Children & young people

Market Position Statement (MPS)
2018 - 2022
Introduction

Dudley Council has the highest ambitions for our children and young people. Our vision is to give children the best start in life and to support families to be independent, responsible and successful and to ensure we provide the highest levels of public protection for our most vulnerable children.

Section 22G of the Children Act 1989 sets out the local authority’s statutory duties to provide sufficient accommodation for children looked after and to plan more generally for them.

As corporate parents we are clear that we have a duty to be ambitious for our children and young people. This means not only ensuring ‘sufficient’ accommodation, but that children who are looked after are cared for in appropriate, high quality placements that support them to thrive and achieve to their full potential. Where it is in the best interests of the child, these placements should also be located within the borough, enabling children to maintain positive relationships and a connection to the communities of which they are a part.

This Market Position Statement (MPS) contains information and analysis to help providers of services to children, young people and families living in Dudley borough or those for whom Dudley Council has a statutory responsibility. It is intended to help identify what the future demand for care and support services might look like and provide a starting point for discussions between the local authority and its partners as to how this demand can be met - and potentially reduced – through effective prevention and early intervention to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people.
Key national drivers and priorities

**Children’s Social Care Innovation Programme**
https://innovationcsc.co.uk

**Children’s Residential Care in England**

**Foster Care in England**

**Regional Adoption Agency**

**Adoption @ Heart (for Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton)**
https://www.adoptionheart.org.uk/

**Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Transformation**

**Future in Mind-Improving Mental Health Services for Young People**
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-mental-health-services-for-young-people

**Keep on Caring – Supporting Young People from Care to Independence**
Key messages

• It is a principle of our work that every provider of services to children, young people and their families, directly or indirectly, has a responsibility to ensure the views of their service users are actively sought, listened to and acted upon in a consistent way to ensure better outcomes.

• We are looking to our commissioned providers to demonstrate their commitment to involving children and young people in the design, development and ongoing improvement of their services.

• Recognising the continued financial constraints the council has we are actively looking for new service models and innovations that deliver best value.

• Understand and develop a commissioning response to the locality-based need ensuring that resource is being targeted effectively and in a manner with the potential to achieve the greatest level of impact.

• Strengthen integrated commissioning arrangements and make it easier for providers to work together to deliver coordinated and complementary approaches in a way that makes sense to individuals and families.

• We need quality services that achieve the best outcomes for all children and young people working in partnership with a range of providers and all key stakeholders.
Population

DEMOGRAPHICS

There are approximately 75,300 children and young people living in the borough aged 0-19. The population of children and young people aged 0-25 in Dudley is forecast to increase at a slower rate than nationally - 6.6% by 2031 vs. 15.6% with the greatest increase in the 0-15 population.

The 2017 School Census identifies that 17.5% of children and young people who are resident in Dudley and attending a Dudley school have some form of special educational need.

The numbers of 12-14 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) remains low, as does the number of First Time Entrants to the criminal justice system. Despite this, anecdotal evidence suggests a small number of young people increasingly entrenched in criminal activity and being found in possession of weapons.

There are 2,430 families across the borough eligible under phase two of the Troubled Families programme for targeted intervention. These families are experiencing inter-related and complex problems.

Emergency hospital admissions for under 5’s are higher in Dudley than the national average (193.3 vs. 147.3). Hospital admissions for intentional self-harm in Dudley are similar to national figures (102.9). Admissions for alcohol attributable conditions are higher than the national average at 125.1.
Early Help interventions are for those children and young people at risk of harm (but who have not yet reached the “significant harm” threshold for whom a preventative service would reduce the likelihood of that risk or harm escalating). They are delivered through social work assessments and early help interventions to children and young people who are at risk of harm.

MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) is a single point of access for safeguarding response for children, young people and vulnerable adults in Dudley working together in a timely manner all based under one roof. Some of their roles include:

- Provides intensive support to children in need
- Identifies whether to take action, to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm
- Interventions may lead to Child Protection conference and the council issuing child protection plans
- May lead to legal interventions leading to a child becoming ‘looked after’
- Carries out statutory Child Social Work Assessments
- Provides long term care outside the family home
- Provides care leavers with advice and support around:
  - Education
  - Health
  - Employment
  - Housing
  - Financial support

LAC (Looked After Children) services also include:

- Adoption
- Psychology services
- Local authority residential homes
- Support children in care council
Although the overall number of children in care is decreasing, demand for placements remains high and, in some cases, complexity is increasing. Although Dudley’s is still the second highest rate compared to our statistical neighbours, only three other authorities within the group of 11, experienced a reduction in Children Looked After (CLA) numbers during 16/17 as opposed to an increase.

### GENDER

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>362</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>314</td>
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**Total Children in Care by Gender**

### AGE

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>under 1</th>
<th>1-4</th>
<th>5-10</th>
<th>11-15</th>
<th>16-17</th>
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<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>85</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>112</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014/15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>113</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015/16</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>125</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016/17</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>128</td>
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**Total by Age**

### ETHNICITY

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>87.4</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>85.8</td>
<td>629</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>87.4</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>85.8</td>
<td>629</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian or Asian British</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black or Black British</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Ethnic Group</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>675</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>755</td>
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Set against general population of 18.3% of school aged population from BME groups and 20% of the 0-5 population.
PLACEMENT LOCATION

Dudley has higher than preferred usage of out of borough (OOB) placements for:

- **Children who have complex mental health and or challenging behaviours**
- **Older children**
- **Permanency placements**
- **Children stepping down from residential**
- **Specialist residential school placements**

![Placement Location Chart]

Spend on children looked after

Continued financial pressures on budgets mean we are all challenged to ensure limited resources are used to best effect.

Innovation and new models of care and support that enable effective integration of services and wrap around support to children and families are essential.

We want to shift conversations with providers to longer term planning, partnerships and outcomes.
QUALITY

Dudley has a risk based approach to managing and monitoring quality of the provider market. This enables a range of data to be used to direct resources to where they are needed most and can make the greatest impact. The risk based approach utilises resources across the council and other partners including Ofsted.

EXTERNAL RESIDENTIAL HOMES

INDEPENDENT FOSTERING AGENCIES

OFSTED REGISTRATIONS FOR ALL PLACEMENTS

RESIDENTIAL

Dudley currently operates three internal care homes with a capacity of 14 beds. All homes are registered for 11-18 year olds and rated as either Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. One home is a specialist disability service. We commission placements from external providers, primarily through the West Midlands Regional Framework. In a number of cases we have struggled to identify placements, particularly for young people who are exhibiting challenging and offending behaviours and those who require short-term placements in an emergency. Further work is required to ensure we have a sufficient number of high quality placements in, or adjacent to Dudley borough as the majority of children in external placements continue to be placed out of borough.

FOSTERING

During the last 12 months, Dudley has experienced an increase in both the number of mainstream and connected persons carers. There is still a challenge in terms of identifying appropriate long-term placements, placements for older children and those who require higher levels of support. Dudley use the West Midlands Regional Fostering Framework as the primary mechanism for making external placements. We are keen to explore how we best utilise the mixed economy of fostering placement provision and are currently reviewing approaches that have been utilised elsewhere e.g. Social Impact Bond for Step-Down Fostering and commissioning a third party to deliver local authority fostering functions as part of a wider permanency service.
What children and young people say…

- I want to live in Dudley
- I want to be near my friends
- I don’t want to keep being moved
- Activities aimed at my age
- I want to stay with my family
Our market view

EMOTIONAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

is a crucial factor in outcomes and the success and stability of care placements. There are a range of providers in the borough working effectively to meet young people’s emotional and mental health needs.

However, there are still circumstances where we do not meet need as effectively as we could and where there continues to be a risk of young people ‘falling through the gaps’ of services due to age, location, diagnosis (or lack thereof) and reluctance to engage with ‘traditional’ models of service delivery. We are clear that further work is required to address these challenges and are currently working with partners to take forward this programme of work, reviewing and reconfiguring existing resource as required.

EDUCATION

It is acknowledged that at present there is a significant challenge in terms of providing a sufficient number of appropriate in-borough education places for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The majority of in-borough provision is over-subscribed and there are also limited places available in neighbouring boroughs. Whilst demand for such places can be difficult to predict, it is vital for the authority to undertake focused work with providers in relation to SEND school place planning to increase the number of children and young people who are able to have their education, health and social care needs met locally.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Only a handful of providers offer services that cut-across fostering, residential and supported accommodation. While some children and young people may only ever require one type of placement, for those whose needs may change over time and who may require support in different environments to best meet this, the current silo approach does not always support effective or timely care planning.

The current shortage of provision can make it challenging to source appropriate move-on placements in a timely manner, whilst commissioning arrangements can limit the support available for transition between placements as the child moves between providers, potentially in different areas of the region or country.

We are keen to work with providers to develop new models of commissioning and service provision, both internal and external, that focus on pathways for children and young people, addressing and wherever possible reducing levels of need whilst providing continuity of support. We recognise that such a model and such a market cannot be created overnight.
Key commissioning intentions

In response to the needs and priorities identified in this MPS, the key commissioning intentions for Children’s Services during 2018/19 are as follows:

- Work with community and voluntary sector partners to build capacity with a specific focus on piloting new ways of working and new models of delivery providing effective coordinated support at an early stage. Our wish is to work collaboratively to identify and agree priority areas, however themes which we are clear need to be addressed are domestic abuse, parental substance misuse and women who have multiple children removed to care through successive care proceedings.

- Multi-faceted programme of commissioning to secure sufficient residential care placements, achieving maximum value through a regional consortia approach; to include ongoing regional and sub-regional activity around framework renewal, block contracts and step-down fostering, building on Birmingham City Council’s successful Social Impact Bond. Effective engagement and co-production with children and young people and care providers will be crucial to ensuring the success of these approaches.

- Models that provide a coordinated pathway including those that combine various forms of placement provision with edge of care and leaving care support such as North Yorkshire’s No Wrong Door Service.

- Explore the use of short-breaks both to prevent young people from entering care and facilitate successful reunification. As part of this process we will appraise options as to which elements the local authority is best-placed to deliver and which would suit an alternative model of delivery.

- Establish an effective model of wrap-around support that contributes to improved placement stability by promoting improved emotional health and wellbeing. Existing services reconfigured and/or re-commissioned as required to enable direct work with children, young people and parents/carers in addition to consultation and training as required.

- To support the development of Dudley’s All Age Disability Service, understanding and responding to any implications for commissioned service provision which will sit outside of and/or have an interface with the service.
• As part of the process of developing/updating the Local Offer for both care leavers and special educational needs and disabilities, aim to identify and respond to any gaps in service provision through innovative and integrated commissioning approaches that seek to maximise outcomes and achieve best value.

• Achieve greater awareness and facilitate more effective integration of services that support children and those that support adults.

• Establish a Young Commissioner programme in Dudley that builds on and contributes to the achievement of the Children and Young People Alliance Board Participation Strategy and Children’s Services Participation Strategy.