

# Sufficiency Strategy for children looked after and care leavers – 2023-28

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**Children in Care**



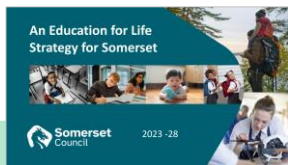
**Somerset**  
Council

# Children's Services Transformation Priorities 2023-2026

Sufficiency

Efficiency

Manage risk



## Education for Life

1. **Best Start in Life** – quality pre-school places for 0-5 years
2. **Whole school focus** – raise attainment for all pupils
3. **Increase attendance & reduce exclusions** – identify children at risk and build effective Team around the School model
4. **School places** – reduce pressures in Bridgwater and Taunton
5. **School transport** – support children to attend their local school and improve value for money

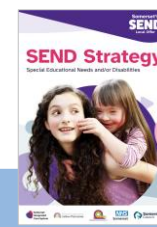
- Improved early years access & engagement
- Improved school attendance
- Improved take up of post 16 education and training
- Reduced exclusions
- Improved attainment
- Improved staff recruitment & retention
- Improved school transport value for money



## CLA Transformation

1. **Homes & Horizons** – 8 to 10 homes, pods and annexes
2. **Fostering improvement** – recruitment, retention and support for Foster Carers
3. **Re-commissioning 16+** – support for independence for young people at risk of homelessness
4. **Edge of care support**
5. **Intelligence and control** – better data to plan & manage
6. **Shape and manage the market** – increase sufficiency
7. **Regional commissioning**

- More local foster carers for Somerset children looked after (CLA)
- More children in residential care live in Somerset
- Better value for money through good quality local provision
- Fewer children coming into care



## SEND Strategy

1. **Working together** to help children achieve what matters to them
2. **Getting help as early as possible** so that families can access the right support at the right time
3. **Access the right information, support and provision**
4. **Preparing for the future** – gaining the right skills to achieve ambitions and prepare for adulthood

- Enhanced learning provisions enable mainstream schools to offer more inclusive provision
- Providing more specialist places for children with SEMH needs
- Fewer children with SEND excluded from school
- Family feedback evidences a more positive experience
- More young people supported into training and employment



## Connect Somerset

1. **Champions, hubs and neighbourhood teams** so services are close to home
2. **#Help4All** offer including targeting early help based on needs
3. **Investment in communities** and redesign delivery to start with the community
4. **Team around the school** wrapping resources around schools to improve attendance
5. **Early Help system workforce development** shared vision, shared case management and communications

- Less demand for statutory services because families are more resilient
- Integrated neighbourhood teams – more efficient shared estate, process, management
- More efficient delivery and increased take up of early help
- Increase delivery of digital and hybrid support
- Target help to those most in need – proactive offer

# Sufficiency means ensuring we have enough high quality homes for our children in care and care leavers

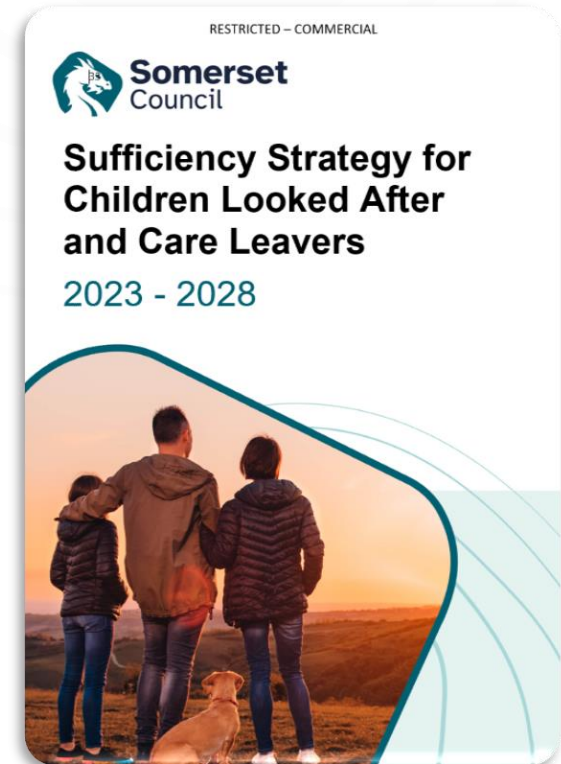
- More than calculating the number of beds
- Providing a range of options to meet different needs which often change
- Working closely with external providers and shaping the market
- Generating new ideas and developments that are sustainable and cost effective
- Ultimately it's about providing a pathway to independence for all of our children in care and care leavers
- Preventing children coming into care is crucial
- Will publish an annual sufficiency statement to show progress

The Council has a statutory duty under section 22G of the Children Act 1989 to take steps that secure sufficient accommodation for children and young people in care:

1. Within Somerset and
2. A range of accommodation capable of meeting different needs

# Our vision

- Better support children at risk of coming into care, before they come into care
- Increase the number of homes for children, especially foster care
- Design our in-house fostering, residential care and supported accommodation so we support the most complex needs
- Improve choice and match homes to children, significantly reducing out of county places
- Reduce costs so we are within budget



# National context and challenges in meeting the sufficiency duty

- The number of CLA has been rising steadily across England, from 69,470 in 2015 to 80,080 in 2020. This figure is expected to rise to 95,000 by 2025
- CIPFA trends in children's services spending found that local authorities spent £11.1 billion on Children's Social Care in 2021/22, a 41% rise compared to 2009
- In 2021 the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) launched a market study in response to lack of supply of placements and high costs. The findings:
  - A lack of placements of the right kind in the right places
  - The largest private providers are making higher profits – dysfunctional market
  - Some of the largest private providers are carrying very high levels of debt
- Providers are struggling to match children with increasingly complex needs
- Ofsted have introduced new quality standards for providers of supported accommodation - Data gathered by Newton Europe indicates that the increase in unit cost is likely to be 15-30%
- Recruitment of foster carers and residential care workers is a national challenge
- Mandatory participation in the National Transfer Scheme has significantly increased the population of unaccompanied asylum seeking children in Somerset

# Somerset context – challenges

- Increasing number of older children in the care system
- A lack of foster carers to meet the needs of children in Somerset
- An ageing population of foster carers
- Recruitment and retention of carers and Registered Managers in children's residential homes
- An increase in children who require specialist provision that can support complex needs
- A lack of secure children's homes nationally, resulting in the need for alternative placements;
- Private providers having more power and ability to choose the children they take, resulting in local authorities having little or no choice
- Local provision is open to all
- Increase in unregistered / illegal placements
- Rising numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC)
- Lack of move-on accommodation for young people leaving supported accommodation
- Number of children in care not in education

# Children Looked After Outcomes Transformation

## Benefits

- Significant savings in 23/24, 24/25 & 25/26
- Cost controls
- Better data
- More carers
- Matching homes to children with choice
- More children stay in county
- Better market relationships



## 1 Homes & Horizons

- Loving homes for most complex needs
- 8 to 10 homes
- Therapeutic education
- Annexes and pods

## 2 Fostering Improvement

- Recruit and retain more foster carers
- Support carers for higher complexity
- Better matching
- Funding follows child
- Workforce development

## 3 Re-commissioning 16+

- Procurement includes P2I and complex spot purchasing
- Implementation for April 24 launch
- Partnership model
- Review UASC costs

## 4 Edge of Care Support

- Family Group Conferences focused on CLA
- Family Safeguarding pilot in FIS
- CLA in education
- Testing targeted analytics

## 5 Intelligence and Control

- New MS BI dashboard
- Redesign invoice process
- Test Valuing Care to improve matching

## 6 Inflation Negotiations

- Annual conversation with markets
- Intelligence to inform commissioning

## 7 Shape and Manage the Market

- Reduce exposure to profiteering
- Build more
- Support small local providers
- Social capital investment

## 8 Regional Commissioning

- Develop Peninsula commissioning
- Regional Care Cooperatives for fostering and residential care

# What does sufficiency look like in Somerset

## Providers operating in Somerset

- 17 residential providers
- 2 Independent Fostering Agencies
- ~15 supported accommodation providers

## Commissioning arrangements currently in place

| Description   | No of providers         | No of beds<br>(sourced from Ofsted list)                 |
|---|-------------------------|--|
| Homes and Horizons strategic partnership  | 1                       | Currently 14   |
| Peninsula fostering framework (Somerset, Devon, Plymouth, Torbay)   | 11                      | Estimated 2273<br>(location not known)                   |
| Peninsula residential framework   | 14                      | 75 beds within Peninsula<br>82 beds outside of Peninsula |
| Housing related support and accommodation block contract for 16-25 year olds (children's social care and housing) | 2                       | 100 Children's social care<br>90 Housing                 |
| 16+ Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS)   | In place for April 2024 | TBC  |



# Time for Questions

