

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham Placement Sufficiency Strategy for Children Looked After & Care Leavers

2022 - 2026



**Agreed by the Corporate Parenting Board
Date: September 2022**

VISION

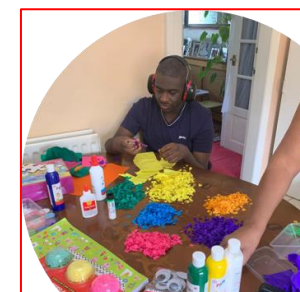
In Hammersmith & Fulham we are committed to ensuring every child has the best possible start in life, grows up feeling cherished, loved and realises their full potential as a young person.

We will ensure we are able to provide the right support at the right time to enable our families and communities to ensure all children are safe, healthy and thrive.

The Corporate Parenting priority areas in Hammersmith & Fulham consist of three overarching themes for our children, these are:

- to Feel Settled and Belong,
- to be Safe, Happy and Healthy, and,
- to Thrive as Adults

Ensuring we have a sufficient supply of high-quality local placements and accommodation options, both now and in the future, that meet the needs of all children in care and care leavers, that safeguards them from harm, and supports them to achieve the best possible outcomes is one of the mechanisms that enables us as good corporate parents to achieve this.



INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

- The aim of this strategy is to set out how Hammersmith & Fulham intends to meet the placement needs of current and future looked after children and care leavers, supporting positive outcomes through understanding their needs and the current placement provision available. The strategy aims to identify measures that need to be put in place to ensure that there is an appropriate range of placement options to meet current and future projected need.
- We continually strive to improve practice to ensure we can say with complete confidence, which children need to come into care, and which can be safely accommodated at home. Children and young people will only become looked after when this is genuinely the best or only option to safeguard or promote their health and wellbeing. Care should provide a safe and positive experience for all children and one that preserves and promotes their identity, culture and religion.
- This strategy outlines the current profile of our looked after children, the resources available when placements are needed, and concludes by highlighting the key areas of focus and actions required to achieve sufficiency. This strategy document builds on our previous Placements Sufficiency Strategy published in 2018 and presents an updated position to ensure we fulfil our duties and enable our young people to achieve the best outcomes.
- The scope of this strategy is not limited to the provision of placements, the intention is to capture a wider range of activity across the Children and Young People's Services, from initial contact and assessment through to leaving care. It includes a clear focus on supporting families to stay together, wherever it is safe to do so, therefore minimising the need for children to come into care and supporting reunification with their families where appropriate.
- Our preference is to manage our placements using our own resources, either through our own supply of comprehensively trained carers or through directly running or block commissioning arrangements. However, we also recognise it is not practical to do this across all categories of placement, in part based on presenting need and matching suitability, but also the ability of our services to be flexible and respond. We will always therefore, to some extent be reliant on the private market to support us in fulfilling our sufficiency duty. Our goal therefore is to ensure the right combination of services and timely access to them which we refer to as a 'mixed model' of provision.
- In achieving this vision, we seek to support the resilience of families and reduce the need for children and young people to enter the care system. We have a range of family support services and interventions that provide a high-quality support offer for families in the borough, complementing the core social work offer and additionally providing targeted support to families at risk of escalating into statutory services and those stepping down from statutory social care.

CONTEXT

The finalisation of our updated H&F Sufficiency Strategy coincides with the publication of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care. Our ambitions regarding family resilience and safety, the importance of children's voices, the strength of family care and support arrangements and the sufficiency of skilled fostering arrangements resonate strongly with the findings of the review. These will be reflected in the implementation of our strategy, and we will ensure that our local approach reflects key national strategic and policy developments.

The links between some of the key recommendations from the Care Review and how we are developing our plans are made below:

- The proposed investment and revolution of Family Help – whilst careful consideration is given at regional and national levels about the implications and implementation of this area of the review, in H&F we continue to strengthen our own Family Help offer and approach to working with families for children in need. Effective early intervention decreases the risk of children requiring care outside their family.
- Packages of support and intervention to family members to enable them to provide support and care in a more realistic way within the current framework. In addition to this, we are reviewing our financial and practical offer to connected persons carers and special guardians.
- Proposed regional approach to fostering through regional care co-operatives – within this strategy we are focussed on strengthening our Shared Fostering Service, but we also reference the ongoing work and engagement with colleagues across London regarding longer term ambitions to develop a Pan London Vehicle.
- Strong commitment to ensuring our foster carers are fully supported, equipped and resilient enough to care for children who would otherwise require a placement in residential care.
- We are strengthening our advocacy and independent visitor offer to ensure this meets all needs across Children's Services and that the child's voice is both strong and independent for all our children in care.
- Broader access to Staying Put for Care Leavers. We are reviewing our Staying Put policy and sufficiency of carers to offer this.
- Making sure that our Sufficiency Strategy links well to our Recruitment, Retention and Workforce Development Strategy. A confident and stable workforce means we are better equipped to making sure only those children who need to be cared for are cared for

PROVISION TO PREVENT CHILDREN COMING INTO CARE

- In Hammersmith and Fulham, we are dedicated to encouraging and shielding the welfare of children and young people in our borough. The underlying foundation of any intervention lies in our obligation to safeguard children and young people and ensure they remain within their families wherever possible. This is what most families want and will achieve the best long-term outcomes for most children.
- We are committed to keeping children and young people within their family home wherever possible. Where children do come into the care system, returning home is considered at every step of the care planning and permanency process if it is the best interest of the child and we have had several examples of successful rehabilitation into the family home. Where children need protection, a range of support may be identified to prevent them from becoming looked after and this is detailed in the following sections. Our services will routinely establish creative and bespoke support packages to enable this and the following section details the range of resources we use to support this process.

FAMILY ASSIST AND FAMILY SUPPORT

- The Family Assist Team works with families and young people who are at risk of being taken into care or the criminal justice system. The team employs rapid response practitioners whose remit is to focus on intensive interventions such as family therapy to prevent further escalation and effectively support children who are on the edge of care. An established joint step up and down process with our Family Assist and Family Support teams ensures we provide ongoing support to our children, young people and their families. The team provide live interventions according to a given situation or crisis.
- Within our Family Assist team, we also have a CAMHS practitioner, who delivers intensive outreach support for children, young people and families who may otherwise find it challenging to access child and adolescent mental health support services. In addition to this the team employ other multi-disciplinary practitioners providing interventions to prevent escalation and or entry to care, these include: systemic therapist, educational outreach teachers, contextual safeguarding co-ordinator, a police officer and an Adult Mental Health practitioner.
- Family Support deliver bespoke and targeted help to families through joint work with children's social care and the child protection process. The family support service uses the 'Family Star' outcomes tool to track and monitor the progress with families. Family support continue to work closely with partner agencies to deliver an effective and co-ordinated service.
- Both Family Assist and Family Support focus on positive activities and the provision of a broad range of activities to help divert young people away from engaging in anti-social or offending behavior, as well as helping those at risk of being socially excluded or on the edge

of care, by giving them a chance to fulfil their potential. The services use a range of mechanisms to engage what can be a hard to engage client group, and in doing so, achieve a range of positive outcomes for our young people including contributing to reductions in criminal and anti-social behaviour, supporting young people back into education, and offering opportunities for personal development – all of which are highly correlated with those at the edge of care, remand, and risk-taking behaviours.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM

Hammersmith and Fulham is one of the 32 inner London boroughs situated in the central western part of London. The borough population was measured as 185,004 at the time of the 2018 Census. The population is projected to continue rising but at a faster rate than between 2011 and 2018. The increase is projected as 9.1% in the period 2018-2031.

Hammersmith and Fulham are the country's eighth most densely populated area, with a density of 113 people per hectare. It is twice as densely populated as London as a whole (57 people per hectare). There are more females (51%) than males (49%) in the borough; this is slightly higher than the regional and national averages.

The age profile of Hammersmith and Fulham continues to be typical of a young, diverse and mobile urban population. Conversely, the proportion (19%) of children and predominantly dependent young population (0-17s) is lower than in London and the rest of the country.



OVERARCHING PRIORITIES FOR 2022-2026

The overarching priorities for achieving placement sufficiency across Hammersmith & Fulham focus on both social work practice and ensuring the best outcomes for our cared for children, whilst simultaneously ensuring we have a strong inhouse fostering service and a mix of directly commissioned or external placement arrangements. These points are detailed in the key priority areas below:

1. Providing **robust and early interventions to support family resilience and safety**, therefore ensuring children become cared for when it is the only option to ensure their safety and it improves their outcomes.

2. **Strengthening our in-house fostering service** by equipping carers with specialised skills and training, increasing stability and reducing the need for agency and external arrangements

3. Stabilisation of our cared for group enables us to focus specifically on **strengthening stability, quality and outcomes**.

4. Continuation of achieving early **permanence in nurturing, secure and stable family settings** for those that do come into care

5. Improving our joint framework with colleagues in **health to ensure joint involvement** in both care and placement planning

6. Care and accommodation arrangements will **consist of a range** of inhouse fostering, agency fostering, in-house residential for disabled children and children with additional needs, external residential, semi-independent living, access to residential schools.

7. **Increasing the supply of local provision** across a range of different placement types, with improved access to local services, family and other support networks

8. Ensuring we have a **mixed model of resilient, outcome focussed and high-quality care arrangements** with a priority focus on **children being cared for in family settings** where appropriate for them.

In addition to these priorities, the voice of the child is central to our care planning and placement arrangements. With this in mind, we want to ensure feedback from children informs our decision making and commissioning moving forward. This next section therefore sets out what we have heard:



WHAT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE TOLD US THEY WANT AND NEED

Spending time with friends, family and significant people is important. Know who these people are too!

Moving around is hard, particularly when you feel you have no control or influence

Relationships are important and make a difference

We want to be actively involved in decisions about where we live.

We want to feel safe where we live and want to know that you prioritise this too

The future can feel uncertain- we want to know where we will settle

Don't call where we live a Placement- it is home, family, names of the people we live with etc

Moving away from everything that has been familiar can be really tough. Think about whether we really need to move away and if we do help us feel connected

Prepare us well for becoming adults– help us understand our options for Housing, work, learning etc.

UNDERSTANDING THE CARE AND SUPPORT NEEDS FOR CHILDREN IN H&F

Extensive work has taken place across our Children's Social Care and Commissioning Teams to fully understand the needs and profile of children in care, both now and in future, and to group these accordingly for the purposes of analysing and planning. This has involved a range of stakeholders coming together to consider current placement arrangements, including where we need to focus our resources and ensure we have the correct profile of placement provision.

We recognise the challenges in the placement market and acknowledge we will need an ongoing mixed model of provision. That is, a mix of internal options, for example our carer network or specialist disability children's home, and externally commissioned provision using the private sector. These groups are detailed in section below with actions spread across our commissioning function coupled with operational frontline teams:

Demand Group 1: Children and young people recovering from complex trauma, displaying behaviours and emotional responses that require containment, therapeutic and intensive care. Some of these young people also have specific mental health diagnoses. This cohort of children covers a range of ages between 8 years to 16 years.

Demand Group 2: Children under 5 years placed together with their parents whilst under assessment or to support transition to independent and safe care

Demand Group 3: Children for whom permanent fostering arrangements forms their care plan, all age ranges. We are committed to progressing plans for these children at an appropriate pace.

Demand Group 4: Children and young people where extra familial harm is a risk. Sufficiency strategy will detail the interventions that support engagement and disruption for this cohort.
Key risks factors for this group are those:

- At risk of criminal exploitation
- At risk of sexual exploitation

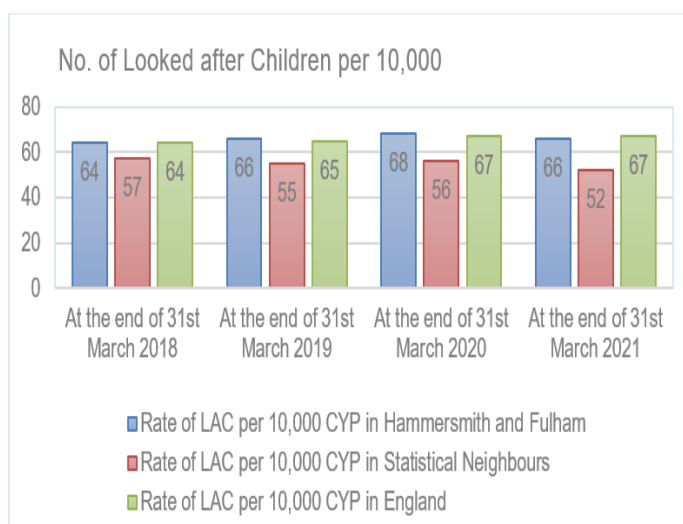
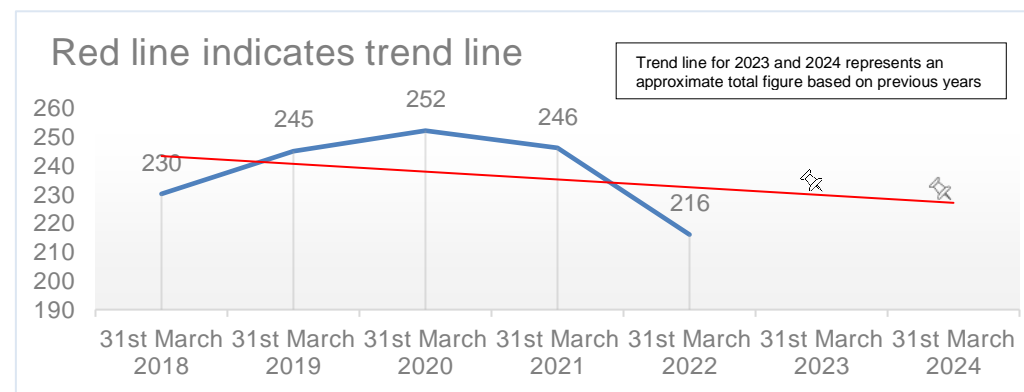
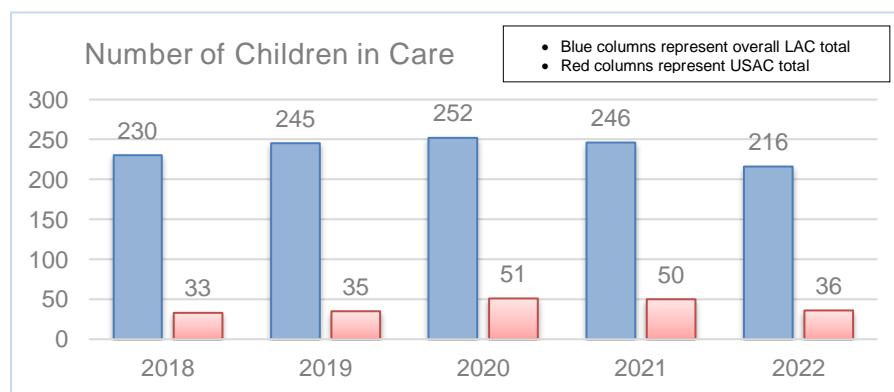
Demand Group 5: Young people at risk of being remanded into LA care or custody

Demand Group 6: Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)

Demand Group 7: Children leaving care, preparation for adulthood & independent living skills

Demand Group 8: Children & Young People with disabilities e.g. provision for those on autistic spectrum & development delays. Children in this group fall into the following categories of need:

HEADLINE DATA AND TRENDS

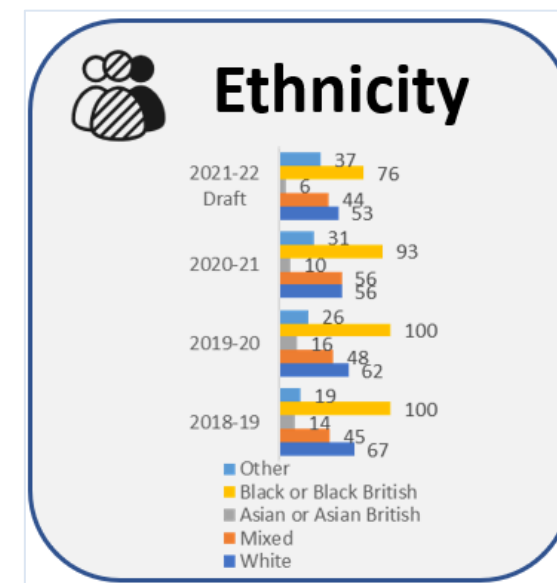


Key points – Children in Care Numbers

- Children in care numbers for the last two years see a downward trend
- A 6-year trajectory, using data from 2018 to date, shows an increase from 2022 numbers, throughout 2023 and 2024
- Rates per 10,000 over a 4-year period place H&F slightly above statistical neighbours but below the national averages
- Approximately 17% of our children in care are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children

Key points – Placement figures *(not shown on graphs on this page)*

- 72.6%** of all children in care reside in foster placements
- 11.6%** are placed in semi-independent living arrangements
- 9.3%** of all children looked after are placed in Children's homes.





PATHWAYS INTO PLACEMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

All children requiring a social care placement will in the first instance be referred to our inhouse fostering service to establish if we have a suitable match within our own carer network. Only once we have explored and exhausted our list of inhouse carer vacancies will a referral be made to our Placements Commissioning Service who will then seek placements using preferred provider lists and regional frameworks.

The Placements Commissioning Service have access to wide range of providers and procurement systems with approved providers and this is detailed below. As a member of the Commissioning Alliance the Placements Team have access to Careplace for placement searching and matching via individual Dynamic Purchasing Systems across different placement categories. These systems offer a range of benefits over spot purchase arrangements and recent benchmarking demonstrates value for money, consistency, and compliance.

Making best use of both inhouse and framework arrangements offers improved oversight and quality assurance mechanisms to enable children to be in the most appropriate placements that best meets need. In addition to this across H&F's Children's Services we have a range of multi-disciplinary panels and feedback opportunities to ensure all professionals involved in a child's care can both demonstrate progress but also escalate placement concerns where necessary.

One example of our focus on Quality Assurance for our children in placements is the introduction of the Young Inspectors Programme. Following the introduction of the National Young Inspectors programme, H&F initiated a pilot of the programme with care leavers in 2021 and planning is underway to build on the success of this pilot and to roll-out widely throughout 2022/23. The programme is youth led and offers young people the opportunity to quality assure, co-design and shape services.

The programme includes a series of inspections of service provision for young people, by young people and a feedback loop to create meaningful change. Following the successful inspections and completion of the 2021 pilot programme, the provider that was the subject of inspection was able to evidence changes that had been made to services for the better, following the feedback provided by our young inspectors.

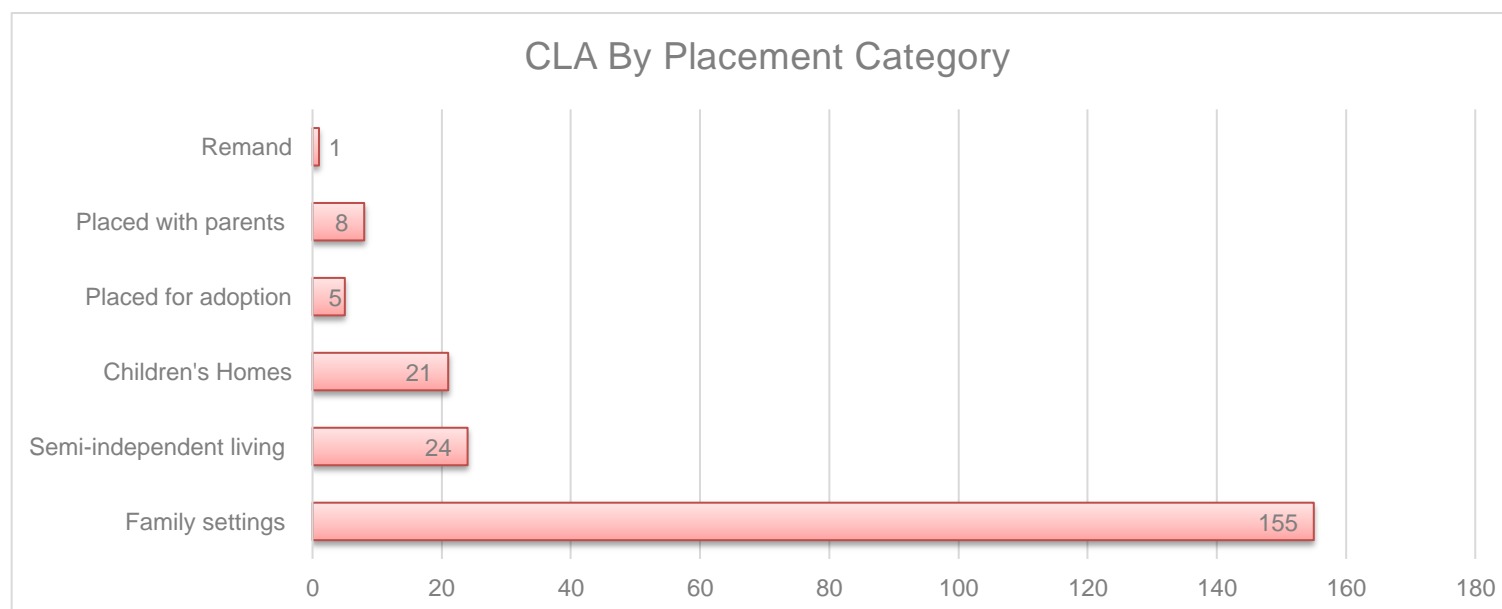


PROFILE OF CURRENT PLACEMENTS

A summary of all Looked after Children in placement as at June 2022 shows 215 Looked after Children placed across a range of different placement categories. The average age of our cohort is 11 years and 4 months, of which 74 are under 10 years of age and 143 are 10 to 17 years of age.

We strive to place all children in family settings where it is safe to do so and this is reflected in the current profile of placements which shows 155 placed across a range of family settings, 21 are placed in Children's homes, 24 in semi-independent living arrangements where their pathway to independence includes a period in semi-independent living to ensure they are equipped with the skills and independence to progress to adulthood, and 14 were placed in other arrangements such as with parents or awaiting adoption.

The next section proceeds to details the current availability of provision in H&F and the measures in place to meet our sufficiency requirements.



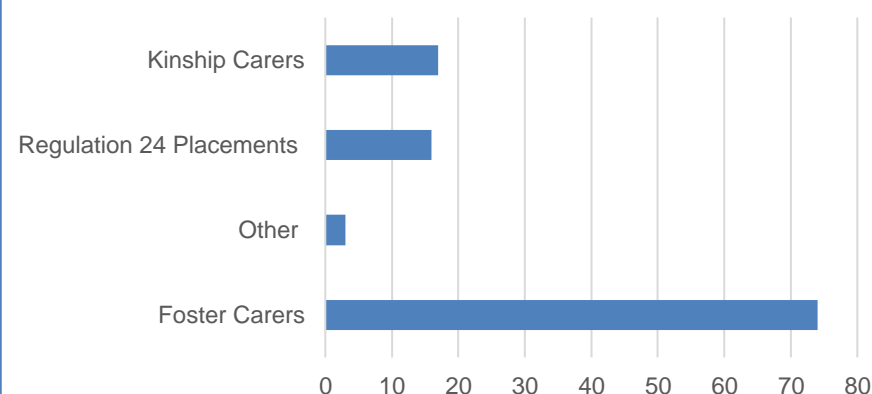
THE FOSTERING SERVICE

The Council has its own in-house fostering service, which is shared across three boroughs, Hammersmith & Fulham, The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster City Council. The Shared Service believes that permanence is driven by knowing our children well, being realistic about challenges which may present, and helping those who care for them, to meet those challenges in ways which build resilience and confidence. As of June 2022, there were a total of 110 foster placements for H&F (excluding Connected Persons arrangements), these are broken down in the table to the right.

If we include Connected Persons arrangements, this represents 49% of the overall children in care cohort being placed by our inhouse fostering service. From the total of all children placed in family arrangements (155), including placements with external independent fostering agencies this represents 72%. A strategic objective of our sufficiency is to increase this percentage to approximately 75%. Careful matching of such placements takes place, and all placements are presented to our Fostering and Adoption Panel and our Children's Resource Panel where recommendations are then made to the Agency Decision Maker.



Breakdown of inhouse Foster Placements

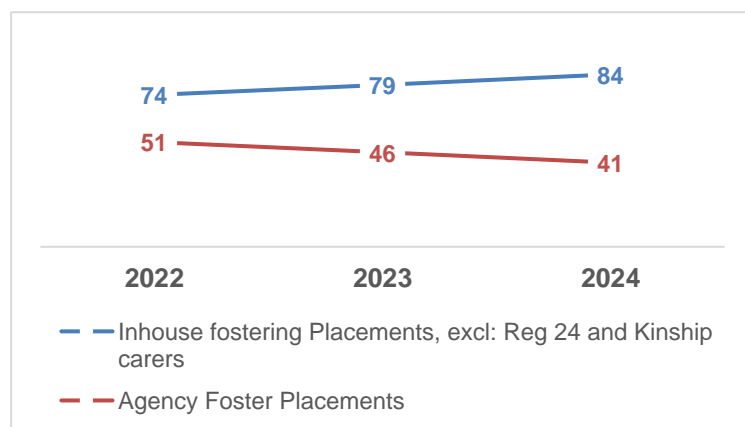


Improving Sufficiency Requirements for Inhouse Foster Carers

- There is an on-going need to recruit a range of foster carers to meet the varying needs of the children in care population. Recruiting and retaining foster carers is key to delivering an effective fostering service and although there is a shortage of foster carers, there is a great deal of information from research about effective recruitment. The in-house Fostering Service has embraced the research and has an established recruitment team that is currently on a drive to recruit more foster carers to meet sufficiency targets thus using new and innovative marketing techniques, increasing recruitment and retention of in-house foster carers. The service has a target to achieve 15 new

carers per annum totalling 45 over a 3-year period. If our children in care numbers remain stable this would significantly change the position and reduce reliance on the private fostering market.

- The table below details the impact on fostering sufficiency where this target is achieved across the shared service, the graph assumes number of children in care remains at or around the same rate.



The shared Fostering Service has experienced some challenges in relation to supporting carers to care for children with overly complex needs and or disability and where experiences of trauma are displayed in behaviours that carers can find challenging. In addition to this, we have a shortage of carers suitably experienced to take older cohorts of children with and without challenging behaviours, for example unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

Targeted efforts will focus on placements for adolescents, parent, and child placements, caring for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children including those that are age-disputed and increasing the diversity of foster carers to meet the broad needs of children requiring placements in a family setting.

- Hammersmith and Fulham are also in the process of exploring support models to increase foster carers' ability to meet the range of needs of our children whilst themselves feeling supported as carers. The focus of this being to increase the strength of the service such that our carers feel they have the necessary skills and tools to achieve the best outcomes for children in care. This work is intended to improve the quality of experience for the child and their carer, whilst simultaneously improving placement stability and recruitment and retention of carers.
- The review process will see the shared services explore the recruitment and development of well trained and well prepared therapeutic foster carers who will be available to provide therapeutic care to children displaying extreme and emotionally challenging behaviours. Foster Carers would be remunerated in context of the requirement to be available full time and work with a range of clinicians and professionals providing therapy and treatment to the children. Therapeutic Foster Carers would be required to support the children's 'therapy/treatment' and 'after treatment' care which is very demanding therefore their role will demand a higher level of specialist learning, guidance, and support to understand the language and the behaviour of traumatised children and young people.

EXTERNAL FOSTERING MARKET

- As of June 2022, Hammersmith & Fulham had 49 Children and Young People placed with Independent Fostering Agencies. This accounted for 23% of the CLA cohort in family arrangements. As noted in the section above, the strategic intention is to strengthen and improve our inhouse service, building resilience and reduce reliance on the external fostering market.

RESIDENTIAL CHILDREN'S HOMES

- We have 20 Looked after Children in residential children's homes, 2 of which are in residential schools, and this represents a small decrease from the same period in 2019/20. From the total of 20 in 2022, seven are children with disabilities and the remaining 13 are children with a range of complex mental health and or behaviour issues.

- Current inhouse

Year	Numbers of Children Placed
2022/23	19
2021/22	18
2020/21	19
2019/20	23

provision in this placement category includes a



valued and well used in-house 7 bed registered children's home for children with disabilities (CWD). However, in its current form this provision is unsuitable for the majority of children requiring placement in registered provision. As a result, we are reliant on the external provider market for this placement category and experience some challenge in securing placements. At the date of this strategy the average distance of our Looked after Children placed in residential settings, other than children with disabilities, is 139 miles from Hammersmith & Fulham, impacting both outcomes for the children and presenting challenges for the oversight of social care and therapeutic services.

- This category of placement represents one of the largest areas of challenge in terms of placement searching, coupled with the highest unit cost per placement. Recent analysis shows our average costs for residential placements are £263k per annum or £5k weekly, compared with our inhouse fostering placements that are on average £23k per annum or £442 per week.
- We are aware of capacity issues on a regional level and working closely with partners to address this. One example of this being led by the Commissioning Alliance and which forms part of the Pan-London Placements Commissioning Programme is the West London Residential Working Group who have undertaken analysis of the care population across London. Anticipated outcomes from this workstream include a risk sharing model to block book beds for use by the West London region. In Hammersmith & Fulham we consider this option to be a short-term option whilst we seek to develop a longer-term solution.
- Longer term options to increase capacity in this area include possible redevelopment and expansion of our current inhouse provision to care for children with Emotional and Behavioural disorders as well as Children with Disabilities, and to respond to central funding opportunities such as the recent Department for Education Capital funding round to increase children's home capacity.
- We are exploring opportunities to develop a small local therapeutic, crisis assessment and intervention short term alternative home with a focus on relationship-based practice and akin to short breaks provision. The model will comprise a multidisciplinary, highly skilled *'team around the child'* network of professionals who will primarily provide holistic support to assess the child's needs in a therapeutic environment, providing the insight needed to develop longer term care plans.
- By enabling children to be supported close to home, within the local community, they will benefit from the continuity of accessing local health and education provision whilst professionals work in partnership with carers to return them home with an offer of outreach supported by existing resources, or to a local family setting such as foster care, ensuring both themselves and their carers receive the ongoing support they need.

SEMI-INDEPENDENT ACCOMMODATION

- Across Hammersmith & Fulham we have access to a commissioned block contract with a strategic provider of supported housing services. This has recently been tendered and reflects changes to our existing arrangements to better reflect the needs of our Children and Young People. This service meets a range of strategic priorities for Children's Services, including placing our children and young people within H&F where they can maintain access to family and support networks, education and social care service.

- Currently, the block contract covers 12 properties with 1 recently refurbished building due to come online imminently. The buildings are separated by support levels, those being high support for children with increased need where 24/7 staffing and support is provided, and a flexible support level. Flexible support provides a core offer of support hours for all children, and additional hours can be commissioned on top of this on a demand led and time limited period. This enables children to receive person centred tailored support for the period required and to provide the life skills required to progress to independent living.
- The new service will have 135 units in total which presents a significant increase from previous arrangements, at present service capacity is at 121 units broken down as 60 high support units and the remaining 75 providing the core/flexible model. The service is subject to routine quarterly contract monitoring coupled with frequent operational meetings with our Leaving Care Social Work Managers to track progress and pathways into independence.
- We are still reliant on the wider market for approximately 40% of placements in this placement category (when including both children in care and care leavers), and these are normally placed outside of Hammersmith & Fulham which creates additional challenges and barriers for our children accessing other services. This is acknowledged as a gap in our sufficiency and as capacity in our new SIL block contract is increased this reliance and sufficiency gap will reduce.
- For the 40% of semi-independent living placements that cannot be placed locally based on either capacity, contextual safeguarding or exploitation issues, we access our own H&F led Dynamic Purchasing System. We have developed this system in collaboration with our partners at the Commissioning Alliance. This is widely used by Commissioning Alliance member and non-member boroughs and demonstrates an effective and creative mechanism for managing the market, ensuring placements are made with approved providers and enabling outcomes to be agreed at point of placement.

ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS FOR CARE LEAVERS

- In H&F we recognise the importance in ensuring a smooth transition into adulthood for our children in care. This is why we have a comprehensive and tailored offer of support to our children leaving care, with a range of options to ensure the transition from care into adulthood is seamless and person centred. This section below details the current placement arrangements for this cohort, coupled with the additional wraparound support and move-on, independent options that are available.

The following table details the current profile of our care leaver cohort with their accommodation arrangement.

Number of Care Leavers (June 2022)	255
Semi-independent living / transitional accommodation	111
Independent living (inc. social housing, accommodation in the private rented sector and student accommodation)	85
Staying put arrangements (with foster carer)	28
With parents or relatives	7
In custody	17
Other arrangements	7

Some of care leavers need additional time in semi-independent living arrangements and or fostering arrangements to ensure they are equipped with the skills and knowledge to live independently. Some care leavers, therefore, make use of our semi-independent living, either through our main block contract with Centrepoint or with an approved provider from our dynamic purchasing system. A reoccurring housing panel takes place 6 weekly to discuss move-on options for those care leavers still residing in either of these placements to determine when will be appropriate to progress with a social housing nomination. This social housing offer now forms part of our core offer to this cohort where appropriate.

For some, we know the transition to live independently can be a significant step and this is why we also offer a tailored floating support service through our commissioned provider. This period of floating support ensures care leavers are supported through their move into their new home and assists in areas such as budgeting including rent payments and or universal credit applications, life skills, employment and or education. The key objective of service is to offer time limited focused support to ensure our care leavers receive the support they need and that their new tenancy remains stable.

Care Leavers Hub and Pan London Care Leavers Offer

In addition to the above, and as part of our commitment to support children leaving care, we are now in the advanced stages of developing a Care Leavers Hub which will provide a homely and informal space within Hammersmith and Fulham where care experienced young people can always seek advice, support & guidance, chose to spend time in and always return to. At the date of this strategy renovation works are imminent, work experience opportunities in progress and an indicate opening date is scheduled for September 2022.

The key Aims and Objectives of our new Care Leavers Hub will be to:

- Create a safe space where Care Leavers can meet with practitioners and support professionals to receive support and guidance around a range of life skills and from where they can be sign posted to other specialist areas.
- Enable our Care Experienced young people to feel valued and socially included in a thriving community.
- Reduce social isolation, ensure Care Experienced young people are equipped with the skills to and resilience to thrive in their adulthood.
- Opportunity to coordinate services in one place and,
- To ensure the hub's development aligns with our Corporate Parenting Priorities, which are:
 - ***To feel Settled and Belong***
 - ***To be Safe Happy and Healthy, &***
 - ***To Thrive as Adults.***

In addition to the above, we are actively involved in the development of a common core offer / guarantee for care leavers across London. We already provide some of the areas offered in the list below but are working collaboratively across London and anticipate the London Care Leaver Compact to cover:

- A core health offer for care leavers including free prescriptions for all eligible care leavers up to the age of 25 and priority pathways to adult/mental health services
- Appropriate education, training and employment opportunities available and care leavers to be supported to be work ready
- Agreed employment opportunities in the NHS, Police, Fire Brigade and local authority 'family business'
- Council tax exemption that crosses boundaries
- Access to reduced and free transport across London
- A clear offer of support and pathway planning across GLA
- An agreed core ring fenced housing offer
- Access to a mentor if requested
- Leisure passes for all care leavers to local authority centres



STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND PAN LONDON PROGRAMMES OF WORK

- Hammersmith & Fulham Children's Services recognise the challenges in the placement sector currently, which have been highlighted in both the Care Review and the Competition and Markets Authority report. In H&F therefore, we continue to play an active role in both Pan London regional programmes of work coupled with sub-regional arrangements facilitated through partners at the Commissioning Alliance to support our sufficiency requirements. In addition to this we are progressing local plans specific to the needs of Hammersmith & Fulham which are detailed in the following section.
- A summary of the Pan London Work and sub-regional work in progress are included in the table below. The intended outcomes for these programmes meet H&F's priorities of delivering more services locally, offering better value from the market and improving outcomes for children. The overarching theme for these workstreams are *high cost, low incidence placements*. That is, whilst the demand for these types of placements is small, they represent significant challenges for our operational teams in the resourcing, financing and matching of these placements. H&F are therefore fully involved in the development of these placement programmes and will go through relevant governance procedures as appropriate.

Workstream	Description	No. of placements in H&F over a 3-year period.	
Residential Parenting Assessments	In H&F we currently commission services for this provision from several specialist providers on a demand led basis, with the assessment format and pricing agreed based on the needs of the family situation. On behalf of membership boroughs and Pan London, the Commissioning Alliance have developed a case for change to deliver improved outcomes, working with the market, to increase provision locally and at a lower block contract fixed cost.	Year	Placements
		2021/2022	7
		2020/2021	13
		2019/2020	7
Secure Welfare Provision	We have a very low demand for this provision as reflected in our placement numbers and will always seek to exhaust all alternatives before progressing a Court Order to place in a secure setting. For all referrals we will make contact with the Secure Welfare Coordination Unit in the first instance (SWCU).	Year	Placements
		2021/2022	1
		2020/2021	2

	The Commissioning Alliance, on behalf of the Pan London Placements Panel, have recently been successful in a bid to the Department for Education for development of Secure Provision in London, addressing the fact that there is significant demand nationally but currently no provision in London. This Programme is being overseen by the London Accommodation and Resettlement Partnership (LARP) and will provide 24 welfare beds and 12 justice beds.	<table><tr><td>2019/2020</td><td>1</td></tr></table>		2019/2020	1												
2019/2020	1																
<p>London Accommodation Pathfinder (LAP)</p> <p><i>‘Alternatives to Custody’</i></p>	<p>The London Accommodation Pathfinder forms part of the Pan London Commissioning Programme which has a remit to secure better quality, value and choice in high cost, low incidence, placements.</p> <p>It will provide a direct residential alternative to custody (remand or sentence) with a bespoke support and risk management programme designed around this cohort of children. The Pathfinder is also directly overseen by the London Accommodation and Resettlement Partnership.</p>	<p>H&F suitability for programme:</p> <table><tr><th>Year</th><th>Placements</th></tr><tr><td>2021</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>2020</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>2019</td><td>16</td></tr><tr><td>2018</td><td>14</td></tr><tr><td>2017</td><td>9</td></tr><tr><td>2016</td><td>8</td></tr></table>		Year	Placements	2021	4	2020	8	2019	16	2018	14	2017	9	2016	8
Year	Placements																
2021	4																
2020	8																
2019	16																
2018	14																
2017	9																
2016	8																
<p>Pan London Vehicle</p>	<p>The Association of London Directors of Children Services (ADCS) has established a priority on commissioning to deliver more local provision for London children, better value for money and improved outcomes for children through pan-London collaboration.</p> <p>The Pan-London Vehicle for Commissioning will be a new jointly owned legal entity that will bring the strategic weight of London’s commissioning to influence the market to stimulate new provision and improve value for money. The PLV will have an initial focus on Secure Welfare provision, but with ambitions to extend to cover the provision of high cost low incidence placements such as the children’s residential sector.</p>																



NEXT STEPS AND ACTIONS TO DELIVER OUR SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY

Returning to our demand groups shown on page 9 of this strategy, this next section articulates the key actions each department will undertake over the next period to enable our sufficiency plan to be achieved. These actions are currently being monitored via an Implementation Group meeting quarterly throughout the year to keep actions on track and maintain progress.

Demand Groups	Actions to be completed with relevant service area.
1	<p>Practice Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confident assessment of strengths' needs and risks which inform clear plans of support and intervention to enable safe and stable care.• Consistent ability to articulate the type of care and placement each child needs.• Residential care identified specifically for only those children who are unable to cope or flourish in a family setting.• Period in residential may form part of longer-term care plan. <p>Fostering and Commissioning Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create additional local 'intensive' fostering arrangements with robust back up care and wrap around support and exploration of additional support models to increase carers' abilities to meet the range of needs of our children.• NVR training for carers and an agreed package of wrap around support to include out of hours advice, guidance and support.• Mixed model of creating 3-5 of these arrangements in house and working with specific fostering agencies for the remainder <p>Commissioning Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maximising use of underutilised London based residential capacity through external commissioning arrangements• Cost benefit analysis of any opportunities to develop or expand internal residential provision
2	<p>Practice Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce the need for residential parenting assessments by focussing more robustly on our pre-birth assessment and intervention approaches <p>Fostering Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create at least one inhouse parent/child fostering arrangement. Ambition for 2 but acknowledgement of barriers in recruiting carers locally with enough space <p>Commissioning Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participation in the Commissioning Alliance block contract arrangements through SIL DPV where external commissioning is required.
3	<p>Commissioning and Fostering Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Join up between Children's Placements Team and the Family Finders based in the Permanence service.

	<p>Housing Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Housing RE: opportunities to prioritise Housing for connected persons foster carers. <p>Commissioning Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider housing options and where agreed and appropriate, progress home extensions.
4 & 5	<p>Fostering Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of existing and/or targeted recruitment of up to 5 existing inhouse foster carers to specifically train and support to work systemically with adolescents and their families (synergy of approach with our practitioners in Family Assist) to include NVR approaches <p>Practice Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop links between specific adolescent respite carers and Family Assist offer so that agreed period of 'time out' work hand in hand with rapid family intervention. • Continue to develop attractive support and intervention bail packages that enable young people to remain with family where possible <p>Joint Action – Commissioning/SRQA/SW Teams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen and embed QA approaches for Semi-Independent accommodation <p>Commissioning Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider developing registered crisis and assessment care provision for 2/3 young people, similar to the model presented in the 2021 DfE bid. • Participation in the West London Accommodation Pathfinder plus up to 2 units of SIL provision through block contract, operational from 1 May 2022.
6 & 7	<p>Practice Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group work offered by the Care Leaving Service to support UASC to understand the care system including the Care leavers offer, duties, responsibilities and expectations. <p>Practice Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation for independent living work and roll-out of toolkit <p>Commissioning & Practice Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project management and development of Care leavers Hub <p>Fostering & Practice Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing the Staying Put Policy with a view to incentives and payments, ensuring this option is considered early in the care planning process.
8	<p>Fostering Action:</p>

- Targeted recruitment of up to 2 foster carers for overnight respite for children with disabilities to avoid reliance on residential short breaks and escalation of need.

Joint Actions: Disabled Children's Team, Commissioning & Practice

- Review usage policy of the Haven in view of out borough residential placement for disabled children and access to overnight short breaks locally.
- Review of short breaks sufficiency.
- Implementation of transition panel, to manage referrals for Adult Social Care and to agree oversight for supported living arrangements, links with demand group 7.
- Using Dynamic Support Register meetings and process to ensure multi-disciplinary accountability and interventions are in place, therefore reducing risk of care where care is not necessary.

Artwork by young people

