



MARKET POSITION STATEMENT June 2016

Placements for Children and Young People



PENINSULA COMMISSIONING AND PROCUREMENT PARTNERSHIP

INTRODUCTION

The Peninsula Commissioning and Procurement Partnership is a longstanding collaboration between Cornwall Council, Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council, Somerset County Council and Torbay Council.

The Peninsula Partnership has been collaborating on the commissioning and procurement of independent sector fostering, children's homes and day and residential special school placements since 2006. The authorities jointly tender for services and co-operate on the monitoring of the quality of provision. The most recent Peninsula placements tender took place in 2012 and there have been regular opportunities for new providers to apply to join the frameworks or for existing providers to add provision.

The spend on the current framework contracts in 2014/15 was £68 million, compared to £64 million in 2012/13

Peninsula member authorities do not procure and commission all the services they provide for children and young people together. Areas for collaboration are identified and range from the sharing of information and good practice to joint procurement. Member authorities also work together in other ways to achieve positive outcomes for children and young people, for example through partnership working and integration with the Clinical Commissioning Groups, and collaborations such as Adopt South West.

The current frameworks expire in March 2017. This Market Position Statement is the basis upon which the Peninsula Authorities will shape the placement provider market during the tender of 2016/17 and beyond, to meet the needs of local children and young people. This document provides information about levels of need for Peninsula children and young people, an analysis of areas of strength and development under the current frameworks, as well as indicative future commissioning intentions.

This is the second Market Position Statement to be produced by the five Peninsula Authorities and demonstrates our continuing commitment to working closely with providers to secure sufficient supply and quality of placements.

The provision of quality care through safe and stable placements for children and young people is a key statutory function of all local authorities. The impact of living in a caring, aspirational and robust environment surrounded by caring and skilled adults and peers cannot be underestimated; research shows this is one of the building blocks for a solid base on which to overcome trauma, mature and grow into healthier, happier adults. Conversely, the devastation caused by repeated placement failures is far-reaching, including non-engagement with education, employment or training, vulnerability in relationships with peers or adults and poor mental health. Placement failure demoralises carers and staff, leading in some cases to them leaving their profession.

The table below illustrates the national challenges of working with vulnerable children and young people and achieving positive outcomes which will sustain them through to adulthood and beyond.

GCSE results for looked after children remain 40 percentage points below the average for children who are not looked after

In March 2015 39% of the 26,330 former care leavers aged 19-21 were not in education, employment or training, compared with 14.7% of all 19-24 year olds.

A third of the homeless population were in care at some point.

One in four people in prison have been in care

70% of adult sex workers have been in care

“We’d like professionals to do what they say they are going to do, to listen to us and fight for us”

Children and Young People's
10 Wishes,
Plymouth City Council

Sources: Department for Education, Centre for Social Justice, Spring Consortium Interim Learning Report

We know that achieving positive outcomes for complex children and young people is a significant challenge and that the right placement is just one factor of many to progress outcomes. We need a team around the child approach that reflects a strong partnership with education, health and care providers to make positive changes for vulnerable children and young people.

There is a mixed market for placements in the South West; the Peninsula Authorities all operate a range of in-house services alongside commissioning provision from external providers. Local authorities and providers are subject to regulation and inspection regimes affecting the quality and availability of placements. External providers are also impacted upon by local authority strategies – recent examples include recruiting more in-house carers, the creation of internal parent and child services, commitment to Staying Put and Special Guardianship. Providers are key partners for local authorities as part of a mixed market in providing safe and nurturing placements for our most vulnerable children and young people.



TERMINOLOGY

Peninsula Authorities – Devon County Council, Somerset County Council, Torbay Council, Plymouth City Council, Cornwall Council

Current Peninsula Contract Area – the wider south west region, including the Peninsula Authorities and Wiltshire, Dorset and Gloucestershire.

**We will involve you
in decisions about
where you live and
make sure you are
given a choice about
where you live and
who you live with.**

The Pledge,
Devon County Council

WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE TELL US

The information below is taken from the Coram Voice Literature Review 2015, Children and Young People's views from being in care (Hadley Centre for Adoption and Foster Care Studies). Children and young people in care tell us they want to be treated like any other child or young person, with the same opportunities to have fun, make friends and learn.

Each LA has undertaken their own pledges to children in care - links are below.

The key messages from children and young people are:

- Make us feel wanted and liked – and treated equally as a part of the whole family
- Do “parent” us – we may say we don't want to go to school or engage with services, but we want you to encourage us and not give up
- We need boundaries – please don't leave us to make the big decisions for ourselves
- Help us to grow up – we want to learn to be independent but we need your help
- It feels like everything we say or do is written down – it's hard to escape feeling “different”
- Help us to get decisions made quickly – when they are delayed it is frustrating and upsetting
- Show respect and don't judge us for our past
- Give us time to build up trust so we can tell you our story – we need key adults to talk to.
- If we have to move placement, give us time to prepare, plan and visit so we aren't frightened

AND FINALLY:

- Celebrate what we can do rather than focusing on the things we get wrong
- Give us a second chance – like all children, young people (and adults) we won't always get it right first, second or third time

Useful web links:

<http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/plymouthpledge>

<https://www.standupspeakup.org.uk/the-pledge/>

<http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/childrens-social-care/mind-of-my-own-momo/>

http://www.torbay.gov.uk/index/yourservices/fis/adoptionfostering/childrenlookedafter.htm#corporate_parent_role

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/get-involved/volunteering/corporate-parenting/>

<https://www.standupspeakup.org.uk/get-started/>

Involve me, listen to me and take action for me

Corporate Parenting Pledge,
Somerset County Council



OUR JOINT ASPIRATIONS

The Peninsula Authorities will continue to require a broad range of placements from the independent sector to meet the needs of vulnerable and complex children and young people in the south west. Numbers of children and young people in care across the Peninsula have remained broadly stable since 2012, but the needs of this cohort are complex and inter-dependant. Managing the challenges in caring for complex children and young people and ensuring placement stability remain a priority for all Peninsula Authorities. Achieving stable high-quality permanent homes for vulnerable children and young people is at the heart of the Peninsula Partnership.

Achieving Value for Money remains a central directive for the Peninsula Authorities. Local authorities are increasingly required to demonstrate that public money is being spent well; significant reductions to budgets and variable quality of provision in the provider market put greater emphasis on achieving this. The aim is to only spend money on provision which makes a demonstrable difference to outcomes for vulnerable children and young people.

The Peninsula Commissioning and Procurement Partnership's vision is driven by the following five principles:

PERMANENCY

- Commitment to the principles of achieving permanence for children and young people, in whatever form is appropriate
- A focus on achieving a continuity of care and emotional stability for children throughout their childhoods, preparing for adulthood and beyond.
- Creation of further Peninsula collaborations such as Adopt South West to progress working together to achieve permanence for children and young people.

FAMILY-BASED CARE

- All children and young people should have the opportunity to live in a safe and secure family home where they are treated kindly and fairly
- There should be an agreed plan to support transition between placements, including the child or young person returning to their family, moving from residential care to a foster placement, on to supported lodgings or to independence
- All agencies should take a proactive approach in partnership with the child to support the delivery of family based care in all types of placement
- Carers and staff will be confident to proactively manage risks when placing children and young people to increase their resilience
- Sometimes children and young people may need to live without their peers, but will have opportunities through care planning for social interaction and re-integration as soon as possible.

I want to feel like it is home and I'm not just another statistic

Young person's feedback, Cornwall Council



QUALITY AND STABILITY

- Professional and resilient care for children and young people which evidences high quality aspirational parenting and positive role models
- Children and young people feel safe to disclose and share their lived experience through the provision of an empathic placement
- Carers are trained and supported to sustain placements through crisis, thus avoiding rejection of the child or young person and preventing placement breakdown
- Social workers work with providers to manage risk, develop plans and focus on stability
- Placement prices are transparent and offer good Value for Money for placing authorities, alongside progressing and evidencing outcomes.

We want to be cared for and treated with respect and warmth and to feel safe

Young person's feedback,
Torbay Council

SUFFICIENCY

- Placements are available within the south west to meet the full range of complex need
- Local providers will be supported and partners encouraged to develop provision
- High quality providers from outside the region will be encouraged to invest in the south west where needed.

PARTNERSHIP AND INTEGRATION

- A multi-dimensional approach to the child or young person with the right placement, education, health and social care all working effectively together to achieve outcomes based care planning
- Breaking down organizational barriers to ensure that teams working with children ensure robust care planning takes place within a culture of trust
 - Workforce development to ensure staff and carers are skilled and trained to develop resilience in working with complex children and young people.



REVIEW OF CURRENT SUFFICIENCY

The Peninsula Authorities currently collaborate to procure four framework contracts under a Dynamic Purchasing System to cover externally commissioned placements:

- Children's homes
- Independent Fostering Agencies
- Special schools
- 16-25 accommodation and support

Currently, all placement provision must be within the wider south west – including Dorset, Gloucester, Somerset, Devon, Torbay, Plymouth and Cornwall. This is known as the Current Peninsula Contract Area.

Parent and child and welfare secure placements are currently spot purchased by the Peninsula Authorities.

The table below shows the average number of placements commissioned by the Peninsula Authorities. Appendix One shows a breakdown of the same information by local authority. Parent and child and welfare secure placements are currently spot purchased outside the Peninsular Frameworks.

Type of provision	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Fostering	474	503	544
Residential	109	162	176
Special Schools	58	222	228
16-25 accommodation	20	33	95
Parent and child – residential and fostering	23	27	28
Welfare Secure	10	10	8

The Peninsula frameworks have achieved improvements in a number of areas:

- The number of provisions on the frameworks has increased from 49 in April 2013 to 231 in March 2015
- Existing providers have been willing to invest in new provision, alongside new providers entering the market
- The quality of provision is checked and challenged through site visits and a more rigorous Ofsted inspection regime, particularly for residential care and special schools; providers are offered support from the Peninsula as part of the journey to improvement
- Unregulated 16+ accommodation and support has been brought under a quality assurance framework, with additional checks carried out before provision is accepted onto the frameworks.

CHILDREN'S HOMES

Residential Children's Homes predominantly cater for adolescents, although younger children are at times placed in this provision. These children and young people have a broad range of needs, such as mental health difficulties and challenging behaviours. Understanding the co-dependencies of these needs and enabling their engagement with support and education is critical to placement stability.

A common challenge is in difficulty settling into a family based placement; due to the trauma of their lived experiences children and young people in residential care often find it difficult to form attachments with new adults in a "parenting" role. Living with peers can also prove to be problematic. These young people often find it difficult to invest in and engage with other support services.

Peninsula Framework Contract Provision:

- In April 2013 there were 11 providers with 36 homes (13 homes were outside the borders of the Peninsula Authorities)
- In December 2015 there were 25 providers with 103 homes (24 homes are outside the borders of the Peninsula Authorities)

Whilst the number of residential children's homes on the Peninsula frameworks has more than doubled since April 2013, the majority of this provision already existed. Growth has been slow but steady; fewer than ten new homes have been opened in the region since 2013 but the rate of closure has been low.

There are a large number of children's homes on the current Peninsula provider list which are sited in Somerset and Devon, with more limited supply in Plymouth, Cornwall and Torbay.

Somerset	35 (98 beds)
Devon	28 (76 beds)
Torbay	4 (6 beds)
Plymouth	5 (7 beds)
Cornwall	2 (6 beds)

The Peninsula has seen an increase in the use of residential placements since 2013/14. In Cornwall this is largely due to the closure of in-house provision in 2014.

Demand outstrips supply, especially for those with multiple and complex needs, with children being placed in residential care outside the South West

This trend needs to be urgently addressed. Analysis of 58 Peninsula children and young people placed in high cost residential homes "at distance" (more than two local authorities' away from the home authority) in August 2015 shows that their main presenting needs were physical aggression, challenging behaviours, self-harm and mental health.

What works well

- Examples of strong partnerships which have enabled step down from residential to 16+ or family based placements
- Providers support young people to enable their voices to be heard in care planning processes and acting as advocates if needed
- Providers work well with the Peninsula Authorities to improve quality and design future provision to meet local need

Opportunities for development

- Access to local provision to meet children's needs
- Homes with quality education provision available nearby - either through the provider's own provision or via links with alternative provision
- Create joint planning and resources across care, health and education
- Crisis and assessment provision, with a time-limited assessment and planned approach to move-on
- Residential care for inter-dependent needs, including significant emotional and behavioural difficulties, mental health, eating disorders and self-harm
- Residential care to support step-down from Tier 4 and Welfare Secure
- Consistent programmes to support step-down into a family based placement
- Placements making use of the natural environment of the South West as part of activity based provision

Quality Assurance issues

- Ofsted reports have shown increases in inadequate judgments for leadership and management – the quality and resilience of staff remains an issue
- Poor matching, leading to placement instability and further challenge by Ofsted
- Resilience of placements, especially during crisis situations where the young person displays increasingly challenging behaviour. This often follows a young person making a disclosure related to their past experiences. Placement breakdown at this stage leads to a sense of further rejection
- Behaviour management approaches which either show a lack of consistency or a strategy which is not fully understood or supported by staff or young people. This has led to incidents of inappropriate restraint, or approaches which have escalated behaviour and anxiety. In particular, the response to autistic children and young people needs to be improved

- Repeated absconding from residential placements has been a source of anxiety to children's home managers, with escalation resulting in placement breakdown. Strategies and support including commitment to multi agency meetings are needed to ensure that staff teams remain resilient and motivated
- A number of residential children's home providers include therapeutic support as part of the placement offer. Scrutiny of this has shown that the support offered is of variable quality and not always linked to the specific needs of the child or young person. As a result evidence of clinical outcomes being achieved is also variable. This is impacted upon by the need for timely access to CAMHS for children and young people in care in the Peninsula area.



FOSTERING

All of the Peninsula Authorities operate in-house fostering services and hold the ambition to increase the supply of in-house foster carers.

Foster placements cater for a broad spectrum of interdependent need, from the aftermath of neglect through to more challenging behaviours including sexualised behaviour and risk-taking such as absconding.

There are 18 Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's) on the Peninsula provider list, offering family based foster placements across the Peninsula area. Placements are offered to children and young people of any age, from babies to older teenagers. The duration of placements ranges from time limited short breaks to long term permanently matched arrangements. The majority of IFA's also offer some form of parent and child placement, with or without assessment.

Traditionally the Peninsula Authorities use in-house foster placements for a range of need, with IFA placements being specifically commissioned to meet the needs of the more complex adolescent cohort. IFA's therefore target their recruitment campaigns accordingly, to attract carers without birth children or those where birth children are older or have left home.

Devon, Plymouth and Cornwall have seen rises in the use of independent foster placements since 2013/14. In contrast in Somerset there has been a marginal increase. In Torbay the use of independent sector foster placements has reduced by 49% between 2013 and 2015 through the recruitment of in-house carers. Plymouth's increased use of IFA placements in 2015/16 was largely for younger children and sibling groups, however plans are in place that seek to increase capacity in in-house provision for this group.

Peninsula Framework Contract Provision:

- In April 2013 there were 8 IFA's
- In December 2015 there were 18 IFA's

The fostering market has remained relatively steady during the current frameworks. A number of new entrants to the local market are concentrating on increasing their carer numbers.

The location of foster carers is generally well spread across the Peninsula, although there are fewer IFA carers in the Torbay area, and agencies report that it is difficult to recruit in the Exeter and Taunton areas.

Foster carers find it difficult to manage aggression, particularly towards birth children or others living in the home. Repeated allegations against foster carers or other children or young people also pose a challenge to placement stability. Due to insurance issues and the perceived level of threat, if a child or young person resorts to using weapons or setting fires the majority of foster carers will feel unable to continue with the placement. Another risk to placement stability is if a child or young person is excluded from education.

An analysis of a sample of 19 IFA placement breakdowns since December 2014 shows that three factors had a key impact on the reason for the placement breaking down:

- Specific aggression towards carer by child/young person
- Carer response to managing challenging behaviour
- Mental health of child/young person

Permanence is a key area of development for IFA's, with options including Foster to Adopt, Special Guardianship and shared care arrangements becoming more prevalent and supported by national legislation and guidance.

More recently, IFA's have been clarifying their position regarding Staying Put placements, where a young person stays in their former foster placement once they are 18 for a more phased transition into independence.

Both permanence and Staying Put, while achieving longer term security for the child or young person, has an impact on the remaining availability of placements to meet local authority need. Nevertheless, there is a need to ensure that young people have the option to stay put to ensure stability and a phased transition to adulthood.

What works well

- Ofsted performance of the IFA market has been broadly stable with good outcomes from inspections
- Providers are willing to work together to discuss issues and feed back to placing authorities
- IFA's are willing to provide or attend training on issues such as CSE and the Prevent agenda
- There has been a creative response to placement stability issues, with packages of additional support being put in place as part of a team around the child
- Providers committed to permanence for young people through the use of Staying Put and SGO's.

Opportunities for development

In broad terms local sufficiency is stronger in the fostering market than the residential market. However, the following are areas for development:

- Commitment to trialing more innovative models of foster care.
- Improving the resilience of carers in managing risk and escalating behaviour, particularly for adolescents.
- Developing carers skilled to accept children and young people who are stepping down from residential or welfare secure, with high level of support initially, and a phased approach to a reduction.

- Carers need to understand and commit to the principles of achieving permanence for children and young people in the broadest sense, from initial recruitment and induction and through onward training and development. Such placements could also include kinship care or shared care arrangements.
- Recruitment of carers able to support children with complex disabilities and sibling groups.

Quality assurance issues

The quality assurance issues in relation to independent foster placements correlate to the ability of foster carers to sustain placements during escalating behaviour and crisis. Similar issues are also seen in in-house fostering services.

- Support to carers can be inconsistent and of variable quality. Placing authorities are at times requested to fund additional support to carers which relates to the skills and needs of the adults in the household, rather than those of the child or young person placed

- The quality of carers varies, from those committed to fostering full time with a broad range of related skills, to carers where the placement on offer is less nurturing and dedicated, leading to difficulties if the behaviour of the child or young person changes
- The best fostering placements require strong partnership working, with the carers as key partners in this process. There have been difficulties with foster carers not committing to partnership working as part of a team around a child or young person.

An analysis of a sample of 96 IFA placements between December 2014 and December 2015 shows that during that time, the % of children and young people having three or more placements is 36%. This compares poorly to a Peninsula average across placements for children in care of 15.4% and nationally of 11%. While children and young people placed with IFA carers may have more complex needs than those placed in in-house provision, this is not always the case and does not wholly account for the discrepancy between the placement stability figures.





SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Independent special school provision in the south west ranges from smaller schools linked to a cluster of children's homes where day education only is provided, to larger sites with residential care available on the school site. Ofsted have changed their expectations of this market, with greater focus on the quality of the residential care being provided and this has led to some inadequate inspection judgements.

Special school placements are commissioned in various ways – as short breaks provision for children with a disability or complex health needs, or for day, weekly or termly education placements. They are also used for 52 week residential and education placements. Special school placements are used by children in care as well as those who are living at home with family or carers. There are also a number of special schools which cater for a specific disability, for example hearing/visual impairment.

The special school sector has seen a number of prominent closures since 2013 in the South West. While the number of providers and provision on the Peninsula frameworks has grown, this is more reflective of existing providers joining the provider lists. Growth in this sector has been very limited.

- In April 2013 there were 3 special school providers with 4 sites (all sites were within the borders of the Peninsula Authorities)
- In December 2015 there were 20 special school providers with 26 sites (5 sites are situated outside the borders of the Peninsula Authorities)

The main presenting needs of children and young people needing special school placements are physical disabilities, speech, language and communication difficulties, and emotional, behavioural, social and learning difficulties and disabilities.

What works well

- The South West region benefits from a number of specialist schools for children with disabilities which are nationally recognised.
- The offer of a range of types of placement, from short breaks to termly boarding
- There has been evidence of a creative response to young people, creating a bespoke curriculum which recognises the full range of a child's needs and talents

Opportunities for development

- Family based models of delivery with smaller homes clustered around off site education provision rather than larger more institutional establishments
- An adequate curriculum offer and a full timetable
- Understanding by all staff of the systems and processes of safeguarding and the need to work together with external professionals at all times
- A more creative educational offer available more quickly in a crisis situation

- Greater emphasis on prevention of escalation
- Focus on longer term inclusion in main-stream provision
- Clearer evidence of assessment and tracking pupil progress
- Improved focus on traditional academic achievement alongside a vocational and creative curriculum which develops the whole child and prepares them for employment through developing practical skills
- Support for the physical and emotional health and wellbeing of the child or young person, including sexual health and peer relationships
- Staff able to effectively manage complex disabilities and health needs
- Provision for high achieving autistic children and young people (both boys and girls) who require a quieter learning environment
- Provision for high achieving autistic girls who also have outward behavioural issues
- Short breaks provision for children with a diagnosis of autism.

Quality Assurance issues

Placing authorities want to see a clearer 'offer' from the special school market for children and young people; feedback is that the quality is not always clear and pricing structures are not clear

Providers need to better evidence the qualifications of teaching staff, assessments and tracking processes. There is also a need to evidence the hours and quality of education being delivered for individual children.

Where additional support has been requested it is not always clear how this relates to a current risk assessment, what any increased funding will buy or how the impact of this will be monitored.

Peninsula authorities report issues relating to behaviour management strategies, including the quality of de-escalation measures and the use of restraint. Improving safeguarding is a key area of development; providers have demonstrated a poor understanding of safeguarding processes and the need for effective communication with all professionals working with a child. Improvements in risk assessment processes have been key to embedding change.

16-25 ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT

16-25 support and accommodation was a new addition to the Peninsula frameworks in 2012/2013. This was to quality assure arrangements where accommodation and support was offered to those aged 16+, without being registered as a children's home, special school or foster placement. Providers will not be registered with Ofsted, but may be registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC), dependent on the level of care provided.

As this provision is unregulated it is an area of focused quality assurance for placing authorities, who need to be assured that support is of a high quality, delivered by experienced staff. The Peninsula Authorities ensure that additional checks are carried out on providers before they can join the frameworks.

Cornwall and Somerset do not commission supported accommodation and supported lodgings placements via the Peninsula frameworks. Cornwall has a strong local provider partnership with supported accommodation and supported lodgings to meet the needs of young people in transition to adulthood. Somerset also commission placements for this age group separately via Pathways to Independence (P2i).

This type of provision includes supported accommodation, supported lodgings and floating support. Provision ranges from large Foyer type provisions, to bespoke packages of support for individual young people in their own accommodation with a staff team. There are also placements in smaller houses of multiple occupancy, with staff providing a range of floating support hours according to need and risk. Support hours can be increased or decreased as the young person progresses.

In supported lodgings placements a young person lives in a family setting with a host. This type of arrangement is more akin to a foster placement, with hosts being assessed and approved by a management company. Hosts receive supervision, training and support with young people offered floating support to engage with education and training and build upon their independent living skills.

The numbers of 16-25 providers on the Peninsula frameworks has grown significantly since 2013, so that supply now outstrips demand, especially in Exeter and Plymouth. The quality of provision in this sector is highly variable and improvements need to be made to understanding safeguarding, safer recruitment and positive behaviour management when working with complex young people.

- In April 2013 there was one provider with one provision (within the boundary of the Peninsula Authorities)
- In December 2015 there were 26 providers with 72 provisions (11 provisions are outside the boundary of the Peninsula Authorities)

Young people tend to be placed in 16-25 placements from one of three routes:

- Step down from custody, welfare secure and residential children's homes

- Late entrants into care – young people with additional complexity who are also homeless
- From foster and residential placements as part of a transition to adulthood and independence.

Young people placed (with the exception of supported lodgings) tend to express difficulty in living in a family based environment and a desire to either live alone or alongside their peers. They often have a history of non-engagement with services including education and therapeutic support. There is a tendency to have experienced substance misuse issues or having been involved in criminal activity. Young people will often over-estimate their ability to manage independent living and typically have poor self-care skills, including nutrition, sexual health and budgeting.

Supported lodgings providers report a more recent change in the cohort of young people seeking their placements; these are now more complex than previously as young people who would have been transitioned to supported lodgings are often seeking to Stay Put in their former foster placement.

What works well

- Providers have been willing to develop and adapt their provision through changing the skillset of staff teams or making changes to physical accommodation
- Providers have been willing to take a risk on accepting young people as a step down from Tier 4, Custody and Welfare Secure provision, achieving some very positive outcomes
- A number of providers have been willing to support and facilitate further step-down to independent living, advocating for the young person to ensure the timing of a move is appropriate
- Making use of previous staff experience in other childcare sectors such as residential care

Opportunities for development

- Improvements in standards of safeguarding practice, including safer recruitment and managing allegations
- More responsive service offer in a crisis/emergency situation to reduce the inappropriate use of bed and breakfast
- Greater skillset of staff in working with complex adolescents to provide support and challenge
- Skilled and consistent staff in responding to and working in partnership around risk taking behaviour including substance misuse and CSE
- Better tracking of outcomes, especially as part of transitions to adulthood
- Support with education and developing employability skills

Quality Assurance issues

The Peninsula Authorities report significant variations in the quality of provision; this sector requires the most development by providers to ensure that needs of young people are consistently met.

Recording and tracking systems range widely so that progress achieved cannot always be evidenced, while concerns are not made clear.

Providers are sometimes too passive in accepting the limitations that older adolescents in care can place upon themselves; there is a need for placements to be more aspirational and pose a positive challenge to overcome hurdles.

While this sector of the placement market has attracted some quality providers, it has also drawn in those with good intentions but very little real understanding of the challenges of this cohort. As a result there have been issues with poor quality of provision, a lack of skilled staff and weaknesses in understanding safeguarding, safer recruitment and how to manage allegations.

Supply of provision now outstrips demand, with potential new entrants to the market continuing to seek to open new 16+ provision in the south west. In some areas the market is now saturated, notably in Devon and Cornwall.

Smaller 16-25 providers report feeling isolated; as this sector often attracts smaller providers operating one provision it is recommended that existing providers form groups to provide peer support to one another and share good practice. Peninsula partnerships will seek to support this development.



PARENT AND CHILD

Parent and child placements (both fostering and residential) are not currently included in the Peninsula frameworks. Plymouth, Devon and Torbay have in place a Cost and Volume for Fostering contract which does include fostering parent and child placements, with and without assessment.

Demand for parent and child placements varies hugely and is difficult to predict, with trends for more placements being needed towards the end of the year through the winter months and into the spring. Both residential and fostering parent and child placements continue to be required, particularly for parents with learning difficulties. Decisions made by the Judiciary also have a significant impact on levels of demand for parent and child placements. It is acknowledged that the Peninsula Authorities need to work with the Judiciary to better explain local commissioning arrangements and quality assurance for parent and child placements.

Placing authorities are increasingly required to make decisions about permanence in a timely fashion, and this can prove challenging when working with families with complex long term difficulties. Quality of assessment is critical for this sector, delivered by experienced professionals able to present their findings in court if required. At times the quality and timeliness of assessments has been variable, leading to conflict with placing authorities.



WELFARE SECURE

The use of Welfare Secure placement remains low. These placements will only be used once the risks a young person presents to themselves or others is such that they cannot be managed at all in a community based placement. To be placed children and young people must meet secure criteria and senior managers and practitioners will work to prevent a young person escalating to this level.

Welfare Secure placements are currently spot purchased by each local authority, based on individual need. Devon County Council operates a ten bedded Welfare Secure unit, but nationally the supply of beds is falling and it is increasingly difficult to source placements. As a result the majority of Peninsula children and young people are placed a considerable distance from the south west.

For the Peninsula Authorities, there is an issue relating to the lack of provision to enable step-down from Welfare Secure. Joint planning is needed to enable risk management of children and young people as they step down – as a result placements are often made out of area.

The Peninsula Authorities wish to further reduce the use of Welfare Secure and enable children and young people to remain in their current placement in spite of escalation in behaviour and risk.



PENINSULA COMMISSIONING INTENTIONS

Market Element: Parent and Child Pre-Court and Court Ordered Assessments

The Peninsula Local Authorities will ensure access to high quality, timely pre-court and court ordered assessments that support Court decisions about children's permanency.

This will be delivered through implementing, for the first time, a framework contract for:

- Parent and child placements in residential family centres
- Parent and child placements in Independent Fostering Agencies
- Community based expert witnesses assessments for family proceedings

In commissioning these placements the Local Authorities will support the market to develop:

- Quality of Assessment
- Clear process for placement planning, including exit planning
- Achievement of value for money through agreeing schedule of rates

Market Element: Family Based Care

The Peninsula Local Authorities will commission a range of family based care options to ensure safe, stable placements that support children's journey through care, that support the child to understand their lived experience and enable them to achieve positive outcomes.

This will be delivered through a framework contract for Family Based Care to include:

- Pre-permanency placements – initial care placements prior to permanency decisions
- Placements to promote permanency and long term matching
- Respite/ Short breaks – for kinship carers, children with disabilities, including shared care arrangements
- Long term care for complex children and young people with a focus on resilience and placement stability
- Staying Put placements

In commissioning these placements the Local Authorities will support the market to develop:

- Clear pathways for permanence, including processes that support the option of Special Guardianship orders
- Clear processes to support placement stability
- Strategies to enable placement resilience
- Embedding the principles and expectations around Staying Put

- Transparency of pricing structures and the cost and delivery of additional support
- Delivery of value for money across the Peninsula
- Ability to position themselves appropriately in the local market through transparency about the plans for the Local Authority delivered Foster Care Services.

Market Element: Children and Young People with high risk/high levels of need

The Peninsula Local Authorities will ensure placement sufficiency through the availability of a range of high quality placements to support good wellbeing health and education outcomes for children and young people who are at risk of harm to themselves or others or present with significant emotional, developmental, behavioural and mental health difficulties.

This change will require a market development plan that ensures co-design prior to tender and the selection of providers and collaborations of providers to develop new models of care in partnership with the Peninsula Local Authorities. Models of care need to enable:

- Crisis response and assessment
- Placements capable of supporting children and young people transitioning out of Welfare Secure, Criminal Justice Secure and Tier 4 Mental Health Care
- Pathways and collaboration between residential, specialist family-based care and "step into independence" placements to ensure support for the journey of the child from crisis and trauma to recovery.
- The ability to purchase additional therapy for young people where necessary
- Clear quality education offer either operated by providers or through clear collaboration with local schools and alternative education providers
- Development of new provision to support improved sufficiency in the "Far South West" (Torbay, Plymouth and Cornwall)
- Consolidation of the supply of residential placements in Devon and Somerset
- In commissioning these placements the Local Authorities will support the market to develop:
 - The creation of pathways to ensure that children and young people with high-level needs are placed in the most appropriate provision as part of their journey through care
 - Support for the development of workforce
 - Clear processes for placement stability
 - Strategies to enable placement resilience

- Appropriate relationship with birth families to promote re-unification, where appropriate.
- Clarity of pricing structures and levels of support
- Delivery of value for money across the Peninsula

16-25 Accommodation with Support

It is not the intention of the Peninsula Local Authorities to commission this provision through the Peninsula Partnership from April 2017 onwards. Individual Local Authorities will take a local approach to ensuring children in care (16+) and leaving care can access an offer focused on engagement, building resilience and development of independence skills, as part of a systems approach across housing and care provision.

Special schools

There are significant changes expected in relation to Special Education Need and Disability expectations and Transforming Care Partnership that means that this is a market in transition.

In light of the development of local plans to respond to this change, it is the intention of the Peninsula Local Authorities to develop an integrated set of expectations across education, health and care for market re-development, setting out the expectations for the future of this market.

In the context of this development the Peninsula Local Authorities will continue to ensure improvement in quality and value for money through letting a framework contract for the purchasing of placements for those with complex or specialist care needs, including:

- Term time or 52 week residential placements
- Residential Short Breaks
- School day placements.



CONCLUSION

The Peninsula Authorities are wholly committed to achieving the best possible outcomes for children and young people. Finding and sustaining the right placement is a key part of this commitment. We will work with our placement providers to develop and continually improve provision to meet a wide range of needs locally.

We are committed to partnership working across all agencies, with our placement providers as a key part of this dynamic. We will support improved communication between placement staff, social work teams and partner organisations. We will offer oversight of provider quality and future service improvement through contract monitoring, relevant use of the suspensions protocol and business development discussions. We will encourage the development of peer networks, so that providers can share ideas and examples of good and outstanding practice. We will facilitate opportunities for workforce development to support our providers in recruiting high quality and dedicated staff.

The Peninsula Authorities are dedicated to ensuring stability and security for our children and young people; this will drive our future commissioning and procurement activity through 2016/17 and beyond.





APPENDIX ONE

INDEPENDENT PLACEMENT USAGE – TRENDS BY LOCAL AUTHORITY

All figures represent the average number of placements made at any one time.

Somerset County Council:

Provision	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Fostering	148	150	157
Residential children's homes	18	22	40
Special schools		161	160
16-25 accommodation	NA	NA	NA
Parent and child – residential and fostering	9	17	7
Welfare Secure	0	0	Under 5

Devon County Council:

Provision	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Fostering	152	169	176
Residential children's homes	29	68	50
Special schools	23	16	Under 5
16-25 accommodation			61
Parent and child - residential			6
Parent and child - fostering			Under 5
Welfare Secure	7		Under 5

Torbay Council:

Provision	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Fostering	91	73	57
Residential children's homes	31	30	27
Special schools	Under 5	Under 5	Under 5
16-25 accommodation	8	10	13
Parent and child residential	Under 5	Under 5	Under 5
Parent and child - fostering	Under 5	Under 5	Under 5
Welfare Secure	0	0	0

Plymouth City Council:

Provision	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Fostering	58	73	87
Residential children's homes	23	29	23
Special schools	32	45	36
16-25 accommodation	12	23	21
Parent and child – residential	Under 5	Under 5	Under 5
Parent and child - fostering	Under 5	Under 5	Under 5
Welfare Secure	Under 5	Under 5	Under 5

Cornwall Council:

Provision	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Fostering	25	33	67
Residential children's homes	8	13	36
Special schools	72	72	96
16-25 accommodation	NA	NA	NA
Parent and child - residential	0	0	Under 5
Parent and child - fostering	Under 5	Under 5	Under 5
Welfare Secure	Under 5	Under 5	Under 5

APPENDIX TWO

ADDITIONAL DATA

Children's homes – use of out of area placements

Local Authority	Current residential placements	Number placed within 20 miles of the local authority boundary	Number placed outside 20 miles but within the Current Peninsula Contract Area (South West region)	Outside the Current Peninsula Contract Area
Peninsula	179	80 (44%)	45 (25%)	56 (31%)

Analysis of 58 Peninsula children and young people placed in high cost residential homes "at distance" (more than two local authorities' away from the home authority) in August 2015 shows that 25% had had 6 or more placement breakdowns in the previous three years. In terms of overall need, 50% presented with physical aggression, 40% with challenging behaviours, 32% had issues relating to self-harm and mental health, 26% were known to be victims of sexual abuse and 20% presented with sexualised behaviours.

Numbers of looked after children

Nos of children looked after at March 31 2015	March 2012	March 2013	March 2014	March 2015
Peninsula Total	2320	2345	2325	2330
Cornwall	480	463	440	440
Devon	710	693	685	700
Plymouth	385	373	395	395
Somerset	495	513	490	490
Torbay	250	303	315	305

Source Department for Education Sfr34_2015 Table LAA1: Children looked after at 31 March by Local Authority 2011-2015

Placement Stability - % children looked after with three or more placements 2011 to year ending 31st March 2015

Across the Peninsula as a whole the numbers of children moved three or more times in a year remains above national averages but varies between local authorities. The Peninsula authorities continue to work to improve placement stability.

%	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015
England	11%	11%	11%	10%
Cornwall	15%	19%	16%	15%
Devon	18%	14%	14%	13%
Plymouth	15%	15%	19%	19%
Somerset	13%	15%	12%	12%
Torbay	15%	13%	16%	28%
Peninsula Average	14.9%	14.9%	15.4%	17%

Source Department for Education Children in care and adoption performance tables 2015

Age of looked after children

Age bands	Cornwall	Devon	Plymouth	Somerset	Torbay	National	SW average
Under 1	30 (7%)	35 (5%)	20 (5%)	30 (6%)	20 (6%)	5%	6%
1 - 4	45 (10%)	85 (12%)	65 (16%)	75 (15%)	40 (13%)	15%	13%
5 - 9	65 (15%)	105 (15%)	70 (18%)	85 (17%)	70 (23%)	21%	18%
10 - 15	195 (45%)	285 (41%)	140 (35%)	200 (41%)	115 (38%)	37%	40%
16 +	105 (24%)	195 (27%)	105 (26%)	100 (21%)	60 (19%)	22%	23%

Source Department for Education Sfr34_2015 Table LAA5: Children looked after at 31 March by age, gender and Local Authority

Children who started to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2015

Age bands	Cornwall	Devon	Plymouth	Somerset	Torbay	National	SW average
Under 1	55 (24%)	60 (17%)	35 (17%)	65 (17%)	25(21%)	19%	19%
1 - 4	55 (23%)	70 (21%)	50 (21%)	55(24%)	30 (26%)	19%	23%
5 - 9	35 (15%)	55 (15%)	30 (15%)	45 (16%)	20 (18%)	18%	16%
10 - 15	80 (33%)	125 (36%)	45 (36%)	90 (24%)	35 (30%)	29%	32%
16 +	15 (6%)	40 (12%)	40 (12%)	30 (20%)	5 (6%)	15%	11%

Source Department for Education Sfr34_2015 Table LAC2: Children who started to be looked after during the year ending 31 March by gender and age on starting

Looked after children placed over 20 miles out of the local authority boundary March 31st 2015

Authority	Number	%
Cornwall	55	13%
Devon	30	4%
Plymouth	50	12%
Somerset	100	20%
Torbay	85	28%
England Ave	-	14%

Source Department for Education Sfr34_2015 Table LAA6: Children looked after at 31 March by distanced between home and placement and locality of placement

APPENDIX THREE

DRIVERS

“Section 22G requires local authorities, so far as is reasonably practicable, to ensure that there is sufficient accommodation for those children that meets their needs and is within their local authority area”

Children Act 1989

The following legislation and regulatory requirements support the need to secure high quality placements for children and young people, to meet a range of needs as close to home as possible:

Legislation/regulation	Relevance	What this means in practice
Section 22G of the Children Act 1989	Sufficiency duty	Requirement for local authorities to ensure there are enough placements available locally to meet the needs of children and young people.
Ofsted inspections and regulation of children's homes, special schools, fostering agencies and parent and child residential assessment centres.	Regulatory and inspection framework	Clear standards for delivery of service for placement providers. Local authority specifications for placements will use the national regulations as a key point of reference. Ofsted inspections of individual providers are used as part of performance management by placing authorities.
Southwark Judgement 2009	Duty to take vulnerable young people aged 16+ into the care of the local authority	Housing and Children's Social Care must assess vulnerable homeless young people to ensure they are offered the most appropriate service to meet their needs. If they are assessed as vulnerable they will be accommodated – the local authority should have placements available to meet need.
Children and Families Act 2014	Duty to support Staying Put placements	Introduced a legal duty for local authorities to support young people “staying put” with their former foster carer after the age of 18, as long as the local authority decides this is in the best interest of the young person.
Children and Families Act 2014 and the Special Educational Need and Disability Regulations 2014	Duty to jointly work with key partners in assessment and planning	Introduced the SEND Code of Practice. Education, health and social care professionals should work together to assess and make a plan for children and young people with a disability or special educational needs, which can be in place until the age of 25. Needs should be met and parents involved in decision making.
Care Act 2014	Duty to assess as part of transition arrangements for those with additional needs	Requirement for a “child's needs assessment” to be carried out where it is likely a child will have needs or require support when they are 18.
Children Act 1989, updated January 2015 (planning transition to adulthood for care leavers volume 3) Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000	Duty to support staying put placements	Local authorities must consider a more graduated transition to adulthood for young people in care.
Adoption and Children Act 2002/ Special Guardianship Regulations 2005	Provides the legal framework for Special Guardianship Orders for children in care	The local authority has greater choice over permanence options for children in care if adoption is not the plan, as an alternative to long term care. This has an impact if the child is in an external foster placement and requires negotiation with the fostering agency.
NHS England Transforming Care, “Building the right support”	Sets out expectations for health-related planning and support for children and young people with learning disabilities and/or autism who have a mental health condition or challenging behaviour	Improve planning – both short and long term through identification of need and planning including for transition to adulthood. There is also a drive to increase community provision and reduce inpatient services and out of area placements by March 2019.

APPENDIX FOUR

USEFUL WEBLINKS

<http://www.traumarecoverymodel.com/>

<https://www.rip.org.uk/news-and-views/latest-news/evidence-scope-risks-in-adolescence/>

http://www.barnardos.org.uk/bouncing_back_resilience_march09.pdf

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright/national-practice-model/my-world-triangle>

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