

**REPORT TO:** Cabinet Member Children's Services

**DATE:** 8th February 2011

**SUBJECT:** Looked After Children Placement Strategy

**WARDS AFFECTED:** All wards in Sefton

**REPORT OF:** Peter Morgan  
Strategic Director

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Colin Pettigrew  
Service Director  
0151 934 3333

**EXEMPT/  
CONFIDENTIAL:** No

**PURPOSE/SUMMARY:** To inform Members of the Looked After Children Placement Strategy and the progress towards delivering the Fostering Strategy.

**REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:** This strategy will deliver better outcomes for vulnerable children and young people in Sefton, including those looked after by the authority, as well as make best use of council resources. This includes the implementation of a Fee Paid Scheme for the recruitment and retention of Sefton's mainstream approved foster carers.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**  
The Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Families approves the report

**KEY DECISION:** NO

**FORWARD PLAN:** Not appropriate

**IMPLEMENTATION DATE:** Following the expiry of the "call-in" period for the Minutes of the meeting.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:**

Alternative options have been considered, the CSF Overview and Scrutiny Committee conducted a thorough review of both the Fostering Service and Corporate Parenting and the contents of this report are in line with these findings.

**IMPLICATIONS:****Budget/Policy Framework:**

The strategy will be delivered within existing resources that have been identified for placement pressures within the MTFP.

**Financial:**

<b><u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u></b>	<b>2006/ 2007 £</b>	<b>2007/ 2008 £</b>	<b>2008/ 2009 £</b>	<b>2009/ 2010 £</b>
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
<b><u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u></b>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N	When?			
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

**Legal:****Risk Assessment:****Asset Management:****CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS****FOSTER CARERS AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

LD00038/11 The Acting Head of Corporate Legal Services has been consulted and has no comments on this report.

FD629 Interim Head of Corporate Finance and ICT has been consulted and has no comments on the report

**CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:**

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		x	
2	Creating Safe Communities		x	
3	Jobs and Prosperity		x	
4	Improving Health and Well-Being		x	
5	Environmental Sustainability		x	
6	Creating Inclusive Communities		x	
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy		x	
8	Children and Young People	x		

**LINKS TO ENSURING INTEGRATION:****IMPACT UPON CHILDREN'S SERVICES TARGETS AND PRIORITIES:**

This Strategy has direct relevance to all CSF priorities: Safeguarding, Think Family and Community, Narrowing the Gap and Resources

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT****1. BACKGROUND:**

- 1.1 Sefton's Children's Trust's vision for all of its children and young people is to have access to high quality services and facilities. The intent of the Looked After Children Placement Strategy (attached) is to support the priorities and principles of the Children's Trust and the Children and Young People's Plan. The Placement Strategy has evolved from the *Corporate Parenting Strategy, Fostering Services 2010-2013* Strategy and the operational *Fostering & Adoption Services Marketing Plan* (2010).
- 1.2 Every child living in Sefton has the right to access universal services such as nurseries, schools, dentists and general practitioners. Some children and their families may need extra support for a short period of time to stop their problems becoming worse and this support can be provided through access to a range of time limited resources such as, educational support in the classroom for children, or for specialist counselling for parents.
- 1.3 There are other children who are at risk of significant harm if targeted support is not provided. Sefton's Children's Social Care has structured its core service delivery into a commissioner and provider framework with each team having a specific role when working with children and their families
- 1.4 There are also those children who need a safe and secure place to live (either for a short while or until they reach adulthood) because their parents are unable or willing to care for them. These children are accommodated by the local authority in a range of 'looked after' placements.
- 1.5 Placements can be with birth parents, family and friends foster carers (kinship care), other foster carers, (local authority or independent fostering providers), within residential settings (local authority or independent residential providers), in semi-independent accommodation (local authority or independent providers), or with a permanent alternative family, through adoption.
- 1.6 Some children with complex health and/or educational and behavioural needs will require a specialist type of placement and these are generally commissioned with external providers and are jointly or tripartite funded with health and education.
- 1.7 Sefton has a higher than average usage of externally, commissioned placements for factors others than the child's complex needs and whilst Sefton's unit costs are lower than the average, the high volume of commissioned placements means that the actual level of spend remains high.
- 1.8 The placement strategy challenge is to significantly reduce the use and reliance upon external placement providers and re-invest resources into local authority foster placements and into more support to more vulnerable families through prevention and early intervention services.

## **2. STRATEGIC AIM**

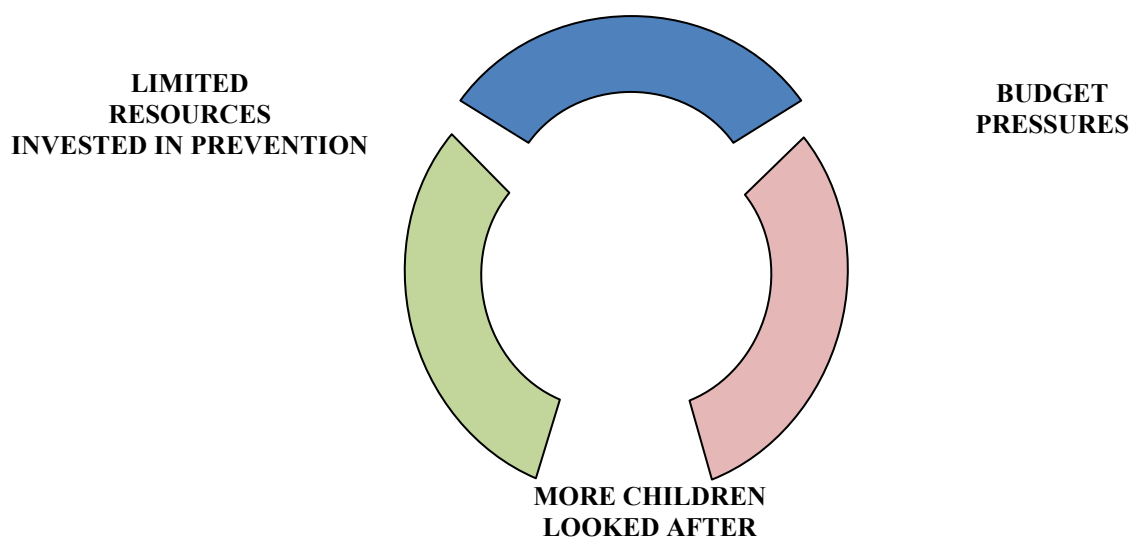
- 2.1 To promote good outcomes for children and young people by providing good quality cost effective services for children in need

## **3. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

- 3.1 To shift the balance of expenditure so that more resources are invested in helping families to care for their children
- 3.2 To ensure children in need of protection are kept safe
- 3.3 To achieve good outcomes for children and young people in need, in particular those who are not able to live with their families

#### 4. CORE OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 Improved access to support services for children and their families
- 4.2 Continue to improve the timeliness, quality and quantity of multi-disciplinary assessment, planning and provision
- 4.3 Greater emphasis on partnership, community-based and family-based intervention and prevention support services
- 4.4 Continue to improve the quality and timeliness of care planning
- 4.5 Continue to improve the quality and timeliness of permanence planning
- 4.6 Develop resource commissioning and robust contracting arrangements for children in need, their families and for children looked after and care leavers
- 4.7 Decrease in expensive and inappropriate placements
- 4.8 Control and reduce the volatile Looked after Children and Placements Budgets



- 4.9 The document sets out the current pressures on the 'looked after' system and the ways in which these will be addressed. It also describes the progress that has been made against the Fostering Strategy which includes a number of the key developments required to achieve the planned objectives.
- 4.10 The Fostering Strategy had 11 core objectives for 2010. These objectives would help us to achieve placement choice, good standards of care and enhanced safeguarding for children looked after. Only one (1) objective was not achieved (management information). Nine (9) of the objectives were achieved at nil or minimum cost. The 11<sup>th</sup> objective (Fostering Marketing Plan) was funded through part of the 2010 Care Matters Grant.
- 4.11 A core objective was to scope the potential costs for Sefton Council moving to a fee paid scheme for foster carers. Whilst Sefton's fostering allowances (that are used to care for any child in placement) are commensurate with other local authorities, Sefton is one of only a few authorities nationally that does not have a fee paid scheme. The implications of this are quite obvious in so far as we cannot compete in the fostering market place, especially with our neighbouring

authorities. Our inability to recruit and retain foster carers has had a major financial impact on the Placement Budget because we have had to purchase fostering and residential placements from the private sector. A Fee Paid scheme is more than a financial reward for foster carers it allows us to move to a position whereby foster carers become competent and skilled in different aspects of fostering. A skill and competency fee paid scheme would give us placement choice for: teenagers, sibling groups, remanded young people, emergency placements, and children with complex health needs or behavioural problems and for mother and baby assessments. Each of these types of placement is currently purchased from the private sector. A Fee Paid scheme is, therefore, an invest to save scheme as over the next three years there will be significant savings on the Placement Budget through more internal fostering placements.

4.12 The financial scoping exercise has been completed and the costs of a Fee Paid scheme are within the Placement Strategy. This document has been developed from the Fostering Strategy and it also embraces the Council's requirement for a Sufficiency Strategy. The Placement Strategy is concerned with placement choice, support to foster carers and adopters, support to care leavers and in developing prevention and intervention services to vulnerable children and their families.

4.13 The costs for the Fee Paid Scheme are over a three year period and will rise as we recruit more foster carers and the costs will come from savings on the Placement Budget.

**Year 1 £188,180                      Year 2 £361,296                      Year 3 £534,916**

## **5. CONCLUSION**

5.1 The Looked After Children Placement Strategy is intended to provide a three-year framework for the development of placement choice for children in need. It also offers proposals for reducing the placement budget and re-investing into more family support service to vulnerable families. The summary list below identifies the outcomes that could be achieved through the various Placement Strategy proposals and all of the current service developments that are in place.

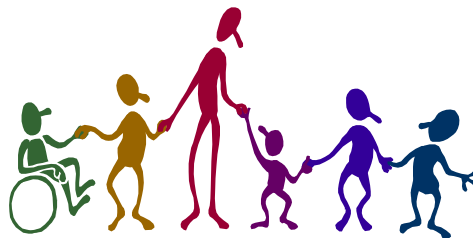
### 5.2 Summary - Outcomes of Placement Strategy

- Children and young people who need to be looked after by Sefton Council are in appropriate placements for the right length of time
- More effective use of Council's resources
- Improved recruitment position in fostering market place
- Improved retention in fostering market place
- Improved standards of care in fostering placement market place
- Improved capacity of local authority fostering services to meet the needs of children and achieve good outcomes for them
- Improved residential choice, placement stability and better outcomes for children and young people
- Cost effective semi-independence accommodation and choice for care leavers
- Potential for joint working for increased efficiency and sustainability through innovative solutions for family mediation (family group conferencing), contact and child minding arrangements
- Placement stability though access to specialist services to carers, children, and adopters
- Meet the sufficiency requirement for provision for looked after children

- Potential for preferred providers to meet Sefton's needs

# LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN PLACEMENT STRATEGY

2010-2013





<b>HEADINGS</b>	<b>CONTENTS</b>
1	INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT
2	PLACEMENT STRATEGY CORE OBJECTIVES
3	PLACEMENT STRATEGY ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS
4	PLACEMENT STRATEGY PLACEMENT FACTORS
5	SEFTON'S FOSTERING MARKET PLACE POSITION 2010
6	THE FOSTERING STRATEGY DEVELOPMENTS
7	ADOPTION SERVICE & PERMENANCE FOR CHILDREN
8	RESIDENTIAL SECTOR
9	CARE LEAVERS
10	SUMMARY SHORTFALLS IN PROVISION
11	PREVENTATIVE & EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES
12	FINANCING THE PLACEMENT STRATEGY & CONCLUSION
Appendices 1	FOSTERING & ADOPTION MARKETING PLAN
2	FOSTERING STRATEGY OBJECTIVES
3	SUSTAINING THE VIRTUOUS CIRCLE
4	SERVICE MODELS OF PLANNING AND COMMISSIONING
5	CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE TEAMS
6	BUSINESS PLANNING MODEL
7	YOU CAN FOSTER - FOSTERING CAMPAIGN
8	SOCIAL CARE PLACEMENTS - FINANCE SUMMARY 26/11/10
9	COMPETENCY BASED FEE PAID FOSTER CARE SCHEME
10	THE KEY AIMS OF SEFTON CHILDREN'S TRUST
11	MANAGEMENT INFORMATION & HARDIKER MODELS

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Looked After Children Placement Strategy is supported by the three year strategic fostering framework document *Fostering Services 2010-2013* and the operational *Fostering & Adoption Services Marketing Plan (2010)* as well as the Sefton Corporate Parenting Strategy. These documents contain information about our intention to deliver best quality and value to children, their families, social workers, foster carers and adopters. It is envisaged that the Placement Strategy with the previously mentioned documents will, in part, inform Sefton's 2011 Sufficiency Strategy.

Reference will be made throughout this document to the terms, 'child or children' as defined within the Children Act 1989 for ease of reading. Where reference is specific, the term 'young person or young people' will be used.

## **CONTEXT**

This is the first Looked After Children Placement Strategy to be developed in Sefton and it is intended that it will be an organic document in that it will change shape and further develop over the next three years. Whilst the focus of the Placement Strategy is upon developing placement choice and as such deals primarily with fostering provision, the residential sector and adoption, reference is made to wider services that impact upon the Placement Strategy and on how we respond to the needs of vulnerable children and their families.<sup>1</sup>

Every child living in Sefton has the right to access universal services such as nurseries, schools, dentists and general practitioners. Some children and their families may need extra support for a short period of time to stop their problems becoming worse and this support can be provided through access to a range of time limited resources such as, educational support in the classroom for children or for specialist counselling for parents with drug, alcohol or debt problems. There are other children who are at risk of significant harm if targeted support is not provided. There are also those children who need a safe and secure place to live (for a short while or until they reach adulthood) because their parents are unable or willing to care for them. These children are accommodated by the local authority in a range of placements.<sup>2</sup>

Placement of looked after children can be with birth parents, family and friends foster carers (kinship care), other foster carers, (local authority or independent fostering providers), residential settings (local authority or independent residential providers), in semi-independent accommodation (local authority or independent providers), or placed for adoption.

Some children will require a specialist type of placement. Some specialist placements are jointly or tripartite funded with health and education because of the complex needs of the child. Such provision is likely to be commissioned from external residential or fostering providers. However, Sefton has a higher than averages use of external, commissioned placements for factors others than the child's complex needs.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Appendices 3 Making Ends Meet SSI & Audit Commission – The Virtuous Circle of Children's Services

<sup>2</sup> See Appendices 4 Model of Level of Need and Service

Sefton Children's Social Care department has structured its core service delivery into a commissioner and provider framework with each team having a specific role when working with children and their families<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> See Appendices 5 Descriptive narrative of teams and their role

## **PLACEMENT STRATEGY AIM & CORE OBJECTIVES**

A business planning model has been used to help determine the core objectives that will provide children and their families with a range of support that also includes placement choice. The model also helps us to take a strategic over-view of what we need to know and what we need to do in order to move to a position whereby we spend our resources on offering more support to more families, including offering suitable placements to children.<sup>4</sup>

### **STRATEGIC AIM**

To promote good outcomes for children and young people by providing good quality cost effective services for children in need

### **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

To shift the balance of expenditure so that more resources are invested in helping families to care for their children<sup>5</sup>

To ensure children in need of protection are kept safe

To achieve good outcomes for children and young people in need, in particular those who are not able to live with their families

### **Core Objectives**

1. Improved access to support services for children and their families
2. Continue to improve the timeliness, quality and quantity of multi-disciplinary assessment, planning and provision
3. Greater emphasis on partnership, community-based and family-based intervention and prevention support services
4. Continue to improve the quality and timeliness of care planning
5. Continue to improve the quality and timeliness of permanence planning
6. Develop resource commissioning and robust contracting arrangements for children in need, their families and for children looked after and care leavers
7. Decrease in expensive and inappropriate placements
8. Control and reduce the volatile Looked after Children and Placements Budgets

---

<sup>4</sup> Making Ends Meet SSI & Audit Commission – The Virtuous Circle of Children’s Services

<sup>5</sup> Appendices 11 Example Model –objectives, indicators and targets

## **PLACEMENT STRATEGY ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS**

Environmental factors, such as central government social and fiscal policy or changes in legislation for children will significantly impact upon our ability to deliver an effective service to children and their families. Other environmental factors that have to be considered include: changing demographics, new geographic areas of high deprivation, the long term impact of child and adult morbid obesity on service type and service demand, the rising population of children with complex medical needs and/or disabilities due to medical advances with very premature babies.

### Sefton demographics<sup>6</sup>

The key features of Sefton's population are:

- The population is declining

- There is a high and growing population of older people

- There are reducing numbers of children and young people of working age

- There is a small black and minority ethnic population, albeit with an increased number of international and European workers

### Size and Age of Population

The size of Sefton's population is changing. The number of people who live in the borough continues to fall. In 2007, it was estimated as, 276,200. Sefton has seen the biggest percentage fall of any local authority in the North West since 2001 (2.4% or 6,700 fewer people).

Over 20% of the population on Sefton is aged over 65 (compared with 16% in England) and the number of older people will continue to grow. By 2012 it expected that there will be over 28,500 people over the age of 75 years with a greater concentration of older people in the north of Sefton.

The number of people under the age of 20 years in Sefton is falling. It has fallen by 5,500 over the last ten years and is predicted to fall by another 4,600 by 2012 and to continue to fall beyond 2012.

### Ethnicity

Sefton has a fairly small population from the black and minority ethnic groups (about 7,200 i.e. 2.6% in 2006). The borough is becoming more diverse with a small number of European/international workers and their families who mainly live in the Southport area.

### Wealth and Deprivation

Some areas in Sefton are amongst the most affluent in England but close to these are some of the poorest places; Sefton is in the 15% most deprived local authority districts in England in terms of concentration of deprivation. The areas of highest deprivation are concentrated in the south, particularly within the wards of Linacre, Derby, Netherton, St Oswald, Ford and Church. There are also areas of high deprivation around the centre of Southport. The areas of deprivation closely correlate with areas where people have the poorest health and are areas of highest income deprivation affecting children.

---

<sup>6</sup> Demographic information taken from NHS Sefton Better Health Better Life Strategic Plan 2008-2013)

The internal and external environmental factors that have been identified and summarised below are current and they will present us with challenges in the coming months and years.

### Internal Factors

There is an imperative to reduce the Placement Budget and over reliance on external providers. There is, therefore, a strategy needed to move from reactive 'looked after services' towards an investment in prevention and early intervention services for children in need and their families.<sup>7</sup> This may mean that over a three year period there has to be an 'invest to save' initiative to achieve these objectives. The points summarised below are some of the greatest challenges to us:

- Reduction in number of looked after children
- Reduction of length of time children are looked after
- Providing looked after children with placement choice that meet their individual identified needs
- Driving up standards of the quality of care children are given
- Ensuring social worker understands of, and need to be compliant with, permanence planning for looked after children
- Implementing the New Life Work Model for looked after children
- Having a departmental stance on the Southwark judgement in relation to accommodating 16 and 17 year olds
- Embedding rigorous resource/provision allocation, resource monitoring and evaluation of services provided

### External Factors

The greatest challenge comes from an historic use and current reliance upon external providers of placements for looked after children. We need to shift the balance to local authority provision whilst also driving down current external costs and introducing systems for monitoring outcomes delivered by external providers. Some arrangements are already in place to gate-keep resources and care plans for children but these arrangements need to be further developed.<sup>8</sup>

The other significant challenge comes from the Court arena where decisions for looked after children are made in the context of their current placement e.g. long-term foster care for very young children who are placed with an Independent

---

<sup>7</sup> Prevention can be described as a process of promoting positive outcomes for children and young people by focusing on key 'protective factors'. This approach enables children's own capacity to avoid developing problems.

Prevention can work on any number of levels but each level is aimed at promoting a child's resilience. For example, promoting positive attachments in infancy builds up resilience for every child. Universal services provide protective and preventative resources for children and families some of these include: health visitors; children's centres and schools for children over the age of five years.

Early Intervention is a process that should allow for the active engagement of any agency with children and their families where more than one risk factor has been identified in advance of emerging problems. Every agency should therefore work in a preventive manner.

Early intervention means that any agency should become involved as early as possible to tackle problems that have already become known. Early intervention in a family will reduce the need for more intrusive and/or complex interventions at a later stage. Early intervention should target specific children, young people and their families with an identified need for additional support once problems have already emerged.

<sup>8</sup> MAPP and PPM's introduced in 2010

Fostering Agency. We need to build confidence in Court and in challenging Children's Guardians.

External agency decisions prevent us reducing the looked after population and furthermore may not be in the long term interests of the children (generally younger children under 9 years should have had a plan for adoption) and they impact on the Placement Budget for several, if not many, years.<sup>9</sup>

The final external factor that affects the Placement Strategy is the delay in being able to either access services or receive advice from targeted or specialist services, (such as CAMHS) particularly for those children that have suffered emotional abuse and neglect; these delays results in multiple placement breakdowns including adoption breakdowns when adopted children enter adolescence.<sup>10</sup>

## **PLACEMENT FACTORS**

### **Fostering Services Market Challenges and Market Competition**

Much research has been recently undertaken on a national and regional basis regarding the recruitment and retention of foster carers.<sup>11</sup> The following list captures some of the research headlines:

- There is a shortage of local authority foster carers and a large percentage of the foster carer population is reaching retirement age. Throughout the UK there is a typical loss of foster families of 10-15% per year. Nationally, over 18% of current foster carers are over the age of 55 years<sup>12</sup>
- There has been an increase in the numbers of looked after children, Sefton has a higher increase in looked after children population than statistical neighbours
- The independent fostering agency sector has become saturated with referrals from local authorities and as a consequence there has been a shift to local authorities commissioning residential care at a much higher cost than fostering placements
- Local authorities have varying fostering allowances and reward schemes in place – they have entered into the competitive market place for the recruitment and retention of foster carers
- The interpretation of Southwark Judgement is putting extra pressure on local authorities for suitable placements for much older children
- There has been a rising uptake of the use of Special Guardianship Orders taken up by foster carers – whilst reducing the looked after children population the fostering resource for future looked after children also withdrawn

---

<sup>9</sup> Appendices 8 Costs of Social Care

<sup>10</sup> As at 03.12.10 there were three older children in residential care as a result of their adoptive breakdown and one family in crisis because of their son's behaviours and emotional state

<sup>11</sup> See for example NW Placements Report 2010 and Appendices 6

<sup>12</sup> Fostering Network research The True Cost of Foster Care 2010

- There has been a rise in the placement of looked after children with kinship carers – these carers receive the same services as mainstream foster carers but they do not offer a general resource to the wider looked after children population; moreover, there is a high level of placement breakdowns and/or de-registrations within Kinship care.

### **Position in the Market**

In 'marketing' terms, Sefton's 'Social Care Market' can be viewed as unique in that it has a higher use of independent providers than most other local authorities.

Usually, local authorities, be they unitary or metropolitan, are market leaders they provide the most services and placements for their children. Normally, local authorities do not compete with each other in the market place rather they are likely to collaborate and jointly fund, commission or provide services. Such arrangements are common between neighbouring local authorities of a similar size as the benefit to each local authority comes through economies of scale. However, the drive for foster carer recruitment and retention by local authorities has resulted in competition within this niche of the market between authorities, most particularly between neighbouring boroughs. Sefton's neighbouring local authorities (e.g. such as Liverpool, Knowsley) are market competitors when it comes to recruiting potential foster carers.<sup>13</sup>

### **Threats to the Market**

#### Current threats

- The high numbers of emergency placements with family or friends under section 20 and regulation 38 arrangements (voluntary care and emergency foster carer status)
- The rising looked after population of older teenagers – this is in part due to a deficit in an alternative crisis support service and in part due to self referral of older teenagers through the Southwark judgement
- The numbers of looked after children who are siblings and the associated drift in permanence planning for sibling groups - some sibling groups have complex, re-constituted birth and extended families. Delays can be caused in planning for children due to the number of assessments that have to be undertaken or because the siblings have different social workers
- The incapacity to respond to emergency placements
- The incapacity to focus on mainstream foster recruitment because of the high numbers of kinship carers
- The regional and local encroachment and expansion of the Independent Fostering Agencies that are a financial and local resource threat<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Appendices 9 example fee paid schemes

<sup>14</sup> Not only are the IFA fees higher than local authority unit costs, they also have real potential to impact upon the retention of the local authority foster carers; they can appear to offer excellent remuneration and support services and can choose their 'customers' whereas local authorities cannot.



- The inability to re-align budgets into family support services because of pressures and commitments on the Placement Budget
- The lack of a 'modelled' residential resource that meets present needs - factors that hinder developing capacity in residential provision that are absent in the residential market for older people.<sup>15</sup>
- Insufficient and early access to specialist services (e.g. such as CAMHS, play therapists)
- Insufficient and early advice from specialist services for adopters and foster carers

#### Future threats

- The growing numbers of disabled children or children with special needs for example, children diagnosed on the higher end of the autistic spectrum whose behaviours become very challenging when they enter adolescence and the increased life chances of premature babies due to medical advances.
- The likelihood of increased family pressures and stresses associated with present fiscal policies and austerity.

#### **SEFTON'S FOSTERING MARKET PLACE POSITION 01.10.2010**

Sefton has a higher usage of independent fostering agency sector than any other local authority within the North West regions

Sefton has lower numbers of local authority foster carers than any other local authority within the North West regions

Sefton has a higher than average number of kinship carers than other local authorities

Sefton has lost a number of foster carers (and potential placements) through their right to make SGO or adoption applications

Sefton does not have a comprehensive financial or incentive recruitment package for foster carers

Sefton pays similar fostering allowances to other regional local authorities (our competitors) but is the only authority without a skill based payment scheme

Payments to foster carers can be problematic (unreliable and inaccurate) causing distress to carers and increased workload to fostering social workers

Enhanced payments to foster carers are neither equitable nor transparent

There is no transport scheme for foster carers (e.g. 7 seated lease cars)

---

<sup>15</sup> The residential market for vulnerable adults is far greater than for children; even where audits and analyses of needs have taken place it is difficult to have a clear picture of demand or duration for children's residential provision

## **Managing the Threats**

### Placement Stability

Improving placement stability is a key outcome of the Placement Strategy but children with complex needs or challenging behaviours and who have high levels of need are unlikely to have their needs met by newly recruited foster carers unless the new recruits are people with professional experience of working with troubled children.<sup>16</sup>

It is more likely that an existing foster family could be identified and then given specific training and support to enable them to care for the young person. This would mean that young people with lower levels of need could be placed with newly recruited families.

The length of time children are looked after has significantly increased over the last two years, with there being a threefold increase for children being in care for between 6 months and a year (2008/09 n= 10: 2009/10 n=31) and a twenty five percent increase in children remaining in care between 1 and 2 years (2008/09 n= 25: 2009/10 n=33). Some children will have long term plans with current foster carers who are externally commissioned; thus, disabling plans for Placement Budget reductions.<sup>17</sup> The ratio of males to females becoming looked after has significantly changed over the two-year period; in 2008/09 there were 35 males and 51 females compared to 51 males and 56 females at 31.03.10. Further investigation into the reason and ages groups of higher male entrants is warranted.

The New Life Work Model will be introduced in 2011 and the primary aim of the model is to prepare children for 'moving children on'. A child may move back to their family or have plans for permanence either way the model will assist children to understand their genetic identity and their circumstances; thus improving their outcomes

### Areas of Development

Even though threats are present there are a number of routes that the Department has developed to ensure that children with priority needs are provided for. Services developed in 2010 include:

- Permanence Planning Meetings (PPM's launched 01.04.10) at the child's 4 month review – earlier contingency planning
- The PPM's to address potential drift in care planning. Reducing drift will also increase resource capacity.
- The revised role and functions of the Fostering Panel and Adoption and Permanence Panel, alongside the department's amended procedures, will

---

<sup>16</sup> One of the Waterhouse recommendations, partially included with the Regulations and national Minimum Standards is for local authorities to exercise extreme caution when assessing and approving a professional worker previously known to a young person who applies specifically to foster that young person

<sup>17</sup> Jim Conalty (Appendices 11)

ensure that there is rigour in matching children who have plans for long term foster care to a suitable carer, rather than external placements being a result of drift and the courts decisions.

- Revised contract with After Adoption to assist birth parents who are unwilling to co-operate with the child's social worker for permanence planning
- Multi-Agency Planning Meetings to access and monitor resources
- Revised procedures for looked after children (all placements to be short-term in the first instance, be they internal or external placements)
- Weekly, agency expenditure & agency budget commitment monitoring meetings
- Nine of the eleven fostering strategy objectives achieved <sup>18</sup>
- A number of the Marketing Plan objectives achieved <sup>19</sup>
- Panel business meetings developed for improved performance
- Fostering Network Form F Assessments being trialled <sup>20</sup>
- Development of self completed Movement Forms for foster carers
- Foster carer service development group established

### **THE FOSTERING STRATEGY – PLACEMENT DEVELOPMENTS**

The second year of the strategy will commence in April 2011. During 2010 attention has been focused on the Marketing Plan for the recruitment and retention of foster carers and capturing those children without permanence plans where special guardianship or adoption is appropriate.<sup>21</sup>

There is no generally recognised formula to calculate the ideal number of foster families to allow placement choice without incurring unnecessary costs through having an excess of foster families. Formulae that could be used include:

- 10% placement vacancies on any given night
- 110% of the number of looked after children
- Placement vacancies in each secondary school catchments area

Instead, most local authorities and independent fostering providers use pragmatic targets such as 10% increase in foster families year-on-year, or a target number of new families for the coming year.

---

<sup>18</sup> Outstanding objectives include Tier paid competency scheme

<sup>19</sup> Insert here

<sup>20</sup> New framework with competency based and quicker assessments

<sup>21</sup> Appendices 3

Sefton needs to recruit both foster carers who match the profile of existing foster carers and people who have a significantly different profile. These require overlapping but separate approaches.

Previous recruitment campaigns have resulted in a loss of potential carers because assessments could not be allocated – in 2010 a ‘trickle’ approach to recruitment has been more successful and resulted in all mainstream applicants being allocated to a social worker. There has been a focus on hard to reach communities such as, single carers, same sex couples, male carers, carers from different religious beliefs and cultures, different race and ethnicity and carers from the eastern European community.

The recent North West region foster carer recruitment initiative resulted in Sefton at one period generating as many contacts from interested people as Liverpool City. However, the take up for further information for Sefton was very much lower than Liverpool. One major factor for this was Sefton’s ‘terms and conditions’ compared to Liverpool i.e. no fee paid scheme.

Target efficiencies for recruitment of foster carers by the Fostering Team are:

100% initial enquiries answered and information pack sent on the same day or next working day

100% of first home visits will take place within two weeks of receiving the initial enquiry form

100% of applicants will be allocated a supervising social worker within two weeks of the first home visit

100% of assessments will be completed within six months (unless the delay is at the request of the applicant or due to inability to complete background checks)

The PPM process now means that the fostering and adoption services have been able to start profiling children who are waiting against applicants within the preparation groups.

BAFF Licence and Form F’s are to be replaced by April 2011 with Fostering Network Licence and Form F’s – this move will ensure that all fostering applicants have been assessed against core competencies and will help to ensure that the quality of care is improved; the assessments will also be swifter by several weeks resulting in earlier approval status.

Other developments in year two will be a move towards a Competency Based Foster Carer Payment Scheme. Such schemes operate in numerous local authorities, including our closest market competitors and is a more transparent and equitable process.

Sefton must move towards such a scheme if it is to stave off present and future competition within the foster carer recruitment market place. The timing for the launch of a fee paid scheme is now at a critical point:

- We compete against our neighbouring authorities in the recruitment of foster carers
- We compete against the terms and conditions offered by external private fostering agencies that are encroaching and saturating our region
- We are over reliant on external providers including the increasing use of expensive residential placements

### **Projected Costs**

Based on the current 59 mainstream foster carer numbers (i.e. exclusive of kinship carers who do not provide a generic placement resource) and inclusive of statutory training at £8k annually the costs for launching such a scheme would be:

**Year 1 £188,180    Year 2 £361,296    Year 3 £534,916**

These costs cover annual training and training materials but do not cover any growth in staffing that will have to be factored in with foster carer growth.<sup>22</sup> The costs will rise as we attract further carers.

### Added Value

A fee paid scheme brings other added value to a local authority; for example, the quality of care will be driven up because foster carers cannot progress through the payment tiers unless they have completed compulsory and then specialist training; also, the foster carers that reach the upper end of the scheme will be able to offer placements for children and young people who are currently in specialist providers; for example

- Remanded young people
- Truculent teenagers
- Sexually abused or sexually vulnerable children and young people
- Children with attachment issues
- Mother and baby assessment placements
- Emergency and assessment placements
- 3-4 disabled children have been identified who may have benefit from short break foster care, especially overnight respite care.

### New Market Opportunities

Lost jobs and redundancies caused through the current economic climate and public sector cuts offers an opportunity to look at a new market place for potential foster carers. This market will have people seeking paid employment and a fee paid scheme could bring new applicants with a wealth of knowledge and skills into the fostering service.

---

<sup>22</sup> See staffing ratio growth and costs form NW Placements Report 2010

## Lease Car Scheme

Currently there are ad hoc arrangements in place for supporting foster carers with transport arrangements where there are more than five family members and a larger vehicle would be required (e.g. two parents, three of their own children). Sefton needs placements for babies and sibling groups and also needs to expand the foster stock in order to reduce the agency expenditure. The following proposal has been thoroughly explored with other local authorities, (in terms of costs, the pitfalls and positive outcomes), discussions with the foster carer steering group and looking against current expenditure.

It is proposed to move to a lease car scheme that will be cost effective and will also deliver an equitable service to foster carers; this in then will support Sefton's position within the recruitment and retention market for foster carers.

### Current Costs – No Growth Capacity

Number of cars	Annual current costs	Total costs
4 hire cars on ad hoc arrangements	£45, 731.52	£45, 731.52
Enhanced payments @ £50.00 week	7 families @ £2600 per annum	£18.200.00
<b>Total costs</b>		<b>£ 63,931.52</b>

### Proposed Costs

By transferring over to lease agreement we would immediately reduce costs (See table below)

Annual Current Hire Car Costs (4 cars)	Lease no. of car seats and cars	Lease annual costs over 3 years	Lease annual costs over 5 years	Combined annual savings on a 3 years lease	Combined annual savings on a 5 years lease
£45, 731.52	7 x 2 9 x 2	15,681.12 17,057.04	10,903.20 11,737.44	12,993.36	23,090.88
<b>Annual Costs £</b>		<b>32,738.16</b>	<b>£22,640.64</b>		

Currently enhanced payments to foster carers are neither transparent nor equitable. Some foster carers receive a payment of £50.00 per week because they have taken out loans to buy larger cars; other carers have bought larger cars and receive no financial support from the Council.

It is proposed that where foster carers buy their own cars to carry out the fostering task within their approval status (when the family falls within the 5 seats criteria) that the council service gives them an annual enhancement equivalent to their road tax and car insurance. This would be paid for from the savings made from a lease car scheme. It is proposed to review outstanding loans of foster carers and bring the current arrangements to an eventual end.

#### **Future Needs of Service**

We have to build in capacity for the car lease scheme to grow to meet present and future demands. In the first stage, it would be cost effective to lease 2 pool vehicles, which would prevent one-off high cost payments for hire cars in times of crises (e.g. emergency sibling placements) or for planned arrangements (e.g. fostering household holidays/contact etc). Moreover, as new foster carers become approved for sibling groups one the pool cars would be re-designated

<b>Annual Current Care hire costs</b>	<b>Number of car seats and cars</b>	<b>Annual costs over 3 years</b>	<b>Annual costs over 5 years</b>	<b>Combined Savings 3 years</b>	<b>Combined Savings 5 years</b>
4 cars 45,731.52	7 x 2 9 x 2	15,681.12 17,057.04	10,903.20 11,737.44	12,993.3 6	23,090.8 8

#### **Insurance**

This is not included with any of the above proposals and would be the responsibility of the foster carer.

It is proposed that if a foster carer do not have a child in placement for three months then their lease car would be returned.

#### **Mileage for Foster Carers**

Currently mileage is paid on submission of mileage undertaken and is paid at the council flat rate. It is proposed that we move to a 'petrol and fee paid scheme'. This will reduce costs and encourage foster carers to transport children.

The proposal is to agree the mileage at the time of placement or at review this will be in-line with the cost table identified below. This will be paid in the form of a weekly amount, which will reduce the admin and social work time and costs.

Daily mileage	0-20	20-40	40-60	60-80	80-100
Payment amount	8.00	16.00	24.00	32.00	40.00

We currently pay Independent providers £12.50 – £ 8.50 hour to carry out this task. Proposal hourly rate be paid to the foster carer for travelling time of £6.50 hour.

#### **ADOPTION SERVICE – PERMANENCE FOR CHILDREN**

The implementation of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 sees a new vision raising the status of adoption as an option for permanence for looked after children. It requires the exploration of a number of options including: returning to the child to the parents (with support where necessary); long-term placement with the child's wider

family; long-term placement with foster carers; residential placements until independence; and placement for adoption.

The adoption service was inspected in June 2010 and it improved upon its previous Ofsted rating from satisfactory to good. Internal changes to the team at nil extra costs have resulted in an identified adoption social worker for family finding for children.

A revised Statement of Purpose was produced in 2010 with the first Adoption Service Marketing Plan. Care Matters grant funding was secured for service improvements and this included the establishment of a dedicated Adoption Panel Administrator and an Adoption Support Service social worker. The latter post will further drive up the standards of care for looked after children who have a plan for adoption and to adopters; this will be achieved through a centralised support service as defined in the Adoption and Children Act.

The PPM process is having a positive impact for younger children in the care planning process through earlier contingency planning that includes: starting the medical processes at 4 months, identifying life work to be undertaken by the foster carer and in setting up profiles of the children. Adoption staff and Adoption Panel Members have had training on Equality and Diversity and the New Life Work Model; materials have been purchased for the Model's launch in 2011. Internal training was delivered to children's social workers on the writing of Child Permanence Reports in 2010 as this was an area identified by Ofsted for improvement.

The Adoption Panel was reviewed in 2009 and the review recommendations implemented in April 2010. The panel was reconstituted to an Adoption and Permanence Panel so that it could deal with applications for Special Guardianship Orders for children under the age of 11 years. Sefton has made a commitment that looked after children placed with mainstream foster carers who are to be subject of SGO's will have the same rigour applied as in the adoption process; for example, full medicals, matching and support plans.

The Panel business was reviewed in June 2010 and a Panel Business Plan is being developed with the Adoption and Fostering independent Panel Chairs.

As part of the improvement in placement planning for looked after children the Adoption Panel will now receive 6 monthly updates on children who should be placed for adoption (SHOBPA) but who have not be linked or matched to a family from the Family Finder social worker; furthermore, annual up dates will be presented to Panel on approved adopters who have not had a child linked, matched or placed within 12 months of their approval. Each of these processes will keep Panel informed of the Adoption Service's efforts towards children and adopters.

The recruitment of adopters is constant. Sefton is a geographically long and narrow borough and Sefton children are more likely than not to be placed with Sefton adopters. Most children with a plan for adoption (but not exclusively) come from the south of the borough and most are placed with adopters in the north. This means



that Sefton does not have to purchase adopters from other authorities or adoption agencies as frequently as councils<sup>23</sup>.

### Areas for Development

There is a critical gap in specialist services for foster carers and adopters (and children placed with them) in terms of services (e.g. play therapy) and advice via consultation.

Foster carers have told us that delays in getting advice and support has resulted in some of the children they have looked after having to move placement (multiple placements on occasion) because they could not longer manage the child's behaviours. Foster carers have also told us that accessing support or services is not equitable but depends upon where the foster carer lives.<sup>24</sup>

The child's placing authority is responsible for providing adopter's assessments and services for a period of three years from the date of the making of the Adoption Order.<sup>25</sup> However, there are times when adoption teams are unable to provide the specialist type of advice or service that adopters need and they go into crisis. The family experiences a range of behaviours (some times extreme) that they cannot cope with. Some types of crises and circumstances around them are:

### Adolescence

Some adoption breakdowns are more likely when the adopted child reaches adolescence. Adolescence is a significant child development stage, physically, emotionally and psychologically and is, experienced by all young people. However, some adopted children have to deal with thoughts and feelings about their genetic identity<sup>26</sup> and feelings of self worth, even perhaps, guilt.

An urgent and informed response is needed to adoptive parents in order to help them understand their child's behaviours and to manage those behaviours appropriately. The consequence of delays can be a rapid and often permanent family breakdown. (In November 2010, three young people were accommodated by the local authority who were adopted; all three children were boys of a similar age)

### Placement of Sibling Groups

Immediate specialist advice and services are needed when a sibling group is placed with adopters. Some of the siblings may not have been placed together child will have competing needs. This short-term work has proved to be effective in terms of giving the children a good foundation for their permanence with their new family.

### Second Child Placements with Adoptive Family

Although adopter's birth child/ren are fully involved and prepared by their parents and the adoption social worker for the placement of another child into the family

---

<sup>23</sup> Families approved in 2009 = n13, 2010 to date = n 7: children placed within time 67% and 72%

<sup>24</sup> Foster Carers Support Group November 2010 and Foster Carers Service Development g Group

<sup>25</sup> Financial arrangements and contact arrangements remain the placing authorities responsibility until the child's 18th birthday

<sup>26</sup> Research undertaken by Professor David Howe talks more fully about adopted children and genetic identity and kinship identity – See East Anglia University Research

there are risks that the placement disrupts<sup>27</sup> breakdowns quite early in the placement because of the birth child's competing feelings of loss and jealousy. This situation is also applicable where the adopters have already adopted a child and a second child enters the adoptive family. *Specialist support* may be needed for the birth child, the first child placed and or the parents of the children so that a solid relationship can be formed between the different members of the family.

The proposal is for a professional Play Therapist, with filial qualifications<sup>28</sup> to be located within the Provision Service for Looked after Children. This accessible and specialist service has been a successful project with one of our market competitors. The option has been tentatively explored with the Assistant Director of Integrated Services with a Play Therapist from a neighbouring authority who has been running this kind of project for two years.

The Play therapist offers rapid response initial phone consultations to foster carers and adopters at times of high need, undertakes direct work with children (including older children in residential care) as well as putting on training programmes for foster carers, adopters and school teachers. Other work offered by the therapist includes the use of developmental charts for helping children and families where children have become 'stuck' in their development because of previous abuse or neglect. This category of need figures highly in the numbers of looked after children in Sefton

### **Costs of Play Therapist for Looked After Children and Adoptive Families**

**Salary £40,000 (plus on costs)**

**Clinical Supervision has to be commissioned for the therapist**

### **RESIDENTIAL SECTOR**

Residential placements (i.e. children's homes) are the most expensive placement resource for looked after children. Residential care affords some children the right placement type for their particular needs and/or their behaviours. Wherever it is appropriate, Sefton continues to emphasise foster placements over residential children's homes options. The priority however is to identify and address the individual needs of the child. In some cases residential care or care commissioned from the independent residential sector may be appropriate.

As at October (2010), Sefton has five children's homes.<sup>29</sup> One home provides respite care for children with learning disabilities, and one home provides residential care on a longer term for a younger age group at the time of their placement. The three other children's homes have similar Statement of Purposes and each holds an emergency bed provision.<sup>30</sup>

A decision has been taken to close one children's home by April 2011. The closure was the result of earlier recommendations that the building (not the service) was unfit for purpose.

---

<sup>27</sup> Adoption disruption is different to an adoption breakdown and as such a Disruption Meeting has to take place and be Independently Chaired

<sup>28</sup> The filial therapy approach is advantageous as it also offers a long arm model of support

<sup>29</sup> Melrose House, Kirwin House, Knowsley Road, Cherry Road, Springbrook

<sup>30</sup> Statement of Purposes can be requested from the relevant children's home as they are public documents

The remaining residential provision needs to have a fundamental re-modelling exercise in 2011 to develop Statement of Purposes and Registration status that reflects the current and projected demands for residential services.

Sefton has a high use of external residential provision and predominantly this is for older children (i.e. teenagers 15, 16 &17). Research shows that the lack of local authority fostering placements and saturation within the private sector fostering agencies has resulted in an increase in residential care<sup>31</sup>. However, local data shows that a large percentage of current residential placements are for young people who had been moved from our own children's homes.

Further investigation needs to take place on this observation. It may be that there are common factors that can be addressed, or further developed, to prevent future external placements being made.

Sefton has a highly trained and comparatively well-paid children's homes staff group. So terms and conditions of employment and lack of training would not appear to be a factor in children being moved out of the home.

Examination of Ofsted statistical neighbour's reports shows that those children's homes with outstanding ratings are generally small homes, taking one or two children.

An option for Sefton would be to rent social housing of three bedrooms, which could take the placement of two young people. Smaller homes offer a wider choice of placement for children and they offer the opportunity to specialise; for example, matching children to staff expertise and to other children placed.

This is not the current situation within Sefton. Rather, as quickly as beds are emptied they are filled and often on an emergency basis. This results in a 'storming stage' of group behaviour and often results in escalating behaviours of children placed and inevitably the change of placement for some children.

## AREAS OF FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

### Placement Planning for Children in Residential Care

There are regulatory requirements for placement planning of looked after children and for children placed in residential care.<sup>32</sup> Observations show that emergency admissions are made to Sefton's children's homes without proper and timely placement planning arrangements being undertaken. This causes drift for some young people and difficulties in managing their unknown behaviours and needs; these factors are significant where the young person has no written and agreed placement plan, behaviour management plan and or risk assessment. Firstly, their presenting behaviours and unmet needs affects the smooth running of the home and the safety and security of other children and staff alike and the young person is likely to be moved<sup>33</sup> and secondly the young person is less likely to be returned home if their case goes into drift.

---

<sup>31</sup> NW Placements June 2010

<sup>32</sup> Children Act 1989 and Volume 4 Children Act Guidance, Care Standards Act 2000 and Children's Homes National Minimum Standards 2002

<sup>33</sup> Data form TTT December 2010

It could be that the present staffing structures are not fit for purpose (4 team leaders in each home) and the structure leads to a lack of clear communication about how staff shifts are to deal with behaviours and respond to placement plans. A review of the structure has been undertaken in 2010 and there was a consensus from the home's managers that the deletion of team leader posts and the creation of an assistant manager post would enhance communication and consistency of care.

It could be that there has been a culture within the children's homes that moving children out was a way of managing the home generally. *This is not a fact but a factor to be investigated.* The children's homes managers are Registered Managers with Ofsted and as such are competent personnel. They are also part of the 'provision arm' of the department. It is recommended that they become more visible within Children's Services through attendance at general and service area management meetings. Such a move would bring a more inclusive approach to achieving the Placement Strategy objectives.<sup>34</sup>

It is proposed that Children's Homes Managers present emergency placements to MAPP to avoid drift and home disruption.

## **CARE LEAVERS**

Sefton has a dedicated Care Leavers team and they are currently providing services to 150 young people.

### Pathway and Placement Planning

All of Sefton's young people who are looked after and/or who qualify as a previously looked after child under the Care Leavers Act have a Pathway Plan. The Plan will have started and been reviewed whilst the young person was still accommodated and receiving placement care (i.e. fostering or residential provision). Observation of financial data and other management information shows that a significant proportion of young people need specialist leaving care placement services because of either their lack of maturity, social skills and independent living skills or because of their presenting anti-social behaviours.

Further, observation shows that this group of young people in external or specialist care leaving services have not come directly from fostering placements but from the residential sector.

### Areas of further development

A review of pre-independence outcomes needs to be undertaken within the current cohort of young people in residential care to establish if there are shortfalls in preparation planning.

**Young people from the Make a Difference group (MAD) have told us that they value the services offered by Connexions they have also told us they would like an accommodation scheme.**<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> The establishment of the Resource Manager post is the opportunity to have Resource Management Meetings

A semi-independent facility (no more than 2 young people) should be considered through using rented social housing with 'hostel' or 'group dwelling' status with floating care, (rather than an older children's residential home status.) This option could be provided by the employed workforce, by partnership arrangements or by a commissioned or voluntary sector service. This link of placement choice development would offer an alternative to requests for external provision for care leavers on emergency basis

### **PREVENTATIVE & EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES**

The reality of family support at present involves some or all of the following:

- Services geared towards children at risk of abuse or neglect
- Emphasis on support to vulnerable families and communities
- Services provided by a number of different agencies with different agendas
- Services developed in an ad hoc way not necessarily reflecting the needs of the community
- Poor co-ordination between services
- Increasingly influenced by policy agendas

### CURRENT PREVENTION SERVICES

Entrants into the looked after system (exclusive of care order) using the category of need criteria shows that family dysfunction numbers has nearly doubled in two years (2008/9 and 2009/10). Data provided on the 10.10.10 shows that apart from babies the significant entrants into the looked after system is those children in the 10 -16 years age groups.<sup>36</sup>

The impetus is to prevent this group of children becoming looked after and to strengthen families. It is intended that future reductions in expenditure for out of area placements could be invested in years two and three to expand support services, to more families, children and young people in crises.

This CRYSYS team will become operational in 2011 with the closure of Kirwin House and the subsequent re-deployment of the experienced residential staff group. There will be a new service created for families of older children who are at risk of coming into care and work with older looked after children with the aim of early reunification to their family.

This will be a 7-day service and will operate outside of core working hours. In the first phase of operation the CRYSYS Team will sit under the Provision sector. The service will be Borough wide but the largest groups of children becoming looked after are living in the Bootle area of Sefton.

The success of the service will be measured and evaluated against the reduction of numbers of older looked after children and the quicker reunification timescales

Sefton does not have an overarching prevention and early intervention strategy. At the time of writing this document it is evident that there is a wide range of

---

<sup>35</sup> MAD Corporate Parenting Board Meeting December 2010

<sup>36</sup> Jim Conalty Children, Schools and Families (Appendices ?attached as excel workbooks)

intervention providers within Sefton and that there are gaps in how these are located and commissioned. In terms of family support we need to identify what is the evidence for best practice nationally and how this can be promoted locally.

## **Area for development**

### Scoping of Services

A mapping exercise of all preventative and early intervention services agencies, schemes and pilot projects would need to be undertaken so there is a family support strategic framework from which a signposting service can be accessed for families and children in need and for looked after children. Such an exercise would assist with consensus building and a shared vision and agreed priorities with all stakeholders.

### Family Group Conferencing

It was previously mentioned that Sefton has the highest Kinship care ratio of foster carers compared to other authorities in the North West.

Kinship care is a vital resource for children who cannot live with their parents and is normally the first consideration when planning for permanence for children. However, the high numbers of kinship carers has significant impact upon social work resources, looked after budgets and the ability to recruit mainstream foster carers and thus reduce the Placement Budget.

Family Group Conferencing (FGC) has been used as a process for mediation between families and social workers by many authorities for some time. The lack of a FGC scheme in Sefton may account for the multiple viability assessments that are requested by families and courts; emergency placements with family and friends (reg.38 arrangements) it may also account for the use of court proceedings for some children when the No Order principle could be applied.<sup>37</sup> Children may have been able to be supported through Section 17 budgets under the Carers and Reviews new arrangements.

Various models of FGC's have been tried and tested over the years and with the introduction of other family support arrangements such as those provided by the Common Assessment Framework and dedicated Family Support Teams the need and importance of family group conferencing has been recognised.<sup>38</sup>

It is proposed that funding is made available and a FGC scheme is established to coincide with the launch of the CRYISIS service. It is further suggested that the scheme is run independently to deal with the levels of conflicts between family members and conflict resolution between families and children's social workers. Our membership to consortiums such as Adoption 22 and Fostering North West would allow a quick and easy review of other authority's arrangements and costs.

---

<sup>37</sup> The Children Act 1989 has the welfare of the child as the key principle and says that there should be no court order unless all other options for supporting the child have been explored

<sup>38</sup> A local authority with an outstanding judgment was used for references purposes

### Management Information Intervention based on the Hardiker Grid

More information is needed to enable to authority to shift its resources to family intervention and prevention, offering families and their children support where and when it is needed.

The conceptual framework that was devised by Pauline Hardiker 'pyramid of service provision' and re-worked for the Every Child Matters Green Paper has been used as a tool by other authorities.<sup>39</sup> This methodology would give us current and projected needs and identify referral management, decision-making and resource gate-keeping processes. Mapping children's ages and needs against numbers and methods of intervention would give us a clearer picture of where to re-direct our efforts and resources.

### **SUMMARY OF SHORTFALLS IN ALL KINDS OF PLACEMENT PROVISION**

A quick review of placement requests and use of commissioned external placements indicate that the most urgent requirement is for more placements for:

Young people with high levels of need/risk – (this includes those young people who self-harm, are at grave risk in the community or are in trouble with the police and known to the Youth Offending Service)

Truculent teenagers

Care leavers

Homeless teenagers (Southwark rule assessments of need)

Sibling groups

Children who need permanence through foster care arrangements

Emergencies

Short term or shared care arrangements for disabled children

### **COMMISSIONING & PARTNERSHIP BUILDING**

Sefton uses a number of internally and externally commissioned services; these range from specialist mental health services to private sector placements, from targeted leisure opportunities for looked after children to child minding arrangements, through Early Years provision.

#### Commissioning and Contracting

Work is in progress to develop the monitoring of outcomes and costs for externally commissioned placements<sup>40</sup>. Currently we have insufficient knowledge if the higher cost services are delivering the outcomes commensurate with the significant additional investment.

#### Child Minding and Contact Provision

Better commissioning arrangements need to be developed with the Early Years Service in relation to child minding provision for foster carers, including and most specifically, to Kinship Carers. Kinship carers may be in full time work and often need an intensive child minding and /or nursery support package to maintain the

---

<sup>39</sup> See for example, North Lincolnshire (2005)

<sup>40</sup> TtT Meetings

child/ren in placement. These arrangements can be withdrawn by a partner agency and as such the placement may breakdown.

Birth-family contact arrangements are often intensive and they are complex to arrange, monitor and manage; this is due to the numbers of familial siblings being looked after, the different placements at which they may be living and the characteristics of the birth family e.g. re-constituted family. Moreover, foster carers may have other children placed with them that have their own contact arrangements.

Arranging and sustaining contact is a resource intensive process for foster carers, children's social workers and for the fostering service staff, both qualified and unqualified. Moreover, frequent contact arrangements during the school holidays (when foster carers are likely to be holidaying with their birth children) place the fostering family under a lot of stress, thus affecting the retention of foster carers.

It is proposed that a scoping exercise is undertaken to map the viability of developing a centralised contact service for children and their families. It is envisaged that by pooling resources with partner agencies this would be a low cost service development.

## **FINANCING THE PLACEMENT STRATEGY**

Sefton's Children's Trust has identified key priorities that have been determined following consultation and engagement with:- children, young people and their families, findings from the analysis of trends and identified needs, key stakeholder events and on-going evaluation, inspection findings, meetings with the Department for Education and Skills, and new legislation.<sup>41</sup> The vision for the borough of Sefton is for all children and young people in to have access to quality services and facilities.<sup>42</sup>

The intent of the Placement Strategy is to support the priorities and principles of the Children's Trust and the Children and Young People Corporate Plan. It will do this through effective commissioning of services with partner agencies, improved access to support services for children and their families, developing intervention and prevention services, improving the timeliness, quality and quantity of multi-disciplinary assessment, planning and provision and by reducing the need to rely upon external placement providers.

Sefton has a lower than average unit cost for commissioned fostering and residential services.<sup>43</sup> This will not offset the higher costs Sefton faces from the rapid growth in the use of IFA placements and the higher than average use of external residential provision, both internally and externally. A reduction in the placement budget could finance more family support to vulnerable families and allow us to develop capacity within our own fostering provision through a fee paid scheme.

As at 03/08/10

Total External residential costs/commitments were:

---

<sup>41</sup> Appendices 10 & 11

<sup>42</sup> Children and Young People Corporate Plan

<sup>43</sup> North West Regional Placements Report June 2010



£3,522,376 (34 beds) average £1992.29  
Total Internal residential costs/commitments were:  
£2,839,922 (27 beds) average £2022.73 (this does not take into account staff overtime and associated staff training costs)

Total IFA costs/commitments were:  
£4,620,848.00 average costs £797.01  
Total internal fostering costs/commitments were:  
£1,457,377.00 average costs £226.94

Special Guardianship costs are only just being collated and stand at £56,250 and this is likely to rise and be a commitment for many years (until children reach the age of 18 years) as foster carers take this option for children they have had placed with them for over 12 months. SGO status offers the child better life chances as they will not suffer the stigma of being 'in care' and hidden costs are reduced for example, social work time, health and educational assessments.

Residence Order costs currently stand at £385,200

Children with disability costs are £1,315,102 made up of  
Independent fostering agency 102,619 average cost £ 927.87  
External Residential Provision £1,212,483 average cost £2883.64

The work undertaken by Placements North West revealed that Sefton would need an additional 76 placements and when using the placement mix at the time they did their research this would mean:-

- 48 fostering placements
- 12 residential placements
- 9 placements with parents

The estimated costs of these placements would be £2.6 million annually

An additional 70 Independent fostering agency placements would cost Sefton £2.85 million annually. To recruit 35 fostering households (offering 2 placements) would cost Sefton:

Foster Carers Form F's £3750.00 x 35	£131,250.00
Cost of 70 placements at £165.00 a week x 52	600,600.00
2 Additional social worker posts	72,000.00 (circa)
Training for foster cares	7,500.00
<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>	<b>£811,550.00</b>

From the £2.85 million a savings of £2,038,450 could be made. A further £23K could be saved through a lease car scheme for foster carers. These savings could be used to fund the following:

- Scoping for remodelling to community- based, low occupancy children homes
- Scoping for centralised and rationalised Contact/ Child Minding Service
- Semi-independent living accommodation
- Family Group Conferencing

LAC Play therapist	<b>41K + on costs</b>
Phase 1 Fee Paid Fostering Scheme	<b>£188,180</b>
Phase 2 Fee Paid Fostering Scheme	<b>£361,296</b>
Phase 3 Fee Paid Fostering Scheme	<b>£534,916</b>
Independent Fostering Reviewing Officer	<b>45K</b> inclusive of on costs
Increase in fostering social workers	<b>72 K + on costs</b>

## **CONCLUSION**

This document is intended to provide a three-year framework for the development of placement choice for children in need. It also offers proposals for reducing the placement budget and re-investing into more family support service to vulnerable families. The summary list below identifies the outcomes that could be achieved through the various Placement Strategy proposals and all of the current service developments that are in place.

### Summary - Outcomes of Placement Strategy

- Children and young people who need to be looked after by Sefton Council are in appropriate placements for the right length of time
- More effective use of Council's resources
- Improved recruitment position in fostering market place
- Improved retention in fostering market place
- Improved standards of care in fostering placement market place
- Improved capacity of local authority fostering services to meet the needs of children and achieve good outcomes for them
- Improved residential choice, placement stability and better outcomes for children and young people
- Cost effective semi-independence accommodation and choice for care leavers
- Potential for joint working for increased efficiency and sustainability through innovative solutions for family mediation (family group conferencing), contact and child minding arrangements
- Placement stability through access to specialist services to carers, children, and adopters
- Meet the sufficiency requirement for provision for looked after children
- Potential for preferred providers to meet Sefton's needs

## APPENDIX 1

### Year 1 - Fostering Marketing Plan & Fostering Strategy

The Fostering Marketing Plan has been implemented with the following being achieved:

- Dedicated free phone line
- Loyalty Scheme for Kinship and Mainstream foster carers
- Introductions Scheme
- Targeted recruitment on hard to reach communities
- Part of the NW Recruitment Initiative
- Recruitment materials reviewed and amended – (improved information)
- Initial Visits reviewed and practice changed – (earlier and better screening)
- Foster Carer Applicant Preparation Groups extended (to capture mandatory training)
- Bootle Town Hall chosen as venue, rather than tired Ellesmere House, for all future preparation groups and information events (thus, raising the profile of Sefton)
- Fostering Panel Procedures reviewed and amended – (to capture older children with a plan for permanence and to drive up quality assurance)
- Fostering Panel Chair contract reviewed and renewed – (driving up standards)
- Fostering Panel Administrator appointed – (drive up performance and now able to capture management information)
- Foster Panel Members financially recognised for service to Panel
- Fostering Manager and Team Manager permanently appointed
- Kinship Care Pilot reviewed and two permanent posts established
- Staff, Panel and foster care training being rolled out on the New Life Work Model
- New Life Work Model materials purchased ready for full launch 2011
- Permanence Planning Meetings launched and reviewed to capture all looked after children under the age of 14 years within 4 month review period so plans for permanence are drawn up – thus, early profiling of children against new foster carers started
- Foster Carer Steering Group established (participation and consultation to deliver strategy)
- Partnership (library, education and social care services) Right To Read Project being developed (Every Child Matters outcomes)
- Two dedicated posts created: one to bring independence and scrutiny to the fostering service the other to assist all foster carers (i.e. kinship and mainstream) achieve their CWDC accreditation, NVQ and foster carer portfolio)
- Itemised payroll for foster carers in New Year
- Development of foster carer self-completion of Movement Forms to ensure timely payments

## APPENDIX 2

The Fostering Strategy has been implemented with the following strategic objectives for 2010 achieved:

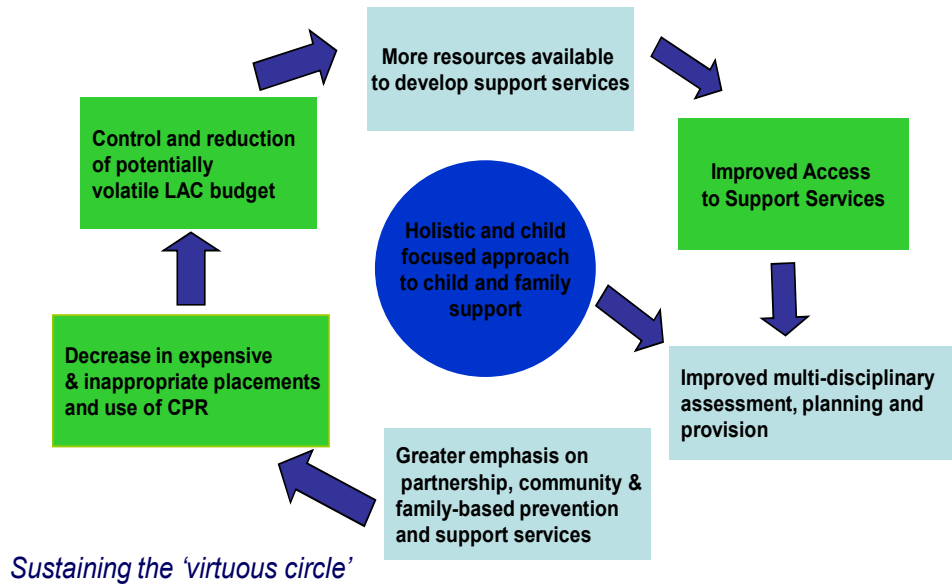
- 1 A Marketing Plan will be developed in 2010 to take forward these aims.
- 2 The Fostering Service Statement of Purpose will be reviewed
- 3 Comprehensive electronic policies and procedures
- 4 The Panel Review recommendations implemented
- 5 Permanence Planning Meetings launched
6. Foster Carer financial review undertaken 2011 target implementation
- 7 Fee Paid Foster Care scheme: potential target for implementation 2011
8. Position statement on Special Guardianship Orders in relation to foster carer's status as permanent carers and their ongoing financial support.<sup>44</sup>
- 9 Branding exercise to raise the profile of the service. This will include consideration to changing the service name from Family Placement Team to Fostering Team;

---

<sup>44</sup> See Adoption 22 Position Statement on Special Guardianship Orders 2009

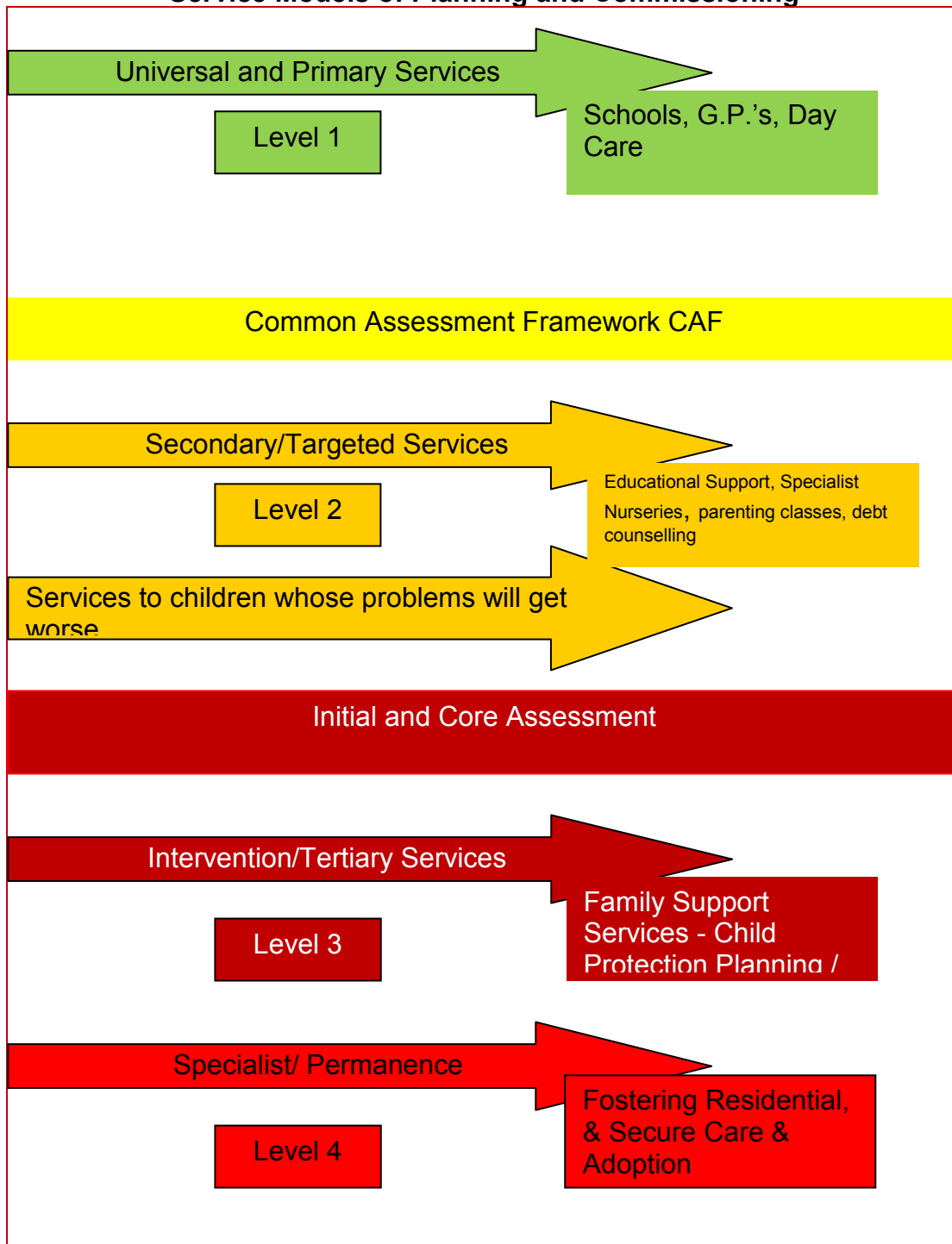
## APPENDIX 3

### *Sustaining the 'Virtuous Circle'*



## APPENDIX 4

### Service Models of Planning and Commissioning



## APPENDIX 5

### CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE TEAMS

#### Contact and Referral

The threshold criteria for the Assessment Service are based on 'Child in Need'. Children are assessed as being 'in need' via the 'Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families' guidance. Services are provided, following an assessment, which identifies a child as being 'in need', via Family Support Agreements, Child Protection Plans and Looked After Children Procedures. Support Services are provided in conjunction with Universal, Targeted and Specialist Services.

There are two Social Work Teams based in the South of the Borough and one Team in the North. New contacts are processed via the Social Care Access Team. There is a qualified social worker/decision maker based with the SCAT to ensure timely and appropriate responses. There is also a qualified Social worker/decision maker based with the FCIU who processes contacts received by the police in relation to domestic violence. This is currently a pilot scheme.

The Social Work Teams are based in two sites, Bootle and Southport and cover the whole of the borough, with defined geographical boundaries.

The Service includes a borough wide Out of Hours Social Work Service, whose responsibilities include an emergency response to children and their families in crisis. This service is provided 365 days per year and includes all out of hours periods and Bank Holidays.

#### Family Support

The Family Support Service operates across the borough. There are three field social work teams. One team is based in Southport in the North of the Borough and two teams are based at the Litherland office in the South of the borough. The work of the service is supported by the Family Support Teams based at four Family Centres across the borough. The aim of the service is the safeguarding of children in the community.

The threshold criteria for the Family Support Service is defined within the Children Act 1989, updated by the Children Act 2004 and is based on 'Children in Need'. Children are assessed as being 'in need' via the 'Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families' guidance. Services are provided via Child in need plans, Child Protection Plans and Looked After Children Procedures.

**Support Services are provided in conjunction with Universal, Targeted and Specialist Services on a multi-agency basis.**

## **APPENDIX 5 (ctd)**

Child in need plans are provided to children and families, where the child is assessed as 'in need' and ensure that services are provided to support and assist families in relation to the difficulties they are facing. Children are also supported via Child Protection Procedures, where the child has been deemed 'at risk of significant harm'.

### **Family Centres**

There are 4 Family Centres in the Sefton Borough, 3 in the South and 1 in the North.

The Family Centres offer valued support to area social work teams in all of the statutory work involving children subject to Child in Need Plans, Child Protection Plans and Care Plans for Looked After Children. This work includes group work, parenting programmes, assessment, supervised and assessed contact, life story work, direct work with children and young people, practical support for families in their home, if appropriate staying overnight in family homes to ensure families can remain together, advice and support. The services provided by the centres are commissioned, and the services being commissioned are identified in the individual child's plan. The commissioned services will be reviewed regularly at the child's review in order to ensure the child receives appropriate services to meet need.

The Family Centres also play a crucial role in supporting Social Workers to identify an appropriate exit strategy for families when they no longer meet the criteria for social care involvement.

### **Children With Disability Team**

Briefly, this team provides support to children with significant disabilities and their families through outreach, social clubs and overnight short breaks. The aim is to promote social inclusion for the children, which also acknowledges parents needs for support due to the additional demands that are often associated with caring for disabled children. The team is also responsible for safeguarding issues or if children need to become looked after children.

Overnight short breaks are commissioned through internal and external providers and these include Springbrook, Nazareth House and the Direct Payments Scheme is being used by parents too.

For some children overnight foster care would be more appropriate if they could not cope or would not benefit from a residential environment. This is generally for younger children aged 5/6 years whose health needs. Overnight fostering respite for children with complex health needs is definitely a short fall in terms of resources and this is linked to being able to recruit the right kind of foster carer and for the foster carer to be willing to have their home physically adapted to meet the needs of the child.



## **APPENDIX 5 (ctd)**

### **Looked After Children's Teams**

The Looked After Children Service will provide children and young people who cannot return to their birth families with a framework of emotional, educational, physical and developmental security within a legal context that gives every child a sense of continuity, commitment and identity.

The threshold criterion for the service is that a child or young person is accommodated by the local authority either by agreement with their parents (Children Act S.20) or via court order (Interim Care Order S.38 or Care Order S.31).

The Service operates across the borough. There are 3 social work teams working with Sefton looked after children and young people wherever they are placed. Approximately one third of children are placed outside of Sefton although the majority of these within a 20 mile radius.

Two of the teams work with children and young people up to the age of sixteen. The other team is the Leaving Care Team that works with looked after children when they reach 16 and continues to support them through the transition from care into independent adult life at 18.

The service works to rehabilitate children with their parents or other family members. Where this is not possible, or appropriate, an alternative plan for permanence is created involving foster care, adoption or residential care (depending on the age and circumstances of the child). Wherever possible the service seeks to maintain and promote contact between children and their birth families to promote a positive sense of identity and emotional security.

The service works closely with the provision arm of Social Care to provide appropriate adoptive, fostering and residential placements. It also employs the services of education and health workers, Connexions advisor and youth worker, and has access to support from Leisure Services and the CAMHS Service.

### **Fostering Team**

As a local authority, Sefton MBC holds statutory powers and responsibilities in relation to fostering services and looked after children. Acting on behalf of the local authority, the Fostering Team actively endeavours to ensure that equal opportunities are incorporated into all aspects of service delivery. All prospective foster carers are recruited and supported on the basis of their ability to undertake the fostering task, and the needs of the service regardless of their particular group or individual characteristics.

The Fostering Team is made up of qualified and unqualified staff. Qualified staff undertake foster carer recruitment, assessment, training, support, professional development and reviews.

## **APPENDIX 5(ctd)**

Qualified staff are also responsible for assessing and supporting family and friends as carers and for Special Guardianship assessments and reports on foster carers. Unqualified staff undertake a wide range of support activities for foster carers and children looked after.

### **Adoption Team**

As a local authority, Sefton MBC holds statutory powers and responsibilities in relation to adoption services and looked after children. The Adoption Team undertakes the following roles and tasks:-

Deciding whether a child with a permanence plan should be placed for adoption and where appropriate, match and place these children with prospective adopters

Providing a range of information, advice and support to each child and their birth family where there is a plan for adoption

Ascertaining the wishes and feelings of the child and their birth parents with regard to adoption and to any future contact arrangements

Providing or commissioning services to assist with the assessment and preparation of children subject to adoption plans, or as when needed post adoption

Providing a comprehensive family finding service for children with a plan for adoption including participation in local and regional consortia and the National Adoption Register

Providing access to the financial assessment scheme where there is special need or circumstances where financial pressure is an obstacle to their adoption

Providing an adoption Letter Box system to provide a confidential exchange of information between adopted children and their birth relatives

### **ADOPTION SERVICES FOR BIRTH PARENTS & OTHER BIRTH RELATIVES**

Counselling for birth parents relinquishing their child for adoption, including written information and translation services or advocacy services about the legal implications of giving consent to the placement and making of a Court Order

Social worker assessment, advice and support for birth families and children subject to proceedings and a proposed plan for adoption

Independent support services for birth relatives

Information, advice and support for birth relatives who were adopted

Ascertaining the wishes and feelings of birth parents with regard to adoption and potential contact arrangements

Appropriate intermediary services for adopted adults and their birth relatives

## **APPENDIX 5(ctd)**

### **SERVICES FOR ADOPTERS**

The recruitment, assessment, preparation, approval and support of prospective adopters

Comprehensive family finding services, including membership to Adoption22 (the North West Consortia and CHARMS data base), and the National Adoption Register

Appropriate financial assistance to adoptive families to assist with costs arising from matching, bridging, placement and adoption

Adoption support services for all new adoptive families through a dedicated social worker, provision of placement support workers, support groups, post-approval training, family-based activities, newsletters and access to services provided by After Adoption.

Providing specific training or support for adopters to prevent a placement disruption

### **SERVICES FOR ADOPTED ADULTS**

Counselling and support for adopted adults making application for original birth record information

Access to adoption records at a time and place appropriate for the enquirer's needs

### **GENERAL ACTIVITIES**

The Adoption Service can undertake general duties that include social worker assessment, advice and support to families in 'non-agency' adoption placements such as stepparent adoption. In conjunction with Adoption 22A a designated adoption social worker undertakes the monitoring and inputting of the CHARMS adoption website. This staff member is also the Family Finding social worker

### **Youth Offending Service**

YOS primary aim is to prevent offending and re-offending. Sefton YOS is composed of 3 teams; Business Support provide administrative support, oversee local and national youth justice performance returns, information management/data analysis and quality assurance oversight; Court Services provide the multi-agency case management of court orders and includes police officers who oversee pre-court disposals and victim contact/mediation, probation officers and social workers oversee court orders; Hornby Centre provide key worker programmes & interventions with young people, Education Training Employment Team including teachers, Connexions, and partnership links.

The service is based on 2 sites; Marsh Police Station-Court Services & Business Support, Hornby Centre Ford.

## APPENDIX 5(ctd)

In relation to the Placement Strategy, historical gaps have always been for remand beds or remand fostering. Given the low level of remands to custody a generic foster carer (teenage fostering placement) would link with our remand strategy and could provide a pragmatic and flexible resource for homeless teenagers allied to our Southwark obligations. A short-term resource, time limited would meet the need of social care as well as YOS. The government Green Paper on Justice outlines proposals for charging LA's for the full cost recovery on remands and potentially custodial sentences for young people in the future. Therefore, presenting a corporate challenge for LA's to do more across service areas to prevent custody

### **Education of Looked After Children**

There are good arrangements in place for looked after children through the role of the Virtual School Head Teacher and the Education Attendance and Welfare Service Every looked after child has a Personal Education Plan (PEP) and designated teachers have had awareness training on the New Life Work Model

Areas for development:

**Young people have told us that they do not like PEP's or the arrangements for them being undertaken<sup>45</sup>**

A working group will explore good and poor practice in relation to the PEP's process as a result of what young people told us.

### **Health of Looked After Children**

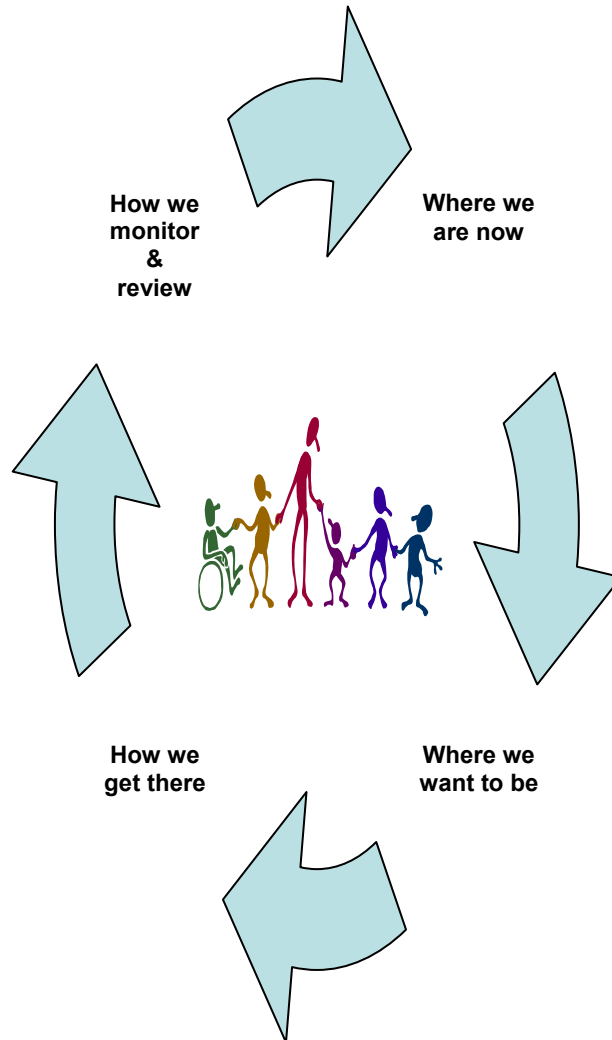
There are good arrangements in place for children looked after with a lead professional nurse – there is a Be Healthy Working Group that links onto the Corporate Parenting Board

---

<sup>45</sup> MAD Corporate Parenting Board December 2010

## APPENDIX 6

### Business Planning Model



## APPENDIX 7

### You Can Foster regional fostering campaign - statistics

Results until Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November

Total enquiries – 502

Call Centre - 84

Website – 422

#### Enquiries received - Breakdown by authority

Every Local Authority has received at least 6 enquiries. (Dumfries and Galloway are outside this campaign, but have received an enquiry as the ITV Borders advertising goes into their area).

The foster care recruitment process consists of two separate phases: the initial contact, enquiry, assessment, preparation and approval process and then the supervision, support, training and reviewing requirements. Assessing and training applicants is resource intensive. Increased numbers of applicants will result in significantly increased workloads within the Fostering Service. There is a risk that this will become a limiting factor. Thus the setting of targets has to be realistic and take into account that there has been no staff growth to deal with mainstream fostering recruitment and foster carer training since the Care Standards Act and subsequent NMS.

	Call centre	Website		Call centre	Website
Blackburn with Darwen		8	Oldham	1	14
Blackpool		11	Rochdale	2	13
Bolton		19	Salford	11	16
Bury	1	6	Sefton	5	26
Cheshire East	3	14	St Helens	6	15
Cheshire West	7	31	Stockport	3	10
Cumbria	2	26	Tameside	3	7
Dumfries and Galloway		1	Trafford		6
Halton	1	6	Warrington	1	8
Knowsley	2	6	Wigan	5	29
Lancashire	13	92	Wirral	4	5
Liverpool	6	27			
Manchester	8	26	<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>422</b>

**APPENDIX 8**  
**Social Care Placements - Finance Summary as at 26th November 2010**

	<u>Budget Allocation</u>	<u>Commitment</u>	<u>Variance to Budget</u>
<b>Independent Fostering Placements</b>	£4,352,900	£4,056,243	£296,657
<b>Residential Agency Placements</b>	£3,440,800	£3,686,434	-£245,634
<b>Leaving Care Placements</b>	£818,500	£903,569	-£85,069
<b>In House Residential</b>	£2,353,650	£2,332,348	£21,302
<b>In House Fostering</b>	£1,445,750	£1,521,038	-£75,288
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£12,411,600</b>	<b>£12,499,631</b>	<b>-£88,031</b>

**Social Care Placements - Finance Summary as at 15th December 2010**

	<u>Budget allocation</u>	<u>Commitment</u>	<u>Variance to Budget</u>
<b>Independent Fostering Placements</b>	£4,352,900	£4,044,658	£308,242
<b>Residential Agency Placements</b>	£3,440,800	£3,787,535	-£346,735
<b>Leaving Care Placements</b>	£818,500	£971,436	-£152,936
<b>In House Residential</b>	£2,353,650	£2,327,456	£26,194
<b>In House Fostering</b>	£1,445,750	£1,424,693	£21,057
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£12,411,600</b>	<b>£12,555,778</b>	<b>-£144,178</b>

## APPENDIX 9

### Competency Based Fee Paid Foster Care Scheme

Two local authorities have been used to prepare a model for Sefton, one is Knowsley a neighbouring authority who is in direct competition in terms of geographical recruitment of potential foster carers and the other is the East Riding of Yorkshire who has similar numbers of looked after children. Neither of these authorities relies upon independent fostering agencies to the same extent as Sefton.

A fee paid scheme would see the demise of the current 'Community Parent' Scheme that is outdated and inequitable. The scheme was set up many years ago and paid a higher boarding allowance for some children.

#### Fee Paid Scheme Costs

Knowsley		East Riding of Yorkshire	
Level 1 Newly approved		Level 1 Newly approved	
Level 2	67.48	Level 2	23.00
Level 3	202.30	Level 3	56.00
Level 4	393.33	Level 4	97.00

***The amount is for the first child in placement- each subsequent placement within the household is paid at 50% of the level fee.***

The proposed scheme for Sefton foster carers has been calculated on the mean between Knowsley and East Riding of Yorkshire figures as they represent a higher and lower scheme rate

#### Fee Paid Scheme Costs

KNOWSLEY		ERY		SEFTON	
Level 1 Newly approved		Level 1 Newly approved		Level 1 Newly approved	
Level 2	67.48	Level 2	23.00	Level 1	45.00
Level 3	202.30	Level 3	56.00	Level 2	129.00
Level 4	393.33	Level 4	97.00	Level 3	245.00



### APPENDIX 9 (ctd)

AGE	Knowsley WEEKLY RATE		Sefton WEEKLY RATE	VARIANCE	Knowsley RELIGIOUS FESTIVAL	Sefton RELIGIOUS FESTIVAL	VARIANCE	Knowsley BIRTHDAY	Sefton BIRTHDAY	VARIANCE	Knowsley HOLIDAY	Sefton HOLIDAY	VARIANCE
0-4	125.09	0-2	109.00	<b>16.09</b>	125.09	218.00	- <b>92.91</b>	125.09	109.00	<b>16.09</b>	250.18	163.20	<b>86.98</b>
	125.09	3-4	111.00	<b>14.09</b>	125.09	222.00	- <b>96.91</b>	125.09	111.00	<b>14.09</b>	250.18	163.20	<b>86.98</b>
5-10	142.49	5-10	122.00	<b>20.49</b>	142.49	244.00	- <b>101.51</b>	142.49	122.00	<b>20.49</b>	284.98	204.00	<b>80.98</b>
11-15	177.38	11-15	140.00	<b>37.38</b>	177.38	280.00	- <b>102.62</b>	177.38	140.00	<b>37.38</b>	354.76	255.00	<b>99.76</b>
16+	215.74	16+	164.00	<b>51.74</b>	215.74	328.00	- <b>112.26</b>	215.74	164.00	<b>51.74</b>	431.48	306.00	<b>125.48</b>

## APPENDIX 10

### The key aims of Sefton Children's Trust

Our priorities in Sefton have been determined following consultation and engagement with children, young people and their families, findings from the analysis of trends and identified needs, key stakeholder events and on-going evaluation, inspection findings, meeting with the Department for Education and Skills, and new legislation.

### Children & Young People's Plan Priorities

#### Be Healthy Priorities for 2009 / 10

- Focus on emotional health and mental well-being.
- Reducing health inequalities with a particular focus on breast feeding, oral health, obesity and reducing teenage pregnancy in specific wards (taking forward the teenage pregnancy national support team's recommendations).
- Reducing risk taking behaviours in relation to alcohol, drugs and sexual health
- Improve services for disabled children to meet the Aim Higher Disabled Children offer by 2011.

#### Stay Safe Priorities for 2009 / 10

##### Home based risk, including:

- Parenting
- Domestic Violence
- Child Protection Plans
- Accidental Death-Child Safety
- Child Death Overview

##### Community based risk, including:

- Housing
- Public Protection
- Youth Offending including First time entrants
- Substance Misuse by adults and its links to Criminality and its impact on parenting- Hidden Harm agenda
- Implement recommendations from 2009 inspection

##### School based risk, including:

Child on child harm in and out of school 16-18 year olds – access to services, early identification of risk to reduce the numbers of those not in education or training

- Developing systems for identifying children not receiving a suitable education and maintaining contact with them including Looked After Children (LAC) placed in Sefton from other Local Authorities
- E-Safety

#### Enjoy & Achieve Priorities for 2009 / 10

- To raise attainment in the Early Years Programme especially by focussing on the percentage of children gaining 78 points across the Foundation Stage with at least 6 points in Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) and Communication, Language and Literacy (CLL)
- To improve the percentage of pupils gaining 5 A\*-C GCSE (including English and Maths) and in particular in those schools below the 30% threshold
- To raise the attainment of vulnerable young people (i) with special needs (ii) those Looked After in the secondary phase and (iii) those receiving free school meals in the secondary phase
- To progress the educational transformation agenda including capital projects in the primary and secondary phases and the integration of associated improvement programmes including through extended schools, community involvement and services to young people

## APPENDIX 10 (ctd)

### **Make Positive Contribution Priorities** for 2009 / 10

- To develop the Integrated Youth Support Service to maximize opportunities for young people in Sefton and support transition to adult life
- To consult with children, young people, parents and carers in Sefton, including those who are hard to reach, and communicate how their views improve services
- To enhance opportunities for children and young people, parents and carers to be involved in planning, developing and evaluating services and policies that affect their lives
- To promote and enhance positive activities for young people in Sefton
- To promote positive images of young people and challenge negative stereotypes.

### **Achieve Economic Well-being Priorities** for 2009 / 10

- Average points score (A level) to be addressed in terms of quality of provision and choice
- Focus upon vulnerable groups, especially: learning difficulties and or disability (LDD) looked after children, (LAC) and Teenage Parents. (There is a disproportionate amount of children and young people with LDD in NEET category)

### **Universal Priorities** for 2009 / 10

- Information and guidance to young people about the range of services available and where to go for help
- More joined up work to support families - a “think Family” approach

### **Local Area Agreement Priorities**

**NI 51** Effectiveness of child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)

**NI 53** Prevalence of breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks from birth

**NI 56** Obesity among primary school age children in Year 6

**NI 62** Stability of placements of looked after children: number of placements

**NI 72** Achievement of at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage with a least 6 in each Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Communication, Language and Literacy

**NI 73** Achievement at Level 4 or above in both English and Maths at KS 2

**NI 75** Proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more A\* - C GCSEs (or equivalent) including English and Maths

**NI 80** Achievements of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19

**NI 87** Secondary school persistent absence rate

**NI 91** Participation of 17 year olds in education or training

**NI 92** Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest

**NI 93** Progression by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 1 and K S 2

**NI 94** Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 1 and KS 2

**NI 99** Looked after children reaching level 4 in English at Key Stage 2

**NI 100** Looked after children reaching level 4 in Mathematics at Key Stage 2

**NI 101** Looked after children reaching 5 A- C GCSEs (or equivalent) at Key Stage 4 (including English and Maths)

## APPENDIX 10 (ctd)

**NI 102 (A)** The percentage point gap between pupils eligible for free schools meals (FSM) achieving at least Level 4 in English and Maths at Key Stage (KS) 2 and pupils ineligible for FSM achieving the same outcome

**NI 102 (B)** The percentage point gap between pupils eligible for FSM achieving 5A\*-C grades at GCSE (and equivalent), including GCSE English and Maths, at KS4 and pupils ineligible for FSM achieving the same outcome.

**NI 110** More participation in Positive Activities

**NI 111** First time entrants into the Youth Justice System

**NI 112** Under 18 conception rate

**NI 115** Reduce the proportion of young people frequently using illicit drugs, alcohol or volatile substances

## APPENDIX 11

### MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

#### Placement Planning - Cost Volume Approach

#### **National Key Messages – What We Know**

On the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009 there were over 83,000 children in care in the UK (in England 60,900)<sup>46</sup>.

The rise in numbers of looked after children began before the effect of publicity in relation to the Haringey case in late 2008.

Since the autumn of 2008 there has been a sustained rise in the numbers of all ages taken into care or under supervision order.

Other factors impacting simultaneously are the economic down turn, which is imposing additional strains on families, and the Southwark judgement, which is requiring local authorities to consider accommodating young people previously referred to their housing department.

There may be further increase to come as the full effect of 'staying put' in relation to 18 year olds and homeless 16 & 17 year olds.

Support for some placements now lasts for the duration of adulthood

Many children in care have long-term health problems and disabilities, and many have severe emotional health problems. Recent research found that 45% of looked after children aged 5-17 in England experience mental health problems.<sup>47</sup>

Residential care is the best option for a only a small minority of children

In recent decades foster care has expanded, increasingly replacing residential care as the preferred option for children.

Foster care is lower in cost than residential care

In 2008-09 the weekly unit cost of foster care is £383, but appears to be an under-representation of the true cost<sup>48</sup>

In 2008-09 the weekly unit cost of independent provided foster care is £864<sup>49</sup>

Eighty percent of children looked after away from home are in foster care

There is a UK-wide shortage of foster carers and many foster carers are in their 50's and 60's, suggesting there will be an impending shortage of foster carers when these carers retire.

---

<sup>46</sup> Full Briefing: The Cost of Foster Care, June 2010 the fostering network

<sup>47</sup> Ibid

<sup>48</sup> Ibid

<sup>49</sup> Ibid

### **Sefton's Looked After Children Profile of Need**

Sefton's LAC population per 10,000 over the period of 2005 to 2008 has been lower than the regional average and has been atypically stable. In 2008 there were 310 looked after children.

Since 2008 it has grown at a much faster rate than the rest of the North West.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> July 2010 there were 394 looked after children this compared to a total of 375 on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010, an increase of 5% in 14 weeks.

#### Sefton's Current Provider Position

As at February 2010 there were 106 Sefton foster care households

- 44 relative/ friend households
- 62 mainstream fostering households

With a total number of carers of 178

- 72 couples of which 21 are relative/friends and 51 are mainstream foster carers
- 34 single carers of which 23 are relative/friends and 11 are mainstream foster carers

#### Children Placed

On the 22.01.10 there were a total of 413 looked after children (this is a rise of 24% post Haringey) and 248 of these children were in fostering placements. Relative/friend foster carers accounted for 66 children.

**Sefton has shown the second largest proportional increase in IFA use and the second highest increase in number of placements. The majority of these additional placements were made prior to the large increase in LAC numbers post Haringey.**

On the 22.01.10 there were more children placed in independent fostering agency placements (99) than were with our own foster carers (83).

The proportion of foster placements has fallen by 2% since 2008

Placements with parents has risen by 1% since 2008

Placements with family/friends has risen

Sefton makes much greater use of residential provision to cater for LAC than is typical in the North West and in England. The population of placements in residential is the same in 2009 as in 2008.

Sefton had a higher ratio of internal children's homes to other local authorities in the North West region. (5)

## **North West Region Key Messages – What We Know**<sup>50</sup>

There has been an increase of 739 children becoming looked after in the last 18 months

Whilst commissioned residential services decline in 2007 & 2008 placement numbers in October 2009 were 20% than in October 2008

A 60% rise in IFA placements

An 8% fall in internal fostering provision in the last three years

If IFA growth continues in 2010 there will be an additional 335 IFA placements - estimated cost would be £14 million

Increased usage of exempted fostering households

The increase in demand for foster care placements is now increasing demand for independent foster care providers and external residential placements as placement choice diminishes

Many local authorities are in negative equity in numbers of carers and numbers of placements

There is a small gap between the ethnicity of children and the ethnicity of carers

Performance management of the recruitment process is not supported by ICS (as yet) or by IT generally

The shortfall in adoption placements is growing and likely to increase further

There is an increasing use of Special Guardianship which is leading to significant numbers of children being financially supported long term but who are not looked after

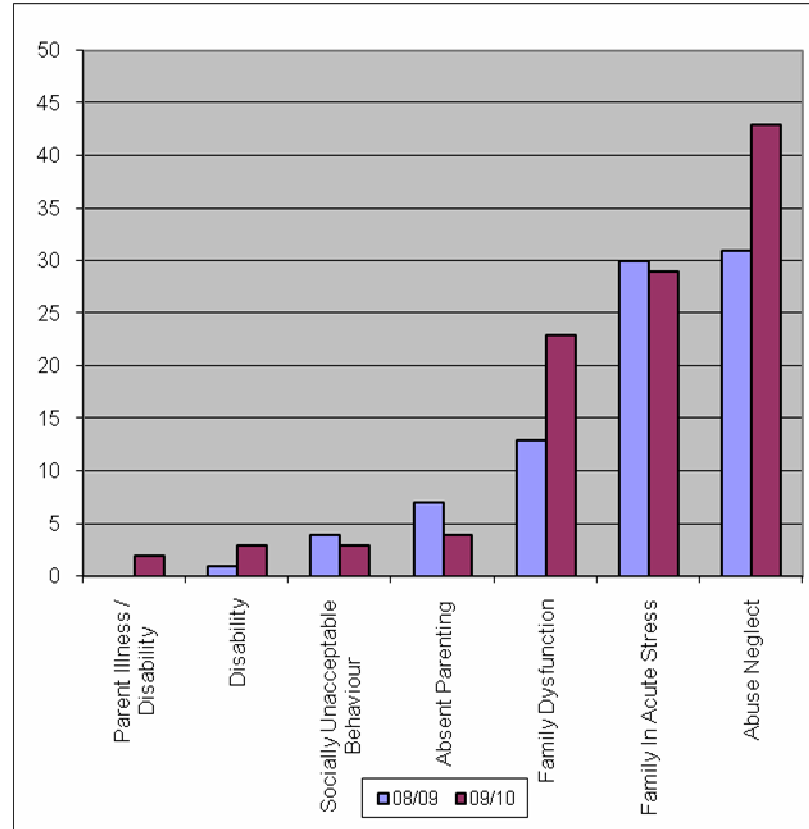
The requirements of post adoption support are now beginning to manifest themselves, with implications for families and for services

---

<sup>50</sup> Northwest Regional Placements Report – Fostering & Adoption Strategies June 2010)

**Children started to be looked after (Not Care Order) 1st April 2008 to 31st March 2010 -  
Need at BLA**

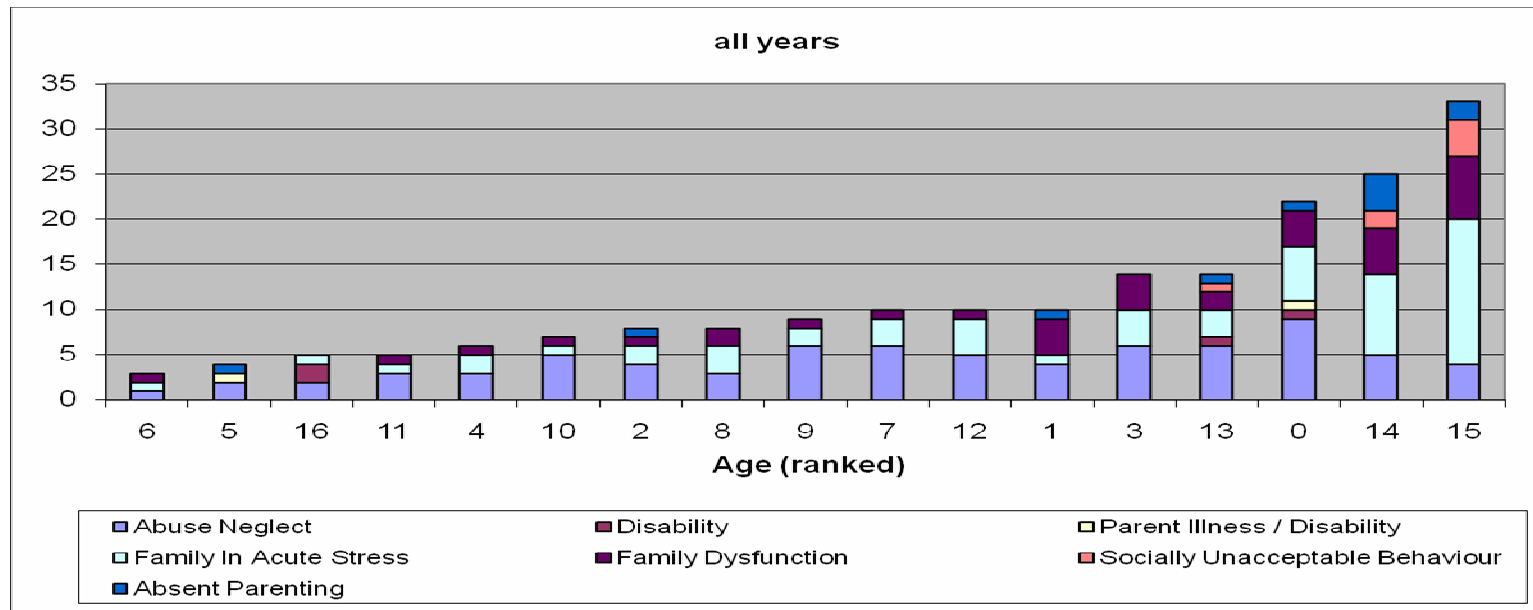
BLA Children In Need	08/09	09/10	Total
Parent Illness / Disability	0	2	2
Disability	1	3	4
Socially Unacceptable Behaviour	4	3	7
Absent Parenting	7	4	11
Family Dysfunction	13	23	36
Family In Acute Stress	30	29	59
Abuse Neglect	31	43	74
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>193</b>





**All years**

	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
Abuse Neglect	1	2	2	3	3	5	4	3	6	6	5	4	6	6	9	5	4
Disability			2											1	1		
Parent Illness / Disability		1													1		
Family In Acute Stress	1		1	1	2	1	2	3	2	3	4	1	4	3	6	9	16
Family Dysfunction	1			1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	4	4	2	4	5	7
Socially Unacceptable Behaviour														1		2	4
Absent Parenting		1					1					1		1	1	4	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>33</b>



## APPENDIX 11

### Example - Objectives, Indicators and Targets

OBJECTIVE	KPI'S	TARGETS		
		2010	2011	2012
To shift the balance of expenditure so that more resources are invested in helping families care for their children	Unit cost of foster care & residential provisions	Same		
	Unit cost of commissioned foster care & residential provisions	Reducing		
	Spend on family support	Increasing		
	Numbers of looked after children	Reducing		
	Numbers of looked after children placed in commissioned placements	Reducing		
	Number of cases which are neither looked after children or Child Protection with a care plan	Increasing		

### Example of Financial Plan

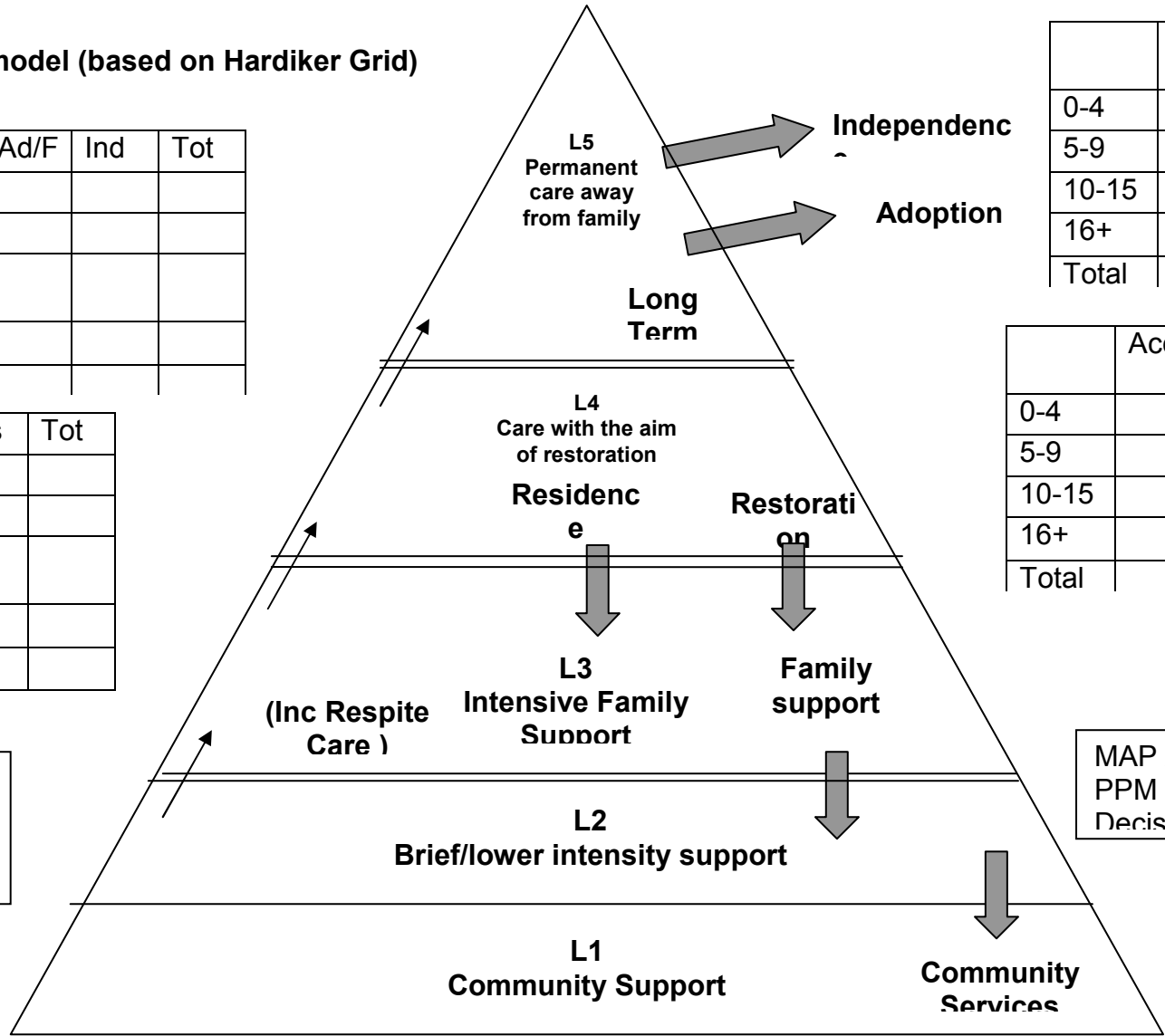
Re-commissioning cost neutral	Current £	2011£	2012£	2013£
Savings - IFA				
Savings – Sefton placement provision				
Increased expenditure infrastructure in- house fostering stock preventing children being looked after care planning – preventing drift for permanence quicker re- unification and intensive family support				

**Intervention model (based on Hardiker Grid)**

	Ad/F	Ind	Tot
0-4			
5-9			
10-15			
16+			
Total			

	Rest	Ass	Tot
0-4			
5-9			
10-15			
16+			
Total			

**Key – aim of plan / Route**  
 Ad/f = adoption / LT fostering  
 Ind = Independence  
 Rest = Restoration



	Acc	Stat Care
0-4		
5-9		
10-15		
16+		
Total		

	Acc	Stat Care
0-4		
5-9		
10-15		
16+		
Total		

MAP AND PPM Decision

**Family and Parenting Support Strategy – framework to describe service provision**

The conceptual framework within which we can describe and plan services is an adaptation of the 'pyramid of service provision' first devised by Pauline Hardiker, and re-worked for the Green Paper, 'Every Child Matters'.

Parents move in and out of different levels, dependent on circumstances and the appropriateness and effectiveness of support

