Appendix 12

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough People services overview

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough

People Services Overview

Introduction

Children’s, Adults, SEND and Homelessness are the four key statutory services recognised by MHCLG as drivers of rising financial pressure across local government.

Following a brief description of trends across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, including financial resilience, there is a summary of each service area as well as cohort and financial information disaggregated by current local authority areas.

This ‘non-paper’ does not reflect council policy. It is intended to aid the reader gain an overview of key ‘social services’ to inform debate about emerging options for Local Government Reorganisation. ‘Non-papers’ are used at international organisations such as the UN, OECD and EU as discussion papers which are not part of formal business.

The initial data discovery was supported by an AI 'deep research' tool (ChatGPT 4.5) to collate publicly available information and identify relevant documents. That research was supplemented with additional information and data from publicly available sources suggested by local government officers and subject matter experts. There have been verification checks and quality assurance of the outputs against official sources using Gemini (2.5 Pro) and by local government officers.

Indicative financial forecasts and district-level disaggregation of cohort data rely on stated assumptions, which are based on publicly available data and established local government benchmarks.

For definitive operational details, service-specific nuances, and the most current expert interpretations, direct consultation with professionals and subject matter leads within the relevant local authorities is recommended.

The paper was shared with Leaders, CEOs and senior officers from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Councils in May 2025 and subsequently updated to reflect feedback received.

June 2025. Version 2.0

Table of contents

Executive Summary

Children's Social Care

- **Cambridgeshire** (Requires Improvement, 2024) has lower than average national rates of children in care, and lower costs per child. There is district level variation, for instance Fenland closer to national averages, SCambs very low rates of care. **Peterborough** (Inadequate, 2024) has slightly higher than national average children in care rates, particularly among adolescents entering care, as well as increasing child protection plans, and higher than average per child costs.

- Both authorities spend around 25% of net revenue budgets on children services and have higher than average Early Help Assessments.

Adult Social Care

- **Cambridgeshire** has stable demand overall, aligned with national trends, predominantly driven by an ageing demographic, and district variation; Fenland has higher needs and costs, East Cambs has relatively low needs and costs. **Peterborough** mirrors Cambridgeshire's overall pattern but has a higher proportion of the adult population receiving care and growing complexity in learning disabilities.

- Adult social care absorbs about 40% of Cambridgeshire's and 33% of Peterborough's net revenue budgets; net costs per adult are respectively below and above average.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

- Overall identification rates for SEND in **Cambridgeshire** are slightly below national average, but it has higher than average EHCP rates. **Peterborough's** identification rates and EHCPs are lower than average, potentially reflecting different mainstream inclusion thresholds and/or under identification.

- Both authorities have invested in expanding special school capacity through their joint SEND Transformation Programme (2020–2026), reducing reliance on expensive out-of-area placements. Persistent challenges include disparities in access and quality, particularly in rural areas, and variability in early years and primary-level educational outcomes.

Homelessness

- Rates in **Peterborough** are driven primarily by family homelessness with heavy reliance on emergency accommodation (B&Bs). Innovative models such as 'Housing First' for entrenched homelessness cohorts, and changes to temporary housing have significantly reduced costs.

- **Cambridge** has the highest rate of presentation across C&P and faces rising complexity including rough sleeping and reliance on emergency placements. **Fenland** has had increases in family and hidden homelessness. **Hunts, East and South Cambs** have lower absolute demand, but increases in hidden homelessness driven by economic factors and housing affordability.

Financial pressures

- **Children's Services** face rising costs from complex adolescent needs and higher numbers of children looked-after including unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

- **Adult Social Care** expenditures will rise due to ageing demographics, inflationary pressures in the care sector and increased complexity around disabilities, which will require service expansion.

- **SEND services** require additional investment to meet growing demand and ensure rural parity. More early intervention and additional local specialist provision is likely to be required.

- **Homelessness** services face rising demand driven by affordability and economic pressures. Strategic investment in prevention, affordable housing supply, and expansion of housing-led models will be critical to manage demand.

Implications for future service delivery

1. **Enhanced prevention and early intervention** across all service areas to manage demand sustainably.

2. **Expanded local provision and specialist capacity** in SEND, children's and adult social care to reduce out-of-area reliance and costs.

3. **Housing-led homelessness solutions** to effectively tackle complex rough sleeping and family homelessness.

4. **Greater multi-agency collaboration** to address cross-cutting issues (e.g., mental health, exploitation, disabilities) effectively.

5. **Data-driven and integrated planning,** including workforce**,** to anticipate demographic changes and manage long-term strategic risks proactively.

Financial resilience

CIPFA's *high-demand services* **Financial Resilience Index 2024** combines net revenue expenditure on adult social care, children's social care and public-health services. The indicator is expressed as a percentage of a council's total net service expenditure. A high percentage is not automatically a red flag. It shows how much of the council's controllable budget is tied up in demand-led statutory services, leaving less headroom for savings or investment elsewhere.

The England median for County Councils and Unitary authorities in 2024 is about **57 %**; anything above ~65% puts a council in CIPFA's top-risk quartile.

Authority	Net spend 2023-24 (£m)	Total net service spend (£m)	High-demand services %	CIPFA quartile band
Cambridgeshire	Adult ASC £230.4m Children's SC £92.9 Public-Health £30.8 m	£578 m	**~ 61 %**	**3rd quartile –** medium / above-average exposure
Peterborough	Adult ASC £75.1m Children's SC £55.8m Public-Health £17.4m	£227 m	**~ 67 %**	**4th quartile –** highest exposure

Sources: 2024-25 MTFS / Business-Plan finance tables for each council (net directorate budgets); Public-health net expenditure from 2023-24 RO3 return; Total net service expenditure from 2023-24 RO statements (includes all General-Fund service lines and excludes parish precepts, schools DSG, HRA).

LGA Financial-Stress Dashboard (April 2025)

Composite out of 10; higher = greater stress.

Council	Score	National band	Main drivers
Cambridgeshire	**4.3**	Medium (amber)	Rising DSG SEND deficit (£51 m), ASC placement inflation, but healthy tax-base and capital financing ratio.

Council	Score	National band	Main drivers
Peterborough	**7.6**	High (red)	Minimal reserves (<£20 m), history of in-year overspends, high debt charges (7 % of revenue), DSG & homelessness pressures.

*Comparable city/district data behind paywall.

Comparative analysis by Local Authority

1. Children's Social Care

Successful adoption of the Family Safeguarding Model in Cambridgeshire (2019) and Peterborough (2017) reduced 'initial proceedings', though adolescent complexity and increased unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) caseloads remain challenging. A strong emphasis on Early Help has contributed to a drop in statutory interventions; caseloads have steadily increased across all districts, especially in **Cambridge** and **Huntingdonshire**.

Neglect remains the primary reason for involvement across all districts, accounting for ~66% of Children in Need cases, above the national average of 59%. Noted shift toward older adolescents entering care, often due to exploitation (e.g., county lines), mental health concerns and UASC, particularly in, **Cambridge** and **South Cambs.** There is a similar trend in **Peterborough** but greater pressures post-pandemic.

Peterborough moved from Good (2018, Ofsted) to Inadequate (Jan 2024), chiefly because support for care-leavers was judged inadequate. **Cambridgeshire** maintained **Requires improvement** (May 2024)**,** but inspectors noted tangible recent progress since its 2019 judgement and the ending of joint management with Peterborough.

2024-25 net revenue budgets

Council	Children's social-care spend inside the overall children's directorate	Total children's directorate net budget*
Cambridgeshire CC	**£92.9m** Director of Commissioning (mostly children looked after placements & commissioning): £33.1m Director of Children & Safeguarding (family-safeguarding teams, disabled-children, youth justice etc.): £59.8 m	£148.9 m (includes education, SEND transport etc.)
Peterborough City Council	The council does not publish a separate line for social care, but the **whole Children & Young People directorate budget is £55.8 m**, of which approximately four-fifths (£44.6m) is children's	£55.8 m

Council	Children's social-care spend inside the overall children's directorate	Total children's directorate net budget*
	social care (CLA, safeguarding, leaving care) with the remainder covering education overheads & SEND transport.	

**Net of all DSG, ring-fenced grants, fees and recharges – this is the amount that has to be financed from council tax, business rates and general government grant.*

Financial trends

	Cambridgeshire	Peterborough
Cash growth 23/24 to 24/25	+£19m (+26 %) – inflation on placements, SEND transport and a £4.8m demographic pressure for rising numbers of children in care.	+£7m (+14 %) – mainly to cover a 5 % rise in children looked after and agency social worker costs.
Share of council net revenue budget	~**25 %** (adult social care 39 %, place & others 36 %).	~**25 %** (adult social care 33 %, place & others 42 %).
Cost-drivers called out in MTFS	• Inflation on external residential / IFA fees (+7 %). • Home-to-school SEND transport inflation (+8 %). • Demographic step-ups for 30 extra high-cost CLA and complex-disability packages. • £3m contingency for agency social work.	• Sharp rise in 10-17-year-old CLA (422 at Mar-24). • Care-leaver accommodation costs up 18 %. • £1.5m Children's Social-Care Prevention Grant built into base. • Reliance on agency social workers still >20 %.

Key take-aways

Benchmarking context: CIPFA's 2023/24 "high-demand services" median shows counties/unitaries spending ~£750 per under-18 population on children's social care. Cambridgeshire is **~£650** whereas Peterborough spends **~£1150** reflecting greater deprivation and smaller scale.

Volatility risk: a handful of high-cost residential placements (≥ £7k pw) or a spike in unaccompanied asylum-seeking children can add £1m+ in-year. Both MTFSs include small risk reserves; CFOs warn these are thin.

Prevention still cheaper than cure: each council is investing in Early-Help expansion and Family-Safeguarding to contain growth; success should be visible in placement spend curves within 18 months.

Approximate caseload breakdown by authority (2023/24)

	Approx. Children in Care	Children in Need	Child Protection Plans	Early Help Cases	Approx. % of Cambs under 18s
Cambridge City	97	410	50	280	15
East Cambridgeshire	65	275	35	225	13
Fenland	150	575	75	350	17
Huntingdonshire	155	700	85	475	28
South Cambridgeshire	75	275	30	280	27
Total Cambridgeshire	*646	*2755	275	1610	(100)
Peterborough	409	1477	277	1,861	(100)

**Figures for Cambridgeshire city/districts are approximate estimates based on available data from Cambridgeshire County Council and JSNA documents for 2023–24, figures for Peterborough are drawn from Council reports. The discrepancy between the total number of children in care and in need across Cambridgeshire and the sum of children assigned to specific districts is likely to reflect children placed outside Cambridgeshire; children that have no fixed or permanent address; and administrative categorisation, where some children receiving services may not have a clearly recorded district designation.*

- **Fenland** has highest relative city/district need, primarily due to abuse and neglect, deprivation-driven cases, it also has a concentration of children's homes.
- **Huntingdonshire** has the highest number of children in care, need, child protection plans, and early help cases, but about average intervention rates and a strong early help presence.
- **East Cambridgeshire** has stable demand, generally slightly lower intervention rates relative to other districts but may face hidden need and rural access concerns.
- **South Cambs** has lowest relative needs and intervention rates, due in part to low deprivation, affluence, and growing early help uptake, which will be important to sustain as new developments increase its population.

- **Cambridge City** has a diverse cohort, including higher proportions of older teens and UASC in care. Average rates but notable complexities, particularly in Abbey and Kings Hedges, which drive up demand for early help.

- **Peterborough** has high under-18 population relative to city/districts. Recent increases driven by adolescents entering care, including UASC, creating demand for specialised supported accommodation. Pressures increased post-pandemic, especially among older youths.

Comparison against national trends

The England average Children in Care is 7 per 1000 children; Children in Need around 33 per 1000; and Child Protection Plans just over 4 per 1000.

- **Children in Care (CiC): Peterborough** (7.4) rate is above the national average (7.0), and **Fenland** (6.1) has the highest rate of any Cambs district.

- **Children in Need (CiN):** all authorities have rates below the national average (33.3), with **Peterborough** (26.4) being the highest. Cambridgeshire's CIN rate is around 42% lower than the national average though there are significant differences between lower need districts such as **South Cambs** and higher needs in **Fenland**.

- **Child Protection Plans (CPP): Peterborough** (7.0) and **Fenland** (3.1) have CPP rates exceeding or approaching the national average (4.2), suggesting higher instances of children at risk of harm.

- **Early Help Assessments**[1]**:** table data is not comparable, however on the best available national benchmark (ADCS Phase 9), Cambridgeshire's Early-Help assessment rate is about **40 % higher** and Peterborough's **30 % higher** than the England average, demonstrating a strong preventative offer, but one that is beginning to plateau under demand pressure.

Authority	approx. under-18 pop. ONS 2023	CiC Rate per 1,000[2]	CiN Rate per 1,000	CPP Rate per 1,000	Early Help cases per 1,000
Cambridge City	~21,500	4.5	19.0	2.3	13.0
East Cambridgeshire	~18,600	3.5	14.8	1.8	12.1
Fenland	~24,400	6.1	23.5	3.1	14.3
Huntingdonshire	~40,200	3.9	17.4	2.1	11.8
South Cambridgeshire	~38,800	1.9	7.0	0.8	7.2
Cambridgeshire	~143,500	4.8	19.2	1.9	11.2
Peterborough	~54,500[3]	7.4	26.4	7.0	29.5[4]
National Average	—	7.0	33.3	4.2	N/A

Children's Social Care: financial pressures

- Significant increases in complex adolescent needs, especially older teenagers (16–17 years) and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, have increased costs related to specialist placements and supported accommodation in **Peterborough** and, to a lesser extent, **Fenland**.

- Continued investment required in early help services across districts, especially where higher complexity exists such as **Fenland**, as well as in **Peterborough**. Expansion of specialist provision for adolescents, including UASC and complex mental health needs.

To note: since 2010/11, spending in England on early intervention services such as children's centres and family support has decreased by 42%. Early intervention now accounts for only 18% of total children's services spending. In 2022/23 for the first time, spending on

[1] National benchmarking of Early Help activity is limited due to inconsistent local reporting.
[2] Cambridgeshire and Peterborough rate from https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/2024-cyp-jsna/
[3] Rates for Peterborough are calculated using 42,000 under 18's from 'Children's Social Care Caseload 2023-24" compiled by their Business Intelligence team before the ONS mid-2023 population estimate (54,500) was published. This more recent population estimate is expected to be incorporated in future DfE returns, which may lead to adjustments in published rates.
[4] Peterborough's figure represents Early Help Assessments (EHAs) and is not directly comparable to 'active cases' data from other authorities. The Association of Directors of Children's Services estimate that EHAs average around 26 per 1000 (authorities with family-hub funding ~29; without ~23)

residential care alone (£2.4 billion) surpassed the total spent on all early intervention services combined (£2.2 billion).

Theme	Key takeaway	Why it matters for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough
Overall demand	After a fall in 2020-21, statutory demand is climbing again. • Cambs Children in Care (CiC) fell from **714 (2019/20)** to **596 (2021)**, rebounded to **646 (2023)**. • Peterborough CiC fell to 344 in 2022 then surged **+20 % to 422**.	Re-escalation is eroding earlier gains from Family Safeguarding and driving placement spend as medium-term financial plans tighten.
Geographical inequality	Need is highly concentrated. *Fenland* carries a CiC rate of over **6 per 1k** and 20-25 % of county cases; *South Cambs* sits below **2.5 per 1k** with <15 % of cases though it has 60% more under 18s than Fenland.	A one-size service offer will miss children. Fenland, Wisbech and parts of Cambridge City will continue to require disproportionate social-work capacity and preventative investment.
Age & complexity	Two-thirds of new entrants are now **10-17 yrs**; UASC account for 10-15% of Peterborough CiC. Adolescents present with exploitation, mental-health and missing-from-home risks.	Supported accommodation, edge-of-care outreach and specialist mental-health provision are becoming core services.
Primary need profile	**Abuse/neglect** drives around 66 % of Cambridgeshire CIN versus 59 % nationally.	The multi-agency neglect strategy and graded-care profile need sustained senior grip; without it the CP caseload will continue to rise.
Early help trajectory	Early-Help Assessments rose to **2,226 (2022/23)** then dipped to 1,861 (2023/24) in Peterborough; Cambridgeshire volumes are rising but plateauing.	Early-help capacity appears to be hitting a ceiling just as statutory demand climbs which risks a "wrong-door" re-referral loop.
Workforce & market pressure	National vacancy rate fell but remains **17 % (7,200 posts, 2024)**; 83 % of children's homes are private. [Explore our statistics and dataGOV.UK]	Reliance on agency staff and independent placements is inflating costs (Fenland residential placements £16.5k pw). A clear attraction-and-retention offer and in-house fostering expansion are key.
Comparative position	• Cambridgeshire CiC rate = **4.7 per 1k**, below England 7 per 1k (83,630 children, 2024).	Lower than average care rates indicate prevention is working, but the reversal since 2022 and rising CP activity show fragile gains.

Theme	Key takeaway	Why it matters for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough
	• Child-protection plan rates are rising locally against a **national two-year fall to c.50,000 plans**. Explore our statistics and data	
Policy horizon	The DfE's ***Stable Homes, Built on Love*** (2023) signals: 'Family Help' to merge EH & CIN; regional care co-operatives for placements; workforce reforms/phased funding. GOV.UK	Early adopter opportunities exist, but the council must model financial and workforce impacts especially for regional placement partnerships).

Policy implications

1. **Hold the line on prevention:** The short-lived dip in 2021 shows Family Safeguarding and Early Help work; sustained political support (and CIPFA-compliant reserve strategies) will be needed to protect that spend.
2. **Targeted place-based response:** Concentrate multi-agency hubs, family hubs and community safety work in Fenland and priority Cambridge wards to arrest rising adolescent risk.
3. **Adolescent-focused sufficiency:** Commission more 16+ supported accommodation and local trauma-informed foster care; explore regional care-co-operative pilot status.
4. **Workforce stabilisation:** Implement a local retention package (market supplements, career pathways) in context of 17% national vacancy rate and increasing use of agency staff.
5. **Neglect & intra-familial harm:** Embed the graded-care profile, domestic-abuse whole-family offer and robust step-up/step-down pathways to break the abuse-neglect conveyor belt.
6. **Performance & inspection readiness:** Ofsted's mixed findings show improvement can be fragile; maintain live dashboards on caseload drift and visiting frequency to keep practice on track.

Conclusion

Cambridgeshire's lower than average care rate masks sharp district contrasts and a clear post-pandemic uptick in complex adolescent case work. Re-doubling efforts on early-help capacity, targeted place-based investment and workforce stabilisation will be decisive in preventing a return to 2019 demand levels and unsustainable placement costs.

Peterborough's costs per child are significantly higher than Cambridgeshire's due to greater complexity, higher deprivation, and a notably higher proportion of older youth entering care. Rates of care and child protection plans are above national averages. These may fall once the latest population forecasts are validated by DfE.

Sources:

Recent Cambridgeshire County Council reports and data – including the 2024 JSNA for Children & Young People, Cambridgeshire's Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy, and the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report and Ofsted's 2024 inspection. Peterborough City Council Corporate Parenting Committee Reports; Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Insight – 2024 Children and Young People JSNA; Ofsted Inspection Letter 2023; Peterborough Virtual School Annual Report 2022–23; Early Help Strategy data - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Safeguarding Children Partnership Board; LG Inform/Department for Education statistics; Population - LSOA 2021 | Cambridgeshire and Peterborough | Report Builder for ArcGIS.

2. Adult Social Care

At present (June 2025) there are no published CQC local-authority ratings for either Cambridgeshire or Peterborough under the new Care Act reviews. Comprehensive local-authority assessments that will give an overall score are still under way.

The most recent inspections show Cambridgeshire running mostly Good-rated services with improvement needed in Learning Disability community teams. Peterborough's council-run service is rated Good. Most domiciliary care, care-home and supported-living services in both areas are run by independent providers and have their own separate CQC ratings.

Metric (NHS Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework; ACS Finance Returns, 2023/24)	**Cambridgeshire**	**Peterborough**	**England county/unitary mean**
Net ASC cost per adult 18+	**£1,650**	**£1,915**	**£1,756**
ASC outcome: % people at home 91 days after reablement	**84 %**	**72 %**	**84 %**

Net revenue budgets for Adult Social Care

Authority	**Financial year**	**Net Adult Social Care budget***	**Direction of travel**
Cambridgeshire County Council	2024/25 (approved Feb 2024 Business Plan)	**£230.4m**	Up c. 7% on the 2023/24 opening position, driven by National Living Wage uplifts, demographic growth (+£12 m) and market-sustainability costs. (Business Plan Section 3 - Detailed Finance Tables - 2024 to 2025)
Peterborough City Council	2024/25 (MTFS adopted Feb 2024)	**£75.1m**	Up c. 8% year-on-year; pressures offset in part by extra ASC grant and tightening placement spend.

**Net = gross spend minus all fees, client contributions and ring-fenced grants; i.e. the sum financed from council-tax, business-rates and general government grant.*

Key take-aways

Budget size vs. risk: Adult social care now absorbs about **40% of Cambridgeshire's and 33% of Peterborough's net revenue budgets**, crowding out discretionary spend elsewhere. Peterborough receives a higher share of its ASC spend via ring-fenced grants such as the

Better Care Fund, which sit outside the 'net' figure which can materially distort fair comparisons. Cambridgeshire's larger taxbase suggest proportionately more is funded from council-tax.

Volatility remains: high inflation in the care market, NLW increases, and fragile provider finances mean in-year pressures can still spike.

Grant uncertainty: Government ASC grants are confirmed only one year ahead; both authorities model flat real-terms grant, so any reduction would create challenges.

Transformation capacity: savings lines depend on successfully expanding reablement, supported-living and digital care-tech. Leadership attention to delivery disciplines is critical.

Collaboration: with an integrated care system (currently) covering both authorities, joint commissioning (equipment, home-care contracts, hospital discharge) could offer an opportunity to bend the cost curve.

Budget outlook

Year	Cambs MTFS projection	P'boro MTFS projection
2025/26	£244.4 m	£81.4 m
2026/27	£262.8 m	£87.2 m
2027/28	£285.4 m	£93.2 m
2028/29	£309.7 m	n/a (plan ends 2027/28)

Both councils assume:

- *Annual **4.99 % council-tax rises** (2% ASC precept) to keep pace with pay and provider-fee inflation.*
- *Further **demand growth of 3–5% a year**, especially in working-age adults with learning disabilities or mental-health needs.*
- *Tight savings programmes (commissioning reviews, early-help & reablement) to contain the growth curve.*

ASC costs and needs by all authorities

Publicly funded adult social care per recipient in England is approximately **£21,000 to £24,000**, depending on the type and intensity of care provided. In England approximately **14.6 adults per 1,000** of the adult population receive local authority arranged or provided long-term adult social care support.

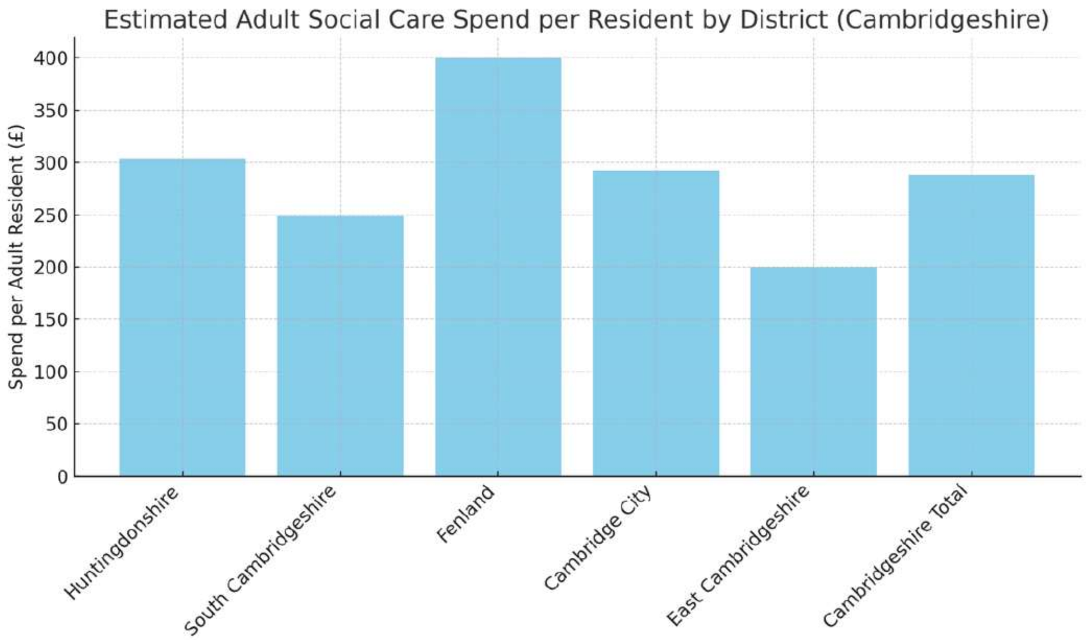
The following district-level summaries for adult social care are **illustrative estimates** derived by distributing total county-wide adult social care budgets based on demographic weighting and placement planning. They are designed to provide a comparative overview only as they do not represent audited actual expenditure by district and should be interpreted with caution.

Data from JSNA 2023	**Adult Population**	**Approx. People Receiving Care**	**% of Cases**	**Cases per 1,000 Adults**
Huntingdonshire	~147,000	~2,000	25%	13.6
South Cambs	~135,000	~1,600	20%	11.9
Fenland	~83,000	~1,400	18%	16.9
Cambridge City	~119,000	~1,400	18%	11.8
East Cambs	~72,000	~800	10%	11.1
Total Cambridgeshire	~554,000	~7,900 total (*700 not identified by a city/district)	100%	14.3 total average
Peterborough	~163,250	~2,900	100%	17.8

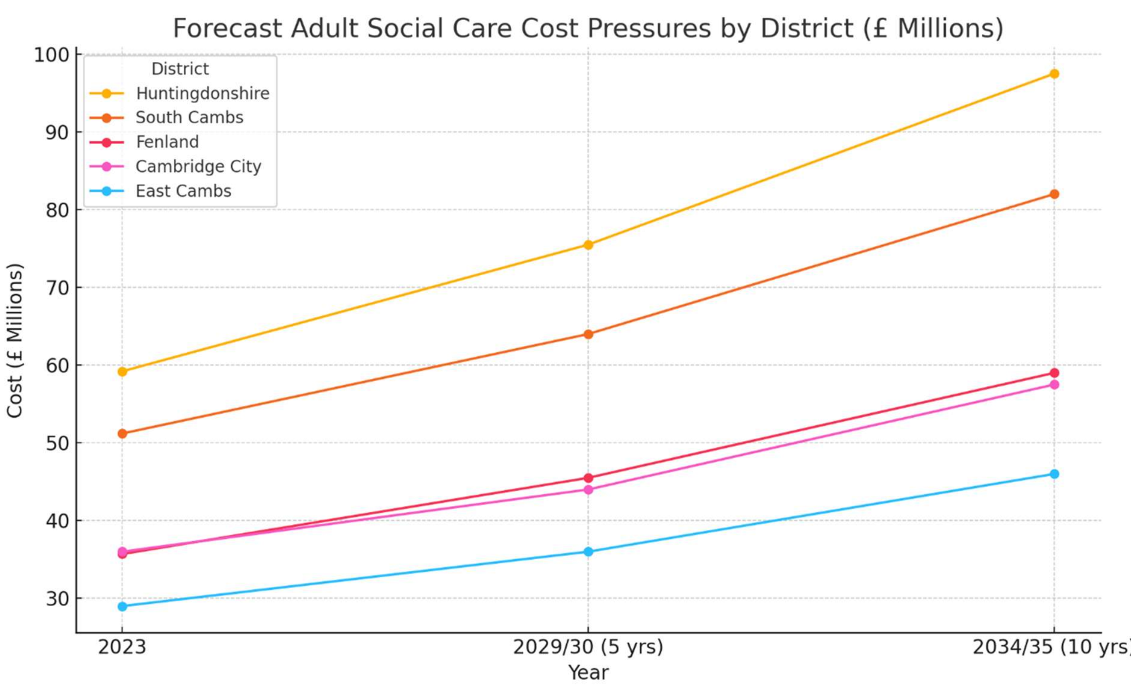
**The discrepancy between the total number of adults receiving care across Cambridgeshire and the sum of adults assigned to specific districts is likely to reflect individuals placed in care homes or facilities outside Cambridgeshire; individuals that have no fixed or permanent address; and administrative categorisation, where some individuals receiving services may not have a clearly recorded district designation. Data sources identified below.*

	Approx. Adults Receiving Care	**% of Cases**	**Approx. Annual Spend (£m)**	**Spend per Adult (£)**
Huntingdonshire	~2,000	25%	44.0	~£22,000
South Cambridgeshire	~1,600	20%	33.6	~£21,000
Fenland	~1,400	18%	33.6	~£24,000
Cambridge City	~1,400	18%	32.2	~£23,000
East Cambridgeshire	~800	10%	16.0	~£20,000
Cambridgeshire Total	~7,900	100%	~159.4	~£22,100 avg.
Peterborough	~2,900	N/A	~£65.0	~£22,400

*******District population estimates: Based on ONS 2021 mid-year estimates. Caseload: Based on proportional estimates derived from Cambridgeshire County Council Adult Social Care Account, JSNA 2023 data and other public sources. Illustrative and estimated Annual Spend based on weighted averages (£m) reflecting historic caseload and cost-per-user averages rather than actual spend. Cambridgeshire average reflects build-up of spend by district, if 700 'unallocated' cases are included the County average falls to around £20,200 per adult.*



**Figures are indicative, based on demographic weighting and historic cost profiles, not actual service accounts. Peterborough approx. ~£400 per adult resident.*



**Approximate and illustrative baseline created by distributing total county-wide adult social care budget across districts based on demographic weighting (e.g., share of elderly population), including allowance for growth and inflation between the 2022 actual figures and the 2023/24 baseline.*

General Trends

- **Older Adults:** constitute roughly 60% of all social care recipients in both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, with numbers steadily increasing due to demographic aging.

- **Learning Disabilities and Mental Health Needs:** second-largest groups, steadily growing demand, particularly among working-age adults.

- **Physical Disabilities:** a notable recent reduction in numbers, likely due to administrative reclassification or aging into the "older adults" category rather than a real decrease in need.

- **Cost Pressures** driven by demographic changes particularly aging in rural districts, high inflation, wage pressures, and complexity of care needs, resulting in projected cost increases of approximately 25% in 5 years and 60% in 10 years.

Local Authority profiles

Huntingdonshire

- Largest adult population and the highest absolute number of adults receiving care (~2,000 adults, ~25% of the county caseload).
- Slightly above average spend per resident; average proportion of adults receiving care, and highest total care spend by district.
- Aging population likely to drive continued growth in care needs and costs over the next decade, projected to reach £95–£100M in 10 years.

South Cambridgeshire

- Around 1,600 adults receiving care (~20% of the total caseload).
- Below-average care needs and spend per adult resident, reflecting generally better health indicators and lower deprivation levels.
- Population growth driven largely by housing developments; care costs expected to rise significantly from £51.2M currently to around £82M in 10 years.

Fenland

- Highest care need per resident (16.7 per 1,000 adults), highest per-adult care spend ~£24,000 and highest annual cost per resident ~£400.
- Approximately 1,400 adults receive care (~18% of county caseload).
- Higher care needs driven by older demographic, rural isolation, and higher deprivation.

- Care costs could double over the next decade based on forecast trends reaching approximately £58–£60M.

Cambridge City

- Approximately 1,400 adults (~18% of total caseload).
- Complex urban care needs including mental health issues, homelessness, and younger adult populations with learning disabilities.
- Costs expected to rise moderately from £36M currently to around £55–£60M in 10 years, largely driven by inflation rather than demographic change.

East Cambridgeshire

- Lowest relative care needs (around 10 cases per 1,000 adults), with roughly 800 adults receiving care (about 10% of county caseload).
- Lowest adult care spend per resident (~£200 annually).
- Demographic pressure expected to increase with aging population, projected cost rising from £29M currently to around £46M in 10 years.

Peterborough

- Approximately 2,800–3,000 adults receiving care annually, has stabilised at around 2,900 in recent years.
- Slight dip during the COVID-19 pandemic but a stable recovery afterward.
- Population profile younger than Cambridgeshire districts, resulting in higher proportional care spend on working-age adults, especially those with learning disabilities and mental health issues.
- Demand for care services driven by higher relative deprivation levels.
- Costs and service-user numbers projected to remain stable or grow modestly, with a slight upward pressure from working-age adults with more complex, lifelong disabilities.

Conclusion

Significant financial pressures are driven by demographic growth and inflationary factors in service delivery. **Fenland, Huntingdonshire, and East Cambs** likely to face the greatest future cost pressures in relative terms, as they contend with a growing elderly population that will require more intensive support.

Cambridge City and **South Cambs** also likely to see rising costs, but a slightly larger portion of this increase would be driven by general inflation rather than client numbers. However, absolute number of older clients will grow as these areas will have higher than average population expansion.

Managing demand through an **e**xpansion of preventative and community-based care solutions will be necessary to cope with demographic trends across all areas, with special attention to working-age adults with disabilities and mental health needs in **Peterborough**, and older adults in **Fenland** and **Huntingdonshire**.

Key sources:

Cambridgeshire County Council & Cambridgeshire Insight (population forecasts and JSNA data; Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Insight – Mental Health Needs Assessment – Older adults – Wider context – Demographics; Office for National Statistics Census 2011 & 2021; NHS Digital Adult Social Care Activity & Finance reports (Adult Social Care Activity and Finance Report, England, 2023-24) (Social Care 360: Expenditure | The King's Fund); Local Government Association funding outlook; ADASS Budget Survey 2024 (NLW impact); Cambridgeshire Adult Social Care Local Account 2023 (Adult Social Care Local Account 2021 to 2023 | Cambridgeshire County Council); CCC Market Sustainability Plan; Cost of Care exercise | Cambridgeshire County Council

3. SEND

Summary of recent trends and financial pressures impacting Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Rising demand, key cost pressures, and strategic responses from both councils are outlined. The **national average for SEND** identification in England (DfE, 2023/24) was 18.4% made up of around 4.8% with EHCPs and 13.6% receiving SEN Support.

Cambridgeshire has increased local SEND capacity significantly via the **SEND Transformation Programme**, reducing reliance on out-of-area placements. Improvements in joint working and EHCP processes have addressed historic weaknesses, but variability in primary academic outcomes and rural access issues persist. Cambridgeshire's overall SEND prevalence is 17.8% of pupils; 5.6% with an EHCP and 12.2% receive SEN Support (DfE, SEN in England, 2023/24, as at Jan 2024).

Ofsted Full Area SEND inspection outcome *'Arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND'* (May 2025).

Peterborough similarly expanded special school capacity, with notable improvements in quality and post-16 transitions. Despite improvements, ongoing challenges include high special school occupancy, uneven rural access, and ensuring consistency in multi-agency EHCP processes. Peterborough has around 15.4% of pupils identified with SEND; 4.3% with an EHCP and 11.1% receive Sen Support (DfE, 2023/24).

Ofsted Joint Area SEND Revisit (2016 Framework) outcome 'Progress judged *sufficient in 4 of 5* previously identified weaknesses; *not sufficient* in preparing for adulthood' (March 2022).

SEND budgets

Authority	High-Needs Block 2024-25*	Change on 2023-24	Notes
Cambridgeshire County Council	**£89.7 million** (after place-funding deductions)	+ **£2.2 m** (+2.5 %)	Pupil-driven share of the national High-Needs formula plus an extra £3.9m "safety-valve" top-up for 2024-25. (Dedicated schools grant (DSG) 2024 to 2025 This allocation)
Peterborough City Council	**£42.2 million** (after deductions)	+ **£2.0 m** (+5.1 %)	Allocation rises faster than Cambridgeshire's because of higher EHCP growth (35 % in three years).

**The High-Needs Block is the part of the DSG that funds statutory SEND duties: special-school budgets, mainstream top-ups, independent placements, alternative provision and SEN Support services. Figures refer to DSG High Needs Block allocations after place-funding deductions, as defined by the DfE in March 2025.*

	Cambridgeshire	Peterborough
Per-pupil high-needs funding (2024-25)	~£3,350 per 0-24 resident	~£4,550 per 0-24 resident – among the highest in the East of England
In-year pressure	Forecast overspend **£11m** (mainly out-county places & EHCP top-ups); DSG deficit forecast to be **£49m** in 2026/2027.	Forecast overspend **£5.7m**; DSG deficit **£6.3m** despite 1% transfer from Schools Block Grant.
Recovery actions	500 new special-school places (2023-27), banding-review and inclusion funding panel.	Repurposing PRU capacity, expanding SEMH free-school places; bid for DfE "Delivering Better Value" wave-2 support.

Bottom line: for 2024-25 the two councils manage SEND budgets of **about £90m (Cambridgeshire)** and **£42 m (Peterborough)**, but both remain under significant pressure from rising EHCP volumes and independent-placement costs.

Local and national trends

Theme	Cambridgeshire & Peterborough	Why it matters nationally
Demand keeps climbing	• EHCPs up **66 % in Cambridgeshire (**4,222 to 7,009, 2018-2023); **Peterborough**'s EHCPs increased around 80% over a similar period. • Autism (ASD) and Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) dominate new plans; wave of post-16 learners with EHCPs coming through.	England's EHCP cohort rose **11 % in 2023 alone**; requests exceed 130,000 a year and continue to climb.
Local capacity at full stretch	• All special schools operating at or over capacity, particularly in **Fenland, Cambridge City** and **South Cambs,** which exacerbates higher cost independent & out-of-county placements up **14 % in Cambs Q1 2023-24**. Cambs spends nearly £12m	National sufficiency gap of c. 23,000 special-school places; DfE's £2.6 bn

Theme	Cambridgeshire & Peterborough	Why it matters nationally
	annually on Independent/Non-Maintained placements • £2.6 bn capital wave funding new schools (Prestley Wood 2024, new Fenland SEMH unit, further bids).	programme runs to 2026 but planning lags demand.
Finances under severe strain	• Cambs DSG deficit (~£51m, 2023/24) triggered a DfE Safety Valve agreement requiring balanced budgets by 2026/27, including milestones for local capacity and process efficiency. The highest spend categories are ASD and SEMH placements, followed by hearing impairments. Increasing transport and specialist therapy service costs due to inflation and provider fee hikes. • Peterborough still broadly balanced but flagged for Delivering Better Value support. Spending is somewhat lower, mainly due to geographically closer placements, yet the overall financial pressure remains significant.	High-needs spending nationally +51 % since 2019; around 77 LAs in formal deficit programmes. GOV.UK
Process and quality improving, but slow	• Ofsted/CQC 2022 revisit: Peterborough making "sufficient progress" in 4/5 weakness areas; Cambridgeshire's QA programme raising EHCP quality. • Timeliness ~50% within 20 weeks in both authorities remains a significant operational challenge. Investment in QA officers and digital EHCP systems is helping address this.	National timeliness in 2023 **50.3 %** (down from 60 % pre-pandemic). Explore our statistics and data
Parent dissatisfaction and pupil outcomes	• Local mediation and tribunal activity rising; informal feedback improving via Pinpoint & Family Voice. Strengths: Fewer exclusions, strong post-16 destinations. Weaknesses: Primary attainment gaps for SEN pupils, inconsistent EHCP quality.	National SEND tribunal appeals up **55 % in 2023/24**; open caseload up 57 %. GOV.UK
Workforce pinch-points	• Shortages of Ed Psychs, SALT, CAMHS; rural recruitment hardest (Fenland, East Cambs).	National vacancy rate for EPs >12 %; DfE bursary

Theme	Cambridgeshire & Peterborough	Why it matters nationally
		scheme covers only half projected need.

SEND: approximate EHCP breakdown by authority (2023)

	Under-18 Population	Estimated EHCP Pupils	EHCP Prevalence (%)
Cambridge City	**~21,500**	**~1,190**	**5.5%**
South Cambridgeshire	**~38,800**	**~1,610**	**4.2%**
Huntingdonshire	**~40,200**	**~1,750**	**4.4%**
Fenland	**~24,400**	**~1,470**	**6.0%**
East Cambridgeshire	**~18,600**	**~980**	**5.3%**
Cambridgeshire Total	**~143,500**	**~7,000**	**4.9%**

Source: Derived from overall 2023 EHCP counts (~7,000 Cambridgeshire pupils), SEND Sufficiency Statement 2023 projections, and recent place-planning data

- **Fenland** has the highest EHCP prevalence at around 6.0%, with a more significant concentration of SEND needs (20% of county EHCPs), particularly in areas like SEMH and MLD needs. Meadowgate Academy (special school) operating at or over capacity. Poorer educational outcomes historically; workforce recruitment for SEND roles remains difficult. Strong case for further specialist SEMH expansion.

- **Cambridge City**: prevalence of around 5.5% reflects urban challenges, including higher identification rates and possibly better access to diagnostic services (17% of EHCPs). Strong growth driven by urban housing expansion (e.g. Trumpington, Cambridge fringe). High proportion of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) needs, reflecting national trend and proximity to autism-specialist provision (e.g. The Cavendish School). Also rising SEMH needs among secondary-age pupils. Inclusion pressure on mainstream schools growing.

- **East Cambridgeshire:** at 5.3% (15% EHCPs), a rural context that shows a notable prevalence. Steady growth, especially around Ely and Soham. Needs profile more mixed: ASD, hearing impairment, and MLD common. Limited local specialist places mean some reliance on out-of-area placements. Highfield Academy (Littleport) provides crucial area-special-school capacity.

- **Huntingdonshire** prevalence rate of 4.4% is below county average and accounts for around 25% of total EHCPs in Cambridgeshire but slower recent growth. Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and ASD dominate. Prestley Wood new special school opening in Alconbury Weald (2024) aimed at absorbing growing complex-need cohort. Rurality creates transport challenges for specialist provision access.

- **South Cambridgeshire**: prevalence rate of 4.2% is lowest district average, and accounts for 23% of total county EHCPs. Rapid growth linked to new towns like Northstowe and Cambourne. Autism and moderate learning difficulties (MLD) are most prevalent. Expansion of Martin Bacon Academy and resource bases has eased pressure, but new communities outpacing service expansion. Post-16 SEND demand increasing sharply.

Cambridgeshire SEND Pupils:

As of early 2023, there were approximately **1,662 pupils** in Cambridgeshire's special schools, with **1,449** residing in Cambridgeshire.

District	Notable Special Provision & Details	Key Needs
Cambridge City	Castle School (multiple complex needs)	Autism, complex disabilities
South Cambridgeshire	Cavendish School (Autism-specific), Martin Bacon Academy (Northstowe)	Autism, SEMH (social, emotional, mental health)
East Cambridgeshire	Highfield Littleport Academy expansion	Autism, SEMH, moderate learning difficulties
Fenland	Meadowgate Academy, proposed new SEMH unit for girls	SEMH, moderate learning disabilities
Huntingdonshire	Prestley Wood School (opening 2024 in Alconbury Weald)	SEMH, autism, complex learning needs

Peterborough SEND Pupils:

Peterborough hosts four special schools, all operating at or above capacity, indicating high demand and ongoing pressures on specialist placements.

Authority	Special Schools and Provisions	Key Needs
Peterborough	Heltwate School, Marshfields School, Lime Academy Orton	Complex needs, Autism, SEMH

Key policy issues

1. **Demand curve still upward – but not uniform:** Greatest growth will be in Greater Cambridge & new settlements due to forecast population growth; Fenland already has the highest per-capita need. Build dynamic forecasting models and align Section 106/CIL negotiations to future SEND places, as well as mainstream rolls. Planning must anticipate the Northstowe, Waterbeach, and fringe-area needs surge. Primary needs trends:
    - **ASD** is the single most rapidly rising need across all districts.
    - **SEMH** is particularly acute in Fenland and Cambridge secondary schools (post-COVID impact visible).
    - **Hearing impairments** remain relatively high in East Cambridgeshire, hinting at gaps in local specialist resource bases.

2. **Rural vs urban challenges:** Fenland and parts of Huntingdonshire face geographical access issues (distance to special schools, transport strains). Urban areas (Cambridge and fringe in South Cambs) face school place sufficiency and pressure on mainstream inclusivity.

3. **Sufficiency strategy priorities:** New special-school places required urgently in Cambridge and Fenland. More resource bases in mainstream settings across South Cambs and Huntingdonshire to prevent escalation to specialist settings. Targeted workforce investment (particularly therapists, SEND teachers, educational psychologists) essential to sustain early intervention outside EHCP pathways.

4. **Safety-Valve:** Delivery milestones (local place expansion, independent placement review, rigorous EHCP gatekeeping) should be hard-wired into MTFS and capital programme. Significant general fund risk in 2027/28 though this could be mitigated to some extent if government decides a national solution is required to address SEND funding challenges. Fairer national SEND funding is critical for both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Cambridgeshire has historically ranked toward the lower end nationally (145th of 151 councils, per-pupil SEND funding).

5. **Mainstream inclusion is the only affordable long-term solution:** Strategic emphasis on local school expansions (e.g., new and expanded special schools) and early intervention programmes to mitigate long-term high-cost placements. Expand and incentivise Enhanced Resource Bases (specialist base on school sites), protect early-years Inclusion Funds, and embed evidence-based literacy & behaviour interventions. Early help is cheaper than tribunals and £60k/yr placements.

6. **Workforce is now the key limiting factor:** Work with the ICS, universities and Teaching School Hubs on "grow-your-own" psychology, therapy and SENCO pipelines; consider locality pay or travel supplements for rural districts.

7. **National reforms are coming:** The 2023 SEND & AP Improvement Plan pilots (standardised EHCP templates, national banding/price tariffs, mandatory mediation) will shape statutory duties from 2026. Position the County and Peterborough as a pilot areas or early adopters that could take influence design and secure early implementation funding anticipated from the SEND White Paper.

Key Actions during 2025	**Deadline**
Confirm capital timelines (Prestley Wood, Fenland SEMH, ERB wave) against revised pupil-place forecasts.	July 2025
Publish joint SEND workforce strategy with ICS to address therapy and EP gaps.	Oct 2025
Safety-Valve Q1 assurance report to Corporate Leadership Team – highlight savings v. trajectory and any slippage.	June 2025
DBV diagnostic findings to Peterborough Cabinet; agree invest-to-save proposals.	Sept 2025

Conclusion

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough have made real progress on governance, quality and place planning, but rising complexity, staff shortages and an unsustainable national funding model keep SEND high on the corporate-risk register. A shift to early intervention, mainstream inclusion and joint commissioning backed by relentless grip on Safety-Valve delivery will determine whether the system is fiscally sustainable by the end of the decade.

Sources

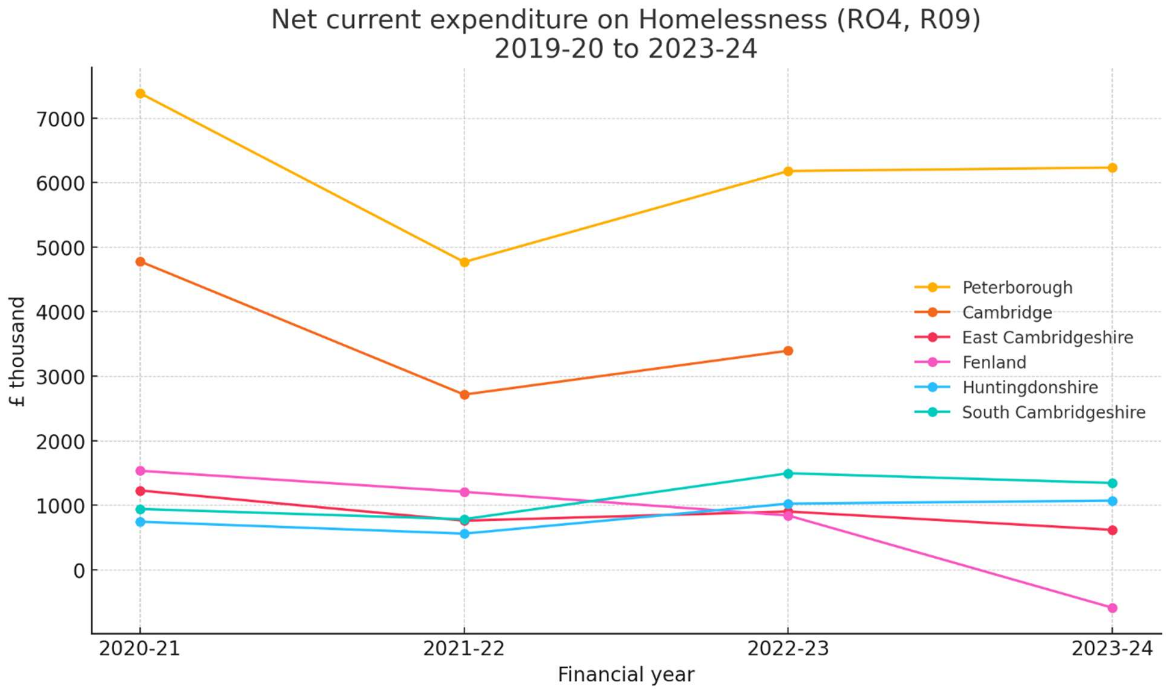
Cambridgeshire County Council – *SEND Sufficiency Statement 2022–2026 (March 2023)*. Peterborough City Council – *SEND Sufficiency Strategy* (2022). Ofsted/CQC Joint Local Area SEND Inspection reports: Cambridgeshire (2017); Peterborough (2019) and Revisit (2022).

Peterborough Information Network – Local Offer and SEND inspection news. *Peterborough Telegraph* – statement by Service Director for Education on rising SEND demand and funding (June 2021). Public Accounts Committee Report on SEND (2023). Cambridgeshire “Our Plans and Actions – SEND Strategy”. Cambridgeshire & Peterborough All-Age Autism Strategy 2021–2026 (via Local Offer). Data references from DfE SEN2 statistics as cited in local documents (EHCP percentages and growth).

4. Homelessness

Rising costs driven primarily from extensive use of temporary/emergency accommodation, particularly B&Bs, and private sector leasing schemes due to insufficient social housing and move on accommodation. Cost of living and rent increases are pushing more households into crisis. LHA rates fall short of market rents. Refugee resettlement pressures and sponsorships ending may lead to new homelessness risks.

In response, councils are increasingly engaged with the private rental market through incentives and leasing schemes to reduce long-term dependency on temporary solutions and achieve sustainable financial management. Shifts to "housing-led" models such as rapid rehousing as well as Housing First initiatives in **Peterborough, Fenland** and **Cambridge**, have helped to manage chronic rough sleeping and reduce emergency housing costs, but additional supported accommodation is required for the highest needs individuals in urban areas.



*Source: MHCLG Revenue Outturn – Net current expenditure, line H09 'Homelessness', which captures all revenue spend on assessment, prevention / relief work, temporary accommodation, Housing First projects, rough-sleeping services, etc., **net** of specific grants and client income. Some capital and other revenue spend related to homelessness from other council budgets will not be pick up in these official statistics.*

- **Peterborough and Cambridge together account for two-thirds of all homelessness spend**, reflecting urban pressures, high temporary-accommodation use and duty to assist a large flow of single people and families.

- **South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire** budgets have risen in recent years as the cost of nightly-paid temporary accommodation has increased and the number of prevention/relief cases grows.

- **Fenland and East Cambs** spend much less in cash terms but even a small rise in TA placements can have a significant impact on baseline budgets.

- **Total homelessness spend ~£18.8m** (2023-24) suggests opportunity for a regional approach to modular housing and Housing First expansions to reduce costly emergency placements.

Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) does **not** hold a core revenue budget line for homelessness (H09). CCC does contribute around **£3.95m** to homelessness and housing related support from adult-social-care, public-health, children-services budgets and the Household Support Fund.

County-funded service	2024-25 allocation	Purpose
Counting Every Adult (complex-needs rough-sleeping partnership)	£0.33 m (Public Health)	Intensive wrap-around support for people with multiple disadvantage across the county. ([PDF] Homelessness Prevention Grants proposed awards Agenda ...)
'Streets to Home' pooled budget with Cambridge City Council	£0.12 m (Adults & Communities)	Commissioned service that moves rough sleepers directly into accommodation. (Decisions for issue Approval of the 'Streets to Home service' budget)
Household Support Fund – housing strands	£1.1m of £10m HSF allocation	Rent-arrears and energy-arrears grants for households at risk of eviction. ([Household Support Fund
Young-people's supported-housing framework	£2.4m (Children's Services)	200+ units for 16-25-year-olds who would otherwise present as homeless.

Future demand pressures

Homelessness is anticipated to rise moderately across **Cambridgeshire**, particularly driven by economic factors, demographic shifts, and housing market pressures. **Peterborough's** demand may escalate due to existing high levels, welfare reforms, and housing market pressures; temporary accommodation numbers could potentially rise above 400 households if trends continue unchecked.

Worsening affordability pressures drive future homelessness growth in Cambridge, unless significant additional affordable and social housing can be delivered.

	Local trends	Why it matters / national mirror
1. Rising demand everywhere except Cambridge City – but real challenges in Peterborough.	• All districts except Cambridge recorded a **5-20 % rise** in applications over the last five years. • **Peterborough's statutory homelessness rate is more than 2×** any Cambs district; 378 households in TA, 23 % in B&B. • Family homelessness growing fastest in Fenland (+20% since Covid) and South Cambs (TA families more than doubled since 2019).	England logged **126,040 households in TA on 30 Sept 2024 – up 15.7 % year-on-year and the highest since records began.** GOV.UK
2. Rough sleeping has stabilised or fallen in most	• 2023 street-count: Cambridge 23 (up from 14 in 2021); Peterborough stable at 24 (Nov 2023); Fenland cut from 23 (2018) to 10 (2023). • Core cohorts are people with complex or no-	National snapshot shows **4,667 people sleeping rough in Autumn 2024, +20**

	Local trends	Why it matters / national mirror
districts – except Cambridge City.	recourse needs; Housing First pilots in Fenland sustaining tenancies for entrenched sleepers.	**% on 2023 and the third annual rise**. GOV.UK
3. Temporary-accommodation use and cost is accelerating.	• Cambridge placed **115 families in B&B in 2022/23** (all moved on inside 6 weeks but at substantial cost), and 77 in 2023/24. • Peterborough has **~90 households in B&B on a typical night** despite adding 140 leased/council units (saving £0.9m p.a.). • Fenland & Hunts now rely on spot B&B because local hostels are full; East Cambs' small hostel often used by neighbours trying to avoid hotels.	National TA bill hit **£1.8 bn in 2023-24** and LGA warns of a **£76 m funding gap** this year as nightly B&B costs surge. Local Government
4. Prevention success rates are respectable but late presentations are rising.	• Cambridge prevents/relieves **~58 % / 38 %** of cases; South Cambs prevention at 43 %, relief 57 % as more people arrive already homeless. • East Cambs' court officer prevented eviction in **76 %** of threatened cases.	National HRA data show prevention success **falling from 56 % (2018) to 46 % (2023)** as affordability tightens.
5. Market rents and frozen LHA are pushing families into crisis faster.	• A two-earner household on median pay cannot cover a Cambridge 2-bed rent within the LHA cap; councils using discretionary funds or incentive payments to close the gap.	Only **1 in 20 new lets in England are now affordable under LHA rates** – a structural risk to all prevention work. IFS
6. Service model is shifting from 'manage' to 'housing-led' – but capital lag is real.	• More councils adopting Housing First / modular-home pilots and expanding private leasing. • Regional collaboration (e.g. Cambridge & South Cambs shared pathway; Cambs Homelessness Operational Group is beginning to pool scarce specialist staff.)	DLUHC continues Rough Sleeper Initiative & RSAP to 2025, but capital approvals can take > 18 months – leaving councils exposed to B&B overspends in the interim.

Peterborough

- High rate of statutory homelessness. Temporary accommodation (TA) usage increased by 16% to 378 households, 23% or around 88 households placed in emergency B&Bs. TA duration rates around 156 days (March 2023) are shorter than the national average.

- Family homelessness is predominant, with more than 50% of homeless applicants having dependent children. Around 2,800 applications on social housing register.
- Peterborough has pioneered innovative rough sleeping interventions, such as the "Off-the-Streets" project (22-bed facility), and Housing First effectively stabilizing rough sleeping counts despite rising national trends.
- Although rough sleeping has stabilised at 24 (2023) and recently fallen to 16 (2024), it remains high compared to the East of England region. Many of these individuals have complex needs, and the city has seen a continual influx of new rough sleepers even as others are housed.

Cambridge City

- Around 880 homelessness applications received in 2022/2023. Family homelessness and complexity is increasing but B&B placements stabilising (115 households in 2022/23 and 77 in 2023/24). Around 3,000 applicants on the social housing register and in 2,250 requests for housing advice per annum.
- Rough sleeping increased from 14 individuals (2021) to 24 (2023), driven by entrenched individuals as well as the influx of new individuals drawn to city where services are available. The 2024 count was 26. Local VCSEs believe numbers to be higher than the annual snapshot. Women's rough sleeping is a growing concern.
- Homelessness will worsen with increasing housing affordability pressures. Cambridge has prevented homelessness in 58% of cases and relieving 38% of cases already homeless. However, visible homelessness remains a challenge despite active outreach.
- 'Housing First' and modular housing units for former rough sleepers; 'The Haven' supports homeless and vulnerable women; Crossways provides over 20 emergency accommodation; Cambridge Street Aid grants; a social lettings agency; and drug and alcohol outreach.

Fenland

- Family homelessness has increased notably (up ~20% post-pandemic), primarily due to eviction from informal arrangements ('sofa surfing') or hidden homelessness. There has been a 13% increase in homelessness approaches since 2018.
- Fenland successfully used Housing First and outreach strategies to significantly reduce rough sleeper numbers and address challenges related to migrant populations with restricted eligibility, which decreased significantly from 23 in 2018 to 7 in 2024.
- There is a high B&B use due to shortage of move-on housing. There is also a heavy reliance on local charity Ferry Project and Rough Sleeper Initiative funded outreach.

South Cambridgeshire

- Homelessness is moderate (~185–190 cases annually), but with growing complexity and a shift towards more relief cases - already homeless rather than prevention. Most homeless occurs due to private tenancy loss or domestic issues. Prevention services are now increasingly dealing with clients already homeless.

- Family homelessness has doubled in recent years, reaching 74 households in temporary accommodation by March 2023, though the council successfully avoids prolonged B&B placements with no B&Bs over 6 weeks.

- Cases of rough sleeping are very low, consistently less than 5 or fewer.

East Cambridgeshire

- East Cambridgeshire currently has the lowest homelessness caseload for any local authority in the country, with 100 or fewer applications annually. It maintains relatively low homelessness demand, primarily hidden or temporary housing issues, rarely using emergency B&Bs due to efficient use of limited hostel resources.

- East Cambridgeshire focuses on strong prevention, with a 76% success rate in threatened evictions. It also focuses on early intervention, small-scale TA, and community outreach.

- Concerns persist around future housing market changes, which could quickly escalate local homelessness. Rural hidden homelessness may mask trends.

- Cases of rough sleeping are very low, consistently less than 5 or fewer.

Huntingdonshire

- Homelessness is dispersed and less visible (hidden rural homelessness) but still increasing. Both urban issues (e.g. single homelessness in towns) and rural challenges (e.g. overcrowding and hidden homelessness) contribute to demand.

- Most cases involve families losing private rented housing especially due to no-fault evictions and individuals being asked to leave family homes.

- There is no central shelter but there is a dispersed use of temporary flats and B&Bs. Emphasis placed on prevention and coordination with police, voluntary groups, and neighbouring councils.

- Cases of rough sleeping tend to be less than 10 or fewer; 9 (2024)

Policy implications

1. **Temporary accommodation is the burning platform.**
    - Expand PRS-leasing and modular schemes; every B&B room displaced saves ~£400–£500 per household per week.
    - Use sub-regional procurement to share risk and drive price ceilings.

2. **Family homelessness is the fastest-growing cohort.**
    - Prioritise Section 106 negotiations for genuinely affordable three-bed units; monitor Ukrainian & Afghan resettlement exits which are increasing family approaches.

3. **Rough-sleeping target will not be met without scaling Housing First and housing options for those that have multiple complex needs.**
    - Existing 30-unit pilots show >80 % sustainment; evidence that expanding provision could lead to long term reduction; additional supported accommodation with wrap around required.

4. **LHA rates do not reflect market conditions in some areas**
    - Without an uplift in LHA, particularly in Cambridge/South Cambs, the prevention maths fails; evidence shows rental gap is the root driver behind rising B&B use.

5. **Data & workforce are shared assets.**
    - Consider a sub-regional homelessness analytics dashboard and explore joint recruitment/retention incentives for Housing Options staff and outreach workers.

6. **An increase in multiple complex needs individuals**
    - Sustaining Changing Futures and increase in supported accommodation capacity is necessary to cope with rising numbers of individuals presenting as homeless with multiple and complex needs which is putting growing pressure on budgets.

Conclusion

Demand is up, costs are rising, and statutory duties are tightening. Councils are innovating, such as Housing First, private-leasing portfolios, Ukraine LAHF purchases, but **the affordability crisis is outpacing capacity gains**. Homelessness pressures will continue to erode general-fund resilience across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough without an increase in social and affordable housing, and reforms to reduce reliance on nightly paid accommodation.

Sources

Cambridgeshire Community Foundation – *Vital Signs 2021: Housing and Homelessness Indicators*; Homelessness and rough sleeping key facts (March 2023) - Cambridge City Council; Fenland District Council - Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-29; South Cambridgeshire DC – *Homelessness Review 2023* (Homelessness Review 2023); East Cambridgeshire DC – Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2025 - 2030; Peterborough CC – *Homelessness Support – Cabinet Report (2023);* Peterborough CC – *Homelessness Support Report (Rough Sleeping & TA);* Peterborough CC – *Housing Needs Data (Housing Register);* Cambridge Ahead – *Housing Dashboard Jan 2023 (Greater Cambridge)*.

Glossary of Terms

- **ADCS:** Association of Directors of Children's Services.
- **AI:** Artificial Intelligence; computer systems able to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence.
- **ASC:** Adult Social Care; services provided to adults with physical disabilities, learning disabilities, mental health issues, or other care needs.
- **ASD:** Autism Spectrum Disorder; a developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication and behavioural challenges.
- **B&B:** Bed and Breakfast; often used in the context of emergency or temporary accommodation for homeless individuals or families.
- **C&P:** Cambridgeshire and Peterborough; refers to the geographical and administrative areas covered in the report.
- **CAMHS:** Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.
- **CCC:** Cambridgeshire County Council.
- **CFO:** Chief Financial Officer; the senior manager responsible for overseeing the financial activities of an organization.
- **CiC:** Children in Care; children looked after by the local authority.
- **CIL:** Community Infrastructure Levy; a charge which local authorities can set on new development in their area to help fund infrastructure.
- **CIN:** Children in Need; children who may require local authority services to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development.
- **CIPFA:** Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy; the professional body for people in public finance.
- **CLA:** Children Looked After; an alternative term for Children in Care.
- **CPP:** Child Protection Plan; a plan put in place when a child is assessed as being at risk of significant harm.
- **CQC:** Care Quality Commission; the independent regulator of health and social care in England.
- **DBV:** Delivering Better Value in SEND; a DfE programme to support local authorities to improve SEND services.
- **DfE:** Department for Education; the UK government department responsible for child protection, education, apprenticeships and wider skills in England.
- **DSG:** Dedicated Schools Grant; ring-fenced funding provided by central government to local authorities for education services.

- **Early Help:** Providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from pre-birth through to teenage years.
- **EHCP:** Education, Health and Care Plan; a legal document that describes a child or young person's special educational, health and social care needs and the support they require.
- **EP:** Educational Psychologist.
- **ERB:** Enhanced Resource Base; specialist provision within a mainstream school for pupils with significant special educational needs.
- **Family Safeguarding Model:** An approach to child protection that involves multi-disciplinary teams working with families to tackle the parental challenges that place children at risk.
- **HNB:** High-Needs Block; part of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) used to fund provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.
- **HRA:** Housing Revenue Account; a local authority account that records income and expenditure relating to its own housing stock.
- **HSF:** Household Support Fund; funding provided to local authorities to support vulnerable households with essentials.
- **ICS:** Integrated Care System; partnerships of organisations that come together to plan and deliver joined up health and care services.
- **IFA:** Independent Fostering Agency.
- **JSNA:** Joint Strategic Needs Assessment; an assessment of the current and future health and social care needs of the local population.
- **LA:** Local Authority; a council responsible for providing public services in a specific area.
- **LAC:** Looked After Children; an alternative term for Children in Care.
- **LD:** Learning Disabilities.
- **LGA:** Local Government Association; a politically-led, cross-party organisation that works on behalf of councils to ensure local government has a strong, credible voice with national government.
- **LGR:** Local Government Reorganisation; structural changes to local government areas or their functions.
- **LHA:** Local Housing Allowance; used to calculate housing benefit for tenants renting from private landlords.
- **MHCLG:** Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (now Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities - DLUHC).
- **MLD:** Moderate Learning Difficulties.

- **MTFS:** Medium Term Financial Strategy; a council's financial plan for the upcoming 3-5 years.
- **NLW:** National Living Wage.
- **Non-Paper:** A discussion paper, often used in international organisations, that is not part of formal business, intended to aid overview and discussion.
- **NRE:** Net Revenue Expenditure; a council's spending on services, less any specific grants, fees, and charges.
- **Ofsted:** Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills; the body that inspects services providing education and skills for learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.
- **ONS:** Office for National Statistics; the UK's largest independent producer of official statistics.
- **PRS:** Private Rented Sector.
- **PRU:** Pupil Referral Unit; a type of school that provides education for children who are not able to attend a mainstream school.
- **RO:** Revenue Outturn; data on local authority revenue expenditure and financing.
- **Safety-Valve Agreement:** An agreement between the DfE and a local authority to manage and reduce a high DSG deficit, particularly related to SEND.
- **SEN:** Special Educational Needs.
- **SEND:** Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.
- **SEMH:** Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs.
- **SLCN:** Speech, Language and Communication Needs.
- **TA:** Temporary Accommodation for homeless households.
- **UASC:** Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children; children who are applying for asylum in their own right and are separated from both parents and are not being cared for by an adult who in law or by custom has responsibility to do so.
- **VCSE:** Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise sector.