

# **Corporate Parenting Panel**

**20 October 2017**



## **Efficiency Plan 2017/18**

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### **Report of Glenda Henderson, Placement Efficiency Manager**

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#### **Purpose of Report**

1. This report seeks to provide the Corporate Parent Panel with an overview of the Efficiency Plan in response to the high number of children in care, the mix of placements, significant demand on services and projected budget overspend.
2. The Efficiency Plan (which will be circulated to members at the meeting) sets out a number of key aims to
  - Achieve the best outcomes for children, young people and families;
  - Increase placement capacity, placement mix and placement choice, broadening the range of placements and working in partnership with providers;
  - Ensure the most effective and efficient use of resources;
  - Deliver value for money.

#### **Background**

3. In April 2015 the number of looked after children (LAC) in Durham remained relatively stable at 622 providing a LAC rate of 62 per 10,000 population which increased slightly to a rate of 68 in 2016. This was significantly below the rates for both regional (84) and statistical neighbours (83.2) but slightly above the national average rate of 60 per 10,000 population.
4. Since April 2016 (677) the number of looked after children has continued to rise, reaching a peak of 817 during April 2017, beyond the numbers previously projected. Durham's current LAC rate as at 30 September 2017 totalled 808 reaching 80.6 per 10,000 population which was still below regional statistics (92) however significantly above national statistics (62).

#### **Next Steps**

5. The Placement Efficiency Plan (2017-2020) seeks to provide a framework, setting out a number of strategies, which will deliver both service improvements and placement efficiencies. The Plan aims to meet the required £2million savings target, identified within the Medium Term Financial Plan, over 2018/19 and 2019/20.

6. The Efficiency Plan for 2017/18 is intended to be a highly operational 'live' plan which at present sets out six key objectives, set out below and identifies a number of strategies to ensure that each of these objectives are met.
  1. Safely reduce the number of children entering care.
  2. Ensure high quality social work practice through effective management of caseloads and which focuses on reducing drift and delay and planning for early permanence.
  3. Ensure effective management of decision making and financial monitoring of placements and use of resources.
  4. Adopt innovative and creative solutions to provision.
  5. Reduce the cost for external provision and dependency on high cost placements.
  6. Increase management oversight in financial decision-making and appropriate use of resources.
7. A detailed Action Plan will monitor the progression and delivery of each of these strategies and this will also be closely reviewed at the Quality Improvement Board (QIB).

## **Recommendations**

7. Members of the Corporate Parent Panel are recommended to
  - Note the contents of this report;
  - Receive the Efficiency Plan and presentation at the meeting on 20 October 2017;
  - Continue to monitor the effectiveness of the Efficiency Plan throughout the year.

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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**Finance –** Finance Officers continuously monitor LAC budget

**Staffing – N/A**

**Risk –** Corporate Risk Register – risk added - R0659 - Severe financial impact resulting from increasing number of looked after children and the allocation of care provision

**Equality and diversity/Public Sector Equality Duty – N/A**

**Accommodation –** Potential inability to meet sufficiency duty (see risk above)

**Crime and disorder – N/A**

**Human rights – N/A**

**Consultation – N/A**

**Procurement – N/A**

**Disability Issues – N/A**

**Legal Implications-** Potential inability to meet statutory sufficiency duty (see risk above).