

East Sussex Looked After Children's Services Annual Progress Report 2018/19



Who did we look after? (1)

- On 31 March 2019 there were 600 Looked After Children (LAC) in ESCC; this represents a decrease of 3 children (0.5%) as compared to 2017/18 and a rate of 56.9 per 10,000 population. This is just below the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) expected rate (a measure in terms of population profiles and deprivation levels) of 57.2 and below the 2017 England rate of 64.0.
- The LAC data only ever gives a snapshot of our children moving in and out of the system at a fixed date each month/year and considerable activity sits beneath it. The data below is referred to as 'churn'. This cohort of children will come in and out of the system within the year, or some may come in and stay whilst others leave. It has been calculated that the churn figure for 2018/19 is 188 which, when added to the total number of LAC, equates to the service working with 788 children. This total figure is higher than last year (756 children), and the churn rate is also higher than for the previous years (153 for 2017/18, 175 for 2016/17).

Who came in and out of care?

- There was a decrease in children coming into care from 212 during 2017/18 to 195 during 2018/19.
- The number of 0-5 year olds admitted to care during 2018/19 decreased to 87 (from 104 in 2017/18).
- The number of 6-12 year olds admitted to care during 2018/19 decreased to 38 (from 50 in 2017/18).
- The number of children aged 13+ increased from 58 for 2017/18 to 70 in 2018/19.
- At year end there was an increase in the number of our LAC leaving care, from 164 in 2017/18 to 197 in 2018/19.
- The number of 0-12 year olds leaving care increased slightly to 90 during 18/19 from 89 in 17/18. This was made up of 70 0-5 year olds and 20 were 6-12 year olds.
- There was an increase in the 13+ age group from 75 of our young people leaving care in 2017/18 to 107 in 2018/19

The trend for this year is showing, for the first time, a slight decrease in our LAC numbers as compared to the previous 3 years. During 18/19 there was a reduction in children coming into care in the 0- 12 year olds but an increase in the 13 plus age group. This increase was largely related to the changes in policy and practice, both locally and nationally, in relation to children who suffer neglect, sexual and criminal exploitation and also a more rigorous application of the Southwark Judgement, whereby teenagers can be offered section 20 accommodation and hence become LAC rather than being viewed as homeless. Although there were higher numbers of children leaving care across all age ranges, the overall 'churn figure' indicates not only greater numbers of our LAC worked with throughout the year, but that many of these children presented with greater levels of complexity particularly in the 13 plus age cohort.

Who did we look after? (2)

Children with disabilities who are looked after

- The number of our LAC with disabilities remains similar in 2018/19 to that of 2017/18.
- At 31 March 2019 there were **31** LAC with disabilities, 9 of whom, were aged between 16-19. This compares with 34 LAC, 14 of whom were aged between 16-19 in 2017/18.
- There were 10 LAC placed in residential schools and 7 were jointly funded with health. These children represent all of the LAC with disabilities placed out of county. The remaining LAC were placed within the county in either agency, in-house foster care or ESCC residential units. There is only one independent children's home in East Sussex and there was one child placed there.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

- At 31 March 2019 ESCC was caring for 36 UASC, 16 more than the previous year.
- These young people were mainly male and over 16, with an additional 27 having ongoing support needs as care leavers.
- In the last year, 5 children have come via The Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme and the remainder have been spontaneous arrivals, found either by the Police or at Newhaven Port.

Looked after young people who offend

- The Youth Offending Team (YOT) worked with 48 of our young people. This accounted for 12.7% of the total young people worked with by the YOT throughout the year. Our LAC aged 10-17 is less than 1% of the total population of this age group across the county therefore our LAC are still over-represented. There is an agreed protocol in place which focuses on decriminalizing them where possible.

Where children are living (end of year snapshot data)

*Agency refers to mainstream schools

Placement type	2018/19	2017/18
With foster carer	473	470
Of these; in house carers	327	331
Kinship carers	49	46
Agency carers	97	93
Placed for adoption	21	26
In supported lodgings	33	27
ESCC children's homes	18	21
Agency children's homes	27	29
Agency special schools	1	0
Placed with parents	23	20
Independent living	0	4
Youth custody/secure unit	2	5
Hospital/NHS establishment	2	1
Absconded	0	0

How well did we do? (1)

Indicator Ref	Description	2018/19 Value	2017/18 Eng	2017/18 Value	2016/17 Eng	2016/17 Value	2015/16 Eng	2015/16 Value
NI 58	Emotional & Behavioural Health of children in care	14.3 ↑	14.2	14.4 ↓	14.1	14.1 ↓	14.0	13.5 ↑
Adoption Scorecard 1	Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted. (3 year average)	420 days ↑	486 days	454 days ↑	520 days	479 days ↑	558 days	516 days ↑
Adoption Scorecard 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)	197 days ↑	201 days	220 days ↓	220 days	212 days ↑	226 days	222 days ↓
Adoption Scorecard 3	% of children who wait less than 14 months between entering care & moving in with their adoptive family (3 year average)	57% ↓	56%	64% ↑	53%	61% ↑	47%	53% ↓

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

How well did we do? (2)

Indicator Ref	Description	2018/ 19 Value	2017/1 8 Eng	2017/ 18 Value	2016/1 7 Eng	2016/ 17 Value	2015/1 6 Eng	2015/ 16 Value
NI62 Placements 1	Number of children looked after with 3 or more placements during the year	12.0% 4i	10.0%	11.1% ↑	10.0%	13.8% 4i	10.0%	10.8% 4i
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	70.1% 4i	70.0%	70.2% 4i	70.0%	70.7% ↑	68.0%	65.0% ↑
Placements 3	% of LAC at 31 st March placed outside LA boundary and more than 20 miles from where they used to live	11.5% 4i	15.0%	10.3% 4i	13.0%	8.4% ↑	13.0%	9.4% ↑
Leaving Care 2 * see note below	% of former relevant young people aged 19-21 who were in education, employment or training	52.1% ↑	51.0%	51.9% 4i	50.0%	53.0% 4i	49.0%	61.0% ↑

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

How well did we do? (3)

Indicator Ref	Description	2018/ 19 Value	2017/ 18 Eng	2017/ 18 Value	2016/ 17 Eng	2016/ 17 Value	2015/ 16 Eng	2015/ 16 Value
Leaving Care 3 * see note below	% of former relevant young people aged 19-21 who were in suitable accommodation	79.9% ↑	84.0%	77.3% ↑	84.0%	76.5% ↓	83.0%	81.7% ↑
Thrive PI 9	Rate of Children looked after per 10,000 population aged under 18	56.6% ↑	64.0	56.9 ↓	62.0	53.0 ↓	60.0	51.7 ↔
PAF C19	Average of the % of children looked after who had been looked after continuously for at least 12 months who had an annual assessment and their teeth checked by a dentist during the previous 12 months.	87.8% ↓	86.0%	88.2% ↓	86.0%	90.3% ↓	87.0%	92.8% ↑
PAF C81	Final warnings, reprimands and convictions of lac	2.0% ↑	4.0%	2.3% ↑	4.0%	3.4% ↑	5.0%	3.8% ↔

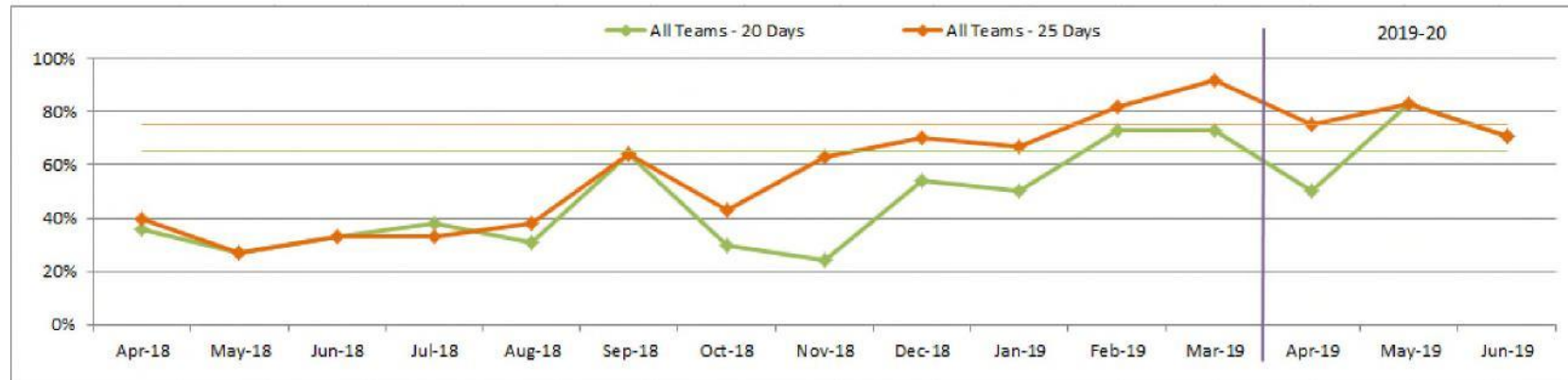
Where performance has improved/increased it is shown with a ↑ and where it has dipped with a ↓

So, in summary

- Although performance is set out in the grid above, the 2018/19 national data has not yet been published by the DfE.
- The rate of our LAC per 10,000 has remained fairly constant.
- There continued to be improvement in performance relating to Adoption timeliness, with good performance being maintained in the majority of other areas.
- The figures for care leavers are snapshot data. The other indicators, in relation to employability of older LAC and care leavers, remain above the South East and National average.

The physical health of our children

Initial Health Assessment (IHA) Monthly Performance Summary 2018-19 and 2019-20 Q1



Steps taken to improve performance in Initial Health Assessments (IHA)

- **Full review and relaunch of the process** by key social care and health personnel starting in Spring 2018.
- Robust IHA tracking system developed in collaboration with East Sussex Healthcare Trust colleagues which provides a clearer picture of where delays occur.
- There is also the option to track all due IHAs for children entering care in any given month.
- There was a significant improvement in performance from September 2018 onward, this has continued into 2019/20.
- Greater responsibility for the timely completion of all necessary paperwork was taken by the social work staff including the clarification for parental consent where required.
- Better communication at both the operational and strategic levels between social care and health staff.
- **43% of IHAs were completed within 20 days** against a target of 65% and **61% within 25 days** against a target of 75% in 2018-19. (This target has been met in the first quarter of 2019/20 with 71% completed within 20 days and 76% completed within 25 days thus demonstrating that there has been a sustained improvement which has been embedded into practice).
- **294 Review Health Assessments (RHA)** were completed by East Sussex Healthcare Trust for East Sussex LAC in 2018/19.

Areas for improvement 2019/20

- **Exceed target for IHAs within statutory timescales**
- **Improve timeliness and reporting of RHAs**
- **Improve quality of health passports for care leavers**
- **Improve pathways into mental health services for LAC and Care Leavers**

The mental health of our children (1)

LAC Children's Mental Health Service (LACMHS)

- **LACMHS received 50 new non-urgent referrals during 2018/19** and all but **3** were accepted and an initial consultations were offered.
- **An additional 35 of our children and young people were also seen urgently** due to the severity of the symptoms they presented with, such as suicidal thoughts and/or serious self-harm, depression or psychotic symptoms.
- **In addition, there was also a cohort of up to 84 LAC** at any one time, who were **in receipt of on-going therapeutic support**. This took the form of individual therapy, dyadic therapy (child and carer together), systemic therapy and/or consultation to the foster carer and network. LACMHS also provided:
 - One Therapeutic Parenting Group (working with 10 carers of 8 young people, their social workers and supervising social workers).
 - Weekly consultation to staff at Homefield, Brodrick House and Hazel Lodge.
 - Weekly consultation to the Through Care Team.
 - Monthly 'drop in' consultation surgeries to the Fostering Service and each of the three LAC teams.
 - LACMHS continued to work in close collaboration with its partner agencies to provide a service for those LAC with a care plan of permanence away from their birth family.
 - The response to new and urgent referrals continued to be prompt with a risk assessment being provided within one week. Ongoing therapeutic work was highly valued by all partners and was deemed to be a significant contributor to the outstanding judgement made in the OFSTED inspection.

The mental health of our children (2)

Areas for development in 2019/20 for LACMHS

LACMHS has developed a number of strategies for reducing the waiting time for on-going therapeutic work which have been approved by both Health and Children's Services Managers during this year, and which will be implemented and reviewed over the coming year.

Our approach is informed by the voice of children and young people

12,166 local votes in Make Your Mark 2018 from 17 schools which equals 21% of young people aged 13 – 18 in East Sussex.

The Youth Cabinet, CICC and other local youth voice groups developed their campaigns which focused on these top priorities:

End Knife Crime, Mental Health and Homelessness.



In October 2018, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex met with 50 young people from youth groups around the county. They discussed the issue of mental health with the young people and what could be done to promote good mental health.

In November 2018 more than over 50 young people took part in East annual Sussex Takeover Day and discussed mental health and emotional wellbeing.



The Education of our children

- The Virtual School caseworkers continued to support the education of all ESCC LAC, including care leavers, and developed their role of providing advice and guidance for children adopted from care, subject to special guardianship orders and child arrangement orders.
- The Virtual School funded and worked with the Placement Support Team to facilitate the Coram Bright Spots Survey which gathered the thoughts of looked after children (4-18 years) . A feedback event and a range of service meetings gave children and staff an opportunity to hear about the survey outcomes. Discussion was held about the findings and a plan was created to inform practice across the authority.
- The Virtual School increased it's bank of casual intervention teachers and worked in partnership with Alternative Education providers to improve the quality of short-term interventions. The team also continued to work closely with ESCC and external services to develop school practice.
- At Key Stage 2 there was an improvement in progress in Reading and Maths, and a very slight decrease in Writing. Teacher training has been put in place to respond to this.
- At Key Stage 4, progress and attainment scores decreased yet individual data showed that a small number of young people did not achieve any qualifications, and as such, had a significant impact on average scores. These were mostly our young people who came into care as teenagers. This is likely to continue to be an issue and is reflective of the National picture. Interventions were put in place to engage our LAC who were at risk of poor outcomes. The pathway into post 16 education remained a focus.
- In relation to our Care Leavers, as of March 2019, of the children who were in continuous care for at least 12 months before sitting their GCSE examinations, 86.1% of 16 — 17 year olds (year 12) were in education, training and employment (EET). This exceeded the target of 80% but is a reduction of 4 % on last year's data. 87% of 17 -18 year olds (year 13) were EET, exceeding a target of 70% and matching last year's data. 10% of Care Leavers accessed University which matches the 10% target.

Children in Foster Placements

- On 31 March 2019 there were 585 of our LAC in foster care. 450 of these children were placed within in-house foster carers as compared to 392 in the previous year. This included in-house 'parent and child' placements, children subject to Special Guardianship Orders placed with their former foster carers, and those older young people who remained in their 'Staying Put' fostering placements through to independence .
- The commissioning of external independent IFA placements remained at a similar level to that of 2017/18 with the total figure of mainstream LAC agency foster placements at 80.
- The Fostering Duty Team was extremely busy and provided a centralised service which commissioned all placements for our LAC. In 2018/19 the team:
 - Received 532 referrals for children needing placements.
 - Worked on a total of 608 placements, 121 of which were not required.
 - Made 487 placements of which 398 were placed with in-house foster carers.
 - The service often needed to respond to emergency and same day placements, the placement of LAC subject to care proceedings, and those LAC whose existing placements had disrupted. Many of these LAC presented with very complex and challenging behaviours.
- The Duty Team were involved in the matching of LAC, the quality assurance of all independent Fostering and Residential placements. In 2018/19:
 - 21 fostering households offering 36 placements were approved, compared to 19 fostering households offering 37 placements in 2017/18
 - A further 14 assessments of prospective foster carers were allocated for assessment, and booked for presentation to the Fostering Panel, which did not progress.
 - There were 9 Fostering assessments still in progress at year end.
 - The number of foster carers who retired was 10 in 2018-19 compared to 22 in the previous year. 21 new fostering households were approved giving the service a net increase in its resources.
 - On 1 April 2019 all foster carer allowances were uplifted by 3% by East Sussex County Council.

Children in Supported Lodgings

Supported Lodgings

- Between April 2018-March 2019, 40 of our young people have been newly accommodated in Supported Lodging's placements. This cohort included LAC and homeless young people.
- Supported Lodging's providers/carers were encouraged to extend their approval range. 2 Supported Lodging's carers were approved under Fostering regulations to become Fostering/Lodgings providers.
- Focused support and training was developed to support providers caring for young people with more complex needs.
- As at 31 March 2019 there were 48 Supported Lodging's households providing a total of 73 placements across the county.
- In the year 2018/19 there were:
 - 10 new Supported Lodging's approvals which provided 13 additional placements.
 - The Supported Lodgings team received 129 referrals requesting placements for young people. Of the 129 referrals, 53 were closed, 76 young people were placed.
 - **Please see the relevant link at the end of this report.**



Dong with his supported lodgings family, who help young people gain independence



Dame Jacqueline Wilson launching the new fostering information van which will help to recruit more foster carers

Adoption and Permanence key facts

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Number of children adopted	45	38	29	27 (AOs)
Number of adoption matches (children)	32	38	30	39
Number of permanent fostering matches (children)	10	14	5	4
Number of East Sussex adoptive matches (children)	26	30	30	33
Number of ASE adoptive matches (children)	0	0	0	2
Number of inter-agency matches (children):				
Permanence:	2	0	1	1
Adoption:	6	8	6	4
Number of prospective adopters approved (households)	41	30	25	33 (of which 4 2 nd time)
Number of permanent carers approved (households)	2	1	3	3
Number of children approved for adoption up to 31stMarch 2017 (including 2 re approvals)	53	52	69	43
Number of children approved for permanence up to 31stMarch 2019	14	32	24	22 (of which 10 change of Care Plan from adoption to perm)
Number of approved adopters waiting to be matched	22	20	12	14 (from the 33 approved this year)
Number of disruptions presented to Panel pre Order:				
Permanence:	0	0	0	0
Adoptions:	1	0	1	1

Children needing Adoption or Permanence

- In line with the national picture, the number of our LAC with a plan for adoption has decreased from 69 LAC in 2017-2018, to 43 LAC in 2018/2019.
- 39 LAC were matched during 2018/2019 which was a slight increase on the previous year. Whilst the number of LAC approved decreased during this period, the levels of complexity and uncertainty remained high.
- The ethnic profile of LAC approved reflected the local population; 6 of the total number approved were from other ethnic groups including Guyanese, Sri Lankan, White/African Caribbean and Iranian.
- The number of birth parents seeking leave to revoke Placement Orders continued to remain steady. This at times resulted in the a significant delay in the Adoption Orders being granted.
- There were 27 Adoption Orders granted in 2018/2019.
- During 2018/2019 88 households attended information events and 37 households registered their interest to adopt. The conversion rate from information event to registration remained high and 33 adopters were approved by the year end, an increase of 8 compared to 2017/2018.
- The Government's regionalisation agenda gained significant momentum during this period. ESCC has worked for the past 4 years with the Adoption South East partnership to form a regional adoption service and develop common practice in all areas of service delivery. It was recently agreed that ESCC would host the new regional service anticipating implementation and 'go live' in April 2020.
- There were 56 new referrals for post adoption support assessments over the past year, with the majority resulting in the provision of packages of support. The adoption CAMHS service, ADCAMHS, continued to offer a dedicated consultation and therapy service.
- ADCAMHS was commissioned to support 40 families but consistently provided a service to over 60 families. Adoptive families valued ADCAMHS, as the clinical work was proven to strengthen family relationships and increase placement stability. Feedback from adopters indicated that they appreciated the support and a key contact for 'the longer journey'.
- **Please see the relevant link at the end of this report.**

Our children's homes (1)

Brodrick Road in Eastbourne

continues

to care for a very challenging group of our young people with differing presentations and very complex needs.

Lansdowne Secure

Children's Home has had a challenging 12 months. This is partly due to the impact of the building work for the extension to create 5 additional beds, due to finish in the spring of 2020. Because of this the number of rooms available has fallen from 7 to 6. The majority of our young people placed over the last six months have been from ESCC which has impacted on revenue income. In addition one of our most complex East Sussex young people has required 2 rooms in an area away from other young people further decreasing the availability of rooms to 5. There remains considerable challenges in recruiting new staff to the home.

Acorns, in Bexhill, provided regular overnight respite care for some of our severely disabled young people aged 7-19 utilizing 7 beds. There were, however, 2 full-time accommodated young people who remained throughout this period to avoid a change of placement close to their 19th birthdays. There was also a full-time emergency placement made available.

Homefield Cottage in Seaford has now changed its registration to include boys from the ages of 11-18 years. To date only girls have been placed, but the RHM would consider accommodating boys if the match was appropriate when a vacancy occurs.

Hazel Lodge in Hastings continues to practise 'Staying Close'.

One of their longer term residents had a successful transition to Supported Lodgings with the help of staff, and they are currently preparing another young woman towards the same outcome.

The Bungalow, in Eastbourne, is registered for 7 children aged 7-19 and has provided full-time accommodation to some of our disabled children who are unable to live in a family setting. They all attended local schools and all maintained contact with their families, facilitated on site. One young person moved onto to a permanent adult placement and another young person was admitted.

Our children's homes (2)

All our homes are externally inspected by Ofsted

- Acorns received an Ofsted judgement of 'Good' in August 2017 but Requiring Improvement in August 2018.
- Brodrick Road continued to maintain its 'Outstanding' rating.
- The Bungalow received a judgement of 'Good' in October 2018 but had declined in Effectiveness in February 2019.
- Hazel Lodge also achieved a well-deserved first 'Outstanding' from its full inspection.
- Lansdowne Secure Children's Home also received 'Improved Effectiveness' for its Ofsted interim inspection in March 2019. Their next full inspection will include Education and for the first time CQC to inspect health services within the home.

Looking after our older children (1)



The Through Care Team (TCT) – What we achieved

- The Local Offer was updated by the Through Care Team (TCT) and published online.
 - Our young people will be designing a ‘young person friendly’ format for the Local Offer through art workshops.
 - The Virtual School worked with the TCT to complete The Coram Voice Bright spots survey with Care Leavers. These findings will inform the development of the offer.
- There was a focus on reducing isolation for our 21 – 25 year olds and support was provided with a range of practical matters such as tenancy Support. There were also a number of additional supports made available by named Personal Advisors (PA) and Placements Support Workers (PSW), access to weekly drop-in sessions and involvement in social activities including Christmas parties, picnics and cinema trips.
- At March 31 2019 the team was working with 351 young people, compared to 277 in 2018/19. A significant proportion of these young people had highly complex behaviours with a range of challenging safeguarding issues.



Age	2018/19	2017/18
Under 16	41	12
Age 16 - 17	102	94
Age 18-24	208	171

- The team worked with some complex young people from the age of 14 to develop a Through Care model. This was embedded and found to work very well. All young people were allocated a PA by the time they reach 17 ½. A number of young people with complex needs were allocated to PAs and received this additional support much earlier on. Joint working has enhanced the offer to these young people through relationship based practice and resulted in improved progress and outcomes for them.

Looking after our older children (2)

- The Virtual School employed a participation worker to work with the TCT to improve the engagement of our young people in their own education and future pathways. There was improved attendance at our drop-in centres enabling our young people to focus on their employability. Transition planning for LAC who are the most complex in terms of disability continued to receive a service from Adult Social Care (ASC) and was managed by a specialist Transitions Team.
- Accommodation - During 2018-19 none of our older looked after LAC or 16 or 17 year olds presenting as homeless were placed in bed and breakfast accommodation. This was possible only because of the additional investment provided by the ESCC transformation fund to improve the accommodation offer for our vulnerable young people.

The Housing Project has focused on:

- Our vulnerable young care leavers and homeless young people.
- Increasing the numbers of Supported Lodging's providers.
- Developing the market and commissioning supported accommodation provision to extend the housing and accommodation pathway, and provide high risk emergency accommodation to mitigate the use of bed and breakfast.

Our Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

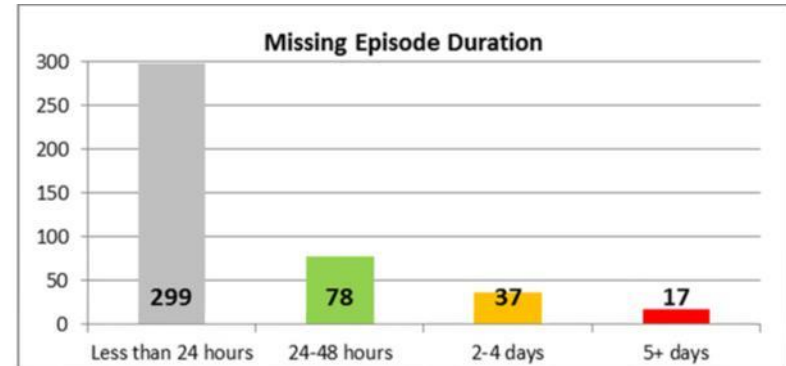
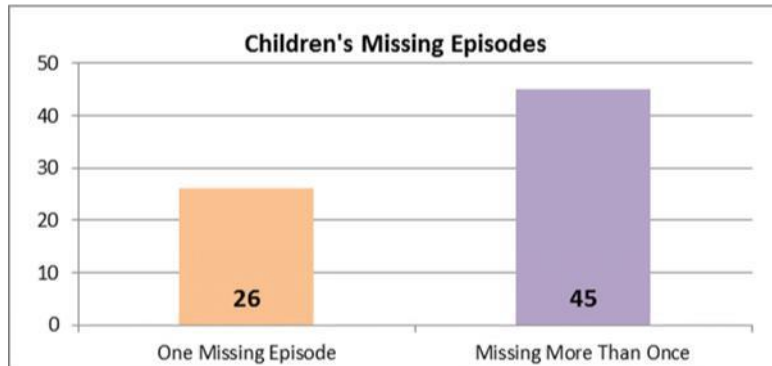
What we have achieved

- A full time PA was recruited to develop opportunities and links for our UASC, including access to vocational courses and work experience. As a result 92% of our UASC are now in education.
- The Service recruited an additional social worker.
- Training was provided on Age Assessments, Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery and recognising and working with Trauma.
- The Through Care Team provided specialist UASC training.

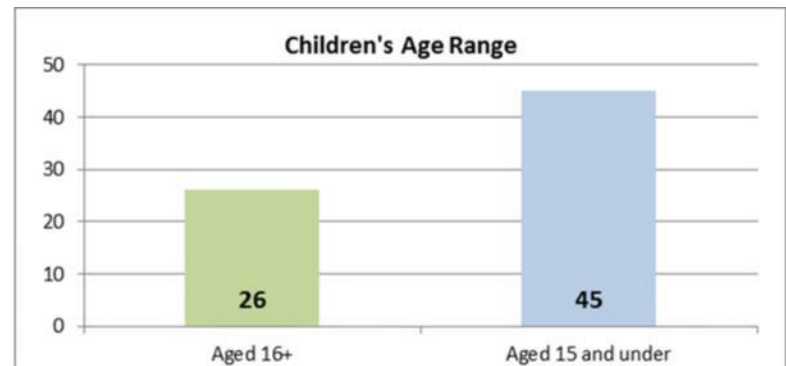
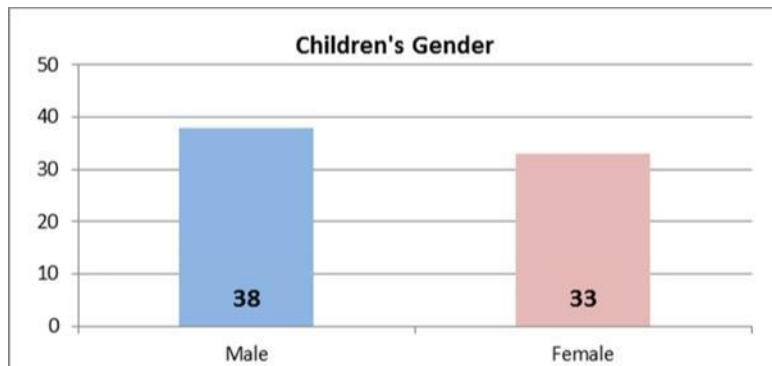
Future developments

- Improve links with adult services for ongoing support needs.
- Improve links with CAMHS including developing trauma screening tools.
- Develop better 'introduction' tools for our newly arrived young people.
- Develop mentoring for our new UASC by young people who are already looked after.
- Develop a UASC drop-in for our young people to allow them to meet socially, and also with professionals to discuss issues such as sex and relationships, the law in the UK, CSE and recognising and managing mental health.

Our children who are Missing and who are at risk of Child Sexual and Criminal Exploitation (CSE/CE) (1)



- In 2018/19 71 LAC went missing, 45 of whom were missing more than once. There were also 18 LAC who were absent (i.e. not where they should be), and 5 of these were absent more than once.
- In 2018/19 there were 431 missing episodes, of these, 299 episodes of children being missing for less than 24 hours, 78 episodes when they were missing between 24--48 hours, 37 episodes when they were missing between 2 and 4 days and 17 episodes when they were missing for 5 days or more. All these children were actively 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 multi agency strategy discussions were held in line with Safeguarding Procedures.



Of the 71 LAC that went missing, 38 were male and 33 were female. 26 of this cohort were aged 16 and above, 45 were aged 15 and under.

Our Children who are Missing and who are at risk of Child Sexual and Criminal Exploitation (CSE/CE) (2)

- The MACE structure remained in place and the MACE Bronze Operational Group continued to meet monthly each side of the county to consider the referrals of all exploited children identified in East Sussex who were deemed to be at highest risk. MACE Silver Operational Group met bi-monthly to consider the strategic issues that were raised in relation to trying to safeguard this group of children. The criminal exploitation of children connected to 'County Lines' activity remained a significant issue within East Sussex, both for locally based children and those who were brought to the area from London. An annual audit of MACE Bronze casework was scheduled.
- As of March 2019 there were **27** children subject to East Sussex MACE Bronze panel oversight and therefore categorised as being at high risk of exploitation. **5** of these children were East Sussex LAC (**3** male and **2** female). There was **1** other local authority child in this group.
- The MACE Action Plan was updated for 2019-20 and was presented to the LSCB.
- The main themes identified for this year included improving school based responses to criminal exploitation, a better level of Police intelligence gathering from schools, continuing oversight on ensuring agencies are taking forward, effective disruption activity, for exploitation locally and that the response to our children who are missing remains consistent.

Our Children who are Missing and who are at risk of Child Sexual and Criminal Exploitation (CSE/CE) (3)

- Since 24 July 2018 the provision of Return Home Interviews (RHI) for all East Sussex children who went missing locally was provided by East Sussex Children's Social Care. The provision of this service by 'Missing People' charity ended on 24 July 2018 when the service was not recommissioned by any of the three Sussex Local Authorities.
- All of our East Sussex LAC had their RHI completed by their allocated social worker or trusted professional.
- Notifications of our missing children were received and screened by MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) and were then shared with the relevant allocated social workers and Practice Manager if they had an existing allocated social worker.
- There was an established performance dashboard that measured all key data for our children who go missing. This performance dashboard was presented bi-monthly to the MACE Silver Operational Group which in turn was overseen by the LSCB Steering Group.

Independent Reviewing Officer Service (1)

The Independent Reviewing Office Service (IRO) is managed off line and is independent of the operational service for LAC and Care Leavers.

IMPACT

- All children who become looked after by ESCC are allocated an IRO within statutory timescales and the majority of these maintain a stable relationship with that same IRO throughout their time in our care. The Unit has an established staff complement which enhances long-term relationships. IROs demonstrate a strong commitment to LAC, resisting reallocation and working creatively to manage challenges caused by caseloads or location.
- 784 children were accommodated by ESCC throughout or for some part of 2018/19, with 610 LAC at year end. Each of these were required to have a review within the first 28 days of becoming accommodated; a second review within three months and thereafter a review no less than every six months. Supplementary reviews should take place if there were proposed significant changes to either placement, education or legal status.

PARTICIPATION

- 86% of children aged 4+ attended or actively contributed to their LAC review.
- Children are encouraged to Chair their own reviews and there is an enhanced focus on ensuring that they are consulted about who attends their meeting, where it takes place and what is discussed. The revised LAC Review documentation will place the child's participation at the center of the process and ensure that all decisions are recorded in an accessible, child focused manner

Thank you for all your kindness and understanding; for being the one who has been there from the beginning. C aged 18

I love my reviews, I get to talk - yes its good - I love them.

E aged 8

Independent Reviewing Officer Service (2)

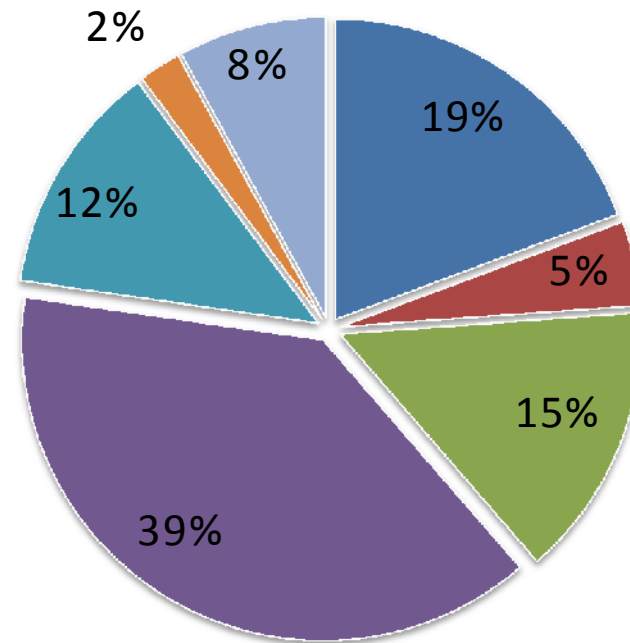
Timeliness Late Reviews

94.6% of all LAC Reviews were held early or on time in 2018/19.

88 reviews (5.4%) were late.

21 cases were a scheduling miscalculation of which 17 were miscalculated by just 1 day; 13 reviews were delayed in the best interests of the child, 34 were delayed due to an essential party being unable to attend and 2 were late due to travel requirements. 11 reviews were delayed due to capacity or reallocation within the Unit with 7 reviews late due to practice issues.

➤ [Please see the relevant link at the end of this report.](#)



- Miscalculation by 1 day
- Miscalculation by < 1 week
- Best Interests Decision Essential Party Unable to Attend
- Capacity Location
- Late Notification / Practice Issues

The role of our elected members

The Corporate Parenting Panel met quarterly during 2018/19 to scrutinize the performance of all services in relation to LAC and Care Leavers, paying particular attention to outcomes. It also received presentations from the Children in Care Council and from the East Sussex Foster Care Association. The reports set out below were presented and considered:

April 2018

- LAC Statistics
- Interim report on Health of LAC
- Vulnerable Young People's House and Accommodation Project
- Ofsted Inspection reports for the following children's homes: - Homefield Cottage, Lansdowne Secure Unit
- Children's Home Regulations 2015, Regulation 44: Inspection reports for December 2017 to February 2018 for the following children's homes: Acorns at Dorset Road, Brodrick Road , Hazel Lodge, Homefield Cottage, Lansdowne Secure Unit, The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive

➤ July 2018

- -Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Annual Report 2017/18
- -Annual progress report of the East Sussex Fostering Service
- -Annual progress report of the East Sussex Adoption and Permanence Service
- -LAC Statistics
- Children's Home Regulations 2015, Regulation 44: Inspection reports for March 2019 to June 2017 for the following children's homes:- Acorns at Dorset Road, Brodrick Road , Hazel Lodge, Homefield Cottage, Lansdowne Secure Unit, The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive

October 2018

- LAC Annual Report
- LAC Statistics
- KS1, 2 and 4 outcomes for LAC 2017/18
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children Update
- Ofsted Inspection reports for the following children's' homes: Hazel Lodge, Brodrick House, Homefield Cottage
- Children's Home Regulations, Regulation 44: Inspection reports for June 2018 - September 2018 for the following children's homes: Acorns at Dorset Road, Brodrick Road , Hazel Lodge, Homefield Cottage, Lansdowne Secure Unit, The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive

➤ January 2019

- Presentation from the Children In Care Council (CICC)
- East Sussex Foster Care Association (ESFCA)
- LAC Statistics
- -Ofsted inspection reports for the following children's homes - The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive, Lansdowne Secure Unit
- Children's Home Regulations 2015, Regulation 44: Inspection reports for March 2019 to June 2017 for the following children's homes:- Acorns at Dorset Road, Brodrick Road , Hazel Lodge, Homefield Cottage, Lansdowne Secure Unit, The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive

Priorities for 2019/20

Continue to improve the timeliness of return home interviews for LAC and Care Leavers

Embed the Local Offer to our LAC and Care Leavers and engage our partners with implementation

Improve the mental health pathways for our LAC and Care Leavers

Extend the pool of foster carers and progress the Regional South East Adoption agency

Complete the extension of Lansdowne Secure Children's Home

Embed commissioned housing options for our Care Leavers

Continue to improve performance on health assessments for Looked After Children

Learn from Serious Case Reviews and consider development of our Corporate Grandparenting Role

Links to Fostering and Supported Lodgings, Adoption and Independent Reviewing Officers Annual Reports 2018-19

➤ **Fostering and Supported Lodgings:**

For the full report, please see Item 9 on the following agenda:

<https://democracy.eastsussex.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=141&MId=4058&Ver=4>

➤ **Adoption and permanence:**

For the full report, please see Item 10 on the following agenda:

<https://democracy.eastsussex.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=141&MId=4058&Ver=4>

➤ **Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO):**

For the full report, please see item 11 on the following agenda:

<https://democracy.eastsussex.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=141&MId=4058&Ver=4>