

Date: **26 January 2018**

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

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

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

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

1. Background and supporting information

1.1 At the end of December 2017, there were 4 more Looked After children overall bringing East Sussex County Council (ESCC) to a total of 584. Over the previous two months numbers were slightly higher still, however it has to be noted that December is a short month given that it includes a period where the offices are shut for public holidays and so activity in January will give a clearer picture. A total of 410 children were in foster care with 68 of those children in agency placements, a decrease of 3 over the quarter. In addition we have 5 young people in supported housing options. 17 children were placed for adoption. 11 children were placed with foster carers who are also approved adopters under the Fostering for Adoption pathway. Placement of babies via this route has continued in the context of repeated legal challenges to 'final' Placement Orders. This is to avoid delay in permanence planning for very young children. However using this methodology places continued financial demand on an already stretched budget and introduces a level of uncertainty for adult carers.

1.2 The number of children with kinship carers now stands at 46, some of whom have been placed at the direction of a judge.

1.3 22 children subject to a Care Order were placed at home with their parents, a rise of 1 over the quarter. 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.

1.4 At the end of the quarter, 17 children were placed in agency residential placements after two months of slightly higher numbers.

1.5 At the end of the quarter, 2 ESCC children were secured at Lansdowne, a young man secured in the context of substance misuse and involvement in a County Lines drugs ring and a young woman whose behaviour is very troubled following prolonged and serious sexual abuse within her birth family.

1.6 At the end of the period, 1 young person who is LAC was remanded to custody for a serious criminal offence. Sadly he was unable or unwilling to comply with the conditions imposed on him following a remand to Local Authority care so was remanded to a Young Offenders Institution.

1.7 The numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking young people has decreased by 2. ESCC is again accepting transfer of young people via the dispersal scheme.

1.8 There numbers of children subject to Child Arrangement/Residence Orders have stayed stable at 329 and 432 children were subject to Special Guardianship Orders, a rise of 1.

1.9 Services for LAC are funded from the Children's Services base budget.

1.10 During Q3 of 2017/18 2 complaints were received from our Looked After Children.

Complaint 1

This complaint was from a young person concerned that they felt the social worker had taken a personal dislike to him. The young person also complained that he felt slanderous information had been shared with his partner about him which was without evidence and based on his race. The complaint was resolved in writing, although attempts were made to phone the young person and discuss it. The complaint was not upheld, but an explanation of why the social worker had been obliged to pass safeguarding information on was provided. The letter refuted the comments around a personal dislike and reminded the young person that the relationship with the social worker had been and would continue to be honest and open.

Complaint 2

This complaint was received via our advocacy service from a young person complaining historically about their foster care from age 5 to 18. Complaints ranged from choice of clothes, to activities undertaken whilst fostered and the type and quality of food provided. The young person also complained about being unsupported by his foster carers and felt that his privacy was not respected with post being thrown away before he had read it. Nor did he feel he was appropriately cared for regarding a trip to A&E where the foster carer did not offer to drive him to the hospital. The young person stated that he did attend LAC reviews but was not confident enough to raise the issues at the time and feels that these issues have contributed to his current poor mental health. The complaint was partially upheld although it was largely around perspective, which made it hard to fully uphold or refute it. A clear and sensitive explanation of the issues raised and how they correlated to records and discussions was noted in the case records for the young person.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 Numbers and costs for LAC have continued to rise and continued close oversight will be maintained.
- 3.2 Two complaints have been received and both have been investigated fully.

STUART GALLIMORE Director of Children's Services

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Local Members: All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Children's Services LAC Summary.

Children's Services LAC Summary between 01/01/2017 and 31/12/2017

Placement Type	Jan 17	Feb 17	Mar 17	Apr 17	May 17	Jun 17	Jul 17	Aug 17	Sep 17	Oct 17	Nov 17	Dec 17
A4 - Placed for adoption with consent (under section 19 of the 2002 Act) not with current foster carer	14	18	19	17	16	17	16	18	18	16	16	15
A5 - Placed for adoption with placement order (under section 21 of the 2002 Act) with current foster carer	1	1	1	1					1	1	1	1
A6 - Placed for adoption with placement order (under section 21 of the 2002 Act) not with current foster carer	5	5	5	5	5	4	3	1	2	1	1	1
H5 - Residential accommodation	7	8	11	11	13	15	16	17	17	21	20	17
K1 - Secure unit	3	3	3	2	2	3	2	1	2	2	2	2
K2 - Homes and Hostels	45	45	45	47	48	46	47	45	44	46	46	47
P1 - Placed with own parents	22	22	23	23	21	19	19	21	21	22	22	22
P2 - Independent living	13	13	9	7	4	2	2	4	4	5	5	4
R1 - Residential care home					1							
R2 - NHS/Health Trust	1	1	1	1					1	1	2	1
R5 - Young Offender Institution or prison	2	2	1	5	5	5	3	2	1	1	3	3
S1 - All Residential schools	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	4	4
U1 - Foster placement with relative or friend- long term fostering	10	12	13	13	13	13	13	12	11	11	11	11
U2 - Foster placement with relative or friend who is also an approved adopter- FFA	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
U3 - Foster placement with relative or friend- not long term or FFA	31	31	27	30	27	27	28	35	34	33	37	34
U4 - Placement with other foster carer- long term fostering	142	138	135	133	131	129	124	121	120	118	116	117
U5 - Placement with other foster carer who is also an approved adopter- FFA	3	4	4	4	5	6	6	9	9	9	9	11
U6 - Placement with other foster carer - not long term or FFA	252	249	256	256	261	271	281	285	289	294	290	293
Total	557	558	559	561	558	563	566	576	580	586	586	584

Immigration Status	Jan 17	Feb 17	Mar 17	Apr 17	May 17	Jun 17	Jul 17	Aug 17	Sep 17	Oct 17	Nov 17	Dec 17
Asylum Seeker	1	1	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	5	5	4
British Citizen	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK (ILR)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child	21	24	24	25	24	23	21	21	20	20	19	18

Legal Status	Jan 17	Feb 17	Mar 17	Apr 17	May 17	Jun 17	Jul 17	Aug 17	Sep 17	Oct 17	Nov 17	Dec 17
Child Arrangements Order/Residence Order S8(1)CA'89	322	325	327	327	328	329	329	330	329	329	329	329
Special Guardianship Order S14A CA 89	406	408	413	415	421	422	424	429	431	431	432	432