



Our Children's Sufficiency Strategy 2021 – 2023

Understanding the needs of our children and ensuring we have sufficient local accommodation and support in Trafford.



1. Introduction



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The Trafford sufficiency strategy 2021-2023 sets out the Council's approach to meeting its responsibilities to provide secure, safe, and appropriate accommodation for children and young people who need our care.

Our children and young people tell us...

- Don't move us unless you have to
- Notice us and what our behaviour means
- Help us when we go missing
- Keep brothers and sisters together if you can.

Children and young people reflected:

- They just want to be listened to and heard
- To be known by their workers as people, not as a case file
- To be engaged with in honest conversations and not judged by a worker's opinion but by fact
- They just want to know the rules with regards to seeing their family and if they are not able to see family again, to know and understand why not.



Our children and young people want to understand why decisions are taken, even if these decisions are not within their influence or control.

2. Our Children and their Needs



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- At the end of January 2021 there were 407 looked after children in Trafford which is equal to a rate of 72.0 Children Looked After per 10,000 which is a rise from the previous year of 67.4
- Comparatively the rate for Trafford is still higher than our statistical neighbours (57.4) and the rate for England (65)
- There are more male children (51%) than female (49%) in our care however when looking at new entries into care the trend has changed to more females than males entering care, but this is balanced out to some degree with a higher number of females ceasing to be looked after aged 16+ years
- 20.51% of our children have an EHCP as at end of September 2020
- 2.03% of our children with autistic spectrum disorder and severe learning disabilities are in care as parents are no longer able to meet their complex care needs
- 0.76% of our children have learning disabilities and complex safeguarding concerns.

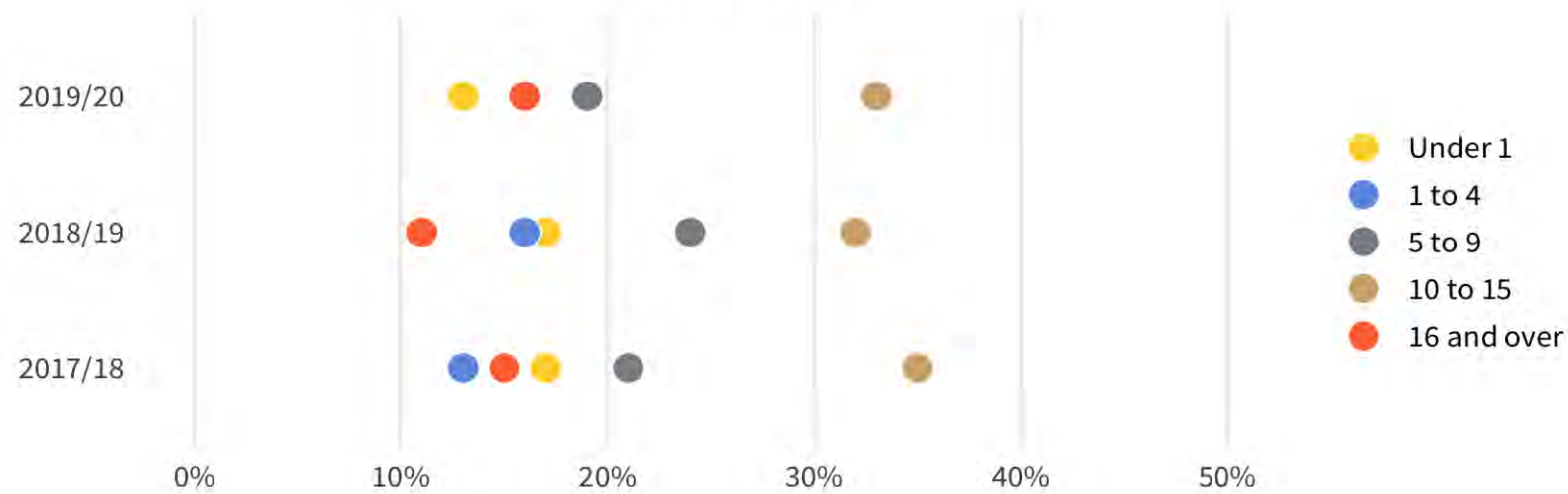


2. Our Children and their Needs cont.

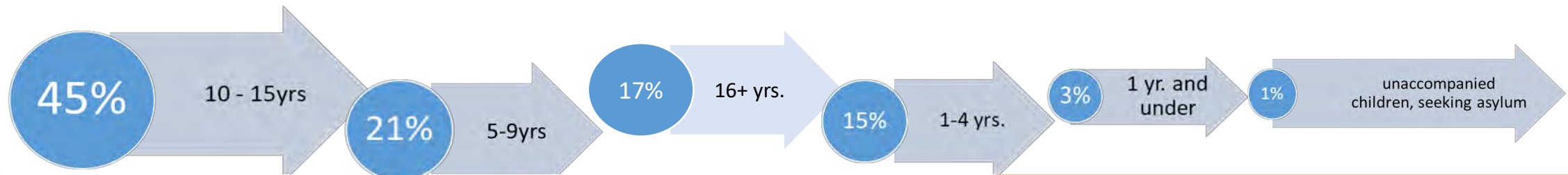


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Age of children becoming looked after
Trafford, as of 31 March

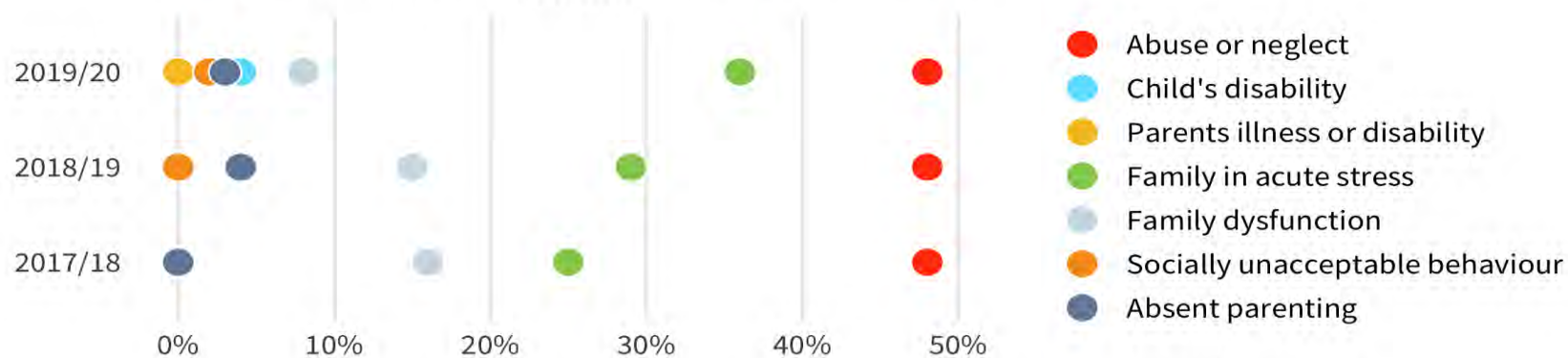



- Comparing the all age 2011 census data and the census data for 0-24 year olds the overall proportion of BAME in care (22.7%) is approximately just over 1% higher than the 0-24 year olds (21.1%)




2. Our children and their needs, cont.

Category of Need of children looked after
Trafford



There has been an 8.5% increase in the number of children leaving care, with a total of 178 care experienced young people in 2019/20  12% of those continuing to live with their foster families and 25% living independently.

48% of all children coming into care have Abuse or Neglect as their category of need with 'family in acute stress' and 'family dysfunction' the next most common reasons

69% of our children had been in the same placement for at least 2 years and the number of our children with three or more placement moves in 12 months has decreased to 3%. 

It is expected that the proportional percentages of children and young people, across the age bands, will remain similar to the current position over the next two years, given the relative stability of placements and average length of time in placement.

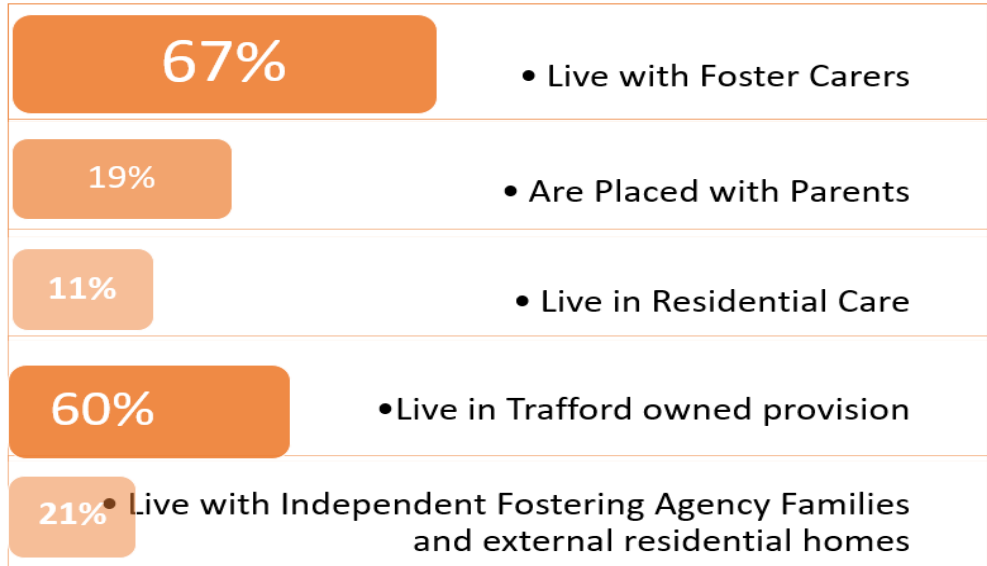
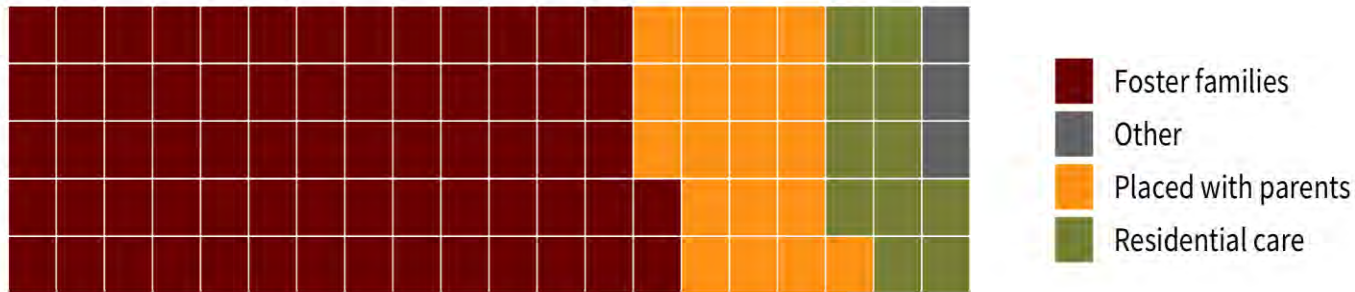
3. The types of homes we purchase to support our children



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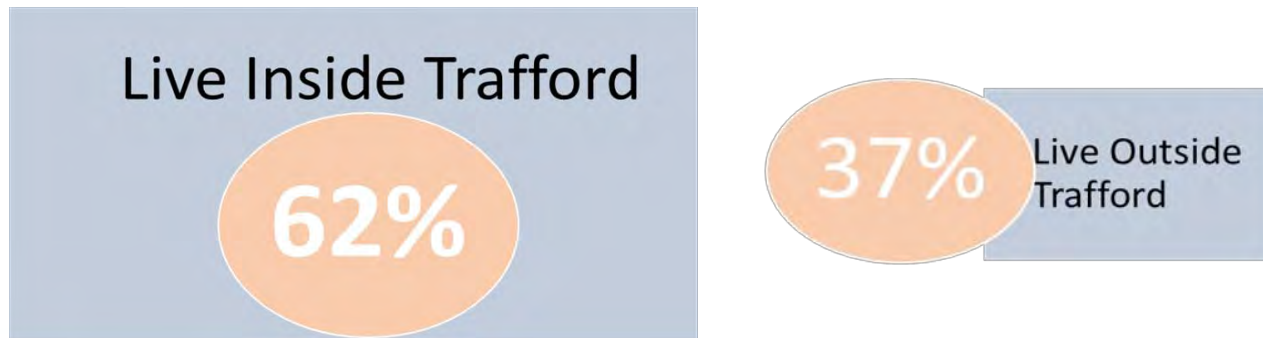
Percentage of homes purchased to support children

Trafford, 2019/20



3. The types of homes we purchase to support our children

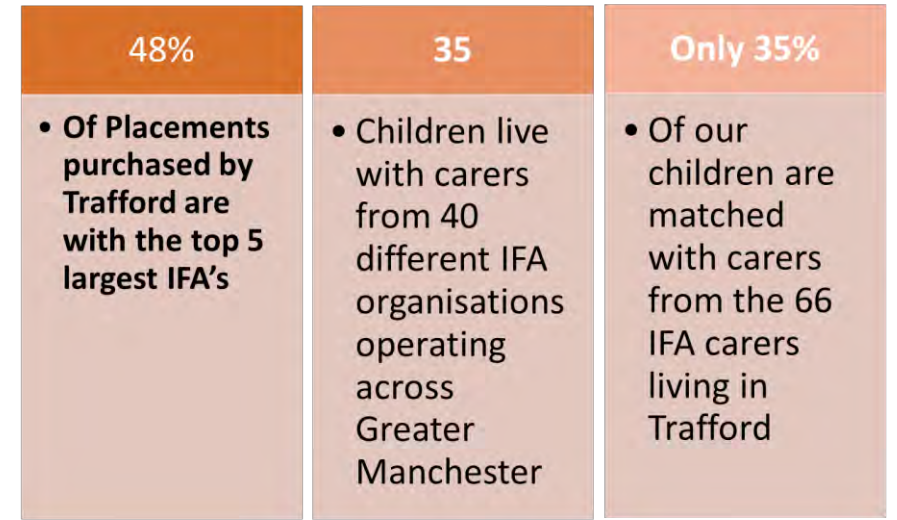
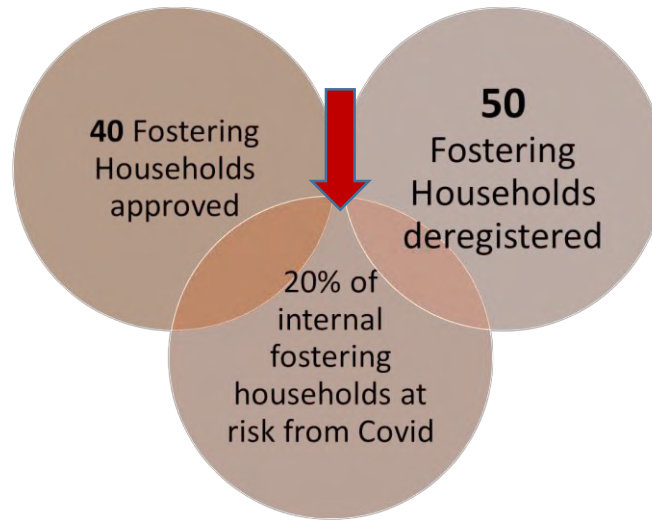
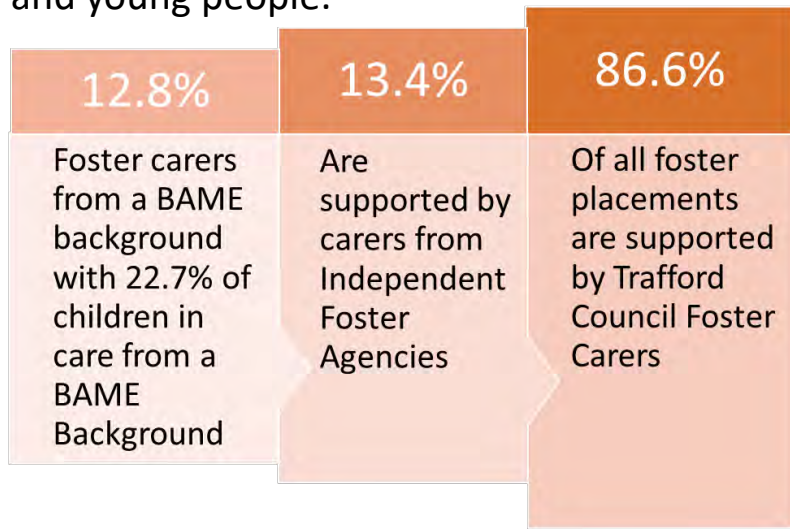
- We believe all of our children and young people should be able to live in family-based care
- We would like to see a reduction in our use of residential provision
- It is our ambition to manage internal provision and work with external partners who are within 20 miles to bring those 7% of children and young people who are placed beyond 20 miles, closer to home
- There is a real challenge with regards to placements for young people aged between 16-18 where first choice placements are not always available or are unable to meet need.





The types of homes we purchase to support our children cont.

There has been a 15% decrease in the use of external placements however placement costs have increased which suggest our children in external placements have a higher level of need. Fostering is our preferred option and most utilised placement type for our children and young people.



- Our ambition is for our children and young people to live within 20 miles of the Trafford boundary
- The priority will be given to plans for those children and young people outside of the North West to return closer to home
- Strengthen our relationship with local providers whilst developing increased support for Foster Carers to ensure the provision we utilise is high quality and meets need.

4. Sufficiency Summary

Whilst Trafford has some very different needs and provisions we ultimately share the three key sufficiency remedies outlined in the Greater Manchester Sufficiency Statement;

Increase supply of services within Trafford to meet the needs of our children

Reduce demand for external placements through the internal offer and models of support

Improve access to existing supply within Greater Manchester, securing local provision, for local children.

- The relative stability of placements and average length of time in placement, would suggest that the current mix of type of accommodation in Trafford is sufficient to meet demand going forward, but only if we can reverse the decline in available foster carers
- One key aspect to consider is that of the cultural and gender needs of our children and young people. It will be crucial that recruitment of carers considers cultural aspects as well as caring aspects if those from BAME and Asylum Seeking populations are to be cared for within their specific cultural environments, recognising that for some this will be dual cultural heritage
- We also need to support providers to better understand the role of autistic spectrum disorders, how they can act as multiplier for early trauma and what kind of support is required for our children and young people in this cohort
- We want more of **our** children and young people to be able to remain living in Trafford, close to their friends and family networks, education, training, employment and other key services, with a further reduction in the use of residential places
- We recognise the unique position of Trafford in that we have few external providers within the borough. We will now be implementing provider forums to enable providers across all markets to come together and work with us as partners. These forums will allow us to regularly communicate the needs of our children and young people.

4. Sufficiency Summary, cont.

Externally we aim to:

Adhere to the GM Placement Provider Standards which all 10 GM LAS committed to, a pledge to providers caring and supporting our children and young people this includes timely payments, regular contact and a swift approval process for placements when they are open/ed for a Trafford child.

Improve the monitoring and quality assurance of external placements and work with providers to find effective ways of measuring impact and focussing on step down plans

Work in partnership with housing providers to create more move on options.

Better understand the demand for services for children and young people with complex health and disability needs; including our short breaks; home from home carers and help and edge of care provision.

Better understand instability and placement breakdown and use this information to inform commissioning and support placements at risk of breaking down.

We know that improving sufficiency is an ongoing journey that sits with both Trafford Council and a range of partners including health and education colleagues and the external market. Analysis completed by Greater Manchester Combined Authority states with regards to Trafford the following:

- Improve stability and longevity of placements
- Reduce placement disruptions
- Reduce the numbers of cyp escalating to residential after an IFA breakdown- particularly in a crisis / emergency
- Increase numbers and % of Trafford cyp placed in Trafford.
- Reduce the lead time when sourcing placements – queue jump.
- Consolidate volume to focus contract management / quality assurance across key partners.

- Increase numbers and % of Trafford cyp placed with IFAs in Trafford.
- Increase numbers of cyp avoiding unnecessary escalation to residential care by capturing supply
- There is a critical under-supply of residential care in Trafford. Simply put, there are not enough services locally to meet the needs of your children and young people.
- Increasing Trafford based services, and ring-fencing access for Trafford cyp will improve sufficiency

5. Sufficiency Strategy Action Plan

General Actions:

- 1. Ensure our children's voice is at the centre of placements**
 - ✓ Connect our children and young people to the provider forums
- 2. Ensure we embed innovation in new models of care in Trafford and do this in partnership with commissioning**
 - ✓ Embed our NWD approach at Kindle Lodge
- 3. Examine the demographics with regards to ethnicity to help understand the cultural needs of children and young people and ensure these needs are assessed and clear in placement referrals**
 - ✓ Ensure the cultural needs of children are assessed and clear in placement referrals
- 4. We want to bring those children who are placed beyond 20 miles, where there were no other options, back closer to home and reduce the number of emergency placements**
 - ✓ Further strengthen our relationship with the emergency duty team to ensure they have the right information to make the right placement, when this occurs out of hours
- 5. Social care spot purchasing is ad hoc and not monitored and evaluated in the same way as other contracted services. There is no menu of additional services to draw upon when a bespoke response is required to prevent placement breakdown or a significant escalation of need**
 - ✓ Review our spot purchasing in social care and explore the potential for a commissioning framework which would support the intensive wrap around approach.

5. Sufficiency Strategy Action Plan cont.

Fostering Actions:

1. **We need to increase the numbers of in house foster carers who are the right match for our children**
 - ✓ Return internal fostering to growth, increasing the number of local, skilled foster carers
2. **For our in-house carers we want to improve the quality, content and timeliness at each stage**
 - ✓ Enhancing data collection relating to the each stage of the start to end journey to determine conversion rates
3. **We need to understand the support our carers and providers need around Covid19**
 - ✓ Continue to monitor information via the PNW reporting template and our regular day to day discussions with providers
4. **We need to understand what is required for our children with health needs to be fostered**
 - ✓ Develop our approach to assessing and supporting health needs through working with both health service partners and fostering agencies
5. **We need to ensure physical limitations of foster care households is not a barrier to making the right placement**
 - ✓ Collaborate with Greater Manchester Commissioners to explore developing the capital funds programme to support foster carers.

5. Sufficiency Strategy Action Plan cont.

Residential / SAIL Actions:

- 1. We need stronger oversight of how our block contracting of supported and semi-independent provides a sufficient range of accommodation and support models**
 - ✓ Help more young people live closer to home through a review of our block contracted SAILS provision in line with predicted future demand
- 2. We have a challenge in finding suitable range, support and accommodation**
 - ✓ We need to work with providers through one to one discussion and provider forums to communicate the needs of our young people and to commission services with the right expertise and types of accommodation to support our young people
- 3. For children stepping down from residential into foster care, we need a robust understanding of the model of support and how providers will evidence impact**
 - ✓ Agree stronger outcome measures and the communication of progress from providers to social care professionals
- 4. Too many of our young people remain in current purchased placements simply because there are little to no move-on options**
 - ✓ We want to develop relationships with accommodation and support providers who can offer care experienced young people aged 18 and 19 years the opportunity to live independently
- 5. We need a robust quality assurance programme which enables a joint approach between social care and commissioning**
 - ✓ The monitoring of SAILS placements provides assurance that providers are not asked to deliver care and inadvertently operate as an unregistered children's home.



The voice of our children and young people will be key to our future success ensuring that their voices are both listened to and heard. Only when they tell us so, will we know we are achieving the very best outcomes possible for those most vulnerable within our communities.

For more information contact: Angela Brown, Specialist Commissioner (angela.brown@trafford.gov.uk).

