





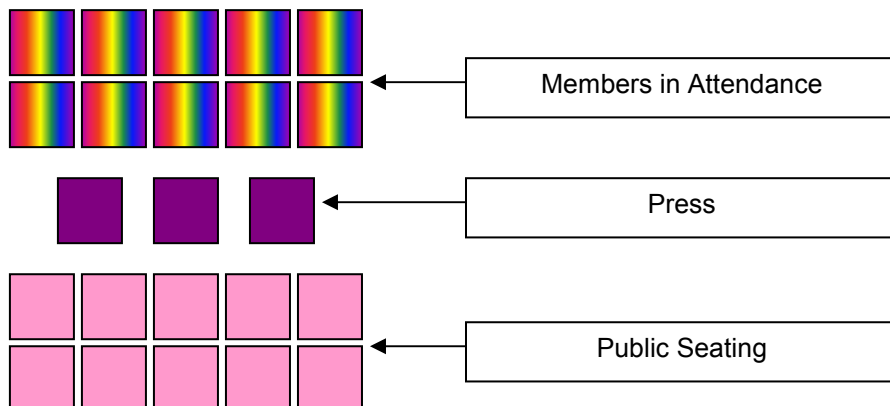
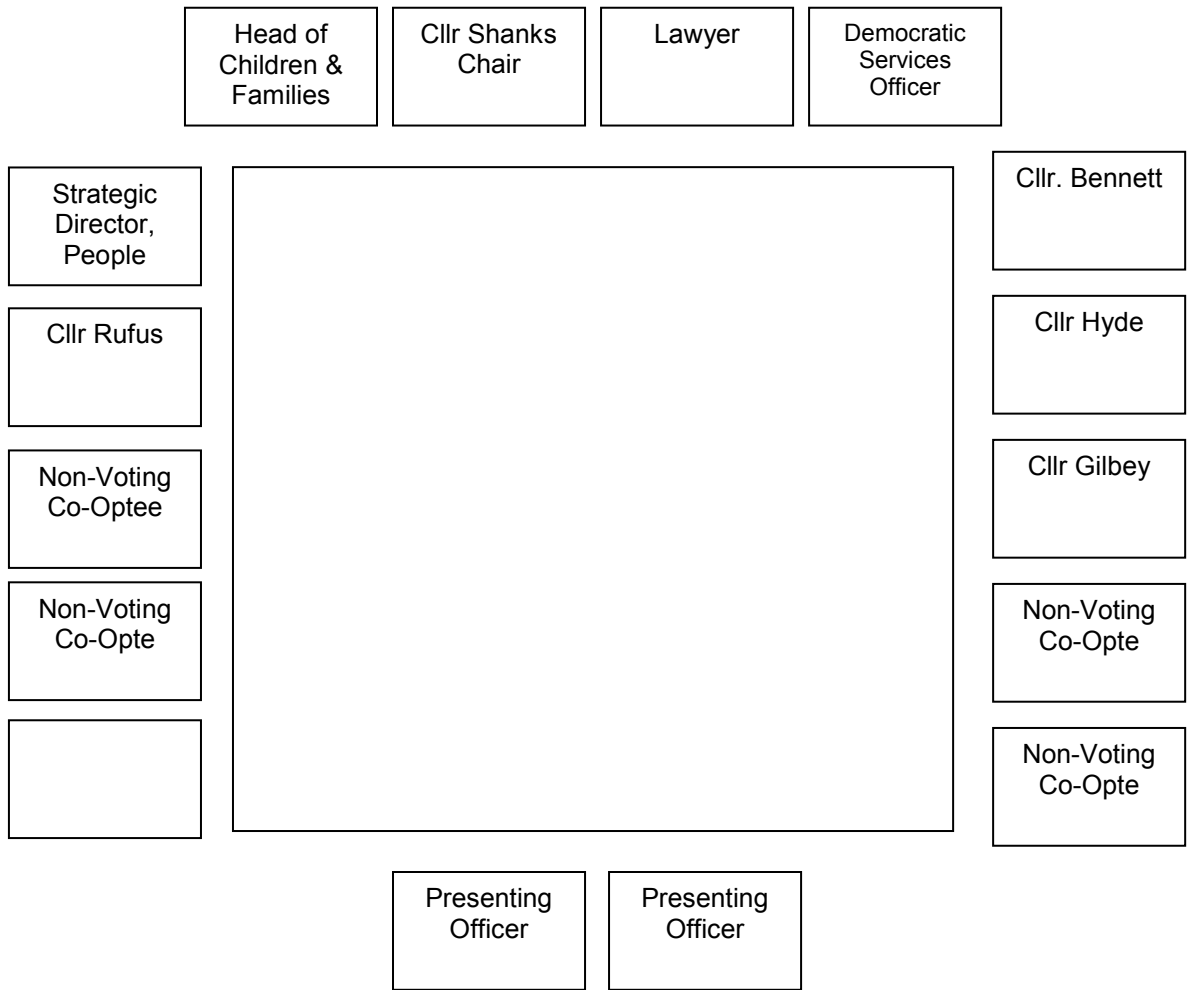
Brighton & Hove
City Council

Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee

Title:	Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee
Date:	17 April 2013
Time:	4.00pm
Venue	Committee Room 1, Hove Town Hall
Members:	Councillors: Shanks (Chair), Rufus (Deputy Chair), Bennett, Gilbey and Hyde
Contact:	Ross Keatley Democratic Services Officer 01273 291064 ross.keatley@brighton-hove.gov.uk

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Democratic Services: Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee



AGENDA

32. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

(a) Declaration of Substitutes: Where Councillors are unable to attend a meeting, a substitute Member from the same Political Group may attend, speak and vote in their place for that meeting.

(b) Declarations of Interest:

- (a) Disclosable pecuniary interests not registered on the register of interests;
- (b) Any other interests required to be registered under the local code;
- (c) Any other general interest as a result of which a decision on the matter might reasonably be regarded as affecting you or a partner more than a majority of other people or businesses in the ward/s affected by the decision.

In each case, you need to declare

- (i) the item on the agenda the interest relates to;
- (ii) the nature of the interest; and
- (iii) whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest or some other interest.

If unsure, Members should seek advice from the committee lawyer or administrator preferably before the meeting.

(c) Exclusion of Press and Public: To consider whether, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, or the nature of the proceedings, the press and public should be excluded from the meeting when any of the following items are under consideration.

NOTE: *Any item appearing in Part Two of the Agenda states in its heading the category under which the information disclosed in the report is exempt from disclosure and therefore not available to the public.*

A list and description of the exempt categories is available for public inspection at Brighton and Hove Town Halls.

33. MINUTES

1 - 6

To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2013 (copy attached).

Ward Affected: All Wards

34. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

CORPORATE PARENTING SUB-COMMITTEE

35. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

To consider the following matters raised by members of the public:

- (a) **Petitions:** to receive any petitions presented to the full council or at the meeting itself;
- (b) **Written Questions:** to receive any questions submitted by the due date of 12 noon on the 9 April 2013;
- (c) **Deputations:** to receive any deputations submitted by the due date of 12 noon on the 9 April 2013.

36. MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

To consider the following matters raised by councillors:

- (a) **Petitions:** to receive any petitions submitted to the full Council or at the meeting itself;
- (b) **Written Questions:** to consider any written questions;
- (c) **Letters:** to consider any letters;
- (d) **Notices of Motion:** to consider any Notices of Motion referred from Council or submitted directly to the Committee.

37. CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORK PROGRAMME 2013-14 7 - 14

Report of the Interim Director of Children's Service (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Rosalind Turner *Tel:* 01273
Ward Affected: All Wards

38. CORPORATE PARENTING SUMMARY PERFORMANCE REPORT CARD 15 - 46

Report of the Interim Director of Children's Service (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Rosalind Turner *Tel:* 01273
Ward Affected: All Wards

39. NEW OFSTED INSPECTION FRAMEWORK RELATING TO CHILDREN IN CARE OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY 47 - 56

Report of the Interim Director of Children's Service (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Rosalind Turner *Tel:* 01273
Ward Affected: All Wards

40. REPORT FROM NHS LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN TEAM 57 - 66

Report of the Interim Director of Children's Service (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Rosalind Turner *Tel:* 01273
Ward Affected: All Wards

CORPORATE PARENTING SUB-COMMITTEE

41. BRIGHTON & HOVE FOSTER CARER RECRUITMENT PROCESS, FOSTER CARERS CHARTER AND CHANGES TO HOUSING BENEFIT AFFECTING FOSTER CARERS **67 - 92**

Report of the Interim Director of Children's Service (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Rosalind Turner *Tel:* 01273
Ward Affected: All Wards

42. ITEMS REFERRED TO THE POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

To consider items to be submitted to the 2 May 2013 meeting for discussion or information.

PART TWO

43. PART TWO MINUTES **93 - 94**

To consider the part two minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2013.

44. CHILDREN MISSING FROM CARE **95 - 100**

Report of the Interim Director of Children's Service (copy attached).

Contact Officer: Rosalind Turner *Tel:* 01273
Ward Affected: All Wards

45. PART TWO PROCEEDINGS

To consider whether the items listed in Part Two of the agenda and decisions thereon should remain exempt from disclosure to the press and public.

The City Council actively welcomes members of the public and the press to attend its meetings and holds as many of its meetings as possible in public. Provision is also made on the agendas for public questions to committees and details of how questions can be raised can be found on the website and/or on agendas for the meetings.

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Meeting papers can be provided, on request, in large print, in Braille, on audio tape or on disc, or translated into any other language as requested.

For further details and general enquiries about this meeting contact John Peel, (01273 291064, email ross.keatley@brighton-hove.gov.uk) or email democratic.services@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Date of Publication - Tuesday, 9 April 2013

CORPORATE PARENTING SUB-COMMITTEE

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
CORPORATE PARENTING SUB-COMMITTEE**

4.00pm 23 JANUARY 2013

COMMITTEE ROOM 1, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Shanks (Chair)

Also in attendance: Councillor Rufus (Deputy Chair), Gilbey and Hyde

PART ONE

21. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

21a Declarations of substitutes

21.1 There were None

21b Declarations of interests

21.2 There were none

21c Exclusion of the press and public

21.3 In accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (“the Act”), the Committee considered whether the public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any item of business on the grounds that it is likely in view of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during it, there would be disclosure to them of confidential information as defined in Section 100A (3) of the Act.

21.4 **RESOLVED** - That the public are excluded from the meeting from items listed on Part 2 of the agenda.

22. MINUTES

23.1 **RESOLVED** – That the Chair be authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2012 as a correct record.

23. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

- 23.1 The Chair explained that as part of the internal review of the Council's governance arrangements a meeting had been held to consider the status of the Sub-Committee. The Senior Lawyer, Natasha Watson, explained that it had originally been envisaged the Sub-Committee would co-opt foster parents and children in care to participate in discussion; however, this gave way to questions in relation to anonymity, and it was felt inappropriate to publish the names of such co-optees. Instead it had been agreed that in future such persons could attend meetings as observers, and the Sub-Committee could invite their views as necessary.
- 23.2 Furthermore discussion had also been held in relation to the Chair of the Sub-Committee, and it was felt there could be a conflict if the Sub-Committee was chaired by the Lead Member for Children's Services; especially where the Sub-Committee was seeking assurance. It was also envisaged that there should be greater 'buy-in' from other departments to better reflect the corporate nature of the Sub-Committee.
- 23.3 It had also been suggested that an annual event could be held informally with children in care, foster parents and care leavers that could help inform an annual schedule of work.
- 23.4 The Chair also noted the first of three training sessions to be held on Tuesday 29 January around Members roles as corporate parents; the second on safeguarding children in need and the third on the legal framework.

24. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

- 24.1 There was none.

25. MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

- 25.1 There was none.

26. CHILDREN IN CARE PERFORMANCE REPORT

- 26.1 The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Interim Director of Children's Services; the report provided a summary of key performance indicators, and an analysis of the key issues. The full report of performance indicators was attached to enable regular monitoring by all Members, as well as Members of the Sub-Committee.
- 26.2 Following a request from the Chair the Senior Lawyer clarified that an interim care order was initially granted for a maximum of 8 weeks; the courts would then be able to renew this every 28 days until either the final order was made, or there is a hearing that the order is no longer needed. A review of the family justice system had made clear that timescales of approximately 1 year were too long for the legal status of children to remain uncertain, and it had been accepted by Central Government that they must complete with 26 weeks – with a set of very prescriptive exceptions. Although this legislation had not yet come into effect a target had been set to complete within 26 weeks; the challenge for local authorities was to develop a system to meet the courts and take advantage of the faster timescales.

- 26.3 Councillor Hyde asked for more information in relation to the instability of placements; and in response Officers explained that the biggest factor affecting placement stability was careers struggling with challenging behaviour. Work was undertaken at stability meetings and additional services were put in place for support where appropriate.
- 26.4 Following queries from Councillor Gilbey it was explained that the education and employment performance of care leavers was better locally than the national average; however, the number of unemployed was rising, and it was accepted that employability was a challenge which needed to be focused on.
- 26.5 The Sub-Committee also discussed 6-monthly sexual health and substance misuse screenings. It was highlighted that this was often a subject that foster carers and social workers struggled to properly address as it was considered a difficult topic to discuss. More work could be undertaken with the Children in Care Council to consider linking up some of this with the work of the virtual school. The Senior Lawyer noted this was an example of a target that was less simple to assess; the discussions needed to be a two-way process between the social worker and the young person. Recording issues were also noted such that this kind of screening might happen informally as part of wider discussions.
- 26.6 **RESOLVED –**
- i. That the Sub-Committee note and scrutinise the information in the report.
 - ii. That the Sub-Committee consider any particular issues they may wish to consider in more depth at future meetings.
 - iii. That Sub-Committee consider how to relay this information to the broader Council to ensure high awareness of the responsibilities for children in care.

27. EDUCATION OF CHILDREN IN CARE

- 27.1 The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Interim Director of Children's Services in relation to the Education of Children in Care. The local authority had a responsibility to promote the educational attainment of children in care, and the Sub-Committee should ensure the responsibility of the local authority for children in care was one shared by all Senior Officers and Members. Opportunities were also made available to young people within the Council for high quality work experience; work shadowing and apprenticeship opportunities. There was a clear understanding of the barriers to educational attainment and how these can be over come.
- 27.2 Members noted that the exclusion record was good; the position was similar to 2011, and it was highlighted that a member of staff would be recruited to support the 16+ personal education plans (PEP). Work would also be undertaken in relation to resourcing, and some comparative work would be done with East and Sussex County Councils.
- 27.3 Following a query from Councillor Shanks it was explained that the virtual school stopped at 16.

- 27.4 Councillor Gilbey asked about the virtual school's relationship with the two academies in the city, and it was explained that more time needed to be spent working with them.
- 27.5 The Sub-Committee discussed the placement of children in care in schools, and it was highlighted that some local authorities took the view that children in care should only be placed in schools rated 'good' or 'excellent'; the Council would work to this as a standard, but tried to take a practical approach and consider factors such as locality and friendship groups. It was noted that this would also apply to children placed in school outside of the city.
- 27.6 Councillor Gilbey asked about placing children in care at the new Free School which was due to open this year, and it was explained that this would be down to the parental choice and considered on a case by case basis. Following further queries it was explained that the local authority had some say in how schools would spend the pupil premium, and they would ask the school to share this information.
- 27.7 **RESOLVED** – That the Committee receives the report and continues to monitor educational outcomes for Children in Care.

28. EMPLOYABILITY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS

- 28.1 The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Interim Director of Children's Services in relation to the Employability for Young People in Care and Care Leavers. The report outlined the positive actions to develop employment opportunities as detailed in the Corporate Parenting Strategy. Employability related to a wide range of opportunities that the Council and its partners can offer young people and include apprenticeships, work experience, taster days and work placements. The strategy assisted young people action to improve employability and included: advocating and providing work experience, work placements and employment opportunities within the Council and its partners, and promoting the needs of care leavers for work experience, training and job opportunities with employers and employer organisations in the city.
- 28.2 It was highlighted that there would be apprenticeships fair in February. Officers in Children's Service would have two weeks notice before job adverts went out publicly to give support to children in care and care leavers whom wished to apply; the job opportunities would still have to offer publically to meet equality and employment laws.
- 28.3 It was noted that the Council should have a crucial role in not only signposting young people, but also providing opportunities. Officers explained that schools also had a statutory duty to offer careers advice, and care leavers were entitled to pathway plans.
- 28.4 Councillor Gilbey noted that this process should begin before aged 16, and Officers said that work experience at an earlier age was important. Councillor Shanks added that it was also important foster carers had access to the necessary information.
- 28.5 The Sub-Committee agreed to forward the report to the Policy & Resources Committee for further discussion, and to consider how such opportunities could be provided across the Council. Officers added that the commitment to provide opportunities needed to be much more explicit.

28.6 RESOLVED –

- i. That Sub-Committee monitor the development of bespoke packages leading to sustainable employment for each young person in care, based on an assessment of their interests, aspirations and abilities. This will assist Childrens Services in improving outcomes and reducing NEET (Not Engaged in Education, Employment or Training) for these young people.
- ii. That Sub-Committee secure a commitment across the local authority, and with other partner agencies wherever possible, to support packages of work placements, work experience, apprenticeships, full and part-time employment and training for young people in care and care leavers.
- iii. That these employability opportunities form the basis of Brighton & Hove City Council policy and procedure to assist our young people leaving care to achieve economic well being.
- iv. That the report be forwarded to the Policy & Resources Committee to discuss how such opportunities can be provided corporately.

29. PART TWO MINUTES

- 23.1 **RESOLVED** – That the Chair be authorised to sign the Part 2 minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2012 as a correct record.

30. CHILDREN MISSING FROM CARE

- 30.1 As listed in the Part 2 report.
- 30.2 **RESOLVED** – That the recommendations listed in the Part 2 report be agreed by the Sub-Committee.

31. PART TWO PROCEEDINGS

- 31.1 **RESOLVED** – That the Part 2 Items remain exempt from disclosure from the press and public.

The meeting concluded at 5.47pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

CORPORATE PARENTING SUB COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 37

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Corporate Parenting Board Terms of Reference and Work Programme 2013-2014
Date of Meeting:	17th April 2013
Report of:	Interim Director Children's Services
Contact Officer: Name:	Rosalind Turner
Email:	Rosalind.turner@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Ward(s) affected:	All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 On 28th March 2013 full Council considered a report setting out proposed changes to the Council's constitution. The terms of reference and ways of working of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee were among the areas reviewed.
- 1.2 This report sets out the revised terms of reference for the Corporate Parenting Board as agreed by full Council and proposes a work plan for the forthcoming meetings in 2013-2014.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That members note the revised terms of reference (Appendix 1) for the Corporate Parenting Board, effective from 24th May 2013;
- 2.2 That members discuss and determine a work programme for the Board in 2013-2014.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 On 17th May 2012 the Council adopted a new constitution based on a committee system of governance. As part of the new arrangements a Corporate Parenting sub-committee was established. When the new constitution was adopted, it was recognised that the new arrangements would need to be kept under review and that it would be good practice to consider any further changes that could be made once the system had been in place for a time.
- 3.2 The Corporate Parenting sub-committee was established to champion the interests of looked after children and engage parts of the Council outside Children's Services at member and officer level. The aim was for the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee to operate as an advisory sub-committee to

Policy & Resources Committee in connection with the discharge of council functions regarding children in care and care leavers. It was intended to highlight the importance of the Council's role as a corporate parent, including ensuring appropriate training for members on the Council's responsibilities.

Terms of Reference

- 3.3 Having reviewed the operation and agendas of the sub-committee since May 2012, it was clear that the sub-committee has not in practice achieved an increased profile. One of the issues that has been encountered is that the formality of the committee procedures mean there is limited flexibility to invite and hear from different groups in a confidential way or to meet at times and places outside of the Council's formal meeting arrangements. It is therefore proposed that it ceases to be a sub-committee and becomes a Corporate Parenting Board. This will increase the flexibility of the Board, enabling fuller engagement and a more open and frank dialogue with looked after children and foster carers in particular.
- 3.4 In addition, a number of practical changes are also proposed, including:-
- Ensuring that the Chair is a lead member from outside Children's Services;
 - Establishing and managing a work programme for the meetings which engages all parts of the organisation at member and officer level;
 - Regular reporting of the work on Corporate Parenting to Policy & Resources Committee. Reporting to Policy & Resources Committee will ensure democratic accountability and transparency in respect of the Council's commitment to its responsibilities as a Corporate Parent.

A copy of the revised Terms of Reference are attached at Appendix 1 for information.

The Work Programme

- 3.5 In order to ensure that the Corporate Parenting Board does engage the wider council and that the Council is considering its obligations as Corporate Parent across its services, a work programme will be developed by members of the Board at this meeting.
- 3.9 The first meeting of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee considered Brighton and Hove City Council's Corporate Parenting Policy and Strategy. Members agreed to monitor progress throughout the year. Reports have been considered on the overall numbers of children in care, performance in assessment, care plans and placements, educational outcomes, and employability.
- 3.10 This meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board will consider reports on overall performance indicators, the work of the specialist health team, recruitment of foster carers and the proposed new Ofsted framework which will set expectations for the care and support of children in care, and care leavers.
- 3.11 Following consideration of these, and hearing the views of children in care, care leavers and foster carers, members may wish to determine priority areas for consideration during the coming year.

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4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The decision to move to a committee system of governance was made by a meeting of full council in December 2011. The design principles and working assumptions were agreed by a Constitution Working Group and the Leaders Group. Following approximately 9 months of the new system being in operation, discussions have taken place with SLT and lead officers to collate the list of issues, including the proposals set out in this report.
- 4.2 The amended terms of reference for the Corporate Parenting Board will be available to the public both at Council offices and on the Council's website.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 There are no financial implications as a direct result of the recommendations of this report. The Looked After Children and Safeguarding budget for 2013/14 is £39m and this is subject to the Children's services Value for Money programme.

Finance Officer Consulted: David Ellis *Date: 05.04.13*

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The Council has a legal duty to act as a 'corporate parent' for each and every child and young person that is looked after, whether this is as a result of a voluntary agreement with their parents, or under a care order agreed by the court. In this respect the council is subject to statutory guidance, the requirements of the Leaving Care Act, and the duties to promote the well being of children under the Children Act 2004 and the Children and Young Persons Act 2008. In ensuring that these duties are met there is no prescribed form that the Council must take (ie Committee or Panel).

Lawyer Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert

Date: 18th March 2013

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 The overall outcomes for children in care and care leavers are much worse than for their peers, and is a key area to be addressed in terms of equality.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 Providing children in care with a safe, secure home life, good education and progression into further education, training or employment will assist community sustainability as they move into adulthood.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 Young People and adults who have been looked after are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system.

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Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 The risk of not providing good care and support is the detriment to life opportunities for individual children, and to the detriment of the Council's reputation.

Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 Children in care and care leavers often have significant health issues which will have an impact on their adult life if not addressed effectively.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 Corporate Parenting is a key role for the local authority.

Background information

1. Brighton and Hove Corporate Parenting Policy and Strategy
Report to Corporate Parenting sub-committee 4 July 2012
2. Government guidance and related documents on the role of Corporate Parent
DfE, LGA

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR ADVISORY GROUPS AND FORUMS

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Corporate Parenting Board reports to the Policy and Resources Committee. It acts as an advisory Board to the Council, its partners and its Committees on matters related to the Council's looked after children. Its role is to ensure that the Council and its partner agencies have a joint commitment to:-
- (a) Achieving improved outcomes for children in care and care leavers;
 - (b) Developing and overseeing implementation of the Corporate Parenting Strategy to drive improved outcomes;
 - (c) Providing challenge to ensure that the Council's duties as Corporate Parent are carried out effectively and consistently.

2. Objectives and Terms of Reference

- 2.1 To assist in the development, operation, monitoring and review of the Council's policies and strategies as they affect children in care and care leavers.
- 2.2 To develop, monitor and review a Corporate Parenting Strategy and work plan.
- 2.3 To promote a co-ordinated and partnership approach to the delivery of Council services as they affect children in care and care leavers and to challenge services where this is not evidenced or effective.
- 2.4 To advise the Council and its Committees on issues relevant to children in care and care leavers and to ensure that policies implemented by the Council which affect these children and young people are effective and appropriate.
- 2.5 To review and monitor outcomes for looked after children and care leavers, including data from the Corporate Parenting Report Card and feedback from the Standards & Complaints and Quality Assurance Framework officers in respect of children in care and care leavers.
- 2.6 To ensure that clear and accessible information is readily available to children in care and care leavers on the corporate parenting they can expect from the council.

- 2.7 To ensure that systems are in place which mean that the views of children and young people are represented in the development of services that affect them.
- 2.8 To ensure arrangements are made for the training and development of Councillors (and others as appropriate) on the Corporate Parenting role.
- 2.9 To receive reports on the discharge of the Council's functions regarding the provision of accommodation for looked after children and care leavers, and to make recommendations to the appropriate body of the Council.

3. Reporting

- 3.1 To report to the Council's Policy and Resources Committee and Council on a twice yearly basis.
- 3.2 To make recommendations to the relevant Committee where responsibility for a particular function rests with that Committee.

4. Membership

- 4.1 Membership of the Board will consist of:-
 - 5 elected Members
 - 4 nominated co-optees
- 4.2 Invitations to attend the Corporate Parenting Board may be extended to representatives of interested groups and to additional elected Members and Officers from across Council services
- 4.3 The membership of the Board is subject to review by the Policy and Resources Committee
- 4.4 The Chair of the Board is an elected Member

5. Review

- 5.1 The work of the Board is subject to bi-annual review by the Policy and Resources Committee

**Corporate Parenting Board - Proposals for Forward Plan
2013-14**

	Report Title	Report Authors
	Current Standing items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children Missing from Care - (usually a Part 2 item) • Summary Corporate Parenting Performance Report Card 	Andy Whippey Andy Whippey/Daryl Perilli
1.	Overview of Legal Framework for Children in Care, including Family Justice Review	Natasha Watson
2.	Independent Reviewing Officers' Annual Report	Jane Doherty
3.	Placement Sufficiency Strategy	Andy Whippey / Sue Boiling
4.	Equalities overview: provision for Children in Care	Andy Whippey
5.	Fostering Annual Report	Clare Smith
6.	Adoption Annual Report	Karen Devine
7.	Adoption Support	Karen Devine
8.	Review of Family and Friends Policy	Karen Devine
9.	Sexual Health and Substance Misuse Screenings	Julie Griffiths/Sian Bennett
10.	Other Health provision: Mental Health, Hospitals, GPs	tba
11.	Education outcomes and Personal Education Plans	Mary Hinton
12.	Employability and Further Education for Care Leavers: Review of outcomes	Dermot Anketell
13.	Outcomes for Asylum Seeking young people	Andy Whippey / Chris Brunstrom
14.	Housing issues for carers and care leavers	Jugal Sharma
15.	Culture and Leisure access for children in care	Adam Bates
16.	Role of the Police in relation to children in care	Pete Castleton
17.	Keeping children safe from sexual exploitation	Andy Whippey
18.	Audit and quarterly review of outcomes for children in care	Jane Doherty
19.	Complaints/representations made by children in care	Andy Whippey / Brian Foley
20.	Informal meetings with children in care, foster carers and adoptive parents	Andy Whippey

CORPORATE PARENTING SUB COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 38

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Corporate Parenting Summary Performance Report Card		
Date of Meeting:	17th April 2013		
Report of:	Director of Children's Services		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Andy Whippey	Tel: 29-5391
	Email:	andy.whippey@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Key Decision:	No		
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 Corporate Parenting is a key responsibility for every Local Authority. Members are required to have an oversight of the care, well-being and outcomes for all children in care, and to ensure progress for young people leaving care.
- 1.2 This report provides a summary of performance indicators, with an analysis of key issues. Attached is a full report of performance indicators which will be useful as a document of record, to enable regular monitoring by all Members of the Council, as well as Members of the Corporate Parenting Board.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That members note and scrutinise the information in this report, to ensure full awareness of performance and outcomes for children in care in Brighton and Hove.
- 2.2 That members consider any particular issues they may wish to consider in more depth at future meetings.
- 2.3 That members consider how to relay this information to the broader council to ensure high awareness of the responsibilities for children in care.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

3.1 Children Looked After Numbers

Whilst the numbers of Children in Care remain high in relation to statistical neighbours and the England average, the rate of children looked after per 10,000 children aged under 18 has fallen from 98 as at 31st March 2012 to 90 as at 31st January 2013. The indication is that these numbers will fall further in 2013 due to

a combination of factors. These include the Family First Strategy children in long-term foster care that increasing numbers of children being cared for by the wider family network under special guardianship arrangements, alongside significant packages being put together for children in need to prevent them becoming looked after in the first instance.

There were 96 children in care proceedings as at 31st January 2013, down from 147 in February 2012. This will have an impact on overall numbers of Children in Care in the long term.

3.2 Distance Between Home and Placement

There has been a significant media and political interest on the issue of the distance Children in Care are placed from their home authority. The recent interim report of the office of the Children's Commissioner has highlighted the increased risk of exploitation children may be exposed to when placed far from their communities of origin. The numbers of children placed within 20 miles of Brighton and Hove (this being the performance indicator which is used) is very high and above the national average, with 85% of children either placed within 20 miles or placed for adoption compared to the national average of 80%.

3.3 Health and Dental Checks

The percentage of children with Health and Dental checks completed within 12 months is 74% as at 31st January 2013, below the national average of 84.3%. Recording of health and dental checks appears to be a significant factor which is being addressed and we would expect this figure to improve over the coming months.

3.4 Personal Education Plans (PEP)

PEP activity has seen a significant increase over the last 12 months, with 90% of school age CiC having a PEP completed within 6 months. The Ofsted expectation would be a figure of no less than 95%. Information Officers now have a crucial role in terms of monitoring PEP completion and we expect the completion figure to continue to rise.

3.5 Offending behaviour by children in care

We will be in a position at the next Corporate Parenting Committee to report on an individual basis relating to offending behaviour and patterns of offending behaviour.

3.6 NEET

We will be in a position at the next Corporate Parenting Committee to report on an individual basis relating to those young people not in employments, education or training (NEET)

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

4.1 Children in Care and Carers should be actively involved in monitoring performance.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 Although there are no financial implications as a direct result of the specific recommendations within this report, the service areas highlighted in the report encompass a significant part of the Children's Services budget. For 2013/14 the initial budget allocation for 'Looked After Children' is £25.8m and for 'Children's Safeguarding' it is £13.2m. It is vital that these resources are deployed in an efficient and effective manner ensuring the best value for money for the Council.

Finance Officer Consulted: David Ellis

Date: 27.3.13

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The report sets out some indicators against which members can consider the extent to which it is evidenced that the Authority is meeting some basic requirements to promote the welfare of the children for whom the Authority holds corporate responsibility. The Local Authority has an absolute duty of care to all Looked After Children, and a duty to promote their welfare. The Authority must ensure compliance with the regulations and guidance in relation to specific aspects of the care of all Looked After Children.

Lawyer Consulted: Natasha Watson

Date: 27.3.13

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 Children in Care generally suffer poorer health, education and life opportunities than other children. The efforts of the Social Care Service, Health and the Council as a whole are focused on addressing this in-balance.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 Concerted efforts have been made to reduce the numbers of Children in Care through earlier intervention.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 Efforts are made to ensure children and young people in care are protected from risk of harm as victims of crime and do not become young offenders.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 Brighton and Hove numbers of Children in Care are high in comparison with other Authorities. A concerted effort into early help may address family issues at an earlier stage.

Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 Health colleagues are fully engaged in the support for Children in Care.

5.8 Corporate / Citywide Implications:

Support for Children in Care is in keeping with the Council priorities for equality and support for the most vulnerable.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

6.1 The Council has reorganised Social Care Services to bring greater focus and consistency to support Children in Need and Children in Care. This will be kept under review.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It is vital that Elected Members understand the position of Children in Care, and their role in supporting better outcomes for them.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Appendix 1 – Corporate Parenting Summary Report Card

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

1. None

Corporate Parenting Summary Report

March 2013 – External Version

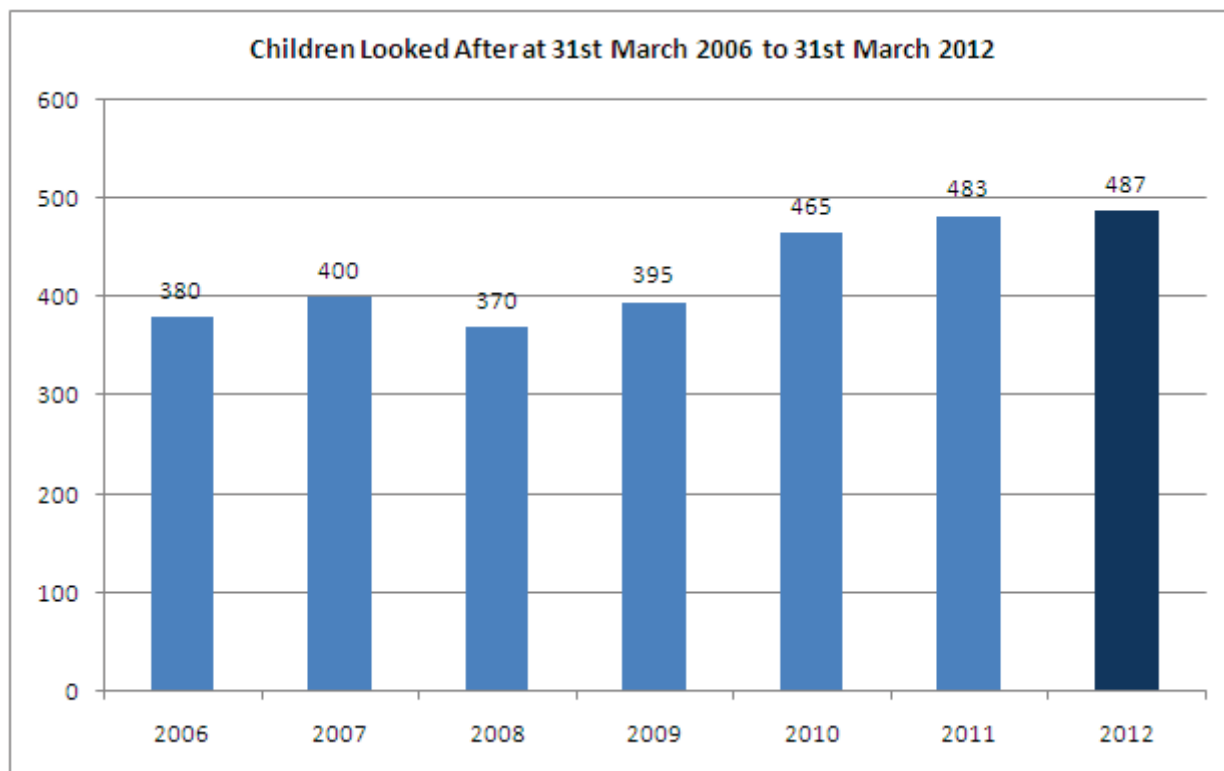
The purpose of this report is to highlight key performance activity relating to Children in Care and to identify key performance issues and the direction of travel for the key indicators.

Contents

	RAG Rating	Direction of Travel	Section
			<u>Children Looked After Numbers</u>
2	Red	Worse	Looked After Children (Excluding Respite) as at 31 st March 2012
3-4	Red	Better	Children Looked After at 31st March 2010 to 2012. Rates per 10,000 Children aged under 18 years
5	Red	Better	Children Looked After last 12 months
6	Red	Better	Children and Families in Care Proceedings
			<u>Profile of Children Looked After Year Ending 31st March 2011</u>
7-8	N/A	N/A	Children Looked After by Age Band
9	N/A	N/A	Children Looked After by Age and Gender
10	N/A	N/A	Children Looked After by Legal Status
11	N/A	N/A	Children Looked After by Ethnicity
12	N/A	N/A	Children Looked After by Placement Type
13	Green	Slightly Worse	Children looked after at 31 March by distance between home and placement by Local Authority
14	N/A	N/A	Children who started to be looked after during the year
			<u>Health of Children Looked After</u>
15	Amber	Slightly Better	Emotional and behavioural health of looked after children
16	Amber	Slightly Worse	Health and Dental Checks for Children Looked After
			<u>Improving Educational Outcomes</u>
17	Amber	Better	Percentage of School Age LAC with a PEP in the last 6 months
18	Green	Better	Percentage of children who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months with at least one fixed exclusion 2010
			<u>Increasing the number of care leavers in 'settled, safe accommodation'</u>
19	Green	Better	Care leavers at 19 - Suitable accommodation
20-21	Amber	Worse	Care leavers at 19 - in education, employment and training
			<u>Corporate Parenting Processes</u>
22	Amber	Worse	Looked after children cases which were reviewed within required timescales
23	Green	Better	Stability of placements of looked after children: number of placements
24	Amber	Better	Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement
25	Green	Better	Adoption and Special Guardianship Order

Looked After Children (Excluding Respite) as at 31st March 2012

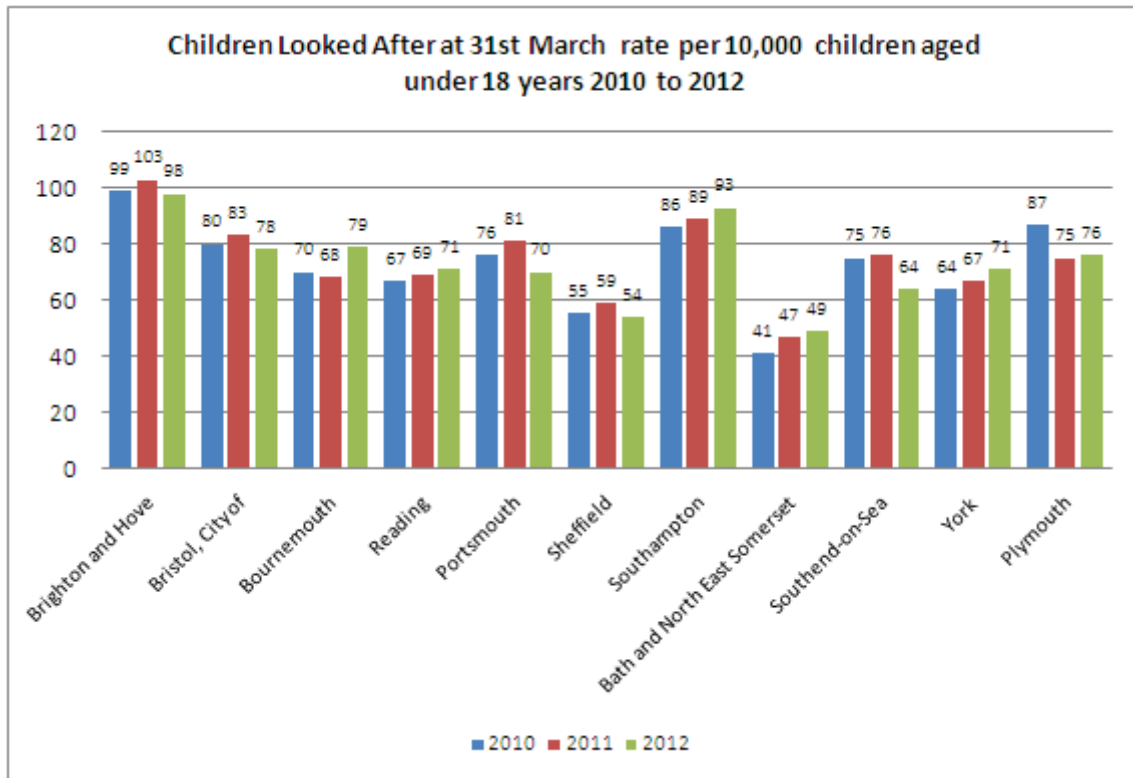
Figure 1: Number of Looked After Children (excluding Respite) at 31st March 2006 to 2012



Source: SSDA903

The number of Looked after Children at 31st March 2012 is 487, a 1% increase from 2011 compared to a 2% increase nationally, and a 32% increase from 2008 compared to a 13% increase nationally.

Figure 2a: Children looked after at 31st March 2010 to 2012. Rates per 10,000 Children aged under 18 years¹



Source: SSDA903

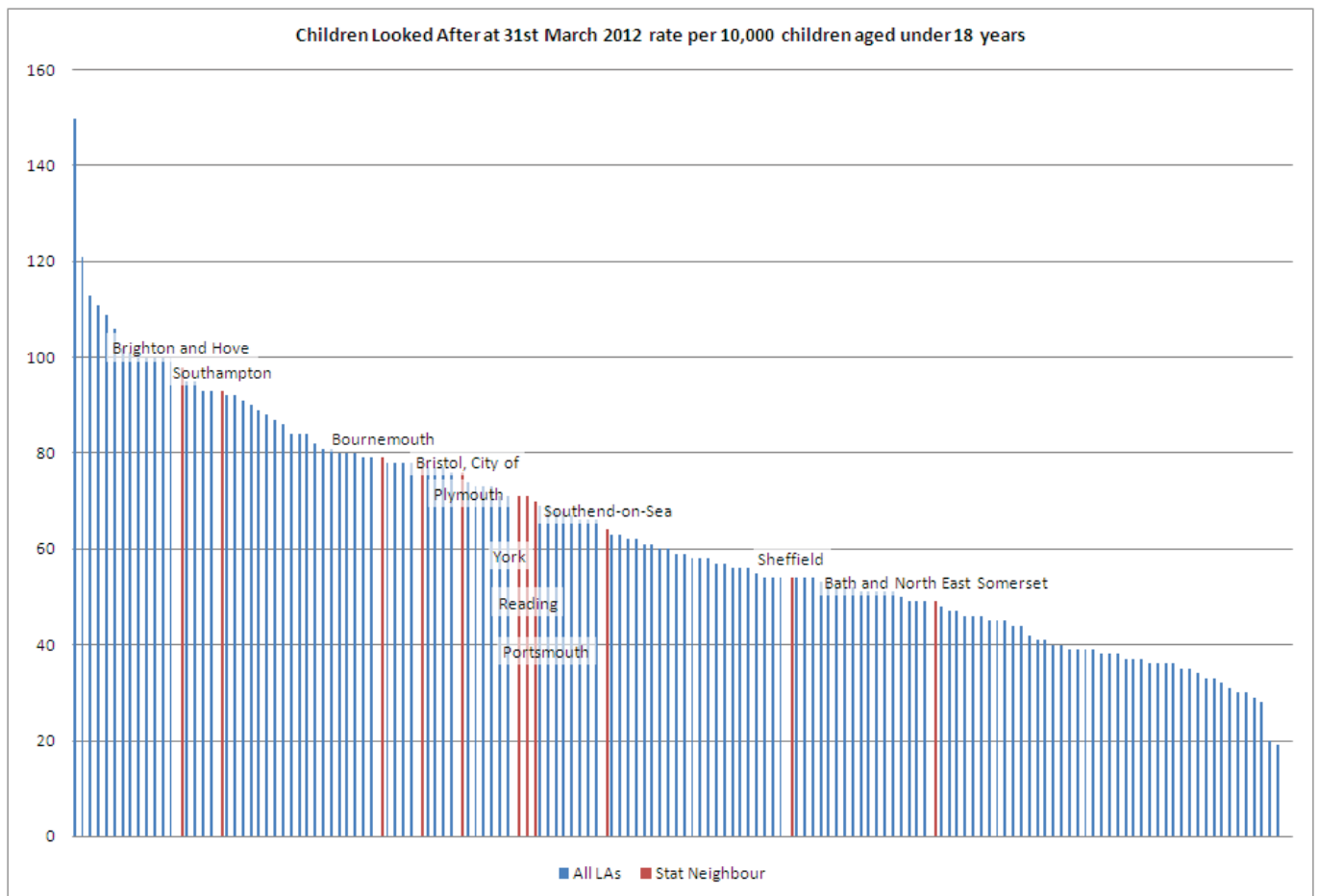
The rate of children looked after per 10,000 children aged under 18 has fallen from 103 as at 31 March 2011 to 98 as at March 2012. The reason that our rate per 10,000 has fallen despite the number of children looked after increasing is because the mid-year 2011 projection for children aged 0-17 based on 2011 Census is 49,900 and the 2010 mid-year projection was 46,900.

The rate for 2012 is higher than the 2011 national average (59 per 10,000) and the average for our statistical neighbours² (70.5 per 10,000). Brighton and Hove's LAC number would need to fall to 352 to be in-line with the statistical neighbour average and 295 to be in-line with the national average. Our closest statistical neighbours in terms of demographics are Bristol and Bournemouth and our LAC number would need to fall to 390 and 392 respectively to be in-line with our closest neighbours.

¹ The rates per 10,000 children under 18 years have been derived using the mid-year population estimates for 2009 provided by the Office for National Statistics.

² Statistical Neighbours (SN) are ranked in order of statistical closeness, with the top SN being closest: Bristol, Bournemouth, Portsmouth, Reading, Sheffield, Southampton, Bath and North East Somerset, Southend-on-Sea, York and Plymouth
Corporate Parenting Summary Report - Mar 2013 Final Version - EXTERNAL

Figure 2b: Children looked after at 31st March 2012. Rates per 10,000 Children aged under 18 years³

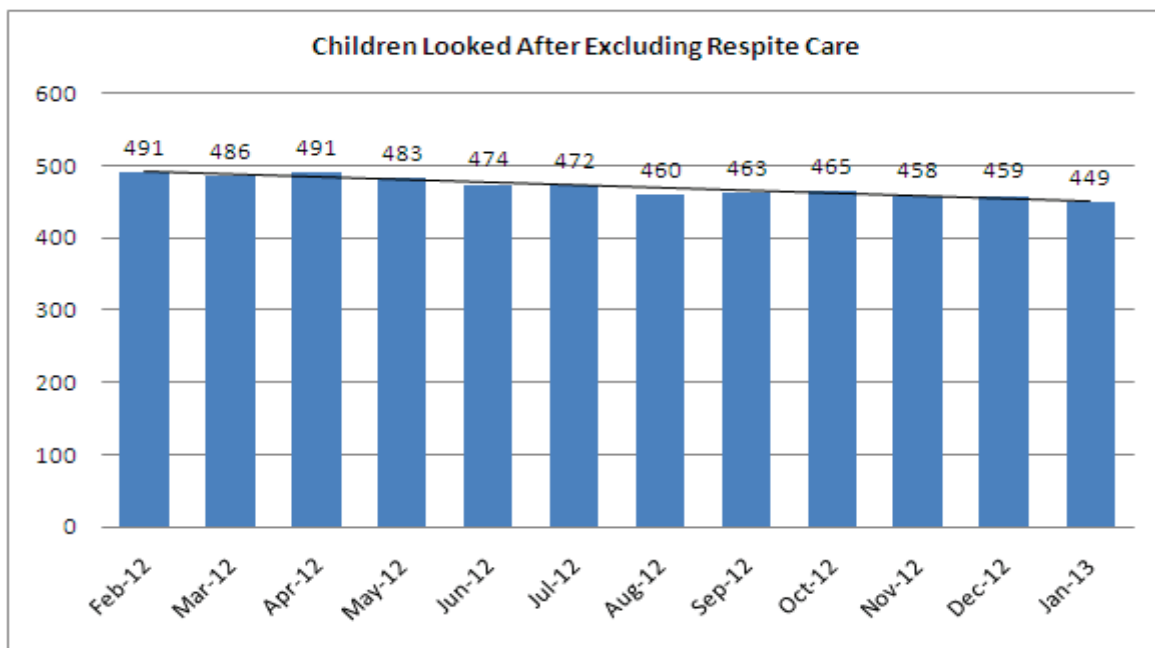


Source: SSDA903

Figure 2b reveals that the 2011/12 LAC Rate per 10,000 for Brighton and Hove Children is ranked 14th highest out of 152 Local Authorities in England. The LAC rate as at 31st January 2013 per 10,000 is 90 which would place Brighton and Hove 22nd highest based on the 2012 position.

³ The rates per 10,000 children under 18 years have been derived using the mid-year population estimates for 2009 provided by the Office for National Statistics.

Figure 3: Children looked after year ending 31st January 2013

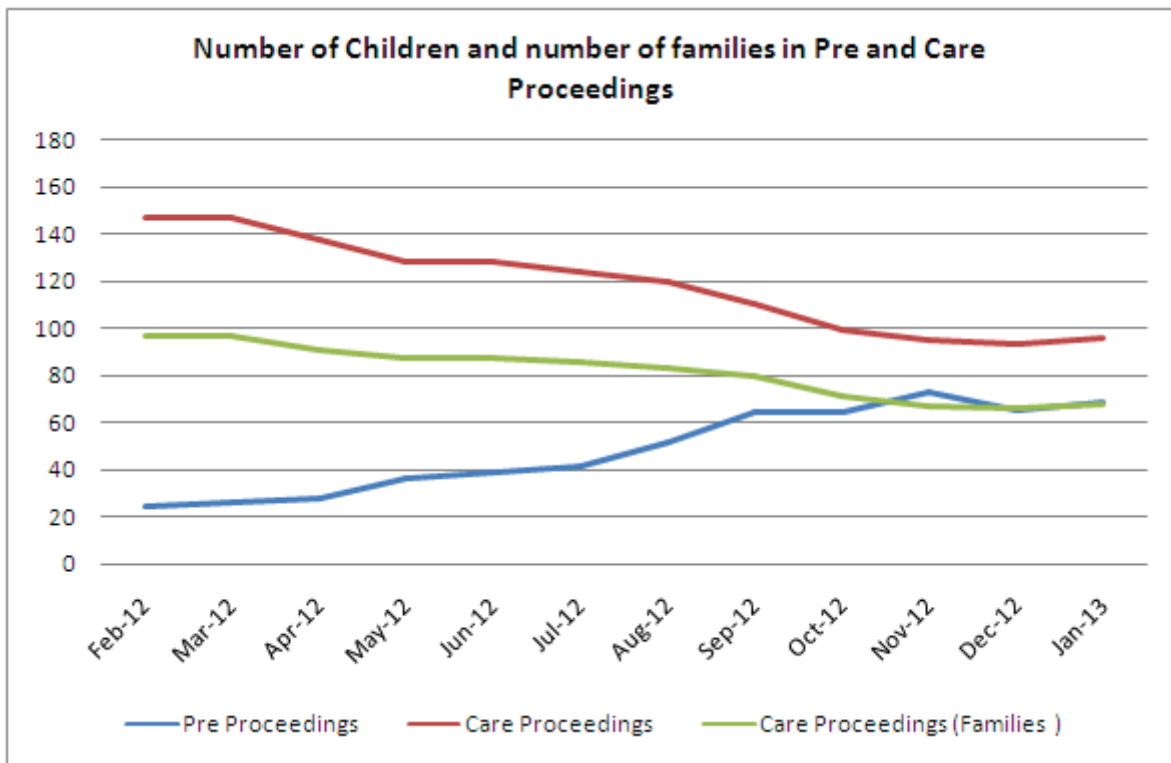


Source: Monthly Monitoring January 2013

The number of Looked After Children fell from 459 at the end of December 2012 to 449. Furthermore, the number of Looked After Children has fallen from 514 in November 2011 – a 12.6% reduction. Based on the Finance Report for Month 9, the placement numbers which includes children who are placed with relatives, residence and special guardianship orders is 631.26 FTE, down from 633.75 in the previous month. The budget is 670.91 FTE so we are under spending against the budget.

Processes have been developed in the CIN Team to discuss cases for children on the edge of care in both Team Manager's supervision and CIN management meetings. The CIN Team has set up a Care Planning Forum to manage discussions around taking children into care. It is hoped that in the current year this will maintain a downward trend in LAC numbers.

Figure 4: Number of Children and number of families in Pre and Care Proceedings



Source: Monthly Monitoring January 2013

Pre-proceedings are now being calculated from the Public Law Outline document and reveals that there are currently 69 children in pre-proceedings. There were 96 children in care proceedings as at 31st January 2013, down from 147 in February 2012. The number of families in care proceedings has also fallen from 97 as at February 2012 to 68. 23 children started care proceedings in the last 3 months compared to 21 in the previous 3 months. 15 families started care proceedings in the last 3 months compared to 18 in the previous 3 months.

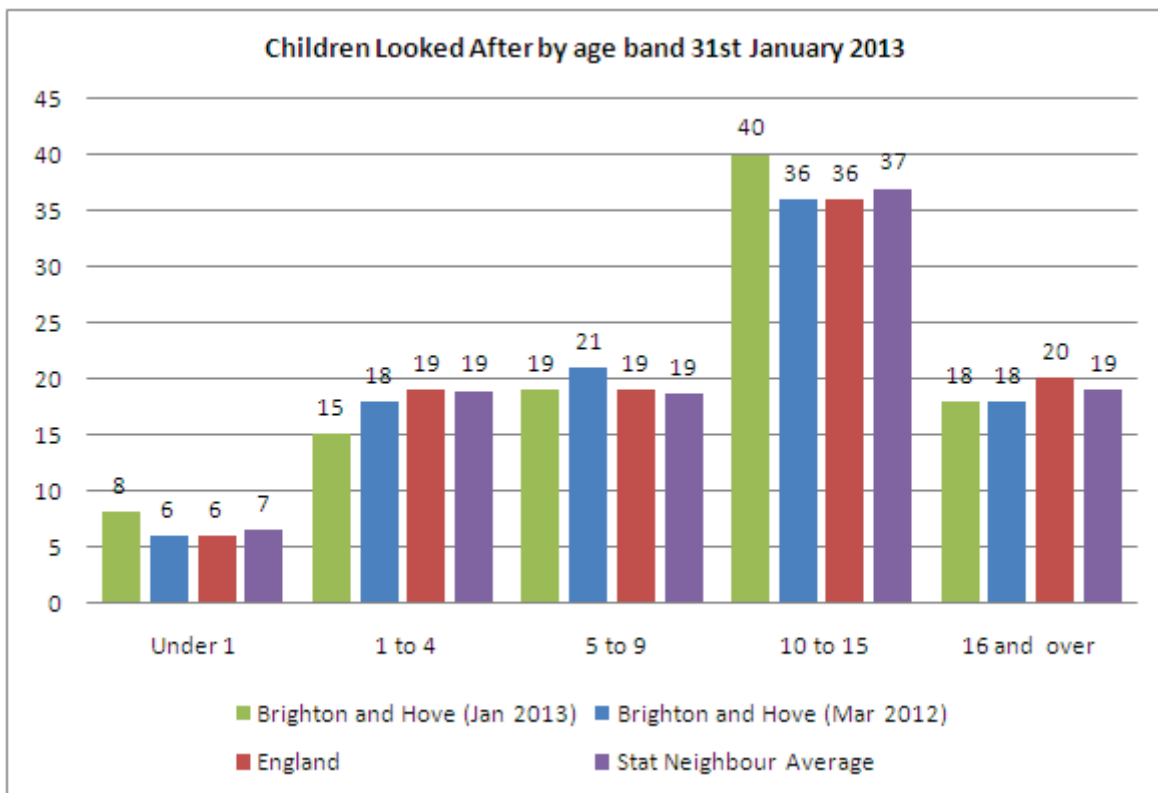
Children Looked After Year Ending 31 January 2013

An analysis of the Children Looked After Statistical First Release (SFR), which provides information about looked after children in England for the year ending 31 March 2012, has been provided in this section of the report to illustrate how the profile of Looked After Children in Brighton and Hove compares with the national average and our statistical neighbours. The figures are based on data from the SSDA903 return collected from all local authorities. Figures for Brighton and Hove for the year ending 31st January 2013 have also been provided.

Please note that:

- Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 5
- Figures exclude children looked after under an agreed series of short term placements.
- Historical data may differ from older publications. This is mainly due to the implementation of amendments and corrections sent by some local authorities after the publication date of previous materials.
- The Statistical Neighbour Average (SN Average) has been calculated by averaging the percentages for the 10 local authorities in our statistical neighbour group.

Figure 5: Children Looked After by Age Band (Percentages)



Source: SSDA903

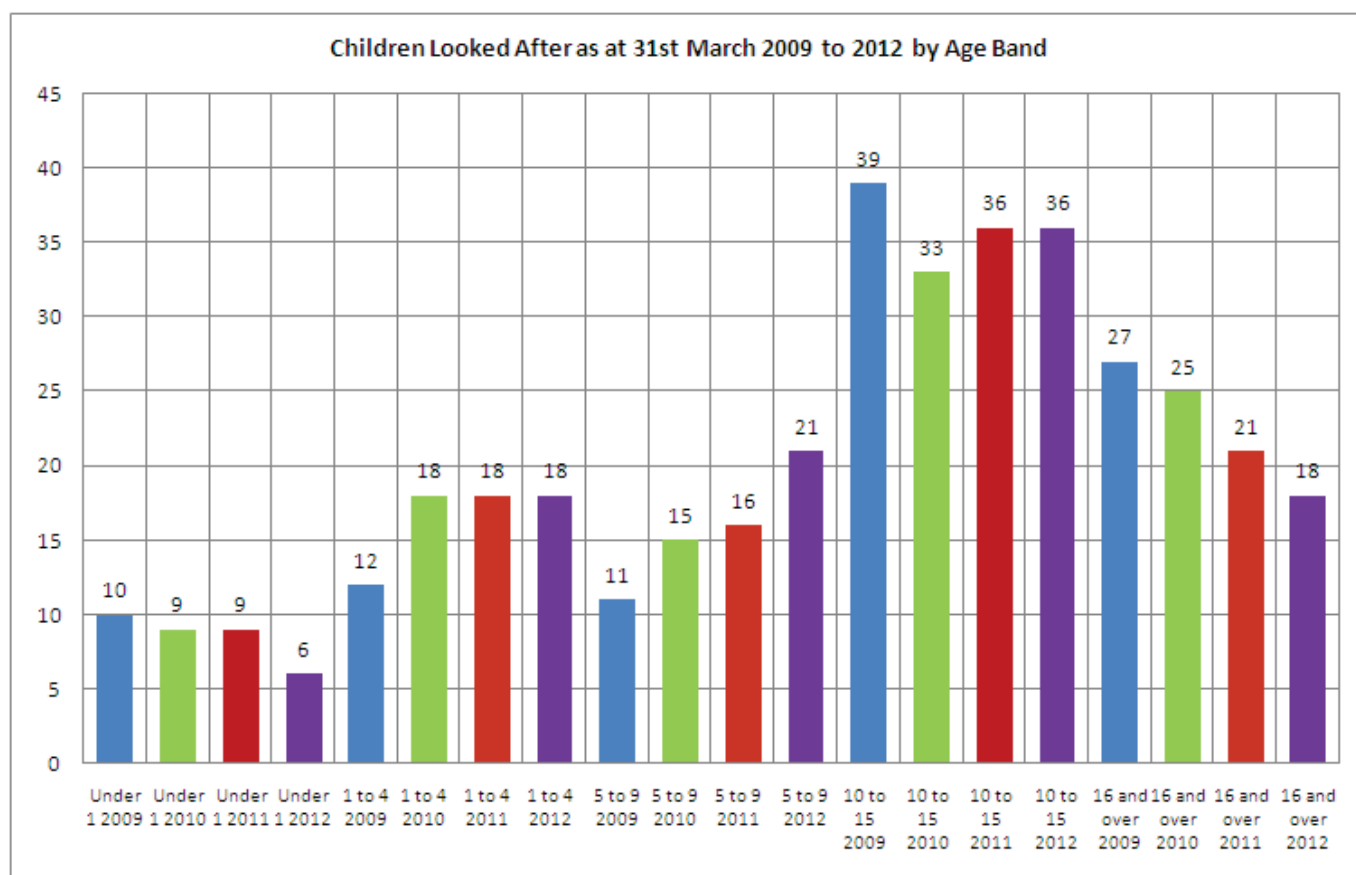
Figure 5 compares the percentage of children looked after by age band as at 31st January 2013. There are 38 children looked after aged under 1 which represents 8% of the cohort (6% nationally), an increase from 30 in March 2012 when 6% of the cohort were aged under 1. There are 82 children aged 16 and over which represents 18% of the LAC cohort (20% nationally), a decrease from 86 in March 2012 when 18% of the cohort were aged 16 and over.

Table 1: Children Looked After at 31st March 2012 and 31st January 2013 by Age Band (Numbers)

Age Band	Mar-12	Jan-13
Under 1	30	38
1 to 4	90	67
5 to 9	104	84
10 to 15	177	178
16 and over	86	82
Total	487	449

Source: SSDA903 and Monthly Monitoring January 2013

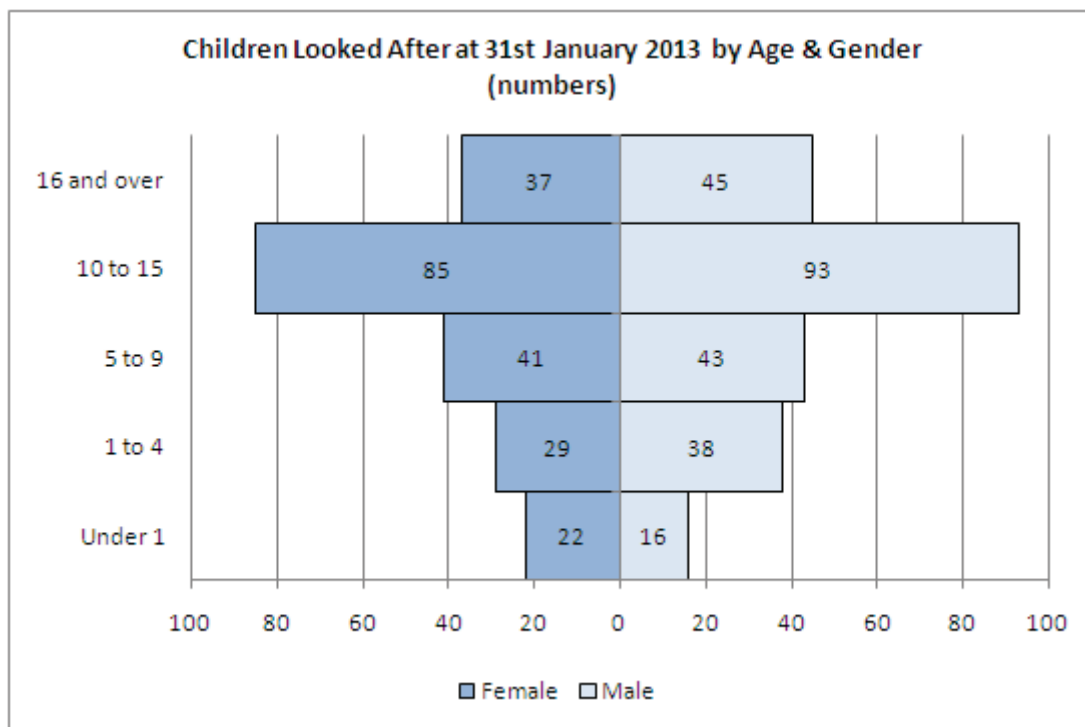
Figure 6: Children Looked After as at 31st March 2009 to 2012 by Age Band



Source: SSDA903

Figure 6 illustrates the percentage of children looked after by Brighton and Hove as at 31st March from 2009 to 2012 and reveals that the percentage of children aged 16 and over has fallen year-on-year from 27% in 2009 to 18% in 2012 whereas the percentage of children aged 5 to 9 has risen from 11% in 2009 to 21% in 2012. The decrease in the number of children looked after aged 16 and over is due in part to a fall in the number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children which is a trend shared both nationally and with our statistical neighbours.

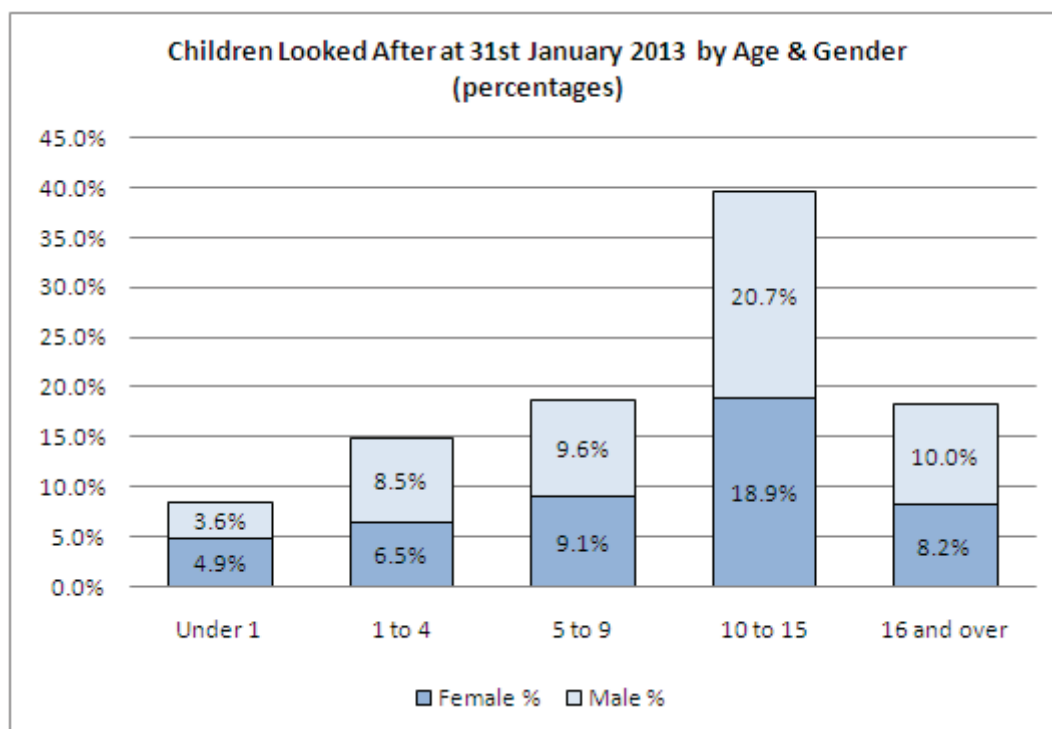
Figure 7a: Children Looked After at 31st January 2013 by Age & Gender (Numbers)



Source: Monthly Monitoring January 2013

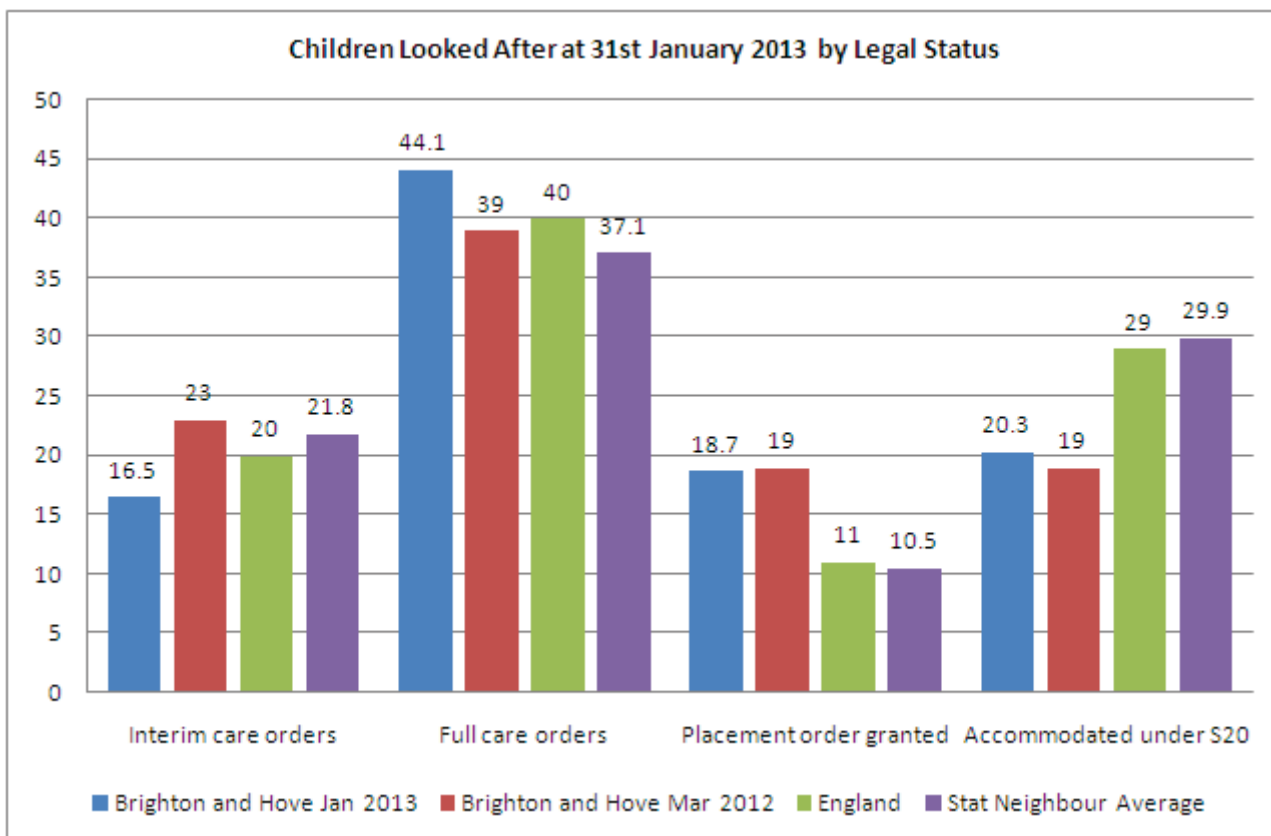
There are 235 male children (52.3%) and 214 female children (47.7%). Nationally, 56% of Looked after children are male. There are more male children in all of the age bands except for children aged under 1 with the biggest differences in the 10 to 15 and 1 to 4 age bands.

Figure 7b: Children Looked After at 31st January 2013 by Age & Gender (Percentages)



Source: Monthly Monitoring January 2013

Figure 8: Children Looked After at 31st January 2013 by Legal Status (Percentages)

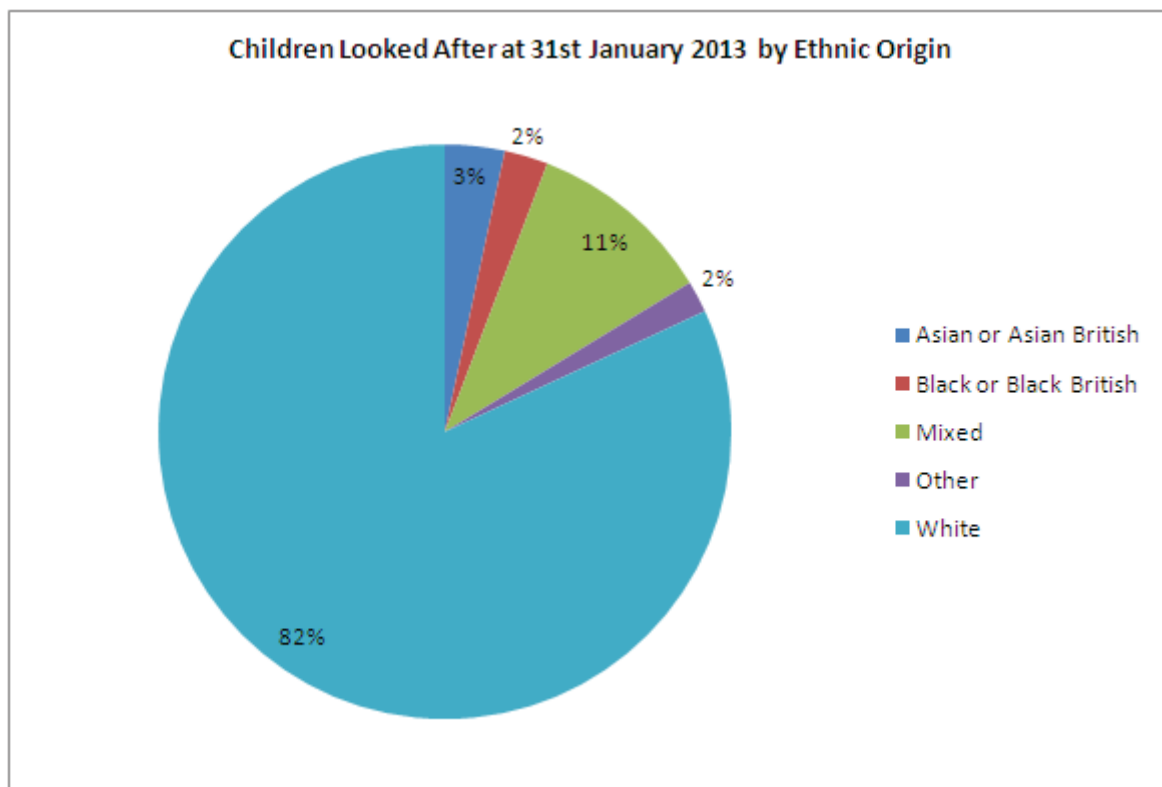


Sources: SSDA903

Please note that other legal statuses have not been included in Figure 8 as the data has been suppressed for many local authorities due to the low numbers involved.

Figure 8 compares the percentage of children looked after at 31st January 2013 by legal status and reveals that the percentage of children on a Placement Order is 18.7%, above the England Average of 11% and 10.5% for our statistical neighbours. The percentage of children looked after on Section 20 is 20.3% as at 31st January 2013, below the England Average (29%) and statistical neighbour average (29.9%). The percentage of children on Interim Care Orders has fallen from 23% as at 31st March 2012 to 16.5% while the percentage of children on Full Care Orders has risen from 39% to 44.1% over the same period.

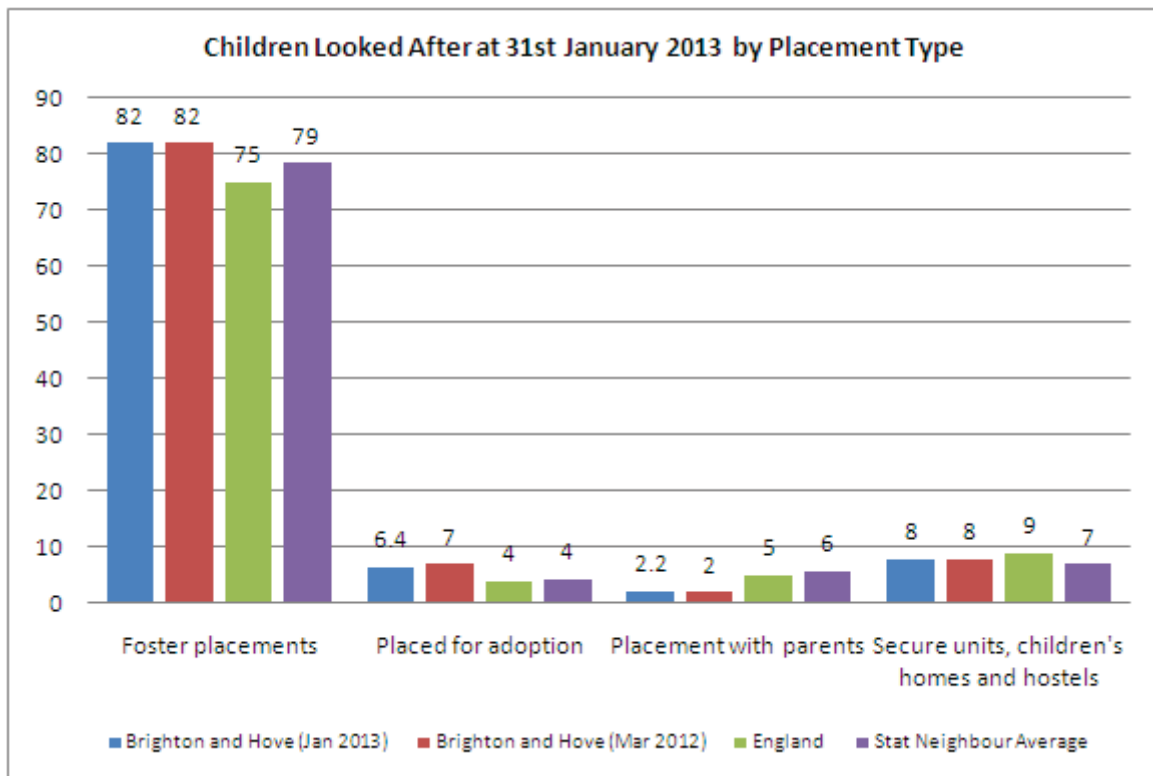
Figure 9: Children Looked After at 31st January 2013 by Ethnic Origin



Source: Monthly Monitoring January 2013

82% of Looked After Children in Brighton and Hove have a recorded ethnicity in the White Ethnic Origin category compared to 78% nationally, with 11% under Mixed (9% nationally), 3% under Asian or Asian British (4% nationally), 2% under Black or Black British (7% nationally) and 2% under Other (2% nationally).

Figure 10: Children Looked After as at 31st January 2013 by Placement Type

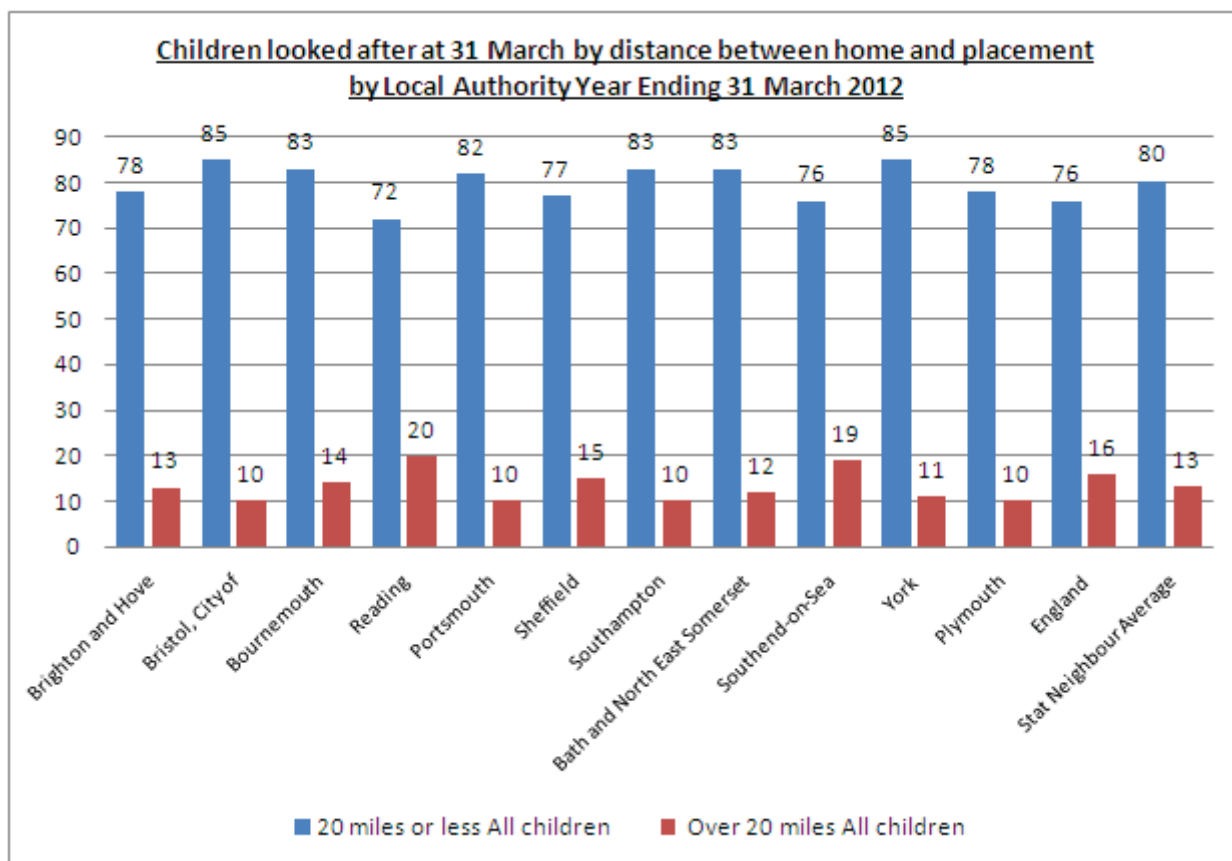


Sources: SSDA903

Please note that other placement types have not been included in Figure 10 as the data has been suppressed for many local authorities due to the low numbers involved.

Figure 10 illustrates that 82% of children looked after in Brighton were placed in foster placements as at 31st January 2013 compared to 75% nationally and 79% for our statistical neighbours. Of the total LAC cohort, 145 (32%) were placed with in house carers, 188 (42%) were placed with agency carers and 52 (7.8%) were placed with relatives or friends. 6.4% of children were placed for adoption as at 31st January 2013, above the national average of 4%.

Figure 11: Children looked after at 31 March by distance between home and placement by Local Authority Year Ending 31 March 2012



Source: SSDA903

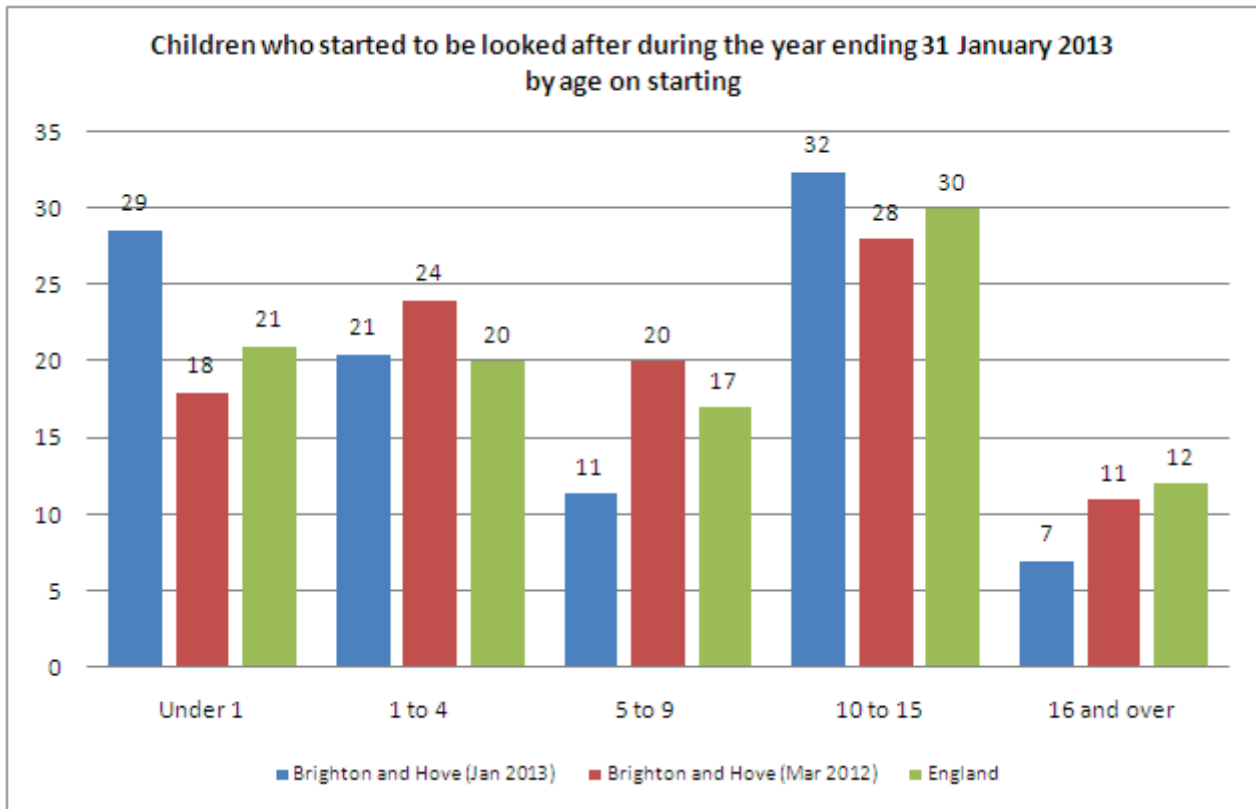
Figure 11 reveals that 78% of children looked after in Brighton and Hove at 31st March 2012 were placed 20 miles or less from their home address, down from 81% last year, with 13% placed over 20 miles (2% were not known and 7% were not recorded). The percentage of children looked after placed within 20 miles remains higher than the 2011/12 England Average (76%) but is slightly below the average for our statistical neighbours (80%). Many of the placements that are more than 20 miles from home are appropriate and can be positive for the child or young person. In Brighton and Hove, 34% of children were placed inside the local authority boundary and 57% were placed outside of the boundary. Nationally, 59% of children were placed inside the local authority boundary and 34% were placed outside with 4% not known and 4% not recorded. The percentages for Brighton and Hove are likely to be skewed given the size of the geographical area. The 3 year average (2010 to 2012) for children placed over 20 miles is 13% compared to 12% nationally and ranks Brighton and Hove 74th out of 152 Local Authorities.

"Home" address unknown or unavailable may occur with Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children or children missing from main placement.

For reasons of confidentiality distance is not recorded for children who were placed for adoption.

Placement locality denotes whether or not the placement at 31 March is within the geographical boundary of the responsible local authority.

Figure 12: Children who started to be looked after during the year ending 31st January 2013 (percentages)



Source: SSDA903

Figure 12 compares the percentage of children starting to be looked after during the year ending 31st January 2013 by their age on starting⁴ with the national average. The data reveals that the percentage of children starting to be looked after during the year aged under 1 has risen from 18% in March 2012 to 29% in January 2013, above the national average of 21%. The percentage of children starting to be looked after aged 16 and over has fallen from 11% in March 2012 to 7% in January 2013, below the national average (12%).

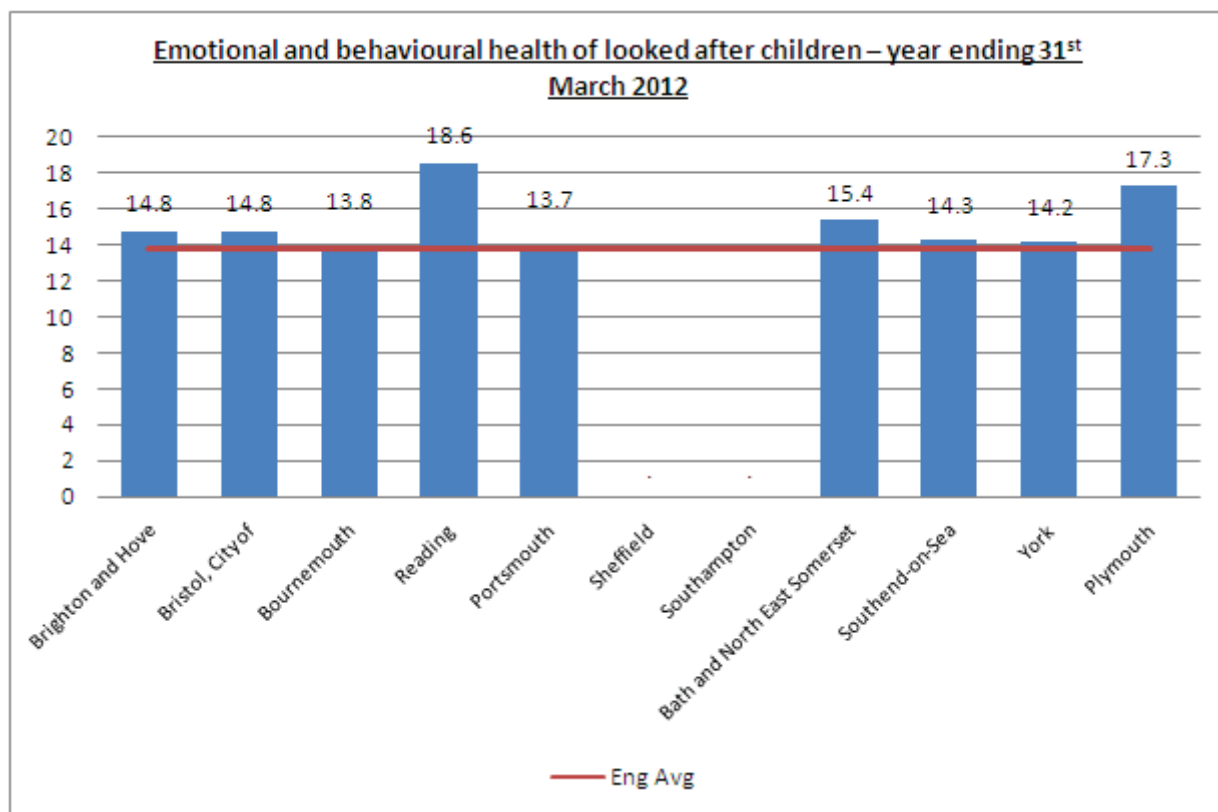
⁴ Only the first occasion on which a child started to be looked after in the year has been counted.

Health of Children Looked After

Emotional and behavioural health of looked after children

Definition: Since 2008, central government have required each local authority to ask carers to complete a 'Strength & Difficulties' Questionnaire for every child looked after at 31st March who has been in care continuously for one year or more and who is aged 4-16 years. The questionnaire produces a score from 10 (no indicators of difficulty or stress) to 40 (extremely high indicators of stress & difficulty) and good performance is indicated by a low number.

Figure 13: Emotional and behavioural health of looked after children – year ending 31st March 2012.



Source: SSDA903

Summary

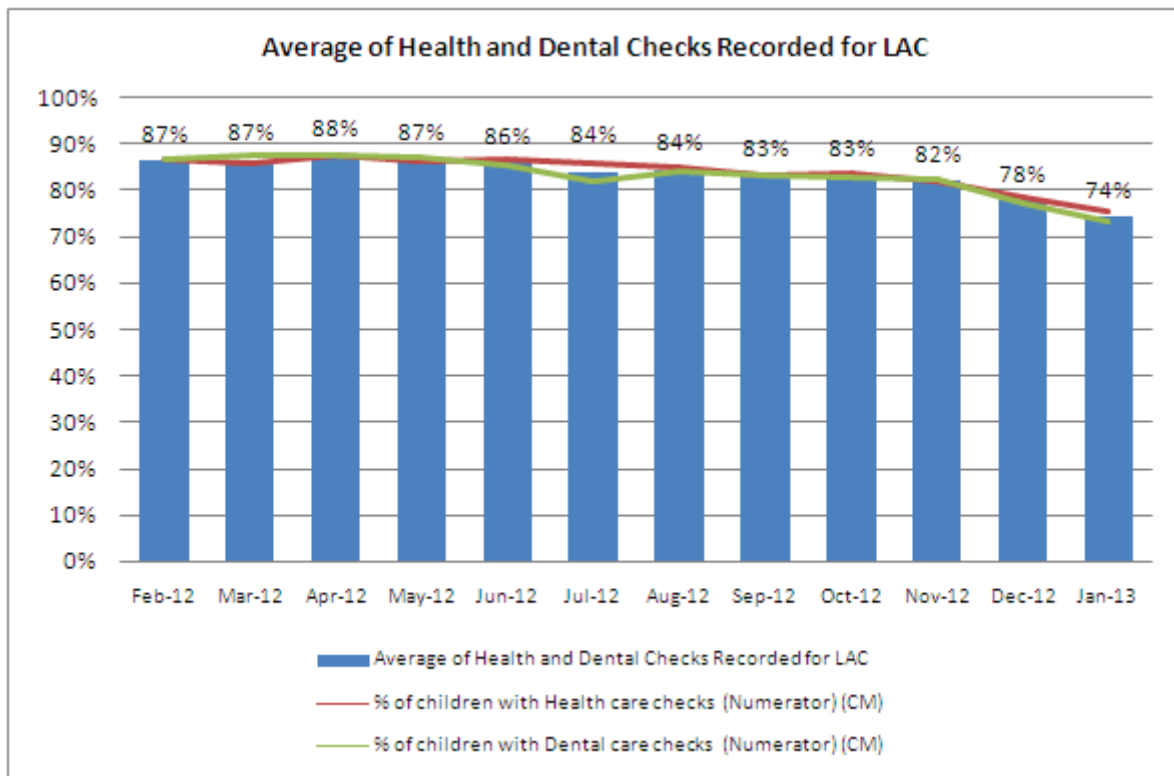
In Brighton & Hove, the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire is administered by the LAC Health team and an 84% return was achieved for 2011/12, compared to a national average of 70%. Children with Disability can be excluded and so we would not expect to achieve 100% return.

The average score gained by Brighton and Hove children and young people in care for 2011/12 is 14.8, an improvement from 15.5 last year but worse than the national average of 13.8. There are multiple factors involved in the emotional state of children and the cohort of children from year to year is not exactly the same, and these factors should be considered when making year-on-year comparisons. 46% of eligible children with an SDQ score were considered 'normal' (51% nationally) 10% were considered 'borderline' (13% nationally) and 43% were considered as 'concern' (36% nationally).

The LAC Health Team follow all high scores up with carers, young people, the Virtual School for Children in Care and Social Workers to ensure that they are receiving the right support. If the child or young person is not receiving the right level of support, the LAC Health would make or suggest a new referral to CAMHS or other agency.

Health and Dental Checks for Children Looked After

Figure 14: Average of Health and Dental Checks Recorded for LAC



Source: Monthly Monitoring Social Care Data January 2013

Summary

Timely health and dental checks recorded for LAC is 74% as at January 2013, down from 88% in April 2012, with the Children in Care Team at 75%, the Children in Need Team at 83% and the Post 16 Support Team at 62%. The indicator is an average of health and dental checks with health checks at 75% and dental checks at 73%. Current performance remains below the national average of 84.3% for the year ending 31st March 2012. This needs to be the subject of urgent management action and the Service Manager for the CIC service will report back next month on actions to improve this percentage.

Performance Issues

The majority of outstanding assessments are for children placed outside of Brighton & Hove. There are very few children who have not had their assessment completed on time by our Brighton & Hove health professionals. There have also been a number of 16 & 17 year old young people who despite much encouragement have refused to have their health and dental checks. It should be noted that the Post 16 Support Team and Young People’s Asylum Service do not have an Information Officer to assist with recording of health and dental checks.

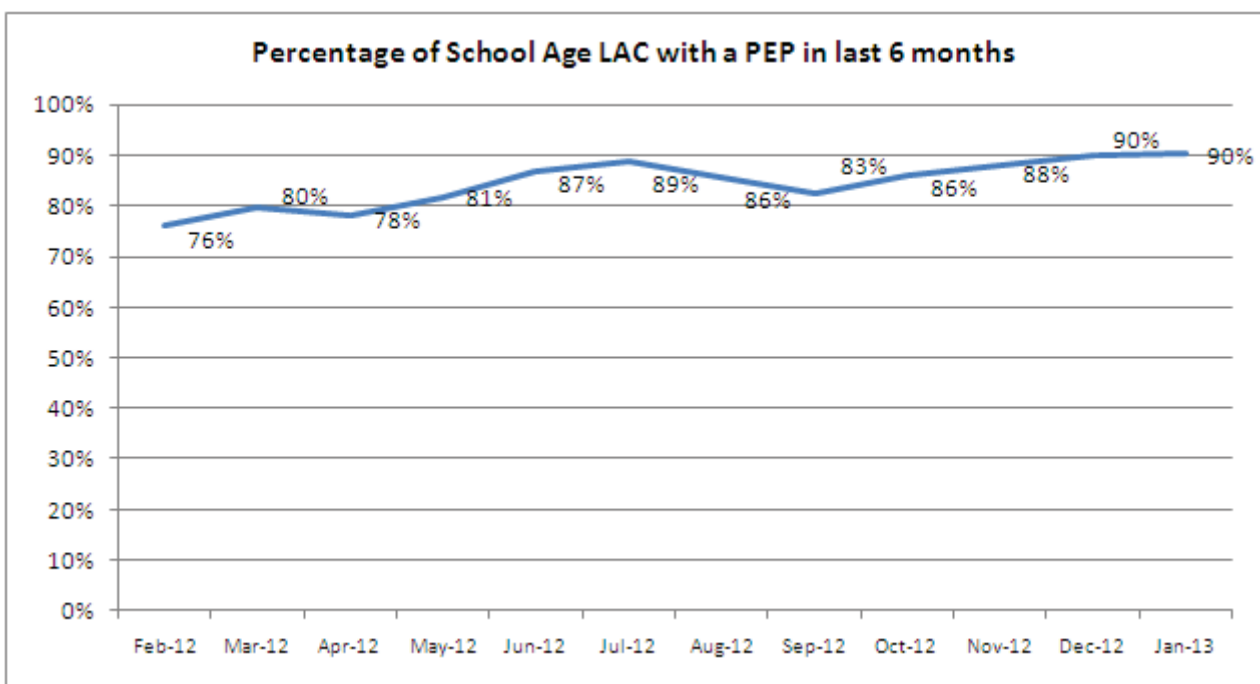
Improving Educational Outcomes

It must be noted that with comparatively small cohorts in Brighton & Hove, individual pupil outcomes will have a demonstrably bigger impact on the overall indicators.

Local indicator – Percentage of Children in Care with an up-to date Personal Education Plan (PEP)

Definition: Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are a statutory requirement for all school age children in care. A PEP is a personalised plan for each child that records any specific learning needs and identifies strategies and support to enable them to make progress in line with their peers. The PEP meeting also provides the opportunity to identify successes in all aspects relating to school performance as well as any other areas that may be causing concern. They are reviewed every six months. There are no national indicators for this target; however other LAs do use this indicator, including some of our statistical neighbours.

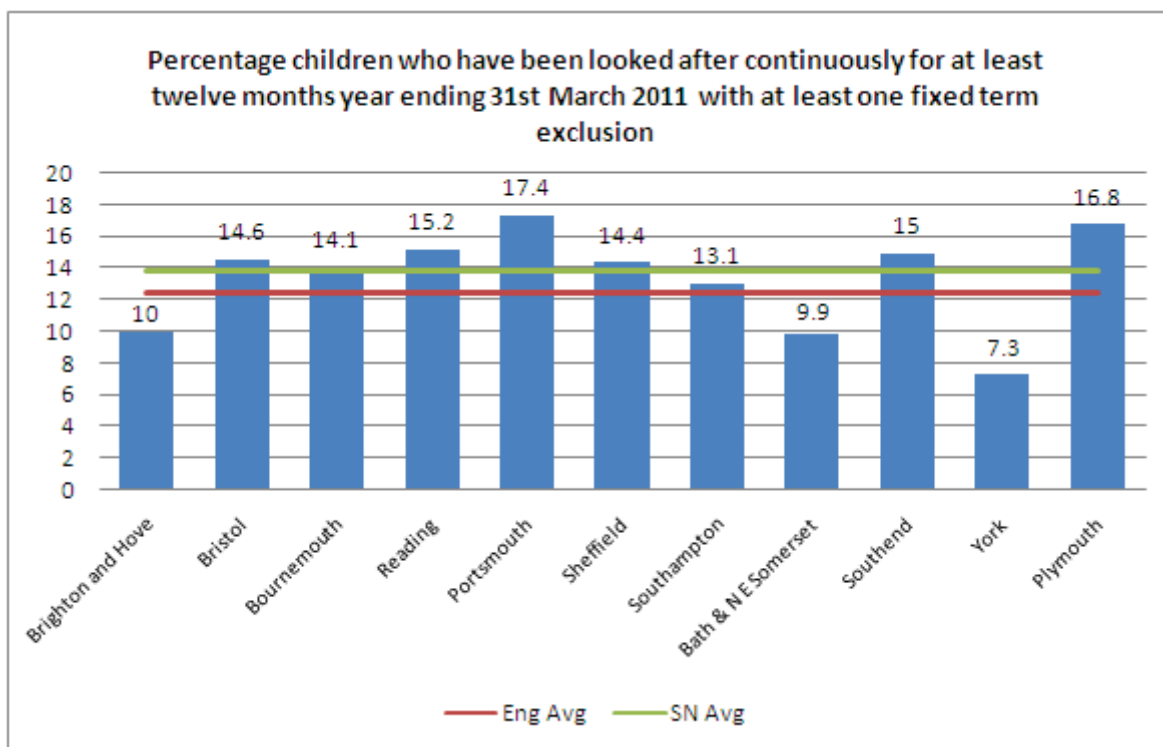
Figure 16: Percentage of School Age LAC with a PEP in the last 6 months



There were 267 children looked after as at 31st January who were of school age and had been looked after for 28 days or more. Of this cohort, 241 (90%) had a PEP Activity dated within the last 6 months recorded on Carefirst, an improvement from 76% as at February 2012.

The Children in Care team have an information officer in post who has taken on responsibility for reviewing the status of PEPs. In the instance of a PEP being due, or out of date, the information officer emails the individual social worker and their manager. The Virtual School continues to provide individual support and team training opportunities to social work colleagues. This is easier now they are co-located. Any social work colleagues experiencing on-going difficulties in meeting PEP deadlines will have this addressed through supervision. The PEP is live on Carefirst, which will make it easier to ensure that social care meet statutory requirements for the initiation and completion of the PEP report. The Virtual School team will continue to authorise PEPs for all children in care. The reporting and auditing of the quality of PEPs will also benefit from being on Carefirst – a work plan for this has been developed.

Figure 17: Percentage of children who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months with at least one fixed exclusion 2011⁵



Sources: CLA-NPD matched data for March 2011

Figure 17 reveals that 10% children who had been looked after continuously for at least 12 months at 31st March 2011 received at least one fixed exclusion, an improvement from 17.6% in 2010 and below the national average of 12.4% and 13.8% for our statistical neighbours.

⁵ Exclusion information is collected from primary and secondary schools, CTCs and academies, maintained and non-maintained special schools.

The total number of children looked after continuously for at least twelve months as at 31 March regardless of age, including those for whom it was not possible to match school census data.

The number of children looked after continuously for at least twelve months as at 31 March aged between 5 and 15, including those for whom it was not possible to match school census data.

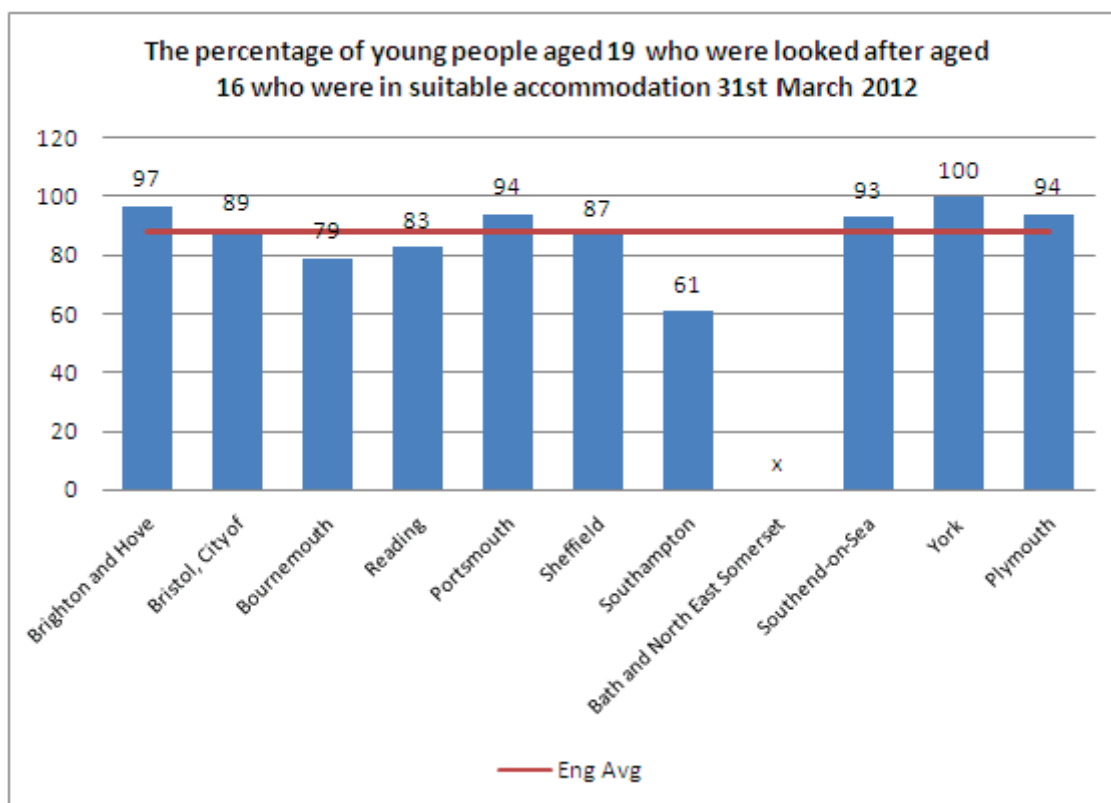
Increasing the number of care leavers in 'settled, safe accommodation'

Care leavers at 19 - Suitable accommodation

Definition: The percentage of former care leavers aged 19 who were looked after under any legal status (other than V3 or V4) on 1 April in their 17th year, who were in suitable accommodation.

Summary

Figure 17: The percentage of former care leavers aged 19 who were looked after on 1 April in their 17th year, who were in suitable Accommodation.



Source: SSSA903

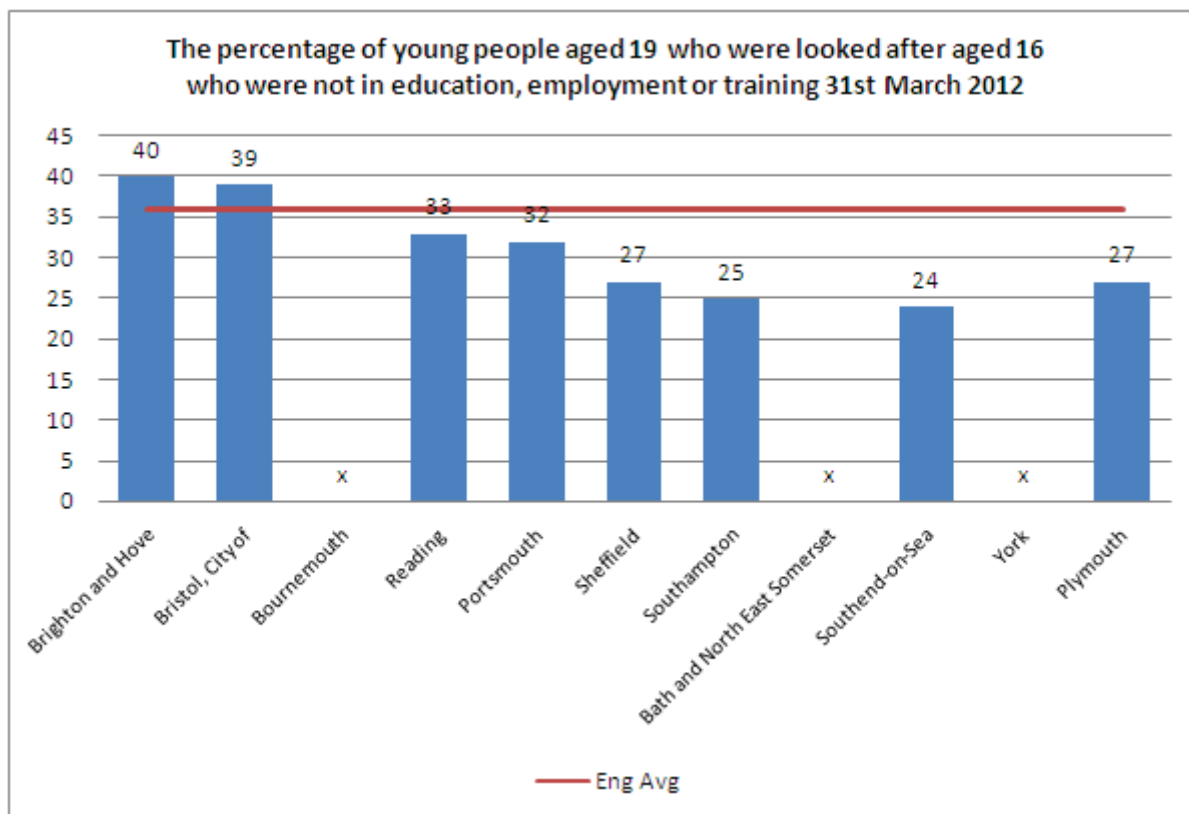
The outturn figure for 2011/12 is 96.6% which is an improvement from 93.8% in 2010/11 and above the 2011/12 England average (88%). The 3 year average (2010 to 2012) for this indicator is 91% which ranks Brighton and Hove 75th out of 152 LAs.

Care leavers at 19 - in education, employment and training

Definition: The percentage of former care leavers aged 19 who were looked after under any legal status on 1 April in their 17th year (other than V3 or V4), who were not in education, employment or training.

Summary

Figure 18: The percentage of former care leavers aged 19 who were looked after on 1 April in their 17th year, who were not in education employment or training.



Source: SSDA903

Summary

The outturn figure for 2011/12 is 39.7%, a fall from 29.2% last year and worse than the 2012 national average of 36%. The 3 year average (2010 to 2012) for this indicator is 32%, better than the national average of 34% and ranks Brighton and Hove 63rd out of 152 Local Authorities.

Performance Issues

23 out of a cohort of 58 (39.7%) were not in Education, Employment and Training in 2011/12 compared to 29.2% of care leavers in 2010/11. Information from the Brighton & Hove Youth Employability Service shows that of the 377 young people aged 19 years on its database, 213 (56.5%) are in Education, Training & Employment and 164 (43.5%) are NEET. There are several factors which have affected the increase of NEET young people for this period:

- Vacancies listed at B&H Job Centres have reduced by 300 compared to same period last year
- current notified vacancies (March '12) at 1,109 and total claimants over 6000

- within this cohort, the number of 16–24 year olds currently claiming JSA (March '12) are Brighton (1397) and Hove (635), a ratio of 6 people for every job vacancy
- Job Centres are also struggling to find work experience placements for 16–24 year olds particularly in the retail sector due to major employers in the city refusing to offer these opportunities after negative press reports”

Improvement Activity

- Identifying employability opportunities across B&HCC and its partners as part of the Corporate Parenting responsibilities and strategy
- The appointment of an Employment & Training Personal Adviser to provide intensive support to 16/17 young people in care and care leavers. This is a development area of the Ofsted Inspection Action Plan
- The appointment of Apprenticeship Co-ordinator based in Human Resources to develop work placements and apprenticeships across the council
- The creation of city-wide single apprenticeships scheme managed by the B&H Strategic Partnership with full involvement of the Education Business Partnership
- Implementation of the ‘Youth Contract’ by the Youth Employability Service which has additionally attached to it re support for care leavers who are NEET
- Positive action initiatives by other local authorities re employability for care leavers being followed up by Corporate Parenting Team Manager.

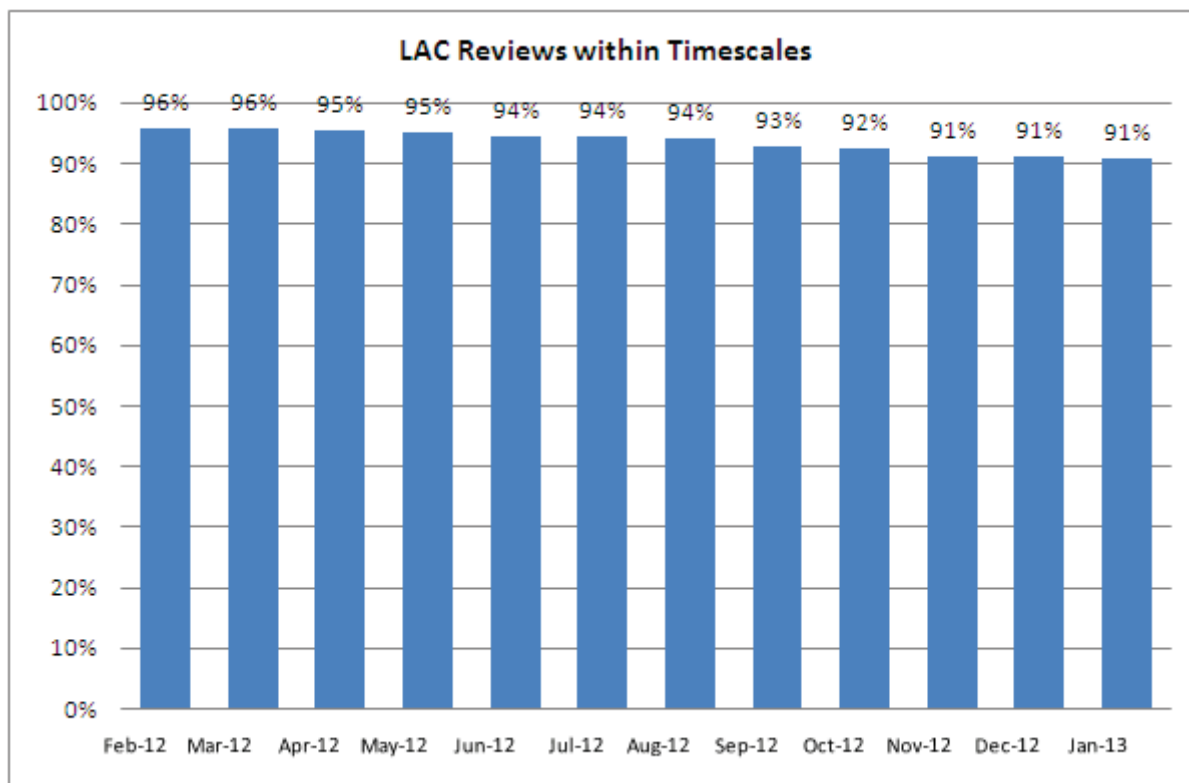
Corporate Parenting Processes

Looked after children cases which were reviewed within required timescales (%)

Definition: The percentage of children looked after cases which should have been reviewed during the year ending 31 March that were reviewed on time during the year.

Summary

Figure 19: The percentage of children looked after cases which should have been reviewed during the year that were reviewed on time during the year



Source: Monthly Monitoring January 2013

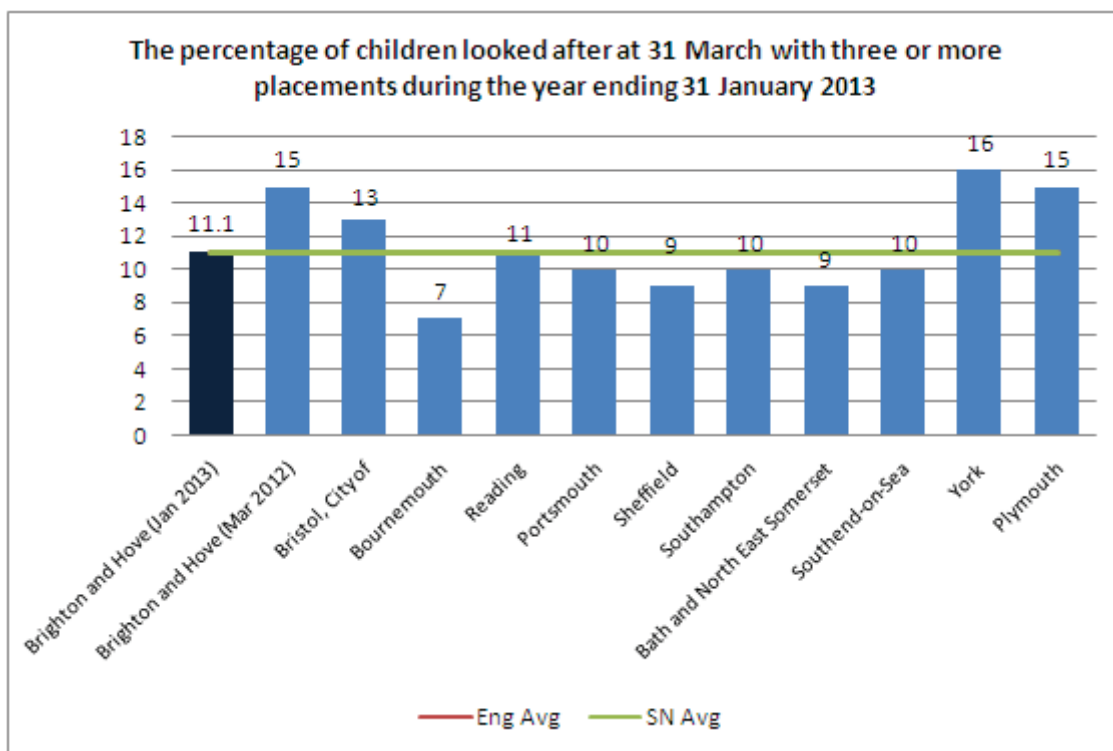
The percentage of LAC Reviews in the last year completed within timescales has fallen from 96% in February 2012 to 91%. The IRO team are looking at this issue as it would appear that only one review is actually out of date and the recording and data issue needs to be resolved. Some of the reviews currently showing out of timescale are reviews that have been held early so should not show as late.

Stability of placements of looked after children: number of placements

Definition: The percentage of children looked after at 31 March with three or more placements during the year.

Summary

Figure 20: The percentage of children looked after at 31 March with three or more placements during the year ending 31 March



Sources: SSDA903

The percentage of children placed three or more times during the year has improved from 13.8% in February 2012 to 11.1% in January, which is slightly worse than the national and statistical neighbour average of 11%. Commentary from the Children in Care Team Manager states that the performance has improved as a result of having a dedicated CiC Service which can focus more on placement stability. In addition, there are fewer children coming into care and more new foster carers coming on stream which means that there can be improved matching, and this will lead to fewer children needing to move placements.

Improvement Activity

A new joint West Sussex County Council and Brighton and Hove City Council framework contract with independent providers of children's residential and foster care services has been set to ensure the framework continues to deliver competitive unit costs and VFM. Improved quality of placements should result in improved placement stability

Placement stability meetings are held in all instances where there are placement issues with the child or young person.

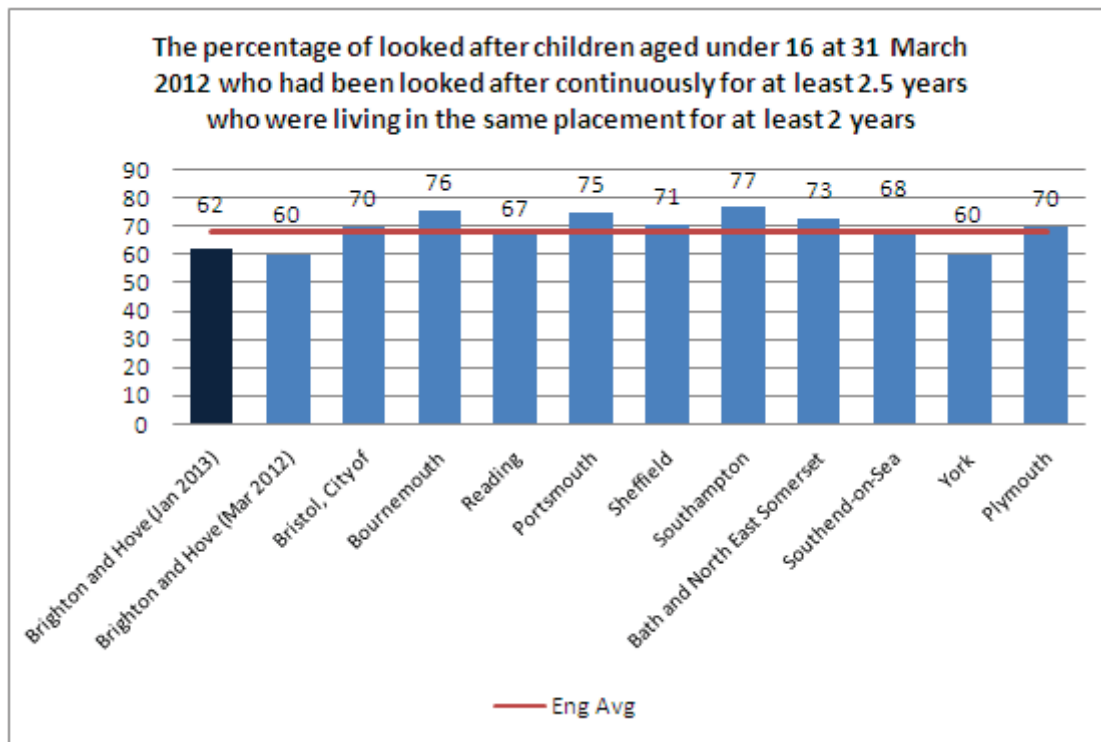
The CiC and CIN teams are receiving reports identifying children who may be at risk of placement instability.

Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement.

Definition: The percentage of looked after children aged under 16 at 31 March who had been looked after continuously for at least 2.5 years who were living in the same placement for at least 2 years, or are placed for adoption and their adoptive placement together with their previous placement together last for at least 2 years.

Summary

Figure 21: Stability of placements of looked after children



Source: SSDA903

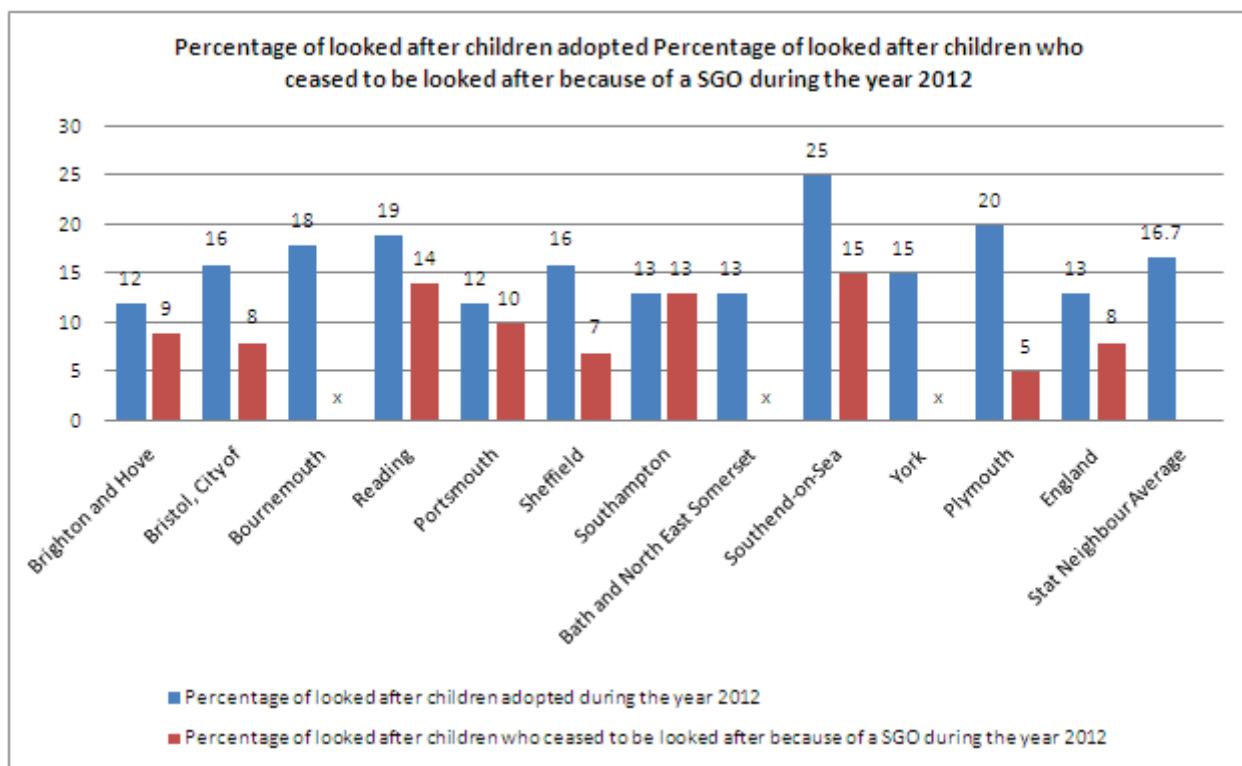
Of the 143 children looked after for two and a half years aged under 16, 88 (62%) had been in the same placement for 2 years, below the England average of 68% as at 31st March 2012.

Performance Issues

There has been further consideration of the children that are not included in the numerator group to provide some additional information behind this performance indicator. Children that are permanently placed with foster carers but may have moved house with their carer. For example, if the carers move to another local authority (i.e. from Brighton to East Sussex) this would count as a placement move. However if the carers had moved house but remained within Brighton & Hove this would not count as a placement move. There are other anomalies that need to be highlighted as many of the children in the group are now settled with permanent foster carers but have not been in that placement for the last 2 years or they may have moved to permanent family and friends foster carers with a care plan of special guardianship or moved to foster carers that are being assessed as adoptive parents. This indicator is also affected by children in hospital placements as this will be counted as a placement move.

Adoption and Special Guardianship Order

Figure 22: Percentage of looked after children adopted Percentage of looked after children who ceased to be looked after because of a SGO during the year 2012



Source: SSSA903

12% of children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31st March 2012 were adopted, slightly below the national average of 13%. However, the percentage has improved to 19% for the year ending 31st January 2013. The 3 year average (2010 to 2012) is 14%, compared to 12% nationally, and ranks Brighton and Hove 49th out of 152 Local Authorities.

9% of children who ceased to be looked after because of a Special Guardianship Order during the year ending 31st March 2012, above the national average of 8%. The percentage has improved to 11.1% for the year ending 31st January 2013. The 3 year average (2010 to 2012) is 7%, level with the national average of 7%, and ranks Brighton and Hove 58th out of 152 Local Authorities.

The average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted is 556 days (3 year average 2010 to 2012), better than the national average of 636 days and statistical neighbour average of 580 days. This ranks Brighton and Hove 36th out of 152 Local Authorities.

The average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family is 206 days (3 year average 2010 to 2012), worse than the national average of 195 days and the statistical neighbour average of 162 days. This ranks Brighton and Hove 90th out of 152 Local Authorities.

The percentage of children who wait less than 21 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family is 63% (3 year average 2010 to 2012), better than the national average of 56% but slightly below the statistical neighbour average of 64%. This ranks Brighton and Hove 41st out of 152 Local Authorities.

Glossary of Terms

Carefirst

The social care client record database used by keyworkers to record the majority of their work with children including Child Protection and LAC activity, social work case notes , assessments etc.

Statistical Neighbours

The introduction of statistical neighbours is linked to the Annual Performance Assessment 2007 and replaces the previous IPF (Institute of Public Finance) comparator authorities. The Statistical Neighbours for Brighton and Hove are:

Bath and North East Somerset, Bournemouth, Bristol, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Reading, Sheffield, Southampton, Southend-on-Sea, York

DfE

Department for Education

Monthly Monitoring

Monthly Monitoring is a large Excel spreadsheet containing data from Carefirst on all key indicators and performance measures relating to social care services for children

OFSTED

Ofsted is the inspectorate for children and learners in England. OFSTED deliver a comprehensive system of inspection and regulation covering childcare, schools, colleges, children's services, teacher training and youth work and work closely with CSCI and other inspectorate bodies

Statistical Returns

The primary statistical return for this service area is called the SSDA903 Return - this is submitted to DFE each Summer and provides detailed information from every local authority on Children Looked After, Care Leavers and Adoption. National and comparator data used in this report is extrapolated from published data on this return and from OFSTED published data.

Personal Education Plans

Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are a statutory requirement for all school age children in care. A PEP is a personalised plan for each child that records any specific learning needs and identifies strategies and support to enable them to make progress in line with their peers. The PEP meeting also provides the opportunity to identify successes in all aspects relating to school performance as well as any other areas that may be causing concern. They are reviewed every six months. There are no national indicators for this target; however other LAs do use this indicator, including some of our statistical neighbours.

Health Care Plan

A Health Care Plan is produced annually on the basis of a health care assessment undertaken by a health care professional. This is normally a health visitor or school nurse but where there are significant health issues this is normally undertaken by a paediatrician.

Substance Misuse

The term 'drug' is used to refer to any psychotropic substance, including illegal drugs, illicit use of prescription drugs and volatile substances. Young people's drug taking is often inextricably linked with

the consumption of alcohol. Therefore the term 'substance' refers to both drugs and alcohol but not tobacco. Substance misuse is defined as 'intoxication by – or regular excessive consumption or and/ or dependence on – psychoactive substances, leading to social, psychological, physical or legal problems'. It includes problematic use of both legal and illegal drugs (including alcohol when used in combination with other substances).

Missing from Placement

All unauthorised absences of more than 24 hours must be recorded. The 24 hours are counted from the time a child left his or her normal placement or was seen by a responsible adult. Therefore, a child went out for the evening at 7 pm, would not be recorded as missing until 7 pm the next day, whilst a child who left for school at 8 am, would not be recorded as missing if he/she returned before 8 am the following morning. If that child actually attended school and left at the usual time (say 4 pm), he/she would not be considered to have absconded until 4 pm the following day. For this purpose, a responsible adult is either the child's carer, or a professional directly associated with the child's welfare or education (e.g. doctor, school teacher, social worker etc.). A child cannot be considered to have returned from absconding unless he or she completes a period of 24 hours of being looked after, before absconding again.

Adoption

A child is adopted when a court grants an adoption order. This must follow a period of being 'placed for adoption' for at least 13 weeks with the prospective adopter(s). As soon as an adoption order is granted the child ceases to be looked after. The effect of the adoption order is that the birth parents no longer have any parental rights and responsibilities for their child. Those rights and responsibilities are given to the adoptive parents.

Special Guardianship Order

Special guardianship is an order made by the court that places a child or a young person to live with someone permanently and gives legal status for non parents who are or wish to care for that child or young person in a long term secure placement. The Adoption and Children Act 2002 introduced special guardianship and special guardianship orders.

CORPORATE PARENTING SUB COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 39

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	New Ofsted Inspection Framework relating to Children in Care of the Local Authority		
Date of Meeting:	17 April 2013		
Report of:	Director of Children's Services		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Andy Whippey	Tel: 29-5391
	Email:	andy.whippey@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Key Decision:	No		
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of proposed changes to the Ofsted framework relating to inspections of the services for Children in Care.
- 1.2 The report will highlight –
 - i. the previous inspection regime
 - ii. identify the drivers for change
 - iii. clarify the current inspection process
 - iv. identify what we know about the new Children in Care inspection process

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That members of the Corporate Parenting Committee note this report and the implications for the City Council's provision for children in care.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 Prior to July 2012, all Authorities were inspected under the SLAC Inspection framework (Safeguarding and Looked After Children).
- 3.2 There were 12 judgements relating to Children in Care under the SLAC framework, in addition to 10 in relation to safeguarding.

3.3 The judgements in relation to Children in Care focussed on –

- i. overall effectiveness
- ii. capacity for improvement
- iii. staying safe
- iv. being healthy
- v. economic well being
- vi. enjoying and achieving
- vii. making a positive contribution and user engagement
- viii. quality of provision
- ix. ambition and prioritisation
- x. leadership and management
- xi. performance management and quality assurance
- xii. equality and diversity

3.4 The gradings in the 2011 inspection of Brighton and Hove Services were as follows –

- | | | | |
|-------|--|---|-------------|
| i. | overall effectiveness | - | adequate |
| ii. | capacity for improvement | - | good |
| iii. | staying safe | - | good |
| iv. | being healthy | - | outstanding |
| v. | economic well being | - | adequate |
| vi. | enjoying and achieving | - | adequate |
| vii. | making a positive contribution and user engagement | - | adequate |
| viii. | quality of provision | - | adequate |
| ix. | ambition and prioritisation | - | good |
| x. | leadership and management | - | adequate |
| xi. | performance management and quality assurance | - | adequate |
| xii. | equality and diversity | - | adequate |

3.5 The gradings definitions applied are as follows –

Outstanding – a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good – a service that exceeds minimum requirements

Adequate – a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate – a service that does not meet minimum requirements

3.6 In addition to making gradings relating to certain areas, Inspection Reports also made specific recommendations for improvement. The specific recommendations relating to Children in Care were as follows –

3.6.1 Immediately

- i. all looked after children and young people are allocated to a qualified Social Worker.

3.6.2 Within 3 months

- i. ensure looked after reviews and pathway plans identify cultural and identity needs and plan how these needs are met
- ii. establish effective and coherent systems for the involvement of looked after children and young people in strategic decision making to influence service improvement
- iii. ensure The Pledge is disseminated in a meaningful way. (The Pledge is a document which details to children the expectations they can have regarding the services we provide to them).
- iv. to consolidate progress at Key Stage 4
- v. Corporate Parenting Board to be more robust and challenging, particularly in the area of ensuring access to employment/training opportunities

3.6.3 Within 6 months

- i. establish a more coherent pre and post 16 education provision

3.6.4 An action plan was devised in response to the inspection recommendations and this has been reviewed on a number of occasions to reflect progress made.

3.6.5 Specific actions have been implemented, for example there is now a working group looking at how children in care can become more meaningfully included in decision making. There are now 3 sub groups of the children in care council who meet on a regular basis and are able to articulate views about their care experiences.

Progress has been made against all of the actions with the specific exception of all looked after children and young people being allocated to a qualified social worker. Given the number of unqualified social workers it has not proved possible to allocate all children in care to a qualified social worker. There is however in place very clear supervisory and quality assurance processes relating to the work of unqualified social workers.

3.6.6 There have been no specific inspections relating to Children in Care since July 2012. Separate inspections of Fostering and Adoption Services have continued. In 2012 Brighton and Hove had separate inspections of Fostering and Adoption Services, the outcome of both of these inspections was extremely positive. Both services received gradings of good/outstanding.

3.6.7 In terms of safeguarding, all Local Authorities who were inspected as either inadequate or adequate under the Safeguarding and Looked After Framework

will be inspected under the 'Inspection of Local Authority arrangements for the protection of children'.

3.6.8 Brighton and Hove have been exempt from this having taking part in a Pilot Inspection in November 2011. This inspection regime was due to finish in July 2013, with proposals for a new inspection framework entitled 'Joint Inspection of multi-agency arrangements for the protection of children'. This would involve Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Her Majesties Inspectorate of Probation, and Her Majesties Inspectorate of Prisons, delivering a joint inspection framework.

3.6.9 However, the multi-agency Safeguarding inspection framework has been delayed and it is unlikely to be introduced before the end of the year.

3.6.10 Alongside the consultation on a new multi-agency safeguarding inspection, there have been proposals for combined Inspections of Children in Care, due to start from May 2013. If this comes into effect, there will no longer be separate inspections of Fostering and Adoption Services. This is on the basis of the need to have a streamlined inspection framework and a more effective way to understand the experiences and care of children looked after. The inspection would be carried out by Ofsted along with the Care Quality Commission.

3.6.11 The new inspection framework would focus on –

- i. the effectiveness of Local Authorities as Corporate Parents
- ii. the provision of health services for children who are looked after
- iii. the quality of professional practice including the protection of children who are looked after
- iv. impact of the care given on children and young people
- v. effectiveness of shared professional responsibility for their outcomes

3.6.12 During the consultation process it was agreed there would also be a focus on –

- i. the experiences of care leavers, listening to all children and young people looked after, not just those who are part of the Children in Care Council
- ii. health services and outcomes for children and young people,
- iii. the particular importance of evaluating outcomes for children and young people in out of area placements
- iv. the emotional well being of children and young people
- v. effectiveness use of resources within the children's partnership

3.6.13 Self assessment is a significant factor in terms of inspection activity and Inspectors will check how well each area knows its service, how data is collected, and how it is utilised to address deficiencies.

3.6.14 In terms of inspection activity, Inspectors will be interested in two major themes –

IMPACT and OUTCOMES

3.6.15 Inspectors will –

- i. observe direct practice with children looked after and care leavers
- ii. reading and discussing case files with Practitioners and Managers
- iii. accompanying Social Workers or other key personnel in children's lives on visits
- iv. observing Children's Reviews and other key meetings
- v. evaluating the quality of education, employment and training
- vi. meeting with people who have a key role in the life of children/young people
- vii. focus on the child's journey from need to receiving help

3.7 In terms of outcomes it is likely that the inspection will particularly focus on –

- i. outcomes for children placed out of area
- ii. permanence and stability for placements for children
- iii. health and well being (particularly the arrangements for securing the emotional health of children looked after
- iv. participation and involvement of children in individual and strategic decision making
- v. how effective the Children in Care Council supports the views of Children in Care
- vi. how lessons are learnt from complaints and used to improve service delivery
- vii. social outcomes for Children in Care (e.g. how many engage in After School Clubs) to ensure they enjoy as well as achieve

3.8 Educational outcomes for Children in Care

- i. the quality of Personal Education Plans with evidence of actions being implemented
- ii. the arrangements for the Virtual School
- iii. what support is there for individual children who may not make certain key attainment level e.g. level 4 at Key Stage 2
- iv. how choices of schools are made
- v. examination of attainment, attendance and exclusion data
- vi. looking at the progress children make in care i.e. the difference between the point they become looked after and now

3.9 Safeguarding

- i. there is likely to be a great emphasis on children missing from care looking at procedures, conducting interviews with children when they return, what changes we make to children's plans when they abscond
- ii. how children are safeguarded in placement (i.e. how do we respond to any allegations or concerns, and how do we ensure placements are meeting children's needs
- iii. do we pay particular attention to vulnerable groups within our looked after children population such as children with Special Educational Needs

3.10 Quality of assessments, placement matching

- i. how are the needs of children/young people assessed
- ii. how are needs met particularly contact (with family, extended family) and identity
- iii. compliance with care planning regulations
- iv. how plans for permanence are made to ensure that stable long term placements are sought for those children who need long term care
- v. how children/young people are involved in the process
- vi. the quality of sufficiency planning for children in care, 'including the extent to which the Local Authority and its partners made plans to provide local placements that can meet the needs of the children in their care'.

3.11 The sufficiency duty defines the expectation that 'Local Authorities must take steps that secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within its area to meet the needs of children that it is looking after'. (*Statutory Guidance on Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children (2010)*).

3.12 Effectiveness of Corporate Parenting

- i. evidence of Corporate Parenting initiatives
- ii. effectiveness of Corporate Parenting in terms of prioritising the needs of Children in Care/young people in terms of Council Services and influencing performance
- iii. evidence of challenging performance
- iv. evidence of using performance data
- v. evidence of how Elected Members, Chief Executive, Directors are in touch with Children in Care

3.13 Transitions/milestones

- i. there will be an emphasis on care leavers and outcomes for care leavers at age 19, 20, 21
- ii. outcomes in relation to –
 - a. emotional health
 - b. education, employment, training (particularly numbers in higher education)
 - c. accommodation
 - d. offending

3.14 The inspection is also likely to look at –

- i. links in with Adult Services
- ii. quality of Pathway Plans
- iii. transition planning for children/young people
- iv. involvement of care leavers in service planning

3.15 Permanence

3.16 Permanence is a combination of emotional, physical and legal permanence which give a sense of security, safety, emotional attachment, continuity, commitment and identity.

3.17 Adoption is a vital route to achieving permanence for many young children and given the high profile of adoption currently, will be a specific inspection focus concentrating on –

- i. identification – extent to which the Local Authority identifies those children who should (and should not) be adopted
- ii. timelines – adoptive process is free from delay and progress is made in line with the timetable for the child
- iii. safety – adoptive placements which are safe, secure, sustainable and do not break down
- iv. matching – extent to which children are carefully matched without delay in families who can meet their needs
- v. adoption support – extent to which children adopted are able to secure support
- vi. breakdown – the extent to which any lessons are learnt from any breakdowns and inform strategy and planning

3.18 Inspectors will look at a number of cases (exact number not yet known, but will be a minimum) and likely to be at differing stages of a child's journey, including children/young people with amongst others –

- i. issues of offending behaviours
- ii. issues relating to substance misuse
- iii. SEN
- iv. disability
- v. history of placement moves
- vi. looked after for more than two years
- vii. subject to a Placement Order for more than twelve months
- viii. histories of non school attendance or not in education, employment or training
- ix. Key Stage 4 where not likely to achieve 5 A-Cs
- x. health issues
- xi. change of care plan (for example from adoption to long term fostering)

3.19 Initially it was proposed that the inspection would be unannounced, however information gathered during the pilots indicated that unannounced does not work so well for inspections of looked after children. It is likely, therefore, that a five day notice period will be given in order for inspection activity to be set up.

- 3.20 Judgements in the inspection will be made on –
- i. overall effectiveness
 - ii. outcomes for children and young people looked after and care leavers
 - iii. quality of practice
 - iv. achieving permanence, including a sub judgement on adoption performance
 - v. leadership and governance
- 3.21 For each judgement, a four point grading scale, outstanding, good, adequate or inadequate will be used. Ofsted have indicated the published framework will be in April 2013.
- 3.22 There is now a proposal from Ofsted that the grade of adequate in Local Authority Social Care Inspections should be replaced with 'requires improvement'.
- 3.23 Ofsted are also proposing that a judgement of inadequate in any contributory judgement – for example, the quality of practice is likely to mean that overall effectiveness will be judged inadequate.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 4.1 It is essential to involve children, young people and carers in on-going work to support children in care.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 There are no financial implications as a direct result of the recommendations of this report.

Finance Officer Consulted: David Ellis

Date: 18.3.13

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The Local Authority have statutory duties towards the children in their care and are charged with providing services to them that provide them with safety, stability and outcomes for the future. The involvement in Ofsted in assessing the performance of Local Authority's nationally is an important one.

Lawyer Consulted: Name Andrew Pack

Date: 8th April 2013

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 The aim of Ofsted and the on-going work of Local Authorities is to improve the current inequity of outcomes for children in care.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 The services have to be sustainable, efficient and effective.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 Reduction in offending behaviour, and becoming victims of crime is a key aim of the work to support children in care.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 There is a considerable reputational, and financial risk if inspection outcomes are not good.

Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 Public health has a key role to play in supporting children in care.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 This a key role for the local authority.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 None

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 It is important that members are aware of inspection requirements and are involved in assessing services against the outcome framework.

Background information

1. Current Ofsted inspection framework for adoption and fostering
2. Proposed new Ofsted inspection framework for children in care.
3. Previous Brighton and Hove inspection reports

CORPORATE PARENTING SUB COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 40

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Report from NHS Looked After Children Team		
Date of Meeting:	Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee 17.4.13		
Report of:	Interim Director of Children's Services		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Dr Sian Bennett	Tel:
	Email:		
Key Decision:	No		
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The provision of health assessments and services for children in care is a legal responsibility for the NHS, to be provided in partnership with children's social care.
- 1.2 Brighton and Hove has a multi-disciplinary Health team of experienced nurses and paediatricians, led by the Designated Doctor for Looked After Children.
- 1.3 This report provides an update on the services offered, performance and outcomes.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Corporate Parenting Board notes the Brighton and Hove provision of NHS services for children in care, and considers any issues they would like to explore further at future meetings.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 A report is attached as appendix 1, from the Medical Adviser and Designated Doctor for Looked After Children(LAC), and the Nurse Consultant and Designated Nurse for Looked After Children. They will present the report at the Board and answer any questions.
- 3.2 The Health Team for LAC forms part of the Section 75 partnership agreement in terms of commissioning and joint delivery with Sussex Community Trust.
- 3.3 Health is an integrated component of the service provided for children in care, along with social care and education.

4. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 4.1 The provision of health assessments and services for children in care is included within the Section 75 partnership agreement between Brighton & Hove City

Council and Sussex Community NHS Trust. It is funded through the pooled budget arrangement as stipulated within the section 75 agreement. The 2013/14 NHS budgets have not yet been finalised but an indicative net budget for Looked After Children has been estimated at £60k.

Finance Officer consulted: David Ellis Date: 04.04.13

Legal Implications:

- 4.2 The provision of health services for looked after children is required under the Children Acts 1989 and Care Planning Regulations 2010, and is subject to NHS guidance.

Lawyer Consulted: Andrew Pack Date: 04.04.13

Equalities Implications:

- 4.3 Providing high quality health assessments and interventions will increase resilience and outcomes for children in care.

Sustainability Implications:

- 4.4 There are no immediate sustainability implications.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 4.5 None

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 4.6 Increased health and well-being is an opportunity to improve future outcomes for children in care

Public Health Implications:

- 4.7 The NHS team work alongside Public Health to improve health and well-being for looked after children and address any health inequalities.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 4.8 Addressing inequality and improving outcomes for children in care is a city wide priority.

5. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 5.1 Health provision for looked after children will be considered as part of the Section 75 review of delivery.

6. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 To introduce the health team to the Corporate Parenting Board, and encourage discussion of provision and outcomes.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendix 1 is the report from the NHA LAC team Brighton and Hove.

Report from NHS LAC Team, Brighton and Hove for Corporate Parenting Board
April 2013

Review of 2012

Achievements

- **Recruitment of new nurse consultant**
- **Recruitment of additional LAC nurses**
- **Maintained reduction in teenage pregnancies for LAC**
- **High numbers of LAC young people over 16 access appropriate health services**
- **Good quality of initial health assessment which identifies health needs and sign posts to appropriate interventions**
- **Close working with Virtual School and establishment of multidisciplinary group, focusing on the needs of preschool LAC**

Challenges

- **Ensuring that children placed out of the city receive timely health assessments**
- **Advocating for health needs of a vulnerable and marginalised group of children**
- **Data quality and harmonising data between LA and Health systems to best effect, focusing on quality and outcomes and not just processes**

1.0 Introduction

The NHS has a legal responsibility (Children Act 1989/2004/ 2008) to assist the Local Authority to carry out its function to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in need, looked after children and their parents and carers. This includes cooperation at strategic and service levels, including a statutory responsibility to carry out initial and review health assessments for Looked After Children and Young people and to review their progress at regular intervals (Promoting The Health of Looked After Children DOH/DFE 2009, NICE Guidance 2010, Children Act Care Planning Regulations 2010).

2.0 NHS Looked After Children Health Team

The LAC health team is a multidisciplinary team of experienced nurses and community paediatricians, with dedicated administrative support. The team is part of the section 75 partnership between Sussex Community Trust and Brighton and Hove Council. They work closely with the CiN, CiC and Fostering and Adoption social work teams.

The team coordinates and delivers health care across services and organisations wherever the child is placed in care. The processes are integrated with the medical advice for adoption in order to facilitate continuity of specialist health care for children moving from being a Looked After child into a permanent placement.

The social worker is responsible for informing the team about new children in care, and about changes in circumstances for Looked After Children. Information sharing

is facilitated by liaison with the fostering and agency placement teams, who also send information about new children and changes of placement details. The team has developed a referral form to ensure that all relevant information is shared.

Sussex Community NHS Trust retains clinical accountability for the team and maintains the necessary CQC registration.

2.1 Initial Health Assessments

The expectation is that these are completed within 28 days of the child/young person becoming looked after (Promoting the health and wellbeing of looked after children - revised statutory guidance 2009)

This is dependent on timely referral from the social worker and is monitored by the LAC Health Team.

The Nurse Consultant for LAC and another experienced LAC nurse undertake the initial assessments. All new referrals are discussed at a weekly nurses allocations meeting, and a triage approach is adopted enabling Nurse Consultant and Specialists Nurse to prioritise those children with significant health needs for immediate discussion with Paediatrician, early assessment appointment with Paediatrician or Specialist Nurse and to identify the health sources for relevant information. Following assessment all children/young people are discussed at a bi-weekly meeting with the Medical Adviser and the outcome recorded in the case file. Referrals to specialist services, such as child development clinic, therapists, CAMHS are made as necessary.

The report of the assessment includes a health care plan, identifying actions and health advice and who is responsible for implementation. For most children this will be their social worker and foster carer.

2.2 Review Health Assessments

The health assessment format encompasses principles of health promotion and children, young people and carers are supported to make healthy choices based on evidence based information.

Children under 5 years are required to have a health assessment every 6 months. Health Visitors carry out the majority of these for children living in Brighton & Hove. Children over 5 years are required to have a health assessment every year. School nurses carry out the majority of these for children attending Brighton & Hove schools, aged 5-16years.

The majority of review health assessments for young people 16-18 years old are carried out by the LAC nurse for the 16+ support team. A flexible and person-centred approach is taken to the assessment of young people, who can choose the timing and location for meetings.

Sexual health, substance misuse and emotional health screening forms part of the health assessment with young people and the specialist nurse can also provide outreach contraceptive services as required. Data is collected on sexual health interventions, pregnancies and outcomes, which is shared with the commissioner for teenage pregnancy and sexual health.

Unaccompanied young people seeking asylum have access to the local interpreting service via a block contract for all health appointments and are part of the allocated caseload for the 16+ support LAC Nurse. She can refer to a specialist community TB and Immunisation team of nurses that will see all refugees/asylum seeking

children and young people to address gaps in their immunisation status. (NICE REC 33)

A proportion of LAC are children with disabilities who have more than 60 nights away from their families as part of a short breaks service (residential or family setting). They are also subject to LAC reviews and recording of health needs and information is gathered from their treating paediatrician and multidisciplinary team to avoid any duplication of assessments.

The Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (DFE 2008) is administered to all LAC children aged over 4 in order to assess emotional health and behaviours. It is used to integrate aspects of mental health assessment into the statutory health review, and a process of follow up work with the LAC Education team and child's social worker is in place to when the score is high.

2.3 Children placed out of Brighton & Hove

Over 50% of LAC are placed outside of B&H, the majority in East and West Sussex. The expectation has been that LAC health teams in the receiving area complete the necessary health reviews. This has proved problematic due to increased numbers of children and overstretched teams. To address this, short term funding from health commissioners has been secured (until September 2013) for the B&H LAC team, so that the statutory health assessments can be completed in a timely fashion.

Approximately 55 children from other local authorities are fostered in the B&H and local NHS services (including LAC Health team) are responsible for providing the necessary health reviews and services..

2.4 Assessments for Permanence and Adoption

The vast majority of children who are requiring adoption or permanence outside of their birth family have experienced abuse or neglect and are subject to care proceedings. Therefore, there is a natural pathway from being Looked After to being placed permanently, either by adoption or other means, for many children in the care system. Permanence health assessments build on the information already gathered and are carried out by a consultant community paediatrician, with reports produced to inform the care planning process and to make clear the health needs and possible future implications for the children in order to share with social workers and with prospective adopters, or other long term carers.

3.0 Involvement of specialist health services for LAC

The outcome of the health assessment or health review is discussed at a biweekly meeting of the LAC Health team and may recommend the referral on to specialist health teams:

3.1 Child Development and Disability Service

Where initial assessment of a young LAC identifies concern about aspects of their development, they are fast tracked for input from the multidisciplinary child development team, based at Seaside View Child Development Centre. Where possible, continuity is maintained and services can be provided, even for children placed outside of Brighton and Hove.

3.2 CAMHS

Brighton and Hove CAMHS has developed an Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Care pathway for Looked after children. Where emotional health and wellbeing issues surface for LAC, the social worker will be advised and make a judgement about whether to refer to CAMHS. All professionals should filter referrals for LAC through their child/young person's social worker.

3.3 Community Dental Health

LAC are a priority group for Community Dental Health Service. Dental health is an issue discussed at all health assessments and direct referral to Community Dental Health for assessment treatment and advice by School Nurse, Health Visitor and LAC health team can be made.

3.4 Contraceptive and Sexual Health Service (CASH)

The nurse led service within the 16+ Support Team and Young People's Asylum Team aims to improve health outcomes for young people leaving care, with an emphasis on reducing teenage pregnancy and rates of sexually transmitted infection. The Specialist nurse working within this team is a skilled practitioner with extensive knowledge of sexual health and contraception; she is able to a flexible and child centred approach is taken to the assessment of young people who can choose the timing and location for meeting. Sexual health screening tools are used during the health assessment and provision of a contraceptive service and some sexual health testing offered at the same time. She is able to offer a service to young people in the Children's Disability Service. During a home visit it is possible to fit a contraceptive implant, give contraceptive injection, oral contraception, contraceptive patch, vaginal ring, emergency hormonal contraception, condoms, C- Card, pregnancy testing, treatment for uncomplicated Chlamydia. It is also possible to refer for IUS/IUD fitting, referral to gynaecology outpatients and referral for termination of pregnancy. She has set up a bi-monthly health drop-in attached to a general drop-in for young asylum seekers at YPC in Brighton and this has proved very popular and helps to address health inequalities which this marginalised group face. The young people can access general health advice and comprehensive sexual health advice and services.

4.0 The Designated Professional Roles

The roles of the Designated Doctor and Nurse are set out in detail in the DH Statutory Guidance 2009. The main functions of the role are to work closely together to provide strategic advice to commissioners and to senior managers in the provider organisations, and to ensure that children receive a high quality of service delivery. The guidance recommends that the designated roles are combined in medical and nursing posts that include elements of service delivery, so that advice on strategy is well informed by practice knowledge, service monitoring and audit of outcomes. In the Brighton & Hove team the role of Designated Doctor has been assumed by the Medical Advisor for Fostering & Adoption, and the Designated Nurse role is fulfilled by the Nurse Consultant for Looked after Children. Both of these posts have direct clinical involvement with children and young people. The post holders work closely together to design and deliver the service, and to ensure provision of strategic advice as required.

Provision of expertise, support and advice for professionals and carers is also a requirement of the designated roles and of the LAC health team.

The Medical Advisor meets most prospective adopters to discuss any significant health, development and genetic issues for children being considered for placement. The team provides input to the adoption preparation course on child health and early development and the significant background factors which are important in children being placed for adoption, or permanence outside of their birth family.

LAC Health team members are part of the Fostering and Permanence Panels and provide clear advice on health issues to the Panels and local authority. They provide responsive advice to social workers for carers and children and to local authority lawyers.

5.0 Performance and Outcomes

In the OFSTED/CQC inspection in 2011, the LAC health component was rated as outstanding, based on the performance in terms of number of initial health assessments completed within 4 weeks and reviews completed for children and young people remaining in care by the year end (31 March). It has proved challenging to maintain this level of service, due to the high numbers of LAC and lack of capacity within the team to complete all of the necessary workload. Additional funding was secured from Brighton and Hove PCT, as part of the health visitor implementation plan, to employ two additional LAC nurses for a temporary period (to September 2013). These new nurses have prioritised the review assessments for LAC, and by 31 March 2013, they will have reached the agreed targets for reviews – ie

- To increase health coverage for Brighton and Hove children in care, under the age of 16, who are placed in the city to 92% .
- To increase health coverage for Brighton and Hove children in care, under the age of 16, who are placed in Sussex to 90% .
- To increase the health coverage for Brighton and Hove children, aged 16 to 18 years, placed in Brighton and Hove to 78%
- To increase the health coverage for Brighton and Hove children, aged 16 to 18 years, placed in Sussex to 75%

Dr. Sian Bennett, Medical Adviser and Designated Doctor for LAC

Sue Donald, Nurse Consultant and Designated Nurse for LAC

March 2013

CORPORATE PARENTING SUB-COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 41

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Brighton and Hove Foster Carer Recruitment Process, Foster Carers' Charter, Changes to Housing Benefit Affecting Foster Carers		
Date of Meeting:	Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee 17.4.13		
Report of:	[Relevant Strategic Director]		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Andy Whippey, Service Manager, Children in Care	Tel: 29-5391
	Email:	Andy.whippey@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Key Decision:	No		
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The majority of children in care are placed in foster homes. In Brighton and Hove 82 % (as of 31.1.13) were placed with foster carers (74% with foster carers and 8% with family and friends carers (nationally 75% children are placed with foster families). Foster carers play a key role in caring for children in care, providing secure, stable homes and ensuring that these children can reach their developmental potential. The need to find suitable foster families is an on-going issue. The recruitment of suitable new foster carers is a key target for the Brighton and Hove Fostering Service.
 - 1.1.1 Brighton and Hove Fostering Service is not the only organisation operating locally who recruits foster carers. There are a number of Independent Fostering Agencies (I.F.A.'s) who also recruit local foster carers and hence there is strong competition for a limited number of people who are willing and able to become foster carers. Timely and effective recruitment is essential in attracting carers to foster for Brighton and Hove.
 - 1.1.3 Following a unit cost exercise it was established that on average it is £184 per week cheaper to place a child with an in-house foster carer than with an I.F.A. carer, hence adding greater impetus to the need to recruit more foster carers for Brighton and Hove.
- 1.2.1 The Foster Carers' Charter was a government in April 2011. It was part of the move to improve outcomes for children and reflecting changes in legislation that recognised the role of the foster carer being of key importance. The Charter outlined a way that foster carers and the council and its members could work together in partnership. A secondary aim was for the Charter to be used one of the tools used in foster carer recruitment.
- 1.2.2 In 2012, Brighton and Hove Fostering Service in conjunction with its' foster carers and in consultation with other key parties produced a Brighton and Hove Foster Carers' Charter which laid out the values and expectations placed on both

foster carers and the local authority in working together and looking after children in care.

- 1.3.1 Changes to the housing benefit being introduced in April 2013 proposed that foster children would not be considered as permanent members of a household and hence leave foster carers claiming housing benefit penalised as they would be seen to have a spare room, the 'bedroom tax'.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the committee notes the Brighton and Hove foster care recruitment process.
- 2.2.1 That the committee notes and approves the Charter on behalf of the council so this can be adopted as a way of working between Brighton and Hove foster carers and the members of the council.
- 2.3 That the committee notes the updates to the proposals related to housing benefit that would affect foster carers claiming housing benefit.

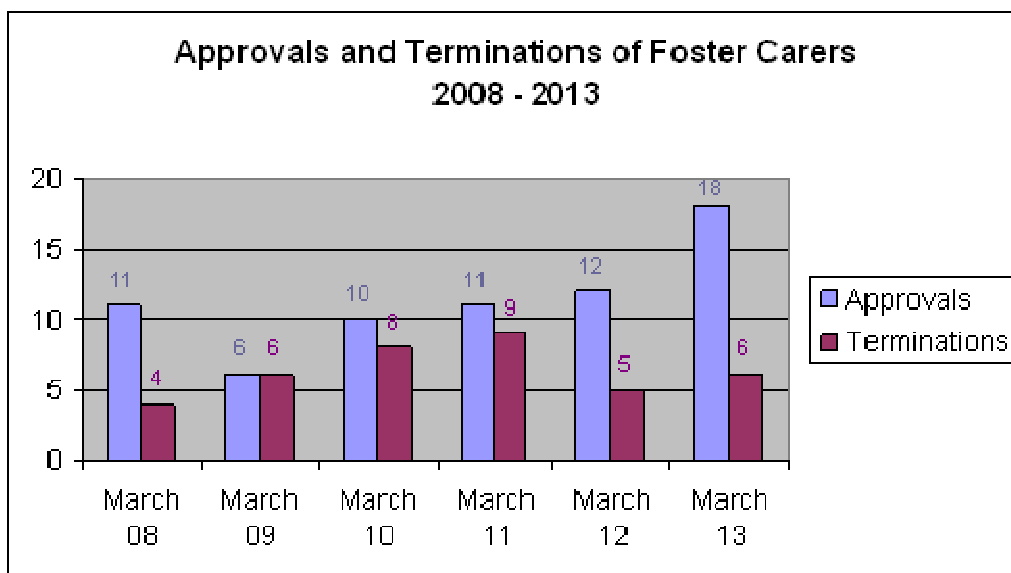
3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

Foster Carer Recruitment

- 3.1.1 Following monies from the council's Value for Money Project, the Fostering Service has formed a dedicated fostering recruitment team in March 2012. This development is in line with other local authorities. The team consists of a part time practice manager, 3 social workers (2.6 FTE) and a recruitment and publicity officer. This team is responsible for attracting potential foster carers, processing their applications and undertaking their assessment. Forming a dedicated team has enabled a more focussed approach to fostering recruitment and enabled the team to respond more quickly to fostering enquiries and undertake assessments more rapidly.
- 3.1.2 The service has a recruitment strategy which is updated regularly and uses a number of different marketing and advertising techniques. The recruitment strategy is based on practice guidance from Fostering Network, the U.K.'s leading fostering charity as well as local needs and experience about what works. Adverts are placed in a range of media publications. Recently more enquiries are coming from the internet. The recruitment website has been updated to respond to this trend. Word and mouth is also important as are 'good news stories' in the press. Fostering Network have estimated that it takes approximately 2 years from someone receiving a prompt to actually picking up the phone, but it can be longer. This can make it difficult to tally exactly what was the 'tipping point' that led the applicant to make the first call. The Fostering Service therefore operates a 'drip, drip' approach in terms of prompts to the public.
- 3.1.3 There are a number of I.F.A.'s operating locally. Hence it is important that Brighton and Hove can compete with these to attract foster carers. A brief bit of local research suggested that whilst some carers prefer to foster for private fostering agencies as believe they offer the best service, others prefer to foster

for the local authority as it fits with their views and they like the back up of the larger council. More recently Brighton and Hove has seen a significant interest from foster carers already working for I.F.A.'s wishing to transfer to Brighton and Hove. The reasons they have given for this are they believe they will have a greater choice/variety of children to foster and they view the support offered by Brighton and Hove to be better and more locally based. On average I.F.A. carers receive on average £50 - £70 per week more in fostering allowance. Foster carers do not feedback that they are making decisions based on finances and hence this is not a key factor in recruitment although carers may not choose to say they are fostering for money.

- 3.1.4 Fostering recruitment tries to reach a wide an audience as possible and invites people to enquire just for information without having to submit a full application. Information about fostering is provided on the website which has recently been updated, www.fosteringinbrightonandhove.org.uk. Information packs giving an oversight of fostering and what is required are sent to prospective applicants. On average the Fostering Service receives over 200 initial enquiries per year. Many of these go no further than making an initial call. Following an initial enquiry a member of the recruitment team will call the applicant back as soon as possible. Research suggests a prompt response at this stage is important. Experience demonstrates that some applicants decide to come back at a later date when their circumstances are right following an initial enquiry.
- 3.1.5 Much of fostering recruitment involves information giving, so prospective applicants can make an informed choice that fit with their circumstances. It also involves a degree of myth-busting such you can foster if you are married or single, gay and lesbian, with or without children. There is no upper age limit to become a foster carer as long as you are fit enough to foster. There are some parameters put in place such as needing to live within 20 miles of the borders of Brighton and Hove, applicants must have a spare room, they must have enough time to foster, no serious offences and have some childcare experience and knowledge. The nature of children in care and the behaviours they bring with them does mean that foster carers need to have what it takes to meet the needs of children coming into care.
- 3.1.6 There is a well-established recruitment process. Please see Appendix 1. In addition to giving applicants information there is a screening component so resources are not wasted on applicants that do not meet the requirements to become a foster carer. Common reasons for people not going forward relate to insufficient space in their home, fostering not being what they thought, it not fitting with their family circumstances.
- 3.1.7 The service receives approximately 200 initial enquiries per year. Over recent years the average number of carers going on to be approved has been in the range of 10 -11. Following the creation of the VFM recruitment Team the number of new carers approved for 2012/13 has risen to 18. Each year a number of carers (average 6-7) will cease to foster for a variety of reasons. In the last 10 months the overall number of fostering households has increased from 126 to 134. However prior to that the increase has been slow e.g. in 2007 there were 122 fostering households. There are 12 assessments underway currently.



3.1.8 With the creation of the dedicated recruitment team, the time from initial enquiry to the start of the assessment has been reduced to 6 months. This has brought Brighton and Hove more in line with the I.F.A.'s. Potential foster carers begin to make a firmer commitment to fostering at the time of the preparation course, which applicants need to complete if they are to go on to be assessed. The team has been able to double the number of preparation groups held within the year to 6, meaning there is a preparation group every 8 weeks reducing waiting time. It is following on from this, if both parties are satisfied that the home study starts. From the prep group 50% of applicants go on to be approved, 78.8% who start an assessment go on to be approved as foster carers.

3.1.9 The Fostering Service, in conjunction with most other local authorities and I.F.A.'s use the B.A.A.F. Fostering Assessment tool. This involves taking up a number of checks and references for safeguarding purposes as well as identifying foster carers strengths and weaknesses. In discussions with the foster carers the assessors establish the ages and numbers of children that the carers will be suitable to foster and type of fostering they wish to do e.g. short or long term. The maximum number of children that a foster carer can foster is 3. However most choose to initially be approved to foster one. This can present challenges in relation to the placing of sibling groups. Foster carers are often not confident at the beginning of their fostering career and prefer to foster one or sometimes two children initially. It has also been difficult to recruit foster carers to foster older children and most carers prefer to foster children under 10. The reasons for this relate to the poor public image of teenagers as well as not fitting with many foster carers who have their own children still at home. The assessors work hard to encourage foster carers to consider being approved for a wider range but this tends to come later into foster carers' careers when they have gained in confidence and experience. The majority of foster carers (80%) in the last year have been approved for children under 10 years of age. 2 carers have been approved for older children and 1 for parent and baby.

3.1.10 The Fostering service currently has 11 parent and baby carers although 5 of these are choosing not to take parent and baby placements currently and are doing other types of fostering. Demand for parent and baby placements outstrips supply. It is a very specialised area of fostering. It can be challenging work. It is

mostly court directed and although very rewarding when successful, it can be stressful and complicated having both an adult, who is often an unwilling party and not co-operative in the home as well as their baby. The service has had more success in amending carers' terms of approval to include parent and baby fostering once they have gained some fostering experience. The recruitment team promote parent and baby fostering right from the initial stages so seeds are planted for a later date. The Fostering Service offers a variety of support to the parent and baby carers and there is a very strong support group in operation. However some carers after a difficult placement may choose not to continue with this type of work or take a break.

The Brighton and Hove Foster Carers' Charter

- 3.2.1 The Charter was a government initiative was part of the move to improve outcomes for children and reflected changes in legislation which recognised the importance of the role of foster carers in looking after children. A subsidiary aim was for it to be used as a recruitment and retention tool. Fostering Network produced a sample charter for foster providers to use as the basis for producing their own. Brighton and Hove has in fact gone further than many other providers in producing a charter that reflects local circumstances and views including consultation with children in care and other interested parties (Appendix 2) . Many providers have replicated solely the sample charter provided by Fostering Network. Foster Carers' Charters are published on fostering agencies websites. Brighton and Hove's is therefore a stronger document reflecting more closely local views of interested parties.
- 3.2.2 Concern has been expressed about the Charter in that it places a greater emphasis on what is expected of the local authority rather than what is expected of the foster carers. One of the reasons for the Charter was redressing the balance with foster carers following government consultation with foster carers as well as a change in emphasis of their role recognised in legislation. This reflected the views of Brighton and Hove's foster carers who felt that they were often the last people to be consulted even though they were caring for children and at times were not treated with respect. It should be made clear that the expectations placed on foster carers are dealt with in other agreements and documents. Foster carers' performance is highly monitored and regulated (National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2011, Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011). The aim of the Charter was more related to the recruitment and retention of foster carers.
- 3.2.3 Foster carers sign a 'Foster Care Agreement' at the time of their annual review which lays out in more detail the expectations placed upon them (Appendix 3). Each year foster carers have an Annual Review. This is a formal meeting which considers their previous year's work, their achievements and learning, whether their status as approved foster carers should continue and the terms of their continued approval. Any training needs are considered, and recommendations are made for the future. Feedback on the foster carers' performance is received from a number of different parties to ensure that foster carers are meeting expectations placed on them. These include the child, the child's social worker, Independent Reviewing Officers, birth parents and other professionals. Where there is a specific area where it is felt that foster carers fall below the standards of care expected of them, there is a set of procedures known as Standards of

Care, where complaints and allegations are investigated. The end result of a standard of care investigation could lead to changes in the terms of their approval or termination of their fostering approval. Data is provided to Ofsted annually of approvals and standards of care. In addition foster carers' performance is monitored at Child in Care Reviews as foster carers are frequently tasked with actions from the reviews.

Housing Benefit Changes Affecting Foster Carers

- 3.3.1 The most recent ministerial statement relating to foster carers and housing benefit implies that foster carers will be allowed 1 extra bedroom as a fostering household, hence will not experience a reduction in their Housing Benefit. This applies to all tenure types i.e. privately rented homes, Housing Associations and council accommodation. The Revenues and Benefit Team has worked with the Fostering Service to identify carers in receipt of housing benefit. These carers have been written to explain the situation. Foster carers who are in receipt of housing benefit within the city have been identified and exemptions for these will be applied for and these carers written to, to confirm this. The numbers involved are small.
- 3.3.2 If a foster carer has more than 1 bedroom used for fostering then the Revenue and Benefits Team are asking those foster carers to contact them. An application to the Discretionary Housing Payment Fund will need to be made to avoid the foster carer experiencing a shortfall in income. Foster carers have been informed of this by letter which makes it clear that Brighton and Hove City Council has agreed to pay the shortfall between rent and Housing benefit caused by the introduction of the size criteria in council and Housing Association tenancies for the full 52 week year. Foster carers claiming Housing Benefit from another council will need to contact them to find out their policy details.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Feedback is taken from throughout the fostering recruitment process from applicants about their experiences as to what has been helpful for them. All newly approved foster carers are asked for feedback about the process when they go to fostering panel and this is fed back to the fostering team. Foster carers and children in care are used as part of the recruitment process.
- 4.2 The production of the Brighton and Hove Charter involved a working party consisting of members of the Fostering Service and foster carers. Parties affected by the Foster Carers' Charter such as children in care and placing social workers views were sought and amendments incorporated.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1.1 There are no financial recommendations associated with the recommendations of this report in terms of the committee noting the foster care recruitment process. There are financial recommendations associated with the Value for Money Foster Carer Recruitment project. These are being presented to the Child review Board held in May 2013.

David Ellis, Senior Accountant consulted 15.3.13

5.1.2 There are no financial implications for the introduction and implication of the Brighton and Hove Foster Carers' Charter.

David Ellis, Senior Accountant consulted 2.9.12 and 15.3.13.

5.1.3 For foster carers using one bedroom to foster there will be no financial implications related to the changes in Housing Benefit affecting foster carers as this policy has now been reversed in respect of foster carers.

5.1.4 For the small number of foster carers who use more than one bedroom for fostering they will experience a reduction in their housing benefit of 25%. They will be invited to apply to the Discretionary Housing Payment fund to make up this shortfall and if they do this they will not experience a reduction in income. The size of the D.H.P. in future years is uncertain. The carers likely to be affected by this are currently.

David Ellis, Senior Accountant consulted 15.3.13

Legal Implications:

5.2.1 The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2011 places a duty on Fostering Services to recruit a range of foster carers to meet the needs of children they provide care. Ofsted inspects Fostering Service against Fostering Regulations 2011 and the National Minimum Standards. Brighton and Hove has been inspected by Ofsted in August 2012, including fostering recruitment and gave the service the rating of 'good'.

5.2.2 The National Minimum Standards for Fostering 2011 gave a greater emphasis to the role of the foster carers and the part they play in delivering improved outcomes for children in care. The standards see the foster carer as having a central and integral role in the care of children looked after. The Charter is viewed as part of the mechanism to ensure that foster carers receive the support they need to carry out their role. The Charter was reviewed as part of the Ofsted inspection in August 2011. The Charter provides a basis and framework for how the council works with foster carers to meet the minimum standards. The charter is part of the services offered to foster carers and gives a clear message of the value placed on foster carers and their role in achieving positive outcomes for children in care.

Lawyer Consulted: Name Andrew Pack, In-house advocate Date:05/04/13

"I agree with the legal position Summarised in the report and have no additional comments to make. "

Equalities Implications:

5.3 Providing high quality foster care is part of giving children the best start in life to help maximise their capabilities. Providing stable secure family homes that meet the needs of children, who are disadvantaged by suffering abuse or not able to live with their own families will work to reduce inequalities that these children face in later life. Increasing the number of fostering households and supporting those households will work to improve placement stability for children in care.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 There are no immediate sustainability implications.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 High quality foster care is part of improving life chances for children who cannot live with their family and who have suffered abuse. The chance for children to engage in family life and form secure attachments with their care givers will aid young people in engaging in law abiding and socially acceptable behaviour. Both foster carer recruitment and the Charter relate to increasing the number of foster carers helping to give children in care a secure base from which to move into adult life and reducing the chances of involvement in crime and disorder.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 Foster care is regarded as a preferable option for children who cannot live with their own families. Foster carer recruitment and the Foster Carers' Charter relates to improving outcomes for children by increasing the number of carers and providing a framework for the council to work with foster carers who are their main carers. This will have implications for reducing risk for children and young people.

Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 For children in foster care the opportunity for them to develop secure and lasting attachments with their foster carers will be a key factor in their on-going emotional health and well-being with implications for later life. Both foster carer recruitment and the Foster Carers' Charter aims to both increase the number and support existing foster carers in looking after children in care and aims to provide placement stability through working with their carers. Children coming into foster care see improvements in their health and foster carers play an integral role in this and ensuring these children have access to appropriate resources.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8.1 Foster carer recruitment fits with the council's priorities of giving children and young people the best start in life by increasing the choice of family placements. It also has implications via the Value for Money Programme as in house with in-house foster carers are recognised as better value for money compared with placing children with private fostering agencies.
- 5.8.2 The Foster Carers' Charter fits with the council's priorities of giving children and young people the best start in life by ensuring that the council works with its' foster carers to ensure they are supported in their task of looking after children in care. It is also a tool to be used in foster carer recruitment and assists with foster carer retention and demonstrating the council's commitment to supporting their foster carers with the challenging task of looking after children in care.

5.8.3 Foster carers with 2 bedrooms used for fostering will need to apply to The Discretionary Housing Premium fund along with other Brighton and Hove residents. The number of carers is small but it will be in competition and to a limited fund.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

6.1.1 The Fostering Service's foster care recruitment strategy has been produced following advice both nationally and locally and experience built up over a number of years as to what works and is a culmination of a number of years work. The creation of a dedicated fostering recruitment team, following one years work has demonstrated advantages over the previous system where foster care recruitment was contained within the Fostering Team, alongside other work. The team have been able to increase the number of additional fostering households available.

6.1.2 The Foster Carers' Charter is a government initiative relating to working with foster carers who are an integral part of improving outcomes for children in care and Brighton and Hove's Foster Carer's Charter meets this obligation. Foster carers have reacted positively to the proposal and have worked to produce a charter that reflects issues facing local carers.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Successful and timely foster carer recruitment is crucial for providing foster families for children who cannot live with their own families. Foster carers

7.2.1 The Brighton and Hove Foster Carers' Charter provides a way the council and foster carers can work together positively that respects the roles and requirements of each party.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Fostering Recruitment Workflow
2. Brighton and Hove Foster Carers' Charter
3. Foster Carer Agreement



Children come first

- Children in foster care deserve to experience as full a family life as possible as part of a loving foster family with carers who can make everyday decisions as they would their own child and without the child feeling that they 'stand out' as a looked after child.

- Children must be given every support to develop their own identities and aspirations, fulfil their potential, and take advantage of all opportunities to promote their talents and skills. Above all, they should be listened to.

Brighton and Hove must

- Recognise in practice the importance of the child's relationship with his or her foster family as one that can make the biggest difference in the child's life and which can endure into adulthood.
- Listen to, involve foster carers and their foster children in decision-making and planning, and provide foster carers and their foster children with full information about each other.
- In making placements be clear about the continuing care or support there will be (including for the child into adulthood), be sensitive to the needs of the foster carer and the child in making and ending placements and have contingency plans should the placement not work.
- Treat foster carers with openness, fairness and respect as a core member of the team around the child and support them in making reasonable and appropriate decisions on behalf of their foster child.
- Ensure that foster carers have the support services and development opportunities they need in order to provide their foster child with the best possible care. That includes liaising with local foster carers groups and seeking to respond to problems and disseminate best practice.
- Make sure foster carers are recompensed on time and are given clear information about any support, allowances, fees, and holidays they will receive.

Foster carers must

- Provide positive adult role models, treat the foster child as they would their own child, and be a 'pushy parent' in advocating for all aspects of the child's development, including educational attainment and physical and emotional health and wellbeing and co-operate fully as part of a team with other key professionals in the child's life.

- Support their foster child and do all they can to make the placement work. Take part in learning and development, use skills and approaches that make a positive impact and enable the child to reach his or her potential. Support their foster child to help them to counter possible bullying and discrimination as a result of their care status.

Roles and commitment

Brighton and Hove City Council's role

The council aims to provide stable and first rate foster care for children and young people who are valued, supported and encouraged to grow and develop as individuals. To achieve this aim, we recruit, train and approve foster carers and deliver ongoing support and supervision to them.

The foster carer's role

Foster carers are at the heart of the foster care service. We are assessed, trained, supported and supervised to look after children and young people in a family environment, providing them with stability, care, encouragement and an opportunity to grow and develop and to reach their aspirations and potential as individuals.

Our working relationships are based on mutual trust and respect. This charter explains what we expect from each other.

Fostering Service's commitment You can expect from us:

- 1 Working in partnership
- 2 Openness and honesty about information sharing
- 3 Clarity about how and why decisions are made
- 4 Support and supervision
- 5 Learning and development
- 6 Fair treatment
- 7 Good levels of communication and consultation

Foster carers' commitment You can expect from us:

- 1 Working in partnership
- 2 Respect for the children and young people in our care
- 3 Openness and honesty about information sharing
- 4 A commitment to learning, development and support
- 5 Good levels of communication and consultation

What foster carers can expect from Brighton and Hove City Council:

1. Working in partnership

We recognise that foster carers have the skills and expertise to make a big difference to the everyday lives of children and young people in care.

We will:

- § Value and recognise your skills, knowledge and expertise equally with other professionals committed to the quality of care to children and young people.
- § Recognise that you are the people who live with children and young people every day and know them well.
- § Aim to include you in all relevant meetings that affect you and the children and young people you care for and to provide you with an explanation and information if you are unable to attend.
- § Ensure that our fostering service will meet the standards set out in fostering regulations and guidance.
- § Treat you fairly and without discrimination and respect you as a colleague.
- § Respect your confidentiality.
- § Consult with the foster carers (the BHFCA) about the development of the fostering service.
- § Ensure you are treated courteously.

2. Information

We know that information is vital in order for foster carers to provide the care that meets the child and young person's needs.

We will:

- § Give you all relevant information in order for you to care safely for the child and young person and we recognise the importance of this information.
- § Provide this information in writing prior to placement or at the earliest opportunity after the start of a placement.
- § Ensure that there is a placement plan drawn up in discussion with you within the specified timescales.
- § Provide you with information on all financial matters including tax allowances and additional entitlements.
- § Provide you with full details of all relevant departmental policies and procedures.
- § To consult with you about change in policies and procedures that affect you.

3. Clarity about decisions

We recognise that in order for children and young people to live a positive family life foster carers need to be able to make decisions regarding the children and young people they foster.

We will:

- § Ensure that, wherever possible and if appropriate, you are able to make everyday decisions that mean that your fostered child or young person is not treated differently to their peers and can feel part of your family.
- § Provide clarity about any decision you cannot take at the outset so that everyone understands who is responsible for what.
- § Provide you with explanations of why decisions are made.
- § If there is a difference of opinion provide opportunity for discussion and resolution.

4. Support

We recognise that fostering is rewarding but can also be isolating and challenging and appropriate and timely support can make all the difference to the child or young person in your care and your own family.

We will:

- § Respond positively and in a non judgemental manner to requests for additional support.
- § Provide you with regular supervision and regular phone contact.
- § Give you honest, timely, constructive and open feedback.
- § Provide you with access to 24 hour support from people with fostering expertise.
- § Pay you allowances, expenses and fees in a timely manner.
- § Continue to support the Brighton and Hove Foster Care Association who offer support and opportunities to meet and share experiences with other fostering families.
- § Provide a range of support services to help you with your fostering.
- § Recognise that foster carers sons and daughters play an essential role.
- § Recognise that positive endings of placements are important for children, young people and foster carers and their families ensuring that support is in place to achieve this.

5. Learning and development

We believe that foster carers must be enabled to access and participate in learning and development opportunities throughout their fostering career. This will ensure they have the skills and knowledge they need, and allow them to develop their practice so that they can help improve and enrich the lives of the children and young people they foster.

We will:

- § Provide you and your family with appropriate and relevant training. Where possible we will provide some flexibility in times of training to enable you to attend.
- § Give you opportunities to utilise your skills and expertise by delivering mentoring or providing support to other foster carers.

6. Fair treatment

We recognise that foster carers have a right to be treated fairly and with respect.

We will:

- § Consult with you before changing terms and conditions.
- § Ensure openness in all of our discussions and communications with you.
- § Provide a framework which details timescales and support networks should you be subject to an allegation.
- § Be transparent in our investigations procedures.
- § Ensure that you know the arrangements for the payment of fees and allowances in the event that you are not able to foster while the subject of an allegation.
- § Provide prompt communication to carers following an investigation resulting from an allegation or complaint.

7. Communication and consultation

We believe that open and honest dialogue is the key to a good relationship.

We will aim to:

- § Facilitate communication between you and key members of the elected council with responsibility for children's services.
- § Ensure that we consult and listen to you on matters that affect you, your family and the children and young people you foster.
- § Arrange regular opportunities for foster carers to meet with managers from the Fostering Service and others to raise issues of importance to carers.
- § Aim to involve foster carers directly in the development of the Fostering Service.

What Brighton and Hove City Council can expect from foster carers:

1. Working in partnership

We will demonstrate a high standard of care and conduct.

We will:

- § Demonstrate our expertise and make use of our skills and knowledge to the best of our ability.
- § Provide children and young people with a positive experience of family life.
- § Recognise the importance of child or young person's birth family and work in a positive way with the birth parents, wider family and other people significant to them.
- § Promote anti-discriminatory practice in our fostering of children and young people in our care.
- § Meet the standards set out in fostering regulations and guidance and follow departmental policies and procedures including complying with the terms of the Foster carers' agreement
- § Respect confidentiality.

2. Respect for the child and young person

Every child and young person should be respected as an individual and be supported in meeting their individual needs and achieving their aspirations and potential.

We will:

- § Respect and promote a child's identity.
- § Afford the same level of protection and care to a child and young person as we would our own in accordance with the national minimum standards.
- § Ensure the child or young person has the right to contribute to making decisions regarding their own lives, as appropriate to their age, maturity and understanding.
- § Help collect and preserve memories of the time the child or young person spends with our family.
- § Ensure that if children have to move placements they are moved in a respectful and considerate manner.

3. Information

We believe that open and honest dialogue is the key to a good relationship.

We will:

- § Inform our supervising social worker about proposed changes in our household.
- § Inform our supervising social worker about any difficulties that arise for us.
- § Keep the child or young person's Social Worker regularly up to date of their progress.

4. Learning, development and support

We will access learning and development opportunities throughout our fostering career. This will ensure we have the skills and knowledge we need, and allow us to develop our practice in order that we can help improve the lives of the children and young people we foster.

We will:

- § Be committed to develop our skills throughout our fostering career.
- § Attend mandatory and relevant training.
- § Take up opportunities offered to us.
- § Be committed to participate in training and other opportunities to develop our skills and knowledge.

5. Communication and consultation

We believe that open and honest dialogue is the key to a good relationship. We believe that it is important for foster carers to play an active role in this

We will:

- § Aim to respond to local consultations and discussion in order to inform the development of the service.
- § Meet with managers others in order to promote dialogue and a good working relationship.

June 2012



**Brighton & Hove
Children & Families**

***FOSTER CARE AGREEMENT(covering
short and long term foster carers,
supported lodgings carers)***

THIS FOSTER CARE AGREEMENT is dated..... and is made
between:

**BRIGHTON AND HOVE CITY COUNCIL CHILDREN, CHILDREN & YOUNG
PEOPLE'S TRUST**

and

NAME OF CARER (S):
.....

ADDRESS:
.....

THE CARER(S) IS/ARE APPROVED TO LOOK AFTER:

Number of children:

Gender:

Age range:

Any other approval restrictions:

Date of initial approval of carer(s):

**Having been approved as a carer(s) for Brighton & Hove City Council
agree to work within the framework of the Carer's Agreement.**

As a carer(s) I/we are aware that it is my/our responsibility to:

- to promote the welfare of the child/young person and to treat them as a valued member of our family;
- to keep the child safe;
- not to use any form of corporal punishment or inappropriate sanctions as detailed in the Care and Control Policy ;
- ensure that the child/young person is encouraged and enabled to:
 - practice their religion
 - follow cultural traditions and speak their first language
 - understand their family history and value their heritage
 - attend school/college/work and fulfil their potential
 - maintain contact with family members and any others significant to them (unless stipulated otherwise in the placement agreement)
 - acquire skills and knowledge to prepare them for adult and independent living from an appropriate age;
- arrange for the child/young person to receive medical/dental/optical attention when needed and allow him/her to be examined when required by the responsible authority;
- ensure that the child/young person has access to a balanced diet and opportunities for exercise commensurate with their abilities;
- not to provide the child/young person access within the home to dangerous, illegal or inappropriate items, such as weapons, adult films, drugs.

I/we are also aware of my/our responsibility to work with the Department as follows:-

- to inform my/our supervising social worker in writing of:
 - any intended change of address
 - any change in the composition of the household
 - any other significant change or event which may affect my/our capacity
 - to care for a child or the suitability of the household
 - any application to foster/adopt/provide lodgings for another agency or to seek registration as a childminder.
- to work within the terms of the placement agreement for any child placed and to undertake the tasks agreed;
- to maintain a written record of any injury or accident suffered by a child placed and physical control and sanctions used;
- to inform the responsible authority of illness/hospitalisation/outpatient treatment of the child/young person, any other serious occurrence e.g. the child runs away

or is involved with the police and any proposal for the child to stay overnight elsewhere without the carer(s);

- to inform the responsible authority of any plans to take the child/young person on holiday for more than two nights;
- to inform the responsible authority of the need for a respite break, giving sufficient notice to allow arrangements to be made;
- to comply with the Department's policies on child protection and care and control;
- to inform a young person's social worker and the supervising social worker immediately if it is thought a child/young person is involved in prostitution so as an urgent Looked After Review can be convened;
- to ensure that any information given to me/us regarding a child/young person is kept confidential and is not disclosed without the consent of the responsible authority or by direction of the court;
- to allow staff from the responsible authority access to the child/young person at all reasonable times;
- to allow any other authorised person, including a representative from the National Care Standards Commission, to visit my/our home to see us or the child/young person by arrangement;
- to allow my/our supervising social worker to visit unannounced; it is understood there will be at least one unannounced visit each year;
- to allow the responsible authority to remove the child/young person from my/our home if the authority decides it is necessary to do so;
- to keep a diary of events related to the child/young person and to make them available to the responsible authority if requested;
- to attend relevant child protection conferences, planning meetings and LAC Reviews concerning the child/young person and provide written reports if requested and help prepare child/young person attending Reviews and other important meetings;
- to accompany a young person to court (if a RAILS carer) and be in court as an appropriate adult;
- to work alongside a young person and their Leaving Care Personal Adviser to ensure that their Pathway Plan is completed;
- to inform the responsible authority if there are difficulties with the placement and to try to avoid a situation reaching crisis point without the problems having been raised;

- to attend training and support groups arranged by the Department, as agreed with my/our supervising social worker;
- to co-operate fully with my/our annual review and any additional reviews required;
- to give a minimum of 28 days notice of any intention to terminate the placement (unless in an emergency); it is understood for RAILS carers a placement would normally end when a remand period finishes.

I/we are aware of the following financial responsibilities:

- to inform the Department of any under/over payment in carers' allowances;
- to provide documentary evidence of insurance cover for any vehicle used for transport purposes for a child;
- to allow the supervising social worker sight of my/our driving licence and information in respect of any penalty points incurred, current or spent, and any disqualification and reasons;
- to inform the insurance companies which provide household and motor cover of my/our fostering activity and to provide the Department with a copy of the acknowledgement of that notification.

Brighton & Hove City Council's responsibilities to the carer(s) :-

- to provide advice, information and individual support from a supervising social worker and access to an alternative source of support if that worker is unavailable;
- to provide information on the additional support available from the Department, including 'out of hours' support and links with other carers;
- to ensure that the carer(s) has the Department's leaflet on child protection investigations and access to support, if necessary from an independent source, in the event of a child protection allegation being made against them;
- to ensure that the carer(s) receives copies of any Council policies which pertain to their responsibilities as a carer, including complaints, and is informed of any changes;
- to provide the carer(s) with opportunities to contribute their views on any proposed changes to agency policy or practice;
- to keep personal information about the carer(s) confidential and secure and not to disclose it to anyone outside the agency without their consent, except in relation to a child protection investigation;
- to provide the carer(s) with access to the information held on records about them (subject to the Access to Information Act and the Department's policy) when requested;

- to provide on-going training for the carer(s) to equip them for the fostering task and to enable them to develop their knowledge and skills;
- to organise and facilitate a foster care review on at least an annual basis to which the carer(s) and other members of the family are encouraged to contribute fully;
- to provide written confirmation of the outcome of any review of approval;
- to consult the carer(s) about the timing of reviews, and to recognise their work and family commitments in planning home visits;
- to provide materials such as a diary for the carer(s).

The Council's responsibilities in relation to a placement:-

- to provide essential information on the child/young person and their family history for the carer(s) in all placements;
- to include the carer(s) in the decision-making process as to whether a placement should take place and in any planning of introductions;
- to ensure that a placement agreement is completed as required by regulations and that it specifies placement aims, tasks and time-scales, education arrangements, family contact and placement review;
- to ensure that the child/young person has been medically examined in accordance with regulations and that the carer(s) receives information on medical history, current treatment, the implications of any illness or development issues and arrangements for consent to medical treatment;
- to seek the views of the carer(s) in relation to the progress of the child/young person and provide any help needed to prepare written reports for meetings;
- to help arrange assessment of a child's needs and appropriate therapy/treatment if necessary;
- where there is no other insurance in place, to provide cover, up to the policy limits, for:
 - damage to and theft of the carer(s) or any other permanent resident's property caused by the foster child, excluding damage to or theft from or of motor vehicles
 - public liability and personal accident insurance in relation to activities undertaken as a foster carer;
- to provide financial information on and support about:
 - the scale of allowances, including additional payments available, and the method and frequency of payment
 - state benefits the carer(s) may be entitled to and the effect of
 - receiving those on your fostering allowance
 - statements for tax purposes;

- to ensure that payments are made regularly and promptly.

I/we confirm I/we have received copies of policies on:

- ◆ Child Protection
- ◆ Care and Control

Signed.....Carer
Date.....

Signed.....Carer
Date.....

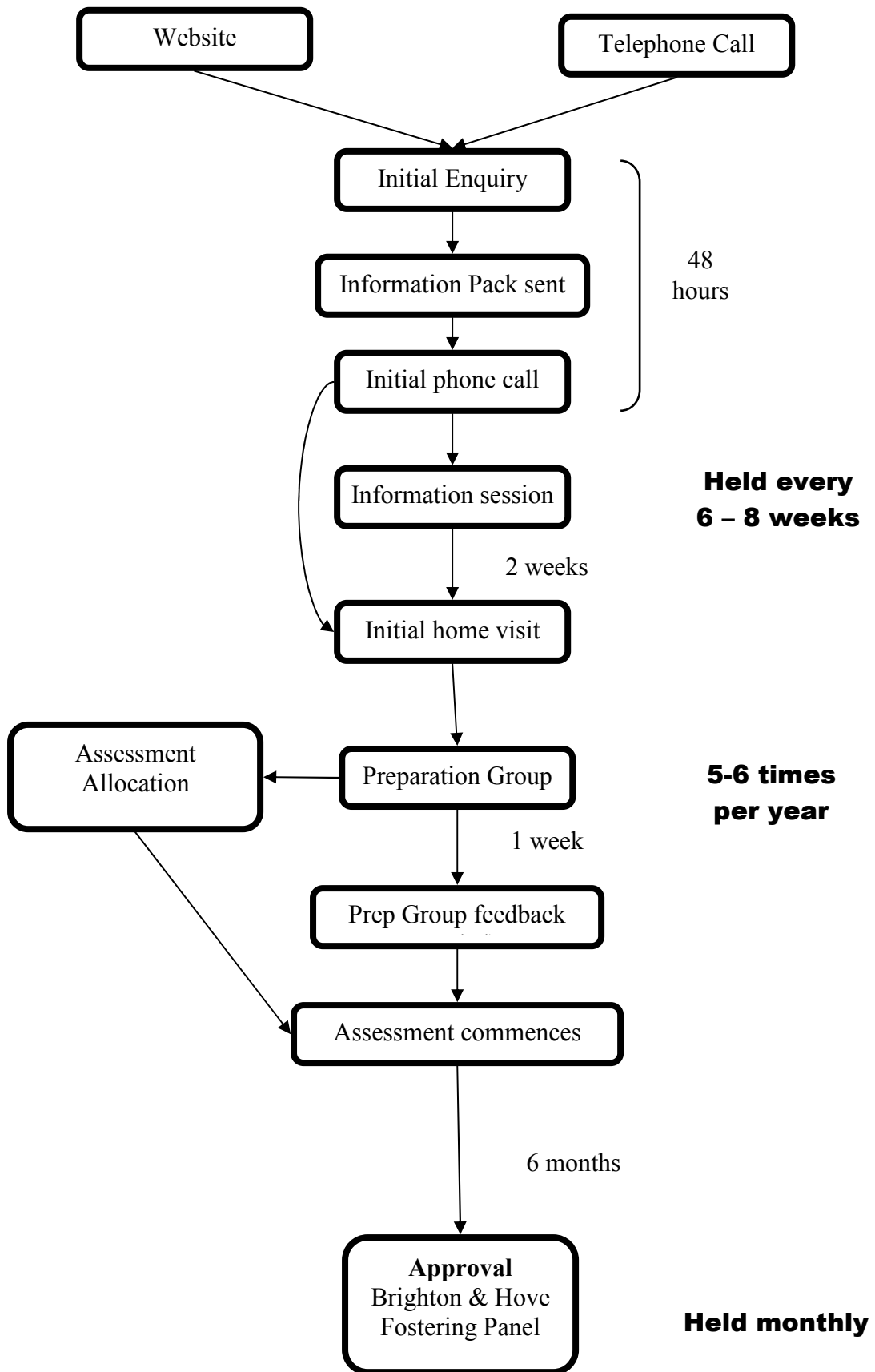
Signed.....Supervising Social Worker Date.....

Copy on carer(s) file & to carer.

This form to be discussed and signed at every Carer Review

This form is based on a foster care agreement checklist by the late Anne van Meeuwen, Principal Policy Officer, Barnardo's. Acknowledgement is gratefully made to Barnardo's for permission to make reference to it.

Foster Carer Recruitment Workflow



Agenda Item 43

Document is Restricted

Agenda Item 44

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