

Committee: **Corporate Parenting Panel**
Date: **30 July 2021**
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 e.g. Virtual School activity from the Pupil Premium Grant.

1.2 Data is drawn as a snapshot on the last day of the month and inevitably there will be some changes subsequently as data is cleansed. However, the past quarter has seen an increase in the numbers of children and on the last day of June there were 622 children in care, up from 612 in March. It remains extremely busy with ongoing pressure on the Fostering Duty system to find placements as new children come in and placements for existing children disrupt and they need to be moved, often at short notice.

1.3 The ongoing context of Covid-19 and schools having to send children home has continued to place significant additional pressure on many households, including on ESCC carers, agency foster carers and on placements with family members. Both internal and external placement options for children have continued to be limited and, in particular, availability of external fostering agency placements are still in very short supply, which has again meant that some children who would previously have been placed with agency foster carers because in-house fostering capacity is full have had to be placed within a residential setting. Internal ESCC foster carers continue to work incredibly hard to welcome children wherever possible and to keep existing children living with them.

1.4 A total of 363 children were in foster care at the end of June, with 279 living with ESCC carers and a further 84 of those children with agency carers, up 1 over the quarter. In addition, we have 72 young people in supported housing options, homes or hostels, a rise of 7 over the quarter. 21 children were placed for adoption, 2 further children being placed with foster carers who are also approved adopters under the Fostering for Adoption pathway.

1.5 At the end of the quarter the number of children with kinship foster carers stood at 63.

1.6 The number of children living at home with their parents whilst remaining subject to a legal order to ESCC stood at 29. 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.

1.7 At the end of June, 60 children were living in residential children's homes, up 2 over the quarter. Staff continue to make every effort to place children in our in-house homes 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. As set out above, the use of residential placements is linked to the availability or not of in-house or agency fostering options.

1.8 At the end of June 2 ESCC children remain secured, one at Lansdowne and the other in Leeds, 1 having experienced sexual exploitation and the other having been transferred from Brodrick

Road following a lengthy period of very violent and sexualised behaviour. Exit planning is ongoing for both but it will be very challenging to find suitable placements for either children.

1.9 At the end of the quarter there was 1 child remanded to custody who is therefore accorded LAC status by virtue of the remand.

1.10 The numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking (UASC) young people fell to 49 at the end of June, down 10 over the quarter as young people already in our care turned 18 and so moved out of these numbers.

1.11 The numbers of children subject to Child Arrangement/Residence Orders have stayed steady at 342 and Special Guardianship Orders have decreased by 1 to 452.

1.12 There were no complaints from a LAC in the last quarter.

2. Conclusion and recommendations

2.1 Pressure on the system continues, driven by complexity and costs for children and by the context of the Covid-19 pandemic which is making placements very scarce.

2.2 The Panel are recommended to comment on and note the report.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – LAC Summary between 01/07/2020 – 30/06/2021

Children's Services LAC Summary between 01/07/2020 and 30/06/2021

Placement Type	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21	May 21	Jun 21
A3 - Placed for adoption with consent (under section 19 of the 2002 Act) with current foster carer					1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
A4 - Placed for adoption with consent (under section 19 of the 2002 Act) not with current foster carer	2	2	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	5	5	2	1	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	2
A6 - Placed for adoption with placement order (under section 21 of the 2002 Act) not with current foster carer	15	15	14	16	16	16	17	19	18	18	17	17
H5 - Residential accommodation	43	45	50	52	56	62	62	63	58	57	56	60
K1 - Secure unit	3	2	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	2	2	2
K2 - Homes and Hostels	58	60	62	64	63	63	66	67	66	69	69	72
P1 - Placed with own parents	18	25	26	26	24	28	29	24	22	21	26	29
P2 - Independent living	3	3	4	4	3	4	4	5	6	6	5	4
R1 - Residential care home			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
R2 - NHS/Health Trust	1	4	3					1				
R3 - Family centre or mother and baby unit								1	1	1	1	1
R5 - Young Offender Institution or prison	1	1							1	1		
S1 - All Residential schools	2	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
U1 - Foster placement with relative or friend- long term fostering	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	11	11	11	10
U3 - Foster placement with relative or friend- not long term or FFA	48	53	56	57	55	54	53	59	55	52	57	53
U4 - Placement with other foster carer- long term fostering	76	76	75	74	71	65	63	61	187	186	184	183
U5 - Placement with other foster carer who is also an approved adopter- FFA	5	5	5	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2
U6 - Placement with other foster carer - not long term or FFA	290	286	288	291	296	295	301	294	172	178	173	180
Total	574	589	600	604	605	607	615	613	612	614	613	622

Immigration Status	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21	May 21	Jun 21
Asylum Seeker	9	9	11	11	11	13	12	10	10	3	1	2
British Citizen	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3
Discretionary Leave to Remain in the UK to 18 (DLR)	1	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
Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK (ILR)	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Refugee Status	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child	27	27	32	34	36	40	42	42	42	42	41	39

Legal Status	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21	May 21	Jun 21
Child Arrangements Order/ResidenceOrder S8(1)CA'89	337	337	337	341	341	342	342	342	342	342	342	342
Special Guardianship Order S14A CA 89	453	452	454	453	454	454	454	453	453	452	452	452