

Derby City Council Children in Care Market Position Statement

1st April 2025 – 31st March 2026



Contents

1. Induction
2. Derby City Footprint
3. Placement Facts Sheet
4. Issues and Challenges
5. Figures and Future Demand
6. Current Supply and Expenditure
7. Commissioning Team Intentions
8. Concluding Remarks

1. Introduction

As per the national census information: The population of Derby on census day was estimated to be 261,400. An increase of 5.1% from around 248,800 in 2011. The population in Derby increased by a smaller percentage compared to the overall population in the East Midlands (7.7%).

Out of the 261,400 residents in Derby City, 65,448 are under the age of 19.

The census happens every ten years and gives us a picture of all the people and households in England and Wales. Census day was on Sunday 21 March 2021. It is run by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

[Census information - Derby City Council](#)

The city is divided into 18 wards and is ranked as the 67th most deprived local authority out of 317 local authorities, with some of our wards being the most deprived in the country.

At the end of the year on 31 March 2026, Derby had 512 children in care. This represents a decrease from the 545 children recorded at the end of the previous year, marking a reduction of 33 children, which equates to a 6% decrease

The Children in Care data will include all Children in Care for Derby City Council, this is including, in house, external, supported accommodation placements as well as children placed with family or friends on a care order.

The below data set will be updated annually, at the end of June in line with DFE data reporting.

Placement Types

As of 31 March 2026, Derby had 512 children in care, with 357 of them placed in foster care, representing 69.7% of the total. This marks a decrease of 2% from the previous year's figure of 67.7%. The percentage of children in foster placements in Derby is slightly higher the 2024-25 national average of 67% and the East Midlands average of 68%.

As of 31 March 2026, Derby had a slightly higher percentage of children placed for adoption, with 2.9% compared to the 2024-25 national average of 2%. On that date, 15 children in Derby were placed for adoption.

Derby had a lower percentage of children in care who were Placed with Parents (2.7%) compared to the 2024-25 national average of 6% and the comparator authority average of 8%.

Placement Provision

Derby utilised a higher percentage of Private Provision placements at 52.0%, compared to the national average of 40%. This marks an increase from the previous year's figure of 48.3% in 2024-25 to 52.0% in 2025-26.

Out of the 512 active placements as of 31 March 2026, 163 were classified as Own Provision, accounting for 31.8%. This represents a slight increase from the 30.8% recorded in the previous Year.

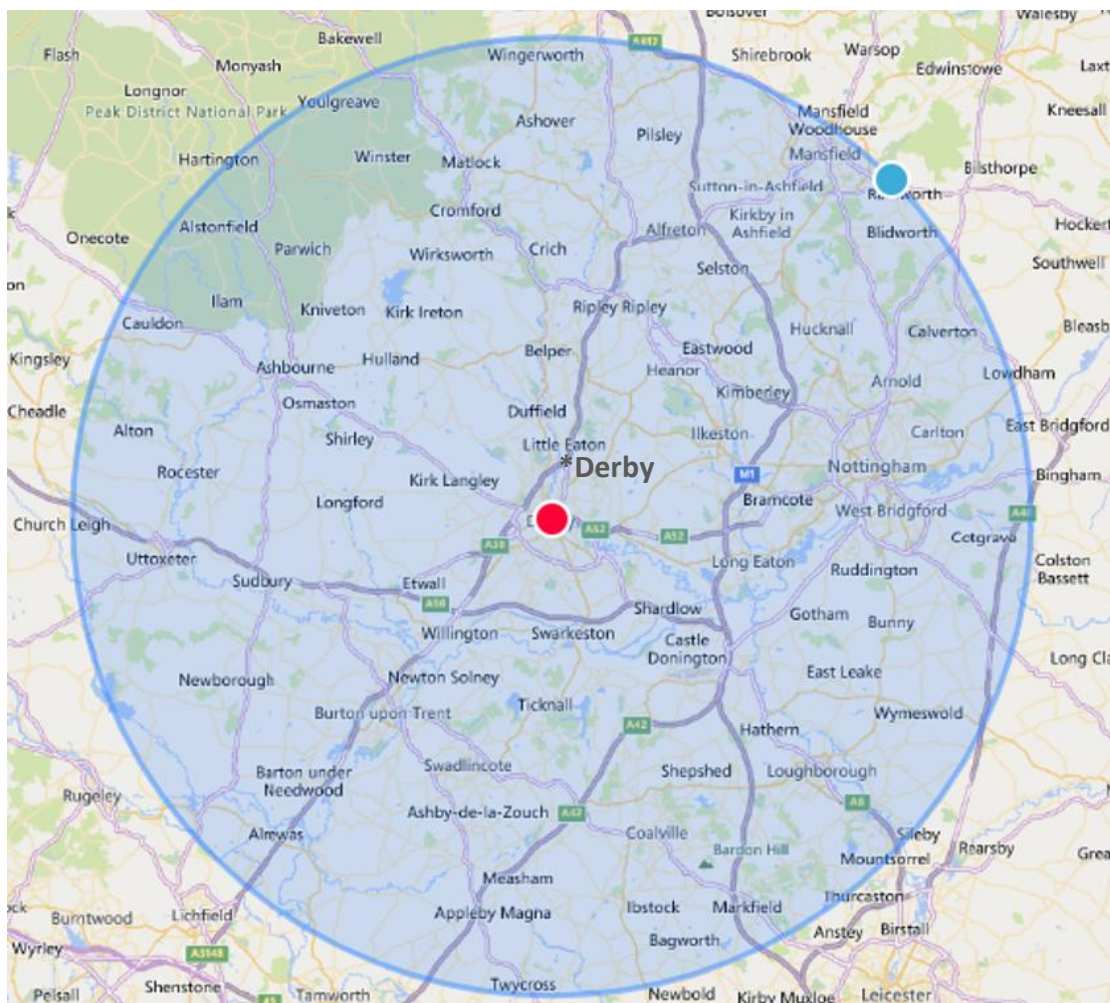
Derby's percentage of Own Provision placements was significantly lower than the national average of 43%, the comparator authority average of 45%, and the East Midlands regional average of 34%.

Stability of Placements – Number of moves

As of 31 March 2026, Derby had 512 children in care, and among them, 39 experienced three or more placement moves during the year. This represents 7.6%, a slight decrease from the previous year's figure of 7.3%.

Derby's performance is better than the 2024-25 national average of 10%, the comparator authority average of 10%, and the East Midlands regional average of 9%.

2. Derby City Footprint



<https://www.calcmaps.com/map-radius/>

Where appropriate, Derby City Council aims for children and young people to remain living locally, taking into consideration maintaining a young person's educational, health, social and cultural connections, and access to resources.

The ambition is for a minimum of 75% of all children and young people in care to be placed within the Derby City footprint, i.e., within 20 miles of the centre of Derby.

Derby had 512 children in care at 31 March 2026 and of these 320 were placed within 20 miles of the child's home address. This equates to 62.5% which is higher than the figure seen in the previous year (56.7%). Nationally, in 2024-25, the percentage was 69% whilst the comparator authority average was higher with 76%. The East Midlands average was lower with 63%.

3. Placements Fact Sheet

Charts below give a snapshot of the latest placement statistics available to help you understand our needs.

Children in Care Data:

Children in Care Data – Last 3 years	Number of LAC at the beginning of the financial year	Number of children becoming LAC during this period	Number of children ceasing to be LAC during this period	Number of LAC at the end of the financial year
2020/2021	589	239	182	642
2021/2022	645	230	246	627
2022/2023	629	219	225	620
2023/2024	620	226	251	598
2024/2025	596	156	217	545
2025/2026	543	175	204	512

Children in Care quarterly data – 2025/2026	Number of CIC at the beginning of the period	Number of children becoming LAC during this period	Number of children ceasing to be LAC during this period	Number of CIC at the end of the period
Quarter 1 (01/04/2025 – 30/06/2025)	544	47	46	546
Quarter 2 (01/07/2025 – 30/09/2025)	547	55	46	552
Quarter 3 (01/10/2025 – 31/12/2025)	539	45	48	539
Quarter 4 – (01/01/2026 – 31/03/2026)	540	30	58	512

Placements made on the D2N2 Framework:

01/04/2024 – 31/03/2025 (Financial Year 2024/2025)

Period:	D2N2 Fostering	D2N2 Residential
Financial Year 2024/2025 – Quarter 1	15	0

Financial Year 2024/2025 – Quarter 2	18	1
Financial Year – 2024/2025 – Quarter 3	25	0
Financial Year – 2024/2025 – Quarter 4	16	2
Financial Year – 2024/2025 – Total	72	3

01/04/2025 – 31/03/2026 (Financial Year 2025/2026)

Period:	D2N2 Fostering	D2N2 Residential
Financial Year 2025/2026 – Quarter 1	15	2
Financial Year 2025/2026 – Quarter 2	9	1
Financial Year – 2025/2026 – Quarter 3	14	3
Financial Year – 2025/2026 – Quarter 4	16	1
Financial Year – 2025/2026 – Total	54	7

As at 31/03/2026, Derby City Council made a total of 61 placements on the D2N2 Framework, 54 of these being foster placements and 7 being residential. This is a decrease of 14 placements in total from the previous data from 2024/25.

Total number of external placements made over financial years

Please note: The Derby City Council Block Contract is a Smaller Children's Home Block Contract. DCC own the property, and the care is commissioned from an external agency. The homes will always be based within Derby City and therefore the figures are not included in the mile radius breakdown section.

Period:	D2N2 Fostering	D2N2 Residential	DCC Block Contract	Spot Purchase Fostering	Spot Purchase Residential
Financial Year 2022/2023	118	5	N/A	22	50
Financial Year 2023/2024	107	9	1	16	34
Financial Year 2024/2025	72	3	4	16	8
Financial Year 2025/2026	52	9	2	14	27

External placements made within the Derby City boundary (20 miles of DE1 2FS)

Period:	D2N2 Fostering	D2N2 Residential	Spot Purchase Fostering	Spot Purchase Residential
Financial Year 2022/2023	58	0	2	25

Financial Year 2023/2024	53	2	9	21
Financial Year 2024/2025	31	1	3	4
Financial Year 2025/2026	37	4	4	18

External placements made outside of the Derby City boundary (more than 20 miles of DE1 2FS)

Period:	D2N2 Fostering	D2N2 Residential	Off framework fostering	Off framework residential
Financial Year 2022/2023	60	5	20	25
Financial Year 2023/2024	54	7	7	13
Financial Year 2024/2025	41	2	13	4
Financial Year 2025/2026	15	5	10	4

This data is showing us that more foster care and residential care provision is required within our local area to support with local placements for our children and young people and to meet our local sufficiency need.

4. Issues and Challenges

The population of Derby is younger, and more deprived than the England average and there are some significant gaps between the health and well-being of residents across the different wards of the city and pockets of diverse communities.

Unemployment, domestic abuse, alcohol and substance misuse, and immigration all impact on the volume and complexity of needs presented by children and young people.

At the end of the year on 31 March 2026, Derby had 512 children in care. This represents a decrease from the 545 children recorded at the end of the previous year, marking a reduction of 33 children, which equates to a 6% decrease.

Children's social care exists to:

- ❖ give support to children, young people and families who need extra help.
- ❖ protect children and young people from harm.
- ❖ give care and a home to children and young people when needed.

Like many Local Authorities, Derby City Council are faced with many challenges when providing care and support for the Children and Young People in their care.

Key Challenges

- ❖ The number of children coming into care continues to rise nationally. (Although our Children in Care numbers have decreased in 2025/26 in comparison to 2024/25, this is due to the preventative work that has been put in place from our early help service).

- ❖ There is difficulty securing local foster and residential placements - more young people are placed outside of the Derby City footprint than we would like, and this can mean that care plans may be compromised.
- ❖ Placement demand exceeds placement supply.
- ❖ Competing pressures for placements with independent agencies within Derby from bordering local authorities and further afield.
- ❖ Young people are presenting with increasingly complex needs and/or challenging behaviours.
- ❖ Many residential providers drive a risk-adverse culture, meaning they can be selective, which impacts children with complex needs making placements much harder to achieve.
- ❖ Too many placements are ending with little notice, often without consistent effort to resolve issues and stabilise, resulting in disruption and unplanned moves.
- ❖ More placements are needed for large sibling groups, and specialist placements for those with complex needs such as risk of:
 - Child Sexual Exploitation
 - Offending behaviours
 - Physical and learning disabilities and
 - Mental health issues such as self-harm, and drug use.

5. Current Supply and Expenditure

Current Supply

Derby City Council currently procures placements for children in care from a range of internal and external provision that includes providers on our current CIC framework, block contract and spot purchase placements.

The DCC block contract commenced in August 2023 and therefore "N/A" has been inputted in the below table for data as at 31/03/2023.

Placement by type	Internal Foster	Independent Foster	DCC Block Contract	Internal Childrens Homes	Independent Childrens Homes	Total
Data as of 31/03/2023	162	278	N/A	17	37	494
Data as of 31/03/2024	158	268	1	17	44	487
Data as of 31/03/2025	144	284	2	10	48	488
Data as of 31/03/2026	138	192	3	9	50	392

The Local Authority will continue to work closely with colleagues and partners to secure the best possible placement in an open market whilst at the same time maximising the use of internal provision.

Current Expenditure

Expenditure	Fostering	Residential	Total
Total from 01/04/2022 – 31/03/2023	£14,204,540	£18,284,797	£32,489,337
Total from 01/04/2023 – 31/03/2024	£14,049,501	£18,249,323	£32,298,824
Total from 01/04/2024 – 31/03/2025	£13,185,792	£17,645,946	£30,831,737
Total from 01/04/2025 – 31/03/2026	£11,919,082	£18,622,730	£30,541,811

Expenditure	Fostering	Residential	Total
Financial Year 2025/2026 – Quarter 1	£2,233,973	£3,417,274	£5,651,247
Financial Year 2025/2026 – Quarter 2	£2,859,130	£3,533,364	£6,392,495
Financial Year 2025/2026 – Quarter 3	£2,893,617	£4,747,714	£7,641,331
Financial Year 2025/2026 – Quarter 4	£3,932,361	£6,924,377	£10,856,738

Figures show that spending reduced by £289,926 in 2025/2026 in comparison to the previous year.

This reduction is mainly due to several extremely high-cost unregistered placements having either reduced or ended completely due to a number of reasons such as the young person having turned 18, returned home or an alternative regulated placement was identified in 2024/25.

The preventative work that is also being undertaken by our Early Help Service is also supporting with the reduction in expenditure as more families are being supported within the family home to prevent an entrance to care.

6. Derby City Council – Commissioning Intentions

We are committed to ensuring that our children and young people can be supported in a family placement whenever possible. We face a shortage of foster care provision, and we need to increase local supply; we would ask providers to focus recruitment on carers for older children and those who because of the trauma they have faced might initially present with challenging behaviour.

More local placements are needed for:

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Offending behaviours
- Physical and learning disabilities
- Mental health issues such as self-harm, and drug use.
- adolescents with challenging behaviour
- young people at risk of CSE
- teenagers with complex mental health problems

We recognise that some children and young people benefit from the type of support that can only be provided via a residential children's home and in some cases, this will need to be specialist provision.

We have a cohort of children that need support when transitioning from secure children's home placements (remand & welfare) and those that are discharged from mental health provision. We also see a need for these 'specialist' children's homes as a preventative intervention to avoid the need for secure accommodation.

Wherever possible we will want children and young people who are accommodated in residential children's homes to have the opportunity to move into a family placement, we therefore want providers from both the fostering and residential sectors who are prepared to work with us on these care plans for transitions into family placements.

Placements and commissioning teams work closely with social care colleagues to ensure that placement requests are referred in a timely way allowing for a thorough search and information sharing with providers to offer a planned solution.

We recognise however, that too often placements are required urgently, and this puts pressure on all partners and can have a detrimental impact on outcomes for children and young people. We want to work with providers that can offer urgent and emergency placements and who will work with us to move these children on to a placement that is appropriate to their care plan.

Corporate Parenting is the collective responsibility of the local authority to actively promote the life chances and outcomes of children in care and care leavers to provide them with the best possible care and protection. Effective corporate parenting requires a commitment to demonstrate the children in care should be cared about, not just cared for.

Derby City Council aspires to provide every child and young person with the best possible local placement (where appropriate), which meets their needs, wishes and feelings and provides them with the opportunity to thrive and achieve.

Derby City Council aims to continue working in partnership with providers and other key agencies to:

- Reduce the use of high-cost placements through increased local sufficiency and by developing a wider range of placements to meet need.
- Aim to place a minimum of 75% of all children and young people 'locally', i.e. within 20 miles of the centre of Derby. For those placements made outside of the local area, we will strive to ensure equality of service offer.
- A shared ambition to improve pathways and outcomes for children and young people with complex needs and mental health concerns by maximising the utilisation of wrap around integrated services.

- Through joint commissioning of local partners to execute the Derby vision and strategy for integrated care to provide every child and young person with the best possible local provision, which meets their needs, wishes and feelings. Providing wrap around support to present them with the best opportunity to thrive and achieve.
- Listen to the voice of children and young people and use their feedback to inform and influence services,
- Secure the best possible placement for every child and young person, considering their needs and wishes.
- Drive to measure children and young people's outcomes across all placements, developing an understanding of what does and does not work and acknowledging when something needs to change.
- Continually review our offer, practice, and commissioning activity in light of changing demographics, need, feedback and constraints.

Derby City Council will continue their committed approach to ensure children within the care of the local authority receive the support they need. Derby City Council will continue to work with partners to develop greater provision within the local footprint in line with the needs, wishes, and feelings of Children in Care in order to:

- Achieve positive outcomes for all Children in Care for the duration of their time as a Looked After Child, including their transition to adulthood.
- Enhance the availability of local provision to enable more children to be placed within the Derby City footprint.
- Work collaboratively and innovatively to create consistent, quality, and cost-effective placements that offer children long-term stability with fewer placement moves.

Derby City Council aims to provide services that are joined up, consistent and designed around needs. Derby City Council plans to continue working with providers and agencies to jointly and swiftly assess need and identify new ways to deliver outcomes together.

Derby City Council are committed to developing stronger partnerships with providers by:

- Making improvements to payment systems
- Holding regular provider forums and meetings
- Listening and responding to provider views and feedback

Our overall aim is to work towards developing robust provision that can offer effective education, health and care provision to achieve the best possible outcomes for all children and young people. We recognise that partnerships and collaboration with providers is key to achieving these aims.

7. Concluding Remarks

Derby City is a relatively small area however we do have 512 Children in Care that we are responsible for (as at 31/03/2026) and therefore need to try to place as many children as we can as close to Derby City as possible and where appropriate to ensure that our children and young people have the ability to remain in their local area with their local connections (family, friends, school and health services etc) and to support meeting our sufficiency target.

Derby City want to develop closer relationships with providers on the framework as well as off framework and to work together to tackle commissioning issues and placement sufficiency where possible. We are aware that this is a national issue however a difference can be made locally, however small this might be, it could be a huge difference for a child in care.

We want providers who can offer urgent and emergency placements in both foster homes and residential children's homes. This will support Derby City with ensuring the safety of our children and young people as well as supporting with our budget constraints. This is because emergency and crisis placement solutions can be quite costly which is an additional expense to the local authority that will then impact on the budget constraints for the rest of the financial year.

Wherever possible Derby City children and young people in care will be supported in a family placement in their local area.

Derby City want to see an increase in the number of foster placements available locally including for older children; where young people are placed in residential care because a foster placement was not available, we want to see proactive move to the type of placement that is identified in their care plan.

Derby City would like fostering agencies to support us with our goal of trying to maintain and stabilise placements wherever possible, we need to be talking and thinking together about what support can be wrapped around a child or young person as well as the placement as a whole when in a period of instability to avoid a possible breakdown in placement which could then lead to a residential placement for that child or young person. We are open to suggestions and ideas from agencies to support us with this but this does also need to be for time limited periods where possible as we do have budget constraints that need to be proportioned across all of our children in care.

We want to have access to a range of residential provision within 20 miles of Derby City including specialist placements for our most complex young people.

We acknowledge that we need to work closely with all our partners to achieve our ambition of:

Right placement; right location; right time; right price