



Looked After Children's Annual Progress Report 2021-22

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Head of Service for LAC



Who did we look after?

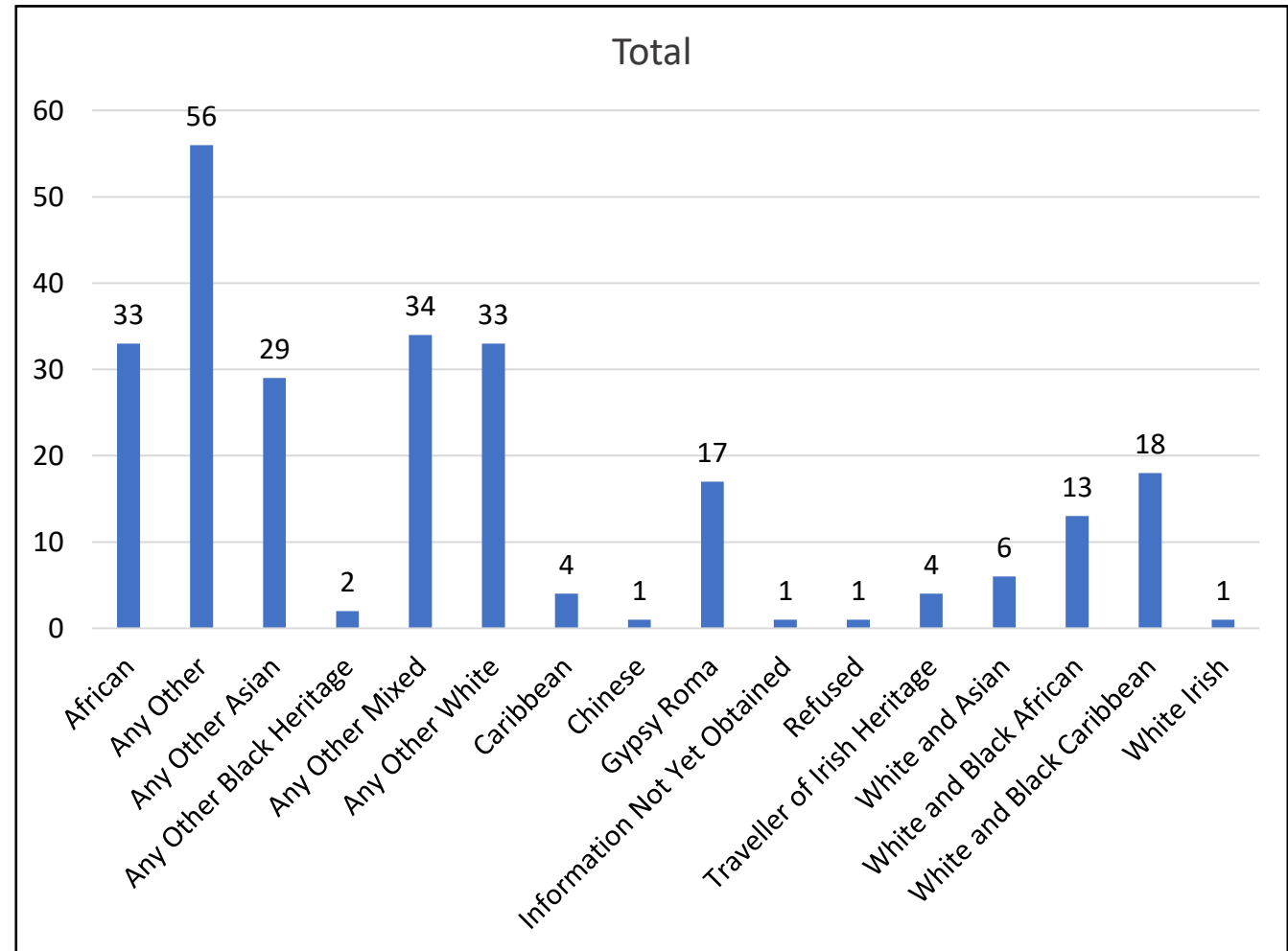
The data shows a snapshot as at 31st March 2022.

- We looked after 356 boys and 272 girls.
- There were more children in care than the previous year. This was in part due to an additional 5 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) in the snapshot figure as compared to the previous year.
- There were higher numbers of children who left care in this period compared to last year, but more children came into our care overall.
- 845 children came in and left our care during the year which is an increase of 63 as compared with 2020/21. This represents significantly higher activity levels across the service.

Statistics	2020-2021	2021-2022
Looked After Children	611	628 (+17)
Children coming into care	209	246 (+37)
0-5 year olds admitted to care	83	81 (-2)
6-12 year olds admitted to care	49	71 (+22)
13+ admitted to care	77	94 (+17)
Children leaving care	178	228 (+50)
0-12 year olds leaving care	91	94 (+3)
13+ leaving care	87	134 (+47)

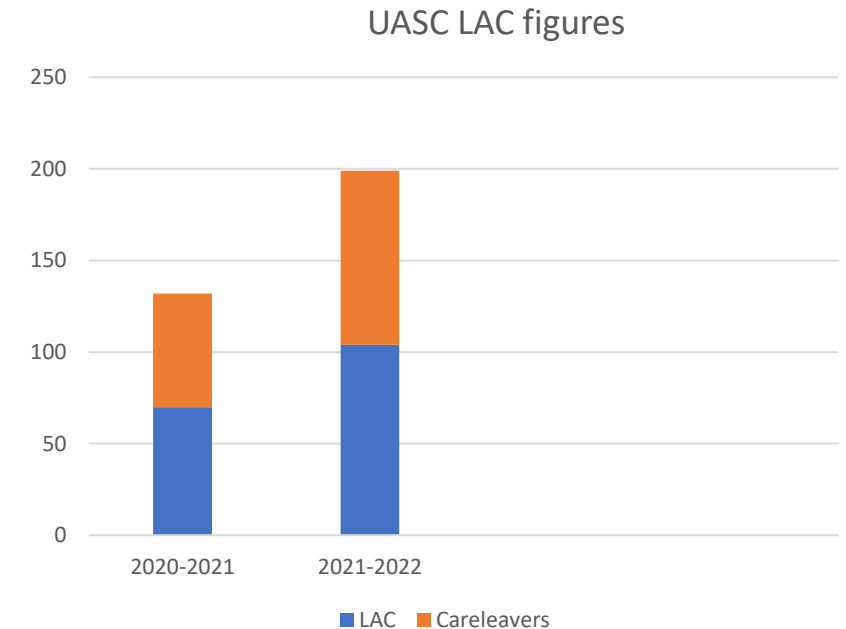
Ethnicity of our Looked After Children (LAC)

30% of our Looked After Children (LAC) during 2021-22 identified as being of a minority ethnic background or of mixed heritage.



Our Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

- East Sussex County Council (ESCC) cared for 104 UASC under 18 during 2021-22 (compared to 70 during 2020-21) plus 95 Care Leavers aged 18+. This is a significant increase on the year previously. Please see graph opposite.
- Our UASC were mainly male, 88% were aged 16 or over and the youngest was aged 13.
- In the last year, 25 young people came to ESCC through the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) and the remainder were spontaneous arrivals via Police involvement or directly from Newhaven Port.
- The majority of these children were Kurdish, predominantly Iranian, followed by Sudanese and Vietnamese. There were also small numbers of children from Eritrea, Afghanistan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Albania, Iraq, Libya, Syria and Egypt.



Children looked after by the Disability Service

- The Children's Disability Service criteria for allocation is 'Children who have severe and enduring cognitive delay, severe learning disability, low functional abilities and physical disabilities.
- As at 31st March 2022, this service worked with 20 LAC. 12 children were aged 0-15 and 8 were aged 16-18.
- Geographically, 3 children were living outside East Sussex. This figure has gradually reduced over the last 3 years.
- These 20 children were in receipt of full time care. In addition, the service provided extensive packages of support and respite to other children and their families in the community.

Placements	
ESCC foster carers	7
Agency foster carers	1
ESCC Residential Homes	6
Independent Residential Homes	5
Residential School	1

Where our children are living

Increase in	Increase in children placed with total number of foster carers, kinship and ESCC foster carers.
Decrease in	Decrease in children placed for adoption.
Increase in	Increase in children aged 16+ living with our supported accommodation providers including with our inhouse supported lodgings providers.
Increase in	Increase in children living in both ESCC and agency Children's Homes.

Data shows a snapshot as of 31st March 2022

Placement Type	2020-2021	2021-2022
With foster carer	426	451
Of these: in house carers	265	276
Kinship carers	65	84
Agency carers	96	91
Placed for Adoption	23	14
Supported Accommodation / Supported Lodgings	57	63
ESCC Children's Homes	14	16
Agency Children's Homes	57	58
Agency Special Schools	1	1
Placed with Parents	22	22
Independent Living	7	0
Youth custody/secure unit	3	3
Hospital/NHS establishment	1	0
Absconded	0	0
Total	611	628

How well did we do in 2021-22?

Indicator Ref	Description	2021/22 Value		2020/21 England	2020/21 Value		2019/20 England	2019/20 Value	
NI 58	Emotional & Behavioural Health of children in care	13.9	↑	13.7	14.1	↑	14.1	14.5	↓
Adoption 1	Percentage of children who ceased to be looked after who were adopted	8.4%	↓	10.2%	15.3%	↑	11.7%	15.2%	↓
Adoption 2	Average time between an LA receiving court authority to place a child and the LA deciding on a match with an adoptive family (3 year average)	301 days	↓	183 days	274 days	↓	175 days	252 days	↓
NI62 Placements 1	Number of children looked after with 3 or more placements during the year	10.4%	↑	8.9%	13.3%	↓	10.6%	13.0%	↓
NI63 Placements 2	% of LAC under 16 who've been lac for 2.5 years or more & in the same placement for 2 years or placed for adoption	73.9%	↑	70.3%	63.7%	↑	68.2%	62.3%	↓
Placements 3	% of LAC at 31 st March placed outside LA boundary and more than 20 miles from where they used to live	15.4%	↑	16.4%	17.3%	↓	15.6%	15.2%	↓

Where performance has improved/increased it is shown with a green arrow ↑ and where it has dipped with a red arrow ↓

How well did we do in 2021-22? (continued)

Indicator Ref	Description	2021/22 Value		2020/21 England	2020/21 Value		2019/20 England	2019/20 Value	
Leaving Care 1 * <i>see note below</i>	% of former relevant young people aged 19-21 who were in education, employment or training	54.9%	↑	52.0%	46.3%	↓	52.6%	52.8%	↑
Leaving Care 2 * <i>see note below</i>	% of former relevant young people aged 19-21 who were in suitable accommodation	88.4%	↑	87.7%	87.8%	↑	85.3%	78.8%	↓
Leaving Care 3 * <i>see note below</i>	% of former relevant young people aged 17-18 who were in education, employment or training	71.8%	↑	65.0%	68.7%	↓	63.8%	76.3%	↑
Leaving Care 4 <i>*see note below</i>	% of former relevant young people aged 17-18 who were in suitable accommodation	94.5%	↓	90.6%	95.5%	↓	89.7%	97.4%	↑
Thrive PI 9	Rate of Children looked after per 10,000 population aged under 18	58.9	↓	67.0	57.5	↓	66.7	55.7	↑
Health 1	Percentage of children who had their teeth checked by a dentist	70.3%	↑	39.6%	32.6%	↓	85.6%	91.2%	↓
PAF C81	Final warnings, reprimands and convictions of lac	0.9%	↑	2.4%	1.8%	↑	2.9%	2.6%	↓

Where performance has improved/increased it is shown with a green arrow ↑ and where it has dipped with a red arrow ↓

* Leaving Care Indicators—calculated using data collected at the time of each young person's 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th or 21st birthday

How well did we do in 2021-22 - Summary

- Overall, the performance remained strong with significant improvements in some areas.
- The rate of LAC increased from 57.5 in 2020-21 to 58.9 per 10,000 population in 2021-22 but this is still well below the national average for England of 67.0.
- Performance against the Care Leavers indicators improved in relation to Education, Employment or Training (EET) and those young people in suitable accommodation.
- The emotional and behavioural health of children in care (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire - SDQ scores) improved slightly and the average score per child is 13.9 which is a reduction of 0.2.
- Performance in relation to placement stability, and children placed outside of ESCC boundaries, improved significantly from last year.
- The percentage of children who had a dental check markedly improved from 32.6% in 2020-21 to 70.3% in 2021-22, although this remained significantly below pre-Covid levels.
- Performance in relation to the adoption indicators was challenging and showed a overall deterioration across all indicators. However, this was a very small cohort of children, and 2 sets of siblings distorted the performance in relation to timeliness and length of time children were waiting to be adopted.

Adoption

- The number of adoption orders made in 2021-22 dramatically decreased. This was largely due to delays in care proceedings, the granting of placement orders and adoption hearings.
- Some delays were also caused by the levels of complexity found in the presentations of LAC where additional specialist medical interventions were required (genetic testing etc).
- There were also 2 sets of sibling groups where the delay was appropriate to the care planning, but this significantly distorted the performance in relation to children waiting to be adopted.
- Adoption South East (ASE) increased the pool of adopters available during this period. This strengthened ESCC's position regarding matching and enabled Social Workers to more easily meet each child's individual needs. Where a match could not be identified in the region, ASE linked with other regions/organisations to identify suitable adopters.
- Early permanence was actively promoted by ASE aiming to improve the timeliness of placing children for adoption in ESCC.
- See ASE Annual Report (slide 34)

Family Finding & Linking in East Sussex	2021-22	2020-21
Number of children adopted (AOs)	10	27
Number of children approved for adoption	16	26
Number of relinquished children	0	1
Number of 2 sibling groups matched	0	1
Number of 3 sibling groups matched	0	0
Number of 4 sibling groups matched	0	0
Number of children matched outside of ASE	3	3
Number of children matched within ASE	10	22
Number of children placed for Foster to Adopt (F2A)	8	8

Fostering Recruitment and Retention

The data provided is a snapshot as of 31st March each year.

East Sussex's recruitment activity during 2021/22 mirrored the challenges experienced by fostering services nationally. A number of new measures have been implemented to maximise the conversion of enquiries to approved foster carers for 2022-23:

- **Appointment of dedicated Marketing and Communications Officer.** Responsible for the fostering recruitment strategy including the development of the fostering website, marketing tools and the use of social media.
- **Referral and Transfer 'Incentive Schemes'.** This scheme rewards any foster carer who either refers or transfers a potential carer to the local authority, with a payment of £500 made at the point of approval, and a further £500 payment when a young person is first placed.

Recruitment	Households		
	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020
Enquiries	200	227	268
Screening calls	68	92	114
Initial visits	32	42	71
Skills to foster training (STF)	15	37	21
Applications for assessment	36	53	35
Closed	7	7	7
Withdraw	9	13	6
Total allocated but did not progress	16	20	13
Approvals	14	20	22
Placements	21	30	39
Conversion rate Enquiry to approval	6%	9%	8%
Conversion rate Screening call to approval	16%	22%	19%
Conversion rate Initial visit to approval	34%	48%	31%

The percentage drop in conversion rate can be attributed to the quality of enquiries. Towards the end of the pandemic, there were a significant number of enquiries from applicants looking for alternative sources of income. However, many were sufficiently informed by the initial assessment process, to make the decision that fostering was not for them.

Fostering Recruitment (continued)

Google Adverts - Covid Recovery Funded Project

East Sussex has invested funding to improve ESCC Fostering's position on "Google Ad Keyword Searches". Carers transferring to ESCC had often advised that the presenting order of Google search results was a factor in their previous decisions to enquire with agencies.

Fostering Friendly Employer Scheme

In conjunction with ESCC HR department, we are currently looking into whether ESCC can adopt Fostering Network's policy which would help aid recruitment and retention of foster carers from ESCC's workforce. This would more generally demonstrate that ESCC is a supportive and flexible employer.

Other initiatives existing and targeted for 2022-23:



With applicants who previously withdrew if it was not the right time for them.



to be explored in 2022-23 for approved foster carers



Upgraded content on the ESCC website and social media profiles.



Including live online information sessions and revised schedule of locations for "Vinnie-the-Van"



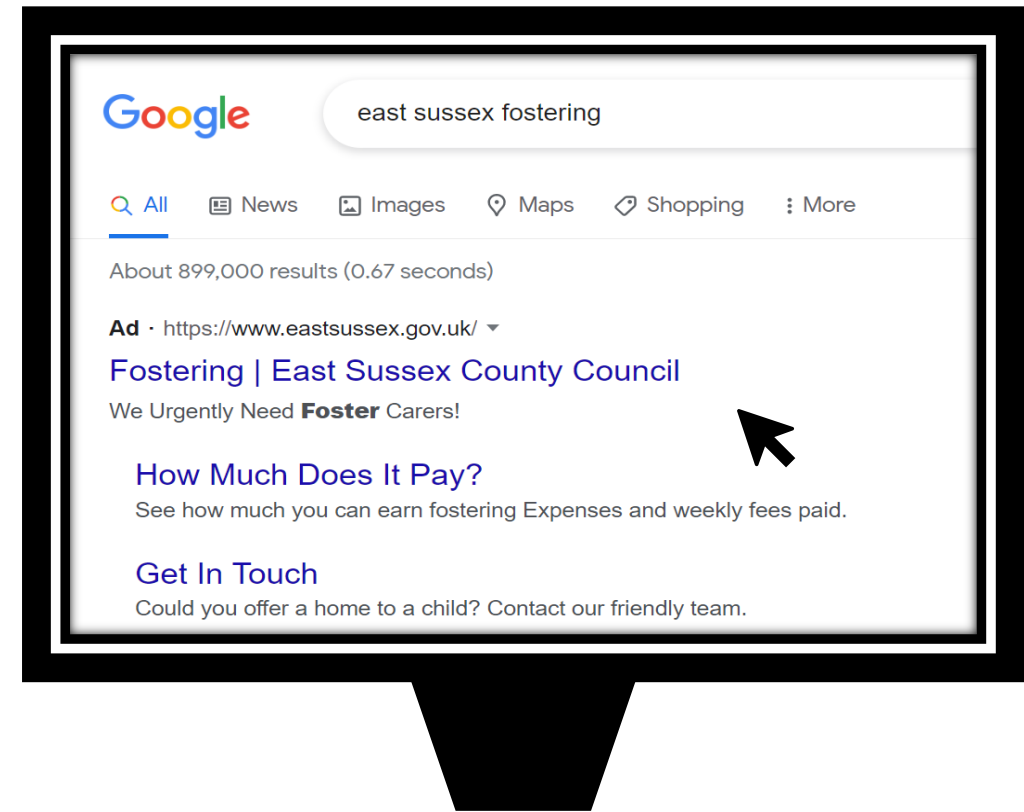
New interviews with existing foster carers.



i.e. roundabout and lamppost banners.



Fostering flyers posted to 50,000 homes across East Sussex so far.



Supported Lodgings

The data provided is a snapshot as of 31st March 2022

The were 43 registered supported lodgings providers.

- 32 of these providers cared for young people aged 16+ only
- 10 of these providers were also approved as “hybrid” (approved as foster carers and supported lodgings providers)
- 1 Provider was being assessed as a “hybrid” foster carer.

46 Young people were placed in Supported Lodgings during 2021/22.

- 10 of these young people were Homeless
- 10 were Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
- 26 were Looked After Children.



Placement Support Service

- During 2021-22 there were 142 packages of support delivered.
 - Placement Support - 90 support packages
 - Special Placement Scheme - 5 support packages
 - Parent & Baby - 2 support packages
 - Through Care Team - 40 support packages to Care Leavers
 - Edge of care - 3 support packages to families in the community
 - Agency - 2 support packages

- **Feedback**

“Our placement support worker was amazing. M enjoys his time out each week”

“He talks to his placement support worker about the things he doesn’t talk to us about”

“Without the support from our placement support worker, we wouldn’t still be looking after our young person”

“The placement support workers really seem to ‘get’ R. They are great at communicating with us and we value their support”

Children in Care Council (CICC)

The CICC had a very busy and productive year 2021-22. A range of activities were organised which enabled young people to participate in key developments.

SUSS it (Speak up Sessions) - 29 activities giving 59 young people the opportunity to speak out and speak up about issues that were important to them.

Digital Ambassadors - Young people participated in the Digital Care Project which was set up to train, update and promote resources for keeping children safe and resilient online.

Partnership working - Young people worked with Ramshackle Productions and Eggtooth to create a social media channel and made a film entitled '10 things you don't say to people in care'.

Youth Cabinet - The CICC and Youth Cabinet came together at Bushy Wood to be consulted on various campaigns and service developments within East Sussex.

Buddy Scheme - 4 CICC members attended a bespoke training to become buddies for this scheme. It offers support to children when they first enter care from a care experienced buddy.

Volunteering - Over the last 12 months, the CICC have completed 964 volunteering hours in their local communities.

Funding - CICC have secured an extra £1288.30 funding this year to support additional team building activities.



Our Children's Homes

Hazel lodge St Leonards-on-Sea

- Judged as 'Good' by Ofsted in May 2021.
- A new manager has been appointed and registered with Ofsted.
- Young people engaged well with education.
- Young people enjoyed a number of fun activities over the summer including a number of short breaks.

Brodrick House Eastbourne

- Continuing 'Outstanding' judgement by Ofsted.
- Ofsted came January 2022 following a series of safeguarding notifications, setting compliance notices which were duly met by March 2022.
- Young people continue to demonstrate positive outcomes and achieve personal goals overall.
- Young people have enjoyed a number of trips away and positive activities.
- All young people despite challenges with education are now on full educational courses / timetables.

Homefield Cottage Seaford

- Was judged by Ofsted to be 'outstanding' in Sept 2021
- The children/young people all made positive progress.
- The children/young people enjoyed the summer holidays and engaged in lots of fun activities.
- The staff team continue to be resilient, child focussed and have high aspirations for our resident children/young people.

Our Children's Homes (continued)

Lansdowne Secure Children's home Hailsham

- Judged as Good in all areas December 2021
- New permanent manager appointed
- Building works completed - defect works being completed
- Covid 19 recovery plan included recruitment and retention strategy revision

Silver Birches Hastings

- Granted registration by Ofsted on 04/05/2022.

Our Children's Homes(Continued)

The Bungalow Eastbourne

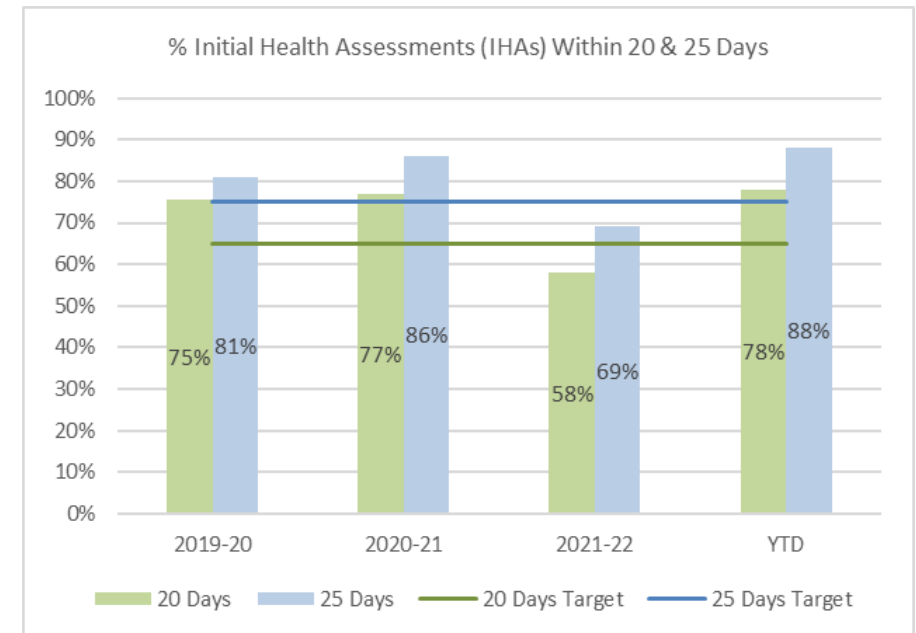
- Registered for 7 children aged 7-19 and provides full time accommodation to children with a severe level of disability who are unable to live in a family setting.
- During the period 2021-22, all children attended local schools and all maintained contact with their families.
- The Bungalow received and Ofsted judgement of 'Good' in 2022.

Acorns Bexhill-on-Sea

- Continued to provide care for 2 young people, both of which have a high level of complex needs.
- Staff worked closely with colleagues in the Positive Behaviour Support Services and the Child Adolescent Mental Health Service.
- Judged as 'Good' by Ofsted in September 2021.

The health of our children

- Following 2 years of improved performance in the completion of Initial Health Assessments (IHA's) there was a marked decline in 2021-22. This was largely due to the reintroduction of a requirement for written consent to be obtained from families for IHA/s.
- A performance improvement plan was agreed and implemented which should drive up the IHA performance again.



The mental and emotional wellbeing of our children

- Following the Foundations for our Future review, a Sussex Children and Young Peoples' Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy 2022-2027 for Sussex Children and Young People up to the age of 25 has been produced by the Sussex Health and Care Partnership. Although a Sussex wide strategy, it recognises the importance of responding to the specific needs of local communities.
- The refreshed Sussex Local Transformation Plan (LTP) September 2021 recognises that some children and young people, including Looked After Children, will need more help and risk support. The LTP includes an action to recognise the increasing number of children who are looked after, to review and align the current service offers and increase the investment to allow more access to timely specialist services for children and carers.
- During the year the Looked After Children's Mental Health Service (LACMHS) offered 40 consultations to networks, 90 Drop Ins and at least one Therapeutic Parenting Group each quarter, either to foster carers or Residential Children's Home staff. The numbers of cases opened at any one time varied between 82 (Q2) and 74 (Q4).
- A review of LACMHS by ESCC Children's Services Looked After Children service during 2021-2022 concluded that there had been:
 - Longer waiting times due to increasing demand due to children coming into care, Section 20 cases, and Section 31 return home assessments; more LAC presenting with significant risk of harm to themselves or others; crisis situations, urgent assessments and interventions for high risk; the number of placement breakdowns and associated support for children affected; and the level of need arising in RCH.
 - A CCG funded one-year pilot to support high risk cases and reduce waiting times commenced in August 2021. Over 11 months, Duty screened 71 referrals in total, responded to 36 crisis incidents and offered 9 short term pieces of stabilisation work.
- Due to ongoing staffing challenges within SPFT within the Adopted Children's Mental Health Service (ADCAMHS), the service ceased to take new clients from October 2021 but has continued to support existing clients. Following a review of ADCAMHS undertaken by ESCC Children's Services during 2021-2022, work is in hand to identify a way forward to provide MH services for adopted children and their families.

Education of our children - Headline data

- Academic Outcomes showed improvement across all stages this year despite the disruption our LAC experienced in their education due to Covid. All current data is provisional and progress data is not yet available for GCSEs.
- **Key Stage 1** data showed the percentage of ESCC LAC reached the expected standard in Reading 57.1% compared with 46.0% of LAC nationally, Writing was 42.09% compared with 35.0% nationally, and Maths was 50.0% compared with 45.0% nationally. There were no ESCC children working at greater depth, but there were also fewer children nationally reaching greater depth in writing and Maths, but not in reading.
- **Key Stage 2** data showed a 19% increase of ESCC LAC reaching expected levels in reading, little change in the percentage of children reaching expected levels in writing, a small drop in Maths but a greater drop in Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling. However, there were excellent progress scores in all areas, the highest progress scores being 27.34 in reading, 10.87 in writing and 14.03 in Maths.
- **GCSE results** showed the percentage of ESCC LAC gaining a level 5 and above in English and Maths increased from 4.2% in 2019 to 16%, and a level 4 and above from 8.1% to 27%.
- **Excellent individual results** ranging from one student gaining 9 in English, 8 in Maths and French, another achieved 7's across all subjects, another achieved a 7 in Physics, one also gained a 9 in Persian and another, who attends a special school, a 9 in Sport. Several students gained distinctions in practical BTECs.
- **Post 16 results** enabled 11 Care Leavers to gain University places with two students gaining A grades and 2 others gaining Distinction stars in their BTEC qualifications. Many other post 16 young people also achieved level 1 and 2 qualifications which will enable them to progress onto other courses.
- **Overall Attendance** was 90.22% (June 2022). 77% of our children and young people had attendance of above 90%. There were no permanent exclusions last year. 56 CYP (13.14%) received 1 or more suspensions last academic year which was a 2% increase on the previous year and higher than the national CLA figure.

Virtual School (VS)

- **Virtual Head extended duties** - The Virtual Head Teacher took on a strategic role to promote the educational outcomes for any child 0-18 who has, or previously has had, a Social Worker.
- **Post 16 Pilot** - This pilot was developed to enhance the educational outcomes for young people aged 16+ and additional developments in FE provision. This included academic tutoring and coaching, a staff training programme and partnership with post 16 providers to more effectively track attendance and performance.
- **Tuition** - 176 blocks of tuition were provided to 118 children. 100% of all children and young people said their confidence against their targets had increased.
- **English as an Additional Language (EALS)** - 45 UASC were provided with additional language tuition through the year.
- **Training** - An extensive training programme was delivered including online Designated Teacher Training using pre-recorded training and live discussions, 'A Journey Through Care' and 'Change Your Mind, Change Your World' reaching 80 members of staff.
- **Alternative education provision** - A range of providers were commissioned to deliver alternative educational support for young people with complex behaviours and who were not in full time education including South Brockwell's Farm, Audio Active, Eggtooth, TLP etc.
- **Mental Health and Wellbeing Conference** - The VS contributed to the planning and delivery of the conference which was held in July 2022.
- **Extra-curricular activities** - A range of these activities were delivered throughout 2021-22 and included options such as a film making course, spring school at University and participation in Glyndebourne performances.

The Through Care Team (TCT)

What we have achieved in 2021-22

- A hybrid model of groupwork was adopted during this period. This enabled some visits and group activities to return to face to face, but also supported virtual meetings where groups of young people could more easily come together from across the county such as the Care Leavers Council (CLC).
- Young people all had access to laptops and Wi-Fi in order to continue with their education, facilitate their access to employment and to keep in touch with their families.
- The Local Offer was reviewed and updated with extensive additional supports put in place for Care Leavers by ESCC. Developments were also agreed to extend the wider corporate parenting role across all agencies in East Sussex.
- The service piloted a Health and Wellbeing Project for 6 months to support young people to use personalised budgets for activities designed to improve their overall wellbeing. The outcomes and reported feedback was extremely positive, and an agreement to extend the project for a further 12 months has been made.
- Placement Support Workers (PSWs) continued to work closely with our young people who were isolated in their own accommodation or who were struggling to maintain their placements.
- A Rent Guarantor pilot scheme was implemented to secure better quality private rental accommodation options for young people.

The Through Care Team

What we have achieved in 2021-22 (continued)

- The housing pathway was extended during 2021-22 to include more commissioned providers.
- Closer working relationships with the East Sussex Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) enabled us to provide accommodation options with support to our most vulnerable young people.
- A closer working relationship has been established with East Sussex County Council Adult Social Care Specialist Accommodation Team ensuring a smoother transition for those Care Leavers with diagnosed mental health needs or trauma related diagnoses.
- The passport to independence was redesigned in collaboration with a group of care leavers and will be rolled out next year. Known as a Skills Journal, it also includes a version that is accessible to UASC and includes additional discussion points about laws, cultures and process in the UK.

Our Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

Developments 2021-22

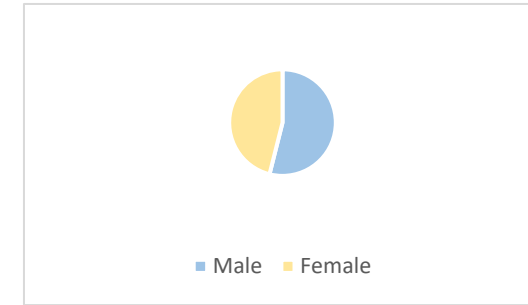
- Further investment was made to increase the capacity of the UASC team.
- Enhanced collaboration with the South East Regional Group and the Home Office (HO) pilot team for age assessments.
- ‘Welcome to the UK’ groups were initiated this year and received positive feedback from our young people. Further options to promote social opportunities for this cohort of young people were explored including encouragement of attendance at other ESCC LAC events and celebrations. The service also supported young people to celebrate other important festivals such as Eid Mubarak and the Chinese New Year.
- The Refugee Council were commissioned to offer specialist therapeutic interventions for the UASC young people.
- The UASC accommodation offer was extended during this period particularly for Care Leavers who did not have leave to remain, were unable to access public funds or hold a tenancy.

Our Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) (continued)

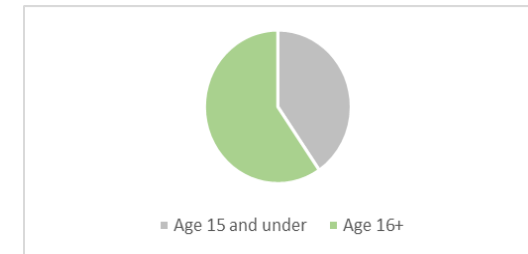
- The service enhanced its working relationships with education providers across ESCC and Brighton and Hove (B&H). This was particularly assisted by taking part in a pilot scheme to enable post 16 learners to access pupil premium funding.
- Joint work with health colleagues to design a more appropriate health assessment tool was completed and is due to be disseminated next year.
- This team has extended its remit to process and support unaccompanied children from the Ukraine.
- UASC young people were supported to access a Young Peoples' Panel hosted by HO to feedback any issues relating to immigration and their experiences of the processes involved.

Our Children who went missing

In 21/22, 89 LAC went missing, of these, 48 were male and 41 were female



53 of the 89 missing LAC were aged 16 and over, while the other 36 were aged 15 and under



55 of the missing LAC went missing more than once



In 2021-22 there were 494 missing episodes throughout the year, 403 episodes of children being missing for less than 24 hours, 49 episodes of children being missing for between 24 to 48 hours, 30 episodes where children were missing between 2 and 4 days and 12 episodes where they were missing for 5 days or more.

All these children were tracked by Sussex Police and by Children Services staff. Risk assessments were regularly reviewed on high profile children who went missing and where necessary, formal strategy discussions were held in line with safeguarding procedures

Our children who are at risk of criminal exploitation

- During 2021-22, 34 children were subject to ESCC MACE operational oversight and therefore categorised as being at high risk of exploitation.
- 8 of these children were ESCC LAC, 6 were female and 2 were male.
- 2 of these children were deemed to be a risk of sexual exploitation, 2 deemed to be at risk of criminal exploitation and 4 deemed to be at risk of both criminal and sexual exploitation.

Our children involved in the Youth Justice Service

- The Youth Justice Service (YJS) worked with 21 looked after children/young people during 2021-22.
- A snapshot of the looked after status of open cases showed that the YJS were working with 3 LAC on March 31st 2022 which equates to 2% of the YJS caseload.
- LAC aged 10 - 17 represent less than 1% of the total population of this age group across the county, therefore they are over represented within the YJS cohort.

My Voice Matters

- Improved performance in timeliness of My voice matters meetings (MVM) 97% of all My Voice Matters Meetings were held early or on time in 2021-22 compared to 2019-20 - 92%, 2020-21 - 95%.
- 11% of late reviews were due to a 1 day scheduling error.
- 21% of late reviews were held within 4 weeks of the scheduled date. The majority of late reviews were delayed in the child's best interests or because an essential party was unable to attend.
- Further improvement work is being completed to address the reasons for late MVMs.
- Meetings were largely scheduled well in advance which contributed to a high level of compliance.



Participation

Children and Young People make their voices heard in lots of different ways

- In 2021-22, 97% of Children aged 4+ participated in some way in their own review process. This was an increase from 2020-21 of 95% and from 2019-20 of 91%.
- Of children aged 4yrs+, 56% attended their meeting and 41% sent their views.
- A Participation Lead was recruited during this period to work with social workers, partner agencies, carers and children and young people, to develop and support meaningful participation.
- My Voice Matters letters improved communication with children so that they received their review outcome in their own age appropriate language or in their preferred communication style.
- Positive feedback from children and young people was received about the IRO profiles that were shared routinely with them during the year.

The role of our elected members

The Corporate Parenting Panel met virtually three times during 2021-22 to discuss the agenda items set out below. The panel is planning to review its role and function during 2022-23.

30th July 2021

- Fostering Service Annual Progress Report
- Looked after Children's statistics
- Ofsted Report for Hazel Lodge
- Regulation 44 Inspection Reports for the following Children's Homes - Acorns, Brodrick House, Hazel Lodge, Homefield Cottage, Lansdowne Secure Children's Home and The Bungalow.

29th October 2021

- Ofsted Inspection Reports for the following Children's Homes - Brodrick House, Acorns, Homefield Cottage and Lansdown Secure Children's Home.
- Regulation 44 Inspection Reports for the following Children's Homes - Acorns, Brodrick House, Hazel Lodge, Homefield Cottage, Lansdowne Secure Children's Home and The Bungalow.
- Virtual School Annual Report
- Looked after Children's Annual Progress Report
- Looked after Children's statistics

21st January 2022

- Ofsted Inspection Reports for the following Children's Homes for Lansdown Secure Children's Home.
- Regulation 44 Inspection Reports for the following Children's Homes - Acorns, Brodrick House, Hazel Lodge, Homefield Cottage, Lansdowne Secure Children's Home and The Bungalow.
- Annual Report for East Sussex Foster Care Association
- Strengthening the Local Offer for Care Leavers in East Sussex
- Looked after Children's statistics

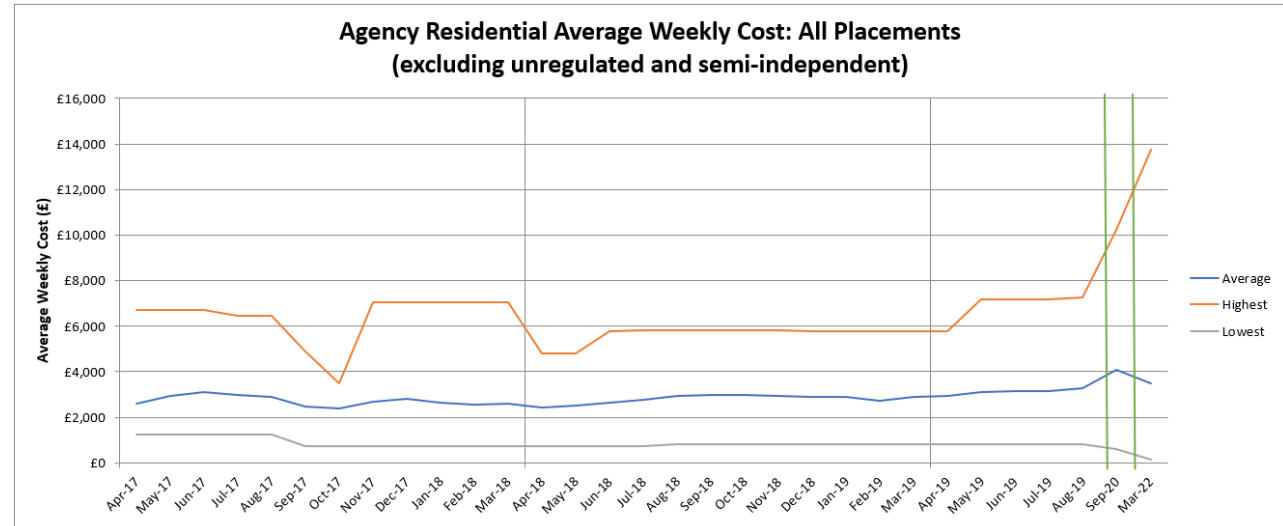
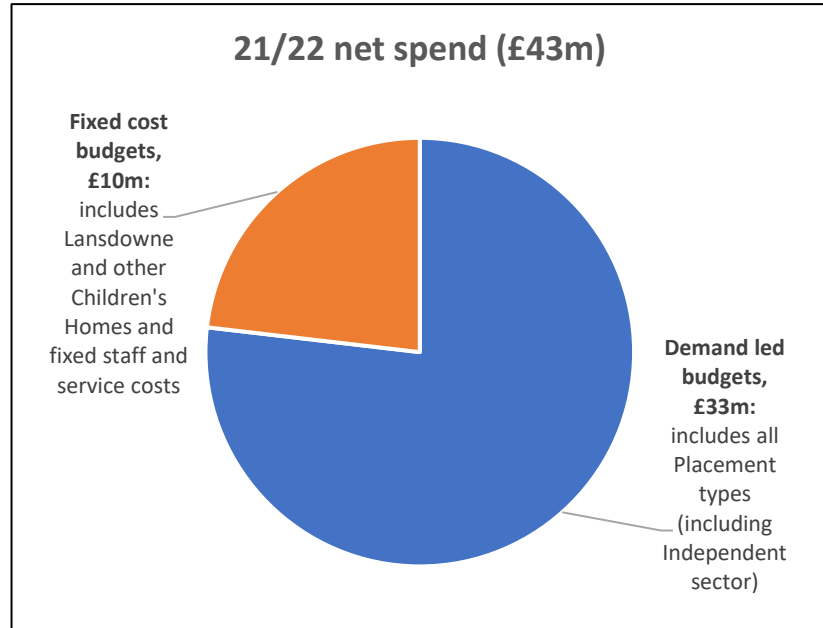
National Sufficiency Context

- Increased numbers of children in care nationally (up 35% from 2008).
- Higher numbers of children in care in all placement options other than adoption.
- Children in care presentations show an increase in levels of complexity - trauma, risk, behaviour, learning, disabilities(including neurodiversity).
- Demand for placements has outstripped supply.
- Market unable to develop and keep pace with levels of need/demand.
- South central LA consortia reported that across 17 LA's **379** live searches for fostering and residential placements on any given day. **247** vacancies reported but 'true' vacancies less than half that number.

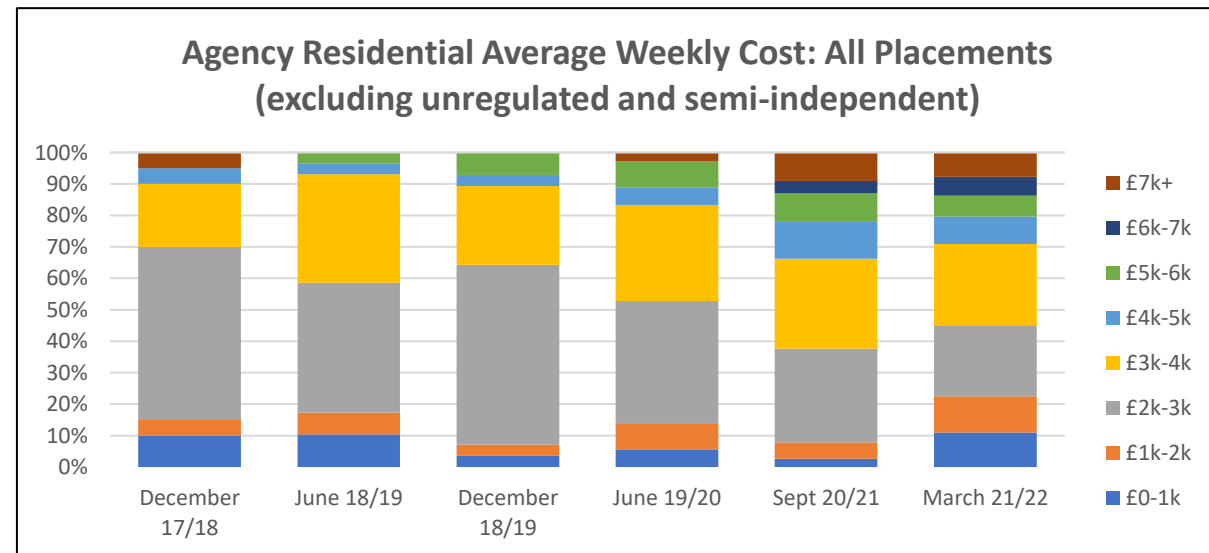
National Sufficiency Context (continued)

- Nationally **45,370** fostering households available - 2% increase in households but 11% increase in children in care placed in fostering households.
- Recruitment for foster carers nationally and locally not keeping pace. Despite high profile recruitment strategies fewer families choosing for foster.
- Children who previously could have been fostered now often placed in residential homes.
- Unintended consequence of Ofsted activity resulting in independent children's homes making offers for children with less challenging behaviours. Therefore often no placement options for children with more complex needs and behaviours.
- National growth of children placed in unregulated provision due to lack of capacity in fostering and residential provision. At times this results in children in care being placed illegally if they have a care need or are under 16 years.
- Authorities across the region are reporting that, due to no other options, for the first time, having to place children, even under 16s, in "unregistered placements". This is illegal for under 16s.
- Demand for emergency placements and lack of supply can at times mean that Social Workers are having to care directly for children in care or deliver intensive round the clock support in family homes.

Financial snapshot



- Majority of the budget covers placement costs, which are determined by the levels of activity and unit costs (which are often dependent on a commercial market)
- Costs are often unpredictable, particularly in the context of sufficiency issues set out in the previous slides, although (excluding these and semi-independent placements) other weekly placement costs are now relatively more stable.



Priorities for 2021-22

- Review sufficiency policy to include all placement and family options with associated services such as education and mental health provision.
- Complete review of LACCAMHS and AdCAMHS.
- Contribute to service developments in relation to emotional wellbeing and mental health of our looked after children.
- Extend the Local Offer for our Care Leavers with key partners responsible for corporate parenting.
- Further develop and focus on meeting the identity needs of our children, young people and their families.
- Develop ambitious programme to enable our children and Care Leavers to maintain safe relationships within their networks. Promote children returning home or to extended family members where possible.
- In partnership with ASE, promote best practice in relation to early permanence, keeping in touch and post adoption support.

Children's Services Annual Reports 2021/22

