

Short term placement stability

An addendum to a Presentation for Corporate Parenting Panel

Central Bedfordshire Council Children's Services

January 2018

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to:

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

1. Purpose of the addendum

Following a request made by the Corporate Parenting Panel in November '17 seeking reassurance regarding the number of children who have experienced 3 or more placement moves in the past 12 months, this addendum provides five pen pictures of the 21 children in this cohort.

There is a requirement placed on the Local Authority by the Department for Education (Performance indicator - exNI62) to measure the percentage of Children Looked After who experienced 3 or more placement moves over the previous 12 months

In the last 3 years CBC's performance on this indicator improved from 14% of our children experiencing 3 or more moves in March 15, to 9.9% in March 17.

At the time of writing, (January '18) this percentage has decreased further to 6.6%. This is a reduction of more than 50% compared to March 2015.

2. Examples of cases where children had 3 or more placement moves in the last 12 months

Having reviewed the placement moves for all children in this cohort these are the emerging themes:

2.1 Some of the placement moves our children are experiencing are part of practice aimed at achieving permanency for our children. An example of this is a boy who was born at Luton and Dunstable hospital. At birth, the Local Authority issued

legal proceedings and the boy was made subject to an Interim Care Order whilst still in hospital. The hospital became his first placement. When he was ready to be discharged, he moved into a 'Foster to Adopt' placement and this was his second placement. Later on, when the Placement Order was granted, the carers were matched at the Adoption Panel and the placement became an adoption placement. Whilst statistically this will show 3 placement moves for this boy, in reality he was only ever looked after by the couple who adopted him.

2.2 Eight of the children had moved due to **carers/residential homes giving notice** as a result of the child's challenging behaviour. An example of this is a 14 years old girl. She experienced long term neglect in the care of her birth family prior to coming into care. She presents as a very angry young person who finds it hard to regulate her emotions. She moved 2 foster placements after the foster carers gave notice each time as they could not cope with her behaviour. She is now placed in residential care where staff are best placed to manage her behaviours and emotions. She is now doing well and the placement is stable.

2.3 Two young people had 3 or more placement moves due to behaviour that led to **involvement with the Youth Justice**. An example of this is a 17 years old boy, who was placed in a Young Offenders' Institute (Y.O.I.). He was discharged in February 17 to semi-independent accommodation until April 17 when, following a breach of a Court Order, he was returned to the Y.O.I. On his release in June 17 he returned to live with his parents under Placement with Parents Regulations. although Social Workers and Youth Offending Services have worked intensively with him to prevent reoffending, he was arrested in relation to a burglary and he was returned in custody. Social Worker and Youth Offending continue to work with him whilst in custody in preparation for his release.

2.4 One of the young people, a 17 years old boy, had had a number of placement moves due to his **mental health needs**. He was living in semi-independent accommodation with the support of the Social Worker and other professionals. The multi-agency group raised concerns about his mental health and the impact this was having on his physical health. As a result, he was admitted to a psychiatric hospital for assessment under the Section 2 of the Mental Health Act.

After his assessment he returned to the semi-independent accommodation with targeted multi-agency support. The placement remains stable and multi-agency support is regularly reviewed to ensure it meets his needs.

2.5 One of the cases where the child experienced 3 or more moves in 12 months was **court directed**. One 12 years old boy had move from his mother's care and was placed with another carer from his family. Later, during the legal proceedings, the Court directed the child to be returned to his mother's care under Placement with Parents Regulations. However, due to further concerns regarding mother's ability to meet his needs, the Local Authority returned to Court and asked for the child to reside with a foster carer. This request was granted and the young person is making progress in his current placement.