

Children Looked After and Care Leavers Sufficiency Statement 2016-2018

Blackpool Council



Children Looked After and Care Leavers Sufficiency Statement 2016-2018

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1. Introduction

The local authority duty to provide accommodation for children in care was strengthened in 2011 with the introduction of Sufficiency Statutory Guidance and the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations.

This duty of sufficiency requires Blackpool Council to ensure a range of placements sufficient to meet the needs of children and young people in the care of the local authority; and to make arrangements to promote co-operation with relevant partners to improve the well-being of children in the local area.

This updated document should be read in conjunction with:

- Blackpool Council Getting it Right: Child and Family Strategy
- Blackpool Council Children and Young People’s Plan
- Blackpool Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

Our ambition is to ensure that where possible children should live within their family environment and all efforts will be made to allow that to safely happen.

Blackpool Council’s Children and Young People’s Plan outlines priorities whereby children and young people will be provided the best possible services to meet their need.

This statement document sets out how Blackpool Council intends to meet the Sufficiency Duty. It also emphasises the Council’s commitment to children and young people who are in the care of the local authority or on the edge of care to ensure that their life chances and outcomes are improved.

The statement takes into account population trends and projections, placement data and market factors for Blackpool Council to fulfil responsibilities and duties as a Corporate Parent for children and young people.

Blackpool - Key Statistics

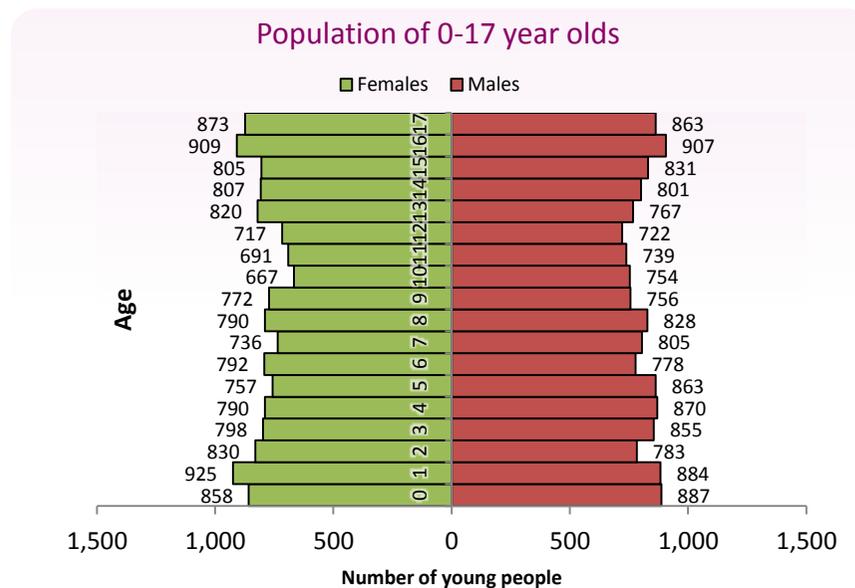
Location

Blackpool is a seaside town located in Lancashire County in North West England.

Blackpool is a Unitary Authority and covers an area of 13.46 square miles. Blackpool boundary sits within the urban area stretching along the Fylde Coast, and is one of the most densely populated authorities in the UK outside London.

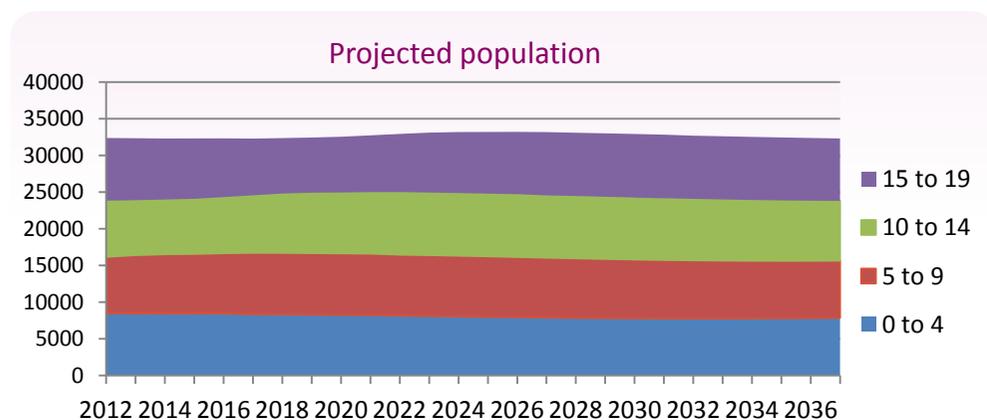
Demographics

The current population of 0-17 year olds in Blackpool is estimated to be 28,900, 20.3% of the total Blackpool population of 142,100. The chart below shows the breakdown of this total by age and sex bandings.



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The Office for National Statistics produces future population projections¹ for 5 year age bandings. They currently project that the overall young person population will remain fairly stable over the next 25 years. There are projected to be approximately 32-33,000 young people aged 0-19. A steady 23% of the Blackpool total.



Social and Economic Context

Research highlights that the environment in which children grow up influences their life chances (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). There are a wide range of existing and ongoing research programmes which show differences in opinion on the significance of these influences and the size of their effects but generally still conclude impacts occur over both the short and long term. (Friedrichs, Galster, & Musterd, 2003).

From a family context, Blackpool has seen a small but notable demographic shift in the nature of family structures. Between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses of Population the number of traditional “married/cohabiting (living together as though married)” families

¹ NB the word ‘projection’ is used instead of forecast as they do not take into account potential changes in future population or policy.

reduced by -4.6%, while the number of lone-parent families increased by 6.4%. There has also been an increase in families with ‘other,’ presumably more complex, circumstances (ONS 2001, 2011).

The socio-economic-status of families is correlated with poor outcomes and in this context a number of Blackpool’s children grow up in one of the poorest performing (statistically speaking) authorities in England. The English Indices of Deprivation is a useful baseline for comparing authorities as it combines a range of deprivation factors under a single measure. Using this index Blackpool is ranked the most deprived authority in England in 2015. (CLG, 2015)

In terms of income and employment, Blackpool has high proportions of individuals reliant on benefits as a source of income with out-of-work benefits, including Employment Support Allowance (ESA) and Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) at almost twice the national (Great Britain) level; currently 23% of Blackpool’s Working Age Population, compared to 12.7% nationally (GB). The median weekly wage for those in full time employment is £137 less than the national equivalent, at just £386 per week. The resulting economic pressure means that 29% of all children in Blackpool are considered to be in relative poverty – the 14th highest level in England. (ONS 2014, DWP 2015, HMRC 2014)

From a health perspective, the health of people in Blackpool is generally worse than the England average and there are marked inequalities both between Blackpool and the national average, and within the town itself. Life expectancy for males the poorest in England at 74.3 years compared to 79.4 years. Life expectancy for females is similarly poor, at 80.1 years, compared to 83.1 years for England -the 3rd poorest after Manchester and Liverpool (ONS, 2012)

The *qualified* skills base in Blackpool is also poor with an estimated 13% of the working age population in Blackpool having no formal qualifications and just 22% having a level 4 qualification, compared to 36% for England. (ONS 2014)

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Evidence from Blackpool's Child Poverty Needs Assessment highlights that many of these factors have intergenerational impacts resulting in an ongoing 'cycle of poverty' that is very difficult to break (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2006). Early intervention, and holistic multi-agency approaches are emerging as one potential solution but are highly resource intensive. Blackpool has also received a significant investment in the form of Big Lottery funded Better Start project which aims to deliver systems change and true early prevention for 0 to 3s in the 7 most deprived wards.

More recently significant changes to health services, welfare reform, local government budgets, school types and other policy initiatives will have a substantial short term and potentially long term impact on future children's outcomes.

Overall these figures highlight that the environment in which children in Blackpool grow up contains a significantly challenging context in which all services in Blackpool, including children's services need to operate. The range of social influences naturally creates a greater level of need in the local population than elsewhere and a correspondingly significant demand for services in Blackpool.

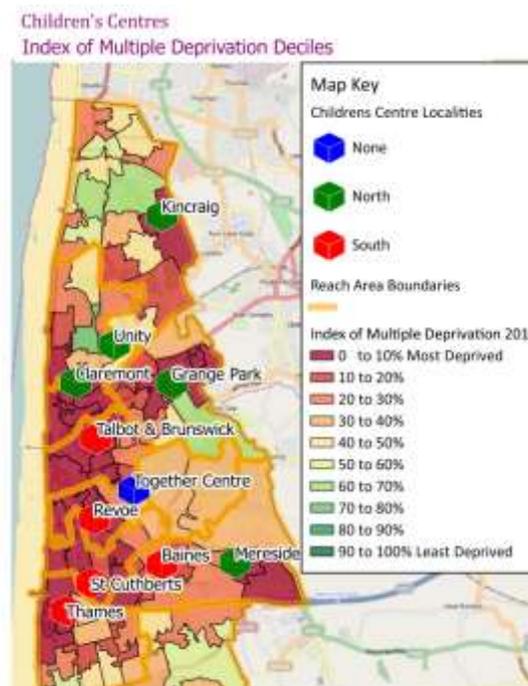
Poverty and Deprivation

Blackpool has a large proportion of residents living in deprived areas and is currently ranked the most deprived authority in England under the Indices of Deprivation 2015, a higher rank than in 2010, (6th) 2007 (12th) and 2004 (24th) Additionally, in the 2010 and 2015 Indices, Blackpool ranked 1st for the concentration of deprivation.

The Indices of Deprivation map (right) shows the relative positions of local areas in Blackpool. Around half of Blackpool's 94 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA's)², are in the most deprived 20% of all LSOAs in England. Specific areas in the central wards of Talbot, Revue, and St. Cuthberts

Bloomfield, Brunswick, Claremont and the outer wards of Clifton and Park have the highest ranked levels of deprivation in Blackpool.

Poverty is also a significant factor in Blackpool. In 2012, 29.3% of children in Blackpool were estimated to be in poverty, compared to 18.6% of all children in England. Further analysis highlights that 67% of children in poverty live in lone parent families³.



Source Data: CLG, Indices of Deprivation, 2010

² An LSOA is a small area of approximately 1500 residents

³ DfE: Local Area Data Tables, 2014

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Education and Children's Outcomes

For young people in Blackpool, there are a range of challenges across both educational attainment and life chance indicators. The range of issues is partly driven by the existing high levels of poverty and social disadvantage in Blackpool, both of which have generational impacts whereby parents' difficulties create problems in the family and influence children's outcomes. The rate of Looked after Children in Blackpool is the highest in England at a rate of 152.4 per 10,000 children; this is over twice the rate for England as a whole at 60 per 10,000.

In terms of academic achievement, the proportion of children attaining the expected level at Key Stage 2 is similar to national levels at 80-85% attainment dependent on subject. There are strong differences between the highest and lowest performing areas however with evidence for the North West region suggesting the proportion attaining level 4 in the 10% most deprived areas is 18 percentage points lower than those in the least deprived 10%.

Blackpool pupils perform below national levels at GCSE level with a lower proportions achieving 5 or more A* to C grade GCSEs (53.2% compared to 63.8%). When Maths and English are included this gap remains – 44.0% of Blackpool pupils achieve 5+ A*-C (incl. Maths & English) compared to 53.4% nationally.

In addition, approximately 7% of Blackpool's young people are not in education, employment or training compared to 5% for the sub-region⁴.

2. Council Plan

Our Council Plan can be viewed by visiting www.blackpool.gov.uk and sets out our priorities to create a better Blackpool.

We're ready to do something different. In the past we've had the resources to support people with health and care issues by providing services to them. Now, we're thinking about how we can create the right conditions for those in less need to find support and strength in other ways, becoming less reliant on our help and more in control.

One of our priorities is creating stronger communities and increasing resilience in Blackpool. There are a number of key challenges to address:

- High rates of Looked After Children
- Low GCSE achievement
- Poor life expectancy
- High levels of alcohol and substance misuse
- High levels of teenage pregnancy
- Domestic violence
- Mental health

This focus on children is part of a wider effort to get things right early, meaning benefits are felt throughout their lives.

Where families go through difficult times, we'll do everything we can to get the environment right so the children can be safe and supported.

Projects for children and young people including a wider Corporate Parent offer for looked after children; and a new Early Help Strategy.

A significant pressure on being able to meet sufficiency for looked after children is the high levels of demand for support. One of our key goals will be to reduce this demand through earlier intervention and support to the family to prevent children and young people entering the care system.

⁴ CCIS Database, March 2015, (12 month averages of 2014 data)

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3. Strategic Objectives

The five Commissioning Priorities as set out in the 2015-2018 Commissioning Strategy are:

- To ensure the provision of a range of services for adult, young people and children with care and support needs to:
 - Keep vulnerable children and adult safe
 - Ensure that children and adults can remain independent and safe in their own home as long as possible
 - To support the health and wellbeing of adults and children
- To ensure that people with eligible support needs are supported to access training, education, employment and volunteer opportunities
- To make high quality information and advice available to the population of Blackpool
- To promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations through the provision of those services which support all people to achieve their potential
- To ensure that children and young people are protected from inappropriate caring roles and provide support for those who do care

The 2013-2016 Children and Young People's Plan has three key priorities:

- Keeping children and young people safe, preventing them from entering the care and custody system wherever possible and ensuring there are safe and effective exit routes
- Improving the health, self-confidence and resilience of children and young people
- Maintaining Blackpool's culture of high expectations and aspirations where attendance, participation and achievement for all are improved

4. Sufficiency Needs (source: Department for Education)

Nationally, in the year ending 31 March 2015, a total of 69,540 children were looked after by local authorities in England, a rate of 60 per 10,000 children under 18 years. This number has increased by 6% since 2011 and has increased steadily since 2008.

Whilst there has been a steady increase in numbers coming into care the emphasis on preventative services has been significant to minimise family breakdown. Although the year on year changes for the number of children placed with parents has been small, the numbers from 2014 to 2015 has increased by 8%.

Children aged between 10 and 15 years represent the majority of the looked after population (38%), while children under one year old are in a minority (5% of the looked after population). The looked after population includes more boys than girls (55% compared with 45%).

These age- and gender-related distributions have remained relatively constant over the past 5 years.

The majority of looked after children (75%) are in foster care placements. This number has increased by 9% since 2010. Over the same period there has been a 12% decrease in the number of looked after children placed with parents; while the number of children placed for adoption increased by 22% between 2011 and 2015.

Only 2% of placements nationally have been made into residential settings. This includes residential care homes, NHS medical and nursing settings, family or mother and baby units and young offenders institutions or prisons.

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5. Blackpool Profile (source: Children's Services Monthly Performance Statistics)

As at 31st March 2016, the number of children looked after in Blackpool was 469, increasing to 482 (April) and 485 (May). This rate remains significantly higher than both the national average and also that of statistical neighbours.

This figure highlights a sharp increase since December 2015 where the number stood at 447.

Table 5.1: Number of children looked after

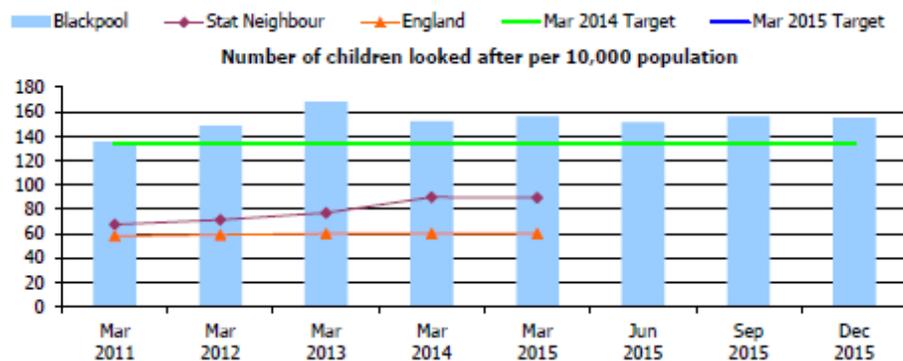


Table 5.2: Gender breakdown of children looked after

	31/03/2011	31/03/2012	31/03/2013	31/03/2014	31/03/2015	31/03/2016
Male	225	246	272	253	250	246
Female	171	188	209	190	204	223
Total	396	434	481	443	454	469

Table 5.3: Breakdown of placement type for children looked after

	31/3/11	31/3/12	31/3/13	31/3/14	31/3/15	31/3/16
Foster placement with relative or friend	48	51	52	33	45	42
Placement with other foster carer	258	278	298	288	280	290
Children's Homes	43	46	52	35	34	37
Residential accommodation not subject to 'Children's homes regulations'	0	0	0	2	1	10
Residential care home	2	4	1	2	1	0
All Residential schools, except where dual-registered as a school and children's home	1	0	0	0	0	0
NHS/Health Trust or other establishment providing medical or nursing care	1	0	0	0	0	0
Young Offender Institution or prison	1	1	3	2	0	0
Secure Unit	2	0	0	3	2	0
Placed for adoption with placement order	14	14	34	43	42	30
Placed with own parents or other person with parental responsibility	20	25	27	20	31	44
Independent living	6	15	14	15	18	13
Other Placements	0	0	0	0	0	3
Total	396	434	481	443	454	469

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The ethnicity of the local children looked after population remains predominantly White British. This LAC group has seen a relative reduction from 95.7% on 31 March 2011 to 91.9% on 31 March 2016.

Over the same period, there has been an increase to:

- White Irish (0.6% increase)
- Mixed – White and Asian (1.3% increase)
- Mixed – White and Black African (0.5% increase)

The majority of placements for children looked after are made into foster care. On 31 March 2016, 70.8% of placements were made into foster care. However, in 2011 this figure was 77.3% and data shows that between 2011 and 2016 the proportion of foster care placements has decreased year on year. Over the same period, placements into residential care settings have seen a similar decrease of 1.5%.

This could be explained by sharp proportional increases in children looked after being placed for adoption (2.9%) as well as being placed with parents / someone with parental responsibility (3.3%).

Roughly one-third of the local children looked after population is aged 11-15, which is consistent with national trends.

Table 5.4: Age breakdown for children looked after

	31/03/2011	31/03/2012	31/03/2013	31/03/2014	31/03/2015	31/03/2016
Under 1	22	34	48	33	35	37
1-4 Years	114	109	115	109	89	78
5-10 Years	72	88	105	100	105	122
11-15 Years	141	144	142	139	143	151
16 and Over	47	59	71	62	82	81
Total	396	434	481	443	454	469

Since 2013/14, around 200 children ceased to be looked after in Blackpool per year.

For those who are discharged, this tends to occur in either the first 6 months or between years 1-3 of being in care; and typically for children aged 1-4 years old.

The most prevalent reason for discharge during 2015/16 was:

- Returned home to live with parents, relatives or another person with parental responsibility (28%)
- Special Guardianship granted (21.5%)
- Adoption (21.5%)

Table 5.5: Duration of care for children ceased to be looked after

	31/03/14	31/03/15	31/03/16
Under 6 Weeks	34	32	28
6 Weeks to 6 Months	28	31	55
6 Months to 1 Year	25	21	40
1 Year to 3 Years	67	55	54
3 Years to 5 Years	32	26	19
5 Years and Over	19	22	18
Total	205	187	214

Table 5.6: Age of children ceased to be looked after

	31/03/2014	31/03/2015	31/03/2016
Under 1	14	9	23
1-4 Years	70	75	75
5-10 Years	41	33	40
11-15 Years	31	25	26
16 and Over	49	45	50
Total	205	187	214

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6. Current Provision

Residential Care

Residential care continues to be a valuable service to provide stable support and provision to the looked after children population. Although the data outlined in table 5.3 shows a decline in the number of children placed in residential care settings (from 10.9% in 2011 to 7.9% in 2016), feedback with young people and providers indicates that residential care is desired by young people and can be the most suitable place for them to thrive and meet their potential.

The residential offer in Blackpool currently includes internal 6-bedded children's homes. This provision has evidenced long-term placements, though both homes are currently subject to a commissioning review. The review of these homes may lead to an opportunity to re-design the service to deliver better outcomes for young people.

Externally, residential care is commissioned through a local framework agreement. There is difficulty placing into homes contracted on the framework, which has resulted in placements being made outside Blackpool we have not previously used. One of the main reasons for not being able to place on the framework is lack of availability in local provision; and a priority in order for Blackpool Council to meet the sufficiency duty is to engage with the local residential care market to understand how this can be improved.

Detail of Framework Agreement (Residential Care)

A residential care framework agreement is currently in place until October 2016, with an option to extend for up to two years.

The framework was awarded on separate lots (Standard, Therapeutic and Disability); and was split according to distance from Blackpool. Zone 1 is areas up to 20 miles from Blackpool, Zone 2 20-60 miles from Blackpool.

Table 6.1: Overview of Residential Care framework

	Number of framework providers	Total number of homes	Bed capacity
Standard (Zone 1)	6	6	35
Standard (Zone 2)	9	24	128
Therapeutic (Zone 1)	3	3	12
Therapeutic (Zone 2)	3	6	19
Disability (Zone 1)	2	3	16
Disability (Zone 2)	3	5	16

Market Management (Residential Care)

Between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016 there were 199 referrals from childrens social care for an externally commissioned placement search for a looked after child:

Table 6.2: Placement search requests 1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016

	Number of referrals
Foster Care (IFA)	90
Residential Care	68
Leaving Care	41

At the beginning of March 2016, Blackpool Council had 29 external residential placements which were costing on average £2,569 per week.

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A priority will be for us to work with our local market better to secure local capacity and achieve value for money. The local market hasn't been proactively managed and the current framework agreement is not meeting the Council needs.

This is particularly apparent for those difficult to place as an emergency placement (e.g. following placement breakdown), for young people who display very challenging behaviour or present with complex needs.

As a result, it is typical that between 30-50% of external residential placements are made with providers outside the framework agreement. This has led to increased costs, which are likely to increase further without a re-design of the local pathway.

The latest data available (taken from w/c 16th May 2016) shows there are 28 external residential placements, of which:

- 64% (18) are made into homes on the framework agreement
 - 11 are made into homes located in Blackpool, Poulton or Cleveleys
 - Weekly cost from: £1895 - £2700 per week
 - Average weekly cost: £2316
- 36% (10) are made into homes outside the framework agreement
 - Weekly cost from: £2490 - £4100 per week
 - Average weekly cost: £2945

Although the issues identified above are experienced with local authorities across the North West, in Blackpool between 2012 and 2015 the average weekly spend for external residential care increased by 22%:

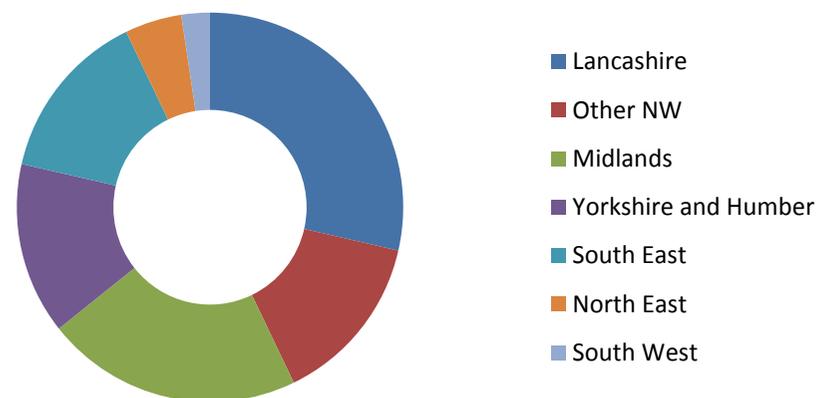
2015: £2,792 per week
2014: £2,469 per week
2013: £2,225 per week
2012: £2,284 per week

The internal residential provision provided by the two 6-bedded homes have been well occupied. Though these homes are not considered to be suitable for the most challenging and complex young people. There may be factors attributed to this including the size of the home (6-bedded homes are acknowledged to be too big to accommodate very challenging and complex young people); and not wanting to jeopardise the stability of other young people in the home when considering referrals.

Figures for non-Blackpool looked after children placed in local residential provision were obtained in January 2016.

At this time, there were 42 residential placements in Blackpool for non-Blackpool looked after children.

Non-Blackpool LAC placed in Blackpool residential care (January 2016)



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Foster Care

Foster care provision is the main source of accommodation for looked after children and provides a key role in meeting the sufficiency duty. This is an area we would like to sustain and develop in the future.

Commitment to ensuring foster care provision has resulted in an increase to the capacity for in-house fostering.

The numbers of approved foster care places at its highest level as detailed below:

Table 6.3: Internal foster care placement figures

	Number of approved places	% filled places
31 March 2011	313	90%
31 March 2012	306	90%
31 March 2013	301	95%
31 March 2014	337	76%
31 March 2015	386	72%

The figures available from 31st March 2015 show that 5% of places were unavailable due to the needs of other children in placement. This is a potential area of growth due to the complex needs of young people in the system.

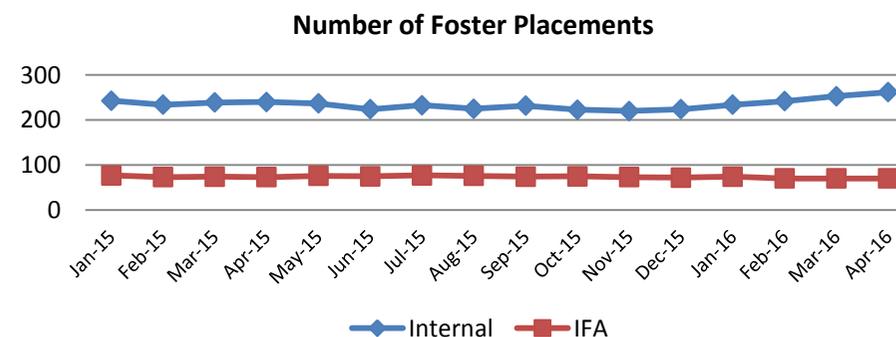
Another impact to explain the perceived reduction on the % filled places is that a number of carers request caring breaks after particularly difficult or complex placements.

Arrangements for independent foster care (IFA) are undertaken through Placements Northwest and led by Manchester City Council on behalf of 21 local authorities. The regional framework is split into lots according to the age of the child/young person.

Market Management (Foster Care)

Of the 199 referrals between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2016 for an externally commissioned placement, 45% of the requests were made for an IFA placement. Continuing this trend, in the first 6 weeks of the financial year (1st April to 18th May 2016) there have been 49 external placement search requests made; with 47% (23) made for an IFA placement.

Table 6.4: Foster placement breakdown January 2015 – April 2016



The majority of foster care placements are made internally. On 1st April 2016, Blackpool Council had 73 IFA placements and 262 internal fostering placements.

Although Blackpool Council is not provided with information to understand the true IFA capacity in Blackpool, on 1st January 2016 there were 48 IFA placements in Blackpool for non-Blackpool looked after children.

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16 + and Leaving Care

A range of provision is commissioned for care leavers and 16+ looked after young people. There is currently a Framework Agreement in place which has been extended until April 2017.

Some young people are subject to the Staying Put policy and as such remain living within existing foster care arrangements. Other young people are supported to move in to semi-independent unregulated accommodation detailed on the Framework agreement wherever possible although it is sometimes necessary to 'spot purchase' appropriate provision.

Accommodation providers commissioned have all achieved the minimum standard assessment co-ordinated by Placements Northwest in an attempt to monitor quality in this unregulated sector. Providers are expected to support young people to become independent and focus on the skills to enable a successful move on.

In addition to the provision on the Framework Agreement some young people are accommodated in Supported Lodgings provided by our internal 'Shared Lives' Service who recruit, train and support appropriate hosts who provide a family environment within which independence skills are acquired. The placements are Social Care funded.

Detail of Framework Agreement (16+ and Leaving Care)

Table 6.5: Breakdown of framework agreement providers (Leaving Care)

Semi Independent Provider	Number of beds
Cherish	3
Moving Up	4
123	6
Care and Community	11

Accommodation with Floating Support Provider
Fusion Care
Stepping Stones
Moving Up

Table 6.6: Breakdown of where care leavers are living (May 2016)

Provision	Number of young people
Semi-independent accommodation	23
Accommodation with floating support	2
Supported lodgings	5
In custody	0
Staying Put	18

Market Management (16+ and Leaving Care)

There is a growing recognition that our leaving care framework agreement is not meeting our needs. A recent review of the semi-independent providers has found inconsistency in the sector with some providers providing more comprehensive support than others.

There is an increasing prevalence of high level complex needs in our looked after population and Blackpool is currently paying huge amounts of money for residential care. As these young people reach the age of 16 and therefore become care leavers we need to be planning on how those needs can be met in an appropriate leaving care setting.

It is a priority to increase the range of 16+ accommodation and ensure it is fit for purpose, achieving positive outcomes and preparing young people for independent living. There is also an opportunity to be more creative in how this might be achieved.

We are currently piloting a long term, shared accommodation option for care leavers, who are engaged in meaningful activity and have an established level of independent skills, in partnership with Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH). A 2-bedded flat has been sourced, furnished and equipped appropriately, in conjunction with two identified young people. Support is being provided by BCH in partnership with the Personal Adviser and they act as guarantor for the tenancy until the young people are 18 years old.

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The young people are encouraged to look upon the accommodation as a potential permanent home. Once they are 18 years old they will be supported to take full responsibility for the tenancy and the support is withdrawn over a period of time as the young people become independent adults.

The pilot is in its early stages but will be fully evaluated and will inform future commissioning intentions.

Managing Remands in the Youth Justice System

Bail and Remand management is a standard set out in the National Standards for Youth Justice. Under the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012, the local authority must seek to reduce unnecessary remands for young people.

The continued retainment of a remand foster bed has ensured that provision is available when required. It is also used for the accommodation of children and young people detained by Police under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. Should subsequent placements be required, the commissioned Independent Fostering Agency is committed to provide from within their wider pool of foster care placements.

The Council's Safeguarding Young People in Custody Policy can be found [here](#)⁵ and highlights the roles and responsibilities of the local children's safeguarding board in respect of children and young people in custody/secure environments.

The table below shows how improvements in remand management in the Youth Offending Service have reduced remands in custody and increased the use of remands to local authority accommodation:

Table 6.7: Breakdown of Blackpool young people remanded into custody

Remands	2009 /10	2010 /11	2011 /12	2012 /13	2013 /14	2014 /15	2015 /16
YOT Bail Support Programme	36	24	23	18	7	2	2
Remands to Local Authority Accommodation	3	1	3	2	8	7	2
Court Ordered Remand to Secure Accommodation (Secure Children's Home or Secure Training Centre)	4	8	4	4	8	2	0
Remands in Custody	25	21	20	13	9	15	8

Despite this, there have been instances where a custodial sentence has been delivered to a young person because a suitable remand placement could not be sought. In these circumstances, a community sentence would have provided a more beneficial outcome for young person.

From a sufficiency perspective, it is clear that risk factors including offending behaviour, substance misuse, mental health and lifestyle all impact on the availability of suitable provision in the market. It will be a feature of work undertaken to ensure remand provision continues to be available for those in the youth justice system.

⁵ http://blackpoolchildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_sg_cyp_custody.html

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7. Commissioning Priorities

An overall Council priority is to reduce the rate of looked after children and to make efficiencies on the placement costs. There is an increasing demand for services and in order to address this we need to provide the means for families to become more resilient. We'll aim to do this through a combination of early help support and joined up health and social care services.

Residential Care

There are efficiencies to be gained by re-designing the local pathway and as a Council we intend to work towards the delivery of several commissioning intentions in 2016/17:

Divert children and young people from coming into care and maintaining the family unit. Development of respite provision for children and young people on the edge and precipice of care would maintain the family unit and reduce numbers of young people entering the care system. This would replicate similar successful models seen elsewhere across the region e.g. Blackburn and Bolton, where their looked after population has reduced as a result of support being provided through a combination of respite and outreach support.

Create local capacity for the most challenging and complex young people who are placed in residential care emergency / crisis, including remand placements.

There is a need to develop the local market for complex children in care who are in crisis and have a range of complex needs that cannot be managed in standard residential and therapeutic settings. This could include for children and young people with mental health issues who do not meet tier 4 criteria; and would aim to avoid the need to place out of the area. This is an active workstream under the Transformational Plan; and the Council is engaged with developments on a sub-regional level to take this work forward.

It is also a priority for commissioners to ensure local capacity and achieve value for money, including remand placements. This will ensure all can be done to achieve efficiencies in placement costs; with support to the youth offending service to deliver community sentencing for those in the youth justice system.

Refresh of the residential framework agreement.

The challenges facing Blackpool are similar to those across the north-west, with local authorities unable to make their framework agreements work for them. The current framework will be extended to allow commissioners the opportunity to engage with the local market, shape the specification and learn from models implemented elsewhere. **A key feature will also be to make sure services are delivered to children and young people as they have been commissioned; and that we are able to identify where young people are not making progress or positive changes.**

Foster Care

The commissioned IFA arrangements appear to be working effectively for Blackpool; and combined with the internal residential provision, offer good local capacity which is meeting the needs of young people.

There may be opportunity to further strengthen the local pathway and provide a step-down from residential care for some young people, by developing a **Social Impact Bond Model to deliver an intensive and innovative enhanced foster care service for young people with complex needs.**

16 + and Leaving Care

It is a commissioning intention to remodel all young people's accommodation (16+) through a pooled budget arrangement involving Housing Related Support and Leaving Care accommodation funding.

This will allow us to develop housing options and pathways which meet the needs of those children and young people in need and to support the achievement of positive outcomes.

The individual contracts need to be aligned and a tender exercise will be undertaken in 2017. A key objective of our accommodation approach will be to ensure that our young people are able to receive good education, employment and training opportunities and are able to be located in an environment that meets their needs and promotes their wellbeing.

Children Looked After and Care Leavers Sufficiency Statement 2016-2018

8. Consultation

As part of the Sufficiency Statement, the views of a range of stakeholders have been sought including current and former young people in care, social care professionals and residential, foster care and leaving care service providers.

Feedback from service providers and social care:

Increasing need:
MH and drug use
CSE and Offenders
Family breakdown
Therapeutic need

Declining need:
Leaving care
Education
Planned referrals
Disability

The main barrier is the high LAC need and limited LA size and funding

Need clarity on the role of providers and social care staff

Feedback from young people:

The stress of moving and living on my own has been a negative experience

I wanted more advice and support about moving to independence

More choice and a fact sheet on housing options would be of benefit

I was happy in foster care, the children's home was horrible

Need more support having left the system to get a job

I get a chance to be more independent in my leaving care accommodation

Children Looked After and Care Leavers Sufficiency Statement 2016-2018

Young Peoples' Feedback - Internal Fostering					Blackpool Council											
Total number of feedbacks received	How do you feel about life ?				Do you understand				Where you are now			Where you are now, do you				
	Good	OK	Could be better	Not Good	Why you are in Care?		What In Care Means?		It's Great	OK	I don't Like it	Have Someone to talk to?		Want to change anything?		
Internal Foster	140	105	13	9	6	Yes	No	Yes	No	113	23	3	Yes	No	Yes	No
Percentages		75	9.29	6.4	4.29	77	19	86	9.3	80.7	16.4	2.14	93	2.9	16	82

Young Peoples' Feedback - External Fostering					Blackpool Council											
Total number of feedbacks received	How do you feel about life ?				Do you understand				Where you are now			Where you are now, do you				
	Good	OK	Could be better	Not Good	Why you are in Care?		What In Care Means?		It's Great	OK	I don't Like it	Have Someone to talk to?		Want to change anything?		
External Foster	44	34	6	2	2	Yes	No	Yes	No	39	5	0	Yes	No	Yes	No
Percentages		77.3	13.6	4.5	4.55	86	11	91	4.5	88.6	11.4	0	98	2.3	4.5	93

Children Looked After and Care Leavers Sufficiency Statement 2016-2018

