

# Market Position Statement

South West of England

July 2016

Local Authorities' Framework Agreement  
for the Procurement of  
Independent Foster Agencies,  
Preferred Provider List 2017 - 2022

Placements for Children & Young People

Bath & North East  
Somerset Council



## **Contents**

1. Introduction and Background	3
2. Priorities	4
3. The National Picture	5
4. The Regional Picture	6
5. Unaccompanied Minors	7
6. Children and Young People's views	7
7. Local Authority information	8
7.1 Bath and North East Somerset	8
7.2 Gloucestershire	9
7.3 South Gloucestershire	10
7.4 Bristol	11
7.5 North Somerset	13
7.6 Wiltshire	14
7.7 Swindon	15
8. Conclusion	16

## **South West Local Authorities' Framework Agreement for Independent Foster Agencies Placements for Children and Young People in care.**

The aim of the tender is to provide a framework list, through a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) of Independent Foster Agencies that will deliver quality, value for money provision for the purchasers looked after children's population, assisting in meeting 'The Sufficiency Duty'.

### **1. Introduction and background**

- 1.1 Independent Foster Agencies are seen as an important part of the overall provision for looked after children.
- 1.2 This document provides existing and potential Independent Foster Agencies with information in respect of the South West Local Authorities' Framework Agreement for Independent Foster Agencies Placements for Children & Young People. It provides information on the needs of the participant Local Authorities and gives an overall indication of the scope, the substance and the structure of the Framework.
- 1.3 In 2013 a sub-regional Framework was established for Independent Foster Agencies for children in the care of the following Local Authorities (LAs): Gloucestershire, Bristol, Swindon, Bath & North East Somerset, South Gloucestershire, North Somerset, Dorset and Wiltshire.
- 1.4 That Framework, which will end on 31st March 2017, has been successful in delivering quality assured Independent Foster Agencies and has been assessed as successful by the participating LAs.
- 1.5 The original participating LAs, except Dorset, will tender for a new Framework, led by Bath and North East Somerset Council that will take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, with an option to extend, subject to fee negotiations.
- 1.6 Framework contracts have been criticised nationally because they have the effect of freezing the market place for the period of the framework. This deters new entrants. To overcome this negative effect, we are going to be using a Dynamic Purchasing System, allowing new entrants onto the framework at 6 monthly intervals.
- 1.7 A Participation Agreement drawn up and agreed by the Legal Services of all participating LAs, formally underpins the partnership working of the 7 local authorities.
- 1.8 Since April 2013, the contract value for those LAs participating in the current Framework, is in excess of £20 million per annum, with 2015/16 in excess of £25 million. The relationship with the market is well developed and mini-tenders have been run successfully from the Framework by individual LAs, in order to ensure that the particular needs of its looked after children population are met.

## 2. Priorities

### 2.1 Importance of stability

Reports published by Ofsted and the DfE in 2013 both highlighted the need to improve placement stability for looked after children. Ofsted's 8 February 2013 thematic inspection report on missing children revealed that "placement instability was a feature of at least a third of the 30 tracked cases where the children were looked after". It found that "going missing contributed to [placement] instability as carers struggled to cope with the regular running away" and that "in turn, placement moves sometimes led to an increase in the frequency of missing incidents".

- 2.2 The purchasers do not consider it good practice for providers to end placements immediately, without giving adequate notice or having exhausted all appropriate strategies. There is an expectation from all of the providers, that if things become difficult, they will alert commissioners and other care professionals and call a disruption meeting to discuss the reasons as to why the provider considers the placement should end. Purchasers will have expected the provider to have considered other options and have employed other strategies to try and make the placement sustainable. Many of the young people face a huge amount of rejection over their lives and we want to work in partnership with providers who will not easily give up on these young people.
- 2.3 The purchasers will seek to place young people as near to their own locality if possible. Where that is deemed appropriate, it is accepted that some young people will need to be placed at distance, if specialist placements are required to meet particular needs.
- 2.4 Procurement rules do not allow the LAs to limit geographically, the providers who wish to apply to be placed on this DPS. The LA's will, in line with other legislation, place children within their own LA and that adjacent to them unless the needs of the child prohibit this or they have particularly specialist needs.
- 2.5 A significant recruitment campaign is needed to cope with increasing numbers. We urgently need more foster carers for teenagers and children with complex needs.
- 2.6 Work to increase stability. Placement breakdown is toxic to children and costly for agencies.
- 2.7 Build capacity for unaccompanied asylum seeking children.
- 2.8 Children, especially those who are at risk of child sexual exploitation or have been trafficked, are still going missing; we need to find effective models of care that address this.

### **3. The National Picture**

- 3.1 There were 69,540 looked after children as of 31 March 2015, an increase of 1% compared to 31 March 2014 and an increase of 6% compared to 31 March 2011. This rise is not just a reflection of a rise in the child population.

In 2015, 60 children per 10,000 of the population were looked after, an increase from 2011 when 58 children per 10,000 of the population were looked after. (DfE)

- 3.2 Fostered children comprise 75% of the care population.
- 3.3 The fostering network reports that 7,600 new foster families need to be recruited in 2016 in England, 600 in the south west.
- 3.4 52,050 children were living with foster families on 31 March 2015. There are around 44,625 foster families in England.
- 3.5 Perhaps the most worrying statistic is the 12% of carers who retired or left fostering last year, just as the numbers of children coming into care have been rising inexorably. This loss of experience is not being replaced fast enough and there is a very real need to better use the pool of available foster carers.

## 4. The Regional Picture

### 4.1 Number of Looked after Children (LAC) as at 31<sup>st</sup> March

	2013	2014	2015	2016
Bath and North East Somerset	141	148	144	152
Gloucestershire	486	519	519	562
South Gloucestershire	167	168	181	166
Bristol	715	695	705	698
North Somerset	250	215	234	219
Wiltshire	448	402	413	419
Swindon	250	252	252	292
<b>Total</b>	<b>2457</b>	<b>2457</b>	<b>2448</b>	<b>2508</b>

### 4.2 Placed in independent foster agencies as at 31<sup>st</sup> March

	2013	2014	2015	2016
Bath and North East Somerset	50	49	46	48
Gloucestershire	105	109	121	102
South Gloucestershire	15	16	15	15
Bristol	189	192	205	203
North Somerset	47	50	41	56
Wiltshire	107	96	108	103
Swindon	33	28	38	58
<b>Total</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>585</b>

### 4.3 Total annual spend on independent foster agencies

	2013	2014	2015	2016
Bath and North East Somerset	£2,568,419	£2,377,462	£219,931	£2,185,415
Gloucestershire	£3,349,212	£3,630,440	£4,062,254	£4,885,075
South Gloucestershire	£771,123	£877,000	£587,000	£620,000
Bristol	£7,381,453	£7,988,375	£7,597,147	£7,440,748
North Somerset	£,793,656	£1,792,539	£1,926,998	£2,182,065
Wiltshire	£4,818,606	£5,009,118	£4,765,680	£5,615,436
Swindon	£1,519,154	£1,335,242	£1,344,279	£2,475,534
<b>Total</b>	<b>£20,407,967</b>	<b>£23,010,176</b>	<b>£20,503,289</b>	<b>£25,404,273</b>

## **5. Unaccompanied Minors**

- 5.1 The South West is due to take 700 unaccompanied minors over the next three years. This is the total for the entire South West based on 0.07 of the child population. Each local authority will take children based on this pro-rata calculation.
- 5.2 This will have the effect of having a 4 – 5% increase in the LAC population over the next three years.

## **6. Children and Young People's Views**

- 6.1 Children's views have been central to informing Local Authorities of their needs and expectations of services.
- 6.2 Each Local Authority has a Participation Lead who works with children, their families and carers, in order to ensure that their views help shape commissioning priorities and future service delivery.
- 6.3 Participating local authorities have worked with children and young people to judge how we evaluate quality as part of the tender process.
- 6.4 **Key Messages from young people include:**
  - Listen
  - Do not assume
  - Show us you are reliable
  - Talk in a way we understand
  - Share responsibility
  - Use no jargon
  - Remember what you have told us
  - Do not let us down

## **7. Local Authority Information**

### **7.1 Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES)**

7.1.1 B&NES has a 0 – 19 population of 40,488 which is 22% of the total population. The population is mainly in Bath.

7.1.2 Less than 180 of our under 18 population are looked after children and / or have multiple and complex needs, they represent the most vulnerable members of our society. In B&NES, the numbers of looked after children has increased from a low of 96 in 2007 to a high of 152 this year.

7.1.3 Analyses of recent trends would support the view that the number of looked after children will continue to increase, rather than level off or decrease. The rate of increase appears most likely to be between 5-15 children per year. This will take the number looked after (in care) to 184-217, or an increase of 8-22% over the next 3 to 5 years.

7.1.4 According to the Department of Education in the financial year 2012/13, Bath and North East Somerset spent £2,487 on each looked after child. This was slightly lower than the rates for the whole South West (£2,633) and England (£3,060).

7.1.5 Just over 19,000 Independent Fostering Agency care days were purchased in 2013/14 in B&NES, an increase of 2% from the previous year. This year B&NES also placed significantly more children with family placement team carers, a number of these were for sibling groups.

#### **7.1.6 Needs**

- Staying Put placements
- Placements for 16/17 year olds
- Placements for children who have offending behaviour
- Placements for children at risk of CSE
- Placement for teenagers with complex needs
- Enough suitable provision to meet 'the sufficiency duty'

#### **7.1.7 Useful links**

Bath and North East Somerset Council's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment – Looked after Children.

<http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/your-council-and-democracy/local-research-and-statistics/wiki/children-care>  
[CYPP 2014-2017:](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/cypp)

<http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/cypp>



## 7.2 Gloucestershire

7.2.1 Gloucestershire is an English county situated on the northern edge of the South West region. In 2013, the resident population of Gloucestershire was estimated at 605,000 people. This represents an increase of around 36,000 people, or 6.4%, since 2003.

7.2.2 In 2014, it was estimated there were 138,192 Children and Young People (CYP) aged between 0 and 19 living in Gloucestershire. Over the next ten years, Gloucestershire's 0 to 19 year old population is projected to increase by almost 10,000 people or 7.2%, to around 148,173 in 2024.

7.2.3 The numbers of looked after children in Gloucestershire, have shown a general increase between 2013 and 2016, with an increase of 76 CYP. When looking at the number of CYP who had been looked after at any point during the year ending 31st March, the general increasing trend in numbers of LAC.

7.2.4 There have been decreased levels of LAC placement stability, with 14% of children having had three or more placements in the preceding 12 months.

7.2.5 Number of LAC per 10,000 of under-19 population as at 31st March 2014 is 42.

### 7.2.6 Needs

- Provision for speciality placements for Children & Young People with:
  1. Challenging, emotional, criminal or self-harm behaviours
  2. Children at risk of Sexual Exploitation
  3. Young People who repeatedly go missing from care
- Provision for emergency placements
- Provision for remand cases
- Provision for solo placements
- Placements that can work with Young People with emerging mental health issues
- Provision for Young People that can access and transition successfully in to independent settings post 18
- Enough suitable provision to meet the statutory requirements

### 7.2.7 Useful links

<http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/inform/index.cfm?articleid=94017>  
<http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/inform/index.cfm?articleid=94001>  
<http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/inform/>

### 7.3 South Gloucestershire

7.3.1 South Gloucestershire stretches from the Severn Estuary in the west, to the Cotswold in the east. Its southern boundary borders Bristol and extends almost to Bath. It has a 0 to19 population of around 63,300, about a quarter of the total population. The population is concentrated in the urban areas surrounding the north and east of the City of Bristol. It is an area of diversity and contrast with a variety of communities characterised by the special relationship between town and country.

#### 7.3.2 Needs

- Placements that can work with young people with emerging mental health issues
- Placements that ensure children and young people leave with academic or vocational qualifications
- Placements that can access and transition young people successfully in to independent settings post 18

#### 7.3.3 Useful Links

JSNA

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/community-and-living/stronger-communities/community-strategy/joint-strategic-needs-assessment-jsna/>

Population and demographics

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/census/population-and-demographics/>

Partnership Strategy for Children and Young People 2012 – 2016

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/cyp120033.pdf>

## 7.4 Bristol

7.4.1 Bristol is the 7th largest city in England and the 10th largest local authority. Its mid-2013 population is estimated to be 437,492. It has a relatively young age profile with its 90,541 children (under 18) making up almost 21% of the total population. Bristol's population is growing rapidly and since 2003 is estimated to have increased by 46,000 people, an increase of 11.8%. Between 2003 and 2013, the number of children (aged 0-15) living in Bristol is estimated to have increased by 10,200 (14.2%). This increase has been amongst the 0 to 9 year olds (an increase of 25%), and in particular among the 0 to 5 year olds. The growth in the number of under-5s in the last decade (36%) is one of the highest in the country.

7.4.2 The number of children in Bristol is projected to continue to grow, with a projected increase of 17,400 children (0 to 15 year olds) between 2012 and 2037, an increase of 21.6%. Within this age group, the number of 6 to 15 year olds is projected to increase the most.

7.4.3 The child population is increasingly diverse. In Bristol 28% of children (under 16) belong to a Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) group. In Inner City and East Bristol, where child population increases have been highest, 52% of under 16's are BME compared to 21% in the North and 13% in the South.

7.4.4 One of the reasons for the increasing diversity among younger children is international migration to Bristol, of families and young working age adults settling in Bristol and having children here. Births to non-UK born mothers are continuing to rise, with 27.8% of all Bristol live births in 2012 being to non-UK born mothers (26% in 2011). The most common countries of birth of non-UK mothers are Somalia, Poland, Pakistan, India and Germany.

### 7.4.5 Needs

- Placements for children who present with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs and challenging behaviours
- Placements for children who are at risk of sexual exploitation
- Placements for children who go missing from care
- Placements for children who are being placed from custody or who are involved with YOT
- Placements for unaccompanied asylum seekers and other children and young people migrating to the UK or being dispersed from other UK areas
- Placements for disabled children (who may have health care needs and/or challenging behaviours), including short breaks and shared care arrangements

- Step down placements for young people aged 14-16 who are moving on from residential care
- Placements linked to Notton House school, our local authority maintained residential SEMH boys school in Wiltshire
- Same day placements
- Placements for sibling groups
- Placements where there are no other children or younger children

#### 7.4.6 Useful Links

Children in and leaving care: plans and policy:

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/policies-plans-strategies/plans-and-policy-for-children-in-or-leaving-care>

JSNA:

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/policies-plans-strategies/joint-strategic-needs-assessment-jsna>

Population and Demographics:

<http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/council-and-democracy/population-bristol>

## 7.5 North Somerset

7.5.1 North Somerset Council Unitary Authority covers an area of approximately 145 square miles bordering the local government areas of Bristol, Bath & North East Somerset and Somerset. The total resident population in 2011 was 202,600 and is predicted to rise to 221,271 by 2020 (ONS sub-national population projections 2012). The four main towns are Weston-Super-Mare (population of 76,143), Clevedon (21,281), Nailsea (15,630) and Portishead (23,699). Nearly two thirds of North Somerset's population live in one of these four towns.

7.5.2 North Somerset has a 0-18 year old population of 44,834 accounting for 21.5% of the whole population (*ONS mid-year estimates 2014*).

7.5.3 The resident population is less ethnically diverse than England and Wales as a whole; in 2011, 3% of North Somerset's population classified themselves as BME, compared with 5% in the South West and 15% across England.

7.5.4 In 2015, North Somerset ranked as the 121st most deprived district of 326. It has the 3rd highest inequality in terms of indices of deprivation nationally, with 11 Local Super Output Areas (LSOA's) in the least deprived 5% in England and five LSOA's within the most deprived 5% in England.

7.5.5 The number of 0-17 year-old LAC in North Somerset at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 was 222, a rate of 52 per 10,000. This compares to 45 per 10,000 with our statistical neighbor's and 60 per 10,000 across England.

### 7.5.6 Needs

North Somerset has a significant and growing need for foster carers able to offer placements for:

- 10-17 year-olds experiencing emotional behavioural difficulties including
  - absconding,
  - risk of sexual exploitation
  - inter-family aggression.
- There continues to be a need for young people in crisis to access same day placements or emergency reception placements (up to 2-4 weeks) within the county boundary or its neighbouring local authorities.

### 7.5.7 Useful Links

North Somerset Council Home

<http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk>

Joint Commissioning Strategy for Vulnerable C&YP

<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/joint-commissioning-strategy-for-vulnerable-children-and-young-people-2014-17.pdf>

## 7.6 **Wiltshire**

7.6.1 Wiltshire is a large land locked, predominantly rural and generally prosperous county, with a population of 471,000 as of 31st March 2014. Almost half of the population resides in towns and villages. Approximately 90% of the county is classified as rural. The relationship between the cities of Salisbury and Chippenham, as the largest towns, and the rest of the county has a significant effect on transport, employment and travel to work issues, housing and economic needs.

7.6.2 Wiltshire's population accounts for approximately 8.74% of the total South West population. With 139 persons per sq. km, Wiltshire has the third lowest population density of the 16 counties and unitary authorities in the South West

### 7.6.3 **Needs**

Wiltshire, have a need for emergency placements. Their LAC population is increasing in age with more teenagers with complex needs (including aggression and drug use). There is an increasing need for solo placements.

### 7.6.4 **Useful Links**

Wiltshire Placement Sufficiency report and Wiltshire Pathways (including policies, commissioning strategies etc.):

[http://www.wiltshirepathways.org/docs\\_index.asp?ID=37&s=1](http://www.wiltshirepathways.org/docs_index.asp?ID=37&s=1)

<http://www.wiltshirepathways.org/>

## 7.7 Swindon

7.7.1 Swindon is a medium sized unitary local authority with one of the fastest growing populations in England – currently 212,000 people and forecast to increase by 10 - 15% in the next ten years.

7.7.2 As at 2014, there were 47,000 children in Swindon under the age of 18 and 49,952 under the age of 19. Children from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities accounted for 16% of all school age children. 117 languages are spoken in Swindon schools and Swindon has the highest proportion of children with English as an additional language in the South West.

7.7.3 The race demographics of the looked after children population over the last 3 years indicate that the majority (90%) are White British and that this has remained relatively unchanged over the 3 years. The other 10% is made up of a range of ethnicities, with no one “other” group being significant in terms of statistics

7.7.4 At any one time, about 10% of children will be in receipt of early help services, and 2.8% (approx. 1,300 children) will be receiving specialist social care. Of the 1,300 children receiving specialist services about 0.4% (188 children) will be on a child protection plan and 0.6% (260 children) will be a looked after child. There are around 1,200 children with statements of Special Educational Need.

7.7.5 As at 31st March 2015, the number of looked after children was 252, equating to 52.6 per 10,000 of population. The numbers of looked after children has remained static, at around 250 for several years, although there is considerable movement of children coming into and leaving care. Within that group of 250, there were 164 children over the age of 10 years old coming in to care over a 12 month period, and of those, 74 were over 16 years old; 40% of those coming in to care were aged 10 to 15 and 20% were aged 16 years plus.

7.7.6 In-house fostering is strong in Swindon, with the majority of children placed in-house. 60% of placements are with in-house foster carers. 81% of 10 to 17 year olds beginning to be looked after, are placed with foster carers. Independent fostering agency placements are used in partnership, but this has grown, given the increase in the numbers of children coming in to care in Swindon.

### 7.7.7 Needs

Swindon must be able to access foster placements within the local area which, as well as delivering value for money, meets the individualised needs of the young people being referred for these services. Providers need to be flexible enough to adapt to emerging needs and priorities moving forwards, and have the ability to think creatively about building bespoke packages for some children. There

must also be the ability to take account of any changes in legislation and Swindon's commissioning priorities.

The profile of the cohort of young people needing foster placements in Swindon is ever changing, however, for the most part, includes those who are deemed: vulnerable with; disabilities, mental health issues, challenging/self-harming behaviours, drug and alcohol issues and / or other complex needs. Swindon will additionally require foster carers who have specialist knowledge around caring for asylum seeking children, those who may be subject to child sexual exploitation and those who may have been subject to trafficking.

More children are coming in to Swindon in crisis and need emergency accommodation. Swindon would welcome providers who can meet this need even for a few nights so children can be kept safe whilst further exploration is undertaken to find the right placement match for them.

During the duration of the current contract, Swindon has experienced a high number of placement breakdowns and inadequate periods of notice being given. There is an expectation prior to any notice being received, that the provider has considered other options and employed other strategies to try and make the placement sustainable. Some of the children / young people Swindon works with, face a huge amount of rejection over their lives and Swindon needs to work in partnership with providers who will not easily give up on children / young people.

Young people and care leavers in Swindon's care have the right to expect that Swindon will provide them with everything a good parent would provide, in order to ensure they reach their full potential and achieve sustainable outcomes.

This procurement supports Swindon Borough Council Priority (4) "Help People to help themselves whilst protecting our most vulnerable children and adults"

#### **7.7.8 Useful Links**

Further information is available on the council's website:

[www.swindon.gov.uk](http://www.swindon.gov.uk)

## **8. Conclusion**

We aspire to work with providers who are delivering high quality outcomes for children and young people in order to prepare them to become useful members of society, by ensuring education, stability and attachment are normal expectations and not exceptional.