

# CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Report subject	Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People Sufficiency Strategy Update (September 2024 – March 2026)
Meeting date	16 June 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>This report provides an update on progress delivering BCP Council's Sufficiency Strategy for Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People covering September 2024 to March 2026.</p> <p>Progress has been made in strengthening local provision, improving provider relationships and embedding governance arrangements. Notable improvements include significant growth in supported accommodation and residential capacity, increased numbers of children living locally, and stronger housing pathways for care experienced young people.</p> <p>However, demand continues to exceed local capacity in key areas. Challenges remain in increasing foster care households, reducing reliance on residential care, and ensuring more children live closer to home.</p> <p>The strategy remains on track overall, with a positive direction of travel. The next phase will focus on accelerating delivery, particularly in family-based care, residential demand reduction, and embedding quality assurance learning into service improvement.</p>
Recommendations	<p><b>It is RECOMMENDED that:</b></p> <p>The Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Notes the progress made in delivering the Sufficiency Strategy to date;</li> <li>iii) Supports the strategic priorities for 2026/27 to accelerate delivery in areas of greatest pressure</li> </ul>

<p>Reason for recommendations</p>	<p>To provide assurance to Members on the effectiveness of sufficiency planning and delivery, highlight areas requiring further focus, and ensure continued oversight of risks impacting outcomes for children in care and care experienced young people.</p> <p>This report is for information</p>
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Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Information

## Background

This report summarises progress against the Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People Sufficiency Strategy 2024–2028, focusing on strengthening local provision, improving placement stability and ensuring children and young people can live in suitable accommodation close to home.

As of March 2026, BCP supports 642 children in care and 361 care experienced young people, with improvements in placement stability and local provision, particularly in supported accommodation.

## Summary of financial implications

1. Growth in local provision has supported cost avoidance and improved value for money, including reduced reliance on out-of-area placements and controlled provider fee increases below inflation in some areas.

Ongoing sufficiency pressures, particularly in fostering and residential care, continue to present financial risk if demand exceeds local capacity.

## Summary of legal implications

2. The Council has statutory duties under the Children Act 1989 to secure sufficient accommodation for children in care. This report demonstrates how the Council is meeting these duties through strategic planning, commissioning, and market development approaches.

## Summary of human resources implications

3. Delivery of the strategy requires continued workforce development, particularly in fostering recruitment, commissioning capability and quality assurance functions. No immediate workforce reductions are identified.

### **Summary of sustainability impact**

4. Increasing local provision reduces travel distances for placements, supporting environmental sustainability and enabling children to remain connected to their communities.

### **Summary of public health implications**

5. Improved placement stability and access to suitable accommodation supports better emotional wellbeing, stability and long-term outcomes for children and young people.

### **Summary of equality implications**

6. The strategy supports vulnerable groups, including children in care, care experienced young people and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, by improving access to suitable accommodation and reducing inequalities in outcomes.

### **Summary of risk assessment**

7. Key risks include:
  - Ongoing insufficiency in fostering households and residential provision
  - Continued reliance on out-of-area placements
  - Market instability and national decline in fostering capacity
  - Inconsistent embedding of quality assurance learning

Mitigations include strengthened commissioning oversight, provider engagement, expanded local provision and enhanced governance.

### **8. Background papers**

N/A

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – CiC and CEYP Sufficiency Update Summary Sept 2024 – March 2026

Appendix 2 - BCP Children in Care and Care Experience Young People

Sufficiency Strategy 2024 – 2028 (full strategy)