

**Appendix 1**  
**Looked After Children (LAC)**  
**population**  
**7 sustainability projects**  
**Executive Cabinet**  
**27 November 2019**

# Challenges (1)

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- **To reduce the need for Local Authority Care, enhance prevention and improve progress through Care.**
- Drivers of current Looked After numbers include:
  - Impact of austerity. National and regional rises (particularly in older cohorts)
  - The impact of an Inadequate judgement - increasing referrals and lowering thresholds
  - Our previous notably low levels of LAC, Child Protection and Early Help activity
  - Entrenched and previously unaddressed issues leading to family breakdown- particularly neglect and domestic abuse.
  - Poor historical response from agencies, leading to significant “legacy” issues
  - A necessary period of focusing on getting basic statutory requirements in place
  - Capacity, stability and quality of workforce
  - A need for more practical support for families and children throughout the continuum of need- to prevent escalation.
  - No respite provision as an alternative to taking children into care
  - A lack of suitable provision locally to meet increased needs- to much out of Borough activity
  - Permanency planning which requires improvement

# Challenges (2)

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- **Stabilise current / move to permanence (incl. re-profile)**
  - We have too many children in expensive placements, and too many out of the borough. This is a combination of the age profile, complexity and level of need of our LAC cohort and a lack of suitable placements locally
  - Not enough provision for those on the cusp of family or placement breakdown- respite
  - Need for more and better local fostering placements (including specialist fostering and a creating a fostering friendly Borough)
  - A need for better mental health support to deal with the impact of trauma
  - A need for children to be able to stay in the Borough to be assessed and supported to go home wherever possible- assessment unit
  - Not enough support for families and children in their homes and neighbourhoods
- **Step down (safely)**
  - Too many children remain in care too long and only leave care at 18
  - A need to properly resource the effort to get children out of care earlier where safe and needs can be met
  - A need for a range of step down options- Special Guardianship Orders, fostering step up/ step down



# Case studies – demonstrate the complexity of need which exists and the impact of historic ineffective interventions/missed opportunities

## Case study 1

- 12 years old.
- 18 contacts and 4 referrals since 2010. CP once, then LAC.
- Domestic violence, chaotic parenting, poor mental health (parents and child), self-harm (incl. ODs), substance misuse, CSE risk, association with negative influencers (seeking belonging).
- Two residential placements. 1<sup>st</sup> - £4,100 week, 2<sup>nd</sup> (therapeutic) - £6,173 week.
- Therapeutic placement having a positive impact.

## Case study 2

- Two boys 14yrs and 17yrs
- 19 contacts and 6 referrals since 2012  
4 Children and Family Assessments which led to no further action. Child in need once and Child protection plan once now Looked After.
- Domestic violence, drug and alcohol misuse, neglect allegations of sexual abuse
- 14yr old in residential placement £3,500 but placement is fragile.
- Placement being sort for 17yr old to be in semi independence.

## 1 – EARLY HELP & PREVENTION AT A NEIGHBOURHOOD LEVEL

Create multi-disciplinary neighbourhood teams providing wrap around support for children and families

### **Key elements:**

- Creation of 4 neighbourhood teams in localities- social care, health, police, schools and voluntary sector working in partnership.
- Support provided in communities building on local assets, driven by local intelligence and woven into the neighbourhood.
- Providing wrap around support to prevent escalation.
- Safer, smarter, stronger model.
- Estates driven.

### **Resources:**

Four neighbourhood hubs

### **Other:**

Multi agency development and implementation Group/Board

### **Impact:**

Longer term reduction in need for higher tier/statutory interventions, including care

## 2 – FAMILY INTERVENTION SERVICE

Establish a Family Support Service to provide practical support and diversionary work to prevent admissions – de-escalating risk, across the continuum of need

### Key elements:

- Currently offer is Early Help and Edge of Care leaving a gap at Child in Need, Child Protection and LAC.
- New model to provide a broader offer across the continuum of need, from tier 2 through to tier 4, with a focus on ongoing not in/out support
- Support from 8am till 8pm on weekdays, and at weekends as well
- Same worker will support family when / if they move up or down the continuum
- Practical help – e.g. take people to appointments. Do with, not to.
- Family Group Conference model extended

### Resources:

£ 800,000

### Other:

Project Management  
HR  
Finance  
Work Force Development  
Estates

### Impact:

Medium term reduction in need for higher tier/statutory interventions including Care. Increased step down,

### 3 – TEAM AROUND THE SCHOOL PLUS

Speed up and enhance the role out the current Team Around the School model to all schools, colleges and nurseries (including PVIs)

#### **Key elements:**

- Enables schools to confidently support children and families preventing escalation and providing the right support at the right time
- Well established and well received by secondary schools- preventing the need to move into statutory services and improving outcomes for children and families
- Current plan is to have 60 schools on stream by December 2019
- Roll out to all schools, with a focus on getting more primaries on board.
- Also moving into pre school – supporting the very youngest.
- Investment needed to speed up the roll out/fully embed in schools through co-ordinator roles.

#### **Resources:**

£ 50,000

#### **Other:**

HR

Finance

#### **Impact:**

Medium term reduction in need for higher tier/statutory interventions, formal Early Help, Child in Need, including Care.

Increased step down, reduced step up, reduced repeat referrals.

## 4 – DUTY / LOCALITY RESTRUCTURE

Stage 1. Restructure the duty and locality teams to remove a step in the process  
Stage 2. Move to true locality working with teams based in each of the four neighbourhoods holding a neighbourhood based cohort / caseload

### **Key elements:**

- Closely aligned with Early Help neighbourhood model
- Aim is to reduce the number of changes of social worker children experience
- Four locality plus four duty teams currently centrally located, will merge and move out to locality in longer term
- Current arrangement = referral received at MASH, passed to Duty teams for assessment, then to Locality Team for intervention then to LAC team.
- Removes one handoff by combining duty and locality team functions.

### **Resources:**

£ – £ 0 (costs in longer term)

### **Other:**

Current base is Denton Centre.

Offices required in all four neighbourhoods.

Project Management

Estates

HR

Finance

Work Force Development

### **Impact:**

Improves continuity of worker, builds relationships, reduces reassessment and enables better management oversight.

Supports more effective case management for Children in Need, Child Protection and LAC, which in turn enables and supports cost avoidance and savings.

## 5 – POSITIVE FUTURES (RESPITE / ASSESSMENT)

Deliver a respite / short break facility, an assessment unit and emergency/short break fostering, supported by an outreach team/key workers. Objective to prevent placement breakdown, and to allow children to remain at home and avoid admission into care. Works alongside Edge of Care and Family Support Service – target 11years plus.

### **Key elements:**

#### Respite

- Up to 72 hour short breaks – planned and emergency
- Provides an alternative to taking a child into care to stabilise and support
- Key worker allocated and remains attached doing outreach work post-respite break.
- Speech and language; psychology and police (prevent criminalisation)
- Assessment with family, and further support through fostering service

#### Assessment

- 1 emergency and 3 assessment beds for up to 12 weeks, integrated with Key workers as above
- Reduces out of area placement and keeps connection with family and community
- Better decisions and oversight- clear focus on step, down less likely to remain in expensive out of borough placements, support through fostering

### **Resources:**

£ – £ 560K million

### **Other:**

Project Management  
Estates  
HR  
Finance  
Work Force Development

### **Impact:**

Medium term reduction in need for higher tier/statutory interventions including Care.  
Increased step down, reduced step up, reduced repeat referrals.  
Reduces number of 11 year plus entering Care

## 6 – FOSTERING SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

Increase the number of foster carers through a new model tailored to current need, cohort demographics and an enhanced payment and support model. Increase number of children with more complex needs fostered in Tameside

### **Key elements:**

- A modernised, fit for purpose fostering offer which keeps Tameside children in Tameside
- New recruitment and retention model
- Targeted recruitment for specialist foster carers (retainer payments)
- Change cohort mix to better match need and LAC demographics
- Work with businesses / partners – e.g. IKEA – with a buddy scheme
- Foster friendly businesses (recruitment from the staff – local placements)
- Out of hours support from Family Support Service incl. weekends. Plus access to Positive Futures
- Potential bid to Lottery fund for step/step down fostering model and looking at a collaboration across GM for Mockingbird model

### **Resources:**

£ – £ 150,000

### **Other:**

Communication Team

### **Impact:**

Increased number of Tameside carers for Tameside children. Increased number of children with more complex needs fostered in Tameside. Supports delivery of placement sufficiency – see No 7 below.

## 7 – PLACEMENTS REVIEW & SUFFICIENCY

Review all placements to ensure children are in the right placement, at the lowest possible cost for shortest possible time – whilst at all time maintaining safeguarding duty.

### Key elements:

- Management review of all LAC placements by end of 2019.
- Tackling drift and delay
- Multi-agency panel looking at cases with view to move to permanence
- Managed market – brokerage and QA (key to sufficiency plan) local and GM wide
- QA reduces readmission and future long term costs
- Additional business support for decision tracking to ensure actions followed up
- Maximise placed with parents and Special Guardianship Orders (with review post discharge)
- Earlier allocation of Personal Advisors (PAs)

### Resources:

£ – £ 630,000

### Other:

Business support capacity

### Impact:

Medium term reduction in need for residential placements for LAC. Move closer towards statistical neighbour placement demographics. Improved matching of placements to child's needs. Increased availability of step down placement options. Reduced number of LAC.

A multi faceted and coordinated approach is required, in order to safely and appropriately reduce the need for Local Authority Care. To stabilise the current cohort, progress children's through to permanency more effectively, step children down where appropriate and provide for a range of placements to best meet children's assessed needs. The 7 projects support these objectives as shown below.

	1 Early Help	2 Family Support Service	3 Team Around School+	4 Duty / Locality	5 Positive Futures	6 Foster Carers	7 Placements Review
Reduce in flow	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Stabilise / move to permanence		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Step down		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓

# Investment Summary

Sustainability Project Reference		Estimated Revenue Investment	Estimated Capital Investment
		£ Million	£ Million
1	Early Help & Prevention - Neighbourhoods		
2	Family Intervention Service	0.80	
3	Team Around The School Plus	0.05	
4	Duly / Locality Restructure		
5	Positive Futures - Respite / Assessment	0.56	0.95
6	Fostering Service Improvement	0.15	
7	Placements Review and Sufficiency	0.63	
<b>Total</b>	NB this currently includes an anticipated Health/CCG element to be agreed which it is anticipated will reduce this to circa 2.0M	<b>2.190</b>	<b>0.95</b>



# Invest / Resources

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- £ investment required – £ 2 million (approx.)
- Estates required (£ 950k capital budget already earmarked)
  - Respite facility
  - Assessment unit
- Business Support -additional resource for placement decision tracking and follow up

In support of the above there is targeted improvement activity in a range of areas, including:

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- The development and enhancement of the Independent Reviewing Officer role to ensure that robust oversight and challenge is provided to Looked After children's care planning and that permanency options are considered at the earliest opportunity
- The development of the role of Social Workers and managers in permanency planning to support the most effective progress of children through the care system and where appropriate exit to permanency



# Timeline and Impact

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The next three slides show firstly the proposed timeline for decision, planning, implementation and delivery of cost avoidance/savings for each project and secondly a projection of Looked After children's numbers and associated costs

It should be noted as detailed earlier that a multi-faceted and coordinated approach as proposed, is required, in order to safely and appropriately reduce the need for Local Authority Care. To stabilise the current cohort, progress children through to permanency more effectively, step children down where appropriate and provide for a range of placements to best meet children's assessed needs.

Impact on the Looked After population and associated spend will therefore be achieved by the cumulative impact of these measures in terms of the overall number, the demographics of the LAC cohort, the placement mix and the time spent in care

Projections below based on current 710, suggest that do nothing will lead to 784 LAC by September 2020. It is anticipated that the implementation of the 7 projects in addition to the range of activity already in place will reduce this projection to 748 by September 2020 following which a steadily reducing number of LAC is anticipated.

Whilst exact predictions are difficult to make given the number of variables, success will be measured by the cumulative impact of these measures on LA numbers and placement mix -we would therefore aim to:

- **Reduced the Looked After population to 650 by April 2021.**
- **Reduced the proportion of residential placements from 16% to 13% by October 2020**

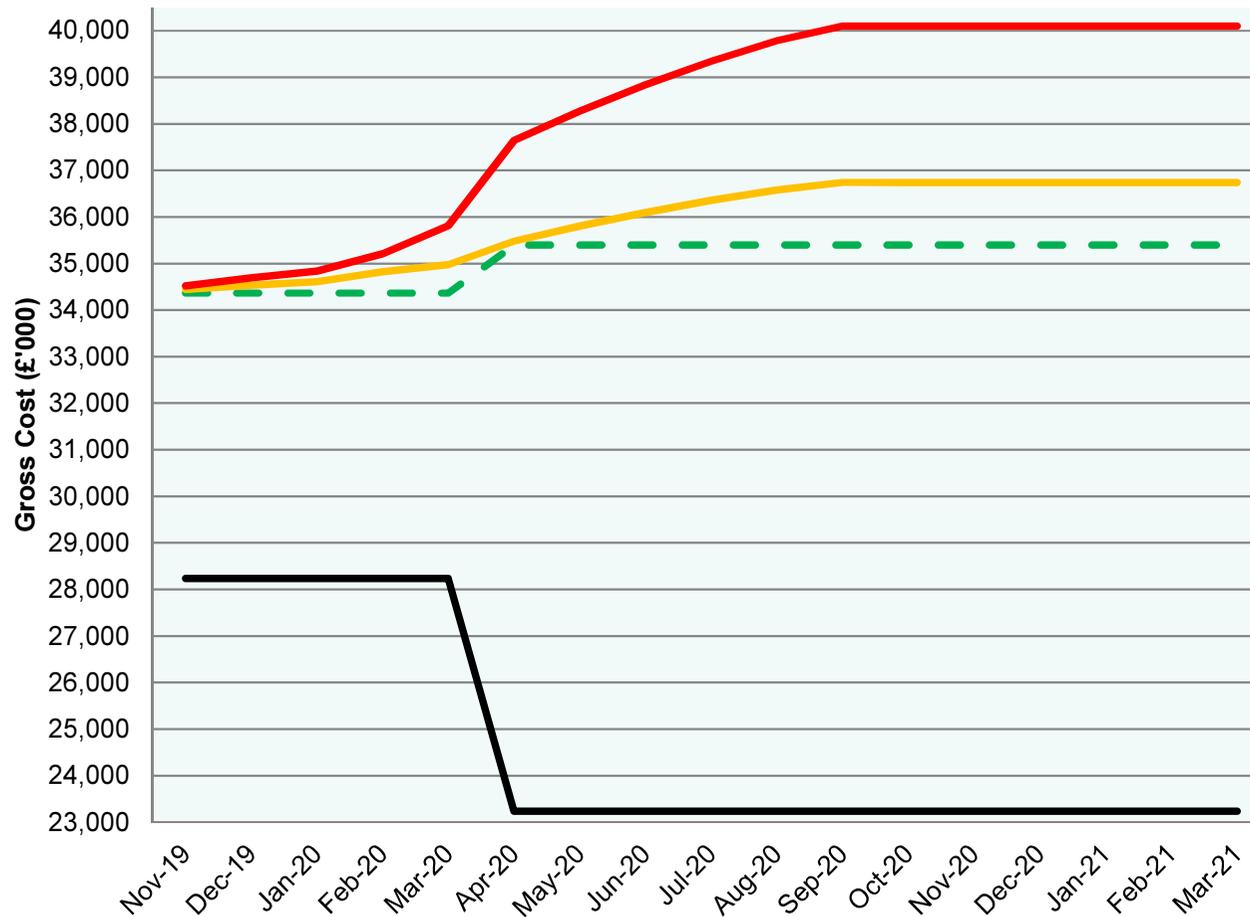


# Timeline

	Nov 19	Dec 19	Jan 20	Feb 20	Mar 20	Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sept 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21	May 21	Jun 21
1: Early Help			D	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	I	I	I	I	I	I	S	S	S
2: Family Support Service	D		P	P	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
3: Team Around School	D	P	I	I	I	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
4: Duty/Locality	D	P	P	P	P	I	I	I	I	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
5: Positive Futures	D					P	P	I	I	I	I	I	I	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
6: Fostering	D			P	P	P	I	I	I	I	I	I	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
7: Placements	D	I	I	I	I	S	S	S												

D = Decision. P = Planning. I = Implementation. S = Cost Avoidance/Savings.

# LAC Indicative Cost Growth



Case mix / placement profile is based on the last 30 LAC placements. This has been weighted more towards a Residential setting assumption for prudence purposes and taking account of current market capacity by placement type.

The current MTFP contains a Children's budget reduction of c£5m. This is being reviewed and updated in light of the current position and estimated future demand.

N.B. Rise at April 2020 = 3% inflationary increase

\*The figures do not factor in impacts of new initiatives at this

- Stabilisation at current numbers (710 CLA Placements)
- Midpoint growth assumption (Growth to 748 CLA Placements by Sept 2020)
- Potential growth to 784 CLA Placements by Sept 2020
- Budget

# Our Looked After Children (LAC) Population

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- LAC numbers currently at 710
- Assuming no change on last 6 months =
  - 756 by end March 2020; then
  - 802 by end of September 2020
- Add in benefit of above average number reaching 18 year olds in next 12 months =
  - 741 by end March 2020; then
  - 784 by end of September 2020
- Potential further benefit of moving to statistical neighbour placement profile in terms of age and placement type.