

Central Bedfordshire  
Council  
Priory House  
Monks Walk  
Chicksands,  
Shefford SG17 5TQ

**This meeting  
may be filmed.\***



**Central  
Bedfordshire**

**please ask for** Sharon Griffin  
**direct line** 0300 300 5066  
**date** 6 December 2018

## **NOTICE OF MEETING**

### **CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL**

Date & Time

**Thursday, 20 December 2018 10.00 a.m.**

Venue at

**Room 14 - Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford, SG17 5TQ**

Richard Carr  
**Chief Executive**

To: The Chairman and Members of the CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL:

#### **Elected Members (voting)**

Cllrs Mrs A L Dodwell (Chairman) Cllr S Dixon (Vice-Chairman), Mrs A Barker, Mrs S A Goodchild, Mrs C Hegley, Mrs T Stock, M A G Versallion and B Wells

[Named Substitutes:

Cllrs R D Berry, D Bowater, Mrs D B Gurney, G Perham, and G Tubb]

#### **Officers (voting)**

Director of Children's Services

Director of Social Care, Health and Housing (or the Assistant Director Housing Services or their representative if the Director is unable to attend)

Assistant Director Leisure, Libraries and Countryside (or their representative if the Assistant Director is unable to attend)

#### **Carers (non-voting)**

Only four of the foster carers' co-opted representatives will be expected to attend at any one meeting.

#### **Children in Care Council representative (Co-Chairman) (non-voting)**

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## AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. **Minutes**

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on the 25 October 2018 (copy attached).

3. **Members' Interests**

To receive from Members any declarations of interest.

4. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

To receive any announcements from the Chairman and any matters of communication.

### Reports

**Item      Subject**

5. **Annual (Health) Report (NHS Bedfordshire CCG)**

To consider a report on the achievements, progress and challenges of the Looked After Children (LAC) health service in meeting the health needs of Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) children and young people in care and care leavers during the period from 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018.

6. **Agency Report Quarter 2 Fostering 1 June – 30 September 2018**

To consider a report outlining the activity in the Fostering Agency during Quarter 2.

7. **Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking young person as Looked After Children – Spotlight Report**

To consider a spotlight report on the way the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking young people become Looked After Children in Central Bedfordshire.

8. **Looked After Children Social Worker Stability**

To consider a report providing further detail regarding social worker stability for Looked After Children.

9. **Work Programme**

To consider the Panel's work programme.

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**CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the **CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL** held at Room 14 - Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford, SG17 5TQ on Thursday, 25 October 2018

**PRESENT**

**Elected Members (voting)**

Cllrs Mrs A L Dodwell (Chairman)  
S Dixon (Vice-Chairman)  
Mrs S A Goodchild  
Mrs T Stock  
M A G Versallion  
B Wells

**Officers (voting)**

Mrs S Harrison Director of Children's Services  
Mrs J Ogley Director of Social Care, Health and Housing

**Carers (non-voting)**

Mr P Albon  
Ms S Daniel

**Children in Care Representative (Co-Chairman) (non-voting)**

Apologies for  
Absence: Cllr Mrs A Barker  
Ms C Hegley, Executive Member for Adults, Social Care and  
Housing Operations (HRA)  
Mr I Ilyasi, Foster Carer  
Ms T Rowlands, Foster Carer  
Ms S Rymell, Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Early Help  
Mr L Youngman, Foster Carer

Members in Attendance: Cllrs N B Costin  
K Ferguson  
G Perham  
R D Berry

Officers in  
Attendance: Ms R Coals Principal Social Worker and Head of  
Professional Standards  
Mr A Coman Head of Corporate Parenting  
Ms A Craig Practice Manager, Fostering  
Ms S Griffin Committee Services Officer  
Mrs S Keenan Practice Manager  
Ms K Mathu CYP Participation Officer  
Miss N Phillips Practice Manager Adoption

Others in Attendance: For Children in Care Council

**CPP/18/13. Minutes****RESOLVED**

**that the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on the 30 April 2018 and 26 July 2018 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.**

**CPP/18/14. Members' Interests**

Councillor Mrs A L Dodwell declared an interest as a member of the Council's Fostering Panel.

**CPP/18/15. Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The following announcements and communications were made:

1. On behalf of the Panel, the Chairman welcomed the Children in Care Council Representatives and Sharon Daniel, Foster Carer, to the meeting.
2. The Chairman referred to the Aspiration's Wish List which had been launched at Full Council. The list and locations had been looked in further detail. Panel members would be approached outside this meeting to discuss further opportunities that could be offered.
3. The Chairman advised that Children's Services Staff Awards had taken place on the 24 October, in recognition of the help Central Bedfordshire Council staff had given young people in care. Thanks were given to the Director of Children's Services for hosting the awards.
4. The Director of Children's Services explained that there had been 140 nominees from the 500 permanent staff in the directorate. The awards showed the comradery amongst the Children's Services staff and how much people wanted to recognise each other's success. Bedfordshire Police Protection Unit received the award for the team outside children's services for the work for the MASH.

The Children in Care Council Representative read out a speech which gave her perception of a young person in care. The speech was to be graded as part as her GCSE English exam.

The Chairman thanked the Children In Care Council Representative for her very thought provoking speech.

**CPP/18/16. Independent Reviewing Officers' Annual Report 2017 - 2018**

The Panel considered a report of the Director of Children's Services on the Independent Reviewing Officers' Annual Report for 2017-18. Members noted

that the Independent Reviewing Officers' (IRO's) Manager had a statutory responsibility for the production of an Annual Report for scrutiny by members of the Corporate Parenting Panel. A copy of the Annual Report was attached at Appendix A.

The Practice Manager, Conference and Review Service, introduced the Annual Report and highlighted matters of particular interest.

Points and comments included:

1. The format of the report is nationally agreed through all local authorities for the Corporate Parenting Panel and is a published document.
2. Page 47 paragraph 8.7 of the report referred to the grading of practice being consistently high. In terms of the national context and expectations against peers, the understanding is that Central Bedfordshire Council uses different scales to grade practice and that not every local authority uses grading or quality assurance forms. Central Bedfordshire is in the top quartile for achievement for its Looked After Children.
3. The Service has had an additional member of staff for a period of time as the number of Looked After Children had increased alongside the child protection number. However this post was currently under review.
4. In response to concerns raised about 60% of the sample group of children and young people feeling safe at school, the Practice Manager, Conference and Review Service explained this was a theme from a dip sample the previous year but was not an issue being raised through the Mind of My Own (MOMO) app used by children and young people to provide feedback on their wishes and feelings. The issue of feeling safe at school would have been shared with the social worker allocated to the young person to be discussed and addressed at an individual meeting with the young person.
5. It was a statutory requirement for a Looked After Child to be asked if they would like an Independent Visitor or Social Worker. A piece of work needed to be undertaken around explaining the concept and role of an Advocate in terms of helping to make sure that the voice of the child/young person was heard when decisions about their life were being made.
6. The Head of Professional Standards and Principle Social Worker explained that an Advocate solely reported on the views of the young person whereas the Social Worker/Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) listening to the views of the young person and took these views into account when evaluating the needs of the young person. The Advocacy Service is located within Children's Services. It is separate from the Social Work and is offered independently on behalf of Central Bedfordshire Council Service. The young person and the Advocacy service agree who the right person to provide support would be.
7. The timing of Looked After Children reviews is specified in regulation. The first review has to be held within 20 working days of the child/young person becoming looked after and the second review within 3 months. Subsequent

reviews are at intervals of no more than 6 months. Mid-way review meetings had just been introduced in Central Bedfordshire. The purpose of these reviews was to assess cases and to speak to Social Workers to ensure that all of the tasks were being achieved and were on time and there was no potential for delay. There was the ability for reviews to take place sooner if there were any concerns, a significant change of circumstances or change of care plan.

8. A member of the Panel referred to paragraph 5.24 of the report which advised that since the introduction of the MOMO app, 162 young people had contributed to the Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children - Voice of the Child Survey of which 91 (56%) were girls and 71 (44%) were boys. It was felt that it would be more beneficial for the Panel to be advised of the size of the cohort as a percentage rather than as data.
9. The Director of Children's Services explained that in response to the Ofsted recommendation about the effectiveness of plans being updated and assurance of progression, an action plan had subsequently been implemented with a measure against each action and how the actions were being achieved.
10. The Practice Manager Conference and Review Service explained that following a key area highlighted in the Ofsted report of being able to achieve and demonstrate permanency for young people, the definition of permanency had subsequently reviewed and a permanency tracking meeting implemented to monitor the stage of a child on their journey.
11. The Practice Manager Conference and Review Service advised that the quality assurance element of the organisation helped to ensure the independence of the IRO from the Social Worker. Good practice models around supervision and the peer practice challenge insured that services were being held to account and checks and balances were in place to ensure that practices were continually reviewed and outcomes achieved.

## **NOTED**

**the activity of the Conference and Review Service in relation to case management and review of Looked After Children during 2017-18 as set out within the Independent Reviewing Officers' Annual Report.**

### **CPP/18/17. Looked After Children Social Worker Stability**

The Panel considered a report of the Director of Children's Services which set out Social Work stability for Looked After Children in Central Bedfordshire.

Points and comments included:

1. The Head of Professional Standards and Principal Social Worker explained that the key reason for a change of Social Worker in Central Bedfordshire during the journey of a child as in many other local authorities, was due the change in needs and circumstances of the

child. The transfer points and related changes of social worker were built into processes and formed part of the child's journey so that the child received specialist support and expertise that was responsive to the particular circumstances of the child.

2. In Central Bedfordshire Social Work churn is low. Some Social Workers changed their role within the service area as part of their career development.
3. Children's Services, Central Bedfordshire Council is committed to Looked After Children having as much consistency as possible throughout their journey as this was pivotal to their wellbeing. Any change to Social Worker was done in a planned way in consultation with the young person/child.
4. When a young person becomes a Looked After Child they are allocated an Independent Reviewing Officer. The IRO did not change during the child's journey.
5. The Director of Children's Services advised that in terms of vacancies, Children's Services was performing well overall. Key issues to address were having permanent skilled members of staff, reducing the use of agency staff. An area of focus was stabilising the workforce. Over the last two years the percentage of agency staff had reduced from 52% to 11% and work continued to increase these figures. A refresh of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy was also being undertaken.
6. A key message emerging from Looked After Children was that social workers needed to commit to working with a child for the minimum of one year. This directive would be added to the requirements of the Service.

#### **NOTED**

**Social Work stability for Looked After Children in Central Bedfordshire.**

#### **RESOLVED**

1. **that a report on the number of placement moves for Looked After Children (10 children from the two age ranges of 0-4 and over 16), over the period of 3 years per 10,000 of the population be given at December meeting of the Panel.**
2. **that the Children's Commissioner Stability Index be brought back to the Corporate Parenting Panel in 12 months.**

CPP/18/18. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

#### **RESOLVED**

**To exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that its consideration involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 2 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.**

**CPP/18/19. The Day in the Life of a Looked After Child**

The Panel received an exempt presentation on the Day in the life of a Looked After Child.

**CPP/18/20. Children in Care Council - presentation on social work stability**

The Panel received an exempt presentation from the Children in Care Council representatives on social work stability.

On conclusion of the consideration of exempt minute items CPP/18/20 and CPP/18/21, the meeting was open to Press and Public.

**CPP/18/21. Foster Carers Loans Policy**

The Panel considered a report of the Executive Member Families, Education and Children and Lead Member for Children's Services which defined the scheme for the provision of an interest-free loan to adoptive/fostering households, who wish to extend to convert their homes in order to offer a wider range or number of placements To Central Bedfordshire Children in Care.

Points and comments included:

1. The main drivers for the Foster Carers Loan Scheme were to achieve the objectives of the Children's Services Transformation Programme to increase the number of Central Bedfordshire Council in-house foster carers and the ability to be able to place Looked After Children and young people in the Central Bedfordshire.
2. The scheme would provide the additional capacity for larger sibling groups to be accommodated in one household where possible.
3. Applications for the Loan Scheme would be considered in time order (a first come basis) then in the following priority order:
  - Priority 1- Foster carers who can offer placements to:
    - Sibling groups
    - Children aged 12 years old and above
    - Permanent placements
  - Priority 2 -Foster carers who can offer placements to 5 - 9-year olds
  - Priority 3 - Foster carers who can offer placements to Under 5-year olds
4. The contract would stipulate what the funding was being provided for, the level of funding and the repayment arrangements. It would also include

details of the expected period of service of a Foster Carer in receipt of the loan, the repayment of outstanding amounts should the Foster Carer resign or the service be terminated and a mechanism to ensure that the loan was recovered should the contract be defaulted upon.

5. The approval process would include a financial assessment to ensure that the Foster Carer was able to make the required repayments of the loan.

## **RESOLVED**

**that the Foster Carer Loan Scheme as set out in Appendix A of the report, be approved and adopted.**

### CPP/18/22. **Fostering Quarter 1 Report**

The Panel considered a report of the Executive Member for Families, Education and Children and Lead member for Children's Services which set out the Fostering Agency Report for Quarter 1 covering the period 1 April – 30 June 2018.

Points and comments included:

1. The Practice Manager, Fostering Team advised that placement stability was a real success in Central Bedfordshire both short and long term and continued to remain strong. The figures for Central Bedfordshire were very favourable in comparison with statistical neighbours and the national average.
2. A member of the Panel sought reassurance that the Council was vigilant in ensuring that children subject to Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) were not exposed to some of the issues/reasons the Order had been put in place. The Head of Corporate Parenting explained that an SGO included the requirement for a report to be provided advising appropriate placements for child. An assessment of the carers and the child also took place and recommendations were made to the Court on the appropriate placements. The Fostering Service and SGO Support Service also provided a level of support during this process.
3. In response to a question raised about Private Fostering and the awareness of safeguarding services, the Head of Corporate Parenting explained that advertising of the services provided by Central Bedfordshire Council took place in various way such as campaigns in schools and that safeguarding training for General Practitioners included an explanation about private fostering and the criteria, and ways of raising any safeguarding concerns.

## **NOTED**

**the Fostering Agency Report for Quarter 1 for the period of 1 April – 30 June 2018.**

**CPP/18/23. Regional Adoption Agency**

The Panel received a report on the Regional Adoption Agency.

Points and comments included:

1. The Acting Practice Manager, Central Bedfordshire Adoption Service explained that Local Authorities currently delivered Adoption Services in slightly different ways and different services were provided depending on the location/postcode.
2. The main benefits of the introduction of a Regional Adoption Agency for existing adoptive parents included the pooling of budgets, a more efficient provision of services and the upskilling of staff to provide therapies and greater support.
3. The Director of Children's Services explained that the provision of Post adoptive support had been identified as a particular area of focus. As part of the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership, work was taking place with health colleagues around the provision of adoption support services.
4. A member of the Panel referred to the launch of the Regionalising Adoption programme in by the DfE in 2015 and the aim of encouraging all local authorities to work together with voluntary adoption agencies to regionalise their adoption services and asked why more local authorities were not involved in the programme. The Director of Children's Services explained that discussions were taking place about the potential of other neighbouring authorities joining the Central East Regional Adoption Agency. Local Authorities needed to be of a similar culture to ensure that there was no dilution of standards.

Panel members would invited to the launch of the service in April 2019.

Thanks were given to Acting Practice Manager, Adoption Service for the work undertaken to develop the Regional Adoption Agency.

**NOTED**

**the presentation outlining the progress of the Regional Adoption Agency.**

**CPP/18/24. Personal Advisor and financial support offered to young people leaving care**

This item was deferred to the December meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

CPP/18/25. **Work Programme**

Members considered the report of the Committee Services Officer which set out the Panel’s proposed work programme for part of the municipal year 2018/19.

**RESOLVED**

**1. that the Corporate Parenting Panel work programme, as attached at Appendix A to the report of the Committee Services Officer, be approved subject to the following amendments:**

**a. Numbers of Looked After Children per 10,000 of the population would added as a standing agenda item.**

**b. 20 December 2018  
Report on the number of placement moves for a LAC - 10 children from each age range (0-4 and over 16) over a 3 year period per 10,000 of the population.**

**c. Unscheduled reports**

- Foster Carer Loan Policy update**
- Looked After Children Social Worker Stability - Children’s Commissioner Stability Index**

**2. the 12-month forward plan be considered at the Children’s Services Management Team and revised work plan be presented at the December meeting of the Panel.**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 12.35 p.m.)

Chairman.....

Dated.....

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# Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group's Looked After Children's Health Annual Report Central Bedfordshire Council

1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018

**Director:** Anne Murray, Director of Nursing and Quality  
**Author:** Teresa McDonald, Designated Nurse for Looked After Children  
**Date:** June 2018

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Contents</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Glossary of Abbreviations (All Acronyms used within this report )</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>NHS England LAC forum</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Partnership Working</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Child Sexual Exploitation</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>CAMHS</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>East of England Protocol</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>CP-IS</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Leaving and After Care Service</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Health Passports</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>The LAC Health Team</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>NHS England Safeguarding Assurance Tool</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Training</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Future Planning</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Performance Data</b>	<b>15</b>

**Glossary of Abbreviations**

<b>Abbreviations</b>	
<b>BCCG</b>	Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
<b>LAC</b>	Looked After Children
<b>LA</b>	Local Authorities
<b>UASC</b>	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
<b>NHS</b>	National Health Service
<b>EPUT</b>	Essex Partnership University Trust
<b>CBC</b>	Central Bedfordshire Council
<b>CAMHS</b>	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
<b>ELFT</b>	East London Foundation Trust
<b>CSE</b>	Child Sexual Exploitation
<b>CSEM</b>	Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Group
<b>NHS SAT</b>	NHS Safeguarding Assurance Tool
<b>PHW-LAC</b>	Promoting the health and wellbeing of Looked after children group
<b>OOA</b>	Out of Area
<b>IFA's</b>	Independent Fostering Agencies
<b>JSNA</b>	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
<b>CIACC</b>	Children In Care Council
<b>LSCB</b>	Local Safeguarding Board
<b>DNA</b>	Did Not Attend
<b>CP-IS</b>	Child Protection Information Sharing System
<b>CCS</b>	Cambridge Community Service

### Executive Summary

This report describes the achievements, progress and challenges of the Looked After Children (LAC) health service in meeting the health needs of Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) children and young people in care and care leavers during the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018. The report provides an update on work and developments for the Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group's (BCCG) commissioned service for the health of Looked After Children and Care Leavers, and gives an overview of service provision.

For the period of this report BCCG commissioned the LAC Health Team within Essex Partnership University Trust (EPUT) who co-ordinates all the statutory LAC health assessments for in county and out of county placements for BBC and CBC children and young people; this includes responsibility for quality assuring LAC Health Assessments.

### Introduction

This annual health report informs on the health aspects for CBC Looked After Children (LAC). The Department of Health Statutory Guidance '*Promoting the Health of Looked After Children (2015)*' requires a report on the delivery of service and the progress achieved for the health and wellbeing of children in care. It will inform partners of the work to improve health outcomes for Looked After Children, as well as identifying some of the challenges facing the service.

Looked after Children and Young People should expect to have the same opportunities as other children and young people, including being healthy and safe. They should be provided with the opportunities needed to help them move successfully to adulthood. The needs of Looked After Children and Young People vary, but are often complex, and can be met only by a range of services operating collaboratively across different settings.

BCCG have in post a full time Designated Nurse for LAC, along with a Designated Doctor who has allocated time to undertake this role. The role of Designated Professionals is to work in partnership with the provider, Essex Partnership University Trust (EPUT), to ensure that the health needs identified for looked after children are met.

### NHS England National LAC Forum

In November 2017 NHS England shared a: *A Guide to Meeting the Statutory Health Needs of Looked After Children through a Standard Approach to Commissioning and Service Delivery November 2017*

This guidance is being developed by the NHS England National Steering Group LAC Forum with the aim to improve the health outcomes of Looked After Children (LAC) across England by reducing the unwarranted variation in the health delivery and commissioning arrangements for this group of vulnerable children. The Project Manager for Unwarranted Variation is working with wider National Consultation across the Regions. It should not be read in isolation by CCGs, Local Authorities and Public Health commissioners and Designated and Named Professionals, it aims to translate the science outlined in The Statutory Guidance (2015) into a standard approach to

the commissioning and delivering outcome focused health services to meet the complex health needs of LAC.

The Designated Nurse within Bedfordshire CCG as part of the LAC National Forum has contributed to the document. The guidance has now been shared with wider health providers, local authorities and public health. It has been used to support the development of the strategic aims and objectives for 2018-19. The Standard Approach guidance is due to go through National Safeguarding Steering Group (NSSG) to:

1. fully critique the document
2. arrange an element of external review
3. re-circulate the revised and amended document once approved by NSSG and Gateway

This process will afford the level of due diligence and scrutiny required of such an important document.

### Partnership working

The importance of the health of children and young people in care cannot be underestimated. The health of looked after children is everyone's responsibility, so partnership working is essential to ensure optimum health for each individual child and young person. There is evidence of good partnership working between the LA and Health services. This is evidenced through the following meetings:-

- *Corporate Parenting Panel*

The CCG is represented on CBC corporate parenting panels. The Corporate Parenting Panel supports the Councils to ensure that it is fulfilling its duties towards those children looked after corporately. It also oversees, the services provided to children and young people in care.

- *The Resource Panel (CBC)*

The Resource Panel is a multi-agency panel that oversees, challenges, endorses and reviews any financial implication for planning processes for Looked After Children and young people (LAC) and those at the edge of care. The Resource Panel's role is to ensure that all proposed and existing internal residential, external residential (OOAs) and Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) continue to best meet the individual needs of the young person whilst at the same time ensuring that Best Value principles are implemented in the care planning process. The Panel will also address potential or actual drift in Care Planning by reviewing such placements and funding arrangements as it deems appropriate. The cases are presented by the social worker; any issues that arise in regards to the health of the children and young people are raised, discussed and fed back to the health commissioner or provider as appropriate.

- *Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)*

Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Health and Wellbeing Boards have a statutory duty to assess the needs of the local population through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). This is a local assessment of current and future health and social care needs. Representatives from the BCCG participate in all areas of the joint assessment. (Central Bedfordshire Link: [www.jsna.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.jsna.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk))

- *Voice of the child*

The BCCG Designated Nurse and the Children in Care Council (CiCC) work in close partnership with Central Bedfordshire in engaging young people to ensure the voice of the child is captured and participates in events across Bedfordshire involving children and young people. This in turn informs commissioning and service provider arrangements. This has included the development of “The Pledge” which gives a commitment from health services to ensure timely completion of health assessment and for all young people leaving care to be issued with a health passport.

The Designated Nurse is engaged with Central Bedfordshire LSCB sub group for the voice of the child. The purpose of which is to represent children and young people living in Central Bedfordshire. It reviews and considers matters that affect young people and giving them a voice.

- *The LAC strategic and operational health groups within the CCG.*

The CCG continues to play an active role on the Local Safeguarding Children’s Boards for Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Councils by ensuring active engagement in the Safeguarding partnerships. Strategic planning for LAC is directed through the local authorities and accountability for the services provided to Looked After Children from the local authority and Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG) is directed through the respective Corporate Parenting Panels. Multi-agency strategic planning and operational oversight is directed through the Multi-agency Promoting the health and wellbeing of looked after children Group (PHW-LAC), which contributes to strategic planning via the Children and Young People’s Plans and the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) partnership, and reports up through the BCCG’s governance structure. The LAC health strategic group meets quarterly, and has the following responsibilities:

- Ensure clear lines of accountability are in place and that issues identified are addressed in a timely manner
- Ensure relevant information sharing occurs between BCCG and relevant stakeholders
- Monitor and delegate LAC Group
- Identify appropriate work streams to the Promoting the Health and Well-being of strengths and gaps in service provision

- Develop multi-agency plans to address key issues
- Monitor progress against agreed actions
- Review and monitor service developments
- Monitor performance data and ensure timely action is taken to remedy poor performance
- Escalate concerns in service or performance where not appropriately addressed
- Ensure all LAC work is in line with statutory guidance, NICE and essential standards
- Maintain a LAC risk register

The LAC strategic aims have been discussed and agreed for 2018-2019. The aims are as follows:

**Strategic Aim 1:** To ensure effective channels of communication between local authority staff working with looked-after children, CCGs, educational provision, health service providers, as well as carers

**Strategic Aim 2:** To ensure that looked-after children (according to age and understanding) have the information they need to make informed decisions about their health needs, including appropriate levels of health promotion and education, and access to universal services as well as targeted services.

**Strategic Aim 3:** To ensure the timely and effective delivery of health services.

**Strategic Aim 4:** To take into account the views of looked-after children, their parents and carers, to inform, influence and shape service provision, including through the Children in Care Councils

**Operational Promoting the Health and Wellbeing of LAC (PHW-LAC) group has the following aims:**

- Each agency sets their own objectives against the strategies aims.
- Aims and objectives are presented for the year and are reviewed within an annual workshop. At the workshop new aims will be set for the year ahead.
- The group will focus on a particular area relating to LAC. The emphasis for 2018-19 is to gain a greater understanding on what life looks like for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) in Bedfordshire.
- The result or any issues identified are fed up to the LAC strategic Board to inform strategic objectives

### **Child Sexual Exploitation**

NHS organisations are subject to the section 11 duties of the Children Act 2004, which places responsibility on the health provider to ensure that effective safeguarding children arrangements are in place. This is achieved through commissioning and monitoring processes identified within the contractual arrangements, and includes arrangements regarding child sexual exploitation (CSE).

Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton Safeguarding Children Boards have developed a strategic CSE action plan based on identified risks and recommendations from an independent CSE review. A pan Bedfordshire Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Group (CSEM) has also

been developed which has replaced the previous Child Sexual Exploitation Group (CSEG). CSEM is a multi-agency group which ensures a co-ordinated approach to concerns about child sexual exploitation and to maintain an overview of emerging child sexual exploitation issues in Bedfordshire. BCCG is represented on both the strategic group and CSEM to ensure health partners are involved throughout.

### CAMHS

BCCG commission a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in Bedfordshire which is provided by East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT). Specialist CAMHS (Tier 3) offers assessment and treatment to children and young people with moderate to severe emotional and behavioural difficulties, including mental illnesses. Core services are provided within several multidisciplinary teams as illustrated below, depending upon the particular needs of the young person. CAMHS staff are mainly based within specialist centres in Bedford and Dunstable, although services are offered across the county. Where feasible, staff are embedded within or closely linked to partner agencies to provide an integrated care package. Tier 2 CAMHS are provided by several third sector organisation across Bedfordshire including CHUMS, Open Door, Relate and Sorted. These services provide assessment and short-term treatment to children and young people with less severe emotional and behavioural difficulties.

### Looked after Children's CAMHS Service Performance Data 2017-18.

Looked After Children	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD
Referrals accepted	29	17	19	24	89
*Direct Patient Contact	256	377	468	222	1323
DNA rates	12.20%	7.4%	4.7%	8.0%	6.7%

*\* Direct Patient is where there is face to face contact with each young person. The number of contacts for each person will vary depending on need.*

### DNA's

When a service user fails to attend an initial appointment the clinician will attempt to contact the service user/carer during the appointment time, by telephone, to ascertain reasons for non-attendance and to enhance future engagement. If it is not possible to make contact by telephone, following a risk assessment of available information, a letter will be sent requesting the service user/carer to contact the service in order to offer an alternative appointment. For first appointments the original referrer and GP will be advised of non- attendance.

If, after a two week period, the service user/carer have not contacted the service a further letter will be sent. There may also be telephone discussion with the original referrer to assess the degree of risk or other professionals involved in the service user's care, if known. If after a further 2 week period there has been no contact with the service user/carer the individual clinician will carefully consider discharge and make a professional judgement based on the available information. If the decision is to discharge, the original referrer and the GP will be informed in writing.

### *Direct Patient Contact*

Children and Young People currently receiving services were seen in a variety of settings including CAMHS clinics, schools or home. Dependant on individual needs appointments were either face to face, telephone, consultation with other professionals, i.e. school, social care etc. This ensures that the young person is seen in the place that suits them the best and where they feel comfortable. This will support the young person's engagement in the process. In the dedication LAC CAMHS service for 17/18 there was 1323 direct contacts with young people.

### *Waiting Times*

Under the NHS Constitution, no patient should wait more than 18 weeks for any treatment. The average waiting times for routine appointments across Bedfordshire CAMHS varies; the majority of the cases are seen for an initial appointment within 11 weeks of referral. The cases waiting outside of this, - are assigned to our Neuro Development Team and are awaiting specialist assessment. When a child presents in Crisis they are seen and assessed immediately and a care plan will be developed in response to the identified need. The LAC CAMHS team also provide a service for all looked after children and young people, this includes CYP who have been placed in Bedfordshire from another local authority.

### *Transition*

NHS England have set national expectations around clinical quality; one of which is to improve the experience and outcomes for young people as they transition out of Children and Young People's Mental Health Services. Adult and Children mental health services have different commissioning requirements; the project is to provide a pathway from children to adult mental health service or to the most appropriate service for that young person.

Bedfordshire CAMHS remain on track with meeting the Commissioning for Quality and Innovation requirements for transition from children and adult mental health services. This project started in April 2017 and will run until April 2019.

The project is constructed to encourage greater collaboration between providers spanning the care pathway. There are three components to this:

- a case note audit in order to assess the extent of Joint-Agency Transition Planning; and
- a survey of young people's transition experiences ahead of the point of transition (Pre-Transition / Discharge Readiness); and
- a survey of young people's transition experiences after the point of transition (Post-Transition Experience).

The pre and post survey questionnaires have been well received by our young people in Bedfordshire.

BCCG is working closely with partners to improve the transitional arrangements for young people. Bedfordshire CAMHS have developed strong local links with our adult services and

continue to meet quarterly to review progress in addition to monthly transition discussions with relevant local community mental health teams.

### East of England Protocol

Bedfordshire CCG is an active member of the regional working group to draw an East of England protocol for Looked After Children and Care Leavers. The protocol will spell out the agreed principles and practice that will be applied when a looked after child from one LA area presents in another LA area in need of

- a. a routine community CAMHS referral
- b. a specialist CAMHS intervention/support when a crisis occurs – either in the community or General Acute Hospital setting
- c. admission to a CAMHS Tier 4 inpatient unit

Looked after children and care leavers from one Local Authority who present in another Local Authority in need of a mental health assessment and/or intervention. There will be some of these children and young people with exceptionally high levels and complexity of needs who will require particularly intensive treatment and support packages, way in excess of any area's core offer. These children and young people should already be subject to joint Local Authority and CCG planning processes. Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meetings will be called to determine what bespoke service offer will be commissioned and provided for such cases and which organisation will pay for each part of the package.

### *What do we want this protocol to achieve in the East of England?*

Elimination of the variation in practice and the delay and harm that can cause to looked after children and care leavers. We want to ensure children and young people have consistent, fair, open access to the local core service offer in whichever part of the East of England they live or present in.

The variation in practice also causes confusion among operational staff from the mental health providers, Local Authorities, and commissioners which can exacerbate the delay and harm to children and young people and damage effective working relationships between staff and organisations.

When a looked after child or care leaver from one Local Authority area presents in another Local Authority area in need of:

1. A routine community CAMHS referral – to either a Targeted or Specialist service – for a mental health issue that was already part way through being addressed when the child or young person lived in his/her originating Local Authority area.
2. A routine community CAMHS referral – to either a Targeted or Specialist service – for a newly emerging mental health issue.
3. A mental health assessment which had been part completed at the point of a move to another Local Authority area – and needs to be completed.
4. A specialist CAMHS assessment and intervention when a crisis occurs, including when an inpatient Tier 4 CAMHS hospital admission may be needed.

The protocol for the East of England is in processing well on being finalised. Once agreement has been sought it will be implemented across Bedfordshire and evaluated as to its effectiveness in the meeting the outcome of these children and young people

### CP-IS

The national implementation of the CP-IS is part of the NHS standard contract. Bedfordshire is in the process of implementing the Child Protection Information Sharing System (CP-IS). When a child is known to Children's Services- Social Care, as a Looked After Child or on a Child Protection Plan, basic information about that plan is shared within the NHS, via a secure IT system. If that child attends any NHS unscheduled care setting, such as an emergency department or a minor injury unit, out of hours GP service:

- *The health team is alerted that they are on a plan and has access to the contact details for the social care team*
- *The social care team is automatically notified that the child has attended, and*
- *Both parties can see details of the child's previous 25 visits to unscheduled care settings in England*

This means that health and social care staff have a complete picture of a child's interactions with any unscheduled health care provision. This may be particularly significant if a looked after young person is missing and attends an unscheduled provision anywhere in the country the social worker team will be notified of the attendance.

### Leaving and After Care

BCCG commissioned a Looked After Young People's Nurse within the LAC health team to provide care leavers with support which is offered until their 21st birthday. All Care Leavers, whether placed in or out of county, are provided with contact numbers and details of the LAC Health Team at the time of their final Health Assessment, in order to facilitate easy access and support as required.

The service specification was reviewed and agreed in April 2017-18 to include:

- To ensure all Care Leavers are offered a service from the LAC Health Team and are provided with information on how to access health care provision
- The leaving Care Service ensures it makes contact with all Care Leavers within the first three months of leaving care to offer any further support or advice
- To provide all Care Leavers who are placed out of area, and whose final RHA is undertaken by an external provider, with the Leaving Care Letter
- To raise the awareness of the availability of the leaving care service and the support it can offer to young people

BCCG has worked with The Care Leavers Association on a three year project commissioned by the Department of Health to improve the health of adults and young people by utilising the user voice to develop guides and resources to better inform commissioning and delivery of services. The project is now completed and the findings were published in December 2017. Please see link to the document:

*Caring for better Health: An investigation in to the health needs of care leavers.*

*By Jakeb Braden, Dr Jim Goddard and David Graham*

[http://cdn.basw.co.uk/upload/basw\\_51020-2.pdf](http://cdn.basw.co.uk/upload/basw_51020-2.pdf)

The document has been shared with members of the Bedfordshire CCG LAC strategic Group for consultation and discussion in regards to findings. It has also been shared with the wider Heath providers. One of the authors of the document has agreed to attend the BCCG LAC strategic group to discuss the findings. This will be arranged for 2018-19

### Health Passport

A workshop was facilitated by the LAC health team to review the original workshop that took place in 2016. This showed a big improvement in health passport notifications to the team, following on from the change of the referral pathway. The change to referral has also reduced the amount of paperwork and time taken by social workers to complete.

The LAC Health 2017-2018 completed 44 health passports.

An internal health passport audit was undertaken which showed that there were some differences in the way clinical staff were completing the health passport. To ensure continuity the team developed a quality assurance tool was created to ensure that all health information available to the clinician was included in the health passport and that a SMART care plan was created, if appropriate, for our leaving and aftercare clients.

### The LAC Health Team

Essex Partnership University Foundation Trust (EPUT) was commissioned by BCCG over the period of this report (April 2017- March 2018) to provide a service for statutory health assessments for Looked After Children from Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire. The purpose of the health assessments are to:

- Ensure that holistic and specific health needs are identified and plans in place to support/manage needs, including opportunities for routine health checks and screening, preventative measures and health education/promotion.
- The service co-ordinates the statutory LAC Health Assessments for in county and out of county placements for Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire children and young people. This process is supported by an administrative single point of contact within each Local Authority which improves the efficiency and streamlining of this service.

The Service Specification was reviewed and agreed in April 2018-19. It requires that the Specialist Nurses for LAC quality assure all health assessments completed by external health providers, and quality assure a 10 % dip sample of all those completed by EPUT health professionals. This ensures that all assessments meet the required standard. Any issues identified through the quality assurance process are followed up, as specific to the child/young person, or as development of the professional undertaking the assessment.

If a young person is placed out of area and there is no provision in the out of placement to carry out the health assessment, they can be invited back to Bedfordshire to undertake their health assessment; this is with the proviso that the young person, foster parents and social worker are all in agreement. The health assessments will be completed by the LAC health team in line with normal contractual arrangements and not incurring additional payment arrangements.

The CCG has implemented a process for the funding of initial /review assessment for Looked After Children placed out of area (OOA). The process will ensure that any payments made to an OOA provider will be quality assured by the LAC health team. This will ensure that the children and young people placed OOA have a detailed comprehensive health assessment. The CCG has an escalation process in place for when there are issues in commissioning health assessment for children placed OOA.

Community Paediatricians undertake the Initial Health Assessments for Bedfordshire Children placed in Bedfordshire and one hours travel outside the Bedfordshire Border. Access to Community Paediatricians is via clinics in Bedford and Flitwick. Bedfordshire children/young people placed out of county and within one hour of the Bedfordshire borders will be invited to attend a Bedfordshire Paediatric clinic for their Initial Health Assessment. Those placed outside this area will be completed by an out of area provision under a service level agreement, or invited back as outlined above if no provision available.

#### [NHS England Safeguarding Assurance Tool](#)

BCCG has taken part in the NHS England Safeguarding Assurance Tool (SAT) pilot. The tool is a complete quality and compliance management tool, letting users assign and track actions, record evidence, create audits and manage policies and procedures and other key documentation in a single integrated environment.

The SAT allows BCCGs to provide evidence and assurances to NHS England that they are meeting the required national standards in safeguarding of children, LAC and vulnerable adults. The SAT includes a number of standards that relate solely to looked after children.

Periodical reviews of the evidence, along with collaborative action plans, drive quality improvement and ensures that the required standards are being met. BCCG has had 3 peer reviews of the evidence in the SAT where evidence and ratings were challenged and agreed. There are 9 standards broken down into 83 elements. BCCG has currently 70 Green, 13 Amber and no red elements.

There is local, regional and national reporting on the SAT tool all information is available to key stakeholders.

#### [Training](#)

BCCG Designated Safeguarding and LAC professional deliver level 1 and 2 safeguarding training to staff within GP surgeries and student midwives. The aim of the training to raise awareness of safeguarding and LAC and to be able to identify signs of abuse and how to escalate and refer as appropriate.

The BCCG delivers level 3 Safeguarding to all GP practices within Bedfordshire. As part of the training programme the Designated Nurse for LAC promotes the roles and responsibilities of GPs in relation to looked after children. This includes the importance for GP's to act as an advocate for the health of each child or young person who is being looked after. Also included is raising the awareness of private fostering arrangements and responsibilities around notification to the LA's. The GPs are advised to ensure timely, sensitive access for LAC to specialist services, taking into account the needs and risk of frequent placement change for many children and young people who are looked after. The importance of maintaining accurate and comprehensive records for each young person and to provide report and health summaries as required are also emphasised.

Bedfordshire's Looked After Children's Team (LAC) delivered foster carer training. Feedback around this training has also been very positive and found to be informative for those attending.

The LAC health team also deliver training for the health visitors and school nurse within the 0-19 teams. Feedback around training has been very positive and evaluation has highlighted that this has/will improve the quality of assessments undertaken by 0-19 staff. Self-quality assurance questionnaires to support staff, whilst completing a review health assessment, continues to be in place to maintain quality standards following on from training.

### Future Planning 2018-19

- In April 2018 East London Foundation Trust (ELFT) was awarded the contract for community services with service provision provided by Cambridge Community Services (CCS).
- An annual workshop to be held in April 2018 for providers to set the new aims and objectives for 2018/19 on how their services meet the needs of LAC.
- To continue to work in partnership with the local authorities.
- The Designated professional to undertake audits in 2018-19 which will include the quality of Health Passports and health assessments.
- BCCG to develop a new data collection tool to monitor LAC performance data. The data will be collated and shared with members of the LAC strategic group.
- To develop a tracker to monitor that the health assessments of looked after children and young people placed in Bedfordshire from another authority are undertaken. This is line with the Statutory Guidance 2015.
- Once finalised to embed the East of England Protocol into practice by working in partnership with the local authorities, CAMHS, LAC Health services and the CCG.

### Conclusion

This report has shown the services that are available to Looked After Children for 2018-2019 Central Bedfordshire. The CCG will continue to monitor the provision of health services that they commission within CBC to ensure that Looked After Children and Young People receive an appropriate and cost effective service in order for them to achieve their full potential. There is a real opportunity for BCCG to work in partnership with the new health provider East London Foundation Trust to meet the needs of Looked After Children and young people.

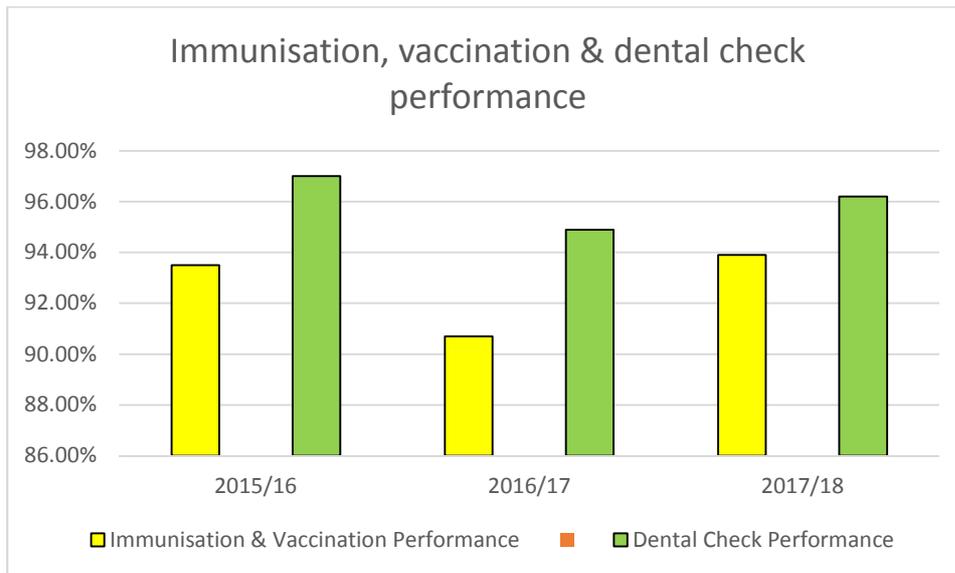
## Central Bedfordshire Council Looked After Children's Health Performance Data.

April 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 - March 31<sup>st</sup> 2018

Table 1: Central Bedfordshire Performance Data.

	2015		2016		2017		Statistical Neighbour
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
Total Number of LAC	287	N/A	304	N/A	312	N/A	274
LAC placed in county	119	41.5%	129	42.7%	128	41.0%	71.3%
LAC placed out of county	168	58.5%	173	57.3%	184	59.0%	28.7%
LAC placed in Foster Placement (total)	199	69.3	211	69.4%	216	69.2%	74.4%
LAC placed with Independent Fostering Agency	86	30.0%	82	27%	84	26.9%	n/a
LAC placed in Children's homes, hostels and other residential settings including secure units	31	10.8%	34	11.2%	25	8.0%	10.7%
LAC living independently	30	10.5%	40	13.2%	41	13.1%	4.0%
LAC placed for adoption, placed with parents or others	27	9.4%	19	6.3%	30	9.6%	n/a

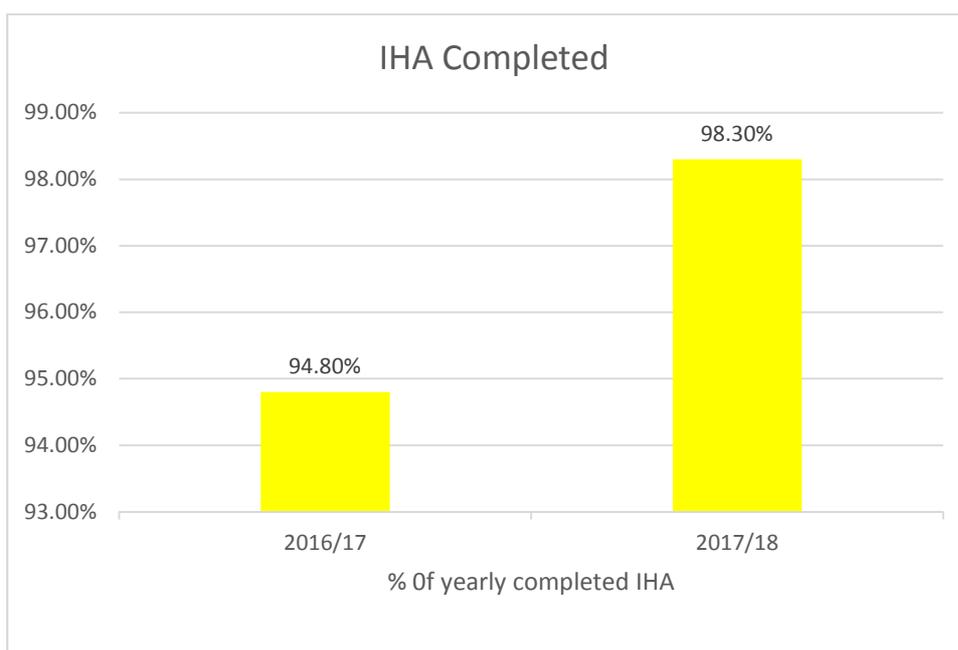
**Table 2: Performance Data for LAC in Central Bedfordshire**

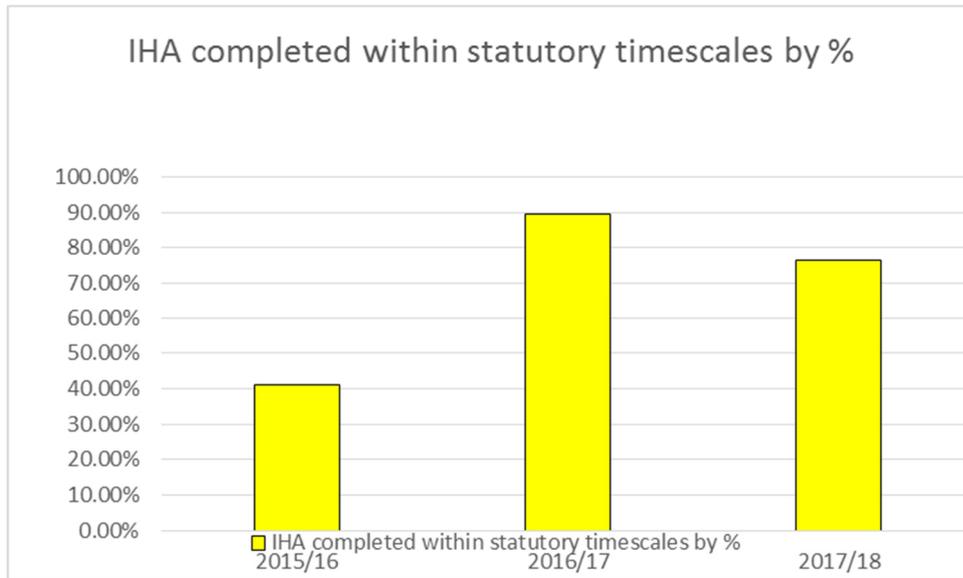


	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Statistical Neighbour Average 2015/16
Immunisation & Vaccination Performance	93.5%	90.7%	93.9%	n/a
Dental Check Performance	97.0%	94.9%	96.2%	77%

The percentage of children who have had their teeth checked and all their immunisations up to date has increased since the previous year.

**Table 3: Initial Health Assessments**





	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2017/18 Completed IHA's
IHA completed	-	94.8%	98.3%	90 out of 116
IHA completed within statutory timescales by %	41.2%	89.7%	76.5%	91 out of 119

Time Band (in working days)	No. Of Children
0-20 days	91
21-30	12
31-40	6
41-50	5
51-60	-
61-70	1
71+	2
No IHA	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>% in Timescale</b>	<b>76.5%</b>

Initial Health Assessment (IHA): 91 out of 119 new Looked After Children had their IHA within the statutory requirement of 20 days of becoming Looked After – 76.5% this is an decrease of 13.2%.

There are a number of reasons for these assessment either being late or not taking place:

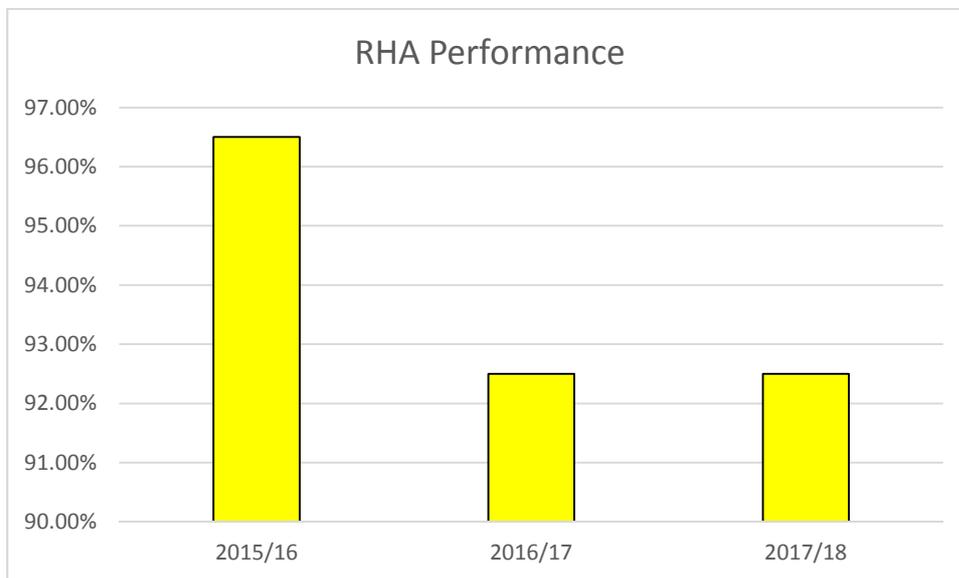
- The YP person refuses the assessment

- UCAS young people who go missing prior to having IHA completed
- The young person ceases to be LAC before the date of the IHA
- The young person is placed out of county and there have been issues in commissioning an out of area provider.
- Late referral from the Local Authority

Exception report meetings take place on a monthly basis between the LAC health named nurses and CBC. The named nurse continues to ensure that these meetings take place on a monthly basis. These meetings help to highlight any exceptions which may affect timeframes and to monitor monthly referrals which can impact team capacity and completion.

The Bedfordshire CCG are monitoring the performance data and were it falls below the standard EPUT are required to provide exceptions reports via the contractual route.

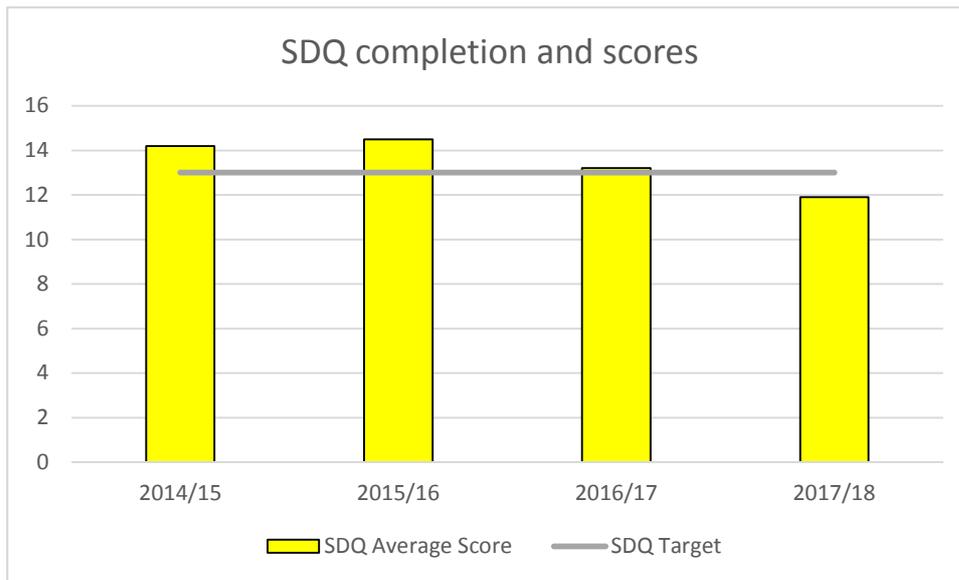
**Table 4: Review Health Assessments (RHA's)**



	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2016/17 Completed RHA's	Statistical Neighbour Average 2015/16
RHA Performance	96.5%	92.5%	92.5%	196 out of 212	81%

The CCG Designated Nurse is aware of the falling compliance over the past three years in CBC and has taken steps to mitigate risk. The Bedfordshire CCG are monitoring the performance data and were it falls below the standard EPUT are required to provide exceptions reports via the contractual route.

**Table 4: Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)**



	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Statistical Neighbour Average 2015/16
SDQ Completion Rate	-	-	100%	98.9%	-
SDQ Average Score	14.2	14.5	13.2	11.9	15.6

The average score for CBC LAC children has decreased by 1.3% in 2017/18.

The SDQ is a short behavioural screening questionnaire. It has five sections that cover details of emotional difficulties; conduct problems; hyperactivity or inattention; friendship and peer groups; and also positive behaviour, plus an “impact supplement” to assist in the prediction of emotional health problems.

The scoring range for the SDQ is between 0-40. On an individual basis a score of 13 or below is deemed as normal, with a score of 17 and above being a cause of concern (14-16 is borderline). For local authorities, their overall average score will give an indication of the level of “concern” there is across the service. From a strategic perspective, a high score will indicate that more looked after children are displaying difficulties. The score is used to inform the review health assessment carried out by the LAC nurses and will ensure that young people are signposted to the most relevant service.

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## Central Bedfordshire Council

Corporate Parenting Panel

20 December 2018

### Agency Report Quarter 2 Fostering 1 June – 30 September 2018

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**Report of:** Cllr Steven Dixon, Executive Member for Families, Education and Children and Lead Member for Children's Services ([steven.dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:steven.dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk))

**Responsible Director(s):** Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services ([Sue.Harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Sue.Harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk))

**This report relates to a decision that is Non-Key**

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#### Purpose of this report

Fostering Services Regulations 2000 requires the Fostering Agency to monitor and control the activities of the Fostering Service and ensure quality performance. Quarterly reports are presented to elected members to outline the activities in the fostering Service in order for members to monitor and feedback on the quality and performance of the Service.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to:

1. Consider and note the Fostering Agency Quarter 2 Report

#### Executive Summary

1. The Children Act 2004, Care Standards Act 2000 and associated relevant Regulations and National Minimum Standards require the Local Authority Fostering Service to report to Members regularly on the activities of the Service. This report, therefore, focuses on the work undertaken in the Fostering Service during the second quarter of the financial year 2018/2019 (1 June – 30 September 2018). It focuses on the recruitment, assessment, approval and training of Central Bedfordshire foster carers. It also reports on any Ofsted notifications, allegations, complaints and compliments received regarding foster carers or the Service as a whole.

## Recruitment of Foster Carers

2. During this quarter a variety of recruitment activities and events took place in line with the Fostering Services Recruitment Strategy which included ongoing adverts in 'First Hand', Central Bedfordshire's Trust website job vacancy pages, Sponsorship of Westoning girls Netball Team and a TV slot on BBC Look East regarding the BBC Three Counties Awards which one of our foster carers won.
3. As a result of the recruitment that took place during this period, we received a total of 27 enquiries; 7 in July; 9 in August and 11 in September (this is a similar number as the first quarter of the year). There were 16 Initial Visits during this period; 7 in June; 5 in July and 4 in September (this is 2 less than in the previous quarter). There were 7 application forms received during this period; 1 in June; 2 in July and 4 in September (this is 5 less than in the previous quarter). The best form of recruitment during this period was through a Net Native campaign (51 enquiries) followed by the CBC website (28 enquiries) followed by various Facebook adverts (12 enquiries).

## Assessments

4. As at the 30 September 2018 there were a total of 16 assessments in progress; 8 career carers (which included 1 PACE carer); 4 Regulation 24's (emergency family and friends) and 4 Special Guardianship Order assessments (SGO's).
5. In addition to the 16 ongoing assessments, 1 Independent Fostering Agency carer (IFA) transferred to become CBC foster carers during this quarter.

## Resignations/Termination of Approvals

6. During this quarter, 3 foster carers resigned, 2 because of personal issues and 1 because they moved out of the area.

## Carer/LAC data

7. As at the 30 September 2018 the Fostering Agency had a total of 102 fostering households (compared to 101 in the previous quarter), 83 of these were career carers.
8. In relation to the ethnicity of foster carers and children placed, there is a fair match of ethnicity with foster carers broadly reflecting the ethnicity of our children in care. As part of its targeted recruitment strategy, the Service is, however, aiming to recruit more carers from ethnic minority groups in order to meet the specific needs of children in care i.e. UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children).

<b>Ethnicity</b>		
<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Foster Carers</i>	<i>Looked After Children</i>
White	89%	87%
Dual Heritage	1%	6%
Black or Black British	6%	3%
Asian	4%	3%
Gypsy/Roma/Traveller	/	1%
	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

9. As at the 30 September 2018 there were a total of 137 children (59%) placed with in house foster carers compared to 136 (62%) in the previous quarter.
10. 96 children (41%) were placed with Independent Fostering Agencies (I.F.A.'s) compared to 85 (38%) in the previous quarter.

## **Referrals/Placements**

11. During this quarter there were 37 new fostering placements made. This is an increase of 12 new placements compared to the last quarter.
12. Short term placement stability continues to remain good. This is defined as children looked after with three or more placement moves during the previous twelve months (national performance indicator). During this quarter we exceeded our annual target of 8% having achieved 6.7%. This compares favourably with statistical neighbours at 11.2% and national average of 10%.
13. Long term placement stability also remains strong. This is defined by the percentage of children looked after aged under 16 who have been looked after for 2 ½ years and in the same placement for at least 2 years. During this quarter we exceeded our annual target of 77% having achieved 81%. This is well above statistical neighbours (67.9%) and national average (70%).

## **Special Guardianship Orders**

14. As at 30 September 2018 there were 155 Special Guardianship Orders in place (compared to 148 at the end of the previous quarter). Although Special Guardianship Order (SGO) carers are, generally, expected to access universal

services, they are entitled to seek support from the Local Authority as and when required.

15. The Fostering Service continues to work with a small cohort of families who contact the service for support and advice. On average the service works with about 5 families a month and will undertake visits and provide telephone support in order to meet the needs of individual carers.

## **Private Fostering**

16. At the end of September 2018, the fostering service were supporting 2 private foster carers who were looking after 2 children.

## **Training**

17. During this quarter foster carers accessed a wide range of training opportunities to help them develop their knowledge and skills. The Fostering Service provided 14 specialist in-house training courses which including:
  - How to support children who have experienced significant childhood trauma;
  - Mindfulness and stress management and
  - Skills to Foster
18. 24 carers accessed various e-learning modules which including:
  - Attachment and brain development
  - Self-Harming and
  - E-safety
19. As at 30 September there were only 2 fostering households that were overdue in completing their mandatory Training, Support and Development Standards (TSD's) in the required timescale. The relevant supervising social workers and Marketing and Recruitment Support Officer were providing additional support to help the carers achieve the standards.

## **Ofsted Notifications**

20. Whenever a significant event happens i.e. a child goes missing from placement or a serious accident/incident occurs the agency have to report these to Ofsted.
21. During this period there were no required notifications.

## **Allegations**

22. During this period 1 allegation was made against a CBC foster carer by a sibling group regarding rough handling and shouting. A professionals meeting was held where it was agreed the threshold had not been made to inform the police or L.A.D.O. (Local Authority Designated Officer). The professionals meeting made a number of recommendations to support the children and foster carers and no further action was taken.

## **Complaints**

23. During this period no complaints were made regarding the service or foster carers.

## **Compliments**

24. During this period the fostering service received 5 compliments from foster carers either about the support they had received, or services provided.

## **Staffing**

25. The Fostering Agency comes under the umbrella of the Corporate Parenting Service and the Head of Service has overall management responsibility for Fostering. Under the Head of Service is the Practice Manager who is also the Registered Manager for Fostering. This person monitors and manages the activities of the Fostering Agency. She supervises 2 team managers who have day to day responsibility for management of 2 fostering teams.

## **Annual Budget**

26. For the year 2018/2019 the Fostering Service within Children's Services has an annual budget of £1,092,557 (this does not include allowances/fees paid to foster carers).

## **Reporting to Members – Legal Requirements**

27. Regulations; associated Statutory Guidance and National Minimum Standards outline the requirements to report to Members on the management and outcomes of Services provided, in order that they can satisfy themselves that the Services provided are effective and achieving good outcomes for children.

## **Risk Management**

28. Regulatory Risks; Failure to report to Members would be a breach of National Minimum Standards.

## **Implications of Work Programming**

29. The 4 quarter reports for fostering feed into an annual report which is then presented to Corporate Parenting Panel with the Fostering Recruitment and Retention Strategy.

## **Council Priorities**

Enhancing Central Bedfordshire

Great resident services

Improving education and skills

Protecting the vulnerable; improving wellbeing  
Creating stronger communities  
A more efficient and responsive Council.

## **Corporate Implications**

30. Not applicable

## **Legal Implications**

31. This report provides updating information to allow consideration of the activities of the Fostering Agency in the previous quarter as required by legislation, there are no further legal implications.

## **Financial and Risk Implications**

32. The report is an update on the fostering service's activity and operational deliverables. This report does not have financial implications.

## **Equalities Implications**

33. Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The report highlights ongoing efforts to recruit foster carers from diverse backgrounds and to provide training and development in relation to equality issues.

## **Conclusion and next Steps**

34. The Fostering Service has an ambitious target to recruit 15 new foster carers. At the end of September 2018, the Service had approved 3 new career carer households and there are there were 11 prospective carers in assessment. If all of these assessments are positive, we would only require 1 further fostering household to be approved before the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 in order to meet this target, this is achievable.

35. As at 30 September 2018, 59% of children living with Foster Carers were placed with in-house foster carers compared to 41% with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's). This is slightly down on the previous quarter of 62% v 38% but it is hoped with the 11 assessments in progress re career carers the % of in-house carers will rise before the end of this financial year.

36. Our children continue to live in stable placements and both short term and long-term placement stability figures remain strong.

37. The stability and quality of placements our foster carers offer is also evidenced by the fact that during this period there has only been 1 allegation, no complaints, no Ofsted notifications and no fragile placement/disruption meetings required.
38. Our foster carers are consistently attending core training in order to develop their skills and knowledge which means they are in a better position to support the children in their care.
39. In conclusion this has been another positive quarter for the Service. Whilst a relatively low number of carers have been approved in this financial year, thus far, there are a high number in assessment which should support the service in meeting its recruitment target in this area. Other performance data for the service is good and provides a good indication that foster carers are providing a high standard of care to the children placed with them, that children are well matched and supported in local resources and that outcomes for them are good.

## **Appendices**

40. None

## **Background Papers**

41. None

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## Central Bedfordshire Council

Corporate Parenting Panel

20 December 2018

### Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking young person as LAC – Spotlight Report

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**Report of:** Sue Harrison – Director of Children’s Services,  
([Sue.harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Sue.harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk))

**Advising Officers:** Alex Coman – Head of Service, Corporate Parenting,  
([Alex.coman@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Alex.coman@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk))

### Purpose of this report

The report provides a spotlight report on the way the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking young people become Looked After children in Central Bedfordshire.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Panel is asked to note the content of the report

### Issues

1. Appendix 1 contains a detailed report relating to the way in which Central Bedfordshire Council support young people who arrive in the UK as unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

### Council Priorities

2. Leaving care support is a key statutory service to Looked After Children between the ages of 16 and 25 including those young people who are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. The efficient and effective delivery of this service is aligned with the Council’s priorities to offer great resident services, to improve education and skills of young people leaving care, to protect the vulnerable; improving wellbeing whilst at the same time creating stronger communities and being a more efficient and responsive Council.

## **Corporate Implications**

### **Risk Management:**

3. Regulatory Risks: The provision of suitable support for Care Leavers is a key activity monitored by Ofsted during inspections, forming part of their judgement about services for Looked after Children.
4. Child Protection Risks: Failure to effectively support young people is a child protection risk.
5. Reputational Risk: Good support and good outcomes for young people leaving care has a positive impact in the way the council delivers its statutory duties as Corporate Parent for children looked after.
6. Financial Risk: there is a financial implication to delivering support to young people leaving care. Should young people not have access to timely support and their issues escalate then there is a far greater financial risk for example if a young person enters the criminal justice system.

### **Legal Implications**

7. National regulations and legislation outline the way in which the council delivers statutory duties for young people leaving care.

### **Financial and Risk Implications**

8. This report provides information to support financial decisions / implications.

### **Equalities Implications**

9. Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
10. Looked After Children are not a protected group under the Equality Act, however the effective support of looked after children requires consideration of a range of issues related to their protected characteristics. Consideration of mental health and wellbeing can be particularly important and has been highlighted by the Office of the Children's Commissioner. Children who have been in care:

- are between four and five times more likely to attempt suicide in adulthood
- have a fivefold increased risk of all childhood mental, emotional and behavioural problems
- have a six to sevenfold increased risk of conduct disorders
- 60% of Looked After Young People have some level of mental health problem

11. The Office of the Children's Commissioner has highlighted that Asylum-seeking children and young people face inequality in experience in many aspects of their lives. Asylum-seeking children may have experienced persecution for their beliefs, or because of their ethnic or social group. Some may have seen adults they loved murdered, beaten, tortured or raped; others may have had members of their family 'disappear' with no warning or explanation. Some may have come from a country where they would have been forced to fight as a child soldier if they remained. Many unaccompanied children seeking asylum will have particular emotional, practical, language and cultural needs that require support.

12. This report sets out how asylum-seeking children are supported, and the steps taken to promote their equality of opportunity.

## **Conclusion and next Steps**

13. The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to note the content of this report

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A: Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking young person as LAC**

**Report author(s): Alex Coman**

**Head of Service – Corporate Parenting**

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## Appendix A: Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking young person as LAC

### 1. Who is an Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking young person?

The East of England Protocol, in accordance with the Home Office definition, defines an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child/young person in the following way:

An unaccompanied asylum-seeking child is any person who, at the time of making an asylum application:

- i) Is under the age of **18**, or in the absence of any documentary evidence, appears to be under 18.
- ii) Is applying for asylum in his/her own right.
- iii) Has no adult relative or guardian to turn to in the UK.

### 2. Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Young People in CBC

In October 2018 Central Bedfordshire Council was accommodating and acting as corporate parent for 42 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (hereinafter referred to as “UASC”) under the age of 18 and has corporate parenting responsibilities for a further 63 young people between 18 and 25 years old who arrived in Central Bedfordshire as unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people under the age of 18 and are now care leavers. This is a total of 105 young people.

94% (99) of our UASC and young people are male and 6% (6) are female

The 105 young people come from 12 different countries with 33% (34) having been born in Eritrea, 17% (18) in Iran and 14% (15) in Iraq.

Country of birth	Under 18	Over 18	Total
Eritrea	12	22	34
Iran	5	13	18
Iraq	5	10	15
Sudan	7	4	11
Vietnam	6	3	9
Afghanistan	3	5	8
Ethiopia	1	2	3
Syria	0	3	3
Turkey	1	0	1
Libya	1	0	1
Saudi Arabia	0	1	1
Egypt	1	0	1

### **3. The Journey of an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child/young person once arrived in the UK**

#### **3.1. Arrival**

Unaccompanied children and young people seeking asylum usually come to the attention of the police when dropped off by those transporting them to the UK. The Police take them to police stations and contact the local children's services or out of hours (EDT) service. Many of CBC's UASC are dropped off at Toddington Service on M1.

As soon as the notification is received a suitably trained Social Worker will meet the young person on the same day to determine their age and the best accommodation for them,

#### **3.2. Assessment**

Many unaccompanied and trafficked children arrive in the UK without documentation or with forged or counterfeit documents. Where the age of a young person is uncertain and there are reasons to believe they are a child, that person is presumed to be a child in order to receive immediate access to assistance, support and protection in accordance with section 51 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. Where an age assessment is required, local authorities must adhere to standards established within case law. (DoE - Care of unaccompanied migrant children and child victims of modern slavery - 2017)

All the young people claiming to be under 18 when asked by the Police are visually screened by Children's Services Social Workers with the support of translators.

Unless the visual screening strongly contradicts the age offered by the young person they are accepted as unaccompanied asylum-seeking children/young people and become looked after immediately. From that point onwards, they receive all services offered to all looked after children.

In disputed cases, a full Age Assessments is completed by two Social Workers who are both specifically trained to undertake this assessment. In order for an age assessment to be valid, it must comply with the findings of R (B) v Merton LBC [2003] 4 All ER 280 (or what is commonly referred to as the age assessment being "Merton Compliant"), where the Court provides guidance as to the conduct of an age assessment.

A named social worker is allocated to each young person as soon as they are assessed as being under the age of 18 and if they are between the ages of 16 and 18, each young person will have a Pathway Plan. The individuality of our children is reflected in their Pathway Plans which were described in August 2017 by OFSTED inspectors as "providing a rich picture of each young person. Case histories are very detailed. Care leavers are fully involved in producing their pathway plans and their views and experience shine through".

### **3.3. Accommodation**

The young people are visually assessed as soon as possible (on the same day) to ensure they are not spending long periods of time in police custody. After the visual assessment concluded that the young people are under the age of 18, they will be accommodated in a suitably staffed and supported accommodation until a full assessment of their need is completed. This is in majority of cases a fully staffed and supported accommodation. Where possible 16-17-year old UASC are placed in shared housing/semi-independent accommodation with other young people that are of same culture and language. This makes it easier for them to integrate into their new surroundings.

However, if the young person is under the age of 16, they will be placed with foster carers and not in semi-independent or other forms of accommodation.

From this point onwards, the Asylum-Seeking Young People will be treated the same as any other looked after child and the social worker is expected to provide or facilitate the meeting of all the needs of the young person including the statutory requirements for all looked after children and young people.

In the past 12 months, a service level agreement has been implemented with Central Bedfordshire's housing department's independent living team. This team now provide accommodation for 9 UASC age 16 and 17 (39%) and 8 Care leaving UASC (17%) age 18 plus who live independently. These properties are all within the local authority's boundaries, which has a range of advantages to the young people such as access to local support, in particular when they are ready to transition in to their own accommodation. The Leaving care team and the Independent living team are continuing to work together to further increase this offer.

At the time of writing 63% of our UASC young people under the age of 18 reside in semi-independent accommodation and 31% are living with Foster Carers.

### **3.4. Responsibilities of Local Authority for Looked after Children**

Looked after children's physical health and emotional well-being and mental health needs must be addressed.

Appropriate schooling/education is ensured and promoted by the Social Workers/Personal Advisers and Youth Support Service in conjunction with Virtual School.

It is also essential to ensure that LAC children engage in meaningful leisure activities, that they can pursue their chosen religious observance and festivals, that they understand and stay in touch with their cultural roots and that they participate in their local communities and networks. The service works closely with a number of agencies and service providers to promote positive outcomes for all young people in relation to diversity issues (Refugee Council, Home Office, CAMHS, Virtual School, Colleges). We are also using regularly the British Red Cross to help UASC safely re-establish contact with their birth families or other people important to them in their home countries.

All looked after children and young people need to be safeguarded and protected from negative outcomes to which they are vulnerable, such as going missing, exploitation, radicalisation, substance misuse, unemployment or homelessness.

### **3.5. Specific requirements for UASC**

In addition, additional requirements include the need to support them in their appointments with their solicitor and with the Home Office in order to resolve their immigration status.

Often, Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and Young People need to be supported to learn to speak English. This is addressed by provision of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages). Induction into UK culture is also important. There is a particular need to ensure that this is a positive experience for our young people.

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children/young people are especially vulnerable to risks of going missing or exploitation. This is particularly so whilst their immigration status in the UK is unresolved for a significant period after they become looked after.

For some unaccompanied asylum-seeking children/young people, their pathway to adulthood is not as clear cut as for other looked after children and young people. For those young people whose residence status is resolved, they become care leavers with access to the same entitlements as other care leavers.

For a smaller group of young people, their residence status is not resolved and become individuals to whom the categorisation “appeal rights exhausted” (ARE) is applied. Put simply, they are awaiting deportation. Currently, following assessment under the Human Rights Act, these young people who are not entitled to work or claim benefits are supported financially by the Local Authority with rent and subsistence and remain part of our cohort of Care Leavers.

Currently CBC supports 6 young people whose appeal rights are exhausted.

## **4. The National Transfer Scheme (NTS)**

The NTS aims to ensure that children can access the services they need by achieving a fairer distribution of unaccompanied children across all local authorities and parts of the UK, through a scheme which is equitable and transparent.

The transfer is done in accordance with section 69 of the Immigration Act 2016, Part 5.

The guidance stipulate that the Local Authorities should support a number of UASC equal to 0.07% of the authority’s total child population. In Central Bedfordshire this equates to 41 children and young people.

**5. Statistic data – regional and national comparison**

DATE	31/03/2014	31/03/2015	31/03/2016	31/03/2017	31/03/2018	31/10/2018
Total no of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children on this date.	3	18	34	46	39	41
% of UAS of the total LAC population	1.1%	6.6%	12.0%	15.2%	12.5%	12.7%

Since the introduction of the NTS in 2016, the number of UASC children looked after in Central Bedfordshire has stabilised and it remained relatively stable as percentage of the overall LAC population.

In the region, CBC is still responsible for a larger number of UASC than most of our neighbours (only Thurrock is higher) and we have more UASC in the looked after population (12.5%) than our statistical neighbours (7%) and national average (6%).

NAME	Under 18	Total LAC	% UASC that are LAC	% of Total 0-17 population	Date
Bedford	17	237	7.2%	0.04%	31/09/2018
Cambridgeshire	82	737	11.1%	0.06%	31/09/2018
<b>CBC</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	0.07%	31/09/2018
Essex	119	1086	11.0%	0.04%	31/09/2018
Hertfordshire	100	946	10.6%	0.04%	31/09/2018
Luton	24	370	6.5%	0.04%	31/09/2018
Norfolk	28	1195	2.3%	0.02%	31/09/2018
Peterborough	18	370	4.9%	0.04%	31/09/2018
Southend	11	281	3.9%	0.03%	31/09/2018
Suffolk	78	892	8.7%	0.05%	31/09/2018
Thurrock	47	311	15.1%	0.11%	31/09/2018

East (Total)	565	6753	8.4%	0.05%	31/09/2018
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CBC	39	312	12.5%		31/03/2018
SN Average			7.1%		31/03/2018
National			5.9%		31/03/2018

## 6. Conclusion

There is clear evidence that our Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking children are well supported by their Personal advisers and their Social Workers. This was also recognized by the last OFSTED inspection in 2017 who mentioned:

*“Care leavers, including unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, receive a good service. They live in good-quality accommodation and receive effective support from their social workers and personal advisers to help them to feel safe and to make good progress.”*

And

*“Personal advisers ensure that unaccompanied asylum-seeking care leavers integrate well, meeting their accommodation needs and helping to build their confidence.”*

The best testimonial of what it means to be Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking child is in the video below from the perspective of a young person:

<https://youtu.be/9x0XBqIPVzg>

**Central Bedfordshire Council**

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL**

20 December 2018

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**Looked After Children Social Worker Stability**

Report of Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services  
([Sue.Harrison@Centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Sue.Harrison@Centralbedfordshire.gov.uk))

Advising Officers:

Sacha Rymell, Assistant Director for Safeguarding and Early Help  
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Ruth Coals, Head of Professional Standards and Principal Social Worker  
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Alex Coman, Head of Corporate Parenting  
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**Purpose of this report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide further detail regarding social work stability for looked after children.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to:

1. Note the content of the report
2. Comment on the report

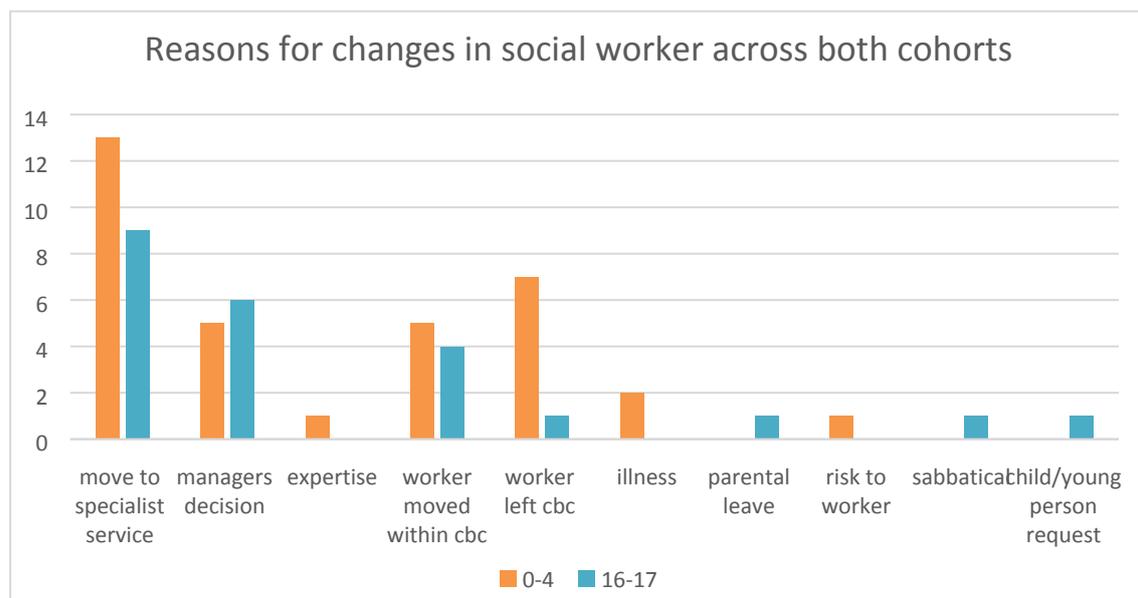
**Introduction**

2. At Corporate Parenting Panel on 25 October 2018, members were advised on the benchmarking data provided by the Children's Commissioner in respect of social work stability. Members heard that whilst Central Bedfordshire Children's Services has overall good performance compared to other local authorities in the Eastern Region and nationally, performance was below average for looked after children aged 0-4 years and 16+.
3. Members requested detail on the reasons for the change of social worker in Central Bedfordshire aged 0-4 years and 16+ over the last three years, examining the reasons for changes of social worker for the 10 children in each age group who had the most changes of social worker in this period.
4. This task was addressed by identifying the children in these age groups who had experienced the most changes of social worker ending in July 2018, considering only children who had been looked after for three or more years.

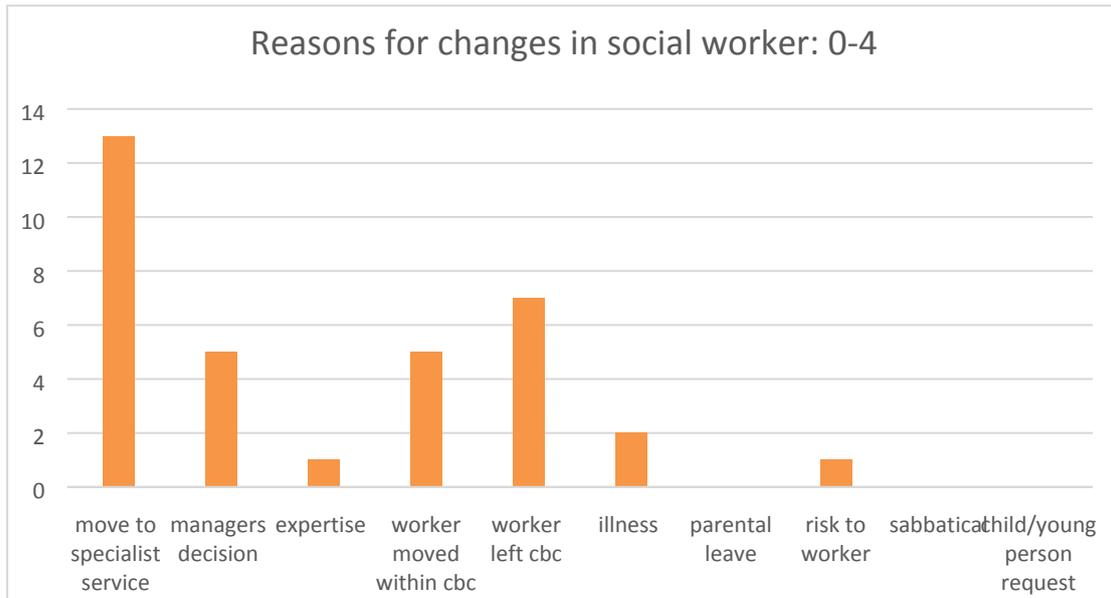
The Corporate Parenting Panel has asked to be advised on the social work stability for looked after children in Central Bedfordshire.

## Findings

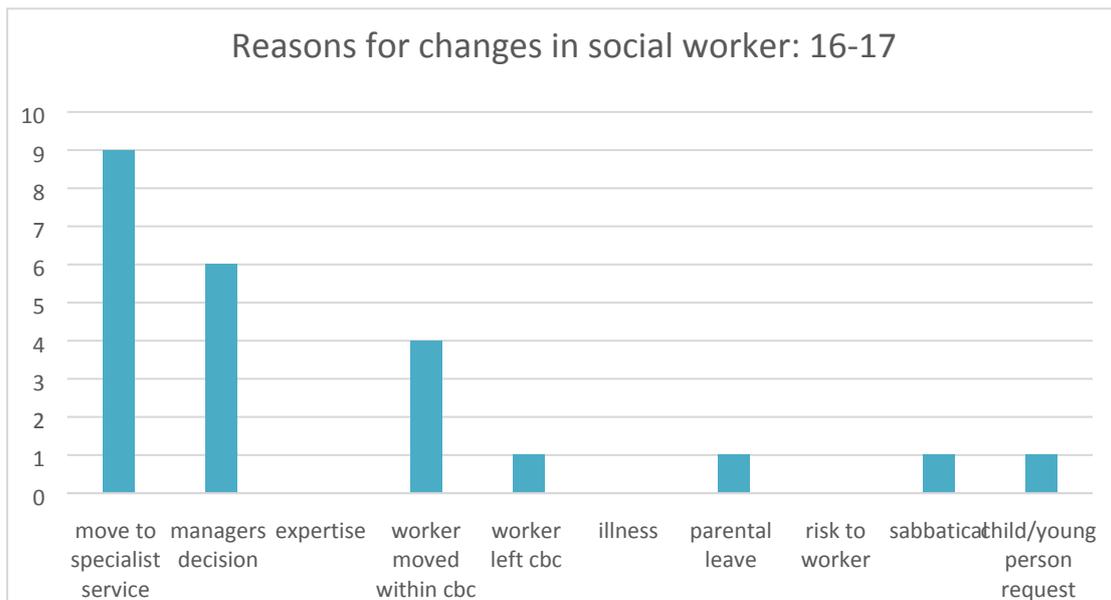
5. In terms of age group proportions, 16% of our looked after children are aged 0-4 years. 24% are aged 16-17 years. The 10 children with the most social worker changes accounted for 21% of 0-4 year olds and 14% of 16-17 year olds.
6. The primary reason for social work change across both cohorts was children moving between services as their circumstances and plan developed therefore requiring a more specialist social work response. This accounted for 22 changes of social worker. Management decisions within a service resulted in 11 changes of social worker. The social worker moving jobs within Central Bedfordshire accounted for nine changes, and the social worker leaving the employment of Central Bedfordshire accounted for eight changes of social workers. This includes agency social workers who have left.
7. Other, less frequently occurring reasons for change were expertise issues, illness, parental leave, risk to worker and at the request of the child. The change at the request of the child involved a social worker who had returned from sabbatical. Whilst this meant a further change for the child, it was a positive decision informed by the child's wishes and meant that a long-term working relationship – the social worker had been the child's social worker for three years prior to the sabbatical – was resumed. The combined 0-4 and 16-17 cohorts are detailed in the graph below.



8. In terms of looked after children aged 0-4 years, the primary reason for changes of social worker was children moving between services as their circumstances and plan changed, as for the combined cohorts and for the 16-17-year-old cohort. However, the social worker leaving the employment of Central Bedfordshire was a more frequent reason for the 0-4 cohort followed by managers' decision and change of job within Central Bedfordshire Council Children's Services. Parental leave, child request and sabbatical were not factors for the 0-4 cohort. Details are provided in the graph below.



9. In terms of the 16-17 year old cohort, similar issues primary issues were apparent as for the combined age cohorts. This is detailed in the graph below.



## Conclusions

10. For our looked after children with the largest number of social work changes, the primary reason is case responsibility moving between service so a more specialist response can be provided according to the child's needs. Moves between service in Central Bedfordshire take place so that children receive a specialist social work service dependent on their circumstances.
11. We also know that children are clear that having a change of social worker is difficult as social workers form close and meaningful relationships with them. This is particularly the case for older children. It is less of an issue for infants in terms of the social worker child relationship. Our Children in Care Council members have told us that it is essential that changes of social worker are done in a planned way whenever possible as this provides an opportunity to say goodbye and to get to know the new social worker. Carefully planned changes of social worker were acknowledged as evident by Ofsted during the 2017 inspection. It should be noted that the Independent Reviewing Officer for a looked after child does not change, thus providing continuity.
12. It is inevitable and healthy for there to be some employment turnover amongst social workers so that new colleagues join the service. It is also positive that social workers take up other opportunities within Central Bedfordshire Council Children's Service so that knowledge and skills are shared and developed. The service is committed to ensure that role changes within the service are not excessive.
13. Management decisions have had a bearing in social work changes for children. This primarily involves shorter term allocation of children to social workers during temporary episodes of position vacancies. The steady reduction in vacancy rates, including the reduced use of short-term agency staff, will contribute to this issue lessening.
14. The less frequently occurring issues for social work change, including sickness and risk to the social worker, are not readily preventable. Whilst sick levels for children's social workers in Central Bedfordshire have been low over the previous 12 months, with an average of 4.2 days of sick leave per social worker, it is on occasions necessary for children to have a change of social worker if the sick leave is extended. It is essential that staff wellbeing continues to be a high priority for the service to prevent sick leave whenever possible.

## Council Priorities

- Protecting the vulnerable
- Improving wellbeing
- Creating stronger communities
- A more efficient and responsive Council

### **Corporate Implications**

- None

### **Legal Implications**

The report does not have specific legal implications. However, the Council has a statutory obligation towards its looked after children and this report provides information as to how some of those obligations are being met.

### **Financial and Risk Implications**

- This report does not have specific financial implications. However, recruitment and retention of social workers costs less than use of agency so contributes to good budget management.

### **Equalities Implications**

- Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Ensuring that looked after children are provided with stable relationships with their social workers enables Central Bedfordshire Council to achieve better outcomes for children and young people who are additionally vulnerable.

### **Recommendations**

- Continued focus on work force welfare and retention, through the completion of the revised Workforce Retention Strategy
- Regular good quality supervision
- Prompt recruitment to vacant posts
- Ensuring that changes of social worker for looked after children continue to be planned and considered

### **Appendices**

- None

### **Background Papers**

- None

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## Central Bedfordshire Council

Corporate Parenting Panel

20 December 2018

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### Work Programme

Advising Officer:

Sharon Griffin, Committee Services Officer  
(Sharon.griffin@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

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### Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to assist the Corporate Parenting Panel in discharging its responsibilities by providing a proposed work programme for consideration.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Panel considers the proposed work programme attached at Appendix A.

1. To assist the Corporate Parenting Panel a work programme is attached at Appendix A to this report. The work programme contains the known agenda items that the Panel will need to consider.
2. Additional items will be identified as the municipal year progresses. The work programme is therefore subject to change.

### Council Priorities

3. The activities of the Corporate Parenting Panel are crucial to ensuring that the Council effectively discharges its role as Corporate Parent of Looked After Children. By considering, approving and following its work programme the Panel helps support the Council's priorities of providing improving education and skills, protecting the vulnerable; improving wellbeing and being a more efficient and responsive Council.

### Corporate Implications

#### Legal Implications

4. There are no legal implications.

#### Financial and Risk Implications

5. There are no financial and risk implications.

### **Equalities Implications**

6. Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
7. Report authors will be encouraged to work with the Corporate Policy Advisor (Equality & Diversity) in order to ensure that relevant equality implications are identified.

### **Conclusion and next Steps**

8. This report will assist the Corporate Parenting Panel in discharging its responsibilities. Any amendments approved by the Panel will be incorporated in the work programme.

### **Appendices**

The following Appendix is attached:

Appendix A – Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme

### **Background Papers**

None

Appendix A

**Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme**

<b>2018/19 Municipal Year</b>	
11 February 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption Agency 6 month Interim report (N.Phillips)</li> <li>• Virtual School for LAC Interim Report for Academic Year 2017/18 (J.Edwards)</li> <li>• The Leaving Care Offer / Council Tax Exemption (A.Coman)</li> <li>• Increased demand leading to increase need of PA support (A.Coman)</li> <li>• Comparison of the current number of Looked After Children to past numbers and covering issues such as turnover and outcomes (parents, adopted, fostered, family guardianship) (Alex Coman/Ruth Coals)</li> <li>• Placement Sufficiency Strategy (Sharon Keenan/Toni Badnall)</li> <li>• Update on the Peer Review and Ofsted Action Plan (R.Coals)</li> <li>• Fostering Q3 report (A.Craig)</li> <li>• 'Spotlight Report' on the transition of young people as they move into Adult Social Care and areas for improvement (R.Coals/Ken Harvey)</li> <li>• Spotlight Report on LAC with disabilities (K.Harvey)</li> <li>• Work Programme (S.Griffin)</li> </ul>
8 April 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
30 May 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress report on the WAY project (A.Coman)</li> <li>• Virtual School for LAC Final Report for the Academic Year 2017/18 (J.Edwards)</li> <li>• Work Programme (S.Griffin)</li> </ul>

**Unscheduled reports:**

1. LAC Annual Report
2. Adoption Support Fund
3. Fostering Service: Quarter 4 and Annual Report
5. Fostering Recruitment Strategy
6. Adoption Annual Report
7. Adoption Recruitment Strategy
8. LAC Annual Health Report
9. Health Annual Report

5 December 2018

Appendix A

10. Education Annual Report

11. Chairman of the Adoption Panel Annual report

12. Chairman of the Fostering Panel Annual report