



**ST HELENS**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

## Placement Sufficiency Strategy

Date of publication: January 2021

Date of review: January 2022



# ST HELENS SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY 2020-2024

## 1. Introduction:

Overarching Aims and Objectives of the Children's Improvement Plan and the aims and objectives of the Sufficiency Strategy to reflect these.

Focus on St Helens Children remaining in St Helens

What are our Outcomes to achieve for CYP?

What are our standards and expectations for CYP and partnership working?

## 2. Governance and Accountability:

What is the agreed reporting process:  
Accountable to the Corporate Parenting Board

Ratification of Strategy through cabinet

Information sharing and assurance to the Children's Improvement Board

Adherence to Safeguarding Policies and processes

Financial accountability

## 3. Partnership and co-production:

Links to VOC action plan - what do CYP tell us about current provision and what they would like to see provided

Links to Advocacy

Links with regulators

Links with wider system eg youth justice, early help, EMHWP, education

## 4. Demographics:

Current need - numbers of Children in Care

Forecasted need and any potential risks identified

Priorities to achieve in reducing numbers and subsequent possible changes in provision-linked with Permanency Planning, Edge of Care, Leaving Care

Comparison with statistical neighbours

Foster Carer demographics

## 5. Current Provision Options:

Market Position Statement

Identify current use of various provisions and what is available / gaps:

- Foster care (in-house / Independent)

- St Helens Children's Homes

- Residential Care

- Supported living

- Secure

- Specialist

## 6. Benefit Analysis & Dependencies:

Financial Impact (costs) (Targets)

Activity Impact (impact on cohorts) (Targets)

Quality Impact (reduced placement breakdown)

Links to other strategies and how they will influence possible demand changes e.g. Early Help Strategy, Fostering Strategy, Care Leavers Strategy, Securing Permanence, Workforce development

## 7. Quality & Performance Monitoring:

- Placement Panel-function and impact

- Quality Visits - checks and relationship work

- Stability Meetings / care planning

- Monitoring number of moves / learning from stable placements

- Contract management

- Financial

## 8. Sufficiency Action Plan: (Sub sections)

Permanence - Adoption, SGO Long Term Fostering

Short Term Fostering

Edge of Care

Residential provision

16+ Provision (inc. SaLS & Supported Lodgings)

Specialist - Secure, Residential Schools

Commissioning - including LCR plans

Communication- to service users and service providers

## 9. Reporting and Annual Review:

Annual report on progress on delivery of Strategy to Corporate Parenting Board

Refresh of strategy

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## What is our Placement Sufficiency Vision?:

We believe in supporting all of our children and young people to have a safe place to live and thrive.

We recognise that most children and young people are best brought up within their own families, however where this is not possible, we look to find a family or a home that best meets their needs and offers access to the support and opportunities needed for success and happiness in later life.

*To meet this vision, we need to have the right home, in the right place, at the right time.*

## Our Objectives:

**The Right Home:** To secure high quality provision that meets the individual needs of our Children and Young People

**The Right Place:** To provide St Helens Children and Young People that we look after with the appropriate provision in St Helens or the local area. Where it is in the best interests of the Child or young person the right place may be outside of our local area

**The Right Time:** That provision and moves are planned, and that we reduce the need for emergency placements and placement changes

## What do Children and Young People We Look After tell us? REMEMBER:

**"WE ARE NOT A POLICY OR PROCEDURE"**

**"YOU ARE WORKING WITH PEOPLE'S LIVES"**

**"NOT JUST A NAME ON A PAGE"**



## Our ambitions:

- To support as many children and young people to be brought up in their own families where safe to do so and safely reduce overall net growth of children and young people coming into care
- Have a population of Children we Look After aligned to our statistical neighbours at a level of under 360
- To provide early help and support, general and targeted, to vulnerable and at risk families, children and young people, to reduce the need for them to enter the care system
- To maximise the opportunity for those children and young people coming into care to remain in St Helens
- To maximise placement stability for those children and young people we look after
- To support children and young people and the local workforce to make the right choice when identifying a suitable placement



## Our aims:

- Use of data and forecasting to inform strategic decision making
- To focus on permanence planning
- To review our internal processes and system working to ensure our Social Workers are better informed of options for their care planning
- To use the St Helens £ wisely to ensure high-quality, cost effectiveness and enable improved matching through building better relationships with our market providers
- To provide a range of high quality provision including developing our own in-house services
- To work with our Third Sector partners to develop local 16+ semi independent living / independent living
- To recruit more foster carers within St Helens

## Outcomes we wish to achieve:

### Children and Young People

- I am safe and I feel I belong
- I am happy
- I am doing well at school
- I am healthy and feeling positive about myself
- I am confident and resilient
- I have skills for my life but know where to get support if I need it

### Local Authority

- Children placed in a family setting in their own community
- An appropriate choice of high-quality local provision
- System financial balance

## Standards by which we will work:

- Working in partnership, locally within St Helens Cares and also across Liverpool City Region
- Co-production and engagement with our Children and Young People, and with our staff
- Ensure Advocacy for children and young people
- Accountability to our Children's Rights and Independent Visitors Service
- Ensuring high quality is paramount
- Work collaboratively with our regulators and inspectors (learning culture)
- Use data, information and robust analysis to inform our thinking and planning
- Adhere to Corporate / Council expectations relating to value for money, prevention and wellbeing

## 2. GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

**The following primary legislation governs our commissioning in relation to looked after children:**

- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Care Standards Act 2000
- Adoption and Children Act 2002 • Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Statutory Guidance on Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children 2010
- Guidance on the Provision of Accommodation for 16 & 17 year old young people who be homeless and/or require accommodation 2010
- Care Planning Review and Regulations 2010
- Promoting the Educational Achievements of Looked After Children: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities 2010
- The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012
- Children and Family Act 2014

**We will ensure adherence to our statutory duties through our governance framework**

- Ratification of Sufficiency Strategy through Cabinet stewardship
- Accountable to the Corporate Parenting Board with quarterly updates and annual report
- Information sharing and assurance to the Children's Improvement Board
- Adherence to Safeguarding Policies and Processes
- Financial accountability

# 3. PARTNERSHIP AND CO-PRODUCTION

We are working with children and young people to improve their lives and the services they receive - listening to and acting on what they tell us about their everyday experiences of being looked after and how they think our services should be run.

**We are doing this by:**

- Giving children and young people the opportunity to hold us to account for the promise we make to them
- Equipping our workforce with the skills to enable a conversation with our children, young people and their families about what matters to them
- Commissioning a children's rights service - to hold us to account as an organisation - includes Independent Advocacy and Visitor services enabling children to speak to people who can help amplify their voice regarding their care and support
- Working co-operatively with Regulators who hold us and our Partners to account for the quality of service provided and welcoming opportunities to learn
- Linking with wider system partners e.g. Early Help, Emotional, Health and Wellbeing, Education, Youth Justice, Housing and Additional Needs who enable support for our children, young people and their families in all aspects of their lives
- Working with Local Authorities across the Liverpool City Region and the North West to enable best use of resources across the region



## Voice of Children and Young People Framework:

The Children and Young people's Voice Framework sets out how we listen to, and act upon the voice of our children and young people in Social Care; how we work with them, support them to take the lead and acknowledge them and their needs as individuals.

In St Helens we take our responsibilities of delivering effective services seriously; working on systems, assessments, training, multi-agency working etc. However, as we strive to continually improve services, we must ensure that our children and young people are at the heart of what we do. It is their experience, their journey, their joy, their trauma, their voice, their life.

Each quarter officers report on components of the framework. This is then collated and analysed for themes to be shared with Senior Managers and Commissioners.

In addition to the Framework there are Voice of the Child Champions in each Social Care team. The role here in relation to the Sufficiency Strategy is to ensure that views heard by individuals or teams are shared across the Department to influence practice and commissioning.



## **OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TELL US THEIR THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, WISHES, NEEDS ETC.**

### **CHILD**

These views influence the care and support provided and are recorded on their case files, linked to their Plan and monitored for improvements in outcomes.

### **TEAM**

Voice of the Child Champions and their managers consider what has been heard from their children and young people at a team level to influence service delivery.

### **DEPARTMENT**

Voice of the Child Champions feed this learning into the Voice of the Child Champions Forum and contribute to the Voice of the Child Framework and Quarterly managers' report on voice of the child from their unique area of the Department into the Voice of the Child Framework e.g. complaints, fostering, advocacy etc.

### **MULTI-AGENCY**

The Children and Young Peoples Engagement and Experience Group (CYPEEG) share what has been heard across agencies.

### **STRATEGIC**

Learning from the CYPEEG and the Voice of the Child Framework is shared with the Children's Forum and Commissioners to ensure views shape practice and provision.

## 4. DEMOGRAPHICS

**We recognise that in order to achieve our ambitions we need to consider:**

- What local data is available to us and what is it telling us?
- We need to set ourselves aspirational targets
- We need to acknowledge that we 'don't have all the details' and that our journey will be incremental
- We need to view this strategy as an opportunity for continual review, development and improvement
- We need to acknowledge that the influences which will impact on our ability to model a future projection are varied and complex
- We need to acknowledge that local current and planned developments and system improvements will impact on the number of children coming into care, the availability of suitable placements and overall sufficiency planning.

**We need to work collaboratively in order to succeed.**



# OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE: DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY



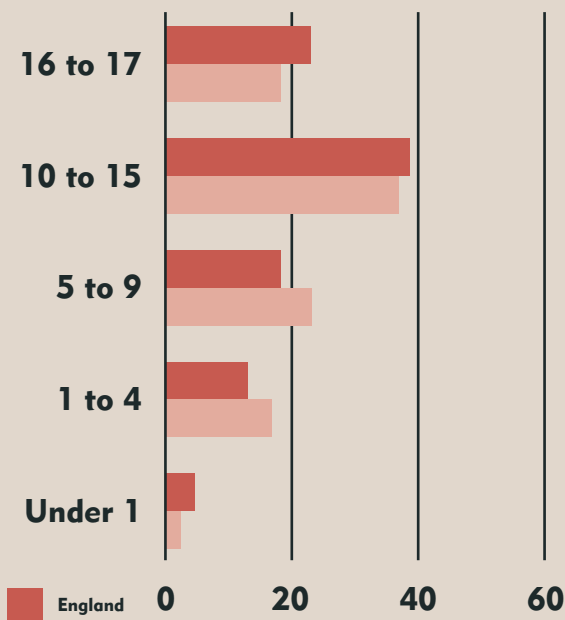
**496** children and young people are cared for by St Helens Council at 31st March 2020. The number of children cared for by St Helens Council has increased by **6%** in the past 12 months and **20%** in the past 5 years.



The number of children and young people cared for by St Helens Council continues to be **well above** comparable regional and national averages



## Age Profile for children cared for at 31st March 2020



St Helens Council cared for a total of **659 children and young people** throughout the 19/20 year



**55%** of children cared for by St Helens at 31st March 2020 are **male**



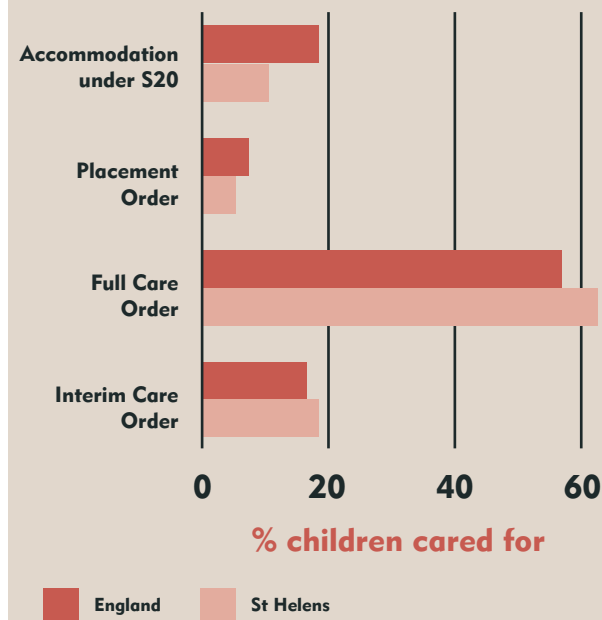
**95%** of children cared for by St Helens at 31st March 2020 are of **White British** Ethnicity



**8%** of children cared for by St Helens at 31st March 2020 are **Disabled**



## Legal Status for children cared for at 31st March 2020



## A Place to Live, Your Home

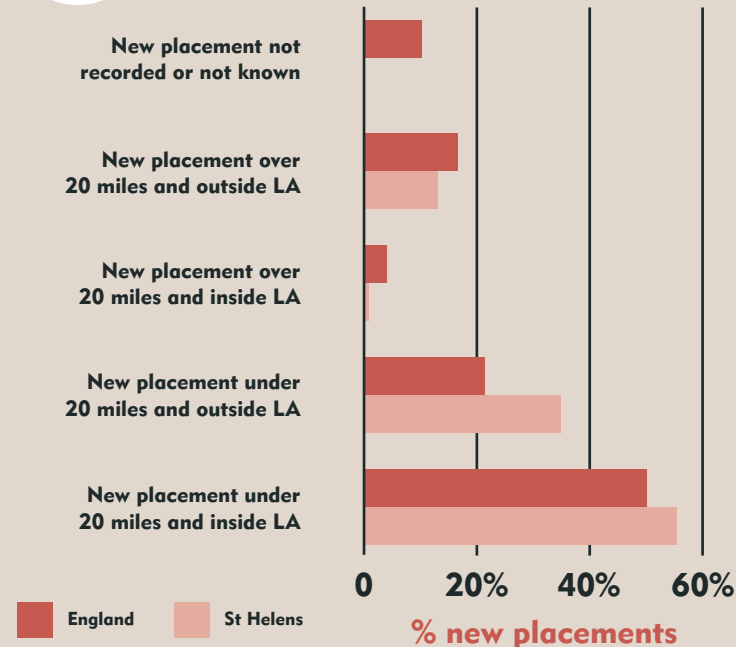
We aim for the majority of our children and young people to live within the local area or close to their home. However, we recognise that sometimes it may be in the best interest of the child or young person to live outside of the local area (for example, for their own safety or need for specialist support).



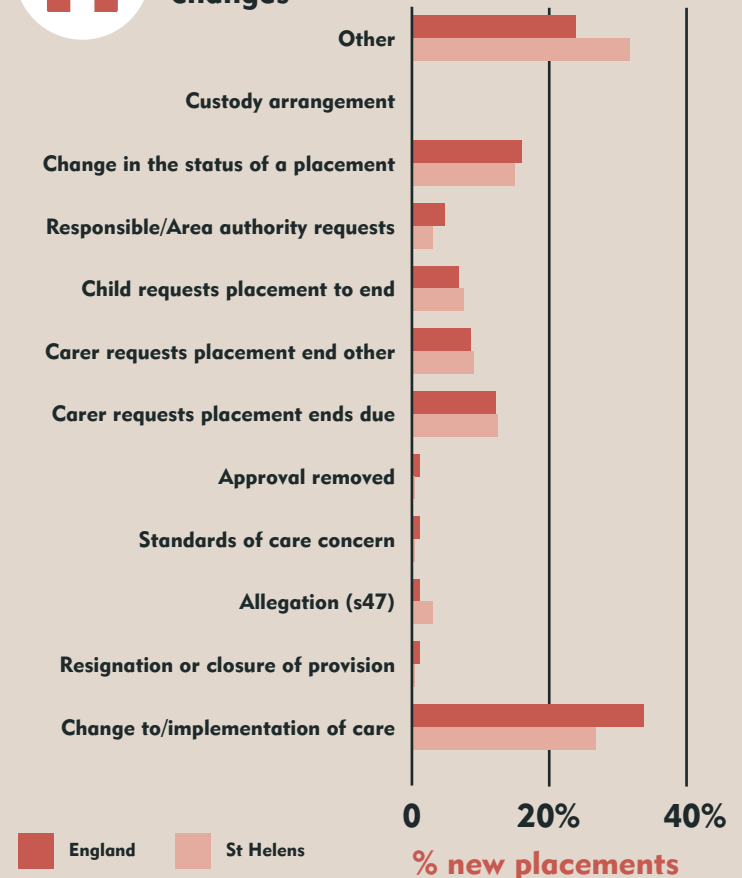
**407** new placements were made during the 2019/2020 financial year



**89%** of new CLA placements made during 2019/20 were in St Helens or within 20 miles of St Helens



**Reasons for placement changes**





## A Place to Live, Your Home

We aim for the majority of our children and young people to live within the local area or close to their home. However we recognise that sometimes it may be in the best interest of the child or young person to live outside of the local area (for example, for their own safety or need for specialist support).

**92%**

**Percentage of children looked after at 31st March 2020 placed in St Helens or within 20 miles of their home**

We want all of our children and young people to feel safe and secure at home. Our strategy focuses on finding homes that create stability. Stability remains positive in St Helens. The number of children experiencing 3 or more moves in 12 months, continues to remain below the national average of 10%.

**9%**

**Children looked after at 31st March 2020 with three or more placements during the year**

**74%**

**CLA in care at least 2.5 years at 31st March 2020 living in their current placement for at least 2 years**

**8%**

**CLA at 31 March placed outside St Helens boundary and more than 20 miles from where they used to live**

# A Place to Live, Your Home

Our vision is for all children in foster care to have stable lives, establish trusted relationships, to feel cared for and to benefit from high quality foster care for as long as they need it.

**73%**

Percentage of children and young people cared for by St Helens Borough Council at 31st March 2020 placed with **Foster Carers**

**24%**

Percentage of children and young people cared for by St Helens Council at 31st March 2020 in **Foster placements with relative(s) or friends(s)**

**29%**

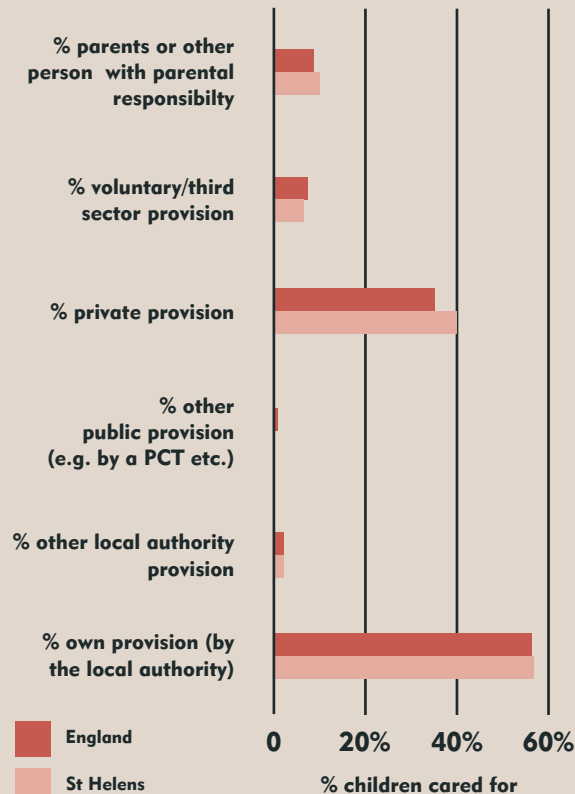
Percentage of children and young people cared for by St Helens Council at 31st March 2020 in **Foster placements confirmed as permanent (long term)**

**47%**

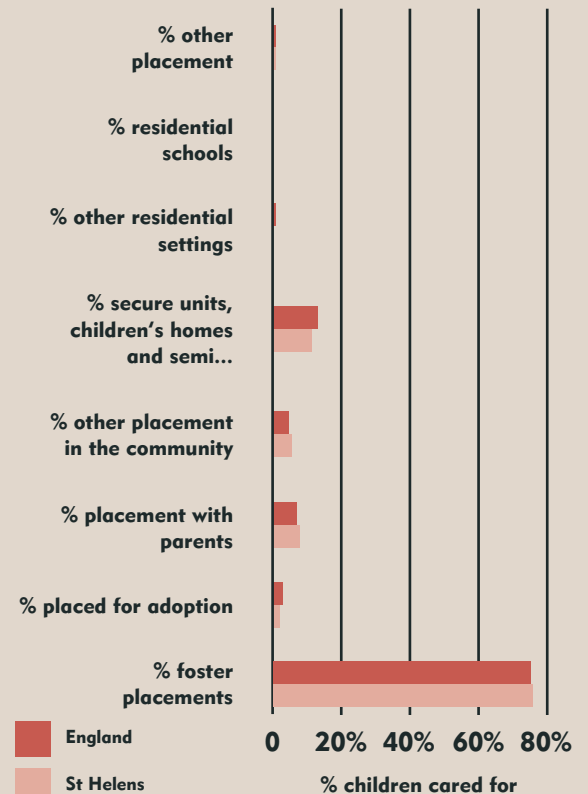
Percentage of children and young people cared for by St Helens Council at 31st March 2020 **placed in own provision (by the Local Authority)** - lower than national (49%) and Statistical neighbour averages (58%)



## Placement Providers for children cared for at 31st March



## Placement Type for children cared for at 31st March 2020

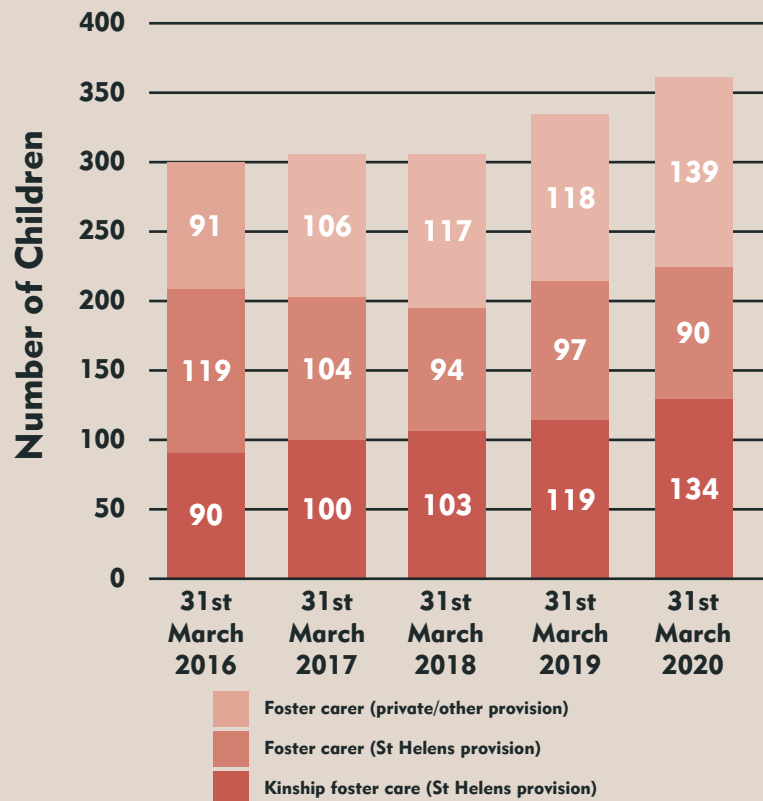


## A Place to Live, Your Home

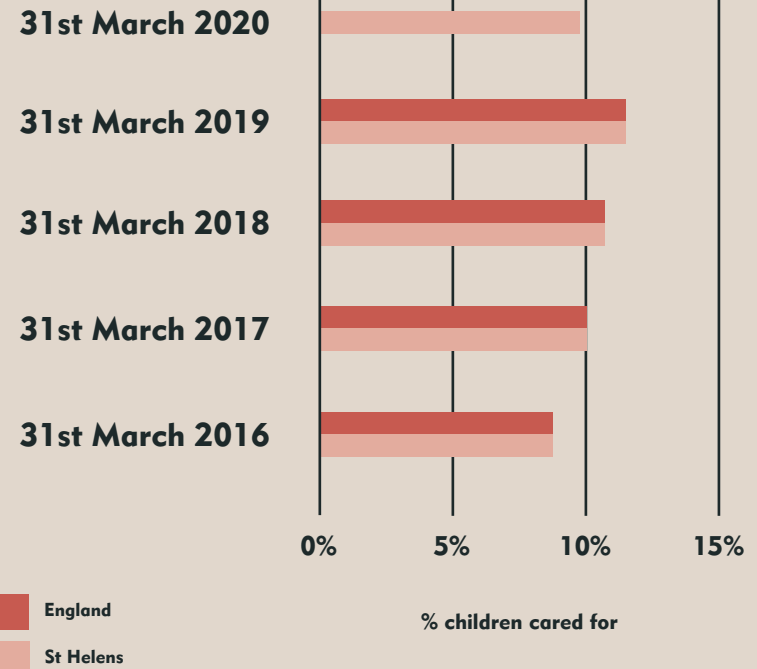
Most looked after children are accommodated in foster placements with **73%** children looked after at 31 March 2020 placed with a foster carer, a similar proportion to previous years

At 31st March 2020 **10%** of children looked after were placed in secure units, children homes and semi-independent living arrangements

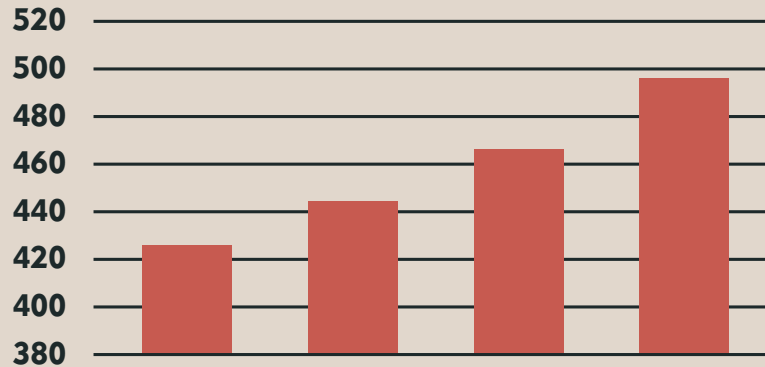
### Foster Care Provision



### Secure units, children's homes and semi-independent living accommodation



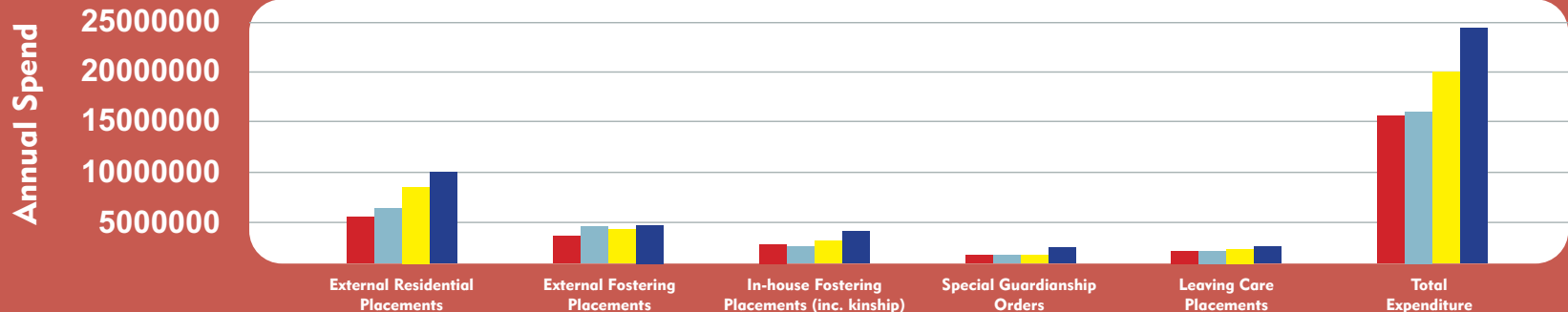
## A Place to Live, Your Home



Number of Children in care at 31st March each year

2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
427	442	466	496

## COMPARISON YEAR ON YEAR SPEND



Category		2016/17	5,997,974	4,140,922	2,909,780	1,435,398	1,694,365	16,178,439
		2017/18	6,608,066	4,882,218	2,725,530	1,439,651	1,684,323	17,339,788
		2018/19	9,202,545	4,730,377	3,129,190	1,492,842	1,795,824	20,350,778
		2019/20	10,426,649	5,552,197	4,208,305	2,037,655	2,131,914	24,356,720



# Children Starting to Become Looked After



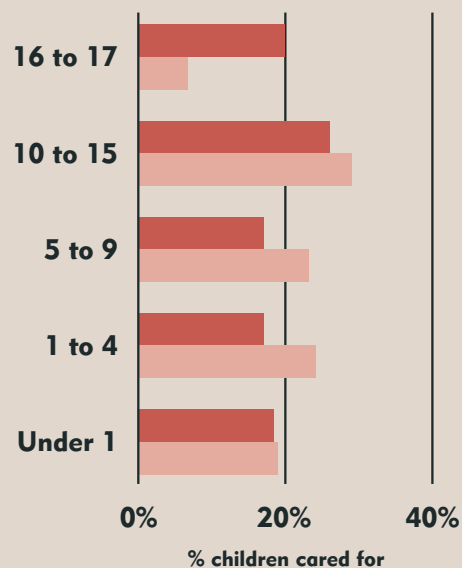
**187** children and young people started to be looked after by St Helens Council during the 2019/20 financial year. The number of children becoming cared for by St Helens in the 19/20 year is higher than recent, previous years



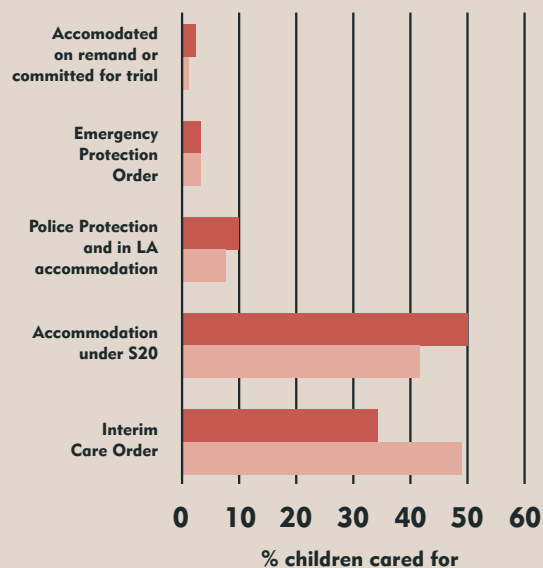
The number of children and young people becoming cared for by St Helens Council in 19/20 is **well above** comparable regional and national averages



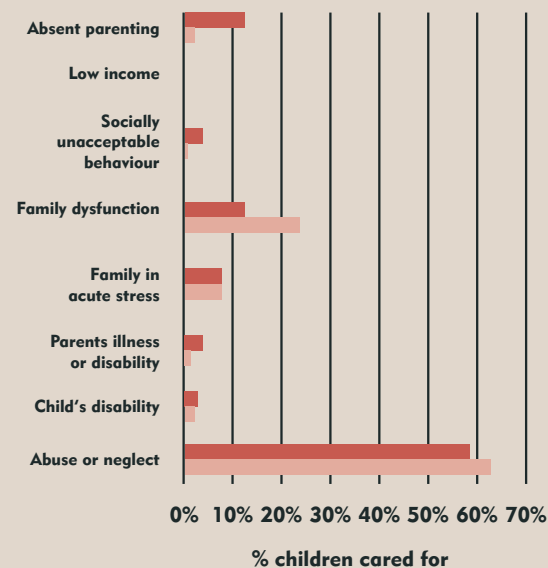
**Age Profile for children becoming cared for in 19/20 financial year**



**First Legal Status for children becoming CLA in the 19/20 year**



**Children starting a LAC episode by category of need**



# Children Starting to Become Looked After



**163** children ceased to be cared for by St Helens during the 19/20 year, a **58%** increase in the number of children ceasing to be cared for when compared to the previous year

**17%**

The percentage of children and young people that ceased to be cared during the 19/20 year who were adopted, an increase in the number or children adopted when compared to the previous year

**15%**

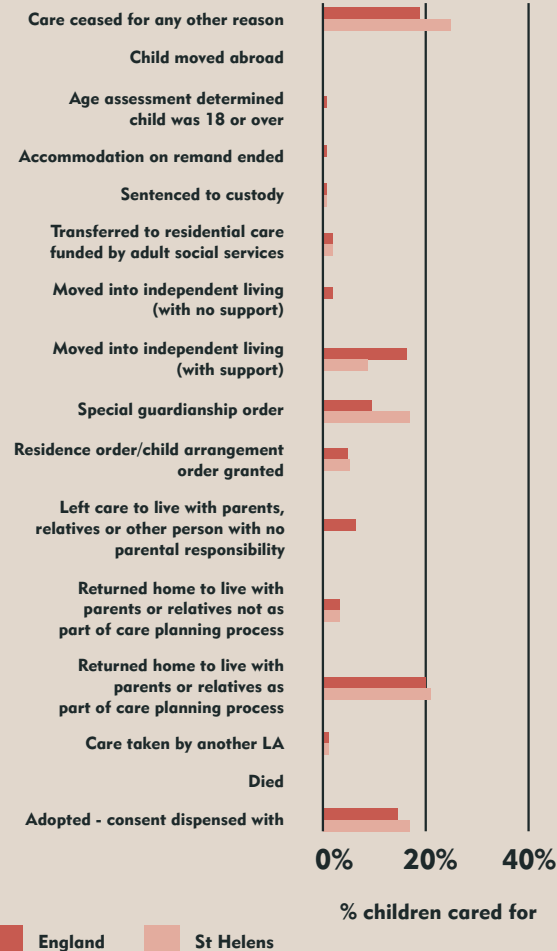
The percentage of children and young people that ceased to be cared for during the 19/20 year who were **discharged with a Special Guardianship Order**, an increase on the previous year.

**25%**

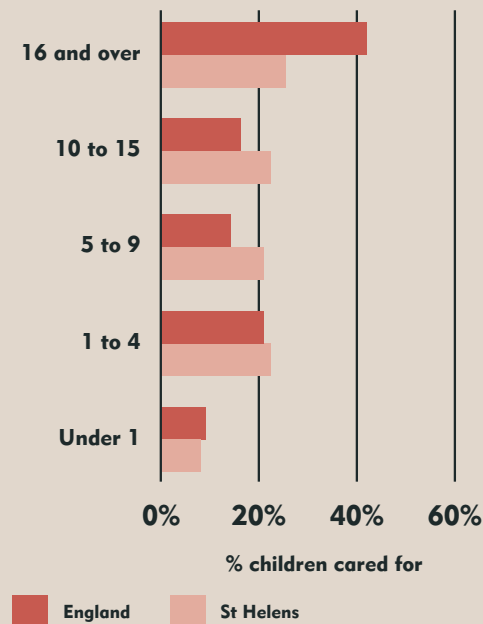
The percentage of children ceasing to be looked after that returned home to live with parents



## Reason for leaving care (2019/20 financial year)



## Age profile for children who ceased to be cared for in 19/20



**21%**

The percentage of children ceasing to be looked after that left care on their 18th birthday

## A Place to Live, Your Home

### RATES FOR THE CHILD POPULATION AND COMPARATOR DATA

Number and rate of children looked after

		31st March			31st March
		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
St Helens	Number	427	442	466	496
	Rate per 100,000	117	120.8	126.6	134.8
Stat neighbours	Rate per 100,000	85.2	89.3	93.1	TBC
England	Number	72,670	75,420	78,150	TBC
	Rate per 100,000	62	64	65	TBC

### NET INCREASES IN EACH OF THE LAST 4 YEARS SINCE 2016

Number of children becoming looked after alongside the number of children discharged from care

	Actual Numbers of children starting/discharged from care				
	2015/16 (Full Year)	2016/17 (Full Year)	2017/18 (Full Year)	2018/19 (Full Year)	2019/20 (Full Year)
Children becoming Looked After	155	139	114	127	193
Children ceasing to be Looked After	157	122	99	103	163
Net CLA population increase/decrease	-2	+17	+15	+24	+30

## 4. DEMOGRAPHICS

Current and Forecasted Placements	20	21	22	23	24
Adoption - awaiting Adoption Order	12				
Foster Care - Kinship (St Helens)	134				
Foster Care In House	90	Increase by 15 households	Increase by 15 households	Increase by 15 households	Increase by 15 households
Foster Care External	139	Decrease	Decrease	Decrease	Decrease
Residential In House	2	Increase by 4 places	Increase by 4 places	Increase by 4 places	Increase by 4 places
Residential External	31	Decrease	Decrease	Decrease	Decrease
Family Assessment	4				
16+ SAILS	22	Increase Supported Lodgings			



## Market Position Statement

**Our market position statement utilises the information contained within this placement sufficiency strategy alongside other relevant local Strategies and Action Plans so that existing and potential providers are aware of the demand and priorities within St Helens.**

As part of the placement sufficiency strategy and service improvement we understand that our relationship with providers is crucial to the ongoing shaping and development of high- quality services.

A major challenge for the Council and our providers is to deliver an increased quality of service, improving outcomes for children and young people within budget.

We wish to work with providers delivering locally to co-produce creative, collaborative solutions with us and will therefore seek to pro-actively engage with the provider market locally and will continue to build relationships with the clear purpose of shaping local solutions to meet local need.

The quality of a child or young person's placement is a significant factor in improving the outcomes and future prospects for a child or young person who is looked after. We want to partner with a range of outstanding, innovative and flexible providers of placements that are able and willing to be a vital member of the team around our most vulnerable children and young people with the aim of improving their outcomes.

In addition a focus will also be on placements and services that assist the Council to reduce the length of time children spend in our care or help us return children to family settings from residential care, if this in the child's interest

St Helens Council will also work collaboratively with regional partners to shape the market for services for children looked after and secure quality provision.

**Additional St Helens priorities for existing and potential providers to recognise are:**

- All children looked after will be, where appropriate, supported to maintain family contact
- All children looked after will be prepared for independence and a healthy adulthood
- All children looked after will be supported to access quality education services
- All children looked after will be supported to access quality health services
- All children looked after will receive services that are of high quality to secure the specific outcomes identified in their care plans.

## 5. CURRENT PROVISION:

### Foster Care - St Helens LA

Children living in stable, long-term foster care can have similar outcomes to adopted children and this is a positive permanency option for those children who still identify with, and wish to maintain links to, their birth families. It can also be a positive option for children with complex care needs or those who are harder to place for adoption, such as sibling groups or older children, providing them with long-term stability and ongoing care and support.

If long-term foster care is the plan for a child, it is important that work begins early to prepare the child for this, and to ensure that the 'match' between the child and the foster family is right, along with putting in place long-term support for the placement.

### Aims

- To provide a safe caring environment with Foster Carers who will enable children and young people to develop their full potential throughout their childhood and into independence
- To provide a Fostering Service that recognises the diverse nature of the community within St Helens in terms of gender, ethnicity, culture, social class, disability and sexual orientation
- To provide a Fostering Service which is conducted and managed by professionals with appropriate skills and experience
- To recruit, support and train a diverse range of Foster Carers across St Helens
- To provide supervision, support and training for Foster Carers

**Of the children identified as having a permanence plan of long term fostering, 93 (37.0%) have Permanence Plans which have been ratified and are living with their carers**

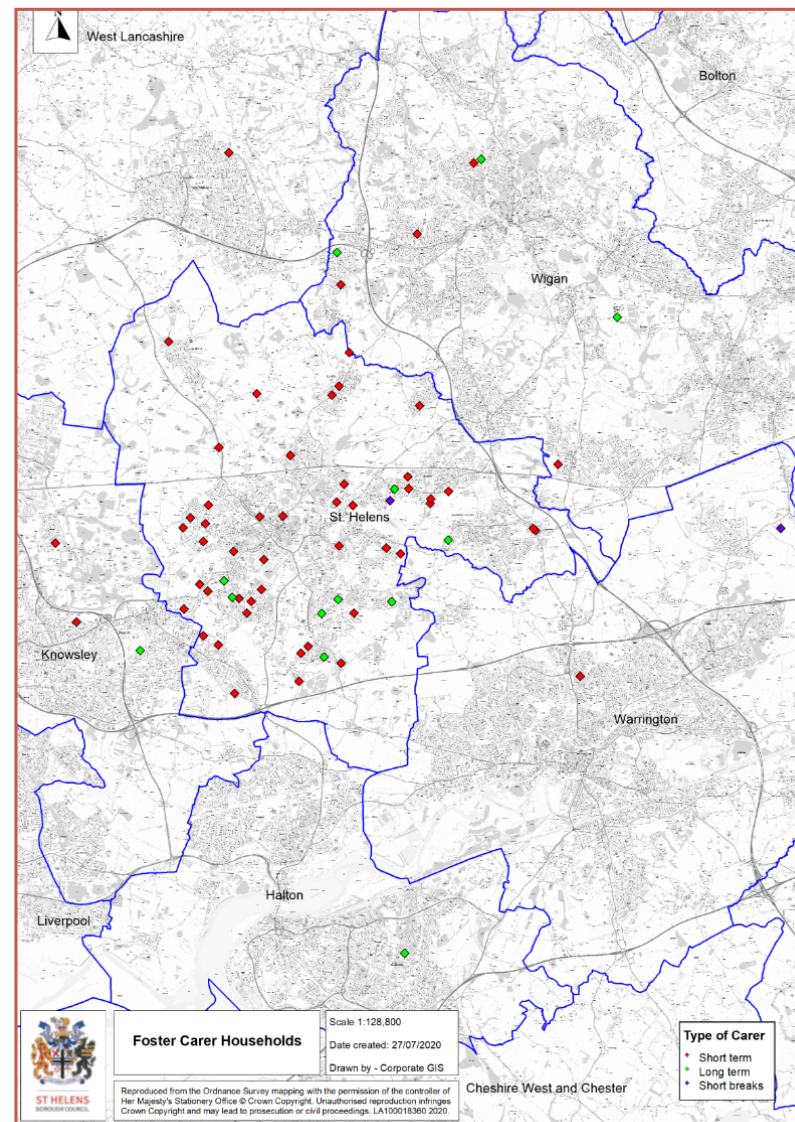
# 5. CURRENT PROVISION:

## Foster Care - St Helens LA: Key themes

Our own recruited carers are able to offer long term fostering, short term fostering, respite and short breaks care.

The majority of our foster carers have a preference for offering placements to younger children (under the age of five years) and to single children or small sibling groups. This is different to the profile of children coming into care which is generally older children with more complex needs and those in larger sibling groups.

Given the significant number of children in care within St. Helens and the competitive market in which fostering services operate, the aim now is to be more ambitious in terms of the recruitment of foster carers.



## Foster Care - Out of Borough

Household data from external fostering providers indicates that there are 3,384 available places in the North West. In total 2,964 external fostering placements were made by North West authorities leaving a theoretical surplus of external places available.

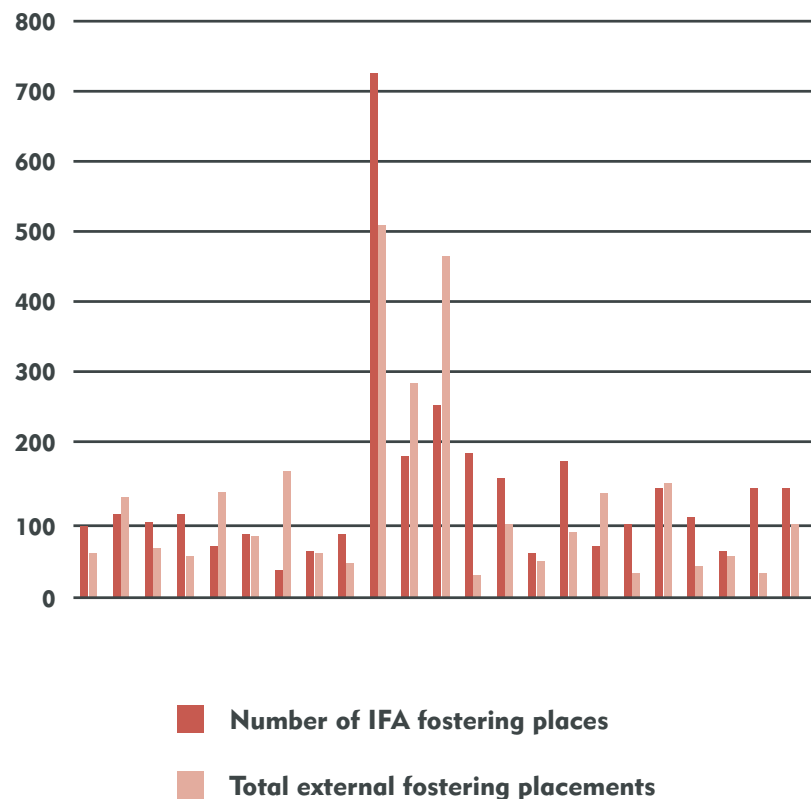
However, the availability of external fostering places varies from authority to authority, and in some areas there are more external placements made than places available.

13 local authorities do not have sufficient external foster care placements in their area. This has increased since June 2019 when 10 Local Authorities were not sufficient.

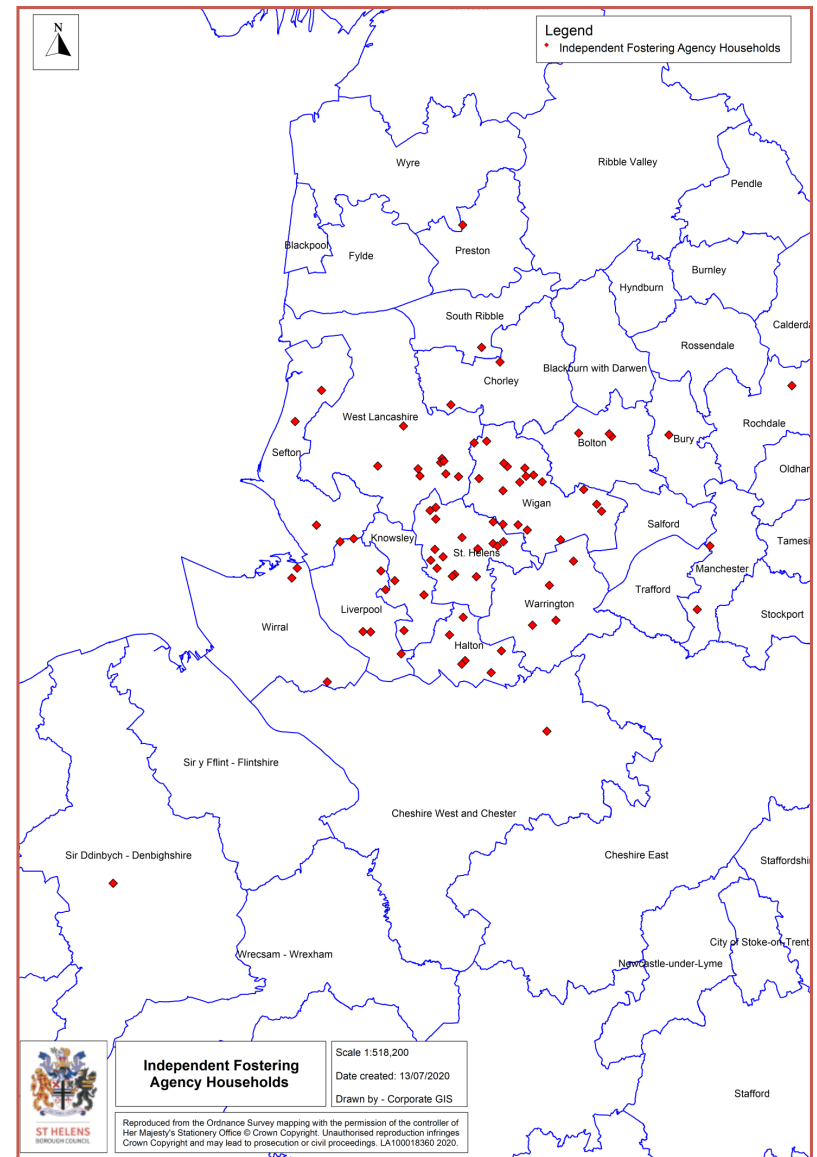
Unfortunately, St Helens is one of the 13 Local Authorities which makes more external placements than have Independent placements available in our Borough. We rely heavily on excess capacity in the primarily in Wigan and West Lancs. and other parts of the Liverpool City Region.

Source PNW Dec 19

## EXTERNAL PLACEMENTS AVAILABLE VS EXTERNAL PLACEMENTS MADE







## Residential Children's Homes - St Helens

There are 33 Registered Children's Homes in St Helens run by 13 Providers

2 homes are Local Authority run, 3 Voluntary Sector and the rest Private provision

There are 14 solo homes the remainder are a mix of 2,3, 4 and 5 bed homes

There is one 12 bed Secure Children's Home and one Short Breaks Respite Unit

Homes cater mainly for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties with a small number offering services for social and emotional mental health and/or learning disability.

As at June 2020 23 homes (69%) were good or outstanding with 2 homes rated inadequate

Our top 5 providers in terms of spend and occupancy over the last 2 years are:

- PIC Children's Services Ltd
- Building Bridges
- Inspire Children's services
- Nugent Care
- Pebbles Care

3 of these are privately owned, 1 is voluntary sector and 1 is private equity

## Residential Children's Homes - St Helens

- Cost of standard individual placements range from £2575 per week to £5175 (additional fees may be charged for extra staffing)
- Prices are generally lower in St Helens for standard placements than the North West average for placing in own LA of **£3382** (Dec 19)
- 2 Providers are able to offer school places as part of their service
- St Helens has sufficient general children's home capacity however availability when we need it can be an issue due to wider market demand
- Placement stability for children with lower level needs is generally good
- We have Providers who generalise rather than specialise in child exploitation and/or mental health
- Placements for children with disability are often at capacity and newly developed services have had teething problems
- We have a Secure Unit in our borough but we do not have any priority for allocation of beds

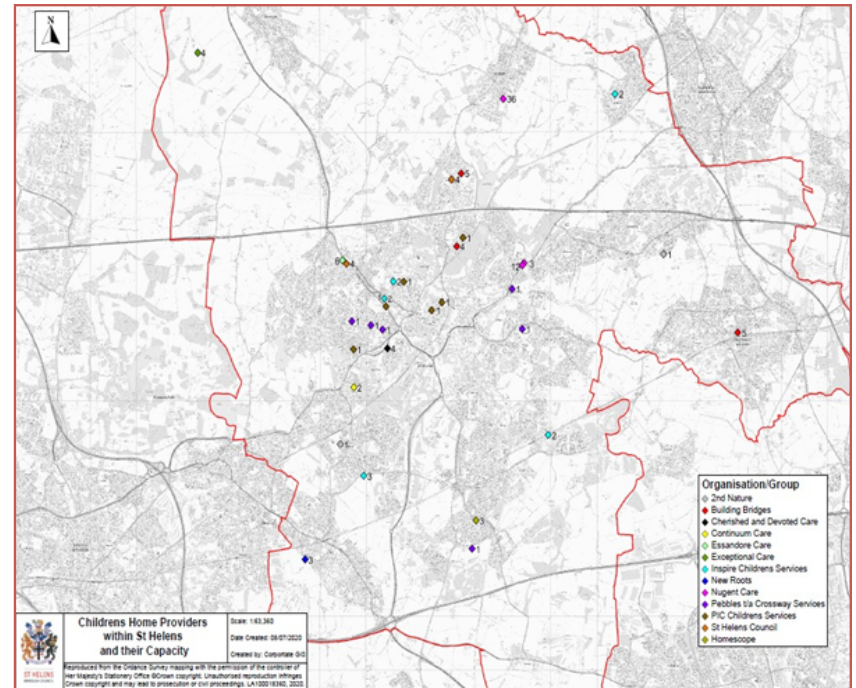
## Residential Children's Homes - St Helens

There are homes situated in all wards across the borough. The greatest concentration are solo homes in the Town Centre (8)

We are often approached by Providers stating they want to set up homes in St Helens due to the value of properties that can be purchased in the town. These approaches are often without any location risk assessment or prior discussion of whether capacity/specialism is needed.

In St Helens most Providers work with local authorities from St Helens and neighbouring boroughs with just a few actively seeking placements from elsewhere. It is estimated that on average up to 45 places within St Helens are utilised by LAs outside the North West. This includes the Secure Children's Home. (PNW Dec 19)

The Local Authority will be looking to increase our internal children's homes over the next 4 years with a phased increase of 1 initially but with additional homes to be added in line with the Sufficiency Strategy.



## Residential Children's Homes - Out of Borough

There are 2,516 residential places available in the North West (Ofsted Mar 2020). This is an increase of 7% from March 2019, significantly higher than the national increase of 1%.

North West LAs made 1,441 residential placements leaving a theoretical surplus of 43% of places, meaning North West authorities are using 6% more of the local market than in June 2019.

North West LAs require 52% of the local market to be sufficient; however they have reported a marked decrease in the number of offers and choice to referrals from the residential market particularly for teenagers with complex needs. (PNW Dec 19)

This is consistent with our experiences in St Helens.



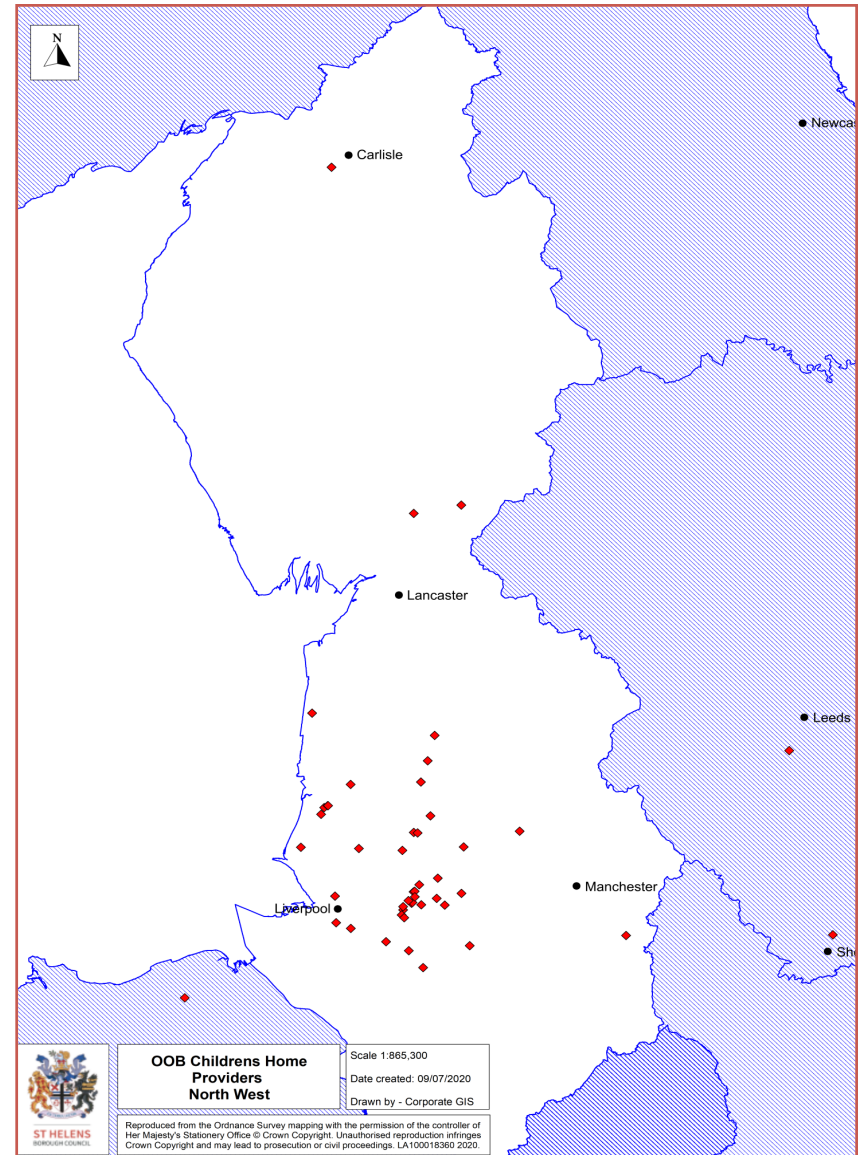
## Residential Children's Homes - Out of Borough

In 19/20 we made placements within 90 children's homes primarily within 20 miles of St Helens.

When placing outside St Helens the top 3 locations were Wigan, Lancashire and Cumbria.

23% of our placements were within Liverpool City Region which was a slight increase on the previous year.

Our future strategy is to increase the number of children placed within St Helens, reduce the number of children placed at distance outside of St Helens and to maximise resource within the Liverpool City Region to support local placements.



## Liverpool City Region Market Reform Programme

The LCR Market Reform Programme was launched in Apr 19. The aim is to achieve strategic reform throughout the children's social care placements sector across the Liverpool City Region. This will ensure there is a diverse range of organisations committed to closer working with LAs and which would be best equipped to deliver high quality services and outcomes to our children and young people, sustainable long-term pricing and a greater social value contribution to our local communities.

Key to this is re-establishing a level of control to the independent residential and foster care markets which have become increasingly dysfunctional due to decreasing competition and choice linked to growth by acquisition models of the largest Provider groups.

In recent years the residential children's home and independent foster market has not been sufficient to meet the needs of children brought into care in the Liverpool City Region.

**IMPROVE VALUE FOR MONEY ACROSS RESIDENTIAL CARE COMMISSIONING**

**REDUCE PROPORTION OF CHILDREN PLACED IN RESIDENTIAL CARE**

**INCREASE USAGE OF A BIGGER AND MORE DIVERSE LCR VOLUNTARY  
SECTOR PROVIDER MARKET**

**INCREASE PROPORTION OF CHILDREN PLACED WITHIN 20 MILES**



# Liverpool City Region Market Reform Programme

**LCR**

## LCR RESIDENTIAL MARKET REFORM PROGRAMME

### NEW RESIDENTIAL COMMISSIONING APPROACH

PLACEMENT  
FINDING

LEAN  
REVIEW

SHARED  
REFERRAL  
MECHANISM

NEW  
COMMISSIONING  
INTERFACE

LCR MARKET  
CHANGE  
PROMPTS

LCR PARTNER  
PROVIDER  
SCHEME

DEVELOP RES  
ALTERNATIVES

IN-HOUSE  
RES

CIC  
INCUBATION

LCR PARTNER  
PROVIDER  
SUPPORT

### GROW AND ENHANCE LCR FOSTER CARE MARKET

ENHANCED  
IN-HOUSE  
FOSTER CARE

RECRUITMENT

RETENTION

IMPROVE USAGE  
OF LCR  
IFA MARKET

CREATE  
GROWTH  
ENVIRONMENT

STABILITY  
REWARD

SUFFICIENCY  
PARTNERSHIP

## 16+ Supported and Independent Living Services (SaiLS)

Our key priority is to provide affordable, sustainable housing for Care Leavers.

The majority of our children leaving care remain in St Helens. Where children are placed outside St Helens this can be to remain near family members, former foster carers or through their choice due to a preference for city living.

We have a range of options of accommodation and support in Group living settings and Supported Lodgings. We have a North West Regional Framework contract where bespoke packages of accommodation and support can be procured.

Our strategy is to support our children into independence at 18 and beyond by promoting Staying Put, increasing access to Supported Lodgings Placements and working with our Registered Housing providers to deliver sustainable housing options.

# Residential Family Assessment

## There are:

- 47 registered Family Assessment Centres in England
- 11 in the North West (5 in the pipeline) run by 11 Providers
- 8 in Liverpool City Region
- 1 in St Helens (2 beds)
- 83% of North West provision is Ofsted Good. None are Outstanding. 1 provider SHAP in St Helens is Inadequate.

St Helens use has increased slightly from 12 placements in 18/19 to 16 placements in 19/20

Most placements have been made in Liverpool City Region (10)

There have been a couple of placements at distance in Yorkshire and the Midlands due to availability or specialism

Spend in the last 2 years has been circa £1.1M

Prices range for £2750 to £3750 per week for 1 parent, 1 child and intermittent CCTV/Monitoring (Full monitoring can cost extra)

Use of Family Assessment Centres can be determined by court direction or as part of the LA plan. In the last 2 years the majority of placements in Family Assessment Centres have been part of the Local Authority plan

There are some specialist Providers of family services which are not regulated by Ofsted but by CQC as they offer rehabilitation for drug and alcohol issues. There are no services of this type in the North West.

The Local Authority are looking to further develop community based assessment so families can be assessed and supported within their own community.

## To achieve quality current provision we need to:

- maintain a clear focus on Permanence and embed Permanence Planning throughout our approach
- ensure quality of care planning
- be able to offer quality family placements within St Helens
- be able to offer quality, permanent placements for those children and young people who have complex social, emotional and behavioural issues and provide them with the appropriate additional support
- be able to support transition from residential to family placement
- be able to safely protect those young people with a pattern of missing and / or at risk of exploitation and harm
- be able to offer quality, permanent placements for larger sibling groups
- increase momentum for achieving long term fostering for children by continuing with dedicated matching panels
- work collaboratively across internal departments and external agencies

**Keep our focus on the needs of the child/young person**

## 6. BENEFIT ANALYSIS AND DEPENDENCIES - FUTURE MODELLING:

### Edge of Care

The partnership between St Helens Council and Innovate CYPS to deliver an Edge of Care Project commenced on 15 June 2020. The partnership duration is 12 months.

The project is aimed at 1 cohort of 40 children, aged 7 to 16, who have been identified by St Helens Children's Services as being at risk of entering the care system if intensive intervention is not undertaken in a timely manner. The aim of the project is to divert a minimum of 80% of this cohort from entering into care.

**The partnership consists of two phases:**

#### PHASE 1

Intensive Targeted Intervention (6-month period), and;

#### PHASE 2

Sustainable Change (6-month period).

Innovate will share themes, patterns and trends which will inform the Sufficiency Strategy going forward.

## Foster Care

Given the significant number of children in care within St Helens and the competitive market in which fostering services operate, the aim now is to be more ambitious in terms of the recruitment of foster carers. The foster carers recruited should be able to meet the needs of the children coming into care.

### **Aims of our local improvement plans include:**

To increase the number of in-house foster carers and therefore reduce the number of children placed within Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA) in order to reduce the cost to the authority of the provision of care for children in our care:

- To increase the number of long-term foster carers for older children
- To specifically increase the number of foster carers for children aged 10 and above and sibling groups
- To retain the existing base of foster carers
- To increase the number of foster carers for short breaks
- To develop 'specialist' foster carers for those children and young people with additional complex needs
- The target is to increase the number of foster carers by 15 each year and to retain levels of current provision.

## What we will do

In the first 6 months we need to undertake an audit of the children and young people currently in care, benchmark the current provision and bring all data and information into one collective dashboard.

This will then enable us to more accurately predict changing demand and availability of provision which are both influenced by the identified inter-dependencies within this strategy.

This should include robust data reporting in the service delivery projects that will both reduce the number of children coming into care and provide additional local sufficiency- short term and long term and will include:

- Early Help
- Edge of Care
- Foster Carer Strategy
- In-house and LCR residential options

Our aim is to develop a future model with aspirational measurable targets to achieve which drives and informs our Placement Sufficiency Strategy and keeps the strategy relevant, timely and adaptable.



# 7. QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING

## For quality assurance we will:

Listen to and learn from the experiences of:

- Children and Young People
- Staff
- Providers

Utilise a Signs of Safety approach to capture for 'reflection on placement':

- What worked well
- What didn't work so well
- What could be better

Develop and implement scaling questions and link to outcomes we want to achieve for Children and Young People from placements as part of their care plan.

## Performance monitoring:

We will:

- Report quarterly to the Corporate Parenting Board
- Include performance information that includes demand, capacity /availability and usage
- Include the use of a Sufficiency Dashboard that will centralise all information from relevant interdependencies
- Report on the delivery of Action Plans contained within this Strategy
- Provide an annual report summary that includes a reviewed and refreshed Placement Sufficiency Strategy.

## Learning from others:

We will:

- Benchmark against statistical neighbours
- Learn from peers - what is working well and what is not working as well