



Corporate Parenting Panel

Date **Friday 27 September 2019**
Time **9.30 am**
Venue **Committee Room 2 - County Hall, Durham**

Business

Part A

**Items during which the Press and Public are welcome to attend.
Members of the Public can ask questions with the Chairman's
agreement**

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Substitute Members
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2019 (Pages 5 - 10)
4. Declarations of Interest
5. Number of Looked After Children - Helen Fergusson, Head of Children's Social Care, Durham County Council
6. Ofsted Updates
7. Update from Investing in Children
8. Feedback from Investing in Children from the CICC / CPP meeting on 18 September 2019
9. Corporate Parenting Strategy - Report of Helen Fergusson, Head of Children's Social Care, Durham County Council (Pages 11 - 54)
10. Performance report Q1 - Report of Stephen Tracey, Corporate Equality and Strategy Manager (Pages 55 - 76)

Theme: Sufficiency

11. Sufficiency Strategy update: Presentation of Lindsey Herring, Children's Commissioner, Durham County Council (Pages 77 - 98)
12. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.

13. Any resolution relating to the exclusion of the public during the discussion of items containing exempt information.

Part B

Items during which it is considered the meeting will not be open to the public (consideration of exempt or confidential information)

14. Regulation 44 Visits: Summary Report - Joint Report of Head of Children's Social Care and Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children (Pages 99 - 182)
15. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.

Helen Lynch

Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall
Durham
19 September 2019

To: **The Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel**

Councillor P Brookes (Chair)
Councillor H Smith (Vice-Chair)

Councillors B Bainbridge, H Bennett, J Carr, J Charlton,
J Considine, P Crathorne, J Grant, I Jewell, P Jopling,
M McKeon, L Maddison, J Makepeace, O Milburn, C Potts,
A Reed, G Richardson, E Scott, M Simmons and C Wilson

Co-opted Members

C Baines
N Harrison
K Myers
W Taylor
Young person representative of the Children in Care Council
(CiCC)

Contact: Jill Parker

Tel: 03000 269 711

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **Corporate Parenting Panel** held in **Committee Room 1A/1B, County Hall, Durham** on **Friday 19 July 2019** at **9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor P Brookes in the Chair

Panel Members:

Councillors Brown, Carr, Considine, Crathorne, Grant, Jewell, Jopling, Makepeace, Simmons and Wilson

Co-Opted Members:

M Baister, W Taylor and a young person representative of the Children in Care Council

Also in attendance:

Florence Coulter, Fostering Team Manager (in attendance for items 9 and 10)
Clive Horton (Deputy Head of Virtual School)
Stacey Midcalf (Solicitor, Children and Adult Services)
Karen Robb (Strategic Manager, Looked After and Permanence)
Ellie Seed (Investing in Children)
Martyn Stenton (Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children)
Jayne Watson (Senior Partnership Officer)
Foster Carers (in attendance for items 9 and 10)

Prior to commencing with the business, the Chair announced that this was Marie Baister's last Panel meeting and Marie was thanked for her valuable contribution to the Panel over the years, and, wished well for the future.

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bainbridge, Charlton, McKeon, Milburn, Potts, Reed, Richardson, Scott and Smith, from C Baines and N Harrison, from one of the young people representative of the Children in Care Council, and, from officers Kelsey Clayton, Helen Fergusson and Christine Stonehouse.

2. Substitute Members

Councillor L Brown was in attendance for Councillor E Scott.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Friday 28 June 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

The following matters arising were reported:

- The Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children informed the Panel that the coroner's inquest into the death of a young person at Aycliffe Secure Centre had concluded with a verdict of suicide. Recommendations made following the inquest have been accepted and implemented.

- The Panel viewed photographs taken at the 'Celebrate Me' awards ceremony. At the event, members observed the good relationships between the young people, foster carers and the looked after teams. Panel members noted that the young people had been very proactive in the planning for the event and thanked them for the enjoyable and successful event.

4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Number of Looked After Children

The Strategic Manager for Looked After and Permanence explained that the migration to the new liquid logic system had resulted in a delay in acquiring accurate data. The number of looked after children was reported as 870 at 19 July 2019, however, the actual number is likely to be fewer.

6. Ofsted Updates

The Strategic Manager for Looked After and Permanence updated the Panel on the recent inspection of Tow Law Children's Home.

7. Update from Investing in Children

Ellie Seed provided the following update from Investing in Children:

- due to the increase in numbers of young people attending Children in Care Council meetings, sub-groups have been set-up to focus on specific areas such as independent living and surveys for children and young people in care;
- at the last meeting the young people discussed the subject of supervised contact which is now known as 'family time'. Whilst it is accepted that the presence of a third party is necessary, this can be inhibitive, especially when the young person is not familiar with the third party. The young people suggested that more fun activities should take place during family time. They added that more openness about what is being written down during the sessions and a comments box for their views would make them feel more involved in the process;
- improvements have been made to Personal Education Plan forms following feedback from the young people. A new scheme is to be piloted in September, with a review scheduled for November;
- Care Leavers' Participation Groups are now being held regularly, at 3 pm, prior to Children in Care Council meetings. At these sessions the young people can access advice on issues such as training, employment and CV writing. One of the young people from the Children in Care Council, co-opted to the Corporate Parenting Panel, is now a member of the Care Leavers' Participation Steering Group;
- young people were involved in the recent interview and appointment process for Independent Reviewing Officers;
- young people have worked with Independent Reviewing Officers on an animation to provide information to children and young people about entering the care system;

- the next meeting will be attended by the Strategic Manager for Looked After and Permanence and the Legal Services Manager for Children and Adults Services to talk to the young people about the courts and legal issues. Independent Reviewing Officers have also been invited to discuss review meetings;
- fun and sports events are taking place during the summer including Sport England events.

Asked about whether examples of good practice are shared, Ellie Seed responded that Durham Children in Care Council often finds itself ahead of the game and good practice is shared, for example the 'Drive' project which has been implemented in other authorities.

8. Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2018-19

The Chair presented the Corporate Parenting Annual Report for 2018-19 for approval and thanked officers for their work in producing the report (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the recommendation in the report be approved.

9. Foster Care Update

The Chair introduced Florence Coulter, Fostering Team Manager and three of Durham's foster carers to the Panel. The foster carers provided information on their role. The Strategic Manager for Looked After and Permanence then delivered a presentation which outlined the progress of the fostering service against key priorities for 2019-20 (for copy of presentation see file of minutes).

In relation to permanence planning, the Chair asked for information on the 37 children in permanent placements who are awaiting a formal match. The Strategic Manager for Looked After and Permanence clarified that, in these particular cases, the young people have not reached a final decision as to whether or not they wish to remain in their placement on a permanent basis.

Panel members referred to national media coverage on the number of young people aged 16 plus who are placed in unregulated supported accommodation. The Strategic Manager for Looked After and Permanence informed the Panel that Durham has no young people in unregulated provision and that the type of accommodation made available to care leavers is informed by individual care plans, with some care leavers requiring bespoke packages. The Panel noted that isolation can be a major issue for care leavers, especially those without support from extended family.

The Chair then invited the foster carers to share their views on why people become foster carers. The following comments were made:

- positive experiences of family members who are foster carers can encourage people to go ahead and become foster carers themselves;
- some who have raised children of their own decide to foster as they miss the fun and experiences of having children in their home;

- there are those with no children of their own who feel that they have the time, patience and skills to give care to children and young people who cannot live in their own home.

Asked about the main challenges for foster carers and the support provided, the foster carers made the following comments:

- the support provided by fostering agencies in the initial stages of fostering is vital – one of the foster carers reported being dissatisfied with an independent fostering agency. They transferred to Durham having heard of its good reputation and they found the process a much more positive experience;
- lack of information and myths around foster caring may be off-putting for prospective foster carers.

The Fostering Team Manager informed the Panel that there is a vacancy on the Fostering Panel and requested that any member interested in filling the vacancy should contact Councillor Brookes or Jayne Watson.

10. Foster Care Discussion

The Panel and foster carers discussed the following issues in groups and a note was taken of their comments.

- What do you see as the strengths of Durham County Council Fostering Service and how can the Corporate Parenting Panel share these messages with a wider audience?
- What barriers do foster carers experience in the role and what could the Corporate Parenting Panel do to support or alleviate this?
- In the last year how have you helped to promote fostering?

11. Exclusion of the public

Resolved:

That under Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely discussion of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

12. Regulation 44 Visits: Summary Report

The Panel considered the monthly update on Regulation 44 visits and outstanding responsive repairs (for copy see file of minutes).

It was noted that the update now includes reports from independent homes, where Durham children are resident. The Strategic Manager for Looked After and Permanence informed the Panel that the home shown as 'requiring improvement' had been visited by Durham's commissioners and the issues identified have been addressed.

Regarding responsive repairs, the Panel noted that a capital bid is being put together by Service Direct in respect of bathroom refurbishment.

Resolved:

That the report be received.

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Corporate Parenting Panel

27 September 2019

Corporate Parenting Strategy for Children and Young People aged 0-25 years, 2019-20



Report of Helen Fergusson, Head of Children's Social Care, Durham County Council

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of the report is to present the Corporate Parenting Strategy for Children and Young People aged 0-25 years, 2019-20 to the Corporate Parenting Panel for information.

Executive summary

- 2 The Corporate Parenting Strategy outlines the statutory obligations and collective responsibilities within County Durham in regard to children and young people who are in the care of the Local Authority.

Recommendation(s)

- 3 Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to note the Corporate Parenting Strategy for Children and Young People aged 0-25 years.

Background

- 4 The Corporate Parenting Strategy for Children and Young People aged 0-25 years is produced on an annual basis to reflect on the achievements over the previous year, and to set out ambitions for our Looked After Children and our key priorities for the year ahead.
- 5 The strategy provides information on:
 - (a) An introduction to Corporate Parenting
 - (b) Durham County Council's Position Statement
 - (c) Our 'Promise' to Children and Young People

- (d) Role of the Corporate Parenting Panel
- (e) Children and Social Work Act Corporate Parenting Principles
- (f) Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme
- (g) Sources of information to the Corporate Parenting Panel
- (h) Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report
- (i) The strategy then goes on to provide achievements in 2018/19 and priorities for 2019/20 for the following eight themes:
 - (i) Multi agency partnership work and integrated governance
 - (ii) Enabling children and young people to remain at home with their families, where it is safe to do so
 - (iii) Sufficiency of placements and Placement stability
 - (iv) Early permanence
 - (v) Local Offer for Care Leavers
 - (vi) Health and wellbeing of our children and young people
 - (vii) Employment, Education and Training opportunities
 - (viii) Engagement with children and young people

6 The Corporate Parenting Strategy has been subject to the following sign off process:

- (a) Children's Social Care Management Team: 19 June 2019 for comment
- (b) Children and Young People's Services Senior Management Team: 27 June 2019 for comment
- (c) Corporate Management Team: 10 July 2019 for agreement

Conclusion

7 A range of work is taking place across County Durham to improve outcomes for our looked after children and care leavers, and plans are in place to make continued improvements.

Contact:	Helen Fergusson	Tel: 03000 266543
	Jayne Watson	Tel: 03000 268371

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The Corporate Parenting Panel's role is to lead on ensuring the corporate parenting responsibilities of the Council are being met in line with the duties under the Children Act 1989.

Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 sets out the general duty of the local authority in relation to children looked after by them, to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of these children, ensuring effective, individualised support and access to services.

Finance

Financial implications are noted and considered within the service.

Consultation

No implications

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

No implications

Human Rights

No implications

Crime and Disorder

No implications

Staffing

Staffing implications are noted and considered within the service.

Accommodation

Accommodation implications are noted and considered within the service.

Risk

No implications

Procurement

No implications

Appendix 2: Corporate Parenting Strategy for Children and Young People aged 0-25 years, 2019-20

Attached as a separate document.

Corporate Parenting Strategy for Children and Young People aged 0–25 years

2019-20

1 INTRODUCTION - CORPORATE PARENTING

Looking after and protecting children and young people from harm is one of the most important jobs that a Local Authority can do. Where a child cannot remain safely at home for whatever reason and comes into the care of the Local Authority the council becomes the 'corporate parent' for that child. They are also the corporate parent for any young person who is under 25, who has been looked after for at least 13 weeks after their 14th birthday.

The term 'corporate parent' means the collective responsibility of the council, elected members, employees and partner agencies, in providing the best possible care and safeguarding support for the children and young people who are looked after by the council for the purpose of this strategy document. The associated responsibility and any reference to 'we' refers to all multi-agency partners. A child in the care of the council looks to the whole council to be the best parent it can be to that child. Every member and employee has the statutory responsibility to act for that child in the same way that a good parent would act for their own child.

This strategy sets out Durham County Councils ambition for our Looked After Children and our key priorities for 2019/20.

Our commitment is to all children and young people living in foster care and residential care; placed for adoption; living in supported lodgings or at home under Placement with Parent Regulations as well as those living in secure establishments or in custody.

2 DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL'S POSITION STATEMENT

Durham County Council is committed to being the best parent it can be for our Looked After Children and Care Leavers and strives to ensure that we deliver support and care that is as good as every good parent.

Durham County Council is committed to ensuring our Looked After Children and Care Leavers have the best opportunities available to them to achieve their potential and that these are at least as good as the opportunities available for all other children. It is recognised that many children and young people face significantly greater levels of challenging circumstances before reaching adulthood than their peers and that this may mean that they have the need for additional support. Durham County Council are committed to ensuring that services are designed with and for Looked After Children and Care Leavers to meet their needs.

We want all of our Looked After Children to live in loving, stable and safe homes in a place that they can 'call home'. We want the people who are caring for them to be fun, loving, skilled, enthusiastic, ambitious and fighting their corner every step of the way. We want our children to form good, trusting, nurturing relationships with their carers and have positive experiences.

We want our children to live in stable placements, only moving when it is in their best interests or when they have chosen to do so.

Durham County Council is ambitious for our children and wants to encourage them to dream big and fulfil their potential. We are committed to ensuring that they receive the best education in the best schools and get additional support if they need it; that they are well prepared for independence and work through apprenticeships, high quality training, support into higher education and into university for those who aspire to do so.

We want our children to be well, healthy and have good emotional and mental health. We want to celebrate their achievements, whether big or small so that they can be proud of themselves and know that we are proud of them too. We want them to have fun and be able to develop their own interests and hobbies so that they can develop in confidence and establish friendships and make memories that they can fondly look back on in later years.

Across Durham County Council, we are committed to listening to our children and young people, hearing what they have to say and acting on it wherever possible. We will develop our services based on this feedback and regularly check with them that we have got it right. We will welcome their feedback and will use this to challenge the way we do things, and to make changes based on their views.

We want our care leavers to be well prepared for adulthood and want to ensure they feel part of a wider extended family who will be there for them if they are needed. We want our young people to be able to make mistakes and know that they will be supported to pick up the pieces if things don't go to plan. This is part of learning and developing, and an important part of growing up and it is really important that there is someone there to offer help, support and guidance at these times.

We want our young people to be able to move into their own homes when they are ready and to feel safe and supported. This can be a big a challenge for any young people and we know that young people who leave care, often do so earlier than their peers.

We also want our young people to have the knowledge, skills and confidence to be able to independently manage their own health and wellbeing to ensure they are living the best possible life they can.

3 YOUNG PEOPLE'S PROMISE

We have a 'promise' that has been developed with children and young people who are in the care of Durham County Council to show our commitment to providing the best care we can. Our 'promise' outlines what young people have said they want from their social workers, foster carers and the other services we provide, to support them, to help them achieve and succeed and to ensure we listen to their views and their voice throughout the time we look after them.

Printed copies were distributed to teams and offices that work with Looked After Children, and framed copies are displayed in public view outside the offices of our Chief Executive, Director of Children and Young People's Services and Heads of Service within Children and Young People's Services.

We have asked those who work with our Looked After Children to keep the promise and stick to these principles in all aspects of their work. We promise to:

- Treat you with respect and to remember that everyone is different
- Help find best home we can for you. It will be where you feel safe, cared about and treated well
- Help you stay in touch with family and friends if it is ok to do so
- Listen carefully to you and try to act on what you say
- Make sure that your social worker will get to know you well
- Make sure your social worker will keep in touch with you and listen to what you say
- Really listen to things you would like to change about being looked after
- Be honest and share any information or changes with you
- Involve you in any decisions, plans or changes that affect you or your future
- Give you any help or support that you need
- Help you to be the best that you can at school, college, training and work
- Give you help and support when needed to move from care to adult life
- Work together and support you during every change in your life e.g. moving placement or leaving care.

4 ROLE OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

The Corporate Parenting Panel is made of 21 elected members including the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services and the Chair of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee as well as senior officers from within the council. In addition there are co-opted members on the panel including representatives from local schools and health services as well as a young people from the Children in Care Council.

The Corporate Parenting Panel is responsible for the following five functions as set out in the Council's constitution:

Function One: Ensure that the Council acts as a good corporate parent to children and young people in care and care leavers including:

- Children and Young People in residential care
- Children and Young People in foster care
- Children and Young People placed for adoption
- Children and Young People placed at home under Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations
- Young People who are living in supported lodgings
- Young People in Secure services
- Young People in custody.

Responsibilities:

- Take an overview of the Councils and partner agencies responsibilities toward children and young people in care and care leavers
- Monitor performance of services for children for whom we are corporate parents, including care leavers, receipt of information on regulation 44 visit and inspections, referring any systemic issues to Cabinet and or scrutiny as required
- Maintain a strategic overview of all developments, plans, policies and strategies for children whom the Council is a corporate parent and make appropriate recommendations for action
- Ensure all members of the Council are regularly updated on issues affecting children for whom they are the corporate parent including care leavers through an annual report to Council, Cabinet and Scrutiny
- Receive an overview of Regulation 44 visits and inspections of private children's homes within the County Durham area
- Receive an update on independent residential homes within County Durham and their Ofsted inspection reports outcomes
- Agree an annual work programme based on corporate parenting strategy and priorities.

Function Two: Engage and listen to the views of children, young people and their carers for whom the Council is the parent.

Responsibilities:

- Provide a forum for children and young people in care and care leavers to participate and influence policy and have an opportunity to talk about their experiences of the services they have received
- Ensure that positive experiences are maintained, lessons are learnt and changes made in areas that require improvement
- Meet with children for whom the council is corporate parent and their carers on a regular basis and celebrate their achievements
- Participation in Regulation 44 visits quarterly will allow the Panel to improve planning and understanding of care in residential homes
- Ensure that leisure, cultural, further education and employment opportunities are offered and taken up by our Looked After Children and care leavers.

Function Three: Work in partnership with other statutory agencies to drive forward improvements in care.

Responsibilities:

- Examine ways that the Council as a whole and partner agencies can improve life chances of children in care and care leavers
- Ensure there is good joined up working with partner agencies
- Develop links with the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership (formerly Local Safeguarding Children's Board) including a picture of Serious Case Reviews of Looked After Children.

Function Four: Act as the governing body for the Virtual School for Looked After Children and young people.

Responsibilities:

- Maintain an overview and provide challenge of governance arrangements for the virtual school
- To monitor and bring challenge to ensure Looked After Children's educational attainment and performance is optimised.
- To encourage and support each looked after child to achieve optimum educational outcomes at each stage of their schooling.

Function Five: Act as the governing body for Aycliffe Secure Services, monitoring and ensuring the quality of secure accommodation.

Responsibilities:

- Maintain an overview and provide challenge of governance arrangements for Aycliffe Secure Services
- Support and bring challenge to achieve the best outcomes for Looked After Children who are in secure services
- Agree the themes and performance, on an annual basis that enhance corporate parenting of Looked After Children in secure services.

5 CHILDREN AND SOCIAL WORK ACT

Section one of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 requires local authorities to have regard to the following seven corporate parenting principles when discharging their functions in relation to Looked After Children and care leavers:

- To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people
- To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
- To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
- For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work
- To prepare children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

6 CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL WORK PROGRAMME

The Corporate Parenting Panel sets its work programme around key lines of enquiry, in relation to outcomes for Looked After Children and Care Leavers which require oversight and scrutiny, these include:

- Understanding the characteristics of our cohort of Looked After Children including age and length of time in care; where children are placed; numbers of children in different types of provision; those waiting for a permanent placement or match to an adopter, those with additional health or developmental needs
- Understanding the role of key partners in supporting Looked After Children and Care Leavers to achieve good outcomes and providing challenge where this is needed
- Exploring how we are demonstrating to children in our care that we have high aspirations for them
- Understanding how well we provide stable environments for our children.
- Ensuring that the partnership is looking after the health and wellbeing of our children
- Understanding how many children are placed out of county and the reasons for this and ensuring that there is sufficient placement provision within the local authority
- Ensuring that we support our foster carers well
- Examining the quality of outcomes for our care leavers against a range of measures
- Understanding how well we develop and commission new services to meet the needs of our children.
- Ensuring that children and young people have an opportunity to express their views and ensuring that we know that they have been acted upon.

7 SOURCES OF INFORMATION TO THE CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

There are a number of sources of information provided to the Corporate Parenting Panel, which informs the work of the Panel, and the Work Programme. These include, but are not limited to the following:

- Monthly Corporate Parenting Panel meetings, where members receive regular reports and updates from a range of sources
- The Children in Care Council (CICC) have a standing item on each Corporate Parenting Panel meeting agenda, where they provide feedback from CICC meetings
- The CICC host two meetings per year, where they set the agenda. Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel and senior officers within the service area are invited to attend, and feedback is shared through the Corporate Parenting Panel meetings and actions taken as appropriate
- Care Leavers have a separate forum and feed their views into a panel either by attending personally or through their representative
- Feedback from foster carers and adoptive families is shared with the Corporate Parenting Panel
- A number of annual reports are presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel, including:
 - Independent Reviewing Officer in respect of Looked After Children
 - Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership
 - Annual Serious Case Review update
 - Fostering Service
 - Adoption Service
 - Care Leavers
 - Sufficiency Strategy
 - Virtual School
 - Corporate Parenting Panel
- The Corporate Parenting Panel receives updates from the Corporate Parenting Panel sub groups:
 - Virtual School
 - Aycliffe Secure Centre
- Regular Performance Reports are presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel in respect of the following:
 - Placement stability
 - Health of Looked After Children and timeliness of health and dental assessments
 - Education outcomes
 - Outcomes for care leavers including the proportion in education, employment and training and appropriate accommodation
 - Children placed out of Durham or in external provision
 - Children who are missing from care
 - Unaccompanied asylum seeking children
 - Children awaiting adoption or permanence.

8 CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL ANNUAL REPORT

The Corporate Parenting Panel Terms of Reference which form part of Durham County Council's Constitution, make specific reference that the Corporate Parenting Panel will prepare and provide an Annual Report that will be shared with Cabinet, Council and Overview and Scrutiny.

To ensure the voice of the child is reflected in the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel, it was agreed that young people from the Children in Care Council, supported by officers from Durham County Council Transformation and Partnerships team, would develop the Corporate Parenting Panel's Annual Report.

For the 2017-18 Annual Report, the young people worked on the design, layout, content and language of the Annual Report to ensure it was easy to read and understand.

For the 2018-19 Annual Report a decision was made to use DCC Design and Print Team to align the Annual Report with other strategic documents. As well as working with young people on the layout, content and language of the document, work also took place with the young people to ensure the corporate design retained enough of the young people's design to make it appealing to young people and easy for them to read and understand.

Moving forward, the Annual Report will hold a more prominent position on the Durham County Council website, and will again be hosted on the Investing in Children Website, and the Children in Care Council website.

The Annual Report includes information on:

- What a Corporate Parent is
- The role of the Corporate Parenting Panel
- The Corporate Parenting Panel's Terms of Reference
- Key performance data
- Achievements
- Evidencing the changes made as a result of consultation with young people 'You Said – We Did'
- The Corporate Parenting Panel's priorities for 2019/20.

9 ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2018-19 AND PRIORITIES FOR 2019-20

Priority 1

Ensure good multi agency partnership work and integrated governance to meet the needs of our Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

We need to work closely with all partner agencies to ensure there is high quality multi agency working to meet the wide range of needs of our Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

Achievements in 2018/19

We have delivered a LAC Strategic Partnership (LACSP) performance management framework with performance on key questions monitored via a quarterly multi agency scorecard. Performance is reported to the LACSP and the Corporate Parenting Panel:

- What are the characteristics of our cohort of children in care and care leavers?
- Do our partner agencies understand their role in supporting us as corporate parents?
- How are we giving children and young people the chance to express their views, wishes and feelings? How do we know those are being acted on?
- Are we providing stable environments for children in our care?
- What are we doing to look after the health and wellbeing of children in our care?
- What are outcomes like for our care leavers?

These arrangements ensure better sharing of information across partners to identify performance priorities, understand need and children and young people's experiences, and to inform and shape the design of services and resources.

We have established reporting arrangements to the Integrated Steering Group for Children and the membership reflects a wide range of partner agencies who are key players in the integration of health, education and social care. These arrangements ensure that strategic partner members are fully sighted on and able to contribute to the work of the LACSP and Corporate Parenting Panel and key performance issues, obstacles and barriers are escalated if necessary, to deliver good outcomes for our Looked After Children and care leavers.

What further action will we take and when?

What	When
We will establish a Multi-Agency Collaborative Care Board that will discuss and review the care, education and treatment of County Durham’s most vulnerable Children and Young People to prevent in-patient admissions and/or the need to become Looked After	Spring/Summer 2019
We will design and deliver local services and models of working (place based services) to improve outcomes around safety, health and emotional wellbeing, quality education, training and local employment as identified in the Children and Young People’s Strategy	2019/20

Priority 2

We will develop services which are focused on providing high quality support to enable children and young people to remain at home with their families where it is safe to do so.

Achievements in 2018/19

Following 150 family group conferences, 140 children and young people remained in their family/living arrangements with support, and did not become looked after.

Children and young people are working on making an animation video that will explain to other young people what family group conferencing is, and what to expect.

The Supporting Solutions Service was established in 2018, and works with young people aged 11-17 who are living in families where there is a risk of family/carer breakdown to provide intensive, responsive support to meet the individual needs of these families. The service worked with 107 young people on the edge of care, and as a result of offering crisis and intensive interventions, 100 young people remained in their family/living arrangements.

A Pre-birth Service was established to provide high quality support where either parent has had a child permanently removed from their care through the court process and are expecting another baby. The aim is to support parents to safely care for their children from birth and avoid them spending time in Local Authority care, or to progress permanency plans quickly so that children do not experience drift and delay, providing better outcomes for children and young people, as well as cost savings for the Local Authority.

Excellent partnerships have been developed with midwifery, health visiting services and Early Help colleagues across the county which impacts on the ability of the team to become involved with families from the outset, to ensure care planning for children is robust. We have worked with a number of families and have seen examples of children being placed from birth in their permanent placement.

Parents have reported a level of apprehension pre-birth given their previous interactions with children's social care, however one parent reported that things were different this time, and she felt more empowered to make changes and demonstrate that she could parent. She was helped to understand 'what had gone wrong in the past' and how her worker, with the benefit of positive relationships, was able to support her to make positive changes, and in this case the child remained in mother's care.

The practice of the Pre-birth Service was commended by Ofsted following the focused visit in January 2019.

The Signs of Safety approach is embedded in all of our work with children, young people and families. The signs of safety model puts the child's voice and the family's responses at the centre of assessment and planning. A Signs of Safety briefing session was delivered to members on 6 June 2019.

What further action will we take and when?

What	When
We will undertake a Pre-birth Family Group Conference pilot, ensuring all families are offered a Family Group Conference, where plans are for the child to remain with family/carers	September 2019
We will develop a respite carer scheme for children on the edge of care as part of the intensive offer	March 2020

Priority 3

Sufficiency of Placements and Placement Stability is important for our children and young people. We want to ensure there are enough high-quality placements to meet their diverse needs and to ensure that young people have a choice where this is appropriate.

Achievements in 2018/19

We have worked hard to recruit more foster carers and adoptive carers to look after our children.

We launched a fostering campaign last year, with the aim of dispelling some of the myths around becoming a foster carers, and encouraging more foster carers to come forward. On the back of this we have recruited 26 new foster carer households this year and 20 new adoptive families.

This continues to be very important and we will continue to work on this next year.

Most of the children in our care are looked after in foster homes (79%). It is really important to us that our children live in good or better children's homes with staff who they have good relationships with. Of our nine homes, two are rated by Ofsted to be 'Good' with 'Outstanding' features. Six are recognised to be 'Good' overall and we are awaiting a full inspection on the remaining home following a programme of remedial work being carried out.

Given the complex needs of some of our children and young people we have worked jointly with a provider to develop a new two bed children's home. This is now operational and has supported two young people. A further home is in the process of being developed.

Placement stability is important, and 86.6% of our children under 16 who have been in care for at least 2.5 years have been in the same placement for two years, in comparison to 69.3% in 2017-18 (note that 18-19 is provisional data).

We continue to host an awards evening for foster carers and their children, to celebrate and recognise the care and love they offer to our children.

Young people from the Children in Care Council continue to support our marketing and recruitment in many ways, either through featuring in articles to promote fostering and importantly in running the foster carer training sessions to share their views from a young person's perspective to prospective carers.

The Fostering Service also work closely with the Children in Care Council to ensure the young people's views and current issues are incorporated into our practice. This has included improvements to the information shared about children and young people and foster carers in advance of placements.

What further actions will we take and when?

What	When
<p>We will undertake a Residential Services Review, which will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a focus on delivering alternative services, including respite care and maintaining young people at home with intensive family support • Recognise the complexity of some of our young people and develop provision to meet their needs. 	<p>2019</p> <p>July 2019</p>
<p>We will continue to review our fostering and adoption marketing strategy to ensure that we target recruitment activity for foster carers and adopters to those people who can meet the needs of our children, particularly for brothers and sisters, small babies, children with complex needs and our older young people.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>
<p>We will update the Placement Sufficiency Strategy to include an analysis of the needs of the children we are looking after and the types of placement and care provision that we need and to highlight where there are gaps.</p> <p>We will develop strategies to fill these gaps through the development of alternative provision where this is needed.</p>	<p>June 2019.</p>
<p>We will work to ensure that wherever it is in the child's best interests, Durham's children live in Durham and that we have enough resource and the right kind of resource to meet the needs of our children. This means reviewing the plans of all children who are placed in external provision and proactively planning for them to return to Durham wherever their needs can be met here.</p>	<p>Reviewed monthly</p>
<p>We will develop a new service that will provide a support, outreach and respite offer to our children and young people who are looked after to promote placement stability when this is required.</p> <p>This offer will also be available to children, young people and families on the edge of care to help prevent children moving into looked after services.</p>	<p>October 2019</p>
<p>We will implement a quality compliance framework across our own children's homes to ensure standards of service of consistent and best practice is replicated where possible.</p>	<p>July 2019</p>

Priority 4

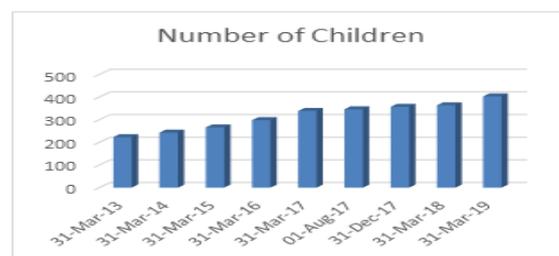
Promoting Early Permanence is a key priority for us, we want to ensure that children are moved into their permanent placement or adoptive placement as quickly as possible once this has been agreed as the appropriate plan.

Achievements in 2018/19

We implemented our Early Permanence Strategy in May 2018 including an improved focus on 'fostering to adopt' whereby adopters are also approved as foster carers to ensure that very young babies have the opportunity to be fostered by the people who want to adopt them, where it is appropriate. To date we have placed ten babies under foster to adopt arrangements.

During 2018-19, 45 children were permanently matched into foster placements, which is an improvement on the previous year.

The total number of children and young people subject to a Special Guardianship Order and in receipt of financial support from the local authority has increased year on year, which means we have been able to secure stable long term permanent care arrangements for children within their families. This is demonstrated in the table below:



In addition, there are currently 58 children and young people subject to a Child Arrangement Order and 35 subject to historic Residence Orders who are receiving financial support from the local authority, which again demonstrates that we have been able to secure stable long term permanent care arrangements for children within their families

By the time a child or young person has been in the Looked After system for 4 months, there is a clear plan for the child about where they will live and who will be their carers in the longer term.

In addition, we want to minimise the average number of days between a child entering care and them moving in with their adoptive family.

We monitor children with a plan of permanence via foster carers, through the following two cohorts:

- Children with a plan of permanence in a permanent placement awaiting a match and
- Children with a plan of permanence not in a permanent placement and who we are actively family finding for

At May 2018 we had 33 children awaiting a match and 49 who we were actively family finding for, a total of 82 children. At May 2019 we had 37 children awaiting a match and 11 who we are actively family finding for, a total of 48 children, which is an improvement on the previous year.

We implemented the Early Permanence Strategy to assist in care planning for children to ensure that permanence is at the fore front of our thinking when working with children and families, and to reduce drift and delay in cases.

We delivered training in 2018 to professionals about the importance of permanence planning and planning for children’s contact with their birth families. The Early Permanence training was delivered to 99 professionals, and the Contact workshop was delivered to 68 professionals.

What further action will we take and when?

What	When
We will aim to deliver the Early Permanence workshop to approx. 75 additional professionals in the year.	2019/20
We will aim to deliver the Contact workshop to approx. 75 additional professionals in the year.	2019/20
We will ensure we audit cases, focusing on the quality of care plans, and learn from them to constantly improve practice.	Ongoing
We will continue to recruit adopters and foster carers who can meet the needs of our children, particularly for brothers and sisters, small babies, children with complex needs and our older young people.	Revised annually
We will ensure that the pre-birth team and the fostering to adopt approaches are integral in the early permanence strategy work	Ongoing

Priority 5

Durham County Council and its partners will develop a 'local offer' for our care leavers and provide them with advice and support from a personal advisor until they are 25 years old.

Care Leavers need to have a range of appropriate accommodation options to meet their needs.

Achievements in 2018/19

Our Care Leavers Local Offer was developed and published on Durham County Council website.

Durham County Council's Chief Executive Officer is a Care Leavers Champion and meets quarterly with young people to talk about their experiences and how services can be improved.

Care Leavers Champions have been identified for each service area within the Council.

We are recruiting apprenticeships within the council and will ensure that care leavers are given priority in applying for vacancies.

Care Leavers are now exempt from council tax when they live in Durham.

Winter Fuel allowance is paid to Durham Care Leavers.

Mentor training is being provided for a group of care leavers, who will then go on to support other young people as they leave care.

We hosted the third annual Exceptional People in Care (EPIC) awards ceremony during National Care Leavers Week in November 2018. The event was really well attended and provided an opportunity for our care leavers' achievements to be recognised and celebrated.

Durham Children in Care Council (CiCC) encouraged key policy and decision makers in the area to take on the Care Leavers Challenge to 'live in the footsteps of a care leaver'. Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel have undertaken the Challenge to raise the profile of care leavers, highlight some of the issues that they face and lobby for change.

It is important that our care leavers live in suitable accommodation, as at March 2019, 95% of our 17-21 year olds (232 of 244) were in suitable accommodation:

- 96.4% (80 of 83) 17-18 year olds
- 94.4% (152 of 161) 19-21 year olds

To further support this, we have developed new accommodation options for older young people and now have 10 flats which support for our care leavers.

Services are commissioned on a spot purchase basis to provide tailored supported living arrangements for young people aged 16+ with needs that challenge services and who require higher levels of support initially, then a plan is implemented to reduce support gradually.

What further action will we take and when?

What	When
We will review the local offer to ensure it is user friendly and meets our young people’s needs. We will continue to work with a wide range of partners to ensure we maximise the opportunities and support available to our care leavers	Ongoing
We will continue to celebrate success at every opportunity but specifically at the annual EPIC awards celebration of achievement event	Annually
We will support care leavers in gaining apprenticeships within the council in their chosen occupation.	Ongoing
We will improve the quality of pathway plans by focusing on outcome based planning and supportive provision	December 2019
We will provide a drop in centre for care leavers	By April 2020
We will work with colleagues in housing to develop alternative provision for care leavers who need some support when moving into independent living arrangements, for example Hedley House which is a new accommodation provision will open.	December 2019
Work will continue with housing and commissioning to develop other accommodation options such as taster flats and move on accommodation	Ongoing
We will develop accommodation and support services to meet the needs of young people with very complex needs who require higher levels of support. We will work with colleagues in commissioning to develop a range of options support this.	
We will undertake a marketing and engagement event with accommodation and support providers to look at options to meet the support needs of young people with complex needs	June 2019
We will then undertake an evaluation, and will work with our commissioners to develop a range of options to meet our young people’s needs.	September 2019

Priority 6

We will work to ensure the right services are in place to meet the health and wellbeing needs of our children and young people

Achievements in 2018/19

The health of our children and young people is very important.

A Health Dashboard has been developed as a tool to provide management oversight on dental checks and health assessments for our looked after children, to ensure these are undertaken in a timely way, or to flag if any are overdue.

As at 31 March 2019 91.4% of our children and young people had received the required number of health assessments.

An information leaflet about health assessments has been developed with young people so that they are fully informed.

Care leavers designed a health passport to ensure they have access to their health histories when they leave care.

In October 2018 Durham County Council's Public Health team published the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Health Needs Assessment (HNA). The HNA identified a number of key recommendations to ensure the Council fulfils its responsibility as Corporate Parent to better understand and support the health and wellbeing of Looked After Children and Care Leavers within County Durham. Recommendations have been pulled into an action plan for monitoring and impact review.

A priority action from the Health Needs Assessment was a review of the current emotional wellbeing and mental health pathway. In order to address these issues, a two day workshop was delivered in April 2019 to clarify, review and improve the current pathway through the eyes of children and young people and to identify barriers and enablers to reduce the number of unnecessary hand offs and duplication in processes.

The workshop identified a range of key actions across the following themes that once addressed will contribute to improved outcomes for Looked After Children and Care Leavers with emotional wellbeing and/or mental health issues by ensuring they receive the right level of support at the right time.

We will participate in the regional training in 2019 around age assessments for unaccompanied asylum seekers to ensure we have staff across the service appropriately trained.

The Teenage Parent Steering Group are overseeing a range of activities across County Durham that ensure young people who are pregnant/parents have access to good services for themselves and their children. We have also worked with young people to ensure they have good access to sexual health services and contraception advice.

The Integrated Sexual Health Service (ISHS) delivered by County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust (CDDFT) are increasing their offer for young people particularly in areas where conception rates are consistently 20% higher than the Durham average.

In addition, CDDFT are increasing the level of C Card and sexual health support to identified vulnerable groups and the professionals that support them, which includes Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

Additional Relationship and Sex Education training delivered by Education Durham, has been made available to relevant teams within Children and Young People's Services, including Looked After Children Teams to ensure staff are equipped to support vulnerable young people effectively.

Sexual health training is now included in initial Foster Carer Launch Pad training programme and Teenage Carers Support Group. Additionally we are ensuring that C Card and wider sexual health support is available in and through all Durham County Council residential children's homes.

What further action will we take and when?

What	When
We will deliver the updated rolling training programme including introduction to sexual health services, C Card and Sexual Health and the law to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster Carers • Staff within residential homes, and those directly supporting looked after children and/or care leavers 	July-September 2019 September 2019
We will strengthen the Vulnerable Parent Pathway (delivered by the 0-19 Service) to ensure that looked after children and care leavers who are pregnant continue to receive enhanced support. This will include the implementation of a single point of contact for staff who are supporting looked after young people and care leavers, strengthening links between Looked After Children teams, Health Visiting and Midwifery Services, and developing processes that identify all eligible looked after children and care leavers for additional support	September 2019
We will develop links between the Integrated Sexual Health Service Teen Mother Pathway to ensure that those looked after children and care leavers who do become pregnant are provided effective contraception advice, and a subsequent plan to prevent further unplanned conceptions	August 2019

What	When
We will work in partnership with Education Durham to enhance the offer of Relationship, Sex Education to Looked After Children and Care leavers to reduce the number of unplanned conceptions in County Durham	August 2019
We will ensure Health Passports are available digitally for young people aged 16+, so that they have access to their health information – further discussions will take place to discuss how this can be achieved.	Ongoing
We will implement the Health Needs Assessment recommendations and action plan	Ongoing

Priority 7

We will continue to work with our children and young people to ensure they have opportunities to access good education, employment and training to achieve their full potential.

Achievements in 2018/19

We are proud of the educational achievement of our Looked After Children. None of our children were permanently excluded from school, and they have good attendance.

Validated outcomes for 2018 show that Durham children made significantly better progress between KS1 and KS2 than looked after children nationally.

At KS4, our young people achieved particularly well in English and made better progress across the whole curriculum than children in care regionally and nationally.

Over 95% of children and young people were involved in the process of developing their personal education plan this year.

We have provided 1:1 tuition for children and young people in year 6 and year 11 to support their academic achievement.

We have also procured additional counselling time and provided funding for schools to access early intervention through behaviour partnerships to help keep young people in mainstream schools.

We have supported schools to understand the needs of Looked After Children and young people through sharing expertise on adverse childhood experiences (ACES), the impact of attachment and early trauma and on foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD).

We have linked with Durham Learning resources to produce our 'Curious Kids' reading packs which have been well received by children and carers. A training session for carers on supporting reading was very well attended with excellent feedback.

The proportion of Care Leavers aged 17 and 18 in Education, Employment and Training is higher in County Durham (82%), compared to national (64%) and regional (66%) averages¹.

Of our young people who have identified themselves as Looked After / Care Leavers, 447 have been supported by the DurhamWorks Programme. Of these 164 have completed the programme, with 141 progressing into a positive Education, Employment and Training destination – a rate of 85.9%²

¹ Department for Education (2018) – Children Looked After in England including adoption: 2017 to 2018.

² Durham County Council – Progression and Learning Performance Report, March 2019.

We have continued to provide work experience opportunities for Looked After / Care Leavers through our 'Teenagers2Work' programme. This takes place during school holiday periods throughout the academic year and over 30 opportunities have been created during 2018-19 so far.

There are currently 22 young people in Higher Education, studying a broad range of subjects at various institutions.

We have provided more opportunities for Care Leavers within Durham County Council through our 'Pathway for Young People', including work experience opportunities and Traineeships. For example, five Care Leavers have undertaken a Traineeship with our 'Clean and Green' team through an innovative Intermediary Labour Market Model.

We have further developed measures to support more Care Leavers into Apprenticeship opportunities with Durham County Council. In addition to guaranteeing an interview for all Care Leavers who meet the essential criteria for the role, we are trialling the ring-fencing of Apprenticeship posts specifically for Care Leavers.

What further action will we take and when?

What	When
We will develop a new protocol to ensure our children and young people have priority admission to a school which best meets their needs and gives stability in their educational placement.	
The protocol will be shared at Durham Association of Primary Heads (DAPH) and Durham Association of Secondary Heads (DASH) for comment.	June 2019
We will then implement the protocol	September 2019
We will streamline the process for completing Personal Education Plans (PEPs) to ensure that we meet the 10 day deadline for initiation. We will also improve our quality assurance systems so that the PEPs are an effective document with an impact on progress. We will implement a new IT system to help achieve this	Start of 2019/20 academic year for children of statutory school age
We will improve opportunities for our children and young people to have their voice heard with regards to education. We will use evidence of best practice in the child's voice in the PEPs to inform our new process. In addition, we will explore further opportunities to capture the voice of the children and young people in conjunction with the CiCC and Youth Voice initiative in the Education team	Autumn term 2019

What	When
<p>We will engage with the National Association of Virtual School Headteachers (NAVSH) and consider recent research to keep abreast of the national agenda, to ensure our knowledge is current and our training is up to date so that we can disseminate this to schools to impact positively on the educational experience of our children and young people.</p> <p>Information will be disseminated at networks and training termly</p>	<p>NAVSH national conference March each year. Local conference Autumn term 2019.</p> <p>2019/20</p>
<p>We will work with teams in Early Years and Post 16 to ensure seamless transition in and out of statutory education and support young people to achieve the best outcomes they can to support transition into Employment, Education and Training (EET).</p> <p>We will work with social care teams to establish a PEP process for Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and post 16 with a view to moving to an electronic system</p>	<p>Streamline current system 2019/20</p> <p>Introduce electronic system 2020/21</p>
<p>We will review the impact of the Pupil Premium+ grant and explore how to use it more effectively to secure additional and timely therapeutic input to support emotional and mental wellbeing and readiness to learn.</p> <p>We will undertake consultation on top slice with DAPH / DASH. Planned spend will be issued.</p>	<p>Evaluation of PP+ 2018-19 in August 2019</p> <p>June 2019</p> <p>July 2019</p>
<p>We will ensure that all Care Leavers receive sustained wrap-a-round support from a Specialist Progression Advisor, to enable them to make an effective transition into post-16 and post-18 EET.</p>	<p>Ongoing – DurhamWorks Programme receives current Youth Employment Initiative / ESF funding until July 2021.</p>
<p>We will ensure that Care Leavers have opportunities to increase their confidence and motivation, as well as develop new skills and aptitudes to prepare them for employment as part of the DurhamWorks Programme.</p>	<p>Ongoing – DurhamWorks Programme received current Youth Employment Initiative / ESF funding until July 2021.</p>
<p>We will ensure all Care Leavers receive information about post-16 progression pathways including Further Education and Apprenticeships through Careers Events.</p>	<p>February 2020</p>

What	When
As an employer, we will further develop Work Experience, Traineeship and Apprenticeship opportunities for Looked After Children and Care Leavers, by embedding our 'Durham County Council Pathway for Young People'	Ongoing
We will develop more opportunities for young people to develop skills for life, to support their transition. This includes accredited programmes such as NOCN qualifications	Ongoing
We will work to increase the number of Care Leavers who progress into Higher Education by continuing to provide sustained support to young people whilst studying at University as well as further developing links with the North East Raising Aspirations Partnership	Ongoing
<p>We will continue to celebrate the success of our Care Leavers who progress into post-16 Education, Employment and Training through our annual awards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care Leaver awards • DurhamWorks awards 	<p>November 2019 May 2020</p>

Priority 8

The engagement and influence of children and young people is a key priority across Durham County Council.

We will continue to work with Looked After Children to ensure that we have adequate strategies in place to hear their voice. We will work proactively to ensure that opportunities are available to enable more young people to share their views and be involved in developing services and setting priorities.

Achievements in 2018/19

We have an annual awards evening to celebrate the achievement of our Looked After Children, younger Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

Children and young people are regularly part of the recruitment process for staff who will be working with Looked After Children and care leavers within the council.

The views of children and young people are also included in relevant recruitment packs so that candidates know what children want from their practitioners.

Children and young people are able to chair their own looked after reviews where they wish to do so.

The Children in Care Council has worked closely with the Corporate Parenting Panel and two young people have a co-opted position on the panel, and attend each meeting to share feedback from the Children in Care Council.

At the request of our young people, photographs and profiles of Regulation 44 visitor are on display in all residential settings so that the young people know who's who before they come to visit their home.

Young people requested comments boxes to be in place in residential settings in case they are not on site whilst the Regulation 44 visit is taking place, therefore still enabling them to share their views with the inspectors and visiting members.

Young people also said they would like to know who their local Councillors are, so information has been shared with young people and hosted on the Children in care Council website for easy access.

Members of the Children in Care Council deliver training on a regular basis to potential foster carers and adopters as part of their assessment training. The sessions have received great feedback and will be included as part of the move towards a regional adoption agency.

All of Durham County Council's looked after services and their nine residential homes have retained the Investing in Children Membership Award™, and each were able to clearly demonstrate the ways in which children and young people had a voice and evidence the changes that had been made as a result.

Plans are in place to roll out our 'Digital Voice' project across all teams for both new and experienced staff to ensure they are sighted on the voice of the child.

Plans are in place to develop DVDs for prospective adopters which include the voice of young people whose brothers and sisters have been adopted. This is a regional project to fit with the plans for the regionalisation of adoption services by 2020.

A leaflet has been developed by our children and young people which will be given to other young people when they are coming into care, so that they know what to expect.

Work is taking place across Durham County Council to ensure we listen to the voice of children and young people, include this in service developments and design, and provide feedback to the young people on what decisions have been made as a result of their involvement.

What further action will we take and when?

What	When
Durham County Council engagement approach to be rolled out across the council	Ongoing
<p>We will present an annual update to Cabinet on the key themes and outcomes from our universal engagement mechanisms, including feedback from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area Action Partnership priority surveys • Student Voice survey • Investing in Children membership awards 	July 2019
<p>We will roll out a modular approach for engagement within the following three areas of Children and Young People's Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Social Care • Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children • Education and Skills <p>The modular approach will capture key themes from the engagement taking place within each service area. This will be fed into the performance clinics alongside performance data. Based on the signs of safety model, this approach will ensure that strategic leads are sighted on the key themes from engagement within their service, and will be able to agree necessary actions and monitor outcomes. This approach will ensure that feedback is provided to service users as appropriate.</p>	Ongoing

What	When
<p>Moving forward, we will explore the following engagement mechanisms, and consider implementation in County Durham:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Mayor • Countywide Youth Forum/Youth Council • UK Youth Parliament representation • Area Action Partnership youth forums • UNICEF Child Friendly Communities status • Countywide awards for children and young people • Additional age relevant mechanisms for engagement 	<p>Autumn 2019</p>

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Corporate Parenting Strategy 2018-2019

**Helen Fergusson
Head of Children's Social Care**

Altogether better



Format

- An introduction to Corporate Parenting
- Durham County Council's Position Statement
- Our 'Promise' to Children and Young People
- Role of the Corporate Parenting Panel
- Children and Social Work Act Corporate Parenting Principles
- Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme
- Sources of information to the Corporate Parenting Panel
- Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report
- Achievements in 2018/19 and Priorities for 2019/20



Altogether better



Multi agency partnership work and integrated governance

Achievements

- LAC Strategic Partnership
- Integrated Steering Group for Children

Priorities

- Multi agency collaborative care board
- Place based services

Altogether better



Enabling children and young people to remain at home when it is safe to do so

Achievements

- Family Group Conferences
- Supporting Solutions Service
- Pre Birth Service
- Signs of Safety

Priorities

- Pre Birth Family Group Conference Pilot
- Respite Carer scheme

Altogether better



Sufficiency of placements and Placement stability

Achievements

- Foster Carer recruitment
- Sufficiency Strategy

Priorities

- Residential Services Review
- Quality Compliance framework

Altogether better



Early Permanence

Achievements

- Early Permanence Strategy
- Special Guardianship Orders
- Training

Priorities

- Continued roll out of training
- Case File audits

Altogether better



Local Offer for Care Leavers

Achievements

- Local Offer Published on DCC website
- Care Leavers Champions
- Financial benefits
- Suitable accommodation

Priorities

- Review the Local Offer
- Drop in Centre
- Develop accommodation options

Altogether better



Health and Wellbeing of our children and young people

Achievements

- Health Dashboard
- Health Passport
- Health Needs Assessment (HNA) undertaken

Priorities

- Strengthen Vulnerable Parent Pathway
- Integrated Sexual Health Service Teen Mother Pathway
- Implement HNA recommendations

Altogether better



Employment, Education and Training

Achievements

- Progress
- Personal Education Plans
- No permanent exclusions

Priorities

- New Protocol developed and implemented
- Transitions work
- PP+
- DCC Pathway for Young People

Engagement with children and young people

Achievements

- CICC
- IIC Membership
- Universal engagement
- Modular approach to engagement

Priorities

- Roll out of DCC's engagement approach

Altogether better



Corporate Parenting Panel

27 September 2019

Quarter One 2019/20 Performance



Report of Stephen Tracey, Corporate Equality and Strategy Manager, Durham County Council

Electoral division(s) affected:

None

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of the report is to present Corporate Parenting Panel with background information and the performance scorecard in advance of a presentation providing an overview of performance in relation to looked after children and care leavers by Stephen Tracey, Corporate Equality and Strategy Manager.

Executive summary

- 2 Durham County Council's Strategy Team have developed a performance management framework (PMF) for Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) based upon the Local Government Association's Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) identified for looked after children and care leavers
- 3 The full CPP PMF scorecard for quarter 1 is attached at Appendix 2. The Corporate Equality and Strategy Manager, Stephen Tracey will deliver a presentation at the meeting giving an overview of performance for quarter 1.

Recommendation

- 4 Members of the Committee are asked to note information contained within the scorecard and presentation and comment accordingly.

Contact: Stephen Tracey

Tel: 03000 268029

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

We have a duty to comply with all statutory duties in relation to the children and young people who are in the care of DCC

Finance

NA

Consultation

NA

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

NA

Human Rights

NA

Crime and Disorder

NA

Staffing

Staffing within Children's Services will impact upon social worker caseloads

Accommodation

NA

Risk

Reputational risk to the Council and Corporate Parenting Panel if it is not judged to be performing effectively by Ofsted

Procurement

NA

County Durham Children Looked After Strategic Partnership: Performance Management Framework

NND - No New Data

What are the characteristics of our cohort of children in care and care leavers?

Measure	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Q4 2018/19	Source Date	2018/19	Source Date	Q1 2019/20	Source Date	Target	Q1 2018/19	DoT	England	North East	Stat Neighbour
Rate of CLA per 10,000 u18 population [Number]	63	60	62	68	81	79.6 [798]	82.9 [833]	@31 Mar 2019	82.9 [833]	@31 Mar 2019	86.4 [873]	@3 Jul 2019	N/A	82.6 [831]	↑	64	95	90
Age and length of time in care								@31 Mar 2019		@31 Mar 2019	See chart 1	@3 Jul 2019	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
CLA Placement breakdown								@29Mar 2019		@29Mar 2019	See chart 2	@3 Jul 2019	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of CLA placed over 20 miles (outside LA boundary)	5.6	5.8	5.7	5.9	6.9	6.9	NND		NND		7.4	@31 Mar 2019	N/A	6.9	↑	15	9	8
Number of children placed for adoption						25	25	@31 Mar 2019	25	@31 Mar 2019	28	@3 Jul 2019	N/A	35	↓	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of CLA who are unaccompanied asylum seeking children [Number]					0.6% [5]	0.4% [3]	0.4% [3]	@31 Mar 2019	0.4% [3]	@31 Mar 2019	0.3% [3]	@12 Aug 2019	N/A	0.4% [3]	↓	6	1	2
Social worker caseloads								@9 Apr 2019		@9 Apr 2019	See table 3	@9 Jun 2019	<20		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Do our partner agencies understand their role in supporting us as corporate parents?

Measure	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Q4 2018/19	Source Date	2018/19	Source Date	Q1 2019/20	Source Date	Target	Q1 2018/19	DoT	England	North East	Stat Neighbour
Number of CLA reported as missing or absent from care [occurrences]			39 [117]		55 [221]	49 [248]	25 [62]	Jan - Mar 2019			24 [56]	Apr - Jun 2019	N/A	33 [89]	↓			
Percentage of Return to Home Interviews completed with CLA					96.9% [186 of 192]	98.3% [236 of 240]	88.5% [54 of 61]	Jan - Mar 2019			98% [55 of 56]	Apr - Jun 2019	N/A	98.8% [85 of 86]	↓			
Percentage of CLA with a missing incident during the year			3.8	3.7%	4.0%	2.6%	5.3%	2018/19	5.3%	2018/19	4.7%	2018/19	N/A	2.6%	↑	11	9	11
Percentage of CSE referrals that were CLA							8% [10 of 122]	2018/19	8% [10 of 122]	2018/19	10% [3 of 29]	Apr - Jun 2019	N/A	8.9% [5 of 56]	↑			
Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire - Average score	15.3	15.5	15.8	14.7	16.0	15.5	NND		NND		NND		N/A		N/A	14	14	14
Percentage of CLA achieving the expected <u>Key Stage 1</u> standard in:																		
Reading					61.0%	38.1%	46.7%	2017/18 ac yr	46.7%	2017/18 ac yr	NND		N/A	38.1%		51% (2017/18)	55% (2017/18)	
Writing					48.0%	23.8%	26.7%	2017/18 ac yr	26.7%	2017/18 ac yr	NND		N/A	23.8%		42% (2017/18)	48% (2017/18)	
Maths					57.0%	42.9%	33.3%	2017/18 ac yr	33.3%	2017/18 ac yr	NND		N/A	42.9%		46% (2016/17)	49% (2016/17)	
Percentage of CLA achieving the expected <u>Key Stage 2</u> standard in Reading, Writing and Maths					44.0%	35.1%	36.6%	2017/18 ac yr	36.6%	2017/18 ac yr	NND		N/A	35.1%		35% (2017/18)	39% (2017/18)	

Measure	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Q4 2018/19	Source Date	2018/19	Source Date	Q1 2019/20	Source Date	Target	Q1 2018/19	DoT	England	North East	Stat Neighbour
Average Attainment 8 score of Children Looked After (<u>Key Stage 4</u>)						21.9	23.2	2017/18 ac yr	23.2	2017/18 ac yr	NND		N/A	21.9		18.8 (2017/18)	20.8 (2017/18)	
Percentage of CLA permanently excluded [number of children]	0%	0.3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	NND		NND		NND		N/A	NND		0.1% (2016/17)		
Percentage of CLA with at least one fixed exclusion from school [number of children]	8.6%	7.0%	9.5%	8.0%	11.1%	9%	NND		NND		NND		N/A	NND		11.8% (2016/17)	10.4% (2016/17)	10.7% (2016/17)
Percentage of CLA classed as persistent absentees (Maintained schools)				3.6%	4.7%	6.4%	6.9%	2017/18 ac yr	6.9%	2017/18 ac yr	NND		N/A	6.4%		10.6% (2017/18)	9.5% (2017/18)	8.9% (2017/18)
Percentage of children looked after continuously for 12 months or more aged 10+ who received a conviction [number of children]	10.2% [25]	5.9% [15]	3.8% [10]	3.6% [10]	4.4% [14]	4.6% [16]	5.7% [21]	@ 30 March 2019	5.7% [21]	@ 30 March 2019	To follow		5%	4.9% [17]		4.1%	4.9%	5.0%

*Not including children out of county or in independent settings so data subject to change

How are we giving children and young people the chance to express their views, wishes and feelings? How do we know those are being acted on?

Measure	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Q4 2018/19	Source Date	2018/19	Source Date	Q1 2019/20	Source Date	Target	Q1 2018/19	DoT	England	North East	Stat Neighbour
Percentage of CLA accessing an independent visitor [Number]					1.23% [10]	1.25% [10]	2.5% [21]	@31 Mar 2019	2.5% [21]	@31 Mar 2019	2.2% [19]	@30 June 2019	N/A	1.24% [10]	↑			

Work is ongoing to determine how the Voice of the Child is captured within County Durham

How do we show children in our care that we have high aspirations for them?

Not evidenced through performance measures

Are we providing stable environments for children in our care?

Measure	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Q4 2018/19	Source Date	2018/19	Source Date	Q1 2019/20	Source Date	Target	Q1 2018/19	DoT	England	North East	Stat Neighbour
Percentage of CLA with 3 or more placements during the year	14	13	7	6	6.7% [55 of 815]	8.4% [67 of 800]	TBC		TBC		TBC		5%			10	9	10
Percentage of CLA continuously for 2.5 years or more aged under 16 who were living in the same placement for at least 2 years	62	54	57	69	72.6	69.3% [187 of 270]	TBC		TBC		TBC		72%			70	73	71
Average number of days between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted		533	449	420	477	446 (prov)	NND		NND		571	@ 30 Jun 2019	450	385		520 (2014-17)	535 (2014-17)	540.2 (2014-17)
Average number of days between an LA receiving court authority to place a child and the LA deciding on a match to an adoptive family, for children who have been adopted		238	211	173	196	194 (prov)	NND		NND		225	@ 30 Jun 2019	220	214		220 (2014-17)	198 (2014-17)	235.2 (2014-17)
Percentage of children adopted from care (as % of total children leaving care) [number of children adopted shown in brackets]		25.4% [73]	17.3% [45]	11.1% [28]	17.3% [53]	14.2% [53]	12.3 [39 of 316]	2018/19	12.3 [39 of 316]	2018/19	9* [7 of 78]	Apr - Jun 2019	15%	11.5% [10]	↓	12.8	14.2	19
Number of Mainstream Foster Carers (Approved in period)		26	24	22	25	28	26	2018/19	26	2018/19	4	Apr - Jun 2019	N/A	4	↔	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of Friends and Family Foster Carers (Approved in period)		25	41	40	46	51	52	2018/19	52	2018/19	11	Apr - Jun 2019	N/A	15	↑	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of Friends and Family Carers Temporarily Approved as Foster Carers (Approved in period)					132	124	88	2018/19	88	2018/19	35	Apr - Jun 2019	N/A	6	↑	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of Adopters (Approved in period)		58	42	35	22	25	22	2018/19	22	2018/19	5	Apr - Jun 2019	N/A	5	↔	N/A	N/A	N/A

*provisional data

What are we doing to look after the health and wellbeing of children in our care?

Measure	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Q4 2018/19	Source Date	2018/19	Source Date	Q1 2019/20	Source Date	Target	Q1 2018/19	DoT	England	North East	Stat Neighbour
Initial Health Assessments completed within 20 working days of the child becoming looked after	100.0	100.0	95.6	100%	84.8%	74.4%	65% [52 of 80]	Jan - Mar 2019	62.9%	106.2	65% [71 of 109]	Apr - Jun 2019	N/A	63.4% [59 of 93]		N/A	N/A	N/A
CLA with the required number of health assessments	92.0	95.1	93.5	89.0	84.8	89.9%	91.4%	@31 Mar 2019	91.4%	@31 Mar 2019	89.8%	@30 June 2019	N/A	89.9%	↓	88 (2017/18)	94 (2017/18)	95 (2017/18)
CLA who have had a dental check	92.0	90.2	97.9	95.5	87.1	94.8%	Data being validated	@31 Mar 2019	85.5%	@31 Mar 2019	94.7%	@30 June 2019	N/A	93.7%	↑	84 (2017/18)	89 (2017/18)	89 (2017/18)
CLA whose immunisations were up-to-date	100	100	95.6	100	84.8	99.2%	NND		99.3%	@31 Mar 2019	99.3%	@31 Mar 2019	N/A	99.2%	↑	85 (2017/18)	93 (2017/18)	85 (2017/18)
CLA whose development assessments were up to date	85.7	100.0	97.0	66.7	71.4	81.4	NND		95.0%	@31 Mar 2019	95.0%	@31 Mar 2019	N/A	81.4%	↑	85 (2017/18)	90 (2017/18)	91 (2017/18)
% CLA identified as having a substance misuse problem in the year	2.3	2.4	1.6	x	1.6	1.4	NND		1.9%	@31 Mar 2019	1.9%	@31 Mar 2019	N/A	1.4%	↑	3.7	2.3	4
Percentage of new presentations to drug and alcohol treatment during period who were CLA [Number]						7% [14 of 193]	10% [18 of 185]	2018/19	10% [18 of 185]	2018/19	Available 5 September		N/A	10% [4 of 39]		11%	N/A	N/A
Care leavers aged 17-21 who are pregnant or mothers					31.1% [32 of 103]	35.7% [40 of 112]	NND		NND		11.8% [28 of 110]	@30 June 2019	N/A	29.5% [31 of 105]		N/A	N/A	N/A

What are the outcomes like for our care leavers?

Measure	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Q4 2018/19	Source Date	2018/19	Source Date	Q1 2019/20	Source Date	Target	Q1 2018/19	DoT	England	North East	Stat Neighbour
Number of children looked after reaching 18 who 'stay put'						26	NND		NND		26	@30 June 2019	N/A	29	↓			
Number of children looked after reaching 18 who 'stay put' with foster carers						23	NND		NND		19	@30 June 2019	N/A	26	↕			
Number of children looked after reaching 18 who 'stay put' in supported lodgings						3	NND		NND		7	@30 June 2019	N/A	3	↑			
Percentage of care leavers aged 17-18 in education, employment or training (EET)				80% [50 of 61]	84% [50 of 60]	82% [51 of 63]	63.9% [53 of 83]	@31 Mar 2019	63.9% [53 of 83]	@31 Mar 2019	61.2% [41 of 67]	@30 June 2019	N/A	85.3% [58 of 68]		64	66	64
Percentage of care leavers aged 17-18 in suitable accommodation				100% [61 of 61]	93% [55 of 60]	96% [66 of 69]	96.4% [80 of 83]	@31 Mar 2019	96.4% [80 of 83]	@31 Mar 2019	88.1% [59 of 67]	@30 June 2019	N/A	94.1% [64 of 68]		89	93	84
Percentage of care leavers aged 17-18 in higher education				0% [0]	0% [0]	0% [0]	0% [0]	@31 Mar 2019	0% [0]	@31 Mar 2019	0% [0]	@30 June 2019	N/A	5.2%		3	3	0
Percentage of care leavers aged 17-18 not in education, employment or training (NEET)						14.3% [9 of 63]	36.1% [30 of 83]	@31 Mar 2019	36.1% [30 of 83]	@31 Mar 2019	38.8% [26 of 67]	@30 June 2019	N/A	11.8% [8 of 68]		30	32	39
Percentage of care leavers aged 19-21 in education, employment or training (EET)				49% [85 of 171]	62% [110 of 173]	59% [95 of 160]	54.0% [87 of 161]	@31 Mar 2019	54.0% [87 of 161]	@31 Mar 2019	59.4% [82 of 138]	@30 June 2019	N/A	55.3% [89 of 161]		51	52	58
Percentage of care leavers aged 19-21 in suitable accommodation				91% [155 of 170]	87% [150 of 170]	87% [139 of 160]	94.4% [152 of 161]	@31 Mar 2019	94.4% [152 of 161]	@31 Mar 2019	87.0% [120 of 138]	@30 June 2019	N/A	87.6% [141 of 161]		84	91	90
Percentage of care leavers aged 19-21 in higher education				5.8% [10 of 171]	8.7% [15 of 173]	7.5% [12 of 160]	8.7% [14 of 161]	@31 Mar 2019	8.7% [14 of 161]	@31 Mar 2019	8.0% [11 of 138]	@30 June 2019	N/A	7.5% [12 of 161]		6	7	8
Percentage of care leavers aged 19-21 not in education, employment or training (NEET)				47% [81 of 171]	29% [50 of 173]	32% [51 of 160]	41.0% [66 of 161]	@31 Mar 2019	41.0% [66 of 161]	@31 Mar 2019	40.6% [56 of 138]	@30 June 2019	N/A	36% [58 of 161]		39	43	38
Percentage of care leavers aged 22-24 in education, employment or training (EET)							15.6% [27 of 173]	@31 Mar 2019	15.6% [27 of 173]	@31 Mar 2019	44.4% [28 of 63]	@30 June 2019	N/A					
Percentage of care leavers aged 22-24 in suitable accommodation							25.4% [44 of 173]	@31 Mar 2019	25.4% [44 of 173]	@31 Mar 2019	92.1% [58 of 63]	@30 June 2019	N/A					
Percentage of care leavers aged 22-24 not in education, employment or training (NEET)							15.0% [26 of 173]	@31 Mar 2019	15.0% [26 of 173]	@31 Mar 2019	55.6% [35 of 63]	@30 June 2019	N/A					
Percentage of care leavers aged 22-24 in higher education							4.0% [7 of 173]	@31 Mar 2019	4.0% [7 of 173]	@31 Mar 2019	15.9% [10 of 63]	@30 June 2019	N/A					

How are we planning for the future and commissioning services?

Not evidenced through performance measures

How well do we support our foster carers?

Not evidenced through performance measures

Chart 1 - Length of time looked after

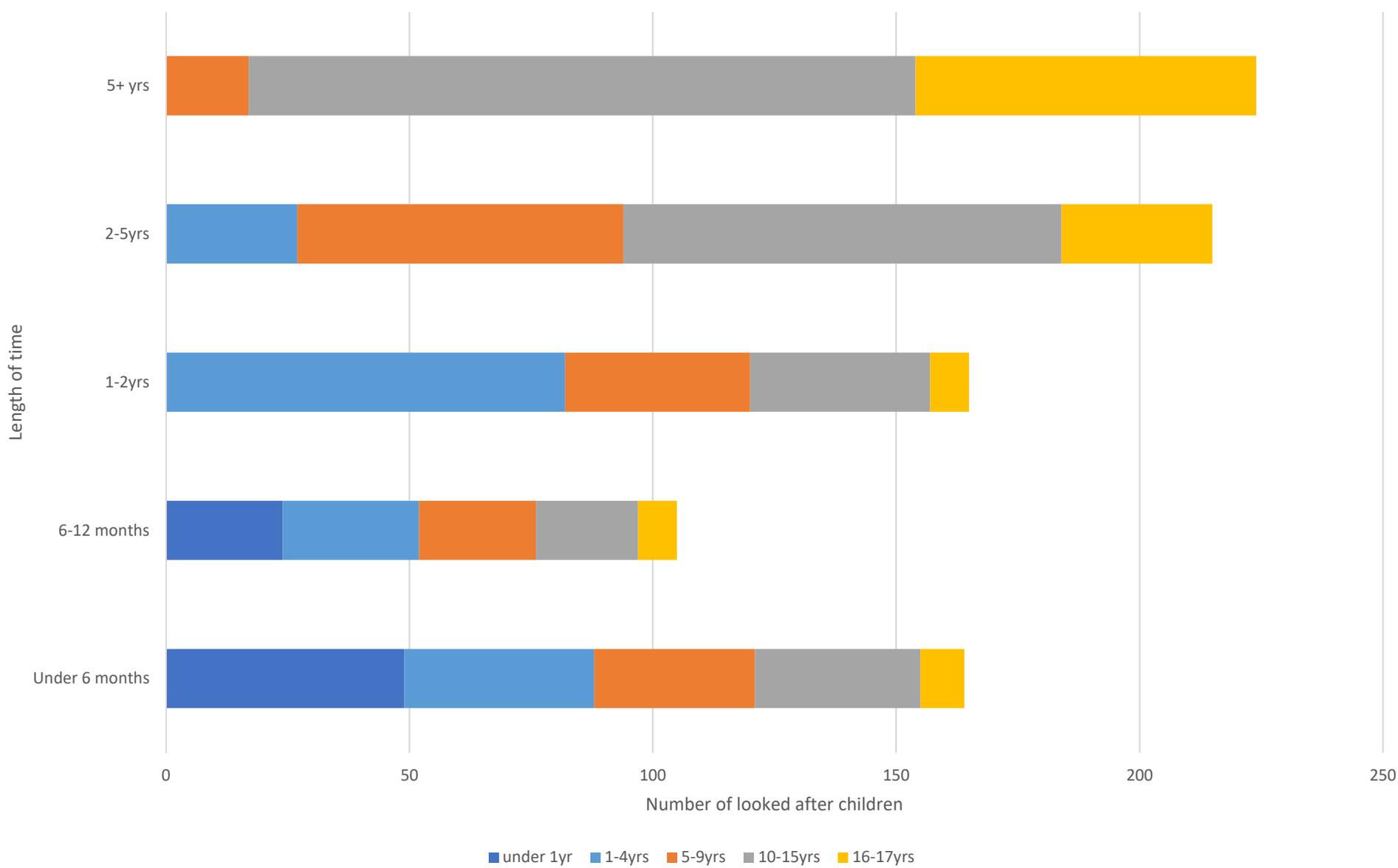


Chart 2 - Placement

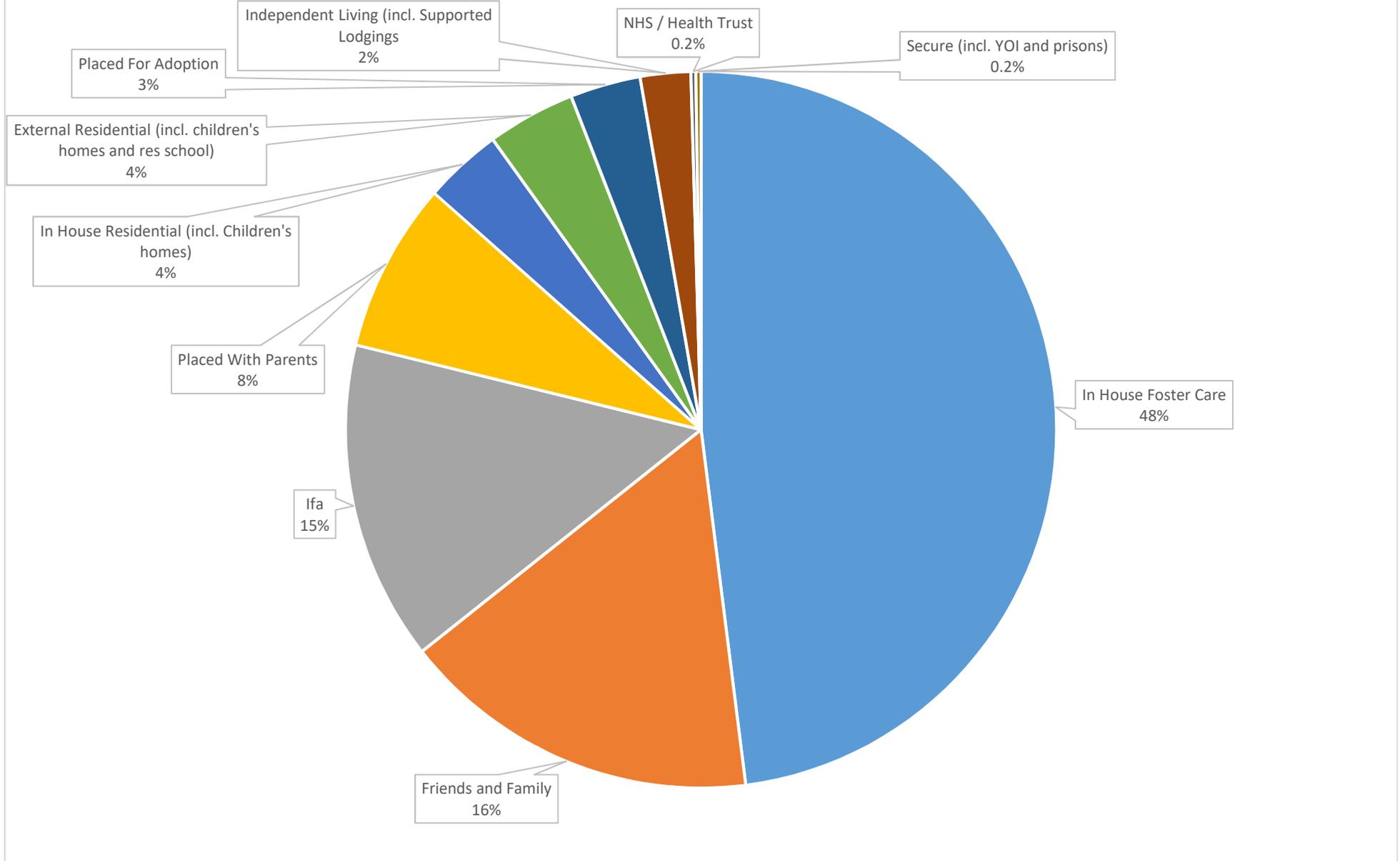
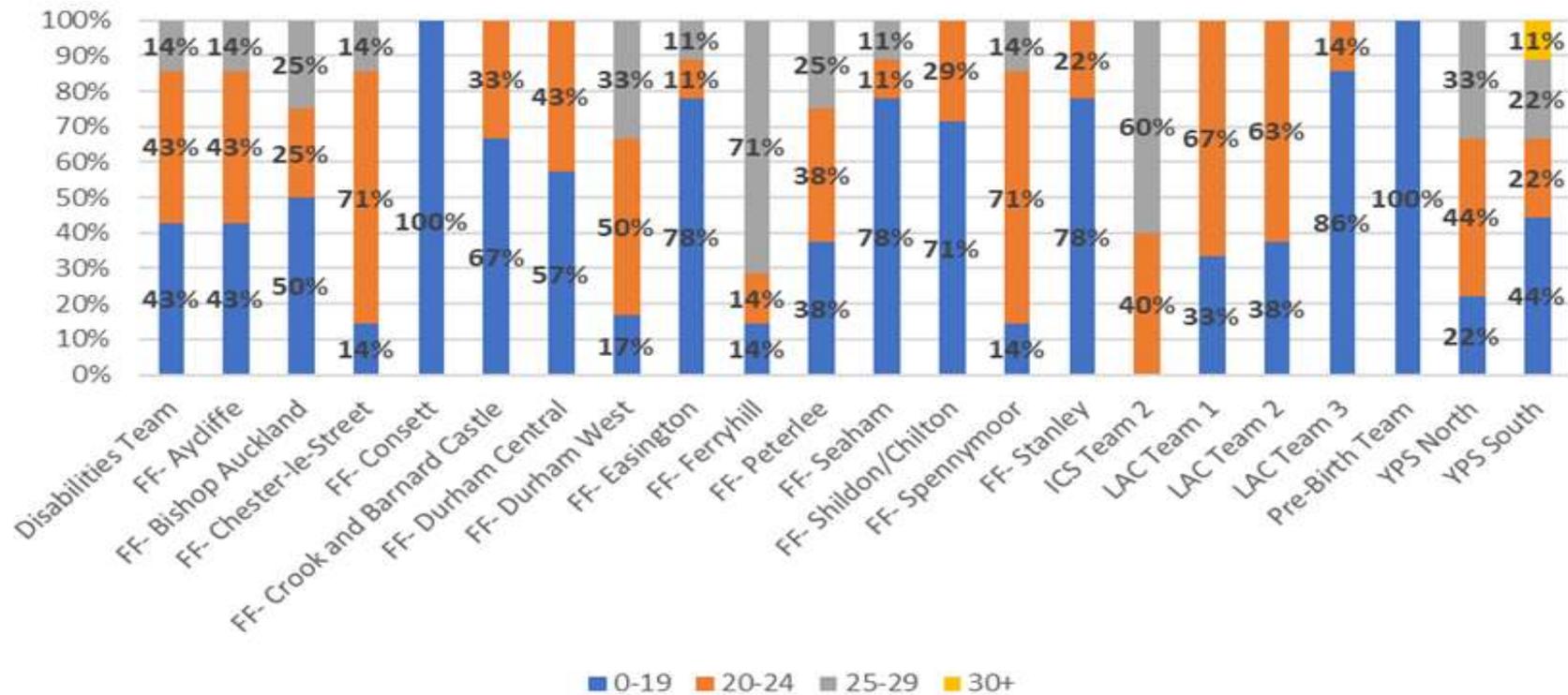


Chart 3 - Caseload Breakdown by Team (SW, ASYE's & YPA's) June



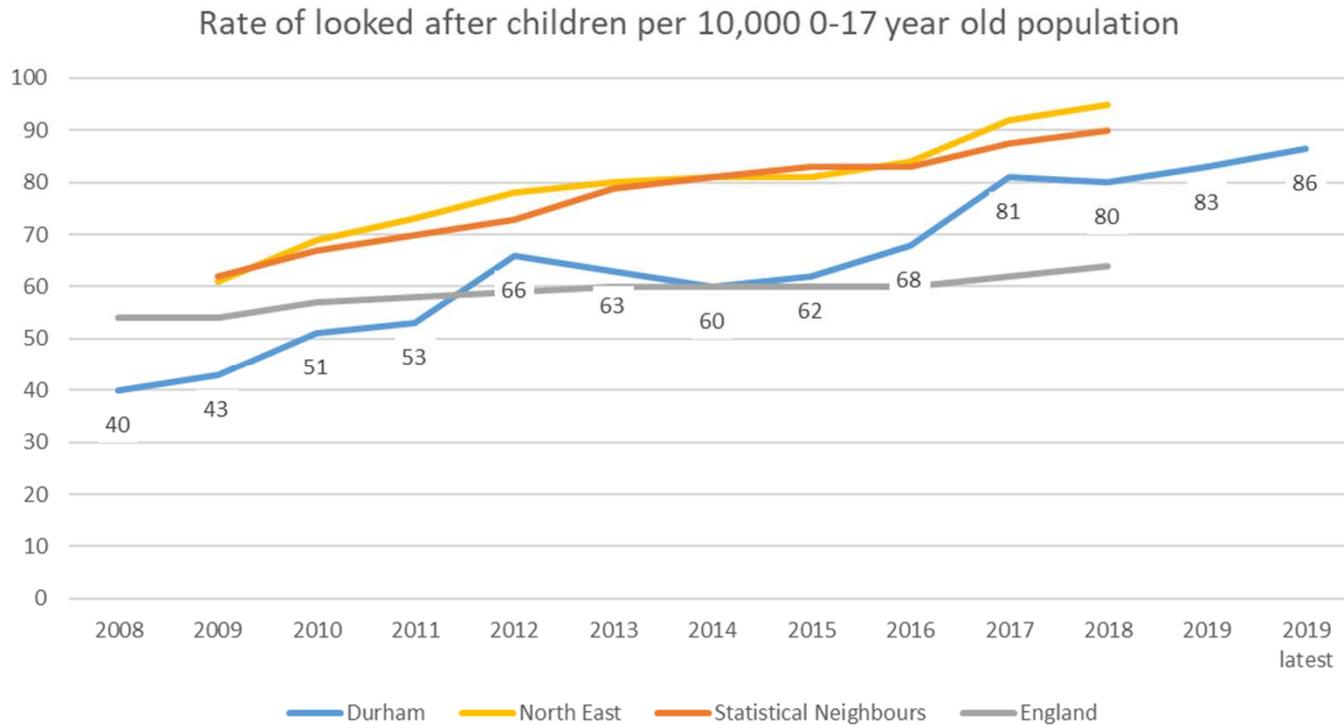
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Quarter 1 Performance 2019/20

Stephen Tracey
Corporate Equality and Strategy
Manager

What are the characteristics of our cohort of children in care and care leavers?

873 children currently looked after



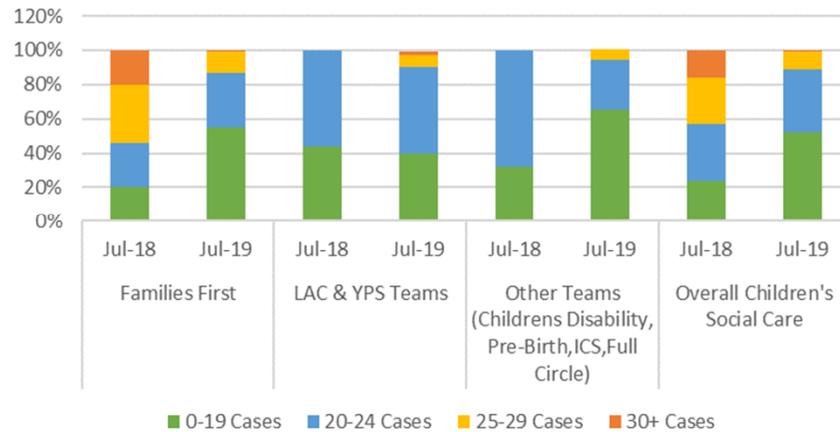
Altogether better



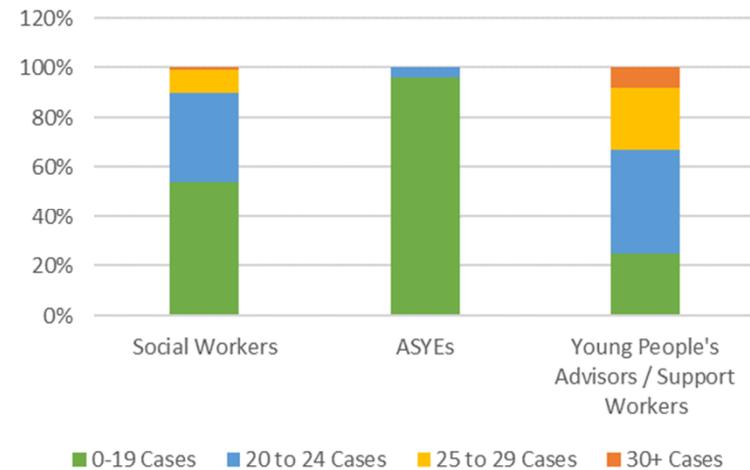
What are the characteristics of our cohort of children in care and care leavers?

Caseloads

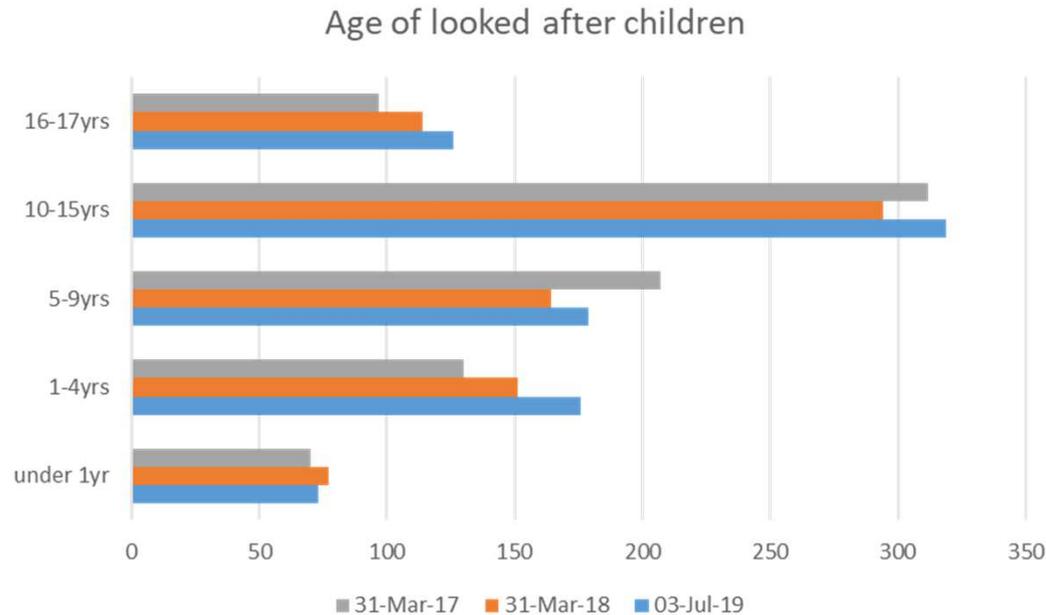
Caseloads - Social Workers only



Caseloads by worker at July 2019



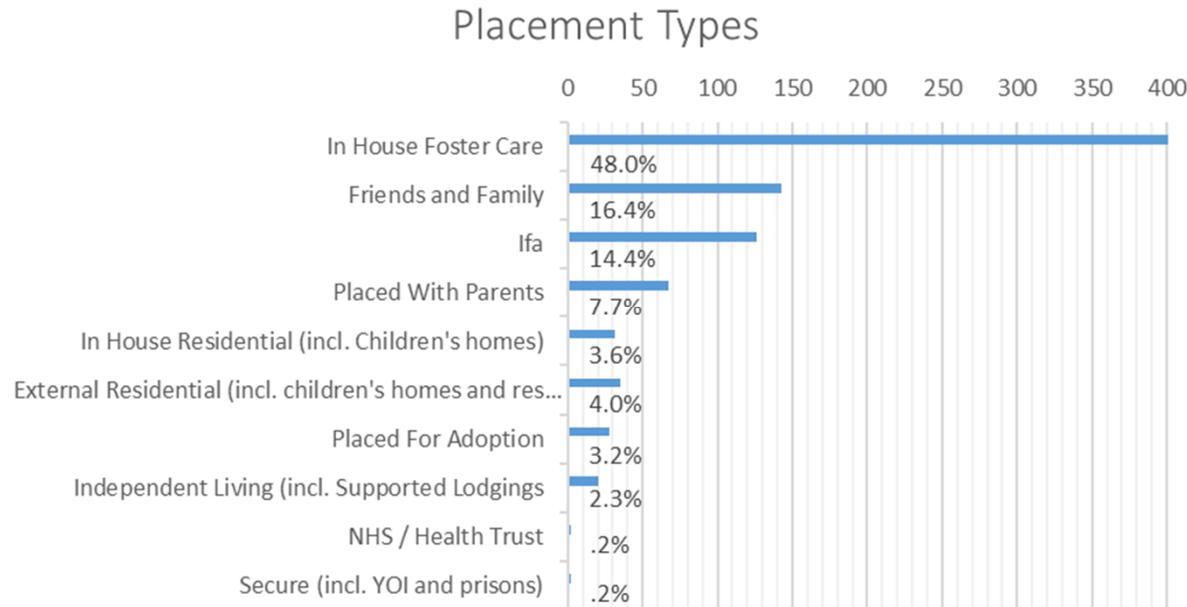
What are the characteristics of our cohort of children in care and care leavers?



- Increase in 16-17 year olds now at 14% of CLA
- Reduction in under 1's now at 8% of CLA

Altogether better

What are the characteristics of our cohort of children in care and care leavers?

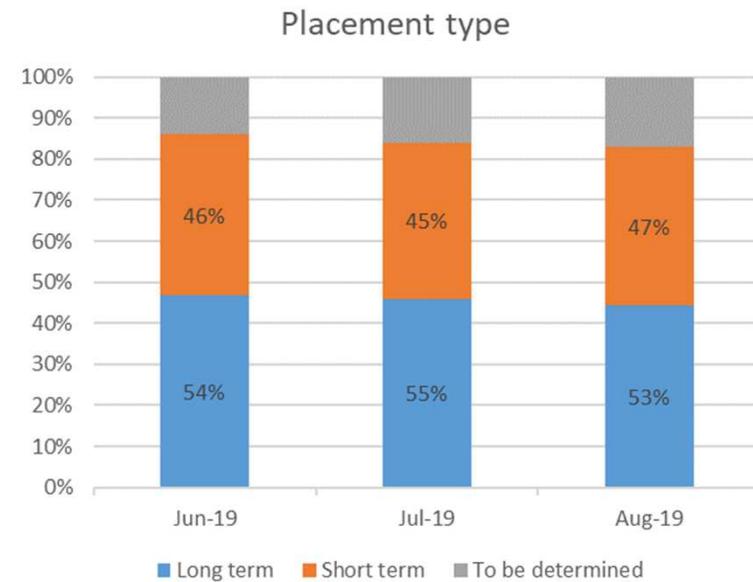
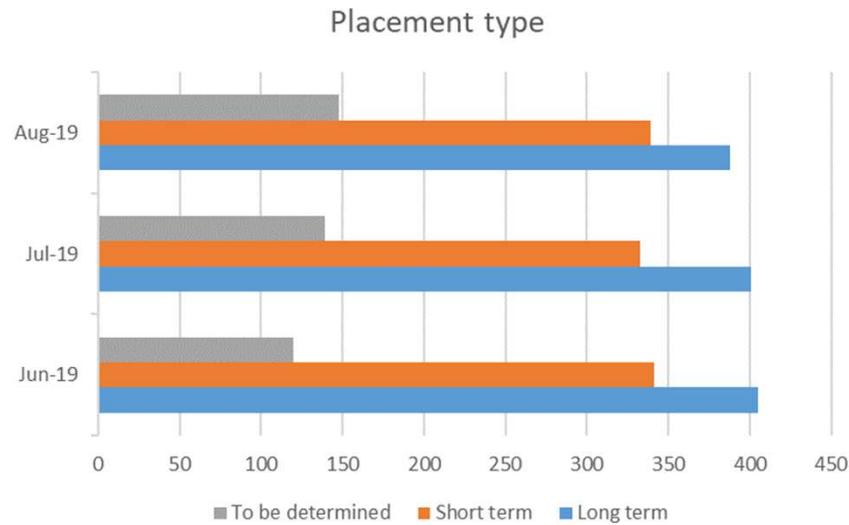


- Just under half of our looked after children are in in-house foster care
- 79% are in foster care, a reduction since Jan 2018 (84%)
- 8% are placed with parents, an increase since Jan 2018 (4%)

Altogether better



What are the characteristics of our cohort of children in care and care leavers?

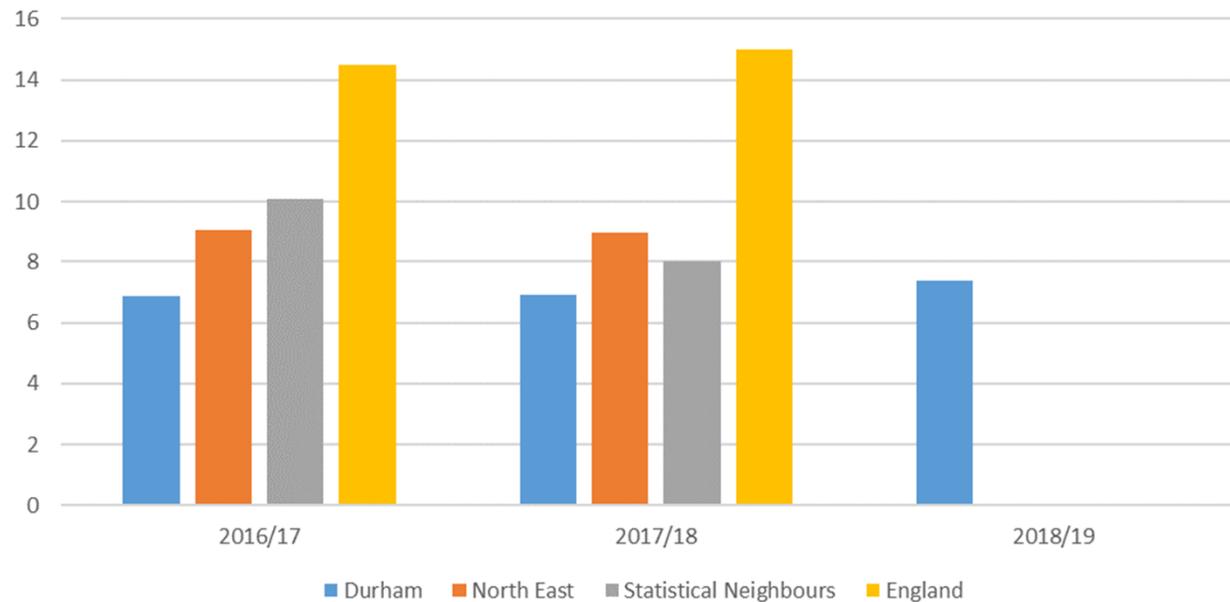


Altogether better

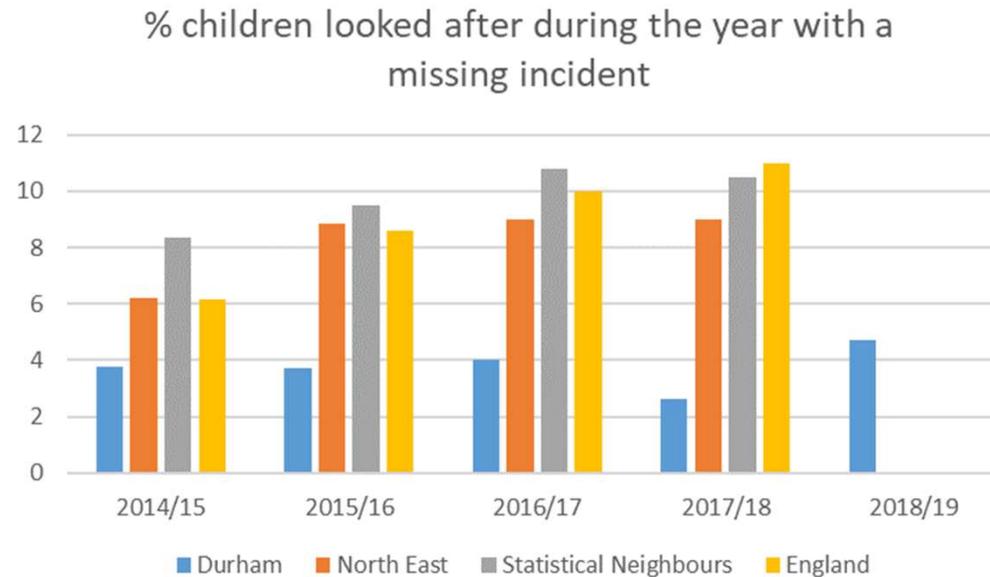


What are the characteristics of our cohort of children in care and care leavers?

% Placed outside of the local authority boundary and over 20 miles from the child's home



Do our partner agencies understand their role in supporting us as corporate parents?



- Missing looked after children and incidents between April and June 2019 reduced

Altogether better

Are we providing stable environments for children in our care?

Between April and June 2019:

- 4 foster carers were approved
- 4 foster carers were de-registered
- 5 adopters were approved
- 7 children were adopted

What are we doing to look after the health and wellbeing of children in our care?

At 30 June 2019:

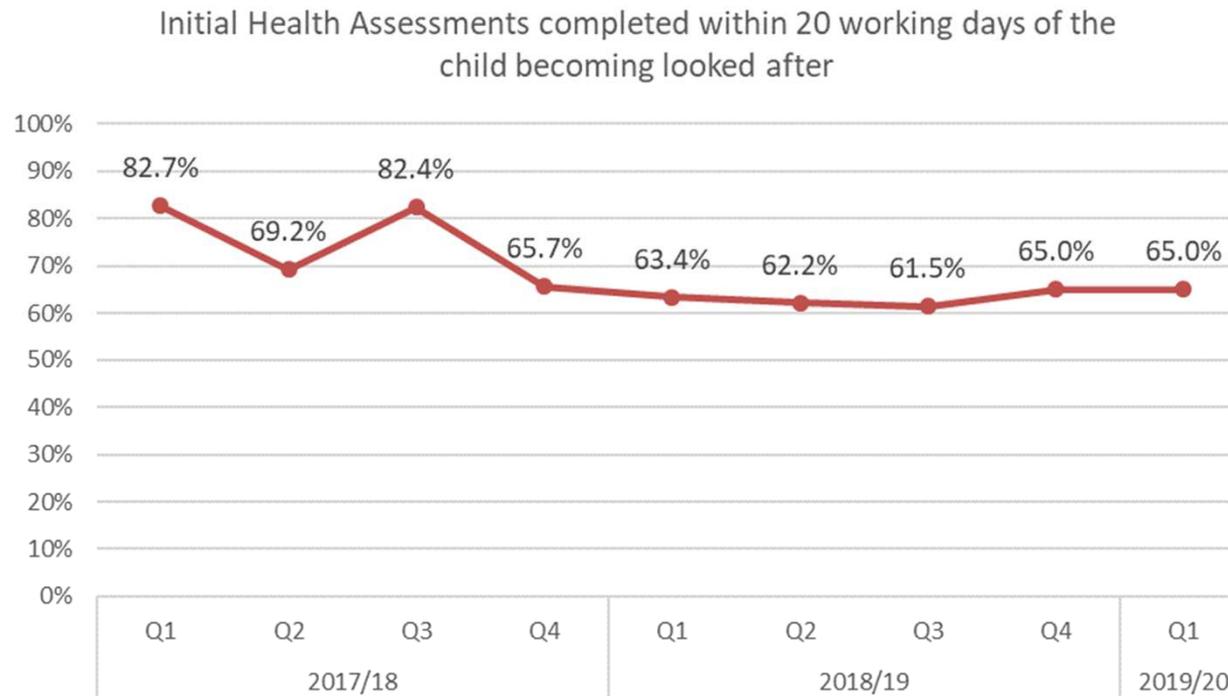
- 90% had the required number of health assessments
- 95% have had a dental check

At 31 March 2019:

- 99% had immunisations that were up to date
- 95% had development assessments that were up to date (5 and under)
- 2% had a substance misuse problem during the year

Altogether better

What are we doing to look after the health and wellbeing of children in our care?



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Corporate Parenting Panel

27 September 2019

**Updated Sufficiency and
Commissioning Strategy for Children
Looked After and Care Leavers**



Report of Lindsey Herring, Children’s Commissioner, Adult and Health Services

Electoral division(s) affected:

County wide service provision for Children Looked After by the Authority

Purpose of the Report

- 1 This report seeks to provide an executive summary of the updated Sufficiency Strategy for Children Looked After and Care Leavers published in June 2019.

Executive summary

Purpose of the Strategy Review

- 2 During 2018/19, CYPS faced significant pressures in relation to securing appropriate placements for Looked After Children, in particular, residential provision to meet the needs of those young people who have high levels of complexity and challenging needs.
- 3 At the Annual Conversation with Ofsted in February 2019 placement sufficiency was raised as a concern, particularly given an increasing need to use unregulated provision during 2018 and early 2019. The Local Authority was informed that it was their view that Durham County Council were failing to meet its Sufficiency Duty under the Children Act (section 22(G) to ensure suitable and appropriate placement resources for looked after children that were suitably and appropriately registered with Ofsted.
- 4 Given the changing needs of the Authority during 2018 and 2019, the pressures and challenges that we faced in meeting our sufficiency duty and our Annual Conversation with Ofsted, we reviewed our Sufficiency Strategy for Children Looked After and Young People. The updated strategy captures our current position, identified gaps, development and progress made during 2018-19 and further planned developments during 2019-10.

- 5 It should be noted that from May 2019, there have been no further unregulated placements made for children and young people that require care.

Durham's Looked After Population

- 6 Durham has a projected 4.2% growth in its population by 2026 and the number of children aged 0-15 is predicted to rise by 5.5% over the next 10 years.
- 7 The number of children in need has increased by 25% (between 2014 and 2019).
- 8 There has been a 20.3% increase in the number of looked after children between March 2016 and March 2019. This has presented many challenges for services across the Authority, particularly in relation to ensuring a sufficient number and range of placement types to meet the individual needs of children and young people.

Placement Mix

- 9 Durham has a range of placement types for children and young people that are looked after. The majority of our children (63%) live in foster care. This consists of 49% of placements with in-house carers and 14% with external independent providers.
- 10 The second largest group of children and young people (16%) live with family and friends.
- 11 7% of our children and young people are in residential care (3% external provision and 4% in-house provision).
- 12 Placement sufficiency and placement choice are key factors in supporting and improving placement sufficiency. As of 31 March 2019, 6.9% of children looked after and young people experienced 3 or more placement moves. This is a reduction from the previous year, with 8.3% of children looked after with 3 or more placement moves during the year. Durham is still performing better than other regional local authorities (9%), statistical neighbours (10%) and the England average (10%).

In-House Fostering

- 13 The majority of our looked after children living in in-house fostering provision (49%).

- 14 A total of 101 foster carers have been recruited between 2015/16 and 2018/19, with 69 carers de-registering during this period. The number of carers de-registering in 2018/19 has reduced to 9 throughout the year. Support, including financial support available to foster carers is critical to their recruitment and retention. This is evident in the feedback received for both new and long-time serving foster carers.
- 15 19% of short-term carers have a preference to care for children aged 11+.
- 16 There is a shortfall in available permanent placements to meet the current demand. The fostering service is promoting permanence arrangements for all new foster carers and ensures dual approval for both short term and permanent arrangements.
- 17 Recruitment and retention of foster carers remains a key priority and as 20% of mainstream foster carers are aged 60+ and given the dependency on Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) provision, the development of a robust marketing and recruitment strategy is important. Working with the Marketing Team to identify both new and proven methods of recruitment and using information/data captured within the update strategy will help to determine future target audiences and marketing needs. A focus will be placed on recruitment of foster carers for teenagers, managing children with complex needs and challenging behaviour and providing permanent placements.

Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) provision

- 18 Whilst the number of IFA placements has reduced during 2018-19, the overall number of foster placements with independent providers remains high, with 120 placements as of 29th March 2019 and 14% of all children looked after being accommodated in this type of provision.
- 19 The demand for IFA placements is high across the region, with local authorities describing the market as 'saturated'.
- 20 Durham continues to struggle to identify placements for older young people and those with more challenging and complex needs. This is often due to matching considerations alongside other children and young people already in the household.
- 21 The high demand for placements allows providers to be more selective.
- 22 Durham continue to play an active role in the current regional consortia framework. A new regional contract will be operational from October 2019.

Adoption

- 23 The Adoption Service continues to focus on achieving the best outcomes for children and to prevent delay in achieving permanence for the child with a plan of adoption.
- 24 In line with national trends, the number of adoption enquiries has significantly declined over recent years. In 2018/19, Durham received 13 initial enquiries, in comparison to 157 received in 2017/18 and 165 in 2016/17. This however isn't directly impacting the number of children placed for adoption, with 43 children placed in 2017/18 and 47 children placed in 2018/19.
- 25 Children placed for adoption in inter-agency and out of county adoptive placements have increased with the likelihood of having complex needs, being part of a sibling group and being older children.
- 26 Fostering for Adoption now plays an integral part of Durham's Early Permanency Strategy, with 7 children placed in fostering to adopt placements during 2018/19.
- 27 Durham continues to be part of the regional adoption agency development, 'Coast to Coast', involving two other local authorities and voluntary adoption agencies. It is anticipated that all adoption functions will be delivered by the new organisation from April 2020.

Residential Provision

- 28 Residential provision meets the needs of some of our children and young people with more complex needs and challenging behaviours who cannot live in fostering provision.
- 29 The number of external residential placements made in 2018/19 (45) has increased, in comparison to 2017/18 (28), demonstrating the greater demand for residential provision and the increasing complexities of our children and young people.
- 30 Given the presenting needs of some of our children and young people and their associated risks and matching requirements, at times we have struggled to identify appropriate regulated placements. This has resulted in a small number of unregulated placements for children who require care. This demonstrates that our sufficiency offer has emerging gaps, particularly in relation to smaller residential homes.
- 31 In response to these gaps, we have been developing a series of 1-2 bedded regulated children's homes with an external provider. Our first home opened in April 2019. The second home is due to be operational from December 2019 and the third home during early 2020.

- 32 We also have agreement to develop a further in-house children's home, which is being progressed and to re-provide our children's home which is located in Aycliffe.
- 33 A review of our residential homes offer commenced in August 2019. The review is considering the services currently offered and if these are still fit for purpose, in line with best practice and meeting our changing needs as an Authority.
- 34 Given the volatility within the residential provider market and the ongoing demand for residential provision, we need to ensure that we have a broad and more flexible range of residential provision.

Care Leavers

- 35 Durham continues to have a high percentage of care leavers aged 17-18 in suitable accommodation (96%), in comparison to both the England average and the statistical neighbour.
- 36 We have a range of universal accommodation and support options for Care Leavers, dependent on their individual needs.
- 37 During 2018 and 2019 we have been working with a number of providers to improve our accommodation and support options for young people aged 16+ who have needs that challenge services and who need to live on their own with support. In order to standardise our approach to purchasing this type of provision and offer an improved menu of services for young people, we are in the process of commissioning a new 'provider panel'. This will be in place from October 2019.
- 38 We want to improve our supported living offer, particularly for young people who have complex mental health needs.
- 39 New legislation in April 2018 meaning that all Local Authorities have a responsibility to continue offering support and accommodation to Care Leavers post 21 to 25 years, could result in greater demand for accommodation and support and this is factored in to recruitment activity and commissioning plans.

Recommendation(s)

- 40 Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are recommended to:
- (a) Consider the updated Strategy for Children Looked After and Care Leavers.

Background

- 41 The council has a duty, as stated in section 22G of the Children Act 1989, to take steps to secure, as far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation for looked after children within their local authority area. The 2010 guidance on the 'sufficiency duty' states that local authorities should have embedded plans, as part of their commissioning processes and through partnership working, to meet the duty.
- 42 The sufficiency duty must take account of the requirement, under section 22C (5) of the Children Act 1989, that the overriding consideration for placing a child is that the placement must be the most appropriate available to meet the child's needs. Next, preference must be given to a placement with a friend, relative or other person connected with the child and who is a local authority foster carer. Failing that, a placement must be found, as far as is reasonably practicable in all circumstances, that:
- (a) Is near the child's home;
 - (b) Is within the local authority's area, unless that is not reasonably practicable;
 - (c) Enables the child to live with an accommodated sibling;
 - (d) Where the child is disabled, is suitable to meet the needs of that child; and
 - (e) Does not disrupt his/her education or training

Conclusion

- 43 The aim of this Strategy is to ensure that children and young people in care live in stable, high quality settings, where their needs can be met and their outcomes improved, enabling them to return where this is in their best interests.
- 44 As corporate parent, the whole Council has a role to play to improve the outcomes for Durham's looked after children and care leavers. This Strategy sets out a number of key objectives (Appendix 2 of the Strategy) and ensuring the delivery of its outcomes, forms part of the overall approach to supporting looked after children and care leavers and those young people on the edge of care and should also work in conjunction with other local strategies for children and families in need of support and protection.

Other useful documents

- Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy for Looked After Children and Care Leaver
- The Children and Young People's Commissioning Plan 2019-2021

Contact: Lindsey Herring

Tel: 03000 265 766

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The Children Act 1989 Section 22A places a duty on the local authority to provide children in their care with accommodation. Section 22G requires Local Authority's to ensure it secures so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within their area which meets the needs of children that the Local Authority are looking after and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare to be provided with accommodation that is in their local area (Sufficiency Duty).

Finance

There is continuing pressure on the budget for Children Looked After by the Authority. In 2018-19 these additional pressures on the Local Authorities Children's Social Care budget linked to placements, resulted in an overspend of £2.624 million.

Consultation

Staff from across CYPS and the Performance and Data Team have been involved in the update of the Sufficiency Strategy and insuring that the most up to date available data has been used.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

The Sufficiency Strategy highlights how we will provide children looked after and care leavers with the same opportunities as their peers.

Human Rights

Non-applicable

Crime and Disorder

Non-applicable

Staffing

Non-applicable

Accommodation

The Strategy outlines the range of accommodation options that are available for our children looked after and care leavers

Risk

It is a statutory duty of the Authority to provide sufficient, appropriate accommodation options to children and young people who are looked after. There is a reputational risk and risk of legal challenge if we can not meet our sufficiency duty.

Procurement

The Strategy identifies a range of commissioning solutions that are / will be developed over the coming year, which will be procured in line with the Authority's Contract Procedure Rules.

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Sufficiency & Commissioning Strategy for Looked After Children and Care Leavers 2018-21

Lindsey Herring, Children's Commissioner

Local Authority Duty

The council has a duty, as stated in section 22G of the Children Act 1989, to take steps to secure, as far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation for looked after children within their local authority area.

Altogether better



Sufficiency & Commissioning Strategy

- The Strategy was updated in June 2019, to reflect challenges during 2018/19 and to capture actions to address these.
- Sets out Durham's strategic approach to securing sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of our looked after children and Care Leavers.
 - Draws together findings, research and analysis
 - Explores likely changes in the overall population and care population
 - Identifies the on-going and future needs of children in care and care leavers for whom we need to develop additional provision.

Altogether better



What does the Strategy tell us?

- Projected 4.2% growth in Durham's population by 2026 and the number of children aged 0-15 is predicted to rise by 5.5% over the next 10 years
- Number of children in need has increased by 25% (between 2014 and 2019)
- 20.3% increase in the number of children looked after between March 2016 and March 2019
- Durham's rate of looked after children continues to remain below the regional and statistical neighbour rates but is higher than the national average rate.

Altogether better



What does the Strategy tell us?

- The majority of our children looked after (63%) live in foster care provision (49% in-house; 14% external)
- 73% of our foster carers are aged 40-59 years old with 20% aged 60+
- We continue to have a reliance on foster placements with the independent market, with 120 placements at the end of March 2019
- Fostering to Adopt is now part of Durham's Permanency Strategy – which seeks to reduce the number of placement moves. During 2018/19, 7 children were placed in fostering to adopt placements

Altogether better



What does the Strategy tell us?

- We have gaps in our residential homes offer – particularly for young people who are very complex and require smaller homes to meet their needs
- The number of external residential placements made in 2018/19 (45) has increased, in comparison to 2017/18 (28) - demonstrating the greater demand for residential provision and the increasing complexities of our children and young people who can not be accommodated in foster care

Altogether better



What does the Strategy tell us?

- Due to the complexity of some of our children and young people and issues sourcing regulated provision we have placed a small number of children in 'unregulated placements' (none since May 2019)
- We have a range of universal accommodation and support options for care leavers (aged 16+) but need to broaden our options for young people who have needs that challenge services and often need to live on their own with support.

Actions?

- Placements Team are using CCIRAG, an online platform which provides an overview of all regulated provision nationally and makes us more efficient in identifying suitable placements
- Improved the quality of information that we share with providers when looking for placements – strength based, balanced, signs of safety risk assessments

Altogether better



Actions?

- Development of 'Multi-Agency Collaborative Care' meeting (MACC) – greater senior management oversight of C/YP with learning disabilities or autism with associated mental health needs, young people at risk of being admitted to specialist hospitals. Provides a planned, coordinated and integrated approach to risk management, ensuring robust support or care packages are in place

Actions?

- We have developed a new smaller children's residential home with a provider. A further 2 x commissioned homes are planned
- Have agreement to develop an in-house smaller therapeutic home and to re-provide our home on the Aycliffe site
- We are reviewing our Residential Homes offer – reshaping services in line with our needs
- Continue to work with external providers to shape the market and develop services which meet our needs and address gaps in provision
- Identified additional supported living options for YP aged 16+ who need to live on their own to ensure sufficiency of placement choice

Altogether better



Actions?

- Our Edge of Care Service continues to support young people to remain at home with their families
- We are developing further support options for children in placement and on the edge of care
- Continue to recruit new foster carers
- Increase adopters for older children, siblings and children with disabilities and continue to work in partnership to implement the 'Coast to Coast' Regional Adoption Agency

Questions.....

Further information contact:

Children's Commissioning Team – 03000 265 766

Altogether better



By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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