The Northamptonshire JSNA

From 2019 the Northamptonshire JSNA will consist of a collection of three types of presentation, an Insight Pack, a JSNA Briefing Document and an In-Depth Needs Assessment. Definitions of these products are below. In addition other work that compliments the JSNA, or is of interest or is similar to the three types of product mentioned will be published alongside the JSNA products if it is appropriate and helpful to do so.

This is a JSNA Insight Pack focused on Care Leavers.

**Insight Pack**

An Insight Pack will highlight the key facts and local needs about a particular subject. This will be presented, where possible, in a very visual format with charts and infographics and will include relevant data produced with comparisons.

There will be a short narrative accompanying this which will provide an overview of the subject. This may result in recommendations for further, more detailed work in the JSNA programme.

**JSNA Briefing Document**

A JSNA Briefing Document is designed to provide an overview of a subject area, usually accompanied by an Insight Pack (though not all Insight Packs will be accompanied by a Briefing Document).

The Briefing Document will summarise the local needs, risk factors, current services in place, evidence to support commissioners and considerations and recommendations for local commissioning. This product may result in recommendations for more detailed analysis and/or an in-depth Needs Assessment.

**In-Depth Needs Assessment**

An In-Depth Needs Assessment will include a detailed analysis of the subject area. Typically this can take up to 6 months to deliver and will usually only be completed if it is either clear at the outset that one is required or a JSNA Briefing Document has been completed that recommended an In-Depth Needs Assessment be delivered.

Each full needs assessment will be delivered by a working group and truly delivered in partnership across all relevant organisations for the subject area.
Key Headlines

In the year April 2018 - March 2019:

- **487** Young people left the care of Northamptonshire County Council
- **600** The predicted number of children leaving care in 2025
- **444** Children entered the care system
- **1,115** Looked-after children in Northamptonshire in 2018/19. This number was **745** in 2011.

Educational attainment for looked-after children is lower than the average of the child population of the county, indeed the whole country. The table below shows the difference in attainment at Key Stages 2 and 4 and the prevalence of Special Educational Needs between the looked after cohort and the wider county population (please note this also includes looked-after children).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Looked-After Children</th>
<th>All children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key stage 2 2018</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key stage 4 2018</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attainment 8</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>45.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress 8</td>
<td>-0.63</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieving 9-4 in English and Maths</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>62.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With SEN/EHCSP</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With SEN but without statement/EHCSP</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>10.7% Primary 9.3% Secondary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **65 out of every 10,000** children are in care in Northamptonshire. The regional average is **57**, the national average is **64** and the average of our CIPFA statistical neighbours is **58.9**.

- **93 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children** in the Northamptonshire Looked After Children population, March 2019.

- **90%** of UASC are male, **76%** are aged 16 or 17. Almost **60%** are from three countries, Afghanistan, Eritrea or Albania.

- **46%** of all care leavers are in Northampton

- **18%** are in out of county placements (2020).
Introduction

In England and Wales, the leaving care age is 18. Each year, around 10,000 young people aged between 16-18 years leave care in England. Compared to their peers, they leave home at a younger age and have a more abrupt transition into adulthood. Unlike their peers, who normally remain in the family home, care leavers will often be living independently by the age of 18. Information from the Children’s Rights Director’s surveys on care leavers and Children in Care Council meetings show that many care leavers think they leave care too early and often feel isolated and lonely.

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 amended the earlier 1989 Children Act and applies to England and Wales. The 2000 Act only applies to young people who left care after 01/10/2000, ensuring that Local Authorities provide help to young people until the age of 21 and in some cases 25. The Act’s two main aims are:
- To ensure that young people do not leave care until they are ready;
- To ensure that they receive more effective support once they have left.

Those defined as care leavers have been separated into three categories:
- **Eligible** – those young people still in care aged 16 and 17 who have been looked after for (a total of) at least 13 weeks from the age of 14.
- **Relevant** – young people aged 16 or 17 who have already left care, and who were looked after for (a total of) at least 13 weeks from the age of 14, and have been looked after at some time while 16 or 17.
- **Former Relevant** - young people aged 18-21 who have been Eligible and/or Relevant children in care - young people who are looked after by a Local Authority either through a Compulsory Care Order or remanded or accommodated by voluntary agreement including accommodation under Section 20 of the Children Act.

Less than 1% of children in England are in care, yet almost a quarter of the adult prison population and almost half of young men under 21 years of age in the criminal justice system have spent time in care. 25% of homeless people have been in care and only 6% of Care Leavers go onto higher education.

A local authority has duties towards:
- **(a)** a person who has been a relevant child (and would be one if he/she were under 18), in relation to whom they were the last responsible authority; and
- **(b)** a person who was being looked after by them when he/she attained the age of 18, and immediately before ceasing to be looked after was an eligible child (known as a ‘former relevant child’).

They must take reasonable steps:
- **(a)** to keep in touch with a former relevant child whether he/she is within their area or not; and
- **(b)** if they lose touch with him, to re-establish contact. They must continue the appointment of a personal adviser for a former relevant child and continue to keep the pathway plan under regular review.

The local authority has a duty to give a former relevant child assistance to the extent that his/her welfare and his/her educational or training needs require it, in kind or, in exceptional circumstances, in cash until he/she reaches the age of 21, or longer if his/her pathway plan sets out a programme of education or training which extends beyond his/her 21st birthday.

**Key Documents:**
Introduction

Legislation and guidance

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 includes an outline of duties for Local Authorities. The legislation applies to all children and young people aged 16 and over who have been looked after by a Local Authority for at least 13 weeks after they reached the age of 14. Those 13 weeks can be continuous or made up of separate episodes of care, excluding short-term placements made by way of respite care (regulation 3(2)), but must include a period of time after reaching the age of 16.

Aged 16-18
- Duty to ensure pathway plan is in place by 16th birthday
- Duty to make assessment and meet needs
- Duty to provide financial support
- Duty to provide Personal Adviser
- Duty to ensure accommodation

Aged 18-21
- Duty to maintain contact and to provide support through Personal Adviser
- Duty to assist with costs of education, employment and training

Aged 21 and over
- Duty to 18-21 year olds continues if still in education or training
- Duty to ensure vacation accommodation for those attending higher education.

The Children’s Commissioner summarised their findings regarding care leavers and their opportunities for education and employment in a press release titled ‘Care leavers missing out on important routes to employment through apprenticeships’ as the following:

- Care leavers miss out on important routes to employment through apprenticeships because of poor promotion and barriers act as deterrents;
- For those 13-21 year olds not at university, care leavers are 8 times less likely to be apprentices compared to the general population;
- The Commissioner calls on Local Authorities to guarantee every care leaver, who would like one, an apprenticeship that meets their aspirations.

In October 2012, the Department for Education released a ‘Care leavers in England data pack’ in which they were able to make the following statements about care leavers:

- The older a person leaves care, the more likely they are to be in education at age 19.
- Care leavers in education at age 19 are more likely to have had stable care periods than those in other activities.
- Care leavers who were in foster placements immediately before leaving care are the most likely to be in higher education aged 19.
- Care leavers who entered care due to socially unacceptable behaviour were the most likely to be NEET at age 19.
- Care leavers are most likely to be living in independent accommodation including that provided by a college or university or flat-sharing.
- Care leavers in education, whether higher education or other types of education, were most likely to be in suitable accommodation (less than 1% deemed to be unsuitable).
**Key facts**

**On the 31st March 2019 there were 1,115 children in care. 444 children entered care and 487 young people left care in the past 12 months.**

65 out of every 10,000 children are in care in Northamptonshire.

The regional average is 57, the national average is 64 and the average of our CIPFA statistical neighbours is 58.9.

23% of children in care eventually returned to their families (32% nationally).
413 of the young people leaving care in 2017/18 were aged 18 or under.

This is lower than in preceding years, the average number of care leavers over the last 5 years is 446. The rate per 10,000 children under 18 leaving care was 24.6 in 2017/18 and is similar to the national average of 25.2.

There were 714 children that had been in continuous care in Northamptonshire for 12 months in the year ending March 2018. In March 2019 the number was 784 (local data).

By 2025, the number of children leaving care is anticipated to exceed 600 (linear regression).
Demographics

Almost half of the counties care leavers live in Northampton. Around 1 in 5 are from out of county placements. Kettering, Corby and Wellingborough are home to 7-8% of care leavers. Daventry and South Northants have the lowest proportion of care leavers at 2% each.

Out of County - 141
Unknown - 71

Gender of care leavers in Northamptonshire 2017-2019

There are twice as many male children in care than females and this is reflected in the gender split of care leavers. This imbalance is mainly due to the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) in the county, 90% of whom are male.

The majority of care leavers in Northamptonshire are white, however the proportion is lower than the county as a whole, according to Census data. The figure to the right shows that Asian, Black and ‘Other’ children are over-represented in the care leaver population compared to the population of the county. This could also be due to the numbers of UASC in the care population.
Demographics

As we have seen earlier, care leavers fall into three categories.

- **Eligible** – those young people still in care aged 16 and 17 who have been looked after for (a total of) at least 13 weeks from the age of 14.
- **Relevant** – young people aged 16 or 17 who have already left care, and who were looked after for (a total of) at least 13 weeks from the age of 14, and have been looked after at some time while 16 or 17.
- **Former Relevant** - young people aged 18-21 who have been Eligible and/or Relevant children in care - young people who are looked after by a Local Authority either through a Compulsory Care Order or remanded or accommodated by voluntary agreement including accommodation under Section 20 of the Children Act.

A local authority has a responsibility to take reasonable steps to keep in touch with a former relevant child whether he/she is within their area or not and if they lose touch, to re-establish contact. They must continue the appointment of a personal adviser for a former relevant child and continue to keep the pathway plan under regular review. The local authority has a duty to give a former relevant child assistance to the extent that his/her welfare and his/her educational or training needs require it, in kind or, in exceptional circumstances, in cash until he/she reaches the age of 21, or longer if his/her pathway plan sets out a programme of education or training which extends beyond his/her 21st birthday.

Children First Northamptonshire (CFN) captures the reason a child has been taken into care at the initial assessment stage.

The majority of children enter care due to abuse, neglect, family dysfunction and/or absentee parents.

Adverse childhood experiences (ACES), such as neglect, abuse or violence can have a **negative impact on young people that they carry with them throughout their lives.**
Outcomes for Looked After Children

Looked after children and those leaving care face a variety of lower outcomes compared to their peers. For example, lower educational attainment, higher exclusion rates and overly represented within the youth justice system. They are more likely to become a single parent and are at greater risk of teenage pregnancy and poor pregnancy-related outcomes such as smoking during pregnancy, having a low birth weight baby, and depression (NICE, 2019). The indicators on this page relate to 2018. Please note that looked-after children are also included in the counts of all children in Northamptonshire.

Key Stage 2

Reading

- Pupils reaching the expected standard
  - LAC in Northamptonshire: 47%
  - All children in Northamptonshire: 73%
  - National average: 51%
  - (2018)

Writing

- Pupils reaching the expected standard
  - LAC in Northamptonshire: 43%
  - All children in Northamptonshire: 75%
  - National average: 49%
  - (2018)

Maths

- Pupils reaching the expected standard
  - LAC in Northamptonshire: 45%
  - All children in Northamptonshire: 72%
  - National average: 47%
  - (2018)

Average progress score

- LAC in Northamptonshire: -1.7
  - All children in Northamptonshire: -0.9
  - National average: -0.2
  - (2018)

- Average progress score
  - LAC in Northamptonshire: -1.3
  - All children in Northamptonshire: -0.6
  - National average: -0.8
  - (2018)

- Average progress score
  - LAC in Northamptonshire: -2.2
  - All children in Northamptonshire: -1.1
  - National average: -0.8
  - (2018)
Outcomes for Looked After Children

Key Stage 4

Attainment 8
LAC in Northamptonshire: 17
All children in Northamptonshire: 45.1
National average: 18.9 (2018)

Progress 8
LAC in Northamptonshire: -0.93
All children in Northamptonshire: 0
National average: -1.2 (2018)

Achieving a 9-4 pass in English & Maths
LAC in Northamptonshire: 10%
All children in Northamptonshire: 62.4%
National average: 17.8% (2018)

Looked After Children with a Statement of Educational Needs / Education, Health and Care Plan
LAC in Northamptonshire: 24.3%
All children in Northamptonshire: 2.5%
National average: 26.5% (2018)

Looked After Children with SEN but without a statement/EHCP
LAC in Northamptonshire: 24.5%
All children in Northamptonshire: 10.7%
Primary: 9.3%, Secondary: 29% (2018)

Challenges facing looked-after children

Employment
30% of care leavers aged 19-21 are NEET (Not in education, employment or training) (2019)

Justice
Looked-after children are 4 times more likely to be involved with the Youth Justice system

Education
Only 15% of looked-after children received 5 A*-C grade GCSEs (2015, indicator now discontinued)

Mental Health
Looked-after children are four times more likely to have a mental health condition
Outcomes for Looked After Children

5%  
Looked after children subject to a conviction, final warning or reprimand in 2019 (3% National Average for LAC).

10%  
Looked After Children whom had a missing incident during 2019 (11% National Average).

1%  
Looked After Children who were away from placement without authorisation during 2019 (3% National Average).

76%  
Care leavers aged 16 who remained looked after until their 18th birthday, 2017 (National Average 71%)

62%  
Care leavers aged 18-21 in suitable accommodation, 2019 (85% National Average)

37%  
Care leavers aged 18-21 in education, employment or training 2019 (52% National Average)

3%  
Care leavers aged 18-21 in higher education, 2019 (6% National Average).

30%  
Care leavers aged 18-21 not in education, employment or training, 2019 (39% National Average)

22%  
Care leavers no longer in touch with Northamptonshire County Council 2019 (7% National Average)

19%  
Care leavers aged 19 or 20 who ceased to be looked after on their 18th birthday remaining with their foster families 2019 (26% National Average)
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

At the end of March 2019 there were 93 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children in the Northamptonshire Looked After Children population. In 2016 there were 142.

Northamptonshire has always had more UASC than its CIPFA statistical neighbours. This is a circumstance of geography, sometimes referred to as the ‘Lorry Stop Lottery’. The M1 motorway and A14 trunk road are popular and busy routes for road haulage to and from Europe and both pass through the county. The distance of Northamptonshire from the coastal ports and legislation regarding HGV driving hours means that trucks coming from Europe are quite likely to be required to stop in Northamptonshire, and as a result any people who have hidden inside a vehicle would be likely to alight here.

As a result, Northamptonshire was home to over half of the UASC in the entire East Midlands region between 2011 and 2016. Since then, the proportion has dropped to 30% in 2019, but for an area of 5 counties, three of which contain cities, this remains a high proportion in Northamptonshire.

At the peak (2014), almost 5% of England’s UASC population was being cared for in Northamptonshire. In 2019 this had reduced to 1.83%.

The fall in the proportion of the regional and national UASC populations in Northamptonshire is caused by an increase in numbers elsewhere in the country. The numbers in Northamptonshire over the last decade average 98 which is similar to the recorded numbers for the last 3 years.

76% of UASC arriving in the UK are aged 16 or 17.

90% are male.

Country of origin (2016)
Afghanistan – 23%
Eritrea – 19%
Albania – 17%
Iran – 7%
Vietnam – 6%
Iraq – 5%
Syria – 4%
Sudan – 2%
Ethiopia – 2%
Egypt – 1%
All other countries – 5%
Not known – 9%

Care leavers mental health

Mental health conditions are often established before the age of fourteen and therefore early intervention can prevent problems escalating.

The rate of mental health disorders in the general population aged 5 to 15 is 10%. For those who are looked after it is 45%, and 72% for those in residential care (NICE, 2019).

Research from Barnardo’s shows:
- 46% of the Barnardo’s care leaver cases reviewed involved young people who in the opinion of the personal adviser had mental health needs.
- 1 in 4 of the case files involved a young person who had faced a mental health crisis since leaving care.
- 65% of young people whom workers identified as having mental health needs were not currently receiving any statutory service.

https://b.barnardos.org.uk/19222_neglect_minds_a_report_on_mental_health_2.pdf

Research conducted in Northamptonshire and neighbouring counties suggested individuals who had experienced more ACE’s before the age of 18 were more likely to have low mental wellbeing as an adult, even after controlling for the effects of deprivation (Ford et al, 2016).

A recent systematic review has also shown that ACE’s are more prevalent among looked after children. Looked after children and care leavers are more at risk of both hurting themselves and completing suicide (Furnivall, 2013).

A local audit conducted by the CCG of the two hospitals in Northamptonshire, Kettering and Northampton General, highlighted a higher proportion of looked after children presenting with self-harm.

Self-harm helps manage distress whereas suicide attempts to stop distress by ending life. Young people self-harm or contemplate suicide for many reasons and every individual’s motivation will be different (Furnivall, 2013).

The rate per 10,000 hospital admissions as a result of self harm for children aged 10 to 24 in Northamptonshire is significantly higher than the national average and has been for a number of years.

Admissions to hospital for self-harm in Northamptonshire is significantly higher compared to the national average. In addition a local survey has shown 1 in 5 children in secondary school in Northamptonshire have self-harmed.
Key evidence

Care leavers face significant disadvantage in a number of areas and significant factor in these outcomes is their prior experience in the system. A child’s experience in care plays a key role in their outcomes post-transition, as those with fewer and more stable placements experience more favourable outcomes in later life. The importance of childhood is reinforced by the fact that traumatic experiences during childhood impact way into adult life for care leavers (Duncalf, 2010). Relationships also play an important role, as a key factor in developing resilience in childhood is strong relationships with trusted adults, therefore special consideration should be given to children in care and the importance of schools, social workers and interventions such as mentoring programmes. (Ford et al, 2016). Additionally, the importance of proactive services alongside standard ongoing support has also been highlighted, in order to bridge the gap for those at an initial disadvantage and prevent furthering the problem (Oakley et al, 2018).

National

Improving outcomes for care leavers requires a multi-faceted approach due to the multitude of areas in which they face disadvantage. This is an acknowledged problem, with a government cross-departmental Care Leavers Strategy launched in 2013 and the subsequent Keep on Caring (KOC) strategy released in 2016 headlining plans for reform and increased corporate parenting responsibility.

The Government’s five key outcomes for KOC are:
1. All young people leaving care should be better prepared and supported to live independently.
2. Improved access to education, employment and training.
3. Care leavers should experience stability in their lives, and feel safe and secure.
4. Improved access to health support.
5. Care leavers should achieve financial stability.

A Care Leaver Covenant (CLC) was introduced as a result of the KOC, working towards the five outcomes outlined. The CLC allows public, private and voluntary sector organisations to pledge support for care leavers, such as employment opportunities or free/discounted services. The initiative has also incorporated an element of mental health support, with all employed care leavers able to access tailored support and advice over nine months through Remploy – one of the scheme’s signatories.

Local

Alongside wide-spread government reforms such as KOC and CLC, more local approaches often centre around increased support post-transition – whether through professional or personal relationships. Examples include ‘Staying Put’ programmes, offering young people the option of remaining with foster carers until 21 – an extension of the current maximum age of 18 – which when trialled showed significantly improved EET status compared to those who did not (Munro et al, 2012). Also, recent changes set out in the Children and Social Work Act in 2017 extended provision of a personal advisor to care leavers from 21 to 25, to help ease the transition into adulthood. Programmes such as these aim to minimise disruption in both relationships and living arrangements, as these factors can ultimately contribute to more serious outcomes such as self-harm and suicide. Additionally, early access to mental health services and clear pathways/protocols have been identified as vital in reducing these risks (Furnivall, 2013).

Furthermore, a 2017 report by Barnardo’s highlighted three effective intervention types in relation to care leavers’ mental health:
- Embedding a mental health professional in leaving care teams
- Providing youth-specific provision designed around the needs of young people
- Training personal advisers and others who work with care leavers on how to support those with mental health issues.
Key evidence

NICE pathways are available for looked-after children and young people, including areas such as mental health and emotional wellbeing, care provision and training practitioners/carers, with updated guidance for looked-after children and young people scheduled for release in April 2021.

NICE have identified 8 priority areas for quality improvement for service providers of looked-after children (LAC) and young people:

• LAC and young people experience warm, nurturing care.
• LAC and young people receive care from services and professionals that work collaboratively.
• LAC and young people live in stable placements that take account of their needs and preferences.
• LAC and young people have on-going opportunities to explore and make sense of their identity and relationships.
• LAC and young people receive specialist and dedicated services within agreed timescales.
• LAC and young people who move across local authority or health boundaries continue to receive the services they need.
• LAC and young people are supported to fulfil their potential.
• Care leavers move to independence at their own pace.
References


Icons made by https://www.freepik.com from https://www.flaticon.com. Flaticon is licensed by Creative Commons http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0