

Committee: **Corporate Parenting Panel**

Date: **24 July 2020**

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

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

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

RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

1. Background and Supporting information

1.1 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 As members will recall, the Corporate Parenting Panel meeting that was due to take place in April was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Hence numbers of children in this report will be compared to those at the end of December 2019, as the quarterly figures presented to panel members in the January meeting ran up until the end of December 2019.

1.3 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 two quarters have seen a slight increase in numbers of children and on the last day of June there were 599 children in care, up from 594 in December after the figures were cleansed. It continues to be extremely busy 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. The context of Covid-19 has placed additional pressure on many households and this has also meant both that internal placement options have reduced and that externally there are very limited (and very expensive) placement options.

1.4 A total of 372 children were in foster care at the end of June, with 83 of those children in agency placements, a rise of 3 from December. In addition, we have 56 young people in supported housing options, homes or hostels. 29 children were placed for adoption. 7 children were placed with foster carers who are also approved adopters under the Fostering for Adoption pathway. Adoption Order applications were delayed significantly at the start of the pandemic but are beginning to be considered again by the Courts. This has consequently blocked a number of foster placements, but more importantly it has delayed placing some very young children with their adoptive families.

1.5 Over the quarter the number of children with kinship carers now stands at 66.

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

1.7 At the end of June 39 children were placed in agency residential care placements, the figure having remained stable since December. 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, however admission to in- house beds has been complicated both internally and externally by the Covid-19 context and the need to isolate any new child for 14 days.

1.8 At the end of June 3 ESCC children were secured at Lansdowne. 1 in the context of sexual exploitation, 1 having severe emotional wellbeing difficulties and the third having just transferred to a secure placement from Brodrick Road following a lengthy period of very violent and sexualised behaviour. His move was delayed significantly by a lack of secure beds nationally during the lockdown for Covid-19. Since the end of June 1 of the children has now moved to a local agency placement and planning is underway to move the second child imminently, hopefully to Brodrick Road.

1.9 1 young person was remanded to custody in January on a murder charge. Although the trial was initially scheduled for June it has now been delayed until September. Whilst of course if he is found guilty at his trial, any time served on remand will be deducted from the ultimate duration of his sentence, remand costs sit with the Youth Offending Team budget in ESCC rather than with the Secure Estate.

1.10. Overall the numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking (UASC) young people were up to 41 at the end of June.

1.11 The numbers of children subject to Child Arrangement/Residence Orders and Special Guardianship Orders have also remained broadly stable at 337 and 455 respectively.

1.12 There have been no complaints from our LAC in the last 2 quarters.

2. Conclusion

2.1 Pressure on the system continues, driven by complexity and costs for children and exacerbated significantly by Covid-19. Continued close oversight will be maintained.

2.2 There have been no complaints during the last 2 quarters.

3. Recommendation

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

STUART GALLIMORE

Director of Children's Services

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 – LAC Summary between 01/07/2019 and 30/06/20

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Children's Services LAC Summary between 01/07/2019 and 30/06/2020

Placement Type	Jul 19	Aug 19	Sep 19	Oct 19	Nov 19	Dec 19	Jan 20	Feb 20	Mar 20	Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20
A3 - Placed for adoption with consent (under section 19 of the 2002 Act) with current foster carer	1	1	1									
A4 - Placed for adoption with consent (under section 19 of the 2002 Act) not with current foster carer	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
A5 - Placed for adoption with placement order (under section 21 of the 2002 Act) with current foster carer	3	3	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	4
A6 - Placed for adoption with placement order (under section 21 of the 2002 Act) not with current foster carer	19	22	25	25	25	24	22	22	23	21	22	23
H5 - Residential accommodation	28	32	34	34	37	39	30	29	29	38	38	40
K1 - Secure unit	5	4	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3
K2 - Homes and Hostels	55	56	54	54	57	58	60	59	56	58	56	56
P1 - Placed with own parents	19	20	22	21	20	21	24	24	20	18	19	19
P2 - Independent living	4	4	4	6	5	3	2	2	4	7	6	4
R2 - NHS/Health Trust	2	3	3	2	2	3	2	1	1	1	1	1
R3 - Family centre or mother and baby unit	1											
R5 - Young Offender Institution or prison					1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
S1 - All Residential schools											1	1
U1 - Foster placement with relative or friend- long term fostering	8	8	5	5	5	6	6	5	5	5	5	5
U3 - Foster placement with relative or friend- not long term or FFA	50	55	57	60	64	58	62	56	56	56	58	61
U4 - Placement with other foster carer- long term fostering	87	85	81	84	82	83	83	83	82	80	80	78
U5 - Placement with other foster carer who is also an approved adopter- FFA	4	4	3	3	5	5	8	7	6	6	6	7
U6 - Placement with other foster carer - not long term or FFA	308	297	293	291	291	285	285	294	296	296	295	294
Total	598	598	593	595	604	594	595	593	589	596	597	599

Immigration Status	Jul 19	Aug 19	Sep 19	Oct 19	Nov 19	Dec 19	Jan 20	Feb 20	Mar 20	Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20
Asylum Seeker	4	3	3	3	3	3	2	1	1	1		
British Citizen	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2
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									
Exceptional Leave to Remain in the UK (ELR)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Humanitarian Protection applied for under ECHR	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Refugee Status	10	10	10	10	11	9	2	2	2	2	2	2
Refused Asylum, Appeal applied for	1	1	1									
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child	16	22	23	22	23	22	23	25	26	34	35	35

Legal Status	Jul 19	Aug 19	Sep 19	Oct 19	Nov 19	Dec 19	Jan 20	Feb 20	Mar 20	Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20
Child Arrangements Order/Residence Order S8(1)CA'89	333	333	334	333	333	335	335	335	336	336	336	337
Special Guardianship Order S14A CA 89	454	454	454	455	455	455	454	456	456	456	455	455