



SOUTH EAST SUFFICIENCY STATEMENT 2025-26

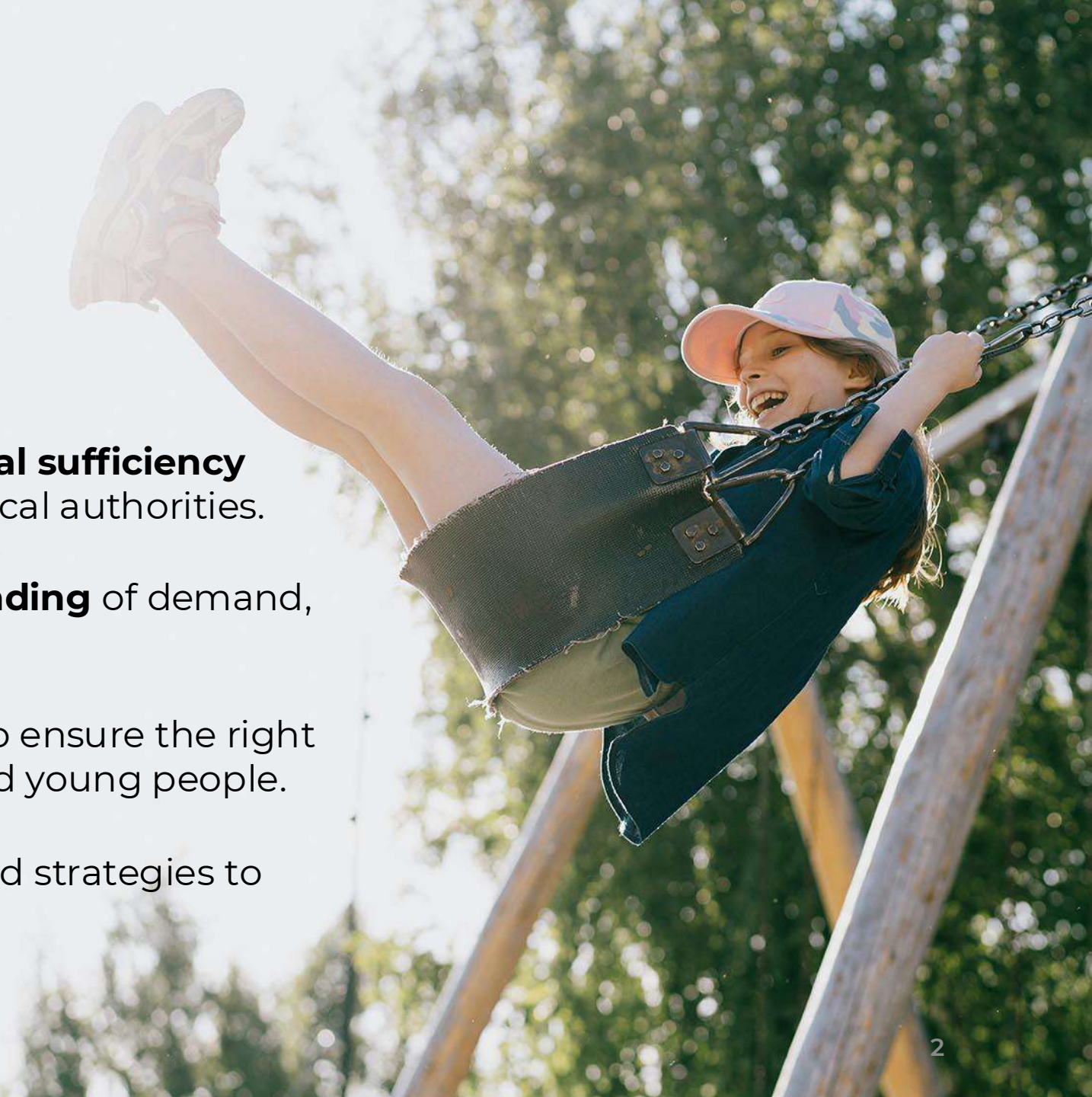
Extended Executive Summary Deck

Building Positive Futures

– A Regional Approach to Children's Sufficiency

PURPOSE OF THE STATEMENT

- Establishes the **first shared regional sufficiency** baseline across the 19 South East local authorities.
- Aims to create a **unified understanding** of demand, supply, and market pressures.
- Supports **collaborative planning** to ensure the right homes and support for children and young people.
- Helps local areas move from isolated strategies to a **coordinated regional approach**.

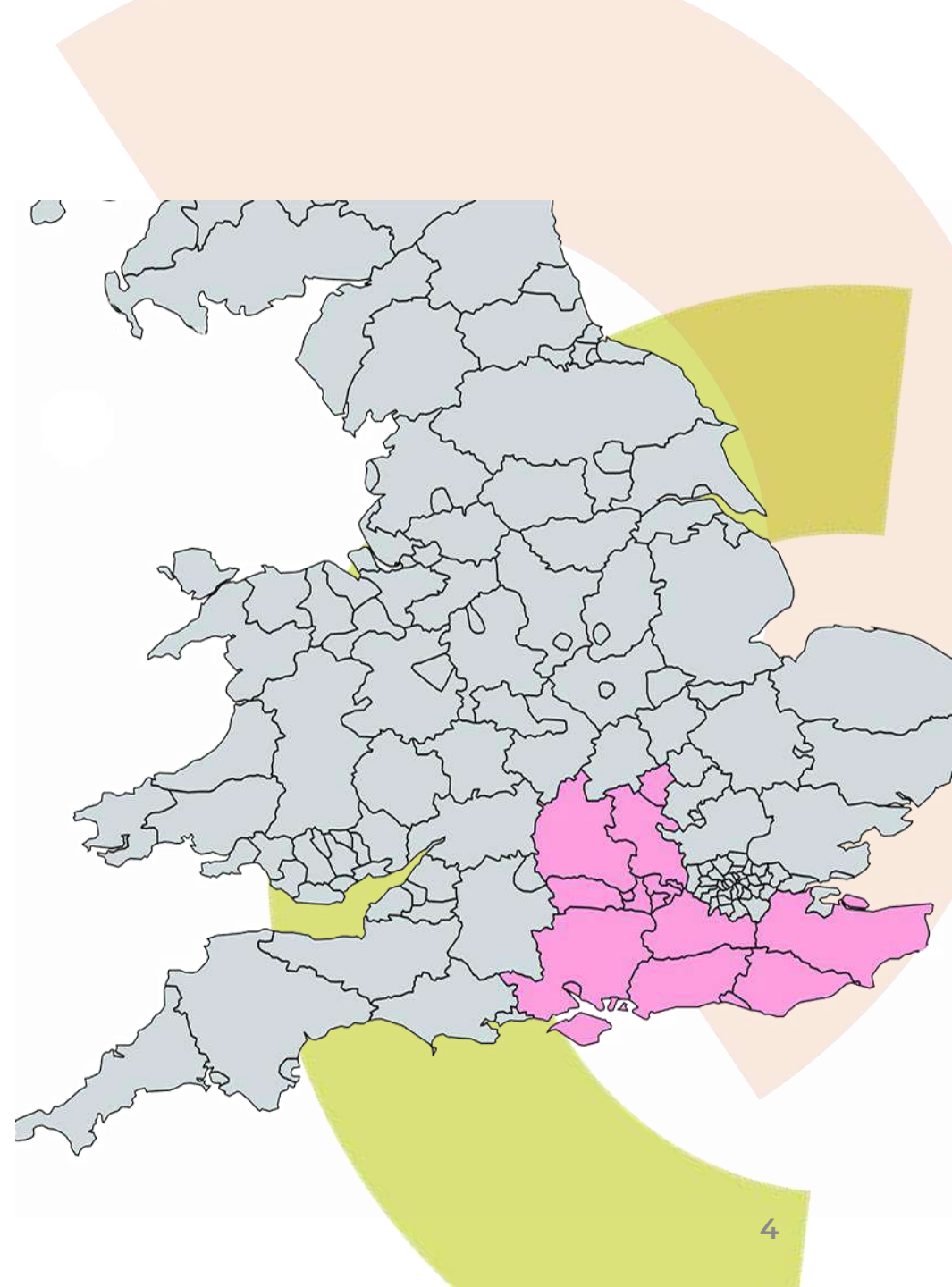


STRATEGIC CONTENT

- Rising national awareness of sufficiency challenges.
- Increasing expectations for **data-driven approaches** to children's services.
- Greater emphasis on **local, stable placements** and reducing reliance on high-cost, reactive provision.
- Government reform agenda encourages **regional care cooperative working**, making this Statement foundational.

REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

- Region covers **2,023,900 children aged 0–17**.
- Shifts in age distribution:
 - More adolescents and older teenagers.
 - Higher levels of complexity in needs.
- Demand influenced by population growth, deprivation pockets, and migration patterns.



TRENDS IN DEMAND

- Steady increase in children in care over the past decade.
- New entrants to care rising sharply since 2021.
- Care entry rate now **above the England average**.
- Significant increase in:
 - Adolescents entering care due to contextual safeguarding risks.
 - Children needing therapeutic or specialist placements.
 - Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC).



REGIONAL VARIATIONS IN PRESSURES

- **Kent & Medway:** very high UASC demand.
- **South West sub-region** (Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton, Isle of Wight): highest looked-after rates.
- **Other sub-regions:** lower overall volumes but increasing levels of complexity.
- Variation means **localised solutions are essential**, not one regional model.



CLARITY
*
LEADERSHIP

PLACEMENT SUPPLY CHALLENGES



Fostering:

- Insufficient carers for teenagers, sibling groups, and complex needs.
- Recruitment and retention challenges.

Residential care:

- Shortage of small, therapeutic, local homes.
- Increasing need for high-intensity placements.

Supported accommodation (16+):

- Pressure from increased demand and new regulation requirements.

Adoption:

- Stable trend but fewer children with straightforward adoption plans.

WORKFORCE PRESSURES

- Recruitment difficulties across fostering, residential and supported accommodation settings.
- High turnover affecting continuity and quality of care.
- Need for more trauma-informed, specialist workforce capability.
- Workforce constraints directly limit placement availability and stability.



MARKET DYNAMICS

- Market is highly competitive, with supply limited in key areas.
- Local authorities often competing against each other and national buyers.
- Prices increasing due to scarcity, especially for specialist or urgent placements.
- Lack of transparency and unequal bargaining power with providers.
- Importance of regional collaboration to influence the market collectively.

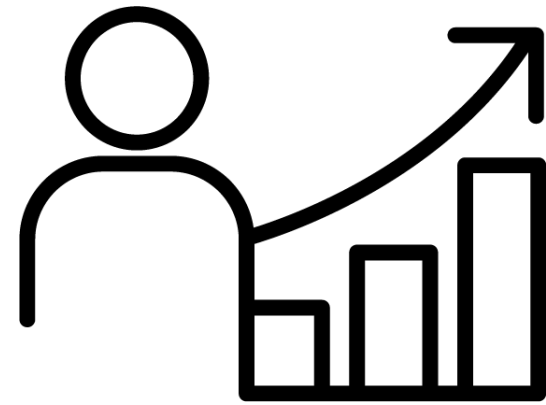


PRIORITY ACTIONS (REGIONAL STRATEGY)

- 1. Expand and diversify homes** for older children, complex needs, and UASC.
- 2. Strengthen regional commissioning** to leverage scale and reduce competition.
- 3. Develop a strong, skilled workforce** across all placement types.
- 4. Increase placement stability** through trauma-informed, locally accessible support.
- 5. Create a balanced market** with focus on quality, value and sufficiency.
- 6. Develop specialised provision** where demand is most acute.

DATA, INSIGHT AND MONITORING

- Roll-out of a **regional data platform** to provide real-time insights.
- Shared intelligence on:
 - Demand trends
 - Placement availability
 - Costs and market behaviour
 - Locality and out-of-area placements
- Quarterly monitoring and annual “deep dives” into sufficiency and market conditions.



WHY THIS MATTERS

- Rising demand and complexity require a **collective, forward-looking response**.
- Children's outcomes improve when they live:
 - In safe, stable homes
 - Close to family, education, and community
- Reduces high-cost crisis placements and improves value for money.
- Regional collaboration strengthens influence over a fragmented market.
- Ensures every child has access to the **right home, at the right time, in the right place**.



THANK YOU

