

## CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE PLACEMENTS

The Council have made 216 placements in the financial year 2013/14 from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 to 20<sup>th</sup> November 2014 at a projected full year cost of £7m; the type and number of placements broken down as below. (These figures exclude the in-house fostering service, independent living and no recourse to public funds placements. Many of these placements end within the year and/or within a few days of the placement starting, when young people return to their family home).

Placement Type	Number of Children
Children's home inside LA boundary	1
Children's home outside LA boundary	16
Family Centre / Mother and Baby Unit	5
Placed with foster carer provided by LA outside LA	42
Placement with agency foster carer in LA	3
Placement with agency foster carer outside LA	38
Placement with foster carer, provided by LA in LA	91
Residential Accom not subject to Children's Home regs (16yrs+)	3
Specialist Community Home outside LA boundary	2
Residential School outside LA boundary	15
	<b>216</b>

### Service Standards

Service provision for children and young people (CYP) aged under 16yrs is required to comply with Care Standards set by Care Standards Act 2000 and regulated by Ofsted. This includes residential parenting assessment centres which are also covered by Care Standards as these providers accommodate both children under 16yrs and their parents whilst the provider conducts an assessment of the parenting ability.

All other categories of provision commissioned to provide accommodation to CYP which are covered by Ofsted are – Boarding Schools, Children's Homes (with and without education), Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs), Specialist Community Homes and secure accommodation for both remand and welfare.

Ofsted conduct a full inspection on a 3 year cycle for which they may make a judgement in the following categories:

**Outstanding:** a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

**Good:** a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements

**Adequate:** a service that only meets minimum requirements

**Inadequate:** a service that does not meet minimum requirements

The Central Placements team will only make placements with providers that have a rating of Good or above.

For any service receiving a judgement of either Adequate or Inadequate annual inspections will be conducted by Ofsted to ensure that the Action Plan, recommendations and requirements issued by Ofsted are progressing and meeting deadlines.

### **Contracting Arrangements**

All placements for Children's Social Care are made by the Placements team in the Commissioning department on a spot purchase basis in order to ensure that the full range of provider options are available to the service. This enables the Placements team to match the child with the provision that can most meet the identified needs. This enables Officers to negotiate each individual placement in line with the specific service requirements of each child to achieve outcomes for the child/YP and best value for the Council.

Spot purchasing of placements also enables the Authority to be very timely in its responses to poor service delivery if this should arise. The provider would be excluded from any future referrals until action had been taken to address any identified areas of concern.

### **Quality Monitoring**

In the past year there have been no complaints received with respect to the provision of children's placements.

L B Bromley is affiliated to London Care Placements consortium (previously Pan London) operated under the auspices of London Councils. The majority of our providers are affiliated to the consortium which means that they have been inspected, accredited and are monitored annually by the consortium officers as well as the registration and inspection processes of Ofsted. Each year the London Care Placements team negotiate base fees and uplifts on behalf of the London authorities and issue a core contract as part of the affiliation process. Each year the Authority pays an affiliation fee which covers the cost of the services provided by the consortium. In 2012/13 this was £5,800.

The consortium also maintains a record of the Ofsted inspection outcomes and removes any providers from the approved list who receive an inadequate rating. The London Care Placements team keep the providers under scrutiny and will reinstate them to the approved provider list only when their rating has been adjusted upwards.

In addition to the monitoring carried out by the consortium the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010 require placing authorities to conduct visits to providers prior to making a placement if the provider has not been used by the authority in the previous six months. The Placement Officers therefore undertake a number of visits during the year to new providers (including those out of borough) and use the London Care Placements formats for their assessment reports.

In addition to checking with Ofsted, references are taken from other placing authorities and checks undertaken by the team that any recommendations or requirements set by Ofsted have been followed through and actioned by the provider prior to making a placement.

### **Safeguarding**

Where safeguarding concerns are raised for a child in placement responsibility for the investigation of the incident falls to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) and social worker (SW) for the child, alongside the Placements team who will investigate any allegation or complaint and take appropriate action. This may involve removing the child to another provision if complaints, allegations or concerns are substantiated.

In the past twelve months there have been no incidents requiring a child or young person to be moved from their placement due to safeguarding concerns.

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