

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

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

Date: Tuesday, 22nd August, 2017

Time: 5.00 p.m.

A G E N D A

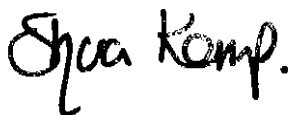
1. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with the Local Government Act, 1972
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency
3. Apologies for absence
4. Declarations of Interest
5. LAC Council Update
6. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 18th July, 2017 (Pages 1 - 7)
7. Corporate Parenting Panel Terms of Reference (Pages 8 - 11)
8. Corporate Parenting Performance - June 2017 (Pages 12 - 34)
9. Leaving Care Service Annual Report (Pages 35 - 44)
10. Implementation of the Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Leavers Strategy - First Review (Pages 45 - 112)
11. Challenge and Escalation Overview (Pages 113 - 116)

12. Date and time of the next meetings: -
Wednesday, 24th October. 2017
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) and J. Elliot (representative on the Fostering and Adoption Panels).



Sharon Kemp,
Chief Executive.

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL
Tuesday, 18th July, 2017

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

Also present were Susan Claydon, Lisa Duvalle, Catherine Hall, Audra Muxlow, Nigel Parkes, Sharon Sandell and Ian Walker.

Ash, Brogan, Emma, Kira, Matthew, Tasha and Zac were also present.

Apologies for absence were received from Deborah Johnson and Jenny Lingrell.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest to report.

2. VOICE OF THE CHILD - LACC TAKEOVER

Sharon Sandall, Service Manager, Leaving Care introduced Zac and Matthew who were in attendance to talk about their personal experiences.

In particular they highlighted the need for:-

- More emotional support and help when the young person saw their birth family – preparatory sessions or someone accompanying them on the visit as well as support after the visit to deal with any issues that may have arisen
- The Leaving Care Team needed more support (financial) as they had previously through the Bridges Project
- A number of young people had been caught up in the transition period i.e. a cohort of young people had missed out on help with driving lessons
- Accessing their personal records and the possible support required once the young person learnt about their past
- When we talk about young people leaving care what do we think the children had left? What do we think care was and what did it mean for the young people?
- How to further support the transition from leaving care
- Low cost bus travel

The Panel had acknowledged that there had been had a period when support had been cut back with the Leaving Care Team having suffered. Accordingly there was a new outline of entitlement which included driving lessons.

An invitation was extended to the Panel to visit the Journey (the Care Leavers Hub) on 26th September, 2017 at 5.00 p.m.

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

(2) That the invitation to visit the Journey be forwarded to all Panel members.

3. LAC COUNCIL UPDATE - APRIL-JUNE 2017

Kira, Emma, Brogan, Ash and Tasha had chosen 4 items from their LACC update report to talk to the Panel about:-

Improving Matching and Placements in Rotherham

- The LAC Council had worked with Dr. Ellie Ott from the University of Oxford to look at their Matching and Placement process in Rotherham. Focus groups had been held to discuss how they would like to improve the process for young people in care. Their suggested improvements were:-
 - Step one – they should have the option to see pictures and a video of potential foster carers, their house, their biological children, any pets and their bedroom so that they may choose which placement they preferred
 - Step two – they should be invited to visit their preferred choices of foster families and stay with them each for a week to see how they all got on living together
 - Step three – after these trials they should be allowed to decide who they wanted to live with

Rotherham Proud DVD

- The LAC Council had worked with the Youth Cabinet and the charity Fixers to create a DVD to express how proud they were of Rotherham and to stop negative stereotypes of the town
- They had written scripts and presented them to camera. They filmed for a full day to create the 2 minute DVD. It was being shown at the Young People's event on 27th July at the Carlton Park Hotel
<http://www.foxers.org.uk/news/15815-11208/rotherham-diversity.php>

The Future LAC Participation

- LAC Council – currently recruiting to give opportunities to more young people aged 11-18 years
- Starting 'little lac' later this year for 8-11 year olds. It would meet every 2 weeks with the aims of
 - Making friends
 - Play games
 - Trips
 - Arts and crafts
 - Having fun

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

- The DVD was available on Youtube
- An ambitious target had been set for recruiting more young people. It was the desire to have 50 young people involved on a regular basis
- Currently there were 11 members of LAC Council as 5 had just left
- "little LAC" would hopefully be a feeder group to the junior LAC and on 18 years of age onto the Youth Forum
- Junior LAC would be split into 2 groups – nurturing group/upskilling/raising confidence and voice and influence

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

(2) That the email link to the DVD be forwarded to all Elected Members.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 25TH APRIL, 2017

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as a correct record of proceedings subject to the inclusion of Catherine Hall and Audra Muxlow in the list of those present.

Further to Minute No. 61 (Staying Put), it was highlighted that foster carers whose children remained with them after they left care at the age of 18, should be included in the Authority's total number of foster carers.

Further to Minute No. 68 (Apprenticeship Strategy 2017-2020), there was further evidence that proved that the benchmark of GCSE Grade A-C in English and Maths was too high and beyond the reach of many of the young people. Increased flexibility was required from those offering the apprenticeships with the waiving of the required qualifications for care leavers and supporting them to achieve the benchmark over the lifetime of the apprenticeship.

5. CORPORATE PARENTING PLAN WORK PLAN 2017

Consideration was given to a draft work plan for the Panel for 2017.

Resolved:- (1) That a revised work plan be submitted to the next meeting.

(2) That Panel members e-mail Ian Walker with suggestions of standing agenda items.

(3) That the agenda for the next meeting include an update on the LAC Strategy, Sufficiency Strategy and Leaving Care annual report.

6. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

7. IRO REPORT

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

8. STRATEGIC COMMISSIONING REVIEW OF IN-HOUSE FOSTER CARE

Ian Walker, Head of Service Children in Care, presented the above review which demonstrated that the Service was going some way towards a successful implementation of the LAC Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2017-20. However, there was a risk of a lack of capacity and capability within the In-House Fostering Service to deliver against the increased demand for placements and the improved offer to foster carers.

The findings highlighted key issues around organisation, support and a culture of performance and learning all of which were directly impeding the Service's ability to operate effectively in the market and improve the quality of practice.

There was a continued lack of a joined up approach across the In-House and external market. This resulted in a lack of clarity in relation to the respective functions and focus which subsequently failed to maximise quality of provision/optimum matching of placements.

Attention was drawn to:-

- Recruitment performance of foster carers was strong – 218 in-house foster placements
- The Fostering Team was now performance managed including dormant places e.g. illness, foster carers needing a break. Foster carers were provided additional support to get them ready for the fostering role once again
- Development of a better relationship with IFAs
- Fortnightly performance review meetings/setting of performance targets with managers explaining why targets had not been met/highlight what was working. There was a need for more analysis of why foster carers dropped out of the process
- Ongoing work to ensure a foster carer was included in any discussions between a child's Social Worker/supervising Social Worker
- Compliance with writing of a care plan had now been established but the quality of the care plan was equally as important with input from the foster carer and the young person concerned
- Improvement in the hand overs from Out of Hours Social Work to the LAC Social Worker

- The need for the young person to be able to contribute to the referral form
- With the additional funding provided, every worker would receive 15 days training/personal study time
- The Signs of Safety training would give a very clear picture over the coming months of those staff who wanted to progress

It was noted that the report had been completed last year with data taken 3-4 months prior to its completion so was almost a year out of date.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be approved and be referred to the Fostering Panel.

(2) That an action plan be developed the implementation of which would be overseen by a newly established Foster Care Service Improvement Group.

(3) That an update be submitted to the Panel on the implementation of the LAC Strategy and Sufficiency Strategy.

9. DISRUPTED PLACEMENT UPDATE

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

10. MISSING FROM CARE

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

11. LAC STRATEGY AND SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY UPDATES

An update was to be submitted to the next meeting.

12. OFSTED UPDATES/REG 44 VISITS

It was noted that there was no update to report.

13. IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATES

It was noted that there was no update to report.

14. RDASH CAMHS UPDATE

Nigel Parkes, Rotherham CCG, presented an update on progress for the CAMHS service as it continued to work towards improving the waiting times for access to service, service delivery and the provision of advice and consultation. Attention was drawn to:-

- The total caseload for Rotherham CAMHS was 1,055 young people of

which 4 were Looked After Children

- The Service continued to consistently meet the 24 hour target for urgent assessments
- The total number of children awaiting assessment had reduced from 150 to 100 on average waiting under 6 weeks to for an appointment – the aspirational target was 3 weeks
- There were 196 children awaiting treatment compared to 360 a year ago

Nigel also presented the review of the pilot for Looked After Children accessing Rotherham CAMHS which had run from November 2016 to 31st March, 2017.

It had been decided to treat all referrals as urgent. In that time period there had been 18 referrals into the Service 8 of which were linked into the Council's LAC Therapeutic Treatment Team.

One of the positives had been the development of a very close working relationship between RDaSH CAMHS and the LAC and Adoption Team. As a result a recommendation of the pilot had been that all LAC referrals be not treated as urgent but all go through the LAC Team in the first instance. The pilot had recommended:-

- Implement the new pathway for routine referrals to RDaSH CAMHS via the LACTT
- Commence regular consultation meetings with the LACTT
- Urgent referrals to continue to be seen as per RDaSH protocol
- Neurodevelopmental assessments to be supported by SW and LAACTT by providing life history and developmental history
- Develop clear information sharing agreements and documentation of consultation and advice sessions

There had been no official response to the recommendations by the CCG as yet.

There was a contract between the CCG and RDaSH for the provision of Mental Health Services. The Council had been a partner in the contract previously. A Section 75 Agreement was being developed that allowed the Council and Health to create a shared budget and shared organisation in the way commissioning of services were dealt with. The Agreement would allow the pooling of funding that went into LAC and manage the services much more closely. It was hoped it would bring real benefits to LAC and also efficiencies of services

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- The preference to formalise the agreement with regard to prioritisation of LAC children to avoid any possible misunderstanding if personnel changed, financial cut backs etc.

- The prioritisation had not had the impact feared – 18 referrals in a 4-5 months period
- It avoided the young people having to go through the process twice
- Foster carers were not bothered whether it was CAMHS or the Therapeutic Team as long as the young person received the support in a timely fashion
- RDaSH now had Locality Workers working out in the community

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(1) The Chairman stated that over the last 9-10 months the Panel had approved a number of policies and the Panel needed to be aware of what impact they had made if any.

It was thought that the update on the LAC Strategy would cover a number of the policies.

The Chair would meet with Ian Walker to discuss this further.

(2) The Chairman had recently met one of the young people who had successfully obtained an apprenticeship. There were now 3 apprenticeships within the Council.

Resolved:- That the Strategic Directors be invited to future meetings and inform the Panel of their Directorates' efforts with regard to LAC.

16. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- That a further meeting be held on Tuesday, 22nd August, 2017, commencing at 5.00 p.m.

ROTHERHAM CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL TERMS OF REFERENCE

Corporate Parenting Panel

1. Our Commitment to Children and Young People in care:

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council is committed to raising the quality of life of everyone living within the borough. For children in particular, the council aims to provide high quality opportunities for learning and ensure children are healthy and safe. It is important that the Corporate Parenting Panel members ensure that the Council provides such care, education and opportunities that the Panel would be afforded to their own children.

2. Purpose:

- i) To lead on behalf of the Council and partners of the Local Authority to ensure that all services directly provided for children and young people in care and care leavers are scrutinised to deliver to a high standard and to all statutory requirements.
- ii) To raise the aspiration, ambitions and life chances of children and young people in care, narrowing the gap of achievement between children in care and their peers.
- iii) To ensure that children in care are protected and supported to develop as healthy citizens, able to participate in their community.
- iv) To ensure that all elected members are aware of their corporate parenting responsibilities and that all Council services are mindful of the needs of children in care and respond accordingly within their particular remit.

3. Functions of the Panel:

- i) To receive statutory reports in relation to the adoption, fostering, commissioning, looked after children (LAC) services, children's homes, and the virtual school with a view to recommending any changes.
- ii) Ensure that the profile of the corporate parenting agenda is incorporated into key plans, policies and strategies through out the Council overseeing interagency working arrangements. Review reports relating to complaints from looked after children to ensure officers have dealt with these appropriately and made any recommendations for change.
- iii) Raise awareness in Rotherham Council and the wider community by promoting the role of members as corporate parents and the Council as a large corporate family with key responsibilities.
- iv) Raise the profile of the needs of looked after children and care leavers through a range of actions including through the organising of celebratory events for the recognition of achievement.
- v) Ensure that leisure, cultural, further education and employment opportunities are offered and taken up by our looked after children and care leavers.

- vi) Promote the development of participation and ensure that the view of children and young people are regularly heard through the Corporate Parenting Panel to improve educational, health and social outcomes to raise aspiration and attainments.
- vii) Undertake meetings with children and young people in care, frontline staff and foster carers to inform the panel of the standards of care and improvement outcomes for looked after children.
- viii) Monitor the ongoing commitment to providing support, training and clarity of expectations to foster carers to achieve excellent and high quality care.
- ix) To appoint elected members to undertake visits to residential children's homes alongside the appointed regulation 44 visitor.
- x) To appoint elected members as Champions for Children in Care in respect of the following strands:
 - *Housing*
 - *Employment and training opportunities within council departments and with partner agencies*
 - *Health (including mental health)*
 - *Educational Attainment and access to Higher Education*
 - *Foster carer recruitment and retention*
 - *Response to those who go missing*

4. Children in Care Council

Representatives from the Children in Care Council will contribute to the Corporate Parenting Panel through methods agreed with them

5. Work Programme

The Corporate Parenting Panel will meet every two months, formally agreeing a skeleton work programme annually and reviewing at each meeting. In reviewing the work programme, the panel may agree to request reports on particular matters of their own preference or as advised by the lead officer.

6. Performance Monitoring

The Corporate Parenting Panel will scrutinise and monitor outcomes for children in care and care leavers. To this end, the panel will develop and agree a core data set which it wishes to receive at each panel meeting. Additional detailed monitoring reports will be presented in accordance with the agreed work programme on the following key aspects of care:

- Placement stability
- Independent child care reviews
- The performance of all care standards regulated services:
 - Adoption and adoption support;
 - Fostering; and

- Children's homes
- Service to care leavers, including accommodation, education, employment and training
- The health needs of children in care
- Educational attainment of children in care

7. Membership of the Panel

There will be standing membership of the Corporate Parenting Panel to provide continuity and consistency. Councillors outside the standing membership will be invited to discuss issues and raise questions within a standing agenda item.

The Councillor standing membership will consist of up to 10 members, which will be reviewed on an annual basis.

The Advisory Lead Member will be chair the panel.

A vice chair will be appointed by the elected members of panel.

Membership will also include a foster carer and representatives from the Children in Care Council.

Membership will include key partners to support the delivery of key priorities in particular a senior local police officer, a Head Teacher, and designated health lead.

8. Officer support

- The Director of Children's Services is responsible for ensuring that the panel has sufficient officer support to lead the council's corporate parenting strategy.
- The Assistant Director, Safeguarding Children and Families, will be the lead officer for the panel together with the Heads of Service/ Service Managers for Looked after Children, Leaving Care, Adoption and Fostering, the Head of the Virtual School and the Children's Rights lead.
- Democratic Services will provide the administrative arrangements and constitutional guidance to the panel.

9. Training

Appropriate training will be commissioned for corporate panel members as required.

10.. Frequency of meetings:

Meetings will be bi-monthly preceded by an agenda setting meeting.

11. Reporting Mechanisms:

The Corporate Parenting Panel will report to the Local Safeguarding Children Board, the appropriate Scrutiny Panel, Health and Well Being Board and the Children's Trust on a six monthly basis .

Council Report

Corporate Parenting Performance

Title

Corporate Parenting Performance Report – June 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 (June 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 – June 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 Service Overview and Context

- 3.1.1 There continues to be an increasing Looked After Children (LAC) profile. Between March 2016 and March 2017 the number of LAC increased by 13% from 432 to 488. Since this time, until the end of June there were a further 73 admissions to care and only 39 children discharged resulting in an overall cohort figure of 522.
- 3.1.2 Despite the additional capacity pressures, in general, performance since the previous report to panel has seen month-on-month and sustained improvement across a number of areas although the services are still not achieving the targets set at the beginning of 2016/17.
- 3.1.3 This has been assisted by the ongoing recruitment of permanent staff. At mid-June, across the whole LAC Service there was only one team manager vacancy and the Fostering Recruitment Manager has been offered to an external candidate and is in the process of appointment. In addition there are now 2 personal adviser vacancies in the Leaving Care Team with offers of employment having been made, 2 social worker vacancies in the adoption team and 3 social work vacancies in the long-term LAC teams for which interview dates have been set. As a result it is likely that, subject to future turnover, the service will be fully staffed with permanent workers by the end of the summer period.

3.2 Looked After Children Profile

- 3.2.1 Rotherham continues to have an increasing Looked After Children (LAC) profile. There were 488 LAC at the end of 2016/17 and at the end of June numbers had increased further to 522 children in care which equates to a rate of 92.6 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.
- 3.2.2 The introduction of the Edge of Care provision will ensure there will be an increasingly strong counter balance to the ongoing increase in numbers of looked after children. Interviews for this team are underway but the team is unlikely to be in place before September and may not be having any discernible impact until the end of the year or beyond.
- 3.2.3 Table 1 provides a breakdown by age of the LAC population at the month end by age group against the latest national comparator data. This shows that overall Rotherham's LAC age profile follows a similar distribution to the National. However we have a higher proportion aged under one (6.5% compared to 5%) and a lower proportion aged over sixteen (17.6% compared to 23%).

Table 1 – Age distribution of Looked After Children at the end of the month

Age Band	Number	% of total	Latest National comparative data (Mar-16)
Under 1	34	6.5%	5%
1 – 4	70	13.4%	13%
5 - 9	110	21.1%	20%
10 - 15	216	41.4%	39%
16+	92	17.6%	23%
Total	522		

- 3.2.4 The current legal status of Looked After Children at the end of the month shows that almost half of our children are on full care orders (47.7%), 33.7% are on an Interim Care Order and 9.0% are Section 20 (Voluntary care agreements). Unfortunately there is no clear national data to benchmark this distribution against.

3.3 Plans

- 3.3.1 As at the end of May 73.8% of children had an up-to-date plan which is a decline on previous months and the 2016/17 outturn of 79.1%. The ongoing lack of improvement in this performance measure led to a deeper dive audit in order to identify any underlying issues. As a result it has transpired that the timescale for Care Plans in Liquid Logic has been aligned with a 3 monthly Statutory Review cycle at which point Care Plans should be reviewed. However, most Reviews take place between every 5 and every 6 months meaning that there is little prospect of social workers achieving the target that was inappropriate in the first

place. Once this is recalibrated on the system it is anticipated that there will be a marked shift in performance.

3.4 Reviews

- 3.4.1 91.3% of LAC reviews completed in 2016/17 were within the required timescales. This is an improvement on the previous year's performance of 83.3%.
- 3.4.2 However since the end of the financial year performance has declined and of the 92 reviews completed in June 82 (89.1%) of them were within timescales
- 3.4.3 This dip has been linked to the implementation of the new standard whereby no Review would be completed without a revised Care Plan and a Social Worker Review report being placed on the case file prior to the Review meeting. Although this standard was implemented in order to improve the quality of the Review process it has become a means by which social workers can defer Review dates as a means of managing their workload. As a result, the previous standard has been re-introduced with the clear expectation set down that Reviews will take place in time and that social workers will submit the relevant reports to make this a meaningful process. It is anticipated that there being some marked improvement in the coming months, progress is being monitored by Heads of Service.

3.5 Visits

- 3.5.1 Despite the increasing LAC numbers the overall compliance against National Minimum visiting standards is on an upward trend, achieving incremental month-on-month improvements. At the end of 2016/17 performance stood at 94.7% from 87.7% in January. At the end of June this had fallen slightly to 92.5%.
- 3.5.2 Similarly, against the higher local standard, visits are improving. At the end of 2016/17 performance was 88.3% compared to 81.5% in January, and in June 83% was achieved.
- 3.5.3 Regular dip sampling is undertaken by the Head of Service (HOS) LAC and Care Leavers to assess quality of these visits. The HOS reports that overall this has been positive with only one occasion in the past month requiring challenge to the social worker regarding the inadequacy of the case recording and immediate remedial action. However, these informal audits also identified that there is still a marked shortfall in analysis of the experience of the child in the placement and, on occasions statutory visits for siblings are still recorded for all siblings rather than as individual entries. This is an ongoing focus of feedback for social workers and evidences that in respect of Statutory Visits we are now successfully improving in both compliance and quality.

3.6 Placements

- 3.6.1 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.
- 3.6.2 At the end of the June the proportion of children who have had three or more placements, (two moves in the previous 12 months), had increased to 12.1% against a 2016/17 year end position of 11.9%. This equates to 63 children who have had two changes in placement in 12 months. Our target of reducing to less than 10%, which is also the National average, remains and it is felt achievable over the next financial year.
- 3.6.3 In 2016/17 Rotherham achieved 66.2% for the proportion of our long term children in care who experience a stable placement for over two years. At the end of June this had reduced further to 62.1% which places Rotherham below latest statistical neighbours and the national average.
- 3.6.4 Placements are known to become more fragile as the child enters mid-teens. Therefore although work continues to stabilise current child placements the LAC Service has initiated a preventative pilot programme to protect the stability of younger children deemed vulnerable to multiple future breakdowns.
- 3.6.5 This pilot has identified 9 children aged 10-13 who are deemed most vulnerable to a series of placement disruptions. This vulnerability has been assessed via:-
- An SDQ score of 18+
 - One previous placement disruption in the past 6 months.
 - Disrupted or less than statutory education provision (ie less than 25 hours per week).
 - Cross referenced analysis with the Rotherham Therapeutic Team (RTT) case load.
- 3.1.2 These children will be having full Team Around the Placement (TAP) meetings convened with an Intensive Intervention Package from the RTT being offered to each child alongside a multi-agency support plan with the specific aim of sustaining the current placement. This pilot will run over a 6 month period and the results will be formally presented to DLT and CPP with a view to expanding it to other children at similar risk of disruption.

3.7 Looked After Children Health and Dental

- 3.7.1 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.
- 3.7.2 Current statistics demonstrate that the timeliness of dental checks continue to decline at the end of 2016/17 performance was 57.3% compared to 95% at the end of 2015/16. At the end of June this had declined further to 55.0%. An independent data matching exercise of LAC health team data against social care dental data showed that a root cause of the decline is lack of data input by social workers.
- 3.7.3 Following previous good performance Health Assessment reviews are similarly declining at 89.5% at the end of 2016/17 compared to 92.8% at the end of 2015/16. In June performance had fallen further to 70.7%.
- 3.7.4 Of the 20 Initial Health Assessments completed in May 55% were completed within 20 days of the child entering care. This represents the best ever performance for a single month albeit from the lowest possible starting point. In June performance was stable at 50%, however there was only 4 assessments completed in total, much less than in May. The outturn position for the full 2016/17 year was 18.2% compared to 8.4% in 2015/16.
- 3.7.5 A deep dive audit has evidenced that the LAC Nurse team only receive notifications of a child becoming looked after (BLA) within the target timescale of 0-1 days post admission in 29% of the time. Thus, although access to Liquid Logic has assisted performance there remains an issue regarding the LAC Nurse team not receiving notifications regarding children who are 'Becoming Looked After'. As yet there has been no effective process identified by which the LAC Nurses can be notified of those looked after children on the BLA pathway.
- 3.7.6 A large amount of validation work is to be carried out with Health colleagues which should result in improved performance over the coming months.

3.8 Personal Education Plan (PEP)

- 3.8.1 At the end of 2016/17 96.9% of eligible children have a PEP recorded on their social care record this is a slight reduction on the previous year's performance of 97.8% but is against a much larger number of children.
- 3.8.2 Our Virtual School implemented a local target of termly PEP, which for performance reasons is calculated as a 4 monthly update. This has been a challenge for the service during parts of the year due to delays in quality assurance and authorisation due to long-term sickness absence. These issues are now rectified and by the end of 2016/17 performance had reached 87.9%.

3.8.3 This improved further in April to 89.7% but June's performance is particularly low at 57.4%. Validation work by the Virtual School has identified a number of PEPs which have not been input into the Liquid Logic system this is contributing to performance being lower than expected. Once remedial work is completed it is expected that a future rerun of performance data will see this improve.

3.9 Care Leavers

3.9.1 The number of Care Leavers at the end of June was 215 which is a small reduction on end of 2015/16 position of 223.

3.9.2 In June 94% of care leavers maintained *meaningful* (i.e. not text or emails) contact with their Personal Advisors over the previous 8 weeks. The Leaving Care Team knows of the whereabouts of all but one of its care leavers and he remains in touch but refuses to disclose the address of his girlfriend with whom he is living.

3.9.3 Pathway Plan performance at 99.3% is good. A revised Pathway Plan template is now in operation and it is anticipated that this will assist in addressing the issues of variable quality of plans as identified in the Ofsted Monitoring Visit.

3.9.4 At the end of June 94.4% of care leavers deemed to be in suitable accommodation represents a decrease since the 97.5% achieved at the end of 2016/17, but still places Rotherham in the top quartile nationally. This decline is known to be caused by two care leavers receiving a custodial sentence.

3.9.5 In respect of care leavers who are in Education, Employment or training (EET) this currently stands at 65.3%; a slight increase on the end of year figure of 62.9%. This remains well above the statistical neighbour and national averages of 50.4% and 48% respectively.

3.9.6 3 care leavers have successfully got through to the final stage of interviews for an apprenticeship with Groundworks although the recruitment process has seemed unduly protracted for young people.

3.10 Adoptions

3.10.1 It is a key issue that 55% of children in the adoption pathway process have been assessed as being 'hard to place'. That means they are either:

- Children older than 5 years of age
- Sibling groups of 2 or more
- Children with challenging behaviours, enduring health conditions or learning/physical disabilities.

3.10.2 Rotherham's policy is to persevere in seeking adoptive placements for these and all children for as long as it is reasonable to do so.

Whilst this can impact on performance figures, this practice does give the necessary reassurance that the adoption service is 'doing the right thing' by its children by doing everything it can to secure permanent family placements for its children. As a result one child was recently adopted 1,624 days after becoming looked after which demonstrates the determination and perseverance of the adoption team.

3.10.3 In 2016/17 there were 31 children adopted compared to 43 in 2015/16. There have been only 5 in the first three months of 2017/18 and it is likely that the year total will see another decline but this is reflective of the national decline in adoption figures.

3.10.4 At present (02/08/2017) in total there are 68 children on the adoption pathway:-

- 13 children with SHOBPA (Should Be Placed for Adoption) decisions.
- 25 with Placement Orders.
- 3 children matched with prospective adopters but not yet placed.
- 23 children placed for adoption
- 4 children for whom the SHOBPA decision is in the process of being reversed.

3.10.5 As at the end of June the average time between entering care and moving to the adoptive placement (measure A1) was 323 days as set against the statistical neighbour average of 546 days and the England average of 593 days. Even more significantly the best statistical neighbour average was 336 days which illustrates how well Rotherham is performing in respect of this performance measure.

3.10.6 Also for the 2017/18 year so far the average time between the Placement Order being obtained and an adoptive match being identified (measure A2) has significantly reduced from 378 days to 131 days. Although both these measures only relate to the 4 children which may explain the relatively low figure.

3.10.7 There are ten prospective adopters currently under assessment with panel dates booked between July and September. In addition there have been two further registrations of interest.

3.10.8 In 2016/17 there was only one adoption placement breakdown. There was, as there always is, a formal review of this breakdown and adopter assessment by the Head of Service and has identified that these adopters were highly unlikely to have been approved against the current benchmarks and practice standards employed by the team.

3.10.9 Whilst Rotherham remains committed to the principle of the regionalisation it seem unlikely that there will be any progress towards further regionalisation of the service before April 2018. One of the reasons for this is that Rotherham is the best performing

authority in the sub-region and the South Yorkshire Regional Adoption Agency have stated that it is unlikely that this performance will be sustained post regionalisation. This seems to undermine any argument for a regional approach and so the SYRAA have been challenged to revise their Business case on this basis.

3.11 Caseloads

3.11.1 The average number of cases per LAC team social worker is relatively stable at 10.7. Similarly the maximum caseload in June was 19.

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

Corporate Parenting Performance Report

As at Month End: June 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. Therefore there may be data discrepancies present when comparing this report to that of the previous month.

Document Details

Status: Issue 1

Date Created: 9th August 2017

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

*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:-

- ↑ - improvement in performance / increase in numbers
- - no movement - numbers stable with last month
- ↓ - decline in performance, not on target / decrease in numbers

NO.	INDICATOR	GOOD PERF IS	DATA NOTE (Monthly)	2017 / 18					DOT (Month on Month)	RAG (in month)	Target and Tolerances			YR ON YR TREND			LATEST BENCHMARKING - 2014/15				
				Apr-17	May-17	Jun-17	YTD 2017/18	DATA NOTE			Red	Amber	Target Green	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	STAT NEIGH AVE	BEST STAT NEIGH	NAT AVE	NAT TOP Q TILE THRESHOL	
LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN	6.1	Number of Looked After Children	Info	Count	501	504	522		As at mth end	↑				n/a	407	432	488				
	6.2	Rate of Looked After Children per 10,000 population aged under 18 (Council Plan Indicator)	Low	Rate per 10,000	88.9	89.4	92.6		As at mth end	↓				75	70	76.6	86.6	75.8	56.0	60.0	-
	6.3	Admissions of Looked After Children	Info	Count	26	14	33	73	Financial Year	↑				n/a	175	208	262				
	6.4	Number of children who have ceased to be Looked After Children	High	Count	11	12	16	39	Financial Year	↑				n/a	160	192	215				
	6.5	Percentage of LAC who have ceased to be looked after due to permanence (Special Guardianship Order, Residence Order, Adoption)	High	Percentage	9.1%	16.7%	37.5%	23.1%	Financial Year	↑		<33%	33%>	35%+	37.5%	40.1%	27.9%				
	6.6	Percentage of LAC who have ceased to be looked after due to a Special Guardianship Order	High	Percentage	0.0%	8.3%	6.3%	5.1%	Financial Year	↓		range to be set					9.8%	11.0%	21.0%	11.0%	14.1%
	6.7	LAC cases reviewed within timescales	High	Percentage	87.4%	85.7%	89.1%	86.8%	Financial Year	↑		<90%	90%>	95%+	94.9%	83.3%	91.3%				
	6.8	% of children adopted	High	Percentage	9.1%	25.0%	6.3%	12.8%	Financial Year	↓		<20%	20%>	22.7%+	26.3%	22.9%	14.4%	18.8%	27.0%	15.0%	21.0%
	6.9	Health of Looked After Children - up to date Health Assessments	High	Percentage	85.4%	78.3%	70.7%		As at mth end	↓		<90%	90%>	95%+	81.4%	92.8%	89.5%				
	6.10	Health of Looked After Children - up to date Dental Assessments	High	Percentage	56.9%	56.5%	55.0%		As at mth end	↓		<90%	90%>	95%+	58.8%	94.5%	57.3%				
	6.11	Health of Looked After Children - Initial Health Assessments carried out within 20 working days	High	Percentage	5.9%	40.7%	50.0%	29.2%	Financial Year	↑		range to be set									
	6.12	% of LAC with a PEP	High	Percentage	98.2%	94.8%	91.6%		As at mth end	↓		<90%	90%>	95%+	68.7%	97.8%	96.9%				
	6.13	% of LAC with up to date PEPs	High	Percentage	95.7%	78.6%	57.4%		As at mth end	↓		<90%	90%>	95%+	71.4%	95.0%	87.9%				
	6.14	% of eligible LAC with an up to date plan	High	Percentage	76.8%	76.4%	73.8%		As at mth end	↓		<93%	93%>	95%+	98.8%	98.4%	79.1%				
	6.15	% LAC visits up to date & completed within timescale of National Minimum standard	High	Percentage	95.6%	95.8%	92.5%		As at mth end	↓		<95%	95%>	98%+	94.9%	98.1%	94.7%				
	6.16	% LAC visits up to date & completed within timescale of Rotherham standard	High	Percentage	91.0%	90.9%	83.0%		As at mth end	↓		<85%	85%>	90%+	64.0%	80.2%	88.3%				
CARE LEAVERS	7.1	Number of care leavers	Info	Count	220	217	215		As at mth end	↓				n/a	183	197	223				
	7.2	% of eligible LAC & Care Leavers with a pathway plan	High	Percentage	98.6%	98.6%	99.3%		As at mth end	↑		<93%	93%>	95%+	69.8%	97.5%	99.3%				
	7.3	% of care leavers in suitable accommodation	High	Percentage	99.5%	96.8%	94.4%		As at mth end	↓		<95%	95%>	98%+	97.8%	96.5%	97.8%	88.2%	100.0%	83.0%	90.6%
	7.4	% of care leavers in employment, education or training	High	Percentage	65.4%	65.0%	65.3%		As at mth end	↑		<70%	70%>	72%+	71.0%	68.0%	62.9%	55.6%	80.0%	49.0%	56.6%
PLACEMENTS	8.1	% of long term LAC in placements which have been stable for at least 2 years	High	Percentage	64.1%	63.3%	62.1%		As at mth end	↓		<68%	68%>	70%+	71.9%	72.7%	66.2%	68.2%	79.0%	68.0%	71.1%
	8.2	% of LAC who have had 3 or more placements - rolling 12 months (Council Plan Indicator)	Low	Percentage	11.6%	12.7%	12.1%		Rolling Year	↑		12%+	12%<	9.6%<	12.0%	11.9%	11.9%	9.2%	6.0%	10.0%	8.0%
	8.3	% of LAC in a family Based setting	High	Percentage	79.6%	80.6%	82.0%		As at mth end	↑		range to be set		87.5%>			81.1%				
	8.4	% of LAC placed with parents or other with parental responsibility (P1)	Low	Percentage	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%		As at mth end	→		range to be set					5.3%				
	8.5	% of LAC in a Commissioned Placement (Council Plan Indicator)	Low	Percentage	45.9%	46.2%	46.6%		As at mth end	↓		range to be set					43.2%				
ING	9.1	Number of LAC in a Fostering Placement	High	Count	357	364	385		As at mth end	↑		range to be set				180	353				
	9.2	% of LAC in a Fostering Placement	High	Percentage	71.3%	72.2%	73.8%		As at mth end	↑		range to be set				41.7%	72.3%				

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- ↑ - improvement in performance / increase in numbers
- - no movement - numbers stable with last month
- ↓ - decline in performance, not on target / decrease in numbers

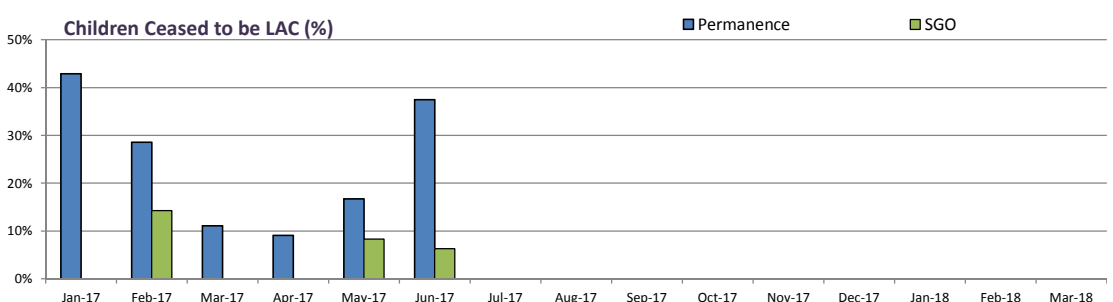
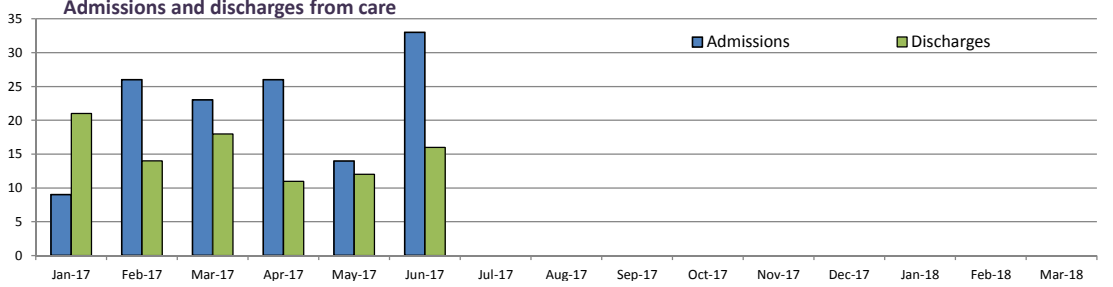
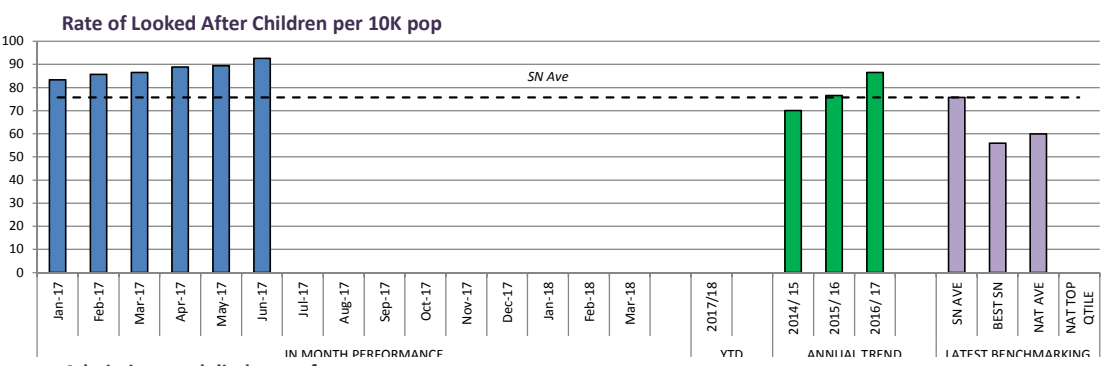
	NO.	INDICATOR	GOOD PERF IS	DATA NOTE (Monthly)	2017 / 18				DOT (Month on Month)	RAG (in month)	Target and Tolerances			YR ON YR TREND			LATEST BENCHMARKING - 2014/15				
					Apr-17	May-17	Jun-17	YTD 2017/18			DATA NOTE	Red	Amber	Target Green	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	STAT NEIGH AVE	BEST STAT NEIGH	NAT AVE	NAT TOP QTILE THRESHOL
FOSTER	9.3	Number of Foster Carers (Households)	High	Count	153	155	159		As at mth end	↑		range to be set					168				
	9.4	Number of Foster Carers Recruited	High	Count	6	3	8	17	Financial Year	↑		range to be set					77				
	9.5	Number of Foster Carers Deregistered	Info	Count	2	0	1	3	Financial Year	↑		range to be set					24				
ADOPTIONS	10.1	Number of adoptions	High	Count	1	3	1	5	Financial Year	↓				n/a	43	43	31				
	10.2	Number of adoptions completed within 12 months of SHOBPA	High	Count	0	1	1	2	Financial Year	→				n/a	16	23	12				
	10.3	% of adoptions completed within 12 months of SHOBPA	High	Percentage	0.0%	33.3%	100.0%	40.0%	Financial Year	↑		<83%	83%>	85%+	37.2%	53.5%	38.7%				
	10.4	Average number of days between a child becoming Looked After and having a adoption placement (A1) (Rolling 12 months)	Low	Rolling year - aver count	618.0	316.3	323.0		Rolling Year	↓		511+	511<	487<	393.0	296.0	404.0	546.5	336.0	593.0	520.0
	10.5	Average number of days between a placement order and being matched with an adoptive family (A2) (Rolling 12 months)	Low	Rolling year - aver count	378.0	149.5	131.0		Rolling Year	↑		127+	127<	121<	169	136	232.9	220.6	47.0	223.0	172.0
	11.3	Maximum caseload of social workers in LAC	Low	Average count	18	18	19		As at mth end	↓		21+	20<	18<		19.2	17.0				
	11.4	Average number of cases per qualified social worker in LAC	Within Limits	Average count	10.6	11.7	10.7		As at mth end	↓		over 1% above range	1% above range	14-20		14.1	11.6				

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 eight 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). In June this was particularly stark as the gap is +17. However the number of children who ceased to be LAC due to permanence improved. 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. More recently the initiating of a large complex abuse investigation will be impacting on the number of children subject to care proceedings that will ensure their safety from the impact of accumulative neglect.

		6.2	6.1	6.3	6.4	6.5	6.6
		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	% of children ceased to be LAC due to permanence	% of children ceased to be LAC due to an SGO
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Jan-17	83.4	470	9	21	42.9%	0.0%
	Feb-17	85.7	483	26	14	28.6%	14.3%
	Mar-17	86.6	488	23	18	11.1%	0.0%
	Apr-17	88.9	501	26	11	9.1%	0.0%
	May-17	89.4	504	14	12	16.7%	8.3%
	Jun-17	92.6	522	33	16	37.5%	6.3%
	Jul-17						
	Aug-17						
	Sep-17						
	Oct-17						
	Nov-17						
	Dec-17						
	Jan-18						
Feb-18							
Mar-18							
YTD	2017/18			73	39	23.1%	5.1%
ANNUAL TREND	2014/15	70.0		175	160	37.5%	
	2015/16	76.6	432	208	192	40.1%	
	2016/17	86.6	488	262	215	27.9%	9.8%
LATEST BENCHMARKING	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 their plan changes to 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)

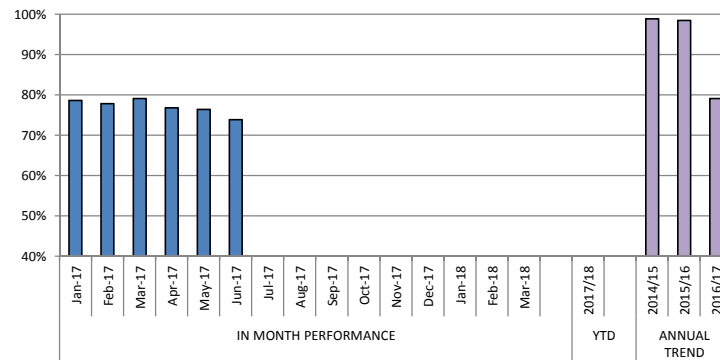
PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

Performance data is starting to return to normal sustained levels after reaching a low in December. June continues to see a small decrease in performance. 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.

The LAC team performance still has some way to go to return to the performance pre new system implementation. It is known that this is being affected by a backlog of outstanding reviews which need completing before plans can start. This is still being monitored via operational performance meetings.

		6.14
		LAC with an up to date plan
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Jan-17	78.6%
	Feb-17	77.8%
	Mar-17	79.1%
	Apr-17	76.8%
	May-17	76.4%
	Jun-17	73.8%
	Jul-17	
	Aug-17	
	Sep-17	
	Oct-17	
	Nov-17	
	Dec-17	
	Jan-18	
	Feb-18	
	Mar-18	
YTD	2017/18	
ANNUAL TREND	2014/15	98.8%
	2015/16	98.4%
	2016/17	79.1%

LAC with an up to date plan

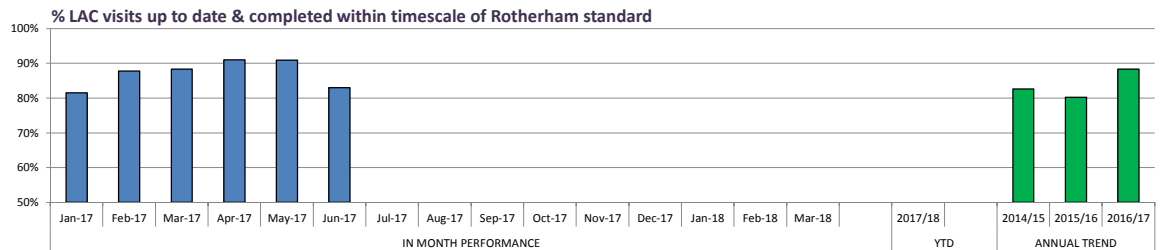
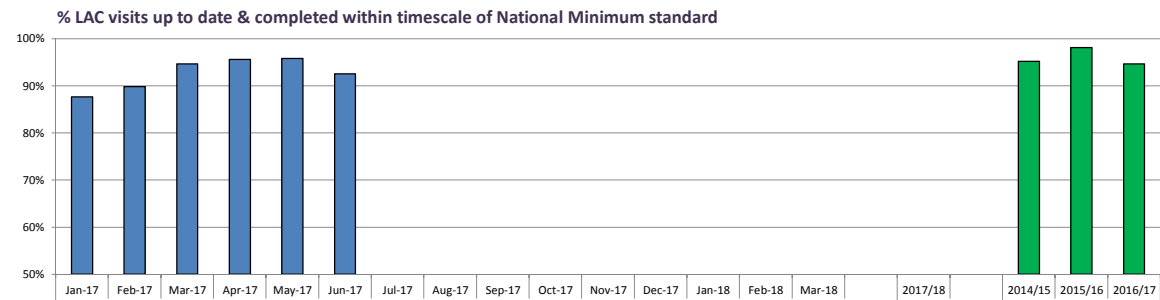
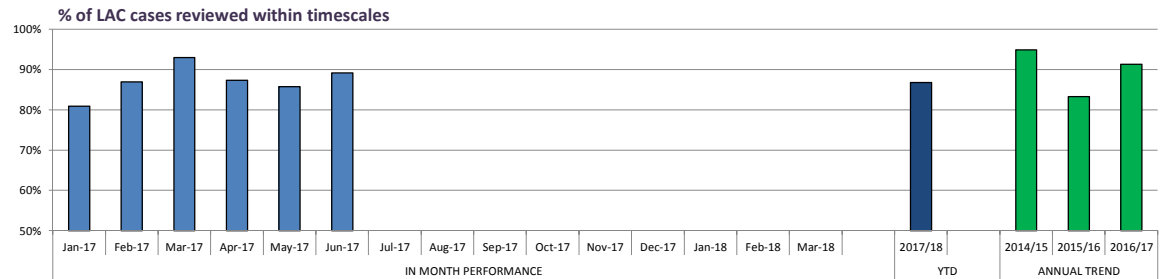


LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN - REVIEWS & VISITS

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 at weekly performance meetings. 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 cases reviewed on time remains at good level.
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		6.7		6.15		6.16	
		% 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-17	72 of 89	80.9%	413 of 471	87.7%	384 of 471	81.5%
	Feb-17	80 of 92	87.0%	434 of 483	89.9%	424 of 483	87.8%
	Mar-17	132 of 142	93.0%	462 of 488	94.7%	431 of 488	88.3%
	Apr-17	76 of 87	87.4%	479 of 501	95.6%	456 of 501	91.0%
	May-17	108 of 126	85.7%	483 of 504	95.8%	458 of 504	90.9%
	Jun-17	82 of 92	89.1%	483 of 522	92.5%	433 of 522	83.0%
	Jul-17						
	Aug-17						
	Sep-17						
	Oct-17						
	Nov-17						
	Dec-17						
	Jan-18						
	Feb-18						
	Mar-18						
YTD	2017/18		86.8%				
ANNUAL TREND	2014/15		94.9%		95.2%		82.6%
	2015/16		83.3%		98.1%		80.2%
	2016/17		91.3%		94.7%		88.3%



LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN - HEALTH

DEFINITION

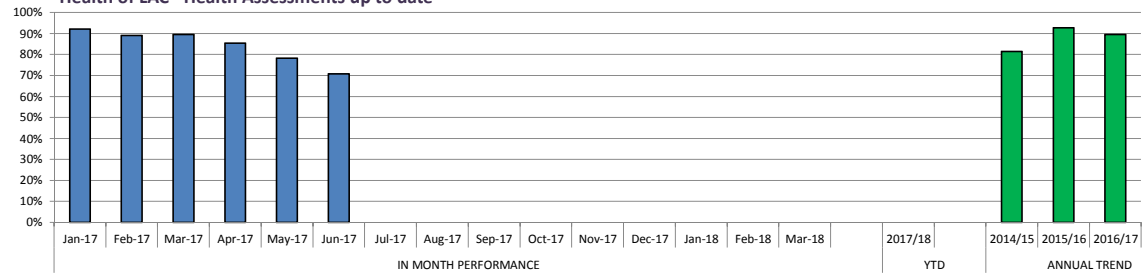
Local authorities have a duty to safeguard and to promote the welfare of the children they look after, therefore the local authority should make arrangements to ensure that every child who is looked after has his/her health needs fully assessed and a health plan clearly set out.

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

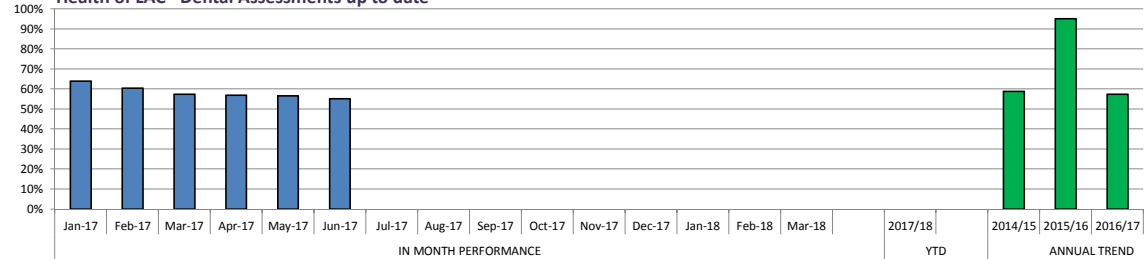
Performance in relation to health and dental assessments was poor and has been the focus of concerted joint effort and has continued to show improvement. The improvement seen in the IHA has to be contrasted with a small decline in overall timeliness of health reviews. This demonstrates that the system is still not resilient enough to sustain performance at a good level. Close monitoring means that any dips in performance are understood. The overall number of health assessments completed remains at a good level but the number of initial health assessments remains variable month on month. From our reviews we know that in the main, those not having health or dental checks are the older children 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 the LAC Head of Service will support locality teams to better perform in respect of Initial Health Assessments.

		6.9	6.10	6.11	
		Health of LAC - Health Assessments up to date	Health of LAC - Dental Assessments up to date	Health of LAC - No. Initial Health Assessments In Time	Health of LAC - % Initial Health Assessments In Time
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Jan-17	92.1%	63.8%	0 of 28	0.0%
	Feb-17	89.1%	60.3%	6 of 16	37.5%
	Mar-17	89.5%	57.3%	5 of 12	41.7%
	Apr-17	85.4%	56.9%	1 of 17	5.9%
	May-17	78.3%	56.5%	11 of 27	40.7%
	Jun-17	70.7%	55.0%	2 of 4	50.0%
	Jul-17				
	Aug-17				
	Sep-17				
	Oct-17				
	Nov-17				
	Dec-17				
	Jan-18				
	Feb-18				
Mar-18					
YTD	2017/18				29.2%
ANNUAL TREND	2014/15	81.4%	58.8%		20.0%
	2015/16	92.8%	95.0%		8.4%
	2016/17	89.5%	57.3%		18.2%
LATEST BENCHMARKING	SN AVE				
	BEST SN				
	NAT AVE				
	NAT TOP QTILE				

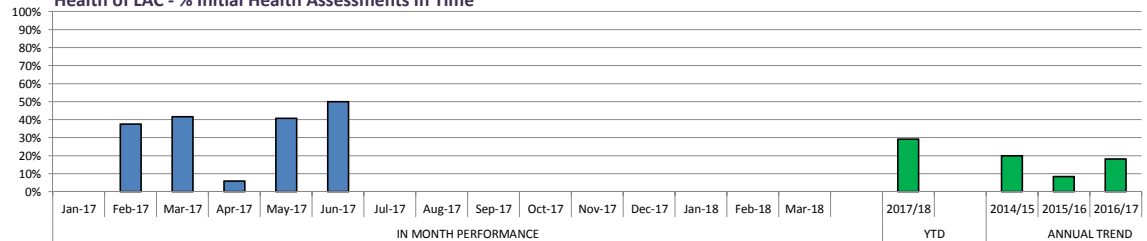
Health of LAC - Health Assessments up to date



Health of LAC - Dental Assessments up to date



Health of LAC - % Initial Health Assessments In Time



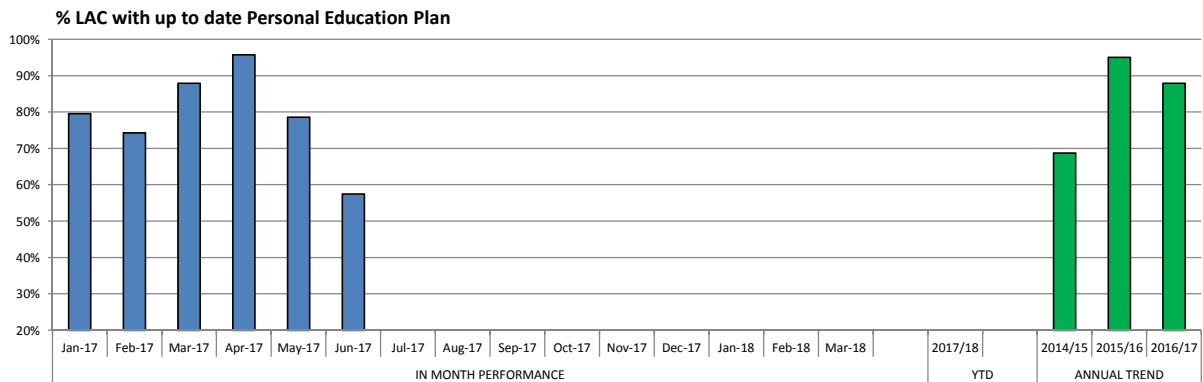
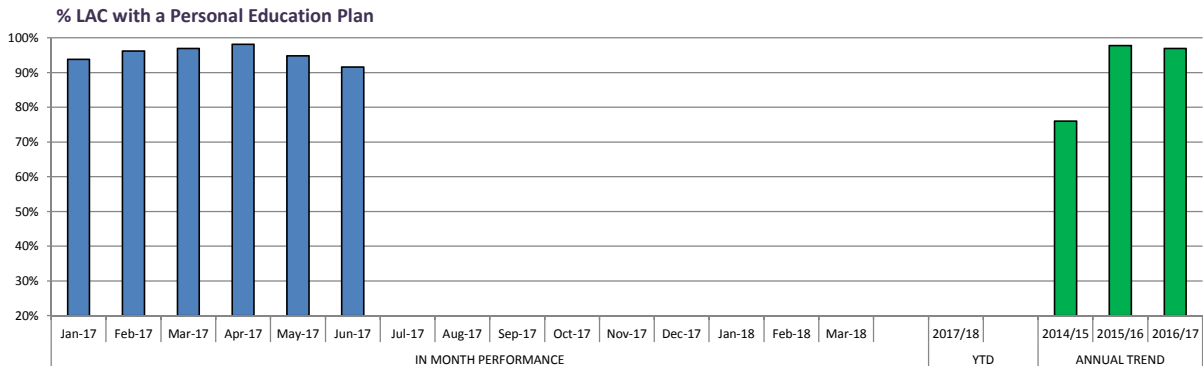
LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN - PERSONAL EDUCATION PLANS

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. The proportion of children with an up-to-date PEP remains too low. This has been caused by authorisation delays due to long term sickness absence, a solution is being looked at. The focus is now shifting to quality 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.

Validation work by the Virtual School has identified a number of PEPs which have not been input into the Liquid Logic system this is contributing to 'LAC with an up to date PEP' performance being lower than expected. Once remedial work is completed performance is expected to be much higher.

		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-17	289 of 308	93.8%	245 of 308	79.5%
	Feb-17	303 of 315	96.2%	234 of 315	74.3%
	Mar-17	313 of 323	96.9%	284 of 323	87.9%
	Apr-17	321 of 327	98.2%	313 of 327	95.7%
	May-17	327 of 345	94.8%	271 of 345	78.6%
	Jun-17	327 of 357	91.6%	205 of 357	57.4%
	Jul-17				
	Aug-17				
	Sep-17				
	Oct-17				
	Nov-17				
	Dec-17				
	Jan-18				
	Feb-18				
	Mar-18				
YTD	2017/18				
ANNUAL TREND	2014/15		76.0%		68.7%
	2015/16		97.8%		95.0%
	2016/17		96.9%		87.9%
LATEST BENCHMARKING	SN AVE				
	BEST SN				
	NAT AVE				
	NAT TOP QTILE				



CARE LEAVERS

DEFINITION

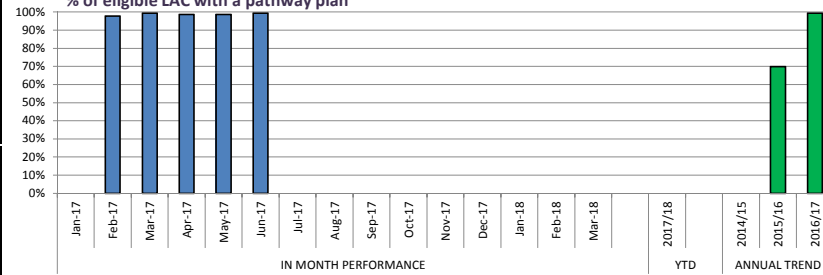
A care leaver is defined as a person aged 25 or under, who has been looked after away from home by a local authority for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14; and who was looked after away from home by the local authority at school-leaving age or after that date. Suitable accommodation is defined as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

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

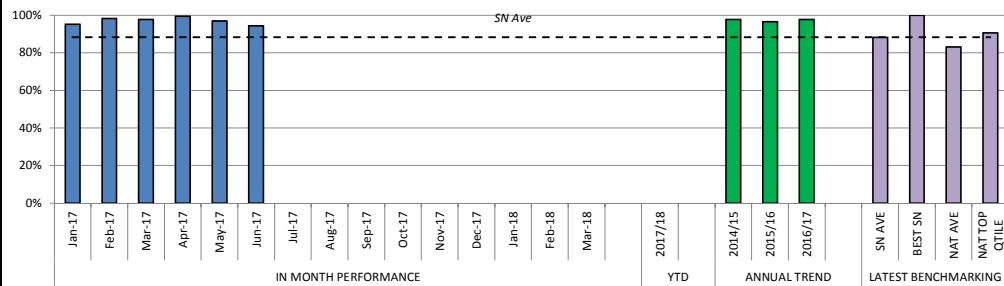
The number of care leavers who have a pathway plan is at a good level, however the quality of the plans are too variable and significant improvement work has commenced to improve the quality of plans including introducing a new plan template that encourages the workforce to hear the young persons voice. The number of young people living in suitable accommodation is high and those who are not, are provided with additional support to address this issue. Performance on this indicator places the service in the top quartile nationally. The number of young people who are positively engaged in education and employment is good and places the service in the top quartile. Those young people who are NEET will receive additional support to make progress into EET.

		7.1	7.2	7.3	7.4
		Number of care leavers	% of eligible LAC & Care Leavers with a pathway plan	% of care leavers in suitable accommodation	% of care leavers in employment, education or training
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Jan-17	223	Unavailable	95.1%	Unavailable
	Feb-17	223	97.8%	98.2%	44.4%
	Mar-17	223	99.3%	97.8%	62.9%
	Apr-17	220	98.6%	99.5%	65.4%
	May-17	217	98.6%	96.8%	65.0%
	Jun-17	215	99.3%	94.4%	65.3%
	Jul-17				
	Aug-17				
	Sep-17				
	Oct-17				
	Nov-17				
	Dec-17				
	Jan-18				
	Feb-18				
Mar-18					
YTD	2017/18				
ANNUAL TREND	2014/15	183		97.8%	71.0%
	2015/16	197	69.8%	96.5%	68.0%
	2016/17	223	99.3%	97.8%	62.9%
LATEST BENCHMARKING	SN AVE			88.2%	55.6%
	BEST SN			100.0%	80.0%
	NAT AVE			83.0%	49.0%
	NAT TOP QTILE			90.6%	56.6%

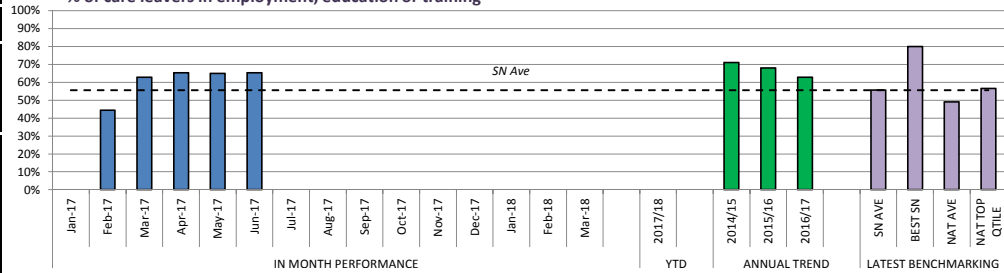
% of eligible LAC with a pathway plan



% of care leavers in suitable accommodation



% of care leavers in employment, education or training



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

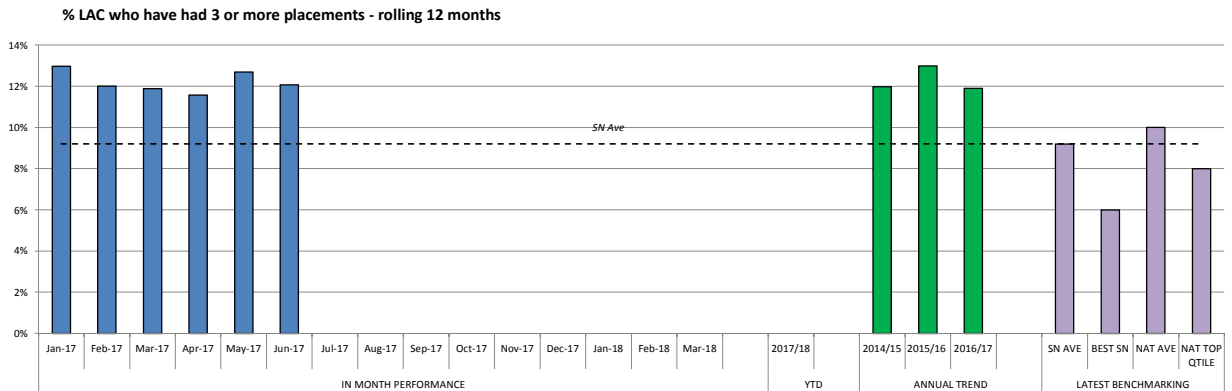
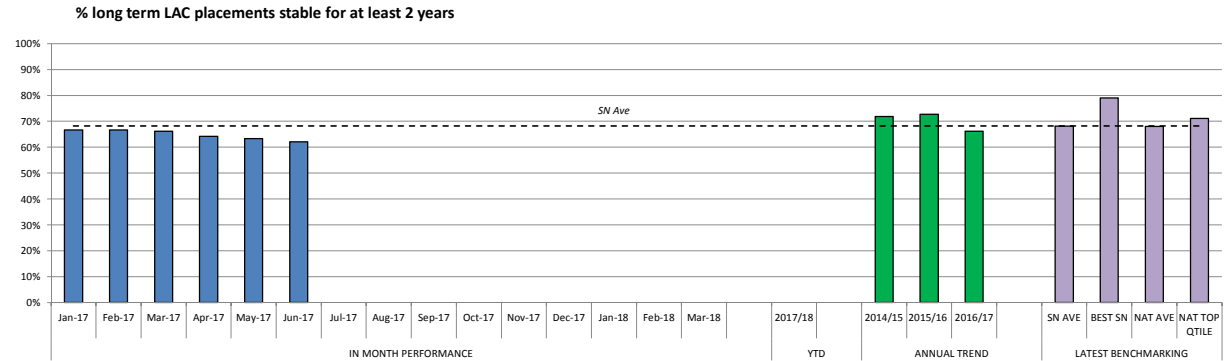
The June performance for children who have had three or more placement moves is stable at, 12.1%, whilst it has reduced, it continues to be higher than all other benchmarks. Our target of reducing to less than 10% remains and is still achievable in the current financial year.

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 new Fostering Allowance and Support Scheme has increased the growth of in-house foster carers. This in turn will support placement stability. In addition the proposed expansion of the in-house LAC therapy team should also ensure greater support to carers and intern the stability of the placement. The number of children in a family based setting remains stable at 82% against a larger number of children in care this demonstrates that the increase in foster carers are managing to care for our new entrants well.

Data Note: March percentage for 'long term LAC placements stable for at least 2 years' shows as lower than expected, due to some data cleansing which has taken place. The system shows in some cases that a placement has ended and then re-started when in fact the child is still in the same placement in the system.

8.1		8.2		8.3		8.4		8.5	
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 mth	% LAC who have had 3 or more placements - rolling 12 months	% of LAC in a family Based setting (Corporate Plan 2016 Indicator)	% of LAC placed with parents or other with parental responsibility (P1)	No. of LAC in a Commissioned Placement	% of LAC in a Commissioned Placement		

IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Jan-17	94 of 141	66.7%	61 of 470	13.0%	80.3%	4.9%		
	Feb-17	96 of 144	66.7%	58 of 483	12.0%	79.9%	4.3%		
	Mar-17	96 of 145	66.2%	58 of 488	11.9%	81.1%	5.3%	211 of 488	43.2%
	Apr-17	93 of 145	64.1%	58 of 501	11.6%	79.6%	5.0%	230 of 501	45.9%
	May-17	93 of 147	63.3%	64 of 504	12.7%	80.6%	5.0%	233 of 504	46.2%
	Jun-17	90 of 145	62.1%	63 of 522	12.1%	82.0%	5.0%	243 of 522	46.6%
	Jul-17								
	Aug-17								
	Sep-17								
	Oct-17								
	Nov-17								
	Dec-17								
	Jan-18								
Feb-18									
Mar-18									
YTD	2017/18								
ANNUAL TREND	2014/15	110 of 153	71.9%	49 of 409	12.0%				
	2015/16	109 of 150	72.7%	56 of 431	13.0%			188 of 431	43.6%
	2016/17	96 of 145	66.2%	58 of 488	11.9%	81.1%	5.3%	211 of 488	43.2%
LATEST BENCHMARKING	SN AVE		68.2%		9.2%				
	BEST SN		79.0%		6.0%				
	NAT AVE		68.0%		10.0%				
	NAT TOP QTILE		71.1%		8.0%				



FOSTERING

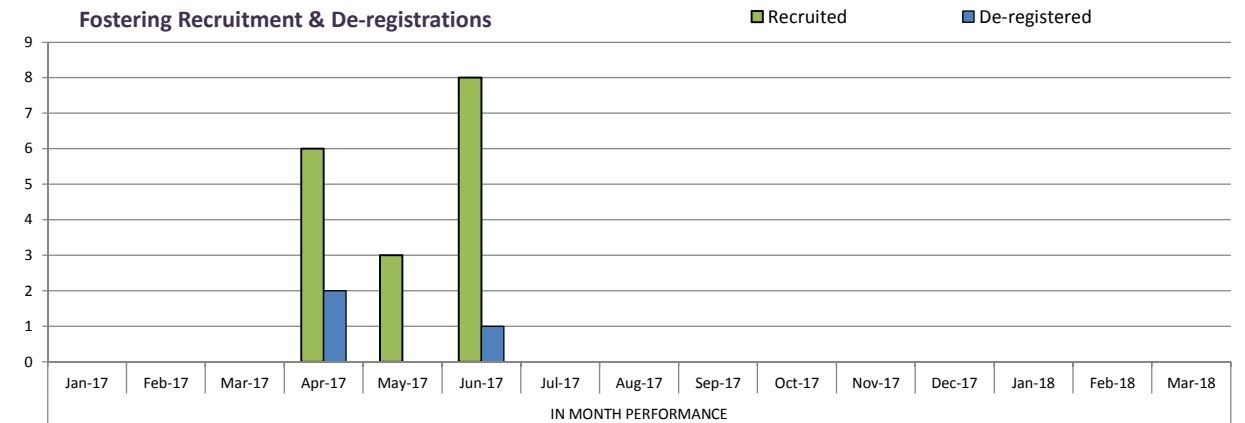
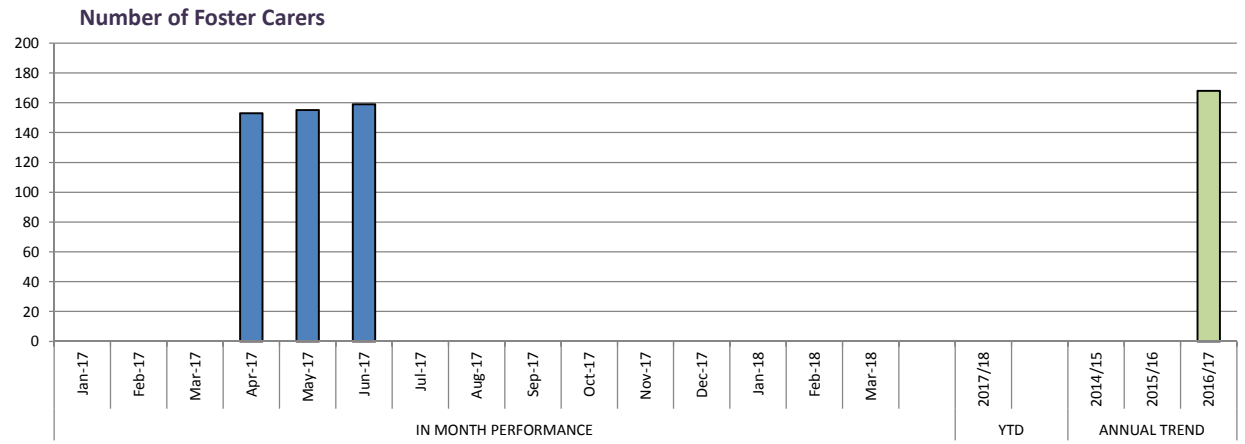
DEFINITION

A foster care family provide the best form of care for most Looked after children. Rotherham would like most of its children to be looked after by its own carers so that they remain part of their families and community .

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

A significant improvement programme is in place to support an increase in the number of families who provide care and increase the number of children living in families. This should then reduce the number of children who experience a disruption.

		9.1	9.2	9.3	9.4	9.5
		Number of LAC in a Fostering Placement	% of total LAC in a Fostering Placement	Number of Foster Carers (Households)	Number of Foster Carers Recruited (Households)	Number of Foster Carers De-registered (Households)
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Jan-17					
	Feb-17					
	Mar-17					
	Apr-17	357	71.3%	153	6	2
	May-17	364	72.2%	155	3	0
	Jun-17	385	73.8%	159	8	1
	Jul-17					
	Aug-17					
	Sep-17					
	Oct-17					
	Nov-17					
	Dec-17					
	Jan-18					
Feb-18						
Mar-18						
YTD	2017/18				17	3
ANNUAL TREND	2014/15					
	2015/16					
	2016/17	353	72.3%	168	77	24



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

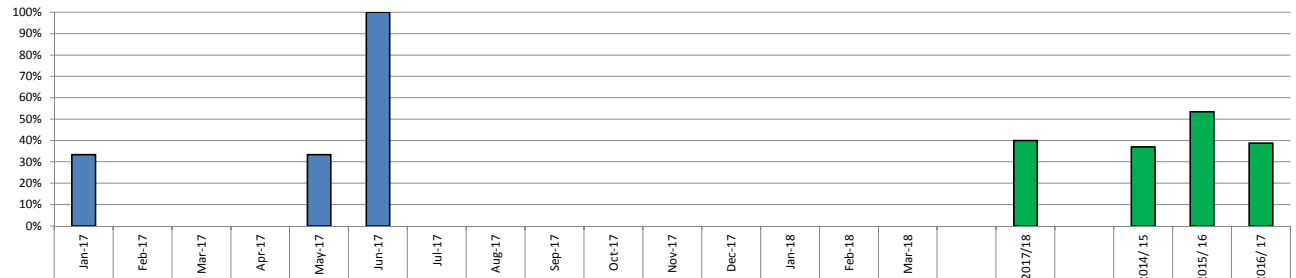
Performance each month can vary significantly given the size of the cohort which is always very small.

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 2016 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.

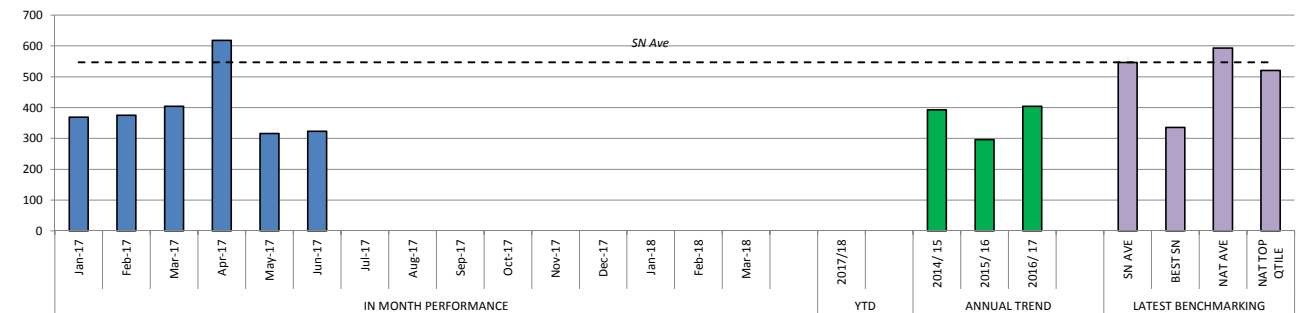
Data Note: Taken from manual tracker. Data requires inputting into LCS

		10.1	10.2	10.3	10.4	10.5
		Number of adoptions	Number of adoptions completed within 12 months of SHOBPA	% 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	Jan-17	9	3	33.3%	368.8	211.0
	Feb-17	1	0	0.0%	374.7	208.4
	Mar-17	2	0	0.0%	404.0	232.9
	Apr-17	1	0	0.0%	618.0	378.0
	May-17	3	1	33.3%	316.3	149.5
	Jun-17	1	1	100.0%	323.0	131.0
	Jul-17					
	Aug-17					
	Sep-17					
	Oct-17					
	Nov-17					
	Dec-17					
	Jan-18					
Feb-18						
Mar-18						
YTD	2017/18	5	2	40.0%		
ANNUAL TREND	2014/15			37.0%	393.0	169.0
	2015/16	43	23	53.5%	296.0	136.0
	2016/17	31	12	38.7%	404.0	232.9
LATEST BENCHMARKING	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

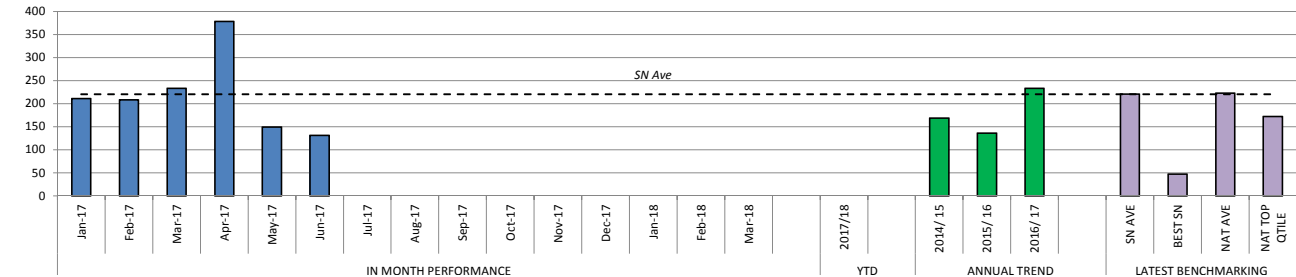
% adoptions completed within 12 months of SHOBPA



Av. No. days between a child becoming LAC & having a adoption placement (A1) - Rolling Year (low is good)



Av. No. days between placement order & being matched with adoptive family (A2) - Rolling Year (low is good)



*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.

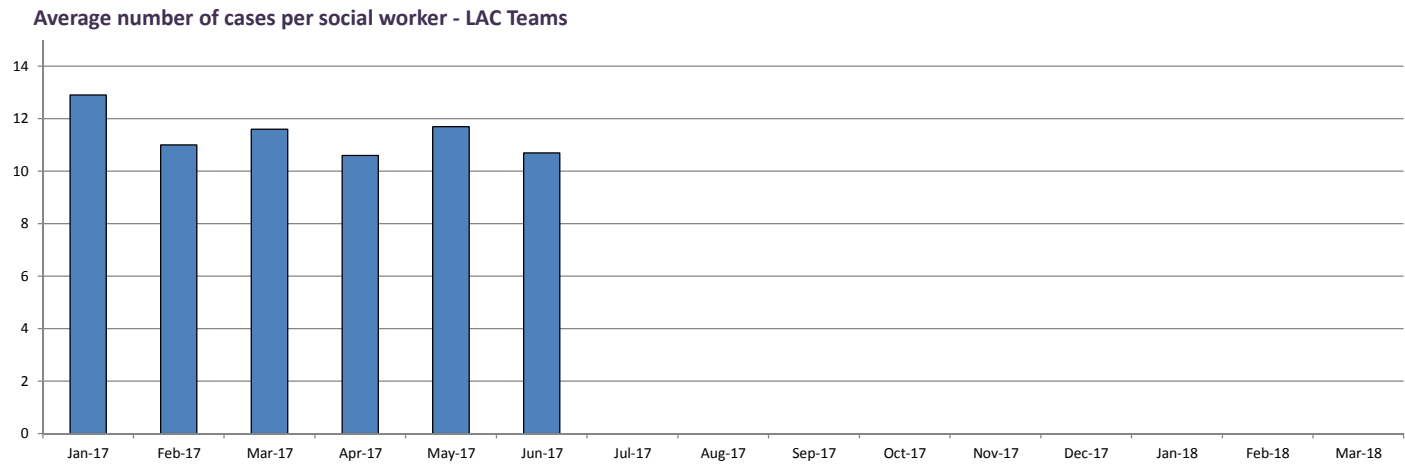
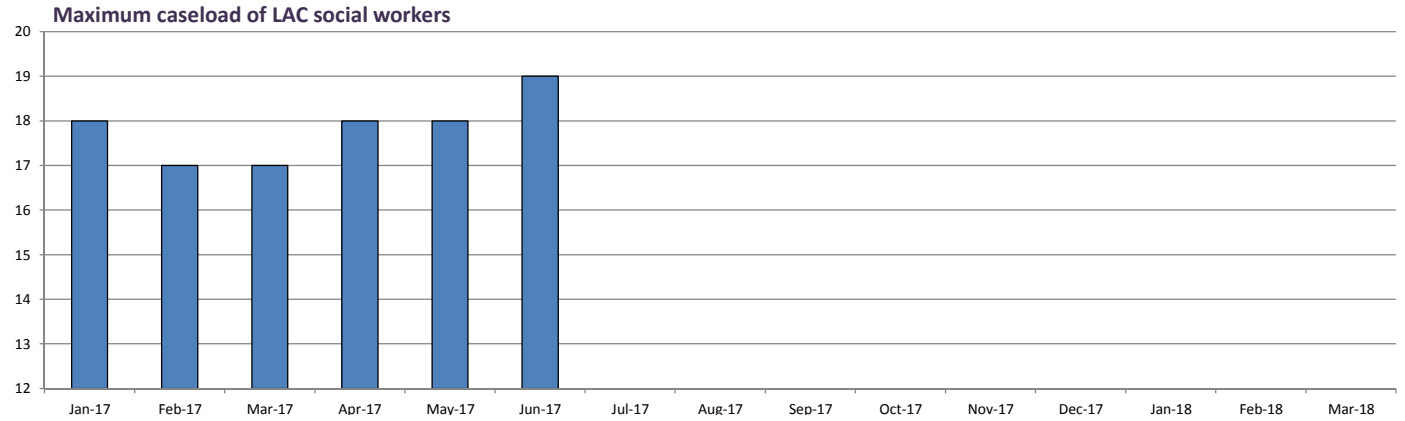
PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS The impact of rising LAC has been a small rise in the number of average cases per SW however this is still well within acceptable tolerances.

	11.3	11.4
Maximum caseload of social workers in LAC Teams		Av. no. cases in LAC Teams

IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Jan-17	18	12.9
	Feb-17	17	11.0
	Mar-17	17	11.6
	Apr-17	18	10.6
	May-17	18	11.7
	Jun-17	19	10.7
	Jul-17		
	Aug-17		
	Sep-17		
	Oct-17		
	Nov-17		
	Dec-17		
	Jan-18		
Feb-18			
Mar-18			

YTD	2017/18		
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ANNUAL TREND	2014/15		
	2015/16	19.2	14.1
	2016/17	17.0	11.6



Summary Sheet

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Corporate Parenting Panel - 22nd August 2017.

Report Title Leaving Care Service Annual Report

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) Sharon Sandell, Service Manager, Leaving Care

Ward(s) Affected All

Summary

Recommendations

That the contents of this report are noted as are the possible implications for the Service arising from recent legislation.

List of Appendices Included OFSTED Monitoring Visit letter.

Background Papers None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Pending approval from DLT this report will be presented to CPP

Council Approval Required No

Exempt from the Press and Public No

The Leaving Care Service Annual Report

1. Recommendations

1.1 That the contents of this report are noted as are the possible implications for the Service arising from recent legislation.

2. Background

2.1 Rotherham's Leaving Care Service provides services and support to young people aged 16 – 21 (25 where there is the extended duty) where they have entitlements as defined by Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers.

2.2 The Leaving Care Service in Rotherham consists of two teams of Personal Advisors and Social Workers who are responsible for completing pathway plans and maintaining contact with our young people. The service currently has an establishment of 10 Personal Advisors, 2 Social Workers and 2 Team Managers.

2.3 The team is now managed by a permanent management team having recruited to the second team manager post in April 2017. There is a permanent service manager and all Personal Advisors will be directly employed by Rotherham by the middle of September 2017. This places the team in a more solid place to drive forward performance and quality in the coming months.

2.4 The Leaving Care Service also has an accommodation project called Hollowgate which is a block of 10 self-contained flats with 24:7 staff support on site to support young people manage their accommodation and tenancy in a way that gets them ready to move to their own accommodation over a planned timescale.

2.5 It is a provision for 16 – 18 year old young people who are engaged in education, employment or training, and where they are focussed on their futures. Those young people with higher levels of need are increasingly placed in specifically commissioned placements which provide higher levels of support.

2.6 The team at Hollowgate are also able to provide outreach to young people as they move on to make sure that consistent relationship is maintained.

2.7 As at 26th July 2017 Rotherham MBC had 239 young people aged 16 to 21(25)The responsibility for these young people rests predominantly across the Looked after Children Service (LAC) and the Leaving Care Service (LCS). There are a small numbers of young people aged between 16 and 18 with entitlements who are allocated within the Locality Social Work teams and the Disabled Childrens Service

2.8 LAC as a social work service carries case responsibility for looked after young people to age 18. Personal Advisors within LCS then take over sole case responsibility from age 18.

- 2.9 Rotherham choose to allocate personal advisors from age 16 to start building relationships and advocate for young people as they approach 18. This then helps smooth the transition into adulthood. There are currently 20 young people awaiting allocation of a personal adviser due to some posts being vacant. This situation will be remedied by mid-September when the service will be back to full staffing compliment.
- 2.10 Rotherham's LCS continues to be members of the National Benchmarking Forum and Local Regional Group. This supports the service to sustain awareness of legislative and best practice developments, build professional networks and access thematic events.

Over the last year:

- 2.11 Rotherham's Leaving Care Service was historically contracted out of the Local Authority and returned to local authority provision prior to the last Inspection in 2014. Since this time there have been many changes and many challenges to the models of service delivery but over the last year especially there has been a developing stability for the service and a greater focus on what Rotherham MBC as a whole can do to improve services and outcomes for young people.
- 2.12 In May 2017 OFSTED completed a monitoring visit for Care Leavers. The visit highlighted emerging strengths such as the quality of the accommodation offer to care leavers. It also highlighted areas of development such as the risk management for young people aged 16 – 21(25) and particularly in relation to sexual exploitation. The monitoring letter is provided as an appendix.
- 2.13 However, OFSTED also observed a commitment and enthusiasm for the service and the Department as a whole from the staff when they completed their visit and felt this significant enough to note in their monitoring letter. There is a tangible sense that a corner has been turned and are slowly but systematically improving the quality of the service and support provided to young people.
- 2.14 The Leaving Care Service has now settled into 2 Chatham Villas. Young people know where their Personal Advisors and Social Workers are and readily access them on a regular basis both on a planned and casual basis.
- 2.15 Hollowgate has recently undergone a revision of its admission criteria which has resulted in significantly reduced call outs to the Police and created a more settled environment to support young people progress. The numbers of successful transitions to secure tenancies has increased as a result.
- 2.16 As of the beginning of July 2017 the care leavers' hub, 'The Journey' (as named by young people), opened. There is a developing programme of activities as well as drop in sessions across the week which supports young people to prepare and eat food, do their washing, learn new skills, meet new people, participate in the Care Leavers Council or simply 'chill-out'. There will be a formal opening in the autumn once the young people feel that this space is theirs.

- 2.17 The Financial Policy and Entitlements Booklet was published in April 2017. Both compare favourably with our regional neighbours, statistical neighbours and with those areas rated 'Good' and 'Outstanding' by OFSTED. This gives looked after young people a very clear concept as to what levels of financial and tangible support they can expect from the service. This will include a proposal being progressed through the Council to give all care leavers exemption from Council Tax. This will include a retrospective review as a number of young people have received enforcement action for historical non-payment of their council tax.
- 2.18 The Staying Put Policy (April 2017) has been published and there is a part time post to established to support carers understand the offer and provide support to such placements. There are currently 22 young people in staying put arrangements which means that more young people are staying with the people they see as their family for much longer which can only serve to improve their outcomes.

Performance of the Service

- 2.19 The performance of the Leaving Care Service has improved significantly over the last year – performance is nearing 100% of Pathway Plan completion for young people after 18 and over and is 87% overall. This is a site of challenge at performance clinic so that both the timeliness and quality of plans is improved.
- 2.20 As part of the preparation for OFSTED and noted in their monitoring visit were some concerns about an understanding of leaving care legislation, entitlements and eligibility for service across CYPS and partner agencies. In response the LCS has developed Leaving Care/Pathway Plan training to support people developing an understanding of the legislation and how to produce good quality pathway plans. Three sessions have been delivered to 35 members of staff to date across LAC, LC, Localities and the IRO service with four more planned for the autumn and this has been well received to date.
- 2.21 The LCS remains in touch with all of its young people. This is subject to their wishes so may be less frequently than the 2 monthly minimum required by guidance. However, the Service does need to improve the planning and recording of these visits so they become more meaningful and purposeful for the young people.

Suitable Accommodation

- 2.22 Performance in this aspect of the service remains strong with 94% of young people being in suitable accommodation. This equates to a shortfall of 9 young people with 5 young people being in custody with the other 4 in temporary accommodation/ staying with friends in unsustainable arrangements.
- 2.23 The 5 young people in custody is an unusually high number for Rotherham and this is expected to increase further in the coming months as there are a number of young people not previously looked after who are currently sentenced/remanded for significant offences who are under 16 for which a custodial sentence is anticipated. This will make them eligible for leaving care services in line with the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders

legislation introduced in 2015 and present particular challenges in respect of securing suitable accommodation and employment opportunities. The Service will need to work with the Youth Offending Team to understand the reasons for this increase and to build an approach which sees more young people diverted from criminalisation.

- 2.24 There are currently 51 young people in their own tenancy and a further 33 young people living in accommodation which is supporting young people to develop the skills necessary to enable them to move into their own accommodation on a planned basis. Young people access the 'Move On' Panel which is a mechanism whereby the Housing Service is able to ensure young people have demonstrated a readiness to move to their own accommodation, and where the Panel make sure the young person is able to understand and articulate the responsibilities of being a tenant.
- 2.25 The Service has also recently developed a placement stability indicator which so far indicates our young people are moving between accommodations less frequently. We have a current rate of 83% for young people over 18 who have had one or less changes in their primary address over the course of the previous 12 months. This is suggestive that in most cases the LCS is making sure young people are moving into independent accommodation at a time that is right for them.
- 2.26 OFSTED was of the view our accommodation offer for care leavers is strong. We have a range of options available dependent on need. There are solid relationships with housing and a developing market approach to commissioning supported accommodation for our young people. This is based on improved use of Individual Placement Agreements (IPAs) and quality assurance visits to providers. Furthermore, as part of a social housing development the LCS will be offered 2 x 2 bedroom new build properties in the Hemmingborough and East Dinnington areas of the Borough to further increase the range of options available.

Education, Employment and Training

- 2.27 There are currently 63% of our young people in employment, education and training (EET). This again compares very favourably with our regional neighbours and with our statistical neighbours who average at c 49%. There are currently 14 young people in Higher Education and one of our young people has received a distinction in his Masters in Sports Science.
- 2.28 There are 4 young people who have been interviewed and been successful in accessing apprenticeships within the Local Authority. 1 young person has started, 2 are due to start as they have recently completed their induction and the 4th has moved his induction to the beginning of September. These are the first apprenticeships being offered by the Council with the 'family firm' and work is ongoing to ring-fence more opportunities for care leavers and to challenge the entry level requirements that continue to be a barrier for many of our young people.

2.29 A multi-agency EET Action Group has been recently established which is chaired by the Head-teacher for the Virtual School. The purpose of this group is:-

- To focus on young people aged 16 – 21 who are not engaged in EET and develop ideas and plans to support young people access opportunities and reduce barriers.
- To focus on young people who are at risk of becoming EET and develop contingency plans to ensure young people can be maintained in EET.
- To reflect on young people who have done well so we can harness learning for the future.
- To devote part of meeting to developing pathways to EET for children and young people entering care to help build ambition and focus.
- To make sure voice of the young person is reflected in both broader and individual plans for the young people.

2.30 The group has met once to agree terms of reference and there are plans to meet in August and September to progress plans to support young people accessing EET. There are approximately 15 young people where there is no clear barrier to accessing EET so these young people will be our initial focus.

2.31 Links have been made to Rotherham's Innovation and Development Organisation and the LCS is in the process of securing an Enterprise Advisor for the Virtual School as a means of breaking down boundaries for our young people with local businesses.

Forward planning to get us to good/ outstanding.

2.32 There is a robust service plan in place based on the New Belongings Self Evaluation Tool developed by Dr Claire Baker and Jo Dixon. The framework is built on the OFSTED framework, research and inspection results. As a result the evaluation tool provides a framework for activity to support RMBC to achieve a 'Gold Standard' for our services. This is attached as an appendix.

2.33 The LCS is looking at how to develop our personal advisors so they are better placed to meet the ever increasing complexities of young people coming through to leaving care. This includes looking to develop specialisms and progression pathways for our personal advisors. It will also include training all personal advisers and accommodation support workers in the Social Pedagogy model of practice over the course of 2018 to radically adjust the way in which they engage and work with young adults.

3. Key Issues

3.1 The Child and Social Work Act 2017 was given Royal Assent in May this year. This provides additional responsibilities and expectations to local areas and the support provided to young people leaving care in their areas including:-

- To increase the Personal Advisor offer to all young people up to 25.

- To produce an easily accessible Local Offer so young people are able to know their entitlements and what their local area is able to offer them. The Local Offer is for all local agencies and services to contribute to and it has to be published and easily available.

- 3.4 Guidance as to how this will work and Government expectations is due for consultation in the Autumn with full guidance published in April 2018. The LCS will initiate a draft of Rotherham's Local Offer in the autumn. As a result of the Child and Social Work Act 2017 it is anticipated that there will be an increase in numbers of young people requiring a service post 21.
- 3.5 There is also work being completed nationally about reviewing the role and qualification/progression routes for personal advisors. The LCS has started to look at the role and have a draft development/progression plan for our Personal Advisors that is due to be presented to DLT for consideration in the autumn.
- 3.6 OFSTED and through self-evaluation we noted the gaps in managing and recording risk of our most vulnerable care leavers. For OFSTED this was in particular reference to sexual exploitation and the collective response for young people from 17 to 21. This is now being addressed through a multi-agency working group who met for the first time on 27th July. The results of this work stream will be ratified through both Adult and Children's Safeguarding Arrangements.
- 3.7 OFSTED also raised a challenge as to how we support care leavers who are pregnant and/or parents. They found specifically that our approach as a Children's Services Department was not sufficiently joined up and they were concerned that the needs of care leavers as parents were not being routinely addressed in either the child's assessments or plans and/or the pathway plans for our care leavers. This has been addressed in part by including this specific need in the pathway plan training. This area is also a developing specialism for one of the Personal Advisors so that there is an improved offer to care leavers who are parents. This worker will be attending a national Benchmarking Event in September.
- 3.8 The participation function is another area requiring further development. There is a group of young people who attend participation groups but as yet there is neither consistent membership nor attendance to fully build this aspect of the service. It is proposed that an Apprentice PA/Participation Worker is recruited to support this function and this post will be ring fenced for one of Rotherham's care leavers who is no longer receiving a service. This proposal will also be presented to DLT in the autumn.

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 4.1 None noted

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Presentation for approval by DLT on the 14th August.
- 5.2 Presented to Corporate Parenting Panel on 22nd August 2017

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

6.1 For information only.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

7.1 The Leaving Care Service has produced and published its financial policy for Care Leavers in April 2017

7.2 The Leaving Care Service has produced entitlements booklets for care leavers that is being distributed to all care leavers and associated professionals so all are aware of their entitlements

7.3 This offer benchmarks favourably with those authorities rated 'Good' and 'Outstanding.'

7.4 Entitlements have now been fully costed and are reflected in budget projections. Over a 3 year cycle the entitlements for young people are £680,000. This includes support for Leaving Care Grant, financial support with accessing EET including Higher Education, driving lessons, clothing and accessing the correct photographic identification.

7.5 The Journey has not been included in the budget planning. As a result the Finance Team are developing a budget line to ascertain actual costs for this provision over the coming year which will then be included on future forecasting for the service as a whole.

7.6 It is hoped that young people will be given full exemption from paying Council Tax. This will have approximate implications of additional cost to the local authority of between £10000 and £14000 per year.

7.7 As a consequence of new duties arising from the Child and Social Work Act 2017 it is expected the service will need to grow to accommodate the increased demand. At time of writing there is a view that Government will be offering some additional monies to accommodate new duties but details have yet to be released.

7.8 Adult Services are seeking to remove their financial contribution to Hollowgate which will have a significant impact on the service. This equates in total to £115000 – approximately half of the total cost of this aspect of the service. The Children's Commissioning team are now looking at the potential implications arising from this shortfall and reviewing what else can be done to address this gap.

7.9 There are 4 young people in bespoke arrangements with a commissioned service providing accommodation and support. This is a necessary resource for young people who are unable to be accommodated in traditional arrangements such as residential homes or foster care and are not yet ready for semi supported accommodation. It is a high cost provision but for this group of young people has been the right decision and is making a significant difference to their outcomes. Due to the success of these arrangements the LCS are seeking to

formalise the approach through a pilot with a local social housing and support provider and it is anticipated that this will significantly reduce costs.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 None noted

9. Human Resources Implications

9.1 The Leaving Care Teams are now at full strength after a period of being under staffed due to secondment and long term absence. This has now been addressed and sees the service back up to strength

9.2 The Accommodation Service does have 3 vacancies. However the Accommodation Service is due to restructure by the end of the year to facilitate efforts to increase the range of accommodation and support options for young people. The team within Hollowgate will increase the hours they are able to offer to young people living in the community and will support staffing within the Journey.

9.3 The Government are also currently looking at development of and progression routes for Personal Advisors as currently there are no specific qualifications frameworks or progression routes. The LCS has developed a draft structure for PA development and progression and this will be coming to DLT shortly for consultation/approval.

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

10.1 As a leaving care service we are required by statute to provide services and support to our care leavers. Therefore the elements contained within this annual report and attached action plan are required to secure the best possible outcomes for our young people as they move on to independence.

11 Equalities and Human Rights Implications

11.1 None noted

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

12.1 Support continues to be required from partners to secure and publish with local offer.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 None noted

14. Accountable Officer(s)

Ian Walker as Head of Service for LAC and Leaving Care

Approvals Obtained from:-

	Named Officer	Date
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services		
Assistant Director of Legal Services		
Head of Procurement (if appropriate)		
Head of Human Resources (if appropriate)		

Report Author: Sharon Sandell, Service Manager Leaving Care

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

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

Appendices

https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/local_authority_reports/rotherham/056_Monitoring%20visit%20of%20LA%20children%27s%20services%20as%20pdf.pdf

Summary Sheet

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Corporate Parenting Panel – 22nd August 2017

Report Title

First Review of the Implementation of the Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Leavers Strategy.

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.

Ward(s) Affected All

Summary The LAC and Care Leavers Strategy was signed off for implementation by the Corporate Parenting Panel on the 28th February 2017. This report will provide the Corporate Parenting Panel with the first update of progress/developments 6 months into the planned three year cycle of the Strategy and identify where further work is still required in order to achieve its agreed objectives.

Recommendations The CPP is recommended to note the contents of this report raise any challenge it feels appropriate.

List of Appendices Included The Strategy is attached in full 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

First Review of the Implementation of the Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Leavers Strategy.

1. Recommendations

- 1 The CPP is recommended to note the contents of this report raise any challenge it feels appropriate.

2. Background

- 2.1 The LAC and Care Leavers Strategy was finally approved by Corporate Parenting Panel in February 2017. This Strategy sets out six key strategic objectives as well as five strands of the placement Sufficiency Strategy and this will form the basis of this report.

3. Key Issues

3.1 The strategic objectives were intended to build on the improvements in strengthening the compliance in relation to the service and to ensure there were no longer widespread systemic failures. They defined what key achievements and service improvements will need to be made over the course of the following three years in order to improve the outcomes for looked after children.

3.2 Since October 2016 there have been 3 Ofsted Monitoring Visits and 3 preceding Peer Reviews undertaken in respect of the LAC Service, the Front Door and the Leaving Care Service. To date, and in contrast to the Ofsted Inspection of 2014, these Peer Reviews and Monitoring Visits have reported no systemic failures and identified no children in critically unsafe living arrangements. There will be a further Ofsted Monitoring Visit of the Adoption Pathway in September 2017 with the full Ofsted Single Inspection Framework anticipated to take place in the Spring of 2018. The objectives set out in these strategies were identified as it was clear that success in achieving them would have a significantly positive impact on children during their childhood and improve their ability to lead successful and happy lives as adults.

3.3 Strategic Objective 1-To protect our children and keep them safe from harm.

3.3.1 Rotherham CYPS has maintained its commitment not to place any looked after child (LAC) in a placement that has been rated as Inadequate. This has on occasions brought us into some degree of conflict with the Family Court and Guardians who have proposed a particular placement for a LAC that has not been agreed by RMBC. In addition those existing placements that become Inadequate are subject to far more rigorous review to assess their suitability for our looked after young people. The Placements and Commissioning Team now undertakes regular quality assurance visits to all placement providers working in conjunction with the child's social worker to ensure that all of their needs are best met. Whilst many of these visits are undertaken on a planned basis, such as to placements not previously commissioned prior to the young person moving there, they can also be requested at any time via the Out of Authority Placement Panel. For example it was identified that three of our young people had suffered sexual harm from a member of staff in three separate children's home but within the same large placement provider organisation. As a result the Commissioning and Placements Team undertook a wholesale review of their safeguarding processes which identified a number of issues and made several recommendations such as in respect of their recruitment and induction processes, the implementation of which is being kept under close review. Until these

issues are resolved to the satisfaction of CYPS there will be no further young people placed within this organisation.

3.3.2 Whilst the Evolve Team has reduced in size and refined its remit to provide more consultation and support to the allocated social workers it continues to ensure that all LAC over the age of 11 have a Trigger Plan and Risk Assessment in place that is regularly updated.

3.3.3 CYPS continues to work in partnership with South Yorkshire Police to ensure that it is the perpetrators of Child Sexual Exploitation who are the focus of their attentions rather than pressure being placed on CYPS to move the victim out of the area. As a result there have been increasingly good examples of co-working to protect our most vulnerable young people. In one recent case by 'pinging' a young person's mobile phone SYP were able to locate and retrieve a young person from a hotel bedroom and arrest the adults before any apparent abusive incidents took place.

3.3.4 There has been something of a spike in incidents of LAC going missing from care. Between January and July 2017 there were 72 LAC who had been reported as being Missing from Care but more concerningly this amounted to 420 missing episodes. This may be at least partly attributable to the ongoing increase in the numbers of LAC admissions. A significant proportion of these incidents involve young people aged 15 and above who have come into care with a pattern of missing behaviours already established. Most of these episodes involved 'curfew breaking' or young people being in the wrong place at the wrong time rather than genuine missing episodes but some episodes did involve young people at risk of harm.

3.3.5 The ongoing development of the Edge of Care provision will ensure that more vulnerable young people are supported to remain with their families and address the spike in numbers of LAC. In addition a learning event is planned for August in which the need to better identify and address the risks of CSE and Missing behaviours in Care Plans will be shared with social workers. Further there will be a full review undertaken of the quality of Return Home Interviews which at present seem to be having minimal impact on missing behaviours at present.

3.4 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.

3.4.1 Placement Stability in respect of those LAC who have been in the same placement for 2 years or more is experiencing a slightly downward trend at present from 66.7% in January to 62.1% in June 2017. This may be at least partly due to a statistical anomaly in that over this period the numbers of LAC have increased from 483 to 522 (8%) which means that proportionally less LAC have actually been in care for two years. However, the number of children experiencing three or more placement moves in a 12 month period has improved from 13% to 12.1% over the same timescale. Further to this there are currently 22 young adults (19 at the time of the Strategy) who have been supported to remain in Staying Put arrangements and with the formal financial and support offer having recently been agreed and published it is anticipated that these figures will further increase in the coming months.

3.4.2 In order to support more placement stability the LAC Service is currently implementing an innovative pilot programme whereby a group of young people has been identified as being most vulnerable to a series of placement disruptions. The criteria used includes a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire score of 18+, one

previous placement disruption, disrupted or less than statutory education provision and identified emotional trauma/needs. These young people will have a monthly multi-agency robust Team Around the Placement (TAP) Meeting and a 9-12 month Intensive Intervention Programme provided by the Rotherham Therapeutic Team. The outcomes for these young people in terms of impact on placement stability will then be reviewed against a control group of similarly vulnerable young people with a view to potential roll out of the programme. The main innovation in this project is that a multi-agency group has attempted to predict placement breakdowns and to direct resources to children with greatest need as opposed to reacting when the placement to all intents and purposes has already come to an end.

3.4.2 In terms of adoption there are 62 children who currently have a plan for adoption. Of these children 28 are subject of a Placement Order, 3 children have been matched with prospective adopters but not placed and 23 have been placed. In addition 7 Adoption Orders have been secured meaning that by the end of the financial year at least 33 children are likely to have been adopted and last year's performance of 31 adoptions will be surpassed. In addition to this there are 11 adopters who have been approved and are waiting for a match and a further 13 assessments ongoing. Early Permanence Planning remains a strength whereby a baby/young child is placed with adoptive parents on a fostering basis until the Care Proceedings have been completed so as to ensure strong attachments are developed at the earliest possible opportunity. However, there remains a real need for potential adopters of older children and this is the focus of recruitment activity at present.

3.4.3 Timeliness of adoptions is also strong with the A1 measure (time between becoming LAC and moving to the adoptive placement) currently standing at 275 days as compared to the statistical neighbour average @546 days and national average @ 593 days. For the A2 measure performance currently stands at 101 days with the statistical neighbour average being at 220 days and the national average being at 223 days. However, there has to be some caution exercised in considering this data as given that RMBC perseveres as much as possible in securing adoptive placements for our children one child can have a significant impact on the reported performance. For example one child was adopted last year after 1600 days due to his significantly enhanced needs. Unfortunately despite this perseverance 4 children have had their Placement Orders rescinded this year and their Care Plan changed to one of long-term fostering.

3.4.4 Whilst the regionalisation of adoption remains very much on the agenda RMBC has yet to be provided with a fit for purpose Business case that meets our 3 essential criteria of :-

- No increased cost
- No reduced performance
- No negative impact on the terms and conditions for our staff.

As a result the implementation plan has been deferred until April 2018. This ongoing uncertainty has had an impact on the stability of the team but a recent round of recruitment will bring them back up to full strength other than a part-time family finder post.

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

3.5.1 There remains an ongoing issue with far too few Initial Health Assessments being completed within the 20 working day timescale (less than 50%). A multi-agency project group of senior managers has recently met to review the process with

a number of developments identified that should assist in improving this performance. At present the timeliness of notifications of admissions to care being sent to the LAC health team and of clinic appointments do seem to be much more appropriate.

3.5.2 In respect of the annual review health assessment 80% of young people have had their check in the past 12 months and 85% of young people have had a dental check. Of the shortfall approximately half involve 16 and 17 year olds who have refused to attend their appointment although the LAC health team continue to work with these young people to better engage them in the process.

3.5.3 As Panel will be aware the CAMHS service has recently implemented a pilot programme whereby LAC were given priority access to CAMHS assessments and interventions. Whilst the numbers involved were small there was some expressed reluctance to formalise this offer on an ongoing basis which the CPP successfully challenged.

3.5.4 The Rotherham Therapeutic Team (RTT) has been expanded as part of the investment process and currently consists of 2 x Consultant Clinical Psychologists, 6 f.t.e Therapeutic Support Workers, 2 x f.t.e Post Adoption Support Workers and 1 x f.t.e Post SGO Support Worker. One of the aims of this last post is to provide existing carers with sufficient confidence in order for them to be encouraged to seek permanence for the children in their care and reduce our numbers of LAC.

3.5.5 The CPP may consider a review of the work undertaken by the RTT at a future meeting.

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

3.6.1 Performance in respect of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) continues to be strong and all PEPs are quality assured by the Virtual School before being entered onto the case file. In addition RMBC implements the higher standard of a termly rather than the annual PEP that is the target of most local authorities. At the end of the summer term the only children without an up to date PEP were those who had been admitted to care too late in the term for a meeting to be organised and a 97% performance had been achieved. In the LAC Monitoring Visit Ofsted identified that too many PEPS were insufficiently aspirational and this is an ongoing focus of attention.

3.6.2 As at the summer term there were 14 care leavers who were attending Higher Education with two of these having graduated this summer and one of our young people having achieved a first class master's degree in Mechanical Engineering. There are no care leavers predicted to commence Higher Education in the Autumn due to the leaning needs of that particular cohort. One young person is academically capable but will, subject to her 'A' level results, take gap year as she is not felt to be sufficiently emotionally strong to manage this transition at this moment in her life.

3.6.3 At the time of writing it is too early to report on the exam results for LAC but a verbal update will be provided to the CPP on the 22th August. Educational outcomes will be impacted by the fact that at present 92 children are currently subject of an Education, Health Care Plan with a further 11 children currently undergoing the assessment and 32 having a Statement of Educational Needs. As a result 133 of 413 looked after children over the age of 5 have some form of educational needs (31% of the total cohort as compared to a national peer group average of 17% [2016 figures]). Despite this, the Service has taken on board the risk of PEPs being insufficiently aspirational and will continue to challenge and support education

providers and the young people themselves to achieve everything they can in terms of educational outcomes.

3.6.4 On occasions CYPS still encounter some significant barriers in placing LAC placed out of authority in the preferred educational provision. This supports the drive to place more young people within the RMBC area whereby greater control of educational provision can be retained.

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

3.7.1 Performance within the Leaving Care Service continues to be strong with 68% of care leavers being in Education, Training or Employment (EET), 93% being in suitable accommodation (5 young people being in custody) , 92 % of care leavers staying in touch with the service and 95% of them having an up to date Pathway Plan. As a result the service has started to implement its own added value performance measures such as the stability of accommodation achieved by our care leavers and as of July 83% of the 220 young people in the cohort had one or less change to their primary address over the course of the previous 12 months.

3.7.2 Ofsted was immensely impressed with the range and quality of accommodation provided to our care leavers and stated that the quality of support provided by staff at Hollowgate was of the highest order. The accommodation options will be further enhanced by the development of 2 x 2 bedroom social housing development in the Dinnington and East Herringthorpe areas of Rotherham which should be available by early 2019. Chatham Villas has been completed and care leavers regularly access the drop-in facility which is going to be a great source of support to them. Members of the CPP have been invited to visit Chatham Villas on the 26th September 'for tea'.

3.7.3 Transition planning to ensure care leavers receive more timely support and interventions from Adults Services is much improved with a formal and well recognised pathway having been established. This has enabled a number of care leavers to move to dispersed and supported accommodation in order to help them live with some degree of independence. Whilst referrals are no longer made as the young person approaches their 18th further work is required to ensure these referrals are submitted before their 15th birthday in line with the Care Planning Guidance.

3.7.4 One of the most significant developments within the Strategy has been the fact that there are now 4 Care Leavers who have been offered an apprenticeship within the Council, one with the Business Support Team in the Transportation and Highways Department and three with the Grounds Maintenance Team. There remains an issue regarding the entry level requirements being set too high for most of our care leavers but the CPP have given some commitment to challenging this on an ongoing basis.

3.7.5 There remains one unfulfilled commitment in that the Fairy Godparent Scheme has yet to be launched. The Leaving Care Service has scoped the demand from young people although it has to be said that at present there has been no significant take up. However, the Guide and Training for Mentors and the Mentees has been drafted and once the post 16 destination of our looked after young people is more clear this service will be offered in a more targeted manner with training for the volunteering mentors due to take place after the summer holidays.

3.8 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.

3.8.1 The Participation function for LAC was very recently transferred into the LAC Service in order to strengthen the voice of the child in service design and delivery. For the first time the LAC Council has its own budget which will ensure that travelling expenses are no longer a barrier to young people attending. This budget will also enable the LAC Council to offer a range of activities including residential week-ends and attendance at national participation events as a means of attracting new members. This, combined with the greater alignment with the LAC Service has boosted membership up to 12 regular participants. Plans are in place to ensure that a minimum of 10% of the LAC population engage in this process via a group being set up for primary school age children and an activity based group for young teenagers as well as the formal LAC Council. The names of these groups will be decided by the young people themselves in the spirit of 'ethical participation' by which the LAC Council will decide its own priorities and no longer be used simply to 'tick the box' in respect of consultation being undertaken by the wider Council Departments.

3.8.2 Luke Rodgers from Fostering Network has undertaken a full participation Scoping Exercise and led the LAC Service Development Day in July from which a Participation Strategy will be developed. He has also offered to 'Train the Trainers' whereby young people will be skilled up to lead training for elected members and CYPS staff in respect of the experience of being a looked after child. It has been agreed that they will receive a fee for providing this training which will be paid into the LAC Council Budget. The LAC Council have also been involved in the planning of the second Pride of Rotherham event that will take place on the 12th October and have been instrumental in selecting the venue, entertainment and trophies.

3.8.3 The voice of the child is still insufficiently represented in Care Plans although more LAC are undertaking Life-story work with their social workers and carers. These issues continue to be a focus of attention in the fortnightly Performance Clinics.

3.9 Placement Sufficiency

3.9.1 The numbers of looked after children has continued to rise from 457 when the LAC Strategy was drafted to 519 as at the 7th August 2017 with the aspiration being very much to reduce this below the starting figure. Part of the reason for this ongoing rise has been as a direct outcome from the Complex Abuse process. In addition the Edge of Care provision has yet to be implemented in full. Recruitment has been completed for the team but appointees are yet to be in post and the Edge of Care Panel has not yet been established although the Terms of Reference have been agreed. The Family Group Conference team has been established since May and they have already undertaken 6 Conferences to support the return of looked after young people to their birth families. The Pause Project is also in the midst of the approval process.

3.9.2 The Rotherham Therapeutic Team has also recruited to its new posts although once again not all appointees are yet in place. Their increased capacity is however enabling them to better support placement stability. The revised Foster Care Payments Scheme is now fully embedded and the contracts in respect of the implementation of the Mockingbird Family Model have been 'signed off' with the allowance scheme for the hub carers in the process of being approved. The concept of the professionalization of the fostering role continues to develop. A number of foster carers attended the LAC Service development day and they are being supported to make increasing challenges regarding care plans. For example a number of carers have successfully challenged a decision not to change the school

for a young person to one more local to placement. The regionalisation of the Adoption Service has been deferred pending the provision of a fit for purpose business case that meets the needs of RMBC in respect of no reduced performance, no increased cost and no impact of the terms and conditions for employees. Implementation target date has now been set for April 2018. The contract in respect of the Taking Care project was ended after one year due to budget issues and a shortfall in the anticipated outcomes.

3.9.3 In terms of foster carer recruitment there have been 8 new placements approved since April with a further 10 assessments to be presented to Panel before December. This, combined with a performance management approach being taken in respect of void placements, has meant that as at the end of July there were 209 in-house foster placements and 267 in-house placements altogether both of which are best performance figures by the service. An approach has been made to the Fostering Agencies to secure the 74 IFA placements in the RMBC area currently not being utilised by Rotherham children as and when they become available to enable more local placements and this was well received.

3.9.4 However, until the rate of admissions to care begins to slow it is highly unlikely that the Sufficiency Strategy can be deemed to have been successfully implemented and this remains a significant risk for the Service as a whole.

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

4.1 There are no options to consider and it is therefore recommended that The CPP note the contents of this report and raise any challenge it deems appropriate.

5. Consultation

5.1 Colleagues from HR, Finance and Legal Services have been consulted regarding the contents of this report.

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

6.1 This Strategy will run over a three year cycle and reviews will be presented to the CPP on a regular basis.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

7.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report although the financial risk will be significant if the Sufficiency Strategy is not successfully implemented.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

9. Human Resources Implications

9.1 There are no Human Resource implications arising from this report

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

10.1 The LAC and Care Leavers Strategy and Sufficiency Strategy have been formulated to improve outcomes for looked after children and care leavers.

11 Equalities and Human Rights Implications

11.1 These Strategies have been designed to address the inequalities in outcomes that can be experienced by looked after children.

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

12.1 None noted

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 The most significant risk to the implementation of the Strategies is presented by the ongoing increase in numbers of looked after children. This risk should be mitigated by the successful implementation of the Sufficiency Strategy and, in particular, of the Edge of Care provision.

14. Accountable Officer(s)

Approvals Obtained from:-

	Named Officer	Date
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services		
Assistant Director of Legal Services		
Head of Procurement (if appropriate)		
Head of Human Resources (if appropriate)		

Ian Walker
Head of Service

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**Rotherham
Looked After Children
and Care Leavers
SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY
2017-2021**

Version 1.0
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Document Control

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0.1	28/10/16	Angela Tracey	First Draft for comments to Deputy Strategic Director
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0.3	31/10/16	Angela Tracey	Circulate to LAC Strategy Group for comments
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Authorisation

Title	Name	Date	Signature
DLT	-	19/01/17	
Strategic Director	Ian Thomas	25/01/17	
Lead Member CYPS	Cllr Gordon Watson	25/01/17	
Children's Improvement Board	Commissioner Bradwell Debbie Barnes	25/01/17	
Chair of the Rotherham Children's Safeguarding Board	Christine Cassell	Virtual Circulation	
Corporate Parenting Panel	Cllr Gordon Watson	28/02/17	

Circulation

Title	Name	Date	Signature

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Foreword

In Rotherham, we will strive for the children we look after to have the same things that every good parent or carer would want; that they are healthy and happy, that they feel valued for who they are, 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 four 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 Corporate Parents 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.

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

Ian Thomas
**Strategic Director, Children & Young
People's Service**

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. This strategy gives consideration 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 for them 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.
- 1.6 Alongside these outcomes, the Looked After Children Service has developed 5 strategic objectives. They drive the key achievements and service improvements that will need to be made over the course of the next four 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 488 as of December 2016 (15% increase in a 12 month period) and is expected to increase.

- 1.14 Black and Minority Ethnic children now represent 19.4% (95) of the Looked After Children population. As a proportion, this is broadly in line with the child population as a whole (17.9%).

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	31 st Dec 2016
Rotherham	69.9	72.2	76.6	86.5
Stat Neighbour Average	73.3	73.2	75.8	-
England Average	60.0	60.0	60.0	-

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

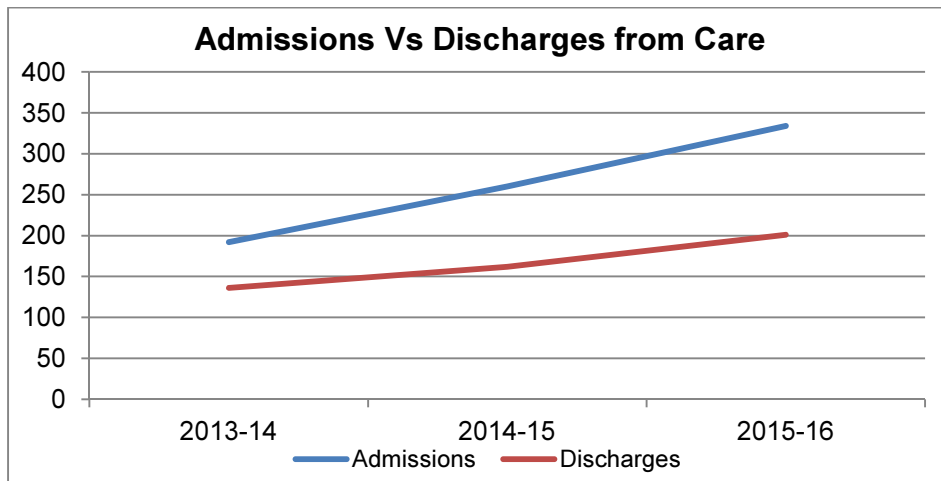
Table 2 - Numbers of Looked After Children by Age Group as at period end

Age Group	31 st March 2014	31 st March 2015	31 st March 2016	31 st Dec 2016
Under 1	23	18	29	39
1 to 4	59	60	52	62
5 to 9	80	80	87	102
10 to 15	160	162	174	186
16 & Over	72	87	89	99
Total	394	407	431	488

- 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 December 2016, of the children and young people looked after for more than 2 years, (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 the older they become 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 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 45% in December 2016. 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.

Table 3 - Admissions to Care by Age Group

Age Group	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	Apr-Dec 2016
Under 1	39/20%	48/18%	57/17%	47/23%
1 to 4	33/17%	70/27%	81/24%	45/22%
5 to 9	39/20%	47/18%	90/27%	38/19%
10 to 15	53/28%	66/25%	67/20%	56/28%
16 & Over	28/15%	29/11%	39/12%	15/7%
Total	192	260	334	201

Table 4 - Discharges from Care by Age

Age Group on Leaving Care	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	Apr-Dec 2016
Under 1	14/10%	17/10%	23/11%	22/15%
1 to 4	45/33%	52/32%	61/30%	35/24%
5 to 9	17/13%	20/12%	27/13%	18/13%
10 to 15	19/14%	21/13%	34/17%	22/15%
16 & Over	41/30%	52/32%	56/28%	46/32%
Total	136	162	201	143

Table 5 - Discharges from Care by End Reason

Reason Care Ceased	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	Apr-Dec 2016
Returned Home to live with birth parent or person with parental responsibility	44/ 32%	52/ 32%	56/29%	43/30%
To live with parents, relatives, or other person with no parental responsibility	-	-	-	20/13%
Adopted (permanence)	36/ 27%	44/ 27%	43/ 21%	19/13%
Alternative permanent care with 'connected people' (SGO)	19/ 14%	18/ 11%	33/ 16%	16/11%
Transition to Adult Services - disability and learning difficulties	2/ 1%	4/ 2%	1/ 1%	4/3%
Becoming an 18 year old Adult (move to independent living)	23/ 17%	14/ 9%	9/ 4%	13/10%
All Other	12/ 9%	30/ 19%	59/ 29%	28/20%
Total	136	162	201	143

- 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 December 2016 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

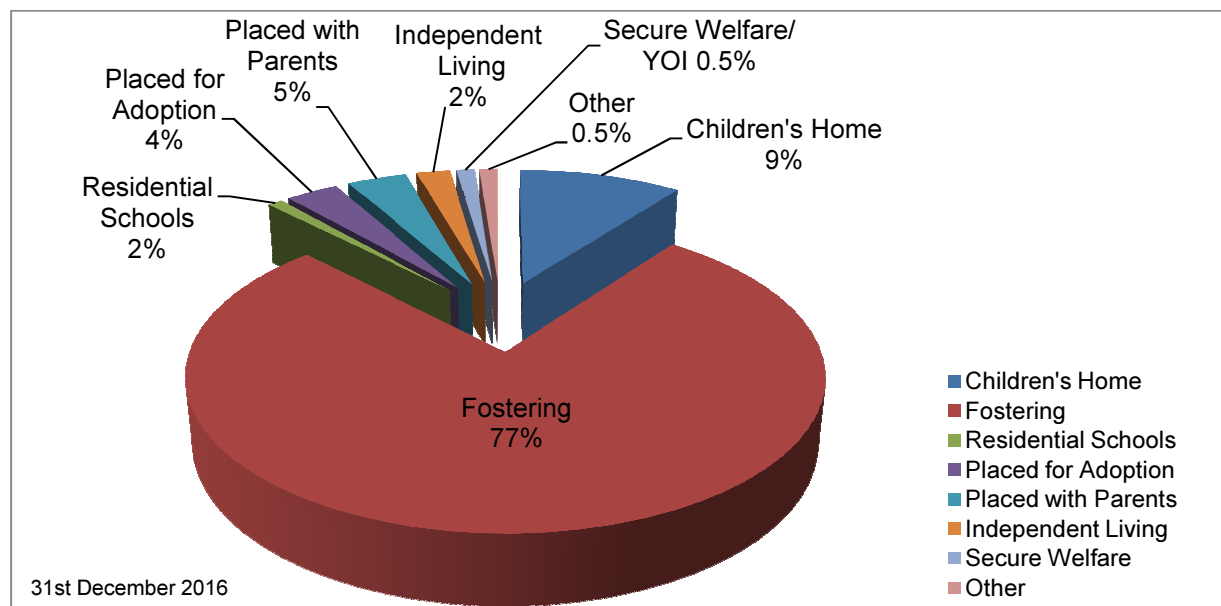
Table 6 - Numbers of Looked After Children by Legal Status as at period end

Legal Status	31 st March 2014	31 st March 2015	31 st March 2016	31 st Dec 2016
Interim Care Order	51/13%	61/15%	78/18%	138/28%
Full Care Order	239/60%	237/58%	251/58%	241/49%
Section 20	40/10%	59/15%	58/13%	59/12%
Placement Order	62/16%	50/12%	41/10%	46/9%
On remand, committed for trial, or detained	2/1%	-	2/0.5%	3/0.5%
Emergency orders or police protection	-	-	1/0.5%	1/0.5%
Total	394	407	431	488

- 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	31 st Dec 2016
Children's Home in-house provision	19/ 5%	16/ 4%	3/ 1%	0
Children's Home provision by others	22/ 6%	30/ 7%	41/ 10%	45/ 9%
Fostering in-house provision	155/ 39%	167/ 41%	178/ 41%	179/ 36%
Fostering with 'connected people' (relatives or friends)	10/ 3%	16/ 4%	20/ 5%	20/ 5%
Fostering provision by others (IFAs & other LAs)	102/ 26%	110/ 27%	136/ 32%	176/ 36%
Residential Schools	3/ 1%	3/ 1%	4/ 1%	9/ 2%
Placed for Adoption (with prospective adoptive parents)	37/ 9%	24/ 6%	14/ 3%	21/ 4%
Placed with Parents (and subject to a FCO or other Order of the court)	18/ 5%	14/ 3%	16/ 4%	23/ 5%
Independent Living	10/ 3%	11/ 3%	9/ 2%	11/ 2%
Secure Accommodation (Welfare grounds)	4/ 1%	2/ 0%	5/ 1%	1/ 0%
Young Offender Institute or Prison	3/ 1%	1/ 0%	0%	1/ 0%
Other	11/ 3%	13/ 3%	5/ 1%	2/ 0.5%
Total	394	407	431	488



2.9 The breakdown of placements by type indicate that the vast majority of LAC are placed in foster care (77%) which is consistent with the department's commitment to place children in family based arrangements. Of the 77%, 41% are in-house placement (including connected people, relatives or friends) and 36% with Independent Fostering Agencies.

WHERE WE CURRENTLY CARE FOR OUR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

2.10 When compared with statistical neighbours and the rest of the country, too many LAC are placed out of borough – more than 20 miles away from their home. 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

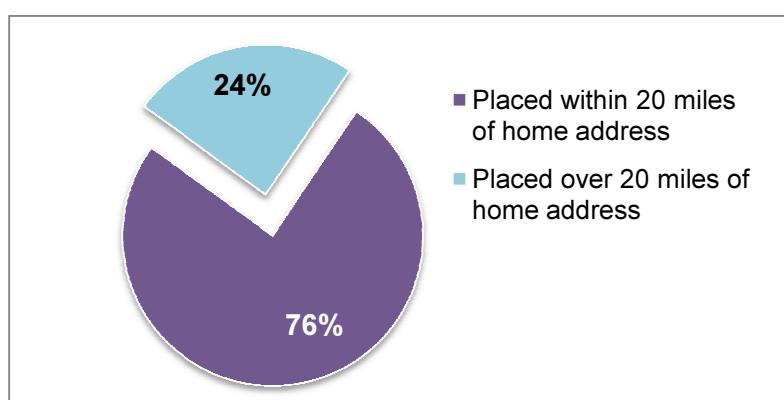


Table 9 – LAC placement driving distance from home by placement type as at July 2016

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

2.11 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 Team (LAACTT).

Table 10 - Looked After Children Accessing LAC Therapeutic Team

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

- 2.12 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 2015/16 from the previous year's figure. This decrease may in part be due to RDASH CAMHS working more closely with the Therapeutic Team 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

- 2.13 There is evidence of good joint working between RDASH CAMHS and the Therapeutic Team and that each respective service is working with the appropriate cohort of children and young people.
- 2.14 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 Learning Disability 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	31st Dec 2016
Rotherham	82.80%	94.00%	96.5%	97.3%
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	31st Dec 2016
Rotherham	38.00%	34.00%	32.00%	28.6%
Stat Neighbours	37.40%	39.60%	-	-
England	38.00%	39.00%	-	-

- 2.15 The vast majority of young people leaving care (97%) are in suitable accommodation which is well above the national average (81%). There are no young people placed in bed and breakfast accommodation.

INDICATOR OUTCOMES

- 2.16 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 Apr-Dec 2016	England 2015/16
Number of Looked After Children per 10,000 under 18 population	69.9	72.2	76.6	86.5	60
Achieving permanence					
Number of adoptions	-	-	43	19	-
% adoptions completed within 12 months of SHOOPA	55.6%	84.6%	53.5%	52.6%	-
Number of Special Guardianship Orders	5	1	16	16	
Stability of Placements					
No. of long term LAC placements stable for at least 2 years	108/157	110/153	109/150	102/148	-
% long term LAC placements stable for at least 2 years (NI063)	68.8%	71.9%	72.7%	68.9%	67%
No. of LAC who have had 3 or more placements - rolling 12 months (NI062)	44/393	49/409	56/431	62/454 At Sep	-
% LAC who have had 3 or more placements - rolling 12 months	11.2%	12.0%	13.0%	13.7% At Sep	11.0%
Personal Education Plan					
% LAC with a Personal Education Plan	65.7%	68.7%	97.8%	91.2% At Sep	-
% LAC with up to date Personal Education Plan	73.3%	76.0%	95.0%	85.0% At Sep	-
Health					
Health of Looked After Children – up to date Health Assessments	82.7%	81.4%	92.8%	89.2%	-
Health of Looked After Children – up to date Dental Assessments	42.5%	58.8%	95.0%	65.5%	-

- 2.17 A social care case management system was implemented in October 2016 which, as expected with any new system, would have a short term impact on reporting information in some areas. Where possible December data has been provided along with efforts to ensure that figures used have been manually validated for accuracy of reporting.

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 March 2015. There has been a small decline in year at December 2016 to 68.9%. However the longer term trend is upwards and remains higher than statistical neighbours (67%).
- 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%.

Adoption and Early Permanence planning

- 2.22 Analysis indicates an increase in the number of Looked After Children aged 0 to 4 whose permanence plan is adoption and reflects the trend of an increase in the number of children aged 0 to 4 entering care. In 2015/16, 19 children under the age of 1 year, had a SHOBPA (Should be placed for Adoption Decision). Eighteen children aged between 1 and 4 years had a SHOBPA decision.
- 2.23 From 1st April 2016 to 1st December, 17 children under the age of 1 year old, had a SHOBPA decision and 10 children aged between 1 and 4. It is likely that the number of children 4 and under whose plan is adoption will exceed the 2015/16 total. This reflects the trend in the growing numbers of children aged 4 or under entering care.
- 2.24 Early Permanence Planning (EPP) has enabled identification of unborn children who are likely to come in to care, develop a permanence plan for adoption and place them with adopters who are temporarily approved as foster carers. In 2015/16, 16 unborns were considered for EPP. Of these, 8 children (50%) were placed in Early Permanence Placements. In 2016/17 year to date, 14 children have been considered for EPP with 3 children placed.
- 2.25 During 2015/16 the average time between becoming a looked after child and placed for adoption (A1) was 296 days. This is within the government target of 426 days demonstrating that permanence is achieved in a timely manner and permanence plans are not allowed to drift.
- 2.26 The average time between the child being the subject of a placement order and being matched with adopters was 136 days during 2015/16 (A2). Although this missed the government target of 121 days, the underlying performance does represent an improvement on the previous year with 72% of children adopted with the target of 121 days compared to 37% in 2014/15.

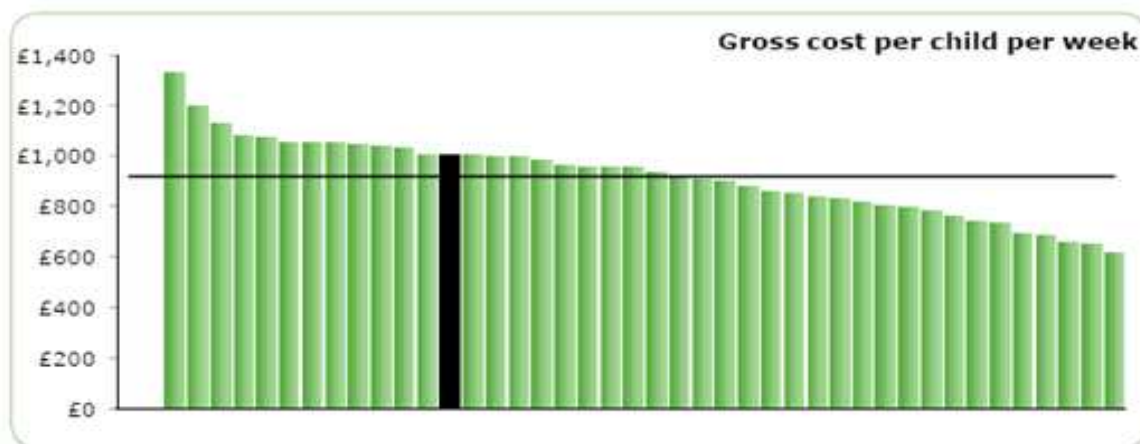
3. Our Current Approach

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 488 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 86.5 per 10,000 children this is 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. (Section 2, Table 9).
- 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 that are out of borough. We also experience a 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 seeking to accommodate these larger groups (3+) in the same setting is difficult irrespective of the placement type. The resulting break up of sibling groups 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

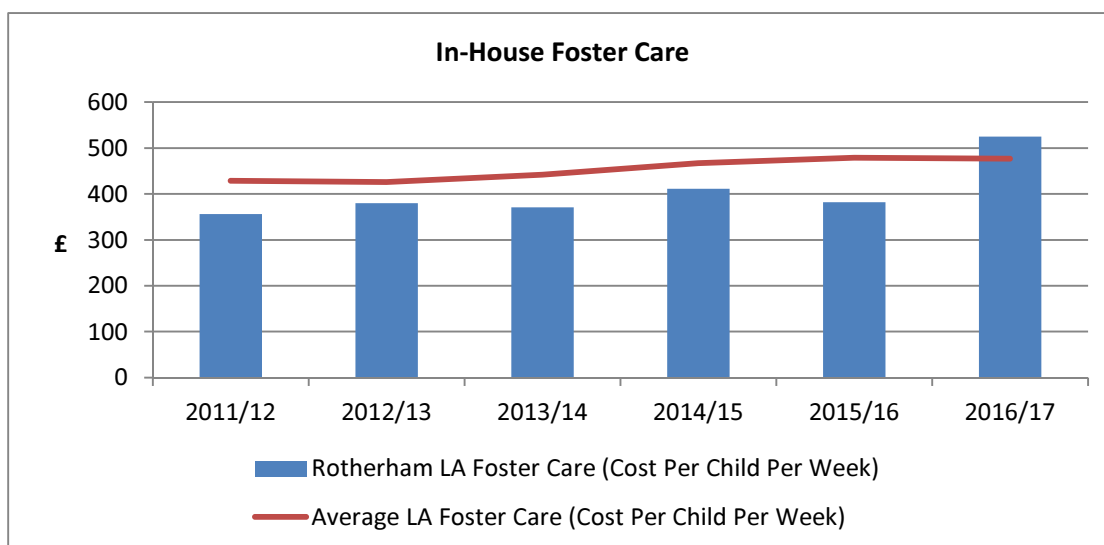
Composition			
Placements			
	No.	%	Avg
LA Homes	0	na	3%
Other Homes	42	10%	9%
In-House Foster Care	196	47%	56%
Other Foster Care	155	38%	27%
	347		

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 167 to 178. In December 2016 the proportion of placements with local authority fostering accounted for 36% of the placement market (178 placements), a proportion that has remained consistent over the past 3 years but needs to increase. The target increase for 2016/17 is a net increase of 15 placements of in-house foster carers.
- 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.
- 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. The current gross unit cost for in-house provision is £525 per child per week.
- 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

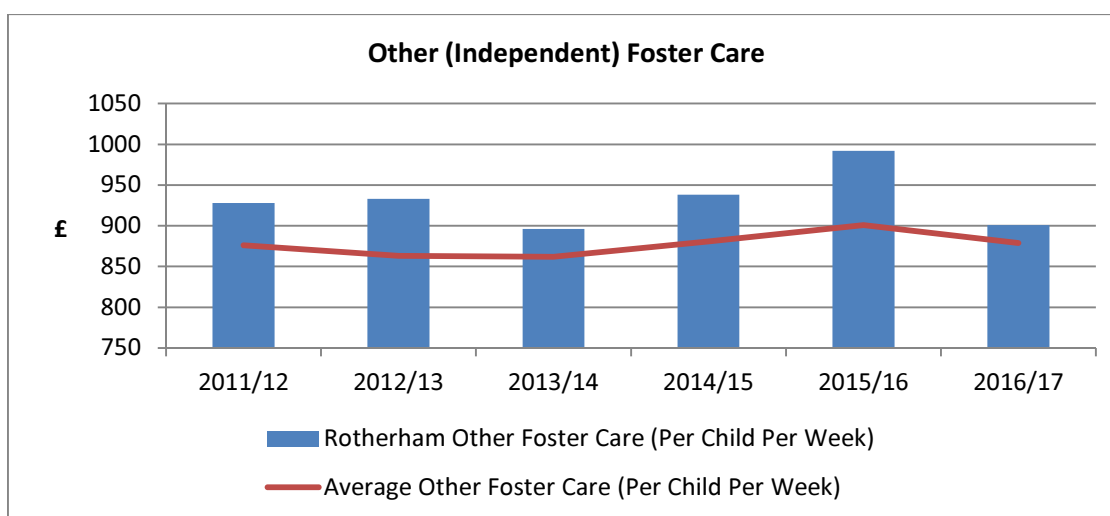
Independent Fostering Agencies

- 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 9 refers):

Table 15 – Numbers of IFA Placements by type

Placement Type	2013/14		2014/15		2015/16	
	Admission	Discharge	Admission	Discharge	Admission	Discharge
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 current gross unit cost for independent foster care provision is £901 per child per week. This varies based on the needs of the child between £600 per week for a standard placement for a child under 5 to £1500 per week for a parent and child placement. The total annual budget for 2016/17 is £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 December 2016, 33.5% of Rotherham children (59 of 176) 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 a result of the fact 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 December 2016 the leaving care service was being accessed by 223 young people. During September 140 (63%) of young people accessing the service were receiving a range of support in their accommodation from daily to weekly contact. Of these 90 (40%) were under 18 years and 60% over. The gender split for Care Leavers is 49% female and 51% 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 has provision which enables it to manage demand and that preventative provision and early help 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, preferably in a family setting, 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

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.

- 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. 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.
- 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. Repeat removal of a child or children is a particular issue in Rotherham. 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.

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 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 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 Independent Reviewing Officer 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) offer continued therapeutic services support in line with specific needs. The intention is to increase the number of SGO's 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 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 36% as of December 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 continue to provide the Council with an important 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 contribute to reducing the number of placement disruptions. This stability 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 bring 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 and interventions proposed, that when implemented will mean we are better placed to meet our Sufficiency Challenge and deliver a financially sustainable Children's Services. The outcome of the strategy will be to safely and appropriately reduce the number of young people requiring care by the local authority.
- 7.2 Our intention is to develop a range of preventative and support services/interventions, some of which have required investment to facilitate the reduction in numbers and deliver the necessary cost reductions and improved outcomes.
- Supporting children and young people on the 'edge of care' to stay at home
 - Returning children to their birth/extended families when safe to do so
 - Supporting permanency through Adoption and special guardianship
 - Placement commissioning and development
 - Support around the placement to meet the individual needs of the child/young person and carer (including SEMH needs)
- 7.3 By 2021 we expect that the interventions 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). 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.
- 7.4 We will track the effectiveness of the interventions and investments in contributing to safely and appropriately reducing the number of children and young people requiring care by 61 placements and the cost reductions. We will establish a number of key measures which will help us to understand whether we are making a difference amongst which will be:
- The Number and rate of LAC
 - Comparison with statistical neighbours and England average (rate per 10,000)
 - Reduction in overall placements costs
 - Reduction of placement disruption to at or below national average.
 - Increase in placement stability and decrease placement disruption
 - Increased permanency – adoption and special guardianship
 - A changed composition of placements 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.
- 7.5 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.
- 7.6 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.

7.7 Regular reports and monitoring of progress will be made to 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

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)

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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

Sharon Kemp, Chief Executive

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.

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

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.

Ian Thomas, Strategic Director Children’s Services

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.

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?

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.

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 to improving outcomes for LAC. This is being addressed by the establishment and regular 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.

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.

Author: Ian Walker

Title: Head of Service - Looked After Children



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 raise 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 for 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 March 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	-	-
February	24	3	-	9	-
March	31	2	-	-	-
April	23	5	1	1	
May	21	4	3	-	
June	23	3	6	-	

July	25	1	7	2	
Total	192	21	25	12	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 for stage 1 reflects that since May 2017 there has been a reduction in the number of Escalations in relation to changes of SW impacting on social work visits to progressing care plans. There has been less concerns raised around supervision and visits with this reflecting a more stable management, and social work force across LAT teams 1 to 5 especially.

*Please note the majority of the stage 1 escalations are generated when an IRO rates their Quality and Compliance checklist as **Inadequate**. There are often various elements which have been identified individually reflecting a higher number of themes that the escalation figures alone indicate*

The key issues reflected in stage 2, 3 and 4 for April to July are:

- Quality and clarity of care plan (3)
- Need for updated assessment ()
- Concern around delay in active care proceedings and legal care plan (4)
- Concern around legal delay in discharging care order (2)
- Concerns around the regulation of placement with parents and management of risk related to this (3)
- Lack of appropriate education provision (1)
- Lack of up to date health assessment
- Concern around decision-making; safeguarding issues and risk being managed in placement. (8)
- Concerns re transition to adults services (1)
- Issues around contact that need to be addressed (1)
- Delay in permanence planning in respect of SGO's (1)
- Delay in permanence planning in respect of Adoption (1)
- Placement suitability (5)
- Impact of changes of social worker in relation to addressing the plan (3)
- Provision of service – access to records (1)
- Voice of Young person and delay re SGO (1)

At the last report we had raised several escalations in relation to section 20 status that had been apparent for too long. All have been addressed expect one who wet

hoe and has returned into care, showing grip and tenacious management and joint working around this issue, to ensure timely decision are made around PR and permanence planning for this group of young people.

There has also been a decline since May in cases where IRO's raised concerns around the cluster of issues related to multiple changes in social worker; issues in school, visits not recorded and PEP's and Health Assessments outstanding. There has also been a much more significant grip around supervision, with this becoming less of a theme of the stage 1 escalations in after May 2017.

We also continue to have a small amount of unregulated placements being raised by the IRO's, where there has been a delay in progressing the Placement with parent paperwork that would support consideration of this placement as regulated. This wider piece of work has been addressed by the head of service for CIC since March 2017. This does however highlight an issue around placement sufficiency as at times the decision around a young person returning home is not always planned and can be as a result of a placement breakdown and then being able to then find the right placement. Especially for young people who often have challenging needs and who want to be at home, despite the risks posed to them.

A strong theme has been the suitability of placements and the risks posed when the placements breakdown or are found not to 'good enough'. The real spike in IRO escalations reflect we have had an increasingly older cohort of young people becoming looked after 14 + and this have at times been unstable and unsettled while we work to support the young person and keep them safe.

Another key theme that remains high is the level of concern around the quality of care plan especially in some cases where social workers have changed mid proceedings and this has created a direct impact for the young person and their plan,

On a positive level the IRO's are seeing are not raising issues re Lifestory or therapeutic provision, and the reduction in escalations around statutory visits and Supervision reflects an increasingly positive management grip.

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