

# Sufficiency Strategy 2020-2023





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## Vision and Principles

This strategy document underpins our commissioning direction and core values. The strategy provides data and trend analysis, highlights areas of significant changes and supports us as we need to change our direction and priorities; as needs, environments and society changes. It is important our strategy does not stand still and we adapt dynamically to meet the needs of children and young people by offering high quality services with the best possible outcomes.

Norfolk Children's Services' overarching strategy 'Vital Signs for our Children' underpins all the work we do.

Signs of Safety, Signs of Well-being and Signs of Success are the Vital Signs we want to see to ensure children's happiness and health. We believe it is vital that children are resilient and able to learn, build positive, long-lasting relationships and receive family-based care.

To achieve this, all our work must be:



### Relationship Based

We work to build consistent and trusted relationships with children, young people, and families.



### Strengths Orientated

We identify the strengths of children, young people and families and build on them to create positive change.



### Outcome Focused

We do whatever it takes to achieve the best outcome for children, young people and families.



### Whole Family

We think about family in the widest sense in all the work we do.



### Whole System

We work in partnership to get the right support for children, young people and families regardless of organisational boundaries.

We shall achieve this vision through working in partnership with our colleagues from the voluntary, statutory and private sectors to plan, develop and deliver a wide variety of services that are needs led, best value and outcome focused. Services will be inclusive and actively promote equality.

Our guiding principles focus on:

- Offering our help early to prevent and reduce demand for specialist services
- Joining up our work so that similar activities and services are easily accessible, done well and done once
- Being business-like and making best use of digital technology to ensure value for money
- Using evidence and data to target our work where it can make the most difference

Success will mean that children:

- Are prepared and able to learn
- Build positive and long-lasting relationships
- Receive family-based care





## The Strategy

For children and young people who require our care, we strive to provide stable placements within highly trained, supportive services. There will continue to be a mix of internal and external providers providing a variety of opportunities and care. We will build positive working relationships with our providers and colleagues; we recognise that partnerships for quality services require firm relationships with shared views and ambitions for the children and young people within Norfolk. Our sufficiency strategy is underpinned by five overarching themes across the portfolio.



### Build

Expand local capacity that is critical to driving long term goals.



### Specialise

Develop specialist services based on service user needs and demands, matched with the local authority's capabilities and resources.



### Streamline

Continuously improve quality and reduce waste.



### Partner

Work with providers and partners to provide services to complement the local authority strategic approach.



### Transform

Ensure alignment to the Children's Service transformation strategy 2018/21

We are focused on developing and improving our enhanced fostering offer, creating a skilled network of carers who are able to meet the needs of the young people during often complex transitions within their care and support as well as their transitions through from child to adulthood. We need to equip children and young people with resilience and ensure their voice is part of the development of our services.

We want to invest in a diverse range of ambitious, high quality service providers. In addition, we intend to control the quality of provision we provide, so that our children and young people get the right service, at the right time and in the right location.

Children and young people's voice:

An important element of the strategy is to ensure we listen to the voices of children and young people, ensuring we offer those impacted by this strategy the opportunity to be at the heart of improvements and the implementation of the strategy. The streamlining element will be an area where we strive to offer stability and reduce the amount of change and transitions the young people experience, particularly those with the most complex needs. Children and young people's voice is important to the implementation of this strategy, meaning the strategy remains focused on the children and young people it is intended to serve.

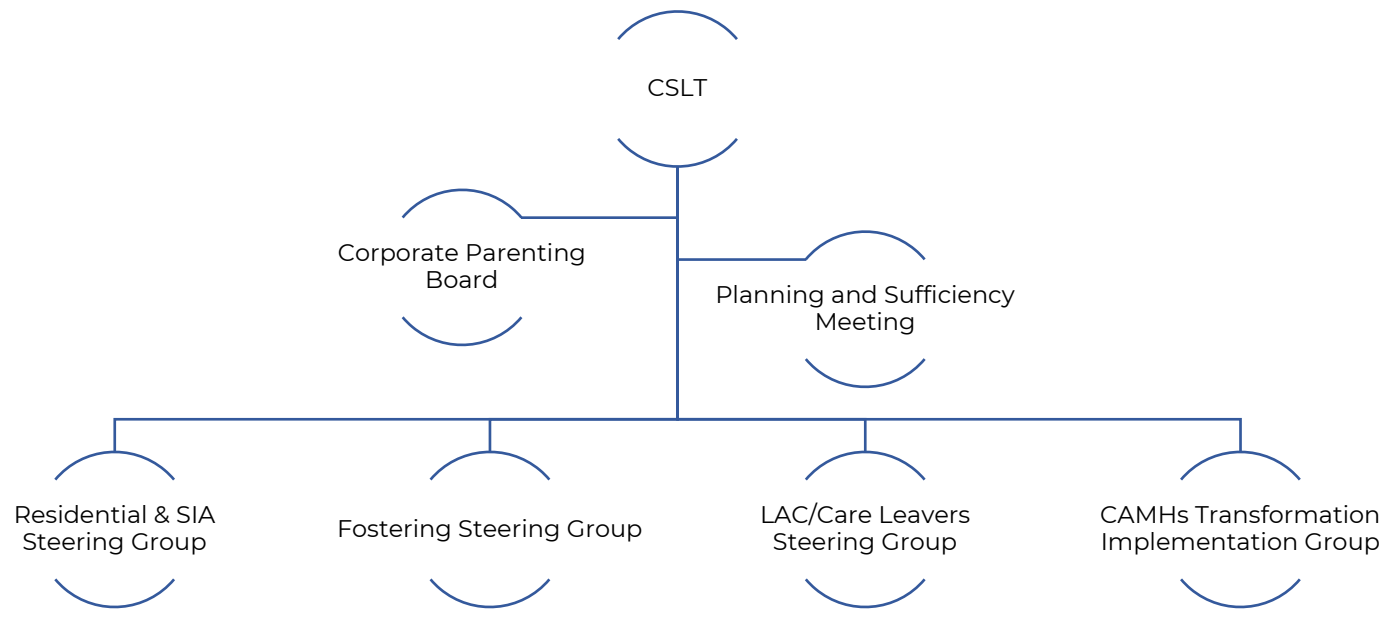
Portfolio	Build	Specialise	Streamline	Partner	Transform
Residential	✓			✓	✓
Fostering	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Semi Independent			✓		
Alternative to Care		✓	✓	✓	
Mental Health			✓		✓



## Reporting & Governance

The Sufficiency Strategy will be overseen strategically by CSLT (Children's Services Leadership Team), Corporate Parenting Board and operationally by the Planning and Sufficiency Meeting where progress reports, risks and issues will be highlighted and presented. These measures provide the level of scrutiny the strategy demands in order to achieve high quality, meaningful, long term outcomes for children, young people and their families. It is our intention to keep the strategy a live document and if changes are needed throughout the strategy time period these will be reported to all relevant Boards and Committees.

Through internal and external understanding and collaboration, the reporting and information flow should be seamless; the importance of total communication and feedback is vital to be able to provide effective, safe care and support as well as highlighting areas of concern at the earliest opportunity to be able to act as required.





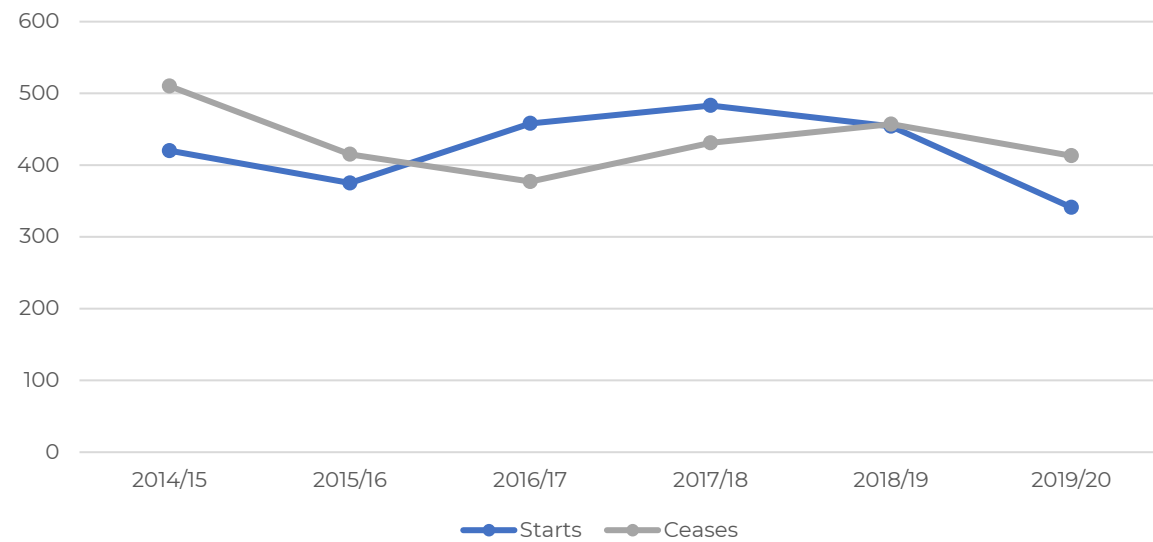


## Local Context

The number of Children Looked After (CLA) continue to decline. They have remained high over the last 5 years, from 1,076 (March 2014) to a high of 1,188 (March 2019), before falling by 6% to 1107 (published March 2019/20). Expressed as a ratio, Norfolk looks after 65.1 children per 10,000 children aged under 18 (as at 31 March 2020), compared to an average amongst statistical neighbours of 56.0. The number of CLA from local families has reduced further, but we have seen a significant increase in Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) becoming Looked After in Norfolk with 79 UASC in our care on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

The entrants (starters) into care have decreased significantly in the last year, down 25% from 454 in 2018/19 to 341 in 2019/20. The number of young people who left care also reduced 10% from 457 in 2018/19 to 413 in 2019/20. Since 2018/19 starts have significantly fallen as the graph has crossed over resulting in the net effect of approximately 64 fewer CLA in Norfolk. Concerns about sufficiency, placement disruption and children entering care in an unplanned way have increased during COVID-19 (coronavirus) restrictions.

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
<b>Numbers of Looked after Children</b>	1067	1045	1104	1179	1188	1107
<b>Rates per 10,000 children under 18</b>	69.0	62.2	65.8	69.7	70.2	65.1
<b>Children who started to be looked after</b>	420	375	458	483	454	341
<b>Children who Ceased to be looked after</b>	510	415	377	431	457	413



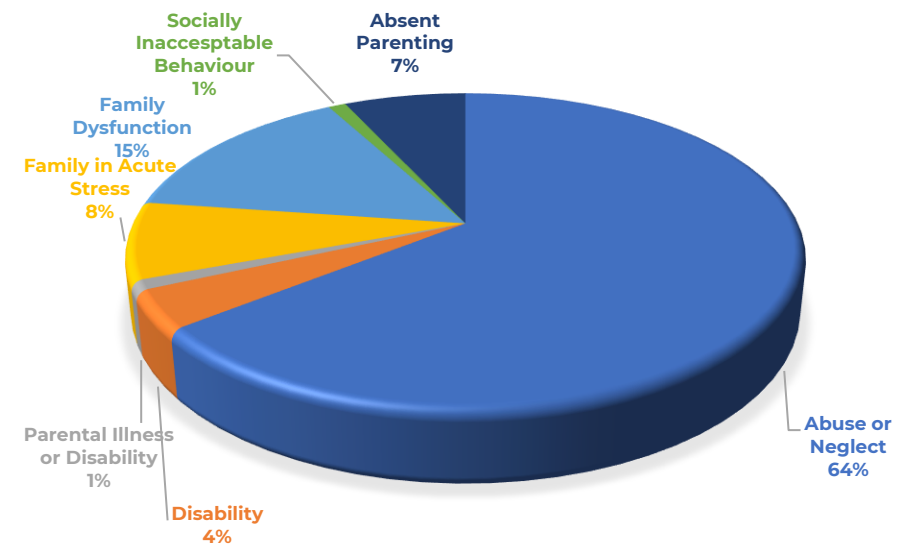
As of 31 March 2019, 75% of young people in local authority care were placed in foster care, which is slightly higher than the national rate of 72%. There has been a reduction of 72 young people in foster care. In contrast, the percentage of Norfolk's looked after children placed in residential placements has declined 17% since 2017/18.

The other significant feature is the decrease in young people placed for adoption since 2014 which has declined by 61%. 48 children looked after were placed for adoption in 2017/18, and this has decreased further by 21% to 38 in 2018/19, and to only 28 in 2019/20. This is also an issue which has been highlighted nationally where they have seen a decrease of 39% from 2015/16 to 2019/20.

The largest cohort of young people in local authority care, as at 31 March 2020, are 10 to 15 years old (41%), just above the national context of 39%. 23% are aged 16 years and over, 18% are aged 5-9 years, 14% 1-4 years and 5% are aged under 1 year. This is a very similar breakdown to the national context. The most significant change this year is in the under 1 category which saw a drop of 36% from 81 to 52. This change was not reflected in the

national statistics where this category dropped 4% from 4260 to 4090.

The broad characteristics of looked after children have remained similar to previous years; just over half (626 - 56%) are male, 489 - 44% are female in March 2020.



When a child is assessed by Children's Service their primary need is recorded. In the local authority the proportion of young people in each category has remained consistent since 2013. As of 31 March 2020, 724 (65%) of children in Norfolk were identified as having a primary need of 'abuse or neglect' which compares to the national figure of 63% - the most common reason identified.

Young people by placement type	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
1 Fostered by Agency	408	399	384	387	449	368
2 Fostered by LA	374	362	335	348	351	380
3 Fostered by Relative or Friend	58	52	79	89	92	72
4 Semi-Independent Accom. (Unregulated)	64	50	40	39	57	105
5 Other placement	11	8	3	21	14	16
6 Placed for adoption	71	55	61	48	38	28
7 Placed with parents	24	26	31	40	51	37
8 Residential	141	115	112	132	127	109
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,151</b>	<b>1,067</b>	<b>1,045</b>	<b>1,104</b>	<b>1,179</b>	<b>1115</b>

## Residential

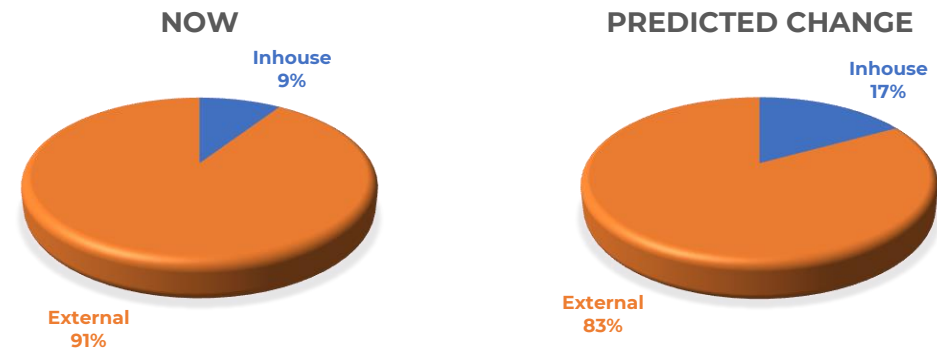
Residential placements represented approximately 10% of total looked after children placements as of 31 March 2020. In house residential placements accounted for approximately 9% of total residential placements with a maximum capacity of 20 beds. The overall number of residential placements have been decreasing over the last two years, there is an overreliance on private providers making the local authority weaker in negotiating availability and placement costs.

Our intention is to continue to reduce the overreliance on mainstream residential settings. Our new innovative New Roads service will support our ambitions to reduce residential placements across the portfolio and support children and young people to remain with their families and carers.

Our needs analysis shows a growing number of young people being accommodated into residential care with complex needs. In response we are developing specialist residential homes to deal with complex needs.

This includes a mix of in-house and commissioned solo/dual residential homes within Norfolk and a Children with Disabilities emergency home.

Over the next 24 months, a number of services will contribute to reducing overreliance on external residential settings where we expect their market share to decrease.



## Fostering

The local authority foster carers are an ageing demographic and it is expected that a number will retire within the next two years. The average age of the local authority foster carer population is 54 years old which will need to be considered when recruiting in order to reach the target of an overall net gain. However, we continue to grow to our Norfolk Fostering Service (in house) and work closely with our partners in the Independent Fostering sector to meet the future expectation of increasing the number of children and young people in family based care and reducing placements in residential Children's Homes. The needs assessment shows the requirement to focus on specific foster placements such as Children with Disabilities, Parent and Child and Enhanced Foster Placements (Stepdown from Residential settings). Future demand will

also be generated through the New Roads service.



## Semi Independent

In April 2018 the local authority commenced the mobilisation of an inhouse semi-independent accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds. The mobilisation of 11 24/7 semi independent accommodation (SIA) was completed in March 2021. The total capacity available through this service is up to 12k bed nights. The needs assessment shows there is good capacity for 24/7 SIAs across the market in Norfolk both in house and external.

The SIA portfolio is likely to continue to see growth in the UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children) area of the SIA. Our aim is to continue to work with partners to ensure we meet the demand for this cohort. There is a clear and consistent approach to young people seeking

asylum in Norfolk with aspirational goals and outcomes for children and young people, promoting best practice in the area. We will continue to work with our partners to ensure that young people in our care approaching and into adulthood are provided with sufficient high quality accommodation that supports and promotes their successful move into independence.



## Alternative to Care

There continues to be focus on reducing the number of children in care and to offer high quality services to reduce the number of children becoming looked after through alternative approaches.

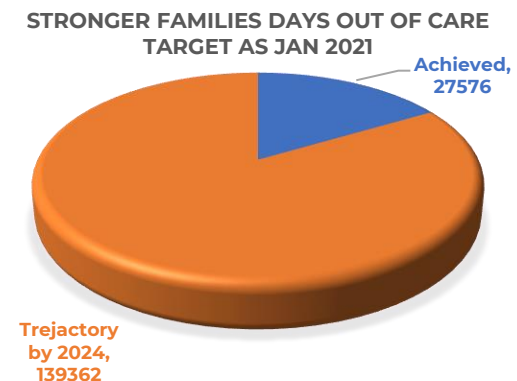
As of March 2020, there were 1107 children who were Looked After by the Local Authority, this has reduced to 1083 in March 2021, this shows a downward trend which has been achieved through a variety of alternative care provisions and alternative ways of working and supporting children and families. Early intervention and recognising the likely trajectory for children and young people early supports us to create this reduction in numbers, through signs of safety, vital signs and careful commissioning of interventions; we can achieve young people and their families to remain at home safely together.

The Provision of Therapy, Assessment and Family Support Framework is thriving with providers offering a range of interventions to meet the various needs of the children and young people, the demand shows a high number of family support packages are required. We are working to improve the framework to offer better guidance and support, ensuring we monitor and offer/commission the highest quality services and achieve improved outcomes for families.

An area of growth and development is the Norfolk Assisted Boarding Partnership, the programme offers term time boarding within a local school. This is a cost-effective approach to offering young people the chance for an education as well as support in their self-esteem, confidence and to support children to remain in

the care of their family. The current average weekly rate for NABP is £695; compared to that for external residential of £2850. It is important for this project to be successful that it includes a wraparound package of support to improve relationships within the family rather than to provide intervention when the young people are at home and relationships can be repaired to offer the young person a better outcome at home.

The demand and trend for Stronger Families is mostly consistent, with the programme achieving a total of 27,576 care days saved between February 2019-March 2021. Data and analysis shows the service will need to continue to adapt and work flexibly with NCC to continue to meet the changing needs of the population. In April 2021, the service has adapted to changing need to increase the age range from 8-15 to 6-15. This will mean that we can work with families of younger children and support early intervention which we anticipate will reduce the demand on Mental Health and care services as children reach adolescence.





## Strategic Alignments

- To continue to review the Sufficiency Strategy and align to the changing landscape, Corporate Parenting and Leaving Care priorities, implementing priorities and reviewing outcomes.
- To continuously review resources and realign commissioned and in-house provision to reduce waste and develop provision to better meet the needs of the population.
- To continue the developments of quality performance frameworks across the portfolio
- To continue to track and monitor financial targets relevant to commissioning activities.
- To develop refreshed performance management frameworks for accommodation-based services, aligned with in-house provision and regulatory reporting
- To further develop and utilise the provider forum networks
- To continuously improve commissioning activities through relationship-based approach and feedback gathered from internal and external stakeholders.
- To continue to collaborate with CRAGG, Eastern region, Adopt East, Health, Education, (high needs/virtual school/ SEND service).
- The development of FLOURISH a systemwide outcomes framework (see page 23).



## Flourish Outcomes Framework – Impact and Outcomes statements

<b>Family &amp; Friends</b> Children and young people are safe, connected and supported through positive relationships and networks	<b>Learning</b> Children and young people are achieving their full potential and developing skills which prepare them for life	<b>Opportunity</b> Children and young people develop as well-rounded individuals through access to a wide range of opportunities which nurture their interests and talents	<b>Understood</b> Children and young people feel listened to, understood and part of decision-making processes	<b>Resilience</b> Children and young people have the confidence and skills to make their own decisions and take on life's challenges	<b>Individual</b> Children and young people are respected as individuals, confident in their own identity and appreciate and value their own and others' uniqueness	<b>Safe &amp; Secure</b> Children and young people are supported to understand risk and make safe decisions by the actions adults and children and young people themselves take to keep them safe and secure	<b>Healthy</b> Children and young people have the support, knowledge and opportunity to lead their happiest and healthiest lives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As many CYP as possible are able to live safely with family</li> <li>Where CYP are not able to live with their family, they have the support they need to build a stable foundation of positive relationships</li> <li>CYP have positive childhood experiences in their homes, schools and communities</li> <li>CYP have the support they need from their parents and carers</li> <li>CYP have positive role models and trusted adults in their lives</li> <li>CYP have the skills and opportunities to develop positive friendships and relationships which support them throughout their lives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CYP establish a great early years foundation for learning and see the benefit in becoming lifelong learners</li> <li>CYP enjoy learning and developing skills and feel positive about what they can achieve</li> <li>CYP have good engagement with learning in and out of school, including attendance and extra-curricular opportunities</li> <li>CYP make the best possible progress in learning and education</li> <li>CYP are supported by families, professionals and communities at all stages of their development</li> <li>YP are equipped with the skills and confidence to live as independently as possible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CYP have improved equity of opportunity through the removal of barriers including improved economic, geographical and digital inclusion</li> <li>CYP have a wide range of education, employment, training, social and community activities available to them</li> <li>All CYP, at every age and regardless of disability or additional needs, have access to opportunities that suit their needs and ambitions</li> <li>CYP have the emotional, personal and practical support they need to make the most of the opportunities available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CYP are active, respected and included members of their communities as individuals and collectively</li> <li>All CYP voices are influential in all decisions made about their lives</li> <li>CYP feel adults respect their views and opinions and promote CYP influence</li> <li>CYP know their rights, how to make their views known and are confident to speak up</li> <li>CYP are confident that all strategies and services for CYP have their needs and ambitions at their heart</li> <li>CYP are confident that their voice will make a difference and can see the impact they are making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CYP can understand and make good decisions and are empowered to do so</li> <li>CYP know what independence entails and are able to transition in the best way for them</li> <li>CYP are supported to try new things, have a variety of experiences and be curious and aspirational</li> <li>CYP understand life can be complicated and know asking for help is OK</li> <li>CYP can recognise when they need help and have choice and control over the support they receive</li> <li>CYP have a range of options for support and advice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CYP are understood and valued as individuals and in their social groups</li> <li>CYP understand and value each other</li> <li>CYP and others on their behalf are able to tackle prejudice and discrimination</li> <li>CYP have safe spaces to explore, develop and become confident in their identity as they grow</li> <li>CYP's self-expression is prioritised, promoted and respected</li> <li>CYP have a range of opportunities to influence the wider world</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CYP are free from exploitation, abuse and neglect</li> <li>Fewer CYP enter/re-enter the criminal justice system</li> <li>CYP are safe and secure in all settings, including where they live</li> <li>CYP feel that families, professionals and communities understand and carry out their role in keeping them safe</li> <li>CYP trust the people and systems that are there to help keep them safe, know where to go for help and feel confident and able to do so</li> <li>CYP know what to do to keep each other safe</li> <li>CYP are supported to understand and take appropriate risks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CYP have the best achievable physical and mental health</li> <li>CYP know how to get healthy and keep healthy and are confident in their own self care</li> <li>CYP have choice in how they access health services, including the best possible virtual health experience</li> <li>CYP are supported at the earliest possible stage, reducing crises</li> <li>CYP know when and where to go for help with physical and mental health and have confidence and trust to do so</li> </ul>

# Children's Services Commissioning

Creating partnerships that make a difference



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