

Sufficiency Plan

2022 to 2024

The plan to ensure a sufficient range of accommodation to meet the needs of children who are looked after and care leavers in Calderdale

Children and Young People's Services

Revised Jan 2023

CONTENTS

		Page
1	<u>About the Sufficiency Duty</u>	2
2	<u>About Calderdale</u>	5
3	<u>About our Children Looked After</u>	11
4	<u>Meeting our Sufficiency Duty</u>	14
5	<u>Leaving Care and Post 16 Arrangements</u>	22
6	<u>Related Services</u>	23
7	<u>Summary and Conclusion</u>	25
	Tables	
	Table 1. Ethnicity	11
	Table 2. Age bands	12
	Table 3. New children looked after age summary	12
	Table 4. Disability	13
	Table 5. Percentage of children looked after with three or more placements during the year	13
	Table 6. Length of placements	14
	Table 7. Types of placement	15
	Table 8: Current placements with external providers	16
	Table 9. Internal Fostering details	18
	Table 10: Current external placements	20
	Table 11: Percentage of Care leavers in suitable accommodation	22
	Table 12: Children adopted	23

1. About the Sufficiency Duty¹

¹ This section mainly taken from the Department for Children, Schools and Families statutory guidance on Sufficiency (DCSF, 2010).

- 1.1 Under Section 22G of the Children Act 1989, local authorities have a duty to take steps which secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the local authority's area that meet the needs of children looked after by the local authority, 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.
- 1.2 The overall aim of this duty, and of this plan, is to improve outcomes for children looked after.
- 1.3 There are a number of specific duties that are related to this overarching duty:
 - Section 17(1) of the Children Act 1989 (the 1989 Act) provides that it is the general duty of a local authority to provide a range and level of services to children in need (as defined in section 17(10) of the 1989 Act) and their families in the local area which are appropriate to their needs.
 - Section 20 of the 1989 Act requires local authorities to provide accommodation for children in need within their area who appear to them to require accommodation in accordance with the provisions of that section.
 - Section 21 of the 1989 Act requires local authorities to accommodate certain children who are either removed or kept away from home under Part V of the 1989 Act or who are subject to a criminal court order.
 - Section 22C (5) requires local authorities to place children in the most appropriate placement available. In determining the most appropriate placement for a child. Section 22C (7) requires local authorities to take into account a number of factors (such as the duties to safeguard and promote welfare; promote educational achievement; ascertain the wishes of the child and family, and give due consideration to religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural background).
 - In determining the most appropriate placement for a child section 22C (a) also requires the local authority to give preference to a placement with a relative, friend or other person connected with the child, and who is also a local authority foster parent.

- Section 22C sets out the additional factors (in no order of priority) which the local authority must take into consideration when deciding the most appropriate placement:
 - 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.
- Section 23(1) (a) requires a local authority to provide accommodation for a child who is in their care (by virtue of a care order).

1.4 The sufficiency duty applies to those children who are 'looked after' under the Children Act 1989 definition:

- Those subject to care orders or interim care orders (under sections 31 and 38 of the 1989 Act)
- Those children who have been placed, or who are authorised to be placed, with prospective adopters by a local authority (section 18(3) of the Adoption and Children Act 2002)
- Those who are accommodated voluntarily under section 20 of the Children Act 1989, including unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. Where children are accommodated under this provision, parental responsibility remains with the parents; and
- Those who are subject to court orders with residence requirements (for example secure remand or remand to local authority accommodation) in accordance with section 21 of the Children Act 1989
- *Eligible young people* are aged 16 or 17 that have been Looked After for a period, or periods, for at least a total of 13 weeks starting after their 14th birthday and are still in care. (This total does not include a series of pre-planned short-term placements of up to four weeks where the young person has returned to a parent.) There is a duty to support these young people up to the age of 25, wherever they are living. Unaccompanied asylum seekers aged 16 and 17 are always deemed to be looked after until they are aged 18 and are therefore 'eligible' under the Children (Leaving Care) Act.
- *A Relevant Child* is a young person aged 16 or 17 years who is no longer Looked After, having previously been in the category of Eligible Young

Person when in care. However, if after leaving care, a young person returns home for a period of 6 months or more to be cared for by a parent and the return home has been formally agreed as successful, he or she will no longer be regarded as a "Relevant Young Person".

- A young person is also "Relevant" if, having been in care for three months or more, is then detained after their 16th birthday in a hospital, remand centre, young offenders' institution or secure training centre. There is a duty to support Relevant Young People up to the age of 25, wherever they are living.

1.5 Calderdale Council's action to meet this sufficiency duty will also include work with children who are not looked after, where this will have an impact on the demands under this duty, particularly:

- Children on the edge of care (to reduce the number of children who are becoming looked after);
- Adopted children (to reduce post-adoption breakdown leading to children returning to care); and
- Children who have just left care, including transition support in the immediate period after care.

2. About Calderdale

Local Strategic context

- 2.1 Our strategy for the children we look after is set out in the Children Looked After Strategy 2021/23. Our vision is that all children in Calderdale are happy, safe and successful, regardless of who is looking after them, and that children who are looked after by Calderdale Council will have everything that good parents want for their children.
- 2.2 Our commitment to corporate parenting across the authority and with our partners is laid out in the Corporate Parent and Grandparent Strategy 2022/23

Post Covid-19 context

- 2.3 Following the global pandemic and subsequent national lockdowns, the recruitment of foster carers moved quickly to on-line assessments and interviews (one home visit was undertaken prior to finalising the assessment). This proved successful in the context but as Calderdale and the Country moved out of the

national restrictions, it was felt that a return to a face-to-face process for assessment was the most appropriate way forward. As such, all initial visits and assessment visits are held in the prospective foster carers' home.

- 2.4 However, the online presence of fostering recruitment continues to grow and there is a focus on social media and web advertising, recognising the increased online usage with the public.
- 2.5 The Council's plans to open two further residential children's home also took pace towards the end of 2021 and the refurbishment of the first new home has been completed. However, owing to the need to fully refurbish one of Calderdale's existing children's homes, the new home will be used on an interim basis to ensure minimal disruption for the young people. Therefore, the new home is likely to become registered as an additional resource during 2023.
- 2.6 There continues to be an active search from the open market to procure another property to expand service provision to create a 6th children's home, that will occupy a maximum of three young people. This will increase the internal residential capacity to 19 placements, thus reducing the reliance on the independent residential market and furthermore provide opportunity for young people placed outside of the borough, to return and be closely connected with family and origins linked to place of birth.
- 2.7 Whilst many aspects of service delivery have returned to pre-pandemic procedures, the service is mindful that many people are still experiencing physical or emotional health issues as a result of Covid-19, bereavements or the national lockdowns. As such, increased check-in and support for employees and foster carers continue to be available for those who need it.
- 2.8 Some multi-agency meetings such as child protection strategy meetings and permanency planning meetings have continued through digital engagement. Where families and children's involvement in meetings is pivotal to engagement in their plans e.g. child protection conferences and statutory reviews for our looked after children, in-person meetings are offered. The format in which meetings with children and/or parents are carried out is determined by need and preference, and aims to ensure that the child remains central to the decision making. The ability to offer choice, supports parents and children and acknowledges their rights and responsibilities and promotes engagement.
- 2.9 The Foster Care Panel proved to be a successful transition to online meetings and this has continued post-pandemic. The Annual Reviews of foster carers are a mix of in-person and on-line meetings, dependent on the foster carers' preference. However, if they are on-line there is an expectation that the reviewing officer will see the carers' home as part of the review process.

- 2.10 Placement stability was very good during the Covid-19 pandemic, however, as the restrictions eased and children returned to school, there was a small number of placement disruptions. Short term stability figures (percentage of CLA with three or more changes in placement) improved from 6.7% at the end of March 2021 to 5.6% at the end of March 2022. It was to 2.3% at the end of September 2022. Long-term stability figures improved from 73% at the end of March 2021 to 78.7% at the end of March 2022. It was 74.4% at the end of September 2022. However, stability is still good in Calderdale and our figures compare positively to those of statistical and regional neighbours (71% for England and the YH region, and an average of 72% for statistical neighbours in 2022 - DFE, 2022).

Local Context

- 2.11 Calderdale comprises of the towns of Halifax, Elland, Brighouse, Sowerby Bridge, Hebden Bridge and Todmorden as well as a number of villages. It is one of the smallest metropolitan districts in terms of population, but one of the largest in terms of area. Calderdale's topography is a mix of both urban and rural areas. Although the majority (four fifths) of Calderdale is described as rural (according to ONS Census 2011), over three quarters of the Calderdale population live in the urban areas of the borough.
- 2.12 There are 206,600 people in Calderdale, (National Census 2021). The overall population grew 1.4% between 2011 and 2021 (National Census 2011 and 2021). The number of children aged 0 to 19 fell 2.2% during this period. The most significant falls were in age groups 0 to 4 (12.4%) and 15 to 19 (8.1%).
- 2.13 According to the national Census 2021, 14% of the population is made up of Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups (Census, 2021). The latest published annual school census for 2022 records 25% of pupils with Black, Asian or Minority ethnicity, of which the majority (15%) have Pakistani ethnicity. There is a small migrant Eastern European community (DFE 2022).
- 2.14 The Office for National Statistics is due to publish 2021 sub-national population projections in early 2024 and will include assumptions that have been informed by National Census 2021 results. The most recent published figures were modelled on National Census 2011 and may no longer be reliable. According to the most recently published projections, the population in Calderdale will increase to 213,277 by 2028 (ONS 2018 Sub national population projections). The number of children aged under 10 is predicted to decrease by 14% by 2028, and the number aged 10 to 19 years is expected to increase by 7%.
- 2.15 Calderdale's economy has bounced back from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns and the winding down of Government financial support.

There has been a slight fall in employment in the last year from 75.5% in March 2021 to 73.2% in March 2022. This is due mainly to an increase in economic inactivity rates (from 21.6% in March 2021 to 23.7% in March 2022). This increase reflects national trends. There has been a small increase in unemployment (from 3.7% in March 2021 to 4.2% in March 2022). Calderdale's employment rate has remained lower than both regional and national rates during this period (Office for National Statistics Annual Population Survey).

- 2.16 Calderdale's economic recovery is reflected in the sharp fall in the number of people claiming benefits who are looking for work (from 9,110 (7%) in March 2021 to 5,245 (4%) in August 2022). Rates vary across the borough, and are much higher in some wards, particularly in areas of deprivation in central, north, and east Halifax. Higher rates are also found in smaller pockets of rural deprivation within the borough (Office for National Statistics Claimant Count).
- 2.17 The latest published figures on premature deaths are from 2020 (deaths occurring before 75 years old). In 2020 there were 324 premature deaths in Calderdale, or 164.5 per 100,000 people. This was a higher rate than for Yorkshire and Humber (160.3) and England (140.5). The average life expectancy for females in 2018-20 was 82.5 in Calderdale (compared with 83.1 for England) and 78.6 for males (79.4 for England). There was a slight improvement in female life expectancy compared with the average for 2017-19, and a slight fall in male life expectancy for the same period.
- 2.18 Life expectancy for those living in the most deprived areas of the borough is significantly lower than for those living in the least deprived areas. There was a difference of 10.6 years for males and 9.1 years for females in 2018-2020 (Figures calculated by Office for Health Improvements and Disparities using mortality data and mid-year population estimates from the Office for National Statistics and Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010, 2015 and 2019 (IMD 2010 / IMD 2015 / IMD 2019) scores from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
- 2.19 In 2022, 65.4% of Calderdale pupils achieved a good level of development, slightly higher than for England (65.2%) and Yorkshire and Humber (64.4%). In 2019 70.5% of Calderdale pupils achieved a good level of development, higher than for Yorkshire and Humber (70.0%) and lower than the average for England (71.8%). DFE and local analysis on how 2022 results compare with 2019 will be produced once all local authority results are published in December. Potential contributors to the difference with results for 2019 may include the impacts of the pandemic and changes to the 2022 EYFSP framework.
- 2.20 Calderdale's 'Progress 8' score for 2022 is -0.19; it was -0.06 for England and -0.07 for the Yorkshire and Humber region. Calderdale's Progress 8 score in

2019 was 0.03 and it was -0.08 for England and -0.02 for the Yorkshire and Humber region. (For background to Progress 8 See DFE YouTube video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4IAEgFMSGDY>)

2.21 Calderdale is also home to between 230 and 300 Children or Care Leavers who are looked after by other Local Authorities. Calderdale has been notified of 230 children but local police services believe there to be more based on their data. This inevitably impacts upon Calderdale children's services access to the independent market and therefore creates sufficiency problems. It also has an impact on partners in health, education and policing.

Calderdale's Children and Young People

2.22 Calderdale is home to 49,100 children and young people aged 0 - 19 years old. They make up 24% of residents, (Office for National Statistic 2021 mid-year population estimates).

2.23 Around 1,500 children have a long-term condition or disability that affects their day-to-day activities, (National Census 2011 – NC 2021 update expected by mid-Feb 2023). 1,953 children aged under 16 receive disability living allowance (DWP Statxplore, May 2022).

2.24 1,813 pupils are known to have a learning disability (DFE Special educational needs in England statistics 2022).

2.25 Across Calderdale, 24% of children live in poverty. This rises to 56% in Park ward, near the centre of Halifax, (DWP & HMRC, Children aged 0 to 15 in low-income families 2020/21: relative measure). 2021/22 data from DWP and HMRC is expected end of March 2023.

2.26 67% of babies are breastfed at birth. Just half of all babies are still breastfed by 6 – 8 weeks (Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust, 2021/22).

2.27 In reception year, 23% of children are overweight or obese. By Year 6, this rises to 35%, (NHS National Child Measurement Programme, 2020).

2.28 70% of children are 'school ready' by the end of Reception, (DFE 2019).

2.29 Teenage conception rates are highest in Ovenden, Illingworth and Mixenden and Elland wards [exact figure not currently available].

2.30 40% of primary school pupils do 60 minutes of activity on at least 6 days. 31% of secondary school pupils do 60 minutes of activity on at least 6 days (Calderdale electronic Health Needs Assessment (eHNA) of the health and

wellbeing of children and young people in Calderdale 2022)

- 2.31 1 in 5 school pupils have 5 or more unhealthy snacks per day (Calderdale eHNA 2022)
- 2.32 Two in five secondary school students have tried alcohol (Calderdale eHNA 2022).
- 2.33 One in 10 secondary school students have tried drugs (Calderdale eHNA 2022).

Some of the challenges facing local partners working with families include:

- 2.34 Reduction in funding to local authorities and the rising cost of social care has reduced overall budgets for Early Help and preventative services.
- 2.35 The challenge of being a small local authority with limited critical mass means that providers have difficulty establishing and running provision within the borough.
- 2.36 Demand on Missing Return Officers is increasing due to the number of children being placed in Calderdale from other Local Authorities.
- 2.37 Early Intervention Services are being creative to respond to increase demand, through the establishment of the Early Help Hub, online line parenting support and development of an Early Help contact point at the front door, this work is leading to reduce the number of children requiring statutory intervention.
- 2.38 However, there is a disconnect between funding reduction and the increase in need for services, this is due to various factors such as the current cost of living and the consequences following Covid. In Calderdale, the Supporting Families funding is protected for Early Help services, however, given the extension to 10 headline problems from 6, it could be argued that the complexity of need is recognised and widespread.

For children looked after services, there are challenges in relation to:

- 2.39 The numbers of older teenagers being looked after, as it is often harder to find this cohort the right fostering placement. Post pandemic national sufficiency challenges are well documented and can found in a report written by the Competition and Markets Authority, linked [here](#).
- 2.40 Fostering recruitment post-pandemic has seen a national shortage in the numbers of people expressing an interest in fostering and at financial year end 2021 only 6% of those who enquired made an application foster, which is down

from 12% in 2015. In Calderdale, a downturn in the number of fostering approvals was seen during 2020/21 financial year and whilst there has been an increase at the start of 2022, foster care recruitment continues to be a challenge.

- 2.41 The number of children who report mental health concerns, self harm and suicidal ideation has increased which has been widely reported nationally. Data for Calderdale is currently unavailable.

3 About our Children Looked After

3.1 Number of children looked after by Calderdale

- 3.1.1 At end of December 2022, there were 359 children looked after by Calderdale Council. Children looked after numbers increased from 297 at the end of March 2018 to 337 at the end of March 2022, reflecting national and regional trends. In terms of children looked after per 10,000 of the population, Calderdale was 75 compared to the regional rate of 81 at the end of March 2022. It is 80 at the end of December 2022.

3.2 Ethnicity of children looked after by Calderdale

- 3.2.1 The percentage ethnicity of children looked after in Calderdale, differs from the population recorded in the January 2022 School Census and this is illustrated in the table below. The differences are similar to our regional neighbours.
- 3.2.2 There are proportionally fewer children looked after from Asian and backgrounds, particularly those from Pakistani backgrounds, and Black and Black British backgrounds compared to the School Census. This may be because some children from these backgrounds are recorded under 'Any Other Ethnic Group' and Mixed. There are a higher number of children from White and Mixed backgrounds than recorded in the School Census.

Table 1 Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Children looked after 31st March 2022	
	Number	%
Asian - Any other Asian background	5	1.5%
Asian - Bangladeshi	0	0.0%
Asian - Chinese	0	0.0%
Asian - Indian	0	0.0%
Asian - Pakistani	6	1.8%
Black - Any other Black background	0	0.0%
Black - Black African	1	0.3%

Ethnicity	Children looked after after 31st March 2022	
	Number	%
Black - Black Caribbean	0	0.0%
Mixed - Any other Mixed background	8	2.4%
Mixed - White and Asian	9	2.7%
Mixed - White and Black African	1	0.3%
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	2	0.6%
White - Any other White background	3	0.9%
White - Gypsy/Roma	2	0.6%
White - Irish	3	0.9%
White - Traveller of Irish heritage	0	0.0%
White - White British	279	82.8%
Any other ethnic group	11	3.3%
Information not yet obtained	7	2.1%
Total	337	100%

3.3 Age of children looked after by Calderdale

Table 2 Age

Age Band	Number of children	%
Under 1	10	3.0%
1 - 4 years	51	15.1%
5 - 9 years	85	25.2%
10 - 15 years	119	35.3%
Age 16 or over	72	21.4%
Total	337	100.0%

Table 3 new children looked after age summary

Age Band	2018/19		2019/20		2021/22		2018/19 minus UASC		2019/20 minus UASC		2021/22 minus UASC	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Under 1	23	20%	28	26%	10	12%	23	21%	28	27%	10	14%
1 - 4 years	38	32%	24	22%	17	20%	38	35%	24	23%	17	23%
5 - 9 years	24	21%	19	18%	19	23%	24	22%	19	18%	19	26%
10 -	20	17%	21	20%	22	27%	20	19%	21	20%	21	28%

15 years												
Age 16 or over	12	10%	15	14%	15	18%	3	3%	11	11%	7	9%
Total	117	100%	107	100%	83	100%	108	100%	103	100%	74	100%

3.4 Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and children looked after by Calderdale

There are currently 45 children who are looked after with EHCP's:

- 20 of these are educated in mainstream schools
- 18 are educated in special schools,
- 5 are educated in mainstream Post 16 FTE colleges
- 1 is Educated, other than at school (EOTAS)
- 1 attends a residential setting.

The Local Authority has also submitted a special free school bid for a general learning difficulty (GLD), which will help support the sufficiency of educational places for children and young people with an EHCP.

Table 4 Disability

Disability	Number of children	Dec 2022 snapshot*
No	331	92.2%
Yes	28	7.8%
Total	359	100%

*Unpublished results. December 2022 snapshot from Cass report "Current LAC at.." for 31 December 2022 run on 5 January 2023

3.5 Placement stability

Table 5: Percentage of children looked after with 3 or more placements during the year

Three or more placements	2019/20 (%)	2020/21 (%)	2021/22 (%)	Dec 2022 snapshot*
% of children	12.0	7.0	5.6	4.7
Target	9.0	8.0	8.0	6.0
Target achieved	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

*Unpublished results. Snapshot from Cass report “two or more placement moves.” for 1st January 2023

Table 6: Length of placement

Length of placement	2019/20 (%)	2020/21 (%)	2021/22* (%)	Dec 2022 snapshot*
% of children who have been looked after in the same placement for at least 2 years	71.0	73.0	78.0	74.4

*Unpublished results. December 2022 snapshot from Cass report “Current LAC at..” for 31 December 2022 run on 5 January 2023

Explanatory Notes:

Table 5 looks at short term placement stability within one year. The number of children/young people experiencing more than three placements within one year has steadily improved since March 2020. The latest published comparative data is for 2020/21 where short-term placement stability in Yorkshire & Humber and in England was 9%.

Table 6 looks at long term stability. There has been a steady improvement since March 2020. In 2020/21 Long-term placement stability in Yorkshire & Humber and in England was 70%.

It was noted in 2021/22 that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the restriction on movement of children between homes likely influenced these improvements to some extent in 2020/21 and part of 2021/22. However, results recorded at December 2022 are positive evidence that now Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted these improvements have been sustained.

4 Meeting our Sufficiency Duty

4.1 Requests for placements are monitored at a weekly ‘External Placement Panel’ meeting. External Placement Panel is made up of operational managers in children’s social care, finance, commissioning, virtual school, housing, the ICB and is chaired by the Service Manager ‘Placements and Sufficiency’. The group has an overview of:

- New placement referrals for all externally commissioned placements
- Current vacancies in internal fostering and residential homes
- Upcoming internal vacancies
- Notice periods and unplanned endings
- Planned moves
- Review of external placements, including residential, fostering and semi-independent placements
- Concerns relating to externally commissioned providers/placements
- The external placement budget including forecasting

4.2 Work already achieved through the creation of the External Placements Team and

panel:

- Robust systems and processes in place to ensure opportunity for challenge is built-in, identifying where problems are likely to occur to establish solutions. This has also resulted in real term savings through correct procedures being followed and adhered to.
- Stronger working relationships with in-house fostering to enable better planning, especially where there is short notice or complex need.
- Creation of the multi-agency Complex Needs panel to allow for in-depth discussions around children and young people with additional and complex needs where our health partners, alongside adult services, may be able to contribute to their placement costs, or indeed assist with placement searches for the most appropriate provision.
- Formation of a high-cost placement working group to look at the most expensive placements within the residential sector to ensure there is no drift to plans and that children and young people are in the most appropriate placement for their needs.
- This is being replicated with high-cost semi-independent placements to understand how best to reduce the spend, especially where they are 18 and over.

Table 7: Types of placements at December 2022*

Placement group	In house	External	Other	Grand Total
Adoption	8	5	0	13
Connected carers	69	0	0	69
Fostering for adoption	1	0	0	1
Independent living	0	19	0	19
Long term foster care	27	9	0	36
Placement with parents	31	0	0	31
Residential placement	9	40	0	49
Short term foster care	84	41	0	125
Other placements	0	0	13	13
Temporary move	0	0	3	3
Total	229	114	16	359

*Unpublished results from Cass report "Current LAC at..." on 31 December 2022, run on 24 January 2023

- 4.3 There has been an increase in the number of children being placed in external residential as sourcing foster carers for older children either internally or externally has become more challenging.

Residential Care

- 4.4 The residential offer in Calderdale comprises of two 5 bedded units, a 3 bedded unit and a short breaks disability service. The service has procured a property 3 bed property in Brighouse which will expand the geographical options for young people and furthermore creates educational opportunities, including a seamless access to services. Continual searches are being undertaken to purchase a further 3 bed provision from the open market which in turn will take the in-house cohort to 19 for Calderdale young people.
- 4.5 There are plans to open a new residential home during 2023. The statement of purpose for this home will be to provide care for 3 young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties (EBD) where 1:1 care and support is offered between the aged 8-17.
- 4.6 The internal provision is well occupied, but there are times that we may need to commission an appropriate external bed, even if there is a vacancy. This is either to meet the particular needs of the young person and their unique circumstances or to ensure the stability and safety of other young people in the home.
- 4.7 Two of the internal provisions are rated as 'Good', one which has successfully sustained an outstanding judgment three years consecutively. The fourth being rated as Requires Improvement to be Good, with clear plans to progress this forward in line with service expectations and standards and a positive monitoring visit from Ofsted in January 2023.
- 4.8 Calderdale Council has a commissioned contract with Restorative Social Care Services Ltd for 5 residential placements. This is being recommissioned and increased to 9 residential placements to ensure a supply of placements for Calderdale children within Calderdale, alongside a positive working relationship with the provider.
- 4.9 Externally, residential care is commissioned through a Yorkshire and Humber agreement, the 'White Rose framework'. This is a list of providers working across the region, coordinated through Leeds as the lead commissioner. Placements are commissioned on an individual basis, as and when needed, based on the individual needs of the child as agreed in their Care Plan. This framework aims to provide choice and flexibility to meet the needs of children looked after and to give the Council access to a wider range of providers. There has been a reduction in the numbers of providers wishing to join the framework citing concerns over the impact of the cost-of-living crisis. This is being looked at by Leeds and there is work being undertaken across the region to encourage 'off framework' providers to join the framework. Regionally, we are seeing a reduction in available residential beds due to the ongoing sufficiency issues with fostering household availability creating a higher demand for residential provision than there is supply.

4.10 As of the end of March 2022, there were 32 purchased residential beds, of which 5 were through the commissioned contract.

Table 8: Placements with external providers March 2022

On framework	Off framework	Block contract	Total
17	10	5	32

Placements within Calderdale	Placements outside Calderdale
12	20

Average Weekly Cost on Framework	Average Weekly Cost off Framework	Weekly Cost of Block Contract	Average Weekly Cost overall
£4,120.29	£5,014.45	£3,150.00	£4,276.05

Number of Providers	14
Number of Homes	29
Outstanding	8
Good	23
Requires Improvement	1
Inadequate	0
Not Yet Inspected	0

4.11 Where we are presented with challenges, we do consider requires improvement in exceptional circumstances but review and challenge the Ofsted action plan and ensure rigorous checks and enquiries are made about the provision.

4.12 As the residential market and the Framework remains fluid, the Sufficiency Strategy will be refreshed annually.

Commissioning Plans

4.13 Calderdale currently have a block contract with local provider for 5 residential beds within borough which is due to come to an end and a new tender has gone out through the White Rose framework for a block contract of 9 residential beds. This will not increase local capacity, but it will create exclusivity for Calderdale CYP at a lower price than the White Rose framework.

- 4.14 Calderdale continue to be committed to the use of the White Rose Framework for residential and fostering placements having recently gone through a IFA refresh round resulting in new agencies joining. The new IFA framework has a capped uplift, although it is to be recognised that this was before the current cost of living crisis and, as such may increase, but as a region this ensures better negotiating and purchasing power.
- 4.15 The most recent version of the residential framework is fairly new but allows for entry points throughout the year for new providers. This gives an opportunity to engage those providers who are not on the framework.
- 4.16 The external placements team is expanding to ensure that they can keep up with the demand whilst also ensuring contract management is in place. This will also give the opportunity to develop relationships with providers to enable Calderdale children to be placed in Calderdale.

Key actions 2023/2024

- Work with our regional colleagues and elected members to regularly review the regional framework. The current contract is for 10 years from August 2019, but with an annual refresh to allow new providers to join.
- Open and register two new residential homes and work with Corporate Asset and Facilities Management (CAFM) to consider the development of the two 3 bed units.
- To fully refurbish Cousin Lane childrens home to bring in line with other residential provisions, installing safety features and infrastructure that not only protects young people but is reflective of modern day living, furthermore is focused on Calderdale's climate emergency ambitions of reducing greenhouse gases.
- Involve children looked after in development of future service provision, including consultation and active engagement with existing participation services. The White Rose framework consults with children through the Children in Care councils.
- To recommission the provider for Reg 44 visits, which are utilised for internal improvement planning.
- Reduce the budgetary pressures on the external placement budget by increasing internal provision.
- Increase edge of care and Outreach services with a renewed focus on supporting adolescents. The Outreach Team are undertaking specific work to explore and establish core route issues with families and informally educating improved ways of engagement. The early and reactive intervention is a key factor with partners, specifically EDT and the Family Intervention Team, demonstrating the ability to respond in out of hours emergency situations.
- Consider how Calderdale can formally develop a 'staying close' policy in collaboration with housing colleagues, to support children's transition from

residential care.

- The 'external placements team' will build upon existing relationships with local external providers and develop new relationships with providers that we do not currently use. The purpose being to expand on the available fostering placements for Calderdale children looked after, within Calderdale.
- Increase the current block contract from 5 beds to 9.

Impact measures 2023/24

- Reduce the number of young people placed in external residential provision.
- Safely reduce the number of looked after children and young people looked after with a specific focus on adolescents.
- Reduced expenditure on external placements.
- Increased placement stability.
- Increase in the number of Calderdale children looked after living within Calderdale.

Fostering

Table 9: Current placements with internal foster carers March 2022

Type of Placement	Number of Households	Number of CLA
Connected Carers	47	75
Short Term Foster Carers	34	61
Long Term Foster Carers	41	85
Support Care or Short Breaks Carers	8	15

4.17 As at 31st March 2022, 171 children were placed in our in-house fostering households, from a total of 337 children looked after. 102 of these were in mainstream and 69 with connected carers.

4.18 It is anticipated in this financial year that we will approve and reach a target of 10 mainstream households which will be an increase on the previous year but remains a realistic target.

4.19 As of March 2022, we had 16 Staying Put arrangements (data source SSDA903 return 2021/22).

4.20 In order to recruit both new carers and approved carers from other sectors, Calderdale Council has taken a number of initiatives over the last few years:

- The introduction of a robust skills-based payment scheme with progression opportunities for existing carers.
- The development of a communications team producing attractive recruitment materials.
- A consistent and timely response to fostering enquiries.
- Increased the Calderdale fostering service social media presence, including use of online information sessions.
- Regular recruitment and information events throughout the borough.
- Reconfigure of the fostering service to have a dedicated team to undertake the assessment of mainstream applications.
- Review of the training and support offer to foster carers which is regularly refreshed.
- Development of bespoke peer support for linked foster families to support placement stability.
- Increase the range of benefits and discounts available locally to Calderdale foster carers
- Introduction of the recommend a friend scheme for existing carers and council staff to receive a payment on successful approval of a new foster carer.
- Increase in funding to the Calderdale foster carers association to provide a greater range of activities and events for foster families in Calderdale.
- Involvement in collaboration work regionally and nationally to promote Fostering for local authorities.
- We are looking at how we can support foster carers to offer a placement to children who have previously lived in residential care, including investigating models and pay structures that would support this.

External commissioning of foster placements

4.21 Whilst most placements are made internally, arrangements for independent foster carers are again undertaken through the White Rose Framework. This framework was recently renewed for a ten-year period through to March 2032.

4.22 Additional staffing in the External Placements Team will allow for the senior officer to be better able to fulfil the role profile, mainly around discussions with the independent market with the following aims;

- Create, maintain and improve relationships with IFAs to raise Calderdale's profile and awareness of our placement needs.
- Identify IFAs with the most carers / placements in the borough and ensure ongoing discussions with them to look at ways of securing local placements for local children.
- Work with IFAs to understand their carer recruitment plans so they can

complement our in-house carer plans to ensure it reflects the community.

- Working in the same way with the residential and semi-independent market sectors to ensure best provision and quality for Calderdale children and young people.
- Exploring best practice through collaboration with regional partners through the White Rose framework
- Structured and proactive approach to quality assurance

Table 10: External placements September 2022

On framework	Off framework	Total
43	5	48

Placements within Calderdale	Placements outside Calderdale
15	33

Average Weekly Cost on Framework	Average Weekly Cost off Framework	Average Weekly Cost overall
£823.14	£810.72	£821.85

Number of Providers	16
Outstanding	17
Good	31
Requires Improvement	0
Inadequate	0
Not Yet Inspected	0

Key actions 2023/24

- Ongoing recruitment locally and a review of the service to ensure sufficient resource for impact. To ensure that we are recruiting carers who can meet the needs of a diverse population including children with disabilities, sibling groups and teenagers.
- Continue to refresh the training and support offer to foster carers including additional online resources.
- To develop our recruitment material to encourage experienced foster carers to return /move to Calderdale, through developing a core offer for foster carers that also tackles the cost-of-living crisis.

- To engage more robustly with the local market and encourage ‘off framework’ providers to join the White Rose Framework following the start of a 10-year Electronic Market Place contract with the region.

Impact measures 2023/24

- Placement stability rates for teenagers improve and the number of children and young people who experience more than three placement moves reduces.
- Placement stability for children in long term placements continues to improve.
- Increase in mainstream foster carer recruitment with a target of at least 10 new mainstream households per year.
- Reduction in the number of independent agency placements utilised.
- Increase in the number of young people Staying Put.
- Reduction in the number of children placed outside LA boundary and more than 20 miles or more from where they used to live.
- Exploration of new commissioning arrangements including supported accommodation arrangements for 16-25 year olds.

5. Leaving Care and Post 16 Arrangements

- 5.1 A young person ceases to be in care when they turn 18 years old, an Adoption Order or Special Guardianship Order is granted or their parents resume parental responsibility through the discharge of the Care Order or the Section 20 arrangement ends. The Children and Social Work Act (2017) extends the local authorities’ responsibilities to care leavers up to the age of 25.
- 5.2 The leaving care service “Pathways” was previously a commissioned service, delivered by Prospects, an independent provider. In March 2021, the leaving care service was brought back under the leadership of Calderdale Council. All children looked after up to the age of 18 are supported by a social worker in the Children’s Looked After Team, and those over the age of 18, up to age 25, are supported by a personal advisor in the Pathways team.
- 5.3 The White Rose Framework for Supported Accommodation for young people aged 16+ has been in place since 2014 providing accommodation in Calderdale, which meet standards agreed by the consortium of local authorities. Calderdale were also in a tripartite arrangement with Bradford and Wakefield but this has now ceased due to Bradford wishing to commission their own dynamic purchasing

framework. Due to timescales, an interim arrangement has been identified to allow the continued use of the DPS whilst providing an opportunity to improve the specification. A full commissioning exercise is being undertaken to work on a DPS for Calderdale to best achieve high quality and value for money provision in the borough. This is also taking into account the upcoming Ofsted regulation of the semi-independent sector from April 2023.

- 5.4 We recognise that there are challenges in this in terms of the consistency and quality assurance in unregulated settings. Internal permissions and placement checks are in place and the placements themselves are reviewed in the External Placements Meeting. We are speaking to providers about their preparedness for the new Ofsted regulations that will come into force in April 2023.

Table 11: Percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation

Percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation*	Q1 April to June 2021	Q2 July to Sept 2021	Q3 Oct to Dec 2021	Q4 Jan to March 2022
Aged 17-18	100%	100%	100%	93%
Aged 19-21	95%	96%	96%	93%

*Unpublished results. Results for Q1 – q3 from Cass reports: Annex A care leavers. Results for Q4 from 2021/22 SSDA903 return. Published results expected November 2022

- 5.5 The range of accommodation as of March 2022 includes:
- Supported lodgings;
 - Student halls;
 - Residential children’s homes;
 - Foster care;
 - Semi independent accommodation via supported tenancies;
 - Semi-independent accommodation via group living
 - Shared lives for those young people with additional needs; and
 - Staying Put arrangements.
 - Housing/homeless offer as at point **6.4**

Key actions for 2023/24

- Review transitions between adult and children’s services for vulnerable young people to ensure they are based on a joint assessment of need.
- Consider further commissioning arrangements post 16 including block purchase or utilising the private rental market.

- Developing internal supported lodgings provision.
- Re-launch the Staying Put initiative to encourage more young people and carers to utilise this.
- Review the offer to care leavers considering University to encourage higher numbers.
- A full commissioning exercise is being undertaken to work on a DPS for Calderdale to best achieve high quality and value for money provision in the borough

Impact measures for 2023/24

- Improve the current level of care leavers in suitable accommodation.
- The provision of commissioned 16 plus accommodation is responsive to need and offers best value.
- More young people remaining in their foster homes to 21.
- More young people in University.
- More 'housing' options for those who are tenancy ready.

6. Related Services

- 6.1 There are some key services that impact on our ability to meet our sufficiency duty or on the context in which we operate to meet this duty.

Adoption

- 6.2 Since April 1st 2017, the adoption service for Calderdale has become part of One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY), the regional adoption agency. OAWY recruits adopters, provides post adoption support and family finding for children with an adoption plan, Calderdale Council retains full responsibility for the child and holds the regional adoption agency to account for the delivery of the adoption service in line with key performance indicators and the service specification. One of the drivers for regionalisation was to increase the pool of available adopters, thus reducing delay for children. The recruitment of adopters continues to be targeted on the following groups for Calderdale

- Early permanence adopters
- Sibling groups
- Older children
- Children with higher need

- 6.2.1 One Adoption West Yorkshire has produced a 'Recruitment and Assessment Strategy and Action Plan – 2022' that can be read alongside the Calderdale

Sufficiency Plan.

6.2.2 Adoption rates in Calderdale have seen an overall decline since 2015, which is in line with the national figures which show an overall decline, but a 2% increase since 2021. (DfE CLA reporting, Nov 2022).

Table 12: Children adopted

Year	Numbers adopted	Percentage of children ceasing to be looked after who were adopted in the year
2015/16	33	31%
2016/17	19	19%
2017/18	10	10%
2018/19	16	21%
2019/20	20	19%
2020/21	9	10%
2021/22	15	14%

6.4 Edge of care provision

The services include:

- Early intervention strategy
- Outreach Team
- Range Street 24 hour supported accommodation for 16–18-year-olds.
- Expansion of the Calderdale Foyer Service for 16 – 25-year-olds.
- Horton Housing for 16 – 25-year-olds
- School House

Each service offers something slightly different, with tailored support to meet the young person’s individual needs.

Key actions for 2023/24

- Review and re-commission the provision at Range Street for young people who are assessed as homeless and in need of support. Consult and engage with young people using the service to learn from their experiences of the current service and aspirations for future support.

- To ensure that robust joint assessments continue with the housing providers to identify need.
- The Early Intervention Panel currently oversees the referrals for vulnerable young people who are at risk of homelessness, the panel work to offer alternatives to care for adolescents, and to create innovative alternative interventions. To review the arrangements for referrals through Early Intervention Panel to ensure this is the correct pathway and the needs of young people are being met.
- To review the housing offer for Care Leavers and implement the joint housing protocol.
- To increase capacity of the Early Help Pathway Coordinators, linking them with secondary schools to support young people with low school attendance and risk of exclusion, thus reducing the potential for escalation into crime, anti-social behaviour, family breakdown and exploitation.
- Calderdale has been chosen by the Government as one of 75 Local Authorities who have been awarded funding to develop Family Hubs. Family Hubs bring services together to improve access, improve connections between families, professionals, services and providers and put family support at the heart of relationships.

Impact measures for 2023/24

- That the need to accommodate young people due to homelessness maintains a primary focus on their welfare.
- Families are supported to access services and support through Family Hubs, targeting families at the earliest opportunity and preventing some children from entering the care system as a result of targeted support.

7. Summary and conclusion

- 7.1 An overall Council priority is to safely reduce the number of looked after children and to make efficiencies on the placement costs. There is an increasing demand for services and to address this we need to continue to provide the means for families to develop and maintain resilience through the early help offer and through our work with children and young people on the edge of care. The development of 'Family Hubs' and the expansion of Early Help Pathway Coordinators in schools, will support this agenda and contribute to the reduction of children entering the care

system.

- 7.2 There is a national shortage of residential placements and a reduction in the number of mainstream fostering households approved each year. As a smaller local authority, we need to further develop partnerships with local providers to ensure they are prioritising Calderdale children, and to maintain a mixed estate of in-house and commissioned services.
- 7.3 We will develop a strategy based on up-to-date research-based strategy to respond to and manage the demands associated with supporting with adolescents.
- 7.4 As a result of pressures on sufficiency we are developing or delivering a range of further responses
- Opening two new 3 bed residential homes
 - Continually reviewing our support and enrichment offer to foster carers to reduce placement disruption, taking into account the cost-of-living crisis.
 - Specialised training to support the placement of teenagers within in-house provision and increasing our pool of level 4 carers with a clear focus on caring for older children
 - Revising Calderdale's Fostering Payment for Skills policy to support more carers progressing to level 4.
 - Increasing the residential block contract from 5 to 9 beds.
 - Developing alternative models of delivery to children and young people on the edge of care.
 - Development of Family Hubs and increasing the Early Help Pathways Coordinators.
 - Reviewing the housing and housing related support offer to Care Leavers including developing links with the private rental market.