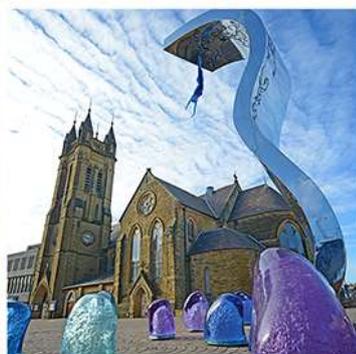


# Sufficiency Statement

For Children's Services  
2018 – 2021

Prepared August 2018

Blackpool Council

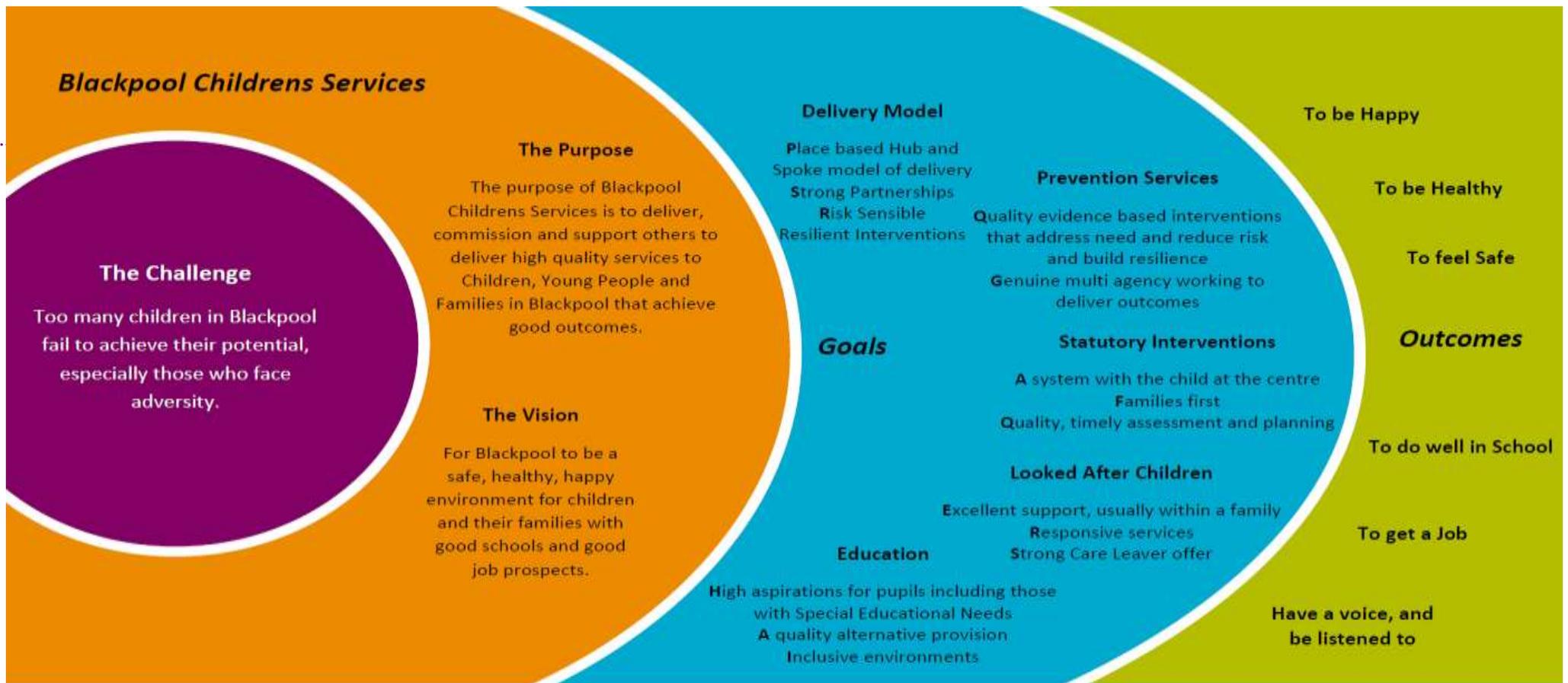


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We believe that.....

- Given the right support, more families can stay together, reducing the number of Looked After Children safely
- Every looked after child and care leaver has the right to a high quality, caring and supportive home which helps them aspire and achieve
- Integrating the approaches led by Betterstart and Headstart will strengthen our ability to build resilience in families and communities
- Schools, health, police and most importantly children, young people and families are our partners in achieving outcomes and we cannot deliver without them.

Child R  
Parent A  
School D  
Y  
**Independent**

# 1 Introduction

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## 1.1 Purpose of the Statement

This statement will set out Blackpool's vision for and approach to providing sufficient, safe and appropriate homes for Looked After Children and Care Leavers over the next three years.

The statement is set against a background of transformational change across Children's Social Care. It will set out Blackpool's current position and provide an overview of the work underway to achieve the strategic priorities.

The statement is supported by a range of detailed, operational action plans which support the delivery of the vision and approach and will be updated regularly as the picture develops.

This statement is designed to:

- Provide a summary of current needs and provision
- Be responsive to what children and young people have told us about the range and quality of services that they have experienced
- Identify key challenges and the headline actions that need to be put in place to ensure there is an adequate and appropriate range of provision to meet the future projected need

## 1.2 The Legislative Framework

All local authorities are required to take steps to secure, as far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation for children in care within their local area. In 2010 the duty to provide accommodation for children in care was strengthened with the introduction of Sufficiency Statutory Guidance and the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations. This 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 to meet 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 become looked after. For those who do become looked after, Local Authorities 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.'*

## 2 What we know now

In Blackpool, we have a high proportion of children who are “looked after”, where the Local Authority are their corporate parent. In fact, our number is higher than anywhere else in the country.

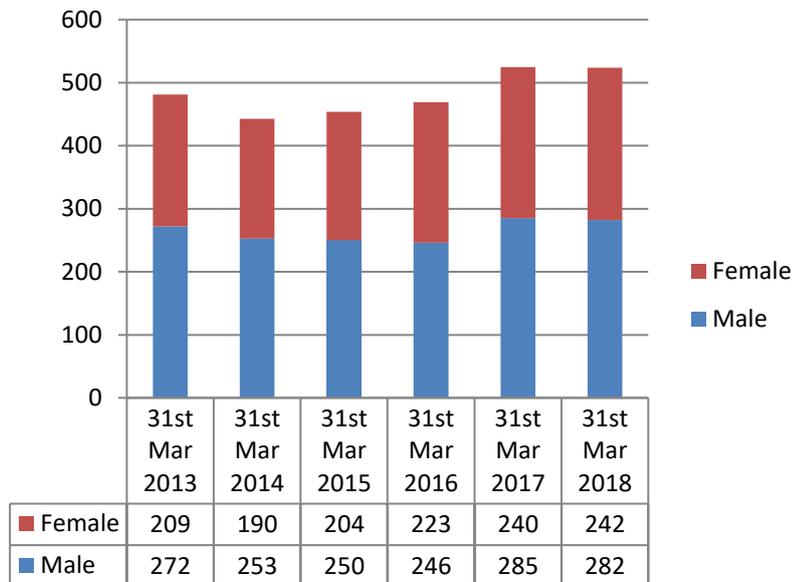
Children’s Services has an ambition to reduce the proportion of children who are looked after, whilst ensuring that children are safe, happy, and healthy and have opportunities to excel in education and employment.

This ambition is based on the belief that there is capacity across organisations in Blackpool to support families more effectively and with better outcomes than the social care system can offer. At the heart of the vision is an approach where preventative support is strengthened and applied consistently, and early interventions are timely, effective and outcome focussed.

Already, changes to the way in which the systems work in Blackpool has yielded results. The introduction of a methodology to support the assessment process, “Risk Sensible”, more checks and balances in place to support quality practise through the assessment and care management process and the consistent application of the continuum of need has seen the proportion of children coming in to the care system fall. Careful and considered planning is underway to support those children who are currently in care to make plans for the future that are right for them.

This sufficiency statement is based on this work continuing and growing at a reasonable rate. The forecasts that are made are based on actual activity rates, and have been developed through a good understanding of the demand which is presented to the system.

### Number of Looked After Children



As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018

Blackpool population

**139,983**

0-19 year olds

**31,865**

Children Looked After

**524**

Rate of Looked After Children per 10k

**184**

Mean of Looked After Children per 10k all English unitary

**74**

- Blackpool has the highest rate of Looked After Children for all English unitary authorities
- Numbers have remained steady during 2017 and 2018
- Numbers increased significantly during 2017 when compared to previous years
- The 10-15 year old age group accounts for the largest proportion of children in care
- There are more male than female children in care
- Demand for placements remains high

## 2 What we know now

Over half of the children who are Looked After in Blackpool are supported by foster carers in a home environment.

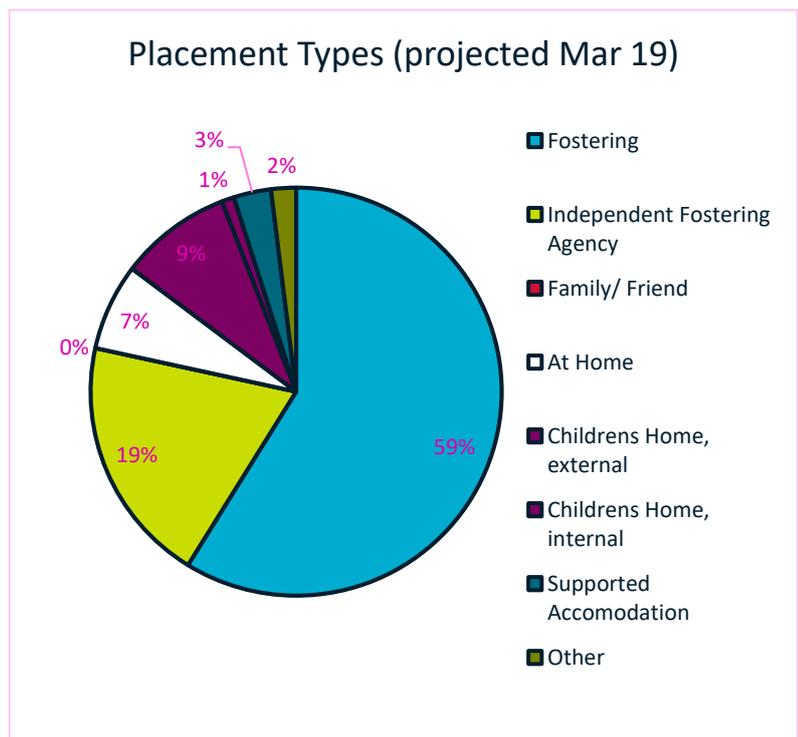
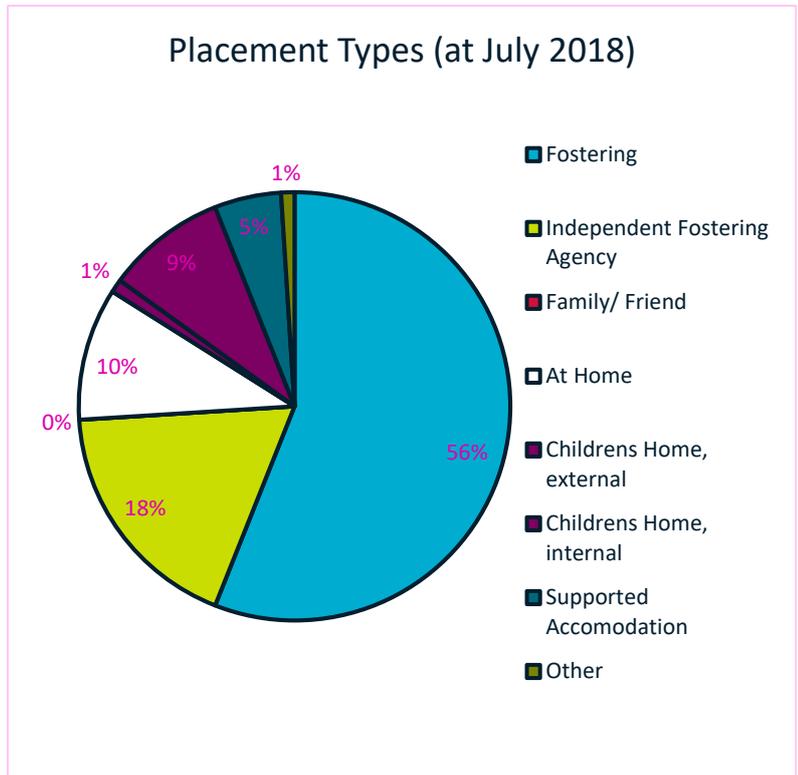
Whilst only a small proportion of the Looked After population as a whole, too many children are supported in residential homes out of area, not because the placement is the right one to meet their needs, but because of the limited availability of placements closer to home. This is despite Blackpool having a very high number of residential facilities in the town.

The age profile of children Looked After in Blackpool is broadly in line with the national profile. Our variation lies in a greater proportion of children under 1 year and a smaller proportion over 16.

By March 2019, based on current and planned activity and demand, we anticipate that the overall numbers of children Looked After will drop, and a higher proportion of children Looked After will be supported by foster carers.

We will see a reduction in placements in external residential providers, with an increased proportion of children supported in internal provision.

This activity will be monitored through the sufficiency group which meets monthly, and variations from planned activity and demand addressed through rapid iteration planning where required.



### 3 The Voice of Children and Young People

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**Children and Young People have told us...**

Blackpool is committed to obtaining feedback and listening to the voice of children and young people. The views of children and young people have been taken into account during the development of this statement and the supporting plans and actions. Children and young people will continue to be involved during implementation of agreed actions and review stages.



Living in Blackpool was better, I stayed close to my family and friends

Blackpool is a good place with opportunities, build on the positives!

Living with people you don't choose is hard... try to look at it from the young person's view

Start work on building independent skills sooner... it's a big change when one day you are 18!

Young people don't like people pretending to be family!

Young people can break down placements deliberately if they aren't listened to

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Children’s Services in Blackpool is on an ambitious change journey, designed to align the delivery of services to a Child’s Journey through the system and ensure that every opportunity to improve their life chances, maintain their family life and increase aspiration and achievement are taken. The strategies and plans that we anticipate will impact on the demand for services for Looked After children in the future include –

- A town wide Early Help Strategy
- A Prevention Strategy
- A Looked After Children Strategy
- Care Leaver Offer
- The development of an adoption alliance with other local authorities
- A “Focus on Foster” plan
- A reunification plan

This change journey is designed to directly impact on the outcomes for children that they have told us are important. Equally, the plans are in place to ensure that the service that those children who do require the Council to undertake a parenting role are supported by good quality services that are, unless it is not in the child’s interest, delivered close to home.

A major focus of current work in progress is to reduce the high numbers of Looked After Children. On the assumption that the current discharge plans for children and young people can be implemented as envisaged the number of Looked After Children would reduce significantly.

This section sets out Blackpool’s planned strategic priorities over the next three years.

### **Ensuring that children and families receive the right help at the right time**

- Build skills and knowledge across all the organisations who work with children and families across the town so that they can spot emerging risk factors and are able to respond to them to address concerns before they escalate.
- Develop a responsive Early Help Service in partnership with Schools, Health and the Police to ensure that assessments and interventions at level 2 of the continuum of need are effective and achieve good outcomes.
- Work to deliver a targeted intervention service to support families to deal with complex and challenging issues using a range of innovative and personalised approaches.
- Work with children and families, partner organisations and providers to ensure that children who are at risk of exploitation are identified and supported out of danger.
- Making sure that children who are risk of offending behaviour get support to change.

### **Being a great corporate parent**

- Listening to our children and shaping services that help them feel happy, healthy, safe, and able to achieve and aspire.
- Ensuring that the people who provide our children with a home are compassionate, understanding and supportive.
- Make sure that there are services to meet complex needs in and around Blackpool so that our children do not need to be taken away from positive support networks in order to be well supported.
- Take a “trauma informed” approach to meeting complex and challenging behaviours.
- Challenge our providers to ensure that the services they provide to our children are always high quality – and take action where there are concerns.

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- Be ambitious for our children, provide them with support and challenge them to develop the skills and resilience they need to set them up for a great future.

### **Supporting our children in to Adulthood**

- Making sure all our children have a good home and the skills to maintain a happy, healthy lifestyle.
- Working with our children to understand the services they need to support them to develop in to independence and make sure they are good quality.
- Helping our children make positive choices for the future by ensuring they have opportunities to access further education, apprenticeships and good quality employment.
- Being there for our children when they face challenges, and help them find the right solution.

### **Meeting the needs of children who have special educational needs and/ or disabilities**

- Making sure our services, and the services provided by others that are key to a child's development are inclusive and good quality.
- Having an assessment and care planning approach that is engaging, asset based, addresses need and is fair and equitable.
- Promote independence, resilience and aspiration
- Make sure different professionals working with families and children work together on assessments and plans
- Ensure there the transition pathway in to services for adults' works for young people and families.

### **Action plan**

The actions required to deliver this statement will be contained in service and improvement plans that detail the activities that will be carried out to progress the priorities, the targets and timescales. These action plans are working documents and will be adapted and

updated as appropriate to respond to the impact of the ongoing and co-dependent strategies and plans.

### **Governance**

The implementation of the plans that support this statement will be led by Children's Services and monitored through regular meetings focussed on sufficiency. Overall responsibility for implementation will be held by the Children's Improvement Board and the Corporate Parenting Panel. Regular updates will be via the Children's Services Senior Management team.

The Corporate Parenting Panel will carry out an annual review of the delivery against the action plan

## 5 Summary Action Plan

Why/What do we need to change?	How we will make a change	What will be the impact on children and young people?	Where will the detailed actions be kept and tracked?
<p>Living with people you don't choose is hard – try to look at it from the young person's view</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our workforce strategy will be focussed on ensuring that staff working with children listen to them and reflect their views in everything they do.</li> <li>When we look at the <b>quality and availability</b> of the services that provide for our children, we will engage our children to understand what is working well and what needs to change from their point of view and not assume we know.</li> </ul>	<p>Children and young people will be listened to and their views will influence decisions.</p> <p>Children and young people will feel that they have control over their lives and what happens to them.</p> <p>The voice of children and young people shapes the development of our services</p>	<p>Workforce Strategy Quality Monitoring Plan Sufficiency Plan</p>
<p>Young people don't like people pretending to be family!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will help our children to support people who provide support services to understand how they can help them feel loved, supported and safe in a way that respects their wishes.</li> </ul>	<p>Our services understand how they can impact positively on the experience of our children</p>	<p>Workforce Strategy Sufficiency Plan</p>
<p>Living in Blackpool was better, I stayed close to my family and friends</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will work with providers of support to develop a range of quality services in and around Blackpool which mean that unless it is in their best interests to live somewhere else, children will be able to access support close to home.</li> </ul>	<p>Our children stay in and around Blackpool and are able to maintain the positive support networks that help them feel safe and secure.</p>	<p>Sufficiency Plan</p>

## 5 Summary Action Plan

Why/What do we need to change?	How we will make a change	What will be the impact on children and young people?	Where will the detailed actions be kept and tracked?
<p>Young people can break down placements deliberately if they aren't listened to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will work to strengthen the quality of our placement finding process, and the support available to children and providers when there are challenges so that placements do not breakdown.</li> <li>We will strengthen our relationships with providers to improve outcomes, ensure value for money and to make sure that the services that are provided are of good quality.</li> </ul>	<p>Children and young people are happy, healthy and safe in their placements and they do not breakdown.</p>	<p>Sufficiency Plan Quality Monitoring Plan</p>
<p>Blackpool is a good place with opportunities, build on the positives!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will work with our workforce, internally and across providers to ensure that we are ambitious for our children and raise their aspirations for themselves, and their place in Blackpool.</li> </ul>	<p>Our children feel confident that Blackpool is a safe place with good opportunities for them to flourish.</p>	<p>Workforce Strategy Care Leaver Officer Opportunity Area Plan Headstart Programme</p>
<p>Start work on building independent skills sooner. It's a big change when one day you are 18!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will shape services that support and challenge young people throughout their teens to help them prepare for adulthood; recognise that every child needs encouragement and support throughout their journey and; ensure that when our children turn 18 they continue to get a great services tailored to their needs for as long as they need them.</li> </ul>	<p>Our Children feel that they have a great support network that challenges and is ambitious for them into adulthood.</p> <p>Our Children have the right skills to live independently</p> <p>Our Children have access to a choice of good quality, safe, clean and</p>	<p>Care Leaver Strategy Quality Monitoring Plan Opportunity Area Plan Headstart Programme</p>

## 5 Summary Action Plan

Why/What do we need to change?	How we will make a change	What will be the impact on children and young people?	Where will the detailed actions be kept and tracked?
..		comfortable places to live when they are ready to live independently.	
Making sure there is equality of opportunity, aspiration and outcomes for children who experience care and/ or have a special educational need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We will work with schools to deliver inclusive environments that help children with challenges achieve great outcomes.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that the support for children with special educational needs is of high quality in mainstream schools, special schools and alternative provision.</li> </ul>	Children will get the education they are entitled to and get the results they are able to achieve.	SEND Action Plan School Improvement Plan

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## Document Control

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## Approved By:

Name	Title	Signature	Date
Kate Aldridge	Corporate Delivery Unit		30/08/18