



Walsall Council

Corporate Parenting Board

Meeting to be held on: **MONDAY 2 SEPTEMBER, 2019 AT 6.00 PM**

Your attendance is requested at the above meeting, which will be held in a conference room at the Council House, Lichfield Street, Walsall, WS1 1TW. A list of the items of business to be considered at the meeting, together with any supporting papers is enclosed.

MEMBERSHIP:

Chair: Councillor Wilson
Vice Chair: Councillor Jukes
Councillor Ferguson
Councillor Jeavons
Councillor M. Nazir
Councillor Neville
Councillor Statham

ADVISOR

Alison Jones (NHS Walsall CCG)

Note: Walsall Council encourages the public to exercise their right to attend meetings of Council, Cabinet and Committees. Agendas and reports are available for inspection from the Council's Democratic Services Team at the Council House, Walsall (Telephone 01922 654369) or on our website www.walsall.gov.uk.

ITEMS FOR BUSINESS

1.	Introductions and Apologies	
2.	Minutes To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 1 July, 2019.	<u>To Follow</u>
3.	Young People Engagement To consider and respond to the matters raised by young people and receive feedback on issues previously raised.	<u>Enclosed</u>
4.	Review of FLASH To receive an update on the review of the FLASH service.	<u>To Follow</u>
5.	Permanency (including the hub at Fallings Heath) To receive an update.	<u>To Follow</u>
6.	Annual Fostering Report To consider the annual fostering report	<u>Enclosed</u>
7.	Performance Monitoring To review performance.	<u>Enclosed</u>
8.	Work Programme To consider the work programme for the 2019/20 municipal year.	<u>Enclosed</u>
9.	Date of Next Meeting To note that the date of the next meeting will be 11 November, 2019.	

The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012
Specified pecuniary interests

The pecuniary interests which are specified for the purposes of Chapter 7 of Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011 are the interests specified in the second column of the following:

Subject	Prescribed description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by a member in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of a member. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Regulations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority: (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to a member's knowledge): (a) the landlord is the relevant authority; (b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where: (a) that body (to a member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and (b) either: (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)

Access to information: Exempt information

Part 1

Descriptions of exempt information: England

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes:
 - (a) to give any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 - (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.
8. Information being disclosed during a meeting of a Scrutiny and Performance Panel when considering flood risk management functions which:
 - (a) Constitutes a trades secret;
 - (b) Its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the risk management authority);
 - (c) It was obtained by a risk management authority from any other person and its disclosure to the public by the risk management authority would constitute a breach of confidence actionable by that other person.

Title of the Report: Children in Care Council update

Executive Summary:

The Council4Kids, the “children in care council”, is the forum where Walsall’s looked after children, young people and care leavers are able to shape and influence the parenting and support that they receive.

The Council4Kids aims to give children and young people a chance to have a say about the things that really matter in their lives and influence the council’s strategies for those in or who have recently left care.

Reason for bringing to the Corporate Parenting Board:

To update the Board on the activities and events of the children in care council.

Recommendations:

- 1. The Board notes the progress of the Children in Care Council.***

Background papers:

None

Corporate Parenting Pledges

Our Pledge to Looked After Children

- *The Council’s Pledge to Looked After Children is currently being updated: children and young people are being consulted by means of a survey on proposed changes – this will be the subject a separate report to the Corporate Parenting Board in Early 2020. The current pledge:*
- Your Education
 - We will do everything we can to make sure you have the very best education and training possible.
 - You will be supported in taking up opportunities for further education and apprenticeships.
- Your Health
 - We will do everything we can to make sure that your health is regularly checked and your health needs are addressed.
 - We will support you to maintain and improve your health and wellbeing.
- A Good and Safe Place to Live
 - We will do all that we can to make sure you have a home where you feel safe, happy and healthy and where you feel well cared for and supported. We will make sure your carers have access to the support they need to make this happen for you.
- Things to do

- We will make sure you have the opportunity to take part in sporting activities, youth clubs and other social activities without facing obstacles.
- Your passport application will be treated as a priority especially where you live in a long term placement.
- Your Voice.....Your Influence
 - We will make sure you have chances to share your views, wishes and feelings. We promise to listen to you and tell you how your views and feelings are taken into account in making plans.
 - We will make sure you know what your rights are on a regular basis and information will be shared with you in a child friendly manner.
 - Contact with people who are important to you will be actively promoted and arrangements will clearly take into account your wishes and feelings.
 - We will support the Respect group to make sure that looked after children in Walsall have their voices heard. Members of the corporate parenting board will meet with children and young people at least four times a year.

Our Pledge to Care Leavers

- We will improve the transition into adulthood so that all young people leaving care are better prepared and supported to live independently.
- We will improve access to education, employment and training and help you with your career plans.
- We will help you to experience stability in your lives, and feel safe and secure, including help to find and keep a stable place to live.
- We will provide improved access to health support, and go to medical appointments with you if you are worried to go alone.
- We will help you learn about budgeting and what bills to pay to help achievement of financial stability.
- We will respect you as individuals, not judge you on the past, and we will believe in your future.
- We will listen to you, hear what you say and spend some time with you away from the office

Resource and legal considerations:

The children in care council is supported by the Children's Champion and an apprentice who has recently been appointed.

Council Corporate Plan Priorities:

- Children have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.
- People have increased independence, improved health and can positively contribute to their communities.

Citizen impact:

The services and the improvements play a key role in the quality of life and outcomes for the children, young people and families of Walsall. The Council and its partners as Corporate Parents make critical contributions to improve outcomes.

Environmental impact:

None

Performance management:

The Children's Champion is works with children looked after and care experienced young people to ensure that that the Council4Kids is rich and engaging forum. Regular reports are provided to the Director of Children's Services and the Corporate Parenting Board.

Reducing inequalities:

The children in care council seeks to secure improvements in the equality of services, which, when achieved will have a positive impact on our most vulnerable children, young people and families

Consultation:

The children in care council is one of the key forums through which services for children in care and care leavers seek to consult on service delivery and where children and young people are able to shape and influence the parenting they receive at every level.

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Report: Children in Care Council

1.0	<p>Introduction</p> <p>The Council4Kids, Walsall's children in care council is a forum where young people looked after are able to shape and influence the parenting and support that they receive at every level. The Council4Kids aims to give children and young people a chance to have a say about the things that really matter in their lives and input to the setting of local authority strategies which affect those in or who have recently left care.</p>
1.1	<p>Walsall has an active children in care council with approximately 12 young people who participate within group settings, consultation or virtually. We have a diverse range of members whose ages range from 11 to 18 years, and we are continuing to recruit new members. We have active apprentices who work within the council and are also part of the children in care council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The last survey we undertook around 50 care leavers participated. Once the online survey is built this will help us to reach more young people; • We are working with National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum to look at further ways to increase the level of involvement and reach a wider range of young people; • Our new apprentice will work closely with young people in different settings to increase the level of engagement including regular visits to the residential homes, supported accommodation and at the drop in; • We will be attending team meeting and unit meetings to ensure information is given out to social workers and personal advisors to give to their young people. • The website is being updated so that it has a more young people friendly format; • We are in the process of piloting Whatsapp which will be part of the communication with young people, this will enable faster information to be shared and help with promoting CICC.
1.2	<p>The Council4Kids meets every three weeks to discuss issues that matter to them and to update the council on work undertaken within different services. We are continuing to promote the Council4Kids to ensure all children with care experience and care leavers are aware there is a platform for them to influence decisions that affect them and the services they access. This has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people having more of a say in decision making; • Young people who are now contributing to the Safeguarding Partnership; Young people who will be "walking the floor" at various services to see if the services are doing what they say they are doing (this includes Sexual Health, CAMHS, MASH, Early Help, Hollies, WMP); • Young people have been involved in interviews for staff and have seen candidates appointed that they have had as their first choice; • Young People attend the Corporate Parenting Board on a regular basis so that members can hear first-hand from them;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new adolescence service is working very closely with young people across the service to shape the service delivery - young people have interviewed the staff and had a major input in how this service will look; • Young people are delivering Total Respect Training monthly – staff have attended from health as well as from different council services; • Young people will be working with IRO's to look at barriers to attending their child protection and looked after review meetings - the aim is to increase meeting attendance with a more child / young people friendly approach ensuring young people's wishes are taken into consideration.
1.3	<p>Feedback from young people</p> <p>Young people who have attended the Corporate Parenting Board have welcomed the experience. They have said it gives them the opportunity to have their say and would really appreciate an opportunity to think about how the experience could be easier and less formal so it does not feel intimidating.</p> <p>Young people have also said they would like to see more of their peers participate in the events and see more young people experience the opportunities they have, for example, in the recruitment of staff and senior leaders, Youth Shadow Panel and the Council4Kids. They have also valued the activities and trips as it is enabling them to meet new friends and build their confidence.</p> <p>The young people also made a contribution to the Big Conversation which has helped to shape the transformation of children's social care services.</p>
1.4	<p>Celebrations and achievements of some of our young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well done to R for being selected to attend the Exchange and Support Conference for Care Leavers in Germany in November. • Fingers crossed for H who has also been selected but is on the waiting list if any other spaces becomes available. • Well done Lee and Ebony who participated in the Interview for the Express and Star Newspaper with Councillor Wilson around the importance of the Children in Care Council. The young people really felt this experience boosted their confidence. • Well done J who flew back from Spain on his own, this was a big achievement for him. • Well done J who passed Level 1 bricklaying course and also had an interview at college and will be starting a media course in September. • Well done J who has passed her 2nd year at university. • H as undertaken the Total Respect Train the trainer and regularly delivers the Total Respect Programme. • R is about to undertake Total Respect "train the trainer" and become a trainer along with other members of the CICC.
1.5	<p>Virtual School Activities:</p> <p>The Virtual School Tea Party took place on Friday 5th July. Primary aged children to came together to celebrate their achievements within their lives and education. Children were also able to meet small animals, have their</p>

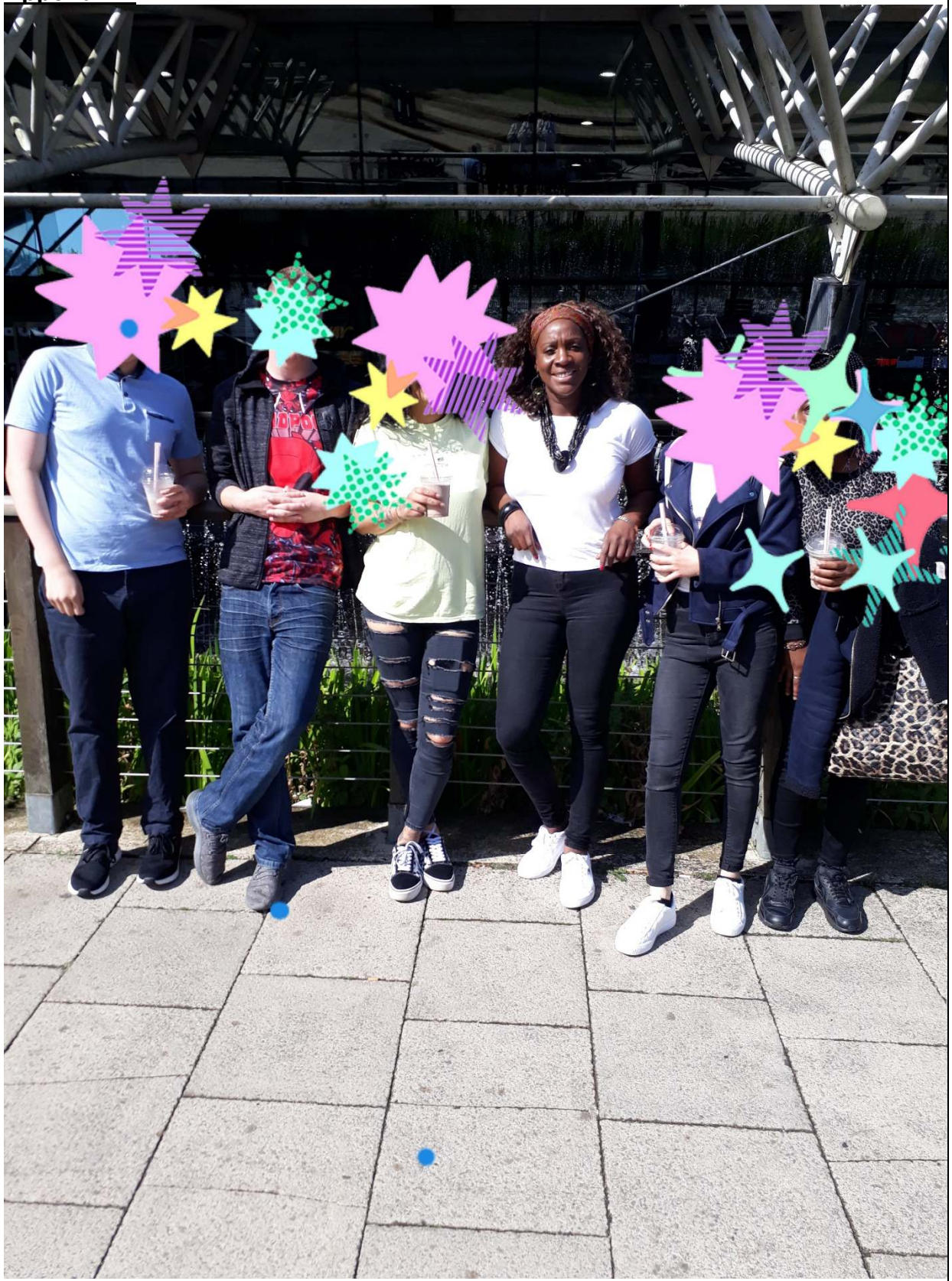
	<p>faces painted, and eat a variety of tea party foods. This sponsored by Tarmac and was great success.</p> <p>The yearly transitions residential took place at Edgmond Hall Outdoor Centre 12 and 14 July. 6 children who are moving to secondary school attended. The trip gave young people the opportunity to discuss their concerns about this transitional period whilst building friendships. The children took part in activities such as team building games, den building, and archery and had a great deal of fun. Children made friends and felt a lot more confident regarding starting secondary school in September.</p>														
1.6	<p>Total Respect Training: Further training dates are now place 10th September 2019</p> <p>New dates to be confirmed: October November Dec Jan</p> <p>Train the Trainers course will be delivered with neighbouring Local Authorities on the 28 and 29th August and three new young people and a professional will be trained which will increase the pool of trainers.</p>														
1.7	<p>Young people's football team: (See Appendix 1) Young people have undertaken weekly football training sessions and formed a team with the support of a personal advisor and a social worker. The team participated in their first Football Tournament hosted by Coventry Local Authority. Young people welcomed the experienced as they play against their neighbouring local authorities, which gave them the opportunity to meet other young people. Young people will take ownership of the team and development it further. The team are now planning to arrange a football match with their Corporate Parents leading up to National Care Leavers Week</p>														
1.8	<p>Events that took place over the summer and autumn:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>30 July 2019</td><td>Summer Event</td></tr> <tr> <td>5 August 2019</td><td>Madame Tussaud's (Appendix 2)</td></tr> <tr> <td>9 August 2019</td><td>Football Tournament Coventry</td></tr> <tr> <td>19 August 2019</td><td>Black Country Museum</td></tr> <tr> <td>26 September 2019</td><td>Carpool Karaoke</td></tr> <tr> <td>1 October 2019</td><td>Theatre Evening Wizard of Oz</td></tr> <tr> <td>11th Dec 2019</td><td>Theatre Evening Dick Whittington.</td></tr> </table>	30 July 2019	Summer Event	5 August 2019	Madame Tussaud's (Appendix 2)	9 August 2019	Football Tournament Coventry	19 August 2019	Black Country Museum	26 September 2019	Carpool Karaoke	1 October 2019	Theatre Evening Wizard of Oz	11 th Dec 2019	Theatre Evening Dick Whittington.
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1.9	<p>Meeting with Corporate Parents: The children and young people are delighted that elected members will be meeting with them on the 26 November 2019. This will be an opportunity to talk about the impact of being in care and working with the foster carers.</p> <p>The invitation for senior leaders and elected members is also extended to the Carpool Karaoke on 26 September 2019 and this is an opportunity for young people to ask their Corporate Parents things that they have always wanted to know about them.</p>														

2.0	<p>Care Leavers Week</p> <p>We have a calendar of events to celebrate National Care Leavers week. The week will start on 23rd October with a Care Leavers Brunch.</p> <p>As part of the celebrations, Care Leavers will also have the opportunity to attend The National Leaving Care's Bench Marking Forum's Big Celebration where they will have the opportunity to meet other Care Leavers, locally and nationally to celebrate achievements.</p> <p>We will also be working in partnership by supporting our Sandwell neighbours in attendance of their Care Leavers conference and end the celebrations with a celebration at the Hub.</p>
2.1	<p>Working with Catch 22</p> <p>We are working very closely with the National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum – Catch 22 to utilise their field of expertise around care leavers and children in care to increase the wider reach and sustainability of young people's engagement and participation.</p> <p>We have a six-month action plan agreed for the service, which will include a whole service approach.</p> <p>The first consultation was undertaken with the Children's Champion, the Group and Team Manager followed a meeting with the young people to think about their views of the service in preparation for how engagement and participation could be improved and include more young people.</p>

Appendix 1 :



Appendix 2



Title of the Report:

Children's Services Transformation – The Permanency Hub

Executive Summary:

The consultation programme, Walsall Right 4 Children (WR4C) - New Ways of Working, identified two core principals in respect of the future structure for children's social care services. Firstly, the need to have a structure within which front line staff were located closer to the children, families and communities that they work with and secondly, for children who may not be able to live with their birth parents, focussed services that will manage care proceedings and make timely decisions about the future care of those children. The first of these objectives will be achieved by locating staff in four locality offices; the second through the creation of a permanency hub.

This report sets out the plans for the development of a permanency hub in the context of the wider transformation of children's social care services in Walsall. In order to provide some context to the permanency hub, the briefing paper distributed to social work staff to assist them in making a choice about where they would like to work in the new structure is attached at Appendix A.

Reason for bringing to the Corporate Parenting Board:

To provide members of the Corporate Parenting Board with an update on the implementation of the transformation of children's social care services with a particular focus on the development of the permanency hub.

Recommendations:

1. Members of the Corporate Parenting Board are asked to note and comment on the contents of this report.

Resource and legal considerations:

The transformation of children's social care services is being undertaken within existing resources. The proposed structure will enable the council to continue to meet its statutory requirements for the provision of children's social care services as set out in the Children Act 1989 and associated legislation, regulation and guidance.

Council Corporate Plan Priorities:

- Children have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.

- People have increased independence, improved health and can positively contribute to their communities.

Citizen impact:

- The transformation programme will locate services closer to the communities with whom they work and create specialist services for the most vulnerable children.

Environmental impact:

- None

Performance management:

- The performance management framework will not change as a result of the transformation programme.

Reducing inequalities:

- Locating services closer to those that engage with them and providing specialist services for the most vulnerable children should help to reduce inequalities by ensuring that children and their families receive the right support at the right time.

Consultation:

- Extensive consultation was undertaken with children, young people and their families in the autumn of 2018. Consultation was also undertaken with staff.

Contact Officer:

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Report: Children's Services Transformation – The Permanency Hub

1.0	Introduction
1.1	<p>Following extensive consultation, a transformation programme is now due to be implemented. The new structure of the service will include two key strands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help and Protection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub ○ Locality Based Social Work Teams ○ Children with Disabilities • Looked After Children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Children in Care Teams (formerly Corporate Parenting) ○ Fostering Team ○ The Permanency Hub
1.2	<p>Attached, at Appendix A, is a briefing paper that has been distributed to social work staff across the service to update them about the progress with the transformation programme and to enable those social workers and managers whose role will change to express a preference about what role they would like to be considered for, in which location in the future. Responses have been requested by early September following which a detailed plan for the implementation, with a timetable, will be put together.</p>
1.3	<p>The role and function of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, the Disabilities Team, the Fostering Team and the Corporate Parenting Team(s) will remain unchanged (other than that the Corporate Parenting Teams will be known as Children in Care Teams). The primary change will be for staff currently based in the Initial Referral Service (IRS) and Safeguarding and Family Support (SFS) who will either join one of the locality teams or one of the Permanency Hub Social Work Teams.</p>
1.4	<p>This report is primarily concerned with the role and function of the Permanency Hub.</p>
2	Permanency Hub
2.1	<p>The Permanency Hub will contain the following services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hub Social Work Teams • Special Guardianship Assessment and Support • The Family Time Service (contact service) • Links to the Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC) and to Adoption@Heart (the regional adoption agency)
2.2	<p>The Hub Social Work Teams will be responsible for managing all cases involving children in care proceedings. This will be from the point at which care proceedings are issued until a permanency plan has been agreed and is being implemented. either because the children have returned to their birth family or through the making of a SGO, long term fostering, adoption or in residential care.</p>
2.3	<p>Permanency may be achieved in a number of different ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Returning to the care of parents with a robust support plan; • Placement with extended family whilst subject to a Special Guardianship Order; • Long Term Fostering, either with extended family through matching with a foster carer;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In residential care; • Through adoption. <p>The role of the Hub Social Work Teams will be to ensure that the right plan is made for each child in a timely manner.</p>
2.4	Where the permanency plan involves long term fostering or residential care, the responsibility for supporting the child or young person will transfer to the Children In Care Teams.
2.5	Special Guardianship assessments and support are also functions that will be undertaken in the Permanency Hub. For many children, a placement with extended family or friends will be the best way of achieving permanency if they are unable to return to the care of their parents. Locating this service within the hub will ensure that relatives and friends can be assessed and, if approved, supported by staff working closely with those in the social work teams undertaking the care proceedings.
2.6	The Family Time Service will be that which provides supervised contact for many children in care during the course of care proceedings. Staff from the this service should be working closely with the social workers in the hub social work teams in the provision of contact with parents and siblings. For this reason, Family Time is part of the hub.
2.7	Together with three other local authorities, Walsall has been successfully applied for funding to establish a Family Drugs and Alcohol Court. This specialist service will deal with care proceedings where parents have significant drug and / or alcohol concerns. Whilst some of those children will return to the care of their parents at the conclusion of the care proceedings, others will need a permanent placement, as outlined in 2.3 above.
2.8	Finally, the Permanency Hub will link with Adoption@Heart, the regional adoption agency in tracking and providing placements for children requiring a permanent placement though adoption.
3	Next Steps
3.1	As outlined above, social work staff and their managers have received the briefing paper, attached, as the basis for expressions of interest in the new service structure. Once those have been received in early September, time scales for staff moving into the Permanency Hub and the Locality Teams can be determined and the new structure implemented.

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Briefing Paper on Walsall Right 4 Children Social Care Transformation

1 Context

Following the consultation on “WR4C - New Ways of Working” we have now published the social care re-structure. This directly impacts staff who currently work in IRS and SFS. Staff in these areas of the service are now invited to consider deployment within our Locality Teams or the Permanency Hub.

As a result of the feedback from staff at the briefing sessions, we are providing you with a brief overview of what social work with children and families will look like post redesign and give more detail on those areas with significant change. This briefing paper aims to provide you with information about where the service area will be based, who will be working in each service area, the area of work covered and the type of work will be undertaken.

We hope this will help:

- Staff directly impacted by the service redesign to support them in making an informed decision about what team they would like to be deployed in; and
- Staff who are not directly impacted so that they can reflect on what this may mean for the work with children in their service area.

We have also arranged drop in sessions during August and early September to enable staff directly impacted to visit the venues and meet the team and managers already based in the service areas where there is significant change:

Service area	Date	Time
Permanency Hub Location: Fallings Heath – Walsall Road, Wednesbury, WS10 9SH	10.09.2019	10.00-12.00 2.00 - 4.00pm
West Locality Location: Ilmington House, Crescent Road, Wednesbury, WS10 8AE	4.09.2019	10.00 - 11.30am
North locality Location: 275 Blakenall Heath, Blakenall, Walsall, WS3 1HJ	10.09.2019	2.00 - 4.00 pm
East Locality Education Development Centre - Birchills Street, Walsall, WS2 8NG	16.08.2019	10.00 - 12.00pm
Central and South Locality SureStart Family Hub ,25 South Street, Walsall, WS1 4HE	03.09.2019	10.00 - 12.00pm

2 Overview: What will help and Support Services look like from a child's / family's perspective post redesign?

2.1 Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

The single point of contact for children who need support or protection will remain the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Once the partners in MASH have made a decision that

Appendix 1

the child needs a social care intervention, the child will be transferred to a locality team to be allocated to a social worker.

2.2 Localities

Each locality team will have two different types of social work teams:

- A social work team(s) that will be undertaking assessment and brief interventions as part of the assessments; and
- A social work team(s) who will support children and their families through Child in Need or Child Protection Plans.

The locality teams will therefore undertake assessments (S17 and S47) and work with children subject to protection plans, child in need plans, private fostering, court ordered assessments (S7 and S37) and children in the PLO process. Case responsibility will transfer to the looked after children service when care proceedings are initiated (Permanency Hub Social Work Teams) or when the plan for a child subject to S20 is permanency (Children in Care Teams).

2.3 Looked After Children

The Looked After Children Service will consist of the following elements:

- Permanency Hub
- Children in Care Teams
- Fostering / Residential Services
- Care Leavers

Where we are unable to enable positive change and we need to escalate support and intervention through court process the support will be taken on by a team of social workers in our Permanency Hub. When the court has made a decision that children need to remain looked after they will receive the support through our Children in Care Teams (formerly Corporate Parenting Teams).

2.4 Continuous Review

Our commitment throughout the transformation programme is that we will continuously review our arrangements to make sure it is making the positive difference we want it to make. So we will review the new arrangements after 12 months. Depending on the outcome of the review further changes and adjustments may need to be made. You will be actively encouraged to participate in any reviews that are undertaken.

3 Services Covered by Help and Protection - Detail

The following 3 areas in our new way of working will be overseen by the Head of Service Help and Protection:

- Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub - MASH
- Social Care Locality Teams
- Children with Disability Team

3.1 Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub - MASH

Appendix 1

We will retain our central front door, which includes MASH and the Early Help Hub. A group manager will have oversight of this service. The staff structure will remain as is but our transformation will focus on the development of partnership working to ensure we have strong accountability for decision making and enabling the right children to get the right help (Support of Thresholds) at the right time.

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub will continue to maintain the same timescales as at present to evaluate contacts and to hand them onto the most appropriate service to provide the support needed by the child / family.

3.2 Locality Teams

Following a decision by the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, those children and families requiring a service will be referred onto one of the 4 locality teams. The 4 locality teams will be managed by two group managers, each of whom will be responsible for overseeing two localities. The social work resources will be deployed based on the demand in each locality (identified through our needs assessment). Social workers will be co-located alongside the early help teams in the localities. There will be a focus on connecting practitioners with communities and local resources, getting to know our children and families well to enable them to become more resilient and stay together.

Following consideration of feedback from staff during briefings, we have reconsidered how we will deliver our services in each locality and as a result, each locality team will have:

- Social Work Team(s) who will take Child and Family Assessments / short term interventions; and
- Social Work Team(s) who will provide support through a Child in Need plan or Child Protection Plan

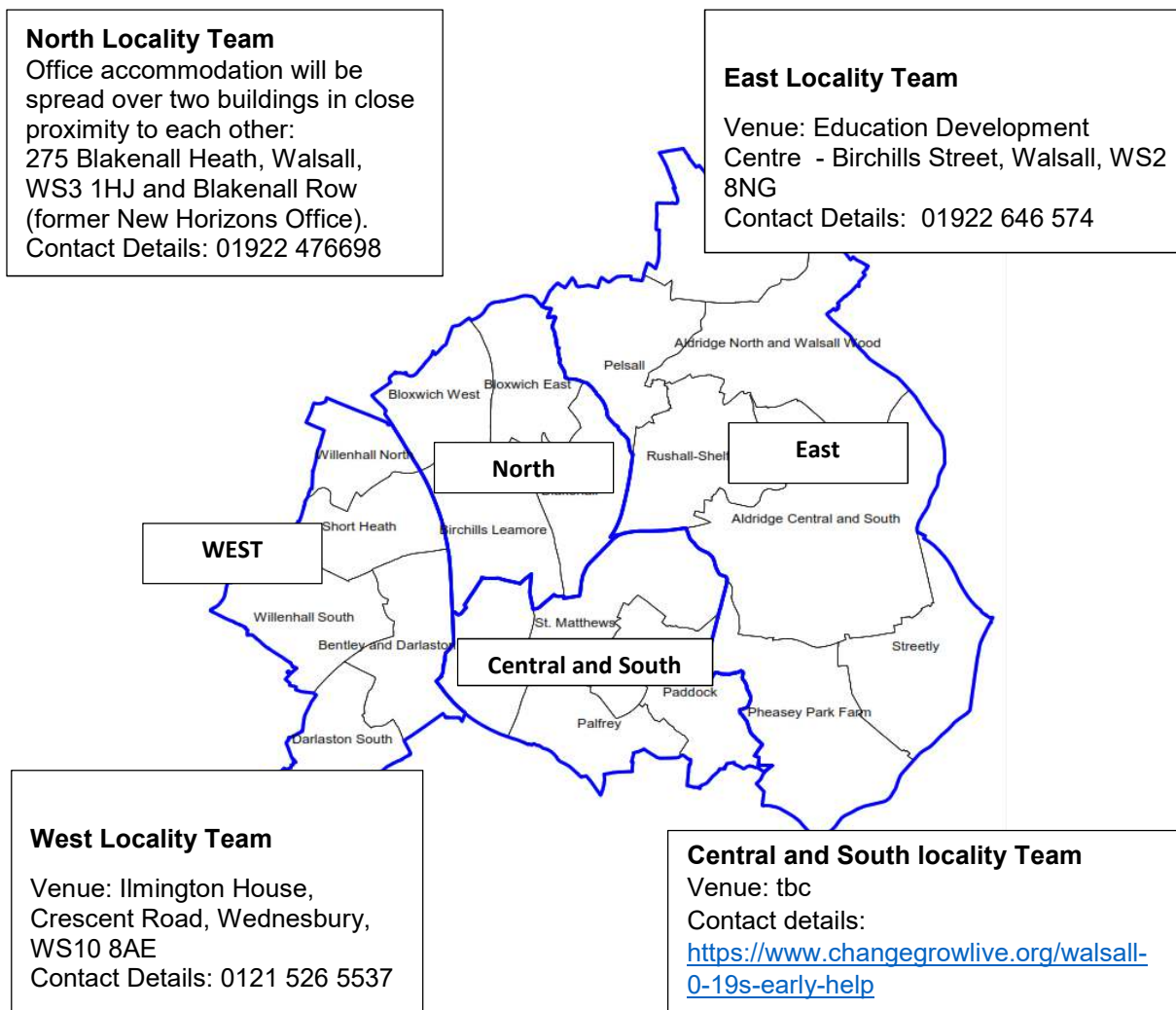
There will be further opportunities to further develop a restorative approach to social work, underpinned by additional training opportunities. Social workers will be provided with regular, high quality supervision.

We have submitted an application to be part of the DfE Strengthening Families, Protecting Children programme to develop the Family Safeguarding Model as part of our locality working. If successful, this will secure additional funding and the development of the model will enhance our locality model by bringing in additional support from adult specialist workers (mental health, substance misuse and domestic abuse) as well as bring in an evidence based practice model, aligned to our restorative approach. We should find out the outcome of the bid in September.

If you want to know more about the Family Safeguarding Model and the impact that the model has made in other local authorities, please see the following links:

- Under One Roof (video) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ilm7OfqGN4g>
- Community Care Article - <http://email.communitycare.co.uk/q/17HNk6oaduJJHTtEribulv/wv>

3.2.1 What are the localities and where will social workers will be based?



3.2.2 Locality Profiles

In order to realise our WR4C vision we need to do things differently, including, moving away from centrally based assessment teams to a locality model, focussing on connecting practitioners with communities and local resources, and getting to know our children families well to enable them to become more resilient and stay together.

Following the restructure there will be a workforce development programme focussed on practitioners located in localities getting to know their communities and connect with the resources around them.

The link below takes you to the locality profiles that have been created by the Walsall Insight Team - they will provide you with insight into the different demographic characteristics and challenges faced in each locality from whole population perspective providing a really good overview of the community context in which you will be working.

<https://www.walsallintelligence.org.uk/home/profiles/locality-profiles/>

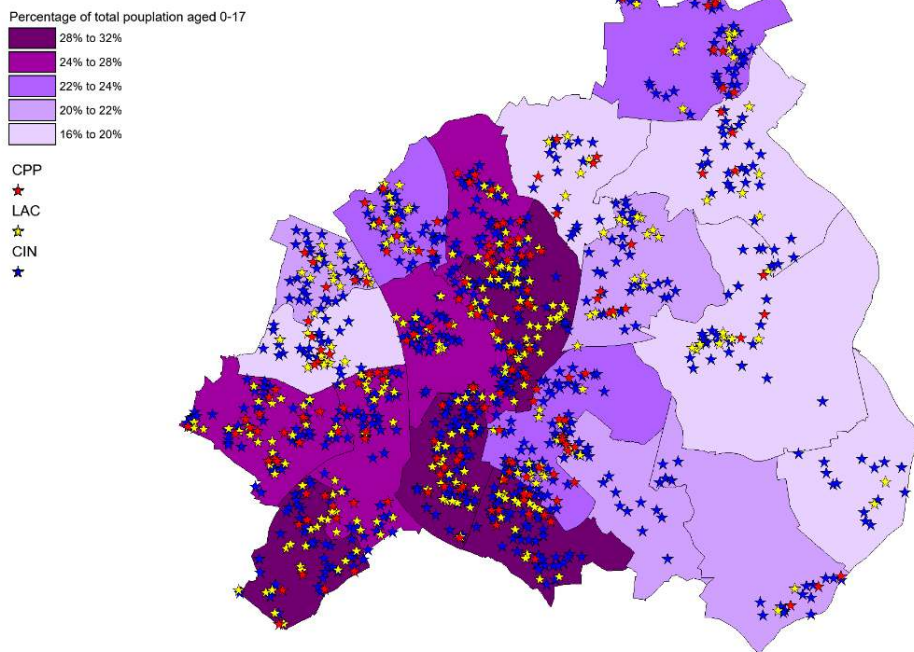
Appendix 1

3.2.3 What type of work will social workers in localities be doing?

Each locality will have resources deployed based on the demand for social care assessments (both child and family assessments and section 47s), CiN Plans and Child Protection Plans. In most instances, social work teams will be working with children living in their locality. However we want to build in flexibility and integrated approach across the 4 localities and therefore at times, where a locality has greater demand than resources, other localities will be drawn on to help and support.

3.2.4 Children in Need by Locality

Location of All Categories 31/03/2019



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3.2.5 Who will social workers in localities be working with?

As well as understanding the context in which young people live, the main benefit of locality working will be enabling social workers to draw on community resources and maximise opportunities to secure sustainable change. There are already some really good partnerships established in each of the localities which will aid your social work practice.

3.2.6 Early Help Teams and partners already based in localities

There are already Early Help Family Support teams established in each of the 4 localities. The locality teams have a skilled workforce that social workers will be working with as well as a range of group work programmes. The link below provides an overview of the current programme available in each locality.

http://www.mywalsall.org/ckfinder/userfiles/files/Targeted%20Delivery%20Sept%20-%20Dec%202018_pub.pdf

Appendix 1

In addition to our **Early Help locality teams** we have representatives from the following partners who deliver interventions from each locality and co-locate there on a part time basis. This will enable better communication and a more coordinated approach with our key partners including:

- **Police** –PCSO's
- **Health Visitors**
- **School Health**
- **IMPACT** (advice on employment and training)
- **Positive Steps** (which is our CAHMS tier 2 service)

If you want to find out more about who you will be working with – speak to one of the team managers currently based in the locality Hubs or drop in to one of the sessions during August and September.

3.2.7 Schools

Schools are key partners in our WR4C journey and are keen to develop better relationship with social work teams in each of the localities to ensure better communication and better support for children and families

The link below provides an overview of the different schools you would be working with in each locality –

<http://www.mywalsall.org/walsallearlyhelp/map/>

3.2.8 Voluntary Sector

Each locality has many voluntary and community sector organisations that social workers will be able to build a relationship with and pull in the right support for the children and families being working with.

One Walsall, our Council for Voluntary Sector, operates a 0-19 network called 'One Voice' in each of the localities and provides a single point of contact to get to know everything about the range of organisations and groups in each locality. The link below provides some further information.

<https://onewalsall.org/what-we-do/network/>

3.3 Children with Disabilities Team

Children with Disabilities Team will remain as a centrally based team providing a social work assessment and care planning service to children and young people aged 0-18 years who have a 'permanent and substantial' disability in Walsall. Transformation priorities within this service area will be about strengthening the connections with the locality resources and the development of an all age disability pathway with adult social care.

The team will be managed by one of the locality group managers.

3.4 Adolescent Service

A new, preventative service working with adolescents is being developed. Recruitment to the posts in the service is in progress and it is envisaged that the service will open its doors during the course of the autumn. The location of the service has yet to be finalised but it will provide a service to young people from across the borough.

Appendix 1

4 Services covered by Looked After Children Service - Detail

The following 4 areas in our new way of working will be overseen by the Head of Service looked after children:

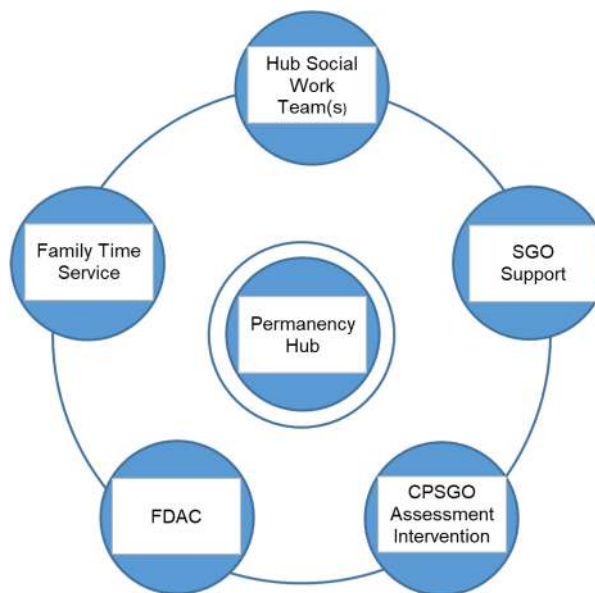
- Permanency Hub
- Children in Care Team
- Fostering / Residential Services
- Care Leavers

4.1 Permanency Hub

4.1.1 Working in the Permanency Hub

The Permanency Hub is a new area of development as part of the transformation and will have a focus **on** ensuring that a child has a long term, safe, secure and nurturing environment in which to grow up. Ideally that will be with their birth parents but if that is not possible, it might be with members of their extended family, a foster carer, adopter or, in some instances, a residential home.

4.1.2 What is in the Walsall Permanency Hub?



The Hub Social Work Team will be responsible for managing all cases involving children in care proceedings. This will be from the point at which care proceedings are issued until a permanency plan has been agreed – either because the children have returned to their birth family or through the making of a SGO, long term fostering, adoption or in residential care

Children ‘in care’ living at home with parents or living within kinship and network placements are experiencing a range of outcomes, some poorer than those in non-family foster care. The Hub will focus on bringing together the key elements that cover the assessment and support pathways for these children and carers.

- Strengthening the intervention work and analysis in the connected persons’ assessments
- Identifying the right type of support to achieve stability for children, young people and their families

Appendix 1

- Unrelenting focus on safely moving children onto family orders rather than public law orders, by way of supporting special guardianship,
- Ensuring that there is good advice and support for connected cares from Grandparent Plus and the Connected Persons Support Team.

New adoptive parents need a real understanding and connection to that chosen child's history, context and family life. The Hub Social worker is a key part of that process. Hub social workers will work with the birth family network, closely with the Family Time Team and Adoption@Heart to ensure that we secure children in their permanent home as soon as possible

The Hub will work with the FDAC service from 2020 who will undertake the direct work in court with parents who have alcohol and or drugs as significant features in their cases.

4.1.3 Which children will social workers in the Permanency Hub be working with?

The Hub workers will be working with

- Children in proceedings
- Children and young people at home with their parents on care orders
- Children and young people with connected persons on care orders
- Children with a plan of adoption and subject to placement orders working closely with Adoption@Heart.

We will work to drive up the quality and depth of assessment across all types of care arrangements. Eventually, the Hub will work to support timely and early permanence planning by undertaking the assessments of all unborn children in the system open to social care.

We will be working closely with our colleagues in health who have agreed to be a virtual Hub in this critical area of work. We will aim to deliver evidenced informed permanency plans for children when born who require court intervention seeking to produce evidence in court that will show at first application that we have the right plan for the right children at the right time.

4.1.4 What type of work will social workers in the Permanency Hub be doing?

Social workers in the Hub will have the chance to **build real and connected** relationships with children and their families. Within the framework of restorative practice, social workers will have the opportunity to enhance and develop their skills in Motivational Interviewing, Mentalisation and Assessment of Adult Attachment and the opportunity to learn Trauma Based Narrative Intervention.

They will learn to work in a service informed by the AMBIT approach. More information about AMBIT can be found on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HrEgDds0hNo>

Social workers in the Hub will have the benefit of continuous learning about permanency with the active support we have secured from Professor June Thoburn, international expert in permanency and the opportunity to join a community of practice being established by the Family Justice Observatory. Walsall is a proud founder of this development.

Location: Fallings Heath – Walsall Road, Wednesbury, WS109SH

4.2 Children In Care Teams

The Children in Care Teams (formerly Corporate Parenting) will continue to provide support to those children and young people who will remain looked after by the council until they are ready to leave care. Their role will remain unchanged.

4.3 Provider Services

Provider Services is not directly impacted within this current phase of transformation. However, following a review of the service, there is separate proposal in respect to the reconfiguration of the Teams. This includes expanding the Connected Person Assessment Sub Team to full Connected Person Assessment and Supervision of Connected Person Team

The proposal envisages that the new Connected Person Team will be co-located with Permanency Hub – although the Team will work across the Service in completion of assessments of connected person and Special Guardianship

4.4 Transition and Care Leavers Team

The Care Leavers' Service will continue to provide support to young people / adults who are in the process of leaving the care of the council.



PROUD OF OUR PAST OUR PRESENT AND FOR OUR FUTURE

Fostering Service Annual Report

April 2018 – March 2019

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the activity of the Fostering Service from 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019. It includes information about the recruitment, assessment, approval and de-registration / resignation of foster carers. Information is also provided on other aspects of the service such as complaints and allegations.

2. The Structure Of The Fostering Service

- 2.1 The Fostering Service continues to be based at 106 Essington Road, Willenhall. During 2018/19 the service comprised of the following:
- 2.2 Group Manager Provider Services - the primary objectives of this role are:
- Responsible for the service planning and management of all local authority fostering and adoption services.
 - Registered Manager of the Fostering and the Adoption Service.
 - Adoption Support Services Advisor (ASSA) for the Adoption Service
 - Line Manager for the Residential Services Manager who has responsibility for the Local Authority children's homes
- 2.3 Recruitment and Assessment Team - this team is responsible for all marketing, recruitment, training and assessment activities. They undertake the assessments of mainstream and family and friends foster carers. The team provides supervision and support to carers until their first annual review. A full time customer services officer responds to all enquiries from adults expressing interest in becoming foster carers or adopters. There is also a recruitment and promotions officer who has been instrumental in the production of new marketing materials and the coordination of new marketing events. The team also provides assessment of friends and family members to become a connected carer under the Fostering Regulations or to apply for a Special Guardianship Order.
- 2.4 Support and Development Team - this team is responsible for providing supervision and support to temporary and permanent carers, including family and friends (known as connected carers). They also provide a duty service which ensures there is always someone available to deal with concerns or questions from foster carers. The team also completes permanence assessments and is responsible for the submission of reports to the annual foster carer reviews.
- 2.5 Fostering Reviewing Officer - the remit of the Fostering Reviewing Officer (FRO) changed in October 2018 as a result of internal review. The FRO now undertakes all first reviews of foster carers, reviews of carers following concerns and allegations and every third subsequent annual reviews. All reviews chaired by Fostering Reviewing Officer are submitted to Panel for a recommendation.

3. Service Development

- 3.1 Progress has been slower than expected especially in respect of ensuring the quality and timeliness of support to existing fostering households, recruitment of

mainstream carers and the transition of family and friends carers to Special Guardianship Orders.

3.2 The following developments have progressed:

- 3.2.1 The Mocking Bird model of household support and supervision was successfully implemented. It was launched in July 2018. The model is based on the appointment of a "Hub Carer" who provides support including overnights stays for looked after children for 6 to 10 households. Two hubs have been in operation since September 2018. A further two hubs are due to go live by the December 2019. The programme has met all fidelity checks set by the licensee, the Fostering Network. Programme leads have been invited to speak at both local and national conferences.
- 3.2.2 A full review of the marketing strategy was undertaken in light of the developments within social media. The review found that the service was a leader in the region with the website design and use of FaceBook as well as starting to make good use of Twitter. However, the gains could not be fully realised without a Customer Relations Management (CRM) tool. Investment in such a tool and training of staff in the use of the software was completed by March 2019. Early signs are that the customer journey from enquiry to assessment has significantly improved and more targeted campaigns are now possible.
- 3.2.3 An independent audit of the service was undertaken in February 2019 with findings presented to the Corporate Parenting Board in July 2019. This audit highlighted a range of operational issues that required addressing in particular the development of specific performance reports and redesign to ensure more effective assessment and supervision of friends and family foster carers.
- 3.2.4 A new allowance and fee structure was the subject of consultation in 2017/18 and was successfully implemented in April 2019. This fee structure has scope for the inclusion of specialist carers - specialist parent and child foster carer has now been identified and a pilot household in operation. Findings from this will be reviewed by the autumn of 2019.
- 3.2.5 The completion of SGO assessments by Supervising Social Workers in the Support and Development Team was reviewed with a number of recommendations on changes to permanency planning practice being identified. This included how the transition should be tracked by the service and how support plans could be considered and signed off in a timely way.
- 3.2.6 The role of the Fostering Reviewing Officer has been reviewed. This confirmed the short fall in capacity to complete all annual household reviews on time along with a completed record that meets regulatory requirements. A revised remit was agreed and implemented in February 2019.

- 3.2.7 Further changes have been made in Mosaic, the recording system, to ensure that data requirements are met.
- 3.2.8 Work with Walsall Fostering Care Association has continued. Their future role in the recruitment and support of fostering households has been reviewed. The outcome of the review will be fed in the service level agreement that should be in place by March 2020.

4. Recruitment

4.1 Foster Carer Recruitment – National Picture:

- 4.1.1 The Fostering Network annually calculates recruitment targets, estimating the number of foster families that fostering services need to recruit during the next calendar year across the UK. The figures take into account a number of factors including the percentage of the foster carer workforce leaving each year and the rise in the numbers of children in care.
- 4.1.2 Within the West Midlands the Fostering Network calculate that a further 850 fostering households would be required in order to meet the rising demand for local family based placements.
- 4.1.3 Recruitment is still taking place in what could be described as an “overcrowded market” with Local Authorities competing with Independent Fostering Agencies and Voluntary agencies.

4.2 Fostering Service Recruitment – Response:

- 4.2.1 A Recruitment and Promotions officer experienced in digital marketing was appointed in October 2018. This appointment has been instrumental in the changes on website and Facebook accounts. Her expertise has meant the full revision of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy. This has subsequently been agreed by the Recruitment and Retention Strategy Group chaired by Commissioning Manager in June 2019.
- 4.2.2 During 2018/19, 35 public events were held in and around Walsall (including those during Foster Care Fortnight.) This is a slight increase from last year. Attendance at information sessions at key community venues has declined over the previous 12 months and these sessions were reduced to one per month. However, with the improved social media output the frequency of these events has recently returned to twice a month. From these events, 15 approaches were made, resulting in 10 enquiries / applications. From digital and online media, 69 approaches were made, resulting in 35 enquiries/applications. Other enquiries are by word of mouth or other advertising.
- 4.2.3 The continued decline in enquiries, initial visits and approvals compared to the previous year is of a concern. However a review of the enquiry pattern suggests an improvement with the appointment and work of the marketing

officer and introduction of CRM starting to realise an upturn. This is seen in the marked upturn during January when the first of digital media promotions was organised. A further event is planned for September 2019. The conversion rate remains sound – at 13% which suggests that marketing is targeted appropriately.

4.4 Enquiry levels;

Fostering	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Enquiries	105	120	109	111	116	135	95
Initial visits	34	71	67	62	75	57	39
Approvals	8	9	17	18	21	13	12
Conversion rate	8%	8%	16%	16%	17%	10%	13%

4.5 Total requests for information and enquiries:

Month	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
April	11	6	14	16	6	15	40
May	28	8	35	11	19	26	18
June	12	19	14	22	3	22	10
July	17	26	13	7	8	16	15
August	8	15	8	18	6	13	13
September	17	30	10	22	7	36	14
October	8	15	12	18	8	45	15
November	13	24	5	12	7	20	12
December	7	9	6	3	4	3	8
January	17	26	26	7	17	8	102
February	16	20	18	15	10	4	50
March	13	15	15	8	21	21	24
Total	167	213	176	159	116	254	321

4.6 Information Requests And Enquiries By Source Of Marketing Methods

	Word of mouth – carer referrals	Word of mouth – other	Event	Media – local & national	Other service publications	Posters & banners	Leaflets	Walsall Website	Google Search	Face book	Other	Total
14/15	41		27	3	4	0	1	91			9	176
15/16	16	17	2	2	3	0	0	18	88	1	2	159
16/17	13	17	24	11	3	3	6	26	55	49	13	220
17/18	8	12	8	8	2	1	5	119	24	51	16	254
18/19	6	1	6	0	0	0	0	81	1	115	103*	321

* Most of these were received via e-mail

- 4.6.1 We continue to pay £100 to the Foster Carer Association for each? foster carer that they (and the foster carers) help us recruit; this is currently being reviewed.
- 4.6.2 Of the 12 families approved, the source of their initial enquires was as follows Google (1), Internet (2), Word of Mouth (carer) (1), Word of Mouth (other) (1), Walsall website (4), Walsall employee/event (1) and Other (2). The previous year 3 carers transferred in with Walsall children already in placement; there was 1 last year.

5. Assessments and Approvals

- 5.1 Of the assessments which led to the 12 approvals, all were undertaken by social workers in the Recruitment and Assessment team. The average timescale of the recruitment process from receiving the prospective applicants offer to panel date was 190 days; this is a further improvement on last year's performance of 225 days. The timescale from beginning the assessment to presentation at panel was also down from 183 to 150 days.
- 5.2 The target of approving the majority of foster carers within 8 months was met. However the completion of the assessment is still over 4 months. A further review of the assessment process will be undertaken as part of the Improvement Action Plan arising from the independent review of the service.

5.3 Approvals

Type of carers	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19
Mainstream approvals	15	20	8	9	15	18	21	13	12
Mainstream de-reg & resignations	8	17	10	12	15	12	17	20	16
Mainstream gain/loss	+7	+5	-2	-3	0	+6	+4	-7	-4
Short-Term Breaks (STB) approvals	2	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
STB de-reg & resignations		0	0	2	1	0	0	2	0
STB gain/loss	0	+2	0	-2	+1	0	0	-2	0
Overall gain/loss	+7	+7	-2	-5	+1	+6	+4	-9	-4

5.4 Although the net losses are not as significant as in 2017/18, it is clear that further work is required to ensure that recruitment is able to cover the resignations / de-registrations. In terms of the 16 resignations, the reasons given were allegations & concerns (4), family circumstances (5), change of carer/not suited to fostering (4), became Staying Put carer (2), Issues re policy, skills levels, payments (1). There were no transfers to IFAs.

6. Supervision, support and reviewing

6.1 Supervision - The fostering service delivers effective regular supervision to all foster carers in line with their need for support, supervision and personal development, as detailed in the policy for foster carer supervision. The service has reviewed the broad training and development needs of foster carers as a consequence of feedback from supervision, and provided training opportunities to meet identified gaps; for example, the courses on looking after Muslim children and combating extremism.

6.2 Visits - According to the fostering service regulations, at least one unannounced visit is undertaken to each fostering household each year. The frequency of unannounced visits is recorded on the electronic system and monitored via the foster carer annual review process. In 2017/18 compliance at the end of financial year was 90%. The performance at the end of 2018/19 continued to be 90%. Monthly performance reports which will provide Managers timely information around the compliance with supervision will be introduced in 2019/20.

- 6.3 Walsall Foster Care Association (WFCA) - The WFCA provides support to carers through a variety of activities:
- Distributes a quarterly newsletter
 - Offers a buddy scheme to carers
 - Assists in recruitment activity
 - Participates with the service in developing and reviewing policies and procedures
 - Supports carer training
 - Runs coffee mornings and support groups
 - Organises social activities
 - Is involved in regular communication meetings with the service
- 6.4 EDT - Foster carers can access support and advice out of hours via the Council's Emergency Duty Team (EDT). All foster carers have the contact details for EDT and reports from carers who have used the service are positive. Carers use the service to report significant events and to seek guidance. On occasions social workers have visited carers' homes out of hours, most usually in response to children exhibiting disruptive behaviour.
- 6.5 Psychological support - the Fostering Service continues to make good use of the regular consultation surgeries provided by Flash Service – the Tier 2/3 CAMHS service. The Hub Carers with the Mockingbird Service use this service to consult on the support they provide to the households in their hubs. Supervising Social Workers support foster carers to make use of the advice and support attendance by children requiring intervention.

7 Permanence

- 7.1 Walsall has a commitment to ensure that a child's need for a permanent home is addressed and that a permanence plan is made at the earliest opportunity. The aim is to ensure that each child has an agreed permanence plan in place by the second Looked after Review.
- 7.2 The expectation is that all children under the age of 16 will have a permanency plan; this can range from an eventual return home, a long term placement with a foster carer, a Special Guardianship Order, a Child Arrangement Order, or Adoption. For those 16 plus, the expectation is that their permanency plan will be addressed through their Pathway Plan.
- 7.3 An Adoption and Permanence Panel was established in January 2016 in order to give long term fostering the same gravitas as adoption, and family finding was transferred to the Adoption and Permanency Team.
- 7.4 The post of permanency co-ordinator was created in 2016 to track and monitor all permanency plans. All children with a care plan of long term fostering, adoption and Special Guardianship Order (SGO) are monitored in respect to timeliness and to prevent delays for our looked after children. The full time post

for SGO post order support has also supported families in progressing SGO applications as a means to achieve permanency with the confidence that this support will be offered after the order is granted. In 2017-18, 34 SGOs were granted, In 2018/19 26 SGO were granted.

- 7.5 A monthly meeting has been to consider all extraordinary support plans for foster carers considering SGO has been established and reviewed. This meeting has been able to assist in identifying the key support issues for prospective Guardians and will assist in the further development of post order support.

8. Family And Friends As Carers And Special Guardianship Support

- 8.1 Family and friends arrangements are often very complex situations with families struggling to come to terms with the reasons why the children have become looked after. Family and friends carers receive the same level of supervision as mainstream carers. The Skills to Foster training tailored specifically for family & friends carers was introduced in 2015-16 and continues to be offered to Friends and Family carers.
- 8.2 Potential carers within the children's own family or friendship network are identified by the children's social worker. In order to ensure referrals for assessment of such carers are viable the Service has introduced the practice of children's social worker and assessing social worker visiting the prospective carer together to decide if an assessment should proceed. Such visits have been found to greatly assist in the determination of the viability of the connected person placement. Despite this finding the practice of joint visits remains variable with just over 50% referrals subject to a joint visit. Work will continue to promote the joint visits.
- 8.3 In addition to this the Service continues to along with provide Safeguarding and Family Support Service to provide feedback on the quality of the viability assessments and as well as developing the understanding of the children's social worker in relation to requirements should the kinship carer be assessed as foster carer.
- 8.4 On 31 March 2018 there were 72 Family and Friends carer households caring for 113 children and young people. This is a decrease 11 households from last year but remains a higher proportion both nationally and with our statistical neighbours

9. Placement and Resources Team

- 9.1 The Placement and Resources Team commissions all external fostering and residential placements, when our internal provisions are exhausted or not available. The service will approach Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA) usually in line with the regional framework and consider the fees depending on profile and any issues. Costs are always negotiated subject to contracts / when the LA is working off contracts for spot purchasing. The team provides the monitoring of external placements as part of the quality assurance at an

external placement panel with senior managers and partners that reviews external residential places.

10 Staying Put

10.1 The provision for 'Staying Put' has ensured that many young people are now able to remain with their carers for a much longer period of time after their 18th birthday and this year has seen 20 young people and their carers accessing this opportunity. However, this does result in less placement availability for other children and young people. For the period 2018/19, 18 out of the 20 Staying Put arrangements were for internal foster carers, which is a similar figure for last year. Although this continues to represent a challenge around managing the availability of fostering places it remains important to ensure offer of staying put is made to every young person in foster care.

11 Placements

11.1 The breakdown for placements as at the 31 March 2018 was as follows

Year	Temporary	Permanent	Family and friends	Short term breaks	Total
12/13	194	40	122	8	364
13/14	184	61	124	6	375
14/15	134	99	120	5	358
15/16	112	80	120	5	331
16/17	126	68	129	7	330
17/18	141	75	123	7	346
18/19	112	62*	110	4	288

* this includes 1 child placed with a fostering to adopt carer

11.2 It is a significant concern that number of children with in house foster households is the lowest it has been since 2012/13 both with short terms carers and permanence carers. This is linked to the slowdown in recruitment and the failure to recruit sufficient carers to cover resignations, retirements and terminations.

11.3 The Recruitment and Retention Strategy Group, having reviewed and analysed the data, is clear about how Mockingbird and the strengths of the support model can not only be used as unique selling point but also retention tool. A review of the trends since March suggests a small improvement – however this remains a significant challenge. This will be monitored by the group who report directly to Head of Service

12 Complaints, Allegations and Children Missing from Care

12.1 Complaints - during 2018/19, the fostering service received 7 complaints from the following sources:

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| • Children | 2 |
| • Foster carers | 4 |
| • Grandparent | 1 |

12.2 Of these complaints, 2 were by children about the finances used by the foster carers, 2 were about the placement of children, 2 were about a lack of support to foster carer. All were resolved at Stage1.

12.3 Allegations - There were 16 allegations against Local Authority Foster Carers which is monitored under Regulation 36 of the Fostering Service Regulations 2011. These are under the category of Physical 12 Emotional 3 and Neglect 1. Of these, 2 resulted in child protection investigations being instigated. Following the allegations being submitted, 12 resulted in no further action being taken. Of the remaining 4, 2 continued fostering with additional monitoring and 2 were referred to the Fostering Panel to have their approval reviewed.

12.4 Missing from care - of the care population as of March 31 2019, 9 children had been reported missing from care on a total of 43 occasions. This is a reduction from the previous year.

12.5 Incidents of physical restraint - no incidents of physical restraint were reported in 2018/19 similar to 2017/18.

12.6 Notifiable events (Regulation 36, Schedule 7 of the Fostering Service Regulations 2011) - as well as the allegations, there were a further 10 Notifiable Events. The majority related to missing episodes, illness or accidents within the foster home. Regulation 35, Schedule 6 requires us to monitor other activity such as minor accidents and injuries and the administration of medication. Of these there were 2 minor accidents or illness, 7 missing from care.

13 Fostering Panel

13.1 Central Membership April 2018 – March 2019;

Chris Dennison	(Chair)
Jan Toplis	(Vice Chair / Independent / Social Worker)
Catherine Mitchley	(Vice Chair / Independent)
Sue Partoon	(Vice Chair / Independent)
Carol Moore	(Vice Chair / Social Worker / Independent)
Surinder Kumari	(Independent / Social Worker)
Deloris Walker	(Independent)
Bob Heighway	(Independent)
Alan Paul	(Independent)
Ann Burford	(Independent)

Balbir Kandola	(Independent)
Ruth Cherrington	(Independent)
Sharon Thompson	(Independent)
Councillor Amers Kudhail	(Independent)
Kim O'Shea	(Social Worker)
Nicitta Hanley	(Independent)
Kimberley Hull	(Independent)
Maxwell Gregory	(Independent / Social Worker)

13.2 Quality Assurance

13.2.1 A quality assurance tool is sent to all panel members to comment on the reports presented to panel. The form is completed by panel members. The Panel Advisor collates the feedback on the quality of assessments and reports back to their manager. Some common themes that were reported in last year's report continue to be a feature in this year's report – albeit with the Chair noting that there had been some improvement. As part of the learning for Service the Panel Cahir has asked the Managers to ensure the following:

- Ex-partners being sought and approached for their views.
- Children's views must be sought (as appropriate)
- All family members who are likely to be involved in fostering must be interviewed
- The safer care aspect must include evidence of in-depth discussion with applicant.
- Recommendations can at times not be consistent to the main body of the report.
- The inclusion and quality of professional analysis varies widely from one report to another
- The 'so what' question should be answered after each key descriptive section in the form of analysis. This should not take the form of further description.
- Wherever possible the assessor should draw on theory, practice and research evidence to support their analysis.
- Too much description in assessments – analysis is highly variable across the assessment presented.

14. Future Service Delivery

14.1 In view of the challenges above, there are a number of areas for service development for the coming year. They are:

- Continued use of the CRM tool to ensure the taken of enquiries via key social media platforms is both timely and effective.
- Further rollout of Mockingbird with two hubs developed and the recruitment of additional Fostering Liaison Officer.

- Implementation of design changes in light of the review of the annual foster carers reviews process and undertaking of kinship assessment and SGO assessments.
- Establishment of dedicated men's group through Mockingbird Hub 3.
- Development of additional specialist schemes in respect to adolescents who are on the edge of or in residential care via Mockingbird Hub1
- Introduction of performance management reports across the assessment and supervision.
- Introduction of new the service agreement with the FCA.

Author

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Walsall Children's Services Corporate Parenting Board September 2019 - Q1 (Apr 19 - Jun 19)

Note - Some comparator averages regarding Stat Neighbours, West Midlands and England are based on 17/18 figures as the 18/19 figures are yet to be published.

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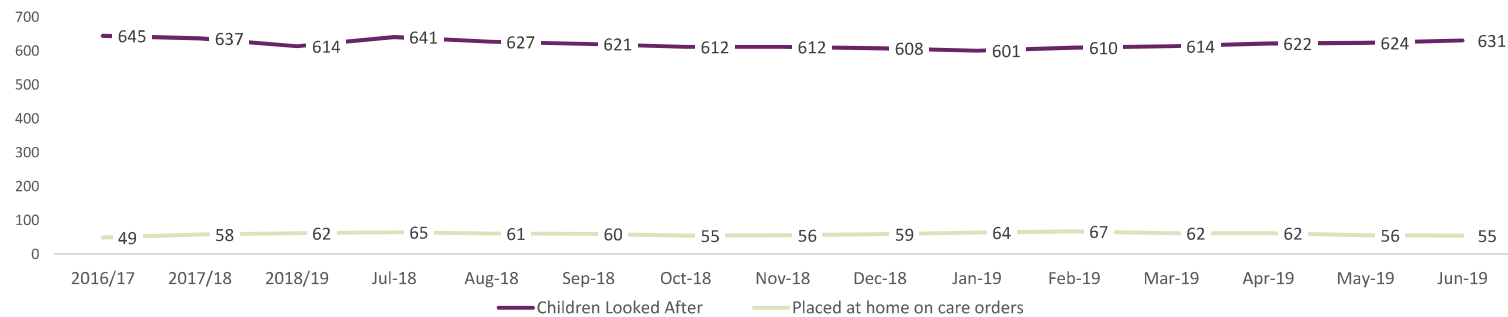
June-2019

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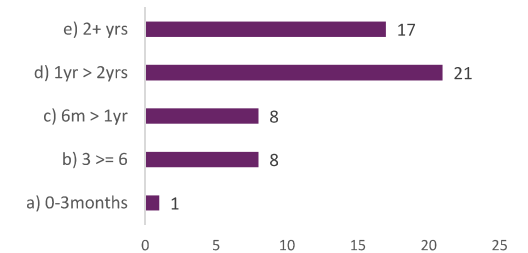
Current Children Looked After (CLA) Profile



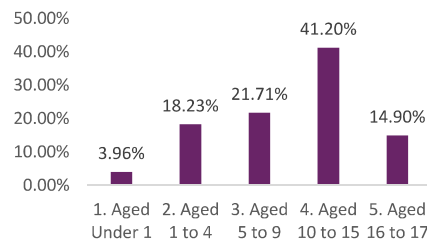
Number of Children Looked After in Walsall (12 Month Rolling)



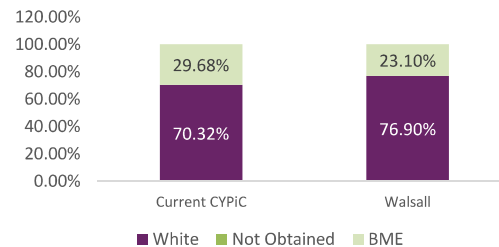
Length of Time placed at home on full care orders



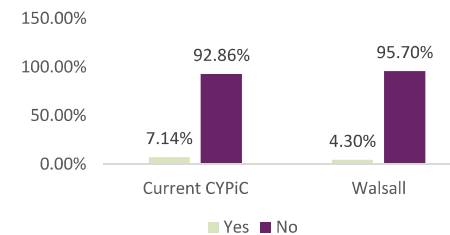
% of current CLA by age



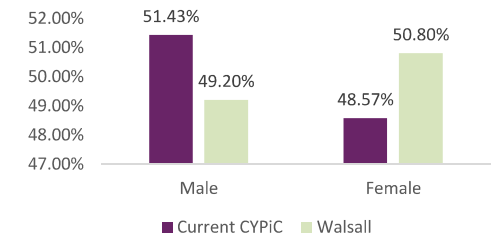
Ethnicity Comparison



Disability Comparison



Gender Comparison



Demographic data has been taken from the 2017 mid-year population estimates. A higher proportion of children looked after are from BME backgrounds compared to the Walsall Child and Young Person population. The current children looked after population has continued to increase since January – from 601 to 631 at the end of June 2019. The current rate per 10,000 remains below that of our statistical neighbours but is still considerably higher than the 2017/18 England and West Midlands averages. We currently have 55 children placed at home on full care order, this has decreased from 62 at the end of quarter 4 2018/19. 38 of the 55 have been placed at home for over a year. Work is continuing with the courts to revoke care orders for children who are placed at home where appropriate.

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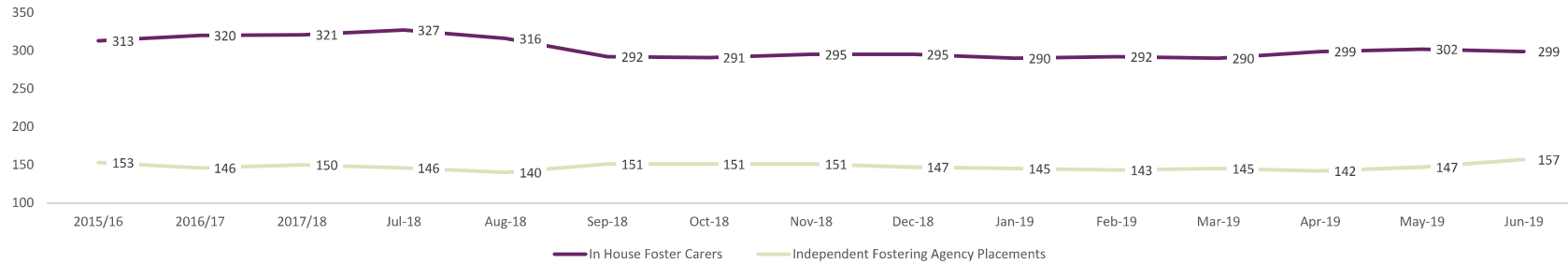
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CLA Placement Analysis

Breakdown of Foster Placements (12 Month Rolling)



The number of CLA placed with in house foster carers and IFA's remains stable.



% CLA placed 20 mile+ from home

13.80%

Walsall 2018/19 = 11.9%
Walsall 2017/18 = 14.0%
Walsall 2016/17 = 14.9%

% CLA 3 or more placements in a year

7.50%

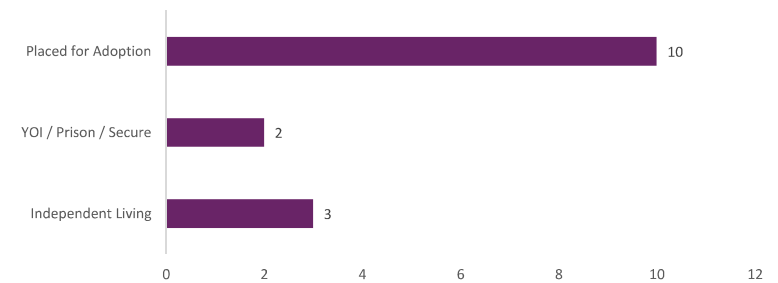
2018/19 Walsall = 7.3%
2017/18 West Midlands = 11.0%
2017/18 Stat Neighbours = 9.2%

% of CLA in same placement for over 2 years if CLA for over 2.5 years

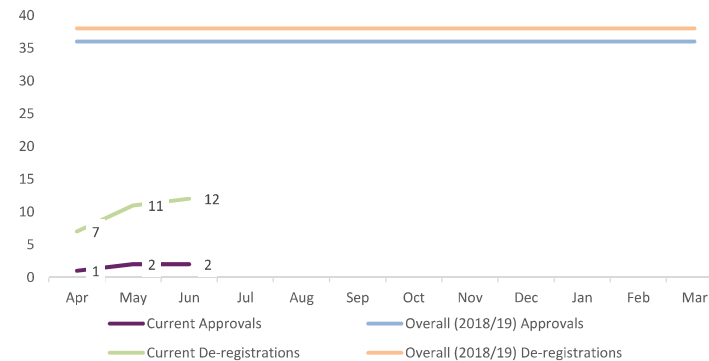
67.80%

2017/18 Walsall = 67.7%
2017/18 West Midlands = 68.0%
2017/18 Stat Neighbours = 69.9%

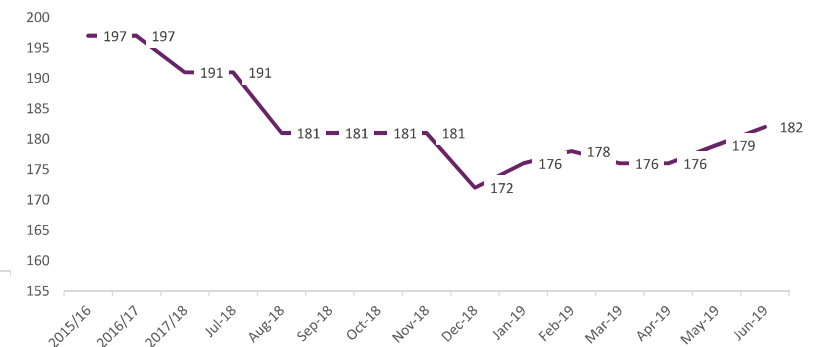
Current CLA by Placement Type (non-fostered)



Approvals & De-registrations (rolling month total)



In House Foster Carer Households (12 Month Rolling)



Month of De-registration	Reason for De-registration	Total
Apr	Resigned	1
	Resigned – adopted child in her care.	1
	Resigned – child chose to leave placement.	1
	Resigned – children returned to mother.	2
	Resigned – SGO Granted	2
May	De-registered/Not to re-approve	1
	Resigned – SGO Granted.	1
	Resigned – YP no longer in placement.	1
	Resigned – YP Staying Put Arrangement	1
June	Failure to meet NMS.	1
Grand Total		12

Both in-house foster care and independent fostering agency placements have slightly increased. The number of approvals has remained stable in recent months but de-registrations have increased., however the number of in house foster carer households that have children placed has fluctuated throughout the year - in June there were 299 children placed in 182 households.

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Nearly 14% of Walsall's CLA are placed 20 plus miles from their home address and 8% of the CLA population have had 3 or more placements within a year. 68 of Walsall's CLA are placed in a residential setting these include children's home, residential accommodation or NHS/Health establishments providing medical or nursing care.

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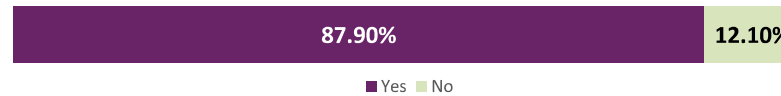
Statutory Visits and Reviews



% Visits undertaken to timescale

Where a statutory visit has been undertaken to timescale in accordance with the child's plan.

Time Since Last Visit Undertaken	Number
a) 0 - 6 weeks	515
b) 6 - 12 weeks	88
c) 12 - 18 weeks	13
d) 18+ weeks	5
Unknown	10
Total	631



2018/19 Year Out-turn = 88%

2017/18 Year Out-turn = 88%



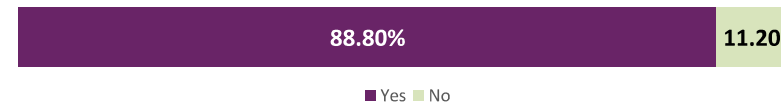
% Time since last visits undertaken



Reviews carried out within timescale

Where reviews for children looked after are carried out within timescale

Time Since Latest Review	Number
a) 0 > 3 months	305
b) 3 > 6 months	246
c) 6 > 9 months	43
d) 9 > 12 months	10
e) 1 year or more	2
No Review	10
No review - new in last month	15
Unknown	0
Total	631

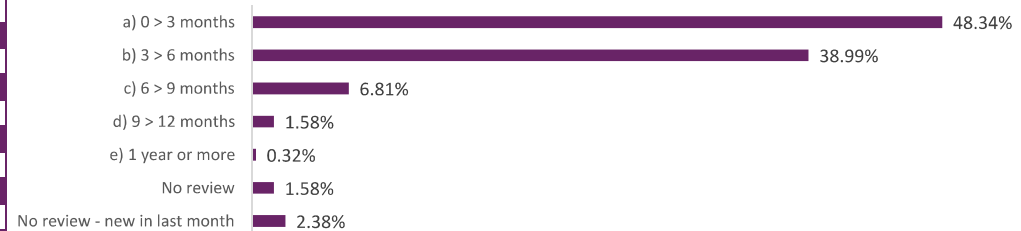


2018/19 Year Out-turn = 91%

2017/18 Year Out-turn = 90%



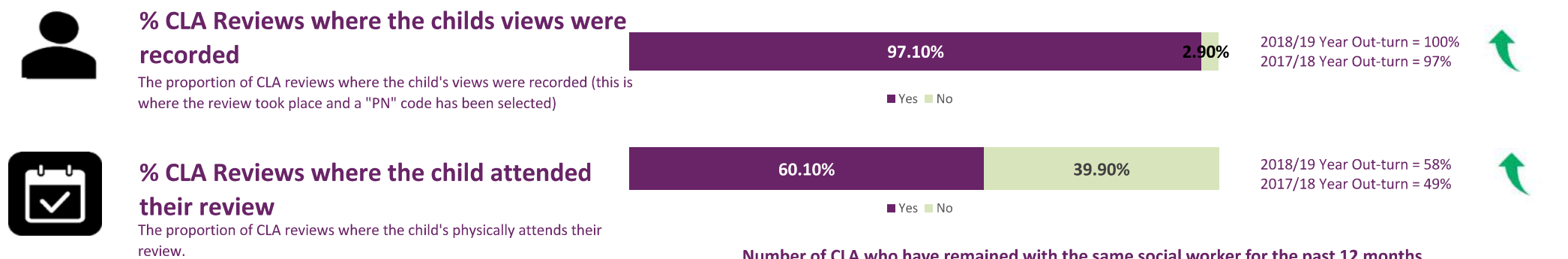
% Time Since Latest Review



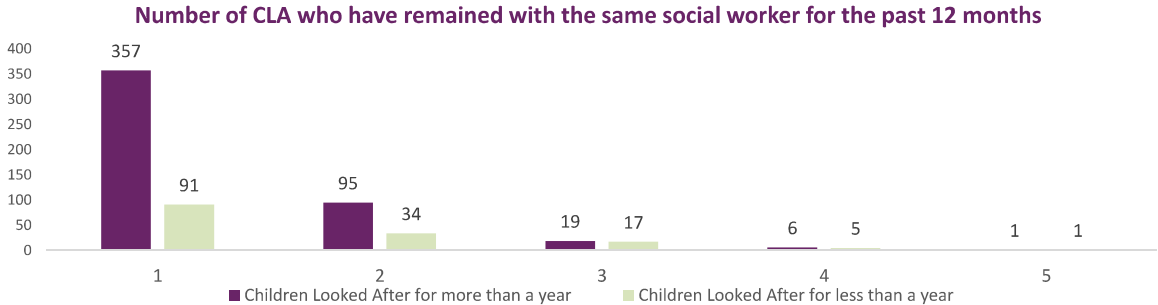
The proportion of CLA where a statutory visit has been undertaken to timescale in accordance with the child's plan is 87.9%, with 81.6% seen within 6 weeks of the previous visit or coming in care. At the end of June, 4.4% (18).

88.8% of reviews have been undertaken within timescales. This is slightly lower than the 2018/19 out-turn of 91%. 87.3% of current children looked after have had a review within the last 6 months. 10% (55) children currently have overdue reviews.

Statutory Visits and Reviews



Type of Participation at Review	Number
PN0 - child under 4 at time of review	74
PN1 - child attends and speaks for themselves	151
PN2 - child attends and an advocate speaks for them	7
PN3 - child attends and conveys their views non-verbally	2
PN4 - child attends; does not speak for themselves / convey their views	10
PN5 - child does not attend but asks advocate to speak for them	21
PN6 - child does not attend but conveys their feelings to the conference	67
PN7 - child does not attend nor conveys their view to the conference	10
Review did not take place or Review Step Incomplete	407



All children and young people have had the opportunity to express their views prior to their review. Positively, the percentage of children who have physically attended their review continues to increase. In 2019/20 60.1% of children attended their review, this is higher than the out-turn of 58% in 2018/19. As the number of children looked after and workforce becomes more stable the number of children experiencing a change of social worker continues to decrease, the number of CLA who have remained with the same social worker for the past 12 months is 357 compared with 201 last year. This is extremely positive and demonstrates that children and young people in care are being given the opportunity to express their views and feelings and are also benefitting from stability of allocated workers, ensuring that they can build trust within the relationship.

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Education - Termly Data **Note that the summer term data will be reported at the next corporate parenting board.

KS2 Expected Standard	Figures highlighted are provisional			
	Maths	Reading	Writing	Reading, Writing and Maths
Walsall Current - CLA	54%	39%	57%	29%
Walsall Borough 2019	76%	69%	76%	61%
Stat Neighbours CLA 2018	46%	50%	47%	33%
England 2018 CLA	47%	45%	49%	35%
KS4	% achieving 9-5 pass in english and maths	% achieving 9-4 pass in english and maths	Attainment 8	Progress 8
Walsall - CLA	11%	17%	19.9%	-0.51%
Walsall Borough 2018	36%	57%	43.8%	-0.19%
Stat Neighbours 2018	37%	59%	19.9%	-1.14%
England 2018	40%	59%	18.9%	-1.20%
Ofsted Rated Schools		Exclusions**		
No Students Attending Good or Outstanding Schools	80%	Atleast one fixed term Exclusion		8%

* NOTE THE EPEP SYSYEM WENT LIVE IN SEPTEMBER 2018



CLA with an up to date ePEP

The proportion eligible CYPiC with an up to date Electronic Personal Education Plan (ePEP)

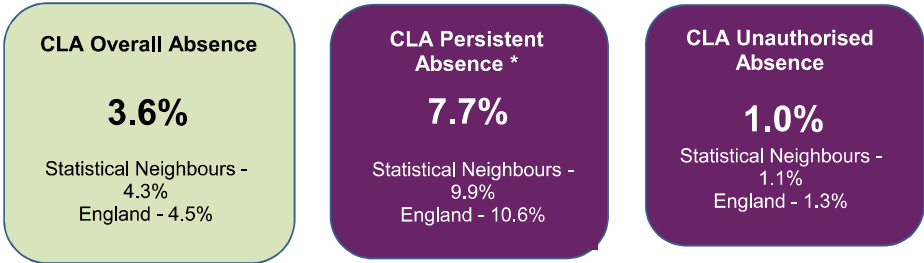
The proportion of ePEP's completed by March is 25.8% however this is likely to increase as data is back dated onto the system. The percentage of ePEP's that have been rated as outstanding in terms of quality is 10.3%, 46.2% were rated as good and 43.6% require improvement.

Methodology

Attainment in English and maths (9-5) From 2017, this measure looks at the percentage of pupils achieving a grade 5 or above in both English and maths. Pupils can achieve the English component of this with a grade 5 or above in English language or literature. There is no requirement to sit both exams.

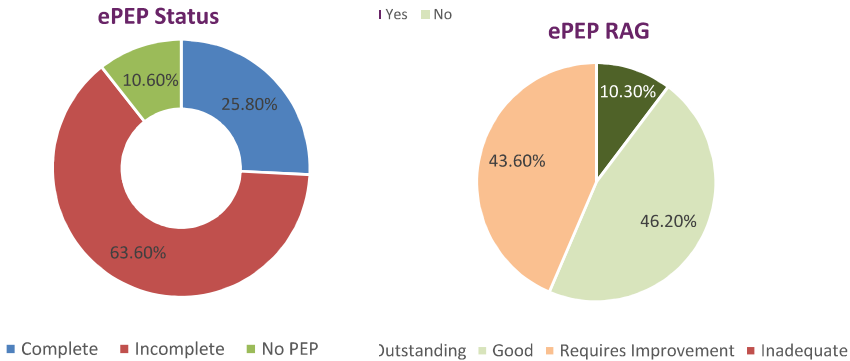
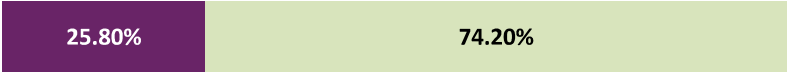
Attainment 8 - Attainment 8 measures the average achievement of pupils in up to 8 qualifications including English (double weighted if the combined English qualification, or both language and literature are taken), maths (double weighted), three further qualifications that count in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) and three further qualifications that can be GCSE qualifications (including EBacc subjects) or any other non-GCSE qualifications on the DfE approved list.

Progress 8 - Progress 8 aims to capture the progress a pupil makes from the end of key stage 2 to the end of key stage 4. It compares pupils' achievement – their Attainment 8 score – with the average Attainment 8 score of all pupils nationally who had a similar starting point (or 'prior attainment'), calculated using assessment results from the end of primary school.



*A pupil is classed as persistently absent if they miss 10 or more possible sessions (due to authorised or unauthorised absence)
**There have been no permanent exclusions

ePEP's - Completed - All ages



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Health and Well-being



% Initial Health Check Completed in Timescale

Assessments in timescale of CLA admission for those in care for 28 days or more



2018/19 Year Out-turn = 75%

2017/18 Year Out-turn = 63%



% of CLA with Up to Date Health Assessments

where the child is over 5 and has been looked after for over a year Out of Borough

All



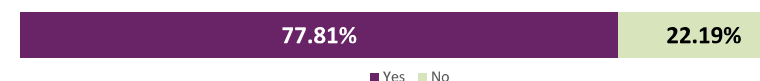
2018/19 Year Out-turn = 83%

2017/18 Year Out-turn = 77%



% of CLA with an up to date dental check

Where a dental check has been completed within 12 months



2018/19 Year Out-turn = 96%

2017/18 Year Out-turn = 86%



Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire should be completed for every child looked after for at least 12 months and aged 5 to 16 years-old.

Average SDQ Score

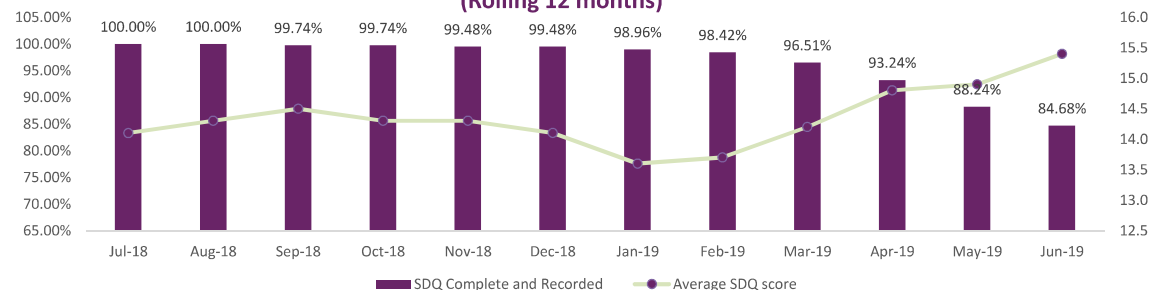
15.4



Breakdown

		Number	% of those eligible for an SDQ	% against all Children Looked After
Score 0 - 13	Considered Normal	129	40%	20.4%
Score 14 - 16	Borderline	40	13%	6.3%
Score 17 - 40	Cause for Concern	105	33%	16.6%

Number of children looked after for at least 12 months aged 5 to 16 with an SDQ score (Rolling 12 months)



The percentage of children looked after with an initial health check and dental checks has fallen. It is anticipated that this will increase as data continues to be loaded onto system throughout the year. Significant work has been undertaken, and continues to be taken in partnership with health to improve the processes and accuracy of data recording in relation to health assessments and to ensure that children and young people receive their assessments on time. The proportion of SDQ's completed and recorded has continued to decrease and the average SDQ score has increased. Currently 84.68% of children looked after have completed an SDQ within the last 12 months and the average SDQ score is 15.4. Work is being undertaken to understand the increase in the average SDQ score. 105 children currently have an SDQ score that suggests there is cause for concern in their emotional and mental well-being based on the answers they gave to the questionnaire

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Care Leavers aged 17-21



Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training

Education, Employment and Training of Care Leavers aged 19-21



2018/19 Year Out-turn = 63%
2017/18 Year Out-turn = 57%



2018/19 Year Out-turn = 63%
2017/18 Year Out-turn = 57%



Care Leavers available to work - All Ages

Care Leavers who are available to work this excludes all those that are not available for the labour market due to illness/disability, pregnancy or young mothers or being in custody. (NALM)

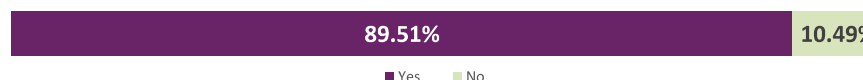


2018/19 Year Out-turn = 81%
2017/18 West Midlands = 59%
2017/18 Stat Neighbours = 55%
2017/18 England = 61%



Care Leavers in suitable accommodation

Care Leavers whose accommodation is classed as suitable for ages 19-21

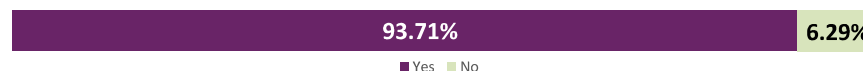


2018/19 Year Out-turn = 90%
2017/18 West Midlands = 84%
2017/18 Stat Neighbours = 89%
2017/18 England = 84%



Care Leavers in touch

Care Leavers where the local authority is in touch aged 19-21



2018/19 Year Out-turn = 97%
2017/18 West Midlands = 93%
2017/18 Stat Neighbours = 96%
2017/18 England = 93%



Current Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training Status



The percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training for the 19-21 and 19-25 cohorts are above last years out turn. 81.3% of care leavers are available to work - excluding those not available for the labour market (NALM) due to illness, disability, pregnancy or being a young mother or because they are in custody. 15 of Walsall's care leavers are currently in custody. We do not know the EET status of 24 care leavers who are not currently in touch with the LA. The proportion of care leavers in suitable accommodation remains stable at 89.5%. The proportion of care leavers in touch with the council is currently at 93.7%, lower than the 2018 out turn of 97%.

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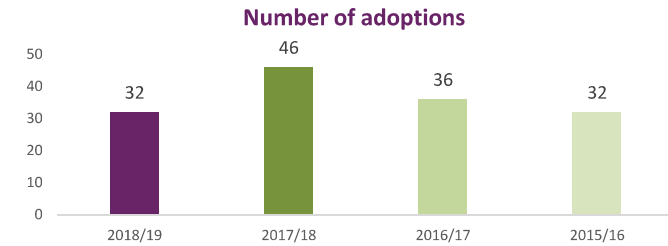
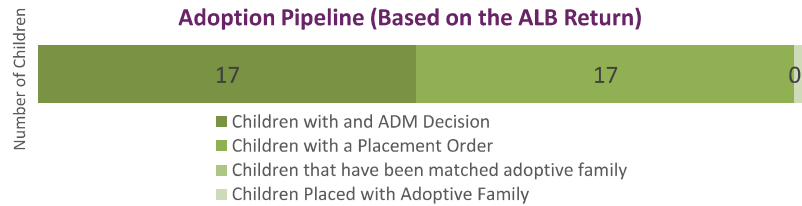
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Adoption and Permanency



Adoption Pipeline

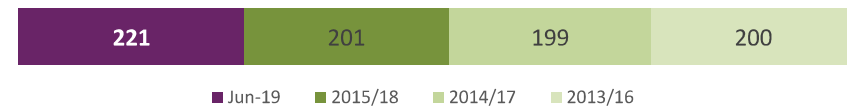


A2 - Average time between receiving court authority to place and finding a match

Rolling average (Single Year)

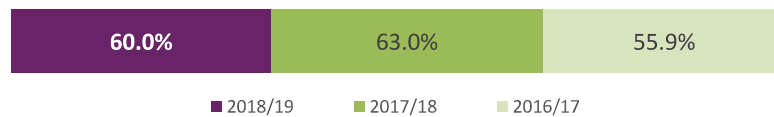


3 year rolling average

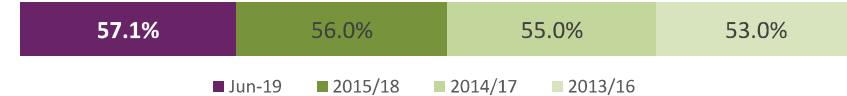


A3 - % Children who wait less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family

Rolling average (Single Year)



3 year rolling average

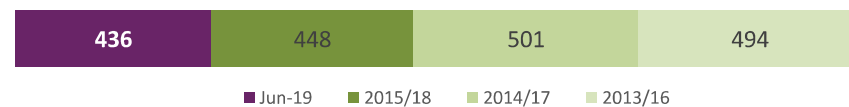


A10 - Average time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family (stopped at point of fostering for foster carers adoptions)

Rolling average (Single Year)



3 year rolling average





In 2018/19 32 were children were adopted. No children have been adoption so far in 2019/20, however, there are 35 children in the adoption 'pipeline'. Children are waiting slightly longer in 2019 than in 2018 between receiving court authority to place and finding a match - this is currently at 221 days compared to 201 days in 2018. 60% of Children wait less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family. This is lower than in 17/18 but higher than in 16/17. Between April and June 2 Children have ceased to be looked after due to special guardianship orders and 3 due to child arrangement orders.

Draft Corporate Parenting Board Forward Plan – 2019/2020

Lead Officer	Item	1 July 2019	2 Sept 2019	11 Nov 2019	7 Jan 2020	17 Feb 2020	27 Apr 2020
Michelle Cummings - Children's Champion	Young People Engagement- feedback/CiCC YOW and youth justice involved in broader engagement so get a rounder picture of thoughts....need lead officer contacts from Jivan. Youth Council involve – Andrea Potts.	X	X	X	X	X	X
Helena Kucharczyk Head of QA and PI	Performance Monitoring (including health dashboard)		Q1	Q2		Q3	Q4
Jivan Sembi - Group Manager	The Local Offer						
	Permanency incl. hub at Fallings Heath		X				
	Children Living out of Borough (CII Tax)			X			
	Corporate Parenting Pledge Refresh			X	X	X	
	Review of FLASH		X				
Assistant Director Social Care & Safeguarding Service Area	Ofsted Action Plan						
	Operational Work Streams – Oversight			X			
Elizabeth Gosling Group Manager	Fostering Review	X					
	Placement Sufficiency Strategy						
	Foster Carer recruitment						
	Mocking Bird						

	Annual Fostering Report/half year update		X				
	Annual Adoption Report/half year update						
	Regional Adoption Agency						

Lead Officer	Item	1 July 2019	2 Sept 2019	11 Nov 2019	7 Jan 2020	17 Feb 2020	27 Apr 2020
Liz Gosling/Mark Jobin	Life Story Work						
Lorraine Thompson Head of Virtual School	Virtual School/Senior Manager Mentor Scheme – Update from Virtual Head						
Independent Reviewing Officer	IRO Annual Report			X			
Neil Picken	Annual Report						X
Mark Rodell	Meet the Board/discussion						
Jivan Sembi/Elise Hopkins	Legalities of the council tax reduction scheme and its application to care leavers/potential costs to assist young people living out of borough with their council tax payments						
Jivan Sembi	An update on the pilot benefits drop in service be provided in the new municipal year						
Alison Jones	Outcomes Framework						
Andrea Potts	Short Term Breaks Provision						
Carol Boughton	Child Sexual Exploitation/Safeguarding						