

# Surrey County Council

## Looked After Children (LAC)

### Sufficiency Plan



## Annual Update (2021/2022)

To be read alongside [Surrey County Council Sufficiency Strategy 2020 - 2025](#).

## Introduction and Background – why is Sufficiency important?

Surrey County Council's Sufficiency Strategy is an update for 2021, building on the overall [Surrey County Council Sufficiency Strategy 2020 - 2025](#).

This summary document outlines:

- Key Changes to the national context
- legislative changes that may impact on Surrey County Council sufficiency for looked after Children (LAC)
- Local context, including placements made at distance
- Changes to provision sufficiency.
  - Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) and fostering
  - Children's Residential provision
  - Supported Accommodation



Sufficiency is important to Surrey County Council (SCC) and, most importantly, the children and young people in its care. To SCC, Sufficiency means:

“Sufficiency” really means having enough of the right accommodation and services, in the right places, to effectively support Surrey’s children, young people and families. This also includes thinking about the quality of those services and whether they are making a positive difference to the lives of children, young people and families. We often call these positive differences “outcomes”.

However, to the children and young people in care, it means a lot more than just that. The comments below highlight what sufficiency means to our children and young people in care:

Sufficiency is important to me because I have had to come from the dirt where I had no stability, no money, no nothing and I had to work very hard to have what I have today and I have create stability in my life I have a stable balance coming in every month , I'm doing very well and I can see a difference in the two when there was no stability my life was chaos and a bad environment but when I created that stability for myself I am loving life and being the best I can be that's why it's so important to me because I never want to end up back in the dirt.

***Looked After Child (17)***

“Sufficiency has impacted my life because I was lucky, I got to stay with my last placement for 5 years and having them be sufficient with me helped me to bloom and grow into the person I am today.”

***Care leaver, 18***

## Surrey's local context - what's changed?

Surrey County Council continues to see a rise in the number of Looked After Children (LAC). Table 1 outlines the changes<sup>1</sup> from the 2020 sufficiency strategy to the present version. There has been a small increase in the number of looked after children in Surrey, a reduction in Children in Need (CIN), but a 29% increase in children on child protection plans in Surrey. Overall, around 1.37% of the 0-19 population in Surrey are subject to LAC, CP or CIN status.

Type of care	Sufficiency Plan 2020	Sufficiency Plan 2021	% change
Looked After Children (LAC)	982	996	1.43%
Child Protection Plan (CP)	698	902	29.22%
Child in Need (CIN)	2106	2097	-0.43%

**Table 1:** changes in CIN,CP and LAC from 2020

The increase in Child Protection rates is against national trends during COVID. Nationally, in line with the Vulnerable Children and Young People Survey, the total number of children looked after (CLA) was 3% higher than the same time in 2019-20 and the total number of children on a child protection plan (CPP) was 6% lower (DfE 2021, Page 5).



## In and out of county

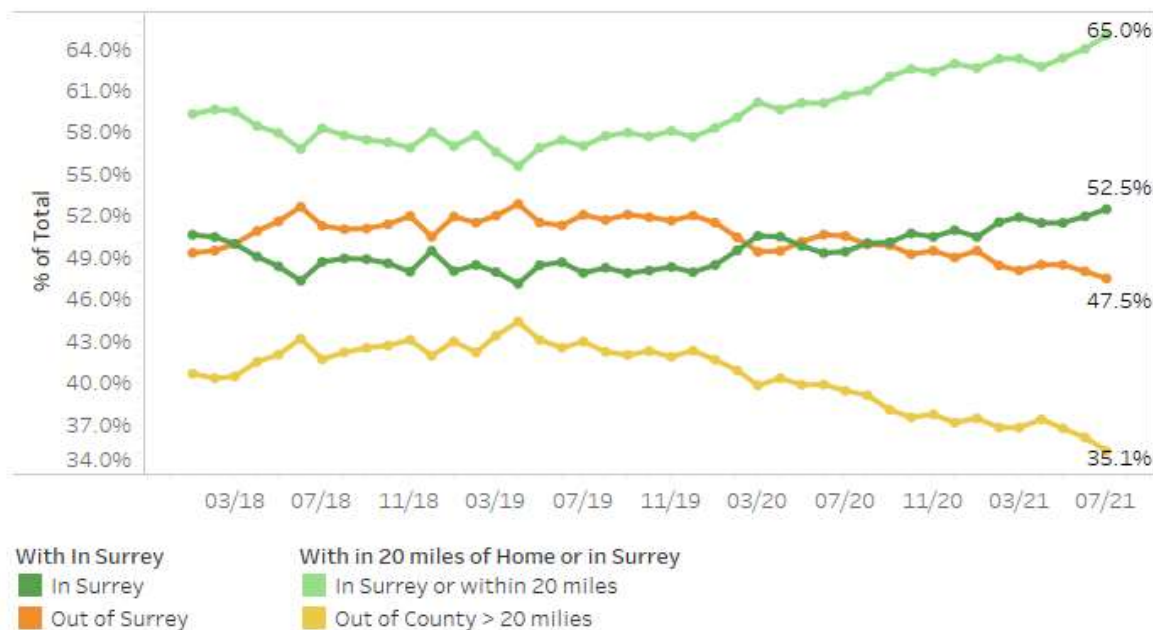
A trend of placing children outside of Surrey is now starting to be reversed since the publication of the 2020 full sufficiency plan, though it is acknowledged significant additional work is required to continue to support this trend, particularly around residential provision,

For children looked after in Surrey:

- A declining proportion of children in care are placed out of county and over 20 miles of Surrey
- An increasing proportion of looked after children placed within Surrey or 20 miles

In terms of the in Surrey / out of Surrey split, progress is being made with a trend upwards of placements purely within Surrey borders.

Location of Placements Over Time



**Figure 1:** Chart shows the trend of placements in and out of county from the since the start of 2018. It also placements in and out of county which is calculated by any placements that is within 20 miles of home address

## What types of provision has Surrey County Council seen demand for?

Compared to March 2020, Surrey County Council has seen modest reductions in the use of externally provided provision (provision commissioned via private providers).

### In the external market:

- SCC has seen a modest increase in the use of residential Family Centre units (mother and baby assessment unit).
- SCC has seen a 5% decrease in the amount of external residential provision required from 2020. The No Wrong Door (NWD) hubs, due to be established in Surrey, will continue to support SCCs ambition to see fewer children in residential.
- Other external provision types have seen modest decreases or have remained static.

### For in-house provision:

- SCC has seen a 30% increase for kinship fostering (extended family). This could be linked to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A 30% Decrease in the use of Supported Lodgings placements
- Modest reductions in other provision types.

Increases to in demand for residential placements is in line with challenges felt more widely on a national level. The recently published CMA market investigation notice states that “On supply, the overall number of looked-after children grew by over 20% between 2011 and 2020, but the number of children’s homes places grew by just 8% in the years 2012-20 (CMA 2021, Page 15).

## By Age

SCC has seen the largest growth in the 0-3 age range for LAC, increasing by 23% since 2020. There have been more modest increases in the 7-9 age range (3.5%) and 13-15 (4.27%). The numbers in the age range of 13-15 naturally start from a higher base, and with modest growth will inevitably require additional supported accommodation provision as these individuals leave education or transition to adulthood.

## By Gender

Overall, 2021 saw an increase in the proportion of Females in care compared to Males of 1% when compared to the previous year. (2020- 56% male and 44% female, 2021- 55% male and 45% female)

## By Ethnicity

Ethnicity of the Looked After Child (LAC) cohort is broadly like 2020, with smaller increases in the percentage of children with ethnicity listed as Asian and White British. There has been a 2% decrease in the number of looked after children with ethnicity identified as black. Published research has noted the importance of culturally appropriate placements, particularly for children in foster care.

## Children with Disabilities (CWD)

Although overall numbers of children with disabilities has decreased, specific areas of need are seeing increases, which will impact on the type(s) of provision and support offers SCC will require in the coming years

These areas are:

- A higher percentage of CWD with a hearing impairment
- Increases in CWD with behavioural difficulties, autism, or mobility.

## Average cost

Surrey County Council is seeing reductions in average weekly cost of external placements for Supported Accommodation, IFA Fostering and Residential (Non-CWD). This corresponds to additional work done with improved contract monitoring processes, the introduction of CareCubed, and increases in supply for Supported Accommodation provision.

## How else is Surrey County Council looking to support the wider social care system?

### No Wrong Door

No Wrong Door ensures that the needs of young people in care, no matter how diverse, are addressed within a single team of trusted and skilled workers. These workers would stay with the young person throughout their journey; be it to prevent care, in care, across care or out of the care system.

### Family Safeguarding Model

Surrey County Council is committed to the principle of early help, so that no child is left behind. The model provides the opportunity to work with parents identify their needs and support them to address these needs arising from domestic abuse, parental substance misuse and poor parental mental health.

### Renovation of Children's Homes

Surrey is committed to the principle of high-quality homes for children in care. A significant capital development programme is underway to refurbish in-house children's homes, as well as developing new opportunities within county.

### Placement Value Outcomes (PVO) Programme

SCC have established the Placement Value and Outcomes (PVO) Transformation Programme, which launched on 1 April 2021. The programme aims to increase the sufficiency of provision in Surrey for children and young people who are looked after and/or have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

## Residential

Surrey County Council has a significantly fewer number of external children's homes within county, compared to neighbouring boroughs, and a strong level of in-house residential provision, which is broadly comparable.

	In Surrey	Out of Surrey		In Surrey or within 20 miles	Out of county
<b>2020</b>	40.54%	59.46%		<b>2020</b>	46.85%
<b>2021</b>	37.93%	62.07%		<b>2021</b>	43.10%

Residential placements made within Surrey borders or within 20 miles have decreased over the last year, in line with limited residential provision within Surrey, and wider national sufficiency challenges.

## Fostering

Surrey places a higher proportion of children in care in Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements (**41.85%**) than the national average. In addition, SCC places a lower number of fostering placements In-House (**58%**) than the national average. This indicates additional in-house fostering provision is required.

Fostering sufficiency within county is improving, driven primarily by improvements in capacity for the in-house fostering service (aligned to increases for kinship fostering).

	In Surrey	Out of Surrey		In Surrey or within 20 miles	Out of county
<b>2020</b>	48.67%	51.70%		<b>2020</b>	58.71%
<b>2021</b>	49.06%	50.94%		<b>2021</b>	59.25%

*"I am very lucky that I was placed with, such an amazing couple who I can never thank enough. They understood why I was struggling and never took anything to heart. I put them through so much stress, despite Social Workers frequently suggesting I move, they still stuck by me. I'm now happy that I am still a big part of their family"*

**Supported Accommodation**

In line with increasing Care Leaver demand, Surrey county Council has increased the proportion of blocks within county, whilst also expanding the number of providers on the Supported Accommodation DPS.

On the Dynamic Purchasing System:

- SCC has a total of 507 beds, of which 79 are within Surrey and 428 are outside.
- SCC has a further 226 block bed provision within county. District & Borough councils have nomination rights to a proportion of these beds.

Since the last Sufficiency Plan update, this is an increase of:

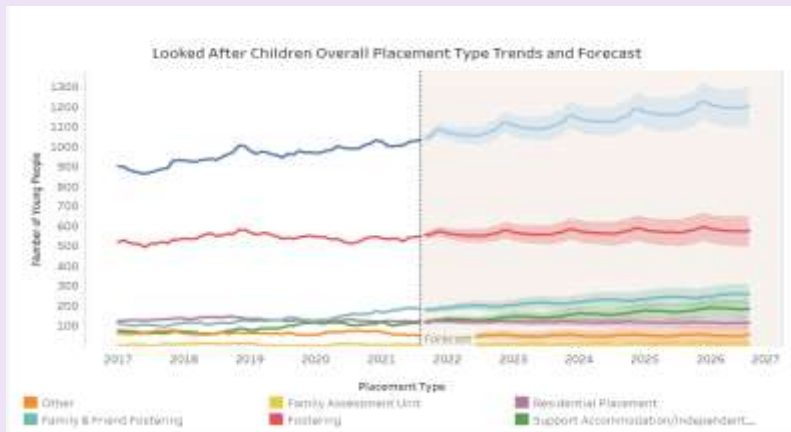
- 142 new call-off beds (26 within Surrey, the remainder being within 20 miles)
- 14 new block beds within Surrey

	In Surrey	Out of Surrey		In Surrey or within 20 miles	Out of county
<b>2020</b>	48.65%	51.35%	<b>2020</b>	54.95%	45.05%
<b>2021</b>	51.06%	50.00%	<b>2021</b>	69.15%	32.98%

In line with the additional Supported Accommodation provision developed above, significantly more placements for supported accommodation are now being made in Surrey or within 20 miles of Surrey.




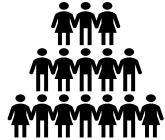






**Planning for future demand**



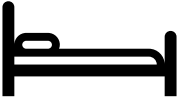






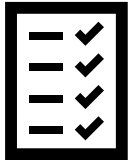


Provision Area	March 2021	March 2025	Change (+/-)	% Change
<b>Overall LAC numbers</b>	<b>982</b>	<b>1167</b>	<b>+185</b>	<b>18.84%</b>
Residential	124	118	-6	-4.84%
Supported Accommodation	101	176	+75	74.36%
Fostering	539	577	+38	7.05%

Surrey County Council have established projected future placement trends by using a standard linear regression projection based on current trends. This produces a forecast that provides an indication on future demand if nothing else changes (*i.e. the model does not take into account any potential changes on demand via changes to practice models*).

On current trends, SCC is expected to see a modest increase in fostering placements over 5 years, a small reduction in residential but a significant increase in the requirements for Supported Accommodation.

Sufficiency Statement 1		Sufficiency Statement 6	
	Considering an increase in children on child protection plans, SCC will continue to take a strength-based approach, reviewing its family resilience provision to build on areas of good practice and work with partners to consolidate the response to family's needs.		SCC will ensure children in foster placements are appropriately matched with culturally appropriate placements, and that a sufficient pool of foster carers is available to meet the needs of this cohort.
Sufficiency Statement 2		Sufficiency Statement 7	
	SCC will increase the amount and proportion of provision in county across Supported Accommodation, Residential and Supported Accommodation. Further information as to the amount required and how SCC intends to do this can be found		In line with the successful increase(s) to kinship fostering, SCC will look to ensure capacity for Reg 21 assessments and explore whether kinship placements could become permanent in time.
Sufficiency Statement 3		Sufficiency Statement 8	
	A higher proportion of 14–15-year-olds in care (and a large 16-17 year old), with changes to the Supported Accommodation regulation from September 2021, will require a) additional in-house fostering provision for adolescents and/or clear pathways to independence b) high quality Supported Accommodation within Surrey c) alternative pathways or provision		In line with the increases to females with mental health needs, Surrey will look to develop more provision for females with tier 4 mental health needs. Work to enhance and expand Surrey's Hope Service (a multi-agency service for young people aged 11-18 who are experiencing complex mental health, emotional, social and behavioural needs) will form a key part of this. This work is <b>closely linked to sufficiency statement 11 – developing additional crisis/emergency beds.</b>
Sufficiency Statement 5		Sufficiency Statement 9	
	In line with increasing proportions of female in care, SCC will look to review the utilisation of single gender homes in residential and supported accommodation.		SCC will develop in-house CWD residential provision, primarily around Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH), to ensure more children with complex needs are supported closer home. This will reduce the reliance on high-cost external provision, often located out of county.

Sufficiency Statement 10		Sufficiency Statement 15	
	In line with change(s) to placement cost, and the announced CMA investigation into residential cost, SCC will utilise CareCubed for review of existing placement cost and look to embed the tool into placement making panels / decisions going forward. SCC will look to reduce average placement cost across all areas of provision.		SCC will look to strengthen and energise partnership working with district and borough councils, to develop more consistent approaches to supporting looked after children and care leavers to progress to independence across Surrey.
Sufficiency Statement 11		Sufficiency Statement 15	
	SCC will commission additional emergency / same day beds within county, to meet future projected demand in line with changes to legislation. This will be supported with changes to practice models to improve crisis management without the need for emergency placements.		SCC will develop a plan around fostering to increase the proportion of children in foster care, including maximising existing fostering capacity and supporting the stability of foster placements. This will equate to looking to support an <b>additional 110-120 foster placements inhouse by 2025</b>
Sufficiency Statement 12		Sufficiency Statement 16	
	SCC requires additional residential provision within county, to support the vision of "Surrey homes for Surrey Children". Provision should align to existing practice models such as No Wrong Door and look to support looked after children within the Surrey community		SCC will look to <b>increase the number of block bed provision by 80 within county</b> to secure Surrey homes for Surrey children. SCC will also look to improve the quality of provision, with the implementation of CarePlace and Commissioning Alliance from September 2021.
Sufficiency Statement 13		Sufficiency Statement 18	
	SCC intends to invest £37 million in developing new capacity to accommodate looked after children and care leavers in Surrey, including significant investment in-house residential provision. This will allow SCC to build on the in-house expertise the council already has in place, as we explore the development of up to 20-30 new in-house residential beds. Alongside this, improved market engagement will encourage complimentary growth in externally run residential provision.		SCC will develop Houses of Multiple Occupation, providing up to 30 beds across all quadrants to support young people in care and UASC transition from Supported Accommodation to independence (dependant on individual circumstance).
Sufficiency Statement 14		Sufficiency Statement 19	
	SCC will look to embed the voice of the child in the placement (where it is possible and appropriate to do so), ensuring the appropriate context for placement is considered full in line with the <a href="#">Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010</a> . <b>Increased placement choice</b> will therefore be a priority, aligned to the actions in <a href="#">Section 13</a> around residential provision.		In addition to increasing block provision within county and improving quality of Supported Accommodation provision via the Commissioning Alliance accreditation scheme, SCC will look to ensure key standards and requirements for WIFI are included within any future service specifications. This will extend to ensuring support is clearly articulated across providers and supplemented by contract management. A minimum response time to rectify faults or issues will be developed within future specifications.



## What are care experienced children and young people telling us? A Summary

Area of provision	What we're being told	Sufficiency Statement Action to address feedback
<b>Supported Accommodation</b>	<i>Young People would like to have more options about where they're moving too, and the reason clearly explained for the move.</i>	<p><b>Sufficiency Requirement 5:</b> SCC will look to increase the number of block bed provision by 80 within county to secure Surrey homes for Surrey children. SCC will also look to improve the quality of provision, with the implementation of CarePlace and Commissioning Alliance from September 2021.</p> <p><b>Sufficiency Requirement 18:</b> SCC will develop Houses of Multiple Occupation, providing 30 beds across all quadrants to support young people in care and UASC transition from Supported Accommodation to independence (dependant on individual circumstance).</p>
	<i>Young People are often not given the choice of location which can affect their relationships/education etc as they're moved away from all of this.</i>	
	<i>Young People report there is a lack of consistency in what support provisions are offered in different housing options/providers.</i>	
	<i>Young People would like all providers to have free access to internet/Wi-Fi as this is not consistent across all.</i>	<p><b>Sufficiency Requirement 19:</b> In addition to increasing block provision within county and improving quality of Supported Accommodation provision via the Commissioning Alliance accreditation scheme, SCC will look to ensure key standards and requirements for WIFI are included within any future service specifications. This will extend to ensuring support is clearly articulated across providers and supplemented by contract management. A minimum response time to rectify faults or issues will be developed within future specifications.</p>
	Some Young People report poor standards in some of the accommodation that they've viewed and feel that it's unsuitable for any CYP. e.g. untreated mould, maintenance/DIY not resolved quickly.	
	Young People report there is a lack of consistency in what support provisions are offered in different housing options/providers.	

Area of provision	What we're being told	Sufficiency Statement Action to address feedback
<b>Residential</b>	<i>"I can't get to events when they're in Surrey as I am placed out of county and too far away."</i>	<p><b>Sufficiency Requirement 5:</b> SCC will look to increase the <b>number of block bed provision by 80</b> within county to secure Surrey homes for Surrey children. SCC will also look to improve the quality of provision, with the implementation of CarePlace and Commissioning Alliance from September 2021.</p> <p><b>Sufficiency Statement 16:</b> SCC will develop a plan around fostering to increase the proportion of children in foster care, including maximising existing fostering capacity and supporting the stability of foster placements. This will equate to looking to support an <b>additional 60-70 foster placements inhouse by 2023.</b></p> <p><b>Sufficiency Statement 14:</b> SCC will look to embed the voice of the child in the placement (where it is possible and appropriate to do so), ensuring the appropriate context for placement is considered full in line with the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010. Increased <b>placement choice</b> will therefore be a priority, aligned to the actions in <a href="#">Section 13</a> around residential provision.</p> <p><b>Sufficiency Statement 13:</b> SCC will invest 37 million in developing new in-house residential provision, to create improve quality and grow additional capacity in county time. This will allow SCC to build on the in-house expertise the council already has in place and develop 20-30 new in-house residential beds. It is hoped that through improved market engagement externally provided capacity will be increased to a similar level.</p>
	<i>"I wanted to go into foster care because that's where everyone else was going – looking back I believe I should have stayed in residential, as I struggled in a family environment."</i>	
	<i>"I had to travel miles on end every morning just to attend school. When I was placed in care I was placed very far from my school, my home and my friends. Surrey children should not have to deal with losing friends because they must be moved far away."</i>	
	<i>"Being placed out of county has worked well in keeping stability because it was to keep me safe from harm and keep me in a safe environment. It kept me safe and helped me become who I am today".</i>	
	<i>I feel like things are different for people depending on what borough they live in; some people get free gym memberships and others don't. There should be equality</i>	

Area of provision	What we're being told	Sufficiency Statement Action to address feedback
Fostering	<p><i>I have had a lot of different carers and placements, carers that involve you in the family making sure you feel included, family meals together and even things like asking how you are in the day really would've helped."</i></p> <p><i>I am very lucky that I was placed with, such an amazing couple who I can never thank enough. They understood why I was struggling and never took anything to heart. I put them through so much stress, despite Social Workers frequently suggesting I move, they still stuck by me. I'm now happy that I am still a big part of their family!</i></p> <p><i>I thought my placement would end abruptly. I thought "What's the point in forming a relationship with my foster carers if I was just going to move". I really think if the placement had been permanent, I would have had a better experience.</i></p> <p><i>If I was in charge, I would want to make sure that young people are placed with foster carers or in placements who are really going to be able to help them. I wouldn't place a young person here or there because it was easy or a quick move.</i></p> <p><i>I had known the carer from before I lived with her. I used to go to her house for dinner and for respite sleepovers and I think this really helped. You should be able to choose your foster carers".</i></p>	<p><b>Sufficiency Statement 6:</b> SCC will ensure children in foster placements are appropriately matched with culturally appropriate placements, and that a sufficient pool of foster carers is available to meet the needs of this cohort.</p> <p><b>Sufficiency Statement 7:</b> In line with the successful increase(s) to kinship fostering, SCC will look to ensure capacity for Reg 21 assessments and explore whether kinship placements could become permanent in time.</p> <p><b>Sufficiency Statement 14:</b> SCC will look to embed the voice of the child in the placement (where it is possible and appropriate to do so), ensuring the appropriate context for placement is considered full in line with the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010. Increased placement choice will therefore be a priority.</p> <p><b>Sufficiency Statement 15:</b> SCC will develop a plan around fostering to increase the proportion of children in foster care, including maximising existing fostering capacity and supporting the stability of foster placements. This will equate to looking to support an additional 60-70 foster placements inhouse by 2023.</p>

## Activity undertaken

The following key developments have happened since 2020, to support the initial aims as outlined in the publication of the [Surrey County Council Sufficiency Strategy 2020 – 2025](#).

Date	Update
March 2020	COVID -19: Staff redeployed across Surrey County Council in response to the pandemic to support critical service areas, including work to limit the adverse impact of this on sufficiency of provision for looked after children.
	Dedicated project manager appointed to take forward the development of the No Wrong Door model and support the development of the <a href="#">Surrey County Council Sufficiency Strategy 2020 – 2025</a> .
June 2020	Launch of <a href="#">helping families early strategy</a>
July 2020	Development and scrutiny of proposals to <b>implement the No Wrong Door</b> model in Surrey undertaken, in conjunction with the <a href="#">Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select committee</a>
	Cabinet approved the creation of two new council-run children's homes, at a cost of £5.5 million;
	Draft of the Surrey County Council's <b>updated <a href="#">Surrey County Council Sufficiency Strategy 2020 – 2025</a></b> discussed and endorsed at the Corporate Parenting Board
February 2021	Cabinet approved the creation of a third new children's home, at a cost of £2.2 million and £30 million to develop <b>150 beds for care leavers in Surrey</b>
	<a href="#">Implementation of CareCubed</a>
March 2021	West of London Market Position Statement (as part of the South-Central Consortium)
	Launch of Surrey-wide Fostering recruitment campaign
	Development of No Wrong Door, to be launched in September 2021
April 2021	Placement Value Outcomes programme launched
	Surrey Supported Accommodation – final DPS Opening and evaluation(s)
	Recruitment of 45 new foster carers (in last year)
May 2021	New internal vacancy / occupancy dashboards created to maximise in-county opportunities at point of placement

Date	Update
	Surrey "Foster Care" fortnight campaign New block beds (15 additional) for supported accommodation commissioned within Surrey 142 new call-off beds (26 within Surrey, the remainder being within 20 miles) New Reg 44 Independent Visitor contract commissioned (for in-house)
<b>June 2021</b>	<a href="#">New off-contract terms &amp; conditions</a> for IFA, RESI and Supported Accommodation launched, alongside new Individual Placement Agreement (IPA) Mobilisation of all new Supported Accommodation provision (block and contract) South Central Market Engagement event (IFA) Fostering needs analysis completed
<b>July 2021</b>	Key areas for fostering development identified and agreed Completion of new IFA specification for new South-Central Framework opening Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) Options Appraisal Commencement of new contract monitoring process for Supported Accommodation, supported by <a href="#">Outcomes Star</a> .
<b>September 2021</b>	Publication of Sufficiency Plan refresh (2021)



## Sufficiency Forward Plan

The following activity is planned from the publication of the refreshed sufficiency strategy update 2021 and the sufficiency strategy update for 2022:

Date	Update
<b>September 2021</b>	Implementation of Commissioning Alliance for Supported Accommodation
	Launch of the “No Wrong Door” model
	Fostering peer review
	Implementation of new In-House residential structure
	Establishing pathways between Supported Accommodation and newly established Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Hubs
<b>October 2021</b>	Supported Accommodation Provider Forums launched
	Commencement of new block contract mini competition for in-county provision (Supported Accommodation)
	End of existing Residential Parenting Assessment (RPA) contract, and transition to South Central Framework
	Development and support of Surrey-wide family centres
	Embedding of <a href="#">family support programme</a>
<b>November 2021</b>	Launch of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) Pilot
<b>February 2022</b>	Additional mini competition for Supported Accommodation block provision (if required)
<b>April 2022</b>	Launch of new Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) Framework (South Central)
	Implementation of additional emergency/ crisis bed provision
	Full implementation of Commissioned Alliance (Supported Accommodation)

## Contacting Surrey County Council

Surrey County Council is committed to improving the experiences of children and young people in care. **This includes ensuring all that we do is aligned to the following principles:**

- ***Surrey homes for Surrey children***
- ***Living in a family setting where possible***
- ***A wide range of placements for diverse needs***
- ***Homes of the highest quality***
- ***Supports moves to independence***

If you are a provider with provision in Surrey, or you are thinking of setting up a home for children in care, please contact:

[gateway.resourcereview@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:gateway.resourcereview@surreycc.gov.uk)

Colleagues from Gateway to Resources and Commissioning will be pleased to arrange a conversation with you.

