CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

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

Date: Tuesday, 16th October, 2018

Time: 5.00 p.m.

A G E N D A

1.   To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with the Local Government Act, 1972

2.   To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency

3.   Apologies for absence

4.   Declarations of Interest

5.   Minutes of the previous meeting held on 28th August, 2018 (Pages 1 - 9)

6.   Looked After Children Council Update (Pages 10 - 13)

7.   Strategic Director Finance and Customer Services - Looked After Children's Promises

8.   Review of Arrangements and Approach to Children Maintaining Relationships with their Families (Pages 14 - 61)

9.   Rotherham Fostering Service Performance Report 2017/18 (Pages 62 - 120)

10.   Rotherham Adoption Service Annual Report 2017-18 (Pages 121 - 165)

11.   Corporate Parenting Monthly Performance Report - Aug 2018 (Pages 166 - 186)

12.   Virtual School Head Teacher Report 2018 (Pages 187 - 236)

13.   Champions' Feedback

14.   Date and time of the next meetings: -
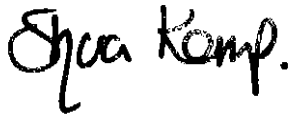
      Tuesday,   18th December, 2018

                    12th February, 2019

                    9th April

      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), V. Cusworth (Chair of the Improving Lives Select Commission), P. Jarvis (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
28th August, 2018

Present:- Councillor Watson (in the Chair) and Councillor M. Elliott.

Also present were Tracy Arnold, Catherine Hall, Karen Holgate, Peter McNamara, Mel Meggs and Rebecca Wall.

AnneMarie Lubanski was in attendance for Minute No. 17 (Looked After Promises).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cusworth, Elliot and Jarvis, Lisa DuValle, Ian Walker and the LAC Council.

14.   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made at the meeting.

15.   MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 9TH JULY, 2018

Arising from Minute No. 10 (Corporate Parenting Performance Report May, 2018), it was clarified that the Rotherham CCG had requested that the 2 providers, the Acute Trust and Mental Health Trust, to look at favourably at applications from Looked After Children for apprenticeships. It was not possible for the CCG to follow the same practice as their application process was carried out by The Source.

Resolved:- (1) That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9th July, 2018, be approved as a correct record of proceedings subject to the above clarification.

Arising from Minute No. 4 (EID Party and Foster Care Matching for Muslim LAC), whilst no progress had been made with regard to recruiting Muslim foster carers, progress had been made in a number of Muslim families agreeing to host Muslim LAC for the 2 EID festivals.

It was suggested that information be supplied to various organisations, particularly Health, whose employees would practise a range of religions.

(2) That the Children and Young People's Service's Marketing Officer contact Rotherham CCG with regard to a publicity campaign highlighting the different religious festivals and the importance of LAC attending those of their faith.

16.   LAC COUNCIL AND LIL LAC CLUB ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY 2017/2018

The Panel noted the LAC Council annual report summary for 2017/18 which highlighted some of the LACC's work during the period including:-

- LAC shaping services
- LAC community engagement
- Internal residential destination Poland April 2017
- Award winners
- Corporate Parenting Panel
- Looked After Children's Club (aka 'Lil' LACC)

Resolved:- That the Panel's appreciation be conveyed to the LACC for their very productive year.

17.   LOOKED AFTER PROMISES - ADULT CARE, HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH

AnneMarie Lubanski, Strategic Director, Adult Care, Housing and Public Health, gave the following verbal report on the areas of her responsibility and how they impacted in terms of the LAC Promises:-

Transitions
- Everyone wanted to get the pathways right
- The Interim Assistant Director was working with Children's Services to produce an agreed data set that everyone worked to particularly aiming at the 14 year olds to attempt to ascertain their plans
- An All Age Autism Strategy was being produced

Commissioning
- An area for improvement was the 16-25 year old commissioning where LAC used a particular service. There was a commitment for Adults and Children's to revisit the commissioning and hopefully involve the young people in it

Housing
- This also included the issue of housing which was a specific commissioning element around where people lived and getting it right. The learning for the Service was about making sure the tendering process was solid about the consequences of young people living together in groups
- From a Housing Service point of view, the housing element was fundamental at the crossover with Children's Services and meetings had taken place to ensure learning
- The Homeless Team was very sensitive to LAC and the processes in place were working well and sensitively to individuals
- Trying to put housing at the heart of some of the plans rather than an add-on
- Getting the narrative where people thought of housing first rather than health and social care

Public Health and Sexual Health
- There had been concerns around the closure of the clinic held on a Sunday but there had been a lack of footfall; the 25 year olds were

attending other appropriate places to seek sexual health advice

Adult Care Offer for LAC
− This was a more difficult issue as an individual tended not to come into mainstream services at the same time as they did care
− A lot of work had taken place and as the Services grew over the next 12 months there would be a better understanding
− There was much more collective communication between the Services than there was previously

Vulnerable Persons Team (VPT)
− The relationship between the VPT and Children's Services was much better and stronger than it had been a year ago
− Clarification was required as to the role of VPT Team rather than it being a "catch all"
− The Doncaster model included complex/counselling team because it appeared that the key factor when things started to go wrong was if the housing was not right for that individual

AnneMarie was thanked for her attendance.

18. **CORPORATE PARENTING PERFORMANCE REPORT - JUNE 2018**

Consideration was given to the report presented by Rebecca Wall, Independent Reviewing Officer, on behalf of Deborah Johnson, Performance Assurance Manager, which provided a summary of performance for key performance indicators across Looked After Children Services for June, 2018. This was read in conjunction with the accompanying performance data report at Appendix A detailing trend data, graphical analysis and benchmarking data against national and statistical neighbour averages where possible.

A Service overview and context was provided which indicated a continual increase in the Looked After Children profile. Between March 2017 and March 2018 the number of LAC had increased by 29% (488 to 628). As at the end of June this had increased further to 648.

This increase in LAC numbers and the consequential shortage in available placements, had had an increase in the number of young people placed outside of the local area which in turn had had a negative impact on Social Work capacity. However, despite the additional capacity pressures, in general performance remained sustained across a number of areas.

Rotherham continued to have an increasing Looked After Children profile. The 648 children at the end of June equated to a rate of 114.5 per 10,000 population; this was significantly high when compared to the statistical neighbour average of 81.3.

Overall Rotherham's LAC age profile followed a similar distribution to that

of the latest national comparator. The most notable differences being the higher rate of children aged 5-9 years (23% compared to 19%) and a lower proportion aged over 16 (18% compared to 24%).

The percentage distribution by legal status remained consistent with 53% of children subject to full Care Orders, 31% on an Interim Care Order, 10% on Placement Orders with Care Order and 6% were under Section 20.

After a period of consistency, compliance on plans at the end of June had increase to 90.1%. This area still remained under close management scrutiny in performance meetings and had increased further to 91%.

In recent months there had been a decline in the timeliness of LAC Statutory Reviews (96.1% March 2018 to 80.3% May 2018)). The timeliness had significantly improved by more than 11% in June 2018. This could be attributed to a number of Independent Reviewing Officers returning from sick leave. Performance in respect of Statutory Visits had declined slightly with long term sick leave continuing to be an issue. Due to this and the continuing high demand, Workers had been directed to prioritise visits to meet the national minimum standard over the local standard.

Despite the overall increase in numbers, the proportion of children placed in a family based setting remained stable at 81.1%. The increase towards the end of 2017/18 in the number and proportion of children experiencing multiple placement moves had continued into the new financial year (14% - 89 children – May 2018) but had seen a decrease in June 2018 to 12.9% (83 children had 3 or more placements in 12 months. June 2018 had seen an improvement in the proportion of long term LAC who had lived in the same placement (63.3% - 95 out of 150 children). This measure had been impacted by the increasing number of long term LAC and the directorate's desire to bring children closer to home and into family placements.

The first analysis of the Intensive Intervention Programme (IIP) had been completed. This evidenced that whilst 14 of the LAC had 2 or more placement moves prior to them accessing the IIP, this had reduced to 4 since their IIP intervention. Similarly, the numbers in the group who were going missing from care had reduced from 7 to 3.

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/highlighted:-

−   For future reports in Table 1 (age description of LAC at the end of the month), there should be inclusion of the number of properties in Rotherham and, as well as knowing what age the LAC were nowand what age they were when they had come into care

−   The target for the number of LAC with 3 or more placements was a national target

- A review was planned for September to look across agencies to ascertain what was working and not with regard to Initial Health Assessments

- It was a data inputting issue rather than an actual decrease in the number of dental assessments

- The need to review performance given the new statutory duty of the Learning Care Service to offer support to care leavers up to the age of 25. The Authority had been given extra funding for the additional responsibilities for the 21-25 age set and it was extremely important to account for how much care leavers required support between those ages and what type of support was provided

- The proportion of care leavers in suitable accommodation remained strong but it was queried whether this included those in custody

- A review would be carried out of the resignations and de-registrations of foster carers

Resolved:- (1) That the contents of the report and accompanying dataset (Appendix A) be received and noted.

(2) That future reports include the number of properties in Rotherham and, as well as knowing what age the LAC were now and what age they were when they had come into care.

(3) That clarification be sought for the next meeting on the proportion of care leavers in suitable accommodation and the percentage of those in secure accommodation.

(4) That Anne Marie Banks, Service Manager, Adoption and Fostering, be invited to the next meeting and report on the age and profile of foster carers who had resigned/deregistered.

(5) That Sharon Sandell, Service Manager, be invited to the next meeting and present the Contact Review.

19.   ROTHERHAM SIF IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Rebecca Wall, Independent Reviewing Officer, presented correspondence received from Ofsted in relation to their post inspection action plan and drew attention in particular to how the Panel would address action 6:-

"The role of the Corporate Parenting Panel in monitoring and challenging schools to reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions of children looked after, as well as reducing the number of these children who are persistent absentees from education".

The LAC Service would be subject to a Peer Review in October; when completed it was suggested that the Panel may wish to consider each of the schools and ascertain if there was evidence to provide assurance that work was taking place.

Peter McNamara, Interim Head, Virtual School, reported that attendance and exclusion reporting was a standing item at the Virtual School Governing Body. A report could be submitted at the end of each term to the Panel.

Resolved:- That the Virtual School submit a report at the end of each term showing an analysis of persistent absenteeism and exclusions as the Virtual Schools' actions and strategy.

20.   **INTENSIVE INTERVENTION PROGRAMME - PILOT PHASE**

Rebecca Wall, Independent Reviewing Officer, presented a report on the outcome of the pilot phase of the Intensive Intervention Programme (IIP).

The impact of the Programme on outcomes for some of the most challenging and high need looked after young people was beginning to be clearly evidenced. In addition, it was reasonable to assume that increased placement stability would have a positive impact on the demand for out of authority placements and, therefore, contribute to reduced budget pressures.

The pilot phase of 5 cases had finished in March 2018 with some further cases which started later due to complete in October, 2018. Evaluation of the successes and limitations of the Service were being reviewed and changes to the protection being agreed to further the effectiveness of the work moving forward.

However, despite the positive impacts, there was a risk to the sustainability of the Programme given that funding was only agreed for the IPP within the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 3 years and was due to end on 31st March, 2020.

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

−   The Virtual School would be running the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant again in January 2019 which now had 30+ schools engaged with the initiative
−   The majority of the costs associated with the Programme was staffing
−   Work was taking place as to how the Service could be structured to embed the ethos of the Programme into the normal practice of the Social Work pathway

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

(2) That a further report be submitted in 3 months on the next stages of the Programme.

21.   **CHAMPIONS' FEEDBACK**

Housing/Educational Attainment and Access to Higher Education
The Chair stated that he would arrange for any Panel member interested in visiting the accommodation provided by Future 19 in September.

Employment with Training Opportunities within Council Departments and with Partner Agencies
(a) Councillor M. Elliott reported that he had met with the HR Director of Liberty Steel on 4th July. It had been a positive meeting where there had been the suggestion that they may be able to offer some work experience for a limited number of LAC in their training centre. However, a few weeks later Councillor Elliott had been notified that the training centre was full committed for the year and therefore not able to offer work experience but had offered work visits for LAC, maximum 20 at a time.

(b)   Councillor Elliott was to meet with Meers Domiciliary on 4th September.

22.   **EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES - LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE 2018**

Peter McNamara, Interim Head, Virtual School, presented the 2017 report.

The purpose of the Rotherham Virtual School for Looked After Children was to raise educational achievement, promote emotional wellbeing and improve the life chances of children and young people in care and care leavers.

The report highlighted:-

−   Small but welcome improvements in attendance during 2017/18
−   Good or better attendance had increased by 5%
−   Persistent absence had increased by 1.4% based on the DfE figure for 2017
−   Comparing and contrasting persistent absentees with those with 100% attendance the key correlations were in relation to the type and number of care placements, special educational needs and whether or not the young person was in a mainstream or non-mainstream school
−   Fixed Term Exclusions
    •   had fallen 15% from 15% to 12.8% (11 from Rotherham schools – 5 primary and 6 secondary)
    •   50% had 3 or more exclusion but fewer exclusions at KS4
    •   Significantly more were excluded from out-of-authority schools
    •   Pupils from black or other minority groups made up 25% of

> excluded pupils
> - By days, BME pupils received over a third of total exclusions
> - Significantly fewer with multiple placement moves than the previous year
> - Placement stability was a much stronger predictor of exclusion than length of time in care
> - Unacceptable, threatening or otherwise disruptive behaviour accounted for the overwhelming majority of days lost to exclusions

− Best outcomes in Year 1 Phonics for 3 years
− Some improvements at Key Stage 1 reading, writing and maths compared with 2017
− Best results over the last 3 years in Key Stage 2 reading, writing and maths with 42% achieving all 3
− GCSE Results – Full cohort
  - 4/43 achieve 5+ at Grade 4+
  - 4/43 achieved 4+ including English and Maths at Grade 4+
  - 6/43 achieved 4+ GCSE at Grade 4+
− GCSE Results – Mainstream Schools
  - 5/19 achieved 5+ GCSE at Grade 4+
  - 8/19 achieved 4+ GCSE at Grade 4+

Peter advised that there were 10 Year 11 LAC who, based on prior attainment only (at KS2), would have been expected to make far greater progress than they actually had. The quantitative information with regard to the cohort was available i.e. type of school, placement type, placement moves, SEN status etc. which helped to explained the lack of progress. However, following discussion, the Panel felt that it would be beneficial to look at the story of each of the 10 in an attempt to help answer:-

"what could we have done differently at different points in their Looked After lives to have made far greater progress".

It was pointed out that it was not to point blame but to assist with learning for all agencies.

The newly appointed Virtual School Head Teacher, with the assistance of secondary Virtual School Advisers, was asked to gather the following relevant information for brief case studies which included:-

− Age and school year on entry to care
− Reasons for admission to care
− Number of schools attendance and reasons for changes – were the changes linked to placement moves
− Number and type of placements and reasons for changes – were the changes linked to school moves
− Emotional and mental health
− Did the Looked After Child have ready access to the relevant specialist services

    –   How many Social workers
    –   Personal knowledge gained through the PEP process
    –   The main statement of category on their EHCP

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

(2) That the case studies be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel.

23.   PETER MCNAMARA

The Chairman reported that this would be the last meeting that Peter would attend.

On behalf of the Panel he thanked Peter for all his work and contributions to the Panel meetings.

24.   DATE AND TIME OF THE FUTURE MEETINGS

Resolved:- That further meetings of the Corporate Parenting Panel be held as follows all commencing at 5.00 p.m.:-

Tuesday,   16th October, 2018

                18th December

                12th February, 2019

                9th April

Rotherham Looked After Children's Council &
Lil' LAC CLUB –
Update Report for October 2018 - **Corporate Parenting Panel**

Summary

The LAC Council and Lil' LAC Club have been busy having fun, socialising and working together achieving fabulous results by continuing to help shape Rotherham Services and engage in Rotherham Show. The LAC Council are very proud to have collected their Diana Award in recognition for their 'Outstanding Contribution to Society', have continued to help shape services by actively participating in the CCG LAC Health Consultation young people have also engaged in an exciting full summer activity programme including 'EQUALITIES' debates, cake making, Visit to town Hall, and a day trip to Skeggy Vegas.

The numerous experiences and opportunities offered to young people at the LAC Council and Lil' LACC are specifically designed to increase social capital, self-awareness and self-esteem, to foster resilience and support better outcomes for our vulnerable young people. Here are some of the things that we have been doing to achieve these outcomes that we would like to share with you;

Diana Award Winners – LAC Council Shaping Services

In September, members of our Looked After Children's Council (LACC) attended a star studded ceremony in Leeds to collect a prestigious Diana Award for their outstanding contribution to society.

The LACC, was publically honoured for the work they have done to campaign for rights of children in care, in particular the work they did earlier this year to ensure bin liners were not used as suitcases when children moved between foster care placements. The group implemented the 'Bin Liners are NOT Suitcases' campaign earlier this year to lobby nationally to ensure that all Council's adhere to national guidance to stop the use of bin liners when moving between placements with huge success.

The Diana Award charity was set up in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales, and is the most illustrious accolade a young person aged 9-25 years can receive for their social action or humanitarian work and the group should be extremely proud of their achievements. Well done to all the children and young people - they are truly inspirational and this reward recognises the difference they have already made in ensuring all our children have the best start in life both now and in the future.   **Sharon Kemp, Chief Executive RMBC**

NHS Health Consultation

The LAC Council have been commissioned by CCG to engage in the LAC Health Assessment Consultation, this is part of an ongoing commitment by the LAC Council to help shape LAC health services.   The CCG based the consultation around a fun game show theme, Ian Walker was the Game Show Host asking the questions and young people were split into two teams with their individual buzzers to vote on their response. It was a fun filled session and young people enjoyed themselves. The voices of the LAC Council are included within a CCG report that are now awaiting proposals from the TRFT.

LAC Summer Activity Programme

EQUALITEAS

The LAC COUNCIL engaged in the national 'Big Debate' activity from UK Parliament where young people participated in discussing equalities and sharing their ideas around historical and modern ways of thinking about the differences between men and women, people with disabilities, LGBTQ community etc and how these inequalities were/are expressed in society, through democracy, jobs, and pay. The session wasn't all serious debate and awareness raising as young people also had a fun time together baking a selection of buns, including biscuits and chocolate brownies, cornflake cake and rice-crispie buns. CIDON construction Steve Simpson & Jane Galloway came to group to join in the fun and so did Ailsa Barr (HOS, localities Social work) who talked about her new role and introduce herself to our young people.

Town Hall Visit

The LAC Council were invited for tea and cakes at the Town Hall with the Mayor, RMBC CEX Sharon Kemp and Cllr Gordan Watson. The special invite and tour of the Town Hall had been arranged to thank the LAC Council for their dedication and commitment to help shape Services in Rotherham that has led to the group winning the Diana Award. The Voice & Influence and co-production work undertaken by the LACC volunteers has ensured that the voices of Looked After and Leaving Care young people are heard to inform practice and improve services for the future.

LAC Skeggy Vegas Trip

The LAC Council have secured some funding from the Community award and CIDON Construction to pay for Looked After Children's Activities. The funding has been set aside for three trips, the first trip was to 'Skeggy Vegas' where siblings living with different foster carers were invited to spend the day together. 18 young people spent the morning in Fantasy Island and the afternoon playing on the beach and paddling in the sea, with lashings of chips and pop for lunch. The young people had a fabulous time together and the trip was a great success. For those old enough to remember the 'Club Trips' of the 70's this was very reminiscent of those days, organised chaos and lots of fun!

Community Engagement

Rotherham Show 2018

14 Members of the LAC Council volunteered to run the Voice & Influence stand for the LAC Council over the Rotherham Show weekend. The group enjoyed promoting the LAC participation groups to other children and engaged in numerous craft activities, showing children how to make bracelets, paint selfie portraits, make 'chatterbox' games and festival flowers. One young person Angelina created a selfie frame and the group chose the title *'what do you like about yourself?'* young people and adults were encouraged to participate and say something good about themselves. There was lots of fun as LACC members also painted dozens of faces with mermaid paints.

Lil LAC Club -Activities

Our Lil LAC Club (Lil LACC) have moved to Dalton Youth Club for their participation sessions on Thursdays. The LIL LAC Club are our youngest participation group aged 6 to 11 years. The children have started meeting up again every two weeks following the summer break. We are actively recruiting to the LIL LAC Club to give as many children the opportunity to have fun, meet and make new friends and play games together in a safe welcoming environment. The children have been engaging in creative games together and have started to play at writing and delivering presentations using the '*Worlds Worst Pet*' game.

Games   **Creative Fun!**

LAC Council Guests - Young people from the LAC Council would like to thank all of our guests, friends, volunteers and supporters who have visited the LAC Council. These include:-

Ian Walker – Head of Service Children in Care

Catherine Hall – Head of Safeguarding CCG

Karen Holgate – Named Nurse - Looked After Children & Care Leavers.

Paul Theaker –Commissioning Manager, NHS Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group

Lisa Gash – Safeguarding & Quality Assurance Officer NHS

Cllr Gordan Watson - Deputy Leader of the Council

Cllr Alan Buckley – Mayor

Sandra Buckley - Mayoress

Jane Galloway -Procurement Manager CIDON Construction

Steve Simpson – Director CIDON Construction

Sharon Kemp – Chief Executive RMBC

LAC Voice, Influence & Participation Volunteers

Thank You All ☺

Contact Name: **Lisa Du-Valle**
LAC Voice, Influence & Participation Lead
Children in Care
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Email: lisa.duvalle@rotherham.gov.uk

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Agenda Item 8

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Public/Private Report
Council/or Other Formal Meeting

Summary Sheet

Council Report

Title Review of arrangements and approach to children maintaining relationships with their families

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

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report – Mel Meggs

Report Author(s) Sharon Sandell – Service Manager Leaving Care and Contact Service

Ward(s) Affected All

Recommendations:

To approve direction of travel and policy for children seeing their families

To approve new job profile and initiation of consultation to move staff across.

To approve further scoping works to determine costs to refurbish Grafton House and the Cranworth Centre

To agree return of contact houses to RMBC General Needs subject to sourcing alternative space via Children's Centre reorganisation/re-designation and while refurbishment works are being undertaken at Cranworth/Grafton.

That RMBC no longer uses the word contact to describe the arrangements for children and young people seeing their families

That RMBC changes the name of the Cranworth Centre to the 'Family Activity Base'

That RMBC changes the name of the team to 'Family Activity Base workers.'

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 – Policy

Appendix 2 – Job Profile

Appendix 3 – Finance Policy

Background Papers None

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

Council Approval Required Yes

Exempt from the Press and Public Yes

1. Background

1.1 The team responsible for supervising the time children see their families has been known as the contact team. The team until July 2017 was dispersed into social work teams. From July 2017 the team was provided with their own centre – the Cranworth Centre.

1.2 The Cranworth Centre is based in Eastwood and was formerly the home for the Family Assessment Team.

1.3 Some residual works have been completed on the centre but a number of issues remain to make it a warm, welcoming and child friendly environment for families to spend time together.

1.4 Alongside the more formal establishment of the team the authority has seen a significant rise in the numbers of looked after children. It has also seen the team become too small to cover all the sessions required.

1.5 OFSTED completed their inspection in 2017 and social workers reported their concerns as to the numbers of sessions they were supervising as a result of these pressures.

1.6 Gathering voices as to the standard of accommodation offered to families seeing their children were becoming louder. There were concerns that while the Cranworth Centre provided space it did not necessarily provide the optimum conditions which allowed children to see their families in a warm, safe and child friendly environment.

1.7 There were also concerns that the levels of communication between social workers and contact service not being coherent or clear enough which, in some cases, meant children were not as supported as they could be as messages were missed or miscommunicated.

1.8 Of significant concern was the extent to which the team transport children to and from sessions. Analysis showed that in at least 80% of cases contact workers were collecting children from school or placement. This equates to one worker operating as a taxi driver for 8 days each month.

1.9 A review of how RMBC CYPS provides time and space to families was requested by Mel Meggs in February 2018.

1.10   The group formed to review arrangements consisted of Service Managers from across CYPS, Legal Services, PLO Manager, LAC Council Participation Worker, Principal Social Worker and the Manager of the Contact Team. This group initially met fortnightly but from May has met monthly.

1.11   This group believed the scope of the review should cover the whole process from the point at which decisions are being formulated and considered to remove children through to how services record and use the time children spend with their families to build memories and support parents/adults in their parenting.

1.12   There has been a sub group to explore buildings and environments which includes representation from CYPS Building Management, RMBC Buildings and Maintenance as well as customer care. This group has meet 4 times.

1.13   A further sub group has been established by the Service Manager of the Fostering Service to explore how foster carers can be further encouraged to take responsibility for bringing children to and from the time spent seeing their families. This group has met once.

1.14   The aim of the approach has been to provide children and young people the opportunity to maintain relationships with their families in as safe a way as possible and which promotes the sense of belonging and identity for children to their birth family.

1.15   A significant element of this was to rename the centre and the team.

2   Renaming Contact

2.1   The LAC Council has met and have requested the Contact Service have a name change. LAC Council have requested the Contact Service now be called The Family Activity Base Team (FAB Team) and the Contact Centre be known as Family Activity Base (FAB). The young people liked the idea of being able to say to their friends that they were 'going to FAB'.

2.2   The idea was taken to families who use the Cranworth Centre (where the majority of contacts take place) to ascertain their views. The families overwhelmingly accepted the new title.

3.   Policy for Children and young people seeing their families.

3.1   Young people leaving care often say they are lonely. They have lost friends and family during their time as a looked after child and when they move on to independence and adulthood they feel lonely.

3.2   There is also evidence to suggest that young people leaving the care of the LA struggle to know who they are, or what has led them into care and to leave care. Some ask to see their records but in many cases this does not answer questions about who they were as children or the detail of how they interacted with their families as children. One young man reported that he has no sense of what he was like as a little boy from reading his records.

3.3   One of the key priorities for this review was to try and address part of this by creating opportunities to offer a rationale and a story for the child as they move through care and into adulthood by placing arrangements for children and families seeing their families in a more prominent position at the heart of decision making.

3.4   Part of this was developing a comprehensive document which underpins RMBC CYPS approach to how decisions are made for children to maintain a relationship with their families and how these decisions are recorded and activities noted in ways which help both future care planning decisions but also for young people to read about their relationships with their families in a more meaningful way.

The document is attached in Appendix 1

3.5   The policy starts at the point at which decisions are made about children coming into the care of the Local Authority at Legal Gateway Planning Meetings. Arrangements for children maintaining relationships with those people who are important to them are key to their present and future sense of who they are, as such the rationale from their corporate parent has to be clear and rooted in a comprehensive understanding of the worries as well as research and understanding of the importance of relationships and identity for children and they age and grow within the looked after system.

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3.6   The policy expects this process to be scrutinised during PLO Panel where workers must evidence a clear rationale and approach to thinking about how relationships are maintained and to what level. Too often there is a lack of consideration for the detail with a default to 3 times a week for 90 mins. The new policy seeks to address this position.

3.7   The policy also expects closer working relationships between the FAB Team, the family and Social Workers. This will be by way of a set up meeting to establish expectations which all parties to the arrangement are aware of and agree. The arrangements will be reviewed regularly – frequency of which will be agreed at the first meeting. This enables workers to keep track of arrangements and to make sure they are a positive experience for child and their family.

3.8   Family will also have a leaflet to keep which they will be provided with at the beginning of their relationship with the service. As well as having contact numbers it will be a reminder of what to expect from the service and what the service expects from families using the service.

3.9   The policy also looks at the role and responsibilities of the FAB worker. Through discussions with the team and review members there was a recognition that the current job profile was not fit for purpose and did not reflect current role or future role to ensure compliance to proposed policy.

The new job profile is attached in appendix 2. It has been subject to grading and continues to attract a Band E salary.

3.10 The new profile acknowledges that the team will offer input to support the development of life story work, helping families build memories together through the use of photos and pictures. They will also be able to offer parenting advice and offer to model positive parenting behaviours. It also acknowledges the reality that at times the team can be called to court to give evidence as to their observations.

3.11 A significant part of the policy has been about changing the way the service writes and talks about the time children see their families. A significant element is how workers record the sessions. The policy seeks to alter the recording form so it becomes a narrative of the time together as opposed to completing a series of boxes which look for behaviours and issues.

3.12 As part of the policy LAC Council have been consulted about arrangements for seeing their families. In response to their views the policy now supports the possibility for children and young people to read what has been written. It also offers the opportunity for children and young people to say how they feel about the time spent with their families.

3.13 This revised recording arrangement has been trialled within the service and examples have been shared with the review group. The examples offer a greater sense of the time spent together.

3.14 The new policy is due to be launched at the Whole Service Event in September and will be supported by Robin Sen (University of Sheffield) who will deliver a key note speech which supports the new ethos and philosophy of RMBC CYPS approach for children maintaining relationships with their families.

3.15 The review has also looked at the financial support offered to families to support attendance and active participation when they see their children. The policy was drawn up in response to a concern of inconsistent messages from across the service in relation to the monies being offered to support children seeing their families.

Family Activity Base Finance Policy is appendix 3

4.   Training and Development of Teams.

4.1 The policy seeks to alter the way the wider service views, arranges and supervises the time children see their families. As such a training and briefing schedule will be developed to support. This will start at the official launch of the new service and policy at the Whole Service Event in September 2018.

4.2 The FAB Team has had little formal training over the years, as such the training plan is significant but necessary to make sure the team have a strong baseline knowledge upon which to take the service to its next phase.

4.3   This will include some focussed training on life story/building memories as well as input from the dominant parenting approach delivered via Early Help. This will help workers offer consistent parenting messages to families as part of being a role model during sessions.

4.4   Briefings will be delivered to social workers to support their understanding of expectations as well as guidance to support social workers complete the requests for LGPM and PLO panel with the necessary depth and analysis so that these secure appropriate and safe arrangements for children maintaining relationships with their families.

4.5   Embedding the expectations and commitment will require significant effort and high levels of scrutiny and oversight across the management spectrum to make sure workers are providing the necessary consideration and explanation for the approach they have taken to children maintaining links with the families.

4.6   Quality assurance at each level including explicit challenge around the decision making for determining frequency, length and type of arrangement. Regular review also becomes important and is made explicit in this policy. Partly to make sure the arrangement is sound and partly as a mechanism to offer opportunity to explore whether current care plan is appropriate or whether it requires revisiting.

4.7   A significant element of the policy offers a standardised paragraph for all care plans which makes clear the grounds in which the LA will review arrangements formally through the Courts and when decisions will be made and approved through CYPS decision making protocols.

5.   Buildings and Environments

5.1   The service has access to a range of buildings – The Cranworth Centre in Eastwood as well as rooms in service centres at Swinton and Maltby. The Service also has 3 council houses available to support children see their families. These are at Cedric Avenue at Thurcroft, Doncaster Road in Wath and Halesbury Road in Eastwood.

5.2   The team is based at the Cranworth Centre in the Eastwood area of Rotherham. Formerly the Family Assessment Team base it offers a number of rooms which have been adapted for families to spend time together.

5.3   This centre currently offers 7 rooms.

5.4   Maltby also has 3 rooms specifically for children seeing their families.

5.5   The houses offer a number of rooms to support children seeing their families and can, at times support 2 families at any one time.

5.6   Occasionally the service has to source alternative space through commissioning rooms in other buildings not owned by RMBC incurring additional costs. Service is also aware children are seeing their families in meeting rooms in other service centres.

5.7 Head of Service LAC and Leaving Care with Acting DCS visited Cranworth and the Contact Houses on 19th April. Both were disappointed at the décor, finish and equipment available for children and their families.

5.8 As part of the review some initial scoping work as to how much it would cost to bring the houses up to a specification which would satisfy the ambition to offer safe, warm and welcoming spaces for children to see their families.

5.9 Mears offered some rough estimations alongside RMBC Buildings Services. To address current fixtures, fittings, décor and gardens alongside furniture each house would require between £15 - £20,000 to bring it to the desired specification. This would see new flooring, décor, new bathrooms, gardens becoming safe spaces to play and new furniture.

5.10 In discussion it is believed spending this money in this way would not be cost effective. The proposal is to return these houses back to RMBC Key Choices where they can be rented out to families in need of accommodation. However this cannot happen until additional spaces have been secured elsewhere.

5.11 Alternative properties have been sought. Grafton House has been identified as a possible option. This is currently undergoing survey work to determine how much this would cost to refurbish and make into a space where children can see their families.

5.12 Grafton House is in centre Rotherham and is in walking distance from the bus station.

5.13 Grafton potentially provides up to 6 or 7 rooms which would directly replace the spaces available in the houses. It is proposed that subject to approval the houses would be handed back to general needs and all arrangements would be transferred to Grafton.

5.14 Grafton also offers the opportunity to move the team base. This could then support increasing capacity at the Cranworth Centre to 8 or possibly 9 rooms.

5.15 Combined with Maltby this would offer 17 – 19 sessions per day or 85 – 95 sessions per week.

5.16 At the current time given the high numbers of looked after children additional space may be required but as numbers reduce over the next 18 months, Grafton and Cranworth should provide enough space for families.

5.17 As noted additional works will be required to bring Grafton and Cranworth up to an acceptable standard. Approximate costs to improve Cranworth but without the additional change in room configuration is expected to be in the region of £30000. However with reconfiguration and increasing rooms in the centre this will change. This estimation also includes furniture and equipment.

5.18 The nature of the environment also requires additional time from cleaning and caretaking staff to ensure the environment is warm, welcoming, safe and clean to welcome families. The cost of this based on current charge out rates would be £16207.00 a year. This would represent an additional cost of

£4246.00 a year. It is likely that this additional £4246 would have to come from CYPS budgets.

5.19 Transitional arrangements could see the transfer of arrangements from the houses to one of the children's centres which are the subject of the current Early Help review. It is expected this could become the temporary additional space for the duration of the improvement works at Grafton. This would temporarily delay the arrangements for one of the centres.

5.20 The centres are already configured to support children and their families so little residual work would be required to support the transition. They are not considered a long term option as they tend to be away from main centres and RMBC should be doing everything is can to support ease of access.

5.21 Team Manager and Service Manager to visit the possibilities on 27th July to consider whether this would be a possible option for the service.

6.   Key Issues:

6.1 The team providing supervision are a committed and experienced group of people who want to offer much more to families. Increasingly the team and senior managers are accepting that additional capacity and resource is required to bring the service up to a standard RMBC should be providing for children for whom it is the corporate parent.

6.2 To be able to do this requires significant additional resource at a time where there are unprecedented budget pressures across the LA.

6.3 Moreover the philosophy of the policy may, at the current time be incredibly challenging to implement given the increasing pressures on social work teams to supervise children's time with their families.

6.4 The policy and approach expects greater challenge, it expects workers to slow down and think, not just about the risks should the child stay with their family but also how decisions made at the beginning will impact and remain with the child as they age and move through care.

6.5 Again these are important messages as the culture and approach to children maintaining links does need to shift but the pressures within the system with pressures placed on teams means that the time spent to think about future is missing.

7.   Options considered and recommended proposal

7.1 RMBC could choose to implement part or all of the review recommendations.

7.2 RMBC may choose to implement none of the recommendations choosing to remain with the status quo. However consultation taken up to this point is that the environment, arrangements, understanding of the importance of maintaining links and well as the expectations of all those involved suggests current arrangements are not good enough and change is required.

7.3 RMBC can choose to not pursue the recommendations to improve the buildings or the facilities. To do so would not provide the environment needed to support the philosophy of the policy or the research underpinning what good quality family time looks like for children who are living away from their families.

7.4 RMBC may choose not to implement the policy to alter the approach to children seeing their families. This would mean the status quo was maintained. There are frustrations and difficulties within the current arrangements which do not offer optimum conditions for children seeing their family.

7.5 RMBC could choose not to pursue the ideas relating to carers transporting children to arrangements to see their families. However the policy is aimed at limiting the hand over points to strangers for children and so they build relationships and attachments to those responsible for their care.

7.6 RMBC may choose to not implement the revised job profile for the team and the associated training package given the banding remains the same for the post. However the current job profile does not address the expectations and range of responsibilities attached to the post. Nor does it allow for the names of the posts to change in line with the wishes of the LAC Council.

7.7 It is the recommendation of this report that RMBC implement all of the recommendations contained in this report as well is offer permission to cost out alterations to Cranworth and Grafton.

8. Consultation

8.1 Through the review group consultation has taken place with all service managers including IROs. Legal Services have also been widely consulted in the development of the new policy and have offered advice on the paragraphs relating to care planning.

8.2 Moving forward foster carers are to be consulted as to how RMBC supports carers taking more responsibility for transporting children to see their families where this is safe and appropriate to do so.

9. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

9.1 Policy scheduled to be launched at the Whole Service Event in September with briefings delivered into the autumn and winter.

10. Financial and Procurement Implications

10.1 There will be significant investment required to improve the environment in which RMBC provides spaces for children to see their families.

10.2 Surveys are currently being carried out on Grafton House to gain a figure for structural changes. When these are in DLT can be provided with a full costed paper as to how much full refurbishment for all houses will cost.

10.3 Immediate costs relate to increased hours required from cleaning/caretaking staff to ensure the centre is clean and ready for families to use. Currently the centre while clean, it is not clean enough to allow children to play on the floor, nor does it allow enough time for staff to move furniture to ensure spaces are fully hygienic. This requires an immediate £4246 per annum increase to the Contact Centre budget.

11. Legal Implications

11.1 Legal services have been part of the review group and have been fully involved in discussions as to changes to the arrangements for children seeing their families.

12. Human Resources Implications

12.1 Subject to approval the service would be seeking to consult with the team to change their job profile.

12.2 No discussions have taken place as yet with the team or HR until approvals have been gained.

13. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

13.1 As already noted a whole scale review and change is required to support children maintain links with their families but it also grounds them in the understanding of their futures and relationships as they get older.

13.2 At the current time RMBC does not offer enough scrutiny and focus to these arrangements in ways which allows confidence in the approach taken. The review and its conclusions has used research available from RiP to inform its choices and decision making alongside consultations with the LAC Council. Therefore the approach offered here is informed by research evidence and takes into account the views, wishes and feelings of children in the system as well as acknowledging the views of care leavers as thy move through the system into adulthood.

14 Equalities and Human Rights Implications

14.1 None noted

15. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

15.1 None noted

16.   Risks and Mitigation

16.1 See section 7

Accountable Officer(s)

Service Manager – Sharon Sandell

Head of Service Ian Walker

Approvals Obtained from:-

Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services:- Named officer

Director of Legal Services:- Named officer

Head of Procurement (if appropriate):-

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

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

Supporting Children and Young People maintain relationships with their families

Policy and Practice Guide

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Introduction: Thinking about arrangements for children seeing their families

When children and young people are unable to live with their immediate birth family it is important they are able to have an arrangement in place which allows them to understand their heritage, and their history.

Maintaining relationships with family is one of the most common issues raised with young people as they age and become adults. For care leavers they feel they have lost touch/missed out on relationships and at times do not understand why decisions have been made. Moreover maintaining these links help define and refine their sense of who they are which promotes their self esteem and confidence in their identity. As a consequence it is important to start thinking about children and young people seeing their families as soon as the LA starts to consider intervening through removal as it will shape and guide their experience in our care as they grow.

It is therefore essential that whenever there is a proposed plan for a child to be removed from the care of the person with PR, it is essential the allocated worker gives significant thought about how, as the corporate parent, the LA is going to continue to support the child/young person maintain links with their family.

Maintaining relationships can be managed through a variety of ways, supervised and direct meetings between child and parent(s)/family member, unsupervised time with members of the family, telephone, Facetime or SKYPE conversations or letters/emails. It can even been supported through 3rd party involvement if children want to know a family member is well but is too worried to talk to them or write to them directly.

However for the Local Authority acting as their corporate parent, a child seeing their family offers an opportunity to observe and assess the quality of the time they spend together. It offers the opportunity to help families make the most of their time together. It can also help the Local Authority make really difficult decisions as to future arrangements of how children maintain links and relationships with their families.

In order to make this time/arrangement as purposeful and positive as possible it is important the team around the child with the family plan for this together. The quality of the information and how this is shared are also key.

The purpose of this document is to outline the process and practice for

- Decision making process for children seeing their families as part of Legal Gateway Planning Meetings
- Decision making process for children seeing their families as part of Public Law Outline Panel
- Referral form for Public Law Outline Panel and Family Activity Base
- Making a referral to the Family Activity Base
- Making a plan for children to see their families.
- Reviewing arrangements for children seeing their families.
- Glossary of terms

Legal Gateway Planning Meeting

The first point the worker will be asked to reflect their decision making about arrangements for seeing/maintaining family relationships is at Legal Gateway Planning Meeting.

Legal Gateway Planning Meeting (LGPM) is the mechanism Rotherham uses to provide workers with the permission to start thinking about initiating proceedings, discharging orders, or making applications for a range of options available to the local authority to support children and young people.

As part of the preparation for LGPM workers are expected to think about and consider arrangements for children seeing their families. As part of this workers should be considering:

- What is the purpose of children seeing their families
- Who is it for
- How often children see their families
- Length of time children see their families
- Where children could see their families

Within these consideration it is essential workers also think about the child's routines, their emotional well being, what would be important to them, alongside consideration of whether direct indirect arrangements for children maintaining relationships with their families would be the most advisable option pending further assessment.

Workers need to be reminded that each child is different and the relationships they have with their families are unique to them and as such in any discussion/ consideration; arrangements must be based on what workers know and understand to be the lived reality with their families. It is also worth considering that it may be necessary to start slowly and increase time together over a period of weeks and months as opposed to start with a high level of frequency and then struggle to reduce.

This rationale for any decision relating to children seeing their families should have been explored with team manager prior to LGPM and recorded clearly in the supervision record. Any change should also be recorded at each stage where there is a change in circumstances or an alteration to arrangements for children seeing their families.

Service Manager will expect SW to offer rationale for their decision making to support children seeing their families during LGPM and this will be recorded on the LGPM form.

Public Law Outline Panel (PLOP).

Unless emergency action to safeguard children/young people is required, final permission to initiate proceedings is taken through Public Law Outline Panel (PLOP).

At this session workers have 30 minute slots to advocate for their decision to initiate proceedings and to gain approval from panel of their care plan for the child(ren)

The purpose of this session is for the worker to be able to rationalise and test out their reasoning for the care plan. Panel members are expected to test out the worker's assessment, analysis and plan.

As part of this discussion panel will be expected to check out thinking and decisions for children maintaining relationships with their families. Part of this will be about the details of times and frequencies. However it will also be exploring workers understanding of their decision making around how children build or sustain relationships with their families, their rationale for arriving at these decisions, research evidence both in terms of the immediate impact of proceedings on the child's relationships as well as over the medium to long term as part of the LA care plan for the child.

To support the analysis and decision making the aide memoire should be used to support decision making.

This tool can be used for PLOP referral form, it can then be updated and forwarded to the Family Activity Base Team as the referral form for service should it be determined that the child will benefit from spending time with their family.

The PLO Panel report is a legally privileged document and as such care needs to be taken with its distribution.

Manager of the Family Activity Base Service will receive the minutes of the meeting and will then be able to start scheduling in possible meetings/dates to support effective planning.

Once the document has been approved it is uploaded onto LCS and is available in the Legal section of the child's file.

Quality and Assurance

Team managers will be expected to make sure any referral to PLOP Panel is detailed and shows consideration of the importance of maintaining relationships and how this will be supported

Chair of Panel and Panel Members will be expected to challenge the social workers rationale and understanding of the arrangements for children maintain relationships with their families during discussions and that this is suitably recording in the minutes

Service Managers will be expected to make sure there is clear rationale on resulting care plans and will only approve if they are confident and assured the SW has evidenced thought and reasoning for their plans.

ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

Safeguarding, Children and Families

Public Law Outline Proceedings Panel
And/Or Family Activity Base Team Referral
Legal advice may be included - this document is then protected by legal privilege and is confidential

For PLO Panel for consideration of issuing proceedings- complete and return to PanelAdministrator@rotherham.gov.uk, with a current Assessment (no older than 56 days) which includes the chronology and LGPM minutes. A separate chronology may be submitted only if this is needed to supplement the assessment chronology. **A full genogram is required –without this the request will not be considered.**

For PLO Panel for notification of proceedings already issued (retrospective) - complete and return to PanelAdministrator@rotherham.gov.uk

For Family Activity Base referral only (when Care Proceedings already issued) email to Contact.Team@rotherham.gov.uk and a copy to the PLO Panel Administrator PanelAdministrator@rotherham.gov.uk,

Please complete ONE form per household. **All sections must be completed (covering the prompts for content) and be authorised by the Team Manager**

Date of Panel Meeting:	
Or Date of Initial Court Hearing and outcome:	

Social Worker: Name and contact details and mobile no.		Team Manager: Name and contact details and mobile no.	

Team:		Service Manager:	

Child's Name	D.o.B. and age	Gender M/F/U	Address where living	LCS No.	School Attended

Family Details (Children not the subject of the referral and Adults)

Name	D.o.B.	Relationship to Child/Young Person- (if needed specify which child)	Address where living	First Language and Ethnicity	Parental Responsibility
					Y / N
					Y / N
					Y / N
					Y / N
					Y / N
					Y / N
					Y / N
					Y / N
					Y / N

1. Please mark with an * any siblings subject to the same referral.
2. Please ensure details of extended family members are included on the form.
3. **Please highlight above with a % i**f there are any household members who are currently residing in the same household as the child on the referral form

Summary: brief summary of current situation that has led to being considered at this PLO Panel or why Care Proceedings already issued

Include in your comments the outcome of Assessments – bullet point what we are worried about /what's working well / strengths – what needs to happen - and Viability Assessments – detail any connected persons considered and outcome. Family Group Conference – has this been held?

The background is that ………the children have been subject of a Child Protection Plan since July 2017. A period of Pre proceedings PLO meetings have been held between dates…

Include as appropriate what led to the court application and what Orders were made with the date made.

We are worried about - (be specific that the LA worries are evidenced ie Domestic Abuse there have been 10 incidents reported between dates, the abuse is perpetrated by… against….)

What's working well

Viability assessments *(detail any connected persons considered and outcome)*

Children's Views:
What do the children think about their home/family situation? What do they want to be different there? What do they think about this proposed plan /or if already removed being in alternative care? If the proposed plan is for the children to be cared for in a different place who do they want to see from their family and any other 'important to them' relationships?

Parents'/Carers' Views:
What do they think about their current situation? What do they want to be different? What do they think about this proposed plan?

What needs to happen:
If Issuing of Proceedings – what is your recommendation in terms of Order to be sought? If Panel endorses the decision to issue, what is your timescale for completion of the required documents to issue?

All cases - Are there further viabilities to do? Are there any assessments outstanding?
What is the plan for the child/ren?

Contact - Maintaining Links and Relationships

Who has been identified as important for the children to maintain their links with? What are the proposed plans for this to happen? Frequency and duration to be considered. What is your rationale for the proposed plan. Has a Together or Apart assessment been completed for siblings?

If a Plan has been agreed at Court already specify what this is

Early Permanence Placement (Fostering to Adopt): Having considered the guidance, comment on if this child meets the criteria as suitable for an Early Permanence Placement?

Manager's Comments (Please indicate your authorisation of this request and any additional comments)

TM Name :

Panel Discussion

Legal Threshold Discussion – Solicitor's Advice

Is S31 Threshold Criteria met **Yes / No**

If **Yes** advice given:

Other Options discussed if Proceedings under S 31 are not agreed:

Panel outcomes / Decisions

After PLO Panel a copy of this Public Law Outline Proceedings Panel Referral form will include the notes of the meeting and will be filed, by the PLO Panel Administrator, on the child's record in LCS:> Legal pathway > Documents
    NB If the allocated worker has not started a legal episode they will be required to do so immediately

For Family Activity Base referral only (when Care Proceedings already issued) The FAB referral must be added by the social worker to the child's record in LCS documents

Court and Planning for children maintain relationships with their families.

Social Workers are expected to outline their rationale in the care plans presented to court as part of proceedings. The care plan should detail the reasons and rationale for choosing the frequency and expectations for children seeing their families.

The initial and future care plan sets out the LA plan for the child and should be clear in our expectations for families as the application proceeds through court.

A key component when writing the care plan is to ensure the following is included,

> **'Contact will be kept under active review to ensure that it is meeting the needs of the child. Should parents fail to be punctual for contact, fail to attend contact consistently or should there be concerns regarding the quality of the contact, consideration will be given by the Local Authority as to whether the frequency or duration of contact should be reduced.'**

The LA then has the capacity to make changes to the arrangements including reducing the times children see their families if, for example, it is considered that it is not meeting the needs of the child(ren) or if parents are not attending consistently without returning the court for permission, unless the court has specifically ordered this in the particular case.

It is still important that legal advice is sought before changing any arrangement.

Parents can still have the right to request to return to court if there are concerns as is the case with any aspect of care planning.

The LA cannot however suspend any arrangement where children see any member of their family for more than 7 days without the permission of the court and can only suspend any arrangement for up to 7 days if it is necessary in order to safeguard or promote the child's welfare. Again, legal advice should be sought in these circumstances

Legal advice suggests the importance of maintaining open communication with the Guardian so they are informed and included in the rationale for decisions.

Legal advice also suggests the importance of maintaining open communication with the child(ren) Independent Reviewing Officer. This makes sure the IRO has oversight and can ensure the arrangements for children seeing their families are robust, in the best

interests of the child and take into account the immediate and long term needs of the child in terms of care planning and the child(ren) understanding of who they are, their roots and history

IRO's should be looking at the arrangements and benefits of child(ren) seeing their families at each review and making every effort to record the views and wishes of the children as part of this process.

Accessing support through the service:

Making a referral for children to see their families:

Preparation:

Social worker must talk to the family about what the LA does to support children seeing their families when they are unable to stay at home with their parent(s)

As part of this discussion the social worker needs to be clear about what the family members can expect from these arrangements. Social worker will also need to talk about what the expectations of family members will be when they see their children.

Social worker can leave written information for the parent(s)/ family members to read.

In these conversations there are key messages which must to be shared with family members:

Key messages for families:

Team who will supervise the time with children are not social workers

Parent(s) will be introduced to the person/people who will be supervising before the first session with the children

This person/people will be observing and watching the relationship and interactions between child and parent

They will try and be as unobtrusive as possible

They may offer advice and help to make the time with the children as valuable as possible.

Parent(s) are able to have access to what supervisors write through solicitors and they can be made available to the court.

Seeing members of their family is really important for children, so it is essential family members are reminded to make it as positive as possible for the child.

Parents must be made aware that in planning for the time children see their families the LA will do everything it can to avoid upsetting the routine of the child. For example no child will miss school to see their parents or no child will be expected to travel long distances from their placement address when it is less demanding for the parent to travel. This may mean parents may have to wait a bit longer to see their children or they may be expected to travel a bit further to see their children.

The team will do what they can to help make the time with the child as positive as possible

The team will stop any agreed session or not allow it to happen if there is a worry that any adult who arrives to see the child is believed to be under the influence of substances or in some significant level of emotional distress.

Should parent(s) present as angry/aggressive/challenging in their manner to the point of concern for the welfare of the people present will be warned once to adjust their behaviour. If this is not heeded, the parent/adult will be asked to leave and the children will be returned to their placement.

Moving to the next stage:

Once the social worker has prepared the parent/family the social worker can make the initial referral to the team requesting a worker and space for parents and children to see their families.

Social worker to provide a comprehensive PLO Panel/ Referral form forward to the service for consideration

Social Worker will then call the service and request a formal set up meeting. The people who should be invited to this meeting are:

- Representative from the Family Activity Base Team
- Social worker (chair)
- Family
- Foster Carer/Carer for the child

Planning Meeting

Any planning meeting needs to take place within 5 days of the initial order being made. Arrangements for children seeing their family can also be agreed as part of the 72 hour planning meeting for any new placement as long as all relevant parties are present.

The Service will not consider any arrangement until this meeting takes place. If there is no commitment to undertake the meeting the referral will be returned to the worker.

Between the order being made and the planning meeting the social worker will be observing and supervising the time with families.

The purpose of this meeting is to determine

- What arrangements will be in the best interests of the child – this must include who will be taking the child to and from the time with their family, arrangements for bringing food, arrangements for communication, frequency and times etc.
- What would work for the child and their family ie activities for the time together/any additional support around modelling positive parenting etc
- Arrangements for communication between carers and family including the use of the communication book
- What the worries are and what will be expected from everyone to lessen/reduce those worries.
- Agree expectations for everyone participating in the arrangements eg –lateness, telephone calls to confirm attendance, making sure medical/DWP appointments are outside of these arrangements wherever possible.
- Agree arrangements and review schedules if there are any issues/difficulties.

Transporting children

Bringing children to and from the time they spend with their families is important. It can capture their worries and hopes for the session and it can offer observations and discussions as to how the child is feeling.

The person caring for the child on a day to day basis is, in the vast majority of cases, best placed to bring the child to see their family and then take them home again. There may be instances where this may not be appropriate and should be discussed at the placement planning meeting.

Expectations:

For all children under school age carers will be expected to bring and collect children from the venue the child is seeing their family.

For school age children carers should be collecting children from the sessions where they see their families

For secondary school age children (from year 10) and where it is safe and appropriate to do so, young people can be encouraged to use public transport.

Where the child is long term matched carers should be supervising/supporting arrangements for children in their care see members of their family.

There will be occasions where alternative arrangements will be needed to bring children to and from the venues where they see their families and should be discussed at either the placement meeting and/or the set up meeting for arranging the sessions. The issues where alternative arrangements are required could be:

- Where it is essential the address and identifying features of carers and their transport remain confidential
- Where there are large numbers of children from different families in the same placement
- If the young person requests it
- Where it is in the best interests of the child

Managing lateness/non attendance

Parents arriving late/not arriving for time with their children can be difficult to plan for, however in supporting how this is managed the following points can offer clarity of approach for workers.

If parent(s) are more than 15 mins late – the child will be returned to placement and the arrangement cancelled

If parent(s) has called to say en route and it is clear that their arrival is going to mean they are going to be longer than 15 mins late for the time with their child, this is too late and the child will be returned to placement and the arrangement cancelled

If parent(s) frequently call(s) on set days to say they are unable to attend – arrangements to be reviewed within 10 working days of this observation.

If parent fails to attend or calls to say unable to attend for 50% of the times they are due to see their children over 10 working days – arrangement must be reviewed within 10 working days. There are a range of options which must be considered:

- Subject to approval by Assistant Director arrangement can be suspended with a view to returning the issue to court for consideration (within 7 days of the decision to suspend being made)
- Arrangement can be reduced significantly
- Arrangement to continue with additional safeguards in place to support child/young person or parent(s) attend

It is within the gift of the LA to reduce/ alter arrangements if the initial care plan has made this clear. It is important however to ensure that the allocated legal officer to the case is notified if there are any issues with arrangements so that the parents and children's legal representatives can be made aware.

If the review and any subsequent actions are unsuccessful and the child is experiencing significant distress it may be necessary to return to court for permission to cease time spent with family for a temporary period pending further assessment. This cannot be suspended for longer than 7 days without the court determining a formal application made by the LA. Any decision to suspend requires permission of Assistant Director.

Managing child's distress

Should the child and/or carer report or be observed to be in some level of distress prior to, during or after they have seen their family it is essential SW spends time trying to ascertain the reasoning for this and work with carer, and the worker observing the time spent with the family to understand where the distress has come from. If the distress is consistent over 3 arrangements immediate review should be requested.

Outcome of the planning meeting

Agree expectations for behaviours and punctuality for all parties.

Agree the date the service will take over responsibility

Agree arrangements for talking to each other to share information, to share worries, and positive observations including the use of communications books

Agree dates for review of the arrangement. These dates should be at a minimum of 6 weeks after initial order/meeting.

Agree the amount of times a social worker will be observing the arrangement. As an expectation social workers should be completing at least 3 sessions in any 6 week cycle when the family and child are subject to proceedings.

Agree the conditions for coming to the meeting to meet more urgently/frequently

At the end of this first meeting arrangements for the first session will be shared with the family

At first session – the full schedule will be made available to family for the period to the next review

Formal review of arrangements

The formal review of arrangements for children seeing their families' takes place in the child's looked after review. It is in these meetings the Independent Reviewing Officer quality assures and challenges the Local Authority to ensure it is making the best and most appropriate plan for the child's immediate and future care for a child/young person. This includes thinking about what the future for child may look like as they move into adulthood and independence.

The Independent Reviewing Officer must proactively encourage the social worker to revisit arrangements for children and young people seeing their families as part of their role in reviewing the care planning arrangements for looked after children

This includes

'the arrangements for contact in relation to the parents, siblings and other family members or significant others, whether these take into account the child's current wishes and feelings and whether any changes are needed to these arrangements.' (IRO Handbook 2010: 3.38)

The options to consider as part of the review are whether the young person sees their family more or less frequently, or with more or less controls around the time they spend together with their families.

The arrangements for children seeing their families must be revisited at each LAC review in terms of risk and of the child or young person's understanding of their family as this shifts and changes as the child grows and develops. This is particularly important as the relationships the young person has with their family tend to become more important to children as they begin the transition from care to adulthood.

Recording

Recording what happens when a child(ren) sees their family is necessary for a range of reasons.

- It provides a record for the child or their time with their family for them to be able to access when they are ready
- It provides a record for the social worker to use in their assessments and analysis for ongoing care planning
- It can provide a record for the family of their time with their child(ren)
- It can provide a record for court to support decision making

What child(ren) tell us about recording of sessions…

Looked after children report they can be wary of what is being written during these sessions and want to be able to see what has been recorded and to understand why.

In response to these worries the structure for child(ren) seeing their family will be

- Worker or carer brings the child to see their family
- During the Journey they can talk about their worries and hopes for the day
- During the Journey they can talk about what they would like to do
- During the session the worker will sit and observe and make notes
- During the session the child(ren) will spend time with their family

- At the end of the session the child(ren) will say goodbye to their family
- At the end of the session the child will be asked by the person observing the session if they want to see what the worker has written
- At the end of the session the child will be asked by the person observing the session to say how they felt about the session and if they would like to add anything
- At the end of the session the child can be asked to draw a picture or complete 3 Houses about how they feel or think about the session
- There may be times where the child(ren) does not agree with what has been observed. However while the worker may not wish to alter their own record, the child(ren) will be able to add their own views to the recording.
- Should the child(ren) not wish to read or spend time undertaking this activity they can leave in the usual way.

As a result the approach to recording the activities and relationships during the time when the child sees their family will be one of a narrative chronological account which starts in the build up for the child seeing their family through to the point at which the child(ren) returns back to the person who is caring for them.

Recording pro forma

Name of child: ……………………………….

Name of supervisor: …………………………….

Name of Social Worker: ……………………………

Date of visit: ………………………………………

Venue:…………………………

Time of session

Expected Duration:

Actual Duration:………………..

What happened on the way to see family?

Prompts to consider when completing this section (this is not an exhaustive list)
- Think about what child was doing on arrival at their placement
- What was their mood? Presentation? Anything unusual? Anything that worried you or the carer?
- Feedback from carer about behaviours and any observations since last visit to family and specifically previous night and this morning
- What was the journey like – topics of conversation, observations of behaviours in the car?
- Singing to the radio? Playing games? Chatting? Or quiet?
- Description of presentation
- Was the member of the family waiting for their child(ren)?
- Describe the greeting

What happening during the session?

Prompts to consider when completing this section (this is not an exhaustive list)
- Was the child(ren) excited?
- Cuddles? Describe the initial interaction and the hellos.
- How was member of the family looking? What was their presentation like?
- What had been brought for the family to do together during their time together?
- Describe interactions, cuddles, activities, conversations
- Describe activities, basic care, feeding, eye contact, body language, ability to play
- Anything worker role modelled and member of the family was able to show they understood and then demonstrated.
- How was any worries or risks to the child(ren) dealt with by family? Were they prompted to recognise? How well did they anticipate any issues?
- If siblings talk about how family managed the dynamics and gave each child attention?
- Describe any items/memories that were made together during their time togehter
- Describe photos that have been taken
- Describe the goodbyes

How did the child(ren) think today went? (Form below developed by LAC Council)

LAC Voices!

What did you like/enjoy about today's meeting?

Is there anything you were/are worried about?

What would you like to happen to make things better for you and/or your family at the next meeting?

LACC
LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN'S COUNCIL

What happened on the way back from seeing family?

Prompts to consider when completing this section (this is not an exhaustive list)
- What happened when the child(ren) got back into the car?
- Describe their presentation/behaviours?
- Were they upset? Did they talk happily about the time they spent with their family?
- Did they not talk about it? Did they sit quietly in the car?
- What happened when they were taken back to their carer?
- How did the care respond to the child(ren)?
- Management of risk during their time together – in terms of family keeping child(ren)safe and any worries posed by family.
- If family had given them any toys to take back – what did they do with them?
- What was this interaction like?
- Did the child(ren) appear happy to be back?
- How were they greeted by their carer?
- How did the child respond to their carer?

Glossary of Terms

Full supervision

Full supervision includes all of the below

- Observation at all times of all children and with all adults. In practice this means following and observing adults if they are allowed to take the children to the toilet.
- Close supervision of nappy changing, outdoor play and preparation of any food.
- Supervisor will be expected to hear all conversations and ask the family to not whisper
- Supervisor will be expected to record significant conversations

Depending on worries it may also be required that families are asked that any bags for the children are left with reception to be searched prior to them being handed over to the child

It is recommended that all new referrals are subject to full supervision.

Partial supervision/relaxed

More relaxed supervision would include

- Supervisor would be present in the room, recording and observing what takes place during the period of time the child is seeing their family
- Would monitor trips to the toilet but not necessarily follow

In order for this to be considered the service would require clarity about what needs to be closely observed and what could be relaxed

Supported arrangements

This is anticipated to be used where there is no perceived danger to the children and where there is a clear permanence plan in place. In these instances

- A room can be allocated at Cranworth
- People will be present in the building

Activity based:

For children in long term arrangement, where proceedings have been concluded and/or where it has been risk assessed as possible, supervising activities in the community is possible subject to planning, risk assessment and agreement. However the service is unable to accommodate the following activities:

- Swimming
- Cinema
- Theatre

Flowchart for thinking and planning for children maintaining relationships with their family

What we need to do   What we need to think about……

Worker is of the view child(ren) cannot be safely cared for by the person with PR Assessments to include consideration of the quality of relationships child has with members of their family –	Think about the network the child would identify and include these people in the assessment of relationships Think about what the assessment says and what this means for the child's sense of who they are, what they need now from their family and what they may need in the future Remember family is key to how we understand our place in the world – give this element
Use this analysis and complete LGPM – include rationale for approach to maintaining links with family	
Chair of LGPM to check out workers decision making for care plan and arrangements for children maintaining links/relationships	Be prepared to explain reasoning for the type, frequency and venue. Be prepared to think about purpose – assessment? Life story? Making memories? All 3? Be prepared to think about possible risks and worries for face to face meetings and how these are going to be managed. Be prepared to talk about how the arrangement will benefit child now and in their future. One size does not fit all – arrangements can be fluid and not fixed
Progress to PLOPP if it becomes clear proceedings are necessary	
Attend PLOPP for permission to initiate	
Permission to initiate has been granted – make contact with service and send referral/PLOPP form and make a date for planning meeting	

Service will not plan for any arrangement until a planning meeting has been held

Finance Policy for children seeing their families

RMBC supervises children and young people seeing their families. This can happen in a range of settings including the designated venue for children seeing their families as well as out in the community undertaking activities.

RMBC seeks to make the arrangements for children seeing their family as positive as possible and is committed to the following principles:

- Maintaining relationships with family is really important for children as they grow and develop into adulthood.
- RMBC will do what it can to make sure children maintain links with their families in ways the ground children in their heritage as well as keep them safe and where they feel secure in their relationships.
- Quality time is less about spending money but more about spending time with each other
- RMBC will make sure any arrangement is realistic and would be a typical activity for that family.
- RMBC will make every effort to support families seeing their children and make arrangements as positive as possible.
- RMBC seeks to make any offer to support children and young people seeing their family consistent in that all children and young people have access to the same opportunities.

Transport costs to and from venue where parents are seeing their children

Bus/Train Fare	Where agreed this will be a return ticket from home to the venue where parents are seeing their child. Ticket will need to be seen and the date and time stamped on the ticket will need to be consistent with the date and time of the session with the child. Reimbursement from the Cranworth Centre
Mileage/Petrol	Where agreed this will be at the rate of 15p per mile. Assessment of miles will be undertaken by the social worker and will be paid at the miles for the shortest route possible from parents home to venue where parents are seeing their children VAT receipt for petrol will be required Reimbursement via social worker and BACS
Taxi Costs	This would not be paid for unless significant evidence was provided to the social worker as to why all other avenues of public transport were not appropriate. Lateness or expediency are not reasons for supporting families take taxis to contact

Activities undertaken within the Cranworth Centre or in another venue for children seeing their families.

Preparing and eating food together	Cranworth Centre and FAB Team do not provide food and refreshments for the time children spend with their families FAB Team would advise healthy snacks. Limited Kitchen facilities are available to support food preparation Social worker with family and carer to agree and inform FAB Team of the agreement Family and carers can communicate plans via the communication book. .
Activities within Venues	Toys, craft activities and games are available within settings to support families make the most of their time with this children Any specific requests for any additional games/craft activities can be made to the team at any point for consideration Families can also bring their own games/activities for the time they spend with their children. However these would need to be age appropriate, comply with safety regulations and not promote violence. Video games and/or use of internet is not recommended
Activities in the community	Where risk assessed and approved families can take their children into the community. This is unlikely where children are still subject to proceedings. This can include going to the local playground or walking to a local shop or park.

	Families would be encouraged to source no cost activities.
	RMBC would not pay for parent/family costs.
	RMBC would not routinely fund any activity outside in the community. Should families wish to purchase ice cream/sweets drinks for their children etc this should be discussed prior to the arrangement taking place and agreed at review meetings.
	Cranworth Centre and FAB Team do not provide food and refreshments for parents or children however would advise healthy snacks and drinks
	Social worker with family and carer to agree and inform FAB Team of the agreement.
Activities which require entrance fees or where the cost of the activity is more than £5.50	This will only be offered for children and families where the long term care plan has been agreed.
	For those children who see their families up to 6 times a year, RMBC will support children and young people up to £25 for entrance fees and refreshments for one session per year.
	Money for activites to be agreed prior to the session and will accompany the FAB worker to the session with the child.
	It is expected that families will provide their own funds for refreshments/entertainment/entrance for this session.
	RMBC will only fund where families can demonstrate hardship or where the session has been acknowledged to be a special occasion for family and/or

	child.
	Cranworth Centre and FAB Team will seek reimbursement from allocated social worker and team for any costs incurred.
	FAB Team do not recommend cinema/theatre or swimming as activities.

Rotherham
Metropolitan
Borough Council

Summary Sheet

Council Report

Directorate Leadership Team

Report: Rotherham Fostering Service Performance Report 2017/18

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

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Mel Meggs (Deputy Strategic Director, CYPS)

Report Author(s)

Anne-Marie Banks, Service Manager, Fostering and Adoption

Ward(s) Affected   All

List of Appendices Included:

Rotherham Fostering Service Annual Report 17/18
Rotherham Fostering Service Statement of Purpose 2018/19

Background Papers: None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel
Corporate Parenting Panel

Council Approval Required: No

Exempt from the Press and Public: No

Report: Rotherham Fostering Service Annual Report 2017/18

1. Recommendations

1.1 That the Corporate Parenting Panel receives this report and considers and comments on any issues arising in the report. The report provides performance and activity data on the service, reports on the activity and functioning of the Fostering Panel, and details service developments that have occurred in the year and those that are planned moving through 2018/19.

2. Background

2.1 This report is an annual report to brief on the business and activity within the Council's Fostering Service in 2017/18.

2.2 The report provides performance and activity data on the service, reports on the activity and functioning of the Fostering Panel, and details service developments that have occurred in the year and those that are planned moving through 2018/19.

3. Key Issues

3.1 Rotherham Fostering Service acknowledge that in order to reach the sufficiency plans, Rotherham Fostering need to recruit and retain more foster carers, enabling Rotherham Looked After Children to be placed within the community which they know and where they belong. The indicators that the service is well placed to achieve this include a successful recruitment of social workers who are skilled and motivated. Interest in fostering has increased, modern technology is used to communicate with foster carers in a more cost effective and timely way. Publicity and marketing materials have been refined and refreshed. The service has stream lined the enquiry process with a dedicated fostering advisor and a dedicated matching and placing duty worker. The call for action regarding the sufficiency agenda is well promoted in Rotherham evidenced in the increase in enquiries. Fostering

assessments are progressed in a timely way for families ready to foster, and for those still thinking about fostering and not ready "yet", these are held by the service in the "keeping in touch" initiative, which sets Rotherham apart from other fostering agencies, and in a position to attract these potential fostering families in the future as they have already been engaged in the "fostering conversation".

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

4.1   That the DLT accept and recommend this report.

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   The Fostering Team, in conjunction with Service Manager and Head of Service continues to monitor the Fostering Team spend in line with RMBC finance team. A lack of sufficiency of provision has implication on the commissioning of placements which brings with it higher costs. The spend for 2017/18 is detailed in the table below.

Description:	Total Spend:	Budget:	Under/Over
Fostering Team	1,449,781.18	1,411,057.00	38,7274.18
Fostering Equipment and Mileage	160,101.42	117,137.00	42,964.42
Families Together. Short Break Care Packages	49,874.71	73,070.00	-23,195.29
Home Adaptions	86,614.00	77,733.00	8,881.00
Wraparound Support	89,920.08	149,897.00	-59,976.92
Totals	**1,836,291.39**	**1,828,894.00**	**7,397.39**

7.2   There was an over spend in the Fostering Team as a result of workers leaving the agency and the necessity of recruiting agency staff. This overspend was absorbed through tighter constraints in other areas of the service. The Service has recruited to post, and the only agency worker at the current time is the Panel Advisor.

7.3 The Fostering Equipment Service has introduced an initiative to recycle within the service equipment rather than automatically buying new equipment when a child is placed. However this budget also relates to the mileage claims for foster carers transporting children to and from school and to contact with their family.

7.4 The cost of the wrap around in 17/18 was less as a result of delay in recruiting to posts and introducing the Mockingbird Model which led to an underspend. This saving was used to offset in other areas of spend.

8. Legal Implications

10.1 There are no direct legal implications to this report, save to say that the Fostering Team operate within the relevant statutory framework set out earlier in this report, together with Statutory Guidance and the Council's policy and procedures.

9. Human Resources Implications

9.1 There are no direct human resource implications to this report.

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

10.1 The Fostering Performance Report 2017/18 relates to services for looked after children in care. The service is mindful of the sufficiency agenda and the requirement to provide family based care to children local to the communities which they know and call home. The service is also mindful that placing children at distant has implications on their identity and connectedness, and presents challenge in providing a responsive service when placements are in jeopardy of disruption. The service is aware of the dual roles of recruiting and retaining foster carers to reach sufficiency and have introduced strategies to improve in these areas in 2018/19. In addition the Service is also mindful of the wider implication on outcomes for children in care, including the impact of placement disruption and in the areas of health and educational attainment. In addressing this, the service attend fortnightly performance clinics where there is a focus on performance, and work closely with health and education in achieving better outcomes for children in care.

11. Equalities and Human Rights Implications

11.1 There are no direct implications within this report, other than to say that the Fostering Team are compliant with the Human Rights Act and Equal Opportunities Policy.

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

12.1 Not applicable.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 Strong managerial oversight by Directorship Leadership Team along with fortnightly Performance Management Meetings mitigates risks by holding managers and workers to account for practice and enabling a climate for managers to check and challenge practice across services.

14. Accountable Officer(s)

Mel Meggs, Deputy Strategic Director CYPS
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Ian Walker Interim Head of Services, Children in Care
Ian.Walker@rotherham.gov.uk

Approvals Obtained from:-

Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services:-
Patricia Phillipson, Head of Finance, CYPS

Director of Legal Services:- Neil Concannon, CYPS

HR Business Consultant:- Amy Leech

Name and Job Title.

Anne-Marie Banks   Service Manager, Adoption, Fostering and Therapeutic Team

Ian Walker Head of Services, Children in Care

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

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

Rotherham Fostering Service

Annual Report

2017/18

1. **Introduction**

   1.1 This report is an annual report to brief on the business and activity within Rotherham Borough Council's Fostering Service in 2017/18.

   1.2 The report provides performance and activity data on the service, reports on the activity and functioning of the Fostering Panel, and details service developments that have occurred in the year and those that are planned moving through 2018/19.

2. **The Fostering Service**

   2.1 Rotherham Borough Council Fostering Service operates within the Fostering National Minimum Standards, the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 (the "2011 Regulations"), and the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010, which form the basis of the regulatory framework under the Care Standards Act 2000 for the conduct of fostering services.

   2.2 Prior to September 2013, local authority fostering services were inspected separately by Ofsted. Since then, inspection of local authority fostering services work has been incorporated into the Single Inspection Framework which takes into account the role of fostering in the wider children's services department.

   2.3 The fostering service in Rotherham comprises of three teams; 'Recruitment Team'; which focuses on the recruitment and assessment of prospective foster carers; 'Mainstream Support,' which focuses on the support and supervision of foster carers and 'Specialist Support,' which support and supervise Foster Plus carers, carers providing short break care for disabled children, Private Fostering and Connected Carers, and delivers the Mockingbird Project.

2.4 In line with the Regulations, the service has a Fostering Panel chaired by a skilled and experienced independent social work professional. The Panel considers and makes recommendations about the suitability of foster carer applicants and their ongoing terms of approval, matching of children requiring long term placements and are advised about foster carers leaving the agency. An Independent panel advisor role was introduced in 2017/18 who is a suitably experienced social worker with a strong knowledge and background in fostering. Previously this role had been covered by the recruitment manager. However it was noted as part of the Peer Review of fostering undertaken in 2017/18 by Lincolnshire County Council (partners in improvement) that this was not sufficiently independent, and recommended reviewing the panel process and introducing this post.

2.5 The Head of Service for Looked After Children performs the role of Agency Decision Maker for the fostering service. The Agency Decision Maker considers and makes decisions (qualifying determinations) on Panel recommendations. The Agency Decision Maker also has responsibility to agree the continued suitability to foster following a foster carer's annual fostering review.

3. Panel Functions

3.1 Regulation 23(1) of the 2011 Regulations states that "*the fostering service must maintain a list of persons who are considered by them to be suitable to be members of a fostering Panel ("the central list"), including one or more social workers who have at least three years' relevant post-qualifying experience.*"

3.2 Regulation 23(4) states that *"…the fostering service must constitute one or more fostering Panels, as necessary, to perform the functions of a fostering Panel under these Regulations, and must appoint Panel members including:*

> *(i)   A person to chair the Panel who, in the case of any appointment made after 1st October 2011, must be independent of the fostering service provider, and;*
>
> *(ii) One or two persons who may act as chair if the person appointed to chair the Panel is absent or that office is vacant ("the vice chairs") from the persons on the central list.*

3.3   Rotherham Foster Panel has the following primary functions (under Regulation 25(1) of the Fostering Regulations 2011.

- To consider each application for approval and to recommend whether or not a person is suitable to be a foster parent (including "connected persons" under Regulation 24 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010).

- Where it recommends approval of an application, to recommend any terms on which the approval is to be given.

- It is to recommend whether or not a person remains suitable to be a foster carer, and whether or not the terms of their approval (if any) remain appropriate - (i) on the first review and (ii) on the occasion of any other review, if requested to do so by the fostering service (e.g. following allegations or complaints against foster carers).

- It matches children who have a plan for long-term fostering with suitable foster carers.

4.   Panel Composition

4.1   The Panel maintains a comfortable number of panel members on a 'Central List'. Each panel member who served for a year had an annual appraisal within the year 2017/18. The panel membership includes members with a range of professional backgrounds and interests including elected members, social workers, foster carers, an adopter and virtual school members. Each member has many years of experience of public service and fostering in particular. The table below provides the details of the 'Central List'.

Name of Panel Member	Type of Member
Fred Lillie	Independent Chair
Andrew Walker	Independent Chair
Catherine Boaler	Independent Panel Advisor
Jenny Hosker	Social Work Member (Locality Team Manager and Vice Chair)
Carol Stickland	Social Work Member (fostering team)
Katie Duffield	Social Work Member (fostering team)
June Watson	Independent Member (foster carers for Sheffield City Council)
Betty Brothers	Independent Member (foster carer for Sheffield City Council
Karen Holgate	Designated Nurse for Looked After Children
Sadia Alam	Social Work Member (fostering team)
Tina Hohn	Virtual School (education) for Looked After Children
Claire Brennan	Social Work Member (Locality Team)
Amie Scaife	Social Work Member (fostering team)
Debbie Willis	Social Work Member (fostering team)
Andrew Bosmans	Independent Member
Arron Batley- Simpson	Independent Member (Adult Care Leaver)
Cllr Victoria Cusworth	Elected Member
Cllr Jayne Senior	Elected Member
Sarah Thompson	Social Work Member (adoption service).

4.2 Recent recruitment to Panel in 2017/18 has been Cllr Jayne Senior and Arron Batley – Smith (Adult Care Leaver now training to be a Social Worker). In the reporting year 2016/17 it was noted that the panel would benefit from recruiting a young person with 'care' experience and a representative of the BME community. In 17/18 this was achieved. The

Panel continues to aim to target additional members with either a CAMHS or therapeutic background, and a teacher to supplement the Virtual School involvement.

4.3 The following training has been made available for Panel Members in 2017/2018:-

- Panel Member Training -6th October 2017
- Half a day SOS Training- 14th February 2018
- Panel Induction/ Group Performance Review/ Functioning as an effective Panel (Appropriate Questioning, Panel etiquette, SCR's)- 26th March 2018
- Data Protection Work Shop- 21st May 2018
- Skills to Foster Assessment Training- 6th July 2018
- Mockingbird Family Model Presentation- 30th July 2018
- Plan to include Panel Members in whole service training/ events moving forward

4.4 In November 2017 an independent consultant & professional advisor was recruited to undertake an independent review and scrutiny of fostering panel and to act as Panel Advisor. This was a recommendation of the Strategic Commissioning Review of the service with a rationale that having team managers acting in this capacity would not promote an unbiased, impartial and independent function when advising the panel chair and panel members or the Agency Decision Maker (ADM).

4.5 Whilst outside this reporting year, the fostering service would want to make the panel advisor resource a permanent position, but recognises the tight budget constraints and the financial challenges faced by Rotherham Council may delay this aspiration. However, as the fostering service continues on its improvement journey, the role of the panel advisor has been identified as central in ensuring panel focus and oversight of all panel business, including quality assurance and service development with a focus on better outcomes for Rotherham Looked after Children.

5. **Panel Business 2017/18**

5.1 There were 24 Foster Panels convened in 2017/18, with 189 agenda items discussed, an average of 8 items per Panel, which is an increase in panel business since last year. In 2016/17, there were 21 Foster Panels with 104 agenda items, and an average of 5 items for each panel.

5.2 The Panel Advisor receives the draft reports for Panel and gives written feedback on the quality of the reports, where appropriate, as well as practice advice. The paperwork submitted to panel is always shared seven days before panel meets to comply with National Minimum Standards and in most instances panel members receive paperwork even earlier.

5.3 When Panel minutes are completed they go firstly to the Panel Chair and Panel Advisor to read and then following any necessary amends/ additions the minutes are then distributed to panel members/ and professionals in attendance at panel. This process usually means that final minutes are available for the Agency Decision Maker in a timely manner by the end of the week following Monday's panel. The ADM then has 7 working days from receipt of the minutes to make a decision.

5.4 The Panel are highly motivated to check and challenge by appropriately maintaining the role of 'critical friend' to the Department with equal emphasis on both aspects. Where appropriate the Panel will offer flexibility without compromising standards.

5.5 The feedback from Panel Chair indicates that the quality of reports presented to panel in 17/18 was variable, including 'Skills to Foster' assessments and Foster Carer Statutory Reviews and has been a key area of development. The introduction of a dedicated Panel Advisor has given greater scrutiny and challenge to the service which has led to some improvement in this area although through 2018/19 this scrutiny will continue. With an ambition to improve practice the Fostering Service have received training around best practice in assessment, with themes including exploration of vulnerabilities, support needs for new carers, and

more triangulation and verification of information from multiple sources rather than relying on self-reporting. The Panel Advisor also produces a Service Feedback Report after every Panel which is shared with the ADM, Service Manager and Team Managers and comments on good practice in addition to any arising concerns or themes. Practice Monitoring Meetings have also been introduced which are facilitated by the Panel Advisor, chaired by the Head of Service and include Panel Chair, Panel Advisor and Senior Management. The meetings focus on performance and practice issues with clear actions agreed; for example the best practice training was arranged following the first meeting as this was identified as a staffing need. This improved focus on the service ensures that it is not operating in a silo and provides an environment for more accountable and collaborative practice development as we move into 2018/19. Further development work in 18/19 will include consultation in gaining the views of the placing social worker and the voice of the child. The process and timeline for reviews and the responsibilities placed on the supervising social worker has been revised and a training event is arranged in 2018. Following this event there will be focused scrutiny in these areas which again will enrich the quality of reports, but more importantly evidence joined up working in promoting best outcomes for children in care.

5.6 Training records are maintained for primary carers within the training 'tab' of Liquid Logic recording system. Each carer household is provided with a Continual Professional Development portfolio to develop their own training history. Personal Development Plans (PDP's) to assist with carer's development are completed annually in conjunction with the Supervising Social Worker. Each carer is required to complete a minimum of three development activities with a review period, at least one of which must be a face to face course. This is reviewed as part of the carers Annual Review and it has been noted in 2017/18 that some carers employed outside the home do not adequately manage training requirements due to their work commitments. In response to this the Fostering Service is offering 'safer caring' evening training in October 2018. If well attended further evening training will be facilitated.

5.7 Panel administration is reported as being efficient, with reports circulated in good time giving five working days to read paperwork. Panel minutes are detailed and draft minutes are usually available on the second working day following panel. The business support review is currently looking at different options in terms of the recording of panel meetings that are more cost and resource effective. This includes the move towards paperless panel, work which began in 17/18 led by the panel advisor with plans for implementation in 2018. The cost saving to the local authority is estimated in the range of 10/15K a year aside from the other additional benefits such as reduced business support requirements.

6. Fostering Families – Placements

6.1 The Fostering Service is an integral section of Children and Young People's Services, providing fostering opportunities to children in care through a range of fostering placements, which include:

Day care: for foster carers who need to attend meetings or training events.

Task Centred Placements: which are placements for children entering care.

Long term permanence: placements for children and young people who cannot return to birth family and where adoption is not the plan.

Family and friends foster care: (Connected Carers) enabling children and young people who are unable to live with their parents to be cared for by extended family members, friends or other people who are connected with them.

Fostering Plus: a Rotherham Borough initiative to accommodate Rotherham's most vulnerable children, typically teenagers. Fostering Plus carers receive a weekly fee and high levels of support and therapeutic intervention in managing and sustaining placements and in developing meaningful relationships to enable children in their care to achieve better outcomes. The Fostering Plus scheme also encompasses the placements for children at risk and/ or subject to CSE and continues to support these placements with a high level of support and supervision. Intensive therapeutic provision continues to be provided by Rotherham's Therapeutic Team, and as Foster Plus carers, they will receive a higher level of supervision and remuneration rate.

Aiming High for Disabled Children Families Together Scheme provides short break care for children with disabilities. The aim of this fostering provision is to provide respite for children with a disability to give a break to a family in order to enable the child to live at home. In 2017 – 2018, Rotherham had 8 Families Together foster carers.

Mockingbird Family Based Model of Fostering is an innovative method of delivering foster care using an extended family model which provides respite care, peer support, regular joint planning and training, and social activities. The programme improves the stability of fostering placements and strengthens the relationships between carers, children and young people, fostering services and birth families.

7. Approvals, Deregistration and resignations

Recruitment and Retention

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Enquiries	195	191	193
Approvals	13	22	17
Deregistrations	24	13	24
Conversion Rate	7%	12%	9%
National Average	12%	12%	12%
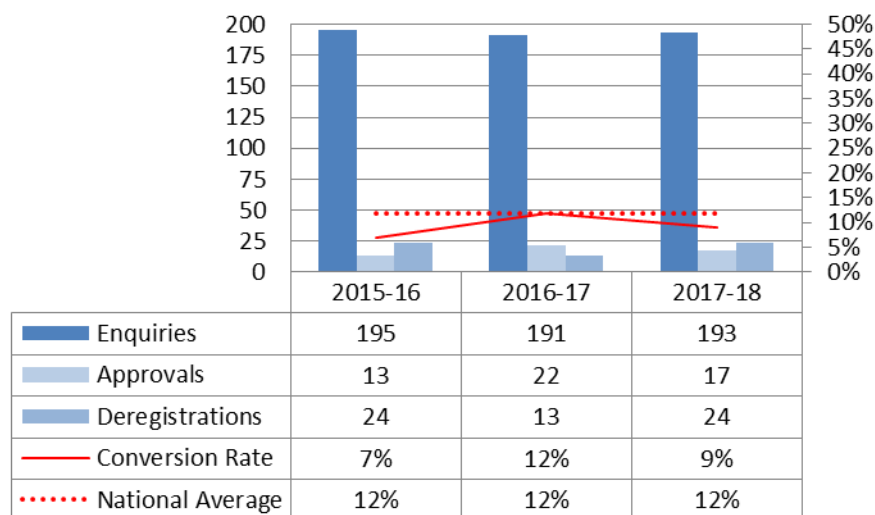
7.1 Following a downturn in enquiries which was understood to be due to the negative media attention following the publication of the Jay Report, 2015/16 saw some growth in enquiries from 147 the previous year to 195 although there was a relatively low conversion rate to foster carers of 7% (13 foster carers approved), as compared to a National Average of 12%.

7.2 The number of enquiries remained stable in 2016/17 with 191 enquires into fostering culminating in 22 foster carer approvals, with potential placement capacity for 30 children (placements - excluding respite and short break care for disabled children); a conversion rate of 12%, putting the Fostering Service in line with the National Average. During the year

there were 13 resignations equating to 7.6% of the in-house population which compared well with the national average of 10% (Local Authority Fostering Service benchmark 2014/15).

7.3 2017/18 saw the number of enquiries at a consistent level with 193 enquiries of which 17 have been approved as foster carers, a conversion rate of 9%, equating to 26 placements. During this year there had been 24 de-registrations and resignations (12.7%) and a loss of 38 placements, a net loss of 12 placements within the service. Rotherham's data performance analytics indicates that the days of fostering gained in 2017/18 from newly approved foster carers as compared to the days 'lost' from foster carers leaving in that same period shows a gain of 1553 days of care. This is due to many of the newly approved foster carers actively taking placements from point of approval, as compared to carers leaving the service being inactive for some time prior to resignation/ deregistration. Whilst outside this reporting year, based on carers approved in 18/19 to date the conversion rate is 10%, with an overall projection of 25 newly approved foster carers by year end.

7.4 In addition to this, whilst the service has 'lost' foster carers, it should be noted that some of the reasons are very positive, for example:

- One child who turned 18 remained with their fostering family under a staying put arrangement.
- One child with a disability, who had also turned 18 years of age, remained in the fostering family, under 'shared lives' (family homes for adults with disabilities) again a positive outcome for this young person.
- Two foster carers secured Special Guardianship Orders for the children in their care, given a greater sense of security for those children.
- Two children who were placed with connected carers returned to their birth family, and so the carers retired as they wanted only to commit to these children from their extended family.

- Two children who turned 18 years moved on to independence and the carers retired after giving 36 years to the service.

Of foster carers who left the service:

Placement Type	Number
Family and Friends	5
Fostering mainstream	14
Foster plus	1
Short breaks	4

7.5 All fostering services lose carers during the year to retirement, deciding fostering is no longer for them, or that their family circumstances have changed, so there is a need to continually recruit significantly just to maintain capacity. The Fostering Stocktake (Narey & Owers February 2018) noted that around 10% of fostering households leave agencies in anyone year. They noted that this included those leaving fostering for explicable reasons, including retirement, change in personal circumstances; because they become adopters or special guardians; or because their child has reached 18 and is now living with them under a Staying Put arrangement. This is consistent with Rotherham Fostering.

7.6 The past year has seen a significant increase in the number of resignations and de-registrations due to the reasons noted above, some of which are for positive reasons. However this does also include an increase in de-registrations due to safeguarding concerns relating to foster carer practice. Rotherham fostering, as with the wider children's services has been on an improvement journey and expects the highest standard of care for our children, whose early life lived experience will have largely included some level of trauma. In 2017/18 as new workers were recruited following the retirement of established workers with many years in the team, this gave "fresh eyes" to practice, and safe guarding. It would seem that the worker/carer relationship may have become "too

comfortable" and high support/high challenge practices less robust then they are currently.

7.7 Although there has been an increase in de registrations for the reasons stated above there are some encouraging signs. As mentioned previously the majority of the carers who were deregistered were inactive whilst the newly approved carers from April 2017 were immediately active giving net gains in the days of foster placement provision, and the service could target foster care support towards those carers providing that service rather than on those who were not. It has also been noted that there were a number of newer approved foster carers who left the agency shortly after been approved and the service, has undertaken a review of this. The service reviewed all foster carers who left the agency in the two year period 2016/18 and found that four carers had left within two years of being approved. One of these carers was a connected carer who left the agency when the child returned to family; two left as a result of health issues and one due to change in circumstances whereby the main carer was being made redundant and planned to focus on fostering but then was given an attractive financial package to remain in paid employment. The service recognises the important value of retaining foster carers and whilst outside this reporting year has recently engaged in a project in partnership with Fostering Network and other agencies around best practice in retention.

7.8 More positively enquiries over the first quarter as compared with the previous year have increased by 60% from 45 to 73 which could be attributed to the newly recruited dedicated 'Fostering Marketing & Communications' lead but also because Rotherham received a 'Good' rating in the 2017 Ofsted inspection. The current projected approvals based on already approved foster carers or in assessment is 17 approvals up to December 2018. The service is increasing promotional activities during the summer months, which is a period of time when it is traditionally quieter for fostering services and it is hoped that this will generate an increased level of enquiry which potentially can convert to

approvals. Based on the foster carers approved to date, and those in assessment, the projected number of approved foster carer for 2018/19 is 25. However if enquires continue to increase at their current trajectory and the recruitment initiatives successful then there is a possibility to exceed this 25 target of approvals for 2018/19.

7.9 Since the beginning of 2018 the fostering service has embarked on a number of recruitment initiatives which is hoped will engage the local community in understanding that there is an urgent need to recruit more foster carers to meet the sufficiency strategy. The fostering service recognises that there is a need for community engagement within Rotherham so that members of the local community are aware of the sufficiency issue for Rotherham Council and the need to increase awareness of the need to recruit additional foster carers. In order to achieve the aspiration of providing significantly more in-house foster placements the following initiatives are being implemented:-

- **Challenge 63:** This is a recruitment initiative that has been designed to involve local Councillors in promoting the need for more foster carers in their wards. This initiative is in its infancy and there will be a relaunch of this in September. If each of the 63 elected members are able to nominate only one suitable prospective carer every two years current recruitment levels would be surpassed by this initiative alone.
- **Muslim Foster Carer project:** In September 2017 the foster service took part in a research project undertaken by Fostering Network alongside other Local Authorities and an Independent Fostering Agency, to better understand and explore how we can recruit more Muslim foster carers. The findings of the research project are to be published shortly. RMBC have decided to set up and deliver a Muslim foster carers project in order to recruit foster carers who will be able to meet the cultural needs of children in their care. In addition the project aims to support the needs of non-Muslim foster carers who are caring for Muslim children and ensure that there are training, development and mentoring opportunities available. The project aims to raise more awareness in the local community of the need for more foster carers within Rotherham. An unforeseen benefit of this project has been the development of the

Eid host family plan whereby Muslim children will be linked with a Muslim family to participate in this cultural event.

- **Profile Raising:** The fostering service will continue to remain visible in the local community by attending events such as Gala's and having information drop in sessions on a monthly basis with foster carers present. In addition to this the fostering service is updating the fostering website and information packs that the general public receive in order to target more effectively potential foster carers who may be interested in fostering. The Fostering service also has employed a dedicated 'Fostering Advisor' who processes all the initial enquires and undertakes all the initial visits. This has led to a more streamlined approach and a consistent person who can guide prospective foster carers from initial enquiry to fostering assessment.

- **Retention:** The fostering Service acknowledges that retention of foster carers is equally as important as recruitment of foster carers and has recently delivered a team away day with a focus on foster carer retention. As a result of this, the foster services are working in collaboration with Fostering Network on a project centred on retention of foster carers. This is part of a country wide research project, involving 6 fostering agencies, and an independent fostering agency. The outcome of this will be fed into the fostering report 18/19 and it is hoped that it will be evident that the Fostering Retention Project will have an impact on retention of foster carers whilst ensuring that our current foster carers continue to remain motivated and happy with the service that they receive from the Fostering Team.

- **Mockingbird programme:** aims to prevent placement breakdown and increase stability of the fostering households. Rotherham fostering's first Mockingbird hub was launched in May 2018 with and additional hub to be launched later in 2018, It is envisaged that the Mockingbird model will result in a decrease in disrupted placements, increased stability for children in fostering placements, and improved retention of foster carers.

- **Foster Carer Association:** A Foster Care Association is a formal body set up by and run by foster carers who represent and advocate for the wider fostering community. The key roles of the association is to offer mutual support, promote working in partnership, develop awareness, knowledge and skills and share this across the service, create opportunities for fostering families to meet together, and act as a bridge between the fostering community wider service to promote best practice for children in

care and their fostering families. This has recently been relaunched in Rotherham Fostering Services.

- The aim of the foster carer association is to provide support and advocacy to all foster carers. Within the foster carer association it is planned that it will deliver mentoring/ buddying to newly approved carers and training will be sourced to support this. In addition, the Foster Carer Association will coordinate social activities which will help embody a sense of community and social cohesion for our fostering community. The foster carer association will also act as a representative voice of the carers and advocate on their behalf to the Senior Management Team.

8. Children Placed in Foster Care - Information 2017/18

Proportion of LAC in Fostering Placements

IFA Placements 39%

Rotherham Fostering 30%
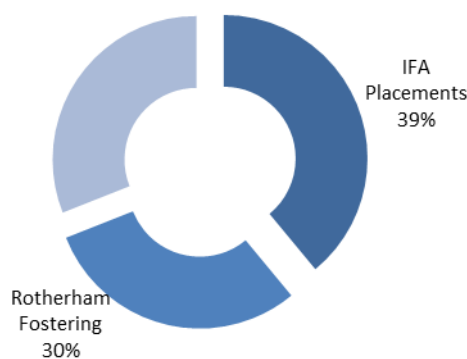
8.1 At year end 2017/18 there were 176 children placed with RMBC foster carers, and 164 fostering households. In addition to this, there were a further 5 Regulation 24 (temporary approved foster carers) looking after 7 connected children, and 6 children in the fostering stage of a fostering to adopt (early permanence placement) equating to 189 children in RMBC in-house fostering households, (30.38% of total number of children in care).

8.2 Many of the temporary approved foster carers will go on to secure alternative permanency arrangements for the children that they are caring for, such as Special Guardianship Orders or Child Arrangement Orders, whilst the children in the early permanent placement are likely to be adopted meaning that these children will be no longer looked after

children. This is in-line with Rotherham's "Right Child – Right Care" agenda, and the principal of securing permanency outside of care. The impact of this on fostering means that there are fewer foster carers as temporary approved foster carers do not progress to permanent kinship foster carers, and established carers leave the agency by committing to SGO and permanency for the child/ren they look after. RMBC fostering recognises however, that for the child this is the best and right outcome.

8.3   As stated above one of the significant issues that Rotherham faces is the high number of children and young people that have been placed in Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements. At the end of this reporting year, there were 622 children in care compared with 480 at year end 2015/16.This is an increase of around 29.58%.

8.4   As of March 31st 2018 there were 244 children in IFA placement which equates to 39% of the children in care population as compared to the 189 children (30.38%) within in-house family based provision.

8.5   Of those 244 children in IFA placements, despite 99 (41%) being within a 20 mile radius of their home postcode, only 60 children (25%) lived within borough. This is a concern as it is well understood that the needs of children and young people can only be met effectively if they live in an environment that provides a high quality of care and support, generally within a family home setting and in a geographical location that is familiar. Wherever possible, children and young people should be placed within their own community which enables them to continue to have contact with the people and community of the most importance to them, thus promoting identify and strong sense of self, fundamental to resilience in later life. In addition, placing children in the RMBC area ensures a better oversight and control over education provision and other support services such as health and Children's Adolescent Mental Health service, (CAMHS).

8.6 Children and Young People's Service has recognised that it 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. As a result of this, Rotherham Borough Council has significantly invested in the support and allowances offered to foster carers to attract and retain carers as noted above. There is a further review of the foster carer scheduled 2018/19. This will be reported to Directorate Leadership Team (DLT) and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and be incorporated in the Annual Fostering report 18/19.

8.7 Rotherham also recognises the benefits of adopting a 'one market' approach by utilising commissioned (IFA) placements who live local to Rotherham Borough when considering matching and placing Rotherham children with Rotherham families. Significant work has been undertaken across the commissioning team and fostering services to secure local IFA provision when making matches in line with the 'Right Child – Right Care' agenda.

9. Placement Stability

Placement Stability

Legend:
- % long term placements stable for at least 2 years
- National % long term placements stable for at least 2 years
- % LAC who have had 3 or more placements - rolling 12 months
- National % LAC who have had 3 or more placements - rolling 12 months
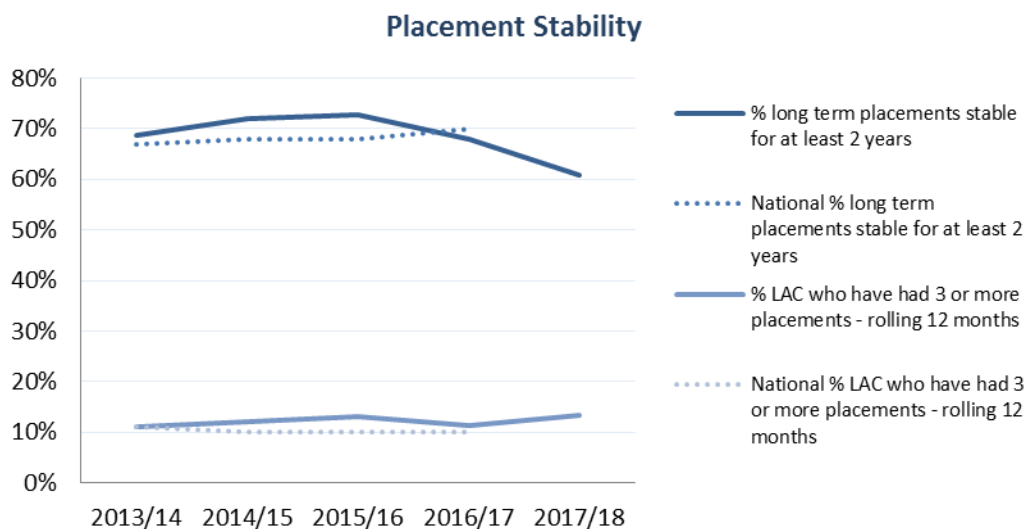
*Note that the national data for 2017/18 has yet to be published. Good performance for % long term placements stable for at least 2 years is a high percentage. Good performance for % LAC who had 3 or more placements is a low percentage.

9.1 Placement stability continues to be a factor in offering an effective Fostering Service and is 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.

	Roth 2013/14	Roth 2014/15	Roth 2015/16	Roth 2016/17	Roth 2017/18	England 2017
No. of long term LAC placements stable for at least 2 years (NI063)	108/157	110/153	109/150	100/147	90/148	-
% long term LAC placements stable for at least 2 years (NI063)	68.8%	71.9%	72.7%	68%	60.81%	70%
No. of LAC who have had 3 or more placements - rolling 12 months (NI062)	44/393	49/409	56/431	55/487	83/620	-
% LAC who have had 3 or more placements - rolling 12 months (NI062)	11.2%	12.0%	13.0%	11.29%	13.38%	10%

9.2 There has been a decrease in performance around placement stability in 2017/18 as demonstrated above; last year the NI063 placement stability figure which was 68% at year-end, this year the figure is 60.81%, (56 children). Of those 56 children, 21 moved for positive reasons, for example moving into adoptive families, moving to reside with connected carers, moving into long term placements or moving back to, or more local to Rotherham.

9.3 The national indicator NI062 has also evidenced a dip in performance at end of reporting year, and at 13.38% at March 2018 is outside of the target of 10%, and higher than the national average, (10%). On reviewing the current data analytics provided by RMBC performance team, over the previous 12 months (August 17/18) there has been an increase in

placement stability with 11.44% of children experiencing 3 or more placements in that period. This is an improvement on the figure at year end.

10. Unplanned Endings & Disruptions

10.1 Unplanned endings are when a foster placement ends outside of the child's care planning arrangements. A disruption occurs when a child who has been permanently matched long term within that placement moves as a result of the placement breakdown.

10.2 In the period 2017/18, there were 11 unplanned endings of placements involving 15 children in RMBC foster care. In 2016/17 there were 11 unplanned endings involving 13 children and 11 RMBC fostering families. Of the 11 unplanned endings in 2017/18 5 carers had their category of approval amended as a result of the move, and carers were placed on hold until the disruption meeting was held and action plans devised.

10.3 Of the 15 children, 5 were long term matched, the remaining 10 children were in task centred (short term/ emergency) placements. Key themes include:
- The importance of matching, and information sharing
- Child's needs, age and complexity of placement
- Change of social worker

10.4 This compares with 54 unplanned endings whereby the fostering agency provider gave notice on the placement during the same timeframe. 17 of these children had been in placement for two years and over. This is suggestive that stability is more likely with in-house care and another rationale for the need for effective recruitment and retention of Rotherham Foster carers.

11. Staffing in the Fostering Service

11.1 It has been a year of change and development within the Fostering Service, which has seen the appointment of a number of permanent social

workers joining the supervision and recruitment teams, the introduction of a marketing and communications lead, and the introduction of a dedicated duty worker, whose role is to lead on matching and making placements, and dedicated fostering advisor role, who is the first 'friendly voice' of fostering when expressing an interest or making an enquiry into the service. The foster service has also recruited a dedicated fostering panel advisor to bring more scrutiny and rigour to the service, and has recently appointed a second panel chair and both roles have the aim and intention to drive up practice of the fostering service.

11.2 2017/18 also saw the introduction of the Mockingbird family based model of fostering. In December two hub carers were interviewed and recruited and whilst outside of this reporting year, the first constellation was launched in May 2018 with a second scheduled for launch in October 2018. In addition to this, a number of other carers, including the foster plus carers have expressed an interest in becoming hub carers and developing constellations.

11.3 The Foster Carer Association was also relaunched and this will enable the service to formalise an effective two-way consultation and information sharing that is both open and transparent. In addition the Foster Carer Association will facilitate service development and ensure that carers feel that their voice has been heard and understood. Whilst outside this reporting year, the FCA facilitated the inaugural fostering families camping weekend in July 2018 which was very successful and aims to be an annual event. The FCA are also being consulted and contributing to the retention project.

12. Fostering Supervision and Support

12.1 Foster care is a demanding task involving significant responsibilities. Support to foster carers begins at the point they make contact to the service, which includes telephone support, training and assessment from the recruiting team.

12.2 From the point of approval, foster carers all have a dedicated supervising social worker. Best practice includes formal handover from recruitment worker to supervising social worker with the foster carer. The recruiting social worker will be consulted around matching, and in some circumstances will undertake joint visits with the supervising social worker to support the first placement where it is appropriate to do so. One of the key performance indicators for the Fostering Service is to provide family based placements for the children, and supervising social workers review with foster carers any of their placements that are "on hold" to manage these breaks and support the carers in taking new placements.

12.3 Foster Carers require a level of support and supervision commensurate with the tasks they perform on behalf of the Local Authority. Foster Carers are visited at a minimum every six weeks, with newly approved foster carers visited / supported more frequently at the start of their fostering journey. Both supervisory visits and unannounced visits are monitored and reviewed in RMBC performance clinics and both are evidencing an upward trend.

Foster Carer Visits
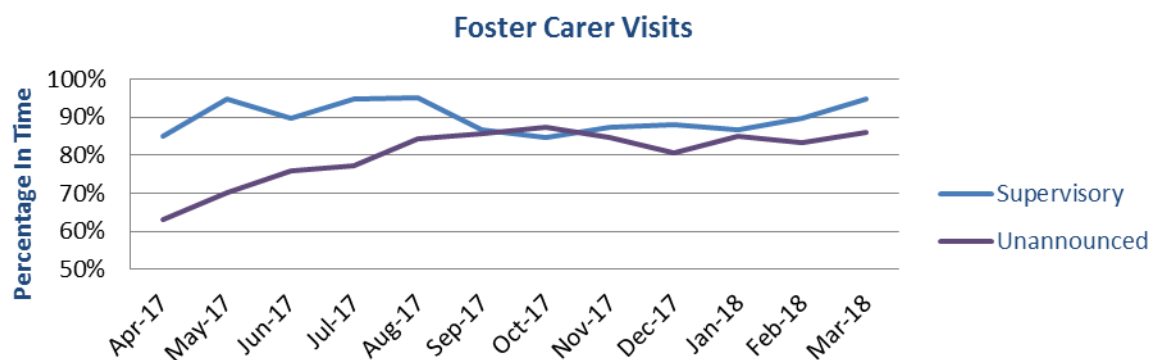
12.4 The supervising social worker continues to support and guide the foster carer through their journey through fostering, by providing guidance, support and development to the foster carer. All foster carers within the fostering service are allocated a supervising social worker prior to attending panel for approval.

13. Activities and Events

13.1 The Fostering Service host an annual diary of events for fostering families and this is foster carer led in consultation with the department. In 2017/18, this included:

- Fostering family Christmas celebration
- Foster Carers Christmas Meal
- A Halloween Party
- Easter Party
- Parties in the park run throughout the summer vacation
- Pride of Rotherham – achievement celebration for children in car- October 2017
- Foster carers conference
- Fostering Fortnight celebration event
- Quarterly foster carer forums involving carers, team managers, service manager, and head of service.
- *fostering services are currently introducing a wider range of cultural events

13.2 These events offer an opportunity for foster carers to network, normalise a looked after child's experience by enabling them to spend time with other children in care, provide informal support to foster carers, and be involved in the fostering, children's social care and wider RMBC developments.

13.3 **Support Groups**: there are four formal support groups hosted across Rotherham and facilitated by supervising social workers:-

- An induction support group for carer in their first two years of fostering (Unity Centre) (morning)
- Dinnington (evening)
- Rockingham (afternoon)
- Listerdale for carers with children aged 0 – 4 years (morning)

The aim of the four support groups is to provide a greater opportunity for foster carers to participate and gain support.

Peer support: foster carers are routinely buddied up with other carers, who provide coaching and peer support to other foster carers. Whilst outside of this reporting year, the plan is to further formalise these arrangements by offering peer mentoring training to carers and staff. The Foster Care in England review by Department for Education (2018) emphasised the importance of Peer Support. Recommendation 10 *"All Fostering Services should consider introducing structured peer support for carers"*

Sons and Daughters groups: is run monthly facilitated by the service. The group is open to birth children aged 8 – 16 years. Each meeting incorporates an activity and consultation element to listen to the views of birth children involved in fostering.

Foster Care Association: has recently been reintroduced and already has a very active membership. Whilst outside of this reporting year, the FCA recently held a successful camping weekend for fostering families.

14. **Consultation:**

14.1 In 2017/18, there have been two foster carer forums around the introduction of the Mockingbird Family Model and two 'You said – We did' meetings with foster carers. Changes to the service as a result of this were:
   - The Mockingbird Family Model going live in May 2018
   - The introduction of a Foster Carers Association
   - The introduction of an electronic fostering newsletter and a web platform for sending and receiving information. Text connect (a text messaging service which enables all foster carers to receive a text from the service) has been discussed and implementation will be introduced in 2018/19.

15.2 A Foster carer's conference was held in June 2017 with a high number of foster carers attending this with speaker Zoe Loderick giving a presentation about Child Sexual Exploitation and the impact on young people. The event was so successful a foster carer's conference has now been built into the yearly foster carer's events calendar.

15. Complaints and compliments:

15.1 In the reporting year 2017/18 there were 2 complaints specifically about the fostering service by young people, and 3 complaints made by foster carers. The three complaints made by foster carers were made in circumstances where practice issues were already being addressed. Of these five complaints, one of the carer complaints was upheld, and one of those made by a young person was upheld. Additional work was undertaken by the fostering service as a result of these complaints, including changing a carers terms of approval, and providing additional support for a young person. In the same reporting year, there was 13 compliments about the fostering service; 9 compliments about social workers in the service and 4 about foster carers.

16. Training

16.1 Rotherham Fostering has a training coordinator who plans and coordinates training and ensures that mandatory training is in place for foster carers. The table below represents some examples of the training and development evidence by foster carers in 2017/18.

Qualification	Number
CWDC Training, Support & Development Standards for Foster Care	16
Foster Carer conference (Safeguarding)	85
Emotional Health and Wellbeing Attachment of children in care	27

Therapeutic Parenting course	15
Managing Challenging Behaviour	29
Life story work	11
Bonding through Play	16
Safeguarding: CSE training/ E-safety for Foster Carers/ Safeguarding training courses/ Living with sexually abused children / radicalisation	118
Education: Epep and other courses provided by the Virtual school	58
Health: Foetal Alcohol syndrome Disorder First Aid Course & Paediatric First Aid Drugs and Alcohol Awareness Self Harm Autism Awareness Child specific specialist health training	15 67 21 19 19 6

17. Fostering Recruitment Activity and Outcomes

17.1 The public perception of Fostering in Rotherham has continued to move towards a more positive picture. "Good news" stories are regularly featured in local media and on-line and the Ofsted report have helped towards this end. In 2017/18 the fostering service employed a full-time communications and marketing officer to work solely on the fostering service account with a focus on recruitment and retention of foster carers. The marketing and communications officer has refreshed its approach to digital communications. There is now a systematic approach to creating content for social media, website and e-newsletters.

17.2 **Website** – a review of the existing websites has resulted in the decommissioning of the fosteringinrotherham.org.uk and driving all web traffic through the main RMBC hosted fostering pages. This has resulted in the URL www.rotherham.gov.uk/fostering being at the top of Google searches for fostering in Rotherham. The council has plans to create a much-improved website and fostering has now positioned its content to be ready to be among the first services to fully transition when the new RMBC site becomes live in April 2019.

17.3 **Digital Content** – in 2018 the fostering service began work to update its use of digital content. A series of videos have generated increased user engagement across social media, Twitter and Facebook, as well as website traffic. The result has been an increase in fostering enquiries through the website and Facebook.

17.4 Communications with the existing fostering community have been transformed from traditional mail outs, paper-based newsletters and limited use of bulk emails to a digital platform, GovDelivery. Carers receive fortnightly e-newsletter containing news, training dates, support group times and dates as well as invitations to help at recruitment events. The e-newsletter has an average open rate of 60 per cent (Marketing industry average 25 per cent), and will invariably lead to cost savings as a result of reduced printing and posting costs.

17.5 Work began at the start of 2018 to introduce an SMS service for sending text messages to targeted groups of foster carers. It is envisaged this service will commence in August 2018.

18. **The Fostering service recruitment target key areas:**

18.1 The Fostering service has used traditional marketing activities of drop-in sessions, information stands well in the past. The Rotherham Show and Rotherham District General Hospital are good examples. In addition it was recognised there was a need to attend events and venues with a high footfall and a good demographic match for recruitment in favour of small

neighbourhood events. Examples include a regular information stand at Tesco in Wath which is providing strong leads. However, this generic approach may be having a limited impact and the fostering service is actively considering a more forensic approach for future marketing strategies. Key target areas include:

- Positive public profile – generating positive coverage and PR in local media
- Public awareness – using the sufficiency story to alert residents borough-wide of the urgent need for more foster carers in all areas and across all sectors, including, teenagers, sibling groups and children with disabilities.
- Elected members – our Challenge 63 campaign was designed to engage local elected members to promote fostering within their wards and communities and will be relaunched in September 2018.
- The recruitment of Muslim families for Muslim looked after children.

18.2 In collaboration with the marketing lead, the newly established fostering advisor manages a more sophisticated pipeline tool to record and track the progress of fostering enquiries. Enquiries are now tracked through to approval or closure as well as those "not yet ready" who progress to a "Keeping in Touch" list. Those on this list receive an e-newsletter four times a year to let them know about drop-in sessions, good news stories and contact information so they are more likely to come back to RMBC when they are ready to foster. This also adds an additional layer to our fostering community, promoting the services good customer service and caring approach. The number of enquires 2017/18 were roughly the same as the previous year, but it should be noted that the first quarter of 2018 has shown a 60% increase in enquires from 45 to 73. It is hoped that if an increase in enquiries continues in the same trajectory that this will lead to increased approvals in 2018/19.

18.3 The Service hold a 6 weekly 'Foster Carer's "what's on what's new" meeting with a hub of 10 foster carers who help with the recruitment activities and retention. In 2018/19 the service plans to implement a new

initiate "FosterCarers4FosterCarers" to mobilise this cohort of foster carers to help recruit new foster carers into the service.

18.4 Throughout the year 2017/18 there was a calendar of monthly recruitment activity, where the fostering service attended events to promote fostering, there were adverts in the press, on line and in social media adverts/videos, bespoke flyers and posters.

19. Key Challenges, Developments, Targets and Actions for 2017/18

19.1The recruitment and retention of foster carers is a challenging task, and the Rotherham Fostering Service recognises that there is no room for complacency. The service need to continually review practices and consider innovative ways of recruiting and attracting foster carers to Rotherham whilst ensuring our existing foster carers remain well supported and motivated. New schemes planned to be implemented in 2018/19 include:

- Further development of the STAR parties (start thinking about recruitment) and fostering champions to promote fostering across Rotherham
- Implementation across the service Mockingbird constellations
- Developing the Muslim Project and Challenge 63
- Participate in the Foster Carer Retention Project in consultation with Fostering Network and translate into practice
- Review foster carer payments to maximise retention and increase placement provision across in-house fostering services and encourage new foster carers into the service
- Embed the Foster Care Association
- Continue to develop marketing and communications across RMBC and within fostering. This includes text connect to contact foster carers on a more informal level, and refresh of the RMBC website and fostering provision.
- Refresh of the 'Refer a Foster Carer' to be rolled out across RMBC
- Develop and implement the virtual assessment team
- Recruit a permanent Foster Care Panel Advisor

- Introduce exit interviews for foster carers

- Increase community engagement

- Widening the fostering family activities to include a more diverse range of cultural celebrations, and

- Linking Muslim children in White/British family placements with host Muslim families in order that there is a golden thread of continuity when celebrating the cultural events, such as Eid for Muslim children in our care.

- Continue to improve the quality of panel reports and specifically consultation with the children's social workers in seeking their views around the experience of the child in placement

- Improve children and young people's input in the carer review process.

20. Summary.

20.1   Rotherham Fostering Service acknowledge that in order to reach the sufficiency plans, Rotherham Fostering need to recruit and retain more foster carers, enabling Rotherham Looked After Children to be placed within the community which they know and where they belong. The indicators that the service is well placed to achieve this include a successful recruitment of social workers who are skilled and motivated. Interest in fostering has increased, modern technology is used to communicate with foster carers in a more cost effective and timely way. Publicity and marketing materials have been refined and refreshed. The service has stream lined the enquiry process with a dedicated fostering advisor and a dedicated matching and placing duty worker. The call for action regarding the sufficiency agenda is well promoted in Rotherham evidenced in the increase in enquiries. Fostering assessments are progressed in a timely way for families ready to foster, and for those still thinking about fostering and not ready "yet", these are held by the service in the "keeping in touch" initiative, which sets Rotherham apart from other fostering agencies, and in a position to attract these potential fostering families in the future as they have already been engaged in the "fostering conversation".

fostering.
be the difference

Rotherham Council Fostering Service
Statement of Purpose
2018

www.rotherham.gov.uk/fostering

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Rotherham
Metropolitan
Borough Council

Forward by Councillor Gordon Watson

As Corporate Parents, all Councillors are part of the team around the child in Rotherham and it is vital that we listen to the views of young people. They know the issues they face and how services can support them, so young people's input continues to be at the heart of how we shape our work to meet their needs.

Contents

This Statement of Purpose fulfils the requirements of Standard 1 of the Fostering Services Minimum Standards (Care Standards Act, 2000) and Regulations 3 and 4 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002.

1. Introduction

The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (Standard 16) and the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 (Regulation 3(1)) state that the Fostering Service Provider must compile a written statement in relation to the Fostering Service, a 'Statement of Purpose', which details the aims and objectives of the Fostering Service and the services and facilities provided by the Fostering Service. The National Minimum Standards and the Fostering Service Regulations govern the work of the Fostering Service Providers throughout England and will be used in inspecting and registering Fostering Agencies. The work of the Fostering Service is underpinned and guided by legislation and by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's policies and procedures.

This Fostering Statement of Purpose has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the standards and regulations and will be a useful source of information to Members of the Council, staff, foster carers and prospective foster carers and children and young people who are placed with Rotherham carers. It will also provide a benchmark for Rotherham children placed with Independent Fostering Agencies.

The Statement of Purpose will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis, at least annually and modified as necessary. In accordance with Fostering Regulation 4b, the Fostering Service will notify the Ofsted Chief Inspector of any revision within 28 days, for the purposes of this Statement the 28 days will be taken from the point of ratification by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (or Lead Member for Children and Young People's Services).

2. Principles and Values

Rotherham Fostering Service will work towards the five outcomes for children set out by the Government in 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children' and given legal force in the Children Act, 2004:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being.

The Fostering Service will contribute to 'Rotherham's Looked After Children Strategy' 2017-2020 and 'Looked After Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy' 2017-2018:

- Children and young people are healthy and safe from harm
- Children and young people start school ready to learn for life
- Children, young people and their families are ready for the world of work
- This will mean our children, young people and families are proud to live and work in Rotherham

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's Looked After Children Statement sets out a number of principles and these principles underpin and inform the Fostering Service:

- A child or young person should only become Looked After by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council if it is clearly in their best interest and there are no other suitable options;
- As a general principle, the provision of accommodation for a child/young person is on the assumption that the arrangements are short-term and aimed at uniting the child/young person with their parents or other person with parental responsibility within a short timescale, unless contrary to safeguarding their health and well-being;
- The Authority is committed to meeting the needs of vulnerable children and families through the use of resources, according to agreed protocols and procedures;
- No child or young person will become Looked After if it is considered to be contrary to their longer term needs or best interests;
- No child or young person will become Looked After solely because a cost effective material resource has not been made available;
- No child or young person will become Looked After solely for reasons of family homelessness, inadequate housing or educational problems;

In addition, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and the Fostering Service:

- Recognise that the needs of Looked After Children are paramount;

- Recognise the value, skill and commitment required of foster carers and treat them, their families and homes with respect;

- Aim to provide a range of quality placements to meet the identified needs of children who require substitute care;

- Are committed to maintaining siblings together wherever possible and promoting positive contact with family members;

- Are committed to engaging other agencies in the assessment of the needs of children and working together to clarify roles and ensuring that their needs are understood and prioritised;

- Recognise that many children will have had damaging experiences prior to placement in substitute care, as well as the effects of separation and loss;

- Recognise their mental health needs may be complex and their need for understanding of their past and access to therapeutic input is essential;

- Recognise that foster carers caring for damaged young people will encounter unknown situations on a daily basis and their own support needs need to be assessed and appropriate support systems deployed;

- Recognise that foster carers who are caring for the majority of Rotherham's Looked After Children are very valuable assets and that their time and commitment is worthy of a reasonable remuneration system;

- Recognise that all staff and carers involved in meeting the needs of children with complex needs require a robust commitment to training and learning opportunities;

- Recognise that foster carers are an integral part in supporting Looked After Children in reaching their educational potential;

- Recognise children with disabilities as children first. The same principles of service apply, while accepting that additional support services will be required to meet all their needs;

- Recognise the transition into adulthood is a major step requiring positive daily living support and enhanced connections with the adult world of opportunity and responsibility;

- Are committed to facilitating young people remaining in the foster placement into early adulthood wherever possible and that a flexible range of accommodation and support options to meet different levels of need will be a factor in the services for young people leaving care;

- Are committed to implementing the Children's Workforce Development Council's standards for foster carers and will support carers in achieving the standards.

3. Aims and Objectives

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and the Fostering Service are committed to working with service users, carers, the wider community and partner agencies to promote the welfare of the Looked After Children and improve their life chances by providing services which:-

- Support families;

- Provide stable, safe effective alternative care at the right time and for the right length of time and which are responsive to individual needs, circumstances and choice;

- Maintain wherever possible continuity of educational provision.

In meeting these aims and objectives, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council will work to secure 'sufficient accommodation' as required by Section 22G of the Children Act, 1989 (as inserted by the Children and Young People Act, 2008) which places a general duty on Local Authorities to secure sufficient accommodation within their boundaries to meet the needs of Looked After Children. Accommodation should be sufficient, not only in number of beds provided but also in respect of diversity and quality of provision available. Local Authorities need to demonstrate that they are taking steps at a strategic level to secure accommodation as is 'reasonably practicable'.

Reasonably practicable is defined as:

- Appropriate;

- Near the child's home;

- Does not disrupt the child's education or training ;

- Enables the child to live with accommodated siblings;

- Within the area and suitable.

The key objectives in providing quality placements are underpinned by the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2011 and are:

- To provide placement choice and positive matching of a child with a placement through identification of child's needs and taking account of any wishes and feelings of the child. (NMS 1, 10);

- To, where possible and appropriate provide a placement that is in reasonable proximity to a child's home and addresses the child's culture and heritage. (NMS 2);

- To, where possible, provide and support a placement within the child's extended family network. (NMS 2, 9);

- To promote an environment that ensures adequate safeguarding measures are in place for the child and the culture within the foster home promotes models and supports positive behaviour through adherence to policies and the skills of the foster carer. (NMS 3, 4, 5);

- That where possible and in the best interests of the individual children, as identified within assessed needs, siblings should be placed together. (NMS 2, 9);

- To allow the promotion of proactive, positive health care and well-being thorough Safer Care policies, promotion of child interests and aptitudes, access to relevant leisure opportunities and Health professionals. (NMS 6,7);

- To promote the maximisation of educational opportunities and achievements for children through access to relevant support and professionals. (NMS 8);

- To ensure placements wherever possible have planned beginnings and endings. (NMS 11);

- The promotion of positive contact with family and friends through effective care planning. (NMS 9);

- To listen to the children and young people and involve them in decision making. (NMS 1);

- To work in partnership with parents. (NMS 8);

- To provide stability of placement - a minimum number of moves for each child. (NMS 11);

- To minimise the length of time between a child becoming looked after and moving to a permanent placement, if this is required. (NMS 11);

- To prepare young people for independence and facilitate a smooth transition into adulthood (NMS12);

- Standards of care for effective planning for the transition of care to independence. (NMS 12).

4. Services Provided

The Fostering Service is an integral section of Children and Young People's Services and offers a comprehensive service to Looked after Children and Young People, operational teams, approved and prospective mainstream and family and friends foster carers.

The Fostering Service aims to provide suitable placements for all children and young people who are looked after in Rotherham and offers a range of foster placements:-

- Task centred foster placements for children of all ages needing emergency and short term placements;

- Respite care, offering time-limited breaks to families;

- Day care for looked after children and young people when foster carers need to attend meetings or training events;

- Long term permanence placements for children and young people who cannot return to birth family and where adoption is not the plan;

- Family and friends foster care to enable children and young people who are unable to live with their parents, to be cared for by extended family members, friends or other people who are connected with them;

- Fostering Plus - The Service has this year launched a new fee paid fostering scheme to accommodate young people with the most complex and challenging needs. Fostering Plus carers will receive a weekly fee and high levels of support, including wraparound support from Rotherham's Therapeutic Support Team.

The needs, wishes, welfare and safety of Looked After Children are at the centre of the Rotherham Fostering Service. We believe that all children and young people needing substitute care, have the right to live within a safe and nurturing family environment which meets their needs throughout childhood and which enables them to realise their full potential.

The Fostering Service is designed to operate within the corporate vision and values of the Council;

A person may not foster more than three children in each foster home, except where all children are siblings. Applications for exemptions will usually be made because of the following exceptional circumstances:

- The child concerned was previously placed with the foster carers and his or her placement elsewhere has disrupted;

- The foster carers have special skills to meet the child's needs which are not available elsewhere;

- The placement of the child over the limit is the most appropriate way of meeting the child's needs arising from disability, race, religion, language and/or culture;

- The placement is required to keep the siblings together.

The application can only be made with the agreement of the foster carers and the application is made to and agreed by the Agency Decision Maker. All exemptions will be reported to the next available Fostering Panel for ratification. The Fostering Panel will have responsibility for the ongoing monitoring of the exemptions.

Mockingbird Family Model

Some of our Rotherham fostering families are part of The Fostering Network's Mockingbird Family Model. This is an extended family model that provides respite care, peer support, regular joint planning and training, and social activities.

The programme improves the stability of fostering placements and strengthens the relationships between carers, children and young people, fostering services and birth families.
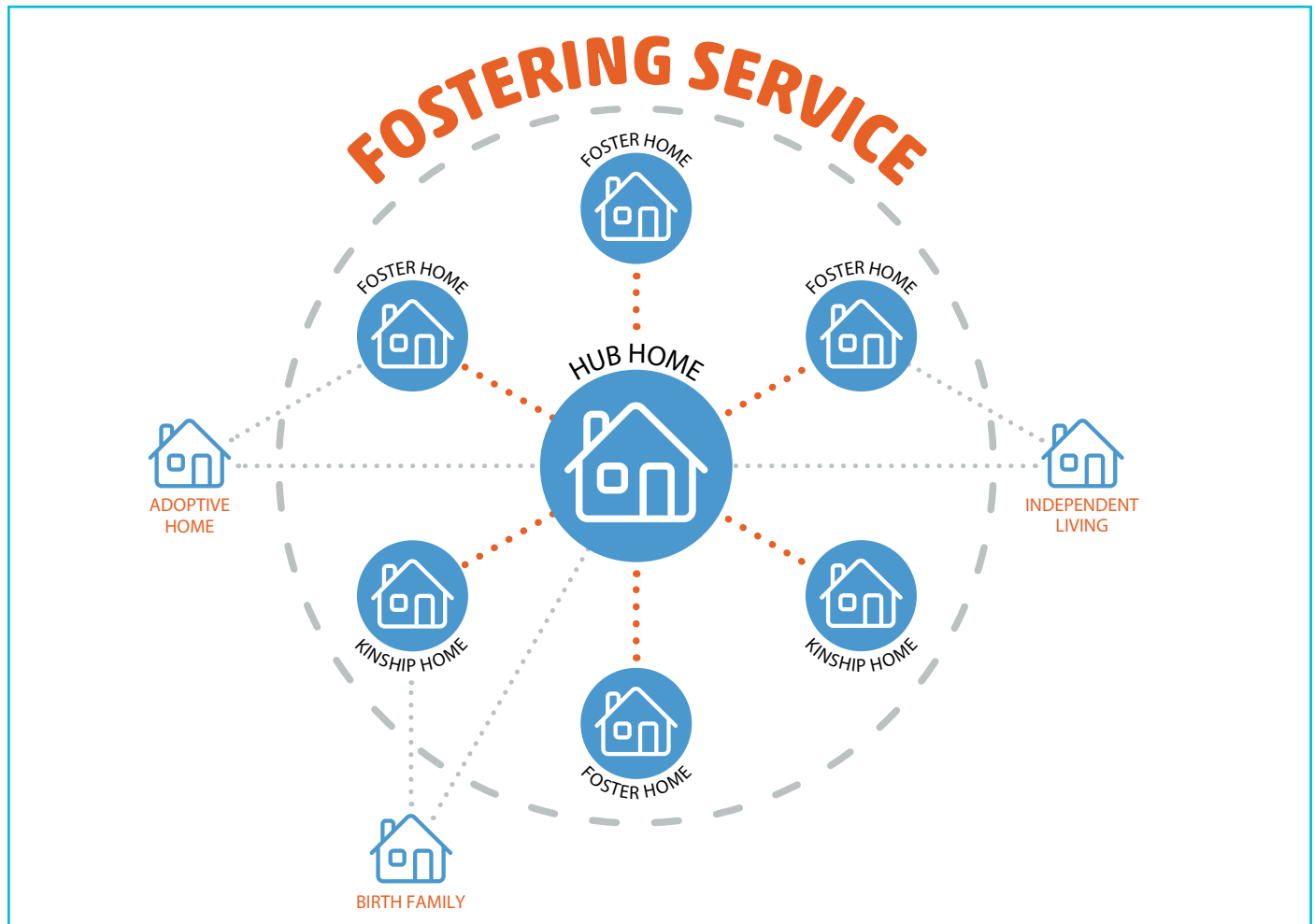
Expected benefits to both carers and looked after children and young people include:

- Improved placement stability and reduction in placement breakdown.
- Stronger relationships that support looked after children, young people and fostering families.
- The provision of a robust and resilient structure, which offers support through times of crisis and transition.
- Improved respite care.
- Increased skills, confidence and role satisfaction for foster carers.
- Higher levels of foster carer retention and recruitment.
- Improved experience of peer support.
- Better experience of birth family contact, including siblings.
- Costs saved and costs avoided.

Rotherham launched its first Mockingbird constellation in May 2018 and plans to have at least four Mockingbird constellations established by the end of 2019.

5. Recruitment, Approval and Assessment of Foster Carers

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's Fostering Service has a recruitment and retention strategy which is based upon the needs of Looked After Children.

The aim is to have a choice of placements to meet the individual needs of every child; recruitment of foster carers is a major priority for the service and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council.

The recruitment and retention strategy is reviewed annually.

Foster carers are recruited by a variety of methods, including personal recommendation or media campaigns highlighting a particular area of need. Adverts or articles placed in newspapers, on television or radio, use of posters, distribution of information leaflets, attendance at local shows, fetes and other public access centres.

There are two stages to the assessment process:

Stage 1:

- Provides the enquirer with sufficient information to decide if fostering is suitable for the family; it also provides the Fostering Service with sufficient information about an applicant's suitability to progress to a more detailed assessment without unnecessary bureaucracy or expenditure of time and resource for either the enquirer or the Fostering Service; this includes a medical assessment, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, Local Authority checks and two references.

- This should take no more than two months and commences when an enquirer's registration of interest in fostering is accepted.

Stage 2:

- This is a more detailed assessment of an applicant's suitability to foster. It determines the applicant's capacity to meet the needs of any child/children likely to be placed with them.

- The assessment is completed using the Fostering Network Skills to Foster template and guidance via a social worker, undertaking a series of visits to the applicant's home.

- Applicants are encouraged to undertake self-assessment during the process and are given regular feedback throughout the process. The assessment is carried out in line with National Minimum Fostering Standards 2011 and Fostering Services Regulations 2011.

- Applicants are expected to attend the Skills to Foster Pre-Approval Training course; this provides the applicants with an opportunity to learn much more about fostering on a programme facilitated by fostering social workers and approved foster carers.

- The Fostering Service recognises and values the contribution of existing foster carers to the recruitment process and actively supports their involvement in recruitment activity. As such, foster carers co-facilitate the pre-approval training with Fostering Service social workers. The course runs over three days and is an integral element of the assessment process.

- The course introduces applicants to the challenges of foster care, the kinds of experiences children may have had and why they may behave in certain ways; it provides information about professionals that foster carers work with and sets out expectations of being a foster carer.

- This stage should take no longer than four months.

6. The Fostering Panel

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council has two Fostering Panels a month. The Panel is convened in accordance with the National Minimum Standards and Fostering Services Regulations 2011. The Panel considers all matters relating to fostering, family and friends care and matching children to long term placements. The assessing social worker completes a report and presents the report to the Fostering Panel, which will consider the application and make a recommendation about the applicant's suitability to foster. The Panel makes a recommendation to either approve or not approve as a foster carer.

The Panel's recommendation is considered by the Agency Decision Maker. The Agency Decision Maker for Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council is the Head of Service for Looked After Children, Fostering and Adoption. The National Minimum Standards 2011 (14.10) states that the Agency decision must be conveyed orally within two working days of being made. The assessing social worker will be responsible for conveying this decision. The Panel Administrator will inform the applicants of the decision in writing within five working days.

On approval, a supervising social worker will be allocated to the foster carer.

Where an applicant does not agree with the Agency Decision, the applicant may make representation to the Agency within 28 days of the decision or make representation to the Independent Review Mechanism for the Agency decision to be reviewed independently by an alternative independent panel. The independent review panel does not have the power to change the decision but can refer the matter back to the Local Authority Fostering Panel and Agency Decision Maker for reconsideration if the independent panel disagrees with the Agency decision.

7. Supervision of Foster Carers

The service recognises that supervision and support for carers is vital. It is important that the carers' work is recognised as providing the major component in meeting the needs of Looked After Children in Rotherham.

Carer satisfaction and retention is essential for a healthy Fostering Service.

All carers (including family and friends carers) have an identified supervising social worker. The supervising social workers visit carers regularly (NMS21) to monitor the standards of care provided, assist the carer to play their part in the child's Care Plan and identify any training and development needs.

Supervising social workers are responsible for ensuring that the care offered to children in foster care meets the required standards.

The supervising social worker visits and telephones the carer regularly whilst the child is in placement. Home visits to the foster carers take place at a minimum of six weekly intervals. These can be increased as assessed need determines, for example, fostering households where there are exemptions, newly-approved foster carers who require a higher intensity of support, placements where more challenging and complex children and young people are placed, or placements where additional support, guidance, training or education is required by the carer.

As part of the monitoring of the work of foster carers, there will be at least one annual unannounced visit by the Supervising social worker to the foster carers' home (as stipulated in NMS 21:8).

8. Foster Carer Reviews

In accordance with Fostering Service Regulation 28, all approved carers undergo an annual review, which is chaired by the Foster Carer Reviewing Officer. The Foster Carer Reviewing Officer is independent of the Fostering Service, and is situated and managed within the Safeguarding Team. The first review following approval is always presented to the Fostering Panel (Regulation 25(5)). Subsequent annual reviews may also be presented to the Fostering Panel in situations where termination of approval is sought, when significant changes in the terms of approval are being considered, where there are major concerns about suitability of the carer or following the investigation of any allegations against the carer. Rotherham has recently implemented the practice standard of the review being formally presented to panel on at least a bi-annual basis in order to re-enforce the safeguarding aspect of this process.

The main aim of the review is to determine whether the carers' approval continues to be suitable and whether there should be any changes in the terms of the registration.

The review is an opportunity to look at the progress the carer has made and to set targets and goals for the next year; within the Personal Development Plan, training, learning and development needs are also assessed and identified; a recommendation for future approval is made by the Supervising social worker and IRO.

Reviews are quality assured by Fostering managers and are presented to panel on a bi annual basis

9. Family and Friends Foster Carers

A social worker is identified in the Recruitment Team to undertake Family and Friends Assessments, including those placed under Regulation 24 (Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010). Regulation 24 placements are approved by a nominated person (the Agency Decision Maker) at the point of placement.

The Fostering Panel is notified of all placements made and full assessments are returned to the Fostering Panel for a recommendation to be made.

Recommendations from the Panel are then considered by the Agency Decision Maker.

There is an identified social worker in the Supervision Team who supports and supervises carers approved under the Family and Friends category. Family and Friends foster carers are able access the foster carer support groups, as well as being entitle to the same levels of support and training as other RMBC foster carers.

10. Training

The Fostering Service Regulations 2011 (17 (1)) states that the Fostering Service must provide foster parents with such training, advice, information and support, including support outside office hours, as appears necessary in the interests of children placed with them.

Standard 20, 'Learning and Development of Foster Carers': Outcome and National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2011 states that 'Foster carers receive the training and development they need to carry out their role effectively'.

A clear framework of training and development is in place and this is used as the basis for assessing foster carers' performance and identifying their training and development needs. Training, learning and development of foster carers are also key elements of the Foster Carers Charter.

The role of all foster carers is valued by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council; there is a strong commitment to ensure that foster carers have access to the right support and development opportunities. Training and development is an intrinsic part of fostering. Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council has a clear expectation that all foster carers will participate in training offered by the Authority as fully as possible. There is an expectation that foster carers will complete the CWDC Training, Support and Development Standards portfolio and this expectation is endorsed by Fostering Panel on approval.

These opportunities enable foster carers to meet the often complex needs of the children and young people for whom they care and to develop skills and knowledge to keep the foster family and the fostered children safe and protected.

It is also important that foster carers are able to document and evidence their skills and knowledge throughout their fostering career.

Learning and development within Rotherham Fostering Service is comprised of three tiers:

1. Pre-approval
2. Induction
3. Continual personal development

Professional Development

All foster carers are provided with their own Continual Professional Development Portfolio. This is used to record evidence of training undertaken, record self reflection on what has been learned from each developmental activity and how it affects the carer's care and practice.

The Portfolio includes the following:

- Foster Care Training Policy and Agreement
- Initial PDP
- Subsequent Reviews of the PDP
- Reflective learning logs
- Certificates
- Other relevant documents (ex. questionnaires)

It is a requirement that foster carers access a minimum of three development activities annually, at least one of which should be a face-to-face training.

The Training Policy details the elements contained in each of these tiers, the requirements of the Children's Workforce Development Council, the associated standards as well as outlining the variety of training methods employed.

Foster carers' training needs are constantly monitored by supervising social workers and formally evaluated through annual reviews of the carers' terms of approval.

Each foster carer has a Personal Development Plan, as required within Section 7 of the CWDC standards, drawn up in conjunction between the Fostering Supervising social worker and foster carer.

The Personal Development Plan is reviewed annually at the Foster Carer Review by the Independent Reviewing Officer, the foster carer and the Fostering Supervising social worker.

A Payment for Skills Scheme is in operation and foster carers can progress through the Skills Levels 1 to 3 by developing a portfolio of evidence of skills, abilities and knowledge they have in meeting the required criteria. One element of the criteria is that carers must have completed specified training or development activities, such as the Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Carers.

11. Support to Foster Carers

Fostering Supervising Social Workers

Each foster carer is linked with a supervising social worker, who visits regularly to provide support and supervision.

They monitor standards of care, encourage high standards and help the carer manage problems which arise. They are also available for telephone consultation and liaise with the social worker for the child.

Independent Support

Foster carers are eligible for individual membership of The Fostering Network. This allows them access to advice and support, including legal advice, independently of the service. In respect of support during serious allegations or complaints against foster carers, independent support is provided via Foster Talk.
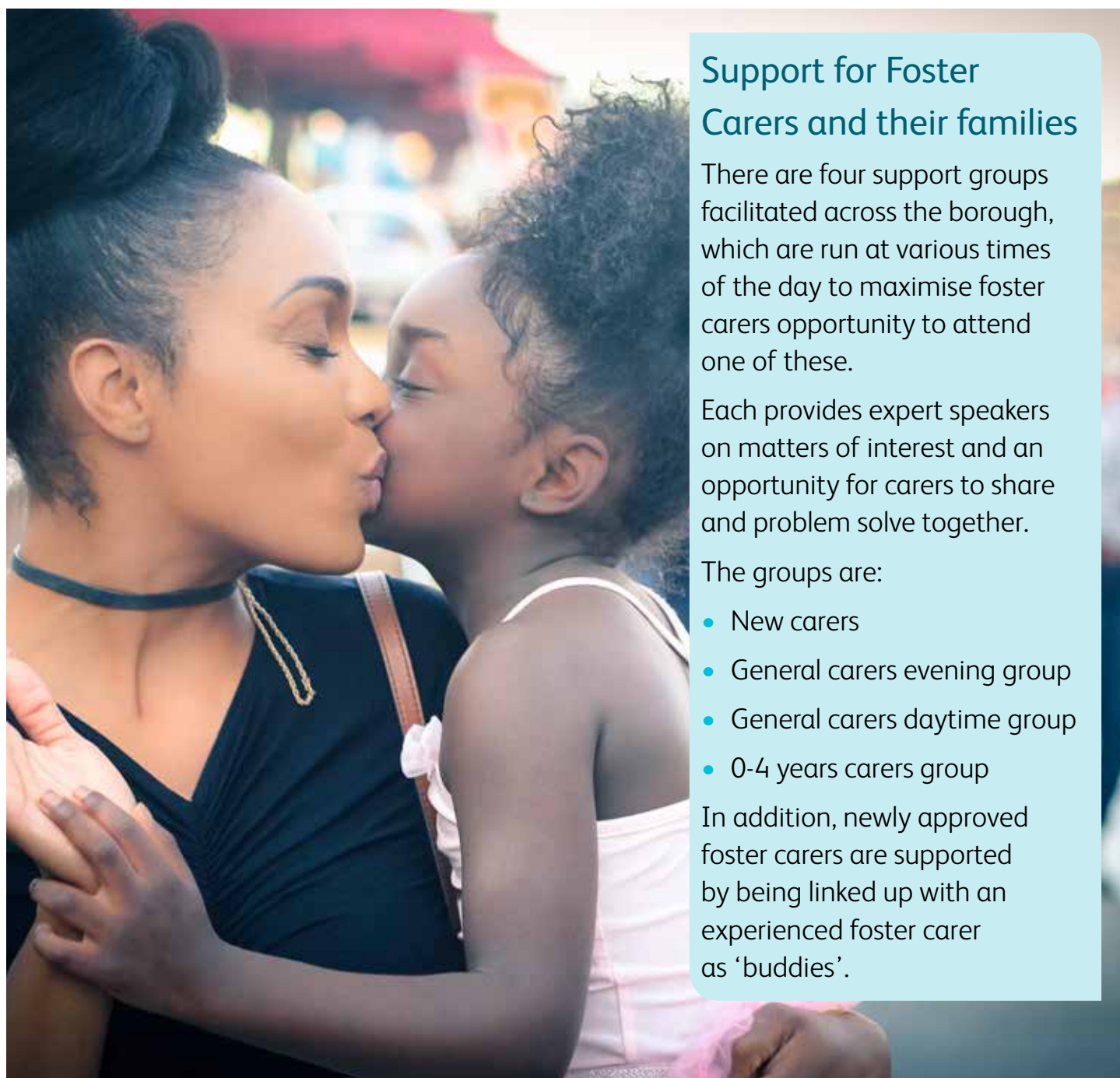
Support for Foster Carers and their families

There are four support groups facilitated across the borough, which are run at various times of the day to maximise foster carers opportunity to attend one of these.

Each provides expert speakers on matters of interest and an opportunity for carers to share and problem solve together.

The groups are:

- New carers
- General carers evening group
- General carers daytime group
- 0-4 years carers group

In addition, newly approved foster carers are supported by being linked up with an experienced foster carer as 'buddies'.

Websites

Information is available on Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's website about the fostering task, with clear links to the recruitment sites.

In addition, Rotherham Fostering also have active Facebook and Twitter account, which is used to share information about fostering and events, share success stories, and promote recruitment,

f Fostering in Rotherham

🐦 @fosterrotherham

Out of Hours Service

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council has an Out of Hours Team and foster carers can contact this team of social workers outside of office hours, should the need arise.

Rotherham Therapeutic Support Team

Therapeutic services, advice and support is provided by Rotherham's Therapeutic Support Team and by other Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) providers through a single point of access. Rotherham's Therapeutic Support Team is managed by a Clinical Psychologist.

The Virtual School

Education is a key priority for Looked After Children in Rotherham. Improving educational outcomes for Looked After Children is actively supported by the Corporate Parenting Panel. Foster carers are expected to support and encourage children in their education and develop good working relationships with the looked after child or young person's school. Rotherham has a 'Virtual School' which provides guidance and support to Looked After Children and their carers in relation to education. This team recognises that education is life-long learning, and thus provides training to foster carers on Personal Education Plans and the education of Looked After Children, including pre-school, primary, secondary education, and beyond.

Leaving Care Service

The Fostering Service works closely with the Local Authority Leaving Care Service, which is responsible for providing support and guidance to all Looked After Children post-16 years and those leaving care.

The Local Authority has recently transferred the Staying Put/Supported Lodgings Co-ordinator post to the Fostering Service with a view to increasing the number of foster carers converting to supported lodgings carers to offer Staying Put placements to young people in their care when they reach age 18. The Local Authority is committed to providing Staying Put placements to as many care leavers as possible and we see the transfer of this post into the Fostering Service as a positive development in helping us to achieve this.

In addition, the Local Authority also manages a Post-16 Accommodation Project, which includes two semi-independent homes for care leavers providing sixteen placements in total as well as several dispersed properties and an outreach service for care leavers in their own tenancies.

Health

Rotherham has a named nurse to promote the health of Looked After Children. Carers are expected to actively promote the well-being of children in their care. The Looked After Nurse provides a link into a wider LAC Health Team to ensure effective co-ordination and delivery of Health Services to Looked After Children.

In addition, Rotherham also has a named nurse specifically to meet the health needs of children subject to CSE.

Child's Social Worker

Social workers for children in placement have an important role to play in supporting foster carers. The dedicated Looked After Children's Social Work Team ensures this support is consistent. They provide essential information about the child and family background, inform the foster carer about the plans for the child and involve them in the care planning process. It is an important part of their role to represent the wishes and feelings of the child, especially where the child is very young and less able to do this him/herself.

The child's social worker carries out statutory requirements in relation to the child, including statutory visits, ensuring reviews and medicals take place and that the plans for the child are progressed without delay.

Annual Events

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council fostering services works closely with foster carers to organise and host a variety of inclusive social events throughout the year. These include parties, picnics and an annual Pride of Rotherham Awards event that recognises the achievements of looked after children and young people.

The purpose of these events is to thank carers for all their hard work and acknowledge their dedication to children and families. It is also an opportunity for carers to meet with one another, with Children and Young People's Services' staff and Elected Members in a pleasant and informal setting.

Consultation with Foster Carers

Consultation with foster carers takes place on a number of levels, at training events, at support groups and in surveys focusing on specific topics.

One recent example of a consultation with carers was a consultation meeting called for all carers about the development of additional foster carers support groups. Foster carers told us that they wanted:

- A choice of which support group they could attend
- Attendance linked to progression
- Time and space to informally chat to and support each other

In addition, carers participating in the consultation supported the Service's plan to develop two new support groups.

Right2Rights Service

Rotherham's Right2Rights (R2R) actively seeks to work directly with all Looked After Children; they provide an individual advocacy service, facilitate involvement in voice and influence opportunities and provide information in creative and imaginative ways. Their work includes supporting Young Rights Representatives, such as the Orchard Flyers, which is a rights group for children and young people who access Disability Short Break Services at the Orchard Centre.

R2R encourage Looked After Children to contribute to their statutory review by supporting their attendance and the development of personal skills and understanding of the process. They have developed initiatives such as the Online Review Form, where each child receives a letter prior to their review encouraging them to fill in a consultation paper and the process to follow. Looked After Children can communicate with this service via telephone, text messaging, communication cards and e mail links via the R2R website.

12. Structure of the Fostering Service

The Rotherham Fostering Service reports to the Members of the Council. The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services is Councillor Gordon Watson.

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                        ┌─────────────────┐
                        │   LAC Head      │
                        │   of Service    │
                        └─────────────────┘
                                │
                ┌───────────────┴────┐          ┌──────────────┐
                │ Service Manager    │ - - - - -│  Business    │
                │ Fostering          │          │  Support     │
                └────────────────────┘          └──────────────┘
```

- **LAC Head of Service**
  - **Service Manager Fostering** ---- **Business Support**
    - **Specialist Team Manager**
      - **Duty Worker**
      - **Training Co-ordinator**
      - **Specialist Social Workers x 5**
    - **Fostering Supervision Manager**
      - **Supervising Social Workers x 9**
      - **Support Worker**
    - **Recruitment Team Manager**
      - **Marketing Officers x 1.5**
      - **Social Workers x 5**
      - **Fostering Advisor**

Mockingbird Family Model

Virtual Recruitment Team

All managers in the service hold a social work qualification, as well as management qualifications and post qualification experience in services for children.

13. Staff in the Fostering Service

The Fostering Service has four key teams:

The Fostering Recruitment Team – Responsible for recruiting and assessing new foster carers.

The Specialist Fostering and Permanency Assessment Team – Responsible for assessing and supervising foster carers in our specialist categories: Regulation 24; Staying Put; Families Together; Private Fostering and Foster Plus.

The Fostering Supervision Team – Responsible for supervising general foster carers.

Business support – The service receives administrative and business support from a team of support staff.

In addition the service has two marketing and communications officers and a training coordinator.

The staff of the Fostering Service are recruited and managed following the principles of positive selection, supervision, induction and appraisal processes of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and incorporating practice outlined in the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and the National Minimum Standards 2011.

All social workers within the team have a social work qualification and previous experience of working with children and families and are subject to Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's corporate standards for continuous professional development.

All staff are subject to the Council policy on recruitment, staffing, equal opportunities and discipline. All social workers are subject to enhanced D.B.S. checks; administrative staff have D.B.S. checks.

14. Monitoring, Evaluation and Management of the Service

Regular performance and statistical information is collected in relation to the work of the Fostering Service. Performance information about the Service is reported to the Fostering Panel and Agency Decision Maker, the Director of Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting and Elected Members via the Corporate Parenting Panel.

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 LAC Placement Sufficiency Strategy has been created to address the council's approach to meeting the needs of it's looked after children and young people.

A number of quality assurance measures are in place to monitor the quality of the Fostering Services.

- Fostering Panels are Chaired by an Independent Person and regular liaison takes place between the Chair of the Panel and the Fostering Service to identify any quality assurance issues and training requirements;

- Reviews of foster carers are undertaken by a Foster Carer Reviewing Officer and these are presented to Foster Panel bi-annually. This was a change in practice in 2016 – 2017 when previously Reviews were presented at panel in line with National Minimum Standards, namely following the first year of fostering, change in circumstances or following a safeguarding investigation. The aim of this is to ensure best practice with Panel having greater scrutiny over the practice and compliance of the service.

- All papers presented to the Panel are quality assured by the relevant Team Manager and the Fostering Panel Advisor;

- Foster carers have access to the complaints procedure;

- File audits are undertaken by the Fostering Managers within a Quality Assurance Framework;

- A Supervision Performance Audit Tool has been devised and is placed on the front of each foster carer's file to ensure relevant checks are up-to-date and that actions from reviews have been completed;

- The Fostering Service has and will continue to undertake periodic satisfaction surveys of foster carers; in addition, the CYPS Performance Team undertakes satisfaction surveys of newly-approved foster carers and 'journey mapping' activity of both prospective and registered foster carers;

- All staff have regular supervision and annual Performance Development Reviews.

15. Equalities and Diversity Issues

The Rotherham Fostering Service is committed to promoting Equal Opportunities in every aspect of its service. Training on equality and diversity is strongly promoted during the preparation process for new foster carers and forms part of the assessment. Ongoing training on equality and diversity is provided to all approved foster carers.

The need to recruit foster carers who are representative of the general population is reflected in the recruitment and retention strategy for foster carers, with a particular emphasis on the developmental work with the black and ethnic communities of Rotherham. All promotional material makes it clear that foster carers from across the population are needed, including same sex carers, older carers and carers from the black and minority ethnic communities. Management information in the gender, race and disability of existing foster carers is analysed on a regular basis.

The Service has succeeded in recent years in increasing the number of carers in the Service who are from different ethnic minority backgrounds and in recruiting same sex foster carer couples.

Specialised Fostering Services for children with disabilities are provided through the Families Together Scheme. Management information on race, gender and disability of the children requiring a fostering service are analysed on a regular basis.

16. Allegations against Foster Carers

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and the Fostering Service:

- Recognise the crucial role that foster carers play in looking after its most vulnerable children;

- Acknowledge that Looked After Children may exhibit behaviour that can be damaging, both to themselves and those around them;

- Acknowledge that dealing with Child Protection concerns, serious incidents and complaints is a stressful and difficult time for foster carers and their families;

- Will ensure that enquiries are progressed in a way that is fair and open to the carer and their family as well as to the child;

- Will ensure that decisions and actions are taken without delay and in line with legislative and Local Authority timescales;

- Ensure that foster carers have immediate access to information and advice from an independent support if there is an allegation against them or the Fostering Service has informed them that they have a serious concern about their practice or standards of care. (NMS 22);

- Ensure that foster carers are prepared, through pre-approval training and assessment, of the possibility that allegations could be made against them.

All allegations of abuse made by children against foster carers, or members of the foster carers' family, are thoroughly investigated in an unbiased way. Local procedures for handling child protection allegations are followed.

The investigation is evidenced based and takes a balanced view of the allegation; unfounded allegations are sometimes made. A decision as to how to proceed will be made which will be in the best interests of the child.

Where a complaint against a foster carer constitutes a safeguarding allegation, this is dealt with as a safeguarding enquiry under Section 47 of the Children Act, 1989, and is investigated under safeguarding procedures.

17. Complaints and Compliments

The Children Act, 1989, requires Local Authorities to have a robust procedure for investigating complaints made by young people receiving Social Care services or complaints made by adults on their behalf.

The complaints procedure is viewed as a useful tool for indicating where services may need adjusting. It is a positive aid to inform and influence service improvements, not a negative process to apportion blame.

The complaints procedure consists of three stages;

Stage 1 is based on local resolution, where staff and the complainant discuss and attempt to address the complaint within ten working days with an additional ten working days for more complex issues or if an advocate is required.

Stage 2 involves an investigation into the circumstances of the complaint. This is carried out by the Children's Complaint Investigating Officer who reports their findings and conclusions and makes recommendations to an Adjudicating Officer. In addition, an Independent Person is engaged to oversee the investigation to ensure that the process is open, transparent and fair. The Adjudicating Officer is responsible for deciding on the report recommendations. This process should take twenty five working days with a permitted maximum of sixty five working days.

Stage 3 involves a Review Panel giving further consideration to the complaint. The Panel consists of three independent people. The Panel must be convened and operating within thirty working days, it has five working days to issue findings and the Local Authority must respond within fifteen working days.

Wherever possible, complaints are dealt with informally. Where appropriate, in the first instance, any complaint by or against a foster carer will be dealt with on a problem-solving basis. There is a written procedure given to all foster carers as part of the Fostering Handbook. The Council has both corporate and Children's Services Complaints Procedures that operate if no resolution can be achieved at the problem solving stage.

Where a complaint against a foster carer constitutes a safeguarding allegation, this is dealt with as a safeguarding enquiry under Section 47 of the Children Act, 1989, and is investigated under Safeguarding procedures.

Our children's guide is specifically designed for children and young people which advise them what to do if they have a complaint.

Regular monitoring reports on the numbers and outcomes are presented to Children and Young People's Services' Management Team and an annual report is received by the Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Compliments: We need to know when we are performing to, and beyond your expectations. Please email **fostering@rotherham.gov.uk** with your positive feedback.

18. Fostering Service Details

The Fostering Service is based at:

Riverside House
Main Street
Rotherham
S60 1AE

Tel: 01709 382121
Email: fostering@rotherham.gov.uk
Website: www.rotherham.gov.uk/fostering

19. Useful Contacts

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's Fostering Services are regulated by Ofsted.

Ofsted
Tel : 08456 404045
Email : commshelpdesk@ofsted.gov.uk
Website: https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

Childline
Tel: 0800 1111
Website: www.childline.org.uk

The Office of the Children's Commissioner
Tel: 020 7783 8330
Email: info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

The Fostering Statement of Purpose is reviewed and updated annually by the Fostering Service and modified as necessary. If you have any comments or suggestions in relation to this document or the Fostering Service please email: fostering@rotherham.gov.uk

20. Signatories

Signed: _____   Date: _____

Cllr Gordon Watson
Cabinet Member

Signed: _____   Date: _____

Mel Megs
Acting Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Service

Signed: _____   Date: _____

Ian Walker
Head of Service, Children in Care

Signed: _____   Date: _____

Emma Darby
Foster Carer Representative

www.rotherham.gov.uk/fostering

or call 01709 823976

Fostering in Rotherham

@fosterrotherham

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Summary Sheet

Council Report
Corporate Parenting Panel

Title: Rotherham Adoption Service Annual Report 2017/18

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

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report
Mel Meggs (Deputy Strategic Director CYPS)

Report Author(s)
Helen Mangham   (Team Manager – Adoption)

Ward(s) Affected All

List of Appendices Included:　　　Annual Adoption Report 2017/18

Background Papers:　　　None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel
Corporate Parenting Panel

Council Approval Required:　　　No

Exempt from the Press and Public:　　No

1. **Background**

    1.1   This report is an annual report to brief on the business and activity within the Council's Adoption Service in 2017/18.

    1.2   The report provides performance and activity data on the service, reports on the activity and functioning of the Adoption Panel, and details service developments that have occurred in the year and those that are planned moving through 2018/19.

2. **Recommendations**

    2.1   That CPP receives the Adoption Annual Report 2017/18, considers its makes comment on any issues arising

3. Key Issues

    3.1   The service continues to achieve adoption for a high number of Looked after children including harder to place children with 27 children being adopted in 2017/18. Tracking and monitoring of adoption plans continues to ensure a timely response to adoption and early identification of areas of delay so swift action can be taken to address this.

    3.2   In this adoption year, the service has been successful in achieving adoption for a wide range of children who are considered 'harder to place' due to age, disability, ethnicity or part of a sibling group. 29.6% were children considered to be harder to place.

    3.3   Rotherham Adoption Team has continued to promote early permanence planning for children with seven Early Permanence Placements (EPP) being made in 2017/18.

    3.4   Performance on the 2 key Adoption Scorecards has improved this year with timeliness for children improving against both measures and A1 being 110 days below the target measure of 426 days and A2 being only 3.7 days over the target measure of 121 days.

    3.5   Rotherham Adoption Service has successfully supported adoptive families by accessing the Adoption Support Fund, with 65 families (72 children) benefiting from therapeutic support packages in 2017/18 equating to £315,681.87 secured funding from ASF.

    3.6   Two adoption placements disrupted in 2017/18 for 3 children. Independent disruption reviews identified lessons learned and these have been implemented. The plan for the single child has changed to Long Term Fostering in recognition of his significant attachment and behaviour needs. Family Finding is ongoing for the sibling group of 2 with potential families identified.

3.7 The Panel has operated successfully and plays a key quality assurance role. The quality of CPRs has been variable and the Quality Assurance Group has been introduced to improve consistent quality.

4. Improvement and Development for 2018/19 onwards

4.1 We will continue to strive to improve and develop our service over 2018 – 2019. Adoption has a key role to play within our overall Looked after Children and Care Leavers Strategy and the Right Child Right Care strategy. Key improvement actions include:

- Recruit more adopters who are able to meet the needs of children with an adoption plan.
- Increase number of Early Permanence Placements available and the use of EPP to include consideration for older children.
- Improve the timeliness of the adoption journey for both children and applicant adopters through robust tracking.
- Improve the quality of assessments.
- Improve the quality of post adoption support plans.
- Continued access to Adoption Support Fund to ensure that adoption therapeutic support needs are best met.
- Use training, supervision, tracking meetings, legal gateway meetings and Public Law Outline to promote adoption best practice and ensure that timely planning and achieving permanence is prioritised.
- Address changes needed to Transition planning in line with research and practice.
- Review and improve the quality of life story work
- Engage in the ongoing development of the South Yorkshire Regional Adoption Agency

5. Options considered and recommended proposal:
   To note content and raise any challenge

6. Consultation
   Not applicable

7. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision
   Not applicable

8. Financial and Procurement Implications
   8.1 There are no direct financial implications to this report. The Adoption Team, in conjunction with Service Manager and Head of Service continues to monitor the Adoption Team spend in line with RMBC finance team. Rotherham Adoption Team's current projected spend is within budget, but there may be overspend on the interagency budget. The mitigating factor here is that Rotherham are committed to making timely placements to ensure that there is no drift for children in care when the plan is adoption. The establishment of the South Yorkshire Regional Adoption Agency aims to reduce interagency fees.

8.2 Outturn figures for 2017-18 were as follows:

Service Costs	2017/18 Budget	2017/18 Actual	Variance
Adoption Team	954,132	845,574	(108,558)
Adoption Allowances	1,030,746	985,529	(45,217)
Inter Agency Adoption Placements	508,496	403,281	(105,215)
TOTAL	**2,493,374**	**2,234,384**	**(258,990)**

9. Legal Implications

9.1 There are no direct legal implications to this report, save to say that the Adoption Team operate within appropriate legislation, such as the Children Act 1989, Adoption and Children Act 2002, Adoption Regulations, Statutory Guidance and RMBC policy and procedures.

10. Human Resources Implications

10.1 There are no direct human resource implications to this report.

11. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

11.1 The Adoption Team Performance Report 2017 – 2018 relates to services for looked after children where the plan has been adoption, the recruitment and assessment of adopters, matching and placing adoptive children and securing permanency for children with their adoptive families.

12. Equalities and Human Rights Implications

12.1 There are no direct implications within this report, other than to say that the Adoption Team are compliant with the Human Rights Act and Equal Opportunities Policy.

13. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

13.1 Not applicable.

14. Risks and Mitigation

14.1 Inability and lack of engagement in performance and management arrangements by managers and staff could lead to drift and delay for looked after children where the plan is adoption. The Right Child Right Care initiative will alleviate this risk alongside continued ongoing good managerial oversight and quality assurance. In addition, there needs to be good management oversight regarding the recruitment and assessment of adopters to ensure smooth running of the adoption process. Rotherham Adoption Scorecard and scorecard tracking meetings enable clear planning for children where the plan is adoption. Strong managerial oversight by Directorship Leadership Team along with fortnightly Performance Management Meetings mitigates risks by holding managers and workers to account for

practice and enabling a climate for managers to check and challenge practice across services.

15. Accountable Officer(s)

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

Ian Walker Head of Services, Children in Care
Ian.Walker@rotherham.gov.uk

Approvals Obtained from:-

Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services:- Patricia Phillipson

Director of Legal Services:- Neil Concannon

Head of Human Resources:- Amy Leech

Name and Job Title.
Helen Mangham   Team Manager, Adoption
Jill Stanley   Team Manager, Adoption
Anne-Marie Banks   Service Manager, Adoption, Fostering and Therapeutic Team
Ian Walker   Head of Services, Children in Care

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

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

Rotherham Adoption Service

Annual Report

2017/18

1. **Introductions**

   1.1 This report is an annual report to brief on the business and activity within the Council's Adoption Service in 2017/18.

   2.2 The report provides performance and activity data on the service, reports on the activity and functioning of the Adoption Panel, and details service developments that have occurred in the year and those that are planned moving through 2018/19.

2. **The Adoption Service**

   3.1 Rotherham Borough Council Adoption Service operates within the regulatory framework of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (as amended); Adoption Agency Regulations; the associated Statutory Guidance 2014 and the National Minimum Standards 2014.

   3.2 Prior to September 2013, Adoption Agencies were inspected separately by Ofsted. Since then, inspection of adoption work is incorporated into the Single Inspection Framework which includes a graded judgement on adoption. In November 2017, Ofsted undertook an inspection within the Single Inspection Framework and the Children's Services overall rating was Good with adoption performance rated as 'Good' and achieving an Annex O, (outstanding) for the bespoke Family and Supporters training.

   3.3 The Adoption Service undertakes the recruitment, assessment and approval of prospective adopters, family finding and matching children and approved adoptive parents, supports and supervises adoption placements and provides post adoption support services.

   3.4 In line with the Regulations, the service has an Adoption Panel chaired by a skilled and experienced independent social work professional. The panel considers and makes recommendations about the suitability of adopters and on the matching of children requiring adoption with approved adopters. The panel also considers the 'should be placed for adoption' decision (referred to as the SHOBPA) for children relinquished by their birth parents.

3.5 The Assistant Strategic Director for Children's Social Care performs the role of Agency Decision Maker for the Adoption Service, (referred to as the ADM). The Agency Decision Maker considers and makes decisions on whether or not children should be placed for adoption, and following consideration and recommendation by the Adoption Panel, on the suitability of applicant adopters and the suitability of a match between a specific child and approved adopters, having considered the Adoption Panel's recommendation in each case.

4. Activity in the Adoption Service in 2017/18
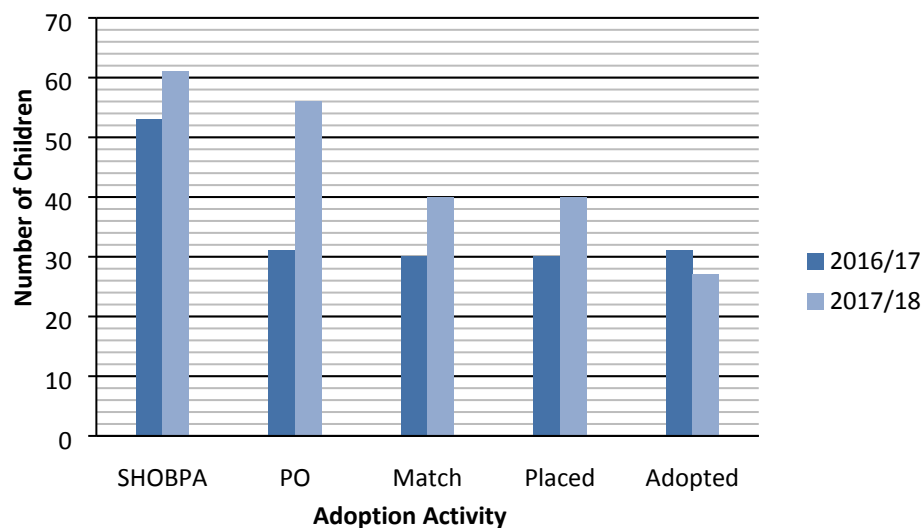
4.1 Should be placed for Adoption Decisions

4.1.1 The decision by a Local Authority that a looked after child SHOBPA is a decision made by the Local Authority's Agency Decision Maker for Adoption based on the social worker's report, known as the 'Child's Permanence Report', legal and medical advice and any other relevant supporting evidence.

4.1.2 In 2017/18 61 SHOBPA decisions were made. This is an increase in the number of children having an adoption plan compared to 2016/17 when 53 children received a SHOBPA decision. The increase in Shobpa decisions reflects the increase in the number of Looked After Children and more timely decision making by the children's Social

Work Teams. This increase is in line with the national increase in the number of children with an Adoption plan.

4.2 Placement Orders

4.2.1 A Placement Order is an Order made by the Court which endorses a child's plan for adoption (following the SHOBPA decision made by the Local Authority) and allows for the child to be legally placed with approved adoptive parents.

4.2.2 In 2017/18 Placement Orders were made in respect of 56 children compared with 31 Placement Orders made in 2016/17. This increase reflects the increase nationally in the number of Placement Orders being granted. Of the 61 children who had SHOBPA decisions made 2017/18 (reported in 4.1.2), 11 children are still in proceedings and therefore Placement Orders have not yet been granted. 45 children have had Placement Orders granted and 5 children's plans have been revoked (a sibling group of 3 children and a sibling group of 2 children) as they have been placed with family members.

4.3 Adopter Approvals

4.3.1 Individuals or couples who wish to adopt a looked after child must first be approved as suitable to adopt. Applicant adopters are assessed by the adoption team and the Adoption Panel makes recommendations on the applicant's suitability and provides advice to the agency on matching criteria. The Agency Decision Maker makes the final decision on suitability.

4.3.2 Performance on recruiting prospective adopters who wish to adopt a looked after child has been maintained this year with a calendar of recruitment events throughout the year. The number of enquiries to the agency in 2017/18 was 146 compared to 151 in 2016/17. A refreshed recruitment campaign, a press campaign for a sibling group of 4 and regular publicised monthly drop in sessions have all contributed to maintaining adopter enquiries. The number of 'Registration of Interests' received has increased from 25 in 2016/17 to 30 in 2017/18. Of these, 9 prospective Adopter households have been approved, 9

are in Stage 1, 7 in Stage 2 and 5 have withdrawn. 10 prospective adopters withdrew in total this year. 9 of the families have been counselled out by the assessing social worker following concerns raised in either Stage 1 or Stage 2 of the process. This included concerns about information shared by referee, current family circumstances and uncertainties, poor understanding of a child's needs and inability to prioritise these, length and stability of relationship, openness regarding finances and concern about ability to meet longer term needs of a specific child. 1 couple withdrew following approval due to an unexpected pregnancy.

Recruitment Activity 2 Year Comparison

	Enquiries	ROI	Approvals
■ 2016/17	151	25	18
■ 2017/18	146	30	14
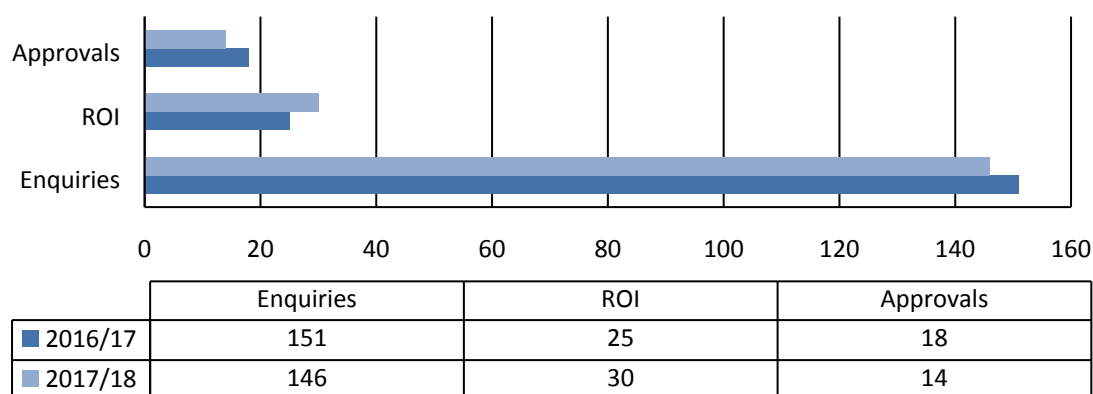
4.3.3 The Agency is ensuring that whilst prospective adopters enquiring are being given a positive welcome, the messages being shared about adoption and the children available for adoption are realistic. The agency is clear about the qualities and skills needed by prospective adopters in order to successfully parent children who have experienced separation, loss and early childhood trauma and use this knowledge and experience to counsel out prospective adopters at the earliest stage.

4.3.4 The number of adopters the agency has approved in 2017/18 is 14 compared to 18 approved in 2016/17. The agency recognises that there is a need to recruit and approve more adopters particularly for larger sibling groups. Information from the other 3 Local Authorities in South Yorkshire, Doncaster, Sheffield and Barnsley indicates that the

number of adopters approved by Sheffield and Barnsley has reduced slightly with Doncaster approving slightly more than the previous year. The total number of adopter approvals across the South region is 71 for the year. This reflects the national picture of more children waiting and less adopters approved. Nevertheless, whilst outside there has been an improvement in performance in year end 18/19. In this reporting year there have been 10 adopters approved, with a further 6 in stage one of the process and 7 in stage 2 and the service is therefore projecting that by end year 18/19, 23 adopter approvals will have been made.

Projection for 2018-19
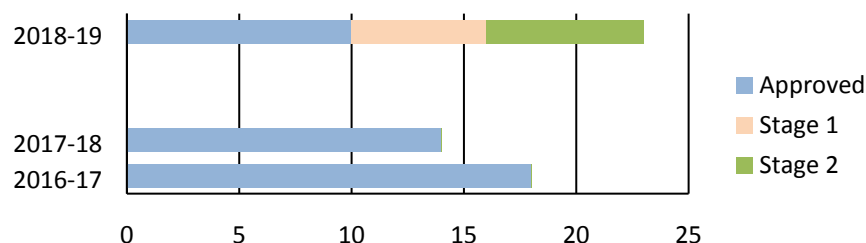
4.3.5 Whilst the 10 withdrawals may appear a loss to the service, and a strain on resource in terms of social worker assessment time, the aim of this assessment process is to ensure that the adoption service is confident that adopters approved are resilient to care for Rotherham children throughout their childhood and into adulthood. At the same time, potential adopters are guided through this process in a thorough but empathic way to enable them to come to the decision, in partnership with the service that adoption at this time is not right for them and this strategy manifests itself in a very low disruption rate .

4.3.6 Rotherham Adoption Team remains committed to increasing the number of adopters approved. To achieve this, there has been a refreshed recruitment campaign utilising social media to recruit adopters for individual children and sibling groups of all ages with an adoption plan and an increase in adoption recruitment activity around Rotherham this reporting year. Whilst outside this reporting year, the trajectory is promising with 10 prospective adopters approved to date.

Projection is for a further 10 to be approved bringing the total projection to 20 for 2018/19. This is an increase of 6 families.

4.4 Timeliness of assessment of prospective adopters

4.4.1   The average time between Registration of Interest and Agency Decision for the 14 adopter approvals in 2017/18 was 208 days, compared to the previous year's average of 192 days. The Agency Decision Maker requires the paperwork and panel minutes 7 days to enable careful consideration and decision making which has led to the slight increase in average time. Since the introduction of the two stage process the timeliness for adopter assessments has declined mainly due to the delay experienced in Stage 1. The agency has no control over the timeliness of medicals, DBS or availability of referees. However, after reporting the delays in receiving DBS results in November 2017 there has been a significant improvement in this. The timeliness of Stage 1 is adopter led and includes an opportunity for adopters to take a break of up to 6 months between Stage 1 and Stage 2 which impacts on the overall timeliness. In 2017/18 2 families took a break between Stage 1 and Stage 2 which has impacted on the overall timeliness of adopter approval.
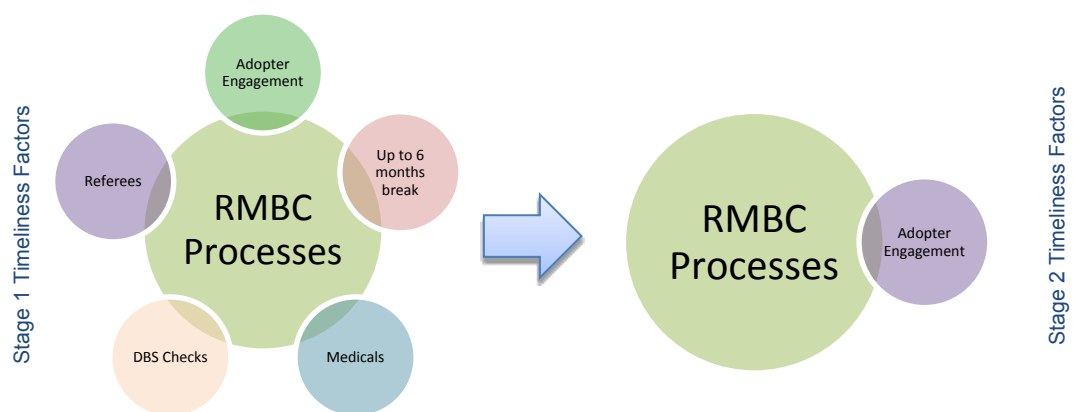
4.4.2 28.5% of adopter assessments were completed within the 6 month timescale in 2017/18 compared to 56% in 2016/17. The main delay being in Stage 1 due to DBS, with no Stage 1's being completed within

timescale this year. By comparison 93% of Stage 2 assessments, where the agency have control of the process were completed within timescale.

4.5 Matches Approved

4.5.1 Rotherham Adoption Service has one full time and two part time Family Finders who work in partnership with the child's social worker to identify the most suitable approved adopters for each child needing adoption in a timely manner. Before a child can be placed with approved adopters the suitability of the match must be considered at the Adoption Panel, with the final decision resting with the Agency Decision Maker.

4.5.2 In 2017/18 the service matched 40 children with adoptive families. This compares with 30 matches in 2016/17.   The increase in number of children matched and placed reflects the increase in Placement Orders being granted.

4.6 Children Placed for Adoption

4.6.1 Once a match between a child and approved adopters has been approved, the service may proceed to legally place that child with those adopters. In 2017/18, the number of children who were placed for adoption was 40. In 2016/17, the number placed was 30 children.

4.7 Children Adopted

4.7.1 Once a child is placed for adoption, the adopters must wait a minimum ten week period before they can apply to the Court for an Adoption Order to legally adopt the child. Once an Adoption Order is granted the adopters obtain full parental responsibility for the child.

4.7.2 In 2017/18 there were 27 looked after children adopted in comparison to 31 in the previous year. The Adoption Service had predicted an increase in Adoption Orders for 2017/18 however; there has been an increase in the number of Adoption Applications being contested and applications to revoke Placement Orders which usually serves only to delay the adoption process. However, despite this, no children had their Placement Orders revoked and whilst there was delay in the Adoption Orders being granted

these children have subsequently been adopted. In addition, changes have been made to the Court process for Adoption Orders including an additional hearing and subsequent 28 day appeal period. These changes have impacted on the number of Adoption Orders granted.

4.8 The Percentage of Children Leaving Care via Adoption

4.8.1 14.21% of children left care via adoption in Rotherham in 2017/18. Slightly less than the previous years amended figure of 15.2%. The children's tracker meetings continue to be held to measure performance of children with an adoption plan, to prevent drift and delay. This information is shared in fortnightly performance meetings, and has had a positive impact in forward planning for children whose plan is adoption. Right Children, Right Care tracking is also supporting timely adoption of children providing senior manager oversight. It is likely that the number of Adoption Orders will increase in 2018/19 as more children have been placed due to the reasons outlined in 4.5.2.

Children Leaving Care

	Adopted	All Other
2016-17	15%	85%
2017-18	14%	86%

■ Adopted   ■ All Other
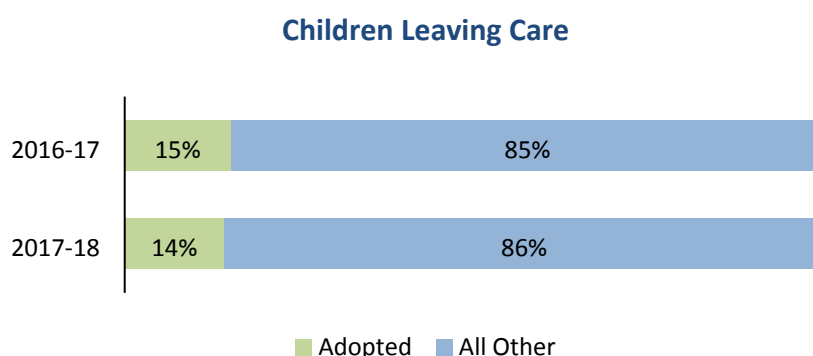
4.8.2 The table below demonstrates the number and percentage of children adopted from care in 2017/18 as compared to statistics from previous dataset year. The table also examines the adoption of 'difficult to place' children.

4.8.3 Of the 27 children adopted, 20 were female and 7 were male. 24 children were of white British origin and 3 children were of BME backgrounds, 1 sibling groups of 2 children, 3 children with disabilities, 1 child aged 5 or over.

Number of children adopted in Rotherham in 2016/17	31
Number of children adopted in Rotherham 2017/18	27
Percentage of children leaving care via adoption in Rotherham in 2016/17	15.2%
The percentage of children leaving care via adoption in Rotherham in 2017/18	14.21%
Percentage of children from the 27 adoption orders who were 'harder to place'	29.6%

5. Timeliness of Adoption

5.1.1 The service has been striving to achieve adoption for children for whom it is in their best interests, in a timely manner. Children should be supported through their journey through care and to their adoptive family without delay so they can benefit from being placed with their adoptive parents at as young an age as possible, enabling the bonding and attachment process to begin.

5.1.2 The Government recognises the need for timeliness in adoption and has been measuring Local Authority performance on timeliness with their 'Adoption Scorecard' measures for several years now.

5.2 Adoption Scorecard Measure 1

5.2.1 Adoption Scorecard Measure 1, measures the number of days on average that it takes for children who have been adopted to move from first coming into care to being placed for adoption with adoptive families. The Government target on this measure is 426 days.

5.2.2 Rotherham's performance in 2017/18 was 316 days. In 2016/17 for children adopted it was 379 days. 81% of children adopted met the A1 measure

5.3 Adoption Scorecard Measure 2

5.3.1 Adoption Scorecard Measure 2, measures the number of days on average it takes for adopted children to move from being made subject to a

Placement Order to them having a match with adopted parents agreed by the Agency Decision Maker. The Government target on this measure is 121 days.

5.3.2 Rotherham's performance in 2017/18 for children adopted was 124.7 days; a significant improvement on the 232 days average the previous year. 70% of children adopted met the A2 measure.

Timeliness Measures
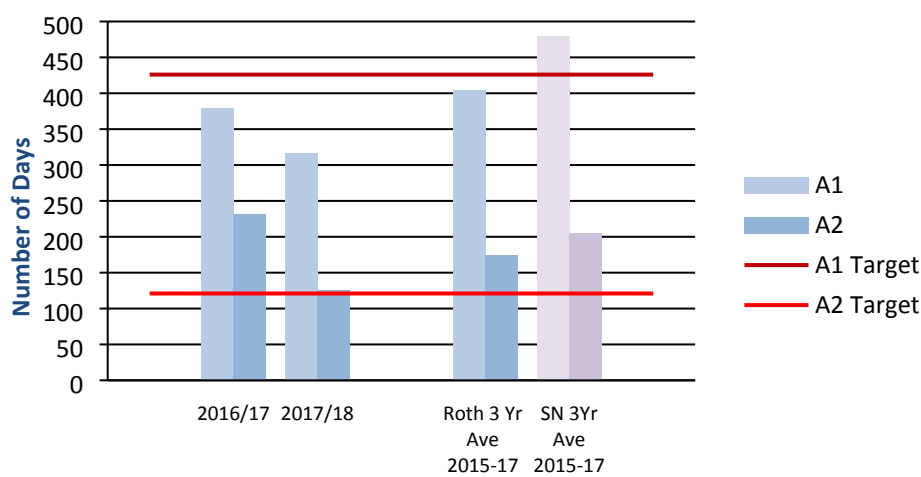
6. **Family Finding**

6.1 The service has one full time and two part time family finding social workers who are supported by a family finding co-ordinator.

6.2 The service strives to provide as many adoption placements as possible from its own recruited adoptive families but where there is a shortfall of in-house adopters, or a child's needs cannot be met by RMBC recruited families, this is identified prior to the SHOBPA decision so that regional and national family finding can commence. The team will strive to find a suitable family in the region and across the whole country through families approved by other Local Authorities and by Voluntary Agencies.

6.3 Rotherham utilises all resources available to secure adoptive placements for children where this is their plan. This includes Adoption Match (previously known as the National Adoption Register), Link Maker, Exchange days, Activity days and arranges local profiling events. In April the Adoption Team arranged and facilitated a Fun Day (similar to an Activity Day) where 32 children with an

Adoption Plan attended, supported by their foster carers and social workers. Invites to adopters locally and nationally were sent and 17 families have attended.

6.4 In 2017/18 when placing a child with adopters approved by another Local Authority or a Voluntary Adoption Agency we are required to pay an inter-agency fee of £27,000 for one child, £43,000 for a sibling group of two, and £54,000 for a sibling group of three children. This fee increased on 1st April 2018 to £31,000, £50,000 and £68,000 for Voluntary Adoption agency placements. In 2017/18 Rotherham Adoption Service had 3 adoptive families where children were placed from other Local Authorities equating to a fee to be received of £81,000.

6.5 Of the 41 children matched for adoption in 2017/18:

- 19 were matched with in-house approved adopters
- 16 were matched with voluntary adoption agency adopters (8 single children and 4 sibling groups of 2) equating to a cost of £378,000
- 6   were matched with other Local Authority adopters (all single children) equating to a cost of £172,000

6.6 As of 31st March 2018 there are 48 children with an adoption plan where family finding is ongoing. Of the 48 children 37 have a Placement Order. The child waiting the longest has had a placement order for 1003 days. He is an older child with disabilities. A potential match had previously been identified however the family withdrew following an informal pre-match introduction, ("bump into" meeting), when the extent of his complex needs became a reality for them. This child's permanency plan has subsequently changed to long term fostering, and he has since been formally long term matched at Fostering Panel in July 2018 and an application to revoke his Placement Order is being made. For children with a Placement Order not yet placed the average time waiting in days for a match since granting of Placement Order is currently 186.6 days.

7. Early Permanence Placements (Fostering to Adopt Placements)

7.1 Rotherham Adoption Service continues to promote Early Permanence Planning and the use of Early Permanence placements. Early Permanence is extremely positive for the child and the Adoption Agency ensures that the adopters are comprehensively prepared and supported to manage the risks.

The use of Early Permanence has contributed to overall performance in improving timeliness. Rotherham Adoption Service is recognised as being a regional practice lead in Early Permanence Provision.

7.2   Rotherham Adoption Service has 3 Early Permanence Champions who alongside the Adoption Team Manager work closely with sw's to identify children who can benefit from Early Permanence Planning.

7.3   There are currently 8 children in Early Permanence Placements. 5 of the children adopted in 2017/18 experienced early permanence placements. The average time from becoming looked after to being adopted for these children is 257 days, compared to 560 days for the 22 children who did not experience Early Permanence. This demonstrates the positive impact EPP has in securing permanence at the earliest opportunity.

8. The Adoption Panel

8.1 Panel Member Training

8.1.1 It is a legislative requirement that there is at least one training day annually for Panel members. Panel members in 2017/18 received joint training with the Adoption Team on the Impact of Early Childhood Trauma on children.

8.1.2 The Adoption Panel members are committed to their learning and development. Training offered is always well attended and well received.

8.2 Panel Business

8.2.1 During 2017/18 the Adoption Panel considered and made recommendations in respect of matches for 40 children and approval of 14 prospective adopters.

8.3 Quality Assurance of Reports to Panel

8.3.1 The Adoption Panel plays a key quality assurance role for the service, providing feedback on the quality of reports it is asked to consider. The reports include Child Permanence Reports, (CPR's), matching reports and post adoption support plans and Prospective Adopter Reports.

8.3.2 During 2017/18 there has been 2 adoption disruptions in Rotherham; a single child and a sibling group of 2 children. Independent disruption reviews have been completed and the findings shared with the Adoption Panel, the Adoption Team and LAC 4 and 5. Presenting themes in both instances noted that there needed to be a clear and robust analysis of the potential impact on child/ren as a result of loss and change from placement disruptions, and the impact of early life history and trauma on child development and attachment, and that this needed to be clearly identified and explored as part of matching of children with adopters. Trauma impact analysis is now explored by the child's social worker and recorded in the CPR, which is scrutinised by the service in the Quality Assurance Meetings, chaired by Service Managers from both Adoption and LAC 4 & 5. In addition, the Adoption Life Appreciation Day Chair also ensures that adopters fully understand the impact of the child's lived experienced on development and how this may impact on the child both currently and in the future. The Adoption Service have also refreshed transition planning, in particular for older children, where there is an extended period of introductions that entails greater involvement from the foster carer as the child says goodbye to their life as a child in care and moves into adoption.

8.3.4 Consultation is available with Clinical Psychologist, Dr Sara Whittaker. Two Social Workers have recently completed Attachment Style Interviewing training. This evidence based assessment of prospective adopters attachment styles will support the assessment of suitability to adopt and matching of adopters and children.

8.3.5 A robust approach is taken with regards to Registration of Interests and progression to Stage 2 with clear managerial oversight and decisions and areas identified where additional assessment is required.

8.4 Quality of permanence planning, The Child Permanence Report, Preparation of Children and Post Adoption Support Plans

8.4.1   The Child Permanence Report is the application to Court for a Placement Order. Support is available to social workers completing CPR's from the Adoption Team Manager

8.4.2   The quality of CPR's continues to be inconsistent, although are improving on an upward trajectory. Areas of development include greater scrutiny in sibling assessments, child's identify and educational needs. To support the improvement in quality of CPR's the Adoption Service has introduced a Quality Assurance Group (QAG) which includes Adoption Team Manager, Fostering and Adoption Service Manager, LAC Service Manager and Head of Service. The QAG quality assures CPRs and meets with the social worker and Team Manager to provide advice, guidance and feedback on areas of the CPR needing further work. The QAG meetings are minuted and these minutes are available to the ADM. Advice and guidance is available from the Therapeutic Team to Social Workers completing Life Story Work and Books. In addition bespoke narratives and guidance on transition planning and preparation of children is offered. The Court Permanence Teams and Adoption Team work closely together with the aim of improving quality of assessments, permanence planning, quality of reports and the preparation of children and their adoptive families. In addition to this, the Court Permanence Team have recently recruited an Advanced Practitioner whose role is to work with the teams to improve practice.

8.4.3   The introduction of a second court permanence team has led to some improvement in the timeliness of CPR's and the preparation work of children with an adoption plan. However, the increase in the number of children with an adoption plan over the last 12 months has impacted on the consistent improvement in practice. In addition, the work completed prior to transfer of cases to the permanence team and the timing of transfer has resulted in social workers completing viability assessments and rehabilitation to parents or family members which has impacted on ability to prioritise and focus on

permanence planning. This is being addressed by the LAC Service Manager and changes are being made to when cases are transferred particularly for the unborn babies being tracked where Adoption is likely to be the plan.

8.4.3 The Adoption Team Managers work closely with the managers of LAC Teams 4 and 5 to develop and improve practice around permanence planning. The family finders in the adoption team consult with the social workers in the permanence teams to commence family finding, once a child is referred for a SHOBPA decision. This ensures earliest opportunity to identify potential matches for the child and promotes timeliness. The number of Care Proceedings for children where Adoption is likely to be the Care Plan remains high. Adoption team managers and court permanence team managers are tracking progress of children and quality of work to identify training needs and areas for improvement.

8.4.4 The Adoption Support Fund (ASF) was introduced by the Government to improve access to therapeutic support services for adoptive families. In 2017/18 104 applications were made to the fund and a value of £315,681.87 received to provide Therapeutic Support to 72 adopted children. Applications to the fund are made following an assessment of the child's therapeutic needs which is reviewed by Rotherham's Therapeutic Team. Applications to the Fund can also be made for SGO Therapeutic Support. The increase in the number of children placed for adoption increases the demand on the Therapeutic Service for applications to the fund. There is a £5,000 limit set for each Therapeutic Package and any costs above this have to be met by the LA.

8.4.5 5 Adopted children attended Summer Camp funded through the ASF.

8.4.6 35 referrals were received from Adoptive Families requesting Post Adoption Support and the Post Adoption Support social workers are currently working with 140 adoptive families.

9. Staffing

9.1 The Adoption Service is responsible for recruiting, assessing, training and supporting adoptive families as well as family finding for children with an adoption plan. There are two full time team managers and 10.5 full time equivalent social work posts, comprising 13 part-time/ full-time social workers. In 2017/18 the service was successful in recruiting to the 3 full time assessing social work vacancies and the 1 part time Family Finder vacancy. Since September the service has been fully staffed. In addition, there are 3 full time support workers, who cover family finding support, adoption support and letter-box co-ordination.

9.2 The two team managers' report to the Service Manager for Adoption and Fostering who reports to the Head of Service for Looked After Children.

10. Adoption Support Services

10.1 Rotherham's Therapeutic Team is an in-house service that has developed extensive knowledge around the emotional wellbeing of children in care, and the needs of adopters and foster carers. Led by a Consultant Psychologist this specialist service provides training and support specifically for children in care and adoption and this best practice service had led to better outcomes for children and adoptive family experience. The service provides input from point of assessment of adopters, work with foster carers and children in care, and through to adoption and beyond to promote stability and permanence. With regards to adoption, the team offers a range of services to adoptive parents, which includes:

- Assessment of children with complex needs,
- Attachment training
- Training around transitions and moving on
- Training, consultation and advice on sibling assessments
- Training on life story work
- Direct work regarding narrative
- Direct work with families
- Therapeutic parenting course

- Theraplay

10.2 The Therapeutic Team have a pre-adoption worker who is available to foster carers, child, social workers and adopters to support and advise on the transition plan to enable a positive adoption experience. This can include preparation work with the child, including narrative therapy, attachment understanding and therapeutic parenting techniques.

10.3 The adoption team run a range of support groups. These include 'Tiny Tuesdays,' which is a group for new adoptive families with children under the age of 5 years, and 'Big Apples,' which targets adoptive families of 5 – 11 year old children. Teenagers have access to the support group AT-ID via the Regional Hub

10.6 RMBC Adoption Services commission PAC-UK to provide a range of post adoption support services to adults including birth parents, adult adoptees and relatives of adopted children. In the Ofsted inspection in 2017 it was noted that whilst a high level of families affected by adoption access PAC UK this wasn't promoted on the adoption website. Following the inspection this action has now been addressed.

10.7 Yorkshire Adoption Agency undertakes inter-country adoption assessments when requested to do so.

11. The Regional Adoption Agency

11.1 In May 2015, the Government announced changes to the delivery of adoption services. By 2020, all adoption services would need to be delivered on a regional basis. The Government advised that where Local Authority services did not form or become part of a regional adoption agency by 2020, it would legislate to force them to do so. The rationale from the Government for this was a belief that a smaller number of larger regional agencies would be better placed to deliver an increase in the number of children adopted, to reduce the length of time children wait to be adopted, and to improve post adoption support services to families who have adopted.

11.2 In 2017 – 2018 Rotherham has continued working towards a regionalised adoption agency, in partnership with:

- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Adoption Service
- Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council Adoption Service
- Sheffield City Council Adoption Service

- Doncaster Children's Trust
- Alliance of Voluntary Agencies

11.3 RMBC are continuing to discuss a regional adoption agency proposal with the DfE and Barnsley, Sheffield and Doncaster.

12. Summary

12.1 The service continues to achieve adoption for a high number of Looked after children including harder to place children with 27 children being adopted in 2017/18. Tracking and monitoring of adoption plans continues to ensure a timely response to adoption and early identification of areas of delay so swift action can be taken to address this.

12.2 In this adoption year, the service has been successful in achieving adoption for a wide range of children who are considered 'harder to place' due to age, disability, ethnicity or part of a sibling group. 29.6% were children considered to be harder to place.

12.3 Rotherham Adoption Team has continued to promote early permanence planning for children, with seven Early Permanence Placements (EPP) being made in 2017/18.

12.4 Performance on the 2 key Adoption Scorecards has improved this year with timeliness for children improving against both measures and A1 being 110 days below the target measure of 426 days and A2 being only 3.7 days over the target measure of 121 days.

12.5 Rotherham Adoption Service has successfully supported adoptive families by accessing the Adoption Support Fund, with 65 families (72 children) benefiting from therapeutic support packages in 2017/18 equating to £315,681.87 secured funding from ASF.

12.6 Two adoption placements disrupted in 2017/18 for 3 children. Independent disruption reviews identified lessons learned and these have been

implemented. The plan for the single child has changed to Long Term Fostering in recognition of his significant attachment and behaviour needs. Family Finding is ongoing for the sibling group of 2 with potential families identified.

12.7 The Panel has operated successfully and plays a key quality assurance role. The quality of CPRs has been variable and the Quality Assurance Group has been introduced to improve consistent quality.

13. Improvement and Development for 2018/19 onwards

13.1 We will continue to strive to improve and develop our service over 2018 – 2019. Adoption has a key role to play within our overall Looked after Children and Care Leavers Strategy and the Right Child Right Care strategy. Key improvement actions include:

- Recruit more adopters who are able to meet the needs of children with an adoption plan.
- Increase number of Early Permanence Placements available and the use of EPP to include consideration for older children.
- Improve the timeliness of the adoption journey for both children and applicant adopters through robust tracking.
- Improve the quality of assessments.
- Improve the quality of post adoption support plans.
- Continued access to Adoption Support Fund to ensure that adoption therapeutic support needs are best met.
- Use training, supervision, tracking meetings, legal gateway meetings and Public Law Outline to promote adoption best practice and ensure that timely planning and achieving permanence is prioritised.
- Address changes needed to Transition planning in line with research and practice.
- Review and improve the quality of life story work
- Engage in the ongoing development of the South Yorkshire Regional Adoption Agency

adoption
ROTHERHAM
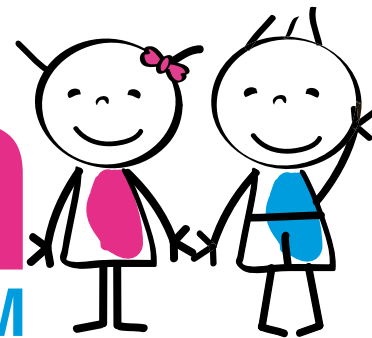
Rotherham Council Adoption Service
Statement of Purpose
2018

www.adoptioninrotherham.org.uk

(01709) 254005

f **Rotherham Adoption Agency**

y **@rmbcadoption**

Rotherham
Metropolitan
Borough Council

Forward by Councillor Gordon Watson

As Corporate Parents, all Councillors are part of the team around the child in Rotherham. It is our aim to achieve the best possible outcomes for all children and young people. Our Adoption Service is a key factor in achieving this aim through support for Adopters and permanence for children and young people.

Contents

Rotherham MBC Adoption Service, Riverside House, Main Street, ROTHERHAM, S60 1AE
Telephone: 01709 254005

The information in this Statement of Purpose can be made available in other languages, in large print, Braille or on audio tape. Please telephone 01709 254005. If you need any of these or to access Rotherham's services.

1. Introduction

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's Adoption service provides a fully comprehensive service for both adoption services and adoption support services. This Statement of Purpose covers both areas of service delivery.

This statement can be used as a guide to the Adoption Services provided. It is available to all members of staff, children, adopters and birth parents and is also available on our website.

This document is produced in compliance with the Care Standards Act 2000, Local Authority Adoption Services (England) Regulations 2003; Local Authority Adoption Services (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2005; Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005; Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005; Adoption Agencies and Independent Review of Determinations, Regulations 2005 and the Statutory Guidance on Adoption 2013.

The Adoption Service is committed to ensuring children are safe, their needs are identified and met and they are provided with security and stability in order to help them achieve their full potential.

Every effort is made to support children to remain with their birth family. However where this is not possible, adoption is considered to be a positive option in providing permanence and security for children.

We recognise that the Adoption journey is lifelong and provide adoption support services to maintain relationships throughout childhood and beyond, including support for adopters and birth family members to promote the child's identity needs.

The Adoption Service has direct access to Therapeutic Services via the Rotherham Therapeutic team. The team provides consultation, assessments and direct work from an early stage in the permanence planning for children. It also provides guidance, support and training for prospective adopters and adoptive parents. This approach supports the agency to identify a child's therapeutic needs, match appropriately to adopters who can understand and meet their needs and provide preparation and early intervention.

All information is correct as of 1st April 2018 and has been approved as required.

This document will be revised annually.

The Adoption Service is registered with OFSTED, who can be contacted as follows:

OFSTED
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
MANCHESTER
M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 123 1231
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

2. Priority Outcomes of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Children and Young People's Plan

The principles upon which we work together with our customers and partners are underpinned with the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2017 – 2021, and the Right Child Right Care Plan. These makes clear our strategic priorities and ambitions to meet the needs of children, young people and their families across Rotherham.

Our Vision, Values and Principles

Our Key Outcomes will be:

- Children and Young people are healthy and safe from harm.
- Children and young people start school ready to learn for life.
- Children and young people and their families are ready for the world of work.

3. Values and Principles of the Adoption Service

- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council will ensure that children are placed in a timely manner without delay with prospective adopters who can meet their identified needs.

- Treat prospective adopters and adopters with openness, fairness and respect.

- Provide a welcoming and helpful approach to prospective adopters at first point of contact.

- Take an encouraging and supportive approach to adopter recruitment.

- Recruit prospective adopters who can meet all the needs of children and young people with an Adoption Plan locally, regionally and nationally,

- Explain to prospective adopters the needs and profiles of the children and young people waiting to be adopted.

- Ensure preparation and training, the assessment and approval processes are timely and flexible.

- Pro-active matching with prospective adopters, including referral to National Adoption Register.

- Provide adopters and prospective adopters with information, training, counselling and support throughout the adoption journey and beyond.

- Provide prospective adopters with information about the Independent Review Mechanism.

Adoptive Parents must:

- Be aware that adoption often brings challenges, as well as rewards and be realistic about the needs of children and young people awaiting adoption. Support and training is available to assist them with this.

- Make the most of opportunities to develop their parenting skills and seek support when needed at the earliest stage. Be prepared to undertake additional training as necessary.

- Do all they can to provide a stable and secure family home where the child feels loved and has a sense of belonging.

4. Aims and Objectives

The aim of the Council in providing care for children Looked After by the Local Authority is to achieve the best possible outcomes for all children and young people. The provision of an Adoption Agency is a key factor in the strategy of achieving this aim.

The Adoption Agency's primary aims are to work towards and achieve:

- Safe, secure, high quality adoptive placements for children who cannot be raised by their own family.

- Comprehensive support for adopters, adopted children and adults and birth families.

- To make decisions about whether adoption is a suitable plan for a child in a timely manner, being mindful of the child's development

- To achieve partnerships with other Agencies, including health and education, to ensure that comprehensive support packages can be made available.

- Every effort will be made to match children with adopters who reflect their ethnic origins, cultural background, religion and language but placements will not be delayed if the prospective adopter does not match the child's ethnicity but is able to meet all the child's other needs.

- Children are prepared, have their wishes and feelings considered and that they are listened to and their feedback informs the service's continuous recruitment and approval of adopters.

- Provide a positive and welcoming approach to prospective adopters, treating them fairly and with respect. The Agency welcomes enquiries from all sectors of the community and does not discriminate on the grounds of age, marital status, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

- Close working with all sections of the Children and Young People's Service to ensure that the best interests of the children are paramount at all times,

- To provide appropriate training, advice, encouragement and support for adopters.

- Contribute to the development and continuous improvement in the delivery of a child care service within the Authority.

- To advise on welfare benefits and entitlements in relation to adoptive families.

Outcomes

As a service, we have shown improvement in our performance and the Adoption Annual Report 2017–2018 reflects this. In 2017–2018 the adoption service approved 14 adoptive families, and 27 looked after children were adopted. Placement Orders were made in respect of 56 children compared with 31 placement Orders made in the previous year. This increase reflects the current national position.

Rotherham has implemented the changes brought about by the Adoption Reform Agenda. The changes are now embedded in practice and include:

- Referral to National Adoption Register (Adoption Match) for children with an Adoption plan and approved adopters.

- A two stage adoption process.

- A fast track process for second time adopters and foster carers adopting a child in their care.

- Early Permanence planning.

- Approved adopters have access to Link Maker, so they can seek out their own matches with children waiting to be adopted.

5. Rotherham Aims of 2018–2019

To encourage more people to adopt and in particular, to consider early permanence placements and sibling groups.

To continue to reduce the time it takes for children to be placed with an adoptive family.

To provide bespoke packages of adoption support.

We will do the above by ensuring:

- The recruitment campaign and branding is refreshed. The campaign will focus on social media, Facebook and website. Monthly drop in sessions are advertised on Radio.

- The Early Permanence Champion will provide information at an early stage and additional training for adopters willing to consider this.

- Work closely with prospective adopters and approved adopters to help them understand the profiles of those children who are waiting for an adoptive family. The Family Finders work alongside the assessing social workers to provide information on Harder to Place children.

- A procedure is in place for early identification of children for whom Early Permanence is an option.

- Rotherham's Therapeutic team provide support to children, pre and post adoption including consultation, theraplay and narrative work. They undertake assessments and referrals to the Adoption Support Fund.

- Continue to work closely with our neighbouring authorities and to participate in regionalisation of adoption services.

6. Staff and Organisation Structure

The Adoption Team maintains good links with the Locality Teams and is accessible to all sections of the service and in particular has developed good working relationships with the Looked After Children's Team. Social Workers and Managers within the service are all experienced in adoption work and are committed to maintaining the child at the centre of the service. Retention of staff is excellent, providing consistency for adopters and children.

The current staffing of the Adoption Team is as follows:
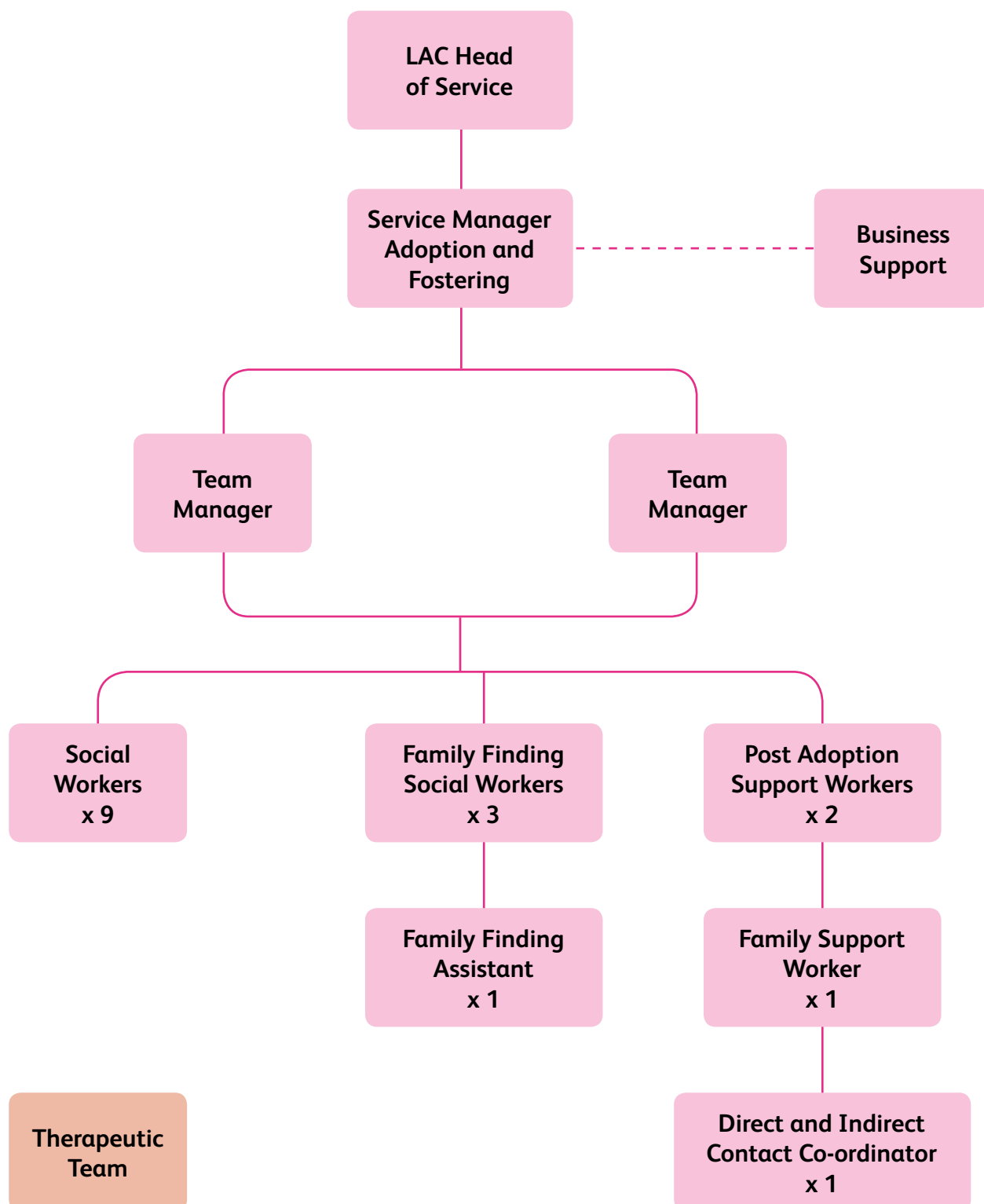
The team is supported and managed through the Children and Young People's Services line management structure. The Service Manager for Adoption and Fostering is responsible for the Adoption Service and supervises the Team Managers. The Head of Service for Looked After children is the Registered Manager.

All social workers and the Managers within the Team have a social work qualification (either CSS, CQSW or Dip SW) and hold a degree level qualification. All social work staff have at least 3 years' post qualifying experience and experience of adoption. All are registered with the Health and Care Professions Council.

Administrative support is primarily delivered by the Adoption and Fostering Business Support Team. The Business Support team works in partnership to support the Adoption Agency.

The Agency Decision Makers for Rotherham are the Assistant Strategic Director and the Head of Safeguarding.

The Family Finding Social Worker role was introduced to improve the timeliness of adoption placements for children by offering experienced support and guidance to the child's social worker and to co-work the Family finding, matching and transition process.

The post adoption support workers are based in the Therapeutic team and managed by the Clinical Psychologist.

All staff are subject to the Council's policy on recruitment, staffing, equal opportunities and discipline. All staff are subject to enhanced DBS checks, including Business Support staff.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation of the Service

The service is regularly monitored by reports being presented to the Strategic Director, Assistant Strategic Director and Elected members. These reports detail the activity and progress of the Adoption Team.

In addition, the quality of work is monitored by regular file audits, customer satisfaction surveys and regular supervision and Individual Performance Development Reviews carried out with staff by the Team Managers. Adopters are listened to and their feedback is used to develop the service. The feedback has highlighted many positive examples of good practice and any areas of improvement are carefully considered and appropriate changes made.

The number and content of complaints within the Adoption Service are reported in a six monthly Service report which is also presented to the Director of Safeguarding, Children and Families, Strategic Director and Cabinet Members.

The methods we use to monitor and evaluate the service are as follows:

Adoption Panel

- Panel reports are quality assured by the Adoption Team Managers in their role as Panel Advisor.

- Panel comments on the quality of reports and this is recorded in Panel minutes. Feedback is provided to social workers.

- An annual summary report is presented to the Panel with managerial comments on performance.

- Quality issues raised at Panel are fed back via the Panel Advisor to the relevant social work team and follow up is reported to subsequent Panel meetings where required.

- Reports to the Adoption Service are completed by the Adoption Panel Chair incorporating Panel Members feedback. The feedback given includes comments on the quality of reports; the meeting of standard timescales and the meeting of the requirements of the Regulations on the Restrictions on the Preparation of Adoption Reports Regulations 2005. This information is used to identify service quality issues and to inform the annual review of the Panel Chair.

- Quarterly information on the Agencies performance in respect of timeliness for children is provided to Adoption Panel.

Service User Consultation

The feedback we receive as a service is important and we use this feedback to develop our services.

Feedback includes:

- Verbal feedback via support groups and social events that we hold.

- Adoptive parents give written comments about their assessment and preparation and the quality of their prospective adopters report within body of the Prospective Adoption Report (PAR).

- Adoptive parents and their social workers who attend the Adoption Panel are invited to complete a questionnaire about their experience of attending the Panel.

- Preparation Groups and training events are evaluated using feedback forms completed after each training event.

- Prospective Adopters are consulted following approval to provide feedback on their experiences to date.

- Service users accessing PAC-UK are asked to complete a service user form by PAC-UK.

- Annual Adopter Forum.

- Annual Celebration Event. Feedback from adopters and children is requested.

- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council has a formal comments and complaints procedure and it is available to those who may wish to comment or complain about an aspect of the service.

- Invitation to attend and be involved in workshops to provide the adopter voice in relation to developing a Regional Adoption Agency.

Lessons to be learned are identified at the point of feedback being received. Ways to improve performance are shared.

Supervision and Management

- Staff supervision takes place on a monthly basis.

- Staff training and professional development is monitored through the Annual Performance Development Reviews.

- Case files are audited on a monthly basis. Actions arising are followed up and lessons for improvement are shared with the social worker teams.

- CPRs are Quality Assured by the Quality Assurance Group (QAG) and support and guidance on completing CPRs and permanence planning is provided by the Adoption Team Managers.

- The performance for children and prospective adopters is monitored through fortnightly performance meetings chaired by the Head of Service for Looked After Children.

- The Adoption Managers monitor progress on a monthly basis with the Team Managers for Children with an Adoption Plan.

- The Adoption Performance Report and Adoption Panel reports are provided and presented to senior managers and Corporate Parenting Panel.

8. Complaints

- The Adoption Agency operates within the framework of the RMBC Complaints Policy. All adopters, children and young people and all other persons have access to this procedure.

- An emphasis is placed on resolving complaints at an immediate local level, ie. Stage 1, Informal Problem Solving and these are dealt with by the Team Manager. Stage 2 complaints are those where resolution at Stage 1 level has not been possible or where a complainant has elected to invoke Stage 2 of the procedure.

- Children and Young People's Services has a Children's Rights Service (Rotherham's Right to Rights Service which develop links with children and young people who are, or who have ever been looked after. They are able to raise issues on behalf of young people and to support and advocate for them as appropriate.

- Further details can be obtained from the Complaints Service.

There have been no formal complaints received via the Council's formal complaints procedure during 2017–18. These have been resolved at Stage 1.

9. Recruitment Strategy

The Adoption Service Recruitment Strategy for 2016–2017 has been updated in collaboration with the Corporate Communication Team. The recruitment strategy is based around understanding the profile of children who are likely to require an adoptive placement both locally and nationally.

A timetable of recruitment events across the year includes attending local community events and advertising. Monthly information events are held where those interested in adoption can come along and find out more.

The branding and Logo has been refreshed and events are advertised on radio and social media.

Increased use of Social Media and the Website to promote Adoption Recruitment. 2017–2018 will see the regionalisation of adoption agencies in Yorkshire and Humberside and a recruitment campaign is currently being designed.

10. Procedures for Recruiting, Approving, Training, Supporting and Reviewing Carers

- Upon receiving an enquiry from potential adopters, the service provides written information, including information on the monthly drop in sessions. An initial visit is provided to all prospective adopters within ten working days of them requesting further information.

- An initial discussion will then take place in the home of the prospective adopter(s) with an Adoption Social Worker. The Registration of Interest form is provided.

- The Team Manager decides, with the Adoption Social Worker, whether to accept a ROI giving reasons. This takes place within five working days of receipt of the Registration of Interest form. (ROI).

- If the prospective adopters are accepted on to Stage 1 of the adoption process, they are asked to complete a workbook and attend a one-day initial training course. Support and guidance is available during Stage 1 from an allocated social worker.

- References are obtained from:

  - Disclosure and Barring Service

  - The Local Authority in which the prospective adopters live and where they have lived previously within the last two years.

- Enhanced DBS checks are obtained on all members of the household aged 18 years and over and other regular adult visitors.

- The prospective Adopter is required to have a medical examination completed by their GP and the report is made available to the Agency's Medical Adviser for comments about the prospective adopters' health.

- The prospective adopters are asked to identify at least three personal referees, (one of which can be a family member reference) who will provide written references and be interviewed as part of the assessment process. Employment references are also taken up as well as previous partners, if they have parented a child together.

- Once all checks are completed, a decision is considered about suitability to be assessed as adopters and a Manager's Decision Meeting is held. If unsuitable at the end of Stage 1, then the prospective adopters are informed in writing of the reasons why. Stage 2 commences on receipt of application. Up to 6-months break may be taken before an applicaton is submitted, if required.

- Upon receipt of the prospective adopter application to commence Stage 2, the assessment stage begins and is to be completed within four months'. Prospective adopters are asked to attend four days preparation training. The information gathered and the social workers analysis of this forms the basis of the Prospective Adopter report (PAR). The report is quality assured by the Adoption Team Manager and signed before presentation to the Adoption Panel. The report is shared with the prospective adopter prior to Panel and an opportunity to discuss with the assessing social worker and include comments.

- Adopters are invited to attend Adoption Panel and are supported at Panel by the assessing social worker and the support worker based in the Adoption Team.

- The Panel Chair meets the prospective adopters before Panel and provides the questions Panel members have for them.

- Prospective Adopters are informed verbally by the Panel Chair of the Panel's recommendation and reasons.

- Prospective Adopters are informed verbally on the day of Agency Decision maker's decision.

- Prospective Adopters are informed in writing of the Agency Decision with reasons within five working days.

- Second time adopters and foster carers are immediately progressed to Stage 2.

11. Training provided to Adopters

Training is provided to:

- Help adopters develop skills and have a better understanding of the adoption task.

- Improve knowledge and assist the prospective adopter in promoting the physical, social and emotional development of children and young people.

- Establish an explicit, positive framework of values which promotes equality of opportunity.

- Understand the impact that past experiences have on a child's emotional wellbeing and attachment style and behaviour.

12. Support Services

- All potential and approved adopters are allocated a social worker in the Adoption Team who will assess, support and match appropriate children with them.

- Support is available to adopters and to the child to ensure stability, security and permanence.

- Monthly support groups are held for adopters facilitated by Adoption Team and Therapeutic team

- A fortnightly Toddler Group for adopters and their children is facilitated by the Adoption Team.

- A duty system is in operation via the Adoption Team to provide advice and information and signpost to other Agencies if appropriate.

- An Out of Hours Service will support and advise adopters on request.

- A fortnightly play and stay group for adopters and children aged up to 11 years.

- Specialised staff within the therapeutic team offer an in-depth support service including Therapeutic parenting training and a wide range of workshops.

13. Inter-Country Adoption

A regional inter country Adoption Service has been established via the Yorkshire and Humber Consortium provided by Yorkshire Adoption Agency. Enquiries regarding Inter-County Adoption are signposted to this Agency.

14. Foster Carers who wish to adopt their fostered child

Foster carers who make a formal application to adopt children that are in their care are entitled to the same information and preparation as other prospective adopters.

Where foster carers are accepted as potentially suitable to adopt a child in their care, they can be expected to be assessed in the same way as other prospective adopters. The assessment request will be fast tracked to Stage 2. The assessment will focus on the specific long term needs of the child in question and will consider the following:

- The quality of the attachment between the child and the Foster Carers.
- The wishes and feelings of the child.
- The assessed ability of the foster carers to provide permanent care for the child through adoption.
- The impact on the child now and for the rest of their lives, of being adopted by these particular carers.

15. Early Permanence Planning

The Agency has developed a successful Early Permanence Planning procedure and has placed 33 children in early permanence placements to date.

Early permanence allows a child to be placed under Fostering regulations with approved adopters who are temporarily approved as foster carers for the child.

Additional training and support is provided for prospective adopters who have the skills and guidance to provide an Early Permanence Placement.

16. Adoption Support – General

After the making of the Adoption Order, support may also be provided if a support plan is in operation or it is decided to provide services as a result of an assessment of needs. Rotherham retains responsibility for any Rotherham child for three years following the making of the Adoption Order. A child placed in Rotherham from another area remains the placing Authority's responsibility for three years following the making of the Adoption Order. After 3 years it is the Local Authority in which the child lives who has responsibilities for assessing adoption support needs and providing services.

Adoptive parents, adopted children or any member of the household, including any other children of the adopters are entitled at any time to request an assessment of their needs for Adoption Support Services under the Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005.

Adoption support services are accessed via a formal assessment of need where the request will involve on-going provision of services. Where one off support is the likely outcome, this will be provided without a formal assessment.

A significant amount of therapeutic support to adoptive families is provided in house via the Rotherham Therapeutic Team. The Manager of the Therapeutic Team is a Clinical Psychologist with an excellent understanding of the support needs of adopted children and their adopters.

Adoption Support Fund

The Adoption Support Fund (ASF) was launched nationally on 1 May 2015. The aim of the fund is to reduce the gap between adoptive children needing therapeutic services and receiving them (ultimately to improve outcomes for young people and families).

The fund is available for children up to and including the age of 21. The fund will support Therapeutic Services after the Adoption Order.

Rotherham has been successful in achieving funding for Therapeutic packages of support for 72 adopted children and their adoptive families equating in 2017 – 2018.

PAC-UK

We commission PAC-UK to provide services to birth families and adopted adults, including birth records counselling.

Post Adoption Contact

Rotherham manages the post adoption contact arrangements for children placed in their adoptive placement and following the making of the Adoption Order.

Post Adoption Contact is facilitated via the dedicated Contact Co-ordinator.

The co-ordinator facilitates the direct and indirect contact between children, adoptive families and birth families throughout the adopted child's childhood.

The contact co-ordinator provides guidance and support to birth family members and adopters including:

- Intermediary work
- Support to write letters
- Supporting direct contact arrangements

Financial Support

Adopters can be assessed for a means tested allowance based on the needs of the child placed and this is reviewed annually.

A start up grant of £300 is paid to facilitate the placement of every child. A means tested Adoption Allowance is available for children with a disability, are BME, aged over five and/or in sibling groups.

Services for Birth Families

Rotherham Council recognises that adoption is a life-long process for all those involved and will provide support to birth families at all stages of the process, both during adoption and afterwards.

Counselling and support for birth families is available from PAC-UK with whom Rotherham has a Service Level Agreement.

Intermediary Services and Vetoes

Adopted adults who were adopted before 30 December 2005 are able to request that there is an absolute or qualified veto placed on their records and on the Adoption Contact Register should they wish for no contact or no contact with specified people.

Adopted adults can request Intermediary services to provide for mediated contact with birth relatives. This service is provided by PAC-UK.

17. Signatories

Signed: _____   Date: _____

Cllr Gordon Watson
Cabinet Member

Signed: _____   Date: _____

Jon Stonehouse
Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Service

Signed: _____   Date: _____

Ian Walker
Head of Service, Children in Care

www.adoptioninrotherham.org.uk

or call 01709 254005

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y **@rmbcadoption**

Rotherham
Metropolitan
Borough Council

Public Report
Corporate Parenting Panel

Council Report

Corporate Parenting Performance

Title

Corporate Parenting Performance Report – August 2018

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)
Cathryn Woodward (Performance and Data Officer – 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 Monthly Performance Report (August 2018)

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 – August 2018

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.

2.4   Please note that all benchmarking data is as at the latest data release by the DfE and relates to 2016/17 outturn

2.5   The narrative supplied within the report has been informed by the Deputy Director for Children's Services and the Head of Looked After Children 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 2017 and March 2018 the number of LAC increased by 29% from 488 to 628. As at the end of August this had increased further to 651.

3.1.2 Despite these significant pressures it is gratifying to note that performance has, on the whole, continued its improving trend. However, whilst there are plans in place to alleviate some of this pressure this will continue to present a risk to future performance for some months to come.

3.2 Looked After Children Profile

3.2.1 Rotherham continues to have an increasing Looked After Children (LAC) profile. The 651 children at the end of August equates to a rate of 115 per 10,000 population. This is significantly high when compared to the statistical neighbour average of 81.3.

3.2.2 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. The most notable differences being the higher rate of children aged 5-9 years (23% compared to 19%) and a lower proportion aged over sixteen (17% compared to 24%).

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

Age Band	Number	% of total	Latest National comparative data (Mar-17)
Under 1	45	7%	5%
1 – 4	104	16%	13%
5 - 9	147	23%	19%
10 - 15	246	38	39%
16+	111	17%	24%
Total	651		

3.2.3 The percentage distribution by legal status remains a consistent picture with 53% of children subject to full care orders, 32% on an Interim Care Order, 10% are on Placement Orders with Care Order, 5% are under Section 20. There is no clear national data to benchmark this distribution against.

3.3 LAC Plans

3.3.1 Despite ongoing high demand, a high proportion of LAC have up to date plans. Compliance has increased to 91.4% at the end of August compared to 89.5% at the end of March 2018.

3.4 Reviews

3.4.1 In recent months there has been was a decline in the timeliness of LAC Statutory Reviews from 96.1% in March to 85.6% in August. It is anticipated that this is reflective of the summer holiday period when many IRO's, Social Workers, and more relevantly, Foster Carers, were not available. This will be closely monitored in September to ensure this is not part of an on-going trend.

3.5 Visits

3.5.1 Performance in respect of Statutory Visits remains strong, above target and has seen a further improvement to 96.6% and is therefore equal to that of April when there were 30 less looked after children.

3.6   Placements

3.6.1   The proportion of children placed in a family based setting remains relatively stable at 82.6% at the end of August (family based settings include internal fostering, independent fostering, pre-adoption placements and those placed with parent/family/friends).

3.6.2   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.

3.6.3   August saw a further improvement in the proportion of long term LAC who have lived in the same placement for at least 2 years (66.9% - 101 out of 150 children), which is an improvement of 5.7% compared to the end of March 2018, and reduces the gap with the statistical neighbour average to 1.3%. Not only is this the best performance of the year so far, it also betters the performance achieved in 2016/17 and 2017/18. This measure has been impacted by the increasing number of long term LAC and our desire to bring children closer to home and into family placements.

3.6.4   Similarly, there has been a positive reduction in the number of LAC experiencing multiple placement moves in the last 12 months from the highest point this year of 14.8% at the end of May to 11.9% at the end of August. In real terms, this is a reduction from 94 to 77 children. Once again, this represents the best performance of the year so far and is equal to or better than the year end performance of the past 3 years.

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 and that figures reported by the LAC Health Team are higher than those recorded in local systems. Therefore we know that recent performance will change when statistics are rerun in future reports.

3.7.2   Initial health assessments in August improved to 66%, however the year to date figure is only at 47%, which is below last year's performance of 55%. In order to address this, a joint agency process review was held on the 10[th] September where a number of actions were agreed with the objective of improving engagement and timeliness. We are in a trial period and will reconvene to assess the impact in 3 month's time.

3.7.3   Health reviews performance at the end of August increased to 90.4% compared to 83.7% at the end of March 2018, with 5% of the shortfall being due to young people declining their assessment. Dental performance remains close to the end of March 2018 figure

of 72.5%, with 71.6% of dental assessments up to date at the end of August.

3.8 LAC Education

3.8.1 Rotherham has a local standard to ensure that each PEP is of good quality and refreshed every term (rather than the annual minimum standard). 514 (97.4%) of the 532 eligible LAC had a PEP in the summer term. This is an improvement on the spring term of 95% due to this term being longer, giving more time for PEP meetings to take place and more opportunity to re-schedule cancelled PEP meetings.

3.8.2 At the end of August, 93.6% of eligible LAC population had a Personal Education Plan (32 LAC had no PEP).

3.9 Care Leavers

3.9.1 The number of young people receiving a Care Leavers service at the end of August was 243, which is a decline on the 2017/18 year end position of 256.

3.9.2 Performance in all of the indicators remains strong and varies according to the circumstances for individual young people some of whom can experience periods of crisis that impact on their ability to sustain their accommodation or access to EET.

3.9.3 The proportion of care leavers who have a pathway plan is at its highest so far this calendar year at 97% at the end of August with 89% of young people having plan less than 6 months old. Both represent a significant improvement on the year-end positions of 93.9% and 70.3% respectively.

3.9.4 The proportion of care leavers in suitable accommodation remains strong at 94.7% and represents top quartile performance nationally.

3.9.5 Care leavers who are in Education, Employment or Training also remains strong at 61.3% and once again places Rotherham in the top quartile.

3.10 Fostering

3.10.1 There were only 5 enquiries for foster carer interest in August, but 3 of these look likely to progress to assessment, which is positive in terms of potential conversion rates.

3.10.2 We have 9 new foster families approved so far since April 2018. We have a further 13 assessments ongoing and 2 more new foster families undertaking the Skills to Foster training, which means there could be a further 15 new foster families in place by December. Two of these assessments are experienced foster carers transferring from an IFA.

3.10.3 The launch of Challenge 63 to recruit more foster carers proved to have disappointing outcomes, but is about to be re-launched with the full support of the Deputy Lead Member.

3.10.4 There have been 10 foster families deregistered so far this year, with a further 7 being de-registered due to safeguarding concerns. However, the impact of the de-registrations is not as stark as it initially appears as many of the 'lost' foster families had actually not provided any placements for many months prior to their resignation/deregistration. Many of these resignations are wholly expected and reasonable including bereavement and illness.

3.11 Adoptions

3.11.1 Rotherham's policy is to persevere in seeking adoptive placements for 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.

3.11.2 So far this financial year, 12 children have been adopted. Timeliness performance remains vulnerable to significant swings given the cohort is so small. The 12 adoptions to date show A1 performance as 354 days (325.3 Mar 18) and A2 as 196.6 days (124.8 Mar 18).

3.11.3 In addition to the 12 adoptions achieved there are currently 24 children already living in their adoptive placement (7 with court dates set for the adoption hearing). As a result, it looks likely that we will significantly surpass last year's performance of 27 adoptions.

3.11.4 There are 10 children in Early Permanence placements, 2 in the adoption phase and 8 in the fostering phase which re-enforces RMBC's position as a regional lead in EPP.

3.11.5 In terms of recruitment of adoptive families, 8 sets of adoptive parents have been fully approved so far this year, with a further 9 at stage 1 and 6 at stage 2 of the recruitment process. Once again, it looks likely that we will surpass last year's performance of 14 approvals with a forecast of 21/22 by year end.

3.12 Caseloads

3.12.1 The increase in LAC numbers has impacted on caseloads within the LAC Service. Average caseloads for LAC teams 1-3 are at the highest this year at 13.8 and the average caseload for LAC Teams 4-5 is 14.1.

3.12.2 Additional pressures caused by the ongoing need to supervise high levels of contact and driving to OoA placements continue to be a significant factor that impacts on social work capacity. This drain on capacity continues to increase, for example, LAC team 3 are diverting 44 hours of social work time every week to supervising contact (this does not include travelling time with some of these contacts taking place in Halifax, Wakefield and Lincolnshire). This means that, including travelling time, almost 25% of the total social work capacity in that team is 'lost' to undertaking non-social work tasks.

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)

Ian Walker, Head of Service Looked After Children and Care Leavers
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Ailsa Barr Interim Assistant Director Safeguarding Children
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Children & Young People Services

Corporate Parenting

Monthly Performance Report

As at Month End: August 2018

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* <u>at least</u> *two individual months data is rerun for each indicator.*

Document Details
Status: Issue 1
Date Created: 02/10/18
Created by: Cathryn Woodward, Performance and Data Officer - 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)	Jun-18	Jul-18	Aug-18	YTD 2018/19	DATA NOTE	DOT (Month on Month)	RAG (in month)	Red	Amber	Target Green	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	STAT NEIGH AVE	BEST STAT NEIGH	NAT AVE	NAT TOP QTILE THRESHOL
LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN	6.1	Number of Looked After Children	Info	Count	642	650	651	-	As at mth end	↑				n/a	407	432	488	627				
	6.2	Rate of Looked After Children per 10,000 population aged under 18 (Council Plan Indicator)	Low	Rate per 10,000	113.4	114.9	115.0	-	As at mth end	↓	Red			99.1	70	76.6	86.6	110.8	81.3	58.0	62.0	-
	6.3	Admissions of Looked After Children	Info	Count	19	34	17	123	Financial Year	↓				n/a	175	208	262	330				
	6.4	Number of children who have ceased to be Looked After Children	High	Count	13	26	16	94	Financial Year	↓				n/a	160	192	215	194				
	6.5	Percentage of LAC who have ceased to be looked after due to permanence (Special Guardianship Order, Residence Order, Adoption)	High	Percentage	30.8%	38.5%	16.7%	29.4%	Financial Year	↓	Red	<33%	33%>	35%+	37.5%	40.1%	27.9%	27.3%				
	6.6	Number of SGOs started (all)	High	Count	3	4	1	12	Financial Year	↓		range to be set										
	6.7	Percentage of LAC who have ceased to be looked after due to a Special Guardianship Order	High	Percentage	15.4%	19.2%	6.3%	9.8%	Financial Year	↓		range to be set			-	-	9.8%	8.2%	12.3%	22.0%	12.0%	17.0%
	6.8	LAC cases reviewed within timescales	High	Percentage	89.1%	88.7%	85.6%	86.0%	Financial Year	↓	Red	<90%	90%>	95%+	94.9%	83.3%	91.3%	90.6%				
	6.9	% of children adopted	High	Percentage	15.4%	11.5%	12.5%	12.8%	Financial Year	↑	YTD	<20%	20%>	22.7%+	26.3%	22.4%	14.4%	13.9%	18.9%	30.0%	14.0%	20.0%
	6.10	Health of Looked After Children - up to date Health Assessments	High	Percentage	89.6%	90.9%	90.4%	-	As at mth end	↓	Red	<90%	90%>	95%+	81.4%	92.8%	89.5%	83.7%				
	6.11	Health of Looked After Children - up to date Dental Assessments	High	Percentage	72.6%	73.4%	71.6%	-	As at mth end	↓	Red	<90%	90%>	95%+	58.8%	95.0%	57.3%	72.5%				
	6.12	Health of Looked After Children - Initial Health Assessments carried out within 20 working days	High	Percentage	45.5%	66.7%	66.7%	47.0%	Financial Year	→		range to be set			20.0%	8.4%	18.2%	55.7%				
	6.13	% of LAC with a PEP	High	Percentage	95.1%	96.6%	93.6%	-	As at mth end	↓	Amber	<90%	90%>	95%+	76.0%	97.8%	97.0%	93.6%				
	6.14	% of LAC with up to date PEPs (Report Termly - End Jul, Dec, Mar)	High	Percentage	-	97.4%	-	-	As at mth end	-		<90%	90%>	95%+	-	-	98.9%	(Summer 2018)				
	6.15	% of eligible LAC with an up to date plan	High	Percentage	90.0%	92.8%	91.4%	-	As at mth end	↓	Red	<93%	93%>	95%+	98.8%	98.4%	79.1%	89.5%				
	6.16	% LAC visits up to date & completed within timescale of National Minimum standard	High	Percentage	95.8%	96.0%	96.6%	-	As at mth end	↑	Amber	<95%	95%>	98%+	95.2%	98.1%	74.0%	97.5%				
CARE LEAVERS	7.1	Number of care leavers	Info	Count	247	244	243	-	As at mth end	↓				n/a	183	197	223	256				
	7.2	% of eligible LAC & Care Leavers with a pathway plan	High	Percentage	95.6%	95.7%	97.0%	-	As at mth end	↑	Green	<93%	93%>	95%+	-	69.8%	99.3%	93.9%				
	7.3	% of eligible LAC & Care Leavers with an up to date pathway plan	High	Percentage	79.9%	86.4%	89.0%	-	As at mth end	↑					-	-	-	70.3%				
	7.4	% of care leavers in suitable accommodation	High	Percentage	93.5%	94.3%	94.7%	-	As at mth end	↑	Red	<95%	95%>	98%+	97.8%	96.5%	97.8%	96.1%	91.0%	100.0%	84.0%	91.0%
	7.5	% of care leavers in employment, education or training	High	Percentage	61.9%	60.2%	61.3%	-	As at mth end	↑		<70%	70%>	72%+	71.0%	68.0%	62.9%	64.1%	52.2%	65.0%	50.0%	57.0%
PLACEMENTS	8.1	% of long term LAC in placements which have been stable for at least 2 years	High	Percentage	62.7%	64.9%	66.9%	-	As at mth end	↑	Red	<68%	68%>	70%+	71.9%	72.7%	66.2%	61.2%	68.2%	85.0%	70.0%	74.0%
	8.2	% of LAC who have had 3 or more placements - rolling 12 months (Council Plan Indicator)	Low	Percentage	13.8%	12.3%	11.9%	-	Rolling Year	↑	Amber	13%+	13%<	10.8%<	12.0%	13.0%	11.9%	13.4%	10.1%	7.0%	10.0%	8.0%
	8.3	% of LAC in a family Based setting (Council Plan Indicator)	High	Percentage	81.0%	82.3%	82.5%	-	As at mth end	↑	Amber	range to be set		85%>	-	-	81.1%	81.0%				
	8.4	% of LAC placed with parents or other with parental responsibility (P1)	Low	Percentage	4.8%	4.8%	5.7%	-	As at mth end	↓		range to be set			-	-	5.3%	4.3%				
	8.5	% of LAC in a Commissioned Placement	Low	Percentage	52.6%	53.1%	52.2%	-	As at mth end	↑		range to be set			-	43.6%	43.2%	50.5%				

*'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)	Jun-18	Jul-18	Aug-18	YTD 2018/19	DATA NOTE	DOT (Month on Month)	RAG (in month)	Target and Tolerances Red	Amber	Target Green	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	STAT NEIGH AVE	BEST STAT NEIGH	NAT AVE	NAT TOP QTILE THRESHOL
FOSTERING																					
9.1	Number of LAC in a Fostering Placement (excludes family/friend carers)	High	Count	427	443	**439**	-	As at mth end	↓		range to be set			-	-	353	414				
9.2	% of LAC in a Fostering Placement (excludes family/friend carers)	High	Percentage	66.5%	68.2%	**67.4%**	-	As at mth end	↓		range to be set			-	-	72.3%	66.0%				
9.3	Number of Foster Carers (Households)	High	Count	151	152	**151**	-	As at mth end	↓		range to be set			-	156	161	154				
9.4	Number of Foster Carers Recruited	High	Count	1	3	**1**	6	Financial Year	↓		range to be set			-	13	32	16				
9.5	Number of Foster Carers Deregistered	Info	Count	3	2	**2**	12	Financial Year	→		range to be set			-	16	22	25				
ADOPTIONS																					
10.1	Number of adoptions	High	Count	2	3	**2**	12	Financial Year	↓				n/a	-	43	31	27				
10.2	Number of adoptions completed within 12 months of SHOBPA	High	Count	2	2	**0**	5	Financial Year	↓				n/a	-	23	12	16				
10.3	% of adoptions completed within 12 months of SHOBPA	High	Percentage	100.0%	66.7%	**0.0%**	41.7%	Financial Year	↓	Red	<83%	83%>	85%+	37.0%	53.5%	38.7%	59.3%				
10.4	Average number of days between a child becoming Looked After and having a adoption placement (A1)	Low	YTD Average	369.0	339.4	**353.9**	-	Rolling Year	↓	Green	511+	511<	487<	393.0	296.0	404.0	325.3	511.6	337.0	558.0	501.1
10.5	Average number of days between a placement order and being matched with an adoptive family (A2)	Low	YTD Average	201.9	163.8	**196.6**	-	Rolling Year	↓	Red	127+	127<	121<	169	136	232.9	124.8	214.7	73.0	226.0	183.6
Caseloads																					
11.4	Maximum caseload of social workers in LAC	Low	Average count	22	21	**23**	-	As at mth end	↓	Red	21+	20<	18<	-	19.2	17.0	18.0				
11.5	Average number of cases per qualified social worker in LAC Teams 1-3	Within Limits	Average count	12.9	13.5	**13.8**	-	As at mth end	↑	Green	over 1% above range	1% above range	14-20	-	-	-	12.6				
	Average number of cases per qualified social worker in LAC Teams 4 - 5	Within Limits	Average count	13.5	15.0	**14.1**	-	As at mth end	↓	Green	over 1% above range	1% above range	14-20	-	-	-	11.8				

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 previously raised grounds for optimism do seem to be justified as over the course of August there was a net increase in LAC of only 1 child. Once again sibling groups were a significant factor in the net increase with the 17 admissions including 2 groups of 3 siblings. Further to this the average age of children admitted to care has reduced from 8.2 to 6.4. This is relevant as CYPS data would indicate that the younger a child is on admission to care the shorter their time spent in care. Thus far in September there has been a further net reduction of 3 LAC.

The Right Child Right Care (RCRC) work continues to progress with 50 of the initial target 170 children in a workstream having already been discharged from care. This is 18% of the original 37% target total target and so the project is on track to achieve its overall objectives with most plans still intended for completion towards the end of the year. In addition due to the ripple effect from RCRC a further 22 children not in a workstream have also been discharged from care and 34 LAC have reached the age of 18 meaning that 106 children in total have been discharged from care over the past 7 months. Phase 2 of RCRC has been initiated with 365 children being considered in the very broad scope for discharge from care. This includes 138 LAC in the same placement for 18 months with a potential for an SGO, 9 children subject of S20 and 43 children subject of Placement with Parents Regs, Reg 24 placement or S38/6. It is planned for team managers and IROs to review these cases over the coming months so the cohort can be formalised and RCRC phase 2 to be launched in January 2019.

The process of admissions to care has also been tightened up with the message being re-enforced to all managers that all admissions, including out of hours, must be presented to the next available PLO - this is already impacting on the timeliness of outcomes with one large sibling group being returned home after being made subject of Police Powers of Protection.

The Edge of Care Service is in the process of becoming part of the LAC Service which should contribute to more joined up working in respect of admissions to care and general management oversight.

Data Note: An issue has arisen within the Liquid Logic system which is impacting on the reporting LAC children. For some children who have left care and have had previous care episodes, the same 'end date' is copying into the previous episodes within the system. This has been reported, however, until this is rectified we will be unable to accurately report on measures regarding children ceasing care.

		6.2	6.1	6.3	6.4	6.5	6.6	6.7
		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	Number of SGOs started (all)	% of children ceased to be LAC due to an SGO
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Jan-18	107.3	607	27	12	16.7%	4	8.3%
	Feb-18	107.8	610	18	15	28.6%	4	7.1%
	Mar-18	110.8	627	44	27	34.6%	16	15.4%
	Apr-18	109.6	620	16	18	22.2%	0	0.0%
	May-18	112.4	636	37	21	38.1%	4	13.6%
	Jun-18	113.4	642	19	13	30.8%	3	15.4%
	Jul-18	114.9	650	34	26	38.5%	4	19.2%
	Aug-18	115.0	651	17	16	16.7%	1	6.3%
	Sep-18							
	Oct-18							
	Nov-18							
	Dec-18							
	Jan-19							
	Feb-19							
	Mar-19							
YTD	2018/19	-	-	123	94	29.4%	12	9.8%
ANNUAL TREND	2014/ 15	70.0	407	175	160	37.5%	-	-
	2015/ 16	76.6	432	208	192	40.1%	-	-
	2016/ 17	86.6	488	262	215	27.9%	-	9.8%
	2017/ 18	110.8	627	330	194	27.3%	67	8.2%
LATEST BENCHMARKING	SN AVE	81.3						
	BEST SN	58.0						
	NAT AVE	62.0						
	NAT TOP QTILE	-						

Rate of Looked After Children per 10K pop

Admissions and discharges from care

Children Ceased to be LAC (%)
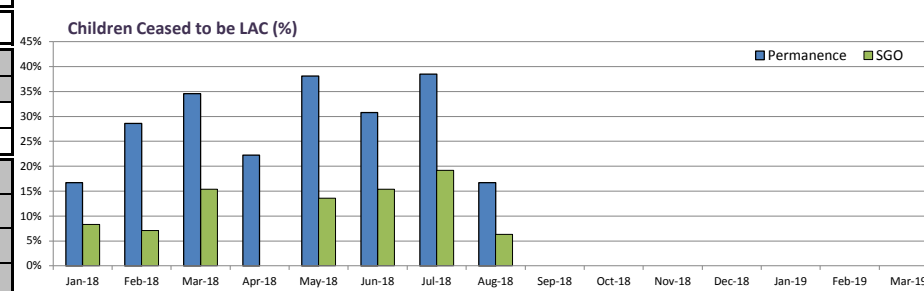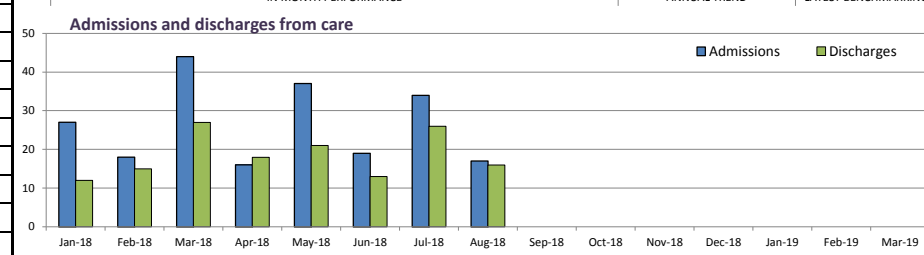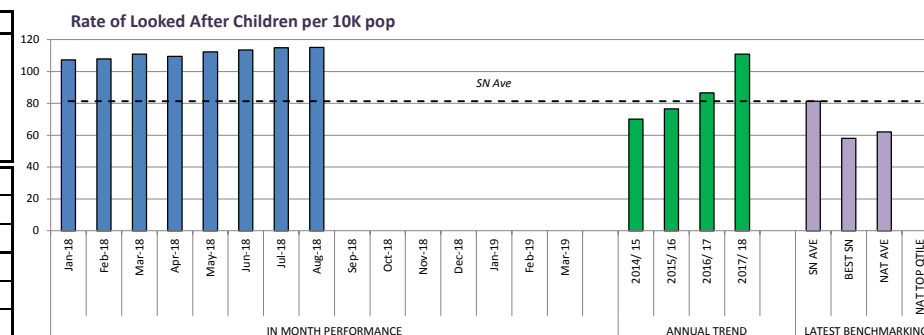
LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN - REVIEWS, PLANS & VISITS

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

The timeliness of Statutory Reviews has declined slightly this month to 95 out of 111 (85.6%) this month despite lower review numbers. A review has highlighted this is linked in availability of professionals, the impact of a phased return to work for an IRO or linked to awaiting key information to inform next steps. Additional support has been sought with an agreed short term agency IRO to commence in role to further improve performance and we have worked where possible to sustain consistency of IRO's.

Performance in respect of Statutory Visits has improved further to a very positive 96.6% and is therefore equal to that of April when there were 30 less looked after children. However, the timeliness of Statutory Reviews has reduced once again as has the timeliness of up to date Care Plans, though it is anticipated that this is reflective of the summer holiday period when many IROs, social workers and, more relevantly, foster carers were not available. This will be closely monitored in September to ensure this is not part of an on-going trend.

The on-going demand for social workers to supervise contact is likely to perpetuate the pressure on social work capacity and on many performance indicators as well as the more qualitative pieces of social work intervention such as life-story work. In addition it is already having an impact on retention, especially in the Court and Permanence teams where most cases in proceedings require at least 3 times a week contact. Recruitment of an additional 5 contact workers has commenced and although the lead in time is likely to be at least 3 months it is anticipated that the resulting reduced pressure on social worker capacity will support improved performance by the end of the year.

	6.8		6.14	6.16	
	% of LAC cases reviewed within timescales		**LAC with an up to date plan**	**% LAC visits up to date & complete within timescale of National Minimum standard**	
Jan-18	150 of 173	86.7%	89.7%	597 of 608	98.2%
Feb-18	119 of 134	88.8%	90.3%	590 of 607	97.2%
Mar-18	148 of 154	96.1%	89.5%	614 of 630	97.5%
Apr-18	119 of 139	85.6%	89.0%	602 of 623	96.6%
May-18	131 of 162	80.9%	87.4%	604 of 638	94.7%
Jun-18	131 of 147	89.1%	90.0%	615 of 642	95.8%
Jul-18	165 of 186	88.7%	92.8%	630 of 656	96.0%
Aug-18	95 of 111	85.6%	91.4%	628 of 650	96.6%
Sep-18					
Oct-18					
Nov-18					
Dec-18					
Jan-19					
Feb-19					
Mar-19					
YTD 2018/19	641 of 745	86.0%	-	-	-
2014/15		94.9%	98.8%		95.2%
2015/16		83.3%	98.4%		98.1%
2016/17	652 of 714	91.3%	79.1%		74.0%
2017/18	1502 of 1658	90.6%	89.5%		97.5%

IN MONTH PERFORMANCE

ANNUAL TREND

% of LAC cases reviewed within timescales

IN MONTH PERFORMANCE · YTD · ANNUAL TREND

LAC with an up to date plan

IN MONTH PERFORMANCE · ANNUAL TREND

% LAC visits up to date & complete within timescale of National Minimum standard

IN MONTH PERFORMANCE · ANNUAL TREND

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

Once again the ostensibly declining performance can be attributed to delayed inputting onto the Liquid Logic case file as refreshed data subsequent to the production of the monthly performance report invariably reflects an improved position. Giving the LAC Health Team the facility to update Liquid Logic would resolve this delay. This is part of the Liquid Logic work plan and this is on the 'jobs list' for the Liquid Logic Team.

In order to address the on-going poor performance of IHAs achieved by the Duty and Assessment and Locality teams a joint agency process preview was held on the 10th September to clarify what the issues are that are impeding performance and to develop a further action plan. As at the start of September there were 39 Review Health Assessments and 71 Initial Health Assessments recorded as being overdue and yet further data comparisons with Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) data need to be undertaken as they continue to report significantly better performance.

A further review will take place in respect of Dental Checks given that the Fostering Team obtained almost 80 further dates of checks that had taken place but this data does not seem to have impacted on performance at all. One issue identified is that many dental practices will not offer dental checks to under 2's and that an oral check undertaken by a Health Visitor can be recorded as a dental check and yet many social workers are not as yet recording it as such - work will be done to address this shortfall over the coming weeks.

		6.10	6.11	6.12	
		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-18	82.9%	81.5%	9 of 18	50.0%
	Feb-18	83.7%	77.8%	6 of 19	31.6%
	Mar-18	83.7%	72.5%	10 of 18	55.6%
	Apr-18	85.5%	72.1%	13 of 25	52.0%
	May-18	87.5%	69.0%	7 of 24	29.2%
	Jun-18	89.6%	72.6%	15 of 33	45.5%
	Jul-18	90.9%	73.4%	10 of 15	66.7%
	Aug-18	90.4%	71.6%	2 of 3	66.7%
	Sep-18				
	Oct-18				
	Nov-18				
	Dec-18				
	Jan-19				
	Feb-19				
	Mar-19				
YTD	2018 / 19	-	-	47 of 100	47.0%
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%
	2017 / 18	83.7%	72.5%	132 of 237	55.7%
LATEST BENCHMARKING	SN AVE				
	BEST SN				
	NAT AVE				
	NAT TOP QTILE				

Health of LAC - Health Assessments up to date
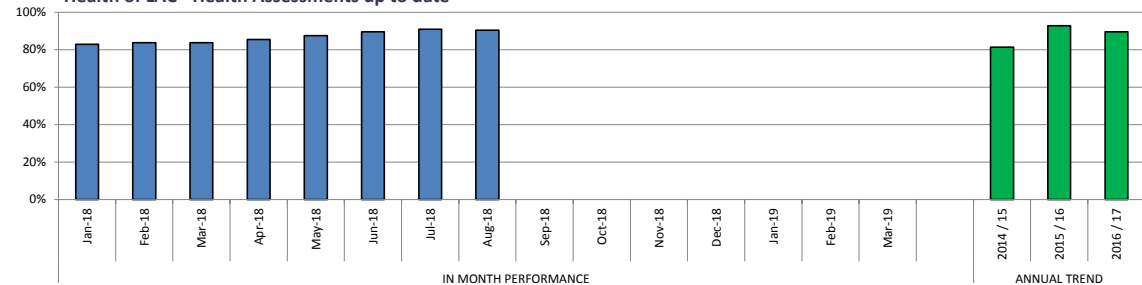
Health of LAC - Dental Assessments up to date
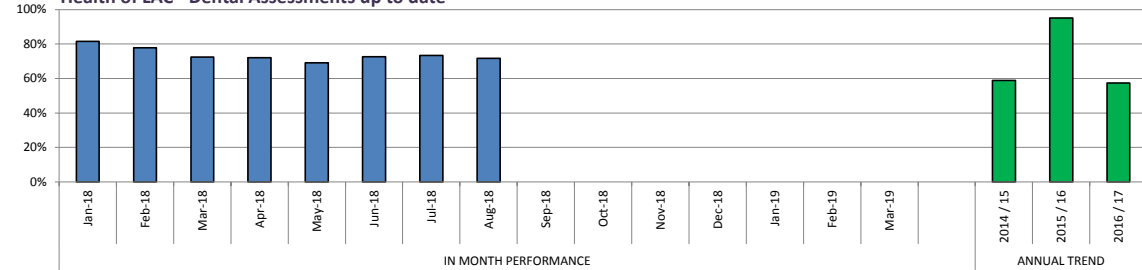
Health of LAC - % Initial Health Assessments In Time
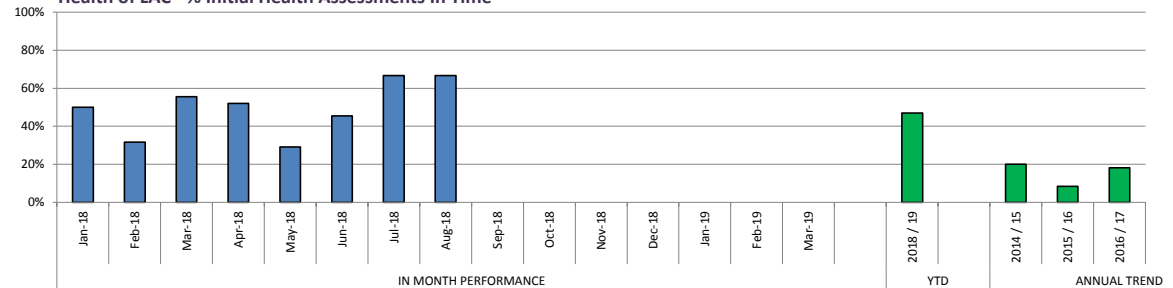
LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN - PERSONAL EDUCATION PLANS

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. 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.

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS	**As schools are closed during August PEP meetings can not be updated any shortfall will need to be addressed in the new term. The text below reflects the end of the Summer term.** At the end of the summer term, the Virtual School had a caseload of 532 LAC aged 2-18. This does not include LAC who turned 18 in the 2017/18 academic year who chose not to have formal PEP meetings after their 18th birthday. 514 of the 532 (97.4%) of LAC had a PEP in the term. 18 did not have a PEP. Performance has improved on previous terms due to this term being longer, giving more time for PEP meetings to take place and more opportunity to re-schedule cancelled PEP meetings. There was also no adverse weather events in the summer term, whereas the snow in March impacted on the spring term performance figure.

		6.13		6.14
		Number of Eligible LAC with a Personal Education Plan	**% LAC with a Personal Education Plan**	**% LAC with up to date Personal Education Plan (Termly)**
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Jan-18	446 of 476	93.7%	
	Feb-18	446 of 477	93.5%	
	Mar-18	454 of 485	93.6%	95.0% (Spring Term)
	Apr-18	461 of 483	95.4%	
	May-18	467 of 490	95.3%	
	Jun-18	470 of 494	95.1%	
	Jul-18	476 of 493	96.6%	97.4% (Summer Term)
	Aug-18	468 of 500	93.6%	
	Sep-18			
	Oct-18			
	Nov-18			
	Dec-18			(Autumn Term)
	Jan-19			
	Feb-19			
	Mar-19			(Spring Term)
YTD	2018/19	-	-	-
ANNUAL TREND	2014/15		76.0%	-
	2015/16		97.8%	-
	2016/17		97.0%	98.9% (Summer 2017)
	2017/18		93.6%	(Summer 2018) (Summer 2018)

% LAC with a Personal Education Plan

IN MONTH PERFORMANCE   ANNUAL TREND

% LAC with up to date PEP

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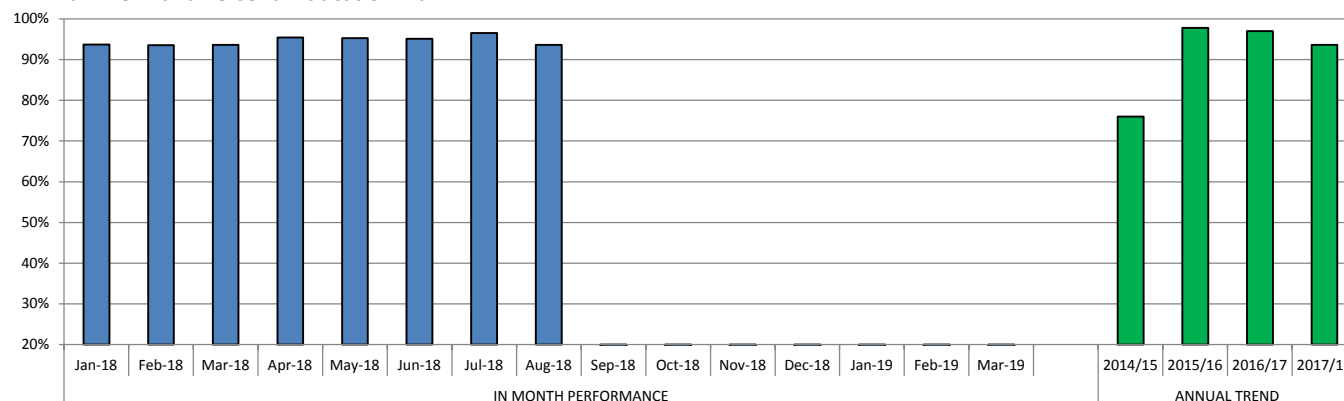
CARE LEAVERS

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 | Performance in all of the indicators remains strong and varies according to the circumstances for individual young people some of whom can experience periods of crisis that impact on their ability to sustain their accommodation or access to Employment, Education & Training (EET). Care leavers who are in suitable accommodation increased to 94.7%, care leavers who are EET increasing to 61.3% and care leavers with an up to date Pathway Plan is improving to 89% (97% overall with a plan in place). This performance retains the Leaving Care Team in the top quartile nationally.

The mentoring scheme is progressing with 4 mentors having been trained - matching processes are about to commence with the clear objective of supporting more care leavers into successful apprenticeship placements. |
|---|---|

		7.1	7.2	7.3	7.4	7.5
		Number of care leavers	% of eligible Care Leavers with a pathway plan	% of eligible Care Leavers with up to date pathway plan	% of care leavers in suitable accommodation	% of care leavers in employment, education or training
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Jan-18	238	94.5%	59.5%	95.6%	57.9%
	Feb-18	246	93.9%	66.7%	99.2%	60.9%
	Mar-18	256	93.9%	70.3%	96.1%	64.1%
	Apr-18	266	93.7%	69.1%	94.0%	61.7%
	May-18	249	96.3%	71.0%	95.6%	64.3%
	Jun-18	247	95.6%	79.9%	93.5%	61.9%
	Jul-18	244	95.7%	86.4%	94.3%	60.2%
	Aug-18	243	97.0%	89.0%	94.7%	61.3%
	Sep-18					
	Oct-18					
	Nov-18					
	Dec-18					
	Jan-19					
	Feb-19					
	Mar-19					
YTD	2018/19	-	-	-	-	-
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%
	2017/18	256	93.9%	70.3%	96.1%	64.1%
LATEST BENCHMARKING	SN AVE				91.0%	52.2%
	BEST SN				100.0%	65.0%
	NAT AVE				84.0%	50.0%
	NAT TOP QTILE				91.0%	57.0%

% of eligible LAC with up to date pathway plan

% of care leavers in suitable accommodation

% of care leavers in employment, education or training
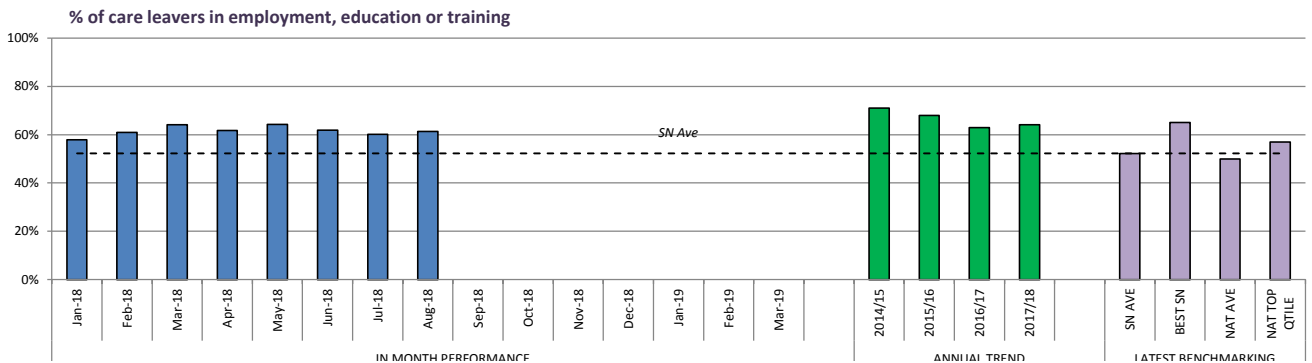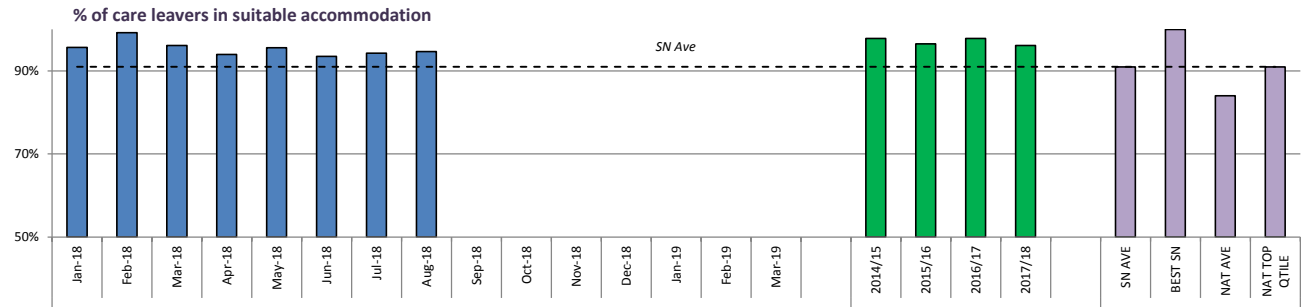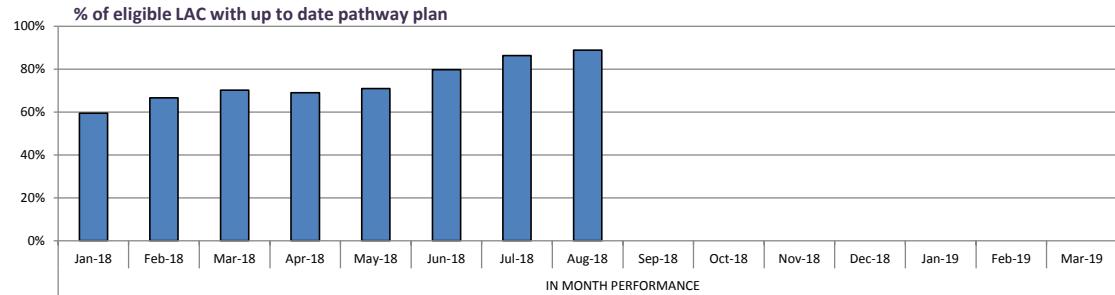
LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN - PLACEMENTS

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.

Placement stability has improved in both measures for the 4th month in a row with children in the same placement for 2 years + reaching 66.9%. Not only is this the best performance of the year so far it also betters the performance achieved in 2016/17 and 2017/18 when the lower numbers of LAC supported more considered matching decisions and reduced general demand for placements on a national level meant that IFAs were more inclined to persevere with challenging placements. In addition the 3+ placements measure has also improved to 11.9%, once again the best performance of the year so far and equal to or better than the year end performance of the past 3 years. Although the number of missing from care incidents has increased from last month's performance of 38 to 51 this is still almost half of what it was in April (99).

The number of LAC in commissioned placements has reduced slightly and the 'Coming Home' project has been refreshed with a further 11 young people in Out of Authority (OoA) placements currently being considered for a step-down plan to semi-independence. This project has been successful in achieving cost avoidance in terms of placements amounting to £2.5m thus far.

		8.1 Long term LAC placements stable for at least 2 years		8.2 LAC who have had 3 or more placements - rolling 12 mth		8.3 % of LAC in a family Based setting (includes living with parents)	8.4 % of LAC placed with parents or other with parental responsibility (P1)	8.5 LAC in a Commissioned Placement (Fostering & Residential)	
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Jan-18	93 of 153	60.8%	73 of 600	12.2%	82.4%	5.5%	293 of 607	48.3%
	Feb-18	91 of 151	60.3%	81 of 605	13.4%	81.5%	5.0%	302 of 610	49.5%
	Mar-18	90 of 147	61.2%	83 of 621	13.4%	81.0%	4.3%	315 of 627	50.2%
	Apr-18	91 of 146	62.3%	89 of 617	14.4%	81.1%	4.7%	317 of 620	51.1%
	May-18	91 of 150	60.7%	94 of 635	14.8%	80.8%	4.9%	319 of 636	50.2%
	Jun-18	94 of 150	62.7%	88 of 640	13.8%	81.0%	4.8%	338 of 642	52.6%
	Jul-18	96 of 148	64.9%	80 of 649	12.3%	82.3%	4.8%	345 of 650	53.1%
	Aug-18	101 of 151	66.9%	77 of 648	11.9%	82.5%	5.7%	340 of 651	52.2%
	Sep-18								
	Oct-18								
	Nov-18								
	Dec-18								
	Jan-19								
	Feb-19								
	Mar-19								
YTD	2018 / 19		-		-	-	-		-
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%
	2017 / 18	90 of 147	61.2%	83 of 621	13.4%	81.0%	4.3%	315 of 624	50.5%
LATEST BENCHMARKING	SN AVE		68.2%		10.1%				
	BEST SN		85.0%		7.0%				
	NAT AVE		70.0%		10.0%				
	NAT TOP QTILE		74.0%		8.0%				

% long term LAC placements stable for at least 2 years
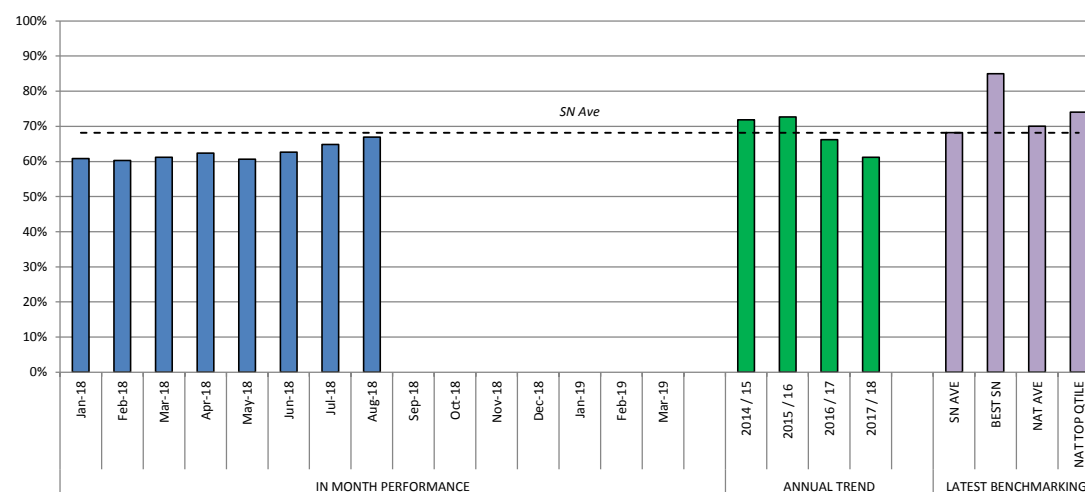
% LAC who have had 3 or more placements - rolling 12 months
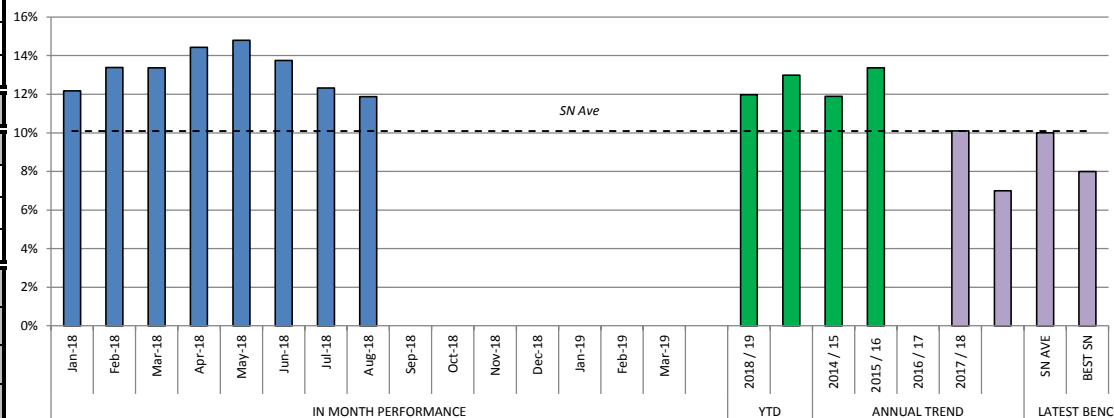
	DEFINITION	A foster care family provide the best form of care for most Looked after children. Rotherham would like most of its children to be looked after by its own carers so that they remain part of their families and community .

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

The recruitment of foster carers remains a key priority and significant challenge for the LAC Service and is, at present probably the one aspect of performance within the LAC Service that seems the hardest to shift. As has previously been stated recruitment is only just keeping up with de-registrations/resignations with 8 new foster families approved and 19 resigning or being de-registered. In real terms the impact is far less significant than this as most of these carers had offered no placement for 12 months or more. One issue of significance that has recently been highlighted is the impact of the LADO process on the longer term commitment of foster carers with resignations being attributed to the time and stress that these investigations take. As a result a joint protocol has been agreed with the Safeguarding and Standards Service to ensure that the Head of Service for LAC has oversight of these cases so they can be more effectively time managed.

There are currently 13 further assessments on-going and two more new foster families undertaking the 'Skills to Foster' training which means there could be 15 more new foster families in place by December. Two of these assessments are existing foster carers transferring from an IFA.

The Service is about to formally review its marketing strategy in order to make it far more targeted in its approach. This will include consideration being given to a sub-regional approach being implemented in order to share marketing resources.

		9.1	9.2	9.3	9.4	9.5
		Number of LAC in a Fostering Placement (excludes relative/friend)	% of total LAC in a Fostering Placement (excludes relative/friend)	Number of Foster Carers (Households)	Number of Foster Carers Recruited (Households)	Number of Foster Carers De-registered (Households)
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Jan-18	398	65.6%	157	0	2
	Feb-18	399	65.4%	155	1	3
	Mar-18	414	66.0%	154	1	2
	Apr-18	409	66.0%	155	1	2
	May-18	418	65.7%	153	0	3
	Jun-18	427	66.5%	151	1	3
	Jul-18	443	68.2%	152	3	2
	Aug-18	439	67.4%	151	1	2
	Sep-18					
	Oct-18					
	Nov-18					
	Dec-18					
	Jan-19					
	Feb-19					
	Mar-19					
YTD	2018/19	-	-	-	6	12
ANNUAL TREND	2014/15	-	-	-	-	-
	2015/16	-	-	156	13	16
	2016/17	353	72.3%	161	32	22
	2017/18	414	66.0%	154	16	25

Number of Foster Carers

IN MONTH PERFORMANCE / ANNUAL TREND
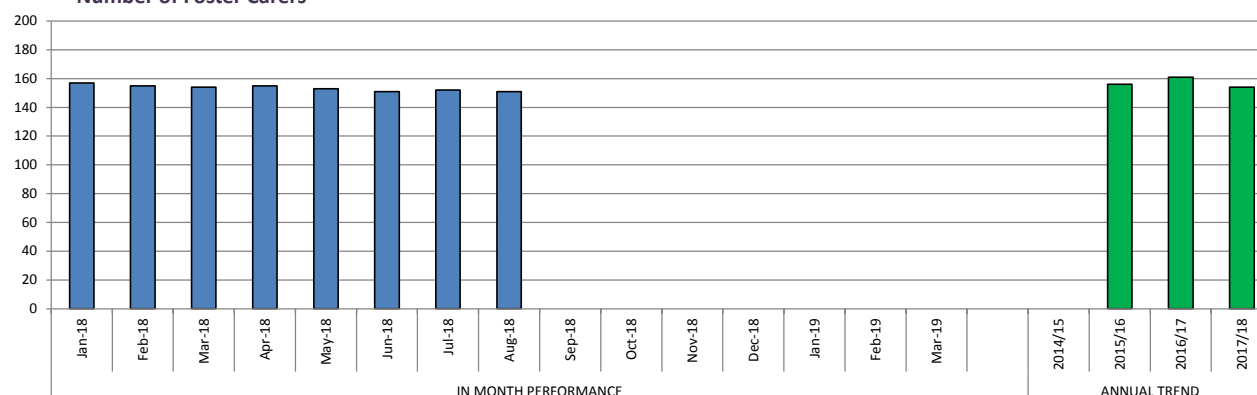
Fostering Recruitment & De-registrations

■ Recruited   ■ De-registered

IN MONTH PERFORMANCE

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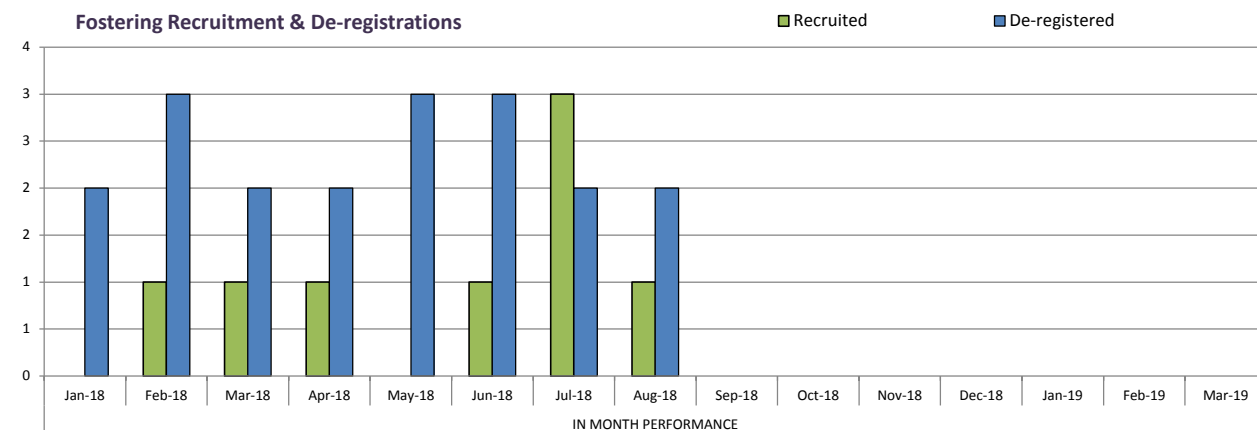
DEFINITION	Following a child becoming a LAC, it may be deemed suitable for a child to become adopted which is a legal process of becoming a non-biological parent. The date it is agreed that it is in the best interests of the child that they should be placed for adoption is known as their 'SHOBPA'. Following 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	As identified last month the scorecard performance remains vulnerable to significant swings given the cohort is so small and the 2 adoptions achieved in August pushed performance out to 353 days and 196 days in the A1 and A2 scorecard respectively. In addition to the 12 adoptions completed thus far this financial year there are 24 children already in their adoptive placements of which 7 have Court dates set for the Adoption hearing. There are 10 children in Early Permanence placements (EPP), 2 in the adoption phase and 8 in the fostering phase which re-enforces RMBC's position as a regional lead in EPP. There have been 8 sets of adoptive parents fully approved so far this year with 9 more at stage 1 and 6 at stage 2 and so once again last year's performance looks likely to be surpassed with the forecast of 21/22 over the year as compared to 14 approvals last year.

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) (ytd. ave)	Av. No. days between placement order & being matched with adoptive family (A2) (ytd. ave)
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Jan-18	0	0	-	315.0	137.0
	Feb-18	2	1	50.0%	311.9	134.9
	Mar-18	5	4	80.0%	325.3	124.8
	Apr-18	2	1	50.0%	370.0	146.5
	May-18	3	0	0.0%	469.0	260.2
	Jun-18	2	2	100.0%	369.0	201.9
	Jul-18	3	2	66.7%	339.4	163.8
	Aug-18	2	0	0.0%	353.9	196.6
	Sep-18					
	Oct-18					
	Nov-18					
	Dec-18					
	Jan-19					
	Feb-19					
	Mar-19					
YTD	2018 / 19	12	5	41.7%	-	-
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
	2017 / 18	27	16	59.3%	325.3	124.8
LATEST BENCHMARKING	SN AVE				511.6	214.7
	BEST SN				337.0	73.0
	NAT AVE				558.0	226.0
	NAT TOP QTILE				501.1	183.6

*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

% adoptions completed within 12 months of SHOBPA
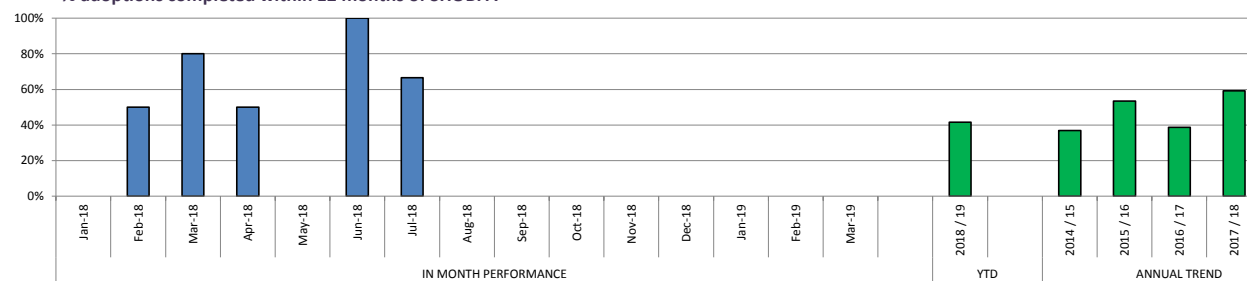
Av. No. days between a child becoming LAC & having a adoption placement (A1) - Rolling Year (low is good)
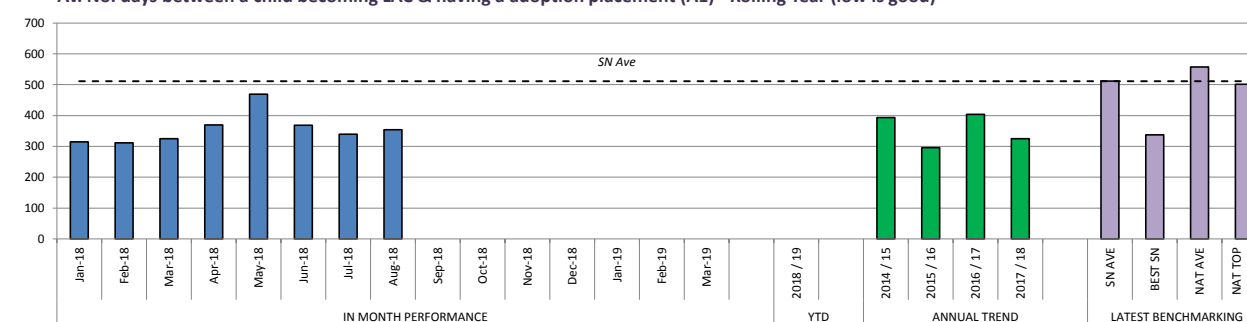
Av. No. days between placement order & being matched with adoptive family (A2) - Rolling Year (low is good)
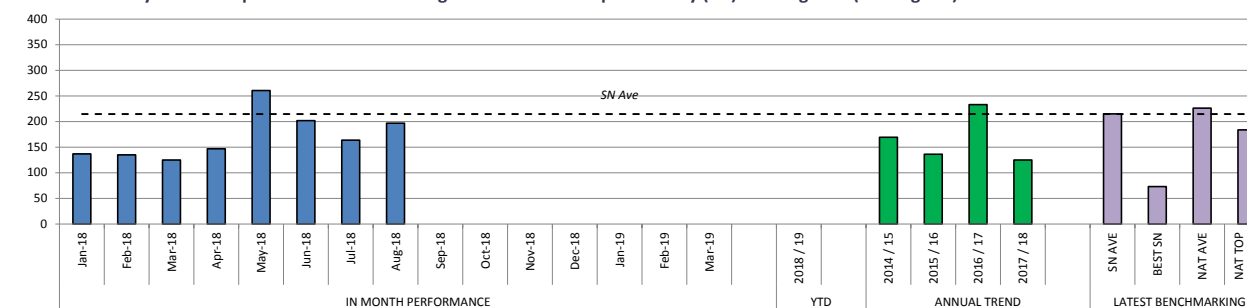
CASELOADS

DEFINITION	Caseload figures relate to the number of children the social worker is currently the lead key worker. All averages are calculated on a full time equivalency basis, based on the number of hours the worker is contracted to work.

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

Taking into account the reduced caseloads of 'Assessed and Supported Year in Employment' (ASYE) social workers and 'Advanced Practitioner' (APs) average caseloads for the LAC teams now actually stand at just over 16 but with 2 more agency social workers to leave the employ of RMBC in September this will increase to 17. The Court and permanence teams are now at saturation point in respect of further allocations with one social worker having 19 and another 23 cases in legal proceedings. As a result the long-term LAC teams are having to take on more court work and as at the start of September were managing 25 individual sets of proceedings involving 53 children which obviously impacts on their capacity even further.

This places the LAC social work caseload on a par with most of the Locality Teams with the added pressure of the enhanced demands arising from court processes, unsustainably high levels of contact supervision and travelling times to OoA placements.

The average caseload is likely only to increase over the coming months as the 2 Agency Social Workers leave RMBC. One social worker remains on long-term sick leave, although another is on a phased return to work and an Advanced Practitioner is currently serving her notice period.

		11.3	11.4	
		Maximum caseload of social workers in LAC Teams	**Av. no. cases in LAC Teams**	
			Teams 1-3	**Teams 4 & 5**
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Jan-18	17	11.6	9.7
	Feb-18	17	12.9	10.7
	Mar-18	18	12.6	11.8
	Apr-18	22	12.8	14.4
	May-18	22	12.5	12.8
	Jun-18	22	12.9	13.5
	Jul-18	21	13.5	15.0
	Aug-18	23	13.8	14.1
	Sep-18			
	Oct-18			
	Nov-18			
	Dec-18			
	Jan-19			
	Feb-19			
	Mar-19			
YTD	2018/19	-	-	-
ANNUAL TREND	2014/15	-	-	
	2015/16	19	14.1	
	2016/17	17	11.6	
	2017 / 18	18	12.6	11.8

Average number of cases per team

Legend: ■ Teams 1-3 ■ Teams 4 & 5
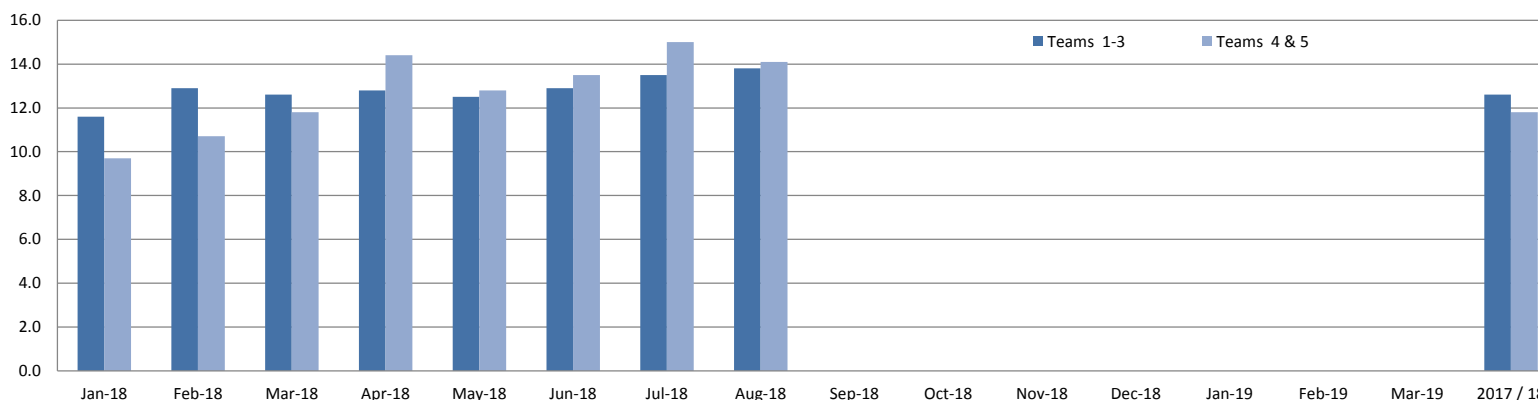
Virtual School Headteacher Report 2018

Virtual School Team
Looked After and Previously Looked After
Children & Young People
September 2018

Index

Introduction

The school year 2017.2018 has been busy, demanding and one characterised by frequent change, which means it has also been typical.

In September 2017 there were 337 looked after children & young people on the Virtual School roll, from Reception to Year 11. By July 2018 the roll had increased by 109 (32%) to 446. There were 137 admissions and 28 discharges from care. Additionally the Virtual School Team was also supporting 96 young people in Years 12 and 13, so 542 in all.

The increase in the number looked after and the rate of those looked after per 10,000 of the under 18 population, has been much greater than regional and national comparators.

Following a long period of ill health, the Virtual School Headteacher, Lorraine Dale, decided to retire at the end of the school year. Lorraine is now in much better health and we wish her well for a long, healthy, and fulfilling retirement. We also need to thank her for the major part she played in establishing and developing a robust, effective and successful Virtual School Team, as recognised in the January 2018 Ofsted report.

After relevant consultations and a recruitment process, there are now two Virtual School Headteacher positions, one for Early Years & Primary and one for Secondary & post 16. Congratulations to Tina Hohn and Pete Douglas on their appointments and thanks to them for their major contributions to Virtual School improvement since 2014. We wish them well and hope they go from strength to strength.

In November 2014 the Ofsted Inspection judged 'the experiences and progress of children looked after and achieving permanence' as inadequate. It also concluded that education support for looked after children was poor and that looked after children and care leavers were not aware of their rights and entitlements, and care leavers did not have good access to emotional support and mental health services.

More specifically the report noted:

- Virtual school arrangements were under review because of weak performance in some key areas.
- Challenge and scrutiny by the Corporate Parenting Board have been ineffective until recently.
- Attainment by looked after children at both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 has declined in 2014.
- Attendance is monitored centrally for looked after children both in Rotherham and out of the authority, and swift action is taken to make sure children and young people attend regularly. In 2013–14 average attendance was good at 93%.
- The role of designated looked after children's teachers within schools has been under-utilised and this, too, is facing scrutiny.
- Exclusions: only one looked after child has been permanently excluded, although the number of fixed term exclusions has increased for all pupils across the borough.
- Ofsted School Ratings: there were more pupils in out of borough inadequate schools than in Rotherham.
- The very large majority of personal education plans were completed in the required timescales. However, the quality of the PEPs sampled was inconsistent and the majority were poorly completed.

- The LAACT team ensures that children can access therapeutic support without delay. Many of the children and young people's files seen by inspectors had evidence of LAACT team support and some of this was excellent.

The Re-inspection Report published in January 2018, and other feedback during the inspection, recognised that the Virtual School has made great strides since 2014:

- It observed that 'there is a much-improved strategic commitment and operational focus on improving the educational outcomes of children looked after' but that 'this has only just begun to close the gap in attainment between the most vulnerable children and other pupils in the borough.'

- The quality of personal education plans (PEPs) has improved significantly since the last inspection. The completion rate of the now termly PEPs is high, at 96%. The great majority of plans contain specific, timed and measurable targets that focus on educational progress and the wider social and emotional development of pupils. Virtual School Advisers from the virtual school attend every PEP meeting to ensure that there is a clear focus on educational attainment, and to hold schools to account for the performance of children looked after.

- The local authority has successfully challenged schools that are using informal exclusions, which has resulted in an increase in formal exclusions. More work is needed to reduce these and persistent absenteeism.

- Despite overall education attendance for children looked after being high at 95%, the proportion of persistent absentees among a small cohort of children looked after has risen.

The 2017.2018 educational outcomes have several positive features. The compliance rate for PEPs and their quality remains very high, and improving further on this is a key priority of the Virtual School.

Interpreting outcomes against the key performance indicators in the public domain, remains very challenging given the volatility of the looked after population, and the multiplicity of contextual variables from cohort to cohort. These variables include: type of school, special educational needs, prior attainment, placement type, quality of placement, placement moves, emotional wellbeing, and time in care.

Good and better attendance improved 2017.2018 from 71% to 76%.The provisional persistent absence figure provided to the inspection team was in fact 3.1% higher than the figure in the DfE statistics (13.3%) published in April 2018. Taking the local figures persistent absence has declined 2017.2018 but risen slightly taking the DfE figure as the base!

Exclusions have fallen 2017.2018 from 15% to 12.8%, and there were fewer exclusions at key stage 4. Overall there were only 7 exclusions from RMBC secondary schools. BME pupils made up 25% of all exclusions.

Primary outcomes in 2018 show significant improvements. Year1 phonics are the best in 3 years and KS1 outcomes show improvements compared with 2017. At KS2 outcomes in reading, writing and maths are the best in 3 years and show year on year improvement.

At KS4 56% of the cohort were in non-mainstream schools. Of those in mainstream, 26% achieved grade 4+ in English, 42% in Maths and 16% in both English and maths**.**

Those with the best results were in foster care, in mainstream schools, had no SEN, and had placement stability. Those who did not make expected progress from KS2 to KS4 had the opposite set of characteristics.

The proportion of 16 -25 year olds in education, employment and training continues to compare favourably with regional and national comparators

There are, of course, may other positive outcomes not captured by the data in the public domain such as securing faster entry to new schools, the impact of the Attachment Friendly Schools' Initiative (AFS), and the creation of a cadre of Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs).

Combined with the Creative Mentoring scheme which should be 'up and running' in September, the increasing interest in the value of Emotion Coaching, the development of the Mockingbird Fostering initiative, the Speech & Language pilot, AFS and ELSAs represent the Virtual School's commitment and contribution to meeting the holistic needs of children and young people in care. It is also central to the strategy for reducing persistent absence and minimising fixed term exclusions. Details of all these initiatives can be found in the appendices of this report.

Embracing Social Pedagogy in this way, is seen as the route from good to outstanding in the next phase of development of the Virtual School, and also recognises that, key to this, is the need to work in close collaboration with a range of other professionals and children & young people.

With effect from 1.9.2018, the Children and Social Work Act 2017 places a new responsibility on local authorities and schools to promote the educational achievement of previously looked after children, aged 3-16. Previously looked after children are those who are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order, or were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales. The duty applies to children who are in early years' provision and continues throughout the compulsory years of education where the child is in provision funded in part or in full by the state.

Local authorities are required to appoint an officer employed by the authority, or another authority, to make sure that its duty to promote their educational achievement is properly discharged. This is generally assumed to be the Virtual School Headteacher.

Previously looked-after children start with the disadvantage of their pre-care experiences and, often, have special educational needs. Virtual Schools have a key role to ensure these children have the maximum opportunity to reach their full educational potential - an important part of why this role was made statutory.

For previously looked-after children, the VSH will be a source of advice and information to help their parents to advocate for them as effectively as possible. VSHs are not acting as the corporate parent in these circumstances, but are there to promote the educational achievement of these children through the provision of advice and information to relevant parties viz.

- any person that has parental responsibility for the child;
- providers of funded early years education, designated teachers for previously looked-after children in maintained schools and academies, and
- any other person the authority considers appropriate for promoting the educational achievement of relevant children.

The ways in which Virtual School Rotherham will discharge its responsibilities in relation to previously looked after children is outlined in Appendix 6
.
Huge thanks are due to the wider Virtual School Team, the Virtual School Governing Body and the Corporate Parenting Panel, for their commitment and tireless efforts on behalf of those looked after by Rotherham and its care leavers.

No doubt the next school year will be as challenging as the last, but the Virtual School is determined to work collaboratively in the pursuit of its ambitions to raise attainment, promote emotional wellbeing, remove barriers, and improve the life chances for looked after children & young people and care leavers, as well as contributing to improvements for those previously looked after.

The Context: regionally and nationally

The distribution and concentration of LAC regionally and nationally   March 31st 2017

Number of LAC in England and by region 31.3.2017	Number of LAC	%age	Per 10,000 aged under 18
England	72670	6	62
North East	4840	6.7	92
North West	13230	18.2	86
York & the Humber	7720	10.6	67
East Midlands	5400	7.4	55
West Midlands	9500	13.1	75
East of England	6460	8.9	49
Inner London	4230	5.8	58
Outer London	5680	7.8	45
South East	9830	13.5	51
South West	5790	8.0	53

Number of LAC by region 31.3.2017

Rate per 10,000 aged under 18 2017
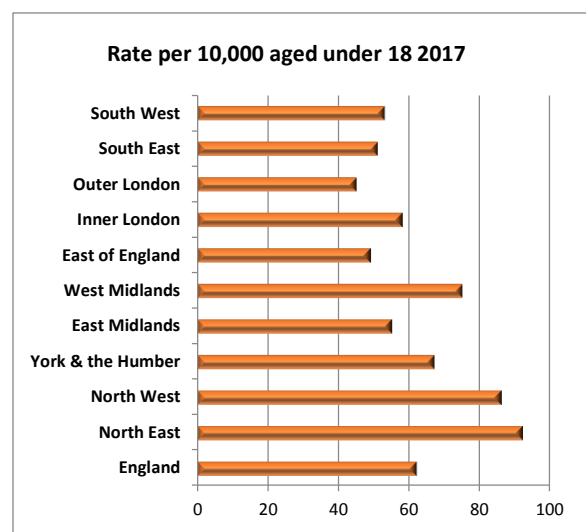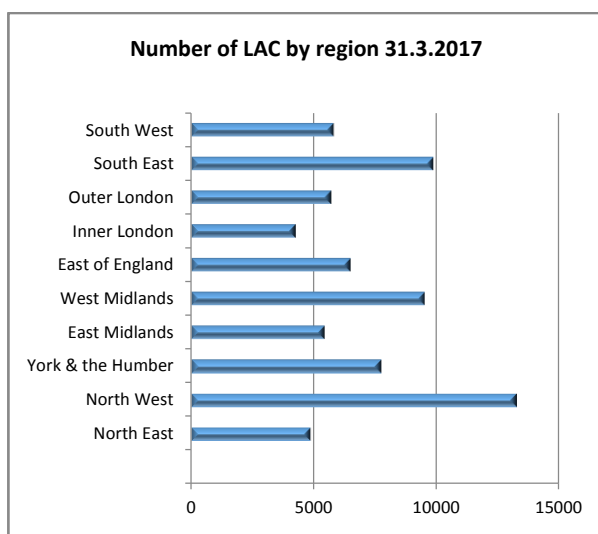
- There were 72,670 LAC in England in March 2017 with the largest number in the North West (18.2%). This is an increase of 2,230 (3.2%) on 2016

- Just over 1 in 10 LAC were in Yorkshire and the Humber making it the 4th largest region by number of LAC.

- In terms of concentration, Yorkshire and the Humber with 67 LAC per 10,000 of the under 18 population in the region, was the 4th highest rate per 10,000 in England. This is a decrease from 73/10,000 in 2016.

- The highest was in the North East with 92/10,000 and the lowest was in the East of England with 49/10,000. This compares with a national average of 62/10,000 (60/10,000 in 2016)

Number and rate of children looked after/ 10,000 of the under 18 population: 31 March 2012-2017							
	2012	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**Change 2016.2017**
Rotherham (number)	380	390	395	405	430	485	12.8%
Yorkshire and the Humber (number)	7530	7420	7380	7260	7240	7720	6.6%
England (number)	67,070	68,060	68,810	69,480	70,440	72670	3.2%
Rotherham (rate)	68.0	70.0	70.0	72.0	76.0	86	+10/10,000
Yorkshire and the Humber (rate)	67	66	65	64	63	67	+ 4/10,000
England (rate)	59.0	60.0	60.0	60.0	60.0	62	+ 2/10,000

Yorkshire and The Humber	**Number of LAC 2017**	**Rate/10,000 under 18 2017**
Yorkshire and The Humber	7,720	67
Barnsley	290	58
Bradford	925	66
Calderdale	315	69
Doncaster	510	78
East Riding of Yorkshire	285	46
Kingston Upon Hull	695	124
Kirklees	700	70
Leeds	1,255	76
North East Lincolnshire	295	87
North Lincolnshire	225	64
North Yorkshire	425	36
Rotherham	485	86
Sheffield	585	50
Wakefield	520	74
York	205	56
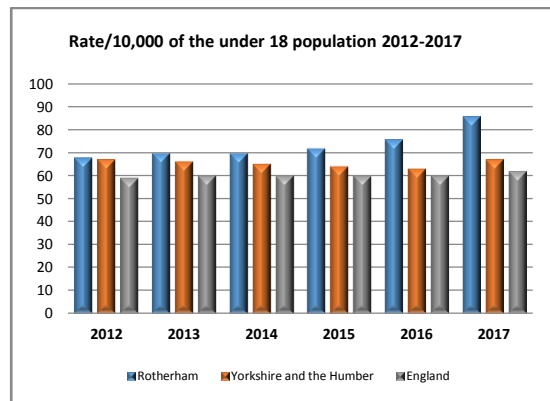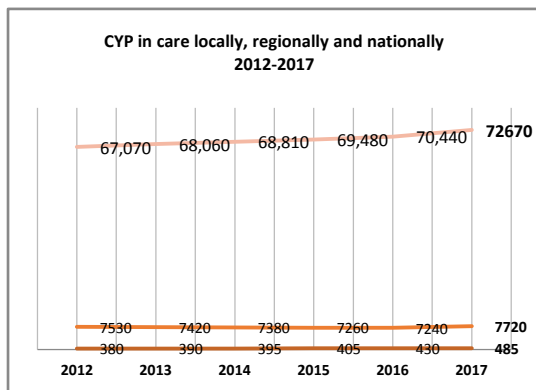
- There has been a 26% increase, 2012-2017, in the number of children & young people in care to Rotherham and an increase of 26% in the rate/10,000 of the under 18 population from 68/10,000 to 86/10,000. There was a 13% increase in the rate 2016-2017
- In England while the number of CYP in care has risen by 8% to 72,670, the rate/10,000 has increased by 5% between 2012 and 2017.
- Regionally there has been an increase of 2.5%, 2012-2017 with the rate/10,000 increasing to the 2012 high of 67/10,000 after a period of steady decline
- Of the 15 LAs which comprise the Yorkshire & Humber region, Rotherham has the 3rd highest LAC rate after Kingston Upon Hull and North East Lincolnshire and is significantly above the regional rate.

The current school age looked after population in care to Rotherham (Sept. 2018)

By gender and local authority

Gender	Rotherham schools (RMBC)		Out of Authority schools (OOA)		ALL	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Female	121	44	64	45	185	45
Male	151	56	77	55	228	55
Total	272		141		413	

By ethnicity

Ethnic Group	RMBC	OOA	ALL	%age
White British	188	99	287	69
Any other White background	13	2	4	4
Gypsy/Roma	21	16	37	9
White & Black Caribbean	5	1	6	1
Caribbean	0	1	1	0
White & Black African	4	0	4	1
White & Asian	11	15	26	6
Any other mixed background	1	1	1	0
Pakistani	7	5	12	3
Any other Asian background	5	0	5	1
African	7	0	7	2
Any other Black background	3	0	3	1
Chinese	2	0	2	0
Any other ethnic group	3	1	4	1
Information noy yet obtained	2	0	2	0
Total	272	141	413	100

By Special Educational Needs (SEN)

SEN	RMBC	OOA	ALL	%age
EHCP/Statement	52	41	93	23
EHCP/Statement pending	6	9	15	4
SEN support	42	36	78	19
No SEN	144	52	196	47
Not yet known	28	3	31	8
ALL	272	141	413	100

Primary LAC by NCY and local authority						
	Rotherham schools (RMBC)		Out of Authority schools (OOA)		ALL	
NCY	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Year 0	15	10	3	16	18	9
Year 1	20	13	4	8	24	12
Year 2	18	12	7	13	25	12
Year 3	16	10	5	10	21	10
Year 4	26	17	15	29	41	20
Year 5	28	18	10	19	38	18
Year 6	32	21	8	15	40	19
ALL	155	100	52	100	207	100
There are 207 LAC in 105 primary schools. 75% are in Rotherham primary schools & 25% are in OOA primary schools.						

Secondary LAC by NCY and local authority						
	Rotherham schools (RMBC)		Out of Authority schools (OOA)		ALL	
NCY	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Year 7	24	21	12	13	36	17
Year 8	25	21	15	17	40	19
Year 9	21	18	19	21	40	19
Year 10	26	22	23	26	49	24
Year 11	21	18	20	22	41	20
ALL	117	100	89	100	206	100
There are 206 LAC in 93 secondary schools. 57% are in Rotherham secondary schools & 43% are in OOA secondary schools.						

Number of LAC attending primary schools by Ofsted category and local authority				
LAC attending	Rotherham schools	OOA schools	Total	%age
Outstanding	14	11	25	12
Good	101	35	136	66
Requires Improvement	33	0	33	16
Inadequate	4	1	5	2
Unknown/not applicable	3	5	8	4
ALL	155	52	207	100
161/199 (81%) of primary pupils attend schools judged by Ofsted to be good or outstanding.				

Number of LAC attending secondary schools by Ofsted category and local authority				
LAC attending	Rotherham schools	OOA schools	Total	%age
Outstanding	13	15	28	14
Good	88	47	135	66
Requires Improvement	6	17	23	11
Inadequate	7	3	10	5
Unknown/not applicable	3	7	10	5
ALL	117	89	206	100
163/196 (83%) of secondary pupils attend schools judged by Ofsted to be good or outstanding.				

The current school age LAC population in Rotherham in September 2018 in summary:

Number:	413
Phase:	207 primary 206 secondary
Gender:	228 male 185 female
Ethnicity:	69%% White British, 6% White & Asian, 9% Gypsy/Roma, 3% Pakistani
SEN:	45% have special educational needs; 26% have statements/EHCPs inc. pending
Local Authority:	272 in RMBC schools and 141 in OOA schools
Number of schools:	185 schools in 40 Local Authorities
Ofsted school category:	82% in good or better schools; primary 81%, secondary 83%

Educational Outcomes Summary 2018 (provisional)

Early Education: significant increase in take-up of Early Education Places maintained

EYFS: 4/10 (40%) with a Good Level of Development

Year 1 Phonics: 78% passed the test compared with 60% in 2017

Key Stage 1: improvements on 2017 particularly in maths

Key Stage 2: best results over the last 3 years in reading, writing and maths; 42% achieved all 3

Key Stage 2: contextualised outcomes at KS2 2016-2018 show a year on year improvement

Key Stage 2: average progress scores in 2016 significantly above LAC national and regional comparators and below in 2017

Key Stage 4: 4/43 (9%) achieved 5+ GCSE at grade 4 +
3/43 (7%) achieved 4+ GCSE inc. English & maths at grade 4+
6/43 (14.0%) achieved 4+ GCSE at grade 4+

Key Stage 4: **Of those in mainstream schools:**

4/19 (21%) achieved 5+ GCSE at grade 4 +
6/19 (32%) achieved 4+ GCSE at grade 4+
26.3% achieved grade 4+ in English
42% achieved grade 4+ in maths
15.8% achieved grade 4+ in both English and maths

Attainment 8: In 2016 RMBC above regional, and in line with LAC national comparators. In 2017 Rotherham outcomes were above national & regional comparators and below statistical neighbour outcomes.

Progress 8: In 2016 above national, regional and statistical neighbour comparators. In 2017 above the national comparator, in line with statistical neighbours and below the regional comparator.

Attendance: overall attendance 94% similar to previous years and comparators. Improvement in good or better attendance. Increase in persistent absence from 13.3 to 14.7%

Exclusions: Fixed term exclusions have fallen from 15% to 12.8%. Fewer exclusions at KS4 Significantly more were excluded from out of authority schools. There were 12 exclusions from RMBC schools, 5 primary and 7 secondary

PEP Compliance: remains very high and is typically 95% + at the end of each term in July 2018

PEP Quality: at least 2/3 judged to be good or better throughout 2018

School ratings: 82% in good or outstanding schools in September 2018 (83% in 2017)

Looked After Children taking up Early Education Places 2016-2017

On a regular basis, the Virtual School Headteacher (Early Years & Primary) and Primary Virtual School Advisers contact Social Workers of any children not taking up a 2 year old place, to ensure that they are aware of the entitlement and support them to take up the place where appropriate. They ensure that places for the children are in settings judged to be good or better. This proactivity has lead to a significant increase in the level of take-up. The team also ensures that the children have a Personal Education Plan.

%age LAC 2 year olds taking up an EEF place in Rotherham						
Spring 2016	Summer 2016	Autumn 2016	Spring 2017	Summer 2017	Spring 2018	Summer 2018
6 (46%)	(9) 82%	10 (77%)	9 (82%)	12 (86%)	27 (81)%	27 (81%)

A similar exercise commenced in Summer 2017 for 3 and 4 year old places for which there is a very high level of take-up.

LAC 3/4 year olds taking up an EEF place in Rotherham 2016-2018							
Term	No. LAC	LAC in EEF Place	%age	Term	No. LAC	LAC in EEF Place	%age
Autumn 2016	11	11	100%	Autumn 2016	26	24	92%
Spring 2017	14	13	93%	Spring 2017	26	24	92%
Summer 2017	19	19	100%	Summer 2017	26	24	92%

EYFS	Number	Good Level of Development	% GLD
DfE cohort	10	4/10	40%

Comment: a good level of development (GLD) at the end of the EYFS involves achieving at least the expected level in the early learning goals in the prime areas of learning (personal, social and emotional development; physical development; and communication and language) and in the specific areas of mathematics and literacy.
                       2015:   0%   achieved a GLD
                       2016:   29% (2/7) achieved a GLD
                       2017:   67% (4/6) achieved a GLD
70% of all Rotherham children in 2016, 72% in 2017 and 73% in 2018 achieved a GLD.			

Early Years Foundation Stage

Year 1 Phonics

Year 1 Phonics	Number	WA	WT	Disapplied
DfE Cohort	11	7/11 (64%)	2/11 (18%)	2/11 (18%)
Excluding Disapplied				
DfE Cohort	9	7/9 (78%)	2/9 (22%)	

Comment:
  • These are the best results in 3 years.
  • This year the results are close to all children in RMBC (81%) and nationally (83%) in 2018				

Key Stage 1 SATs: Cohort Characteristics

Number	Gender		Ethnicity				LA		SEN Status			Number of Placements				Time in care (years)		
	M	F	WBRI	MWA	APKN	AOBB	RMBC	OOA	E	K	N	1	2	3	4+	1+	2+	3+
13	6	7	10	1	1	1	10	3	2	6	5	3	5	1	4+	8	2	3

Key Stage 1 SATs results 2018

KS1	Number	Reading	Writing	Maths	Science
DfE Cohort	13	5/13 (38%)	5/13 (38%)	8/13 (62%)	9/13 (69%)
Excluding EHCP					
DfE Cohort	11	5/11 (45%)	5/11 (45%)	8/11 (73%)	9/11 (82%)
Comment: • some improvements in reading, writing and maths compared with 2017 • Deficit greater in reading and writing than maths. This will clearly need to be a major focus for schools and Virtual School Advisers in the personal education planning process. • Excluding those with EHCPs the number reaching expected standard in maths is broadly in line with outcomes for all pupils in RMBC (75%) and nationally (76%).					

Key Stage 1 SATs results 2016-2018 %age LAC reaching expected standard compared nationally

	2016			2017			2018		
	Reading	Writing	Maths	Reading	Writing	Maths	Reading	Writing	Maths
RMBC	67	56	56	25	17	33	38	38	62
England	50	37	46	51	39	46			

Key Stage 2 SATs: Cohort Characteristics

Number	Gender		Ethnicity				LA		SEN Status			Number of Placements				Time in care (years)			
	M	F	WBRI	MWA	GRT	APKN	RMBC	OOA	E	K	N	1	2	3	4+	1+	2+	3+	4+
24	15	9	20	2	1	1	15	9	5	6	13	7	7	2	8	4	7	3	10

Key Stage 2 SATs results 2018

KS2	Number	Reading	Writing	Maths	Science
DfE Cohort	24	13/24 (54%)	13/24 (54%)	14/24 (58%)	13/24 (54%)
Excluding EHCP					
DfE Cohort -5 EHCP	19	12/19 (63%)	12/19 (63%)	13/19 (68%)	12/19 (63%)
Comment:					

Comment:
- 10/24 (42%) achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (all 3) which is significantly above the number and %age for 2016 and 2017.
- Excluding those with EHCPs close to 2 out of 3 reached expected standards in reading and maths which is closer to all children in RMBC and nationally
- 1 CYP with an EHCP met expected standards across the board at KS2

KS2 SATs 2016-2018: %age LAC reaching expected standard) compared regionally & nationally

	2016				2017				2018			
	Reading	Writing	Maths	RWMa	Reading	Writing	Maths	RWMa	Reading	Writing	Maths	RWMa
England	41	46	41	25	45	47	46	32				
Yorkshire & Humber	39	47	40	25	44	46	45	30				
RMBC	38	33	33	x	39	39	26	x	54	54	58	42

Comment:
- The variability of outcomes at KS2 is explained partly by the variability of cohort composition, especially in relation to special educational needs:

- 2016   2/21 (10%) had statements/EHCPs
  2017   7/24 (29%) had statements/EHCPs
  2018   5/24 (21%) had statements/EHCPs

Key Stage 2 SATs: Contextualised Outcomes 2016-2018 (excluding EHCPs)

RMBC:	KS2 Contextualised Outcomes 2016-2018 (excluding EHCPs)				
	Cohort	Reading	Writing	Maths	RWMa
2016	19	8 (42%)	7/19 (37%)	7/19 (37%)	5/19 (26%)
2017	17	9/17 (53%)	8/17 (47%)	8/17 (47%)	6/17 (35%)
2018	19	12/19 (63%)	12/19 (63%)	13/19 (68%)	9/19 (47%)
Comment:					
The contextualised outcomes (excluding pupils with EHCPs) 2016-2018 show a year on year improvement.					

RMBC KS2 Contextualised Outcomes (- EHCP) 2016-2018
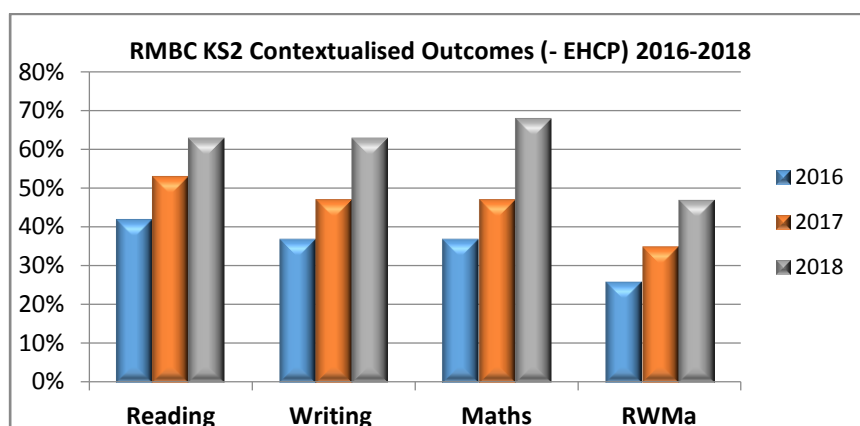
Key Stage 2: Average Progress 2016 and 2017

KS2 Average Progress Scores 2016 & 2017

	Reading	Writing	Maths		Reading	Writing	Maths
England	-0.5	-1	-1.3		-0.7	-0.9	-1.1
Yorkshire & Humber	-0.8	-0.5	-1.4		-0.8	-0.8	-1.3
RMBC	-0.4	-0.9	-0.5		-1.12	-1.33	-1.972
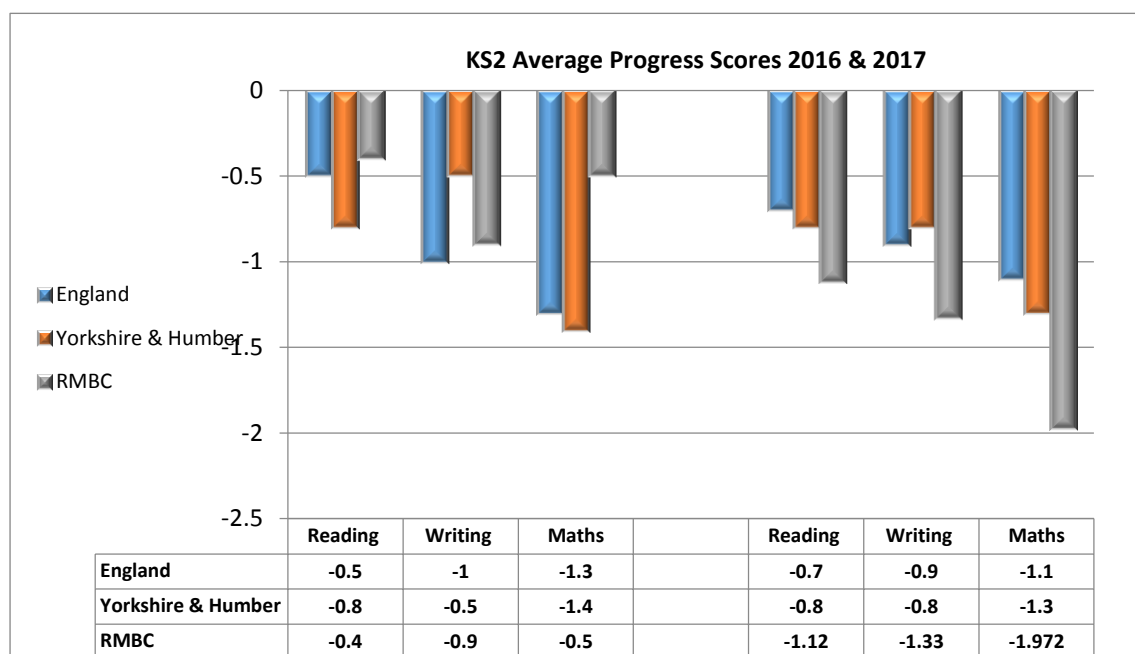
The deterioration in Average Progress Scores is also directly linked with the proportion of the cohort with EHCPs. The 2018 data when published should show a significant improvement on 2017.

Educational Outcomes for RMBC LAC compared with all pupils in RMBC and with all LAC and all pupils nationally	National All Pupils (%)			Rotherham All Pupils (%)			National LAC		Rotherham LAC		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2016	2017	2018
EYFS Good Level of Development	69.3	70.7	71.7	70.4	72.1	73.1			29% (2/7)	67% (4/6)	**40% (4/10)**
Y1 Phonics	81	81	81.0	79	79	83.0			67% (6/9)	60% (3/5)	**78% (7/9)**
KS1 Reading Reached Expected Standard	74	76	75.5	71	73	72.7	50	51	67% (6/9)	25% (3/12)	**38% (5/13)**
KS1 Writing Reached Expected Standard	66	68	70.0	65	69	69.8	39	39	56% (5/9)	17% (2/12)	**38% (5/13)**
KS1 Mathematics Reached Expected Standard	73	75	76.1	71	75	74.9	46	46	56% (5/9)	33% (4/12)	**62% (8/13)**
KS2 SP&G Reached Expected Standard	72	77	78.0	71	76	74.2	44	50	33% (7/21)	46% (11/24)	
KS2 Reading Reached Expected Standard	66	72	75.0	64	69	70.2	41	45	38% (8/21)	42% (10/24)	**54% (13/24)**
KS2 Writing Reached Expected Standard	74	76	78.0	78	77	79.4	46	47	33% (7/21)	38% (9/24)	**54% (13/24)**
KS2 Mathematics Reached Expected Standard	70	75	76.0	72	76	73.7	42	46	33% (7/21)	33% (8/24)	**58% (14/24)**
KS2 Reading, Writing & Maths Reached Expected Standard	53	61	64.0	54	61	61.4	26	32	24% (5/21)	25% (6/24)	**42% (10/24)**

LAC KS2 summary:
Year 1 Phonics: these are the best outcomes in 3 years
Key Stage 1:   some improvements in reading, writing and maths compared with 2017
Key Stage 2:   best results over the last 3 years in reading, writing and maths, with 42% achieving all 3
Key Stage 2:   contextualised outcomes at KS2 2016-2018 show a year on year improvement

Year 11 Outcomes 2018

Year 11 Cohort Characteristics 2018

Gender		Ethnicity				Local Authority	
Female	**Male**	**WBRI**	**MWA**	**MOTH**	**OTH**	**Rotherham**	**OOA**
20	10	25	2	2	1	18	12
67%	33%	83%	7%	7%	3%	60%	40%

- 2:1 female to male
- 83% white British
- 3:2 Rotherham schools

SEN Status				School Type		School Ofsted Category				
EHCP/S	**K***	**K**	**N**	**MS**	**NMS**	**O/S**	**Good**	**RI**	**Inadequate**	**N/A**
7	3	10	10	20	10	9	14	2	1	3
23%	10%	33%	33%	67%	33%	30%	47%	7%	3%	10%

- 67% with special needs
- 33% with high level special needs (EHCP/Statement/ Statement pending)
- 1 in 3 in non-mainstream schools (NMS)
- 77% in schools rated good or outstanding by Ofsted

K* = EHCP pending

Type of Placement				Placement Moves						Years in Care				
Foster	**Resid**	**Parents**	**IL**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**6**	**8**	**<2**	**<3**	**<4**	**<5**	**5+**
17	10	1	2	14	9	2	1	3	1	5	7	5	1	12
57%	33%	3%	7%	47%	30%	7%	3 %	10%	3%	17%	23%	17%	3%	40%

- 1 in 3 in residential placements
- 2 independent living
- 84% with 3 or fewer placements
- 18/30 became LAC during their secondary school years
- 12/30 became LAC in Years 9, 10 and 11
- 5/30 became LAC in Years 10 and 11

GCSE results 2018 and contextualised by SEN and school type			
Number of GCSE grade 4 +	**%age GCSE grade 4+ (cohort 43)**	**%age excluding EHCP (cohort 23)**	**%age mainstream only (cohort 19)**
9	2.3	**4.3**	**5.3**
8	4.8	**8.7**	**10.5**
5	7.0	**13.0**	**15.8**
5	9.3	**17.4**	**21.1**
4	11.6	**21.7**	**26.3**
4	14.0	**26.1**	**31.6**
3	16..3	**30.4**	**36.8**
3	18.6	**34.8**	**42.1**
2	20.9	**39.1**	**47.4**
2	23.3	**43.5**	**52.6**
1	25.6	**47.8**	**57.9**

Cohort: **43**
EHCP/Statement: **20**
EHCP/S/Statement pending: **24**
Mainstream: **19**
Non-mainstream: **24 including special, secure, not in education**

Full cohort:
- **4/43 (9%) achieved 5+ GCSE at grade 4 +**
- **3/43 (7%)   achieved 4+ GCSE inc. English & maths at grade 4+**
- **6/43 (14.0%) achieved 4+ GCSE at grade 4+**

Of those in mainstream schools:
- **4/19 (21%) achieved 5+ GCSE at grade 4 +**
- **6/19 (32%) achieved 4+ GCSE at grade 4+**

Grade 4+ in English and Grade 4 in Maths				
	English Grade 4+		**Maths Grade 4+**	
Full cohort (43)	**5/43**	**11.6%**	**8/43**	**18.6%**
Excluding EHCP (23)	**5/23**	**21.7%**	**8/23**	**34.8%**
Mainstream ((19)	**5/19**	**26.3%**	**8/18**	**42.0%**

Full cohort: **11.6% achieved grade 4+ in English and 18.6% in maths**
                                  7.0% achieved grade 4+ in both English and maths

Of those in mainstream: **26.3% achieved grade 4+ in English and 42% achieved grade 4+ in maths**
                                         15.8% achieved grade 4+ in both English and maths

Number grade 4+ GCSE	GCSE English grade	GCSE Maths grade	Gender	Ethnicity	School Type	SEN	Placement Type	No. Placements	Exclusions	Days Absent	Time in care	KS2 grade English	KS2 grade maths
Characteristics of Highest Achieving LAC GCSE 2018													
9	5	5	F	WBRI	MS	N	U4	2	NO	1.5	9+	NK	NK
8	7	6	F	WBRI	MS	N	U6	2	NO	6	1+	NK	NK
5	4	4	F	WBRI	MS	N	U4	3	NO	1.5	6+	4	4
5	4	2	F	WBRI	MS	N	U6	2	NO	2.5	1+	3	3
4	3	4	M	WBRI	MS	N	U6	5	NO	1	6+	4	4
4	3	4	M	BWA	MS	N	U6	1	NO	1	1+	4	5
3	3	8	M	WBRI	MS	N	U4	2	NO	6.5	5+	4	6
3	4	2	F	WBRI	MS	N	U4	1	NO	0	6+	4	4
2	3	5	M	WBRI	MS	N	U4	1	NO	0	3+	3	4
1	2	4	F	AOWB	MS	K*	U6	2	YES	14	1+	3	4
1	2	2	F	WBRI	MS	E	U6	4	YES	3	5+	4	4

11/11 in foster care   **11/11 in mainstream schools**   **2/11 with SEN**

8/11 in one or two placements   **9/11 with very good /excellent attendance**

9/11 no exclusions   **7/11 female**   **9/11 WBRI**

Gender	Ethnicity	School Type	SEN	Placement Type	No. Placements	Exclusions	Persistent Absence	Time in care	Eng GCSE	Maths GCSE
LAC achieving level 4+ in English and Maths at KS2 achieving neither grade 4 + in English or maths										
F	WBRI	MS	E	U6	4	YES	NO	5+	2	2
M	WBRI	NMS	K	P1	4	NO	YES	7+	No quals	
M	WBRI	MS	N	P1	2	NO	NO	5+	U	1
F	WBRI	MS	N	U6	1	NO	YES	1+	2	2
F	WBRI	NMS	K	H5	9	NO	YES	4+	0	0
M	WBRI	NMS	E	K2	6	NO	YES	4+	1	3
F	WBRI	MS	K	K2	5	YES	YES	2+	0	2
F	WBRI	MS	E	P2	15	NO	YES	9+	0	0
F	WBRI	NMS	E	K2	4	NO	NO	2+	D	3
F	WBRI	NIE	E	P2	5	NO	YES	3+	0	3

7/10 female   **10/10 WBRI**   **5/10 non-mainstream school**   **5/10 EHCPs**

4/10 residential   **2/10 with parents**   **2/10 living independently**   **2/10 foster care**

6/10 with 4+ placement moves   **7/10 persistent absentees**   **6/10 < 4 years in care**

Attainment 8 and Progress 8, 2016 and 2017

Attainment 8
- In terms of Attainment 8 Rotherham LAC outcomes in 2016 were below national outcomes and above regional and statistical neighbour outcomes.
- In 2017 Rotherham outcomes were above national & regional comparators and below statistical neighbour outcomes.
- In 2017 this gives a national rank of 53 and places RMBC in quartile banding B
- The score of 21 compares with 45.00 for all pupils in Rotherham and 44.6 for all pupils in England.

LAC: Attainment 8 2016-2017

	England	Yorkshire & the Humber	Rotherham	Stat Neighbours
2016	22.8	21.4	22.6	21.16
2017	19.3	20.1	21	21.91
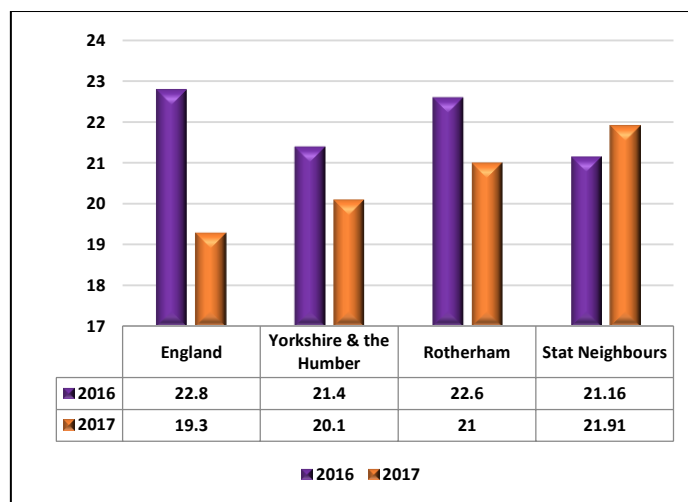
Progress 8

- In terms of Progress 8 Rotherham LAC outcomes in 2016 were above national, regional and statistical neighbour comparators.
- In 2017 RMBC outcomes were above the national comparator, in line with statistical neighbours and below the regional comparator.
- In 2017 this gives a national rank of 54 and places RMBC in quartile banding B
- It compares with 0.06 for all pupils in Rotherham, -0.03 for Yorkshire & Humberside and 0.10 for statistical neighbours

	England	Yorkshire & the Humber	Rotherham	Stat Neighbours
2016	-1.14	-1.16	-0.94	-1.06
2017	-1.18	-0.97	-1.06	-1.06
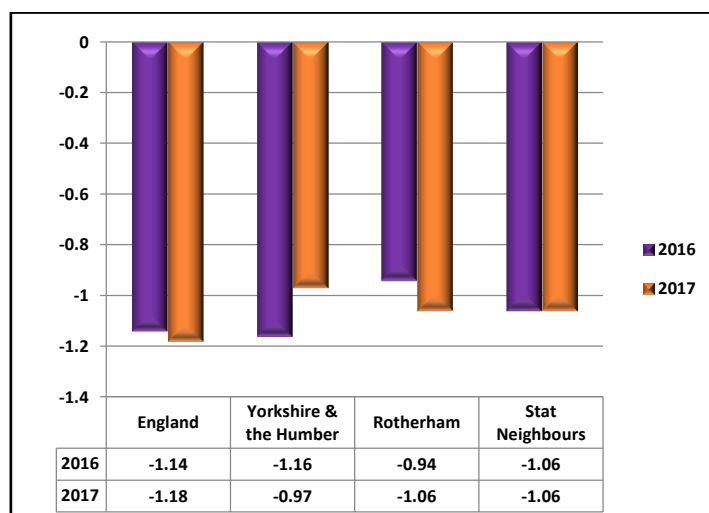
Attainment 8 and Progress 8

Attainment 8:

- Attainment 8 measures the achievement of a pupil across 8 qualifications including mathematics (double weighted) and English (double weighted), 3 further qualifications that count in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) measure, and 3 further qualifications that can be GCSE qualifications (including EBacc subjects) or technical awards from the DfE approved list.

- In measuring Attainment 8:
  A*= 8 points
  A = 7 points
  B = 6 points
  C = 5 points
  D = 4 points

  Points are doubled for English and maths

  So a pupil with 5 grade Cs including English and maths would attain 35 points.

Progress 8:

- Progress 8 aims to capture the progress a pupil makes from the end of key stage 2 to the end of key stage 4.

- It compares pupils' achievement (attainment 8 score) with the average Attainment 8 score of all pupils nationally who had a similar starting point (prior attainment).

- A school's Average Progress 8 score is calculated as the average of its pupils' Progress 8 scores. It gives an indication of whether, as a group, pupils in the school made above or below average progress compared to similar pupils in other schools.

- An Average Progress score of zero means pupils in the school on average do about as well at key stage 4 as other pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

- A score above zero means pupils made more progress, on average, than pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

- A score below zero means pupils made less progress, on average, than pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

- A negative progress score does not mean pupils made no progress, or the school has failed, rather it means pupils in the school made less progress than other pupils across England with similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Care Leavers (aged 17 & 18) - Education, Employment or Training (%): 2016 and 2017

Care Leavers aged 17 & 18 in Education, Employment & Training 2016 and 2017 (%age)
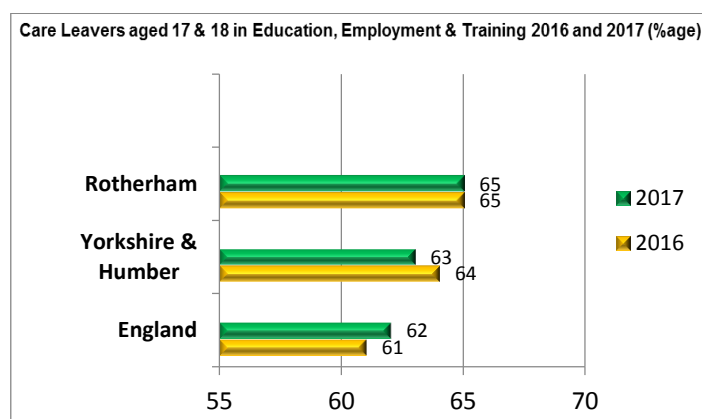
Commentary: This data was collected for the first time in 2016. They are experimental statistics and need to be treated with caution. Nonetheless it is gratifying to see that Rotherham's performance compares favourably in both years, with national and regional comparators with 2/3 care leavers aged 17 and 18 in education, employment or training.

Care Leavers (19, 20 and 21 year olds) - Education, Employment or Training (%): 2011-2018

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Rotherham	68.00	68.00	61.00	47.00	61.00	61.00
England	61.00	58.00	58.00	45.00	48.00	49.00
Yorkshire and The Humber	63.00	61.00	58.00	47.00	53.00	52.00
Statistical Neighbours	56.20	58.60	58.80	40.80	50.40	55.60

National Rank 2016:	16
Quartile Banding 2016:	A
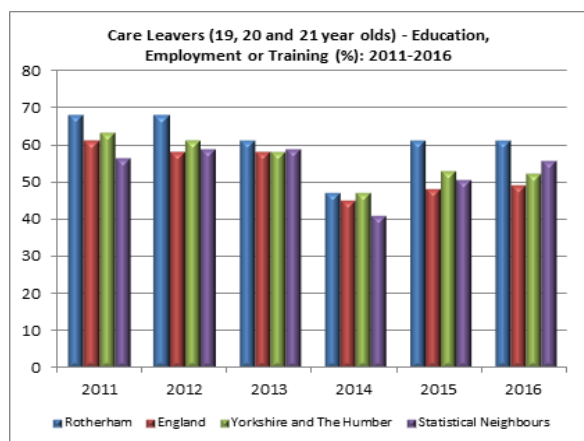
Between 2011 and 2016, Rotherham has consistently outperformed national, regional and statistical neighbour comparators and, in several years by significant margins, apart from 2014, when Rotherham and its statistical neighbours were in line.

In 2016, with 61% of 19-21 year old care leavers in education, employment and training, Rotherham's national ranking was 16th which placed it in quartile band A.

In 2017 the measure for care leavers has been changed to those up to the age of 25. Local performance data shows a small increase from March 2017 to March 2018

- March 2017:   62.9% EET
- March 2018:   63.6% EET

Attendance 2017 – 2018

Headlines

- **Overall Attendance:**   **2018: 94%**   **2017: 93.5%**
- **Full Attendance:**   **2018: 14.3% (38/266)**   **2017: 15% (33/220)**
- **Good or better attendance:**   **2018: 76%**   **2017: 71%**
- **Persistent Absence (20+days):**   **2018: 14.7%**   **2017: 13.3%**

Year	Overall Attendance
0	96%
1	95%
2	97%
3	96%
4	98%
5	97%
6	99%
7	96%
8	97%
9	90%
10	89%
11	85%
Total	**94%**

Days Absent	2018	2017
0 days absent	14.3%	15%
<5 days absent	59.0%	56%
<10 days absent	75.9%	71%
<15 days absent	82.7%	78%
<20 days absent	85.3%	84%
<25 days absent	88.7%	87%
25 days + absent	11.3%	13%

Attendance Analysis 2017-2018

100%	NCY/Days Absent	0-4.5 days	5-9.5	10-14.5	15-19.5	20-24.5	25 + days	Total
2	**0**	5	2	2	0	1	0	10
2	**1**	5	2	1	0	1	1	10
0	**2**	9	2	1	0	1	0	13
3	**3**	16	0	1	2	1	1	21
4	**4**	15	2	0	0	0	0	17
3	**5**	11	5	0	2	0	0	18
6	**6**	20	4	0	0	0	0	24
20	**Total primary**	**81**	**17**	**5**	**4**	**4**	**2**	**113**
17.7	**%age primary**	**71.7**	**15.0**	**4.4**	**3.5**	**3.5**	**1.8**	
6	**7**	15	7	2	0	1	3	28
5	**8**	19	5	3	0	0	1	28
1	**9**	14	5	2	0	0	5	26
4	**10**	13	5	2	1	2	5	28
2	**11**	15	6	4	2	2	14	43
18	**Total secondary**	76	28	13	3	5	28	153
11.8	**%age secondary**	49.7	18.3	8.5	2.0	3.3	18.3	
38	**Total all**	157	45	18	7	9	30	
14.3	**%age**	59	16.9	6.8	2.6	3.4	11.3	
	Cumulative total	157	202	220	227	236	266	
	Cumulative %	59	75.9	82.7	85.3	88.7	100	

Characteristics of Persistent Absentees 2018

NCY	No. in NCY	Persistent Absentees	%age of NCY	Gender		Ethnicity						Local Authority		SEN Status				Mainstream	Non- m/s	School Ofsted Category				
				Male	Female	WBRI	GRT	AOWB	AFR	MWA	MWBA	RMBC	OOA	EHCP	K* EHCP pending	School Intervention	None			Outstanding	Good	RI	Inadequate	N/A
0	10	1	10	1	0	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1	10	2	20	0	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	2	0	0	0	0
2	13	1	7.7	1	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
3	21	2	9.5	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	0
4	17	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	18	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	24	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PRI	113	6	5.3	3	3	5	0	0	0	0	1	3	3	1	0	3	2	6	0	3	3	0	0	0
7	28	4	14.3	4	0	2	1	-	-	1	-	0	4	1	1	2	0	0	4	0	3	1	0	0
8	28	1	3.6	0	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
9	26	5	19.2	3	2	5			-	-		1	4	1	1	3	0	2	3	1	4	0	0	0
10	28	7	25.0	5	2	4	1	1	1	-	-	3	4	4	1	1	1	3	4	0	5	1	1	0
11	43	16	37.2	10	6	13	3	-	-	-	-	5	11	8	1	5	2	4	12	2	9	1	1	3
SEC	153	33	21.6	22	11	24	5	1	1	2	1	9	24	14	5	11	3	9	24	3	22	3	2	3
Total	266	39	14.7	25	14	29	5	1	1	2	1	12	27	15	5	14	5	15	24	6	25	3	2	3
%age				64	36	74.4	12.8	2.6	2.6	5.1	2.6	31	70	38.5	12.8	36	12.8	38.5	61.5	15.4	61.5	7.7	5.1	7.7

The main characteristics of persistent absentees 2017.2018:

*Male : 64%   * White British: 74%   *Out of authority: 70%   * Years 10 & 11: 59%   * High level of SEN: 51%   *In non-mainstream schools

*Attending good/outstanding schools: 76%   * not in foster care: 67%   * 4+ placements: 64%   * 21/33 (64%) of secondary in care from Year 7 or later

*11/33 secondary excluded between 3 and 38 days

Note: The only significant difference from 2017 is that the majority were in Rotherham schools (69%)

NCY	No. in NCY	Persistent Absentee	Placement Type										Number of Placements									
			A5	A6	U1	U3	U6	P1	K2	H5	P2	Z1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+
0	10	1						1						1								
1	10	2		1			1						1	1								
2	3	1					1							1								
3	21	2	1				1								1	1						
4	17	0																				
5	18	0																				
6	24	0																				
PRI	113	6	1	1	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	28	4					3	1						1		1				2		
8	28	1					1								1							
9	26	5			1			1	3					2			1	1				1
10	28	7				1	1	2	3					1	1	2	1			1		1
11	43	16					2	3	5	1	4	1	2	1	1	3	3	2		1	2	1
SEC	153	33	0	0	1	1	7	6	12	1	4	1	2	5	2	7	5	3	0	4	2	3
Total	266	39	1	1	1	1	9	8	12	1	4	1	3	8	4	8	5	3	0	4	2	3
%age			2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	23	20.5	30.8	2.5	10.3	2.5	7.7	20.5	10.3	20.5	12.8	7.7	0	10.3	5.1	7.7

Code	Placement Type	Code	Ethnicity
A5	Placed for Adoption With Placement Order (current Foster Carer)	WBRI	White British
A6	Placed for Adoption With Placement Order (not current Foster Carer)	GRT	Gypsy Roma
U1	Foster placement with relative or friend- long term fostering	AFR	Sfrican
U3	Foster placement with relative or friend- not long term or FFA	MWA	White & Asian
U6	Placement with other foster carer - not long term or FFA	MWBA	White & Black African
P1	Placed with parents or other with Parental Resp	AOWB	Any other white background
K2	Children's Home	AOAB	Any other Asian background
H5	Resid. Accom. not subject to Children's Homes Regulations.	AOBB	Any other black background
P2	Independent living (flat/lodgings/friends/B&B		
Z1	Z1 - Other Placement		

Characteristics of those with 100% attendance 2018

Total	Gender		Phase		Ethnicity						School Type		SEN		
	M	F	PRI	SEC	WBRI	AOWB	GRT	BWA	AOAB	AOBB	MS	NMS	E	K	N
38	26	12	20	18	27	3	2	4	1	1	34	4	7	6	25

Placement Type						Number of Placements					Time in Care (years)				
A6	U3	U4	U6	P1	K2	1	2	3	4	5+	1+	2+	3+	4+	5+
2	1	12	19	2	2	17	8	5	3	5	11	6	6	3	12

- Those with 100% attendance (14.3%) are predominantly male, white British, in mainstream school, and are in foster care.
- 66% have no special educational needs and 66% have only 1 or 2 placements
- There are similar numbers in primary and secondary school
- There is no strong correlation with duration of time in care

Attendance over time: 2012-2017

LAC Overall Absence 2012-2017	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Rotherham	5.80	4.20	3.70	5.00	4.1	5.7
England	4.70	4.40	3.90	4.00	3.9	4.3
Yorkshire and The Humber	4.50	4.00	3.70	3.70	3.5	3.9
Statistical Neighbours	4.27	3.57	3.32	3.38	3.46	3.9
%age difference RMBC and England	1.1	-0.2	-0.2	1	0.2	1.4
%age difference RMBC & Stat. Neighbours	1.5	0.6	0.4	1.6	0.7	1.8
ALL RMBC schools	5.6	5.9	5.0.	5.3	5.1	5.2

Persistent Absence 2013-2017	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Rotherham	10.50	6.40	11.70	12.2	13.3
England	10.10	8.90	9.00	9.1	10.0
Yorkshire and The Humber	9.30	8.10	8.30	8.4	9.1
Statistical Neighbours	8.17	8.23	8.23	8.9	9.36
%age difference Rotherham and England	0.40	-2.50	2.70	3.1	3.3
%age difference Rotherham & Stat. Neighbours	2.33	-3.83	2.70	3.1	3.3
ALL RMBC schools	-	-	-	13.0	13.0

- Local information for 2017 was higher than the DfE calculation by 3.1 percentage points
- The local figure for 2017 is 14.7% which gives an increase rather than a decrease
- **In 2017 the persistence absence for LAC was broadly in line for that of <u>all RMBC pupils.</u>**

Persistent Absence compared: 2013-2017
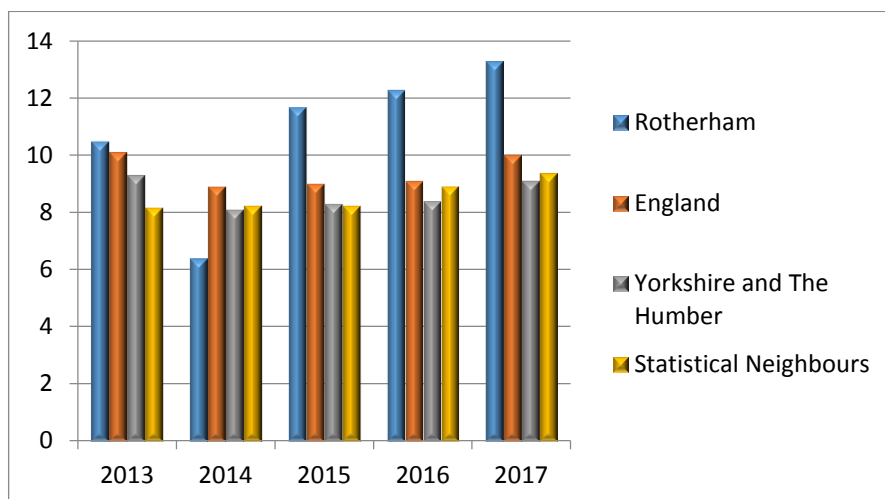
In summary

- There have been some small but welcome improvements in attendance 2017.2018
- Good or better attendance has increased by 5 percentage points.
- Persistent absence has increased by 1.4% based on the Dfe figure for 2017. This is 3.1 percentage points lower than the local calculation
- Comparing and contrasting persistent absentees with those with 100% attendance the key correlations are in relation to the type and number of care placements, special educational needs, and whether or not the CYP is in a mainstream or non-mainstream school. These are, of course, inextricably interrelated.

Virtual School Actions:

The Virtual School maintains its robust strategy to improve overall attendance and to tackle persistent absence particularly in Years 10 and 11.

Welfare Call contacts schools, education providers and tutors on a daily basis to ask whether each looked after child is accessing education that day. Attendance monitoring reports are provided to the Virtual School on a daily and weekly basis, and issues where children are not in attendance can be investigated in a timely manner and inform interventions.

A high priority is placed on attendance at PEP meetings. Those with high rates of absence will be closely monitored during the school year 2018/19 and solutions will be sought to minimise absence.

Persistent absence is clearly connected with placement type and placement stability as well as school type and special educational needs. These are both intertwined and, in turn, rooted in the emotional wellbeing of the children & young people.

Recognising this, the Virtual School's longer term strategy is focused on improving attendance by promoting emotional wellbeing through Attachment Friendly Schools, Emotion Coaching, Solution Focused Staff Meetings, Creative Mentoring, and creating a cadre of Emotional Literacy Support Assistants.

Exclusions 2017 – 2018

	2017.2018	2016.2017
Permanent:	0	0
Fixed term	34/266 (12.8%)	33/220 (15%)
Number of exclusions	17/34 had 3+ exclusions	15/34 had 3+ exclusions
Days excluded in total	17/34 (50%) with 4 + days of exclusions	15/34 (44%) with 4 + days of exclusions
NCY	38% in Years 10 and 11	50% in Years 10 and 11
Phase	15% primary	12% primary
School Type	1 in 3 in non-mainstream	1 in 3 in non-mainstream
Ofsted Rating	3 out of 4 excluded from good + schools	3 out of 4 excluded from good + schools
Local Authority	68% from OOA schools	47% from OOA schools
Gender	53% female	44% female
Ethnicity	Predominantly white British; 4 GRT	Predominantly white British; 1 GRT
SEN	56% high level needs	65% high level needs
Time in Care	44% in care for 5 years +	35% in care for 5 years +
Placement type	65% in foster care	71% in foster care
Placement moves	47% had 3 or more placements	76% had 3 or more placements

No. of Exclusions	No. of pupils
1	13
2	4
3	4
4	5
5	1
6	2
7	1
9	2
11	1
13	1

Reason for Exclusion	Total days of exclusion
Unacceptable Behaviour	54.5
Verbal Abuse / Threatening Behaviour Against an Adult	39
Disruptive Behaviour	34.5
School Unable to Supply Reason	30.5
Persistent Disruptive Behaviour	23.5
Physical Assault - Pupil	18
Verbal Abuse / Threatening Behaviour Against a Pupil	16
Aggressive Behaviour	10
Non - Cooperation with staff	10
Drug/Alcohol Related	10
Physical Assault - Adult	7
Damage	5
Sexual misconduct	5
Other	3.5
Racist Abuse	2
Theft	0.5
Total	**269**

Commentary:

- Based on local data, fixed term exclusions have fallen 15% from 15% to 12.8%
- 50% had 3 or more exclusions
- There were fewer exclusions at KS4
- Significantly more were excluded from out of authority schools
- There were 12 exclusions from RMBC schools, 5 primary and 7 secondary
- More females than males this year
- Pupils from black or other minority groups made up 29% of excluded pupils. By days, BME pupils received over a third of total exclusions
- Significantly fewer with multiple placement moves than last year
- Placement stability is a much stronger predictor of exclusion than length of time in care
- Unacceptable, threatening or otherwise disruptive behaviour account for the overwhelming majority of days lost to exclusions

Characteristics of Excluded LAC 2018

NCY	No. Excluded	Gender		Ethnicity						LA		SEN Status				Mainstream	Non- m/s inc. AP	School Ofsted Category			
		Male	Female	WBRI	GRT	AFR	APKN	MWA	AOWB	RMBC	OOA	EHCP	K* EHCP pending	K: School Intervention	None			Outstanding	Good	RI	Inadequate
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	3	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	0
5	2	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	1	1	0
6	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
PRI	6	3	3	6	0	0	0	0	0	5	1	3	1	1	1	6	0	0	5	1	0
7	4	3	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	4	0	1	3	0	1	3	1	2	1	0
8	5	2	3	4	0	0	0	1	0	1	4	3	1	0	1	4	1	0	3	2	0
9	6	3	3	4	0	0	0	2	0	2	4	1	1	3	1	5	1	1	4	0	1
10	7	4	3	3	3	1	0	0	0	1	6	3	1	2	1	1	6	0	5	1	1
11	6	1	5	5	0	0	0	0	1	2	4	3	1	2	0	5	1	0	5	0	1
SEC	28	13	15	18	4	1	1	3	1	6	23	10	5	10	3	16	12	2	19	4	3
Total	34/266	16	18	24	4	1	1	3	1	11	23	13	6	11	4	22	12	2	24	5	3
%age	12.8	47	53	70.6	11.8	2.9	2.9	8.8	2.9	32.4	67.6	38.2	17.6	32.4	11.8	64.7	35.3	5.9	70.6	14.7	2.9

NCY	No. Excluded	Placement Type					Number of Placements										Time in Care (years)				
		U4	U6	P1	K2	P2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5+
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	3	0	3	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1
5	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
6	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
PRI	6	0	6	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	0	1
7	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0		1	1		2
8	5	3	2	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0					5
9	6	1	1	2	2	0	0	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2		2	1	1
10	7	0	1	0	6	0	0	2	1	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	3			1	3
11	6	1	3	0	1	1	0	2	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1		3
SEC	28	5	11	2	9	1	2	7	4	3	5	1	1	3	0	2	6	2	4	2	14
Total	34/266	5	17	2	9	1	4	9	5	3	5	2	1	3	0	2	7	4	6	2	15
%age	12.8	14.7	50.0	5.9	26.5	2.9	11.8	26.5	14.7	2.9	14.7	5.9	2.9	2.9	0	5.9	20.6	11.8	17.6	5.9	44.1

	Placement Type	Code	Ethnicity
U4	Placement with other foster carer- long term fostering	WBRI	White British
U6	Placement with other foster carer - not long term or FFA	GRT	Gypsy Roma
P1	Placed with parents or other with Parental Resp	AFR	African
K2	Children's Home	MWA	White & Asian
P2	Independent living (flat/lodgings/friends/B&B	APKN	Pakistani
		AOWB	Any other white background

Exclusions 2009-2016

Fixed Term Exclusions 2012-2015	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Rotherham	9.95	9.42	6.38	7.61	10.61	11.79	13.11
England	12.62	11.79	11.32	9.77	10.25	10.42	11.44
Yorkshire and The Humber	11.65	9.97	9.66	8.22	9.38	10.35	11.72
Statistical Neighbours	13.54	12.26	10.77	9.81	10.71	10.52	12.68
%age difference RMBC and England	-2.67	-2.37	-4.94	-2.16	0.36	1.37	1.67
%age difference RMBC & Stat. Neighbours	3.59	-2.84	-4.39	-2.21	-0.1	1.27	0.34

Note: Exclusions data are collected two terms in arrears, so the latest DfE exclusions data available is from the academic year 2015/16.

LAC Exclusions 2009 - 2016
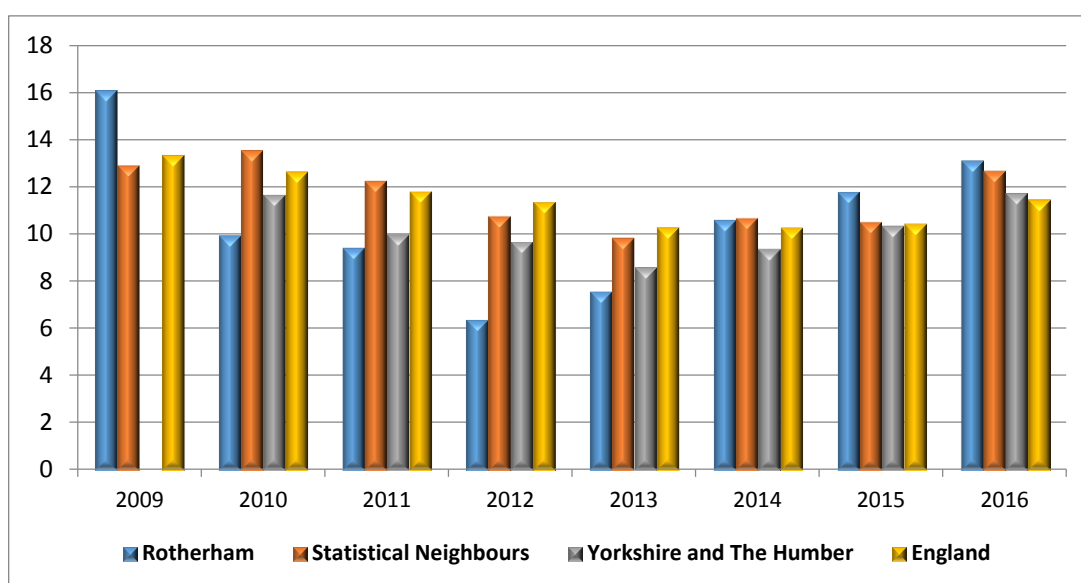
Commentary on exclusions over time:

Looked After Children and Young People are five times more likely to have a fixed period exclusion than all children and one and a half times more likely than children in need. Fixed term exclusions were on a downward trend 2009-2012 locally, regionally, in Rotherham's statistical neighbours, and nationally. This trend would appear to have gone into reverse since 2013.

Fixed term exclusions in Rotherham in 4 out of 6 years between 2010 and 2015 were significantly below national, regional and statistical neighbour comparators and broadly in line in 2014. They were 1.37 percentage points above the national average in 2015 and 1.67 in 2016.

2016 saw a significant increase in fixed term exclusions. In 10 out of 33 (33%) cases the exclusion was requested by the Virtual School, as the Virtual School was challenging the practice of schools 'informally' excluding young people. This appears to be the principal reason for the increase. Excluding these 10 would have given an exclusion rate of 10%.

Virtual School Actions:

Minimising fixed period exclusions is a major priority for the Virtual School and was identified as a key recommendation in the Ofsted Report. Exclusions impact negatively on placement stability, on emotional wellbeing, and on educational attainment. For every additional day of school missed due to fixed term exclusions, young people in care scored one-sixth of a grade less at GCSE (Rees Report).

Promoting attachment awareness in schools through central and school-based training is a key element in the endeavour to reduce fixed term exclusions. The range of complementary initiatives, funded by the Virtual School, is extensive:

- Attachment Friendly & Trauma Informed Schools
- Emotion Coaching
- Solution Focused Staff meetings
- Creative Mentoring
- Emotional Literacy Support Assistants

Early intervention is also crucial in ensuring that young people have access to any additional support that is identified through the PEP process.

Those with exclusions will be closely monitored by the Virtual School Team and appropriate and timely interventions will be put in place during the next school year.

Appendix 1: Promoting Emotional Wellbeing and Removing Barriers

Attachment Friendly Schools Project

Rotherham VS is establishing a network of Attachment Friendly Schools (AFS). These are settings which have not just shown an understanding of attachment difficulties, and the effect of trauma on child development, but have firmly embedded this knowledge base and skill set within their setting. Attachment Friendly Schools recognise and celebrate the importance of nurturing relationships as well as educating children and young people

The Attachment Friendly Schools' Initiative continues to develop with 23 schools currently participating. In the first year, this involves two members of staff from these schools attending the 7 day Touch Base (Louise Bomber) training. In the following year, the schools engage in whole school development activities based on an audit and action research model. This work is supported by the Virtual School LAC Educational Psychologists.

Attachment Research Community (ARC)

Several schools as well as Rotherham's Virtual School are members of the **Attachment Research Community (ARC).** ARC is a national community of schools and settings committed to supporting everyone's attachment needs. It is dedicated to sharing best practice, and turning important research and understanding into practical ways of working that make a difference within schools and settings. Recognising that the best developments are those designed and developed locally, at the core of the ARC sits a web platform which supports members to share and develop best practice.

Attachment Friendly Schools Evaluation

The Evaluation of Attachment Friendly Schools Phase 1 is now available from the Virtual School.

This includes an analysis of the impact on exclusions:

- Five settings showed a decrease in overall exclusions and four showed an increase, 2015-2017.
- Within the participating schools fixed term exclusions increased 2015-2017 with the number of permanent exclusions decreasing from 6 to zero. No pupils were permanently excluded from the Cohort 1 schools during the year that the schools engaged in the training.
- When the data is interrogated further it is clear that there are significant differences between different settings. Five settings showed a decrease in overall exclusions and four showed an increase.

Anecdotally, it would appear that those schools that engaged strongly with the course and took steps to generate change at a whole school level showed reductions in exclusions. These schools also showed the highest engagement from members of the SLT.

The AFS project aims to work closely with a core group of schools towards becoming Attachment Friendly Schools/Settings. However, we also recognise that the focus and outreach needs to be broader that just these few schools and settings. Virtual School EPs are seeking to share more widely knowledge, understanding and research around attachment and trauma through locality wide training and development and individual casework. Beyond this they are seeking to develop and provide specific interventions and strategies which develop SEMH provision and practice in its widest sense.

Emotion Coaching

From the ARC project, Emotion Coaching has been recognised as a cost effective strategy which schools in other areas have supported and found very effective. As a result, EPs within Rotherham have been trained in Emotion Coaching and are now able to provide training and development to schools. So far approximately 20+ schools and setting have received Emotion Coaching training with more events planned for the next academic year. The VS EP is also offering **Emotion Coaching training to Foster Carers** which has been very well received.

What is Emotion Coaching?
Emotion Coaching is based on the principle that nurturing and emotionally supportive relationships provide optimal contexts for the promotion of children's outcomes and resilience. Research by Gottman found that Emotion Coached children and young people:
- Achieve more academically in school
- Are more popular
- Have fewer behavioural problems
- Have fewer infectious illnesses
- Are more emotionally stable
- Are more resilient

How does Emotion Coaching work?
Emotion Coaching uses moments of heightened emotion and resulting behaviour to guide and teach the child and young person about more effective responses. Through empathetic engagement, the child's emotional state is verbally acknowledged and validated, promoting a sense of security and feeling 'felt'. This activates changes in the child's neurological system and allows the child to calm down, physiologically and psychologically

Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA)

ELSA is an initiative developed and supported by educational psychologists who apply psychological knowledge of children's social and emotional development to particular areas of need and to specific casework.

The ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) project was originally developed within Southampton then Hampshire by Sheila Burton, Educational Psychologist. It was designed to build the capacity of schools to support the emotional needs of their pupils from within their own resources. It recognises that children learn better and are happier in school if their emotional needs are also addressed.

The EPS completed the initial ELSA training in the Summer term 2018. 34 schools participated: 24 primary, 6 secondary and 4 specialist. It has received excellent evaluations. The VS hopes to re-run the training during 2018.2019.

Creative Mentoring

The Virtual School is currently working with colleagues in Derbyshire County Council and Grimm and Co to develop a Creative Mentoring Programme for Rotherham. Kim Johnson from Derbyshire's Virtual School Team describes the concept below:

Creative Mentoring in Derbyshire

Young people have Creative Mentors for reasons such as exclusion from school, poor school attendance, because they are struggling with behaviour difficulties or perhaps where they are experiencing a significant life challenge (e.g. bereavement, mental health problems or moving foster home).

Creative Mentoring offers young people one to one support through a carefully designed programme that is both nurturing and education focussed; seeking opportunities to help unearth where the gems of talent lie in each and every one of them.

This is achieved by the mentor and young person working together in a practical way, using a wide range of activity is included e.g. eco skills, digital media, outdoor pursuits, art, science, computing, craft making, sport, music etc. Emphasis is placed on transferable skills e.g. communication, planning, reflection, organisation and team work, using creative tools such as film and photography to record and share the work.

The Creative Mentor supports the child for as long as schools, professional agencies and carers feel it is needed and there is a review of progress at each PEP meeting.
Compelling evidence is emerging that, over time it has had a positive, transformative impact on young people's confidence and willingness to engage in education.

Creative mentors focus on emotional readiness for learning; and approach activity in a way that is in line with international education development - where the emphasis is shifting to work readiness skills such as empathy, leadership, teamwork, problem solving, determination, calmness and respect, all skills that employers are increasingly requesting.

Creative Mentors encourage other supporting adults to be aspirational for the children we care for, by helping to make visible their unique talents to reveal their often hidden ambition. We have seen young people grow in confidence and go on to achieve way beyond what they thought they could, becoming successful in school, gaining qualifications, making friends, gaining apprenticeships and going to University.

"Human resources are like natural resources; they're often buried deep. You have to go looking for them, they're not just lying around on the surface. You have to create the circumstances where they show themselves." Ken Robinson

The Mockingbird Fostering Initiative

Mockingbird is an alternative method of delivering foster care with the potential to improve placement stability, safety and permanency for children and young people in care and to improve support for, and retention of, foster carers.

Mockingbird increases the protective factors around children through the simple provision of an extended network of family support. It uses the concept of a constellation which is where six to 10 satellite families of foster and kinship carers live in close proximity to a dedicated hub home of specially recruited and trained carers offering respite care, peer support, regular joint planning and social activities.

Relationships are central to Mockingbird, with hub carers and foster carers providing frontline care and with social workers able to concentrate on successful relationship building. The hub empowers families to support each other and overcome problems before they escalate, and offers children a more positive experience of care.

The constellation also builds links with other families important to the children's care plans and to resources in the wider community which can provide them with enhanced opportunities to learn, develop and succeed.

It is envisaged that the Virtual School will establish a relationship with Hubs and be a point of reference in providing information, support, advice and training to the Hub Carers and to provide the Hub Carers with the knowledge, understanding and skills to advocate for children and young people when challenges and difficulties arise around school matters, including admissions and exclusions.

As noted above, the VS EP is offering Emotion Coaching training sessions to Foster Carers.

As with Creative Mentoring, it will also be of value to explore the relationship and philosophy underpinning Mockingbird through the twin foci of Attachment Theory and Social Pedagogy.

The Speech & Language Project:

Specialist Speech and language therapists (0.6 FTE) are joining the VST in September 2018 to ensure that the particular communication and interaction needs of looked after children & young people group are better met. This is through a Service level agreement with the Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust, fixed for 1 year in the first instance.

Children and young people who are looked after represent a vulnerable group likely to have additional needs, including those related to speech and language. This is because:

Children brought up in areas of deprivation are more likely to have speech and language delays, which puts them at an educational disadvantage before they even start school. Children entering care are more likely to come from this demographic.

Looked after children are also more likely to have experienced neglect or poor attachment, both of which are associated with delayed or atypical patterns of communication and interaction.

Issues with non-attendance at health appointments can mean that communication needs are not identified or, if identified, that no intervention has been provided e.g. missed Speech and language therapy appointments. This can lead to secondary problems such as challenging behaviour linked to frustration or embarrassment, social withdrawal and/or poor educational attainment
Almost more than any other group of children, looked after children really need to have strong communication skills in order to be able to voice their experiences and feelings and contribute to discussions about their own care.

Failing to support communication needs can have long-term consequences in terms of poorer mental health, lower educational attainment, reduced employability and independence, and increased likelihood of entering the criminal justice system .

The speech and language therapist (SLT) would be embedded within the Virtual School team and have 4 main roles:

- Increasing awareness and skills across the team and providing training for carers, school staff, social workers
- Identifying the needs of individual children
- Providing support for the most complex children
- Monitoring provision for children out of area

Solution Focused Staff Meeting:

The Solution Focused Staff Meeting has been used effectively in supporting CYP in crisis or where difficulties are anticipated: new to care, changing placement, moving school, contact difficulties, relationship breakdowns. 'All transitions trigger stress response', observes Louise Bomber.

Central to the process is the view that, on a strictly private & confidential basis, all those who teach and support children & young people in care, need to know some detail about their pre-care story and their story since admission to care. Understanding the impact of past experience on current behaviour is crucial to providing sensitive support in home and school. Hearing about the traumas and losses in the young person's life invariably has a significant impact on staff perspectives about them.

The Educational Psychologist provides us with the opportunity to deepen understanding from a the twin lenses of attachment and trauma and shed light on questions about why some children are much more easily 'triggered' than others.

The process concludes with developing a plan of action to support the young person more effectively, taking into account how to prevent 'arousal', how to de-escalate and accessing longer term term interventions to stabilse and promote emotional wellbeing.

Virtual School Rotherham
Building Brighter Futures

Solution Focused Staff Meeting:
Supporting the emotional wellbeing of children and young people in care and previously in care

THE FACILITATORS/ CONTRIBUTORS	THE PROCESS	THE PURPOSE
Teachers Learning support Designated Teacher, SENCO, SLT Key Adult The Team Around Carers Professionals (EP, CAMHS….)	**THE POSITIVES** Identify and share interests, strengths, talents, personality traits…….	To build upon as a means of engagement and motivation To ensure perspective by focusing on the positive and knowing the CYP in the round
Social worker Carer	**THE CHRONOLOGY** Outline the principal traumas, separations and losses in the CYP's life pre-care, post care and currently **N.B. confidentiality**	To understand the impact of the CYP's past experience on current behaviour and emotional wellbeing To explore how this might inform interventions and support
Educational Psychologist or some other suitable professional	**THE THEORY** A brief overview of Attachment Theory	To help make sense/shed further light on current behaviour and emotional wellbeing To consider how this might inform interventions and support
Designated Teacher Educational Psychologist or some other suitable professional	**THE SUPPORT** Based on the knowledge and understanding gained from the above process, how do we work together to PREVENT, CONNECT, DE-ESCALATE and help to stabilise and repair	To ensure that the school and carers have a range of effective strategies, which are consistently implemented to support the wellbeing and behaviour of the CYP To ensure the school is supported by the home and other agencies

Appendix 2: Virtual School Team 2018

Virtual School Headteachers
Tina Hohn (EY & primary)
Pete Douglas (secondary & post 16)

Emily Keefe
Speech & Language Therapist

Rebecca Whitehouse
Speech & Language Therapist

Daniel Chedgzoy
Data Manager &
ePEP Co-ordinator

Karen Davies
Educational Psychologist

Kat Thorn
Educational Psychologist

Margaret Gilbert
Data and Systems Officer

Helena Szczepkowski
Virtual School Adviser

Jane Taylor
Virtual School Adviser

Sarah Cairns
Virtual School Adviser

Rebecca Holland
Virtual School Adviser

Colleen Middleton
Virtual School Adviser

Steve Trotter
Virtual School Adviser

Christine Waugh
Virtual School Adviser

Vicki Tansley
Virtual School Adviser

Appendix 3: Key Questions for School Leaders

For school leaders, the answers to the following key questions, should assist in auditing current practice and should point the way forward in terms of possible future refinements and developments in school.

• Is there a robust information management system in place to monitor attendance, attainment and progress, and barriers to progress, and which informs appropriate interventions?

• Are highly effective literacy and numeracy interventions readily available and accessible for young people?

• Is the curriculum, especially for lower attainers, sufficiently relevant, challenging and engaging?

• How do we encourage and promote the highest possible expectations for looked after and previously looked after children and young people?

• Is there a really effective system of pastoral support, which is alert and sensitive to the more vulnerable moments (care start, placement changes, changes in contact arrangements, transitions in school) in the lives of vulnerable young people?

• Does the personal education plan (PEP) focus on the positives (strengths, talents and interests), and how to encourage and capitalise on the positives to promote self-belief and self-esteem?

• Does the PEP have SMART and relevant targets which are regularly reviewed in terms of impact?

• Does the designated teacher for a looked after children and young people, if not a member of the SLT, have direct access to the SLT?

• Does the DT produce and present a report to the SLT on a regular basis?

• Does the Designated Teacher attend the LA network meetings and training?

• Is there a designated governor who, with the designated teacher, raises the profile of the looked after child and acts as their champion, advocating for them, both in school and within the governing body?

• Is there a long-term programme of professional development for all staff about promoting the wellbeing of looked after children and young people? Does it focus on deepening the understanding through the twin lenses of attachment and trauma?

• Does the school work in close collaboration with the LA Virtual School for looked after children and young people?

Appendix 4: Pupil Premium Plus 2018/19

The 2018/ 19 PPP allocation is £1,085.600 for the financial year.

- Approximately 40% is centrally retained to fund interventions accessible to all looked after children & young people, in and out of authority.

- The remainder is available for schools to spend to assist in removing barriers, promoting emotional wellbeing, raising expectations and attainment, improving attendance, minimising exclusions and nurturing the talents and interests of children & young people in care.

- The level of school funding is determined as part of the PEP target setting process

- Clearly there are significant differences in the needs of CYP in care and these needs vary over time.
  In practice this means that the needs of the most vulnerable, disaffected and disengaged CYP, who are unable to access mainstream education and many of whom do not have EHCPs and the associated funding. Often these CYP need temporary in-school support while others require additional alternative and complementary provision, including one to one tuition for those in receipt of less than 25 hours education. Typically, in order to avoid drift, and to ensure that there is immediate provision for the following categories, one to one tuition is put in place:

  - not on roll
  - not in education
  - where there are safeguarding issues
  - in transition between settings, often linked to a placement move
  - for those whom more appropriate alternative/complementary provision is being sought

Central Retained Funding

Educational Psychology: two very experienced EPs (one full time equivalent) provide the team with support, advice and guidance. A core element of their brief is to promote, organise and manage the Attachment Friendly Schools' Project. They also make regular contributions to the Designated Teacher Network meetings, provide training for schools and carers in Emotion Coaching, and train and support the ELSA network

Emotion Coaching: see Appendix 1

Emotional Literacy Support Assistants: see Appendix 1 and http://www.elsa-support.co.uk

Speech & Language Therapy: see Appendix 1

Mockingbird: see Appendix 1

Virtual School Advisers: 2 additional VS Advocates are funded through PPP to ensure that all PEP meetings (2-18 years of age) are attended by a member of the VST. The regularity of the meetings (termly) means that the VST has excellent intelligence on all LAC aged 2-18: those who are making good progress, those who are gifted and talented, those who are underachieving, those whose who

are NEET, those who are particularly vulnerable with poor emotional wellbeing, those for whom attendance is an issue, and those who are at risk of exclusion. VSAs ensure that there are SMART targets with tailored interventions in place to meet the individual needs of the CYP.

The Letterbox Club: designed to inspire a love of reading and engagement with numeracy in children who are looked-after from EYFS to Year 7. Across the UK, children are enrolled for the Letterbox Club by local authorities and schools. Each child receives their own colourful parcel of books, maths games, stationery and other high quality materials once every month for six months, from May to October. For many children, it's the first time they have had a letter or a parcel through the post and for some it's the first time they have had books of their own.

Creative Mentoring: we are currently in the process of launching a Creative Mentoring Programme in collaboration with Grimm and Co.(grimmandco.co.uk). See Appendix 1.

Sound Training: the Sound Training Intervention (catch up literacy) is a work in progress to accelerate progress in Years 5, 7, and 9.

ePEP: the ePEP system is in place and is generally regarded as having enhanced the PEP process. Compliance at the end of the school year 2016/17 was 97% and were judged to be good or better through the external quality assurance process.

Welfare Call: monitors and reports on attendance and exclusions for all LAC of statutory school age, both in and out of authority which provide the basis for a robust strategy to maximise the former and minimise the latter.

NCER: Rotherham is part of the NCER project: The Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS), the National Association of Virtual School Heads (NAVSH), and the National Consortium for Examination Results (NCER) have launched the Children Looked After (CLA) Analysis Project. This project has been jointly funded by the Department for Education, ADCS and 147 individual local authorities.The CLA Analysis Project is a new national system, run by NCER on behalf of local authorities, to measure the educational performance and progress of children and young people whilst in care.

The data will enable Virtual School Heads to write more analytical action plans and annual reports, providing a clear idea of their children's progress from prior attainment, as well as attainment compared with regional and national trends. It will also help Virtual School Heads to ensure the effective use of Pupil Premium Plus funding and provide evidence to the local authority or Ofsted of their effectiveness in improving educational outcomes.

Complex needs inc. post 16, AP and tuition: Additional alternative and complementary provision, including one to one tuition for those in receipt of less than 25 hours education. Typically, in order to avoid drift, and to ensure that there is immediate provision for the following categories, one to one tuition is put in place:

- not on roll
- not in education
- where there are safeguarding issues
- in transition between settings, often linked to a placement move
- for those whom more appropriate alternative/complementary provision is being sought

Appendix 5: The Budget 2018.2019

Income

Total PPP Income:	**1,085,600**
Previously LAC Grant:	**30,000**
Total Income:	**1,115,600**

Expenditure

Centrally Retained PPP spending 2018.2019

Total	**482,600**
Allocation to schools	**633,000**
Total Expenditure	**1,115,600**

Appendix 6: Previously Looked After Children & Young People

Supporting Post LAC 2018.2019

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 has placed a new responsibility on local authorities and schools to extend their remit to support the education of previously looked after children aged 3-16 and specifically to promote the educational achievement of previously looked-after children in their area, with effect from 1.9.2018.

A. New responsibilities for Virtual Schools for post LAC outlined in the draft statutory guidance:

1. **Advice, information and training for:**
   - Adoptive parents/PR
   - Social workers and IROs
   - Virtual School Team
   - Early Years (funded) providers
   - Designated Teachers and other school staff
   - School Governors

2. **Advice and information and training about:**
   - Admissions
   - SEN
   - Attendance and Exclusions
   - Behaviour
   - Homework and options
   - Promoting positive activities
   - Encouraging high aspirations
   - Pupil Premium Plus and its effective use

3. **The provision of training for schools in mental health and promoting emotional wellbeing**

4. **Working collaboratively with:**
   - Schools and Early Years settings
   - Post Adoption Support Team
   - Health, Education, Social care and others

B. Current resources (people) available to support parents, guardians, carers and children in RMBC:
   - Fostering & Adoption Manager   Anne-Marie Banks
   - Therapeutic Team   Sara Whittaker
   - Post SGO social worker   Abi Hall
   - Post adoption social worker   Julie Link
   - Post adoption therapeutic intervention worker   Leah Eggington

The Therapeutic Team

Rotherham's Therapeutic Team is managed by a Clinical Psychologist and consists of both Social Workers and therapists including Art Therapists.

MASH: getting help for a looked after or adopted child

The Looked After and Adopted Children Support and Therapeutic Team can be accessed by contacting the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 01709 823987.

Post adoption support group

This is a support group for adoptive parents and provides opportunities to:

- Meet other adoptive parents of children
- Share experiences of life with their child
- Share and discuss strategies and celebrate success

The group can also help to explore other issues such as:

- Sensory integration
- Education
- Executive functioning
- Trauma
- Sleeping
- Eating/food issues
- The brain
- Attachment
- Pace (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy) parenting principles
- Grandparents
- Looking after yourself
- Triggers from your own childhood

Current resources available to support parents, guardians, carers and children in RMBC:

- **Adoption Support Fund**

The Adoption Support Fund (ASF) is a fund established to help pay for essential therapy services for adoptive/SGO families as and when they need it. A Social Worker within the Post Adoption/SGO Support Team will complete an assessment and make an application to the fund on behalf of parents, guardians or carers

- **Pupil Premium Plus**:

Paid directly into schools. From 1.4.2018 £2300 p.a. Pupils must be identified as eligible on the January PLASC. It is held by schools who are accountable for its use through the annual report to the Governing Body. The Virtual School has a PLAC grant of £30,000 p.a. for 2 years. Part of this grant will be used to secure the services of PAC-UK https://www.pac-uk.org/ to assist in delivering its responsibilities.

C. Current position

The Virtual School Team met with the Head of LAC Service, the Therapeutic Team manager, one of the post adoption social workers, the post SGO social worker and the post adoption therapeutic

intervention worker, to consider how we could work together in discharging the new statutory responsibilities of the Virtual School.

There are approximately 200 post adoption live cases and 150 post SGO live cases.

Of these there are about 20 acute post adoption cases and 15 acute ost SGO cases at any one time.

D. The VS will continue to clarify over the next few months how it can best meet its responsibilities.

It has been agreed that:

- To modify the training the VS already provides to carers, schools, governors, social workers and so on to incorporate support for post LAC. The professional development programme will continue to focus on deepening the understanding of professionals who work with LAC and post LAC and improving the quality of the support they receive in overcoming barriers to learning.

- To raise awareness through:
    - SENCO network
    - Headteacher network
    - The DT network
    - Governor Training
    - ELSA network
    - AFS network

- To establish systems and processes need to signpost, provide advice and guidance to all relevant parties

- To provide consultancy to the post LAC team

- To attend the post adoption support group/ drop-ins when required

- To provide guidance in making the most effective use of Pupil Premium Plus for LAC and post LAC

- To encourage school capacity building measures such as ELSA

- To provide highly accessible written and electronic leaflets/ communications for parents, carers and teachers in the area of understanding and responding to challenging behaviour.

- To produce case studies of good practice

- To contribute to the regional website

- The Head of the LAC Service will discuss with David McWilliam about the possible role of Early Help in this area

- Duty and Assessment and MASH will require guidance and training to ensure that enquiries are directed appropriately

Appendix 7: Signs of Safety Framework

The Virtual School for Looked After Children

What are we doing well and what's working well?

- The Information & Data Management System is first class. It is accessible, accurate, up-to-date, easy to use and extremely well managed. The IDMS is the bedrock of the Virtual School It informs interventions:
    - to raise attainment and to accelerate progress of those in care
    - to promote their emotional wellbeing
    - to improve their life chances

- The Virtual School Advisers attend all termly PEP meetings. This mean that the VST has detailed knowledge of all CYP in care (2-19), not least those with the greatest vulnerability, both in Rotherham schools and schools out of authority. This ensures that SMART targets are set and that progress against them is closely monitored on a regular basis.

- PEP compliance and quality: compliance is 95% + and external quality assurance deems that at least 8/10 are good or better. Indications are that this continues to improve.

- The Attachment Friendly Schools' Project is central to the drive to remove barriers and to improve the emotional wellbeing of CYP in care. Phase 1 has been evaluated very positively. Phase 2 is over-subscribed. At the heart of this is:
    - the endeavour to deepen professional knowledge and understanding in schools about the complex needs of CYP in care, through the twin lenses of attachment and trauma
    - to provide schools with assistance in developing more effective strategies to better support CYP; many schools have undertaken whole school training in Emotion Coaching

The AFSP currently has 23 participating school and is managed by two highly experienced LAC Educational Psychologists.

- In embracing social pedagogy, in addition to AFS, the VS:
    - has funded the training of Emotional Literacy Support Assistants covering 32 schools in RMBC; first class evaluations
    - is funding a I year speech & language pilot to help to minimise barriers in this area
    - has developed a Creative Mentoring scheme which is launching in September 2018

- The robust support for pre-school LAC continues to develop through the work of the primary team and is reflected in the high take-up of Early Education Places and in primary LAC educational outcomes. There were significant improvements in KS1 and KS2 outcomes in 2018 with year on year improvement at KS2, 2016-2018

- There was a significant reduction of 15% in fixed term exclusions 2017.2018 with far fewer exclusions from RMBC secondary schools. (7/34)

- There were significant improvements in those with good and better attendance 2017.2018. Persistent absence rose slightly.

- More effective collaborative working with colleagues in social care, Educational Psychology, the Therapeutic Team, Early Help & Intervention, SEN & Inclusion, Admissions and with carers is evident in, for example, the establishment of the multiagency group to track and intervene to support those with less than 25 hours education.

- The Designated Teacher Network meetings are well attended and are designed to keep DTs up to date and to provide professional development for the group.

What are the current challenges and priorities?

The most significant challenges are interrelated:

- persistent absence
- fixed term exclusions
- those not accessing 25 hours education

The VS also needs to ensure that:

- it discharges its new responsibilities effectively in relation previously looked after children and young people
- to manage the budget as efficiently as possible given the unpredictable demands upon it

What needs to happen and by when?

In responding to these challenges the VST:

- will continue to monitor closely the patterns of absence and exclusions at individual and cohort level to inform interventions (in place and ongoing)
- will continue to work with colleagues in social care, Admissions, Early Help and Inclusion Services through the multiagency group monitoring and intervening to support those not accessing 25 hours education (in place and ongoing)
- has launched a Creative Mentoring programme to support the most disaffected and disengaged CYP (September 20118)
- is exploring ways of expanding the range of alternative and complementary provision for Years 10 and 11 (Sept 2018-July 2019)
- has continued to develop its Attachment Friendly Schools programme
- has commenced a speech & language pilot to ensure that the particular communication and interaction needs of looked after children & young people group are better met.
- Is expanding the capacity of schools through the ELSA programme
- will ensure that it meets its new statutory obligations in relation to those previously looked after
- regular budget monitoring and reporting will be a standing item at VS SLT meetings

Judgement: 8/10

This updated Signs of Safety provides the starting point for the Virtual School Improvement Plan 2018.2019

Virtual School Rotherham
Building Brighter Futures

Collaborations:

Education & Skills, EPS, Schools, Social Care , Inclusion, Mockingbird, Carers, Speech & Language ....

Nurturing interests & talents

Building self-belief and aspirations

CYP Voice

Raising attendance & attainment

Accelerating Progress

Minimising Exclusions

Robust SMART PEPs

IMPROVING THE LIFE CHANCES OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE

Promoting Emotional Wellbeing

Rigorous Monitoring & Appropriate Interventions

Attachment Friendly & Trauma Informed Schools

Emotion Coaching

Solution Focused Staff Meeting

Creative Mentoring

Cadre of ELSAs

The Virtual School Vision

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