

Camden's Sufficiency statement for Looked After Children 2020/21 and action plan 2021/2022



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Introduction

This document provides an update on Camden's Sufficiency Statement for the provision of accommodation for Looked after Children and Care Leavers.

Camden aims to ensure sufficient local placements for looked after children whilst improving outcomes and obtaining value for money. Savings made will enable Camden to invest in preventative services to support children, young people and their families that prevents escalation of difficulties and avoids the need for accommodation.

The statement reflects our ambition to be a good and effective corporate parent and is also aligned with our corporate parenting priorities with the overall aim of making a difference in the lives of all our Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

This statement outlines the progress made since the production of the first sufficiency statement in 2010 and sets out the measures that Camden is taking and will take to develop greater and more sustainable sufficiency.

The right placement (in the right place) at the right time and the achievement of stability are crucial to performance against the sufficiency duty. The delivery of efficient services is equally important to Camden given the high level of resources it has committed to securing services and accommodation to children on the edge of care, Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

The actions identified in this statement are focused on ensuring that the care planning and commissioning processes are fully aligned and that all of the agencies with corporate parenting responsibilities and accommodation providers work effectively and creatively together to deliver services that can have the most impact on the lives and outcomes of our Looked After Children and Care Leavers National policy context.



Children Act 1989

Looked After Children are provided with accommodation and services under the Children Act 1989. Services and support are provided on a statutory basis and involve engagement with high risk families and children in acute need who are on the edge of or who require care.

Since the introduction of the Children Act 1989, Government policy for looked after children has concentrated on increasing the stability and quality of placements offered to them in order to improve educational, health and other outcomes for individual children and to enhance their life chances.

Staying put 2011

The Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers Regulations and Guidance 2010 and the Fostering Regulations and Guidance 2011 (Children Act 1989) both require local authorities to have a Staying Put policy which places a legal duty on councils to advise, assist and support young people up to the age of 21 who want to remain with their foster family.

Family justice review 2011

The Family Justice Review – the focus on time limits for care proceedings and on permanency planning means that having an adequate supply of family placements is of critical importance.

The Sufficiency Duty requirements

The requirement under S22G Children Act 1989 of Local Authorities to publish annual sufficiency statements for accommodation for Children Looked after was introduced in April 2010.

The Children Act 1989 (s.22G) places a requirement on local authorities to:

“Take steps to secure as far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the authority’s area which meets the needs of children that the local authority is looking after, and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the local authority’s area.”

For the small number of children who cannot be cared for within their own families Camden becomes their corporate parent. As a corporate parent Camden takes on the responsibility for providing alternative care which includes foster care, residential care and supported accommodation.

The majority of children who come into Camden’s care have experienced trauma which has affected their early development, behaviour, and ability to attach positively to peers and adults. This means that they have needs, other than for basic care and support, which Camden and its statutory partners are required to meet.

Camden has always been committed to providing its looked after children with a stable home and a positive experience of a family life for however long they require care. For some children their needs are so great that they require a range of integrated specialist services to be delivered to meet their needs.

A key requirement of the sufficiency duty is that all children are placed in the local authority area **except where this is not consistent with their needs and welfare**. This exception is important for Camden who have prioritised placing its children in the right placements where interventions can be delivered that have the most impact on their outcomes.

In order to meet the sufficiency duty Camden must have within its resources or through effective commissioning a sufficient number of local care and accommodation options which vary in type and which are able to meet the physical and emotional wellbeing of every child and safeguard their welfare.

There are constraints, some permanent, that will impact on Camden’s ability to provide a full range of provision within the borough but through effective joint working and collaboration Camden can assure its looked after children that they will be placed as close to their family home as is **‘reasonably practicable’**. **(DSCF: securing sufficient accommodation for children looked after)**.

This sufficiency statement has been developed in accordance with the best practice guidance for achieving sufficiency set out in the DSCF Sufficiency: statutory guidance on securing sufficient accommodation for looked after children. Sufficiency is achieved when the following can be demonstrated:

- All children are placed in appropriate placements with access to the support services they require in their local authority area, except where this is not consistent with their welfare;
- The full range of universal, targeted and specialist services work together to meet children’s needs in an integrated way in the local area, including children who are already looked after, as well as those at risk of care or custody
- Where it is not reasonably practicable for a child to be placed within his/her local authority area, there are mechanisms in place to widen the range of provision in neighbouring areas, the sub-region or region which is still within an accessible distance (i.e. based on transport

links and community boundaries), while still being able to provide the full range of services required to meet identified needs.

- All children with adoption recommendations are placed with an adoptive family within 12 months of that recommendation
- Working together with our Housing partners to secure a range of provision to meet the needs of those who become looked after at the age of 16 and 17 and support the continuity of accommodation beyond the age of 18.
- Services are available in adequate quantity to respond to children, including predicted demand for a range of needs, and emergencies
- Professionals involved in placement decisions have sufficient knowledge and information about the supply and quality of placements and availability of all specialist services within the local authority area.

Review of 2019/20 sufficiency strategy

Progress and achievements since the first sufficiency statement

Camden first produced its sufficiency statement for looked after children in 2010. The statement had two key aims and five objectives.

- To ensure sufficient local placements for children whilst improving outcomes and obtaining value for money
- To develop a range of accommodation providers in the local area and to ensure that a full range of safe and suitable accommodation is available that is capable of meeting different needs

The progress made and outcomes achieved against each objective are set out below.

Objective 1	Outcomes
<p>Managing the Front Door</p> <p>Good preventative services will ensure that children and young people are supported to remain within their families where this is appropriate and safe, and children who need to be looked after become so at the right time.</p> <p>Where children do not need to be looked after long term, rapid rehabilitation is achieved, and families continue to be supported</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally, thresholds for referral into the social work service were well understood and this is reflected in evidence obtained through case audits. • In 2019/20 Camden’s rate of child referrals per 10,000 of under-18 population was 286, almost unchanged since 2018/19 (273), but decreased substantially since 2013/14 (522) and 2014/15 (496). The 2019/20 referral rate is considerably lower than national (544.5), inner London (580.8) and statistical neighbour (610.8) average referral rates for 2018/19. • Of the 1499 referrals received between April 2019 and March 2020, 131 (8.7%) were repeat referrals received within 12 months of the previous referral (as per DfE repeat referral definition). The proportion of repeat referrals in 2019/20 was a decrease since 2017/18 (12.6%) and 2018/19 (9.8%), but similar to 2016/17 (9.1%), whilst also being Camden’s lowest annual proportion of repeat referrals since the measure began • Efforts were also made to avoid children returning to care where possible. The Mediation service and Family group conferences were used to explore alternative options where this is in the child’s best interests.

Objective 2	Outcomes
<p>Managing the LAC Population</p> <p>Prevent drift and ensure children and young people do not remain looked after longer than they need.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A multi-agency Care Pathways panel was set up in May 2014 to ensure that decisions in the best interest of children and young people are made in care cases. This is chaired by the Director Children’s Safeguarding and Social Work. The panel reviews all cases where a child has become (or is at risk of becoming) looked after and aims to facilitate good outcomes for children by scrutinising assessments; making recommendations on the most suitable interventions or care pathways for a child and by ensuring that children’s plans are implemented in a timely manner. • Permanency options are always considered by IROs at the 2nd LAC review so that options can be discussed, and plans put in place in a timely manner where required. • Where rehabilitation home is the permanence plan for the child, planning for their return is addressed throughout the care planning process. Social workers are required to detail the work that will be carried out with parents in order to forward this in the child’s care plan. Progress is then monitored as part of the statutory Looked after children (LAC) review process where decisions about the timing of a return home are made following consultation with the child, parents and the professional network. • A Moving on from care policy is in place which includes the procedure to be followed to manage the return of LAC to the care of birth families. • Preventative services, swift assessment and approval of family and friends’ placements and the Family Group Conference Service are all enabling children to remain at home. An increase in adoption plans and special guardianship orders has also contributed to the stability in numbers.
Objective 3	Outcomes
<p>Maximise and expand the use of Camden resources to meet needs of children and young people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council currently commissions seven providers to deliver 13 contracts within the Young people’s Pathway service. These are: 3 Assessment Centres (55 beds); 7 Progress and Specialist Services (109 beds) 2 Move Through services (103 beds) and 1 mediation service. • Camden encourages young people to remain with their foster carer beyond the age of 18 under the Staying Put policy where the carer and the young person agree to the arrangement and it is thought to be in the young person’s best interests. • Camden commissioned an 8 bedded Residential Children’s home in the borough, which enables these Looked after Children to remain in their community and maintain local networks.

Current provision Prevention Camden has a range of good preventative services which are part of the early help offer. In relation to looked after children, the purpose of early help services is to ensure that children and young people are supported to remain within their families where this is appropriate and safe, by tackling emerging issues early before problems escalate.

Early help services in Camden are now able to provide a streamlined and efficient referral and assessment pathway for children and families so that appropriate services can be identified swiftly from a range of services and interventions.

Families in Focus provides a range of community-based services to support families, including parenting courses and targeted work with children in order to improve children's life chances.

The Camden Mediation Service was set up to divert young people from care and aims to provide an independent, impartial mediation service to help young people and their families find achievable and workable solutions to family conflict,

The service works to enable young people to remain in their families, thus reducing the incidence of older children becoming looked after and 16/17-year old's becoming homeless. Staff in the service work to improve and rebuild family relationships so that a young person can return home or at least have regular contact with their family. They also work with young people in the Young People's Pathway, encouraging them to take responsibility for their behaviour using a restorative justice approach

Finding the Right Balance is Camden's targeted support Innovation for 10-13-year-old Children in Need. This is an approach to working with children and families building on their existing networks to help them develop more resilience. This is a family led and relationship based method where all families are offered a family group conference which will agree what needs to change, how this can be achieved and who is the best person to work directly with the child and their family. It is also a social work led intervention which supports innovative solutions to effect lasting changes for children and their families through a multi-disciplinary team including CAMHS, teachers, youth workers and mediators.

The Partners in Practice funded **Integrated Adolescent approach** project is a strategic redesign of our work with adolescents to create a single, multiagency adolescent approach that deals with the extra familial and contextual nature of those young people experiencing exploitation and risk.

At its heart, the approach will focus on the child and the need to engage with them and develop trusting relationships using methods that recognise the child as victim.

Part of the design is a model of intervention that uses strengths-based, trauma-informed, systemic methods to build trusted relationships with this hard to engage cohort of children who have been affected by trauma and who face complex and multiple risks. The approach seeks to build resilience in the child and intends to improve outcomes by focusing on their own strengths and those in their networks and communities.



Care Pathways Panel

The Care Pathways Panel is a multi-agency forum that makes decisions and provides recommendations on cases where a child has become or is at risk of becoming looked after. The Panel aims to facilitate good outcomes for children by making recommendations to CSSW on the most suitable interventions and care pathways for a child and ensuring that children's plans are implemented in a timely manner, including care proceedings.

Adoption

Working closely with Adopt North London the London Borough of Camden has been able to place children in permanent families in a timely manner. In 2020/21 Camden achieved 2 adoptions (compared to 3 in 2019/2020, 9 in 2018/19 and 8 in 2017/18).

There was 1 placement made with early permanence (foster to adopt) carers in 2020-2021. There has been 2 more placements with early permanence carers since April 2021.

The DFE Adoption Scorecard is used to rank local authorities in relation to the timeliness in achieving different stages of the adoption process. The one for the last 3- year average (2017-2020) compared Camden favourably with members of the North London Adoption Consortium (Haringey, Islington, Barnet, Enfield and Hackney).

The high level of performance in respect of adoption processes is due to appropriate identification and timeliness of assessments of prospective adopters. Camden also promotes a system of early linking of children with prospective adopters to help children to be matched and placed in a timely manner, as well as timely tracking and application to court for the adoption order.

The family finder works closely with the child's allocated social worker and foster carer to ensure that a child's placement needs can be fully understood. Family Finding Criteria meetings are coordinated by the family finders and are held every six weeks to review what progress has been made in identifying an adoptive family for a child.

Family and Friends Placements

In 2020 to 2021 in addition to adoption, there has been an increase in the use of Family and Friends placements for children compared with other forms of achieving permanency. 9 children achieved permanency via Special Guardianship Orders.

In house foster care

Local placements generally produce the best outcomes for LAC, perhaps due to factors such as proximity to family and friends, greater scope for good co-ordination of services at a local level, better contact between social worker and child and ease of supervision of the placement. Continued links with family, community and maintaining the same school has been found to significantly reduce the likelihood of placement breakdowns.

- Camden as a provider recruits' families within the 20-mile area to ensure that our LAC can continue to have links with their families and community.
- On the 31st March 2021 there were 84 approved fostering households registered with the in-house provision, including 16 kinship carers. These foster carers provided 86 places for LAC on 31st March 2021.
- The main care type provided by these households was 12 long-term fostering households, 52 short-term carers, 16 family and friends foster carers and 4 short breaks households.
- In 2020-2021 the in-house foster care provision has recruited and approved 26 new foster carers including kinship carers.

However, between 2020/2021, 18 fostering households have resigned or de-registered; the reason generally given for this was a change in personal circumstances including being granted a special guardianship order or an adoption order for the children they were looking after. Sadly two foster carers were de-registered after suffering personal bereavements.

a) Recruitment of Foster Carers

In 2020/2021 a total number of 176 enquiries were received by the Camden Fostering team. A total of 38 fostering households were in the application process during this period and we achieved 26 approvals (including 18 family/friends carers). 12 applicants remained in the process. 0 applicants withdrew from the recruitment process.

b) Initiatives

• **Increase in Foster carers fees and allowances**

In 2019 Camden again increased foster carers allowances and fees, to ensure that remuneration was competitive, and that the Council was able retain existing carers, and attract and recruit new carers. These fees and allowances are reviewed annually.

• **Joint Children, Schools & Families / Housing protocol on the quota for larger homes foster carers**

Camden fostering services are minded of the current pressures on available spaces with Camden approved foster and adoptive carers. The service is also aware that some Camden foster carers have indicated that they would be happy to foster more children if they had more bedroom space.

To address this issue, the council has changed the housing allocations scheme whereby an allocation of 10 council tenancies each year, ranging from 2 to 4-bedroom properties, has been set aside for allocation to Camden foster carers and adoptive carers. These carers will have been nominated by the fostering and adoption teams on the basis that they require a larger property in order to provide foster care to more Looked After Children.

To-date six families have been offered four-bedroom properties, there are a further four applications being processed.

- **Council tax exemption**

Camden has introduced an exemption for Camden foster carers. There is now a new class of council taxpayer that is entitled to a reduction and this allows foster carers to receive full relief from council tax. This is the first initiative of its kind in England and has resulted in an increase in enquiries from members of the public expressing an interest in becoming Camden foster carers.

- **Staff recommendation scheme**

Camden fostering service introduced a staff incentive scheme for staff to make referral of prospective foster carers to the Fostering service. To encourage recruitment of Camden foster carers, the Fostering Service made available a £900 gross incentive payment to any member of staff who would refer a friend, family member or colleague to the fostering service. This payment will be made once they are formally approved as foster carer/s.

Camden became approved as a foster friendly employer towards the end of 2019 and changed the corporate leave policy to include:

“If you are a foster carer, approved kinship carer or a special guardian we will provide you with:

- Five additional days of paid leave – which you can use to attend panels, meetings with professionals, training, settling in a child or for annual reviews.

If you have begun the formal process to become a foster carer or special guardian, we will provide you with:

- Four additional days paid leave – which you can use to attend assessment visits, training and panels (if required).”

We display the fostering friendly logo in our publications and Camden was entered into the fostering excellence awards.

c) NLSA/NLAFC Consortium Foster Placements

Camden is a partner in the North London Strategic Alliance and the North London Adoption and Fostering Consortium. There is a memorandum of understanding in place that states a commitment to share placements and commission new services as a Consortium. This will enable partners to increase its pool of carers and share resources, ideas and achieve efficiencies.

The sharing of foster placements has continued to ensure Camden children can be placed locally with Consortium foster carers in 2020-2021. The consortium shares placement at cost prices and reduces the need for children to be placed further afield in the private sector.

Residential Provision

66 Shoot up Hill

There is a continued role for good quality residential care services. Some children and young people are likely to continue to require residential placements due to their high-level needs, challenging behaviour or personal preference.

In response to this need Camden has re-commissioned St. Christopher's Fellowship to run a small 8 bed residential unit in the borough, for 12 – 17-year-old children and young people.

All young people at the unit have access to CAMHS, a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary service for children and young people from 0 to 18 years of age and their families and carers. The service is jointly commissioned and managed by Health and CSSW and works with children and young people who are experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties. The service is delivered by the Tavistock and Portman Foundation Trust

This unit has been able to deliver good outcomes for our teenage LAC; and enabled us to keep the young people in their community, with most young people either returning home or transferring successfully into semi-independent accommodation.

The Young Peoples Pathway Supported accommodation

The young person's pathway was established in order to reduce and prevent homelessness and to improve opportunities for 16- and 17-year olds, care leavers and other vulnerable young people in preparation for independent living.

The Young Peoples Pathway (YPP) provides supported accommodation (290 bed space) for young people with a range of support needs aged 16-21 or up to 25 if they have a learning disability. As such there are a number of interdependencies with the different client group areas such as mental health, learning disability; sexual health and substance misuse.

Since October 2012 the YPP has in place a specific service for young people with mental health issues that works closely with the CAMHS and two services for teenage parents working with the Senior Commissioning Officer for Teenage Pregnancy & Young People's Sexual Health.

The YPP operates in three stages and young people are able to move backwards or forwards dependent on need. The stages and provision are:

- **Assessment** – there are three assessment centres which are used to confirm eligibility, understand needs and identify the most suitable service to move to
- **Progress** - progress beds spread across a number of units throughout the borough which are used to develop the young person's independent living skills within a controlled environment of semi-independent accommodation
- **Move Through** - services across the borough where young people are supported by key workers once or twice a week as they learn how to maintain a tenancy
- **Specialist** – there are two specialist young parent services (visiting support and high support) and a mental health service for young people with complex needs.

This service has enabled Camden to provide a range of accommodation to young people who are ready for semi-independent living. Also, where appropriate young people placed out of borough are able to be brought back into the borough and placed in safe and appropriate placements.

Support services for looked After Children

Virtual School

Camden's virtual school for LAC provides a specialist integrated LAC service aimed at improving the educational attainment of LAC. The Virtual School Head's role includes reviewing the Personal Education Plans for all LAC and advising on educational provision to help LAC meet their targets for educational attainment.

The virtual school provides resources for all Camden LAC, whether placed in Camden or in other boroughs, and for looked after children from other boroughs who are being educated in Camden schools.

Camden CAMHS Looked After Children/Refugee Team

A specialist CAMHS multi-disciplinary team working both with Camden children and young people aged 0-18 years who are or have recently been looked after, plus refugee and asylum-seeking children and young people who are in the care of Camden. We also work with their carers and residential placements plus offer support and a thinking space for professionals.

The team is co-located with Camden social care staff aiding access and engagement.

We are able to provide a range of brief and longer-term interventions beginning with an initial meeting with the network and from this starting point can then think about the most appropriate way to support the young person. The children/young people we see are often hard to engage and distrust professionals and as a result, we tend to offer most of our support to the people who are caring for them.

The service aims to identify and support the psychological, emotional and mental health of children and young people who are cared for by Camden and can offer specialist knowledge in relation to:

- Assessment and treatment for children and young people who are fostered, adopted or in kinship care placements.
- Understanding the difficulties for children and young people arising from early trauma, neglect, physical and sexual abuse, from family breakdown, separation from parents and siblings and multiple placement moves.
- Screening to identify the emotional and mental health needs of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people.
- Direct interventions for children and young people to deal with trauma, bereavement and loss.
- Support for carers and professional networks with children/young people presenting with challenging behaviour, problems in relationships, developmental difficulties and with mental health worries.
- Supporting residential placements which are struggling with the demands/behaviour of Camden children they are caring for.
- Helping carers to 'hold on' and working to support carers through crises and prevent placement breakdown.
- Supporting professionals to think about the child/young person in situations where there is a high level of distress and tension and where circumstances are chronic and seemingly unchanging.
- Helping the network to think where a child/young person should best be placed.

The team is made up of a Clinical Service Manager and Social Worker, Senior Clinical Psychologist, 2 x Consultant Psychiatrists, Clinical Psychologist, CAMHS Clinician Art Therapist and a Nurse.

FWD drug and alcohol services for children and young people

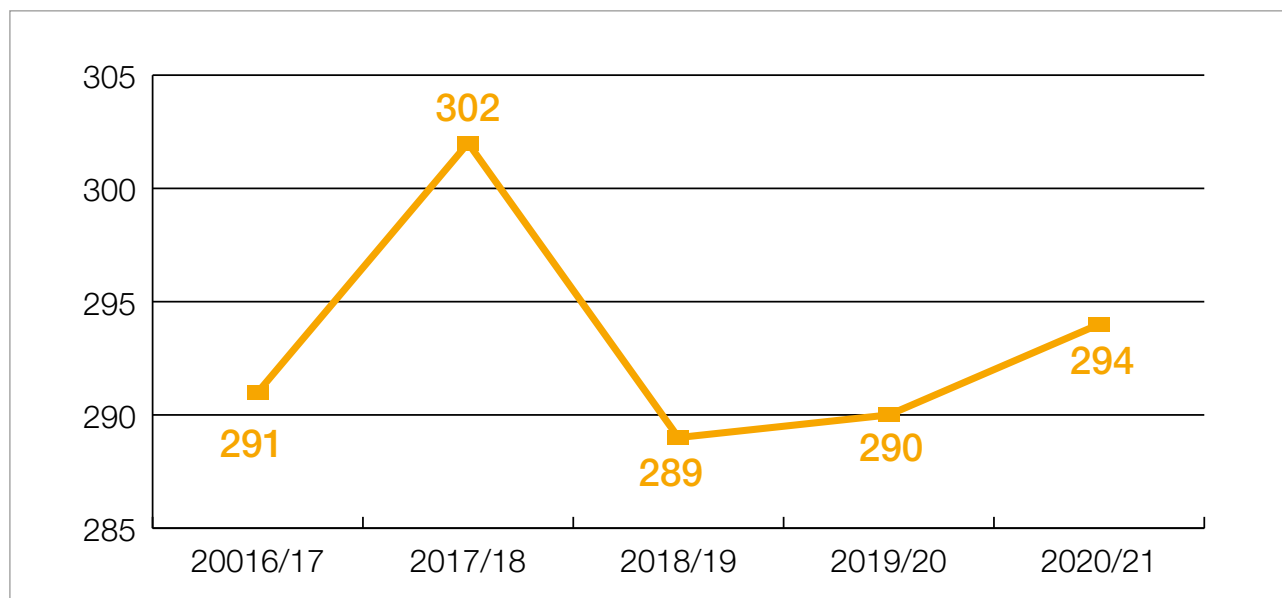
FWD is a multi-disciplinary drug and alcohol service for young people in Camden. FWD provides one-to-one structured support and group work sessions to young people affected by substance misuse (including the impact of parental substance misuse). There is a dedicated Substance Misuse Worker linked with CSSW teams with particular focus on LAC. All LAC aged 10 – 18 are now screened once a year for substance misuse using the Drug Use Screening Tool (DUST).

LAC profile 2020-21

Total number of children looked after during period

Between April 2020 and end of March 2021, a total of **294** children were looked after during the period (including children who ceased to be looked after), which is very similar to the total number in 2018/19 (289 children) and 2019/20 (290 children), although a slight decrease from the 2017/18 figure of 302. The total number of children looked after remains significantly lower than experienced prior to 2015/16 financial year (the 2015/16 total of 283 was the smallest total number of looked after children in any of the previous twelve financial years).

The following chart shows the total number of children looked after during the period (including children who ceased to be looked after), in each of the last five years.



Children in care at any time during year

Figure – total number of children looked after (including children ceasing to be looked after) per financial year (5 year trend).

Number of children looked after at 31st March 2021

On 31st March 2021 there were **187** children looked after by Camden (excluding those children and young people accommodated on a respite basis). In the period between end of March 2013 and end of September 2014, the number of children looked after decreased from 275 to 190. Since then the number of children looked after has remained stable at between 185 and 210 children, despite an increase in unaccompanied asylum seeking children becoming looked after through the Camden rota and Dubs amendment.

The following chart shows the number of children looked after at March 31st for the last five years.

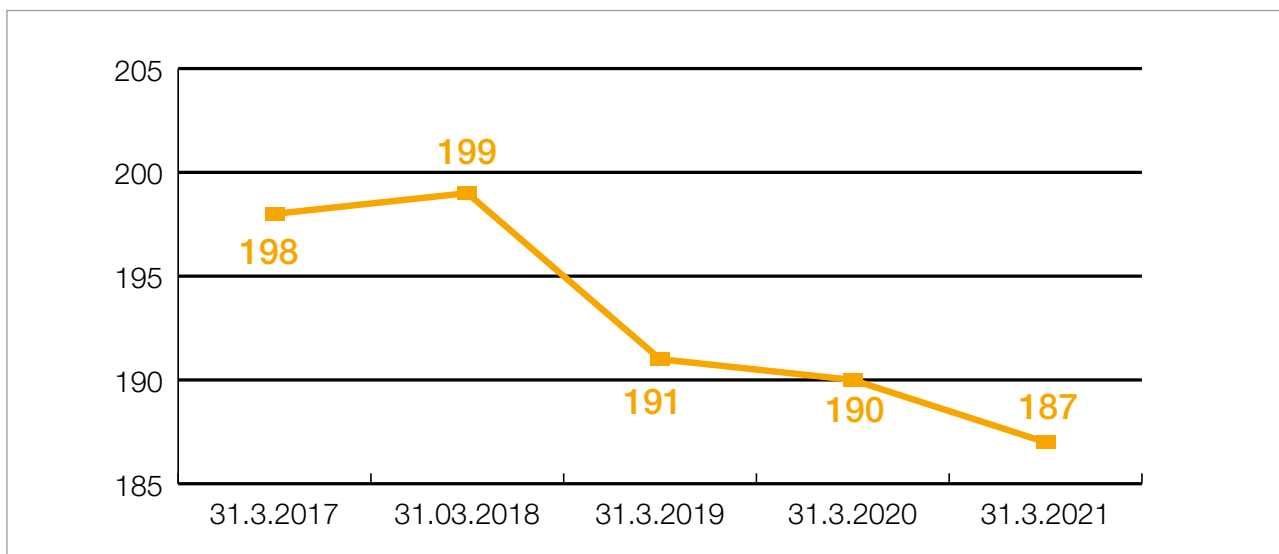


Figure – children looked after at 31st March (5 year trend)

Preventative services, family and friends placements and the Family Group Conference service are all enabling children to remain at home and contributing to the stability in numbers of looked after children.



The following chart shows the number of children looked after at end of each month, between April 2020 and March 2021

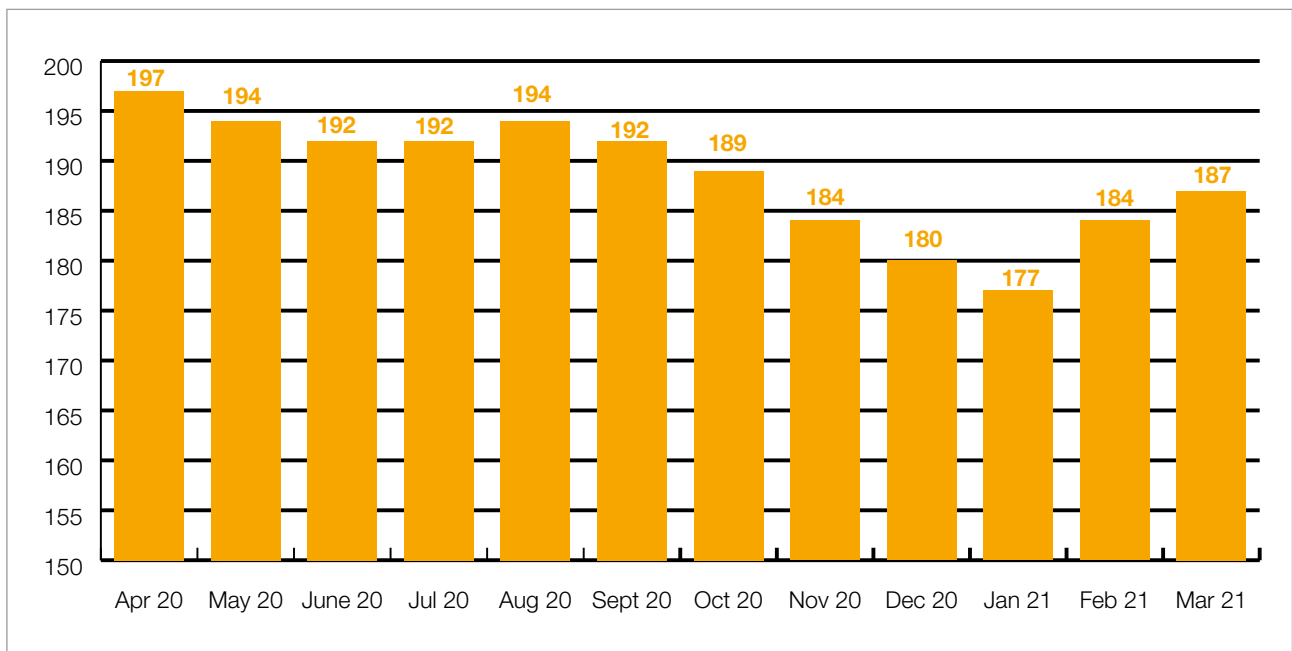


Figure - LAC numbers (April 2020 to March 2021)

The 2020/21 financial year began with a year high of 197 children looked after at end of April 2020, thereafter remaining stable, at between 192 and 194 children, until end of September 2020, beginning in October 2020 numbers reduced month on month to a year low of 177 children at end of January 2021. The number of children looked after then increased in February and March 2021, with 187 children looked after on 31st March 2021.



Profile of children looked after at 31st March 2019

Children looked after age groups

Although the proportion of children looked after at end of March 2021, who were aged 16 or older shows a slight decrease (since end of March 2020), Camden continues to have a higher proportion of looked after children aged 16 or older, when compared to national and inner London averages, this has been the trend since end of March 2015. The proportion of children looked after in the 16+ category increased year on year between March 2012 (24.5%) and March 2019 (53.9%) and whilst national and inner London averages also showed increase over the same period, it was not to the same extent. The proportion of children in the 10-15 age category has decreased in the last six consecutive financial year periods and is significantly lower than national and inner London averages for 2019/20.

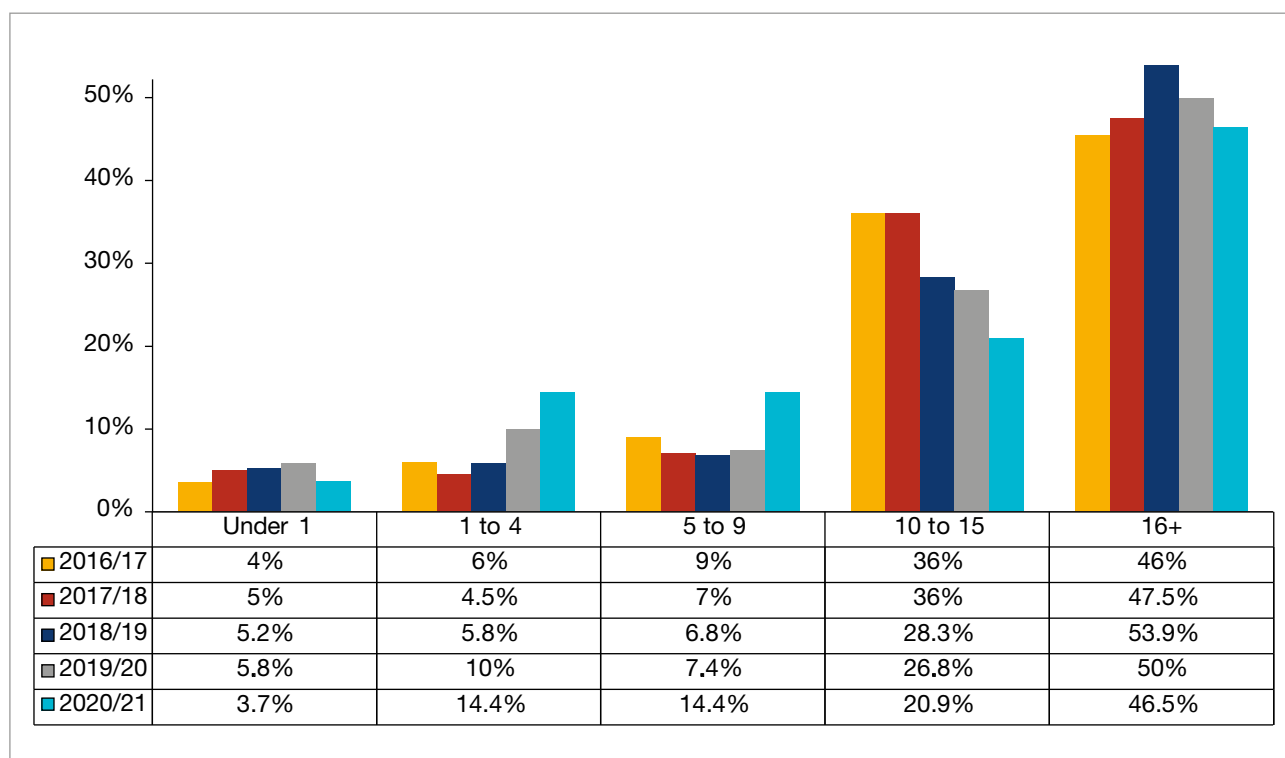


Figure - Camden LAC age groups (five year trend)

The following table shows Camden's children looked after categorised by age group as at the end of March 2021, compared to March 2020 figures for Camden and other inner London authorities, plus national and inner London averages as at end of March 2020

	Under 1		1-4		5-9		10-15		16+	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Camden 2019/20	11	5.8%	19	10%	14	7.4%	51	26.8%	95	50%
City of London	0	0%	x	x	0	0%	x	x	x	x
Hackney	20	5%	35	8%	55	13%	173	40%	149	34%
Hammersmith & Fulham	12	5%	28	11%	36	14%	72	29%	104	41%
Haringey	17	4%	41	10%	50	12%	165	41%	130	32%
Islington	9	2%	17	5%	42	11%	144	39%	154	42%
Kensington & Chelsea	x	x	6	6%	x	x	x	x	53	50%
Lambeth	11	3%	27	8%	34	9%	132	37%	154	43%
Lewisham	23	5%	36	8%	58	12%	191	40%	164	35%
Newham	16	4%	41	10%	52	13%	145	35%	157	38%
Southwark	19	4%	29	6%	56	12%	206	45%	148	32%
Tower Hamlets	14	5%	34	11%	49	16%	111	36%	99	32%
Wandsworth	7	3%	15	5%	50	18%	104	38%	101	36%
Westminster	x	x	x	x	x	x	77	35%	119	54%
Camden 2020/21	7	3.7%	27	14.4%	27	14.4%	39	20.9%	87	46.5%
National	4,130	5%	10,850	14%	14,700	18%	31,370	39%	19,030	24%
Inner London	170	4%	340	8%	510	12%	1,610	38%	1,650	39%

Table - inner London looked after children age groups

Children looked after gender

	Female		Male	
	#	%	#	%
Camden 2019/20	67	35.3%	123	64.7%
Camden 2020/21	69	36.9%	118	63.1%
National	35,090	44%	44,990	56%
Inner London	1,720	40%	2,560	60%

The proportion of male children looked after by Camden increased between end of March 2007 (when 49% of looked after children were male) and end of March 2019, when 71.2% of Camden children looked after were male. The proportion of male children looked after decreased slightly as at end of March 2020, and again has decreased slightly as at end of March 2021. The proportion of female children looked after remains lower than national, inner London and statistical neighbour averages for 2019/20.

Camden has had a higher proportion of male looked after children when compared to national, inner London and statistical neighbour averages since 2010/11.

Children looked after ethnicity

As of end of March 2021, 85.0% of children in care were from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds.

41 of these children were unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (or former UASC); 6 from Afghanistan, 3 from Albania, 1 from Algeria, 6 from Eritrea, 1 from Ethiopia, 2 from Iran, 4 from Iraq, 1 from Ivory Coast, 2 from Morocco, 1 from Somalia, 8 from Sudan, 2 from Syria and 2 from Vietnam. 53.7% of this group of children are from African countries, with 39% from Asian countries, and 7.3% from European countries.

The mixed and white ethnic categories have seen the greatest proportional decrease since end of March 2017.

In the same period, the proportion of children looked after from a black ethnic background has increased substantially, this trend can be in part attributed to the increase in unaccompanied asylum seeking children who have been accommodated in the same period, with 53.7% of UASC looked after at 31st March 2021 being from African countries.

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC)

The following graph shows the proportion of all LAC who were unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (or former UASC) as at the end of March 2021, compared to the end of year figure for the previous four years

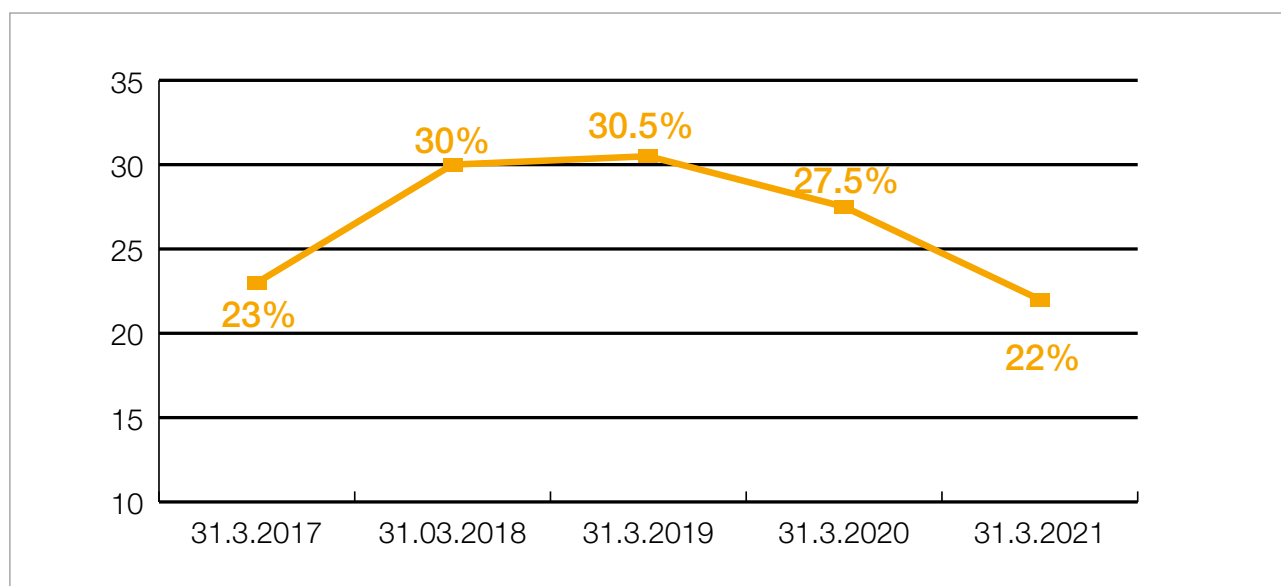


Figure - LAC unaccompanied asylum seeking (and former UASC) children (5 year trend)

The number and proportion of looked after children who are unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors (or former UASC) more than doubled during 2016/17, with growth continuing, but slowing during 2017/18 and 2018/19. Whilst the proportion of UASC or former UASC had decreased slightly as at end of March 2020, and again as at end of March 2021, it remains

higher than in all years prior to 2017/18. The increase in Camden UASC mirrors the trend nationally with many local authorities experiencing significant growth in numbers over the five year period.

The profile of Camden UASC has changed significantly over the last five financial year periods with notable increases in children from Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sudan. The numbers of children from Albania/Kosovo have decreased over the period after peaks in 2016/17 and 2017/18.

Children looked after placement types

The following table shows Camden's LAC population as at the end of March 2021 categorised by placement type, compared to end of March 2020 figures for Camden and other inner London authorities, plus national, inner London and statistical neighbour averages as at end of March 2020.

	Foster care		Residential placements*		Placed for adoption		Placed with parents		Other	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Camden 31.3.2020	97	51.1%	84	44.2%	2	1.1%	7	3.7%	0	0%
City of London	13	54%	x	x	x	x	0	0%	0	0%
Hackney	324	75%	x	x	x	x	15	3%	0	0%
Hammersmith & Fulham	169	67%	x	x	x	x	16	6%	0	0%
Haringey	281	70%	x	x	6	1%	21	5%	33	13%
Islington	279	76%	95	23.5%	0	0%	10	3%	0	0%
Kensington & Chelsea	55	52%	70	19%	x	x	x	x	x	x
Lambeth	259	72%	x	x	x	x	x	x	0	0%
Lewisham	352	75%	83	23%	7	1%	x	x	0	0%
Newham	280	68%	x	x	x	x	x	x	0	0%
Southwark	356	78%	117	28.5%	x	x	8	2%	x	x
Tower Hamlets	214	70%	x	x	6	2%	12	4%	x	x
Wandsworth	187	68%	x	x	x	x	10	4%	x	x
Westminster	128	58%	x	x	x	x	9	4%	0	0%
Camden 31.3.2021	106	56.7%	71	38.0%	7	3.7%	3	1.6%	0	0%
National		72%		15%		3%		7%		4%
Inner London		70%		25%		1%		3%		1%

Table – LAC placement types (inner London comparison)

*Residential placement category includes children's homes, family assessment centres/mother and baby units, NHS or other medical provision, residential employment, semi-independent placements, residential care homes, residential schools, secure units and young offenders institutions



Camden's proportion of children in residential placements as at end of March 2020 was higher than the national and inner London averages in the same period. Camden also had a lower proportion of children placed with foster carers than any inner London or statistical neighbour authorities as at end of March 2020.

Historically the proportion of children in residential placements (this includes young people aged 16 or over and, in the Camden

Young People's Pathway) increased substantially in the five years between end of March 2014 (22%) and end of March 2019 (45.5%). The proportion in foster care decreased in the same five-year period from 70% to 50.3%. The increase in residential placements and associated decrease in fostering placements, over the five-year period, correlated closely with changes in the age and need profile of children looked after, with the proportion of LAC aged 16 or older increasing from 31% to a high of 53.9% by end of March 2019, with the proportion of children becoming looked after aged 13 or older increasing from 45% in 2013/14 to a high of 79% in 2017/18. With an increased proportion of adolescent children entering care and an older cohort of looked after children, with complex needs, there was an increased need for specialist residential placements and placements which prepare young people for independence.

The proportion of LAC aged 16 or older at end of March 2020 (50%) and the proportion of children becoming looked after aged 13 or older during 2019/20 (63.7%) remained high and there was little change in the placement profile of Camden children during 2019/20, when compared with 2018/19. However, at end of March 2021, the proportion of LAC aged 16 or older had reduced to 46.5% and the proportion of children becoming looked after aged 13 or older during 2020/21 also showed a reduction (50%). The proportion of children in fostering placements increased (from 51.1% at end of March 2020 to 56.7% at end of March 2021), with a linked reduction in the proportion of children placed in residential type settings (from 44.2% at end of March 2020 to 38.0% at end of March 2021).

As at end of March 2021, 23 young people (32.4% of all children in residential placement types) were in placements within the Camden Young People's Pathway. Camden Young People's Pathway has been recognised as a model of good practice by National Leaving Care Advisory Service (NCAS) in their publication 'Journeys to Home – Care Leavers Successful Transition to Independent Accommodation'. It is a model that has been replicated by other local authorities.

Pathway services are designed to enable young people to be suitably accommodated within the borough they have grown up in and to avoid the use of out of borough placements. Young people have access to wrap around support services and are supported to make good use of leisure time and engage in education, employment and training. The provision also offers a high level of support to enable young people to gain independence through the development of independent living skills in a three-step process and enables them to remain in borough, close to the support of family and local mainstream and specialist services.

The following chart shows the placement types for children looked after by Camden as at the end of March 2021

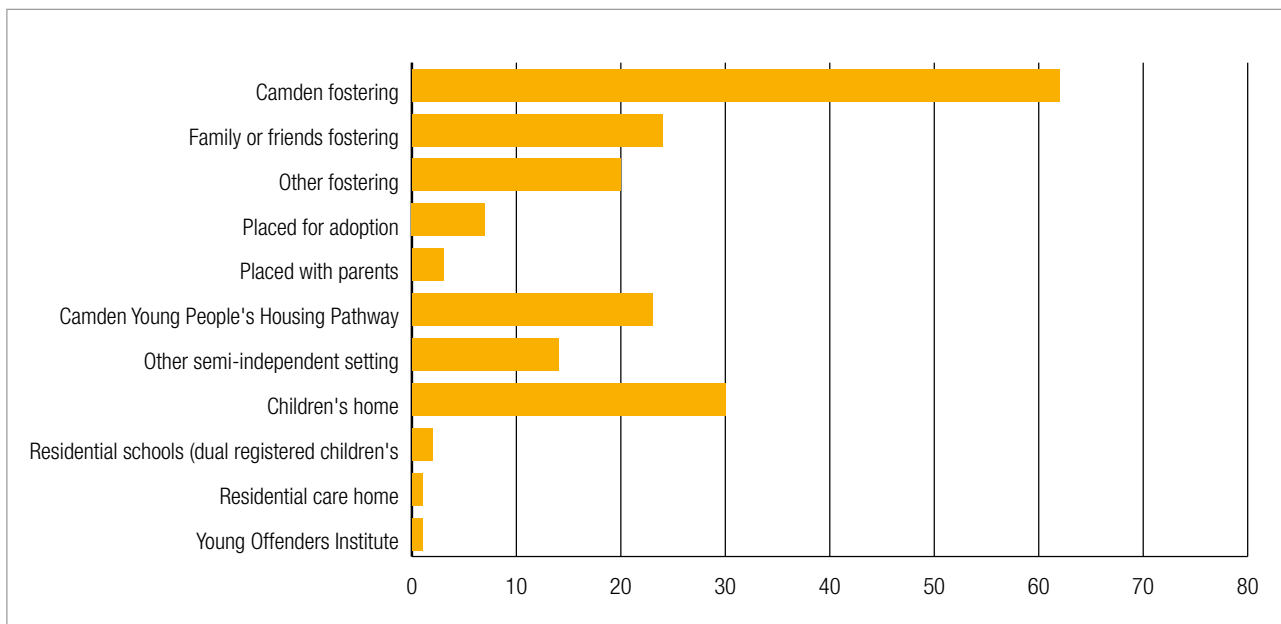


Figure – LAC placement types

Children looked after on 31st March 2021 were in the following placement types:

106 (56.7%) were placed with **foster carers**, of which:

- 62 were Camden carers
- 20 were carers from independent/voluntary agencies, or other local authority carers
- 24 were relatives or friends

7 (3.7%) were **placed for adoption**

3 (1.6%) were **placed with parents at home**

71 (38.0%) were placed in **residential settings**, of which:

- 30 were in children's homes
- 23 were Camden Young People's Housing Pathway
- 14 were in other semi-independent settings
- 2 were in residential schools which are dual registered as children's homes
- 1 was in a residential care home
- 1 was in a Young Offenders Institute

Children placed 20 miles or more from home address

As at the end of March 2021, 24 (12.8%) out of 187 children were placed 20 miles or more from where they lived prior to becoming looked after.

The following table shows Camden's LAC placed 20 miles or more from their home address as at the end of March 2021, categorised by placement type, compared to end of year figures for the previous four years

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Adoptive placement	1	1	1	0	3
Camden foster carers	10	8	5	8	7
Family or friends fostering	0	1	2	0	2
Independent or voluntary fostering	13	9	8	6	3
Placement with parents	1	0	0	0	0
Residential placement types	9	15	13	8	6
Residential schools (dual registered as care home)	7	6	4	4	2
Young offenders institute	0	0	0	0	1

Table - LAC placement types (20 miles or more from home address)

The following table shows the proportion of Camden LAC placed 20 miles or more from their home address as at the end of March 2021, for comparative purposes 2019/20 figures for Camden and other inner London authorities are provided, plus 2019/20 national, inner London and statistical neighbour averages.

	LAC placed 20 miles or more from where they used to live
Camden 2019/20	13.7%
City of London	0%
Hackney	13%
Hammersmith & Fulham	16%
Haringey	16%
Islington	19%
Kensington & Chelsea	12%
Lambeth	18%
Lewisham	20%
Newham	14%
Southwark	22%
Tower Hamlets	19%
Wandsworth	14%
Westminster	16%
Camden 2020/21	12.8%
National	16%
Inner London	17%
Statistical neighbours	18%

Table - Children placed 20 miles or more from home address

As at end of March 2021, 12.8% of children looked after were placed 20 miles or more from their home address, a continued improvement from 2017/18 (20.1%), 2018/19 (17.3%) and 2019/20 (13.7%). The proportion of children placed 20 miles or more has improved significantly since 2011/12 when the rate was as high as 25%, and as at end of March 2021 Camden was lower than national, inner London and statistical neighbour averages for 2019/20.

All children placed more than 20 miles from home address at end of March 2021 were placed in specialist adoption, fostering or residential placements. Director and managerial agreement is required for all out of borough placements and only establishments rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted are used to ensure quality standards and good care for the child.

Of the children who became looked after during 2020/21 and who remained in care at the end of March 2021, 5 out of 84 (6.0%) were placed 20 miles or more from their home address (PAF C69).

Our regular case audit findings were that practice around this group of children was sound with a good focus on outcomes. Children were found to be visited regularly, management oversight was robust and there were good partnership working arrangements with services local to the children placed out of borough including health, education services and CAMHS. The outreach work of the LAC CAMHS team was highlighted, as were the efforts made to include children placed out of borough in user engagement activities. Overall, outcomes for out of borough LAC were deemed to be the same as for those placed inside the local authority area.



Timeliness of adoption process for children whose care plan is adoption

The following table shows Camden's 3 year average 2018-21 (2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21) for Adoption Scorecard measures; A2) being matched to adoptive family (from date of placement order), A10) moving in with adoptive family (from date of entering care) and A20) local authority receiving placement order (from date of entering care). For comparative purposes 3 year Camden averages for 2017-20 (2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20) are provided, alongside figures for statistical neighbour authorities, and 3 year national and statistical neighbour averages for 2017-20 (2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20)

	Adoption Scorecard measure A2 Average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family (days)	Adoption Scorecard measure A10 Average time between a child entering care and moving in with adoptive family (for children who have been adopted) (days)	Adoption Scorecard measure A20 Average time between a child entering care and a local authority receiving court authority to place a child, for children who have been adopted (days)
Camden (2017-20)	139	334	257
Barnet	167	466	305
Greenwich	150	349	219
Hammersmith & Fulham	x	589	x
Haringey	231	297	239
Islington	206	388	240
Kensington & Chelsea	x	x	x
Manchester	98	320	271
Reading	171	440	292
Wandsworth	295	404	177
Westminster	135	369	258
Camden (2018-21)	128	342	294
National	175	367	256
Statistical neighbours	154	368	273

Table – Camden Adoption Scorecard (2017-2020)

The Adoption Scorecard, published in July 2021 by Department for Education, measures local authorities in relation to their timeliness in achieving different stages of the adoption process (based on a 3 year average for period 2017-2020).

- Between receiving a placement order and matching the child with an adoptive family, Camden took on average 139 days, which was the second shortest average time both amongst inner London authorities and within the statistical neighbour group. Camden was quicker than both national and statistical neighbour average durations for the 3 year period 2017-2020. **Camden's average improved to 128 days in the 3 year period 2018-21.**

- Between children entering care and being placed for adoption, Camden was the third quickest within both inner London local authorities and the statistical neighbour group, at an average of 334 days. Camden was quicker than both national and statistical neighbour average durations for the 3 year period 2017-2020. **Camden's average increased slightly to 342 days in the 3 year period 2018- 21.**
- Between children entering care and the local authority receiving a placement order, Camden took on average 257 days, which was the ninth best result amongst inner London authorities and fifth within the statistical neighbour group. Camden was in line with national average but slower than statistical neighbour average for 2017-20. **In the 3 year period 2018-21, Camden's average increased to 294 days.**

Strong performance in the adoption process is supported by appropriate identification and timely assessment of prospective adopters. Camden also promotes a system of early linking of children with prospective adopters to ensure timely match and placement, in conjunction with rigorous tracking and efficient application to court for the adoption order. Family finding is a key aspect in securing a permanent placement for a child. The Permanence team works with the RAA family finder to identify suitable adoptive placements and is responsible for family finding for children under 16 requiring a long term fostering placement. The Permanence team social workers work closely with the child's allocated social worker and foster carer to ensure children's placement needs are fully understood.

Children looked after criminal offences

In the five year period between 2016/17 and 2020/21, the proportion of Camden children looked after who were cautioned or convicted fluctuated considerably, decreasing from 12.6% in 2016/17, to 6.5% in 2017/18, then again in 2018/19 (to 3.6%), before increasing in 2019/20 (to 9.9%) and again in 2020/21 (to 14.7%).

Compared to other inner London authorities in 2019/20, Camden had a higher proportion of children looked after cautioned or convicted than any of the inner London group, and was well above national, inner London and statistical neighbour averages for the same period.

A policy on working with children looked after in the criminal justice system was implemented in 2021. The policy sets out the framework for joint working between CSSW and Youth Offending Service workers with regard to LAC who are known to both services. The policy seeks to enable social workers to reduce the numbers of looked after children entering the criminal justice system through restorative justice processes and the use of care planning to encourage positive behaviour to address anti-social or offending behaviour.

As the number of children who received a caution or conviction in 2020/21 remains relatively small, it is not statistically viable to undertake an analysis of specific offence types.

Children looked after substance misuse

Substance misuse screening is undertaken on all looked after children as part of the child and family assessment, using the Drug Use Screening Tool. FWD (Camden's drug and alcohol service for young people), provides specialist, multi-disciplinary substance misuse support and intervention, with all LAC who are assessed as requiring an alcohol or drug service being referred. The primary reason for referral to FWD is cannabis use with alcohol being the second most prevalent.



Historically, the proportion of children (looked after for at least 12 months) and identified as having a substance misuse issue increased substantially over the four financial year periods between 2013/14 (7.4%) and 2016/17 (21.3%). Thereafter the proportion identified decreased in both 2017/18 (15.9%) and 2018/19 (10.8%), before increasing again in 2019/20 (16.5%), which was the fourth highest proportion of children identified since the measure began in 2005/06, though still lower than in 2015/16 (19.7%) and 2016/17 (21.3%).

In 2019/20 Camden had the highest proportion of children looked after with an identified substance misuses issue of any inner London local authority, with Camden having been above national and inner London averages since 2009/10. Camden's 2019/20 proportion is over three times higher than both national and inner London averages.

The proportion of children with an identified substance misuse issue has increased since 2013/14, due in part to improved identification, in line with a linked focus on early help and offering an appropriate intervention earlier on. For the sixth consecutive year, 100% of children with an identified issue received an intervention.

Children with Disabilities

As at 31.03.2021, 4 LAC were allocated to the Children and Young People's Disability Service. An additional 17 LAC either had a disability or SEN/EHCP plan recorded on their MOSAIC case management record.

Summary Needs Analysis

- Between April 2020 and end of March 2021, a total of 294 children were looked after during the period (including children who ceased to be looked after), which is very similar to the total number in 2018/19 (289 children) and 2019/20 (290 children)
- There were 187 children looked after on 31st March 2021.
- 63.1% of Camden's children in care were male and 37% were female at the end of March 2021.
- 85.0% of children in care were from black and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds.
- 46.5% of children in care at end of March 2021 are over 16 years old. 20.9% are aged between 10-15. 14.4% are aged between 5-9, 14.4 % are aged between 1-5 and 3.7% are under 1.
- 56.7% of children looked after at the end of March 2021 were placed in fostering and kinship placements while 38.0% were placed in residential settings. 1.6% of children looked after at the end of the period were placed at home on care orders.
- Of Camden children looked after at end of March 2021, who were aged under 16 and had been in care for at least 2.5 years, 66.7% had been in their placement for at least 2 years.

This is slight decrease from 75.8% in March 2020.

- The proportion of children with 3 or more placements (in the previous 12 months) decreased during 2020/21 to 6.5% (from 10% in 2019/20), and is lower than national, inner London and statistical neighbour averages for 2019/20.
- The proportion of children living 20 miles from where they used to live has decreased in 2021 to 12.8% from 13.7% in 2020.
- In 2020/21, permanent families were secured for 11 looked after children through adoption or special guardianship orders.
- 67 children (35.3%) looked after at March 2020 were in placements within other London local authority areas. A total of 32 (16.8%) children were placed in local authorities outside of London.

The COVID-19 pandemic

The pandemic impacted upon resources and placements for children in care. Camden's Young People's pathway was impacted as there was a freeze on the housing allocations scheme. This meant that young people who would ordinarily have moved from the pathway into their own accommodation were unable to do so, so that fewer new beds became available.

The pandemic also meant that no young people were evicted over this period, even when they were not paying rent and service charge or using the bed space as often as we recommended. Again, this led to the local authority having to source supported living accommodation and foster placements from the private sector.

It was also the case that many Camden foster carers needed to shield and that the number of available foster carers was reduced.

Despite this the service managed to source appropriate placements for every single looked after child when this was required.

Meeting the needs of the cohort

Increasing numbers of adolescents are presenting to our services because of educational disruption, family breakdown and risky behaviour.

As noted earlier, we had previously been finding it difficult to deal effectively with the challenges and instead were using costly, risk averse statutory processes which did not offer stability to the adolescents in our care.

Along with our preventative and established Early Help offer, we need to continue to develop a range of services and support for these families including respite and joint care arrangements.

We also need to recruit more family and friends' carers to enable these children and young people to remain locally and connected to their communities. Our Early Help Services will continue to work closer with communities to enable them to care safely for their children and young people.

Our numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children have continued to grow. These young people are older than our local Looked After Children population. They are predominantly male and most have experienced severe trauma. There is a shortage of local specialist and teenage placements for these young people. The National Transfer Scheme was set up to support local authorities like Camden who are over the 0.007% quota for UASC but the scheme

has been ineffectual since 2018. The scheme is due to be relaunched in 2021 but remains voluntary and the likely impact remains uncertain .

Camden has carried out a needs assessment of the present looked after population to inform its sufficiency strategy. The assessment shows current needs, future trends, and placement requirements to meet identified gaps. An action plan has been developed to set targets to meet identified needs.

Since end of March 2014, the proportion of LAC aged 16 or older increased from 31% to a high of 53.9% at end of March 2019. In the same period, the proportion of children becoming looked after aged 13 or older increased from 45% in 2013/14 to a high of 79% in 2017/18. Both the proportion of LAC aged 16 or older at end of March 2021 (46%) and the proportion of children becoming looked after aged 13 or older in 2019/20 (66%) remain high. With an increased proportion of adolescent children entering care and an older cohort of looked after children, with complex needs, there is an increased need for specialist residential placements and placements which prepare young people for independence.

Pathway services are designed to enable young people to be suitably accommodated within the borough they have grown up in and to avoid the use of out of borough placements. Young people have access to wrap around support services and are supported to make good use of leisure time and engage in education, employment, and training. The provision also offers a high level of support to enable young people to gain independence through the development of independent living skills in a three-step process and enables them to remain in borough, close to the support of family and local mainstream and specialist services.

More capacity in fostering and kinship placements has been achieved through a series of initiatives including providing larger homes for carers, exempting foster carers from paying council tax and increasing fees and allowances.

The demand for residential placements for children with complex needs including autistic spectrum disorders and therapeutic inputs for children with mental health needs has increased in the last two years. Some of these children have experienced multiple foster care placement breakdowns prior to being placed in residential care which affected their stability. Many of these children had received support from specialist services and health partners prior to admission to care and these services continued to be available when children became looked after.

Over the last 3 financial years both placement stability for children who remain in their placement for at least 2.5 years and proportion of children experiencing more than 3 placements in a single year have remained on par with national, inner London and statistical neighbour averages.

Camden is utilising a mixed economy of placement provision, but we still have a high reliance of the external market to continue to provide placement choice. Camden's use of residential care has continued to decrease in the last two years. However due to the lack of specialist education and health resources in the borough some of our LAC children with more complex multiple needs have been placed in residential schools and specialist therapeutic provision much of which is located more than 20 miles away from the borough. These specialist provisions are commissioned and monitored by the multidisciplinary Complex Needs Panel.

As an inner London borough there is evidence of criminal and sexual exploitation and an established network of street gangs in Camden. Young people who may be associated with gangs and who may be vulnerable to exploitation may need to come into local authority care or may be remanded into custody or remanded into local authority care. Camden have therefore worked closely with CAMHS and Youth Offending Services using the integrated

adolescent approach, to build support around placements to ensure that missing episodes, police searches and high risk incidents do not lead to young people moving frequently between foster homes and residential provisions. The drop in the number of children with 3 or more moves from 10% in 2020 to 6.5% in 2021 evidences success in this area.

Camden are the lead borough for the London Pathfinders project (agreed and joint funded by London DCSs) and have commissioned 2 homes for complex adolescents at risk of remand. These homes are currently in the commissioning of contracts phase and expect to be operational at the end of 2021 and to divert some young people away from custody.

The Black Lives Matter movement prompted a full analysis of matters pertaining to race and racism in looked after children and care leavers social work. It was no surprise that this data illustrated how Black, Asian and minority ethnic Looked after Children and Care leavers were disproportionately represented in the care population, in the criminal justice system and were more likely to live in residential care than foster care. It was clear that to properly develop a plan of action to address these inequalities we needed to begin a programme of work which considered both quantitative data alongside the real-life feedback from looked after children, care leavers, foster carers, and professionals. This exploration has enabled a more holistic understanding of the challenges our Black children and care leavers face both in wider society and in local authority care. The corporate parenting board has oversight of the action plan to address disproportionality and actions include:

- YOS input in all risk assessments and placement referrals of young people who have outstanding charges and convictions to make clear support in place and to put incidents in context to enable safe matching and ensuring placement options are not ruled out by providers who do not understand outstanding charges and convictions.
- YOS disproportionality strategy has been shared with partners and a joint protocol for reducing the criminalisation of looked after children has been developed as per government guidance.
- YOS are essential parts of the professional network for high-risk young people and there is now a monthly meeting to consider high risk young people chaired by Head of YOS and Head of Looked after Children services.

Resources team monitoring the support provided by residential care to Black children and including checks of stop and search data in locality risk assessments before a placement is chosen for a Black child.

Plans to ensure sufficiency

Camden needs to continue to limit the use of Private and Voluntary (P&V) placements which are usually out of the borough and expensive. The strategy needs to continue to include a robust foster carer recruitment strategy and joint initiatives with neighbouring Local Authorities to reduce the use of P&V agencies. As noted above Camden is commissioning the joint London Pathfinders accommodation to house complex adolescents at risk of remand.

Camden needs to achieve the following:

- Manage the numbers of children and young people being placed in out of borough foster placements and in residential units, and where possible and appropriate return LAC to the borough.
- Increase placement stability for all LAC
- Reduce the number of 16+ young people coming into care
- Ensure that permanency is achieved within the required timescales.

Increasing the in-house provision is necessary as the need's assessment indicates an increase in demand for:

- Placement for under 5s in early permanence 'foster to adopt' households that will enable them to move through the court process to a smooth transition into adoption. This will reduce the numbers of moves for young children.
- Respite placement for 13+ children in need
- Local specialist foster placements to manage children and young people with high level of complex needs to reduce the use of residential placement.
- Provision for children with physical disabilities.
- Short break care for children with physical and learning disabilities

Market management

The Placement Service has clear business aims for the management of commissioning, purchasing, and contracting of all care placements and accommodation options.

The Select List for the delivery of foster care provision will be tiered in order that providers offering the best value for money against set quality and price criteria are rewarded by receiving increased referrals.

Camden has established average sector rates to strengthen price negotiations on spot purchased provision which have resulted in improved management of spend on external provision and achieved cost avoidance savings.

Better scrutiny of placement extras and the implementation of more efficient payment processes to suppliers have led to improved controls on extras. As a result, Camden has met its savings target for placement extras at the end of this financial year.

A balanced placements budget and stability of unit costs has been achieved against a backdrop of demand for high-cost residential placements, volatility and market driven price increases whilst absorbing the increase in demand for **Staying Put** and Special Guardianship.



Action plan 2021/22

Objectives to Ensuring sufficient accommodation for Children Looked After

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fostering 2. Residential Placements 3. Semi Independent Accommodation 4. Adoption/Special Guardianship Orders 5. Leaving Care
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Ref	Action	Owner	By when	Progress (RAG)	Success measures
1. Fostering					
a)	Develop our model for foster carer recruitment and assessment	HOS Care provision, SM Permanence, TM Fostering	31/03/22	Recruitment impacted due to pandemic and national shortage of carers. Innovative recruitment plan agreed in conjunction with CAFC and fostering rates reviewed and increased.	<p>Increased number of foster carers available and taking Camden children.</p> <p>Foster carers report satisfaction and foster carer reviews demonstrate LAC are experiencing high quality family life</p>
b)	Target the recruitment of in-house foster carers to Camden's profile of Children and Young People Looked After, including carers who can offer homes for children with disabilities and parent & child placements	HOS Care provision, SM Permanence, TM Fostering, HOS CYPDS	31/03/22	As above	<p>More specialist foster carers recruited.</p> <p>Higher % of CYPDS in foster care rather than residential placements</p>
c)	Ensure options for permanency are considered and progressed, including long-term fostering and fostering for adoption	HOS Care provision, SM LACCL, SM Permanence, SM IRO, RAA	31/03/22	Strengthened permanency tracking and all PPMs now chaired by Permanence manager.	Every LAC will have a clear permanency plan by second LAC review
2. Residential Placements					

Ref	Action	Owner	By when	Progress (RAG)	Success measures
a)	Continue to work in partnership with other North London boroughs to develop standards of commissioning placements	HOS Care provision/ TM Resources	31/03/22	Rigorous monitoring in place through Resources team. Reducing use of IFA placements	Framework in place for suitable IFA and residential placements that better meet need and reduces spot purchasing
b)	Develop integrated adolescent approach and continue to ensure placement stability	HOS Care provision, SM LACCL, SM Permanence	31/03/22	Pathway offers stability. Improved oversight of Missing adolescents through work with Missing analyst.	Placement stability increases for high risk vulnerable teenagers

3. Semi Independent Accommodation

a)	Develop monitoring framework for Semi independence provisions	HOS Care provision/ Strategy and commissioning manager	April 2022	'Raising Standards' completed . Final report due April/May 2022	Framework in place for suitable semi- independent and residential placements that better meet need and reduce spot purchasing
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Ref	Action	Owner	By when	Progress (RAG)	Success measures
4. Adoption/Special Guardianship Orders					
a)	Increase in the numbers of children leaving care through adoption	HOS Care provision, SM Permanence	Monitored at bi- monthly adoption tracking meeting with ALN	4 adoptions and 21 SGOs were achieved during 2021/22, an improvement on 2019/20 (3 adoptions/11 SGOs) and 2020/21 (2 adoptions/8 SGOs).	Increase in the numbers of children leaving care through adoption, achieving a minimum of 20 adoptions each year
b)	Recruit more adoptive families for disabled children, BME groups and to keep siblings together through the RAA	HOS Care provision/ SM Permanence/ RAA	Ongoing	Active recruitment is underway through RAA	More specialist adoptive families recruited Higher % of CYPDS with adoptive families rather than residential placements
c)	Increase the number of early permanence 'foster to adopt' families taking Camden children and young people	HOS Care provision / SM Permanence	Monitored at bi- monthly adoption tracking meeting with ALN	The family finders from Adopt London North work closely and effectively with Camden and provide family finding statements and support for Early Permanence. This has enabled at least 3 EP placements to take place over the last 12 months. We are actively looking to identify a further 3 placements.	Increase in the number of foster to adopt families with Camden children
d)	Continue to improve performance in placing children through SGO's	HOS Care provision/ SM Permanence	Reviewed 6 weekly with SGO team / permanency tracking meeting	From April 2021- March 2022 the team has successfully completed and been granted special guardianship orders for 29 children and young people. 14 are still pending the outcome of the proceedings where the children are placed with their proposed SGO carers under a family and friends foster care.	Increase in the number of SGO's for Camden children

Ref	Action	Owner	By when	Progress (RAG)	Success measures
5. Leaving Care					
a)	Review the local offer with Council wide input ensuring that care leavers know their entitlements and the support available to them so that they experience improved outcomes	HOS Care provision / SM LACCL	June 2022	Review in progress YP views gained directly through pathway panel and 18 + review	Feedback from care leavers and more care leavers in suitable accommodation
b)	Develop the Young People's Pathway Panel to include youth violence reps and adult housing staff to better integrate pathways of access between children's social care, Housing Needs and other services to ensure that planning for independent accommodation at a strategic and individual level happens at as early a stage as possible	HOS Care provision, SM LACCL, Strategy and commissioning manager	June 2022	In progress. Young people now invited to attend panel	Improvement in quality of plans and progress for young people towards independence.
c)	Map out the current cohort and next cohort of care leavers to understand need, complexities, and demand for leaving care support, especially focussing on our UASC	HOS Care provision / SM LACCL/ Strategy and commissioning manager	April 2022	In progress. End of year data suggests numbers are stable but increasing demand due to high number of new UASC,	Quantitative picture of projected need of care leavers to better meet need

