

[PICTURE OF CHILDREN]

## DRAFT V.7

Children and Young People's  
Interim Sufficiency Strategy:  
Improving local placements for our looked after children

2018-2019



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## Introduction: Kirklees, the challenge, and our approach

The Council is working to constantly improve the lives of children and young people in Kirklees so they can have the best start in life possible. This includes ensuring each child and young person in our care has safe and secure relationships in a good home, a good education that helps them achieve their potential, and the right health support when they need it. Since 2005, the number of looked after children in Kirklees has increased from 312 to 656 (November 2017). The local market has been unable to meet demand because of the speed and size of this demand shift, so more of our children and young people have moved outside Kirklees.

Moving into care is usually a difficult experience. It can bring with it a significant sense of loss. Older children may experience significant problems at school not just due to the earlier problems that led them into care, but also from other factors such as having to travel to maintain a stable school placement and losing friends and support networks, which are crucial for our children and young people's wellbeing. Being placed out of area exacerbates these challenges and makes it harder for us as Corporate Parents to quickly and effectively respond to the child or young person's needs.

This is one of the major challenges in the District and nationally. As of 31 March 2017, 40% of looked after children in England were placed outside their home area ([link](#)). This will continue to be a challenge as the number of children in care nationally continues to rise ([link](#)). In Kirklees, 23% of Kirklees foster carers are aged 56 and above, meaning they may retire soon, and we do not have enough new foster placements to offset these retirements. We also already have an above average number of children and young people in residential care, which is expensive and will become more so without the right plan. Without the right strategy and partnerships, this will impact on the long-term sustainability of our local offer, meaning the District will not have enough placements to cope with local future need.

This is our strategy to improve the availability of local placements and supporting services for our looked after children and young people: ensuring we have enough ('sufficient') placements and supporting services (like education and health) to meet local demand. Our ultimate aim is to improve the wellbeing of those of our children and young people currently placed out of area by securing enough placements for them to move back, when it's in their best interest, and preventing future children and young people facing the challenges and disruption of being moved out of area in the first place. We will do this in three ways.

We will improve early intervention to help children and young people stay with their families when safe and we will support our children and young people leaving care so they do not need to come back into care. This will mean more local placements are reserved for those that need them most.

We will increase the number of local family-setting (especially foster) placements. Family-setting placements emulate a healthy home life, providing secure relationships that make it

easier for our children and young people to achieve their potential and live happy lives. More local foster placements will also mean our residential care is reserved for those in need of more specialised support.

We will improve placement stability. Moving placements can be extremely disruptive, especially when they involve moving area, which can mean losing important support networks that the child is developing or losing an educational placement if the child moves far enough. Children and young people only move placements when they absolutely have to, which means that when they need to move either their needs have changed or the placement was not the right match in the first place. We will strengthen the involvement of education and health partners in placement decisions, so that a child doesn't lose their placement because they don't have the right education or health support. We will also ensure that we act on information from in-depth return home interviews when a child goes missing from care, since this is often a sign they are struggling to cope with something that may escalate further.

We will increase the number of in-house residential placements with four or less beds either by reducing the beds in existing children's homes or purchasing properties and converting them into small residential homes. Our children and young people have complex needs and placing large numbers of them together can create complications that are difficult for our staff and for our children and young people to manage. This strategy was discussed with our Children in Care Council and our Care Leavers Forum, and the children who were in smaller residential placements said they were a lot happier since moving.

In all of our efforts, the voice of our children and young people will be central. This Strategy's details have been informed by engagement with our children and young people. The key messages we have received from our children and young people are that they want smaller residential homes and that they want to be involved in the recruitment and training of foster carers and other carers. Efforts are ongoing to strengthen the voice of the child in our decision-making and not every element is addressed in this Strategy. The Improvement Plan sets out further steps. However, to make it clear that we take the voice of the child seriously, our actions are set out concretely in our Voice of the Child Sufficiency Action Plan, appended to the Strategy.

In the course of the next year and a half, we will be prioritising the development of our understanding of local need. The High Needs Review will report in 2018 and we will use its findings in the preparation of our commissioning plans for the specialised residential accommodation that some of our children and young people need and communicate its findings to local education and health partners as well as external placement providers to extend and improve the District's offer to our looked after children and young people. When we have filled our new Head of Sufficiency post, they will build on this in producing and delivering a five-year Sufficiency Strategy.

Appended to this document alongside the Voice of the Child Sufficiency Action Plan, there is a Service Action Plan based on our professionals' and practitioners' expertise in addressing sufficiency issues.

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## Ofsted's recommendations and the Improvement Plan

In June 2017, Kirklees entered into an Improvement Partnership with Leeds City Council. This Strategy forms part of Kirklees Council's efforts to deliver the outcomes stated in the Improvement Plan, which are, in turn, our response to Ofsted's recommendations following their September-October 2016 inspection ([link](#)).

Following the inspection, Ofsted recommended that Kirklees 'increase the availability of local placements to ensure that children and young people do not need to be placed at a distance from their communities' (recommendation 20) ([link](#)). In the Improvement Plan, we committed to deliver this outcome through a Sufficiency Strategy and accompanying Action Plan.

## Other documents

This Strategy's scope is limited to managing and meeting accommodation need for our looked after children in a way that is sensitive to local education and health support provision. It is part of a wider strategic framework, aiming to improve the lives of all children and young people and their families living in Kirklees:

- Our Corporate Plan sets the context for everything we do. In our new Plan, we have committed to do better at enabling people and communities to address problems independently, share more knowledge, information, and resources with local partners, and adapt our work to the different communities and places we work in: recognising and starting from their unique, different strengths.
- This Sufficiency Strategy sets out ways of improving children's wellbeing. With partners from across the health sector, we are aiming to deliver the health and wellbeing outcomes agreed in the [Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy \(2014-2020\)](#) ([link](#)). The [Economic Strategy \(2014-2020\)](#) ([link](#)) sets out priorities complimentary to those in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, recognising the role of inequality in the health and wellbeing of all Kirklees' residents, and its implementation will support this Strategy. These strategies are currently being updated.
- We are developing a Children and Young People's Plan, setting out our overall approach to improving children and young people's lives in Kirklees and we are looking at developing a distinct strategy regarding children subject to safeguarding activity.
- We are developing a new Corporate Parenting Strategy, which sets out how we plan to ensure we deliver on our responsibilities as corporate parents.
- The Early Help Strategy will help families stay together and ensure our children and young people only come into care when they need to.
- Future in Mind: Transformation Plan 2015-2020 ([link](#)) sets out how Kirklees is working together with the NHS to provide better outcomes for children and young people's mental health and this strategy will help deliver its commitment to protect those at

risk of serious mental health problems through its emphasis on early intervention services.

- Ensuring we have the right offer is particularly important for children and young people living with special educational needs or disabilities. This Strategy compliments the outcomes stated in the Joint Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities ([link](#)).

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## The statutory duty to secure sufficient placements and supporting services

The Strategy sets out our approach for 2018-19 on meeting the requirements of section 22G of the Children Act 1989 in line with the statutory guidance 'Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked after Children' (2010).

Section 22G ([link](#)) applies to all children looked after under the Children Act. It requires local authorities to secure, as far as practicable, enough accommodation to meet the needs of any children whose circumstances are such that living within the local authority's area would be consistent with their welfare.

The UK Government guidance 'Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked after Children' sets out a check-list for what counts as meeting the sufficiency duty:

1. The right placement is available at the right time.
2. There is a range of local placements and supporting services that are sufficient to meet the needs of all Looked after Children or a plan to move towards that position.
3. There is consideration of the service requirements of children that are looked after, on the edge of care, at risk of custody, and/or leaving care.
4. Working with local partner agencies and neighbouring authorities to ensure this need will be met and that young people with this need receive the support they need.<sup>1</sup>

The guidance also sets out the building blocks of effective commissioning for children and young people in care: high quality assessments, care planning, and placement decisions.

This Strategy's approach has been developed in line with that guidance. Given that we do not have enough local placements for our looked after children and young people, this is the plan to move towards that position as referenced under (2) of the check-list.

The Corporate Parenting Board will review our progress against the Service Action Plan appended to the Strategy. Progress against our key indicators will be presented to Corporate Parenting Board every six months.

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<sup>1</sup> Partners have obligations under the Children Act 2004 section 10 in relation to improving the outcomes for children in the local area.



## **Enabling families to stay together and children and young people to be independent and leave care early**

Early help delivers better outcomes for children and families and is less expensive than late intervention.

Problems at home become entrenched when left too long, which makes them more disruptive for the children and family and harder and more expensive to solve. It also raises the risk of a child being taken into care, which is disruptive for the child and expensive for the Council.

Early help means managing challenges when they are easier to solve, to prevent their problems becoming entrenched. It also means targeted and evidence-based responses to entrenched problems to support a child or young person to stay at home when safe. This is an urgent issue, as without any intervention the number of looked after children is predicted to rise. Entrenched problems increase pressure on social services. Early help helps manage that pressure, which helps social workers make high-quality, cost-effective decisions. Our Early Help Strategy sets out how we will ensure our early help offer continues to improve.

We want a full range of care and support packages to support children and young people living with disabilities or health (including mental health) problems. Disabilities and health problems create challenges at home that make it more likely that a child or young person will be looked after, but the right support can help them and their families manage. It is more difficult and costly to complete health assessments on our children and young people once they are placed outside the District, making it harder to ensure we're meeting all the needs of those with complex health problems, including mental health problems.

### ***We will support our children and young people exiting care early***

When safe, young people will be enabled to return home or exit care early. To this end, we will try to support more children and young people into adoption and other permanence arrangements. We will work more closely with One Adoption West Yorkshire, who provide our adoption services. We will also support children and young people to exit care earlier through more Special Guardianship Order and Child Arrangement Order placements.

We will build our relationships with private sector providers of both fostering and residential services. We will meet regularly with private sector fostering and residential services to understand their capacity and challenges and to share relevant policies and procedures.

We will have effective support for young people entering adulthood, including a range of appropriate semi-independent accommodation placements and high quality personal advisor support. This will assist them in exiting care early, if beneficial to their wellbeing. If we don't

have this semi-independent accommodation available, these young people might be placed out-of-area.

### ***Accommodating young people leaving custody***

If a child or young person leaves custody following a criminal offence and they do not have a parent or guardian, cannot return home, or were previously in care, the local authority will be responsible for providing accommodation. Some of these children and young people have very complex needs, which require highly specialist support. We have to plan our specialist placement provision in line with what we know about children and young people due to leave custody. We need the right kind of local placements and supporting services for these young people. Without the right specialist provision, we will have to place them out-of-area.

We will continue the good work of the dedicated Looked After Children team within the Young Offenders Team: since 2010/2011 we have seen a gradual year on year reduction in the percentage offending of LAC young people, from 12.8% (10/11) to 6% (15/16).

We will also continue the good restorative justice work, delivered by schools, partners, and the Council through the Youth Offenders Team and others. **EVIDENCE OF IMPACT**

## More local placements of the right kind

Our broad approach: a mixed offer of mostly family settings complemented by good relationships with private providers that helps children return home when safe.

### *More foster placements*

Wherever it is in their best interests, children and young people will be placed in family settings with friends and family (Connected Persons) or foster placements rather than residential settings.

The local children's residential market is not currently meeting local need either due to availability, quality or affordability. We have above average numbers of children in residential care. In November 2017, 11.2% of Kirklees' looked-after-children, comparable local authorities have around 8.2%. Residential care placements are expensive and this high proportion in residential care affects the sustainability of our offer.

We will continue our mixed approach of Council-run and commissioned provision and we welcome private placement providers, who develop the local placements market. Like most local authorities, however, we will try to increase the number of in-house placements to reduce our dependency on private-sector placements. In times of high-demand private sector providers cost more and we must then pay extra or find a provider out-of-area. The Specialist Accommodation project board will assess ways for the Council itself to provide more small children's homes so we have a sustainable local offer.

We have proportionately few foster placements in our care: 68% of our looked after children are in foster care compared to 73% in other local authorities' care. The use of the Council's own in-house foster carers for placements is also low at 34% of placements against 44% for our comparators. In April 2017 there were 169 Kirklees Council carers offering 221 placements this equates to 1.3 placements per carer, the national average is 1.7 placements per carer.

With this in mind, increasing local fostering and other family setting placements and improving foster care retention are our key measures to guaranteeing the sustainability of our local offer. We will try to lower the proportion of children placed in residential care by increasing the number placed in family settings such as foster care. Children in residential care aged 12 or below might especially benefit from being in foster care. These decisions will always be made with the best interest of the child in mind and in light of their views.

We know that word of mouth is the strongest advert for foster carers, so we will focus efforts on providing the best quality support to existing foster carers and encourage them to talk to people they know. This will also help improve retention.

The Head of Corporate Patenting is looking to meet with researchers from the University of Huddersfield to discuss options for collaborative research on local foster care retention.

The key challenges to fostering in Kirklees are:

- We heavily rely on Independent Agency Foster placements (IFAs). There are currently 153 IFA placements and 75% of these placements are outside Kirklees.
- 23% of Kirklees foster carers are aged 56 and above. We need to make plans now for their potential retirement as well as other carers deregistering.
- Kirklees Councils' recent foster carer recruitment campaigns have not been as successful as anticipated and have not kept pace with carers de registering or retiring.
- The introduction of Staying Put has reduced the local foster placement capacity as young adults are now staying in their foster placements after their 18<sup>th</sup> Birthday.
- There are especially few foster carers for older children, long term placements, sibling groups and young people with complex needs.
- Staying Put arrangements give children and young people the right to stay in their foster placement after they are 18, so long as both parties agree. Whilst this brings many benefits for the child or young person, this reduces the number of foster placements.

### ***Small residential homes***

Our children and young people in residential care have told us they feel safer and enjoy home more when they are in smaller residential homes. They highlighted how larger homes have more children and young people with more complex needs together and that this heightens the risk of conflict and disorder in the home.

We will monitor the Government response to the 36 recommendations in the Review into Foster Care in England by Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers. We will consider the impact of the Government response on providing sufficient accommodation in developing the next, 5-year Sufficiency Strategy (2020-25).

### ***Specialist residential homes***

We know the majority of badged 'therapeutic or specialist' residential placements do not currently deliver the outcomes we expect or value for money. We will explore other options to meet needs.

For some of our children and young people, specialist placements within fostering or residential care can be the best way to give them the best start in life. A small number of our children and young people, often with autism, learning difficulties, and/or emotional and behavioural issues, need highly specialist placements and educational settings. Our local offer

for these children requires improvement so that more of these children are placed locally. This should reduce costs and help ensure the placements are of the highest quality possible. To ensure we have the right offer for those of our children with such complex needs, we need to fully understand their needs. The findings of the High Needs Review (ongoing) will be vital for this. It will inform our understanding of local need and decision-making around priorities for developing our local offer in future commissioning. Some of our young people with the most complex needs will transfer to Adult's Services on or close to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. We will support them in this transition.

### ***We will review our commissioning practices***

A key means to achieving this outcome of this strategy is securing the placements and services needed to meet need when a child or young person's wellbeing is better served in care. We need to ensure our placement offer is sustainable, so we will review and improve our arrangements for purchasing placements. These might include:

- Regional and/or sub-regional collaboration;
- framework contracts;
- block and/or spot purchasing;
- partnering with others, including another council or councils, businesses, and/or charities and voluntary organisations.

We will review our current placements service, examining the efficiency and effectiveness of current arrangements. The service will manage all placement referrals and use a robust quality assurance and contract management model to ensure good quality matches and sustainable investments.

Quality assurance is a priority. There will be robust quality assurance and oversight. For children's homes, there are monthly Regulation 44 visits. There are also regular manager reports. We are developing regular foster care business meetings, which will take place every 6 weeks. We are also creating new practice standards for our fostering service and a quality assurance officer role within the Placements Team to drive up standards in private sector residential and fostering provision.

## Placement stability

Children and young people have the best start in life when they develop secure attachments with their carers. Evidence shows that moving care placements reduces children's opportunities to develop these attachments. It may also worsen any behavioural and/or emotional difficulties. Moving placements only happens when absolutely necessary, so moving placements means that the child or young person and the placement either no longer match or that they did not match in the first place.

The main ways to ensure placement stability are: proactively asking our children and young people whether they are happy in their placements, effectively responding when they're not and as early as possible, and ensuring they have the right health support and education placement alongside their accommodation.

We and our partner agencies will always look to improve the quality of our wrap around care and improve support to carers. Our new Quality Assurance Officer role in the Placements Team will help make this happen.

### *Speaking to our children and young people*

Research and reviews from Laming to Munro emphasise the importance of the voice of the child in ensuring children are effectively supported and protected. Children's services need to build the right relationships and trust with our children and young people to enable them to voice their concerns, share their views and be involved in agreeing the support and plans that are right for their needs. Kirklees will have better services, better outcomes and better future if our children's voices are at the heart of everything we do. In line with the Improvement Plan, this is becoming a shared value and central to the work of our services and partners.

In 2016 a survey was sent to 165 young people placed out of area to which 20 responses were received. For this small quota of young people most were happy with their placements but the overarching issue was around contact with family and friends i.e. wanting to see them more. Whilst placing young people out of area makes contact more difficult, the Local Authority has a duty to ensure that good quality, regular contact happens (unless restrictions apply) and this should be facilitated by giving whatever support is needed. For any young person moving placement either within or out of area there are also the obvious issues of feeling nervous / frightened as they move to somewhere new and have to get to know new people and used to new surroundings. Having to change school is a further disruption as they leave familiarity and their school friends behind.

When a child or young person goes missing, it is an indication that something is wrong and they are struggling to cope. Being away from their placement also makes them more likely to be a victim of crime, including child sexual exploitation. In-depth return home interviews provided by someone the child or young person trusts are an effective way for us to check-in

with the child and identify why they are struggling. We will ensure we provide timely return home interviews given by someone the child or young person trusts.

In April and May 2018, a draft version of this strategy was discussed with the Children in Care Council and the Care Leavers Forum. In Appendix 1, we have our 'Voice of the Child' Sufficiency Action Plan. It sets out what the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum told us and our response. This is to demonstrate how the voice of the child is helping to design our local offer.

#### **What our Looked after Children and Care Leavers told us:**

- "Make sure you listen to children and young people to get their views on their placements"
- "Care Leavers should be in a comfortable placement so they can feel at home"
- "Make sure that people in care feel important"
- "Not enough attention given to Care Plans and Pathway Plans"
- "Kids in care and care leavers don't know what social workers expect of them"

Extracts from "Views of Children" by the Kirklees Children's Rights Team, March 2017

The Children in Care Council also provided us with a check-list for what counts as a great placement:

#### **'Voice of the child' 'great placement' check-list**

A list produced by our Children in Care Council (May 2018)

1. The child or young person is given skills for living independently
2. A non-judgmental carer that respects the child or young person
3. The family positively including the child or young person in activities with the extended family or young people they live with, to create good memories
4. A variety of placements are available, so the placement chosen suits the person's needs
5. The carer and support workers listen to the voice of the child or young person
6. The carer helps with and promotes education and extra-curricular activities
7. The child or young person lives with the right number of people
8. The child or young person lives in a safe and accessible area
9. The carer understands the child's family dynamics and culture
10. The carer allows the child or young person personal space

### ***Education needs will be central in every placement decision***

Alongside health and a good home life, education is one of the most important considerations in delivering good placements for our children and young people. When we don't have the right education placement locally for one of our children or young people, they may have to move out-of-area to ensure they get an appropriate education placement. Placement stability is key to good outcomes for our children and young people. Getting the right educational decision first-time is crucial for placement stability.

Alongside monitoring the attendance and attainment of children and young people in our care, the Kirklees Virtual School flags difficulties children and young people may have in their education placements. This can indicate support is needed to help keep them in their placement. We will involve the Virtual School in all placement moves from the earliest possible stage so educational requirements are considered.

Finding a school place can be complicated for the small number of children and young people requiring specialist placements with on-site education, such as some of those living with complex disabilities, or those with complex emotional, behavioural, and social needs. When education is an afterthought or education needs are not thoroughly assessed, it can lead to a child or young person having a place to live without the right high quality school placement to match their sometimes complex needs. This leads to education placement breakdown. This is disruptive in itself, but it can also then result in a child or young person having to move home in order to stay in education if there is no alternative nearby.

The Virtual School will liaise with SENACT to ensure children with special education needs are identified on the Placement Referral Form prior to commencing the placement search. SENACT will be involved at all stages and always before any education package is chosen.

We will strengthen our relationships with both mainstream and specialist education providers and look at ways to provide more bespoke education provision locally to meet our children and young people's educational needs.

This Strategy conforms with the latest statutory guidance on promoting the education of looked after children, which was published in February 2018 ([link](#)). The guidance means that:

- When we make a care plan for one of our children or young people, we have to set up a Personal Education Plan as part of that and at the same time.
- Social workers, the Virtual Headteacher, Independent Reviewing Officers, school admissions officers, and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities departments in Kirklees should work together to ensure appropriate education provision is arranged at the same time as the care placement, except in an emergency (p.6). In emergency placements, Kirklees has to find a suitable education placement for the child within 20 days (p. 11).



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## **Data development agenda**

Effective commissioning requires that we collect the right data and draw the right conclusions about what it says. Alongside drawing on the findings of the High Needs Review to understand the most complex needs in the District, teams in the Council are developing baseline figures for more effectively monitoring things like our early help and intervention and prevention efforts. This will mean an intelligence-led response to the challenge of early intervention and prevention that is thereby more likely to deliver the outcomes our children and young people need and helping to ensure sufficient local placements and support services to meet those needs.

## **Next steps**

By late 2018 we know we will have a better understanding of current and expected support needs and potential sites that can be converted into residential care. These will help us produce commissioning options that will inform the next 5-Year Strategy. We will also produce a Market Position Statement, so that private providers know what the needs of our local children and young people are and the volume of demand.

## APPENDIX 1: 'Voice of the Child' Sufficiency Action Plan

What our Children in Care Council told us (May 2018)	What we'll do about it
<p>When someone is a carer, they should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understand the needs of children and what motivates them</li> <li>- Teach life skills that young people will need in the future, including independent living skills</li> <li>- Be supportive</li> <li>- Be non-judgemental</li> <li>- Be flexible</li> <li>- Be understanding</li> </ul>	<p>Develop and implement a Corporate Parenting training package for elected members, social care and other Council staff, and partner agencies.</p> <p>Develop and deliver our local offer for care leavers as defined in the 2017 Children Act.</p> <p>Improve training to foster carers and residential staff.</p> <p>Implement better quality assurance in relation to purchased placements.</p>
<p>When someone becomes a foster carer, their extended family should receive training on how to behave appropriately with the child or young person</p>	<p>There is currently some training available to extended family members. We will look to extend this to more family members with regular contact with those of our children and young people in foster care, developing a skilled, informed team around the child.</p>
<p>When residential homes (in-house and private) recruit, they should include children and young people on the recruitment panels</p>	<p>This will be made a requirement for recruitment processes in residential care.</p>

When the Council recruits a foster carer, children and young people should be involved	We will start to involve young people in foster carer recruitment events, when appropriate. However, there is a regulatory process for the recruitment of foster carers that includes analysis of their history and appearance before a panel. We will find ways of involving our children and young people as much as possible, including in the developing recruitment material.
When children are in care, there should be no more than 4 children or young people in total in their placement	The Sufficiency Strategy seeks to develop smaller children's homes with occupancy four and below. Current mainstream homes are now operating as an occupancy of four residents.
When a child or young person is in care, their carer should start planning them leaving care and thinking about the skills they need earlier	Skills training for carers will incorporate the local offer for care leavers that is currently being developed.
Police come to care homes too frequently	Residential staff and foster carers will continue to receive training in restorative ways of working to improve conflict resolution.

What our Care Leavers Forum told us (April and May 2018)	What we'll do about it before the end of 2019
<p>When a young person is leaving care and moving into independent living, they need:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An introduction to independent living;</li> <li>2. in-depth skills in money management (including budgeting, debt management, bills, and the cost of living), shopping, cooking, cleaning, and other skills;</li> <li>3. support with home decoration, repairs, and maintenance;</li> </ol>	<p>Local care leavers offer</p> <p>Being developed. Act says what it has to include.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. more resources for emotional resilience;</li> <li>5. mental health support;</li> <li>6. more housing options;</li> <li>7. housing with wifi;</li> <li>8. housing in a good location; and</li> <li>9. housing options in their Pathway Plan.</li> </ul>	
When a young person lives in foster care, they should be able to ask to stay in the home until they're 21	The Council actively encourages foster carers to become involved in Staying Put arrangements. However, foster carers are volunteers and it is their choice if they wish to care for an adult post-18.
When a care leaver finishes University, they should have housing available	
When a care leaver lives in semi-independent accommodation, they should receive more support from staff	
When supported lodgings providers are trained, young people should be involved	
The Leaving Care Grant should be £250 higher to reflect the higher cost of living	Analysis to take place of the Kirklees Leaving Care Grant compared with other authorities in the reason and evidence to be gathered to give consideration to this request.
When a young person leaves care, they should have accommodation available	The Specialist Accommodation Board is looking at needs for specific groups. Young people leaving care are included as a specific group. Discussions are already taking place between the Council and local partners.

## APPENDIX 2: Service Action Plan

This Action Plan and services' progress against it will be monitored by the Corporate Parenting Board. It is not a list of everything we will be doing, but a statement of the key performance measures by which the success of our Strategy will be evaluated. It is therefore an accountability document in line with the Council's move towards Outcomes-Based Accountability. The progress against the performance measures will be monitored monthly and there will be six-monthly updates to the Corporate Parenting Board with commentary from those identified in the relevant column. Decisions about modifications to this Action Plan will be approved at Corporate Parenting Board. For example, as baselines become available, Corporate Parenting Board will need to approve measure targets and actions to achieve them.

Our key indicator is the proportion of looked after children placed outside Kirklees, which cuts across all three of our main outcomes:

Indicator	Baseline (date)	Target (date)	Rationale for target	What will be done?
% of Looked After Children placed more than 20 miles outside Kirklees	???	TBC	<p><i>Why not a higher target?</i></p> <p>This is an Interim Strategy that sets out what we will do whilst developing the detailed knowledge base to get a longer-term Strategy right. The main local challenge is a lack of local places. It takes time to develop local placements because that are high-quality. Our focus on improving the support offer to foster-carers will also not have an immediate effect, but will in the long-run. Sufficiency is a complex issue that requires lots of time, attention, and coordination. A new Head of Sufficiency</p>	<p>In 2018, the new Head of Sufficiency post will be filled</p> <p>Every 6-months, the <b>Corporate Parenting Board</b> will review progress against the indicators and actions in this Action Plan</p> <p>At least every three months, the <b>Head of Corporate Parenting</b> will meet the CCGs, Virtual School, and external placement providers to discuss local health, education, and accommodation needs</p> <p>At least every three months, the <b>Head of Service for Assessment and Intervention</b> will meet the CCGs, Virtual School, and external placement providers to discuss early-help services</p>

			will mean more time can be given to solving the problems.	
# of children in care that have three or more placements moves on a year	??? (???)	Reduction (???)	<p><i>Why not a lower target?</i></p> <p><i>Why these actions?</i></p> <p>The chief preventable reason for placement moves is that the placement doesn't meet all of the child or young person's needs, including care, education, and health needs. By continually learning what works well in our residential and family-setting placements, we can encourage good practice that is based on real experience. By involving the Virtual School at the earliest possible stage, we can ensure that our children and young people's education needs are fully met in any new placement. Going missing is an indication that something is wrong and it's important that we figure out what that is through timely return interviews. The new Resource Panel provides an important check that service decisions reflect overall requirements.</p>	<p>In 2018, the <b>Virtual Headteacher</b> will develop new services and resources for the education, health, and wellbeing needs of complex children</p> <p>In 2018, the <b>Placements Team Service Manager</b> will create a Quality Assurance Officer role within the Placements Team</p> <p>When children and young people identify good practice in their placements, the <b>Children's Rights Team Manager</b> will collect and communicate it</p> <p>On a regular basis, the <b>Children's Rights Team</b> will hold regular informal consultations with young people on foster care recruitment and developing new residential homes</p> <p>When a placement decision has to be made, the <b>Placements Team</b> will involve the Virtual School at the earliest possible stage</p> <p>Within 72 hours of one of our children or young people returning from being missing, the <b>Team</b> will provide return interviews or organise them with an external provider</p>

				<p>When agreeing a Care Plan with fostered children, the <b>Fostering Team</b> will ensure it is outcome-focussed</p> <p>Every X months, the new <b>Resource Panel</b> will meet to ensure there is senior management oversight of all placements</p>
# of foster care households	??? (???)	Increase of 24 by end 2019 calendar year.	<p><i>Why not a higher target?</i></p> <p>A higher target is not currently realistic because we expect many foster carers to be retiring soon.</p> <p><i>Why these actions?</i></p> <p>We know that word of mouth is the strongest advert for foster carers, so we will focus efforts on providing the best quality support to existing foster carers and encourage them to talk to people they know.</p>	<p>In 2018, the <b>Head of Corporate Parenting</b> will meet with the <b>Centre for Applied Childhood, Youth and Family Research (CACYFR)</b> at Huddersfield University to find opportunities for collaborative research into the recruitment and retention of foster carers</p> <p>Every two months, the <b>Head of Corporate Parenting</b> will meet with the local Foster Care Association every two months to identify good practice and challenges in our support and recruitment/retention of foster carers</p> <p>In 2018, the <b>Service Manager for Fostering</b> will survey existing and former foster carers on their support needs</p>



				In 2018 and 2019, the <b>Service Manager for Fostering</b> will develop new training and support models that better meet the identified support needs of foster carers
# of in-house placements (residential and family-setting)	???	Increase	<p><i>Why not a higher target?</i></p> <p>We are looking to have more small residential homes, which will mean the number of homes will go up. This will be a significant investment, but we must balance that with financial sustainability.</p> <p><i>Why these actions?</i></p> <p>Our children and young people in residential care have told us they feel safer and enjoy home more when they are in smaller residential homes. They highlighted how larger homes have more children and young people with more complex needs together and that</p>	<p>At least every three months, the <b>Head of Corporate Parenting</b> or <b>Head of Sufficiency</b> will hold regular meetings with external providers to understand their future plans and how they impact on our provision</p> <p>In 2018, the <b>Head of Corporate Parenting</b> OR the <b>Head of Sufficiency</b> will meet regularly with the <b>Specialist Accommodation Board</b> to help identify sites potentially convertible into children's homes</p> <p>In Summer 2018, the <b>Commissioning Team</b> will produce Commissioning Options papers for small residential homes and the <b>Head of Corporate Parenting</b> OR the <b>Head of Sufficiency</b> will share these with the <b>Specialist Accommodation Board</b></p>

			<p>this heightens the risk of conflict and disorder in the home.</p> <p>We know that external providers are significant local providers. If they decide to provide more or less local placements, we need to know as far in advance as possible so we can prepare for any resulting changes in local demand. Also, telling external providers what our children and young people's needs are and how we expect them to change will ensure they are developing an offer that meets local demand.</p> <p>Converting existing homes into residential children's homes is cheaper and quicker than building new homes.</p>	
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## Future strategy

What will be done?
When the High Needs Review is complete, <b>the Head of Corporate Parenting</b> will begin producing the next 5-year Sufficiency Strategy

## Data development agenda

Some things are important for us to measure, but we don't measure them yet. Baselines will be available by the end of calendar year 2019.

### What will be done?

The Head of Education, Safeguarding, and Inclusion is coordinating the High Needs Review, which will provide us with data such as:

- % of our children who need specialist health support
- % who need specialist education support and/or placement

We also want to know:

- % of local partners reporting high levels of confidence with locality early-help services
- % of partners who report improved satisfaction with partnership arrangements / joint working
- # of children and young people moved outside of Kirklees that have complex needs (emotional, behavioural, educational, and health)

## APPENDIX 2: Our Approach to Commissioning

Improving commissioning is the primary way to deliver better outcomes. In delivering the outcomes set out in this Strategy, we will follow the four-stage commissioning model set out below:



Effective commissioning requires agreeing outcomes and strategic vision with partners and utilising our resources and assets in a more collaborative way. It also involves being clear about needs through comprehensive and high quality intelligence. It also requires us to involve children at each stage of the commissioning process. We will also adopting a whole system approach to designing our services:



(Wright et al, 2006)

The Council has an ambition to become an 'Outcomes-Led Commissioning Council'. Part of this means we will ensure our planning starts from outcomes (e.g. looked after children living in the District) and judge our success on the following:

- How much we have done (e.g. 20 more homes secured);
- How well we have done it (e.g. how long it took to secure the homes, how expensive it was);
- If anyone was better off (e.g. 60% improvement in placement stability).

Our Corporate Plan sets out how we want to prioritise work with people, partners, and places. This means doing more work to enable and facilitate the variety of strengths and capacities people have so they can live as independently as possible. It means working more with partners and being clear about what our unique role in any partnership can be, focussing on only what we can do. It means focussing on the uniqueness of places, the unique capacities and strengths that differentiate each community and place and not taking a one-size-fits-all approach.

Once our approach is agreed, future Sufficiency Strategies will implement this new approach.

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## APPENDIX 3: Looked After Children in Kirklees in November 2017

### FIGURES TO BE UPDATED FOR FINAL DRAFT

#### *A Snapshot of Our Looked after Children*

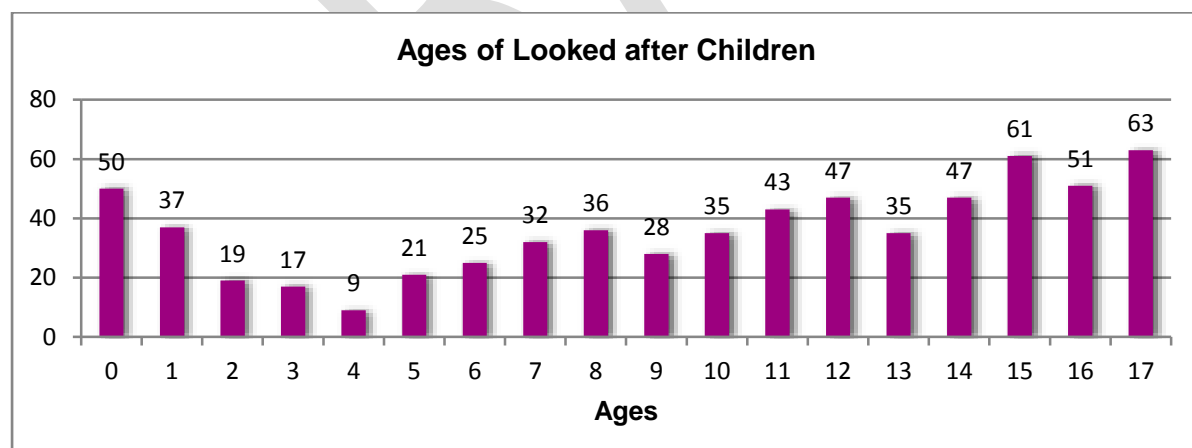
Our key aggregated needs assessment is our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment ([link](#)). Our Children's Rights Team also work with children to get their views and our Children in Care Council and Youth Council also work on this. We also monitor the needs of all children engaged with our services as part of our day-to-day work.

The number of looked after children has grown from just over 300 in 2005 to a peak of 705 in December 2016 and has since dropped.

The local population of all young people aged 0 -17 years living in Kirklees is increasing, and based on the current rate of Looked after Children which is 65.6 per 10,000 aged 0-17; this would mean that if we do nothing the looked after children's population could potentially increase to 708 by 2020 and to 745 by 2035.

Set out in this section is a snapshot of our current cohort of looked after children. Is CareFirst 11/17 the latest?

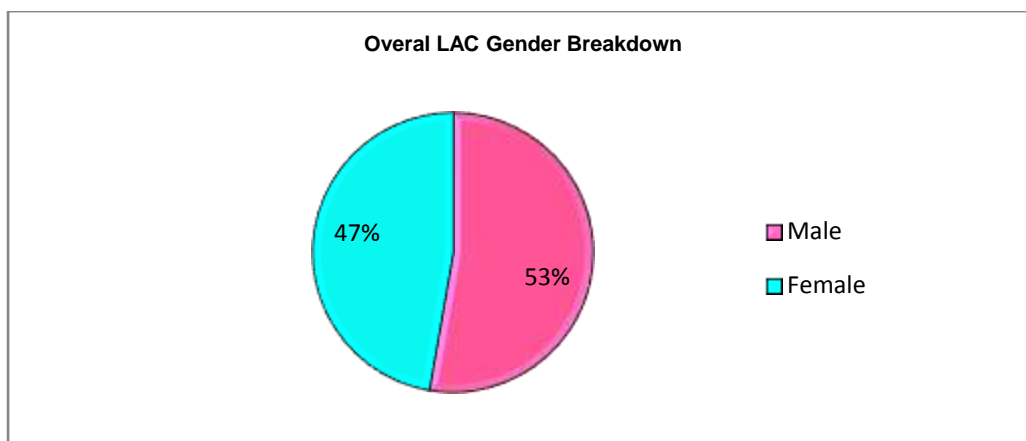
Table 1



Data from Carefirst 22.11.17

Table 1 tells us that 20% of looked after children in Kirklees are aged 4 and below, this is above the English average of 13%. Kirklees have 58% of looked after children aged 10 years and above this is lower than the English which is 62%.

Diagram 2

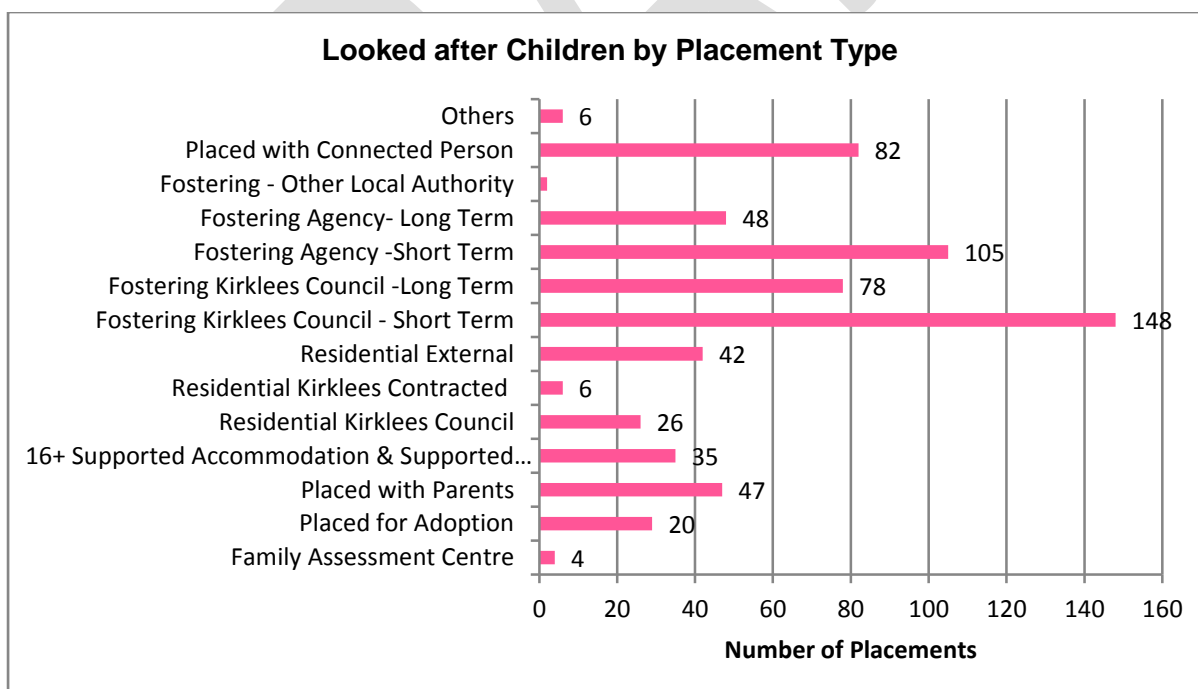


Data from Carefirst 22.11.17

The overall gender split of looked after children is 47% female and 53% male. This tells us that we need around 40 more placements for boys and young men than for girls and young women.

For Kirklees young people in residential care the gender split shifts to 34% female and 66% male. This tells us we need one third of residential placements suitable for the specific needs of girls and two thirds for boys.

Table 3



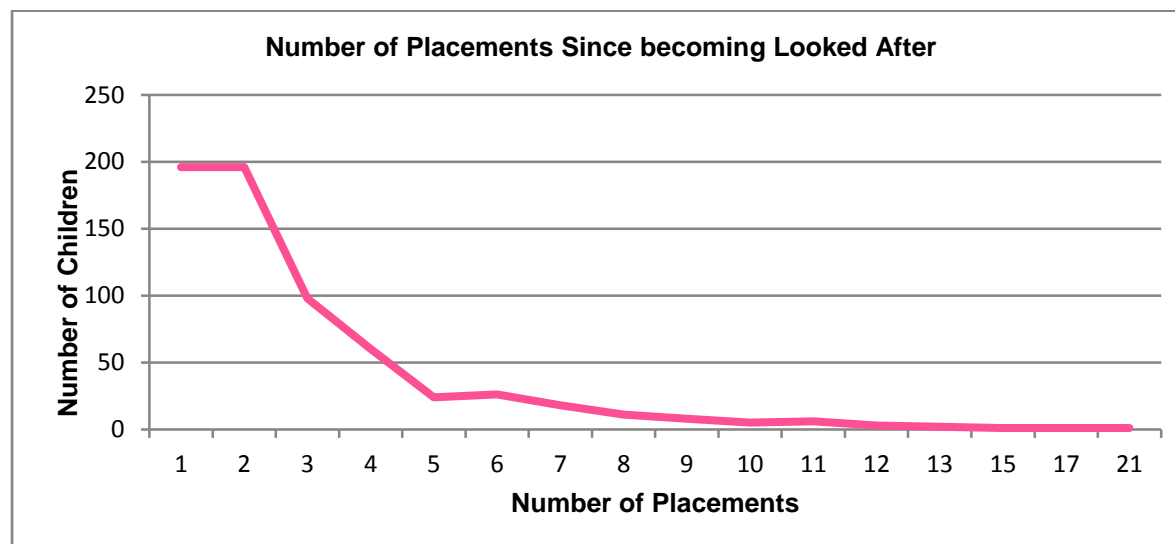
Data from CareFirst 22.11.17

Kirklees have more young people (11%) in residential care than our statistical neighbours and comparators (8%).

Kirklees have a total 58% of children in foster care. Kirklees have 34% of our total looked after children placed with our own foster carers compared to our comparators who have on 43.8%.

### *Number of Placements since becoming Looked After*

Table 4



Carefirst 22.11.17

The table above sets out the number of placements each young person has had since coming into care.

- 70% have had 3 placements or less
- 147 have had between 4 and 9 placements since coming into care
- 19 children have had 10 or more placements since coming into care

Evidence shows that having multiple care placements reduces children's opportunities to develop secure attachments. It may also worsen any existing behavioural and emotional difficulties. Therefore placement stability is something we will continue to strive to improve.

### **Age**

In Kirklees 58% of looked after children are aged 10 or above. Children at this age are far more likely to be placed in out of area, specialist residential placements, which are costly. There is currently little or no choice in placement availability for this age group. Links to family and education placements frequently disrupted through lack of placement choice. Looking at new entrants into the care system we can see that 10-15 year olds make up 22% of new entrants.

### **Children and young people living with disabilities in Kirklees**





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