

Wakefield Council

Sufficiency Strategy 2018 -2021

To ensure a sufficient range of high quality
accommodation for Children in Care and
Care Leavers in Wakefield

Contents

	Page
1.0 Introduction	3
The Sufficiency Duty	3
2.0 Our Vision, Priorities and Aims	3
3.0 Context and Analysis of Need	5
4.0 Demographics of our Children in Care Population	7
5.0 Our Commissioning Arrangements	13
6.0 Our Future Plans	14
7.0 Legal and Governance Frameworks	24
8.0 Quality Assurance & Review	26

1. Introduction

The Sufficiency Duty

The Children Act 1989, section 22G requires local authorities to take steps that are reasonably practicable to secure sufficient accommodation for children under their care who cannot live at home and whose circumstances indicate that it would be in a child's best interest to be accommodated within the local authority's area – for example, in order to stay at the same school or near to other family where contact can easily take place. This is commonly referred to as 'the sufficiency duty'. The statutory guidance on securing sufficient accommodation for children in care carefully sets out the local authority's responsibilities.

Further statutory guidance was also issued in April 2018 around the 'Provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds who may be homeless and/or require accommodation'.

This strategy sets out how Wakefield meets the duty in ensuring there are sufficient resources for children in care and those on the edge of care, including accommodation of all types. It sets out the steps we are taking to maintain an offer that covers a whole system approach, delivering early intervention and preventative work to support those children and young people on the edge of care as well as providing better services for children if they do become looked after. It highlights what we already know about the needs of our children who are looked after in Wakefield and what we are doing to address the challenges we face.

We recognise that further work needs to be done to broaden our understanding around the needs of our children in care, whether through improved feedback mechanisms or improvements to our electronic case recording system. This work will inform future updates to this strategy and be underpinned by a robust reporting process on its progress.

2. Our Vision, Priorities and Aims

Our Vision

We want to develop our ambitions that children and young people looked after can access accommodation, support and services that are appropriate to their needs. Through the effective delivery of our sufficiency strategy we aim to demonstrate greater impact on the permanency and stability of placements for children and young people.

Children and Young People Directorate – Statement of Priorities 2018/19

All that we do is aligned to deliver the Council vision. In delivering that vision we will adhere to the Council's core values of: Ambition; Integrity; and Respect.

For the children, young people and families we work with, this will be about;

- **Helping people to help themselves** – Supporting families to stay together
- **Keeping people safe at times of vulnerability** – Creating services that support individuals and enhance their sense of community.
- **Demonstrating real impact** – Providing better and more joined-up working with partners, taking un-necessary demand and disproportionately high costs out of the system. Ensuring we always offer the right level of support, provided by the right worker and delivered at the right time.
- **Being a forward thinking Council** – We recognise the very real challenges our services have to improve and to do this quickly. We will tackle difficult issues adequately, involve and engage the whole workforce in the process of change and ensure we have fit-for-purpose performance management activities to evidence what we are doing is making a difference.

Services for children in Wakefield are on a journey to improve and we know we have a lot of work to do. We want to ensure that our services are good and that we consistently demonstrate quality practice. We have both determination and commitment, including from our partners, to ensure that we achieve this. Our Improvement Plan sets out the actions we will take both in the immediate and longer term as we develop our Transformation Plan containing strategic actions that we will deliver over the next 18 months.

Our Aims

- To work together in Wakefield through the Children and Young People's Partnership Board (CYPP). The partnership includes the Council, the police, health services, voluntary and community groups, schools, children, young people and families.
- To listen to and consider the views of children, young people and families and to ensure that their needs are at the centre of our planning and practice.
- To ensure that there is sufficient provision within the district to cater for the needs of our children in care and match our recruitment and placement provision to the need
- To ensure that the Council continue to support children in their family through partnership with universal, targeted and specialist services. The use of family group conferencing (FGC) will play an important role in de-escalating family problems, keeping children out of care and we will continue to invest in these services accordingly.
- Where children cannot be supported within their immediate family, kinship care arrangements will be explored as a preferred alternative arrangement.
- To ensure that services are of good quality and are available in adequate quantity to respond to children's and young people's needs.

- To ensure that where it is not reasonable for a child to be placed within the district that their needs will be met by placements in other appropriate areas.
- To ensure that services to promote permanency for children and young people within their families or alternative substitute care will be promoted at the earliest opportunity.
- To ensure that the relevant professionals and responsible Council Members have knowledge and information about the supply and quality of placements, both within district and in other appropriate areas.
- To increase the number of in-house foster carers available for consideration by placement services.
- To identify and work with private sector and voluntary sector partners to identify gaps in the market; to shape the market; and, where needed, to commission independent fostering, residential and supported accommodation placements.
- To ensure consistent levels of support are given to both within district and out of district placements for Children in Care (CiC).
- To comply with the aims and objectives laid out in the CiC Strategy and other relevant strategies.
- To understand the needs of our CiC population, including Children with Disabilities with the vision to increase the share of children being looked after within local, in house provisions.
- To further develop short break and respite options to support families at risk of breakdown and children on the edge of care.
- To ensure that where external Independent Provision is used, it is subject to Quality Assurance scrutiny in addition to Ofsted Inspection.

3. Context and Analysis of Need

LOCAL CONTEXT

Wakefield covers 350 square kilometers and is one of 5 local authorities that make up the West Yorkshire region. Wakefield district comprises of 4 areas being, the City, the North East, the West and the South East.

Wakefield is home to 337,000 people and is the 20th largest local authority area in England. Official projections show the overall population increasing in size by 4.7% over the next 10 years (2018-28).

The population of young children aged 0-19 in Wakefield is 76,388, this is 23.2% of the total population and is slightly lower than the national proportion of 23.8%. The population of children and young people aged 0-19 is expected to increase by 5.3% to 80,000 by 2025.

The population is becoming more ethnically diverse, but the numbers of people from BME backgrounds (7%) is still much lower than the England average (20%).

Across the district in 2016 there were 11,150 children aged under-16 (18% of this age group) living in households where at least one parent or guardian was claiming out-of-work benefits. This number is lower than the position five years previous (13,710 children) but was still higher than the national rate (14%).

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2015 shows Wakefield as the 65th most deprived district in England (out of 326 districts). A more sophisticated indicator of child poverty shows that in 2017, it was estimated that 26% of children were living in child poverty in Wakefield District, after housing costs had been taken into consideration.

Analysis of Need

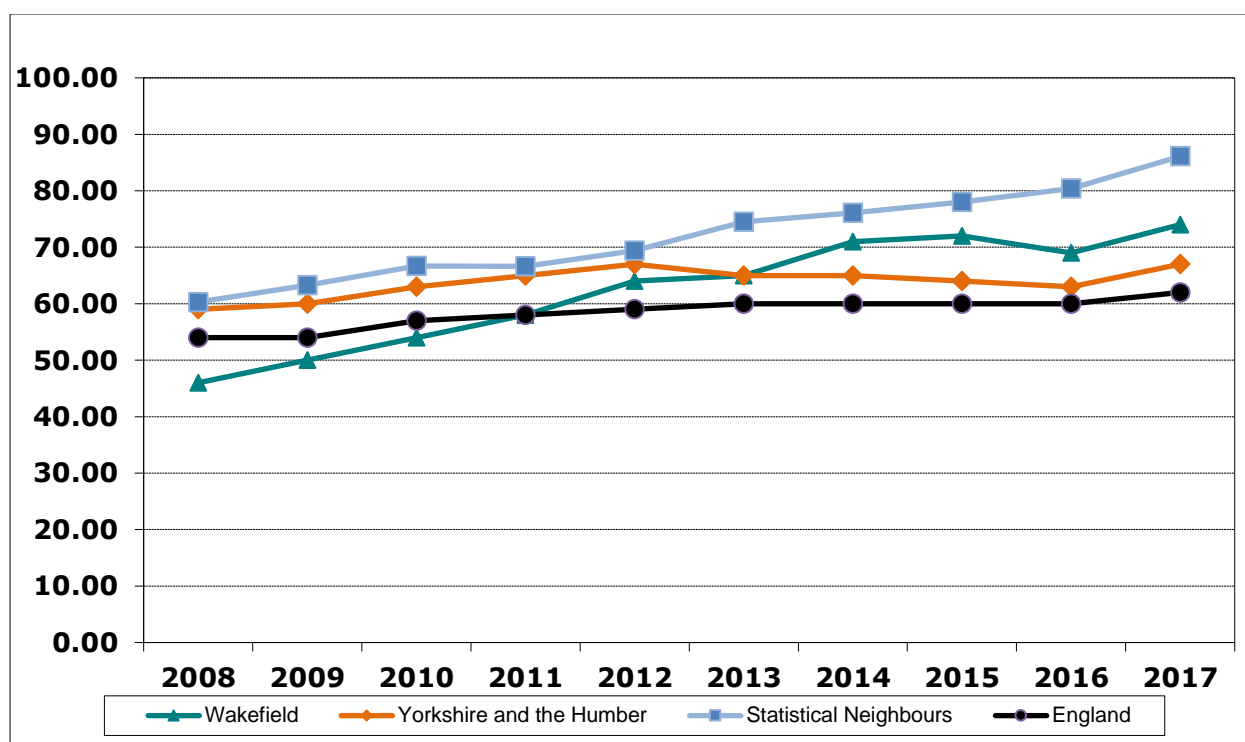
We have seen significant increases in the numbers referred to Children’s Social Care. This has resulted in increasing numbers being open to service involvement across Child in Need, Child Protection and Children in Care services.

Referrals, CiN and CP children do not automatically form part of the CiC population for which placement sufficiency planning is immediately relevant. However, we feel it is important to scope these figures to assist in the projection of potential future demand.

Referrals and Open Cases to Children’s Social Care 2017 - 2018

End of March	2017	2018
Total of Referrals 2017/18		
Total of Referrals to Children’s Social Care 2017/18	4016	4515
Open Cases as at 31/03/2018		
Child in Need (CiN)	1393	2365
Child Protection Plan (CP)	199	263
Children In Care (CiC)	517	562
Care Leavers (CL)	132	160

CiC per 10,000 Children under 18 as at March 31st 2017



Number of children in care in Wakefield as at March 31st 2018

	March 2016	March 2017	March 2018
Wakefield	477	517	562
Rate per 10,000	69	74	75.7
England Rate per 10,000	60 (70,450)	62 (72,670)	NK

The latest national data shows that across England, in March 2017, there were 72,670 CiC, this continues the year on year rises seen in the past decade. From 2016 to 2017 this has also shown a marked increase of 3%. Over the period 2011 to 2017 the actual percentage increase is over 10%.

Wakefield is echoing the national picture in terms of rising CiC numbers, and as at 31st March 2018 there were 562 CiC which equated to a rate of 75.7 per 10,000 children, an increase from 69 per 10,000 in March 2016 and 74 in 2017 showing the upward trajectory. In Wakefield the rate per 10,000 figure remains significantly higher than the England average, although it is lower than our statistical neighbours, which stood at 86 per 10,000 in March 2017, a marked increase itself from the 80 recorded in 2016.

These increases present us with significant challenges in future years if numbers continue to rise at the same rate. We aim to promote earlier and timely services to children and families in Wakefield to support and enable them to live safely together and to reduce the number of children needing to become looked after.

Gender of CiC

Within Wakefield 56% of our CiC are male which is in line with the national picture and has remained fairly consistent in recent years.

	March 2017	March 2018
Female	226	245
Male	290	316
Unborn	1	1
Total	517	562

Age of CiC

In terms of age banding our local picture does differ from that seen nationally. Whilst those aged 10-15 is highest both nationally as it is for us, we are slightly lower at 34% (39% England). We also have a slightly higher percentage of those under 1 (8% against 5% nationally), and with 1-4 (18% against 13% nationally).

	March 2017	%	March 2018	%
Under 1	31	6%	47	8%
1-4	114	22%	101	18%
5-9	104	20%	113	20%
10-15	163	32%	191	34%
16+	105	20%	110	20%
Total	517		562	

Ethnicity of Children in Care by Wakefield as at March 31st 2018

Over the past 2 years the percentage identifying as White British has dropped from 84.1% of the CiC population to 79.9%. This is still representative of the looked after population across England, which in March 2017 stood at 75%. Those from 'Any Other Ethnic Background' has risen in Wakefield from 5.8% to 8.7%, which is still lower than both the national average and figures of our statistical neighbours.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

Nationally, UASC figures have increased in recent years in line with Government policy around supporting more children and young people to live in the UK.

In Wakefield UASCs are predominantly 16 or 17 years old and currently represent 4.7% of our total population of children in care.

Legal Status of CiC

We have seen an increase in the number of children in care under a Care Order or Interim Care Order and this is also the case across England.

We have also seen an increase in the numbers of children becoming looked after

under a Section 20 voluntary agreement. However the national trend has seen numbers decreasing. Through Early Help and Edge of Care services we aim to reduce the number of children for whom S20 care arrangements become necessary.

Placement Types

Fostering

The majority of our children in care are placed with foster carers, currently at 54%. Of those, 38% are with our in house foster carers and 16% with independent agency foster carers. Our reliance on independent agency carers has remained fairly consistent at an average of 18% of our total population of CiC. However, our numbers of children placed with in house carers has reduced in recent years from 48% in 2015 to 38% in 2018.

Staying Put

Young people remaining with their foster carers under Staying Put arrangements in Wakefield in 2016 and 2017 was significantly higher than the national average but in line with our statistical neighbours. As at March 2018, 13 young people were actively living under Staying Put arrangements.

Whilst we recognise that it is often right and in the interests of the young person to remain with their foster family beyond their 18th birthday, we also accept that further work is needed for our leaving care offer. We want to enable young people to have opportunities to go into supported living where it is safe and practicable to do so. Through our staying put policy we aim to align our funding arrangements alongside other regional authorities.

Residential

The numbers of children living in our in house residential placements has reduced in recent years from 4.3% in 2015 to 2.3% in 2018. In line with developing our Edge of Care service, the change of use of one of our children's homes in 2017 directly impacted on this figure.

In addition we saw that our numbers of children residing in external residential placements increased over the same period from 6.5% in 2015 to 11% in 2018, creating greater budgetary pressures and dependencies on external providers.

Parent and Child

We have also seen increasing demand on the use of parent and child assessment placements over recent years from a low of 0.2% in 2015 to a high of 0.7% in 2017. Whilst low in number, the costs and dependencies on external providers are important to us in terms of understanding and meeting need locally within Wakefield.

Family and Friends care

We have seen an increase in the number of children going to live with family members under Family and Friends placements and reunification under Placement with Parents regulations. Our numbers of children securing permanence through, for example, Special Guardianship Orders, has risen from a total cumulative figure of 195 as at March 2015 to a total of 278 as at March 2018.

As at April 2018 there were 67 children under kinship arrangements of which it was expected that 27 would transition to Special Guardianship Orders (SGO). It is projected that 42 new kinship in-house placements will be made this coming year of which we would anticipate 40% transitioning to SGO (based on data available).

Adoption

The numbers of children securing permanence through adoption in Wakefield have fluctuated over the four years to March 2018. In the year to the end of March 2018, the length of care proceedings in Wakefield, based on a quarterly average in a rolling year was between 26 and 27.4 weeks.

The average time for children entering care and moving to adoptive placements in Wakefield in the three year period 2014-17 was 494 days an improvement on the previous reporting period (2013-16) of 543 days. This is lower in both reporting periods than the England average and that of our statistical neighbour.

The average time between Wakefield receiving court authority to place a child and Wakefield deciding on a match to an adoptive family for 2014 – 2017 was 211 days compared to 221 days in the period 2013 – 16. This was lower in both reporting periods than the England average and that of our statistical neighbours. We are pleased about that and want to build upon being the best performing local authority in the West Yorkshire region for the past 12 months.

Since 1st April 2017, the Adoption Service for Wakefield has become part of One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY), the regional adoption agency. The responsibility for the sufficiency of adoptive placements is held by them, though responsibility for children with plans for adoption remain with the local authority. Our sufficiency strategy takes into account the working arrangements and respective responsibilities of Wakefield Children's Services and OAWY in our future plans.

Leaving Care

We have seen a significant increase of young people in semi-independent and supported living arrangements as care leavers aged 16 years plus from 1.2% of the CiC population in 2015 to 6.5% in 2018.

Wakefield has seen a marked improvement in the percentage of care leavers aged 18 years plus in suitable accommodation rising from 86% in March 2017 to 96% in March 2018. The last known regional and national picture covered up to March 2017 and at that time we were slightly better than the England average (84%) but lower

than our statistical neighbours (91.67%).

Providing placements for care leavers in Wakefield that are considered to be suitable remain consistently high. However, with increasing demand and the extended duties towards assisting and supporting care leavers for longer, up to 25 years of age, we continue to work with a range of partners and providers to explore ways of increasing and improving these resources.

Out of District placements

Children living in placements outside of the Wakefield district have been higher than both the national and statistical neighbour averages in recent years, and our latest outturn suggests we are still likely to be above comparators. This is in stark contrast to 2012 when we were at only 9% and better than all comparators. Through our sufficiency improvements we aim to bring more children back home to Wakefield and into the right placements, where it is the right plan to achieve the best outcomes for them.

The need to commission out of district placements have ranged from the need for specialist placements including therapeutic on site provision, challenging or harmful sexual behaviours and child sexual exploitation. In some instances, the need has been simply due to having no available provision more locally, including our own in house provisions.

Placement Stability

We want to further improve placement stability for children and young people by reducing the number of placement moves and enabling placements to access the right services and support that results in them being more likely to become permanent for children.

Through developing our permanency and matching procedures and early warning systems where children experience more than one move we will provide timely and additional support services to reduce the risk of placement disruption and to enable us to better understand the reasons for placement disruption.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

We recognise that some of our children in care have special educational needs and disabilities. Data from the January 2017 school census indicates that there were 7,431 children and young people with a special educational need and/or disability (14.2%). Of these, 1,378 had an EHC Plan or Statement of SEN (2.6%) and 6,053 were receiving SEN Support (11.5%).

	Not SEN	SEN %	EHCP %	SEN Support %
All Children (England)	85.6%	14.4%	2.8%	11.6%
All Children (Wakefield)	85.8%	14.2%	2.6%	11.5%
LAC (England)	43.7%	56.3%	26.7%	29.6%

LAC (Wakefield)	40.3%	59.7%	27.5%	32.2%
LAC (Stat Neighbours)	43.4%	56.6%	25.0%	31.6%

Nationally (England), in March 2017, 56.3% of LAC children and young people had SEN, compared with 59.7% in Wakefield. There has been a slightly downward trend in the percentage of LAC with SEN both in Wakefield and Nationally.

Currently our three residential provisions for SEND Short breaks have 6 beds which can be utilized as well as a 7th emergency bed.

We have undertaken a full analysis of current and projected use for our Short Breaks Programme Board as part of our short breaks review. Historical data shows that 88 out of 205 (43%) of children and young people accessing short breaks are receiving overnights. The percentage receiving overnights through the new needs assessment process is only 30% (26 out of 87) children and young people.

The overnights support received through the new short breaks process show on average children and young people have 149 nights allocated per year at York Villas, 52 nights at Star House and 40 at Wasdale.

Education and Care Provision

We have undertaken our High Needs Review following the request from Government in March 2017. High Needs includes children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans, children and young people attending Pupil Referral Units and those being educated out of the Wakefield District. Without duplicating, this strategy takes into account our review that identified potential requirements and considerations for how we might meet these and any potential for developing our future provision. Our review can be found on the Local Offer.

The national trend has been a steady increase in the percentage of children with an EHCP being educated in a special school. In Wakefield we still educate less of our children in special schools compared to national (35% compared to 48%).

We recognise that nationally, there is a broad correlation between the percentage of children educated in a special school and the percentage needing an out of district placement. That is, the more children educated in a special school, the greater the potential pressure on availability of high needs places to best meet the needs of children and young people with SEND. As a result, a greater number may then need a specialist, out of district place, to ensure their holistic needs can be met. This may relate only to educational provision for their SEND and infrequently may require a residential provision for this purpose purely due to the distance of the educational placement.

Our High Needs review considered all children with an EHCP who were in out of district placements. We have 11 children who are placed in independent specialist educational provision due to their identified needs, parental preference and inability to meet needs within Wakefield specialist provision. The majority of these are placed with providers within or close to the district.

For our out of district placements 16 of the young people have an EHCP and are Children in Care (CiC).

Of these 16 there were 7 children and young people for whom the combination of the SEND provision to meet their needs as described in their EHCP, coupled with CiC status meant that a specialist residential educational setting was the best option for meeting their holistic needs and provide the stability their SEND needs required.

Where there is a need for SEND Support or EHCP identified for other CiC this would be addressed through the relevant Code of Practice processes in conjunction with any Personal Education Plan. Any EHCP may still be held by Wakefield where education and care are provided in the same provision or may be held by the LA where the child resides

External Placements

External residential care is commissioned through the external market, referred to regionally as the White Rose Framework. There were 54 purchased residential beds, as at May 2018, with 27 on the framework and 27 off the framework.

On framework	Off framework	Total
27 (50%)	27 (50%)	54
Placements within Wakefield	Placements in neighbour authorities (Leeds, Wakefield, Doncaster, N Yorks, Kirklees)	Placements outside Wakefield and beyond neighbour LA s
3	13	38

5. Our Commissioning Arrangements

White Rose Framework (WRF)

The WRF is a collaboration of 15 Local Authorities (Yorkshire & Humberside and Lincolnshire) joined together to procure and commission CiC placements.

There are currently 4 Frameworks in place - IFA, (Independent Fostering Agency) Residential, SEND and 16+ Leaving Care (16+ Leaving Care Framework ends in December 2018). Leeds City Council are the procurement lead on behalf of all partner Local Authorities. Benefits from being a named LA partner include a consistency of approach to placing activity, control of costs and shared approach to price uplift requests from providers shared contract management and audit arrangements and a defined escalation processes,

The Commissioning Placements Team are responsible for all IFA, Residential and

UASC and 16+ Leaving Care placement searches. This approach enables us to develop our understanding of the provider market and ensure there are fully integrated placements functions, including:

- In-house options (foster care/residential) are always explored first and continuously at every stage of the search process.
- Wherever possible and appropriate, we endeavour to place children locally – this enables them to benefit from local services (CAMHS, Schools and Health) and have contact with family.
- The availability of in house foster carers, skill levels/ experience and matching with other children determines whether an IFA placement needs to be sought.
- Additionally, out of district placements are considered when local placements cannot be identified or are specifically required to meet a primary need e.g.: parent and baby, CSE risk, Harmful Sexual Behaviours, risks around missing.
- Wakefield Commissioning and Business Development Team are represented at WRF Strategic and Operational Groups and fully participate in WRF refreshes and evaluations, providers meeting the quality and tender standards can remain or join the framework at this stage.

Provider Market Challenges

A number of challenges exist in relation to the management of the IFA and residential provider market which are being explored by the Commissioning Placement Team:

- Work is currently underway with WRF partners to the future of the WRF and ways in which the provider market can be developed this includes exploration of a more bespoke Care Leaving Framework to include two of West Yorkshire LA's, namely Calderdale and Bradford.
- Market management dialogue is taking place in relation to ensuring more residential provision available locally to reduce the need for YP to be placed out of area and to ensure there are more IFA providers more able to meet more complex needs

IFA and Residential Placements are nationally in high demand which is driving up costs for placements and creating a provider driven market. The commissioning Placement Team are working via the WRF and engaging direct with providers to ensure Wakefield's placement needs can be met.

Wider Commissioning Work with integrated approach

Through this strategy we will engage with the market in a number of ways. We will work with the local private provider forum about our plans and ambitions for improving placement sufficiency in Wakefield. We will publish our sufficiency strategy and invite both new and existing providers to meet with commissioners and service managers to develop our plans.

We will work closely with our partners to continue to review future demand and to

ensure that our sufficiency strategy meets the needs of Wakefield children and families. We will further develop our integrated approach to wider or joint commission through:

- Learning about new and innovative provisions or challenges from frequent market engagement events.
- Developing joint understanding of the needs of children and families locally with neighbouring local authorities and partner agencies.
- Seeking partnership decisions, where required, through the Integrated Commissioning Board and Connecting Care Executive.

6. Our Future Plans

Our Sufficiency Strategy primarily focuses on statutory duty to ensure placement sufficiency for CiC.

However, it needs to be understood in line with Wakefield's Early Help offer which seeks to deliver preventative support through a variety of mechanisms including the provision of parenting and strengthening families programmes as well as approaches to tackling crime, violence and anti-social behavior.

We are also working to ensure appropriate access at an earlier stage to services for children, young people and parent's mental health and wellbeing, substance misuse and domestic violence to avoid family breakdown.

We are committed to providing the right services, to the right children, at the right time in our ambition to reduce the numbers of children and young people needing to become looked after. This includes:

- Children on the edge of care (to reduce the number of children becoming looked after);
- Children in fostering and kinship placements to prevent or reduce placement disruption and breakdown.
- Adopted children (to reduce post-adoption breakdown leading to children returning to care); and
- Children who have just left care, including transition support in the immediate period after care.

Cross Cutting Objectives 2018 – 2021

1. **Thresholds** – Develop and further improve partnership wide understanding of thresholds for accessing the right services for children and families.
2. **Permanency Planning** – To improve on clear and timely permanency planning for all children at the point of coming into care. Our permanency tracking system will be further developed to better embed this in practice including robust decision making and management oversight.

3. **Participation** – To further develop how we engage with children in care and care leavers about the services they receive and how future service provision might be improved to reflect ever changing need and requirement. For example, the purchase of MOMO (Mind Of My Own) - an app-led suite of products and services that modernises the processes and systems used to gather the views of children and young people using children's services.
4. **Quality Assurance** – To expand both support and challenge to include robust and timely decisions are made to ensure that children and young people go into, and remain, in the right placement to meet their needs.

Integrated Commissioning Objectives 2018 – 2021

1. Review of out of district placements
2. Mapping of Children's & Young People Contracts
3. Review of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
4. Review of the Early Help Strategy
5. Review of CiC Nursing and Safeguarding services delivered by Mid Yorkshire Hospital Trust (MYHT)
6. Share the Evaluation of the Edge of Care Service to have assurance of impact of service
7. Develop integrated care model for children, young people and families across the District
8. Through our Investment to develop local and directly managed provision we aim to reduce future demand and dependencies for external or higher cost placements.

EDGE OF CARE

Our Edge of Care provision is a critical strand in our sufficiency strategy as it seeks to provide preventative services that enable families to stay together, where it is safe and right to do so, rather than entering the care system.

The Edge of Care model is being enhanced with a range of alternative care options and development of wraparound services to enable children to stay living safely at home.

Dacre Avenue - Dacre Avenue had its statement of purpose amended in late 2017 to enable it to operate as a dedicated respite provision. This has now been fully embedded and the numbers of young people accessing the service has steadily

grown. The core aims of the unit are:

- To increase placement stability, to build resilience for children and young people and their families.
- To prevent unnecessary admissions to care and wherever possible for children and young people to remain with their families.
- To provide a holistic family approach for supporting and engaging with young people and families.

Edge of Care Objectives 2018 – 2021

1. Develop and implement an outcome based framework for the Edge of Care Services in consultation with young people who use the service, to learn from their experiences of the current provision and aspirations for future support.
2. Analysis of impact data coming out of activity with those accessing Dacre respite and outreach support.
3. Further develop the skills and knowledge base of staff working within Edge of Care services to promote more restorative and whole family approaches to families.
4. Development of the restorative practice approach through Partners in Practice. This is being run by North Yorkshire as part of sector led improvement opportunities.
5. Further develop the Terms of Reference and scope of the service to incorporate working to stabilise placements and reunification and ensure a clear cohesive Edge of Care strategy and approach is in place.
6. Build on the Forensic review of CAMHS being undertaken by Wakefield CCG, working with them to identify where resource might be re-directed to edge of care services as part of a move away from conventional clinical models.
7. Further develop the usage of FGC as a tool to respect and empower families through their active involvement in decision making and planning around the future arrangements to ensure the wellbeing of their children).
8. Undertake a review of early help hubs to better understand any impact on CYP by children's services and partner agencies.
9. Explore opportunities for those vulnerable to becoming looked after or in cases where children are already looked after, to access assisted boarding provision through Ackworth School.
10. Create better understanding of thresholds and appropriate referrals to access the full range of children and young people services.

11. Development of Early Help performance report.
12. Review our panel processes to understand any impact on more timely actions being taken.
13. To ensure that the 'Grandparents Plus' initiative becomes embedded into our practice.
14. To extend our Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) training and support to cover more adults providing care to children and young people.

Impact measures for Edge of Care services 2018 – 2021

- 1. A reduction in the number of Children and young people needing to become looked after.*
- 2. Outcomes based framework in place that measures impact of interventions*
- 3. Increase the number of Family Group Conferences.*

ADOPTION

One of the drivers for regionalisation through the creation of One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY) was to increase the pool of available adopters, improve overall services for children and prospective adopters, thus reducing delay for children.

Recruitment activity 2017-18 Q1 –Q2

- In Q1 One Adoption West Yorkshire received enquiries from 38 families (69 individuals) and in Q2 42 families (79 individuals)
- 15 adopters were approved in Q1 and 18 in Q2
- 18 children were placed each in Q1 and Q2
- 15 children were adopted in Q1 and 24 in Q2
- At 30th September 2017 there were 65 families not yet approved with One Adoption West Yorkshire – (7 on hold) and the remainder in various stages of approval
- In the same period there were 51 families waiting to be matched – 9 of whom had been waiting to be matched more than 6 months
- The average time since approval for those 51 families was 9 months

Throughout the life of this strategy, we will continue to work with OAWY and the other West Yorkshire local authorities to review the performance of the agency, especially the recruitment of adopters for Wakefield children and how they will be targeted on the following groups

- Early permanence adopters
- Sibling groups

- Older children
- Children with higher need

FOSTERING

Foster care is the main placement option for Wakefield’s children who are looked after, taking into account those with in house foster carers, independent fostering agency placements and connected carers. A key focus in meeting the sufficiency duty is to develop and sustain provision with our own carers, this also includes ensuring they are representative of our CiC cohort.

The rising numbers of CiC nationally and locally and in turn on those needing to be placed in foster care means that we need to find ways to grow our in-house foster carer provision. Our Fostering and Recruitment Strategy 2018/19 has been developed to form part of our sufficiency objectives.

External commissioning of foster placements

Whilst the majority of placements are made internally, arrangements for independent foster carers are again undertaken through the White Rose Framework in the first instance. Whilst the White Rose Fostering Framework has maintained some effectiveness, there are on-going discussions on a regional basis as to the efficacy of its current operation, again given market demand and local shortage of foster carers.

Current external foster placements (as at May 2018)

Off framework	On framework	Total
36	63	99
Placements within Wakefield	Placements in neighbour authorities (Leeds, Wakefield, Doncaster, N Yorks, Kirklees)	Placements outside Wakefield & beyond neighbour LAs
35	34	30

Given the implications for sourcing external foster carers, the fact that these are not always possible within the district, work is ongoing to ensure recruitment and retention of our own in-house foster care provision remains a priority. We will implement our Recruitment and Retention Strategy to increase our foster carer compliment and which highlights our commitment to supporting our vulnerable children and young people through our own carer network.

There are clear challenges given that nationally around 10% of carers leave every year and there is a shortage of in-house carers across the country. This is exacerbated by Wakefield’s positioning in the middle of 4 other local authorities within West Yorkshire and the proliferation of Independent fostering agencies who are perceived

to offer better rates of pay and packages for carers who work for them.

Whilst undoubtedly challenging, we plan to recruit additional foster carers over the 2018/19 financial year.

Kinship Care

We are currently developing the Kinship Team, as part of the wider Fostering Assessment Team. This will enhance the support given to assessing carers for whom kinship offers a real opportunity to the child to remain living in a family or friends environment. Where it is appropriate and intervention takes place prior to Public Law Outline (PLO), but following a Family Group Conference (FGC) this could also lead to reductions in those becoming looked after. A further positive effect would be to enable the fostering team to refocus on their core business and mainstream carer provision.

Fostering Objectives 2018 – 2021

1. Implement and embed 2018 Fostering Recruitment and Retention Strategy.
2. Recruit to the position of the Recruitment and Retention Lead to lead on the recruitment of new in-house carers.
3. Ongoing recruitment locally and through the regional 'You Can Foster' campaign to increase in house capacity to increase net capacity for our in house foster carers.
4. More bespoke and innovative approaches to foster carer recruitment i.e. specific matching with hard to place children or, for example, those who go into assisted boarding and require care during weekends and holidays.
5. Scope local independent providers to explore block purchasing a number of placements for older young people with challenging behaviours – consideration of undertaking this block purchase option with regional authorities.
6. Actively develop the training and support offer to foster carers including out of hours support to meet the needs of our CiC cohort to enable more children to be placed within our own resources and supported to remain close to home.
7. Establishment of the Kinship Care team (as part of wider fostering assessment team). This will provide much needed support to carers, for example Special Guardians where it is acknowledged there are gaps in provision of support.

Impact measures for fostering provision 2018 – 2021

1. *Improved placement stability (three moves or more) to improve to perform at below national and statistical neighbours' performance*
2. *Improved placement stability by increasing placements of two years or more at*

- higher than national and statistical neighbours' performance.*
3. *Reduce the number of long term disruptions.*
 4. *Increase in mainstream foster carer recruitment; a target of net 17 new households with capacity for 24 children and young people.*
 5. *Increase the number of children placed with in house foster carers.*
 6. *Reduce the amount of time children are reliant on IFA placements unless they are in a matched long term placement.*
 7. *Increase the number of kinship placements progressing to SGO.*

RESIDENTIAL PROVISION

Wakefield currently has a number of residential provisions for children ranging from 8 to 17 years:

We are proud that our internal provisions are rated as “outstanding” or “good” by Ofsted.

- **Benson Lane** – Mainstream children’s residential care.
- **Dacre Avenue** – Residential provision with outreach support for children on the edge of care.
- **Wasdale** – Residential and short break care for children with disabilities.
- **York Villas** – Shared care residential provision for children and young people with a range of learning disabilities, complex healthcare needs and/or associated physical disabilities.
- **Star House** – (Health commissioned Service) short-break care children and young people who have learning disabilities and complex healthcare needs. The service also provides nursing input and is registered with the CQC.

We recognise that Short breaks may act as a preventative measure in reducing family breakdown within families where there is a child or young person with complex SEND. Therefore, we will continue to review the provision required for residential short breaks as part of a broader offer for families.

We acknowledge an increase in the requirement for shared care placements in relation to potential family breakdown or prevention of risk or harm to young people. This is as a result of complex disability and challenging behavior and the families sustained ability to meet those needs.

Future demand forecasts, based on the numbers from a model of using EHCP and My Support Plan (MSP) figures, and current trends in the use of short breaks would suggest we will need to make provision for further increases in the maximum number of children and young people that may require overnight services, including at home.

Residential Care Objectives 2018 – 2021

1. Develop residential provision to maximize opportunities for children to move closer to home as oppose to living out of district.

2. Engage with partners and the local market to learn about innovative models of working to shape the specification to ensure improved outcomes for children placed both within our own residential provision and in externally commissioned residential care.
3. Engage with children in care and care leavers about the future service provision, including consultation and active engagement with existing voice structures.
4. Consider the option to commission additional beds for high need placements in two bedded pedagogy model units that would meet the needs of our children within the Wakefield or West Yorkshire footprint at below framework costs.
5. Scope the provision for children with complex SEN needs with severe learning disability and also those for whom their SEND needs in relation to their disability of ASD / SEMH mean they do not fit with mainstream or more complex SEND provision.
6. Review the outcomes achieved for our young people within our existing residential provision, including the skills and knowledge of our staff to deliver specialist, both for cost effectiveness and to ascertain whether any improvements or savings can be achieved and reduce the external spend.
7. To be part of the ADCS regional activity to explore joint bid to DfE for secure provision.
8. Review the use of in house shared care provision for children with complex SEND and severe learning disability, and work with partners to develop options for disabled children and young people.
9. Continue with the review of short breaks provision for children and young people with SEND and their families and the use of personalized budgets to enable them to remain at home, where practicable.
10. Evaluate the outcomes of the short break unit to inform a cost benefit analysis of its sustainability in the light of market pressures and in consideration of a family based short break provision as an alternative.
11. Evaluation of a bespoke home option for disabled children and young people to cover situations where there is no provision for children with complex needs following carers giving notice (up to 4 beds)
12. Reviewing short breaks provision and the use of personalized budgets to enable children and young people to remain at home, where practicable.

Impact measures for residential provision 2018 – 2021

- 1. Reduction of young people placed in external residential provision*
- 2. Further develop the regional commissioning framework*
- 3. Reduce expenditure on the external placement budget*
- 4. Improvements in percentage of children placed close to home (within 20 miles).*
- 5. Increase in children and young people with SEND able to remain at home.*
- 6. Increased care options for children and young people with disabilities.*

LEAVING CARE ARRANGEMENTS

We acknowledge that young people leaving care are some of our most vulnerable young people. Leaving care is a key moment in these young people's lives, and events at this stage in their life will have a lasting impact. The sufficiency and quality of the support and accommodation provided for them is continually monitored through the Leaving Care Team. We recognise that the White Rose Framework for 16+ provision is due to expire in December 2018 with some elements being integrated within the IFA Framework.

Therefore, we want to ensure that the Supported Accommodation options for young people aged 16+ are further developed within Wakefield and ensure that all external placements for CiC and Care Leavers are commissioned via the placements commissioning team.

Through improved sufficiency we plan to reduce demand on spot purchasing placements and through our Local Offer for Care Leavers provide access to consistently good quality accommodation through our commissioning team.

The range of accommodation for 16+ and our care leavers currently includes:

- Supported lodgings;
- Residential children's homes;
- Foster care
- Semi-independent accommodation via supported tenancies;
- Shared lives for those young people with additional needs;
- Staying Put arrangements

'Staying Put' Arrangements

We acknowledge that the average age of leaving home is rising and the transition to adulthood is increasingly becoming more complex and elongated. The "Staying Put" initiative therefore facilitates the extension of young people's transition to adulthood within a family and household supported environment. The intention being to ensure young people can remain with their former foster carers until they are prepared for

adulthood, can experience a transition akin to their peers, avoid social exclusion and be more likely to avert a subsequent housing and tenancy breakdown. Whilst this promotes positive outcomes for care leavers, where utilised effectively, we recognise the likely to impact of reducing the capacity of foster carers to provide other placements for the Staying Put period.

Leaving Care Objectives 2018 – 2021

1. Commissioning of 16+ accommodation to be undertaken by the Placements team.
2. Finalise and implement the Joint 'Preventing Homelessness Protocol' ensuring it is fit for purpose in the context of new National Guidance in April 2018.
3. Recruit in-house supported lodgings placements – linked to fostering recruitment and retention strategies.
4. Further expand and develop our semi-independent provisions, including the option to commission a number of 'staying close' beds locally to support transition from residential care to avoid high cost out of area semi-independent provisions.
5. Review transitions between adult and children services for vulnerable young people to ensure they are based on a joint assessment of need and commence transitional planning sufficiently early enough (aged 14 or earlier).

Impact measures for leaving care services 2018 – 2021

- 1. Maintain the high number of care leavers in suitable accommodation.*
- 2. Reduce the use of multiple home occupancy unregulated placements.*
- 3. The provision of commissioned 16 plus accommodation is responsive and targeted to need as well as offering value for money.*
- 4. Reduce number of care leavers placed in high cost out of area placements to bring them closer to home and support them to build resilience and transition successfully to adult in the Wakefield district.*
- 5. No young people placed in bed and breakfast accommodation.*
- 6. More 16years+ and care leavers placed in-house – including staying put placements.*
- 7. Clear and effective working agreements and relationships with local housing commissioners and providers demonstrating an increase in care leavers accessing tenancies.*

7. Legal and Governance Frameworks

Corporate Parenting

As corporate parents we want to ensure that our children and young people receive good quality care and resources to promote positive outcomes for them. We want Wakefield children and young people to be able to live in the district by ensuring that local placements and support services are available to meet their needs. Where it is necessary for a child or young person to live outside of the district we will ensure that they have access to good quality placements and support services in the areas where they live.

The governance framework for our strategy includes a range of people from children in care and care leavers through to Cabinet. See Appendix A.

Our Corporate Parenting Committee has a terms of reference clearly setting out the collective responsibilities of the council and its partners as Corporate Parents to act on the needs and issues of children and young people in care focusing on what really matters for them. The whole Council is expected to do what any good parent would do to promote their children's educational aspirations, ensure their child's health and safety and support their achievements in life.

The 'Corporate Parenting Committee' contribute to the overall governance and accountability for councillors, officers and our partners in knowing and responding to the needs of children and young people in care.

The committee plays an active role in meeting with, and learning from our children and young people themselves. Underpinning all of our work is our pledge to children and young people to involve them in the decisions about their lives, to listen to their voice, to offer them the best care we can and to support them as we would our own children

This strategy is connected to a number of other strategies and policies as outlined earlier.

The Children in Care Council (CiCC) is a representative group of young people who are in care or who are care leavers. The CiCC has a critical role and contribution to make in regard to the Sufficiency Strategy. We believe it essential that young people who have experience of being cared for are able to influence current and future practice and provision and as such will be consulted with as outlined in Wakefield's Participation Strategy.

Working alongside Wakefield Council Commissioners, management oversight of the work undertaken around sufficiency is provided by the Service Director, Safeguarding and Family Support and the Service Manager, Children In Care and Leaving Care services.

The progress and challenge of implementing this strategy is reported to the Corporate Director and Directorate Management Team, Children and Young People Services. In turn, this reports through to the Children and Young People Partnership Board.

The CYPP Board membership includes, alongside local authority officers, commissioners from the Central Clinical Commissioning Group (who have commissioning responsibility for children's services and CAMHS) as well as membership from the Virtual Head Teacher, representatives from the Police, third sector and other agencies where appropriate.

The Corporate Parenting Committee has the strategy as a standing item on the agenda and have an overview of the impact of the strategy on outcomes for Children in Care and Care Leavers.

The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee will receive regular updates on the progress and impact of the strategy.

A Partnership agreement is currently in development, which will clearly set out the purpose and functions of all Boards across Children and Young People Services and make linkages where appropriate to clarify line of sight on key activity.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

A number of key developments in recent years, at national level, have informed our strategy;

- Children and Social Work Act, introduced in 2017.
- 'Provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds who may be homeless and/or require accommodation' (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and Department for Education – April 2018).
- The development of Regionalised Adoption Agencies.
- Staying Put – The extended legal duty on councils to provide support to young people up to the age of 21 and beyond who are able to stay with their foster family.
- The Family Justice Review – the focus on time limits for care proceedings and on permanency planning means that having an adequate supply of family placements is of critical importance.
- The Narey Report - Published in July 2016 the Narey report reviewed Residential Children's Care and made recommendations to Government and Local Authorities on how to make better use of this provision. His report criticised the use of residential care as a 'last stop' for children with a number of previous placement breakdowns and challenged Local Authorities to better engage private providers in order to meet demand.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-residential-care-in-england>

- The focus and challenge in Government policy around reducing the use of out of district placements.
- Provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds who may be homeless and/or require accommodation

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/provision-of-accommodation-for-16-and->

8. Quality Assurance and Review

An annual report will record progress and challenges in implementing this strategy.

The Annual Report will provide information on the following;

- Delivery against each of the key actions arising from the strategy
- Outline of other changes (internal and external) which have impacted on our delivery of sufficiency for Children In Care placements
- Relevant Cost comparisons – projected vs actual where practicable
- Performance comparisons – projected vs actual where practicable
- A summary of what has been achieved in 2018/19 in relation to placements for our looked after population
- An outline of the challenges we anticipate in 2019/20 in relation to our delivery of sufficiency

There are a number of key drivers which will influence our future refresh of the Sufficiency Strategy. They include:

- Political and legislative action to improve services for children in care and care leavers
- Case law which places obligations upon Children Services
- Outcomes of inspections undertaken by regulatory bodies
- Departmental priorities and targets
- Financial constraints
- Changes to the delivery of front line services

Additionally, work is ongoing to further understand and analyse our children in care population and for suitable reduction measures to be identified that could help us to safely reduce the number of children and young people in our care as well as providing the best placements to meet the needs of those for whom care is the best option.

This strategy will be reviewed at least annually and revised as appropriate. In the event of a revision to the strategy it will be re-published on the website to ensure it remains up to date and relevant to all those working with our children and young people.

Sufficiency Strategy Governance Framework

