



STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Sufficiency Strategy for Children in Care

2024 - 2027

Ambitious Stockport, creating opportunities *for everyone*

The Sufficiency Strategy and the Children and Young People Plan

This document sets out our approach to ensuring that we have sufficient placements for our children and young people in care for the period 2024 until 2027.

The Sufficiency Strategy is one of a suite of documents that contributes to the delivery of the Children and Young People Plan 2024-2027 and is key to delivery of our Corporate Parenting Strategy.

Our overarching ambition for Stockport is “to be the best place to live happy and healthy lives. We want to create a place where anything is possible, a place that everyone right across the Borough can be proud of:

Our vision for children and families is key to achieving this ambition.

The Children and Young People Plan identifies seven Big Ambitions:

Ambition 1 – All the services that work with children and families work together to ensure families get the help they need when they need it and children and young people are safe and supported by their family networks

Ambition 2 – Working together with families and communities, all children have the best start in life and are ready for school at the end of reception;

Ambition 3 – All children and young people can access and engage in education and achieve the best they can;

Ambition 4 – Children and families with SEND receive the best possible support at the right time to ensure the best possible outcomes are achieved

Ambition 5 – All children, young people and families have access to a clear and inclusive early help offer;

Ambition 6 – All children and young people enjoy good emotional health and wellbeing and can access co-ordinated robust and timely support based on need;

Ambition 7 – Children in care and care leavers have stable and loving homes and are equipped with the skills needed to live a fulfilling, successful and rewarding life.

The Sufficiency Strategy specifically supports the delivery of Ambition 7.

Introduction to the Stockport Sufficiency Strategy

Within the Children's Act 1989, there is an explicit requirement for Local Authorities to provide or procure placements for Children in Care. This duty requires *"local authorities to take steps that secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the authority's area 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"*.

Ensuring the Sufficiency Duty is met, requires Stockport to safeguard, either through direct provision or commissioned services, a range of placements sufficient to meet the needs of all children in care. Stockport's Sufficiency Strategy for Children in Care draws together the findings from extensive research into the needs of children and young people in care and explores the current picture of accommodation within Stockport.

This Sufficiency Strategy sets out the current and future needs of children in care in Stockport. This in turn will inform:

- Our recruitment strategy for foster placements and supported lodgings providers;
- Our children's home development programme
- Engagement with key providers who can help us to meet a wider range of needs within or close to Stockport.
- Forecasting the demand for care leavers for post 18 housing and supported accommodation

This Sufficiency Strategy will be published on the Stockport Council website.

The Strategy has been designed to be read alongside the **Greater Manchester (GM) Children's Sufficiency Observatory**.

[GM Sufficiency Analysis - Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](https://greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

This is a database of placement activity across the region, which is updated on a quarterly basis. It gives a snapshot of authorities' commissioning activity and builds a picture of emerging trends.

This **Strategy** also summarises the Greater Manchester proposals around sufficiency in the region. Stockport Council will be pursuing actions that are set out within the Stockport document. We will also be considering joining GM commissioning initiatives, where they are

relevant to the needs of Stockport young people. Stockport's Children's Commissioning team, meet regularly and work closely with regional colleagues, to develop proposals and contribute to shared initiatives.

Local Commitments

We are committed to ensuring that children and young people can remain safely within their own families wherever this is consistent with their wellbeing.

1. We have developed a range of preventative and family help services that support families to address issues that may otherwise lead to a breakdown in family relationships, and which enable children and young people to remain safely in the care of their parents or extended families. In recent years, we have increased the services in Stockport Family supporting these families to prevent children being taken into care.
2. We are also committed to improving the range of support available to children with Special Educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families, again to ensure that this group of children and young people are also able to remain within their families wherever possible.
3. Where children and young people do need to come into care, we are committed to ensuring that as many as possible are placed with foster carers within Stockport, and that those carers are supported to provide the level of care we expect and require for the children we are responsible for.
4. Our approach to ensuring that we have sufficient placements for our children and young people in care is one that includes:
 - Ensuring that we look after those children and young people for whom being in care is the only way of ensuring their safety and protection;
 - Ensuring that we invest in 'edge of care services' so that families are supported to ensure children remain within their families where it is safe to do so;
 - Ensuring that we secure permanency through adoption, Special Guardianship Orders and Child Arrangement Orders for younger children who cannot remain within their families wherever possible;
 - Utilising foster placements for children and young people in care wherever possible. Also continuing to search for foster placements for young people who are in residential provision.

Social and Economic Pressures

Economic and social change over recent years has been rapid and significant. National and international forces have impacted on the sufficiency of accommodation for children in care. Despite sustained creative efforts across the region, there are significant greater forces at work, which are driving challenges with sufficiency and rapidly rising costs.

- Placement costs have risen sharply, and this creates challenge for the delivery of other services to children, families and residents. In 2022 a review of the sector by the Competitions and Markets Authority reported that *“there are significant problems in how the placements market is functioning”*, identifying a number of structural issues including *“a lack of placements of the right kind, in the right places”*, as well as some of the largest private providers *“making materially higher profits and charging higher prices than we would expect if this market were functioning effectively”*.
- The impact of Brexit has been felt in the sector, with European workers returning to the continental mainland, creating vacancies across the workforce. Vacancies in many other sectors, such as retail have then drawn staff from the childcare sector. Commercial roles are often better paid, with more flexibility and less responsibility, making them an attractive option for the workforce.
- The world-wide impact of COVID, has also reduced the workforce. Factors include keyworkers taking early retirement, some choosing to return to less stressful roles, with others now preferring home-based work. Significant numbers are coping with the effects of long-COVID, by working fewer hours or choosing less demanding roles, away from the sector.
- These factors are making recruitment particularly challenging. Although children's homes report vacancies, many are unable to staff the settings to a level that enables operation at full capacity. We are also seeing a growing number of young people who require higher staffing ratios, again, increasing pressure on staff requirements. Social workers report a growing complexity of need among children in care.
- Stockport is real living wage accredited and actively promotes the Real Living Wage across all council spend. This has also been a factor in increasing costs for settings, leading to requests for fee uplifts. Providers commonly list rising energy and food prices among the increasing costs needed to keep homes financially viable. These costs are then passed onto local authorities, through uplifted placement fees.
- Rising costs of living has also impacted on the numbers of young people requiring accommodation. As families face increased economic hardship, stress within the home can build, leading to damage to relationships and instability in the family structure.

- In recent years, we have also seen increasing numbers of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) through the mandated home office national transfer scheme alongside spontaneous arrivals and age disputes from young people in hotels for migrant families. Stockport accommodates young refugees in a range of settings, including foster homes, children's residential homes, semi-independent units and supported lodgings (where a young person lives in a domestic setting, supported by the householder). This increase in demand for placements has put significant pressure on sufficiency.
- From October 2023, all semi-independent settings, where 16–17-year-olds are accommodated, now require Ofsted registration under the Supported Accommodation Regulations (2023). This stringent application process and inspection regime is likely to increase placement costs, as organisations seek to meet the government requirements. Costs could be incurred by a need for additional staff, with some carrying out quality-related roles, for instance. Physical changes to properties may also be needed, to meet regulation standards. These costs are likely to be passed onto local authorities, through uplifted fees.

Executive Summary

This Strategy promotes the development of specific types of placements within Stockport that will ensure that, as far as possible, children and young people can continue to live within or close to their families, school, and communities. Stockport strives to provide placements for children in care that are caring, nurturing, stable and able to meet their needs.

Stockport provides coordinated intensive support to children and their families on the edge of care and those children in care with plans to return home. The multi-agency team works collaboratively with locality social workers wrapping support around children and families. Interventions are clinically informed and reviewed. Where possible families are supported to remain together, to prevent young people coming into care.

This Sufficiency Strategy identifies a need for more internal and external foster care placements for children who can live in a family environment. This Strategy complements the Fostering Recruitment Strategy that sets out a detailed recruitment and marketing strategy for Stockport Foster Carers. The Council's fostering team has also worked closely with other Greater Manchester authorities to support the GMCA fostering promotion initiative "Foster for Greater Manchester" <https://fosterforgm.com/>.

Stockport Council is one of the North West Authorities that works to the North West Flexible Purchasing System for foster carers when making referrals to Independent Fostering Agencies. Established in 2018, it is regularly reviewed and developed.

Within Stockport, there is far more residential capacity than needed by Stockport young people. Although Stockport places a high percentage (37%) of our commissioned residential placements within the borough, we still only use a small percentage (16%) of the commissioned residential placements in Stockport. We are aware that 39% of independent residential placements in the borough are being purchased by local authorities from outside the GM region. Since 2018, Stockport has used the North West Flexible Purchasing System to make referrals for residential placements. The children's commissioning team will continue to liaise with local residential and 16+ supported accommodation providers, around quality and development issues. The team run a provider forum to raise quality, to create better communication and build relationships with the commissioned providers across the local area. We also encourage existing local residential and supported accommodation providers (for 16- and 17-year-olds) to offer available places, within the borough, to Stockport young people. We particularly need residential providers within Stockport who can support young people who have complex behavioural needs.

Stockport has also joined with North West authorities to set up the dynamic purchasing system (DPS) for commissioning 16+ supported accommodation providers. Established in 2020, this has recently been re-tendered to take account of the new Ofsted regulations introduced in October 2023. We work closely with semi-independent providers within the

borough to ensure that the provision meets local needs, and to encourage providers to join the regional DPS contract and register with Ofsted.

The new Ofsted regulation requirements have enabled a review of internal residential provision within Stockport. As a result, Broadfields children's home has been reconfigured to provide a five-bed children's home and a 16+ supported accommodation offer comprising of a 2-bed annex and 3 starter flats.

There is approval to develop three new internal childrens homes providing one 5-bed and two 3-bed homes over the next 2-3 years. The first of these children homes "The Crescent" opened in September 2024. Once these homes have been developed, there is a further ambition to continue to increase the estate to meet demand in the local area.

Stockport Council is also part of the GM homes programme (Project Skyline) to develop 10 new children's homes across Greater Manchester, over the next 2-3 years.

There are future plans to increase capacity within internal supported accommodation, to increase this from 5 to 9-bed capacity at the Broadfields site. The Council also plans to expand the supported accommodation offer for care leavers post 18.

Stockport also has developed supported accommodation for 18 to 25-year-old care leavers who are not yet able to sustain independent living. The Council is working in partnership with Stockport Homes. (This is the arm's length management company that manages the housing stock on behalf of Stockport Council). The Council has commissioned progression coaches for care leavers living within the accommodation and elsewhere within the community. We also continue to promote staying put placements, where fostering arrangements continue after 18 years of age. The Council also recruits supported lodgings providers, while also commissioning supported lodgings from independent providers. Hosts provide a bedroom within their household, for young people over 16, while providing a low level of support promoting preparation for independent living.

Stockport has recently been very successful in attracting central government support for the 3-year pilot Staying Close programme. This significant project has established a staying close team of professionals and specialist workers to support care leavers with employment, mental health and social network support and making the smooth and supported transition into independent living. In addition to this, Stockport is part of the Greater Manchester collaboration to deliver the House Project (Stockport/Tameside). This provides unique and peer supported programme for supporting care leavers who are preparing to manage their own tenancy.

In the future we need the following offer from local providers:

- Stockport based placements that are prioritised for Stockport young people.
- To work closely with local IFA providers, encouraging the recruitment of new foster carers in Stockport and plan for new placements where future matches can be made.
- Good communication with IFA, residential and supported accommodation providers about forth-coming vacancies in Stockport, so we can align with the needs of Stockport young people.

Children in Care / Demand for Placements

Numbers of Children in Care in Stockport

Over the last six years the number of children in care (CiC) has increased steadily and is now over a third higher than in March 2018. In the last year, the numbers of young people in care have increased by 12.

	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020	March 2021	March 2022	March 2023	March 2024
Stockport CiC population	362	361	368	407	447	483	495

Source: 2021/2 Children's Services Benchmarking Tool (BMt) and Children's Services Analysis Tool (ChAT) for March 2024.

The rate of children in care per 10,000 children / young people in Stockport has also increased steadily over six years. The rate, of 78, is now higher than statistical neighbours and England rates. It remains lower than the NW average rate of 97.3 in March 2022.

	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020	March 2021	March 2022	March 2023	March 2024
CiC / 10,000 children & YP in Stockport	58	57	58.3	64	72	76	78

Source: 2021/2 Children's Services Benchmarking Tool (BMt) and Children's Services Analysis Tool (ChAT) for March 24

Unaccompanied Asylum- Seeking Children

The mandatory national transfer scheme (NTS) was introduced in July 2021 for the fair dispersal of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) across the country. Since 2021, there has been growth in the numbers of UASC cared for by Stockport Council. In the last four years this number has increased to 29 young people. This accounts for 5.9% of the total number of children in care in March 2024.

	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020	March 2021	March 2022	March 2023	March 2024
UASC children in care.	X	C	C	7	14	21	29
% of children in care who are UASC		C	C	2%	3%	4%	5.9%

Source: 2021/2 Children's Services Benchmarking Tool (BMt) and Children's Services Analysis Tool (ChAT) for March 24. X and C denote very small statistical totals

Children in Care Demographics

The graphs below display demographics of children in care in all placement types, whether internally or externally provided. There are still slightly more children in care who are male. The gender percentages remain close to those in 2018.

	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020	March 2021	March 2022	March 2023	March 2024
Male	55%	55%	50%	51%	53%	55%	57%
Female	45%	45%	50%	49%	47%	45%	43%

Source: 2021/2 Children's Services Benchmarking Tool (BMT) and Children's Services Analysis Tool (ChAT) for March 24

In March 2022, across GM, there were also more male children in care (54%) than female (46%).

In March 2022, 73% of children in care across GM are from a white ethnic background, however in Stockport in March 2024, there is a larger percentage of ethnically white children in care reflecting the mix of the wider population.

	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020	March 2021	March 2022	March 2023	March 2024
White	85%	86%	87%	87%	84%	79%	79.0%
Mixed	7%	8%	7%	8%	8%	8%	8.3%
Asian/Asian British	3%	2%	1.6%	2%	3%	5%	4.4%
Black/Black British	2%	c	2%	2%	3%	4%	4.0%
Other	x	c	c	c	c	2%	3.2%
Not stated	x	2%	2%	c	c	1%	1.0%

Source: 2021/2 Children's Services Benchmarking Tool (BMT) and Children's Services Analysis Tool (ChAT) for March 24

The percentage of children in care who are 16 and over has been increasing in Stockport. Part of the reason for this has been an increase in UASC numbers since 2021. Across the GM region, there are increasing numbers of 16-17 years olds in care.

	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020	March 2021	March 2022	March 2023	March 2024
Under 1	6%	6%	5%	3%	5%	5%	3.8%
1-4-year-olds	17%	14%	11%	14%	15%	14%	13.1%
5-9-year-olds	23%	23%	24%	24%	17%	22%	20.6%
10-15-year-olds	36%	38%	42%	40%	41%	37%	38.2%
16 and over	19%	19%	18%	20%	22%	23%	24.2%

Source: 2021/2 Children's Services Benchmarking Tool (BMT) and Children's Services Analysis Tool (ChAT) for March 24

Placement Types for Children in Care

This chart displays the types of placements used by Stockport on 31st March 2024. 69.1% of children in care are in foster placements. This percentage has reduced over the last year, whilst the percentage of residential and supported accommodation placements has increased.

	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020	March 2021	March 2022	March 2023	March 2024
Foster placement	236 (65%)	227 (63%)	250 (68%)	293 (72%)	321 (72%)	346 (72%)	342 (69.1%)
Placed for adoption	x	c	8 (2%)	c	6 (1%)	5 (1%)	6 (1.2%)
Placed with Parents	50 (14%)	42 (12%)	37 (10%)	37 (9%)	32 (7%)	41 (9%)	37 (7.5%)
Children's homes, secure units, and semi-independent units & other residential settings	46 (13%)	58 (16%)	56 (15%)	61 (15%)	84 (19%)	86 (18%)	99 (20%)
Residential schools	x	x	1 (0.3%)	c	c	2 (0.4%)	x
Other placements	14 (4%)	16 (4%)	15 (4%)	12 (3%)	c	1 (0.2%)	9 (1.8%)

Source: 2021/2 Children's Services Benchmarking Tool (BMT) and Children's Services Analysis Tool (ChAT) for March 24. X and C denote very low statistical totals.

Note that some of the children in previous years that make up "Other Placements" were incorrectly recorded and should have been recorded as semi-independent or foster placements.

In Stockport, in March 2024, 26.9% of all placement types were made in independent sector provision. This has increased from 19% in 2019.

	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020	March 2021	March 2022	March 2023	March 2024
Own provision (by the Council)	215 (59%)	213 (59%)	243 (66%)	274 (67%)	298 (67%)	317 (66%)	313 (63.2%)
Other local authority provision	10 (3%)	c	c	c	c	6 (1%)	2 (0.4%)
Other public provision (e.g. PCT)	x	c	c	c	0	1 (0.2%)	1 (0.2%)
Private provision	62 (17%)	70 (19%)	58 (16%)	72 (18%)	95 (21%)	107 (22%)	124 (25.1%)
Voluntary/ third sector provision	9 (2%)	c	c	9 (2%)	15 (3%)	9 (2%)	9 (1.8%)

Parents or other with responsibility	50 (14%)	42 (12%)	37 (10%)	37 (9%)	32 (7%)	41 (9%)	37 (7.5%)
Placement provider not reported	14 (4%)	16 (4%)	15 (4%)	12 (3%)	c	0 (0%)	9 (1.8%)

Source: 2021/2 Children's Services Benchmarking Tool (BMT) and Children's Services Analysis Tool (ChAT) for March 24. X and C denote very low statistical totals.

Use of In-house Residential Placements

In Stockport, there are two in-house children's homes that now include a total of 10 placements.

The Council has recently reconfigured Broadfields Home to reduce the number of residential beds to 5 beds and created new Ofsted registered 16+ Supported Accommodation 5-bed provisions. The Council intends **to increase the number of children's homes** which are managed internally. The success of the existing council-run homes, Broadfield and Dial Park is a key element in current sufficiency, with staff teams providing an important insight into the children's needs and how they can be best met going forward. Careful assessments determine next steps for the young people, which are then planned with both internal and external partners. Teams have developed high levels of trust with partners, making decisions more effective and well-integrated across expert groups. Our property services team are seeking to locate appropriate properties to grow the internal provision. There are plans to develop three new Children's Homes (one 5 bed and two 3 bed homes) over the next two years. These plans are at an early stage.

Over the last 5 years, the use of in-house residential homes has increased, as set out below:

	March 2019	March 2020	March 2021	March 2022	March 2023	March 2024
Use of in-house residential	8	8	12	10	13	15

Independent Placements by Type

The table below shows a trend for different children's placement types in Stockport, all of which were commissioned with the external / independent sector (private and voluntary sector).

In Stockport, each type of placement has seen an increase in numbers since 2019. Although the total children in care population increased by around a third since 2018, the numbers of internal placements have not increased at the same pace, meaning that a disproportionately higher number of external placements have been required.

In March 2024, there are 60 more commissioned placements compared with March 2019. This is an increase of 82% over five years

Type of commissioned placement	March 2019	March 2020	March 2021	March 2022	March 2023	March 2024
Fostering Independent Agency	31	28	37	35	44	48
Residential commissioned	25	20	25	38	37	43
Supported Accommodation commissioned	17	17	22	29	30	42
TOTAL	73	65	84	102	111	133

From Placements North West census data return

Supported Accommodation Placements by Type

The number of commissioned 16+ supported accommodation placements has increased in the last five years from 17 to 42. Part of the reason for this has been an increase in UASC numbers since 2021.

Since October 2023, all semi-independent settings, where 16–17-year-olds are accommodated, require OFSTED registration. This stringent application process and inspection regime is likely to increase placement costs, as organisations seek to meet the government requirements. Costs could be incurred by a need for additional staff, with some carrying out quality-related roles, for instance. Physical changes to properties may also be needed, to meet regulation standards. These costs are likely to be passed onto local authorities, through uplifted fees.

The Council has increased the number of in-house 16+ supported accommodation beds to 5 beds (2-bed Annex staff supported and 3 starter flats). The Council has in-house supported lodgings scheme with 21 householders. Stockport is also part of the GM collaboration for National House Project to support 16+ years children in care. This is a three-year programme until August 2025.

18+ Placements

The demand for commissioned 18+ supported accommodation for care leavers has increased dramatically over the last 4 years from 2, in March 2019, to 13, in June 2024. This is due to increasing numbers of young people and limited housing options for young people without status and unable to apply for local housing.

- UASC – leave to remain granted x 2
- UASC –waiting for leave to remain decision x 7
- Care Leaver (not UASC) x 3

This increase reflects the new need for UASC housing options post 18, and the difficult process of status applications for young people. These young people were generally living in supported accommodation from 16 or 17 years old and have remained in placements post 18 years.

Stockport Homes are searching for existing properties (or land for development) which could be used to support care leavers **at the age of 18**. A business case has been developed to increase post 18-supported accommodation options for care leavers leaving care. The increase to 13 x 18+ placements, shows that there is an increasing need for this type of local setting, as a significant number of young people are waiting for suitable accommodation once they become 18.

In addition, Stockport has established a successful partnership with the Depaul UK charity, who manage supported accommodation, in the Shaw Heath area, for young people who are not yet ready to manage independent living. In August 2022, additional 18+ care leaver supported accommodation was opened at Bridge Apartments, providing 7 x 1 bed flats for young people aged 18-25 years. Staff offer a wide range of support to help young people gain independence skills, prior to obtaining independent accommodation. Support can focus on employment skills, mental and physical well-being, and healthy relationships, depending on the needs of the young person. Depaul UK are currently supporting 12 young people within the supported accommodation provisions and other young people that have moved on to their flats within the community. There is a need to extend this type of provision.

Stockport was successful in gaining central government support for a very significant support project, called **Staying Close**. This is a three-year initiative (2022-25), in partnership with Depaul, that have developed and established a range of professional support for some of our most vulnerable children in care, as they leave care. Teams focus on mental health, employment and developing social support networks. The aim is to add real value and assistance in ensuring young people can sustain successful independence.

Stockport is also part of the Greater Manchester **National House Project** collaboration LAs partnering with Tameside. Selected young people have joined a support network to prepare them for independence, in their own property, once they reach 18. The project brings young people together and creates a strong culture of careful and personalised preparation, to help ensure their steps post 18 are well-supported and that they feel confident to manage the demands of a long-term tenancy.

Stability of Placements

Placement stability is an important contributor to local sufficiency. The longer that children and young people can remain in stable, safe, and secure placements, in which they can thrive, will result in better outcomes for many children.

	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020	March 2021	March 2022	March 2023	March 2024
Children in care with three or more placements during the year	13%	14%	7.9%	13%	12%	13%	10.5%
Proportion of children in their current placement for 2+ years, of the children that have been in care after 2.5+ years	67.0%	74.0%	65.2%	65.7%	75.8%	68%	78.2%

The analysis above suggests two trends in Stockport:

1. Children with three or more placements during the year has decreased over the last year, showing that there is more placement stability.
2. The percentage of children who are in care at least 2.5 years at period end, that were living in their current placement for at least 2 years has also increased in the last year.

The stability of short and long-term placements is identified as a key area for improvement.

External Placement Budget 2024-2025

In Stockport, the residential and supported accommodation spend for 2024/25 is now more than double the annual spend from 2019/20, representing the increase in numbers of placements and increases in individual placement costs over the last four years.

	2019/20 spend	2024/25 budget	2024/5 Projected spend (7/24)
External Residential & Supported Accommodation spend	£5,400,036	£11,431,045	£14,253,323
External Foster carer spend	£1,352,712	£2,070,879	£2,142,735
Total commissioned placement spend	£6,752,748	£13,501,924	£16,396,058

Location of Placements with Independent Providers

Placements Within Greater Manchester and Stockport

One of the main challenges to sufficiency is that not all Greater Manchester based provision is made available to the Greater Manchester local authorities. In March 2022, across the GM region, as an average, only 20% of purchased placements in GM localities were occupied by children from that host Local Authority. At the time, Stockport's figures were the highest of any GM authority, with 34% of the Council's purchased residential placements, were made in borough. (Current figures are shown below). Stockport would prefer to place more children within the Borough, however, often we are not offered local placements by Stockport Providers.

The data above is taken from: The GM Observatory: [GM Sufficiency Analysis - Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/gm-observatory)

Stockport Council carried out a census of all independent residential placements filled at the end of September 2023. At the time, 92 young people were living in independent residential placements located within Stockport. However, most of these children were placed by other authorities. Of the children placed in Stockport:

- 16% (15 YP) were placed by Stockport
- 45% (41 YP) were from the other 9 x GM authorities
- 17% (16 YP) were from NW authorities/neighbouring boroughs (outside GM)
- 22% (20 YP) were placed from nationwide authorities (from as far away as London and Lincolnshire).

Location of Stockport Commissioned Placements

March 2024 data (from EP sheet)	Stockport	Other GM Authority (not Stockport)	Other Authority
Independent Fostering Agency (IFA)	18%	47%	35%
Commissioned Residential (including Joint funded)	37%	46%	17%
Supported accommodation (16– 17-year-olds)	41%	51%	8%

The percentage of IFA placements made by Stockport in Borough indicates a lack of placements available to meet the specific needs of Stockport children. As it has been difficult to match local IFA carers in Stockport, the Council has over 80% of IFA placements in other local authority areas.

In March 2024, 37% of residential placements commissioned by Stockport, were located in borough. Although on paper, there is an over-supply of residential providers in the Borough,

in reality these placements are not always made available for Stockport children. The Council still struggles to find residential placements within the Borough, however over 80% of commissioned within the GM area.

Supported Accommodation provision is much more geographically centralised around Stockport, with 92% of young people either placed within Stockport or another GM authority.

Placement provision within Stockport

Residential Supply in Stockport

In-House Childrens Homes

Stockport Council has two children's homes, Dial Park, and Broadfield. These offer 10 beds in total. Broadfields home has recently been reconfigured to reduce the size of the Children's Home Ofsted registration capacity from 7 bed to its original registration of 5 bed home. Attached to Broadfields, is now a 2-bed Annex and three flats that are registered 16+ supported accommodation provision for young people with complex needs.

There are plans to develop the Council's in-house residential provision. It is proposed to develop three new Childrens Homes (one 5 bed and two 3 bed homes) and capital and revenue investment has been secured to support this plan. The first of these childrens homes "The Crescent" opened in September 2024.

Independent Childrens Homes

The most recent figures from July 2024, show that, within Stockport, there are now 36 independent children's homes with 143 beds available:

- 25 homes in mainstream category (104 beds)
- 8 homes in therapeutic category (26 beds) - this includes one family assessment unit
- 3 homes in disability category (13 beds)

There are also 2 settings (28 beds) at Seashell Trust residential school / respite home.

As of July 2024, we are also aware of another three planning applications for childrens homes that are in development within Stockport.

September 2023 Snapshot - children living within Stockport based childrens homes

On paper, there is a large over-supply of independent residential placements in Stockport. The Council does not require this residential capacity, as the number of Stockport young people in residential placements is much lower. However, residential placements are not always made available for Stockport children, and the Council still struggles to find residential placements in Stockport.

- In September 2023, a third of all available residential placements within Stockport were vacant. This is likely to be due to staff recruitment issues, or models where homes are always running at a lower capacity to the full Ofsted registration allowance. Some independent placements were only available on a respite basis.
- In September 2023, 92 young people were living in independent residential placements located within Stockport. However, most of these children were placed by other authorities. Of the children placed in Stockport:

- 16% (15 YP) were placed by Stockport
- 45% (41 YP) were from the other 9 x GM authorities
- 17% (16 YP) were from NW authorities/neighbouring boroughs (outside GM)
- 22% (20 YP) were placed from nationwide authorities (from as far away as London and Lincolnshire).

Matching Stockport young people with Stockport residential providers

In March 2024, Stockport had 43 commissioned placements in independent residential children's homes. In March 2024, 17 of the residential placements were made within Stockport (40%). Where it is not possible to place within Stockport, we aim for placements close by, in neighbouring boroughs or the Greater Manchester region. In March 2024, another 46% of commissioned residential placements were located within other GM authorities.

By far the largest factor, which prevents matching with Stockport residential providers, is the management of challenging behaviours (such as poor mental health / missing from home / allegations etc).

We would like to work with Stockport providers to match more vacancies in Stockport with the needs of Stockport young people. However, there can be factors where we sometimes need to place outside the GM region:

- Safeguarding needs, such as breaking negative social influences.
- Complex health needs.
- Secure accommodation, through a national network
- Young person's choice, e.g. near the city centre or relatives.

In some cases, Stockport Council does not place with local providers because they are either poor value for money or specialist services which we don't need in quantity e.g. services for children with disabilities, sexualised behaviours, 1:1 support, or with education.

Foster Care Supply in Stockport

For clarity, there are two types of fostering placements. These could be either with Stockport Council employed foster carers or with foster carers employed by Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA).

All Stockport Council foster carer recruitment data is collated and reported on the GM Dashboard – see the Retention and Utilisation Indicators [Workbook: GM In-house Fostering \(gmtableau.nhs.uk\)](https://gmtableau.nhs.uk)

In March 2024, there were 153 registered mainstream carers (259 available places). This was a net gain of 1 household since March 2020, when there were 152. In March 2024 we had 169 young people living in mainstream in-house foster placements. At the same time, there were also 124 young people living with connected carers in 91 households.

The utilisation ratio (average number of children living in household) of Stockport foster carer households is 1.1. This is the lowest ratio in Greater Manchester, where the average ratio across the region is 1.4. The lower utilisation rate in Stockport reflects that we encourage foster carers to broaden their approval category to the maximum number of children a foster carer can take to give the greatest flexibility. However, sometimes we do not use all the placements a family can offer.

In addition, Stockport has the Mockingbird Model, short breaks carers, home from home carers and respite carers all of which do not have children placed with them all the time. They provide different forms of valuable respite, but they are still approved for up to three children.

Attracting more foster carers to work with Stockport Council's **Fostering Service** is an on-going campaign, with many different strands including GM foster for Greater Manchester. Fostering is always considered for every child needing a loving and stable home, but sometimes there are not enough foster carers available locally to provide enough homes for children. This has resulted in some children being placed in children's homes when a fostering environment would have better met the child's needs. We are seeing younger children now being placed in residential care or in Independent Fostering Agency placements, compared to previous years. This trend is reported by many other local authorities. The Council is a Fostering Friendly Organisation and has developed a range of benefits for employees who elect to foster. This year, there has been an emphasis on promoting this support to Council employees, so that they are fully aware that their employer will support a role as a foster carer, alongside their employment.

The Council's Fostering Service also work with GM authorities to support the GMCA fostering promotion "Foster for Greater Manchester" <https://fosterforgm.com/>.

In March 2024, 48 Stockport children were placed with IFA foster carers. 9 of these young people were placed in Stockport. The average age of children living with IFA carers has reduced and is now 8 years old. About two thirds of our IFA placements are for children who are of 11 years or younger.

Stockport has seen a fall in the number of IFA foster carer households in our area. Latest estimates from GMCA show that, in September 2022, there were around 64 IFA households located within Stockport. These figures are estimates, as it has been difficult for the GMCA to collect accurate information from IFA providers about numbers of households. Across Greater Manchester, there are not enough IFA carers to meet the needs for Greater Manchester children.

Numbers of Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA) foster households in Stockport have declined. In September 2023 there were 21 IFA carer households reported, with 42 beds located in Stockport. This is an estimate, based on IFA responses to a NW survey. This is unlikely to be the complete picture.

In some cases, a lack of IFA placement availability means that a young person is placed in a residential placement. Where appropriate, we then continue to search for step-down fostering arrangements.

Supported Accommodation Supply in Stockport

Supported Accommodation is designed for young people aged 16 to 17 who are working towards independent living at 18 and should be registered with Ofsted under the supported accommodation regulations 2023. Accommodation is either in a shared group living environment or in a solo flat. In both cases, young people are supported by specialist workers. Arrangements can vary from staff being onsite 24 hours per day, or who provide a specified number of hours per week, depending on the needs of the young person.

Stockport Council manages a two-bed annex and three semi-independent starter flats at Broadfields, which can offer 5 beds in total that have completed their registration with Ofsted.

In March 2024, 42 young people were living in commissioned supported accommodation settings. Most 16+ young people were in group living placements, while 5 of the placements were solo provisions with floating support, and 6 were with supported lodging providers. 15 of the supported accommodation placements were located within Stockport.

There are 11 independent supported accommodation providers in Stockport (with a total of 53 group living beds or trainer flats). All providers are registered with Ofsted, except for one CQC registered provision.

We are also aware of four supported accommodation providers who have solo flats with floating support within the Borough, and two providers with supported lodgings. Across Stockport there are potentially up to 67 independent placements in total.

There has been an increase in 16+ supported accommodation provision within Stockport. We now have sufficient provision in the Borough that we continue to monitor. We would however encourage providers to recruit more supported lodgings carers within Stockport.

Analysis of Independent Sufficiency within Stockport

There are several Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) who recruit foster carers across the country. These foster carers provide foster care placements for children of all ages.

In Stockport, we need more local IFA foster carers who can provide a wide range of foster placements for local children of all ages, including support to step young people down from residential settings. The average age of children living with IFA carers has reduced and is now 8 years old. Two thirds of our IFA placements are for children who are of primary school age.

We need residential settings where aggressive behaviours can be reduced, and substance misuse can be disrupted.

We encourage local providers to consider offering placements for Stockport children because:

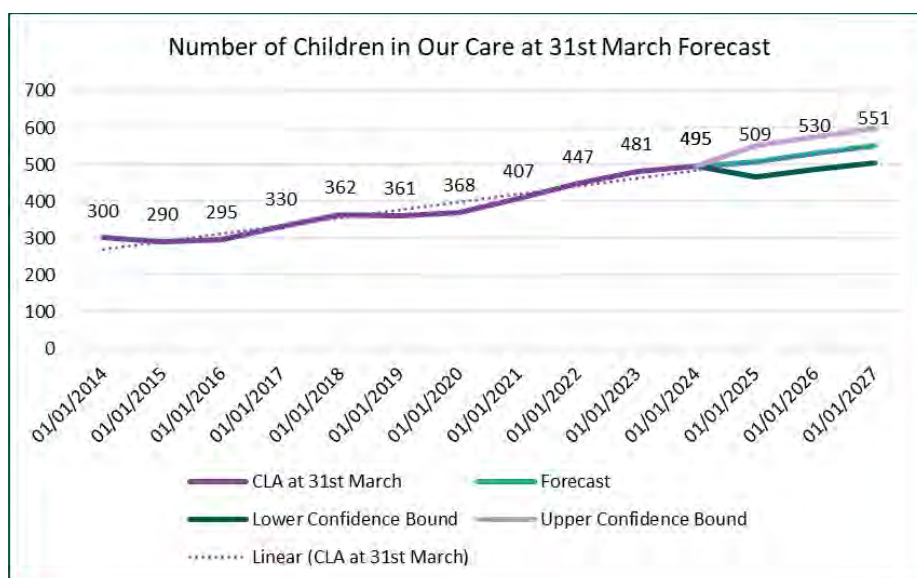
- The young person's school placement is likely to be local to the home. In many cases, the school place will be stable, and staff will be able to share approaches with the setting.
- Relationships can be established with local health professionals, who can support at a local level.
- Where appropriate, family contact can be easier to co-ordinate.
- There will be a stable team of dedicated and knowledgeable social workers who can attend local meetings.
- There will be reduced travelling distance for providers, to attend meetings.
- There will be local support on hand, from a well-organised, established Social Care team who are keen to reach creative solutions to stabilise placements and reach the best outcomes.
- Stockport Children's Services was last rated Good by Ofsted (ILACS inspection March 2022) and highlighted consistently strong social work practice and services to support children in care
- Stockport placements and commissioning Teams will both support providers.

We encourage local IFA providers to prioritise the recruitment of new foster carers in Stockport and plan for new placements where future matches can be made.

We work on excellent communication with IFA, residential and 16+ Supported Accommodation providers about forth-coming vacancies in Stockport, so we can align with the needs of Stockport young people and plan placements in advance of predicted vacancies.

Stockport Recovery Plan

Current Projections for the Future 2024-2027



Using historic data, it is possible to forecast numbers of children in care into 2027. It is important to note that figures become less accurate the further ahead the forecast date, however they show a likely continued increase in numbers, based on current trends.

A recovery plan has been in place since 2022 which aims to change this trend, and to reduce the number of children coming into care in the future. The plan aims to manage the deficit on the Childrens Service budget with the following objectives:

- Reduce the number of children coming into care, so that children can stay with their families and communities
- To ensure children who do come into care are in a placement that meets their needs and is best value for money
- Increase our internal sufficiency to meet increasing complexity of need and demand across Stockport placement services. Identification of appropriate property in Stockport for children coming into care has been agreed as a priority

- To have the right joint commissioning arrangements to meet children's health, education and care needs
- To have the right capacity, knowledge and skills within the workforce to meet children's need effectively in a timely way
- To reduce demand across the system, having a strong early help offer to address need at the earliest opportunity to avoid escalation in statutory services

For 2024/25 the key areas of focus are:

- **Internal sufficiency** – creating a new childrens home at The Crescent and the purchase of a further property in Heald Green
- **Evidence Based Interventions:**
 - o Family Group Conference launch
 - o Intensive support workers team launch
 - o New Beginnings increased capacity – additional cohorts
 - o Family Drug and Alcohol Court
- **Supporting Improved Recruitment and Retention of social care staff**
- **Early Help and Prevention** – implementation of the Family Help Service and development of Family Hubs
- **Review of SEN Transport**
- **Family Nurse Partnership**

North West Regional Commissioning

Stockport commissions children's social care placements through regional contracts detailed on the NW ADCS website [Regional purchasing systems | NWADCS](#) :

North West Foster Care Flexible Purchasing System (FPS) 2018

Start Date	April 2018										
End Date	March 2028										
Description	The FPS is designed to provide the opportunity for 23 North-West local authorities to benefit from the consolidation of demand for foster care placements. The contract reopens for new IFAs to join at quarterly intervals. The FPS includes three Service Type Lots each split across 4 different age bands: <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Lot 1</td><td>Standard Foster Care</td></tr> <tr> <td>Lot 2</td><td>Specialist Foster Care (higher need placements for example disability support)</td></tr> <tr> <td>Lot 3</td><td>Cohort placements (multiple placement purchase)</td></tr> <tr> <td>Lot 4</td><td>GM Enhanced Foster Purchase (higher rate for more specialist GM placements)</td></tr> <tr> <td>Lot 5</td><td>Parent & Child Placements</td></tr> </table>	Lot 1	Standard Foster Care	Lot 2	Specialist Foster Care (higher need placements for example disability support)	Lot 3	Cohort placements (multiple placement purchase)	Lot 4	GM Enhanced Foster Purchase (higher rate for more specialist GM placements)	Lot 5	Parent & Child Placements
Lot 1	Standard Foster Care										
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Lot 3	Cohort placements (multiple placement purchase)										
Lot 4	GM Enhanced Foster Purchase (higher rate for more specialist GM placements)										
Lot 5	Parent & Child Placements										

North West Residential Care Flexible Purchasing System 2018

Start Date	January 2018														
End Date	December 2027														
Description	This arrangement allows for residential care provision. It reopens quarterly for new providers to join. There are 6 main placement lots in the FPS: <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Lot 1:</td><td>Flexible mainstream Residential Care</td></tr> <tr> <td>Lot 3:</td><td>Complex Health / Medical Care</td></tr> <tr> <td>Lot 4:</td><td>Short break and respite residential care</td></tr> <tr> <td>Lot 5:</td><td>Short Break Residential Services to Support Transition</td></tr> <tr> <td>Lot 9:</td><td>Residential Family Centres</td></tr> <tr> <td>Lot 10</td><td>Therapeutic with Clinical Oversight</td></tr> <tr> <td>Lot 11</td><td>Therapeutic with Clinical input</td></tr> </table>	Lot 1:	Flexible mainstream Residential Care	Lot 3:	Complex Health / Medical Care	Lot 4:	Short break and respite residential care	Lot 5:	Short Break Residential Services to Support Transition	Lot 9:	Residential Family Centres	Lot 10	Therapeutic with Clinical Oversight	Lot 11	Therapeutic with Clinical input
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Lot 11	Therapeutic with Clinical input														

North West Supported Accommodation (Young People) FPS 2023

The previous DPS was retendered in 2023 to dovetail with new OFSTED requirements. A new Supported Accommodation (Young People) FPS replaced the previous contract in November 2023

Start Date	November 2023	
End Date	October 2031	
Description	To offer Supported Accommodation for Young People aged 16 years until their 18th birthday (including Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children - UASC); where the Young People can be assisted to acquire necessary skills in preparation for living independently, experiment safely with their increasing freedom and develop responsibilities associated with adulthood, whilst still having the appropriate level of support from an experienced and qualified staff team. There are 4 lots in the new FPS:	
	Category 1	Supported Accommodation in a self-contained unit, where the accommodation is for the sole use of the child or for the child and other individuals living with the child
	Category 2	Supported accommodation in a shared or group living situation in premises used to accommodate only looked after children and care leavers.
	Category 3	Supported accommodation in a shared or group living situation in premises which are not limited to accommodating looked after children and care leavers.
	Category 4	Supported Lodgings

North West Flexible Purchasing System for SEND 2021

Start Date	March 2021
End Date	February 2031 (estimated)
Description	This contract will facilitate the commissioning of high-quality day and residential Education Placements for Children and Young People, aged 0-25 years old. It currently includes three Lots: - Lot 1: Day placements - Lot 2: 38 Week Residential School Placements - Lot 3: 52 Week Residential School Placements In September 2023, the contract was extended to include: - Lot 4: 16+ Day Education Placement - Lot 5: 16+ Education with Residential Placements - Lot 6: Alternative Provision – Registered Setting - Lot 7: Alternative Provision – Unregistered Setting

GM Market Position Statements

The Greater Manchester Children's Placement Sufficiency Observatory is a live site, enabling a dynamic representation of demand and supply for children's social care placement services. This helps us to reflect the ever-changing fluidity of the market and how that impacts sufficiency across the region.

Children's Sufficiency Observatory - Greater Manchester Combined Authority
(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

Stockport Council will be participating in GM commissioning, where these will support the needs of Stockport Children. These are likely to include:

Project 1: Project Skyline (Childrens Residential Care Shared Service)

The creation of 10 new Homes across different service categories. Skyline is a significant residential project, in development with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), which aims to increase the number of children's home placements in the region, that are ring-fenced for GM children. The aim is to commission ten new homes, providing 24 new placements for young people across GM. Once established, the homes will work with the ten GM authorities, with placements offers based on the most appropriate matches. The project is being tendered in 2024, with selected providers then partnering with GMCA to identify appropriate properties, for purchase by GMCA. Long-term lease agreements with providers will repay GMCA's investment, over a 30-year period. Homes will focus on emotional and behavioural difficulties and mental health support.

Project 2: Growth Partnerships

Encouraging growth of high-quality providers in Greater Manchester, including working closely with and encouraging Voluntary and Community (VCSE) sector participation

Project 3: GM First

GM First Covenant sets out what are intended to be shared principles between LAs and Children's Care Providers based in Greater Manchester. This is to encourage the offer of placements to young people within Manchester.

Project 4: Supporting recruitment & retention across workforce

GMCA are partnering with the Children's Homes Association (CHA) to create a regional marketing campaign to support staff recruitment and retention within residential care homes. GMCA is procuring a Training Provider and aims to support around 100 individuals across GM to learn more about children's residential care and receive training.

Actions 2024-2027

Reduce the number of children coming into care

Objective	Action	Who
Ensure all avenues have been explored to prevent a child coming into care	• Having good care planning decisions that ensure that the gatekeeping for entry to care is robust. • Upskilling and targeted workforce development/training • Implementing family network meetings • Increased use of Family Group Conferencing for edge of care cases • Children at edge of care to receive full time education offer	Head of Social Work Services and Practice Improvement/ Head of Social Care and Commissioning
Ensure we have a strong edge of care offer which responds to needs and prevent children coming into care when alternative support/plans can be put in place	• Review the current edge of care services to understand what is working well and ensure the resources are effectively targeted to make the biggest impact • Service Leaders to review care plans for children in care to identify plans for rehabilitation and support needed. • develop Tableau dashboard to strengthen edge of care support tracking and review with clear outcome data to show where it is most effective	Head of Social Care and Commissioning

Ensure in-house vacancies are fully utilised

Objective	Action	Who
Ensure in-house children's home are fully utilised and provide good quality care to children	Through pipeline planning and matching. Monitor occupancy rates & Ofsted inspection grading	Service Leader Residential and Support Services
Support more children to live with foster carers by recruiting child focused/ specialist carers/home from home carers	Careful matching of internal foster carers with young people	Service Leader – Fostering
Monitor in-house foster vacancies weekly and ensure that vacancies are filled whenever possible.	Incentivising carers to take more complex young people. Also upskilling carers and providing more support. Report regularly on utilisation ratio of foster carer capacity	Service Leader - Fostering

Increase wellbeing support for foster carers to reduce placement breakdowns	Review priority and focus of emotional wellbeing team to support foster carers to prevent placement disruption	Head of Social Care and Commissioning
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Develop new in-house provision

Objective	Action	Who
Continue to recruit new adoptive families.	Adoption Counts to continue to encourage Concurrent Planning and fostering for adoption placements Take innovative approaches, for example trialling bespoke family finding, in house activity days and exchange days.	Adoption Counts recruitment
Targeted campaign to recruit Stockport Foster carers for Teenagers and older children, sibling groups, children with complex needs and children with SEND with increased focus on digital marketing and social media platforms e.g. 'Foster for Greater Manchester.'	Details of our recruitment approach is set out in the Fostering Recruitment Strategy for 2023-24. The recruitment objectives for the year are: • 20 new fostering households who can offer placements to children over the age of 10, sibling groups and/or children with complex needs from diverse backgrounds • 75% to offer placements for young people over the age of 11. • Increase the number of foster carers who are approved to take Parent and Child Placements • To expand the specialist/child focused foster care scheme households by 50% by 2024 • To recruit 4 carers for the new short breaks scheme • Expand Home from home – increase 2 to 4 households	Service Leader Fostering / Fostering Recruitment and Retention Officer
Promote and encourage foster carers to access training for continues professional development	Working closely with Workforce Development Team to support carers to book on, access training and reflect on learning. Service to work closely with Workforce Development and SEND training to be offered as part of the Foster Carer Training Programme.	Fostering Team/Workforce Development
Retention and utilisation of existing foster carers	Continue to support and retain existing foster carers. Continue and expand the local offer e.g. Life Leisure pass, museum pass, access to council benefits etc.	Service Fostering Leader / Fostering Team

	Monitor numbers of conversations and adaptations to increase utilisation with existing carers	
Embed Mockingbird constellations and support GM Mockingbird Roll Out	Stockport now supports 5 Mockingbird constellations. Stockport Council is supporting the roll out of Mockingbird across GM.	Service Lead - Fostering
GM Foster for Greater Manchester campaign	Continue to work with GM authorities to support the GMCA fostering promotion "Foster for Greater Manchester" https://fosterforgm.com/	Fostering Service Leader /Fostering Recruitment and Retention Officer
GM Enquiry Hub to manage enquiries	Stockport fostering service is part of the GM enquiry hub collaboration. The front door system will manage enquiries foster for Greater Manchester campaigns and link in with Stockport fostering service for Stockport enquiries	Fostering Recruitment Team
Working to increase internal children home capacity for children in care	It is proposed to develop three new in-house Childrens Homes (one 5 bed and two 3 bed homes),	Service Leader Residential and Support Services
Recruit new supported lodging carers who can support young people with more complex needs.	This area became Ofsted Registered as Supported Accommodation in October 2023 and ongoing recruitment activity to recruit to this scheme to be implemented during 24/25 to include providers for UASC.	Residential and Support Services/ Fostering Service Lead
Proposal to reconfigure Broadfields annex and flats to provide four new supported accommodation units	Business case to be drafted and Building work to be scoped for approval for 2025/6.	Service Leader Residential and Support Services
Business case developed to increase post 18-supported accommodation options for care leavers leaving care	Stockport Homes are searching for existing properties (or land for development) which could be used to provide supported accommodation for care leavers post 18. Profiling and analysis of current children's needs to inform commissioning needs. Housing options for former UASC post 18 to be further scoped with strategic housing colleagues to increase housing options. Housing options for care leavers with disabilities, vulnerabilities and/ or complex needs to be further scoped with adults and strategic housing colleagues	Head of Social Care and Commissioning

External sufficiency and market management

Objective	Action	Who
Proactively engage the local provider market to further develop positive relationships and manage the development of the market.	Meet with IFAs regularly to understand the local IFA market availability and encourage recruitment of IFA carers in Stockport to meet local needs for placements. Ensure that independent providers are aware of wrap around services that are available to Stockport children who are placed within local placements. Meet with local residential and 16+ providers to ensure that Stockport providers are aware of the need for placements for young people with more complex needs locally. Encourage local placements to be made available for local Stockport children. Continued provider forums for IFAs, residential & Supported Accommodation providers, sharing innovation and best practice across Stockport providers and good links to support services available to Stockport young people.	Commissioning Manager
Placements North West Referral writing training	Encourage social workers to attend Placements North West regular training around the completion of excellent referrals for new commissioned placements.	Service Lead
GM Commissioning Group Priorities	Supporting the GM priorities • Project 1: Project Skyline (Children's Residential Care Shared Service) • Project 2: Growth Partnerships • Project 3: GM First Covenant • Project 4: Supporting Recruitment and Retention Across the Children's Social Care Workforce	Commissioning Manager
North West Commissioning Strategy	Supporting the evaluation of new regional tender submissions to existing regional tenders, as contracts are re-opened for new providers. This includes the SEND contract and new Supported Accommodation FPS Quarterly collection of local authority census information and regional census reports produced.	Commissioning Manager

Monitoring of placement costs

Objective	Action	Who
Ensure that all new placements are on standard regional contract fees where possible.	If additional fees are required, these should be clearly set out within the IPA, ensuring that these additional costs are monitored closely.	Placements Team
Continue to review high cost / low outcome placements and monitoring costs against external placements budget.	Ensure that if changes are required to placement, IPAs are amended with additional appendix for detail. Ensure reviews undertaken at IPEP and Tracking Meetings and additional costs are considered. Ensure monitoring mechanisms can easily identify overpayments.	Placements Team/ Head of Social care and commissioning
Continue to ensure outline specify outcomes and timescales for review.	Ensure that IPAs are issued quickly as a young person is placed. These will set out full details of costs, and review dates.	Placements Team
Continue to ensure that annual and sibling discounts are collected.	Review discounts regularly.	Placements Team

Monitoring of placement quality

Objective	Action	Who
Regular collection of Ofsted reports for all current providers.	Reviewed by Placements Team, store reports centrally and send links to Managers. Inform managers if issues arise.	Placements Team
Collection of Reg 44 reports for current providers, focussing on those who are less than good.	Reviewed by Placements Team, informing managers if issues arise.	Placements Team
Regular contact with placement providers	Monitoring of children and young people in placements as part of care planning processes	Responsible Social Worker
Visits to residential providers within Stockport.	Focus on providers within Stockport where Stockport young people are placed & new providers within Stockport	Commissioning Manager
Ensure annual visits to Semi-independent providers – ensure due diligence with unregistered providers.	Focus on providers where Stockport young people are placed. Encourage and monitor the correct registration with Ofsted as Supported Accommodation providers since October 2023	Commissioning Manager
Share any concerns about safeguarding with LADO and Regional Authorities, as necessary.	Using Placements North West Information Sharing Protocol (ISP) system.	Placements / Commissioning Team

Commissioned services for young people

Objective	Action	Who
Continue to support new tenders for services, quarterly contract meetings with providers for existing commissioned services	Contracts are in place to provide support to young carers, mentoring schemes, advocacy, and independent visiting and IMHA services.	Commissioning Manager
18+ supported accommodation for care leavers	Depaul UK are commissioned to support care leavers in Shaw Heath and Bridge Apartment accommodation. This five-year contract will reviewed after March 2025 in line with a Supported Housing Strategy.	Head of Social Care and Commissioning
18+ Staying Close DfE Pilot scheme	Continue with the third year of the three-year initiative which will develop and establish a range of professional teams to support care leavers. Teams will focus on mental health, employment and developing social support networks.	Head of Social Care and Commissioning
House Project (Stockport/Tameside) GM collaboration	Continue with the third year of the three-year initiative which will support care leavers prepare for independent living and their own flats.	Head of Social Care and Commissioning
Strengthen joint commissioning decisions for share funding for children with complex needs with health and education	Embed the Multi-Agency Referral panel (MARF) for joint commissioning decision for potential joint and tri-partite funded placements for children with complex needs.	Head of Social Care and Commissioning

