

# Sufficiency Strategy

for Children in Care and  
Care Leavers in Essex

**2023-2026**

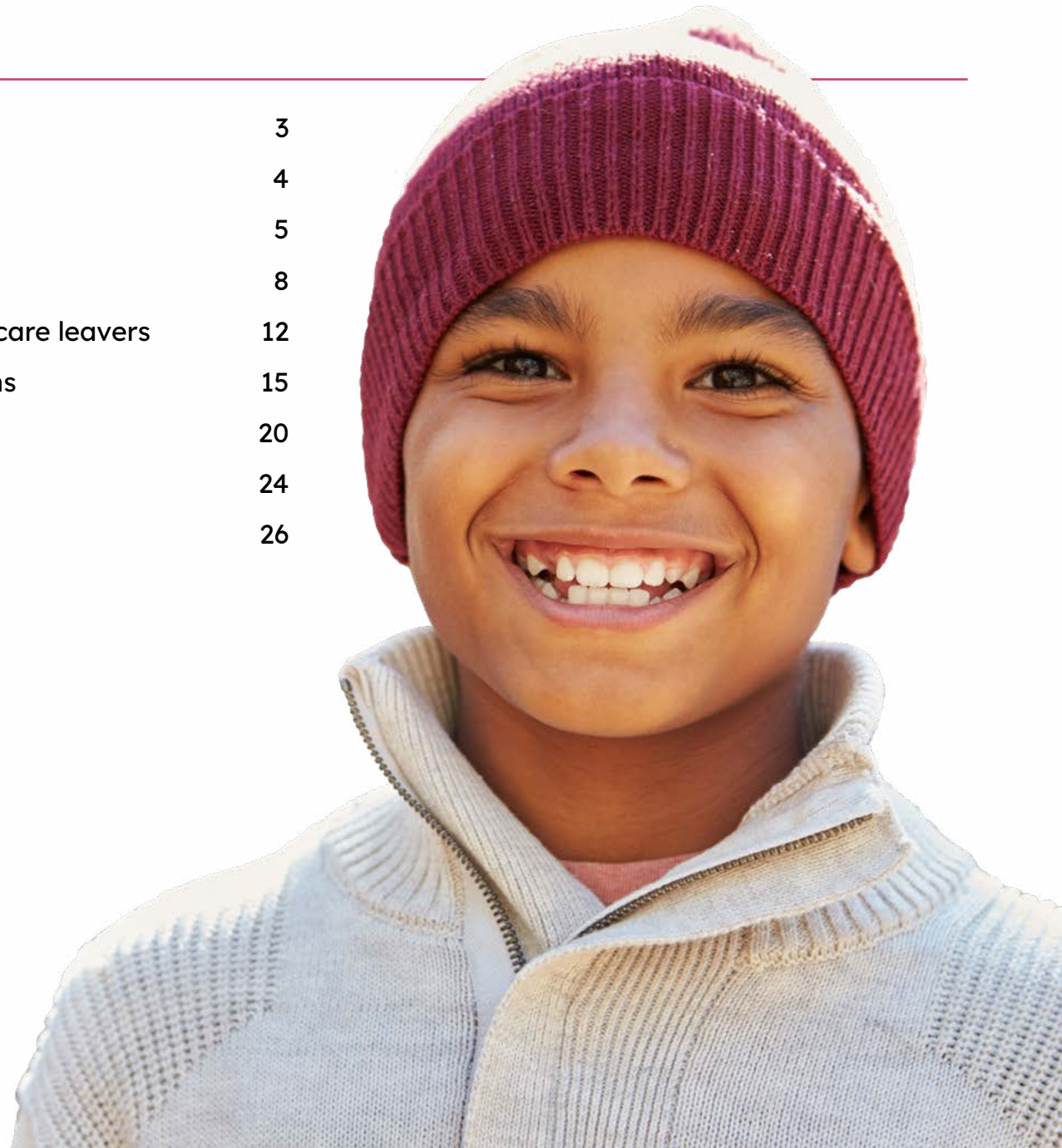
(Updated January 2025)



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# Foreword

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**Cllr Beverley Egan** – Cabinet Member  
for Children and Early Years

As the lead Member for Children's Services and Early Years in Essex, I know that it is vitally important that we set out how we will ensure children and young people in and leaving care are well looked after.

Our job is to ensure that children are not just safeguarded, but are happy and well looked after, encouraging them to be confident and independent so they can succeed and thrive in life. In Essex, our approach has always been to put children and families first in our thinking.

We must all remember that each statistic in our care system represents a child, in many cases very vulnerable children. In developing this strategy, we have listened to what children of all ages have told us is important to them and this has shaped our priorities and actions.

Our partners across the public sector can help make things better for children who enter the care system and as they grow up and find their independence. This is Everyone's Essex, and we want everyone to be proud of themselves and able to achieve their aspirations, no matter their background. We all play a vitally significant role in encouraging and supporting children and young people to be the best that they can be, and I am confident that this strategy will take us even further.



**Helen Lincoln** – Executive Director  
for Children and Families

At the heart of everything we do in the Children and Families service is our Vision to get the best outcomes for the families, children, and young people we support.

We support families by working with their strengths. We strive to give them the best chance to be together, where it is safe to do so, and help them go on to build a life and a future together. I am proud that in Essex we have one of the lowest rates of Children in Care in the country.

It is our commitment to ensuring those in and leaving care feel cared for, are safe, have high aspirations and are supported to achieve those aspirations as they grow into independent adults.

At the heart of everything we do in the Children and Families service is our Vision to get the best outcomes for the families, children, and young people we support.



# About the children in our care and care leavers

**1131**

Children in Care

(December 2022,  
of which 119 were  
Separated Migrant  
Children)

**15, 16 and  
17 years**

Most common ages  
of Children in Care  
including Separated  
Migrant Children

(December 2024)

**17 years**

Most common  
age of Separated  
Migrant Children  
and Young People  
in care

(December 2024)

**19.8%**

of Essex Children  
in Care are Black,  
Asian or Global  
Majority this  
increases to **24.2%**  
when including  
Separated Migrant  
Children

(March 2022)

**Placement  
stability**

**65.97%**

in the same  
placement for 2+  
years (of those  
that have been in  
care for 2.5+ years)

(December 2024)

**66%**

Children in Care in  
foster care

(December 2024)

**58**

Children in Care  
recorded as at risk  
of exploitation, 37  
at risk of sexual  
exploitation and 9  
children at risk of  
both.

1 child in care had no  
risk type recorded

In December 2024,  
**36** children and  
young people went  
missing a total of  
**85** times

**819**

care leavers aged  
18-21 (of which 323  
are former SMC)

(December 2024)

**53.24%**

of care leavers  
are in education,  
employment or  
training (EET)

(December 2024)

**13.1%**

3+ placements  
in a year

(rolling 12 months as  
at December 2024)



# Introduction and purpose

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# Introduction and purpose

The Children Act 1989 requires local authorities to secure accommodation for children in their care, within 20 miles of home and within local authority boundaries wherever possible and appropriate. This is known as the 'Sufficiency Duty' and is stated in the Act as: "the Local Authority must take steps to secure, as far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the Authority's area boundaries which meets the needs of children that the local authority is 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".

This Strategy sets out how Essex County Council (ECC) will fulfil these duties and meet the needs of our Children in Care and care leavers. It includes the council's commissioning intentions and supports our vision for children and young people which is articulated in our Children in Care Partnership Strategy to have the right placement in the right place, at the right time.

This Strategy sets out how Essex County Council will fulfil these duties and meet the needs of our Children in Care and care leavers.



When assessing "sufficiency", ECC considers the condition of the local market (which will include the level of demand for the specific types of provision locally) and the amount and type of supply that currently exists. We also consider the capacity, quality and suitability of all providers and unique challenges to Essex.



# Introduction and purpose



## Legal duties

Local authorities have several duties towards children within their area which are related to the Sufficiency Duty. In particular:

- Section 17(1) of the 1989 Act provides that it is the general duty of a local authority to provide a range and level of services to children in need (as defined in section 17(10) of the 1989 Act) and their families in the local area which are appropriate to their needs.
- Section 20 of that Act requires local authorities to provide accommodation for children in need within their area who appear to them to require accommodation in accordance with the provisions of that section.
- Section 21 requires a local authority to accommodate certain children who are either removed or kept away from home under Part V of the 1989 Act or who are subject to a criminal court order.

- In determining the most appropriate placement for a child, section 22C(7)(a) also requires the local authority to give preference to a placement with a relative, friend or other person connected with the child and who is also a local authority foster parent.
- Section 22C sets out the additional factors (in no order of priority) which the local authority must take into consideration when deciding the most appropriate placement:
  - allowing the child to live near his/her home
  - not disrupting the child's education or training
  - enabling the child and a looked after sibling to live together
  - meeting the needs of disabled children
  - and providing accommodation within the local authority's area, unless that is not reasonably practicable
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017, extends the duties on all local authorities (including District and Borough Councils) to have regard for a set of Corporate Parenting Principles when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and care leavers up to the age of 25.



# Summary needs assessment

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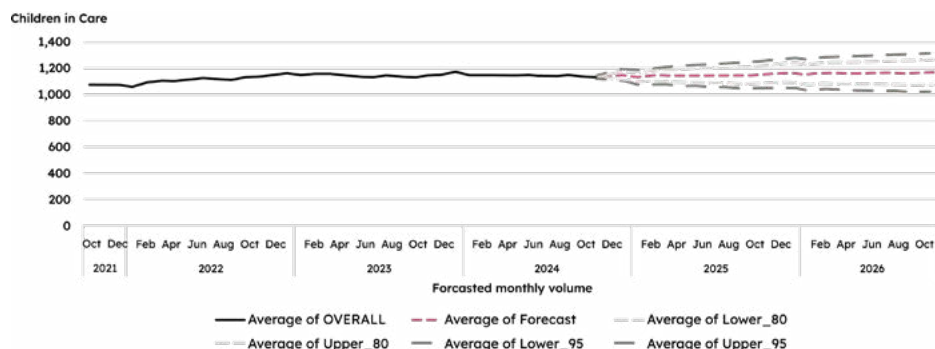




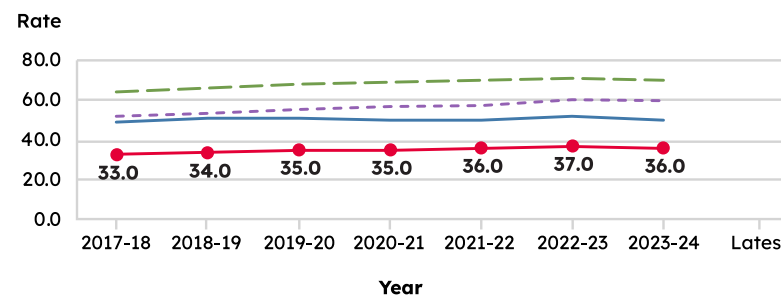
# Summary needs assessment

- As of December 2024, there were 1131 Children in Care in Essex. The historic trend of Children in Care shows a steady, gradual increase from 2021 to the end of 2024, with relatively low volatility.
- The forecasted trend, suggests a continuation of this stable trend with a slight increase over time, maintaining a similar rate as the historical data. Over the next 2 years we expect Children in Care numbers to increase to 1170 by the end of March 2026.
- The number of Children in Care in Essex has remained below England, East of England, and Statistical Neighbour averages since 2012/13. As shown in Graph 2, since 2017/18 Essex has risen slightly from 33 Children in Care per 10,000 to 36 Children in Care per 10,000

**Average historic and forecasted monthly volume of all children in care**



**Rate of children looked after at 31 March per 10,000 children aged under 18 years**

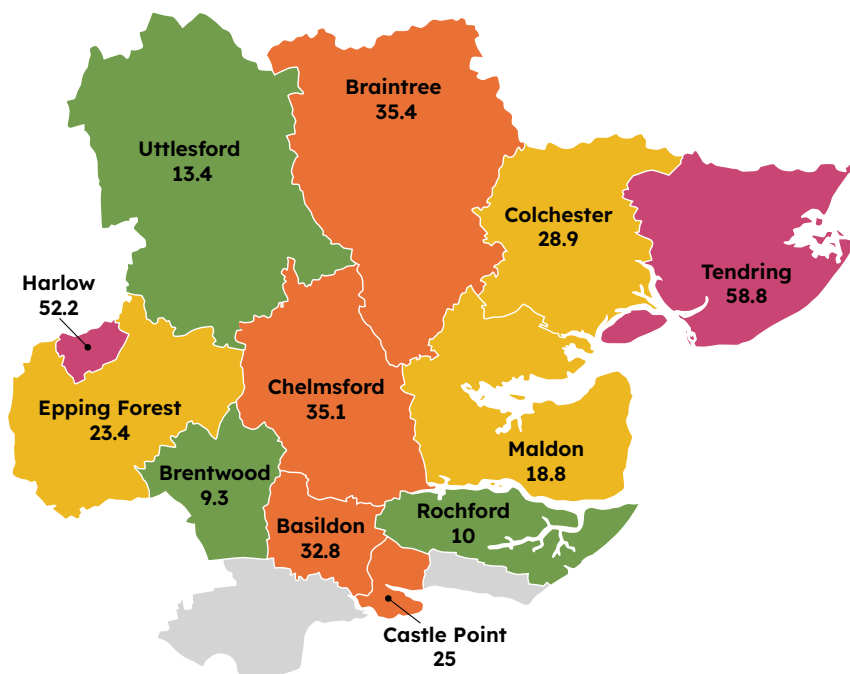


- Of the 1131 children in care as of December 2024, 1012 were from Essex while 119 were Separated Migrant Children, 33% down from the 178 SMC children in care in December 2023.
- Tendring and Harlow have the highest prevalence of children in Care in the county (58.8 and 52.2 children per 10,000) However in Tendring this is down slightly on February 2022 (62.4 children per 10,000). Moreover, rates for all districts remain below the England average of 70.

# Summary needs assessment

## CIC rate per 10,000 0–17-year-olds

(December 2024)



- 79% of placements for Essex’s Children in Care are in county.
- Fostering is the most used form of care with 66% of our Children in Care placed within that sector.
- 10.9% of Children in Care are placed in residential children’s homes.
- Ofsted ratings nationally for residential providers on overall effectiveness are: Outstanding 11.7%, Good 72.5%, Requires Improvement 12.5% and Inadequate 2.3%. Ofsted ratings in Essex for providers on overall effectiveness are: Outstanding 6.6%,

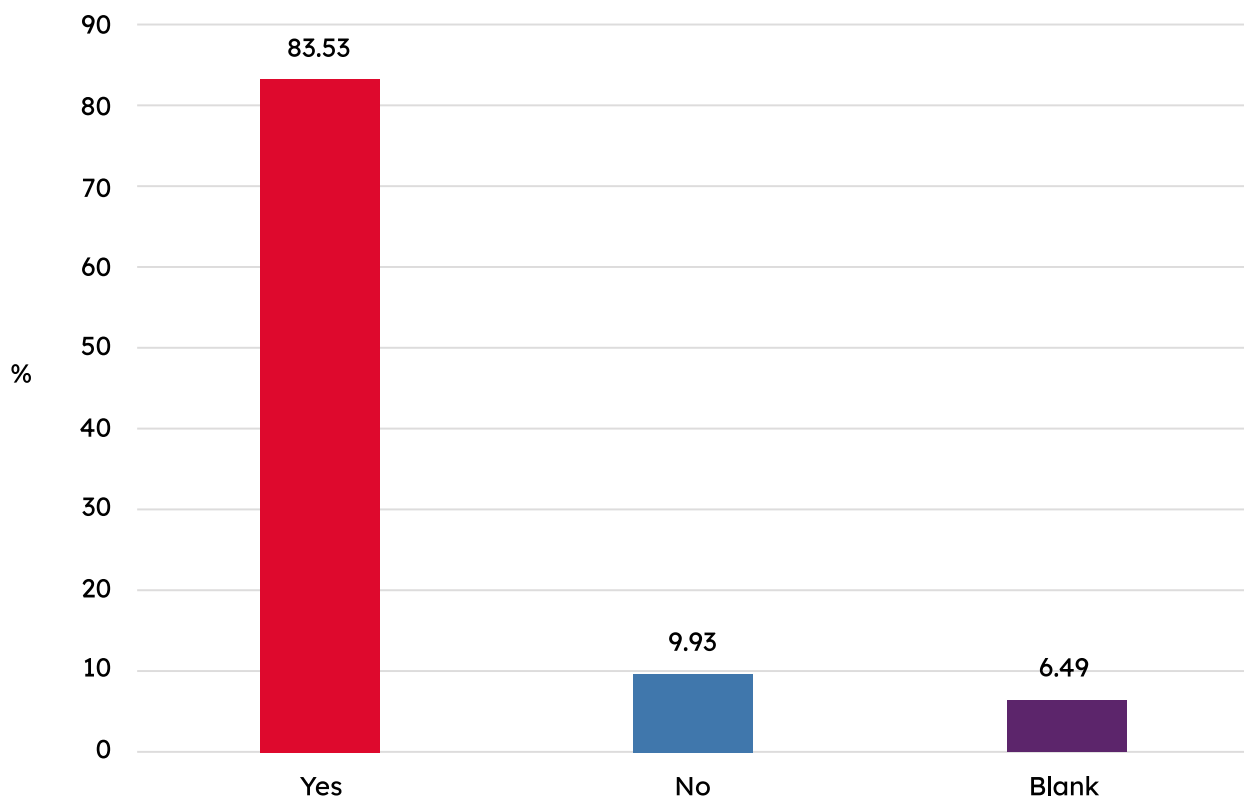
Good 76.7% and Requires Improvement 16.7%.

- Only 13% of registered children’s homes capacity in Essex is being used by Essex Children in Care.
- Supported Accommodation for Young People represents 12.6% of placements. This is in part owing to ECC voluntarily participating in the National Transfer Scheme for Separated Migrant Children.
- The percentage of children with 3 or more placements in 12 months has increased slightly to 13.1%, from 11% at the end of 2023/24.
- The proportion of children who have been in care for at least 2.5 years, are aged under 16 and who have been in the same placement for 2 or more years has decreased in Essex. In 2023/24 64% of these children had been in the same placement for 2 years or more, 3% down from 2021/22 and down by 5% from 2020/2021. However, it has more recently seen a slight increase to 66% in December 2024. The rate is 2% below the current published national average for 2023/24 of 68%, and slightly below than the statistical neighbour average.
- Whilst 71.7% of Children in Care are White British, the proportion of children from Black, Asian and Mixed ethnic groups continues to increase.
- Children in Care from “any other ethnic group” has almost halved in the last year (from 11.6% to 6.2%), with those from a Black African ethnic group becoming the third highest recorded ethnic group, at 7.2%.
- 44% of Children in Care were part of a sibling group, a slight increase from 41% in January 2022. 22.6% of Children in Care have a sibling in the same placement, slightly higher than 22.5% in January 2022.

# Summary needs assessment

- As of December 2024, there were 119 separated migrant children in care in Essex. This is a 33% decrease on the year before. 98% of Separated Migrant Children (SMC) were aged 16-17 years and 2% were 10-15 years, with 90.8% of these children being male.
- The ethnicity of SMC has changed over the last year with “Any other ethnic group” dropping to 29.4% from 55.6%, whilst Black African SMC has increased to 37.8% from 25.8%.
- In December 2024, there were 94 Children in Care with a disability (8.3% of Children in Care). 43 of the 94 children were placed within the fostering sector and 41 were within the residential sector.
- Children staying in care for 2-5 years has decreased slightly, with 27.8% of young people being in care for 2-5 years (compared to 29% in Jan 22).
- Over the last four years, the number of children who were looked after continuously for at least 2.5 years has increased by 7%, from 339 children in 2020/21 to 357 in 2023/24, but a 5.3% decrease from 2022/23 (377) to 2023/24.
- 83% of care leavers are suitably accommodated (December 2024).

## Care leavers in suitable accommodation 18 to 21



Over the last four years, the number of children who were looked after continuously for at least 2.5 years has increased by 7%



# Feedback from children and young people in care and care leavers

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# Feedback from Children and Young People in Care and Care Leavers

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ECC's much-loved 'It's My Life' festival 2024 reached nearly 1,000 children, young people and family members. This includes 195 Children in Care and care leavers, 121 family members of children with disabilities, 149 family members of children and young people subject of Child In Need and Child Protection plans, and 212 family members of children who have been adopted or who are subject of a special guardianship. All of these attendees were given the opportunity to give their views.

## Education

Children in Care report quite different relationships with school with around half of those engaged in discussions describing school as 'good'; expressing their enjoyment of learning and attending school, whilst several others describe no longer being in school stating school was a difficult experience for them.

Of those Children In Need and children subject of Child Protection they describe their enjoyment of school and learning, their relationships with friends and looking forward to transitioning to secondary school and college. Whilst the sample from children subject of child protection was small, they all reported positive relationships in school.



## Friendships

“End up pushing them away because that is how I keep safe. I do not like getting hurt”

**15-year-old child in care**

Children in Care describe a multitude of difficulties in forming and maintaining friendships. These include being worried about their socialisation skills, getting anxious talking to others, placement rules / restrictions hindering friendships, school peers being 'mean', and being overtly pulled out of lessons in school for counselling.

## Relationships

“I feel cared for and part of the family”

**12-year-old child in care**

Children in Care overwhelmingly describe their relationships with carers as positive; feeling loved, cared for and settled, with good and supportive relationships is all part of the common narrative. Of those experiencing difficult relationships with carers, they describe always feeling told off or 'nagged', being punished, being treated younger than their age and wanting to stay in their room. The views of Children In Need and children subject of Child Protection are more evenly divided between positive and negative experiences; some describe good and supportive relationships, whilst others describe difficult times, difficult relationships, and lots of arguments.

Around a third of Children in Care, report that they have considered wanting to change placement in the past year. Several say that they have moved placement in the past year and that they are happier for it.

# Feedback from children and young people in care and care leavers

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## Relationship with social workers

“It is good. She is really nice and quick with everything” **12-year-old child in care**

“We have a strong bond. Have jokes and serious conversations” **15-year-old child in care**

Nearly all Children in Care report good relationships with their social workers, describing relationships which are stable, workers who are helpful, likeable and easy to get along with. Nearly all Children in Care feel that their social workers are good at listening and are kind. The reasons given by those Children in Care with less positive relationships with their social workers include not listening, changing young person's words, breaking confidentiality, and asking too many questions. Over a third of Children in Care say that they have experienced a change in worker in the past year and whilst new relationships are good for some, several young people noted the difficulty experiencing change and losing a relationship with someone they liked.



## Time with family

“Yeah, I have seen them. It has been good, but I have not seen my brother recently. Normally I see him every month, but it has been 2 or 3 months now” **13-year-old child in care**

“It was virtual in lockdown, but there was always someone behind me, so I felt I couldn't say what I wanted” **13-year-old child in care**

When talking about their time spent with family during the past year, Children in Care describe mixed emotions in their experiences. They talk about the different approaches to family time that they have engaged in such as virtual, face to face, or going for walks. Many Children in Care describe the difficulties they had with virtual time with family; poor connections or data, running out of things to say or finding it hard to interact online, and feeling like someone is always there listening.

When talking more generally about family time, the experiences are generally divided between positive and negative. Those with positive experiences enjoy their time and are pleased to see family face to face, and those with negative experiences describe getting anxious, feeling depressed, feeling a sense of obligation, not feeling comfortable, being worried about family members and getting upset when family doesn't engage or show up.



# Progress against previous strategy and future intentions by placement type

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# Progress against previous strategy and future intentions by placement type

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## D-BIT

The Essex Divisional Based Intervention Teams (D-BIT) provide whole family support to young people and families with a view to help families stay together where safe and possible to do so. The service is formed of two strands, one edge of care that works with children and young people 8-17 and their families to prevent family breakdown and unnecessary care entries. This service strand also contributes to the stabilisation of foster placements, Special Guardianship Order arrangements and supports the prevention of adoption breakdowns. The second D-BIT service strand focuses on Connecting and Uniting work with 0-17 young people who have been in the care of the local authority for some time and where there is a viable plan for reunification and/or (re)connecting with family and kin networks.

In 2023/2024 76% of those referred to the edge of care service had a successful outcome, with young people remaining in the care of their families and kinship arrangements, also reporting better relationships within the family. Of those referred for reunification support, 80% have successfully returned to family/kin arrangements and 70% of referrals for connecting work had successful outcomes.

## In-house Fostering

National foster carer numbers have decreased significantly, with 6% fewer foster carers in November 2024 than in 2021. Within this National context Essex Fostering Service has, to date, managed to maintain the number of households and has not experienced decline. We have continued to invest in our foster carers through a long-term business plan in order to increase carer numbers through effective retention and recruitment activity. In February 2025 we announced a raft of measures to boost recruitment of new carers

and support retention of current carers, these included significant increase in fees and allowances, a loyalty bonus, increased incentives for carers to help us recruit, as we know that ‘word of mouth’ is our strongest recruitment tool. We have also developed plans to engage all key partners and businesses in ECC to support us recruit carers by becoming ‘fostering friendly’ employers.

ECC collaborated with other eastern region local authorities to form Foster East, a regional fostering recruitment hub established to support fostering recruitment activity across the region.

Article 20 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that “Children who cannot be looked after by their own family have a right to special care and must be looked after properly, by people who respect their ethnic group, religion, culture and language”. With the diversity of children in care changing (e.g. 24.4% of children in care are non-white British) Essex has developed a fostering dashboard which enables Children Services to keep track of the numbers of Children in Care from different backgrounds in contrast to the diversity of our foster care population. We are focused on increasing the number of carers from diverse ethnic and religious groups to better match our children in care population. We are also supporting all our carers to understand and respond to children’s individual identity needs, helping them make better sense of their history and identity.

We are piloting an 18-month 4 bedded intensive fostering scheme to support some of our highest need young people. This is due to start delivery in Spring 2025.

# Progress against previous strategy and future intentions by placement type

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## Kinship Care

Kinship care provides a secure and valued alternative for children who cannot live safely with their parents. There are a range of routes and legal frameworks which facilitate and support kinship care, as an alternative to being 'in care'. ECC has services in place to support children in Private Fostering, Kinship or Connected Fostering, Special Guardianship and Child Arrangement Orders. The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill (2025) requires local authorities to publish their Local Offer for children in kinship care and their carers, as well as enabling access to family group decision making; supporting families to identify potential kinship care options where appropriate. The Virtual School head role is also to be extended to include children in kinship care and those with a social worker.

## The Residential Plan

The Residential Plan considers the complexity and challenges of securing sufficient mainstream and specialist residential care.

The council is determining innovative approaches to working with market providers and concurrently have made the decision to deliver residential care internally for some of our young people with highest need. This mixed economy of external and in-house residential care will facilitate us to deliver the right homes, in the right places, at the right time for Essex young people. One in-house placement is operational with others in the pipeline.

The foundations of this work are the design findings from the work completed in strategic partnership with an experienced national charity. This partnership prioritised the perspectives of providers, professionals, and young people with care experience in shaping its outcomes.

## Inside Out

Inside Out was launched in July 2018 as a DfE funded Innovation Project and following the success of the pilot, the programme was commissioned from July 2022. Essex is working in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council and with The Children's Society who deliver the direct work with young people. Inside Out provides young people aged from 14 ½ to 17 with a 'coach' who works intensively with them, their placement, social worker, other involved professionals and where possible, their families. The cohort includes young people who are placed in residential care; those who might have moved from residential to semi-independent placements, and who have experienced instability in their lives. The current contract comes to an end in 2026.

## Staying Close

A programme that offers an enhanced support package for young people transitioning out of children's homes. It aims to provide a comparable alternative to the Staying Put option, which allows young people in foster care to remain with their former foster carers until they turn 21. Staying Close supports young people up to the age of 25 and includes move-on accommodation and a comprehensive package of practical and emotional support. This support is provided by a trusted member of staff from their former children's home or someone they know well. These tailored support packages help young people build confidence, develop independent living skills, and maintain their emotional health and wellbeing. The council has extended its existing Inside Out programme to include Staying Close support.



# Progress against previous strategy and future intentions by placement type

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## Adopt East

Essex Adoption Agency is part of the Adopt East Alliance which comprises of 8 Local Authorities (Bedford Borough, Luton, Hertfordshire, Essex, Thurrock, Southend, Suffolk and Norfolk) and 2 Voluntary Adoption Agencies (Barnardo's and Adoption Plus). Adopt East is one of the largest Adoption Agencies/Alliances in the country.

Placement costs are worked out on a system of pooling adopters and children, so there are no barriers to placing our children anywhere in the region. Likewise, adopters are matched with children from across the region. A regional matching co-ordinator organises and supports various family finding events across the Adopt East region. An adopter lead team manager has been appointed to work with regional partners to address any adopter sufficiency challenges.

Essex adoptive families have access to a wide range of support services that are offered through a core regional offer as well as a localised support. There is also an extensive training programme, co-run with adopters, available to support and develop our adoption community.

## CareCubed

ECC has commissioned CareCubed, a nationally recognised web-based tool to allow benchmarking of services in the residential market. This has enabled a transparent review of the market uplift request process to ensure a consistent and timely approach. We work closely with the market to develop services within Essex and have gained a better understanding of the impact of costs both on the market and for Essex.

Transparency in the children's social care market is crucial for ensuring that public funds are used effectively and ethically. By openly sharing information about how money is allocated and spent, we can build trust with our providers and ensure accountability. This transparency helps to identify areas where resources are most needed, allowing for better planning and improved outcomes for children.

# Progress against previous strategy and future intentions by placement type

## Future projection by placement type

	December 2024	October 2026*
Number of Children in Care	1,131	1,170
Residential (Mainstream & CwD)	123	142
Fostering	727	786**
Supported Accommodation	133	176

In the next two years, ECC anticipate requiring:

- 19 additional Residential placements
- 59 additional Fostering placements\*\*
- 43 additional Supported Accommodation Placements

\*Forecast is available up to October 2026

\*\*Figures are based on the updated Fostering Strategy targets:

- 72% of all Essex children in care to be placed with Foster Carers by March 2030
- 95% of Essex fostered children living with In-House ECC Foster Carers by March 2030
- This figure has been modelled to assume a consistent monthly increase of 0.13% in the proportion of children in care in fostering between December 2024 and March 2030. To reach this target, by October 2026 approximately 67% of children in care should be in a foster placement.

This exercise informed and acted as intelligence to support our approach and priorities.



# Making a difference – our approach

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# Making a difference – our approach

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- To continue efforts on early intervention programmes, to ensure that only children that need care enter care.

- For all children and young people in care to experience placements that are well matched, able to meet their needs and are stable.

- To gain a better understanding of why placements do not always endure and intervene appropriately to prevent placement breakdown.

- To continue with family-based placements by default but recognising that this is not right for all young people and there will be occasions where other placement options are more suitable to meet the needs of the child or young person.

- To challenge the negative perception of residential care, and commission and/or create more good quality, local provision.

- To recruit and retain more in-house foster carers.

- To work effectively with providers as partners to ensure that children are placed as close to home as possible.



# Making a difference – our approach

## Fostering Intentions:

Improve Sufficiency through:

- Use Household Annual Reviews to strategically explore carer capacity and encourage stretching approval / expanding approval when appropriate.
- Expanding bedroom capacity of known and valued foster carers - Availability of capital funding to be promoted and used to increase foster carer capacity through adaptations.
- Continued roll out of all the Therapeutic pathways training provided by Mental Health Coordinators and psychologist, to increase foster carer confidence to manage trauma behaviours.
- Maximisation of foster carer retention.
- A holistic approach to placement stability through 'team around the placement' meetings which engage all multi-agency partners to view placement stability as everyone's responsibility.
- Continue development of the Oasis networks, with funding agreed to develop Networks dependent upon the level of need in each quadrant.
- Continuing to improve our carer's ability to interact with the service digitally by developing further online forms to add to the finance forms, and online recording for foster carers
- Continuing to specifically target recruitment activities to attract carers who can meet the sufficiency needs of our Children in

Care. These include carers who can take older children, children with complex 'trauma' behaviours, sibling groups, children with disabilities and carers from a diverse Ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds.

- Piloting an 18-month, 4 bedded intensive fostering scheme to support some of our high need, complex young people. This is due to start delivery in Spring 2025.

## Supported accommodation for young people intentions:

Improve Sufficiency through:

- SA providers are now required to register with Ofsted – existing providers on the framework have registered and all new providers must prove registration prior to bidding to enter the framework.
- During 2024 the framework was recommissioned to June 2027 with an option to extend for up to a further 2 years.
- As of February 2025 over 140 providers are on the framework to provide SA, reducing the need for spot purchasing.
- Currently work is beginning to explore how SA could be commissioned differently to address some of the sufficiency challenges such as move-on opportunities for over 18s. This work will be ongoing until 2027.

# Making a difference – our approach

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## Residential care intentions:

Improve sufficiency through:

- Strengthening and brokering closer relationships with Essex providers to increase access to local placements.
- Creating more placement capacity by providing buildings from which providers can deliver the care and support.
- Creating emergency/crisis placement capacity.
- Capitalising on collaborations with other regional and likeminded Local Authority Partners to address specific gaps in provision.
- Work with our providers to create a sustainable market.
- Work with Local Planning authorities to increase their understanding of the need for Children's Homes.
- Being a strong leader with the market, sharing intelligence on existing and emerging trends and co-producing new innovative models.
- Ensuring there is an even spread of placements across the county, so that we can offer placements in all our localities.

## Adoption intentions:

Improve sufficiency through:

- Continued focus on recruitment of Early Permanence carers, to enable more children to achieve permanence at an earlier stage. Alongside a review of fostering and adoption responsibilities within the Early Permanence process to ensure the fostering phase is robustly supported, and fully understood by the carers and professionals involved.
- Continued focus on recruitment of adopters who can meet the needs of the children who wait the longest, older children, sibling groups, children with additional needs and children from a Black background. Including engagement with all #YouCanAdopt marketing campaigns and materials, but particularly in relation to recruitment and support of Black Adopters.
- To focus on the modernising adoption agenda, to recruit and train adopters who will be able to support the maintenance of relationships with birth families, in creative ways, which might include direct contact, or communication via digital means, as per each child's individualised plan. This focus will be at every level of the adoption service, from recruitment of adopters, through assessment and into adoption support. The adoption service will also work with other service areas to promote and increase understanding of the modernising adoption agenda.



# Governance and next steps

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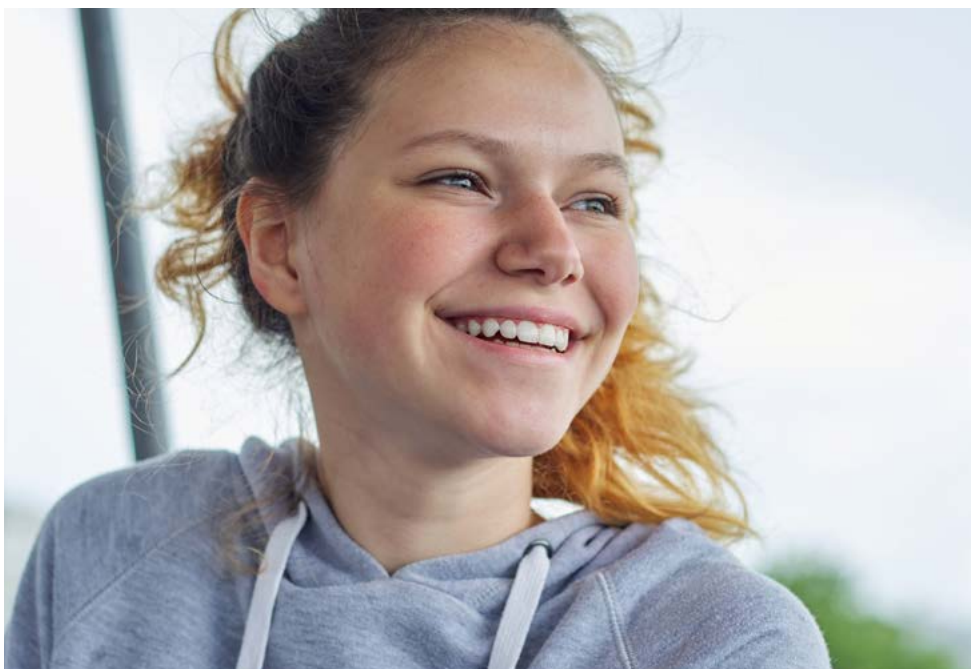


# Governance and next steps

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Essex County Council has established a Sufficiency Board of key officers from Children's Services to monitor the intentions, actions, and priorities of this strategy. This Board and the working groups which support it will develop innovative new concepts to meet our sufficiency duties in response to emerging needs, trends, and legislation as aforementioned. Risks and actions are monitored monthly by the Sufficiency Board.

Sufficiency covers a wide range of areas within children services, and it is important that partners, carers, children, young people, and providers are all invested in the actions. Partnership and collaboration continue to be key and therefore our well attended Market Engagement events will support this strategy.



## Priorities

1. Providing good, stable homes and ensuring children and young people feel cared for.
2. Ongoing investment and development in inhouse fostering, including continued targeted recruitment of BME carers and sibling placements.
3. Ensuring providers are supported to navigate the new regulatory framework for supported accommodation for young people.
4. Ensuring access to the residential sector through relational commissioning and supporting the quality of these services.
5. Using innovative commissioning and procurement models, truly understanding and recognising the current national challenges, specifically surrounded the cost of living and workforce difficulties.
6. Close monitoring / scrutiny of out of county statistics.
7. Working effectively with our Corporate Parenting Partners and advocating on behalf of Children in Care.
8. Engage with the levelling up agenda for Essex.

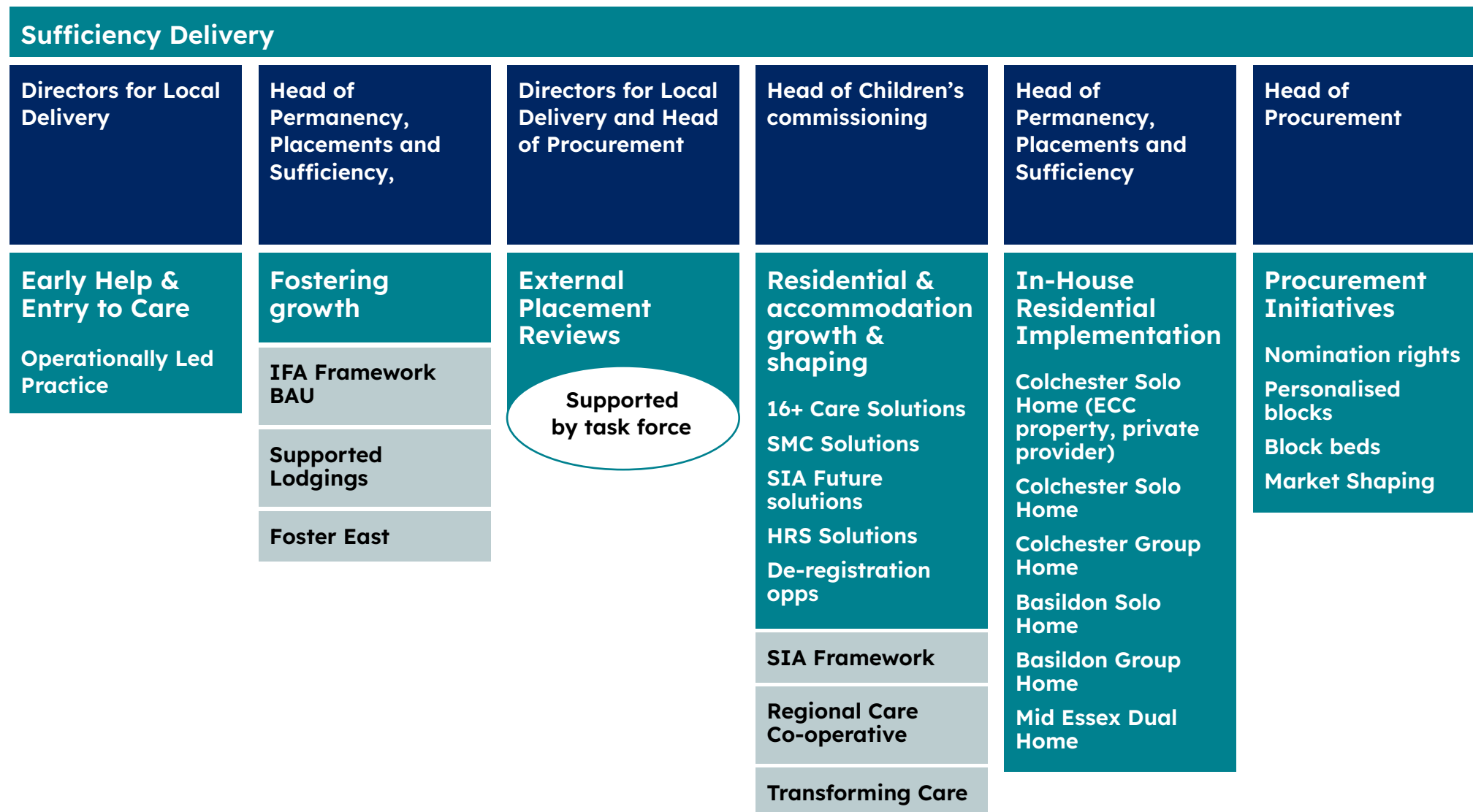
# Appendix

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# Appendix

## Sufficiency Board structure

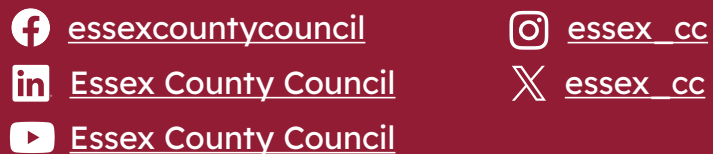


This information is issued by:  
Children and Families

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