Children in Care Placement
Sufficiency Strategy 2017-21

"Providing Sufficient Accommodation For Children in Care and Care Leavers"

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

Stronger Families Safer Children

Version Control	Date	Author
1.0	20 October 2017	Susanna Williams
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Table of Contents

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

1. Introduction and purpose

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

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

This issue has been provided to close out the 2017 to 2021 Sufficiency Statement which will allow Derbyshire County Council to formulate the 2021 to 2025 Sufficiency Strategy and Statement.

2. Derbyshire's sufficiency vision

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

When assessing "sufficiency" Derbyshire County Council has considered the condition of the local market, supply and demand within the context of the current resource and overall budget priorities of the Council.

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

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

3. Needs assessment summary

- Derbyshire's population is predicted to increase by 8% (2016 to 2041), with numbers of children (0-18 year olds) in Derbyshire being predicted to rise to a similar extent. However, the proportion of the Derbyshire population falling within the 0-18 year old age range is predicted to fall.

- As of March 2020, there were 861 children in care in Derbyshire, a rise from 719 as of March 2018. Nevertheless, the total child in care population per 10k remains

below the national and Derbyshire's statistical neighbour average at 56 (SNA = 62.5).

- Our child in care population is growing fastest amongst children below age 10. The % rise between 2018 and 2020 is 51.7% compared to 13.3% amongst children aged 10 to 18.

- Between March 2018 and March 2020, the percentage increases amongst all Derbyshire's children in care population for the following age ranges were: under 1 (73%), 1 to 4 (39.2%), 5 to 9 (56.1%), 10 to 15 (15.7%), 16 & over (10.0%).

- New entrants into care have been increasing, with admissions rising by 16% between 2018 and 2020 (338 in 2018, 393 in 2020)

- Discharges have also risen by 29% over the same period (264 in 2018, 340 in 2020).

- Percentage increases in new entrants to care (between 2018 and 2020) are most prevalent in the following age bands: 5-9 (44%), 10-15 (40.0%), under 1 (5%), with decreases seen in 1-4 (-5%) and 16-17 (-3%).

- Growing complexity of need is also a driver for demand. Between March 2018 and March 2020, there was an 55% increase in admissions on an interim care order, while there was a 6% decrease in admissions under S20 voluntary care entry. This suggests an increasing proportion of entries into care are due to safety and welfare concerns.

- Between March 2018 and March 2020, increases were seen in the following admissions reasons: Abuse or neglect (28% increase), Family in acute stress (48% increase), Socially Unacceptable Behaviour (300% increase) and Parental illness or disability (92% increase). Decreases were seen for: Absent Parenting (41% decrease), CYP Disability (44% decrease) and family dysfunction (8% decrease).

- Between March 2018 and March 2020, the number of child protection plans starting as a result of physical abuse increased by 143%, while the number starting as a result of neglect increased by 70%.

- At March 2018 Derbyshire cared for 29 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) compared to 24 at March 2020. UASC form 2.8% of all children in care at March 2020. This is lower than the latest national average (March 2020) of 6%. The National Transfer Scheme Cap for Derbyshire is 60 UASC.

- As of March 2020, there were 399 Derbyshire care leavers in receipt of a leaving care service.

3.1 Meeting sufficiency requirements

- Between March 2018 and March 2020, the number of children in care rose by 19.7%, and the number of children placed more than 20 miles away rose to a similar extent. Consequently, the percentage of children placed more than 20 miles from their home at March 2020 (22.2%) has increased compared with March 2018 (18.4%).

- For a very small number of young people, a decision to place at a distance will have been in response to their individual needs and plan. However, the intention in the majority of cases is to place children and young people within 20 miles of home and within Derbyshire.

3.2 Stability and length of time in care

- Re-admissions to care as of March 2020 (9.3%) are lower than in the previous 2 years. Older children, children who enter care at the beginning of adolescence, children with additional behavioural and emotional needs are all more likely to experience multiple placement moves.

- According to government guidance, an SDQ (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire) score of 13 or below is normal and 17 and above is a cause of concern (between 14-16 is borderline). The average SDQ score for Derbyshire children in care remains borderline (15.8 in March 2018 and 16.9 as of March 2020), with 52.9% of children in care showing an SDQ score indicating cause for concern in 2020 compared to 46.2% in 2018.

- The percentage of children in 3 or more placements remained consistent between March 2018 and March 2020 at 9% and 10% respectively. Derbyshire outcomes were better (lower) than statistical neighbour and national outcomes in 2018 and 2019 but 0.6% higher in 2020.

- Between the 2017/18 (+0.2 percentage points) and 2018/19 (-1 percentage point) academic year, the gap between Derbyshire and national outcomes has narrowed for the % of children who have been looked after continuously for at least 12 months who are classed as persistent absentees. The % of Derbyshire children in care that have been looked after continuously for 12 months and have experienced at least one fixed term exclusion decreased between the 2017/18 (12.8%) and 2018/19 (10.8%) academic year. Education and placement stability are interrelated and support each other. *Note: 2019/20 national data not yet published.*

- Children discharged from care between April 2019 and March 2020 showed that 29.4% had been in care between 1 and 3 years, 25.3% had been in care for 6

months to under a year, 18.5% less than six months, 9.4% 6 weeks or less, 9.4% for 5 years and over and 7.9% between 3 to 5 years.

- More young people leaving care over the age of 16 are staying in placement until they are 18 years old (10% in 2018 and 18% in 2020), although between 2018 (4%) and 2020 (2%), there was a decrease in the percentage of care leavers aged between 19 and 21 who ceased to be looked after on their 18th birthday and remained with their former foster carer.

3.3 Types of placements and trends

- The percentage of children placed with in house foster carers and the absolute number of Council foster homes continues to slowly decline, although the absolute number of children placed with Derbyshire foster carers has grown through an increased placement utilisation rate. Absolute numbers placed in 'in-house' children homes also continues to fall. In part, this reflects a decision to close some homes in order to refurbish and re-open as smaller homes, and in part it reflects a reduction in occupancy due to the complex needs of the children being placed in some homes.

- Between March 2018 and March 2020 Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's) grew their share of all placements made by Derbyshire by 2%. At March 2020 IFA's cared for 26% of Derbyshire's child in care population. Agency residential was overall static despite the planned fall in residential provision delivered by Derbyshire. Placement growth trends reflect the need for more foster homes to care for both a bigger child in care population (19.7% rise between March 2018 and March 2020), but also a disproportionate rise amongst younger children (51.7% rise in under 10 year olds between March 2018 and March 2020).

- Between 2018 and 2020 Derbyshire increased the number of children adopted per month by 69%, but this is set within the context of very low numbers overall. The East Midlands Regional Adoption agency 'went live' in April 2019 and assumes responsibility for most adoption processes.

- The number of children subject to an SGO (Special Guardianship Order) rose from 432 at March 2018 to 576 at March 2020. The numbers discharged from care as a result of Special Guardianship increased from 12 in 2018 to 50 in 2020. However, Derbyshire continues to increase the overall number of children discharged from care (being 264 in 2018 rising to 340 in 2020).

- The total number of Derbyshire care leavers to their 21st birthday is 399. The percentage of care leavers (17-18 years old) living in suitable accommodation increased from 94% to 99% between 2018 and 2020, however, the percentage of care leavers (19-21 years old) living in suitable accommodation remained static between March 2018 (95%) and March 2020 (96%). Derbyshire aspires to

increase the percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation, despite the current figure being above both the national and statistical neighbour average. It has also commissioned 3 post -16 emergency accommodation beds.

Table 1 - Placement category at March 2018 and March 2020

Placement category	Number Placed March '18	% Placed March '18	Number Placed March '20	% Placed March '20	Percentage change 2018 to 2020	Percentage point change 2018 to 2020	Trend % Placed 2018 to 2020
Foster Placement (Agency)	174	24.2	226	26.2	29.9	2.0	↑
Foster Placement (DCC)	347	48.3	388	45.1	11.8	-3.2	↓
Placed for Adoption	23	3.2	39	4.5	69.6	1.3	↑
Residential Placement (Agency)	59	8.2	74	8.6	25.4	0.4	↑
Residential Placement (DCC)	38	5.3	31	3.6	-18.4	-1.7	↓
Placed with Parents	33	4.6	50	5.8	51.5	1.2	↑
Independent Living	39	5.4	40	4.6	2.6	-0.8	↓
Secure Unit	Less than 11	0.4	Less than 11	0.3	n/a	-0.1	↓
Other	Less than 11	0.4	Less than 11	1.2	n/a	0.8	↑

Table 2 – Placements by Distance at March 2018 and March 2020

Placement Category	Number of children in care March '18	% of children in care March '18	Number of children in care March '20	% of children in care March '20	% change 2018 to 2020	% point change 2018 to 2020
Placed 20 miles from home or less (inside or outside LA)	586	81.6	669	77.8	14.2 (↑)	-3.8 (↓)
Placed inside the LA boundary (at any distance from home)	450	62.6	494	57.4	9.8 (↑)	-5.2 (↓)

4. Feedback from young people

4.1 Consultation and participation

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

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

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

Derbyshire has developed a jointly agreed action plan against which children in care can hold services to account regarding mutually agreed improvements as well as to change and refresh its Pledge. The Pledge encapsulates what Derbyshire will do, what children in care commit to, and what we will do together.

The Big Conversation is a consultation opportunity for care leavers and children in care. In October 2020 we held the latest Big Conversation.

From the action plan 57% of the actions are now completed to the satisfaction of young people, 7% are still not completed and 36% are nearly completed.

Only 1 action is still classified as 'not completed' or red and this is due to technical challenges. With all the other significant progress has been completed and they are nearly ready to be agreed as completed by the young people who have been working with the managers.

The ongoing themes for action are:

-Accessible WIFI in children's homes.

-Further choice and communication with young people when they are moving home.

-Support for care leavers around financial management.

-Better support for young people to develop independence skills.

All young people in care over 11 years old and care leavers were invited to attend or feed into the event by asking a question.

The children in care council and care leavers council will be consulted to update and input new ideas into the action plan before the next event in April 2021. A survey will also be shared for children in care and care leavers to hear their views and issues that

can be incorporated into the next Big Conversation.

4.2 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

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

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

4.3 Care leavers

Significant levels of consultation and engagement with care leavers was conducted in 2018 to inform the new care leaver support service and the new care leaver accommodation service. Care leavers told us that one of the most important things for them is having a safe home, not just a place to live. Analysis of the care leaver survey against the 5 Keep on Caring outcomes told Derbyshire that a high percentage of young people feel:

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

Areas of concern identified:

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

Particular service areas highlighted for improvement were:

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

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

5. Progress against the sufficiency strategic intention published 2017

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

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

5.1 Edge of care

Derbyshire delivers a range of services to safely divert children from coming into care and to promote reconnection and reunification. Following a process of continuous review through 2019/20 we have strengthened the Locality Scrutiny Panel held in each Locality so as to improve oversight, scrutiny and challenge by the Head of Service, together with legal services and independent Managers, at key points in decision making for children. This is to ensure the right resources are identified for children at the right time thereby reducing the likelihood of admission to care and improve the chance of a return to family where this is required. The Preventing Family Breakdown Team is also closely aligned to the Scrutiny Panel in order to focus its edge of care offer to children. The Team is focussed on pathways to enable children to remain at home or make a sustainable return home or to extended family. Reunification work also continues and is closely aligned to the Placement and Commissioning Meeting and Agency Placement Panel led by the Assistant Director.

Family support staff located within our early help offer deliver parenting assessments to inform good decision making for children and support them residing at home with the right support.

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

5.2 Edge of care delivery intentions

The rising volume of children requiring a safeguarding service, alongside rising numbers of children in care informed 2018 Cabinet decisions to invest in new delivery structures. This significant investment increased the number of social workers in children teams and strengthen authoritative social work practice which clearly identifies and challenges risk for children

- Provide strong social worker supervisory and management oversight to drive practice in this area.
    - introduced no case holding Practice Supervisors in place of Senior Practitioners in social care

- introduced A Systemic Practice Lead to oversee and deliver systemic training and coach practice across the workforce
- introduced Team co-ordinators in each children's social work team.

Early help case work forms an essential part of Children's Services core offer to children, young people and families. Across Derbyshire there is a network of locality Early Help teams who provide a range of targeted support when there is an evidenced intensive level of needs. The teams use evidence-based programmes, practice and group work to deliver effective change with families. Derbyshire's offer includes two primary functions:

1. Family Support: to prevent harm and escalating risk to children and young people, reduce family conflict and breakdown, improve parenting capacity and family functioning
2. Youth Support: to prevent harm to children and young people, reduce child vulnerabilities (including substance misuse and mental health) and risk of child exploitation, reduce the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and to support successful transitions into adult life.

5.3   Placement provision

In 2017 Derbyshire said it would be the 'main provider of fostering and residential placements for children in care in Derbyshire'. This intention was met in 2017/18 and 2018/19 (54% and 53% respectively) but in 2019/20 only 49% of all Derbyshire children in care are placed in either a Derbyshire foster home or children's home.

6. Fostering

6.1 Fostering developments from 2017

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

Derbyshire is making good progress towards delivering the approaches that will impact on quality, stability and choice. It provides an 'end to end' in house fostering service across a range of placement types. It has increased investment in recruitment, retention, training and support to ensure good quality local placements are available. In April 2017 DCC introduced The Fostering Skills Allowance Scheme and reviewed it in September 2018. The new fee structure incentivises carers to have a child in placement for more total time, and to attend skills building training. The last 4 years have seen a steady growth in the number of children living with Derbyshire foster carers from 333 on 31 March 2017, to 347 March 2018, to 379 at March 2019, to 388 at March 2020.

Derbyshire has grown its specialist provision to provide more choice, and quality care for children with higher levels of need. Contract Carers offer homes to complex children and are additionally supported by regular reflective practice facilitated by a psychologist. At April 2020 Derbyshire had 51 contract carers and grew the volume of contract carers able to meet the needs of disabled children.

6.2 Staying Put

In 2017 we said that 'young people leaving care will be offered the opportunity to remain in their foster home beyond 18, if that is their wish'. Derbyshire has successfully embedded Staying Put, having increased the number of Staying put arrangements from 19 (2018) to 27 (2020). Less than10 placements support UASC.

6.3 Procured fostering placements

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

Derbyshire undertook a volume, trend and cost analysis in contribution to the D2N2 collective commissioning and procurement activity. The D2N2 volume assessment identified that there are sufficient local placements to meet current D2N2 demand, but that there are children placed outside of its geography, and other local authorities have children placed within its geography. The D2N2 Framework commissioning and contract management arrangements are expressly tasked with shaping the market to increasingly deliver more placements for local children, and to develop provision to meet the profile of need expressed by the D2N2 child in care cohort over the term of the contract. The D2N2 vision is to have all D2N2 children in care placed within 20 miles of its outer perimeter.

7. Adoption

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

At April 2019 The East Midlands Regional Adoption Agency assumed responsibility from Derbyshire for adoption processes, however, Derbyshire retains responsibility for identifying which children in its care are best served by adoption, submitting applications for non-agency adoptions, meeting the growth in 'access to records' requests, and supporting birth families. Derbyshire continues to make effective use of the Adoption Support Fund, including for children who were in care before a Special Guardianship Order was made.

The recruitment of adopters willing to consider fostering for adoption remains a priority for Adoption East Midlands to ensure that Derbyshire can consider early permanence for our children wherever possible. In 2019/20 and 20/21, fewer than 10 children were placed in fostering for adoption placements. Overall, between 5-10% of Derbyshire children who are placed for adoption are placed with families approved for fostering

for adoption. We have strengthened scrutiny and challenge re pre-birth children which we anticipate will lead to increased foster to adopt placements.

8.   Special Guardianship Orders

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

9.   Residential care

9.1 Derbyshire children homes

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

Derbyshire continues to invest in the quality of its children homes in acknowledgement that some children's needs are best served by the more intensive support provided in residential care.   At any one time, Derbyshire's children's homes have capacity to care for 32 children, including 9 beds for children with disabilities who are looked after on a full-time basis. We also have 15 short breaks beds. At April 2021, all of our homes are rated as Good or better, with two rated as Outstanding.

We are proactive and innovative in evaluating and developing our range of provision. In March 2019, we opened an additional 2 bed children's home to fill a gap in provision for young people with significant emotional well-being and mental health difficulties. This home is improving outcomes for young people. We are also currently progressing the registration of an additional children's home which will offer a swift response to support fragile placements, and the re-registration of a 4-bedded home following extensive refurbishment of the building.

9.2   Reunification

In 2018 a focussed reunification work stream with Dartington Social Research Unit addressed the value of supporting older children to return home in a planned and supported manner. This conversation has continued within locality Children's Services and across our residential staff groups.

Reunification work continues and is closely aligned to the Placement and Commissioning Meeting and Agency Placement Panel led by the Assistant Director.

9.3   Residential Provision: Therapeutic and Specialist

The 2017 - 2021 Strategy noted the ' ongoing implementation of re-designed residential provision which enables children and young people in care who require specialist, therapeutic provision to receive this in Derbyshire, and complete a robust review of provision in all areas identifying any gaps or opportunities for provision

development such as disability specialist provision.' In addition to the quality improvements made across our residential provision.

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

9.4   Procured residential care placements

The D2N2 collaborative procured Residential Placements Framework which commenced on 1 February 2020. The contract management of the D2N2 Framework is led by Nottingham City Council, but each authority retains responsibility for ensuring their child's needs are met in that particular home.

As with fostering placements, the intention is that D2N2 children are placed locally, and that a system is developed to enable D2N2 commissioners to be notified of both new and vacant placements. It is anticipated 'local' will result in a better service to both the child, but also the placement provider as the child's social worker will be more accessible. D2N2 anticipates the development of a virtuous circle which will increasingly prompt Framework providers to offer local placements to D2N2 members. In October 2020, it was evidenced that 73% of residential placements secured through the D2N2 framework for Derbyshire Children in Care were within the D2N2 boundary.

At any one time Derbyshire has around 60 children or 7% of the total child in care population placed in agency residential.

10.   Emotional Health and Wellbeing

10.1   Specialist therapeutic informed practice

Action for Children, trauma informed emotional health and wellbeing service, is a multi-disciplinary team of Clinical and Educational Psychologists and Therapeutic Workers commissioned by Derbyshire County Council and the CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group). The provider specialises in providing high quality training, consultation and therapeutic interventions to children in care and care leavers alongside the networks surrounding them. It aims to help children and young people resolve trauma and develop healthy and trusting relationships.

The team provides:

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

d. A monthly Adoption Support Group co-facilitated with the Adoption Support Team
e. Attachment-focused parenting groups for Foster Carers
f. Intensive direct therapeutic interventions based on a variety of models.

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

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

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

An independent review of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision was commissioned from ISOS and reported its findings and insights in June 2019. There is a three year SEND strategy and transformation plan in place with a timeline to deliver all actions by 2023. The strategy covers six themes;

- Co-production with parents and young people
- Partnership working and joint commissioning across education, health and care
- Identification and assessment of needs, information and access to support
- Building inclusive capacity in mainstream schools and settings, and providing targeted support for inclusion
- Developing responsive, effective local specialist provision
- Preparation for adulthood.

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

Through significant consultation with Care Leavers during 2018 we said we would commission accommodation that better met the needs of those children in care approaching independence as well as care leavers. Older Children in care and care leavers told us they wanted different types of accommodation such as shared houses and self-contained flats within all districts in Derbyshire.

12.1 Children's Accommodation and Support Service (CASS)

The children's accommodation and support service was re-commissioned in October 2018. A consortium of providers delivers 75 units of accommodation for children in care and care leavers between the age of 16 and 21.

27 units of accommodation are staffed 24/7 with a further 48 units in dispersed or shared properties. There are three spaces to house homeless young people. Each place in a dispersed property has a nominal entitlement to 5 support hours per week, although this can be flexed across provision and individuals as needs rise and fall. The contract also allows for additional support hours to be purchased.

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

12.2   Housing Related Support

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

12.3   Supported Lodgings

Supported Lodgings development and the Staying Put support service was contracted out alongside the Leaving Care Service. That contract ended 30 June 2019. From 1 July 2019 the holistic Leaving Care service has been delivered internally within Derbyshire County Council. An increase in the recruitment and retention of supported lodgings placements, and improved Staying Put support has taken placed with a successful recruitment campaign in early 2021. At December 2018 Derbyshire had less than 10 supported lodgings providers. The Supported Lodgings campaign and increased the number of Supported Lodging Providers to 14 (providing a total of 18 beds) with two further assessments currently underway.

13.   Care leavers

In 2018 Derbyshire commissioned an external consultant to undertake a stock take of Derbyshire's care leaver offer and make recommendations. In November 2018 Cabinet agreed the need for a care leaver support service re structure to deliver on new legislation and the outcomes articulated in Keep on Caring. Derbyshire has invested in a new strategic lead post to be accountable for care leaver outcomes and to improve service coordination and operational practice.

At March 2020, 96% of care leavers lived in suitable accommodation to age 21, higher than the England and statistical neighbour average at 85.6%.

13.1   Care leaver delivery intentions (Progress in italics)

1. Increase Supported Lodgings capacity by 50% over 2019/20 – *see item 12.3.*
2. To promote placement longevity and improve support to Staying Put placements – *We have two staying put workers who offer support to providers – this is well received*

3. Promote EET as offering the best opportunity to access secure affordable accommodation – *EET outcomes have increased to over 60%*
4. To improve care leavers financial stability, promote a Council tax exemption agreement across Derbyshire Tier 2 Councils – *achieved and also achieved for young people who live out of county*
5. Further develop the Offer to respond to 21 to 25-year olds returning for a service because they are homeless. – *the 21-25 service and practice is well embedded.*

14. Acknowledgements

Department	Name	Role
Children Services	Jane Parfrement, Alison Noble, Isobel Fleming, Linda Dale, Iain Peel	Senior Management Team
Performance and Analytics	Gareth Mainprize	Management Information Officer
	Sara Lewis	Asst Head of Service: Performance and Analytics
Children's Social Care	Patsy Burrows	Head of Children in Care provision
Children's Social Care	Luke Impey	Operational Manager Fostering and Adoption