



Sufficiency Strategy

Children or Young people Looked After & Care Leavers

2021-2024



Waltham Forest

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1. Introduction

All Local Authorities (LAs) are required to take steps to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation for children in care within their local area. In 2010, the 'Statutory Guidance for the Sufficiency Duty' was issued. The guidance is explicit in placing a duty on LAs to act strategically to address gaps in provision by ensuring that they include, in relevant commissioning strategies, their plans for meeting the sufficiency duty.

The Children Act 2004 defines sufficiency as "a whole system approach which delivers early intervention and preventative work to help support children and their families where possible, as well as providing better services for children if they do come into care. For those who are looked after, LAs and partners should seek to secure a number of providers and a range of services, with the aim of meeting the wide-ranging needs of Children in care and young people within their local area."

The aim of this strategy is to set out how Waltham Forest intends to meet the alternative home needs of current and future Children in care and care leavers, supporting positive outcomes through understanding their needs and current provision, and identify measures that need to be put in place to ensure that there is an appropriate range of provision to meet future projected need.

The strategy outlines the current Children in care profile and alternative home mix and concludes by highlighting key areas of focus and challenges in achieving sufficiency before setting out a range of actions to address these.

The scope of this strategy is not restricted to just making good quality alternative home;

the intention is to capture the range of activity across Families Directorate, including a clear focus on supporting families to stay together, wherever it is safe to do so, therefore minimising the need for children to come into care, or supporting reunification with their families.

This approach is consistent with our belief that children are best cared for within their families wherever this can be safely achieved and that investing in providing services that are able to promote change within families is frequently more effective and efficient than removing children and placing them in alternative care. Waltham Forest are currently delivering and continuing to develop and enhance early help and preventative services that aim to reduce the numbers of children and young people entering care.

We recognise that working in partnership is vital to support our Children in care and young people in each aspect of their life. Particularly relevant to this strategy is our partnership with other LAs and particularly those within East London Sub Region. This emerging arrangement is between 8 East London boroughs Waltham Forest, Redbridge, Havering, Barking & Dagenham, Tower Hamlets, Newham, City of London, and Hackney.

Our partnership is equally important across the Council and with LSCB partners within the borough. We are engaged in collaborative work with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) North East London Foundation Trust (Nelft), the Metropolitan Police amongst others. We have adopted "language that cares" and have replaced "placements" with "alternative homes", LAC with "Children in care (CIC)" and Care leavers with "Young people with care experience" in all of our practice.



2. Legislative framework

This strategy is a statutory requirement set out in Section 22G of the Children’s Act 1989. The strategy is set within the context of national policy, legislation and guidance and addresses the needs of children and young people from birth to the age of 21 (or 25 where children’s services continue to have statutory responsibility). This duty requires “local authorities to take steps that secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the authority’s area which meets the needs of children that the local authority are looking after, and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the local authority’s area (‘the Sufficiency Duty’)”. **The following primary legislation governs our commissioning** in relation to Children in care (CIC):

- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Care Standards Act 2000
- Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Statutory Guidance on Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Children in care 2010
- Guidance on the Provision of Accommodation for 16 & 17 year old young people who be homeless and/or require accommodation 2010
- Care Planning Review and Regulations 2010
- Promoting the Educational Achievements of Children in care: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities 2010
- The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012
- Children and Family Act 2014
- Police and Criminal Evidence act 1984.
- Children and Social Work Act 2017



3. Waltham Forest vision

Our vision is to ensure that Waltham Forest Children in care and care leavers will be supported through quality alternative homes that meet all their needs and support them to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve. All Children in care presenting emotional and mental health needs, particularly in response to childhood trauma, will receive swift and quality assessment and support. Children in care and young people are able to access high quality education and training opportunities to support their aspiration and opportunities post 18. Care leavers are supported to independence with access to good quality housing, employment opportunities and further education. Children and young people are able to contribute meaningfully to the services and opportunities available to them through a range of participation and engagement mechanisms. This input is used to inform service design and commissioning intentions. Children and young people are reunited with their birth family wherever possible and for those who do remain in care, they are supported through stable and quality alternative home. Improving Outcomes for all children in care and care experienced young people is at the 'Heart of our place'.

Message from Councilor Alistair Strathern, Incoming Chair and Lead Member for Children and Families



It is my great pleasure to take on the role as Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board. There is no more important role for any council than making sure every child in our care makes the best possible start in life. I am looking forward to building on the great work carried out with my predecessor Cllr Williams, and to working with our young people and services to continue to strive for the best outcomes for our children.

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The Children Act 2004 defines sufficiency as "a whole system approach which delivers early intervention and preventative work to help support children and their families where possible, as well as providing better services for children if they do become looked after. For those who are looked after, LAs and partners should seek to secure a number of providers and a range of services, with the aim of meeting the wide-ranging needs of looked after children and young people within their local area."

The aim of this strategy is to set out how Waltham Forest intends to meet the alternative

home needs of current and future children in care and care experienced young people, supporting positive outcomes through understanding their needs and identifying measures that needs to be put in place to ensure future needs are properly met.

The scope of this strategy is not restricted to just making good quality alternative homes, the intention is to capture the range of activities across Families Directorate, including a clear focus on supporting families to stay together, wherever it is safe to do so, therefore minimising the need for children to come into care, and supporting reunification with their families.

This approach is consistent with our belief that children are best cared for within their families wherever this can be safely achieved and that investing in providing services that are able to promote change within families is frequently more effective and efficient than removing children and placing them in alternative care.

Waltham Forest are currently delivering and continuing to develop and enhance early help and preventative services that aim to reduce the numbers of children and young people entering into care.

We recognise that working in partnership is vital to support our looked after children and young people in each aspect of their life. Particularly relevant to this strategy is our partnership with other LAs and particularly those within East London Sub Region and our Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) partners.



Cllr Alistair Strathern

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

4. Views and opinions of Children in care

We will ask Children in care and care leavers about the relationships they have with us, including whether we are making a difference in their lives and what we need to do to improve. We will embrace this feedback and seek it out so that we build honest relationships that can be trusted and used to help children to rebuild their lives and future. Although full impact of covid-19 in relation to children coming into the care system is yet to be conclusive, however our experience locally shows that whilst fewer children came into care in 20-21 fewer Children left, hence the increase in the total number of Children in care.



The Voice & Influence team annually survey all our Children in care. Set out below are some of the responses gained from the Pledge for Children in Care survey took place between August and September 2020 .

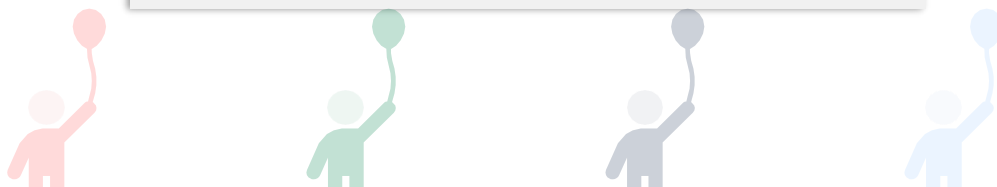
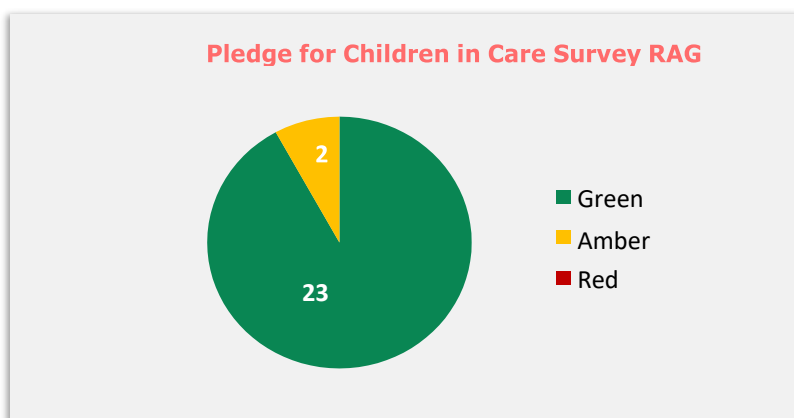
There were 40 responses of the 304 Children in care (13%). **The results highlight that 23 of the 25 areas assessed in this survey (83%) were in our area of strength (70%+ Agree or Strongly Agreed) range.** Of this 83%, 48% of the Pledge Promises were rated at 90%+ Agreed or Strongly Agreed.

All questions asked under the themes “Understood an individual”, “Supported with your ambitions”, “Being kept informed” and “Feeling safe” all scored over 85%.

Areas for improvement

2 pledge promises scored in our amber zone of 50-69%, but 0 in our red zone of under 49% positive responses. In addition, there were 4 sub-areas of health awareness that scored lower than 60% in term of access to information. Exercise scored 55%, putting it in the amber zone – whilst 3 fell within the red zone (Sexual health (33%), Drugs (28%), Smoking (26%)).

The themes “Keeping healthy” and “Finding you somewhere to live” scored the lowest overall.



4. Views and opinions of Children in care

The Annual Survey results suggest that on the whole young people feel that most the Pledge for Children in Care promises are either reflected or mostly reflected in their lived experience. From the 25 pledge promises assessed it is encouraging to see that 22 (83%) of these are in our green zone of over 70% agreeing with the statement.

However a 2 pledge promises sit in our amber zone of 50-69% positive results; and 3 sub-areas fall within the red zone of less than 49% positive results.

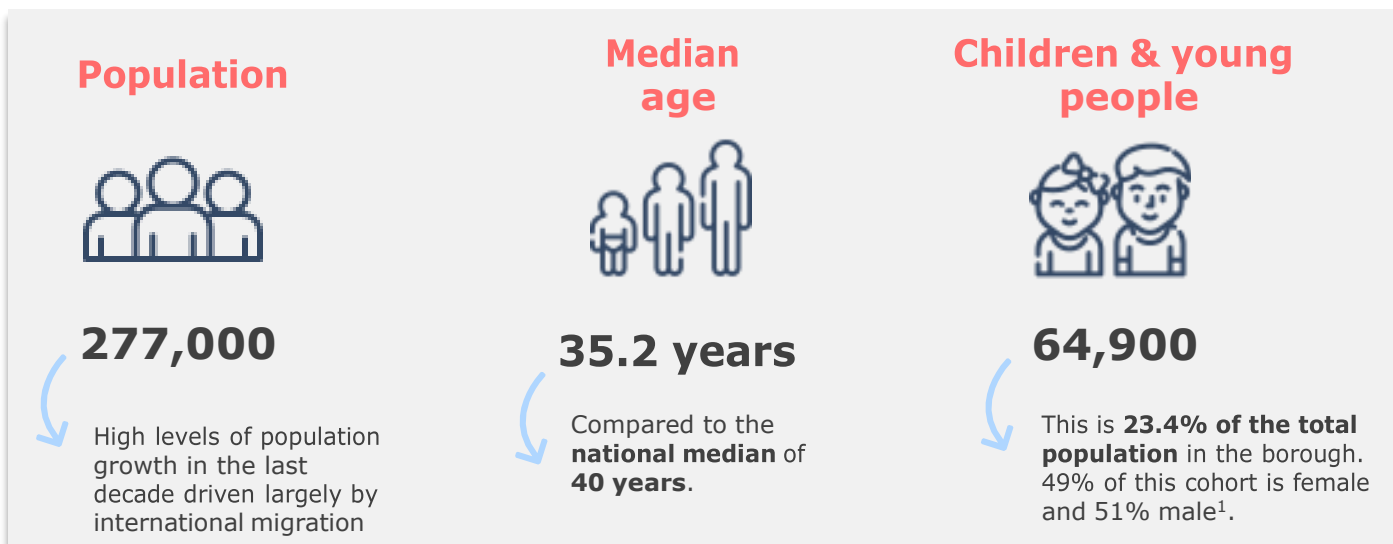
In terms of trends, 4 of the 6 Pledge themes were positive overall. “Keeping healthy” had weak positive responses to the question about being about to find out about your health history – with 3 of the sub areas scoring between 26% and 33%, including one amber response at 55% (Exercise). “Finding you somewhere to live” had two amber experiences – “*did your social worker ask you what was important to you before you moved there?*” and “*did your social worker discuss where you were living with & what the home was like?*”.



Outcome of all surveys are analysed by Voice and influence and views shared by Children and young people are reviewed to develop ongoing strategies on how we can improve services to improve the lived experience for young people and how that is communicated back to young people.

5. About the borough

Waltham Forest is an outer London borough that has a mixture of both inner and outer London characteristics. The north of the borough is greener and less densely populated with larger homes and older population, while in the south the population is younger and more transient and is more likely to live in private rented accommodation and overcrowded conditions.



Waltham Forest is one of the most ethnically-diverse areas. **More than two thirds (68%) of residents are from an ethnic minority**; around two-fifths of residents are born outside the UK and around one in five are EU nationals.

Children and young people from minority ethnic groups account for 78% of all children living in the area. The ethnic make-up of children and young people aged 0-17 in Waltham Forest is almost equally split between the three main ethnic categories: Asian/Asian British (24%), White British/Irish (22%) and Black/Black British (21%) followed by White Other (14%), Mixed/Multiple ethnicities (13%) and Other ethnic group (6%)².

The proportion of children and young people with English as an additional language is 48% in state-funded primary schools (national average 21.3%), and **42% in state-funded secondary schools** (the national average is 17%)³.

The proportion of non-resident special school pupils attending schools maintained by the Waltham Forest Local Authority is 20.0% (the national average is 8.6%). Waltham Forest is one of London's larger 'receiver' of special school pupils, with +103 pupils accessing these provisions (14.1% of the special school population).

1 - GLA 2018-based demographic projections (medium migration scenario)

2 - GLA Demographic Projections

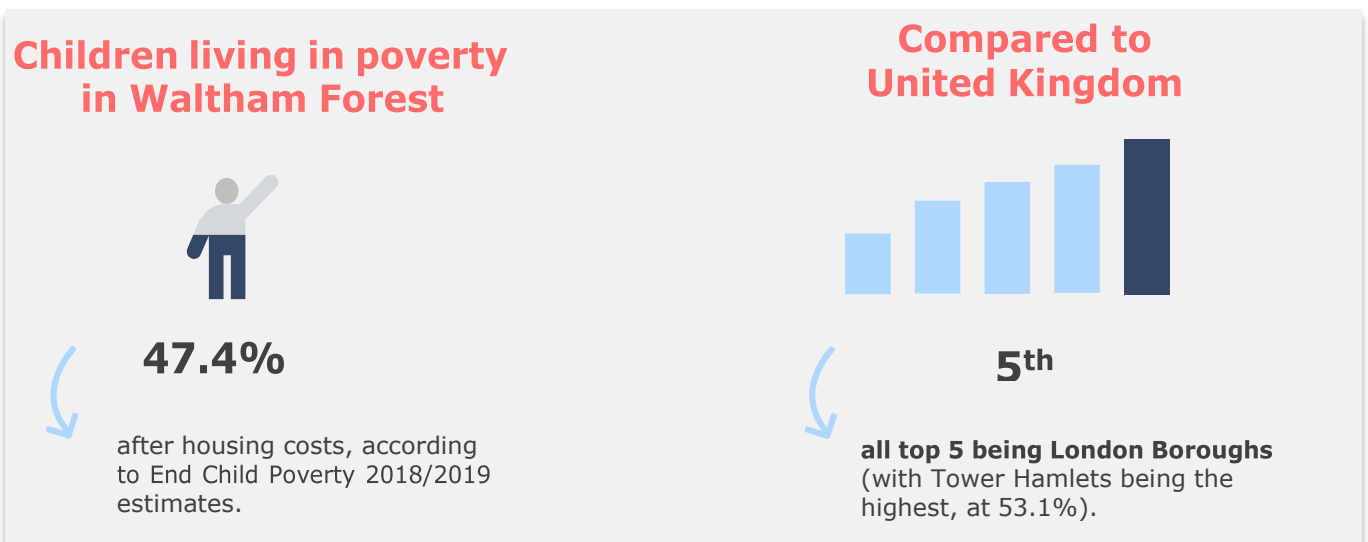
3 - 2019/2020 School Census, DfE

5. About the borough

Waltham Forest is relatively less deprived in 2019 compared to 2015, improving its rank from the 35th most deprived local authority in England to the 82nd most deprived out of 317 local authorities.

In London, Waltham Forest now ranks 12th most deprived borough - an improvement from the 7th most deprived in 2015 - and is relatively less deprived in all seven deprivation domains⁴.

According to the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI), which measures the proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived households, **around one in five children (19%) in Waltham Forest were living in income-deprived families, ranking 53rd highest in the country (out of 326 local authorities)**. Tower Hamlets had the highest proportion of children living in income deprived households nationally (27%).

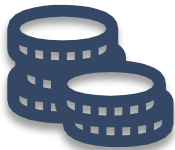


The proportion of **children eligible for free school meals** in state-funded primary schools is 16.1% (national average 17.7%), and in state-funded secondary schools it is 19.1% (national average 15.9%)⁵.

As highlighted by statistics, the age cohort with most projected increase is 16-24 years with expected increase of 4.5%. In addition, the number of young people under the age of 18 living in the borough is 23.4% of the population and this is higher than national and London average. Therefore, this highlights the need for further collaboration between the Children Services and Housing Department to ensure that accommodation needs of young people in care and care experienced adults is prioritised.



5. About the borough



Waltham Forest residents currently have a **median household income** of £35,000. **This is places Waltham Forest 21 out of 33 London boroughs in terms of income.** Despite this, residents have higher income than both the United Kingdom (£33,120) and Great Britain (£33,280) median. Household income in Waltham Forest has grown by £4,000 (12.7%)⁶ since 2014. Around 1 in 4 households in Waltham Forest earn 60% or less of the median income.



Property prices are rising rapidly across London and Waltham Forest is quoted as one of the London boroughs with the fastest rising prices. From 2013 to 2018, the average price of a house almost doubled, increasing from £245,400 to £450,000, a rise of 83 per cent.

Since 2018, house prices have remained relatively stagnant. On average, residents could expect to pay an estimated 14 times their annual earnings on purchasing a home in Waltham Forest. The ratio of average house prices to average earnings more than doubled from 5.69 to 13.61 between 2002 and 2018. **This now makes housing in Waltham Forest less affordable than in London as a whole, which has created a pressing need for affordable housing for people who wish to live independently, living in overcrowded conditions and the homeless.** The increasing house price/rent to earnings ratio is contributing to high population churn, with many people, particularly families with young children, moving out of the borough to more affordable areas. It is estimated that 20% of homes are privately rented; 21% are Council or Housing association owned, with the remaining 59% as owner occupied.



Waltham Forest has been losing people to other areas through domestic migration – more people move out to other local authorities than other way around. This large net outflow has been characteristic to London as a whole. Overall, Waltham Forest lost about 4,985 people through domestic migration in 12-months period to June 2019.

The top 5 areas people move from are Hackney, Newham, Haringey, Redbridge, and Tower Hamlets. The top 5 places which people leave Waltham Forest to live in are Redbridge, Newham, Barking and Dagenham, Enfield and Epping Forest.

International migration has been the main driver of population growth in Waltham Forest in the last 10-15 years. This has been accompanied by high birth rates that are characteristic to areas with high international migration. Mid-2018 to mid-2019 saw a drop in the net international migration in the borough as in-migration from overseas decreased by 5.3% and out-migration increased by 30.8% compared to mid-2017 to mid-2018.

5.1 COVID-19 Impact to residents of the borough

At this stage we are not sure of the statistical impact of Covid-19 on different parameters within the population therefore have carefully decided not to make any assumptions to that effect.

Employment rate

Currently unemployment in Waltham Forest, along with the rest of east London, is predicted to remain persistently high for the longest compared to London’s four regions. Waltham Forest is forecast to have the highest unemployment in London with peak unemployment of up to 27,900 residents expected by December '21.



The gap in employment rate last year between White residents and residents from a Pakistani or Bangladeshi background was 34.5%, higher than London average of 21.5%. It is almost twice as likely that a white person in the borough is employed compared to someone from a Pakistani or Bangladeshi background.

Crime rate

Recorded crime has increased slightly in Waltham Forest since lockdown; however, rates have started to return to normal (i.e. 2020 levels). There has been a significant reduction in knife crime offences since the 2018 peak. However, resident perception that knife crime is growing increased from 23% in 2015 to 50% in 2020. Residents are broadly more worried than most other London boroughs.

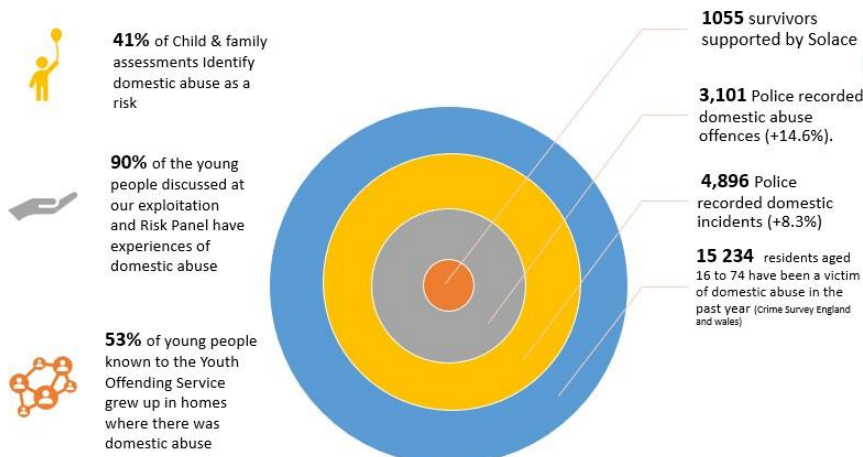
40%
reduction in knife crime
in Waltham Forest
(2018-2020)

BUT

More residents think knife crime is **increasing**

Source: Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime

Sexual and domestic offences, victims are predominantly female, with national data showing 75% of victims of domestic violence are women. Alongside this, more than half of the young people within the Youth Offending Service have either witnessed domestic abuse or been victim to it. There are inequalities in the risk of being a victim of crime. In some cases, these are down to the type of crime, such as hate crime directed at specific groups, targeted because of their race, disability, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity.



Victims with insecure immigration status can be less likely to report domestic violence, because of the police practice of sharing victims' immigration information with the Home Office. There are other risks, related to wider inequalities, such as population groups that are more likely to live in deprived areas characterised by higher rates of crime 75%

6. Children and young people demographics

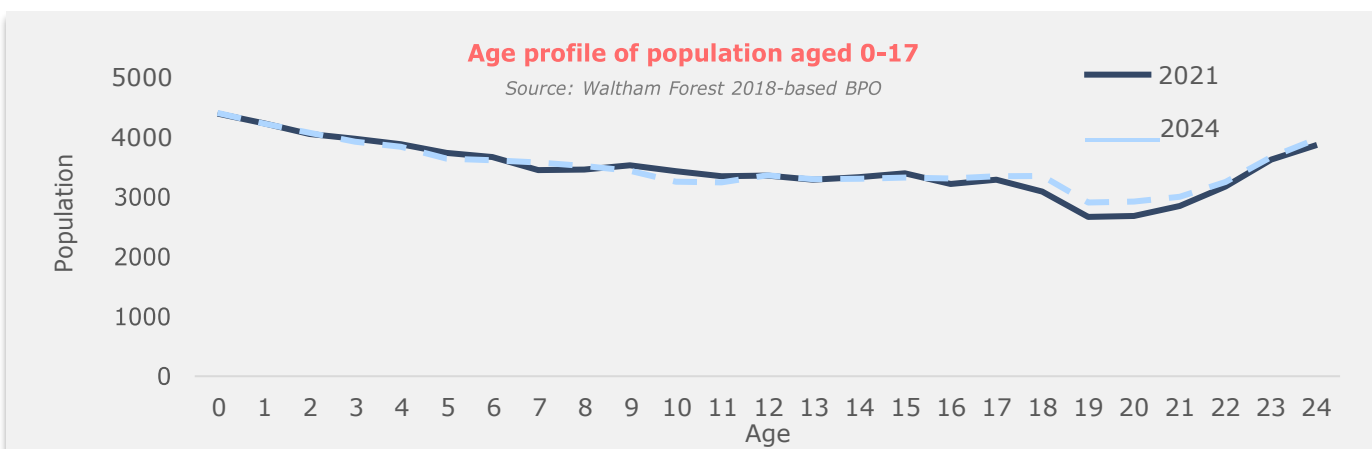
6.1 Projections by age and gender

The age cohort which is expected to increase the most by 2024 is that of 16-24 year olds, with an expected increase of 4.5% (1280 persons). This is the second largest age cohort for Children in care.

In total, 64,900 children and young people under the age of 18 years are estimated to live in the borough. This is 23.4% of the total population, higher than the national (21.4%) and London average (22.6%). 49% of under 18 year olds in the borough are female and 51% male⁷.

In addition, around 21,600 residents are aged between 18 to 24 years (7.8% of total population). In total 86,500 or nearly a third of residents (31.2%) are aged under 25 compared to 29.8% nationally and 31% in London as a whole.

Projections by age						
	2021	2022	2023	2024	Change 2021-2024	% change 2021-24
Under 1	4390	4390	4390	4400	10	0.2%
1 to 4	16120	16030	15970	16050	-70	-0.4%
5 to 9	17810	17700	17690	17760	-50	-0.3%
10 to 15	20120	20030	19860	19750	-370	-1.8%
16 to 17	6490	6610	6710	6650	160	2.5%
Total 0-17	64940	64760	64610	64600	-340	-0.5%
Total 18-24	21920	22330	22530	23040	1120	5.1%
Total 0-24	86860	87100	87140	87640	780	0.9%



All ONS and GLA projections are considered to be equally valid in contrast to the use of the latest Census (2011) available data which are now considered out of date. However, all population projections are highly uncertain and should be regarded as such. None of the projections take account of the impact of macro-economic factors or Government policy. This is particularly pertinent in the light of the Brexit and the impact of COVID19 or other socio- economic related factors.

7 - GLA 2018-based demographic projections (medium migration scenario). National and London figures are from mid-2019 Estimates of the population for the UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, ONS.

6. Children and young people demographics

6.2 Projections by ethnic group

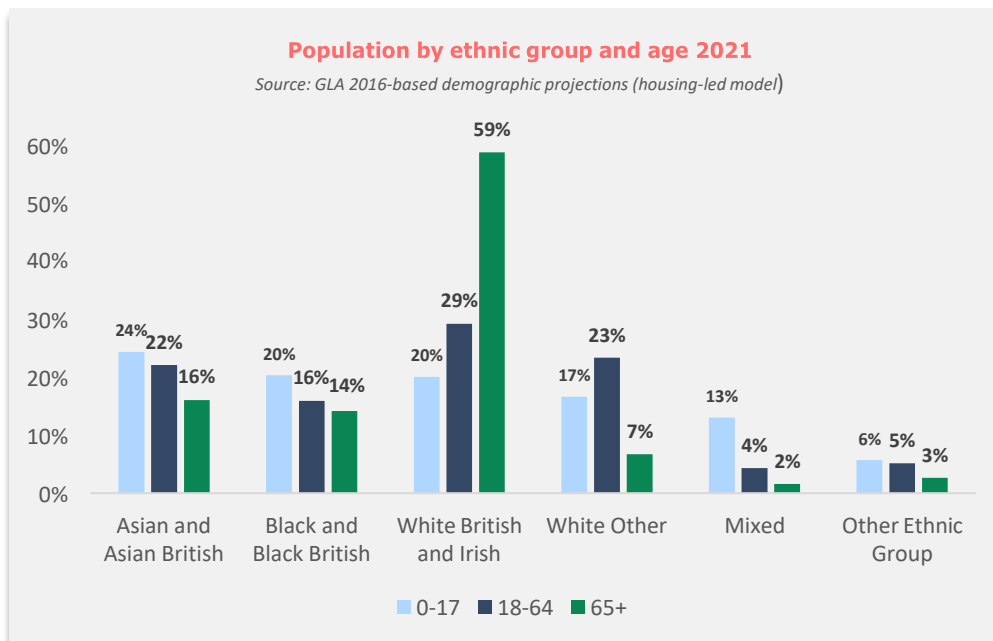
The younger the population the more ethnically diverse it is. Asian/Asian British is the biggest individual ethnic category among the under 18s in the borough (24%), followed by same proportion of White British/Irish (20%) and Black/Black British residents (20%).

Waltham Forest is one of the most ethnically diverse boroughs in the country: 30% White British/Irish, 22% Asian/Asian British, 20% Other White, 17% Black/Black British, 6% Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups and 5% Other Ethnic Groups.

	All ages	Aged 0-17	Aged 18-64	Aged 65+
White British/Irish	30%	20%	29%	59%
Asian/Asian British	22%	24%	22%	16%
Other White	20%	17%	23%	7%
Black/Black British	17%	20%	16%	14%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Group	6%	13%	4%	2%
Other Ethnic Group	5%	6%	5%	3%

Source: GLA 2016-based demographic projections (housing-led)

Around two thirds (63%) of children and young people in Waltham Forest are from BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) groups compared to 50% in overall population. This proportion is higher if Other White is included as a minority ethnic group: 80% compared to 70% of overall population. **Older population aged over 65 is predominantly White British/Irish (59%).**



Asian/Asian British is the biggest individual ethnic group among the under 18s in the borough (24%), followed by same sized groups of White British/Irish (20%) and Black/Black British (20%).

6. Children and young people demographics

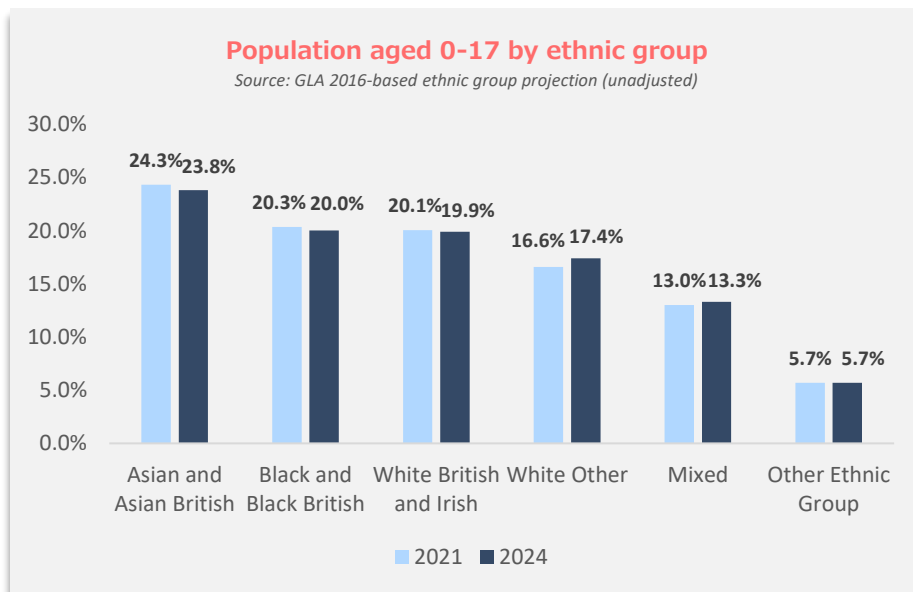
According to the 'pre-Brexit' and 'pre COVID-19' projections **the fastest growing ethnic groups in the borough is White Other Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups**. The growth of the White Other group is however likely to be most impacted by Brexit and therefore may be slower than we expect.

White British/Irish group is projected to stay similar/increase 0.7% over the next three years. White Other (predominantly EU origin) was projected to grow most (5.9%) but this is likely to lower depending on the scale of impact Brexit might have. The category is also a very diverse group itself in terms of the countries of origin and nationalities.

	2021	2024	Change	% change
Asian/Asian British	17,200	17,100	-100	-0.6%
White British/Irish	14,200	14,300	100	0.7%
Black/Black British	14,400	14,400	0	0%
Other White	11,800	12,500	700	5.9%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Group	9,200	9,600	400	4.3%
Other Ethnic Group	4,000	4,100	100	2.5%
All persons	70,800	72,000	1,200	1.7%

Source: GLA 2016-based ethnic group projections (unadjusted housing-led) *Note: figures are rounded to nearest 100

0-17 year old in Waltham Forest area very diverse cohort without a single majority ethnic group.



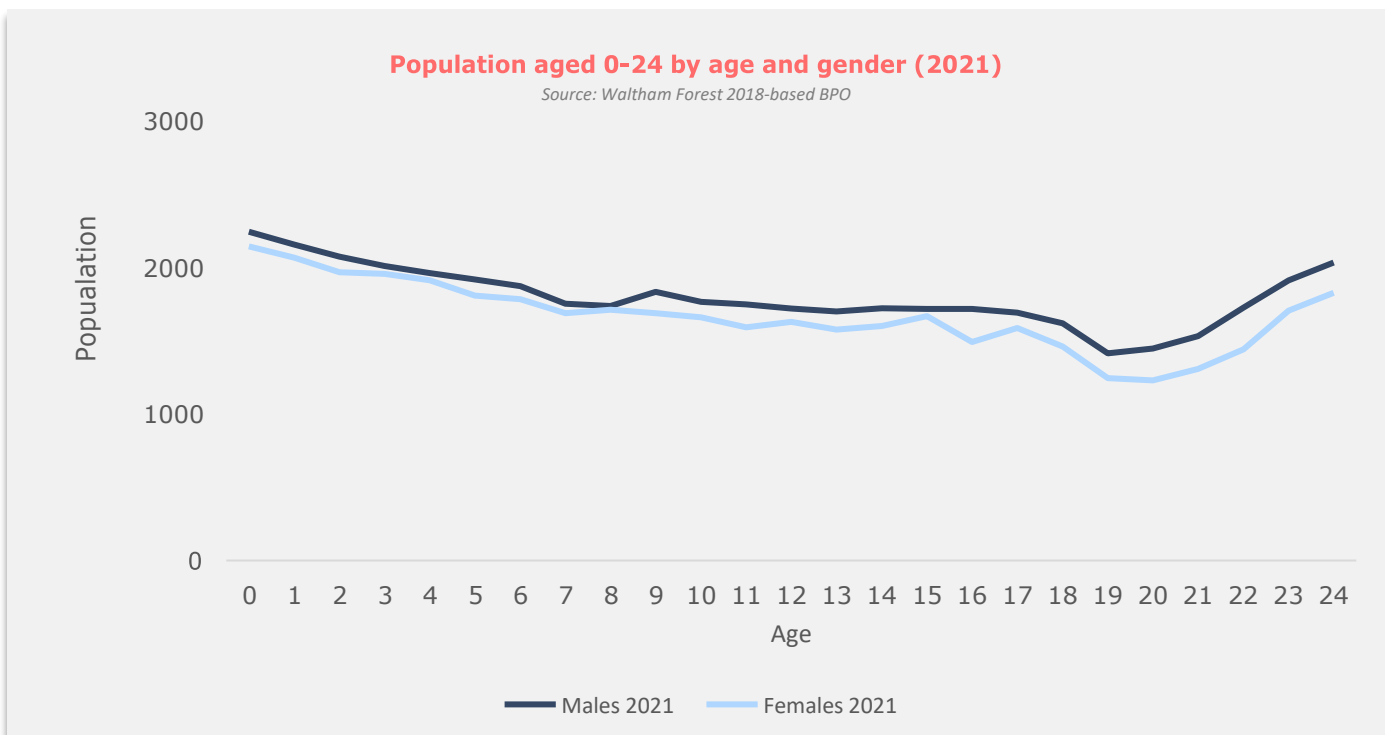
*The total number of 0-17 by ethnic group is higher than the overall population estimates due to differences in methodology (based on the earlier, unadjusted data). Therefore the ethnic group estimates and projections are to be treated with caution and are best used as indication for the possible direction of change.

6. Children and young people demographics

There are more males than females among the children and young people in the borough; however, both gender cohorts are expected to grow at similar rates (0.9% by 2024).

51% of the under 18 population in the borough are male. Both male and female cohorts are expected to grow at a similar rate (0.9% by 2024); however, age cohorts are growing at differing rates – notably the 18-24 bracket is increasing the most (+4.9% change in females and 5.4% in males).

Projections by gender								
	Males 2021	Males 2024	Females 2021	Females 2024	Males	Females	% change Males	% change Females
					2021-24	2021-24		
Under 1	2,250	2,250	2,150	2,150	0	0	0.0	0.0
1 to 4	8,210	8,180	7,910	7,860	-30	-50	-0.4	-0.6
5 to 9	9,120	9,100	8,690	8,660	-20	-30	-0.2	-0.3
10 to 15	10,390	10,180	9,730	9,570	-210	-160	-2.0	-1.6
16 to 17	3,410	3,460	3,080	3,190	50	110	1.5	3.6
Age 0-17	33,380	33,170	31,560	31,430	-210	-130	-0.6	-0.4
Age 18-24	11,690	12,320	10,220	10,720	630	500	5.4	4.9
Age 0-24	45,070	45,490	41,780	42,150	420	370	0.9	0.9



6. Children and young people demographics

6.2 Projections by ethnic group

Detailed ethnic group projections population aged 0-17

Ethnic Group	2021	2024	% change (2021-2024)
Arab	1,800	1,700	-5.6%
Bangladeshi	1,700	1,700	0.0%
Black African	7,700	7,900	2.6%
Black Caribbean	3,200	3,100	3.1%
Chinese	500	500	0.0%
Indian	2,100	2,200	4.8%
Other Asian	3,300	3,300	0.0%
Other Black	3,400	3,500	2.9%
Other Ethnic Group	2,300	2,400	4.3%
Other Mixed	3,300	3,400	3.0%
Other White	11,800	12,500	5.9%
Pakistani	9,600	9,400	2.1%
White & Asian	2,000	2,000	0.0%
White & Black African	1,400	1,500	7.1%
White & Black Caribbean	2,600	2,600	0.0%
White British	13,900	14,000	0.7%
White Irish	300	300	0.0%
All persons	70,800	72,000	1.7%

Source: GLA 2016-based ethnic group projections (housing-led). Figures are rounded to the nearest 100.



6. Children and young people demographics

6.3 Projections by ward

The number of 0-17 year olds is projected to decrease by around 340 from 2021 to 2024. This decline is not universal across wards – some wards, such as William Morris in the centre of the borough, are experiencing high growth.

The number of 18-24 year olds is projected to increase by around 1120 people from 2021 to 2024. Similarly, the largest concentration of this growth is projected for William Morris ward.

Note that the **projections are subject to change as they are being revised annually** based on the most recent information on demographic changes and housing development trajectory. **Understanding ward statistics will assist analysis to target early help and community interventions which may reduce the demand in acute services.**

Population projections aged 0-17 by ward

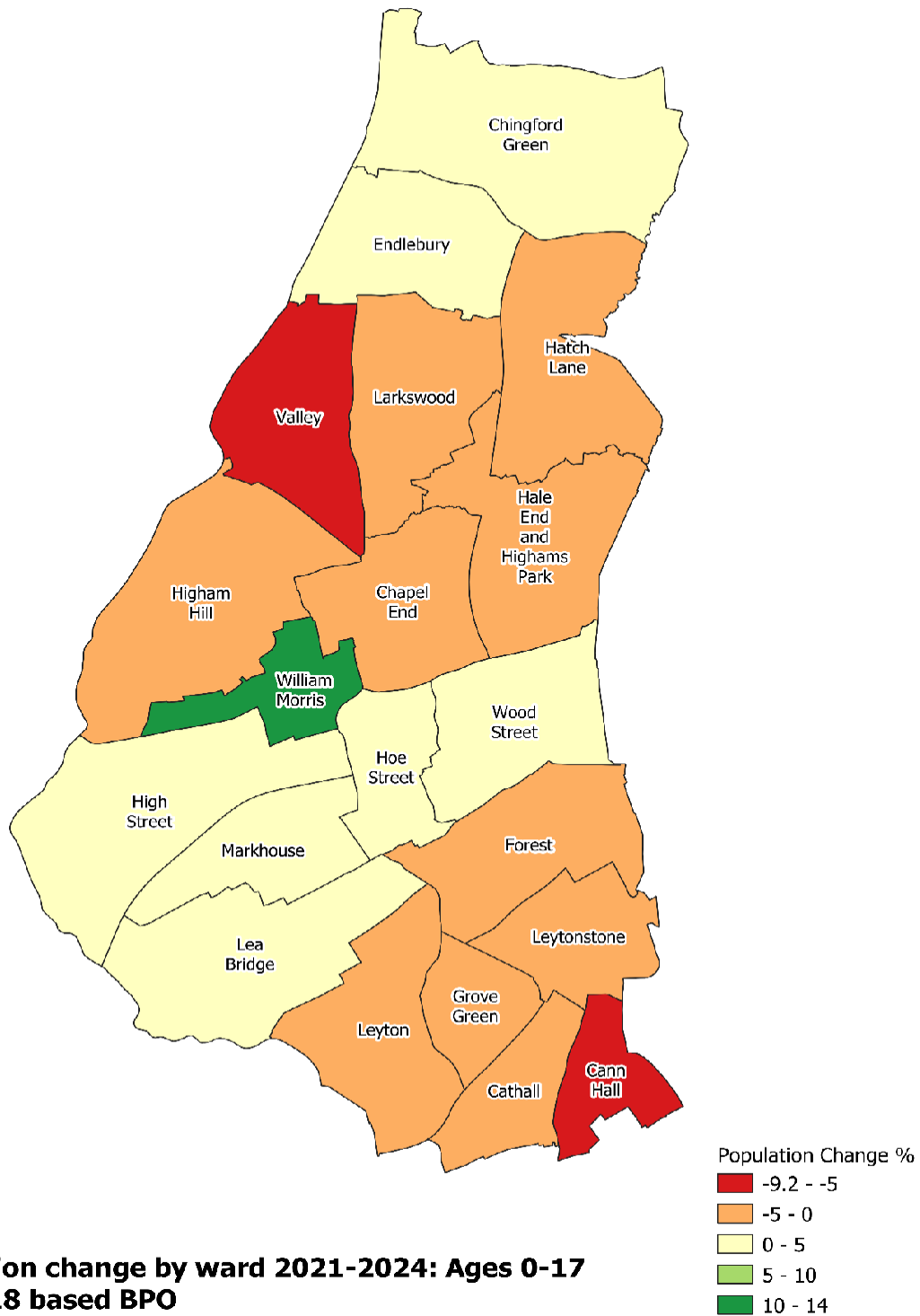
Ward	2021	2022	2023	2024	Change 2021-2024	% Change 2021-2024
Cann Hall	3050	2950	2850	2770	-280	-9.2
Cathall	2810	2790	2780	2760	-50	-1.8
Chapel End	4020	3990	3930	3880	-140	-3.5
Chingford Green	2150	2180	2200	2240	90	4.2
Endlebury	2360	2360	2360	2400	40	1.7
Forest	2730	2700	2650	2600	-130	-4.8
Grove Green	3290	3270	3250	3220	-70	-2.1
Hale End and Highams Park	3230	3220	3190	3170	-60	-1.9
Hatch Lane	2610	2560	2530	2490	-120	-4.6
High Street	3370	3380	3380	3400	30	0.9
Higham Hill	4200	4140	4080	4090	-110	-2.6
Hoe Street	3350	3350	3380	3380	30	0.9
Larkswood	2910	2910	2870	2830	-80	-2.7
Lea Bridge	4130	4120	4110	4180	50	1.2
Leyton	4070	4030	3960	3920	-150	-3.7
Leytonstone	2440	2410	2370	2330	-110	-4.5
Markhouse	3560	3620	3660	3700	140	3.9
Valley	2920	2880	2820	2760	-160	-5.5
William Morris	3780	3830	4120	4310	530	14.0
Wood Street	3970	4050	4130	4160	190	4.8
Borough Total	64940	64760	64610	64600	-340	-0.5

Source: GLA 2018-based Borough Preferred Option (BPO) Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

6. Children and young people demographics

6.3 Projections by ward

Population change by ward 2021-2024: Ages 0-17



Population change by ward 2021-2024: Ages 0-17
GLA 2018 based BPO

6. Children and young people demographics

6.3 Projections by ward

In addition, the **number of 18 to 24 year olds is projected to increase** by around 1,120(5.1%).

Population projections aged 18-24 by ward						
Ward	2021	2022	2023	2024	Change 2021-2024	% Change 2021-2024
Cann Hall	1600	1650	1630	1670	70	4.4
Cathall	1230	1240	1220	1230	0	0
Chapel End	1160	1170	1180	1210	50	4.3
Chingford Green	500	510	490	530	30	6
Endlebury	730	740	740	740	10	1.4
Forest	1220	1260	1250	1270	50	4.1
Grove Green	1160	1160	1150	1170	10	0.9
Hale End and Highams Park	910	920	920	940	30	3.3
Hatch Lane	730	740	740	770	40	5.5
High Street	1000	1020	1010	1060	60	6
Higham Hill	1180	1190	1210	1320	140	11.9
Hoe Street	1260	1300	1310	1340	80	6.3
Larkswood	830	840	820	850	20	2.4
Lea Bridge	1350	1350	1390	1480	130	9.6
Leyton	1340	1370	1360	1360	20	1.5
Leytonstone	1120	1160	1150	1150	30	2.7
Markhouse	1290	1360	1350	1320	30	2.3
Valley	960	970	970	990	30	3.1
William Morris	1240	1190	1430	1450	210	16.9
Wood Street	1110	1160	1190	1180	70	6.3
Grand Total	21920	22330	22530	23040	1120	5.1

Source: GLA 2018-based Borough Preferred Option (BPO)

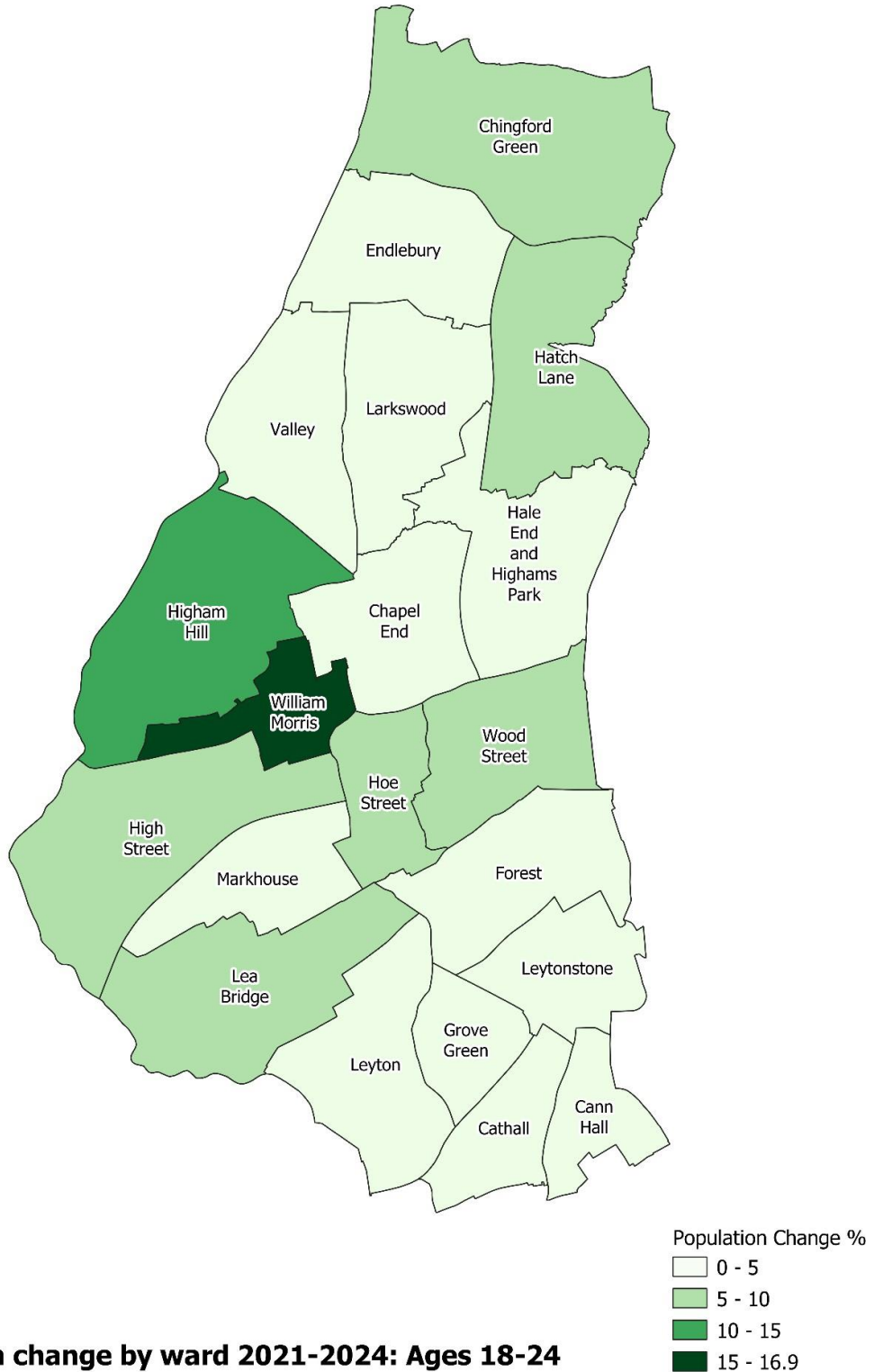
Note: figures are rounded to the nearest



6. Children and young people demographics

6.3 Projections by ward

Population change by ward 2021-2024: Ages 18-24



Population change by ward 2021-2024: Ages 18-24

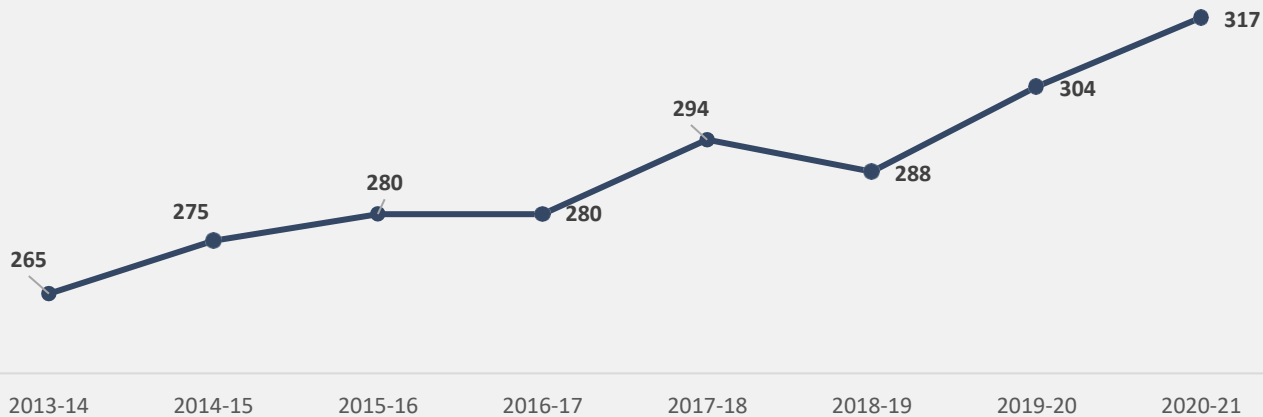
7. Children in care trends

7.1 Number of Children in care

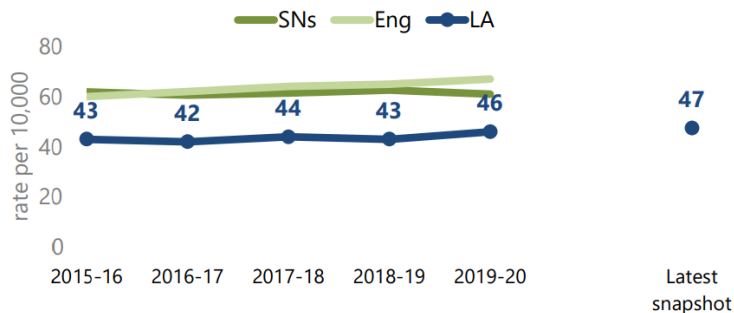
Waltham Forest had a total of 317 children in care at 31 March 2021, 4% increase from the previous year and 20% increase from March 2014. Overall, there were 13 more children in care at 31 March 2021 compared to 2020⁸.

The number of 18–24-year-olds is projected to increase by around 1,120 people from 2021 to 2024. The largest concentration of this growth is projected for William Morris ward.

All children looked after at 31st of March 2021



Rate of CLA per 10,000 children (snapshot)



The rate of children looked after increased from 46 to 47 per 10,000 children aged under 18 living in the area. This remains below the average rates for England and statistical neighbours/similar areas

Similar areas are those local authority areas that OFSTED and the Department for Education define as most similar to Waltham Forest. They are: Birmingham, Brent, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield, Greenwich, Hackney, Haringey, Lewisham and Luton.

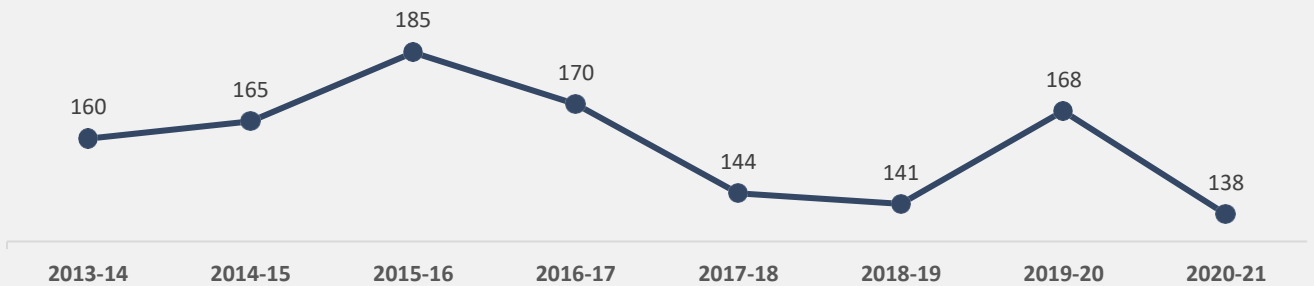
8 - Children’s Social Care Benchmarking Tool, 3.14

7. Children in care trends

7.2 Children coming into and leaving care during the year

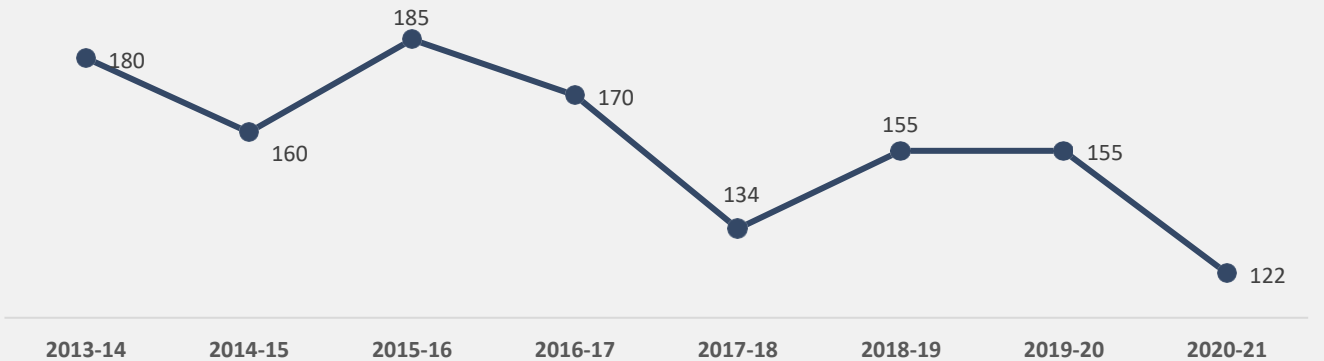
2020-21 saw the least number of children becoming looked after. A total of 138 children started to be looked after in 2020-21, an 18% decrease compared to the previous year.

Children who started to be looked after during the year



2020-21 also saw the least number of children ceasing to be looked after. 122 children in total ceased to be looked after during the last year. This is 22% below the 2019-20 levels, and 34% below the highest count in 2015-16.

Number of children who ceased to be looked after during the year



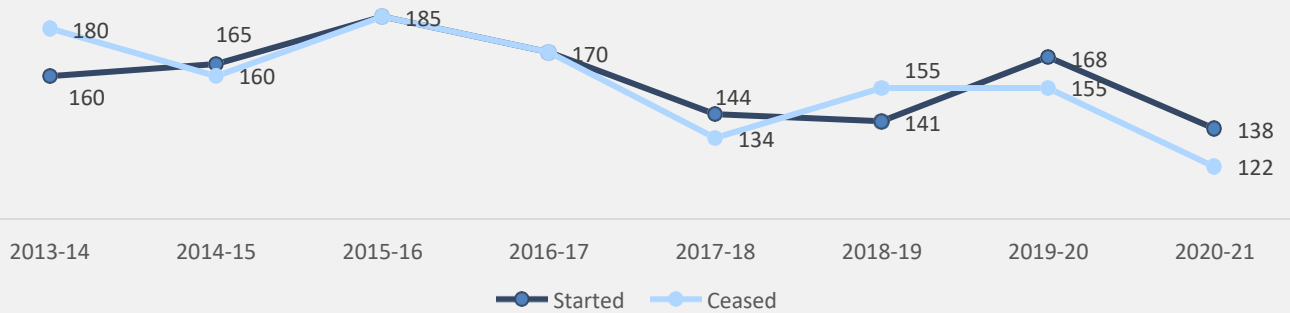
This means that **slightly more children came into care than left during the year.** This is further evidence of the impact of children becoming looked after as older teenagers. Although work is undertaken to reunite them with their family, it is more likely that family relationships have broken down and that the young person is so vulnerable that they will remain in care and become Care Leavers. This has a direct impact on needing to adjust Sufficiency Plans to include increased alternative homes that are not family based such as semi-independent accommodation.

7. Children in care trends

Given the volatility of this cohort, it is important to recognise that many forces can act to increase CIC numbers and that the local trend upwards is line with the national figures which shows a rise in CIC numbers.

Overall, 16 more children started to be looked after (138) than left the care last year (122).

Number of children who started and ceased to be looked after during the year



Number and percentage of children who started to be looked after in 2019/20 by legal status

	2019/20 starters (count)	2019/20 starters (%)
Interim care order	55	40%
Accommodated under S20	65	47%
On remand, or committed for trial or sentence, and accommodated by LA	6	4%
Under police protection and in local authority accommodation	4	3%
Full care order	8	6%
Total	138	100%

Of those 138 children who came into care during the 2020-21, around third (25%) ceased to be looked after during the same year (34 children). **Analysis shows that younger children entering care are more likely to leave sooner with their main destinations being return to birth family or other permanent family alternative home.**

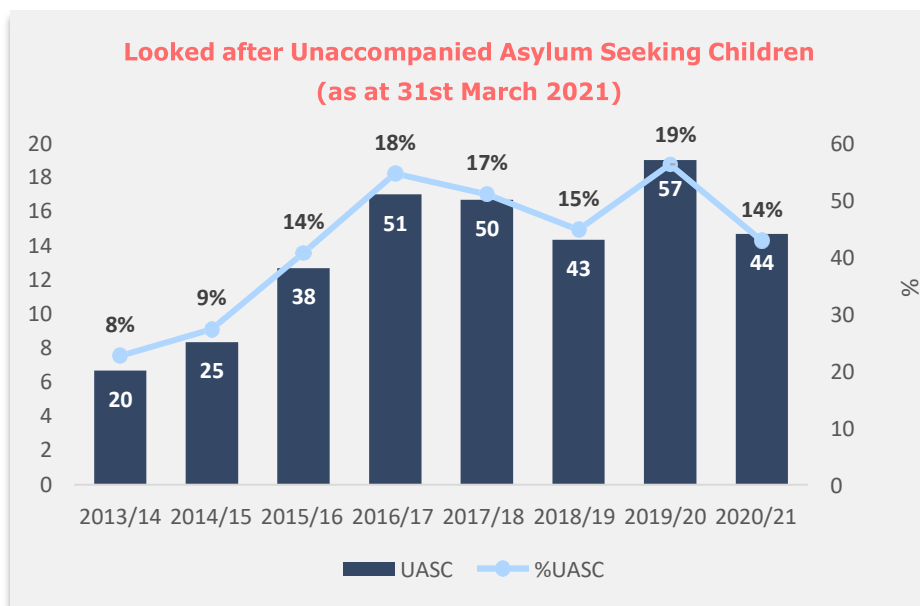
7. Children in care trends

7.3 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

At 31 March 2021 Waltham Forest had a total of 44 unaccompanied asylum Seeking children looked after, lower to the last year's figure which could largely be due to Covid -19 restriction.

This threshold has been set by the National Transfer scheme to protect areas that have been proactive in offering services to unaccompanied asylum seeking children and to encourage other areas to participate in National Transfer. If policy changes this number could rise again.

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children make up 14% of all the children looked after in Waltham Forest, a ratio that has nearly doubled since 2014 and is nearly twice higher than the national average 6% in 2020⁹.



According to the latest figures (as at 31/03/2021) **there are 44 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in care** (14% of the total of 317 Children in care)¹⁰.

As we are currently receiving referrals from the London Asylum Seekers Consortium or through the National Transfer Scheme, we expect the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children to increase over the next period. However, referral is dependent on the borough remaining under/over 0.07% population threshold. As looked after unaccompanied asylum-seeking children pass 18 the leave the cohort we can dip below the threshold and start to receive rota referrals again.

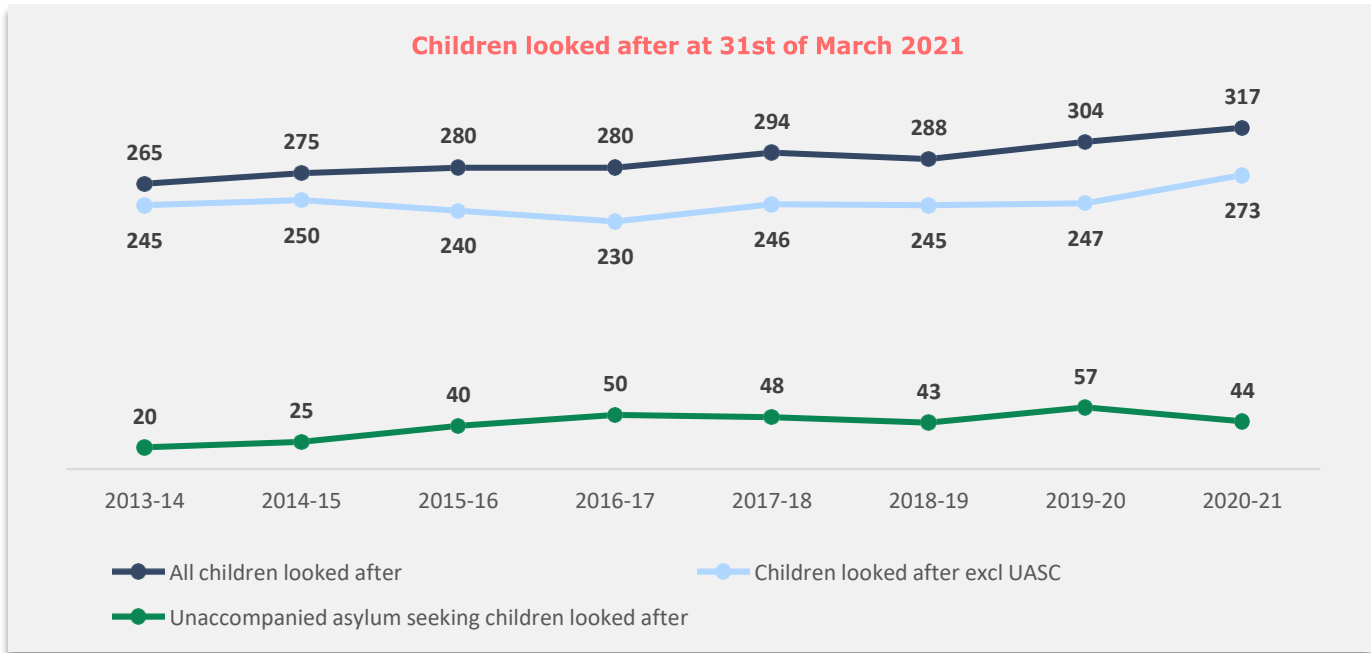
We also expect the occasional walks-ins/ direct referrals to continue. **In the last 6 months (Oct 2020-Mar 2021), 9 of the 83 children who started to be looked after were unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (8%).** At the same time, 18 out of 103 children who ceased to be looked after were unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (17%)¹¹.

9 - 2020 is the latest available national figure, Children looked after in England including adoptions, DfE, 2020

10 - Children's services Analysis Tool, March 2021

11 - Children's services Analysis Tool, March 2021

Until last year, the number of Children in care in the borough increased mainly on account of the growing number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children. Last year, however, the trend reversed as the number of Children in care increased while the number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children declined.



The 75% of the unaccompanied asylum seeking children in Waltham Forest are from Afghanistan (33 out of 44 children at the end of March 2021).

Number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children at 31st March 2021 by nationality

Nationality	Count
Afghan	33
African	1
Albanian	2
Any other group	5
Arab	1
Other white	1
Vietnamese	1
Grand Total	44



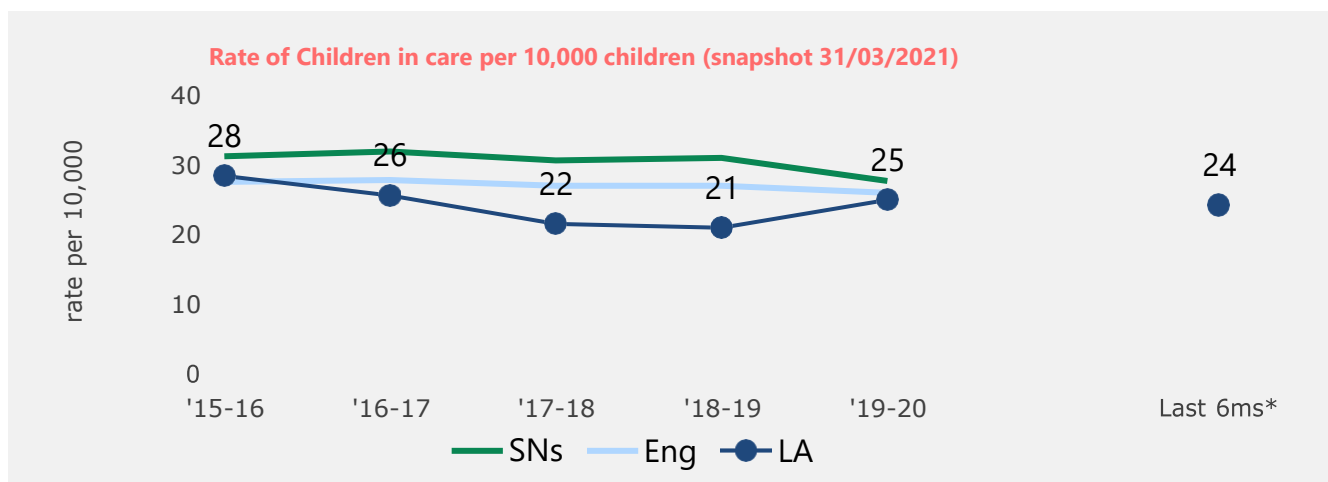
According to 2021 ONS, the top 5 countries of birth in the borough are: Romania, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria and Lithuania.

7. Children in care trends

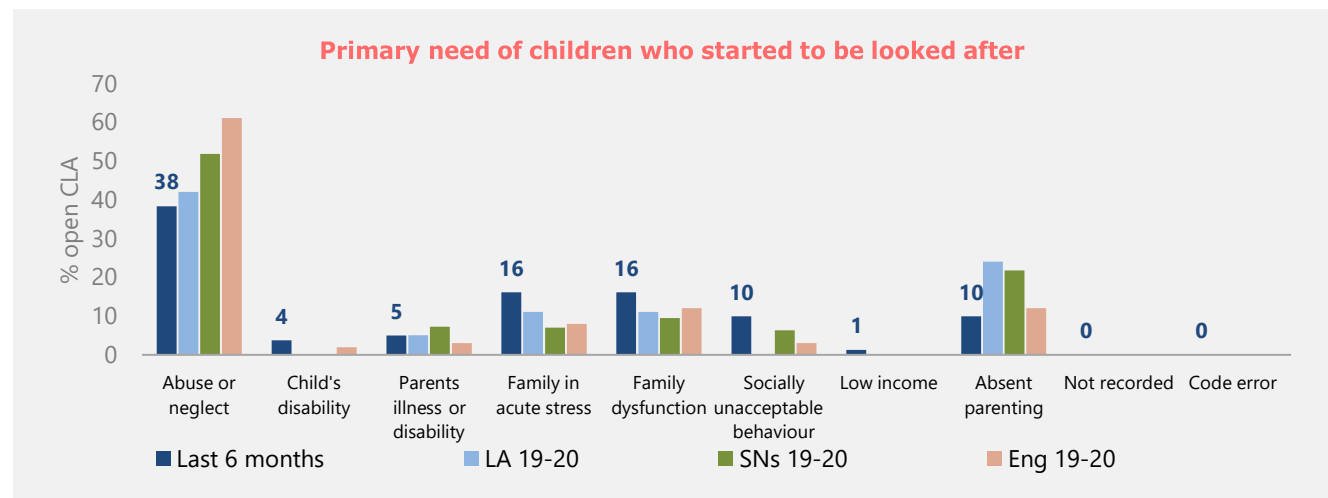
7.4 Children Looked After in the last 6 months of 2020/21¹²

Children coming into care

- 81 Children in care started in care in the last 6 months 20/21
- 5 of the 81 starters (6%) were unaccompanied asylum-seeking children
- 47 of the starters were males (58%), 34 (42%) were females, all 5 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children were males
- 8 of the 81 starters (10%) had previously been looked after
- **The rate of children starting to be looked after per 10,000 children is higher than same time last year.**



38% became looked after because of abuse or neglect, 16% due to family in acute stress and 16% due to family dysfunction. These were the three primary reasons for coming into care.



12- Source: Children's services Analysis Tool, Waltham Forest (01/10/20-31/03/21)

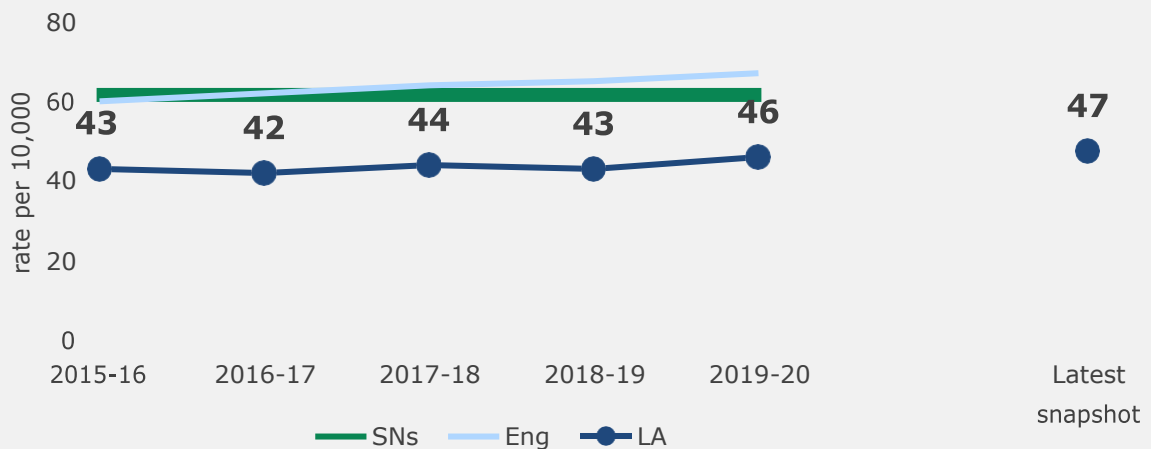
Children in care ceasing care

More children started to be looked after (81) than ceased the care (53) in the last 6 months. The rate of children who have ceased care has decreased more than the rate of children starting care.

- 53 Children in care ceased care in the last 6 months
- 11 of the 53 children ceasing care (23%) were unaccompanied asylum-seeking children
- 34 of the leavers were male (66%), 18 (34%) were females, 11 were unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and were males but one female
- 26 children (46%) who ceased care were 18 years old
- 31 (38%) returned home to live with parent/relatives
- 2 were adopted (4%)
- 6 were under Special Guardianship Order (11%)

As a result of more children starting to be looked after than ceasing care the overall rate of Children in care has increased from 301 at the end of October 2020 to 317 as at 31/03/2021. The rate of Children in care per 10,000 has remained similar to the end of March figure (47) but is higher than in previous years.

Rate of Children in care per 10,000 children (snapshot 31/03/2021)

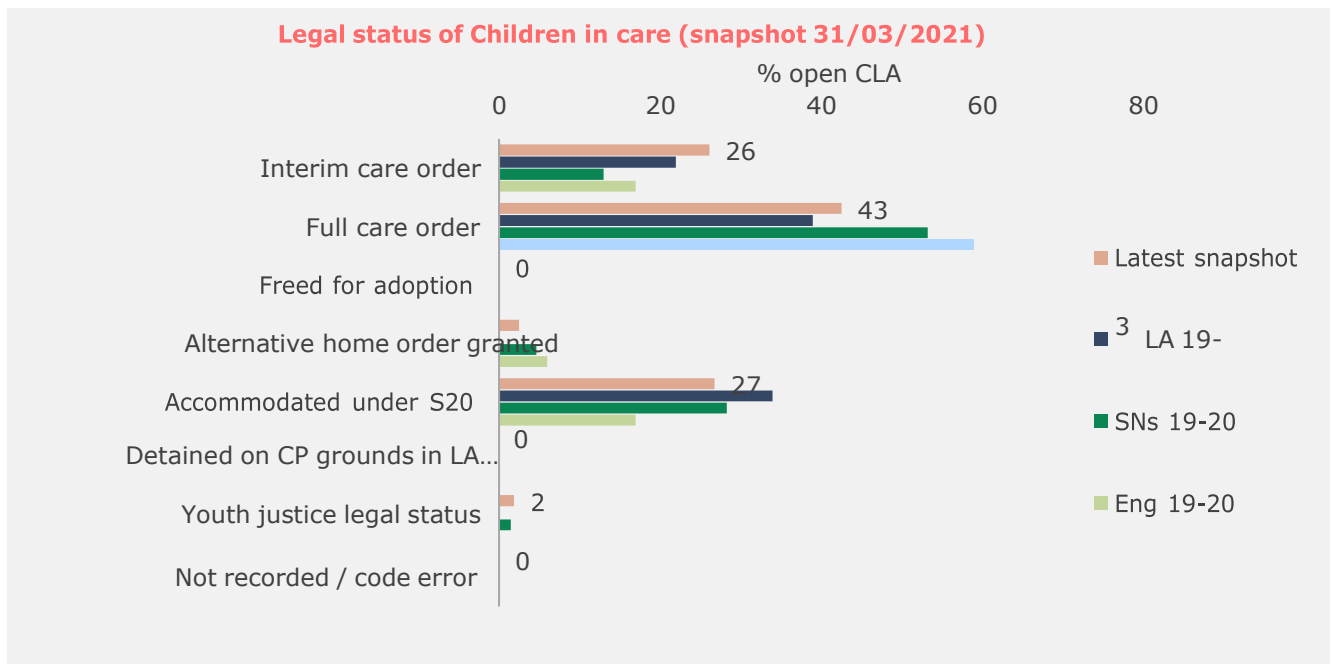
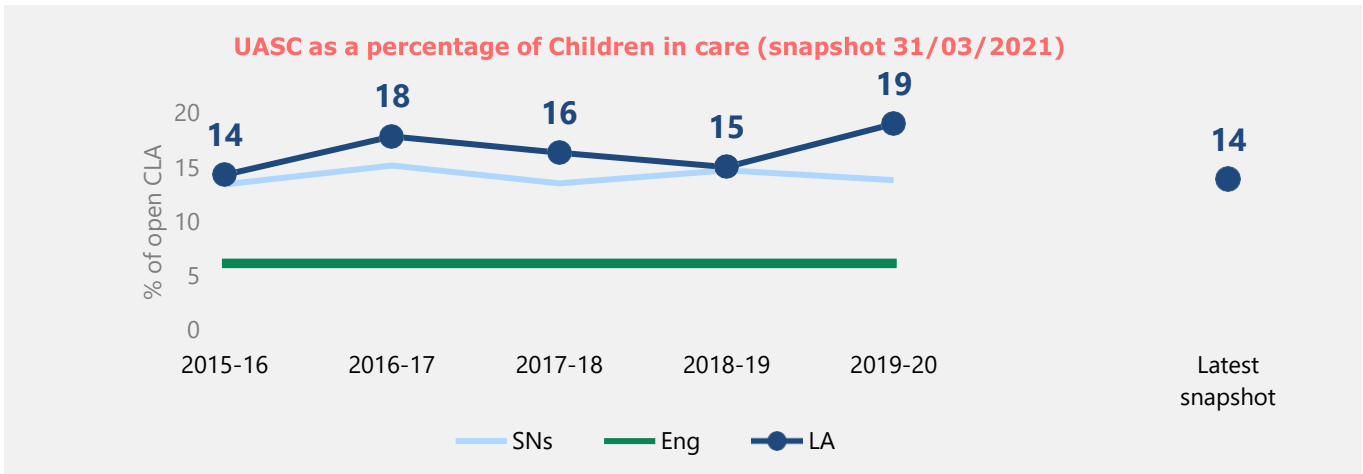


7. Children in care trends

Of the 317 Children in care with an open episode of care as at 31/03/2021:

- 44 are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (14%), all males
- 140 are males (44%) and 132 are females (42%)
- 11 children (3%) are living with disability
- 75% of the UASC are from Asian or Asian British background compared to 13% of non UASC Children in care.
- 16% of the non UASC Children in care are from 'Other' ethnic group compared to 3% of UASC
- 29% of all Children in care are White

The proportion of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children has decreased from 19% to 14% compared to 2019/20 year end figure.



8. Children in care profile

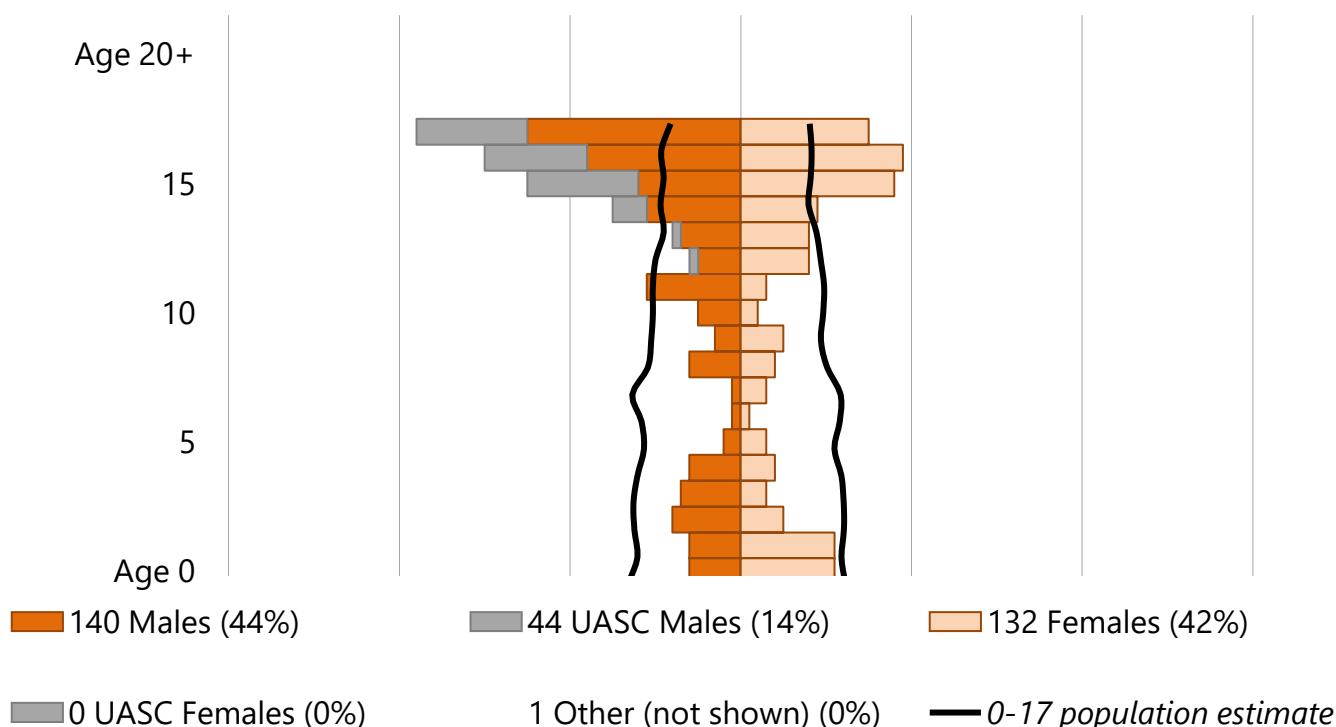
Of the 317 Children in care at 31 March 2021 ¹³:

- 14% were UASCs
- 58% were male
- 38% aged 10-15
- 71% were BAME
- 3% live with disability

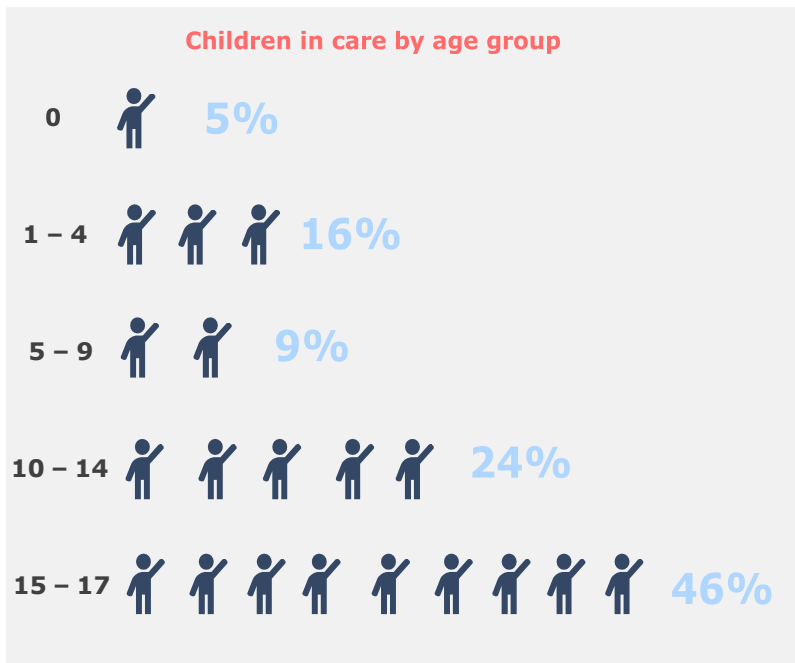
8.1 Age and gender

3/5ths of all children looked after in Waltham Forest are male (58%). Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) in care are predominantly male. As of 31 March 2021, all 44 UASC were male – similar to the previous year where only one was female. Older age groups in particular have a significant gender imbalance due to the higher proportion of unaccompanied asylum seeking children. The youngest UASC in the borough is 12 years old (1 person).

Children in care by age and gender (as at 31st March 2021)



8. Children in care profile

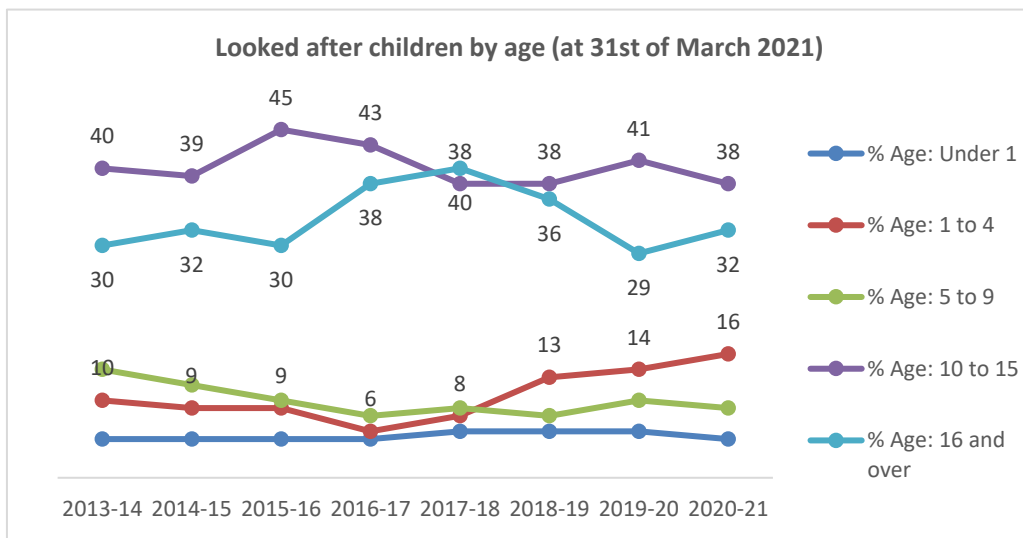


Compared to the overall profile of the children and young people in the borough, there are **disproportionally more teenagers, particularly boys, among the Children in care cohort.** This is influenced by the unaccompanied asylum seeking children who are predominantly teenage boys.

The proportion of 16 -17 years olds looked after has decreased sharply in the last couple of years but on increase the last year and has returned to the same levels in 2014-15 (32%).

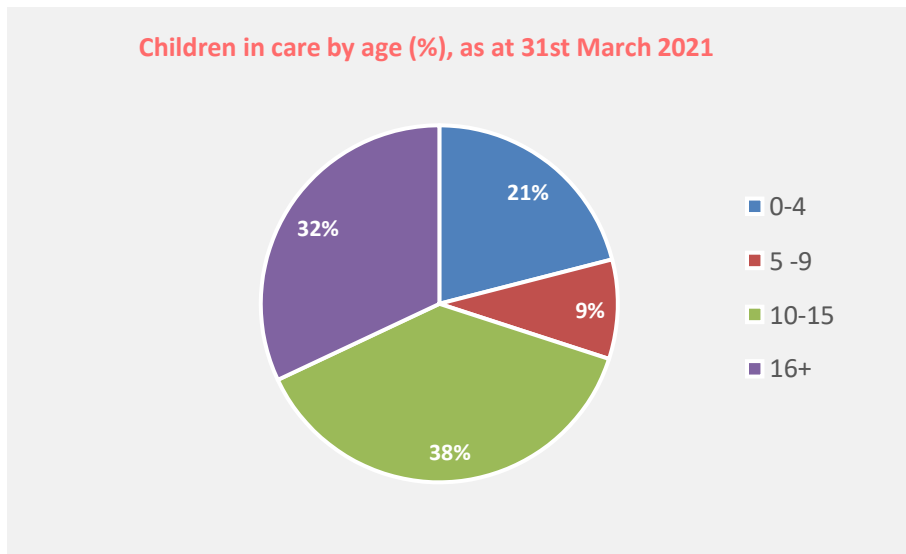
Additionally, the proportion of the 1-4 years olds looked after has continued to increase – with a +8% change since 2017-18.

This is reflective of the challenging make-up of young people becoming CIC as “late entrants” to Care. The majority of these older local teenagers are gang affected and may have been involved in serious youth violence as perpetrator, victim or both. **There is also a significant cohort of young women at risk of or subject to CSE.** Many of the young people of both genders are at risk of, or are being exploited. This presents us with specific challenges in sourcing appropriate alternative homes that both protect and promote the welfare of such young people. As a group they are less likely to attach to new adult primary carers and alternative home stability can be hard to achieve with them.



8. Children in care profile

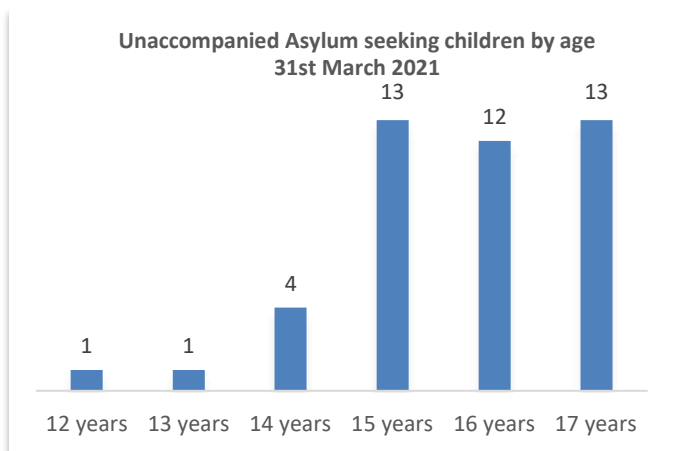
8.2 Age when coming into care ¹⁴



About a third of CIC are younger than 10 years old. **38% are aged 10 to 15 and likely to remain in care until their 18th birthday or become eligible Care Leavers.**

All unaccompanied asylum seeking children were over 10 years old when they first became looked after. Around half of them came into care when they were over 16 years old.

At the end of the March 2021, all unaccompanied asylum seeking children looked after in Waltham Forest were over 12 years old. One third of them (30%) were aged 17 and therefore likely to leave care within the year. Nearly 90% are aged 15 or older and therefore likely to cease care in the next three years at which point they will be transferred to living care when they turn 18.



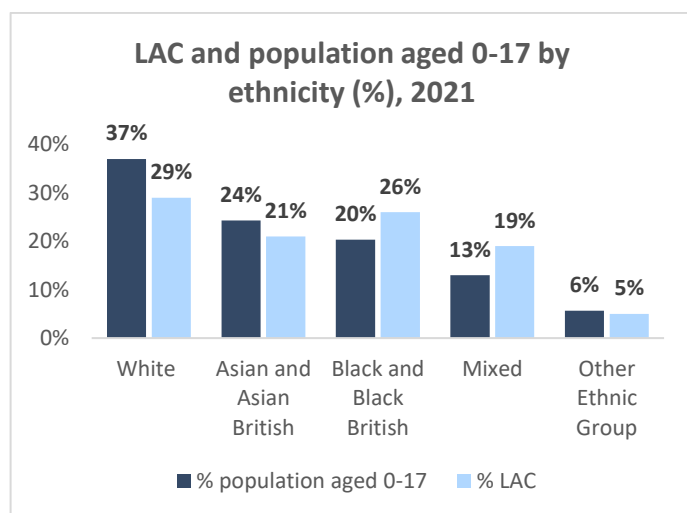
Note that in the last 6 months a total of 5 new asylum seeking children have become looked after in Waltham Forest. As they are aged 12-17 they are likely to stay in care until their 18th birthday.

8. Children in care profile

8.3 Ethnicity

The ethnic profile of Children in care compared to the population aged 0-17 in White groups appear to be underrepresented in CIC cohorts.

The ethnic profile of Children in care compared to the population aged 0-17: The proportion of white and Black/Black British young people in the CIC cohort is very similar to the proportions in the borough population overall.



Mixed and Black/Black British ethnicities appear to be

overrepresented in the LAC¹⁵

compared to the proportion in the overall population and Asian/Asian British group underrepresented by 3%. This however may have to do with how ethnicity is recorded and what they identify it with.

Overall, more than two thirds of the LAC are BAME (71%) as at end of March 2021, 8% higher to the proportion in the 0-17 age cohort as a whole.

	Count	% CIC	% population aged 0-17
White	91	29%	37%
Black or Black British	82	26%	20%
Mixed	61	19%	13%
Asian or Asian British	68	21%	24%
Other Ethnic Groups	15	5%	6%
Total	317	100%	100%

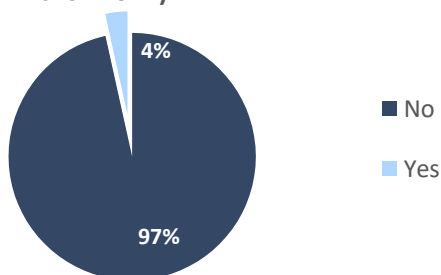
8. Children in care profile

8.4 Disability and health

Around **3%** of Children in care are known to have a disability

11 out of 317 (3%) Children in care are known to have a disability. **Disabled children stay in care significantly longer than their peers who are not disabled.** On average, the Children in care with disabilities in Waltham Forest have been **in care for 58 months compared to the 33 months** the average for children with no disabilities.

Children in care with known disability(31st March 2021)



There is a **need to better understand the type of disabilities Children in care have** and how that has changed over the year in order to plan for the appropriate support.

Recommendation for the BI and Insight teams to look into this for the next Sufficiency Report.

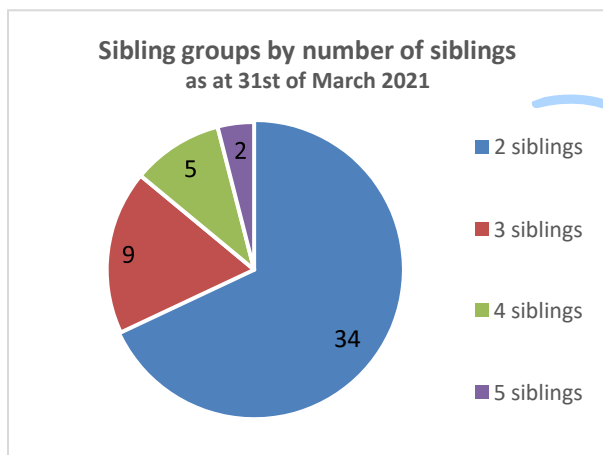
Children in care statutory return reports on number of health-related indicators(2019/20 provisional figures)

Indicator	2019/20 outturn for:		
	WF	Statistical Neighbours	England
Percentage of children looked after for at least a year who have had a health assessment within the last 12 months	84%	90%	93%
Percentage of children looked after for at least a year whose immunisations were up to date within the last 12 months	54%	88%	84%
Percentage of children looked after for at least a year who have had an oral health assessment within the last 12 months	94%	86%	82%
Percentage of children aged 5 or below and looked after for at least a year who have an up to date development assessment	93%	88%	90%
Percentage of children looked after for at least a year who have been identified as having a substance misuse problem	10%	8%	4%
Number of children looked after for at least a year who have received an intervention for their substance misuse problem	2	47%	49%
Number of children looked after for at least a year who were offered an intervention for their substance misuse problem	17	43%	34%

8. Children in care profile

8.5 Sibling groups

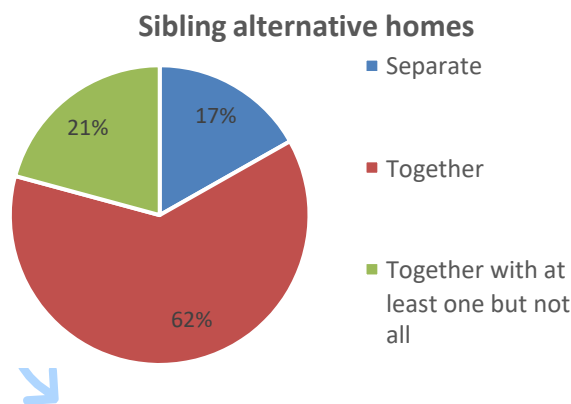
The Children in care cohort in Waltham Forest as at 31 March 2021 included a total of **125 siblings in 50 sibling groups** ¹⁶.



Around two thirds of the sibling’s groups had two siblings (34 out of 50 sibling groups). There were also nine 3-sibling-groups, five 4-sibling-groups and 2 5-sibling groups.

Highest number of sibling groups is from Chapel End with 6 sibling groups followed by William Morris and Cathall wards with 4 sibling groups each. Chapel End which has 6 sibling groups also has a highest number of siblings (15).

Ward	Number of sibling groups	Number of siblings
Cann Hall	4	10
Cathall	4	12
Chapel End	6	15
Chingford Green	2	6
Endlebury	1	2
Forest	1	2
Grove Green	1	2
Hatch Lane	2	5
High Street	3	10
Higham Hill	2	4
Hoe Street	2	6
Lea Bridge	4	8
Leyton	2	4
Leytonstone	1	2
Markhouse	3	7
Valley	4	10
William Morris	4	12
Wood Street	2	4
Outside of the borough	2	4
Total	50	125



Children may be placed together with some or all of their siblings or separately. At 31 March 2021, just under two thirds of the siblings were placed together (78 out of 125). 17% (21 out of 125) were placed separately and 26 (21%) were placed together with one more siblings but not all.

8. Children in care profile

8.6 Length of time in care

42% of our Children in care have been with us over 2 years and its only 12% who have entered care in the last 3 months. This demonstrate stable long term care planning and consistency to the Children once they are in care.

Length of time in care (as at 31 March 2021)

	Number of CIC	% CIC
3 months or less	38	12%
More than 3 months but less than or equal to 6 months	34	11%
More than 6 months but less than 1 year	39	12%
1 year but less than 2 years	74	23%
2 years and over	132	42%
Total	317	100%

Note: length of time is calculated based on the start date of the latest period of care.

Younger children tend to enter and exit care in relatively short periods of time whilst older entrants are more represented amongst children with longer “care careers”.

Length in care by age (as at 31 March 2021)

Length in care	Age Under 1	Age 1-4	Age 5-9	Age 10-15	Age 16-17	Total (all ages)
Up to 1 year	17	16	10	42	26	111
1-2 years		17	11	24	22	74
2-3 years		9	2	13	11	35
3-4 years		7	4	12	11	34
4-5 years		1		2	5	8
5-10 years			2	21	15	38
10+ years				5	12	17
Total	17	50	29	119	102	317

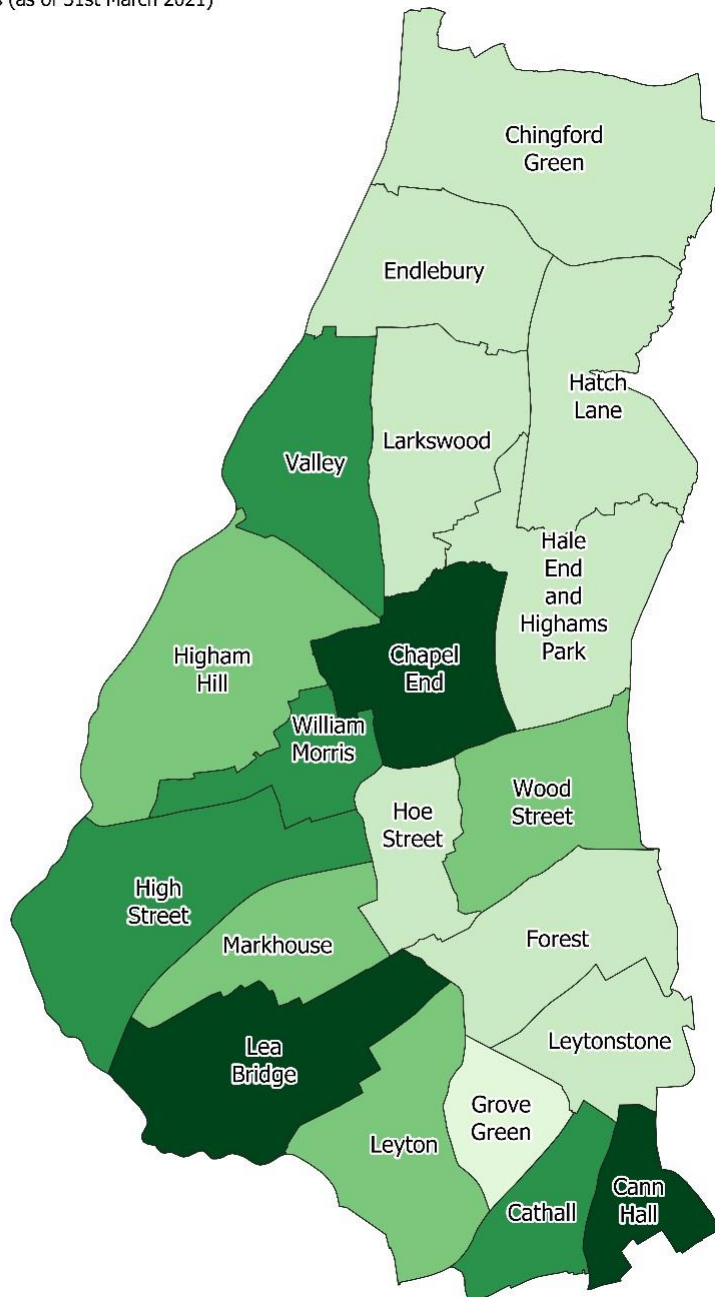
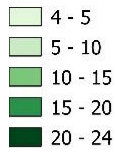
9. Home location mapping

NB that this data is 31st March 2021, whilst earliest pages refer to March 31st 2020. This is because some parts of the 2020 data won't be updated / reconciled until September 2021.

Map showing the home postcode and ward of the Children in care in care as at 31 March 2021 (excludes UASC as they are registered at the LBWF Children Service's address).

3 wards have over 20 Children in care – Chapel End (24), Cann Hall (24), and LeaBridge (21).

LAC Home Locations (as of 31st March 2021)

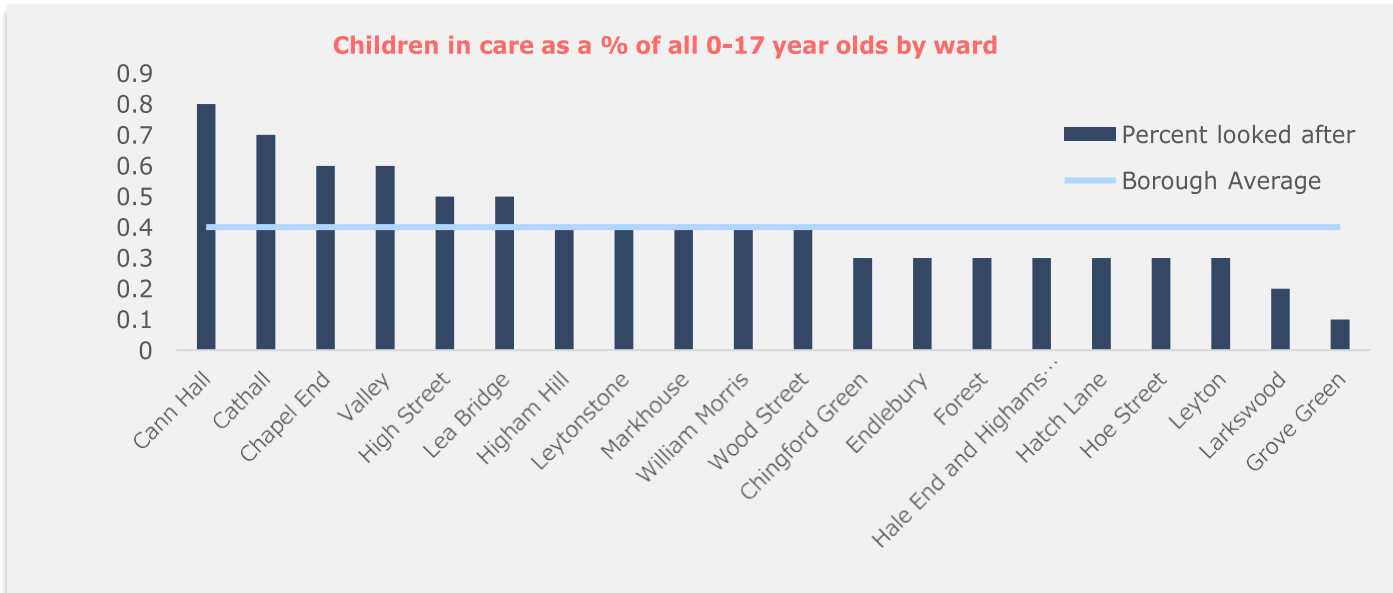


9. Home location mapping

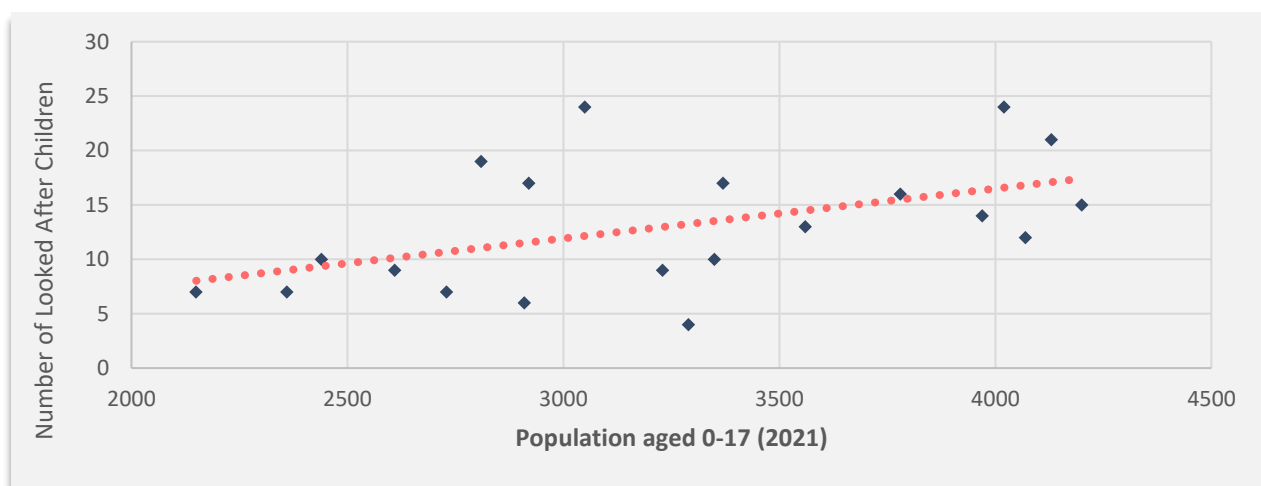
Population aged 0-17 by ward

Children in care as at end of March 2021 made up on average 0.4% of Waltham Forest’s 0-17 year old population (UASCs excluded here for ward based analysis).

By ward the percentage varies from the lowest of 0.12% in Grove Green to the highest of 0.79% in Cann Hall.



Wards which have a higher number of children also have more children coming in care.



Cann Hall ward has four sibling groups with 10 Children in care in total, which partly explains why it stands out with high percentage of Children in care compared to the child population in the ward¹⁷.

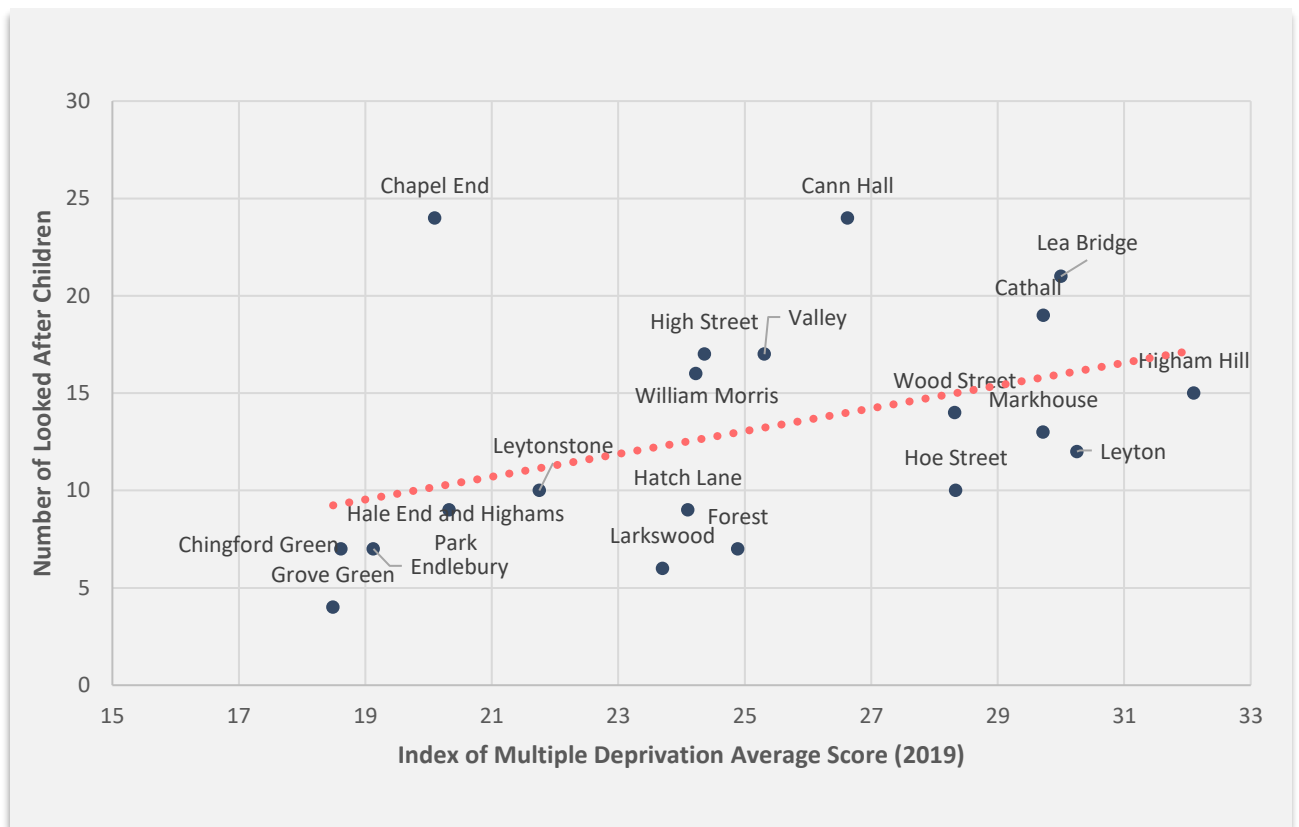
17 – Chapel End ward also has the highest number of sibling in total (15)

9. Home location mapping

Deprivation by ward

There appears also to be **a correlation between the deprivation and the number of Children in care from these wards. The more deprived wards tend to have more children coming into care.** There are some exceptions, for example Chapel End which is the 4th least deprived ward, but has the highest count of Children in care.

The chart below compares the deprivation score (2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation) and the number of CIC by ward.



9. Home location mapping

Ward summary table

Ward Name	CIC by ward (home location)	Population aged 0-17 (2021)	% CIC of population	2019 IMD Score
	(31 Mar 2021)		aged 0-17	
Cann Hall	24	3050	0.79	26.6
Cathall	19	2810	0.68	29.7
Chapel End	24	4020	0.6	20.1
Chingford Green	7	2150	0.33	18.6
Endlebury	7	2360	0.3	19.1
Forest	7	2730	0.26	24.9
Grove Green	4	3290	0.12	18.5
Hale End and Highams Park	9	3230	0.28	20.3
Hatch Lane	9	2610	0.34	24.1
High Street	17	3370	0.5	24.4
Higham Hill	15	4200	0.36	32.1
Hoe Street	10	3350	0.3	28.3
Larkswood	6	2910	0.21	23.7
Lea Bridge	21	4130	0.51	30.0
Leyton	12	4070	0.29	30.3
Leytonstone	10	2440	0.41	21.8
Markhouse	13	3560	0.37	29.7
Valley	17	2920	0.58	25.3
William Morris	16	3780	0.42	24.2
Wood Street	14	3970	0.35	28.3



10. Alternative homes

Waltham Forest had a total of 317 Children in care including 44 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) as at end year 2020/2021 (31st March 2021). Of these:

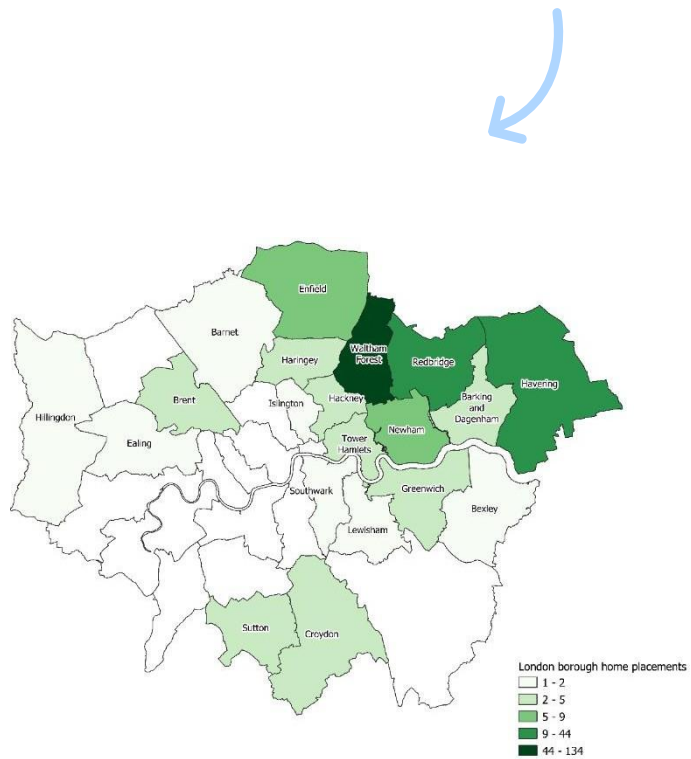
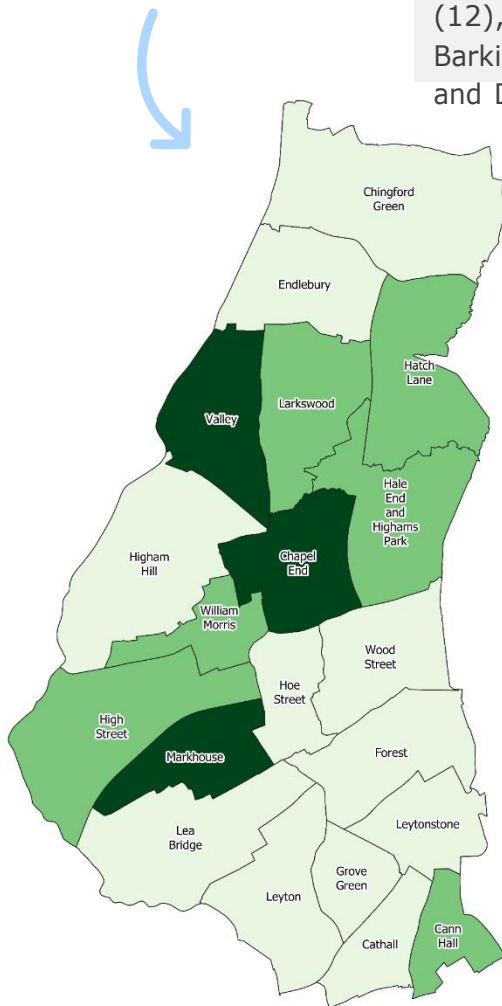
- 59% of all Children in Care lived **outside the local authority** area
- 20 lived in **residential children’s homes**, of which 90% lived outside of the authority area
- 234 lived with **foster families**, of whom 55% lived out of the authority area
- 20 children lived with their **parents or person of parental responsibility**, 75% of which are within the authority area.

10.1 Alternative home mapping

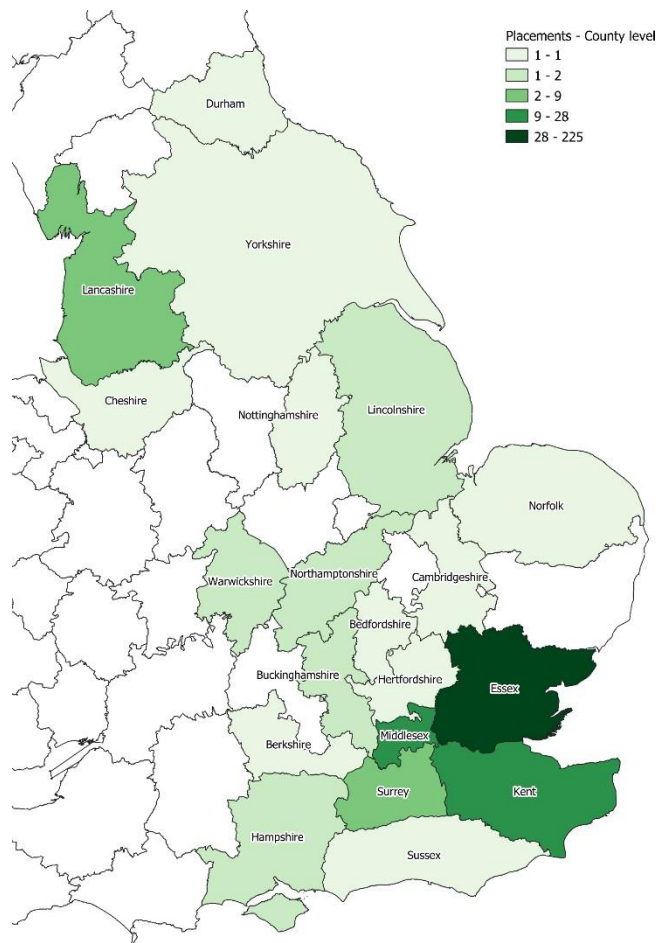
Of the total of 317 Children in care at 31st March 2021, 134 (42%) were placed in **within Waltham Forest**.

Within London, Redbridge had the highest number of Children in care alternative homes for Waltham Forest (44). Waltham Forest neighbouring boroughs also have the highest amount of alternative homes – Havering (12), Enfield (9), Epping Forest (9), Newham (9), and Barking and Dagenham (5).

LAC Ward placements
 2 - 5
 5 - 10
 10 - 13

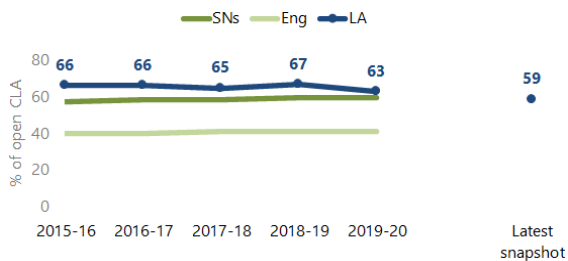


10. Alternative homes



Outside London, Epping Forest, Brentwood, and Medway had the highest number of alternative homes from Waltham Forest (9, 5 and 4 respectively).

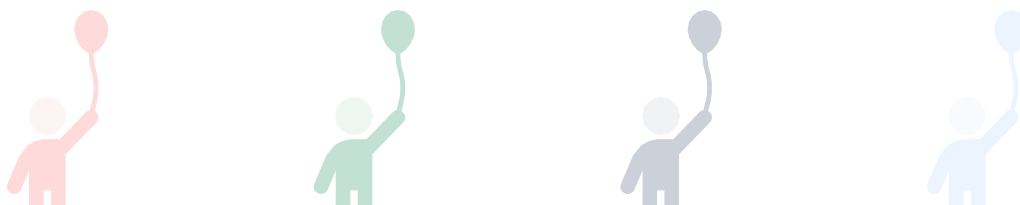
CLA alternative homes out of borough



Alternative home by distance

Taking a snapshot in March 2021, 15% of Children in care were placed more than 20 miles away from home, down from 18% in 2017/18. In 2019/20, Waltham Forest had a lower percentage of children placed more than 20 miles away from home compared to othersimilar areas (19%) or England average (18%).

It is clear from this data that more local alternative homes are needed nearer to Waltham Forest. Although there is a need to move looked after young people and children from their home communities for safeguarding reasons, we are having to make alternative homes too far away forbest interests of children¹⁸. Our strategy for addressing this is set out in Section 14 of this report.



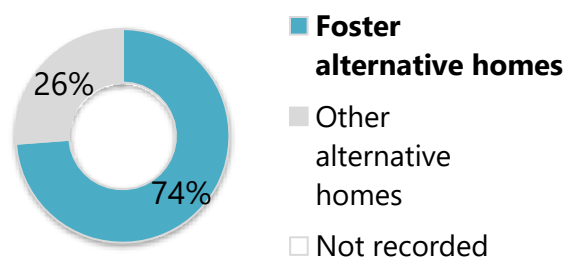
10. Alternative homes

10.2 Alternative homes by type and provision

74% of our Children in Waltham Forest are in foster homes (237 out of 317). This is 1% lower to last year's snapshot with 75% of the total alternative homes being foster homes.

37% of the alternative homes are LA own provision, lower than the statistical neighbors' (40%) and the national average (49%) in 2020/21 ¹⁹.

Alternative homes by type (snapshot 31/03/2021)



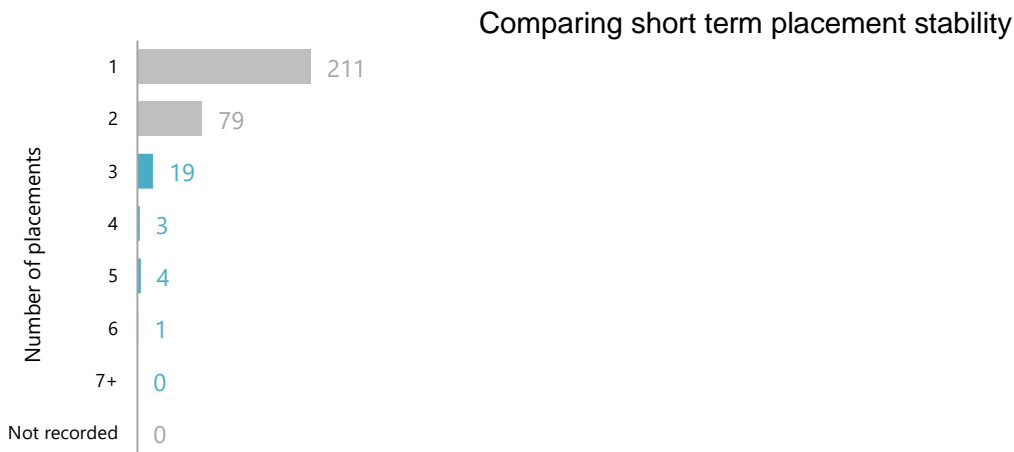
Alternative home type (open CLA)	Own LA	Private	Other	Total
Foster alternative home	109	114	11	234
Placed for adoption	4	0	0	4
Placed with parents	0	0	20	20
Independent living	0	0	0	0
Semi Independent	0	30	0	30
Secure Children's Homes	0	1	0	1
Children's Homes	0	20	0	20
Residential Care Home	0	1	0	1
NHS/Health Trust	0	0	2	2
Family Centre	0	1	0	1
Young Offender Institution	0	0	4	4
Residential school	0	0	0	0
Other alternative homes	0	0	0	0
Temporary alternative home	0	0	0	0
Total alternative homes	113	167	37	317

10. Alternative homes

10.2 Alternative homes by type and provision (snapshot 31/03/21)

Short-term placement stability

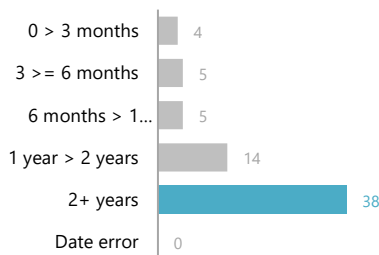
9% of the currently looked after children have had **more than 3 placements** in the last 12 months.



The short-term placement stability has improved over the last 3 years showing that **11% of the total placements** (31/03/21) were for a **short term** in comparison to 20% in 2017/18. We recognise that the continued trend for older children to become looked after children and require placements away from the borough because of either risk factors in the borough, or difficulties in accessing placements for them because of market pressures.

Long-term placement stability

Long term placement stability measured as duration of latest placement for children aged under 16 who have been looked after for 2 and half years or more. 38 children (58%) have been in care for over 2 years.



38 children (58%) have been in care for over 2 years.

This is an improvement from 46% in 2017/18 to 68% in 2019/20 and demonstrates the issue of it being more possible for children to settle with primary carers and feel a sense of belonging if they entered care earlier.

11. Care leavers

Background

The Leaving Care Act 2000 established a **statutory requirement** for older young People leaving care to continue to receive support from the responsible Local Authority.

The Children & Social Work Act 2017 introduced **new duties on local authorities**, to provide Personal Adviser (PA) support to all care leavers up to age 25, if they want this support and to ensure that the local partnership recognises and acts to improve their corporate parenting responsibilities to ensure CIC and Care Leavers can access services to help and support them. In Waltham Forest we have designated our PAs as Leaving Care Coaches.

Under previous legislation, local authorities were required to only provide care leavers with support from a PA until they reach age 21, with that support continuing up to age 25 if a care leaver was engaged in education or training. However, this support was not available to care leavers aged over 21 who were not in education, training or employment.

The duty commenced from 1 April 2018²⁰.

20 - Source: Extending Personal Adviser support to all care leavers to age 25. Statutory guidance for local authorities.

February 2018, DfE

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683701/Extending_Personal_Adviser_support_to_all_care_leavers_to_age_25.pdf

11. Care leavers

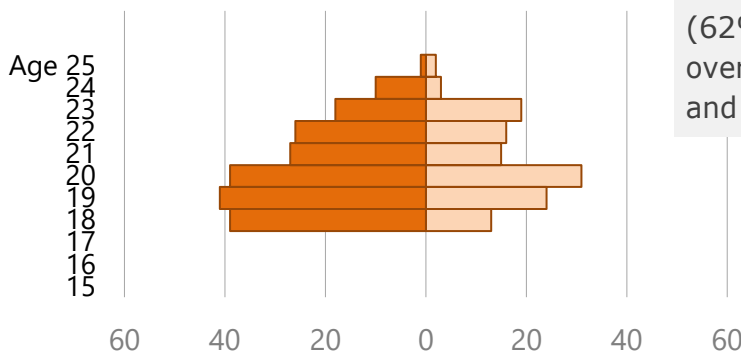
Care leavers analysis

The care leaver’s data is from the Children’s services Analysis Tool reflecting a snapshot of the service as at 31st March 2021.

In total 324 young people are in receipt of leaving care services in Waltham Forest including 201 males (62%) and 123 females (38%). Just over half (55%) are aged between 19 and 21 (177 in total).

Care leavers by age and gender (31st March 2021)

- 201 Males (62%)
- 123 Females (38%)
- 0 Other (not shown) (0%)



In total 324 young people are in receipt of leaving care services in Waltham Forest including 201 males (62%) and 123 females (38%). Just over half (55%) are aged between 19 and 21 (177 in total) ²¹.

19 (6%) of young people using leaving care services have a disability. The main types of accommodation are Semi-independent, transitional accommodation such as HMO’s (43%), whilst 31% are living independently, and 16% with former foster carers according to the latest snapshot in 31st of March 2021.

Care leavers by ethnic group (31/03/2021)

Ethnicity	Care leavers	Children looked after	LA schools pupils (Jan-2021)
White	30%	28%	40%
Mixed	15%	19%	12%
Asian or Asian British	17%	9%	25%
Black or black British	27%	24%	18%
Other ethnic group	11%	20%	1%
Not stated	0%	0%	
Not recorded	0%	0%	

More than two thirds of care leavers (70%) are of minority ethnic background. This is similar to as BAME proportion among the Children in care (72%); but 10% higher than the under 18s in the borough as a whole (60%) ²²

21 - Children’s services Analysis Tool, March 2021

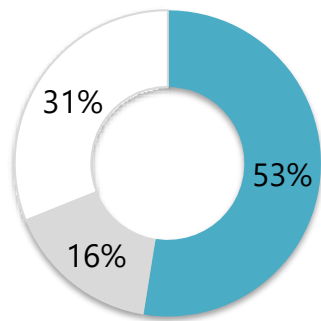
22 - Children’s services Analysis Tool, March 2020 (borough ethnicity figures based on the LA’s primary and secondary school pupils in Jan 2021 school census)

11. Care leavers

Care leavers aged 19-21

177 (55%) of care leavers are aged 19-21 (snapshot 31/03/21). 100% of care leavers are in touch with the LA ²³.

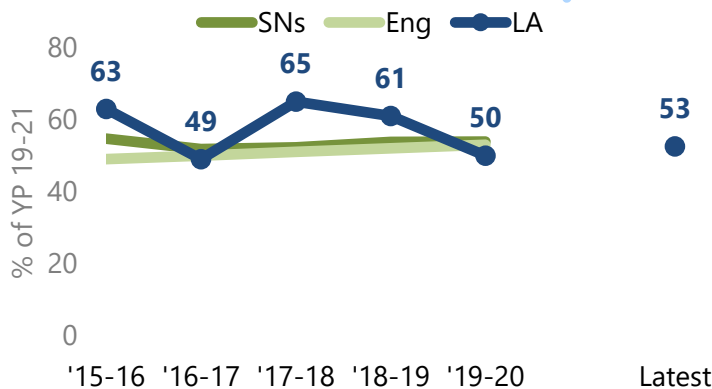
	Aged 19	Aged 20	Aged 21	Total
Cohort	65	70	42	177
LA in touch	100%	100%	100%	100%
Education Employment Training	52%	51%	55%	53%
Suitable accommodation	93%	95%	90%	93%



According to the latest data, **53% of the 177 care leavers aged 19 to 21 are in education, employment or training** and 16% were classed as NEET (not in education, employment or training).

■ YP in EET ■ NEET
□ No info

Over the last few years less care leavers are in education, employment or training **now (53%) compared to 2017/18 (65%)**.

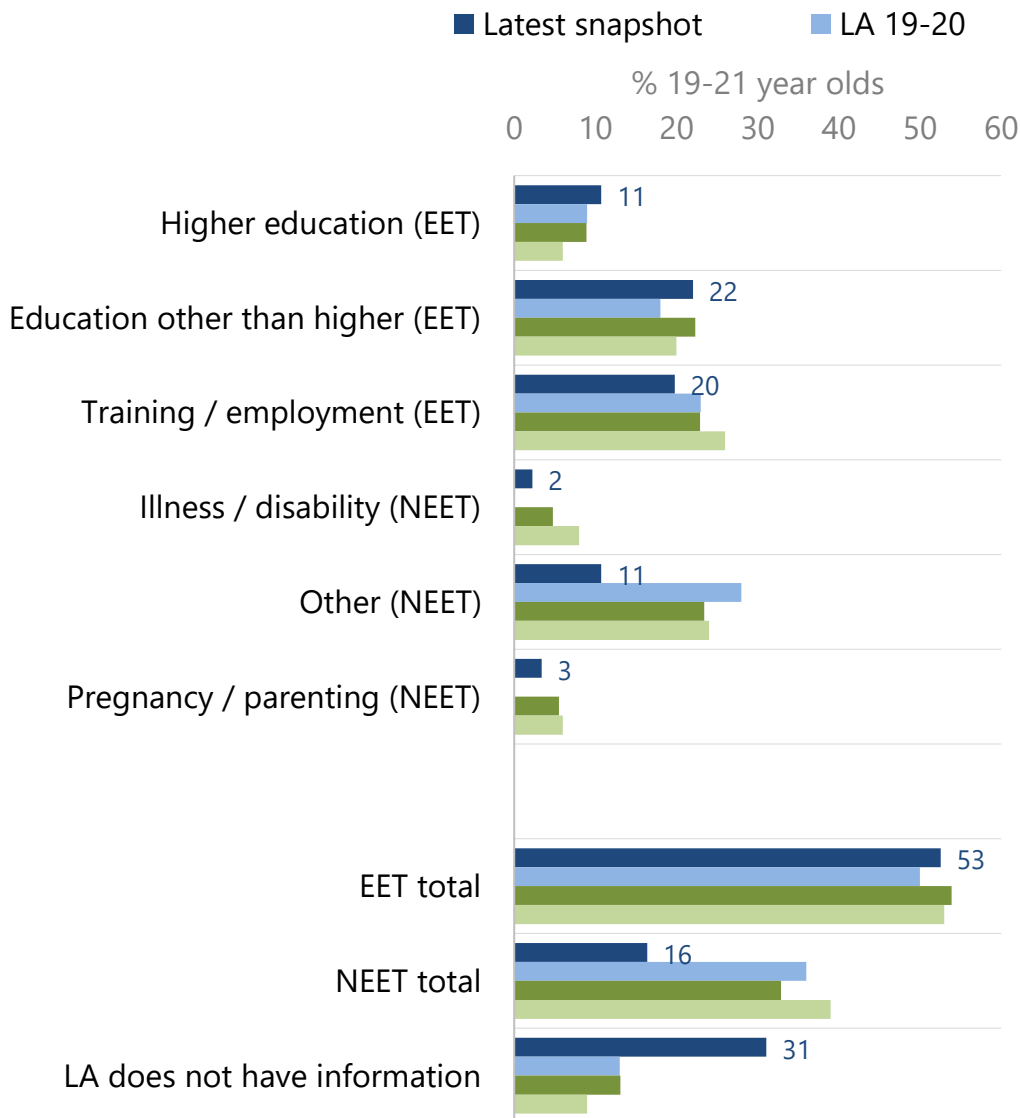


11. Care leavers

Care leavers aged 19-21

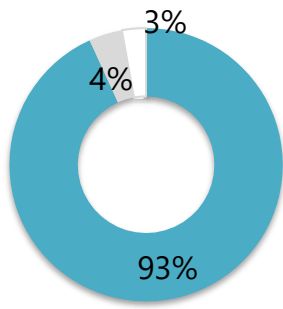
As at 31st March 2021 (latest snapshot), **11% of 19-21 year olds** were in education other than higher and 20% in training /employment. **re leavers were in higher education,**

Of those young people not in education, employment or training, **3% was due to pregnancy/parenting, 2% due to illness/disability.**



11. Care leavers

Suitable accommodation of 19-21 year old care leavers (snapshot 31/03/2021)



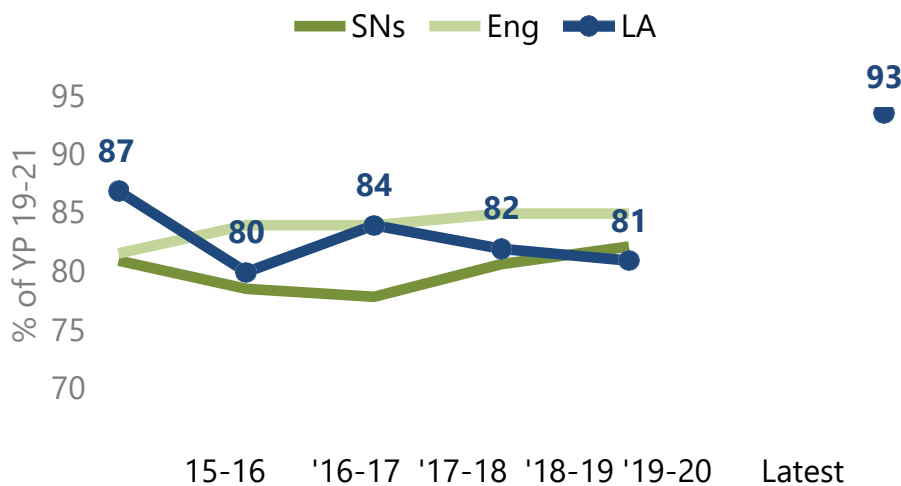
- Suitable accom
- Not suitable
- No information



93% of care leavers aged 19-21 were in suitable accommodation and 4% were identified without suitable accommodation.



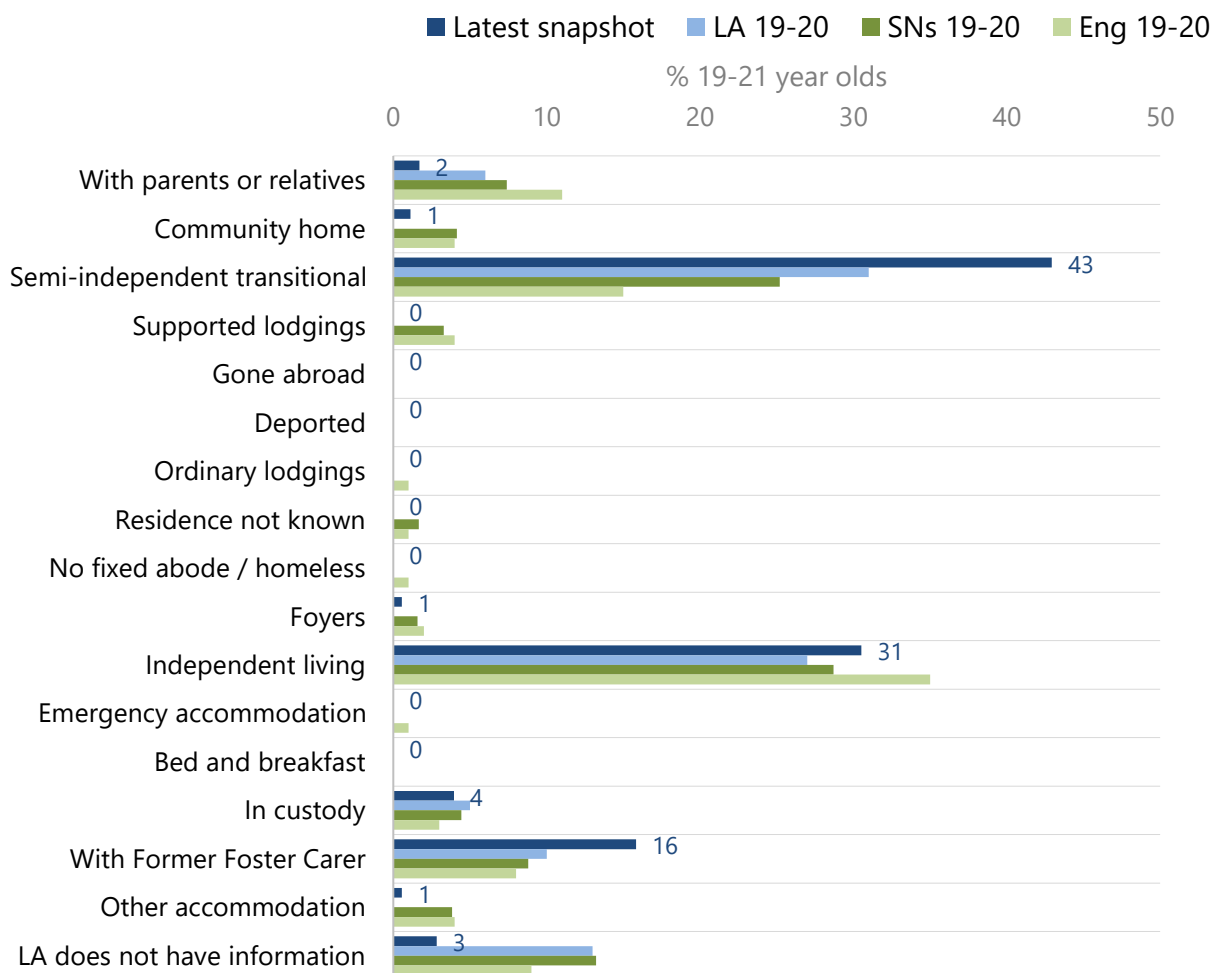
The percentage of young people aged 19-21 in suitable accommodation is **93% up from the 81% in 2019/20.**



11. Care leavers

Suitable accommodation of 19-21 year old care leavers (snapshot 31/03/2021)

Of the 177 care leavers aged between 19 and 21, **31% were living independently and further 43% in semi-independent transitional accommodation.** In total 16% lived with their former foster carer.



The percentage of 17 and 18 year old care leavers not in touch has decreased by 11% since 2019/20, with 98% of care leavers being in touch with the local authority. These are care leavers that have returned home to live with parents and/or have refused a service ²⁴.

73% of 18 year old care leavers who were in a foster alternative home on their 18th birthday continued to stay-put with former foster carers, a trend that is similar to 2018/19 figures (74%) ²⁵. The rising age of the numbers entering care also impact on Staying Put when the young people do not have strong primary attachments to their carers.

24 - Children's services Analysis Tool, March 2021

25 - CIC Statutory Return (SSDA 903): Provisional outturns for 2020/21

12. Summary of needs

Population projections

There is significant uncertainty around population projections due to COVID19. The latest population estimates produced by both the GLA and the ONS do not account for the effect COVID19 has had on population components of change (migration, births, deaths). COVID19 has led to greater excess deaths and mostly prevented international migration since March 2020. Due to this, there is the possibility that the projected numbers may not be reached.

Revised population estimates are due around June / July 2021.

Current projections are based on demographic trends from the past 10 years to mid-2018 and uses the latest development data to feed the housing-led model (the housing-led model starts with the projected population from the GLA trend model; looks at the number of houses available and fills them with people. A compromise between these two projected populations is then reached). During this period Waltham Forest has seen a very fast population growth driven by the international migration (largely through the EU free movement of people). The 2018-based projections, which take into account the first full year of data since the Brexit referendum, already showed a significantly slower growth in the borough.

Acknowledging this caveat, we have used the best projections currently available to us to understand the possible changes in the cohort of children and young people living in Waltham Forest over the next three years (see Chapter 5).

By 2024, Waltham Forest is projected to have around 340 fewer children aged under 18 compared to 2020 (0.5% decrease). The number of 18-24 year olds is projected to rise by 1,120 (5.1%).

Whilst 0-24 year olds are projected to increase by 0.9%, this is dominated by two age cohorts. 16-17 year olds are expected to increase by 2.5%, and 18-24 by 5.1%. The other age cohorts are expected to decrease marginally (between -0.3% (5-9 age cohort) and -1.8% (10-15 age cohort)).

There is an even split of genders of the under 18 population - 50% male and 50% females. Both gender cohorts are expecting a small decrease in numbers (-0.6% males, -0.4% females). The gender difference in gender projections is only prominent for the 16-17 age bracket, where the female cohort is expected to grow at just over twice the rate of the male cohort (+110 and +50 count, respectively).

See Appendix 1 for the maps showing which wards will see the biggest increase in the number of children and young people over the next three years. The analysis showed that wards which have a higher number of children also tend to have more children coming in care.

12. Summary of needs

Children in care trends

Trends in starts and leaving care are set out in Chapter 7 above.

More children started to be looked after than ceased the care in the last 6 months. The past few years' trends have been impacted by the numbers of UASC coming into care. This is likely to stabilise short term, but they are likely to stay in care until they are 18 and with the possibility of requiring care leaver support.

There is likely to be an increased impact from the larger numbers of children becoming Looked After at 15, 16 and 17 years. They are eligible for a Leaving Care service which will increase the demand on that service. In Alternative homes Sufficiency terms this will mean a need for suitable accommodation which will include permanent accommodation for Care Leavers.

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children

As we are currently receiving referrals from the London Asylum Seekers Consortium or through the National Transfer Scheme, we expect the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children to increase over the next period.

In the 6 months from 1 October to 31 March 2021 a total of 5 unaccompanied asylum seeking children started to be looked after in Waltham Forest.

Care leavers

From 1 April 2018 local authorities have had a duty to provide Personal Adviser (PA/LCC) support to all care leavers up to age 25, if they request it.

Under previous legislation, local authorities were required to only provide care leavers with support from a PA until they reach age 21, with that support continuing up to age 25 if a care leaver was engaged in education or training.

The numbers of Care Leavers open to the service has increased rapidly in 2019/20. There has been a rise of 58% of open cases over the past 3 years.

This will continue to rise as more young people become aware of their entitlement to a service through our communication and contact including the public access to an online Care Leaver's Offer. The numbers of Care Leavers turning 21 lead us to expect an eligible cohort of up to 400 Care Leavers. There has been significant investment in expanding the number of Leaving Care Coaches employed to ensure that a good service can be offered to all eligible Care Leavers.

13. Interpreting need and managing the alternative home market

Fostering

Waltham Forest is committed to improving the quality of foster care and its availability, to enable more Children in Care and young people to remain locally and experience the support and stability they need in a family home environment. Feedback from the foster carers through their association has been positive and they recognize the support, collaborative working approach and strong trusting relationship we have developed with the service.

Current occupancy status

At present nearly 74% of Waltham Forest Children in Care are residing in a foster home. This will be either a Connected Person (Family & Friends), a short or long-term foster care home with either a Waltham Forest approved foster carer or an alternative home arranged through an Independent Fostering Agency (IFA). Waltham Forest is placed above England average (72%) and is exactly the same as statistical neighbors (74%) that is not to say that we have met our sufficiency target but shows that we are going in the right direction

Recruitment of foster carer

Our journey over recent years has been to recognise the challenges and to apply creative thinking to finding solutions. In relation to recruitment of foster carers, we are beginning to see the impact of root and branch review of our offer through the number of foster carers recruited in 20-21. We identified aspects of the offer that would improve our attraction to prospective carers including developing a digital approach to marketing resulting in creation of a new website. Further, extending our material offer to include a contribution to fostering households Council Tax, a leisure and recreation offer for fostering families, free parking permits, access to the Council's staff discount scheme and fees and allowances. We also developed a specialist fostering fee for foster carers who offered alternative homes to children with additional and challenging needs. We are seeing an increase in the number of potential families referred to us by the existing foster carers which we believe reflects confidence in quality of the service we offer. In 20-21 Waltham Forest successfully recruited 35 mainstream foster carers within 24 households.

Despite this effort, we have come to understand the scale of competition in the local market. As well as independent providers who are recruiting, many neighboring boroughs target recruitment is in competition with us. We feel that whilst our numbers have gone up, we still fall short of achieving self-sustainability and will continue to operate as a mixed economy to meet children's needs.

Fostering Projects

1. Mockingbird

We understood that support is a key element in both recruitment and retention. Therefore, we have developed the Mockingbird Family Model as part of the Fostering Network pilot project and have introduced Virtual Reality which enables a subversive experience in understanding the origins of childhood trauma. To give the best family care possible, our Mockingbird Model is playing a huge role in enabling a supportive environment. This model emulates the extended family system and provides support and respite care to help achieve and maintain stability for the Children and young people. At present we have introduced one constellation which includes seven fostering families supporting eleven Children in Care. A second constellation is planned to be launch before the end of 2021 and by the end of 2024, we hope to implement further two constellations.

2. Control Migration Project

Our larger UASC community also require alternative homes and through a grant from Control migration fund (CMF) we have recruited foster carers from diverse communities and those wishing to offer support to arriving UASC minors. The fostering service recruitment plan has recognised the need to undertake targeted recruitment for carers to meet the needs of this group of young people. Historically, lower proportion of unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people were placed with in house foster care than the wider looked after population. As part of (CMF), further work was undertaken to increase available options for alternative homes for UASC children within in house foster carers who can provide the level of support, and access to local services that young people may need, given their likely issues of trauma and loss.

The carers recruited and trained as part of this project were from diverse background including black African, black Caribbean, Arab, Asian and white European (including Portuguese, Albanian and British) foster carers. All potential families who attended Skills to Foster training between May 2018 until March 2020 were also provided with specific training about meeting the needs of asylum seeking children, so we are confident that children and young people in alternative home with these carers are more likely to have their needs appropriately met than was the case previously. We will continue to apply knowledge and skills developed through this project in future recruitment and support activities.

What we are doing

The analysis set out above predicts that the trend for children coming into care at an older age will continue and as such we need to ensure that alternative family home arrangements are available for all children in care who need one. The reliance on alternative home arrangements over 20 miles from the borough is too great and we will continue to work to recruit more of our own foster carers and as part of North East

London Commissioning Group to improve the range, number and quality of IFA alternative homes in our area.

Residential provision

As on 31st March 2021, we have 20 children placed with Residential homes.

- of these children have got an EHCP statement,
- 4 live with known disability
- 2 of them are placed within Waltham Forest.
- of these children were placed over 20 miles and
- 6 are within 10 miles radius.

Often, those young people placed at considerable distance from Waltham Forest will require more intensive and specialist residential care service including DOLs and Secure that is less available or does not exist at all locally.

Current state

Accessing residential alternative homes, especially for young people who present complex needs, has always been challenging. We are not sure how much of this was due to Covid-19 but the past year has seen an unprecedented level of challenge in finding alternative home providers who are able to accept them and then work effectively with them to provide a settled stable alternative home. We struggled to find residential resources, and this is mainly due to lack of providers equipped to deal with the complexity of the young people who are coming into care. The main challenges remain suitable alternative homes for teenagers who have been criminally exploited and due to their experiences are presenting with behaviors that are considered complex, challenging and risky.

Placements in Secure Accommodation are seen as the last resort. The deprivation of a child or young person's liberty is a serious matter which is closely scrutinised by a court process and Secure Accommodation Orders are only made if all alternatives have been explored and exhausted to keep a young person safe. We have a very limited use of secure accommodation but remain reliant on such placements where the risk of significant harm is such that no other placement can provide safety. The secure estate has shrunk over the years meaning that sourcing local placements is often impossible, even more so out of office hours. Because of the shortage of placements, children have had to be placed throughout England and Wales.

13. Interpreting need and managing the alternative home market

What we are doing

As part of DfE Innovation bid, North East London Commissioning Group (NELCP), (This is 8 neighboring authorities across the footprint who share common alternative homes commissioning issues) have worked collaboratively to create new local residential provisions across the East London footprint. In the first phase of this collaboration a block contract was awarded to work creatively in partnership with a provider to develop 35 beds in small manageable units which are geographically spread across East London. Waltham Forest is hoping to utilise 5 of these beds as part of our share to ensure that we have access to high quality provision which is close enough that young people feel able to settle and engage. We are expecting that the home will be set up within Waltham Forest by the end of 2021. The program will be outcomes focused using systemic approaches that are evidence based. This will include family reunification, supporting birth families to resolve issues where possible so that young people can safely return to their care.

Another progress we have made is our innovation project which has been developed within the borough whereby the residential respite provision currently at 99 Leyton Green Road is fully functional. This was part of a project with Belmont Park Special School built on land adjacent to the school. The shared therapeutic hub provides space for short breaks and a Positive Behavior service to support families to manage challenging behavior linked to autism and learning difficulties to support their own resilience.

Importantly a new 3 bed residential unit is also functional on the same site. We are working in partnership with local schools to ensure that their educational needs are met locally, and Children do not have to be placed out of borough to get the right combination of schooling and residential home.

We recognize that due to matching criteria, we may not be able to utilise all the spaces ourselves in both provisions and will be open to invite interests from other boroughs to purchase available beds on “spot purchase” basis.

Young people with care experiences

Waltham forest have dedicated leaving care service whose focus is to support and stay in touch with the care experienced young people in their transition to adulthood.

Leaving care service Intentions:

- Continue to monitor and promote Staying Put
- Further increase the percentage of Young people with care experiences in

employment, education and training through targeted employment support.

- Continue to ensure that Young people with care experiences access suitable accommodation and are supported in their own accommodation where this is an assessed need

The population of care experience young people is steadily increasing as our data shows. As of 31st March 2021, there were 324 care experienced young people receiving services. We are anticipating the number of young people receiving support from the service to rise further given the age of older teenagers within our Children in Care population.

We have recently completed impact assessment to assess the need for service to help us respond to these changes. We anticipate an increase of up to 22% in the number of care experienced young people by the end of 2023 and this is based on current cohort of children in care population not including potential new entries for the defined period.

Until 2020 Waltham Forest rate of care experienced young people in suitable accommodation was 81% which was like other outer London Boroughs, but slightly less than our statistical neighbors (81.80%) and less than England average (85%). Currently, 93% of our care experienced young people reside in 'Suitable Accommodation'; our ambition is for this to be 100% at any given time. We define "suitable accommodation" as Semi-Independent living accommodation, a council owned property or 'Stay Put' arrangements with a Foster Carer.

In the last three years, 80 of our young people were offered their own accommodation and the expectation going forward is to have increased housing offer for care experienced young people to completely avoid young people living in local authority funded accommodation after their 18th birthday. The increase in number of care experienced young people will continue to generate demand for social housing and other local authority funded alternative homes.

What we are doing

We have strengthened our working relationship with Department for Work and Pension (DWP) and Housing Department to speedily triage support response for care experienced young people to ensure smooth transition to adulthood and Independent living. We are working with housing partners, to ensure care experienced young people are supported to bid successfully and timely for their own accommodation. We are working with voluntary sector to enable access to additional support such as money management, education, training, mentoring and employment etc. even after they move into their own accommodation where beneficial.

Leaving care service also provides a "Physical Hub" for young people to connect/network and are exploring bigger venue given the increase in number of young people accessing the service.

Semi Independent provision

We have 30 under 18's and around 98 over 18's young people living in semi-independent accommodation provided by the Council. Our experience makes us believe that there are young people whose needs are best met within Semi Independent provisions. Keeping this in mind we have developed a block contract with a provider and 16 of our young people are supported through this arrangement.

Given Semi Independent Accommodation is not regulated or inspected, it is important that Local Authorities put arrangements in place to ensure quality standards are maintained to protect and promote the interests of our young people. Therefore, we are in the process of designing our own framework which should be operational before the end of 2021, and we look forward to incorporating the National standards into our framework to improve service specification when it becomes available.

14. Conclusions

The aim of the Sufficiency Strategy is to analyse demands, needs and trends, and produce a plan to provide sufficient alternative homes to meet those needs over a three year period.

Waltham Forest operates as a mixed economy, in which we have in house fostering and residential services and externally commissioned or spot purchased provisions, however we know that our ability to identify alternative homes locally that meet children's needs is constrained by the availability of resources. This means that children may have to live outside of Waltham Forest, in provision which is spot-purchased and may not be judged by Ofsted to be good or outstanding. We endeavor to increase availability and choices within local resources (in-house and external) to meet the demand of our Children in care population. We know that finding the right environment for a child / young person early on gives them the best chance of creating a stable and secure base upon which they can thrive.

We are conscious that demography of Waltham Forest is ever changing and Brexit and Covid-19 have introduced further uncertainty in terms of the number and make up of our likely care population.

Our Journey in last 3 years

As part of the previous sufficiency commitment, we are on the right path for in house fostering occupancy levels and 2019-2020 saw a 15% increase in number of nights the in-house fostering service provided. For 20-21 this further increased by 7% from 2019-2020 level effectively meaning a net 25.22% gain from the 2018-2019 figures. Our ambition for the next 3 years (21-24) is to maintain reasonable growth and to reach a point where we are able to turn around the current ratio of In-house fostering : IFA/third sector.

With the change in social work practice and early permanency being the focus, Waltham Forest has been successful in increasing their use of friends and family carers by 76% in 20-21 from the base figure in 2018-2019. This is a significant increase and reflects the strong commitment of our practitioners towards "family as a system".

As part of our ambition, we have been successful in reducing our usage of unregulated (semi-Independent) provisions and 2020-2021 saw a 35% reduction from 2018-2019 figures. We prefer our Young people to remain in regulated services as long as it suits their care plan and step down is only considered where their needs could be fully met within the services the unregulated sector offers.

Number of nights	Percentage change from 18-19 (31 st March 2020)	Percentage change from 19-20 (31 st March 2021)	Percentage change from 18-19 to as on 31 st March 2021
In house fostering mainstream	15.99%	7.96%	25.22%
In house friends and family	44.23%	22.15%	76.19%
External fostering	7.41%	-2.28%	4.95%
Residential	2.93 %	8.02%	11.19%
Semi Independent (Under 18)	-21.06%	-18.06%	-35.32%

Our Children in care

Based on our data, the growth in the numbers of very young children to enter and exit care within short episode will continue along with the older teenagers who generally stay longer in the care system.

When Children enter care at a younger age, the focus is on whether they are safely able to return to birth parents or extended family members. When this is not possible the permanence outcome may be adoption, SGO or long-term fostering.

With older young people who have lived at home, it is highly likely that they may have experienced trauma, neglect and abuse for a prolonged period and might have been caught up in peer/adult exploitation. As a result of this, these children may have difficulties in developing trusting relationships with adults which makes using family alternative homes a challenge. Wherever possible, they will be placed in foster care, however it is quite likely that they may not form attachment with foster carers leading to multiple disruptions. In most case these young people will need to be cared for in residential home provisions.

There are issues of contextual safeguarding risks posed by child criminal/sexual exploitation meaning that these young people would need alternative home away from their local area.

We recognise that we need to ensure our planning and support for adolescents is robust so that only those who really need to be looked after do so and only for as long as necessary.

Fostering

We have reorganised our fostering team so that we offer an approach to prospective carers which matches the independent sector and will help us convert more prospective applicants to approved foster carers. We have continued to develop our marketing recruitment by exploring digital marketing alongside more traditional approaches. We have created division of work which ensures that fostering social workers have manageable caseloads and are available to support foster carers. We are also developing peer support through Mockingbird Family Model and Virtual Reality training to help develop understanding of trauma. We are working with NELCP Local Authorities to develop market management to make more IFA alternative homes available locally.

Residential Homes

Residential alternative homes are increasingly hard to obtain and almost impossible to acquire locally. Our analysis shows that alternative home away from the borough is more likely to be available than local provisions. When alternative home changes are prompted by crisis or breakdown it is common for only one alternative home to be offered nationally and as a result young people are moved a long way from home and will find settling hard.

Our mitigation is to continue to work with alternative home provider to deliver local residential children's home as part of NELCP Regional Commissioning arrangement. We hope to have this new provision on stream by end of 2021.

In terms of specialist alternative homes for disabled children our greatest demand is for alternative homes to support children with autism, learning difficulties with associated challenging behavior. As part of our strategy to develop local provision we have a fully operational 5 bedded respite care centre and 3 bedded residential provision.

Secure Childrens Home

As on 31 March 2021, for England and Wales Children accommodated in secure children's homes decreased by 23% (42 fewer children) to 142. Approved places that were occupied - 56% - down from 72%. On the contrary London Council estimated that over the preceding 3 years, London Boroughs have jointly referred 295 children and young people to the Secure Welfare Co-ordination Unit. Of these only 159 (54%) were offered places leaving local authorities having to search for an alternative provision. We are concerned that this leaves us as a local authority to look for alternatives which is not only costlier than secure accommodation but also not fit for purpose given the risks associated with the young people. To mitigate this London Borough of Waltham Forest will be working in partnership with our East London neighbors to explore proposals from the Pan London accommodation vehicle in relation to secure accommodation within London area.

We will also be exploring along with our East London Partners proposal from London accommodation pathfinder project commissioned by the Youth Justice Board as an alternative to secure for 16-17 year old and young people turning 18 at the time of placement.

Semi Independent

We are conscious that many of our 16-18 years old young people with care experiences are in semi-independent accommodation. Although unregulated sector is commercially very competitive, there are notable issues around quality and standard of service delivery. There are a broad range of semi-independent accommodation options available for Young People in Waltham Forest to use. The work we have done to develop

this market has led to the availability of accommodation where floating support can be used to offer an increasing level of independence. We are in the process of designing our own framework which should be operational before the end of 2021, and we look forward to incorporating the National standards into our framework to improve service specification when it becomes available.

Out of Borough placements

We recognise that many Children and young people in care are living outside of Waltham Forest, where this is not the first choice of plan or type of alternative home. We have observed that often it is the young people with the most complexity or vulnerabilities who are living outside of the area. For some children the best option to meet their needs may be in very specialist provisions, and/or outside Waltham Forest, but we want to develop more options and choices by strengthening our knowledge of external providers.

Non -Waltham Forest Children placed within our Borough

We are conscious of the impact Children placed by other boroughs may have on our sufficiency and local resources. In the last 3 years we have 33% more Children placed in Waltham Forest than we have placed out of Borough totaling 192 Children.

Cost of care

Both commissioned residential and foster care alternative homes have seen fee increases. This means that Waltham Forest are facing increased demand for alternative homes as Children in Care numbers rise, but also higher fees from private/ third sector providers.

We know that fostering is the most cost-effective alternative home type for children and young people in care aged under 16, and particularly when the alternative home is local, the outcomes for children are likely to be better. Ascertaining like for like cost comparisons with in-house and external provision is challenging and we have identified the need to undertake further work to better understand the unit costs of inhouse fostering and residential alternative home, so that we can be sure of balancing both cost and outcomes for children in our future work.

We have witnessed that there is a wide range of costs in external residential alternative homes from the cheapest to the most expensive, and there is not always a clear link between cost of the alternative home and positive outcomes for children. As part of commissioning approach, we will focus on the quality of alternative homes and outcomes, along with driving value for money, measured against outcomes.

Adoption and Special guardianship (Permanency)

A Special Guardianship Order (often known as an SGO) is a legal order, where the court appoints a carer usually a relative as the 'Special Guardian' of a child until they turn 18. The Special Guardian then shares parental responsibility for the child with the parents. In Waltham Forest, total of 33 young people are supported in this type of arrangement in the last 3 financial years. Waltham Forest has witnessed an increase in number of SGOs as an alternatives route to permanence. Without these arrangements being in place, we would need to find appropriate alternative homes for these young people. We anticipate that this service area specially around SGO assessment and support will grow over the coming years. Our adoptions numbers have been low for the last few years and we will continue to work closely with our regional adoption agency to ensure needs of Waltham Forest Children are met.

Joint working (Clinical Commissioning Group(CCG), Education and SEND)

Given the complex needs of Children who are coming into care it is important that we continue to work collaboratively and strengthen our working relations with colleagues from Virtual school, SEND and CCG and use their expertise in designing care packages that will meet health and educational needs of children and young people specially those living with mental health and disabilities. We have developed a joint commissioning panel to look at those complex cases which helps us with matching and quality assurance of the resource for children.

Market engagement and Contracts monitoring

We organise providers engagement forum regularly to share our demand/service provision expectations and to encourage providers to take up the opportunity to develop local services. Providers are made aware of our sufficiency aspirations and priority that local options will get. Our contract management approach encourages providers to consider their own recruitment strategies to focus on our alternative homes need. We are participating in Provider engagement events as a vehicle to deliver our demands to the market. We endeavor to work more closely and innovatively with providers to:

Review contracting options with current spot purchased services

- a) Improve the matching process between provider and child /young person to create greater alternative home stability
- b) Analyse high-cost alternative homes by reviewing spend and outcomes
- c) Undertake procurement exercises in line with contract end dates
- d) Implement programme of review for each accommodation type including clear feedback from children and young people.

Direction of travel

We are working on two key strands to developing our sufficiency:

Widening the alternative home landscape to increase choice availability within in the in- house /or within Waltham Forest.

Developing our social work practice to provide stability within the family home and prevent Children entering the care system.

Broadening the choices of alternative home

We need to increase the in-house capacity and usage to meet the needs of all young people with increased focus on those who are late entrants to care, unaccompanied minors, those on the autistic spectrum, mental health needs and those who are vulnerable to exploitation or who present risk to themselves and others. We would further improve our market engagement with the external providers to convey our needs for them to target their development of provisions in our area.

The in-house fostering service will continue with its recruitment plans and alongside this, will ensure attention is given to retention, incentives/barriers for carers to care for older/Children with complex needs. The further roll-out of the Mockingbird model gives an opportunity to frame service development to better meet the needs of all children.

Current level of collaboration and monitoring of activities of the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) arrangement will need to be maintained to ensure needs of Waltham Forest children are met.

We need to ensure strong join up with SEND commissioners to ensure that children requiring specialist SEND provision do not become looked after if their needs can be best met by family support and appropriate educational provision.

Social Work Practice

There are clear and exciting measures underway to strengthen edge of care and contextual safeguarding services through the extended arm of Family Edge of care service. In the first phase, embedding a culture whereby risk is managed by keeping young people close, with trauma informed and restorative approach we endeavor to prevent Children and young people aged 10-17 entering the care system with a wraparound support service. This service will also try and mitigate the level of care a child or young person may need if they have to come into care at all which effectively can translate into low level need hierarchy i.e Secure → DOLS → standard residential → Fostering.

As part of the second phase of this project, We want to minimise the number of alternative home moves Children in Care may experience, especially those which are unplanned. We will do this by consistently using a 'team around the alternative home' approach to support alternative home and prevent breakdowns by utilising the skill set

of our Edge of care service.

Edge of care pilot project is based on the background

- That families are usually essential to being part of keeping children safe
- That being away from local services and communities is not always the best way to manage risk or meet needs
- That early intervention and proactive support helps to avoid planning in a crisis which inevitably narrows the options and response available

Though we have lower number of children coming into care, there is a significant decline in number of children exiting care. This has resulted in increased number of children in care and young people with care experience (care leavers). As already highlighted this has future implications for leaving care services. We need to pay attention to supporting children to exit the care system where appropriate, in a timely and supported manner. Housing options for young people with care experiences will be one of the focus areas within the next three years. We have strengthened our commissioning arrangement for floating support for young people who would benefit from it even after moving into their own accommodation and work with housing colleagues will continue to help more young people with care experience to bid for their own accommodation.

15. Summary of objectives 2021-2024

Stability	<p><i>Monitor effectiveness of interventions to support alternative home stability through available data.</i></p> <p><i>Improve matching and explore long term stability from the onset of care episode.</i></p>
In-house fostering	<p><i>Increase alternative home capacity for adolescent and sibling groups.</i></p> <p><i>Target recruitment campaign to recruit new carers.</i></p> <p><i>Increase the number of Mockingbird constellations.</i></p> <p><i>Review opportunities to improve retention and learning from independent sector</i></p> <p><i>Continue to utilise learning from CMF project to recruit carers for UASC.</i></p> <p><i>Develop capacity for Parent and Child and children living with disability.</i></p>
Fostering external	<p><i>Undertake cost comparison and develop value model.</i></p> <p><i>Maximise use of London care alternative home providers.</i></p>
Adoption and SGO	<p><i>Strengthen current collaboration and monitoring of RAA activities</i></p> <p><i>Review local support offer for SGO carers.</i></p>
Residential Homes In house	<p><i>Optimise use of the provision</i></p> <p><i>Ascertain the operational cost including service and Corporate overheads.</i></p> <p><i>Reach out to other local authorities to market the vacancy as and when available (Marketing)</i></p>
Residential Homes External	<p><i>Analyse options to increase alternative home stability</i></p> <p><i>Strengthen Market engagement with the providers.</i></p> <p><i>Identify opportunities for collaboration with other Local Authorities</i></p> <p><i>Optimise use of collaboration (NELCP) alternative home option Improve knowledge on new providers.</i></p>
Residential Schools Special	<p><i>Review placing children in Residential Special Schools with colleagues in SEND</i></p>
Overnight Breaks Short	<p><i>Optimise use of in-house provision.</i></p> <p><i>Explore new contracting opportunities where in-house capacity is exhausted.</i></p>
Shared Accommodation	<p><i>Roll out new Framework</i></p> <p><i>Work with providers to secure accommodation within the Borough</i></p> <p><i>Improve quality assurance through framework</i></p>

15. Summary of objectives 2021-2024

Semi- Independent	<p><i>Actively reduce reliance on spot purchasing of semi-independent provision and move to new contractual Framework.</i></p> <p><i>Improve quality monitoring through Framework arrangement.</i></p> <p><i>Review high-cost semi-independent alternative homes and derive a plan to utilise regulated services where possible.</i></p> <p><i>Work with providers to secure additional accommodation within the Borough.</i></p>
Floating Support	<p><i>Optimise use of Floating Support for young people with care experiences and utilise this to support young people transitioning into their own accommodation</i></p>
Housing offer for care experienced young people	<p><i>Work closely with Housing colleagues to Increase pool of housing offers.</i></p> <p><i>Review waiting time for housing applications.</i></p> <p><i>Improve quality and standard of accommodation offered.</i></p>
Secure accommodation	<p><i>Work with other local authorities (Pan London) to explore possibilities of London based provision.</i></p> <p><i>We will be exploring along with our East London Partners proposal from London accommodation pathfinder project commissioned by the Youth Justice Board as an alternative to secure for 16-17 year old and young people turning 18 at the time of placement.</i></p>
Innovation funding	<p><i>We will continue exploring opportunities for innovation funding across all areas.</i></p>