



WILTSHIRE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S TRUST

**CHILDREN IN CARE COMMISSIONING STRATEGY
(including Sufficiency Duty)**

2012 to 2015

**DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION
July 2011**

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1. SUMMARY

This is the draft of Wiltshire Children's Trust commissioning strategy for children and young people in care. The strategy has been produced in line with the Wiltshire Children's Trust commissioning framework. The strategy has sections on:

- Purpose and scope
- National and local context
- Local needs and services
- An analysis of the current position
- Shaping future services

This is an update to the previous placements strategy. The update provides an opportunity to highlight achievements, consult on plans for the future and take into account some key changes to the legal framework for looked after children.

The new Children in Care Commissioning Strategy will have a wider scope than the previous strategy which had a specific focus on placements. The new strategy will be holistic and cover all services for looked after children. Work on the strategy is being co-ordinated by the Children in Care Commissioning Group. Terms of reference for this group including membership can be found at Appendix 1.

Consultation on the commissioning strategy will take place for 12 weeks from 28th July to 20th October 2011. The strategy is due to be presented to Wiltshire Council Cabinet on 15th December. There will be a variety of consultation events including the following:

- Children and young people who are looked after including the Children in Care Council
- In-house and independent sector providers
- Foster carers and adoptive parents
- Social care staff

In addition we will be ensuring the draft commissioning strategy is an agenda item at relevant regular meetings including the following:

- Children's Select Committee and the Looked After Children Task Group
- Corporate Parenting Panel
- Children's Voluntary Sector Forum and Wiltshire Voluntary Youth Services Council
- Key planning groups which report to the Children's Trust Commissioning Executive

The draft includes key consultation questions which are summarised in Appendix 2. Please send any response to this consultation to Pathways@wiltshire.gov.uk.

For more information please contact Jane Shuttleworth, Interim Commissioning Project Manager by email jane.shuttleworth@wiltshire.gov.uk or by phone on 07764 583178.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Purpose of the commissioning strategy

The purpose of the Children in Care Commissioning Strategy is to achieve better outcomes for children and young people by making sure there are sufficient services available locally. This will involve ensuring:

- There are services available which prevent children and young people from coming into care and assist with a return home if this is appropriate.
- A good range of high quality services for children in care, including placements (our aim is 'local placements for local children').
- All services are cost effective.

The strategy has been produced in line with the Wiltshire Children's Trust Commissioning Framework. The diagram below produced by the Commissioning Support Programme summarises the elements of strategic commissioning.



Consultation question 1 Do you have any comments on the purpose of the looked after children commissioning strategy outlined in section 2.1?

2.2 Links with existing strategies

There are a number of other strategies which relate to the Children in Care Commissioning Strategy. These are:

- The Wiltshire Children and Young People's Plan 2008 – 2011 (currently being updated). This is the overarching plan for children and young people in Wiltshire.
- Employment and Skills Strategy for Wiltshire (being developed)
- Young People's Substance Misuse Treatment Plan
- Teenage Pregnancy Strategy
- Wiltshire Youth Offending Service – Youth Justice Plan 2010/2012
- Reducing Child Poverty Strategy
- Hidden Harm Strategy
- Family and Parenting Support Commissioning Strategy
- Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Commissioning Strategy (being updated)

Consultation question 2 *Are there any other strategies or plans which relate to children in care to add to the list in section 2.2?*

2.3 Developing the children in care commissioning strategy

The Children in Care Commissioning Group is co-ordinating the development of the Children in Care Commissioning Strategy. This is a multi-agency group which reports to the Wiltshire Children's Trust Commissioning Executive. The terms of reference including membership are included at Appendix 1.

This draft has been informed by the following:

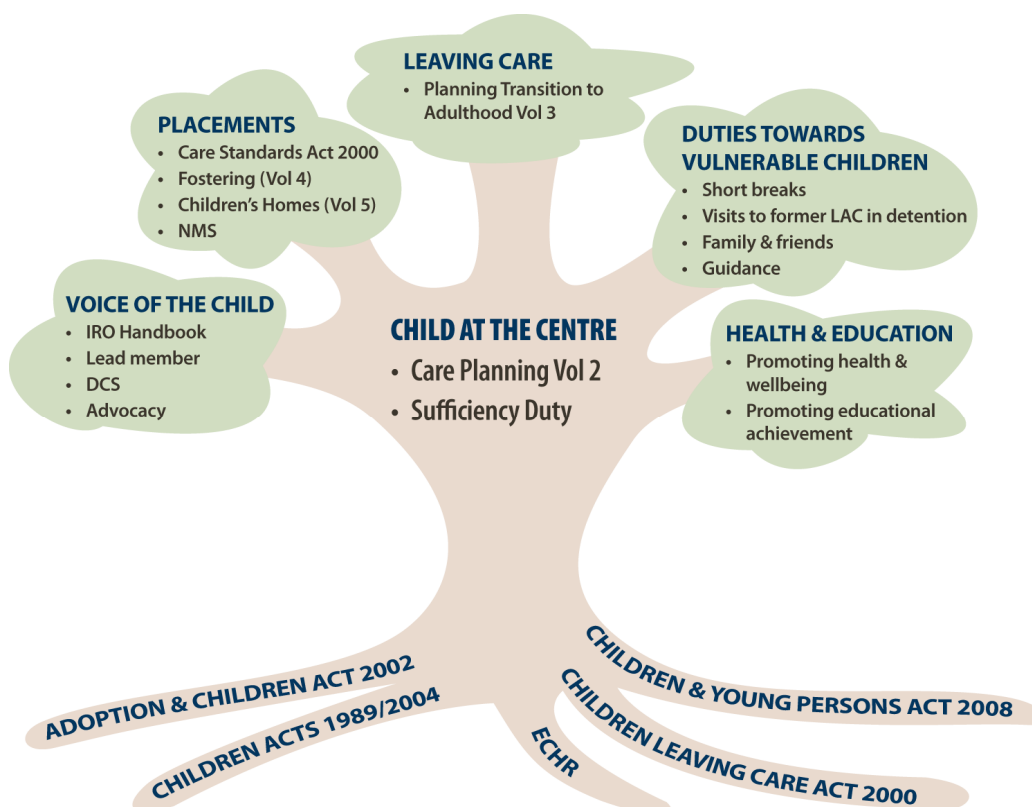
- A review of progress in implementing the previous placements strategy (undertaken by the Children in Care Commissioning Group in March 2011).
- Views of children and young people in care through the Children in Care Council and a specific focus group on the commissioning strategy.
- Feedback given at a workshop for independent sector providers of residential and foster care held on 20 July 2011.
- Analysis and work undertaken by the Sufficiency Duty Task Group (focused on securing sufficient accommodation for children in care in line with statutory guidance).

3. CONTEXT

3.1 National Context

3.1.1 Statutory Framework

The Government has revised the legal framework for children in care. The revised framework covers all aspects of the care system. This is summarised in the diagram below which has been produced by the Department for Education.



Note – 'NMS' stands for National Minimum Standards, DCS stands for Director of Children's Services and ECHR stands for European Court of Human Rights

The revised legal framework includes statutory guidance on securing sufficient accommodation for children in care. This is referred to as the sufficiency duty. The sufficiency duty requires local authorities to take steps to secure local accommodation which meets the needs of children in care. The duty includes securing services for children and young people on the edge of care. The commissioning strategy for children in care will set out plans for ensuring a sufficient supply of placements and demonstrate a whole system approach to early intervention and prevention.

3.1.2 Sufficiency duty commissioning standards

The Department for Education has produced guidance and information to assist Councils with ensuring they have sufficient placements. This includes guidance on

commissioning standards which will raise the quality of commissioning practice. The 6 standards focus on:

- Individual assessment and care planning
- Commissioning decisions
- Strategic needs assessment
- Market management
- Collaboration
- Securing services

The 6 standards have informed the commissioning priorities outlined in section 7 and will be used as a focus for discussions during the consultation process.

The Department for Education has also recently published a residential data pack to give commissioners and providers a better picture of how children's homes are being used and to promote debate about increasing the quality of residential provision.

3.1.3 Open Public Services White Paper

The Open Public Services White Paper sets out proposals for extending opportunities for a range of providers to deliver services. The White Paper highlights some local government services where options for delivery *"will switch the default from one where the state provides the service itself to one where the state commissions the service from a range of diverse providers"* (section 5.2). Support for looked after children is included in the list of services the Government is consulting on about *"how to go further in opening up locally commissioned services."* (section 5.8).

3.1.4 Promoting the Quality of Life of Looked After Children and Young People

In October 2010 the National Institute of Clinical Excellence produced guidance on promoting the quality of life of looked after children and young people. The guidance includes 52 recommendations with suggestions on actions which should be taken.

3.1.5 Munro Review of Child Protection

The Munro Review of Child Protection makes recommendations about the child protection system. This includes stressing the importance of early help and support reinforcing the findings of the national reviews conducted by:

- Graham Allen on Early Intervention
- Frank Field on Poverty and Life Chances
- Dame Clare Tickell on the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Munro states that:

"The case for preventative services is clear, both in the sense of offering help to children and families before any problems are apparent and in providing help when low level problems emerge. From the perspective of a child or young person, it is clearly best if they receive help before they have any, or have only minor, adverse experiences. Evaluative research provides the same message, showing that there are a number of helping methods that have a good

record of reducing the later incidence of adverse outcomes for children and young people but that, in comparison, services offered once problems become severe have a much lower effectiveness rate. The reviews conducted by Graham Allen MP, Rt Hon Frank Field MP and Dame Clare Tickell share this review's belief in the importance of providing help early. From this review's point of view the three key messages are that:

- *Preventative services will do more to reduce abuse and neglect than reactive services*
- *Co-ordination of services is important to maximise efficiency*
- *Within preventative services, there needs to be good mechanisms for helping people identify those children and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer harm from abuse or neglect and who need referral to children's social care.*

3.1.6 Research on what works

The Centre for Excellence and Outcomes for Children's Services has produced 3 Knowledge Reviews including up to date evidence on what works for children and young people in care. The Knowledge Reviews include evidence from research, validated practice and views of professionals.

During the consultation process the Children in Care Commissioning Group will be considering the findings from the Knowledge Reviews.

Consultation question 3 *Are you aware of any research studies or good practice which should inform the development of the children in care commissioning strategy?*

3.2 Local context

3.2.1 Values

A set of values will underpin the children in care commissioning strategy. These values should inform the work of all agencies that work with children in care and are set out below:

- Ensuring the participation and involvement of children and young people in decisions which directly affect their lives (effective care planning), and in the re-shaping and planning of services.
- Promoting resilient communities, families and individuals.
- Raising achievement and promoting the wellbeing of children in care.
- Focusing on outcomes and making a positive difference and on narrowing the gap in outcomes between children in care and children and young people living at home with their families.
- Understanding everyone's needs and taking account of equalities and diversity issues.
- Providing flexible services available at times which suit young people.
- All agencies working in partnership to promote the best interests of children and young people in care.

Consultation question 4 *Do you agree with the values which should underpin all services for children in care? Do you have any comments, amendments or additions?*

3.2.2 Children in Care Council Promise

The Children in Care Council has developed a “promise” which the Corporate Parenting Panel has signed up to. The promise provides a framework for the commissioning priorities set out in section 7. The promise is set out below.

CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL PROMISE

Being in Care

- A choice of when to move on from care.
- To try not to separate brothers and sisters (however, if this is not possible, try to ensure brother’s and sister’s placements are close together and allow contact).
- To allow looked after children and young people to be involved in the choice of their placement from the start.
- To find a place where you feel comfortable and ‘at home’ and can stay until the end of your time in care.

Listening to Looked After Children and Young People

- To listen to your views and act on them.
- To provide a social worker you can rely on who keeps to meetings, gives clear information, is honest and responds when needed.
- Make looked after children and young people aware of their rights and to train others in the rights of looked after children and young people.
- To ensure that young people are involved in the creation and regular review of all care plans.

Support

- Better help getting into school whatever has happened.
- To provide support so looked after children and young people can see their family (i.e. transport).
- To use reliable transport for young people.
- To organise group activities for young people in care and those leaving care.
- That if bullying arises for any looked after child or young person it will be dealt with quickly and efficiently.
- To support young people in care to find training, education or a job that suits them when they leave school.

4. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

4.1 The Joint Strategic Needs Analysis

The Wiltshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) provides information on the current and future health and wellbeing needs of people in Wiltshire. The current JSNA can be found at the following address - <http://wiltshirejsna.org/>

A specific needs analysis relating to children and young people is produced annually. The latest needs analysis can be found by following the link below.

http://www.wiltshirepathways.org/UploadedFiles/Needs_Assessment.doc

The 2011 update is in production and information from this unpublished assessment has been used below.

4.2 Key features of Wiltshire

Wiltshire is a predominantly rural county located in the south-west of England. It has a population of 457,500. Nearly half of the population live in towns or villages with fewer than 5,000 people. A quarter of the county's inhabitants live in settlements of fewer than 1,000 people.

Bigger concentrations of population can be found in the cathedral city of Salisbury, the county town of Trowbridge, and Wiltshire's many market towns, including Chippenham, Devizes, Marlborough, and Wootton Bassett.

Wiltshire has a significant proportion of children and young people with parents employed in the armed forces. This brings with it the challenges of turbulence and disruption to family life and learning due to children moving schools as their parents are posted to different locations and the anxiety felt whilst parents are away on active duty. At the time of the 2011 January School Census, 18 Wiltshire schools had 30% or more of their pupils belonging to service families, a proportion of these are learning English as an additional language.

4.3 O to 19 years population

The 2001 census recorded 108,430 children and young people aged 0-19 years living in the area covered by Wiltshire Council. This equates to 25% of the total population.

The table below shows the numbers and percentages of children by age band based on the 2011 mid year estimates.

Numbers and percentages of children by age band

Wiltshire Population	Number	%age of population
0-4	26,310	5.7
5-9	26,220	5.7
10-14	29,990	6.5
15-19	31,870	6.9
0-19	114,400	24.8

4.4 Deprivation

The areas of greatest deprivation in Wiltshire, as determined by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, are located in parts of Trowbridge, Salisbury, Chippenham, Westbury, Calne and Melksham. The relative ranking of the most deprived areas as shown in the individual index of deprivation is shown in the table below:

Comparison of deprivation by area by Index of Deprivation (2010)

Local Name	National Rank	Rank in Wiltshire
Salisbury St Martin – central	2,732	1
Trowbridge Adcroft – Seymour	3,837	2
Trowbridge John of Gaunt – Studley Green	3,886	3
Salisbury Bemerton – west	4,450	4
Salisbury Bemerton – south	5,046	5
Calne Abberd – south	6,881	6
Melksham North – north east	6,903	7
Chippenham Queens – east	7,144	8
Trowbridge Drynham – Lower Studley	7,337	9
Westbury Ham – west	7,616	10

In Wiltshire 11,120 (11%) children live in poverty of which 7,990 (72%) live in lone parent families.

4.5 Number of children in care

On 31 March 2011 there were 384 children in care. The number of children in care has increased by 34 or 8.9% in comparison to March 2010. The March 2011 data has been used to enable comparison with other local authorities of the rate per 10,000 population of children in care. However, at the end of July 2011, the number of children in care reached 400.

On 31 March 2011 90% children in care were white British in comparison to 94% of the total white British 0 to 18 population. 3% of children in care were of mixed heritage, 1% Asian or Asian British and 5% from other ethnic groups. This is summarised in the table below.

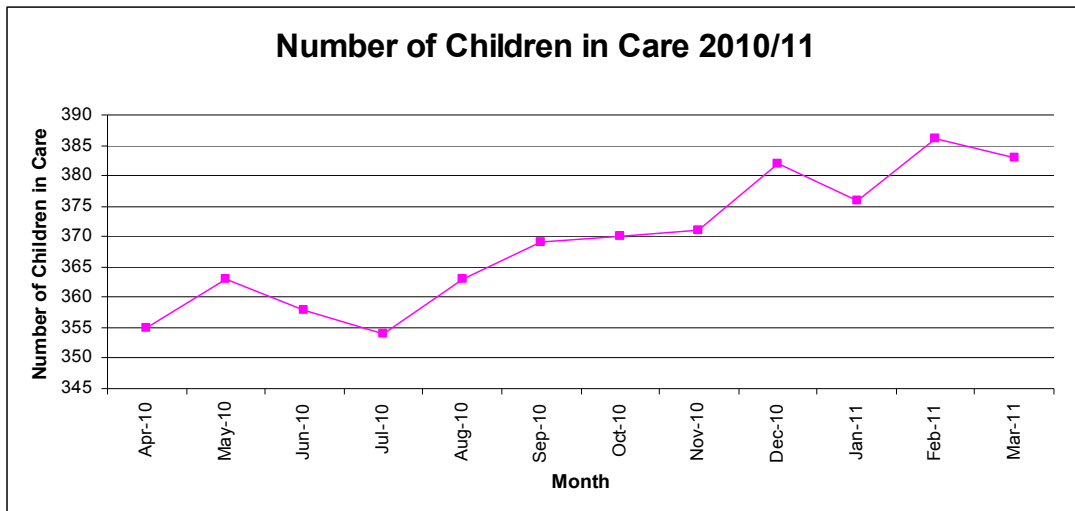
	White British	Mixed heritage	Asian or Asian British	% black or black British	Other ethnic groups	Total
Number of children in care	346	13	5	0	20	384
% children in care	90%	3%	1%	0	5%	100%
% overall 0 to 18 population	94%	2%	1%	1%	2%	100%

The rate per 10,000 for children in care at 31 March 2011 was 38. The latest comparative data available shows that on 31 March 2010 the statistical neighbour rate was 40 and the national average rate was 58.

The table and graph below outline the increase in children in care during 2010/11.

Children in care numbers from April 2010 to end March 2011

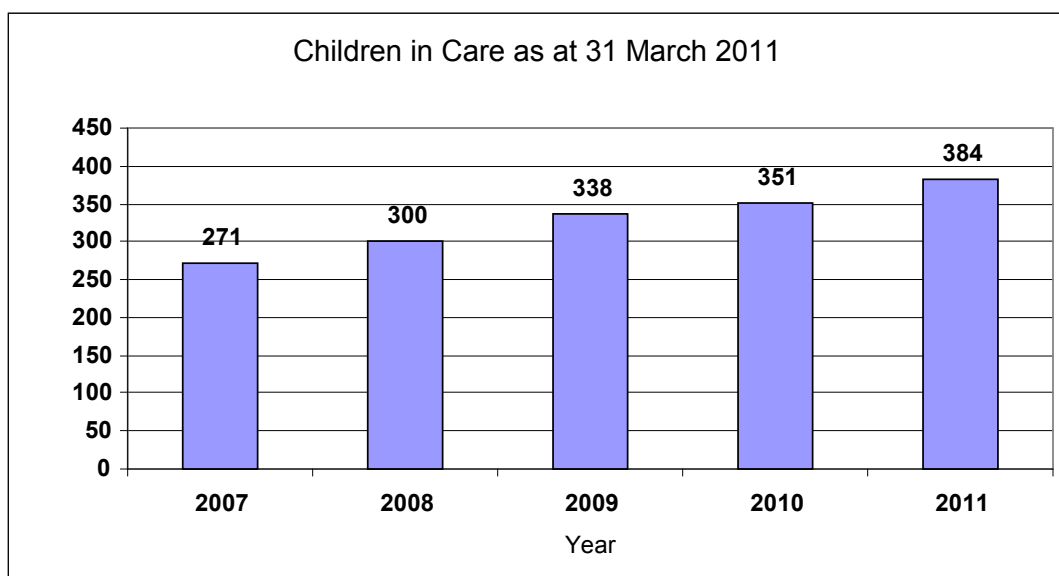
Month	Apr-10	May-10	Jun-10	Jul-10	Aug-10	Sep-10	Oct-10	Nov-10	Dec-10	Jan-11	Feb-11	Mar-11
No. Children in Care	355	363	358	354	363	369	370	371	382	376	386	384



The number of children in care has increased from 271 in 2007 to 384 at the end of March 2011. The year on year increase (April to March) was as follows:

- From 2007 to 2008 increase of 29
- From 2008 to 2009 increase of 38
- From 2009 to 2010 increase of 13
- From 2010 to 2011 increase of 33

This is summarised in the table below.



Of the 384, 166 or 43% were looked after under voluntary agreements under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989. This compares to the latest comparative data for 2010 which shows an English average of 33%.

An audit of a sample of Section 20 cases has recently taken place. A detailed analysis is also taking place on the reasons for the increase in the children in care population.

Consultation question 5 *Do you have any comments on the information included in section 4 on needs analysis? Please note any additional information you think should be included in the final strategy.*

5.1 Financial issues

5.1.1 Local financial context

The Council's intentions regarding savings and investments are set out in the Council's financial plan for 2011-15. Savings and investments identified for services for children in care are as follows:

- The Council set a target of making 10% savings from procurement budgets. This includes £750,000 savings in 2011/12 to be made from the budget for purchasing placements for children in care. These savings have been made through negotiations with service providers on placement costs.
- The Council's financial plan for 2011 – 1015 also identifies areas for investment in protecting and safeguarding vulnerable children. Details are set out in the extract from the financial plan below.

“The number of looked after children has continued to increase..... This is due to a multiplicity of factors and is echoed across the country as all local authorities respond to pressures and demands of homelessness, the increase in vulnerable adolescents and the increase in child protection referrals.

We have responded to these pressures by developing in-house fostering provision, recruiting local carers and expanding schemes such as supported lodgings and semi-independent accommodation for vulnerable teenagers. Our service continues to need to expand to meet the increase in numbers; dedicated foster carers are needed for unaccompanied asylum seekers, disabled children, those requiring respite and vulnerable teenagers. In 2010/11 there was a significant increase in the levels of service needed and this led to a shortfall in the budget – this deficit needs addressing to respond to these needs. Our family placement service also needs to strengthen its post adoption support to meet the needs of those young people who have been adopted with complex health needs due to maternal drug and alcohol and parental health issues. A range of strategies are being put in place to both reduce the need for high cost external placements and take preventative action. One part of that plan is to develop a small in-house short term residential crisis resource to provide a safe environment for young people whilst assessment of needs are undertaken to better inform placement decisions to keep them in Wiltshire and reduce expensive out of county placements which are often detrimental to a young person's wellbeing.”

The plan notes that these measures will require an additional £675,000 in 2011/12, plus a further investment of £650,000 in 2012/13. The development of in-house residential provision will be based on an updated analysis of our children in care population and likely future patterns of demand to consider the best use of the residential resource.

5.1.2 2011/12 budget for children in care

The net budget for children in care is £16,224,141. Details are noted in the table below.

This does not include expenditure on children in care from Council budgets for the following:

- Referral and assessment team
- Safeguarding teams
- Disabilities teams
- Respite services for children with disabilities
- Business support

Further work will take place on apportioning expenditure on children in care from these budgets and this will be included in the final draft.

Work is also taking place on calculating expenditure on looked after children from health budgets and this information will also be included in the final strategy.

Expenditure on Children in Care

Item	Gross budgets	Recharges	Income	Net budget	Notes
External placements	£8,464,305		£30,000	£8,434,305	Independent Fostering Agency Allowances & Residential Placements including Disability
Towpath Rd (preparation for independent living for 16+)	£363,422		£10,000	£353,422	
Permanency placements	£90,000			£90,000	Special Guardianship arrangements to allow adoptions/long term arrangements to take place
UASC /Asylum seekers	£540,497		£430,000	£110,497	
Placements Services in-house	£2,978,450			£2,978,450	Internal Foster Carers Allowances
LAC & 16+ teams	£1,911,131			£1,911,131	Staffing Costs £1,283k + Independent Living Payments £628k
Fostering team	£1,040,779			£1,040,779	Staffing Costs £1,011k + £30k Foster carer recruitment & training
Adoption services	£1,049,468			£1,049,468	Staffing costs £375k + adoption allowances £662k + virement in transition £12k
Host family scheme (Prevention of homelessness of young people)	£35,500			£35,500	
Education services LAC	£356,729	£13,860	£150,000	£220,589	Staffing Costs £153k + Educational fees & ICT support for LAC £203k
Totals	£16,858,001	£13,860	£620,000	£16,224,141	

5.1.3 Costs

The table below compares the average gross weekly costs of the three main types of placement of looked after children. These figures are collated annually at national level. The 2010/11 figures will be available in November 2011. For 2009/10, Wiltshire's average unit costs are in line with the average benchmarking unit costs,

1% higher on residential and 2% lower in fostering. Overall, Wiltshire now has a lower than average cost per placement.

For the 2011/12 financial year, procurement savings of £750k were applied to the placements budgets. Steady progress has been made in procuring the 5, 10 and 15 percent savings on current and new contracts.

Indicator	Wiltshire					Average benchmarking club members Feb 2011
	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	
Average gross weekly expenditure per LAC in residential care	£2,800	£3,080	£2,658	£2,817	Not currently available. Will be included in final strategy	£2,786
Average weekly unit cost of independent fostering agency	£665	£815	£935	£869		£884
Average weekly unit cost of in-house foster placements	£568	£495	£459	£425		£434

Consultation question 6 Do you have any comments on the financial information presented in section 6.1? Please note any additional information you think should be included in the final strategy.

5.2 Where children in care are placed

5.2.1 Type of placements

As at 31 March 2011 there were 384 children in care in Wiltshire.

Since 2007/8 there has been a downward trend in the numbers placed in residential provision from 62 young people on 31st March 2008 to 39 young people on 31st March 2011. This is a reduction from 18.5% of the total population of those in care to 10%. This is outlined in the table below. Please note 2010/11 figures for other authorities are not currently available.

The percentage of children and young people living in foster care has increased slightly over the last couple of years. There has been a significant increase in this period in the number of children and young people fostered by friends and family.

Indicator	Wiltshire NB. For all years numbers as at 31 st March					English average 2009/10	South West average 2009/10	Statistical neighbour Average 2009/10
	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11 provisional			
% in residential including residential schools	17.7% (52)	18.5% (62)	16.5% (56)	13.8% (48)	10% (39/384)	14%	12%	14.9%
% in foster care	69% (201)	69% (231)	73% (246)	75% (264)	77% (294/384)	73%	76%	
% fostered by family or friends	11.3%	8.7%	9.7%	10.6%	14% (55/384)	12.0%		12.7%

5.2.2 Independent sector provision

As at 19th July 2011, 24 young people were placed in residential care homes at a weekly cost of between £2,125 and £4,600 per week. The average weekly cost of a residential care home placement was £3,122 per week.

The total number of independent fostering placements on 19th July 2011 was 91 which included 3 mother and baby placements and 5 placements for unaccompanied asylum seeking children. The weekly cost of placements varied from £585 to £1,819 per week. Average weekly costs varied according to the age of the child and complexity of needs.

5.3 Children in care performance information

5.3.1 Stability of placements

Indicator	Wiltshire					English average 2009/10	South West average 2009/10	Statistical neighbour Average 2009/10
	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11 provisional			
LAC with 3+ placements during the year	14.3%	11.3%	8.6%	12.9% 45/349	13.6% 52/383	10.9%	12.9%	10.8%
Looked after for at least 2.5 years in same placement for at least 2 years	68.6%	70.3%	63.3%	67.5% 85/123	70.6% 84/119	68%	66.6%	68%

5.3.2 Quality of services

	Wiltshire					English average 2009/10	South West average 2009	Statistical neighbour Average 2009
	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11 provisional			
% adopted during the year	11% (15)	7% (10)	17% (25)	9% (13)	8% (14/169)	13%	12%	
% health and dental checks		87.9%	85.3%	80.0%	93% (243/261)	86% 09/10		88% 09/10
% LAC who sat at least 1 GCSE		63.0%	48.3%	72.4%	64%	77.6% (09/10)	75.6% (09/10)	
% LAC who achieved at least 1 GCSE (academic Year)	55.6%	48.3%	72.4%	64%	72.5%	71.9%	70.0%	
% LAC with 5 or more GCSEs grades A*-C including English & Maths	0.0%	6.9%	10.3%	14.5%	16% 3/17	9.8%	7.6%	
% LAC missing more than 25 days schooling	10.6%	19.1%	15.8%	13.8%		11.5%	11.0%	12.8%
% 10+ LAC for at least 12 months given a final warning/reprimand or convicted during the year	8.7%	10.6%	9.5%	10.9%	Collected at end of year -	2.5%	3.0%	2.8%
% Final warnings/reprimands and convictions of LAC				7.2%	Collected at end of year			

5.3.3 Leaving care

Indicator	Wiltshire						English average 2009	South West average 2009	Statistical neighbour Average 2009
	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	Current position 31/03/2011 provisional	Target (added if appropriate)			
Number eligible LAC 16-18 with pathway plans					96% 54/56	-			
% care leavers in suitable accommodation aged 19	96.7%	100%	81.8%	76.5% (26/34)	97.1% (34/35)	95%	89.6%	-	92%
% care leavers who were in ETE aged 19	60.0%	84.4%	54.5%	41.2% (14/34)	60% (21/35)	68%	62.1%	-	63.4%
Percentage LAC over 18 in higher education					7% (12)				

Consultation question 7 Do you have any comments on the children in care service performance information outlined in section 5.2. Please note any additional information you think should be included in the final strategy.

6. ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT POSITION

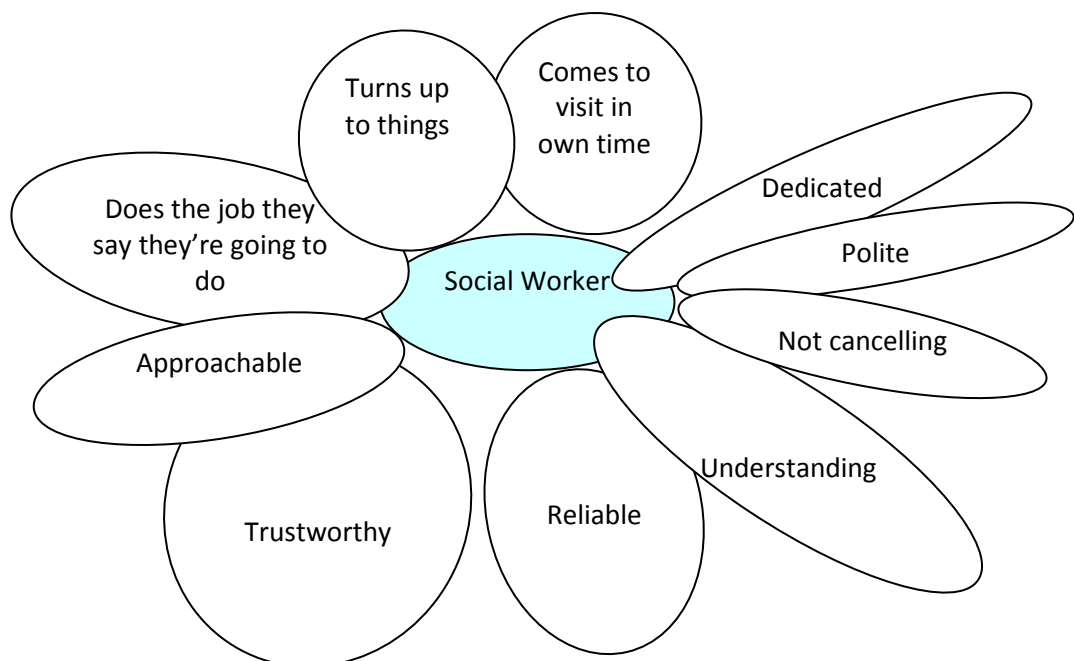
6.1 Views of Children and Young People

6.1.1 Feedback on what works well and what could be improved

What works well...

- Independent visitors and Independent Reviewing Officers
- Children's Rights service
- Once you reach 16 you are listened to more
- Some positive experiences of support from social workers

At the April Children in Care Council meeting young people identified what makes a good social worker.



What could be improved...

- Post 18 advice and guidance
- Lack of continuity of staff – residential homes and social workers
- Greater acknowledgement of maturity of 16 to 18 year olds
- More support for young people looking to go into work from care
- More support for those who are struggling with school
- More work on preventing children & young people coming into care
- Better transition when moving from care to after care
- More opportunities for siblings to be placed together and if this is not possible to see each other regularly
- More adoption with a faster process – ensure social workers look at family first
- Improving skills of some social workers and foster carers in working with young people
- More mother and baby units

6.1.2 Reports from the Children’s Rights Director

The Children’s Rights Director has produced 2 reports in 2011 based on children and young people’s views:

- Children on the Edge of Care
- Independent Reviewing Officers.

These reviews will be considered during the consultation period in order to check whether the findings are consistent with views on what happens in Wiltshire.

6.2 Children in Care Commissioning Group review of 2010/11 achievements

The achievements are listed below.

6.2.1 Governance

- Multi-agency group established as one of the key commissioning groups reporting to Children’s Trust Commissioning Executive Group met 7 times in 2010/11.
- Set of performance indicators (PIs) established to monitor implementation of the strategy developed.
- Overall aim, objectives with key PIs developed for LAC Scrutiny Task Group.

6.2.2 Strategic planning and analysis

- Improved systems for budget management.
- Unit costs improved (from having a relatively high unit cost per placement two years ago, Wiltshire’s unit cost per placement is now slightly below average).
- Review of all residential placements leading to a reduction in inappropriate use of residential as a resource.
- Work started on audit of sample of S20 placements.

- Work started on analysis of reasons for increase in numbers of LAC.

6.2.3 Preventing the need for care

- Family and Parenting Support Commissioning Strategy agreed by Wiltshire Cabinet.
- Additional investment via Family Intervention Project.

6.2.4 Panels to gate-keep, prevent drift and ensure appropriate placements

- Implementation of weekly gate-keeping panels at Devizes and Trowbridge. Terms of reference developed.
- Improvements to Complex Needs Panel with a robust process and good links with contracts. Revised terms of reference. Some joint training taking place.

6.2.5 Purchasing services from external providers

- Developing the Placements Buyer Service. 2 Children's Services Buyers in post. Process includes 'mini-competition' for each placement. Have improved process of negotiation and contracting arrangements. Savings as at end of February 2011 were £42,524 or just under 100k per annum if accrued at the current rate.
- Learning from the experience of entering into a 5 year residential block contract. Improved contract management and performance.
- Setting up systems for achieving procurement phase 1 savings which involved fee negotiations with providers.
- Placement profile developed for each key provider.
- Beginning to map placement provision and through this process gaining more market intelligence.
- Wiltshire leading the sub-regional residential framework re-tender.
- Sub-regional accreditation project for residential parent and child assessments.

6.2.6 Developing in-house services

- Developing in-house foster care service
 - Database of all approved carers.
 - New approach to recruitment, training and supervision and support.
 - Appointment of new service manager for fostering and a specific worker for kinship care and private fostering.
 - 22 foster care assessments approved.
 - Development and implementation of friends and family policy.
 - Increased the capacity of in-house nights by approximately 20,000.
- Developing In-house Adoption Service
 - Established a central adoption agency team.
 - Increase in number of Special Guardianship Orders.
 - Increased number of children placed for adoption.
 - Increased and achieved target of 20 set for number of adopters.
 - Improved the speed of the adoption process.
 - Training packages for life story work completed.
- House purchased in Melksham. Planning permission given for change of use.

Not planning to open a children’s home this year. Will consider best use of house based on further in-depth analysis of children in care population and future predicted patterns of need.

- Three Resource Centres purchased with planning permission gained. Each of the three resource centres has attached “crash pad” facilities for use as immediate accommodation option. Up to 72 hours at this stage. The Resource Centres also have facilities to prepare young people for independent living.

6.2.7 16 to 24 accommodation

- Young people involved in developing the specification for Towpath House.
- Focus group of young people took place on 16-24 accommodation needs.
- Tendering and opening Towpath House as a “stepping stones” resource.
- Service Level Agreements being developed with housing providers.
- 23 participants attended workshop on developing range of 16-24 accommodation.
- Social Care and Housing worked on implications of the Southwark judgement including developing a protocol and joint training.
- Development of supported lodgings policy and associated staff guidance.
- Development of Host Family Scheme.

6.3 Independent sector placement providers

A workshop for independent sector providers was held on 20 July 2011. Feedback is highlighted below:

Positives	Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent services by some social workers • Children’s Services Buyers are responsive • Buyers have improved communication and contract arrangements • Independent reviewing officers • Police • Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis intervention service • Information being given to placement providers promptly eg referral information • Quality of assessments and care planning • Pathways service for care leavers • More continuity of staff • Is there the right balance between cost and quality?

Consultation question 8 Do you have anything to add to the analysis of the current position outlined in section 6?

7. SHAPING FUTURE SERVICES

7.1 Outcomes

The Department for Education is reviewing the set of performance indicators collected by local authorities.

The Children in Care Commissioning Group has highlighted the following key outcome indicators which might be used in the future to monitor the overall impact of the commissioning strategy. These indicators will be finalised following the consultation period and once the Department for Education indicator set is finalised.

- Care leavers in suitable accommodation
- Young people looked after in 17th year who were in ETE aged 19
- Children in care with 5 or more GCSEs grades A*-C including English & Maths
- Gap in attainment between children in care and average attainment
- Number teenage pregnancies of young women in care
- Children in care in higher education
- Children in care who return home within 6 months
- Children and young people worked with by LAC prevention services who do not enter the care system
- Shift in expenditure from placements budget to prevention and family support budget

Consultation question 9 *Do you have any comments, amendments or additions to the suggested outcome indicators noted in section 7.1?*

7.2 Different types of services

Wiltshire Children and Young People's Trust has recently issued agreed multi-agency thresholds which outline different levels of need. These levels of need are outlined in the table below.

Children in care have level 4 needs but the children in care commissioning strategy will also consider the following:

- Level 2b services which can prevent the need for social care services and which can provide support which assists children and young people to remain at home.
- Level 3 edge of care services where although children and young people are "in need" of social care services they have not yet become "in care".

Different levels of need

Level	Description of needs
Level 1	These are children and young people who make overall good progress in all areas of their development. These children are likely to have a protective environment where their needs are recognised and well met. These children require no additional support beyond that which is universally available.
Level 2a	A child or young person would fall within this band if they can be defined as needing some additional support from a single service without which they would be at risk of not meeting their full potential. The support they need may relate to their health, educational, or social development. If ignored these issues may develop into more worrying concerns for the child or young person.
Level 2b	Children and young people who fall into this band would be defined as having needs that are complex in range, depth, and significance. It is likely that if these needs are not met their health, social development, or educational attainment may be significantly impaired and they may have poor long term outcomes. Children in this band may be very vulnerable or living in considerable adversity. A child in this band will need the support of more than one professional. A CAF will be completed and the lead professional will ensure that support and services for a particular child are co-ordinated and provided in an integrated, effective way (through putting in place a Team Around the Child – TAC).
Level 3	A child or young person who falls into this band is defined as requiring specialist help. It is likely that for these children their needs and care are at present very significantly compromised. Only a small proportion of children will fall within this band. These children will be those who are highly vulnerable or living in the greatest level of adversity. Children at this level will require specialist assessment and support from statutory services, for example social care, CAMHS, Youth Offending Service, SEN.
Level 4	Children and young people with acute needs. This will require a specialist or statutory integrated response. This is also the level at which child protection intervention is necessary and in many cases a joint social worker and police investigation is required (Section 47 Children Act 1989) followed by multi-agency protection planning.

7.3 Commissioning priorities

Six commissioning priorities have been developed. These are as follows:

- CP1 Maximising the involvement of children in care and care leavers in the commissioning process
- CP2 Improving understanding of the demand for children in care services
- CP3 Better market and supply management
- CP4 Support for children and young people on the edge of care
- CP5 Ensure children in care assessment and case management pathways are effective
- CP6 Improving range and quality of services for care leavers

Further information and some suggested actions for each commissioning priority are noted below.

CP1 Maximising the involvement of children in care and care leavers in the commissioning process

This includes involving children and young people in:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving feedback about services • Planning and designing services • Specifying services • Selecting providers if there are any competitive tendering processes • Monitoring services
Possible actions	Consult with children in care during the consultation process to determine how they will be involved in each stage of the commissioning process

CP2 Improving understanding of the demand for children in care services

This includes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of trends and projections • Detailed analysis according to local area and teams and other factors such as deprivation and family circumstance • Robust financial planning which matches budgets with care plans • Using information from assessment and care plans to inform strategic commissioning
Possible actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producing an in depth needs assessment which estimates short term and long term demand for services • Setting up systems for ensuring individual needs and care plans are informing the strategic commissioning process • Producing in year and longer term budgets which reflect placement plans and anticipated demand for placements • Improved forward planning on placements including the estimated number of new LAC placements which will start in the next 3 years ie, the number, types and costs of placement we might expect

CP3 Better market and supply management

This includes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifying the range and amount of provision needed• Designing services to meet needs• Buying placements and contract management• Developing and maintaining provider relationships• Outcomes-based contracting• Ensuring cost effective services
Possible actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Producing a market position statement• Exploring different foster care and residential service models including finding ways to create more opportunities for siblings to be placed together• Making decision on whether to extend the block contract for residential care which ends in September 2012. This will take place in the context of the detailed analysis of demand for placements.• Consider extending the remit of the buyer service so it becomes first contact point for procuring all placements• Targeted active contract management against outcomes. Better defined requirements at the outset to avoid additional cost• Individual placement contracts for all leaving care placements• Ensuring value for money from expenditure on transport for looked after children• Developing a specification for the in-house foster care and adoption services• Further work on a more targeted marketing and recruitment strategy for Wiltshire foster carers based on the analysis of demand and supply• Review of Wiltshire existing skills fee criteria for foster carers• Reducing number of placement disruptions and moves• Improving timescales for adoption• Improving adoption and post adoption support

CP 4 Support for children and young people on the edge of care

<p>This includes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the appropriate type and amount of services is available to respond to level 2a and 2b needs ie. Services which respond to parents and children and young people when problems first arise and if problems appear to be longer term and are escalating • Edge of care services • Services which can undertake intensive work which will enable the child or young person to return home if appropriate
<p>Suggested actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of Family and Parenting Support Commissioning Strategy including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review of Crisis Intervention Team ○ Review of Family Support Service • Considering the Northumberland model for supporting vulnerable adolescents • Monitoring the impact of the CAMHS service on preventing LAC and enabling a return home • Mapping and extending edge of care options

CP 5 Ensure children in care assessment and case management pathways are effective

<p>This includes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality assessments and care planning • Well managed transitions between teams • Well managed transitions when a child returns home or young person leaves care • Appropriate systems in place for case management including panels which assist with decision making and monitoring care plans • Good support services which support good educational and health outcomes
<p>Suggested actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring systems in place for promoting good practice such as opportunities for case work discussions and peer audits • Improving quality of health assessments provided by external health services • Improved monitoring of education, employment and training • Staff training which involves children and young people in care and addresses approaches and techniques for working with young people • More support with schooling for those who struggle with this • Reviewing panels to ensure there is a strong focus on finding alternatives to care if this is appropriate

CP 6 Improving range and quality of services for Care Leavers

This includes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensuring best possible outcomes for care leavers in terms of life chances including finding suitable accommodation and education, training or employment
Suggested actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Further work on securing a good range of accommodation options• Continue to improve planning on moving from care to after care• Improve post 18 advice and guidance

Consultation question 10 *Do you agree with the commissioning priorities and suggested action identified in section 7.2? Do you have any comments, amendments or additions?*

Appendix 1 Terms of Reference of Children in Care Commissioning Group

NB. Agreed that the terms of reference would be kept under review

Purpose of the Children in Care Commissioning Group

To improve outcomes for children and young people in care by ensuring there are robust commissioning arrangements.

The Children in Care Commissioning Group will take an overview on the commissioning and planning of all aspects of services for children in care. This will include social care, education, health and services which prevent children and young people from entering the care system and assist with a return home.

Objectives

1. To co-ordinate and monitor the work of key children in care commissioning, planning and development groups. This will include making sure governance arrangements are clear, there is no overlap between the roles and responsibilities of different groups and that children and young people participate in the commissioning process.
2. To develop and co-ordinate implementation of the working draft of the Children in Care Commissioning Strategy. The Children in Care Commissioning Strategy will be reviewed and updated annually.
3. To ensure project plans are in place for key developments and to monitor implementation of project plans.
4. To take a strategic overview of children in care commissioning budgets including monitoring planned shifts in expenditure.
5. To ensure an appropriate supply of high quality placements and ensure statutory requirements and the needs of young people are met. This includes addressing equality and diversity issues.
6. To ensure services procured through the commissioning strategy are improving outcomes for children and young people in care.
7. To ensure children and young people are involved in developing, monitoring and updating the Children in Care Commissioning Strategy.

Membership

Julia Cramp	Chair, Service Director Commissioning and Performance
Sharon Davies	Service Director Children's Social Care
Lin Hitchman	Head of Children in Care
Rebecca Barson	Area Services Managers
Karen Reid	Virtual Headteacher
Yvonne Taylor	Divisional Director Children and Families Services Oxford Health Foundation Trust
Cecelia Wigley	Designated Nurse – Safeguarding and LAC
Blair Keltie	YOS Operations Manager
Karina Kulawick	Central SEN Services Manager
Tom Smith	Head Procurement and Contracts Unit
Angie Rawlins	Head of Housing Options
Marie Taylor	Finance
tbc	Voluntary sector representative
Jane Shuttleworth	Interim Project Manager Commissioning (responsible for managing work programme of the group)

Appendix 2 Summary of Key Consultation Questions

Consultation question 1 Do you have any comments on the purpose of the looked after children commissioning strategy outlined in section 2.1?

Consultation question 2 Are there any other strategies or plans which relate to children in care to add to the list in section 2.2?

Consultation question 3 Are you aware of any research studies or good practice which should inform the development of the children in care commissioning strategy?

Consultation question 4 Do you agree with the values which should underpin all services for children in care? Do you have any comments, amendments or additions?

Consultation question 5 Do you have any comments on the information included in section 4 on needs analysis? Please note any additional information you think should be included in the final strategy.

Consultation question 6 Do you have any comments on the financial information presented in section 6.1? Please note any additional information you think should be included in the final strategy.

Consultation question 7 Do you have any comments on the children in care service performance information outlined in section 5.2. Please note any additional information you think should be included in the final strategy.

Consultation question 8 Do you have anything to add to the analysis of the current position outlined in section 6?

Consultation question 9 Do you have any comments, amendments or additions to the suggested outcome indicators noted in section 7.1?

Consultation question 10 Do you agree with the commissioning priorities and suggested actions identified in section 7.2? Do you have any comments, amendments or additions?

Please send any response to this consultation to Pathways@wiltshire.gov.uk.

For more information please contact Jane Shuttleworth, Interim Commissioning Project Manager by email jane.shuttleworth@wiltshire.gov.uk or by phone on 07764 583178.