



**Directorate of Children's Services**

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# **Isle of Wight Sufficiency Duty 2020 - 2023**

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## Document Information

<b>Title</b>	Isle of Wight Sufficiency Duty 2020 -2023
<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Current version</b>	V0.3
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<b>Consultation</b>	Consultation:
<b>Approved by</b>	
<b>Approval Date</b>	
<b>Review Frequency</b>	Bi-annually
<b>Next Review</b>	July 2022
<b>Reviewed</b>	July 2020

Version History		
Version	Date	Description
0.1	14/07/2020	Initial draft
0.2	07/08/2020	Revision
0.3	13/08/2020	Revision
0.4	12/08/2020	CFMT for sign off
0.5		Redraft next report

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# 1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this sufficiency report 2020 to 2023 is three-fold. The first is to systematically review the current situation in relation to securing accommodation which meets the needs of looked after children and care leavers. The second purpose is to develop and enhance the strategic commissioning so that all relevant services, including universal services, make a full contribution to meeting the needs of looked after children and children in need, who are at risk of care or custody. The third purpose is to set priorities for action for 2020 to 2023.
- 1.2 The previous sufficiency duty report and action plan 2017 to 2020 accurately forecast the rise in numbers of children in care and care leavers. The actions identified were completed and the additional sufficiency was commissioned in time to meet this rise in demand. The 2017/2020 sufficiency duty delivered the following priorities:
  - 1.2.1 Develop further opportunities to commission an integrated early help offer that includes health visiting and school nursing.
  - 1.2.2 Develop the 'Team Around the Worker' approach which will create the right conditions and capacity for professionals to work effectively with children and families in order to get it right first time for the children.
  - 1.2.3 The Council will implement the new marketing and recruitment strategy for fostering and adoption to increase the number of in-house foster carers to provide wider choice, better matching and deliver better stability and outcomes for children for all placements.
  - 1.2.4 To increase the number of in-house foster carers to increase capacity to provide staying put arrangements.
  - 1.2.5 Continue to put plans in place to establish the Regional Adoption Agency with Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton Local Authorities and three Voluntary Adoption Agencies,

- 1.2.6 Continue to develop a learning pathway for adopters and Adoption Support Services including the learning pathway for adopters.
- 1.2.7 Continue to improve timescales for adopter assessment.
- 1.2.8 Deliver the new 16+ contract for supported accommodation.
- 1.2.9 To explore ways to mitigate risks to outcomes for situations where young people need to move on due to carer circumstances.
- 1.3 The plan was implemented through the partnering arrangement that continued to exist between Hampshire County Council and the Isle of Wight Council children's services. Hampshire County Council retained the strategic lead with regard to fostering, adoption and placements which has led to a number of improvements in meeting the sufficiency duty. Due to the sustained improvements in Children's Services the strategic responsibility for fostering and adoption moved across to the Service Manager for Children in care, and the Isle of Wight became part of the regional adoption agency Adopt South.
- 1.4 Part of the local authority's early help offer, Family Centres, continued to be commissioned to Barnardo's and an integrated locality-based provision established. The provision of 'edge of care' developed significantly during the 2017 – 2020 period. In 2017, a Resilience Around Families Team (RAFT) was created with a greater emphasis on mediation, prevention and intensive support regarding edge of care cases. This, more recently, has included child mental health workers and volunteers recruited through the Transformation Programme. This is key in enabling more children to remain safely at home. In addition, a reunification programme was launched within Children's Services to support more successful and sustainable reunification between children in care and their families where considered appropriate.

- 1.5 Despite the focused work in this area, and in line with national data, the demands for all types of placement have continued to grow and as the needs assessment and projections in Appendix A indicate, demand is likely to continue to increase. This is within a context nationally and locally of reductions in funding, rising costs of placements and pressures on all existing types of placement. In addition, the recent covid pandemic and lockdown has only increased pressures further. The profile of children needing placements includes more older children with more complex needs. Not all current placements are funded or necessarily skilled to meet these more complex needs. Based on the national and local percentage rises in children coming into care, over the next three years, there needs to be an additional five higher needs supported accommodation and 10 more in-house supported lodgings carers, 15 more foster carers and 9 more adopters. The local market needs to be supported to increase residential provision by a further four. This could be through expansion of an existing provider, or via the regional residential framework with an off-island provider encouraged to open a local provision
- 1.6 The Isle of Wight sufficiency duty strategy for 2020 to 2023 will shape the placement market to prepare and respond to the likely impact of covid on children and their families and rising demands on children's social care and other services long term.
- 1.7 The Modernising Placements Programme (MPP) is a Hampshire Children & Families led transformational programme which commenced in October 2019. It builds on the foundations achieved by Transforming Social Care (TSC) and both programmes are working together to ensure high quality services for children and families across the social care pathway.
- 1.8 The focus of the Modernising Placements Programme is those children who are in our care. As the success of TSC ensures we have the right children in our care, the needs of those children are becoming more complex and it is imperative that we have carers and staff who are resilient and can effectively support and parent children.

- 1.9 The landscape of placement provision nationally is complicated, and this is replicated in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, with a decreasing number of fostering households meaning more use of independent fostering agencies. The same is also seen within the residential children's homes market, where local capacity has been a challenge and optimising occupancy has been difficult with the increasing needs of children. Again, this has led to an increase in commissioning non-county placements which often are outside of the local authority boundary. The primary concern arising from these challenges is the effect on children of placement instability through differing interventions and distance from home, school, friends and local community.
- 1.10 The vision of this programme is to develop a continuum of care that works across Children's Services and is able to provide the right accommodation and support at the right time, placing all care types on an equal footing and bringing a respect and value to those caring for children every day. Approaches to care need to be more fluid, offering different pathways to children at various points in their childhood that pull on the different skills and experiences of carers and staff in all settings who share a common understanding and language around trauma.
- 1.11 The approach of MPP is multi-pronged. It aims to improve service capacity to provide in-house fostering and residential placements and decrease use of IFAs and out of authority residential placements by increasing our staff and foster carers' capability to care for children with more complex and challenging behaviours, and by creating a culture of equivalency across all our placement types, and across our Children's Services pathway.
- 1.12 A number of approaches are being developed to achieve this which include an urgent and extended care model for those children with the highest needs; a psychological service that will provide consultation and support to all social care staff and foster carers working with our children in care; a foster carer network approach that provides a family support network for foster carers and their children; and a trauma informed parenting approach across Children's Services.

1.13 This is to meet the needs of these children, achieve improved outcomes and integrate approaches to develop pathways to independent adulthood for children in care and care leavers.

## **2 Background to the Sufficiency Duty**

- 2.1 The duty to provide or procure placements for children looked after (Children in Care) is explicit in the Children Act 1989. This has since been strengthened by the introduction of Sufficiency Statutory Guidance (2010) and the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations (implementation April 2011).
- 2.2 There is a duty of 'sufficiency' that requires Local Authorities and Children's Trust partners to ensure that, through direct provision or commissioned services, a range of placements sufficient to meet the needs of all children in care are available locally or that there is a plan in place to move towards that position. The regulations require a strategy that describes how Local Authorities intend to provide sufficient care placements for its children in care.
- 2.3 The guidance also requires that the commissioning standards on securing sufficient accommodation for looked after children, also apply to children in need who are at risk of care or custody (referred to as children on the edge of care). This is important since it is preferable, where it is in the best interest of the child, to provide support to avoid the need for them to become children in care.

- 2.4 Like all authorities, the Isle of Wight Council has experienced reductions in spending since 2010 and is in the process of responding to increased demand. This is being achieved against a backdrop of increasing demand on children's social care caused, we believe, largely by better identification of the most vulnerable children. This ten years of austerity, local socio-economic deprivation and inequality, and child poverty all impact on local families. We have pride in the quality of what we do, concern to manage risk and a deeply held commitment towards the welfare of the most vulnerable children. The council, through the voluntary strategic partnering arrangement with Hampshire County Council, has managed to afford a high level of priority to children's social services.
- 2.5 This strategy sets out the overall approach to managing demand and focusing on the right solutions and choices to provide children with the best possible outcome. Part of this provision requires planning and delivering sufficient and high-quality accommodation as a corporate integrated approach with Housing, Adult Social Care and Regeneration.

### 3 Introduction

- 3.1 The vision of the Isle of Wight Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) is to support and develop resilient families. The Council's ambition is to achieve an Ofsted rated outstanding children's services. The ambition is to continue to strive to ensure the right help is provided at the right point in time to children and families so that the best outcomes can be achieved and sustained.
- 3.2 The Council places the utmost importance on its responsibilities as a corporate parent. There is a highly effective Corporate Parenting Board with a clear action plan that has already achieved significant steps forward for children such as waiving council tax for care leavers up to 25 years. The Children in Care Pledge, Care Leavers Pledge and Local Offer are produced and reviewed by Hearing Young People's Experience (HYPE), our children in care council. HYPE have also played a lead role in influencing and shaping the Pathways to Independent Adulthood integrated commissioning of supported accommodation providers, adding additional capacity in the local market.
- 3.3 Our pledges clearly set out the expectations of children and young people and are drawn from our Brightspot surveys with children in care and care leavers. Have Your Say weeks and activities provide opportunities for other children open to children's social care to get involved in how services are planned and delivered. The voice of children will continue to influence service delivery and commissioning. The council is committed to meeting the sufficiency duty requirements, ensuring that it has the appropriate range of support resource options available to enable the needs of children in care and on the edge of care to be met in the most effective way and to achieve the best outcomes.

## 4 The Isle of Wight Context

4.1 For a more detailed analysis of the contextual data in this section please refer to Appendix A: Needs assessment and projections.

4.2 As of 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020, there were 1,244 children in need of social care support from the Isle of Wight Council. Among this number, two groups of children require particularly intensive support:

- The number of children subject to child protection plans was 121 children at the end of January 2020, having been assessed by the Local Authority and other multi-agency partners as being at risk of significant harm. The numbers have incrementally decreased over the last five years bringing the Isle of Wight broadly in line with England national average.
- The number of children looked after by the Local Authority was 261 children at the end of January 2020 either voluntarily (with the agreement of their parents), or by orders of the court. The numbers have incrementally increased over the last five years so that the Isle of Wight is an outlier compared with England national average.

- 4.3 For the period between Feb'18 & Jan '19, the total number of contacts to our Children's Reception Team/Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (CRT/MASH) was 20,015. This fell by 10.7% to 17,877 for the same period 2019/20. The number of children in need referrals rose 19.8% in the same period from 2,477 to 2,967. There was a 30.8% decrease in the number of child protection plans from 175 end of Jan'19 to 121 as of the end of Jan'20. Although the current number represents a 174% increase since 2009/2010.
- 4.4 The numbers of children looked after has increased from 237 in Jan'19 to 261 in Jan'20, a rise of 10.1%. The number of care leavers has gone from 170 in Jan'19 to 164 as at Jan'20, a decrease 3.5%.
- 4.5 Numbers of children looked after are currently predicted to increase year on year by between 3-4%. (Jan'18 to Jan'19 increase 1.3%, Jan'19 to Jan'20 increase 10.6%) (Appendix B). Children subject to Child Protection Plans are likely to remain stable based on current trends.
- 4.6 Re-referral rates remain stable (34.3% in the last 12 months from February 2019) compared to 34.5% of children who had more than one referral for the same period to the end of January 2020. This is primarily because of the complexity of families requiring support where children are on the edge of care. Poor parental mental health, substance misuse and domestic abuse are a factor in 80% of the families with whom the Children's Services Department work with.
- 4.7 As of July 2020, there were eight children placed in IFA foster placement out of our authority. Seven children placed on Island but with another local authority carer. Three children placed off Island with another local authority carer and 13 children in out of authority residential placements, three in supported accommodation and five unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. The out of authority placements are reviewed monthly by senior managers to ensure that the providers are supporting children to make progress, achieve outcomes and to have management oversight of the quality of care and the future plans for each child.

4.8 The Isle of Wight has children placed in the following local authorities in the South East.

LA of Care Address	Total
Brighton and Hove	2
Cambridgeshire	3
East Sussex	1
Hampshire	7
Medway	5
Milton Keynes	1
Southampton	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>21</b>

4.9 The Isle of Wight has the following number of children placed locally by other local authorities.

LA RESPONSIBLE	Total
Birmingham City Council	1
Bournemouth Borough Council	1
Brighton And Hove Council	2
Devon County Council	1
Dorset County Council	1
East Sussex County Council	1
Hampshire County Council	14
Hertfordshire County Council	2
Islington Borough Council	1
Kensington And Chelsea Council	1
Leeds City Council	1
London Borough Of Lambeth	2
London Borough Of Sutton	2
Newport City Council	1
Portsmouth City Council	40
Portsmouth Social Services	4
Southampton City Council	6
Surrey County Council	2
Thurrock Council	1
Warwickshire County Council	1
Wigan Borough Council	1
Wirral Borough Council	2
West Sussex County Council	1
Solihull Borough Council	1
Ealing Council	1
Wokingham Borough Council	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>92</b>

4.10 The Isle of Wight has the following children placed out of authority.

LA of Care Address	Total
Brent	1
Brighton and Hove	2
Cambridgeshire	3
Croydon	1
Dorset	2
Ealing	1
East Sussex	1
Hampshire	7
Kent	5
Medway	5
Milton Keynes	1
Northumberland	1
Sandwell	2
Somerset	1
Southampton	2
Southwark	1
Wiltshire	3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>39</b>

4.11 For comparisons with other local authorities in the South East please go to Appendix D.

4.12 Hampshire and Isle of Wight Children's Services use a 'threshold' table to define levels of need among children and families as below:

- Level 1 All families and children where there are no specific needs.
- Level 2 Families where there is a need for support, but this can be met within a specific setting e.g. pre-school or school, and by one single service or agency, i.e. a speech and language therapist providing advice and help.
- Level 3 A family or child with many needs requiring more than one service or agency to be involved.
- Level 4 (statutory care) A family or child with a high level of unmet and complex needs, and in need of children's social care intervention.

- 4.13 Widespread research evidence of the long-term effects of parental mental health, substance misuse and domestic abuse on children and the learning from serious case reviews has resulted in more children coming into care who may previously not have done so.
- 4.14 Locally, at the end of quarter four 2019/2020, the number of First Time Entrants into Youth Justice System was 61, the highest it has ever been, against a target of 35. Percentage of Offenders from a 43-month cohorts who go on to reoffend in the 12 months following their court outcome (or release from the custodial part of their sentence) was 45.5%, against a target of less than 45%. There were no custodial sentences given at the time of offence. The percentage of disposals with the young person in suitable accommodation at the end of the relevant disposal was 95.9% above a target of 95%.
- 4.15 Nationally, it is recognised that the outcomes for teenagers is poor and often they gravitate back to their communities and families at the end of the care episodes. Adolescent entrants to the system tend to experience a larger number of placements, a more disrupted experience of care, poorer outcomes in education and are at increased risk of struggling when they leave care.
- 4.16 Many adolescents in care will still have a relationship with their family, however difficult, and children are often focused on returning to their family and more likely to reject placements. In the last two quarters of 2019/2020, 37 children went missing 289 times of which 263 episodes were 25 children in care.

## **5 What children and young people say**

5.1 The 2018 Isle of Wight Your Life, Your Care survey of looked after children aged 4 to 18 years made the following recommendations based on the survey findings:

- Overall, 85% of children and young people reported that they 'all or most of the time' felt safe in their placements compared to 75% nationally in the

general child population. This was identified as a Bright Spot for the Isle of Wight.

- For children, the important things about where they lived was if there was a pet in their home and that they had access to the internet.
- Liking your bedroom was an important feature for the focus groups. Young people reflected that their bedrooms were a place for being on your own in busy homes. It is linked to safety, sense of identity and feeling a sense of belonging. 100% of 4 to 7-year olds liked their bedroom, 91% of 8 to 11 years and 96% of 11 to 18-year olds like their bedroom.
- Just over half of young people (59%) felt settled 'all or most of the time' and 41% sometimes. A significantly lower proportion of young people felt settled in their placements compared to other LAs, where 78% felt settled 'all or most of the time'.

5.2 Corum voice have continued their relationship with the Isle of Wight as Bright Spots Champions in 2019. As well as the Isle of Wight piloting the survey for Care Leavers, Corum also supported the Have Your Say Week where they hosted a focus group on the survey findings. Corum reflected that it allowed them to gain a deeper understanding behind the findings of the survey and so better supply the IOW Leaving Care Service with information to support service improvements.

- 49% of IOW Care Leavers rated their accommodation as unsuitable (compared to 29% in national care leaver statistics). A new Homelessness PA was appointed in August 2019 specifically to work with Housing to address this. In the 2018 inspection, Ofsted identified four areas for improvement, one of which was to ensure all 16- and 17-year olds have the opportunity to be accommodated under the Southwark ruling. The second was that all care leavers have the opportunity to stay living on the Isle of Wight or to return to live if they choose to.
- Wellbeing was comparatively lower for Isle of Wight Care Leavers than the national average with high anxiety (47% vs 26% nationally).
- Care leavers in the Isle of Wight were statistically more likely than care leavers in other LAs to have retained the same leaving care worker in the

previous year (79% vs. 61%). This is also reflected in the positive feedback care leavers shared about their respective PAs.

- 5.3 The 2018 inspection by Ofsted identified four recommendations, two of which related to accommodation. These were:
- Improved joined up response to 16/17-year olds who are homeless.
  - There is sufficiency of suitable housing options to meet the needs of all care leavers who wish or need to live on the island.
- 5.4 In February 2019, a revised protocol and leaflet were drafted and reviewed by legal services. Guidance re Southwark sent to all teams as interim measure. Isle of Wight Performance Action Group and County PAG monitor all those young people accommodated through s20 Southwark on a monthly basis. In April 2019, the Joint Housing protocol was signed off by the senior management team.
- 5.5 In August 2019, a Homelessness Personal Advisor was appointed to work closely with Housing to support all children and young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. In June, all young people s20 continue to be reviewed by senior managers at PAG and CPAG, by the social work team and Independent reviewing Service.
- 5.6 Young people through our children in care council (Hearing Young People's Experiences) identified their concerns about where they would live when they were older. The sufficiency duty and action plan had also identified this need. Children in care and care leavers were involved in drawing up a specification for new supported accommodation offer called Pathways to Independent Adulthood. They were also involved in a provider day and in evaluating the tenders. The new offer started October 2019.
- 5.7 The Council will ensure it meets the accommodation and placement needs of children in need, children in care, care leavers and children on the edge of care in four main ways:
- The council will work with partners to continually improve and transform services which support the best outcomes for children in care and in need. It

will aim to prevent children from needing to be “in care” by offering early help to families, and by supporting children in need to remain at home or with friends and family where this is in their best interests.

- The council will increase placement choice and capacity and ensure that the placements offer meets, and strives to exceed, the requirements of the National Minimum Standards.
- The council will ensure that the Local Offer for care leavers meets their needs and creates pathways to achieve independent adulthood. This is included in the action plan in section 18.
- The council will improve the suitability of accommodation for children and care leavers including those in the criminal justice system and those needing remand fostering.

5.8 This sufficiency duty has been developed with due regard to relevant legislation and guidance including (but not exclusively):

- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984
- Children’s Act 1989
- Care Standards Act, 2000
- Statutory guidance; Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation, 2009
- Sufficiency of Accommodation Guidance 2010
- Care Planning Regulations 2010
- Children’s Homes Regulations, 2011
- Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act, 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children’s Homes and Looked After Children (Miscellaneous amendments) (England) Regulations 2013
- Housing Act 1996 Part 7 (as amended)
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

## **6 The impact and outcomes from the previous sufficiency duty report and action plan 2017 to 2020 that covered the following identified priorities:**

- 6.1 Develop further opportunities to commission an integrated early help offer that includes health visiting and school nursing.** The Early Help Board through the Children's Trust established the Early Help Strategy and action plan to drive improvements. The integrated Family Centre offer is in the process of being recommissioned and has incorporated the new Parental Conflict Training and the Family Time service (previously known as the Contact Service). The new 0-19 public health nursing offer is now aligned with the Early Help strategy and consistency in the use of public health outcomes to measure progress and impact are incorporated. The number of families supported through an early help assessment and plan has remained consistent at around 450 open every month. The Strengthening Families programme has been integrated with the Family centre offer. Step-down from children's social care ensures families are supported to achieve sustained positive changes. The Isle of Wight is seen nationally as an exemplar of early help and family centres and has been invited to present at government briefings in Westminster.

- 6.2 Develop the 'Team Around the Worker' approach which will create the right conditions and capacity for professionals to work effectively with children and families in order to get it right first time for the children.** The RAFT team has incorporated the targeted youth support service and recruited two child mental health professionals to increase their capacity and broadened the skill set available to social workers. We have built on the Family Intervention Team and development of Children Assessment and Safeguarding Teams and invested further in multi-disciplinary intensive working with children and families. Multi-disciplinary working is focused on a coordinated, joined up, whole family approach, which brings together: the family, child's social worker and RAFT workers including intensive family support workers and specialist workers to help issues around adults and children's' mental health, drug and alcohol use. Ofsted wrote, *'A range of innovative and effective services is helping to meet increasing demand, this includes the disabled children's intervention team and the resilience around family's team (RAFT).'* ILACS, Ofsted, November 2018.
- 6.3 Increase numbers of foster carers and adopters.** The Council will implement the new marketing and recruitment strategy for fostering and adoption to increase the number of in-house foster carers to provide wider choice, better matching and deliver better stability and outcomes for children for all placements. More foster carers and adopters than previously are now in assessment. Based on the rising numbers of children in care over the next three years, a further nine adopters need to be recruited above the current number.

6.4 Stage 1 and 2 Assessment work is now being delivered by our Regional Adoption Agency, Adopt South. From 1 April 2019 – 31 December 2019, the overall average Stage 1 assessment timescale was 1.8 months within the government's two-month expectation. The average time for completion of Stage 2 between 1 April 2019 – 31 December 2019 was 3.7 months within the government's four-month expectation. The average number of days between enquiry and Stage 1 was 2 days within the government's expectation of 5 days. Since the implementation of Adopt South, 7 families have been identified for the Isle of Wight's children, one of these was considered hard to place and had had a Placement Order for nearly two years. There have been 6 children formally linked at panel. The benefit of the regional adoption agency is that resources have been pulled together from four authorities providing more choice which allows for better matching with dedicated matching social workers.

- 6.5 **To increase the number of in-house foster carers to increase capacity to provide staying put arrangements.** The council has invested an initial £200,000 capital grant to fund internal adaptations for local authority foster carers to increase their capacity. This means children have staying put opportunities without decreasing the fostering capacity in households.
- 6.6 **Deliver the new 16+ contract for supported accommodation.** The new framework went live October 2019 and created 16 high needs additional supported accommodation opportunities locally with another four coming online in September 2020. Children were involved in each step from sharing their experiences at provider days to evaluating the tenders. Fifteen more high needs supported accommodation opportunities have been created. One provides a training household so four young people can learn to live together before moving on into private rented accommodation together. A further four is due to become available in September 2020. Based on projections of the increase in the number of care leavers (due to increase in numbers of children in care), a further five will need to be developed over the next three years.

## 7 Early help for children and families

- 7.1 The Isle of Wight Council is focused on achieving the best outcomes for children and their transition into adulthood in a way that prevents the need for statutory involvement whilst ensuring there are effective safeguards and protection in place. Effective early help and the right intervention at the right time can help deliver this goal and can support the best use of limited resources.

- 7.2 The Isle of Wight Council currently commissions Barnardo's to provide an early help offer for families with children aged 0-19 years (or up to 25 for young adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities). This brings together the work of Family Centres, Parenting and Family Support, Frankie workers and the Strengthening Families Programme to provide a joined-up, whole-family service to those who are most in need, but who do not meet the threshold for statutory social care. The aim is to reduce escalation into higher tier services be that statutory social care, mental health services or youth offending. Effective step-down processes ensure that children and families receive a smooth transition from statutory services to support available in the community and aims to prevent re-referrals.
- 7.3 The main benefit to families with children aged 0-19 years is that they are able to access support through one point of contact which considers the needs of the family as a whole. At the end of quarter two 2017/2018, there were 428 early help plans open, 14 early help assessments stepped up to social care and 32 stepped down from social care. The creation of the integrated commissioning unit through the Children's Trust has offered further opportunities to commission an even more integrated early help offer including aligning the health visiting and school nursing recommissioned offer.
- 7.4 **Priority for action:**
- Develop further opportunities to align an even more integrated early help offer through our Family Hubs including, Housing, mental health, health visiting and school nursing.

## **8 Managing risk for children so they can stay safely at home**

- 8.1 In order to improve outcomes for children, to respond to the increasing demand and especially address the revolving door for social work interventions, the council has created a Resilience Around Families Team (RAFT) to support children to continue to live with their families where appropriate to do so. RAFT work with family intervention workers who support adults with mental health and substance misuse issues. The creation of the integrated commissioning unit offered further opportunities to commission new approaches to child and adolescent mental health and emotional well-being to complement the work of RAFT.
- 8.2 The Hampshire and Isle of Wight approach is a new way of delivering effective social work, one that involves building resilience in individuals, families and local communities through a strengths-based approach. To support this the council has invested in a Transformation programme to develop new more effective ways of delivering social work locally. The target is to reduce the net number of children in care by 15 by 2021. This is a mix of those prevented from coming into care when they can be supported to remain safely at home or returned home from care. Transformation also includes implementing a new case management system with agile technology whilst rolling out the Hampshire and Isle of Wight approach with a focus on strengths'-based practice.
- 8.3 The programme involves a stronger focus on the family and environmental risk and protective factors for the child. It also means releasing capacity and enhancing capability of the workforce to ensure work with the whole family and the community to ensure the most effective and sustainable interventions are made at the right time. This will stabilise repeat interventions and manage demand for services and the provision of accommodation in a sustainable way.
- 8.4 The Council will be developing innovations for children on the edge of care including:

- Family focused shared care – to enable children and families to have time out from each other as a support. Unlike ‘support foster care’ this will not be time limited but provide ongoing support through to adulthood if required.
- Community support- Home Start volunteers to engage with and support children providing a significant adult to provide an authentic warmth model of support and direction.
- Physical and mental strength-based activities and development to build confidence, resilience and positive relationships with local providers.

8.5 The Isle of Wight has a multi-agency Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Children (METRAC) arrangement in place. This complements the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and specifically addresses the needs of children who repeatedly go missing, are exploited or are trafficked into the area. There is a detailed focus on children who repeatedly go missing, including but not solely, children looked after. Children’s social care has also developed a reunification framework based on the work of the NSPCC. Children are identified as to who could return home safely with the right support. Children in out of authority residential children’s homes are reviewed by senior managers regularly to ensure their long-term plans are progressing without drift.

8.6 **Priority for action:**

- Ensure the transformations achieved are embedded and support children to remain at home when it is safe to do so and children in care are returned home when it is safe to do so.

## 9 Foster placements

9.1 During 2019/2020 the service successfully recruited and approved 9 new fostering households. At the end of March 2020 there were 132 registered foster carers in the Isle of Wight constituting 85 fostering households. The Fostering Service has a marketing strategy for 2020/2021; with a target to recruit 15 fostering households.

9.2 The recruitment data for 2019/20 was as follows.

- Number of enquiries 79
- Number of Initial Home Visits 50
- Number of assessments initiated 15
- Number of approvals 9
- Conversion rate from enquiry to approval 2.5%

- 9.3 As of 31/03/2020, there were 85 registered foster carers including staying put, supported lodgings and connected carers being assessed with children in placement.
- 9.4 The Council will retain a focus on the importance to secure the right placement which offers the best chance of stability and placements for children in care whilst ensuring best value for money. Traditionally this has been achieved through a mixed economy, developing in house carer capacity for around two thirds of placements, supplemented by the use of independent fostering agencies under a collaborative framework contract with other local authorities across the south east region. This is against a backdrop of increasingly complex need, a deficit in the supply of carers and increasing pressure on resources. Based on the projections of the rising numbers of children in care, a further 15 in-house foster carers need to be recruited above the current number.
- 9.5 A cohort of existing in-house foster carers were accredited and remunerated as 'Impact Carers' to provide homes for children with more complex needs and behaviours that challenge. A review of the effectiveness of the Impact Carer scheme is underway. Fostering are developing more targeted social media marketing and recruitment campaign to reach those who may not have considered becoming a foster carer before and have the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to support children (particularly adolescents) with more complex needs.
- 9.6 There are differences in the pricing structures between in-house and IFAs leading to higher costs for independent agencies, especially for children with less complex needs and sibling groups. A new in-house remuneration scheme has been developed to address this. As well as standard placements there are a number of "specialist" requirements with specific in-house capacity issues including:
- parent and child
  - prevention of offending
  - trafficked and unaccompanied asylum seekers
  - level 3 and level 4 (therapeutically trained and experienced foster carers)

- those leaving residential placements
- emergency and assessment
- intensive fostering

9.7 The aim of the placement offer continues to be to increase placement choice and capacity to ensure that placements offer sufficient accommodation and meet the requirements of National Minimum standards. Further investment has been made to increase the number of fostering support social workers and a dedicated assessment team. The new marketing strategy and recruitment of a joint Marketing Assistant for both adoption and fostering has seen a rise in households undergoing assessments. The Isle of Wight Council has an active year-round marketing campaign to recruit more local in-house local authority foster carers.

9.8 At the end of December 2019, there were 91 registered foster carers in the Isle of Wight. Of these:

- 52 were general foster carers.
- 31 were friends and family or connected person.
- 1 is a specialist respite carer.
- Supported lodgings carers.
- Connected carers in assessment with children in placement.
- 8 had been deregistered initiated by the foster carer and 9 deregistered initiated by the fostering service.
- As of 31 March 2020, the number of places available were as follows:

## Fostering households reports

### H1. Number of households and places at 31 March (and trend)

Collection year	Number of households	Number of places
2017	94	163
2018	94	163
2019	103	169
2020	94	154

9.9 There is a very committed foster carer community across the Isle of Wight that engages with the relevant social care teams and works continuously to improve the service and outcomes for cared for children.

9.10 A comprehensive training pathway is in place with a variety of face to face and online learning opportunities to build on foster carers knowledge and skills. Educational psychologists are delivering “Cool, Calm and Connected”, “Attachment” and “Attachment and the Effects of Trauma” courses following feedback from carers, particularly around adolescents. Foster carers are also able to access wider workforce development opportunities and conferences through the local safeguarding children’s partnership.

9.11 The marketing and recruitment of foster carers has now separated from Adoption due to the implementation of the Regional Adoption Agency. A revised fostering marketing strategy is being implemented to drive up the capacity of in house fostering and to increase placement choice.

9.12 Nine children were adopted over the last year to March 2020. Of these the average time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family is 395 days still within the government target of 426 days. However, this included one very hard to place child (with Cerebral Palsy) who took 997 days. If he is taken out of the cohort, this figure reduces to 320 days which is more reflective of practice.

- 9.13 Nine in-house foster carers were deregistered by the service due to retirement, foster carers not meeting our improved standards in terms of foster carer performance, or because they went on to become a special guardian. The numbers of in-house foster carers is increasing but the need to use independent foster carers remains a financial pressure. Investment in local authority foster carers would increase their skills to meet the needs of children with more complex needs. The recruitment drive also aims to increase the choice available to children who need foster carers to ensure better matching and to improve placement stability.
- 9.14 All foster carers and supported lodgings carers have a profile to pass to any child or young person being placed with them. The profiles were written by the carers with the assistance of their Supervising Social Worker to ensure that they are child and young person friendly and give an honest and open view of the carers' family and home life – these include pictures of the home, family and pets.
- 9.15 Foster carers are supported by the fostering service and placements are identified through the commissioning unit. The fostering team's training pathway continues to be delivered and includes the implementation of 'Fostering Changes' which is a 12-week training programme. The 'Skills to Foster' training has been provided for all potential new foster carers, and for those carers who felt they needed to refresh their training in this area. An Education Psychologist has been commissioned to provide specific training and 1 to 1 consultation. Further training had been developed and offered including E-Learning via the Virtual College and Research in Practice.
- 9.16 All foster carers, connected carers and supported lodgings carers have a supervising social worker and they received support via a supervision visit, every six weeks; these visits are more frequent if they have children or young people in placement that require a higher level of support.
- 9.17 The supervision visits cover:
- Education

- Daily Diary Sheets - Accidents/Injuries, Medical Administering/Treatments, Rewards and Sanctions
- Safe care plan/ smoking policy
- Missing episodes and response
- Training attended (e.g. course and date)
- Family dynamics carers own family and any issues that arise from contact
- Allegations/concerns

9.18 The Fostering Team rebranded and re-launched the advertising campaign. The Fostering Team continues to use social media, internet and radio to promote Local Authority Fostering with a launch of a new website in 2019.

9.19 The new Fostering Strategy has the following priorities for action:

- An increase of good quality resilient carers to meet the needs of a range of children and care leavers of all ages and diverse needs.
- Carers who actively prepare children to be independent adults and who have the skills needed in life.
- Carers with more skills and experience to care for children with higher levels of need which will include younger children who are struggling to regulate and teenagers who are putting themselves at risk.
- A clear payments scheme which is competitive and rewards carers for their skills and commitment.
- A clear support and training offer which enables all foster carers to be supported and developing.
- Clear recruitment plan which targets the areas of need and provides a timely response to interest.

9.20 The average length of assessment from Stage 2 is currently four months.

9.21 A restructuring of fostering and adoption into a unified permanence service has created a dedicated assessment team to improve the timeliness of assessment and approvals.

9.22 The Isle of Wight also places children with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs). As July 2020, 60 children in care were placed with IFAs, of whom 8 were placed out of authority, 7 placed locally with another local authority foster carer and 3 placed out of authority with another local authority foster carer. In 2017, the Isle of Wight along with 16 other local authorities developed a framework through which to commissioning IFAs. This was to manage the marketplace in the South East to ensure sufficiency, quality of provision and competitive pricing. The framework is back out to tender in 2020.

9.23 The Isle of Wight has five unaccompanied asylum-seeking children placed out of authority in IFAs. Every child in each IFA has an Independent Placement Agreement with which the social worker and the Placement and Commissioning Team hold providers to account in achieving progress and outcomes for children through the use of individual placement agreements. A senior child placement planning groups reviews plans for the most complex children in care to ensure there is no drift in their care and where appropriate can be supported to step down from residential care into a family environment.

9.24 **Priority for action:**

- Implement the modernising placement planning programme as the strategic approach to improve outcomes for children.
- The Council will implement the new marketing and recruitment strategy to deliver better stability and outcomes for all placements through:
- Maximising the use of in-house services and to increase in-house placements.
- Ensure maximum value for money and outcomes for children placed with foster carers through the Independent Fostering Agency framework.
- Commission outcome focused specialist services.

- Purchase block contracts for some placements.
- Work corporately and collaboratively with providers to develop pathways to independent adulthood for children in care and care leavers.
- The marketing campaign for foster carers has a focus on targeted recruitment of carers that have prior experience of childcare/working with children to address the current shortfall of carers for children with more complex needs.
- To increase the number of in-house local authority foster carers that can provide placements for large sibling groups together.
- To increase the number of in-house local authority foster placements that can meet the needs of older teenagers with complex needs and challenging behaviour and are trained in therapeutic parenting approaches.

## 10 Adoption

- 10.1 During April 2019 to March 2020, there were 16 step-parent enquiries, six SGO referrals and 11 joint applications with Fostering. This compares to 11 SGO referrals and 15 joint applications during the same period last year. There was a decrease in referrals for child permanence reports from 42 last year to 30. There were 13 new child's plans for adoption and seven linked/placed and five placement orders granted. The nationally reported performance is as follows.
- 10.2 Scorecard 1 – Average time between a child entering Care and moving in with their adoptive family. For the 9 children adopted between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2020, the average time in days between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family was 395 days which is within the government's threshold of 426 days. This compares to 337 days in the same period last year.
- 10.3 Scorecard 2 – Average time between the Local Authority receiving Court Authority and the Local Authority identifying a match. For the 9 children adopted between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2020, the average time between Placement Order and the Local Authority identifying a match was 225 days which exceeds the government's threshold of 121 days. This is predominantly due to an older sibling group of two boys that required more extensive family finding activity, 9.6 months, to achieve a match. One child with a disability of Curzon's syndrome that required 26.6 months to achieve a match. One child required 7.2 months to achieve a match. The other five children were all placed well within the target. One was placed at 111 days, 2 x 62 days, 1 at 131 days and 1 at 46 days. It is positive that we found adoptive families for these children. This compares to 100 days in the same period last year.
- 10.4 Scorecard 3 – % of children who wait less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with an adoptive family. For the children adopted between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2020, 88.8% (8 of the 9) waited less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with an adoptive family. This compares to 85.7% (6 out of 7) in the same period last year.

- 10.5 Whilst there continues to be insufficient numbers of adopters coming forward to meet the numbers of adoptive placements required for the looked after children of the Isle of Wight, this is being addressed through Adopt South. There continues to be a focus on matching children with island adopters where it is assessed as safe to do so. This ensures that island children maintain their identity and culture wherever possible.
- 10.6 Stage 1 and 2 Assessment work is now being delivered by our Regional Adoption Agency, Adopt South. Data from Adopt South. From 1 April 2019 – 31 December 2019, the overall average Stage 1 assessment timescale was 1.8 months within the governments two-month expectation.
- 10.7 The average time for completion of Stage 2 between 1 April 2019 – 31 December 2019 was 3.7 months within the governments four-month expectation. The average number of days between enquiry and Stage 1 was 2 days within the governments expectation of 5 days.
- 10.8 Since the implementation of Adopt South, 7 families have been identified for the Isle of Wight's children, one of these was considered hard to place and had had a Placement Order for nearly two years. There have been 6 children formally linked at panel. The benefit of the regional adoption agency is that resources have been pulled together from four authorities providing more choice which allows for better matching with dedicated matching social workers.
- 10.9 Training and recruitment and support is being delivered by Adopt South. 87 adopters were approved between April – December 2019. The average number of available adopters remains stable at an average of 30. Between April – December 2019, 549 enquiries were received. 36 Adoption Information Sessions were held, and 210 households attended. During April – December 2019, 400 Children and Family cases were open across the region. An average of 29 cases open to the Isle of Wight hub and receiving adoption support. 96 workshops have been provided by the Adopt South Post Adoption Service.

10.10 The Adoption and Fostering Teams work collaboratively to undertake recruitment events to promote the needs of both services whilst maximising on cost effectiveness. The teams have embedded the practice of working together to ensure connected persons and special guardianship reports, which are increasingly jointly commissioned within proceedings, are co-worked to ensure efficiency and reduce the impact on families of multiple assessments.

10.11 The Team are actively working with prospective applicants to consider alternatives to Step Parent Adoption and full consideration is being given to less intrusive orders, in line with the directive of the local judiciary. The Adoption Team also ensure that post adoption support and adult adoption services are easily accessible on the island. The referrals for post adoption support have been responded to in a timely manner, however, to evidence this further, new measures are being put in place to track the response times and quality of service. The Adoption Team continues to strive to provide a high-quality service to adoptive families on the island.

**Priorities for action:**

- Continue to ensure the Regional Adoption Agency with Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton Local Authorities and three Voluntary Adoption Agencies, provides the best outcomes for children.
- Continue to develop a learning pathway for adopters and Adoption Support Services including the learning pathway for adopters.
- Continue to improve timescales for adopter assessment.

## **11 In-house provision of residential accommodation**

- 11.1 Beaulieu House is our local authority children's residential and respite service for children and young people with disabilities. It is registered with Ofsted to provide care and accommodation for up to ten children and young people who have learning disabilities. Children and young people accessing Beaulieu House will usually have profound and multiple learning disabilities, complex health care needs; often in combination with other disabilities such as ADHD, autism, Cerebral Palsy and Down's Syndrome. Beaulieu House is situated in Newport and is a purpose-built premises with accessibility features and adaptations for children and young people with disabilities.
- 11.2 Beaulieu House supports children and young people from all over the Island and is accessed via the Isle of Wight Council Children and Families branch. All children and young people who access any part of Beaulieu House will have an identified Social Worker who will make a referral for services on behalf of the child/young person and their family. The referral is discussed at a panel and if the request meets Beaulieu House statement of purpose staff from Beaulieu House will initiate contact and undertake an impact assessment. They will then contact the child/young person and their family to plan a visit. Once the assessment process is complete and criterion is met, a transition into the service begins with the needs of the child/young person at the centre.

11.3 Beaulieu House provides residential and respite support to meet the assessed and agreed needs of the individual child/young person. This support may be short or long term and can include a transition to adult services. This support will be through a bespoke package of care with the child/young person being at the centre of the decision-making process. All children and young people accessing Beaulieu House have a care plan with agreed outcomes. This enables the child/young person to continually develop and to attain maximum life choices and chances in a supportive environment. Children's need for residential care, support and respite can vary over time. Beaulieu House will work with children, families and their social workers to continually assess whether Beaulieu House remains a suitable provision to assist in meeting the child's assessed needs. Alternative or additional support such as pre-paid cards to purchase respite and/or short breaks will be introduced to provide families with more choice.

**Priorities for action:**

- Evaluate the impact of the introduction of pre-paid cards for families to purchase respite and short breaks.

## 12 Commissioned residential accommodation

- 12.1 In recognition that in-house fostering and residential provision will not be sufficient to meet all placement requirements for children in the Isle of Wight, a framework contract was established in 2017 in collaboration with 10 Local Authorities in the South to provide flexible additional capacity.
- 12.2 As of July 2020, there were 31 out of 270 children in care in residential placements with external providers from the private and not for profit sectors of which 8 were on the Isle of Wight and 13 out of authority. Some of the placements include specialist education provision for those who have been excluded from mainstream Schools or who have specific learning requirements, or a statement of Special Education Needs. Placement decisions involving health and education are agreed through the Joint Placement Group.
- 12.3 A Service Manager at the Resource Allocation Group agrees and monitors the budget for all social care placements. Currently the Social Work team and contracts officer work together to hold the providers to account for achieving progress and outcomes for children we have placed with them. The new commissioning unit will provide improved demand analysis and more sustainability of the placements role. Individual placement agreements are in operation for each child in each residential placement. These will be used to hold providers to account for achieving progress and outcomes for children we have placed with them.
- 12.4 The commissioning approach reflects the commissioning standards in national contracts. The joint commissioning ensures high quality provision including the requirement for all establishments on the framework to have, and to maintain an Ofsted rating of 'Good' or 'Outstanding' and to undertake enhanced DBS checks for anyone involved in the delivery of services to children or young people.

- 12.5 For those children already in a placement, a thorough risk assessment will be carried out to ascertain the viability of the placement continuing. Appropriate move on will be managed should the establishment be found to not meet the requirements of individuals or the risks associated with the placement cannot be managed. It is a priority for the Council to maintain the stability of placements where possible, but without compromising the high standards that are required of establishments delivering the services.
- 12.6 Social Work teams and the Independent Reviewing Service carry out regular inspections at and visits to establishments as part of the child or young person's contact visits and review. The placement and commissioning team reviews the monthly regulation 44 inspection reports as part of their management oversight of the quality of provision for each child and responds quickly to any potential concerns.
- 12.7 Every child in care be that residential or IFA has an individual placement agreement as part of the national contract. This IPA sets out the progress and outcomes the provider is expected to help the child to make based on the social worker assessment and care plan. The IPA is incorporated into the contract monitoring and performance management of each provider and reviewed with the social worker. This is to ensure every child makes sufficient progress and providers are held to account or the quality of care they provide and the outcomes each child is supported to achieve.
- 12.8 As described previously, the number of children with complex needs is increasing, as is the number of children entering the care system as teenagers. Both of these place additional pressure on finding well matched placements within desired locations to ensure the best possible outcome for the child or young person. This is being addressed through the commissioned Pathways to Independent Adulthood supported accommodation, the new Housing offer and the homelessness support personal advisor in the leaving care team.
- 12.9 **Priorities for action:**
- Continue to establish closer relationships with providers to ensure the best possible placement matches, to reduce the risk of placement breakdown

which is a particular risk with complex cases and to ensure the very best outcomes for children.

- Enhancing the 'Voice' of the child or young person within the commissioning process.
- Ensure that children placed out of authority have the ability to participate in service user feedback and activities.
- Align the commissioning offer with Housing to provide the Pathways to Independent Adulthood supported accommodation offer for young people through the new Integrated Commissioning Unit using outcomes-based commissioning.

### **13 Secure accommodation**

The Isle of Wight does not have an in-house secure children's home. When a child requires accommodation in a secure children's home this is sourced nationally. As of July 2020, there is one child in secure accommodation. Negotiations are underway with the provider to create a step-down provision with education for the child to move to.

### **14 Post 16 and leaving care**

#### **a) Supported lodgings and staged accommodation 16-21-year olds**

14.1 The current provision includes the following:

Housing commission the following accommodation through supporting people funding. This is out to tender (July 2020). Children's social care are involved in evaluating the tenders. Based on the projected rise in the numbers of children in care and hence care leavers, a further 10 more in-house supported lodgings providers above the current number need to be recruited. The current provision is listed below.

Young Persons Supported accommodation scheme – Sovereign Housing Association (in partnership with Southern Housing Group) = 65 units:

- Foyer = 45 units (including 1 x emergency bed)
- Atkinson House = 8 units
- 54 St Johns Road = 7 units
- Fairlee Road = 5 units

Fellowship House Single homelessness supported accommodation (18 years plus) –  
Salvation Army = currently 29 units:

- Fellowship house = 22 units (including one disabled adapted)
- Melville Street = 7 units

The Bus Shelter (although not widely used) = to be determined

Social care commission the following Pathways to Independent Adulthood high support supported accommodation.

Solent Youth = 3-bedroom home plus planning on opening a second 4 bed in September 2020 higher need supported accommodation.

Oakfield = 4-bedroom house with support.

Cornerstones = 3-bedroom home with support

Island Choices (residential children's home) = 3 + 4

- 14.2 Following concerns regarding the referral process and a high number of voids at the Young Persons Supported Accommodation scheme, all referrals to the scheme are currently co-ordinated through the placement commissioning team who meet with the providers regularly along with the leaving care team to jointly assess, place and monitor the progress of young people.
- 14.3 It is considered that accommodation needs for 16 to 21-year olds, will be met through the new 16+ contract for supported lodgings and staged accommodation with a particular focus on 16- and 17-year olds who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and have support needs as well as care leavers. This will be achieved through working with Housing and their new providers to develop a wider choice and range of accommodation options.
- 14.4 This additional capacity will enable the Council to provide the Local Offer for care leavers established in the Children and Social Work Act 2017. These arrangements will minimise the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation by Children's Services which is deemed to be unsuitable accommodation for 16-17-year olds as per the Secretary of State and in accordance with the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities. Housing and supported accommodation for 16 to 24-year olds is co-ordinated through the 'Pathways to Independence', group which brings together commissioners, placements team, housing, providers, young people's representatives and children's services. This group plans, commissions and monitors provision and links the future needs of children and young people into the corporate strategic housing group.
- 14.5 The commissioning of supported accommodation aims to meet the needs of young people from a diverse range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds, including, but not limited to:
- Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Leavers
  - Single parents
  - Couples (where both meet the eligibility)
  - Young people with mental health issues
  - Pregnant young people
  - Young Offenders
  - Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

- Young people who are Rough sleepers with a local connection to Isle of Wight\*\*
- Young people with learning difficulties.
- Young people with physical difficulties.
- Those from a traveller family background
- Those affected by domestic abuse
- Those affected by child sexual exploitation
- Young people affected by substance misuse
- Young people with complex and chaotic needs
- Those Young people remanded into the care of the Local Authority

14.6 16/17-year olds will access Supported Lodgings, in the first instance, unless there is a risk or genuine reason, why this is not appropriate accommodation and they require a higher level of support. The accommodation types include:

- Emergency and Assessment bed at the Foyer - to provide emergency accommodation, within Stage 1 provision, with the view that the provider and referrer (which may include the Resilience Around Families Team (RAFT) will work with the young person and their family to provide mediation with the aim of reunification with their immediate/extended family or previous placement. The bed is available for 1-15 working days.
- Stage 1: Shared accommodation - for young people who need a high level of support with staff to be on site 24 hours a day seven days a week.
- Stage 2: Accommodation - a 'step down' service from the Stage 1 for those young people who do not require support through the night and are demonstrating some level of independence. This includes:
  - ✓ Supported Lodgings where a young person is placed with a 'host family' with their own room
  - ✓ Teenage Parent Service to house and support both parent and child, enabling them to access parenting services within the community (provision available through YMCA and through Oakfield).
  - ✓ Self-Contained Accommodation - for those young people with higher level needs who cannot be in a shared environment due to their specific needs and requirements.

14.7 The new 16+ contract may include block and spot purchase arrangements with a range of providers. The focus will be on ensuring smooth transitions between fostering and residential placements and supported accommodation options to create pathways to independent adulthood.

#### 14.8 **Priorities for action:**

- Evaluate the new Pathways to Independent Adulthood supported accommodation offer with young people.

## **b) Staying put for those leaving care**

14.9 In response to the duties within the *Children and Families Act 2014*, Isle of Wight Children's Services enable care leavers aged 18 to remain living with their former foster carer under a supported lodgings arrangement. This arrangement is called 'staying put'. Care leavers have the opportunity to 'stay put' under these arrangements until their 21st. There are no conditions that the young person must be in education, training or employment to access supported lodgings, however if they are completing an education or training course, the arrangement may continue until the completion of the course.

14.10 **In June 2020**, there were the following carer leavers were accommodated.

- Staying put with LA Carers = 15
- Shared Lives with LA Carers = 3
- Supported Lodgings with LA Carers = 3
- Private Arrangements with previous carers = 3
- Staying put with IFA = 1
- Residential Supported Lodgings = 3

14.11 16 care leavers in a 'staying put' arrangement with a former foster carer (six with in-house foster carers, one with an IFA, seven with connected carers and two with another local authority carer). With a high and increasing number of children in care and care leavers together with the new duties under the Local Offer, the number of staying put arrangements will increase. Whilst this provides stability and consistency for children into young adulthood, which is paramount, this increase means that the availability of existing in-house foster carers decreases. Increases in in-house foster carers is a priority for the term of this sufficiency duty.

14.12 Fee paid foster carers do not receive a skills fee once the young person is 18 years old they are paid the same as supported lodgings providers. For those placements within Independent Fostering Agencies there is negotiation around funding post 18 as current contracts do not define arrangements. In both cases, if the young person is eligible to claim housing benefit they are expected to do so in order to contribute towards the cost of the staying put arrangement.

14.13 Not all carers are able to enter into staying put arrangements i.e. to continue to offer a home to a looked after child they had fostered once they had turned 18. This is due to the impact on their personal financial situation so that the young person would need to move on. This level of disruption at a crucial life transition point can result in a number of negative consequences for the young people. For those in employment this can be particularly difficult as their new accommodation and the distance to their workplace could result in the job no longer being viable.

**14.14 Priority for action:**

- To explore ways to improve our Staying Put policy in line with our Local Offer and to mitigate risks to outcomes for situations where care leavers need to move on due to carer circumstances.
- To increase the number of in-house foster carers to increase capacity to provide staying put arrangements due to the increase in teenagers coming into care.

## 15 Managing Risks

- 15.1 There are a number of risks to developing and retaining sufficiency. The covid pandemic and lockdown created challenges. Children could not move between placements. Some foster carer households were shielding, and residential providers stopped receiving new children. The longer-term risk for sufficiency is the impact of rising demand, if more children come into care as a result of abuse that occurred during lockdown.
- 15.2 The primary risk of not maintaining and developing sufficiency is that we do not as corporate parents ensure that every child and care leaver has a safe, warm permanent home with trusted adults and who are confident about their future. We need to ensure that every child can remain living locally if safe and appropriate to do so or return from an out of authority placement. Every care leaver should also have the opportunity to continue to live locally or to return to the Isle of Wight if they are living elsewhere.
- 15.3 Maintaining current sufficiency is a risk that remains. We are reliant on a limited number of residential homes and supported accommodation providers. This has meant, when concerns are identified regarding safeguarding or quality, we as commissioners intervene and support them with improvement plans rather than stop using them. We have implemented two improvement plans with both residential children's homes providers and one high needs supported accommodation provider, all successfully.
- 15.4 Maintaining and developing capacity for sufficiency also comes with a financial risk. The current range of providers and associated spend is listed in Appendix E. There is an increase in the complex needs of a cohort of children and young people beyond the needs the current providers are commissioned to meet through Housing.

15.5 To help mitigate the financial risk, we are also part of a wider approach to manage the regional marketplace. We are part of two regional frameworks, one for residential children's homes and one for Independent Fostering Agencies. This is to ensure costs are controlled through the collective buying power of all the local authorities involved and quality is maintained. One of our local residential children's homes providers is part of this framework but we have a block contract with them to ensure island children can remain locally. This also prevents other local authorities placing children which could potentially disrupt the dynamics within the home whereas we can ensure the best possible matching when placing. The new Pathways to Independent Adulthood supported accommodation is commissioned through a framework, again to manage the local market, control prices, ensure quality and to encourage an increase in provision.

## **16 Governance**

16.1 There is a clear governance structure for the development and implementation of each element of the strategy to meet the sufficiency duty. This strategy is signed off by the senior management team, monitored through the Pathways to Independent Adulthood group, reviewed six monthly reporting to the County Performance Action Group (PAG). Key targets are reflected in the Quality Improvement Plan (QUIP) and Children and Young People's Plan with regular reports to the Children and Families Management Team and up through the Children's Trust. The sufficiency duty is shared with the Corporate Parenting Board and is held to account by children and young people through the Hearing Young People's Experiences (HYPE) participation group.

## 17 Conclusion

17.1 The purpose of this sufficiency report 2020 to 2023 was three-fold. The first is it has systematically reviewed the current situation in relation to securing accommodation which meets the needs of looked after children and care leavers. The second purpose was to develop and enhance the strategic commissioning so that all relevant services, including universal services, make a full contribution to meeting the needs of looked after children and children in need, who are at risk of care or custody. The third purpose was to set the priorities for action for 2020 to 2023. The Isle of Wight remains committed to ensuring that there is sufficiency, so that every child has a home that meets their needs, promotes their outcomes and supports them to be aspirational for their future.

## 18 Action Plan

PRIORITY FOR ACTION	HOW	BY WHEN	LEAD	RISKS / ISSUES	TARGET	PROGRESS	RAG
1. Develop further opportunities to align an integrated early help offer that includes Housing, CAMHS, health visiting and school nursing.	Through the integrated commissioning unit and retendered public health nursing offer and new Housing tender	January 2021	Simon Dennis, Team Manager Placement and Commissioning Team	Pressures on budgets and saving requirements.	Existing performance targets in place with Barnardo's. HV and SN public health outcomes incorporated into the performance framework.	Integrated commissioning unit report signed off by CFMT, CMT and Children's Trust	A
2. Ensure the transformations achieved are embedded and	Transformation Programme Reunification Programme	March 2021	Ian Thompson Transformation Lead	Rising numbers of children in	14 children per year remain at or return safely to home.	New KPIs monitored through the Transformation Board	A

PRIORITY FOR ACTION	HOW	BY WHEN	LEAD	RISKS / ISSUES	TARGET	PROGRESS	RAG
supports children to remain at home when it is safe to do so and children in care are returned home when it is safe to do so.				care locally and nationally			
3. The Council will implement the new marketing and recruitment strategy for fostering to increase the number of in-house foster carers to provide wider choice,	To create a permanence service with a dedicated team to undertake assessments. Implement the Modernising Placements Programme to M	July 2020	Debbie Price Service Manager Permanence	Increase in in-house foster carers and reduction in use of IFAs and residential placements will have a significant impact on the	Net gain of 15 or more new carers each year and 10 in house supported lodgings providers. The Isle of Wight are currently	In order to maintain this percentage conversion rate, the department would be required to generate a further 71 enquiries which at year-end could provide 9 additional foster carers.	<b>A</b>

PRIORITY FOR ACTION	HOW	BY WHEN	LEAD	RISKS / ISSUES	TARGET	PROGRESS	RAG
<p>better matching and deliver better stability and outcomes for children for all placements.</p> <p>To increase the number of in-house foster carers to increase capacity to provide staying put arrangements.</p>	<p>maximise the use of in-house foster carers</p> <p>establishing a comprehensive support and training programme to recruit and retain in-house carers and to increase in-house placements especially for teenagers with complex needs and large sibling groups.</p>			<p>savings required</p>	<p>approving 12 carers in every 100 enquiries which equates to 12.88%, this will only realise 7 new foster carers per year. The target and subsequent number of enquiries per month should be reset at 58. Fostering have identified a target of 15 new foster carers linked to the</p>		

PRIORITY FOR ACTION	HOW	BY WHEN	LEAD	RISKS / ISSUES	TARGET	PROGRESS	RAG
	<p>Implement the new pay structure.</p> <p>Develop relationships between the in-house foster carers and independent providers develop pathways of care from out of authority placements.</p> <p>Commission outcome focused specialist services.</p>				<p>maximum capacity of the service. This would reduce the number of IFAs by 15 and associated costs.</p>		

PRIORITY FOR ACTION	HOW	BY WHEN	LEAD	RISKS / ISSUES	TARGET	PROGRESS	RAG
	<p>Purchase block contracts for some placements.</p> <p>Review Impact Carer programme</p> <p>.</p>						
4. Develop a pathways to independent adulthood for children in care and care leavers	Work corporately and collaboratively with providers to develop pathways to independent adulthood for children in care and care leavers	October 2019	Placement and Commissioning Team	No tenders bid	15 new supported accommodation opportunities created for higher need young people so they can stay or return to the Isle of Wight. Plus a		<b>G</b>

PRIORITY FOR ACTION	HOW	BY WHEN	LEAD	RISKS / ISSUES	TARGET	PROGRESS	RAG
					further net gain of another 5.		
5. Continue to ensure the Regional Adoption Agency with Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton Local Authorities and three Voluntary Adoption Agencies,	Establish RAA in line with guidance from DfE	April 2019	Rachel Reynolds, Head of Adoption	Need to manage any reconfiguration of the service as a result of the RAA.	Net gain of 9 adopters. Current scorecards 1, 2 and 3 targets for adoption remain in place		<b>G</b>
6. Continue to develop a learning pathway for adopters and Adoption	Develop policy from national best practice Provide training for panel members	October 2017	Rachel Reynolds, Head of Adoption	Possible delays in the timing and development of the RAA may impact	Adopters have portfolios of training and development		<b>A</b>

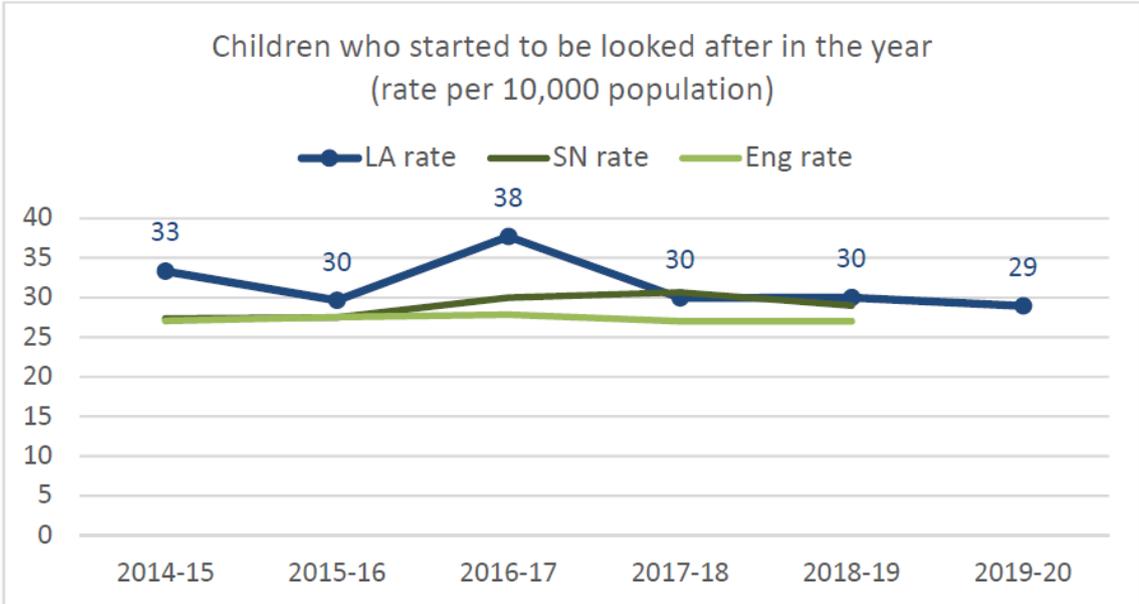
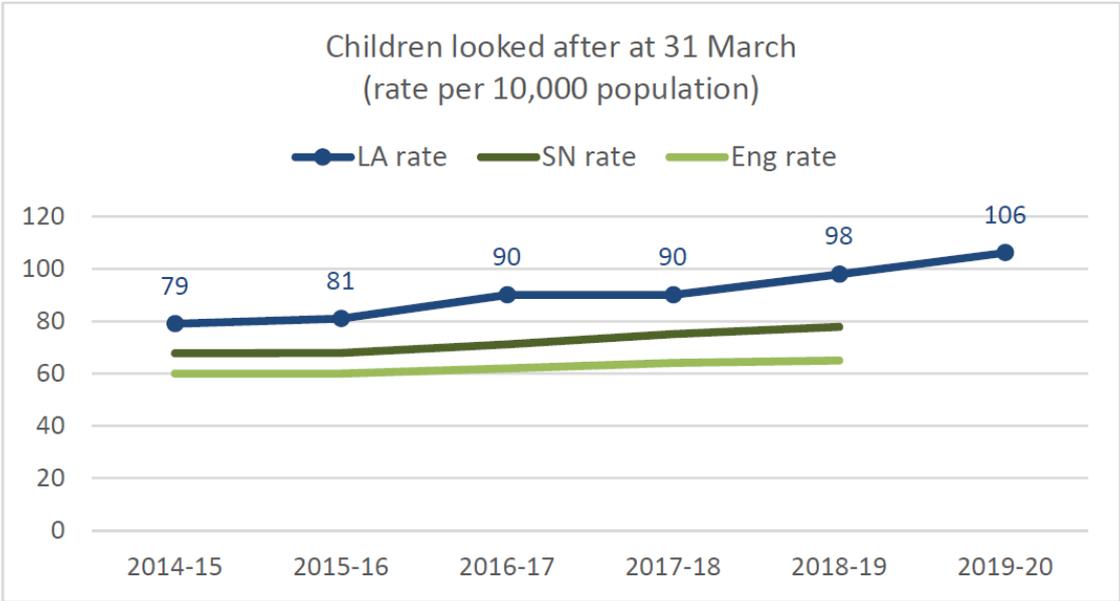
PRIORITY FOR ACTION	HOW	BY WHEN	LEAD	RISKS / ISSUES	TARGET	PROGRESS	RAG
Support Services including the learning pathway for adopters.				on performance			
7. Continue to improve timescales for adopter assessment.	Document adoption process and develop a data handling manual for adoption	April 2018	Rachel Reynolds, Head of Adopt South	Possible impact on performance.	To ensure scorecards 1, 2 and 3 are within national targets.		<b>A</b>
8. Children's eligibility to receive a service from Beaulieu House to be reviewed as part of individual care planning.	The introduction of pre-paid cards for families to purchase respite and short breaks. Evaluate the impact.	October 2020	Mark Rodwell Team Manager children with disabilities	Some families may not agree with the level of assessed need to be met.	All families to be offered pre-payment cards.	Roll out started April 2020	<b>G</b>

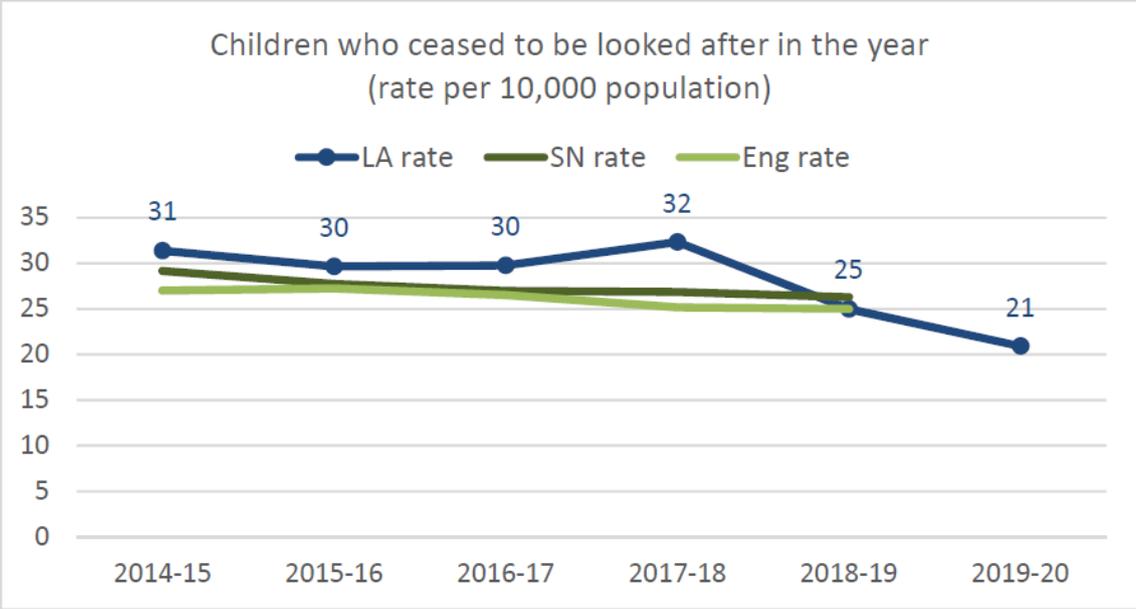
PRIORITY FOR ACTION	HOW	BY WHEN	LEAD	RISKS / ISSUES	TARGET	PROGRESS	RAG
9. Align the commissioning offer with Housing to provide the Pathways to Independent Adulthood supported accommodation offer for young people through the new Integrated Commissioning Unit.	Children's social care involved in the new Housing specification and in the panned evaluation of bids.	September 2020	Simon Dennis, Team manager Placement and Commissioning Team.	Housing offer may not connect with the Pathways to Independent Adulthood offer	All children and care leavers have a home with the right level of support to meet their needs.	Housing tender out and evaluations of bids due to begin September 2020.	A
10. Ensure all children in placement have a full and varied opportunity to	IROs ensure during reviews that children have opportunities.	April 2020	Stephen Woodford Children's Rights and	Out of authority children have equal	All children have opportunities to participate.	During current covid lockdown all children out of authority have been contacted and involved in	A

PRIORITY FOR ACTION	HOW	BY WHEN	LEAD	RISKS / ISSUES	TARGET	PROGRESS	RAG
participate in decisions about them and service performance.	Participation leads in each team ensure children have opportunities to participate.		Participation Officer.	opportunities to participate.		participation opportunities.	
11.Develop ways to mitigate risks to outcomes for situations where young people need to move on due to carer circumstances.	Implementing a housing adaptation policy for building extensions and loft conversion if this results in young people being able to stay with their carer	February 2020	Simon Dear, Service Manager Strategic Development and Commissioning	Financial risk to the Council if care ceases to be a carer.	Increase of 10% of young people being able to stay put because of adaptations to the foster carer home.	Policy and contract developed and implemented in two foster carer household since February 2020.	<b>G</b>

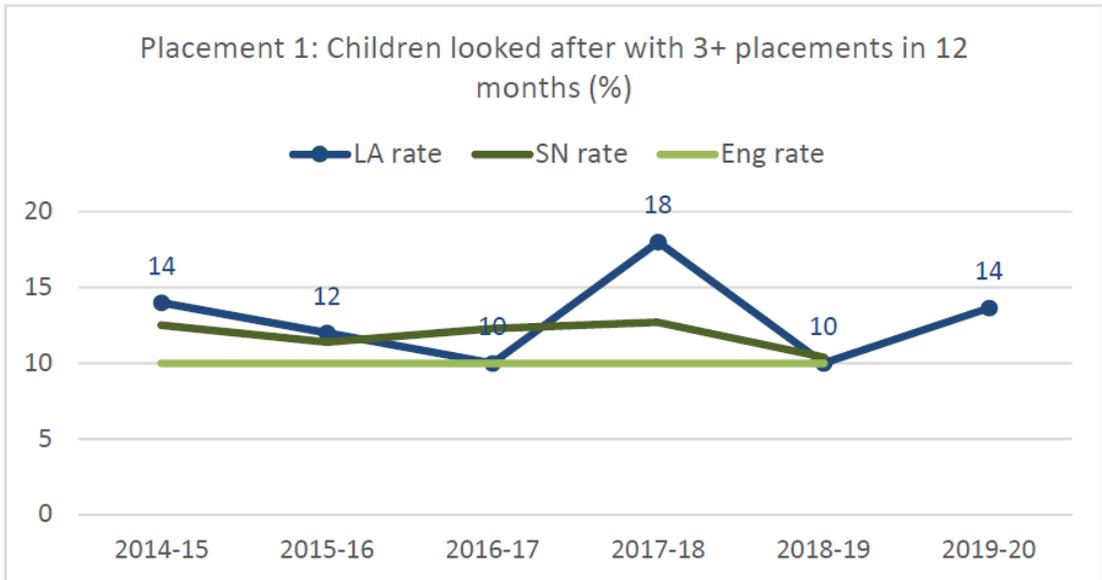
## 19 Appendix A: Needs assessment and projections

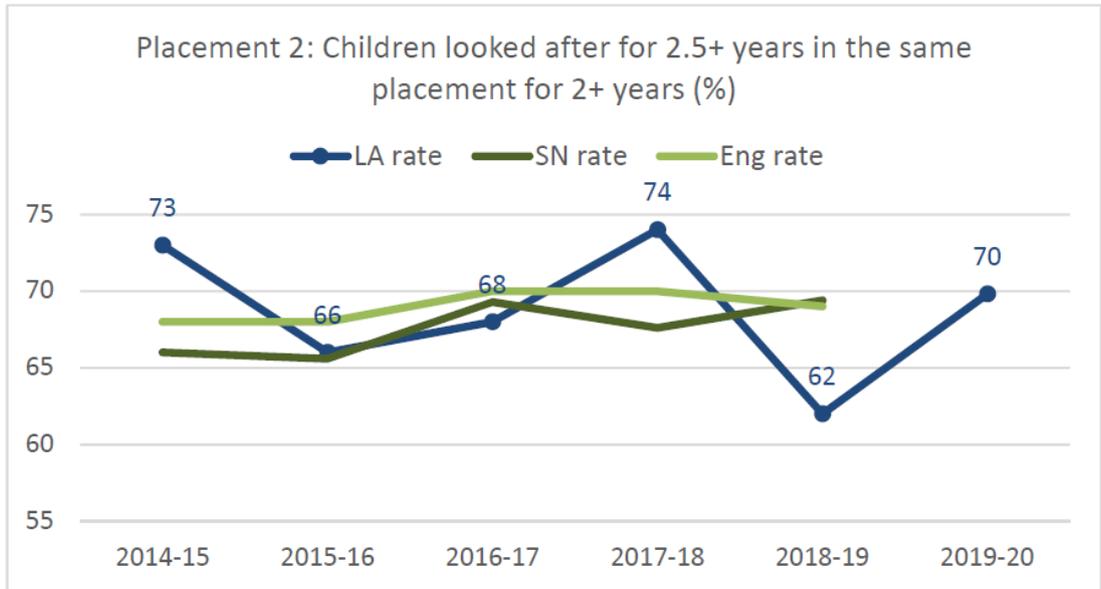
1. Numbers of children in care which had stabilised during the 2013 – 2015 sufficiency duty period remained so in 2015 – 2016 but started to rise in 2016 – 2017 and has continued to rise in 2017/2018, 2018/2019 and 2019/2020. Further work was undertaken to improve the quality of foster care and a year-round recruitment campaign continued for foster carers and adopters. Additional investment was made to develop the website in fostering to help with the recruitment campaign. The Isle of Wight collaborated with other local authorities in the south east to develop a new framework for Independent Fostering Agencies and a framework for residential providers is in place. A new framework for SEND residential placements is underway. This is to improve the quality of provision, introduce competitive pricing and to manage the local markets to ensure provision better matches geographic need. Additional local capacity in the residential children's homes and supported accommodation sectors was also commissioned.
2. The leaving care team continued to improve transitions and outcomes for care leavers with over 95% of all care leavers in suitable accommodation. The Isle of Wight Council chaired the multi-agency 16 to 25 supported housing strategy group called pathways to independence. This group contributed to the re-commissioning of the supporting people supported accommodation for young people provision creating ten high needs placements. The functions of this group are now embedded as business as usual and the group has concluded.
3. The rate of children in care has continued to rise since the last sufficiency duty report. The rate is 106 per 10,000, higher than the England average and statistical neighbours. The rate of children starting to become looked after is higher than the rate of children ceasing to be looked after. This difference will continue to create a net increase in the rate.



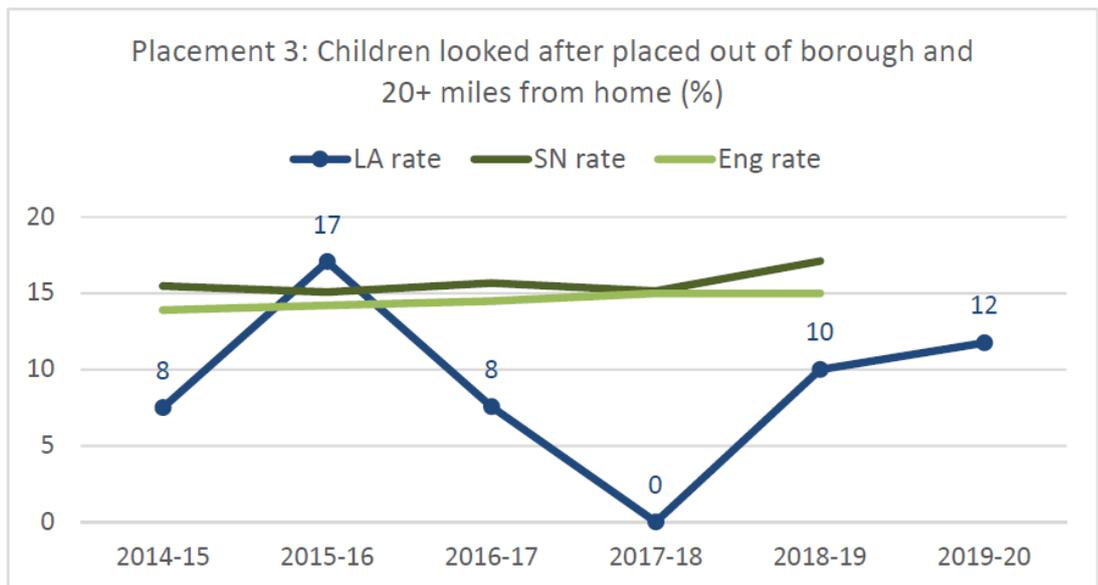


The number of placement moves are monitored through the Performance Action Group. Each placement moved is scrutinised to see if it was a positive or negative move.

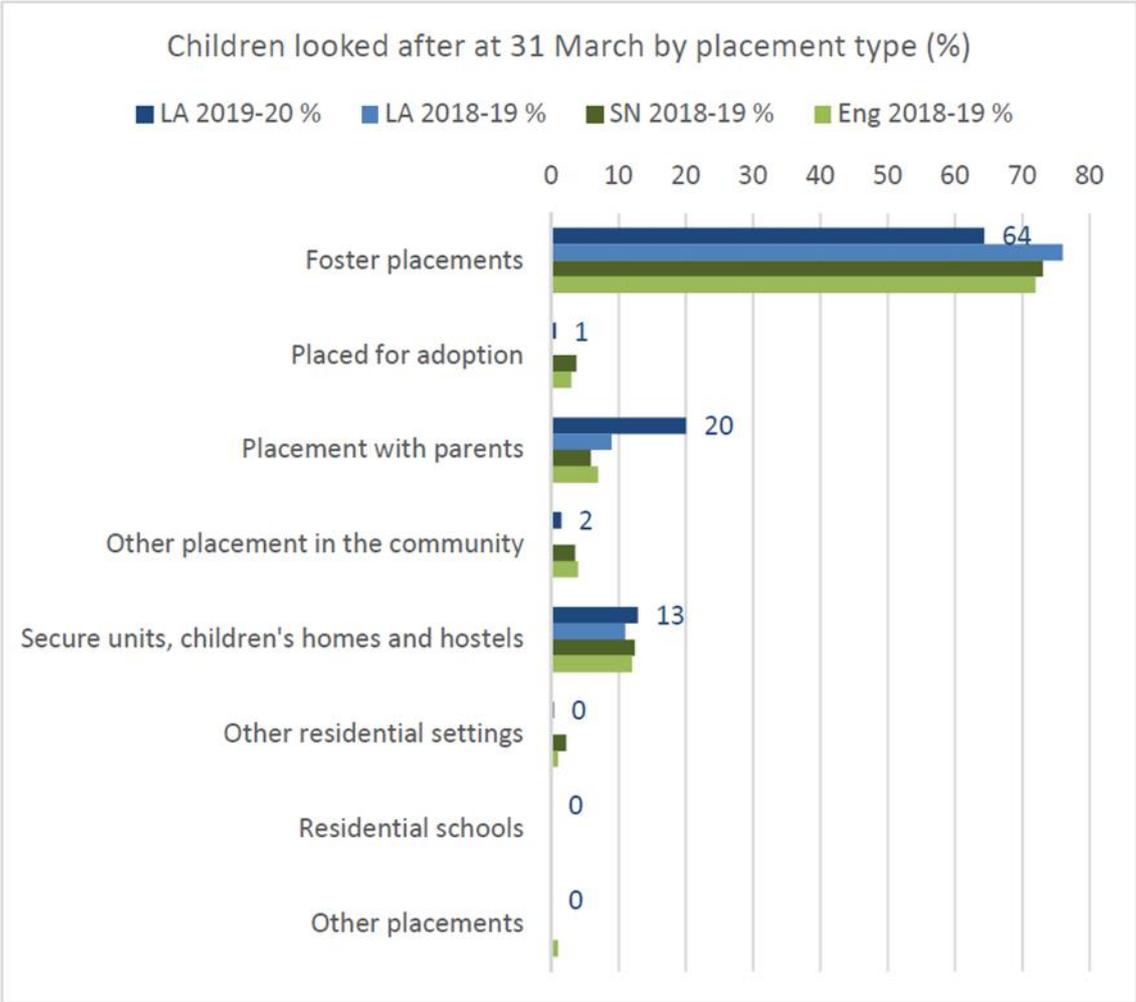




More children in care on the Isle of Wight have been in the same home for longer compared to other children in care in our statistical neighbours and nationally.



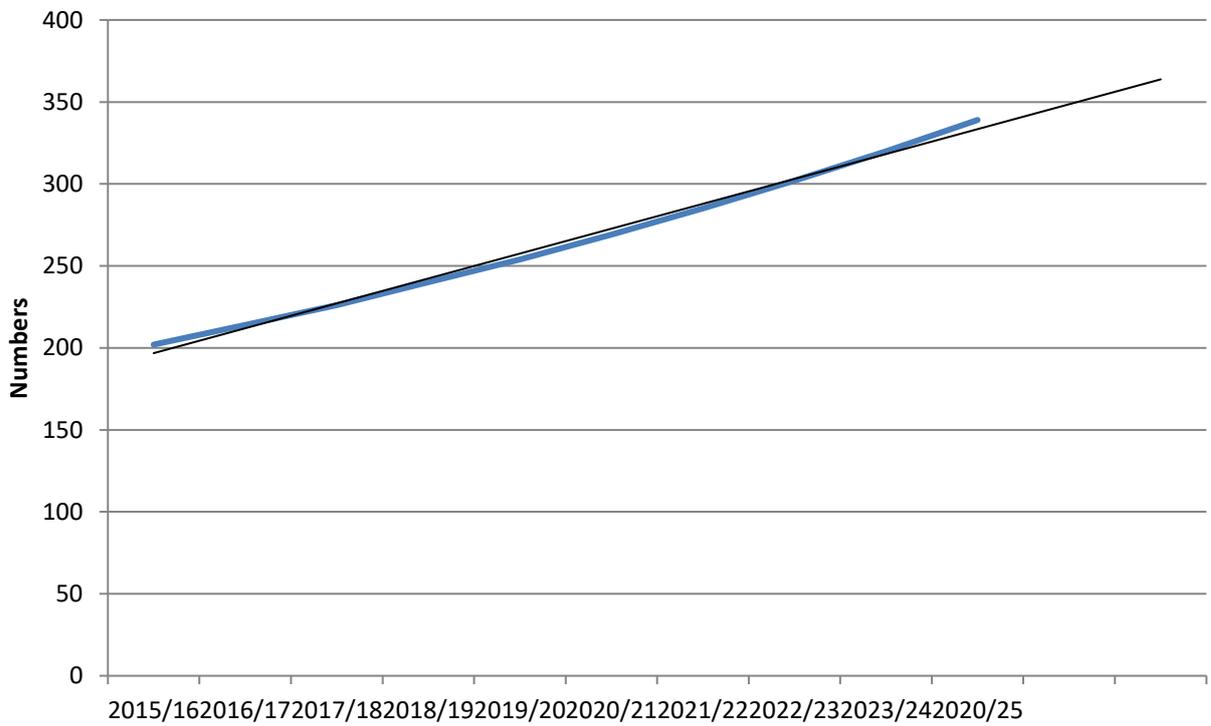
Fewer children in care on the Isle of Wight live outside of the local authority area compared to other children in care in our statistical neighbours and nationally.



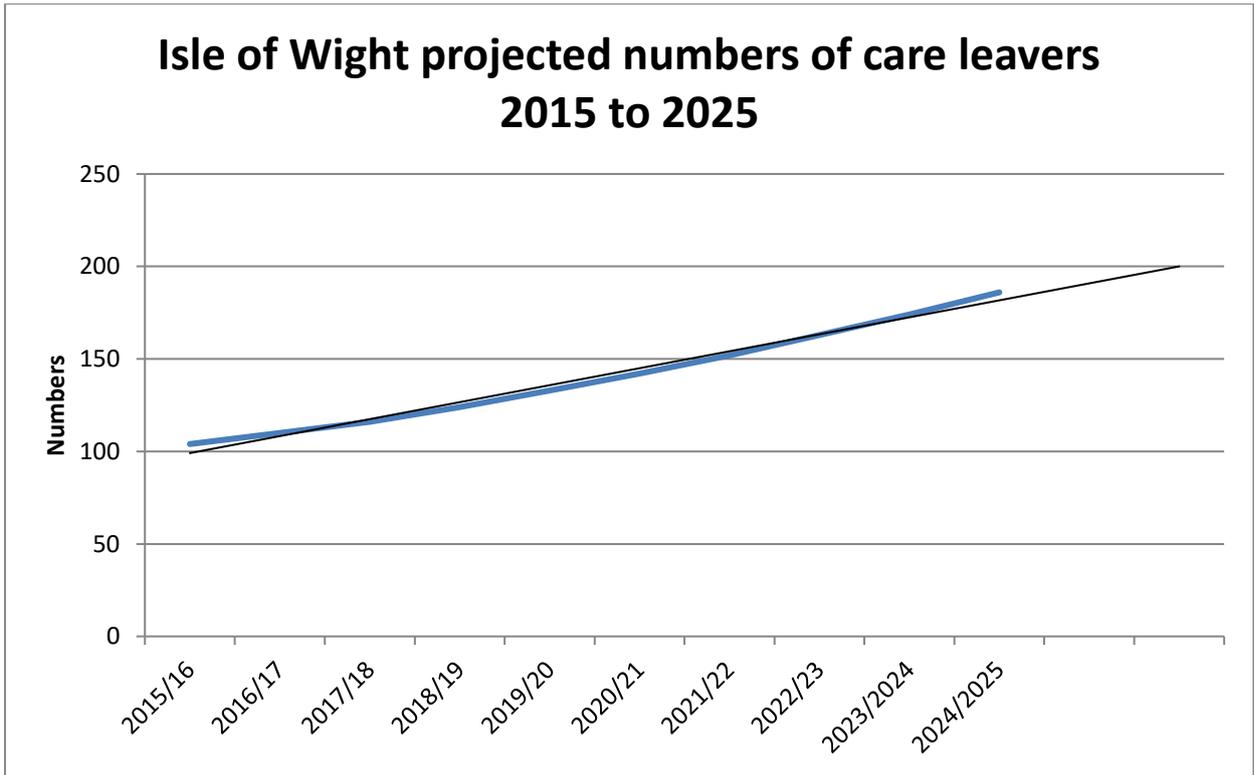
The majority of children in care live in foster families. A higher number of children in care are living with parents on placement parent orders issued by the courts. These are reviewed regularly.

- There is an estimated reduction in the child population through to 2021 in all age groups except the 15 – 19-year olds which is estimated to rise by 1.67% (1% per annum). This is may be a factor to consider when estimating the future age profile of children in care. However, throughout the period of the last sufficiency duty report, the rate locally and nationally has continued to rise as had the complexity of needs of children coming into care. The previous trajectory has been accurate in projecting the number of children coming into care locally which now stands at 270 as of July 2020.

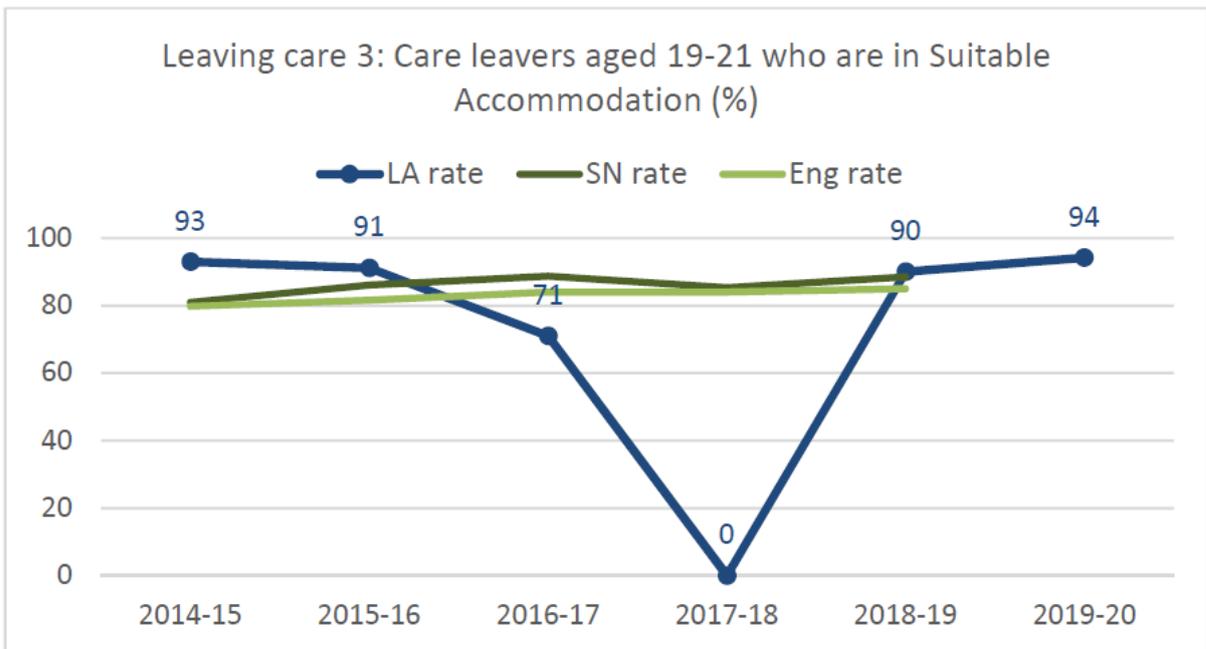
### Isle of Wight projected numbers of children in care 2015 to 2025



5. The average number of children in care per month in 2015 – 2016 was 202, in 2016 – 2017 this rose 6% to 214 and in 2017 – 2018 this rose a further 6% to 226 as of August 2017. By July 2020, this had risen to 270, a rise since August 2017 of 20%. Based on this annual rise in children in care plus the 1% annual rise in the general population for 15 to 19-year-old, the numbers of care leavers is projected to rise.



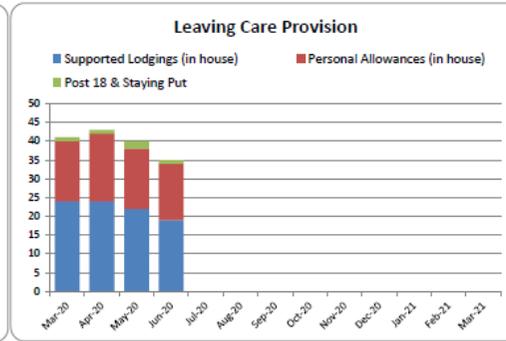
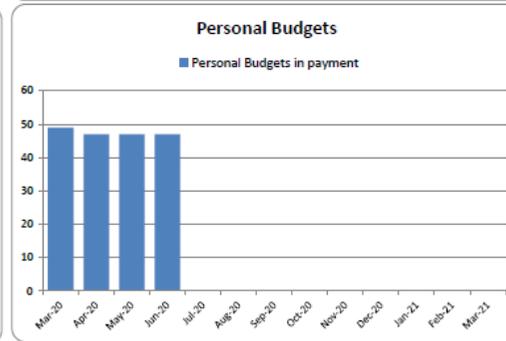
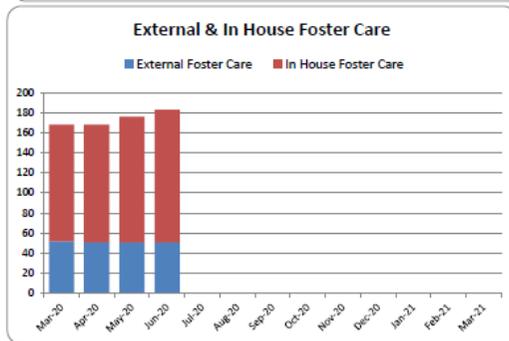
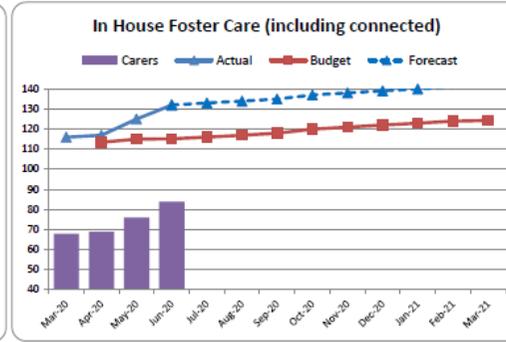
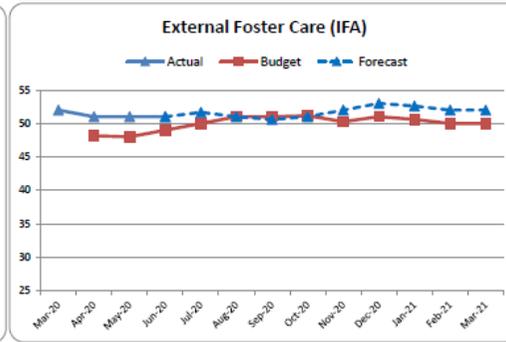
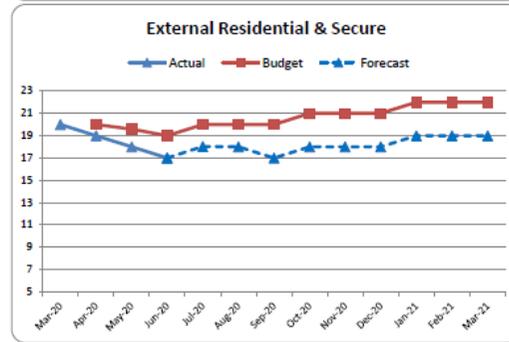
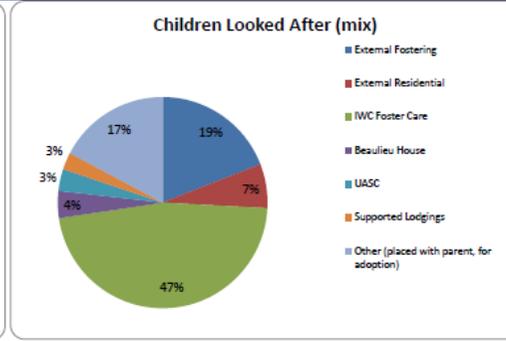
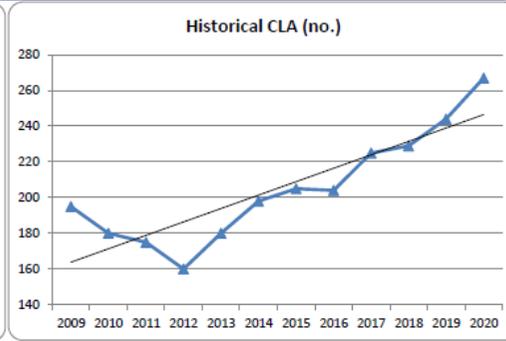
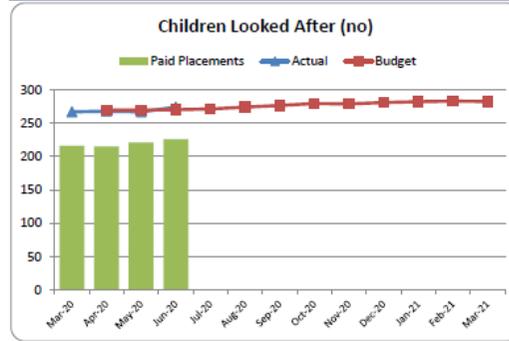
Despite these rising number, more care leavers on the Isle of Wight continue to be in suitable accommodation compared to care leavers in our statistical neighbours and the England average.



6. This sufficiency duty report contributes to local care leavers strategy, local offer for care leavers and the other requirements established in the Children and Social Work Act 2017. The priorities for action identified within this 2020 to 2023 sufficiency duty report is to for more specialist local residential and 16+ supported accommodation for children with complex and high needs. Housing Services is re-tendering the supporting people funded supported accommodation provision to provide some of this more specialist local capacity. The aim of the Isle of Wight Council is to deliver an integrated cross-council accommodation offer with partner organisations and local providers that creates pathways to independence for children in care and care leaver.

Section 5.2 - Activity Graphs

Jun-20



## 20 Appendix B: Governance

There is a clear governance structure for the development and implementation of each element of the strategy to meet the sufficiency duty. There is a service plan for each element and six-monthly reporting to the County Performance Action Group (PAG). Key targets are reflected in the Quality Improvement Plan (QUIP) with regular reports to the Children and Families Management Team.



## 21 Appendix C: South East comparisons of children looked after

Summary of Children Placed In/ Outside of the Responsible LA (Children Looked After at 31st March 2019)							
	<i>c</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>i</i>
Local Authority	Total LAC ( <i>d+e</i> )	LAC placed within the local authority boundary	LAC placed outside of the local authority boundary	LAC who were the responsibility of all local authorities placed within the local authority boundary ( <i>d+g</i> )	LAC who were the responsibility of an external local authority placed within the local authority boundary	LAC who were the responsibility of Other South East local authorities placed within the local authority boundary	LAC who were the responsibility of Non-SE Local authorities placed within the local authority boundary ( <i>g-h</i> )
Bracknell Forest	158	87	71	175	88	64	24
Brighton and Hove	391	159	232	226	67	48	19
Buckinghamshire	515	224	291	401	177	106	71
East Sussex	600	507	93	770	263	172	91
Hampshire	1664	1084	580	1721	637	469	168
Isle of Wight	243	193	50	266	73	56	17
Kent	1590	1376	214	2548	1172	387	785
Medway	424	239	185	635	396	146	250
Milton Keynes	381	226	155	417	191	60	131
Oxfordshire	779	484	295	590	106	33	73
Portsmouth	486	220	266	305	85	71	14
Reading	273	88	185	136	48	44	4
Slough	213	66	147	135	69	38	31
Southampton	481	201	280	321	120	90	30
Surrey	973	463	510	743	280	108	172
West Berkshire	172	100	72	229	129	95	34
West Sussex	704	529	175	870	341	266	75
Windsor and Maidenhead	124	49	75	91	42	35	7
Wokingham	110	43	67	114	71	65	6
<b>SOUTH EAST</b>	<b>10281</b>	<b>6338</b>	<b>3943</b>	<b>10693</b>	<b>4355</b>	<b>2353</b>	<b>2002</b>

End.