

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

**Venue: Town Hall,
Moorgate Street,
Rotherham, S60 2TH**

Date: Tuesday, 28th February, 2017

Time: 5.00 p.m.

A G E N D A

1. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with the Local Government Act, 1972.
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
3. Apologies for absence.
4. Declarations of Interest.
5. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 6th December, 2016 (Pages 1 - 10)
6. Rotherham Looked After Children's Council Update (Pages 11 - 16)
7. Performance Management (Pages 17 - 34)
8. Overview of Corporate Parenting Training for Elected Members
9. IRO Report (Pages 35 - 37)
10. Missing from Care (Pages 38 - 42)
11. Rotherham Looked After Children and Care Leaver's Strategy 2017-2020 (Pages 43 - 73)
12. Guide to Financial Support for Young People Leaving Care in Rotherham (Pages 74 - 112)
13. Rotherham Looked After Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2017-2020 (Pages 113 - 146)

14. Ofsted Updates/Regulation 44 Visits (Pages 147 - 158)

15. Health/CAMHS (Page 159)

16. Date and time of the next meetings: -
Wednesday, 25th April, 2017
27th June
29th August
24th October
19th December

All commencing at 5.00 p.m.

Membership of the Corporate Parenting Panel: -

Councillors G. Watson (Deputy Leader and Children and Young People's Services Portfolio holder), M. Clark (Chair of the Improving Lives Select Commission), V. Cusworth (second representative of the Improving Lives Select Commission), M. S. Elliott (Minority Party representative), S. Sansome (Elected Member) and J. Elliot (representative on the Fostering and Adoption Panels).



Sharon Kemp,
Chief Executive.

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL
6th December, 2016**

Present:- Councillor Watson (in the Chair); Councillors Cusworth, J. Elliot, M. Elliott and Sansome.

Also present were Audra Muxlow, Anne-Marie Banks, Lorraine Dale, Lisa Duvall, Catherine Hall, Karen Holgate, Deborah Johnson, Julie Lodge, Mel Meggs and Ian Walker.

Courtney, Manny and Kira were in attendance representing the Looked After Children Council.

Apologies for absence were received from Collette Bailey and Ian Thomas.

D30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted by Collette Bailey and Ian Thomas.

D31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made at the meeting.

D32. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 27TH SEPTEMBER, 2016

Agreed:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 27th September, 2016, be approved as a correct record with the inclusion of Councillor Cusworth's apologies.

D33. ROTHERHAM FOSTERING SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2015-2016

Consideration was given to the Fostering Service's Annual Report, 2015/2016. The report provided performance and activity data on the Service, activity and functioning of the Fostering Panel and detailed Service developments that had occurred in the year and those that were planned moving through 2016/17 which included:-

- Fostering Panel Functions and Composition
- Panel Business 2015/16
- Fostering Families – Placements
- Approvals, Deregistration and Resignations
- Children Placed in Foster Care
- Placement Stability
- Unplanned Endings and Disruptions
- Staffing
- Fostering Supervision and Support
- Activities and Events

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL - 06/12/16

- Consultation
- Recruitment Activity and Outcomes
- Key Challenges, Developments, Targets and Actions 2016/17

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified: -

- The financial offer to foster carers had been increased and also included support and training.
- Children needed to live within the community they were born in and wherever possible within a 20 mile radius of Rotherham.
- It had to be borne in mind when recruiting foster carers that there were sufficient staffing resources to undertake the assessments and the required support.
- Had consideration been given to the utilising the facilities at the football and rugby grounds and GP surgeries for the advertising campaign? Yes. There was to be a new South Yorkshire Plan and Protect recruitment campaign and all avenues would be explored.
- The conversion rate in 2015/16 had been 11% from 147 enquiries – was that low? It was hoped to have an additional 26 foster carers by the end of March, 2017. It was a massive commitment with enormous rewards.
- How many households did the number of approved foster carers represent? In fostering language when talking about approvals a couple were classed as 1 foster carer.
- Work had taken place with foster carers as to the number of young people they could take e.g. siblings.
- Were there many young people who refused to move from a care home to a foster family? There were some young people who stated that they had a family and did not want another. Some young people could make that emotional attachment that foster care required and felt much more comfortable in a less family environment of a care home. Their wishes were taken into account but work would continue with them to get them to a position where they felt they could move to a family.

Resolved: - That the report be received and its content noted.

D34. THE LOOKED AFTER AND CARE LEAVERS' STRATEGY 2017-20

Ian Walker, Acting Head of Service, Children in Care, presented the draft Looked After Children and Care Leavers' Strategy for consideration.

Looked After Children generally experienced poorer outcomes in relation to their education, health and transitions to adulthood as a result of a combination of negative early life experiences and a legacy of poor standards of care provided by Rotherham as a Corporate Parent. The Strategy provided a framework for the improvements that were essential if the legacy was to be addressed and better outcomes achieved.

The Strategy had been developed following a detailed analysis of the existing quality of service offered to Looked After Children as compared to their identified needs. As a result it had been designed to improve the outcomes for Looked After young people and care leavers and to support their successful transition to adulthood.

Discussion ensued on the draft Strategy with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- If really serious about taking the voice of children on board it should reflect/include the comments made by the young people about their emotional health and wellness
- Had there been a legal opinion as to what the duty on Health, Housing and Education authorities under Section 27 of the Children Act 1989 actually was? It was understood that the definition was that there was a responsibility to support CYPS to ensure that all the needs of Looked After Young Children were best met. Housing had agreed to ensure that care leavers had priority allocation to housing. It was a legally challengeable decision; if any young person felt that the duty was not being met it could be challenged in a Court of Law.
- The Strategy should reflect the work being undertaken by the Virtual School around the emotional health and wellbeing support and challenge and training of schools in this area. It was hoped to develop school practices in SDQs.
- Had any LAC accessed a Modern Apprenticeship at the Council? The Council's Modern Apprenticeship Programme was very restrictive and required a GCSE A-C grade in Maths and English. Work was taking place to ascertain if care leavers could be afforded a greater degree of flexibility and that the LAC undertake the required GCSE(s) during the course of the apprenticeship. Funding had been secured for the young people to re-sit the examinations.

There was a strong partnership with the local Chamber of Commerce. There were more than 500 companies in the Rotherham area who the Chamber could access to provide a pre-apprenticeship programme to support young people even if only for ½ a day a week to gain an experience of a working environment and then look to support them to re-sit exams.

Agreed:- (1) That the draft Looked After Children and Care Leavers'

Strategy 2017-20 be noted.

(2) That the wording under No. 4 The Corporate Parent with regard to the duty on Health, Housing and Education authorities be reworded in consultation with Legal Services.

(3) That any comments on the draft Strategy be provided to Ian Walker.

(4) That the Chairman report to the next Panel meeting on his discussions regarding access to the Council's Apprenticeship Programme for LAC.

D35. OFSTED ACTIVITY REPORT- CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER

Ian Walker, Acting Head of Service, presented a summary of the Ofsted inspection of the Council's children's homes in 2016.

Liberty House Short Breaks Residential Home was registered with Ofsted and was inspected by them twice a year. They received a full 2 day inspection and an interim 1 day inspection. The full inspection determined the grade and the interim inspection assessed progress in relation to the grade. The Service had been graded as 'Outstanding' on 2nd November, 2016.

The report also clarified the decision made by Commissioner Bradwell on 12th September, 2016, in relation to Silverwood and Cherry Tree House Child's Homes.

An Ofsted Monitoring Visit had taken place on 20th-21st October, 2016, of the Looked After Children Service. This had concluded that the Council had taken effective action to address the significant shortfalls identified in the 2014 single inspection. There was a more stable senior management team that had demonstrated a strong focus on performance management and had established a determined, effective leadership with clear objectives and aspirations as well as a sustained focus on improving outcomes for children. It was also stated that senior managers had undertaken a honest and robust self-assessment of the Service and, as a result, knew itself very well. Whilst progress had been slower in the Looked After Children's Service than in some of the other services areas across Children's Services, there was clear evidence of improvement in some key areas including strategic management, vision and planning, performance management and quality assurance arrangements, service restructure, recruitment and retention and compliance with statutory requirements.

The outcome letter had also highlighted areas as being in need of further development which were set out in the report submitted.

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- How was the lack of commitment by some agencies to the Working Together 2015 guidance monitored? The agency concerned had been challenged. All of the actions were part of the Improvement Plan which was submitted to the Improvement Board of which the agency was a member.
- As the agency was an outside body what power did the Local Authority have to ensure it met the objectives of the action plan? It was a legal requirement that the agency concerned commit to the attendance at the Strategy meetings and they were being called to account.
- Were lessons being learnt from the strong management team at Liberty House? Yes. There was a template that was to be spread across the wider services
- How could the Authority rectify the standard of service given to the children who were placed out of the Borough? The return home interview was very important and should be pursued. There was a temptation for outside agencies to not persist once a young person had stated that they did not want to complete an interview.
- Why had the number of LAC increased but the number of Children gone Missing from Care had reduced? There was a range of actions within the Strategy which would result in a reduction in numbers. The LAC Service was a very wide service and work was taking place on identifying a staffing resource to act as the dedicated person managing that Service who would visit the out of Borough placement and provide the Head of Service with the information. At the moment it was not known why young people went Missing from Care but that person would provide an analysis of why those young people went missing, hold the out of authority placement to account and to challenge them.

Providers had been called to Panel to justify face-to-face the quality and degree of service they offered with the ultimate sanction of withdrawing the young person from their service. The Authority's experience could then be shared with the Yorkshire and Humber Consortium.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Panel's congratulations be placed on record to the staff and management of Liberty House for their Outstanding Ofsted rating.

D36. CCG COMMISSIONING COMPLIANCE TOOL FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVER HEALTH SERVICES

Catherine Hall, Designated Nurse Looked After and Safeguarding Children, submitted, for information, the NHS Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group's Looked After Children and Care Leaver self-assessment, peer challenge and call to action conference with regard to

their commissioning commitment to children in care.

NHS England North had tasked all 68 Clinical Commissioning Groups to complete the self-assessment tool and RAG rate themselves. The self-assessment was then analysed and a peer challenge processed development. Following the independent analysis of CCGs, a call to action conference was held on 25th May, 2016 to discuss the findings and ascertain the next steps nationally.

NHS Rotherham's LAC and CL action plan was submitted at Appendix 2 of the report submitted.

NHS England were hoping to influence the Department of Health with regard to the health needs of LAC and to roll out this piece of work nationally.

Discussion ensued on the report with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- Was there any progress on the difference between the data sets relating to review health assessments? The data sets were set by the Government. For the Local Authority the young person had to have been in care for a year as at 31st March. Health would count anyone who was taken into care during a financial year.
- Health Care Assessments were carried out within 20 working days of admission into care and then 12 months for the over 5's and 6 months for under 5's.
- Was there a Service Level Agreement between the Local Authority and CCG providers? If so was it monitored/reviewed? The CCG commissioned the Acute process (Annual Health Assessment) and the Council currently commissioned the Health Visiting and School Nurse Services. There was a robust Service Agreement with the TRFT to ensure they met the needs of Rotherham's LAC with Karen Holgate, Dedicated Nurse, overseeing the quality of the work from the Health Visiting/School Nurse Services and that it met the needs of the young people. Paediatricians were utilised in Rotherham to conduct the Health Assessments which were performance monitored on a quarterly basis.
- How did we take the concern out of the whole package and have a joint Health Assessment? There was very close working and nothing was missing. There was to be an integrated Health Visiting and School Nursing Service for 0-19's. Work was taking place on setting up a Looked After Children's Emotional and Physical Wellbeing workstream to make sure all the officers were sat round the table.

Agreed:- That the report be noted.

Consideration was given to the update from Courtney, Manny and Kira on the work of the Looked After Children's Council (LACC) which had enjoyed another exciting, busy and productive period (July to the end of October, 2016).

It was noted that the LACC had positively influenced the consultations on Rotherham Residential Accommodation, with particular emphasis on the proposed closure of Cherry Tree House and Silverwood House, and NHS Healthcare consultation. Their work also included:-

- Get In Gear: Accessibility of Public Transport for Young People Consultation
- Child's Voice Digital Solutions Trial and Consultation
- LAC Council Voice in Improving Rotherham for Young People
- Ofsted – Video Conferencing Interview
- Fostering Review
- New York Stadium Tour
- EID Celebration-EID Mubarak
- Rotherham Show
- Pride of Rotherham Awards
- Fixers – Rotherham Proud DVD Development
- Youth Voice – Residential Filey
- Don't Hate Education Training
- Destination Poland Fundraising – Marathon and Ten Mile Walk

The LACC had lost 1 of its members recently who had been an active participant for 5 years. Abbie had represented the LACC on the Panel and engaged in Voice and Influence consultation work to give her voice to help shape Children's Services. She was now studying Creative Writing at the University of Bedfordshire.

Discussion ensued on the report with the following issues raised and clarified:-

- Had the LACC received assurances that health professionals were well trained and understood the impact of being in care on young people and that School Nurses would be trained in Mental Health? The School Nursing Service was currently undergoing transformation. It would be a 0-19 service combining School Nurses with Health Visitors and would take on board the LACC's comments. The Mental Health Trust would provide Mental Health training within the Foundation Trust.

Manny felt that the health professionals were only trying to fix the physical side of him and not the mental side. It had been hard, both mentally and physically, being in care. It was only right that children in care should be treated in a respectful way and be able to get their point across and not be pushed aside. They needed more help than others because they did not have the parental guide to help them through.

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL - 06/12/16

- Had the LACC received any more feedback from the Transport consultation? The chairs had been turned around in the bus station so they were against the windows as the young people had not felt safe with people walking behind them with the way they were positioned previously.
- Had there been any feedback with regard to the extra training for drivers? It was ongoing with nothing received in writing as yet. It had been said that young people should be paying their own bus fares to attend meetings such as this Panel. For young people leaving care at 16/17 years of age it was quite an expense and the LACC were losing people because they could not afford to attend meetings and, therefore, losing their voice.

Ian Walker stated that no young person should be paying for their own transport costs to attend any participation event. He would meet with the LACC to discuss how best this could be addressed.

- It was suggested that an e-mail be sent to all Elected Members informing them of the LACC's funding raising efforts for Destination Poland. It was clarified that the criteria for the Community Leadership Fund would allow for a donation to be made.

Courtney, Kira and Manny were thanked for their presentation and attendance at the meeting.

Agreed:- (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That Ian Walker meet with Lisa Duvalle to discuss the issue of transportation costs for LACC members to attend participation events/meetings.

D38. 'THE CARE WE RECEIVE AS CHILDREN COLOURS OUR WHOLE LIFE' (CARE QUALITY COMMISSION 2016)

Catherine Hall, Designated Nurse Looked After and Safeguarding Children, submitted for information the arrangements made by the Local Authority and the support that the health economy in Rotherham provided to ensure that LAC received their healthcare entitlement.

The report had been considered by the Local Safeguarding Children Board on 1st December, 2016.

The report set out the support processes for ensuring children and young people in care received the level and quality of care you would expect not only celebrating the strengths but also highlighting the weaknesses.

As at the end of September, 2016, the compliance rate of Review Health Assessments were:-

0-5 years Rotherham	100% compliance
0-5 years Out of Area Placement	88.8% compliance
5-18 years Rotherham	99.5% compliance
5-18 years Out of Area Placement	95.1% compliance
Overall RHA's	97.5% compliance

Performance with regard to Initial Health Assessments was not as good. Within 20 days of a child coming into care such an Assessment had to be undertaken. It looked at the parents' health to establish if there were any health issues that might impact upon the child and dated back to the delivery of the child. It also included social care and work with the family to gain their consent.

Rotherham had seen a significant increase in the number of children coming into care – 116 in 2013/14 to 213 in 2015/16. There had been a need to flex the health clinics with the Acute Trust increasing the number of from 54 to 75.

The report also highlighted the fact that each local authority was looking at some point of having a number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children coming into the area. Currently it was an unknown quantity but thought it would not be more than 39 children, however, it was not known what their particular health needs would be.

Discussion ensued on the report with the following issues raised/highlighted:-

- How many Initial Health Assessments were conducted within the 20 days? In September/October no child received an Assessment within the 20 days, however, every child did receive an Assessment just not within the 20 days.
- Was there any dominant factor within the process? A multi-agency health summit had scrutinised the process from start to finish which was a long sequence of actions that all interlinked and had to be addressed. LAC Nurses were to be given access to Liquid Logic which would quicken the process as currently it took between 5-7 days of a young person coming into care and the LAC Nurses receiving notification. With direct access to Liquid Logic they would know on day 1 of an admission into care which immediately provided more time. It was hopeful that this would go some way to address some of the barriers that existed.
- How would that be monitored? It was monitored and challenged on almost a weekly basis. The Deputy Director met with the Service every week and looked at all the exceptions, what the impact was on the child and what could be done to quicken it up. It was risk managed through the system.
- What pressures would that put on the Service? There was some pressure but it was for the children. The difference it made to the children by all the activity needed to be understood.

- If Looked After Children were engaged early in the health processes then they were more likely to stay engaged whilst in care.

Agreed:- That the report be noted.

D39. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That future meetings be held as follows:-

Tuesday, 28th February, 2017
25th April
27th June
29th August
24th October
19th December

all to commence at 5.00 p.m.

Rotherham Looked After Children's Council (LACC) – Corporate Parenting Panel - Update Report November 2016 – January 2017

The last three months have been busy, productive and exciting for the Looked After Children's Council (LACC). The young people volunteer for the LAC Council at least once a week and sometimes more to engage in activities, meetings and community events over weekends. The LACC has positively impacted on improving C&YP Services through consultations and co-production work to enhance services including Public Health through their Suicide Prevention Logo Consultation and Early Help LAC Post Card Development, have successfully engaged in the community event Remembrance Sunday Service and Parade and placed a poppy wreath at the Cenotaph on behalf of all Rotherham Looked After and Leaving Care Young People, have delivered a presentation for Holocaust Memorial Day at the Town Hall and have created a 'Rotherham Proud' DVD to give young people's perspective, experiences and voices to positively promote Rotherham. Members have supported the Leaving Care Forum. LAC Council young people have also continued to fundraise for Destination Poland and engage in activities to prepare themselves for their journey. The numerous experiences and opportunities offered young people at the LAC Council are specifically designed to increase social capital, self-awareness and self-esteem, to foster resilience and support better outcomes for our young people. Here are some of the things we would like to share with you:-

LACC CONSULTATIONS – Shaping Services in Rotherham

Suicide Prevention Logo Consultation

Ruth Fletcher Brown from Public Health came to consult with young people about their new Mental Health Campaign around suicide prevention and awareness. The LAC Council supported the development of ideas for the LOGO and name to identify the project. The LACC have an interest in mental health and wellbeing issues and have supported Ruth in consultations to develop ideas from Looked After Children's perspectives for a number of years.

Early Help Looked After Children Post Card

Collette Bailey (Head of Early Help Service North) came to the LACC in January to ask if the group could co-produce a post card sized information leaflet to tell young people within Early Help what Early Help has to offer Looked After Children and where to get it. Young people were split into 3 teams to work through the language and design of the Early Help



literature which included the 9 LAC promises originally chosen by the LAC Council. Each team then fed back to Collette their ideas of how to make the post card visually attractive and easier to read for young people like themselves, as when making literature targeted at young people it is important to make it young person friendly in order to tempt other young people to read the information. Collette said she would take all these suggestions back and hand over to the design team to translate the LAC Council's ideas onto the card creatively.

COMMUNITY, CULTURAL & SEASONAL EVENTS

Remembrance Sunday Service & Parade

For the 6th year running and at the invite of the Mayor, young people from the LAC Council alongside their peers from the Youth Cabinet and UK Youth Parliament have actively participated in the Remembrance Sunday Parade through Rotherham and engaged in the Service at the Rotherham Minster. This was a proud day as Simon lay down the LACC Poppy Wreath at the Cenotaph on behalf of all Rotherham's Looked After and Leaving Care young people. To say thank you to those who have sacrificed their lives, their physical and/or mental health to fight for our freedom



Fixers – 'Rotherham Proud' DVD Development

As part of the LAC council's ongoing commitment to promoting Rotherham in a positive way and challenging negative stereotypes of their town, they have been working collaboratively with other young people as part of the Youth Voice Group and the charity 'Fixers' to develop their ideas to create a Rotherham Proud DVD. Throughout November the LAC Council worked alongside the Youth Cabinet to create scripts, identify locations for filming and rehearse their delivery to camera. Filming for the day at various locations around Rotherham, including the Town Centre, Wentworth, Clifton Park, the Mosque and Minster young people delivered their scripts to camera. It was an exciting and exhausting day. The film is being edited by the Fixers Team and we hope to have it with us shortly. We are hoping this DVD will be a valuable tool to show young people's perspectives and voices to positively promote Rotherham.

LACC Pantomime at the Civic Theatre – Oh Yes We Did!

In December the LAC Council visited the Rotherham Civic Theatre to watch Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. This was a fantastic and fun afternoon where young people had an opportunity to relax and share the day in a safe social environment. Many of the group had never seen a Panto' before and found it hysterically funny.

I didn't even know what a Pantomime was? ... But I'll bring my own kids now at Xmas when I'm older!!

I loved the Panto Dame best she was right funny!

Holocaust Memorial Day Event @ Town Hall

The Holocaust Memorial Day is an annual event in January held at the Town Hall, and celebrated by numerous Rotherham Youth Groups, this year's National Theme was 'How Can Life Go On?' Participating in this event is important to the LAC Council and is part of their ongoing commitment



to the anti-fascism agenda. Young people from the LACC worked together for a few weeks talking about the Holocaust, writing down their ideas, and developing this into a presentation that they delivered at the Town Hall. Their presentation talked about their Destination Poland Project which will take them to Auschwitz-Birkenau, Jewish Quarter and Schindler's Factory Museum in April. They related this to how life goes on with new generations of young people like themselves learning about the Holocaust and passing this information on to their peers. They also talked

about the iconic Jewish Hanukkah Menorah (9 branch candelabrum) which is a symbol of life going on through faith, as they are passed from one generation to the other along with their religion and practices.

TRAINING & EDUCATIONAL Sessions

Remembrance Sunday & Personal Remembrance Awareness – Arts & Crafts

In preparation for Remembrance Sunday young people engaged in an arts and crafts session to create their own Poppy Wreaths. The session was designed to raise awareness and generate discussion around why we have remembrance Sunday and what it means. Following this, we moved into a personal remembrance a self-awareness session to get young people to think about who has been positively influential in their lives and identify who they would like to show respect for and remember. This is an important session for a young person's continuous personal development to reflect upon and recognise positive influences and how this has helped them along their journey so far. Young people had a lovely discussion sharing with their peers who has been positive in their lives and why and everyone created a poppy and wrote the name/s of positive influences they would like to remember and thank. These names included special Foster Carers, School Teachers, LAC Council facilitators and Ian Thomas (for his support with Driving Lessons) Ian Thomas joined the group briefly and was flattered to see a poppy with his name on.

LACC Working together with the Leaving Care Forum

The LAC Council is made up of Looked After and Leaving Care Young People aged 11 to 19 years old. Young people come to the LAC Council in their early teens and sometimes continue to volunteer for a number of years taking them from being Looked After Children ages (11 to 16) to being Leaving Care aged young people (aged 16+) Although, this mixture of ages has provided important personal development opportunities as 16+ young people become senior volunteers to support the younger children and take on some responsibility for training the younger volunteers, thereby gaining skills and experiences, it is sometimes challenging to meet the needs of such a broad age range of young people within one group.

However, recently the Leaving Care Team has introduced a Leaving Care Forum to work with Leaving Care young people to have a voice and engage in social activities with their peers. This is

an exciting opportunity for older young people and one which the LAC Council wholeheartedly supports. Therefore, the LAC Council and Leaving Care Forum have been working together to support the gentle transition of young people aged 16+ to engage in Leaving Care activities and meetings. This will be an ongoing project.

Seasonal Craft Session

In December the LAC Council enjoyed an crafting session creating lots of seasonal craft items



including, paper snowflakes, Xmas Tree decorations, Rudolf Antlers and Snowflake Soup. We were joined by our Chief Exec Sharon Kemp and Head of Service for Children in Care Ian Walker.



Young people took the opportunity to write out 'Thank You' seasonal greeting cards for all those who we were aware had donated to Destination Poland. A fun filled evening!

Christmas Party – Youth Voice

To finish our 'Youth Voice' year the LAC Council alongside the Youth Cabinet and UK Youth Parliament celebrated our collective achievements this year through working together and helping to shape Rotherham Services by visiting the Pizza Oven. It was great fun spending social time together and having a laugh.



DESTINATION POLAND - ONGOING PROJECT

Destination Poland features every week in the LAC Council's sessions. The group are due to visit Poland for a 5 day visit from 10th April. Funding for this visit has been raised through numerous fund raising activities many of which the LAC Council have actively engaged in too, including the Rotherham Together Partnership Marathon, Ten Mile Walk at Thrybergh Country Park, Swinton Lock Halloween Party, REMA Angels, Young Inspectors Bike Miles and Cake Sales, LACC Xmas Hamper Raffle and the generous donations from Rotherham Councillors, Foster Carers, Virtual Schools, Commissioner Kenny etc etc. Destination Poland is an educational visit that will reunite a LACC member with his Polish heritage and is part of the group's ongoing anti-fascism work to raise awareness and



Xmas Hamper Raffle Draw with Stevo & Sharon Kemp

generate discussion around discrimination and persecution of people around the world and in Britain expressed in LACC's commitment to Holocaust Memorial Day, Armed Forces Day, Remembrance Sunday and Don't Hate Educate Campaign.

In December the group had a visit from 2 Sheffield University Students studying Journalism. They



have chosen our Destination Poland Project for their Journalism Module and interviewed and filmed our young people asking them about why they are so passionate about wanting to go to Poland? what they have achieved so far? and what are their aspirations when they come back to Rotherham? It was a fascinating experience and gave our young people the opportunity to promote their project and speak proudly about it.

Recruitment Drive for LAC Council

The LAC Council at present have 13 members who attend the group on a weekly basis. Membership reduces over time as older young people go off to work/university or move out of authority. So recruitment of new young people is vital to keep the group fresh and evolving to have a voice and help shape services for looked after and leaving care young people. Therefore, we are engaging in a recruitment drive to widen participation of the Looked After Children's Council. Young people have created leaflets and a poster to promote their group, saying who they are, what they do and contact details if any young person is interested in joining them. This promotional literature has been widely distributed through Early Help Managers, Social Care Managers, VAR Newsletter, through virtual School and hand delivered to all LAC Designated Teachers and Heads of each school year in all Rotherham Secondary Schools. We are exploring all avenues to give other Looked After young people opportunities to engage and have a voice and make a positive difference to things for young people in care. LACC members have done everything they can to support recruitment, it is now up to the Corporate Parents to take this forward and ensure the opportunities are communicated to Looked After Children they work with.

LAC Council Guests - Young people from the LAC Council would like to thank all of our guests who have visited the LAC Council or invited us to visit them over the past few months. These are:-

Sharon Kemp – Chief Executive RMBC

Ian Thomas – Strategic Director C+YPS

Collette Bailey – Head of Early Help Service North

Ruth Fletcher Brown – Public Health

Ian Walker – Head of Children in Care

Adam Young – Granada and Yorkshire Fixers

Mariam Ahmed – Granada and Yorkshire Fixers

Sian Bradley – Sheffield University Student

Christian Palfrey – Interim Manager Leaving Care Accommodation

Susan McBride – Participation Coordinator Leaving Care Team

Thank You All 😊

Contact Name:

Lisa Du-Valle
Looked After Children's Council
Voice & Influence Team
Early Help & Family Engagement
Tel: 01709 822130 or Mob: 07748143388
Email: lisa.duvalle@rotherham.gov.uk



@LACCRotherham



LACC Rotherham

Council Report

Corporate Parenting Performance

Title

Corporate Parenting Performance Report – January 2017

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan? No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**Report Author(s)**

Deborah Johnson (Performance Assurance Manager – Social Care)
Ian Walker (Head of Service Children in Care)

Ward(s) Affected

All

Summary

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of performance for key performance indicators across Looked After Children services. It should be read in conjunction with the accompanying performance data report at Appendix A which provides trend data, graphical analysis and benchmarking data against national and statistical neighbour averages where possible.

Recommendations

- 2.1 The Panel is asked to receive the report and accompanying dataset (Appendix A) and consider issues arising.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix A – Corporate Parenting Performance Report (January 2017)

Background Papers

Ofsted Improvement Letter
Children's Social Care Monthly Performance Reports

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required No

Exempt from the Press and Public No

Title: Corporate Parenting Performance Report – January 2017

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to receive the report and accompanying dataset (Appendix A) and consider issues arising.

2. Background

- 2.1 This report provides evidence to the council's commitment to improvement and providing performance information to enable scrutiny of the improvements and the impact on the outcomes for children and young people in care. It should be read in conjunction with the accompanying performance data report which provides trend data, graphical analysis and benchmarking data against national and statistical neighbour averages.
- 2.2 Targets, including associated 'RAG' (red, amber, green rating) tolerances, are included. These have been set in consideration of available national and statistical neighbour benchmarking data, recent performance levels and, importantly, Rotherham's improvement journey.
- 2.3 The narrative supplied within the report has been written by the Deputy Director for Children's Services

3. Key Issues

- 3.1 This is the first performance report for Corporate Parenting Panel since the implementation of the new Liquid Logic case management system at the end of October 2016.
- 3.2 As with any major change in system this changeover created a number of challenges in terms of data quality and reporting. Significant progress has been made however teams are still adjusting to new recording requirements and addressing data migration gaps. Therefore caution needs to be applied when comparing performance to that achieved earlier in the year.
- 3.3 Overall Rotherham has an increasing Looked After Children (LAC) profile. At the end of January there were 482 children in care which equates to a rate of 85.5 per 10,000 population this is high when compared to the 2015/16 year-end position of 76.6 and statistical neighbour average of 75.8.
- 3.4 Plans
 - 3.4.1 Due to technical reasons 'plans' data could not be migrated into Liquid Logic. Therefore workers are required to manually input the information for each child. This no longer relates just to the date of the plan but includes the full details. Performance demonstrates progress has been made with the proportion with a plan increasing

from 55.6% in December to 79.4% in January however we are significantly behind previous performance levels of 95-99%.

3.5 Reviews

3.5.1 Timeliness of LAC reviews remains high and monthly performance is relatively stable at above 98%. Slightly lower performance in the summer however is impacting on the year to date figure which is slightly lower but still good at 96.7%.

3.6 Visits

3.6.1 Visit data was successfully migrated into the new system. However since the November performance has been declining. This is, in part, connected to the high turnover of staff across the LAC service, this should improve following the latest round of recruitment and once a stable permanent team management is secured. Performance against National Minimum standards at the end of the month was 78.7% and against local standards 65.8%. This is well below targets and previous performance levels.

3.7 Placements

3.7.1 Although some placement moves are in the best interests of the child the provision of a good stable home is known to be essential for children to achieve good outcomes. Placement performance statistics demonstrate that we need to improve our preventative work to reduce placement disruption.

3.7.2 In January the proportion of children who have had three or more placements (two moves) has seen a small improvement from 12.8% to 11.7%. Whilst it has reduced it continues to be higher than all other benchmarks. Our target of reducing to less than 10% remains and is still achievable.

3.7.3 The proportion of our long term children in care who experience a stable placement for over two years is at 66.2% which is a declining picture and places Rotherham below statistical neighbours and the national average.

3.8 Looked After Children Health and Dental

3.8.1 Please note there are known delays in the data input for both Health and Dental information therefore it is likely that performance may change when statistics are rerun in future reports.

3.8.2 Current statistics demonstrate that the timeliness of dental checks is declining at 66.1% compared to previous performance of above 71% and a target of 95%.

3.8.3 Health Assessment reviews in the previous three months has been good at over 95% in time and it is expected that the fall in January to 92.7% will be linked to data inputting issues. This will need to be monitored in future months.

3.8.4 Initial Health Assessments (IHA) however remain an area of concern. Every child should have their first (initial) health assessment within the first 20 working days of entering care. However the number of IHAs completed each month is not reflecting the increase in LAC admissions. It is worth noting that January's improvement to 50% relates to only one IHA out of two.

3.9 Personal Education Plan (PEP)

3.9.1 PEPs are now produced termly and are led by the Virtual School Team. 90.1% of eligible children have a PEP recorded on their social care record only 63.7% of children have a PEP which is up-to-date (produced within the last term).

3.10 Care Leavers

3.10.1 The number of Care Leavers is stable at 224. Unfortunately at this time we are unable to report direct on accommodation or Education, Employment and Training (EET) status as the data was not migrated during Liquid Logic implementation and requires manual input on all young people's files. The performance team is working closely with the service and systems support to ensure this gap is addressed.

3.10.2 Whilst the systems developments are being addressed the Leaving Care Team are still ensuring that they can track each young person with an internal tracker.

3.10.3 This tracker showed on 1st February 10 of the young people were not in suitable accommodation, 4 of which were in custody. Of the remaining 6 the service were in touch and supporting all but one of the young people (one in overcrowded family based accommodation, one in hotel/B&B, three 'sofa surfing' at friends) The remaining young person has abandoned his tenancy and is wanted by the police.

3.10.4 The Leaving Care tracker also demonstrated that 71.3% of care leavers were in EET. For those aged over 18 this drops to 64.7%. Although this still compares well against the benchmarking averages of 50.4% for statistical neighbour and 48% for national average, it is still not where we want to be for our young people.

The service continues to work with young people to return them back into suitable training or employment. To support this Early Help services have allocated a part time worker (0.5FTE) to focus on education pathway planning alongside leaving care personal advisers.

3.11 Adoptions

3.11.1 There were nine adoptions in January which is the highest figure for a single month in over 12 months. Although timeliness measures have not been achieved this represents a good outcome for these children. It is hoped that there will be another six adoptions completed before the end of the reporting year taking the total to 35 which is a drop on last year's achievement of 43.

3.12 Caseloads

3.12.1 The impact of rising LAC has been a rise in the number of average number of cases per LAC team social worker to 12.9 however the maximum is now at 18. A management review of all children with a section 20 legal status has identified the potential to return home for up to 15 children. If this is achieved, combined with new edge of care interventions, this will result in a significant decrease in workload.

4. **Options considered and recommended proposal**

4.1 The full corporate parenting performance report attached at Appendix A represents a summary of performance across a range of key national and local indicators with detailed commentary provided by the service director. Commissioners are therefore recommended to consider and review this information.

5. **Consultation**

5.1 Not applicable

6. **Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

6.1 Not applicable

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications to this report. The relevant Service Director and Budget Holder will identify any implications arising from associated improvement actions and Members and Commissioners will be consulted where appropriate.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct legal implications to this report.

9. Human Resources Implications

- 9.1 There are no direct human resource implications to this report. The relevant Service Director and Managers will identify any implications arising from associated improvement actions and Members and Commissioners will be consulted where appropriate.

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 10.1 The performance report relates to services and outcomes for children in care.

11. Equalities and Human Rights Implications

- 11.1 There are no direct implications within this report.

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

- 12.1 Partners and other directorates are engaged in improving the performance and quality of services to children, young people and their families via the Rotherham Local Children's Safeguarding Board (RLSCB). The RLSCB Performance and Quality Assurance Sub Group receive this performance report within the wider social care performance report on a regular basis.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 Inability and lack of engagement in performance management arrangements by managers and staff could lead to poor and deteriorating services for children and young people. Strong management oversight by Directorship Leadership Team and the ongoing weekly performance meetings mitigate this risk by holding managers and workers to account for any dips in performance both at a team and at an individual child level.

14. Accountable Officer(s)

Mel Meggs, Deputy Strategic Director (CYPS)
Mel.meggs@rotherham.gov.uk

Approvals Obtained from:-

Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services:- Named Officer -

Director of Legal Services:- Named officer

Head of Procurement (if appropriate):- N/A

Name and Job Title.

This report is published on the Council's website or can be found at:-
<http://modern.gov.rotherham.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?Categories=>

DRAFT

Corporate Parenting Monthly Performance Report

As at Month End: January 2017

*Please note: Data reports are not dynamic. Although care is taken to ensure data is as accurate as possible every month, delays in data input can result in changes in figures when reports are re-run retrospectively. To combat this at least two individual months data is rerun for each indicator. **In addition the data migration undertaken to facilitate the implementation of the new social care (LCS) and early help (EHM) systems at the end of October 2016 will have impacted on the data validity and recording processes. Therefore there may be data discrepancies present when comparing this report to that of the previous month.***

Document Details

Status: DRAFT 1

Date Created: 21st February 2017

Created by: Deborah Johnson, Performance Assurance Manager - Social Care

Performance Summary

As at Month End: January 2017

*'DOT' - Direction of travel represents the direction of 'performance' since the previous month with reference to the polarity of 'good' performance for that measure. Colours have been added to help distinguish better and worse performance. Key Below:-

- ↑ - increase in numbers (no good/bad performance)
- - stable with last month (no good/bad performance)
- ↓ - decrease in numbers (no good/bad performance)
- ↑ (green) - improvement in performance
- ↓ (orange) - decline in performance but still within limits of target
- ↓ (red) - decline in performance, not on target
- (green) - no movement but within limits of target
- (orange) - no movement, not on target

NO.	INDICATOR	GOOD PERF IS	DATA NOTE (Monthly)	2016 / 17					DOT (Month on Month)	RAG (in month)	Target and Tolerances			YR ON YR TREND			LATEST BENCHMARKING - 2014/15				
				Nov-16	Dec-16	Jan-17	YTD	DATA NOTE			Red	Amber	Target Green	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	STAT NEIGH AVE	BEST STAT NEIGH	NAT AVE	NAT TOP QTLILE THRESHOLD	
LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN	6.1	Number of Looked After Children	Info	Count	479	484	482			↓				n/a		407	432				
	6.2	Rate of Looked After Children per 10,000 population aged under 18	Info	Rate per 10,000	85.0	85.9	85.5			↓		more than +/-5	+/-5	up to +/-2 of 73.5	70	70	76.6	75.8	56.0	60.0	-
	6.3	Admissions of Looked After Children	Info	Count	30	22	10	219	Financial Year	↓				n/a	147	175	208				
	6.4	Number of children who have ceased to be Looked After Children	High	Count	15	17	12	172	Financial Year	↓				n/a	136	160	192				
	6.5	Percentage of LAC who have ceased to be looked after due to permanence (Special Guardianship Order, Residence Order, Adoption)	High	Percentage	33.3%	38.5%	0.0%	23.2%	Financial Year	↓		<33%	33%>	35%+	40.4%	37.5%	40.1%				
	6.6	Percentage of LAC who have ceased to be looked after due to a Special Guardianship Order	High	Percentage	6.7%	17.6%	0.0%	9.3%	Financial Year	↓		range to be set									
	6.7	LAC cases reviewed within timescales	High	Percentage	98.5%	98.9%	98.2%	96.7%	Financial Year	↓		<90%	90%>	95%+	98.6%	94.9%	83.3%				
	6.8	% of children adopted	High	Percentage	33.3%	5.9%	75.0%	16.9%	Financial Year	↑	YTD	<20%	20%>	22.7%+	26.5%	26.3%	22.9%	18.8%	27.0%	15.0%	21.0%
	6.9	Health of Looked After Children - up to date Health Assessments	High	Percentage	95.9%	95.3%	92.7%			↓		<90%	90%>	95%+	82.7%	81.4%	92.8%				
	6.10	Health of Looked After Children - up to date Dental Assessments	High	Percentage	69.1%	66.8%	66.1%			↓		<90%	90%>	95%+	42.5%	58.8%	94.5%				
	6.11	Health of Looked After Children - Initial Health Assessments carried out within 20 working days	High	Percentage	17.2%	0.0%	50.0%			↑		range to be set									
	6.12	% of LAC with a PEP	High	Percentage	93.9%	92.2%	90.1%			↓		<90%	90%>	95%+	65.7%	68.7%	97.8%				
	6.13	% of LAC with up to date PEPs	High	Percentage	60.9%	80.1%	63.7%			↓		<90%	90%>	95%+	72.9%	71.4%	95.0%				
	6.14	% of eligible LAC with an up to date plan	High	Percentage	-	55.6%	79.4%	64.1%	Financial Year	↑		<93%	93%>	95%+	67.0%	98.8%	98.4%				
	6.15	% of completed LAC visits which were completed within timescale - National Minimum standard	High	Percentage	90.6%	89.7%	78.7%			↓		<95%	95%>	98%+		94.9%	98.1%				
	6.16	% of completed LAC visits which were completed within timescale - Rotherham standard	High	Percentage	80.5%	77.8%	65.6%	60.0%	Financial Year	↓		<85%	85%>	90%+		64.0%	80.2%				
CARE LEAVERS	7.1	Number of care leavers	Info	Count	224	224	224			→				n/a		183	197				
	7.3	% of care leavers in suitable accommodation	High	Percentage	-	-	-					<95%	95%>	98%+	96.3%	97.8%	96.5%	85.1%	98.0%	81.0%	90.0%
	7.4	% of care leavers in employment, education or training	High	Percentage	-	-	-					<70%	70%>	72%+	52.3%	71.0%	68.0%	50.4%	76.0%	48.0%	56.0%
PLACEMENTS	8.1	% of long term LAC in placements which have been stable for at least 2 years	High	Percentage	68.7%	67.6%	66.2%			↓		<68%	68%>	70%+	68.8%	71.9%	72.7%	68.2%	79.0%	68.0%	72.0%
	8.2	% of LAC who have had 3 or more placements - rolling 12 months	Low	Percentage	10.4%	12.8%	11.7%			↑		12%+	12%>	9.6%<	11.2%	12.0%	11.9%	9.2%	6.0%	10.0%	8.0%
	8.3	% of LAC in a family Based setting (Corporate Plan 2016 Indicator)	High	Percentage	86.2%	86.2%	86.3%			↑		range to be set 87.5%>									
	8.4	% of LAC placed with parents or other with parental responsibility (P1)	Low	Percentage	7.1%	7.4%	6.9%			↑		range to be set									
ADOPTIONS	9.1	% of adoptions completed within 12 months of SHOBPA	High	Percentage	20.0%	0.0%	33.3%	41.4%	Financial Year	↑	YTD	<83%	83%>	85%+	55.6%	84.6%	53.5%				
	9.2	Average number of days between a child becoming Looked After and having a adoption placement (A1) (Rolling 12 months)	Low	Rolling year - ave count	364.1	345.9	374.7		Rolling Year	↓	YTD	511+	511>	487<	661	417.5	338.5	546.5	336.0	593.0	520.0
	9.3	Average number of days between a placement order and being matched with an adoptive family (A2) (Rolling 12 months)	Low	Rolling year - ave count	142.9	216.9	208.4		Rolling Year	↑	YTD	127+	127>	121<	315	177.3	137.9	220.6	47.0	223.0	172.0
CASELOAD	10.1	Maximum caseload of social workers in key safeguarding teams (excluding children's disability team)	Low	Average count	-	19	18			↑		18+	18>	15<							
	10.2	Maximum caseload of social workers in LAC	Low	Average count	-	19	18			↑		21+	20>	18<							

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

DEFINITION

Children in care or 'looked after children' are children who have become the responsibility of the local authority. This can happen voluntarily by parents struggling to cope or through an intervention by children's services because a child is at risk of significant harm.

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

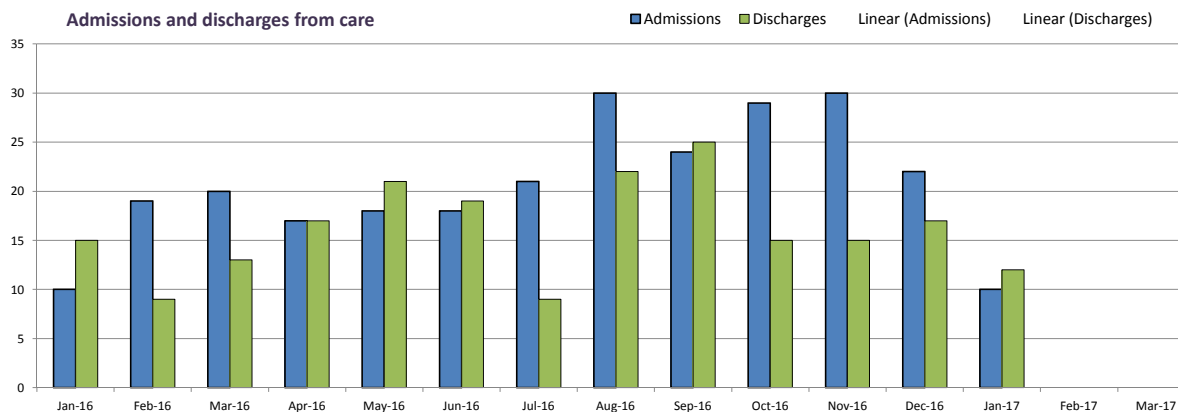
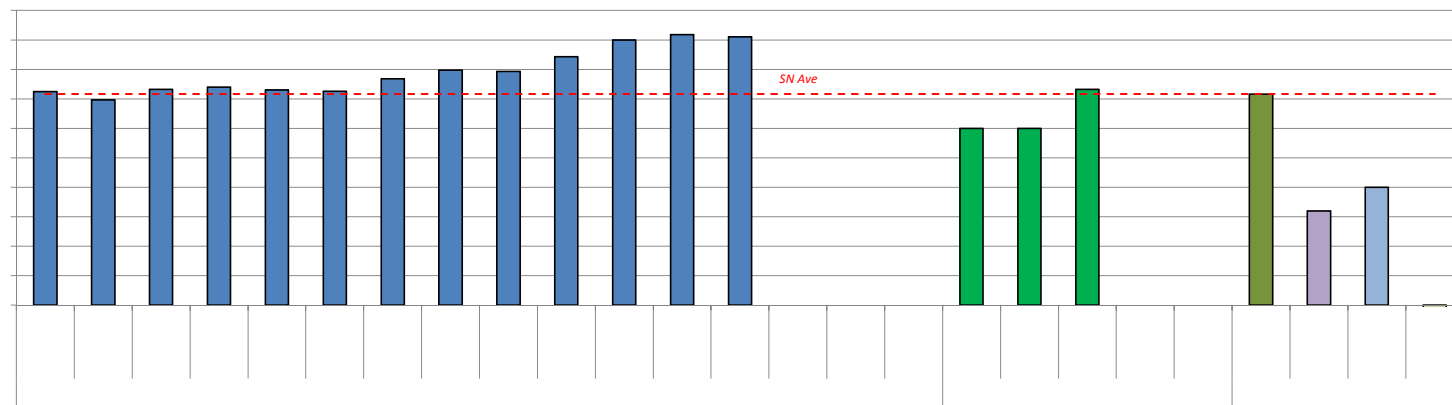
The overall trend of admissions to care continues to rise. In the last three months we have seen a significant rise of children (stock) with the number of children leaving care being lower than those being admitted to care (flow). The overall rate for Rotherham remains significantly higher than that of our statistical neighbours. Outcomes are rarely improved for young people coming into care in adolescence who make up the most significant proportion of our care population. Work has commenced to develop a range of services that will address this such as an Edge of Care intervention team, Family Group Conferencing and an expanded Therapeutic Team. This will enable more adolescents to remain and/or return home. It is not unusual for numbers of LAC in an authority in intervention to rise as action is taken to address cases which have been drifting previously. The rise in the numbers of care proceedings in Rotherham is testimony to this happening locally. There is no feedback from the courts to suggest that any children are being brought before them unnecessarily.

	6.2	6.1	6.3	6.4
Rate of children looked after per 10K pop				
Number of LAC				
Admissions of children looked after				
No. of children who have ceased to be LAC				

IN MONTH PERFORMANCE		6.2	6.1	6.3	6.4
	Jan-16	76.2	430	10	15
	Feb-16	74.8	422	19	9
	Mar-16	76.6	432	20	13
	Apr-16	77.0	434	17	17
	May-16	76.5	431	18	21
	Jun-16	76.3	430	18	19
	Jul-16	78.4	442	21	9
	Aug-16	79.8	450	30	22
	Sep-16	79.7	449	24	25
	Oct-16	82.2	463	29	15
	Nov-16	85.0	479	30	15
	Dec-16	85.9	484	22	17
	Jan-17	85.5	482	10	12
	Feb-17				
Mar-17					

ANNUAL TREND		6.2	6.1	6.3	6.4
	2013/ 14	70.0		147	136
	2014/ 15	70.0		175	160
	2015/ 16	76.6	432	208	192
2016/ 17 YTD		480	219	172	

LATEST BENCHMARKING		6.2	6.1	6.3	6.4
	SN AVE	75.8			
	BEST SN	56.0			
	NAT AVE	60.0			
NAT TOP Q TILE	-				



PLANS - IN DATE

DEFINITION	A child's plan is to be developed for an individual child if they have a "wellbeing need" that requires a targeted intervention. Each type of plan has a completion target. When a Looked After Child reaches 16 years and 3 months they become eligible for a 'Pathway Plan' - this plan focuses on preparing a young person for adulthood and their future (For example; future accommodation, post 16 Education/Training and Employment)
-------------------	---

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS	<p>As shown in the note below the data presented should be viewed with with caution. Workers continue working through their caseloads to manually type plan information into the new system. This is a far more intensive piece of work than on the previous system as the new database will contain the full content of the plan and not just the date. However once the first plan is created any subsequent plans are much easier to update.</p> <p>The LAC team performance is particularly disappointing. The Teams had been set the deadline of early February to address the plan system transfer which looks to have been missed. Progress is expected as additional capacity comes on line, each child for who the system says does not have an up to date plan will be reviewed and remedial action specified. This will be monitored via operational performance meetings.</p>
-----------------------------	---

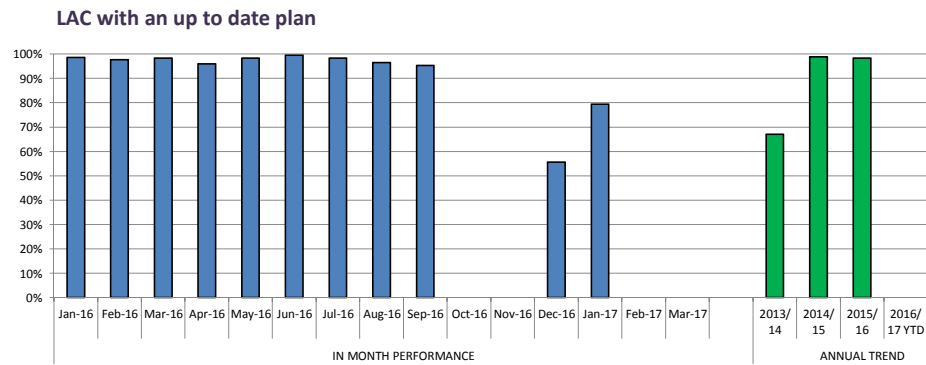
DATA NOTE: Plans information could not be migrated from CCM into LCS (Liquid Logic). October & November data is unavailable due to information not being in the system and the input work started in December. Figures are based on data entered at month end. January represents true performance.

		6.14
		LAC with an up to date plan
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Jan-16	98.6%
	Feb-16	97.7%
	Mar-16	98.4%
	Apr-16	96.0%
	May-16	98.4%
	Jun-16	99.5%
	Jul-16	98.4%
	Aug-16	96.4%
	Sep-16	95.3%
	Oct-16	Performance data unavailable, due to the information not being migrated into LL.
	Nov-16	Performance data unavailable, due to the information not being migrated into LL.
	Dec-16	55.6%
	Jan-17	79.4%
	Feb-17	
Mar-17		

ANNUAL TREND	2013/ 14	67.0%
	2014/ 15	98.8%
	2015/ 16	98.4%
	2016/ 17 YTD	

LATEST BENCHMARKING	SN AVE	
	BEST SN	
	NAT AVE	
	NAT TOP QTILE	

data position 13th Jan: 81% CIN, 83% CPP, 61% LAC, 82% Care Leavers



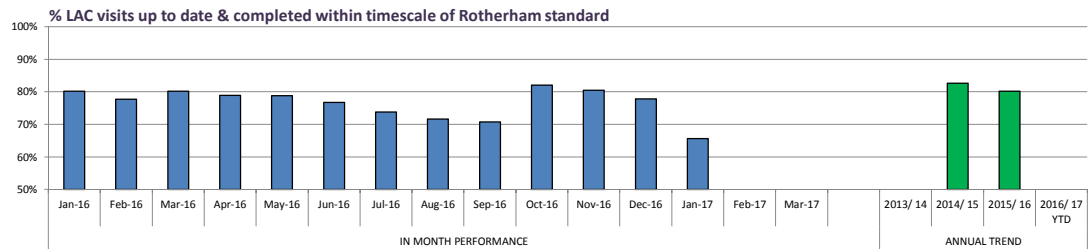
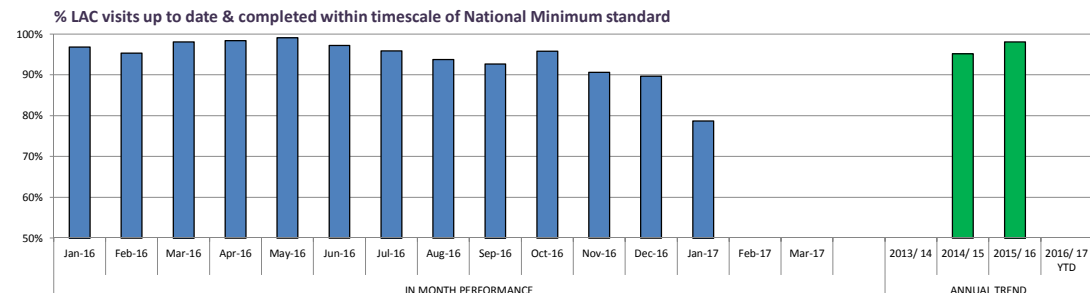
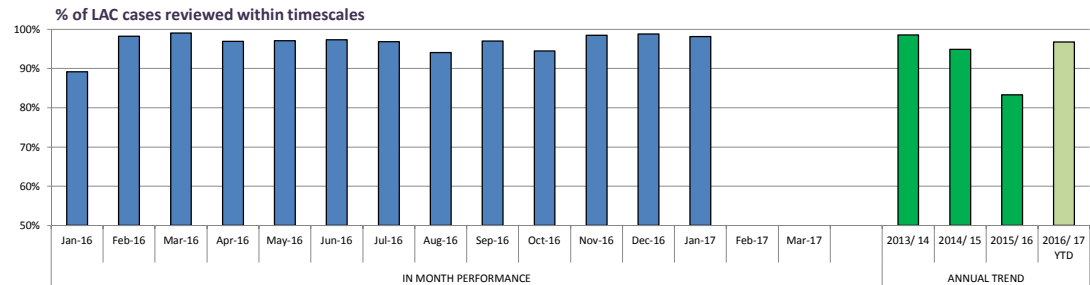
LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN - REVIEWS & VISITS

DEFINITION	The purpose of LAC review meeting is to consider the plan for the welfare of the looked after child and achieve Permanence for them within a timescale that meets their needs. The review is chaired by an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)
	The LA is also responsible for appointing a representative to visit the child wherever he or she is living to ensure that his/her welfare continues to be safeguarded and promoted. The minimum national timescales for visits is within one week of placement, then six weekly until the child has been in placement for a year and the 12 weekly thereafter. Rotherham have set a higher standard of within first week then four weekly thereafter until the child has been permanently matched to the placement.

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS	Current performance on LAC visits are monitored by the head of service daily and at weekly performance meeting. Any visit exceeding statutory minimum timescales is examined on a child by child basis to ensure they have been subsequently visited and to ensure the reason for lateness is understood. In addition to statutory minimum standards, Rotherham has set a local standard that exceeds the National one, performance in relation to local standard is still not good enough and will continue to be the focus of sustained management attention. There are some children in care however who are visited more often than the Rotherham standard according to their need at any particular time. There is now a clear process in place for social workers to ensure the Rotherham standard is proportionate to need but remains within the national standard. This will ensure that those LAC in greatest need receive appropriate levels of social workers support.
	LAC visits on time remain an area of concern due to the high turnover of staff. This should improve after this latest round of recruitment which is starting to see a move to increase the ratio of permanent staff

Data Issue: Issues identified in last month's report have now been rectified and the November, December & January data has been updated.

		6.7		6.15	6.16
		No. LAC cases reviewed within timescales	% of LAC cases reviewed within timescales	% LAC visits up to date & completed within timescale of National Minimum standard	% LAC visits up to date & completed within timescale of Rotherham standard
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Jan-16	74 of 83	89.2%	96.8%	80.2%
	Feb-16	114 of 116	98.3%	95.3%	77.8%
	Mar-16	104 of 105	99.0%	98.1%	80.2%
	Apr-16	96 of 99	97.0%	98.4%	78.9%
	May-16	101 of 104	97.1%	99.1%	78.8%
	Jun-16	111 of 114	97.4%	97.2%	76.7%
	Jul-16	93 of 96	96.9%	95.9%	73.8%
	Aug-16	79 of 84	94.0%	93.8%	71.6%
	Sep-16	98 of 101	97.0%	92.7%	70.7%
	Oct-16	188 of 199	94.5%	95.8%	82.0%
	Nov-16	133 of 135	98.5%	90.6%	80.5%
	Dec-16	86 of 87	98.9%	89.7%	77.8%
	Jan-17	54 of 55	98.2%	78.7%	65.6%
	Feb-17				
Mar-17					
ANNUAL TREND	2013/ 14		98.6%		
	2014/ 15		94.9%	95.2%	82.6%
	2015/ 16		83.3%	98.1%	80.2%
	2016/ 17 YTD		96.7%		



LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN - PLACEMENTS

DEFINITION A LAC placement is where a child has become the responsibility of the local authority (LAC) and is placed with foster carers, in residential homes or with parents or other relatives.

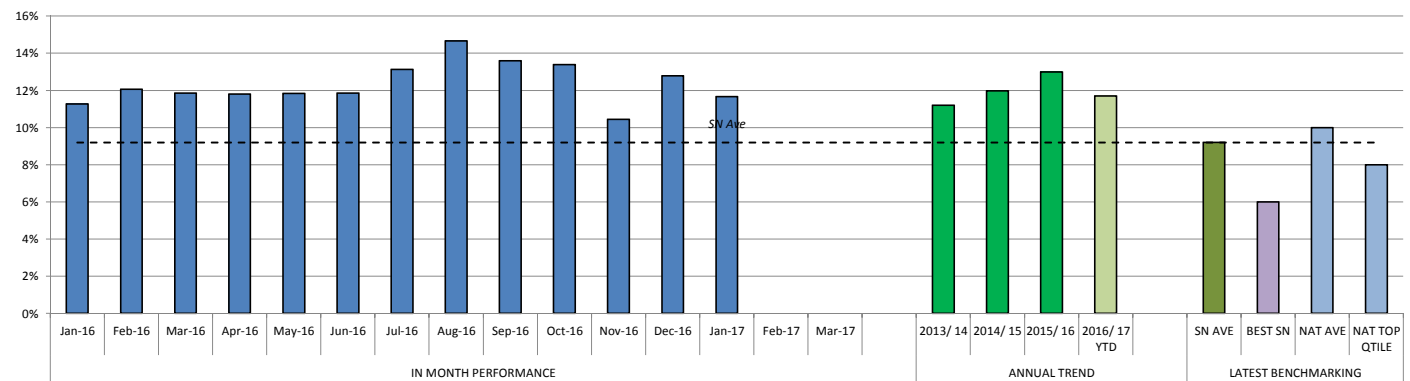
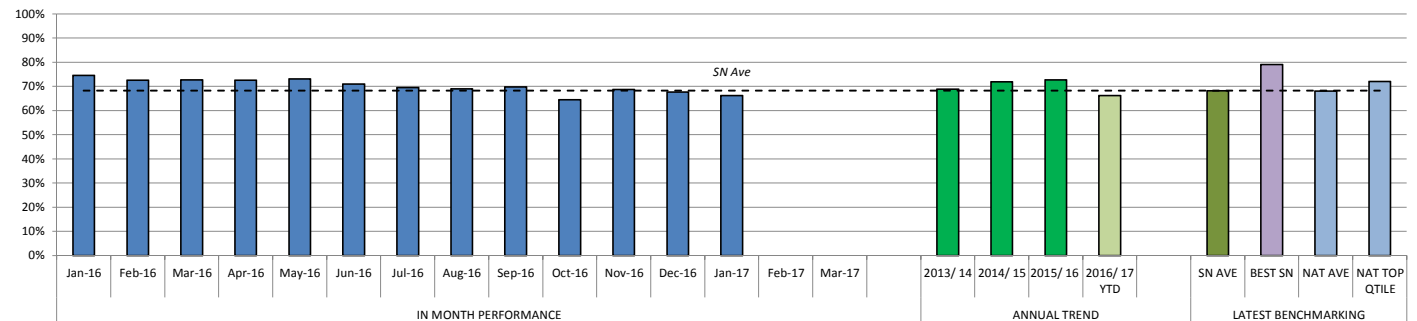
PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

The January performance for children who have had three or more placement moves has seen a small improvement, whilst it has reduced, it continues to be higher than all other benchmarks. Our target of reducing to less than 10% remains and is still achievable.

The number of children who experience a stable placement for over two years is just below that of our statistical neighbours and the national average. These two statistics could suggest that we need to improve our preventative work to reduce initial placement disruption. If a child experiences a disruption they are more likely to disrupt again. It will also be important to consider the impact of our return home programme our wish to return children to live in rotherham which will increase the number of children experiencing placement moves. There is good progress being made in reducing the numbers of children placed in residential care. While the change for them signifies a disruption, and will have some impact on these performance measures, they are only being moved if the new arrangement is demonstrably in their best long term interests. The Fostering Allowance and Support Scheme has recently been approved which should increase the growth of in-house foster carers. This in turn will support placement stability - a recent audit evidenced that over the past six months 18 Independent Fostering Agency placements disrupted whilst only four in-house placements disrupted over the same period. Whilst there can be no direct correlation more in-house placements should support placement stability. In addition the proposed expansion of the in-house LAC therapy team should also ensure greater support to carers and inturn the stability of the placement.

Data Issue: Issues identified in last month's report have now been rectified.

		8.1		8.2	
		No. of long term LAC placements stable for at least 2 years	% long term LAC placements stable for at least 2 years	No. of LAC who have had 3 or more placements - rolling 12 months	% LAC who have had 3 or more placements - rolling 12 months
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Jan-16	108 of 145	74.5%	47 of 417	11.3%
	Feb-16	108 of 149	72.5%	51 of 423	12.1%
	Mar-16	109 of 150	72.7%	51 of 430	11.9%
	Apr-16	103 of 142	72.5%	51 of 432	11.8%
	May-16	103 of 141	73.0%	51 of 431	11.8%
	Jun-16	98 of 138	71.0%	51 of 430	11.9%
	Jul-16	98 of 141	69.5%	58 of 442	13.1%
	Aug-16	98 of 142	69.0%	66 of 450	14.7%
	Sep-16	99 of 142	69.7%	61 of 449	13.6%
	Oct-16	136 of 211	64.5%	58 of 433	13.4%
	Nov-16	101 of 147	68.7%	50 of 479	10.4%
	Dec-16	98 of 145	67.6%	62 of 485	12.8%
	Jan-17	96 of 145	66.2%	56 of 480	11.7%
	Feb-17				
Mar-17					
ANNUAL TREND	2013/ 14	108 of 157	68.8%	44 of 393	11.2%
	2014/ 15	110 of 153	71.9%	49 of 409	12.0%
	2015/ 16	109 of 150	72.7%	56 of 431	13.0%
	2016/ 17 YTD	96 of 145	66.2%	56 of 480	11.7%
LATEST BENCHMARKING	SN AVE		68.2%		9.2%
	BEST SN		79.0%		6.0%
	NAT AVE		68.0%		10.0%
	NAT TOP QTILE		72.0%		8.0%



LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN - HEALTH

DEFINITION

Local authorities have a duty to safeguard and to promote the welfare of the children they look after, therefore the local authority should make arrangements to ensure that every child who is looked after has his/her health needs fully assessed and a health plan clearly set out.

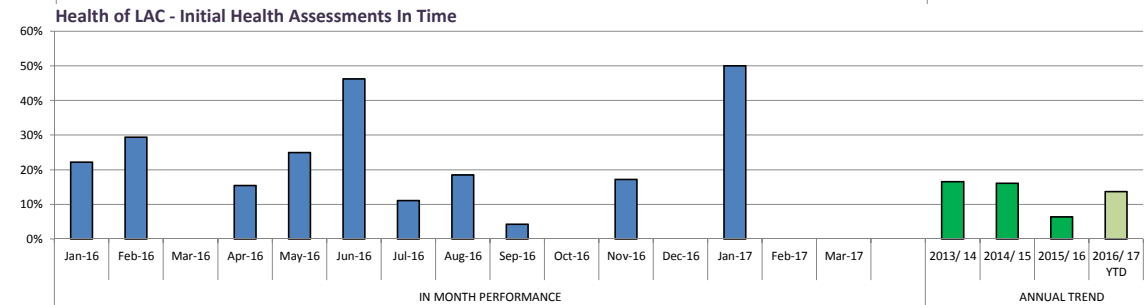
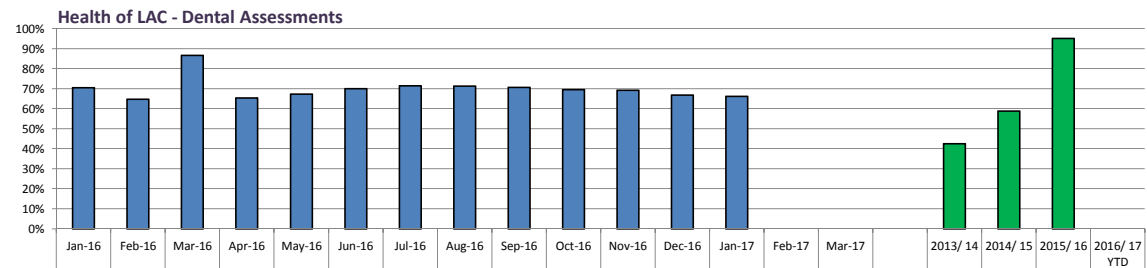
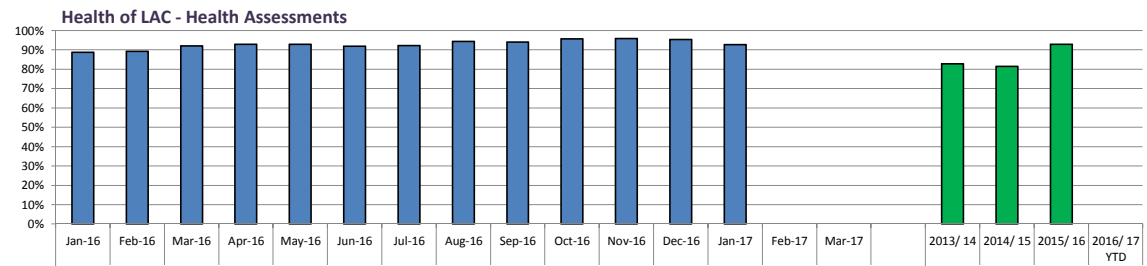
PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

Performance in relation to health and dental assessments was poor and has been the focus of concerted joint effort and has shown improvement. Close monitoring means that any dips in performance are understood. The overall number of health assessments completed remains at a good level and the number of initial health assessments has risen significantly to 50% on time the highest level of the year. This is due to the access health services have to the new case management system that has improved the administration of the process. From our reviews we know that in the main, those not having health or dental checks are the older young people who are recorded as 'refuses'. This is no longer going to be accepted on face value and we will be actively exploring with health colleagues how we can promote the reviews as something useful and 'young person friendly'. This will focus on the things that interest most young people such as weight, hair and skin as well as other aspects of health. We will also make sure that we are creative in thinking about how we can actively engage young people and 'reach out' to them rather than expecting them to attend a standard clinic appointment. Performance will continue to be very closely monitored. Health colleagues have identified that early contact in a non-clinical setting may prove to be the best way to sustain young people engagement in the process. As a result they will be running a pilot whereby they visit newly admitted young people in their placement to support them to attend their health assessment. Joint intervention between Health and LAC Head of Service to support locality teams to better performance in respect of Initial Health Assessments.

		6.9	6.1	6.11
		Health of LAC - Health Assessments	Health of LAC - Dental Assessments	Health of LAC - Initial Health Assessments In Time
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Jan-16	88.7%	70.5%	22.2%
	Feb-16	89.3%	64.7%	29.4%
	Mar-16	92.1%	86.6%	0.0%
	Apr-16	92.9%	65.3%	15.4%
	May-16	92.8%	67.2%	25.0%
	Jun-16	91.8%	69.9%	46.2%
	Jul-16	92.2%	71.4%	11.1%
	Aug-16	94.3%	71.3%	18.5%
	Sep-16	94.0%	70.6%	4.2%
	Oct-16	95.7%	69.5%	0.0%
	Nov-16	95.9%	69.1%	17.2%
	Dec-16	95.3%	66.8%	0.0%
	Jan-17	92.7%	66.1%	50.0%
Feb-17				
Mar-17				

ANNUAL TREND		82.7%	42.5%	16.5%
	2013/ 14	82.7%	42.5%	16.5%
	2014/ 15	81.4%	58.8%	16.1%
	2015/ 16	92.8%	95.0%	6.4%
	2016/ 17 YTD			13.7%

LATEST BENCHMARKING			
	SN AVE		
	BEST SN		
	NAT AVE		
	NAT TOP QTILE		



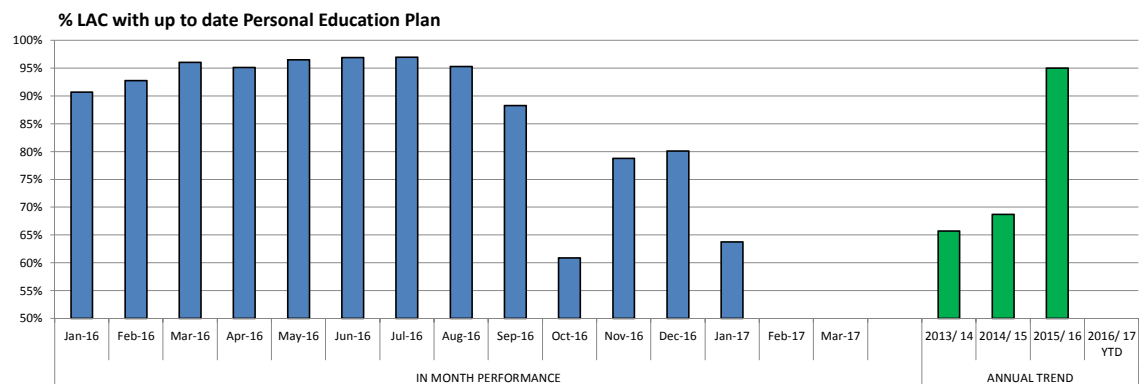
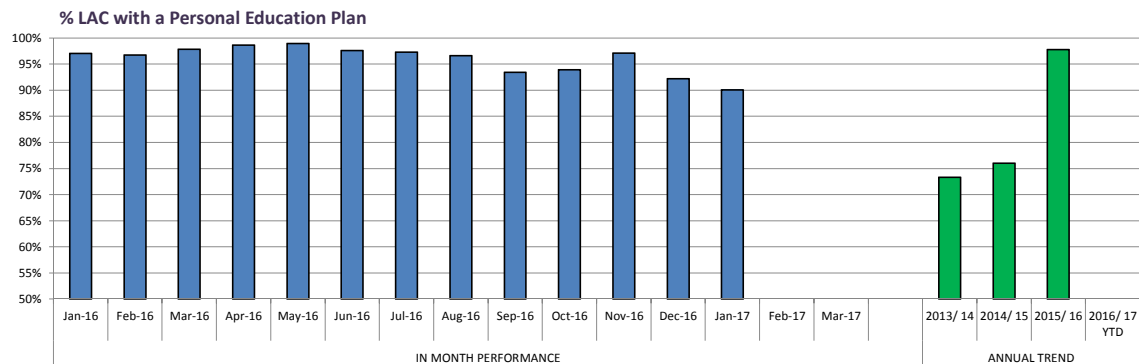
LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN - PERSONAL EDUCATION PLANS

DEFINITION	A personal education plan (PEP) is a school based meeting to plan for the education of a child in care. The government have made PEPs a statutory requirement for children in care to help track and promote their achievements.
PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS	Prior to September 2015 PEPs were in place for compulsory school-age children only. PEPs are now in place for LAC aged two to their 18th birthday. There has been good improvement within the year for children and young people having an up-to-date plan but there is more to do to ensure that every child and young person has a plan in place. The focus on quality is now shifting to address the numbers of children and young people who are not in full time education and those whose school place is known to be fragile. The virtual school governing body will take responsibility for driving this improvement area. Exception reporting has been provided for the children who are without an up to date pep.

Data Issue: Issues identified in last month's report have now been rectified and the November, December & January data has been updated.

		6.12		6.13	
		Number of Eligible LAC with a Personal Education Plan	% LAC with a Personal Education Plan	Number of LAC with up to date Personal Education Plan	% LAC with up to date Personal Education Plan
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Jan-16	260 of 268	97.0%	243 of 268	90.7%
	Feb-16	267 of 276	96.7%	256 of 276	92.8%
	Mar-16	272 of 278	97.8%	267 of 278	96.0%
	Apr-16	283 of 287	98.6%	273 of 287	95.1%
	May-16	282 of 285	98.9%	275 of 285	96.5%
	Jun-16	282 of 289	97.6%	280 of 289	96.9%
	Jul-16	287 of 295	97.3%	286 of 295	96.9%
	Aug-16	287 of 297	96.6%	283 of 297	95.3%
	Sep-16	255 of 273	93.4%	241 of 273	88.3%
	Oct-16	216 of 230	93.9%	140 of 230	60.9%
	Nov-16	233 of 240	97.1%	189 of 240	78.8%
	Dec-16	236 of 256	92.2%	205 of 256	80.1%
	Jan-17	236 of 262	90.1%	167 of 262	63.7%
Feb-17					
Mar-17					
ANNUAL TREND	2013/ 14		73.3%		65.7%
	2014/ 15		76.0%		68.7%
	2015/ 16		97.8%		95.0%
	2016/ 17 YTD				
LATEST BENCHMARKING	SN AVE				
	BEST SN				
	NAT AVE				
	NAT TOP QTILE				

Data issue: No start or end dates for PEPs within LCS and duplicate PEPs



CARE LEAVERS

DEFINITION A care leaver is defined as a person aged 25 or under, who has been looked after away from home by a local authority for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14; and who was looked after away from home by the local authority at school-leaving age or after that date. Suitable accommodation is defined as any that is not prison or bed and breakfast.

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

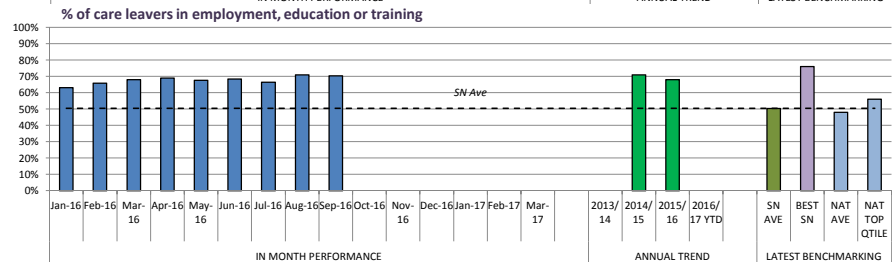
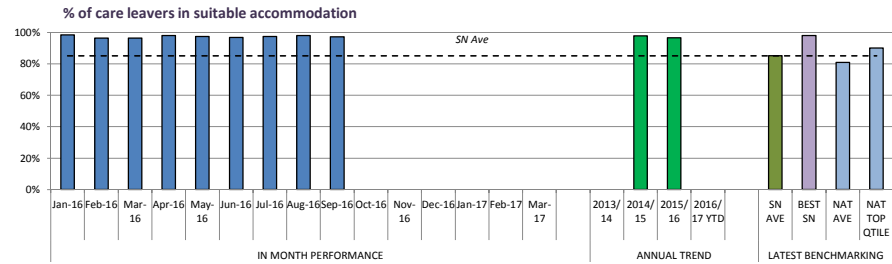
See note below for last quarter reporting . Team managers continue to report performance at fortnightly performance meetings so that compliance can be assured.

DATA NOTE: Care Leavers information was not part of the automated data migration, service are in the process of manually inputting full cohort information. Monthly monitoring will be re-established when this is complete.

		7.1	7.3	7.4
		Number of care leavers	% of care leavers in suitable accommodation	% of care leavers in employment, education or training
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Jan-16	198	98.5%	63.1%
	Feb-16	196	96.4%	65.8%
	Mar-16	197	96.5%	68.0%
	Apr-16	192	97.9%	68.9%
	May-16	188	97.3%	67.6%
	Jun-16	187	96.8%	68.5%
	Jul-16	185	97.3%	66.5%
	Aug-16	200	98.0%	71.0%
	Sep-16	201	97.1%	70.3%
	Oct-16	222	Performance unavailable due to no migration of data to Liquid Logic	
	Nov-16	224		
	Dec-16	224		
	Jan-17	224		
	Feb-17			
Mar-17				

ANNUAL TREND	2013/ 14			
	2014/ 15	183	97.8%	71.0%
	2015/ 16	197	96.5%	68.0%
	2016/ 17 YTD	224		

LATEST BENCHMARKING	SN AVE	85.1%	50.4%
	BEST SN	98.0%	76.0%
	NAT AVE	81.0%	48.0%
	NAT TOP Q TILE	90.0%	56.0%



ADOPTIONS

DEFINITION

Following a child becoming a LAC, it may be deemed suitable for a child to become adopted which is a legal process of becoming a non-biological parent. The date it is agreed that it is in the best interests of the child that they should be placed for adoption is known as their 'SHOBPA'. Following this a family finding process is undertaken to find a suitable match for the child based on the child's needs, they will then be matched with an adopter(s) followed by placement with their adopter(s). This adoption placement is monitored for a minimum of 10 weeks and assessed as stable and secure before the final adoption order is granted by court decision and the adoption order is made .

Targets for measures A1 and A2 are set centrally by government office.

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

Performance each month can vary significantly given the size of the cohort which is always very small.

Given the small numbers it is most useful to look at a rolling 12 months than a month snapshot and overall performance in this area over the last three years has shown an improving trend. Importantly, all children awaiting adoption are reviewed in the fortnightly performance meeting and the reasons for delay examined and understood. The work of the new 'permanence' team which has been in place since January is really starting to show impact in terms of both reducing the length of care proceedings and ensuring timely matching and placing of younger children with prospective adopters. The good quality of the work of this team is attracting regular positive feedback from the courts and the impact on outcomes for children is tangible. The introduction of the Regional Adoption Agency in 2017 should further speed up the adoption process due to the pooling of resources in respect of assessments and adoptive parents.

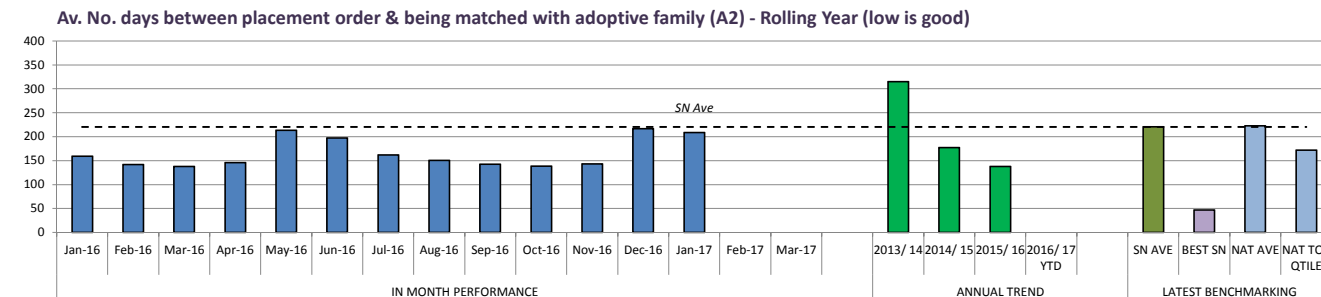
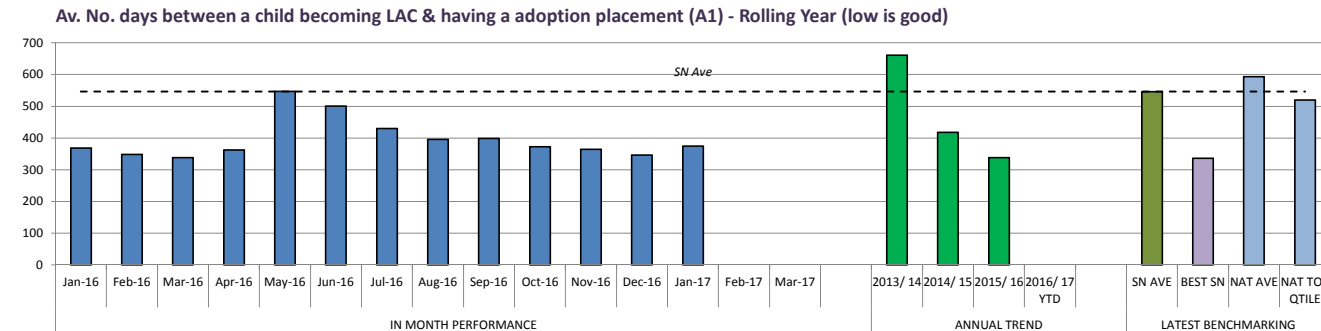
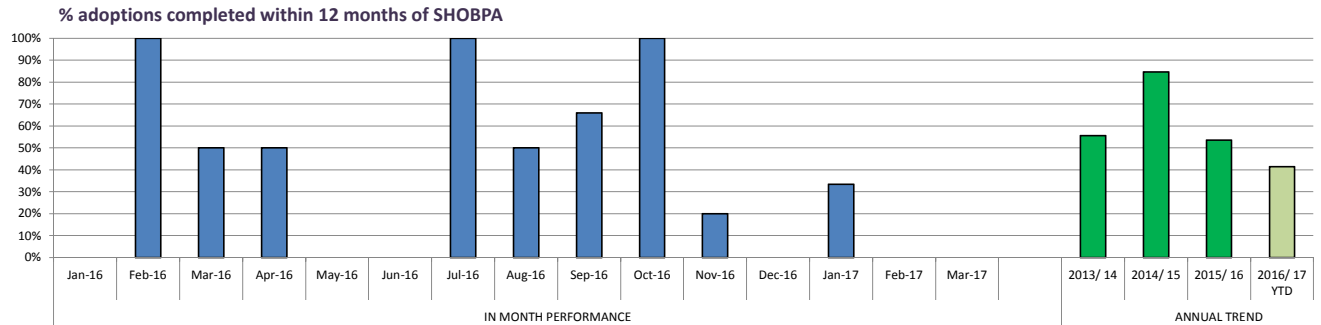
It is known that a number of children will have their final adoption approval decision before the end of the financial year, the service are projecting another 15 adoptions between January and March.

		9.1	9.2	9.3
	Number of adoptions	% adoptions completed within 12 months of SHOBPA	Av. No. days between a child becoming LAC & having a adoption placement (A1) (rolling yr.)	Av. No. days between placement order & being matched with adoptive family (A2) (rolling yr.)

IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Month	Number of adoptions	% adoptions completed within 12 months of SHOBPA	Av. No. days between a child becoming LAC & having a adoption placement (A1) (rolling yr.)	Av. No. days between placement order & being matched with adoptive family (A2) (rolling yr.)
	Jan-16	3	0%	368.0	159.5
	Feb-16	7	100%	348.4	141.7
	Mar-16	4	50%	338.4	137.9
	Apr-16	2	50%	362.5	145.5
	May-16	2	0%	546.8	213.3
	Jun-16	1	0%	500.4	197.0
	Jul-16	2	100%	430.1	161.8
	Aug-16	2	50%	395.7	150.7
	Sep-16	3	66%	398.3	142.4
	Oct-16	2	100%	372.3	138.6
	Nov-16	5	20%	364.1	142.9
	Dec-16	1	0%	345.9	216.9
	Jan-17	9	33%	374.7	208.4
	Feb-17				
	Mar-17				

ANNUAL TREND	Year	Number of adoptions	% adoptions completed within 12 months of SHOBPA	Av. No. days between a child becoming LAC & having a adoption placement (A1) (rolling yr.)	Av. No. days between placement order & being matched with adoptive family (A2) (rolling yr.)
	2013/ 14		55.6%	661.0	315.0
	2014/ 15		84.6%	417.5	177.3
	2015/ 16	43	53.5%	338.4	137.9
	2016/ 17 YTD	29	41.4%		

LATEST BENCHMARKING	Metric	Av. No. days between a child becoming LAC & having a adoption placement (A1) (rolling yr.)	Av. No. days between placement order & being matched with adoptive family (A2) (rolling yr.)
	SN AVE	546.5	220.6
	BEST SN	336.0	47.0
	NAT AVE	593.0	223.0
	NAT TOP Q TILE	520.0	172.0



*Annual Trend relates to current reporting year April to Mar - not rolling year

**adoptions have a 28 day appeal period so any children adopted in the last 28 days are still subject to appeal

CASELOADS

DEFINITION

Caseload figures relate to the number of children the social worker is currently the lead key worker. Fieldwork teams relate to frontline social care services including the four Duty Teams, none Long Term CIN Teams, two LAC teams and the CSE Team. All averages are calculated on a full time equivalency basis, based on the number of hours the worker is contracted to work.

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

The impact of rising LAC has been a rise in the number of ave.cases per SW to 12.5 however the maximum is now at 18 well within accepted limits. A management review of all children with a section 20 legal status has identified the potential to return home for up to 15 children. If this is achieved, combined with new edge of care interventions, this will result in a significant decrease in workload.

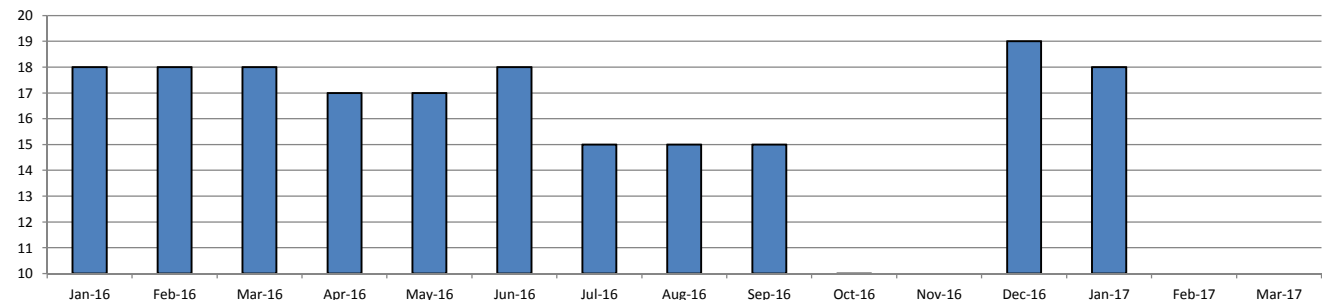
DATA NOTE: Historical reporting has not been possible due to data validation issues linked to the recording of allocations 'Key Team' when cases are transferred between services and worker. Awareness raising has been undertaken to ensure managers and, in turn workers are fully aware of the importance of the information and wider impact on reporting.

10.2	10.3
Maximum caseload of social workers in LAC Teams	Av. no. cases in LAC Teams

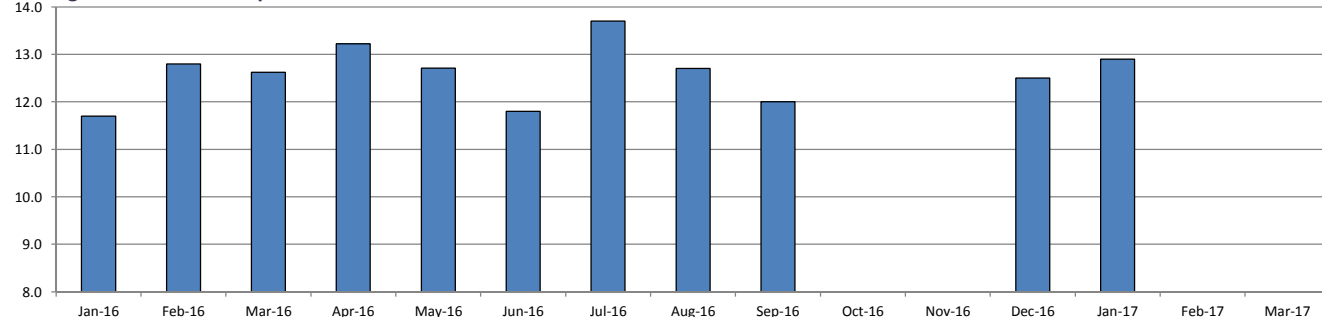
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Jan-16	18	11.7
	Feb-16	18	12.8
	Mar-16	18	12.6
	Apr-16	17	13.2
	May-16	17	12.7
	Jun-16	18	11.8
	Jul-16	15	13.7
	Aug-16	15	12.7
	Sep-16	15	12.0
	Oct-16	Not historically reportable see data note above	
	Nov-16	Not historically reportable see data note above	
	Dec-16	19	12.5
	Jan-17	18	12.9
Feb-17			
Mar-17			

ANNUAL TREND	2013/ 14		
	2014/ 15		
	2015/ 16	19.2	14.1
	2016/ 17		

Maximum caseload of social workers



Average number of cases per team





CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER'S (IRO'S) Challenge and Escalation Overview

Purpose of the Report

The key aim of this report is to provide a regular overview of the number of Escalations by IRO's via the formal Challenge and Escalation process (this replaced the DRP – Dispute Resolution process in September 2016)

IRO Monitoring and Challenge

The IRO Handbook and Care Planning Regulations (2010) clearly place responsibility upon the IRO to 'monitor the child's case' on an ongoing basis. There is the expectation that the IRO will challenge managers where necessary and 'champion' positive care planning which is timely and relevant in respect of individual children. As a part of the monitoring function, the IRO also has a duty to monitor the performance of the local authority's function as a corporate parent and to identify any areas of poor practice. IRO's seek to ensure good outcomes for children are identified and seek to support this on an individual basis through the quality assurance role they have within the LAC Review process.

The IRO's undertake considerable work in seeking to resolve differences of opinion (disputes) informally and seek to ensure care plans and actions from reviews are based on assessments that consider the individual needs of children and their families. Where resolution focused practice has not supported the progress of the child or young person's plan, the IRO has a statutory duty to address this via the escalation process.

The Escalation and Challenge Process

Within Rotherham the Challenge and Escalation process is the formal route by which an IRO can escalate their concern to the appropriate management level.

Rotherham's Escalation and challenge process was re-launched following review in September 2016. There are 5 stages which can be commenced at any point and at

any stage. The level is determined by the IRO and Operations manager for the IRO's and determining factors would be the urgency and level of authority needed to make decisions to progress the issues identified.

The stages reflect the level of management that that the concern should raised with and the identified response time.

- Stage 1 - IRO to Team manager (1 day to respond)
- Stage 2 - Ops manager for IRO's to Service manager (5 days)
- Stage 3 - HofS Safeguarding to HofS (4 days)
- Stage 4 - HofS Safeguarding to Deputy Director / Director (5 days)
- Stage 5 – Referral to CAFCASS
-

The process should provide for no more than 20 working days, to resolve the issue. In practice however it can take longer due to, the complexity of the issues raised via the process.

IRO Quality Assurance and compliance

As part of the role of driving forward quality outcomes, as well as ensuring compliance, the IRO service now completes an IRO Quality Assurance and Compliance checklist. This process has been in place since October 2016 and is completed for each young person before their looked after reviews. It allows the IRO to comment on key areas of the young person's plan and journey through care and offer an overall grading as to the quality of the work completed around the young person. There are 4 grading; Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement and Inadequate. In order not to duplicate work, where a case is graded as Inadequate this is also regarded as a stage 1 Escalation and a plan is formulated between the IRO and Team manager following the review to support improvement.

IRO Activity from October 2016 to end of January 2017

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Contact with CAFCASS
October	14	1	1	-	-
November	19	2	2	-	-
December	10	2	3	-	-
January	11	-	2	-	-
Total	54	5	8		0

Using early intervention and monitoring complex cases between the reviews, the IRO works with CYPS, Virtual school, health and other key agencies to try and address issues where there is the time to do so at a local level and outside of this process. The Challenge and Escalation process is used where there is a visible impact for the young person or a level of concern that if action is not taken quickly, this will impact on the young person.

Key themes and issues raised via the Escalations are:

- Concerns over care planning or drift and delay
- Delay in progressing Care proceedings and lengthy periods of care under section 20
- A lack of supervision leading to a lack of management oversight and grip
- Concern around decision-making; safeguarding issues and risk being managed in placement.
- Delay in finding a long term placement, despite ongoing assessment highlighting the placement cannot meet the needs of the child
- Delay in permanence planning in respect of SGO's
- Concerns re transition to adults services and delay in the adult assessment process commencing
- Delay in the provision of therapeutic support
- Concerns around the regulation of placement with parents and management of risk related to this.
- Lack of health assessment
- Lack of PEP and or appropriate education provision
- Progression of contact
- Placement suitability
- Lack of appropriate written assessment given current level of need and risk

These key themes and issues are similar to previous periods. Of significance is the numbers that are having to be formally raised with the Head of Service as these have not been through the various stages. Key issues are the timely progression of legal action and appropriate orders and placement sufficiency.

Rebecca Wall – Operations Manager for IRO's
Children's Safeguarding Service

Summary Sheet**Council Report**

Title Looked After Children Missing from Care

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan? No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report Ian Thomas

Report Author(s) Tracy Moss/Ian Walker

Ward(s) Affected All

Summary There has been a recent improvement in the quality of the data available relating to children missing from care. This data evidences a significant improvement in the numbers of missing incidents, the numbers of children involved and the length of time those young people go missing. This reduction will have a positive impact on other performance measures and the general safeguarding of looked after children.

Recommendations The Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to note the contents of this report.

List of Appendices Included None

Background Papers None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel
None

Council Approval Required No

Exempt from the Press and Public No

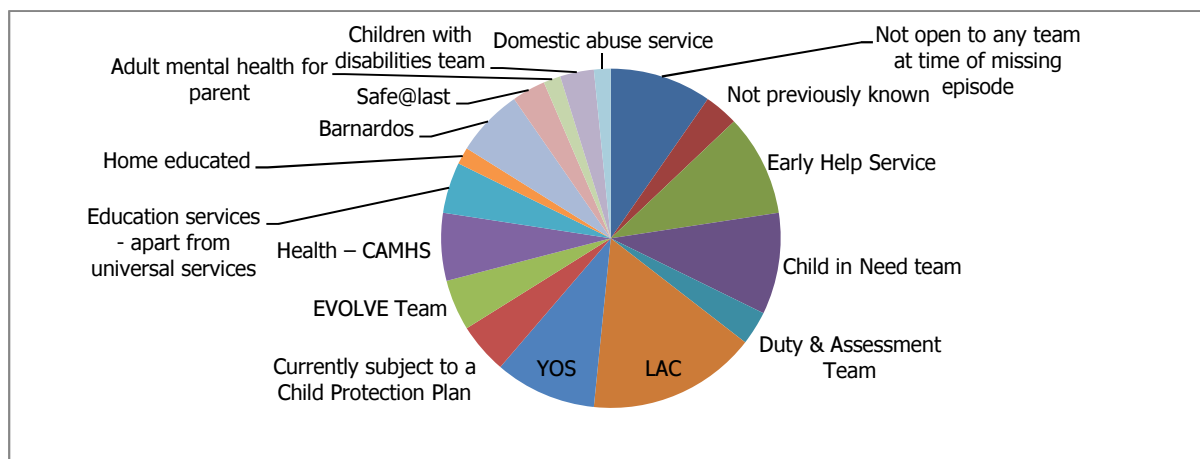
Title: Looked After Children Missing from Care

1. Recommendations

1.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended only to note the contents of this report.

2. Background

2.1 The chart below is taken from a RLSCB Multi –Agency audit which is looking at a whole range of issues, which is yet to be completed, however some findings will be shared for the purposes of this report. What this chart highlights is that out of the overall amount of children that go missing the percentage of LAC children is the largest cohort within the total number of missing incidents.



3. Key Issues

3.1 Looked After Children (LAC) Missing Episode Data

3.1.1 The following data looks to provide statistical evidence LAC children reported “missing” from the 1st December 2016 to 13th February 2017:

- Number of LAC Missing incidents – 50
- Number of young people involved – 24
- Age Range – 12 to 17
- Average time missing – 4hrs (Total time is 199 hours 09 minutes)
- Longest time missing – 21hrs 30mins

- Number of Return Interviews completed (RHIs) – 18

3.1.2 Reasons for shortfalls – 4 RHI's declined (a young person can be missing on more than one occasion and if there are incidents close together they will only have one interview which covers more incidents).

- Episodes which were curfew issues – 8

3.2 The following data refers to the same time last year 1st December 2015 to 13th February 2016:

- Number of incidents – 91
- Number. of young people involved – 47
- Age Range – 12 to 17
- Average time missing – 6hrs 30mins (Total time is **595** hours **52** minutes)
- Longest time missing – 23hrs 15mins
- Number of Return Interviews completed – 76
- Reasons for shortfalls – 17 RHI's declined
- Episodes which were curfew issues – 3

3.3 Due to the improvements in data collection and recording processes we are able to provide comparative statistics to evidence the progress made in services for LAC missing children. This Data therefore shows a significant reduction in both the number of incidents of LAC Missing children and the number of children involved in missing behaviours from an identical timeframe last year. However, as the Pie Chart indicates LAC are still the most significant cohort of children who go missing in Rotherham.

3.4 The LSCB are completing a Multi-Agency audit relating to 1 September to 30 September 2016. The most positive part of the early findings is that there is evidence of real strength in multi-agency partnership working for this cohort of children. There is evidence that the voice of the child is apparent in more of the interventions and that the children are influencing decision making in their lives.

3.5 There is also evidence that the new processes for children who go missing (the tracker, trigger plan, operational meetings, screening through

MASH, designated RHI officers) have strengthened the focus on these children and helped to make better decisions around their risk and safety. There is also evidence that the early help services are beginning to impact positively on these services.

- 3.6 The South Yorkshire Missing from Home and Care Protocol is currently being revised and is still in draft form. RMBC are part of the South Yorkshire Missing Group, along with Sheffield, Doncaster and Barnsley which is currently developing a revised protocol. It is anticipated that this will be presented for consideration to senior management in Spring 2017. This is, in conjunction with the College of Policing Briefing and Guidance will further ensure best practice and that all missing persons are investigated.

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 4.1 Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to note the contents of this report and note the general improvements achieved over the course of the past 12 months.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 N/a

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 6.1 N/a

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 7.1 N/a

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 N/a

9. Human Resources Implications

- 9.1 N/a

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 10.1 The reduction in numbers of young people going missing from their placement will clearly contribute to, although not eliminate, the numbers of young people who are vulnerable while they are missing from issues such

as Child sexual Exploitation, school attendance and attainment and offending behaviours.

11 Equalities and Human Rights Implications

11.1 N/a

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

12.1 Missing children present a significant pressure on resources both within and external to CYPS and especially South Yorkshire Police. By reducing this burden when young people genuinely go missing more resources are likely to be available to ensure they are located and returned to placement in a more timely and safe manner.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 The risks remain significant whenever a LAC goes missing but by reducing the incidences and length of time a person is missing these risks can be mitigated.

14. Accountable Officer(s)

Ian Walker

Approvals Obtained from:-

Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services:- Named officer

Director of Legal Services:- Named officer

Head of Procurement (if appropriate):-

Name and Job Title.

This report is published on the Council's website or can be found at:-

<http://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?Categories=>

Summary Sheet

Council Report

Title

The Looked After and Care Leaver's Strategy 2017-20

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Ian Thomas, Strategic Director for CYPS

Report Author(s)

Ian Walker, Acting Head of Service, Children in Care

Ward(s) Affected

All

Summary

Looked After Children generally achieve worse outcomes in terms of their education, health and transitions to adulthood. These outcomes are the result of a combination of negative early life experiences and a legacy of poor standards of care provided by Rotherham as a Corporate Parent.

The Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy 2017-20 provides a framework for the improvements that are essential if this legacy is to be addressed and better outcomes achieved.

Recommendations

The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to endorse the attached strategy and agree to it being adopted by Rotherham MBC for implementation. The Corporate Parenting Panel will be asked to review the Strategy and support its key objectives. The Panel will also be asked to monitor the implementation of the Strategy and hold individual officers or partner agencies to account for any delays or barriers being experienced.

List of Appendices Included

The full Strategy is set out as an appendix to this report.

Background Papers

None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

The Strategy has been previously discussed at Cabinet, the Departmental Leadership Team, the Looked After Children's Council, the Improvement Board and Rotherham's Local Safeguarding Children Board. Each body has had the opportunity to feed in to the final draft of the Strategy and thus there has been extensive consultation throughout the process.

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Title (Main Report)

1. Recommendations

1.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to endorse the attached strategy and agree to it being adopted by Rotherham MBC for implementation. The Corporate Parenting Panel will be asked to review the Strategy and support its key objectives. The Panel will also be asked to monitor the implementation of the Strategy and hold individual officers or partner agencies to account for any delays or barriers being experienced.

2. Background

2.1 Both the Peer Review and Ofsted Monitoring Visit undertaken in October 2016 noted that Rotherham CYPS had a greater proportion of young people in its care with significant emotional needs. These extreme needs were attributable to a legacy of being left in unsafe and harmful situations for too long within their birth families and to a historical poor care experience once they became looked after. These experiences continue to impact on many looked after young people as evidenced by the high number of placement disruptions, poor educational outcomes and the reliance on out of authority placements.

2.2 This Strategy analyses these needs and outlines the plans to be implemented over the course of the next 3 years in order to improve the quality of the service we provide for looked after children and to better support them into successfully transitioning to adulthood

3. Key Issues

3.1 The Key Service Priorities for 2017 are set down in the Strategy as being:-

- Stability and consistency in placements and the workforce.
- Supporting social workers to move from compliance to quality.
- Facilitating increased and enhanced management oversight.

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

4.1 This strategy has been developed following a detailed analysis of the existing quality of service offered to looked after children as compared to their identified needs. As a result it has been designed to improve the outcomes for looked after young people and care leavers and to support their successful transition to adulthood. Accordingly it is recommend that the Corporate Parenting Panel endorse this strategy and agree to review its implementation and challenge any barriers over the course of its lifetime.

5. Consultation

5.1 There has been full and wide-scale consultation in the formulation of this Strategy including with Cabinet, the Looked After Children Council, The Departmental Leadership Team, the Improvement Board and the LSCB. The comments from all of these forums have been incorporated into the final version of the Strategy prior to its publication.

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

6.1 It is planned that the Strategy will be implemented as from March 2017. Accountability for implementing this decision will be with the Head of Service for Children in Care.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

7.1 The financial implications of the those initiatives included in 3.6 which form part of the Council's overarching CYPS Sufficiency Strategy was presented to Cabinet on 14th November 2016.

7.2 The financial implications of the Foster Carer Payments Scheme, Support and Development element of the strategy was included in the report to Cabinet on 12th September 2016.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 The Looked After Children Strategy proposed by this report will underpin the Council's compliance with the statutory duties it owes towards looked after children, such as the duties under the Children Act 1989 (as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014) to provide accommodation for and to safeguard and promote the welfare of looked after children, and a duty to promote the child's educational achievement.

9. Human Resources Implications

9.1 The only Human Resource implications arise out of the proposed implementation of the Regional Adoption Agency. This will necessitate the implementation of the TUPE Regulations.

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

10.1 This Strategy is specifically designed to improve the care experience for looked after young people, to improve their outcomes and to support their successful transition to adulthood.

11. Equalities and Human Rights Implications

11.1 The Strategy is designed to address the potential inequalities encountered by looked after young people and to support their Human Rights.

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

12.1 There are implications for partner agencies and other directorates in terms of the expectations being made placed upon them as part of their Corporate Parenting responsibilities. However, no commitment has been placed in this Strategy without their prior agreement.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 The successful implementation of this Strategy will be dependent upon a number of agencies working together as a true Corporate Parent to promote the best interests of looked after children. The Corporate Parenting Panel will be the key forum for driving the Strategy and thus mitigating the risks arising from any delays or barriers being encountered.

14. Accountable Officer(s)

Ian Walker, Acting Head of Service, Children in Care

Approvals Obtained from:-

Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services:- Mick Wildman

Director of Legal Services:- Neil Concannon

Head of Procurement (if appropriate):- N/a

This report is published on the Council's website or can be found at:-

<http://modern.gov.rotherham.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?Categories=>

(DRAFT)

Looked After Children and Care Leaver's Strategy 2017-2020

***'Quality means doing the right thing when no-one
is looking'***

(Henry Ford)

***'If you're not going to make it better, then don't
bother'***

(Rotherham Looked After Young Person)

Version 9

Date of Publication: November 2016

Date of Review: November 2017

Contents

1. Foreword
2. Vision Statement
3. Introduction and Context
4. The Corporate Parent
5. Strategic Drivers
6. The Needs of our Children
7. Strategic Objectives
8. Key Service Priorities
9. Placement Sufficiency
10. Education and Attainment
11. Economic Wellbeing and Independence
12. Workforce Development
13. Oversight and Governance

Glossary of terms and acronyms

CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

CPP – Corporate Parenting Panel

CSE – Child Sexual Exploitation

DfE – Department for Education

EHCP – Education, Health and Care Plan

EYFS – Early Years Foundation Stage

ePEP – Electronic Personal Education Plan

FGC – Family Group Conference

IFA – Independent Fostering Agencies

LAC – Looked After Children

NEET – Not in Education, Employment or Training

OoA – Out of Authority (residential care)

PEPs – Personal Education Plans

RAA – Regional Adoption Agency

RTT – Rotherham Therapeutic Team

SDQ – Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

1. Foreword

As a Council we have a vital role to play – which is to be the “corporate parents” for all of Rotherham’s looked after children – whether this is a child in foster care, residential care or living with other people. We must be able to provide everything a loving parent can, providing the children and young people we’re responsible for with the best possible support and care.

Our role is to not only provide homes for our looked after children, but it is also to encourage people and organisations to do as much as they can to make sure these children and young people feel in control of their lives and able to overcome the barriers they face.

This strategy sets out our vision and ambition towards our looked after children so that we can transform their lives to help them grow and flourish.

Sharon Kemp, Chief Executive

We need to continue to provide an excellent standard of care that places children and young people at the heart of all that we do in order to make sure we fulfil our corporate parenting duties and beyond. That is why despite the budget cuts we are facing, we are prioritising and protecting the services for our looked after children.

We are investing in our social workers; we are making family based placements our preferred choice for those children for whom this is right and this is why we have increased the fees we give to our hardworking foster carers. And we want to encourage more people to be foster carers, especially for our teenage looked after children.

As corporate parents the question we should ask ourselves is - ‘if this child were mine, what would I want for them?’ This is the unique challenge faced by all of us with a responsibility to provide a service for children in our care. We hope that this document will provide you with some insights as to how we aim to fulfil this vital role.

Cllr Gordon Watson, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Young People’s Services and Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel

Ian Thomas

Strategic Director

The LAC Council think that having a strategy that recognises and encourages numerous opportunities to have our Voices heard and those Voices to have genuine influence to make positive changes within Social Care, our families, communities, and importantly ourselves is essential to improve our world.

By supporting us in coming together as a group so that we may help design, develop and shape our Services will benefit us as it will improve our lives as we can help create a quality service that better fits us, also, by socially engaging in an empowering environment helps us raise our aspirations, raise our self-esteem, improve our personal skills that helps build our resilience, giving us better outcomes in future.

The Looked After Children Council

DRAFT

2. Vision Statement

The highest quality of children's social care can transform the life chances of the most vulnerable children in Rotherham. It can offer every child who has had a difficult start the promise of a brighter future, with every prospect of success.

For the children and young people in or leaving our care we recognise that those who grow up with safe, stable and nurturing relationships form stronger friendships, develop greater resilience, achieve more in school and are more likely to build successful careers and have positive relationships throughout their lives. The right support gives children independence, choice and control as they enter adulthood.

It is the vision of the Looked After Children Service for all of our children and young people to be provided with a safe and dependable foundation from which they can grow and flourish.

If we are not going to 'make it better' then indeed - why bother?

DRAFT

3. Introduction and Context

As a Council striving to become a Child Centred Borough, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council takes its role as Corporate Parent for Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Leavers very seriously. Elected members and officers understand that looked after children and care leavers are a more vulnerable group than their peers who are not looked after and that, their life chances and overall outcomes are more likely to be poorer as a result of this. Consequently, Looked after children require higher standards of parenting than their peers and additional levels of support to overcome this disadvantage and reach their full potential. As the largest and most resource rich group of parents in the Borough, RMBC is committed to supporting all looked after children and care leavers to achieve their full potential and make a successful transition to adulthood.

In supporting our children and young people all of our plans and actions will be framed by the rhetorical question;

***“In whatever we do (and whatever that may be)
would this be good enough for my child?”***

This Looked After Children’s Strategy 2017-20 sets out how any legacy issues will be addressed, how the current needs of looked after children will be better met and also how the Looked After Children Service will drive the aspiration for the department to achieve its ambition to become ‘outstanding’.

This strategy also sets out the aspiration for achieving improved outcomes for all our children and young people in care and leaving care and the expectations placed upon all partner agencies and commissioned services in the development and delivery of services for and with looked after children. Whilst the local authority is the lead agency in developing and implementing this strategy, it has been developed in collaboration with a wide range of partners and will be owned and implemented by all professionals working with children, young people, their parents and carers.

This strategy is linked to and informed by the following:

- The Corporate Parenting Strategy.
- The Looked After Children and Care Leavers Placement Sufficiency Strategy.
- The Corporate Parenting Promise to Looked After Children.
- The Pledge to Looked After Children.
- The Rotherham Offer to Care Leavers.
- The Early Help Strategy.

4. The Corporate Parent

When a child comes into care, Rotherham MBC becomes the Corporate Parent. Put simply, the term 'Corporate Parent' means the collective responsibility of the Council, elected members, employees and partner agencies, for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children who are looked after by the Council. A child in the care of RMBC looks to the whole council to be the best parent it can be to that child. Every member and employee of the Council has the statutory responsibility to act for that child in the same way that any good parent would act for their own child.

Further to this, Section 27 of the Children Act 1989 places a duty on health, housing and education authorities to assist the Children and Young People's Service in carrying out its functions under the Act. This includes assisting in the Corporate Parenting function and to provide joined up services that best meets the needs of the child.

DRAFT

5. Strategic Drivers

The objectives of the Strategy are framed by the following drivers:

- Ensure that the outcomes for LAC/care leavers are as good as those of their peers in all aspects of their lives so that they achieve a successful transition to independence as young adults.
- Have a shared vision and agreed priority objectives for those working with LAC/care leavers.
- Ensure that services meet at least a 'good' judgement within the Ofsted Inspection Framework for Children in Need of Help and Protection, Children Looked After and Care Leavers.
- Ensure that services for LAC and care leavers provide best value for money are evidence based and demonstrate a positive and tangible impact on their lives.
- Deliver the Children in Care and Care Leavers Promise

The Rotherham Children in Care and Care Leaver Promise

- Promise 1 - We will help you to live in a safe place where you are protected from harm
- Promise 2 - We will listen to what you have to say and make sure it makes a difference
- Promise 3 - We will help you to learn and do your best at school and college
- Promise 4 - We will fully involve you in plans and decisions about you and your future
- Promise 5 - We will help you to learn new skills as you grown up and become an adult
- Promise 6 - We will help you take part in activities that you enjoy/are interested in
- Promise 7 - We will help you to be proud of yourself and celebrate your individual beliefs
- Promise 8 - We will help you to be happy and healthy
- Promise 9 - We will help you to explore and be ready for the world of work

6. The Needs of Our Children

The Ofsted Inspection (October 2014) determined that Children's Services in Rotherham were rated as being 'Inadequate'. The inspection report highlighted that there were serious weaknesses caused by delays in initiating proceedings and delays in considering permanency. The LAC Peer Review undertaken in October 2016 highlighted that the legacy issues arising from these delays was likely to have a significant impact on the rate of improvement likely to be achieved within the Looked After Children (LAC) Service. This is because looked after children who are now approaching adolescence are likely to have experienced protracted periods of neglect and harm while living at home leading to them having increased emotional and psychological needs once in our care.

This has been exacerbated by the period of time in care when those emotional and psychological needs were poorly met and this is manifesting itself in a significant number of the looked after children cohort experiencing a series of placement breakdowns and difficulties in school, having to be placed in out of authority placements, not being able to develop consistent and trusting relationships with adults and not engaging in their education or health provision. For too many of our long-term looked after young people there have been long periods of no, or limited, social work contact and no, or limited, consideration of permanence leading to significant drift being experienced. Care plans have not been kept up to date, have been vague and non-specific with no clear targets or timescales set and with minimal input of the young person themselves. Case file recording has been of variable quality making the rationale for decision making and the child's journey difficult to understand.

For many years Rotherham has failed to meet its sufficiency duty leading to too many young people being placed Out of Authority where once again they have been allowed to drift. Those young people vulnerable to CSE have had insufficiently well-developed plans, risk assessments or responses to further incidents and care leavers have not been made aware of their rights and entitlements, have had poor access to emotional support and mental health services and too many of them have not been in education, employment or training.

Historically Rotherham has not been a good corporate parent for its children, for example at the Ofsted 2014 inspection only 21% of children had an up-to-date Health Assessment recorded and only 41% had a recent dental check. In 2014 Personal Education Plans (PEPs) were considered to be poor both in completion rate and quality and therefore not fit for purpose of driving outcomes.

Rotherham has an increasingly high number of children in its care. Part of this is due to the remedial actions necessary to address the legacy of a lack of timely interventions that left children in unsafe circumstances for too long. In addition, Rotherham has had an inadequate 'alternative offer' to support children and families at times of crisis and this has also led to more children coming into care. In conjunction with this the recruitment and retention of in-house foster carers has been insufficient to meet demand and the children's residential care homes have been of such poor or inconsistent quality that they have been deemed unviable in their current state. In turn this has led to an over-reliance on Independent Fostering Agencies and private providers of children's residential care homes and to too many young people have been placed some distance away from the RMBC boundary. As a result the LAC Service has had less control over the support offered to these children including education and CAMHS provision. These placements are also more likely to disrupt which leads to concerning levels of instability and poorer outcomes being achieved by our young people.

7. Strategic Objectives

The following strategic objectives build on the improvements in strengthening the compliance in relation to the service to ensure there are no longer widespread systemic failures. They define what key achievements and service improvements will need to be made over the course of the next three years in order to improve the outcomes for looked after children. All of the objectives are measurable and they relate to key aspects of children's development. These objectives have been identified as it is clear that success in achieving them will have a significantly positive impact on children during their childhood and improve their ability to lead successful and happily lives as adults.

1. To protect our children and keep them safe from harm.

It is, of course, the first priority of any parent to keep their children safe from harm and this has particular resonance within Rotherham. As a result Rotherham MBC has made the commitment not to place any of its children in a placement provision rated as being 'Inadequate' by Ofsted. Any placement provision that becomes 'Inadequate' subsequent to the young person being placed there will be reviewed by the Head of Service for LAC taking into account the views of the young person and their IRO, the Ofsted Action Plan and any likely impact on the outcomes being achieved by the young person especially in respect of their education.

Rotherham is already evidencing some success in reducing the incidents of young people going missing from care. In 2016 there were 235 incidents involving 66 young people (down from 571 incidents involving 112 young people in 2014) and the average time a young person was reported as being missing was one day. Performance data evidences that young people in stable placements are far less likely to go missing and so the key driver of providing more placement stability as set out below will have the most significant impact on this risk factor.

In addition Rotherham CYPS will work more closely with South Yorkshire Police to ensure that it is those adults who encourage our young people to go missing who face the legal consequences as opposed to the young person being penalized by being moved out of the area. In addition there will be a more forensic review of the Return to Placement Interviews so that the Corporate Parenting Panel can gain a greater understanding of the reasons why our young people go missing. The LAC Service will also ensure that the current shortfall is addressed in respect of Return to Placement Interviews being available for all looked after young people who go missing from out of authority placements.

Those young people who are deemed to be at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation will be allocated a co-worker from the Evolve Team to ensure that the social work interventions to address these risks are informed by best practice. All such vulnerable young people will have a risk assessment and trigger plan inputted onto their case-file and all partner agencies will be actively encouraged to take every possible step to minimise these risks.

2. To improve the timeliness of identifying and securing placement stability and permanence so that children are able to make and sustain safe, nurturing and enduring relationships.

All evidence shared by the DfE indicates that the best outcomes are achieved by young people who are helped to remain in a stable and consistent placement that provides them with the opportunity to have a longstanding relationship with an adult carer.

Research ('The Educational Progress of Looked After Children in England: Linking Care and Educational Data' – Rees Centre and University of Bristol 2015) suggests that for every placement change after the age of 11 is associated with one-third of a grade less at GCSE; young people in care who change school in Years 10 or 11 score over five grades less than those who do not;

young people living in residential or another form of care at age 16 score over six grades less than those who were in kinship or foster care.

Furthermore, the Virtual School report that every significant change that a young person experiences in their life will result in a reduction in the GCSE attainment by one third of a grade in every exam they sit. As most placement changes also bring a change of school this may result in two thirds of a grade reduction for every placement move.

In September 2016 13.7% of the cohort had, had three or more placement moves over the course of 12 months (62 young people) meaning that they will have lost at least 2 grades on their peers even before they sit their exams. This means almost 30% of our LAC are already likely to be at an increased risk of an unfavourable outcome, with pre-care experiences already having impacted on outcomes.

Further to this, in September 2016 69.7% of the total LAC cohort had been in a stable placement of more than 2 years (311 young people) standing with the trend being slightly downward. This means almost 30% of our LAC are already likely to be at risk of an unfavourable outcome.

Addressing this trend is key therefore to improving outcomes for LAC. This is being addressed by the establishing and regularly review of a Permanence Tracker in which the young people who have a permanence plan in place or have been matched on a long-term basis with their current carer are monitored and progressed. Both of these will support young people to greater placement stability.

This work is supported by the Sufficiency Plan which sets out the mechanisms to increase our own placement provision and reduce the reliance on out of authority private providers in both residential and foster care. However, it is acknowledged that IFAs can provide stable long term placements for some young people and a 'one market approach' needs to be implemented to best meet the needs of our young people. There are currently 58 Rotherham young people who have been in the same IFA placement for longer than 2 years (37% of total). However, between February and July 2016 four in-house placements came to an unplanned end where 18 IFA placements were similarly disrupted. It could be argued that this is not surprising given that our older and more challenging looked after young people are more likely to be placed within the IFAs. Placement stability as opposed to the source of that provision is key to good outcomes being achieved with every change of placement and school being assessed at reducing GCSE grades by one third.

3. To improve the emotional wellbeing and physical health of looked after children.

At the end of September 2016 93.6% of young people had an up-to-date health assessment and 91.6% had a recent dental check-up. Although the vast majority of the shortfall consisted of older adolescents who decided to decline the service, the performance is, nonetheless, below our target. To address this, the LAC Nurse has undertaken a review which evidenced that if a young person is supported to establish a relationship with a health professional early on during their time as a LAC they will be more likely to engage and participate in their health care arrangements throughout their childhood. As a result the LAC Nursing Team are piloting a 'meet and greet' style visit to all LAC within one week of their admission to care to see them in their placement as opposed to in a hospital or clinic setting. The focus of this visit will be to introduce themselves, explain LAC health service provision, discuss their health needs and support them to access future health and dental assessments.

The emotional wellbeing of LAC is supported via the Rotherham Therapeutic Team (RTT) (previously known as the Looked After and Adopted Children Therapeutic Team - LAACCTT). This

service is only available to young people placed in or close to the Rotherham MBC area. Those young people who are placed Out of Authority have to access local CAMHS support which can be problematic for a range of cross border arrangements which conspire to adversely impact on young people. In turn this can be a factor which contributes to out of area placement disruptions and supports the need to grow our in-house provision. As part of the Sufficiency Plan there is therefore a proposal to expand the capacity of the RTT to ensure we are able to improve access to therapeutic services when they are required. In addition the most recent agreement with RDASH in respect of the Statement of Purpose for the CAMHS Service specifies that locally placed LAC will be prioritised for interventions as well as assessment by November 2016.

At present the 'Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire' (SDQ) is an under-developed and under-used resource, although the RTT do use it to frame their interventions. Although SDQs are completed they are not routinely reported or analysed to inform planning and decision making at a strategic level. The introduction of Liquid Logic will provide more timely performance reports to enable the LAC Service to better identify those children and young people with an SDQ of 18+, ensure a timely consideration of a referral to the RTT or CAMHS, track the intervention and assess the impact of that intervention via a revised SDQ.

4. To improve educational progress and attainment and narrow the gap between the attainment of LAC and their peers.

The Virtual School has taken responsibility for driving the completion rate and quality of PEPs since September 2015. A Rotherham standard of termly PEPs has been introduced to ensure a targeted focus on education that mirrors school practice. An electronic PEP system (ePEP) has been commissioned and is now embedded practice that has streamlined processes leading to a greater focus on the education rather than the paperwork. Schools and social workers have 24/7 access to the ePEP with an increasing number of foster carers accessing the system.

The Virtual School model has LAC advocates that strive to attend every PEP meeting both in and out of borough in order to raise the quality of educational dialogue, support and challenge for all Rotherham LAC. This practice has been well received and is respected by schools.

Every looked after child should have an up to date PEP and as of September 2016, 97.63% of young people had such an up to date plan in place. PEP audits in 2015-16 demonstrated improving quality. All PEPS from September 2016 will be quality assured through the Virtual School with verification from Inclusion Support Services and an external consultant. In terms of 2015-16 GCSE outcomes, of the cohort of young people that had been in care for at least 12 months in March 2016, 4 young people achieved at least 5 A*-C passes including English and Maths out of a total eligible cohort of 32 (10 of whom have special educational needs and a further 12 of whom were in receipt of an SEN support plan in school).

Schools are required to request LAC Pupil Premium funding through the ePEP system which must be linked to SMART targets that address need.

Processes have been developed to reduce drift and delay in securing education at the same time as care placements but systems are not yet rigorous enough. There is a need for Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) assessments to be fast-tracked for LAC to reduce drift and delay. There is also an issue with cross-border SEND delays resulting from other LAs having different priorities, thresholds and processes. The impact of this would be reduced if less LAC were placed out of authority. However there remains a sufficiency issue around SEND specialist provision and Alternative Provision.

5. To improve support and opportunities for care leavers to increase the number and proportion who are in Education, Employment or Training (EET).

In respect of care leavers who are in EET the performance of the Leaving Care team compares favourably with national and statistical neighbours. Whilst in September 2016 70.3% of care leavers were EET the latest national average was only 48% and the statistical neighbour average

was only 50.4%. However, work continues to support yet more care leavers into EET opportunities.

At present there are no care leavers who have accessed a Modern Apprenticeship that has been provided by RMBC. The reasons for this have been explored and revealed that whilst all apprenticeships require a GCSE A-C grade in Maths and English at entry level the educational data above indicates that this is beyond the attainment of most of our current LAC. In addition many LAC have experienced some degree of disrupted attachments in their lives and this makes it more difficult for them to sustain a prompt and regular attendance record at a work placement and many require additional support to manage within the world of work and training. Barriers resulting from social, emotional or mental health issues have led to a lack of development of appropriate skills for some care leavers to access either college or work placements.

In order to address these factors the Leaving Care Service is developing a project with the Modern Apprentice Programme to:-

- Provide additional support to assist LAC to achieve their A-C in maths and English.
- Agree some form of ring-fencing so that LAC have some priority afforded them in the application process.
- Establish more pre-apprenticeship programmes and work experience opportunities to support LAC into the working environment.
- Broaden the apprenticeship opportunities from the traditional caring and business support professions to more diverse areas of employment.

The Corporate Parenting Panel have acknowledged that RMBC is currently not being as good a parent as it should be in not employing any LAC or care leaver in the 'family firm'. They have therefore agreed to press the council for a greater degree of flexibility in respect of the entry level requirements and to ensure there is a greater degree of ring-fencing of apprenticeship opportunities for our young people.

In respect of the provision of suitable accommodation, the Leaving Care Team and the Commissioning Service continue to work to expand the range of accommodation options for care leavers. This includes working more closely with Adults Services to develop an effective Transition Planning process and to enable vulnerable care leavers who don't meet the mental health or learning disability criteria to access supported accommodation.

A strong partnership approach has been developed over the last 12 months with Housing Strategy and the wider housing market in Rotherham which will aim to expand and enhance the accommodation options available for care leavers. A Strategic Partnership is also being developed with the private sector to establish outstanding residential care provision in Rotherham. Hollowgate currently provides 10 young people with floating support living in dispersed properties provided by the Council's Housing Service. In addition they offer continued support to young people who have moved on from Hollowgate through access to 3 properties shared by 6 young people. In response to identified need and in consultation with the Care Leavers Council 2 newly built 2 bedroom properties will be allocated to care leavers as preparation for applying for a social housing tenancy, this is expected to be available from 2018.

The other measure of the effectiveness of the service is the number of care leavers who remain in meaningful contact with their Personal Adviser from the Leaving Care Team. Although care leavers are adults and this is therefore very much a 'voluntary' arrangement, the team's performance for 2015/16 was good at 91% of care leavers maintaining meaningful contact with their Personal Adviser (8 weekly minimum standard). To further enhance the relationships that care leavers have with their PAs, the team has recently moved to a new site near the town centre at Chatham Villas. Phase 2 of this project will be to develop a 'drop-in' facility in the building to encourage care leavers to maintain even more regular contact and receive input to strengthen their independence skills.

6. To listen to children and young people to ensure that their voices influence their own care plans as well as wider service delivery and development.

There is an increasingly effective Child in Care Council in place with 12 young people providing regular and meaningful representation on behalf of the wider LAC cohort. These young people support service development by populating interview panels for staff recruitment, by attending and contributing to the Corporate Parenting Panel process and by participating in foster carer training. They are also becoming increasingly involved in the strategic agenda by attending and contributing to regional participation events. There is also a recently established Care Leavers Council now in place which provides direct input into the development of services to support care leavers. For example they recently reframed the plans for the new-build care leavers accommodation in terms of location and size of property.

The Corporate Parenting Panel has as standing agenda items the LAC Council activity updates and Learning from LAC Complaints. This will ensure that the experience of looked after young people is shared directly with their corporate parents. In addition, one of the Corporate Parenting Panels every year from now on will be a LAC 'take-over' session in which the LAC Council will set the agenda, invite reports and presentations, chair the Panel and agree the future actions.

However, this remains an area for further development and the number of young people actively involved in participation processes needs to increase. In particular the voice of the young people placed out of authority needs to be significantly amplified as does the voice of younger children in care and those with disabilities.

The Virtual School has developed the pupil voice within the ePEP which is now captured for most pupils with schools expected to record their response and actions resulting from that pupil voice. The Virtual School requests attendance of pupils at PEP meetings (or part thereof) and asks schools to record within the PEPs the specific contribution of social workers and foster carers to directly support education. Schools, social workers and carers are being asked to raise their aspirations for the children in their care as well as develop and inspire aspirations within our young people.

8. Key Service Priorities

Arising from these strategic objectives, the LAC Service has agreed the following key service priorities: to improve and develop overall service delivery and standards of practice:-

- Stability and Consistency in placements and in workforce.
- Supporting social workers to move from compliance to quality.
- Facilitating increased and enhanced management oversight.

These key service priorities will be reviewed on an annual basis.

DRAFT

9. Placement Sufficiency

Addressing placement sufficiency results in us being able to ensure we are able to place the right children in our care in the right placements at the right time (please refer to the Placement Sufficiency Strategy for Looked After Children and Care Leavers for 2017-20).

At the inception of this Strategy it has been acknowledged that there are too many looked after children in the care of RMBC. There has been a consistent upward trend in the numbers of looked after children from 424 as of January 2016 to 488 as of the end of December 2016 (9% increase over the course of 2016). If this trend was to continue by November 2019 there would be 604 looked after children in Rotherham. Whilst this trend is reflected across many local authorities in the Yorkshire and Humber region, at a rate of 86.5 per 10,000 children (December figures) this is significantly above the statistical neighbour average of 64 looked after children per 10,000 of population (as at 31st March 2016) which would equate to a figure of 360 looked after children in Rotherham. Through a number of targeted interventions Rotherham aims to safely reduce the number of LAC to around 399 by 2020.

To facilitate this reduction Rotherham has developed an overarching Sufficiency Strategy that dovetails with the LAC Strategy to ensure that we only have the 'right' children in our care and that they are in the 'right' placements at the 'right' time. The evidence based Strategy incorporates some of the best practice identified in "Putting Children First" (2016) and consists of the following 5 strands:

- I. **Enhanced 'Edge of Care' Interventions** to support children and families where there is an immediate risk of family breakdown or to respond to families in crisis. The proposed location of the service in Early Help will ensure that the opportunity to intervene earlier when problems begin to emerge is enhanced by a robust continuum of evidence based practice across the children's workforce
 - a. An **'Edge of Care' Team** – by investing in the recruitment and development of a dedicated team of practitioners offering a range of services to support children to remain living safely with their immediate or extended families they will be given the best chance to thrive without long-term reliance on services. This provision is projected to achieve a net reduction of 69 LAC over the 3 year period of this Strategy.
 - b. **Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST)** – an intensive programme that works within the whole ecology of a young person including parents, family, the community and school at the same time in a solution-focused, strengths-based approach to empower the family to take responsibility for solving problems. It is projected that the implementation of MST will create a net reduction of 12 LAC over the period of this strategy. In the longer-term this strategy will also push demand for placements down from costly high tier services to less expensive early interventions.
 - c. **Family Group Conferencing (FGC)** – FGC is an effective tool for identifying and engaging with wider family members and friends at an early stage of concern regarding a child. It is a child-centred, family-led decision making and planning process which develops existing strengths to build safety for children. Learning from other local authorities indicates that the FGC model is most effective when delivered in-house as part of an early help model. Targeting services at children and young people at an earlier stage of their journey is likely to reduce the number of children subject to a child protection plan and consequently reduce the numbers that escalate to PLO care proceedings and ultimately entering care. It is estimates that a wider FGC offer will reduce the number of LAC by 72 over the 3 year period.

- d. **Pause Project** – It has been determined that over a 7 year period 29% of care applications in the UK involved women who had previously had a child removed from their care and this often related to trans-generational patterns of neglect and/or abuse. The Pause Project aims to engage with mothers on a one to one basis to provide intensive therapeutic activities and practical support to encourage them to think of themselves as individuals, often for the first time in their lives. The programme gives women the chance to ‘pause’ and take control of their lives, breaking the destructive cycle that causes them and their children deep trauma. To support this process they are encouraged to take Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) during the intervention to create the space to reflect, learn and aspire. The first Pause pilot was undertaken in Hackney and is now being rolled out across other local authorities across the country.

Initial data analysis indicates that there are currently 25 women in Rotherham who have experienced the repeat removal of a child or children who could access such a programme. At present the investment has been approved only to assess the need for and potential impact of introducing a similar intervention in Rotherham but over the three year period of this Strategy it is projected that the Pause initiative could contribute to a net reduction of 30 LAC.

- II. **An expanded Rotherham Therapeutic Team (RTT)** to provide enhanced support to the child and carer to reduce the likelihood of a placement breakdown which often results in the use of more expensive placement provision. By breaking the cycle of placement disruptions through intensive provision early in the child’s care journey will lead to increased placement stability and lead to healthier emotional wellbeing and better outcomes for looked after young people. This support will be based on the ‘team around the child’ model where the carer and professionals will be supported to develop their skills, resilience and knowledge to respond in a confident, competent and consistent way to emerging issues by preventing escalation and disruption. It is forecast that the team could support up to 30 looked after children and their carers per year and significantly reduce the number of placement disruptions which was recorded at 20 between March to September 2016. This in turn should support LAC to achieve better outcomes including in respect of their educational attainment.
- III. **Foster Carer Payments Scheme, Support and Development** to ensure that wherever possible children are looked after in Rotherham in a family setting. The aim of this revised scheme is to attract additional foster carers to Rotherham, especially for adolescents and large sibling groups, and to improve the retention and development of existing experienced carers. The current reliance on Independent Fostering Agency placements (IFAs) impacts on the outcomes achieved by young people as once a young person is placed outside of the RMBC area control can be lost in respect of certain aspects of their care package including education, CAMHS and health provision. Recent audits also indicate that an IFA is up to four times more likely to disrupt that an in-house placement. Thus, not only will an expanded, well-trained and supported in-house foster care provision bring significant financial benefits it will also support better outcomes for our children. In September 2016, the Children’s Commissioner approved the revised scheme that had been co-produced in partnership with the local foster carer consultation group. This scheme offers increased and more transparent financial incentives, good quality support and training with a target of 15 or more placements being secured per annum between 2016-18. The LAC Service Peer Review undertaken in October 2016 expressed the opinion that this target was set too low and so it will be subject of a strategic review. However, this initiative will still bring both significant financial benefits and improve the outcomes for looked after children.

In addition, Rotherham will adopt one of the key practice principles set out in ‘Putting Children First’ so that foster carers will be actively involved in decisions about the children they are looking after. These will include decisions in relation to their education, additional

support and decisions about care planning in order to empower foster carers to stand up for the children they look after as any good parent would. This 'professionalisation' of the role will be utilised to support recruitment processes.

- IV. **Regional Adoption Agency** – Despite timescales between an admission to care and a child being placed for adoption in Rotherham being half that of the national average the DfE maintain that that too many children still have to wait too long for a permanent family. As a result the Government has directed that adoption services should be regionalised so that local authorities can pool their resources in respect of assessments and availability of adoptive placements. The Secretary of State has reserved the right to enforce this process with any local authority deemed not to be implementing it with a sufficient degree of urgency. Subject to Commissioner and Cabinet approval, Rotherham adoption service will be part of the South Yorkshire Adoption Agency as a joint venture along with Barnsley, Sheffield, Doncaster MBC and Doncaster Children's Services Trust with a planned implementation date for June 2017.
- V. **Taking Care Project** – This is a partnership arrangement with the NSPCC through which up to 30 young people will be considered and formally assessed in respect of the viability of them returning to the care of their birth/extended families over a two year period. It is projected that this aspect of the Sufficiency Plan will lead to a net reduction of 12 LAC. This programme is evidence based and not only strengthens the assessment and decision making process when deciding whether a child should return home but also informs how best to support children and families throughout the reunification process and after they have returned home. The LAC social workers have been fully trained in the process so that the intervention should become embedded practice and self-supporting. This in turn *should* reduce the drift that is a factor within the current care planning processes in the LAC service.

Overall it is anticipated that the cumulative effect of these 5 strands of the Sufficiency Plan will enable RMBC to safely reduce its number of looked after children to around 360 as compared to the current figure of 457 (October 2016). If the current trend of increasing numbers of LAC was allowed to continue unabated, by November 2019 there will be a projected 604 looked after children.

10. Education and Attainment

It is the commitment of RMBC that all LAC:-

- Access the full and appropriate, high-quality educational offer to which they have an entitlement. The percentage of LAC educated in schools with a Good or Outstanding rating has risen from 75% in September 2015 to 88% in authority and 77% out of authority schools in September 2016. The challenge remains to translate these high quality educational placements into improved educational outcomes.
- They receive a planned and stable education which enables them to fulfil their potential supported by professionals who have high expectations of and high aspirations for them.
- They are supported to develop high aspirations and are supported by services and structures that can ensure these are achieved.

The national ambition for children and young people in care is to raise their own ambitions and educational progress so that they are given every possible opportunity to achieve their potential. Children in care have historically achieved poor educational outcomes but these are gradually improving on a national basis.

Within Rotherham our current strengths are:-

- Our priority locally for children and young people in care is to help them have high aspirations and ensure they are well supported in order to be able to raise their educational attainment and help them become successful adults.
- Some of our children and young people have achieved positive results with several achieving 7 or more A*-C GCSE grades or equivalent
- More than 70% of our care leavers are in Education, Training or Employment.
- There are currently 7 care leavers who are attending Higher Education/University.
- All 2 year old LAC engage with the vulnerable two year olds offer with 13 looked after children currently accessing this and two more accessing local toddler groups.
- There have been no LAC formally permanently excluded in 2015/16.
- However, 535 days of education were lost in 2015/16 through fixed term exclusions and there have been 9 school placement moves in order to avoid a permanent exclusion. Furthermore, the percentage of school days lost is higher for LAC than their peers.

Attendance data has not historically been sufficiently reliable to be able to use it to support timely targeted interventions. However, this has now been addressed and the recent commissioning of an external daily attendance/exclusion reporting provider, Welfare Call, has led to improved data that will now be used to address highlighted issues and target timely interventions. In addition, to date there has been no comprehensive overview held of destinations matched with outcomes at either Further or Higher Education levels.

Outcomes generally for children in care in Rotherham are below outcomes for children in care nationally and below outcomes for non-care children both in Rotherham and nationally. However the attainment gap is clearly narrowing at EYFS, KS1 and KS2 but remaining fairly static at KS4.

The new Virtual School model that has been put in place champions the education of children in care. The new electronic PEP system has been further developed since being commissioned and

enables a wider range of professionals to have access to the PEP in order to support children's progress and supports young people in having their voices heard in their education plans. This has contributed to an increase in PEP completion rate from 68% to 94% with PEPs continually improving in quality and with a focus on driving progress. There is a Rotherham standard of termly PEP meetings which aligns with school monitoring processes and ensures a more frequent and intense focus on progress and the Virtual School commit to attend PEP Meetings both within and outside of the RMBC boundary. The provision of PEPs has been extended to include 2 to 18 year olds and the LAC pupil premium funding is directly targeted to support raising attainment. The LAC pupil premium has also been used for the MAST counselling project that supports a number of children in care to address their emotional issues in school. The Virtual School also offers extensive training to support schools, carers, social workers, IROs, governors and other professionals and a Virtual School Governing Body has been established that reports to Corporate Parenting Panel.

In addition to the work with schools the Virtual School is currently working on:

- Ensuring all foster carers have access to the ePEP system.
- The development of foster carer education champions
- Ensuring that foster carers and social workers access a detailed training offer so they are well placed to support education.
- A strategy to analyse impact of LAC pupil premium funding to further improve targeted spend.
- The post-16 agenda to include the development of a training offer to post-16 education providers.
- An Attachment project designed to support and upskill school staff to help address the emotional health and well-being needs of LAC in order to stabilise school and care placements, to improve readiness to learn, and reduce exclusions.
- The development of cross-service strategies and protocols that have a 'golden thread' of prioritising LAC and their education eg the Rotherham Attendance Strategy.
- Supporting plans to develop a sufficiency of appropriate provision to meet specialist educational needs

The educational aim of this strategy is to ensure that Rotherham looked after children (within and out of borough) have:

- improved educational progress and attainment with the gap narrowing year-on-year with outcomes for non-care children
- improved 'readiness to learn' through improved emotional health and well-being
- improved attendance in school
- reduced exclusions
- reduction in school placement moves
- reduced numbers of LAC accessing Alternative Provision
- reduced numbers of LAC on reduced provision timetables
- support through improved skills of professionals that can support them and their education
- foster carer education champions

The impact on outcomes will be measured via national benchmark attainment data, positive destinations, increase in the numbers of care leavers in Education, Employment or Training.

11. Economic Wellbeing and Independence

As previously stated care leavers in Rotherham do achieve reasonably positive outcomes in respect of being in Education, Employment or Training (EET). Further to this 97.1% of them are living in suitable accommodation. However, this data warrants deeper examination. For example, how many of those in suitable accommodation manage to maintain a stability of accommodation? In addition the percentage of care leaver in EET still means that there are approximately 80 care leavers who are NEET. This situation can be much worse for those young people residing outside of the Rotherham area.

To build on the accommodation provision RMBC will undertake a review with St Basil's Housing with the overall objective of improving the range and quality of accommodation and support options for care leavers as they make their transition to adulthood. This review will focus on particular areas of potential concern including accommodation and support for care leavers, mapping current provision and identifying gaps, commissioning of services and targeted housing related support. There will be a specific focus on the accommodation needs for young people with multiple and complex needs who do not necessarily reach the threshold for adult social care.

In order to better support these looked after children and care leavers the LAC Service proposes to introduce a 'fairy godparent's scheme' where a group of Corporate Parents (officers and members) as well as wider partners oversee the progress of children, acting as pushy parents from afar. This isn't about introducing yet another person into the child's life but ensuring that someone is looking out for them - someone who 'has their back' so to speak. With 63 elected members and 20 senior officers all our children placed beyond 20 miles should be able to benefit from this scheme.

The Corporate Parenting Panel have acknowledged that RMBC is currently not being as good a parent as it should be in not employing any LAC or care leaver in the 'family firm'. They have therefore agreed to press the council for a greater degree of flexibility in respect of the entry level requirements and to ensure there is a greater degree of ring-fencing of apprenticeship opportunities for our young people. This will be considered as part of the review of apprenticeships within RMBC, which is driven by the introduction of the apprenticeship levy, and which will aim to broaden the range of opportunities available, including job roles and the required entry level qualifications.

The LAC Service, the Virtual School and the Council will offer an identified cohort of young people currently in Year 11 who are unlikely to access Higher education. From the summer of 2017 they will be offered and incentivised to attend a graduated programme to prepare them for a full apprenticeship starting with one day a week release from school, moving to a 4 week work experience leading to a full apprenticeship. The Leaving Care Team are working in partnership with Brathay to provide a 10 week Future Focus programme which will work with LAC and Care leavers to build on their core employability skills.

Young people will be allowed to take a 'step back' within this programme and move up and down the ladder depending on their presenting needs but we will not give up on them. To support his programme the LAC Service is developing a partnership with the Rotherham Chamber of Commerce to increase the range of placement options for young people. As part of this process Rotherham aim to be an early adopter of the care leaver covenant as set out in 'Putting Children First' that local companies and private organisations can sign up to and make a commitment to support care leavers.

The Leaving Care Service is developing a formal offer to Care Leavers that has had significant input from care leavers themselves. This will include:-

I. Developing a Pledge for care leavers/sign up to the national pledge.

The National Pledge has been shared with a group of Care Leavers who have agreed that the principles within the Charter are what they would want the local authority to sign up to and follow. The Pledge is due to be approved by the Corporate Parenting Panel in December 2016.

Following consultation with The Care Leavers Foundation the LAC Service has given a public to their Care Leavers that they have signed up to the Charter and will ensure that it will be documented that the principles of the Charter will be adhered to in full by RMBC. The Corporate Parenting Panel will 'sign off' this commitment.

This will be formally recognised on the Care Leavers Foundation website and they will notify the Department for Education of our commitment. This is also the forum to share any 'good news' or communications about activity for Care Leavers and they will make sure it is recognised.

II. Celebration event for care leavers

The Leaving Care Service will work with care leavers to ensure that the achievements and successes of our care leavers are formally acknowledged and celebrated on an annual basis.

III. Phase 2 of Chatham Villas

The Leaving Care Service has relocated to Chatham Villas. This is the new dedicated support 'hub' for care leavers, and is somewhere that young people can come to when in need or to 'drop in' to have contact with staff.

The second phase of the hub is in development. Plans have been drawn up and approved. The specification of work and costs have gone out to tender with an expected completion date of February 2017.

The Hub will offer a range of facilities including a breakfast club, drop in space, group work targeted around themes relevant to young people such as health, education and employability, a learning space, relaxation/recreation area and access to life-skills areas including a kitchen and laundry. Workshops are being carried out with young people to co-design the service.

IV. Development of a 'Rights and Entitlement' leaflet for care leavers

Consultation events have been with care leavers to formalise the Rights and Entitlements for Care Leavers within Rotherham. A leaflet is in draft and will be ratified by the start of 2017. The formal offer includes the Leaving Care Allowance, the Health Passport, Driving License and lessons, HE Bursary, set up TV License along with the offer in respect of support into EET and accommodation. The policy demonstrates a significant financial commitment from the Local Authority to Care Leavers. Once approved, the offer will be made available to care leavers via the website and in leaflet form.

V. The revised accommodation team

The accommodation team has changed somewhat widening the remit of the Level 3 workers to assume delegated responsibility for the PA role with young people who they are key working with. The Leaving Care Accommodation Team also provides tenancy support to young people

in their own accommodation and dispersed properties. Stronger links have been developed between the Accommodation Team and the Leaving Care Teams and links developed with Housing to improve the process for young people's access to appropriate accommodation. At present Care Leavers are awarded Band 2 status meaning that they can bid for properties after those who are deemed to be emergency cases such as families who are homeless due to fire and flood.

However, there are still some particular vulnerabilities faced by Care Leavers such as the rent allowance cap. As a result the Leaving Care Team and Rotherham Housing and Neighbourhood Services will develop a joint protocol to ensure that more care leavers are supported into appropriate and stable accommodation. This will include plans to increase the numbers of dispersed properties available to Care Leavers.

Structured activities have been developed within the Accommodation team at Hollowgate and are open to all young people residing at Hollowgate and those receiving floating/tenancy support in the community. Examples of these activities include:

- Breakfast club 08.00-10.00 Wednesday mornings
- Cooking workshop 18.00-20.00 every Thursday
- Drop in sessions held monthly by Barnardo's & Know the Score (Substance Misuse Service)
- Monthly Residents meetings held at the beginning of every month
- Move on toolkit group workshops held every two weeks

VI. Closer partnership with Adults Services

Historically the transitional planning in Rotherham has been inadequate leading to too young adults being placed in inappropriate accommodation leading to unstable tenancies. Partnership working with Adults Services has been poor, especially for those vulnerable young people with no diagnosed mental health or learning disability. However, an 'in principle' agreement has been given for the transitional planning for these vulnerable young people to commence from their 14th birthday via a presentation to the Adults Transitions Panel. An Adults Services representative is also a standing member of the Joint Complex Planning and Placement Panel which ensures that they are best placed to identify those young people who are likely to need the support of Adults Services and contribute to the care and placement planning decision making processes. As a result there will be much closer collaboration in developing accommodation and support packages.

12. Workforce Development

At present the Workforce Offer is inadequate as it is not based on any assessment of the developmental needs of the social workers and managers. This strategy recognises that the inconsistency in line management available to social workers over the past few years has impeded the required improvements in social work practice. In turn the inconsistency in social worker has impeded the drive for improved outcomes for looked after children. As a result this Strategy will be supported by the departmental recruitment strategy.

In addition the existing practice model, Strengthening Families, has been inconsistently rolled out and this has tended to focus on the Child Protection Case Conference processes. In terms of more general social work development there is nothing in place that is consistent or sustainable other than the generic LSCB offer and short-term training programmes.

The plan to address this has yet to be approved by the service's management team but the proposal is to move the Workforce Development function from the Commissioning Service to Safeguarding and Quality Assurance.

The infrastructure will be split into two streams – Recruitment/Retention and Learning/Development.

In respect of Learning/Development there will be a 3 stage process:-

1. An assessment of current development needs aimed to support the move from Inadequate to Requires Improvement. This will include basic social work learning from audits, complaints and Restorative Practice (first 6-12 months of plan).
2. Implementation of the Strengthening Families and Signs of Safety across the organisation including an embedding of this intervention model across case file structures and single assessment formats (12 months to 2 years).
3. Development of the Centre of Excellence to provide a high quality learning and development offer for the sw staff and the provision of training by our own staff who have been supported to become experts in practice. The sources of the support required to get staff to this position may come from the South Yorkshire Teaching Partnership or Research in Practice but it is likely to involve 'on the job' academic research (2 to 3 years).

13. Oversight and Governance

The implementation of this Strategy will be provided by the Corporate Parenting Panel where it will be a standing agenda item. The Strategy will be formally reviewed on an annual basis and any updates and amendments being agreed by the Panel.

DRAFT

Author: Ian Walker
Title: Head of Service - Looked After Children

Summary Sheet

Council Report

Title Guide to Financial Support for Young People Leaving Care in Rotherham

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan? No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report Ian Thomas

Report Author(s) Ian Walker, Head of Service, Children in Care

Ward(s) Affected All

Summary

This guide will describe how RMBC will provide young people leaving care with financial support to enable them to make a successful transition to adulthood and how the leaving Care Team will help them gain confidence in managing their money. It outlines all of the sources of income available to care leavers depending on their own particular individual circumstances and provides information as to how they can access this income. It also outlines the additional support that RMBC as a good Corporate Parent will offer to its care leavers and what, in return, is expected of the young person.

This is the first time that these entitlements and discretionary payments have been set down in such a formal way and as a result the support available will be more transparent and young people will have a clearer understanding as a result.

Recommendations The Corporate Parenting Panel is requested to endorse the implementation of this Guide and the financial commitment it entails.

List of Appendices Included The full Guide is attached as an appendix.

Background Papers None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel No

Council Approval Required No

Exempt from the Press and Public No

Title (Main Report)

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel is requested to endorse the implementation of this Guide and the financial commitment it entails.

2. Background

- 2.1 To date there has been no formal policy in respect of the financial support offered to care leavers. This shortfall has been highlighted by the Improvement Board and is part of the LAC Service Improvement Plan. As a result of this shortfall young people have not been aware of their entitlement and to a variance in financial support being offered. This Guide will formalise the offer to our care leavers and establish greater consistency in practice. Once this Guide has been approved the draft leaflet guidance for young people will be distributed to all eligible, relevant and former relevant young people

3. Key Issues

- 3.1 Whilst being looked after it is important that young people are assisted to start thinking about managing their money as early as possible. The experience of those that have already left care and are living independently informs us that difficulties in managing budgets effectively on a low income is one of the main areas that care leavers experience. Young people should be encouraged to use the assistance and support available to them whilst still in care, to gain experience with budgeting and avoid getting into difficulties at a later stage.
- 3.2 All Care Leavers who are ready to move onto independence will receive an allowance to set up home, and financial help with education and training courses, including higher education or help to get and keep a job.

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 4.1 The proposals in this Guide are framed by what a good Corporate Parent should provide for its young people. As a result no other options are being considered and the Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to agree to its full implementation.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Care Leavers have been fully consulted in respect of the contents of this Guide and have contributed to the detailed financial commitments. For example, it was the care leavers who stated that they would like to be provided with a passport as part of this offer.

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

6.1 Ian Walker, Head of service, will be responsible for the implementation of this decision by February 1st 2017

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

7.1 This new policy is expected to work within the 2017/18 cash limit for Leaving Care Allowances. The 2017/18 budget will be increased to take into account this budget pressure.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 The proposed policy should provide clarity to both the young person leaving care and relevant staff alike. Once approved it is imperative that the Council complies with its own policies to avoid any potential legal challenge.

9. Human Resources Implications

9.1 There are no Human Resource issues arising out of this proposed Policy (Theresa Caswell).

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

10.1 This Guide will ensure greater levels of consistency in the financial support offered to care leavers.

11. Equalities and Human Rights Implications

11.1 This Guide will support the Human Rights of care leavers by ensuring they have sufficient support to make a successful transition to adulthood.

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

12.1 None

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 The Guide will bring a financial impact to CYPS. However, it will also forestall the risk of formal complaints and legal challenges being entered into by care leavers.

14. Accountable Officer(s) Ian Walker, Head of Service

Approvals Obtained from:-

Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services:- Named Officer - Colin Allen

Director of Legal Services:- Named officer – Robin Williams

Head of Procurement (if appropriate):- N/a

This report is published on the Council's website or can be found at:-

<http://modern.gov.rotherham.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?Categories=>

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

**GUIDE TO FINANCIAL
SUPPORT FOR YOUNG
PEOPLE LEAVING CARE IN
ROTHERHAM**

INFORMATION SHEET

Service area	Looked After Children's Services
Date effective from	January 2017
Responsible officer(s)	Ian Walker/Mick McCarthy
Date of review(s)	June 2017
Status: <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory (all named staff must adhere to guidance) <input type="checkbox"/> Optional (procedures and practice can vary between teams)	Mandatory
Target audience	All Children's Social Care staff
Date of DLT decision	

**Guide to Financial Support for Young People Leaving Care in
Rotherham**

1. Introduction
2. Eligible Young People
3. Relevant Young People
4. Young People Detained or in Hospital
5. Former Relevant Child
6. Young Parents
7. Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)
8. Identification Documents
9. Financial Assistance for Eligible and Relevant Young People
10. Eligible Young People Who Are Not in Education Training or Employment
11. Accessing Money - Rates for Eligible and Relevant Young People
12. Eligible and Relevant Young People That Are Working
13. Apprentices
14. Young People in Further Education, Training and Employment
15. Financial Support to Care Leavers 18+ (Former Relevant Children)
16. Claiming Benefits
17. Job Seeker's Allowance

18. **Income Support**
19. **Employment Support Allowance**
20. **Housing Benefit**
21. **Accommodation**
22. **Further Education**
23. **Additional Funding Support for Former Relevant Young People**
24. **Education and Training for Former Relevant Care**
25. **Cold Weather Payments**
26. **Care Leavers in Custody**
27. **16 and 17 Year Old Young People Who Return Home**
28. **16 and 17 Year olds who live with an extended family member, other person known to them – Connected Person**
29. **Young People in Receipt of Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) Payment**
30. **Young People With Other Income**
31. **Qualifying Care Leavers**
32. **Complaints, Comments and Compliments**
33. **Emergency Payments**

1. Introduction

- 1.1.** This guide describes how Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) will provide young people with financial support and help young people to gain confidence in handling their money.
- 1.2.** Whilst being looked after it is important that young people are assisted to start thinking about managing their money as early as possible. The experience of those that have already left care and are living independently informs us that difficulties in managing budgets effectively on a low income is one of the main areas that care leavers experience. Young people should be encouraged to use the assistance and support available to them whilst still in care, to gain experience with budgeting and avoid getting into difficulties at a later stage.
- 1.3.** All Care Leavers who are ready to move onto independence will receive an allowance to set up home, and financial help with education and training courses, including higher education or help to get and keep a job.
- 1.4.** In all our dealings with young people we will not take into account any money they may have in savings or trusts etc.
- 1.5.** All allowances should be based on an assessment of need and set out in the young person's Pathway Plan. The Plan must highlight any attached conditions, how payments will be made, the frequency of payments and when they will be reviewed and cease. If young people are not satisfied with the amount or way we are paying them, there should be a review of their Pathways Plan to reassess their needs.
- 1.6.** Where young people are in receipt of money from RMBC, the way in which they are paid and the amounts they will receive will be agreed in their Pathway Plan, which will be reviewed at a minimum of every six months. If young people do not comply with the agreements made within the Pathway Plan about getting money, then sanctions may be imposed in the manner in which they receive their allowance but not the amount they receive.
- 1.7.** The allowances set out in the following sections are subject to an assessment of young people's needs. Care Leavers who are also Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

DRAFT V2 09/12/16

are entitled to the same allowances as any other Care Leaver. However, allowances to this group of young people may be affected and limited as a result of their immigration status.

- 1.8.** Certain groups of children who are Looked After and Care Leavers aged 16 & 17 are eligible to claim welfare benefits (lone parents and sick and disabled young people). Where young people are eligible to claim, support should be provided to enable them to maximise their income. Where young people aged 16 & 17 are in receipt of welfare benefits the leaving care allowances cease.
- 1.9.** Care Leavers will continue to receive a service from RMBC until they are at least 21 years old, unless they are in education or training or wish to have a continuing service with RMBC, in which case their support, subject to assessment, can continue until they reach the end of their agreed programme of education and training or their 25th birthday. Any financial support that is agreed upon and provided to the young person will be detailed within their Pathway Plan. Where young people stop receiving a leaving care service at 21 years old, but then wish to return or are returning to education or training at any time before their 25th birthday, they can return to the Leaving Care Team and will have a new assessment of their needs carried out. For those young people who are returning to education, an education and training focused Pathway Plan will be completed and this will include details of any agreed financial support to be provided to them.

2. Eligible Young People

- 2.1.** An Eligible young person is one who is aged 16/17, has been Looked After by the Local Authority for a period of 13 weeks which began after reaching the age of 14, and who remains Looked After. The period of 13 weeks need not have been continuous and may be made up of a series of shorter periods when the child was Looked After. Planned periods of respite care do not count towards eligibility. The period of Care must cross their 16th birthday.
- 2.2.** Eligible young people include young people remanded into the care of the Local Authority. Young people remanded into the care of the Local Authority are regarded as Eligible, even if they are not given a custodial sentence, providing that the period of remand is for 13 weeks or more, and crosses their 16th birthday.

- 2.3.** Young people on a Care Order remain Eligible until such time as they reach their 18th birthday, or the Care Order is discharged, whatever their living arrangements.

3. Relevant Young People

- 3.1.** Under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, a Relevant child is one who was previously an Eligible child, but who is no longer Looked After and is under the age of 18.

4. Young People Detained or in Hospital

- 4.1.** Regulation 3 of the Care Leavers Regulations provides for an additional category of Relevant young people. These are young people who, on reaching their 16 birthday are detained in a remand centre, young offender's institution, or any other institution ordered by the Court and immediately prior, to being detained or in hospital had been looked after for 13 weeks after reaching the age of 14. This exemption applies even if the young person is detained overnight.

- 4.2.** Regulation 3 also provides that a child who has lived for a continuous period of six months or more with:

- a) his/her parent.
- b) someone who is not his/her parent, but who has parental responsibility for him.
- c) where he/she is in care and there was a Residence Order in force immediately before the care order was made, a person in whose favour the residence order was made then that child is not a Relevant child despite falling within section 23A(2). Where those living arrangements break down and the child ceases to live with the person concerned, the child is to be treated as a Relevant child.

5. Former Relevant Child

- 5.1.** Defined in section 23C(1) of the 1989 Act as a young person who is:

- a) aged 18 or above, and either.
- b) has been a relevant child and would be one if he/she were under 18.
- c) immediately before he/she ceased to be looked after at age 18, was an eligible child.

6. Young Parents

Relevant young people who are lone parents can claim Income Support, but not Housing Benefit. For all other purposes of the Act they are considered Relevant.

6.1. Persons qualifying for advice and assistance are defined in Section 24 of the 1989 Act as a person who is:

- a) aged at least 16, but is under 21.
- b) with respect to whom a Special Guardianship Order is in force (or was in force when they reached 18) and was looked after immediately before the making of that Order.
- c) at any time after reaching the age of 16 but while he was still a child was, but is no longer, Looked After, accommodated or fostered.

6.2. A Qualifying child who is 16/17 years old and has previously been Looked After, but ceased to be Looked After before their 18th birthday, does not have the same restrictions to claiming welfare benefits as Eligible and Relevant young people do. Because of this the Leaving Care Team will not pay a personal allowance or pay for the accommodation costs for these young people. All Qualifying children aged 16+ who would like a service from Leaving Care Team will have their needs assessed. Where, following the Initial Assessment, it is concluded that support will be necessary over a period of time a plan will be drawn up with the young person. The plan will outline the support to be provided to the young person, including, if appropriate, any financial support. The plan will be drawn up by a social worker or suitably qualified person.

7. Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

7.1 A child's immigration status has no bearing on a local authority's duties to provide leaving care support and the duties of the local authority to unaccompanied or trafficked children apply as equally to asylum seeking young people as they do to all children looked after children. UASCs usually have equal access to financial support from the Leaving Care Service, depending on their immigration status, they may have differing entitlements to public funds which could affect their entitlement. A child's immigration status has no bearing on a local authority's duties to provide care leaving support. Unaccompanied children must be provided with the same support as for any care leaver

DRAFT V2 09/12/16

7.2 However, the planning for permanence for UASC who are looked after should consider the potential of re-unification with the child's birth family subject to child protection considerations being paramount. Those who return under Assisted Voluntary Returns Families and Children are eligible for up to £2,000 worth of reintegration assistance for each person, including a £500 relocation grant in cash on departure for immediate resettlement needs. Once home, a range of reintegration assistance options are available, tailored to the returnee's individual needs. This assistance is to help returnees make an income and become financially independent.

- 7.1.** Most children who arrive in the UK seeking asylum without a parent or guardian, make an application to the UK Border Agency (UKBA), and are granted Discretionary Leave for three years, or until they are 17 and a half years old, whichever comes first. They then have the opportunity to make an 'in-time application' for this leave to be extended, and as long as they do this before their original leave has expired, they will usually have access to public funds, which includes entitlement to welfare benefits, whilst they are awaiting a decision from the UKBA. Any UASC subject to immigration control may need and require access to specialised legal advice and support particularly in relation to immigration and asylum applications, decisions and court proceedings. If they have been trafficked legal advice may be needed in respect of criminal proceedings or compensation claims.
- 7.2.** If the decision on their asylum claim is negative, but they make an in time appeal, they still have access to public funds until all of their asylum appeal rights have been exhausted. For those young people who are refused asylum and have exhausted all of their appeal rights, their entitlement to public funds, including welfare benefits, would usually end. At this point, the Local Authority will work in partnership with the UK Border Agency and the National Asylum Support Service to provide financial support to these young people whilst they are waiting for instructions and assistance in leaving the country.
- 7.3.** The above is the most common route for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children entering the UK, but there are other possible outcomes of their asylum claim:
- a) The young person could be granted Refugee Status (i.e. granted asylum), they would have leave to remain for five years, and access to public funds.
 - b) Or the young person could be refused asylum but granted Humanitarian Protection (HP) with leave to remain for five years, again usually with access to public funds. HP is most

DRAFT V2 09/12/16

commonly granted when the young person is at some risk of 'ill-treatment' in the particular country they have left but does not meet the criteria of the Refugee Convention. This is a rare category for UASC.

c) There is also the possibility that the UK Border Agency could refuse asylum with no grant of leave. In this case the UASC would be returned to his/her country of origin.

7.4. From the age of eighteen former relevant children who have been granted leave to remain in the UK can generally claim means tested benefits and have rights to public housing. This includes cases where the person's leave to remain has expired but they have applied for an extension of leave to remain (provided the application was made before the previous period of leave expired) and that application is still under consideration, or an appeal against refusal of the extension has been made. It is especially important, therefore, that the person is advised that he/she has the opportunity to apply for an extension of leave before the earlier period of leave to remain that was granted expires.

7.5. For young people aged over 21 who are "unlawfully present in the UK" – which includes those who have been refused asylum and have either not applied for an extension of further Discretionary Leave to remain or have applied for an extension but that application and any appeal has been rejected, they can generally only be supported to the extent necessary to avoid a breach of their human rights (under the European Convention of Human Rights). Therefore a Human Rights Assessment should be arranged to ascertain if leaving care support should continue. As a general rule, the person will not usually be able to show that support should continue solely because they have no other means of assistance and be made destitute if it is stopped because they could avoid that by leaving the United Kingdom. Examples that could demonstrate that support should continue for human rights reasons might be:

- The person is taking all reasonable steps to leave the UK but is unable to do so immediately e.g. because they are waiting for the required travel documents from the national embassy.
- The person is temporarily unable to leave the UK because they are too sick to travel.
- The person is awaiting the outcome of judicial review proceedings in the higher courts in relation to his/her asylum claim.

DRAFT V2 09/12/16

8. Identification Documents

By the age of 16 all young people should have a National Insurance Number and relevant identity documents with photographic evidence to ensure they can register for housing, bank accounts and claim welfare benefits.

8.1. National Insurance Numbers do not get issued automatically. At the age of fifteen and nine months, the social worker for the young person should contact the New Registrations Section of the National Insurance Number Office – HMRC to instigate the process of obtaining the National Insurance Number. For detailed guidance, [click here](#).

8.2. When the letter confirming the National Insurance number is received the social worker should record it on Liquid Logic and place a copy of it on the young person's electronic record.

8.3. To ensure young people have other documentation to prove their identity Children's Social Care will pay for the following:

- Passport.
- Travel documents (subject to an assessment).
- Provisional Driving Licence.
- Copy of Birth Certificate.
- Deed Poll to change name legally, if required.

8.4. The initial purchase of an Item of Personal Luggage up to the value of £40 will also be provided to all young people who meet the criteria of this policy.

9. Financial Assistance and Support for Eligible and Relevant Young People

Foster carers and providers commissioned by the local authority have a responsibility to prepare young people to leave care. They will be expected to help young people to learn how to budget and manage their finances. Eligible and Relevant young people (subject to an assessment) will receive an allowance (see Allowances Table 1). This money is to cover items such as clothing, toiletries, personal telephone calls, entertainment, entrance fees, personal items young people intend to take with them when they move on and treats.

9.1. Young People Living with Parent(s)

DRAFT V2 09/12/16

When an eligible young person returns to live with someone with parental responsibility, it is assumed that they will take financial responsibility for their child. RMBC will consider making a contribution towards the setting up costs of that return, provided that it does not exceed the value of the setting up home allowance. The parent should claim benefits appropriate to their circumstances. Any additional funding will be provided only in exceptional circumstances and with the agreement of a Service Manager.

- 9.2.** Young people will need to be assisted to open a Bank or Building Society (Savings) Account. This will be used to budget their personal expenses. Young people should be encouraged to save at least half of their personal allowances for more expensive clothing and personal items they may wish to buy.
- 9.3.** Young People will also need a Bank (Current) Account.
- If young people are working this will allow them to be paid directly into an account.
 - When young people leave care a bank account will enable the Council where necessary to also make payments to them.
 - Benefit agencies now prefer to pay benefits into bank accounts for those eligible for benefits post 18.
 - Social workers and personal advisors should look into what types of accounts are available to young people.
 - Foster carers, personal advisors and social workers should help young people make a decision about which one will suit them.
 - Young people who are still in foster care but work and earn money should be encouraged to save a proportion of the money they earn that they will not access until they are 18. This will assist them in preparing for the realities of leaving care and is a step towards taking full financial responsibility in the future.
 - All payments will be paid into young people's bank accounts and in exceptional circumstances in cash agreed as part of the Pathway Plan. This should be recorded, both in terms of the amount of payments and how they will be paid. Young people should also be

DRAFT V2 09/12/16

advised about how they are able access discretionary payments. Young people must be provided with a copy as a record of this agreement.

- If a young person lives outside Rotherham and needs a cash payment, the social worker/PA will contact the leaving care service in the area where the young person lives or the service provider so that the young person can receive money locally for which that local authority will be reimbursed.

9.4. Accommodation:

The local authority will arrange and meet accommodation costs up to the age of 18. If the placement agreement states that the lodgings provided includes meals and/or utilities, the young person will be expected to pay towards this from their maintenance payment. The amount payable will be discussed and agreed within the placement agreement.

9.5. Subsistence and Other Payments:

A maintenance allowance in line with current DWP rates will be paid to young people including those who are studying, undertaking unpaid training, seeking employment, or undertaking voluntary work. If young people are undertaking training for which they are paid they will get the equivalent or a higher allowance from their training provider.

- 9.6.** Young people who are undertaking low paid employment and living independently or semi independently will continue to receive a maintenance allowance until they earn a given threshold up to the age of 18.

- 9.7.** Sick and disabled young people and lone parents (aged 16 & 17) are able to claim means tested benefits and therefore will not receive the majority of the 16 & 17 year old leaving care allowances as their welfare benefits are provided to cover these areas. The Maintenance Allowance and Clothing Allowance will cease for these groups.

- 9.8.** Where young people are living in semi-independent/supported placements adjustments will be made to the level of financial support/services provided as follows:

Table 1

DRAFT V2 09/12/16

Placement Support to young person	Leaving Care Allowance	Deduction	Allowance
Full responsibility for all costs including utility and food	Full Maintenance Allowance	£0.00	£57.90
Accommodation and utilities only	Partial Maintenance Allowance	£10.00	£47.90
Accommodation, utilities and food provided	Partial Maintenance Allowance	£22.90	£35.00

Where money is deducted from the young people, the aim is to prepare young people for having to set money aside for when they are independent.

NB: Bed and Breakfast Accommodation is not to be used in any circumstances for 16 and 17 year olds.

10. Lone Parents:

10.1 Lone parents who are also eligible or relevant including those young people living in foster care and residential care or in education, are entitled to claim Income Support, Child Tax Credits, Child Benefit and Healthy Start Vouchers from the birth of their baby.

10.2 They are also entitled to apply for a Sure Start Maternity Grant from the day their baby is born (or up to 11 weeks earlier if in receipt of a qualifying benefit such as Employment & Support Allowance at that time).

10.3 The Sure Start Maternity Grant is only available for the eldest or first child. Lone parents should be supported and assisted to claim their full benefit entitlement. New claims for income support by lone parents can only be made if they have a child under the age of five. Lone parents will need to register for Jobseeker's Allowance and look for work unless they are sick or disabled or can claim income support as a carer when the youngest child reaches the age of 5.

11. Accessing Money - Rates for Eligible and Relevant Young People

DRAFT V2 09/12/16

- 11.1.** Young people who are not in education, employment or training will receive and living independently/semi independently:

Table 2

Living Allowance	£57.90 per week minus any deductions as identified in table 1
Housing/accommodation	Rent payments as required up until the age of 18
Travel seeking work/education	Funding for travel if the young person can evidence that they are actively seeking employment or training.

12. Eligible and Relevant Young People That Are Working

- 12.1.** Eligible and Relevant young people who are working full time continue to receive a maintenance allowance that will guarantee they are in receipt of at least £100.00 per week in addition to their rent and travel costs. Once the total income from wages and subsistence exceeds £100.00, the amount of the maintenance allowance the local authority will pay will be reduced pound per pound after the first additional £20 per week. This is designed to give an incentive to young people to access employment opportunities.
- 12.2.** For those working part time the same rules apply once the combination of wages and subsistence exceeds £80.00 per week.
- 12.3.** Allowances to young people in full and part time employment will cease when the young person reaches the age of 18 and will be subject to young people providing proof of their earnings. If proof is not provided, the young person will not be eligible for additional allowances.

13. Apprenticeships

DRAFT V2 09/12/16

13.1. The National Minimum Wage is the minimum pay per hour almost all workers are entitled to by law. It doesn't matter how small an employer is, they still have to pay the minimum wage. The [minimum wage rate](#) depends on a worker's age and if they are an apprentice. Use the [National Minimum Wage calculator](#) to check if the minimum wage has been paid.

13.2. The National Minimum Wage rate per hour depends on age and whether a young person is an apprentice – young people must be of at least [school leaving age](#) to receive it. This rate is reset in October of each year.

14. Young People in Further Education, Training and Employment

14.1. Eligible and Relevant young people (16 and 17 year olds) who are studying at sixth form college or further education colleges will be supported if living independently or semi-independently via their maintenance allowance.

14.2. For young people eligible for £1,200 16-19 bursary, this will be paid by the learning provider in cash/kind and be additional to the maintenance allowance

14.3. Further Education:

Young people who are undertaking full time further education courses may receive support up to £350.00 per year if the FE bursary is not available or insufficient. This is available for equipment, stationery, books and educational visits related to a course of further education. Young people will be required to submit a list of their needs regarding equipment; course books etc. and provide receipts to their leaving care social worker/personal adviser. In exceptional circumstances, and where courses require substantial amounts of equipment or materials additional funding will be considered following an assessment of need.

14.3. Computer Grant

Young people entering full time Further Education and Higher Education will be provided with a one off Computer Grant up to £250.00 (young people may wish to top-up this amount to purchase a higher specification machine). The course must be an academic course of at least GCSE level and require the use of a computer. This grant will be provided as a one off payment by the end of school year 11 (age 16) and ceasing to be a former relevant child at

DRAFT V2 09/12/16

the age of 21 or beyond. The costs of the computer will be jointly met by the LAC Service and the Virtual School.

14.4. Young People Who Are Sick or Disabled:

14.5. Young people who are sick or disabled can apply for a Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) if they have a disability, including a:

- long-term health condition
- mental health condition
- specific learning difficulty, e.g. dyslexia

14.6. In order to qualify for this support young people will need to meet the [definition of disability](#) under the Equality Act 2010.

14.7. The [support available](#) depends on individual needs and not on income. Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) is paid on top of other student finance. This helps young people who are in education pay the extra costs they may have because of a disability. This allowance does not have to be repaid. How much young people will get depends on individual needs. For part-time students the '[course intensity](#)' can affect how much a young person can get.

14.8. Young people with a disability can also get help with the costs of:

- specialist equipment, e.g. a computer if needed because of a disability
- non-medical helpers
- extra travel because of a disability
- other disability-related costs of studying

14.10. Summary of payments for Eligible and Relevant Young People

Young people may receive these additional payments subject to assessment and need:

Table 3

DRAFT V2 09/12/16

In education/training NB: this payment is term time only but does include half terms.	£10 per week bonus for full attendance and travel costs associated with the course.
Education expenses not covered by an FE bursary	Up to £350.00 per year for books, equipment, stationary, and educational visits related to a course of further education. Young people should submit a list of requirements regarding equipment, course books etc. and return receipts to their leaving care social worker/personal adviser. In exceptional circumstances, extra tuition, and where courses require substantial amounts of equipment or materials an additional grant will be considered following an assessment of need.
Clothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £200 for young people who on entering care following their 16th birthday with inappropriate clothing for their needs. A list of the young person's needs and costing will need to be provided and approved by the Service Manager. • Additional £150.00 per year specifically for clothing for work/education/training subject to assessment.
Travel Costs	Travel costs may be met by the training or education provider. If travel costs are not available funding may be payable subject to an assessment of need.
Birthdays	16 th Birthday – Fostering rate for birthday allowance 17 th Birthday - Fostering rate for birthday allowance 18 th Birthday - £100 (currently £50)
Health Needs	Complete HCI (SC) . The HCI (sc) form enables young people to obtain an NHS low income exemption certificate which provides free or reduced costs including dental, optician and prescriptive services. Where young people need glasses and are in receipt of an NHS voucher RMBC will match the value of the voucher.
Fares to attend place of worship	Upon request and subject to assessment.
Cultural and Individual Needs	Young people will be assisted in accessing services to meet their cultural needs. Subject to an assessment of need services will be funded or partially funded as appropriate to meet identified needs such as skin care, hair care or dietary needs.

DRAFT V2 09/12/16

Holidays	A 16 and 17 year old fostering holiday allowance rate will be provided to young people for a holiday with their former foster carer or residential home. Additionally the holiday allowance can be used by young people for holidays outside of this arrangement. A risk assessment and verification of the suitability of the holiday/destination and accommodation will need to be undertaken and the arrangements should be set out in the young person's Pathway Plan.
Christmas / Festivals	<p>Young people who are non-Christian should be given the choice as to when they will receive their allowance which will be the equivalent to that provided for young people in foster care. They should also be offered the opportunity to split their allowance between Christmas/Festival.</p> <p>Following an assessment of need the Christmas/Festival allowance can be paid directly to the young person or given to the foster carer/key worker/PA or SW to purchase a gift or to contribute towards a celebration.</p> <p>This allowance will be subject to young people remaining in contact with social care and actively engaging in their pathway planning.</p>
Contact	Where young people have family members who do not live locally to their placement (more than a short bus/train journey), travel costs may be provided following an assessment of need. Wherever possible travel arrangements should be booked in advance in order to reduce costs.
Key Documents	<p>Funds will be provided for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passport 1 birth certificate Travel Document for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children – subject to an assessment of need and appropriateness of the request and destination. Driving Licence

DRAFT V2 09/12/16

Childcare	<p>Lone parents, who wish to return to education, start a traineeship/apprenticeship or take up employment opportunities, will be assisted to identify funds from universal services to cover or contribute to child care costs. In the first instance, the Care to Learn Fund, individual colleges, Sure Start, HMRC (through working tax credits), the Job Centres Flexible Support Fund and other universal services must be approached as sources of potential child care funding. Where appropriate and dependent on an assessment of need, with all options having been explored without success, RMBC may contribute towards the costs of child care.</p> <p>The Care to Learn Fund Care to Learn provides financial support to assist young parents under the age of 20 to undertake education.</p> <p>Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children who have applied for asylum and have an initial decision such as Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave can apply for a Care to Learn Fund grant</p>
Prom	<p>Young people can access up to £100 to assist with the costs of attending a Prom. This can be used towards any Prom related activity including Clothing, hair/ makeup, travel and photos.</p>

15. Financial Support to Care Leavers 18+ (Former Relevant Children)

At 18 as an adult living independently, young people are expected to be responsible for their own maintenance costs. If young people are not in employment they will be entitled to claim state benefits. Since this is an entitlement the Local Authority no longer has a duty to support young adults financially unless this is required to assist in the seeking and maintenance of education, training or employment.

16. Claiming Benefits

NB. At the time of forming this policy, Universal Credit (UC) is in the process of being implemented. This will require an addendum to the policy to be included once UC is implemented, together with proposed changes to Housing Benefit rules.

DRAFT V2 09/12/16

- 16.1.** Benefits can be claimed when a young person reaches the age of 18 years. Personal Advisers should assist the young person to prepare to make the application one month before their 18th birthday. The pathway plan should determine who is responsible for completing this task.
- 16.2.** The PA should assist young people to make an appointment to commence their claim on the 18th birthday. Care Leavers will be expected to attend an appointment at the Job Centre Plus the DWP named single point of contact, complete an application form and submit any evidence that is required. SWs or PAs will need to check that Care Leavers have the necessary ID. For all benefit applications and renewals, proof of address, bank details and ID will be required (e.g. birth certificate, passport, driving licence).
- 16.3.** The process following the application can take a few weeks and providing that the young person has kept all appointments, submitted an application and any paper work requested, they will continue to be supported financially by the Leaving Care Team for up to four weeks. Failure to make an application at the appropriate time, missed appointments or failure to submit paperwork is the responsibility of the young person. RMBC is under no obligation to compensate for a young person's failure to comply with the benefits application process.
- 16.4.** Care Leavers will be expected to utilise all avenues available to them prior to financial support being provided by RMBC where they have not kept appointments or submitted an application despite support to do this. In these circumstances, the local authority will provide minimal assistance which may include food parcels, and vouchers. Cash payments will only be made in exceptional circumstances.
- 16.5.** If benefit payments are disrupted through no fault of the young person they will receive the full Young Persons Allowance minus any deductions identified in Table 1. In these circumstances, young people will be required to sign an agreement that once their payments have been received and if they receive backdated payments that any money that we have paid will be repaid.
- 17. Job Seeker's Allowance**
- 17.1.** This benefit is set up to provide temporary assistance whilst seeking work. Young people aged 18 and above who are not in Education, Training or Employment (NEET), will make an application for Job Seeker's allowance.

17.2. Application Process:

The Personal Adviser will:-

- Assist the young person to make the claim on line or by telephone.
- Arrange and attend appointment at the Job Centre with the young person..
- Support the young person to maintain the ongoing signing appointments and requirements to search for agreed jobs.

17.3. Once young people are receiving payments they will still be expected to attend an appointment every week or fortnight to check that they are still NEET and to be offered support to access employment. Young people will also be asked to evidence that they have applied for jobs weekly and that they have applied for any that they have suggested to them. If this is not adhered to their benefits may be stopped for a few weeks. In these circumstances the Leaving Care Team is not responsible and has no duty to pay any money and will provide minimal assistance as identified earlier in this policy.

18. Income Support

18.1. Eligibility

This is an allowance that young people may be entitled to if they are in further education. In order to be eligible young people will have to be undertaking a course that is more than 16 hours per week. If eligible it will remain payable whilst the young person is still in further education up until 20 Years old. Young people will also be entitled to Income Support if pregnant or a lone parent. For young people who are pregnant an application should be made once they are 29 weeks pregnant even if they are still looked after.

18.2. Application Process

- a) Apply by phone or download the application form, print, complete and send to Job Centre.
- b) Application is from the date of phone call or receipt of application form.

- c) Interview arranged to confirm application details.
- d) If applying because of being in education, a copy of the Learning Agreement, showing the hours of study, is required.

19. Employment Support Allowance

19.1. Eligibility:

This is the allowance that young people should be applying for if they are unable to work due to your physical, emotional or mental health needs.

19.2. A medical certificate will be required to confirm the identified need.

N.B. The DWP will be assessing the young person's capability of working and may find a job that takes their medical needs into consideration.

19.3. Application Process:

- a) Applications made by telephone.
- b) An application form will be sent to the young person which they may need assistance to complete and must be returned immediately.
- c) Forward medical certificate to the DWP- preferably by hand and receipt needs to be obtained.
- d) The young person's Medical Certificates MUST cover the whole period claiming for and be continuous.

20. Housing Benefit

20.1. Housing Benefit requires proof of income before any payment is assessed. It is important to ensure that the Housing Benefit department is advised of all change of circumstances, including any change in benefits, even if the Leaving Care Team is supporting young people financially.

20.2. If young people have a tenancy, Housing Benefit must be claimed or rent and council tax will not be paid. Current rates for different areas can be checked via the Rent Service website, or

DRAFT V2 09/12/16

via <http://www.direct.gov.uk> following the links to Local Housing Allowance and individual council areas.

21. Accommodation

Where there are plans for young people to rent private sector accommodation, the amount of rent must be within the Local Housing Allowance for the area they plan to live in. Provision of a deposit or rent in advance must be clarified before the tenancy agreement is authorised.

21.1. Housing Benefit for tenants renting in the private sector is calculated using the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates. The Rent Officer sets the level of the LHA for the different types of property in each LHA designated area. Payments will generally be made directly to the tenant unless they are particularly 'vulnerable'. Care leaver status could, in principle, qualify a young person to have his or her LHA paid directly to the landlord. The intention of paying LHA directly to tenants is to encourage responsibility for paying the rent themselves. LHA rates are set annually.

21.2. In circumstances where the young person is not able to access social housing or would be at risk in such accommodation a deposit and rent in advance will be considered. This would be subject to assessment. Where young people are moving into private accommodation a deposit and rent in advance will not be approved in the following circumstances:

- The rent charged by a landlord is higher than the Local Housing Allowance for the area.
- Where a young person has appropriate access to social housing.

21.3. Young people leaving care are exempt from the Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) up to the age of 22; therefore they are eligible to rent accommodation up to the 1 bedroom Local Housing Allowance rate. In exceptional circumstances RMBC will consider acting as a guarantor for young people aged 16 and 17 following an assessment of need and all other possible guarantors being explored and ruled out. Where RMBC has acted as a guarantor for 16 and 17 year olds, a new tenancy agreement will need to be completed when the young person reaches their 18th birthday in all circumstances and this should be agreed at the time of the original tenancy agreement.

DRAFT V2 09/12/16

21.4. When young people move into private rented accommodation their Personal Adviser should take digital pictures that show the condition of the property and any items that are included in the rent/inventory. Copies of the pictures should be provided to the landlord, young person and a copy uploaded onto the young person's personal file. This will assist if there is any dispute about the condition of the property and the return of the deposit when the young person's tenancy ends.

21.5. Young people who remain in their previous foster care placement under a Staying Put Arrangement are eligible to claim Housing Benefit (See Staying Put Policy).

22. Cold Weather Payments:

In cold weather, help towards the cost of heating for each qualifying week is available from the Benefits Agency for parents of children under 5 years who are in receipt of:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance

The parent needs to notify the Benefits Agency if they have a baby or have a child start to live with them. Thereafter the payments are made automatically.

23. Further Education

From the age of 18 to the end of the academic year following their 21st birthday, care leavers who are 'estranged from their families' and who are studying full time (12 hours or more of 'guided learning') can claim Income Support and Housing Benefit on the grounds of being in 'Relevant Education'. Young people can start or change courses at any point up until their 21st birthday.

23.1. Where young people aged 21 to 25 wish to commence or resume education or training after their 21st birthday, financial assistance and funding will be considered following an assessment of need and of the motivation of the young person to undertake, sustain and complete the course.

DRAFT V2 09/12/16

24. Additional Funding Support for Former Relevant Young People

Former Relevant young people can obtain additional incentives from the RMBC depending on whether they are NEET or EET as follows:-

Table 4

	In Education, Training or work	Not in Education or Training
Receiving State Benefits	£10.00 pw for full attendance. This payment is during term times only but does include half terms and will be paid each half term in arrears subject to confirmation of attendance.	Fares to interviews and to attend education or training if this is not provided by the training or education provider.
No Benefits	See Financial Assistance for Care Leavers in Education.	Fares to interviews
Apprentices	£10.00 pw incentive for full attendance.	
Employed on Low Wage	If income is less than the JSA rate following outgoings for rent, water rates and fares subsistence payments will make up to the JSA rate + £10.00 pw incentive.	
Housing Costs		
Receiving Benefits	None	None
No Benefits	Education package See Financial Assistance for Care Leavers in Education.	None
Travel		
Receiving Benefits	Costs to get to course if not covered by FE grant or student finance. RMBC will pay for first 4 weeks travel to a new job.	Fares to interviews and to attend education or training if this is not provided by the training or education provider subject to an assessment. RMBC will pay for first 4 weeks travel to a new job.

DRAFT V2 09/12/16

No Benefits	See Financial Assistance for Care Leavers in Education.	Fares to interviews and to attend education or training if this is not provided by the training or education provider subject to an assessment. RMBC will pay for first 4 weeks travel to a new job .
Contact with family	Fares for up to max of 4 visits per year	Fares for up to max of 4 visits per year
Childcare	<p>Lone parents, who wish to return to education, start a traineeship, apprenticeship or take up employment opportunities, will be assisted to identify funds from universal services to cover or contribute to child care costs. In the first instance, the Care to Learn Fund, individual colleges, Sure Start, HMRC (through working tax credits), the Job Centres Flexible Support Fund and other universal services must be approached as sources of potential child care funding. Where appropriate and dependent on an assessment of need, with all options having been explored without success, RMBC may contribute towards the costs of child care.</p> <p>The Care to Learn Fund Care to Learn provides financial support to assist young parents who are under the age of 20 at the start of their course to undertake education.</p> <p>Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children who have applied for asylum and have an initial decision such as Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave can apply for a Care to Learn Fund grant.</p>	Assistance may be provided subject to an assessment of need to allow young people to seek employment or training.

Table 5 – Funding Available To All Care Leavers Up To 21:

Further/Higher Education/Work	See Financial Assistance Form for Care Leavers in Education. For agreed accredited courses up to the age of 24.
--------------------------------------	---

DRAFT V2 09/12/16

Special Needs	Resources may be provided in individual cases following an assessment of need and young people being assisted to access services to meet their specific needs.
Cultural/Religious needs	Individual cases to be considered following an assessment of need.
Clothing (excluding foster care)	Up to £150 towards special items associated with work/education. £100 Summer + £100 winter (Currently £100 for any purpose)
Other (Care Leavers Only)	
Birthdays (19th/20th)	£50.00 subject to remaining “in touch” and engaging in their pathway plan. (Currently £20)
18th Birthday	£100.00 (Currently £50 if not in foster care)
21st Birthday	£100.00 (Currently £20) subject to being “in touch”.
Christmas/Festivals	£50.00 (Currently £20)
Setting up home allowance	Up to £2000.00 to spend on essential items plus cost of 1 st year insurance.
Security	Up to £100 for locks/bolts etc. subject to assessment.
Initial Food stock	£40.00 – One off payment.
Smoke alarm, fire blanket and carbon monoxide alarms	Subject to assessment and consultation with Landlord.
First Aid box	£10.00
TV License	Full cost – One off payment for first license.
Payments for Consultation/Participation Work	£30 per day pro rata + travel expenses.
Maternity	£200 payable in 3 rd trimester in addition to state benefit entitlement
Driving lessons	£100 contribution towards license and test fee + cost of 10 driving lessons. Subject to assessment of current circumstances and young person’s contribution.

25. Education and Training for Former Relevant Care Leavers**25.1. Further and Higher Education:**

The Leaving Care Service will offer financial support for care leavers through at least one course of further or higher education of their choice starting before their 21st birthday as agreed and detailed in the Pathway Plan. If not met by a bursary or charitable funding, costs may be met, subject to assessment, for:

- Registration and Examination fees.
- Accommodation.
- Textbooks and equipment specified as essential.
- Activities essential to meet course requirements.
- Public transport between accommodation and course centre if over 3 miles, if they have attended the closest available course to their home.
- Transport costs to open days & college interviews.
- Specific clothing, including clothes for interview and essential equipment related to the course.

25.2. The Leaving Care Service will assist young people to apply for college/university support funds to help with costs associated with courses. For young people who cannot access benefits, either because they are over 21 years, or for some other reason, an assessment will be carried out and, subject to the outcome of that assessment financial support provided.

25.3. Accommodation may also be provided, or the means to secure it, to a maximum of the relevant Local Housing Allowance rates.

25.4. Relevant or Former Relevant Care Leavers entering a higher education or university degree course will be provided with financial support subject to an assessment of need. Income and outgoings should be calculated and young people in education should after their outgoings have been calculated, be left with a minimum weekly living allowance in line with DWP benefit rates after rent and utilities have been paid. If there is a shortfall this will be made up by RMBC if there is good reason why the young person is not able to work during their course.

DRAFT V2 09/12/16

- 25.5.** Loans are available to all students in Higher Education. Tuition Fee Loans pay for the course. Maintenance Loans and Grants help with living costs (e.g. accommodation, books, bills etc.). Full information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance/overview>.
- 25.6.** It is expected that young people will access all funds available to them prior to an assessment and decision being made about the level of financial assistance that the local authority will provide. A written assessment will need to be completed by the social worker /PA and the proposed financial package presented to the Service Manager for authorisation.
- 25.7.** All student related finance may be applied for at the same time and advice obtained through the Student Loans Company.
- 25.8.** In addition RMBC will pay a bursary of £2,000 to young people in Higher Education. The Personal Advisor must arrange for this to be paid in instalments over the length of the course subject to attendance. This will not be included in any calculations for further support.
- 25.9.** Some Universities and Colleges also pay Institutional Bursaries and extra bursaries for students who have been in care. The PA must assist in applying for all these and also to charitable organisations for any additional funding. RMBC will provide travel costs for transporting a care leaver and their belongings to and from university at the beginning and end of terms, if required.
- 25.10.** Accommodation (or the money to secure it to a maximum of the relevant Local Housing Allowance rates) will be provided for holidays during the course, except for the time leading up to the first term, or after the last term. During the holidays, if a return to an ex-foster carer is planned this must be agreed in accordance with arrangements in line with the Staying Put Policy.
- 26. Post Graduate Courses and Requests for Support with Education or Training after age 21**
- 25.1** Young people will be assisted to identify financial support and resources to undertake post graduate courses and will not be financed via RMBC.
- 25.2** Young people previously eligible for leaving care services, who wish to or are resuming programmes of education or training after the age of 21, are entitled to an assessment to

DRAFT V2 09/12/16

determine eligibility for financial support. They must be informed of this and provided in writing, information advising of their rights and entitlements. Support can be available for as long as the young person continues on the agreed education even if this ends beyond their 25th birthday.

26.4. Programmes are not limited to university study and might include:

- completion of a basic skills course, so that the young person has the numeracy and literacy skills needed to compete in the jobs market;
- take up of a course of further education;
- take up of a university place;
- participation in vocational training and apprenticeships.

25.5 Where a Care Leaver requests support through an educational programme, an assessment will be carried out by the Leaving Care team. The assessment will focus on the appropriateness of the education or training course for the young person given their level of ability, the purpose of undertaking the course and how it will help them to find employment in the future and financial assistance available to them from other means. It will draw on information about the young person's skills and capabilities, previous support given and the extent to which the young person made use of that. This information should have been set out in the Pathway Plan.

25.6 The extent of practical and financial assistance provided will depend on the young person's needs and will reflect the type of course, whether it is full or part time and an assessment of the young person's existing income will also be carried out. Advice will be given on sources of funding available from bursaries, grants and charitable organisations and young people will be expected to avail themselves of all sources of funding. The maximum payable will be maintenance at the equivalent of the personal allowance £57.90 per week, accommodation costs at the relevant Housing Allowance rate and essential course costs.

Incentives, festival and birthday allowances will not apply for young people over 21. If financial support is given, it will be dependent on attendance and the leaving care worker will need to check on this with a contact at the university or college.

27. Care Leavers in Custody

Young people on remand in custodial settings will not receive full personal allowances but will be paid £20 per month (currently £10). If sentenced to a term in custody, the prison will pay an allowance of £10 per week. Festival allowance will continue to be paid. Transport from custody will be arranged or paid for and any immediate needs on release considered and should be assessed in advance.

28. Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) payment

Young people should be assisted to seek independent financial advice regarding the use of their award and how, for example, by establishing a Discretionary Trust Fund, they may retain entitlement to means tested benefits. A Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority payment is disregarded in calculating means tested benefit entitlement for the first 52 weeks after receipt of the award.

30. Young People With Other Income:

If a young person is in regular receipt of an income (for example, from parents or relatives, interest on an inheritance), the first £15 per week of this will not be taken into account for the purposes of payments.

31. Qualifying Care Leavers:

31.1. Local authorities must give advice, guidance on request have a discretionary power to give assistance, sometimes financial, to young people who do not meet the criteria for full leaving care support on account of their particular needs until they reach the age of 21. This needs to be assessed on a case by case basis. Young people qualifying for this will be:

- Under the age of 21 who were in the care of RMBC between the ages of 16 and 18 for any period of less than 13 weeks
- Relevant young people who have successfully returned home for 6 months by the time they reach age 18
- Those aged 16 to 21 who are or were subject to a Special Guardianship Order and were looked after by RMBC immediately before the making of the order.

- Young people accommodated by a health or education authority or by or on behalf of a voluntary organisation.

32. Emergency Payments

Young people will be supported to manage their finances effectively to meet their day-to-day needs. Where relevant and former relevant care leavers request additional support, they should be advised to access budgeting or crisis loans if they are able to. (See www.direct.gov.uk for more information).

The Leaving Care Service may, subject to an assessment of need, provide some time limited practical assistance in the form of emergency payments for food and clothing, etc. Should it appear that there are patterns to the request or, the young person consistently appears to be unable to manage their budget, action including formal budget advice and training will be required before any further payments are made.

In general, young people should always be encouraged to save part of their weekly maintenance to ensure that they can meet the cost of bigger items or, have money available in the event of an emergency. Any additional support received, should be recorded in the Pathway Plan alongside arrangements to ensure improved money management.

Where an emergency payment is being considered the following conditions will apply:

- The reason for making a payment and the young person's circumstances must be fully assessed together with the young person's other available means.
- Making a payment should be part of an overall support plan and contract to ensure the young person manages within the agreed levels of maintenance provided for all care leavers.
- The amount paid out should be recorded on the electronic record immediately so that if further requests are made this information is available.
- Where young people have lost/had money stolen they must obtain a crime reference number before an assessment of need is undertaken and hardship support provided.
- A supervised food shop may be provided to the maximum value of £10 and consideration may be given to support with gas (£5) and electricity (£5).

32. Complaints, Comments and Compliments:

All care leavers with whom staff are working should be made aware of the processes for giving feedback which might include comments, compliment or complaints. Young people may request/need help in completing feedback. Care leavers should routinely be encouraged to make suggestions and comments about, the services they are receiving, and agreement should always be sought about any issues or differences of opinion that may arise. However, where this cannot be done and the young person wants to make a complaint about the finances they have or are receiving, in the first instance local resolution should be attempted. The person receiving the complaint must acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 3 working days saying who will deal with it and when a response will be received and a substantive response must be given within 10 working days.



(DRAFT)

**Rotherham
Looked After Children
and Care Leavers**

SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY

2017-2020

Version 0.7

Date of Publication: December 2016

Date of Review: December 2017

Document Control

Version History

Issue	Date	Author	Change Description
0.1	28/10/16	Angela Tracey	First Draft for comments to Deputy Strategic Director
0.2	28/10/16	Angela Tracey	Incorporate Amendments
0.3	31/10/16	Angela Tracey	Circulate to LAC Strategy Group for comments
0.4	04/11/16	Angela Tracey	Incorporate Amendments
0.5	10/11/16	Angela Tracey	Draft for comments to Interim AD Commissioning
0.6	05/12/16	Angela Tracey	Incorporate Amendments and draft to DLT 05/12/16
0.7	07/12/16	Angela Tracey	Final Draft

Authorisation

Title	Name	Date	Signature
DLT	-		
Strategic Director	Ian Thomas		
Lead Member CYPS	Cllr Gordon Watson		
Children's Improvement Board	Commissioner Bradwell Debbie Barnes		
RSCB	Christine Cassell		
Corporate Parenting Panel	-		

Circulation

Title	Name	Date	Signature

Contents

Foreword.....	4
1. Introduction and Rotherham's Context	5
2. Our Challenges	8
3. Our Current Approach.....	17
4. Our Intended Response	25
5. Management of the Market.....	31
6. Voice of the Child	33
7. Impact of this Strategy.....	34

DRAFT

Foreword

In Rotherham, we will strive for the children we look after to have the same things that every good parent would want; that they are healthy and happy, that they feel valued for who they are, and feel loved, and when they grow up they achieve their potential.

This document sets out how Rotherham Children's Services will fulfil its role as a Corporate Parent and meet its statutory sufficiency duty by providing good quality care, effective parenting and support to children and young people in and leaving our care. It describes our 'one market' approach to the commissioning and provision of secure, safe and appropriate accommodation and support to children in care and care leavers over the next three years.

We identify the key challenges that we face in achieving sufficiency and our strategic approach to overcoming them. Our commissioning approach will rethink services and the way we work with families. We will invest in the right support at the right time, enhancing early help and prevention so that fewer children come into care in the first place. We will encourage participation by engaging customers throughout the commissioning process to ensure that children, young people and their families help us to design services and influence the way in which they are delivered. This is at the heart of Rotherham's Children's Transformation Programme and Children's Financial Sustainability Plan 2016-2021.

This Strategy also describes the on-going needs of children for whom we need to develop additional provision with key providers to ensure a range of specialist support and choice. It will focus on ensuring that the local market is developed over time so children and young people who remain in our care are able to continue to live in a family setting with the right support within or close to the Borough.

Achieving this requires the collective engagement of the local authority and its partners working together, involving children and young people in the decisions affecting their lives. As a Corporate Parent we will provide scrutiny and seek assurance that the Strategy and the actions are owned and implemented by all professionals and partner organisations working with children, young people, their parents and carers to secure the best outcomes for our children. This is based on our fundamental commitment to being a Child Centred Borough.

Signed:

Councillor Gordon Watson
**Lead Member,
Children and Young People Services**

Signed

Councillor
**Chair,
Corporate Parenting Panel**

1. Introduction and Rotherham's Context

Overview

- 1.1 The duty to provide or procure placements for Children Looked After (CLA) by the local authority is explicit in the Children Act 1989. This has since been strengthened by the introduction of Sufficiency Statutory Guidance (2010) and the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations (implementation April 2011). There is a duty of 'sufficiency' that requires Local Authorities and Children's Trust partners to ensure that there is a range of sufficient placements which meet the needs of children and young people in care, and to take steps to develop and shape service provision to meet the needs of all children and young people in care at a local level, as far as is reasonably possible.
- 1.2 This Sufficiency Strategy analyses the needs of children and young people in care that are not currently being met within Rotherham. It also considers the likely changes in the overall care population between now and 2020, taking into account the ambition to improve preventative services, increase the number of children for whom permanency is secured and ensuring children are matched to the right placement to meet their needs.
- 1.3 Some of our Looked After children will have special educational needs and disabilities. We recognise for this cohort of children that their placement will be driven by their special educational need and is considered in a separate Sufficiency Strategy for SEND. Consideration must also be given to the cohort of children that display a high level of Social, Educational and Mental Health (SEMH) issues only some of whom will have SEN statements or Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).
- 1.4 Young people leaving care are some of the most vulnerable young people in our society. Leaving care is a key moment in these young people's lives, and events at this stage in their life will have a lasting impact. Care leavers generally face having to be independent much younger than their peers. Care leavers need support at events in their lives such as moving into their first home, perhaps getting a job at a far earlier age than their peers and all of this without the support network and safety net of a family. The sufficiency of the support and accommodation provided will be considered.

Strategic Outcomes

- 1.5 Rotherham Children & Families Strategic Partnership have agreed three underpinning outcomes which inform the Commissioning Strategy:
 - Children and young people are healthy and safe from harm.
 - Children and young people start school ready to learn for life.
 - Children, young people and their families are ready for the world of work.
 This will mean our children, young people and families are proud to live and work in Rotherham.
- 1.6 Alongside these outcomes, the Looked After Children Service has developed 5 strategic objectives. They are the key achievements and service improvements that will need to be made over the course of the next three years in order to improve the outcomes for looked after children and inform the strategic intentions in this Sufficiency Strategy:
 - To improve the degree and timeliness of placement stability and permanence and ensure that children are able to enjoy a continuity of relationships.

- To improve the emotional wellbeing and physical health of looked after children (which will also support care and school placement stability).
- To improve the educational progress and attainment and narrow the gap between attainment of LAC and their peers.
- To improve the support and opportunities for care leavers and to increase the number and proportion of them who are in Education Employment or Training (EET).
- To listen to children and young people so as to ensure that they can influence their own plans as well as wider service delivery and development.

Supporting Strategies

- 1.7 This document and the Strategy are separate to but linked to and informed by the following:
- The Rotherham Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)
 - The Rotherham Children & Young Peoples Plan
 - The Looked After Children's Strategy 2016-2019
 - The Corporate Parenting Strategy.
 - The Corporate Parenting Promise to Looked After Children.
 - The Pledge to Looked After Children.
 - The Rotherham Offer to Care Leavers.
 - CYPS Sustainability Plan 2016-2021
 - The Early Help Strategy 2016-2019
 - CAMHS Transformation Plan

Rotherham Local Context

- 1.8 Rotherham is a diverse borough with a mixture of people, cultures and communities. There are densely populated multi-ethnic inner urban areas, large council built housing estates, leafy private housing suburbs, industrial areas and rural villages.
- 1.9 Rotherham is currently home to 260,000 residents with approximately:
- 56,356 (21.6%) children and young people aged 0 to 17 years
 - Of which, 16,004 (28.6%) are aged 0-4
- 1.10 There are significantly more people aged over 60 than children under 18. The child population has not changed significantly in total since 2011, although those aged under 5 years have increased in recent years. However, the number of children aged 0-4 is projected to stabilise before falling slightly to 15,800 by 2019. The largest reduction will be in young people aged 16-19, whose numbers are projected to reduce by 9% from 12,200 in 2015 to 11,100 to 2025.
- 1.11 Our Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population is less than half the national average, but this has more than doubled between 2001 and 2011 from 10,080 to 20,842 (8.1%) and becoming increasingly diverse. The largest of over 75 different BME groups is Pakistani and Kashmiri who numbered 7,912 in 2011 (or 3.1% of the population). There were 3,418 (1.4%) 'other White' residents mainly Slovak, Czech and Romanian Roma.
- 1.12 Whilst the child population has not changed much in total since 2011, ethnic composition has changed rather more. The child BME percentage is estimated to have increased from 12.7% in 2011 to 17.9% in 2016. Of this Pakistani and Kashmiri is the largest group (6.7%) The 'other White' child population has seen the most increase, now estimated to represent 4.5%.
- 1.13 Rotherham has an increasingly high number of children in its care. There has been a consistent upward trend year on year in the numbers of children and young people

looked after by the Local Authority. The number has increased from 424 as of January 2016 to 460 as of October 2016 (8% increase in a 9 month period) and expected to increase.

- 1.14 Black and Minority Ethnic children now represent 19.4% of the Looked After Children population. As a proportion, this is broadly in line with the child population as a whole (17.9%).

BME Child population 2016 compared to BME for Looked After Children

Ethnic Origin	2016 Estimate %	2016 LAC Sept %
White	82.1	80.6
Mixed	3.1	3.7
Asian or Asian British	8.2	9.0
Black or Black British	1.4	2.2
Other ethnic groups (other white)	5.2	4.4

2. Our Challenges

- 2.1 The data identified below is crucial to understanding the makeup of Rotherham's LAC population and being able to forecast future trends and to identify the right placement, in the right place at the right time.

THE NUMBERS OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN RISING AND LEGACY OF NEED

Table 1 - Numbers of Looked After Children per 10,000 under 18 population as at period end

	31 st March 2014	31 st March 2015	31 st March 2016	30 th Sept 2016
Rotherham	69.9	72.2	76.6	80.6
Stat Neighbour Average	73.3	73.2	75.8	73.4
England Average	60.0	60.0	60.0	

- 2.2 Numbers of Looked After Children in Rotherham is high when compared to Statistical Neighbours and England averages. However, the Authority acknowledges historically poorly performing services have left a legacy of need as well as a legacy of numbers.

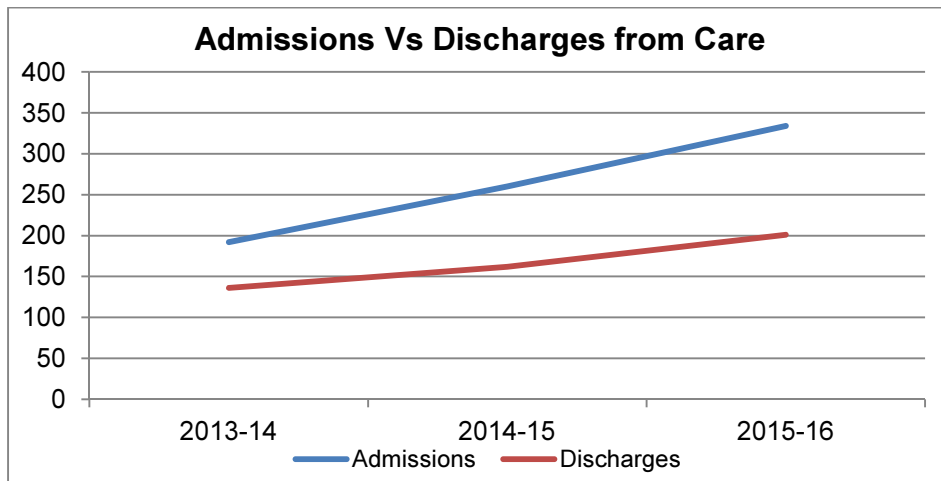
Table 2 - Numbers of Looked After Children by Age Group as at period end

Age Group	31 st March 2014	31 st March 2015	31 st March 2016	30 th Sept 2016
Under 1	23	18	29	36
1 to 4	59	60	52	55
5 to 9	80	80	87	94
10 to 15	160	162	174	173
16 & Over	72	87	89	96
Total	394	407	431	454

- 2.3 Rotherham has a disproportionate number of older children with nearly two thirds of the children looked after aged 10 and over. The net numbers of children looked after aged between 10 and 15 admitted to care remaining constant (Table 3 and 4). At September 2016, of the children and young people looked after for more than 2 years, 185 (41%) were aged 10 and over.
- 2.4 The likelihood of these young people returning to their birth families or achieving permanency through adoption or special guardianship orders diminishes with time and they are more likely to remain looked after. Often (but not always) the older children have a greater complexity of need which impacts on education and stability of school placements

Admissions and Discharges Activity In Year

- 2.5 Table 3 and 4 below show both admissions and discharges have risen significantly over the last 3 years. With an increasing number of children coming in to care than those being discharged, the gap is widening and the net LAC population is growing.



- 2.6 Following the establishment of a new LAC Court and Permanence Team in November 2015 and as a result of a review of Public Law Outline (PLO) practice completed in April 2016 the service has refocused its efforts on early permanence planning to intervene and secure permanent alternative care for babies and young children within a legal framework. There are an increasing proportion of babies and young children becoming looked after between birth and 4 years of age which has risen from 37% in 2013/2014 to 50% YTD in September 2016.

Table 3 - Admissions to Care by Age Group

Age Group	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	30 th Sept 2016 YTD
Under 1	39/20%	48/18%	57/17%	31/25%
1 to 4	33/17%	70/27%	81/24%	31/25%
5 to 9	39/20%	47/18%	90/27%	21/17%
10 to 15	53/28%	66/25%	67/20%	31/25%
16 & Over	28/15%	29/11%	39/12%	10/8%
Total	192	260	334	123 YTD

Table 4 - Discharges from Care by Age

Age Group on Leaving Care	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	30 th Sept 2016 YTD
Under 1	14/10%	17/10%	23/11%	13/12%
1 to 4	45/33%	52/32%	61/30%	29/28%
5 to 9	17/13%	20/12%	27/13%	13/12%
10 to 15	19/14%	21/13%	34/17%	18/17%
16 & Over	41/30%	52/32%	56/28%	32/30%
Total	136	162	201	105 YTD

Table 5 - Discharges from Care by End Reason

Reason Care Ceased	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	30 th Sept 2016 YTD
Returned Home to live with birth parent	44/ 32%	52/ 32%	19/10%	21/20%
Returned Home to live with person with parental responsibility	-	-	37/19%	27/25%
Adopted (permanence)	36/ 27%	44/ 27%	43/ 21%	11/ 11%
Alternative permanent care with 'connected people'	19/ 14%	18/ 11%	33/ 16%	19/18%
Transition to Adult Services - disability and learning difficulties	2/ 1%	4/ 2%	1/ 1%	2/ 2%
Becoming an 18 year old Adult (move to independent living)	23/ 17%	14/ 9%	9/ 4%	20/ 19%
All Other	12/ 9%	30/ 19%	59/ 29%	5/ 5%
Total	136	162	201	105 YTD

- 2.7 Returning children to their birth or extended families where it is safe to do so shows a marked increase on 2015/16 to 45% by September 2016/17 Year to Date figures. Discharges of 37% in 2015/16 were to permanency arrangements through adoption or special guardianship orders.

HOW WE CURRENTLY CARE FOR OUR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

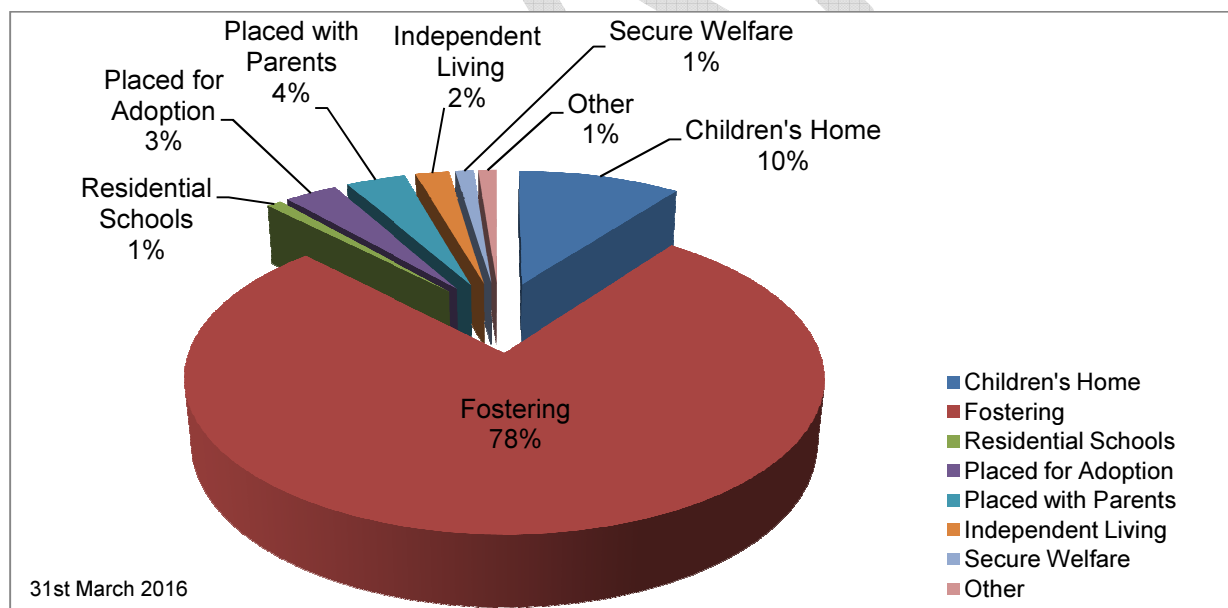
Table 6 - Numbers of Looked After Children by Legal Status as at period end

Legal Status	31 st March 2014	31 st March 2015	31 st March 2016	30 th Sept 2016
Interim Care Order	51/13%	61/15%	78/18%	106/23%
Full Care Order	239/60%	237/58%	251/58%	245/54%
Section 20	40/10%	59/15%	58/13%	62/13%
Placement Order	62/16%	50/12%	41/10%	38/9%
On remand, committed for trial, or detained	2/1%	-	2/0.5%	-
Emergency orders or police protection	-	-	1/0.5%	3/1%
Total	394	407	431	454

- 2.8 There is a sustained proportionate increase in the numbers of children subject to ongoing care proceedings (interim care order) which would suggest that a permanent legal resolution is being sought for more children more of the time.

Table 7 - Numbers of Looked After Children by Placement Type as at Period End

Placement Type	31 st March 2014	31 st March 2015	31 st March 2016	30 th Sept 2016
Children's Home in-house provision	19/ 5%	16/ 4%	3/ 1%	0/ 0%
Children's Home provision by others	22/ 6%	30/ 7%	41/ 10%	48/ 11%
Fostering in-house provision	155/ 39%	167/ 41%	178/ 41%	178/ 39%
Fostering with 'connected people' (relatives or friends)	10/ 3%	16/ 4%	20/ 5%	19/ 4%
Fostering provision by others (IFAs & other LAs)	102/ 26%	110/ 27%	136/ 32%	146/ 32%
Residential Schools	3/ 1%	3/ 1%	4/ 1%	4/ 1%
Placed for Adoption (with prospective adoptive parents)	37/ 9%	24/ 6%	14/ 3%	21/ 5%
Placed with Parents (and subject to a FCO or other Order of the court)	18/ 5%	14/ 3%	16/ 4%	22/ 5%
Independent Living	10/ 3%	11/ 3%	9/ 2%	14/ 3%
Secure Accommodation (Welfare grounds)	4/ 1%	2/ 0%	5/ 1%	0/ 0%
Young Offender Institute or Prison	3/ 1%	1/ 0%	0%	1/ 0%
Other	11/ 3%	13/ 3%	5/ 1%	1/ 0%
Total	394	407	431	454



2.9 The breakdown of placements by type indicate that the vast majority of LAC are placed in foster care (78%) which is consistent with the department's commitment to place children in family based arrangements. Of the 78%, 41% are in-house placement and a high proportion with Independent Fostering Agencies 32%. There are however, too many Looked After Children in residential placements out of borough.

2.10 Whilst most looked after children are placed in foster care is high. Notwithstanding the needs and circumstances of the child this type of provision is more expensive and places a financial burden on the Council.

WHERE WE CURRENTLY CARE FOR OUR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

2.11 When compared with statistical and the rest of the country too many Looked After Children are placed out of borough/ more than 20 miles away from their home and is on an increasing trend. This has implications for the child and family in terms of maintaining contact and for social work practice and oversight.

Table 8 – % of children placed more than 20 miles from their home, outside LA Boundary

% of children placed more than 20 miles from their home, outside LA Boundary	31 st March 2014	31 st March 2015	31 st March 2016
Rotherham	20	19	n/a
Stat Neighbour	15.25	12.70	n/a
England	13	14	n/a

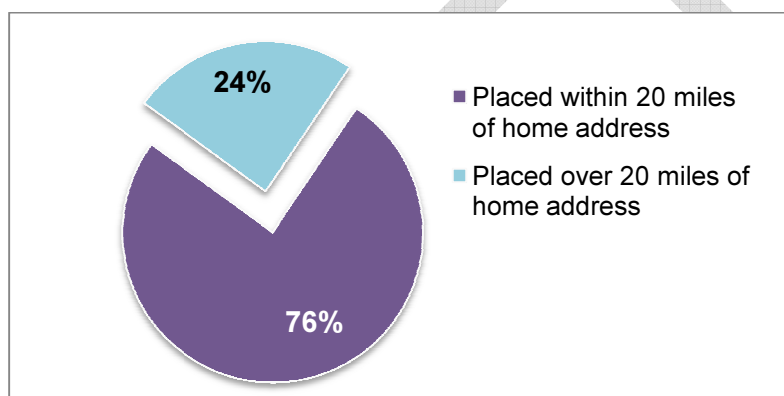


Table 9 – LAC placement driving distance from home by placement type as at July 2016

Driving distance from Home Address	Internal Fostering	Independent Fostering Agency	Internal Residential	Independent Residential	Other provision	Grand Total
July 2016						No/ %
Within Rotherham	178/ 96.2%	93/ 62.4%	1/ 50%	17/ 32.7%	43/ 78.2%	332/ 75.1%
20 to 49	6/ 3.3%	33/ 2.1%	1/ 50%	13/ 25%	6/ 10.9%	59/ 13.4%
50 to 99	-	22/ 14.8%	-	17/ 32.7%	4/ 7.3%	42/ 9.5%
100+	1/ 0.5%	1/ 0.7%	-	5/ 9.6%	2/ 3.6%	9/ 2%
Total LAC	185	149	2	52	55	442

DEMAND FOR SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

2.12 An increasing number of Looked After Children are presenting with emotional wellbeing and mental health need. There has been a 39% increase in 2015/16 in the number of Looked After Children accessing emotional wellbeing and mental health support from the Looked After and Adopted Children's Therapeutic (LAACTT).

Table 10 - Looked After Children Accessing LAC Therapeutic Team

	31st March 2015	31st March 2016
	No.	No.
Active cases	150	208

2.13 There has been a 41% decrease in the number of Looked After Children accessing Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust CAMHS for mental health treatment in 2014/15 from the previous year's figure. This decrease may in part be due to RDASH CAMHS working more closely with the LAACTT and preventing an escalation of need.

Table 11 - LAC and Care Leavers accessing the RDASH CAMHS treatment service

	31st March 2015	31st March 2016
	No.	No.
Numbers accessing the CAMHS treatment service:		
Numbers of LAC and Care Leavers accessing	131	77

2.14 There is evidence of good joint working between RDASH CAMHS and LAACTT and that each respective service is working with the appropriate cohort of children and young people.

2.15 At the time of writing, children accessing CAMHS are on average 13½ years old. Most of those not being referred as part of the specialist LD pathway have either experienced, or are at high risk of Child Sexual Exploitation or were referred for a neuro-developmental assessment (ASD or ADHD). Of the current cohort (92%) were deemed to be 'routine' referrals

SUPPORTING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVING CARE

Table 12 - Percentage of Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation

Suitable Accommodation	31st March 2014	31st March 2015	31st March 2016	30th Sept 2016
Rotherham	82.80%	94.00%	96.5%	97.1%
Stat Neighbours	74.24%	85.10%		
England	77.88%	81.00%		

Table 13 - Percentage of Care Leavers Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

NEET	31st March 2014	31st March 2015	31st March 2016	30th Sept 2016
Rotherham	38.00%	34.00%	32.00%	29.70%
Stat Neighbours	37.40%	39.60%	-	-
England	38.00%	39.00%	-	-

- 2.16 The vast majority of young people leaving care (97%) are in suitable accommodation which is well above the national average (77.8%). There are no young people placed in bed and breakfast accommodation.

INDICATOR OUTCOMES

- 2.17 The performance against the following indicators is directly related to the evaluation of placement sufficiency and accommodation.

	Roth 2013/14	Roth 2014/15	Roth 2015/16	Roth Sep 2016	England 2015/16
Number of Looked After Children per 10,000 under 18 population	69.9	72.2	76.6	80.6	60
Achieving permanence					
Number of adoptions	-	-	43	12 (YTD)	-
% adoptions completed within 12 months of SHOBPA	55.6%	84.6%	53.5%	50% (YTD)	-
Number of Special Guardianship Orders	5	1	16	14 (YTD)	
Number of Child Arrangement Orders					
Stability of Placements					
No. of long term LAC placements stable for at least 2 years	108/157	110/153	109/150	99/142	-
% long term LAC placements stable for at least 2 years	68.8%	71.9%	72.7%	69.7%	67%
No. of LAC who have had 3 or more placements - rolling 12 months	44/393	49/409	56/431	62/454	-
% LAC who have had 3 or more placements - rolling 12 months	11.2%	12.0%	13.0%	13.7%	11.0%
Continuity of Relationships (data in development)					
No of changes in social worker per placement (build data)	-	-	-	-	-
Emotional Wellbeing (data in development)					
Average result from Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQs)	-	-	-	-	-
Personal Education Plan					
% LAC with a Personal Education Plan	65.7%	68.7%	97.8%	91.2%	-
% LAC with up to date Personal Education Plan	73.3%	76.0%	95.0%	85.0%	-
Health					
Health of Looked After Children – up to date Health Assessments	82.7%	81.4%	92.8%	90.7%	-
Health of Looked After Children – up to date Dental Assessments	42.5%	58.8%	95.0%	89.0%	-

Placement Stability and Disruption

- 2.18 Placement stability continues to be a factor in offering an effective Fostering Service and crucial to ensuring that the Council delivers good outcomes to each looked after child. Stability is measured by 2 national indicators, NI062 relating to children who experience 3 placement moves within 12 months and NI063 which relates to children looked after for 2.5 years who have been in the same placement for 2 years.
- 2.19 There has been steady improvement over the last 3 years in the placement stability NI063 placement stability figure which was 72.7% at year end. There has been a small decline in year at September 2016 to 69.7%. However the longer term trend is upwards and remains higher than statistical neighbours (67.6%).
- 2.20 Foster placement disruptions happen when the placement has had an unplanned ending outside of the child's care planning arrangements. In 2015/16 within RMBC in-house fostering service there were 15 foster placement disruptions involving 17 children in care. This compares with 40 placement disruptions that took place, during the same timeframe from within independent fostering agencies.
- 2.21 The national indicator NI062 shows steady increase to 13% in 2015/16 in placement breakdowns. This trend has continued into 2016 and is higher than statistical neighbours and higher than Rotherham's target of 10%. The Yorkshire and Humber Regional Peer Review of Looked After Children, June 2016, confirmed a high incidence of placement breakdown for looked after children with a reactive rather than a proactive response to bringing about stability.

Placement instability certainly impacts on outcomes, including education and stability of school thus placing the child or young person at a disadvantage in achieving their potential.

Stability of Placements	Roth 2013/14	Roth 2014/15	Roth 2015/16	Roth Sep 2016	England 2015/16
No. of long term LAC placements stable for at least 2 years	108/157	110/153	109/150	99/142	-
% long term LAC placements stable for at least 2 years (NI063)	68.8%	71.9%	72.7%	69.7%	67%
No. of LAC who have had 3 or more placements - rolling 12 months	44/393	49/409	56/431	62/454	-
% LAC who have had 3 or more placements - rolling 12 months (NI062)	11.2%	12.0%	13.0%	13.7%	11.0%

Disruptions

- 2.22 There has been steady improvement over the last 3 years in the placement stability figure and performance is slightly higher than the England average at the end of 2015/16. In September 2016 13.7% of the cohort had three or more placement

moves over the course of 12 months (62 young people). Further to this, whilst in September 2016 most of children in care (69.9% of the total LAC cohort) had been in a stable placement of more than 2 years (99 young people) there are a significant number who had not.

DRAFT

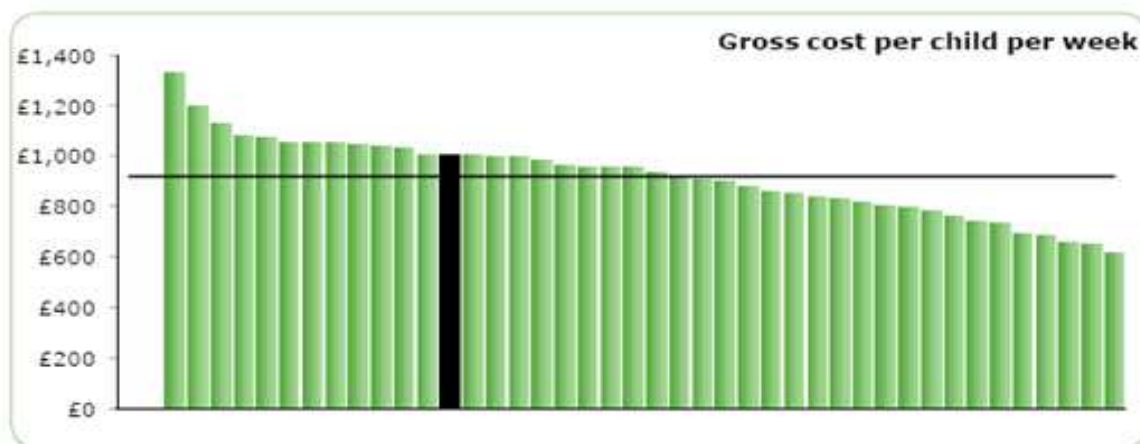
3. Our Current Approach

Current Provision Overview

- 3.1 There has been a consistent upward trend year on year in the numbers of children and young people Looked After by Rotherham. Overall the number of children in care has increased from 407 at end of 2014/15 to 433 at the end of 2015/16. The trend continues upwards, being 460 and rising at the time of writing in December 2016.
- 3.2 Whilst this upward trend is reflected across many local authorities in the Yorkshire and Humber region, at a rate of 80.2 per 10,000 children this is significantly above the national average of 60 looked after children per 10,000 of population (as at 31st March 2016). If the current trend of increasing numbers of Looked After Children was allowed to continue unabated, by November 2019 there will be a projected 604 looked after children.
- 3.3 Rotherham has had an inadequate 'alternative offer' to support children and families at times of crisis and this has also led to more children coming into care. Once in care there has been inadequate support provision for the child and carer and this has implications for placement stability, impacts on the child's education and potentially poorer outcomes.
- 3.4 In conjunction with this the recruitment and retention of in-house foster carers has been insufficient to meet demand and the children's residential care homes have been of such poor or inconsistent quality that they have been deemed unviable. In turn this has led to an over-reliance on Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA) and private providers of children's residential care homes
- 3.5 In addition the lack of in-house provision too many young people have been placed some distance away from the Rotherham boundary. More than 24% (110 children) are placed more than 20 miles from their home address with 42 children being more than 50 miles and 9 children more than 100 miles from their home address. (Section 3, Table 11).
- 3.6 These distances can make social worker and commissioning oversight of the placements difficult in terms of ensuring that the young person is receiving the services that have actually been commissioned such as therapeutic interventions, enhanced staff support packages, respite care etc. Furthermore, these placements bring with them a dependency on other agencies to provide for many of the other needs of the looked after young person including their education, non-teaching support, CAMHS intervention and health and dental treatment.
- 3.7 The Virtual School supports education wherever the child is placed and it is more difficult to support/challenge schools out of borough. We also experience an element of lack of prioritisation of Rotherham Looked After Children in other authorities. In addition some local authorities do not have a sufficiency of therapeutic support, Education Psychology input, post-16 support to be able to support our Looked After Children. Addressing the number of children looked after 'out of borough' is a key consideration in respect of their educational outcomes.
- 3.8 Where larger sibling groups have to come into care the search to accommodate these larger groups (3+) all in the same setting is difficult irrespective of the placement type. The breaking up of sibling groups which results simply adds to the trauma which the young people experience at point of placement. Larger sibling groups are common amongst Rotherham's BME population.

- 3.9 The most recent **INITIAL** (2016) Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) LAC Benchmarking Club shows Rotherham's weekly gross cost at £1,006. The overall trend is down on the previous year and is moving towards the benchmarking average of £918. The Benchmarking data show that there is scope to manage the sufficiency in the market as a whole for family based support within the Rotherham Borough.

Table 14 - Gross cost per child per week by LA (Rotherham shown in black)



Unit Costs Gross (£ per child per week)	Roth	Avg.
LA Homes	0	£3,049
Other Homes	£3,712	£3,571
In-House Foster Care	£525	£477
Other Foster Care	£901	£879
Overall	£1,019	£925

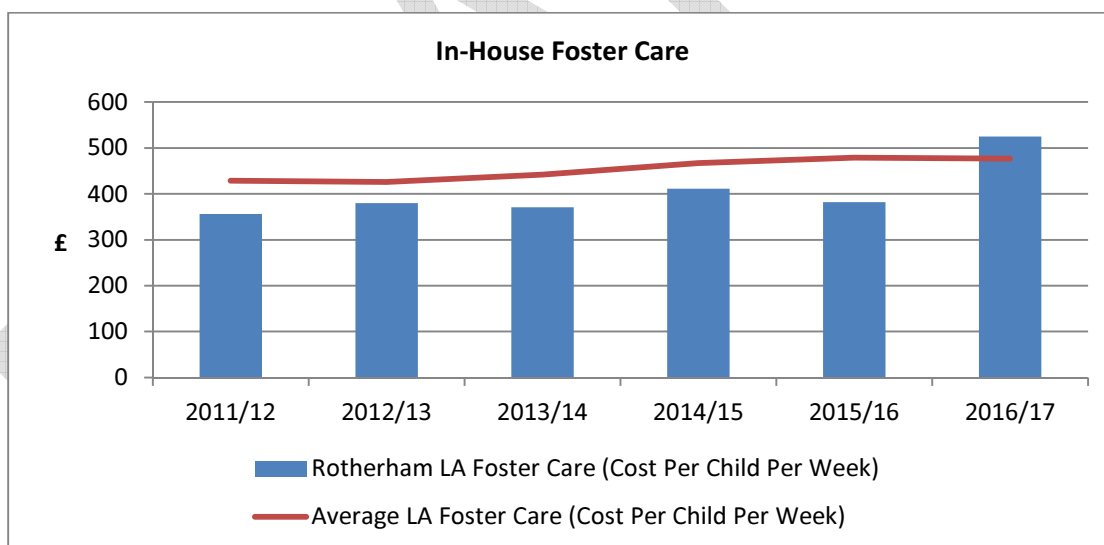
Composition Placements	No.	%	Avg
LA Homes	0	na	3%
Other Homes	42	10%	9%
In-House Foster Care	196	47%	56%
Other Foster Care	155	38%	27%
	347		

IN-HOUSE PROVISION

In-house Foster Care

- 3.10 During the course of 2015/16, despite recruitment, there was a net loss of 3 carers but this did not translate into a loss of placements as those who deregistered were not actively taking child placements. Placements increased from 163 to 188. The target increase for 2016/17 is a net increase of 15 placements of in-house foster carers. In August 2016 the proportion of placements with local authority fostering accounted for only 43% of the placement market (188 placements), a figure that has remained consistent over the past 3 years.
- 3.11 The In-House Fostering Service experienced an increase in the number of placement disruptions in 2015/16 which is indicative of a lack of placement choice to match against the child's needs. The Council will not meet its sufficiency of placement provision for 'Looked After Children' without attracting additional carers to foster for Rotherham and ensuring existing Foster Carers are retained and developed.

- 3.12 In response to the current sufficiency position work has begun to transform the local authority's in-house fostering agency 'offer' including a revised scheme of payments and support provision.
- 3.13 Rotherham, in common with local authorities across the Yorkshire and Humber region, has a shortage of all foster care placements, in particular in relation to placement sufficiency for:
- Older children - adolescents aged 12+
 - Larger sibling groups
 - Children and young people described as having 'challenging behaviour'
- 3.14 It is anticipated that some existing Rotherham foster households will be able to increase the number of children they care for and provide an opportunity to increase placements. Cost effective investments in foster care house Support for existing to care for more children in with
- 3.15 Rotherham Fostering Service have 7 Foster Plus carers who provide support to children and young people described as having 'challenging behaviour'. Three of the Foster Plus carers provide emergency placements for those children placed out of hours. Rotherham also has 4 foster carers who specialise in caring for children at risk of or subject to child sexual exploitation.
- 3.16 In previous benchmarking reports Rotherham has been consistently below the average weekly cost per child for in-house foster care. From 2016-17 this position changes following an improved payment scheme introduced in October 2016.



- 3.17 Recruitment of in-house foster carers will be a key element of the Sufficiency Strategy and the Directorate financial sustainability plans. Whilst an improved offer has increased costs increasing the numbers of in-house foster carers will help to reduce the reliance on more expensive independent fostering placements.
- 3.18 The provision of high-quality training of foster carers is a key issue to support them to care for Rotherham children to upskill carers to improve the prospect of placement stability. This includes intensive and ongoing work on attachment, trauma, resilience, behaviour management as well as education.

In-house Residential Care

- 3.19 In-house support at Liberty House provides planned short break overnight respite care seven days a week for up to eight children, aged between 8 to 18 years, of either

gender who have physical or sensory disabilities, complex health needs and challenging behaviour as a result of their disability. The provision was rated outstanding by Ofsted in November 2016.

INDEPENDENT SECTOR PROVISION

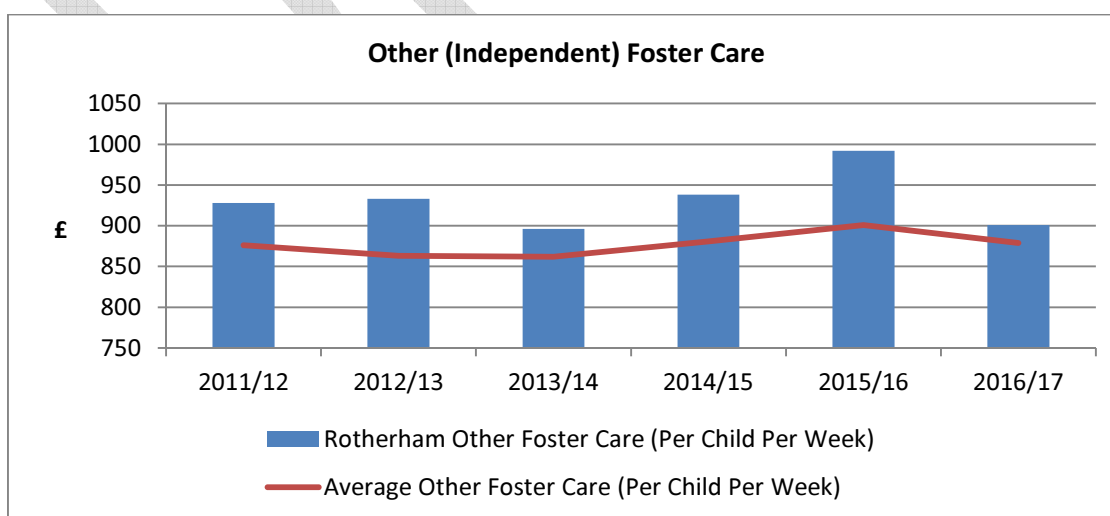
Independent Fostering Agencies

- 3.20 Rotherham has commissioned framework arrangements for standard independent fostering provision from April 2016 until March 2019 with an option to extend for a further year. The framework consists of 19 providers and according to data submitted within their tender submissions these agencies had 391 fostering households within South Yorkshire, of which 62 were within Rotherham.
- 3.21 The establishment of the Rotherham Fostering Framework in April 2016 forms part of the sufficiency offer and a recent early evaluation of the impact of the Framework has deemed that it has provided additional and responsive capacity.
- 3.22 The number of IFA placements the council has used has increased over the last 3 years and with it the use of those outside of Rotherham's boundaries (table 10 and 11 refer):

Table 15 – Numbers of IFA Placements by type

Placement Type	2013/14		2014/15		2015/16	
	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out
Standard	18	89	17	90	26	118
Enhanced / Complex	8	38	7	53	9	54
Solo / Specialist	0	14	0	18	1	25
Parent & Child	1	4	0	1	1	4

- 3.23 IFA's will continue to be an important element in providing the right placement sufficiency. However, the average cost of an IFA placement is higher than in-house provision. The average cost of an IFA to Rotherham can vary between £600 per week for a standard placement for a child under 5 to £1500 per week for a parent and child placement with a total annual budget of £5.07m per annum.



- 3.24 Recent benchmarking reports have shown Rotherham to have a higher than average cost per child for independent foster placements. Although Rotherham has a

downward trend in IFA costs in line with other authorities our average cost per child is slightly higher than the average.

- 3.25 IFA's can provide stable long term placements for some young people in care. At September, 37% of Rotherham children have been in the same IFA placement for longer than 2 years.
- 3.26 Placement stability is key to good outcomes being achieved with every change of placement and school having the potential to impact on grades. However, between February and July 2016 four in-house placements came to an unplanned end where 18 IFA placements were similarly disrupted. It could be argued that this is not surprising given that our older and more challenging looked after young people are more likely to be placed within the IFAs.

Independent Residential

- 3.27 There has been an increase in the use of independent residential provision over the last 3 years. In respect of Out of Authority residential placements the financial impact is significant with placements costing an average of £3,712 per week. The budget for residential placements in 2016/17 is £6.958m.
- 3.28 Rotherham is a member of the White Rose Residential Framework; a collaborative framework set up by the nine South and West Yorkshire Authorities and since joined by York, Hull and North East Lincolnshire. The framework aims to secure high quality independent residential care for young people and to meet local demand for LAC. The framework was developed to ensure capacity to cope with fluctuations in demand across participating councils and has created a tier system of tried and tested providers.
- 3.29 The framework supports regional contract management and quality assurance which minimises costs to the participating member authorities and provides an effective interface with all independent providers. The current framework agreement originally ran to July 2015 and the option to extend until July 2017 has been taken up with a replacement framework currently in development.
- 3.30 The White Rose Residential Framework has provided stable placement costs (no price increases were approved across the framework until the introduction of the Living Wage), which were less than the Authority were paying prior to joining. It gives access to provision from 42 different providers all being consistently quality assured to the same standards with that QA work shared across participating authorities.

CARE LEAVERS ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT

- 3.31 At the end of September 2016 the leaving care service was being accessed by 201 young people. During September 145 (71%) of young people accessing the service were receiving a range of support in their accommodation from daily to weekly contact. Of these 145 49% were under 18 years and 51% over. The gender split for Care Leavers is 47% female and 53% male.
- 3.32 Care leavers are actively encouraged to remain looked after until they are 18 where this is appropriate, and supported to remain in their placement post 18 under the 'Staying Put' initiative. 11% of care Leavers aged 18+ are in Staying Put Arrangements. The 'Staying Put' Policy is being embedded but requires further promotion with foster carers, young people and social care staff.
- 3.33 Within the annual return to the DFE (903 data) 97% of our care leavers are in suitable accommodation (unsuitable accommodation is defined as custody; homelessness

(including sofa surfing); bed and breakfast). However, the quality of that accommodation varies and we believe that too many young people are living beyond the borough's boundaries in relatively expensive supported accommodation provided by the private sector.

- 3.34 Planning is underway to review the quality and cost of our spot purchased supported accommodation with a view to re-directing resources to enable young people to live within the borough, particularly for those who will take longer to be equipped to manage the responsibilities of a tenancy in their own right. In addition, the children's commissioning team will be taking responsibility for identifying these placements from early 2017 which will bring increased rigour when purchasing these services.
- 3.35 The leaving care service (in-house) operates from a dedicated support hub in Rotherham town centre which was developed in response to young people's wishes. Personal advisors and other team members are available at the hub during the week and offer a duty service, drop-in facility and 1:1 appointments.
- 3.36 The service also has an in-house supported living facility (Hollowgate) in the town centre providing nine flats for semi-independent living plus a resource for staff to meet with young people. The provision helps them make a positive transition into adulthood. Young people housed at Hollowgate report that the service they are receiving is improved, supportive and appropriate. A further facility providing seven bedsits near the town centre was decommissioned earlier in 2016.
- 3.37 Hollowgate provides 10 young people with floating support living in dispersed properties provided by the Council's Housing Service (request data of numbers from Mick). In addition they offer continued support to young people who have moved on from Hollowgate through access to 3 properties shared by 6 young people. In addition to this and in response to identified need 2 newly built 2 bedroom properties will be allocated to care leavers as preparation for applying for a social housing tenancy, this is expected to be available from late 2017.
- 3.38 Work is needed to ensure that referrals for accommodation and support for young people is co-ordinated and that accommodation identified for young people is quality assured and consistent and able to appropriately meet the needs of young people referred to them and provide good outcomes for care leavers.
- 3.39 Relationships with the Council's Housing Service are positive. Young people are supported in their own tenancies/dispersed tenancies and supported accommodation to appropriately manage their homes and finances and how to keep themselves safe within their home.
- 3.40 During 2016 a Transitions Project has focused on effective transitioning young people into their adulthood including care leavers. A collaboration across Directorates and with partners (Transitions Project) is working with children from a younger age to prepare them for adulthood and is establishing better links with Adult Services to create pathways to identify any ongoing needs and support as they leave care.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Social, Emotional and Mental Health Support

- 3.41 The main increase in presenting need for young people requiring an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Assessment and Plan is Social Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH) only some of whom are not Looked After. This will be described in

more detail in the SEND sufficiency strategy but an outline of provision is described here particularly as it links to the support around foster care placements.

- 3.42 The current support for SEMH in Rotherham is provided in-house by The Looked After and Adopted Children's Therapeutic Team (LAACTT) and Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust – CAMHS.

Rotherham's Therapeutic Team (LAACTT)

- 3.43 The Looked After and Adopted Children's Therapeutic Team offer advice, training and intervention to parents or carers and professionals working with looked after and adopted children to support the emotional wellbeing of the children and young people in their care. Demand for services has been high and there are capacity issues.

Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust (RDASH) - CAMHS

- 3.44 RDASH CAMHS is the mental health treatment service in Rotherham. They offer a variety of therapeutic interventions, such as family systemic therapy, art psychotherapy, cognitive behavioural therapy, psychoanalytical therapy, and solution focused therapy, play work and many other short and long term therapies.

- 3.45 Some of the issues that they help children/young people manage include anxiety disorders, severe behavioural issues, chronic fatigue/somatisation disorder, conduct disorder, eating disorders, gender identity disorder, mood disorder or depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, psychosis or suspected psychosis, self-harming behaviours, suspected attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD), and suspected autism spectrum conditions (ASC).

- 3.46 RDASH CAMHS have, from 1st November 2016, implemented a process for the prioritisation of Looked After Children and Care Leavers for mental health treatment, which is as follows:

- 3.47 Following a referral for a looked after child, the assessment will be undertaken within the same timescales as an urgent referral i.e. within 24 hours. The outcome of the assessment and risks will determine the appropriate course of action which range from advice to children and carers for further managing the presenting situation, to intensive support to the young person and carer within 7 days of the initial assessment, to specialist therapeutic intervention for identified mental health problems prioritised for LAC.

- 3.48 In response to Rotherham's sufficiency challenge and the CAMHS Transformation Plan, there has been an increasing focus on promoting resilience, prevention and early intervention in this area. This has included:

- Initial work with schools in Rotherham on Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) approaches, which is specifically targeting the most vulnerable children in schools
- Five secondary schools and one special school participating in the 'whole school approach to Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health' pilot project.
- A whole-service reconfiguration of the RDASH CAMHS service has been undertaken and as part of this reconfiguration, a locality service has been established, whereby locality workers interface and provide support and advice to locality Social Care teams, GP Practice localities and locality Early Help teams. In addition, the locality workers are also working closely with schools and providing support and advice to staff and direct contact with pupils as necessary.

- Rotherham's My Mind Matters website: www.mymindmatters.org.uk website for all children, young people, parents, carers and practitioners provides information on how to get help, what help there is and how to look after mental health and emotional wellbeing.

SUMMARY

3.49 The key challenges that we face in achieving sufficiency are as follows:

- There are too many looked after children in the care of Rotherham MBC. Historically poorly performing services have left a legacy of more complex need as well as a legacy of rising numbers.
- There is a need to ensure that the Local Authority is able to manage demand and that preventative provision is in place to minimise the number of children coming into care. For some children, for whom the right decision has been to become looked after, there is insufficient timely access to appropriate specialist support.
- The number of those children in care placed out of borough is too high, closing gaps in the provision of sufficient local placement accommodation is required so children and young people in care and care leavers are able to continue to live within or close to the Borough.
- There is a need to work with key providers of specialist provision to help us to meet a range of needs and sufficiency of placement provision. More needs to be done to ensure the efficient and effective operation of our local market. Delivering much better value in terms of quality, price, unit costs and outcomes is essential across all provision.

4. Our Intended Response

- 4.1 In response to the challenges we face, we are committed to four clear intentions which inform our commissioning:
- a. For those children and young people on the edge of care, we will ensure that they are supported to stay with their parents or extended family and only come into care where it is absolutely necessary and justified in the best interests of the child or young person, and that all support options and strategies have been exhausted.
 - b. For young children who come into care we will work to return to their birth or extended families, as a best outcome for them, when it is safe to do so. Where it is not, we will seek permanency for them through adoption or special guardianship orders wherever possible.
 - c. For children who remain in our care we will ensure that we have good quality placement in a family setting or suitable residential provision in or close to Rotherham.
 - d. For young people leaving care we will actively encourage them to remain looked after until they are 18 where this is appropriate. We will help them to 'stay put' in their placement after they are 18. Where this is not possible or appropriate we will ensure that we have sufficient accommodation locally to meet their needs including support to enable smooth transition to independent living.
- 4.2 We intend to facilitate a reduction in the number of children and young people looked after in Rotherham by investing in the right support at the right time for children and families across early help and on the edge of care; children's social care and education settings to develop better, more affordable placement choices. It is our intention to develop a range of preventative and support services/ interventions. There are five strands contained within the LAC strategy 2016-2019, which are as follows:
- Supporting children and young people on the 'edge of care' to stay at home
 - Supporting permanency through Adoption and special guardianship
 - Placement commissioning and development
 - Support around the placement for child/young person and carer (including SEMH needs)
 - Returning children to their birth/extended families when safe to do so
- 4.3 Overall the aim is that the cumulative effect of these 5 strands of targeted interventions over the next four years will see Rotherham safely reduce the number of LAC to around 399 by March 2021 from a forecast high of 460 in March 2017. This equates to 71 per 10,000 population against a national average of 64 per 10,000 population (360). If the current trend of increasing numbers of LAC was allowed to continue unabated, by November 2019 there will be a projected 604 looked after children.

Supporting children and young people on the 'edge of care'

- 4.4 We will develop enhanced 'Edge of Care' interventions within Early Help Services to support children and families where there is an immediate risk of family breakdown or to respond to families in crisis. This will ensure that the opportunity to intervene

earlier when problems begin to emerge is enhanced by a robust continuum of evidence based practice across the children's workforce.

- a. Establishing an '**Edge of Care**' Team – by investing in the recruitment and development of a dedicated team of practitioners offering a range of services to support children to remain living safely with their immediate or extended families they will be given the best chance to thrive without long-term reliance on services. This provision is projected to achieve a net reduction of 69 LAC over the 3 year period of this Strategy.
- b. Continue **Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST)** – an intensive programme that works within the whole ecology of a young person including parents, family, the community and school at the same time in a solution-focused, strengths-based approach to empower the family to take responsibility for solving problems. It is projected that the implementation of MST will create a net reduction of 12 LAC over the period of this strategy. In the longer term this strategy will also push demand for placements down from costly high tier services to less expensive early interventions.
- c. Establish **Family Group Conferencing (FGC)** – FGC is an effective tool for identifying and engaging with wider family members and friends at an early stage of concern regarding a child. It is a child-centred, family-led decision making and planning process which develops existing strengths to build safety for children. Targeting services at children and young people at an earlier stage of their journey is likely to reduce the number of children subject to a child protection plan and consequently reduce the numbers that escalate to PLO care proceedings and ultimately entering care. It is estimated that a wider FGC offer will reduce the number of LAC by 72 over the 3 year period.
- d. Implement the **Pause Project** – It has been determined that over a 7 year period 29% of care applications in the UK involved women who had previously had a child removed from their care and this often related to trans-generational patterns of neglect and/or abuse. The Pause Project aims to engage with mothers on a one to one basis to provide intensive therapeutic activities and practical support to encourage them to think of themselves as individuals, often for the first time in their lives. The programme gives women the chance to 'pause' and take control of their lives, breaking the destructive cycle that causes them and their children deep trauma. To support this process they are encouraged to take Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) during the intervention to create the space to reflect, learn and aspire.

Initial data analysis indicates that there are currently 25 women in Rotherham who have experienced the repeat removal of a child or children who could access such a programme. Over the three year period of this Strategy it is projected that the Pause initiative could contribute to a net reduction of 30 LAC.

Returning children to their birth/extended families

- 4.5 We will continue the work to consider and formally assess young people in terms of the viability of them returning to the care of their birth/extended families. This is a partnership arrangement with the NSPCC (**Taking Care Project**) through which up to 30 young people will be considered and formally assessed in respect of the viability of them returning to the care of their birth/extended families over a two year period.
- 4.6 It is projected that this provision will lead to a net reduction of 12 LAC. This programme is evidence based and not only strengthens the assessment and decision

making process when deciding whether a child should return home but also informs how best to support children and families throughout the reunification process and after they have returned home. The LAC social workers have been fully trained in the process so that the intervention should become embedded practice and self-supporting. This in turn should reduce the drift that is a factor within the current care planning processes in the LAC service.

Supporting permanency through Adoption and special guardianship.

- 4.7 Rotherham has a commitment to offer the best opportunity for permanence for Looked After Children by ensuring that they are looked after by family, friends or established foster care placements, wherever possible and appropriate for the child.
- 4.8 Our intention, in line with DfE direction to **regionalise adoption services**, is to enter a joint venture along with Barnsley, Sheffield, Doncaster MBC and Doncaster Children's Services Trust by a planned implementation date of June 2017. This creation of a South Yorkshire Adoption Agency will enable the pooling of resources in respect of assessments and availability of adoptive placements.
- 4.9 Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) offer the opportunity for family, friends or existing foster carers to give a permanent home to the child without the financial loss normally associated with adoption but without Social Care or IRO input associated with foster care offer permanency within a family setting therefore improving the opportunities for the best outcomes for the child. Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) Special Guardianship offers financial packages in line with the specific needs of the child and continued support through therapeutic services. The intention is to increase the number of SGO's by around 6 per year from 2017/18.

Placement commissioning and development

- 4.10 LAC are a particularly vulnerable group and are at high risk of social exclusion, health inequalities, inequalities in educational attainment and wider negative outcomes. We acknowledge that it is critical to ensure we place LAC in the most appropriate placement available and that we have a market available to meet those needs. Ensuring sufficiency of all placement types in and close to Rotherham is important across foster care and residential provision.
- 4.12 It is our intention that wherever possible, children and young people should be looked after in Rotherham in a family setting, placed with foster carers and in-house foster carers where these are available. In-house foster carers are able to offer placements at a lower cost than Independent Foster Agency placements. Reducing the overall costs of providing service to children and young people in care enables us to invest more in services to children and young people who are on the edge of care, and in preventative services.
- 4.13 The planned reduction in the number of looked after children is expected to result in a net reduction of 61 placements; 4 in 2017/18; 13 in 2018/19; 22 in 2019/20; and 22 in 2020/21. The intention is to increase the number of Foster Carers in the local authority, but importantly, increasing this supply of capacity sufficiently to ensure more placement choice when matching children with fostering families. The initial aim is to increase the proportion of placements with local authority fostering from around 43% as of August 2016 to a forecast 67% in March 2021; an additional net 15 placements per year.
- 4.14 A revised **Foster Carer Payment Scheme along with appropriate support and development** was approved for implementation by the Children's Commissioner. The scheme was co-produced in partnership with the local foster carer consultation

group. By investing in a well-trained and supported in-house foster care provision, the aim is to attract additional foster carers to Rotherham, especially for adolescents and large sibling groups, and to improve the retention and development of existing experienced carers. In addition, Rotherham will adopt one of the key practice principles set out in 'Putting Children First' so that foster carers will be actively involved in decisions about the children they are looking after. A target of 15 or more placements being secured per annum between 2016-19.

- 4.15 Independent Foster Agencies will continue to be an important provider in ensuring the sufficiency of accommodation for looked after children. Whilst in overall terms our intention is to reduce our current reliance on them, there will be a focus on working with them develop a sufficient local provision and to secure better value in terms of quality, price and outcomes. IFA's will provide the Council with a viable alternative to out of authority residential provision.
- 4.16 For some children and young people a residential placement will be the right option. We will continue to ensure sufficiency of residential placement whilst looking to reduce out of borough residential placements gradually over time so as not to remove a child from settled and successful placement.

Support around the child and carer

- 4.17 We are developing a cohesive interagency LAC provision between RDaSH CAMHS and RMBC Looked After and Adopted Children's Therapeutic Team. The two services continue to work closely together to develop collaborative approaches to best support the needs of this client group. The longer term approach is described at 5.17.
- 4.18 There has been a pathway and a clear threshold criterion established to identify when children and young people require support from LACCST or CAMHS. The emphasis of this provision focuses on keeping continuity of care of the child or young person with familiar clinician, with the aim of avoiding or minimising unnecessary transitions between the services.
- 4.19 As part of this overall offer the intention is to expand the **Rotherham Therapeutic Team (RTT)** commissioning clinicians to provide access to good quality and responsive wrap around therapeutic support to address the child's specific emotional and mental well-being needs. Targeted at in-house foster care and SGO's, the support to the child and carer will reduce the likelihood of a placement breakdown which often results in the use of more expensive placement provision and will lead to healthier emotional wellbeing and better outcomes. Pathways to CAMHS will be clear as will consideration of clinical risk and governance.
- 4.20 This support will be based on the 'team around the child' model where the carer and professionals will be supported to develop their skills, resilience and knowledge to respond in a confident, competent and consistent way to emerging issues by preventing escalation and disruption. It is forecast that the team could support up to 30 looked after children and their carers per year and significantly reduce the number of placement disruptions which was recorded at 20 between March to September 2016. This in turn should support LAC to achieve better outcomes including in respect of their educational attainment.

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

CAMHS Transformation

- 4.21 The Future in Mind Report (FiM) was published in May 2015 and sets out a clear national ambition to transform the design and delivery of a local offer of services for children and young people with mental health needs.

4.22 Future in Mind describes an integrated whole system approach to driving further improvements in children and young people's mental health outcomes and is structured around 5 key themes:-

- Promoting resilience, prevention and early intervention.
- Improving access to effective support – a system without tiers.
- Care for the most vulnerable.
- Accountability and transparency.
- Developing the workforce.

4.23 In response to Future in Mind, Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group jointly produced with Rotherham MBC and partners, the CAMHS Transformation Plan 2015 to 2019, which was a requirement for the release of the extra funding from NHS England.

Promoting resilience, prevention and early intervention.

4.24 There will be a continued strong focus on promoting resilience, prevention and early intervention within the CAMHS Transformation Plan. This work will impact positively on Looked After Children, as it will enhance information, self-help approaches and provide support that will prevent escalation into mental health treatment services. The key developments are as follows:

- Rotherham's primary and secondary schools have established SEMH partnerships. Schools will work together collaboratively and in partnership with each other, Early Help and CAMHS to achieve maximum impact and better outcomes for this vulnerable group.
- Following the implementation of the locality service the RDaSH CAMHS locality workers interface and provide support and advice to locality Social Care teams, GP Practice localities and locality Early Help teams, and work closely with schools.
- Rotherham MBC Public Health is leading on the development of a Rotherham Public Mental Health Strategy, which will include early intervention and prevention approaches for children and young people.

4.25 Over time it is intended that the local authority will incrementally decommission one of its pupil referral units and increasingly enable partnerships of schools to develop and commission more local, alternative solutions. Early indications are that this is beginning to reduce the number of fixed and permanent exclusions from secondary schools.

Improving access to effective support – a system without tiers

4.26 When children and young people do need support, we are focussing on an alternative to the 'Tiered' system and a 'One stop shop' model of provision. There are two local priority schemes which relate to this area and are as follows:

- We are developing a Single Point of Access (SPA) for CAMHS services. The SPA is currently operational within the CAMHS structure, but we are combining this with the RMBC Early Help Triage service. The CAMHS SPA will co-locate with the Early Help Triage service by mid-January 2017 and referrals will be directed to the most appropriate service as early as possible in the process.
- The Single Point of Access for mental health and Early Help referrals will ensure improved and targeted access to appropriate services. The main KPI associated

with this scheme will be that 95% of referrals received by RDaSH CAMHS will either be accepted by the service or signposted to an appropriate service.

CARE LEAVERS ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT

- 4.27 We intend to reduce the number of young people placed within other local authorities. Permanent social housing tenancies are rarely available in other authorities so wherever possible and where it meets the longer term interests of our young people, we want them to be prepared for living independently within the community they are from and will inevitably return to.
- 4.28 Currently, Supporting People (SP) provides significant funding to our in-house provision (Hollowgate) and to 2 main voluntary sector providers of supported accommodation to 16-25 year olds. Hollowgate's funding will reduce by almost 50% over the next 2 years, potentially reducing capacity by the same proportion. The other 2 main providers of supported accommodation to 16-25 year olds will see a reduction of funded places from 68 beds to 28. Emergency and short term beds (12 in total) are not affected. A tender for the new funding will be released in 2017 which will accommodate the general population of 16-25 year olds including care leavers.
- 4.29 This presents a significant challenge. Over the past year, approximately 39 16/17 year olds were provided with accommodation through SP, mainly with 2 providers: Action and Rush House. This data needs refining to determine how many of these young people became or should have become looked after as a consequence of their homelessness. We will be clearer about how many young people will require accommodation provided by children's services if places through SP are no longer available. It will also determine whether a leaving care service should be provided at age 18, including the need for children's and young people's services to ensure that they continue to live in suitable accommodation after they have left the SP funded accommodation.
- 4.30 Given that the unit cost for support is c. £170 (rent is covered by HB), a place with an SP funded provider within the borough is generally preferable to a spot purchased private sector provider at a unit cost of £400 - £1,200+. Initial discussions with the 2 main providers (Action and Rush House) confirm that they would be open to being commissioned by Children and Young People's Services at the same rate and unit cost as current SP funding.
- 4.31 As corporate parents we understand that our aspirations for the future of young people leaving our care continues well into their adulthood. Transition pathways will offer continuity of support up to the age of 25, but we appreciate that we need to base our services on a whole life approach supporting them to stay healthy and independent at home and to deliver person centred care and support. We will be looking to build on strengths whilst they are in our care to develop their resilience, understanding that some vulnerabilities may be carried into adult life and as good parents we need to anticipate potential needs.

5. Management of the Market

Commissioning Approach

- 5.1 Our aims over the period of this Strategy to address our key sufficiency challenges are underpinned by the following commitments:
- To invest in the right support at the right time for families
 - To enhance early help and preventative action
 - To support children and families so that fewer children come into care in the first place
 - To develop partnership working based on an asset based life journey approach
 - To further develop the in-house foster care service
 - To close the gaps in the provision of sufficient local placement accommodation so children and young people in care and care leavers are able to continue to live within or close to the Borough
 - To close gaps in support to children and young people once they are in care
 - To continuously improve the quality of care and support by robust market management and a 'one market' approach
- 5.2 The management of the market is fundamental in relation to how we will deal with and exceed our sufficiency challenge in Rotherham. A 'one market' approach will be our driver to ensure that children and young people are empowered to improve their life chances and are recognised for the skills and talents they have rather than the needs they present.
- 5.3 This asset based approach to commissioning will embrace both the in-house services and the external market to ensure we can offer choice, quality and value for money services in Rotherham, recognising that all top quality services have their place within one market. The benefits to the pooling and rationalisation of services in this way brings greater economies of scale, greater transparency and accountability and the ability to respond rapidly to provider failure.
- 5.4 Diversity brings choice, competition and innovation, and particularly by working with the voluntary and community sector, local knowledge and connections, trust and a relationship based approach. Relationships are at the heart of high quality commissioning and will be a key priority as the 'one market' in Rotherham is shaped and embedded.
- 5.5 The collection and effective use of accurate data as part of our commissioning process will ensure the 'one market' approach is informed, robust and responsive to changing market forces, cost and need. We will base our commissioning intentions and decisions on three data sources:
- Population Data- We will build our population data to support the fulfilment of our Sufficiency Duty and will allow us to predict the characteristics of the population, the duration of each individual child's case, the rate of the referrals, the size of the population and the level and cost of services required for each child. We will as a result develop a more person-centric approach to the utilisation of data
 - Costs Data - We will develop robust cost data across internal and external services based on a child's journey to ensure we are clear about the costs of commissioned services and to inform our developing approach to personal budgets.
 - Outcomes Data - We will collate and analyse data about the outcomes achieved by children and young people in order to measure and monitor

performance of commissioned services. This move to outcome based commissioning will mean we pay providers based on social outcomes rather than broader output measures. This will involve a shift of control to providers to undertake support and activities which they think will promote positive outcomes. This shift will foster innovation as providers find new ways of delivering high quality services for children and young people in Rotherham.

- 5.6 The commissioning of services based on a 'one market' approach subsequently will be underpinned by robust local data. In addition to effective use of data commissioning will further embed the Quality Benchmarking Assessment Framework which is used as a tool to improve the monitoring of the quality of the services provided. This tool has also been designed to help us to work together to improve the services for Children and Young People in Rotherham and to build good working relationships with providers which in turn will provide a robust line of sight across the child's journey through transition to adulthood. This benchmarking tool will enable self-assessment and support improvement.
- 5.7 The Quality Assessment Framework informs whole market areas for improvement which are in turn collaboratively addressed by Service Improvement Partnerships with providers with a particular focus on Fostering and Residential Care. The Service Improvement Partnerships are excellent examples of a collaborative approach to the improvement of services based on evidenced monitoring and review, enabling the sharing of good practice, workspace and learning and development opportunities.

INDEPENDENT RESIDENTIAL PROVISION

Collaborative Regional Working

- 5.8 Rotherham Council are members of the White Rose consortium, a collaborative framework which now involves all authorities across Yorkshire and Lincolnshire (with the exception of North Yorkshire). Rotherham participates in their frameworks for the provision of independent residential placements, Post 16 placements and SEN placements. There is an intention to continue this regional collaboration to strengthen market options and choice.

Strategic Partnerships

- 5.9 Residential placement numbers are expected to be small and needs diverse so subsequently the intention is not to provide in-house residential care. A Strategic commissioning review determined this position which was further compounded by concerns in relation to quality and the ability to sustain improvement to the standards we now expect. We will develop strategic partnerships with independent providers to ensure that Looked After Children can be cared for in Rotherham to mitigate against high risk of social exclusion, health inequalities, inequalities in educational attainment and wider negative outcomes.

6. Voice of the Child

- 6.1 The views, opinions and feedback of looked after children are sought regularly across services. Children and young people are given the opportunity to provide their views before their annual reviews are held LAC Reviews; Independent Visitors and Advocates are available to help with concerns of Looked After Children and care leavers ensuring that their views and feelings are heard. Views are also captured through lifestyle surveys and learning is taken from complaints and compliments.
- 6.2 The Council places young people at the heart of inspecting services delivered to children and young people through our highly commended 'Young Inspectors' scheme which was established to make sure services are meeting quality standards and that the voices of children and young people are listened to and acted upon. Young people who are in care or leaving care (11 to 18 years old) also hold regular meetings of the LAC Council to have their say about the things that affect them and to work together to influence positive decisions to improve the lives of young people living in care in Rotherham.
- 6.3 The balance of the listening and action is on an individual child level. Our next phase is to ensure that views, opinions and feedback are more systematically collected, that we capture intelligence that can be used to influence the commissioning of services, and that we encourage participation of children and young people in their design and continuous improvement.
- 6.4 The intention is that we redistribute power within our social care system by connecting life experiences to strategy. We will co-produce and co-design strategy and services with children and young people. We will work to gain the children and young people's trust and take the time to create safe and stimulating spaces to enable their voices to be heard.
- 6.5 The approach we will take to co-producing with our stakeholders is two-fold:
- Participation in service design/ redesign and
 - Hearing their voice in the everyday experience of the service
- 6.6 For all future commissioning it is imperative to work with all stakeholders throughout the design process in order to develop the right services in the right way.
- 6.7 What we will do throughout the life of the service is gather qualitative and quantitative data around our stakeholders experiences using this as a tool for continuous improvement. We will use this data to clearly define any problems or issues that emerge and will seek solutions. The intelligence we gather will be systematically used to inform future commissioning.
- 6.8 Effective commissioning is critical to successful delivery of the sufficiency strategy and as part of that the participation and engagement of children and young people in co-production, design and the continuous improvement of value for money services

7. Impact of this Strategy

- 7.1 This document has looked at Rotherham and the challenges faced in meeting our sufficiency duty. Strategic priorities have been identified and actions proposed that when implemented will mean we are better placed to meet our Sufficiency Challenge. As a result, by 2020 we expect that:
- Through investment in prevention services to manage demand we will only have children in care who need to be in care. We will safely reducing the number of LAC to around 399 (closer to the statistical neighbour average of 64 per 10,000 population i.e. 360).
 - For those children in our care, we will have sufficiency of accommodation and support such that it meets their individual need, thus decreasing placement disruption and increasing the likelihood of them achieving their full potential and making a successful transition to adulthood. We will reduce placement disruption to at or below national average.
 - The composition of placements will move over time to increase the share of in-house foster care provision, have sufficient numbers of independent foster agencies and residential placement provision in the local area.
- 7.2 Throughout the life of this document we will continue to work with our children in care, care leavers and key partners to develop our plans and priorities. We believe it is important that this Strategy remains a 'live' document. The strategy itself will be updated annually but will have a key mid-term review in 2018 to ensure that the Strategy remains as relevant in 2020 as it is now. Key measures will be developed to monitor the success of the strategy as will outcomes.
- 7.3 This strategy will be supported by a transformational commissioning action plan. There will be quarterly reviews and oversight from our Corporate Parenting Panel. It will be owned and implemented by all professionals and partner organisations working with children, young people, their parents and carers.
- 7.4 Regular reports and monitoring of progress through the CYPs Directorate Leadership Team, the Children's Improvement Board, the RCSB and to our Elected Members and Commissioners to ensure the following:
- A Quarterly Report on the progress of our performance measures and analysis of our progress
 - Implementation of Sufficiency Strategy Action Plan
 - A robust Sufficiency Performance Dashboard and quality assurance system reporting on how much we do, how well we do it and what difference it makes in terms of whether anyone is better off.
 - An Annual Report which reflects evidenced outcomes
 - An annual consultation with Children in Care to review progress and discuss key issues and aspirations for improvement

Regulation 44 report**The Independent Person's report**

Unique reference number of children's home: SC037521

Liberty House- announced visit.

Liberty House (LH) provides planned short break overnight respite care seven days a week for up to eight children, aged between 8 to 18 years, of either gender who have physical or sensory disabilities, complex health needs and challenging behavior as a result of their disability.

There is provision to also offer on an emergency basis care to a young person. This bed is currently in use.

LH provides support under S.17 of the Children Act to young people who stay for less than 75 days. Young people are accommodated under S.20 if they spend more than 75 days in the unit.

Name of person completing the report:

Independent Person Regulation 44- Kay Garvey – Independent Reviewing Officer- Foster Carers

Date of visit:

Announced 17.1.17. Please note the last planned visit on 11th December to coincide with the young people Christmas party didn't take place nor did any other visit during December 2016. The Independent Visitor wasn't available as had taken unexpected leave in December. Therefore no inspection December 2016. Last inspection 24.11.16

General Issues

This was an announced visit. Time of visit 11am – length of visit two and half hours.

During the visit on 17.1.17 I spent time:-

- Short discussion with D.H – Unit Manager
- Looking at records
- Short discussion with staff on duty

Staff Present over the time of the visit.

DH- Unit manager

Marie Traynor- Senior

Marianne Deputy Manager - In supervision with Nicky Horsby

Vicky Battersby – chairing a meeting re a young person using LH- meeting in the Jubilee Room with professionals and family

Domestic staff – two

Use of the emergency bed

The emergency bed is being used by a young person A.C. This young person was previously placed with foster carers approved by an Independent Agency. The young person has been visiting LH over a period of time. At the time of the last inspection visit the unit manager had met with the foster carers. This young person's placement at LH is a planned arrangement. Placed on 16.1.17 the day before this visit. The young person has a Looked After status. This placement appears to have been made as no other placement could be identified, Foster Carers having given notice to the local authority of their wish to end the placement. This is a planned use of the emergency bed.

In addition to this young person a second young person with a Looked After status S.P. has been placed at L.H. Placed on 13.1.17 from school. This young women's long term foster placement with local authority foster carers has come to an end when her carer gave notice to the local authority to end her placement. The circumstances surrounding the ending of this placement are known to the Independent Visitor whose primary role is in respect to the review of local authority foster carers. This young person has previously lived in a family setting.

Discussion with staff on duty reflects their understanding that S.P. requires an increased level of support in respect to personal care and that a ratio of 2:1 staffing is to be provided. I am aware of the potential in respect to the making of allegations by the young person and would endorse the increased level of staffing in respect to personal care.

Previous Actions from the last Regulation 44 inspection visit

Managers are required to evidence actions completed and/or planned in response to the recommendations made by the Regulation 44 Visitor.

These are the actions from the visit dated the 24.11.16. This is the status of the actions from the submission of the last report. Within this report I will comment on any actions that have not been progressed or any that have been implemented since the last report.

Note- these actions are taken directly from the previous report.

Issues	Actions by relevant Person	Timeframe
1. That there is consideration for some system of keeping personal items those children can identify as theirs in the building.	Progress in this area is slow but progressing. Staff continue to promote the use of the boxes at CIN meetings.	<u>Update</u> This piece of work to personalise the experience of young people accessing LH is ongoing. Personal items being brought in to the building for young people is still in

		<p>progress. In some cases children will bring certain items with them when they stay.</p>
<p>2. All recording must be consistent and in line with the recording policy and subject to Quality assurance by a senior.</p>	<p>Embedding this in practice.</p>	<p><u>Update</u></p> <p>All recordings are consistent in this inspection and have been subject to quality assurance by a senior manager within agreed time scales and in line with policy. All incidents, violence to staff and use of a restraint are now recorded individually when they form part of one event. Evidenced in this inspection.</p> <p>I continue to recommend that all reports are signed off by hand to further evidence the authenticity of the report being produced. Particularly in respect to a significant incident-see number 153 report noted in this inspection</p>
<p>3. Creation of a Facebook Page</p>	<p>The development of this is ongoing, a member of staff has been tasked to take this forward</p>	<p><u>Update</u></p> <p>Ongoing discussions with members of the I.T department regarding the details of how either a webpage or Facebook account could be implemented, to be overseen by LH staff are ongoing.</p> <p>Email from Richard Fisher deputy manager</p>

		<p>10.12.16 to update- S. R. has been working with our IT department and has had a number of meetings with them exploring options as to how best to progress our needs. There has been some resourcing issues We will both be meeting with someone from IT and the media team within the next few weeks with a view to be up and running within the next couple of months .</p>
--	--	---

Update of actions from last month- To be completed by Registered manager/Service Manager-

Emergency bed/Lac

I have provided short break for two LAC young people under section 20(4) of short break Legislation. Under this section a child may be provided with accommodation with range of providers which exceed timescales outside of regulation 48 guidance. I.E for longer than 17 days.

A.C who was already accessing Short break was placed in the emergency bed on 17th January and was and is able to stay at a short break provision for longer than the 17 day period, which we have also applied to the young person (S.P). Equally young person (S.P) who accessed short break on the 13th January after having a planned visit on the 10th January, again as the guidance states, can reside in a short break provision for a period exceeding that of a child where regulation 48 applies.

The planned short break for (S.P) was to stay no longer than 17 days, however, following legal guidance it was equally appropriate to place this child in the emergency bed while providing a longer term short break for A.C - i.e 17 days. The update to S.P placement is that they have been offered a new long term placement starting on Monday 30th January- staying within the 17 day timescale. (Young person S.P was supported to move by Liberty staff on the agreed date of the 30th January).

R.L

Following concerns regarding behaviour of young person R.L a TAC meeting was held on Friday 27th January with Camhs present. The aim of the meeting from Liberty perspective was to identify if strategies could be adopted to limit the locking of doors, the hiding of pens and further manage sexualised behaviour young person is currently displaying. Parents could not attend the meeting. Recommendations from this meeting were for school to try to engage

with dad and for S/W to discuss further with service manager on how to progress further with parents. Suggestion from school was that a medicine ball had offered some distraction for Y.P when displaying secularised behaviour Liberty to purchase a ball.

NME

Tac meeting also held on the 27th January owing to concerns within the family setting. Y.P has shown behaviours within the family home which foster carer states can last up to 20 minutes. Y.P tends to target foster mum. Incidents are not mirrored in their frequency at Liberty House-3x incidents in 2016. Recommendations are for the family disability support team to offer advice/support within the family home. The therapeutic LAAC team will also offer additional advice in April 2016 when allocated worker returns from A/L.

Building

- Tree quote received. Will process in new financial year.
- Ceiling tiles now replaced

Interviews with children - discussion and key issues identified

There were no young people in the unit at the time of my visit.

Voice of young people

It is clearly evident in the inspection visit for this month the continuing progress that LH makes in respect to the voice of the child.

The young people in Liberty House have a range of need and Makaton is used by a number of the young people. In the dining area there are pictures on the walls of some Makaton signs which would offer some help to a person like me unfamiliar with this language. The sign of the week this week is and clearly evident that this is frequently changed

The unit has now embedded the practice of producing a monthly newsletter called La Liberte Voice of the Child. Issue 8 for December has been produced and is on display.

There are images around the unit of young people engaged in activities provided by LH which promote a sense of homeliness and belonging, updated since Christmas

Activities Calendar

There is some question in this inspection as to its use on a daily basis as card for week beginning 2nd January still in use. This maybe a staffing oversight.

Interviews with parents/relatives.

This inspection doesn't benefit from interview with parents or relatives. Parents were in the unit attending a multiagency planning meeting- held in the jubilee room.

Interviews with staff – discussion and key issues identified.

- Potential for some funding to do some work in the garden area
- Care provision to two looked after young people
- Use of the emergency bed
- Increase need in respect to staffing- staff have been approached to undertake additional work over the weekend to avoid a need to cancel the planned stay of other young people.
- Staffing levels to reflect the need to provide an increased level of support to S.P. re her personal needs
- Fire check to be undertaken on day of inspection visit.
- Medication for ZA signed in by two staff on duty- in the medication room. Medication had been brought to L. H. by his mother.
- Event involving young person NME including violence to staff incidents 186 and 187, accident number 63 and Significant incident recording number 153.

Inspection of the premises including assessment of the physical condition of the building and furniture and equipment of the home.

Certificate of excellence following a full Ofsted inspection is on display in the entrance are to LH where visitors are asked to sign and in and out.

During this visit I have not inspected any of the bedrooms used by the young people. Rooms were reported to have been made ready for the young people staying that evening- 6 in total this includes A.C. and S. P. who are both looked after and placed in the unit.

Z.A. another young person with a LAC status will be staying this evening- LAC status due to the number of nights he stays- This young person has complex needs and has 2;1 support .

Name plaques were on the young people's bedrooms- strategy to personalise their stay. Two young people were to be using the rooms with an ensuite- this includes A.C.

Work still needs to be undertaken to repair damage to the ceiling in the dining area. Two ceiling tiles still need to be repaired. This damage including water coming in to the dining area was noted in November 2016.

For a number of months the affected area has had a number of ceiling tiles in need of replacement. These become water stained when there is heavy rain. The weather had been exceptionally harsh a few days prior to the visit in November and has resulted in water coming into the dining area in front of the food serving hatch and bringing parts of the ceiling down.

Building services are aware. The area is now safe but ceiling tiles just need to be replaced.

See email below from DH to update in respect to actions from building meeting

on 11.1.17

- Cherry Tree is now closed.
- Use of Building:
Respite CYPS
- Issues to be Resolved:
NEW QUOTE – Replacing the damaged ceiling tiles in the dining room.
– leak seems to be under control, ridge tiles replaced.
- Notes:
- Tarmac work done.
- Meter Readings:
Electric: nxt. time
Gas: next. time – sent through recently
- Monthly Checks:
Site Review/ Walkthrough inc. slips/trip/fall etc: ok
FRA/ Log Books: ok
Legionella/HSL ok
Asbestos Log Books: ok
- Key Holders/ Alarm Details/ Emergency Access Numbers:
--- alarm code for upstairs office.

Note the above doesn't reference the update on work to cut the trees back. Novembers inspection noted work still to be progressed. DH reports some delay due to sickness in building maintenance.

General Décor

Communal areas in LH are appropriately decorated and child focussed and subject to ongoing improvement.

Health and safety

There is no ongoing risk from damage to the ceiling caused by heavy rain in November.

Inspection of daily log of events

These were not inspected on this visit.

Significant incidents

None noted

Accident Recording.

Accident recordings since November 2016 inspection visit

- Number 63- 25.11.16 Injury to NME. To right hand. Occurred as part of an event when NME was displaying aggressive behaviour- lashing out at staff. A situation arose whereby NME was in the kitchen area on her own using her weight against the door to deny staff access. First aid given to injury to hand didn't require further treatment. Broken skin on right hand across knuckle.
Risk assessments up dated as injury occurred as part of an event whereby NME sought to be violent to two MOS. Paper work completed by P. K and signed off by DH
- Number 64- Date 31.12.16 Young person MW. Cut to her toe injured on her bedroom door. Note that young person can be unsteady on her feet. First injury of this type. Report signed off by DH
- Number 65 date 11.1.17 Young person A. G. Young person walked into a door frame , had been talking to a visitor she knew outside the night station . Small red mark noted at 4.30, not noted at 8.30. Senior on duty made aware and child's social worker made aware. Report completed by L.B. signed off by DH on 1.11.17

Violence to Staff

Incident number

- 186- Occurred on 25.11.16 and is part of the overall incident involving NME, time 9.05 pm punch to female worker LH in genital area – no apparent trigger. MOS advised to seek a further medical check. Bruising noted on the report and witness by young people and MOS UB
- 187- Occurred on 25.11.16 part of the overall incident involving NME see above – injury to NME hand. . At the time staff were seeking to reassure the young person, to support her to move towards going to bed. MOS LB had stepped in to support other staff with a view that a change in staffing may calm the young person. On this occasion this appears to have had the adverse effect young person assault MOS pulling hair. Caring C's used to prevent NME injuring herself and further hurting staff. Incident witnessed by two other staff.

A detailed report has been completed and escalated. Deputy RF notes he has yet to speak to MOS as she has been on leave. NME is a young person who has the potential to cause harm and this is the second significant incident in a relatively short period of time whereby she has displayed behaviour that has put herself and staff at risk.

- 188.- Young person R. L. . Violence towards MOS N. H. Smack to her face area, bottom lip with palm of hand. Cut and swelling to lip recorded.

Witness SG. Appears to have been no trigger. . Report signed off by DH. Plan to meet with school and social worker to explore strategies to manage this young person's behaviour. RL is a young person who requires high levels of supervision and staff have to ensure that pens are not accessible to him. He will use these inappropriately inserting into his penis.

Significant Incident Recording

Number 153.

A report has been drawn up in respect to incident number 153 involving NME- See accident report number 63 and violence to staff number 186 and 187.

This report is thorough and considers the relevant issues, identifying no potential triggers to NME aggressive behaviour.

I am satisfied that staff have sought the right balance in terms of managing this difficult situation, seeking to safe guard NME, other young people and themselves. Whilst ever other young people are present in a potentially violent situation the primary objective will be to keep everyone safe. Whilst it can often be easier to remove other young people in the longer term this isn't a solution. I concur with the managers comments that planning and preparation and communication between staff will help minimise the opportunity for an environment to be created which increases the risk of NME displaying aggressive behaviours and being a risk to herself and to others.

Whilst it is concerning that a situation arose whereby she was unattended in the kitchen area, reading the reports I can picture how this happened. Had this occurred in the summer months, curtains may have been open a staff better able to observe NME actions. .

All relevant professionals and family members have been sent a copy of the incident report.

Whilst the report is signed electronically by the appropriate manager I would recommend that it is hand signed by the person and dated as a further assurance in respect to the authenticity of the report.

A form of restraint was used by staff MG. This is recorded in the Bound and numbered book as number 76

Near Misses

Young person with faeces in their hand. MOS had contact with young person's wrists. This near miss was discussed with staff on duty who had been present as the report raised a question as to whether a form of restraint used. Having discussed this I am satisfied that no restraint used and the staff action was appropriate given the risk from infection.

Incidents of missing

There are no reported incidents of missing

Medication Administration

No medication errors

There have been no further medication errors or near misses since the last inspection. The flexibility of the two deputy managers in respect to providing additional oversight and support on a shift is clearly making a difference.

LH has continued to improve practice that hasn't been sufficiently robust in the past. Improving practice in this area is evidenced.

Inspection of record of complaints/disciplinary measures/use of restraint

Incidents of restraint

These are recorded in the Bound and Numbered book.

Number 76- This occurred as part of the significant incident involving NME on 25.11.16 when staff had to intervene. NME pulled hair of a MOS also swinging a sensory toy . Caring C;s used to prevent further injury to young person and to the MOS.. M. G. used caring C , for three seconds. The outcome was child reduced grip on MOS hair. Report of this restraint signed of by 28.11.16.

Complaints

Since the last inspection there have been no new complaints- please note this question not specifically asked

Fire safety

Fire regulations guidance is in place and signed for Darren Wright- is this a new young person?

Documents seen all seem to be in order and checks in place as required.
Last evacuation false alarm- August 2016 Cherry Tree

Last drill full evacuation has been completed in December 2016.

False alarm is noted – No need to evacuate and fires service not in attendance.

The independent person must produce a report about a visit (“the independent person’s report”) which sets out, in particular, the independent person’s opinion as to whether—

- (a) children are effectively safeguarded; and**
- (b) the conduct of the home promotes children’s well-being**

The young people at LH have complex needs and it takes skilled intervention to manage the challenges they can present. In respect to young person NME she

features in a number of incidents of violence towards staff. Whilst these incidents are clearly of concern and present a potential risk to staff and to NME it is very positive that staff have managed these and have only had to use a minimal caring c's restraint. The recording of accidents/violence to staff is on file and clearly recorded. The actions of staff in safeguarding young people and themselves appear to be proportionate to the potential level of risk and incidents of restraint are very few.

I am satisfied that the young people at LH are effectively safe guarded while having opportunity to engage in activities in and out of the unit. Staffing levels are sufficient to ensure the safety of young people and staff. There is a degree of flexibility within the staffing team with a willingness to change shift patterns to ensure the safety of young people. This will be particularly important given the current planned use of the emergency bed and the placement of S.P. who is noted to need an increased level of support and supervision in respect to personal care. The placement of S.P. will need to be subject to a robust risk assessment as knowing of this young person I am aware of the potential for her to make an allegation.

Children accessing LH I would conclude that on balance are being effectively safeguarded both within the building, garden out in the community. They are supported and encouraged to enjoy activities and to socialise and to have fun Staff are working in partnership, together as a team and within safeguarding procedures to ensure that children are safe in the wider community.

I am satisfied that LH is providing a short break to young people in a children friendly environment which safe and is welcoming. It provides support to families to ensure ongoing care within a family setting. It is important that staffing levels are sufficient to ensure the safety of young people, and that young people can continue to stay as planned at LH whilst the emergency bed is being used and S.P. remains in placement

Scrutiny in respect to medication has been increased and levels of incidents are very much reduced. It is clear that the introduction of two people signing for, booking in (as evidenced in this visit), the administration, and the checking has supported staff to be more robust in safeguarding in this area of children's care.

I continue to recommend that all reports are signed off by hand to further evidence the authenticity of the report being produced. Particularly in respect to a significant incident- see number 153 report noted in this inspection.

Conflicts of Interest For Independent Person

Previous knowledge of the circumstances in respect to the ending of S.P. long term foster placement.

Comments by Responsible Individual

Signature: Date:

Signed

Kay Garvey

Date 23.1.17

1.	Meeting:	Corporate Parenting
2.	Date:	28 February 2017
3.	Title:	Looked After Children Statutory Health Assessments
4.	Directorate:	The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust

5. Initial Health Assessments

Comprehensive partnership working continues between The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust (TRFT) and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) to improve the compliance of initial health assessments in line with statutory guidance. A multi-agency pathway (Appendix 1) has been devised and agreed between the 2 agencies to strengthen the process; this is reviewed weekly by both agencies to identify areas for improvement. The TRFT health admin now have access to Liquid Logic and receive alerts when a child becomes looked after which has reduced delays in the notification process.

A summary from the pathway for looked after children in January, identifies that TRFT were informed of 11 children/young people becoming looked. TRFT received notification on average of 4.9 working days from the child becoming looked after; this is expected to reduce in the future with the access to Liquid Logic. Of the 11 children/young people – 9 have had their initial health assessment undertaken (with 1 young person within 6 days of becoming looked after), 2 appointments are booked but not yet undertaken due to a delay in the notification process. At the time of writing of this report, no documentation was available to inform the child/young person's looked after review as per statutory guidance.

6. Review Health Assessments

At the end of January, the completion of review health assessments within the statutory timescales remains stable at 95.1%. Dental attendance is recorded at 89.5% and children/young people with up to date immunisations is 87.9%.

Karen Holgate

Named Nurse – Looked After Children and Care Leavers