

Looked After Children Sufficiency Strategy

2019-2022

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1 Foreword

Corporate Parenting is the term used to refer to the responsibility of the Council to provide the best possible care and protection to children and young people who are 'looked after' by the Local Authority. At the core of this responsibility is the moral duty to provide the kind of support and environment that any good parents would provide for their children. This includes enhancing the quality of life of children who are looked after as well as keeping them safe.

If we get the care and accommodation right for our children and young people who are looked after or leaving care we are giving them a stable platform upon which to develop as individuals and access education, employment and relationships as an adult which leads to happy, healthy, fulfilled and contributing members of our communities and wider society.

This sufficiency strategy aims to demonstrate a detailed understanding of the children's placement market in Rotherham and nationally, examining supply and demand whilst identifying gaps in provision. The strategy will offer realistic, cost effective and outstanding solutions to ensure sufficiency for looked after children in Rotherham between 2019 - 2022.

Moreover this strategy supports the ambition of RMBC to ensure that all our looked after children live and grow up in homes with carers who meet all of their physical and emotional needs. Finally it will define and make statement of what Rotherham intends to do in the future to improve our provision for children and young people in our care.

Jon Stonehouse, Director of Children's Services

2 Introduction

Rotherham is committed to improving the outcomes and life chances of the children and young people who are in our care. The Looked After Children's Sufficiency Strategy focuses on placement data and market factors which will inform the market management activity we need to undertake.

We want everything the best parents want for their children:

- That they are happy and healthy both physically and emotionally;
- That we keep them safe and protected from harm and exploitation;
- That we support them into adulthood and that we prepare them for independence;
- We are ambitious for our children, we want them to achieve their potential and participate in decisions which affect their lives; and
- We want them to work with us and, along with parents and carers, shape the services we offer to them.

We know that an increase in demand for placements across the region has made the market more challenging than ever. Within Yorkshire & Humber, Rotherham has seen the largest increase in its population of Looked After Children over the last 4 years, with a 30% increase between 2016 and 2018 and 37% between 2014 and 2018. This strategy will identify the work we will do to respond to this pressure and re-balance the market to ensure that we have a placement mix that can meet the needs of our children.

3 Rotherham Context

Rotherham is one of four metropolitan boroughs in South Yorkshire and lies at the centre of the Sheffield City Region. The Borough is divided into 21 wards covering a wide diversity of urban, suburban and rural areas.

There are 50,900 children aged 0-15 in Rotherham and 26,100 young people aged 16-24. Whilst the majority get a good start in life, child poverty is highly polarised across the Borough and life chances can vary greatly. In the most deprived areas, 25% of the population are aged 0-15 but in the least deprived, the proportion is only 16%. Rotherham has a lower proportion of young people aged 18-24 than the national average due to people moving elsewhere to study or work. The number of Looked after Children in the Borough has increased from 380 in 2012 to 610 in 2018.

Whilst RMBC is not significantly out of step with many local authorities in experiencing a significant increase in the numbers of looked after children if this trend is allowed to continue unabated then the impact on capacity experienced by the department as a whole is likely to have a significant negative impact on effective budget management but also on the positive outcomes achieved by Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

4 Legal Duty

In 2010, the Government published statutory guidance on the implementation of section 22G of the Children Act 'General Duty of Local Authority to secure sufficient accommodation for looked after children'. Since May 2014 there is a duty in the Children and Families Act (2014) for local authorities to have staying put arrangements in place to enable young adults to remain in their foster placements until they are 21 years old. The Council must support and monitor these placements.

This strategy considers what is required by the local authority in terms of sufficient provision. The accompanying data booklet collates the relevant data to help us understand some of the dynamics affecting sufficiency. The market for sufficiency is diverse and complex; as such it is difficult to predict changes in need or availability in a rapidly changing environment.

5 Principles

This strategy has its foundations in the belief that every child has the right to a family life. Wherever possible and safe we will support children to live with their parents or family. When this is not possible we take responsibility to ensure that they live with supportive and nurturing families. In the event that living in a family home is not an option we will make every effort to ensure they live in a children's home which replicates family life as closely as possible. Once in care every effort will be made to either plan for the safe return of children to their families or have a permanent alternative family as soon as possible.

In Children's Services we believe:

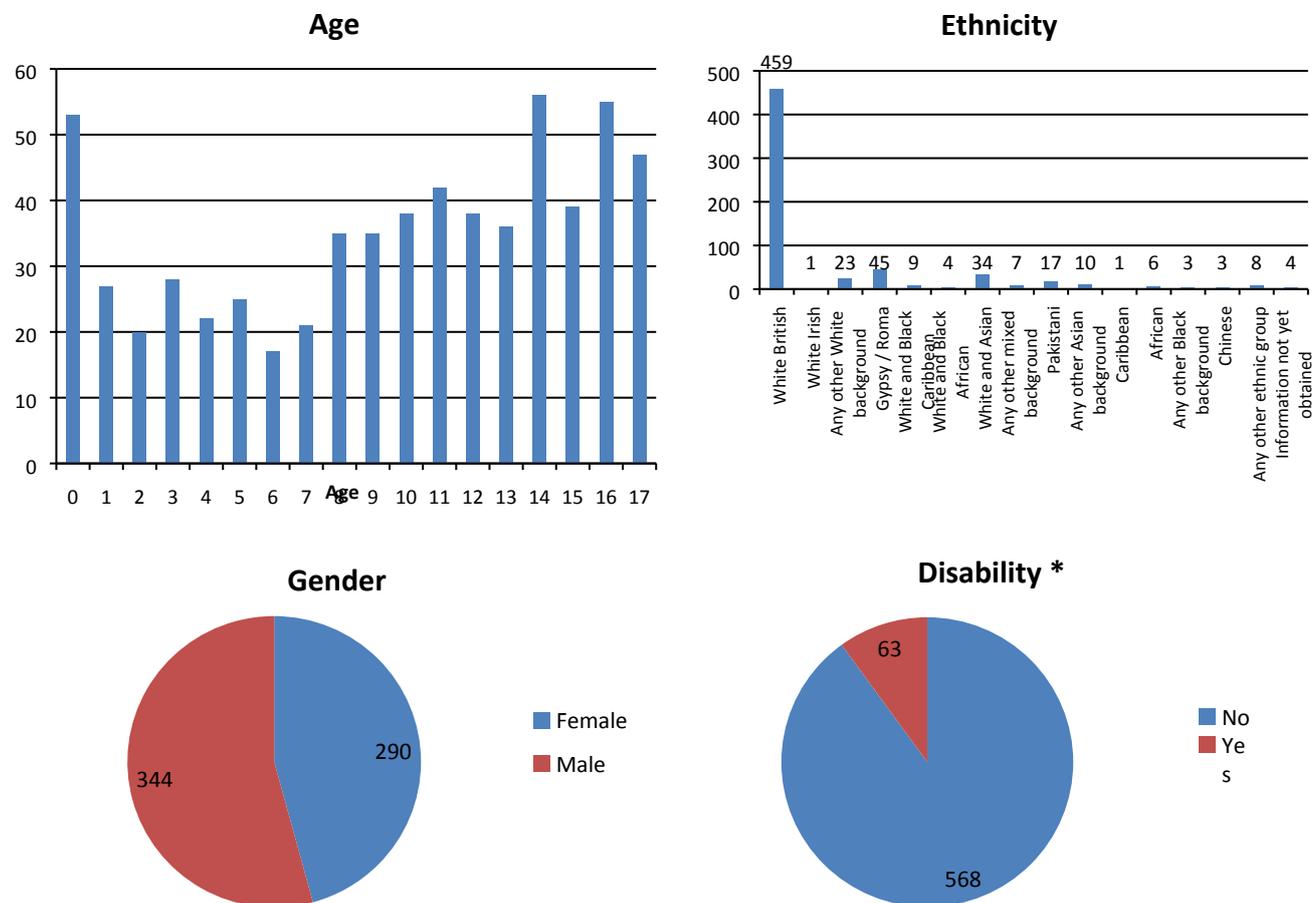
- Children should be supported to live with their parents in their own communities wherever it is safe to do so.
- Intensive support should be offered to children and families on the edge of the care system. This includes exit from as well as entry to care.

- Where a child cannot remain in the family home meaningful contact with parents, siblings and other important people in their lives will be carefully considered. The needs and welfare of the child will be at the centre of all contact arrangements.
- If it is consistent with the child's wishes and welfare a placement with family or friends will be the preferred option for children who become looked after.
- When a family member or friend is being considered for placement they will be afforded the same training and support, including financial support as other arrangements to secure the child's future (this may be via a fostering arrangement, special guardianship order or private arrangement).
- The next preferred option will be in-house fostering or Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placement so that their right to a family life is upheld.
- Some children cannot live in a family environment, usually due to a combination of complex factors including the child's experiences and management of presenting risk. In these cases placement in a caring and nurturing children's home will be sought with due attention to the matching process. Wherever this is the case, plans for coming out of the children's home and into a family environment such as fostering should be explored at every opportunity. It should never be the case that residential care is seen as a lifelong option and step down should be considered at every review from the point of entry into the children's home.
- Where it is necessary to use a children's home they will be small and replicate a stable and happy family home as far as possible.
- Where children are not expected to return to their parents' care planning for a permanent placement will happen as quickly as possible. The preferred options will be adoption, child arrangement orders, special guardianship orders or long term fostering.
- Where the longer term solution is out of necessity residential provision we will seek to ensure security of placement and timely, supported transition into adult services, where possible and appropriate developing joint transition or long term arrangements.
- Placement matching will consider closely all the needs of the child/children in placement.
- Wherever possible siblings will be placed together unless assessment determines that it is not in their best interests.
- Placement in a residential setting will only be taken as a last resort when all other options have been exhausted.
- All plans and reviews will be made, wherever possible, with the participation of the child. The child will be consulted on every decision and their views taken into consideration. There may be times when, as a good parent, decisions are made with which the child does not agree, such decisions will be clearly explained and the views of the child will be noted.

We will only place our children in facilities judged as good or outstanding by Ofsted. Should judgement result in a lower rating post placement then work will be undertaken to ensure the safety and care of the children accessing it is not compromised. Once this is ascertained and where through discussion with the child, social worker and other relevant individuals the child may be relocated or remedial work undertaken with the service.

6 Profile of Looked After Children

There were 634 Looked after Children in Rotherham as at 31st December 2018. The majority of our Looked After Children fall into the 10-17 year old age bracket with the majority being White British. There are more males being looked after than females. Rotherham is also assisting 7 unaccompanied asylum seekers with their claim for asylum.



*There are 3 records where the Disability field has not been recorded

The breakdown below shows the length of time Children and Young People have been Looked After.

LAC Duration	Number
Under 6 Months	104
6 Months to Under 1 Year	104
1 Year to Under 2 Years	159
2 Years to Under 3 Years	78
3 Years to Under 4 Years	43
4 Years to Under 5 Years	28
5 Years to Under 7 Years	37
7 Years to Under 9 Years	38
9 Years to Under 11 Years	22
11 Years to Under 13 Years	15
13 Years Plus	6
Total	634

An analysis of the profile of Looked After Children shows that more children are being taken into care at an earlier age; this has contributed to an inflated 0-5 cohort. The rate of growth within the cohort in Rotherham is one of the largest in the region and 0-5 year olds now account for 30% of Rotherham’s overall LAC cohort. This inflated cohort may have significant implications on Rotherham’s future sufficiency requirements, if permanency plans are not made.

Rotherham also appears to have a much more diverse range of ethnicity within its LAC population than most of its other regional statistical neighbours. In particular, it has the highest proportion of children and young people from Gypsy/Romany backgrounds than anywhere else in the region (equating to 7.7% of the population). There also appears to be higher concentrations of non-British, White background LAC. This (and qualitative information from personnel in Rotherham) suggests that Rotherham has seen a high influx of migrants from Eastern European Countries settling in Rotherham over recent years which could account for this increased LAC demographic.

Other LAC population demographics are consistent with other YH regions.

The table below shows the rate of LAC per 10,000 under 18 population. Rotherham rate of LAC is much higher than the regional, statistical neighbours and England averages, and has remained so for the last 7 years+.

	Children looked after rate, per 10,000 children aged under						
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Rotherham	69	68	70	70	72	76	86
Yorkshire & Humber	65	67	65	65	64	63	67
Statistical Neighbours	62	67	70	73	73	76	81
England	58	59	60	60	60	60	62

* Source: DfE

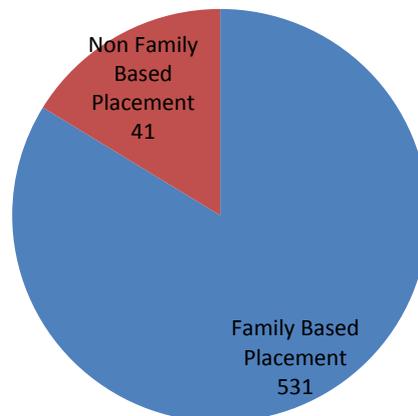
The below table shows the trend of Rotherham's increasing number of Looked After Children since April 2018.

	Breakdown of LAC Leaving and Entering Care								
	Apr 18	May 18	Jun 18	Jul 18	Aug 18	Sep 18	Oct 18	Nov 18	Dec 18
LAC	629	627	642	648	655	657	653	652	647
Admissions	16	37	19	34	22	16	26	19	18
Ceased	18	22	13	27	20	20	27	24	31
Net +/-	-2	15	6	7	2	-4	-1	-6	-11

Rotherham has seen a large increase in its number of Looked After Children, particularly over the last four years. Within Yorkshire and Humber, Rotherham has seen the largest increase in LAC population over the last 4 years with a 30% increase between 2016-18 and 37% over the last 4 years (to 2014-18).

7 Placements

Of the 634 Looked after Children in Rotherham as at 31st December 2018 83.8% were in a family based placement of which 6.5% were placed with parents or other person with parental responsibility.



Placed Out of Authority

As at 31 December 2018 there were 361 Looked after Children who were placed out of the authority. This represents 56.9% of the LAC cohort.

Placement Type	No. of Children	% of Children
Placed for Adoption	20	5.5%
Secure Unit	1	0.3%
Children's Homes	46	12.7%
Placed with parents or other with Parental Resp.	7	1.9%
Independent living (flat/lodgings/friends/B&B)	16	4.5%
Family Centre or Mother and Baby Unit	3	0.8%
Young Offender Institute or Prison	1	0.3%
Residential Schools	7	1.9%
Foster placement with relative or friend	12	3.3%
Placement with other foster carer	247	68.5%
Other Placement	1	0.3%
Total	361	100%

When the placements of the entire LAC cohort are considered as a whole, a significant number of Rotherham children are currently placed outside the borough. Regional sufficiency work completed with 2017-18 data suggested that Rotherham had the highest net-exporter number of children placed outside the area when compared to other local authorities in the Yorkshire & Humber region.

8 In-House Fostering

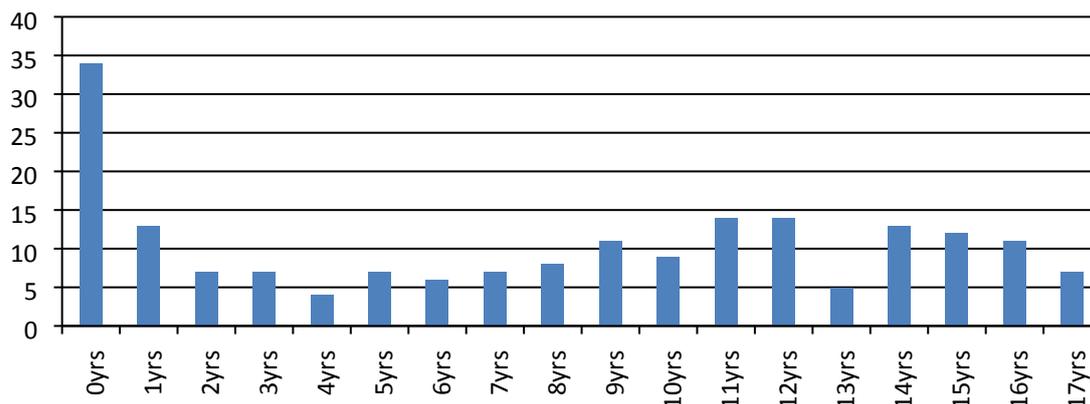
In-house foster placements make up 29.8% of the total LAC population. Overall, at the end of December 2018, there were 464 children in fostering placements (all-types); this is 73% of the total LAC population. However, of these, only 41% of children are placed with in-house foster carers, compared to 59% with independent fostering agencies. This balance has shifted further in favour of IFAs in the past 12 months. Regional sufficiency work indicates that Rotherham has one of the

highest proportions of IFA placements in comparison to in-house placements in the region. This means that Rotherham is currently substantially exposed to the IFA market; this, in-turn has an impact on our local ability to achieve value for money when managing LAC Sufficiency.

As at 31 December 2018 there were 189 Looked after Children who were placed with Rotherham Foster Carers (In House). This represents 40.7% of those Children in any Foster Placement. In House Foster Placements make up 29.8% of the total LAC population.

Age of Children

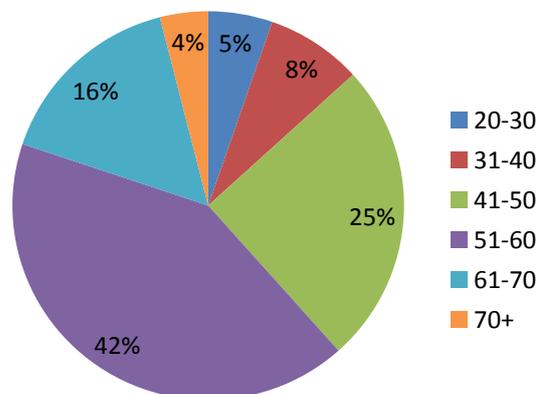
Of the 189 children placed in an in-house fostering placement at the end of December 2018, 36.5% (69 children) were between the ages 11-16yrs.



Age of Carers

Of the 151 foster carers at the end of December 2018, 42.0% (63 carers) were between the ages 51-60yrs.

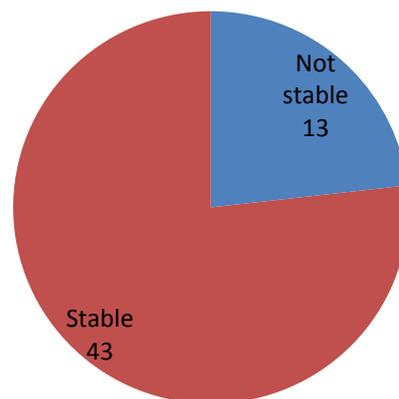
Carers age group	No. Carers
20-30yrs	8
31-40yrs	12
41-50yrs	38
51-60yrs	63
61-70yrs	24
70+yrs	6
Total	151



Placement Stability

At the end of December 2018, 56 children aged sixteen or under were in an in-house fostering placement and had been looked after continuously for 2.5 years or more. Of these children 43 (76.8%) had been living in the same placement for at least 2 years, or were placed for adoption and their adoptive placement together with their previous placement together had lasted for at least 2 years.

Rotherham has supported children to establish permanency and, since 2016/17, 28 in-house foster carers have been special

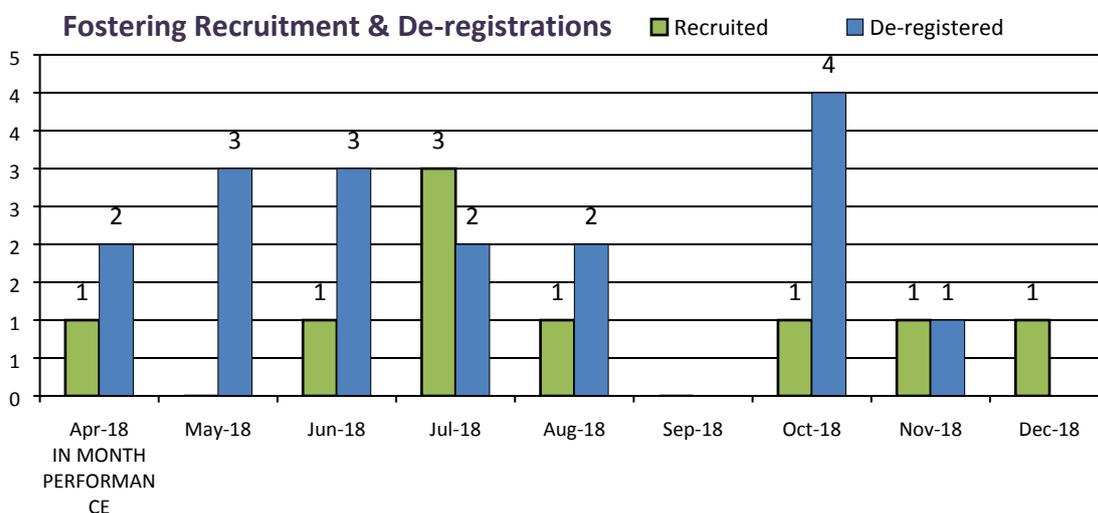


guardians. Whilst this has reduced the overall number of in-house foster carers, it has achieved long-term stability for children and will support them to achieve better outcomes. (Table below shows how many foster carers had an SGO in each financial year.

Year	No. Carers - SGO
2016/17	3
2017/18	5
2018/19	20
Total	28

Recruitment & Approvals

At the end of December 2018 there were 150 Foster Carer Households. Between 1st April 2018 and 31 December 18, there were 9 newly recruited Foster Carers and 17 de-registrations.



The table below details Foster Carer approvals for on-going & new carers between 1 April 18 and 31 December 18.

Approval Type (New)	No. Households
Task Centred	42
Fostering Respite/Day Care	21
Long Term/Permanent	15
Fostering Plus	2
Families Together	2
Total	49

In addition to this between 1 April 18 and 31 December 18, 86 Foster Carer approvals were ceased.

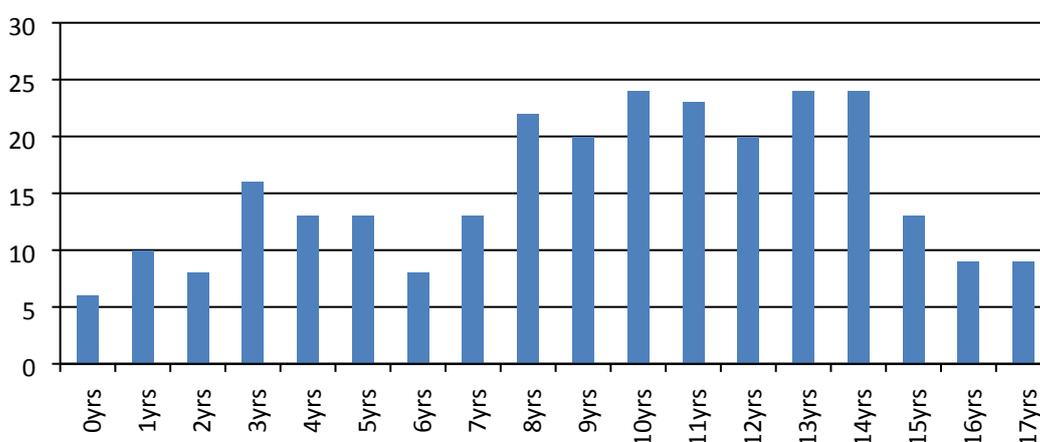
However, it is of concern that the age profile of Rotherham’s foster carers may lead to further de-registrations through retirement in coming years. The Foster Carer Recruitment Strategy will also seek to increase the range of placements offered (especially to sibling groups and children with complex needs) and to support foster carers who are able to have more than one child in placement.

9 Independent Fostering Agencies

Of all Rotherham children placed within a family-based setting, 59% are with an Independent Fostering Agency (compared to 41% with an in-house foster carer). Regional data suggests that this is one of the highest proportions of IFA placements in comparison to in-house placements in the region. The largest cohort of children placed with Independent Fostering Agencies is between the age of 11 and 16 years olds. Children placed with IFAs may be further away from Rotherham (more than a quarter are placed more than 20 miles away), however, regional sufficiency data suggests that many Rotherham children live with IFAs in neighbouring local authorities.

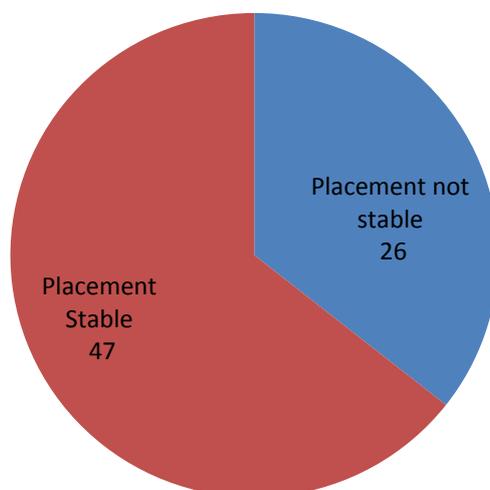
Age of Children

Of the 275 children placed in an Independent Fostering Agency placement at the end of December 2018, 41.1% (113 children) were between the ages of 11-16yrs.



Placement Stability

At the end of December 2018, 73 children aged sixteen or under were in an in-house fostering placement and had been looked after continuously for 2.5 years or more. Of these children 47 (64.4%) had been living in the same placement for at least 2 years, or were placed for adoption and their adoptive placement together with their previous placement together had last for at least 2 years.



Placement Distance

Of the 275 children placed in an Independent Fostering Agency placement at the end of December 2018, 75 (27.3%) of them were placed over twenty miles away. The average distance for all of the 275 children is 18.3 miles.

IFAs offer positive placement stability to the children they care for with more than half in placement for 2 years or more. This indicates that there may be opportunities to encourage carers to become Rotherham foster carers, or to transfer to more permanent arrangements.

Rotherham has its own framework agreement with fostering agencies (it is not part of the White Rose Framework). This has worked well; the feedback from IFAs is that the relationship with Rotherham is the nearest thing to partnership that they have experienced and there is positive engagement with the Rotherham Quality Assurance Framework.

Rotherham will leverage these positive relationships as the local framework for fostering is reviewed, and seek to balance the exposure that Rotherham currently has to the IFA market in terms of securing foster care placements. The work will also seek to reduce the necessity to commission off-framework placements.

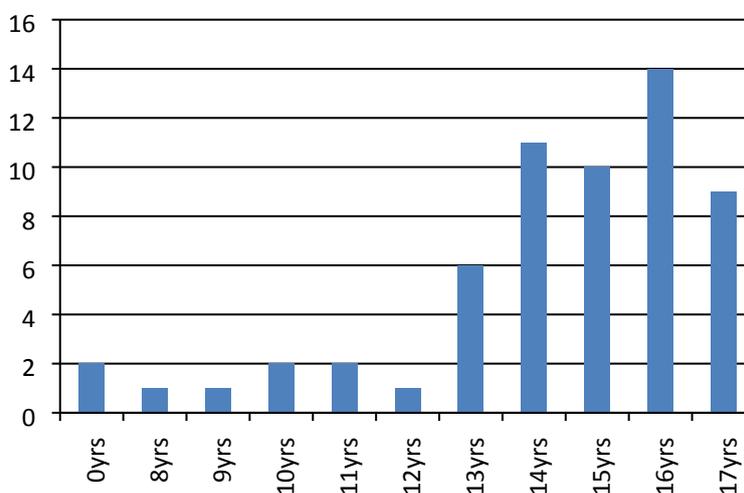
The work with IFAs will be set in the context of renewed focus on recruiting more in-house foster carers.

10 Residential Placements

As at 31 December 2018 there were 59 Looked after Children in Residential Placements. This equates to 9.3% of the total LAC population. Of the 59 children placed in a Residential placement at the end of December 2018, 74.6% (44 children) were between the ages 11-16yrs. Of the 59 children placed in a Residential placement 35 (59.3%) of them were placed over twenty miles away. The average distance for all of the 59 children is 43.6 miles.

Age of Children

Of the 59 children placed in a Residential placement at the end of December 2018, 74.6% (44 children) were between the ages 11-16yrs.



Placement Stability

At the end of December 2018, 7 children aged sixteen or under were in an in-house fostering placement and had been looked after continuously for 2.5 years or more. Of these children 0 (0.0%) had been living in the same placement for at least 2 years, or were placed for adoption and their adoptive placement together with their previous placement together had last for at least 2 years.

Placement Distance

Of the 59 children placed in a Residential placement 35 (59.3%) of them were placed over twenty miles away. The average distance for all of the 59 children is 43.6 miles.

Rotherham does not have any in-house residential provision. This means that the majority of placements are made with private providers via the White Rose Framework. Rotherham is a partner in the White Rose Consortium which consists of 15 local authorities within the Yorkshire and Humber region; this offers a level of assurance in relation to both price and quality when procuring placements with contracted providers.

Children requiring residential placements are often older children with complex needs or challenging behavior who need an intensive package of support from a range of agencies. 44% of Residential Care placements were made at the Tier 3 (Specialist) weekly fee rate which indicates a high level of complexity in these cases in comparison with the Tier 1 (Standard Placement) and Tier 2 (Intensive Placement) placement categories. Regional sufficiency work suggests that Rotherham has the highest proportion of placements in this category.

Rotherham is working to build relationships with private providers who are based in the borough in order to be in a position to place according to the principles of this strategy, within or close to the local area, and to achieve best value for money. Two new providers now have residential homes within the borough and places have been block-booked for Rotherham children. In December 2018, 3 children were occupying 100% of the block-booked places with one provider. The second provider was awaiting Ofsted registration.

The market management work will prioritise developing relationships with providers to encourage them to open new provision within the Rotherham borough and working with them to secure further block purchase agreements to ensure value for money sufficiency of local, good quality placement options for young people. The White Rose Framework provides a procurement vehicle to support this work.

11 Specialist Placements

Out of the 634 Looked after Children in Rotherham as at 31st December 2018 0.8% (5) was in a Specialist Placement.

Placement Type	No. of Children
Secure Unit	1
Residential Care Home	0
NHS/Health Trust or other establishment providing medical/nursing care	0
Family Centre or Mother and Baby Unit	3
Young Offender Institute or Prison	1
Total	5

In December 2018, Rotherham required 3 mother and baby placements (residential family assessment) to meet its sufficiency needs. Improved value for money would be achieved if this specialism was available from in-house provision; there is currently too greater reliance on independent provision.

12 Short Breaks

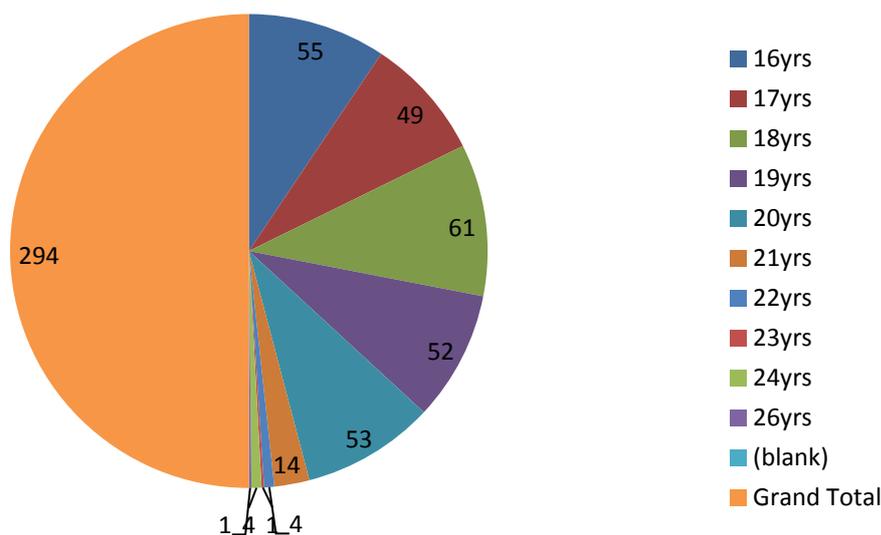
Liberty House is an in house service which offers short break residential provision for children aged 8-18 with a range of complex physical, learning and health needs. Liberty House comprises of 9 bedrooms, 4 of which are suitable for children with less ambulant ability. Children’s frequency of short break stay is assessed on the dynamics of both the child and their family. Liberty House is an Ofsted registered short break provision and adheres to all aspects of the Children’s Homes Regulations 2015. Liberty House received a Good outcome following inspection in December 2018.

The provision of short breaks supports families to remain together; the needs analysis for short breaks provision (including residential and non-residential provision) was refreshed in November 2018 and will inform future commissioning activity.

13 Care Leavers

As at the 31 December 2018 there were 294 Care Leavers in Rotherham. The pie chart below shows the age breakdown of the Care Leavers Cohort. Of the 294 Care Leavers; 44 were accessing commissioned post 16 accommodation and support.

Care Leavers Age Breakdown



Care Leavers Key Performance Indicators

	No.	%
Care Leavers:	294	-
Eligible Care Leavers (289) with Pathway Plan	249 / 289	86.2%
Eligible Care Leavers (289) with up to date Pathway Plan	205 / 289	70.9%
Care Leavers in suitable accommodation	282 / 294	95.9%
Care Leavers in employment, education or training	184 / 294	62.6%
Eligible Care Leavers (289) in Touch	288 / 289	99.7%
Care Leavers with PA allocated	294 / 294	100.0%

Accommodation Type	No of Care Leavers in the accommodation
Post 16 accommodation and support (commissioned)	44
With parents or relatives	39
Community home or other form of residential care	27
Semi-independent, transitional accommodation	29
Supported lodgings	1
Gone abroad	2
Residence not known	2
No fixed abode / homeless	2
Independent living	69
In custody	6
Other accommodation	45
With former foster carers	28
Grand Total	294

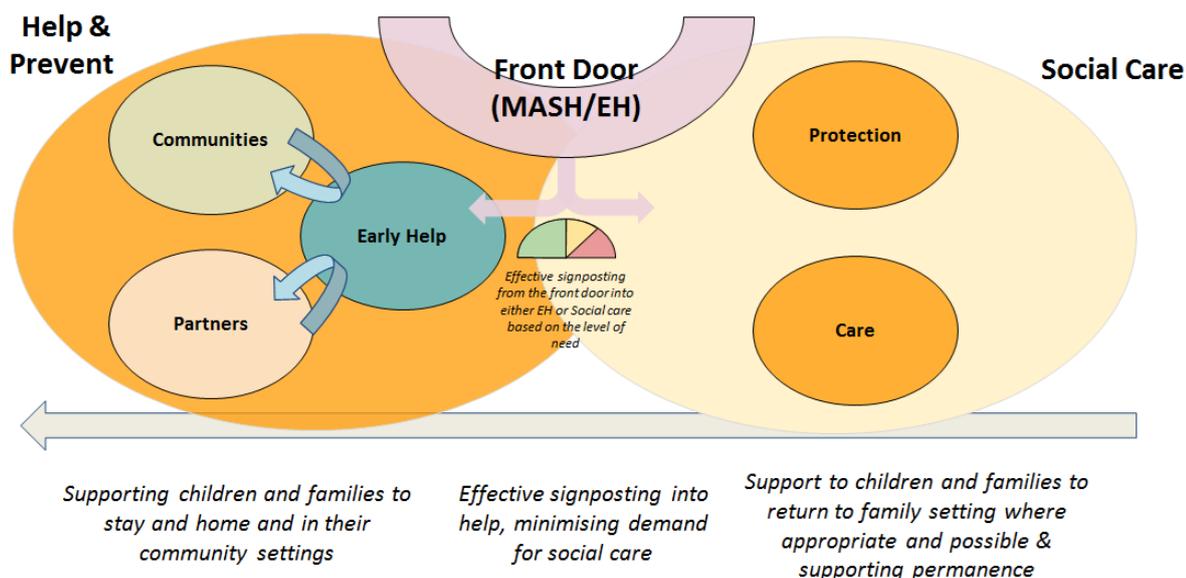
The White Rose Leading Care and Vulnerable Young People Accommodation and Support (16-25) Framework Agreement ended on 18th December 2018. Accommodation for Rotherham Care Leavers will be procured through a Rotherham Framework. This will use a 'light touch' procurement approach to set up a dynamic system to ensure that the needs of care leavers are met effectively through high quality provision that delivers value for money.

In addition to the framework agreement for care leavers, adult services will provide accommodation and support for vulnerable 16 and 17 year olds.

14 Demand Management Approach

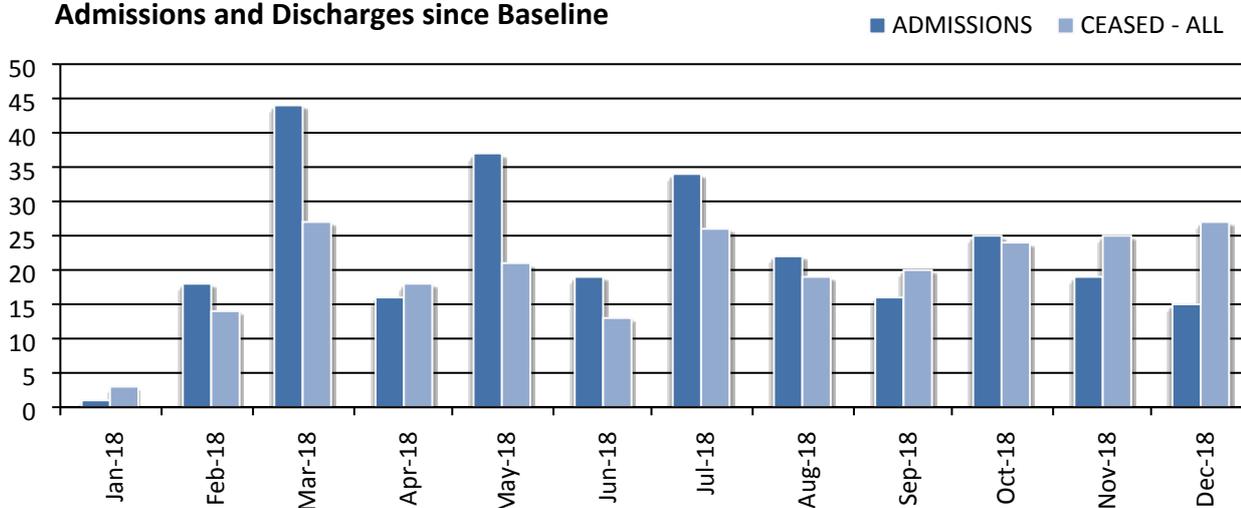
Children and Young People's Services will implement two major transformation projects, aiming to support children, young people and their families with the right services at the right time. The Early Help and Social Care Pathway project will ensure that needs can be addressed early before they escalate, and that interventions, underpinned by the Rotherham Family Approach, support families to step down to less intensive services. The Demand Management Project will ensure that there is improved practice to safely support more children to stay out of care and improved practice to safely support more children to be discharged from care. This work is under-pinned by analysis titled, 'Right

Child, Right Care’ which is included in the LAC Sufficiency Data Booklet. Evidence-based support, including Edge of Care services will also support the demand management approach.



The Right Child Right Care initiative was baselined and introduced in February 2018. Progress is tracked on a monthly basis to ensure that children and young people identified in the baseline cohort are receiving the right package of care to meet their needs. The chart below represents the numbers of admissions and discharges into care since the baseline, until the end of December 2018.

Admissions and Discharges since Baseline



The Demand Management Approach also includes targeted work to prevent children from escalating to higher thresholds of intervention, for example Family Group Conferencing, Multi-Systemic Therapy and the Edge of Care Team. Rotherham’s PAUSE Practice works with a cohort of women who have had more than one child removed from their care; the assertive outreach and support provided gives women space to work on their own needs and seeks to prevent more children being born who are likely to come into the care system.

The Edge of Care service supports the Demand Management Approach and the table below represents the number of Children and Young People who have been impacted by evidence based approaches (as at 31 December 18).

Impact	No. of Children	% of Children
Reduced Intervention since referral to EoC	48	33%
Increased Intervention since referral to EoC	9	6%
No Change	89	61%
Total	146	100%

15 Market Management Approach

The Market Management project will implement plans to make sure the right placements are available to meet the needs of Rotherham’s looked after children. Where children travel out of the borough to live, it is more difficult and expensive to ensure that the right support is in place to meet all their needs.



In order for more children to remain within Rotherham there are several key strands of work that need to be pursued:

Increase In-House Fostering Capacity

Rotherham is disproportionately reliant on Independent Fostering Agencies. This does not provide good value for money and increase the chances of Rotherham children living outside the borough. It is a priority to increase the number of Rotherham foster carers at pace.

In addition to increasing the number of foster carers, we will work to broaden the demographic profile of the foster carer community and support them to have the skills and capacity to meet the needs of Rotherham’s Looked After Children.

Develop In-Borough Residential Provision

Rotherham’s in-borough residential provision is Liberty House, providing Short Breaks for children with disabilities. There is no in-borough provision for full time residential care.

Rotherham will seek to develop the local market, through relationship-based commissioning and innovative partnership work to increase the number of residential placements in the borough. The White Rose Framework supports local areas to develop provision that is specific to the needs of the local area. Where the need for specialist provision is identified (for example therapeutic placements or provision for children with profound and multiple disabilities) we will work with the market to develop the right local offer to meet need. Block-booking arrangements will be negotiated where we are confident that this will deliver best value for money.

Understand Local Sufficiency Arrangements and Value for Money

The data booklet that accompanies the LAC Sufficiency Strategy will be updated on an annual basis to ensure that there is a clear understanding of our ability to meet the needs of Rotherham’s Looked After Children. In addition a dynamic placement tracker is in development to enable us to have clear visibility of the mix of placements and whether these are achieving value for money.

16 Financial Analysis

The CYPs LAC placement costs for 2018/19 were £30.037m, with the majority of spend on the following placements:

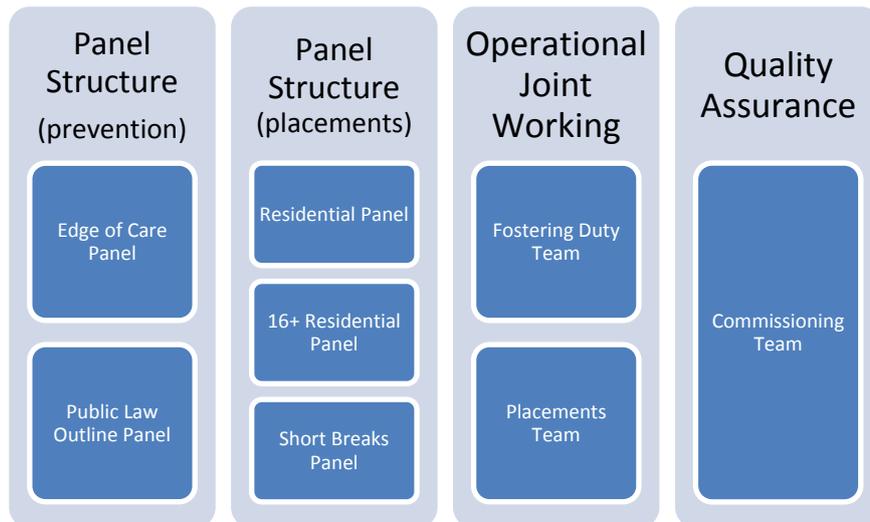
	<u>Costs</u>	<u>No.s</u>
• External Residential (Out of Area) Placements	£12.376m	64
• Independent Fostering Agencies	£11.122m	263
• In-house Foster Carers	£3.188m	167
• Supported Accommodation	£2.143m	48

As can be seen from the figures above the majority of LAC placements are in high cost IFA and external residential placements and the strategy over the next three years is to reduce the number of children in high cost and out of area placements by developing local provision.

The development of local residential provision through a block contracting arranging is intended to provide cost savings compared to the current spot purchase method and will also ensure the child remains within the Rotherham district.

The growth of in-house foster carers is another strategy to keep children in Rotherham whilst placing the young person in a more cost efficient placement. In-house placements cost on average £18k per annum compared to an IFA placement as £44k per annum.

17 Roles, Responsibilities & Processes



The Commissioning Service has introduced a Quality Benchmarking Assessment Framework to be used as a tool to improve the monitoring of the quality of the Services provided. This tool has also been designed to help us to work together to improve the services for Children and Young People in Rotherham and to build good working relationships with providers. This benchmarking tool will enable self-assessment and support improvement; it will clarify our expectations and ensure that we are a child centred borough.

18 Conclusion

The LAC Sufficiency Strategy will underpin the activity that will be delivered through the Market Management Project.

The key priorities of the Market Management Project are:

- **To reduce reliance on Independent Fostering Agencies by recruiting more in-house foster carers; and**
- **To develop local residential provision and secure block-bookings for Rotherham children where this will achieve best value.**

The detailed work to increase the number of in-house foster carers is set out in the **Foster Carer Recruitment Strategy**.

In addition to this work we will:-

- **Explore opportunities for regional collaborative working arrangements.** Rotherham Council is a member of the White Rose consortium, participating in frameworks for the provision of independent residential placements and SEN placements. LAC Sufficiency is a priority across the region (and the country) and Rotherham will fully engage with innovative practice that will support the principles and challenges set out in this strategy;

- **Review the Rotherham Fostering Framework** to ensure that it continues to deliver high quality placements and value for money;
- **Implement a Dynamic Purchasing Framework** to ensure that sufficiency is achieved for Rotherham care leavers; and
- **Work in partnership with Adult Care & Housing** to ensure that sufficiency is achieved for vulnerable 16 and 17 year olds.