

Appendix 3: Sufficiency Priorities

No.	Overarching Objective	Priorities	Completed by
1	<p>Grow our number of in-house foster carers, support the retention of carers and work with IFAs to ensure that children and young people can live with foster carer families when it is in their interests to do so</p>	<p>Recruit 35 new foster carer households in 2022/23 and a further 35 new foster carer households in 2023/24</p>	<p>March 2023 and March 2024</p>
		<p>Develop and launch the new fostering website</p>	<p>December 2023</p>
		<p>Launch the Mockingbird Model to support our in-house foster carers</p>	<p>July 2022</p>
		<p>Review the current Payment for Skills Model in consultation with foster carers, which seeks to improve our sufficiency of in-house foster carers, by attracting new carers and retaining existing carers and implement findings</p>	<p>October 2023</p>
		<p>Develop a 'wrap around support' team that will work intensively with our in-house foster carers to promote placement stability and prevent placement breakdown</p>	<p>March 2023</p>
		<p>Develop the respite foster care offer for children and young people with a disability</p>	

No.	Overarching Objective	Priorities	Completed by
			September 2022 – March 2024
		We will continue to work regionally with other Local Authorities to ensure that the new commissioning solution continues to be fit for purpose and to encourage off framework providers and new providers to join.	April 2022 – March 2024
		We will launch a new Provider Forum with our IFAs outside of our regional arrangements to share information about our demand, gaps in provision and to maximise effective partnership working.	September 2022

2	Increase the number of adopters	Ensure that the transition to Adopt Coast to Coast does not impact on the recruitment improvements made in 2020-2022.	March 2024
		Work collaboratively with RAA partners to develop practice around linking and matching, to reduce the waiting time for children when being matched to their forever family.	March 2024
3	Continue to develop and broaden our residential homes offer and maximise opportunities with external providers when there is a case to do so	Develop up to 4 x smaller children's homes. Two will accommodate up to two children and young people and a further two homes will accommodate one young person each. Homes to be operational in 2022 and 2023.	December 2022 and December 2023
		Develop an Edge of Care home	August 2023
		Re-provide a children's home for three young people	November 2023
		Continue to develop the residential peripatetic staffing team to support capacity and reduce the use of agency staff within homes.	April 2022 – March 2024

		Continue to have close oversight of the residential workforce to ensure that the experience and skills of the workforce continues to meet our sufficiency needs.	April 2022 – March 2024
		Continue to review the upper bedding capacity in our existing children’s home, taking into account ongoing sufficiency press	April 2022 / March 2024
		Develop a step down to foster care children’s home for younger children, by reviewing our existing children’s home provision	March 2024
		Develop a children’s home for disabled children and young people, in line with feedback from Ofsted. We will consider both DCC and provider led options, including new build options.	March 2025
		Develop a specialist short break home which offers planned respite for up to two children / young people with complex needs. We will consider both DCC and provider led options, including new build options.	March 2025

		Develop a Staying Close Programme for a small group of identified young people	July 2022 – March 2025
		We will continue to work with providers to sustain children and young people's residential home arrangements, offering support and solutions which minimises moved for children and young people.	April 2022 – March 2024
		We will continue to work closely with providers that wish to develop new Durham First services in County Durham, to shape services and to positively challenge development when this does not meet our needs.	April 2022 / March 2024
		We will review our potential future use of parent and child residential units and encourage providers to develop these services when there is an identified need.	March 2024
		We will explore options for working in partnership with a provider to develop a solo / dual registered children's home in County Durham, specifically for our use.	April 2022 – March 2024
		We will continue to play an active role in the NE12 regional consortia, working with neighbouring Local Authorities, to understand regional challenges, demand and to work collaboratively.	April 2022 – March 2024

		We will launch a new Provider Engagement Forum with our residential homes providers. This will be specific to Durham's local needs.	July 2022
		We will work with health partners to develop a new registered step down from hospital offer to meet the needs of children and young people with ongoing mental health needs.	March 2024
		As our capacity increases within in-house residential home provision, we will review our out of county placements, to understand which children and young people have a plan to move back into the area.	Ongoing
4	Develop access to a diverse range of appropriate accommodation for Care Leavers	Review the marketing and recruitment strategy for Supported Lodging providers	March 2023
		We will open up the Supported Accommodation Provider Panel for young people with complex needs, broadening our pool of providers.	October 2022
		Establish a new Provider Engagement Forum with supported accommodation providers.	September 2022
		Work with supported accommodation providers in relation to the regulation of provision, to understand any potential impact or emerging gaps in provision.	August 2022 – March 2024
5	Improve our sufficiency offer for	Work with local supported accommodation providers to explore the extension of existing services to meet our increasing accommodation and support needs for UASC.	December 2022

	UASC and reduce waiting times		
		Consider options and funding opportunities to develop a local supported accommodation and assessment hub, which will assess UASC over a 6 – 12-week period, before moving young people onto suitable long-term supported accommodation.	December 2022
		Develop a new supported accommodation assessment service for UASC	September 2023
		Continue to work in partnership with regional LAs to explore opportunities for joint commissioning	April 2022 – March 2024
6	Broaden our short breaks offer for disabled children and their families	Develop a Short Breaks Sufficiency Action Plan which highlights the range of actions that will be taken forward to address the ongoing challenges and gaps in provision, and to improve both the universal and statutory short breaks offer for children, young people and their families / carers	July 2022
		<p>Deliver a programme of non-assessed community short break improvements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Ensure that organisations maximise inclusion for disabled children in community activities across County Durham and have the right skills and experience to respond to young people’s needs. (ii) Further invest to enable children and young people with disabilities to access local universal activities, ensuring that parents / carers access regular breaks when these are needed and reducing the reliance on commissioned assessed services, preventing escalation of family needs. 	July 2022 – March 2024

		(iii) Continue to commission a menu of community activities for children unable to access the community due to their disability, without the need for a statutory assessment, whilst ensuring that providers are upskilled to respond to specialist needs.	
		<p>Deliver a programme of assessed specialist enhanced short breaks:</p> <p>(i) Ensure that the provider market has the capacity, experience and skills to meet to children and young people's short break needs, either at home, in the community or in a residential setting.</p> <p>(ii) Develop specialist and inclusive community hubs to enable complex young people to be supported within their local area.</p> <p>(iii) Review overnight respite provision at Park House, alongside the wider overnight respite offer in the region, propose options to meet all needs, including those young people with complex disabilities / challenging behaviours that post a risk to other children. Develop a model and service provision for overnight respite (this action overlaps with Priority Number 9 within the In-House Residential Homes section of this strategy).</p> <p>(iv) Change our commissioning approach to block investment with existing providers to develop, stabilise and upskill the workforce so it can respond to short break demand, particularly for those young people with autism and challenging behaviours.</p>	July 2022 – March 2024