

Children in Care Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2016 - 2019

Executive Summary

The Derby 2015-2018 Placement Sufficiency Strategy details how Derby City Council intends to meet the 'Sufficiency Duty' set out in Section 22G of the Children Act 1989. It:

- Sets out the Council's approach to meeting its responsibilities to provide secure, safe and appropriate accommodation to children in care and care leavers over the next three years,
- Identifies the key challenges that we face in achieving sufficiency and sets out our strategic approach to overcoming them, and
- Outlines the actions we will take and the way we will measure our success.

The number of children placed within 20 miles of Derby is above the national average; however there is a clear picture of placements at a distance in non-adjacent Local Authority areas and of the rationale for making these placements. There is a continuing priority to continue to place more children within or near to Derby.

The provision of foster care placements for Derby's Looked After Children is in line with national averages and the service has implemented Staying Put practice to enable Care Leavers to remain in their foster care placements post 18. We have also developed a range of Supported Accommodation for care leavers to provide a transition into adulthood and ensure housing related support is available to help sustain tenancies. The challenge for the fostering service will be to increase capacity for teenage placements, and to increase the number of households which reflect the background of our children, further to develop Staying Put practice and policies and to mitigate the impact of Staying Put arrangements on the supply of teenage foster placements.

All in-house residential provision in Derby is currently rated as Adequate or Good by OFSTED. The key area for development indicated by this Sufficiency Strategy is the increased use of residential care over recent years. The key action is to ensure that children placed in residential care are only there for the time required to meet their identified needs and that step down and exit plans are in place and implemented in a timely way.

Additional sufficiency work will take into account the impact of wider developments on placement needs and provision, such as implementation of the Children and Families Act 2014 and the further development of effective joint commissioning for children with complex needs.

The proposed actions to develop Derby's placement sufficiency during 2016-19 build on the good and improving practice identified in this Strategy, taking into account the areas of need and development identified through the analysis.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Section 22G of the Children Act 1989 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 are looking after; and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the local authority’s area (‘the sufficiency duty’).”

The sufficiency duty requires local authorities to do more than simply ensure that accommodation is available in terms of the number of beds provided. They must also have due regard to the benefits of securing a range of accommodations through a number of providers.

Statutory Guidance on Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children (2010) further reinforces the responsibilities of the local authority when sourcing a placement for a looked after child, from Section 22C:

- Allowing the child to live near his/her home
- Not disrupting the child’s education or training
- Enabling the child and a ‘looked after’ sibling to live together
- Meeting the particular needs of disabled children; and
- Providing accommodation within the local authority’s area, unless that is not reasonably practicable.

1.1 Background

Derby currently use a range of internal and external providers for both fostering and children’s home provision, however placements are always sought with in-house provision prior to considering purchasing services from the independent sector.

Derby City Council have led the implementation in April 2011, and recent review of the East Midlands Regional Children’s Framework (EMRCF) for Independent Fostering Agencies and Children’s Home Providers. The framework established a formalised agreement between providers and currently all nine local authorities, which has brought about multiple benefits including shared risk, efficiencies, buying power, influence over the market and increase quality and consistency across the region. This East Midlands regional work has not only increased the strategic power of the local authorities, but also allowed for a wider inclusion of sufficiency and market development, as the framework has been re-tendered in 2015/16 with a refreshed business model requiring providers to identify where their bed spaces are, and what specialist areas they may offer.

It is acknowledged that new and emerging delivery methods could generate improved outcomes for children and young people, and potentially generate efficiencies for the local authority. These alternative means of considering how placements are made include:

- Emergency assessment units which can help to ensure that emergency placements are time limited, and achieve the required outcomes to allow the young person to move into a more stable and longer term solution;
- Up to 12 weeks step down provision to allow move on from secure or other complex and high cost residential placements.

These types of commissioned services will be explored as the action plan for this strategy is implemented.

1.2 Vision

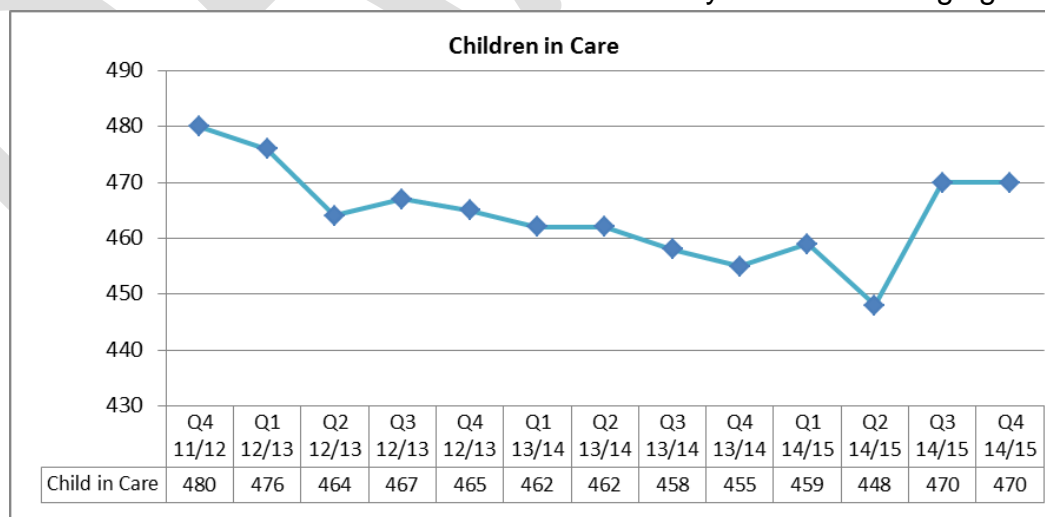
Derby City Council aims to:

- Secure the most appropriate placement for every child and young person, using the market to ensure consistent quality standards and the best possible outcomes;
- Reduce the number of children and young people placed outside the local authority area (at 31st March 2015 53.8% were placed outside the city boundary);
- Clarify the requirements for local children in care by producing a market position statement to support providers to develop appropriate provision;
- Listen to children and young people and maximise opportunities for the voice of the child to influence commissioning activity and service delivery.

2.0 PROFILE AND NEEDS ANALYSIS

2.1 The Number of Children in Care

The number of children in care in Derby has risen from 455 at the end of March 2014, to 470 at the end of March 2015. This is a rise in cases which follows three years of declining figures.



The rate of children in care per 10,000 of the population was 81.3 as at 31/03/2015. Whilst this is an increase from 77 per 10,000 seen in 2013-14, it is still only slightly above the 2014-15 comparator figure of 80.3 per 10,000.

2.2 Age and Gender

In the different age groups of children in care, Derby is in line with comparator and national averages in general. The recent increase at the 16 and over age range could be a result of the Southwark judgement (May 2009) which clarified local authorities' responsibility to assess homeless under 18's in England and Wales under the Children Act 1989, rather than referring them to the housing authority in the first instance to meet their accommodation needs. In response to this, Derby established a Leaving Care housing framework for 16 and 17 year olds in 2014/15.

Age Group	31/03/2012	31/03/2013	31/03/2014	31/03/2015
Under 1	33	28	29	36
1 to 4	88	82	81	81
5 to 9	101	110	112	98
10 to 15	159	174	166	173
16 and over	99	71	67	82
Total	480	465	455	470

Of the 470 children in care at 31st March 2015, 60.9% were male (286). This is an increase of 2.9% from 31st March 2014 and higher than both our comparators (55%) and the national average (55%). This trend has continued through 2015/16 and is reflected in the data from 31 December 2015 in terms of the gender ratio of the 487 children in care.

2.3 Ethnicity

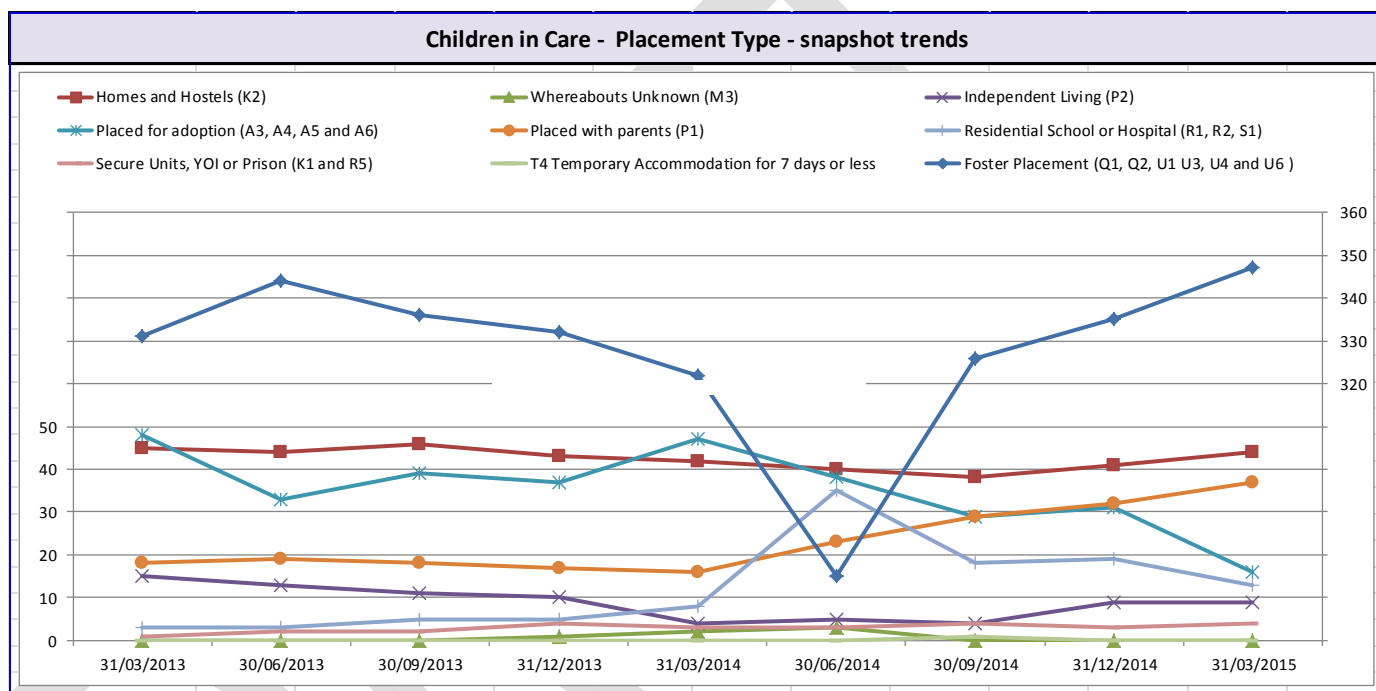
Derby is a small, culturally diverse city with a population of 251,423 representing 182 nationalities, speaking 71 languages. Approximately 25% of Derby's population are from Black and minority Ethnic (BME) communities, with its largest ethnic group comprised of the Asian/ Asian British community. There is also a growing Roma community originating from Eastern Europe which represents an emerging trend in terms of a disproportionate number of children from this group now entering the care system. Numbers of Children in Care by Ethnicity at 31st March 2015:

Ethnic Origin	Number	Percentage
Asian or Asian British	16	3%
Black or Black British	13	3%
Dual Heritage	61	13%
Gypsy/Roma	12	2.5%
White British	328	70%

White Non-European	4	1%
White Other European	24	5%
Other	12	2.5%
Total	470	100%

2.4 Children in Care Placement Type

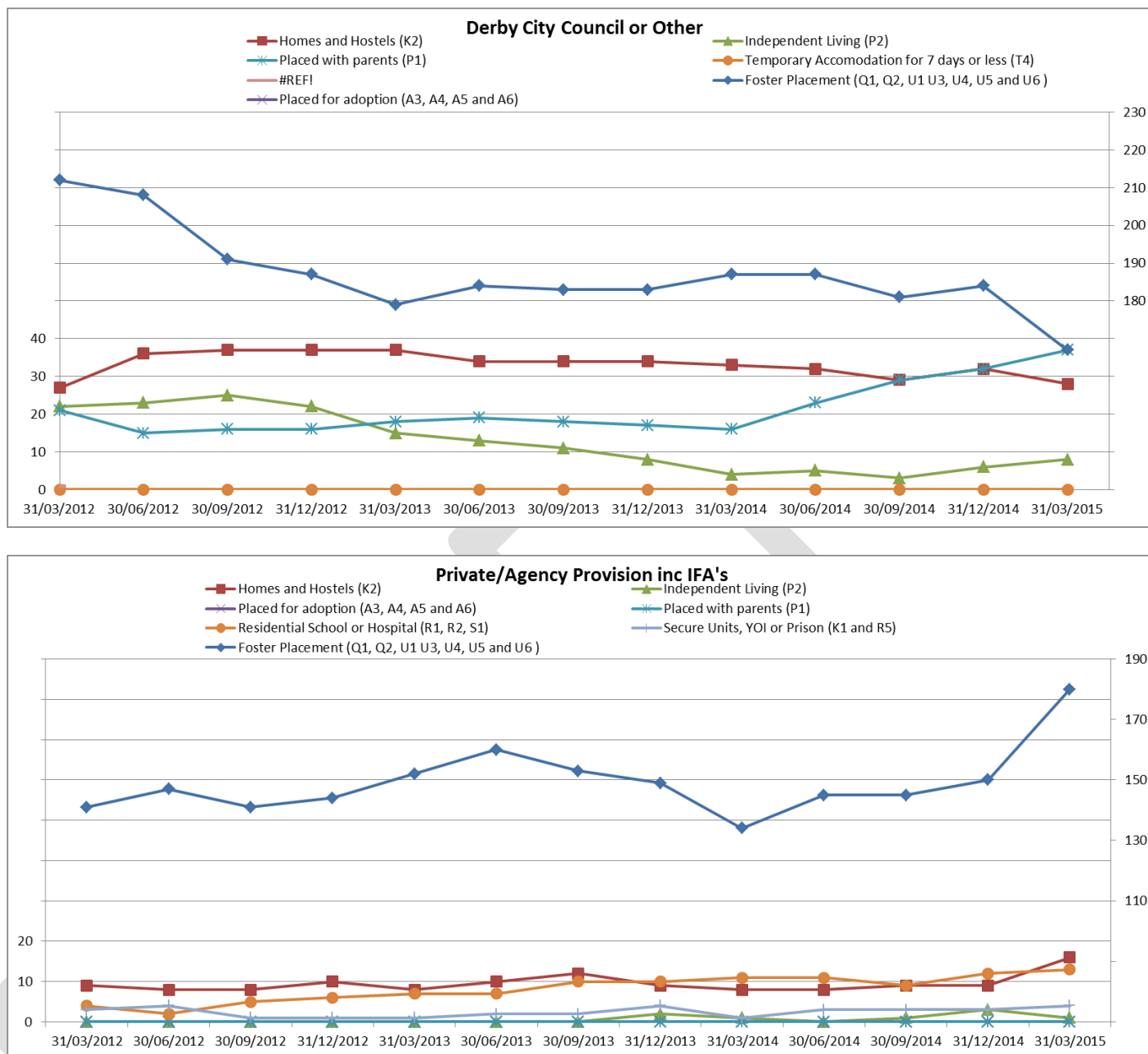
The primary placement types for children and young people in Derby are foster care and children's home placements.



The types of provision are either delivered by Derby City Council as foster care or children's home in-house services, or by private agencies which also include foster care (IFA) and children's homes. The trend of the split over the last four years reflects an increase in external agency placements which directly correlates with a reduction in the number of in house foster carers and children's home places.

Placement Groups - provision of placement	Quarter End - percentages			
	31/03/2012	31/03/2013	31/03/2014	31/03/2015
Derby City Council or other	66.6%	63.9%	65.3%	54.5%
Private/ Agency (IFA's)	33.4%	36.1%	34.7%	45.5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

At 31 March 2105, 67% of children in care were in foster care, 10% in children's homes and hostels, 3% placed for adoption and 8% lived with a parent.



The Local Authority are reviewing the current sufficiency for both internal and external provision, and, in addition to a shortage of placements with internal foster carers, this has highlighted a shortfall in specialist placements for those with complex needs such as risk of Child Sexual Exploitation, offending behaviours, physical and learning disabilities, mental health issues such as self-harm, and drug use. This has resulted in an increase in spot placements being made 'off framework' in order to successfully match young people.

The revised East Midlands Regional Children's Framework (EMRCF) which provides the ability to purchase services from Independent Fostering Agencies and Children's Homes has a focus on specialised provisions which will help to ensure a wider availability of a range of specialised placements enabling more young people to be placed in the right environment in the first instance.

2.5 Finances

The table below shows a summary of the spend on external fostering and children's home placements over the last four financial years on services which were purchased using the EMRCF, against the total spend on placements which includes increasing levels of spot purchase (off framework) placements.

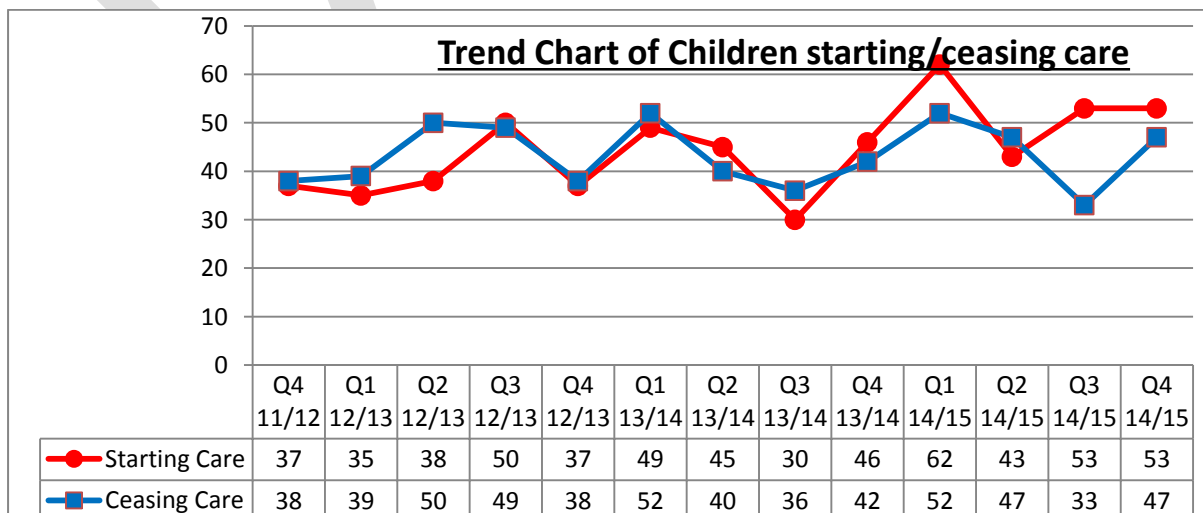
It should be noted that some of these are not new placements but reflect children and young people moving between placements:

Year	Numbers of placements using the framework	Total number of placements	Cost of placements using the framework (£)	Total cost of placements (£)
2011-12	139	145	6,089,365	7,492,404
2012-13	155	164	6,713,036	8,176,324
2013-14	156	171	7,780,309	9,131,562
2014-15	179	195	9,084,992	11,170,904

2.6 Admissions and Discharges Data

Derby had 154 children ceasing care during 2014-15, with 41 adoptions and 10 Special Guardianship Orders granted during 2014-15.

200 children started care during 2014-15. This is an increase from 172 seen during 2013-14 and is our highest figure of new entrants over the past six years. 70.6% of Derby's CIC population enter care as a result of abuse or neglect.



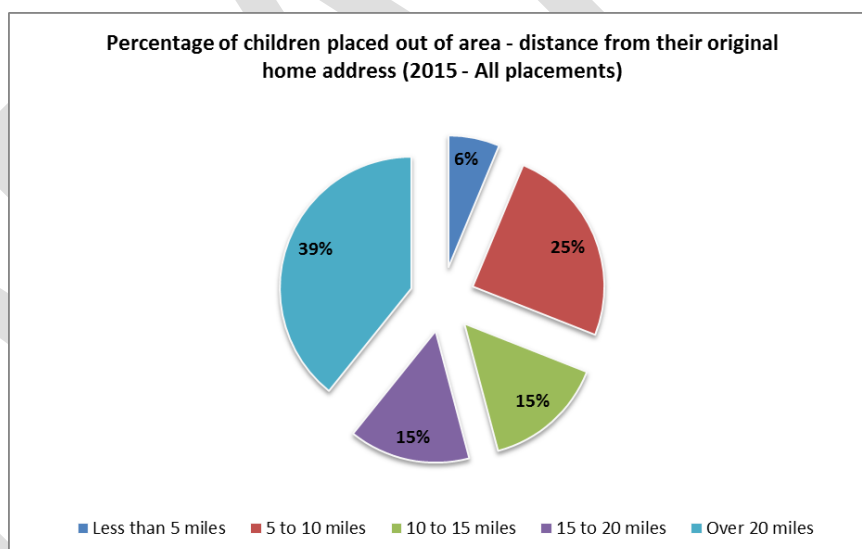
2.7 Placement Location

54% of Derby's children in care are placed outside the Derby City Council local authority boundary; the most recent national benchmarking data from 2012/13 is 37%.¹

255 children and young people are placed outside the local authority area, albeit 94 of these are still within Derbyshire, 41 in Staffordshire and 38 in Nottinghamshire, all bordering the County of Derbyshire.

The strategy incorporates the need to develop more provision local to Derby.

Distance of children placed out of area from originating home address - March 2015			
Miles	Out of Area placements	Miles	Out of Area placements
Less than 5 miles	6%	Less than 5 miles	16
5 to 10 miles	25%	5 to 10 miles	63
10 to 15 miles	15%	10 to 15 miles	38
15 to 20 miles	15%	15 to 20 miles	38
Over 20 miles	39%	Over 20 miles	100
Grand Total	100%	Grand Total	255



3.0 CURRENT PROVISION

Limited availability across all placement types is restricting choice and affecting matching to the most appropriate placement for our children and young people, particularly within local provision. Meeting the needs of those with the most complex needs, and reducing those needs, is proving increasingly challenging. 347 of the 470 children in care at 31st March 2015 were in foster placements (74%), the national average is 75%.²

¹ <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/official-statistics-children-looked-after-placements-31-march-2013>

² DfE Children looked after in England (including adoption and care leavers) year ending 31 March 2014

3.1 Derby City Council Internal Fostering

The total number of fostering places was 241, offered by 116 foster carer households at 31st March 2015³ who between them had 152 children placed, which is 44% of the total fostering placements in total. The majority of the remainder of children fostered are placed with independent fostering agencies. There are on-going strategies in place in terms of increasing the recruitment and sufficiency of in house foster carers which is currently a high priority. The following standard weekly allowances are provided to foster carers (2015/16):

Age	Allowance
0-4	£142.86
5-10	£162.73
11-15	£197.39
16 -18	£236.27

Additional fees are paid for the foster carer of children and young people with more specific needs.

3.2 Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA)

The number of placements purchased from IFA's has increased steadily over recent years to 180 at 31st March 2015. Analysis shows these placements were often made to meet specific and often complex needs, or to facilitate sibling group placements. There has also been a lack of capacity within the in house fostering and residential provision particularly to accommodate more complex placement needs. The EMRCF re-tender provides additional information regarding IFA carers in Derby. Derby uses the EMRCF to place young people with IFA carers.

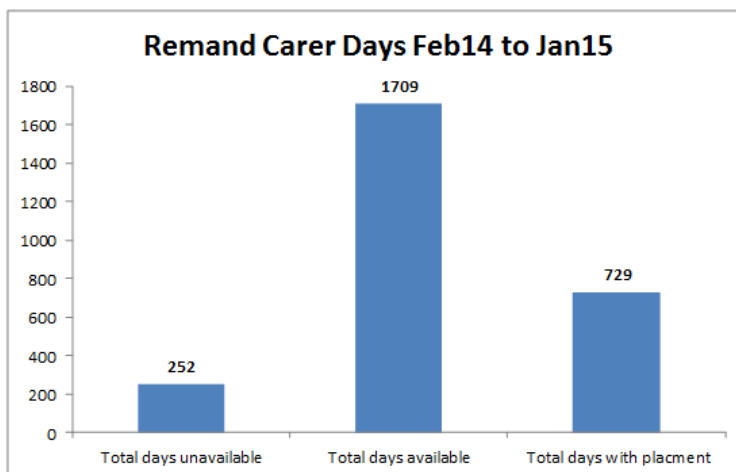
The total spend on IFA agencies in 2014/15 was £6,796,000 (an average spend of £726 per child per week), with the top five providers receiving over £2M of annual funding between them.

3.3 Remand Fostering

The Retained Complex Remand Foster Care pilot was launched in February 2014 as a partnership between Derby City, Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire Youth Offending Services. The aim of the scheme was to commission high quality foster care to meet each individual child and young person's needs and outcomes. The retained Foster Carers provide placements for young people who are either awaiting trial, having pleaded not guilty, or sentence as an alternative to custody.

The Foster Carers were expected to manage adolescent behaviours and set firm boundaries. The age range of the group was mainly 15 -17 years however placement was possible for 12 years upwards where required. This pilot finished on 31 December 2015 and a review is underway to provide useful information on the commissioning of placements for children and young people with complex needs, and to inform future commissioning models. The success of the scheme can be measured by the feedback and outcomes of the young people who were placed, in addition to data on cost savings for the local authority.

³ OFSTED Fostering Return 2014-15



3.4 Residential Provision

Children's homes fulfil a number of purposes and cater for a range of children's needs, from adolescents with challenging behaviour (many of whom have recently entered the care system and may have spent long periods of time out of school with the aspiration they may return to their family), to young people at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation, and children and teenagers with complex mental health problems.

In-house - Derby City Council has the following children's homes:

Provision	Number of Places
The Willows, 400 Sinfin Lane	4
Shine (specialist disability)	5
Coronation Avenue Children's Home	5 (currently 0 due to refurbishment)
Queensferry Gardens Children's Home	6
Bute Walk Childrens Home	6
Cricklewood Road Children's Home	6
402 Sinfin Lane	5
Total	37 (August 2015)

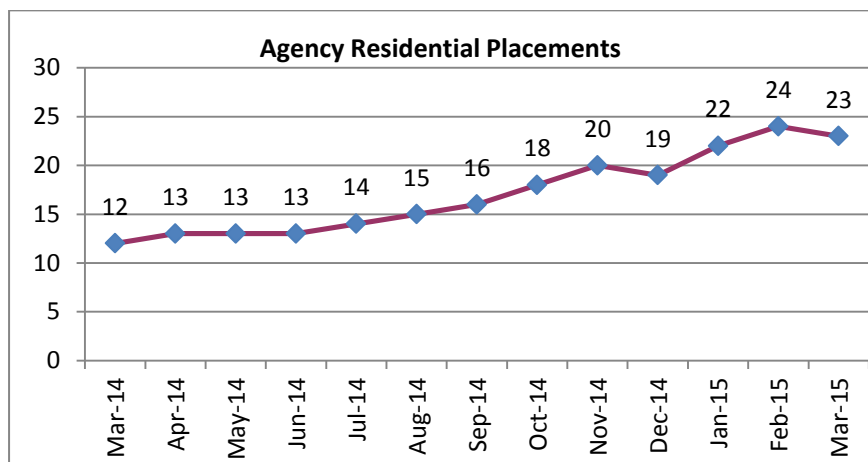
24 children were in placement at 31st March 2014, a reduction from 31 at 31st March 2013 and 32 at 31st March 2012.

There has recently been a programme of refurbishments and rebuilding within the local authority homes, and a reduction in the overall number of residential units has also reduced from 39 to a planned 24 by 2018.

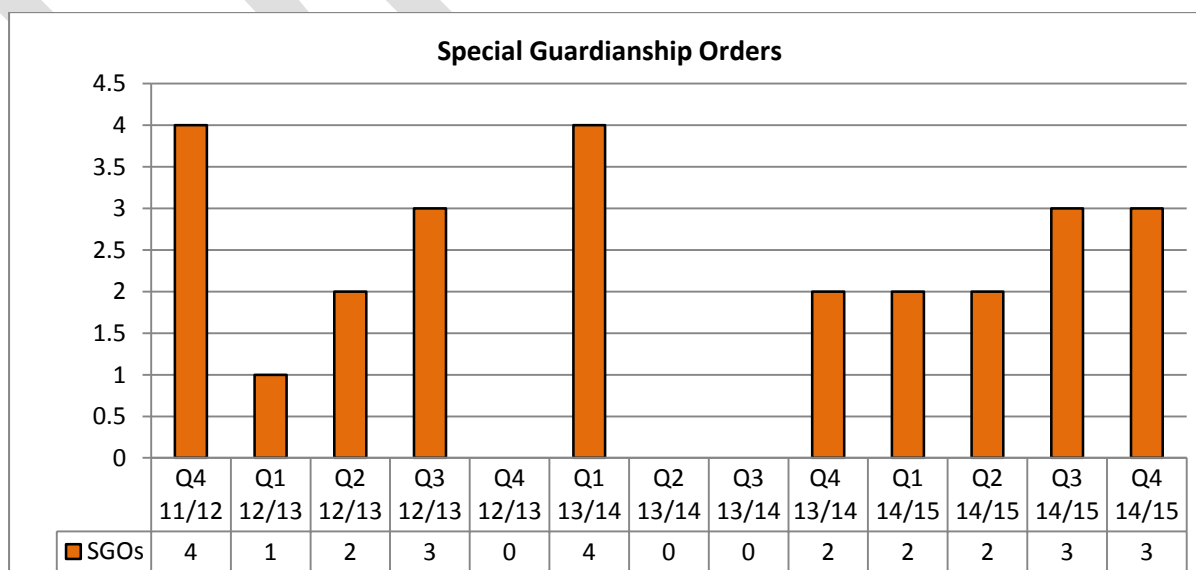
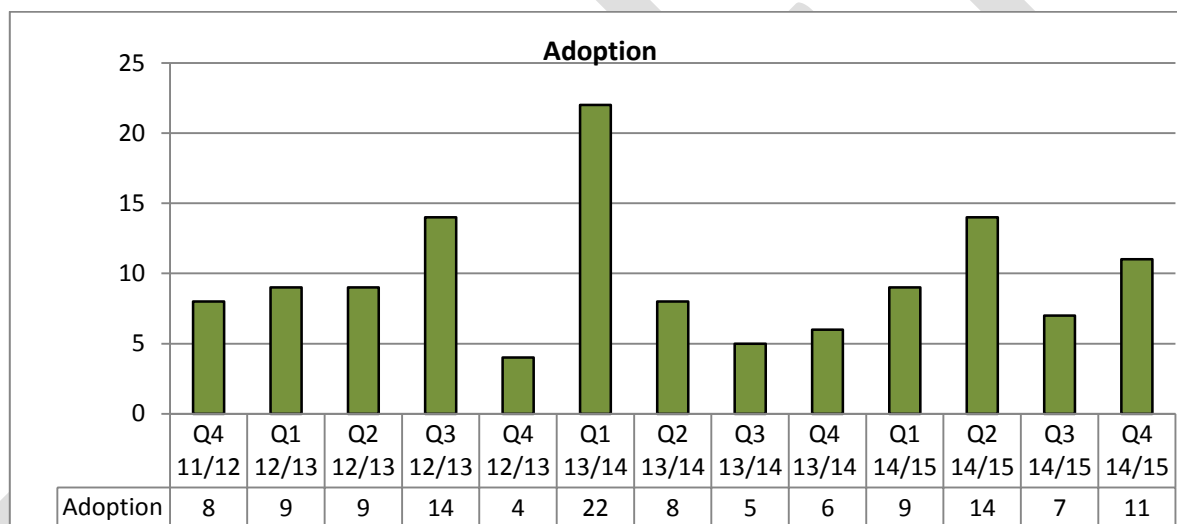
External Registered Providers

Externally purchased residential placements are commissioned when an in house placement is not possible, or when the child's needs are complex and specialist placement options need to be

explored. The numbers of children in external placements have almost doubled in the last financial year. Derby uses the EMRCF to place young people with external residential providers.



3.5 Adoption and Permanence - Number of adoptions and special guardianship orders:



A key development over recent years has been the development of “Staying Put” provision, enabling foster children to remain in placement beyond their 18th birthday. Take up has been lower than expected in Derby, where there have been two approved placements providing a Staying Put service since the policy was introduced. However there are consequent reductions in the availability of foster placements for other foster children where these arrangements are in place. The Children and Families Act 2014 indicates that there must be a Framework for Staying Put arrangements for young people aged 16 and over. Statutory guidance issued in May 2014 (Planning Transitions to Adulthood for Care Leavers) reinforces these requirements.

3.6 Leaving Care Provision

The strategic goal is for young people who are care leavers is to have access to appropriate supervised accommodation with transitional support to maximise the potential for successful independent living. In addition, the Local Authority provides 16 and 17 year olds who are in need and would otherwise be homeless, with accommodation.

In September 2014 Derby commissioned a housing framework comprising six providers, to respond to the accommodation and support needs of 16 and 17 year olds including those leaving care provision.

There are 3 levels of support available (Core, Enhanced and Complex) with costs varying by provider and level of support:

- Core Accommodation and 5 hours support – average cost per week £238.98
- Enhanced Accommodation and up to 20 hours support – average cost per week £452.50
- Complex 24/7 provision - average cost per week £591.21

The total projected spend for 2015/16 is £411,271.15.

Over 70 young people have been supported using the framework since September 2014 presenting with a variety of levels of need.

4. ACTION PLAN / RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the needs of Derby's children in care, current placement sufficiency and the mix of provision available to young people, the following have been identified as key areas for development:

- Increase the availability of in-house foster carers – Head of Fostering and Adoption
- Work with local providers to facilitate a better understanding of local independent provision, being proactive in securing local placements when they arise – Commissioning Manager (CiC) to hold market event during 2016
- Work with providers to develop a portfolio of specialist placements for hard to place young people in order to ensure availability using pre-purchased services. Specialisms would include placements for those at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation, offending behaviour, challenging behaviour, mental health – Commissioning Manager (CiC) by July 2016
- Considering how block contract commissioning arrangements may be used to increase local sufficiency – Commissioning Manager (CiC)
- Review of placement types for children considering 'step down' packages, local placements, earlier transition planning, and alternative provision and packages – Commissioning Manager (CiC)
- Implementation of the revised East Midlands Regional Children's' Framework, and consideration of the opportunities presented from additional providers and services - Commissioning Manager (CiC)
- Review of the current models of Supported Accommodation Framework and Remand Fostering Scheme – Commissioning Manager (CiC)
- Fully embed quality assurance in external placements – Commissioning Manager (CiC)
- Support the development of therapeutic environments for Children in Care – establish emotional health and well-being service for CiC from April 2016 – Commissioning Manager (CiC) and Southern Derbyshire Clinical Commissioning Group

Appendix A – Incorporating the views of Children and Young People

Derby People Services Department recognise it is important to ensure the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people in care are incorporated in the LAC Sufficiency Strategy. To ensure this, consultation was undertaken with the members of the Derby Children in Care Council as well as feedback from children and young people in care from across the East Midlands at a special consultation event. In total over 20 children and young people gave their views.

When asked what makes a good foster or children's home placement the children and young people said they want a homely and friendly placement, children and young people were clear that they want to be listened to and have a say in their care, furthermore they emphasized the importance of having a robust matching process with a choice of placements rather than being rushed into a placement without any consultation with the child or young person.

**"A nice and friendly carer that takes care, listens and looks after me" Kerry
15 years old**

Children and young people want a supportive and nurturing environment, where they feel safe and cared for. Bullying was a big feature in their feedback. Children and young people want to be able to talk to their foster carers and residential staff about bullying, they want a safe placement where there is no bullying and staff and carers are encouraging, caring and listen to children and young people.

"Help with preparing for independence particularly with developing budgeting skills" Daniel

Children and young people said it was important to provide appropriate support and advice in preparing for independence particularly around developing the right budgeting skills.

Young people said they want to be involved in the training of foster carers and children's residential homes staff.

Appendix B - Reference List

In developing this Strategy and on-going plan for sufficiency, Derby City Council is mindful of the regulatory and legislative requirements. These include:

- Care Planning, Placement and Review Regulations 2011
- Fostering Regulations (2011) and Minimum Standards (2011)
- Adoption Regulations (2014) and Minimum Standards (2011)
- Children's Homes Regulations 2001, amended 2013
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Staying Put guidance, Planning Transitions to Adulthood for Care Leavers, 2014
- The State of the Nation Children in Care and Care Leavers Survey 2015
- The Children Act 1989 and the Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015
- The Care Standard Act 2000
- The Children's Home's (England) Regulations 2015, including the Quality Standards (2015)
- Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 12)
- The National Standards for The Provision of Children's Advocacy Services 2003
- Care Planning and Fostering (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2015
- Promoting the education of looked after children 2014
- Promoting the health and wellbeing of looked after children 2015

Version	Date	Status
0.1	August 2015	First Draft
0.2	2 September 2015	Amended action plan following ideas session
0.3	4 September 2015	Amended following feedback from Lisa Melrose
0.4	9 September 2015 17 September 2015	Amended following feedback from Lisa Melrose and executive summary amended DMT approved final draft – requested SMART targets and named officers to enhance action plan
0.5	29 October 2015	Action plan amended
0.6	16 February 2016	Updated