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| Committee: | Corporate Parenting Panel |
| Date: | 30 October 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 Looked After Children (LAC) are predominantly funded from the Children's Services base budget with some additional smaller funding streams supporting specific activity for example Virtual School activity from the Pupil Premium Grant.

1.2 The data is drawn as a snapshot on the last day of the month and inevitably there will be some changes subsequently as data is cleansed, however the past quarter have seen an increase in numbers of children and on the last day of September there were 606 children in care, up from 586 in June after the figures were cleansed. It is still extremely busy with ongoing pressure on the Fostering Duty system to find placements as new children come in and existing children disrupt and need to be moved, often at short notice. The context of Covid-19 placed additional pressure on many households, including on our foster carers. Both internal and external placement options have been quite limited and, in particular, external fostering agency placements have been virtually non-existent which has mean that some of our children who would previously have been placed with agency foster carers have had to be placed within a residential setting. The number of internal East Sussex County Council (ESCC) foster carers now available for placements has again returned to normal levels, although there are never enough to meet the need.

1.3 A total of 365 children were in foster care at the end of September, with 82 of those children in agency placements, a reduction of 1 since the end of June. In addition, there are 64 young people in supported housing options, homes or hostels, a rise of 8. 23 children were placed for adoption. 7 children were placed with foster carers who are also approved adopters under the Fostering for Adoption pathway.

1.4 At the end of the quarter the number of children with kinship carers stood at 60.

1.5 The number of children placed at home with their parents whilst remaining subject to a legal order stands at 23. 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, unless it is court mandated when realistically ESCC has no choice in the matter.

1.6 At the end of September 51 children were placed in agency residential care placements, up 11 over the quarter. 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 and robust negotiations on both quality and price are a feature of every external placement search.

1.7 At the end of September 3 ESCC children were secured at Lansdowne. 1 in the context of sexual exploitation, 1 having experienced both criminal and sexual exploitation and 1 having been transferred from Brodrick Road following a lengthy period of very violent and sexualised behaviour. There is also a

child placed in a secure home in Northumberland in the context of criminal exploitation, that being the only available bed after a lengthy search.

1.8 At the end of the quarter there were no remands to custody, the young man who has been in a young offender's institution for many months having been found guilty and sentenced.

1.9 Overall the numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking (UASC) young people rose to 51 at the end of September, up 11 over the quarter.

1.10 The numbers of children subject to Child Arrangement/Residence Orders and Special Guardianship Orders have also remained stable at 337 and 453 respectively.

1.11 There was one complaint from a LAC in the last quarter which arrived in July. Child A aged 15 had been living at Brodrick Road and objected to the fact that her mother requested that she return home at the beginning of the pandemic. She found this stressful and wanted to be back at Brodrick Road or in another placement. Although legally ESCC could not have refused her mother's request, the complaint was partly upheld, and learning identified around how expectations of the young person could have been better managed. Child A did not return to Brodrick Road however, remaining with her mother until July with outreach support from the Brodrick team and oversight from the social work team and from senior managers. In July Child A moved to a foster placement where she remains.

2. Conclusion and recommendations

2.1 Pressure on the system continues, driven by complexity and costs for children.

2.2 There has been 1 complaint from a child in the last quarter which was fully investigated.

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

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – LAC Summary statistics between 01/10/19 – 30/09/20

Appendix 1

Children's Services LAC Summary between 01/10/2019 and 30/09/2020

| Placement Type | Oct 19 | Nov 19 | Dec 19 | Jan 20 | Feb 20 | Mar 20 | Apr 20 | May 20 | Jun 20 | Jul 20 | Aug 20 | Sep 20 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| A3 - Placed for adoption with consent (under section 19 of the 2002 Act) with current foster carer | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | |
| A4 - Placed for adoption with consent (under section 19 of the 2002 Act) not with current foster carer | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 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 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 |
| A6 - Placed for adoption with placement order (under section 21 of the 2002 Act) not with current foster carer | 25 | 25 | 24 | 22 | 22 | 22 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 18 | 18 | 18 |
| H5 - Residential accommodation | 34 | 37 | 39 | 30 | 29 | 29 | 38 | 38 | 40 | 42 | 44 | 51 |
| K1 - Secure unit | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| K2 - Homes and Hostels | 54 | 57 | 58 | 60 | 59 | 56 | 58 | 56 | 56 | 60 | 62 | 64 |
| P1 - Placed with own parents | 21 | 20 | 21 | 24 | 24 | 20 | 18 | 18 | 17 | 17 | 23 | 23 |
| P2 - Independent living | 6 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| R2 - NHS/Health Trust | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 |
| R5 - Young Offender Institution or prison | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| S1 - All Residential schools | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| U1 - Foster placement with relative or friend- long term fostering | 5 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| U3 - Foster placement with relative or friend- not long term or FFA | 60 | 64 | 58 | 62 | 56 | 56 | 56 | 58 | 50 | 49 | 54 | 55 |
| U4 - Placement with other foster carer- long term fostering | 84 | 82 | 83 | 82 | 82 | 82 | 80 | 80 | 78 | 76 | 76 | 75 |
| U5 - Placement with other foster carer who is also an approved adopter- FFA | 3 | 5 | 5 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| U6 - Placement with other foster carer - not long term or FFA | 290 | 290 | 284 | 284 | 293 | 292 | 292 | 291 | 294 | 291 | 288 | 290 |
| Total | 594 | 603 | 593 | 593 | 591 | 585 | 592 | 592 | 586 | 582 | 597 | 606 |

| Immigration Status | Oct 19 | Nov 19 | Dec 19 | Jan 20 | Feb 20 | Mar 20 | Apr 20 | May 20 | Jun 20 | Jul 20 | Aug 20 | Sep 20 |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Asylum Seeker | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | |
| British Citizen | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 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 |
| Exceptional Leave to Remain in the UK (ELR) | 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 | 11 | 12 | 10 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child | 21 | 21 | 20 | 21 | 23 | 24 | 32 | 33 | 33 | 36 | 37 | 44 |

| Legal Status | Oct 19 | Nov 19 | Dec 19 | Jan 20 | Feb 20 | Mar 20 | Apr 20 | May 20 | Jun 20 | Jul 20 | Aug 20 | Sep 20 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Child Arrangements Order/Residence Order S8(1)CA'89 | 333 | 333 | 335 | 335 | 335 | 336 | 336 | 336 | 337 | 337 | 337 | 337 |
| Special Guardianship Order S14A CA 89 | 454 | 454 | 454 | 453 | 455 | 455 | 455 | 454 | 454 | 453 | 452 | 453 |