

Childrens Placement Sufficiency



The “Sufficiency Duty”

- We have a legal duty under the 1989 Children’s Act, to ensure we are taking reasonable steps to secure sufficient provision for our children in care.
- Our Sufficiency Strategy, *Excellent Homes and Families* sets out the strategic vision we have for our children in care when we accommodate them
- Sufficient doesn’t mean ‘heads on beds’ it must mean good quality local services which make a difference for our children.



Excellent Homes and Families

- Our sufficiency strategy. Has our visions for our cared for children:
 - *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;*



How we provide care

Internal services

- 5 Childrens Homes, Fostering, Transition Support for Care Leavers, House Project

External Services

- Fostering / Residential / Leaving Care purchased through regional arrangements from private companies and charities



National Context

- Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has recently undertaken a market study into children's social care placements in the UK.
 - The market is not providing sufficient placements that fully meet children's needs when and where they require them resulting in negative outcomes.
 - Some prices and profits are above levels expected in a well-functioning market
- Quarter of all children's homes in England are in the North West
- There are not enough foster carers



Placement Commissioning in Tameside

- Children's commissioning a new service area in 2020
- Subject to further fixed term investment post Ofsted in 2021 recognising very high work load
- Increased strategic and operational capacity has improved decision making and accountability

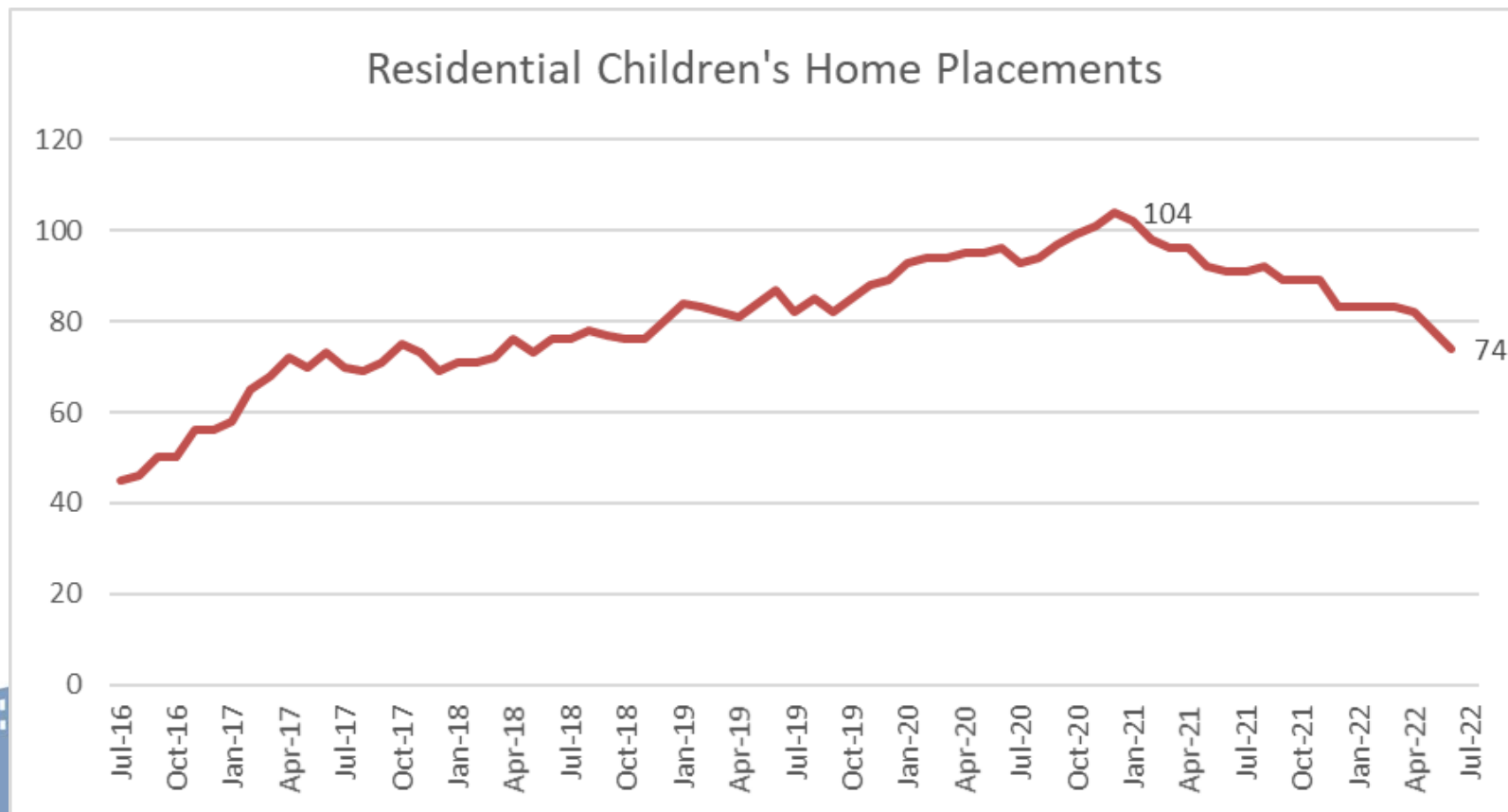


Children's Homes 1/3

- Tameside has historically placed too many children in children's homes
- Considerable growth since 2016 resulting in numbers more akin to a city such as Leeds or Sunderland
- Too many children placed too few moved on to family environments or independence
- New sufficiency strategy to support a change of culture and practice



Children's Homes 2/3



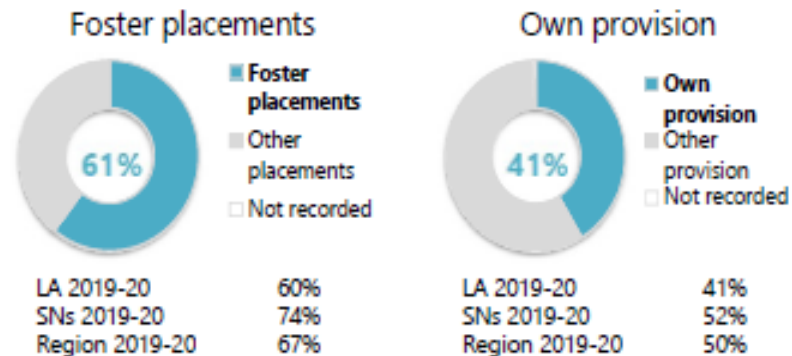
Children's Homes 3/3

- Key driver monthly review of residential placements to increase grip
- Operational capacity to challenge providers and find more effectively
- North West benchmarking shows Tameside in line with regional average for Ofsted registered children's home costs for first time (data back to 2018)
- Marked improvement in the number of children living in residential more than 20 miles from Tameside. There are now 16 children living far away compared to 29 last summer.

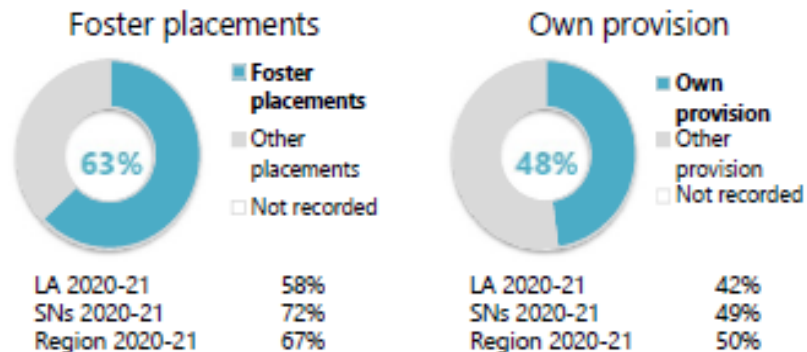


Fostering

CLA placements by type and provision



CLA placements by type and provision



June 2021

June 2022



Fostering Agency Usage

- Reduced use of private agencies
- Increased proportion of our children living with families
- Number with our own provision now almost in line with statistical neighbours



Leaving Care Options

- A key challenge has been a legacy of young adults funded through Children's Services. This has been mitigated in the current financial year through investment in expansion of the 'Threshold Service' which is supporting more young adults to live with appropriate support.
- Remains a budget line of £2.3 million in children's to fund placements for over 18s.
- Investment in the House Project, the established Transition Support Service and ensuring young people and appropriate access to the local Semi-Independent market means our young people are being helped to prepare properly for adult life, and removing the cliff edge of turning 18 in a children's home.
- £1.4 million DfE Grant for Staying Close to support care leavers who have lived in children's homes after the age of 18



Financial Impact

- Financial Position Remains Challenging
- P2 (May 2022); Forecast £30,043,506
- P6 (September 2022): Forecast £28,324,853
- Budget: £26,725,780

Out turn in 2021/22 financial year: £31,262,650.



Ongoing pressures/risk

- Currently very low Health contributions to complex placement costs compared to other GM LAs
- Over 18s appearing as a budget line of £2.3 million in Childrens Services.
- Unplanned placement breakdowns bring significant price escalation risks
- Bespoke placements cost significantly more than regulated. If these placements were at an average cost there budget would nearly balance
- Implementing fostering recruitment strategy
- Increased UASC numbers
- National shortage of placements and national pressure on unit cost



Current Challenges

- Mental health of teenagers
- Delayed hospital discharge
- Services to support our children who need the most care
- Restrictions of liberty
- Care v Support and balancing the need for independence
- Ofsted regulation



Forward plans of activity

- The relaunch of Stockport Road our internal children's home which will bring three children back into our services in the borough. Currently we have been able to bring once child back home to Tameside from a private provider outside of the borough.
- Staying Close Grant income: £1.3 million to support young people who have lived in children's homes
- Replacing Boyd's Walk children's home
- Continued to focus transformation activity on accommodation and support for young people leaving care
- Review partner contributions to complex cases
- Working with PCFT on delivering the GM funded Ealing / Parachute models to access greater crisis support models for a children in crisis who need the greatest levels of support
- Fostering Recruitment Strategy to grow our internal services
- Sector Led Improvement Programme support (SLIP) from Salford to review and reposition the existing internal residential offer.

