



CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

FRIDAY, 26 OCTOBER 2018

10.00 AM COMMITTEE ROOM - COUNTY HALL, LEWES

MEMBERSHIP - Councillors Charles Clark, Chris Dowling, Kathryn Field, Jim Sheppard, Colin Swansborough, Sylvia Tidy (Chair) and Francis Whetstone

A G E N D A

- 1 Minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2018 (*Pages 3 - 8*)
- 2 Apologies for absence
- 3 Disclosure of Interests
Disclosure by all members present of personal interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the member regards the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct.
- 4 Urgent items
Notification of items which the Chair considers to be urgent and proposes to take at the end of the appropriate part of the agenda. Any members who wish to raise urgent items are asked, wherever possible, to notify the Chair before the start of the meeting. In so doing, they must state the special circumstances which they consider justify the matter being considered urgently.
- 5 Exclusion of Press and Public
To consider excluding the public and press from the meeting for the next two agenda items on the grounds that if the public and press were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as specified in Category 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), namely information relating to any individual.
- 6 Ofsted Inspection reports for the following: Acorns, Brodrick House, Hazel Lodge and Homefield Cottage (*Pages 9 - 64*)
- 7 Children's Home Regulations 2015, Regulation 44: Inspection reports for the period June 2018 - September 2018
 - 7a Acorns at Dorset Road (*Pages 65 - 162*)
 - 7b Brodrick House (*Pages 163 - 282*)
 - 7c Hazel Lodge (*Pages 283 - 378*)
 - 7d Homefield Cottage (*Pages 379 - 484*)
 - 7e Lansdowne Secure Unit (*Pages 485 - 610*)
 - 7f The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive (*Pages 611 - 740*)
- 8 Any other exempt items considered urgent by the Chair.

- 9 Annual Progress Report of Looked After Children's Services - 1 April 2017 - 31 March 2018 *(Pages 741 - 826)*
Report by the Director of Children's Services
- 10 KS1, 2 and KS4 outcomes for Looked After Children 2017/18 *(Pages 827 - 832)*
Report by the Director of Children's Services
- 11 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children Update *(Pages 833 - 842)*
Report by the Director of Children's Services
- 12 Looked After Children (LAC) Statistics *(Pages 843 - 846)*
Report by Director of Children's Services.
- 13 Any other non-exempt items considered urgent by the Chair.

PHILIP BAKER
Assistant Chief Executive
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18 October 2018

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Agenda Item 1

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held at County Hall, Lewes on 27 July 2018.

PRESENT Councillors Chris Dowling, Kathryn Field, Jim Sheppard,
Colin Swansborough, Sylvia Tidy and Francis Whetstone

ALSO PRESENT

Liz Rugg - Assistant Director, Early Help and Social Care
Sally Carnie – Head of LAC Services
Janet Fairless – RHM – Homefield Cottage
Ian Williams – RHM Hazel Lodge
Scott Lipa – RHM Brodrick House
Helen Simmons - RHM Lansdowne Secure Unit
Charlotte De Retuerto – RHM The Bungalow
Shirin White – RHM Acorns, at Dorset Road
Dr Susan Leather – Designated Doctor for LAC
Nicky Scott – Operations Manager – Residential LAC Services
Adrian Sewell – Operations Manager – Fostering Team
Antony Julyan – Strategic Joint Commissioner ISEND
Beverly Moores – Strategic Lead – ISEND
Fiona Lewis – Operations Manager – Safeguarding Unit
Douglas Sinclair – Head of Children’s Safeguards & Quality Assurance
Carole Sykes- Operations Manager – Adoption and Permanence Team.

38 ELECTION OF CHAIR

38.1 Councillor Sylvia Tidy was appointed Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

39 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 APRIL 2018

39.1 RESOLVED to agree as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 27 April 2018.

40 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

40.1 Apologies were received from Councillor Charles Clark.

41 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

41.1 There were none.

42 URGENT ITEMS

42.1 There were none.

43 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

43.1 The Panel agreed to exclude the press and public for the next two agenda items on the basis that if they were present there would be disclosure to them of information considered to be exempt by virtue of Category 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), namely information relating to any individual.

44 CHILDREN'S HOME REGULATIONS 2015, REGULATION 44: INSPECTION REPORTS FOR THE PERIOD MARCH 2018 - APRIL 2018

44.1 The Panel considered Regulation 44 Reports for the period March 2018 – April 2018 for the following Children's Homes:

- (a) Acorns at Dorset Road
- (b) Brodrick House
- (c) Hazel Lodge
- (d) Homefield Cottage
- (e) Lansdown Secure Unit
- (f) The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive

40.2 Each Registered Homes Manager (RHM) gave an oral update on activity at the home covering the period since the last Panel meeting.

40.3 The Panel discussed the challenges of emergency admissions. The Panel were advised that the use of agency staff may be required to assist with these situations which is clearly more expensive and potentially has an impact on the overall service

40.4 The Panel were advised that the renovation and décor improvement works taking place at the homes was having a positive impact on the young people and that many of them have had an input into these works.

40.5 The Panel praised the hard work of the staff and RHMs, with particular praise to the staff at Brodrick House which was rated outstanding by Ofsted at their June 2018 inspection.

40.6 RESOLVED to note the reports.

45 ANY OTHER EXEMPT ITEMS CONSIDERED URGENT BY THE CHAIR.

45.1 There were none.

46 INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER (IRO) ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

46.1 The Panel considered the Independent Reviewing Officer Annual report for the period 2017/18.

46.2 The Panel discussed the high caseloads for IRO's and the implications this has on the service. The Panel were advised that caseloads were averaging at 102 children per IRO in March 2018, which is above the 60 recommended in the Department for Education's (DfE) IRO Handbook. In response to this, the Panel were advised that the ESCC Safeguarding Unit sets a target of a maximum caseload of 90 per IRO, and at the time of the meeting, the number of caseloads had dropped to between 90 and 92 children per IRO. Even with this high workload the team are meeting their statutory obligations to our LAC. In order to support this they are concentrating their input on children who are not in stable long term placements.

46.3 The Panel gave thanks to the IRO's and expressed their support for the important role they play.

46.4 RESOLVED to note the report.

47 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT OF THE EAST SUSSEX FOSTERING SERVICE

47.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which outlined the performance and progress of the East Sussex Fostering Service for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018. Adrian Sewell, Operations Manager Fostering Service, explained to the panel the successes and challenges in the areas of recruitment & retention; publicity campaigns; fostering panels, and foster carer training.

47.2 The Panel were informed that although the recruitment and retention of foster carers continues to be a challenge, in the year 2017/18 19 households offering 37 placements were approved. More children are placed with in house carers than ever before.

47.3 The Panel discussed the importance of the Fostering Panel and were informed that training on assessments, appointments of 6 new members, and the introduction of a new medical advisor have all contributed to the effectiveness of the Fostering Panel over the past year.

47.4 The Panel discussed the support systems in place for Foster Carers. They were advised that foster carers are now benefiting from a buddy system which has been successful in facilitating carers supporting each other with a range of issues. The Panel also discussed the POD system which has been introduced to allow Social Workers within a 'pod' to share knowledge and understanding of each fostering household's circumstances. This system has been successful and ensures consistency of support for carers should their allocated support worker be unavailable.

47.5 The Panel expressed their thanks to the East Sussex Fostering Service for the excellent work they do and the support they give to the children and young people in their care.

47.6 RESOLVED to note the report.

48 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT OF THE EAST SUSSEX ADOPTION AND PERMANENCE SERVICE.

47.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which outlined the performance and progress of the East Sussex Adoption and Permanence Service for the period 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018. Carole Sykes, Operations Manager, Adoption and Permanence Service introduced the report and highlighted aspect of the work such as: recruitment of adopters, placements and matching, adoption support and panel activity.

47.2 The Panel discussed the challenges in recruitment of adopters over the past year and were informed that this is reflective of national trends and despite the reduction in recruitment, the service has continued to receive positive feedback with regards to the quality and customer focus of the recruitment process.

47.3 The Panel gave their thanks to the East Sussex Adoption and Permanence Service with particular thanks to Dr Susan Leather for the medical advice and knowledge she has provided to the Adoption and Permanence panels.

RESOLVED the Panel noted the report.

49 LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) STATISTICS

47.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which provided an update on Looked After Children (LAC) statistics. It was noted that there has been an increase in the number of LAC which East Sussex currently has in its care. The Panel were advised that work has been undertaken to identify the reasons for this, with the results concluding that whilst the number of children entering the system over the past year has remained stable, young people are staying longer in placements. It is considered that this is due to the following factors: older children at risk of exploitation, both criminally and sexually; improved practice on neglect which has led to identifying larger family groups; and Courts being increasingly reluctant to approve adoption for some young children.

47.2 The Panel requested that an update regarding Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking young people is brought to the next meeting of the Panel on 26 October 2018.

RESOLVED the Panel noted the report

50 ANY OTHER NON-EXEMPT ITEMS CONSIDERED URGENT BY THE CHAIR.

50.1 There were none

The meeting ended at 12.22 pm.

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Report to: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date of meeting: 26 October 2018

Report by: Director of Children's Services

Title: Annual Progress Report of Looked After Children's Services
1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018

Purpose: To outline the performance of the Looked After Children's Service
between 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018

RECOMMENDATION: The Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to comment on and note the contents of the report.

1. Background and supporting information

1.1 The Annual Report is attached as Appendix 1. At present the full comparative national data is still not available and so an update will be provided to the next Panel meeting so that local performance can be assessed in that context.

1.2 The services for Looked After Children (LAC) are supported via core funding from the CSA budget, a small proportion of the Dedicated Schools Grant and the Pupil Premium for additional education support for children.

2. Recommendation

2.1 Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to comment on and note the contents of the report.

STUART GALLIMORE
Director of Children's Services

Contact Officers:
Teresa Lavelle-Hill - Head of Looked After Children's Services
Telephone: 01323 747197
Sally Carnie - Head of Looked After Children's Services
Telephone: 01323 747197

Local Members: All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 - LAC Annual Report 2017 – 2018

Listed within Appendix 1 are the following annexes:

Annex 1 - Annual Progress Report of East Sussex Fostering Service 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018

Annex 2 – Annual Progress Report of East Sussex Adoption and Permanence Service 1 April 2017– 31 March 2018

Annex 3 – Independent Reviewing Officer's Annual Report 2017 – 2018

Annex 4 – Annual Progress Report of East Sussex Virtual School 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018

Annex 5 – Annual Progress Report on Looked After Children's Statistics 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018

1 Looked after Children Trend Data

1.1 On 31 March 2018 there were 606 Looked After Children (LAC) in ESCC; this represents an increase of 45 children (8.1%) as compared to 2016/17 and a rate of 56.9 per 10,000 population. This is just below the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) expected rate (a measure in terms of population profiles and deprivation levels) of 57.2 and below the 2016 England rate of 60.3.

1.2 There is a strong link between rates of LAC and the rate of children subject to Child Protection (CP) Plans, with arguably some risk held at that lower level. The rate of children subject to CP plans has shown a sharp increase from 44.9 per 10,000 in 2016-17 to 52.9 per 10,000 in 2017/18. This is higher than the IDACI expected rate of 42.9 and the 2016 England rate of 43.1.

1.3 The LAC data only ever gives a snapshot of the children moving in and out of the system at a fixed date each month/year and considerable activity sits beneath it. The data below is referred to as 'churn'. This cohort of children will come in and out of the system within the year, or some may come in and stay whilst others leave. It has been calculated that the churn figure for 2017/18 is 153 which, when added to the total number of LAC, equates to the service working with 759 children. This total figure is higher than last year (733 children), but the churn rate was lower than for the previous years (175 for 2016/17, 185 for 2015/16).

1.4 There was an increase in admissions to care from 198 during 2016/17 to 212 during 2017/18. This increase was across all age groups. The number of 0-5 year olds admitted to care during 2016/17 increased from 98 to 104 in 2017/18, with an increase in admissions for 6-12 year olds from 44 in 2016/17 to 50 for 2017/18, and for children aged 13+ an increase from 56 for 2016/17 to 58 in 2017/18.

1.5 At year end there was a decrease in the number of LAC discharged from care, from 183 in 2016/17 to 164. The number of 0-12 year olds discharged from care also fell to 89 during 17/18 from 106 in 16/17. This was made up of 60 0-5 year olds and 29 were 6-12 year olds. There was also a slight decrease in the 13+ age group from 77 discharged in 2016/17 to 75 in 2017/18.

1.6 The trend for the last three years is showing a picture of an overall increase in the number of LAC worked with year on year. During 17/18 there was an increased number of admissions and fewer discharges across every age cohort. This means that with the higher number of children being admitted to care, a lower proportion of the overall cohort moved into alternative permanent options such as adoption, special guardianship or returned to their birth families. This produced a net increase of children in permanent or long term foster placements, and significantly fewer in the churn data. The increase was largely related to the changes in policy and practice both locally and nationally in relation to children who suffer neglect, and the application of the Southwark Judgement whereby teenagers can be offered or request section 20 accommodation and hence become LAC rather than being viewed as homeless.

1.7 The trend within the specialist disability children's and transition services has been a decrease in the number of LAC. At year end 2016/17 there were 43 LAC, which reduced to 34 at year end 2017/18. Throughout this period personal budgets were being offered to support families in a flexible way and 143 personal budgets were given to families assessed as requiring support, with the aim of preventing harm and family breakdown. Placement of disabled children made when they cannot remain within their families has largely mirrored proportionally that of non-disabled children, with an emphasis on placing close to home and in foster care wherever

possible, with fewer children being placed in residential homes and out of county placements. At year end there were 8 children placed full time within the in house disability residential provision. The number of children placed out of county has reduced year on year to 8 children. These represent a small number whose health needs cannot be met within a family setting, local school or a children's home. 6 of these children are funded jointly by health budgets in the context of significant health issues, for example uncontrolled epilepsy or occasionally due to extreme challenging behaviour. The transforming care agenda and other local solutions are anticipated to reduce this number still further as plans are formulated to meet the health needs of disabled children more locally.

1.8 In terms of UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children) , at year end ESCC was caring for 20 children, 4 fewer than the previous year. These young people were mainly male and over 16, with an additional 10 having ongoing support needs as care leavers. These young people usually arrived in a clandestine way via Newhaven, or were found elsewhere in East Sussex. East Sussex also continued to accept UASC via the National Transfer Scheme. A small number of young people disappeared from care placements before age assessments could be completed to determine whether they were indeed children.

1.9 The end of year snapshot data showing LAC placements were as follows (2017 figures in brackets):-

With foster carers	470	(429)
Of these: in house carers	331	(304)
Kinship carers	46	(38)
Agency carers	93	(87)
Placed for adoption	26	(30)
In supported lodgings	27	(14)
ESCC children's homes	21	(23)
Agency children's homes	29	(25)
Agency special schools	0	(1)
Placed with parents	20	(23)
Independent Living	4	(7)
Youth custody/secure unit	5	(5)
Hospital/NHS establishment	1	(1)
Absconded	0	(0)

2. Fostering

2.1 On 31 March 2018 there were 494 children in foster care. 409 of these children were placed with in-house foster placements as compared to 392 in the previous year. This includes in-house 'parent and child' placements, children subject to Special Guardianship Orders placed with their former foster carers and those older young people remaining in their 'Staying Put' fostering placements through to independence. As a result of increased LAC numbers overall, the number of East Sussex LAC placed with agency foster carers increased from 64 children 2016/17 to 85 at the end of March 2018.

2.2 As in 2016/2017 East Sussex County Council (ESCC) continued to be challenged in the number of foster carers that could be recruited. This is a national issue with the 'National Stocktake' report, published at the end of this financial year, confirming that there was a national shortage of foster carers.

2.3 Of the 534 referrals received between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018, 437 resulted in placements being made or children matched with carers and 97 were ultimately not required. However, on the 31 March 2018 there were still 36 active referrals for LAC waiting to be matched with foster carers. This will include children needing respite and some children for whom a planned entrance to care is being

delayed whilst we look for a suitable placement. It became increasingly clear that the fostering market was struggling to respond to the level of demand and complexity that ESCC LAC were presenting and thus that a search for an agency placement was not a solution to a lack of placement in house.

2.4 ESCC Fostering Service recruited 19 households offering 37 placements in 2017/18 compared with 21 households in 2016/17 offering 50 placements. 1 of these households was a transfer from an Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) with both an ESCC LAC and a West Sussex LAC in placement at the point of transfer. A further 12 assessments were allocated and booked for presentation to the Fostering Panel but did not progress to completion. This was due to changes in personal circumstances, insufficient evidence or information provided at Stage 1, and in 2 cases there were family members who did not wish to be assessed and approved as foster carers. However, there were 13 fostering assessments still in progress at year end compared to 6 at year end in the previous year. Overall when the recruitment figures were combined with the retention data, ESCC had a net loss of 4.3%. This compared well with the last available national benchmarking data which was published in 2015/16 and set the national figure at a 12% loss.

2.5 East Sussex Supported Lodgings provision has continued to be an invaluable resource for LAC, Care Leavers and homeless young people. In 2017/18 the Supported Lodgings service benefitted from Corporate Transformation funding for the Housing and Accommodation project to extend housing options for Care Leavers and homeless young people. As a result of this funding, the service has reviewed its recruitment strategy to maximize the potential of all applicants applying to the service, and encouraged people with a wide range of differing skills and experiences to apply.

2.6 From June 2017 to the end of March 2018, 61 Care Leavers (85%) and 11 16/17 year old vulnerable homeless young people (15%) were placed with Supported Lodgings providers. In addition providers were encouraged to extend their approval potential to take more parent and child, emergency duty and complex placements. As of 31 March 2018 there were 38 Supported Lodgings households providing a total of 62 placements across the county. In addition there were 9 new approvals, providing 12 additional beds.

Please see **Annex 1** for full Fostering Service Annual Report 2016-17.

3. Physical and Mental Health

3.1 Notifications to the CCG (Designated Nurse LAC) of entry into care have shown a significant improvement in timeliness through 2017/18.

East Sussex LAC KPIs – LAC Medical team	1 st Qtr	2 nd Qtr	3 rd Qtr
Initial Health Assessments			
ESCC Notifications of Entry to Care (requiring IHA)	43	60	42
ESCC Notifications received within 5 working days of entering care	17	46	36
% received within 5 working days of child entering care	40%	77%	86%

However, sometimes an appointment was delayed as consents and essential paperwork took a variable time to be sent to the medical team. In the last quarter only **12.5% (8/64)** referrals (including Notification, consents and essential paperwork) had been received within 5 days of a child entering care. This significantly impacted on the ability of the LAC medical team to see children within statutory timescales. However further discussion is ongoing with health colleagues because it is often not possible to apply the 'Gold Standard' of having signed parental consent to a medical

or which allows access to parental health records. Unsurprisingly parents can often refuse to sign and provide consent of any kind. Further work is underway to try and address this and improve the rate of timely health assessments.

3.2 The delays in a child being seen within 28 calendar days of entering care have been identified jointly and are being addressed by the LAC health operational group (ESHT and ESCC) that was set up when the contract moved back to ESHT. ESCC have now developed a robust IHA tracking system which, in collaboration with EHST colleagues, is giving a clearer picture of where delays occur and an ability to track all IHAs that were due for children entering care in any given month.

3.3 Review Health Assessments (RHAs) were initiated by the LAC Nurse team with requests for consent and paperwork from social care 3 months prior to an assessment being due, following this up as necessary with repeat requests at intervals. This resulted in the high percentage of assessments within timescales. This process was, however, burdensome for clinical staff and was affecting nurses' time and impacting on their ability to attend LAC reviews or to follow up on health care plans. Therefore from April 2018 the process of requesting a RHA is now initiated by social care. This process is still bedding in but it is anticipated that this will resolve the clinical issues.

3.4 Over the year to March 2018, the LAC nursing team undertook 386 RHAs. 61 of these were commissioned by other Local Authorities (child placed in East Sussex) and 10 were for children who were Looked After by ESCC but placed across the border (within travelling distance). In total 56 young people declined a review health assessment.

East Sussex LAC KPIs - LAC Nursing team	1st Qtr	2nd Qtr	3rd Qtr	4th Qtr
Review Health Assessments				
Number of RHAs completed by LAC nursing team	70	86	79	78
Number of young people declining a RHA	9	18	13	16
RHA of Primary children within 12 months of IHA or previous RHA	26/28	40/43	36/40	-
RHA of Secondary children within 12 months of IHA or previous RHA	34/34	29/31	29/30	-
RHA of 16 + young people within 12 months of IHA or previous RHA	7/8	11/12	6/9	-
Overall % RHA, for over 5 years, within timescales	96%	93%	90%	-

3.5 There is a particular challenge in commissioning both statutory health assessments and secondary health care (including CAMHS) for children placed out of area as processes are often complex and different areas have a variety of arrangements with providers. The IHAs for East Sussex children and young people placed out of area over the year were invariably delayed unless a young person was brought back to be seen by the local LAC medical team within East Sussex. The LAC nursing team will cover RHAs for all children placed within a reasonable distance in order to avoid delay. Young people placed in Brighton and Hove travel back into East Sussex for IHAs due to a variation in provision in that area. The LAC health teams participate in a regional NHS England network and this participation, together with the increasing collaboration with LAC health teams from neighbouring authorities, is beginning to address these concerns.

3.6 The LAC Mental Health Service (LACMHS) received 52 new referrals during 2017/18, all but 3 of which were accepted and an initial consultation was

offered. The 3 which were not accepted were due to the referrals not meeting LACMHS criteria (e.g. no care plan for permanence). A number of children were also seen urgently due to the severity of the symptoms they presented, such as suicidal thoughts and/or serious self-harm, depression or psychotic symptoms. In addition, there was also a cohort of LAC in receipt of on-going therapeutic support such as individual therapy, dyadic therapy (child and carer together), systemic therapy and/or consultation to the foster carer and network. Over the year 2017/18 this ranged between 72 and 79 LAC at any one time. LACMHS also provided:

- One Therapeutic Parenting Group (working with 10 carers of 8 young people, their social workers and supervising social workers)
- Two Therapeutic Parenting Groups provided to the residential staff of Homefield, Brodrick House and Hazel Lodge
- Weekly consultation to staff at Homefield, Brodrick House and Hazel Lodge.
- Weekly consultation to the Through Care Team
- Monthly 'drop in' surgeries to the Fostering Service and each of the three LAC teams
- Mental health services commissioned by NHS England to Lansdowne Secure Unit, including sessions of a child and adolescent psychiatrist, a clinical psychologist, and a mental health nurse. One Therapeutic Parenting Group for LSU was also completed in April 2017.

3.7 LACMHS continued to work in close collaboration with its partner agencies to provide a service for children with a care plan of permanent placement away from their birth family. The response to new referrals continued to be prompt (e.g. a risk assessment being provided within one week) and ongoing therapeutic work was highly valued by all partners. The challenge for LACMHS has been the increased complexity of children within the LAC cohort, and the consequent demand for intensive ongoing support to the child/young person and their networks. The impact of this on service delivery meant that the waiting time for ongoing therapeutic interventions for some children was longer than the service would have wanted.

4. Adoption and Permanence

4.1 Supporting Information

	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/8
1. Number of children adopted	43	45	38	29
2. Number of adoption matches (children)	56	32	38	30
3. Number of permanent fostering matches (children)	7	10	14	5
4. Number of East Sussex adoptive matches (children)	33	26	30	30
5. Number of ASE adoptive matches (children)	6	0	0	0
6. Number of inter-agency matches (children):				
Permanence:	3	2	0	1
Adoption:	17	6	8	6
7. Number of prospective adopters approved (households)	50	41	30	25
8. Number of permanent carers approved (households)	4	2	1	3
9. Number of children approved for adoption up to 31 st March 2017 (including 2 re-approvals)	43	53	52	69

10. Number of children approved for permanence up to 31 st March 2017	26	14	32	24
11. Number of approved adopters waiting to be matched	20	22	20	12
12. Number of disruptions presented to Panel:				
Permanence:	0	0	0	0
Adoptions:	0	1	0	1

4.2 In 2017/18 there was a sharp increase in the number of children with a plan for adoption (ADM) from 52 children in 2016-2017 to 69. Within this group there were 2 large sibling groups of 6 and 5 respectively, plus a sibling group of 3 and 8 sibling pairs. Of the single children between the ages of 0-2 years, a number of them had significant complex medical needs and developmental delay. This cohort of children was particularly challenging in terms of family finding.

4.3 Despite the increased numbers of children approved, there were a number of plans changed unexpectedly which caused some delay, this was primarily due to late removal from the family home or to medical and legal complications. Nonetheless 30 matches were completed this year which was largely consistent with previous years.

4.4 During 2017/2018 the Adoption Service received 198 household enquiries, 81 households attended information events and 43 households registered their interest in adoption. The conversion rate from information event to registration remained high but unfortunately only 25 adopters were approved by the year end, this was a drop of 5 on 2016/2017. This was in part due to a significant number of the applicants having far more complex histories than the service had traditionally received. A number of assessments could not be completed and resulted in the applications being paused, whilst others were counselled out of adoption completely. This is the second year when the number of adopters being approved was lower than expected, and this has had an impact on the family finding element of the Service.

4.5 The Government's regionalisation agenda has gained significant momentum in the past year with 5 pilot regions going live in autumn 2017, and a further 4 going live in autumn 2018. ESCC is committed to the Adoption South East (ASE) partnership which submitted a bid earlier in the year. This proposal was accepted by the DfE who awarded a grant of £750k to explore the first stages of the development.

4.6 The adoption CAMHS service, AdCAMHS, has continued to offer a dedicated therapy and consultation service. The unique partnership model enabled clinicians and adoption social workers to think together to consider the therapeutic needs of children and their adoptive families. Undoubtedly the service contributed to the increased stability in adoption, promoted positive attachments and ultimately helped to prevent adoption breakdown for some families. Due to the limited clinical resource the service has considered therapists offering more consultations to social workers and doing less of the direct work, which could be bought in via the national Adoption Support Fund (ASF). AdCAMHS was offering therapeutic support to 64 children at year end.

4.7 The demand for an assessment for post adoption support has continued to rise. With the increased placement of children with complex needs, older children and sibling groups this has significantly raised the challenge of adequately supporting these families in the longer term. Some of the most complex family situations required the

service to coordinate multidisciplinary approaches. In these situations it was essential that the service worked closely with colleagues in the wider social work teams to manage risk and safeguarding concerns which at times lead to the use of Child Protection Plans, or to children being readmitted to the care system. In addition, there were an increased number of adopters who requested respite due to the complexities of their adopted children and the impact of their presenting behaviours on the family.

Please see attached **Annex 2** for Adoption Service full Annual Report.

5. Residential Services

5.1 Most of the children's homes have again received positive inspection outcomes from Ofsted during 2017/18. Brodrick Road maintained Outstanding overall, with Hazel Lodge and Homefield Cottage achieving an overall rating of Good. This is a real credit to the managers and staff teams within the homes as they care for the most challenging and complex young people who are unable to remain living in foster homes. Lansdowne Secure Children's Home was also judged to be Good overall in July 2017 with Outstanding in outcomes for education and related learning activities with a judgement of Improved Effectiveness in the interim inspection (which Secure Children's Homes are subject to regardless of their full inspection judgement) in February 2018. In relation to the disabled children's homes the Bungalow received a judgment of Requires Improvement in December 2017. Acorns received an Ofsted judgement of Good in August 2017.

5.2 Homefield Cottage is registered for 4 children of single gender (female) with behavioural and emotional difficulties between the ages of 11-18 years, it is located in a residential area of Seaford. The home had a very challenging mix of young people towards the end of the year, resulting in damage to the fabric of the home and assaults on staff. However, those young people were moved to different placements and a period of redecoration has since improved the appearance of the home allowing new placements to be planned for the coming months.

5.3 Brodrick Road is registered for 4 children of either gender with emotional and behavioural difficulties between the ages of 8-18 years, it is located on a residential road in Hampden Park, Eastbourne. The home has cared for some very challenging young people and has been able to offer very supportive and positive outreach support to young people returning to their birth families or to move on accommodation options aged 16+. Those who have moved on have been replaced by young people with equally complex and demanding needs but the staff team have ensured that they all have their particular needs met.

5.4 Hazel Lodge is registered for 4 children of either gender with emotional and behavioural difficulties between the ages of 11-18 years, it is located in a residential area in St Leonards on Sea and has maintained a reasonably settled group despite discharges and admissions during this period. Two residents were successfully returned to the care of their family, which was a really positive outcome for them. One resident unfortunately required admission to Lansdowne as a result of high risk involvement with local criminal groups and suspected county lines drug dealing.

5.5 Lansdowne has been granted £7.3 million by the DfE to expand the existing provision from 7 beds to 11/12 beds from March 2020. Work on the new extension will commence in October 2018. The new extension will contain a high dependency area which will meet the needs of those young people who have extremely challenging and complex behaviours and who need to be cared for away from the main group of residents for a time, until they can be integrated into the group. The work will make the home more adaptable and able to accept the types of referrals

which are now being received from across the country. The management team will be planning additional recruitment of staff next year.

5.6 The Bungalow in Eastbourne continued to provide longer term care for severely disabled young people. It retained a relatively stable group of young people who would have been unable to live in a family environment, but who were enabled to remain close to their families with contact facilitated on site. The Bungalow team worked closely with the special schools to implement strategies for managing challenging behaviour and hopefully prevent breakdown of either the residential or the school placement. However, one young person was moved to a residential school due to her challenging behaviour which had become unmanageable in either the Bungalow or in the local special school.

5.7 Acorns in Bexhill provided regular overnight respite care for severely disabled young people. Despite this high level of support, some of the families were no longer able to care for their children and they moved in on a full time basis. Therefore Acorns managed a mixture of full time young people and those on respite. The strategy of reducing the number of disabled young people placed in residential schools, often out of county, meant that both units have managed some very complex and challenging behaviour during this period.

5.8 In relation to the children who receive a service from either The Bungalow or Acorns Unit there have been a range of specialist initiatives developed which include working with the transitions service to develop independence skills and move older adolescents onto adult placements at the age of 18.

6. Care Leavers Service

6.1 As a response to the Government's "Keep on Caring" strategy, the revised legislation and the appointment of a National Care Leaver's champion, ESCC undertook its own self-assessment of the service against the 10 'gold standards', which were developed from a range of sources including from the Ofsted framework, DfE data packs and the Children's Commissioner. The framework allowed ESCC to identify both its current strengths and the areas for development. The improvement plan for 2017/2018 formed the basis of a more sophisticated Local Offer which was drafted and consulted on with Care Leavers in March 2018. There remains some ongoing work for 2018 in relation to the formatting of the Offer and dissemination to young people and Corporate Parents. In addition, the opportunity for Care Leavers to return to the service for advice and guidance between the ages of 21 – 25 years is now embedded within local practice.

6.2 At the end of 2017/18, the service was working with 277 young people which was considerably higher than the 241 of the previous year. Of this cohort, 12 were under 16 compared to 13 in 16/17, 94 were 16 - 17 year olds (71 in 2016/17) and 171 18 - 24 year olds (157 in 2017/17). A significant proportion of these young people had highly complex behaviours with a range of challenging safeguarding issues. The introduction of the 'Through Care' model where younger LAC with chaotic challenging behaviours were referred to the service at an earlier stage has proved very beneficial for an increasing number of children. The aim of the pilot was to establish a relationship between the young person and a care leaving specialist to establish a more seamless transition into independence. This has worked well and very positive feedback has been received from a number of key stakeholders. A Coramvoice survey was commissioned to take place in the autumn of 2018 and will pick up this feedback directly.

6.3 The Care2Work multi agency strategic board has implemented a range of developments designed to improve the skills of care leavers and to ensure a successful transition into education and employment. The action plan has been

reviewed and updated until end of March 2019 to consolidate and embed the good practice already established.

6.4 As of 31 March 2018, of the children who were in continuous care for at least 12 months before sitting their GCSE examinations, 90% (56/62) of 16 – 17 year olds (year 12) were in education, training and employment (EET). This exceeded the target of 80% and is an improvement of 18% on last year's data. 87% (27/31) of 17 - 18 year olds (year 13) were EET, exceeding a target of 70% and showing an improvement of 16% on last year's data. Of all eligible care leavers, four young people secured University places for September 2017 and the target for the percentage of Care Leavers at University was exceeded by 3% (Target 10%-Achieved 13%).

6.5 During the spring of 2017 there were no 16 and 17 year old young people placed in bed and breakfast accommodation and no over 18 year olds placed in bed and breakfast accommodation by the local authority. This was possible because of the additional investment provided by the ESCC transformation fund to improve the accommodation offer for vulnerable young people.

The Project has remained focussed on the 5 key areas:

- Vulnerable young people including care leavers and homeless young people
- Increasing the numbers of supported lodgings providers
- Developing the market and undertaking specialist commissioning for supported semi-independent and independent accommodation
- Developing a 'Staying Close' provision to residential children's homes
- Developing a medium and high risk Crash Pad accommodation

6.6 Transition planning for LAC who are the most complex in terms of disability and who will continue to receive a service from ASC is managed by a specialist Transitions Team within Adult Social Care.

7. Performance

7.1 Although performance is set out in the grid below, the 2017/18 national data set has not yet been published by the DfE, therefore this section does not benchmark the performance of ESCC against other local authorities or statistical neighbours for 2017/18. Despite there being a higher rate of LAC per 10,000, there have been some real improvements in performance in relation to adoption timeliness, placement moves and stability for children and suitable accommodation for Care Leavers, with good performance being maintained in the majority of other areas. There has been a dip in performance for young people aged 19-21 who were in education, employment or training. However, this is snapshot data and the other indicators in relation to employability of older LAC and Care Leavers remains well above the South East and national average. A specific report from the Virtual School will be available later in the year when educational outcomes have been validated nationally. The Independent Reviewing Officer Report in **Annex 3** also provides some helpful information.

Where performance has improved/increased it is shown with a ↑ and where it has dipped with a ↓

Indicator Ref	Description	2017/18 Value	2016/17 Eng	2016/17 Value	2015/16 Eng	2015/16 Value	2014/15 Eng	2014/15 Value
NI 58	Emotional & Behavioural Health of children in care	14.4 ↓	14.1	14.1 ↓	14.0	13.5 ↑	13.9	15.4 ↓
Adoption Scorecard 1	Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted. (3 year average)	454 days ↑	520 days	479 days ↑	558 days	516 days ↑	593 days	520 days ↑
Adoption Scorecard 2	Average time between an LA receiving court authority to place a child and the LA deciding on a match with an adoptive family (3 year average)	220 days ↓	220 days	212 days ↑	226 days	222 days ↓	223 days	190 days ↑
Adoption Scorecard 3	% of children who wait less than 14 months between entering care & moving in with their adoptive family (3 year average)	64% ↑	53%	61% ↑	47%	53% ↓	47%	57% ↑
NI62 Placements 1	Number of children looked after with 3 or more placements during the year	11.1% ↑	10.0%	13.8% ↓	10.0%	10.8% ↓	10.0%	9.7% ↓
NI63 Placements 2	% of LAC under 16 who've been lac for 2.5 years or more & in the same	70.2% ↓	70.0%	70.7% ↑	68.0%	65.0% ↑	68.0%	64.0% ↑

Indicator Ref	Description	2017/18 Value	2016/17 Eng	2016/17 Value	2015/16 Eng	2015/16 Value	2014/15 Eng	2014/15 Value
	placement for 2 years or placed for adoption							
Placements 3	% of LAC at 31 st March placed outside LA boundary and more than 20 miles from where they used to live	10.3% ↓	13.0%	8.4% ↑	13.0%	9.4% ↑	12.5%	10.0% ↓
Leaving Care 2 * <i>see note below</i>	% of former relevant young people aged 19-21 who were in education, employment or training	51.9% ↓	50.0%	53.0% ↓	49.0%	61.0% ↑	47.8%	55.0% ↓
Leaving Care 3	% of former relevant young people aged 17-21 who were in suitable accommodation	77.3% ↑	84.0%	76.5% ↓	83.0%	81.7% ↑	80.7%	78.0% ↓
Thrive PI 9	Rate of Children looked after per 10,000 population aged under 18	56.9 ↓	62.0	53.0 ↓	60.0	51.7 ↔	60.0	51.7 ↑
PAF C19	Average of the % of children looked after who had been looked after continuously for at least 12 months who had an annual assessment and their teeth checked by a dentist during the previous 12 months.	88.2% ↓	86.0%	90.3% ↓	87.0%	92.8% ↑	87.7%	92.6% ↓
PAF C81	Final warnings, reprimands and convictions of lac	2.3% ↑	4.0%	3.4% ↑	5.0%	3.8% ↔	5.2%	3.8% ↓

** Leaving Care 2 Indicator – this is calculated using data collected at the time of each young person's 19th, 20th or 21st birthday.*

8. The Virtual School

8.1 The Virtual School (VS) for LAC maintained a core staffing establishment of caseworkers during 2017/18. These staff supported the education of all ESCC LAC, Care Leavers and adopted children wherever they were educated. A Teaching Assistant was also employed to enable direct work with LAC at the point of transition to a new setting or at other particularly challenging times. The VS advises on the placement and sustainability of specialist provision for disabled children by working in partnership with the Joint Agency Advisory Panel within ISEND.

8.2 Pupil Premium from the Government enabled the school to enhance its provision to schools, carers, individual LAC and to recruit a bank of specialist tutors. The primary focus for the use of this funding has been maintaining school placements and direct intervention to improve educational outcomes and school attendance (for full details of pupil premium spend and activity please see Annex 4). The VS continued to work with Bede's School to support LAC in boarding school settings. This has had positive outcomes both educationally and socially for all of these children. In addition, the VS team have continued to foster excellent working relationships across the Council and with the local community. Champions from different teams within the authority have raised the profile of LAC to ensure that needs are met quickly and to support effective joint working.

8.3 The attendance of LAC has continued to be an area of focus within the VS, with staff working as part of a countywide strategy to secure improved attendance.

8.4 Training in attachment has continued across East Sussex schools and the VS continued to develop partnerships with others in the LA working in the area of Mental Health and Emotional Well-being.

9. LAC who are Missing from Care and who are at risk of Child Sexual and Criminal Exploitation (CSE/CE)

9.1 Part way through 2017/2018, there was a change to the structure of the Multi Agency Child Sexual Exploitation Panel (MACSE). The primary change was to formally widen the remit of the MACSE panel to include children at risk of other forms of exploitation. The MACSE panel thus became the MACE Panel (Multi Agency Child Exploitation). The primary reason for this change was the continued identification of children at risk of criminal exploitation in East Sussex. This is most closely related to children being exploited to deal illicit drugs through county drug lines. The process still involved monthly multi agency meetings, on both sides of the county, co-chaired by Social Work Managers and the Police. A further positive multi agency audit was completed in April 2018 that identified continued positive working practices. The audit chose several of our highest risk children to be looked at in detail. The audit highlighted the positive multi agency information sharing that exists in these cases and that creative approaches are being used to try and reduce risk for children being exploited in this way. It was acknowledged however that criminal exploitation and county lines remains an increasing problem across East Sussex. We continue to see local East Sussex children being recruited and exploited in this way together with children from the London area who are also being sent to East Sussex as part of county lines activity. It is also worth noting that the recent OFSTED inspection in July 2018 also identified some examples of exceptional practice in how cases of this type were being addressed.

9.2 The strategic MACE Action Plan is overseen by the LSCB and remains a live document that is updated regularly and which includes details of emerging themes from the casework that is being carried out. The priorities for 2017/2018 included continuing to tackle the continuing risks around criminal exploitation and developing better ways to disrupt county lines activity. There was a continued focus on male children and the particular challenges in supporting them with criminal and sexual exploitation.

9.3 Throughout 2017/2018, all Return Home Interviews (RHIs) relating to missing children were carried out by a national charity, Missing People, an independent organisation commissioned by the 3 Sussex authorities to deliver this work across Sussex. During 2017/18 however, concerns emerged about the performance of Missing People and a decision was taken in May 2018 by all 3 authorities to terminate the contract. This ended therefore on 31 July 2018 and the service has been brought back in-house. All East Sussex Children who are either LAC or subject to the MACE panel discussion have their Return Home Interviews offered to them by their allocated Social Worker (or trusted professional). All other East Sussex children have this service offered by a team of Caseworkers now based in the Multi Agency Screening Hub (MASH). The weekly missing meeting within the MASH continues on both sides of the county, reviewing all missing episodes over the past week. The Registered Homes Managers are able to feed into this meeting as appropriate. This reflects the recognition that this group of children are at a particularly high level of risk of and from going missing.

9.4 In 2017/18 54 LAC went missing, 32 of whom were missing more than once. There were also 10 LAC who were absent (i.e. not where they should be), and 4 of these were absent more than once. Of these there were 105 occasions of children being missing for less than 24 hours, 55 times when they were missing between 24-48 hours, 24 times when they were missing between 2 and 4 days and 10 times when they were missing for 5 days or more. All these children were actively tracked by Sussex Police and by Children Services staff. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed on high profile children who go missing and, where necessary, formal multi agency strategy discussions are held in line with Safeguarding Procedures.

9.5 Of the 54 LAC that went missing, 32 were male and 22 were female. 29 of this cohort were aged 16 and above.

10. Independent Reviewing Officer Service

10.5 The action plan 2018/19 will include: 10.1 The Independent Reviewing Office Service (IRO) is managed off line and is independent of the operational service for LAC and Care Leavers. However, IRO's work closely with Social Workers and Managers across the LAC Service to ensure the quality and effectiveness of care planning and ensure best practice. ESCC IROs are a relatively stable staff group with many children having had the same IRO throughout their journey through care. They are a well-qualified and experienced team who exercise appropriate levels of challenge as part of the review processes.

10.2 Most reviews were held well within timescales, were flexible, tailored to the child's needs and were compliant with at least minimum standards. IRO's fulfilled most of their expected functions to at least minimum standards and evidenced areas of good practice. However, the increased numbers of LAC within the system resulted in increased caseloads for each IRO and did not allow for the level of scrutiny which ESCC should aspire to. During 2017/18 1549 LAC review meetings were held for 724 children compared to 1529 in 16/17 and 1229 in 15/16.

10.3 Participation by children in their reviews remained stable and reflected the performance of previous years. Whilst the majority of LAC were aware of their right

to an advocate, the take up of this service was inconsistent and was identified as an area for future development. The Children In Care Council (CICC) reflected back to the IRO service during 17/18 that LAC reviews no longer felt that they belonged to the child and had drifted away from being 'the child's meeting'. Feedback from them suggested that the process had become overly bureaucratic with too many people in attendance. The IRO service has begun working with the CICC, LAC Managers and administrative staff to develop a more creative document and child centred processes and there is a commitment to re-launch the approach to LAC reviews in East Sussex during 2018/19.

10.4 Disabled children have largely retained consistent IRO's who were familiar with their needs and communication methods. The take up of advocacy has been limited among disabled children with the exception of the in-house children's homes. It is planned that this will be addressed by extending the advocacy service to the children with most complex needs regardless of their ability to fully understand or request this service.

- Develop a standalone form for IRO contribution to Care Proceedings
- Embed and develop the CPD programme
- Enhance the profile of IROs through lead areas and facilitating training
- Ensure robust, consistent scrutiny of care plans with use of the issues resolution process where necessary
- Roll out a more child friendly LAC review process/document in line with statutory duties and the requests of the CICC.
- Drive up of standards within the unit to ensure that review decisions are circulated within timescales.
- Increase the expectation that IROs will visit or at least communicate with all LAC aged 5 and over between reviews.
- IROs will routinely record the quality of Health Assessments and PEPs.
- Dental Health amongst LAC in ESCC has been identified as being a particular cause for concern. This will be a focus for improvement across the LAC Service in 2018/2019. IROs will contribute to this target through pre and post review monitoring / discussions with carers, social workers and young people.

11. Corporate Parenting Panel

11.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel met quarterly during 2017/18 to scrutinise the performance of all services in relation to LAC and Care Leavers, paying particular attention to outcomes. It also received presentations from the Children in Care Council and from the East Sussex Foster Care Association. The reports set out below were presented and considered:

April 2017:

- Looked After Children (LAC) Statistics
- Ofsted Inspection reports for the following children's homes:
 - Acorns at Dorset Road
 - The Bungalow
 - Homefield Cottage
 - Lansdowne Secure Unit
- Children's Home Regulations 2015, Regulation 44: Inspection reports for December 2016 to February 2017 for the following children's homes:
 - Acorns at Dorset Road
 - Brodrick House
 - Hazel Lodge
 - Homefield Cottage

- Lansdowne Secure Unit
- The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive

July 2017:

- Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Annual Report 2016/17
- Annual progress report of the East Sussex Fostering Service
- Annual progress report of the East Sussex Adoption and Permanence Service
- Looked After Children (LAC) Statistics
- Ofsted Inspection reports for the following children's homes:
 - Hazel Lodge
- Children's Home Regulations 2015, Regulation 44: Inspection reports for April 2017 to June 2017 for the following children's homes:
 - Acorns at Dorset Road
 - Brodrick House
 - Hazel Lodge
 - Homefield Cottage
 - Lansdowne Secure Unit
 - The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive

October 2017:

- Looked After Children (LAC) Annual Report
- Looked After Children (LAC) Statistics
- Ofsted Inspection reports for the following children's' homes
 - Lansdowne Secure Unit
 - Brodrick House
 - Acorns at Dorset Road
- Children's Home Regulations, Regulation 44: Inspection reports for August 2017 – September 2017 for the following children's homes:
 - Acorns at Dorset Road
 - Brodrick House
 - Hazel Lodge
 - Homefield Cottage
 - Lansdowne Secure Unit
 - The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive

January 2018

- Presentation from the Children In Care Council (CiCC)
- East Sussex Foster Care Association (ESFCA)
- Looked After Children (LAC) Statistics
- The Virtual School Annual Report, including the use of Pupil Premium
- Ofsted inspection reports for the following children's homes
 - The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive
- Children's Home Regulations 2015, Regulation 44: Inspection reports for October 2017 – November 2017 for the following children's homes:
 - Acorns at Dorset Road
 - Brodrick House
 - Hazel Lodge
 - Homefield Cottage
 - Lansdowne Secure Unit
 - The Bungalow Sorrell Drive

12. Conclusion

12.1 Overall the LAC service continued to perform well during 2017-18 and to achieve good outcomes for children in the care of ESCC. The pressure on recruitment and retention of in house carers and on availability of placements within the private market in the South East has impacted on placement stability, especially for those children with the most complex needs.

12.2 The challenge for 2018/19 is to continue to ensure that the right children are in the right placements for the right amount of time, and that we secure the best outcomes possible within a context of reducing resource in Children Services.

12.3 It should be noted that shortly following year end, an Ofsted ILACs inspection was completed and reviewed the performance of the LAC services. It was very pleasing to note that a judgement of Outstanding was given to the overall service.

Report to: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date: 27 July 2018

By: Director of Children's Services

Title of report: Annual Progress Report of East Sussex Fostering Service
1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018

Purpose of report: To outline the performance of the Fostering Service between
1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018

RECOMMENDATION:

The Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to comment on and note the contents of the report

1 Background information

- 1.1 The Annual Progress report of the East Sussex Fostering Service is attached as Appendix 1.
- 1.2 There are no increased costs arising from this report.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to comment on and note the contents of the report.

STUART GALLIMORE

Director of Children's Services

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Local Members:

All

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Annual Progress Report of East Sussex Fostering Service 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018.

Background documentation:

None

Appendix 1 - The Annual Progress report of the East Sussex Fostering Service

1. Safeguarding

1.1 This outcome is fundamental to the delivery of fostering services across East Sussex and is embedded in each of the core functions which are addressed fully throughout the report. The core functions are as listed:

- Recruitment and retention
- Assessment
- Supervision and review
- Foster carer training
- The matching and placing of children and young people with foster carers and supported lodgings providers.

2. Recruitment and Retention of Carers

2.1 As in 2016-17, East Sussex County Council (ESCC) continues to be challenged by the number of foster carers it has been able to recruit. In common with last year, these challenges have been shared by neighbouring authorities. The 'National Stocktake' report, published at the end of this fiscal year, confirmed that there is a national shortage of foster carers.

2.2 Foster carers transferring from Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs), continue to provide ESCC's Fostering Service with experienced carers, often also bringing income to the authority via their existing placements from other authorities. As with last year, some carers initially wishing to transfer from IFAs have at a later stage withdrawn, after being offered financial incentives by their agency to remain with them, for example the offer of private medical care.

2.3 Approval timescale targets for the assessment of foster carers continue to be important as they remain a significant incentive for carers choosing to foster for ESCC. Our assessment timescale of 6-8 months is below that of both our neighbouring authorities and many IFAs.

2.4 From 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018, 346 new enquiries were received which led to 157 screening calls and 86 initial visits to prospective foster carers. This year the Fostering Service has introduced a text enquiry service so that applicants can either text, phone, email, or complete a web form to enquire about the service. These methods maximise enquiries at weekends and out of office hours.

2.5 There were 6 'Skills to Foster' pre-assessment preparation courses held during 2017/18 and 43 households attended. During the assessment process, the Children in Care Council (CICC) continued to play an active role by holding 6 sets of informal interviews with applicants and providing feedback for the assessment report.

2.6 19 households offering 37 placements were approved in 2017/18 compared with 21 households offering 50 placements in 2016/17. 1 of these households was a transfer from an IFA and with an East Sussex child and a West Sussex placed. There were a further 12 assessments that were allocated for assessment and booked for presentation to the Fostering Panel that did not progress. The reasons were as follows:

- 4 cases were due to changes in personal circumstances that could not have been predicted earlier.
- 1 case was due to the applicant not being able to provide sufficient Stage 1 information and referees for us to evidence their address, employment and relationship history.
- 2 cases were assessments of family members who did not wish to be assessed and approved as foster carers.
- 5 cases were closed by the Fostering Service due to Stage 1 information that was not evident or available at earlier stages.

There were 13 fostering assessments still in progress at 31st March 2018 compared with 6 on the same date on 31st March 2017.

2.7 The retention of foster carers this year was a challenge for the service. Over recent years, it had been anticipated that the age profile of carers would lead eventually to a significant number of retirements within a short period. Accordingly 2017/18 saw 22 households retiring from the service, contributing to our overall figure of 30 households leaving ESCC. The context of these carers moving on, apart from retirement, included 6 changes in personal circumstances, one termination of approval, one transfer to an independent fostering agency, and sadly the death of 2 carers.

2.8 Considering these retention figures and the recruitment of 19 new households, the net loss of carers for ESCC Fostering Service was 4.3%. Although there are no recent national benchmarking figures for net gain/loss of carers (the last being 2015/16 putting the figure at 12%) we would consider ESCC's performance to be good.

2.9 Reports published over the last year both by 'Fostering Networks' and Sir Martin Narey's 'National Stocktake', would indicate that the recruitment of foster carers for local authorities has been particularly challenging.

2.10 The Fostering Service continues to employ the marketing strategy of 'continual presence'. This consists of wide-ranging and extensive advertising throughout the year using a range of different mediums. The Fostering Service marketing strategy for 2017/18 has focussed on its new strapline of '**foster with trust**'. This branding has been developed in partnership with the ESCC Communications team with the objective of promoting ESCC as the primary and most 'significant' Fostering Service within the geographical area. The Fostering Service is using foster carer profiles and 'real life' scenarios to illustrate the rewards of fostering. A significant strand of the strategy is the use of the internet; using social media, Facebook and Twitter to engage the e-generation.

Below are some examples of the mediums used to recruit foster carers:

- Information evenings promoted by advertising in the Herald, Hastings Observer, and Sussex Express running throughout the year
- Editorial in the Herald and Hastings Observer
- Roundabout advertising
- Your County
- Google 'ad words' (search engine marketing)
- Heart radio campaign
- Promotional merchandise 'giveaways' (Mugs, pens etc.)
- Banners across Eastbourne town centre and seafront
- Display board advertising (major routes into Eastbourne and Hastings)
- Magnet magazine
- Foster carer radio interviews
- ESCC intranet editorial
- Text communication and response to prospective applicants

3.0. The Fostering Panel

3.1 The Fostering Panel meet on a monthly basis. Panel activity included 19 new approvals, 23 initial annual foster care reviews and 2 standards of care reviews. Panel benefited from the appointment of 6 new members to its central list, including a new medical advisor and a newly elected ESCC Councillor. New panel members also bring experience from operational social work and residential children's services. Panel members received training commissioned from Coram BAAF which focused on assessments.

4.0. Recruitment Events

4.1 This year has seen a significant shift from recruitment events to the use of more internet and social media. 'Live' events such as information evenings and venue based promotions have been less popular. Potential applicants now use the internet to get a 'virtual' understanding of what an agency or service may potentially offer them. In response to this shift, the Fostering Service now produces a regular e-newsletter as well as regular 'Twitter' service updates.

Retention Events

- In May 2017, an evening event was held at Powder Mills to say "Thank You" to our foster carers. This was attended by 120 carers and staff.
- In August 2017, all foster carers and their families caring for East Sussex children were invited to a picnic at Knockhatch. Both children's social workers and supervising social workers attended. Agency foster carers were also invited to give them the opportunity to meet ESCC foster carers and staff, and to find out more about our service.
- In October 2017, the children of our foster carers were invited to a weekend at PGL Activity Centre. This was organised by the East Sussex Foster Care Association (ESFCA) who worked in partnership with the Fostering Service to facilitate the event. Staff and managers attended to spend time with the children of our foster carers in order to further forge the relationship between carers and social workers.

5.0. Foster carer training

5.1 From 1st April 2017 to the 31st March 2018, 773 training places have been taken up by foster carers (as compared to last year's equivalent of 796), evidencing strong and continued interest in training. Overall, the evaluations of the courses by participants were rated as excellent, although there has been a reduction of evaluations being completed since the introduction of the East Sussex Learning Portal.

5.2 New courses introduced this year have included:

- Understanding the 'angry' child
- The impact of childhood experiences on mind, body and brain
- Family Thrive
- Supporting readiness to learn the key to education success
- Advanced attachment theory
- "Ladies who foster" support group
- Understanding sensory attachment

5.3 The Fostering Service has continued in 2017/18 to use the extensive skills, knowledge and expertise in delivering a number of our courses as well as the use of experienced trainers. These courses included:

- Parenting traumatised children
- Practical skills to help children protect themselves
- Understanding self-harm
- Caring for children with additional needs
- Using visuals to help communication
- Supporting new carers workshops
- Creative ideas for digital photo albums

5.4 These courses have received excellent feedback. Foster carers have identified the value of having experienced carers who really understand the fostering task delivering specific expertise

training. This model of delivery also provides a more cost effective way to up-skill those foster carers that need further training.

5.5 To ensure the quality of training, there is an agreed framework of requirements and support identified with opportunities for continual professional development. 11 foster carers are undertaking a variety of qualifications. These include the level 3 diploma 'Children and Young People's Workforce' qualification, and Level 3 and 4 in 'Training and Education'. There are also 6 dedicated foster carers involved in the delivery and assessment of the 'Children and Young People's Workforce' qualification.

5.6 Foster carer training has also been central in promoting the carer's vital role in preparing young people for independence. All carers are now familiar with the 'Passport for Independence' programme with it being driven and promoted by supervising and children's social workers.

Planned courses for 2018/19 include:

- Mental Health courses
- Understanding the teenage brain
- Gang culture
- County lines and cuckooing
- Neuroscience – Theory of attachment
- Montessori method up to 7 years of age
- Understanding the principals of non-violent resistance theory (NVR)
- Caring for the child with hidden disability (Developmental trauma)
- Loss and grief, the child's view

5.7 Other courses that Foster Carers / Supervising Social Workers (SSW's) are being trained to deliver are:

- An introduction to Non-violent resistance
- An introduction to Theraplay
- Understanding sensory attachment
- Understanding the angry child
- The impact of childhood experiences on mind, body and brain

To try and compensate for reductions in the training budget, identified training will be actively promoted to other agencies for income generation opportunities.

6. Foster carer support and supervision

6.1 East Sussex Fostering Service has experienced an unprecedented year of placement pressure with a significant number of households extending their approval preference to help respond to the demand. In turn, this has resulted in the need for increased support of foster carers by their SSWs. There is a recognised correlation between foster carers receiving good and appropriate support and the retention of these households.

6.2 As endorsed by the recent national 'Stocktake' report, peer support is a vital part of foster carer retention and The Fostering Service's 'Buddy' system has been utilised by an increasing number of foster carers during 2017/18.

6.3 Support groups continue to be a large part of the service's support strategy. There continue to be 4 localised groups in Uckfield, Rotherfield, Eastbourne and Newhaven. There are also three themed support groups: a parent and child foster carer's support group; a support group for carers of adolescents and a 'Men who Foster' support group. A new 'Ladies who Foster' support group has been developed which, similarly to the men's support group, discusses relevant themes

6.4 The Fostering Service has also developed a 'Pod system' for SSW's. This consists of 3 sub-teams of 4 SSW's overseen by senior social workers. This system has allowed carers to have

consistent support in the absence of their allocated SSW as fellow 'Pod' members will have a knowledge and understanding of each fostering household's circumstances. This system also allows for group supervision of SSWs and offers a further layer of support where SSWs can gain access to advice and direction more expediently.

6.5 Further support is provided for foster carers through the fostering advice line - an out of hour's service, available to all foster carers and supported lodgings providers for 365 days per year. This service is staffed by a team of 7 workers from the Fostering Service, working on a rota basis, to provide support and advice to all foster carers. The service deals with a range of issues such as placement disruptions children and young people missing from placement, police involvement or generally supports carers in managing challenging behaviours presented by our children or young people. The advice line has seen a considerable increase in activity in 2017/18 taking 378 calls in comparison with 2016/17's figure of 297.

6.6 There continues to be close working relationships with Looked After Children (LAC) teams, The Looked After Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (LACAMHS), The Virtual School and Placement Support Services (PSS); all of which are invaluable in supporting foster carers in sustaining placements and endeavouring to meet the children and young people's needs.

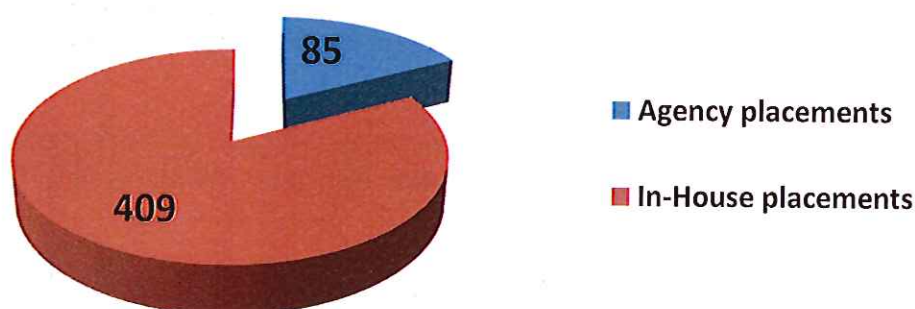
7. Health

7.1 Meeting the health needs of LAC remains a high priority for the Fostering Service. Foster carers continue to prioritise the health needs of their children with SSWs monitoring foster carers contribution to timely Initial Health Assessments. There have been a number of training courses available which can be accessed by foster carers to focus on the health needs of young people. These include: autism, self-harm, first aid and healthy living.

8. Placement activity

8.1 On 31st March 2018 there were 494 children in foster care. 409 of these children were placed with in-house placements as compared to 392 in the previous year. This includes in-house parent and child' placements, children subject to Special Guardianship Orders placed with foster carers and those older young people remaining in their 'Staying Put' fostering placements through to independence. As a result of increased LAC numbers, the number of East Sussex LAC placed with agency foster carers has increased from 64 children in 2016/17 to 85 at the end of March 2018 reflecting increased numbers of children placed both with our in house foster carers as well as with agency foster carers. The Fostering Duty team will source and match all IFA carers with our children.

Placement Activity 2017/18



8.2 As of 31st March 2018, 19 young people (over 18 years of age) remain with their foster carers under 'Staying Put' arrangements. There are also 26 children who are currently subject to Special Guardianship Orders placed with East Sussex foster carers.

8.3 Of the 534 referrals received between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018, 437 resulted in placements being made or matched. Of the 534 referrals, 97 were ultimately not required. On 31st March 2018 there were an additional 36 active referrals waiting to be matched with foster carers.

9. The Supported Lodgings Team

9.1 East Sussex Supported Lodgings provision continues to be an invaluable resource for LAC, care leavers and homeless young people. 2017/18 saw the Supported Lodgings service benefit from Corporate Transformation funding for the Housing and Accommodation project to extend housing options for care leavers and homeless young people. As a result of this funding, the service has reviewed its recruitment strategy to focus on maximising the potential of all applicants applying to the service, encouraging people with a wide range of skills and experiences.

9.2 A new marketing strategy has been launched to recruit additional Supported Lodgings providers using a wider range of media formats, with plans to promote the service still further via social media. The website has been updated, including a new direct text service and the assessment process has been streamlined to reduce timescales whilst remaining sufficiently robust. Applications to date range from 'landlords' wanting to help a young person, to experienced carers who are looking for approval as a jointly registered foster carer/supported lodgings providers (hybrids).

9.3 Since June 2017 to end of March 2018, 61 Care Leavers (85%) and 11 16/17 year old homeless young people (15%) have been placed with Supported Lodgings providers. Through this project, providers have been encouraged to extend their approval potential to take more parent and child and more Emergency Duty placements. Focused support and training is being developed to help providers offer statutory placements to young people with more complex needs, thereby expanding local support and pathway options.

9.4 During this year, Supported Lodgings providers have demonstrated that, when appropriately matched, they can support young people 'stepping down' from expensive agency foster and residential settings. During 2017/18 2 young people moved from agency placements to Supported Lodgings carers making a saving of £212K.

9.5 As of 31st March 2018 there were 38 Supported Lodgings households providing a total of 62 placements across the county. In the year 2017/18 there has been 9 new approvals, providing 12 additional beds. Recruitment of sufficient Supported Lodgings remains challenging because of the competitive nature of the local market. The revised marketing strategy allows the service to attract applicants who may have previously considered taking overseas and local students, households where their own children have recently left home (empty nesters), single carers and foster carers wishing to transition to Supported Lodgings instead of retiring.

9.6 Between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018, the Supported Lodgings team received 62 referrals requesting placements for young people. 30 of which were LAC, 31 were for homeless young people and 1 was unknown (out of county referral, no status given.) Of the 62 referrals, 27 were closed, 3 remain open (requiring placement) and 32 were placed.

10. User participation

10.1 The Children in Care Council (CICC) continues to go from strength to strength. CICC members have participated in 89 opportunities to promote their work both locally and nationally and some examples are listed below-

- Meeting with the Children's Commissioner.
- Participating in foster carer preparation groups and advising recruitment panels for prospective foster carers.
- Attended a meeting with Minister of State, Robert Goodwill.

- Attended activity holidays representing CICC.
- Highlight issues and concerns made by looked after children.
- Promoted the need for more cyber safety and recognition of mental health issues for LAC.
- Published regular newsletter.
- Attended the national CICC Conference in Oxford.
- Taken part in work experience within Children's Services.
- Partnership working with the Through Care team.

11. Working in Partnership with East Sussex Foster Care Association (ESFCA)

11.1 The Operations Manager attends the monthly evening meetings of the ESFCA management group to report on the developments of the Fostering Service and on Children's Services more generally. During 2017/18 the service has worked closely with the now established chair and trustees of the ESFCA. Consultation has taken place on a number of issues including young people's savings and foster carer allowances. They continue to provide support to foster carers who have raised concerns at the surgeries held in conjunction with both the Fostering and LAC Operational Managers.

12. The Placement Support Service (PSS)

12.1 The PSS is currently supporting 91 young people. 74 reviews of packages of support were held throughout the year. During 2017-2018, 30 new pieces of ongoing work were commissioned including 6 pieces of life story work. The PSS also responded to 91 emergency or crisis requests from carers that resulted in 121 days support. PSS staff provide additional support to young people who are unable to sustain their school placements. Obviously a child not being in school creates additional pressures on foster carers. This additional direct work is funded by the Virtual School.

12.2 Despite some financial pressures and staffing capacity, the PSS has continued to provide holiday and weekend group activities for LAC aged 5 to 17. All activities cover all aspects of the national curriculum. The partnership with Bedes School continues to allow our young people to access sports facilities including the swimming pool free of charge at weekends. PSS has also been able to negotiate free tickets to Brighton and Hove Albion football matches.

During the year:

- 40 group holiday activities were provided
- PSS worked with 127 young people
- 458 holiday places were offered to children and young people
- 10 to 15 young people on average attend each activity

98% of young people who evaluated their activities rated them as either excellent or good. Foster carers highly value PSS support and holiday activities as illustrated by the comments below extracted from the service's annual evaluations.

'Without PSS I could not have offered the young person a placement for the 7 weeks she was here.'

'As a new carer I have found PSS to be invaluable in supporting our children'.

'Having support allows me to have time with my own family and I know the children are in safe hands'.

13. Summary

13.1 The most significant challenge for the Fostering Service during 2017/18 continues to be the recruitment of sufficient foster carers and this is reflected both nationally and by our

neighbouring authorities. The recent 'National Stocktake' report by Sir Martin Narey evidenced that although we are seeing an increasing LAC population nationally, the number of people coming forward to be foster carers is not increasing. In East Sussex, although we have experienced better than average retention figures, these are negated to some extent by fewer numbers of carers recruited. However, despite this challenge, our numbers of in-house placements have increased significantly. This is partly attributable to the fact that there is poor availability of appropriate agency carers, leaving no option but to place with our in-house foster carers. It is crucial that placement is combined with increased support to our foster carers and robust risk assessments. The revision of our recruitment strategy for both Fostering and Supported Lodgings now focuses around the internet and social media. Early indications for 2018/19 would suggest that this change in strategy is showing positive signs, with the first quarter showing the highest number of approvals of new foster carers for the last 5 years.

13.2 Towards the end of 2017/18, an analysis regarding the drop in the number of foster carers transferring from IFAs to ESCC was undertaken. Traditionally, this had been a fairly fertile ground for recruitment. However, more recently the number of enquiries from carers wishing to transfer has reduced. Further investigations have revealed that carers who had expressed an interest in transferring have withdrawn due to financial incentives offered by the agencies. A recent comparison undertaken by ESFCA and The Fostering Service with our local authority neighbours showed ESCC allowances are less competitive. As the driver for agency carers wishing to transfer to local authority is based on local authority having more choice and placement availability it is essential that ESCC remains competitive when carers are considering transferring. The Fostering Service is now in the process of proposing a modest inflation uplift to foster care payments for 2018/19. This, coupled with the services excellent reputation for support and training, will hopefully attract more carers wishing to transfer from independent fostering agencies.

The Key Management Priorities for 2018/2019 include:

- Investment in Supported Lodgings via the Corporate Transformation funding to continue through 2018/19 to maximise the accommodation resources for young people who are homeless and leaving care.
- Recruitment and retention of foster carers. Positive partnership working between the service and corporate communications team in reviewing recruitment strategies should help to improve the potential numbers of carers being recruited.
- Improved preparation of young people for independence. The 'Passport to Independence' programme will continue to be a major priority for LAC services with foster carers taking a key role in the delivery of this programme.

Adrian Sewell
Operation Manager Fostering Service

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Report to: **Corporate Parenting Panel**

Date: **27 July 2018**

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

Title of report: **Annual Progress Report of East Sussex Adoption and Permanence Service 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018**

Purpose of report: **To outline the performance of the Adoption and Permanence Service between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018.**

RECOMMENDATION: The Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to comment on and note the contents of the report

1. Background information

1.1 The Annual Progress report of the East Sussex Adoption and Permanence Service is attached as Appendix 1.

1.2 There are no increased costs arising from this report

2. Recommendation

2.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to comment on and note the contents of the report.

STUART GALLIMORE

Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Carole Sykes, Operations Manager, Adoption and Permanence Service Tel: 01323 747406

Local Members

All

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Annual Progress report of the East Sussex Adoption and Permanence Service.

Background Documents

None

Appendix 1 - Annual Progress report of the East Sussex Adoption and Permanence Service

1. Supporting Information

	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/8
1. Number of children adopted	43	45	38	29
2. Number of adoption matches (children)	56	32	38	30
3. Number of permanent fostering matches (children)	7	10	14	5
4. Number of East Sussex adoptive matches (children)	33	26	30	30
5. Number of ASE adoptive matches (children)	6	0	0	0
6. Number of inter-agency matches (children):				
Permanence:	3	2	0	1
Adoption:	17	6	8	6
7. Number of prospective adopters approved (households)	50	41	30	25
8. Number of permanent carers approved (households)	4	2	1	3
9. Number of children approved for adoption up to 31 st March 2017 (including 2 re-approvals)	43	53	52	69
10. Number of children approved for permanence up to 31 st March 2017	26	14	32	24
11. Number of approved adopters waiting to be matched	20	22	20	12
12. Number of disruptions presented to Panel:				
Permanence:	0	0	0	0
Adoptions:	0	1	0	1

2. Recruitment Activity

2.1 East Sussex County Council (ESCC) has had a considerable reduction in recruitment activity over the past two years, particularly in relation to the number of applications started and approved. However, this reflects the national picture and what is being seen as the crisis in the sufficiency of adopters. It certainly reflects the situation with neighbouring authorities and local partners in Adoption South East (ASE). Nonetheless, the service has continued to receive positive feedback about the quality of the recruitment processes and the customer focused approach.

2.2 During 2017/2018 the Agency received 198 household enquiries, 81 households attended information events and 43 households registered their interest in adoption. The conversion rate from Information event to registration remained high but unfortunately only 25 adopters were approved by the year end, this was a drop of 5 on 2016/2017. This was in part due to a significant number of the applicants having far more complex histories than the service had traditionally received. A number of assessments could not be completed and resulted in the applications being paused, whilst others were counselled out of adoption completely. This is the second year when the number of adopters being approved was lower than expected, and this has had an impact on the family finding element of the Service.

2.3 The Government's regionalisation agenda has gained significant momentum with 5 pilot regions going live in autumn 2017, and a further 4 going live in autumn 2018. ESCC is committed to the ASE partnership which submitted a bid earlier in the year. This proposal was accepted by the DfE who awarded a grant of £750k to take forward the first stages of the development.

2.4 Within ASE the work streams have continued to run across the four local authorities in an effort to develop common practice and shared events. While this has proved beneficial in many ways, it has also presented major challenges. The issue of adopter sufficiency and the implications of the inter-agency fee is a critical challenge for ASE going forward.

2.5 There has been a tension within the adopter recruitment work stream during this transitional phase of ASE due to the imbalance of adopters recruited and children requiring placement. Surrey County Council (SCC) and ESCC are and have been key providers in relation to adopter recruitment and contribute a disproportionately higher number of adopters to the regional pool. In contrast, West Sussex County Council (WSCC) and Brighton and Hove Council (B&HC) have either not prioritised or have struggled to recruit sufficient adopters and have consequently placed a significantly higher percentage of their children outside of their local authority boundary.

2.6 Whilst there has been a drive to share resources across the region, each local authority continued to prioritise meeting local targets, especially in the context of the rising number of children with a plan for adoption.

2.7 In 2017/18 in ESCC, 10 experienced adopters were reassessed as second time adopters and 3 sets of foster carers were assessed to adopt a child already in their care. In addition 8 sets of prospective adopters went through to offer Fostering to Adopt through an adoption match and 1 couple still await legal conclusion due to legal processes although the actual placement of the child has been made.

3. Family Finding and Matching

3.1 There was a sharp increase in the number of children with a plan for adoption (ADM) with 52 children in 2016-2017, to 69 in 2017-2018. Within this group there were 2 large sibling groups of 6 and 5 respectively, plus a sibling group of 3 and 8 sibling pairs. Of the single children between the ages of 0 – 2 years, a number of them had significant complex medical needs and developmental delay. This cohort of children was particularly challenging in terms of family finding.

3.2. Despite the increased numbers of children approved, there were a number of plans changed unexpectedly which caused some delay, this was primarily due to late removal from the family home or to medical and legal complications.

3.3. This year, 30 matches were completed which was largely consistent with previous years. The number of matches could have been higher as potential adopters were identified for this cohort of children. However, there was an increase in the number birth families who wished to appeal against the plan for adoption for their child/ren. This had a significant impact on fostering resources and consequently on the budget, whilst simultaneously delaying adoptive placements. ESCC continued to place the majority of children in the local area. Sadly there was 1 adoption plan which disrupted during the introductions stage.

3.4 In terms of income generation, there were 11 children from elsewhere placed with ESCC adopters, this included one sibling pair and a number of single children. 7 of these were from

the ASE regional partners. Overall this exceeded the financial target set for the service and generated £263k.

3.5 The challenge of placing siblings has been recognised as an increasing pressure both nationally and regionally, particularly as fewer sibling adopters are coming forward as they begin to recognise the increased challenge of being matched with siblings. ESCC Adoption Service is planning to review local practices and consider whether extra support and incentives can be put in place to support sibling placements.

3.6 In the past year the service has been working closely with its ASE partners in relation to family finding and of the 4 events planned, 2 were undertaken, 1 in Horsham and 1 in East Sussex. At these 2 events ESCC had more adopters in attendance than the other three agencies, and also, along with WSCC, had greater numbers of children to be placed.

3.7 The family finding strategy for the service concentrated on working with all key staff to identify potential children needing adoption placements as early as possible, whilst simultaneously identifying and prioritising adopters for specific children, siblings and Fostering to Adopt. Currently the service delivers a Fostering to Adopt workshop 3 times per year for potential adopters to encourage them to consider these types of arrangements.

4. Staffing

4.1 There have been a number of staff changes during the past year, including 2 staff returning from maternity leave and 1 from secondment. However, of most significance was the retirement of the Practice Manager who had over 35 years of service within ESCC and who had made an enormous contribution to the lives of many children and to the Service overall.

5. Permanence

5.1 The permanence tracking workshops have continued to meet regularly and in addition, the Practice Manager responsible for family finding has had regular meetings with the wider Children's Services staff to offer advice and guidance at an early stage in the planning for permanence. The majority of permanence placements continue to be 'home-grown' from current foster carers claiming and making a commitment to children in their care.

6. Post Adoption Support

6.1 The demand for an assessment for post adoption support has continued to rise. ESCC has a legal duty to assess adoption support needs and to provide a service if necessary. The increased placement of children with complex needs, older children and sibling groups has significantly raised the challenge of adequately supporting these families. A number of adopters who requested assessments had moved into East Sussex from other areas and so were not previously known locally. Last year there were 55 referrals requesting an adoption support assessment with the majority of these requiring a range of support services to be offered.

6.2 Some of the most complex family situations required the service to coordinate a multiagency, multidisciplinary approach. In these situations it was essential that the service worked closely with colleagues in Locality to manage risk and safeguarding concerns either through child protection plans or children whose needs were such that there was a high risk of imminent placement breakdown. In addition, there were an increased number of adopters who requested respite due to the complexities of their adopted children and the impact of their presenting behaviours. Several complicated young people have become LAC as a result of adoption breakdowns.

6.3 Adoptive families have continued to greatly benefit from the services of the dedicated adoption worker in the Virtual School. Unfortunately the post holder retired earlier this year, but a replacement caseworker was recruited who recently started in the role. The remit has

continued to provide adoptive families with support for education and school based issues, as well as offering training to schools in relation to the attachment needs of adopted children affecting their ability to access learning. A caseworker in the adoption team also plays a key role in supporting adopters and their children in school, and works alongside the Virtual School.

6.4 The adoption CAMHS service, AdCAMHS, has continued to offer a dedicated therapy and consultation service. The unique partnership model enabled clinicians and adoption social workers to think together to consider the therapeutic needs of children and their adoptive families. Undoubtedly the service contributed to the increased stability in adoption, promoted positive attachments and ultimately helped to prevent adoption breakdown for some families. Due to the limited clinical resource the service has considered therapists offering more consultations to social workers and doing less of the direct work, which could be bought in via the national Adoption Support Fund (ASF). AdCAMHS was offering therapeutic support to 64 children at year end.

6.5 The ASF was launched nationally in 2015. The Government guaranteed ongoing funding, increasing year on year until 2020. The ASF is specifically for the provision of therapeutic support to children adopted from care, intercountry adoptions and children subject to Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) who were previously Looked After. The types of work which have been funded are Psychotherapy, Non Violence Resistance (NVR), DDP, Play therapy, Music therapy as well as the commissioning of multidisciplinary assessments. East Sussex has worked closely with the administrators of the fund and has used this to complement the work of AdCAMHS. Sadly it has not proved possible to date to secure funding for AdCAMHS as a service from the ASF despite the fact that arguably this could be more cost effective.

6.6 The ASE adoption support work stream has met regularly during the last year. The focus has been working on a joint offer of adoption support which would be consistent across ASE. There was also discussion about making regional bids to the ASF as well as looking at where resources could be shared. The challenge has been to try to identify where there is commonality across 4 very different adoption support services.

6.7 The demand on the Contact Service has increased during this year, both in relation to indirect/letterbox contact and direct/face to face contact. Every adoptive match which was approved had a letterbox arrangement, often with multiple exchanges between the adopters and various birth family members. Facilitating direct contact was, and continues to be, a complex piece of work if the actual face to face meeting is to be successful for the child. Contact arrangements were regularly reviewed to ensure that they continued to be in the best interests of the child. There were 605 active letterbox arrangements at year end.

6.8 The referrals from adopted adults seeking to access their records/information about their adoption remained consistent. In the last year there were 159 enquiries from adopted adults. Also relatives of adopted people were offered an intermediary service through a contract with CMB counselling.

6.9 The Adoption Service held two social events for adoptive families during the past year which were well received. Through the contract with PAC-UK 4 different support groups for adoptive families were offered across the county. In addition a Children's Group, Teenage Group and Therapeutic Parenting Group were delivered in conjunction with AdCAMHS Adoption Support.

7 Adoption & Permanence Panel

7.1 There were a similar number of Panels convened during 2017/2018 to that of the previous year. However, the activity for the forthcoming year is anticipated to increase due to a higher forecast of assessments underway. The Panel membership remained relatively stable during this period with the addition of 3 new County Councillors. An induction programme will take place early in 2018/19, and a whole Panel training event is planned for the autumn of 2018.

7.2 The contract for medical advice for Panel and Children's Looked After Services has continued to be delivered by East Sussex Health Care Trust. The feedback provided by staff and services users alike has been that the Senior Paediatrician and the team provided an excellent and reliable service. All adopters were offered face to face meetings with a Medical Adviser prior to a match, and given the increased complexity of children being matched, this was particularly helpful.

Management Priorities 2018/9

- To continue to target recruitment for ESCC children and to manage the tension between the rising numbers of children and the challenge of adopter sufficiency.
- To continue to strengthen and build on ESCC's high national profile and to further expand the regional service together with our partners in SCC, B&HCC and WSCC.
- To update and revise policies and procedures in accordance with new regulations and strategy guidance.
- To maintain and extend adoption support developments including the revised CAMHS contract, close partnerships with the Virtual School and continued use of the Adoption Support Fund to good effect.
- To maintain the contract with East Sussex Health Care Trust and to ensure that the service continues to improve.
- To ensure ESCC's role in the regionalisation agenda brings added value and builds on success.

Report to: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date of meeting: 27 July 2017

By: Director of Children's Services

Title: Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Annual Report 2018/19

Purpose: To update the Corporate Parenting Panel on the contribution of Independent Reviewing Officers to Quality Assuring and Improving Services for Looked After Children

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to comment on and note the contents of the report

1 Background

1.1 This Annual IRO report provides quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to the IRO Services in East Sussex as required by statutory guidance.

2 Supporting information

2.1 The report is attached as Appendix 1.

3. Recommendations

3.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to comment on and note the contents of the report.

STUART GALLIMORE
Director of Children's Services

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Local Members

All

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Annual Independent Reviewing Officer Report April 2017 – March 2018

Background documents

None

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Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Annual Report April 2017 – March 2018

This Annual IRO report provides quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to the IRO Services in East Sussex as required by statutory guidance. The IRO Annual Report must be presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Purpose of Service and Legal Context

It is vital that children's care plans are reviewed by individuals who are not directly involved in providing support to either the child or the foster carer. IROs need to be objective, to scrutinise and hold to account the individuals and agencies who are charged with meeting the needs of the child.

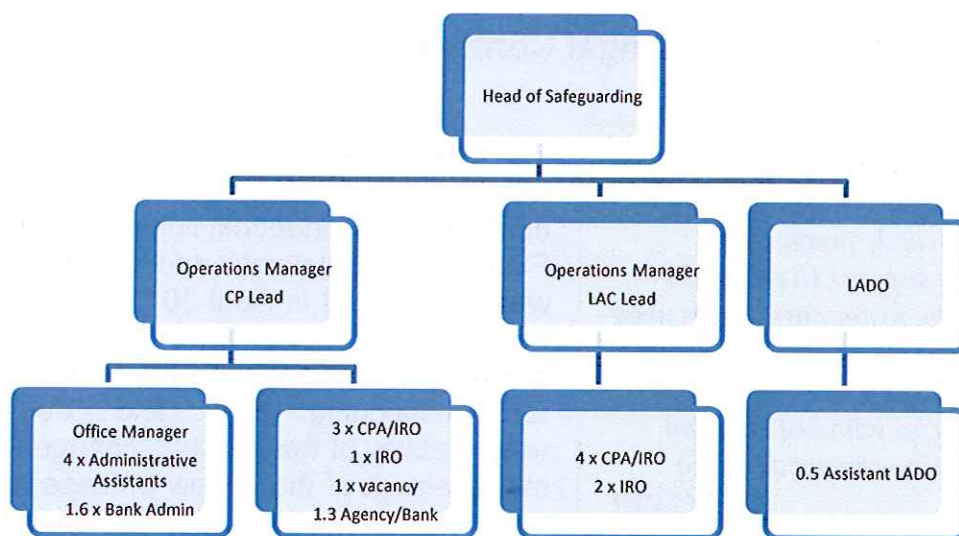
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1.1 The Independent Reviewing Officers' service is set within the framework of the updated IRO Handbook, linked to revised Care Planning Regulations and Guidance which were introduced in April 2011. The IRO has a key role in relation to the improvement of care planning for children who are looked after and for challenging drift and delay. The responsibility of the IRO has changed from the management of the review process to a wider overview of the case including regular monitoring and follow-up between reviews.

- 1.2 The appointment of an IRO is a legal requirement under S118 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. IROs quality assure the care planning process for all Looked After Children (LAC) and ensure that their wishes and feelings are understood.
- 1.3 The statutory duties of the IRO are to:
- Monitor the Local Authority's performance of its functions in relation to the child's case
 - Participate in any review of the child's case
 - Ensure that any ascertained wishes and feelings of the child are given due consideration by the appropriate authority
 - Perform any other function as prescribed in the regulations
- 1.4 724 children have been accommodated by ESCC throughout or for some part of 2017/18 with 603 LAC at year end. Each of these were required to have a review within the first 28 days of becoming accommodated; a second review within 3 months and thereafter a review no less than every six months. In addition reviews should take place if there has been, or if there are proposed significant changes e.g. a change of placement, educational provision, legal status etc.

Professional Profile of the CPA and IRO Service in East Sussex

- 2.1 The IRO/CPA Service sits within the Performance and Planning Directorate of Children's Services. The Head of Safeguarding is Douglas Sinclair, there are two Operations Managers; Sue McGlynn and Fiona Lewis who have the leads for Child Protection Advisors (CPA) / Safeguarding and for IROs / LAC respectively. The LADO also sits within the Safeguarding Unit; management cover for this role is provided by the two Operations Managers.



- 2.2 When the unit was created the CPA and IRO were separate specialisms; today the majority of staff exercise a dual role; this is common practice across much of England and Wales. There is a long standing debate regarding the benefits and disadvantages of combining the two functions; specifically there is a concern that it dilutes the independence of the IRO. The two roles are separated by different legislation and regulatory protocols; they each require a depth and breadth of expertise. Whilst this debate is kept under review; operating the combined role allows the Unit greater elasticity and ensures that staff retain a sense of the child's holistic experience. The separate management streams ensure a focus on legislative / practice developments and quality assurance of each function.

- 2.3 The Unit has a relatively diverse staff who bring a wealth of personal and professional skills and experiences to their role. The IRO/CPAs are all registered social workers with extensive experience. They have the confidence and knowledge to bring a critical perspective to the care plans for the most vulnerable children in our county.

- 2.4 At the end of March 2018 the Safeguarding Unit comprised 9.6 fte IROs /CPAs. This was the same

The IRO should be an authoritative professional with at least equivalent status to an experienced children's social work team manager.
IROH

staff complement as at the start of 2016/17. During that year a reduction in caseloads had resulted in agreement to reduce Unit staffing by one IRO/CPA. However, in response to increasing demand throughout 2017/2018, resulting in consistently high caseloads, the Senior Management Team (SMT) gave agreement to the post being reinstated.

- 2.5 Higher than expected caseloads and the long-term absence of one member of staff meant that the Unit was reliant on bank / agency staff and a seconded locality manager throughout 2017/2018 of which 1.3 fte staff have continued short term into Quarter 1. Agreement was given in April 2018 to recruit a CPA/IRO to a twelve month contract; in addition two CPA/IROs agreed to temporarily increase their hours from 0.8 to fulltime to increase capacity within the Unit. This equated to an in-work staff complement (including agency) of 11.3 fte at the start of the new financial year.
- 2.6 The Unit made savings in the year 2017-2018 by a significant restructuring of the administrative functions within the team. This has had an impact on timeliness and tracking of the LAC review process as well as a reduction in administrative support for IROs. The Operations Manager for the IRO Service and the Office Manager are currently working with the Business Solutions to develop a more robust system.
- 2.7 IRO/CPAs have continued to undertake a number of different activities although this is currently constrained due to their increased caseloads:
- 1 IRO has a specialist lead for children with disabilities
 - IRO/CPAs have lead on specific training for the LSCB and newly qualified social workers.
 - 1 IRO/CPA chairs PREVENT meetings
 - 2 IROs lead on asylum seeking children and young people

Key Messages

- As a Local Authority our IRO/CPAs represent a well-qualified, experienced and diverse resource. A key quality identified by carers, professionals and young people is for the IRO to be consistent and reliable. ESCC IROs are a relatively stable staff group with many children having had the same IRO throughout their journey through care.
- ESCC IRO/CPAs are knowledgeable and are able to share their expertise to ensure a consistent approach across county. IRO/CPAs offer critical oversight of cases to inform care planning and ensure best practice.
- Most reviews are held well within timescales, are flexible, fitted to the child's needs and are compliant with at least minimum standards.
- IRO/CPA's fulfil most of their expected functions to at least minimum standards and evidence areas of good practice. However high caseloads impact on the broader functions of the IRO role and do not allow for the level of scrutiny which the County should aspire to.
- IRO/CPAs have retained a sense of the importance of challenge and continue to exercise this role.



Risks

Capacity

- 3.1 Numbers of LAC have increased significantly throughout the year from 563 to 609. This has a corresponding impact on caseloads and the ability of the IRO/CPAs to undertake the breadth of scrutiny required of their role.
- 3.2 At the same time the service as a whole has faced challenges in recruitment and there is a national shortage of foster carers.
- 3.3 25% of children in East Sussex were living in poverty (25 351 children) in September 2017 (latest figures available) with the highest concentration in Hastings and Rother at 32.6%. Nationally, the twenty Local Authorities with

the highest levels of child poverty ranged between 36% and 53%, whilst the lowest were between 5% and 13%. <http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/poverty-in-your-area-2018/>. A corresponding study by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that 30% of children were living in poverty across the UK at the end of 2017.

- 3.4 There is a strong link between childhood poverty/deprivation and becoming looked after. Children from the most deprived wards in East Sussex are almost 5 times more likely to enter the Care system than those from the least deprived wards. (ARDPH 2017/2018). With childhood poverty predicted to increase by around 4% between 2017 and 2020 (Hood and Waters 2017) we should expect an associated rise in demand for placements.

Legal Challenge

- 3.5 The Unit has seen an unprecedented increase in examination of the IRO/CPA's role in care planning and effective challenge. Across the year both within care proceedings and in cases which have been referred back to court for review the courts have required statements from the IRO/CPA in respect of the challenge they have brought to the case and their view on the legality/professional practice of the local authority. In some cases these statements have been prompted by CAFCASS. There is a concern that if this trend continues it will become expected practice which will impact on capacity and associated legal costs (IRO's independent legal advice is bought in from Brighton and Hove)
- 3.6 Legal challenge has focussed on delay in bringing cases to court, returning Placement Orders for revocation; changes to contact without recourse to court and failing to properly consult birth parents. The balance between strict adherence to a legal mandate and the softer workings of cases in children's best interests is a complex one.
- 3.7 It is of note that those cases challenged to date are not exceptional, in the event that the courts are critical of ESCC practice then it is likely that further claims will follow. There is potential for financial compensation in these and future cases.
- 3.8 This scrutiny of the role requires an increasingly forensic approach to practice by IRO/CPAs who are having to evidence challenge more formally than in the past. This has a potential impact on relationships with LAC and Locality teams and on workload.

Uncertainty

- 3.9 The Fostering Stocktake was undertaken by Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers and published in February 2018; this report makes a number of recommendations which, if acted upon will have significant implications for children within the care system. The report is controversial and would require legislative change in order to enact many of its key points. Those opposed argue that *'recommendations 4, 6, 7, 8 and 33 would greatly weaken the legal protections enjoyed by our country's most vulnerable children and young*

people. They each advocate a dilution of legal safeguards; together they communicate a lack of understanding for the origins and importance to children's welfare of existing policy. We are doubtful that any of the legislative proposals would be compliant with the UK's human rights obligations, both within the Human Rights Act and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.' Together for Children – Letter to the Minister March 2018.

- 3.10 However others believe that *'in principle it is right that LAs are given the flexibility to put in place arrangements that best suit local children, recognising that not all LAs would use such flexibilities. Many LAs would welcome the opportunity to reinvest potential savings from these areas into other parts of the business according to local needs and priorities.'* (ADCS Feb 2018)
- 3.11 The Government response was expected this spring; whatever the outcome of the negotiations that follow it is likely that there will be a period of uncertainty and change across the Care System. There is a potential impact on staff confidence, retention and development of the IRO service.

*1549 LAC Review Meetings for
724 children were held in the
year compared with:*

1529 in 16/17

1229 in 15/16

Practicing Effectively

Caseloads

- 4.1 It is recognised that IRO/CPAs have been operating with caseloads significantly in excess of those recommended in the IRO Handbook. The capacity required for the service was calculated based on forecasted numbers of LAC and CP plans. Although LAC numbers remain below IDACI, CP numbers have been higher than forecast.
- 4.2 The IRO Handbook recommends that Independent Reviewing Officers hold a maximum caseload of 60 children. ESCC caseloads have consistently been in excess of this and we are aware that we have higher caseloads than neighbouring authorities. The unit sets a target of a maximum caseload of 90 alongside consideration of how many meetings it is reasonable to expect an IRO/CPA to chair in a week. At the end of March 2018 caseloads averaged 102.
- 4.3 High caseloads impact on IRO/CPA's capacity to undertake the robust, nuanced monitoring of care plans that is their primary function. In addition to chairing reviews for LAC the IRO is required to maintain contact with the child between reviews and to track the case between reviews; to prevent drift and to challenge decisions/practice as appropriate. Higher than expected caseloads through 2017/18 have impacted on the fulfilment of these requirements; most IRO/CPAs report minimal contact with children between meetings, IRO/CPAs have continued to monitor cases and to raise challenge but most would acknowledge that their capacity to offer effective oversight across their caseloads is limited. The impact of this is that some children may

remain LAC for longer than is necessary due to a delay in permanency planning or rehabilitation. IROs do prioritise and have scrutiny of the most vulnerable and unstable children within the system.

Supervision and training

- 4.4 Continuing Professional Development has long been a challenge for CPA/IROs due to workload/diary pressures and a shortage of relevant training. The Unit has devised an enhanced CPD programme to take advantage of existing opportunities, mandate a level of formal training and commission bespoke courses. It is anticipated that training will be offered in conjunction with LMG2 and LMG3 from Fostering and Adoption and Youth Justice services. The Social Work Education Team have responded positively to this initiative and are helping to build an inspiring programme.
- 4.5 CPD over the next year will focus on enhancing IRO/CPA's depth of knowledge in key LAC circumstances such as Remand Placements and Children with Disabilities. Enhanced legal training regarding s20 voluntary care placements, permanence and drift will also form part of the programme.

Knowing our Looked After Children Looked After population and the IRO service

- 5.1 CLA numbers have been high across the year starting at 563 and hovering over the 600 mark throughout the year ending on 604. Numbers of LAC are higher than had been expected with more children and young people becoming accommodated than leaving.
- 5.2 LAC demographics have been impacted by trends in legislation particularly in terms of s20 guidance and addressing options for permanence with Special Guardianship Order (SGO) carers. Increasing numbers of UASC have also pushed up East Sussex LAC although to date these have been fewer than expected.
- 5.3 ESCC target for LAC in 2017/18 was 57.2 per 10000 population; this was up from 51.6 in the previous year. The actual figures for LAC were 57.2 and 53.3 per 10,000 child population respectively.
- 5.4 LAC admissions have remained relatively stable across the past three years although the final quarter of 2017/18 saw a marked increase in admissions. Children leaving care (discharges from care) have been significantly fewer in 2017/18 than in the previous two years.
- 5.5 The gender profile of LAC has remained consistent with previous years. The BME profile is slightly raised; this is in line with CP returns and will also reflect increased numbers of UASC.
- 5.6 Children with disabilities are a relatively small percentage of the LAC population but present very different demands in terms of planning to address

complex needs; often needing to be placed out of their local area, negotiating multi-agency packages of care and working in partnership with families generally without a discrete legal mandate. IRO/CPAs bring a wealth of knowledge to this area with one IRO in particular taking a lead for this vulnerable group.

March 2018	March 2017	March 2016
45% Female 55% Male 12.5% BME	44% Female 56% Male 11.9% BME	42% Female 58% Male 9.2% BME

Legal Status & Care Applications

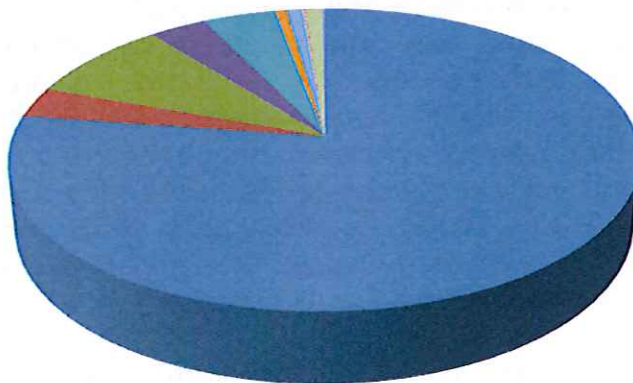
- 6.1 ESCC issued 91 sets of Care Applications in 2017/2018; this was down slightly on the preceding year (104). The National data set is not available for 2017/18; in 2016-17 East Sussex made applications at the rate of 9.1 per 10,000 population; this was slightly below the National figure of 12.5 but in line with statistical neighbours.
- 6.2 60% of Care Proceedings are concluded within the statutory 26 week target with all proceedings averaging 31 weeks. It is right that some proceedings will extend beyond the 26 week timetable in order to ensure that every option to support a child remaining within their family and to enable parents to make necessary changes is explored. However for most children a timely conclusion allows them to be safeguarded and for plans to be made for their longer term care.
- 6.3 The figures above are testament to the commitment and skill of staff in LAC and Locality teams when placing cases before the courts. The 26 week timetable presents significant challenges to all involved. The views of the IRO are required to inform the final order and should be included in the Final Care Plan; the scheduling of expert reports and statements can mean that IROs have a very limited window in which to consider all evidence and provide a thoughtful response. This will be a key area for development in 2018/19.

Where Do Our Children Live Whilst We Are Caring For Them?

- 7.1 The majority of LAC in East Sussex are in foster care; for most children who are unable to live with birth family, foster care offers 'the next best thing'; the opportunity to live within a family and to experience enduring, individual relationships with the adults who care for them.
- 7.2 IRO/CPAs are key to monitoring these placements; they are generally the most senior professionals to spend time in the child's home with them and

their carers. The breadth of placements that IRO/CPAs visit over the years provides them with a unique perspective and depth of knowledge which underpins the review process.

'a sense of security, continuity, commitment and identity ... a secure, stable and loving family to support them through childhood and beyond' (DCSF, 2010).



- 7.3 The majority of children in the care of East Sussex experience stable placements, however there is increasing pressure on placements which is resulting in a higher number of children experiencing less than optimum matches and subsequent placement moves. Across 2017-2018 an average of 10.4% of children experienced 3 or more placements within the preceding twelve months; this was up from 9% in 2016/17. 3% of children had experienced 5 or more placements, up from 2% in the preceding year.
- 7.4 IRO/CPAs should review any change of placement to ensure that moves are in the child's best interests. The team are increasingly using opportunities within our Management Information System, Liquid Logic (LCS) to scrutinise the matching process and bring challenge when appropriate

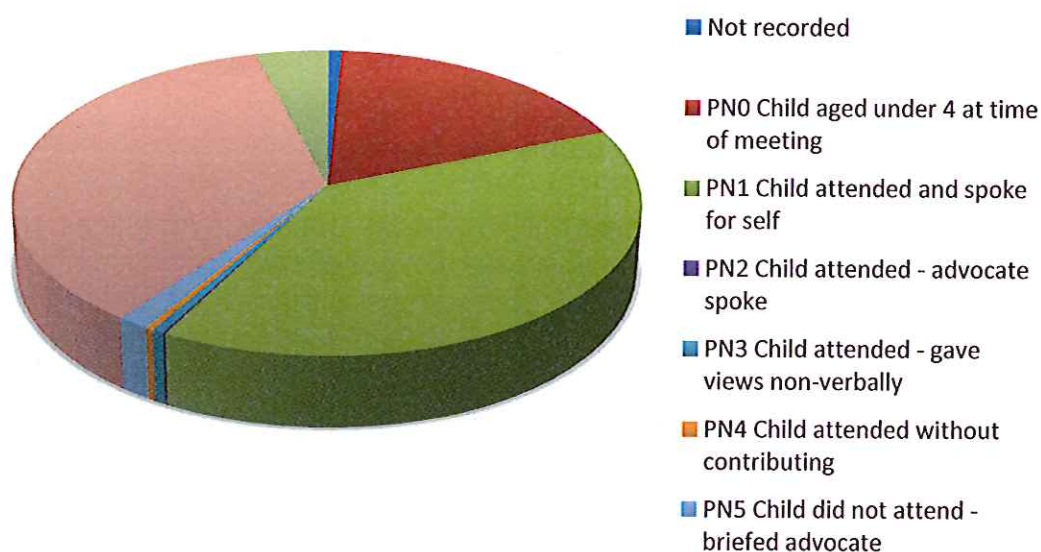
Where Do Children Go When They Leave Our Care?

- 8.1 29 children were adopted through East Sussex last year. Adoptions are one of the most enduring and serious interventions that the Local Authority makes in a child's life. IRO/CPAs are key to this process, providing a bridge between birth, foster and adoptive carers. The IRO/CPA is often the one professional who has had involvement throughout the child's journey; they are skilled and experienced in managing these transitions.
- 8.2 50 children who were discharged from the care of East Sussex in 2017/18 returned to their families. This is a positive reflection on the work which is undertaken by LAC and Locality teams in cooperation with the IRO/CPAs.

- 8.3 19 children were made subject to a Special Guardianship Order with family/friends; 4 other children achieved permanence with existing foster carers through the same order.
- 8.4 21 young people moved out of Local Authority care into independence with formal support; 11 others moved to independent living with no formal support in place. 13 young people reached the age of eighteen but remained living with their existing carers under Staying Put arrangements. The intention of Staying Put arrangements is to ensure that young people can remain with their former foster carers until they are prepared for adulthood, can experience a transition akin to their peers, avoid social exclusion and be more likely to avert a subsequent housing and tenancy breakdown. (OICS – Staying Put in Foster Care - Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010, Planning Transition into Adulthood for Care Leavers Guidance and Government Staying Put Guidance (2013.) IRO/CPAs review each child's plan prior to their 18th birthday to ensure that young people have appropriate support in place for their move to independent living / adult services.
- 8.5 4 young people who had been remanded into care were subsequently sentenced to custody and so were no longer LAC. 4 Young People became the responsibility of another Local Authority and 1 18 year old UASC was discharged having been missing for a significant period.

Participation

- 9.1 Participation in reviews has remained level with last year; approximately 40% of LAC contribute actively to their review; 4% of LAC did not attend or contribute their views in any way; this is up slightly on the year before.



- 9.2 Whilst the majority of LAC are aware of their right to an advocate, take up of this service is inconsistent. Only 2% of children who did not attend their review had briefed an advocate

IROs ensure that children participate in their reviews and that their voices are heard. IROH

- 9.3 The Children In Care Council (CICC) and others have commented that LAC Reviews have drifted away from being 'the child's meeting', becoming overly bureaucratic with too many people in attendance. Alternative approaches and a new name were requested. The Unit is working with the CICC, LAC Managers and Business Support to develop a creative document and to relaunch the approach to reviews in East Sussex.
- 9.4 LAC Reviews have a legal mandate and statutory functions which must not be lost within these changes. However a method has been arrived at which will allow meetings to be differently presented with less bureaucratic paperwork and adopting the CICC proposals regarding branding.
- 9.5 Children in care did not seem to be aware of their rights within the review process; not all children understood their right to determine who comes to their review; some did not have a copy of The Pledge and not all could name their IRO. These continue to be key challenges for the unit which will be addressed over the coming year.
- 9.6 A further challenge for the unit is to improve the level of communication with children between reviews. IRO/CPAs will generally meet with children immediately prior to their review but this is not an alternative to the more frequent visiting expected within guidance. Whilst some IROs meet some children between reviews this is well below target and must be improved as caseloads reduce.

Timeliness of Reviews

- 10.1 It has become evident that an improved tracking system for Reviews is needed to ensure reliable data in this area. This issue is due in part to the way in which LCS operates with reviews sometimes flagging as late due to having taken place after the 'scheduled date' but in fact still within statutory timescales. There is also a problem whereby reviews do not show as having occurred until the closure of a number of LCS functions; this means that the data collected on any one day will identify a number of 'late' meetings which have in fact taken place within timescales but have not yet passed through the full administrative process. With around 30 LAC Reviews taking place each week and IROs experiencing substantial administrative backlogs the data error for this figure is significant.
- 10.2 Historically the Unit kept a spreadsheet of all ILAC / LAC reviews; this was abandoned under the Management of Change process as it was thought to be

redundant. Options for tracking LAC will be prioritised in 2018/19 following the outcome of the current LEAN review.

10.3 167 reviews were showing as late at the end of March 2018; 10% of all reviews up from 5% in 2016/17, however:

- 13 were a miscalculation and were not late
- 30 were less than a week late
- 34 were more than a week but less than a month late
- 21 appear to have been held more than a month late and will be followed up.
- 6 Children's legal status had not been updated so were included in error
- 63 were awaiting outcome only but had been held on time.

10.4 This data will be followed up with individual chairs and will inform the administrative review. Comparisons with previous years cannot be relied upon as the data was not subjected to the same analysis.

Quality of Care Planning

Role of the IRO within Care Proceedings and beyond.

11.1 There is an increased emphasis within Care Proceedings on the role of the IRO. This has been demonstrated nationally with a number of articles/calls for formalisation of the IRO contribution and experienced locally in an increased demand for court statements and evidence from IROs in individual cases. This enhanced scrutiny of the oversight applied by the IRO does demand a more forensic approach to issues resolution and escalation. The Unit has seen a number of requests for statements to Court from IROs in cases where there is drift and post-proceedings where there has been a delay in securing permanence or where Care Plans/Contact have been changed without recourse to the Court.

11.2 A recent article in Family Law Week called for a greater emphasis on the views of the IRO within Care Proceedings citing the December 2017 CAFCASS Practice Note. This article and others reflect a national picture where the views of the IRO are inconsistently and ineffectively represented in Court. Practice in ESCC would appear to be stronger in this respect with IROs reporting consistent communication with Guardians (CAFCASS) within Care Proceedings. Inclusion of the IRO's view in LA documentation continues to be problematic however, with timescales and workload pressures meaning that social workers often do not provide IROs with sufficient time to respond to statements and care plans. The National Association of Independent Reviewing Officers (NAIRO) and the South East Regional group have discussed development of a stand-alone form for IROs to better evidence their experience, qualifications and involvement in the case.

Ensuring Management oversight

- 12.1** The revised statutory guidance states that operational social work managers must consider the decisions from LAC Reviews before they are finalised. This is due in part to the need to ensure any resource implications have been addressed. Once the decisions have been completed by the IRO/CPA the Locality/LAC Manager has 5 days to raise any queries or objections.
- 12.2** A screen of LAC reviews identified that the above process was not being routinely followed and new guidance is being issued to ensure that the service is compliant. In practice such queries are rare due to the high level of communication between social workers and IRO/CPAs but this remains an important balancing exercise within the review cycle.

Progress on Priorities set for 2017-2018

IROs have had an increased focus on monitoring and reviewing statutory requirements- e.g. Initial Health Assessments and Personal Education Plans

- 13.1** IRO/CPAs monitor compliance with Health Assessments and Personal Education Plans at each review. There is an expectation that these documents are available for scrutiny prior to the meeting and that the IRO follows up on any recommendations or delay. These meetings are essential tools in the Local Authority's exercise of its Corporate Parenting. It is the role of the IRO to ensure that social workers understand the value of IHAs and PEPs, the importance of timely review and of progressing identified needs.
- 13.2** The Unit is working with Locality teams to streamline and track the Initial Health Assessment (IHA) process. There have been changes to the delivery of Health Assessments which will be important to embed across the Service. Whilst targets for achieving assessments within timescales have almost been met for 2017/18 there should be an ambition to drive up this expectation and to ensure more detailed examination of individual plans.
- 13.3** The Operations Manager with responsibility for IROs is part of the newly formed 'Health of LAC Strategic Forum' which aims to drive forward health outcomes for LAC. This is a multiagency forum bringing together processes, knowledge and innovation to streamline services and broaden take-up.
- 13.4** The IRO outcome document should have enabled a more robust focus on statutory requirements. However IROs are not routinely gathering / recording qualitative or quantitative data. This will be a performance priority for the coming year.

IROs have continued to monitor Section 20 placements to address drift in planning

- 13.3 IROs have continued to monitor children placed under s20 to ensure that such placements are legal and that drift is minimised. S20 challenge represents one of the most common areas of debate between IROs and Locality teams; it is an issue of national prominence with increasing scrutiny by the courts. See Appendix.

Half-day workshops and audits focussed on diversity needs, pathway plans and sibling contact were planned for 2017/18.

- 13.4 A detailed audit of all UASC's files was undertaken in conjunction with the Equalities and Participation Unit. See Appendix.
- 13.5 IROs have attended a range of diversity training and development activities to enhance knowledge, skills and practice within the Unit.
- 13.6 Audits in respect of sibling contact and pathway plans will be priority areas in 2018/19. ***Improved performance for reviews being held on time***
- 13.7 See above

Reduced IRO / CPA caseload

- 13.8 See above

IROs have contributed to driving forward expectations in respect of Pathway Plans and the uptake of Passports to independence.

- 13.9 The application and quality of Pathway Plans has significantly improved over the past two years; up from 74 plans in March 2016 to 230 plans as at March 2018. Young people's views are now much more clearly recorded and there is a stronger sense of their participation in planning for their future.

Identifying good practice, problem resolution and escalation

- 13.10 Providing independent challenge whilst recognising the pressure that social workers are operating under and not adding unfairly to their workload is not an easy task. Quantifying the challenge provided by IROs is therefore complicated by the extensive efforts most make to resolve issues informally in the first instance. This approach is in line with guidance in the IRO Handbook which recommends recourse to formal dispute resolution and escalation only after informal professional discussion has failed.
- 13.11 IRO/CPAs do however offer a high level of professional questioning and challenge to ensure that plans for children and young people are robust and timely. The unit operates a system of Issues Resolution and escalation; there is an increasing move to evidence the early stages of this process and to capture ongoing monitoring of the same.

13.12 No cases have been referred to CAFACSS during 2017/18.

Actions For The Year Ahead

- Development of a standalone form for IRO contribution to Care Proceedings
- Embed and develop the CPD programme
- Enhance the profile of IROs through lead areas and facilitating training
- Ensure robust, consistent scrutiny of care plans with use of the issues resolution process where necessary
- Roll out of a more child friendly LAC Review process/document in line with statutory duties and the requests of the CICC.
- Driving up of standards within the unit to ensure that review decisions are circulated within timescales.
- Increased expectation that IROs will visit or at least communicate with all LAC aged 5 and over between reviews.
- IROs to routinely record the quality of Health Assessments and PEPs.
- Dental Health amongst LAC in ESCC has been identified as being a particular cause for concern. This will be a focus for improvement across the LAC Service in 2018/2019. IROs will contribute to this target through pre and post review monitoring / discussions with carers, social workers and young people.

There are 70,000 children in the care of the state and they have faced more challenges in their short lives than most of us will ever know. Anne Longfield, Children's Commissioner for England.

Appendix - Thematic Audit Summary

Two LAC themed audits were undertaken relating to Section 20 Placements and Care Planning for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) in East Sussex.

Section 20 Placements

- 1.1 Children placed under s20 may be disadvantaged in terms of their legal protection or there not being an appropriate adult exercising parental responsibility for them. Families may be disadvantaged due to a lack of clarity regarding their legal rights.
- 1.2 However families do not always want to formalise s20 placements through court, particularly where the child is living with relatives. Social work teams can be reluctant to destabilise fragile relationships or to expose the child to immediate risk in a bid to achieve long term security. IROs are increasingly using their independent challenge to ensure that proper scrutiny and balance has been applied to s20 decision making. Evidencing this challenge is essential to reduce the possibility of misuse of the power.
- 1.3 An audit of all s20 placements as at 30/03/2018 was undertaken; in drilling down on the data those records where the child is an UASC or where they have been remanded to LA care were screened out due to their unique legal status.

Findings

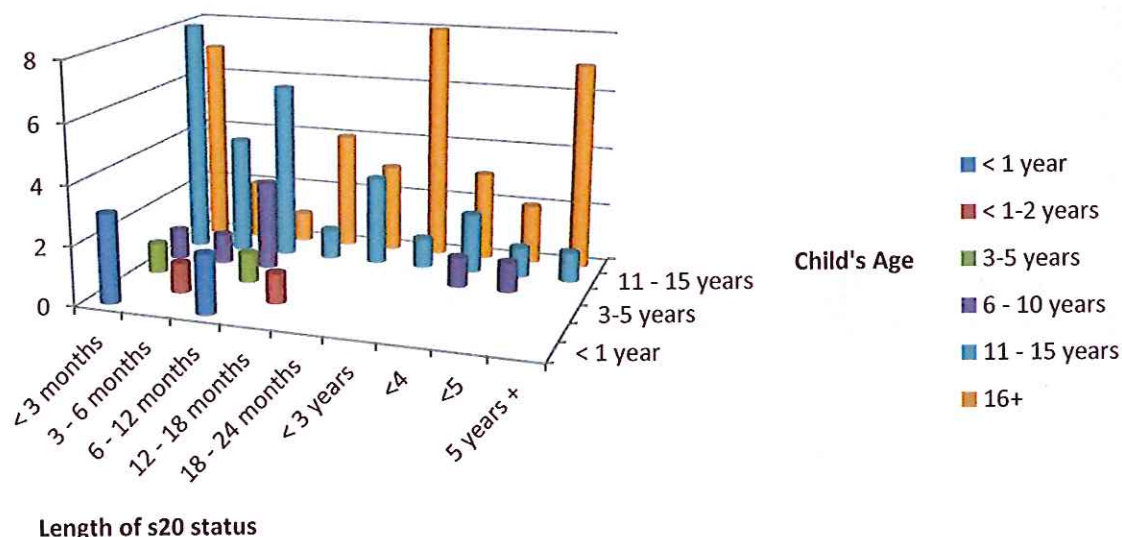
- 1.4 Delays updating the child's legal status mean that some children show as being subject to s20 when in fact this status has been superseded by other orders or they have left the care system.

CONTEXT

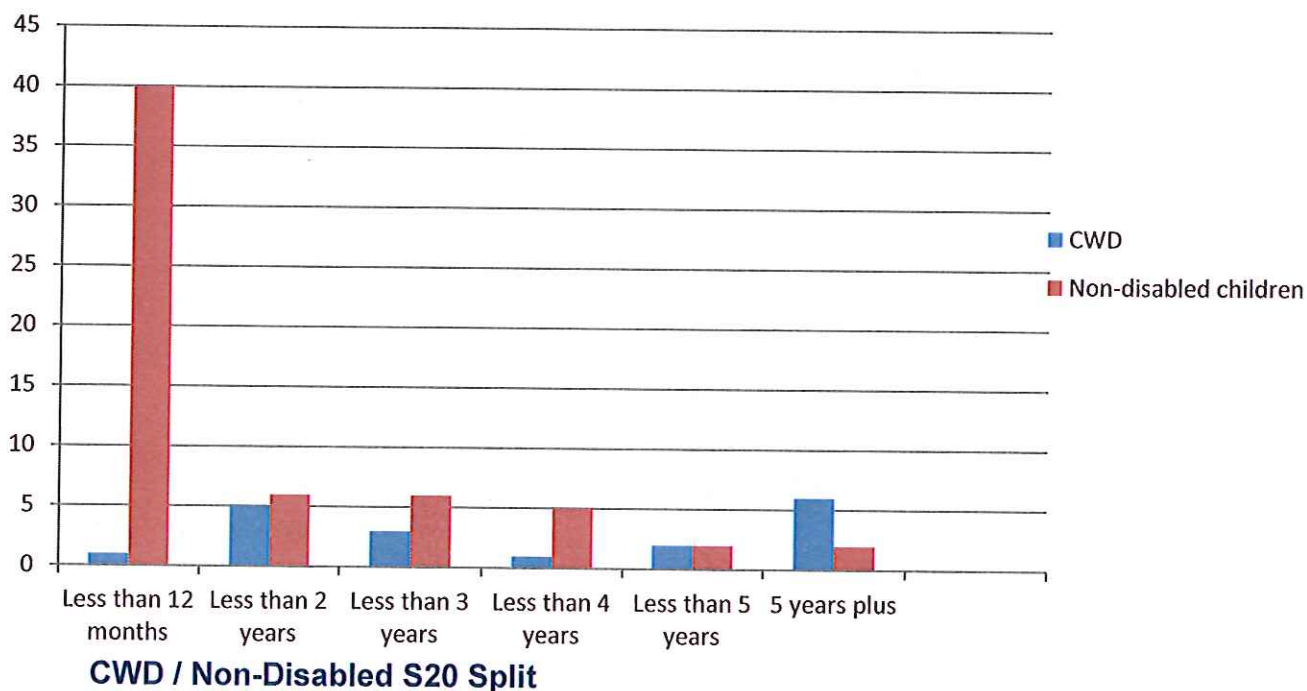
In 2015 the President of the Family Court Division stated:

"The misuse and abuse of section 20 in this context is not just a matter of bad practice. It is wrong; it is a denial of the fundamental rights of both the parent and the child; it will no longer be tolerated; and it must stop. Judges will and must be alert to the problem and pro-active in putting an end to it. From now on, local authorities which use section 20 as a prelude to care proceedings for lengthy periods or which fail to follow the good practice I have identified, can expect to be subjected to probing questioning by the court. If the answers are not satisfactory, the local authority can expect stringent criticism and possible exposure to successful claims for damages. N (Children) (Adoption: Jurisdiction) [2015] at para 171 of HHJ Munby's judgment.

- 1.5 S20 is most commonly used to provide short term respite or safeguarding with the majority of s20 placements lasting less than 12 months. NB this figure is artificially lower in this audit as it would be more affected by the annual 'churn' than the longer term placements.

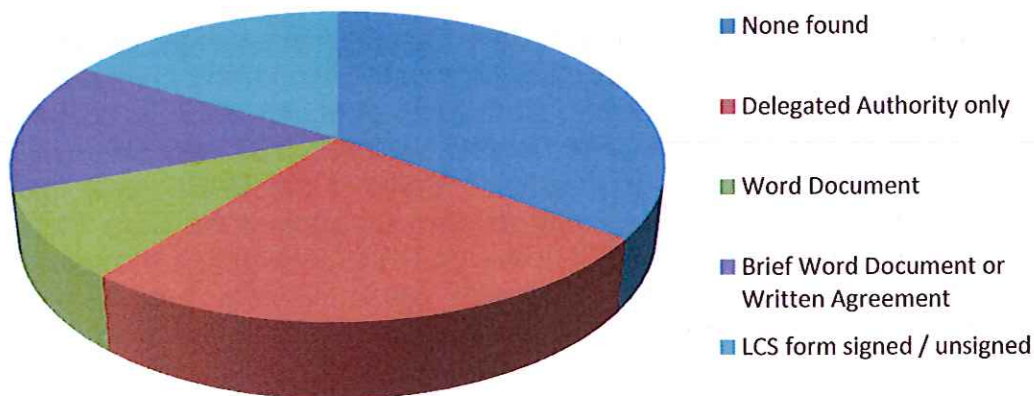


- 1.6 Children aged 16+ constitute the majority of s20 placements.
- 1.7 A relatively small number of children in East Sussex have been subject to s20 for more than 5 years; the majority of these are children with complex and enduring disability.
- 1.8 Children with disabilities represent approximately 25% of the s20 cohort (excluding UASC and remand). These children were least likely to have a signed s20 agreement at a level that complies with current guidance. However there was good evidence across these files of IRO oversight and in most cases there was good evidence of an effective working relationship with families.



- 1.9 S20 regulation has evolved over the past 3 years. There has been clear guidance from CSCMT/ Legal Services; however social workers are not using a consistent process to record parental agreement to s20. Historically parents signed a Placement Agreement which did not set out their legal rights; some children have remained accommodated without this agreement being brought into line with current guidance.
- 1.10 Whilst some historic variation is to be expected the system now needs to be clearer. Word documents uploaded to ecasefile are not always easy to find; a range of different templates are being used, not all are compliant; in some cases the child's name did not appear on the signed document. The LCS form will not contain the parents' signature unless it is printed off and a hard copy uploaded; this is a significant risk within the system which needs to be addressed.

S20 Consent Document



- 1.11 It is not unusual for parents to challenge s20 status but then not pursue return of the child to their care. In those circumstances the legal mandate for the LA can become confused. Some of the files reviewed evidenced a request for the child to be returned but did not formalise the parent's subsequent consent. In the event of future legal challenge these cases would be vulnerable.

Recommendations

- 1.12 The agreed procedure for obtaining and recording parental consent to s20 must be re-circulated.
- 1.13 Social Workers should use the LCS s20 agreement as this will be the current version; they should record on that form the date of upload to ecasefile a signed copy of the same. All ecasefile uploads should have a standard referencing format.
- 1.14 Where, in exceptional circumstances a handwritten or other note of the parents' consent is taken this should be followed up as soon as possible with the formal documentation.
- 1.15 Those children who have been subject to s20 for a significant period of time should have consent revisited at least annually. The IRO should satisfy themselves at each review that the above procedure has been followed and that s20 status remains the appropriate legal mandate. The child's legal status should be explicitly referenced in the review documentation.
- 1.16 Parental consent to s20 should be reviewed following any formal (abandoned) request for the child to be returned home.
- 1.17 It may be appropriate for a bespoke s20 form to be devised for CWD in acknowledgment of the different needs/motivation for these children becoming looked after.

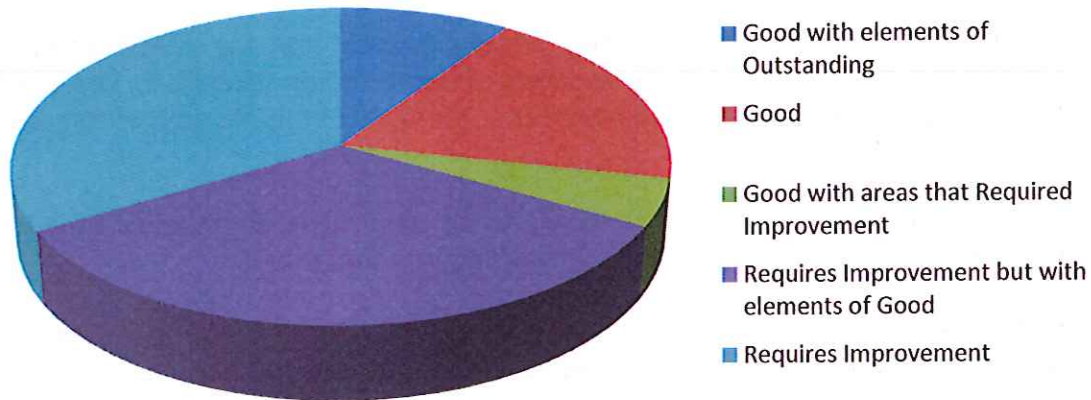
Audit of Assessment and Planning for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children

- 2.1 Responding to the needs of UASC has become increasingly pertinent as numbers increase due to conflict elsewhere in the World and changes under the government dispersal scheme. At the end of March 2018 there were 20 UASC open to ESCC; cases were held across LAC, YST and ThroughCare teams with some variation in practice. Many of the UASC were placed outside of the County boundary with evident implications for Care Planning and Review. Changes to the ESCC offer for UASC including a discrete team and efforts to bring placements back within County are a positive development and can reasonably be expected to address many of the findings below.
- 2.2 Two IROs within the Unit lead on UASC and undertake the majority of these reviews; this has ensured development of a secure knowledge base which is evident in the quality of outcome documents.
- 2.3 Understanding and meeting the diverse needs of the children in our care was an area for development that was identified during the 2014 Ofsted Inspection. Maintaining a focus on the child's experience – including continuing to address diversity remains a priority for Children's Social Care in 18/19.
- 2.4 As a result of this priority an audit of UASC case files was agreed in February 2018 to ensure assessments and plans demonstrated an explicit understanding of diverse needs arising from the child's cultural and heritage background, disability, or other equality characteristics, as well as specific needs arising from their status as UASC. This audit was undertaken jointly between the Safeguarding, and Equalities and Participation Units.

Findings

- 2.5 Mental Health / Emotional Wellbeing were observed to be neglected areas; this is common across other LAs and Agencies. LAC CAMHS do not routinely pick up these children, their needs are quite distinct and they are often reluctant to take up services.
- 2.6 Use of placements in more diverse communities has benefits however it also places a geographical distance between the UASC and their social worker which was evident in the quality of relationship on some of the files.

Quality of Assessment and Planning for UASC



- 2.7** Family assessments did not always explore the child's diverse needs. Faith was usually explored, although it appears that less attention is paid to cultural needs when the child does not identify as Muslim. In some cases the social worker had relied on the age assessment rather than completing their own assessment; whilst providing useful detail of the child's experience in their home country and journey this doesn't explore needs.
- 2.8** The child's needs in relation to faith had usually been mentioned in the plan. Sometimes links to the country or culture of origin had been explored, but other diverse needs did not feature. Where the child had expressed a wish to assimilate into Western culture, this had been readily accepted, however links to diverse cultures should have been continued to ensure that the child develops a coherent identity. The identity section was not always complete on the Pathway Plan. It is easier to evidence that diverse needs have been considered if clear headings are used within the plan.
- 2.9** Social workers identify the experience of the child 'back home' and journey either through Age Assessment, Home Office interview or Family Assessment. Where there is evidence of trafficking, this did not always appear to have been explored. Mental health needs as a result of trauma had often been acknowledged but not fully explored.
- 2.10** Social workers had encouraged UASC to make contact with family back home using the Red Cross family seeker service. Sometimes social workers had attempted to access mental health support for child through LAC CAMHS or the Refugee Council. Updates re asylum claim were not always clear in the plan.

Recommendations

- 2.11 A number of 'quick wins' were identified in terms of consistency and guidance re the LCS process and reporting parameters.
- 2.12 Family Assessments and Reviews should ensure that the UASC's holistic experience has been captured and their diverse needs identified. The child's journey and experience should be evident throughout the file so that this is not lost.
- 2.13 Asylum claim/immigration and identity to be explicitly discussed at all UASC reviews. IROs to record in LAC Review outcome document.
- 2.14 Future planning re pathways to independence and contingency in the event of asylum claims being refused needed to be better evidenced on file.
- 2.15 All UASC should have an allocated, qualified social worker who is actively working the case.
- 2.16 Placement matching should be better evidenced. Where an UASC is placed with a provider with expertise in that area this should be identified on the file rather than just naming the resource.
- 2.17 Legal advice was recommended in respect of data re sexuality as there is a risk of this information being passed back to the country of origin by the Home Office which could place the UASC or their relatives at serious risk of harm. There has been recent legal precedent in this area and significant financial compensation claims.

Report Author: Fiona Lewis

Co-Author: Susan McGlynn

<https://www.basw.co.uk/news/article/?id=1702>

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Gabrielle Jan Posner, Barrister and Recorder, Trinity Chambers Chelmsford;
<http://www.familylawweek.co.uk/site.aspx?i=ed189418>

Anne Longfield, Children's Commissioner for England, response to Department for Education's publication of 'Foster Care in England'; 6th February 2018;
<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/2018/02/06/anne-longfield-childrens-commissioner-for-england-responds-to-department-for-educations-publication-of-foster-care-in-england/>

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Report to: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date of meeting: 26 January 2018

By: Director of Children's Services

Title: Virtual School Annual Report 2016/17

Purpose: To outline the performance of the Virtual School 2016/17

RECOMMENDATION:

The Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to note and comment on the contents of this report.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Virtual School (VS) consists of a team who work with Designated Teachers, Social Workers and Foster Carers to support the education of all East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Looked After Children (LAC) and formerly LAC wherever they are educated.
- 1.2 The Virtual School is supported by the Dedicated Schools Grant and Pupil Premium Grant. There are no increased costs arising from this report.

2. Supporting information

- 2.1 The Annual Progress Report for the Virtual School is attached as Appendix 1. In addition, supporting case studies are attached as Appendix 2.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 3.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to note the contents of this report.

STUART GALLIMORE

Director of Children's Services

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LOCAL MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

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The Virtual School

1. Background Information

1.1 The Virtual School (VS) comprises a small team of educational staff (11 core staff on part time contracts and 2 administrators), who have a responsibility to promote and support the educational success of East Sussex Looked After Children (ESLAC) wherever they are educated. The team is based in Hailsham but works across the County and beyond if children are placed out of County. The VS is an integral part of the Looked After Children (LAC) Service and has a fully formed and constituted Governing Body. The Head of School is a member of the LAC Management Team.

1.2 Every school in East Sussex, and any school outside the County where an ESLAC is on roll, has a named worker from the VS who is available to support the designated teacher and other key staff. In addition there are three key staff who specialise in supporting; young people 16+, early years children and children previously adopted from care, children on Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) and children on Child Arrangement Orders (CAO).

1.3 The VS works in close partnership with other areas of Children's Services and has identified senior members of staff who act as champions for our LAC in ISEND: Assessment and Planning, East Sussex Behaviour and Attendance Service (ESBAS), Educational Psychology (EP), Communication, Learning and Autism Support Service (CLASS), Children's Integrated Therapy Service (CITS), and in Admissions and Transport.

1.4 The VS tracks the educational progress of all ESLAC and makes weekly contact with schools to check attendance. All management information is entered onto the SIMS database just like in a "real" school, to enable the team to track progress, monitor Personal Education Plans (PEPs), SEN and Pupil Premium spend for all ESLAC, including early years and Post 16 children. The progress of 6 – 19 year olds is tracked via PEP's and termly meetings with Further Education (FE) and training providers. There are ambitious targets for this age group particularly in relation to engagement in Education, Employment and Training and in Higher Education (HE). In addition the VS also supports Care Leavers in full time education up to the age of 25, with advice, guidance, tuition and resources if appropriate. This is also managed via a PEP/Pathway Plan.

1.5 The VS was instrumental in the development of the new East Sussex Additional Needs Plan (ANP). This document is combined with the PEP and helps to ensure continuity in education when a young person comes into care or leaves care. The ANP/PEP was launched in January 2017. The VS attend PEP reviews for individual children, and will offer advice, support and challenge where appropriate to any professional who has a responsibility for an ESLAC.

1.6 The VS provides training for a wide range of professionals including designated teachers, early years providers, trainee teachers at the universities, training providers, FE colleges, social workers, foster carers, supported lodging providers and also provides whole school training for teachers, teaching assistants and individual needs assistants on the impact in school of trauma. The VS also contributes to the cost of training individual staff members in schools and in East Sussex residential settings to increase the capacity of staff to become skilled to work with children and young people who have experienced trauma. An annual conference is organised by the VS for all those with an interest in the education of LAC. This is always well attended by schools and other professionals from Children's Services, FE and HE providers. In July 2016 the keynote speakers were a group of East Sussex Care Leavers, and in 2017 with the theme 'Together We Can' the keynote speech was delivered by Sharon Grey OBE. As a result of this contact Sharon

has been invited to develop closer links with ISEND, working to support ES schools and learning communities to increase inclusivity and meet the needs of all young people.

1.7 The VS delivers a number of courses for ESLAC and Care Leavers including a Summer programme for children of reception age with their carers, a day programme for children in Years 2 and 3, a residential course for Year 6 pupils focussing on transition to secondary school, a "Spring School" for KS3 Pupils, a revision course for Year 11 students and summer schools for both Year 10 and Year 12 students.

1.8 The VS works closely with local boarding schools and, together with a national charity, has developed an assisted places scheme for ESLAC. The VS aims to place 3 or 4 children each year at local boarding schools at no additional cost to ESCC. Those who have been placed so far are thriving and benefiting from the high quality education provision. Currently we have young people placed at Bedes in East Sussex and at Box Hill in Surrey. (See Appendix 2)

1.9 The VS maintains a strong presence in a number of strategic/ operational groups across Children's Services, the Local Authority and across third party providers; Care2Work, JAPP, Increased Participation Operational Group(IPOG), Post SEND Inspection Working Group, LACAMHS management, SEND Commissioning and Governance Steering Group Meeting, Transforming Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Service Operational Group.

2. Pupil Premium

2.1 The VS in East Sussex has managed Pupil Premium (PP) since its inception in 2012. Since 2014 it has been a requirement that PP is managed by Virtual Headteachers. The conditions of the grant as laid out by the DfE for 2016-17 are:

A provisional amount of £1,900 per child looked after for at least one day as recorded in the March 2015 children looked-after data return (SSDA903), and aged 4 to 15 at 31 August 2013.

2.2 In 2016 -17 a total of £856K was received. PP has enabled the VS to work more strategically in order to support the education of ESLAC as well as holding and distributing a fund on an individual needs-led basis. The continuation of the Pupil Premium Plus into 2017-18 will ensure that the projects initiated in 2016-17 will be able to continue, and there will be sufficient funding to meet the needs identified in each child's PEP. The DfE plans to increase the PP funding in 2018-19 to £2300 per LAC. PP for those children who were formerly in care is paid directly to the schools the children attend.

2.3 In addition to the PP for children outlined above, the VS is also responsible for the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP). This is a payment made by the Government to Early Years settings to improve the education they provide for LAC who are 3 and 4 years old and who are taking up their free early education entitlement. In 2016-17 it was £300 per eligible child.

2.4 Total allocation of the Pupil Premium by expenditure category

	Requested	Funded 2016/17[1]	Number of requests
Assessment	19,700	14,000	37
ISEND provider services (ESBAS, CLASS, EP etc)	85,000	80,000	79
Extra and Alternative Curriculum	73,500	70,000	115
IT Equipment and Software	9,250	7,500	82
Maintaining School Placement	310,000	290,000	97
Music	8000	7000	43
Educational Resources (includes 22,500 for school projects)	56,000	54,000	68
TA/INA Support	68,000	60,000	71
Therapeutic Support	9,000	7,500	37
Training and Development	21,000	21,000	28
Tuition	250,000	244,000	280
Total	909,450	855,000	937

2.5 A large number of the funding requests from schools were met from the PP this year. This was largely due to the overall increase in funding and to a more widely held understanding of the criteria used to access the fund. Where requests were declined it was either because there was an existing source of funding in place (for example foster carer's allowances) or the request did not relate to an intervention or activity that would impact sufficiently on a young person's learning (for example some of the requests received were for tablet computers etc.).

2.6 The following paragraphs give a brief overview of the allocation.

- In total there were 937 requests for funding from PP. There were 356 school aged children who were in care for the whole period and further 55 who were in for at least 1 day but not the whole year.
- There was a significant increase in the amount allocated to **maintaining school places** and this was used both for providing alternative curricula, using placement support for children who would otherwise have been at risk of exclusion or disengagement and also used to fund transport for children who had to move their care placement but where it was critical that the school placement was maintained. There are established protocols which demand that any LAC placement change must be approved by the VS if it is likely to have any potential impact on a child's school place and moves at key stages such as leading up to exams are refused.

- **Tuition** Provision of 1:1 tuition remained a significant driver for good outcomes, particularly in English and in Maths. A bank of tutors was established on a claims only basis, all of whom have experience in working with traumatised children and/ or a very specific subject specialism. This has significantly improved the quality of the tuition provided by tutors who are becoming experts in the field of supporting LAC. There are 2 tutors who specialise in working intensively with traumatised children to help them access the school environment and in most cases they also provide evidence for further educational assessment. There is a rolling programme of recruitment for tutors to maintain a sufficient quantity and level of expertise.
- One of the most effective uses of PP has proved to be the development of schools to more effectively support the learning of looked after children through **training**. The PP has funded a number of schools to train teachers and support staff in the Thrive Approach which is a whole school approach to supporting children with additional emotional needs and ACE education on-line training programmes. In addition the VS contributes towards other specific staff development in schools that will benefit ESLAC. Of course this also raises expertise and confidence more generally in our schools.
- In addition to the core ISEND offer, the VS uses PP to purchase additional units from the traded offer for EP's, ESBAS, CLASS, EAL to work with our young people in schools.
- PP has been used to support a wide range of **extra-curricular activities** where it is felt that this will impact positively on motivation and attitude toward learning. Activities include Sports Clubs, School Holiday Clubs, Drama and Dance Clubs. PP has also been used to contribute toward school visits, although it is expected that foster carers fund most clubs and visits from their allowances. Music lessons via East Sussex Music Service have also been funded.
- **Educational Resources** covers a very wide range of requests and includes all non IT resources used directly by the children or used by teachers to help support them. The biggest element of this budget is the Book Club which is organised in partnership with a local bookshop, 'Bag of Books'. All Year 1 – 6 children receive termly parcels (6 per year) of books and other educational materials for them to use at home with their foster carers to help encourage reading and educational play. The parcels are extremely popular with the children who love the content and the personal way it is addressed (and tailored) to each individual. Year 7, 8 and 9 ESLAC are invited to opt into the scheme and it is increasingly popular as they get a choice of books. The VS has also funded IT equipment and software to support learning.
- PP has funded **therapeutic support** for children and young people ranging from Play Therapy, Talking Therapy, Drama Therapy, Equine Therapy and Thrive sessions, Speech and Language Therapy supported by CLASS. The aim of the project is to screen all young people that come into care (year R-9) using speech and language link.

3. Virtual School Activity and Training 2016-17

15.9.2016	Skills to Foster	St Mary's	AB
13.10.2016	Attachment Training	Early years. Sidley	SI and CH
24.10.2016	Year 2&3 Mallydams trip		LTW, AH, SI,ER
31.10.2016	Designated Teacher training	St Mary's	AB and HC
31.10.2016	Attachment Training	Sacred Heart	SI and CP
17.11.2016	Skills to Foster	St Marys	AB
1.12.2016	FC training Sand tray and Story Telling	Hastings	JG, SI
5.12.2016	Attachment Training	Early Years. Wellshurst	SI and CH
3.1.2017	Attachment Training	Parkside Primary	SI
3.1.2017	Attachment Training	St Mary's Horam	SI
10.1.2017	Attachment Training to Foster Carers	Eastbourne	SI/CP
19.1.2017	Virtual School Inset. Person centred planning for PEPs	Dunbar	Team and EP's. SW?
19.1.2017	Skills to Foster	St Mary's	AB
26.1.2017	Family Thrive for carers Wk 1. 10-12.30	Dunbar	SI, SS
26.1.2017	Primary Skills (Education) for Carers		LTW,JG,SS
02.2.2017	Family Thrive for carers Wk 2. 10-12.30	Dunbar	SI,SS
08.2.2017	FC training Sand tray and Story Telling	Eastbourne	SI,JG
09.2.2017	Designated Teacher training	St Mary's	AB and HC
9.2.2017	Secondary Skills (Education) for Carers		VC,CP,HH
9.2.2017	Family Thrive for carers Wk 3. 10-12.30	Dunbar	SI,SS
20.2.2017	Attachment Training	Chyngton Primary	SI,CP
21.2.2017	Attachment Training Foster Carers(6.30pm)		SI,CP
27.2.2016	The role of the VS to trainee teachers	Brighton University	AB &Team
28.2.2017	Foster carers Support Group. Re PEP	Eastbourne	AB
1.3.2017 and 2.3.2017	Inclusion Network re ANP	Alfriston and Bexhill	AB
2.3.2017	Family Thrive for carers Wk 4. 10-12.30	Dunbar	SI,SS
4.3.2017	Year 11 Revision Day	Sussex University	SI/AB/AH/ER/LH/LTW
9.3.2017	Family Thrive for carers Wk 5. 10-12.30	Dunbar	SI and SS
14.3.2017	Foster carers Support Group. Re PEP	Robsack Centre	AB
15.3.2017	Attachment Training	Early Years, Cooden Beach	SI,CH
16.3.2017	Family Thrive for carers Wk 6. 10-12.30	Dunbar	SI,SS
16.3.2017	Skills to Foster	St Mary's	SI

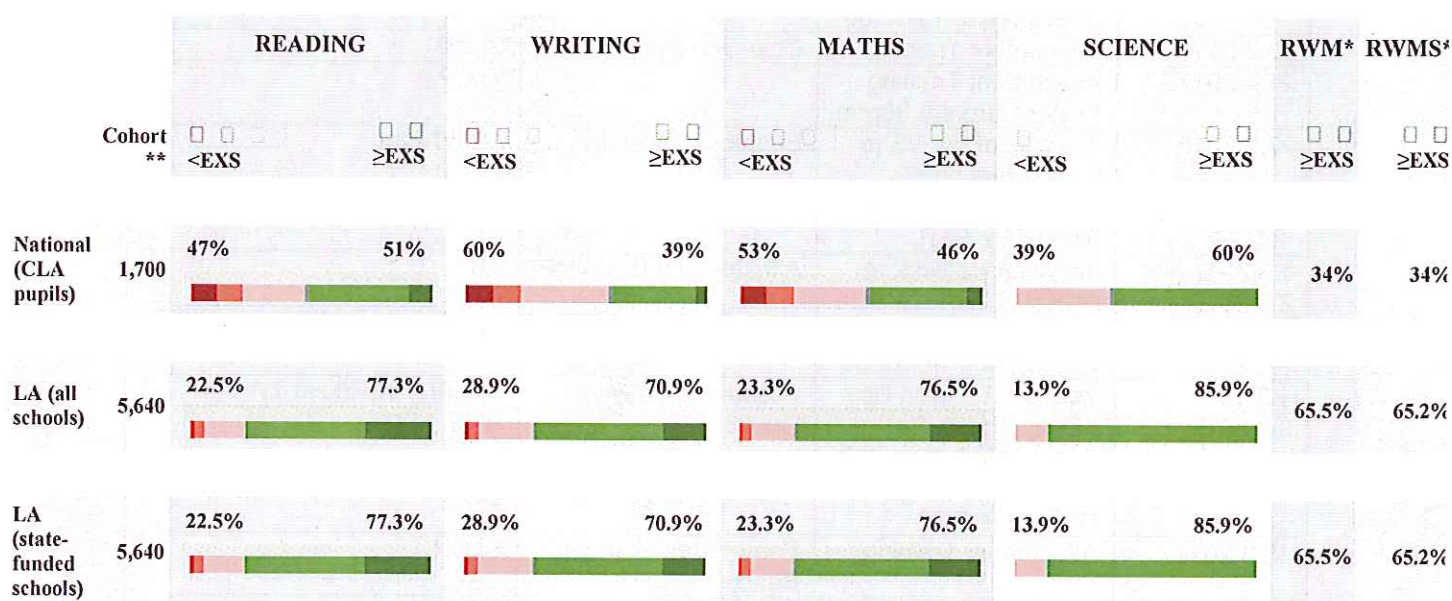
11.4/12.4 2017	Spring School Year 7/8/9	Brighton University(Eastbourne)	Team
20.4.2017	Virtual School Inset	Dunbar	Team
9.5.2017	Designated Teacher training	St Mary's	AB/HC
10.5.2017	FC Attachment Theory (am)	Hastings	SI/CP
11.5.2017	Primary Skills (Education) for Carers	TBC	LTW, JG, SS Cancelled
18.5.2017	Skills to Foster	St Mary's	AB
30.5.2017	Year 6 Transition camp	Hindleap Warren	SI, AB/team
31.5.2017	Year 6 Transition camp	Hindleap Warren	SI, AB/team
1.6.2017	Year 6 transition camp	Hindleap Warren	SI, AB/team
20.6.2017	Virtual School Annual Conference	Bramber House Sussex University	All
29.6.2017	CEIAG /Enterprise advisors Conference. Workshop on LAC and Careleavers	Wellshurst	AB
29.6.2017	Skills to Foster	St Mary's	AB
7.7.2017	NQT Conference re LAC and VS	Bramber House Sussex University	AB
July/Aug	Nursery to Reception 9.30 - 12 noon for 2 sessions tbc	Dunbar Drive	SI and AB

These activities are funded as part of the Virtual School core offer.

4. Educational Outcomes for 2016 /17



**KS1 Benchmark
(CLA) 2017**





ESLAC at KS 1 didn't achieve as well as LAC nationally. A high % of the cohort had an identified SEN, those in East Sussex with an SEN didn't achieve as well as those nationally with SEN.



KS 1- 2 Benchmark (CLA)

2017 | CLA 12 Months

			READING				WRITING				MATHS			
	Avg. KS1 Pt Cohort	Score	Cover.	Prog. Score ≥ 0	Avg. Prog. Score	Conf. Int.	Cover.	Prog. Score ≥ 0	Avg. Prog. Score	Conf. Int.	Cover.	Prog. Score ≥ 0	Avg. Prog. Score	Conf. Int.
National (CLA pupils)	3,010	12.3	92%	46%	-0.7	± 0.23	93%	49%	-0.9	± 0.22	92%	45%	-1.1	± 0.21
LA (all schools)	5,329	15.5	94.1%	53.1%	+0.3	± 0.17	94.8%	47.8%	-0.5	± 0.17	94.2%	44.8%	-0.8	± 0.16
LA (state-funded schools)	5,267	15.5	95.2%	53.1%	+0.3	± 0.17	95.9%	47.8%	-0.5	± 0.17	95.3%	44.8%	-0.8	± 0.16
Virtual School	30	13.0	96.7%	41.4%	-1.6	± 2.27	93.3%	32.1%	-2.6	± 2.24	93.3%	46.4%	-3.3	± 2.08

The cohort was made up of 30 Young People, 13 girls, 17 boys. 16 (8 girls and 8 boys) had identified special educational needs (SEN) of this group 6 had Education Health Care Plans/Statements (3 girls and 3 boys).

ESLAC made less good progress from Keys Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 in Reading and Writing than LAC nationally, in Maths ESLAC did slightly better.

For those with SEN Nationally 39% made expected progress or better, in East Sussex 40% (6) of LAC made expected progress or better.

Reading

Nationally 46% of LAC made expected progress or better, ESLAC fell short of this as 41.4% (12) of LAC made expected progress or better.

For those with SEN Nationally 39% made expected progress or better, in East Sussex 40% (6) of LAC made expected progress or better.

Writing

Nationally 49% of LAC made expected progress or better, ESLAC fell short of this as 32.1% (10 yp) of LAC made expected progress or better.

For those with SEN Nationally 39% made expected progress or better, ESLAC fell short of this as only 7.1% (1) of CLA made expected progress or better.

Maths

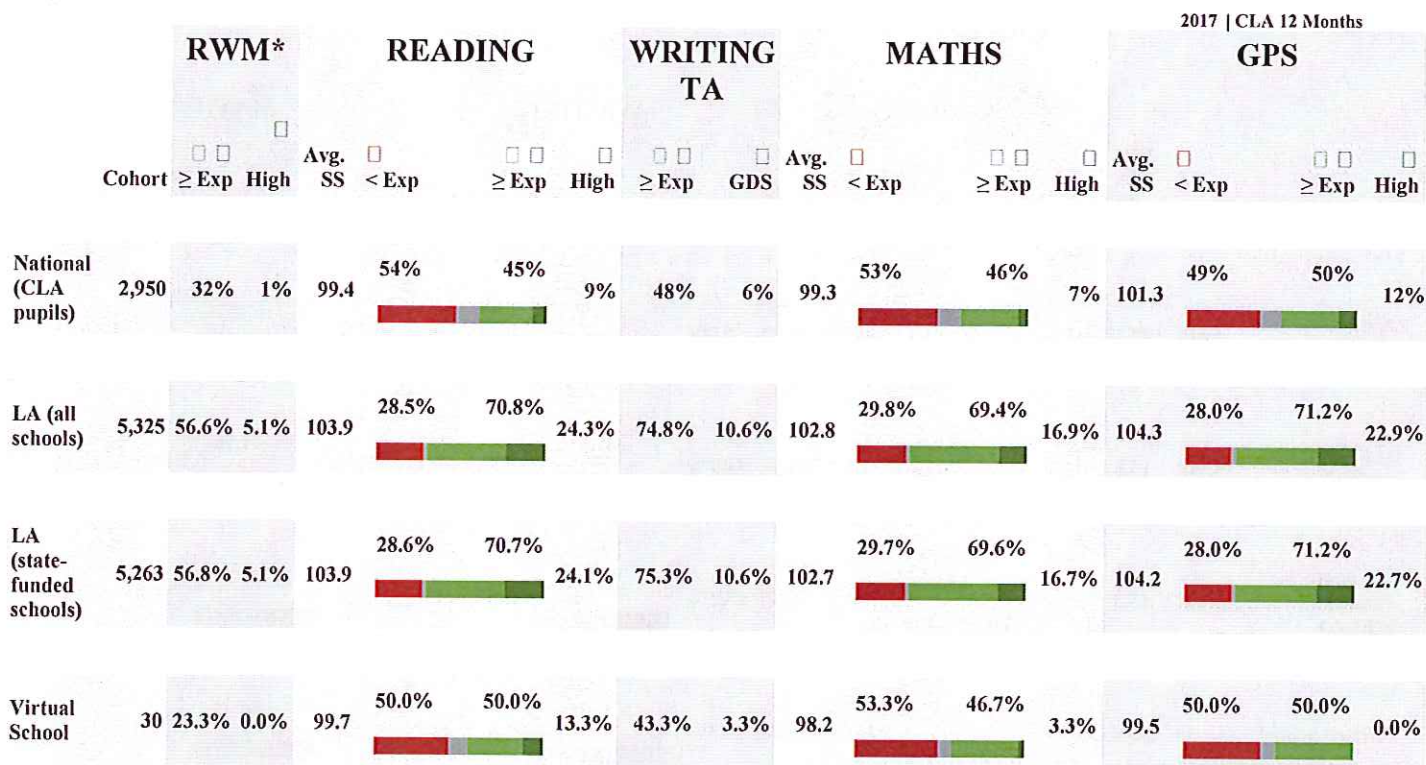
Nationally 45% of LAC made expected progress or better, ESLAC performed slightly better as 46.4%(14) of LAC made expected progress or better

For those with SEN Nationally 39% made expected progress or better, in East Sussex 28.6% (5) of LAC made expected progress or better.



KS2 Benchmark (CLA)

2017 | CLA 12 Months



The cohort was made up of 30 Young People, 13 girls, 17 boys. 16 (8 girls and 8 boys) had identified special educational needs (SEN) of this group 6 had Education Health Care Plans/Statements (3 girls and 3 boys).

Reading, Writing and Maths combined (RWM)

Nationally 32% of LAC achieved expected standard or better in RWM. ESLAC fell short of this with only 23.3% (7) of LAC achieved the expected standard or better in RWM.

For those with SEN Nationally 14% achieved the expected standard or better in RWM. There were no children in East Sussex with SEN who achieved the expected standard or better in RWM.

Reading

Nationally 45% of LAC achieved the expected standard or better, in East Sussex 50% (15) achieved the expected standard or better.

For those with SEN Nationally 27% achieved the expected standard or better, in East Sussex 25% (4) of LAC achieved the expected standard or better.

Writing

Nationally 48% of LAC achieved the expected standard or better, ESLAC fell short of this 43% (13) of CLA achieved the expected standard or better.

For those with SEN Nationally 26% achieved the expected standard or better, in East Sussex 6.3% (1) of LAC achieved the expected standard or better

Maths

Nationally 46% of LAC achieved the expected standard or better, in East Sussex 46.7%(14) of LAC achieved the expected standard or better

For those with SEN Nationally 27% achieved the expected standard or better, in East Sussex 25% (4) of LAC achieved the expected standard or better,

Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling

Both Nationally and in East Sussex 50% of Children Looked After (CLA) achieved the expected standard or better.

For those with SEN Nationally 29% achieved the expected standard or better, in East Sussex 18.8% (3) of CLA achieved the expected standard or better.



KS4 Att8/Prog8 Benchmark (CLA)

2017 | CLA 12 Months

	Cohort	Prog. Cov.	Avg. KS2 Fine Lvl	Overall			English			Maths			EBacc			Other		
				Avg. At8 Score	Avg. Pr8 Score	Conf. Int.	Avg. Att. Score	Avg. Prog. Score	Conf. Int.	Avg. Att. Score	Avg. Prog. Score	Conf. Int.	Avg. Att. Score	Avg. Prog. Score	Conf. Int.	Avg. Att. Score	Avg. Prog. Score	Conf. Int.
National (CLA pupils)	5,110	77%	3.0	18.9	-1.19	±0.04	4.1	-1.31	±0.05	3.7	-0.97	±0.04	4.5	-1.15	±0.05	6.6	-1.28	±0.05
LA (all schools)	5,650	83.3%	3.9	43.2	-0.01	±0.04	9.0	-0.05	±0.04	7.8	-0.06	±0.04	12.1	+0.00	±0.04	14.3	+0.03	±0.04
LA (state-funded schools)	4,841	96.6%	4.5	45.0	+0.00	±0.04	9.6	-0.03	±0.04	8.5	-0.05	±0.04	12.2	+0.02	±0.04	14.7	+0.04	±0.04
Virtual School	67	86.6%	3.1	18.8	-1.01	±0.32	4.1	-1.15	±0.40	3.5	-0.83	±0.36	4.3	-0.96	±0.37	6.8	-1.08	±0.37

East Sussex LAC at KS 4 made better progress than LAC Nationally. ESLAC are more likely to achieve the EBacc and any other qualification than LAC Nationally. ESLAC at KS 4 with SEN support and an EHCP achieved just below all LAC Nationally.

In East Sussex if you are LAC and have SEN support or an EHCP you are more likely to achieve a qualification than any LAC Nationally.



KS4 Benchmark (CLA)

2017 | CLA 12 Months

	Cohort	Attainment 8	Progress 8			A*-C/9-5				EBacc ²		Entry				
			Avg. Cov.	Score	Conf. Int.	EBacc Eng. LL	EBacc Mat.	5+ Inc E&M	5+ Inc E&M ¹	Entry	Att.	Any Qual.	EBacc Slots	Other Slots	Triple Sci.	≥2 Lang.
National (CLA pupils)	5,110	18.9	77%	-1.19	±0.04	15%	11%	7%	15%	8%	2%	74%	1.5	1.7	5%	<0.5%
LA (all schools)	5,650	43.2	83.3%	-0.01	±0.04	53.4%	39.9%	34.9%	53.6%	26.1%	14.2%	96.7%	2.6	2.7	25.4%	5.3%

LA (state-funded schools)	4,841	45.0		96.6%	+0.00	±0.04	58.2%	43.2%	37.9%	58.9%	28.7%	15.2%	98.1%	2.7	2.8	26.2%	3.6%
Virtual School	67	18.8		86.6%	-1.01	±0.32	16.4%	11.9%	9.0%	17.9%	4.5%	1.5%	76.1%	1.5	1.8	6.0%	0.0%

9% (6) of ESLAC achieved 9-5 in GCSE English and maths compared to 7% nationally, however 18 % (11) ESLAC achieved a 9-4 in GCSE English and maths (no national data).

17.9% (11) of ESLAC achieved 5 + A*-C (9-4 Eng/maths) in GCSE including English and maths compared to 15% nationally.

1. Case Studies for Use of Pupil Premium Plus 2016/17

NZ a little girl: White other- Polish now in Reception

NZ was born in Poland and moved to the UK as a baby. She came into care in October 2014, having only just started at nursery in September 2014. Prior to N's enrolment in nursery, there were concerns that she presented as vulnerable due to her young age, her family's isolation, lack of English and lack of social stimulation via contact with other children her age. She is on a Care Order. She has been with the same foster carers since Dec 2014.

Current attainment- Although N is working below GLD (Good Level of Development) in some areas, she has made accelerated progress in many areas, most noticeably in communication and interaction. For example, she has recently been rescreened using the Language Link programme and has moved from the 5th to the 95th centile.

Attendance: Reception- 96%

Additional support provided by Pupil Premium since N came into care

Provision	Description
Virtual School Summer School	The VS runs a summer school every year for children due to start in Reception in the following September. The six sessions are led by a Primary teacher and focus on Literacy alongside preparing children for the transition from nursery to primary school. N attended all of the six sessions held throughout the summer holidays in 2016. She made a smooth transition to Primary school, enjoys school and has made peer friendships.
Educational Resources	Numicon at Home Kit (Multi-sensory Numeracy resource) and a Jolly Phonics Letters & CD book were provided for the foster carers to use to support home learning.

EV a little boy: White British; Year 1

He came into care in December 2015 (Year R) because of neglect. E hadn't attended his Reception Class due to his behaviour. He lived with his first Foster Carer until July 2016 and then moved to the Specialist Placement Scheme because of his extreme behaviour. He remained with the same carer until December 2017 when sadly he had to move unexpectedly because his carer became seriously ill. He started in Reception in March 2015 at a local school and stayed there until Dec 2016 when he transferred to a local school nearer to new carers. During this period E was being assessed and it was agreed to issue an Educational Health Care Plan based on assessments Health, Education and Care specialists. He repeated year R.

Attendance: Year R – 33% in school from when he came into care

Year R – 66% (repeated Year R, mornings only)

Additional support provided by Pupil Premium since E came into care

Provision	Description
Reception Summer School	E attended Summer school as he had missed so much of Year R, it had been agreed that 'stage not age' needed to be applied and E would repeat Year R.
Book Club	E receives termly book parcels, PP funded from the VS. He has an interest in bugs and has received a bug hunting kit as part of the parcels
1-1 tuition	E had never been in a classroom. When he first came into care a 1-1 tutor worked with him at home for 2 hours per day, after 6 weeks this moved into the local schools Reception class. This increased to 3 hours per day until a special school placement was identified. A 1-1 tutor worked with E over the holiday periods.
East Sussex Behaviour Attendance Service (ESBAS)	An ESBAS Advisor and practitioner worked with schools and with the VS 1-1 tutor to plan, deliver and support E's programme.
Maintaining Placement	In order to maintain both school and care settings initially E's Childminder provided 1-1 support in the afternoons. When E moved to new carers in July 2016 placement support staff collected him from school after lunch and carried out appropriate activities off the school site.
Thrive training	The Virtual School contributed to the costs to train staff in Thrive. The VS provided books and activities to support staff who were working with E.

OJ, a little girl: White British; now in Year 3

Prior to coming into care in July 2015 because of neglect, O was working below or well below expected levels in maths and literacy with very low attendance.

End of KS1 results: Reading – Working At, Writing – working below, Maths – Working well below.

O has lived with the same carer since coming into care. O changed school when her care setting became permanent so that she would be nearer her carer.

Attendance: Year 2 – 96.1%

Year 3 – 85.4% (low due to educational experience with carers in Australia)

Additional support provided by Pupil Premium since O came into care

Provision	Description
Book Club	O receives termly book parcels, PP funded from the VS. These

	parcels are selected on reading age and are a range of genres.
1-1 tuition	O previously received a block of 10 1:1 tuition sessions in both maths and English to bridge the gaps in her learning. These sessions were hugely beneficial for her as she had a very late start to her education, missing all of reception year and very low attendance in Y1, prior to coming into care. O is just beginning her second block of 10 1:1 tuition sessions to continue to bridge these gaps. O is making great progress, however is still working below
Taxi	O was in a foster placement in Eastbourne, attending school in Peacehaven, as it was agreed by the team around O that school consistency was key for her whilst she settled into her foster placement, a taxi was agreed for her to get to and from school. Her carers were unable to transport her to and from school due to the distance and O not being the only young person living with them, however they were able to collect her on days that O wanted to stay for after-school clubs. As O is now very settled in her placement she has moved to a local school and is able to be transported by her carer, both O and her carer are very happy with this as it is a positive start to the day together.
Year 2 VS trip	O attended the VS year 2 trip to Mallydams Wood in October half term. This was a fun packed day, learning about woodland creatures, habitats, being kind to our environment and enjoying the outdoors. This day also involved a lot of team work between the children, using initiative and leadership skills.
Thrive training	Both O's previous school and her current school have received PP funding for Thrive practitioners training O has been able to access Thrive through school intervention. In addition O's carer has attended the Family Thrive training run by the Virtual School, this has enabled her carer to support the Thrive work done in school by understanding the Thrive Action plan and using same language and activities.
East Sussex Behaviour Attendance Service (ESBAS)	O receives Thrive sessions from ESBAS, funded by PP. These sessions are hugely beneficial for O's social and emotional needs. As O has gaps in her emotional development due to her chaotic early years, these sessions allow her to go back to these missing strands in her early brain development and secure these missed skills. O is making fantastic progress within these sessions which also feeds into her day to day school and home life.

DZ a boy: White other/Polish EAL, Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, now in Year 6.

DZ came into care in October 2014 because of neglect, is on a Care Order and has been with the same foster carer since May 2016. Prior to coming into care he was not in the UK, so there is no data or end of KS1 SATs. Working below ARE for a year 1 child (below National Curriculum levels)

Attendance: Year 4 – 98%

Year 5 – 98%

Year 6 – 97%

Additional support provided by Pupil Premium since DZ came into care

Provision	Description
Book Club	6 Book parcels per year, KS 2 linked to reading age
1-1 tuition	D has received 30 hours of 1-1 tuition to improve his English at KS2 and is currently part-way through a further block of 10 hours. When DZ came into care, he was unable to recall many sounds and could not blend sounds to read words. He was only able to use a few key words in spoken language. He was working at a level below ARE for a Year 1 child. He is now working at ARE in Literacy for a Year 2 child, which represents significant progress for a child with specific developmental language difficulties and FASD.
Virtual School Year 6 Transition Residential camp	The VS invite all year 6 to attend this 3 day residential, the challenges of outdoor and adventurous activities provide a platform for Virtual school staff and SW's to explore with the child the challenges around transition and consider strategies to manage the situation.
Independent Speech & Language Therapy	There was some evidence that DZ had experienced speech & language difficulties in his first language, prior to coming to England and despite S&L interventions in school, DZ was not making the expected progress, so the VS funded a full Speech and Language assessment by an Independent therapist, to identify his difficulties and to inform future intervention. Following the report, which identified specific developmental language difficulties and speech sound production difficulties, the VS also funded a block of 6 1:1 sessions with the therapist to support speech sound production. A TA from his school shadowed these sessions, so that the work could be continued in school. His spoken English has improved considerably; he has a wider vocabulary and is now working on using complex sentences in both spoken and written English. His confidence and self-esteem has increased considerably as his ability to verbally express his needs, thoughts and feelings has

	improved. This has also had a positive impact on his ability to initiate and maintain peer relationships.
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SM- a boy White British, Year 8

SM came into care in December 2016 because of neglect, he hadn't attended any school for 4 years. He had received some mentoring via ISEND for 4 months prior to coming into care and had an Additional Needs Plan and access to e-learning. Initially he stayed with a family member out of East Sussex, so e-Learning and book parcels were put in place. He moved back to East Sussex in February 2017 and went on roll, into year 8 at a local mainstream secondary school March 2017. A Thrive assessment, Speech and Language link assessment was carried out by the school. No SEN were identified but gaps in education.

Additional support provided by Pupil Premium since L came into care

Provision	Description
E Learning	The Virtual school provided a lap top and funded 10 weeks of E learning. When S returned to East Sussex and went on roll at a school to ease the transition into school he continued the E learning in the school setting. This finished in April 2017
1-1 Tuition	Gaps identified and S had 4 hours p/w 1-1 tuition in basic literacy and numeracy. This was for 12 weeks. S embraced the tuition and made huge progress. He is fully integrated into school
Book Club	S received books and reported that he had never had a book of his own before.
Thrive/Nurture	The school have a nurture coordinator who is Thrive trained, this was funded in part by the Virtual School. S had access to regular Thrive sessions and Nurture provision as part of his transition into full time education.

S is attending full time with an excellent attendance record, he is in mainstream classes making very good progress.

PK a girl, White British; now in Year 10

Pk came into care in June 2009 due to neglect/abuse, is on a Full Care Order and has been in a residential children's home since August 2015 following 8 placement breakdowns.

Year 8 – put on a part-time timetable due to very disruptive placement breakdown/high anxiety.

Year 9 – period of time at College Central. 67.4 % attendance

Year 10 – 95.6% attendance

Additional support provided by Pupil Premium since P came into care

Provision	Description
1-1 tuition	P received a block of tuition during Year 8 when on a P/T timetable. Support from VS tutor for period of time without a school in Yr 9 – several sessions of 2 hrs or more per week.
Transport	Taxis provided for short period due to distance of foster placement to school.
Virtual School Year 6 Transition Residential camp	The VS invite all year 6 to attend this 3 day residential, the challenges of outdoor and adventurous activities provide a platform for Virtual school staff and SW's to explore with the YP the challenges around transition and consider strategies to manage the situation.
ESBAS	1:1 sessions to support engagement and self-confidence.
'Fast Tomato'	VS Caseworker looked at 'Fast Tomato' programme with P to give advice on careers/college choices.
Mentoring	Support from VS worker around PSHE topics and mentoring. This is ongoing.
Alternative Provision - Egg Tooth	P has recently joined a group working on self-esteem and confidence.

P is now in Year 11 and continuing to make progress, she is planning to go to college in September 2018.

FG - a girl, White British; now in Year 12

F came into care in December 2009 because of neglect, is on a Full Care Order and has been with her current carers for four years.

Attendance: Year 9 – 98%

Year 10 – 100%

Year 11 – 96%

Additional support provided by Pupil Premium since F came into care

Provision	Description
Book Club	F received book parcels in KS2 termly, these will have been selected on her reading age.
1-1 tuition	Throughout secondary school F has received several blocks of 1:1 tuition in maths, science and English to boost her levels and bridge any gaps she may have had in her learning. F made a huge amount of progress in her education, exceeding her expected levels in many subjects. All of these blocks of tuition were requested by F herself during her PEP meetings as she was very keen to succeed in her education. F sat her GCSE's

	and is now in the 6 th form at Bedes on a boarding placement.
'This Is Us' CICC film	The Virtual School and CICC (Children In Care Council) produced a short film 'This is Us' about being in care which was PP funded. F came up with this idea as a member of the CICC, she wanted the film to be a message to others about what being in care is like for the young people including the positives. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ztIm5IGGpfQ
Virtual School Year 6 Transition Residential camp	The VS invite all year 6 to attend this 3 day residential, the challenges of outdoor and adventurous activities provide a platform for Virtual School staff and SW's to explore with the children the challenges around transition and consider strategies to manage the situation.
VS Y11 revision day	The Virtual School run a revision day for Y11 at Brighton University, helping the young people to find was of revising as they approach their GCSE's. This also gives them the opportunity to look round the university with current students, getting a glimpse of university life.
Higher Education opportunities	F has been given the opportunity to be part of higher education schemes such as Compact Plus and university day events. These have been excellent opportunities for F as she is extremely aspirational regarding her future and possible career paths. F also went on the Sussex university Year 10 residential.
School trip – World Challenge, Sri Lanka	F went to Sri Lanka last summer on a world challenge trip with school, pupil premium funded 1/3 of this trip, in order for us to agree the fund F did a presentation about the challenge and how she would benefit. This was a wonderful life experience for F and a great way to spend her summer before moving on to sixth form. F had to fund raise for the final 2/3 of the cost .

2. Springboard boarding placements

Until the end of 2016 -17 we had 5 YP attending boarding school at Bedes (1 Year 8, 1 Year 11, 2 Year 12, 1 Year 13). We continue to work with the Springboard charity who have now amalgamated with RNCF who agree to fund 25% of the fees, Bedes fund 50% and the LA 25%. In 2017-18 2 students are joining year 12. There is a YP (Yr 12) who has recently come into care who is being supported at Box Hill Boarding School.

In addition to the fantastic opportunities offered to the YP that attend, Bedes offer days to groups of students from placement support, 1-1 opportunities and host our Children in Care Awards.

The student who has just left Bedes has written the following about his experience:

When I was first introduced to the opportunity to attend Bedes, I lacked knowledge of what private schools were, what boarding was, what living away from home would feel like and whether or not I would enjoy such a significant change from state school to private school. 5 years on and I can certainly state that, without a doubt, accepting that opportunity was one of the best decisions I have ever made. The first few weeks was challenging for me as I was new to the concept of boarding however over time, I found that the easily accessible and somewhat invaluable support I was given

by staff and newly befriended classmates allowed me to feel like I was not only part of the multicultural and incredibly diverse Bedes community but moreover that I could achieve anything I wanted to, be it in an academic or co-curricular field.

Being a looked after child who struggled with settling into new places and managing work with personal time, I felt anxious about how I would cope with such a tremendous transition in my life however all of this apprehension swiftly and absolutely vanished with the help of Bede's looked after child representative; Dr Andrew Carroll. Having Dr Carroll there, knowing I always had someone on campus that I could talk to if I ever needed any advice or help really made me feel safe and ultimately gave me the courage to try new activities and sports out, allowing me to meet new people and feel more settled in. This support was also provided to me by my house master and tutors throughout the 5 years at Bedes which I feel has given me the skills and confidence to smoothly transition into the next chapter of my academic journey.

Even though Bedes consistently encourages you to accomplish goals you never thought possible, it must be said that a significant part of that process begins with pushing yourself to try new things out, whether it be sports, subjects, activities or events. To this I say, if you wish to truly leave Bedes feeling that you have done all that you can, you MUST be able to jump into the deep end and try things out that you've perhaps always wanted to do or that you never knew existed until you came to Bedes. By doing this, you will experience the opportunities to make new friends and obtain new knowledge which will conclusively prepare you for later life whilst also taking advantage of everything that Bedes has to offer you. This would unequivocally be my most valuable advice I could give to anyone thinking about applying to Bedes.

There will always be rules you must abide by in any academic institution however if I were asked to list what I would advise someone NOT to do within their time at Bedes, it would be:

- 1. DON'T defer from taking up a new hobby or subject at Bedes through the thoughts of embarrassment of failure. Everyone is in the same boat as you and anyone that appears highly skilled at their activity had to start somewhere.*
- 2. DON'T feel intimidated by the incredibly cultural diversity at Bedes. You are constantly surrounded by students your age that come from a wide range of different backgrounds and nationalities so embrace it and begin to enjoy learning how their lives differ from yours.*

In conclusion, Bedes is a fantastic place to learn new things and meet new people albeit being a looked after child or not. Knowing I constantly had access to invaluable support from teachers and staff as well as feeling part of an ambitious, loving community ultimately allowed me to achieve all of my goals which is why I encourage anyone deciding whether to attend Bedes to take the jump and see where their experience will take them.

*This young person achieved Triple distinction * and went off to York University in September 2017.*

3. Higher Education

Our YP who go onto Higher Education make the most of all the opportunities and are very willing to return to East Sussex to share their experiences. One of our undergraduates spent a year as part of his course in Vienna and another in Australia (University of Sydney), they will graduate in June 2018. We have enjoyed celebrating with our graduates as they complete studies and move on in the world of work or to MA's. One of our YP who completed an MA in July 2016 is working for an East Sussex Creative training Provider. One of the YP who graduated in 2016 completed an MA in 2017 and was the guest speaker at the recent CIC Awards. He now runs a photography business:

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

Committee: **Corporate Parenting Panel**

Date: **27 July 2018**

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**

Recommendations: The Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to comment on and note the report.

1. Background and supporting information

1.2 Services for LAC are predominantly funded from the Children's Services base budget with some additional smaller funding streams supporting specific activity eg Virtual School activity from the Pupil Premium Grant.

1.3 The past quarter has continued to see sustained pressure on the system and at the end of June, ESCC had 606 children in care. Work has taken place to drill down into the underlying reasons for the steady rise over a number of months, with the conclusion that while the number of children entering the system over the past year has remained fairly stable, children are staying longer in placement in the context of the following factors:

- Older children who are being exploited both criminally and sexually
- Improved practice on neglect identifying larger family groups with a spread of children of different ages
- Courts being increasingly reluctant to approve adoption for some young children and also protracted legal challenges to plans for adoption delaying the permanence process.

1.4 The rate in East Sussex is now 57.2 and closer to but still below the IDACI expected rate of 59 (which would equate to 625 children). A total of 425 children were in foster care at the end of June, with 85 of those children in agency placements, a rise of 8 over the quarter. In addition we have 50 young people in supported housing options, homes or hostels. 23 children were placed for adoption. 6 children were placed with foster carers who are also approved adopters under the Fostering for Adoption pathway.

1.5 The number of children with kinship carers now stands at 45, some of whom have been placed with family members at the direction of a judge.

1.6 The number of children placed at home with their parents whilst subject to a legal order has reduced by 4 to 17. Planning for placements of this sort is always monitored rigorously in order to mitigate any risk factors and agreement to begin or end a placement with parents is given at a senior level. However some of these children remain placed with parents on interim legal orders during ongoing proceedings and hence they are not subject to internal Placement with Parent processes.

1.7 At the end of the quarter 33 children were placed in agency residential placements, a rise of 6 over the period. Budget pressure has been mitigated to some extent but not eradicated by a step down from residential placement to Supported Housing, a return home etc.

1.8 At the end of the quarter 1 ESCC child remained secured at Lansdowne; the same young woman who was reported as secured at the last meeting of the CPP. Her behaviour is still very troubled. It had been hoped that she would leave Lansdowne within this quarter however staff applied in June for her Secure Order to be extended by a Court and the search for a suitable placement to enable her to leave Lansdowne continues. This will be a very delicate piece of work with few options being identified given her complexity.

1.9 We have had no new remands to custody during this quarter and, at the end of June, there were no young people still on remand and awaiting sentencing.

1.10 Overall the numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking young people has remained stable because, although ESCC has continued to accept transfer of young people via the dispersal scheme when it is possible to allocate social work staff, some of our young people have turned 18 and become care leavers. As far as possible new young people already placed in or close to East Sussex continue to be prioritised for transfer to ESCC to facilitate staff contact etc.

1.11 There numbers of children subject to Child Arrangement/Residence Orders has risen by 1 to 331 and 439 children were subject to Special Guardianship Orders, a rise of 2. Sadly a number of children have become LAC due to a breakdown in SGO placements for them.

1.12 During Q1 of 2018/19 1 complaint was received from a young person in one of our Children's Homes who was complaining that she felt that a member of staff was singling her out and making false allegations of assault and trying to get her arrested. An internal investigation was carried out and it was found that the assault was witnessed by a third party and reported to the Police, which was considered appropriate. The young person was warned by staff about her behaviour and offered a further meeting if she so wished. The complaint was therefore not upheld.

2. Conclusion

2.1 Pressure on the system continues, driven by the numbers of and costs for children and continued close oversight will be maintained.

2.2 1 complaint was received and investigated fully but not upheld.

Stuart Gallimore

Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Liz Rugg, Assistant Director, Early Help and Social Care Tel: 01273 481274

Local Members

All

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Children's Services LAC Summary between 01/07/2017 and 30/06/18

Background documents

None

Children's Services LAC Summary between 01/07/2017 and 30/06/2018

Placement Type	Jul 17	Aug 17	Sep 17	Oct 17	Nov 17	Dec 17	Jan 18	Feb 18	Mar 18	Apr 18	May 18	Jun 18
A3 - Placed for adoption with consent (under section 19 of the 2002 Act) with current foster carer	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	2
A4 - Placed for adoption with consent (under section 19 of the 2002 Act) not with current foster carer	19	17	17	12	9	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
A5 - Placed for adoption with placement order (under section 21 of the 2002 Act) with current foster carer	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	
A6 - Placed for adoption with placement order (under section 21 of the 2002 Act) not with current foster carer	4	5	7	8	8	8	10	13	13	15	14	14
H5 - Residential accommodation	16	17	17	21	20	18	16	24	25	28	26	30
K1 - Secure unit	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
K2 - Homes and Hostels	47	45	44	46	46	47	49	50	50	49	49	50
P1 - Placed with own parents	18	20	20	20	20	20	19	19	21	21	20	17
P2 - Independent living	2	4	4	5	6	5	5	5	4	4	4	3
R2 - NHS/Health Trust			1	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1
R5 - Young Offender Institution or prison	3	2	1	1	4	4	3	5	4	2	2	1
S1 - All Residential schools	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
U1 - Foster placement with relative or friend- long term fostering	13	12	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	10	9
U3 - Foster placement with relative or friend- not long term or FFA	29	36	35	32	34	31	39	36	35	36	32	36
U4 - Placement with other foster carer- long term fostering	124	121	120	118	116	117	116	114	114	113	113	113
U5 - Placement with other foster carer who is also an approved adopter- FFA	2	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	7	7	6	6
U6 - Placement with other foster carer - not long term or FFA	273	276	279	282	276	277	287	291	306	306	318	312
Total	561	569	571	571	566	562	576	590	605	607	610	606

Appendix A

Immigration Status	Jul 17	Aug 17	Sep 17	Oct 17	Nov 17	Dec 17	Jan 18	Feb 18	Mar 18	Apr 18	May 18	Jun 18
Asylum Seeker	1	1	1	1	1							
British Citizen	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK (ILR)	1	1	1	1								
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child	22	22	21	23	22	23	21	21	20	22	24	20
Legal Status	Jul 17	Aug 17	Sep 17	Oct 17	Nov 17	Dec 17	Jan 18	Feb 18	Mar 18	Apr 18	May 18	Jun 18
Child Arrangements Order/Residence Order	331	332	331	331	331	331	331	331	333	333	333	334
S8(1)CA'89	425	430	432	432	433	433	433	436	437	438	438	439
Special Guardianship Order S14A CA 89												

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Report to: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date of meeting: 26 October 2018

Report by: Director of Children's Services

Title: KS1, 2 and KS4 outcomes for Looked After Children 2017/18

Purpose: To provide an overview of the KS1, 2 and KS4 results

RECOMMENDATION: The Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to comment on and note the contents of the report

1 Background and supporting information

1.1 The indicative educational results are contained within Appendix 1 and will be validated by the published Department for Education (DfE) data later in the year.

1.2 The Virtual School will continue to direct the Pupil Premium to interventions which will have the best possible educational outcomes for Looked After Children.

2 Recommendation

2.1 Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to comment on and note the contents of the report.

STUART GALLIMORE
Director of Children's Services

Contact Officers:
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Local Members: All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - KS1,2 and KS4 outcomes for Looked After Children 2017/18

1. Background and Context

1.1 Last summer 27 children finished year 2, 37 children finished year 6 and their primary education and 42 children finished year 11 and their secondary education. All children took national assessments. These numbers include the Looked After Children (LAC) cohort as defined by the DFE (children who were 11 years old or 15 years old respectively on 31 August 2017, who were in continuous care for 12 months ending on 31 March 2018 and who were educated in England). Data on outcomes has been obtained directly from exams officers at individual schools by telephone and email, and is therefore is not yet validated. The relatively small numbers in each cohort mean that year on year variations have limited statistical significance. In addition, there is not yet any comparison data with the national cohort. The DFE results are published next spring but LAC data is now collected by NCER (Nexus) and is expected to be available in November. Nexus will allow the Virtual School (VS) to analyse the data in detail, looking at the effect of multiple variables such as special educational needs (SEN), number of placements and whether children were educated in or out of East Sussex. It will also enable regional and national comparisons.

1.2 All three cohorts had a high proportion of children on the SEN register. At KS1 29% were on the SEN register and 18% had an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). At KS2 61% of children were on the SEN register and 22% had an EHCP. At KS4 46% of children were on the SEN register and 24% had an EHCP. The outcomes of these groups of children also need to be compared nationally.

2. Key Stage One Outcomes

2.1 Percentage working at expected standard or above: East Sussex LAC Data.

Expected and above	East Sussex LAC	In Care in East Sussex Schools	Not in Care in East Sussex Schools
Reading	33.3	31.6	77.1
Writing	29.6	26.3	73.3
Maths	37	31.6	77.5

2.2 The data in column 2 includes all children supported by the VS placed and educated in and out of County. It is slightly higher than the Local Authority data for children In Care who are educated in East Sussex schools; data which includes the results of children who are looked after by other authorities (column 3)

2.3 There were some noticeable successes. Child A (11) came into care in 2015, has had multiple placements and attended two primary schools. Child A was also out of school for an extended period of time and had social, emotional and mental health difficulties which impacted significantly on learning and behaviour.

2.4 A VS tutor worked with A out of the school setting and continued to support integration back into school. The VS teacher also worked closely with the class teacher and key staff to embed supportive strategies, such that A was able to build relationships within school. The VS also contributed to funding Thrive Practitioner training for school staff. At the end of KS1, Child A achieved age related expectations in writing and Maths and greater depth in reading.

3. Key Stage Two Outcomes

3.1 Percentage reaching expected standard or above: East Sussex LAC Data.

	East Sussex LAC 2018	East Sussex LAC 2017	In Care in East Sussex Schools	Not In Care in east Sussex Schools
Reading	46.4	46	46.7	76
Writing	32.1	48	36.7	79.1
Maths	46.4	46	43.3	73.8
Reading, Writing and Maths	18.9		26.7	63.9

46.4 % of the East Sussex LAC cohort who sat the exams made expected progress in reading, 32.1% in writing and 46.4% in Maths. Outcomes at KS2 have remained fairly constant in reading and Maths at 46% but are down from 48% to 32.1% in writing.

3.2 Analysis of the Local Authority Key Stage 2 data, which includes all LAC children educated in East Sussex maintained schools, shows that gaps in reading and Maths are lower than in writing. If the children with an EHCP are removed from this data set, the results for LAC are very similar to those of the disadvantaged group in reading and Maths but remain lower in writing.

4. Progress Data for all East Sussex LAC at Key Stage 2

4.1

	Average progress score 2018	Average progress score 2017
Reading	-1.97	-0.5
Writing	-2.83	-2.4
Maths	-1.79	-2.8

Progress scores have improved significantly in Maths but have gone down in reading. This is likely to be the result of an increased level of challenge in the tests and the language difficulties experienced by a significant proportion of our LAC population. The data requires further detailed analysis to explore the reasons for these progress scores.

4.2 There have been some noticeable successes within the Key Stage 2 cohort. One student had an average progress score of 18.4 and another of 6.4. Six students had a score of greater than 5 for reading progress. Of this group, Child B (11) has been in care for over 3 years and had multiple placements. Child B received literacy support from the Virtual School. Child C (11) has only recently come into care but sadly has had multiple placements. The VS provided home to school transport to allow the child to maintain his school placement, teaching assistant support and counselling.

5. Key Stage 4 Outcomes

5.1 Outcomes at KS4 are very provisional. The Local Authority data for KS4 has not

yet been published. The use of Attainment 8 and Progress 8 as headline measures and the complex formulas that these involve means that it is not possible to predict these outcomes from the data held by the VS. We are therefore dependent on Nexus which will allow us to analyse the data in detail and will inform action.

	English language	English Literature	Maths	Science	English and Maths
No. of students entered for GCSE	24	20	26	21	23
% 4 and Above	8.3	15	30.8	33	13

Initial data analysis suggests that results in Maths and Science are significantly better than in English. The relatively low percentage of our students achieving level 4 and above in English brings the base measure of achieving level 4 in both English and Maths down and shows that the Virtual School must continue to focus on English tuition and other interventions aimed at improving results in English.

5.2 There are many success stories. The highest performing student, Child D (17), achieved nine GCSEs at 4 and above and 6s in five subjects. The VS funded tuition for Child D in Maths and English during key stage 4. Other KS4 students made excellent progress against personal targets. Child E (16), student with English as an Additional Language supported by a VS funded tutor, achieved a grade B in their home language and a further 7 GCSEs including a 5 in one subject. Many year 11 students have made progress from their starting points and against personalised targets. Child F (16) had a history of social and emotional difficulties within education and moved school and placement in year 10. He struggled to engage with school and was close to permanent exclusion. The VS worked with his school to set up a bespoke timetable based around his strengths. Child F gained a vocational qualification through work experience and worked with a tutor on English and Maths. Child F is now at College.

6. Education, Employment and Training, Care Leavers

6.1 Of this summer's KS4 exam cohort, 86% of students are in education employment or training, an increase of 6% from last year. Of the NEET group, two young people are placed in an out of county residential home and the remaining young people are engaging with social workers and applying for EET opportunities. In year 13, 94% (60) are in education, employment or training. This is a substantial increase from last year's 70%. Three are on apprenticeships and three are on alternative training programmes, e.g. DV8 and In 2 Skills.

6.2 The young people who remain NEET are all engaging with social workers but have very high levels of need.

6.3 The percentage of care leavers going on to University has remained at 10% this year (14 out of 139). One young person is taking a Masters qualification. 12% (5 out of 4) of the year 13 cohort have gone to University and one has been offered a University place but has deferred.

7. Summary and recommendations

7.1 It should be noted that the results for the KS2 and KS4 cohorts this year were significantly impacted by a number of these children facing some very challenging wider issues. In particular, the complexity of their behaviours resulted in a proportion of them having a number of placement moves and necessitated them being placed out of county.

7.2 For the school year 2018-19, the VS will continue to focus on strategies to improve English and Maths, embed effective interventions for children with SEN such as Speech and Language services and, given the impact of social, emotional and mental health issues on all 3 cohorts, will consolidate the commitment to attachment training across all settings to help schools and colleges better understand the complexity of our children.

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Report to: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date of meeting: 26 October 2018

Report by: Director of Children's Services

Title: Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) Update
1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018

Purpose: To outline the development of the services for Unaccompanied Asylum seeking Children.

RECOMMENDATION: The Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to comment on and note the contents of the report

1. Background and supporting information

1.1 A report outlining the development of the services for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children is attached as Appendix 1. In addition, a short briefing note is attached as Appendix 2 specifically to address a range of frequently asked questions (FAQ)

1.2 The services for UASC are supported via a combination of core funding from the CSA budget, the Pupil Premium for additional education support and a proportion of Home Office funding for each placement made.

2. Recommendation

2.1 Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to comment on and note the contents of the report.

STUART GALLIMORE
Director of Children's Services

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List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children Service Report

Appendix 2 – Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (FAQs)

1. Background

1.1 The United Nations High Commissioner for Children defines unaccompanied children as 'those who are separated from both parents and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, has the responsibility to do so.' UNHCR (1994) Refugee Children: Guidelines of protection and care.

1.2 The Home Office defines an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child (UASC) as a person who at the time of making the asylum application

- is, or (if there is no documentary evidence) appears to be, under eighteen
- is applying for asylum in his or her own right
- has no adult relative or guardian to turn to in this country
- AND
- is fleeing persecution from their own country

1.3 UASC usually come to the attention of East Sussex County Council (ESCC) in a number of ways

- **Spontaneous arrival** which incorporates those young people who are discovered by police or boarder force staff having arrived in the UK illegally. ESCC become responsible for these young people if they are found in the county.
- **Dublin iii regulation** which is an EU law addressing where asylum should be claimed. If an unaccompanied minor has a family member in a member country they can apply to join them and make their asylum claim in that country. Family member includes siblings.
- **Sec 67 Immigration Act 2016** which relates to the resettlement of unaccompanied child refugees in France, Italy and Greece to the UK. Children must be under the age of 18 and in Europe before the 18 January 2018.
- **Dubs amendment** which covers the UK commitment to the resettlement of children in refugee camps in Europe.
- **Vulnerable children's resettlement scheme** which was established in 2016 as a scheme to resettle vulnerable children from Middle East and North Africa in response to the Syrian Conflict.
- **National transfer scheme (NTS)** which addresses the issue that the location of UASC across the UK is not evenly spread. Local Authorities with "entry points" such as ports and airports have a disproportionate number of UASC in their areas. NTS was set up to manage this with the aim of dispersing young people more evenly across the country. The Local Authorities who agreed to participate in the scheme made a commitment to take unaccompanied children up to 0.07% of their total child population. In ESCC this equates to 78 UASC. ESCC Children's Services have pledged to take up to 2 UASC a month under this scheme. ESCC are currently looking after 14 young people who came through the National Transfer Scheme.

2. ESCC Duties to UASC

2.1 Section 17 of the Children Act (1989) imposes a general duty on local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need. UASC who have no responsible adult to care for them are separated or 'unaccompanied', and are therefore 'in need'. Almost all of these children will be accommodated by ESCC Children Services as they meet the criteria of s20 unless a needs assessment results in another response being considered more appropriate

(for example if a trafficked child is at risk and it is appropriate to initiate care proceedings).

2.2 As Looked After Children (LAC), UASC are eligible for support in the same way as any other LAC.

2.3 UASC are also eligible for Care Leaving (CL) services in the same way as other LAC. The 2014 UASC Statutory guidance states: "A child's immigration status has no bearing on a Local Authority's duty to provide CL support, unaccompanied children must be provided with the same support as for any CL. This obligation remains until the young person is 21 even in cases where the young person has been refused asylum, is considered "all rights exhausted" and has no recourse to public funding. This can be extended to 25 if the young person is in education.

3. ESCC services to UASC

3.1 Historically UASC have been allocated to social workers across a variety of teams in ESCC including Youth Support, LAC and Care Leavers/Through Care teams. This has resulted in an inconsistent service with young people receiving different levels of support.

3.2 Asylum and immigration is a complex area of practice which requires a specialist level of knowledge and expertise. During the self-assessment completed within the CL service against the '10 gold standards' it became apparent very quickly that UASC would be best served by creating a small bespoke team partially funded through the additional Home Office grant. Workers in the UASC service will have specialist knowledge of the asylum process, legal duties, risks specific to UASC and resources to support cultural needs.

3.3 A decision was made to incorporate the newly formed specialist UASC service within the Through Care Service (TCS). This reflects the development of some expertise already acquired within the TCS in relation to the duties and responsibilities of ESCC to LAC and CL's. In light of the specific knowledge regarding asylum all UASC, regardless of age, will be allocated to UASC service.

3.4 The team will consist of 0.5 Practice Manager, 2 full time Social Workers, 1 full time Newly Qualified Social Worker and 0.7 Personal Advisor who works with young people aged 18+.

4. UASC within ESCC

4.1 There are currently 43 young people within ESCC who come under the umbrella of UASC. Of the total cohort of 43, 24 young people are aged 17 years or younger with the youngest being 13 years old and are being cared for as below

- 8 in foster care (3 in county, 5 out of county)
- 2 in supported lodgings (in county)
- 11 in supported accommodation (4 in county, 7 out of county)
- 1 living with friends (out of county)
- 2 missing

4.2 The remaining 19 young people are 18+ and are living in a range of accommodation options as detailed below

- 4 Staying Put (1 out of county)
- 11 Supported accommodation (1 in county, 10 out of county)
- 2 living independently
- 2 supported lodgings (in county)

5. Summary

5.1 The reconstituted UASC service should be fully staffed and up and running by the end of November 2018. These service developments were very well received by Ofsted during the ILAC's Inspection in July 2018. In addition the close working relationship with the Principal Social Worker for UASC for the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration has assisted with the drafting of detailed operational practice which is keeping pace with national best practice, a fast moving agenda.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

1. What sort of children does this definition cover?

The United Nations High Commissioner for Children defines unaccompanied children as:

‘those who are separated from both parents and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, has the responsibility to do so.’ UNHCR (1994) Refugee Children: Guidelines of protection and care.

The Home Office defines an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child as a person who, at the time of making the asylum application

- Is, or (if there is no documentary evidence) appears to be, under eighteen;
- Is applying for asylum in his or her own right;
- Has no adult relative or guardian to turn to in this country; and
- Is fleeing persecution from their own country

2. What do we have to do in East Sussex?

For migrant children who come to the United Kingdom alone and who are separated from their families, the assistance they would be entitled to from East Sussex Children’s Service as a ‘child in need’ means that their age is the most important characteristic in determining whether they are owed a duty of assistance at all ie if they are age assessed to be under 18 then they become the responsibility of ESCC.

Section 20 of the Children Act (1989) states that every local authority “shall provide accommodation for any ‘child in need’ in their area who appears to them to require accommodation as a result of:

- There being no person who has parental responsibility for him;
- His being lost or having been abandoned”.

Following LAC (2003) 13 Guidance and the Hillingdon Judgement there is a clear legal need to respond to UASCs as 'looked after children' under the Children Act 1989 (Section 20).

3. What happens when they turn 18?

Once the child reaches 18yrs what happens next will depend on their immigration status.

- If asylum application is positive, the same threshold criteria for leaving care provision as British born children entering the Looked After Child system is applied.
- If at aged 18yrs a child has no status and is All Rights Exhausted (ARE), then a Human Rights Act assessment should be completed to consider if leaving care support can be terminated and care transferred to National Asylum Support Service (NASS).

4. How do we know how many UASC there are nationally or in the South East?

The data concerning the number of resident migrant children across the UK, is predominantly linked to the three Government schemes currently in operation, the National Transfer Scheme, Dubs amendment and vulnerable children's scheme. Data is generated, by the number of payment requests received by the Home Office in any specified timeframe. Whilst this is considered an accurate measure for the purposes of calculating unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in the UK, it does not account for children being cared for by friends or relatives (Dublin III) who do not qualify for government funding.

Data generated in March 2018 estimates the entire child population in the UK to be 14,000,000. The estimated number of UASCs being claimed for by local authorities is 4,600. In the South East region (19 local authorities), the entire child population is estimated at approximately 2,000,000. The estimated number of UASCs currently being claimed for in is 885. The Government calculates that it is reasonable for each Local Authority to care for the equivalent of 0.07% of their entire child population. For the South East as a region this equates to 1353 children. In terms of percentages the South East are currently caring for approximately 65% of their 0.07% calculated figure.

5. What does this mean for East Sussex?

East Sussex has an estimated entire child population of 106,000 and so the 0.07% calculated figure is 74. The current figure cared for by East Sussex County Council is 25, this equates to 33.7% of what the Government considers is the capacity.

6. Where are children coming from?

Most young people arriving in the South East region are between 15-17yrs. With the highest numbers from Sudan, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iran and Albania. Some will be refugees whilst others may be considered to be economic migrants.

7. How do they arrive?

There are various routes by which migrant children can arrive in East Sussex;

i) Spontaneous arrivals

Children who come to the attention of either Police or Border Force, 'inland' or at Port of entry (Newhaven) ie some children are found in lorries at the port whilst others just 'appear' on the streets. These children have travelled to the UK either of their own 'free will', using smuggling networks with family or friends paying for their journey; or have been trafficked to the UK for the purpose of exploitation (eg the sex trade, cannabis farming etc). Regardless of which method these children have used they are all considered vulnerable and likely to have suffered harm or abuse either in their Country of origin or on the journey to the UK.

ii) National Transfer Scheme

The scheme was introduced on 1st July 2016 to relieve the pressure on Port authorities who were caring for high numbers of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (eg Kent and Portsmouth). The transfer protocol provides guidance on the operation of the NTS and the way in which local authorities in England, can transfer unaccompanied children to another local authority in accordance with section 69 of the Immigration Act 2016. In essence "where an unaccompanied child first presents in a participating local authority which is over the ceiling of 0.07% UASC to total child population the local authority may arrange for the transfer of the child through the NTS, unless there are clear reasons why transfer would not be in the best interests of the child.

Key transfer rules:

- a)** If the region in which the child first presents is under the ceiling of 0.07% then the child would be expected to be transferred to a participating local authority within that region unless there is good reason to transfer to another region. For example, if they are a potential victim of trafficking and if it is in their best interests to be placed away from the alleged trafficker who may reside in that region or if they have a relative in that region who may pose a safeguarding risk to the child. Similarly, it would also be appropriate to consider transfer out of region if the child had a relative living in another region and it was considered to be in their best interests to be placed near the relative.

b) If the region is over the ceiling of 0.07% then the child would be expected to be transferred to another participating local authority out of the region using the transfer protocol”.

iii) Vulnerable Children’s Resettlement Scheme.

This scheme was announced in April 2016 and was specifically tailored to support vulnerable and refugee children at risk and their families. The Government has committed to resettling up to 3,000 children and their families over the lifetime of this Parliament.

The scheme does not solely target unaccompanied children, but also extends to vulnerable children at risk, such as those threatened with child labour, child marriage and other forms of abuse or exploitation. It will be open to all ‘at risk’ groups and nationalities within the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA).

This scheme, which is the largest resettlement effort aimed specifically at children at risk from the MENA region, is in addition to the Government’s commitment to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS).

iv) Dubs Amendment

The amendment, passed in May 2016, required the Government to act “as soon as possible” to relocate and support unaccompanied refugee children in Europe, who it is considered would have their needs best met by living in the UK. There has to be consultation with local authorities to determine the number of children each council has the capacity to help.

v) Dublin III Regulation.

The Dublin III regulation is a European Union Law that allows applicants to be considered for family reunification. Children can apply to be brought to the UK to be reunited with parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts or uncles. The UK are obliged under the Dublin Regulation to transfer children so that he may reside in the same country as their family member, whilst their claim for international protection is assessed. In cases where the relative is a parent or sibling they are entitled to come to the UK regardless of whether the family can support them or not. In cases where it is a grandparent, aunt or uncle, the relative must be assessed as being able to support the child to live with them in the UK.

8. Does the Government pay East Sussex to look after these children?

The Home Office will reimburse costs incurred by LAs, caring for UASC and Care Leavers who were formerly UASC. Each LA is required to submit claims on a bi-monthly basis. The funding level was increased in 2016 for any new arrivals but funding for pre-existing or 'legacy' cases was not.

The current funding tariff is as follows;

Category	£ daily
Legacy UASC Under 16	£95
Legacy UASC 16-17yrs	£71
National Rate UASC Under 16 (UK arrivals from 1 July 2016)	£114
National Rate UASC 16/17 (UK arrivals from 1 July 2016)	£91

Leaving Care

Legacy cases (25 FTE threshold)	£150 per week
National Rate cases	£200per week

If a local authority's actual expenditure (for all eligible UASC supported) is less than a sum calculated by applying the standard rates, payments will be capped at the level of actual expenditure.

The Home Office is currently reviewing the funding arrangements for local authorities caring for UASC. Whilst the outcome of the review is underway, the existing arrangements, as set out above remain in place. If the review results in any changes to the current arrangements, the Home Office will publish a revised funding instruction. This level of funding does not cover the costs of most of the placement- with the gap being as great as £200/week for some children.

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Committee:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	26 October 2018
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 comment on and note the report.

1. Background and supporting information

1.1 The past quarter has continued to see sustained pressure on the system and at the end of September, ESCC had 620 children in care, a rise of 18 over the quarter. The rate in East Sussex is now 58.5, only just below the IDACI expected rate of 59 (which would equate to 625 children).

1.2 A total of 430 children were in foster care at the end of September, with 85 of those children in agency placements the same number as at the end of quarter 1. In addition we have 46 young people in supported housing options, homes or hostels. 20 children were placed for adoption. 5 children were placed with foster carers who are also approved adopters under the Fostering for Adoption pathway.

1.3 The number of children with kinship carers now stands at 57, some of whom have been placed with family members at the direction of a judge or have remained at home during proceedings, again at the direction of a judge.

1.4 The number of children placed at home with their parents whilst subject to a final legal order has risen by 1 to 19. Planning for placements of this sort is always monitored rigorously in order to mitigate any risk factors and agreement to begin or end a placement with parents is given at a senior level.

1.5 At the end of the quarter 34 children were placed in agency residential placements, a rise of 1 over the period. Staff continue to make every effort to place children in house and to negotiate costs with the agency where this is not possible.

1.6 At the end of the quarter 1 ESCC child remained secured at Lansdowne; a young man with a significant health issue, exacerbated by chaotic substance misuse. His exit plan is in place.

1.7 We have had no new remands to custody during this quarter and, at the end of September, there were no young people still on remand and awaiting sentencing.

1.8 Overall the numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking young people has seen a slight increase due to a combination of transfers of young people via the dispersal scheme and spontaneous arrivals in the County.

1.9 The numbers of children subject to Child Arrangement/Residence Orders has stayed stable at 334 and 442 children were subject to Special Guardianship Orders, a rise of 2 over the quarter.

1.10 During Q2 no complaints were received from our LAC.

1.11 Services for LAC are predominantly funded from the Children's Services base budget with

some additional smaller funding streams supporting specific activity eg Virtual School activity from the Pupil Premium Grant.

2. Conclusion

2.1 Pressure on the system continues, driven by the numbers of and costs for children. Continued close oversight will be maintained.

2.2 No complaints were received from our LAC in this quarter.

STUART GALLIMORE
Director of Children's Services

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Local Members: All

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 - Children's Services LAC Summary between 01/10/2017 and 30/09/2018

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

Children's Services LAC Summary between 01/10/2017 and 30/09/2018

Placement Type	Oct 17	Nov 17	Dec 17	Jan 18	Feb 18	Mar 18	Apr 18	May 18	Jun 18	Jul 18	Aug 18	Sep 18
A3 - Placed for adoption with consent (under section 19 of the 2002 Act) with current foster carer	1	1	2	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1
A4 - Placed for adoption with consent (under section 19 of the 2002 Act) not with current foster carer	12	9	7	7	7	7	5	5	5	4	4	4
A5 - Placed for adoption with placement order (under section 21 of the 2002 Act) with current foster carer	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	3	5	5
A6 - Placed for adoption with placement order (under section 21 of the 2002 Act) not with current foster carer	8	8	8	10	13	13	14	13	13	12	10	10
H5 - Residential accommodation	21	20	18	16	24	25	28	26	31	30	37	34
K1 - Secure unit	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1
K2 - Homes and Hostels	46	46	47	49	50	50	49	49	48	49	48	46
P1 - Placed with own parents	20	20	20	19	19	21	21	21	18	20	20	19
P2 - Independent living	5	6	5	5	5	4	4	4	3	2	3	2
R2 - NHS/Health Trust	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
R5 - Young Offender Institution or prison	1	4	4	3	5	4	2	2				
S1 - All Residential schools	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5
U1 - Foster placement with relative or friend- long term fostering	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	10	9	9	9	9
U3 - Foster placement with relative or friend- not long term or FFA	32	34	31	39	36	35	36	34	39	42	52	48
U4 - Placement with other foster carer- long term fostering	118	116	117	116	114	114	113	113	113	112	109	106
U5 - Placement with other foster carer who is also an approved adopter- FFA	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	5	5	5	5	5
U6 - Placement with other foster carer - not long term or FFA	282	276	277	287	291	306	306	315	310	311	318	324
Total	571	566	562	576	590	605	603	606	602	607	628	620

Immigration Status	Oct 17	Nov 17	Dec 17	Jan 18	Feb 18	Mar 18	Apr 18	May 18	Jun 18	Jul 18	Aug 18	Sep 18
Asylum Seeker	1	1										
British Citizen	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1
Discretionary Leave to Remain in the UK to 18 (DLR)	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
DLR to 18th Birthday, extension applied for	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Exceptional Leave to Remain in the UK (ELR)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK (ILR)	1											
Refugee Status	1	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child	17	16	16	14	14	13	14	16	12	12	18	17

Legal Status	Oct 17	Nov 17	Dec 17	Jan 18	Feb 18	Mar 18	Apr 18	May 18	Jun 18	Jul 18	Aug 18	Sep 18
Child Arrangements Order/Residence Order S8(1)CA'89	331	331	331	331	331	333	333	333	334	333	334	334
Special Guardianship Order S14A CA 89	432	433	433	433	436	437	438	438	439	441	442	442