

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

**PEOPLE'S CABINET MEMBER**

**INFORM MEMBER OF THE REVIEW OF THE NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE  
COUNCIL PLACEMENT SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY 2011-2013 AND THE  
REVISED STRATEGY FOR 2013-2015**

**1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform the Cabinet Member of the review and revised Sufficiency Strategy for Children in Care and Care Leavers 2013-2015.

**2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 The Placement Sufficiency Strategy is a legislative requirement, the council having to have in place a 'sufficiency' strategy that details how the council will provide sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of looked after children or who are assessed as requiring on-going support to live independently.
- 2.2 The strategy sets out the strategic intentions of services in fulfilling our sufficiency duty contained within s22 of the Children Act 1989. The document also forms an integral part of the Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy.
- 2.3 The review contains detailed review of how we met our statutory duties in the previous year and the strategy as to how we will continue to provide for the accommodation of looked after children.
- 2.4 The numbers of CiC in North Lincolnshire are significantly below both the England and Statistical average and represent a well-managed population with a key focus upon permanency, either with the birth or alternative family. This represents improved outcomes for children and value and value for money for the council.

**3 OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 The review and production of the Placement Sufficiency Strategy is a statutory responsibility and outlines how we will achieve this for those children who will become/need looking after in the next two years.

3.2 To achieve the key aims in relation to placement sufficiency, the council made a commitment to:

- Increase staffing capacity in our fostering and adoption services with the aim of increasing the number of and availability of foster families and adopters.
- Reduce our mainstream children homes to one home and build a Children's Campus that provides high quality accommodation for the few children who are not living with families.
- Increase the level and choice of accommodation for care leavers and post-16 young people.
- Develop specialist accommodation for young mothers in a 6-unit facility with built in support.
- Explore the use of social enterprises to further extend our provision.

## 4 ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 Placement Sufficiency Strategy have supported the achievement of positive outcomes for children and young people:

- The age profile of Children in Care (CiC) continues to demonstrate that early and effective intervention is making a difference. Of those children who entered care between April 2011 and December 2012, 54% were aged 0-4 (compared to statistical neighbour comparator of 50%).
- This has enabled increased success in achieving timely permanence for children within a family environment. The % of children ceasing to be looked after who were adopted in 2012/13 was 19% (up from 6.6% in 2007). This compares favourably with the latest statistical neighbour comparator of 18%. The % of children leaving care with a legal plan of permanence (including adoption, Special Guardianship and Residence Orders) in 2012/13 was 47.3%, this is substantially higher than the national average.

4.2 To support these achievements, it is important that children and young people are able to live in safe, stable placements. The Placement Sufficiency Strategy has achieved and or is on target to all its ambitions:

- The number of adoptive carers recruited has doubled over the past year and there is a robust recruitment strategy in place to increase further the number of carers recruited during 2013/14. The council has taken the lead within the regional Adoption Consortium and the development of a business model to increase the collaboration between authorities thereby increasing placement choice and availability.

- The number of North Lincolnshire Foster carers has increased substantially with the number of new carers approved increasing from 9 in 2010-11 to 22 during 2011-12. 21 were recruited in 2012 –13. This represents 43 new carers in the last two years. There is a robust recruitment campaign in place and to focus on carers for older and harder to place young people.
- We have developed a range of placement options for young people as they move through the care system and young people who are assessed as needing on-going support in their accommodation. This includes:
  - Permanence through Special Guardianship, Residency, Adoption and Fostering
  - Newly designed Children’s Campus ( in construction)
  - Increased Supported lodgings
  - Supported Accommodation with NL Homes
  - Arrangements to provide accommodation with Private Landlords
  - Supported shared houses

4.3 The updated Placement Sufficiency Strategy includes the key priority areas for 2013 – 2015.

The key areas include:

- Further increase foster care placements, targeting those who provide placements for harder to place young people. This includes a fee based scheme to offer alternatives to agency placements, remands, mother and baby fostering and provides for those with the most complex needs and disabilities.
- Continue to build on the range of Supported Accommodation to increase choice and further enable children to “stay put”.
- Open the new Children’s Campus as an integral part of the landscape of accommodation
- Deliver a Social Enterprise model of provision for young people who leave care and present as homeless to enable us to develop further and sustain the service in a changing market
- Continue to increase the speed of the adoption recruitment process and the number of available adopters.
- Reduce those who require external placements

## 5. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)**

5.1 The council continues to demonstrate its support to the most vulnerable children who require to be looked after by the local authority, the budget program reflecting the commitment of the council to children in care and care leavers. Whilst there are no additional resource implications contained within the strategy the preventative work and focus has to remain robust to prevent an

unexpected rise in those requiring accommodation and those who need to remain looked after.

5.2 The Placement Sufficiency Strategy has been delivered within agreed transformation of the provision of accommodation within North Lincolnshire. This has included reducing the number of children's homes, investment in the Fostering and Adoption Services, re-provision of staff to provide support to older young people, increasing the accommodation available for children and young people to enable them to live in family settings and within their communities. As a result we have seen a reduction in those young people moving to external placements at a high cost.

5.3 Effective partnership working and increased placement choice provides the most cost effective services to children in care, it enables effective matching resulting in fewer placement disruptions and helps children and young people achieve positive outcomes reducing the need for additional services.

## **6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)**

6.1 The Integrated Impact Assessment was undertaken as part of the development of both strategies. Any issues raised were included in the action plans developed within the services.

## **7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED**

7.1 Children in Care and Care Leavers were consulted as part of the development of the strategies and have been consulted throughout in the development of services and re-provision of accommodation by relevant services in delivering the strategies.

7.2 Examples of consultation in the Placement Sufficiency Strategy include young people's involvement in the design and development of the new purpose built Children's Campus, children involved in the recruitment and training of Foster Carers, Care Leavers involved in the development of services.

7.3 Consultation with staff has taken place within agreed protocols as part of the review and development of services to achieve the aims of the strategies.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 That Cabinet Member welcomes and supports the positive review of Placement Sufficiency 2013/14 and the future strategy.

DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE

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**Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2013-2015

North Lincolnshire Council Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2011-2013

North Lincolnshire Council Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2013-2015



***CHILDREN IN CARE  
AND CARE LEAVERS STRATEGY***

**PLACEMENT  
SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY**

**2013-15**

**SAFE CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS, SUPPORTED FAMILIES  
AND CARERS, TRANSFORMED LIVES.**

Version	Date	Author
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## Introduction

The North Lincolnshire Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2013-15 sets out our overall approach to looked after children in the authority for the next three years. It sets out the principles and values that govern our approach to these children and young people, including our Corporate Parenting approach, and gives details of how we intend to develop the service.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy, and forms an integral part of it.

The purpose of this document is to set out clearly and briefly the strategic intentions of North Lincolnshire Children's Services in fulfilling our sufficiency duty (s22G Children Act 1989) towards children in care.

The plans that it outlines are based on an analysis of the looked after population contained within the children's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and intelligence from comprehensive monthly and quarterly performance information. An analysis of this information can be found in the Children in Care Strategy.

The actions necessary to fulfil these strategic intentions are set out in the Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy Action Plan.

Overall the care population has remained static. Therefore our sufficiency strategy is based upon a good knowledge of what we need to have available and also and significantly our ambition to provide a new relationship and range of choice across all areas of our provision.

We aim to ensure that all children who require accommodation are provided with a permanent placement within the quickest timescales to maximise stability and success.

We aim to increase in-house fostering, supported lodgings and adoption services

to ensure we have more available families, and work with our colleagues across the region to expand our recruitment strategy for prospective adopters to meet the needs of our children awaiting adoption. This includes expediting the assessment and approval process as per the Governments 2 stage assessment process for both adopters and foster carers introduced in July 2013 and recruiting outside of our geographical boundaries.

We will use agency foster care where this offers a viable option to prevent the need for children to be accommodated within a children home.

We have reduced our mainstream homes by two in 2011/12. We have re invested money to build a new purpose built children's campus and underpin our growing ambitions to fostering, adoption, and accommodation and support services to care leavers and young people on the cusp of care.

We are developing a new service of Specialist Foster Carers:-

- For older aged children with complex care needs requiring more specialist family based care.
- For children with disabilities requiring short break family based care as opposed to short break residential care.
- To support and prevent young people being remanded to a secure setting or to local authority accommodation where possible.

We are developing a Social Enterprise model to enhance and build capacity in our accommodation and support services for Young People.

## Children and Young People in Our Care

Throughout the 2010 – 2013 three-year strategy we have actively worked to:

- Maintain children at home. *Where this is not possible...*
- Place children in permanent or alternative family placements, *and when appropriate...*
- Place children in suitable residential accommodation or in the community
- Work with partners to ensure better outcomes of all children and young people in our care
- Listen to our children and young people to create services that effectively support their needs

This has required us to work with children and families to help them stay together. However we have intervened decisively when this was not possible, giving children the best opportunity for permanence in an alternative family.

On the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013, North Lincolnshire Council “looked after” 164 children. This represented a small decrease on the previous year when it was 172 children at the same point. This demonstrates a commitment to maintaining children at home and a sustained approach to our values when there has been strong external pressure resulting in many local authorities seeing a substantial rise in their care population.

We actively work to maintain children at home wherever possible. If this is not appropriate we seek alternative family based permanence through adoption, long-term foster care, Special Guardianship and Residence Orders. There has been an increase in the number of children achieving permanency through adoption, special Guardianship or Residence Order. Children whose care plan is long term fostering have been

formally matched to their foster carers at the fostering panel.

We are increasing stability for those in the older age ranges and increasing placement choice and stability over a prolonged period. This is being achieved through targeted recruitment, robust assessments and identification of carers who have the skills to offer long term care to older children.

The stability of children in care continues to improve.

The Adoption Service works to the timescales set within the Adoption Scorecard. There are challenges in identifying adoptive placements for older children, children with complex needs and sibling groups. A regional approach has been developed to meet the challenge of recruiting adopters who can consider older, more complex needs and sibling groups. We have taken a lead role within the region in developing the approach to the recruitment and availability of adoptive placements and the support they receive. North Lincolnshire council are the lead for the regional Adoption Consortium where we have seen amazing success locally and regionally in adopter recruitment. This is forecast to increase in the future.

Overall it is therefore reasonable to conclude that the values and strategies we have worked to, have begun to achieve their goal, we have seen a change in our population data and a change in the nature of the accommodation provided.

We have maintained or improved performance levels. We continued to hold care reviews in time on 100% of occasions, and at 100% of reviews children’s views were given and taken account of.

Placement stability in terms of the number of children experiencing 3 or

more placement moves has improved from 13% in March 2007 to 9.7% in March 2013 above the national average. The stability of placements measured by length of time in the same placement also improved increasing from 57.8% in March 2007 to 62.1% in March 2013 which is broadly in line with statistical neighbour and England averages.

Whilst in care, children's health needs have been addressed well, with a year on year increase in the proportion of health assessments completed in time from 85% in March 2007 to 96.3% in March 2013.

The cohort of children taking GCSE's each year is relatively small. In the proportion of children gaining 5 or more GCSEs at A\*-C, including English and Maths there was a rise from 0% in 2007 to 13.3% in 2010, this increased to 30% in the year 2011 and has fallen again in the year 2012 to 15%. The figures for 2013 are not yet available.

The proportion of care leavers in employment, education or training (EET) at age 19 has not been maintained, which is reflective of the challenging economic situation. (82.4% Sept. 2010, 80% in 2011 and 54.5% in 2012 and 57.1 in March 2013).

During the period, 100% of children in care have had a Qualified Social Worker allocated to them.

In a period of increasing pressure, the service has maintained good standards of care for children and young people in care and consistently good outcomes, evidenced by OFSTED inspection judgements of Outstanding for Looked After Children (SLAC inspection May 2012) and Fostering Services (July 2012)

This continuing good performance has been supported by the continuing provision of high quality placements and planning where services within the Council and partner agencies have supported children in care in achieving positive outcomes.

We are committed to ensuring that friends and family are a first choice of care for children. We support this by supporting private arrangements through clear Private Fostering procedures and a dedicated worker for these arrangements.

Where the local authority places children with family and friends we ensure assessments are undertaken to ensure their suitability and support those placements through connected persons provisions.

## Aims and ambitions

The key aims of our sufficiency strategy are to:

- strengthen the early identification of need, the provision of early help and effective, timely intervention to prevent children entering the group on the edge of care.
- reduce the need for council care by strengthening preventive support to those on the edge of care.
- provide a range of care placements that provide choice, stability and swift permanence and that fulfil the requirements of s22C of the Children Act 1989 i.e. placements that:
  - are near to home and within our own area.
  - minimise disruption to education and training and help the continuation of community ties and friendships.
  - allow siblings to live together.
  - meet the needs of disabled children.
  - meet the needs of our diverse ethnic minority populations.
- Continue with management arrangements that provide a tight focus on looked after children, concentrating on the journey of each individual child within the system.
- secure permanence at the earliest point for those who do enter care.
- provide a pattern of services that improve outcomes for children in care in the areas of safety, education and training, health, positive engagement and

preparation for a successful future.

These aims are set within a framework of strong corporate parenting, excellent individual care planning and a firm focus on the needs and wishes of children and young people.

### **Strengthen early help and timely, effective intervention to prevent children entering the group on the edge of care**

We are engaged in a transformation of our services to establish a strong, integrated early help service based within North Lincolnshire. These revised services operate within Children and Family Support Service (CFSS), in line with the Single Organisational Model described in the Children and Young People's Plan, and with direct linkages into the Children's Trust via an Assistant Director. CFSS has a remit that includes a specific goal of preventing the need for care by working with universal and early-targeted provision to support families with a range of risk factors that are known to be connected with entering care.

The Children and Family Support Service (CFSS) will work through collaboration and co-ordination at all levels and across all services to:

- Identify needs earlier.
- Deliver a co-ordinated package of support for the child/young person.
- Help to secure better outcomes.

The services on offer around preventive support include working with the range of universal services to 'plug in' children and families to services that will enhance their lives and reduce family stress and conflict.

## **Reduce the need for council care by strengthening early help to those on the edge of care**

Built into the Children and Family Support Services (CFSS) are intensive support staff within a newly created crisis team, whose remit includes providing effective interventions to children who are on the edge of care, to prevent their admission. These staff will use a range of approaches, including parenting and boundary work, solution-focused interventions and strong engagement skills to maintain or restore them with to their family.

When taken together with the preventive work of our Social Work Service resource, the development of 13-19 years strategy to effectively manage risk in the community and the increasing use of short breaks to prevent breakdown, we expect to see a continuation in our long-term trend towards fewer children in care.

Where our early support offer cannot meet the child's needs within the child's timescales we will continue to make effective use of the court's Public Law Outline (PLO) framework, as early as possible, in successfully preventing entry to care.

## **Provide a range of care placements that provide choice, stability, diversity and swift permanence**

Our ambition is to provide early permanent placements of a type that best suits the needs of the child, within the shortest feasible timescale. This will happen in a variety of settings, from returning to the family home, through placements with family and friends ('connected persons' in the 2010 Care Planning Regulations), to foster care,

adoption or residential care. Where the journey to permanence includes a stay in a setting that meets complex needs that cannot be met locally, we will continue to use our multi-agency commissioning arrangements to determine the best place for the child. These placements (including young people meeting the Winterbourne concordat definition) are subject to regular reviews, transition planning and consideration of inclusion in the proposed local "extended care scheme" (supported living). This scheme being developed by Adults Services aims to provide supported living in the community for adults with moderate to severe learning disabilities and therefore consideration will be given to young people returning from out of county placements to the local area. Although placements within the scheme are predominantly intended for young people aged 18+ years there is scope for negotiation in relation to taking young people at age 17.

- In order to reduce the number of agency and out of county placements we intend to focus on local provision for all but a small number of children and young people with specialist needs. We aim to do this by developing a specialist carers scheme for children and young people with specialist needs including parent and child placements, remand carers and older young people with complex care needs including those currently in out of county external provision. This will continue to be balanced against value for money criteria, with the interests of the child remaining the paramount consideration.
- We have further invested in fostering and increased the ratio of foster care placements to

residential placements, based on extensive research that shows that the majority of children do best in family placements. As of 31/03/2013, 84% of our children in care were in foster care or placed for adoption.

- Local authority foster care still provides lower cost services when compared with private provision, so we intend to provide the majority of foster care through local authority carers. We will continue to test this decision against value-for-money criteria to take account of market changes over time.
- We intend to increase the number of foster placements available to us by 30 in 2013-14. This is an ambitious target, based on the number of placements required to reduce reliance on residential care both internally and externally and reduce the need for expensive external agency foster care. This will increase placement choice, reduce the number of young people placed out of area and enable better responses to the needs of ethnic minority children. It will allow us to reduce the use of local residential care for all except those children whose needs are clearly best met within residential provision.
- The North Lincolnshire Fostering Service has increased staffing capacity to enable it to increase its recruitment and approval capability and to provide higher levels of support to carers. Clear targets for increases in the number of placements have been set.
- We intend to increase the number of Short breaks Butterflies foster carers to provide family based care for

children with disabilities in need of a short break provision as an alternative to our residential provision "The Cygnets".

- Increasing the overall number of carers will continue to be achieved by increasing the recruitment and approval effort, but also by retention of carers.
- A dedicated communications officer post has been created to plan and deliver an ongoing recruitment campaign for foster carers, adopters and supported lodgings providers including the use of radio and television to appeal to a larger cohort of potential carers and adopters.
- We have embarked on a new relationship with our carers, offering improved and bespoke training and increased support by foster placement staff, the use of a peripatetic support team based at "King Fisher Lodge" and CFSS staff. We are continuing to offer existing support initiatives such as special car loans, Looked after Children's Education Service and CAMHS support to maintain placements and increase placement stability for our children in care.
- Increasing the number of available carers is important, but so is increasing the range of placement skills and types on offer. We have successfully recruited carers who have the skills to care for teenagers and children with more complex needs which have enabled us to maintain our children within our own foster carers in the local community.
- We have improved our training programme to reflect the needs of the carers and the children we look after. Examples of this are

“Understanding Behaviour” which builds upon and complements the attachment and development training run by the CAMHS service. We have delivered training for foster carers jointly with the adoption service to support successful moves to adoptive placements.

- We have provided training and 1:1 sessions to continue to enable all carers to achieve the Training Support and development (TSD) minimum standards. In addition the programme will provide more specialist training on issues including attachment, advanced child development, engaging parents and children, dealing with mental health issues, and working with offenders.
  - We have revised the foster payments scheme to reflect increased responsibilities and skill levels for certain carers whilst maintaining fair allowance rates for the majority of ‘mainstream’ carers. This is reviewed annually.
  - We have developed our in-house adoption service and invested in social workers to increase the number of available adopters to give children the quickest access to adoption services to provide adoption within the child’s timescales. Again, this will be subject to value-for-money examination at regular intervals.
  - We have successfully recruited adopters with whom we have been able to place our own children, this has resulted in more timely matching and placement as well as reducing the inter agency fee.
  - We will continue to lead on the Regional Adoption business arrangements to encourage Local Authorities to increase activity as the trend has shown a downward turn in the number of available adopters, with an increase in children waiting to be adopted.
- All potential new adopters are encouraged to consider becoming fostering to adoption carers in order to prevent placement moves for children with a plan of adoption. Fostering for adoption also means that children are placed with potential adopters sooner and provides for earlier building of relationships and developing attachments to their new family.
  - For those children and young people whose specialist, complex needs cannot be met within our own provision, we will continue with our effective joint commissioning arrangements, in conjunction with our health partners, to meet education, health and care needs. Placements will always be made with the goal of reducing the level of need in order to return the child to ordinary provision and thence to a permanent solution. Placements will only use provision that is rated good or better in Ofsted inspections.
  - North Lincolnshire Youth Offending Service (YOS) is currently working to keep the level of secure remands for young offenders to a minimum. From April 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 the Local Authority became financially responsible for all Remands to Youth Detention Accommodation (YDA). This presents a serious challenge in that the devolved budgets are finite. We will therefore work with our YOS on methods of reducing the number of secure remands.

- To achieve this, the YOS needs to be able to offer the courts robust bail and community packages as alternatives to remand. This is now required in all cases where it is 'safe' for young people to remain in the community and the risks to the public can be managed.
- The YOS is already investing its resources in activities and interventions that reduce the incident of breach and remand on open cases – and can reduce the likelihood of placement breakdown.
- We will work with the YOS on alternatives to overnight remand placements whilst identifying a small number of placements to cope with those that do occur.
- We will train a number of foster carers in the skills required to provide placements for young people remanded to care by the courts. This will be set alongside support for the local YOS in continuing to provide more robust packages to the courts that reduce the incident of remand to youth detention placements and in which the courts can have confidence.
- We will retain a local children's home capacity to meet the needs of a small number of young people who choose not to live in a family. The council has made a substantial financial commitment to the development of a new all purpose children's campus due to open in the near future. The Campus development includes a number of semi independence flats to support the transition of young people in the children's home into independent living. Local provision currently remains

better value for money compared with external residential home provision, but this situation will be continuously monitored for changes in the market situation. The children's home will be reviewed to ensure best value and will adapt to provide a new relationship with a population of older young people that reflects their rights and decision making whilst working to keep them as safe as possible.

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- Timely developments within Children's Services, including the restructure, over the past twelve months of social work services has ensured that we are compliant with the revised Working Together Guidance published in April. This has placed the service in a good place to manage the challenge of reduced Court protocol time-scales and implementation of the recommendations/actions from the review of the Family Justice System of Professor Norgrove which means that childcare proceedings must be fully completed within 26 weeks.
  - Revised performance/compliance management processes have been reviewed by both legal services and children's services to accommodate the changes. In addition, we have developed public law outline meetings are family meetings are being held and regularly reviewed. Parents, with the benefit of their legal representatives are being made fully aware at the earliest possible time of the Local Authority



concerns and subsequent expectations. It is hoped that by continuing this early intervention matters will be dealt with outside of the court hearings, failing that they can be expedited through the court process

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- The development of social work 'pods' has enabled less experienced social workers to benefit from access to the 'practice experience' available from other team members, thus enabling a clearer focus upon interventions and methods of change and clarity about the theoretical underpinnings of work undertaken. There is a clear focus on cases have a high quality social work assessment to ensure that permanency is achieved with without any unnecessary delay

## **Provide an increased range and choice of provision for care leavers and other post-16 provision**

- We are committed to children in our care remaining with their foster carers as part of our "Staying Put" scheme and in line with Government policy. We support all of our children in care post 16 currently in a fostering arrangement "to remain with their foster carers until; they are prepared for adulthood, can experience a transition akin to their peers, avoid social exclusion

and be more likely to avert a subsequent housing and tenancy breakdown". (Staying Put. HM Govt. May 2013). We have in place a care leaver's charter which has been compiled with our young people and signed and supported by corporate parents.

- We have reconfigured our services to provide greater specialist support to care leavers and children post-16. There is now a support service dedicated to those groups, including a supported lodgings component.
- We have increased the level and choice of accommodation for care leavers and post-16 young people by working together with North Lincolnshire homes to provide 14 units of accommodation.
- We provide specialist accommodation for young mothers in a 6-unit facility with support on site.
- We are exploring the feasibility of the Accommodation and Support Service for Young People to become a staff led Social Enterprise that will provide accommodation and support to care leavers and those on the cusp of care aged 16 & 17.
- The Social Enterprise would have the potential to bid for funding to further increase accommodation provision and further enhance the support provision to these groups. This could include the development of accommodation provision for young people returning from external residential out of county placements requiring supported independent living within the local community.
- A development plan will be created for the Social Enterprise which will focus on enhanced

provision of accommodation, including supported lodgings and support.

## **A new relationship with carers**

- We have provided a comprehensive training and development service for our foster carers to develop the range of skill and expertise we will require into the future
- We have maintained our Foster Care Charter as an up-to-date and relevant agreement between carers and the service.
- We will continue to pay allowances at the National Fostering Network recommended rate so that North Lincolnshire provides competitive allowances that are adjusted according to skill levels and the demands of individual placements.
- We will maintain the level of support benefits for foster carers that exist currently e.g. payment for insurance cover, the availability of car loans at a zero repayment rate, privileged access to sports facilities etc. We will look to improve these support benefits as opportunities arise, given the tight financial framework within which we are working.
- We will continue to build special support arrangements for foster carers, such as the tiered fostering scheme, with its layered approach to the provision of CAMHS support.

## **Reviewing the Strategy**

This strategy will form the basis of an action plan, contained within the Children In Care Strategy 2013-15. Those actions will be set out in terms of what needs to be done, by whom and by when. They will be monitored through our well-established performance improvement mechanisms, including the quarterly performance reviews that we hold. The impact of the strategy will be reviewed annually during the period to 2015.

The change in provision will be managed and reviewed as part of the Transformation agenda under the 'Operational Fitness' strand. It will be led by the Assistant Director (Children's Services), reporting directly to the Director of People and the People Transformation Board.

## What will success look like?

care leavers and those aged 16 & 17 who are on the cusp of care.

By 2015, we will expect to see:

- Further reductions in the looked after population as a result of:
  - Early effective intervention.
  - Increased use of Adoption and Special Guardianship.
  - Permanence in families where they are independent of the local authority.
- A greater proportion of the care population cared for within a family setting rather than a residential one.
- A reduction in the use of expensive external provision by improving our ability to meet a wider range of needs locally.
- A reduction in the number of children experiencing three or more moves, and greater stability of placement in the longer term.
- Children and young people report high levels of satisfaction with their placements in exit interviews and other surveys.
- A reduction in the proportion of older young people in long-term care.
- A reduction in the amount of time that children and young people spend in care before a permanent solution is found.
- Increased choice of placements for children and young people resulting from reductions in numbers coupled with increases in approved placements.
- A staff led Social Enterprise will be in place that can develop and grow to enhance the provision of accommodation and support to



## Key Milestones 2013-15

	Milestones		
	April 2013	April 2014	April 2015
Foster care	20 placements more than the 31/03/2011 baseline	30 additional placements	20 additional placements
Accommodation and support services ( including supported lodgings)	18 placements more than the 31/03/2011 baseline	10 additional placements	10 additional placements
Residential care	Reduce by 6 placements (18 to 12)	Reduce by 4 placements (12 to 8)	Reduce by 2 placements (8 to 6)
Secure remand provision	Reduce the number of secure remands from 8 to 6	Reduce the number of secure remands from 6 to 2	Appropriate young people only are securely remanded.
Alternatives to Secure remand	2 children in care or alternatives	4 children in care or alternatives	2 children in care or alternatives