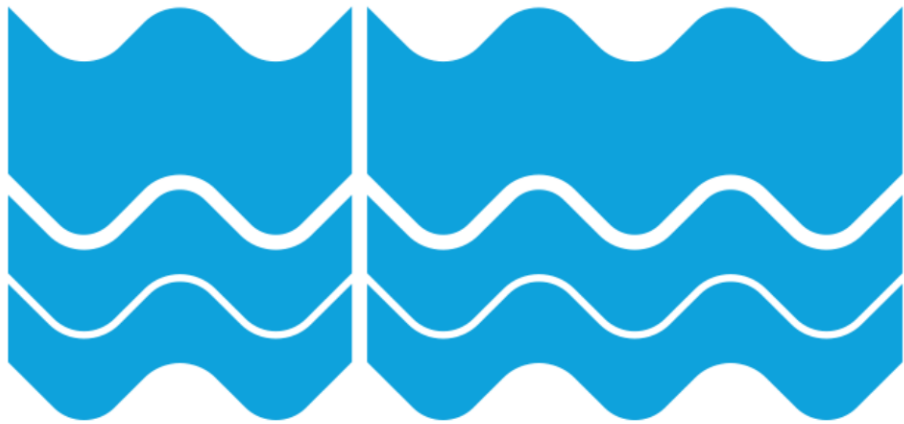


# East Sussex County Council



## East Sussex Looked After Children Services Annual Progress Report 2019/20

Sally Carnie, Head of Service

# Who did we look after?

- The data below is a snapshot as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

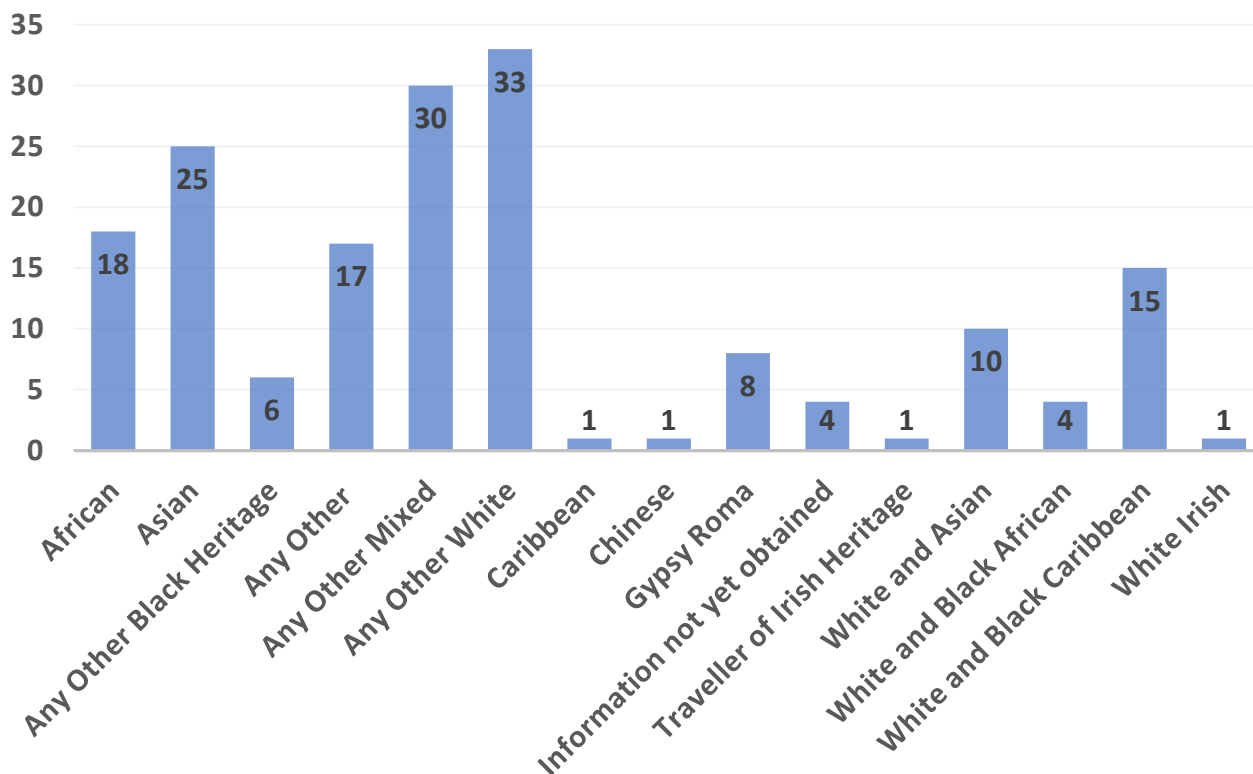
Statistics	2018-2019	2019-2020
<b>Looked After Children (LAC)</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>592</b>
<b>Children coming in to care</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>179</b>
<b>0-5 year olds admitted to care</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>6-12 year olds admitted to care</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>13+ year olds admitted to care</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>Children leaving care</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>0-12 year olds leaving care</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>13+ year olds leaving care</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>105</b>



- We looked after 311 boys and 281 girls.
- Overall there were fewer children in care during this period
- This figure is made up of fewer admissions to care but also fewer discharges from care
- In addition the 'churn' figure, which is made up of the number of children moving in and out of care during the annual cycle, when added to the year end figure shows a reduction by **20** overall. In total there were **760** children in care allocated to Social Workers and worked with during the year 19/20

# 23% of LAC in ESCC identify as being minority ethnic or mixed heritage.

Who did we look after?



\* Numbers of BAME children within the LAC population across 2019/20

# Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

- ESCC was caring for **32** UASC under 18 during 19/20 (plus 48 care leavers).
- Our UASC cohort were mainly male and over 16 years old, although 25% of this group were under 16 years and our youngest child was only 12 years old and female.
- In the last year, **2** 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 or transferred via the National Transfer Scheme mostly from arrivals at Dover.
- The majority of these children came from Vietnam and Iran followed by Sudan, Iraq, Albania and Afghanistan with one child each from Ethiopia, Mali, Kuwait and Kurdistan.

**This data is a snapshot as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.**

Statistics	2018-2019	2019-2020
UASC in care	40	32



# Children with Disabilities

- The number of our LAC with disabilities remains similar to previous years.
- At 31 March 2020 there were **27** LAC with disabilities, with similar age distribution to previous year (**19** aged 15 or less and **8** aged between 16 and 19 )
- **8** of these children were placed with ESCC foster carers and **2** with independent agency foster carers. **6** were placed in ESCC Childrens Homes and **5** in independent Childrens Homes. **4** children were placed in residential schools to meet their medical needs, joint funded with health and **2** were placed in residential schools due to behavioral needs arising from their ASD diagnosis.
- The disability homes have managed a variety of young people with differing needs from behaviours that challenge, to vulnerable young people with complex medical needs.
- Going forward there are plans to create more capacity and flexibility into the structure of the homes to safely manage the needs of any disabled child requiring respite or accommodation



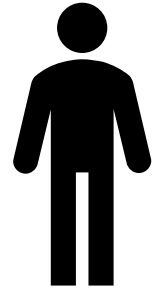
# Where our children are living

Placement Type	2018-2019	2019-2020
With foster carer	473	447
Of these; in house carers	327	293
Kinship carers	49	62
Agency carers	97	92
Placed for Adoption	21	30
In Supported Lodgings	33	30
ESCC children's homes	18	19
Agency children's homes	27	38
Agency special schools	1	0
Placed with parents	23	20
Independent living	0	3
Youth custody/secure unit	2	4
Hospital/NHS establishment	2	1
Absconded	0	0

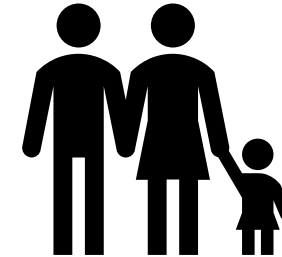
The data below is a snapshot as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.



Increase in  
Kinship  
placements



Increase in  
children  
placed for  
Adoption



Increase in  
Independent  
living

Increase in  
children living  
in agency  
children's  
homes



Decrease in  
children living  
in ESCC Foster  
placements &  
Supported  
Lodgings

# How well did we do in 19/20?

- Overall performance in relation to our LAC indicators remained strong and stable with very small % variations in most areas. The impact of Covid 19 on performance will need careful review going forward.
- The rate of LAC per 10,000 population under 18 years **reduced** from **56.6%** (18/19) to **55.7%** (19/20) against a national England rate of 65%
- More challenging has been timely placements for children with a plan for adoption (adoption scorecard), children with 3 or more placement moves (N162), children in permanent placements (N163) and children placed outside ESCC boundaries. Whilst the performance in these areas remains comparatively high, our local dip in performance reflects the wider national picture in terms of sufficiency of placements across all areas of placement planning
- Latterly some of our health indicators have been adversely affected by Covid such as access to dentistry and timely review health assessments
- The emotional and behavioural health of children in care (SDQ) has dipped slightly by 0.1% but this is consistent with the pattern over previous years
- There has been a real improvement in the accommodation options for LAC and Care Leavers under 18. However, Care Leavers aged 19-21 years in suitable accommodation has fallen by 1.1% from 18/19, and 6.2% against the national average
- Care Leavers 19-21 years in education employment and training has shown a real improvement this year and is above the national average

# Adoption Recruitment

## Adoption South East(ASE) Developments:

ASE went live on 1 April 2020. Managers and staff were actively involved in the recruitment work stream, developing common practice, shared resources, and in the final quarter of the year processed all recruitment enquiries for Brighton and Hove.

Despite high levels of recruitment activity, the number of adopters approved continued to fall compared with previous years. This reflects the national position on adopter sufficiency.

Recruitment	2016- 2017	2017- 2018	2018- 2019	2019- 2020
Total No. of adopters approved	30	25	33	22
No of 2 <sup>nd</sup> time Adopters	0	0	4	3



# Family Finding and Linking

- Those children approved for adoption have complex backgrounds and needs
- Large sibling groups may have a different plan for individual children e.g. a mixture of long term fostering and adoption and may need to be separated, as it is difficult to place them altogether
- Children of mixed heritage tend to be placed out of county in areas reflecting greater ethnic diversity
- Complex health and genetic conditions, together with protracted care proceedings, contribute to delay in family finding and placement
- Early permanence meetings continue with locality teams to promote timely planning and family finding.
- There has been an increase in the number of children placed for Fostering to Adopt and this continues to be keenly promoted, especially for young children.

Family finding and linking	
	2019-2020
No. of children adopted (AO's)	32
Number of children approved for adoption	29
No. of relinquished children	2
Total No. of children matched	31
No. of 2 sibling groups matched	7
No. of 3 sibling groups matched	0
No. of 4 or more siblings groups matched	0
No. of children matched (outside of ASE)	7
No. of children matched within ASE	4
No. of children placed for Fostering to Adopt	6

# Adoption - Support

Within Adoption Support we have a range of services which include:

Adoption Support  
Fund applications

Adopted Families Group

Throughcare pathway for  
Adopted adolescents

Letterbox & Direct Contact  
Service

ADCAMHS

Services to Adopted  
Adults

ADOPTION SUPPORT 2019/20	
	2019-2020
Post Adoption Support Assessments carried out; statutory responsibility to assess and provide coordinated package of support or sign post	56
No. of open cases, including therapeutic interventions, parent consultations, respite, education & virtual school advice and family social work	152

# Fostering: Recruitment and Retention

- There were 22 foster households approved during 2019/20 – this means that ESCC has held steady in the context of a national shortage of foster carers.
- The conversion rates from enquiry to approval have continued to increase annually.
- The fostering service's recruitment strategy and advertising has been successful in targeting potential foster carers.
- The fostering service experienced a small increase in enquiries compared to 2018-19.
- At the close of 2019/20, the fostering service had 254 approved foster homes and 451 approved foster carers with all households having a supervising social worker who provides intensive support.

Retention	Households		
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Approvals ending Retirement	22	10	8
Approvals ending Change in circumstances	9	3	9
Approvals ending Terminated at panel	1	4	3

Recruitment	Households		
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Enquiries	346	266	268
Screening calls	157	118	114
Initial visits	86	70	71
Skills to foster training (STF)	43	29	21
Applications for assessment	31	35	35
Closed	5	3	7
Withdrew	7	11	6
Total allocated but did not progress	12	14	13
Approvals	19	21	22
Placements	37	36	39
Conversion rate Enquiry to approval	5.5%	7.9%	8.2%
Conversion rate Screening call to approval	12%	17.8%	19.2%
Conversion rate Initial visit to approval	22%	30%	31%



# Supported Lodgings:

## Supported Lodgings: Approvals

- There were **11** supported lodgings households approved during 19/20 offering **14** placements.
- **NET gain of +3 Supported Lodgings households.**

## Placements

- **61** young people were placed with supported lodgings providers during 19/20.

### Young people placed:

- **57** Looked After Children (LAC) **93.44%**
- **1** Homeless **1.64%**
- **3** Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) **4.91%**

# Placement Support Service

**The placement support service delivered 143 packages of individual support during 2019/20.**

PSS support includes:

- Foster carers - 75 child support packages
- Children In Care Council (CICC) - 10 child support packages
- Special Placement Scheme (SPS) - 6 child support packages
- Through Care Team - 50 young person's support packages
- Attachment Project (SWIFT) - 1 family supported
- Foster Care Agency - 1 child support package

Evaluations of PSS support packages are undertaken annually:

**25% of all support packages “I would not have continued this placement without Placement Support”**

**95% of carers noted that the placement support service resulted in a positive impact on the placement.**

**60% of carers would prefer more hours of placement support.**



# Our Children's Homes

## Brodrick House in Eastbourne

- Continuing good work with challenging group of young people.
- Outreach embedded for those that move on.
- New bathrooms at last.
- Continuing 'Outstanding' judgement by Ofsted.
- Manager & deputy resign & are replaced.

## Lansdowne Secure Children's Home

- Re-designed to improve the existing accommodation and increase capacity from 7-12 beds.
- The new fully furnished home will be complete in early 2021.
- Ofsted inspection (February 2020) judged as 'good' in all areas (inspection included education and CQC for health services within the home).
- Lansdowne has continued to work creatively with all residents during this period of change.

## Homefield Cottage in Seaford:

- Settled group of young people.
- Re-modelling of study and decoration throughout.
- Young people enjoy a holiday in Dorset.
- Thrive model of care embedded in the home as staff trained.
- Judged as "good" by Ofsted.

## Acorns in Bexhill:

- Continued to provide regular respite care for some of the highest need disabled children aged 7 - 19.
- A full time emergency placement was made for a few months until the beginning of 2020, and another young person's respite became a full time placement whilst awaiting a residential school place.
- Acorns received an Ofsted judgement of 'Good' in October 2019

## Hazel Lodge in Hastings:

- Move on of long-term resident to Supported Lodgings.
- New residents achieving positive outcomes.
- Judged as "Outstanding" by Ofsted June 2019.

## The Bungalow in Eastbourne:

- 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.
- All children attended local schools and all maintained contact with their families, facilitated on site.
- The Bungalow received an Ofsted judgement of 'Good' in January 2020

# Initial Health Assessment

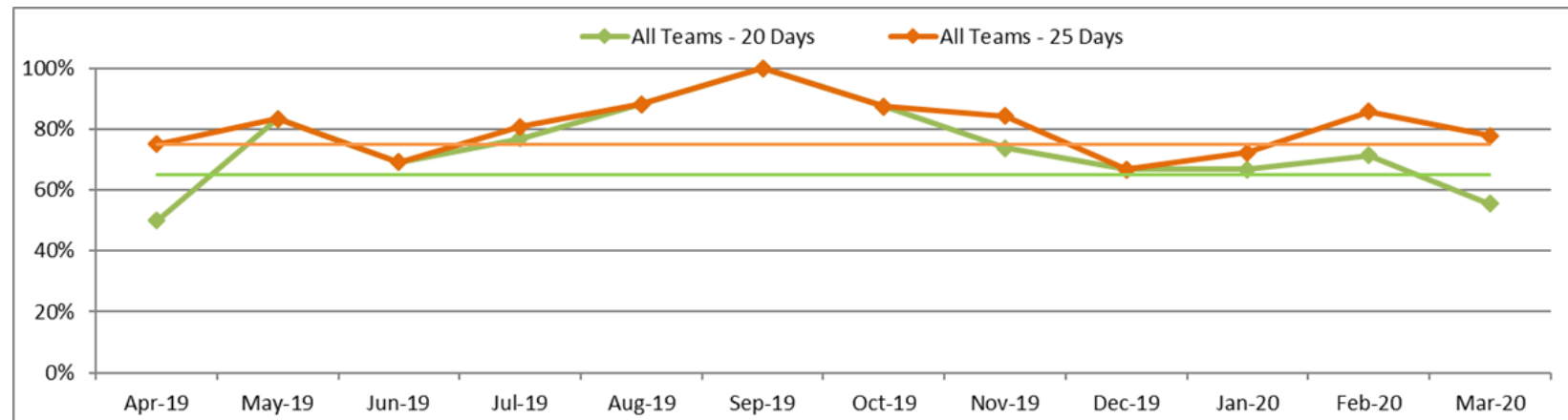
## Steps taken to improve performance in Initial Health Assessments (IHA)

- Robust IHA tracking system now embedded.
- Partnership with East Sussex Health Care Trust colleagues has led to improved communication between social care and health staff at both the operational and strategic levels.
- Significant improvement in performance, routinely monitored by ESHT and ESCC together.
- **75%** of IHAs were completed within 20 days against a target of **65%**, and **81%** within 25 days against a target of **75%** in 2019-20.

## Successes in 2019/20

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

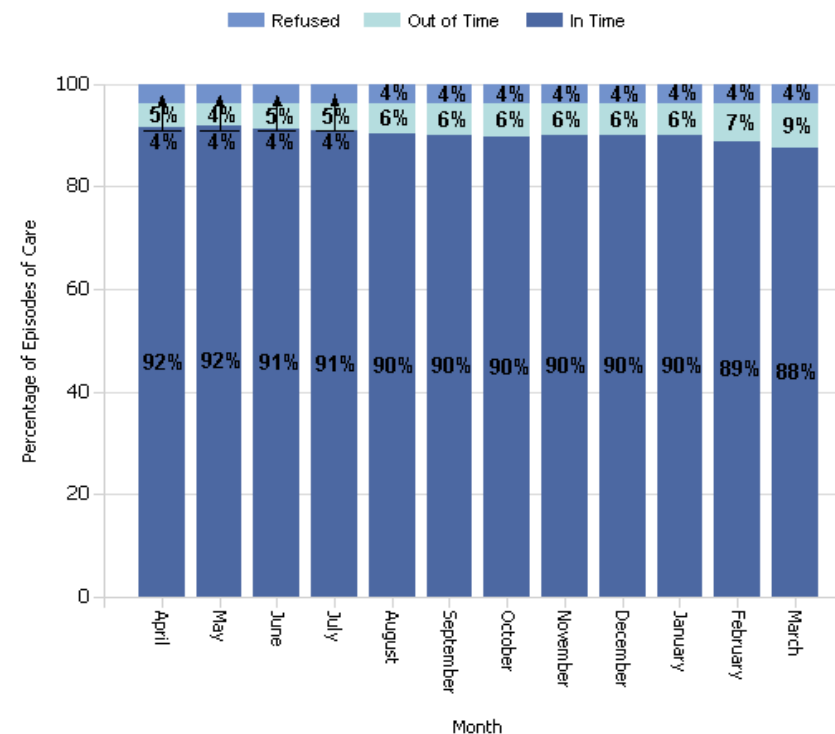
Initial Health Assessment (IHA) Monthly Performance Summary 2019-20

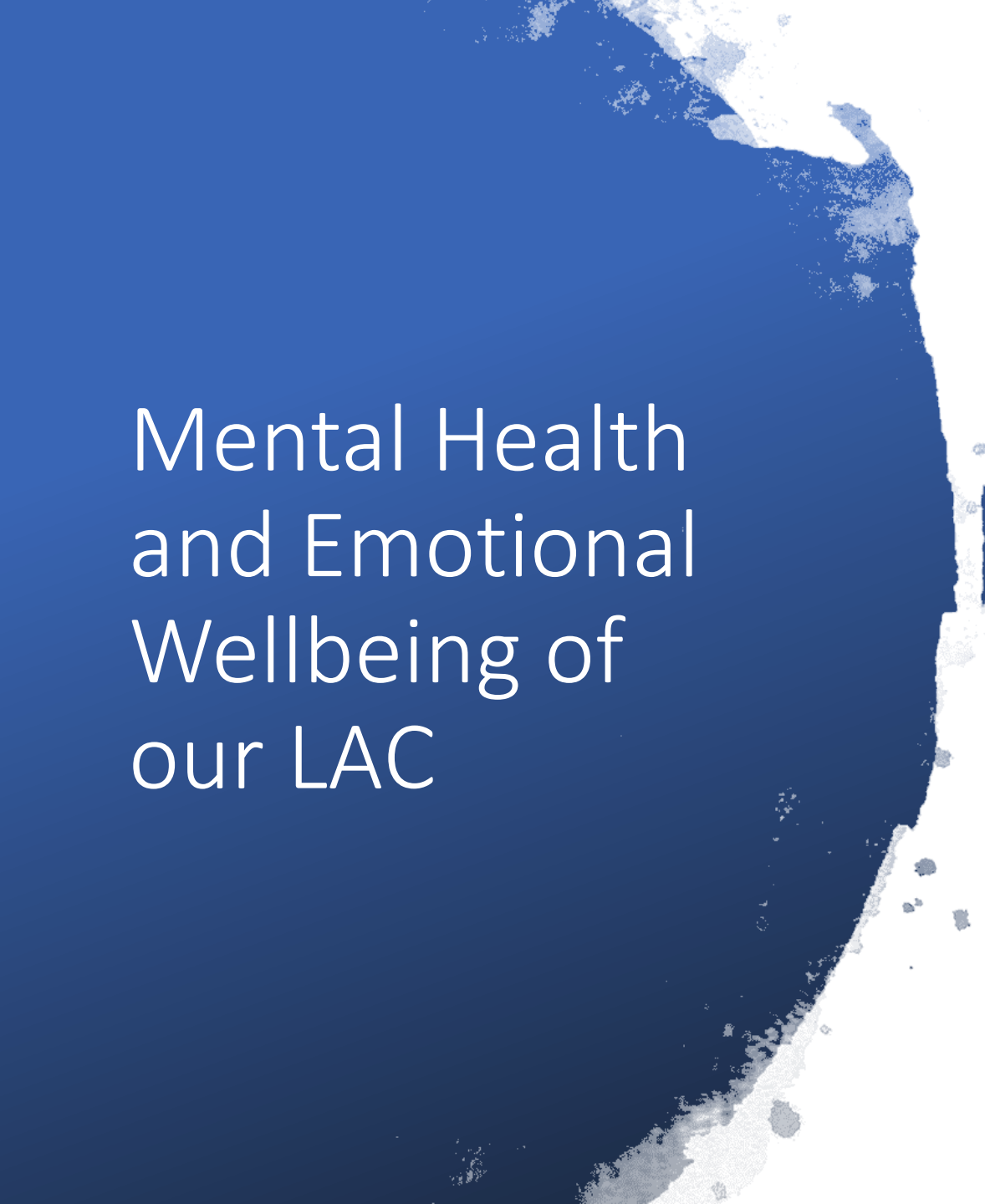


# Review Health Assessments

- Performance has remained largely stable and good throughout the year except for February and March.
- These months were impacted by the combination of a systems error and Covid. This has been rectified for 2020/21.

Percentage of Health Assessments Completed On Time For Children Looked After for more than 12 months if over 5 and Looked After for more than 6 months if under 5





# Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing of our LAC

- JTAI Ofsted multi-agency inspection in February 2020 focussed on the mental health of Children and Young People in East Sussex
- A Sussex wide review of emotional wellbeing services was completed and taken through governance structures over the summer of 2020.
- East Sussex Health and Social Care plan has identified that mental health services for LAC should be prioritised in that:
  - looked after children's needs are prioritised across health, social care and education to enable the best outcomes
  - and mental health services are commissioned to optimise the emotional wellbeing of looked after children and previously looked after children
- ADCAMHS and LACAMHS continue to work exclusively with LAC and children who were previously LAC. ADCAMHS have worked with 60 families and LACCAMHS have worked with 143 children plus running Therapeutic Parenting Groups for carers and residential teams.

# Education of Looked After Children

- The Department for Education (DfE) announced on the 8<sup>th</sup> April that school or college performance data based on summer 2020 tests, assessments and exams at any phase would not be published. Schools and colleges should not be held to account by Ofsted or the DfE through the publication of performance tables on the basis of exams and assessment data from summer 2020.
- The National LAC dataset for 2020 will not be published by the DfE or issued to NCER to populate the Local Authority reporting tool for Virtual Schools.
- While there is no ESCC or national data available we can see that individual pupils have performed in line with or above expectations.



# Education for Looked After Children- What we have achieved in 2019/20

- All year 13 students who applied to University have been accepted. This is 11% of the year 13 students who are eligible for University.
- Improvement in the quality of teaching and learning and development of on line teaching
- In total, 77 CYP received one to one tuition in March and 24 took part in group interventions.
- The 2019/20 national attendance data will not be reported due to COVID and regional comparisons will be difficult.



# Education for Looked After Children – Future Developments

- Development of teaching and learning including an online offer and focus on Key Stage 2 phonics
- Delivery of training on attachment and trauma as part of a wider ESCC offer
- Development of joint working with Adoption Support services across the region
- Promotion of the work of the Virtual School and share information and resources with Schools, Carers and Social Workers on line

# The Through Care Team (TCT): What we have achieved in 19/20

- The Published Local Offer is now available in leaflet form designed by our young people
- Our most isolated young people accessed weekly groups in Eastbourne and Hastings, these groups provided opportunities for social interaction with their peers.
- Young people not in education or training attended weekly sessions with our Participation Worker, Virtual School Case Worker and the Youth Employability Service representative.
- Care Leavers who are parents had access to a parent and baby group which encouraged positive parenting strategies alongside social engagement.
- Social activities took place throughout the year, including a trip to London to see the sights, a Halloween party planned by the young people, a summer picnic and sports event and the annual Christmas party.

# The Through Care Team (TCT): What we have achieved in 19/20 (continued)

- Our care Leavers were involved in providing their views in a number of forums including National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum events, a Care Leaders film regarding fostering and a CYPT partnership day.
- Tenancy support remained a high priority with Placement Support Workers providing individual support to those struggling to maintain their placements or homes.
- We used the newly commissioned highly intensive support placements for our most vulnerable young people.
- The Team continued to support young people with highly complex behaviors from the age of 14 to 25. A flexible approach to working with these young people including joint working between Social Workers, Personal Advisors and Placement Support Workers ensured a high level of support and engagement using relationship-based practice. A significant number of these young people were struggling with trauma related mental health issues, others had been exposed to exploitation including county lines.
- The Through Care / Adult Social Care Panel made plans for young people who required support from Adult Social Care post 18, ensuring the relevant support was identified to enable a smooth transition at 18.



# The Through Care Team – Future Developments

Work with local businesses and other agencies to improve our Local Offer to young people to include:

- Cheap / free access to leisure activities including local gyms.
- Subsidised travel on public transport.
- Work with CAMHS and Adult Mental Health Services to provide therapeutic intervention to our older teenagers, particularly those who are experiencing the impact of trauma, require tier 4 services and our young people who entered care late.
- Establish our Care Leavers council, a pilot is underway.
- Establish a Peer mentoring scheme, with a particular focus on our young people who are now parents.
- Put on an Art Exhibition to show case the work of our Care Leavers.
- Develop an opportunity to provide a care experienced young person with an Apprenticeship in the Through Care Service.
- Create a specific Placement Support Case Worker role with a focus on homelessness and the hardest to reach young people, funded by DfE grant.



# Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

## What we have achieved in 19/20

- Improved education offer to UASC including access to English Lessons on electronic devices.
- The recruitment of a social worker to increase the UASC Team.
- Successful UASC social drop in (monthly) with representatives from health, Sussex Police and The Refugee Council regularly attending.
- Specialist UASC training provided to foster carers and social workers
- Training delivered to young people to support them to understand and adjust to life in the UK.
- Continued improvement in relationship with specialist accommodation providers to better respond to the needs of young people.

## Future Developments

**Mentoring for UASC by young people who are already looked after**

**Keyword tools for accommodation providers to better support UASC to understand life in the UK**

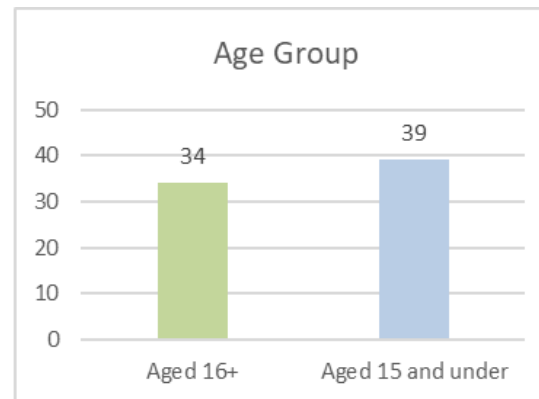
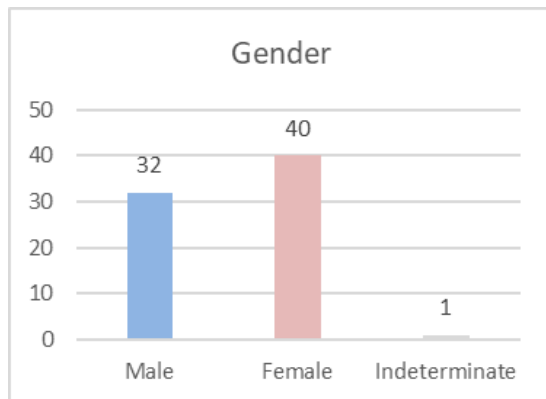
**Vocational courses for UASC in addition to traditional classroom based learning.**

**Service provision to better respond to the specific mental health needs of UASC.**

**Improved accommodation offers for UASC including step down accommodation to enable our care leavers to develop independent living skills**

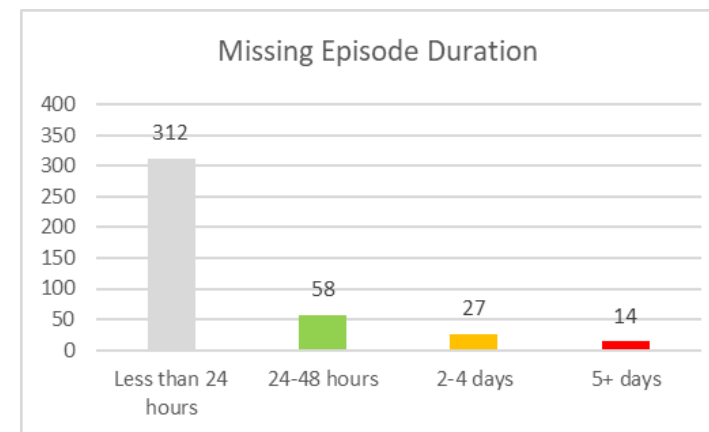
**Service provision to better respond to the specific mental health needs of UASC.**

# Our children who went missing



- In **2019/20**, **73** LAC went missing, of these, **32** were males, **40** were females and **1** was indeterminate.
- **34** of the **73** missing LAC were aged 16 and over, while the other **39** were aged 15 and under.
- **50** of the **73** missing LAC were missing more than once.

- In 2019-20 there were **411** missing episodes, of these, **312** episodes of children being missing for less than 24 hours, **58** episodes when they were missing between 24-48 hours, **27** episodes when they were missing between 2-4 days and **14** 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.



# Our Children who are at risk of Criminal Exploitation

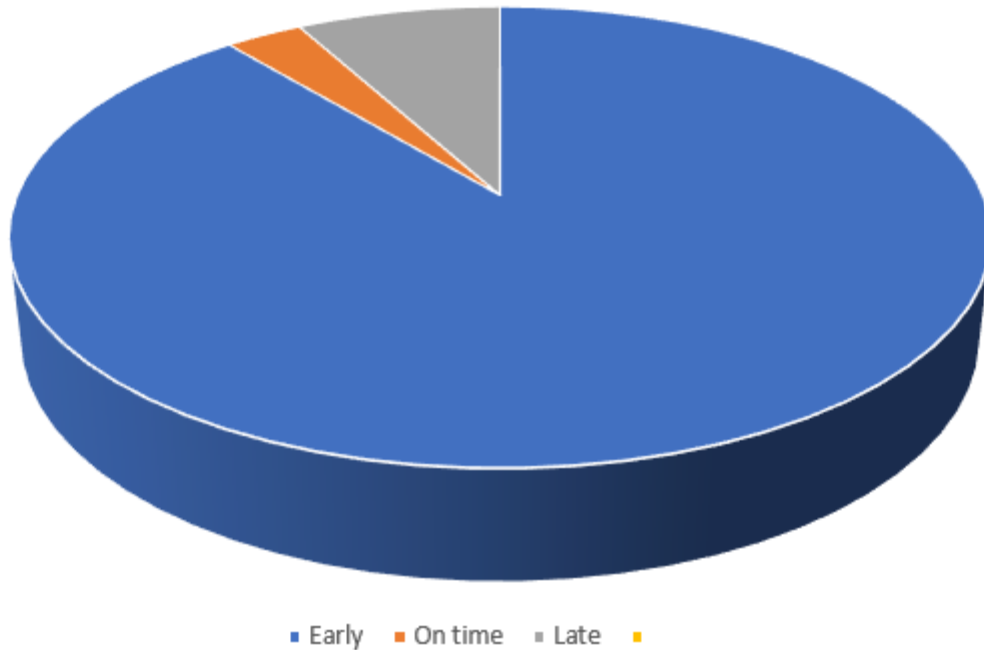
- The MACE Operational Group continued to meet monthly each side of the county to consider the referrals of all exploited children identified in East Sussex who were deemed to be at highest risk. Referrals to the group were screened through a multi-agency screening hub with processes tightened in line with feedback from the JTAI.
- As of March 2020 there were **25** 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 (**2** male and **3** female). One of these young people was deemed to be at risk of criminal exploitation, two of sexual exploitation and two deemed to be at risk of both criminal and sexual exploitation.
- The MACE strategic group met bi-monthly to consider the issues raised in relation to safeguarding this group of children. The criminal exploitation of children connected to 'County Lines' activity remained a significant issue in East Sussex, with changes during Covid to criminal exploitation in the Hastings area. In response the YOT led on a contextual peer group assessment in Hastings/St Leonards. This was one of a number of contextual safeguarding responses that East Sussex delivered over the past 18 months. This approach was supported by a growing body of research and evidence in effective multi agency safeguarding practice, particularly focusing on older children and place-based interventions



# Looked After Young People Who Offend

- The YOT worked with **26** looked after children in 2019/20.
- **11** of those were subject to care orders, **13** were s.20.
- **2** young people became LAC as a result of being securely remanded.
- A snapshot of the Looked After status of open cases showed that the YOT were working with **5** Looked After Children on March 31st 2020 which equates to **5%** of the YOT caseload. Looked After Children 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 YOT cohort. There is an agreed protocol in place which focuses on decriminalizing LAC where appropriate.

# Timeliness – LAC Reviews



92% of all LAC Reviews were held early or on time in 2019/20.

The majority of late reviews were delayed in the child's best interests or because an essential party was unable to attend.

Capacity issues and unexpected long term absence in the Safeguarding Unit during Quarters 3 and 4 resulted in a decision to prioritise Safeguarding. Some LAC Reviews were pushed back to make way for ICPCs and others postponed to preserve the existing IRO relationship. These Reviews were only postponed where the child was settled and in discussion with their social worker.

Meetings continue to be scheduled well in advance which contributes to a high level of compliance.





## Participation

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

In 2019/20 91% of Young People and Children aged 4+ participated in some way in their Review. New processes in 2020 will ensure that this involvement is increasingly meaningful and held at the centre of the Review.



# The role of our elected members

The Corporate Parenting Panel met quarterly during 2019/20 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 2019

- Ofsted Inspection report for the Bungalow, Sorrell Drive
- Bright Spots Survey highlights
- LAC Statistics
- Children's Home Regulations 2015, Regulation 44: Inspection reports for January 2019 to March 2019 for the following children's homes: Acorns at Dorset Road, Brodrick Road , Hazel Lodge, Homefield Cottage, Lansdowne Secure Unit, The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive

## July 2019

- Annual progress report of the East Sussex Fostering Service
- Annual progress report of the East Sussex Adoption and Permanence Service
- Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report 2018/19
- LAC Statistics
- Children's Home Regulations 2015, Regulation 44: Inspection reports for April 2019 June 2019 for the following children's homes:- Acorns at Dorset Road, Brodrick Road , Hazel Lodge, Homefield Cottage, Lansdowne Secure Unit, The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive

## October 2019

- LAC Annual Report
- LAC Statistics
- Virtual School Annual Report
- Coram Voice Bright Spots Survey of Care Leavers
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children Update
- Ofsted Inspection reports for Brodrick House, Hazel Lodge, and Homefield Cottage
- Children's Home Regulations, Regulation 44: Inspection reports for July 2019 - September 2019 for the following children's homes: Acorns at Dorset Road, Brodrick Road , Hazel Lodge, Homefield Cottage, Lansdowne Secure Unit, The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive

## January 2020

- East Sussex Foster Care Association (ESFCA) Annual Report
- Health of LAC Annual Report
- LAC Statistics
- Children's Home Regulations 2015, Regulation 44: Inspection reports for October 2019 to December 2019 the following children's homes:- Acorns at Dorset Road, Brodrick Road , Hazel Lodge, Homefield Cottage, Lansdowne Secure Unit, The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive

# Priorities for 2020/21

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

Improve the mental health pathways for our LAC and Care Leavers

Complete the extension of Lansdowne Secure Children's Home

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

Continue to focus on equality data informing practice with a particular focus on the MACE cohort

Explore and develop No Wrong Door strategy

Improve sufficiency of placements through Fostering, Adoption and Residential provision