



Placement Sufficiency Strategy
for
Children Looked After and Care
Leavers 2023 – 2026

Sheffield City Council

‘Sufficiency’ means having enough homes that give our looked after children and young people the right place to live. Our focus is on providing family homes locally that are of good quality and that living there makes a positive difference to children and young people’s lives.

To achieve this we analyse, consult and identify, and then we make an action plan



Why does sufficiency matter?

Section 22G of the Children Act 1989 (‘the 1989 Act’).¹ requires local authorities to take steps that secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the authority’s area which meets the needs of children that the local authority are looking after, and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the local authority’s area (‘the sufficiency duty’)

We prioritise the needs of our looked after children and care leavers, and we know from listening to them, that having the right provision at the right time leads to better outcomes for our children and young people

Why do we produce a sufficiency strategy?

Creating a strategy lets us understand

- How many looked after children and care leavers we have in Sheffield, and if this number is likely to change over time
- The needs that our young people have and if some of our needs are changing
- What provision we currently have to respond to these needs and how changes might develop in the future
- What we might need to do in the next 5 years to respond to these needs

Sheffield's Sufficiency Principle

Children stay at home wherever it is safe to do so



Children are reunified at the earliest opportunity wherever it is safe to do so



When children cannot live at home they live with people in their existing network (connected carers)



When children cannot live with connected carers they live in family-based care which might be foster care or adoption



When children cannot live in family-based care, they live in high quality residential placements that meet their specific needs

Aims of the strategy



Provide the right number and type of homes for children and young people who are looked after in Sheffield.



Improve outcomes for looked after children and care leavers through the provision of a sufficient number and range of high-quality placements and accommodation options.



Provide local homes in Sheffield to enable young people to maintain links to those that are important to them.



Ensure that we achieve best value for money.



Sheffield Context



What do we know about our population?

- **Context**

In Sheffield at 31.7.23 there were

- 1801 children with Child in Need plans
- 601 children with Child protection plans
- 634 looked after children
- 675 care leavers 18+ with active pathway plans

Child in Need plans (Cin)

Our data from 22/23 shows that Sheffield has a 362.5 rate compared to statistical neighbours 388.5 and England 334.3

Child protection

Our data from 22/23 shows that Sheffield has a 59.5 rate compared to statistical neighbours 51.5 and England 42.1

Looked after children

Our data from 22/23 shows that Sheffield has a 59 rate compared to statistical neighbours 93 and England 70 . This is lower than statutory neighbours and England

CLA rate of 54 per 10,000 (2023) children compared to 70 per 10,000 (2022) in England

We continue to prioritise family based care through connected carers. Our rates of children placed in connected care continues to grow

14% CLA have a disability

Proportion of our looked after children who are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children has increased from 1% in 2020 to 10% in 2023.

73% of our children live in family-based care

51% of children are in our own provision, higher than statistical neighbours (49%) and England (46%)

37% of children are placed out of city, however 75% of young people live within 20 miles of their home

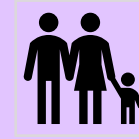
The placement mix changes as children move through the age range. As children move into adolescence the balance between in-house and external provision switches. For children aged 16-17 47% are in internal placements compared to 10 % of children between 0-4 years



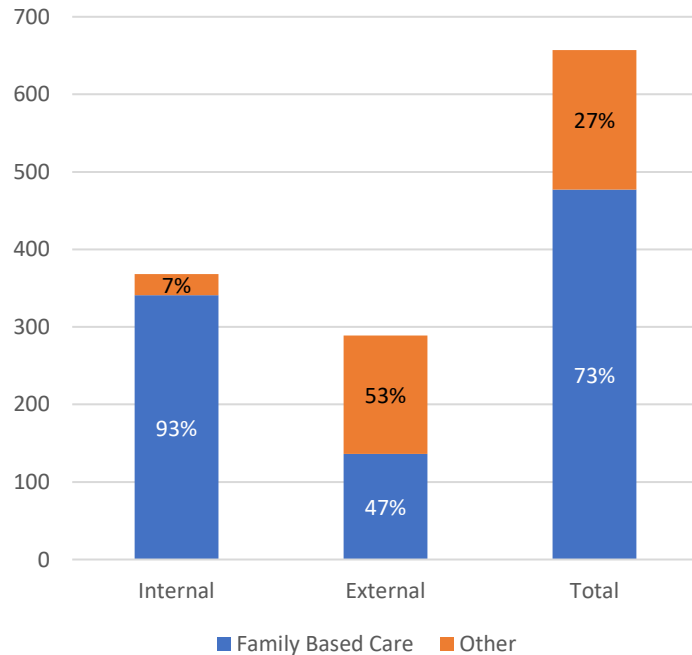
51% (336) In-House Provision



43% (285) External Providers

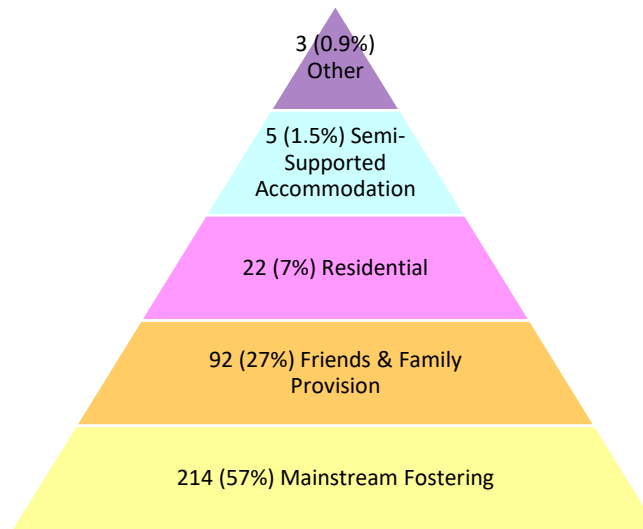


5% (36) Placed with parents

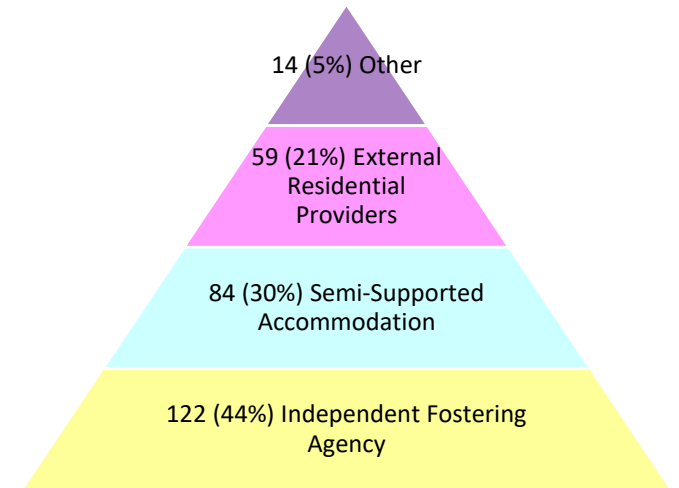


Family Based Care

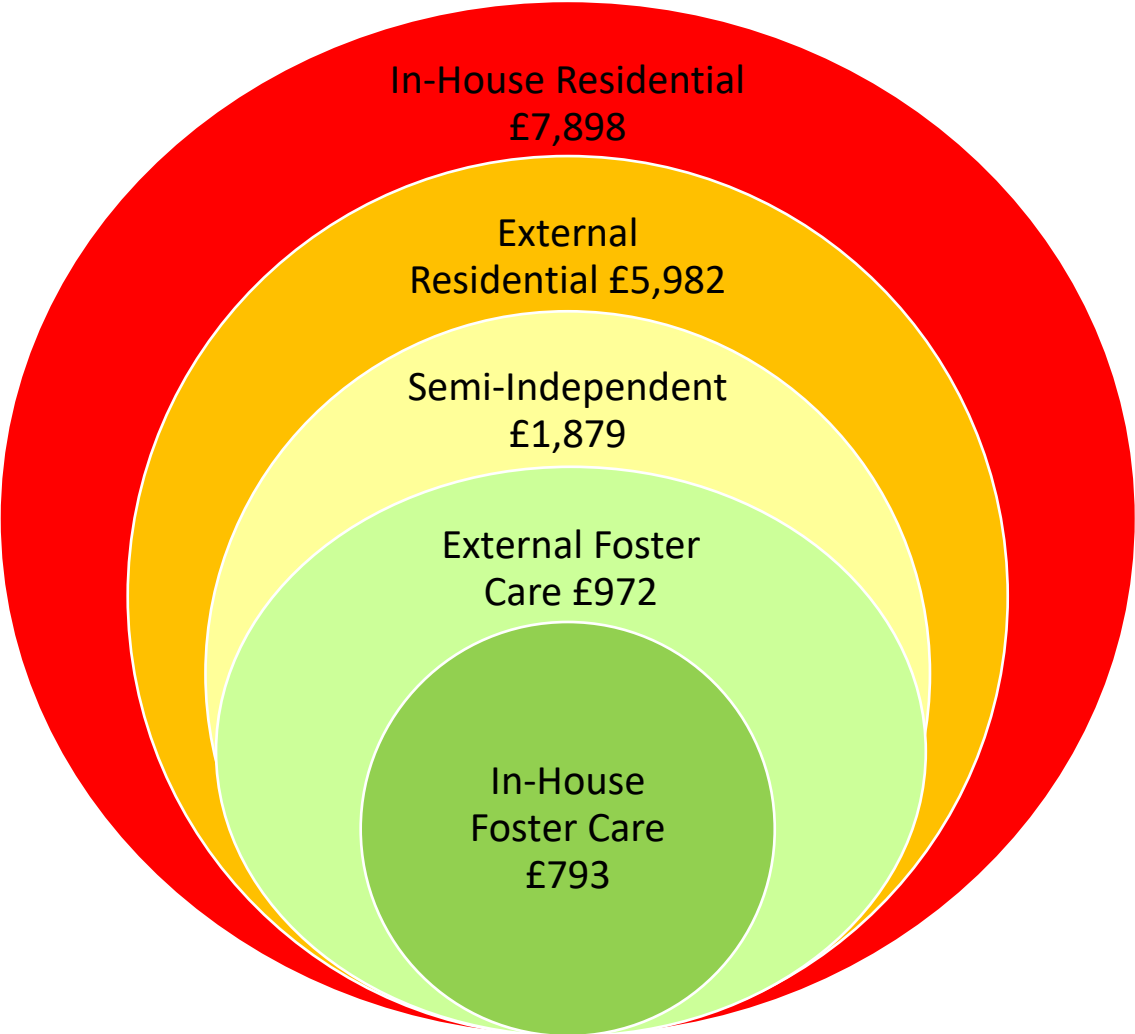
In-House Provision Breakdown



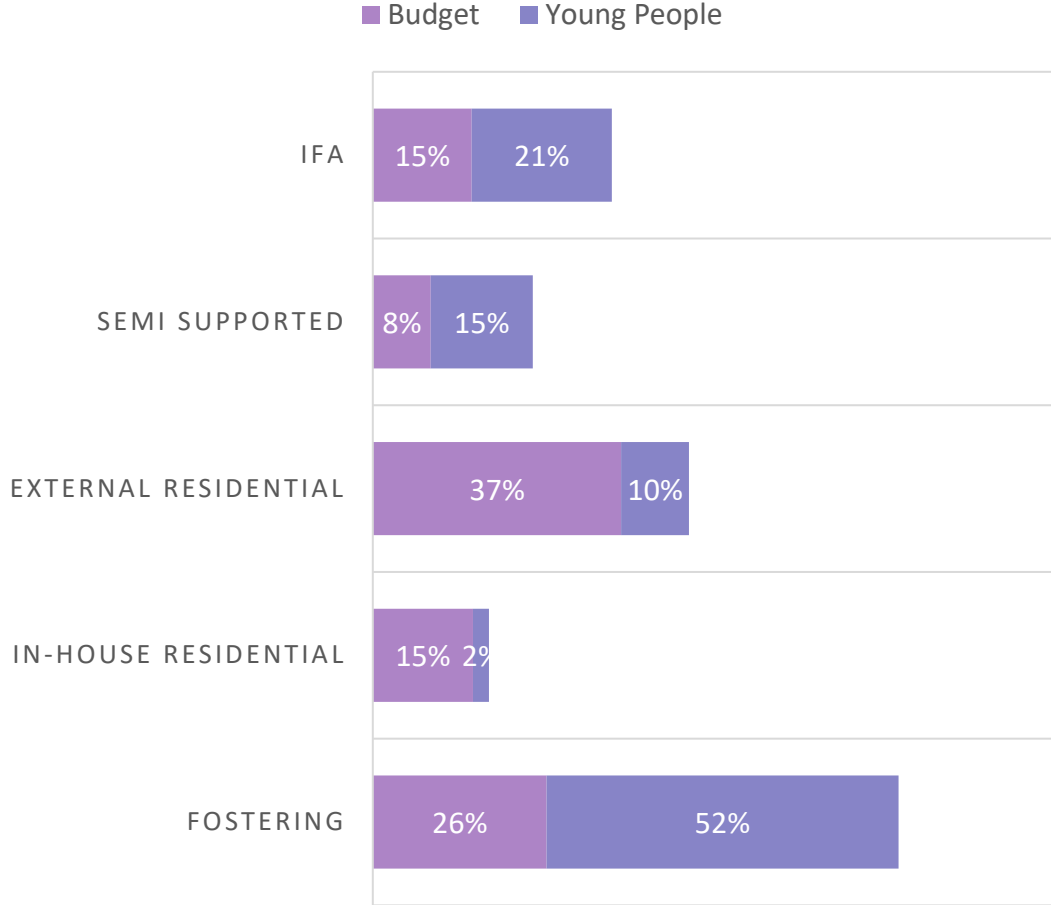
External Provider Breakdown



Cost Per Week



Annual Cost Vs Young People



What are we
already
doing and
what are we
going to do
next

- **We prioritise keeping all children at home wherever it is safe to do so.** We will continue to prioritise edge of care services and contextual safeguarding as our data tells us this approach is being successful, supported by the appropriate investment to do this effectively
- **Explore better ways of supporting our connected carers,** empowering these families to overcome problems before they escalate and cause placement breakdowns
- **Continue our relentless approach to foster carer recruitment,** strengthening high quality foster carer capacity in Sheffield that meets Sheffield children's needs.
- **Ensure that we have an overnight respite offer** that is meets the needs of our children with disabilities
- **Seek to ensure that all placements meet the needs of the child,** minimising the number of placement moves that a child might experience, through robust commissioning
- **Increase the number of supported lodgings** that are available to young people in the city to support our UASC young people to have the opportunity to live in family environments
- **Work with adolescent looked after children and care leavers to ensure that they are supported in their transition to independence** in adulthood through robust commissioning of semi-supported accommodation, and good inter department links within the council and housing services

What are we
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- **Reduce 'off framework' placements**, and use knowledge of the needs of our children to maximise commissioning frameworks
- **Improve joint commissioning of provision between Social Care, SEND, Education and Health**, exploring shared provision in response to the holistic needs of children and young people.
- **Establish identified practice improvements** to ensure that across all areas of the directorate are consistent
- **Re-align our internal residential provision** to best meet the needs of children in Sheffield
- **Review the Short Breaks offer** to ensure that it meets the needs of young people and families.
- Ensure children in residential care **have the same access to reunification opportunities** as children in family-based care settings
- **Access Capital investment programme** to develop suitably sized good quality internal residential homes to meet the needs of Sheffield children

How will we implement our strategy?

Robust action plan owned by both operational and commissioning staff at SCC, monitored by the DCS and SCC governance arrangements- to be signed off January 2024

Develop a medium-term Residential Strategy that meets the changing needs of our young people and provides good quality residential homes for children where this best meets their needs

Continue to listen to the voice of children and young people using the findings from Bright spots, CICC and SCLU and voice and influence workers to ensure our children live in homes where they feel safe supported and can thrive

Provide regular updates to the Sheffield Corporate Parenting Board