

Excellent Families and Homes for Children in Care



**Tameside Council's
'Sufficiency Strategy'
2022 -2025**



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1. Introduction

What do we want to achieve with a “sufficiency strategy”

Excellent Families and Homes for Children in Care is the name of our “sufficiency strategy”. A sufficiency strategy sets out how Tameside Council will make sure there are enough good quality, sustainable, families, homes, and services to look after the children and young people we care for. This is a requirement of the Children’s Act 1989 and is commonly referred to as ‘the sufficiency duty’.

Making sure we have enough of the right, high quality homes and families in Tameside to care for our children, is an important priority for the whole council and our partners. In 2022 this is a vital part of the council’s transformation agenda and involves colleagues from health, housing, adults, schools, colleges, police, registered landlords, children’s services, transformation, human resources, finance and many more. We are all taking responsibility to work together to make sure our children have the right services to care for them in our borough.

This document sets out how sufficiency links to the wider plans and strategies of the council and our vision and outcomes that we want to achieve for our children. It also provides some key information about who the children we care for are and the provision we currently have to meet their needs.



2. Strategic Links

The Corporate Plan

The sufficiency strategy links into a number of key strategies and plans. Our Corporate Plan and should be considered alongside it.



This strategy supports the Corporate Priorities of:



Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Children and Young People: Growing up in Tameside

The strategy also links to Tameside's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Children and Young People; Growing up in Tameside.

Corporate Parenting Strategy

This strategy also aligns to the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

Early Help Strategy

The sufficiency strategy links to our Early Help Strategy 2020-2022, 'Smarter, Stronger, Sooner, Safer'¹ which sets out our vision to support children, young people and their families through early help in Tameside.

The strategy will reduce the overall number of children in care, and will consequently reduce the overall number of families, homes and services needed to care for our children.

Greater Manchester Children's Plan and Greater Manchester Sufficiency Strategy 2020-2022

Tameside is part of Greater Manchester and works collaboratively on the Greater Manchester Children's and Young People Plan² and, with particular relevance for this strategy, the Greater Manchester Sufficiency Strategy³. This strategy and action plan has been written in the context of these documents, and links to the GM strategy and workstreams.

SEND Joint Commissioning Strategy

This sets out how we will work together to commission services jointly with partners for children with SEND.

¹www.tameside.gov.uk/TamesideMBC/media/Children/EarlyHelpStrategyGuide.pdf

²www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/2115/gmca-children-young-peoples-plan-2019-2022.pdf

³greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/3849/gmca_childrens_sufficiency_strategy_20-22_final.pdf

3. Our 'Sufficiency' Vision

When children do need to be cared for by the council our vision for our children is that:

They have access to good quality homes, families and services close to their home communities

The children we care for have the opportunity to live with families

Where children do need to live in children's homes this will act as an intervention to support them to successfully live with families and independently in the future

The homes and families where our cared for children live will be caring and will nurture and protect them

The people who care for our children will help address and deal with the trauma they have experienced

Our children are prepared for adult life by the families and homes that care for them



4. Our Pledge to Children in Care

We will measure the outcomes and impact of our sufficiency strategy against the pledge we have made to our children in care.



The Tameside pledge was co-produced with young people who are equal partners in designing our pledge for Cared for young people. We strongly believe that those who use our services are best placed to design it.

While you are in care we are your corporate parents. In Tameside we take this responsibility seriously and we will only promise you things we believe we can do

Our Pledge to all our Cared for Children is that we will:

- Prioritise your health and wellbeing
- Listen to what you say and take your views seriously
- Help you understand your journey and what's happening in your life
 - Provide a place for you to live that make you feel safe
- Make a plan with you that will explain how we will look after you
 - Ask you what you think you need
- Act on what you have told us and get back to you quickly
- Help you to participate in having your voice heard and in doing so help us make our services better for you
 - Provide opportunities to meet other young people
- Recruit permanent staff with you so that we are choosing the best workforce for our young people
- Expect all professionals who work with you such as social workers, support workers and independent reviewing officers to give you the time you need to build relationships with them


Cllr Brenda Warrington, Executive Leader, Tameside Council


Cllr Bill Fairfoull, Deputy Executive Leader (Children and Families)

5. The ‘language of care’

The children we care for have asked us to change some of the terms we use to describe care and the services we provide for them. In this strategy we will describe the children who we looked after as Cared for Children (CfC).

Our Cared for Children have also asked that we stop using the word ‘placement’ to describe where they live. They have asked us to describe their ‘homes’ or ‘where they live’. This is how we will refer to where they live in this strategy.

Services for our young people who are 16 and 17 which provide supported and semi-independent living have been called many different names including ‘leaving care services’, unregulated, Supported and Independent Living Services (SAILS), and post 16 provision. In its announcement launching new national standards for this provision the Department for Education has set out that this provision will now be called ‘supported accommodation for young people’ which will be used in this document.⁴

Children’s homes can be called ‘residential’ as a service type, but the homes should never be called ‘units’.



⁴www.gov.uk/government/consultations/introducing-national-standards-for-unregulated-provision

6. Guiding Principles

The children we care for should live close to their home communities

Our children we care for should live with families where it is possible

We will honour the commitments we have made in our Pledge to Cared for Children



We will work in partnership with other agencies to support our cared for children.



We will LISTEN to our cared for children and coproduce services with them in line with our LISTENing coproduction framework⁵

Have the highest expectations for children and young people

We ensure there is a rigorous focus on the preparation for adulthood.

⁵[www.tameside.gov.uk/TamesideMBC/media/PublicHealth/J002317-Listening-in-Tameside-V4-\(2\).pdf](http://www.tameside.gov.uk/TamesideMBC/media/PublicHealth/J002317-Listening-in-Tameside-V4-(2).pdf)

7. What the law says about sufficiency and homes for our children

The Childrens Act 1989 requires local authorities to take reasonable steps to secure sufficient accommodation for children who cannot live at home and need to live in local authority care. This is commonly referred to as ‘the sufficiency duty’.

The statutory guidance on securing sufficient accommodation for children in care sets out the local authority’s responsibilities in more detail and it has shaped how we have written this strategy. This strategy reflects Tameside’s commitment to care for our children in the ways which are most suitable for each child, in line with an understanding of their needs and listening to their voice.

The strategy provides some analysis of the number of children requiring care in Tameside, the nature and level of their needs, and makes some predictive analysis of future levels of demand. It reflects on the services and developmental activity aimed at minimising care admissions, so that only those children who really need to become “cared for” do so, with other children receiving the help they need to maintain them in their own family settings. Importantly, the strategy (and its underpinning action plan) seeks to provide a vision for creating and maintaining enough of the right kinds of care provision for children who need it, in the short, medium and longer term.

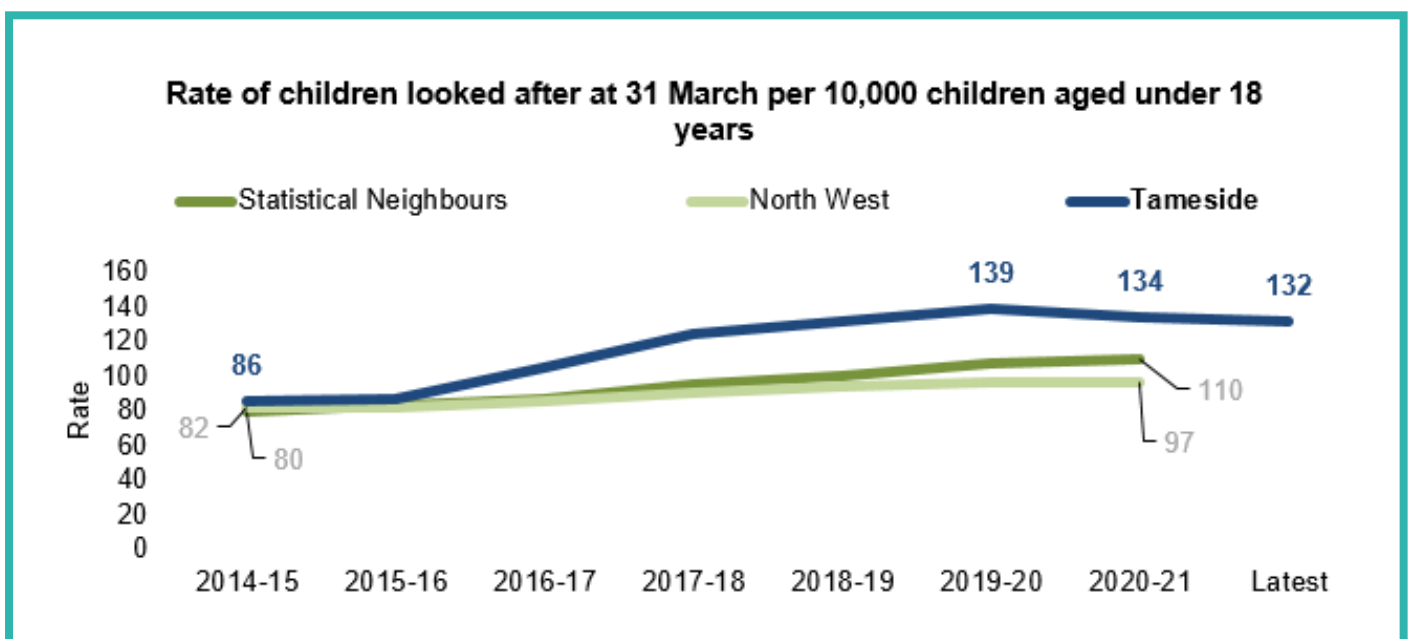
An accompanying Sufficiency Action Plan, provides a programme of work which will deliver on the vision set out within the strategy. Equality and diversity issues have been a feature of our consideration in developing this strategy. The profile of our population, and of our children in care is well understood. Our processes provide for a regular and thorough review of our children in care, their specific needs and the availability and type of homes and services to provide for them.

8. Tameside's Children and Young People Population

Tameside's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Children and Young People includes detailed information on Tameside 67,683 children and young people aged 0-24. This is almost a third of all residents and similar to England.

Our cared for population is larger than regional or statistical neighbours though the number of children in care has declined across 2021.

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Latest	% change from '19-20 to '20-21	
Tameside	86	87	105	124	132	139	134	132.0	Down	-5%
Statistical Neighbours	80	83	87	95	101	107	110		Up	3%
North West	82	82	86	91	94	97	97		Same	0%



9. Fostering

It is our vision that “The children we care for have the opportunity to live with families” and fostering is absolutely central to delivering on that promise. Its importance is reflected in how explicitly it’s referenced in the corporate strategy Our People, Our Plan, Our Place under strand 4 ‘Resilient Families and Supportive Networks’ where there is a commitment to ‘Increased levels of fostering and adoption’.

9.1 Internal Fostering

We are ambitious about our internal fostering service, and our investment in recruitment, training and quality are the cornerstones of how we will ensure our children have the opportunity to live with families in our borough.

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Recruited Foster Carers	124	117	118	111	111	101
Connected Cares	60	64	78	103	86	81
Total FC House Households	184	181	198	214	197	182
Number of children living with Tameside recruited foster carers.	163	164	180	165	149	152
Number of children living with connected foster carers	73	87	103	130	118	116
Recruited occupancy rate	1.31	1.4	1.52	1.49	1.34	1.5

Increasing the number of foster carers in Tameside's service

Tameside signed off a new marketing strategy in 2021 which sets out comprehensive and ambitious targets for fostering recruitment. It aims to increase the number of our children living with in house foster families by **34%**, which equates to a net growth of approximately 70-80 foster carers over the next three years. The key groups of cared for children in need of foster care identified were:

- All age groups, particularly 5+ (In 2019/20, **38% of children over 5** were placed with an IFA)
- BAME children (**12%** BAME children in foster care vs **4.4%** BAME carers)
- SEND children (Children with an ECHP or disability more likely to be placed with an IFA than children without)
- Sibling groups (**5 out of 47 sibling groups** could not remain together due to lack of suitable in-house options)
- Children placed in residential care with a permanence plan of fostering. A specific focus is on those children placed at distance.

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority's Sufficiency Strategy has identified "Grow Foster Care" as one of its two Commissioning Themes⁶. As part of this a growth strategy has been developed for GM LAs including collaborative recruitment activity which builds on previous projects Tameside has participated in on a North West scale such as You Can Foster.

Connected Carers

Connected carers are friends and families who are assessed as being able to provide safe and caring homes for our children in care. There are 59% more children living with connected carers in 2020/2021 compared to 2015/16. Supporting and enabling more connected carers will increase our children's opportunities to live with families in line with our vision.

How we will make the change

The enablers of our strategy for internal fostering growth include:



⁶greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/3849/gmca_childrens_sufficiency_strategy_20-22_final.pdf page 27.

9.2 Externally Provided Fostering

Where a child needs a foster family to care for them, and an appropriate home cannot be found with the internal service, Tameside will seek to source a family from an Independent Foster Agency to provide care.

Tameside has, since 2011, used regionally procured and developed North West Frameworks and, latterly, Purchasing Systems to secure foster families. In December 2020 monitoring suggested 100% of our IFA foster families had been secured through this arrangement. However, where appropriate we do refer more widely. Information on how Independent Fostering Agencies can join in Purchasing Systems can be found here: www.nwadcs.org.uk/regional-purchasing-systems

We work with our colleagues in the North West to monitor the number of foster families who live in Tameside. There is a very wide number of companies/brands who operate in our area with twenty two different brands reported carers living in Tameside, which is half of all companies with carers in the North West.

Provider Name	1. July 2019	2. December 2019	3. December 2020
Provider	0	0	1
Provider	2	4	2
Provider	3	3	2
Provider	5	5	5
Provider	6	7	5
Provider	6	6	5
Provider	2	3	4
Provider	1	2*	3
Provider	1		
Provider	9	10	10
Provider	2	2	2
Provider	3	3	3
Provider	6	6	6
Provider	1	1	0
Provider		1	1
Provider	1	2	2
Provider	1	2	3
Provider	3	2	2

Provider	6	7	9
Provider		1	0
Provider	1	1	1
Provider	1	1	1
Provider	5	5	5
Provider	1	1	1
Provider	2	5*	9
Provider	2	2	Tbc
Grand Total	70	82	82 (84**)

**Estimates taken at midpoint between 2019 and 2020 figures.*

***Estimate assuming final provider maintained 2 households.*

The number of foster families supports our ability to find local homes for our children, however a significant proportion of the capacity is taken up by other local authorities. Analysis from Greater Manchester's sufficiency strategy shows Manchester has almost as many children placed in our borough as we do.

Local Authority		Hosted Within									
		Bolton	Bury	Manchester	Oldham	Rochdale	Salford	Stockport	Tameside	Trafford	Wigan
Placed By	Bolton	27	6	7	4	0	4	2	0	0	7
	Bury	5	23	1	3	4	0	0	5	0	4
	Manchester	15	30	95	55	39	15	34	38	39	13
	Oldham	1	1	6	6	8	0	1	3	0	0
	Rochdale	2	5	8	8	31	2	4	0	3	0
	Salford	8	2	4	1	2	10	0	1	2	6
	Stockport	2	0	7	2	2	1	4	2	0	0
	Tameside	0	5	10	19	18	1	22	41	2	1
	Trafford	0	0	6	0	1	1	5	1	14	0
	Wigan	4	1	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	26

The table also shows our focus on placing our children close to home, with our next largest number of children living in Stockport, Oldham, Rochdale and Manchester respectively. We will work together on these challenges as Greater Manchester through the GM Children's Plan and the GM Sufficiency Strategy.

Greater Manchester's sufficiency strategy includes partnering with the IFA sector to understand the market and support growth as part of its Commissioning Theme Grow Foster Care. It is also seeking to establish a GM Foster Carer retention and recruitment working group including IFAs⁷.

How we will make the change

Enablers to work more closely with IFAs to grow capacity in Tameside, and for us to increase the number of children who live in the borough:

We will encourage Independent Fostering Agencies to recruit more foster carers in Tameside

We have invested in our Commissioning services to work more effectively with IFAs to ensure our children access good quality services locally.

Working with Greater Manchester Combined Authority 'Grow Fostering' strategy

9.3 Specialist fostering for our children who need more support

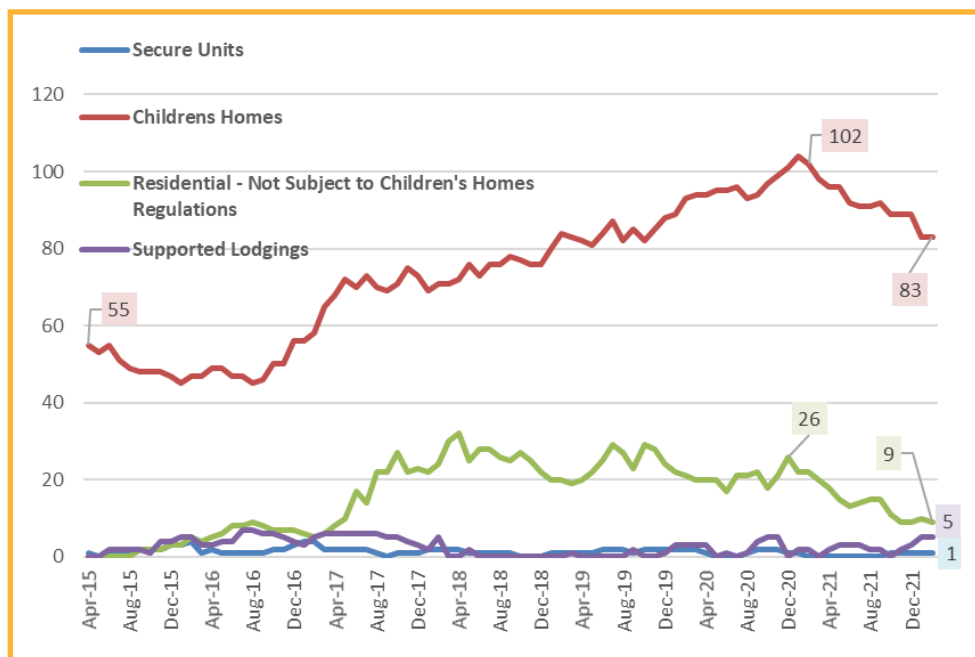
The North West Fostering Purchasing system has categories for bespoke fostering arrangements to be created for our children who need more support. It also includes a Greater Manchester Specialist Fostering Category on the North West FPS. This includes IFAs who have committed to long term matching activity for young people who need additional support to live with families.

Through this activity we have been able to successful support a number of our children who need greater help to live with families.

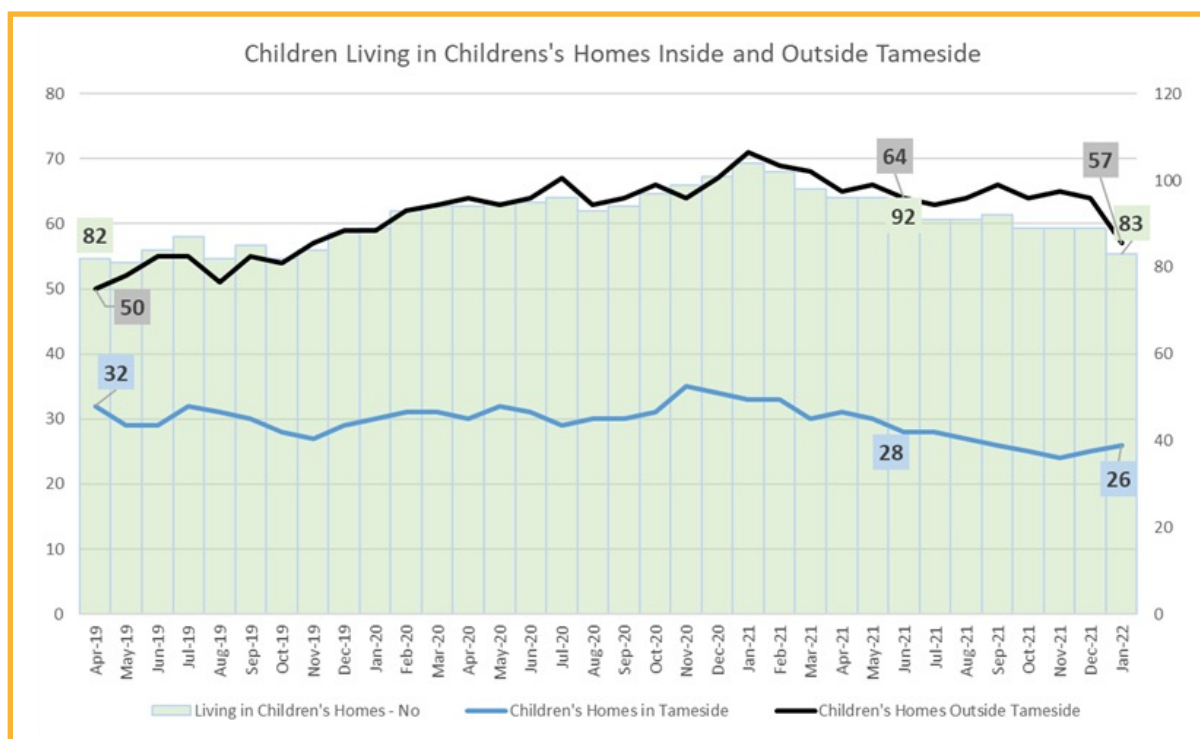
⁷greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/3849/gmca_childrens_sufficiency_strategy_20-22_final.pdf page 27

10. Children's Homes

While it is our vision that our children will live with families we recognise that children's homes will remain an important part of the services that care for our children. We have invested in our children's home and we know the role that homes will play will change over time. It is our vision that **"Where children do need to live in children's homes this will act as an intervention to support them to successfully live with families and independently in the future;"**



The covid pandemic appears to have had a particular impact on the number of children living in children's homes with numbers peaking in January 2021 before returning to pre-pandemic levels in September 2021:



When Tameside has been looking for children's homes options for our children we have often struggled to find Ofsted registered services who can care for our children who have the following needs:

- Our children with suicidal ideation and self-harm
- Our children who are acting out with violence to staff and others
- Our children who 'go missing' very frequently
- Our children who have had many breakdowns in previous children's homes or foster families

Our children with these needs are more likely to be placed further away from Tameside. We have robust plans in place to address these shortfalls in provision, but would continue to welcome discussions with services who can work with our children with these needs in Greater Manchester.

10.1 Internal Children's Homes

Tameside has made a considerable commitment to providing children's homes for the children it cares for and we are committed to doing even more and doing better.

At the time of writing the strategy Tameside has five active children's homes:

Children's Home	Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties	Learning Difficulty	Physical Disabilities	Max Users
Chester Avenue	Y			3
Boyd's Walk		Y	Y	6
Clough Fold	Y			3
Stockport Road	Y	Y		4
Durham Drive	Y			3

As part of the '7 projects for LAC Sustainability' investment a further two new children's homes are being developed with a model called 'Positive Futures'.

- St Lawrence Road: A three bedroom assessment hub with emergency provision. A service young people who are within or on the edge of care. The home integrates residential services with wider support to care for more complex young people who are in crisis. It will go live in 2022 and will offer a new model of care in Tameside. Linking to fostering and other provision it will support our vision as children's homes as an intervention to help our children live with families.

- [Property being finalised] A three bedroom house to meet the needs of 2 children with staff facilities on the edge of care to avoid family breakdown. A new intensive service, which will work with the wider early help offer to support our children and families in crisis and reduce the need for children to come into care.
- Chester Avenue (solo): A further solo children's home service is being registered with Ofsted at the time of writing which will be able to care for some of our most vulnerable young people in our borough. It is integrated with our wider children's home offer and will allow for our young people to be 'stepped down'

Reviewing and developing provision for the future

A comprehensive review of our existing five children's homes offer has been underway in 2021. This review seeks to ensure:

- Our existing children's homes model of working is integrated and coherent with the new Positive Futures homes
- Homes are meeting our vision for residential and fostering
- Our homes are supporting our children to live in Tameside and return to the borough.
- Our children's homes are properly equipped and able to meet the needs of our current cared for children
- Our homes can care for children who need more help and support

How we will make the change

Delivering and launching the two additional, innovative, residential services funded through the '7 projects for sustainability' called Positive Futures. This includes an edge of care service, and an assessment service informed by evidence based models.

Our residential review will ensure we have a modern and integrated residential offer.

Working with our partners in housing, health, education, police and others to support our residential services.

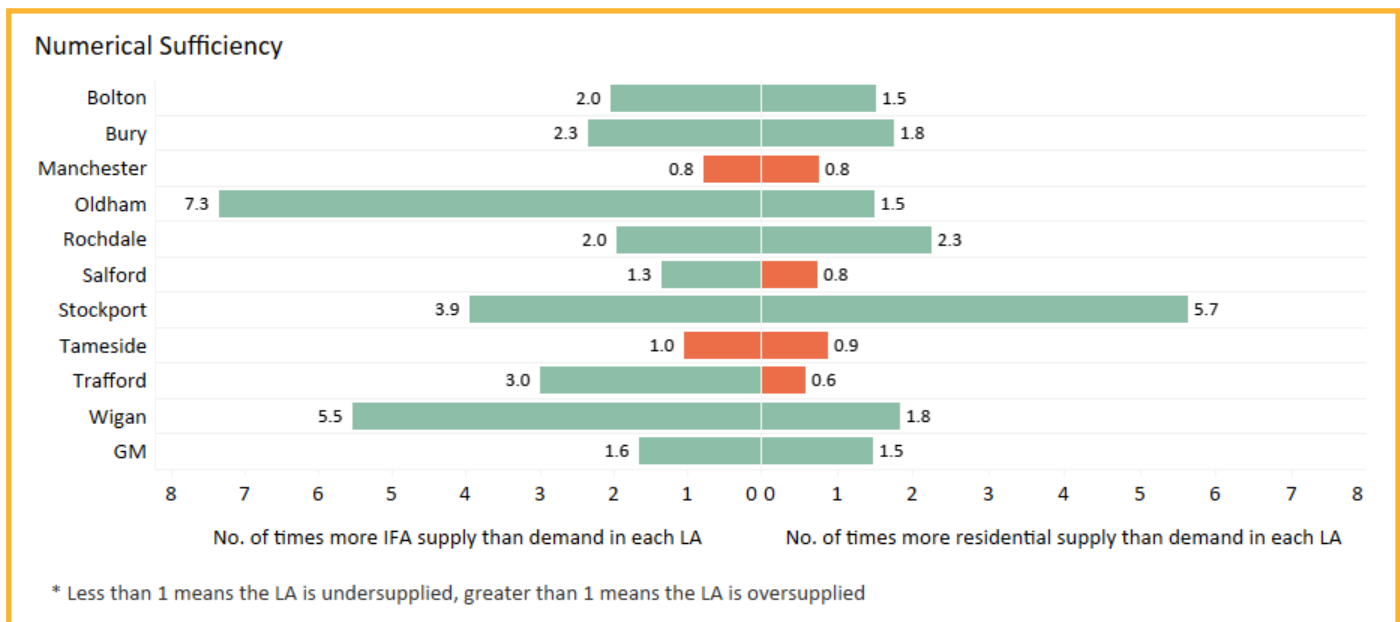
Development of the solo home

We will keep our children's home sufficiency under regular review and consider opportunities such as the DfE capital programmes

10.2 Private and Voluntary Children's Homes

Where internal provision cannot meet needs, purchased services are used to care for our children. Our current purchasing arrangements are mature and Tameside has been part of regional North West purchasing arrangements since 2011. These well-established purchasing systems⁸ give excellent routes to markets locally and nationally. Providers who wish to work with Tameside should apply to these purchasing systems.

Tameside has slightly fewer beds than the number of children living in children's homes, but this is offset by significant surplus capacity in the neighbouring boroughs of Stockport and Oldham. The gap is narrowing with additional homes opening in Tameside and the number of our children living in homes falling in the latter half of 2021.



While there are a range of homes providing a breadth of services for children in Tameside there are some gaps in the private provision operating in Tameside:

- There are no voluntary sector children's homes
- There are no services registered with Ofsted in the following service categories (Ofsted's service titles): Mental Disorders and Present Drug Problems
- The private provision in Tameside is unusually large. The average size of private provision is 4.5 beds compared to the average for the rest of GM being 3.3 beds
- There is no solo or dual provision in the borough, and no solo homes in the authorities who share borders with Tameside.

⁸www.nwadcs.org.uk/regional-purchasing-systems

Registration Date	Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties	Sensory Impairment	Present Alcohol Problems	Learning Difficulty	Physical Disabilities	Max Users	Town
29/06/2001	Y					4	HYDE
10/07/2001	Y			Y		3	ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE
07/11/2003	Y					7	HYDE
16/03/2005				Y	Y	6	ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE
02/03/2007	Y					5	ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE
06/02/2008	Y					4	STALYBRIDGE
21/07/2009	Y					6	MANCHESTER
15/06/2011	Y					5	MANCHESTER
10/09/2014	Y			Y		6	ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE
10/02/2017	Y					4	HYDE
08/04/2019	Y			Y		4	ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE
19/11/2019	Y					3	ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE
16/06/2020		Y		Y		4	DUKINFIELD
19/01/2021	Y					3	AUDENSHAW
01/10/2021	Y					4	ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE
05/11/2021	Y	Y	Y	Y		4	HYDE

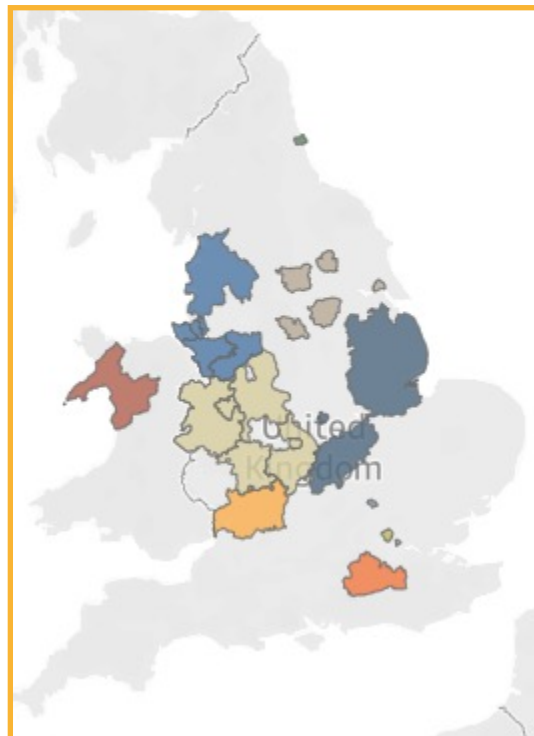
There is more provision opening in Tameside with three children's homes opening in 2021.

There are two homes who can meet the needs of children with disabilities and two for children with a sensory impairments.

A surface reading of children's home capacity in Tameside, Greater Manchester and the North West would suggest there is ample children's homes to meet the needs of our children. A **¼ of all England's children's homes** are in the North West, however, these are operating in the national market place and it is increasingly difficult to find quality homes in the right location for our children.

The challenges of the national market is identified in the following snapshot map which illustrates the diverse range of local authorities placing into private children homes located in Tameside. There are two homes in Tameside that have never cared for our children.

Greater Manchester notes this as a regional problem; “More [Cared for Children] were placed in residential care further outside of GM in 2020/21 than in 2019/20” with the sufficiency statement going on to note “Children with more complex needs are much less likely to be placed in GM,”. Tameside are active participants in the Greater Manchester Sufficiency strategy which identifies ‘More Local Placements’ as a key ‘Commissioning Theme’ identifying projects including:



- Creating new supply and/or reconfiguring existing services
- Partnering with the independent sector regarding Placing Closer to Home
- Better integrating service types such as children’s homes and supported accommodation for young people
- Reducing demand through early help and reunifications programmes such as no wrong door.

How we will make the change

Reducing the demand for external children’s homes through our early help strategy, fostering growth strategy, and investment in and redesign of our internal children’s homes

Working with Greater Manchester Combined Authority ‘More Local Placements’ strategy

Keeping our residential sufficiency under regular review.

Investment in the Brokerage and Monitoring team to deliver more effective market management to secure more capacity closer to home

11. Children's Homes for Children with Disabilities

One of Tameside's children's homes, Boyd's Walk, is registered for children with disabilities and there are two private providers in our borough that can meet the needs of children who have disabilities.

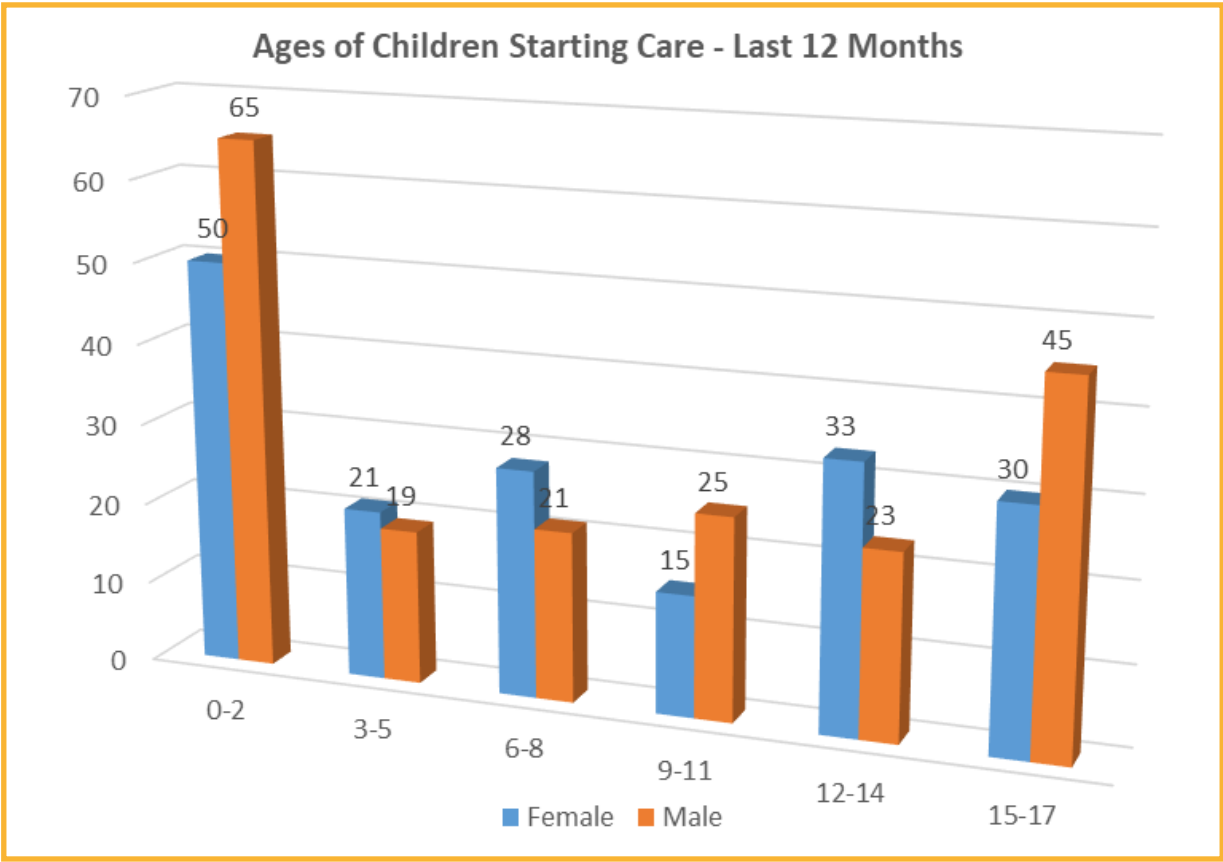


12. Supported Accommodation for Young People and Staying Put

Our vision is for our cared for children to live with families, so over time increasing numbers of our children will be able to access ‘Staying Put’ and remain with their foster carers after they are 18. For those of our young people for whom this is not possible we are working to expand the range of services that are available to provide high quality support and preparation for adulthood.

Supported Accommodation for our young people in care, young homeless people and our young adults who have left care is a strategic priority for transformation for the Council. We are working with partners from housing, transformation, children’s and adult services to improve the accommodation and support offer we have for young people and care leavers.

We know that in particular we have a number of boys starting care aged 16 to 17 and we will be working to provide better support to reduce the need to come into care, and widen the range of services for them if they do come into care.



12.1 Internal Provision

Tameside has two services it currently provides for Supported Accommodation from internal resource.

Transition Support Service

A service which offers support to young people aged 17 and 18 in 17 Transition Support Flats provided by Registered Landlords. The service provides an opportunity for young people to experience independent living while supported by the Transition Support Team for up to two years before moving on to their own home.

Support is provided by a dedicated Transition Support Team who work with young people.

Supported Lodgings

Tameside's Supported Lodging service has declined in size in recent years and currently has four 'providers' who are supporting 4 young adults in December 2021.

There are no private or voluntary providers who offer this service to our children and initial conversations with providers in November 2021 suggest there is very limited active recruitment of providers offering services.

Group Living, Supported Accommodation and Forums

Tameside does not currently have any Supported Accommodation for young people that it block contracts or delivers from internal services. It is currently purchasing such services from local private providers when the need arises.

The council in 2021 and 2022 has developed a number of cross cutting themes which are key transformation priorities. As part of the 'accommodation' strand there is a key focus on the accommodation options for our cared for children who preparing for independence, young people who are homeless and young adults.

We have invested in additional commissioning capacity to review our provision for our children leaving care and will bring forward a number of business cases for consideration to plan and deliver more effectively for the predictable need of our care leavers.

Supported Housing for young adults

Working in partnership with housing, transformation and across the council we are working to significantly increase the capacity of housing with additional support available for young adults who have left care and young homeless people.

The service which is sometimes referred to as 'Threshold' offers accommodation and support for young adults aged 18 or above. It's provided as part of a contracted arrangement and supports young people for up to two years and into accessing a flat.

Making sure our young adults who have left care have access to good quality and sustainable accommodation is a key focus for the whole council as part of it's 'Accommodation' transformation strand.

How we will make the change

Work with housing, adults, transformation, health and employment and skills to consider service models which are not currently operating in Tameside that might offer better opportunities for our young people and young adults. This will include, ideas such as the House Project, Forums, and other innovations operating elsewhere.

Review and develop our Supported Lodgings Offer including consideration of commissioned capacity

Widen the volume and range of accommodation options for our young adults who are leaving care

Increase the number of our young people accessing Staying Put with their foster families.

Consider opportunities to plan for predictable need and build or commission new group living capacity using the additional commissioning capacity invested in, in 2021.

12.2 External Provision

The largest number of Supported Accommodation services for our young people are provided by private providers. Our current purchasing arrangements are mature and Tameside has been part of regional North West purchasing arrangements since 2011. These well-established purchasing systems⁹ give excellent routes to markets locally and nationally.

The regional purchasing system includes the North West minimum standards for supported accommodation for young people. These have been operable since 2010 and establish a series of clear expectations on all providers which are assessed by Placements North West and are embedded into the contractual arrangements. The DfE has consulted upon and will be implementing national standards¹⁰ during the life of this sufficiency strategy.

Provider	Count
Group Living	50 providers across the NW
Floating Support with Accommodation	40 providers across the NW
Floating Support	33 providers across the NW

At the time of writing there are **15 companies** with who operate in Tameside. There has been continued interest from new and existing organisations in providing or developing new services in the borough.

There are not enough providers with effective relationships with local landlords who can offer floating accommodation and support, where the young person has the opportunity to keep their home when they turn 18, though there are providers who offer this service. We do not want services where young people have to give up their home when the support offer ends or is no longer needed.

Supported Lodgings

The North West Flexible Purchasing System has added a category for Support Lodgings. This will provide a route to secure more supported lodgings options for our young people. We will however consider if this is the best way to secure the best provision for our young people and are actively engaging with providers to ensure recruitment is happening in Tameside.

⁹www.nwadcs.org.uk/regional-purchasing-systems

¹⁰www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-on-national-standards-for-unregulated-provision-analytical-report

Increase the quality of services for our young people

We will only refer to providers who have been assessed against the North West Minimum Standards in the first instance.

How we will make the change



12.3 Staying Put

One of the visions of this strategy is that ‘the children we care for have the opportunity to live with families;’. Delivering this will mean that more of our children are living with foster families and consequently will have a greater chance to ‘Stay Put’. This will reduce our long term need for Supported Accommodation for Young People.

Tameside is currently more reliant than is typical on Independent Fostering Agencies. It is important that we ensure our approach to Staying Put is working as effectively for our young people cared for by IFAs as our own services.

Our approach to staying put is captured in our Staying Put Policy

www.proceduresonline.com/tameside/cs/chapters/p_stay_put_pol.html#supp

13. Provision available for our children:

Adoption

Tameside participates in Adoption Now, a Regional Adoption Agency. The agency is a consortia of 6 local authorities and is responsible for recruiting adopters and placing children.

The services is accountable to Tameside through the governance group.

Over the 2021 Tameside had the second greatest number of children placed for adoption of the RAA consortia.

	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Total
Blackburn	7	4	3	10	24
Bolton	7	9	8	5	29
Bury	1	3	3	4	11
Oldham	6	12	11	6	35
Rochdale	5	7	3	4	19
Tameside	7	8	1	14	30
RAA	33	43	29	43	



14. Avoiding criminalisation

Tameside supports **The national protocol on reducing unnecessary criminalisation of looked-after children and care leavers**¹¹. This protocol recognises that whilst the vast majority of looked-after children do not get into trouble, for a small number, contact with the criminal justice system can make it that bit harder to achieve positive outcomes. Whilst never taking away from the need to take responsibility for actions and their consequences, the right approach in responding to challenging behaviour or during contact with criminal justice agencies can help avoid unnecessarily criminalising looked-after children and care leavers, and promote better outcomes for them and society.

The protocol sets out key principles:

Avoid the prosecution of looked-after children and care leavers wherever possible and appropriate, by encouraging a response to incidents which reduces the likelihood of criminalisation, offending or reoffending through promoting:

- an understanding of trauma and attachment and their impact on neurodevelopment and behaviour amongst all key professionals;
- an understanding of where children (UK as well as foreign nationals) may have been coerced and subsequently criminally exploited (for example, through running county lines or in cannabis cultivation);
- the use of positive parenting whilst in care; o learning from incidents;
- listening to children and young people's voice/views and using this to inform practice;
- the development of strong understanding of local data and circumstances;
- use of restorative approaches; and o an attitude where all professionals ask themselves 'would such behaviour lead to an arrest if the child had been living with their family?'¹²

The protocol goes on to note that “police should not be used for low-level behaviour management or matters a reasonable parent would not have called the police over”¹³.

How we will make the change

- We will ensure the protocol and the responsibilities to avoid criminalisation are captured in our placement agreements
- Tameside benefits from a specialist Complex Safeguarding Service, whose expertise will support young people and can help shape service delivery.

¹¹assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/765082/The_national_protocol_on_reducing_unnecessary_criminalisation_of_looked-after_children_and_care_leavers.pdf

¹²[Ibid page 7](#)

¹³[Ibid page 18](#)

15. Moving Home

Our Children in Care Council were clear in the development of this strategy of how very important it is to make the move to a new home or family as good as possible. Many of our children and young people shared painful memories of their special things being lost, or the worry or uncertainty of not knowing what comes next. Some of our children and young people talked about arriving at families and homes, with little information about who is going to be caring for them.

Tameside will be joining other local authorities in signing the NYAS 'My Things Matter' pledge which is a set of promises that we will commit to. By signing the pledge it is our commitment to making sure that our children and young people have suitable luggage and their special things are packed properly and kept safe when they are moving home. It makes sure that our children and young people and their belongings are given the dignity and respect they deserve.

How we will make the change

We will help you to keep your most precious belongings with you safely during your move and promise they will not be moved in binbags.

We will provide written guidance for you and anyone helping you to move, which we will publish on our website.

We will communicate with you about your move and ask you how the move went.

We will support you to make a complaint if any of your belongings have been lost or damaged during your move.

We will never move or throw away your belongings without your consent and will always respect your personal property.

16. Ensuring families, homes and services are excellent

Tameside wants the homes and families that care for our children to be of the highest quality. Having sufficient provision does not just mean having enough places for children to live, it also means making sure those services are of the very best quality.

Tameside seeks to place our children with services which are rated as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted where ever possible.

We use a Quality Framework to monitor the quality of our provision which was launched in March 2020 and additional capacity has been put into the Brokerage and Monitoring service to support increased quality assurance activity

Ofsted Overall Effectiveness Rating	Number of children placed
Outstanding	78
Good	133
Requires Improvement	5
Inadequate	0
Not yet inspected	6

How we will make the change



Ensuring that services are making a difference and are working towards our vision

LISTENing to our children about what good services are

Having a focus of continuous improvement on our Quality Framework.

To make sure the homes and families that care for our children are preparing them for adult life.

17. Stability

All children need security, stability, love, a strong sense of identity and belonging in order to thrive and fulfil their potential. Planning for permanence in all stages of work within Childrens Service's increases the possibility that those children with the greatest need in our community have a secure, stable and loving family to support them through childhood and beyond.

Our Permanence Strategy sets out Tameside Council's commitment to securing permanence for all our children and how this will be achieved. Our priority is supporting children to remain at home within family where possible and when children are placed in the care of the local authority, it is our commitment to ensure these children have a clear plan for permanence



18. Ensuring our children have stable school placements

School is important in any child's life and the Children's Commissioner's stability index includes changes in school as one of its three key measures of stability for young people.

School stability is identified as one of the eight priorities of Tameside's Virtual School for 2020-2021¹⁴.



¹⁴www.tameside.gov.uk/virtualschool/reports Annual Report 2020-2021 page 1

19. What our young people are telling us about sufficiency

Our Children in Care Council gave us some very clear messages about what was important to them. Their comments and views run through this strategy like ‘a golden thread’ but we want to also capture them in this section, so there can be no doubt about what they think.

- That we feel safe, have stability and bond with the people who care for us.
- It's important that children have access to balanced diets
- We get help to support services like CAMHS when we need extra help
- That we are treated the same at school as everyone else, and that we can have extra help when we need it.
- We can have a place to stay in the holidays if we are university
- We should get the same opportunities who ever cares for us. We should have the same opportunities to do the things we like, and access services and events.
- We have a clear plan for independence and somewhere to move onto.
- Our homes and families keep their promises
- We have the opportunity to personalise our own spaces.
- We have stable school placements

If the Children in Care Council had a magic wand to address challenges in sufficiency they would:



Our young people agreed with our vision, but were also clear that sometimes fostering isn't right for them and a children's home might be better.

20. Covid

“We are all in the same storm, but we are not in the same boat”¹⁵

A covid sufficiency statement was produced in 2021 which captured the impact of covid on the services that care for our children and how they have responded. We know that while covid has impacted on all aspects of society we know that it has affected most those who were already facing, health, financial, housing and other inequalities.

We will need to be mindful of the much longer term consequences of covid and how this will have an impact on the children in Tameside who are in our care, and children who may need to come into care in the future. Our sufficiency plans will need to be flexible and adaptable.

How we will make the change

We will ensure our action planning to deliver the strategy continues to recognise that there may be more rapid changes to the needs of our children as a consequence of covid.



¹⁵A Tameside Parent at the Tameside Poverty Truth Commission Launch Event
www.youtube.com/watch?v=WoU24Mtxwao

21. Oversight and Governance

The progress and delivery of our Sufficiency Strategy is overseen by Tameside's Corporate Parenting Board. Reporting will be undertaken on an annual basis on progress against the action plan which accompanies this strategy and the Key Performance Indicators will track progress on delivering the vision.

The delivery of the Action Plan on a day to day basis will be owned by the Corporate Parenting Steering Group.



22. Sufficiency Performance Indicators

A suite of performance measures will help us identify if we are ‘making the change’ for our cared for children and ensure our plans are delivering as we hoped.

Vision 1

Our cared for children have access to good quality homes, families and services close to their home communities;

- Proportion of children placed in services rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted
- Number of children living in Tameside
- Proportion of children living more than 20 miles from home
- The proportion of children experience school stability

Vision 2

The children we care for have the opportunity to live with families;

- Proportion of all CfC living with families
- Annual net change in number of recruited foster carers
- Percentage of CfC living with connected carers

Vision 3

Where children do need to live in children’s homes this will act as an intervention to support them to successfully live with families and independently in the future;

- Proportion of children placed in children’s home who’s next move is to live with a family
- Number of children who move from one children’s home to another

Vision 4

The homes and families where our cared for children live will be caring and will nurture and protect them;

- The SDQ scores of our children

Vision 6

Our children are prepared for adult life by the families and homes that care for them

- The proportion of children who experience stable placements
- Number of care leavers in appropriate accommodation

Vision 5

The people who care for our children will help address and deal with the trauma they have experienced;

- The SDQ scores of our children
- The number of foster carers who have access training to support trauma

