GMCA GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY

GREATER MANCHESTER **CHILDREN'S PLACEMENT SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY** 2020 – 2022

sufficiency@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk

Executive Summary

Our ability, as Corporate Parents, to be able to provide local placement opportunities is increasingly becoming a challenge across Greater Manchester. Tackling and remedying the displacement of children and young people from their home area simply because there is an insufficient market of good quality provision available locally for them is a priority.

Some GM LAs are currently in an impossible situation from a numerical perspective (i.e. even if all supply in their area was fully available exclusively for their use, they could still never place all their current LAC locally) and because of this, there is a proliferation of placing in other LAs both in Greater Manchester and further afield. The evidence highlights clearly how placement sufficiency is interlinked across GM; a lack of sufficiency in one area has a profound impact on others.

The majority of children's placements are delivered in-house by LA run services, with around 30% being delivered by the private or voluntary sector. That said, the numbers of placements provided in-house across GM have fallen between March 2019 and 2020, with the proportion of in-house fostering, residential and SaILs (Supported Accommodation and Independent Living Services) placements decreasing by 1%, 13%, and 24% respectively.

The analysis would suggest that increased use of the private / voluntary sector hinders local sufficiency and as such change is needed with regards to the commissioning of external placements. Even LAs that have far greater supply locally than they need still struggle to place in their area. This shows the non-rational nature of sufficiency within the independent sector across Greater Manchester; having too much supply does not equate to having enough. Finding ways to work in partnership with the sector to improve accessibility and reclaim in-area availability for LAC from that host LA are needed.

The most critical and urgent sufficiency issue facing Greater Manchester is the shortage of foster carers both within Local Authority and Independent Fostering Services. With rising LAC numbers across GM, the insufficiency of foster care provision is driving increased, and potentially unnecessary, use of residential care and SaILs.

Plans to reduce the numbers of looked after children across Greater Manchester continue in earnest but will take time to fully realise. For now, there must be emphasis placed on increasing local supply and improving access to existing services.

There are remedies for every sufficiency challenge however, and the second part of this strategy outlines the commissioning approach that Greater Manchester Local Authorities intend to take collectively in order to see progress.

Strategic ambitions

The ambitions for this strategy are to see measurable improvements in the following. These will be monitored through the GM Sufficiency Observatory (details on Page 4).

- Increase the % of GM placements made within GM
- Increase the % of in-area placements made across fostering, residential and SaILs
- Reduce the number of LAC placed outside of GM, particularly the number placed outside of the NW entirely
- Increase the numbers of foster carers across Greater Manchester

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GM Sufficiency Strategy: Metadata document

Introduction

Within the Children Act 1989, there is an explicit requirement for Local Authorities to provide or procure placements for Looked after Children (LAC). This duty requires *"local authorities to take steps that secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the authority's area which meets the needs of children that the local authority are 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 ('the Sufficiency Duty')"*

In order to meet our Sufficiency Duty, the Greater Manchester Local Authorities must ensure that, through either direct provision or commissioned services, a range of placements sufficient to meet the needs of all children in care are available locally within the region. Where that is not currently the case, the duty requires that there be a plan in place to rectify that sufficiency shortfall.

The targeted focus of this strategy has been the three highest volume placement types; foster care, residential care (excluding residential schools) and Supported Accommodation and Independent Living Services (SaILs). These represent the areas for which we know the most, and where many of the critical sufficiency challenges lie. As we move forwards with the launch of the web-based GM Sufficiency Observatory (see below) we will expand the scope and associated analysis into other placement type and service need areas.

Greater Manchester Sufficiency Analysis

The Sufficiency Strategy sets out the consolidated need and demand for children's social care services across Greater Manchester and overlays that against the current prevailing market of provision.

The analysis describes the sufficiency need of placements for children looked after Greater Manchester with data split into 3 themes:

Category	Detail
People	*Containing information on numbers and demographics*
Place	*Shows where demand for placements is required and met*
Provision	*Supply across GM set against demand to establish sufficiency*

We intend for this to be a practical document that shares policy direction, service gaps and identifies ways that care and support could be delivered differently and more effectively in the future.

Greater Manchester Strategic Commissioning Intentions

The second part of this document overviews the commissioning landscape across Greater Manchester covering both current routes to market as well as highlighting future market shaping strategy intended to address any sufficiency challenges.

There are also discreet Market Position Statements covering residential, foster care and SaILs. These are written primarily for the attention of Providers currently in Greater Manchester (both Local Authority and Independent) or those intending on establishing services in the region to ensure that future supply best meets the needs of children and young people in the area.

Greater Manchester Sufficiency Observatory

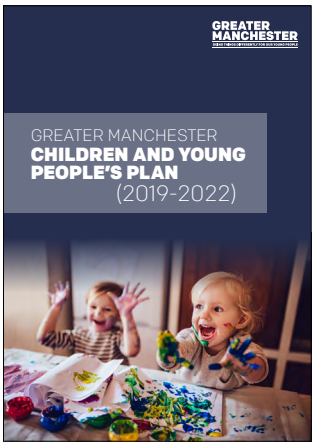
Our intention is to reflect the ever-changing fluidity of demand and supply. That is why GMCA are launching the **GM Sufficiency Observatory** – *greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/young-people/childrens-sufficiency-observatory* – a web-based data portal that will include regularly refreshed data on sufficiency need across the region.

In addition to containing data and analysis, this site also explains the GM Strategic Commissioning Intentions to improve sufficiency which will be updated and refreshed over time. It also contains links to each GM LA's Sufficiency Strategy.

Wider Context

Greater Manchester Children and Young People's Plan 2019-2022

The Greater Manchester Children and Young People's Plan 2019-2022 contains the wider context of Greater Manchester's ambition for children, young people and their families.



It also includes a commitment to review *"placement sufficiency across Greater Manchester to capture the varied needs of looked after children alongside the current offer of placements and the requirements of placements in the future"* and to *"develop a Greater Manchester Commissioning Plan and Sufficiency Strategy to ensure children coming into care are provided with a quality placement which meets their needs, ensuring permanence is achieved at the earliest stage."*

This document, alongside the Greater Manchester Sufficiency Observatory (detailed on Page 4) complete that action.

This Greater Manchester Children's Sufficiency Strategy will contribute significantly to our ambitions for Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Leavers highlighted in the GM Children's Plan as follows:

Future state ambitions

- Looked after children and care leavers will be supported through quality placements that meet all of their needs and support them to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve.
- All looked after children presenting emotional and mental health needs, particularly in response to childhood trauma, will receive swift and quality assessment and support.
- Looked after children and young people are able to access high quality education and training opportunities to support their aspiration and opportunities post 18.
- Care leavers are supported to independence with access to good quality housing, employment opportunities and further education.
- Children and young people are able to contribute meaningfully to the services and opportunities available to them through a range of participation and engagement mechanisms. This input is used to inform service design and commissioning intentions.
- Children and young people are reunited with their birth family wherever possible and for those who do remain in care, they are supported through stable and quality placements.

Background

Purpose

This purpose of this Strategy is to deliver the following:

1	Provide clear and consistent messaging to the wider Local Authority and Independent Provider market regarding those children's social care placement services which Greater Manchester Local Authorities require
2	Outline the market of Provision that already exists across Greater Manchester
3	Highlight where there are insufficient services to meet demand
4	Launch the **Sufficiency Remedies** and wider strategic commissioning intentions, designed to improve sufficiency across Greater Manchester

Sufficiency Remedies

The analysis contained within this document, outlines various challenges faced by GM LAs and their children and young people in securing and accessing high quality, well-resourced and flexible provision within the Greater Manchester region.

It highlights where the greatest pressures lie, and propose a series of **Strategic Commissioning Intentions** designed to link against the 3 **Sufficiency Remedies**. These are the most fundamental solutions to fixing insufficiency in any market. The greatest impact will be achieved by following a plan to address all of the remedies in conjunction with one another:

Increase supply of high quality services within Greater Manchester	**Reduce demand for services from the Greater Manchester LAs**	**Improve access to existing supply within Greater Manchester**

Orchestrating a comprehensive and sufficient mix of high quality, local provision both in-house and independent, increases the likelihood that well-matched placements can be sourced, and we know that finding the right environment for a child / young person early on gives them the best chance of creating a stable and secure base upon which they can thrive.

Many GM LAs are numerically over-supplied for certain placement types, and yet still face daily challenges in placing children and young people in their area. As such the Sufficiency Analysis contained in this strategy will show that it is as much about the careful choreography of sequencing demand against supply as it is a simple matter of needing more local provision.

Data Analysis

Greater Manchester Combined Authority's Research Team have been instrumental in collating and analysing the data used within this strategy. This process is not always straightforward on a regional footprint across 10 individual LAs and as such the data sources, time points and contextualisation of analysis vary in order to present the most comprehensive, reliable and up-to-date overview possible.

Rather than congest the main body of the strategy document, we have instead provided as **GM Sufficiency Strategy: Metadata document (Appendix 1)**. This can be used a reference tool to understand the background to all the data and analysis used herein.

GM Sufficiency Infographic

6,027

Looked After Children (LAC) across Greater Manchester* – **18% more than in 2015/16**

Three-quarters of all foster placements are run by **Local Authority Fostering Services**

Increase in GM LAC numbers is driven by rise in numbers of **10-15 year olds**

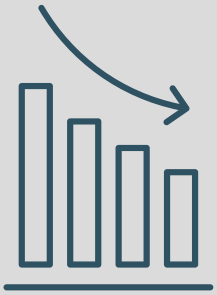
80% of residential placements are delivered by **the Independent Sector and 84% of SaILs placements**

100+

In December 2019, there were just over **100 LAC placed in residential care** in GM by a Local Authority outside of the North-West

10%

more LAC were placed in a residential placement in an LA **that doesn't border GM** from 2019/20 to 2020/21



There is a **declining number** of foster carers (LA and IFA) across GM

GM have 1.5 independent residential / IFA places for every LAC, but **less than 1/3** get to remain in their local area

LAC placements accounted for 52.4% of total Children's Services expenditure in 2018/19 and **costs are rising**

Market Ownership

Top 5 IFAs have 35% and top 5 independent residential providers own 40% of GM market

For every 1 LA-run children's home in GM, there are **5 independent homes**

Key: **People** **Place** **Provision**

* March 2020

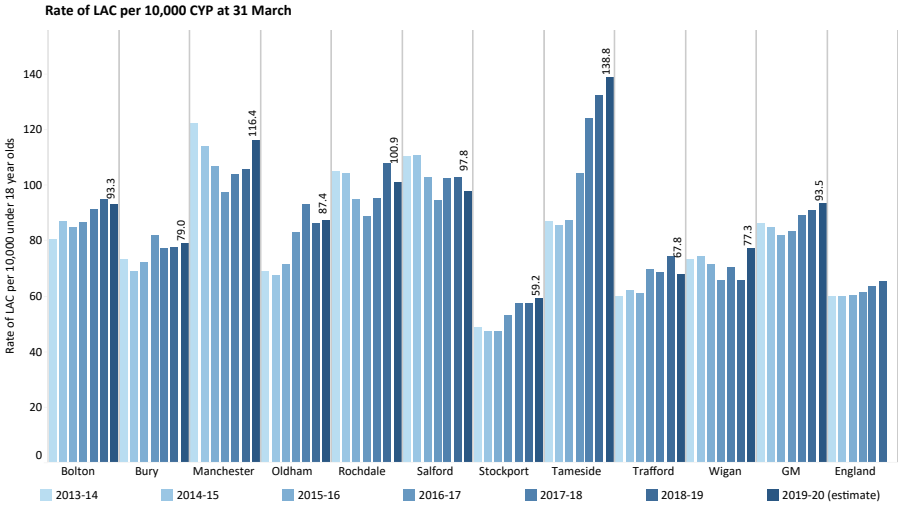
Sufficiency: People

Numbers of Looked After Children (LAC) across GM

The rate of LAC per 10,000 children / young people in GM has been increasing since 2015/16. This reflects the national picture.

Estimates suggest that the 2019/20 GM LAC rate is higher than the year previous, although has decreased in four localities: Bolton, Rochdale, Salford and Trafford.

As the numbers of LAC have increased, so too has the demand for placements. Where availability of good quality local resources has not grown at the same pace, this has resulted in heightened sufficiency pressures.



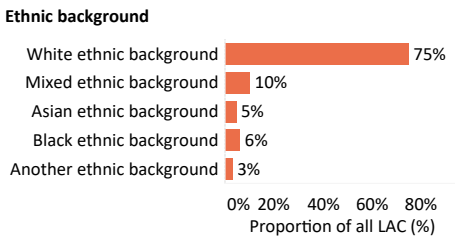
18%
more LAC across GM now than there were in 2015/16

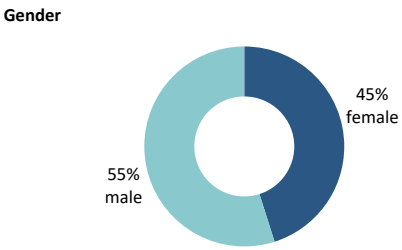
6,027
LAC in GM at the end of March 2020

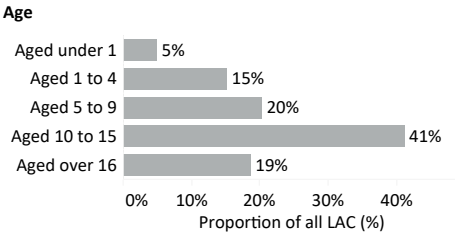
The volume increase in GM LAC numbers is fundamentally driven by increases in numbers of 10-15 year olds – as nationally

LAC Demographics

The graphs below displays publicly available Department for Education data on the demographics of LAC in all placement types, whether internally or externally delivered. This data is taken from 31st March 2019.







75%
of LAC across GM are from a white ethnic background

There are more male LAC (55%) than female (45%)

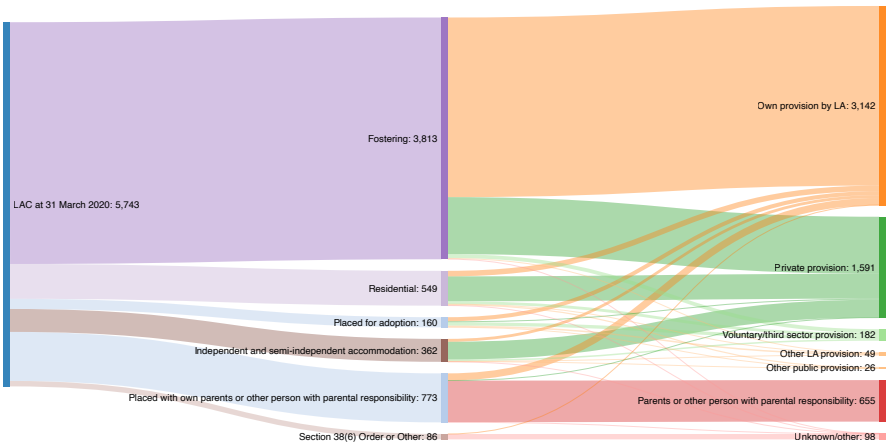
60%
of all GM looked after children are aged 10 and over

A fifth of all looked after children aged 4 or under

LAC Placement Types

This chart displays the types of placements used by the GM LAs at 31st March 2020 and the market from which those placements were sourced. Data from Bury is currently unavailable.

With such high volumes of children and young people in foster care currently, there are legitimate questions about capacity within the existing foster care market – both Local Authority led, and that delivered by the Independent sector.



Private provision accounts for around 1 in 4 placements

The private and voluntary/third sector accounted for 80% of residential, 25% of foster, and 84% of SaILs placements

75%

Almost three-quarters of foster placements are the LA's own provision (includes family and friends placements)

Independent LAC Placements by Type

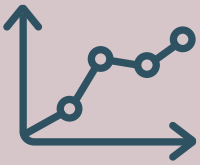
The table below shows a linear trend for different LAC placement types, all of which were commissioned with the external / independent sector.

The use of independent SaILs provision has grown the fastest of any commissioned placement type. Numbers of LAC in an IFA placement has plateaued in the last 2 years, suggesting that the sector is operating at maximum operational capacity and that without additional growth of foster carer numbers, that figure is unlikely to increase by any significant margin.

At June 2020, our annual expenditure on private and voluntary/third sector placements for 0-17 year olds was around £87m for residential placements and around £15m for SaILs, which is 14% and 34% more than this time last year respectively. Annual expenditure on fostering is broadly in line with last year (£42m for the last 12 months).

Independent placements, placed by GM

	Q3 2018/19 (Dec)	Q1 2019/20 (Jun)	Q3 2019/20 (Dec)
Independent Fostering Agency (IFA)	1,033	1,010	1,039
Residential - External (Commissioned)	353	370	395
Supported and Independent Living (SaILs)	248	281	380

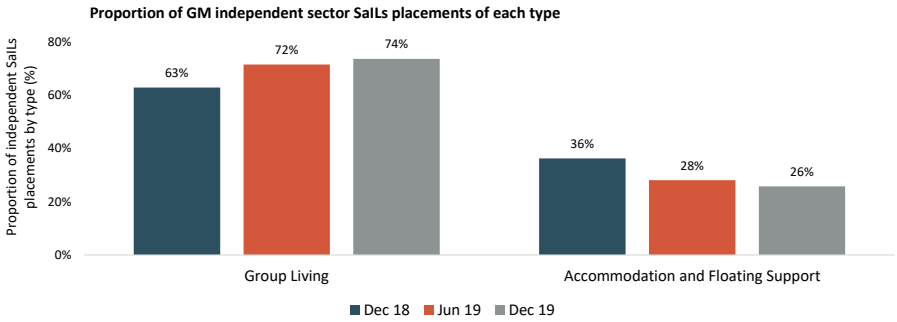


There has been a 14% increase in the use of independent residential care homes since December 2018 – this growth in has added around £11m of expenditure annually

There is a strong link between LAC numbers rising, foster care capacity reaching its maximum and the consequential increase in the use of residential care and SaILs provision

SaILs Placements by Type (%)

Numbers of SaILs placements continue to rise, and at March 2020, the number of private/voluntary sector SaILs placements for under 18 year olds had increased by a further 23% upon the year previous. Group Living is by far the most used SaILs service type.



17%

increase in the proportion of Group Living SaILs Placements at December 2019 compared to the year previous

29%

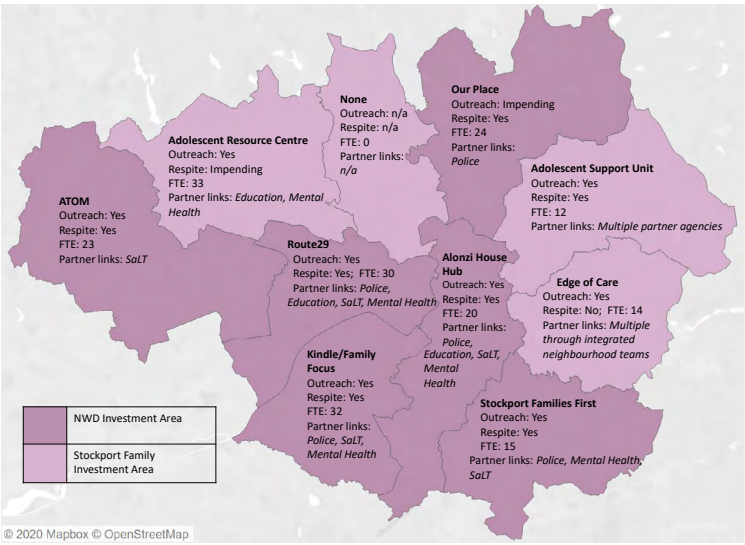
decrease in the proportion of LAC that were in supported Accommodation with Floating Support

Edge of Care Service Mapping

A key strategic focus across GM is to ensure that children and young people remain safely or are reunited with their birth family wherever possible. From a sufficiency perspective, this links to the 'Reduce Demand' remedy.

Edge of Care services across GM are integral to this and a summary of the models deployed to support this across the region is below. Details of 'No Wrong Door' models in GM are on page 22.

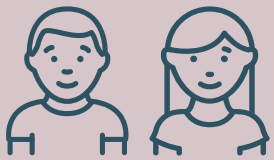
There is limited scope to detect the underlying needs which give rise to being taken into care, other than the primary need category identified within the DfE framework. Throughout GM, "Abuse or neglect" is most common category of presenting need.



Bolton	An in-house model, with restorative practice promoted among all staff.
Bury	Commissioned placement breakdown support. Signs of safety, with restorative practice.
Manchester	An in-house model, based on signs of safety, restorative practice, a strengths-based approach, and systemic practice.
Oldham	An in-house model, using a strengths based approach with signs of safety.
Rochdale	A multi-modal, strength-based approach with restorative practice and systemic practice.
Salford	A trauma-informed approach, with restorative practice and signs of safety.
Stockport	Restorative practice, a strength-based approach, and systemic practice.
Tameside	Restorative practice, signs of safety and systemic practice. A strengths-based model.
Trafford	Restorative practice and systemic practice.
Wigan	Signs of safety, with a strengths-based approach.

3/10

GM LAs have all age edge of care services



Declining national trend in LAC accommodated under s.20 but GM stable

UASC make up smaller % of LAC in GM than national average

Stability of Placements

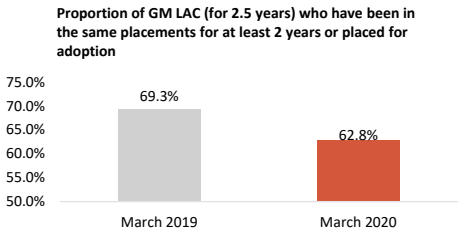
Placement stability is an important contributor to accessibility challenges regarding local sufficiency. The primary intent is, and will continue to be, to ensure children and young people can remain in stable, safe, and secure placements in which they can thrive, however, the longer that children and young people remain in a placement, the longer that resource remains unavailable.

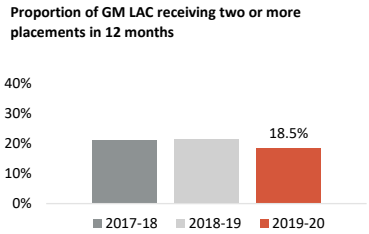
The analysis below suggests two trends across GM:

1. Fewer LAC that have being in care for over 2.5 years, have remained in the same placement for at least 2 of those years. This suggests that long-term settlement is declining, a trend which GM would want to see reversed.
2. However, on a positive note, in the same period fewer LAC have had 2 or more placements which would indicate that GM LAs are getting better at securing the right, well-matched placement earlier.

These are not however translating into longer-term placements as often as they did though, creating therefore a lower volume, but more regular turnover of placements.

Purely from a sufficiency perspective, this helps to maintain a regularity of new vacancies appearing in the market, but if there is a sustained further decline in the proportion of LAC remaining in the same placement for 2 or more years, it questions the resilience of placement settings being prepared and able to care longer-term for individuals.





1 in 5 LAC have had 2 or more placements in a 12 month period

5%

of LAC with 2 or more placements in the last 12 months had their placements ended by their own request

3 in 5 LAC that have being in care for over 2.5 years, have remained in the same placement for at least 2 of those years

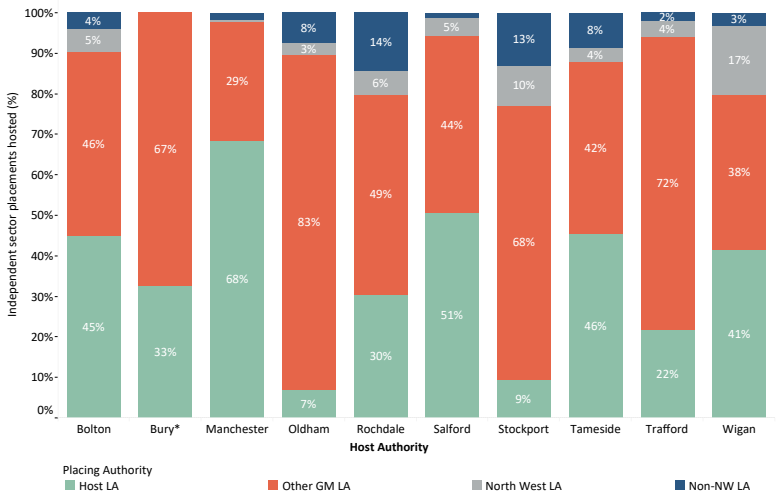
Sufficiency: Place

Volume of Placements Hosted by each GM LA

Independent placements hosted in each LA, shaded by placing authority categorisation, December 2019.

Inter-locality placements account for just over half of LAC placements with private/third sector providers hosted in GM. All GM LAs have children placed in their area from outside of the North-West. Rochdale (14%) and Stockport (13%) being affected the most.

Use of in-area provider market is lower for Oldham and Stockport, where their LAC occupy 7% and 9% of provider placements in their locality respectively, reflecting an over-provision within their boundaries.



* Data on placements hosted in Bury from LAs outwith GM is not presently available. Data on independent placements by NW and non-NW LAs relate to residential only.

100+

In December 2019, there were just over 100 LAC placed in residential care in GM by a Local Authority outside of the North-West

2/10

GM LAs are particularly challenged with fewer than 10% of Provider placements in their locality being used by their own CLA

90%

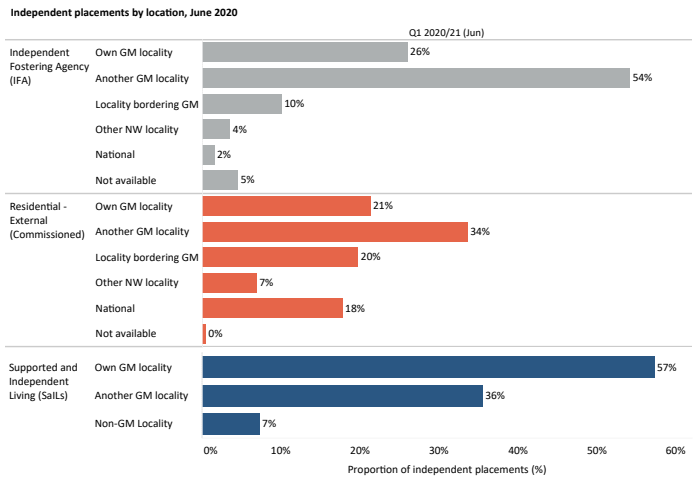
of all independent LAC placements hosted within GM are from GM LAs

GM Placement Location by Placement Type

As at June 2020, GM LAs have fewer LAC placed in independent residential or foster care provision within their own LA boundary compared to the number of LAC placed out of area.

The variance in IFA placement location is stark given the volumes involved, but residential sufficiency remains concerning with only 21.3% of LAC being placed in their host LA area.

SaILs provision is much more geographically centralised around the host LA with 4 in every 7 young people remaining in their host LA.



1 in 5 LAC placed in independent residential care are placed outside of the North-West entirely

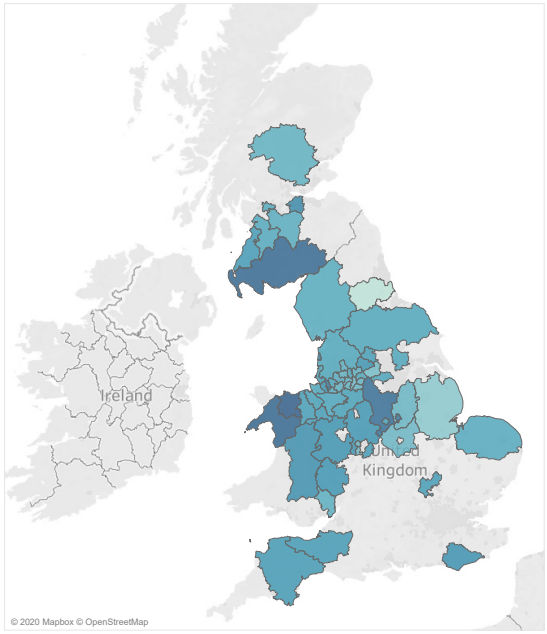
Nearly 1/4 of girls aged 11-16 are currently placed outside of the North-West

National Spread of Independent Residential Care Placements

The map below shows the location of residential placements with private/third sectors at June 2020. The average weekly cost is colour-coded, with the darker the colour the higher the cost.

More often than not, those young people placed at considerable distance from GM will require a more intensive and specialist residential care service that is less available, or does not exist at all within GM. Some of the later proposals within the Market Position Statement for Residential highlight the need to see service development of more complex care within the GM region.

Map of Independent Residential Care Placements



Average weekly cost per placement

More LAC were placed in residential care further outside of GM in 2020/21 than in 2019/20

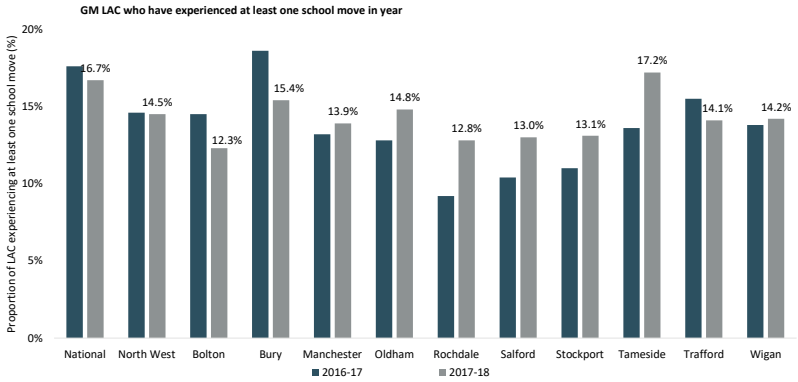
GM LAs place fewer LAC outside of the North West, than non-NW LAs placed inside GM

This means GM is a net-receiver of long-distance residential care placements

School moves

Insufficient local supply leads to LAs having to place LAC further away which, in some circumstances, will lead to the need to move school.

The trends below suggest school moves are happening more frequently and although the individual reasons for this are complex and varied, there is a likely correlation between GM LAs having to place LAC further away from home and increased school moves.



7/10

GM LAs have seen an increase in the proportion of CLA experiencing a school move in the last 12 months

9/10

GM LAs show figures below the national average

Sufficiency: Provision

Residential Supply Overview

Local Authority	Local Authority Homes (July 2020)				Independent Homes (July 2020)			
	Homes	Beds	Av. Home Size	Change from 2019	Homes	Beds	Av. Home Size	Change from 2019
Bolton	6	27	4.5	-	16	61	3.8	▲
Bury	0	0	n/a	-	11	36	3.3	▲
Manchester	2	11	5.5	-	20	70	3.5	▲
Oldham	3	18	6.0	-	16	59	3.7	▲
Rochdale	3	14	4.7	-	36	83	2.3	▲
Salford	6	27	4.5	▼	8	31	3.9	▲
Stockport	2	10	5.0	-	32	135	4.2	▲
Tameside	5	20	4.0	-	13	60	4.6	-
Trafford	2	11	5.5	-	3	12	4.0	▲
Wigan	5	21	4.2	-	21	67	3.2	▲
GM	**34**	**159**	**4.7**	▼	**176**	**614**	**3.5**	▲

Market Trend	▼	▲
	There is 1 less Local Authority operated Children's Home as at July 2020, than compared to June 2019	There are 15 more independent children's homes covering 57 additional places as at July 2020 compared to June 2019

Market Overview
For every 1 LA run children's home in GM, there are **5 independent homes**.
51 Independent Residential Care Providers operate in Greater Manchester.
The largest 5 Independent Residential Care Providers have **72 homes** between them, **40% of the entire GM market**.
LAs tend to operate **larger children's homes**.
75% of all the solo children's homes in GM are located in **Rochdale**.
Stockport's share of the total GM residential demand is only 7%, but **nearly a quarter of the entire GM residential market is based there** meaning they regularly host placements from other GM LAs in their area.
Half of all children's homes within Greater Manchester registered to care for children and young people with Learning Difficulties are located in **just 2 LAs** (Bolton and Stockport). Those same 2 LAs host 65% of the GM market of homes registered to look after LAC with physical disabilities.
In the period June 2019 – July 2020, there are now **more independent children's homes in 9 out of 10 GM LAs**, but no additional Local Authority run homes in any of the GM LAs indicating a shift from LA-run homes to independent provision.

Foster Care Supply Overview

Local Authority	Local Authority Foster Care Households (excluding Family and Friends Carers) (March 2019)	IFA Households (December 2019)
Bolton	195	75
Bury	65	65
Manchester	235	176
Oldham	145	106
Rochdale	140	93
Salford	150	32
Stockport	135	63
Tameside	110	79
Trafford	95	66
Wigan	185	90
GM	**1455**	**845**

Market Trend	▼	▼
	In the 12 months preceding 31st March 2019, more carers left GM LA Fostering Services than joined	There are also fewer IFA carers, albeit only slightly, in the 6 months prior to December 2019

Market Overview
More LAC are placed within **In-house or Local Authority Foster Care** than any other placement type.
2 in every 3 foster placements made in-house are **mainstream placements** (permanent or non-permanent).
Only a small proportion of specialist foster placement types are catered for by LA Fostering Services (remand, Parent and Child, Disability Foster Care etc.). The IFA market tends to cater for these instead.
There are nearly **twice as many LA Foster Carers across GM** compared to IFA carers.
40 IFAs Operate in Greater Manchester
The largest 5 IFAs have **296 Fostering Households** between them, **35% of the entire GM market**.
Bolton, Manchester, Rochdale and Stockport have all seen **a fall in the number of IFA households** in their areas from July 2019 through to December 2019.
Oldham, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan have seen **increases** in the same period.
IFA market data is based on **self-reporting** currently. Proposals are made later to enhance this across GM.

SaILs Supply Overview

Independent SaILs Providers on North West SaILs Dynamic Purchasing System 2020

The supply overview below relates to SaILs provision on the NW SaILs DPS 2020. Please note that the information below is only a partial picture of the GM supply market as not all of the GM based SaILs providers are on this arrangement.

Local Authority	Group Living or Supported Accommodation Properties
Bolton	8
Bury	13
Manchester	89
Oldham	6
Rochdale	7
Salford	13
Stockport	14
Tameside	12
Trafford	3
Wigan	9
GM	**174 Properties 404 Potential Places**

Local Authority	Group Living	Accomm. with Support	Floating Support
	Providers	Providers	Providers
GM	**21**	**13**	**10**

Market Trend

▲

The market is **growing** although there are fewer Providers on the NW SaILs DPS 2020 than on the previous iteration which commenced in 2016.

This is due to the tightening of standards and service expectations built into the latest agreement.

More work is needed to map the entire on/off contract SaILs market.

Market Overview

31 SaILs Providers operating in Greater Manchester were unsuccessful in securing a place on the latest NW SaILs DPS 2020 as they **did not meet the standards required**. This highlights that the data presented above is only a fragment of the total GM SaILs market across GM but also that there continues to be a need to raise quality across the sector.

At March 2020, the number of private/voluntary sector SaILs placements for under 18 year olds had **increased by 23%** upon the year previous.

There was a **17% increase** in the proportion of SaILs placements that were Group Living Placements at December 2019 compared to the year previous, and a **29% decrease** in the proportion that were Accommodation and Floating Support.

Around 75% of all SaILs placements were based on Group Living provision.

This is a market in flux given the focus on unregulated provision and the fine margins between support and care that sometimes operate in the SaILs sector.

The decisions taken following Ofsted's 2020 consultation into 'Unregulated provision for children in care and care leavers' **may have a profound effect on this market**.

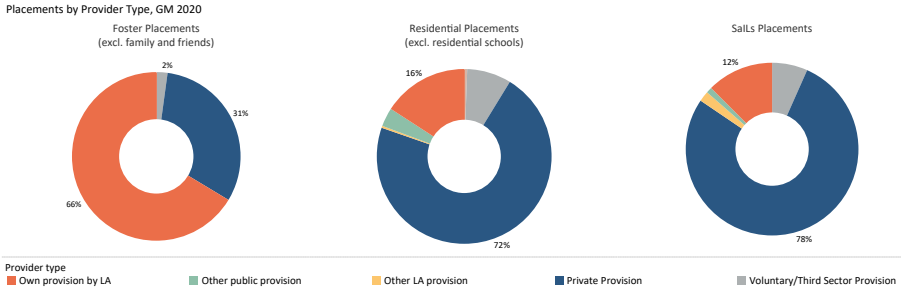
Sector Overview

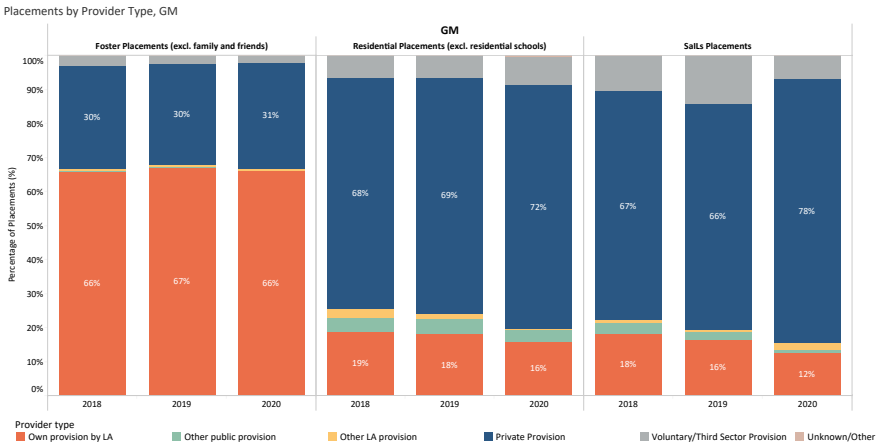
Placements by Provider Sector and Type

The charts below show the reliance GM LAs have on the independent sector (private and voluntary / third sector) for the provision of residential and SaILs placements.

An increasing proportion of all placement types are being provided by the private and third sector when comparing 2018 usage to that in 2020. Continued scrutiny is needed on market oversight across GM with a number of acquisitions in recent years impacting choice within the sector, most notably within the IFA market.

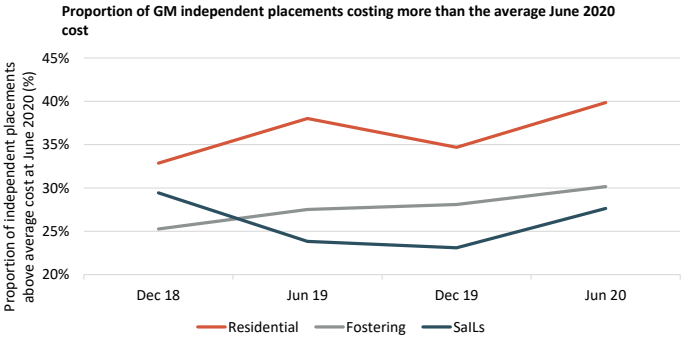
While the proportion of GM in-house foster placements declined by 1% between March 2019 and March 2020, there is a varied picture between localities, with the decrease being more pronounced in some and the proportion having increased in others.





LAC Placements Above Average Cost

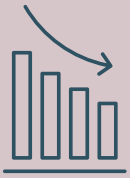
Both commissioned residential and foster care placements have seen fee increases. This means that GM LAs are facing increased demand for placements as LAC numbers rise, but also higher fees from private/ third sector providers.



In recent years, GM LAs have been placing more LAC in private/third sector placements and also paying more

2

largest IFA Groups are responsible for 11,000 fostering placements nationally – highlighting potential risk in the market as currently configured



All LA run in-house placement numbers fell (March 2020 to March 2019). Fostering by 1%, Residential by 13% and SaILs by 24%.

40%

of residential placement fees charged by the independent sector are now above the average paid by GM LAs

Despite higher volumes of placements fees are not reducing

Independent Sector Sufficiency Analysis

This section outlines the impact that the independent sector has on sufficiency across Greater Manchester. Local Authority operated services are largely based within the host LA boundary and provide almost exclusively for their own children and young people, but this not the case for independent sector provision.

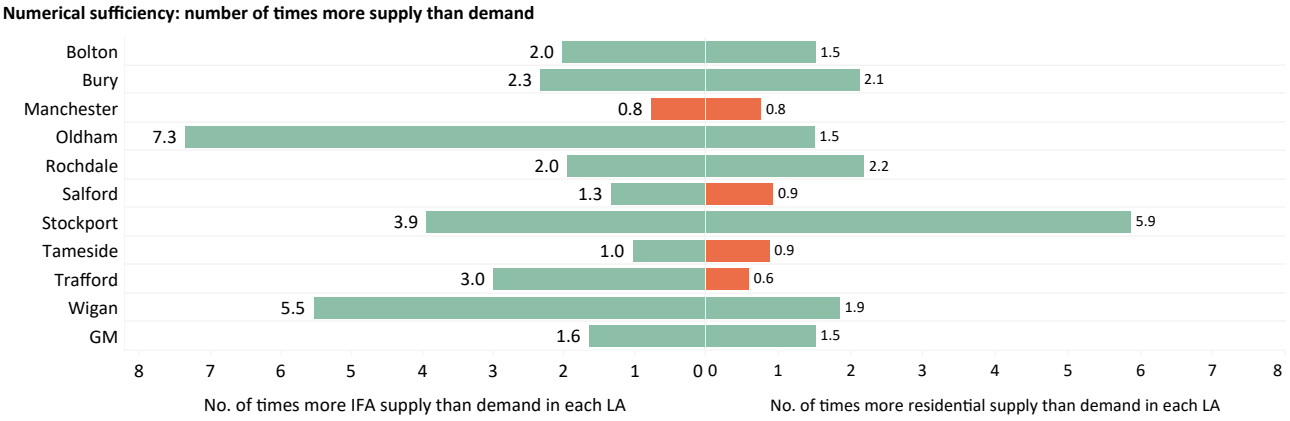
This has created a two-tiered approach to the likely care journey for a child / young person. Being placed in-house almost always means remaining within your local area, close to your school, friends and community. However, the moment a child / young person moves to the independent sector, the majority will end up having to leave their local area.

The Commissioning Intentions later in the strategy begin to propose ways in which both GM LAs and Independent Providers need to work differently if the sufficiency gap is to narrow.

1. Numerical Sufficiency

Numerical Sufficiency is the best place to start, but we should note that it is a fantasy calculation, in that there is no scenario when all of the placement capacity could become available in an instant, allowing for the realignment of in-area provision for local LAC.

It does, however, enable us to establish where critical under-supply exists and also begins to outline the nature of the Sufficiency Dilemma facing many GM LAs. It is advised to contact the host authority regarding their own sufficiency strategy and commissioning intentions prior to developing new provision.



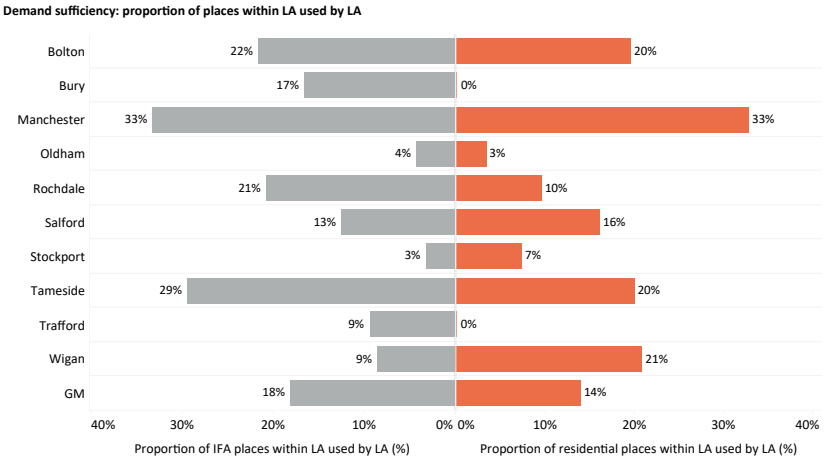
* Less than 1 means the LA is undersupplied, greater than 1 means the LA is oversupplied

Sufficiency Status	Number	Sufficiency Explanation
Under-Supplied	<1	For LAs that are numerically under-supplied, achieving sufficiency is currently impossible. Even if every possible placement were to become vacant tomorrow, a numerically under-supplied LA would still not have enough availability to place all their LAC within their locality.
Over-Supplied	>1	LAs that are numerically over-supplied have, in theory, more than enough provision in their locality than they need. This is where the Sufficiency Dilemma arises however, as despite having too much supply, this is still not proving to be enough.

Further work is needed to explore and understand why LAs are finding it so hard to place with independent provision in their area. Placements being blocked due to existing LAC in placement is the greatest factor, but also services being temporarily unavailable for a variety of reasons, challenges linked to matching alongside other LAC and the high volume transactional nature of placement finding all contribute.

2. Demand Sufficiency

Demand Sufficiency shows the proportion of each local market that is being utilised currently by that host LA. None of the GM LAs currently are accessing more than a third of their local IFA or Independent Residential Care markets for their own LAC.



4 GM LAs are accessing less than 10% of the IFA placements within their area

50%

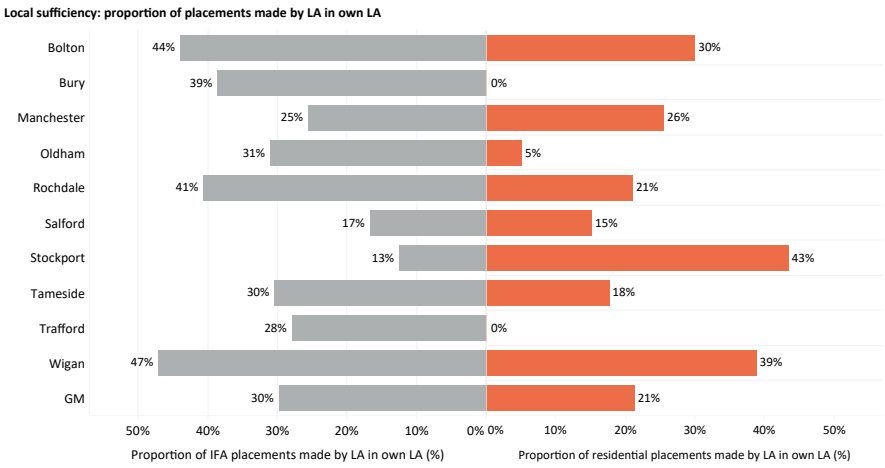
of all GM LAs are accessing 10% or less of the independent residential care market in their area

3. Local Sufficiency

This chart shows the proportions of LAC for each GM LA places in area currently. It should be compared against the Numerical Sufficiency one on page 18.

Given the numerical over-supply that exists for most GM LAs, the opportunity is there to reclaim in-area provision for the use of local children and young people. This requires a fundamental shift in the way that LAs commission from the independent sector, and indeed will need Providers to support the LAs in this realignment.

Clearly with GM LAC numbers rising, the increased demand creates pressures that will make such transformation challenging, but what's clear is that continuing 'as is' cannot and will not solve the sufficiency challenges across GM.



8/10

8 out of 10 GM LAs, have more IFA placements in their area than they need, and yet only 1 in every 3 LAC needing an IFA placement will get to stay in their local area

For independent residential, 6 out of 10 GM LAs are over-supplied but only 1 in every 5 LAC will remain local

GM Commissioning Overview

Current Arrangements

Currently the Greater Manchester LAs all commission children's social care placements through a number of regional arrangements detailed below:

North-West Foster Care Flexible Purchasing System (FPS) 2018

Start date	April 2018
End Date	March 2028
Number of Providers	Currently 44 Foster Care Providers are on the FPS
Which GM LAs?	All
Description	The FPS started in April 2018 and was designed to provide the opportunity for 23 North-West local authorities, including all those in GM, to benefit from the consolidation of demand for foster care placements. The contract reopens for new IFAs to join at quarterly intervals. The FPS includes three Service Type Lots each split across 4 different age bands: **Lot 1** *Standard Foster Care* **Lot 2** *Specialist Foster Care* **Lot 3** *Cohort placements*

GM Enhanced Foster Care (Commissioned through North-West Foster Care FPS 2018)

Start date	The delivery launch was in August 2020
End Date	Reviewed every 12 months – expiry in line with NW FPS (Foster Care) so March 2028
Number of Providers	5
Which GM LAs?	All
Description	This arrangement, launched in 2020, creates a bespoke partnership arrangement regarding an enhanced service for children and young people who have a long-term plan to live in fostering but are currently living children's homes and for those children with complex needs requiring a specialist placement. Some of these children and young people will need extra support to make the transition to fostering successful. However, finding placements for those children has in recent years proven difficult. Greater Manchester set up this arrangement to work differently with a small number of providers to help more of our children access family environments with the right support.

North-West Residential Care Flexible Purchasing System

Start date	January 2018
End Date	December 2027
Number of Providers	Currently 120 Residential Care Providers are on the FPS, covering 658 Children's Homes
Which GM LAs?	All
Description	Similar to the Foster Care FPS above, this arrangement also commenced in 2018 and is open to all North-West LAs, including those in GM. It reopens quarterly for new Providers to join. There are 6 main placement-type lots in the FPS: **Lot 1: Residential Care** *Flexible mainstream provision located in or within 40 miles of the NW* **Lot 2: Therapeutic Care Services** *In or within 40 miles of the NW, which meet the needs of children and young people needing more specialist care and will employ or procure specialist resources to do so.* **Lot 3: Complex Health / Medical Care** *Providers must be trained, competent and able to meet the needs of children and young people requiring more specialist health care and are located in or within 40 miles of the NW.* **Lot 4: Short Break Services** *Short break and respite residential care located in or within 40 miles of the NW.* **Lot 5: Short Break Residential Services to Support Transition** *Time limited, intensive support placements purchased for the sole purpose of stabilising behaviours, and supporting the Young Person and LA in transitioning into a longer term placement.* **Lot 6: Services located at a distance** *Services located more than 40 miles of the boundaries of the NW.*

No Wrong Door (NWD)

Start date	Launched in January 2020
End Date	n/a
Number of Providers	The model is live in 6 Greater Manchester LAs (Manchester, Trafford, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport and Wigan)
Which GM LAs?	The model is live in 6 Greater Manchester LAs (Manchester, Trafford, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport and Wigan)
Description	NWD is a multi-disciplinary approach to providing support to young people who are on the edge of care or within the care system. The model, developed initially by North Yorkshire, replaces the traditional approach to residential care through "hubs" which provide specialist and relational support to both young people living in the hub, young people in foster care and at home. This support is provided through a team including key workers, speech and language therapist, police officer, clinical psychologist and hub foster carers. These workers stick with the young person, ensuring they are able to access the right services at the right time and in the right place to meet their needs. Although in the early stages of implementation, the NWD approach across GM is demonstrating real successes. This includes a strengthened edge of care offer drawing on the expertise of a range of professionals and the use of bespoke placements to support families to remain together and to stabilise placements.

North-West Supported Accommodation and Independent Living (SAILS) Dynamic Purchasing System

Start date	April 2020
End Date	March 2030
Number of Providers	47
Which GM LAs?	All
Description	Supported accommodation needs for 16 to 18 year olds who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and Care Leavers who have support needs. This arrangement is open to all North-West LAs, including those in GM. It covers support and accommodation services for young people aged 16 and over and reopens a minimum of annually for new providers to join. There are 3 lots in the DPS: **Lot 1: Group Living** *Accommodation based support services offering a group living environment and communal areas with staff available to meet the needs of the Young Person.* **Lot 2: Accommodation with Support** *Community-based dispersed accommodation services sourced within the social housing or the private rental market, providing direct 1:1 support and, where specified group / shared floating support in accordance with assessed need.* **Lot 3: Floating Support** *Community based services providing floating / resettlement support to Young People in their chosen accommodation.*

GM Market Position Statements

Residential Care

Key messages
GM LAs want to place more children who need residential settings **in their local area**.
There are enough beds in GM for **all the children who are in residential settings to live in the region**, but accessing them by the host GM LA is proving difficult.
Children with more complex needs are **much less likely to be placed in GM**, although more insight is needed to drive the specific service development needed to support this cohort of children and young people.
The development of complex safeguarding teams and the deep dives rolled-out across GM will help to **better inform commissioning**. This may include more young people being cared for locally in specialist placements, managing higher risk in-area as the partnership working between agencies becomes tighter.

Top 3 Sufficiency Challenges		
Challenge 1	**Challenge 2**	**Challenge 3**
The steep escalation in use of residential care seems led more by insufficiency in foster care than by the needs of children and young people.	Too few LAC are being placed within their host LA independent residential care market, due to an imbalance in the geographical spread of homes.	We need a continued strive for quality improvement within the sector. 40 GM based homes were rated overall as 'Requires Improvement' or 'Inadequate' by Ofsted (June 2020)

Sufficiency Remedies	Increased Supply	Reduced Demand	Improved Access
To reduce the numbers of LAC that unnecessarily escalate to residential care because of a shortage of foster care availability. Growth of foster care is critical to achieving this.		✓	
Continue developing and expand No Wrong Door, ensuring only the right young people come into care at the right time		✓	
Where numerical insufficiency exists (i.e. LAs where even if all supply was fully available for use, then that host LA could still never place all their LAC in area) there needs to be a Market Reshaping Plan developed urgently.	✓	✓	✓
Re-profile residential placements for less complex young people. These are lower cost services, meeting the needs of young people in larger homes. They may bring in additional services to meet some specialised needs on a flexible basis.	✓		
More high quality Homes with clinically recognised specialist interventions which work with more complex young people including services that either prevent escalation to Tier 4 provision, or as a step-down transition from such a service.	✓		✓
More emergency residential care that can offer short term/time limited high intensity placements to meet the needs of more complex young people while a permanent home can be found.	✓		

Foster Care

Key messages
There are **not enough foster carers in Greater Manchester** to meet the needs of our children.
Despite demand for placements increasing, we have seen **a decline in the numbers of foster carers** across GM. It is essential that we see growth.
We need to explore ways to **commission IFA placements differently** given the challenges faced by LAs in accessing IFA carers in their area.
There needs to be **a clearer delineation** between the types of placements that can be offered at high volume in-house by LA Fostering Services and those lower volume, higher acuity placements that should be delivered by the IFA market.
The growth in GM LAC numbers as been driven by a rise in numbers of 10 – 15 year olds, so we need to see **more carers offering placements for teenagers**.
Staying Put is an important opportunity for young people and Ofsted has identified that its use is declining nationally and remains lower in IFA settings than in internal LA fostering services.

Top 3 Sufficiency Challenges		
Challenge 1	**Challenge 2**	**Challenge 3**
There is a declining number of foster carers across GM.	Demand for foster care across GM far exceeds availability	Too few LAC are being placed with IFA carers within their host LA

Sufficiency Remedies	Increased Supply	Reduced Demand	Improved Access
Improve retention of foster carers, in particular a reduction in the volume of foster carers leaving the sector entirely.	✓		✓
Increase recruitment of foster carers across GM, both to Local Authority Fostering Services and to IFAs.	✓		
Where numerical insufficiency exists (i.e. LAs where even if all supply was fully available for use, then that host LA could still never place all their LAC in area) there needs to be a Market Reshaping Plan developed urgently.	✓	✓	✓
More opportunity to work closely and in partnership between GM LAs and IFAs, particularly in response to services for teenagers, sibling groups and those with more complex needs			✓
Growth of specialist foster care services, particularly care for children with complex health needs and disabilities. This may include models such as Mockingbird.	✓		✓
To explore ways to work with the IFA market differently in order to see more LAC being placed closer to home.			✓
To see the Enhanced Foster Care arrangement support the careful transition of children and young people back to foster care.	✓		

SaILs (Supported Accommodation and Independent Living Services)

Key messages
Demand for SaILs placements has grown at a higher pace than residential or foster care, **rising by 23%** between 2018 and 2019
There are wide variations in **quality standards** across the SaILs market, indicative of 31 GM based SaILs Providers failing to secure a place on the NW SaILs DPS 2020
GM had a disproportionately **smaller number of children moving into independent living**, motivated largely by fewer children moving into supportive accommodation. Across GM, this was the equivalent of 130 fewer looked after children moving into formal support (-6% of the total population of those who ceased to be looked after)
A **GM Housing offer for care leavers** in partnership with Greater Manchester Housing Providers (GMHP) is being developed. The pledge commits each housing provider to offer quality and stable housing to care leavers, in addition to employment and skills opportunities plus peer mentoring.

Top 3 Sufficiency Challenges		
Challenge 1	**Challenge 2**	**Challenge 3**
Continued work is needed to raise the standards throughout the GM based SaILs market.	There is an inconsistent geographical spread of services across GM.	GM has fewer children moving into independent living – in part due to the availability of accommodation.

Sufficiency Remedies	Increased Supply	Reduced Demand	Improved Access
To finalise and agree the GM Housing Offer for Care Leavers. This will confirm support models and options to go alongside accommodation for care leavers and will reduce demand for commissioned SaILs placements with the independent sector.		✓	
Agree a more consistent GM-wide Staying Put policy in order to increase the numbers of young people that are able to remain in their foster placement post-18. This will have a negative impact on foster care capacity however so needs to be twinned with an increase in carer numbers or it will simply exacerbate the insufficiency across fostering.	✓		
More connectivity within the placement supply chain is needed to strengthen links between Residential Homes/Fostering Services and SaILs in order to improve transitions towards independence.			✓
Expansion of Supported Lodgings services across GM. Again there needs to be focus placed on how this might affect foster carer numbers across GM and inadvertently affect sufficiency.	✓		
Increase the proportion of 15+ year olds that are placed in foster care. The low numbers of older LAC that move to foster care increases demand for SaILs services.		✓	

Strategic Commissioning Intentions

In order to improve sufficiency across **Greater Manchester Commissioning Programme** has been developed with a series of projects and initiatives. Summarised below are the key cross-cutting enablers along with an outline of the high level commissioning themes. All of the commissioning activity is designed to link back against the 3 Sufficiency Remedies used throughout this strategy.

Enablers

GM Children's Placement Sufficiency Strategy and GM Sufficiency Observatory	Launching this strategy begins to communicate our sufficiency need and vision across GM. Having a web-based **GM Sufficiency Observatory** means we are able to keep our messaging regarding Sufficiency agile, reflective and current. It also creates a centralised contact, access and support service for sufficiency matters. This establishes a focal point for supply side conversations with the market, which can then drive activity linked to this Sufficiency Strategy.
Building Stronger Partnerships with the Independent Sector	There is a recognition that strengthening positive, strong and enduring relationships with the Independent Sector create the best platform to influence change. We aim to build upon the great work that is done at a local level with Providers and establish Greater Manchester as a place that providers want to develop services. We also want to encourage Providers to support more of our children and young people in their host LA wherever possible and appropriate.
Targeted Locality Support	Work with those LAs that have a supply disequilibrium (either too little or too much) to develop a **Market Reshaping Plan**. The design will ensure there is connectivity between these plans, given what one LA does with regards to their local market will have an impact on others and also will have a strong focus on partnership with the independent sector.
Alternative Commissioning Model Toolkit	Develop a toolkit for alternative commissioning models that improve access to more ring-fenced local supply – including 'soft blocks' , 'relational contracting', 'sufficiency retainers' and 'market brokerage' concepts. This hope is that this can be co-produced alongside the independent sector.
Voice of Children and Young People	We want to establish a platform to better engage and involve children and young people in discussions regarding their local market. Encouraging them to be central to the dialogue with Providers looking to develop services in GM and amplifying their voice when it comes to building a sufficient market for the future.
Develop Placement Finding (Brokerage)	Support the ongoing work following a GM review of Brokerage including exploring opportunities for cluster based working. One key enabler will be improving the visibility of vacancies within the market. This is critical to improving timely access to local placements. Also build Community of Practice for Placement Teams across GM.

Commissioning Themes

We have distilled sufficiency activity into two key themes. By launching/further developing the unique projects below, we hope to drive measurable improvements in sufficiency across Greater Manchester.

Theme	Grow Foster Care	More Local Placements
Project	Develop Growth Strategy for LA Fostering Services, including options to collaborate regarding the recruitment of carers	Create new supply or reconfigure existing services to better meet need / demand
	Partner with the IFA sector to understand the market and support targeted growth	Tether demand for specialist services between 2 or more GM LAs and proceed to develop or commission them.
	Embed Enhanced Foster Care Agreement	Partner with the independent sector regarding the Placing Closer to Home project
	Set up GM Foster Carer Retention and Recruitment Working Group (LAs and IFAs)	Better integrate placement supply chain by linking sectors together (i.e. residential and SaILs providers)
		Reduce unnecessary demand for placements through Early Help, Edge of Care, Reunification programmes including No Wrong Door

Further information

For more information about this strategy, please access the **GM Sufficiency Observatory**
greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/young-people/childrens-sufficiency-observatory
or email ***sufficiency@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk***

greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/young-people/childrens-sufficiency-observatory