



CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

FRIDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2019

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 26 July 2019 (*Pages 3 - 6*)
- 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:
 - 6a Brodrick House (*Pages 7 - 14*)
 - 6b Hazel Lodge (*Pages 15 - 22*)
 - 6c Homefield Cottage (*Pages 23 - 32*)
- 7 Children's Home Regulations 2015, Regulation 44: Inspection reports for July 2019 - September 2019 for the following:
 - 7a Acorns at Dorset Road (*Pages 33 - 114*)
 - 7b Brodrick House (*Pages 115 - 202*)
 - 7c Hazel Lodge (*Pages 203 - 286*)
 - 7d Homefield Cottage (*Pages 287 - 366*)
 - 7e Lansdowne Secure Unit (*Pages 367 - 482*)

- 7f The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive (*Pages 483 - 576*)
- 8 Any other exempt items considered urgent by the Chair.
- 9 Annual Progress Report of Looked After Children's Services - 1 April 2018 - 31 March 2019 (*Pages 577 - 608*)
- 10 Virtual School Annual Report - 1 April 2018 - 31 March 2019 (*Pages 609 - 616*)
- 11 Coram Voice Bright Spots Survey of Care Leavers - presentation
- 12 Looked After Children (LAC) Statistics (*Pages 617 - 620*)
Report by Director of Children's Services.
- 13 Any other non-exempt items considered urgent by the Chair.

PHILIP BAKER
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17 October 2019

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CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held in the Committee Room, County Hall, Lewess on 26 July 2019.

PRESENT	Councillors Charles Clark, Kathryn Field, Jim Sheppard, Colin Swansborough, Sylvia Tidy and Francis Whetstone and Michael Ensor
ALSO PRESENT	Liz Rugg – Assistant Director, Early Help and Social Care Teresa Lavelle-Hill – Head of LAC Services Claire Padgham – Practice Manager, Adoption and Permanence Nicola Scott – Operations Manager, Residential LAC Services Adrian Sewell – Operations Manager, Fostering Service Fiona Lewis – Operations Manager, Safeguarding Unit Beverley Moores – Strategic Lead, Children’s Disability Social Care ISEND Janet Fairless – RHM Homefield Cottage Scott Lipa – RHM Brodrick House Charlotte De Retuerto – RHM The Bungalow Shirin White – RHM Acorns Ian Williams – RHM Hazel Lodge

1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 APRIL 2019

1.1 RESOLVED: to agree as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2019.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1 Apologies were received from Helen Simmons, RHM Lansdowne Secure Unit.
2.2 Councillor Michael Ensor was present as a substitute member for Councillor Chris Dowling.

3 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

3.1 There were none.

4 URGENT ITEMS

4.1 There were none.

5 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

5.1 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 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), namely information relating to an individual.

6 OFSTED INSPECTION REPORTS FOR THE FOLLOWING: LANSDOWNE, BRODRICK HOUSE AND HAZEL LODGE

6.1 The Panel received Ofsted reports on the following Children's Homes:

- Lansdowne Secure Unit
- Brodrick House; and
- Hazel Lodge

6.2 The Panel welcomed the positive outcomes of the Ofsted reports.

6.3 RESOLVED: to note the reports.

7 CHILDREN'S HOME REGULATIONS 2015, REGULATION 44: INSPECTION REPORTS FOR APRIL 2019 - JUNE 2019

7.1 The Panel considered Regulation 44 Reports for the period April 2019 to June 2019 for the following Children's Homes:

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

7.2 Each Registered Home Manager (RHM) gave a verbal update on the activity at the homes covering the period since the last Panel meeting.

7.3 The Panel discussed the progress which is being made on the interior and exterior building improvements at many of the Homes. They were assured that disruption from these works was always kept to a minimum.

7.4 RESOLVED: to note the reports.

8 ANY OTHER EXEMPT ITEMS CONSIDERED URGENT BY THE CHAIR.

8.1 There were none.

9 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT OF THE EAST SUSSEX FOSTERING SERVICE

9.1 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 2018 to 31 March 2019. Adrian Sewell, Operations Manager – Fostering Service informed the Panel of the successes and challenges in the areas of recruitment & retention; publicity campaigns; fostering panels, and foster carer training.

9.2 The Panel were informed that 21 households offering 36 placements were approved in 2018/19 compared with 19 households offering 37 placements in the previous year. The Panel were advised to view the figures within the context of the national decline in placements and were informed that East Sussex is in a favourable position in terms of recruitment in comparison to neighbouring authorities.

9.3 The Panel were informed of the 'continual presence' marketing strategy of the Fostering Service. This strategy includes: 'Vinny' the recruitment van which has been able to reach more of the county; roundabout advertising; radio campaigns; promotional merchandise 'giveaways'; and lamppost banners in Eastbourne, amongst others.

9.4 The Panel discussed the success of the recruitment van and the importance of the Fostering Service to be able to reach all parts of the county, particularly those parts where there have been challenges with recruitment.

9.5 RESOLVED: to note the report.

10 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT OF THE EAST SUSSEX ADOPTION AND PERMANENCE SERVICE

10.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which outline the performance and progress of the East Sussex Adoption and Permanence Service for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019. Claire Padgham, Practice Manager – Adoption and Permanence Service introduced the report and highlighted various aspects of the work such as: recruitment of adopters, placements and matching, adoption support and panel activity.

10.2 The Panel were informed that activity levels were high during 2018/19 with 27 children adopted and 33 prospective adopters approved. There were also 88 households in attendance at information events and 37 households subsequently registered their interest to adopt.

10.3 That Panel discussed the declining national trend in recruitment and the lack in sufficiency of adopters. The Panel were advised that despite these national issues East Sussex continues to maintain a favourable position regarding recruitment in comparison to our statistical neighbouring authorities.

10.4 The Panel discussed the importance of the Adoption and Permanence Panel and were informed that training on assessments and serious case reviews, the medical advice from East Sussex Health Care Trust (ESHCT), and the appointments of 3 new members have all contributed to the effectiveness of the Adoption and Permanence Panel over the past year.

10.5 The Panel also discussed the future development of Adoption South East and East Sussex County Council acting as the host of this Regional Adoption Agency.

10.6 RESOLVED: to note the report.

11 INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER (IRO) ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

11.1 The Panel considered the Independent Review Officer (IRO) Annual report for the period 2018/19. Fiona Lewis, Operations Manager – Safeguarding Unit, introduced the report and informed the Panel and highlighted aspects of the IRO's work including: managing high caseloads, the statutory obligations of IRO's and the processes of LAC reviews.

11.2 The Panel were informed that caseloads for the IRO's remain high with an average of 101 cases per IRO. This is well in excess of the 50 – 70 recommended from the Department for Education. In response to a query regarding the caseload capacity IRO's the Panel were informed that the recruitment of two further IRO's will be taking place to mitigate this issue.

11.3 The Panel discussed the importance of social activities and inclusion for LAC and sought clarification that a record of a young persons social interests was kept. The Panel were advised that recording and discussing these areas was a statutory requirement for IRO's when carrying out reviews.

11.4 RESOLVED: to note the report.

12 LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) STATISTICS

12.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which provided an updated on Looked After Children (LAC) statistics.

12.2 The Panel were informed by Liz Rugg, Assistant Director for Early Help and Social Care on the slight reduction in the number of East Sussex LAC since the last quarter.

12. RESOLVED: to note the report.

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

13.1 There were none.

The meeting ended at 12:15pm.

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Report to: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date of meeting: 25 October 2019

Report by: Director of Children's Services

Title: Annual Progress Report of Looked After Children's Services
1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019

Purpose: To outline the performance of the Looked After Children's Service
between 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019

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 Children's Services budget, a small proportion of the Dedicated Schools Grant and the Pupil Premium for additional education support for children.

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 Officers:

Teresa Lavelle-Hill - Head of Looked After Children's Services
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Sally Carnie - Head of Looked After Children's Services
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Local Members: All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

APPENDICES: Appendix 1 - Annual Progress Report of Looked After Children's Services 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019

East Sussex Looked After Children's Services Annual Progress Report 2018/19



Who did we look after? (1)

- On **31 March 2019** there were **600** of our Looked After Children (LAC) in ESCC; this represents a **decrease** of **3 children (0.5%)** as compared to **2017/18** 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 **2017** England rate of **64.0**.
- The LAC data only ever gives a snapshot of our 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 2018/19 is 188 which, when added to the total number of LAC, equates to **the service working with 788 children**. This total figure is higher than last year (756 children), and the churn rate is also higher than for the previous years (153 for 2017/18, 175 for 2016/17).

Who came in and out of care?

- There was a **decrease** in children coming into care from **212** during **2017/18** to **195** during **2018/19**.
- The number of **0-5 year olds** admitted to care during **2018/19 decreased** to **87** (from **104** in **2017/18**).
- The number of **6-12 year olds** admitted to care during **2018/19 decreased** to **38** (from **50** in **2017/18**).
- The number of **children aged 13+** **increased** from **58** for **2017/18** to **70** in **2018/19**.
- At year end there was an **increase in the number of our LAC leaving care, from 164 in 2017/18 to 197 in 2018/19**.
- The number of **0-12 year olds leaving care increased slightly to 90 during 18/19 from 89 in 17/18**. This was made up of 70 0-5 year olds and 20 were 6-12 year olds.
- There was an **increase in the 13+ age group from 75 of our young people leaving care in 2017/18 to 107 in 2018/19**

The trend for this year is showing, for the first time, a slight decrease in our LAC numbers as compared to the previous 3 years. During 18/19 there was a reduction in children coming into care in the 0- 12 year olds but an increase in the 13 plus age group. This increase was largely related to the changes in policy and practice, both locally and nationally, in relation to children who suffer neglect, sexual and criminal exploitation and also a more rigorous application of the Southwark Judgement, whereby teenagers can be offered section 20 accommodation and hence become LAC rather than being viewed as homeless. Although there were higher numbers of children leaving care across all age ranges, the overall 'churn figure' indicates not only greater numbers of our LAC worked with throughout the year, but that many of these children presented with greater levels of complexity particularly in the 13 plus age cohort.

Who did we look after? (2)

Children with disabilities who are looked after

- The number of our Looked After children with disabilities remains similar in 2018/19 to 2017/18.
- At 31 March 2019 there were 31 children with disabilities who were looked after of whom 9 were aged 16-19. This compares with 34 children of whom 14 were aged 16-19 in 2017/18.
- The reasons remain broadly similar with 10 children placed in residential schools of whom 7 are jointly funded with health. These children together represent all of the children with disabilities placed out of county. Other LAC children are placed in agency or in house foster care within East Sussex or in our own residential units. One child is placed in the only independent children's home in East Sussex.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

- At 31 March 2019 ESCC was caring for **36** UASC, **16** more than the previous year.
- These young people were mainly male and over 16, with an additional **27** having ongoing support needs as care leavers.
- In the last year, 5 children have come via The Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme and the remainder have been spontaneous arrivals, found either by the Police or at Newhaven Port.

Looked after young people who offend

- The Youth Offending Team (YOT) worked with 48 of our young people. This accounted for 12.7% of the total young people worked with by the YOT throughout the year. Our looked after children aged 10-17, is less than 1% of the population of young people aged 10-17 living in East Sussex and so LAC are still over-represented in the YOT cohort despite an agreed protocol to decriminalize them where possible.

Where children are living (end of year snapshot data)

*Agency refers to mainstream schools

Placement type	2018/19	2017/18
With foster carer	473	470
Of these; in house carers	327	331
Kinship carers	49	46
Agency carers	97	93
Placed for adoption	21	26
In supported lodgings	33	27
ESCC children's homes	18	21
Agency children's homes	27	29
Agency special schools	1	0
Placed with parents	23	20
Independent living	0	4
Youth custody/secure unit	2	5
Hospital/NHS establishment	2	1
Absconded	0	0

How well did we do? (1)

Indicator Ref	Description	2018/19 Value	2017/18 Eng	2017/18 Value	2016/17 Eng	2016/17 Value	2015/16 Eng	2015/16 Value
NI 58	Emotional & Behavioural Health of children in care	14.3 ↑	14.2	14.4 ↓	14.1	14.1 ↓	14.0	13.5 ↑
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)	420 days ↑	486 days	454 days ↑	520 days	479 days ↑	558 days	516 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)	197 days ↑	201 days	220 days ↓	220 days	212 days ↑	226 days	222 days ↓
Adoption Scorecard 3	% of children who wait less than 14 months between entering care & moving in with their adoptive family (3 year average)	57% ↓	56%	64% ↑	53%	61% ↑	47%	53% ↓

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

How well did we do? (2)

Indicator Ref	Description	2018/ 19 Value	2017/1 8 Eng	2017/ 18 Value	2016/1 7 Eng	2016/ 17 Value	2015/1 6 Eng	2015/ 16 Value
NI62 Placements 1	Number of children looked after with 3 or more placements during the year	12.0% ↓	10.0%	11.1% ↑	10.0%	13.8% ↓	10.0%	10.8% ↓
NI63 Placements 2	% of LAC under 16 who've been lac for 2.5 years or more & in the same placement for 2 years or placed for adoption	70.1% ↓	70.0%	70.2% ↓	70.0%	70.7% ↑	68.0%	65.0% ↑
Placements 3	% of LAC at 31st March placed outside LA boundary and more than 20 miles from where they used to live	11.5% ↓	15.0%	10.3% ↓	13.0%	8.4% ↑	13.0%	9.4% ↑
Leaving Care 2 * see note below	% of former relevant young people aged 19-21 who were in education, employment or training	52.1% ↑	51.0%	51.9% ↓	50.0%	53.0% ↓	49.0%	61.0% ↑

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

How well did we do? (3)

Indicator Ref	Description	2018/ 19 Value	2017/ 18 Eng	2017/ 18 Value	2016/ 17 Eng	2016/ 17 Value	2015/ 16 Eng	2015/ 16 Value
Leaving Care 3 * see note below	% of former relevant young people aged 19-21 who were in suitable accommodation	79.9% ↑	84.0%	77.3% ↑	84.0%	76.5% ↓	83.0%	81.7% ↑
Thrive PI 9	Rate of Children looked after per 10,000 population aged under 18	56.6% ↑	64.0	56.9 ↓	62.0	53.0 ↓	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.	87.8% ↓	86.0%	88.2% ↓	86.0%	90.3% ↓	87.0%	92.8% ↑
PAF C81	Final warnings, reprimands and convictions of lac	2.0% ↑	4.0%	2.3% ↑	4.0%	3.4% ↑	5.0%	3.8% ↔

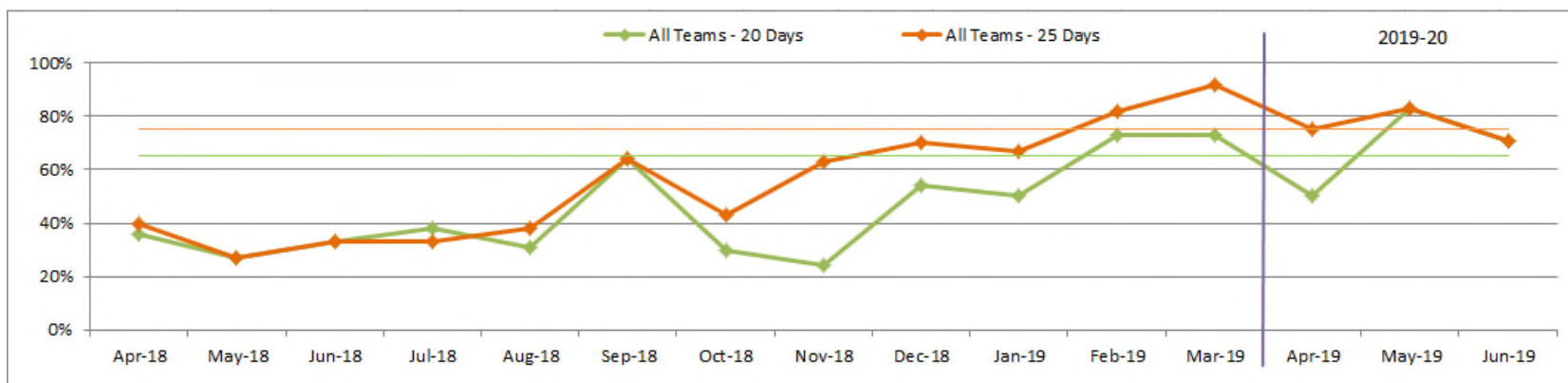
Where performance has improved/increased it is shown with a ↑ and where it has dipped with a ↓

So, in summary

- Although performance is set out in the grid above, **the 2018/19 national data**, has not yet been published by the DfE.
- **The rate** of our LAC per 10,000 **has remained fairly constant**.
- There **continues** to be improvement in performance in relation to Adoption timeliness with good performance being maintained in the majority of other areas.
- The figures for care leavers are snapshot data. The other indicators in relation to **employability** of older LAC and care leavers remain above the South East and national average.

The physical health of our children

Initial Health Assessment (IHA) Monthly Performance Summary 2018-19 and 2019-20 Q1



Steps taken to improve performance in Initial Health Assessments (IHA)

- **Full review and relaunch of the process** by key social care and health personnel starting in Spring 2018
- Robust IHA tracking system developed in collaboration with East Sussex Healthcare Trust colleagues which provides 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.
- From September 2018 onwards there has been consistent improvement in performance which has continued into 2019/20
- Greater responsibility for timely completion of necessary paperwork by social work staff, and clarification for parental consent where required
- Better communication on both operational and strategic level between social care and health staff
- **43% of IHAs were completed within 20 days** against a target of 65% and **61% within 25 days** against a target of 75% in 2018-19. (This target has been met in the first quarter of 2019/20 with 71% completed within 20 days, and 76% completed within 25 days, demonstrating sustained improvement which has been embedded into practice).
- **294 Review Health Assessments (RHA)** were completed by East Sussex Healthcare Trust for East Sussex LAC in 2018/19

Areas for improvement 2019/20

- Exceed target for IHAs within statutory timescales
- Improve timeliness and reporting of RHAs
- Improve quality of health passports for care leavers
- Improve pathways to mental health services for LAC and Care Leavers

The mental health of our children (1)

LAC Mental Health Service (LACMHS)

- **LACMHS) received 50 new non-urgent referrals during 2018/19**, all but 3 of which (due to not meeting LACMHS criteria) were accepted and an initial consultation was offered.
- **An additional 35 of our children and young people were also seen urgently** due to the severity of the symptoms they presented with, such as suicidal thoughts and/or serious self-harm, depression or psychotic symptoms.
- In addition, there was **also a cohort of between 81 and 84 LAC** (at any one time) **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. LACMHS also provided:
 - One Therapeutic Parenting Group (working with 10 carers of 8 young people, their social workers and supervising social workers)
 - Weekly consultation to staff at Homefield, Brodrick House and Hazel Lodge.
 - Weekly consultation to the Through Care Team
 - Monthly 'drop in' consultation surgeries to the Fostering Service and each of the three LAC teams
- LACMHS continued to work in close collaboration with its partner agencies to provide a service for our children with a care plan of permanent placement away from their birth family.
- The response to new and urgent 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 and deemed to be a significant contributor to Outstanding OFSTED inspections.

The mental health of our children (2)

Areas for development in 2019/20 for LACMHS

- LACMHS has developed a number of strategies for reducing the waiting time for on-going therapeutic work which have been approved by both Health and Children's Services Managers during this year, and which will be implemented and reviewed over the coming year.

Our approach is informed by the voice of children and young people

12,166 local votes in Make Your Mark 2018 from 17 schools which equals 21% of young people aged 13 – 18 in East Sussex.

The Youth Cabinet and CICC and other local youth voice groups have developed their campaigns on the top priorities which are:

- End Knife Crime
- Mental Health
- Homelessness



In October 2018, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex met with 50 young people from youth groups around the county. They discussed the issue of mental health with the young people and what can be done to promote good mental health.

November 2018, over 50 young people took part in East Sussex Annual Takeover Day to discuss mental health and emotional wellbeing.



The Education of our children

- **The Virtual School caseworkers continued to support the education of all ESCC LAC including care leavers** and developed their role of providing advice and guidance for children adopted from care, subject to special guardianship orders and child arrangement orders.
- The Virtual School funded and worked with the Placement Support Team to facilitate the Coram Bright Spots Survey which gathered the thoughts of looked after children (4-18 years) . A feedback event and a range of service meetings have given children and staff an opportunity to hear about the survey outcomes and discuss how these findings can inform practice across the authority.
- The Virtual School bank of casual intervention teachers has increased and partnership working with Alternative Education providers has developed to enable high quality short term intervention. The team continues to work closely with ESCC and external services on an operational level and a strategic level, contributing to the development of whole school practice. The Virtual School Head has sat on strategic groups re: Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing and on Special Educational Needs, both areas which have a significant impact on our LAC.
- **At Key Stage 2 there was an improvement in progress in reading and Maths and a very slight decrease in writing and teacher training has been put in place in response to this.**
- **At Key Stage 4, progress and attainment scores fell** but individual data showed that a small number of young people did not achieve any qualifications and as such had a significant impact on average scores. These are often our young people who came into care as teenagers. This is likely to remain an issue and reflects the national picture. **Interventions have been put in place to engage our LAC who may be at risk of poor outcomes and to ensure that they have a pathway into post 16 education.**
- In relation to our care leavers, as of **March 2019**, of the children who were in continuous care for at least 12 months before sitting their GCSE examinations, **86.1% of 16 — 17 year olds (year 12) were in education, training and employment (EET)**. This exceeded the target of 80% but is a reduction of 4 % on last year's data. **87% of 17 –18 year olds (year 13) were EET**, exceeding a target of 70% and matching last year's data. **10% of Care Leavers accessed University**; this matches the 10% target.

Children in Foster Placements

- On **31st March 2018** there were **585 of our LAC in foster care**. **450 of these children were placed within in-house foster carers 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 .
- The commissioning of external independent IFA placements remains at a similar level to that of 2017/18 with the total figure of mainstream LAC agency foster placements at 80.
- The Fostering Duty team is an extremely busy service providing a centralised service for the placement and commissioning of all placements for our LAC. In 2018/19 the team:
 - Received 532 referrals for children needing placements.
 - Worked on a total of 608 placements (121 of which were not required).
 - Made 487 placements with 398 placements made with our in-house foster carers.
- The service often has to respond to emergency duty and same day placements (immediate safeguarding concerns), placing children subject to care proceedings as well as responding to the disruption of existing placements with very complex children and young people presenting with very challenging behaviours.
- The duty team are involved in the matching of children, quality assuring all independent fostering and residential placements and often sensitive negotiations regarding costs. In 2018/19:
 - 21 fostering households offering 36 placements were approved compared to 19 fostering households offering 37 placements in 2017/18
 - a further 14 assessments of prospective foster carers were allocated for assessment and booked for presentation to the Fostering Panel that unfortunately did not progress.
 - there were 9 fostering family assessments still in progress at year end.
 - the number of existing foster carers who retired stabilised (compared to 2017-18 where 22 foster carers retired) the service only lost 10 carers and 21 new fostering households were approved and so The Fostering Service saw a net increase in its resources. Given the challenges experienced nationally for the recruitment of foster carers, a net gain of resources is evidence of effective recruitment and retention strategies.
- On **1st April 2019** all foster carer allowances were given a 3% uplift by East Sussex County Council.

Children in Supported Lodgings

Supported Lodgings

- April 2018-March 2019, **40 of our young people have been newly accommodated in Supported Lodging's placements**; this being a mixture of LAC and young people presenting as homeless.
- **Currently 57 young people are accommodated through this project.**
- Supported Lodging's providers/carers have been encouraged to extend their approval potential to take more parent and child and more Emergency Duty placements. The scheme has also utilised experienced carers in providing accommodation and support to a number of young people under the age of 16, with robust risk assessments in place. This has resulted in two supported lodging's carers seeking fostering status and becoming 'hybrid' carers. Focused support and training is being developed to help providers offer placements to young people with more complex needs, thereby expanding local support and pathway options.
- As of 31 March 2019 there were **48 Supported Lodging's households providing a total of 73 placements across the county.**

In the year 2018/19

- **There has been 10 new Supported Lodging's approvals, providing 13 additional placements.** Although this is an increase on the 2017/18 figures, recruiting in East Sussex remains challenging because of the competitive nature of this market.
- **The Supported Lodgings team received 129 referrals requesting placements for young people.** 51 of which were for care leavers, 31 were for young people presenting as homeless and 47 were older children requiring foster placements. **Of the 129 referrals, 53 were closed, 76 young people were placed and 0 referrals remained open.**
- **Please see the relevant link at the close of this report.**



Dong with his supported lodgings family, who help young people gain independence



Dame Jacqueline Wilson launching the new fostering information van which will help to recruit more foster carers

Adoption and Permanence key facts

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Number of children adopted	45	38	29	27 (AOs)
Number of adoption matches (children)	32	38	30	39
Number of permanent fostering matches (children)	10	14	5	4
Number of East Sussex adoptive matches (children)	26	30	30	33
Number of ASE adoptive matches (children)	0	0	0	2
Number of inter-agency matches (children):				
Permanence:	2	0	1	1
Adoption:	6	8	6	4
Number of prospective adopters approved (households)	41	30	25	33 (of which 4 2 nd time)
Number of permanent carers approved (households)	2	1	3	3
Number of children approved for adoption up to 31st March 2017 (including 2 re approvals)	53	52	69	43
Number of children approved for permanence up to 31st March 2019	14	32	24	22 (of which 10 change of Care Plan from adoption to perm)
Number of approved adopters waiting to be matched	22	20	12	14 (from the 33 approved this year)
Number of disruptions presented to Panel pre Order:				
Permanence:	0	0	0	0
Adoptions:	1	0	1	1

Children needing Adoption or Permanence

- In line with the national picture **the number of our children with a plan for adoption has decreased from 69 children in 2017-2018 to 43 children in 2018/2019** and 2 re-approvals.
- **39 children of our children were matched during 2018/2019** which was a slight increase on the previous year. Whilst overall the number of children approved decreased during this period, the levels of complexity and uncertainties re: health and development remained high.
- **The ethnic profile of children approved reflects the local population**; 6 of the total number approved were from other ethnic groups including Guyanese, Sri Lankan, White/African Caribbean and Iranian.
- The **number of birth parents seeking leave to revoke Placement Orders continued to remain steady**. This at times resulted in the a significant delay in the Adoption Orders being placed.
- There were **27 Adoption Orders granted in 2018/2019**.
- During 2018/2019 **88 households attended information events and 37 households registered their interest to adopt**. The conversion rate from information event to registration remained high and **33 adopters were approved** by the year end, **an increase of 8 compared to 2017/2018**.
- The Government's **regionalisation agenda** gained significant momentum. ESCC has worked for the past 4 years with the Adoption South East partnership to form a regional adoption service. The work across four local authorities is developing common practice and shared events in all areas of adoption service delivery. It was recently agreed that **ESCC will host the management and coordination of the new regional service, anticipating implementation and 'go live' in April 2020**.
- There were **56 new referrals for post adoption support assessments** over the past year with the majority resulting in the provision of packages of support. The adoption CAMHS service, **ADCAMHS, continued to offer a dedicated consultation and therapy service**
- **ADCAMHS was commissioned to support 40 families but consistently provided a service to over 60 families**. Adoptive families very much valued ADCAMHS, as the clinical work has been proven to strengthen family relationships and increase placement stability. Feedback from adopters indicated that they appreciated the support and a key contact for 'the longer journey'.
- **Please see the relevant link at the close of this report.**

Our children's homes (1)

Broderick Road continues to care for a very challenging group of our young people with differing presentations and very complex needs. The home is currently waiting for work to commence on updating the bathrooms.

Lansdowne Secure Children's Home has had a challenging 12 months. This is partly due to the impact of the building work for the extension to create 5 additional beds, due to finish in the spring of 2020. Because of this the number of rooms available has fallen from 7 to 6. The majority of our young people placed over the last six months have been from ESCC which has impacted on revenue income. In addition one of our most complex East Sussex young people has required 2 rooms in an area away from other young people further decreasing the availability of rooms to 5. There remains considerable challenges in recruiting new staff to the home.

Acorns, in Bexhill, provided regular overnight respite care for some of our severely disabled young people aged 7-19 utilizing 7 beds. There were, however, 2 full-time accommodated young people who remained throughout this period to avoid a change of placement close to their 19th birthdays. There was also a full-time emergency placement made available.

Homefield Cottage has now changed its registration to include boys from the ages of 11-18 years. To date only girls have been placed, but the RHM would consider accommodating boys if the match was appropriate when a vacancy occurs.

Hazel Lodge continues, as the other home, to practice 'Staying Close'. One of their longer term residents had a successful transition to Supported Lodgings with the help of staff, and they are currently preparing another young woman towards the same outcome.

The Bungalow, in Eastbourne, is registered for 7 children aged 7-19 and has provided full-time accommodation to some of our disabled children who are unable to live in a family setting. They all attended local schools and all maintained contact with their families, facilitated on site. One young person moved onto to a permanent adult placement and another young person was admitted.

Our children's homes (2)

All our homes are externally inspected by Ofsted

- **Acorns** received an Ofsted judgement of '**Good**' in **August 2017** but **Requiring Improvement in August 2018**.
- **Broderick Road** continued to maintain its '**Outstanding**' rating.
- **The Bungalow** received a judgement of '**Good**' in **October 2018** but had **declined in Effectiveness in February 2019**.
- **Hazel Lodge** also achieved a well-deserved first '**Outstanding**' from its full inspection.
- **Lansdowne Secure Children's Home** also received '**Improved Effectiveness**' for its Ofsted interim inspection in March 2019. Their next full inspection will include Education and for the first time CQC to inspect health services within the home.

Looking after our older children (1)



The Through Care Team (TCT) – What we have achieved

- **The Local Offer** has been updated by the Through Care Team (TCT) and **is now published on line**
 - Through Art Workshops, our young people will be designing a 'young person friendly' format for the Local Offer and we will embed the offer with other agencies.
 - The Virtual School worked with the TCT to complete **The Coram Voice Bright spots survey with care leavers**. These findings will extend the offer over this coming year.
- There has been a **focus on reducing isolation for our 21 – 25 year olds** and provide support with practical matters, e.g. tenancy support. Other supports include: individual support by named Personal Advisors and Placements Support Workers, access to weekly drop in sessions and involvement in social activities including Christmas parties, picnics and cinema trips.
- **At March 31 2019** the team was **working with 351 young people**, compared to 277 in 2018/19. A significant proportion of these young people had highly complex behaviours with a range of challenging safeguarding issues.

Age	2018/19	2017/18
Under 16	41	12
Age 16 - 17	102	94
Age 18-24	208	171

- The team is picking up work with some complex young people at the age of 14 and this **Through Care model** is now **embedded and working well**. **All young people are allocated a PA by the time they reach 17 ½**, with a number of young people with complex needs, receiving this additional support much earlier on. This joint working has enhanced the offer to these young people through **relationship based practice resulting in improved progress and outcomes for our young people**.

Looking after our older children (2)

- The Virtual School has employed a **participation worker** to work with the TCT to **improve engagement of our young people in their own education and future pathways. There has been improved attendance at our drop-in centres for our young people to improve their employability. Transition planning for LAC who are the most complex in terms of disability** will continue to receive a service from ASC and is managed by a specialist Transitions Team within Adult Social Care.
- **Accommodation** - During 2018-19 neither our older looked after children or 16 or 17 year olds presenting as homeless have been placed in bed and breakfast accommodation. This was possible only because of the additional investment provided by the ESCC transformation fund to improve the accommodation offer for our vulnerable young people.

The Housing Project has focused on:

- Our vulnerable young care leavers and homeless young people.
- Increasing the numbers of Supported Lodging's providers.
- Developing the market and commissioning supported accommodation provision to extend the housing and accommodation pathway and providing high risk emergency accommodation to mitigate the use of bed and breakfast accommodation.

Our Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

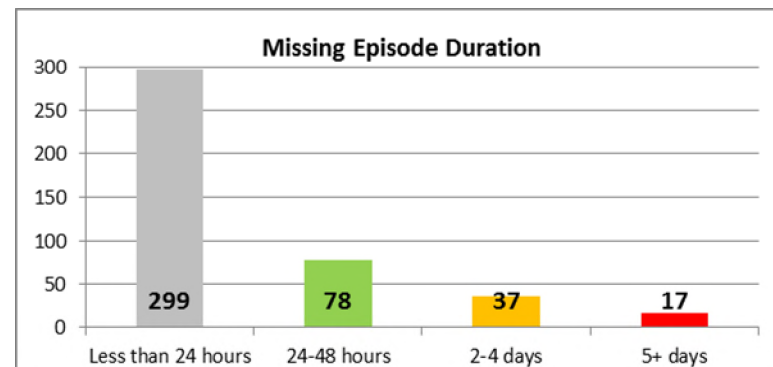
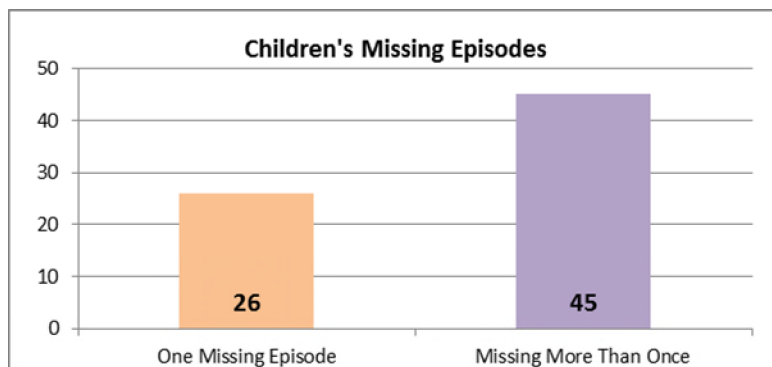
What we have achieved

- A full time **Personal Advisor has been recruited**, who is the specialist Virtual School case worker responsible for **developing opportunities and links** for our **UASC including access to vocational courses and work experience**
- **The Service has recruited an additional social worker which brings the current total to 3.**
- **Continuing development of staff** includes training on Age Assessments, Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery and recognising and working with Trauma.
- The Through Care Team are **providing specialist training for our foster carers in regard to working with our UASC.**
- The Virtual School has also employed a **specialist education placement adviser to work with our UASC team** who is working with education providers to develop English as an additional language as well as other educational pathways provision. As a result **92% of our UASC are now in education.**

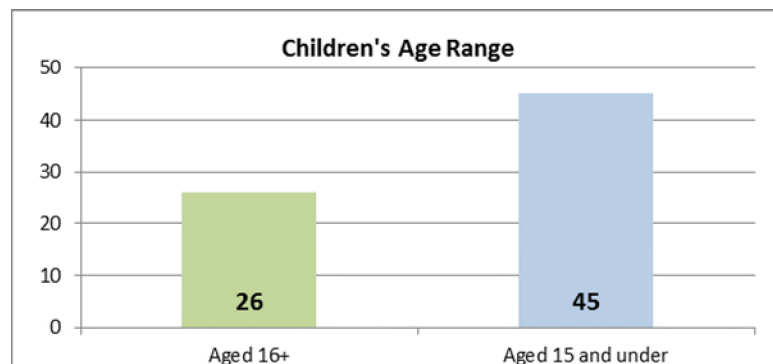
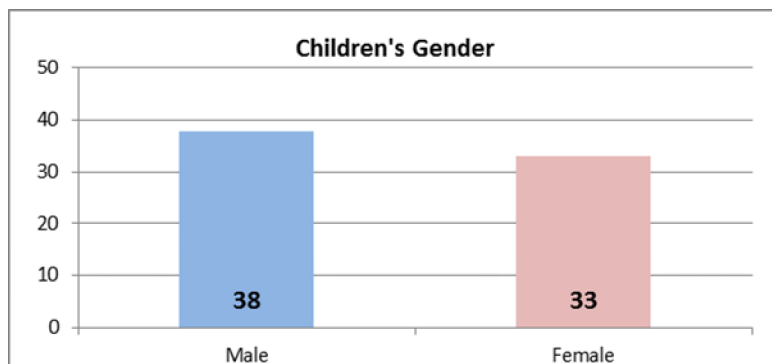
Future developments

- **Improving links with adult services for ongoing support needs.**
- **Improving links with CAMHS** including developing trauma screening tools.
- **Developing better “introduction” tools for our newly arrived young people** includes showing videos of young people’s experiences we have already looked after and the cultural and language challenges they may face. The largest group of our UASC is Vietnamese, with other groups including Eritrean, Albanian, Iranian and Kurdish.
- **Developing mentoring** for our new UASC by young people who we already look after.
- **Developed a UASC specific drop-in** for our young people to allow them to **meet socially and also with professionals** to discuss issues such as sex and relationships, the law in the UK, CSE and recognising and managing mental health.

Our children who are Missing and who are at risk of Child Sexual and Criminal Exploitation (CSE/CE) (1)



- In 2018/19 71 LAC went missing, 45 of whom were missing more than once. There were also 18 LAC who were absent (i.e. not where they should be), and 5 of these were absent more than once.
- In 2018/19 there were 431 missing episodes, of these, 299 episodes of children being missing for less than 24 hours, 78 episodes when they were missing between 24--48 hours, 37 episodes when they were missing between 2 and 4 days and 17 episodes 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.



- Of the 71 LAC that went missing, 38 were male and 33 were female. 26 of this cohort were aged 16 and above, 45 were aged 15 and under.

Our Children who are Missing and who are at risk of Child Sexual and Criminal Exploitation (CSE/CE) (2)

- The MACE structure remains in place and MACE Bronze Operational Group continues to meet monthly on each side of the county to consider the situation of all exploited children identified in East Sussex who are deemed to be at highest risk. MACE Silver Operational Group meets bi-monthly to consider the strategic issues that are raised in relation to trying to safeguard this group of children. The criminal exploitation of children connected to 'County Lines' activity remains a significant issue within East Sussex both for locally based children and those who have been brought to the area from London. An annual audit of MACE Bronze casework is scheduled.
- As of March 2019 there were 27 children subject to East Sussex MACE Bronze panel oversight and therefore categorised as being at high risk of exploitation. 5 of these children were East Sussex LAC (3 male and 2 female). There was 1 other local authority child in this group.

The MACE Action Plan has been updated for 2019-20

- It continues to be reported at the LSCB.
- The main themes for this year include improving school based responses to criminal exploitation, a better level of Police intelligence gathering from schools, continuing oversight on ensuring agencies are taking forward effective disruption activity, for exploitation locally and that the response to our children who are missing remains consistent.

Our Children who are Missing and who are at risk of Child Sexual and Criminal Exploitation (CSE/CE) (3)

- Since 24 July 2018 the provision of Return Home Interviews (RHI) for all East Sussex children who go missing locally has been provided by East Sussex Children's Social Care. The provision of this service by 'Missing People' charity ended on 24 July 2018 when the service was not recommissioned by any of the three Sussex Local Authorities.
- All of our East Sussex LAC have their RHI completed by their allocated social worker or trusted professional.
- Notifications of our missing children are received and screened by MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) and are then shared with the relevant allocated social workers and Practice Manager if they have an existing allocated social worker.
- There is an established performance dashboard that measures all key data for our children who go missing. This performance dashboard is presented bi-monthly to MACE Silver Operational Group which is overseen in turn by the LSCB Steering Group.

Independent Reviewing Officer Service (1)

The Independent Reviewing Office Service (IRO) is managed off line and is independent of the operational service for LAC and Care Leavers.

IMPACT

- All children who become looked after by ESCC are allocated an IRO within statutory timescales and the majority of these maintain a stable relationship with that same IRO throughout their time in our care. The Unit has a relatively established staff complement which further ensures these long-term relationships. IROs demonstrate a strong commitment to children, resisting reallocation and working creatively to manage challenges caused by caseloads or location.
- 784 children have been accommodated by ESCC throughout or for some part of 2018/19 with 610 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 three months and thereafter a review no less than every six months. Supplementary reviews should take place if there have been, or if there are proposed significant changes to the placement, education, legal status etc.

PARTICIPATION

- **86% of children aged 4+ attended or actively contributed to their LAC review.**
- Children are encouraged to Chair their own reviews and there is an enhanced focus on ensuring that they are consulted about who attends their meeting, where it takes place and what is discussed. The **revised LAC Review documentation** will place the child's participation at the center of the process and ensure that all decisions are recorded in an accessible, child focused manner

Thank you for all
your kindness and
understanding; for
being the one who
has been there
from the
beginning. C aged 18

I love my reviews,
I get to talk - yes its
good - I love them.

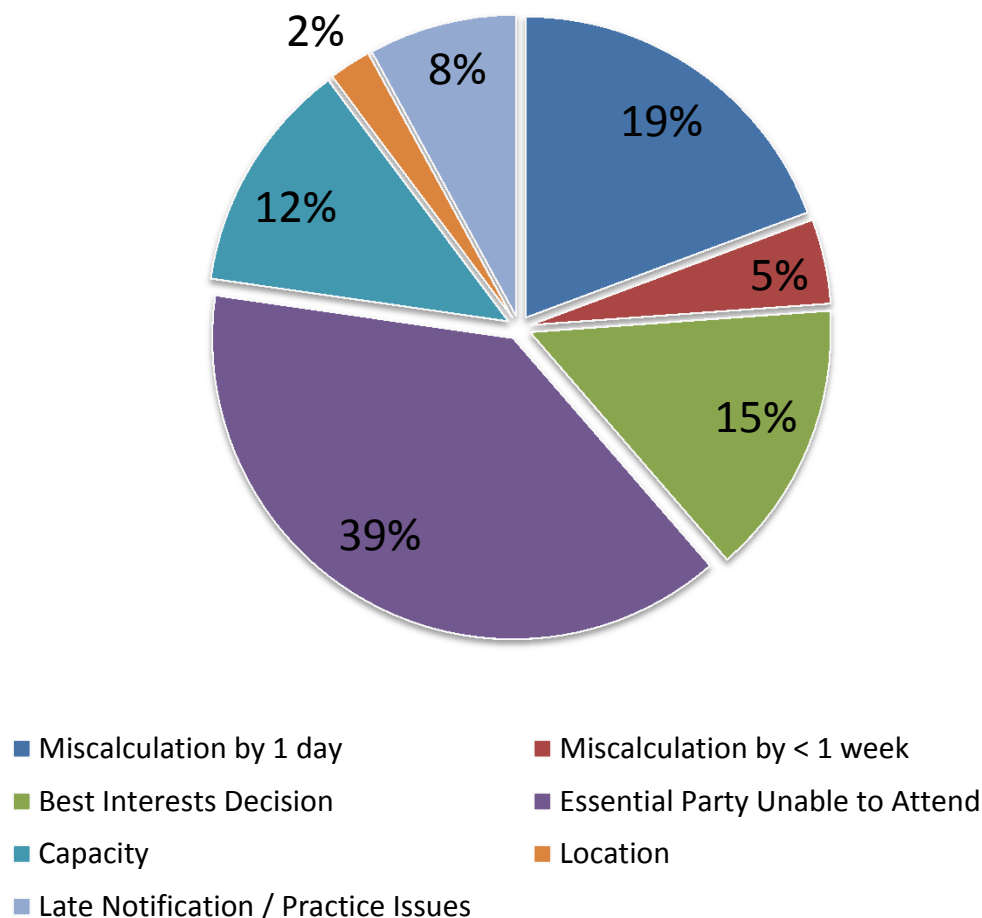
E aged 8

Independent Reviewing Officer Service (2)

Timeliness

- **94.6% of all LAC Reviews were held early or on time in 2018/19.**
- **88 reviews (5.4%) were late.**
- **21 cases were a scheduling miscalculation** of which 17 were miscalculated by just 1 day; 13 reviews were delayed in the best interests of the child, 34 were delayed due to an essential party being unable to attend and 2 were late due to travel requirements. 11 reviews were delayed due to capacity or reallocation within the Unit with 7 reviews late due to practice issues.
- **Please see the relevant link at the close of this report.**

Late Reviews



The role of our elected members

The Corporate Parenting Panel met quarterly during 2018/19 to scrutinize 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 2018

- LAC Statistics
- Interim report on Health of LAC
- Vulnerable Young People's House and Accommodation Project
- Ofsted Inspection reports for the following children's homes: - Homefield Cottage, Lansdowne Secure Unit
- Children's Home Regulations 2015, Regulation 44: Inspection reports for December 2017 to February 2018 for the following children's homes: Acorns at Dorset Road, Brodrick House, Hazel Lodge, Homefield Cottage, Lansdowne Secure Unit, The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive

July 2018

- ·Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Annual Report 2017/18
- ·Annual progress report of the East Sussex Fostering Service
- ·Annual progress report of the East Sussex Adoption and Permanence Service
- ·LAC Statistics
- Children's Home Regulations 2015, Regulation 44: Inspection reports for March 2019 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 2018

- LAC Annual Report
- LAC Statistics
- KS1, 2 and 4 outcomes for LAC 2017/18
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children Update
- Ofsted Inspection reports for the following children's homes: Hazel Lodge, Brodrick House, Homefield Cottage
- Children's Home Regulations, Regulation 44: Inspection reports for June 2018 - September 2018 for the following children's homes: Acorns at Dorset Road, Brodrick House, Hazel Lodge, Homefield Cottage, Lansdowne Secure Unit, The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive

January 2019

- Presentation from the Children In Care Council (C CC)
- East Sussex Foster Care Association (ESFCA)
- LAC Statistics
- ·Ofsted inspection reports for the following children's homes - The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive, Lansdowne Secure Unit

Priorities for 2019/20

**Continue to improve the
timeliness of RHIs for LAC
and Care Leavers**

**Embed the Core Offer to
our Care Leavers and
engage our partners with
implementation**

**Improve the mental
health pathways for our
LAC and Care Leavers**

**Sufficiency
Extend pool of foster
carers and progress
Regional South East
Adoption agency**

**Extension of LSU to be
progressed**

**Embed commissioned
housing options for our
Care Leavers**

**Continue to improve
performance on health
assessments for Looked
After Children**

**Learn from Serious
Case Reviews and
consider development
of our Corporate
Grandparenting Role**

Links to Fostering and Supported Lodgings, Adoption and Independent Reviewing Officers Annual Report 2018-19

➤ **Fostering and Supported Lodgings:**

For the full report, please see Item 9 on the following agenda:

<https://democracy.eastsussex.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=141&MId=4058&Ver=4>

➤ **Adoption and permanence:**

For the full report, please see Item 10 on the following agenda:

<https://democracy.eastsussex.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=141&MId=4058&Ver=4>

➤ **Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO):**

For the full report, please see item 11 on the following agenda:

<https://democracy.eastsussex.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=141&MId=4058&Ver=4>

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Report to: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date of meeting: 25 October 2019

Report by: Director of Children's Services

Title: Virtual School Annual Report - 1 April 2018 - 31 March 2019

Purpose: To outline the performance of the Virtual School between 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019

RECOMMENDATION:

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

1. Background information

1.1 The Virtual School Report is contained within Appendix 1. Provisional attainment data is contained as Appendix 2

1.2 The Virtual School is funded via a combination of grants and will continue to direct the Pupil Premium to interventions which will have the best possible educational outcomes for Looked After Children (LAC).

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 Officers:

Sally Carnie: Head of Looked After Children's Services

Tel: 01323 747197

Local Members: All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Virtual School Report 2018/9

Appendix 2 - Provisional Academic Results for East Sussex Looked After Children (LAC) September 2019

Virtual School Report 2018/2019

1. Introduction

1.1 During this period the Virtual School (VS) focused on the delivery of support to schools and social workers to ensure the best possible outcomes for children who are looked after (LAC), previously looked after children (PLAC) and care leavers (CL). All interventions were designed to meet this overriding objective and were planned using an evidence based approach, incorporating national research and local quantitative and qualitative data.

1.2 The VS supported 445 LAC in schools and 685 CYP (Children & Young People) when care leavers are included. 26% of the LAC cohort had an EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan), 55% were on the special needs register at SEN support level and 20% were in special schools. As at March 2019 there were 55 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children in years 7 to 13, 15 of whom were of school age. This is an increase of approximately 50% since the start of the academic year. Caseworkers in the VS had an average caseload of 80 LAC.

1.3 The Key Stage 4 education accountability measures for all children have changed to reflect progress (P8) as well as attainment (A8). These measures involved the use of a complex formula which is administered centrally. Changes have also occurred in reported primary outcomes. There is no confirmed data on outcomes to date, and it is anticipated that final primary data will be released in December 2019 and secondary in 2020. At Key Stage 4 (aged 16) attainment and progress A8 and P8 are recorded and calculated by taking data across 8 qualifications. The accountability measures used by the VS were revised to reflect these national changes. Any comparison performance data will need to reflect these changes, particularly in relation to attainment at GCSE where the exams have changed from an A – G grading system to a 1 – 9 grading system and will be affected by subject entry patterns at a national level.

1.4 The VS school holds and manages the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) for LAC. In the financial year 2018- 2019 each LAC was allocated £2,300. Funding from the PPG is pooled to ensure the best outcomes for our children as outlined in 1.1 and according to the priorities set out in the Virtual School Development Plan as described below. Pupil Premium funding for PLAC is also £2,300 but is held by their schools. The VS school has advised schools on appropriate spend of the grant allocation for this group of children.

2. Virtual School Structure

2.1 The VS restructured a number of vacant posts during 2018/19 to include a Primary Advisory Teacher specifically to lead on the development of teaching intervention, with a focus on the primary phase of education. This appointment corresponded with the employment of 17 casual Intervention Teachers. The new role had a remit for the delivery of academic, social and emotional intervention; this was as a direct response to a local provider revising their offer and no longer providing one to one teaching. The VS delivered interventions to meet the identified priority subjects, with a particular focus on English and Maths across all the age ranges. This team of Intervention Teachers had a formal induction process and were offered regular training and supervision. They remain employed on a casual basis but policies and procedures were developed to ensure that their intervention was at least good, and a sense of team was encouraged.

2.2 In addition, two Personal Advisers (PAs) were appointed mid-way through the year with a specific educational role within the Through Care Service. One PA focused on working with young people who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) and the other on Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking

Children (UASC). Both posts were created in response to identified needs within these two groups and were co-located with the Through Care team. The PAs were managed by the Practice Manager of the service.

3. Key Developments

3.1 In order to better understand the experiences and views of our LAC in East Sussex, the VS commissioned Coram Voice to undertake a survey of all LAC and Care Leavers. The Bright Spots Survey is a nationally recommended tool and very well regarded. Both surveys gathered some very rich feedback on a range of issues concerning care, education, relationships, accommodation and finances. All LAC aged 4-18 years were helped to complete the survey using a trusted adult who were independent of the service. A feedback event took place in April 2018 for the LAC Bright Spots survey and participants responded by making a range of commitments to develop improved services for LAC. These commitments took the form of 'We Will' statements and have since been disseminated across the Local Authority. The Care Leavers survey has now been completed and the findings will be delivered to an event which is being designed to further develop the Local Offer for care leavers in East Sussex.

3.2 The quality of teaching and learning has been the main focus for the VS throughout the year 2018/19. The successful appointment of the Intervention Teachers enabled the VS to offer consistently high quality learning for LAC. An analysis of the 2018 performance data indicated that literacy and numeracy should remain the key areas for intervention, with a particular focus on writing. In addition the VS developed an assessment and reporting policy to evaluate the impact of this work. This enabled the VS to be assured of the effective assessment, planning, delivery and review of each intervention. These interventions were supplemented by a partnership developed with local providers to deliver services to young people who were not engaging with school. 'Eggtooth', based in Hastings, was commissioned to offer educational and therapeutic interventions to LAC in the Hastings area. Likewise a relationship was developed with Develop Outdoors, the Education Foundation Trust and YES. The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service for Looked After Children were closely involved in the work with these new partners and took on a key role in the referral and review process. As a result of these partnerships there was an increase in the levels of engagement of LAC in education and in post 16 pathways.

3.3 Personal Education Plans (PEPs) remained critical to the effective planning for raising educational outcomes for our children during this period. Any applications for Pupil Premium funding to support LAC and their learning continued to be made via the PEP. In addition, a new system for monitoring and reviewing PEPs was introduced, in order to streamline and improve performance. In the next academic year the VS will be exploring the benefits of using an existing PEP product or considering whether it would be better to develop an in-house system.

3.4 The VS reviewed the use of the Book Club in 2018/19 and found that it remained a very cost effective intervention to support literacy. This is a termly service whereby LAC receive a bag/parcel of books. The review established that

- **92%** of children described the positive feelings they had when the parcels arrived
- **75%** of the children felt the book parcels helped them with their reading or their enjoyment of reading
- **85%** of carers/parents described the positive reaction they got at home when the parcels arrived.
- **82%** of carers/parents described how the parcels promoted the child's love for reading

3.5 The preparation of LAC for key educational transitions remained a focus during 2018/19 with the summer school for pre reception children and summer support for vulnerable year 11 students. The VS

also worked closely with the ESCC Behaviour and Attendance Service (ESBAS) to develop a secondary transition project. The VS worked together with post 16 providers and universities to raise aspirations, support young people to succeed at college and to secure the most appropriate post 16 pathway. A group of year 7s, 8s and 9s took part in a very successful 2 day Media course run by Brighton University. The YES Service continued to work with LAC re: future transition planning, and the Local Authority's Enterprise team offered a bespoke work experience programme for young people in year 11 and above.

3.6 The VS continued to work closely with Bede's to further develop the Springboard boarding project and plan placements for the next academic year. There are currently 4 students at Bedes (March 2019). Bede's also hosted the Coram event, the Children In Care Awards and the VS Governor meetings. It continued to offer our LAC a range of extra-curricular experiences, for example one of our year 11 students was offered work experience in the Bede's zoo.

3.7 The next annual Children in Care Awards will be held in October 2019 to celebrate the successes of our children and young people. Jacqueline Wilson was invited as a guest of honour and has agreed to produce a filmed message for the nominees and award winners.

4. National Agenda for Virtual Head Teachers

4.1 The Virtual Head Teacher (VHT) worked collaboratively with the national cohort of VHT's on a range of national priority areas. In relation to PLAC the VS has a duty to provide information, advice and guidance for children adopted from care, who are on Special Guardianship Orders or subject to Child Arrangement Orders. In 2018/19 the VS caseworkers developed this role in their allocated schools, providing advice to schools, social workers and adoptive parents. The VS also met together with Post Adoption Social Workers and with an Adoption UK support group to increase awareness of the new role. The VS funded membership of Adoption UK for 50 schools, trained Designated Teachers on their responsibilities regarding PLAC, and met with AMAZE the local advocacy and support group to consider how best they could support parents of PLAC with Special Educational Needs.

4.2 The VS worked to develop better communication with Local Authorities across the country where LAC were placed out of the county. This was and remains an area of key challenge, particularly for those children with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) or those awaiting assessment for an EHCP. As a result of these difficulties with out of county educational arrangements, there were a number of our children who were unable to attend school for significant periods of time. The VS worked closely with ISEND to develop policies and procedures to address this issue and as a consequence it has been possible to reduce the timescales for school admissions.

4.3 The exclusion of LAC from school has been a significant national issue during this period and is one that is being reviewed currently. This year the VS worked with all schools to support children who were in crisis, to avoid exclusion where possible. Unfortunately there were three children who were permanently excluded in terms 1 and 2 of the last academic year but there have been no more to date.

4.4 The mental health of children and young people is of national concern and the VHT's group has been keen to raise the profile of this issue. The VS continued to provide free training to schools on the impact of trauma and meeting the needs of children who have experienced trauma. 100% of all participants reported that they found these sessions at least useful and 53% rated them as very useful. This year the VS also worked strategically with other educational services and with health colleagues to develop a co-ordinated approach to supporting mental health in schools. The VS has planned for a joint conference with the school's Mental Health and Well-being Coordinator during 2019/20.

5. Governor priorities for the Virtual School 2019/20

5.1

Priorities	Tasks
To improve KS2 progress outcomes, particularly in writing	Develop PEP audit policy to include robust quality control To provide ongoing training programme to intervention teachers in response to needs of LAC To analyse end of intervention reports and use to inform practice.
To improve progress outcomes at KS4	To analyse end of intervention reports and use to inform practice. To ensure that Alternative Provisions interventions include clear assessment, planning and review
To develop inclusive practice re LAC in all schools – academic and pastoral differentiation so that all LAC have access to good and better schools and enjoy going to school	To develop work with LA services to develop a co-ordinated approach to the promotion of whole school practices and mental health and emotional wellbeing interventions (MHEW) To work with the School Improvement and ISEND teams to promote inclusive practice and use of the Inclusion Quality Mark To support the development of high quality MHEW interventions through joint working with LA services including LACAMHs and private providers To develop the training offer to Designated Teachers and other school staff To produce and share a Designated Teacher newsletter promoting inclusive practice To explore the use of social media to promote the work of the VS
To reduce exclusions – both fixed term and permanent	To challenge exclusions and work with schools to put in post exclusion and preventative plans
To increase the participation of all LAC and care leavers in opportunities that will raise aspiration and prepare them for the challenges of an independent future (Extra Curricular activities, Work experience, CICC developments)	To run a Care leavers Bright Spots dissemination event. To work with Universities to develop their Widening Participation programme from primary aged LAC to and ensure engagement in events by involving CYP in programme planning To develop a Information, Guidance and Advice group to ensure effective guidance for young people interesting in going to University
To develop high quality advice and support re PLAC	To increase staff knowledge and understanding of issues specific to PLAC To work with adoption team to develop an effective offer for PLAC
To increase attendance rates overall and reduce persistent absence	To embed and develop policy re LAC with EHCPs moving in or out of county To continue to track attendance and intervene at an early stage.
Improve rates of completion of PEPs on time	To develop the system for monitoring completion of PEPs – to include VS caseworkers and social workers as well as designated teachers in schools To develop the system for monitoring the quality of PEPs
To ensure clear and effective educational pathways	To ensure co-ordinated working between the UASC

for UASC	<p>team and VS caseworkers</p> <p>To work with EALs to develop a clear policy re EAL delivery to UASC and care leavers</p> <p>To work with EALs and post 16 providers re wider provision for UASC</p>
To ensure that all young people are engaged in education and have aspirations for their futures	<p>To work with YES and Enterprise team to develop targeted Information, advice and guidance from the start of year 10</p> <p>To develop bespoke work experience project for LAC and ensure LAC are included in schools' work experience offers</p>

6. Recommendations

6.1 The VS to review the priorities outlined above in light of the educational attainment and progress data from 2019 when it is confirmed.

6.2 The VHT together with the national group of Virtual Head Teachers to contribute to the national debate regarding the ongoing DfE commitment to funding Pupil Premium Plus for LAC and PLAC.

Provisional Academic Results for East Sussex Looked After Children (LAC) September 2019

These results are taken from National Centre for Education Research and are dependent on returns from different Local Authorities. The data is constantly changing as more data is added.

Early Years Foundation Stage

In the Early Years Foundation stage 41.7% of LAC made a Good Level of Development compared to National level of 49% and DFE South Region 47%

Key Stage 1

Key Stage 1 LAC results showed a significant increase from last year in all outcome measures and were better than national and south east region outcomes in all areas.

KS1 meeting expected standards %	2108	2019 East Sussex	2019 National LAC	2019 DFE South East LAC
Reading	46.2	66.7	52	50
Writing	46.2	58.3	42	39
Maths	53.8	66.7	49	43
Science	61.5	75	59	57
RWM (S)	46.2	58.3	37	34

Key Stage 2

The percentage of LAC with EHCPs was significantly higher (50% higher) than last year reflecting the higher and more complex level of need of this year's cohort. 78.2% of the year 6 cohort was on the SEN register compared to 60% of last year's cohort.

Attainment data for KS2 LAC children has improved in writing, Maths and GPS (Grammar, punctuation and spelling). The percentage of LAC meeting expected standards in reading has decreased to 25.0 % but another 22% of children only missed the expected standard by 3 marks. Had these children gained 3 further marks, the percentage would have risen to 47%

KS2 meeting expected standards %	2108	2019 East Sussex LAC	2019 National LAC	2019 DFE South East LAC
EHCP	20	30.4		
SEN Support	40	47.8		
Reading	44	25.0	49.0	44.0

Writing	32	37.5	50.0	46.0
Maths	44	45.8	51.0	44.0
GPS	28	41.7	53.0	49.0

The percentage of LAC making expected rate of progress between KS1 and KS2 has increased in writing but fallen in both Maths and Reading. Outcomes are, however, better than for South East region LAC results in both writing and Maths. The reading outcome for East Sussex LAC is within the average range compared to all children.

Percentage of LAC making expected rate of progress between KS1 and KS2	2108	2019 East Sussex LAC	2019 National LAC	2019 DFE South East LAC
EHCP	20	30.4		
SEN Support	40	47.8		
Reading	41.7	27.3	49.0	47.0
Writing	41.7	43.5	47.0	41.0
Maths	45.8	40.9	46.0	37.0

There is little pattern to the progress scores of individual children but individual stories show that the children who made least progress were those who had experienced significant change in the recent past.

Percentage of young people going to University

11% of the year 14 cohort has obtained places at University

The percentage of Care Leavers attending university is 10.5% compared to 10% last year.

KS4 data

KS4 data will not be available until the start of November. Initial analysis of individual student data suggests that many students have missed both Maths and English at level 4. This is the same in other Local Authorities and reflects both the complexity of the cohort and the nature of the exams.

Committee:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	25 October 2019
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 information

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

1.2 Data is drawn as a snapshot on the last day of the month and inevitably there will be some changes subsequently as data is cleansed. However the past quarter has seen an increase in numbers of children and on the last day of September 2019 there were 605 children in care, up from 585 in June after the figures were cleansed. It has been a very busy summer with pressure on the Fostering Duty system remaining intense as new children come in and existing children disrupt and need to be moved, often at short notice.

1.3 A total of 393 children were in foster care at the end of June, with 81 of those children in agency placements, a stable figure for agency fostering placements from the previous quarter. In addition, we still have 47 young people in supported housing options, homes or hostels. 26 children were placed for adoption. 5 children were placed with foster carers who are also approved adopters under the Fostering for Adoption pathway; we continue to see Adoption Order applications being delayed significantly by repeated parental appeals.

1.4 Over the quarter the number of children with kinship carers has risen by 19 and now stands at 63, some of whom have remained within their extended family but legal proceedings have been initiated by ESCC to resolve complex situations or an uncertain legal status for children.

1.5 The number of children placed at home with their parents whilst subject to a legal order has remained stable at 20. 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.

1.6 At the end of the quarter 38 children were placed in agency residential care placements, an increase over the period. This is being driven partly by the pressure on in-house fostering capacity and by the inability of the external market to provide any placements for children at times. Staff continue to make every effort to place children in our in-house beds before they seek agreement from a senior manager for an agency placement.

1.7 At the end of the quarter 3 ESCC children were secured at Lansdowne, this includes the young person who was previously placed in County Durham. 2 of the children were secured in the context of exploitation, with the remaining child having severe emotional wellbeing difficulties. Exit planning is underway for all 3 children but it will be significantly challenging and likely very expensive to put an alternative plan in place for at least 2 of them.

1.8 We have had no new remands to custody during this quarter.

1.9 Overall the numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking young people was up to 41 at the end of September, many arriving in the County spontaneously.

1.10 The numbers of children subject to Child Arrangement/Residence Orders and Special Guardianship Orders have also remained stable at 333 and 454 respectively.

1.11 There have been no complaints from our LAC in Q2

2. Conclusion

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

2.2 There have been no complaints during this quarter.

STUART GALLIMORE

Director of Children's Services

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Local Members

All

Background documents

None

Children's Services LAC Summary between 01/10/2018 and 30/09/2019

Placement Type	Oct 18	Nov 18	Dec 18	Jan 19	Feb 19	Mar 19	Apr 19	May 19	Jun 19	Jul 19	Aug 19	Sep 19
A3 - Placed for adoption with consent (under section 19 of the 2002 Act) with current foster carer	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
A4 - Placed for adoption with consent (under section 19 of the 2002 Act) not with current foster carer	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
A5 - Placed for adoption with placement order (under section 21 of the 2002 Act) with current foster carer	3	2	2			1						
A6 - Placed for adoption with placement order (under section 21 of the 2002 Act) not with current foster carer	13	11	11	10	14	12	18	17	17	17	21	21
H5 - Residential accommodation	32	34	36	30	33	33	30	32	30	31	36	38
K1 - Secure unit		2	2	2	1	2	4	5	5	5	4	3
K2 - Homes and Hostels	44	46	44	45	43	44	47	46	47	50	49	47
P1 - Placed with own parents	25	23	23	23	23	22	23	22	21	19	20	20
P2 - Independent living	1	2	2	3	1				2	3	3	2
R2 - NHS/Health Trust	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	3	2	3	3
R3 - Family centre or mother and baby unit										2	2	2
R5 - Young Offender Institution or prison							1	1				
S1 - All Residential schools	4	4	4	4	4	2	1	2	3	4	3	3
U1 - Foster placement with relative or friend- long term fostering	9	10	9	8	8	7	7	7	7	8	8	5
U3 - Foster placement with relative or friend- not long term or FFA	52	49	43	43	41	37	36	37	37	49	54	58
U4 - Placement with other foster carer- long term fostering	103	100	98	96	92	93	92	91	88	86	86	82
U5 - Placement with other foster carer who is also an approved adopter- FFA	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	5	5	5
U6 - Placement with other foster carer - not long term or FFA	315	320	322	325	321	327	318	317	318	313	306	311
Total	612	613	606	599	591	591	585	586	585	599	605	605

Immigration Status	Oct 18	Nov 18	Dec 18	Jan 19	Feb 19	Mar 19	Apr 19	May 19	Jun 19	Jul 19	Aug 19	Sep 19
Asylum Seeker	3	4	5	5	5	5	4	4	2	2		
British Citizen	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Discretionary Leave to Remain in the UK to 18 (DLR)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
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)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Refugee Status	11	11	11	7	10	10	9	9	8	8	8	8
Refused Asylum, Appeal applied for	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child	4	15	16	16	16	17	17	17	19	20	27	27

Legal Status	Oct 18	Nov 18	Dec 18	Jan 19	Feb 19	Mar 19	Apr 19	May 19	Jun 19	Jul 19	Aug 19	Sep 19
Child Arrangements Order/ResidenceOrder S8(1)CA'89	334	334	334	334	334	334	334	333	333	332	332	333
Special Guardianship Order S14A CA 89	448	449	449	449	449	453	454	454	454	454	454	454