

Committee: **Corporate Parenting Panel**

Date: **27 January 2012**

Title of Report: **Looked After Children (LAC) Statistics**

By: **Director of Children's Services**

Purpose of Report: **To update the Panel on changes in the last quarter**

Recommendation: **The Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to note the contents of the report.**

1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 Services for LAC are funded from the Children's Services base budget, supplemented by the Early Intervention Grant. Clearly rising LAC numbers have been putting the available budgets under intense pressure and this forms a core rationale for the current Outline Business Case for Service Transformation that will be presented to Cabinet on 26th January.

2. Supporting information

2.1 The most recent LAC Statistics are attached as Appendix 1.

2.2 Between September and December 2011, the upward trend in the overall number of LAC appears to have stabilised, although December is a short month in practical terms given the public holidays so definite conclusions are hard to reach.

2.3 At the end of the quarter, the total number of children in foster care has increased by 1, with 11 additional placements with in house foster carers at the end of the quarter. There were 4 fewer agency foster placements at the end of this quarter. There has also been a decrease of 4 children with kinship carers. There were 5 parent and baby placements at the end of the quarter.

2.4 The number of children placed with prospective adopters has risen by 6. Activity rates are obviously closely allied to individual care planning for children.

2.5 The number of children subject to a Care Order placed at home with their parents has decreased by 4 over the quarter. These placements should always be monitored rigorously in order to mitigate any risk factors and agreement to the placement is given at a senior level.

2.6 The number of children subject to Residence Orders has risen by 5 with 30 additional children becoming subject to Special Guardianship Orders.

2.7 In the Bungalow there are 2 residents (one of them is 18 and her Social Worker in the transition team is actively seeking an appropriate adult placement). In Acorns there are 2 full-time residents, and another young person who is LAC but who is spending increasing lengths of time at home so is currently shared-care.

2.8 During this period 6 East Sussex children have been subject to secure orders on welfare grounds with 3 currently secured at Lansdowne and the 4th child secured at Beechfield in West Sussex.

3. Conclusion and recommendation

3.1 Pressure on the system remains very intense but there may be early signs that a plateau may have been reached. Close attention will be paid to numbers and proportions going forward and in

particular to the numbers of children placed in expensive agency placements. The development of early intervention services through the Business Transformation plans is intended to help reduce LAC numbers safely and in a phased way over the next 3 years.

3.2 Staff from ESCC have been contributing to the current thinking by Central Government on how best to re-design the assessment process to streamline assessment of prospective carers. The service also hosted a visit by Martin Narey the Government's adoption 'tsar' in December. This is important given the good performance of ESCC as an adoption agency and the continuing high numbers of small children both nationally and locally who need adoptive families.

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Local Members: All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

Accommodation Type	Jan-11	Feb-11	Mar-11	Apr-11	May-11	Jun-11	Jul-11	Aug-11	Sep-11	Oct-11	Nov-11	Dec-11
Total Foster Placements (Parent & Baby Placements)	472	476	482	496	496	517	525	516	520	523	520	521
<i>Of these:</i>												
<i>In House fostercarers</i>	<i>328</i>	<i>327</i>	<i>334</i>	<i>339</i>	<i>337</i>	<i>350</i>	<i>361</i>	<i>353</i>	<i>358</i>	<i>359</i>	<i>361</i>	<i>367</i>
<i>Kinship fostercarers</i>	<i>64</i>	<i>66</i>	<i>65</i>	<i>65</i>	<i>69</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>66</i>	<i>62</i>	<i>65</i>	<i>65</i>	<i>63</i>	<i>61</i>
<i>Agency fostercarers</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>83</i>	<i>83</i>	<i>92</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>98</i>	<i>101</i>	<i>97</i>	<i>99</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>93</i>
Placed For Adoption	22	22	21	19	19	24	23	21	21	20	24	27
Independent Living	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	4	4	5
ESCC Residential	15	15	18	19	19	18	17	14	14	16	16	16
Agency Residential	14	14	15	16	15	17	19	20	21	20	15	14
Special Education	15	13	13	12	11	11	11	10	10	9	11	10
Placed With Parent	25	31	27	26	23	20	20	22	22	25	22	18
Hospital/NHS Establishment	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	3	3	1	3	2
Prison Estab/Secure Unit	6	6	4	6	7	6	6	7	7	6	5	6
Total	573	581	585	599	594	618	626	615	620	624	620	619

Legal Status Type	Jan-11	Feb-11	Mar-11	Apr-11	May-11	Jun-11	Jul-11	Aug-11	Sep-11	Oct-11	Nov-11	Dec-11
Residence Orders	163	163	164	167	168	167	166	166	168	168	174	173
Special Guardianship Orders	60	62	64	68	80	82	85	90	92	99	117	122
Total	223	225	228	235	248	249	251	256	260	267	291	295