

PERFORMANCE REPORT

To: **Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee**

Meeting Date: **21 February 2018**

From: **Lisa Reid
Head of Partnerships and Quality Assurance**

Electoral division(s): **All**

Purpose: **To report on the performance of services for Looked After Children and Care Leavers - as required in legislation and fulfilling the purpose of monitoring and offering advice.**

Recommendation: **The Sub-Committee is asked to:**

- a) **review performance for Looked After Children and comment on the themes and trends identified in this report.**

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Summary:

- As of the 31 January 2018 there are 702 Looked After children supported by the Council
- 57% of Looked After children are male, 43% are female
- 8% have a disability
- 53% of the current placements are in-county, with 47% of placements out of county
- 75% of unaccompanied asylum seeking young people are placed out of county
- The proportion of Looked After children being visited within the statutory timescales has been improving through the year, from 70.3% in April 2017 to 84.0% in December 2017
- The number of Looked After children who were reported missing within the month, and the number of individual instances where a Looked After child went missing, fell in December 2017
- The numbers of children and young people who are at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Gang Exploitation are reducing

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report provides the Sub-Committee with an overview of performance of services for Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Leavers. The full performance report can be found in Appendix A.

2. MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 This report has been re-designed since the previous Sub-Committee, to include sections on:

- LAC population
- LAC demographics
- Placements
- Visits, reviews and health assessments
- Care Leavers and Adoption
- Missing children
- Sexual and gang exploitation

- 2.2 The report takes account of the following points discussed at the last Sub-Committee meeting:

- Reports should avoid the use of acronyms – acronyms are now explained in notes on data and definitions
- The table on 17-21 year care leavers has been revised to make it clear what it

- shows, acronyms have been removed or explained
- The information on LAC accommodated in county has been added to the section on LAC placements
 - Data on the proportion of health assessments carried out within timescale has been included in the report
- 2.3 Further improvements to this report are currently being worked on. These will include topics highlighted by the Sub-Committee including:
- Breakdown of LAC placements (both in and out of county)
 - Information on foster carers, including recruitment figures
 - Further information on education of Looked After Children
- 2.4 As of the 31 January 2018 there are 702 Looked After children supported by the Council. 57% of these children are male, 43% are female. 8% have a disability.
- 2.5 Although there has been a 2.6% increase in the number of Looked After children since April 2017, this equates to a rate of 52.8 per 10,000 of population. The national average is 60.0 per 10,000 of population, meaning Cambridgeshire is performing favourably compared to national figures.
- 2.6 53% of the current placements are in-county, with 47% of placements out of county. 75% of unaccompanied asylum seeking young people are placed out of county and this is due to lack of availability of accommodation in Cambridge. These placements are mostly in Peterborough. This area is better placed to serve some of the cultural needs of this cohort of young people and it is relatively close to our borders, making statutory visits and keeping in touch manageable.
- 2.7 The proportion of Looked After children being visited within the statutory timescales has been improving through the year, from 70.3% in April 2017 to 84.0% in December 2017. Capacity issues are the largest contributing factor to late visits. Individual cases have management oversight and where there are capacity issues, the priority is given to the most vulnerable children. Steps are being taken to reduce late visits. There are also other mechanisms in place designed to safeguard children and these include visits to foster carers, where children are seen, school attendance and visits from other professionals. Performance on children having their Looked After review in timescales is strong and this activity also supports the monitoring children's wellbeing.
- 2.8 The proportion of children who wait less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family is generally high in Cambridgeshire. Performance was reported at 100% in six of the last nine months, although it dipped to 66.7% in December 2017.
- 2.9 The number of Looked After children who were reported missing within the month, and the number of individual instances where a Looked After child when missing fell in December. 18 Looked After children were reported

missing in the month, compared to 24 in November. 29 instances were reported in December compared to 47 in November. On average there are 43 missing incidents reported per month.

- 2.10 The numbers of children and young people who are at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Gang Exploitation are reducing. There are various mechanisms used to monitor and keep children safe, and to collate and share this information across agencies. There is a clear difference in the high numbers of girls versus boys at risk of CSE (on average there are 18 boys identified as being at risk of CSE per month compared to 70 girls), and the high number of boys compared to girls involved in gang exploitation (on average 24 boys identified as being at risk compared to 3 girls per month).

3. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Resource Implications

The number of children who are Looked After increased by 2.6% since April. Social workers and other staff are travelling distances to visit children placed out of County. Many of these children are in Independent Fostering Agency placements due to a lack of in-house provision that can meet their needs and this puts pressure on the placement budget.

3.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

None

3.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

Ofsted will consider the data and analysis available to the Sub-Committee when considering the effectiveness of the council's Corporate Parenting Function.

3.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

All children who become Looked After have access to the same service provision irrespective of their age, gender and ethnicity. There is a gap in suitable in-County provision for children and young people seeking asylum, with the majority of placements located in Peterborough.

3.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

None

3.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

Relevant to all Members in the role as corporate parents.

3.7 Public Health Implications

None

SOURCE DOCUMENTS

Source Documents	Location
Children's Service Performance Dashboard. Appendix A - Corporate Parenting Dashboard	Matthew Tullett (Interim) Senior Analyst Business Intelligence Cambridgeshire County Council Octagon, Shire Hall Cambridge CB3 0AP Matthew.Tullett@cambridgeshire.gov.uk