CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

FRIDAY, 28 OCTOBER 2022

10.00 AM COUNTY HALL, LEWES

MEMBERSHIP - Councillors Bob Bowdler, Johnny Denis, Kathryn Field (Chair), Sorrell Marlow-Eastwood, Matthew Milligan, Colin Swansborough and Sam Adeniji

A G E N D A

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 29 July 2022 *(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. Quarterly Registered Children's Homes Report *(Pages 7 - 30)*
   Report by the Director of Children's Services

7. Any other exempt items considered urgent by the Chair

8. Virtual School Annual Report *(Pages 31 - 42)*
   Report by the Director of Children's Services

9. Look After Children's (LAC) Annual Report *(Pages 43 - 78)*
   Report by the Director of Children's Services

10. Looked After Children (LAC) Statistics *(Pages 79 - 82)*
    Report by Director of Children's Services

11. Presentation on proposed new approach to Corporate Panel Parenting (CPP) *(Pages 83 - 90)*

12. National Review - Children with disabilities and complex health needs placed in residential settings - verbal report

13. Any other non-exempt items considered urgent by the Chair.

PHILIP BAKER
Assistant Chief Executive
County Hall, St Anne's Crescent
LEWES BN7 1UE

20 October 2022

Contact
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CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held at Council Chamber, County Hall, Lewes on 29 July 2022.

PRESENT	Councillors Bob Bowdler, Kathryn Field (Chair), Sorrell Marlow-Eastwood, Johanna Howell, Matthew Milligan and Colin Swansborough
ALSO PRESENT	Kathy Marriott – Assistant Director, Early Help and Social Care Teresa Lavelle-Hill – Head of Looked After Children Services Nicola Scott – Operations Manager, Residential LAC Services Sally Hodson - Operations Manager, Children's Disability Service, Residential and Directly Provided Services, ISEND Adrian Sewell - Operations Manager, Fostering Team Dawn Price - Operations Manager, Safeguarding Unit Thea Synnestvedt – Governance and Democracy Officer

1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 APRIL 2022

1.1 RESOLVED to agree as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2022.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1 Apologies were received from Councillors Sam Adeniji, Johnny Denis and Alison Jeffrey, Director of Children Services. It was noted that Councillor Johanna Howell was substituting for Councillor Sam Adeniji.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

3.1 Councillor Matthew Milligan declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest that a close family member is an East Sussex County Council Foster parent.

4. *URGENT ITEMS*

4.1 There were no urgent items.

5. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

5.1 RESOLVED to exclude the public and press from the meeting for items 6 and 7 on the agenda (see minutes 6 and 7) 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 12(A) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), namely information relating to any individual. It was considered that the public interest in maintaining the exception outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

6. OFSTED INSPECTION REPORTS

6.1 The Panel considered Ofsted Inspection reports for the following Children's Homes:

- Brodrick House
- The Bungalow

6.2 The Panel welcomed the reports and received a verbal update from the Operational Managers.

6.3 The Panel RESOLVED to note the report.

7. CHILDREN'S HOME REGULATIONS 2015, REGULATION 44: INSPECTION REPORTS

7.1 Kathy Marriott, Assistant Director, Early Help and Social Care updated that Panel that going forward, a summary paper would be brought to the Panel with an update on each of the Children's Homes, this would highlight any progress or cations noted through regulation 44 reports, it is hoped that this approach would ensure best use of time and resources in future. Ofsted reports will be provided separately to the Panel.

7.2 The Panel discussed the proposed changes and fed back that direct contact with the Registered Homes Managers remained important for the Corporate Parenting Panel and as such, should not be lost.

7.3 The Panel considered Regulation 44 Reports for the following Children's Homes:

- Acorns
- Brodrick House
- Hazel Lodge
- Homefield Cottage
- Lansdowne Secure Unit
- Silver Birches
- The Bungalow

7.4 The Panel received a verbal update from Operational Managers.

7.5 The Panel discussed funding for residential care homes and the cost associated with the specialist care provided. It was noted that the local authority does not receive child benefits. Child benefits are awarded to parents once the child returns to their care. This differed from the Adult Social Care sector where care homes for elderly residents received some of the additional benefits for providing care. It was agreed that this matter would be investigated.

7.6 The Panel discussed residential home visits and agreed that it would be beneficial for Panel Members to visit Lansdowne Secure Unit and that a visit would be arranged in autumn for Members to visit the homes two at a time.

7.7 The Panel RESOLVED to note the report.

8. ANY OTHER EXEMPT ITEMS CONSIDERED URGENT BY THE CHAIR.

8.1 There were none.

9. FOSTERING SERVICES ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

9.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which outlined the performance of the Fostering Service between 01 April 2021 – 31 March 2022. Adrian Sewell, Operations Manager – Fostering Service provided further detail regarding the key activities and work of the service, including updates on recruitment and retention, foster carer training, diversity & equality, the placement support service, and the current pressures on the service both nationally and locally, with significant difficulties finding appropriate placements.

9.2 The Panel discussed the report including:

- Children in Care Council (CiCC) meeting – a meeting with the CiCC was due to take place in autumn, with options for dates having been circulated to all Panel Members.

- The East Sussex County Council's Fostering Service's summer picnic – the Fostering Service picnic was due to take place and it was noted that all Panel Members were invited to attend this event. The picnic was due to take place on Wednesday 3 August and it was agreed that Adrian would send information regarding the event to Democratic Services for this to be circulated to Panel Members following the meeting.

- Foster carers application dropout rates – the Panel noted the high initial dropout rates for the foster carer assessment process and asked if there were any specific barriers identified causing this. Adrian fed back that the high rates were unusual but that there was no specific reason why people were dropping out. As the application process was around 4-6 months, dropouts were largely due to changes in the applicant's circumstances.

- Respite – the Panel discussed the current situation regarding respite carers, recognising that due to significant pressures within the service many respite carers were asked if children could remain with them over a longer period due to the lack of options available. It was noted that despite pressures, respite remained an incredibly important part of the service and provided a much needed break for longer-term foster carers. Teresa Lavelle-Hill, Head of Looked After Children Services updated the Panel that ESCC continued to welcome many new respite carers and recognised the importance of their role providing respite to longer term foster carers. The role also provided opportunities for people interested in fostering to gain an initial insight into what fostering entails before committing to longer term arrangements.

9.3 The Panel RESOLVED to note the report.

10. INDEPENDENT REVIEWING SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2021/2022

10.1 The Panel received an update from Dawn Price, Operations Manager - Safeguarding Unit on the contribution of the Independent Reviewing Officers to Quality Assuring and Improving Services for Looked After Children. This included details on My Voice Matters, participation, the minority and ethic population, Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC), Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) profile leaflets and training.

10.2 The Panel discussed the procedure for bringing in an Independent Person to sit on the Secure Accommodation Review (SAR) Panel. Dawn Price updated the Panel that the Independent Person does not work for the local authority but would have a background working in Children's Services.

10.3 The Panel discussed participation rates of the review process and the mechanisms used where children had specific needs or were not engaging with their IROs. Dawn fed back that an advocacy service was in place, with staff trained to work with children with disabilities. For the small percentage of children that do not engage, alternative techniques were used by IROs to

encourage participation, such as suggesting alternative venues to talk where the child may feel more comfortable. Social Workers were also asked to provide observations on the child's behalf and all children were encouraged to use the Mind of My Own app.

10.4 The Panel RESOLVED to note the report.

11. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) STATISTICS

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

11.2 Kathy Marriott, Assistant Director, Early Help and Social Care updated the Panel on the latest position for Looked After Children in East Sussex. During the last quarter, a total of 638 children were living in care, a rise of 11 LAC. This was a reflection of the challenges faced by the sector both locally and nationally, with placement sufficiency being extremely challenging. Increased complexities in behaviours were also recorded, following families having been significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. A Senior Management Review of care plans is scheduled for August/September.

11.3 One young person was remanded into youth detention accommodation in this quarter. The Panel noted that for an area the size of ESCC, this figure was low and a testament to the strong work the council undertakes to where at all possible prevent escalation into custody.

11.4 The Panel discussed current media announcements regarding lack of support for kinship carers in the UK. Teresa Lavelle-Hill, Head of Looked After Children Services assured the Panel that this is not the case for ESCC. ESCC have a number of approved kinship foster carers who have access to everything an approved foster carer would. Special Guardianship Orders are in place to ensure carers receive Special Guardianship allowances. ESCC recognised the important role of kinship carers and are working to boost support for families providing kinship care.

11.5 The Panel RESOLVED to note the report.

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

12.1 There were none.

The meeting ended at 12.12 pm.

Councillor Kathryn Field
Chair

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

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Report to:	**Corporate Parenting Panel**
Date of meeting:	**28 October 2022**
By:	**Director of Children's Services**
Title:	**Virtual School Annual Report 1 September 2021 – 31 August 2022**
Purpose:	**To outline the performance of the Virtual School between 01 September 2021 and 31 August 2022**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to comment on and note the contents of the report paying particular attention to the extension of duties and Post 16 pilot.

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1 Background

1.1 The Virtual School Report is contained within Appendix A.

1.2 The Virtual School is funded through a combination of the Pupil Premium grant and the base budgets within Children's Services and will continue to direct the funding to support the best possible educational outcomes for Children Looked After (CLA) by effective use of available resources.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to comment on and note the contents of the report, paying particular attention to the extension of duties and Post 16 pilot.

ALISON JEFFERY
Director of Children's Services

Contact Officers:
Sally Carnie Head of Looked After Children's Services
01323 747197

Local Members: All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

Appendices

Appendix A Virtual School Report 2021/22

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Virtual School Report Academic Year 2021/2022

1. Introduction

1.1 During this period the Virtual School (VS) focused on the delivery of support to Schools, Carers and Social Workers to ensure the best possible outcomes for children who were looked after (CLA), previously looked after children (PCLA) and care leavers (CL). All interventions were designed to meet this overriding objective and used an evidence-based approach, incorporating national research and local quantitative and qualitative data.

1.2 In additional the Virtual School was given extended duties to promote the education of children with a social worker or who had ever had a social worker from ages 0 to 18

1.3 East Sussex was selected by the DFE to be part of a Post 16 Pupil Premium pilot and received funding for seventy-two young people attending further education colleges.

2. Children Looked After (CLA)

2.1 Last summer the Virtual School was supporting 426 school aged children, 39 Nursery age and a total of 660 CLA year N1 – 13 (756 including year 14) but numbers had been nearer 465 overall as new children came into care and others left. There was an increase of 3% in school aged children and 7% in all children and young people on the previous year. 24% of our school aged children have an EHCP for special educational needs and 11 % attend special schools. In July 2022, there were 132 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and young people in years 7 to 13, 15 of whom were of school age. This was an increase of 30% on July 2021.

2.2 The VS was responsible for the management and administration of the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) for CLA. In the budget year 2021- 2022 each CLA was allocated £2,300. Funding from the PPG was pooled to ensure the best outcomes for our children as outlined in 1.1 and according to the school priorities. Pupil Premium funding for PCLA was also £2,300 but was held by the child's individual school.

2.3 The main areas of spending last year were on casework staffing, training, short term home to school transport, Alternative Provision for children struggling to manage school, inclusion projects in schools, academic tuition, extra curricula activities and interventions from specialist services e.g., Behaviour & Attendance (ESBAS), Education Psychology Service (EPS), Communication Learning and Autism Support Service (CLASS) and the English as Another Language Service (EALS).

2.4 The VS employed a Head Teacher (VHT), Four full time equivalents (fte) Education Officers (Caseworkers with supervisory and additional responsibilities), an Advisory Teacher, 3 fte caseworkers and a Teaching Assistant. The VS also employed casual Intervention Teachers of which ten work with us on a regular basis. In addition, two Personal Advisers (PAs) were funded to work within the Through Care Service. One PA focused on working with young people who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET) and on increasing youth participation in local and national issues; the other on supporting the education of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC). In addition, a VS Extended Support Assistant was employed to work within the East Sussex Behaviour and Attendance Team (ESBAS).

2.5 Caseworkers in the VS had an average caseload of between 80 and 100 CLA each depending on the numbers of CLA and capacity of the team. Last year we had one member of staff on maternity leave and two members on long-term absence from illness.

3 PEPs

3.1 Personal Education Plans (PEPs) remained critical to raising educational outcomes for our children. Any applications for Pupil Premium funding to support CLA and their learning continued to be made via the PEP. PEP meetings took place online and in person. In terms 3 and 4 of this academic year 95.53% of students had had PEPs and we had received the paperwork for 91.44%. We have a robust system in place for chasing up on PEPs that have not been completed and/or paperwork that has not been received. There have been some specific challenges in some schools where key staff have been off long term. We worked with these schools to ensure that planning and reviews remained in place despite these difficulties.

3.2 PEP quality audits last year (May 21 – May 22) rated 42.31% as green overall (good or better), 46.15% as amber overall (satisfactory) and therefore 88.46% as satisfactory or above. A total of 78 PEPs were audited and responses to each section analysed. The results have been used to inform planning. Strategies to improve the quality of PEPs included individual discussions with designated teachers, caseworker focus within PEP meetings, general feedback shared to schools and focus within CPD sessions.

3.3 Last year the Standards and Effectiveness Service worked with schools to redraft the Additional Needs Plan (ANP). We have adapted the PEP in line with these changes and provided updated exemplars.

4 Outcomes

4.1 These statistics cover the attainment of pupils who took assessments in summer 2022. These pupils experienced disruption to their learning during the pandemic. This is the first summer exam series since 2019. Results are, therefore, compared to 2019 rather than 2020 or 2021, when there were different methods of assessment.
The statistics are provisional and will be updated with revised data in December.

4.2 Key Stage 1 The percentage of children in care in East Sussex reaching expected standard in Reading was 57.1% compared with 46.0% of children in care nationally. The percentage of children in care in East Sussex reaching expected standard in Writing was 42.09% compared with 35.0% nationally. The percentage of children in care in East Sussex reaching expected standard in Maths was 50.0% compared with 45.0% for children in care nationally. Unfortunately, we had no children working at greater depth. Nationally there have been fewer children reaching greater depth in writing and Maths but not in reading. This will be a focus for next year.

		Reading	Writing	Maths
East Sussex CLA	2022	57.1%	42.9%	50%

National CLA	2022	46.0%	35.0%	45.0%

4.3 **Key Stage 2** There was an increase from 2019 of 19% in the percentage of our children reaching expected levels in reading, an area which has been a key focus. There was little change in the percentage of children reaching expected levels in writing but a small drop in Maths. There were some excellent progress scores in all areas, the highest progress scores being 27.34 in reading, 10.87 in writing and 14.03 in Maths.

		Reading	Writing	Maths
East Sussex CLA	2019	25.0%	37.5%	45.8%
East Sussex CLA	2022	44.0 %	36.0%	41.0%
National CLA	2022	52.0%	43.0%	45.0%

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4.4 Key Stage 4

4.41 The use of 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. This data is not yet available.

4.42 The percentage of students gaining a level 5 and above in English and Maths increased from 4.2% in 2019 to 16% and a level 4 and above from 8.1% to 27%.

4.43 There were some excellent individual results. 7 and 8 is equivalent to A and above. One student achieved a 9 in Maths and English and an 8 in French, another 7s in core subjects and all other subjects. Another student achieved a 7 in physics. One student gained a 9 in Persian and another a 9 in Sport. Several of our students gained distinctions in practical BTecs.

5 Exclusion and Suspensions

5.1 The Virtual School worked with schools and LA services to ensure that there were no permanent exclusions of CLA last academic year. This included the funding of a range of interventions including additional adults, alternative provisions and placement support. 56 CYP (13%) received one or more suspensions since September 2021. This is a 2% increase on last year. NCER data shows that our CLA Cohort has a fixed period exclusion rate of **14.02** in 2021/22, which is **6.55 greater than** the National CLA Rate of **7.47**. This will, therefore, be an area of focus for the Virtual school, working in partnership with schools, ISEND and SLES next year.

5.2 The VS worked with all schools to support children who were in crisis to avoid exclusion where possible. This has included funding ESBAS support, Educational

Psychologist consultations, Extended Support Assistant classroom support and Alternative Provision.

6 Attendance

6.1 The Virtual school tracks attendance of school aged CLA weekly. This enables us to identify any attendance issues and intervene at an early stage. Overall Attendance was 90.22% (June 2022) 77% of our children and young people had attendance of above 90%. NCER data for last academic year (CLA 12 months) shows our attendance as 93.2% and national CLA as 93%. It shows our persistent absence as 16.9% as compared to a national figure of 18%.

6.2 We have also tracked the attendance of our post 16 cohort as part of the Post 16 pilot. The collation of this data and the pupil premium funding has enabled us to identify any dips in attendance and intervene accordingly. For example, when A's attendance dropped, they received support from the Additional Learning Support Team and changed the level of their course. This led to an improvement in attendance from 65% to 94%. Student B received English as Another Language tuition and the Virtual School funded gym membership both which contributed to an improvement in attendance from 33% to 100%.

7 Key Provisions

7.1 Teaching and Learning

The Virtual School delivered 176 blocks of tuition to 118 children and young people. We also funded EALS tuition for 45 young people during the academic year and 22 academic interventions to post 16 students as part of the Post 16 Pilot. Teaching last year was a mixture of online and face to face to tuition.

7.2 Tuition was provided by our own tutors and a small number of private companies. We struggled to source tutors at times and have needed to use more tutors from external providers. This has been the case nationally.

7.3 75% of the CYP who received tuition met all three targets and the remaining 25% achieved at least one target and partially met the others. 100% of all children and young people said their confidence against their targets had increased.

7.4 Literacy development is a key focus of our work. All CLA in school years reception to Year 6, receive a book parcel containing three books, 6 times a year. The parcels are accompanied by a newsletter which sets the children challenges aimed at increasing engagement with reading. Older children are sent a letter with a list of 6 available titles from which they choose 2 books.

'Thank you for all the parcels you send us. We love the books and magic cards.' (Child feedback)

8 Alternative Provisions

8.1 Partnerships between the VS and local providers continued throughout the year. These organisations mainly delivered services to young people who were not engaging with school. Eggtooth and the Education Futures Trust, both based in Hastings, South Brockwell Farm, Audio Active and Develop Outdoors provided educational and therapeutic interventions.

8.2 Last academic year 22 young people accessed Alternative Provision and 10 young people received Placement Support. Alternative provision included supported work experience in a beauty salon and at a stable, forest skills, music production, farm-based activities, bike maintenance and art activities. 100% of evaluation responses showed that at least 2 out of 3 targets had been achieved and that all young people recorded an increase in confidence against their targets.

9 Extra Curricula Activities

9.1 The VS organised a range of extra curricula activities including a Film workshop, Glyndebourne Performances, University Spring school and a summer holiday 'Ready to Learn' for children entering reception in September 2022

10 Information, Advice and Guidance

10.1 The Youth Employability Scheme (YES) offered a universal service to all young people from year 10 and worked intensively with those who required more support in identifying future pathways. YES staff work in partnership with the Through Care Team and Virtual School caseworkers.

10.2 The percentage of Looked after Children (LAC) participating in education, training or employment with training (RPA) at (Year 12) and (Year 13) (March 2022) was 81% for year 12 and 70 % for year 13. The percentage in education or employment (EET) was 83% for year 12 and 73% for year 13.

10.3 In May 2022 the year 12 RPA was higher than the percentage of the wider group of young people supported by YES and only 2% lower than last year. The EET figure was higher than the wider YES group and 1% higher than last year.

10.4 In May 2022 the year 13 RPA was 10% higher than wider YES but 10% lower than last year. The percentage of YP in EET was 5% higher than wider YES and 6% higher than last year. This reflects the wider context in which young people are opting for employment over employment with training.

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10.5 Evidence from YES casework shows positive outcomes for young people.

Case Study A: The YES caseworker had a referral from the VS. He reported getting to know Young Person A and working with them to develop a plan of action to redress lack of education and qualifications. The VS funded and organised 1:1 English and maths tutoring

YP completed applications for two local colleges and sat Functional Skills exams with a training provider. YP secured college place for September 2022.

11 Boarding School Partnership

11.1 The VS continued to work closely with Bede's school as part of the Springboard boarding project. Five students completed their studies at Bedes school at the end of the year. Four students joined Bedes in September 2022.

12 The Children in Care Awards

12.1 The awards took place virtually last year. Fifty-six children and young people were nominated in the categories of educational achievement, positive contribution, personal achievement and skills and talents.

12.2 The overall winners in the four categories received their award for positive transition to secondary school, determination to help others, sports leadership, community volunteering and educational achievement in terms of both attainment and progress.

13 Strategic Partnerships

13.1 The Virtual School worked closely with other Local Authority services to develop policy and practice across East Sussex.

13.2 We continued to work strategically with partners in the local authority re mental health and emotional wellbeing, in planning to meet the needs of children and young people in schools and colleges and in the planning and delivery of the ISEND Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing conference in July 2022.

13. 3 We met monthly with LACAMHs to support partnership working between health, care, and education.

13.4 We were involved with developments of a Vulnerable Learners Protocol and with the SEND Community of Practice which develops good practice re information, advice, and guidance for young people with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND).

13.5 We have been involved in strategic reviews on exclusion in East Sussex (Rethinking Exclusions) and on College Central Provision and will attend Inclusion Partnerships meetings and sit on the SABDEN Alternative Provision Quality Committee, both group supporting the inclusion of vulnerable students including looked after children and children with a social worker.

14. Training

14.1 The Virtual School delivered and organised a range of training last academic year focused on developing staff understanding of the needs of children in care the role of the designated teacher and effective personal education planning, understanding the care system and attachment and trauma.

14.2 The VS commissioned two training courses Journey Through Care course and Change Your Mind, Change Your World for Teachers, Social Workers, Other Professionals each involving weekly sessions over 6 weeks. The courses each had 40 regular participants and were rated highly by all participants.

15 Children with a social worker

15.1 In July 2021 the Head of the Virtual School was allocated extended duties from the Department for Education to provide a strategic lead to improve the educational outcomes of children with a social worker. This follows the national Children in Need Review (2019) that highlighted how poor the educational outcomes of children with social workers could be and how the leadership and expertise of Virtual School Heads was helping to raise aspirations and improve outcomes for children in care. This is a strategic responsibility and does not involve any direct work with children.

15.2 The first phase of the new duties involved consultation with partners. The consultation involved Social Workers from the Youth Support and Family Support Team and managers from across the service. Staff from 30 schools across the Authority were consulted incorporating Primary, Secondary and Sixth Form phases and both mainstream and special schools. Discussions were also held with managers across ISEND Services.

15.3 Alongside this consultation, Virtual School staff provided information and advice to social workers. The Head of Service for Locality Social Work and team managers identified children on the edge of care where education was a key contributing factor to their vulnerability. Virtual School staff were also involved in multi-agency work to preventing the permanent exclusion of children on the edges of care.

15.4 Strategic planning around attendance, exclusions, SEND and mental health and emotional wellbeing was extended to include a focus on children with a social worker.

15.5 An Extended Duties Adviser has now been appointed and an action plan in place for the coming year.

15.6 Our Children in Care role includes providing information and advice to parents, social workers and schools on previously looked after children. Last year we developed a partnership with Family and Friends Service who support special guardianship families. The Family and Friends keyworkers have reported that the partnership has resulted in them feeling informed and empowered to liaise with schools directly, and to advocate for the educational needs of children cared for under special guardianship orders.

16 Post 16 Education

16.1 We are pleased with post 16 results. Students gained A stars in Art and Psychology A-level and Distinction stars in ICT, music and art production and sport. Other students are either continuing onto a level 3 course or moving into employment.

16.2 Eleven young people secured University places although two are deferring.

16.3 East Sussex was successful in becoming part of a pilot for funding Post 16 provision. We are one of 30 LAs in the country and three in the southeast received funding based on the number of young people enrolled in Further Education Colleges. The pilot included training for staff in FE colleges and in the Through Care Team, the development of guidance for teachers and social workers re post 16 provision and effective education planning as well as an offer of additional English and Maths lesson. The Virtual School has funded the delivery of 22 interventions in English and Maths.

16.4 20 young people have been referred for coaching and feedback from key staff and young people has been positive.

I have been amazed, gratified, and surprised at just how quickly B connected and engaged and how much he achieves. You have not only boosted his confidence, but his enthusiasm for learning and his ability to do it well.

The advice and support provided is humane, responsive, and very practical. You are not telling him to not worry and just get on with it, you are telling him why his brain is worrying, how to manage it and always making it clear that well-being is the partner of great learning and productivity. This focused, quiet, diligent and goal orientated approach is having a real impact on him.

16.5 The pilot also included a focus on delivering quality education to UASC from the point of entry to the Authority. This has included provision of English as an Additional Language lessons, language for Maths and for ICT lessons. Also support for carers to help develop English language in the home and the community. Twenty-eight referrals for EAL teaching were made over the year and 20 YP received regular weekly sessions.

16.6 The DFE has recently announced that the pilot will be extended in its current form and that East Sussex will, therefore, receive a further year of funding.

17. The wider National context

17.1 The Virtual Head Teacher (VHT) collaborated with the national cohort of VHT's on a range of national priority areas.

17.2 The VS Head Teacher and Designated Teacher from Bedes school accepted an invitation to join the Broadening Educational Pathways Programme Expert Advisory group. The invitation was in recognition of the well-established partnership between Bedes and East Sussex which has been in existence for 10 years. They attended an inaugural meeting at the DFE attended by the then Education Minister, Nadim Zahawi and later in the year, an event at the House of Lords where East Sussex represented the Virtual School Head Teachers on a panel.

18 Governor priorities for the Virtual School 2022/23

18.1 To further improve the educational and wider outcomes for Looked After children

18.2 To improve outcomes for children and young people with a social worker, including academic progress, attendance, and wellbeing

18.3 To improve outcomes for post 16 children in care and care leaver

18.4 To increase the knowledge and understanding of the care system by education staff and education by care

18.5 To develop further partnership working between care and education to the benefit of all vulnerable groups.

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Report to:	**Corporate Parenting Panel**
Date of meeting:	**28 October 2022**
By:	**Director of Children's Services**
Title:	**The Annual Report of Looked After Children's Services 2021-22**
Purpose:	**To outline the performance of the Looked After Children's Service between 2021-22**

RECOMMENDATION:

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

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1 Background and supporting information

1.1 The Annual Report of the East Sussex Looked After Children's Service is attached as Appendix A.

1.2 Services to LAC are supported by base budgets within Children's Services. 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.

ALISON JEFFERY
Director of Children's Services: Alison Jeffery

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Appendices
Appendix A - LAC 2021-22

LOCAL MEMBERS
All
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
None

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East Sussex County Council

Looked After Children's Annual Progress Report 2021-22

Sally Carnie

Head of Service for LAC

Appendix A

Who did we look after?

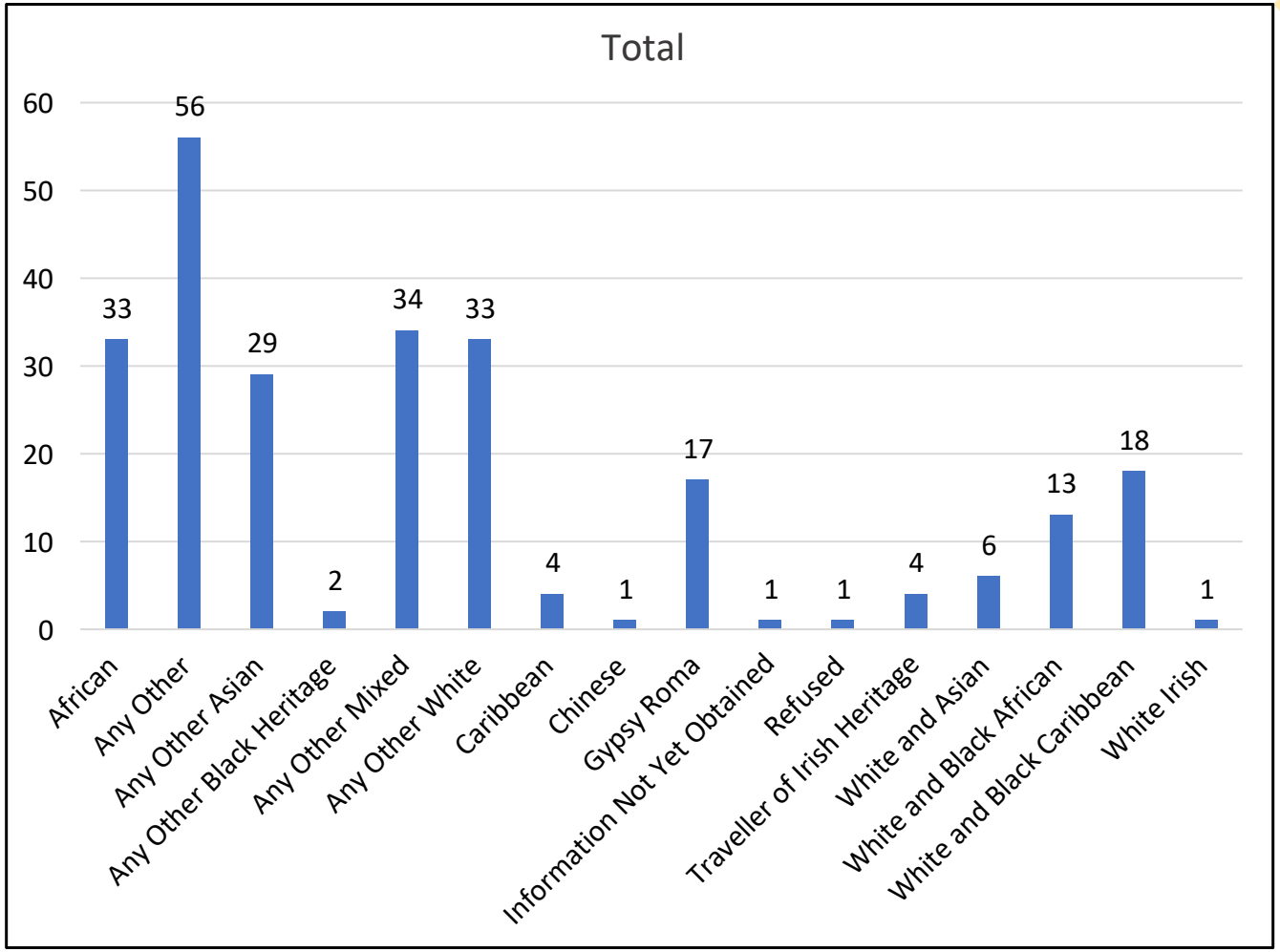
The data shows a snapshot as at 31st March 2022.

- We looked after 356 boys and 272 girls.
- There were more children in care than the previous year. This was in part due to an additional 5 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) in the snapshot figure as compared to the previous year.
- There were higher numbers of children who left care in this period compared to last year, but more children came into our care overall.
- 845 children came in and left our care during the year which is an increase of 63 as compared with 2020/21. This represents significantly higher activity levels across the service.

Statistics	2020-2021	2021-2022
Looked After Children	611	628 (+17)
Children coming into care	209	246 (+37)
0-5 year olds admitted to care	83	81 (-2)
6-12 year olds admitted to care	49	71 (+22)
13+ admitted to care	77	94 (+17)
Children leaving care	178	228 (+50)
0-12 year olds leaving care	91	94 (+3)
13+ leaving care	87	134 (+47)

Ethnicity of our Looked After Children (LAC)

30% of our Looked After Children (LAC) during 2021-22 identified as being of a minority ethnic background or of mixed heritage.



Our Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

- East Sussex County Council (ESCC) cared for 104 UASC under 18 during 2021-22 (compared to 70 during 2020-21) plus 95 Care Leavers aged 18+.
- Our UASC were mainly male, 88% were aged 16 or over and the youngest was aged 13.
- In the last year, 25 young people came to ESCC through the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) and the remainder were spontaneous arrivals via Police involvement or directly from Newhaven Port.
- The majority of these children were Kurdish, predominantly Iranian, followed by Sudanese and Vietnamese. There were also small numbers of children from Eritrea, Afghanistan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Albania, Iraq, Libya, Syria and Egypt.

Statistics	2021-22	2020-21
UASC in care as at 31st March	54	59

Children looked after by the Disability Service

- The Children's Disability Service criteria for allocation is 'Children who have severe and enduring cognitive delay, severe learning disability, low functional abilities and physical disabilities'.
- As at 31st March 2022, this service worked with 20 LAC. 12 children were aged 0-15 and 8 were aged 16-18.
- Geographically, 3 children were living outside East Sussex. This figure has gradually reduced over the last 3 years.
- These 20 children were in receipt of full time care. In addition, the service provided extensive packages of support and respite to other children and their families in the community.

Placements	
ESCC foster carers	7
Agency foster carers	1
ESCC Residential Homes	6
Independent Residential Homes	5
Residential School	1

Where our children are living

Increase in	Increase in children placed with total number of foster carers, kinship and ESCC foster carers.
Decrease in	Decrease in children placed for adoption.
Increase in	Increase in children aged 16+ living with our supported accommodation providers including with our inhouse supported lodgings providers.
Increase in	Increase in children living in both ESCC and agency Children's Homes.

Data shows a snapshot as of 31st March 2022

Placement Type	2020-2021	2021-2022
With foster carer	426	451
Of these: in house carers	265	276
Kinship carers	65	84
Agency carers	96	91
Placed for Adoption	23	14
Supported Accommodation / Supported Lodgings	57	63
ESCC Children's Homes	14	16
Agency Children's Homes	57	58
Agency Special Schools	1	1
Placed with Parents	22	22
Independent Living	7	0
Youth custody/secure unit	3	3
Hospital/NHS establishment	1	0
Absconded	0	0
Total	611	628

How well did we do in 2021-22?

Indicator Ref	Description	2021/22 Value		2020/21 England	2020/21 Value		2019/20 England	2019/20 Value	
NI 58	Emotional & Behavioural Health of children in care	13.9	↑	13.7	14.1	↑	14.1	14.5	↓
Adoption 1	Percentage of children who ceased to be looked after who were adopted	8.4%	↓	10.2%	15.3%	↑	11.7%	15.2%	↓
Adoption 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)	301 days	↓	183 days	274 days	↓	175 days	252 days	↓
NI62 Placements 1	Number of children looked after with 3 or more placements during the year	10.4%	↑	8.9%	13.3%	↓	10.6%	13.0%	↓
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	73.9%	↑	70.3%	63.7%	↑	68.2%	62.3%	↓
Placements 3	% of LAC at 31st March placed outside LA boundary and more than 20 miles from where they used to live	15.4%	↑	16.4%	17.3%	↓	15.6%	15.2%	↓

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

How well did we do in 2021-22? (continued)

Indicator Ref	Description	2021/22 Value		2020/21 England	2020/21 Value		2019/20 England	2019/20 Value	
Leaving Care 1 * *see note below*	% of former relevant young people aged 19-21 who were in education, employment or training	54.9%	↑	52.0%	46.3%	↓	52.6%	52.8%	↑
Leaving Care 2 * *see note below*	% of former relevant young people aged 19-21 who were in suitable accommodation	88.4%	↑	87.7%	87.8%	↑	85.3%	78.8%	↓
Leaving Care 3 * *see note below*	% of former relevant young people aged 17-18 who were in education, employment or training	71.8%	↑	65.0%	68.7%	↓	63.8%	76.3%	↑
Leaving Care 4 **see note below*	% of former relevant young people aged 17-18 who were in suitable accommodation	94.5%	↓	90.6%	95.5%	↓	89.7%	97.4%	↑
Thrive PI 9	Rate of Children looked after per 10,000 population aged under 18	58.9	↓	67.0	57.5	↓	66.7	55.7	↑
Health 1	Percentage of children who had their teeth checked by a dentist	70.3%	↑	39.6%	32.6%	↓	85.6%	91.2%	↓
PAF C81	Final warnings, reprimands and convictions of lac	0.9%	↑	2.4%	1.8%	↑	2.9%	2.6%	↓

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

** Leaving Care Indicators–calculated using data collected at the time of each young person's 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th or 21st birthday*

How well did we do in 2021-22 – Summary

- Overall, the performance remained strong with significant improvements in some areas.
- The rate of LAC increased from 57.5 in 2020-21 to 58.9 per 10,000 population in 2021-22 but this is still well below the national average for England of 67.0.
- Performance against the Care Leavers indicators improved in relation to Education, Employment or Training (EET) and those young people in suitable accommodation.
- The emotional and behavioural health of children in care (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire - SDQ scores) improved slightly and the average score per child is 13.9 which is a reduction of 0.2.
- Performance in relation to placement stability, and children placed outside of ESCC boundaries, improved significantly from last year.
- The percentage of children who had a dental check markedly improved from 32.6% in 2020-21 to 70.3% in 2021-22, although this remained significantly below pre-Covid levels.
- Performance in relation to the adoption indicators was challenging and showed a overall deterioration across all indicators. However, this was a very small cohort of children and 2 sets of siblings distorted the performance in some areas.

Adoption

- The number of adoption orders made in 2021-22 dramatically decreased. This was largely due to delays in care proceedings, the granting of placement orders and adoption hearings.
- Some delays were also caused by the levels of complexity found in the presentations of LAC where additional specialist medical interventions were required (genetic testing etc).
- Adoption South East (ASE) increased the pool of adopters available during this period. This strengthened ESCC's position regarding matching and enabled Social Workers to more easily meet each child's individual needs. Where a match could not be identified in the region, ASE linked with other regions/organisations to identify suitable adopters.
- Early permanence was actively promoted by ASE aiming to improve the timeliness of placing children for adoption in ESCC.
- See ASE Annual Report (slide 34)

Family Finding & Linking in East Sussex	2021-22	2020-21
Number of children adopted (AOs)	10	27
Number of children approved for adoption	16	26
Number of relinquished children	0	1
Number of 2 sibling groups matched	0	1
Number of 3 sibling groups matched	0	0
Number of 4 sibling groups matched	0	0
Number of children matched outside of ASE	3	3
Number of children matched within ASE	10	22
Number of children placed for Foster to Adopt (F2A)	8	8

Fostering Recruitment and Retention

The data provided is a snapshot as of 31st March each year.

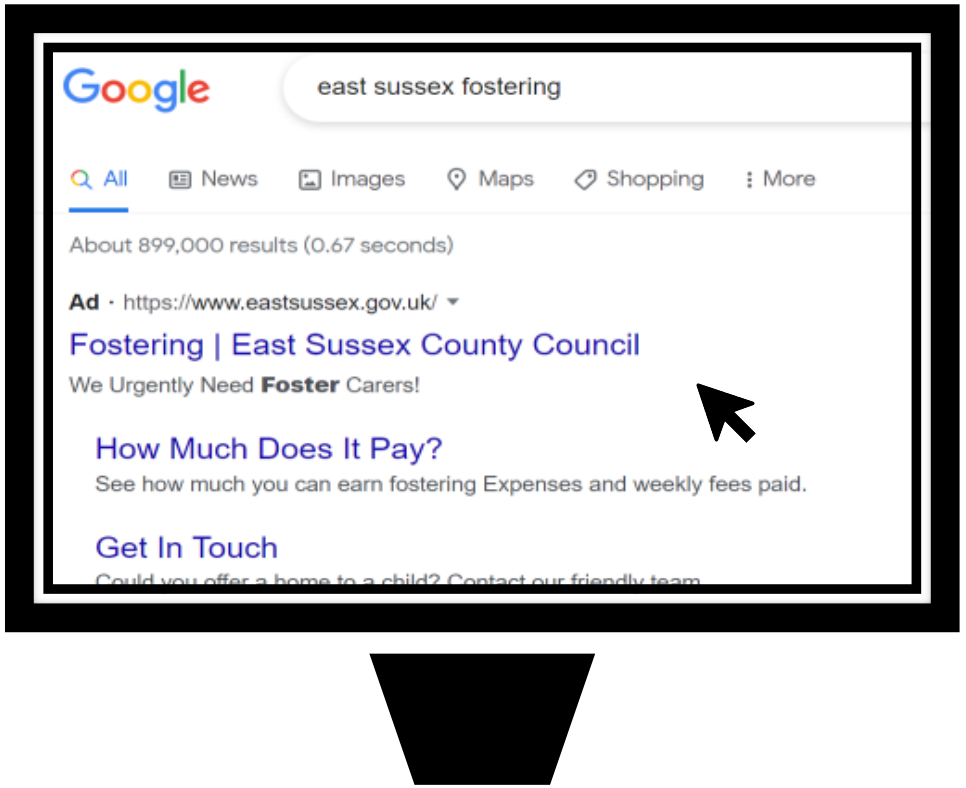
East Sussex's recruitment activity during 2021/22 mirrored the challenges experienced by fostering services nationally. A number of new measures have been implemented to maximise the conversion of enquiries to approved foster carers for 2022-23:

- **Appointment of dedicated Marketing and Communications Officer.** Responsible for the fostering recruitment strategy including the development of the fostering website, marketing tools and the use of social media.
- **Referral and Transfer 'Incentive Schemes'.** This scheme rewards any foster carer who either refers or transfers a potential carer to the local authority, with a payment of £500 made at the point of approval, and a further £500 payment when a young person is first placed.

Recruitment	Households		
	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020
Enquiries	200	227	268
Screening calls	68	92	114
Initial visits	32	42	71
Skills to foster training (STF)	15	37	21
Applications for assessment	36	53	35
Closed	7	7	7
Withdrew	9	13	6
Total allocated but did not progress	16	20	13
Approvals	14	20	22
Placements	21	30	39
Conversion rate Enquiry to approval	6%	9%	8%
Conversion rate Screening call to approval	16%	22%	19%
Conversion rate Initial visit to approval	34%	48%	31%

The percentage drop in conversion rate can be attributed to the quality of enquiries. Towards the end of the pandemic, there were a significant number of enquiries from applicants looking for alternative sources of income. However, many were sufficiently informed by the initial assessment process, to make the decision that fostering was not for them.

Fostering Recruitment (continued)



Google Adverts - Covid Recovery Funded Project

East Sussex has invested funding to improve ESCC Fostering's position on "Google Ad Keyword Searches". Carers transferring to ESCC had often advised that the presenting order of Google search results was a factor in their previous decisions to enquire with agencies.

Fostering Friendly Employer Scheme

In conjunction with ESCC HR department, we are currently looking into whether ESCC can adopt Fostering Network's policy which would help aid recruitment and retention of foster carers from ESCC's workforce. This would more generally demonstrate that ESCC is a supportive and flexible employer.

Other initiatives existing and targeted for 2022-23:

- "Keeping in touch" — With applicants who previously withdrew if it was not the right time for them.
- "Possible council tax exemptions" — *to be explored in 2022-23* for approved foster carers
- "Website editing and social media" — Upgraded content on the ESCC website and social media profiles.
- "Recruitment Events" — **Including live online information sessions and revised schedule of locations for "Vinnie-the-Van"**
- "Revised Global Radio Advert Campaign" — **New interviews with existing foster carers.**
- "Review of outdoor advertising" — **i.e. roundabout and lamppost banners.**
- "Council tax postal mailout" — **Fostering flyers posted to 50,000 homes across East Sussex so far.**

Supported Lodgings

The data provided is a snapshot as of 31st March 2022

The were 43 registered supported lodgings providers.

- **32** of these providers cared for young people aged 16+ only
- **10** of these providers were also approved as “hybrid” (approved as foster carers and supported lodgings providers)
- **1** Provider was being assessed as a “hybrid” foster carer.

46 Young people were placed in Supported Lodgings during 2021/22.

- **10** of these young people were Homeless
- **10** were Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
- **26** were Looked After Children.

Placement Support Service

- During 2021-22 there were 142 packages of support delivered.
  - Placement Support - 90 support packages
  - Special Placement Scheme - 5 support packages
  - Parent & Baby – 2 support packages
  - Through Care Team - 40 support packages to Care Leavers
  - Edge of care - 3 support packages to families in the community
  - Agency - 2 support packages

- Feedback

  ''Our placement support worker was amazing. M enjoys his time out each week''

  ''He talks to his placement support worker about the things he doesn't talk to us about''

  ''Without the support from our placement support worker, we wouldn't still be looking after our young person''

  ''The placement support workers really seem to 'get' R. They are great at communicating with us and we value their support''

Children in Care Council (CICC)

The CICC had a very busy and productive year 2021-22. A range of activities were organised which enabled young people to participate in key developments.

SUSS it (Speak up Sessions) - 29 activities giving 59 young people the opportunity to speak out and speak up about issues that were important to them.

Digital Ambassadors - Young people participated in the Digital Care Project which was set up to train, update and promote resources for keeping children safe and resilient online.

Partnership working - Young people worked with Ramshackle Productions and Eggtooth to create a social media channel and made a film entitled '10 things you don't say to people in care'.

Youth Cabinet - The CICC and Youth Cabinet came together at Bushy Wood to be consulted on various campaigns and service developments within East Sussex.

Buddy Scheme - 4 CICC members attended a bespoke training to become buddies for this scheme. It offers support to children when they first enter care from a care experienced buddy.

Volunteering - Over the last 12 months, the CICC have completed 964 volunteering hours in their local communities.

Funding - CICC have secured an extra £1288.30 funding this year to support additional team building activities.

Our Children's Homes

Hazel lodge
St Leonards-on-Sea

- Judged as 'Good' by Ofsted in May 2021.
- A new manager has been appointed and registered with Ofsted.
- Young people engaged well with education.
- Young people enjoyed a number of fun activities over the summer including a number of short breaks.

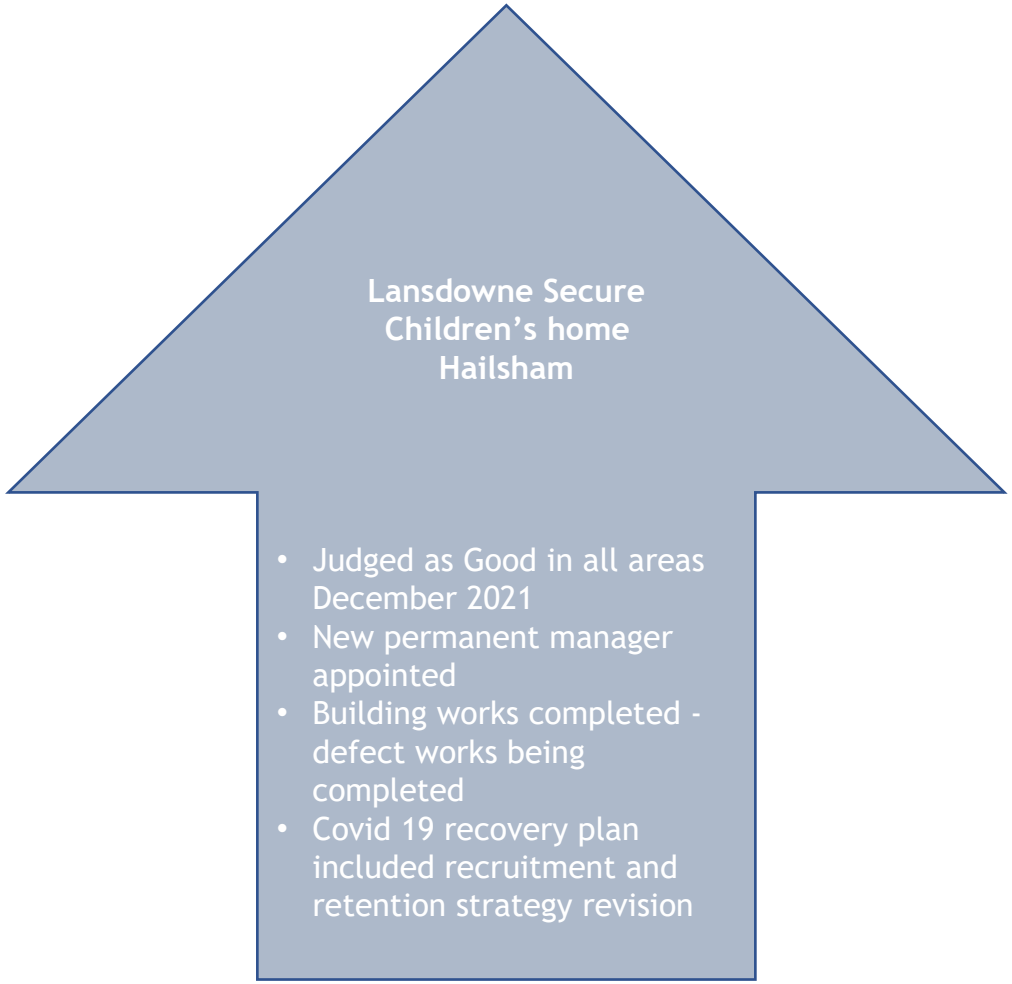
Brodrick House
Eastbourne

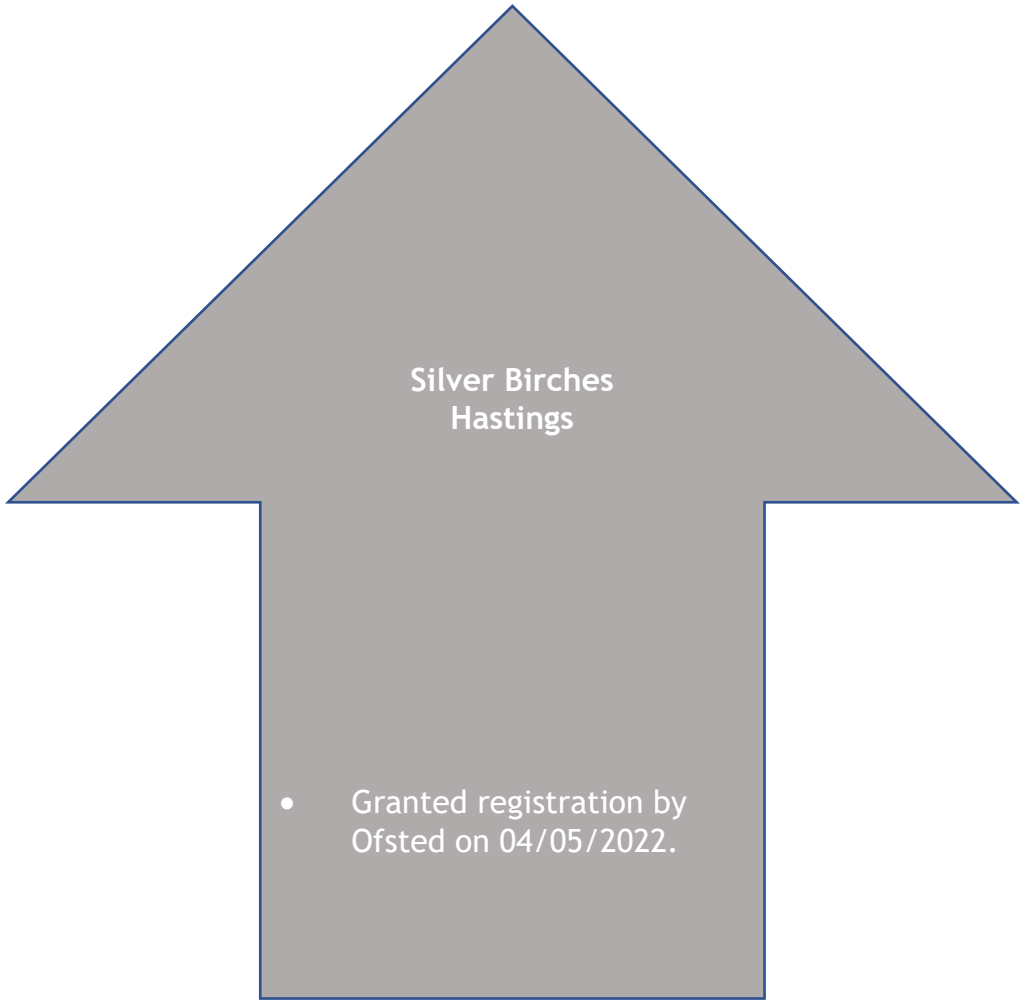
- Continuing 'Outstanding' judgement by Ofsted.
- Ofsted came January 2022 following a series of safeguarding notifications, setting compliance notices which were duly met by March 2022.
- Young people continue to demonstrate positive outcomes and achieve personal goals overall.
- Young people have enjoyed a number of trips away and positive activities.
- All young people despite challenges with education are now on full educational courses / timetables.

Homefield Cottage
Seaford

- Was judged by Ofsted to be 'outstanding' in Sept 2021
- The children/young people all made positive progress.
- The children/young people enjoyed the summer holidays and engaged in lots of fun activities.
- The staff team continue to be resilient, child focussed and have high aspirations for our resident children/young people.

Our Children's Homes (continued)





Our Children's Homes(Continued)

The Bungalow
Eastbourne

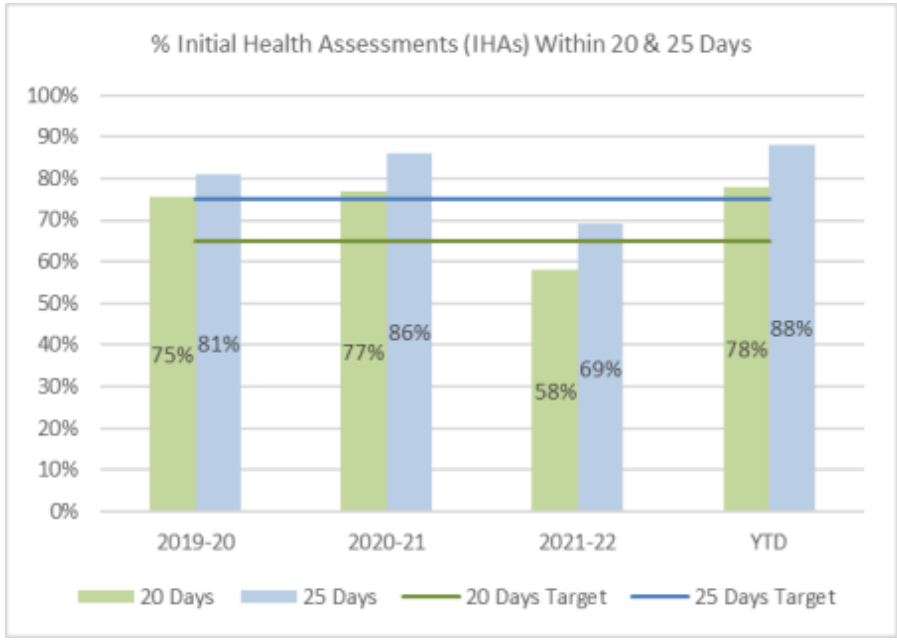
- Registered for 7 children aged 7-19 and provides full time accommodation to children with a severe level of disability who are unable to live in a family setting.
- During the period 2021-22, all children attended local schools and all maintained contact with their families.
- The Bungalow received and Ofsted judgement of 'Good' in 2022.

Acorns
Bexhill-on-Sea

- Continued to provide care for 2 young people, both of which have a high level of complex needs.
- Staff worked closely with colleagues in the Positive Behaviour Support Services and the Child Adolescent Mental Health Service.
- Judged as 'Good' by Ofsted in September 2021.

The health of our children

- Following 2 years of improved performance in the completion of Initial Health Assessments (IHA's) there was a marked decline in 2021-22. This was largely due to the reintroduction of a requirement for written consent to be obtained from families for IHA/s.
- A performance improvement plan was agreed and implemented which should drive up the IHA performance again.



The mental and emotional wellbeing of our children

- Following the Foundations for our Future review, a Sussex Children and Young Peoples' Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy 2022–2027 for Sussex Children and Young People up to the age of 25 has been produced by the Sussex Health and Care Partnership. Although a Sussex wide strategy, it recognises the importance of responding to the specific needs of local communities.
- The refreshed Sussex Local Transformation Plan (LTP) September 2021 recognises that some children and young people, including Looked After Children, will need more help and risk support. The LTP includes an action to recognise the increasing number of children who are looked after, to review and align the current service offers and increase the investment to allow more access to timely specialist services for children and carers.
- During the year the Looked After Children's Mental Health Service (LACMHS) offered 40 consultations to networks, 90 Drop Ins and at least one Therapeutic Parenting Group each quarter, either to foster carers or Residential Children's Home staff. The numbers of cases opened at any one time varied between 82 (Q2) and 74 (Q4).
- A review of LACMHS by ESCC Children's Services Looked After Children service during 2021-2022 concluded that there had been:
    - Longer waiting times due to increasing demand due to children coming into care, Section 20 cases, and Section 31 return home assessments; more LAC presenting with significant risk of harm to themselves or others; crisis situations, urgent assessments and interventions for high risk; the number of placement breakdowns and associated support for children affected; and the level of need arising in RCH.
    - A CCG funded one-year pilot to support high risk cases and reduce waiting times commenced in August 2021. Over 11 months, Duty screened 71 referrals in total, responded to 36 crisis incidents and offered 9 short term pieces of stabilisation work.
- Due to ongoing staffing challenges within SPFT within the Adopted Children's Mental Health Service (ADCAMHS), the service ceased to take new clients from October 2021 but has continued to support existing clients. Following a review of ADCAMHS undertaken by ESCC Children's Services during 2021-2022, work is in hand to identify a way forward to provide MH services for adopted children and their families.

Education of our children - Headline data

- Academic Outcomes showed improvement across all stages this year despite the disruption our LAC experienced in their education due to Covid. All current data is provisional and progress data is not yet available for GCSEs.
- **Key Stage 1** data showed the percentage of ESCC LAC reached the expected standard in Reading 57.1% compared with 46.0% of LAC nationally, Writing was 42.09% compared with 35.0% nationally, and Maths was 50.0% compared with 45.0% nationally. There were no ESCC children working at greater depth, but there were also fewer children nationally reaching greater depth in writing and Maths, but not in reading.
- **Key Stage 2** data showed a 19% increase of ESCC LAC reaching expected levels in reading, little change in the percentage of children reaching expected levels in writing, a small drop in Maths but a greater drop in Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling. However, there were excellent progress scores in all areas, the highest progress scores being 27.34 in reading, 10.87 in writing and 14.03 in Maths.
- **GCSE results** showed the percentage of ESCC LAC gaining a level 5 and above in English and Maths increased from 4.2% in 2019 to 16%, and a level 4 and above from 8.1% to 27%.
- **Excellent individual results** ranging from one student gaining 9 in English, 8 in Maths and French, another achieved 7's across all subjects, another achieved a 7 in Physics, one also gained a 9 in Persian and another, who attends a special school, a 9 in Sport. Several students gained distinctions in practical BTECs.
- **Post 16 results** enabled 11 Care Leavers to gain University places with two students gaining A grades and 2 others gaining Distinction stars in their BTEC qualifications. Many other post 16 young people also achieved level 1 and 2 qualifications which will enable them to progress onto other courses.
- **Overall Attendance** was 90.22% (June 2022). 77% of our children and young people had attendance of above 90%. There were no permanent exclusions last year. 56 CYP (13.14%) received 1 or more suspensions last academic year which was a 2% increase on the previous year and higher than the national CLA figure.

Virtual School (VS)

- **Virtual Head extended duties** - The Virtual Head Teacher took on a strategic role to promote the educational outcomes for any child 0-18 who has, or previously has had, a Social Worker.
- **Post 16 Pilot** – This pilot was developed to enhance the educational outcomes for young people aged 16+ and additional developments in FE provision. This included academic tutoring and coaching, a staff training programme and partnership with post 16 providers to more effectively track attendance and performance.
- **Tuition** - 176 blocks of tuition were provided to 118 children. 100% of all children and young people said their confidence against their targets had increased.
- **English as an Additional Language (EALS**) – 45 UASC were provided with additional language tuition through the year.
- **Training** – An extensive training programme was delivered including online Designated Teacher Training using pre-recorded training and live discussions, 'A Journey Through Care' and 'Change Your Mind, Change Your World' reaching 80 members of staff.
- **Alternative education provision** – A range of providers were commissioned to deliver alternative educational support for young people with complex behaviours and who were not in full time education including South Brockwell's Farm, Audio Active, Eggtooth, TLP etc.
- **Mental Health and Wellbeing Conference** - The VS contributed to the planning and delivery of the conference which was held in July 2022.
- **Extra-curricular activities** – A range of these activities were delivered throughout 2021-22 and included options such as a film making course, spring school at University and participation in Glyndebourne performances.

The Through Care Team (TCT)
What we have achieved in 2021-22

- A hybrid model of groupwork was adopted during this period. This enabled some visits and group activities to return to face to face, but also supported virtual meetings where groups of young people could more easily come together from across the county such as the Care Leavers Council (CIC).
- Young people all had access to laptops and Wi-Fi in order to continue with their education, facilitate their access to employment and to keep in touch with their families.
- The Local Offer was reviewed and updated with extensive additional supports put in place for Care Leavers by ESCC. Developments were also agreed to extend the wider corporate parenting role across all agencies in East Sussex.
- The service piloted a Health and Wellbeing Project for 6 months to support young people to use personalised budgets for activities designed to improve their overall wellbeing. The outcomes and reported feedback was extremely positive, and an agreement to extend the project for a further 12 months has been made.
- Placement Support Workers (PSWs) continued to work closely with our young people who were isolated in their own accommodation or who were struggling to maintain their placements.
- A Rent Guarantor pilot scheme was implemented to secure better quality private rental accommodation options for young people.

The Through Care Team

What we have achieved in 2021-22 (continued)

- The housing pathway was extended during 2021-22 to include more commissioned providers.
- Closer working relationships with the East Sussex Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) enabled us to provide accommodation options with support to our most vulnerable young people.
- A closer working relationship has been established with East Sussex County Council Adult Social Care Specialist Accommodation Team ensuring a smoother transition for those Care Leavers with diagnosed mental health needs or trauma related diagnoses.
- The passport to independence was redesigned in collaboration with a group of care leavers and will be rolled out next year. Known as a Skills Journal, it also includes a version that is accessible to UASC and includes additional discussion points about laws, cultures and process in the UK.

Our Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

Developments 2021-22

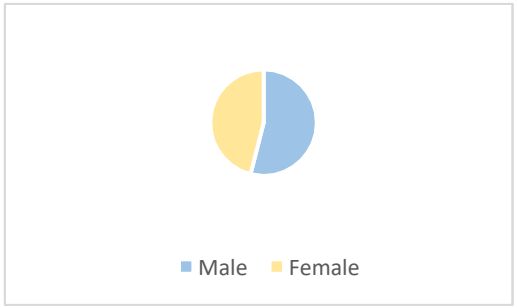
- Further investment was made to increase the capacity of the UASC team.
- Enhanced collaboration with the South East Regional Group and the Home Office (HO) pilot team for age assessments.
- 'Welcome to the UK' groups were initiated this year and received positive feedback from our young people. Further options to promote social opportunities for this cohort of young people were explored including encouragement of attendance at other ESCC LAC events and celebrations. The service also supported young people to celebrate other important festivals such as Eid Mubarak and the Chinese New Year.
- The Refugee Council were commissioned to offer specialist therapeutic interventions for the UASC young people.
- The UASC accommodation offer was extended during this period particularly for Care Leavers who did not have leave to remain, were unable to access public funds or hold a tenancy.

Our Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) (continued)

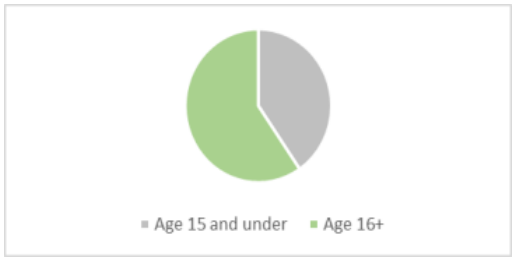
- The service enhanced its working relationships with education providers across ESCC and Brighton and Hove (B&H). This was particularly assisted by taking part in a pilot scheme to enable post 16 learners to access pupil premium funding.
- Joint work with health colleagues to design a more appropriate health assessment tool was completed and is due to be disseminated next year.
- This team has extended its remit to process and support unaccompanied children from the Ukraine.
- UASC young people were supported to access a Young Peoples' Panel hosted by HO to feedback any issues relating to immigration and their experiences of the processes involved.

Our Children who went missing

In 21/22, 89 LAC went missing, of these, 48 were male and 41 were female



53 of the 89 missing LAC were aged 16 and over, while the other 36 were aged 15 and under



55 of the missing LAC went missing more than once

In 2021-22 there were 494 missing episodes throughout the year, 403 episodes of children being missing for less than 24 hours, 49 episodes of children being missing for between 24 to 48 hours, 30 episodes where children were missing between 2 and 4 days and 12 episodes where they were missing for 5 days or more.

All these children were tracked by Sussex Police and by Children Services staff. Risk assessments were regularly reviewed on high profile children who went missing and where necessary, formal strategy discussions were held in line with safeguarding procedures

Our children who are at risk of criminal exploitation

- During 2021-22, 34 children were subject to ESCC MACE operational oversight and therefore categorised as being at high risk of exploitation.
- 8 of these children were ESCC LAC, 6 were female and 2 were male.
- 2 of these children were deemed to be a risk of sexual exploitation, 2 deemed to be at risk of criminal exploitation and 4 deemed to be at risk of both criminal and sexual exploitation.

Our children involved in the Youth Justice Service

- The Youth Justice Service (YJS) worked with 21 looked after children/young people during 2021-22.
- A snapshot of the looked after status of open cases showed that the YJS were working with 3 LAC on March 31st 2022 which equates to 2% of the YJS caseload.
- LAC aged 10 - 17 represent less than 1% of the total population of this age group across the county, therefore they are over represented within the YJS cohort.

My Voice Matters

- Improved performance in timeliness of My voice matters meetings (MVM)97% of all My Voice Matters Meetings were held early or on time in 2021-22 compared to 2019-20 – 92%, 2020-21 – 95%.
- 11% of late reviews were due to a 1 day scheduling error.
- 21% of late reviews were held within 4 weeks of the scheduled date. The majority of late reviews were delayed in the child's best interests or because an essential party was unable to attend.
- Further improvement work is being completed to address the reasons for late MVMs.
- Meetings were largely scheduled well in advance which contributed to a high level of compliance.

Participation

Children and Young People make their voices heard in lots of different ways

- In 2021-22, 97% of Children aged 4+ participated in some way in their own review process. This was an increase from 2020-21 of 95% and from 2019-20 of 91%.
- Of children aged 4yrs+, 56% attended their meeting and 41% sent their views.
- A Participation Lead was recruited during this period to work with social workers, partner agencies, carers and children and young people, to develop and support meaningful participation.
- My Voice Matters letters improved communication with children so that they received their review outcome in their own age appropriate language or in their preferred communication style.
- Positive feedback from children and young people was received about the IRO profiles that were shared routinely with them during the year.

The role of our elected members

The Corporate Parenting Panel met virtually three times during 2021-22 to discuss the agenda items set out below. The panel is planning to review it's role and function during 2022-23.

30th July 2021

- Fostering Service Annual Progress Report
- Looked after Children's statistics
- Ofsted Report for Hazel Lodge
- Regulation 44 Inspection Reports for the following Children's Homes – Acorns, Brodrick House, Hazel Lodge, Homefield Cottage, Lansdowne Secure Children's Home and The Bungalow.

29th October 2021

- Ofsted Inspection Reports for the following Children's Homes – Brodrick House, Acorns, Homefield Cottage and Lansdown Secure Children's Home.
- Regulation 44 Inspection Reports for the following Children's Homes - Acorns, Brodrick House, Hazel Lodge, Homefield Cottage, Lansdowne Secure Children's Home and The Bungalow.
- Virtual School Annual Report
- Looked after Children's Annual Progress Report
- Looked after Children's statistics

21st January 2022

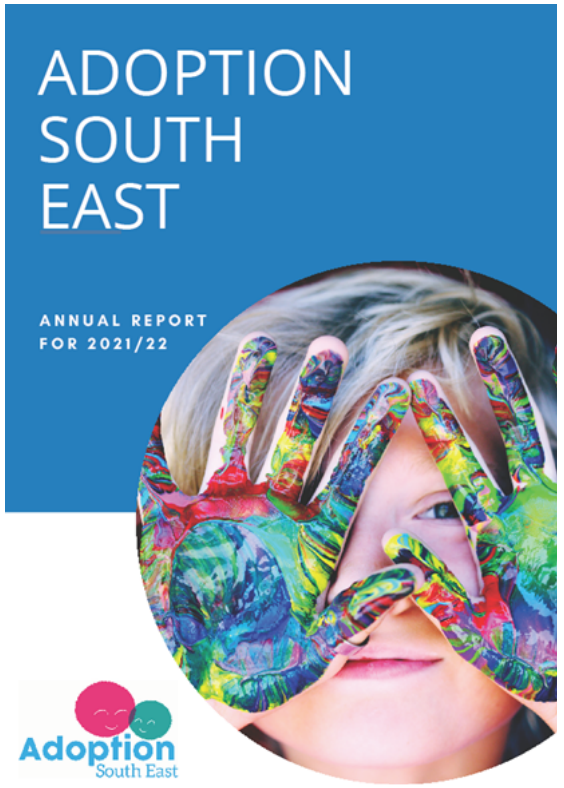
- Ofsted Inspection Reports for the following Children's Homes for Lansdown Secure Children's Home.
- Regulation 44 Inspection Reports for the following Children's Homes - Acorns, Brodrick House, Hazel Lodge, Homefield Cottage, Lansdowne Secure Children's Home and The Bungalow.
- Annual Report for East Sussex Foster Care Association
- Strengthening the Local Offer for Care Leavers in East Sussex
- Looked after Children's statistics

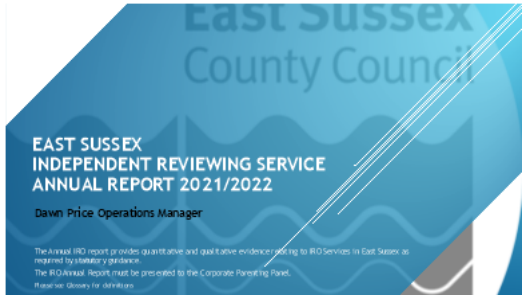
Priorities for 2021-22

- Review sufficiency policy to include all placement and family options with associated services such as education and mental health provision.
- Complete review of LACCAMHS and AdCAMHS.
- Contribute to service developments in relation to emotional wellbeing and mental health of our looked after children.
- Extend the Local Offer for our Care Leavers with key partners responsible for corporate parenting.
- Further develop and focus on meeting the identity needs of our children, young people and their families.
- Develop ambitious programme to enable our children and Care Leavers to maintain safe relationships within their networks. Promote children returning home or to extended family members where possible.
- In partnership with ASE, promote best practice in relation to early permanence, keeping in touch and post adoption support.

Children's Services Annual Reports 2021/22

UPDATED 06/09





Committee:	**Corporate Parenting Panel**
Date:	**28 October 2022**
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 Services for Looked After Children 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 each month, is scrutinised and cleansed where necessary. There were 630 children who were looked after at the end of September, which was a decrease of 8 from the previous quarter. This was largely due to a cohort of children who either left care or turned 18. The service was very busy and the sufficiency of any placements either in-house, or in the independent sector, was, and remains, extremely challenging. This is a reflection of a national issue across the UK.

1.3 A total of 352 children were living in foster care at the end of September which was a decrease of 13. Of that number 255 were living with ESCC carers and a further 97 children were living with agency carers. In addition, 70 young people were living in supported housing options, homes or hostels, this figure remained the same as the previous quarter. 19 children were placed for adoption; 7 of whom were placed with foster carers, who were also approved adopters, as part of the Fostering for Adoption pathway.

1.4 At the end of the quarter 88 children were living with kinship foster carers, 1 more than in the previous period.

1.5 The number of children living at home with their parents (PWP) whilst remaining subject to a care order to ESCC, remained at 21. Planning for placements of this sort is monitored rigorously to mitigate any risk factors. Agreement and authorisation for PWP placements is given at a senior level unless it is court mandated.

1.6 At the end of September, the number of children living in residential children's homes decreased by 1 to 77. Of that figure 18 children were living in ESCC children's homes and 59 were placed in external homes. Our staff work strenuously to place children in our in-house provision before they seek agreement from a senior manager for an agency placement. Robust negotiations on both quality and price are a feature of every external placement search. An additional ESCC children's home has now been registered and has a number of children in placement.

1.7 At the end of September we had 2 ESCC children placed in the Secure Children's Home at Lansdowne, and 1 other child was in an external secure unit.

1.8 There were no children remanded into youth detention accommodation in this quarter.

1.9 ESCC remained an active participant in the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC). The number of UASC was 64 at the end of September. In addition, there were 92 UASC who were Care Leavers during this period.

1.10 The number of children subject to Child Arrangement/Residence Orders decreased slightly to 340, and those children subject to a Special Guardianship Order increased to 478.

2. Conclusion

2.1 There were significant pressures in the Looked After Children's system during this period. This was not just driven by the numbers of children coming into care but compounded by the complexity of the children's presentations and challenging behaviours. This in turn, with the national shortage of care placements, has proved very challenging for the service.

3. Recommendations

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

ALISON JEFFERY
Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer:
Kathy Marriott, Assistant Director, Early Help and Social Care
Tel: 01273 481274

Local Members:
All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:
None

Children's Services LAC Summary between 01/10/2021 and 30/09/2022

Placement Type	Oct 21	Nov 21	Dec 21	Jan 22	Feb 22	Mar 22	Apr 22	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22
A4 - Placed for adoption with consent (under section 19 of the 2002 Act) not with current foster carer		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
A5 - Placed for adoption with placement order (under section 21 of the 2002 Act) with current foster carer	1	1	3	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	6
A6 - Placed for adoption with placement order (under section 21 of the 2002 Act) not with current foster carer	16	16	13	14	11	11	11	11	11	12	12	12
H5 - Residential accommodation	57	61	60	59	56	62	64	65	71	72	65	70
K1 - Secure unit	2	3	2	3	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	3
K2 - Homes and Hostels	75	72	73	72	74	73	75	77	77	76	77	76
P1 - Placed with own parents	30	23	20	21	26	22	22	23	23	22	21	21
P2 - Independent living	2	2	2	1								
R1 - Residential care home	1											
R2 - NHS/Health Trust			1								1	
R5 - Young Offender Institution or prison		1			1	1	2	2	1			
S1 - All Residential schools	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
U1 - Foster placement with relative or friend- long term fostering	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	12	12	12	12
U3 - Foster placement with relative or friend- not long term or FFA	69	70	74	73	68	73	74	72	72	77	78	76
U4 - Placement with other foster carer- long term fostering	171	171	169	167	160	157	154	149	146	142	141	135
U5 - Placement with other foster carer who is also an approved adopter- FFA	3	8	6	4	4	5	5	6	7	7	7	7
U6 - Placement with other foster carer - not long term or FFA	172	173	174	182	186	202	200	201	202	205	210	210
Total	611	614	610	614	606	626	626	626	632	635	634	630

Immigration Status	Oct 21	Nov 21	Dec 21	Jan 22	Feb 22	Mar 22	Apr 22	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22
Adult Asylum Seeker	1	1										
British Citizen	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	7	7	7	7
Discretionary Leave to Remain in the UK to 18 (DLR)	1	1										
Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK (ILR)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1
Refugee Status	24	23	21	16	15	15	14	13	13	12	11	11
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child	30	31	34	35	36	44	47	47	49	49	51	52

Legal Status	Oct 21	Nov 21	Dec 21	Jan 22	Feb 22	Mar 22	Apr 22	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22
Child Arrangements Order/ResidenceOrder S8(1)CA'89	343	343	343	342	342	342	342	342	342	342	341	340
Special Guardianship Order S14A CA 89	466	470	471	471	475	476	477	477	478	478	478	478

Corporate Parenting Panel

Agenda Item 11

Corporate Parenting?

- The responsibility of local authorities to improve outcomes and actively promote the life chances of children they look after is referred to as “corporate parenting” in recognition that the task must be **shared by the whole authority in partnership with partner agencies along with parents.**
- The role of corporate parent is to act as the **best parents** for each child they look after and to **take action to speaking out** on their behalf, **arranging for appropriate services to meet their needs**, **standing up for them** and representing them as needed, to ensure they **grow up in the best possible way**

Corporate Parenting Principles

In order to thrive, children and young people have certain key needs that good parents generally meet. There is a Legislative Framework covering requirements and responsibilities of Corporate Parents.

The Children & Social Work Act 2017 sets out seven corporate parenting principles that local authorities must have regard to when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and young people, as follows:

- to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people
- to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
- to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
- for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
- to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

Working with partners

- Children's Act 2004-LA's have duty to promote cooperation between relevant partners, including police, the NHS and education providers.
- Corporate parenting is a 'task' that must be shared by the whole local authority and partner agencies.
- Role of Corporate parent should not be a passive one
- Corporate parents should work closely together with partner agencies to ensure the needs of our children and young people are clearly identified and et at every level.

Proposals to strengthen the impact of the CPP

- Hearing more directly from our looked after children and care leavers, through the CiCC and junior CiCC, including going to their bases for meetings sometimes rather than pulling them into County Hall
- Taking the themes of our corporate parenting strategy in turn for in depth consideration with the right colleagues from partner agencies involved, e.g. Bringing our health partners together for a joined up at health issues with health partners there
- Building the membership of the panel to include representatives from other parts of the council and partner agencies and foster carers
- Establishing task and finish groups which could include interested councillors around particular areas of work. E.g. Creating volunteering opportunities for young people

East Sussex CPP-Starting from a position of strength….

“Senior and political leaders are enthusiastic and meticulous corporate parents. Members of the children in care council are enthusiastic about making changes that will benefit all children in care. They are helped by senior and political leaders who listen to them.”

“Probing oversight and challenge from the corporate parenting board, scrutiny committee and the East Sussex safeguarding children’s board are routine, all closely holding senior managers to account.”

(Ofsted, 2018).

- Given the increasing demand and pressures across all services (including partners), it is more important than ever to think about how we make the maximum impact for our children through CPP.

Themes to consider

01

Ensure children and young people in our care and care leavers receive a good education and achieve the best educational outcomes

02

Ensure children and young people in our care and care leavers have good opportunities to maintain and improve emotional health and wellbeing.

03

Improve education, employment and training opportunities for care leavers

04

Ensure that placements are of the highest standard and that there is a wide range available and support is in place

05

Ensure that relationships with family and friends are promoted

06

Ensure that children and young people participate in decisions about their own lives and influence policy, through their involvement in the panel.

Proposed Agenda for meetings

Welcome

Minutes and actions from previous meeting

CiCC presentation on theme-Key issues, what works well, what could be improved-suggestions

Presentation of date/quality re theme

Relevant annual reports

Actions and next steps.