

Committee: **Corporate Parenting Panel**

Date: **29 April 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**

Recommendations: **The Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to 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 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 a slight increase in numbers of children and on the last day of March 2022 there were 627 children in care, up from 620 in December 2021. The service remains extremely busy as children come in and placements for existing children disrupt and they need to be moved, with continued and increasing difficulty in the supply of external agency placements when in-house capacity is full.
- 1.3 A total of 358 children were in foster care at the end of March, a rise of 14 over the quarter, with 268 living with East Sussex County Council (ESCC) carers and a further 90 children living with agency carers. In addition, we have 63 young people in supported housing options, homes or hostels, a decrease of 10 over the quarter. 16 children were placed for adoption, 7 further children being 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 foster carers stood at 90.
- 1.5 The number of children living at home with their parents whilst remaining subject to a legal order to ESCC stood at 23. Planning for placements of this sort is always monitored rigorously to mitigate any risk factors. 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 March, the number of children living in residential children's homes has remained stable at 63. Our 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. The building works at the new children's home in Hastings are finished and a formal opening event was held in February 2022. Ofsted registration is being completed in April 2022 and, subject to successful registration, it is intended that children will be able to be placed at the home by the end of the month.
- 1.7 At the end of March one ESCC child was placed in the secure unit at Lansdowne. Exit planning is underway for this child and it is hoped that they will be able to move to residential provision shortly. One ESCC child left secure this quarter following significant work by Children's Services staff and the agency provider and with Ofsted to complete the registration of the home in time for their move.

- 1.8 Two young people were remanded into youth detention accommodation in this quarter.
- 1.9 ESCC is fully participating in the national transfer scheme in relation to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. The numbers of young people seeking asylum rose to 62 at the end of March, up two over the quarter. Some young people seeking asylum and already in our care turned 18 during this quarter and so moved out of these numbers but remained eligible for ongoing support as care leavers. The total number of asylum-seeking young people being supported as care leavers was 95 at the end of March.
- 1.10 The numbers of children subject to Child Arrangement/Residence Orders have stayed steady at 342 and the number of children placed with a Special Guardianship Order has decreased by four to 470.
- 1.11 Once again there were no complaints from a LAC in the last quarter.

2. Conclusion

- 2.1 Pressure on the system continues, driven by complexity and costs for children and by the context of Covid-19 which is making placements locally and nationally very scarce.
- 2.2 There have been no complaints from a child in the care of ESCC in the last quarter.

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Children's Services LAC Summary between 01/04/2021 and 31/03/2022

Placement Type	Apr 21	May 21	Jun 21	Jul 21	Aug 21	Sep 21	Oct 21	Nov 21	Dec 21	Jan 22	Feb 22	Mar 22
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	3	3	3	1	1
A5 - Placed for adoption with placement order (under section 21 of the 2002 Act) with current foster carer	6	6	5	2	2	2	1	1	3	3	3	3
A6 - Placed for adoption with placement order (under section 21 of the 2002 Act) not with current foster carer	18	18	18	15	15	14	15	15	13	14	12	12
H5 - Residential accommodation	57	56	61	61	59	61	57	61	60	59	56	63
K1 - Secure unit	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	1
K2 - Homes and Hostels	73	73	75	75	75	78	75	72	73	72	74	73
P1 - Placed with own parents	21	26	30	27	32	29	30	23	20	21	26	23
P2 - Independent living	6	5	4	5	4	4	2	2	2	1		
R1 - Residential care home	1	1	1	1	1	1	1					
R2 - NHS/Health Trust			1	1					1			
R5 - Young Offender Institution or prison	1							2	1	1	2	2
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	10	10	11	10	9	9	9	9	9	9
U3 - Foster placement with relative or friend- not long term or FFA	53	57	55	60	60	71	71	72	77	76	74	81
U4 - Placement with other foster carer- long term fostering	186	184	183	178	177	173	171	171	169	167	160	158
U5 - Placement with other foster carer who is also an approved adopter- FFA					1	1	3	8	6	6	6	7
U6 - Placement with other foster carer - not long term or FFA	173	168	175	176	170	169	173	174	175	183	188	193
Total	611	610	624	617	612	618	613	616	614	618	613	627

Immigration Status	Apr 21	May 21	Jun 21	Jul 21	Aug 21	Sep 21	Oct 21	Nov 21	Dec 21	Jan 22	Feb 22	Mar 22
Asylum Seeker	4	2				1	1	1		1	1	1
British Citizen	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6
Discretionary Leave to Remain in the UK to 18 (DLR)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1				
Humanitarian Protection applied for under ECHR	1	1	1	1								
Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK (ILR)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Refugee Status	24	21	21	21	21	21	19	18	16	12	11	11
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child	18	21	24	30	32	33	35	36	39	38	39	46

Legal Status	Apr 21	May 21	Jun 21	Jul 21	Aug 21	Sep 21	Oct 21	Nov 21	Dec 21	Jan 22	Feb 22	Mar 22
Child Arrangements Order/ResidenceOrder S8(1)CA'89	342	341	341	343	343	343	343	343	343	342	342	342
Special Guardianship Order S14A CA 89	453	457	457	459	460	460	462	466	467	467	469	470