

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

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

Date: Tuesday, 15th October, 2019

Time: 3.30 p.m.

A G E N D A

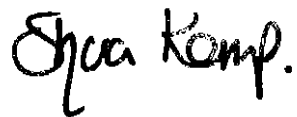
1. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with the Local Government Act, 1972.
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
3. Apologies for absence.
4. Declarations of Interest.
5. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 2nd July 2019 (Pages 1 - 7)
6. Demand Management Strategy (Pages 8 - 22)
7. Revised Foster Carer Fees and Allowances (Pages 23 - 33)
8. Foster Care Recruitment Website (Pages 34 - 39)
If you wish to view the website prior to the meeting -
www.fosteringrotherham.com
Password - bsstaff
9. Draft Staying Put Policy (Pages 40 - 70)
10. Rotherham Adoption Service - Annual Report (Pages 71 - 93)
11. IFA Carers Transfer Protocol (Pages 94 - 104)
12. Corporate Parenting Performance (Pages 105 - 125)
13. Champions' Feedback

14. LAC Update (Pages 126 - 131)

15. Date and time of the next meeting: -
Tuesday, 17th December, 2019, commencing at 3.30 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), M. S. Elliott (Minority Party representative), P. Jarvis (Vice-Chair of the Improving Lives Select Commission) and J. Elliot (representative on the Fostering and Adoption Panels).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon Kemp." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sharon Kemp,
Chief Executive.

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL
Tuesday, 2nd July, 2019

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

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from M. Elliott.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made at the meeting.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 9TH APRIL 2019

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9th April, 2019.

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9th April, 2019, be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

Arising from Minute No. 63 (The House Project HP), it was noted that officers had met with the national lead from the National House Project to discuss Rotherham's progress.

The first cohort of young people would move into their tenancies during July/August and work was already taking place on those who would be best placed to move into the next cohort of tenancies in 2020. The 2020 cohort would focus even more on those young people in out of authority placements who it was thought would return to Rotherham unsupported. It would also have a marked impact on the out of authority placement budget.

Arising from Minute No. 64 (Ofsted Focussed Visit – Challenge 63), it was noted that a report was to be discussed at Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on 3rd July and the Cabinet on 8th July regarding foster carer fees and allowances. A further report would be submitted in September regarding the Foster Carer Recruitment Strategy. Further discussions were required regarding Challenge 63 but it was suggested that it wait until after the May 2020 election.

Minute No. 67 (Looked After Children Update), praise was given for the Total Respect training and felt to be very worthwhile.

It was noted that the Looked After Children would be attending the Designated Teachers meeting very shortly to deliver a presentation on the Caring Language Campaign.

3. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN'S PROMISES

Judith Badger, Strategic Director, Finance and Customer Services, gave a

verbal update on the work of her Directorate with regard to Looked After Children's Promises and apprenticeships in particular.

Apprenticeships

A young person, a student at a local college, had worked in Finance earlier in the year for one day a week for 7-8 weeks. He had expressed a real interest in accounting. Discussions had commenced with regard to an apprenticeship with Sheffield College identified as being the training provider for the Accounting Technician qualification.

Unfortunately, the apprenticeship would have to be advertised externally so the young person would have to compete against other applicants but he could be supported by his Leaving Care Worker to get the best opportunity.

It would be advertised over the summer holiday ready for enrolment in September.

There were other issues around the apprenticeship salary rate and how that would work for this individual if they were still cared for, where they lived and how it affected their benefit. However, work was ongoing to ensure that it could take place.

Foster Carer Fees and Allowances

A report was to be considered to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on 3rd July and the Cabinet on 8th July regarding foster carer fees and allowances. There was a close working relationship between Finance and Children and Young People Services. It was a reflection of the progress Rotherham had made.

Discussion ensued with the following questions raised:-

- LAC in Rotherham had highlighted their need for free access to leisure facilities as they were aware that some local authorities provided this as a part of the package of care. Was there a plan for Rotherham to provide the Local Authority foster families with a free family leisure pass?
As part of the wider Customer Services Review, the website would be renewed and the customer offer e.g. online transactions, how to access services. The Review would also include the Rothercard and look at the whole variety of categories of person who the Authority might want to help access services through some form of discount or enhancement
- How does the Directorate engage with young people, therefore, taking into account of the 'voice of the child' within the Legal Services Team? The Legal Team worked with Children Services with respect to Care Proceedings and acted on instructions from the client

The Social Worker would be the intermediary for the young person.

Legal Services and Children Care worked much closer together to maximise the relationship; if there was a disconnect in that relationship it could work against the best wishes of the family and children.

- Could consideration be given to increasing the £57.90 allowance given to 16/17 year olds who were not accessing employment education or training to £60? Very few people went into a bank to draw money out and the use of cash points limited young people to only being able to draw out £50 and having to physically go to a bank for the £7.90

It was agreed that the information be sent to Judith who would consider the request and, if appropriate, submitted to the appropriate decision making body

The Panel thanked Judith for her attendance.

4. EXTENSIONS AND ADAPTATIONS TO HOMES OF FOSTER CARERS, SPECIAL GUARDIAN AND ADOPTERS (REVISED POLICY)

Ian Walker, Head of Service, presented a report that had been considered by the Directorate Leadership Team regarding the revised Policy for Extensions and Adaptations to Homes of Foster Carers, Special Guidance and Adopters.

The Policy set out the criteria adopted by the Local Authority to provide funding to Local Authority foster carers and adopters to extend their home or to part-fund new home purchases where, necessary to do so, to meet the needs of Looked After Children. The Policy would also be applicable to people within the family and friends network of the child who would offer care to that child to either prevent the child from becoming Looked After or to support a child ceasing to be Looked After but for the lack of available bedroom space.

It was not designed to enhance the lifestyle of either the carers or of the Looked After Child other than in the case of children with a disability when the funding may be used to address the challenges they may encounter due to their disability. It was also increasingly apparent that there were a number of legacy issues whereby commitments had been made to families that would not fit in with the more restrictive eligibility criteria.

The revised Policy was designed to support the Local Authority in meeting its legal duty to provide sufficient accommodation for Looked After Children and to be intrinsically linked with the principles of the Demand Management Strategy and Placement Sufficiency Strategy.

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

5. CORPORATE PARENTING PERFORMANCE REPORT

Consideration was given to the report presented by Cathryn Woodward, Performance and Data Officer Social Care, provided a summary of performance for key performance indicators across Looked After Children Services for April, 2019. 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 stated that April appeared to bring the first real results for Right Child Right Care (phase 2) with 29 discharges from care achieved over the month and only 16 admissions giving a net reduction of 13 children in total and an overall number of 627 by the end of the month. The discharges from care meant that all of those planned were achieved within April suggesting some growing confidence within the Family Court regard the Council's permanent planning. As a result 13 children had been discharged via permanence (SGOs) over the course of 2019 so far.

The report also drew attention to:-

- 16 children admitted to care and 29 ceased to be Looked After giving a total of 627 LAC at the end of the month. The rate of LAC per 10,000 population was 110.1%, however, Rotherham remained exceptionally high in comparison to statistical neighbours at 87.8%
- The percentage of children who ceased to be Looked After due to permanence was 27.6% compared to 31.7% in 2018/19 and 27.3% for 2017/18
- The percentage distribution by legal status remained consistent with 55% of children subject to full Care Orders, 28% on an Interim Care Order, 11% on Placement Orders with Care Order and 5% under Section 20
- The proportion of LAC with an up-to-date care plan was 94.7%. Despite the improvement in performance, there was still work to be done and was going to be an area of focus in June's LAC Service Development Day
- 93.4% Statutory Reviews within timescale
- 95.5% statutory visits
- 62.3% of LAC of LAC were in long term stable placements
- The number of children experiencing 3 or more placement moves had reduced to 12.5% with the actual number of children affected reducing from 91 to 78
- 81.5% of LAC placed in family based settings including internal

fostering, independent fostering, pre-adoption placements and those placed with parent/family/friends

- The year end figure for 2018/19 Initial Health Assessments undertaken within 20 working days of entering care was 51.7%. During April 72.2% had been undertaken in time
- 80.8% of LAC had an up-to-date assessment as at the end of April. This was a decline in performance compared to previous months
- Dental assessment had also declined to 82.6% of LAC with an up-to-date Dental Assessment
- 95.9% of LAC had a PEP at the end of April 2019 and 96.7% of LAC had a PEP meeting during the 2018-19 Spring term
- There had been a realignment of the performance reporting for the Care Leavers cohort to reflect the requirements of legislation. Performance would now be reported on the wider cohort of young people identified as care leavers. This gave a cohort of 303 care leavers at the end of April
- 85.3% of Care Leavers had a Pathway Plan with 77.6% having an up-to-date Plan. The cases without a Pathway Plan tended to be young people aged 16 the majority of which would have an in-date care plan and would be addressed by transitioning young people to a Pathway Plan on Liquid Logic
- The number of care leavers who were in Education, Employment or Training had reduced to 60.1%
- 66% of LAC were in foster placements
- 4 households and 2 deregistered during April. This gave a net increase of 2 households for the year to date, totalling 150 in-house fostering households
- 14 new foster families approved with a further 7 active assessments ongoing with 2 more on hold and 3 IFA carers considering a potential move to RMBC
- The Foster Carer Diversity Scheme had led to 8 new foster families being allocated for assessment and a further 3 viability visits looking positive for progression to full assessment
- 32 children had been adopted, an increase on the 27 achieved in the previous year
- There had been one adoption in April and a further 36 children

already placed with their prospective adoptive families

- 22 adopter families successfully approved a significant increase on the 14 approved in the previous year
- For 2019-20 there were 14 prospective adopters already at stage 1 of the recruitment process and 3 in stage 2
- LAC average caseloads had reduced for the first time in many months from 19.4 to 18.8 in the long term teams and from 15.3 to 14.4. in the Court and Permanence Teams largely as a direct consequence of the success of the Demand Management Strategy

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/highlighted:-

- From September there would be a LAC Nursing Team who would work with LAC children and have a greater focus/target than the wider 0-19 Service as well as keeping a tighter oversight of the out of authority placements
- The Team would work 9-5 thereby offering after school appointments. Flexibility of working hours had been emphasised during the recruitment process
- There was no issue with the dental services in Rotherham; it was a recording issue
- Very few Health Assessments highlighted that a young person was not registered with a dentist. The Community Dental Service had agreed that any referrals for LAC who had moved into the area would be able to access a local dentist
- Afternoon clinics for Initial Health Assessments had started in April
- The Virtual School's Governing Body meeting would agree targets for acceptable performance in respect of all individual performance measures
- There had been an improvements in schools' abilities to manage the more complex children's behaviour
- It was planned to hold a further Foster Carer Diversity Scheme event at the Unity Centre

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

6. CHAMPIONS' FEEDBACK

It was felt timely to review the Champions given the new Panel membership.

Resolved:- That discussion take place with Panel Members with regard to the allocation of "Champion" role.

7. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN UPDATE

Apologies had been received from representatives of the Looked After Children Council.

8. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING: -

Resolved:- That a further meeting be held on Tuesday, 15th October, 2019, commencing at 3.30 p.m.

DEMAND MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Big Heart Big Changes Board
27th August 2019

www.rotherham.gov.uk

Rotherham
Metropolitan
Borough Council 

The Way We Were – July 2017-18.

- 38% of all admissions via Duty and Assessment Teams (127 of 337 children).
 - *(Cultural practices)*
- Inconsistent practice across D&A Teams (Tm 1=8 admissions, Tm 3=33).
 - *(Inconsistent threshold application)*
- 45% of these admissions not referred through PLO Panel (58 children).
 - *(Lack of challenge in decision making processes)*
- Half of all admissions had had 3+ referrals prior to the referral resulting in LAC.
 - *(Missed opportunities to divert from care)*
- 46% of all admissions had been an open case < 3 months before entering care (157 children).
 - *(Shortfalls in of pre-proceedings social work)*

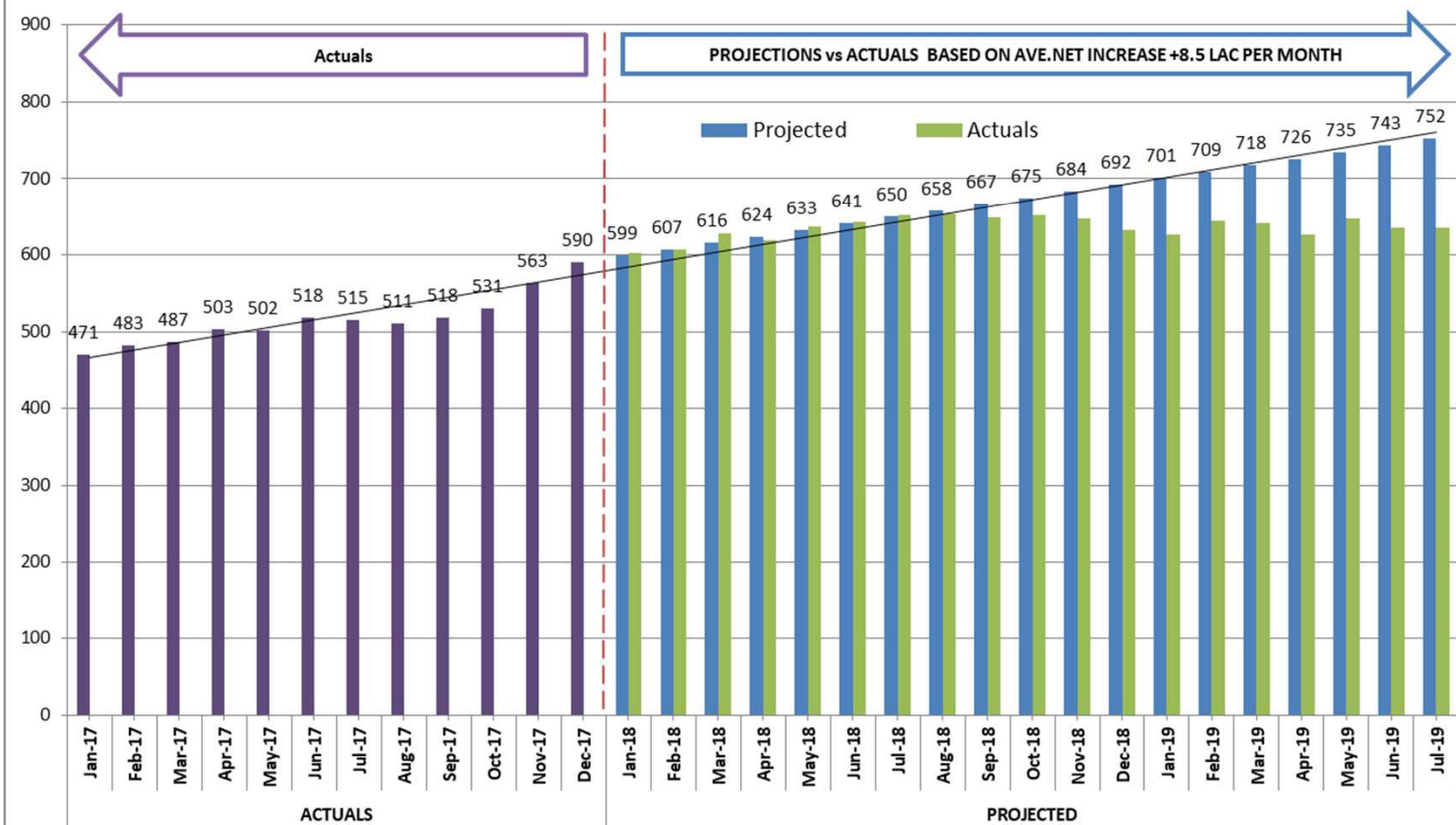
Achieving Cultural Change

- All cases now referred to PLO Panel including retrospectively for emergency admissions.
- Children admitted to care via Duty and Assessment teams reduced from 127 children to 36 children Aug 18 to July 19.
- Increased challenge has reduced the average number of care proceedings per month from 19.5 (2017/18) to 13.7 (2018/19) and Y.T.D. to 11.
- Success rate in respect of Court applications has increased to 88% over last 12 months.
- “The standard of social workers’ presentation and reporting to court has evidently improved and this is supported by partners such as CAFCASS and the local judiciary, who say that this is now mostly of good quality.”

(Ofsted Focussed Visit March 2019)

- Average age of children admitted to care reduced from 10.5 to 6.2. since January 2018.
 - Less time spent in care
 - Less expensive placements
 - Quicker routes to Permanence
- In South Yorkshire there has been a decrease in the number of children subject to care applications, with 664 children being subject to care applications. All authorities in South Yorkshire saw a decrease in the number of children subject to care applications from the previous year. Sheffield had a reduction of 19, Rotherham 115, Doncaster 33 and Barnsley 36.

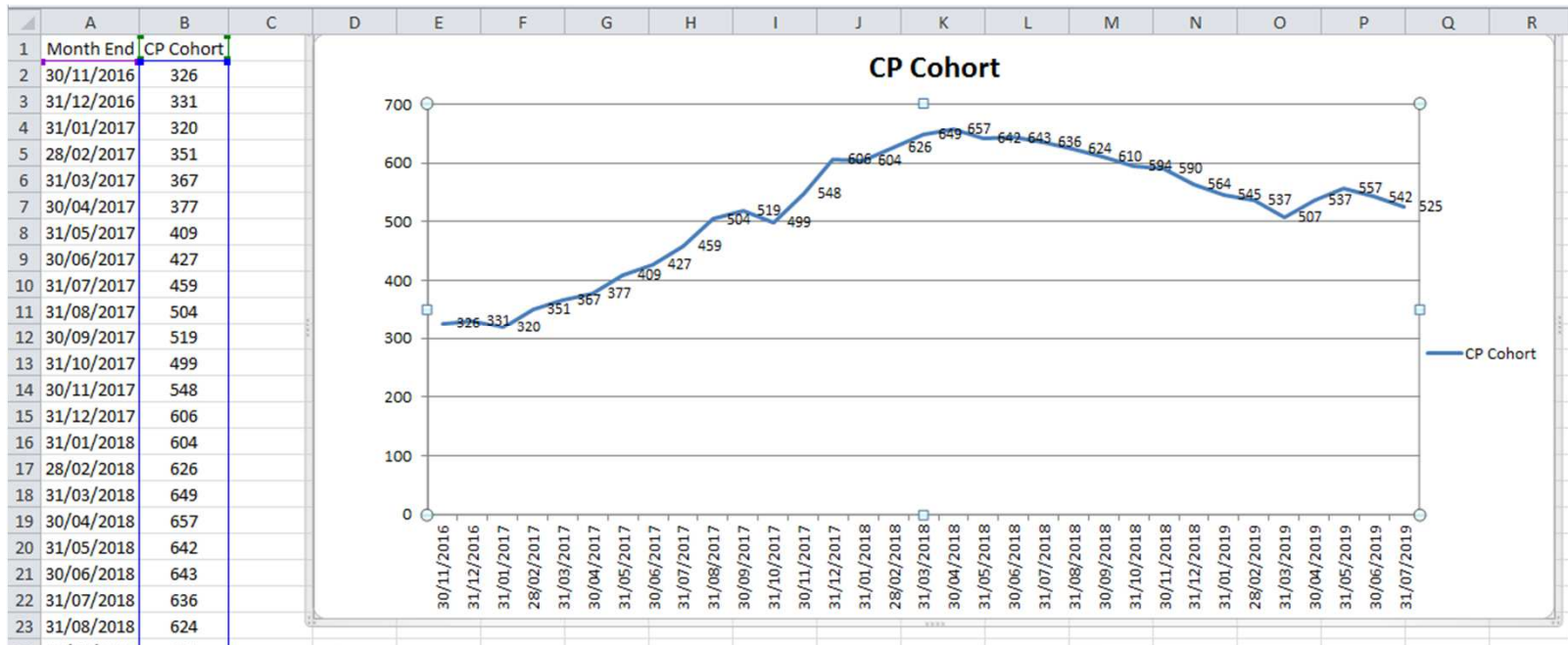
LAC as at end of month



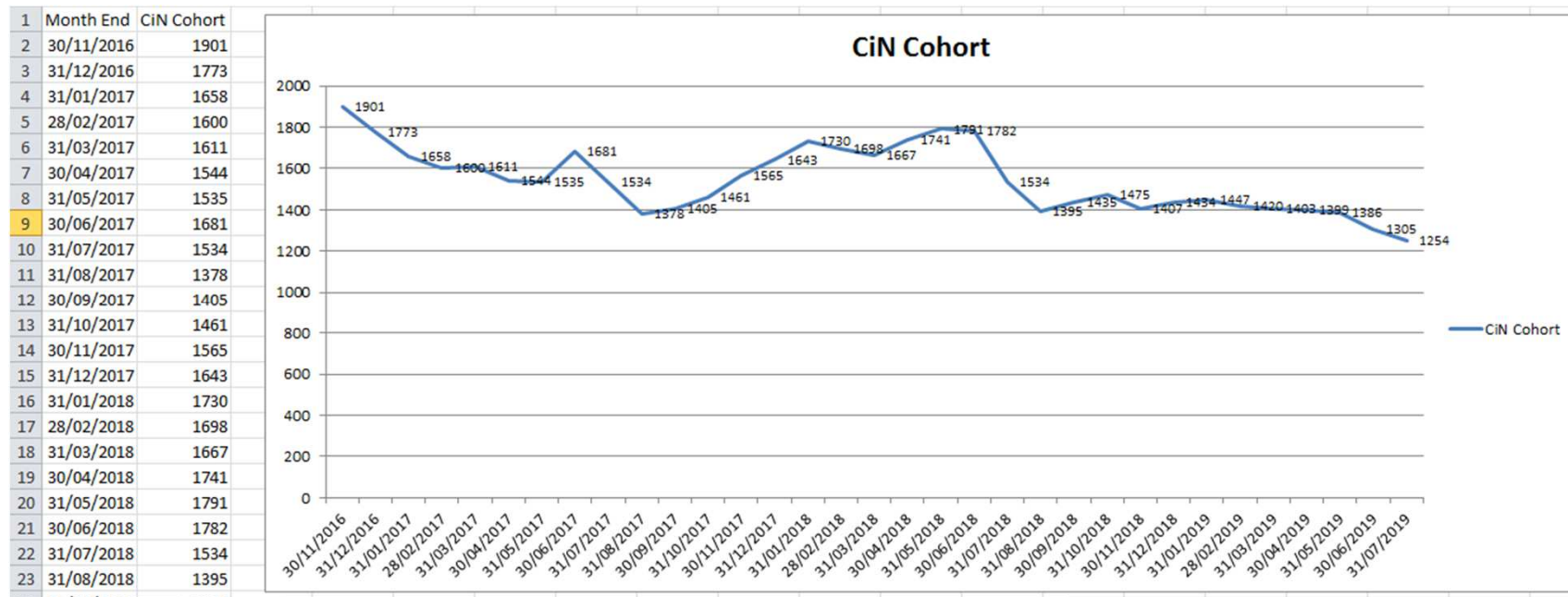
Projected Impact

Placement Type	30th April	31st May	30th June	31st July	31st Aug	30th Sep	31st Oct	30th Nov	31st Dec	31st Jan	28th Feb	31st March
Adoption	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24
Child Home	51	50	48	44	43	41	32	31	30	28	27	26
Block Residential Contracts	8	8	8	8	8	8	16	16	16	16	16	16
Parent & Baby	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Independent Living	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33
In-house Fostering	213	213	214	215	215	216	217	217	217	219	219	221
NHS or Other												
Other												
Other Fostering	274	273	272	265	262	259	253	250	247	239	238	231
PWP	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36
Resi - Care Home												
Resi - Other												
Resi School	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
Secure												
YOIP	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Total LAC Placements	652	650	648	638	634	630	624	620	616	608	606	600

A Cooling System (1)



A Cooling System (2)

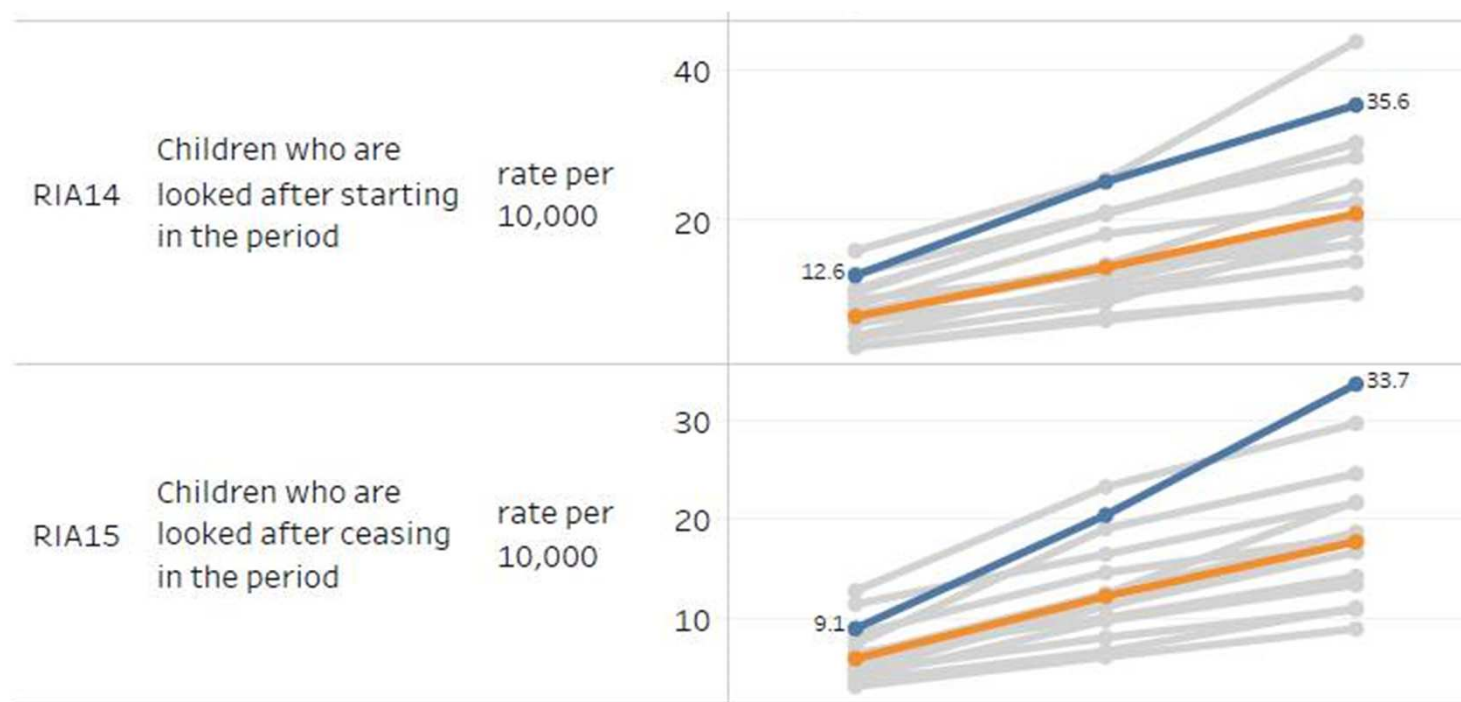


RIGHT CHILD RIGHT CARE

- Focussed and performance managed activity to achieve discharges from care in 4 work-streams.
 - Adoption
 - Return home
 - Foster care to permanence (SGO/CAO)
 - Reg 24 and S38/6 placements
- 170 children initially in scope.
 - 72 children successfully discharged from care
 - 13 plans still viable at end of Dec 2018 (subsequently progressed)
 - 37 more discharged out of scope (ripple effect)
 - 72% success rate
- 263 children discharged from care in 2018 (40% churn and highest in Yorks and Humber region).

2018/19 Q3 Regional Profile Trends

- Key:
- Rotherham
- Region
- Other LA



WI1

RIGHT CHILD RIGHT CARE 2

“A renewed focus on the needs of children in long-term care through senior leaders’ ‘Right Child Right Care’ project has resulted in children’s continuing needs being reassessed and options for permanence being successfully delivered. The project has also produced a sustainable framework of permanence planning for those children who are new into care.”

(Ofsted Focussed Visit March 2019)

- 195 children in the initial scope
 - 80 children already discharged from care.
 - 54 children no longer in scope.
 - 61 children with a plan that is still on track.
 - 20 more children discharged outside of a work-stream.
 - Predicted success rate of 76% by end of year.
 - A model adopted by other L.A.s
- “Monitoring of some key areas of practice that significantly impact on children has been too slow to develop. For example, tracking of permanence for children with plans for long-term fostering, adoption and those placed with parents is very new and has been implemented following a peer review commissioned by the new DCS. “

(Ofsted Report for Kirklees June 2019)

OUT OF AUTHORITY STEP DOWN PLANS

- 66 LAC in OoA Residential placements as at July 2019 including 7 who are <12 years old .
- 28 plans for step-down by September 2020.
- 6 moves to House Project by September 2019.
- 4 planned moves to House Project in Summer 2020.
- 3 young people have already stepped down successfully.
- 2 more young people with confirmed dates for plan completion.
- Future plans performance managed via the RCRC processes.

Placement Sufficiency Strategy

- Revised Allowance and Support Scheme for foster carers.
- Pathways to Care.
- Performance managed assessment tracker (6->4 months).
- Bright-sparks marketing campaign.
- Foster carer diversity scheme.

Social Care Pathway Strategy

- Reduction of I team in Children with a Disability Service and all cases re-assigned.
- Duty and Assessment Service reduced by 1 team.
- Direct transfers from MASH to Locality Teams by-passing D&A when assessment is clear.
- Aspiration to reduce LAC teams by one as Demand Management Strategy has an impact.
- Potential for re-investment into preventative/edge of care provision to create virtuous circle.

NEXT STEPS

- Fully implement the 63 remaining plans in RCRC2.
- Review the impact of the Edge of Care Offer (Oct 19).
- Cabinet to consider Charging Policy for S20 Placements.
 - 8 of the last 10 S20 admissions created £1.2 m placement costs p.a.
 - Engagement tool rather than income stream.
- Launch RCRC3 >> embedded practice.
- Translate reducing LAC numbers into reducing placement costs.
 - Step-down tracker for 28 LAC currently in OoA placements with plans.
 - Multi-faceted strategy to support more LAC into in-house foster care.
 - Brightsparks
 - Revised Allowance Scheme & Pathways to Care
 - Foster Care Diversity Scheme
 - In-house residential options?

Summary Sheet

Report Title

Revised Foster Carer Fees and Allowances

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

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Jon Stonehouse

Report Author(s)

Catherine Boaler (Service Manager- Fostering & Adoption)

Ward(s) Affected

All

Summary

- 1.1 The vision within 'Child Friendly Rotherham' is reflected in the ambition to be 'Working with Rotherham's children, young people and families to be safe, resilient and successful'. In the spirit of this ambition Rotherham CYPS has revised its 'offer' for Foster Carers in regards to the fees and allowances that they receive.
- 1.2 This report seeks to improve the care experience for children in Rotherham by ensuring that wherever possible they are looked after in Rotherham in a foster family environment.
- 1.3 Rotherham has a shortage of all foster care placements, but particularly foster care placements for adolescents and larger sibling groups. The Council places too many young people in Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's) and residential care and despite all of the work-streams being implemented the in-house/IFA split has consistently and stubbornly remained in favour of the IFA provision. As at the start of May 2019 there were 170 LAC placed with the 158 in-house carers and 266 LAC placed with IFA carers. Whilst there is no regional or national benchmarking available, anecdotal evidence and liaison with colleagues from the other South Yorkshire Children's Services would indicate that Rotherham relies more heavily on the IFA market than its regional neighbours.

Recommendations

Whilst foster carers would state that finances are not their prime motivating factor it is also clear that any allowance scheme that is perceived to be iniquitous can be a disincentive to prospective carers pursuing their interest in fostering within Rotherham. As a result, in formulating this revised scheme the following factors have been taken into consideration:-

- Research undertaken in February 2019 evidenced that at that time there was an average of only 1.26 placements per carer. Whilst this position has subsequently improved as a result of performance management processes this still indicates that there is insufficient incentive in the current scheme to encourage carers to offer a placement to more than one child at a time.
- RMBC continues to find it difficult to place adolescents with in-house carers. As a result, whilst there is an over-supply of placements for babies and very young children, older children have a much greater risk of being placed within an IFA.
- Whilst allowances paid by RMBC can never match those paid by the IFAs they do need to be at a level so that, when they are incorporated with the less tangible benefits such as high quality training, good levels of supervisory social worker support and local therapeutic interventions, there can be seen to be some level of parity.

It is therefore recommended that the Directorate Leadership Team approves the implementation and changes to Foster Carer Fees and allowances as follows:

- An additional skill level fee to paid to the carer when caring for more than one child
- The weekly allowance, to cover the expense involved in caring for a child to remain the same (Slightly above national minimum average recommended)
- Changes to payments to Foster Carers for Birthdays, Christmas/ Cultural Celebrations and Holiday Pay for the child in placement.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix: In House Fostering Rates - Benchmarking Exercise

Background Papers

Revised Recruitment & Sufficiency Strategy

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

Yes

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Revised Foster Carer Fees and Allowances

1. Recommendations

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2. Background

- 2.1 This report seeks to improve the care experience for children and young people in Rotherham by ensuring that wherever possible they are looked after in Rotherham in a foster family environment. This is in accordance with the authority's ambition to become an outstanding children's services authority.
- 2.2 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. In general this is located within a family home setting, which additionally is also the most cost effective placement. It also follows that, wherever possible, children and young people should be placed within their own community which enables them to continue to have some

consistency in education and contact with the people and community of the most importance to them, thus promoting a strong sense of self, fundamental to resilience in later life.

- 2.3 Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council currently has 642 children in care. Around 170 are placed with Rotherham Borough Foster Carers. Rotherham has a shortage of all foster placements but particularly of placements for adolescents and for larger siblings groups. There are too many children and young people placed out of borough because there are not enough local placements.
- 2.4 The lack of sufficient foster placements means that Rotherham relies on the use of Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) or residential provision, all of which are more costly. This has led to a position where there is significant pressure on the external placement budget with the average cost of an IFA amounting to c £750 per week as opposed to an in-house placement costing c £300 per week (dependent on the additional needs of a particular looked after child). Performance data would also evidence that in-house placements are also more likely to maintain placement stability because the social work support is more readily at hand and the placements are likely to be more local thus maintaining links for the child with family and community which can strengthen attachments for young people.
- 2.5 Whilst Rotherham is not in direct competition with other local authorities for its foster carers who, if they are not fostering for an IFA, tend to opt to foster within their home area, some benchmarking within the Yorkshire region has been attempted. Given the range of differing allowance schemes in operation this has been difficult but some of the learning from the more successful recruiters has been incorporated in to this proposal such as Leeds incentivising carers to take additional placements (cf Appendix).

3. Key Issues

- 3.1 In response to the current sufficiency position this proposal forms part of the work to transform the local authority's in-house fostering agency 'offer'. This includes a review of Rotherham's fostering provision, including a review of the payments to Foster Carers. It is anticipated that some existing Rotherham foster households may be able to increase the number of children they care for and provide an opportunity to increase placements. The launch of the revised allowance scheme is planned to coincide with a re-launch of the revised Pathways to Care Policy in order to encourage more foster carers to consider what they need to enable them to offer more placements.
- 3.2 However, the Council will not meet its sufficiency of placement provision for 'Looked after Children' without attracting additional carers to foster for Rotherham and ensuring existing Foster Carers are retained and developed.
- 3.3 The consultation with Foster Carers at the Foster Carer Forum considered the elements of the current fees and allowances as follows:
 - An additional skill level fee to paid to the carer when caring for more than one child

- The weekly allowance, to cover the expense involved in caring for a child to remain the same (Above National minimum average recommended)
- Changes to payments to Foster Carers for Birthdays, Christmas/ Cultural Celebrations and Holiday Pay for the child in placement.

3.4 Whilst financial incentives are a consideration, Foster Carers have said that they regard the level of support received from their fostering social worker as being most critical to their fostering experience. This was also true when managing complex placements. They identified the wrap around support provided in such circumstances makes the difference to their commitment to foster for Rotherham.

3.5 In reviewing the fee rate and developing the 'offer' it is essential to ensure the fostering service remains financially competitive, whilst supporting the recruitment and retention of more locally based Foster Carers.

3.6 The outcome of the consultation and review is that the proposed 'offer' incorporates financial incentive and ongoing good quality support, training and development for Rotherham's Foster Carers.

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

4.1 Option One: Take no action. This is likely to result in a continuation of the current position where an unacceptable number of children and young people are placed in residential care, and with independent providers and/or away from the borough and 'at a distance' from their family, schools and support networks. This would have an adverse impact on outcomes for children and overall placement costs would continue to remain high.

4.2 Option Two: **(recommended option)**: To develop a foster carer 'offer' that ensures all carers are incentivised and incorporates the following: competitive financial incentives for caring for additional children/ young people, good quality support and training and development. This will require investment, but an increase in the number of these placements will be a key enabler in improving outcomes and reducing the overall cost of placement provision.

4.3 Option Three: To develop a foster carer offer that is comparable to other local authorities and provides a financial incentive to increase the number of in-house foster care placements.

Option 2 Proposal: Revised Fees and Allowance 2019/2020

Skill Level	1 st placement	2 nd placement	Subsequent placements
1	£100.00	£100.00	£50.00
2	£125.00	£125.00	£62.50
3	£175.00	£175.00	£87.50
4	£360.00	£360.00	£180.00

(Full payment for 1st placement and 2nd Placement, 3rd Placement 50%)

Child Age	Amount
-----------	--------

0-4	£133.54
5-10	£152.12
11-15	£189.37
16+	£230.30

(Allowances to remain the same)

Birthdays, Christmas and Holiday allowances to be paid in addition to the above allowances.

Age	Birthday	Christmas/Cultural celebrations	Holiday
0-4	£133.54	£133.54	£267.08
5-10	£152.12	£152.12	£304.24
11-15	£189.37	£189.37	£378.74
16 plus	£230.30	£230.30	£460.60

(Birthdays & Christmas/ Cultural celebrations= 1 weeks allowance)

(Holiday Pay= 2 weeks allowance)

Option 3 Proposal: Revised Fees and Allowance 2019/2020

The skills payments will remain unchanged as in option 2

The basic maintenance allowance will be realigned to be more comparable with other local authorities and the national fostering rates

Child Age	Current Rates	National Fostering Rates	Proposed Rates
0-4	£133.54	£132.00	£133.54
5-10	£152.12	£146.00	£152.12
11-15	£189.37	£167.00	£173.30
16+	£230.30	£194.00	£200.30

Birthdays, Christmas and Holiday allowances to be paid in addition to the above allowances.

Age	Birthday	Christmas/Cultural celebrations	Holiday
0-4	£133.54	£133.54	£267.08
5-10	£152.12	£152.12	£304.24
11-15	£173.30	£173.30	£346.60
16 plus	£200.30	£200.30	£400.60

(Birthdays & Christmas/ Cultural celebrations= 1 weeks allowance)

(Holiday Pay= 2 weeks allowance)

RMBC-Current Fees and Allowances

Skill level	1 st placement	2 nd placement	Subsequent placements
1	£100.00	N/A	N/A
2	£125.00	N/A	N/A
3	£175.00	N/A	N/A
4	£360.00	N/A	N/A

Child Age

Amount

0-4	£133.54
5-10	£152.12
11-15	£189.37
16+	£230.30

Birthdays, Christmas and Holiday allowances to be paid in addition to the above allowances.

Age	Birthday	Christmas/Cultural celebrations	Holiday
0-4	£121.85	£182.77	£243.70
5-10	£137.98	£206.97	£275.96
11-15	£168.09	£252.13	£336.17
16 plus	£ 206.25	£309.39	£412.51

Recommended National minimum weekly allowance (2019-2020)

Child Age	Amount
0-4	£132.00
5-10	£146.00
11-15	£167.00
16+	£194.00

5. Consultation

- 5.1 This report has been written in consultation with the Finance Department.
- 5.2 A consultation with Foster Carers (at the Foster Carer Forum) regarding the rationale and options for a revised Fees and Allowances was undertaken and has informed this proposal.
- 5.3 Foster carers were very clear that their motivation to foster was not solely based on finance. However, they felt that the skills payment for additional placements felt 'fair' and may provide more of an incentive to take additional placements where possible and to attract new foster carers to Rotherham.

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 6.1 Subject to DLT approval, the revised payment structure will be introduced from April 2019 and will therefore involve some degree of backdated calculations.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 7.1 **Option 2** - The cost of implementing the proposed fostering allowances based on the current number of children with existing in-house foster carers would be an additional £321k per year. Based on the proposed allowance scheme the average cost of an in-house placement would be £18k, an increase of £2k per annum, per child compared to the current scheme. The current average cost of an IFA placement is £44k, meaning there would be a cost reduction of £26k should a child be placed in an in-house placement at the proposed scheme rates rather than an IFA.

To breakeven with this proposal an additional 12.3 children will be required to transfer from IFA to in-house foster carers, and therefore increasing the net increase of in-house placements from 23 (15 + 8 carer adaptations) to 36 in the 2019/20 financial year.

On the basis that 36 additional in-house foster carer placements are generated a cost saving of £936k will be achieved though avoiding IFA placements.

An associated financial implication of the revised fostering allowance is the requirement to increase the maintenance allowance used to determine the payments made to SGO, CAO and adoption allowances, which has not previously been included in the pocket money and clothing allowance. The financial impact is estimated at £582K per annum based on current numbers.

- 7.4 **Option 3** – The cost implications of option 3 will be the same as option 2 offset by savings to the basic maintenance allowance. The net cost to the fostering allowance of implementing option 3 would be £244K, and a cost reduction of £77K on option 2. Option 3 will mean a reduction in the weekly payment to 35 in-house foster carers who only have one child in placement. The average impact would be £20 per week per carer.

By reducing the basic maintenance allowance for the two higher age groups to nearer the national fostering allowances as outlined in 4.3 will also reduce the financial impact in aligning the maintenance allowances for SGO, CAO and adoption allowances to a net cost of £319K per annum. Reducing the 16+ age group would result in a payment reduction of £5.95 per week for 63 children in receipt of allowances. Consideration should be given to protecting the current 16+ cohort for a 2 year period.

The cost avoidance resulting from option 3 would be £77k against the recommended fostering allowances and £263k from SGO, CAO and adoption allowances a total of £340k per annum.

Implications

- 8.1 The current proposals demonstrate that Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council has implemented a fair approach in that it has considered amounts paid by neighbouring local authorities; whilst also taking into account the recommended national minimum payments for allowances to devise proposals which will assist it in improving services and carrying out its statutory duties towards its looked after children.

9. Human Resources Implications

- 9.1 None predicted.

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 10.1 The proposal seeks to attract additional Foster Carers and placements such that wherever possible, children and young people can be placed within their own community. This will enable them to continue to have contact with the people and community of the most importance to them, promoting a strong sense of self, fundamental to resilience in later life.

11 Equalities and Human Rights Implications

- 11.1 The proposed changes to fees and allowances have been developed following consultation with foster carers (at the Foster Carer Forum). The overall assessed impact is concluded to be a positive one in terms of enhanced skill level fees (for additional placements) along with good support, and training. Foster carers felt that the changes were positive in terms of future recruitment and retention of foster carers.

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

- 12.1 None noted.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 There is a risk that Foster Carers may receive an increase in payments for additional placements without increasing the number of children being cared for although this is felt to be very unlikely. If the planned number of Foster Carers does not increase then this could have a negative impact on the Councils budget. This is mitigated by the change in approach and the recruitment resource identified in this proposal, which will include the revised marketing/ Recruitment strategy to specifically attract Foster Carers with the capacity to care for adolescents and children with more complex needs.
- 13.2 The revised changes will offer an inducement to potential Foster Carers to offer their services to Rotherham Council and it is hoped will lead to current carers considering additional placements/ placements of sibling groups.

14. Accountable Officer(s)

Ian Walker – Head of Service
 Catherine Boaler – Service Manager

Approvals Obtained from:-

	Named Officer	Date
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services	Neil Hardwick	26.03.19
Assistant Director of Legal Services	Rebecca Pyle	26.03.19
Head of Human Resources (if appropriate)	Amy Leech	26.03.19

Report Author: Catherine Boaler (Service Manager -Fostering & Adoption)



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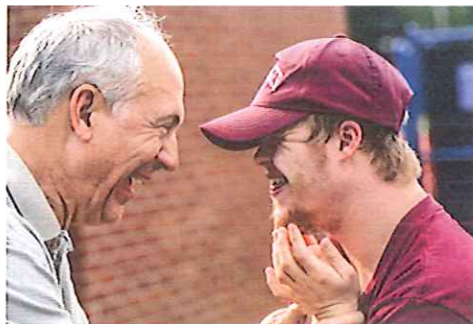
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Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

**Policy and Practice Guidance:
Staying Put**

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Part 1: Making the Staying Put arrangement**1. Legal Framework**

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 3 (Revised Jan 2015): Planning transition to adulthood for care leavers.
- Staying Put: Arrangements for care leavers aged 18 and above to stay on with their former foster carers which is joint guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE), Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC). This provides more detail relating to many of the financial aspects of Staying Put arrangements.
- Staying Put – Good practice guide (the Children's Partnership, 2014)
- Children and Social Work Act 2017

2. What is a Staying Put Arrangement?

Staying Put is about care leavers continuing to live with their foster carers when they reach the age of 18.

Staying Put arrangements should replicate as far as possible normal family life. Foster carers are required to care for any child placed with them as if they were a member of their family, and this expectation should carry through into Staying Put arrangements. Families all have different rules, expectations and ways of doing things, and Staying Put arrangements should take account of this and be sufficiently flexible to be tailored to individual circumstances and needs.

Additionally Staying Put arrangements should build on the secure and stable environment of a 'Staying Put' arrangement. RMBC, with the former foster carer and young person, should from the outset assess how they will help the young person develop the skills required for independent living once they move on from this arrangement.

Key features of Staying Put include how the former foster carer, with the allocated team, supports the young person to develop a range of skills including:

- Relationships - getting on with neighbours; understanding acceptable behaviour; when and how to communicate with relevant professionals;
- Emotional Resilience - managing isolation and where to go for support.

Building self-esteem;

- Finance and budgeting - opening a bank account, safe borrowing and managing debt, understanding basic financial products, benefits and welfare reform; budgeting for priority bills, household appliances and everyday shopping on a budget;
- Cooking - cooking healthily and on a budget; understanding nutrition and its impact on overall health;
- Managing a home - washing and ironing, cleaning, basic DIY, operating appliances and what is allowed within a tenancy; and
- Applying for jobs - understanding strengths and areas for personal development; developing job skills, understanding job/volunteering pathways and support available; understanding bursaries and other financial support; where to go for advice; understanding the impact of work on benefits.

To be considered for a Staying Put arrangement the young person must be defined as an 'eligible young person' as defined by Children (Leaving Care Act 2000)

An eligible child is someone who:

- is looked after by a local authority;
- is aged 16 or 17, and;
- has been looked after for a total of at least 13 weeks since the age of 14

Once they become 18 an eligible child is known in law as a 'former relevant child'.

Whenever a young person continues to live with their former foster carer in these circumstances, it is referred to as a Staying Put arrangement.

Staying Put arrangements continue until

- the young person becomes 21, or
- stops living in the household before then, or

- when the young person completes the agreed programme of education or training being undertaken on their twenty-first birthday, if continuously living in the arrangement since their eighteenth birthday.

RMBC has a duty to monitor and support Staying Put arrangements, and the arrangements for the execution of this duty are reflected throughout this policy.

3. Guiding Principles

Staying Put arrangements will be most effective if they are underpinned by clear principles. This practice guidance is based on the follow principles:

Best interests

The best interests of the young person should be at the heart of decision making about Staying Put, enabling them to have the best possible opportunities to lead successful lives.

Support

Support to both carers and young people should be geared to their specific circumstances and needs. Carers should be enabled to develop the skills required to best help the young person to do well in life and keep safe from harm. Ideally, no young person should lose out due to lack of financial support to themselves or their carer so every effort will be made to find solutions to financial barriers.

Clear information

Foster carers and young people should be provided with clear information about the support available from local authorities and fostering services to help them to make choices about whether or not to enter into Staying Put arrangements. This will always include information about financial arrangements and implications for benefits and tax.

Early planning

Early planning for Staying Put is crucial and arrangements should be considered as part of the care and permanence planning process, from the time that a long term placement is planned or any new placement is made of a young person aged 16+. Decisions in principle about whether or not Staying Put is an option should be taken

as early as possible in the placement, and written into the young person's pathway plan.

If a foster placement is considered permanent or long term, carers and young people should be informed that Staying Put is an option at the time that a decision regarding permanence is made.

Discussion regarding the foster placement changing to a Staying Put arrangement when the young person reaches the age of 18 years should be included at all statutory review meetings for young people aged 15 and above. This will ensure that arrangements are in place well before the young person's 18th birthday. This will ensure a smooth transition for the young person and mirror 'normal family life' as far as this is possible.

Equality of opportunity

In order to maximise the opportunity for young people to participate in Staying Put, fostering services – both local authority and independent agencies - should do everything possible to ensure that all foster carers have an equal opportunity to become Staying Put carers. This includes family and friends foster carers and foster carers approved by independent fostering providers.

A young person's immigration or asylum status does not affect their entitlement to enter into a Staying Put arrangement but may affect the duration. A Staying Put arrangement should be the norm, not the exception. As a result RMBC, acting as the young person's corporate parent, should do everything as can be reasonably expected to support young people remain with their former foster carers.

Flexibility

Arrangements should be sufficiently flexible to enable support to be provided over and above the minimum legal duty, recognising that the relationship between carer and young person will not always end at age 21 or when the Staying Put arrangements ceases.

4. Criteria for Staying Put arrangements

There are no eligibility criteria for entering into a Staying Put arrangement, other than the young person being an 'eligible child' for care leaver support. If on the day before their 18th birthday the young person was a looked after child placed with a foster carer, and had been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and where all or part of this period of time falls on or after their 16th birthday. By continuing to live with their former foster carer this constitutes a Staying Put arrangement. This applies whether the foster placement was long term or short term, and includes placements made at any time up to the young person's 18th birthday.

RMBC has a general duty to do all we can to support care leavers into further and higher education, training or employment, but these are not preconditions for starting or maintaining a Staying Put arrangement. The legislation does not permit local authorities to introduce their own eligibility rules.

There is no reason to put foster carers through any sort of assessment or approval process to become Staying Put carers because the arrangements are made between adults and are not regulated.

However if RMBC has any concerns or worries about with the proposed arrangement which relate to safeguarding of the young person, the former foster carer and/or any members of their family including any other children or young people placed within the household, RMBC may choose not to support the arrangement.

5. Preparation for a Staying Put Arrangement

6.1 The option of staying put should be discussed at the young person's LAC review leading up to their 16th birthday or as soon as they become 'eligible' as defined by Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.

At this point staying put can be offered as an idea as a means to start the conversation between carers, young people and the wider professional network around the young person

A follow up discussion should then take place to discuss Staying Put

There are 3 key aspects in these initial discussions

Expectations of a Staying Put arrangement

This includes the

- Role of Former Foster Carer
- Role of Leaving Care
- Expectations of young person
- Development of young persons skills to support progression to independent living in the future

The Living Together Agreement

- How to live together within the Staying Put arrangement including each others roles and responsibilities within the home

Financial Arrangements

- Financial support available to former foster carer and young person
- Financial implications for former foster carer given the new status for allowance.
- Criteria and financial framework for extending the Staying Put arrangement and the National Insurance, Income Tax and Welfare Benefits issues for the foster carer/s and welfare benefit issues for the young person.

These 3 core elements should also be discussed, considered and agreed at each subsequent meeting that focusses on securing future plans for the young person in a Staying Put arrangement.

6. Securing agreement for Staying Put

To ensure sufficient time is available to make the necessary planning arrangements for extending a placement beyond a young person's 18th birthday, a professionals meeting should take place three months before a young person's 16th birthday or 3 months after a young person becomes Looked After if this is after they are 16.

After the initial discussion a Staying Put meeting alongside the development of a needs assessment should include the foster carer/s, the carer's supervising social worker, allocated social worker and leaving care social worker/personal adviser and should establish the viability, appropriateness and likelihood of a Staying Put arrangement occurring.

The decision making can be supported by the attendance of the Staying Put Coordinator.

The meeting should identify all key tasks and roles and responsibilities related to extending the former fostering arrangement. These should include

Expectations of a Staying Put Agreement

The Living Together Agreement

Financial Arrangements

The Staying Put professionals meeting should be repeated when the young person reaches the age of 17 and should ensure any final arrangements and requirements are in place by the young person's 18th birthday.

A review meeting should be held 3 months before a young person reaches the age of 18 years to ensure that all requirements for the Staying Put arrangement are in place.

Where Staying Put continues to be an option as the young person approaches 18, the IRO should ensure this option is reflected in discussions and LAC reviews and in any challenge regarding care and pathway planning.

When Staying Put has been identified as an option the IRO is expected to check and challenge the arrangements are in place in a timely manner to support a smooth transition to Staying Put.

7. Foster carers

RMBC and Independent Fostering Agencies need to ensure that their carers are given clear information about how they can expect to be supported if they enter into a Staying Put arrangement, and how this may impact on their continued fostering.

Becoming Staying Put carers only

When foster carers plan to become Staying Put carers they will need to discuss with the fostering service whether or not they wish to remain approved as foster carers, either to continue with an existing placement or to take new placements.

If they decide that they no longer wish to foster they should submit their resignation in writing to the fostering service, in which case their approval automatically ends 28 days after this is received. This is an opportunity for the fostering service to acknowledge and celebrate their contribution as foster carers.

Staying Put carers will continue to be supported by the Staying Put Coordinator in these instances.

Becoming Staying Put carers in addition to fostering

When foster carers wish to continue as both approved foster carers and Staying Put carers, the impact of the new arrangements will need to be considered. The young person who is Staying Put will no longer be considered as a foster placement once they become an adult, so the foster carer will be able to take another placement within any terms of their approval. This may not always be possible or appropriate due to lack of accommodation, the demands of the Staying Put arrangement, or other factors.

The change in the foster carer's circumstances, including the looked after child becoming an adult member of the household, means that a review of the foster carer's approval should be undertaken before a Staying Put arrangement begins. This will provide the opportunity to discuss the impact of the Staying Put arrangement on the role of the foster carer and to think carefully through all the implications of the change in the legal status of the relationship with the young

person. The need for any further training or additional support needs should also be discussed.

The review should be carefully planned at a stage which enables discussion of all the relevant matters and also allows time for the fostering service's decision maker to consider its recommendations, including any changes to terms of approval.

Sometimes Staying Put carers are not able to take another foster placement whilst the young person remains living with them, but wish to remain approved as foster carers in order to resume fostering in the future. If the fostering service agrees that it is appropriate to continue approval then it must continue to meet the statutory requirements regardless of the fact that no child is placed. This includes regular visits by the supervising social worker (including an annual unannounced visit); reviews of approval; provision of training, advice, information and support; and support for continuing professional development.

Staying Put and the Foster carer

A meeting to discuss the option of Staying Put should be arranged with the foster carer when their foster child has reached their 16th birthday. Attending this meeting should be the Staying Put Coordinator. At this meeting the process and the funding should be explained to the foster carer. The expectation is that young people can remain with the foster carer up to their 21st birthday and that the foster carer is preparing the young person fully for independence and that they are supporting the young person in employment, education or training. This will be included in the care/pathway plan.

The carer should be fully informed of the implications of agreeing to a Staying Put arrangement and identify the differences between caring for a child and supporting an adult. Although there is an expectation of a seamless transition and the maintenance of existing rules and household/family norms carers should be encouraged to consider how they will react to impending adulthood and the young person's expectation of greater independence. For example, a young person may enter into contracts in their own right which in the case of default, could affect a carer's credit rating.

If the foster carer does not wish to sign up to the Staying Put arrangement then the Fostering Social worker will inform the young person's social worker or personal adviser. A needs led assessment will then be carried out and formulated into a plan which will be drawn up in order to prepare the young person to move on from their foster placement on or before their 18th birthday.

The reasons why a foster carer has chosen not to sign up to a Staying Put arrangement should be clearly recorded on the case record. These should also be shared with the responsible service manager. This will allow for analysis and consideration of any changes that need to be made to support foster carers in feeling better able to move to a Staying Put arrangement for the young people in their care.

8. Staying Put and the Young Person

A meeting to discuss the option of Staying Put should be arranged with the young person when they reach their 15th birthday by their social worker or personal adviser, or if supported by the disability team the transitions worker.

At this meeting the changes and process should be explained to them.

The expectation is that young people can remain with the foster carer up to their 21st birthday.

Following this meeting, young people need to be given the opportunity to think about the options that may be available for them and to consult with other professionals or family members should they wish to do so.

Young people should be provided with written information and where possible linked with other young people who have benefitted from a Staying Put arrangement who will be able to discuss on more of a peer level the pros and cons of the arrangement from a young person's perspective.

If the young person does/does not wish to sign up to the Staying Put arrangement then the young person's social worker, personal adviser or transitions worker will inform the foster carer if they were not part of that joint discussion

A needs assessment will be carried out and formulated into a plan which will be drawn up, in order to prepare the young person to acquire their independent living skills, and included in the young person's Pathway Plan.

Young people who say they do not want to remain in a Staying Put arrangement should have the opportunity to revisit this decision at any time, and as many times as they need to, before their 18th birthday in discussion with the foster carer.

Even where a young person may initially say they do not want to remain in a Staying Put arrangement, discussions need to be had with the young person's carers to ensure that if the young person changes their mind, arrangements are already in hand to ensure the smoothest transition possible for when the young person reaches the age of 18 years.

Arrangements for disabled young people

Young people who have an enduring disability which is likely to have an impact on their ability to live independently, should be referred to RMBC Transitions Team after age 14. If following assessment the disability meets the Fair Access to Care criteria, the former foster placement should, subject to all parties agreement and assessment, convert to an Adult Services placement known as Shared Lives once the young person becomes 18. At this point care and financial responsibility transfers to Adult Services.

Shared Lives arrangements are a regulated arrangement for Adult Social Care.

DBS checks on young people

Since the young person who is Staying Put becomes an adult member of the foster carer's household, to comply with fostering regulations an enhanced disclosure must be obtained from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). This shouldn't reveal anything of surprise to the fostering service or the carer, but may need handling sensitively, particularly with the young person themselves. It is appropriate to obtain the enhanced disclosure before the young person becomes 18, so that it may be considered at the review of the foster carer's approval before the Staying Put arrangement begins.

There is no requirement to seek further DBS disclosures, however fostering services have a policy of updating checks at regular intervals through the DBS update service. If this is the case the young person will need to agree to this if their Staying Put carer remains a foster carer. The foster carer will also be bound by their foster care agreement to notify the fostering service of any circumstances which might make their household unsuitable to foster and this might include criminal offences committed by the young person who is Staying Put.

Known issues which may impact on the continued approval of the foster carer should be included in early discussions about Staying Put, as these will be crucial to the ability of the foster carer and the fostering service to make an informed decision.

9. Extending Placements

There are circumstances where placements may be extended beyond a young person's 18th birthday without becoming Staying Put arrangements. These circumstances fall into clear categories.

Situation	Review frequency
Alternative accommodation is not available as planned, requiring a brief extension.	Monthly and agreed by Team Manager If still not ready after 3 months Service Manager to be informed
Young person completing a course of education where they turn 18 during that academic year consideration can be given to extending the current arrangement until 31 st July of that academic year.	Reviewed in line with pathway plan or if there is a significant change Any extension to this will be considered on a case by case basis Agreed in each case by the Service Manager
Where a young person has significant vulnerabilities but where they not yet eligible for support from other agencies	Every 3 months – purpose to review and consider step down to standard Staying Put

All circumstances for extended payments to be discussed and agreed at Out of Area Residential Panel

Any other circumstance not covered about should be discussed with Service Manager and presented to Out of Area Residential Panel prior to any agreement being offered

Where extended payments are agreed this refers only to the fee provided to the carer for their care for the young person.

In all instances at 18 there will be no further fee payment to the Independent Fostering Agency.

The only fee payable by RMBC will be to the carer for the carer and their care of the young person

10. Professional Roles and Responsibilities

All Staying Put arrangements will be supported by a personal advisor, social worker and the Staying Put Coordinator. In situations when the household continues to foster, a supervising social worker will remain allocated and should support the carer in their combined role as Staying Put carer and foster carer.

Fostering Supervising Social Worker

The fostering social worker will support the foster carer throughout the Staying Put process. Twelve months before the young person reaches their 18th birthday they will undertake a review of the foster carer and make any recommendations and present them to the fostering panel.

The fostering supervising social worker will provide support through regular supervision and identify any additional training that may be required in order that the carer has the skills to support the young person.

Young Person's Social worker, Personal Adviser or Transitions Worker

The social worker, personal advisor or transitions worker will support the young person throughout the Staying Put process in keeping with leaving care legislation and guidance. They will assist the young person in applying for benefits or any other finance for which the young person is entitled to claim.

Staying Put Coordinator

The Staying Put Coordinator will be the first point of contact when considering Staying Put arrangements. They will provide:

- Information to young people and foster carers about how Staying Put works in Rotherham

- The detail regarding payments to former foster carers and the young person's contribution
- Advice, support and information. This may include advice about money, jobs, benefits, and employment, training and housing options
- Supporting the young people in completing Housing Benefit applications
- The link between Children and Young People's Services and other agencies, such as Housing Benefit departments and Independent Fostering Agencies
- To lead on the development of the Staying Put arrangements, including consultation with interested parties
- Data regarding the use of Staying Put arrangements

The Commissioning Team

The Commissioning Team will ensure that a copy of this policy is made available to Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA) at the time a foster placement is commissioned. There should be an explicit expectation that an IFA accepts the terms of this policy. The Commissioning Team should also ensure that payments to a Staying Put carer are made.

11. Staying Put Arrangement Guidance - Living Together Agreements

Young people, Staying Put carer/s, leaving care personal advisers and supervising social workers should meet to develop a 'Living Together Agreement' prior to a young person's 18th birthday.

The agreement should set out the expectation of all personal advisers and clarify roles and responsibilities. See appendix 1 for an example of a Living Together Agreement

12. Health and Safety

The same health and safety principles including household/car insurance that applied under the Foster Placement will continue. The car must have a current MOT certificate.

13. Household Insurance

The Staying Put providers will continue to be covered by RMBC's "All Risks Carer's Contents" policy.

This insurance policy covers Foster Carers, Staying Put Providers and Supported Lodgings Providers against damage caused to home contents by the direct actions of the young person.

Claims should be submitted either via email to insurance@rotherham.gov.uk or in writing, marked for the attention of the Insurance & Risk Manager at the RMBC Riverside House address. The policy does not carry an excess but providers will subsequently be asked to produce documentation to support any claim made (e.g. purchase receipts; estimates).

Providers should ensure that they continue to maintain their own full household and liability insurance policy to provide cover against damage that is unconnected to the young person.

14. Monitoring and Reviewing Arrangements

The Staying Put Arrangements should be reviewed as part of the Permanence Plan, or Pathway Plan Review at least every six months. This should record any problems or difficulties that have emerged and what is working well in the arrangement. A review can be arranged earlier if needed by agreement between the young person, the carers and the personal advisor involved.

15. Safeguarding Measures

The same safeguarding measures that apply under the foster placement will continue to apply to a Staying Put Arrangement. In addition, safeguarding policies and procedures as they apply to vulnerable adults will also be observed.

16. Ending the Staying Put Arrangement

The Staying Put arrangement can be ended at any time before the young person reaches their 21st birthday, by either the young person or the carer by giving a

minimum of 28 days' notice. This period can be shortened in exceptional circumstances.

When planning to end a Staying Put arrangement it is worth remembering that as the young person reaches their 21st birthday they may no longer qualify as having a "priority need" under housing legislation for social housing. Therefore it is essential that plans are made in advance in order to maximise the opportunity to be considered for social housing.

If the young person wishes to remain with the carer post 21 then it will become a private or informal arrangement and no longer funded by the Local Authority.

There will be circumstances whereby a planned move-on from a Staying Put arrangement doesn't work and a return to the Staying Put arrangement is in the young person's best interests. Subject to prior agreement and within an 8 week period a young person can return to their previous Staying Put household and the original payment arrangement will resume. In these circumstances the arrangement will continue to be considered as Staying Put.

Part 2: Funding and Financial Arrangements for Staying Put**17. Funding Arrangements**

The funding of the Staying Put arrangement is derived from a number of sources: housing benefit; the young person's personal contribution; any personalised budget and the local authority looked after budget.

Due to recent changes to benefits young people have to make the claim for Housing Benefit. While the Staying Put Coordinator can support and guide the young person through this process of making the claim, the Staying Put Coordinator cannot make the claim for the young person.

Where applicable the young person will be supported to apply for the maximum housing benefit to which they are entitled.

The young person is expected to make a financial contribution from their personal benefit allowance towards the cost of food and utilities. This is currently set at a maximum of £20.00 per week; however the actual amount will be agreed between young person and the provider in advance of the Staying Put arrangement starting. This will be incorporated into the Living Together Agreement and reviewed either when circumstances change or at the pathway plan review.

Where a young person is working, they will be expected to contribute towards their upkeep and in addition to the initial £20.00, the young person should be contributing an agreed % of their net earnings towards the household costs (this needs to be agreed between the carer and young person – with the support of the personal adviser and the Staying Put Coordinator).

These amounts should be reviewed at least annually and earlier if there are significant changes and should not be at a level that prevents the young person from saving. This is to be paid by the young person directly to the carer. This will be laid out in the Living Together Agreement.

The Staying Put payment to the foster carer from RMBC's children's services is set at £189 per week. These payments will be reviewed annually. If a carer will not

accept this level of funding, the matter is to be referred to the Head of Service for Looked after Children and Care Leavers.

The Staying Put payment covers all: accommodation, support, utilities, food and associated costs, it does not cover pocket money and clothing as this will be replaced by the young person's personal benefit allowance or earnings as well as the financial offer from the Leaving Care Service.

Staying Put carers will continue to receive the above payment for 56 weeks of the year paid over 52 weeks. This will cover one week for Christmas/Festival, one week for birthday and two weeks for a holiday as the Staying Put Carers will continue to treat the young person as a member of the family, taking them out etc. This does not apply to the young person's contribution.

As set out above all young people are required to claim a personal benefit allowance or be earning money to be able to fund their day to needs such as travel, clothing or leisure.

All young people are required to claim housing benefit. In situations where young people are working part-time, and do not claim a means tested personal benefit they will still need to claim housing benefit.

Earnings over £57.90 will result in a reduction of housing benefit which will need to be made up by a contribution by the young person and RMBC. Housing benefit will be paid directly to RMBC children's services.

Unlike fostering allowance, payments for Staying Put is not a disregarded allowance for the purposes of claiming means tested benefit. When the carers are already in receipt of means tested benefits RMBC children's services will become responsible for paying the equivalent amount of Housing Benefit based on the Local Housing Allowance rate.

When a young person has no recourse to public funds (NRPF) RMBC Borough Council children's services will become responsible for paying the equivalent amount

based on the Local Housing Allowance rate, provided that the young person is not in receipt of income which could be taken into consideration.

The Staying Put Coordinator will help young people complete housing benefit applications. This will be laid out in the Living Together Agreement. If a young person does not claim benefits they are entitled to or pay their contribution, they will be in breach of their Living Together Agreement.

To ensure that there is a smooth process the application for Housing Benefit should be made at least 4 weeks prior to the young person's 18th Birthday.

When housing benefit or the young person's contribution is not made available to the carers a meeting will be called to review the Living Together Agreement. RMBC will compensate for a young person's failure to pay their contribution or claim housing benefit for a period of three months from the start date of the arrangement. Thereafter the carer should decide whether they wish to continue providing the accommodation.

Housing benefit is now determined by Local Housing Allowance or Local Reference Rates based upon the area in which the applicant lives and may change each month. However, these rates are fixed in the month of application until the end of the financial year. Up to date Housing benefit levels are published each month on the area LHA website: [directgov](https://www.direct.gov.uk).

Carers receiving a Staying Put payment have a duty to inform the Local Authority of any changes in circumstances.

Young People at University

Young People at University

The Government expects and Rotherham offers a range of financial entitlements to support young people attend University. This includes funding for vacation expenses for up to 20 weeks.

There are 3 scenarios for young people choosing to apply for University.

If the young person chooses to remain living at home for the duration of their University career the staying put funding arrangements would apply. However in these instances the young person would not be eligible for Housing Benefit so the young person would be expected to pay the LHA rate to the carer from the funding available to them through Rotherham and/or student

If a young person will be returning to live at home during university holidays, they will have monies to support this arrangement through the Finance Policy and Student Finance. This exchange of monies would be considered a private arrangement between the young person and the carer and would be consistent with the LHA rate for the area in which the carer resides.

If the former carer is maintaining significant contact with the young person during term time in the form of weekly phone calls; contact as and when needed with the university; at least one visit each term to the young person; an open invitation to the young person to spend weekends at home – a retention payment of up to £100 per week can be considered. This is subject to negotiation based on the level of involvement) and will be in addition to the rent payment offered to the carer by the young person.

Any other arrangement which does not fit into any of the above categories will be considered on its own merits. This can include additional support to the carer/young person by the LA should financial issues be the only block to the young person returning to the carer for ad hoc weekends and/or short periods of time during holidays/reading weeks. Any funding to support return home in these instances will be based on LHA rates.

However the Finance Policy and funding available to young people enables young people to make decisions as to where they wish to spend their money. They can be supported in making these decisions by their Personal Adviser.

Each arrangement can be recorded in the Living Together Agreement and will outline the commitment each party makes to each other as part of the staying put arrangement. This will include the financial contribution of the young person inclusive of rent and monies for food etc and where applicable RMBC.

18. Independent Fostering Agency (IFA)

Young people placed in Independent Fostering Agency placements will be considered against the same criteria as RMBC foster carer placements. The local authority will ensure that the process to agreeing a Staying Put arrangement involves the IFA at all key stages.

Once a young person becomes 18, the fostering placement ends and thereafter the IFA is not a formal party to the Staying Put Arrangement. The financial arrangements for Staying Put are made between the local authority and the carers in keeping with that which a RMBC foster carer receives, not what the IFA carer is used to receiving.

The IFA will cease to receive a fee once the young person reaches 18. The former foster carer will receive payment direct from RMBC.

The post age 15 planning meetings, professionals meetings and child care reviews will be the medium by which all IFAs will be involved in the Staying Put process. There will be occasions where the decision by the young person and their carer/s to enter into a Staying Put arrangement will not follow the exact processes noted in this policy for example where the young person may have come in to placement post 15. However at whatever point discussions occur, the IFA will be fully involved.

The local authority expects that those representing the IFA at meetings/reviews have the authority to agree with the decisions made by the carer/s and the young person when considering Staying Put arrangements.

Once the decision is made by the young person and their carer/s to enter into a Staying Put arrangement post 18, the IFA will be notified and asked to ensure that their carers formally notify the IFA of their change in circumstances.

The IFA may be continuing to provide a supervising social worker where a child in care remains placed with the carers. In keeping with government good practice guidance, that same supervising social worker could provide support in the carer's Staying Put role. If this is not possible, RMBC will offer the support of a supervising social worker.

It is expected that IFAs with whom the local authority commission placements will fully embrace the legislative and good practice guidance associated with the Staying Put initiative. A copy of this policy will be sent to the IFA at the point of commissioning a placement by the Commissioning Team.

19. Benefits for Young People

Young people remaining in a Staying Put arrangement can claim means tested benefits for their personal needs from their 18th birthday. These benefits replace the pocket money and clothing allowance previously contained in the foster carer's maintenance allowance.

Personal advisers will be responsible for assisting care leavers in understanding their benefits and will assist them using the [Benefit Adviser tool on www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/benefit-adviser). As every case is different and there are different entitlements, this tool is vital in understanding the exact entitlement for that individual.

Further benefits advice is available from Citizens Advice Bureau.

20. The Treatment of Benefits

Personal payments from Children's Services to young people and carers under section 17, section 20, section 23, section 24 and section 31 do not count as income for benefit purposes.

21. Income Tax and National Insurance Issues for Staying Put Arrangements

Tax

All foster carers and Staying Put carers must register with HMRC as self-employed.

The Simplified Tax Arrangements apply and Foster carers and Adult Placement Carers will continue to be able to claim under their existing simplified tax arrangements. Full Tax details are provided in the HMRC help sheet 236.

Where young people remain living with their former foster carer/s under a Staying Put arrangement, the Income Tax and National Insurance framework and liabilities that apply are set out in the new “Shared Lives Carers” Guidance.

The ‘Shared Lives’ - ‘Qualifying Care Relief Guidance’ sets out that Staying Put carers receive tax exemptions up to a given qualifying amount for each Staying Put young person living with them. The Staying Put qualifying rate mirrors the system and amounts that applied when the placement was previously a foster care placement.

The Staying Put exemption does not affect any income from other sources, for example, from employment or from investments. Such other income will be taxed in the normal way.

Staying Put carer/s as well as foster carer/s should note that they may be able to claim Working Tax Credit which is administered by HMRC. Fostering/Staying Put care is counted as work for tax credit purposes. The carer’s taxable income is used to assess the amount of tax credits that they are entitled to. So, where the carer receives less in Staying Put personal payments than the tax free allowance then their income from caring for Working Tax Credit purposes is treated as nil, which means they get the highest rate of WTC.

The same Class 4 National Insurance contributions apply as for fostering.

Appendix 1**Living Together Agreement – Staying Put Arrangement**

Date: agreed on _____ to start on _____

This agreement is made between _____ and _____.

It allows you to stay at _____ and sets out what will be expected of you and what you can expect.

You will have your own room in the home of your former foster carer.

The full cost of the Staying Put placement will be a total of £..... per week, calculated as follows:

- RMBC Children's services - £..... per week
- You'll claim Housing Benefit of £..... per week for the rent to be paid directly to RMBC
- Your weekly allowance contribution of £..... towards utilities and food

Total: £.....

Your contribution will be reviewed on a regular basis. Please keep all your wage slips as these are needed to work out your contribution. Any increase or decrease in your income needs to be brought to the attention of your social worker or personal adviser.

If you want to move out of _____, you must let the provider know at least **4 weeks** before you want to move. Your former carer can also end the "Staying Put" Agreement at any time by also giving 4 weeks' notice.

We agree that the conditions of occupying this accommodation are:

- The rent is paid regularly and on time.
- All have read and understood the expectations, which say what all must do.
- All agree to do the things that are set out in the expectations.

Signed: (young person) Date:

By this agreement _____ permit _____ to occupy the above accommodation.

Signed: (Provider) Date:

PRINT NAME _____

In signing this Agreement both parties are under obligation to inform the Personal Advisor and the Finance Department of any significant financial changes.

EXPECTATIONS:

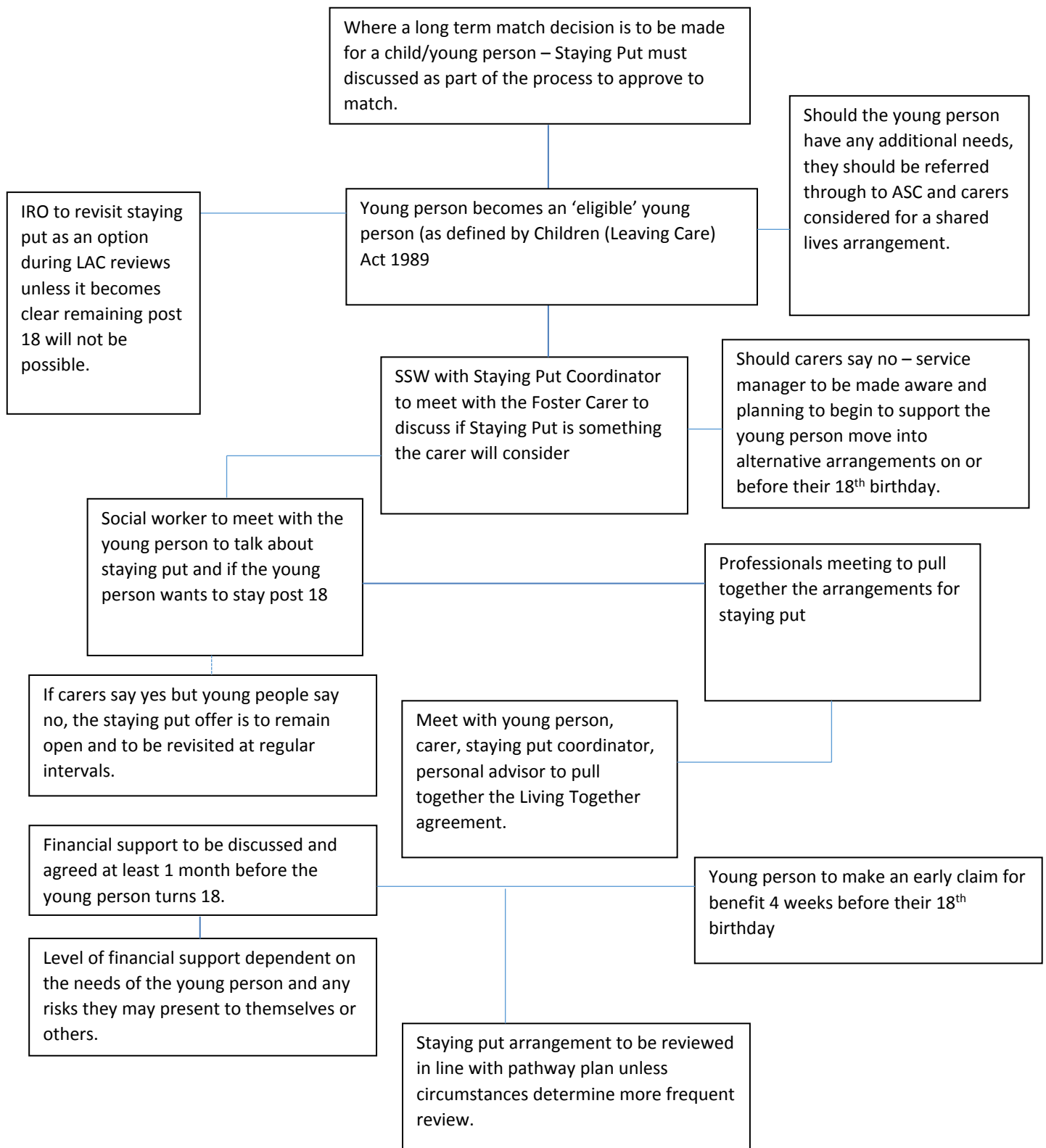
- Both parties will be expected to work towards agreements set within the pathway plan
- If at any time, the former foster is worried about the young person's safety, they have the right to enter the young person's room to see if the young person is OK
- The young person must pay the agreed amount of rent on time.
- The young person must pay for any loss or damage to their own furniture or belongings.
- The young person must let the former foster carer know if anything is broken or needs mending.
- The young person must ask the former foster carer if they want to keep a pet.
- The young person must be considerate to all the people who share the house.
- The young person must not invite anyone else to share the bedroom. Overnight visitors must be agreed beforehand with the former foster carer.
- The young person must not use or keep illegal substances in the property.
- ADD EXPECTATIONS THAT THE YOUNG PERSON HAS OF THE FORMER FOSTER CARER

Both parties can end the "Staying Put" Agreement at any time by giving 4 weeks' notice. The former foster carer will be expected to end the agreement, and will do so if either:

- The young person stops paying rent/ contribution towards utilities/food.
- The young person does not keep to the above expectations.

Appendix 2

Flowchart for Staying Put



Appendix 3**Funding arrangements for Staying Put**

Criteria	LA Contribution	Young Person's Contribution	Benefits agency	Review frequency
In FT EET (Year 13) and avoid any disruption for carer/young person	Maintain carer fees less £57.90	Young person contributes £20 per week to carers	Housing Benefit claimed at shared room rate and paid directly to LA. Young person claims relevant benefit	In line with Pathway planning
Significant vulnerabilities not eligible for support from other agencies	Maintain carer fees less £57.90	Young person contributes £20 per week to carers	Housing Benefit claimed at shared room rate and paid directly to LA. Young person claims relevant benefit	Every 3 months – purpose to review and consider step down to standard Staying Put.
Young person subject to solo funding prior to turning 18	Subject to risk assessment and ongoing review	Young person contributes £20 per week to carers	Housing Benefit claimed at shared room rate and paid directly to LA. Young person claims relevant benefit	Risk assessment prior to turning 18 to determine funding level post 18 and reviewed every 3 months.
Standard Staying Put arrangement	£189	Young person contributes £20 per week to carers	Housing Benefit claimed at shared room rate and paid directly to LA. Young person claims relevant benefit	In line with Pathway planning



Rotherham Adoption Service

Annual Report

2018/19



1. Introductions

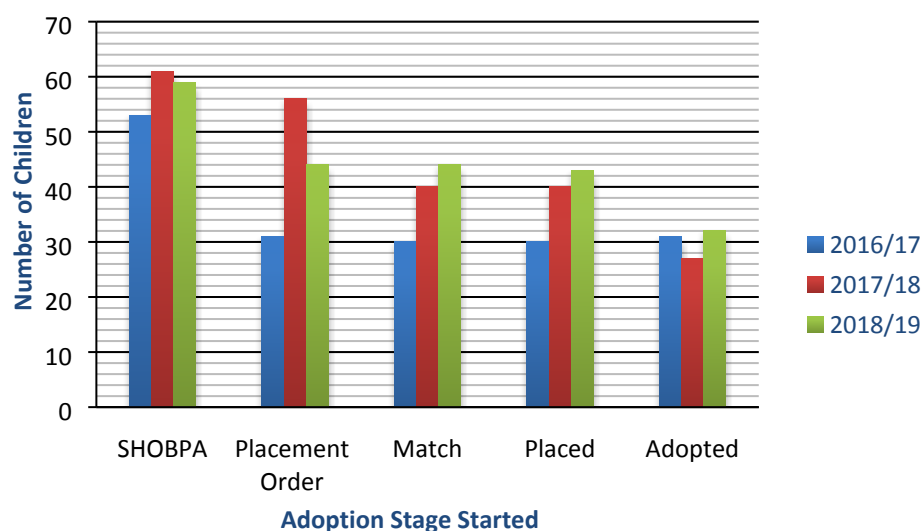
- 1.1 This report is an annual report to brief on the business and activity within the Council's Adoption Service in 2018/19.
- 1.2 The report provides performance and activity data on the service, reports on the activity and functioning of the Adoption Panel, and details service developments that have occurred in the year and those that are planned moving through 2019/20.

2. The Adoption Service

- 2.1 Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Adoption Service operates within the regulatory framework of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, Children and Families Act 2014, Adoption Agency Regulations, the associated Statutory Guidance 2014 and the National Minimum Standards 2014.
- 2.2 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 rated Good with adoption performance rated as 'Good' and achieving an Annex O, (outstanding) for the bespoke Family and Supporters training.
- 2.3 The Adoption Service undertakes the recruitment, assessment and approval of prospective adopters, family finding and matching children with approved adoptive parents, supports and supervises adoption placements and provides post adoption support services.
- 2.4 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.

2.5 The Acting 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.

3. Activity in the Adoption Service in 2018/19



3.1 Should be placed for Adoption Decisions

3.1.1 The decision by a Local Authority that a looked after child Should be Placed for Adoption (SHOBPA decision) 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.

3.1.2 In 2018/19 59 SHOBPA decisions were made. This is a slight decrease compared to 2017/18 when 61 children received a SHOBPA decision. Although the number of children with a SHOBPA decision has fluctuated slightly over the last 3 years, the number of children with an Adoption Plan has on the whole remained stable.

3.2 Placement Orders

3.2.1 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.

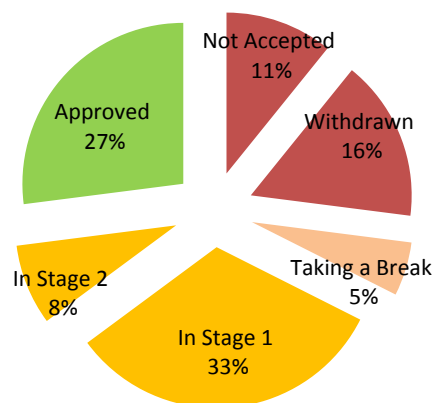
3.2.2 In 2018/19 Placement Orders were made in respect of 44 children compared with 56 Placement Orders made in 2017/18. This is a slight decrease mainly as a result of Court not granting a Placement Order at the Final Hearing. Given the age and additional needs of some of the children, to find an adoptive placement would be a challenge but one that RMBC felt was in the children's best interests, however the court did not agree. The assessments of family members were not sufficiently robust in some cases and earlier exploration of an alternative plan of permanence with foster carers would have prevented care plans having to change. The children in these cases either remained or returned to the care of a family member or the plan changed to long term fostering. Of the 59 children who had SHOBPA decisions made 2018/19 (reported in 4.1.2), 10 children are still in proceedings and therefore Placement Orders have not yet been granted. 38 children have had Placement Orders granted and 4 children's plans have been revoked and a further 7 children are awaiting revocation. A piece of work is being completed to identify themes and lessons learned which will be shared with the LAC teams and disability teams.

3.3 Adopter Approvals

3.3.1 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.

3.3.2 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 2018/19 was 130 compared to 146 in 2017/18. A recruitment campaign and regular publicised monthly drop in sessions, with added morning sessions, have contributed to maintaining adopter enquiries. In addition, through word of mouth, we have had a number of adopters make enquiries from the Leeds area. Although the number of initial enquiries has fallen slightly the number of Registrations of Interests has increased to 37. Of these, 10 prospective Adopter households have been approved, 12 are in Stage 1, 3 in Stage 2 plus 2 taking a break and 6 have withdrawn and 4 were not accepted. Reasons for withdrawing included; adopters recognising adoption was not the option for them following Stage 1 training, the agency advising due to unresolved issues the couple were not felt suitable to adopt, issues with pets, and concerning personal references. 10 prospective adopters in total have either withdrawn or were not accepted.

2018/19 ROI Status at Year End



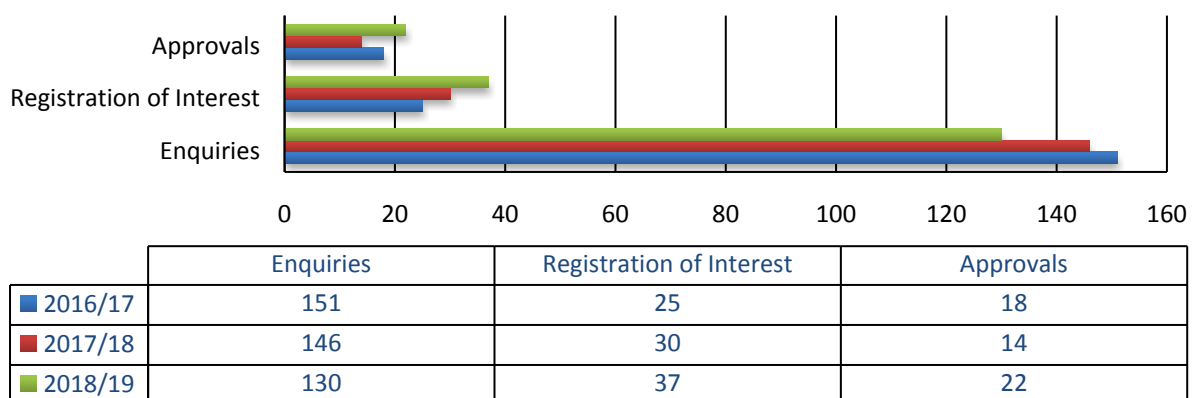
3.3.3 The Agency is ensuring that whilst prospective adopters enquiring are being given a positive welcome, the messages being shared about adoption and the children available for adoption are realistic. The agency is clear about the qualities and skills needed by prospective adopters in order to successfully 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. The Stage 1

training enables prospective adopters to gain a realistic understanding of the needs of children with an adoption plan and helps them to consider if they are able to meet these needs.

3.3.4 The number of adopters the agency has approved in 2018/19 is 22 compared to 14 approved in 2017/18. Whilst the number of adopter approvals has increased the agency recognises that there is a need to recruit and approve more adopters particularly for larger sibling groups. In addition, the number of babies with an adoption plan has increased latterly and there is currently a shortage of in house approved adopters for these babies. The prediction for 2018/19 was that 23 adopter approvals would have been made. The agency was on track to approve 24 however due to 2 families choosing to take a break between Stage 1 and Stage 2 this has not been achieved. The agency has set a target to approve 30 prospective adopters in 2019/20.

Information from the other 3 Local Authorities in South Yorkshire shows that there has been a slight increase in the number of adopters approved regionally with a total of 91 adopters approved compared to 71 the previous year.

Recruitment Activity 3 Year Comparison



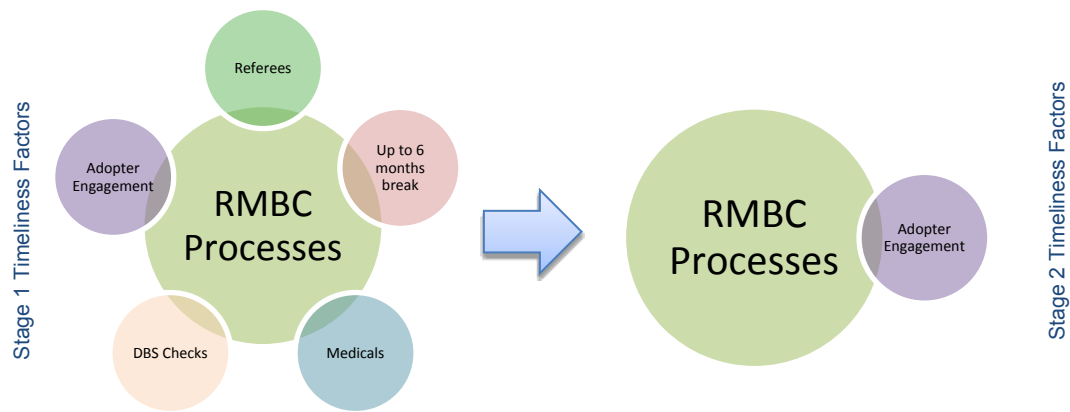
3.3.5 In addition to the 10 withdrawals pre approval, 1 approved adoptive family withdrew due to unexpected pregnancy and the Adoption Service recommended 1 single female adopter who had been approved was no

longer suitable to adopt following increasing concern about her suitability following feedback from social workers and other Adoption Agencies. This was the first case to be taken by an adopter to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) for many years and the qualifying decision made by the Agency Decision Maker was upheld. Whilst the 10 withdrawals and 2 no longer suitable to adopt 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. Only 1 adoption placement disrupted this financial year and the adopters were not approved by RMBC.

3.3.6 Rotherham Adoption Team remains committed to increasing the number of adopters approved. To achieve this there has been a recruitment campaign utilising social media and other recruitment activities including the addition of a morning drop in session on a monthly basis to complement the evening drop in session.

3.4 Timeliness of assessment of prospective adopters

3.4.1 The average time between Registration of Interest and Agency Decision for the 22 adopter approvals in 2018/19 was 214 days, compared to the previous year's average of 208 days. The slight increase in time is due to 1 adopter taking a break between Stage 1 and Stage 2. Of the 19 families that completed both Stage 1 and Stage 2, only 1 family completed Stage 1 within the 2 month timescale due to continued delay in obtaining DBS and adopter medicals.



3.4.2 There has been a slight decrease in the percentage of adopter assessments completed within the 6 month timescale. In 2018/19 27% compared to 28.5% in 2017/18. This continues to be due to delay in Stage 1 and factors which are beyond the control of the agency for example DBS checks and adopter medicals, with only 5% of the approved families meeting the Stage 1 timescale. In contrast 95% of adopters approved met the stage 2 timescale where the agency has control.

3.5 Matches Approved

3.5.1 Rotherham Adoption Service has two full time and one 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.

3.5.2 In 2018/19 the service matched 44 children with adoptive families. This compares with 40 matches in 2017/18. Successful family finding, including the introduction of Rotherham's own Family Finding Fun Days, has resulted in matches including a sibling group of 3. 70% of the children matched (31 children) are considered to have additional needs including being part of a sibling group, older children, health and development needs, BME children and children with direct contact with first family.

3.6 Children Placed for Adoption

3.6.1 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 2018/19, 43 of the children matched were placed. One child has not yet been placed as the Foster Carers have lodged an application to Court to adopt the child and an injunction has been granted by court to prevent her removal. In addition one child who had been matched in 2017/18 was placed in 2018/19. This brings the total number of children placed to 44.

3.7 Children Adopted

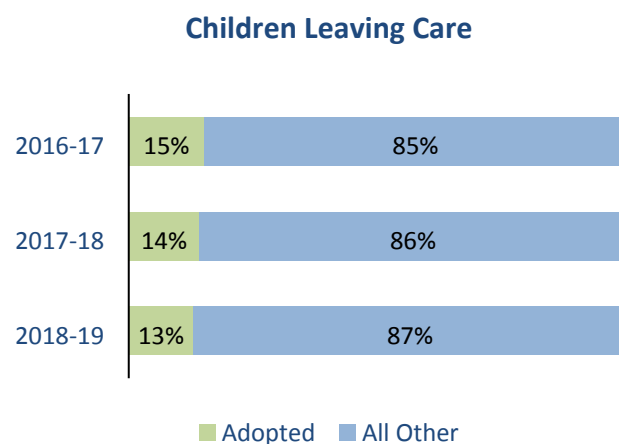
3.7.1 Once a child is placed for adoption, the adopters must wait a minimum ten week period before they can apply to the Court for an Adoption Order to legally adopt the child. Once an Adoption Order is granted the adopters obtain full parental responsibility for the child.

3.7.2 In 2018/19 there were 32 looked after children adopted in comparison to 27 in the previous year. In addition there are a further 6 adoption applications lodged where first families are seeking leave to contest the granting of an Adoption Order and a further 5 adoption applications are filed awaiting Court Hearing dates. There are 3 Adoption Applications with dates set. There continues to be a high number of Adoption Applications where first families are seeking to oppose which serves only to delay the Adoption Process. Of the 32 Adoption Orders granted in 2018/19, first families sought leave to oppose the granting of 10 Adoption Orders. All Adoption Orders were subsequently made. There is currently delay of approximately six weeks due to the volume of cases being heard at the Sheffield Family Court. Currently the average time from filing an adoption application to Adoption Order granted is 16 weeks.

3.8 The Percentage of Children Leaving Care via Adoption

3.8.1 13.3% of children left care via adoption in Rotherham in 2018/19. Slightly less than the previous year's figure of 14.21%. The children's tracker

meetings continue to be held to measure performance of children with an adoption plan, to prevent drift and delay and the Right Child Right Care initiative is also supporting the timely adoption of children providing senior management oversight. It is likely that the number of Adoption orders will increase in 2019/20 as more children have been placed due to the reasons outlined in 4.5.2.



3.8.2 The table below demonstrates the number and percentage of children adopted from care in 2018/19 as compared to statistics from the previous dataset year. The table also examines the adoption of children with additional needs. The number of children being discharged from care in 2018/19 increased due to the Right Child Right Care initiative therefore whilst the number of children adopted increased, the percentage of children adopted from care has decreased.

3.8.3 Of the 32 children adopted, 16 were female and 16 were male. 25 children were of white British origin and 7 children were of BME backgrounds, 6 sibling groups of 2 children, 2 children with disabilities, 1 being over 5 years old, and 6 children over the age of 5 years. 68% of the children adopted had additional needs.

Number of children adopted in Rotherham in 2017/18	27
Number of children adopted in Rotherham 2018/19	32
Percentage of children leaving care via adoption in Rotherham in 2017/18	14.21%
The percentage of children leaving care via adoption in Rotherham in 2018/19	13.3%
Percentage of children from the 27 adoption orders granted in 2017/18 who have additional needs	29.6%
Percentage of children from the 32 adoption orders granted in 2018/19 who have additional needs	68%

The above table demonstrates the success RMBC adoption service has in achieving permanence through adoption for children with additional needs.

4. Timeliness of Adoption

4.1.1 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.

4.1.2 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.

4.2 Adoption Scorecard Measure 1

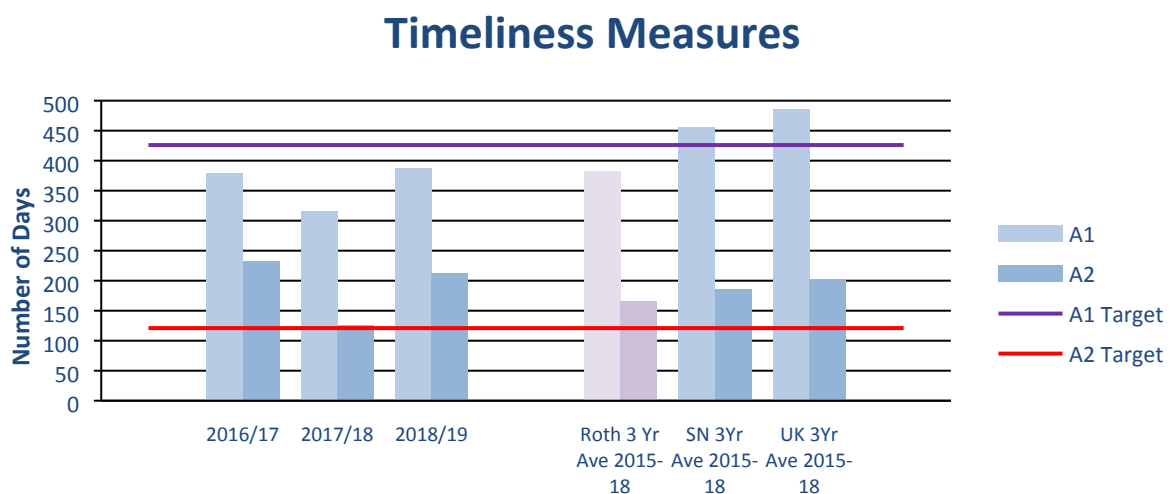
4.2.1 Adoption Scorecard Measure 1, measures the number of days on average that it takes for children who have been adopted to move from first coming into care to being placed for adoption with adoptive families. The Government target on this measure is 426 days.

4.2.2 Rotherham's performance in 2018/19 was an average of 387 days. 69% of children adopted met the A1 measure. The children who did not meet the A1 measure had significant needs including health needs or were sibling groups. It therefore took significantly longer to identify suitable adoptive families for these children.

4.3 Adoption Scorecard Measure 2

4.3.1 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.

4.3.2 Rotherham's performance in 2018/19 for children adopted was 212 days; the increase in days is a reflection of the percentage of children with additional needs who achieved permanence through adoption.



5. Family Finding

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

5.2 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

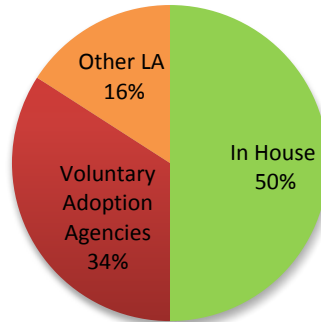
suitable family in the region and across the whole country through families approved by other Local Authorities and by Voluntary Agencies.

- 5.3 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, October and March the Adoption Team arranged and facilitated Fun Days (similar to an Activity Day) where a total of 82 children with an Adoption Plan attended, supported by their foster carers and social workers. Invites to adopters locally and nationally were sent and 50 families have attended. These Fun Days resulted in matches being identified for 25 children plus a further 7 links are being pursued from the Fun Day held in March.
- 5.4 When placing a child with adopters approved by another Local Authority we are required to pay an inter-agency fee of £27,000 for one child or £43,000 for a sibling group of two, and £54,000 for a sibling group of three children. This fee for the VAA's increased on 1st April 2018 to £31,000, £50,000 and £68,000 with a further increase for Voluntary Adoption agency placements anticipated from April 2019 to £31,620, £51,000 £69,360 and £79,560 for four children.
- 5.5 Of the 44 children matched for adoption in 2018/19:
- 22 were matched with in-house approved adopter
 - 15 were matched with voluntary adoption agency adopters (9 single children and 3 sibling groups of 2) equating to a cost of £429,000
 - 7 were matched with other Local Authority adopters (2 single children, 1 sibling group of 2 and 1 sibling group of 2) equating to a cost of £151,000

However, given the placement and invisible costs that would be incurred from maintaining these children in care, this is still deemed to

be financially beneficial as well as being the best outcome for the children involved.

Children Matched by Agency 2018/19



- 5.6 As of 31st March 2019 there are 19 children with an adoption plan where family finding is ongoing. Of the 19 children 8 have a Placement Order. The children waiting the longest are a sibling group of 2 with additional needs in respect of their age and ethnicity. The children have had their Placement Orders for 492 days. RMBC perseveres with searches when adoption is deemed to still be the right care plan thereby demonstrating commitment to achieving permanence for our children. An updated sibling assessment has concluded that these children's needs would be best met if they were separated and family finding is now ongoing to find families who would facilitate direct contact between the children. 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 235 days. The time between Placement Order and match reflects the additional needs of the children with an Adoption plan for example older children and sibling groups.

6. Early Permanence Placements (Fostering to Adopt Placements)

- 6.1 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 contributes to overall performance in improving timeliness. Rotherham Adoption Service is

recognised as being a regional practice lead in Early Permanence Provision.

6.2 Rotherham Adoption Service has 2 Early Permanence Champions, who alongside the Adoption Team Manager, work closely with social workers to identify children who can benefit from Early Permanence Planning.

6.3 There are currently 7 children in Early Permanence Placements. 6 of the children adopted in 2018/19 experienced early permanence placements. The average time from becoming looked after to being adopted for these children is 479 days, compared to 741 days for the 26 children who did not experience Early Permanence. This demonstrates the positive impact EPP has in securing permanence at the earliest opportunity.

6.4 Rotherham has experienced its first EPP placement not progressing to adoption. Whilst this was distressing for the EPP carers this demonstrates the benefits of EPP for children. Nonetheless, Rotherham has reflected on this case and identified lessons learned for future practice. This includes more robust assessments of family members and clear messages to EPP carers that there are always risks associated with these placements. RMBC has made the decision that EPP carers who are not approved by RMBC will be expected to attend RMBC EPP training to support their understanding.

7. The Adoption Panel

7.1 Panel Member Training

7.1.1 It is a legislative requirement that there is at least one training day annually for Panel members. Panel members in 2018/19 received training on the Rotherham Family Approach and a workshop to reflect on the impact of Attachment Style Interviews on adopter assessments.

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

7.1.3 New panel members have been recruited, 4 independent members and 4 social work members and 4 social work members.

7.2 Panel Business

7.2.1 During 2018/19 the Adoption Panel considered and made recommendations in respect of matches for 44 children and approval of 22 prospective adopters.

7.3 Quality Assurance of Reports

7.3.1 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.

7.3.2 CPR's are Quality Assured by a Service Manager and the Adoption Team Managers who form the Quality Assurance Group (QAG). Feedback on the quality of the report and amendments needed are shared with the Social Worker and Team Manager.

7.3.3 During 2018/19 there has been 1 adoption disruption in Rotherham; a single older child. An Independent disruption review has been completed and the findings shared with the Adoption Panel, the Adoption Team and LAC 4 and 5. Presenting themes noted that there needed to be clear reflection in the CPR on the possible challenges of caring for a child who has experienced trauma and adoption panel's role in ensuring that adopters being matched with a child whose needs are more significant have had an updated assessment to explore ability to meet the child's needs and the importance of "time out" during transitions to allow adopters to fully reflect with their social worker before progressing. The QAG is addressing the quality of CPR's to ensure the impact of traumatic early life experiences on children's behaviour is clearly identified. The Adoption Panel chair and panel members have had the opportunity to reflect on their role when considering matches and further training is planned to address appropriate questioning. A pause and reflect day is included in all transition plans and the expectation that the adoption social worker spends time with the adopters during this day reflecting

before progressing further is made clear particularly for interagency placements.

7.3.4 Consultation and support is available from the Therapeutic Team to support the preparation of children and adopters for transition and ensure an appropriate support plan is in place. The potential for input in to the quality assurance of CPR's by the Therapeutic Team is being considered to ensure that the potential impact of early life experiences on a child's development, emotional wellbeing and attachments is clearly understood.

7.3.5 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.

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

7.4.1 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 and consideration is being given to linking adoption social workers to teams as a point of reference and guidance.

7.4.2 The Quality Assurance Group (QAG) continues to QA CPR's and meet with the social worker and Team Manager to provide advice, guidance and feedback on areas of the CPR needing further work. 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. Both Looked After Children Permanence Teams have Advanced Practitioners whose role is to work with the teams to improve practice.

7.4.3 The Adoption Team Managers continue to work closely with the managers of LAC Teams 4 and 5 to improve practice around permanence planning. The family finders in consultation with the child's social worker 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 track progress of children and quality of work to identify training needs and areas for improvement. Fortnightly performance meetings support senior management oversight.

7.4.4 The Adoption Support Fund (ASF) was introduced by the Government to improve access to therapeutic support services for adoptive families. In 2018/19 148 applications were made to the fund and a value of £450,628 received to provide Therapeutic Support to 126 adopted children. In addition, £14,696 had been provided from applications made in 2017/18 for support in 2018/19. 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.

7.4.5 2 Adopted children attended Summer Camp funded through the ASF.

7.4.6 37 referrals were received from Adoptive Families requesting Post Adoption Support and post adoption support has been provided to 139 adoptive families.

8. Staffing

8.1 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. Currently there is a 0.7 FTE post vacancy and a full time family finding coordinator vacancy. In addition, there are 2 full time support workers, who cover adoption support and letter-box co-ordination.

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

9. Adoption Support Services

9.1 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 has 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

9.2 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.

- 9.3 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 for teenagers via the Regional Hub.
- 9.4 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.
- 9.5 Yorkshire Adoption Agency undertakes inter-country adoption assessments on behalf of RMBC when requested to do so as part of commissioned services through the regional hub.

10. The Regional Adoption Agency

- 10.1 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.

10.2 In 2018/19 Rotherham has continued working towards a regionalised adoption agency, in partnership with:

- Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council Adoption Service
- Sheffield City Council Adoption Service
- Doncaster Children's Trust
- Alliance of Voluntary Agencies

10.3 Rotherham is continuing to discuss and work toward a regional adoption agency proposal with Barnsley, Sheffield and Doncaster.

11. Summary

11.1 The service continues to achieve adoption for a high number of Looked after children including children with additional needs, 32 children being adopted in 2018/19. 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.

11.2 In this adoption year, the service has been successful in achieving adoption for a wide range of children who are considered to have additional needs due to age, disability, ethnicity or part of a sibling group. 68% were children considered to have additional needs.

11.3 Rotherham Adoption Team has continued to promote early permanence planning for children, with 7 Early Permanence Placements (EPP) being made in 2018/19.

11.4 The number of days for the 2 Adoption Scorecard measures has increased this year. The A1 measure remains within the Government target being 39 days below the target measure of 426 days. However the A2 measure is 91 days over the target measure of 121 days. This increase identified in 12.2 is due to the higher percentage of children with additional needs achieving permanency through adoption.

11.5 Rotherham Adoption Service has successfully supported adoptive families by accessing the Adoption Support Fund.

- 11.6 One adoption placement disrupted in 2018/19 for a single older child. 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 her significant attachment and behaviour needs.
- 11.7 The Panel has operated successfully and plays a key quality assurance role. The quality of CPR's has been variable and the Quality Assurance Group has continued to improve consistent quality.

12. Improvement and Development for 2019/20 onwards

12.1 We will continue to strive to improve and develop our service over 2019/20. 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. The target is 30 and current performance indicates that only 21 adopters will be approved with the shortfall arising from some prospective adopters withdrawing from the process, some taking a break and some delays being experienced in stage 1 of the process eg issues in securing references and medical information.
- Increase number of Early Permanence Placements available and the use of EPP to include consideration for older children.
- Deliver EPP training across the South Yorkshire region to ensure consistency of training and preparation for EPP carers.
- Refresh and redeliver the EPP training to social work teams and legal.
- Improve the timeliness of the adoption journey for both children and applicant adopters through robust tracking. Adoption Team Managers will check performance trackers on a fortnightly basis to identify any children or adopters who are experiencing delay and the reasons and address this with the social workers and team managers.
- Improve the quality of assessments through training and guidance for SW's.

- Improve the quality of post adoption support plans by clear analysis and identification of the child's individual needs and how these can be met by the adopters, including therapeutic support needs.
- 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.
- Continue to embed changes to Transition planning in line with research and practice.
- Track the provision of Life Story Work.
- Engage in the ongoing development of the South Yorkshire Regional Adoption Agency.
- Agree and deliver a training package for prospective adopters to be delivered across the region to provide consistent quality of training and availability.



Summary Sheet

Report Title

IFA Carers Transfer Protocol

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

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Jon Stonehouse

Report Author(s)

Cheryl Long, Fostering Recruitment Team Manager

Ward(s) Affected

All

Summary

Increasing the in-house foster care placement provision is central to the Sufficiency Strategy and is an important element of financial sustainability of the Directorate. In order to meet the Sufficiency Strategy there needs to be adequate local placement provision and an increase in the number of looked after children in family settings. Increasing in-house fostering placements can be achieved in 3 ways:

- Recruiting new foster carers into the service, whilst taking into account that an average 13% of foster carers will be lost per year due to resignation or deregistration.
- Increasing the capacity of existing in-house foster carers by consultation with them about what the service would need to offer to support and encourage them to care for additional children in their homes where practicable.
- Encouraging and supporting the transfer to the Local Authority of foster carers approved by Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA carers) who have Rotherham child(ren) placed with them and have expressed a wish to transfer.

This report will focus on the development of an IFA Carer Transfer Protocol and how this would benefit the Local Authority in respect of increased foster carers. This report will set out the rationale for adopting an IFA Foster Carer Transfer Protocol, including the potential benefits and challenges.

Recommendations

DLT is recommended to note the contents of this report and to endorse the proposal that an IFA Foster Carer Transfer Protocol is adopted by the Local Authority.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix A - Principles Governing the Transfer of Foster Carers - Fostering Network 2015

Appendix B - Transfer of Foster Carers Protocol England 2014 (reissued 2015)

Appendix C - Anonymised information on IFA carers who have expressed an interest in transferring over

Appendix D – Examples from IFA consultation NFA, Fostering People, TACT

Background Papers

None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

IFA Foster Carers Transfer Protocol**1. Recommendations**

- 1.1 DLT is recommended to note the contents of this report and to endorse the proposal that an IFA Foster Carer Transfer Protocol is adopted by the Local Authority.

2. Background

- 2.1 At the start of 2019 RMBC had a Looked After Children's population of 633 children (30/1/19). There were 166 in-house foster carer households including Regulation 24 placements and connected carers. This number of in-house fostering households equated to 175 in-house fostering placements. In addition to our in-house fostering households there were 275 children placed in 178 IFA placements.
- 2.2 This proposal will also support the Demand Management Strategy target of recruiting an additional 36 foster care placements (net) each year between 2019 and 2021.

3. Key Issues

- 3.1 Foster carers from the IFA's regularly approach Rotherham Fostering Service enquiring about transferring to the Local Authority. Between October 2017 and August 2019 the recruitment team received 19 enquires from IFA foster carers expressing an interest in transferring over to the Local Authority. Within these 19 enquiries 7 foster carers wanted to transfer, citing that they did not feel that they receive sufficient support, particularly in relation to respite and another 6 foster carers stated that they believed their current agency was not providing them with sufficient placements. 3 enquiries have requested increased allowances in excess of what they currently receive from their agency. A further 3 enquirers wanted information only and did not wish to progress at this stage.
- 3.2 Within the 19 initial enquiries received, one foster carer has successfully transferred to Rotherham Council with a Rotherham child already in placement and has since had another Rotherham child placed. Another was approved in March 2019 and has a Rotherham child matched long term. There is one IFA carer who started being assessed however this assessment has been placed on hold due to concerns regarding the carer and pending investigations. There are a further two IFA foster carers who have strongly expressed an interest in transferring over to the Local Authority.
- 3.3 Feedback from IFA carers indicates that some of the barriers that prevent them from transferring to the Local Authority are broadly:
 - Lack of parity in their allowances. IFA carers do not wish to experience a significant drop in their allowances and fees when they are transferring.
 - Lack of clear protocol about the transfer process. There needs to be a clear and transparent transfer procedure, including the reassessment process and timescales.
- 3.4 In order to successfully attract foster carers from IFAs who have Rotherham children in placement, we need to consider the merit in implementing an IFA Foster Carers Transfer Protocol which would include matching their current fostering allowance as per the Fostering Network Transfer Protocol; the underlying principles governing the transfer of foster carers. (Please see attached appendices.)

3.5 The transfer protocol recognises that:

“All foster carers have the right to freedom of movement between fostering services. However, fostering providers should not intentionally entice or persuade foster carers to transfer to a new service in an unethical manner or such that it impacts on placement stability for a child...”

(page 2 Principles governing the transfer of foster carers 2015 - Fostering Network)

3.6 This protocol clearly sets out that it is best practice to match the current allowances of a child in placement as stated below:

“Where it is agreed that a child in placement will continue with a foster carer, the recruiting service should, as a minimum, continue to pay the foster carer their current rates of allowances and fees in relation to that placement. These rates should continue to apply for the duration of the placement, subject to any annual agreed increases and movement through the age bands.”

(page 8 Transfer of Foster Carers Protocol England 2014 – Fostering Network)

3.7 Foster carers are paid allowances for their skills and allowances for the children in their care. There are 4 Skills levels starting at level 1 to level 4 (Foster Plus). There is a criteria for progression at each level with the expectation that the higher the level the more skilled the foster carer would be to manage more complex placements. Previously IFA carers have transferred as Foster Plus (level 4) carers and received allowances of £360 per week, skills payment plus allowances for the child, and one-off payments for birthdays, Christmas/Cultural celebrations and holidays. However, IFA carers do not necessarily fit the criteria of Foster Plus (see criteria below) and it is therefore proposed that all IFA carers transferring in will be subject to a skill level assessment based on their experience as a foster carer.

The foster carers will:

- Have no birth children residing in the home with them.
- Provide care on a full time basis, 24 hours a day, expecting one carer to always be available.
- Have previous experience of caring for, working with, or fostering young people.
- Have professional experience of working with children and young people and transferable skills.
- Have a spare room in their house.
- Enhanced therapeutic skills.
- Maintain records and provide reports as required.
- Provide support and supervision to the young person outside the foster home, e.g. within school, recreational settings as determined in the care plan. Placement will be offered (subject to availability) to young people aged 11-17 years.

3.8 This proposal is not to try and fit IFA foster carers into the existing Foster Plus scheme, as it was not designed with IFA foster carers in mind, but to consider the introduction of an IFA Foster Carers Transfer Protocol which recognises the following:

- IFA foster carers with Rotherham children in placement need to have their allowances matched as per the Fostering Network Transfer Protocol for the duration of the placement. This could be several years if the child(ren) in placement are long term matched.
- Should the child in placement move on then subsequent placements would not continue at the same rate. The IFA carer would then receive allowances for the subsequent children in placement at the rates below.

- Furthermore, the proposed Foster Carers Transfer Protocol recognises that they may have children placed under 11 years and have other children in the household including birth children.

3.9 Once an IFA carer transfers over, in the event of their existing child in placement moving on and a new child is placed with the carer, the IFA Foster Carer Transfer Protocol would allow up to a level 4 skills payment of £360 per week to be paid to the carer in addition to the age-related birthday, celebration and holiday allowances identified in the tables below. All allowances would be subject to a skills level assessment based on their experience as a foster carer. The foster carer could receive the same level 4 allowances as our in-house foster plus carers for subsequent placements; hence there would be some parity of allowances with other in-house carers. The skills level of an IFA foster carer would therefore be assessed prior to transfer and on an ongoing basis.

Revised Fees and Allowance 2019/2020

Skill Level	1st placement	2nd placement	Subsequent placements
1	£100.00	£100.00	£50.00
2	£125.00	£125.00	£62.50
3	£175.00	£175.00	£87.50
4 (Foster Plus)	£360.00	£360.00	£180.00

<Full payment for 1st placement and 2nd Placement, 3rd Placement 50%>

Child Age Amount

0-4	£133.54
5-10	£152.12
11-15	£189.37
16+	£230.30

<Allowances for child to remain the same>

Birthdays, Christmas and Holiday allowances to be paid in addition to the above allowances.

Age	Birthday	Christmas/Cultural celebrations	Holiday
0-4	£133.54	£133.54	£267.08
5-10	£152.12	£152.12	£304.24
11-15	£189.37	£189.37	£378.74
16 plus	£230.30	£230.30	£460.60

<Birthdays & Christmas/ Cultural celebrations= 1 weeks allowance>

<Holiday Pay= 2 weeks allowance>

3.10 The majority of the IFA foster carers that have approached Rotherham have Rotherham children in placement that are already long term matched and it is hoped that these foster carers feel better supported by transferring over to the Local Authority which will lead to better placement stability and better outcomes for the children. 3.11 If IFA foster carers express a wish to transfer over and they do not have any children in placement then they would be

subject to a skill level assessment based on their experience as a foster carer. The transfer of IFA foster carers with no children placed could be based on the following criteria:

- The IFA carer would normally be expected to have had a minimum of two years' experience of fostering children over 8 years old and will be subject to a skills level assessment undertaken during their fostering assessment.

3.12 If the proposed Transfer Protocol was adopted there would be significant cost reductions of each IFA foster carer transferring over to the Local Authority with Rotherham children in placement as the Local Authority would no longer have the ongoing costs of the Agency fees (Please see examples on the attached appendix C).

3.13 The proposed criteria for IFA Foster Carers Transfer Protocol is:

- IFA foster carer has a Rotherham child placed. Ideally the child/ren in placement are long term matched to the foster carer.
- IFA foster carers will be subject to a skills assessment and prepared to attend Skills to Foster training to familiarise themselves with what it will be like to foster for RMBC.
- IFA foster carers who do not have Rotherham child/ren in placement normally need to have fostered for a minimum of 2 years and be able to support children over 8 years old. They will also be subject to a skills assessment.
- Foster carers are willing to be reassessed as a foster carer in accordance with Fostering National Standards and also attend fostering panel and complete a skills assessment.
- Foster carer will complete their fostering Training and Development Standards (TDS). This will normally be completed within the first year of approval, although it is unlikely that the foster carer will be transferring over without having completed their TDS.
- Foster carer is willing to access training and development opportunities available to them as stipulated in their Personal Development Plan including Therapeutic Parenting Training.
- One of the carers will need to be available full time to support the needs of the child/ren in placement.
- Attend support groups and contribute towards the development of the service, eg foster carer forums and consultation events.
- Support foster carer recruitment events.
- Willingness to receive professional instruction and work in partnership with RMBC, the child's social worker and supervising social worker in the best interests of the child.
- Foster carers accept that where a matching allowance is initially agreed if the child/ren in placement move on then subsequent allowances will fall in line with the allowance schedule and skills levels.
- Transfer protocol meeting to be held with the foster carer, child's social worker and supervising social worker to ensure that IFA are fully aware of the transfer and there is due consideration given to the impact on the child in placement by them transferring to RMBC.

3.14 Implementation of the scheme will require new publicity materials to be developed to promote the IFA Foster Carer Transfer Protocol. A separate leaflet is to be sent out to all IFA carers who enquire or have previously enquired explaining the Transfer Protocol and procedure. A dedicated area of the website will be set up for IFA foster carers to advise on details about the transfer procedure. Promotion of the Transfer Protocol to child social workers will be undertaken at Whole Service Events and team meetings.

3.15 The benefits of the scheme will include:

- A transparent transfer process which will give guidance to IFA foster carers and children's social workers on transfers into the Local Authority with Rotherham children in placement.
- Improved communication and consultation between children's social worker and supervising social workers who will be co-located within Riverside House.
- Better oversight on the placements for the Local Authority, as the IFA foster carer once transferred over will be an in-house carer and supervised and supported by Rotherham's social workers.
- The IFA foster carer would benefit from feeling better supported, which would support placement stability. Joint visits could be more easily arranged particularly, if the placement is out of area.
- Children in placement should not experience any significant change by the transfer to the Local Authority. In some instances there may be increased benefits to children if their siblings are already placed with in-house foster carers.
- IFA foster carers should not feel that they will experience any significant reduction in their current fostering allowances when transferring over.
- The Local Authority will realise significant cost reductions on each IFA foster carer who has a child in placement due to no longer paying the Agency fees (see examples outlined in appendix C)

3.16 The potential issues arising from the proposals will include:

- Mainstream existing foster carers may not be happy that Rotherham Council are matching the allowances of IFA foster carers, as in most instances the allowances will exceed the allowances that in-house foster carers receive.
- There is a risk that existing foster carers become demotivated and do not feel that they are of equal value to IFA foster carers. Ultimately there is a risk that in-house foster carers could decide to exit the service, thus impacting on retention.
- In order to minimise this there would need to be further consultation with foster carers. Further work and consultation has already been undertaken by the fostering service with regard to the feasibility of offering an additional skills payment to mainstream foster carers who have more than one child in placement. The revised allowances have been agreed by Cabinet in June 2019 and therefore foster carers will now receive a Skills Payment for each child. This could result in in-house carers feeling more satisfied with the allowances available and increase the overall in-house fostering capacity. Informal consultation on this potential protocol was undertaken with Rotherham's foster carers at the Foster Carer Forum in March 2019, with the carers understanding that as an authority we need to readdress the balance by reducing the number of IFA placements. They acknowledged that it was fair that subsequent placements would be within our allowance structure.
- An analysis of foster carer's current capacity (e.g. age range and approval types) was undertaken to identify the needs of the service to increase in-house capacity for all age ranges and approval types. The data identified that there is an existing reduced in-house capacity for siblings and older teens. Transferring in IFA carers will assist with diversifying our current range, particularly any IFA carers who transfer over with no children in placement or older children.

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

DLT is recommended to note the contents of this report and to agree with the proposal to implement an IFA Foster Carers Transfer Protocol. Options that could be considered are:

- **Option 1-** To implement the policy for carers transferring from an IFA with RMBC children in placement e.g. honouring the payments they receive from the IFA for the duration of that placement. This to include IFA carers without children coming across to RMBC if they are able to evidence fostering for 2 years plus and for age 8 years upwards and subject to a skill level assessment. If they wish to transfer then there could be an agreement that we pay the current agency an amount to reimburse against the cost of an assessment being completed (Circa £2,000). This is consistent with the findings of the Narey Report¹ which notes at page 55-56 that *“sometimes, local authorities will be acting prudently in seeking to transfer IFA carers to them when a placement is considered to become long term (because the marginal costs of an additional in-house carer is much smaller than a fee paid to an IFA). When that happens, we believe local authorities should compensate the IFA for the recruitment costs of replacing that carer.”*
- **Option 2-** To implement the policy for carers transferring from an IFA with RMBC children in placement e.g. honouring the payments they receive from the IFA for the duration of that placement. This to include IFA carers without children coming across to RMBC if they are able to evidence fostering for 2 years plus and for age 8 years upwards and subject to a skill level assessment.
- **Option 3-** To implement the policy for carers transferring from an IFA with RMBC children in placement e.g. honouring the payments they receive from the IFA for the duration of that placement only.

- 4.1 DLT is recommended to note the contents of this report and to agree with the proposal to implement an IFA Foster Carer Transfer Protocol.

¹Foster Care in England: A Review for the Department for Education by Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers (February 2018)

5. Consultation

- 5.1 There was a brief Consultation with foster carers at the March Foster Carer Forum. RMBC carers seemed to overall be positive of the need to attract IFA carers and to grow our in-house foster carer base if it meant the benefit of reducing the significant spend on IFA placements and keeping Rotherham children in locality with the overarching support from RMBC. Our carers understood that carers transferring across and having their IFA payments honoured for the duration of that placement with an RMBC child was fair and in line with Fostering Networks recommended Transfer Protocol. They also appreciated that other IFA carers transferring without children in placement would be subject to a skills assessment based on experience before being eligible for Level 3 or 4 which felt fair.
- 5.2 There has also been consultation with the IFA providers that RMBC currently work with to gain their views in regard to this draft policy. The Commissioning Team's Head of Service spoke firstly with the IFA's at the May 2019 Provider Meeting. This was not received positively and there were some suggestions that if this was implemented that they would prioritise responding to other LA referrals before RMBC and potentially this would mean placing RMBC children at greater distance from Rotherham.

5.3 Following this meeting we then sent out a survey consultation to all of the IFAs on the RMBC Framework. The response, whilst varied in detail, was still overall quite negative to elements of the Transfer Protocol. Feedback forms from some of the main IFA Providers are attached to this report but in brief summary IFAs expressed concerns that related in main to the risk/ loss posed from significant investment in their carers. The IFAs also seemed to be under the misunderstanding that RMBC would be actively seeking to poach carers from them which was never the purpose or suggestion of implementing this Protocol.

5.4 Following the consultation with IFAs contact was made by Marie Tucker from the Nationwide Association of Fostering Providers (NAFP) wishing to know more about the response from providers from our consultation. They expressed that they were impressed with RMBC's openness and transparency in consulting with IFAs however they also wanted to give their input and views to see that this reflected correctly with the responses from the IFAs.

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

6.1 The IFA Foster Carer Transfer Protocol is ready to be implemented once approval is given and consultation with RMBC foster carers completed and the Local Authority should realise significant cost reductions from early in the next financial year 2019-20 once IFA foster carers begin to transfer over in accordance with the Protocol.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

7.1 As at 31st August 2019 there are currently 270 children residing in IFA placements. The estimated cost for these placements is circa £11.5m per annum. This is against 165 in-house placements costing £3.3m.

7.2 The average cost of current IFA placements is £846 per week (£44k per annum). For the most complex children the weekly cost rises to an average of £1,056 per week an annual cost of approximately £55K, whilst solo placements currently cost in the region of £1,262 per week (£66K annually).

7.3 Based on the last fostering tender exercise, the split in costs is on average 40% (carer) and 60% (agency). Assuming this split, we would estimate the carer receives on average £338 per week (£18K), £423 per week for a complex placement (£22K per annum) and £508 (£26K per annum) for a solo placement.

7.4 All three options support an IFA carer transferring with a child continuing to receive their current payment for the duration of that child's care. Based on saving the 60% IFA margin we would look to save £26K per annum per place on an average placement. Savings increase for the more complex placements at £33K per annum and £40K per annum for solo placements. The table below sets out the potential savings:

	Average Annual IFA cost	Carer - 40%	Potential IFA Saving - 60%	Weekly Carer Pymnt	Weekly IFA Saving
Carer Type	£	£	£	£	£
Average Cost	44,000	17,600	26,400	338	508
Complex Care	55,000	22,000	33,000	423	635
Solo Placement	66,000	26,400	39,600	508	762

Placement examples are based on 1 child, if more than 1 child transfers then subsequent placement savings would be made but this would be reduced by the IFA agencies sibling discount.

- 7.5 For IFA carers transferring without a child and IFA carers who transfer with a child but that placement ceases the carer would be subject to a skills level assessment based on Rotherham's current Foster Care rates.
- 7.6 In-house foster care averages £346 per week, £18K per annum. The payments range from a Level 1 foster carer (limited fostering experience and younger children) receiving approximately £15K per annum (£288 per week) to a Level 4 carer (through the protocol 2 years' experience and 8+) at £29k per annum (£558 per week).
- 7.7 Based on a 1 child placement, the potential savings of a Level 4 carer against an IFA placement would range between £15K per annum for an average IFA placement, £26K per annum for a complex IFA carer and £37K for a solo place.
- 7.8 If option 1, to actively seek to recruit IFA carers for matched Rotherham children, is agreed, a compensation fee of circa £2,000 per carer could be payable to the IFA to compensate for recruitment costs.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

9. Human Resources Implications

- 9.1 There are no human resources implications arising from the recommendations within this report

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 10.1 Within the protocol it is stipulated that a transfer protocol meeting is undertaken which ensures that the needs of the children in placement remain central to any proposed transfer from fostering agency to local authority.

11. Equalities and Human Rights Implications

- 11.1 There are no equalities and human rights implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

- 12.1 None noted.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 There is a risk that existing foster carers feel that they do not receive parity in their allowances with IFA carers transferring over. This may lead to foster carers feeling demotivated and they may decide to leave the service. Existing carers have been consulted about the proposed Protocol and the context around this, including that matching existing allowances of foster carers is considered best practice from Fostering Network, who are a National Charity who advocate for all foster carers. In addition the Local Authority have recently implemented a revised allowances schedule which includes additional skills payments to foster carers who are

able to increase their fostering capacity and offer more fostering placements. Also, this allowance schedule will be more attractive to prospective foster carers and IFA carers.

14. **Accountable Officer(s)**

Approvals Obtained from:-

	Named Officer	Date
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services	Neil Hardwick	
Assistant Director of Legal Services	Rebecca Pyle	
Head of Procurement (if appropriate)	Karen Middlebrook	
Head of Human Resources (if appropriate)	Amy Leech	

Report Author: Cheryl Long, Fostering Recruitment Team Manager

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

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

Council Report

Corporate Parenting Performance

Title

Corporate Parenting Performance Report – 15th October 2019

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 (LAC) 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 – Aug 2019

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 2019

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 2017/18 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 Looked After Children Profile

- 3.1.1 In August, we had 22 children admitted to care and 16 children ceased to be looked after. This gave us a total of 642 LAC at the end of the month.
- 3.1.2 The rate of LAC per 10k population remains high at 112.7%. This is exceptionally high in comparison to our statistical neighbours at 87.8%.
- 3.1.3 The percentage of children who have discharged from care this financial year due to permanence is 38.2%. For comparison, our previous 2 years were 31.7% for 2018-19 and 27.3% for 2017/18. Permanence includes SGO, Residence Order and Adoption.
- 3.1.4 Table 1 provides a breakdown of the LAC population 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.

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

Age Band	Number	% of total	Latest National comparative data (Mar-18)
Under 1	47	7%	6%
1 – 4	105	16%	13%
5 - 9	125	19%	19%
10 - 15	251	39%	39%
16+	114	18%	23%
Total	642		

3.1.5 The average age of children admitted to care in August was 5 years old. This bodes well for timely permanence plans being achieved in the foreseeable future. Performance data evidences that the younger a child comes into care the shorter the time they spend in care, the greater the chance of them moving to permanence and the less expensive their placement costs.

3.1.6 The percentage distribution by legal status remains a consistent picture with 55% of children subject to full care orders, 29% on an Interim Care Order, 10% are on Placement Orders and 5% under Section 20. We have 1% (4 children) who are Accommodated with breaks.

3.2 LAC Plans, Reviews and Visits

3.2.1 Over the summer months we have seen a decline in performance in Care Plans, LAC Reviews and Statutory Visits.

3.2.2 We had a low for the year of 82.7% of Care Plans up to date at the end of August and 88% of Statutory Reviews undertaken in time.

3.2.3 Statutory Visits also declined from 98.4% in July to 92.4% at the end of August.

3.2.4 The significant factor has been the summer holidays with social workers, foster carers and children being unavailable to undertake visits and reviews. We also had a long term absence of an IRO. It is anticipated the shortfall will be addressed over the course of September/October and a plan to address the backlog of reviews in the IRO service has been developed.

3.3 Placements

3.3.1 As is evidenced by research the best indicator of a positive outcome for looked after children is the extent to which they have been supported to remain living in the same placement or with as few placement disruptions as possible. Placement stability is most likely to be achieved by good matching processes; high levels of support provided to foster carers; and strong relationships being

developed by social workers with their young people to ensure they are best placed to address any issues as and when they arise.

- 3.3.2 Long-term placement stability has recently increased to 64.8% of children in long term placements for at least 2 years, closing the gap towards the statistical neighbour average of 67.6%.
- 3.3.3 Reassuringly, the number of children experiencing 3 or more placement moves has reduced over the year to 12.1% at the end of August, again closing the gap to the statistical neighbour average of 10.6%.
- 3.3.4 Children placed in family based settings remains stable at 79.3%, which includes internal fostering, independent fostering, pre-adoption placements and those placed with parent/family/friends.
- 3.3.5 The percentage of children placed in a commissioned placement has reduced to 52.3% at the end of August, the lowest this financial year. This is 16 fewer commissioned placements than at the end of July. This can be at least partially attributed to a focussed step-down project that has achieved some success in moving children from Out of Authority residential placements with 10 out of the 31 plans successfully implemented by the end of the month. The remaining 21 plans are on track and 4 more young people are due to move to their house project properties by the end of September.

3.4 Health and Dental

- 3.4.1 During August, 91.7% of initial health assessments were undertaken in time, this was 11 out of 12 children. This makes 84% for the year to date, which is significantly higher than the previous year end figures, the best year being 2017/18 with 55.7%.
- 3.4.2 Overall, 89.1% of all LAC had an up to date health assessment as at the end of August. This has remained consistent across the year to date.
- 3.4.3 Dental assessments are currently reporting at 63.6% up to date at the end of August. There will be a drive over the final two quarters of the year to address this data inputting issue.

3.5 LAC Education

- 3.5.1 Rotherham has a local standard to ensure that each Personal Education Plan (PEP) is of good quality and refreshed every term (rather than the annual minimum standard).
- 3.5.2 At the end of the Summer Term, 97.5% of eligible LAC population had a Personal Education Plan and 95% of LAC had a PEP meeting during the term 2018-19.

- 3.5.3 At the end of July, 14.8% of LAC were classed as persistent absentees (more than 10% of sessions missing). This is a reduction compared to the previous months but remains above the statistical neighbour figure of 10%.
- 3.5.4 Of the children who have been in care for 12 months or more, 9.8% had at least one fixed term exclusion as at the end of July. For this measure, we sit below the statistical neighbour average of 13.7%.
- 3.5.5 At the end of July, we had 10.7% of all LAC on reduced timetable arrangements.

3.6 Care Leavers

- 3.6.1 The numbers of Care Leavers eligible for a service stands at 321 at the end of August, which is an all year high. The rise in this number since the start of 2019 is more than that of a full case-load for a Personal Advisor (PA).
- 3.6.2 The percentage of Care Leavers with a Pathway Plan has seen a decline from 86.1% at the start of the year to 84.2% at the end of August. Likewise, as the year has progressed, the number with an up to date pathway plan has reduced to 80.8% from a high of 88.8% in May. This will be an area of focus for the Leaving Care teams in the coming months.
- 3.6.3 We continue to perform higher than the statistical neighbour average of 88.3% of care leavers in suitable accommodation with 95% of our care leavers living in suitable accommodation.
- 3.6.4 The number of care leavers who are in Education, Employment or training has remained fairly consistent at 62% at the end of August and remains above statistical neighbour averages of 56%.

3.7 Fostering

- 3.7.1 At the end of August we had 66.4% of our LAC in fostering placements (both in house and IFA households). This figure excludes relative and friend placements.
- 3.7.2 Since April, we have recruited 9 households and deregistered 7 from our in house fostering service. This is a net increase of 2 households for the year to date, giving us a total of 147 in house fostering households.
- 3.7.3 Recruitment looks increasingly positive with 16 assessments currently being undertaken, a further 9 prospective carers at stage 1

with the potential of progressing to a full assessment and 17 enquiries leading to 2 Initial Visits over the course of August.

- 3.7.4 There will be a further Foster Carer Diversity Community Event held in September to sustain the recent momentum that has built up in respect of this project.

3.8 Adoptions

- 3.8.1 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.
- 3.8.2 There were 3 adoptions finalised over the course of August bringing the yearly 2019/20 total to 16.
- 3.8.3 There are 31 children currently placed with their adoptive parents, 5 of whom have lodged their application and a further 23 whose placement is longer than the required 10 weeks but who are yet to lodge. This looks promising for the number of adoptions projected for this financial year.
- 3.8.4 There are a further 12 children with a matching family identified but not yet placed and a further 25 children for whom family finding is continuing.
- 3.8.5 The national target for the number of days between a child entering care and having an adoption placement is 426 days. The average for our 16 adoptions so far is slightly above target at 449 days. However, the latest published statistical neighbour average was 479 days. Performance here is aggravated by the standard 3 month delay between adopters lodging their application and a court date being set for the adoption hearing which continues to be addressed within the Family Court User forum.
- 3.8.6 The national target for the number of days between a child receiving a placement order and being matched to an adoptive family is 121 days. The average for the children adopted so far is above the target at 167 days. Again, the latest published statistical neighbour average was also higher than the target at 205 days.
- 3.8.7 In adopter recruitment 4 adopters have already been approved this financial year.
- 3.8.8 There are a further 15 adopters in the midst of their assessment; 7 at stage 1 and 8 at stage 2.

3.9 Caseloads

- 3.9.1 LAC average caseloads have remained relatively stable over the last 3 months with a slight increase in teams 1-3, and a decrease in teams 4-5 during August. In terms of regular time commitments there is a further average equivalent of 3 cases for every social worker arising from contact supervision requirements.

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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Corporate Parenting Monthly Performance Report

As at Month End: August 2019

Please note: Data reports are not dynamic. Although care is taken to ensure data is as accurate as possible every month, delays in data input can result in changes in figures when reports are re-run retrospectively. To combat this at least two individual months data is rerun for each indicator.

Document Details

Status: Issue 1

Date Created: 19/09/19

Created by: Performance & Quality Team

Performance Summary

As at Month End: August 2019

*'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)	2019 / 20					DOT (Month on Month)	RAG (in month)	Target and Tolerances			YR ON YR TREND					LATEST BENCHMARKING			
					Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	YTD 2018/19	DATA NOTE			Red	Amber	Target Green	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	STAT NEIGH AVE	BEST STAT NEIGH	NAT AVE	NAT TOP Q TILE THRESHOL
LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN	6.1	Number of Looked After Children	Info	Count	635	636	642	-	As at mth end	↑				n/a	407	432	488	627	642				
	6.2	Rate of Looked After Children per 10,000 population aged under 18 (Council Plan Indicator)	Low	Rate per 10,000	111.5	111.7	112.7	-	As at mth end	↓				99.1	70	76.6	86.6	110.8	112.7	87.8	62.0	64.0	-
	6.3	Admissions of Looked After Children	Info	Count	15	19	22	109	Financial Year	↑				n/a	175	208	262	330	271				
	6.4	Number of children who have ceased to be Looked After Children	High	Count	28	18	16	109	Financial Year	↓				n/a	160	192	215	194	254				
	6.5	Percentage of LAC who have ceased to be looked after due to permanence (Special Guardianship Order, Residence Order, Adoption)	High	Percentage	55.6%	22.2%	36.4%	38.2%	Financial Year	↑		<33%	33%>	35%+	37.5%	40.1%	27.9%	27.3%	31.5%				
	6.6	Number of SGOs started (Legal Status)	High	Count	5	7	4	25	Financial Year	↓					-	-	-	67	62				
	6.7	Percentage of LAC who have ceased to be looked after due to a Special Guardianship Order	High	Percentage	29.6%	11.1%	18.2%	18.6%	Financial Year	↑					-	-	9.8%	8.2%	13.1%	12.3% (2017)	22.0% (2017)	12.0% (2017)	17.0% (2017)
	6.8	LAC cases reviewed within timescales	High	Percentage	87.3%	96.5%	88.0%	91.5%	Financial Year	↓		<90%	90%>	95%+	94.9%	83.3%	91.3%	90.6%	88.6%				
	6.9	% of children adopted	High	Percentage	25.0%	11.1%	18.8%	14.7%	Financial Year	↑	YTD	<20%	20%>	22.7%+	26.3%	22.4%	14.4%	13.9%	12.6%	19.2%	32.0%	13.0%	19.0%
	6.10	Health of Looked After Children - up to date Health Assessments	High	Percentage	88.1%	90.5%	89.1%	-	As at mth end	↓		<90%	90%>	95%+	81.4%	92.8%	89.5%	83.7%	91.8%				
	6.11	Health of Looked After Children - up to date Dental Assessments	High	Percentage	76.0%	68.8%	63.6%	-	As at mth end	↓		<90%	90%>	95%+	58.8%	95.0%	57.3%	72.5%	88.4%				
	6.12	Health of Looked After Children - Initial Health Assessments carried out within 20 working days	High	Percentage	100.0%	64.7%	91.7%	84.0%	Financial Year	↑					20.0%	8.4%	18.2%	55.7%	51.1%				
	6.13	% of LAC with a PEP	High	Percentage	-	97.5%	-	-	As at mth end	n/a		<90%	90%>	95%+	#REF!	#REF!	#REF!	#REF!	#REF!				
	6.14	% of LAC with up to date PEPs (Report Termly - End Dec, Mar, Jul)	High	Percentage	-	95.0%	-	-	As at term end	n/a		<90%	90%>	95%+	-	-	98.9%	97.4%	95.0%				
	6.15	LAC Overall absence - % of sessions lost due to absence	Low	Percentage	6.5%	9.0%	n/a	-	As at mth end	n/a					5.0%	4.1%	5.7%	4.7%	9.0%	4.7%	3.5%	4.5%	3.8%
	6.16	% of LAC who are classed as persistent absentees	Low	Percentage	15.7%	14.8%	n/a	-	As at mth end	n/a					11.7%	12.2%	13.3%	11.7%	14.8%	10.0%	7.1%	10.6%	8.8%
	6.17	% of LAC with at least one fixed term exclusion	Low	Percentage	9.4%	9.8%	n/a	-	As at mth end	n/a					11.8%	13.1%	15.5%	TBC	12.0%	13.7%	9.0%	11.8%	9.6%
	6.18	% of LAC on reduced timetable arrangements	Low	Percentage	10.7%	10.7%	n/a	-	As at mth end	n/a					-	-	-	-	-				
	6.19	% of eligible LAC with an up to date plan	High	Percentage	88.2%	87.9%	82.7%	-	As at mth end	↓		<93%	93%>	95%+	98.8%	98.4%	79.1%	89.5%	98.0%				
	6.20	% LAC visits up to date & completed within timescale of National Minimum standard	High	Percentage	94.6%	98.4%	92.4%	-	As at mth end	↓		<95%	95%>	98%+	95.2%	98.1%	74.0%	97.5%	96.9%				
CARE LEAVERS	7.1	Number of care leavers	Info	Count	314	316	321	-	As at mth end	↑				n/a	183	197	223	256	299				
	7.2	% of eligible LAC & Care Leavers with a pathway plan	High	Percentage	85.9%	85.3%	84.2%	-	As at mth end	↓		<93%	93%>	95%+	-	69.8%	99.3%	93.9%	88.1%				
	7.3	% of eligible LAC & Care Leavers with an up to date pathway plan	High	Percentage	85.5%	84.3%	80.8%	-	As at mth end	↓					-	-	-	70.3%	81.4%				
	7.4	% of care leavers in suitable accommodation	High	Percentage	95.9%	95.6%	95.0%	-	As at mth end	↓		<95%	95%>	98%+	97.8%	96.5%	97.8%	96.1%	96.3%	88.3%	94.0%	84.0%	91.0%
	7.5	% of care leavers in employment, education or training	High	Percentage	60.5%	62.0%	62.0%	-	As at mth end	→		<70%	70%>	72%+	71.0%	68.0%	62.9%	64.1%	64.9%	56.0%	73.0%	51.0%	59.0%
PLACEMENTS	8.1	% of long term LAC in placements which have been stable for at least 2 years	High	Percentage	60.5%	64.6%	64.8%	-	As at mth end	↑		<68%	68%>	70%+	71.9%	72.7%	66.2%	61.2%	61.2%	67.6%	78.0%	70.0%	74.0%
	8.2	% of LAC who have had 3 or more placements - rolling 12 months (Council Plan Indicator)	Low	Percentage	12.5%	12.0%	12.1%	-	Rolling Year	↓		13%+	13%<	10.8%<	12.0%	13.0%	11.9%	13.4%	13.3%	10.6%	8.0%	10.0%	8.9%
	8.3	% of LAC in a family based setting (Council Plan Indicator)	High	Percentage	79.5%	79.1%	79.3%	-	As at mth end	↑				85%>	-	-	81.1%	81.0%	81.9%				
	8.4	% of LAC placed with parents or other with parental responsibility (P1)	Low	Percentage	4.3%	4.4%	4.7%	-	As at mth end	↓					-	-	5.3%	4.3%	7.2%				
	8.5	% of LAC in a Commissioned Placement	Low	Percentage	55.6%	55.3%	52.3%	-	As at mth end	↑					-	43.6%	43.2%	50.5%	52.3%				
FOSTERING	9.1	Number of LAC in a Fostering Placement (excludes family/friend carers)	High	Count	426	419	426	-	As at mth end	↑					-	-	353	414	427				
	9.2	% of LAC in a Fostering Placement (excludes family/friend carers)	High	Percentage	67.1%	65.9%	66.4%	-	As at mth end	↑					-	-	72.3%	66.0%	66.5%				
	9.3	Number of Foster Carers (Households)	High	Count	149	147	147	-	As at mth end	→					-	156	161	154	149				
	9.4	Number of Foster Carers Recruited	High	Count	0	3	0	9	Financial Year	↓					-	13	32	16	11				

*'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 <i>(Monthly)</i>	2019 / 20					DOT (Month on Month)	RAG (in month)	Target and Tolerances			YR ON YR TREND					LATEST BENCHMARKING			
					Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	YTD 2018/19	DATA NOTE			Red	Amber	Target Green	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	STAT NEIGH AVE	BEST STAT NEIGH	NAT AVE	NAT TOP QTILE THRESHOL
ADOPTIONS	9.5	Number of Foster Carers Deregistered	Info	Count	1	3	0	7	Financial Year	↓					-	16	22	25	21				
	10.1	Number of adoptions	High	Count	7	2	3	16	Financial Year	↑					-	43	31	27	32				
	10.2	Number of adoptions completed within 12 months of SHOBPA	High	Count	1	1	0	4	Financial Year	↓					-	23	12	16	11				
	10.3	% of adoptions completed within 12 months of SHOBPA	High	Percentage	14.3%	50.0%	0.0%	25.0%	Financial Year	↓		<83%	83%>	85%+	37.0%	53.5%	38.7%	59.3%	34.4%				
	10.4	Average number of days between a child becoming Looked After and having a adoption placement (A1)	Low	YTD Average	407.9	420.4	449.6	-	Financial Year	↓		511+	511<	487<	393.0	296.0	404.0	325.3	386.9	479.7	362.0	520.0	455.0
	10.5	Average number of days between a placement order and being matched with an adoptive family (A2)	Low	YTD Average	167.1	172.7	167.4	-	Financial Year	↑		127+	127<	121<	169	136	232.9	124.8	212.4	205.6	89.0	220.0	171.8
	11.4	Maximum caseload of social workers in LAC	Low	Average count	25	25	25	-	As at mth end	→		21+	20<	18<	-	19.2	17.0	18.0	23.0				
	11.5	Average number of cases per qualified social worker in LAC Teams 1-3	Within Limits	Average count	18.4	19.2	19.7	-	As at mth end	↑		1+ above range	1 above range	14-20	-	-	-	12.6	19.4				
		Average number of cases per qualified social worker in LAC Teams 4 - 5	Within Limits	Average count	16.2	17.6	16.7	-	As at mth end	↓		1+ above range	1 above range	14-20	0	-	-	11.8	15.3				

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

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

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

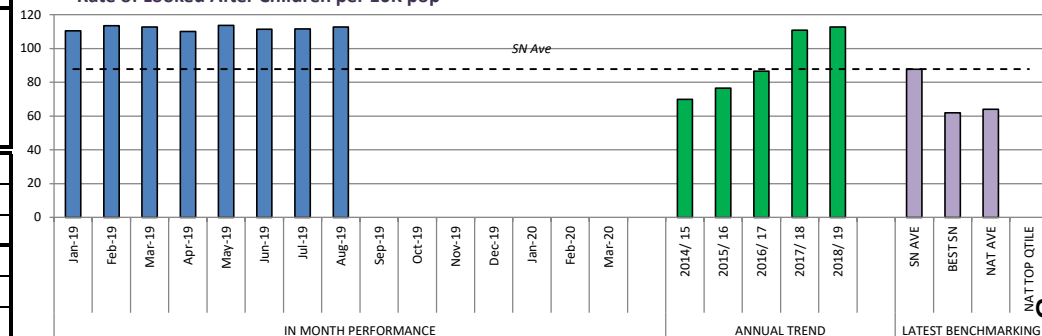
There was another small increase in the numbers of LAC in August to 642. This is now 8 children above the predicted number of 634 as set down in the Big Hearts Big Changes Demand Management Strategy. There are a significant number of discharges planned for September which it is anticipated will bring the Strategy back on target. However, final plans can only be made following court applications & judgement. It is difficult to precisely predict timescales for legal proceedings and this can sometimes lead to unexpected delays.

The average age of admissions to care in August was 5.0yrs which is lower than the average of 5.7yrs in July. This augers well for timely permanence plans being achieved in the foreseeable future.

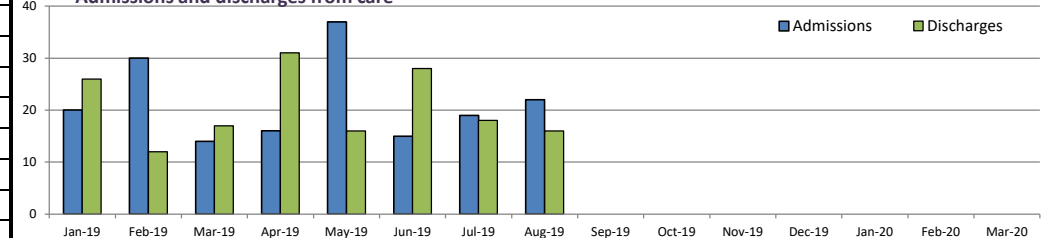
Data Note: An issue has arisen within the Liquid Logic system which is impacting on the reporting LAC children. For some children who have left care and have had previous care episodes, the same 'end date' is copying into the previous episodes within the system. This has been reported, however, until 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 (Episodes)	No. of children who have ceased to be LAC (Episodes)	% of children ceased to be LAC due to permanence (Episodes)	Number of SGO's started (Legal Status)	% of children ceased to be LAC due to an SGO
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Jan-19	110.5	629	20	26	51.9%	5	18.5%
	Feb-19	113.4	646	30	12	50.0%	7	16.7%
	Mar-19	112.7	642	14	17	29.4%	6	23.5%
	Apr-19	110.1	627	16	31	27.6%	2	6.9%
	May-19	113.8	648	37	16	47.1%	7	29.4%
	Jun-19	111.5	635	15	28	55.6%	5	29.6%
	Jul-19	111.7	636	19	18	22.2%	7	11.1%
	Aug-19	112.7	642	22	16	36.4%	4	18.2%
	Sep-19							
	Oct-19							
	Nov-19							
	Dec-19							
	Jan-20							
	Feb-20							
	Mar-20							
YTD	2019/20	-	-	109	109	38.2%	25	18.6%
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%
	2018/ 19	112.7	642	271	254	31.5%	62	13.1%
LATEST BENCHMARKING	SN AVE	87.8						12.3% (2017)
	BEST SN	62.0						22.0% (2017)
	NAT AVE	64.0						12.0% (2017)
	NAT TOP QTILE	-						17.0% (2017)

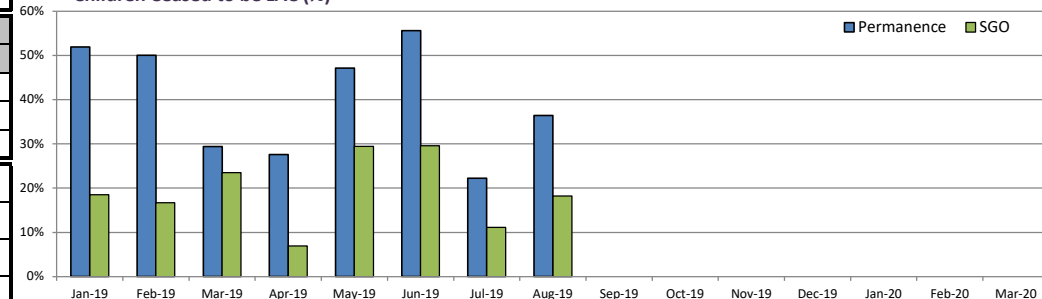
Rate of Looked After Children per 10K pop



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)

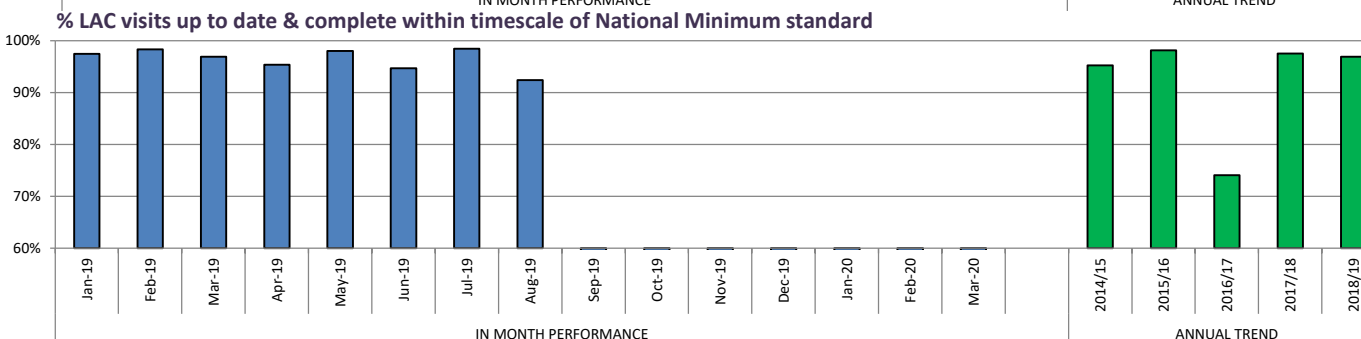
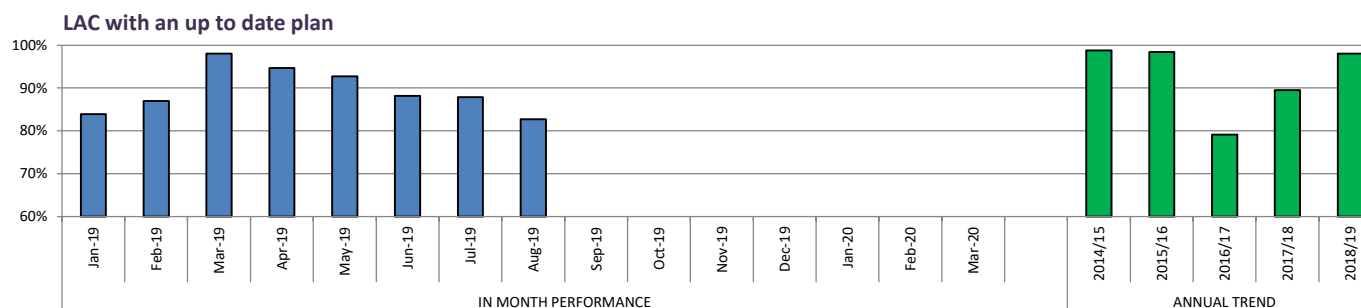
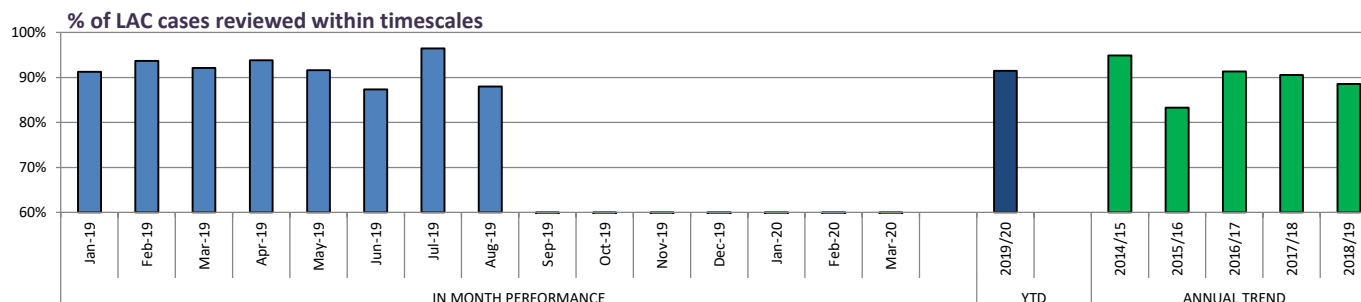
The LA is also responsible for appointing a representative to visit the child wherever he or she is living to ensure that his/her welfare continues to be safeguarded and promoted. The minimum national timescales for visits is within one week of placement, then six weekly until the child has been in placement 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

Performance in respect of all 3 measures dipped over the course of August after reaching a high for the year in July for both LAC Reviews and LAC Visits. Part of the underlying reason for the declining performance in respect of Statutory Reviews is the fact that one IRO has been on long-term sick leave creating a back log in both Statutory Reviewing and Care planning processes. However, they have recently returned to work and a plan to address this back-log has been developed.

The other significant factor has been the summer holidays with both social workers and foster carers/children being unavailable to undertake visits and reviews. It is anticipated the shortfall will be addressed over the course of September/October.

		6.8		6.20		6.21	
		% 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	
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Jan-19	125	of 137	91.2%	83.9%	614	of 630 97.5%
	Feb-19	148	of 158	93.7%	87.0%	636	of 647 98.3%
	Mar-19	164	of 178	92.1%	98.0%	622	of 642 96.9%
	Apr-19	122	of 130	93.8%	94.7%	598	of 627 95.4%
	May-19	142	of 155	91.6%	92.7%	638	of 651 98.0%
	Jun-19	138	of 158	87.3%	88.2%	601	of 635 94.6%
	Jul-19	110	of 114	96.5%	87.9%	626	of 636 98.4%
	Aug-19	66	of 75	88.0%	82.7%	594	of 643 92.4%
	Sep-19						
	Oct-19						
	Nov-19						
	Dec-19						
	Jan-20						
	Feb-20						
	Mar-20						
YTD	2019/20	578	of 632	91.5%	-	-	-
ANNUAL TREND	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%
	2018/19	1668	of 1883	88.6%	98.0%		96.9%



LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN - HEALTH

DEFINITION

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

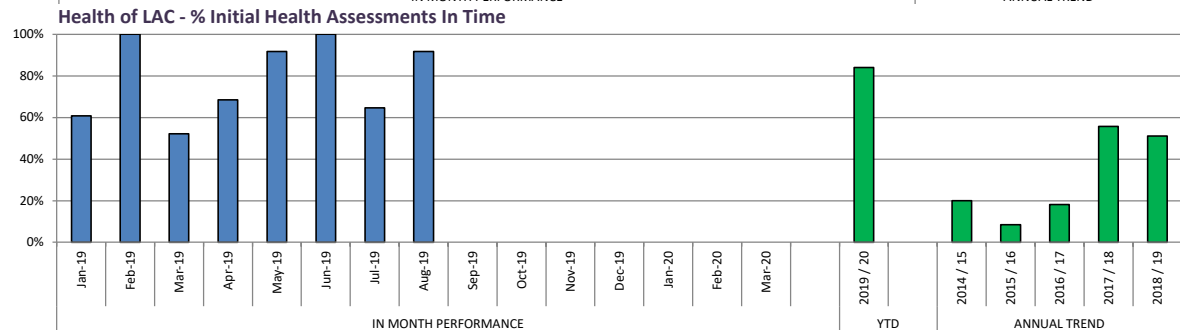
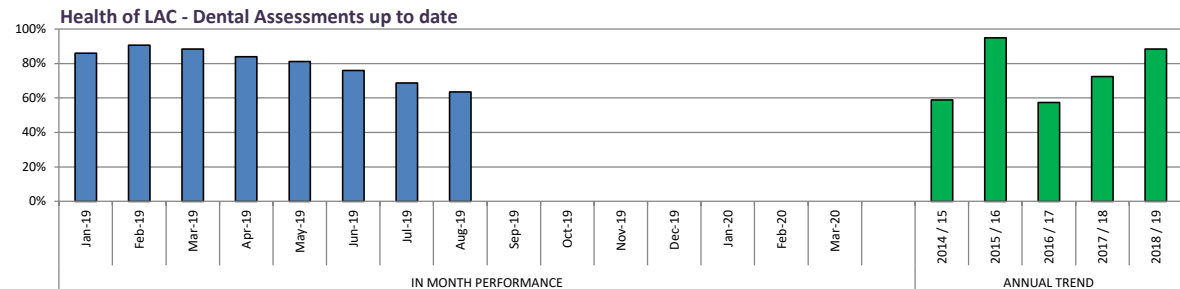
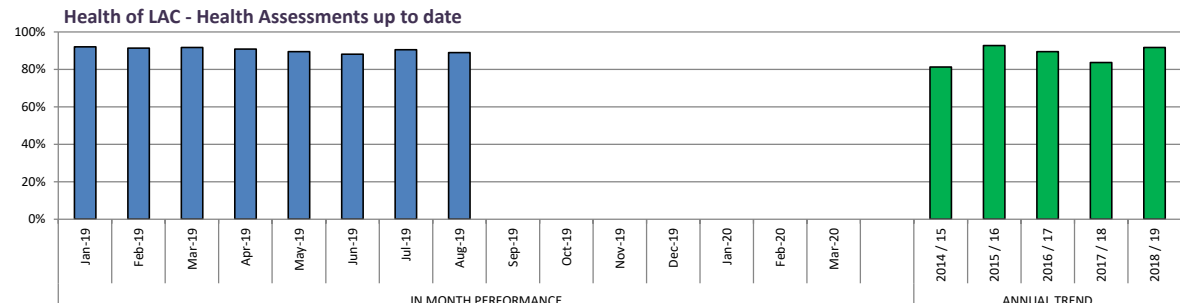
PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

Performance regarding Initial Health Assessments (IHA) was positive in August at 91.7%; a shortfall of only 1 IHA out of timescale and this brings the YTD performance up to 84%.

Performance in respect of Review Health Need Assessments (HNA's) has ostensibly dipped by just over 1%; however data reported by the LAC Health Team indicates that the overall figure is likely to be several % higher once all records have been brought up to date and performance is re-run for the September report.

Dental assessments have continued to decline and now stand at 63.6% and there will be a drive over the final two quarters of the year to address this data inputting issue.

		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-19	92.1%	86.0%	14 of 23	60.9%
	Feb-19	91.4%	90.7%	14 of 14	100.0%
	Mar-19	91.8%	88.4%	12 of 23	52.2%
	Apr-19	90.9%	84.0%	13 of 19	68.4%
	May-19	89.5%	81.1%	22 of 24	91.7%
	Jun-19	88.1%	76.0%	22 of 22	100.0%
	Jul-19	90.5%	68.8%	11 of 17	64.7%
	Aug-19	89.1%	63.6%	11 of 12	91.7%
	Sep-19				
	Oct-19				
	Nov-19				
	Dec-19				
	Jan-20				
	Feb-20				
	Mar-20				
YTD	2019 / 20	-	-	79 of 94	84.0%
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%
	2018 / 19	91.8%	88.4%	136 of 266	51.1%
LATEST BENCHMARKING	SN AVE				
	BEST SN				
	NAT AVE				
	NAT TOP QTILE				



LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN - EDUCATION

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. *(PEPs are now in place for LAC aged two to their 18th birthday.)*

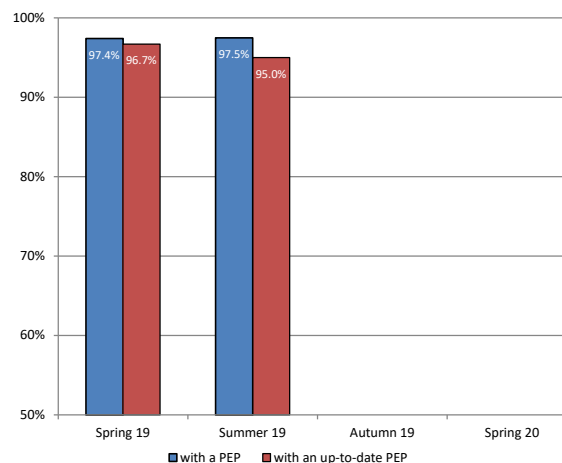
PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

There are no updates to provide for August given the school summer holidays.

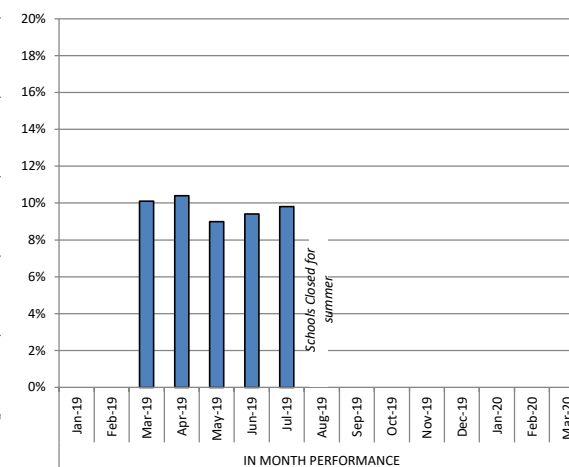
Data Note: System produced reports have now been introduced for the below measures which has caused some changes in performance. (PEP data from April 19 onwards is now produced direct from the ePEP system. From June 19 onwards all attendance data is now extracted direct from attendance systems.)

		6.13	6.14	6.15	6.16	6.17	6.18
		% LAC with a Personal Education Plan (Termly)	% LAC with up to date Personal Education Plan (Termly)	LAC Overall absence - % of sessions lost due to absence (LAC continuous for at least 12 months)	% of LAC who are classed as persistent absentees (LAC continuous for at least 12 months - missing 10%+ sessions)	% of LAC with at least one fixed term exclusion (LAC continuous for at least 12 months)	% of LAC on reduced timetable arrangements (All LAC)
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Jan-19	97.4%	96.7%	-	-	-	-
	Feb-19	Spring Term 2019	Spring Term 2019	-	-	-	-
	Mar-19			6.5%	14.2%	10.1%	-
	Apr-19	97.5%	95.0%	6.2%	16.6%	10.4%	4.3%
	May-19			6.6%	16.1%	9.0%	4.8%
	Jun-19			6.5%	15.7%	9.4%	10.7%
	Jul-19			9.0%	14.8%	9.8%	10.7%
	Aug-19	Autumn Term 2019	Autumn Term 2019	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Sep-19						
	Oct-19						
	Nov-19						
	Dec-19						
	Jan-20	Spring Term 2020	Spring Term 2020				
	Feb-20						
	Mar-20						
YTD	2019/20		-	-	-	-	-
ANNUAL TREND	2014/15	76.0%	-	5.0%	11.7%	11.8%	-
	2015/16	97.8%	-	4.1%	12.2%	13.1%	-
	2016/17	97.0%	98.9%	5.7%	13.3%	15.5%	-
	2017/18	93.6%	97.4%	4.7%	11.7%	TBC	-
	2018/19	97.5%	95.0%	9.0%	14.8%	12.0%	-
LATEST BENCHMARKING	SN AVE		-	4.7%	10.0%	13.7%	-
	BEST SN		-	3.5%	7.1%	9.0%	-
	NAT AVE		-	4.5%	10.6%	11.8%	-
	NAT TOP Q TILE		-	3.8%	8.8%	9.6%	-

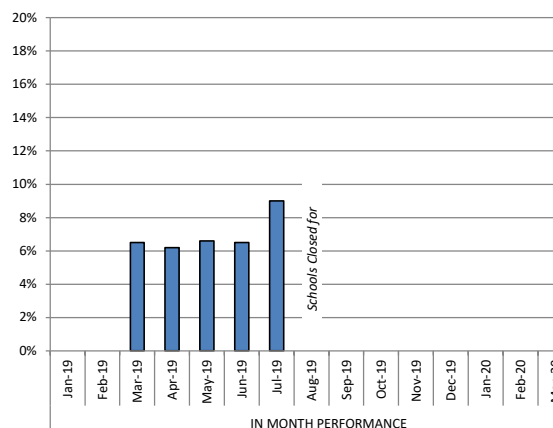
% of LAC with a PEP & % with an up-to-date PEP



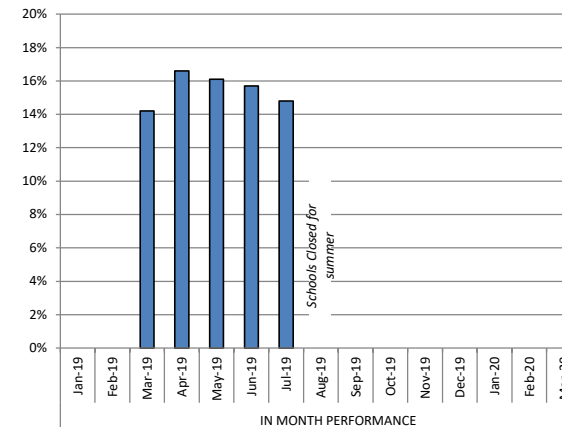
% of LAC with at least one fixed term exclusion



% of sessions lost due to absence



% of LAC who are classed as persistent absentees



CARE LEAVERS

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

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

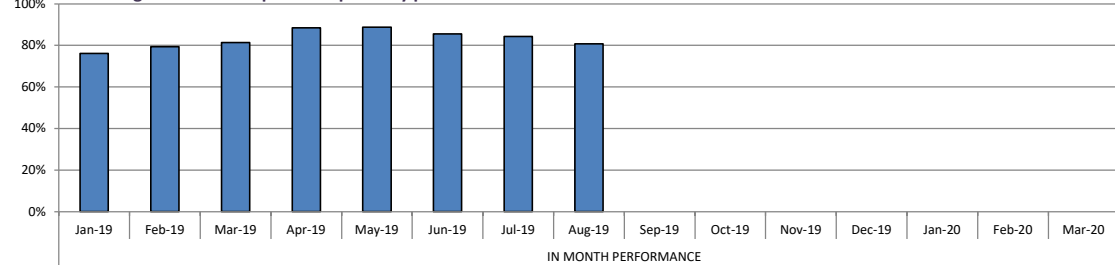
The numbers of Care Leavers eligible for a service currently stands at 321 which is once again a year high, and the rise since the start of 2019 is more than that of a full case-load for a Personal Advisor (PA). In addition to this there has been a high level of staff turnover within the team with 4 new PA's commencing work and they have taken some time to be appropriately inducted into the LAC Service and its performance expectations.

Despite this, performance in respect of care leavers who are in employment, education or training (EET) and who are in suitable accommodation has remained consistent at circa 62% and 95% respectively, both of which are well-above the national average and place RMBC in the top quartile.

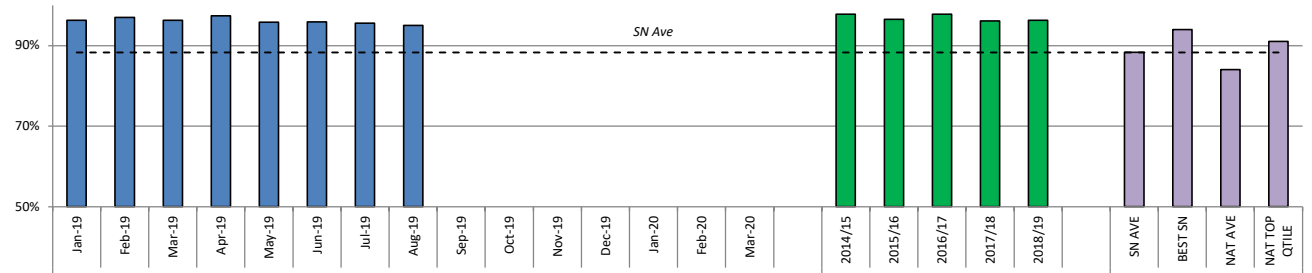
However, with an up to date Care Plan, performance in respect of Pathway Plans has declined once again to 80.8% and this will be an area of focus in the coming months. Although in all previous months when the report is re-run this figure usually increases by circa 4-6% and so this may not be as significant an issue as may first appear.

		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-19	298	86.1%	76.2%	96.3%	64.4%
	Feb-19	297	87.4%	79.3%	97.0%	66.3%
	Mar-19	299	88.1%	81.4%	96.3%	64.9%
	Apr-19	303	88.5%	88.5%	97.4%	61.4%
	May-19	307	88.8%	88.8%	95.8%	58.3%
	Jun-19	314	85.9%	85.5%	95.9%	60.5%
	Jul-19	316	85.3%	84.3%	95.6%	62.0%
	Aug-19	321	84.2%	80.8%	95.0%	62.0%
	Sep-19					
	Oct-19					
	Nov-19					
	Dec-19					
	Jan-20					
	Feb-20					
	Mar-20					
YTD	2019/20	-	-	-	-	-
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%
	2018/19	299	88.1%	81.4%	96.3%	64.9%
LATEST BENCHMARKING	SN AVE				88.3%	56.0%
	BEST SN				94.0%	73.0%
	NAT AVE				84.0%	51.0%
	NAT TOP QTILE				91.0%	59.0%

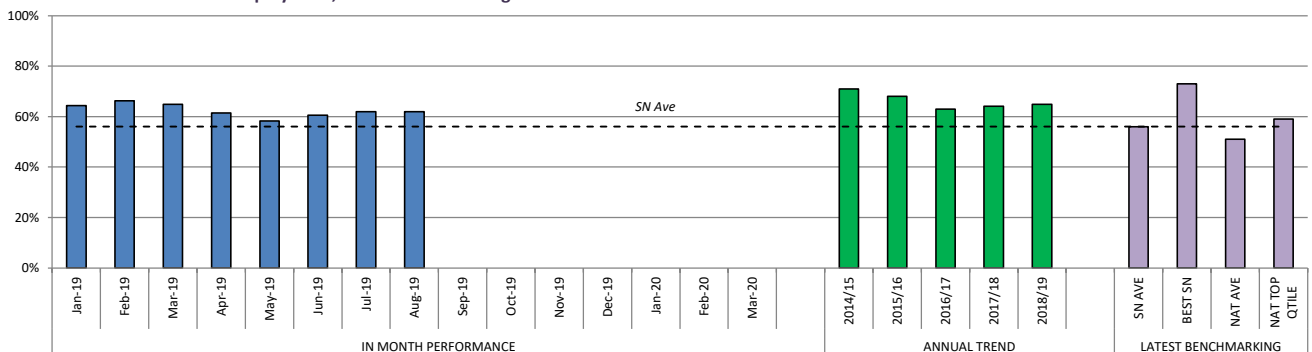
% of eligible LAC with up to date pathway plan



% 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.

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

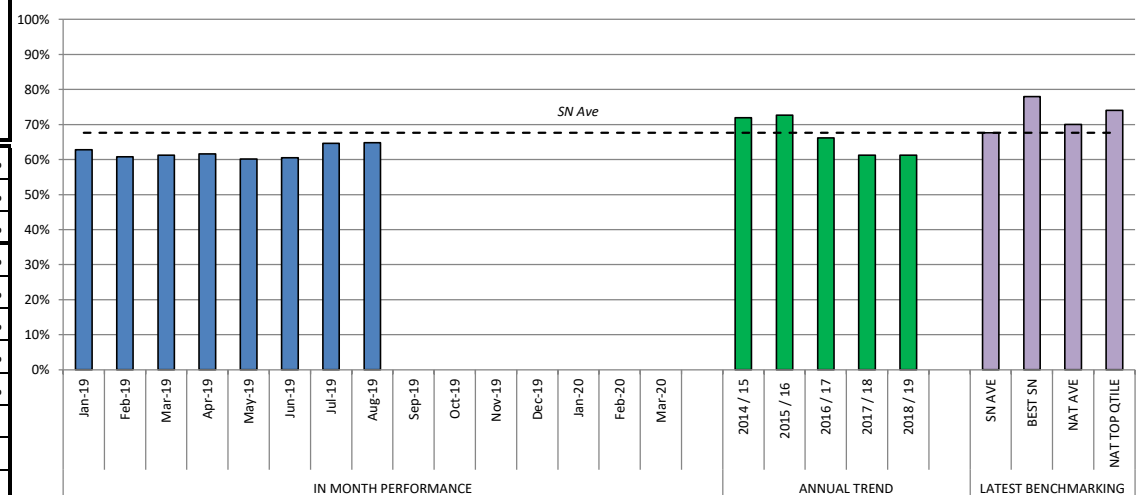
Both measures of placement stability have remained fairly consistent with the long-term measure increasing to 64.8% (3 children in real terms) and the 3 placement moves in 12 months worsening slightly to 12.1% (1 child in real terms) and this latter measure is part of a positive trend given that at the start of the year performance was at 14.7%

The number of children in family based settings has remained fairly consistent over the past 5 months when it has varied by less than 1%.

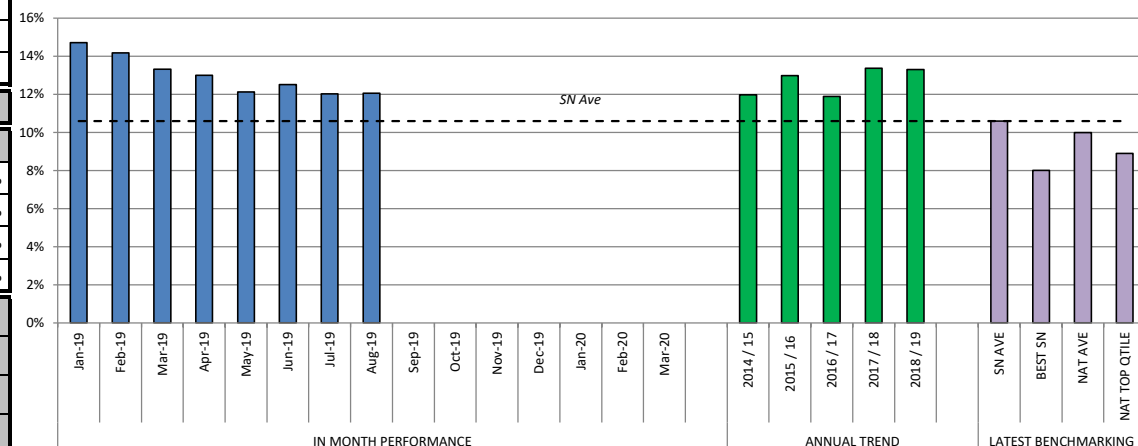
Most positively however, the number of children placed in a commissioned placement has reduced to 52.3% which is the equal second best performance of the year thus far and an overall reduction of 16 fewer commissioned placements from July. This can be at least partially attributed to a focussed step-down project that has achieved some success in moving children from Out of Authority (OoA) residential placements with 10 out of the 31 plans successfully implemented by the end of the month and the other 21 plans remaining on track and 4 more young people due to move to their house project properties by the end of September.

		8.1		8.2		8.3		8.4		8.5	
		Long term LAC placements stable for at least 2 years		LAC who have had 3 or more placements - rolling 12 mth		% of LAC in a family Based setting (includes living with parents)		% of LAC placed with parents or other with parental responsibility (P1)		LAC in a Commissioned Placement (Fostering & Residential)	
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Jan-19	91 of 145	62.8%	92 of 625	14.7%	82.4%		7.8%		339 of 629	53.9%
	Feb-19	90 of 148	60.8%	91 of 642	14.2%	82.5%		8.2%		331 of 646	51.2%
	Mar-19	90 of 147	61.2%	85 of 638	13.3%	81.9%		7.2%		336 of 642	52.3%
	Apr-19	98 of 159	61.6%	81 of 623	13.0%	80.2%		6.2%		336 of 627	53.6%
	May-19	98 of 163	60.1%	78 of 643	12.1%	79.8%		5.1%		342 of 648	52.8%
	Jun-19	98 of 162	60.5%	79 of 631	12.5%	79.5%		4.3%		353 of 635	55.6%
	Jul-19	104 of 161	64.6%	76 of 632	12.0%	79.1%		4.4%		352 of 636	55.3%
	Aug-19	107 of 165	64.8%	77 of 638	12.1%	79.3%		4.7%		336 of 642	52.3%
	Sep-19										
	Oct-19										
	Nov-19										
	Dec-19										
	Jan-20										
	Feb-20										
	Mar-20										
YTD	2019 / 20		-		-	-		-		-	
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%
	2018 / 19	90 of 147	61.2%	85 of 638	13.3%	81.9%		7.2%		336 of 642	52.3%
LATEST BENCHMARKING	SN AVE		67.6%		10.6%						
	BEST SN		78.0%		8.0%						
	NAT AVE		70.0%		10.0%						
	NAT TOP QTILE		74.0%		8.9%						

% long term LAC placements stable for at least 2 years



% LAC who have had 3 or more placements - rolling 12 months



FOSTERING

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

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

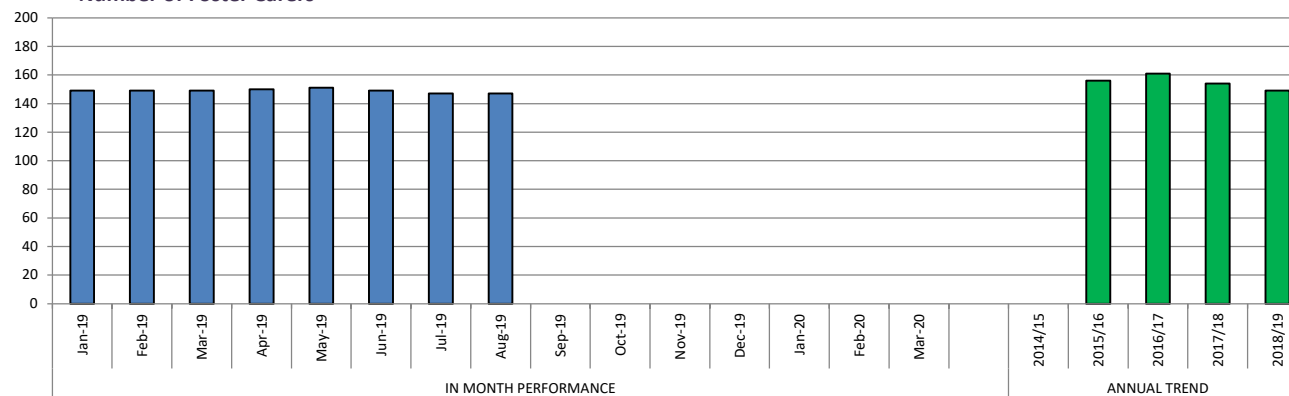
There has thus far been very little net gain of foster families over the course of 2019/20 since April with 9 recruited and 7 de-registered (all of varying reasons). In addition, one third of foster carers leaving RMBC are for positive reasons (SGO's or Adoptions).

Recruitment looks increasingly positive with 16 assessments currently being undertaken, a further 9 prospective carers at stage 1 with the potential of progressing to a full assessment and 17 enquiries leading to 2 Initial Visits over the course of August. As a result there is a chance that there will be up to 34 new foster families recruited within the financial year. There will be a further Foster Carer Diversity Community Event held in September to sustain the recent momentum that has built up in respect of this project.

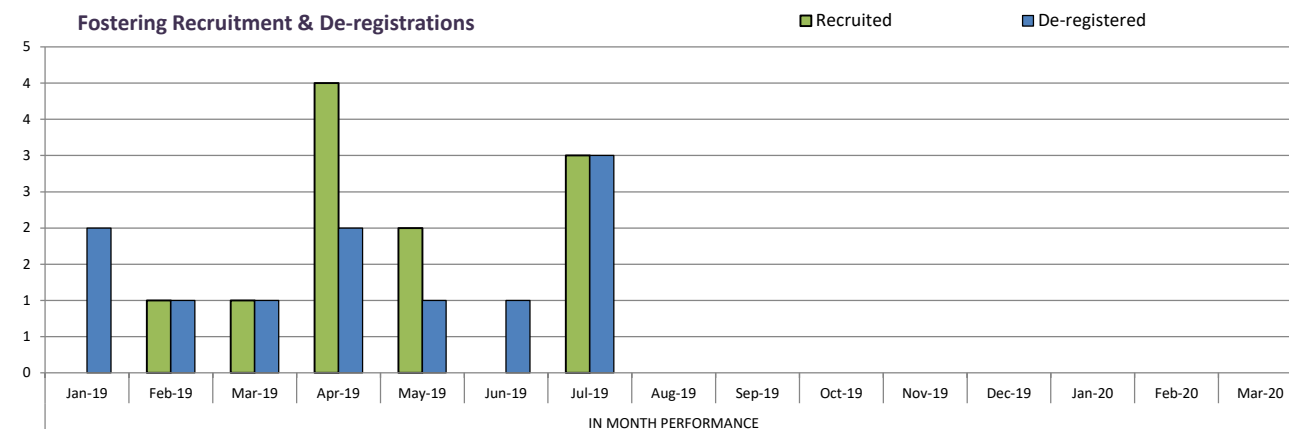
A more refined performance management process is in the midst of being developed in order to support the team to minimise any delays in the assessment and approval process with the aim of reducing the overall timescale from Initial Visit to approval to an average of less than 4 months.

		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-19	428	68.0%	149	0	2
	Feb-19	436	67.5%	149	1	1
	Mar-19	427	66.5%	149	1	1
	Apr-19	414	66.0%	150	4	2
	May-19	433	66.8%	151	2	1
	Jun-19	426	67.1%	149	0	1
	Jul-19	419	65.9%	147	3	3
	Aug-19	426	66.4%	147	0	0
	Sep-19					
	Oct-19					
	Nov-19					
	Dec-19					
	Jan-20					
	Feb-20					
	Mar-20					
YTD	2019/20	-	-	-	9	7
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



Fostering Recruitment & De-registrations



ADOPTIONS

DEFINITION

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

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

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

There were 3 adoptions finalised over the course of August bringing the yearly 2019/20 total to 16, with the team remaining well placed to at least match if not surpass last year's total of 32 adoptions. This is more the case given that there are 31 children currently placed with their adoptive parents, 5 of whom have lodged their application and a further 23 whose placement is longer than the required 10 weeks but who are yet to lodge. There are a further 12 children with a match identified but not yet placed and 25 for whom family finding is continuing.

Performance in respect of the A1 scorecard continues to decline with a slight improvement in the A2 scorecard. This may not be too much of a surprise given that 68% of the children adopted over the course of 2018/19 were in the 'Hard to Place' categories and despite this, RMBC remains in the top quartile. A1 performance is aggravated by the standard 3 month delay between adopters lodging their application and a court date being set for the adoption hearing which continues to be addressed within the Family Court User forum.

There are currently 15 adopters in the midst of their assessment; 7 at stage 1 and 8 at stage 2 with 4 adopters already having been approved in 2019/20 and so the team is well placed to surpass last year's performance of 12 adopters recruited.

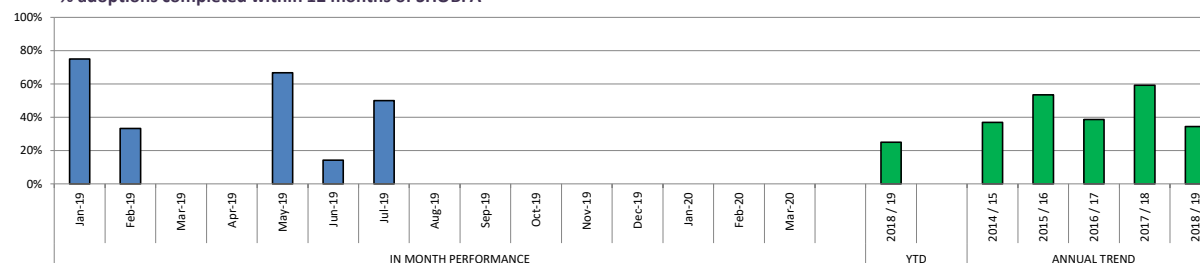
Data Note: Performance is taken from the services manual tracker as the data is not currently recorded on LCS

		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-19	4	3	75.0%	365.5	197.8
	Feb-19	3	1	33.3%	385.3	212.5
	Mar-19	0	0	-	386.9	212.4
	Apr-19	1	0	0.0%	233.0	118.0
	May-19	3	2	66.7%	372.8	162.8
	Jun-19	7	1	14.3%	407.9	167.1
	Jul-19	2	1	50.0%	420.4	172.7
	Aug-19	3	0	0.0%	449.6	167.4
	Sep-19					
	Oct-19					
	Nov-19					
	Dec-19					
	Jan-20					
	Feb-20					
	Mar-20					
YTD	2018 / 19	16	4	25.0%	-	-
ANNUAL TREND	2014 / 15	-	-	37.0%	393.0	169.0
	2015 / 16	43	23	53.5%	296.0	136.0
	2016 / 17	31	12	38.7%	404.0	232.9
	2017 / 18	27	16	59.3%	325.3	124.8
	2018 / 19	32	11	34.4%	386.9	212.4
LATEST BENCHMARKING	SN AVE				479.7	205.6
	BEST SN				362.0	89.0
	NAT AVE				520.0	220.0
	NAT TOP QTILE				455.0	171.8

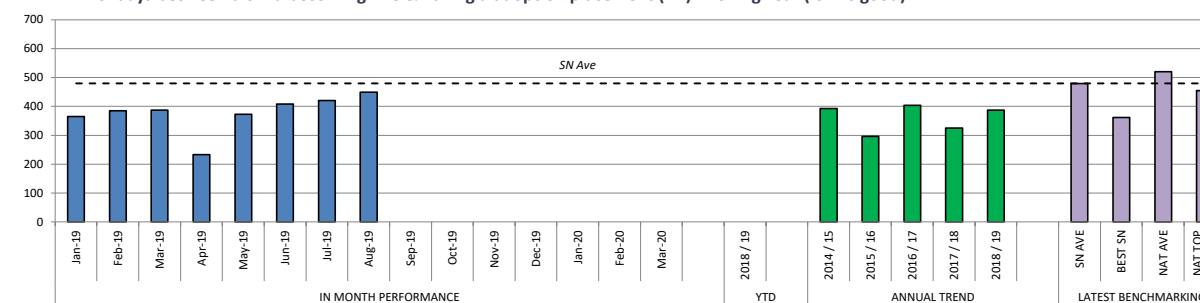
*Annual Trend relates to current reporting year April to Mar - not rolling year

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

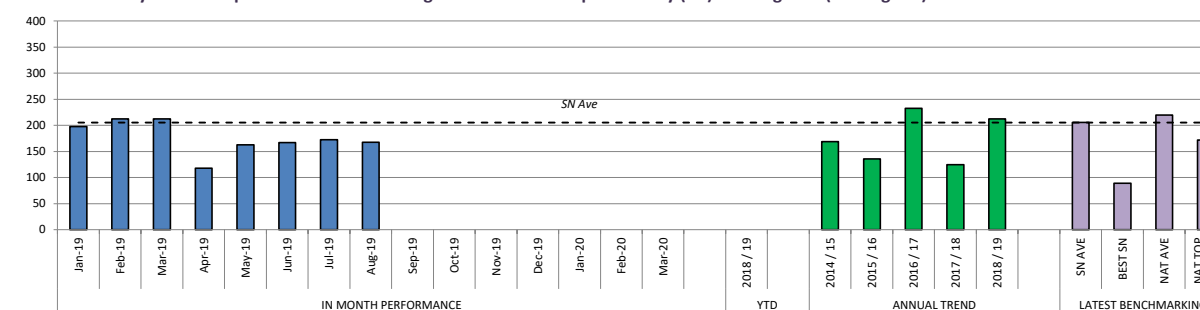
% adoptions completed within 12 months of SHOBPA



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

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

LAC average caseloads have remained relatively stable over the last 3 months with a slight increase in teams 1-3, and a decrease in 4&5 during August. In terms of regular time commitments there is an average of a further equivalent 3 cases for every social worker in terms of additional workload arising from contact supervision requirements. There is an additional burden arising from time spent undertaking out of Authority visits but this is spread less evenly across the teams and therefore the impact on individual social workers is less easy to calculate.

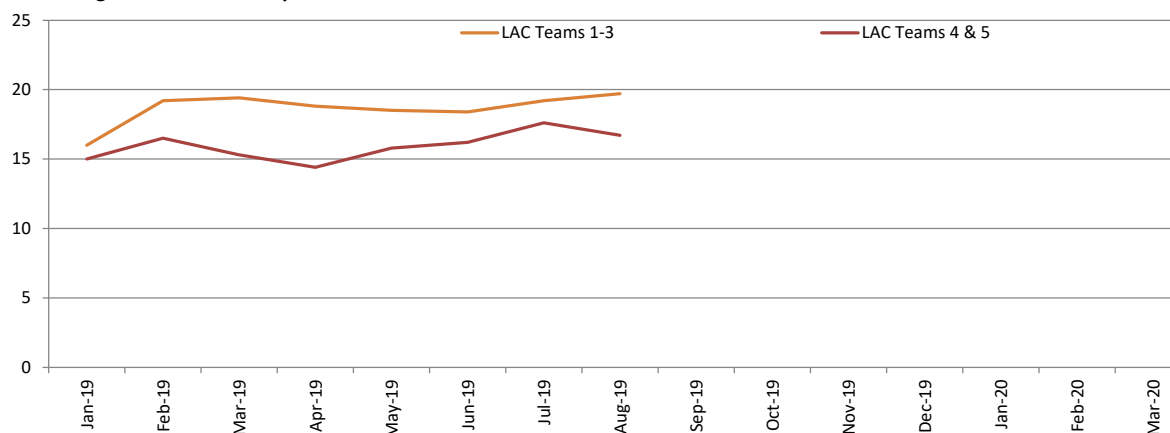
Data Note: Please note that from February 19 onwards adjustments were made to the average caseload calculations effecting FTE for Advanced Practitioners and Newly Qualified Social Workers as follows: AP's: 0.4 of their contracted FTE and NQSW's: 0.6 of their contracted FTE

		11.3	11.4	
		Maximum caseload of social workers in LAC Teams	Av. no. cases in LAC Teams	
IN MONTH PERFORMANCE			Teams 1-3	Teams 4 & 5
	Jan-19	23	16.0	15.0
	Feb-19	23	19.2	16.5
	Mar-19	23	19.4	15.3
	Apr-19	23	18.8	14.4
	May-19	26	18.5	15.8
	Jun-19	25	18.4	16.2
	Jul-19	25	19.2	17.6
	Aug-19	25	19.7	16.7
	Sep-19			
	Oct-19			
	Nov-19			
	Dec-19			
	Jan-20			
	Feb-20			
	Mar-20			
YTD	2019/20	-	-	-
ANNUAL TREND	2014/15	-	-	-
	2015/16	19	-	-
	2016/17	17	-	-
	2017/18	18	12.6	11.8
	2018/19	23	19.4	15.3

Maximum caseload of social workers



Average number of cases per team



Rotherham Looked After Children's Council & Lil' LAC CLUB

Update Report for September 2019 - 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 through their Total Respect Training, Presentations around their Caring Language campaign to Designated Teachers and Corporate Parenting panel. The group continue to engage in Community Events by participating in the Armed Forces Day and Rotherham Show Weekend and have welcomed Sharon Kemp (CEX), Peter Douglas (Head of Virtual School), and Kat Thorne & Karen Davis to their evening Voice & Influence sessions. The LAC Council are also raising funds for their group activities through delivering Total Respect training, from CIDON Construction and Tesco Supermarket. The group have enjoyed Activity days over the summer including a Flamingo Land visit, a 3 day residential to Kingswood and have interviewed for the position of Independent Chair of the LSCB. The LIL LAC CLUB are continuing to welcome new members and have fun packed sessions, making friendship bracelets, cards, game playing, music and dancing. 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;

LAC Council Voices Shaping Services

Total Respect Training x Two

The LAC Council training team are fulfilling their priorities for 2019/20 and have delivered 2 Total Respect training days to a broad mix of Corporate Parents in April and July including Social Workers, Head of Service, Managers, RMBC Councillors & PA's. The young people delivered interactive activities to shift attitudes and stereotypes about young people living in care to very receptive audiences who individually made promises to improve their practice reflecting what they had learned during their training. The training was a resounding success as participants fed back:-



'the exercises and interactive content were very meaningful and the video & poems really moving & powerful' (Social Worker)

'It was brilliant, best training I've ever been on' (Social Worker)

LACC Caring Language Campaign with Designated Teachers

Another example of how the LAC Council is using their Voices to shape Rotherham Services is through education of Teachers. As part of the LAC Councils 'Caring Language Campaign' they aim not only to distribute and raise awareness of their Language that Cares Glossary and change the current use of Care Language by professionals in Rotherham but they also identified issues with Teachers and other professionals who were exposing students care status to other young people and adults.

To rectify the issue and spread the word of language change with Teachers the LAC Council attended the Designated Teachers meeting at Rockingham. The group delivered their presentation highlighting how teachers were exposing their Care Status and sharing with them how terrible this makes Looked After Young People feel. The LAC students shared that once the Teacher has exposed them as Looked After Children they are often bombarded with very personal questions from other students which are embarrassing and place the LAC in difficult positions when asked questions like *'Why are you in care?'* *'Didn't your Mum and Dad want you?'*

The Designated Teachers were very positive and receptive towards changing practice and all 26 made their promises to change or improve practice when they returned to their Primary or Secondary Schools. The LAC Council will visit the Designated Teachers later in the year to check on their progress.

Independent Chair Interviews for LSCB

Members of the LAC Council formed an interview panel with members of the Youth Cabinet to interview candidates applying for the post of Independent Chair for Local Safeguarding Children Board in August. The panel created and delivered their own questions to challenge the candidates' views around Young People's Voices, Rotherham and their own life experiences. Young people scored each candidate individually and through discussions agreed overall scores for responses to their 7 questions. Results of which were delivered to Human Resources to contribute to the overall recruitment process.

Community Engagement

Sun shines on Armed Forces Day 2019



The LAC Council were invited by our Mayor Jenny Andrews to participate in the Rotherham's Armed Forces Day celebration on 29th June. Hundreds of people flocked to the town centre to remember those who have given their lives for our country and to give thanks to veterans and

active servicemen and women. The young people had a fabulous time joining in the fun. It was one of our young people Kaylen's 14th Birthday and she was treated by the Events Team who presented Kaylen with a huge Unicorn birthday cake. Kaylen said she would never forget this Birthday

Rotherham Show 2019

14 Young people of the LAC Council set up their stall at Rotherham Show over the weekend to raise awareness about Looked After Children's groups, recruit new young people and engage with the community. The LAC Council stall was visited by our Mayor Jenny Andrews and her entourage. Over 200 people visited the LAC Council stall and our young people painted 180 Festival Glitter faces of children, adults and RMBC Council members including Cllr Ian Jones and his wife. The group had lots of fun engaging with the community and creating a hand paint tree with smaller children who visited the stall. Well done LAC Council!



Fundraising

This period the LAC Council have continued to raise funds for their activities through delivering Total Respect Training to RMBC professionals twice.

They have also received a £600.00 check from our generous supporters CIDON Construction Barnsley to pay for the LACC CIDON Day trip to Flamingo Land for August.

The LAC Council and Lil LAC Club have also benefitted from a further 2 trolleys of Tesco supermarket food which has supplied refreshments for our children and young people.

Thank you☺



LAC Participation Activities

Flamingo Land Theme Park

LAC Council and some members of the Lil LAC Club went on an amazing adventure to Flamingo Land Theme Park in August. The trip was part funded by Cidon Construction. The young people supported each other going on scary thrill rides such as Pterodactyl, Velocity, Mumbo Jumbo & Navigator and enjoyed the award winning Zoo. The activity supports relationship building between the children and young people to help build and strengthen the protective factors of Social Capital.



Children in Care Councils Regional Residential to Kingswood



Members of the LAC Council joined their LAC peers from across the Yorkshire and Humber region to spend 3 days together at Kingswood Outdoor Activity Centre. The residential saw our young people engaging in a full programme of camp fire singalongs, Archery, Zip-Wire, Buggy building, Climbing, Building a bridge alongside Voice & Influence debates each evening around what the Children in Care Councils regionally should focus on next. Unlike other LAC Councils across the region, the Rotherham LAC already have their campaigns planned for the year but have agreed to do joined up work where-ever they have the capacity or interest in doing so. The residential was a great success with friendships forming across the region.

LAC Council Guests

Peter Douglas (Head of Virtual School)

The LAC Council invited Peter Douglas to visit them during a Voice & Influence Session. The groups agenda was to discuss their Language that Cares Campaign with Peter and discuss how we could work together to support Rotherham Teachers in adopting the new Language Glossary and be aware that what they say in class can negatively impact on Looked After Children when they expose their care status to other students. The LACC members enjoyed meeting Peter and were happy to look forward to working more closely in future.

Sharon Kemp (Chief Exec)

Sharon Kemp joined the LAC Council for a chill n chat session where she supported the young people in creating a body map to show the skills and qualities young people feel Foster Carers & Social Workers should have when working with Looked After Children. This body map will go to helping with the Fostering Review. Sharon also enjoyed engaging in a game of fooze-ball with Brogan.



Kat Thorne & Karen Davis (Educational Psychologists)

The LACC welcomed a visit from Kat Thorne & Karen Davis to discuss the Virtual Schools Conference 2020 for professionals working with Looked After Children. Our visitors asked the group whether they would like to be involved with the design & delivery of it, choosing the Conference theme and how much involvement the young people would like to have. The group are busy in discussions to clarify what they would like to do and how involved they would like to be. As soon as the LACC achieve clarity between them we will feed this back to Kat & Karen.

Lil' LAC Club -Activities



The Lil LAC Club members are continuing to enjoy making friends, playing, learning how to take turns and share the games with each other. We are very happy to have recruited a few new children and are committed to giving as many Looked After Children from Rotherham the opportunities to have fun, make friends and play together in a safe welcoming environment. We have been very busy this quarter. Some of our boys have engaged in football workshops delivered by our



Social Work Students Hannah & Steve.



Members of the LIL LAC CLUB have also engaged in numerous team building exercises, board games & puzzles, arts & Crafts activities including making friendship bracelets and friendship cards.

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

Sharon Kemp – Chief Executive RMBC

Peter Douglas – Head of Virtual School

Kathryn Thorne – Educational Psychologist

Karen Davies – Educational Psychologist

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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LACC Rotherham