

**Sufficiency Strategy Update**  
**January 2024**

This report provides an update on the progress against the priorities identified in the Sufficiency Strategy 2023-2025.

Our priorities are delivered through our 'Continuous Service Improvement Plans' for our Fostering, Residential and Placements services.

a) **Where possible children in care live in family homes.**

46 Special Guardianship Orders and 5 Child Arrangement Orders were made between April 2023- January 2024 which have supported children to remain within their family. Our team re structure has ensured that our kinship foster carers receive consistent support in their own right through a supervising social worker.

b) **Expand our Fostering Services to delivery more fostering homes for our Children.**

Our number of children placed in internal mainstream fostering households matched the 12 month average (168) in November 2023. Our continuous service development plan has implemented a number of policies and practices to support the expansion of our fostering service including relationships with our regional colleagues, relationships with our fostering community and network, quality assurance activity, fostering finance policy. We recognise more is required to invest in our fostering services to ensure that it has effective capacity and resource to deliver our aspirations to build our fostering community and ensure that the corporate centre recognises and promotes fostering for Kirklees as a top priority for the authority.

c) **Ensure our Residential Children's Home deliver outstanding care**

We have invested in our residential estate to ensure that the homes we provide deliver best quality Outstanding care for our children. We have undertaken a full refurbishment of one of our homes in 2023 and will use this as a blueprint for our estate over the next three years. As part of our continuous improvement strategy, we will continue to invest in our workforce ensuring that our practice remains current and effective supported by our revised progression pathway as part of our workforce strategy.

d) **Ensure that our children and young people have access to a spectrum of placement options to best meet their individual needs.**

We will ensure that our recruitment of in house foster carers is based on a current understanding of demand and that our focus remains to increase our services in house capacity. We will establish effective commissioning arrangements that build strong partnership and join working based on safe and effective commissioning principles.

**e) Build and develop our local relationship with the independent sector through effective market engagement to develop and manage a mixed economy of provision.**

Two residential children’s homes provider events have taken place in 2023. Visits by Commissioning and the Placement Team staff to all children’s home providers in Kirklees are taking place. A White Rose regional provider event is planned for spring 2024.

All new children’s home planning applications in Kirklees are being monitored by the Commissioning Team, contact is then made with providers to explore potential opportunities for us to work in partnership.

A new 16+ Supported Accommodation Electronic Market Place (approved list of providers) is current out to tender, which is in line with the new Ofsted 16+ Supported Accommodation regulations and categories. A 16+ Supported Accommodation Provider Engagement Event was held September 2023.

**f) Ensure that we can response to urgent / crisis need for accommodation for children and young people by developing our in house and commissioned provision designed to offer immediate access where required.**

GW: The Commissioning Team and Placement Team are working in partnership to actively engage with current approved providers and potential new providers to increase emergency placement opportunities in Kirklees and neighbouring authorities.

The Commissioning Team are developing and reviewing contracts and Individual Placement Agreements with all of our external and unregulated providers to ensure they meet need.

**Placement Sufficiency Headline Plan**

Updates against our Headline Plan:

Area	Outcome	by
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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Fostering</b></p>	<p>Increase the number of Kirklees Council Foster Carers</p>	<p><b>Ensuring that fostering is recognised as a LA priority driven by our Corporate Parenting strategy</b></p> <p>Our corporate parenting strategy and approach is currently being refreshed.</p> <p><b>Ensure that our finance arrangements for foster cares are competitive against IFA and neighbouring LAs</b></p> <p>A foster carer fee uplift was implemented in 2023 for 2022-2023. Kirklees Fostering Finance Policy to ensure fairness and consistency of payments and enhancements support our sufficiency requirements was launched in May 2023.</p> <p><b>Deliver an effectively resourced marketing strategy</b></p> <p>We are refreshing our fostering recruitment and marketing strategy</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Children's Homes</b></p>	<p>Expand our in-house capacity for caring for more children in our homes</p>	<p><b>Open our newly planned home 'Magdale House' in the spring 2023</b></p> <p>We are now finalising our registration for a new home that we anticipate will open within early new year 2024.</p> <p><b>Re-open our currently Closed home Healds Road in the spring 2023</b></p> <p>Healds Rd is now open with one young person living there and another moving in January 2024.</p> <p>Work with our cross council services to support our estate refurbishment programme and ensure that responses to damage and requirements for repair are undertaken swiftly and to a high quality.</p>

		<p>Aligning our placement support resources to support maintaining best and current practices within our homes</p> <p><b>Develop a business case based on invest to save principles, to expand our bedded in- house capacity by developing a small number of one and two bedded homes for children and young people, linked to our existing estate.</b></p> <p>Progress is being made to purchase a house from the open market to become a two person children’s home. A property has been identified, Corporate Assets colleagues are now taking the lead on carrying out due diligence.</p>
<p><b>Supported Living</b></p>	<p>Develop the range of independent/semi-independent accommodation options for our older young people in our care and those with care experience from our authority.</p>	<p><b>Review our commissioning arrangements and agree a new fit for purpose commissioning framework</b></p> <p>A revised list of Ofsted registered provider was put in place from the 28<sup>th</sup> October 2023. The new 16+ Supported Accommodation EMP will be operational from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.</p> <p><b>Explore the potential for partnerships with local third sector organisations to enhance our offer for Care experienced young adults</b></p> <p>The new 16+ Supported Accommodation EMP has provided us with the opportunity to grow local supported accommodation options by actively engaging with providers as part of the tender process.</p>