



SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL
Children, Schools & Families Directorate
LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN
COMMISSIONING STRATEGY

2013-2015

Foreword

Surrey County Council is committed to the commissioning of targeted, high quality services for all its residents. We recognise that Looked After Children and those leaving care are amongst the most vulnerable within our society and aim to ensure that for those children and young people, their life experiences and chances are enhanced by our care and support.

The Looked After Children's Commissioning Strategy outlines what we know and continue to learn about the needs of our looked after children. It describes what we do and intend to do, to support them. It has been designed as a link to the priorities contained within the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2014/15 and the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2012.

It also acknowledges the recent research and recommendations made by the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) in April 2013 and the content of the Association of Directors of Children's Services – 'Care Inquiry'.

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1. Introduction

In Surrey we believe that for most children and young people the best place to live and grow up is with their family of origin and wherever possible we will support parents and or the extended family who need our assistance to do this.

It is our vision that:

Every child and young person will be safe, healthy, creative and have the personal confidence skills and opportunities to contribute and achieve more than they thought possible.

Some children and young people cannot live with their family of origin and they need to live in an alternative setting, either for part of the time or all of the time.

Looked after children and care leavers in Surrey are amongst the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in our community. In order to ensure the best possible outcomes for them, it is a council priority that the right services and the right support at the right time, are provided.

Surrey County Council is committed to the commissioning of targeted, high quality services to provide substitute parenting and accommodation for these particular children and young people, commissioned directly from services within the council or from other public, private and voluntary, not for profit organisations.

The purpose of this commissioning strategy is to understand and plan for the current and future needs of our Looked After Children, Young People and Care Leavers and also those at risk of becoming looked after.

We aim to ensure that we

- Listen to the experiences of Looked After Children, care leavers and those on the edge of care,
- Design and deliver appropriate services in response to their needs
- Address the inequalities they face by constantly reviewing the services we offer.

2. Background

Over the past 14 years there has been a major legislative programme aimed at improving outcomes for vulnerable children with a particular emphasis on Looked After Children and Young People, including Quality Protects in 1998 and Every Child Matters and Care Matters programmes. These have set high expectations for local authorities to improve outcomes for Looked After Children and Young People by ensuring placement choice, stability, excellence in education and dedicated health services. All of these factors support and ensure the best outcomes for young people as they move into adulthood.

Nationally there has been a significant rise in the numbers of children entering the care system, both through legal and voluntary routes. This is a reflection of the numbers of children subject to safeguarding procedures, where numbers have risen significantly following national incidents such as the death of baby Peter and the ensuing reviews and reactions, as well as the improved multi agency working which has led to earlier and better identification of children who are at risk of harm.

In addition there has been a rise in the number of teenagers entering care following family breakdown. This is due to a range of reasons including increased instability for families from divorce and step families, changing expectations of both families and young people, shortage of jobs and opportunities as well as poverty and neglect.

As demand increases, needs become more complex and the desire for stability and permanency rise. There is a local and national shortage of foster carers and competition between the public and the private sector to provide foster care placements.

Recent research Quality Matters in Children's Services (Every Child Matters 2009) indicates that despite high ambitions and a shared commitment for change the outcomes for children and young people who are Looked After and for Care Leavers have not sufficiently improved and there remains a significant gap between the quality of their lives and those of all children.

Therefore a critical aspect of service development is the need to effectively plan and commission services based on evidence based needs analysis with our colleagues, partners and a range of stakeholders, including children and young people. This is an essential means to deliver improved outcomes and cost effective services.

3. Commissioning

Commissioning is the process for deciding how to use the total resource available in order to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families in the most efficient, effective, equitable and sustainable way. (Commissioning Support Programme, 2009)

In Surrey we are moving towards becoming a commissioning led Council and a Commissioning Framework for the Council has been developed which supports our commissioning approach across all services within the Children, Schools and Families Directorate.

Underpinning our approach is the traditional UPDR model of commissioning (UNDERSTAND, PLAN, DO, REVIEW) but critical to the success in Surrey will be our ability to place our children and their families at the centre of our outcome focussed approach.

The Looked After Children's Commissioning Strategy outlines what we know and continue to learn about the needs of our looked after children. It describes what we do and intend to do, to support them. It has been designed as a link to the priorities contained within the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2014/15 and the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2012.

It also acknowledges the recent research and recommendations made by the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) in April 2013 and the content of the Association of Directors of Children's Services – 'Care Inquiry'.

The LAC Commissioning Strategy focuses on delivering the aims and objectives of our Corporate Parenting Strategy:

Knowing who you will live with:

We will put creative, effective, preventative approaches in place to explore alternatives before a child becomes looked after. Where this is not possible our focus is to ensure permanence, through a range of routes, for all our children

We recognise that to achieve this permanency plans need to be completed in good timescales and be of a high quality.

Belonging:

We will make sure that all our children and young people who are placed outside Surrey receive the same level of support as those live in the county

Aiming High:

We are committed to ensuring that all our looked after children's achievement rate is the same as their peers. We will improve educational achievement, training opportunities and employment options

Our Carers:

We are dedicated to getting the right people with the right skills looking after our children and young people. We will achieve this through a comprehensive recruitment strategy that works creatively with our community to provide increased numbers of carers

4. Legislation and Guidance

The following primary legislation governs our commissioning in relation to Looked After Children and Young People:

- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Care Standards Act 2000 (regulates delivery of residential, foster care and adoption)
- Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Sufficiency: Statutory guidance on securing sufficient accommodation for looked after children (2010)
- Guidance on the Provision of Accommodation for 16 and 17 year old young people who may be homeless and/or require accommodation (2010)
- Care Planning, Placement and Review Regulations (2010)
- Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (2010)
- Health & Social Care Act 2012

The following national guidance and regulation guides us in relation to high quality service delivery:

- Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 Children Act 2004 (2005)
- Personal education allowances for looked after children: Statutory guidance for local authorities (2008)
- Statutory guidance on promoting the health and well-being of looked after children (2009)
- Improving the educational attainment of children in care (looked after children) (2009)
- SCIE/NICE recommendations on looked after children: Promoting the quality of life of looked-after children and young people (2013)
- Department of Health, NHS Outcomes Framework 2013-14 (2012)
- Department of Health, Improving Outcomes and Supporting Transparency: A public health outcomes framework for England, 2013-16 (2012)
- Report of the Children and Young People's Healthy Outcomes Forum (2012)
- The Care Inquiry (2013)

5. National and Local Context

This statistical first release (SFR) provides information at national and local authority (LA) level on the outcomes for children who have been looked after continuously for at least 12 months at 31 March 2012¹.

National Picture

¹ DfE: Children Looked After by Local Authorities in England (including adoption and care leavers) year ending 31 March 2012. Available at: <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001084/index.shtml>

- There were 67,050 looked after children at 31 March 2012, an increase of 2 per cent compared to 31 March 2011 and an increase of 13 per cent compared to 31 March 2008.
- Of children looked after at 31 March 2012, 50,260 were cared for in a foster placement. This represents 75 per cent of all children looked after at 31 March 2012.
- There were 28,220 children who started to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2012. This represents an increase of 3 per cent from the previous year's figure of 27,500 and an increase of 21 per cent from 2008.
- There were 27,350 children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2012. This is a small increase of 1 per cent from 2011 and an increase of 12 per cent from 2008.
- There were 3,450 looked after children adopted during the year ending 31 March 2012. This was the highest figure since 2007 and an increase of 12 per cent from the 2011 figure.

The health and wellbeing of looked-after children and young people – that is, their physical health, and social, educational and emotional wellbeing – is influenced by nearly all aspects of their lives and the care they receive. Experiences early in life may have long-term consequences for health and social development. Some looked-after children and young people have positive experiences in the care system and achieve good emotional and physical health, they do well in their education and go on to have good jobs and careers.

However, looked-after children are more likely to have experienced deprivation and poverty as a result of low family income or parental unemployment. About 60% of children and young people who are looked after in England are reported to have emotional and mental health problems and a high proportion experience poor health, educational and social outcomes after leaving care. The main reason for children and young people entering care in the year up to April 2012 was abuse or neglect (reported in 62% of cases). Looked-after children and young people should expect to have the same opportunities as other children and young people, including being healthy and safe. They should be provided with the opportunities needed to help them move successfully to adulthood. The needs of looked-after children and young people vary, but are often complex, and can be met only by a range of services operating collaboratively across different settings.

Local Picture in Surrey

The following summary is taken from the Looked After Children Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2013). The strategy should be read in conjunction with the JSNA which can be viewed in more detail:

<http://www.surreyi.gov.uk/ViewPage1.aspx?C=resource&ResourceID=1029&cookieCheck=true>

- There were 835 looked after children at 31 March 2013, an increase of 2.2 per cent compared to 31 March 2012 and an increase of 0.5 per cent compared to 31 March 2009.
- Of children looked after at 31 March 2013, 634 were cared for in a foster placement. This represents 76 per cent of all children looked after at 31 March 2013.
- 9.6%² of Surrey's looked after children were living in a residential children's home (September, 2013) which compares with 8% as at 31 March 2012. *The national average in 2012 was 7%.*
- There were 306 children who started to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2013. This represents a decrease of 17% from the previous year's figure of 370.

² Snapshot data as at 16 September 2013: Nb data was cleaned to compare with national benchmarks to not include residential schools or specialist placements.

- There were 258 children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2012. This is a decrease of 15% from 2011.
- There were 47 looked after children placed for adoption during the year ending 31 March 2013. There were also 35 children and young people adopted in 2012; this was the highest number of adoptions since 2007 and an increase of 12 per cent from the 2011 figure.

Key issues

- **Increasing volumes** – Trends of looked after children both in Surrey and nationally are rising and it is reasonable to expect this to continue. This may have significant resource implications and present issues in terms of providing suitable accommodation for all looked after children.
- **Foster carers** – There is a shortage of foster carers in Surrey who can take children of all ages and genders, siblings and also unaccompanied asylum seeking children.
- **Specialist placements** – There is a need for specialist residential placements which cannot be met in-house.
- **Health and dental checks** - The number of looked after children who received health and dental checks at the end of March 2012 was below levels of statistical neighbours in 2010/11. Health assessments play a key role in preventing ill- health in looked after children and promoting positive wellbeing through identifying emerging health issues.
- **Out of county offending** – Surrey’s looked after children placed out of county are far more likely to enter the criminal justice system than those who continue to reside in Surrey.
- **Education** – Surrey’s looked after children perform well compared to their looked after peers in other local authorities, but there is a considerable gap with their non-looked after peers. In 2011 the percentage of looked after children who obtained 5A*-C GCSEs in Surrey including Mathematics and English was 22% compared to 57.9% for non-looked after children.

6. Corporate Parenting – Our Strategy and Pledge

Our [Corporate Parenting Strategy](#) outlines our focus our values and our pledge to the children whom we look after. We want to ensure that they grow up having the same opportunities as their peers. We will have achieved this when our children leave our care with the skills to live successful and fulfilling lives.

6.1 Corporate Parenting

For Surrey, Corporate Parenting is overseen by the Corporate Parenting Board which is chaired by the lead member for Children and Families. It is a Board comprising of members, officers and partner agencies who hold responsibility for providing services to those in our care. The membership of the Board can be found within the strategy.

The Corporate Parenting Board has ownership of the Corporate Parenting Strategy which sets out our priorities for providing care. This Strategy was reviewed and renewed by the Board in 2012 through a series of workshops with stakeholders including children and young people.

The priorities from the strategy are as follows:

- To reduce the number of children who are coming into our care by ensuring the right services are in place to support children and families as early as possible
- To make sure that being in care is not a limiting experience for children and young people and we equip them for a successful and fulfilling future
- To increase the number of placements provided in Surrey, when children need to be placed with foster families or in residential care. This will reduce the number of children who need to move out of county
- To ensure that children who we place out of county are not disadvantaged but have the same chances as all our children and young people

Below the Corporate parenting Board there are four operational sub groups headed by the Corporate Parenting Operational Group and supported through area groups, to oversee the work to improve services and to monitor and track outcomes for looked after children. They ensure the targeted use of resources to improve placement stability, healthy outcomes, learning outcomes and leaving care.

There are a number of other complimentary Strategies and Plans in place that contribute to our overall Looked After Children Commissioning Strategy. These are:

- Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-14 (2013)
- Children, Schools and Families Strategy 2012-17 (2012)
- Health, Wellbeing and Safeguarding Plan (2013)
- Placement Strategy 2013-15 (2013)

6.2 Our Pledge

In Surrey we aim to ensure that our looked after children know and believe in our commitment to them. We use our pledge to reinforce this.

Our Pledge to children and young people

- To care about you, be honest with you and keep you in mind
- Only make promises that we know we can keep and when mistakes are made to make sure we learn from them
- To provide you with somewhere to live, with people who care about you
- To involve you fully in plans about all aspects of your life
- To listen to you and take your points of view seriously
- To keep you safe and help support you to make the right choice
- To help you keep in touch with the important people in your life
- To ensure you receive excellent education and health advice
- To ensure your experience of care results in positive outcomes and prepares you for becoming an adult
- To help and support you to live independently when the time is right
- To make sure you know your rights and who to turn to when you need help
- To be there for you and do everything we can to make sure you are happy

7. Profile and Needs Analysis

A needs analysis is a way of estimating types of need and prevalence across a given population. This assists with planning and commissioning services, which are targeted to meet identified need. The needs analysis can help:

- Estimate the current and future needs of a population
- Indicate the geographical distribution of need
- Identify the gap between met and unmet need.

The Surrey Joint Strategic Needs Assessment along with the analysis of performance and activity data has supported the understanding of the needs of Looked After Children and Young People.

The following section provides an overview of the looked after population in Surrey and a summary of our performance.

The SSDA903 return collected for the year ending 31 December 2012 reports the following:

- The increase in Looked After Children and Young people rates in the South East, 47 per 10,000 population, are slowing down and remain below the average for England
- Surrey's rate 33 per 10,000 population, as at the end of March 2012, is one of the lowest in comparison to our statistical neighbours, except Buckinghamshire (32), Windsor and Maidenhead (30) and Wokingham (20) and below the regional (47) and national (59) average.

Further analysis reveals the following:

- The numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children have dropped in Surrey from 105 in 2009 to 55 last year however Surrey's figures are above the average for the South East region.
- The number of Looked After Children and Young People has fluctuated in the period 2008 to 2012 from 795 in 2008 to a low of 730 in 2011 before a marked increase in 2012/13 to 835. All of Surrey's regional comparators have experienced rises in the numbers of children and young people they are responsible for.
- Surrey has 367 children placed in a variety of settings outside the county, of which 169 children are placed more than 20 miles from their home address and outside the county border. Whilst this represents 20.2 % of our children it is lower than the South East average of 28% and considerably lower than the national average of 35%

The profile of Looked After Children and Young People in Surrey at the end of December 2012 was:

- More boys are looked after than girls (55%/45%) the same as the national average and the children and young people were predominantly of White British origin.
- The highest number of Looked After Children and Young People can be found in the 10 – 15 age groups. This is broadly consistent with regional and national data.
- The main reason for children becoming looked after in Surrey is abuse or neglect which reflects the national and regional trend – further investigations have revealed that the main causes for these categories are linked to parental Substance misuse, - mental health and/or domestic violence, referred to as the 'toxic mix'. (Monroe, 2010)
- Children and young people are likely to be Looked After Children and Young People for over 12 months.

- The number of children who are looked after under short term placements has been significantly reduced from 130 in 2008 to just 10 in 2012.
- 40% of children and young people in Surrey's care have been accommodated under S20, which involves a joint parenting commitment between the council and the parent or carer
- Care cases close mainly due to children returning home to live with parents and relatives (30%)
- Of 305 children who ceased to be looked after in 2012, 35 were adopted. This is a drop from the previous year when 45 were adopted though this remains above the regional average of 26 children per year.

8. Overview of Services and Interventions

8.1 Early Help

The early intervention and prevention approach is at the heart of our all our provision and a variety of services are delivered across Surrey by the Council and its partners, in particular the voluntary sector.

They include family support services delivered within the homes of vulnerable families with a child under 5 yrs, activities within the 58 Children Centres across the County and extend on occasion to short break, respite, and day and overnight support.

At the core of all these services is their ability to offer the right provision at the right time with many providing a continuum of support for a number of months.

It is recognised that some families may occasionally reach crisis point. Our Extended Hours Service is available during the evenings and weekends to assist families who need an immediate response at such time. Using a variety of approaches they work with families, signposting to other services where necessary; to prevent family breakdown.

In 2012 a Public Value Programme was launched to undertake a review of three specific service areas. 'Early Help', Children with Disabilities and Family Support.

The aim and objectives of the Early Help strand are as follows:

Aim

- To develop and implement an early help offer across services and agencies working with children and young people to improve outcomes and reduce the need for formal referral to children's social care

Objectives

- To Develop a 5yr Early Help Strategy 2013-17 that builds on the current 1 yr early Help Strategy, setting out a clear direction of travel, desired outcomes and approach
- To commission an Early Help service offer informed by strategy, need, outcomes, evidenced based practice and feedback from families
- To agree the tools and operational processes for accessing and delivering Early Help
- To develop a multi agency thresholds document agreed by partners

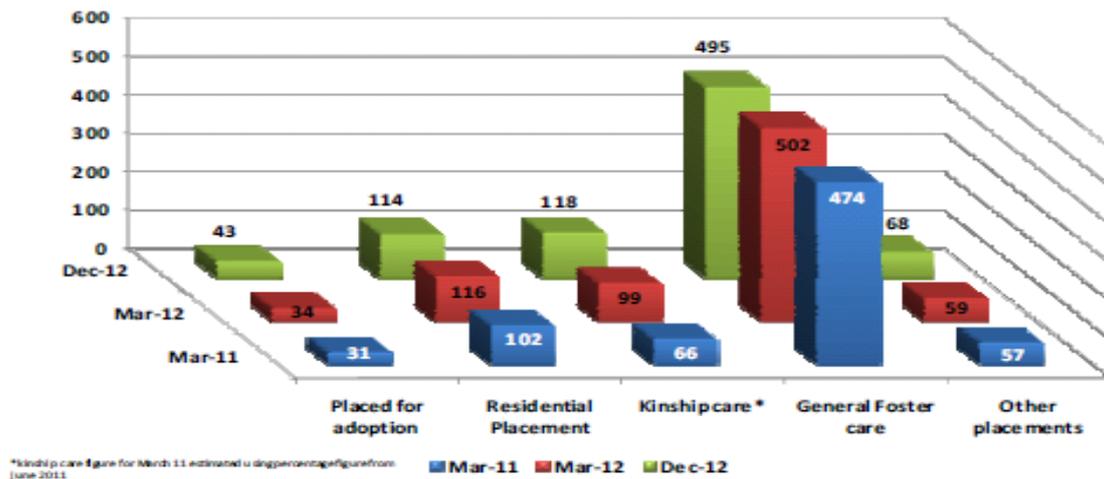
Initial findings from the programme are due to be published in autumn 2013.

8.2 Placements (foster care / kinship care / residential)

For a number of our children and young people in Surrey, living at home with birth families is not an option at present for a number of reasons. Once they move into care, children and young people are placed in a range of settings according to need. These include foster placement with general foster carers, foster care with extended family or friends (kinship care), residential school or care home or specialist placement such as parent and child assessment placement or supported lodgings. The Childcare Support Team (CCST) commissions and monitors the placements for children who are placed out of county. Appendix 1 includes our Surrey Placement Strategy 2013 – 2015.

Graph Four: Numbers of children in care by type of placement

Looked after children by type of placement
March 2011 - December 2012



Kinship care

Wherever possible (and appropriate) it is considered best to place children within their extended family. This is described as either kinship care or Family and Friends care.

Placement with extended family usually leads to better outcomes for children as their sense of identity is maintained and there is less disruption to their lives and relationships. Within Surrey there has been a noticeable increase in our use of kinship care, in line with national trends. This is due, in large part, to the changes in care proceedings through the public law outline and the requirement to ensure that consideration has been given to the potential for care by members of the child's extended family. In addition, the use of Special Guardianship Orders has led to some changes in care planning for entry into care and subsequently the exit route for permanency.

Foster care

Our numbers of children placed with general foster carers has remained stable with 474 in March 2011, 502 in March 2012 and 495 in December 2012. However, the age profile of our foster carers shows that our carers are at the older age range and we are not recruiting new carers in high enough numbers to compensate for this.

In order to ensure we continue to recruit and retain good quality foster carers since 2011 a number of initiatives have been launched including the Parent & Child, The Enhanced Fostering and the Children with Disabilities Fostering Projects. All represent initiatives to provide safe, supportive fostering environments for some of our most traumatised, challenging and vulnerable young people.

In 2012, the Council Fostering and Adoption Team launched a DVD made with Surrey Care Council and young people in care and during 2013 there will be a number of targeted recruitment campaigns to find carers for children with disabilities and also foster carers who are willing to care for siblings. Through the use of our improved fostering website and initiatives such as 'fostering fortnights' the number of foster carer's recruited remains steady, with the number of interested applicants subsequently becoming carer's increasing.

Residential Care

Surrey has a strong history of providing high quality residential care through its seven homes for children who are living in care. Through this provision we have been able to limit the number of young people needing residential care outside of the county other than for specialist placements because of particular disabilities or mental health needs.

The needs of children placed within a residential setting are varied but of the current 101 children placed the highest proportion (43) are in our care due to family disfunction or acute stress, followed by placement due to the child's disability. Please see appendix 2.

Whilst we are able to accommodate up to 40 children in our own provision, we recognise that our reliance on external provision is still an area that could be improved and is one that places significant burdens on our financial resources. During 2013 we will be undertaking a review of residential provision and the use of non maintained independent learning provision. This will be in conjunction with 16 other local authorities across the south of the country with the aim of developing a vibrant provider market that is responsive to need.

8.3 Adoption Service

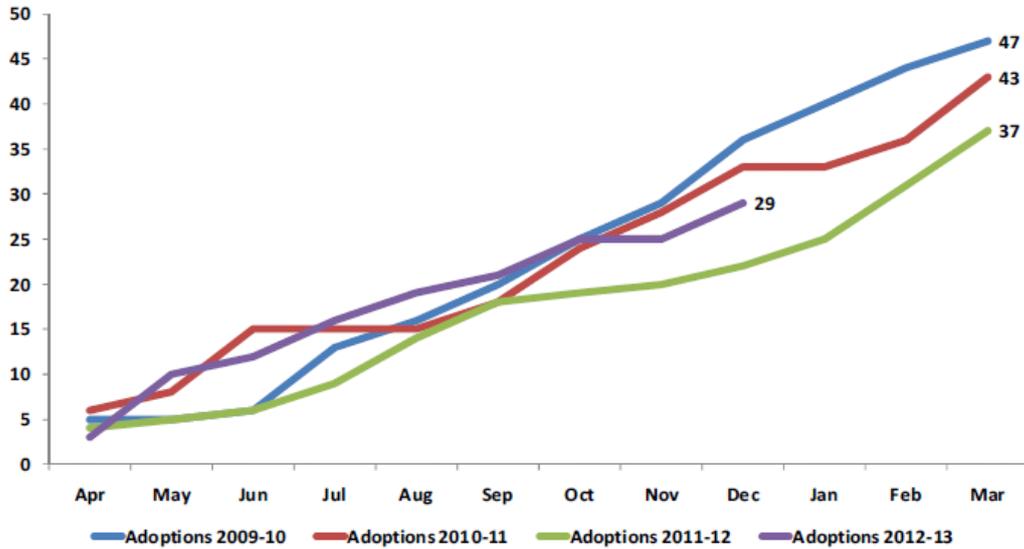
The concept of permanency for looked after children, of being able to grow up knowing who you are and where you belong, has been of increased importance over the last few years as our understanding of the impact of this on a child's development and transition to adulthood has improved.

Historically adoption was deemed to be the main route to achieving permanency for a child. However, whilst adoption brings many strengths for children, it does represent an absolute change – of ending of ties with one family and the change over to ties with a new. This has generally worked well for very young children but for children aged 3 and over it has represented a challenge to find suitable families who can provide a new life.

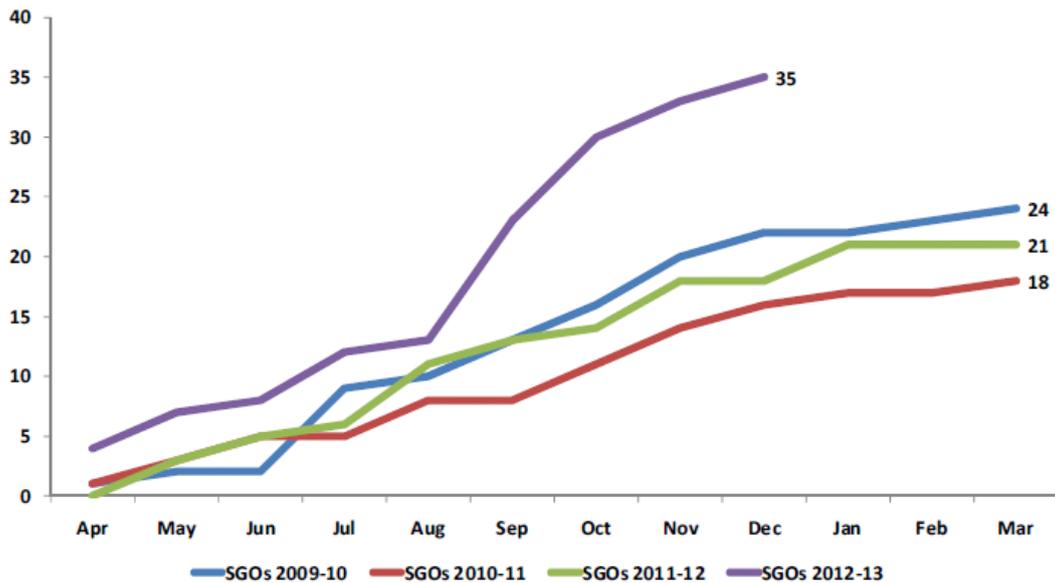
In Surrey our Adoption and Permanency service take lead responsibility for assessing prospective adopters or permanent carers. The Adoption and Children Act 2002 introduced the concept of a Special Guardianship Order where the carers could take on responsibility and have the authority to make all decisions relating to a child as they grow up, in line with birth parents' rights and responsibilities, but it did not end the child's legal ties with their birth family, as with an Adoption Order. This makes it a less final and absolute change of responsibility and is increasingly the option of choice for carers or birth family members who wish to ensure they can care for a child as they grow up.

Since 2012 we have been constantly reviewing the use of Special Guardianship Orders (SGO's) to ensure that where appropriate, they are used to enhance the feeling of stability and permanence for the child. Since our review the number of children and families benefitting from SGO's has almost doubled.

Looked after children adopted in the year
(cumulative figures to 31 March)
2009 - Dec 2012



Looked after children leaving care on a Special Guardianship order in the year
(cumulative figures to 31 March)
2009 - Dec 2012



8.4 Children with Disabilities

Whilst some children with disabilities will be in care following safeguarding concerns, in line with all children, for many they are accommodated as the impact of the disability can no longer be managed safely within their family or local school setting. The age and life stage at which families need support will vary for each, with some needing support from the moment of diagnosis whereas others find that the challenging behaviour that may intensify as the young person grows into adolescence requires additional help.

For all children with disabilities, in line with our practice for all children, the preferred option for those placed away from their families will be for care within a family setting. For those with additional/exceptional needs it may be that residential care provides the right support.

Nationally it is recognised that family based care is the preferred option for children under 10 and we hold a principle for our care in line with this.

The majority of children with disabilities who are in the care system are teenagers who are placed in residential settings that combine both care and education to provide a consistent and suitable placement. Although their parents may continue to be actively involved, they are formally acknowledged as looked after to recognise the shared responsibilities that social care and education have with parents to make sure that this vulnerable group are cared for appropriately and safely. For other children our Children with Disabilities Fostering Project supports a number of foster carers in their care of children with particularly complex needs. At present 12 children with disabilities are cared for under this project.

We currently have 56 children in care with disabilities and during 2013 we will be undertaking a review of the provision we offer to ensure that their care settings continue to meet their individual needs. Currently their care settings are as follows:

Children with Disabilities by Care setting as at 31 December 2012

| Placement Type | Total |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Agency Foster Care | 2 |
| Surrey Foster Care | 11 |
| Children's/Residential Care Home | 24 |
| Residential Schools | 19 |
| Total | 56 |

8.5 Health Care

All children who are looked after are entitled to both universal and secondary care services. These include services from GPs, immunisation programmes and health promotion as well as targeted services such as therapies, hospital specialist services and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) as examples and as required.

For children in care their health care is assessed and planned through a designated health professional (for Surrey, this is usually a paediatrician in the first instance) who will complete an initial health assessment. This is used to develop a health care plan, contributing to the over-arching care plan for the child, and this is then reviewed annually.

Emotional health and wellbeing is of significant concern for many looked after children and care leavers. It is known that children in care are much more likely than other children to have experienced risk factors that predispose to the development of mental health disorders.

Once children have been identified as needing additional support this can be accessed through specialist CAMHS and the 3Cs service (specialist mental health service specifically for children in care to Surrey - CAMHS for Children in Care). Support can be provided either directly to the child through a range of therapies / interventions as appropriate or by providing support to the carers where the child or young person is not able or willing directly to participate in any therapy.

During 2012 Surrey County Council and NHS Surrey undertook a review of the health assessment services received by looked after children. Using a co-production approach, a number of consultations, survey's, workshops and interviews took place with children, young people, their families and carer's and a large number of multi agency professionals.

As a result a redesigned child centred pathway is being developed and is now central to the re-commissioning of health services planned for introduction later this year. Surrey CC and the six Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) within Surrey are working together to re-commission this service, led by Guildford & Waverley CCG.

We are also working closely with health colleagues to review the emotional wellbeing and mental health service currently provided within our CAMHS service with a view to introducing a new jointly commissioned service by October 2014. Available as a countywide universal and targeted service offer, we are aiming to enhance the support available to looked after children in particular.

8.6 Education

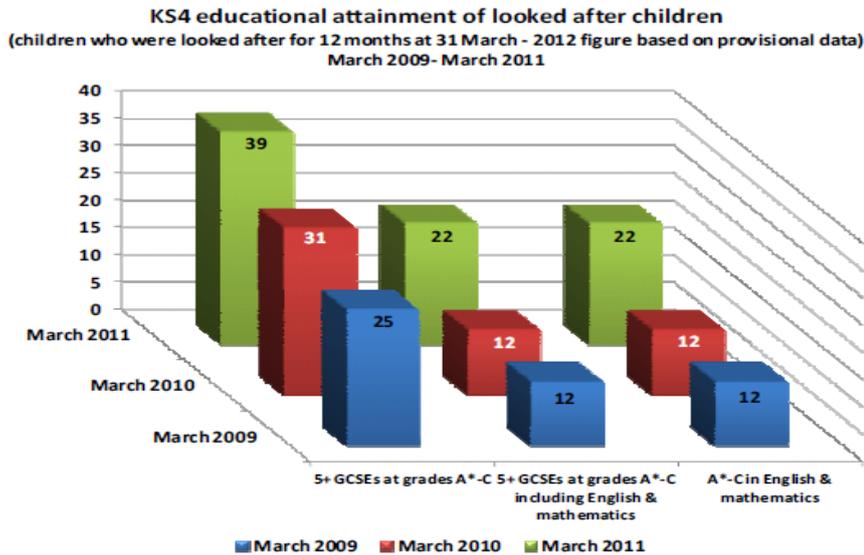
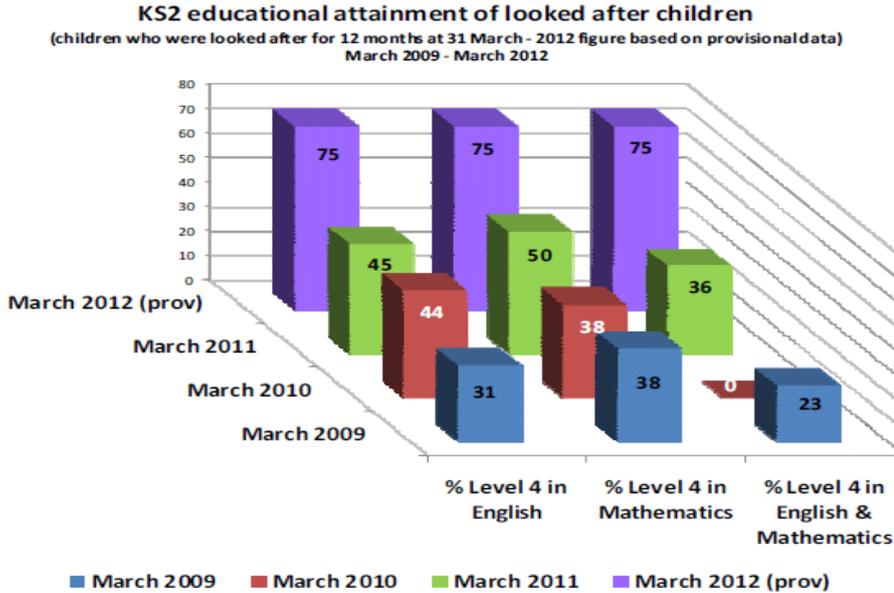
Education for children in care in Surrey is supported and monitored through the Virtual School. All children in the care of Surrey are on the roll of the Virtual School as well as their own school. The Head teacher of the Virtual School is supported by four Assistant Head Teachers who provide support in each of the four areas.

Our children are placed in a variety of educational settings dependent on their need and care placements. In March 2013, 491 pupils were being supported through the work of the virtual school. The profile of the pupils is as follows:

| | |
|---|-----|
| Number of pupils with statement of Special Educational Need (SEN) | 151 |
| Number of pupils in Surrey mainstream schools | 271 |
| Number of pupils in Surrey independent Schools | 9 |
| Number of pupils in mainstream schools out of county | 102 |
| Number of pupils in independent schools out of county | 40 |
| Number of pupils in short stay schools | 6 |
| Number of pupils accessing other provision (EOTAS criteria) | 45 |

Although there are always differences in particular cohorts of children, the impact of the work between Virtual Schools, schools and social care can be seen in the results of achievement for our children which have steadily improved over the last three years.

A fuller set of results can be seen in the annual report for the Virtual School but as an illustration of outcomes at key stage 2 and 4 has been as follows:



Additional members of the Virtual School support tracking general progress and there is a specialist post for support towards higher education post-16. In March 2013 we had 148 young people aged 16 or 17 for whom we were corporate parent, of which 121 were participating in education, training or employment (PETE)

In addition we have 29 care-leavers who are currently at university and whilst this represents a significant financial commitment from the authority, it is a trend we would hope to increase.

8.7 Offending & Restorative Practice

It is well documented that looked after children across the country continue to be significantly over represented in the youth justice system relative to their non looked after counterparts and prior to 2011 this was the position in Surrey.

It was identified that many of the pathways to prosecution stemmed from the inability to effectively manage behaviours within placement settings. As a result during 2012 Surrey CC Youth Support Service and its partners developed and introduced a number of restorative approach initiatives to behaviour management underpinned by a joint protocol.

The Surrey Looked After Children Reducing Offending Strategy 2012 outlines our approach, protocol and intention to embed restorative approaches across Surrey and beyond by working closely with neighbouring authorities, criminal justice partners and independent placement and service providers.

As a result in 2012 no looked after child placed in Surrey was subject to criminal prosecution and we aim to achieve the same success throughout 2013.

8.8 Leaving Care & Transitions

It has long been recognised that young people who have grown up in care have significant problems to overcome as they grow up in to adulthood. Statistics show that they are over represented in the prison population, amongst those who are homeless or those with both physical and mental health problems, including substance misuse and mental health issues.

Surrey has a good record of low numbers of children leaving care aged 16 and 17 (and usually they are returning home) which places us in a strong position to respond further to national initiatives for services for children in care that are expected from national government.

As each young person approaches their 16th birthday a requirement for them to have a pathway comes in to force. The pathway plan should run alongside the care plan during their last two years in care and then become the main form in which needs and support are co-ordinated.

We recognise that for any young adult support during these particular years is crucial in enabling self confidence and independence. Our Care Leaving Service supports this particular group with aftercare advice, support and financial assistance.

At present the service supports 452 young people over the age of 18 and is currently working in partnership with social workers for 16 and 17yr olds preparing to leave care.

Homelessness prevention and the identification of more effective pathway transition into independent adulthood remains a priority and during 2013 we have undertaken additional consultations with our service users to inform future use of independent living resources and funding.

Supported Housing is one option available to care leavers aged 16yrs or over. Managed by the Youth Support Service, Supported People funded projects provide medium to low level housing support dependent on need and circumstances.

At present we have 200 funded bed spaces across the county for young people and adults aged 16-25yrs with 41 spaces dedicated for young parents.

Work is currently taking place to re-commission our supported housing service to ensure that appropriate provision of housing related support and a menu of support packages are available across all our 11 districts and boroughs.

Current and anticipated demand, provision, referral pathways are being reviewed as part of this process with a new service launched by March 2014.

8.10 Other Support Services/ Initiatives

Social Pedagogy

Surrey has been nominated as one of six social pedagogy sites nationally through the Fostering Network. Social pedagogy is an academic discipline that draws on core theories from various related disciplines such as education, sociology, psychology and philosophy. In essence it is concerned with wellbeing, learning and growth underpinned by human values and principles.

Two social pedagogues have been recruited to work in Surrey. Jointly funded by the Fostering network they are currently working with 40 foster carer's across the county to implement an holistic, outcome focussed approach to care.

Short Breaks Service

For an increasing number of our children with disabilities we offer a short breaks service to them and their families. The extent and nature of the support is assessed individually and reviewed by our Children with Disabilities Team. At present we have:

- 32 Active Short Break carer's supporting 46 young people with respite care
- 3 approved Short Break carer's in process of being linked
- 3 fee paid carer's who offer over 200 overnight respite care to a number of high need young people.

8.11 Listening to Children and Young People

We use a number of methods and approaches to listen to our children and young people both as individuals and as groups. Their experience of care, their aspirations and needs are all evaluated during the social worker reviews undertaken with the children and foster carer's and as part of strategic evaluations of placement provision.

Our Rights and Participation Team co-ordinate a number of activities and initiatives and have developed the scope and remit of the Care Council within Surrey.

Surrey Care Council is a group of looked after young people aged 13+ who meet once a month to discuss some of the important issues whilst being in Surrey's care. There is also Care Council Juniors for those aged 8-13, who meet every three months.

At Care Council children and young people:

- chat about the things that are important to children and young people in care
- take all the issues and things they want to change to the top managers in the corporate parenting group at Surrey
- meet other young people in care and make new friends
- go on fun days out with the group - these could include go-karting, music concerts and much more.

Care Council member's are also involved in:

- 'Recruit Crew' assisting in the recruitment of any new workers in Surrey
- Presenting issues or concerns to the Corporate Parenting Board

- Total Respect Training -The training of social workers and foster carer's who work with children and young people

9. Overview of Finance

During the financial year 2012/13 expenditure by service directorate and percentages of spend on looked after children as a whole was as follows:

| Service Directorate | £ '000 per anum | £'000 per anum spend on Looked After Children | % of Service Directorate Spend |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Children's Services | 86,335 | 36,404 | 42% |
| Services for Young People | 18,558 | 0 | 0% |
| Schools & Learning | 219,111 | 1,931 | 0.9% |
| S + C Resources & Transformation | 4,018 | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 328,022 | 38,335 | 13.3% |

The numbers highlight that Looked after Children's services are a significant area of expenditure for the Children Schools and Families Directorate as a whole reflecting the high priority placed on this group as well as the high level of need.

Fostering & Adoption

During the financial year 2012/13, £13,857,000 expenditure was incurred in this specific service area. The majority of the £10.3 million non staffing expenditure was utilised on foster carer's and adopters allowances with payments of between £339 pw to £1,700 per week made dependent on the individual needs and circumstances of the child.

In March 2013 637 children and young people were placed in a variety of foster placements 354, within Surrey and 283 out of county
 Whilst Surrey is able to provide foster placements from within its own provision for over 60% of its children we also require the use of foster carer's with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's) to supplement our current 'in house' provision. The current budget for placements with IFA's (2012/13) is £6.1million.

The numbers of children and their foster placement type are as follows (March 2013):

| Placement Type | Surrey provision | CC | Not Surrey provision | CC | No of Children & YP |
|--|------------------|----|----------------------|----|---------------------|
| Foster Care in Surrey Area | 337 | | 17 | | 354 |
| Kinship Foster Care | 66 | | | | 66 |
| Other Foster Care | 271 | | 17 | | 288 |
| Foster Care Outside Surrey Area | 122 | | 161 | | 283 |
| Kinship Foster Care | 56 | | | | 56 |
| Other Foster Care | 66 | | 161 | | 227 |

At present we commission our agency placements using a mixture of 'Block Contract' and Regional Framework Arrangements with 11 other local authorities. We believe this mixture, at present provides the appropriate stability, flexibility and quality.

Quality is monitored on a quarterly basis through an on line portal that allows performance of suppliers to be easily compared across the south east region. An annual review is also undertaken to evaluate the quality of each individual placement. Further review of the use and value of IFA's is to be undertaken during 2013.

Residential Care

Demand for the number and type of residential placement provision is increasing. In line with other economic indicators independent sector placement costs within Surrey and the South East in general are significantly higher than in other parts of the country placing additional burden on commissioning sufficient placements to meet current and future need.

Our own existing provision consists of 7 residential children's homes which are able to accommodate a maximum of 40 young people with moderate or medium need. In addition we have two other facilities that are able to offer short break and overnight respite care for children and their families.

In March 2013, 101 children and young people (CYP's) required residential care within residential homes, schools and mother and baby units. 69 CYP's (70%) of this provision was purchased from the Independent Residential Sector within Surrey and out of county and much of this represented specialist provision .

Independent/Agency Placements

The use of external residential provision and placement within non maintained independent (NMI's) schools is a significant area of expenditure. In March 2013, 49 children were placed in non maintained independent school settings, which accounts for 10% of those supported via the virtual school.

At present residential placements are purchased within a south east framework with 11 other local authorities using the National Schools Contract. Places are agreed on an individual basis using the 'should cost' model approach introduced in 2012.

During 2013 work commenced to more fully understand the NMI provision across the country and the challenges facing commissioners of this service in light of the significant changes the Children & Families Bill will introduce. Activity will be ongoing throughout the year underpinned by a strategic needs assessment to ensure provision is more closely aligned to need.

10. Gap Analysis

Based on the profile of our looked after children, what they have told us, the needs analysis and the overview of services and finance there is a need to consider how a commissioning led approach can ensure that we meet the needs of our children in the most cost effective way.

The following needs have been prioritised:

- The availability of sufficient residential provision within county to reduce the dependency on external residential providers

- The availability of quality and timely health advice and support
- The development of family resilience strategies and services across the county
- The number of foster carer's residing within the county
- The availability of suitable accommodation for care leavers
- The continuing rise in the academic attainment levels of looked after children
- The needs of particular groups of children who are looked after are met in particular, those children with complex needs or challenging behaviours e.g Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Severe ASD

11. Next Steps: Taking this Strategy Forward.

Children and young people who are, or who are likely to be, at risk of harm or who are the subject of concern must be identified and protected. Working together, as a multi-agency team, we will provide help and protection at the earliest opportunity. Children and young people will be listened to and advocated for to ensure that their needs and wishes are met.

Permanent homes and families will be found without unnecessary delay that best meet the needs of our looked after children. Safe and secure relationships with adults will be formed over time. When support is needed, children, young people and families are able to access it for as long as it is needed, throughout their childhood and beyond.

The Surrey Corporate Parenting Board will oversee the implementation of this strategy. The Board will provide the strategic leadership to ensure that all agencies involved in supporting looked after children, and preventing children from being looked after, recognise and understand their roles in the delivery of the strategy, achieving objectives in the time required.

The implementation of the strategy will be monitored by the Surrey Corporate Parenting Operational Group (CPOG) measuring progress against:

- Surrey Looked After Children Action Plan 2013 – 2015 (to be developed)
- Local Area CPOG work plans 2013 – 2015
- Four CPOG thematic groups focusing on Educational Attainment; Placement Stability; Care Leavers and Healthy Outcomes.

12. Our Looked After Children Commissioning Intentions 2013/15

The following strategic commissioning intentions are listed alongside commissioning objectives to be achieved 2013 – 2015:

CI1: Reduce the number of children who are coming into our care by ensuring the right services are in place to support children and families as early as possible.

A. We will *invest in Early Help services as part of the Surrey Early Help Framework*, to identify families' issues at the earliest opportunity working with multi-agency partners supporting families to avert crisis and prevent children coming in to the looked after system.

B. We will *support for children on the edge of care more effectively*: Wherever possible, Surrey believes that children should remain with their families. Every effort will be made to offer targeted, joined up support for children on the edge of care. For those families where this is not possible, we will seek to reunite children with their parents and extended family as

an alternative to remaining in the care system, unless there is clear intention that this is not in the child's best interest.

CI2: Ensure that being in care equips children and young people for a successful and fulfilling future, helping them to achieve their potential.

C. We will ensure all looked after children are supported to have improved health and wellbeing: Statutory guidance from the Department of Health states that "Looked after children share many of the same health risks and problems as their peers, but often to a greater degree. They often enter care with a worse level of health than their peers in part due to the impact of poverty, abuse and neglect." Surrey will work collectively with key partners to ensure that all our children and young people are supported to achieve improved physical and emotional health and wellbeing.

D. We will provide targeted education support for all looked after children and young people and offer a range of choices after compulsory education: Looked after children often need support in their education for a number of reasons. They can sometimes fall behind through missing school, or by changing schools, particularly if their placements change, or from very negative experiences in their life which impacts on their behaviour, making it very difficult to access learning.

E. We will reduce the numbers of looked after children who are involved in the youth justice system: Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care reported that while a small overall proportion of children in care were involved in the youth justice system, they were still around three times more likely than other children to be cautioned or convicted of an offence while in care. Surrey recognises this and its Youth Offending Service provides specialist support for looked after children who do come in to the youth justice system and has dedicated plans for improvement.

F. We will protect looked after children and care leavers from sexual exploitation: The need to identify children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation is gaining momentum, specifically those in residential care.

G. Involving Children and young people: We will ensure that there are systematic processes in place so that looked after children have a voice which is heard. Children and young people will be encouraged and supported to actively shape and develop services; give feedback on existing services and have a say in their Care Plans supporting them to make decisions about their own lives.

CI3: Increase the number of placements provided in Surrey when children need to be placed with foster families or in residential care supporting them to achieve permanency (Appendix 1 for Surrey Placement Strategy – currently in development)

H. We will promote the wellbeing of looked after children by providing them with stable homes where they feel safe and secure and can form healthy attachments with a responsible adult

I. We will ensure every child in Surrey who needs an adoption plan, has the opportunity to be adopted. Suitable adoptive families will be identified without delay for all children for whom adoption is in their best interests. The recruitment and assessment arrangements are

aligned with national systems and enable potential adopters to consider and to be considered for a wide range of children for whom they may provide a home.

J. For those young people leaving care, we will support them effectively towards independent living and transition to adulthood. Young people will acquire the necessary level of skills and emotional resilience to successfully move towards independence. We will ensure that there are a good range of safe accommodation, education, employment and training opportunities. Where appropriate, we will support young people to remain with their foster carers beyond 18-years old as part of staying put arrangements.

K. We will ensure provision for all children and young people in care is high quality, efficient and effective. Looked after children and young people return home with the support they need when it is safe for them. If this is not possible, looked after children live in stable placements where they are helped to build positive relationships and maintain contacts with their family and friends where this remains in their best interests. We will monitor the effectiveness of provision through a multi-agency performance management framework.

All provision, especially placements should be of good quality. We will ensure providers improve the efficiency and effectiveness of provision. We will monitor quality and ensure it is in line with agreed standards and manage the costs of providers. Surrey Placement Strategy is currently in development (to be included as Appendix 1)

CI4: Ensure that children who we place out of the county are not disadvantaged but have the same chances as all our children and young people.

L. We will ensure that all children who are placed out of county have immediate access to education and health services that meet their needs as soon as they begin to live outside of their 'home' area.

Appendix 1 Surrey Placement Strategy – To be added

Appendix 2 Needs Analysis of Children in a Residential Placement

Children in residential placements by category of need
as at 31 March 2013

| Placement Type | N1 Abuse or Neglect | N2 Child's Disability | N4 Parents III Disability | N4 Fam Acute Stress | N5 Family Dysfunction | N6 Soc Unacceptable Behaviour | N8 (Unaccom- panied) Asylum Seeking Child | Total |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|------------|
| Children's Home in Surrey | | 3 | | 1 | | | | 4 |
| Children's Home Outside Surrey | 1 | | | | | | | 1 |
| Homes and Hostels | 11 | 12 | 1 | 14 | 18 | | 1 | 57 |
| Mother and Baby Unit | 3 | | | 2 | | | | 5 |
| NHS or Other Nursing Establishment | | 1 | | | | | | 1 |
| Res Care Home (Res Homes Act 1984) | 1 | 5 | | | 4 | | | 10 |
| Residential Schools | 2 | 16 | | 1 | 3 | 1 | | 23 |
| Total | 18 | 36 | 1 | 18 | 25 | 1 | 1 | 101 |

Appendix 3 Surrey Looked After Children Action Plan – to be added