
- There has been an increase in the number of children placed in IFA placements.
- Number of connected foster carer placements have reduced, and this will be partly due to the increase in SGO's being granted. In 2022/23 there were 23 SGO's granted and in this reporting period there has been 14.
- External residential placements have remained static.

Placement Type on Date	Apr 2020	Mar 2021	Mar 2021	Feb 2022
Adoption	1.6%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Connected Carer	28.3%	29.9%	30.8%	27.1%
IH General	27.2%	24.8%	27.5%	30.0%
In-House Childrens Home	2.1%	1.5%	2.5%	2.9%
Placed with Parents	19.3%	21.5%	20.3%	14.1%
P2 - Independent Living	0.0%	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%
H5 - Residential Accommodation	4.0%	2.0%	3.0%	2.6%
IFA	11.6%	10.6%	8.5%	16.4%
External Childrens Home	5.6%	6.3%	5.8%	5.2%
Residential Care Home	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%
HNHS/Health Trust	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Residential School	0.3%	0.8%	0.8%	0.9%
Family/Mother & Baby Unit	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Secure Unit	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%
YOI ot Prison	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%

# Trafford Demand Management Strategy - Right children, Right placement for the Right length of time.

The Strategies in place to improve the Quality of Leadership and Practice in Children's Social Care Improvement Plan. They relate to:

- **Effective co-ordinated early help offer as part of a longer term prevention strategy.**
- **Improving the quality of assessment and care planning particularly where childhood neglect and domestic abuse are features of children's lives**
- **Implement Permanence and Sufficiency strategies alongside the No Wrong Door model so that children/young people progress swiftly to their plan of permanence living in family's within their communities in Trafford or to return them to family based care in Trafford**

# Forecast – Leaving Care Demand

We have reduced Cared For numbers from 409 (January 2021) to 345 (February 2023) but we know our previously high number of cared for children means we have a growing cohort of young people that will need our support into adulthood.

We have an increasing number of young people who will become care experienced adults in the future, it is critical we start planning for them now so they will have the support available to them when they need it.

We will need to have appropriate accommodation for a significant number of cared experienced young people over the next 5 years.

Analysis of the age cohorts of our cared for children – February 2023

**77 (22.3%) in 16-17 age bracket**

**163 (47.2%) in 10-15 age bracket**



# 16+ Unregulated Placements

- The numbers of looked after young people in 16+ unregulated accommodation is stable. The costs across all settings range from £510 to £3636 pw, with an average of £1234.15 pw.
- There were 8 looked after young people placed in external semi-independent, unregulated 16+ placements. 3 are 16 years old, 1 female and 2 males. 5 are 17 years old, 3 females and 2 males.
- There were 34 young people aged 18+ in commissioned placements. The costs across all settings range from £79 to £4500 pw, with an average of £871 pw.
- We commission 2 supported accommodation services specifically for Trafford young people. Both have recently been reviewed and continue to deliver positive outcomes for our young people. They are:
  - Mary House – a group living provision for 4 young people with support on site 24/7. A satellite flat for 2 young people is also supported by the staff team
  - Forest Court – 5 individual flats in one building with support staff and/or a concierge team on site.

# Current Challenges and Pressures

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Increasing demand and complexity of need which has significant impacts on the placement budget

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For those children in Tier 4 Hospital Beds, providing them with suitable and appropriate step down provision in the Local Area.

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Ability to provide range of choice to match & access children to local placements

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A reduction in number of internal foster carers over past 2 years.

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Availability and choice of move on accommodation for care experienced young people

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# How we plan to address our challenges



Returning fostering to growth – Internal Fostering modernisation plan in place to increase number of foster carers retain our current fostering community.



GMCA fostering recruitment Campaign- Will launch in May 2023 to increase the awareness of Local Authority Fostering with an aspiration to increase the number of foster carers in GM.



Securing local beds – a pilot approach working alongside 4 GM LAs to ‘soft block’ a bed in a residential home which will be ring fenced for the 4 LAs.



Project Skyline – ‘Project Skyline’ has emerged out of the create supply project line in the GM LAC sufficiency Programme. The aim is to create high quality homes in GM for more complex young people including services that either prevent escalation to Tier 4 provision or as a step down transition from such a service.



Re-launch of the NWD model at Kindle Lodge in Trafford. This investment will stem the flow of adolescents needing to be cared for and can remain in the care of family safely.



Continue to drive the implementation of Trafford’ House Project which is supporting 7 young people to develop their independent skills and find their tenancy

# Summary

- Even with all the previous success of year on year savings from the placement budget it will be challenging and difficult to continue to make further savings.
- The nature of the work is unpredictable and there is increase in complexity and trauma of children who need to be cared for.
- With ongoing challenges with internal sufficiency and difficulties sourcing appropriate external placements for complex young people, this could lead to more children being placed outside of Trafford and increased costs.
- There is significant ongoing work internally, locally and regionally to address these difficulties with aspirations that they will lead to prevention and reduction in cared for children.

**Thank you for listening – any questions?**



