

Leeds Sufficiency Strategy 2024-2027

Family Valued, Stable Homes

June 2024



we are

**child
friendly
Leeds**

Executive summary

Our vision is to make Leeds a Child Friendly City, the best city for children, young people and families in the UK.

We are ambitious for our children and young people and want them to fulfil their potential and achieve improved care, education and health outcomes.

We want children to be brought up by family and where this is not safe or possible, we want to improve the lives of children and young people in care. These children face some of the biggest challenges, so they need the best help to give them an equal chance to grow up with the support, care and love that every child deserves.

The Leeds sufficiency strategy 2024 -2027 is focused on families first, family valued and creating loving and stable homes.

The Strategy highlights Leeds commitment to keeping children and young people in the city, close to their families, friends, local communities and school and their support networks.

It also highlights Leeds commitment to recognise and embrace different needs, situations, and ambitions for our children looked after. The Strategy will seek to promote the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) agenda by removing the barriers that limit what children looked after can do and can be, enabling them to be their best.

We have set our ambitions for children and young people, and we will implement these using the Leeds Practice Model underpinned by a consistent therapeutic approach informed by Dyadic Development Psychotherapy.

We know that we can only promote and utilise family and create stable homes if we work together with families and our partners across the city.

We need to develop a flexible range of high-quality responsive provision for our children and young people that provides the right support at the right time. This starts with effective evidence based early help, prevention, family support and reunification through to short breaks, crisis intervention, family-based care and small group living. Residential care is seen as an intervention and not a destination and crisis provision as a safe space to work towards the next step in achieving family resolution. Staying put and staying close will be promoted to ensure trusted relationships can be maintained to support independence.

Detailed three-year profiles and implementation plans will sit underneath this strategy and will be monitored monthly and updated annually to ensure we are working towards the ambitions, meeting the targets and delivering affordability.

The strategy has been informed by the views, voices and experience of our children and young people and the measure of its success is that we deliver on the promises we have made as their corporate parents.

Foreword

Cllr Helen Hayden, Executive Member for Children and Families

I am delighted to introduce Leeds City Council's Sufficiency Strategy for children looked after. It is our vision is to make Leeds a Child Friendly City, the best city for children and young people to grow up and live in.

We are ambitious for our children and young people and want them to fulfil their potential and achieve improved outcomes. We want children to be brought up by family and where this is not safe or possible, we want to improve the lives of children and young people in care. These children face some of the biggest challenges so need the best help to give them an equal chance to grow up with the support, care and love that every child deserves.

To give every child and young person the best home and best support, the Council is committed to work in new and better ways with its partners in the public, private and third sector and, importantly, to work in different ways with families and communities.

In line with our aim to be a Child Friendly City, our strategy is shaped by the voices of children and young people and supported by research on what is most beneficial for their well-being. Above all, children and young people wish to stay with their family and friends wherever possible. When they need to be in care, they generally prefer to remain in Leeds, in a setting like a family home, surrounded by trusted, caring adults and children. These are things that we would hope for any child, yet we recognise that there is still work to be done, both in Leeds and nationally, to ensure every child has these opportunities and rights.

Introduction

In Leeds around 1,500 children and young people are looked after by the Council at any one time. For most of these children and young people, the Courts have decided that this is in their best interests, or their parents have asked that the local authority bring them into care. So, for each of these children and young people, a new home is needed that will meet their needs and help them thrive again. This Strategy sets out how the Council and its partners aim to meet this challenge.

As set out in the Leeds Children and Young People Plan, one of our three 'obsessions' is to reduce the need for children to be in care. We will achieve this by providing more effective and timely early help for families, taking a strength based relational and evidence-based approach to working 'with' children and families and their wider support networks and improving the quality of care planning to help children move onto a permanent home sooner.

Leeds other two obsessions focus on all children and young people attending, achieving, and attaining well at school, and continuing their route of a sustained education, apprenticeship or employment and Leeds being a healthy place for all children and young people; improving the timely access to healthcare they need.

For those children and young people who need to be in care we aim to improve the choices and opportunities available to each child. We will create more family-based homes for children to live in Leeds by continuing our successful work to recruit more foster carers from across Leeds, and by reshaping our children's homes to become smaller, located in the heart of our local communities and supported by an agile multi-disciplinary team wrapped around the child and family with a focus on maintaining family links and reunification wherever possible.

We will keep children and young people at the centre of all of what we do and ensure they are always involved in the decision making that affects their lives. Practice, behaviour and decision making to safeguard and promote children's welfare will always be seen through a lens of 'Think family'. In order to do this effectively we need a trained, supported and diverse workforce that reflects the culture, identity and diversity of our children looked after.

Background

Sufficiency Strategy

All local authorities have a legal duty under the Children Act 1989 to make sure they have enough placements to meet the needs of the children they look after. Whilst the Council has the lead role, there is also a duty on local partners such as Health to cooperate in this work, to make sure that children's needs are met. Led by the local authority, all local areas are expected to produce a plan, known as the 'Sufficiency Strategy' that sets out how children's needs will be best met.

Best City Ambition

The [Leeds Best City Ambition](#) is our overall vision for the future of Leeds, At its heart is our mission to tackle poverty and inequality and improve the quality of life for everyone who calls Leeds home. The Team Leeds approach will focus on improving outcomes across three pillars; Health and Wellbeing, Inclusive Growth and Zero Carbon. Our commitment to [equality, diversity and inclusion](#) is also a key part of the best city ambition. We want Leeds to be a trauma informed compassionate city that is fair and just, that recognises and embraces people's different needs, situations, and ambitions. The barriers that limit what people can do and can be, will be removed, and everyone will be enabled to be their best.

Child Friendly Leeds

Leeds also aims to be a Child Friendly City, the best city in the UK for children, young people to live and grow up in and the best city for families. To achieve this, organisations who seek to support children and families in Leeds have committed to shared priorities, specific behaviours and ways of working. The Child Friendly Leeds [12 wishes](#) were refreshed in 2022 and developed based on consultation with over 80,000 children and young people in Leeds. These wishes, our shared priorities, values and behaviours shape this Sufficiency Strategy.

Leeds Children and Young People's Plan 2023 – 2028

The detail of all our plans and ambitions for children and young people are part of the [Leeds Children and Young People's Plan 2023-2028](#). The Leeds CYP plan has 5 outcomes, 14 priorities and 3 obsessions that underpin this sufficiency strategy. The 3 obsessions are:

- Safely and appropriately reduce the number of children looked after
- Young people in Leeds attend school, achieve, and attain well, and continue their route of a sustained education, apprenticeship or employment destination
- Leeds is a healthy place for all children; and improve the timely access to healthcare when needed

Leeds promises and pledge

Leeds City Council and its partners through its Corporate Parenting Board has made a series of [promises to children and young people in care](#) to;

- help and support you to stay safe and have a healthy lifestyle
- have high aspirations and reach your full potential
- make sure you have lots of different people to support you
- help you have new experiences and develop your own interests
- support throughout your education and to plan for the future
- involve you in all decisions about your life
- celebrate your achievements
- listen and make sure you know what will happen next
- work towards the [My Things Matter Campaign](#)

Leeds City Council have also agreed to establish Care Experience as a locally protected characteristic by the Council. This means that decisions on services and policies made and adopted by the council will be assessed and consider the impact on people with care experience. We want to keep improving how we meet the needs of those who have care experience and reduce the disadvantages they face. Working with care experienced individuals, we will enhance our cross-council approach to creating opportunities for those with care experience to thrive and succeed.

Voice of children and young people



Listening to and acting on the views of children and young people is essential to making sure that the right home, care and support are provided at the right time for our children and young people.

The views of children and young people have been gained through direct feedback and ongoing consultation work with Voice and Influence groups and Youth Councils, and our Advocacy and Children Rights service. Children and young people have clearly shared that they want

- an 'ordinary' family life, and not to feel 'different'
- to maintain relations with their birth families
- to understand why they're in care
- to be listened to about where they want to be, and to have an element of control
- to be valued, respected, encouraged (for example, at school) and to be appreciated for themselves.

The Leeds Corporate Parenting Board completed a survey with children and young people. The key messages, themes and findings from children and young people include:

- Children and young people want to be happy, healthy and settled. They want a say in decisions about where they live and the opportunity to build positive relationships with the people that care for them.
- They want to achieve at school and receive opportunities to develop further education, training and employment options that are right for them.
- They want effective support with their physical and mental health, at the right time and a say in what this looks like.
- Children and young people want choice about where they live and for this to be matched to their needs personally.
- Relationships with their families is really important to them and the time that is spent with them.
- Young people want information and support as they develop into adulthood and stability and consistency of support from the people caring and looking after them.

Listening to those with lived experience including parents and carers and those who have had previous children removed or adopted is also a key part of our consultation and engagement. Child and Parent advocates are used to ensure voice and lived experience is heard and effectively responded to.

Leeds children

This section presents our Leeds children in care population in the context of our overall child population as part of a large, diverse, complex and growing city. Locally and nationally Children looked after populations are growing and are weighted to older ages and to children from deprived communities.

The Leeds child population (under 18) has grown 10.9% in the last decade. This growth has seen an increasingly diverse child population and a child population weighted towards more deprived communities and families with low income.

- The Office for National Statistics estimates that the Leeds population of 10–15-year-olds grew 9% 2019-2022 and the population of young people ages 16 and 17 grew 12%. Leeds has had a falling birth rate in recent years alongside a now growing teenage population.
- A disproportionate third of Leeds children live in areas in the 10% most deprived in England. 57% of care starters (2023/24) come from communities in the 10% most deprived in England.
- The number of children in Leeds experiencing low income is the 7th largest number in England.
- Our youngest populations are our most diverse and diversity is increasing.
- As at March 2024, 1548, children are in care a rate of 89.7 per 10,000 children. Children in care rose by 7% in 2023/24, care starters exceeded leavers in 9 out of the preceding 13 months.
- The March 2023 average children in care rates for DFE statistical neighbour local authorities was 93.7 per 10,000 (range 57 to 144) and for Core Cities 96.5 (range 57 to 156). 2024 rates will be available late autumn 2024.
- Children aged 10-17 make up 62% of our looked after population and 44% of our child population, this is reflected nationally.
- Children from mixed ethnic background are over-represented in our care population.

Child Population

After a sustained period of high birth years in Leeds there has been a decline in the birth rate since 2017. With this decline in birth rate the Leeds child population (under 18) is at its current peak. We recognise that the high birth years have just begun to enter secondary school and will start to reach post-16 learning in 2026/27. This growth in our Leeds teenage population will see a more diverse teenage population and one weighted more to our deprived neighbourhoods.

Nationally and in Leeds the child in care population is disproportionately weighted to older age groups and to children from more deprived backgrounds. These demographic factors will impact on demand. This is in the context of broader challenges impacting families, children and young people including cost of living, growing inequality, increased mental health needs in young people and lower levels of school attendance post pandemic. Mitigation comes from strong partnerships at all levels that listen to children and families and supporting timely identification and help. The table below shows the under 18 child population 2019-2022 by age groups. The overall child population has grown by 2% ages but within these ages 10-15 have grown 15% and ages 16-17 by 12%.

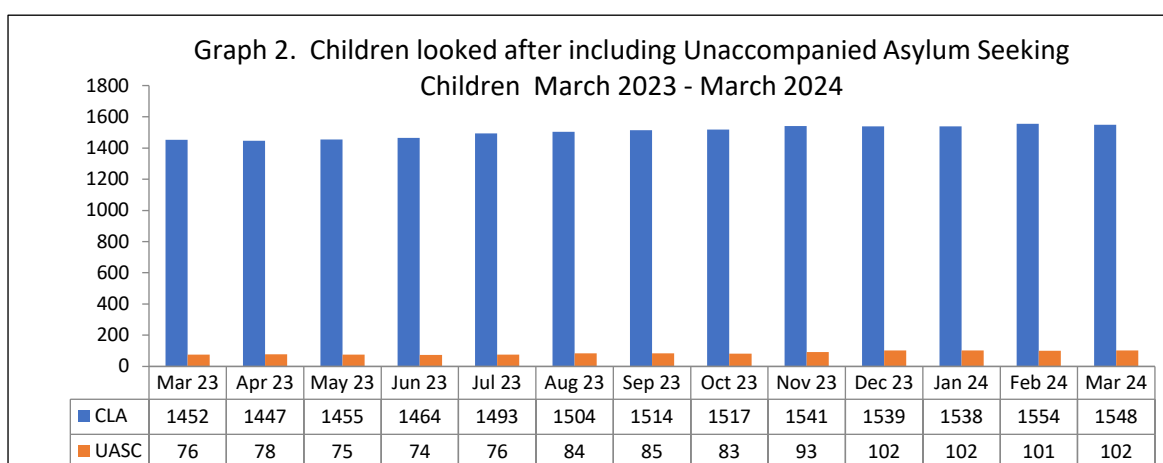
	2019	2020	2021	2022	Change	
0-4	49,212	48,022	46,395	45,846	-3,366	-7%
5-9	50,115	49,727	49,557	49,782	-333	-1%
10-15	54,185	55,851	57,325	59,142	4,957	9%
16-17	15,953	16,692	17,362	17,881	1,928	12%
TOTAL	169,465	170,292	170,639	172,651	3,186	2%

Source Office for National Statistics.

Children looked after population

Our Looked After Children population grew by 7% from March 2023 to March 2024 with 1548 children in care on 31 March. This represents 89.7 children in care for every 10,000 children under 18 in Leeds. Graph 2 shows the looked after children population over the 13 months to March 2024, in this period care starters exceeded care leavers in 9 of the 13 months.

The number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in care increased in 2023 and has sustained at around a hundred children. These children represent a quarter of the growth in children in care over the last year. Numbers may rise further reflecting Leeds commitment as a compassionate city and government guidance.



The table below compares Leeds rate of children in care per 10,000 children with 4 comparator averages from 2014 to 2023 (latest national data). For March 2023 Leeds has a rate above England, close to the Yorkshire and The Humber and below Department for Education Statistical Neighbours and Core Cities.

Consistent with authorities across England, Leeds is seeing growth in the child in care population. The provisional Leeds rate per ten thousand for March 2024 is 89.7 per 10,000. The official release of national data will be late 2024. Comparing 2019-23 Leeds has a marginally higher rate of increase than comparators (7 children per 10,000 compared to 5 or 6) but 2014-23 Leeds' rate of children in care declined against increases in comparator rates of 10 children in care per 10,000 or greater. For 2023-24 regional sharing of unofficial data suggests a mixed picture with authorities care populations, including a rise in Leeds and a small reduction in the regional rate.

Within these averages there is substantial local authority variation, Leeds 2023 rate of children in care at 84 per 10,000 ranks 6th of 11 with statistical neighbours, rates range from 57 to 144. Leeds rate is 4th of 8 core cities with a range from 57 to 156 children in care per 10,000. Local authority rates of children in care are affected by socio-economic factors, demography and local organisational and practice arrangements.

Table 2 Rates of Children in Care 2014-2023 (children in care per 10,000 child population)

CLA rates at end of March	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Change 14 to 23	Change 14 to 23
Leeds	86	78	76	76	76	77	79	75	80	84	7	-2
Yorkshire & The Humber	65	64	63	67	71	75	78	80	81	81	6	16
Statistical Neighbours	76	77	76	82	83	89	91	93	92	94	6	18
Core Cities	87	84	82	84	86	91	93	94	99	97	6	10
England	60	60	60	62	64	66	68	69	70	71	5	11

Source DFE Local Authority Interactive Tool/SFR. Dates are for the end of March. Leeds/England/Yorkshire are CLA rates per 10,000 statistical neighbour/core cities are the average rate across local authorities.

Children looked after population by age.

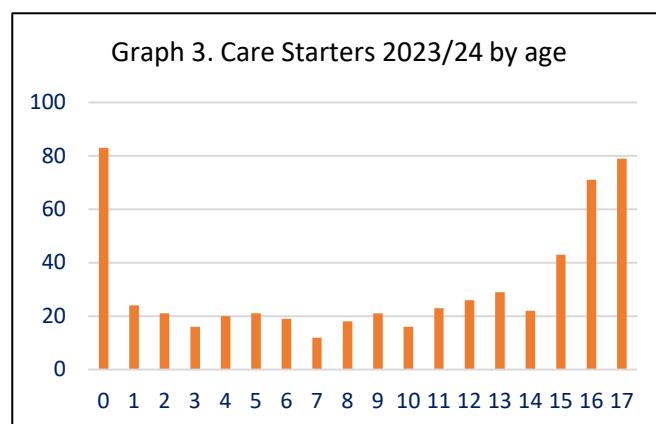
The Office of National Statistics estimates that the Leeds child population (U18) grew by 2% 2019-22 to 172,651. The age profile of the Leeds children in care is similar to England this includes younger ages being under-represented compared to the local child population and ages 10 plus overrepresented, especially ages 16 and 17. For this later group they make 22% of Leeds care population (03/23) and 10% of Leeds population (ONS 22) for England this is 26% (03/23) and 11% (ONS 22).

The Leeds care population has seen a 20% increase from March 2019 to December 2023, within this:

- Ages 0-4 saw a 3% increase in the context of a declining child population (273 children Dec 23).
- Ages 5-9 a 26% increase in the context of a stable child population (308 children Dec 23).
- Ages 10-15 a 16% increase in the context of an increasing child population (591 children Dec 23).
- Ages 16-17 a 39% increase in the context of a stable child population (361 children Dec 23).

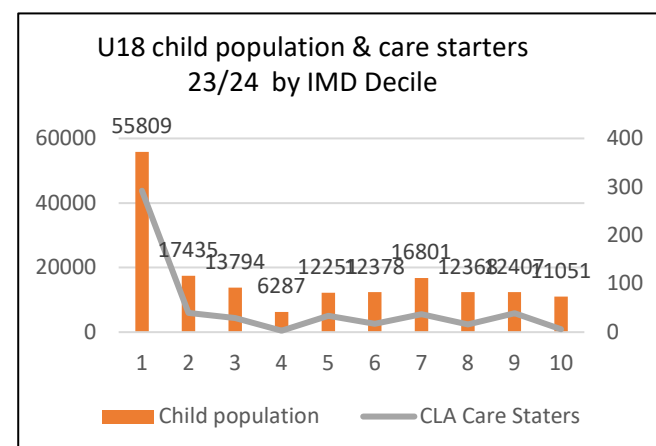
Children looked after starters and leavers

- Graph 3 shows care starters in 2023/24 highlighting that starters are weighted to children under one (15%) and teenagers aged 15 and over (35%), the later will include the majority of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.
- 2023/24 saw a continuation in the rising numbers of children entering local authority care in Leeds with 558 children starting care. This is a 6% increase on 2022/23 and a 35% rise from 2018/19. Abuse or Neglect is the main reason for children entering care, consistently 60-64% of care starters each year. Absent parents (18%) and families in acute distress (10%) have increased as reasons for care entry in recent years. (2023/24 data is provisional).
- In 2023/24 (provisionally) 482 children left care, 153 of whom when they turned 18. 22% of care leavers were aged under 5, 13% aged 5 to 10, 14% 11 to 15, 19% aged 16 and 17 and 32% aged 18.



Children looked after population and poverty, income and deprivation.

Leeds is the second largest metropolitan authority in England. For the financial year ending 2023 33,432 of the under 16 child population in Leeds were living in households of relative low income, 21.6% of the child population. While the Leeds percentage of children in low income households doesn't stand out the absolute number does, Leeds has the fourth largest child population being impacted when compared to metropolitan and unitary authorities and the seventh if large county councils are included.



The growth in the Leeds child population is weighted to our most deprived communities. 33% of the Leeds children under 18 population live in neighbourhoods in the 10% most deprived nationally. In 2023/24 57% of care starters came from these communities.

Data sources: Children in care local statistics. Population Office of National Statistics. IMD – Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 1-most deprived decile 10 – least

While overall Leeds has a rate of children in care of 89.7 per 10,000 (03/2024) at a community level this varies. 3 of our 22 children’s clusters (local partnership areas) have rates of children in care over 150 per 10,000 and 11 have rates lower than 20 per 10,000. We recognise that all Leeds communities have families experiencing low income and children eligible for free school meals and that these are heavily concentrated in some communities. This includes both highly mobile, diverse, dynamic communities and more settled communities facing intergenerational challenges.

Children looked after population and diversity.

Our youngest children and our youngest communities are our most diverse and diversity is increasing. The table from the 2021 census emphasises this.

Table 3 Leeds 2021 Census Ethnic diversity by age.

	24 & under	25 to 64 years	65 years & over
Ethnically Diverse Communities	29%	20%	6%
White	71%	80%	94%

Source ONS Census 2021

Children with English as an additional language make up 23% of primary pupils in Leeds school and 20% of secondary pupils, this is above national and regional rates with the Leeds rate, especially at secondary school, increasing faster than comparators. (Source DFE School Census)

For children in care those from mixed ethnic backgrounds are over-represented and those from Asian backgrounds under-represented relative to the Leeds population. It is a recognised that these broad headings do not adequately represent the diversity or change in our communities.

Table 4 Children in Care by Ethnicity.

Open Children Looked After	School Census		
	Apr-24	Mar-23	Jan-22
White	70	71	69
Mixed	14	14	7
Asian	4	4	13
Black	8	8	8
Other	4	3	2

Source Leeds CHAT April 2024 local data

Nationally published (March 24 for 2022/23) data identifies children in care with special education needs, both children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and children identified in school as in need of SEN support. 60% of Leeds children looked after of statutory school age have an identified SEN compared to 58.1 percent in England. 436 looked after children are identified as having special education needs, 149 with an EHCP and 287 receiving SEN support. Social Emotional and Mental Health is the primary SEN need for 57.1% of these children. Local analysis from the 2024 January school census 219 children in care attending a Leeds schools are in receipt of SEN support.

Leeds current provision

Local Authority Fostering

Leeds has recruited and supports over 400 foster carers who work with a range of children and young people, including those with complex needs and disabilities. Mockingbird Hubs are a central part of the support and infrastructure of the Leeds fostering community. A resourced recruitment strategy is in place that aims to significantly increase the number of carers. Over 60% of our children looked after are placed with Leeds Foster carers.

External Fostering – Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA)

Where fostering demand cannot be met through the in-house fostering service, Leeds commission provision direct from IFAs through the White Rose IFA Electronic Market Place (IFA EMP). The White Rose Partnership (WRP) is a regional partnership of Yorkshire & Humber local authorities who work together to ensure there are contracted quality placement options available. Where contracted providers cannot be sourced, off contract spot purchases are made with additional quality assurance and due diligence checks.

Local Authority Residential

Leeds provides a number of children's homes for children and young people focusing on long term support, complex need, SEND and reunification. There are plans to double this internal provision providing additional small group living homes which will offer multi-disciplinary evidence-based models of intervention and wrap around care. Leeds is also working in partnership with Health to develop multi-disciplinary homes for children and young people at risk of or stepped down from admission to tier 4 mental health provision.

External Residential

Where residential demand cannot be met through the in-house residential service, Leeds jointly commission alongside health and education, provision direct from the independent external children's homes providers through the White Rose Residential Electronic Market Place (Residential EMP). Due to the demand on this provision, spot purchased placements are also made with additional quality assurance and due diligence checks.

SEND Care and Education

Leeds commission care and education provision from the White Rose SEND Schools and College Placements Electronic Market Place (SEND EMP). These provisions can be day placements or can be residential schools. Spot purchased placements are also made with additional quality assurance and due diligence checks.

Short breaks

Leeds has a graduated short break offer which is communicated through the Local Offer and short break statement which includes residential short breaks.

Parent and child

Leeds commission parent and child assessment, support and residential provision through external locally based providers.

Supported Accommodation

Our Way Leeds (OWL) is a partnership of external providers who provide accommodation with support to Leeds young people aged 16+. This arrangement is Leeds-only and has been commissioned jointly with the Adults & Health Directorate. Leeds has also commissioned a Leeds Electronic Market Place for Supported Accommodation for Young People aged 16 to 25 (16+ EMP). The 16+ EMP has a range of registered support accommodation providers including floating support.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)

Leeds is seeing an increase in Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking children (UASC) and is developing a specific support and accommodation offer to meet this need and demand. This builds on the existing service and support given that this was highlighted as best practice in Leeds last Inspection of Local Authority Children Services (ILAC).

Staying put and close

Leeds is committed to and has invested in Staying Put and Staying Close, to ensure that young people can sustain their trusted relationships and networks of support through foster care and residential workers up to the age of 21. Staying Put and Close are recognised models of good practice that are embedded in policy and practice and deliver positive outcomes around accommodation stability, wellbeing, education, employment and training, independent living skills and support networks.

Emergency

At points of crisis, placement breakdown and in emergencies, activity-based provision is commissioned for short periods of time. Due to the unregulated nature of this provision additional quality assurance, due diligence, and social work and senior management decision making, and oversight is put in place. There is commitment to keeping our numbers of children and young people in unregulated settings to an absolute minimum and ensuring there is high support and high challenge given at all levels throughout the course of these placements.

Secure Children's Home

Leeds provides a local authority secure children's home. The home comprises of three 8-bedded house units. Of the 24 available places, 14 are contracted to the Youth Custody Service (YCS), allowing 10 placements for local authority purchase under s25 Children Act 1989 or further spot purchase YCS requirements. If available, beds can also be accessed under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984 for the 5 local authorities in West Yorkshire only.

Wetherby Young Offenders Institution

Leeds hosts HM Wetherby Youth Offender Institution (HMYOI) which is a closed youth custody centre housing up to 250 male juvenile offenders between the ages of 15 to 18. All accommodation is single cell occupancy consisting of four wings and a specialist unit called Keppel. Keppel unit is an enhanced needs unit holding up to 48 young people. This is a national resource and looks after young people who find it difficult to manage in normal accommodation due to issues including learning, physical and mental health issues. Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust provides a community style, general health service to the prison.

PACE beds and Remand care

Leeds provides PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence) and remand care beds in line with the guidance set out in PACE Act 1984 and Children Act 1984 and process outlined in the Leeds Bail and Remand Protocol for young people.

Red Kite View

Leeds hosts Red Kite View which is a Children and Young People's Mental Health Unit. The 22 bed unit, is based at St Mary's Hospital site and delivered by Leeds and York Partnership Trust. The provision was designed in partnership with clinicians and young people and is part of the drive to eliminate out-of-area placements for young people who need to be inpatients but can't access a bed locally.

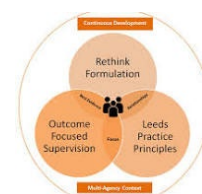
Leeds Vision

- Commitment to *'think families and families first'*, including Family Valued model, family-based settings, family-based solutions (eg Family Group Conferencing) and reunification with family where possible.
- Safely reduce the number of looked after children because we know the best place for a child to be brought up is with family. This will be implemented through developments to early help and preventative services, so reducing the need for children to become looked after and through better support and planning to help children move on from care and return home.
- A focus on family-based solutions for those in care. This will be implemented through work to promote adoption, new policies and support for kinship carers, enhanced Special Guardianship Order (SGO) offer and continued recruitment and development of foster care.
- Effective permanency planning through the childcare review process, supporting applications for a Special Guardianship Order (SGO), reunification with family or ensuring that children are matched with identified long term carers
- Where foster or residential care is needed, these high-quality stable homes will be centred on the needs of the individual, be family focused and as close to home as is possible and safe, to allow children to maintain family, friendships and community networks.
- Residential care will be seen as an intervention not a destination. Residential homes will be developed by the local authority and in partnership with local providers to ensure there is high quality provision to meet a range of different needs.
- Stronger relationship-based commissioning and market management and shaping to address escalating cost and the 'broken market and delivering value for money.
- Multi-disciplinary approach from care, education and health to assess, commission, support and intervene ensuring an agile, flexible joined-up wrap around offer for children, young people and families. This approach is in partnership with parents, involves the voluntary and community sector and recognises education as key.
- Implement learning from National Review of Complex Health Needs in Residential Settings by ensuring a robust, multi-disciplinary and tenacious approach to quality assurance across all care health and education residential settings.
- Supporting the transition to adulthood and independence by providing a range of options for Care Leavers, USAC and children leaving Youth Custody. The implementation of Staying Put and Staying Close ensuring support is close in proximity through trusted relationships.
- Working together across the Yorkshire and Humber region, alongside health partners, to understand need, gaps and opportunities, developing regional sufficiency solutions to local challenges.
- Recognising, supporting and developing an agile, highly skilled, knowledgeable and experienced workforce that understands, promotes and reflects the culture, identity and diversity of our children looked after.

Leeds Model

The [Leeds Practice Model](#) builds on all aspects of practice and what we know to be useful when assessing, implementing and evaluating what we do. It is based on findings from a wide range of practices and does not necessarily represent anything new or unknown. Rather it is a bringing together of evidence based best practice which in itself naturally aligns to working restoratively with both children and families. The Leeds Practice Model contains the five key elements of:

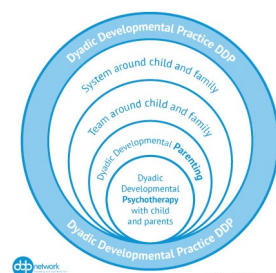
- Rethink Formulation
- Leeds Practice Principles
- Outcome Focused Supervision
- Continuous Development
- Multi-agency Context



A central part of the Leeds Practice principles is [restorative practice](#). Restorative practice is a term used to describe the behaviours, interactions and approaches which help to build and maintain positive, healthy relationships, resolve difficulties and repair harm where there has been conflict.

When we work restoratively with and alongside people, there is strong evidence to say that outcomes for children and their families are improved.

All our fostering, family-based settings, reunification and residential homes are underpinned by the same evidence based therapeutic model and approach. Dyadic Development Psychotherapy (DDP) is based on and brings together attachment theory, what we understand about developmental trauma, the neurobiology of trauma, attachment and caregiving, intersubjectivity theory and child development.



DDP helps children learn to trust. It is family based and relationship focused, using PACE to develop connections, relationships and attachment. PACE is **Playfulness** which brings enjoyment to the relationship. **Acceptance** which creates psychological safety. When we **Curiously** explore within a relationship, we express a desire to know the other more deeply. Finally, **Empathy** communicates our curiosity and acceptance, as we recognise and respond to the other's emotional experience.

The Leeds Model acknowledges that we can only promote family first and create stable homes when we work together effectively with children, their families and our voluntary and statutory partners. This also includes contextual safeguarding and an understanding and response to the extra familial risks that children and young people face across a range of social contexts.

The Leeds Practice model also recognises that there needs to be flexible range of responsive provision for our children and young people that provides the right support at the right time. This starts with effective evidence based early help, prevention, family support and reunification through to short breaks, crisis intervention, family-based care and small group living. Residential care is seen as an intervention and not a destination and crisis provision as a safe space to work towards the next step in achieving family resolution. Staying Put and Staying Close are promoted to ensure that trusted relationships can be maintained to support independence.

Leeds Ambitions

Our Families First ambition...

That all children and young people, where safe and possible are brought up in families or family-based settings

We will achieve this by...

- Investing in restorative early support, prevention and family help including Family HUBs
- Development of a reunification service offer, including Multi Systemic Therapy (MST) CAN (Child Abuse and Neglect) MST Family Integrated Transition (FIT) and Integrated Treatment Model (ITM)
- Implementation of enhanced Special Guardianship Order (SGO) support offer

We will know we are achieving this if...

- We stabilise or reduce the numbers of children looked after
- Increase the number of children and young people reunified to families or family-based settings

Our fostering ambition...

That all children and young people who need and can live in a fostering family, have access to foster carers in Leeds

We will achieve this by...

- Wrap around support to our foster carers through Mockingbird and therapeutic service
- A resourced and effective foster carer recruitment strategy that provides a diverse range of carers that offer family-based provision for children and young people that is part of their care plan
- Training and developing foster carers that can support a range of children and young people including teenagers, children with complex and mental health needs and stepping down from residential placements
- Developing effective partnerships with external fostering providers to maximise the use of local carers to provide homes for Leeds children and young people with a range of needs include complex

We will know we are achieving this if...

- We increase the number of in house foster carers in line with agreed targets
- Increase retention of foster carers
- We increase the stability of children and young people in foster care
- We have positive feedback from children and young people and foster carers

Our residential ambition...

That all Leeds children and young people that need residential care can have access to local, loving, nurturing stable homes that are rated good and outstanding and effectively meet their range of needs.

We will achieve this by...

- Implementing the Leeds Practice Model for residential including therapeutically informed and psychologically lead wrap around support
- Providing a range of local authority registered residential homes to meet the needs of children and young people
- Developing a joint Health funded home for children and young people stepping down or at risk of tier 4 mental health admission
- Implementing a wrap-around multi-disciplinary flexible support offer to all children and young people in residential care
- Developing a mixed economy of residential provision including exploring partnerships with the third sector
- Ensuring Leeds based external residential children's homes are prioritised for Leeds children and are used to compliment local authority homes and manage fluctuation in demand
- Implementing a 'no notice' approach to placement stability so that children and young people only move home if it is part of planned move as part of their care plan

- Leeds children being in high quality local children's homes

We will know we are achieving this if...

- We increase the number of local authority homes in line within agreed targets
- We develop homes in partnership with third sector in line within agreed targets around cost, quality and mobilisation timescales
- We increase the use of good or outstanding local children's homes
- We increase the stability of children and young people in children's homes
- We decrease the number of children and young people placed at distance

Our Supported Accommodation ambition...

That young people progress into and through independence and having access to the right high quality accommodation and loving and nurturing support

We will achieve this by...

- Supporting young people to access education, training and employment and being ambitious about plans for the future
- Ensuring there are a range of registered supported accommodation providers that meet different levels of need and support for young people into independence
- Maintaining an effective contractual partnership with the third sector to provide accommodation and support
- Providing a specific offer and pathway for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children
- Implementing the Staying Close initiative which ensures practical and emotional move on support from trusted workers

We will know we are achieving this if...

- We increase the number of registered providers and provision for different levels of need
- We increase the quality of provision and amount of young people in good or outstanding registered provision
- We meet our agreed Staying Close and Staying Put targets
- We have positive feedback from our care leavers

Implementation

Three-year profiles and implementation plans will be developed for the fostering, residential and semi-independent ambitions.

The profiles will set out direction of travel for the next 3 years and detail target numbers required for each type of provision.

The implementation plans will outline what is needed, by when and who is responsible. These plans will be monitored monthly and updated annually based on progress, changing need and financial and budget implications.

The Sufficiency Strategy will be agreed by the Council's Executive Board having progressed through a range of Leeds City Council's internal teams and Board's including the Children and Families Senior Leadership Team, Corporate Parenting Board and Corporate Leadership Team.

A summarised infographic of the strategy, including an accessible version has been shared with children and young people for their input and agreement.