



Children in Care Placement
Sufficiency Strategy 2017-21

“Providing Sufficient Accommodation For Children in Care and Care Leavers”

This document sets out how Derbyshire County Council will meet its ‘Sufficiency Duty’ in accordance with Section 22G of the Children Act 1989.



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Table of Contents

Paragraph		Page Number
1	Introduction and Purpose	4
2	Derbyshire's sufficiency vision	
3	Needs assessment summary	4-6
3.1	Meeting sufficiency requirements	6
3.2	Stability and length of time in care	6-7
3.3	Types of placements and trends	7-8
4	Feedback from young people	9
4.1	Consultation and Participation	
4.2	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children	
4.3	Care Leavers	10
5	Progress against the sufficiency strategic intention published 2017	
5.1	Edge of Care	11
5.2	Edge of Care Delivery Intentions	11-12
5.3	Placement Provision	12
6	Fostering	
6.1	Fostering developments from 2017	12-13
6.2	Staying Put	13
6.3	Procured fostering placements	
6.4	Fostering Commissioning Intentions	14
7	Adoption	14-15
8	Special Guardianship Orders	15
9	Residential Care	
9.1	Derbyshire Children Homes	
9.2	Reunification	15-16
9.3	Residential Provision: Therapeutic and Specialist	
9.4	Procured Residential Care Placements	16
9.5	Residential Commissioning Intentions	17
10	Emotional Health and Wellbeing	
10.1	Horizons: Specialist Therapeutic Informed Practice	
10.2	Commissioning Intentions	18
11	Educational support for Looked after children, and support for those with Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities	

11.1	Commissioning Intentions	
12	Semi Independent Accommodation (SIA) Housing Related Support (HRS) and Supported Lodgings	
12.1	Children's Accommodation and Support Service (CASS)	19
12.2	Housing Related Support	
12.3	Supported Lodgings	
12.4	Commissioning Intentions	
13	Care Leavers	19-20
13.1	Care Leaver Delivery Intentions	20
14	Making the difference: reviewing our strategy and approach	
15	Acknowledgements	20
Appendix 1	LAC Sufficiency Action Plan 2017-2021	21-23

Note - in this document numbers below 11 are suppressed to avoid identification of individuals.

1. Introduction and purpose

The Children Act 1989 requires local authorities to secure accommodation for children in their care, within 20 miles of home and within local authority boundaries wherever possible and appropriate. This is articulated as ‘the Local Authority must take steps to secure, as far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the Authority’s area boundaries which meets the needs of children that the local authority is looking after and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the local authority’s area’ (the “sufficiency duty”).

This Strategy Refresh sets out how Derbyshire County Council will fulfil these duties and meet the needs of our looked after children and care leavers. It includes the Council’s commissioning intentions, and supports our partnership vision for children and young people.

2. Derbyshire’s sufficiency vision

‘Derbyshire aspires to only have the right children in care for the right length of time and to be creative in its care and support planning. Derbyshire’s vision for its child in care population is to provide sufficient high quality placements for children, young people and care leavers, which enable them to achieve their potential. For care leavers, the objective is to ensure sufficient quality homes, provided or commissioned by Derbyshire or other suitable provision.

When assessing “sufficiency” Derbyshire County Council has taken into account the condition of the local market, supply and demand within the context of the current resource and overall budget priorities of the Council.

Alongside hard data Derbyshire employs ongoing consultative arrangements to understand and respond to our children in care and care leavers lived experiences, views and priorities, alongside those of placement providers.

The Head of Service - Commissioning and Head of Children in Care Provision are responsible for implementing and reviewing the Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy.

3. Needs assessment summary

Please note that 2018/19 outcomes are provisional until year-end returns to Department for Education have been finalised.

- Derbyshire’s population is predicted to increase by 8% (2016 to 2041), with numbers of children (0-18 year olds) in Derbyshire being predicted to rise to a similar extent. However, the proportion of the Derbyshire population falling within the 0-18 year old age range is predicted to fall.
- As of March 2019 there were 805 children in care in Derbyshire, a rise from 630 as of March 2017. Nevertheless, the total child in care population per 10k remains below the national and Derbyshire’s statistical neighbour average at 53.

- Our child in care population is growing fastest amongst children below age 10. The % rise between 2017 and 2019 is 52.6% compared to 13.3% amongst children aged 10 to 18.
- Between March 2017 and March 2019 the percentage increases amongst all Derbyshire's children in care population for the following age ranges were: under 1 (75.7%), 5 to 9 (56.1%), 1 to 4 (40.2%), 10 to 15 (15.7%), 16 & over (9.6%). When Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children are excluded, the % change of 16-17 year olds in Derbyshire's children in care population between March 2017 and March 2019 reduces to a -3.4% (i.e. a decrease).
- New entrants into care have been increasing at a higher rate than discharges, with admissions rising by 23.5% between 2016/17 and 2018/19, compared to discharges rising by only 8% over the same time period.
- Percentage increases in new entrants to care (between 2016/17 and 2018/19) are most prevalent in the following age bands: 5-9 (34%), 1-4 (28.8%), under 1 (27.9%), 10-15 (18.3%) and 16-17 (4%).
- Growing complexity of need is also a driver for demand. Between March 2017 and March 2019, there was an 85.4% increase in admissions on an interim care order, while there was a 2% decrease in admissions under S20 voluntary care entry. This suggests an increasing proportion of entries into care are due to safety and welfare concerns.
- Between March 2017 and March 2019, increases were seen in the following admissions reasons: Abuse or neglect (31.9% increase), Child's disability (36.4% increase), Family dysfunction (103.7% increase) and Parental illness or disability (20% increase). Decreases were seen for: Absent Parenting (12.8% decrease), Family in acute stress (8% decrease) and Socially Unacceptable Behaviour (80% decrease).
- Between March 2017 and March 2019, the number of child protection plans starting as a result of physical abuse increased by 88.6%, while the number starting as a result of neglect increased by 37.5%. This rise is likely to reflect changing use of the child protection plan categories, following Derbyshire's review of child protection in 2017, and does not necessarily indicate that the risks for children have changed.
- At March 2017 Derbyshire cared for 14 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) compared to 33 at March 2019. UASC form 4.1% of all children in care at March 2019. This is lower than the latest national average (March 2018) of 5.9 %. The National Transfer Scheme Cap for Derbyshire is 108 UASC.

- As of March 2019 there were 362 Derbyshire care leavers in receipt of a leaving care service from the commissioned provider.

3.1 Meeting sufficiency requirements

- Between March 2017 and March 2019, the number of children in care rose by 27.8%, and the number of children placed more than 20 miles away rose to a similar extent. Consequently, the percentage of children placed more than 20 miles from their home at March 2019 (21.9%) has remained consistent with March 2017 (21.1%).
- For a very small number of young people, a decision to place at a distance will have been in response to their individual needs and plan. However, the intention in the majority of cases is to place children and young people within 20 miles of home and within Derbyshire.

3.2 Stability and length of time in care

- Re-admissions to care as of March 2019 (12.66%) are higher than in the previous 2 years. Older children, children who enter care at the beginning of adolescence, children with additional behavioural and emotional needs are all more likely to experience multiple placement moves.
- According to government guidance, an SDQ score of 13 or below is normal and 17 and above is a cause of concern (between 14-16 is borderline). The average SDQ score for Derbyshire children in care remains borderline (16.2 in March 2017 and 16.1 as of March 2019), with 47.4% of children in care showing an SDQ score indicating cause for concern.
- The percentage of children in 3 or more placements remained consistent between March 2017 and March 2019 at 5.6%. The rising trend of 3 or more placements that occurred in the interim period (March 2018) peaking at 7.9% was successfully addressed. Derbyshire outcomes were below statistical neighbour and national outcomes in 2016/17 and 2017/18.
- Between the 16/17 (1 percentage point) and 17/18 (0.2 percentage points) academic year, the gap between Derbyshire and national outcomes has narrowed for the % of children who have been looked after continuously for at least 12 months who are classed as persistent absentees. The % of Derbyshire children in care that have been looked after continuously for 12 months and have experienced at least one fixed term exclusion decreased between the 16/17 (16.13%) and 17/18 (13.33%) academic year (17/18 national data not yet published). Education and placement stability are interrelated and support each other.

- Children discharged from care between April 2018 and March 2019 showed that 33.9% had been in care between 1 and 3 years, 19.8% had been in care for 6 months to under a year, 17.7% less than six months, 12.4% 6 weeks or less, 11.3% for 5 years and over and 4.9% between 3 to 5 years. However, the percentage of children discharged from care (as a percentage of the total child in care population) fell between 16/17 (42%) and 18/19 (35%). More young people leaving care over the age of 16 are staying in placement until their 18th birthday (82% in 2016 and 84% in 2017), although between 2017 (22%) and 2018 (17%), there was a decrease in the percentage of care leavers aged between 19 and 20 who ceased to be looked after on their 18th birthday and remained with their former foster carer.

3.3 Types of placements and trends

- The percentage of children placed with in house foster carers and the absolute number of Council foster homes continues to slowly decline, although the absolute number of children placed with Derbyshire foster carers has grown through an increased placement utilisation rate. Absolute numbers placed in 'in house' children homes also continues to fall. In part, this reflects a decision to close some homes in order to refurbish and re-open as smaller homes, and in part it reflects a reduction in occupancy due to the complex needs of the children being placed in some homes.
- Between March 2017 and March 2019 Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's) grew their share of all placements made by Derbyshire by 6%. At March 2019 IFA's cared for 28% of Derbyshire's child in care population. Agency residential was overall static despite the planned fall in residential provision delivered by Derbyshire. Placement growth trends reflect the need for more foster homes to care for both a bigger child in care population (27.8% rise between March 2017 and March 2019), but also a disproportionate rise amongst younger children (52.6% rise in under 10 year olds between March 2017 and March 2019).
- Between 2017 and 2019 Derbyshire increased the number of children adopted per month to a number less than 10. There was a 25% increase but is set within the context of very low numbers overall. The East Midlands Regional Adoption agency 'went live' in April 2019, and assumes responsibility for most adoption processes.
- The number of children subject to an SGO rose from 370 at March 2017 to 472 at March 2019, although the numbers discharged from care as a result of Special Guardianship dropped from 20 in 16/17 to - in 18/19. However, Derbyshire continues to increase the overall number of children discharged from care (being 263 in 16/17 rising to 284 in 18/19).
- The total number of Derbyshire care leavers to their 21st birthday is 379 (2018/19 OC3 cohort). The percentage of care leavers living in suitable accommodation

remained static between March 2017 and March 2019 (92%). Derbyshire has increased the contracted volume of semi-independent accommodation units from 45 to 73, and increased outreach accommodation support. Derbyshire aspires to increase the percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation, despite the current figure being above both the national and statistical neighbour average. It has also commissioned 3 post -16 emergency accommodation beds.

Table 1 - Placement category at March 2017 and March 2019

	March 2017		March 2019		2017 - 2019		
Placement category	Number Placed	% Placed	Number Placed	% Placed	Percentage change	Percentage point change	Trend % Placed
Foster Placement (Agency)	134	21.30	222	27.68	65.67	6.38	↑
Foster Placement (DCC)	333	52.90	379	47.26	13.81	-5.64	↓
Placed For Adoption	27	4.30	32	3.99	18.52	-0.31	↓
Residential Placement (Agency)	48	7.60	59	7.36	22.92	-0.24	↓
Residential Placement (DCC)	33	5.20	34	4.24	3.03	-0.96	↓
Placed With Parents	26	4.10	32	3.99	23.08	-0.11	↓
Independent Living	28	4.40	41	5.11	46.43	0.71	↑
Secure Unit	Less than 10	-	-	-	-	-	↓
Other	Less than 10	0.00	-	-	n/a	-	↑

Table 2 – Placements by Distance

	March 2017		March 2019		2017 - 2019	
	Number of children in care	% of children in care	Number of children in care	% of children in care	% change	% point change
Placed 20 miles from home or less (inside or outside LA)	497	78.9%	629	78.1%	26.6 (↑)	-0.8 (↓)
Placed inside the LA boundary (at any distance from home)	448	71.1%	488	60.6%	8.9 (↑)	-10.5 (↓)

4. Feedback from young people

4.1 Consultation and participation

In 2017 we said that ‘the views and meaningful participation of children and young people (is) to be sought wherever possible’. Derbyshire has introduced new opportunities to contribute across a wider variety of mechanisms to ensure it understands the views and experiences of its looked after and care leaver populations.

Stronger Families, Safer Children (SFSC) is Derbyshire’s operating model. The model offers a range of tools for engaging children and young people and ascertaining their wishes, feelings and views. Quality assurance activity shows that these tools are widely used by practitioners.

Independent Reviewing Officers have sustained high levels of participation in reviews for children in care over a number of years. In the 12 months to March 2019, 98 % of children in care participated in their reviews.

Derbyshire has strengthened the corporate parent challenge role of its Children in Care Council, and has increased the number of active participants. A ‘Big Conversation’ event is held twice a year to which every child in care in an age appropriate manner is invited to make a contribution. Strategic managers and children in care meet to review progress and our young people give feedback on positive change and also challenge where they feel things are not happening.

Derbyshire has developed a jointly agreed action plan against which children in care can hold services to account regarding mutually agreed improvements and change, and refreshed its Pledge. The Pledge encapsulates what Derbyshire will do, what children in care commit to, and what we will do together. Children in care have told Derbyshire they value:

1. Good quality placements and foster carers
2. Contact with family and friends
3. Not being treated differently
4. Being involved in decisions
5. That diversity is valued.

4.2 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

At April 2019 Derbyshire cared for less than 10 UASC under age 16. All UASC aged under 16 live in foster care and are positive about their placements.

In June 2018 Derbyshire undertook a focus group with UASC aged over 16 to discuss a range of issues around accommodation, finances, EET, and their health and wellbeing. They all stated they were healthy and happy most of the time, enjoyed attending college, but found it difficult to live on the semi-independent living allowance. Although they were very positive about the semi-independent living support staff, nearly all the participants expressed a desire to be in London.

4.3 Care leavers

Significant levels of consultation and engagement with care leavers has occurred in the last 18 months to inform the new care leaver support service and the new care leaver accommodation service. Care leavers told us that one of the most important things for them is having a safe home, not just a place to live. Analysis of the care leaver survey against the 5 Keep on Caring outcomes told Derbyshire that a high percentage of young people feel:

1. Involved in their independence planning - 63% said they were involved or mostly involved in their independence planning
2. Safe, secure and stable - across the 3 areas the response range to feeling either very or simply safe, stable or secure was 73% to 91%.
3. There is good support to access employment, training and education opportunities - 61% said EET support was good or very good
4. In good physical health - 67% said they felt well or very well
5. Well prepared for budgeting expenses - 63% said they were well or fairly well prepared.

Areas of concern identified:

1. Mental health, as only 51% of young people surveyed felt either "Very well" or "Well" and 30% felt "Unwell" or "Very unwell"
2. 45% of care leavers worry about money either "All the time" or "Regularly". Only 18% said they "Never" worried about money.

Particular service areas highlighted for improvement were:

1. Preparedness to leave care
2. Provision of consistent personnel to provide continuity of relationship
3. Access to relevant health and adult social care services
4. Activity to alleviate financial stress
5. Greater fairness in what different care leaver cohorts can access.

82 care leavers responded to the on-line survey, and 32 care leavers took part in four focus groups across the County locations.

5. Progress against the sufficiency strategic intention published 2017

The Early Help and Safeguarding structure delivers services in localities across specialist and safeguarding, targeted and early help, and also provides a children centre offer. All services operate to the Stronger Families, Safer Children (SFSC) operating model. The model's guiding principles are: to be family and child focused; everybody is listened to; that the child is placed first, and that workers are respectful, inclusive and empowering of families and children to participate.

With regard to sufficiency our primary objective is to provide high quality social work interventions and support to children and families, so that wherever possible, children can continue to live at home safely with their families, avoiding entries into care and the subsequent need to provide a placement.

5.1 Edge of care

In 2017 we said we would 'locate the right services and interventions at the Edge of Care to reduce admissions, thereby increasing sufficiency options'.

Derbyshire delivers a range of services to safely divert children from coming into care and to promote reconnection and reunification. Our two specialist teams working at the edge of care are the Preventing Family Breakdown Team and the Time Out Team. Both are focussed on pathways to enable children to remain at home, or make a sustainable return home or to extended family. If neither is possible a robust planned transition to high quality care will be facilitated. In 2018 a complementary work stream with Dartington Social Research Unit and the Dartington Design Lab focussed Derbyshire's attention on length of stay in care and opportunities to reunify more children safely with a family member. The reunification work stream continues and is led by a locality manager reporting to the Children in Care Sufficiency Board.

Family support staff located within our early help offer deliver parenting assessments, often but not always in response to court direction to assess the support needs of each family and their ability to provide 'good enough' parenting. To maintain sharpness of focus we renamed our edge of care panels 'Locality Care Planning Scrutiny Panels'. The panel process was re-evaluated and strengthened in April 2019.

Children services contribute funding to support children living with domestic abuse or/and at risk of exploitation. A new domestic abuse contract commences 1 April 2020, and a new (child sexual exploitation) CSE contract from 1 October 2019 will commence delivery of services to reduce harm to children from both sexual and criminal exploitation of children. We know that the experience of domestic abuse and exploitation are key factors prompting some children to commence a journey into care.

5.2 Edge of care delivery intentions

The rising volume of children requiring a safeguarding service, alongside rising numbers of children in care informed 2018 Cabinet decisions to invest in new delivery structures. The underpinning intentions are to:

- Strengthen authoritative social work practice which clearly identifies and challenges risk for children
- Provide strong social worker supervisory and management oversight to drive practice in this area.

Early help casework is part of children's services core business. The Council's future targeted early help teams will case work where an intervention is required to meet a high level of emerging or entrenched need and provide a menu of group work to children and their families. The teams will use evidence-based programmes and practice to deliver effective change with families. Derbyshire's offer will include two primary functions:

1. Family Support: to prevent harm to children, reduce family conflict and breakdown, improve parenting capacity and family functioning

2. Youth Support: to prevent harm to children, reduce child vulnerabilities and risk of child exploitation, reduce the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and support successful transitions into adult life.

In addition Derbyshire has remodelled the social care structure to strengthen the support to social work practice with children and their families. Newly approved roles and functions include:

1. None case holding Practice Supervisors in place of Senior Practitioners in social care
2. A Systemic Practice Lead to oversee and deliver systemic training and coach practice across the workforce
3. Team co-ordinators in each children's social work team, and
4. Increased social work capacity in front-line child protection teams.

5.3 Placement provision

In 2017 Derbyshire said it would be the 'main provider of fostering and residential placements for children in care in Derbyshire. 51% of all Derbyshire children in care are placed in either a Derbyshire foster home or children's home.

6. Fostering

6.1 Fostering developments from 2017

In 2017 we said we would increase the number of Derbyshire foster homes by 60 and maintain the increased foster placement bed occupancy rate, and improve quality and choice.

Derbyshire is making good progress towards delivering the approaches that will impact on quality, stability and choice. It provides an 'end to end' in house fostering service across a range of placement types. It has increased investment in recruitment, retention, training and support to ensure good quality local placements are available. In April 2017 DCC introduced The Fostering Skills Allowance Scheme, and reviewed it in September 2018. The new fee structure incentivises carers to have a child in placement for more total time, and also to attend skills building training. The last 2 years have seen a steady growth in the number of children living with Derbyshire foster carers from 333 on 31 March 2017, to 347 March 2018, to 379 at March 2019.

Derbyshire has grown its specialist provision to provide more choice, and quality care for children with higher levels of need. Contract Carers offer homes to complex children and are additionally supported by regular reflective practice facilitated by a psychologist. At April 2019 Derbyshire had 51 contract carers, and grew the volume of contract carers able to meet the needs of disabled children.

Developments to the Contract Carer scheme from 2017 are:

- Increased registration for more than one child
- Minimum age at placement moved down from 13 to age 11

- In January 2019 the implementation of a contract carer scheme for disabled children grew out of a scheme called 'Aiming High'. It currently has less than 10 full time carers and also less than 10 short break households. (Aiming High scheme has now ended).

Other in house specialist foster placements are two full time mother and baby and one mother and baby respite placement.

To 2016 Derbyshire worked with iMPower, and since that time has continued its improvement journey. Although to date we have not increased the number of carer households, we have increased the bed occupancy rate. Success of our ongoing strategic intent and activity is demonstrated by:

1. Our most recent annual foster carer feedback survey told us that 94% of carers are happy with the assessment process; 76% are satisfied or fairly satisfied with the service provided by DCC and 79% would recommend fostering for Derbyshire to family or friends.
2. At December 2018, 61% of carers were actively fostering or providing ongoing short breaks. This is the highest utilisation rate since September 2016.
3. The percentage of fostered children placed with in-house carers (63% at March 2019).
4. 75% of children in care were in foster provision at the end of March 2019, up from 73% the previous year.
5. The Central Placement Team continues to build good relationships with our carers, we continue to improve our web information, myth bust, promote fostering, and co-produce services with our foster carers.
6. We have a healthy and robust Foster Carer Council that has worked to refresh the Derbyshire Foster Carer Charter, and increased carer's involvement in new service developments. Experienced carers now mentor new foster carers through the assessment process.

6.2 Staying Put

In 2017 we said that 'young people leaving care will be offered the opportunity to remain in their foster home beyond 18, if that is their wish'. Derbyshire has successfully embedded Staying Put and consistently supports around 45 Staying Put arrangements each year. Less than 10 placements support UASC.

6.3 Procured fostering placements

The D2N2 commissioning arrangement (a collaboration of 'Derby City, Derbyshire County, Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Councils) is procuring a Fostering Placement Framework to commence 1 February 2020. The Framework will be D2N2's primary source of PSCI foster placements from the end date of the East Midlands Regional Framework at 31 January 2020.

Derbyshire undertook a volume, trend and cost analysis in contribution to the D2N2 collective commissioning and procurement activity. The D2N2 volume assessment identified that there are sufficient local placements to meet current D2N2 demand, but that there are children placed outside of its geography, and other local authorities have children placed within its geography. The D2N2 Framework commissioning and contract management arrangements are expressly tasked with shaping the market to

increasingly deliver more placements for local children, and to develop provision to meet the profile of need expressed by the D2N2 child in care cohort over the term of the contract. The D2N2 vision is to have all D2N2 children in care placed within 20 miles of its outer perimeter.

6.4 Fostering commissioning intentions

Internal provision:

1. On-going review of the communications and marketing plan
2. Strengthen strategic response to growing demand for Regulation 24 assessments. At spring 2019 44% of all ongoing assessments are Regulation 24.
3. Ensure the Foster Carer Charter is fully used and understood
4. Explore 'a better leave entitlement offer' for DCC staff who foster
5. Explore service developments to include development of in house provision to 'step down from residential', and also therapeutic foster care provision for primary aged children
6. Strengthen the use of a number of management tools.

External provision:

1. Progress the procurement of a D2N2 Foster Placement Framework that will:
 - a. Place more children locally
 - b. Deliver cost efficiencies associated with:
 - I. placing children locally
 - II. local D2N2 procurement and contract management
 - III. on-going local shaping of the market.
2. Following on from the procurement activity, D2N2 intends to explore how it can collaborate to make improvements to D2N2's collective internal fostering processes, supply and costs.
3. Develop further Derbyshire's sub-commissioning arrangements to step down children with complex needs to foster care from either internal or external residential care.

7. Adoption

In 2017 Derbyshire recognised its performance on timeliness of adoption (A1 and A2 indicators) was not as good as its statistical neighbors or England. We said we would 'improve timely permanence planning whilst continuing to have adoption as an aspiration for harder-to-place children through the establishment of a new Permanence Team'. We have made significant progress since 2017 on timeliness, and practice remains strong at facilitating the adoption of older, disabled children and siblings groups.

At April 2019 The East Midlands Regional Adoption Agency assumed responsibility from Derbyshire for adoption processes. Derbyshire retains responsibility for identifying which children in its care are best served by adoption, meeting the growth in 'access to records' requests, and supporting birth families. Derbyshire made effective use of the Adoption Support Fund, but is not forward planning spend beyond

2020 as future funding is uncertain.

In 2018/19 17 prospective adopters were willing to consider fostering for adoption. Less than 10 children were placed. This is the same number as the previous year. Thus we have developed the readiness to consider such placements, but there is understandable caution in determining which children are suitable for such placements. We have strengthened scrutiny and challenge re pre-birth children which we anticipate will lead to increased foster to adopt placements.

8. Special Guardianship Orders

To achieve permanency Derbyshire will continue to facilitate the conversion of fostering placements to SGO's when it is in the best interests of the child and placement to do so.

9. Residential care

9.1 Derbyshire children homes

In 2017 we said that 'all our internal residential services will work towards obtaining, or remaining, "Good" to "Outstanding", as judged by Ofsted'.

Derbyshire continues to invest in the quality of its children homes in acknowledgement that some children's needs are best served by the more intensive support provided in residential care. At any one time Derbyshire children's homes have capacity to care for around 35 children, less than 10 of whom are in homes for severely disabled children. In 2017 only two Derbyshire homes were Outstanding and two Required Improvement. At April 2019 five Derbyshire homes are Outstanding and four are rated as Good. No homes are rated as Requiring Improvement.

Independent Visitors overwhelmingly report children living in Derbyshire children's homes are well cared for. Recent comments reported by Independent Visitors as the 'Voice of the Child' are: 'She thought the Home was 'really good', staff were 'amazing' and were 'like her second family', and 'The caring and supportive interactions of staff observed by the visitor was evident throughout the visit in relation to individualised care of all of the young people during their stay.' March 2019.

9.2 Reunification

In 2018 a focussed reunification work stream with Dartington Social Research Unit addressed the value of supporting older children to return home in a planned and supported manner. Residential staff groups have been particularly responsive and active in delivery of this work stream, as part of a wider work programme to strengthen children's preparation for adulthood and independence.

9.3 Residential Provision: Therapeutic and Specialist

The 2017 - 2021 Strategy noted the 'ongoing implementation of re-designed residential provision which enables children and young people in care who require

specialist, therapeutic provision to receive this in Derbyshire, and complete a robust review of provision in all areas identifying any gaps or opportunities for provision development such as disability specialist provision.' In addition to the quality improvements made across our residential provision.

In March 2019 Derbyshire opened a 2 bedded home to care for children and young people with a high level of emotional well-being and mental health needs for between 6 months and 2 years. The vision of the home is 'to strengthen the resilience and protective factors of the children that come to live with us by providing care that complements the therapeutic interventions that have been assessed to be in the best interest of the children's' wellbeing.'

In spring 2019 Newton Europe undertook an end to end review of services for children with disabilities across children services and adult social care. The final report is anticipated June 2019, and its insights will be utilised to shape and improve our placement services for disabled children going forward.

9.4 Procured residential care placements

The D2N2 collaborative commissioning arrangement is procuring a Residential Placements Framework to commence 1 February 2020. The four local authorities will agree contract management lead arrangements, but each authority will retain responsibility for ensuring their child's needs are met in that particular home.

As with fostering placements, the intention is that D2N2 children are placed locally, and that a system is developed to enable D2N2 commissioners to be notified of both new and vacant placements. It is anticipated 'local' will result in a better service to both the child, but also the placement provider as the child's social worker will be more accessible. D2N2 anticipates the development of a virtuous circle which will increasingly prompt Framework providers to offer local placements to D2N2 members.

At any one time Derbyshire has around 60 children or 7% of the total child in care population placed in agency residential. In 2018 Derbyshire undertook an audit of 38 children under age 16 placed in external residential homes. It found that access to an appropriate placement at the right time near to a child's home had been challenging. Only 13 of the 38 children were placed within 20 miles from home, and fewer than 10 were placed at a distance of over 100 miles.

It also found that although most placed children are not registered as disabled, 58% of the cohort had a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) plan, and that social workers regarded over 60% of the cohort to have additional needs. 40% of the sample had education provision or education support alongside care. The most common needs expressed were emotional and mental health support needs, needs associated with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and ADHD, support requirements to manage inappropriate sexualised behaviour and sometimes also risk of exploitation, including sexual exploitation, and moderate to severe learning difficulties.

Within the work stream Derbyshire worked with a specialist disability provider to ascertain how many of the audited children were fosterable. It identified less than 10 children as fosterable, primarily amongst younger children.

9.5 Residential commissioning intentions

Derbyshire:

1. Is partnering in the D2N2 commissioning consortium to procure a new residential placement framework to commence 1 February 2020, alongside an intention to increase the supply of stable foster homes to reduce the need to place as many children in residential care
2. Is signed up to the strategic intention to develop the market to enable local children to be placed locally
3. Will work with the market to enable it to open new units that meet the needs profile of Derbyshire and 'D2N2' children requiring residential care
4. Has tasked an Assistant Director to develop a coherent response to the Boarding Schools Partnership offer in recognition of the number of education placements purchased alongside residential care, and to improve child outcomes
5. Is undertaking a review of the Complex Cases Section 75 agreement. This process allocates tri - partite funding (Health, Education and Social Care) to support residential placements
6. Has tasked staff with being mindful of opportunities to step down children from residential care to foster care and reunify children to their families care as appropriate.

10. Emotional Health and Wellbeing

10.1 Horizons: specialist therapeutic informed practice

In 2017 Derbyshire said that 'specialist therapeutic informed practices will be introduced to selected services in Derbyshire'.

Horizons is a multi-disciplinary team of Clinical and Educational Psychologists and Therapeutic Workers commissioned by Derbyshire County Council and the CCG's. The provider specialises in providing high quality training, consultation and therapeutic interventions to children in care and the networks surrounding them. It aims to help children and young people resolve trauma and develop healthy and trusting relationships.

The team provides:

- a. Training events open to foster carers, residential workers, social workers and other professionals working with children in care
- b. Monthly consultation sessions in each of the Locality Offices, and in each of Derbyshire's in house children's homes
- c. Monthly Reflective Practice sessions in each of the residential homes, to Contract Carers and Supervising Social Workers, to the Time out Team, to the Leaving Care Teams and to the Disability Contract Care Team
- d. A monthly Adoption Support Group co-facilitated with the Adoption Support Team

- e. Attachment-focused parenting groups for Foster Carers
- f. Intensive direct therapeutic interventions based on a variety of models.

The service supports approximately 250 children and young people per year.

10.2 Commissioning intentions

The current contract is coming to an end. The service content is positively evaluated and will be re procured as a collaborative exercise with the CCG's. The intention is to extend the size and reach of the service, including continuing a service to relevant care leavers to age 19.

We also work collaboratively with our partners through the Future in Mind Programme. Childrens emotional health and wellbeing is also seen as a priority within the (Sustainability and Transformation Plans) STP 'Joined Up Care Derbyshire' and within our Derbyshire Childrens Partnership.

11. Educational support for Looked after children, and support for those with Special Educational Needs and /or disabilities

Derbyshire continues to offer a mixed model of short breaks, longer term care and permanence for children with disabilities. We know disruptions to schooling should be avoided and that any transitions must be well planned to ensure the necessary support can be put in place. To facilitate effective education input the Virtual School is a member of both the Placement Matching and Complex Cases process. Senior management agreement has to be gained before a young person in Key Stage 4 moves care placement where this necessitates a change in school.

An independent review of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision has been commissioned from ISOS. It will report its findings and insights in June 2019.

11.1 Commissioning intentions

A key development in our workforce development plan is training for foster and contract carers about education. We also intend to:

- Deliver greater rigour within the D2N2 Residential Framework procurement and contract management processes re: school registration and the content of the provider's education offer.
- Continue to seek the most appropriate post 16 college or/and holistic Employment, Education and Training offer for children in care and care leavers that have or had an ECHP plan.
- Utilise insights from the Newton Europe review of provision for people with disabilities across children services and adult social care, and the ISOS review of SEND to inform any new additional commissioning intent.

12. Semi Independent Accommodation (SIA) Housing Related Support (HRS) and Supported Lodgings

In 2017 we said we would re-commission the Care Leaver Accommodation Service and to include an active contribution to the delivery of the 5 'Keep on Caring' outcomes.

12.1 Children's Accommodation and Support Service (CASS)

The children's accommodation and support service was re-commissioned in October 2018. Across two providers it delivers 75 units of accommodation for children in care and care leavers between the age of 16 and 21. 27 units of accommodation are staffed 24/7 with a further 48 units in dispersed or shared properties. There are three spaces to house homeless young people. Each place in a dispersed property has a nominal entitlement to 5 support hours per week, although this can be flexed across provision and individuals as needs rise and fall. The contract also allows for additional support hours to be purchased.

All young people progressing through service are expected to complete a tenancy ready programme to evidence to landlords their preparedness to retain their tenancy. Young people moving from semi to independent accommodation will have access to floating support.

Occupancy is consistently around 93% permitting new referrals, managed moves between properties, and access to emergency beds.

12.2 Housing Related Support

There is provision within the contract to support and also buy additional support time for care leavers that moved directly from a regulated placement to independent accommodation, and require help to manage their tenancy.

12.3 Supported Lodgings

Supported Lodgings development and the Staying Put support service was contracted out alongside leaving care support. That contract ends 31 June 2019. From 1 July 2019 the total holistic care leaver service will be provided by an in house county leaving care support team. An increase in the recruitment and retention of supported lodgings placements, and improved Staying Put support is anticipated. At December 2018 Derbyshire had less than 10 supported lodgings providers. During 2018/19 44 young people had lived in Staying Put arrangements, and 11 were in placement at 31 March 2019.

12.4 Commissioning intentions

The Council is exploring becoming a party to a Derby City procurement process, or starting a Derbyshire procurement process for a framework for unregulated accommodation provision. In particular Derbyshire seeks more opportunity to place UASC near or in a multi-cultural city.

13. Care leavers

In 2018 Derbyshire commissioned an external consultant to undertake a stock take of Derbyshire's care leaver offer, and make recommendations. In November 2018 Cabinet agreed the need for a care leaver support service re structure to deliver on new legislation and the outcomes articulated in Keep on Caring.

Derbyshire has invested in a new strategic lead post to be accountable for care leaver outcomes and to improve service coordination and operational practice. The Care Leaver Offer and Financial Offer are published. The new service will commence at age 16 and continue to age 25, as need dictates from age 21. It will increase capacity to better address supported lodgings capacity and Staying Put support. As most UASC are within the care leaver age bracket, the strategic lead will oversee the specialist UASC team. Care leaver EET delivery will move from the Early Help structure to the care leaver support worker role. It is recognised that a seamless holistic service which enables relationship building is the best way to support care leavers, and that well-coordinated support is key to placement and subsequent accommodation retention.

At March 2019 92% of care leavers lived in suitable accommodation to age 21, higher than the England and statistical neighbour average at 84% (last published figure).

13.1 Care leaver delivery intentions

1. Increase Supported Lodgings capacity by 50% over 2019/20
2. To promote placement longevity improve support to Staying Put placements
3. Promote EET as offering the best opportunity to access secure affordable accommodation
4. To improve care leavers financial stability promote a Council tax exemption agreement across Derbyshire Tier 2 Councils
5. Further develop the Offer to respond to 21 to 25 year olds returning for a service because they are homeless.

14. Making the difference: reviewing our strategy and approach

The action plan in Appendix A sets out how our priorities will be taken forward. The Children in Care strategy 2017 to 2021 will be refreshed annually and overseen by the Children's Social Care Senior Leadership Team and the Corporate Parenting Board.

15. Acknowledgements

Children Services	Jane Parfremment, Alison Noble, Isobel Fleming, Linda Dale	Senior Management Team
Performance and Analytics	Corrina Hampton	Performance Officer
Children's Social Care	Mary Wilton	Head of Children in Care provision
Children's Social Care	Gwen Roe	Operational Manager Fostering and Adoption

Appendix 1: LAC Sufficiency Action Plan 2017-2021

Refresh April 2019

	Priority / Timescale	Action (s)	Who will do it	Timescale
1	Ongoing placement customer consultation and service feedback is maintained and improved.	Maintain the increased and improved range of methods utilised to consult with the customers of placements.	Corporate Parent Responsibility – Activities delegated.	Ongoing.
2	Commission services that mitigate against the risks that can prompt children's need for a placement.	Recommission the CSE and domestic abuse contracts.	Commissioning Team and Community Safety respectively.	Oct 2019 and Jan 2020 respectively.
3	Effectively support children to live safely at home with their families.	Embed effective practices and processes in the restructured front line services.	Assistant Director of children's services – specialist and safeguarding.	Ongoing – placement demand and numbers in care are scrutinised at least monthly.
4	New Frameworks to access PSCI foster care and residential care placements.	Participate in D2N2 commissioning and procurement activity to source more local placements for more local children.	Commissioning Team.	1 February 2020.
5	Collaborate to improve access to and utilisation of the D2N2 collective internal placement resource.	Progress through the D2N2 Board. D2N2 to submit a DfE Feasibility Study to explore this areas.	D2N2 Commissioning Board. D2N2.	Not before March 2020. May 2019.
6	Increase specialist carers to meet the increasing complex needs of children in care.	Re commission the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service to provide increased support.	Commissioning Team.	January 2020.

	Priority / Timescale	Action (s)	Who will do it	Timescale
7	Increase the supply of approved foster carers, and maintain the strategy that expands choice and improves quality.	Re-fresh the communications and marketing strategy. Re commission the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service.	Head of Service Cic provision and communications team. Commissioning Team/CCG's.	Summer to autumn 2019. Jan 2020.
8	Make best use of available resource within the context of growing demand.	Utilise the Newton Europe Review to improve understanding of how best to support children and families of children with disabilities.	Senior Management Team	June 2020.
9	Improve services for children in care with additional needs.	Utilise insights from the ISOS SEND review to services and transitions to adult services.	SEND Board	September 2019.
10	Deliver more residential vacancies to increase choice whilst improving outcomes.	Commission a Step Down service from residential care to foster care.	Commissioning Team.	January 2020.
11	Reunification work stream.	Maintain focus on in care for the 'right length of time'	Children in care teams	Ongoing – monitor trend each quarter
12	Care leaver accommodation service.	Embed the new contract and monitor success of 'tenancy readiness' programme.	Contract Manager.	Ongoing – review bi annually.
13	Increase and improve unregulated accommodation quality assurance processes Increase the multi-cultural placement opportunities for UASC	Deliver with Derby City or develop a Derbyshire DPS to access quality unregulated accommodation. Facilitate more opportunities for UASC to live the multi-cultural city of Derby or environs.	Commissioning Team to facilitate.	January 2020.

	Priority / Timescale	Action (s)	Who will do it	Timescale
14	Increase the supply of Supported Lodgings and lengthen the duration of Staying Put arrangements.	Increase recruitment and retention.	The Leaving Care Support Service.	From 1 July 2019.
15	East Midlands Adoption Agency.	'Bed in' relevant Derbyshire processes to ensure gains made to timelines are accelerated.	Cic Head of Service provision and Adoption and Fostering Manager.	2019-2020.