

Market Position Statement
for
Looked After Children and Young People
August 2016 – August 2019

DRAFT

Drivers for Change

'Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children' statutory guidance came into effect in April 2011, which requires local authorities to be able to access sufficient accommodation, where possible, in their locality ('the Sufficiency Duty'). The sufficiency duty requires local authorities to do more than simply ensure that accommodation be 'sufficient' in terms of the number of beds provided. They must have regard to the benefits of securing a range of accommodation through a number of providers. The accommodation must also meet the needs of children and young people

As a Corporate Parent Newcastle City Council needs to demonstrate how it meets its Sufficiency Duty as well as planning for how it will continue to meet it in the future. The Council needs to ensure there are sufficient appropriate placements available to meet the needs of children and young people who are Looked After, both those looked after now and to meet future demand.

What is a Market Position Statement?

Market Position Statements are designed to help care and support providers and the people who use care and support services in Newcastle understand what services are currently on offer in the City, and also what we think these services should look like in the future. We are producing a range of these documents looking at different client groups and service models in the City.

In developing these documents we speak to people that use Social Care services, the people that work in services and the organisations that run them to understand what they think of what's currently on offer and how they would like to see it change. We want to use these documents as the start of a conversation with providers, carers and people who use services, about the vision for the future of our Social Care market in Newcastle.

This document represents our **Looked After Children Sufficiency Statement**. It is part of a suite of documents that provide the key information and statistics on needs, demand and trends for the city. It should therefore be read in conjunction with:

- the Newcastle Future Needs Assessment
- The joint Wellbeing for Life Strategy
- The other Market Position Statements we have developed or are developing.

Links to these documents can be found at

<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/business/tenders-contracts-and-procurement/market-position-statements>

Who is it for?

This document is aimed at:

- existing and potential providers of placement services for Looked After Children, who will be able to use the information to develop their business plans to best support children and young people who are Looked After. Providers can learn about our intentions for what services in Newcastle will look like and use this to inform their own planning for the future;
- community stakeholders, including children and young people who are Looked After and their carers, to understand and shape the direction of travel in Newcastle;
- voluntary and community organisations and community and faith groups who make a key contribution to building and maintaining individual and community independence. We hope

these partners, who may or may not deliver commissioned services, will be able to use the Position Statement to understand how their offers support children and young people who are Looked After;

- health and education colleagues, who will be crucial partners in ensuring appropriate health and educational interventions are delivered alongside social care interventions to support children and young people who are Looked After to fulfil their potential ;
- people who are interested in starting up social enterprises or a business in this sector, who will be able to use this document to identify future opportunities in the market.
- social care managers and staff

Introduction

We know that all children and young people require a happy, stable home life if they are to achieve their potential.

We know that children and young people who cannot live with their birth parents do best if they can live with a family member or other person connected to their family.

We know that those children and young people who do require local authority care, a stable, well-matched placement where they can live until they are prepared and ready to leave, is the single most influential factor in improving children's outcomes and creating the conditions from which they can go on to live successful adult lives.

We currently commission a range of services from a mixed market of internal and external providers working to ensure that placements are of the highest quality and cost effective.

Ensuring we have sufficient accommodation for children and young people in care and those leaving care is a core part of how we meet our broader duties to ensure that children and young people's needs are fully assessed, and that effective care planning results in well matched placements able to meet the child's identified needs.

We want to support children and young people to remain within their families wherever possible and prevent them from becoming looked after. Where this is not possible, we will seek to ensure sufficient accommodation, is available to support children and families as early as possible. Our aim is to improve the choice quality of accommodation for children; reducing placement breakdown and supporting better working together in order to reduce the numbers of children and young people coming into care. In addition we will continue to provide, develop and commission services which deliver value for money.

In Newcastle, we take preventative action to support children and families so that fewer children and young people become looked after. Our Family Insights Project, Common Assessment Framework and Newcastle Families Programme arrangements

set the direction of travel towards a more family centred, *whole family* approach, which encourages children's, young people's and adult services to identify child and wider family needs which extend beyond the individual they are supporting. Intervening early with a *whole family* approach can help avoid problems escalating to crisis level and reduce the number of families and individuals who need intensive support in the future.

Our Vision

We have high aspirations for our children and young people and will be strong advocates for them. We want to help the children and young people in our care to succeed in life. We are committed to being an effective, caring, and ambitious corporate parent. We care both about and for the children and young people in our care and seek to give them the skills they need to fulfil their ambitions.

Our objectives

This Market Position Statement forms part of our approach to corporate parenting. It describes the services we have and our commissioning intentions for the future. Our objectives are that:

- where possible, children and young people will live safely with their families, reducing the need to be cared for by intervening early
- children and young people receive the right services and remain in care for as little time as possible
- being in care does not prevent the child or young person from acquiring the skills which will help them have a successful and fulfilling future
- we have a range of good quality local placements for children and young people, both those who are in care and those leaving care, offering local choice and achieving high levels of placement stability
- accommodation is safe and secure
- children and young people in care and those who are care leavers are supported to have improved outcomes

Our story

A Looked After Child is one who is accommodated by the local authority, a child who is subject to an interim care order, full care order or emergency protection order; or a child who is remanded by court into local authority accommodation or youth detention accommodation.

Looked After Children may be placed with parents, foster carers (including relatives and friends), prospective adopters, in Children's Homes or in secure accommodation.

As at 31 March 2016 there were 498 Looked After Children in the care of the Local Authority, representing a 1.4% reduction on the previous year (505 Looked After Children were being supported on 31 March 2015).

Looked after children per 10,000 0-17 year olds							
Authority	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016 prov	Direction of Travel
Newcastle	99	101	100	100	90	88.5	↑
Statistical Neighbour Av.	92	93	93	93	94		↓
North East Av.	73	78	80	81	82		↓
England Av.	58	59	60	60	60		↔
Gap-to-SN	7.2	8.5	6.7	6.6	-4.3	-5.8	
Gap-to-NE	26	23	20	19	8	6.5	
Gap-to-England	41	42	40	40	30	28.5	
Best - Wokingham					20		
Worst - Blackpool					158		
No. of children (Newcastle):							
	530	550	550	555	505	498	
How many children would Newcastle look after to equal:							
Best Performing LA					113		
Worst Performing LA					889		

The table above shows that the number and rate of LAC have reduced compared to 2014/15. We are **5.8 lower** than our statistical neighbours, 6.5 higher than the North East average.

Early Intervention

We have carried out a whole system review of family services from age 0-25 in order to develop investment opportunities for long term sustainable family support with a strengthened focus on prevention and early intervention services. This will enable us to expand the provision of early intervention services and help to reduce the need for children and young people to enter care.

To reduce the amount of time children and young people spend in our care, we have introduced frequent reunification meetings.

Fostering and Staying Put

We have seen the proportion of placements in Newcastle shift towards greater use of in house foster placements and away from external residential and fostering placements. Challenges to this include ensuring sufficiency for large sibling groups, children and young people with high care needs and children and young people in the criminal justice system.

Along with six other Councils, we have worked together to develop a contract that ensures where a child or young person is placed into foster care we know that the service will support that child or young person to achieve the best outcomes possible.

We support 36 young people in Staying Put placements. Formal arrangements are now in place with both internal foster care placements and with external IFA providers which will ensure this type of support continues to be available to young people who wish to remain with their foster carers.

What we do

Early Intervention

- Family Insights Project
- CAMHS
- Common Assessment Framework
- Newcastle Families Programme

Foster Care

- Newcastle's Foster a Future programme (in house)
- NE7 (The Council leads a consortium, working with 6 other local authorities in the region to contract with Independent Foster Care Agencies (IFAs), known as the NE7)
- Staying Put requirements

Residential Care

- In house residential provision
- NE6 (The Council leads a consortium, working with 6 other local authorities in the region to contract with residential care providers)
- Secure Children's Homes
- Secure Remand placements
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
- High Care Needs placements
- NE12+ Independent Special Schools and Colleges
- 16+ Accommodation

Adoption

- Post Adoption Support Fund

Independent Visitors

- Befriending and Support

We will continue to monitor foster placements to make sure they are effective, fit for purpose and support looked after children and young people to meet their goals.

We have identified the need to work with providers to encourage them to develop their range of foster carers, for example BME carers, those able to take sibling groups or teenagers as we recognise the need to increase opportunities in this area.

Accommodation options

86.7% of care leavers are considered to be in suitable accommodation, including 36 young people in 'staying put' arrangements. This relates to 274 of 316 care leavers and is an increase from 2015. Newcastle's percentage is 6.7 points higher than its statistical neighbours, 3.7 higher than the regional average and 5.7 higher than the England average.

Our statutory duty is to ensure we have access to sufficient accommodation provision to meet local need.

Residential care

We are proud that we have two of our four in-house residential services rated as "Outstanding" by Ofsted with the other two rated "Good". We also ensure when procuring placements that the external providers we work with are rated as at least "good" overall.

Most of our placements are within the City, however, we currently support 47 children and young people in residential placements which are outside of the City. For some, this is the right thing to do, for others, we have identified that the only reason they have been placed out of area is because we did not have a suitable placement available in the City. We have therefore reviewed the use of out of area residential placements and have identified the need to develop a service which can support children and young people who have complex needs. We have also looked at our in-house services and identified that one is environmentally no longer fit for purpose. We will therefore seek capital funding to develop and expand our existing residential care offer.

We are working with providers and other Local Authorities across the region to explore the need to develop short break services for children and young people, including those who have life limiting conditions

16+ accommodation

We currently support 22 people aged over 16 in residential care homes. While capacity fluctuates as new providers enter or leave this market, current providers have the capacity to support 67 people. As such, we believe we have enough sufficiency within the market.

Nine young people aged over 16 live in supported accommodation services. This is an unregulated market and providers can easily exit and enter.

The 16+ service has partnered with YHN young people's service to provide a range of support services to meet the differing needs of young people and care leavers. This includes a recently commissioned intensive service designed to offer enhanced support for young people who may otherwise struggle to maintain their own tenancy. Once in a tenancy the young person remains there and new housing stock is added to the project. This reduces the number of moves a young person experiences and allows them to opt to live in parts of the city in which they have existing support links and the care team can build community capital for sustainable support.

The monitoring of all changes of placement and requests for placements is overseen by the Care and Resource panel in order to provide senior management oversight of the types for accommodation used in support of care leavers or those preparing to leave care.

The current market can support over 40 people. All services have been monitored and found to be satisfactory. We will not seek to increase the available numbers of placements as the current market can meet our sufficiency needs. Instead, we will explore the potential to develop formal commissioning arrangements for 16+ accommodation. This will enable us to work with providers and shape the market; ensuring that services meet our quality and outcome expectations while supporting children and young people to achieve their goals. It will also allow us to work with providers to ensure their service can support children and young people to move towards independence and away from a reliance on support. This approach will support us to ensure all of our care leavers are in suitable accommodation.

We have also identified the potential to develop 'step down' arrangements, where a young person in a residential placement for example can be 'stepped down' into a foster care placement or supported tenancy. We will continue to explore this opportunity over the next six months to identify if it is a service which we need within the city.

Adoption

We have invested in increasing the capacity of our Adoption Service including the introduction of 'Family Finders' and this has helped us to move children and young people through the adoption process in a timely manner. This has meant:

- on average, children and young people spend 564 days in care before being placed with an adoptive family. This is 25 days shorter than 2015. Newcastle's average was 32 days shorter than its statistical neighbours and 29 days shorter

than the England average. We are working towards achieving the national threshold of 426 days

- our average time between placement order and finding a match with adoptive family is 135 days. This is 93 days shorter than the regional average and 88 days shorter than the England average.

We will continue to monitor the impact of this approach by looking at the number of children and young people adopted and the time taken to complete the process.

While we have worked hard to reduce the time children and young people spend in care before adoption, the rate and number of adoptions have been falling in Newcastle since it peaked in 2013/14, when 27 per 10,000 0-18 population were adopted from care (equating to 60 children and young people). Our latest data places us significantly below the latest known comparator and national averages from 2014/15. Comparator group data for 2015/16 will be published later in 2016, and we anticipate a significant reduction will also be evident nationally.

While our performance in this area should be seen against Government research which has revealed a 15% decline in the number of children and young people being considered for adoption in 2015, we also believe we have identified the need to target our recruitment on people who can take children and young people from minority backgrounds or accommodate larger sibling groups.

We have been a pilot authority for the Post Adoption Support Fund. As of the 1st April 2016 all local authorities are required to establish post adoption support provision. We have established some short term arrangements as this provision is likely to become integrated with the wider 'Regionalising Adoption' agenda.

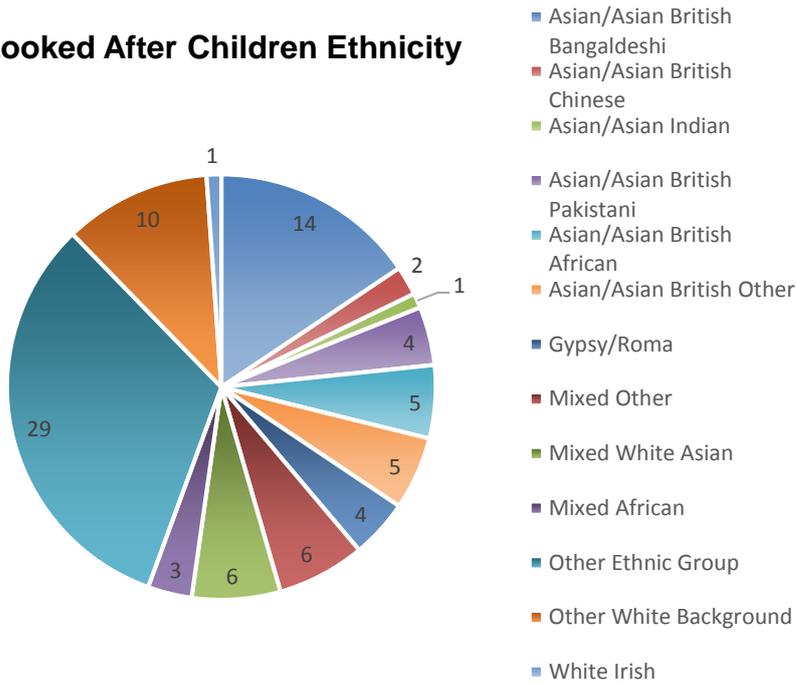
Placement Panel

We are introducing a multi-agency Placement Panel to enable greater challenge and more consistent decision making and we have amended the timescale for reviews to increase opportunities for challenge by Independent Reviewing Officers.

Who are our Looked After Children and Young People?

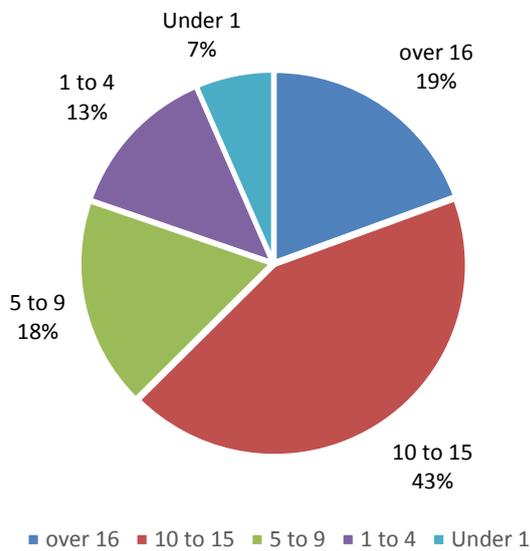
Of the 498 Looked After children and young people on 31 March 2016, 51% were male; 49 % were female. 81.5% identified as white British with 18.5% identifying other minority backgrounds as follows:

Looked After Children Ethnicity

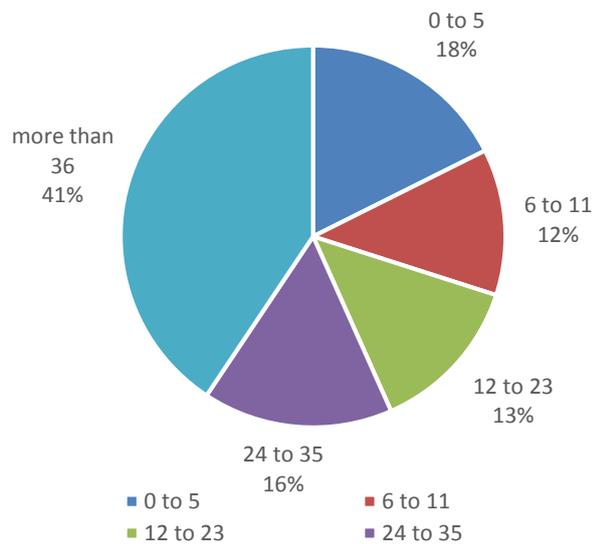


The age group and length of time in Care of Looked After Children was recorded as follows:

Age Group



Number of months in care



What this means

As a Corporate Parent, we aim to improve outcomes for children and young people by:

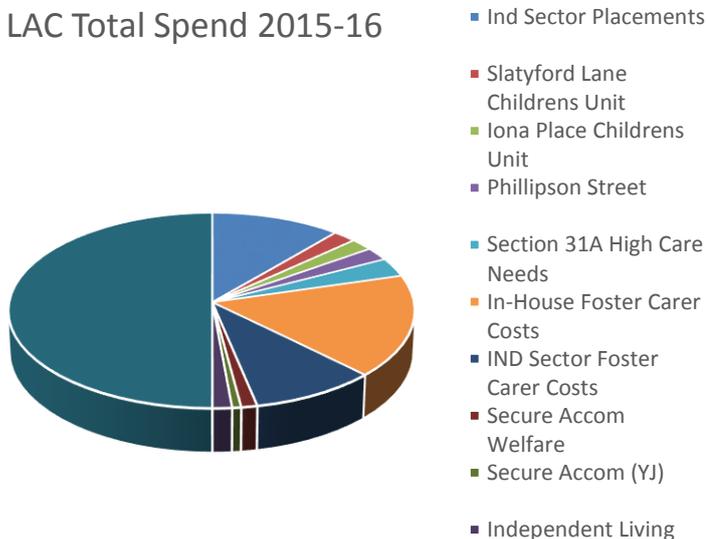
- Reducing the number of children and young people coming into care by intervening earlier;
- Increasing the number of children and young people returning home, where appropriate, and in a timely manner;
- Increasing choice and range of placements available within the local area, whilst recognising that out of area placements in some cases may be a more positive option;
- Commissioning jointly with other authorities in the region where appropriate to achieve increased value for money, sufficiency of provision and drive up quality;
- Improving the stability and quality of placements to meet the individual needs of children and young people who need to be looked after, with due regard to their age, ability, gender, ethnicity and religion;
- Maintaining and supporting placements for those children and young people that are settled in their placement and where possible seek a long term match;
- Ensuring that those placed for adoption are matched with a loving family as quickly as possible;
- Supporting integration between looked after children and young people's services, health and education.

Finances and funding

The charts on the below outline the total spend by Newcastle City Council on Looked After Children and young people for financial Year 2015-16.

Description	Total £'s
Independent Sector Placements	3,973,319
Slatyford Lane Children's Unit	723,760
Iona Place Children's Unit	699,602
Phillipson Street	767,500
Section 31A High Care Needs	1,106,232
In-House Foster Carer Costs	6,016,231
Independent Sector Foster Care	3,303,820
Secure Accommodation Welfare	415,312
Secure Accommodation (YJ)	234,930
Independent Living	505,391
Totals	17,746,100

LAC Total Spend 2015-16



What this means for providers

Where children and young people do need to become looked after, we need to strengthen our focus on permanency, increase discharges and reduce the amount of time children and young people spend in the care system, ensuring those who can, can return home as soon as it is safe and that families are supported to continue to keep them safe.

For those children and young people who can't return home, we need to provide a suitable permanent home without delay to improve children and young people's outcomes and encourage successful transition to adulthood. The Council believes that outcomes for children and young people are better met if they are placed near to their family and friends within a family setting, and therefore the aim is to place children and young people in or as close as possible to Newcastle, where appropriate. High quality placements within the local area can help to avoid disruptions to the child's education or training, keep sibling groups together, where appropriate, and ensure better integration of services.

We will do this by actively recruiting local people who are able to adopt or foster children and young people using both informal advertising, e.g. word of mouth and formal publicity campaigns. We will particularly seek to recruit those who are able to support larger sibling groups.

There is an ongoing campaign to recruit more adopters to provide more opportunities for children and young people to be permanently placed with a loving family, where appropriate.

We also recognise that sometimes this approach will not be appropriate and the child or young person may need to be placed at a distance from a particular locality or certain individuals.

Effective commissioning, including jointly commissioning with regional authorities where appropriate, will improve placement choice, reduce placement breakdown, increase value for money and support integration between looked after children and young people's services, health and education to reduce numbers of children and young people becoming looked after in often high cost placements.

We will work with other Councils in the region to develop opportunities for education, residential and building based short break providers. We have also identified a need to increase the number of in-house residential placements, including the potential to develop a "step-down" service which will support children and young people in their transition from residential care to independence. We will further shape these plans over the next 6 months.

We require providers to work with us and key stakeholders to maintain and stabilise placements in order to improve outcomes for children and young people through placement stability, to be flexible, driven and outcome focused to achieve multi-agency 'wrap around' responses to improve outcomes for looked after children and young people.

While we are not seeking to increase the numbers of places we have available, we will continue to work with providers to ensure that there is a comprehensive outcomes framework which can be used to ensure children and young people are supported to achieve their goals.

We want to improve outcomes for care leavers – we need to work closely with health partners and adults' services to improve transition planning around the physical and emotional health needs of young people leaving care, particularly those who are vulnerable and at risk of not receiving the health services they need as adults. There needs to be greater focus on the need for providers to prepare young people for independence.

Key contacts

Internal and external key contacts for organisations and service users who want to find out more / develop ideas with other organisations

Commissioning

Write to:

Room 104

Newcastle City Council

Civic Centre

Barras Bridge

Newcastle upon Tyne

NE1 8QH

Phone: 0191 211 5394

E-mail:

adult.commissioning@newcastle.gov.uk

Wider support to Looked After Children

- The current Independent Visitors contract has been developed through the established sub-regional consortium which Durham Council leads.
- We have an established Alternative Education provision which consists of 28 providers. This has increased our offer than the previous contract and is available to the Virtual Head to use to source educational provision for looked after young people where required.
- Further work is needed to review the use of tutors and bespoke education provision for looked after children.

Other relevant commissioning activity

- We are continuing to develop our approaches to meet the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) reforms.
- Domestic abuse services have been recommissioned to deliver a citywide integrated offer which includes a new refuge and outreach services.
- The Community Family Hub and city wide family support services are being recommissioned with new contracts due to be awarded by autumn 2016.
- Further work is needed to review the use of tutors and bespoke education provision for looked after children. This will inform a future exercise to either commission a framework of providers or to work with NEPRO to establish a new category of provision that the authority can draw from.
- You can find out more in our market position statement on Parental Needs here:
<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/business/tenders-contracts-and-procurement/market-position-statements>