

Agenda

Children and young people scrutiny committee

Date: **Wednesday 5 July 2017**

Time: **10.00 am**

Place: **The Council Chamber - The Shire Hall, St. Peter's
Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX**

Notes: Please note the time, date and venue of the meeting.

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Agenda for the meeting of the Children and young people scrutiny committee

Membership

Chairman	Councillor CA Gandy
Vice-Chairman	Councillor FM Norman
	Councillor JA Hyde
	Councillor JF Johnson
	Councillor JG Lester
	Councillor MD Lloyd-Hayes
	Councillor MT McEvelly
	Councillor A Seldon

Co-optees	Mr P Burbidge	Archdiocese of Cardiff
	Mrs A Fisher	Parent Governor Representative: Primary Schools
	Mr P Sell	The Diocese of Hereford

Agenda

	Pages
<p>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>To receive apologies for absence.</p>	
<p>2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES</p> <p>To receive details of members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a member of the committee.</p>	
<p>3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>To receive any declarations of interest by members in respect of items on the agenda.</p>	
<p>4. CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2017 - 2020</p> <p>To review the draft Corporate Parenting Strategy and action plan and identify recommendations to the cabinet member.</p>	5 - 68
<p>5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC</p> <p>To receive any written questions from members of the public. <i>Deadline for receipt of questions is 5:00pm on Friday 30 June.</i> <i>Accepted questions will be published as a supplement prior to the meeting.</i> <i>Please submit questions to: councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk.</i></p>	
<p>6. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>To receive any written questions from members of the Council. <i>Deadline for receipt of questions is 5:00pm on Friday 30 June.</i> <i>Accepted questions will be published as a supplement prior to the meeting.</i> <i>Please submit questions to: councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk.</i></p>	
<p>7. WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW</p> <p>To review the attached work plan for 2017/18 and propose updates and additions to forthcoming committee business.</p>	69 - 72
<p>8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>Monday 2 October 2017 – 10.00 a.m.</p> <p>The remaining meeting dates during 2017 – 18:</p> <p>4 December 2017 22 January 2018 16 April 2018</p>	



Meeting:	Children and young people's scrutiny
Meeting date:	5 July 2017
Title of report:	Corporate parenting strategy 2017- 2020
Report by:	Head of looked after children

Classification

Open

Key decision

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

Countywide

Purpose

To consider the draft Corporate Parenting Strategy 2017-2020

Recommendation

THAT - the draft Corporate Parenting strategy and action plan at appendix A are considered and the committee identify any recommendations it wishes to make to strengthen the strategy or action plan.

Alternative options

- 1 There are no alternatives to the recommendation. It is open to the committee to recommend the drafts to cabinet without further change or to identify proposed changes to the strategy or additional actions to be considered by cabinet which would improve the ability of relevant bodies to fulfil their role as corporate parents more effectively

Reasons for recommendations

- 2 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 has recently been given Royal Assent and defines for the first time in law the expectations of councils in relation to their corporate parenting responsibilities. To be able to evidence the council's commitment and action in relation to these responsibilities it is necessary to have a strategy.
- 3 Corporate parenting is a responsibility of all elected members and officers within the council as well as statutory partners. A strategy enables the council and its partners to be clear about priorities, what needs to be done and by who if change is to be achieved. To be effective the strategy needs to be understood and owned by all councillors.

Key considerations

- 4 The cabinet member, young people and children's wellbeing has asked that the corporate parenting strategy is reviewed by the committee before it is presented to the executive.
- 5 The council, incorporating elected members and all officers, has a special responsibility for all looked after children and care leavers in its care. Almost all children in care will have experienced trauma as a result of abuse and/or neglect. Although many children in care and care leavers are able to achieve well, overall outcomes for looked after children and care leavers in relation to educational achievement, emotional and mental health, offending and employment are worse than their peers. As corporate parents it is the council's responsibility to ensure that every effort is made to enable children and young people in care to succeed as well as their peers.
- 6 A needs analysis was completed to understand how children and young people in care in Herefordshire are achieving in comparison with their peers and those from other local authorities. This has enabled an analysis to be completed regarding what is working well and what needs to be improved to achieve the best outcomes. The needs analysis was used to develop the Corporate Parenting strategy. The strategy and action plan as attached at appendix a; sets out how change will be achieved.
- 7 Progress against all of the key priorities is expected in the first and each subsequent year. On an annual basis cabinet, and scrutiny will be provided with an update report that informs them of the progress with regards to the implementation of the strategy. This annual report will also be presented to the corporate parenting panel which includes members and external partners for their information and comment.

Community impact

- 8 The Corporate Parenting strategy will support the achievement of key priorities within

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Gill Cox, Head of Service for looked after children on Tel (01432) 383738

the corporate strategy including to enable residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives and to keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life. The strategy will also support progress in achieving priorities within the Children and Young People's plan particularly that relating to children and young people in need of safeguarding.

- 9 Children and young people in care are members of our community and many will live within our community as adults. Therefore doing our best to support these children and young people to achieve happy, healthy and successful lives will benefit the community in the future. On the 29 May 2017 there were 310 children looked after by Herefordshire. A thorough needs analysis of our looked after children population (as shown in appendix b) has been completed and had informed the priorities for the strategy.

Equality duty

- 10 The corporate parenting strategy seeks to redress the impact of disadvantage due to being a looked after child and early life experiences of abuse and neglect. We will pay due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under this Act. We will advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. We will foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Financial implications

- 11 The strategy is largely cost neutral in that practice improvements can be achieved through existing resources. A reduction in the looked after children population would avoid significant costs for the council and partner agencies particularly in relation to the costs of placement and staffing capacity.
- 12 The strategy does not of itself commit resources but delivering any actions necessary to achieve the strategy's priorities will be subject to the relevant governance process.

Legal implications

- 13 The scrutiny committee has the power to make recommendations to the executive in respect of any function which is the responsibility of the executive.
- 14 There should be a strategy in place for Corporate Parenting which should be reviewed on a regular basis. This is an executive function.
- 15 The purpose of such a strategy is to reaffirm and reinforce the Council's corporate responsibility jointly with our partner agencies.

Risk management

- 16 There are no risks identified to adopting a strategy for Corporate Parenting.
- 17 There are risks associated with having no clear strategy in place. There are expectations upon the council and its partners to act as responsible and ambitious corporate parents for looked after children and care leavers. The absence of a strategy is likely to be noted as a concern by Ofsted and would bring increased scrutiny regarding the level of commitment and leadership by the council in this area.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Gill Cox, Head of Service for looked after children on Tel (01432) 383738

Consultees

- 18 The draft strategy was circulated widely for consultation between 17th February and 7th April 2017 to the Corporate Parenting panel who include members, officers, multi-agency partners, foster carers and young people; Herefordshire Safeguarding Children's Board; elected members, foster carers and the Children in Care council. Written responses were received from a number of organisations in addition to verbal feedback from a range of individuals. Consultation responses included suggested ideas and amendments that have been incorporated into the final strategy.
- 19 The Corporate Parenting panel recommended and endorsed a final version of the strategy on 23rd May 2017.

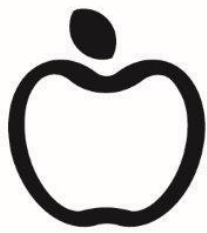
Appendices

Appendix A - Corporate parenting strategy

Appendix B - Corporate parenting strategy needs assessment

Background papers

- [Adoption Annual Report 2016-17](#)
- [Fostering Annual Report 2016-17](#)



Herefordshire Council

Herefordshire Council

Corporate Parenting Strategy

2017-20

DRAFT

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Foreword

Every child deserves the best start in life. They should grow up to be happy, healthy and thrive in an environment that will enable them to reach their full potential. If a child needs to be taken into our care this should not mean that they do not have the same opportunities as anyone else. This strategy is our way of ensuring that looked after children have happy and fulfilling lives. Our society cannot always foresee the challenges that a child may face. However, how a society meets those challenges is a key measure of how well it is functioning. One of the most important roles a Council can play is to provide the best of outcomes for children who are disadvantaged. There can be no greater reward than to achieve the very best for children who need our help. This strategy sets out how we as Corporate Parents will provide every opportunity for our looked after children. We, as elected members, will strive to put their wellbeing at the centre of all we do and together we can achieve great things for those who need our full support.

Insert signature
Councillor Jonathan Lester
Cabinet member for Young People and
Children's Well-being

Insert signature
Councillor Jenny Hyde
Chair of Corporate Parenting panel

Introduction

This strategy sets out how we as Herefordshire Council and its partners will carry out our corporate parenting responsibilities for looked after children and young people and care leavers.

The aim of this strategy is to ensure that all officers, partners and elected members understand our responsibilities as corporate parents and are working together to improve outcomes for this group of children and young people who are particularly vulnerable and for whom we all have a special responsibility.

What is Corporate Parenting?

Put simply, the term 'Corporate Parent' means the collective responsibility of the council, elected members, employees, and partner agencies for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for children who are looked after by the council. A child in the care of the council looks to the whole council to be the best parent it can be to that child. Every member and employee of the council has the statutory responsibility to act for a looked after child in the same way that a good parent would act for their own child.

Every good parent wants the best for their child - to see their child flourish, to enjoy good health, to be safe and happy, to do well at school, to enjoy good relationships with their peers, to make the most of leisure opportunities, hobbies and interests, and to grow towards adulthood equipped to lead independent lives and to make their way as happy, healthy, successful and financially secure adults.

That's why Herefordshire Council has the same goals for the children it looks after as those of every good parent and takes seriously the moral and legal responsibility for enabling the children in its care to experience happy and fulfilled lives. This does not mean that everyone with the responsibility of being a corporate parent should meet and get to know every looked after child on an individual basis. However, being a good corporate parent means we should:

- accept responsibility for children in the council's care
- make their needs a priority
- seek for them the same outcomes any good parent would want for their own children.

Corporate parenting responsibilities are not confined to elected members. All officers share the responsibility to promote the needs of looked after children.

Key responsibilities of all Officers are:

- To promote the life chances of looked after children and care leavers in their area of responsibility.
- To consider the impact of decision making on looked after children and care leavers.

How the strategy will be delivered, monitored and evaluated

This strategy includes an action plan to support implementation of its aims and objectives with measurable outcomes. Effectiveness of the strategy will be monitored and evaluated by the Corporate Parenting Panel. The Corporate Parenting Panel will present an annual report to the Council on progress.

The Children in Care Council will monitor progress and hold us to account.

The National Picture

There were 70,440 looked after children on the 31st March 2016, an increase of 1% compared to 31 March 2015 and an increase of 5% compared to 2012. The rise during 2015/16 reflects a rise of 1,470 in unaccompanied asylum seeking children, compared to a rise of 970 in all looked after children. In 2012, 59 children per 10,000 of the population were looked after; in 2016 the rate was 60 children per 10,000 of the population.

In 2016 the number of children in foster care continued to rise; of the 70,440 looked after children at 31 March 2016, 74% were cared for in foster placements – the same proportion as the previous year.

In 2016 the number of looked after unaccompanied asylum seeking children increased by 54% compared to 2015. At 31 March 2016, unaccompanied asylum seeking children represented 6% of the looked after children population.

The outcomes for children and young people in care are poor in comparison with the general population and other vulnerable groups. However, despite the complex needs these children and young people have, many can and do make a great success of their lives, with the right support and care.

The Local Picture

On the 31st March 2016 there were 287 looked after children in Herefordshire which equates to a rate of 80 children per 10,000 significantly higher than the national average, statistical neighbours and even higher than would be expected when taking into account relatively low deprivation levels within the County.

A needs analysis (*insert hyperlink*) has been completed using data available locally, regionally and nationally to help us understand relative strengths and areas for improvement. This needs analysis has been used to inform the priorities for this Strategy.

Priority 1 – All elected members and senior leader across all key partners understand and act on their responsibilities as corporate parents

What we are doing well

- A committed group of cross-party Councillors are members of the Corporate Parenting panel and act as effective corporate parents in their other roles
- All Councillors are provided with a copy of “If this were my child... A councillor’s guide to being a good corporate parent”
- Council demonstrate interest and support when reports relevant to Corporate Parenting are presented to them
- Performance information is shared quarterly with cross-party Councillors and at Corporate Parenting panel

Current opportunities

- Councillors and many Officers live within Herefordshire and have the opportunity to influence their wider networks to promote opportunities for looked after children and care leavers
- A Children’s scrutiny committee has been established during 2017/18 to focus scrutiny on the well-being of children specifically
- The Council, Wye Valley NHS Trust and Clinical Commissioning Group are jointly responsible for contracting and commissioning a wide range of services that could be required to provide opportunities to improve the life chances of looked after children and care leavers including employment and training opportunities
- The Council has a volunteering scheme that allows employees to have up to 2 days paid leave to do charitable work which could be extended to offer support for looked after children and care leavers

Current challenges

- Engaging Councillors, Officers and partner agencies to ensure that corporate parenting responsibilities are owned “corporately” rather than being seen as a Children’s Wellbeing Directorate responsibility.

What we will improve

- Regular sharing of information to elected members and officers to enable them to understand the quality of care being provided for looked after children and care leavers and therefore to effectively scrutinise and challenge
- Awareness and understanding of corporate parenting responsibilities amongst Councillors, Officers and partner agencies

- Explicit consideration of the impact of decision making across the Council on looked after children and care leavers and using every opportunity to promote their life chances

Priority 2 – Families are supported to care for their own children

What we are doing well

- The threshold for support and intervention by Children’s Social care is being more effectively managed resulting in a significant reduction in children on a Child Protection plan that has been sustained
- Threshold of Care panel and Legal Gateway panel ensure that decisions for children to become looked after and/or to initiate care proceedings have appropriate oversight and scrutiny by Heads of Service
- The number of children admitted to care has started to reduce during 2016/17
- Where children are looked after they are placed with family and friends as a first option

Current opportunities

- An Early Help strategy has been approved which will drive the focus for preventative services to increase the resilience of families and communities and therefore reduce demands on Children’s Social Care
- There are interventions that have been nationally evaluated that are successful at reducing the risk of parents having children repeatedly removed from their care

Current challenges

- Reduced resources are available for preventative services, including the budget pressures experienced by partners such as schools
- Family support services within Children’s Wellbeing Directorate are limited

What we will improve

- We will reduce the number of looked after children to a rate that is below the national average given our relatively low rates of deprivation
- We will increase the numbers of children rehabilitated home to their family’s where it is safe to do so
- We will implement the Early Help strategy and develop a joined up preventative approach to prevent children coming into care
- We will explore opportunities to develop services that work with parents who are at risk of having multiple children removed from their care

Priority 3 – All looked after children have a safe and stable home

What we are doing well

- Case file audits indicate that children are safe in care
- The fostering service has been successful at recruiting, training and supporting carers and so is increasingly meeting the needs of children and young people with complex needs and/or challenging behaviour
- The number of children who have experienced 3 or more placement moves has reduced and is well below the national average
- HIPSS and TISS are supporting foster carers and staff to better understand and meet the needs of children with complex needs
- The Adoption team has successfully found adopters for older children, sibling groups and those with complex needs
- Approximately £94,000 of funding has been awarded since April 2015 to enable adopters and special guardians to access specialist therapeutic support through the Adoption Support Fund
- A protocol has recently been agreed to “Reduce Offending and Criminalisation of Children in Care”
- Herefordshire has good quality, enthusiastic foster carers with an increasingly professional approach

Current opportunities

- To develop innovative projects to support adopters as part of a Regional Adoption Agency alongside the third sector
- To re-direct funding spent on independent foster placements and residential units to support the growth and improvement of the in-house fostering service
- To use the expertise of foster carers to contribute to training the children’s social care workforce
- Barnardo’s BASE project provides tailored intervention programmes to children at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation and training to staff and foster carers
- To develop a restorative justice approach to incidents within foster and residential placements to reduce the risk of placement breakdown and reduce criminalisation of looked after children
- The HSCB have agreed to include thematic audits for looked after children and care leavers within their audit programme

Current challenges

- Maintaining the quality of the adoption service during the planning and early implementation of a Regional Adoption Agency
- Children’s social care workforce includes a lot of newly qualified Social Workers who lack experience in Court work and early permanency planning

- Continued growth and improvement of the fostering service if spend on independent placements does not reduce and other funding is not identified
- Contract for HIPSS and TISS is due to end in 2017/18
- Matching children with foster carers is difficult when there is limited placement choice
- Many foster carers are reluctant to apply for Special Guardianship Orders when it would be in the best interests of children they care for
- Difficulties in recruiting and retaining experienced Social Workers

What we will improve

- The number of children who are in a stable long term placements
- Ensuring that foster carers are valued as professionals
- Achieving permanency for children through adoption where this is in the child's best interests
- Reducing the time children spend in care before they achieve permanency
- Reducing the number of placements that disrupt and end in an unplanned way
- Increase the number of foster carers (particularly kinship carers) who are matched long term with children who apply for Special Guardianship orders
- Greater consistency in practice in relation to children who go missing and child sexual exploitation risk assessments to enable understanding of themes and effective intervention
- Multi-agency case file audits for looked after children and care leavers through the HSCB

Priority 4 – All looked after children are supported to reach their potential in education

What we are doing well

- The gap in achievement for children in Early years education has narrowed
- The Virtual school monitors attendance levels closely and ensures a joined up approach if attendance reduces below 90%
- The Virtual school has a plan focussed upon narrowing the gap in achievement between looked after children and the general population
- The recording of exclusion data is more accurately recorded which enables more effective challenge of schools
- Children and young people have a Personal Education Plan which is reviewed every term

Current opportunities

- The Virtual school is planning training for foster carers, social workers and virtual school staff on raising aspirations
- E-PEP has been purchased which will enable real time tracking of data for looked after children and release capacity within the Virtual school to focus on interventions
- Development of a University in Hereford provides opportunities to raise aspirations for children in care

Current challenges

- The emotional impact of harm that children in care have experienced can prevent them from engaging fully in education and learning opportunities
- Children admitted to care aged over 12 experience the most placement and school disruption
- A small number of looked after children have very complex health needs which affect attendance
- Having access to accurate current information on children's attainment and progress
- Methods of teaching students today are often not well understood by carers making it difficult for them to support children with their homework
- Meeting educational needs of unaccompanied asylum seeking children particularly those aged 16+

What we will improve

- Reduction of the gap in achievement between looked after children and the general population
- Reduction in the number of young people who are not engaged in education, employment or training
- Our ambition for children to achieve their potential
- Consistency of practice regarding exclusions between schools
- Reducing the number of children in care who experience multiple school moves
- Inclusion opportunities for children with Special Educational Needs

- Oversight and challenge to the Virtual School

Priority 5 – All looked after children enjoy the best possible health

What we are doing well

- LAC health team complete LAC health assessments for children placed in neighbouring authorities wherever possible to provide continuity
- The percentage of Health assessments completed for young people aged 16+ has improved significantly
- The LAC health team have been stable enabling them to develop trusting relationships with children over time that are effective at identifying concerns
- The completion rate for Strengths and Difficulties questionnaires has improved
- CAMHS have introduced a telephone advice line that is available to Social Workers

Current opportunities

- To re-design work flows within IT systems to simplify notification processes
- Reducing the numbers of children placed out of County through reduction in numbers of children looked after and continued growth of in-house fostering service
- To use SDQ data to target resources and prevent escalation of emotional and mental health difficulties for children and young people and prevent placement breakdown

Current challenges

- The high numbers of looked after children stretch resources and capacity of the LAC health team
- No mental health services are commissioned for children under the age of 10 beyond what is available from universal services
- Risk taking is a normal aspect of adolescence but looked after children and care leavers have fewer protective factors to balance risks
- Many care leavers have poor emotional and mental health but don't meet the criteria for adult mental health services

What we will improve

- Completion of statutory health assessments within timescales which requires Children's Social Care to notify the LAC health team promptly when a child is admitted to care
- Accuracy of data produced by the LAC health team
- Using the Strengths and Difficulties questionnaires to target support for children, young people and their carers
- Closer monitoring of health needs of children placed out of County to ensure health needs are met

- Understanding the health needs of our care leavers
- Engaging older young people and care leavers in taking responsibility for their own health and ensuring they have accurate information about their own health history
- Understanding the profile of looked after children with a disability
- The integration of EHC plans with LAC health assessments

Priority 6 – All looked after children enjoy a range of play, sport, leisure and cultural opportunities

What we are doing well

- The Council supports looked after children to access sport and leisure activities by providing HALO vouchers
- The Council holds an annual event to celebrate the achievements of looked after children and care leavers across a wide range of categories
- Foster carers support children to take part in a wide range of activities

Current opportunities

- The Children in Care Council is planning a trip to Spain which they have fundraised for
- The Children in Care Council have priorities that include fundraising and being more involved in their local communities

Current challenges

- Guidance and laws can make it difficult for corporate parents to allow children to do activities that have a recommended or statutory age rating
- As corporate parents we are naturally risk averse
- Some children are placed a long way from their home when they come into foster care and so it can be difficult to continue attending clubs and activities that they are part of
- Herefordshire is a very rural County and so it can be difficult for young people to travel independently and difficult for carers to transport children to clubs and activities

What we will improve

- The information on our looked after children's access to play, sport, leisure and cultural activities as a population
- Ensuring that when children do have to move that we minimise the impact by supporting continuity of friendships, clubs and activities wherever possible
- Children tell us that too often they are made to feel "different" because we don't always allow them to take part in activities that their peers enjoy

Priority 7 – All looked after children are listened to and treated with respect

What we are doing well

- Looked after children are encouraged to Chair their own LAC reviews if they want to
- Independent Reviewing Officers send an age appropriate letter, including a photo and contact details, explaining their role, purpose of a LAC review and right to advocacy when allocated to a child or young person
- Children in care are involved in almost all recruitment for new staff within Children’s Social Care and the Virtual School
- A Participation Worker is employed who supports the Children in Care Council which is well established and meets every month
- The Children in Care Council is represented at the Corporate Parenting Panel
- The 16+ team has a closed group Facebook page which has been successful in engaging with some difficult to reach young people and enable young people to ask for support where they might otherwise have found it difficult to ask
- Evaluation from NYAS (advocacy service) shows that children and young people understand their rights and entitlements better after receiving support from the service
- On Take-over day 2016 representatives from the Children in Care Council took over Corporate Parenting Panel and the Council’s Management Board

Current opportunities

- A survey of all looked after children is planned for Spring 2017
- To embed more robust arrangements for assessing, planning and reviewing children’s contact arrangements that keeps the child at the centre
- Training to improve the competence of children’s social care staff in working with children and families from diverse cultural backgrounds is planned
- New apps provide opportunities for children and young people to communicate their wishes and feelings in a way that is accessible for them and that enables analysis of this information by the service

Current challenges

- Children’s Social Care are struggling to recruit permanent Social Workers in some teams meaning that we still have to employ some agency staff
- The numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children within our looked after and care leaver population is expected to rise in the next two years but the workforce and local services are inexperienced in working with this client group

What we will improve

- The influence that children and young people's views have on policy and practice
- The proportion of looked after children and care leavers who regularly attend or engage with the Children in Care Council
- Accurate recording of children's ethnicity and therefore improvement in meeting children's cultural needs
- The skill and experience of our workforce in working with children and families from diverse cultural backgrounds
- The range of racial, cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds of our foster carers and their ability to meet diverse need
- Children's confidence to tell us if they want something to change in their foster placement
- Choices for children and young people about how they tell us about their wishes and feelings
- Reducing the number of changes of Social Worker that children and young people experience
- Ensuring that contact arrangements for children and young people with their families are in their best interests
- Understanding the experience and views of all our looked after children as a collective group
- Children and young people's understanding of their rights and entitlements

Priority 8 – All looked after children are supported and enabled to live happy, healthy and financially secure lives when they leave care

What we are doing well

- Young people really value the support they receive from the 16+ team and the drop in at No. 4 is used a lot and valued by young people
- Young people have a Pathway Plan that is co-produced with them and is regularly reviewed
- The fostering team has been successful in increasing the number of approved supported lodgings providers

Current opportunities

- The Council, its partners and those it commissions are large employers who could offer a wide range of employment opportunities to young people in care and leaving care
- The Apprenticeship levy and development of traineeships and supported internships creates employment opportunities
- Shared housing is more available, affordable and reduces the risk of isolation than single accommodation
- The draft Young People's Accommodation strategy includes as a key principle that there will be no homelessness assessment of care leavers required in order to identify housing suitable for them
- "Keep on caring" strategy establishes Government commitment that leaving care services will be extended to all care leavers up until the age of 25 and offer to care leavers will need to be published

Current challenges

- There is a shortage of affordable housing especially for single people
- Government approaches to reducing the welfare bill are impacting upon care leavers – particularly those with mental health difficulties and leave young people vulnerable to debt
- Some young people are very difficult to engage and are involved in some very risky behaviours
- Extending leaving care services will require additional resource and it's not yet clear what funding will be made available from central Government

What we will improve

- The range of supported accommodation available to meet the needs of care leavers within Herefordshire
- Some care leavers are found to be “intentionally homeless” and this makes it difficult for them to move on from mistakes
- Reducing the number of young people in care or who have left care who are not in education, employment or training
- The engagement of some young people in taking responsibility for their own physical and mental health
- A consistent approach to assessing and managing risk in adolescents which is understood by all agencies operating in Herefordshire
- Having a safe place for 16+ team to be based and to offer a drop in service for older looked after children and care leavers
- Formalising relationships with partner agencies through formal protocols to support effective joint working
- Reduce the numbers of children and young people in care and care leavers are at risk of offending
- The quality and consistency of support to young people to develop their independent living skills

Corporate Parenting Action Plan 2017-20

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?
1	Increase awareness and understanding of corporate parenting responsibilities amongst elected members.	Include Corporate parenting workshops within mandatory induction programme for Councillors	Governance services, Head of service for looked after children and Children in Care Council	% of Councillors completing mandatory induction programme Progress within Action Plan and against key performance indicators
1	Increase awareness and understanding of corporate parenting responsibilities amongst senior Council officers and partners.	Offer Corporate parenting workshops to senior officers within the Council and partner organisations	Management board, Head of service for looked after children and Children in Care Council	Progress within Action Plan and against key performance indicators
1	Councillors will have looked after children and care leavers at the forefront of their work and offer of support	Ask the question “how does this support Herefordshire’s looked after children and care leavers?” in relation to all Council and community business Commit to a minimum percentage of all work experience placements and apprenticeships being made available to LAC and care leavers Develop a directory of interests	Elected members Cabinet	Progress within action plan and against key performance indicators % of looked after children and care leavers who are NEET at age 19 and 21 is lower than national average and improves each year to be in the bottom quartile

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?
		and skills of members so that they can offer to support/mentor individual children and young people who wish to explore that field	Elected members	% of looked after children and care leavers who are NEET at age 19 and 21 is lower than national average and improves each year to be in the bottom quartile
1	Ensure that the Council, Wye Valley NHS Trust and Clinical Commissioning Group considers the impact upon corporate parenting responsibilities prior to any decision.	Provide guidance within report templates	Council, WVT and CCG	Progress within Action Plan and against key performance indicators
1	Ensure that Councillors, WVT and CCG are held to account for progress of the Corporate Parenting strategy	Present an annual report on Corporate Parenting to full Council and CCG Governing body and thematic information to children's scrutiny committee	Head of service for looked after children, WVT and CCG	Progress within Action Plan and against key performance indicators
1	Enable children and young people in care and care leavers to hold their Corporate Parents to account	Provide information to explain what a Corporate Parent is and the role and function of the Corporate parenting panel for children and young people Strengthen accountability of the Corporate parenting panel to the Children in Care Council	Children's Social Care and Participation Team Corporate parenting panel and Children in Care Council	
2	The rate of looked after children will gradually reduce	Ensure families receive multi-agency support to enable them to meet their children's needs Ensure children are only admitted	HSCB Children's Social Care	Rate of looked after children will reduce and be at or below national average

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?
		<p>to care when there is no safe alternative</p> <p>Focus upon permanency planning to ensure children do not remain in care longer than is in their best interests</p> <p>Provide clear information on support available to Special Guardianship carers to enable prospective SGO carers to make informed decisions</p> <p>Ensure that foster to adopt placements are considered in all cases</p> <p>Ensure service demands are shared to inform the development of early help services</p> <p>Early help strategy fully and effectively implemented</p> <p>Ensure clear joint protocols are effective in preventing homelessness for young people aged 16+</p>	<p>Children's Social Care</p> <p>Children's Social Care</p> <p>Children's Social Care and Legal Services</p> <p>Children's Social Care</p> <p>Children and young people's partnership</p> <p>Children's Well-being and Strategic housing team</p>	

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?
3	Continue to grow the fostering service to meet placement needs of looked after children and care leavers and improve placement stability	<p>Review and revise recruitment strategy every year to focus on gaps in placement provision</p> <p>Specifically target recruitment of foster carers to meet needs of BME children</p> <p>Further develop and improve training for foster carers to increase skill level and resilience of foster carers particularly for those caring for teenagers</p> <p>Promote foster carers as professionals by holding joint training and where appropriate co-producing training with foster carers for Children's Social care workforce and celebrating achievements of foster carers</p> <p>Ensure effective support is in place to enable children to step-down from residential care</p> <p>Ensure consistent practice in</p>	<p>Fostering service</p> <p>Fostering service</p> <p>Fostering service</p> <p>Children's Social care and Foster carers</p> <p>HIPSS & TISS</p> <p>Children's social care</p>	<p>Number of children placed and spend on children placed in independent fostering agencies and residential care</p> <p>Profile of foster carers in comparison with looked after children</p> <p>Placement stability in comparison with national average and previous local performance</p>

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?
		<p>relation to minimising risk of placement disruption and learning lessons when disruptions do occur.</p> <p>Ensure effective placement provision to reduce numbers of children placed in residential and provide effective step-down to foster placements</p> <p>Train Foster Carers and Social Workers to understand and apply restorative justice solutions to incidents in placement</p>	<p>Children's Social Care and Commissioning</p> <p>Youth Justice service, foster carers and children's social care</p>	
3	<p>Develop effective adoption support services</p> <p>Continue focus upon recruitment of adopters for sibling groups, older children and those with complex needs</p>	<p>Working with Regional Adoption agency and third sector</p> <p>Working with Regional Adoption agency</p>	<p>Adoption service</p> <p>Adoption service</p>	<p>Number of adoption disruptions</p> <p>The average time between receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family in comparison with national data and previous local performance</p>
3	<p>Understand numbers affected and levels of risk to looked after children who go missing and/or are at risk of child sexual exploitation</p>	<p>Develop consistent recording methods to enable accurate monitoring and analysis of</p>	<p>Children's Social care and performance team</p>	<p>Data is accurate</p>

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?
	Train Children's Social Care staff and foster carers to manage and reduce risk of CSE	<p>themes</p> <p>Complete multi-agency thematic audits</p> <p>Working with Barnardo's BASE project</p>	<p>HSCB</p> <p>Barnardo's BASE project and Social Work Academy</p>	<p>Outcomes from audits</p> <p>Levels of risk to individual children reduces over time</p>
4	Reduce the gap in educational achievement between looked after children and their peers	<p>Closer analysis of exclusion data and joint approach with schools to address inconsistencies in practice between schools</p> <p>Continue to implement virtual school plan</p> <p>Implementation of E-PEP and challenging schools on use of Pupil Premium</p> <p>Consider whether to introduce a Board of Governors for Virtual School to improve oversight and challenge</p> <p>Training for foster carers, social workers and virtual school staff to raise aspirations amongst looked</p>	<p>Virtual school</p> <p>Virtual school</p> <p>Virtual school</p> <p>Children's Well-Being directorate and Cabinet member</p> <p>Virtual school, children's social care and foster carers</p>	<p>Reduction in gap in achievement between looked after children and the general population as compared with national average and previous local performance</p> <p>Numbers of young people choosing to go to University and successfully completing their course</p>

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?
		<p>after children and enable effective support for children's learning</p> <p>Explore opportunity to make refurbished IT equipment that the Council no longer requires available for looked after children and care leavers</p> <p>Work with local FE colleges and Universities to develop opportunities for taster days for looked after children and care leavers</p> <p>Develop a clear offer of the practical, emotional and financial support available to care leavers who go to University</p>	<p>Virtual school and Hoople</p> <p>Virtual school</p> <p>Children's social care</p>	
5	Ensure the health needs of our looked after children are met	<p>Completion of health assessments within statutory timescales</p> <p>Effective and timely liaison with colleagues to ensure needs of children placed out of County are met and smooth transition of services if children move</p>	<p>LAC health team</p> <p>LAC health team</p>	Compliance with timescales for completion of health assessments

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?
		<p>placements</p> <p>CAMHS will offer training to Social Workers, inductions for ASYE and attend team meetings in children's social care to develop skills and understanding of mental health issues within Children's Social care workforce.</p> <p>Ensuring accurate recording of disability on MOSAIC</p>	<p>CAMHS and Children's Social care</p> <p>Children's Social care and performance team</p>	
5	Use data to target support and resources effectively to ensure children's needs are met and risk of placement breakdown is reduced	Continue to increase the number of SDQ assessments completed and use data to review whether this indicates the need for changes to a child's care plan and/or support for their carer	LAC health team, fostering team and children's Social Workers	Placement stability
5	Enable care leavers to understand their health needs and how to access additional support when they need it	<p>Ensure all care leavers receive their health passport and a copy is kept on their file</p> <p>Offer a regular drop-in advice service for children in care aged 16+ and care leavers</p> <p>Train 16+ team in C-card scheme</p>	<p>LAC health team</p> <p>LAC health team</p> <p>Sexual health team and 16+</p>	<p>Care leavers who are EET and in suitable accommodation</p> <p>Care leavers who are parents</p>

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?
		Explore opportunities for CAMHS to be expanded to provide support for young people up to the age of 25	CCG	
6	Commit to enabling children and young people being able to take part in the activities that are “normal” and socially acceptable for their peers	Develop guidance for practitioners and managers to support delegated authority for carers and a pragmatic approach to risk assessments	Children’s social care and Corporate Parenting panel	
7	Develop the Children in Care Council (CICC) so that it is able to represent the voice of all children in care and is able to hold the Corporate Parenting panel to account	Increase numbers of children and young people engaged in or with the CICC CICC to develop its priorities for change Ensure CICC is enabled to engage fully with the work of the Corporate Parenting panel	Participation team, Children in Care Council and Corporate Parenting Panel	% of looked after children who engage with CICC
7	Support our workforce to develop confidence and competence in working with children and families from diverse backgrounds	Deliver training on “culturally competent” practice	Social Work academy	% of workforce trained
7	Ensure that contact arrangements for children and young people are in their best interests	Embed the use of contact assessment tool Regularly review contact arrangements including whether contact needs to be supervised	Children’s social care Children’s social care	Placement stability data

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?
7	Improve understanding of children's wishes and feelings	<p>Analyse results of looked after children's survey</p> <p>Offer "U chair" training on a regular basis and encourage children and young people to chair their own LAC reviews</p> <p>Purchase licenses for "mind of my own" (MOMO) app</p> <p>Analyse information provided through MOMO and other sources of information to inform service improvements</p>	<p>Participation team</p> <p>Participation team and IRO service</p> <p>Children's social care</p> <p>Children's social care</p>	
7	Decrease the number of children and young people who have a change in social worker and/or IRO	<p>Recruit permanent staff to vacancies</p> <p>Improve retention by addressing issues highlighted within the annual Social Work health check survey and developing a clear CPD offer</p>	<p>Hoople and Children's social care</p> <p>Children's social care</p>	Workforce stability data
8	Ensure that there is a range of accommodation available to care leavers that meets need and allows for a gradual move to independence that is financially sustainable	<p>Re-commission housing support to deliver accommodation with support that meets the needs of care leavers</p> <p>Work with housing providers (including private rented sector)</p>	<p>Housing strategy and Children's Social care</p> <p>Housing strategy and Children's social care</p>	<p>100% of care leavers in suitable accommodation</p> <p>% of care leavers successfully sustaining a</p>

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?
		<p>to develop move on accommodation and shared housing options suitable for care leavers</p> <p>Implement Young Person's accommodation strategy</p> <p>Develop clear policy on financial support for care leavers</p>	<p>Adults well-being and relevant partners</p> <p>Children's Social care and Chief finance officer</p>	<p>tenancy</p> <p>Number of care leavers who present as homeless</p>
8	Increase the number of care leavers who are safe	Implement a joint approach to assessing and managing risk for adolescents	HSCB	Number of care leavers subject of regular risk management meetings
8	Reduce the number of looked after children and care leavers who are not in education, employment or training	<p>Offer a minimum of 1 week's work experience to every looked after child within the Council, WVT or CCG</p> <p>Establish a baseline of how many looked after children and care leavers undertake an apprenticeship and increase this each year</p> <p>Ensure care leavers are supported to access supported internships and traineeships as opportunities develop as appropriate</p>	<p>Council, WVT and CCG</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Hoople and Council</p>	% of looked after children and care leavers who are NEET at age 19 and 21 is better than national average and improves each year

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?
		<p>Offer a guaranteed interview to every looked after child or care leaver who meets the person specification for a job within the Council (including apprenticeships)</p> <p>Require services contracted or commissioned by the Council or CCG to offer work experience and apprenticeships to looked after children and care leavers</p> <p>Have a business advisor linked to the Virtual School to help develop employment opportunities</p>	<p>Hoople and Council</p> <p>Council and CCG</p> <p>Virtual school and Careers Enterprise co-ordinator</p>	
8	Provide a venue for a drop in service for young people in care aged 16+ and care leavers that enables them to feel safe and valued	Identify a long term venue for 16+ service within the City centre	Council	
8	Ensure joined up services are provided for care leavers that meet need	Develop joint protocols with relevant partners including Housing Solutions team and Probation service.	16+ team and head of service for looked after children with relevant partner agencies	
8	Improve the quality and consistency of support provided to looked after children and care leavers to develop their independent living skills	Clear expectations for carers in placement plans and pathway plans about what they will do to support development of independent living skills	Children's social care, foster carers and SLP providers	Number and % of care leavers sustaining a tenancy

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?
		<p>Consider establishing a support group for carers of older young people</p> <p>Develop a clear policy for foster carers on saving for looked after children</p> <p>Expand the Council Volunteer scheme to enable employees to provide support to looked after children and care leavers</p>	<p>Foster carers and Fostering Team</p> <p>Fostering Team</p> <p>Council</p>	
8	Develop a clear care leavers "offer"	In consultation with looked after children and care leavers once legislation is in place and clear guidance produced	16+ team, young people, Participation team and Head of Service for LAC	

Corporate Parenting Strategy – Needs analysis

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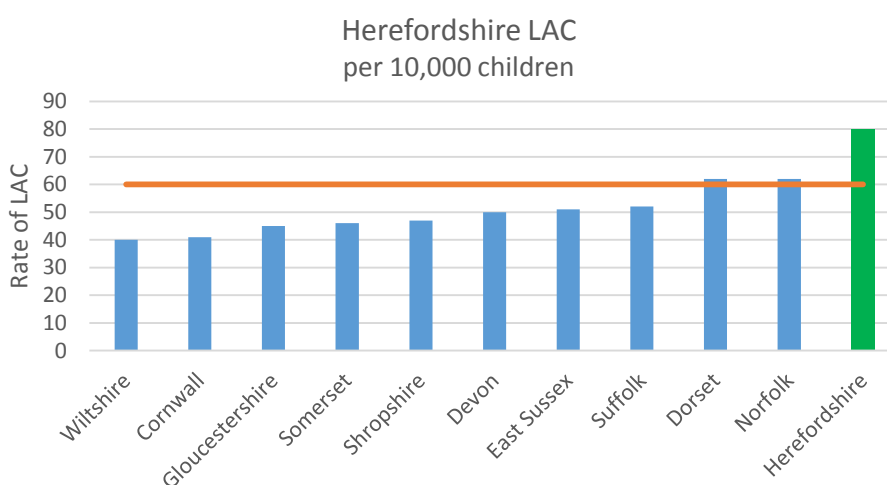
Introduction

This needs analysis has been completed with the purpose of informing the Corporate Parenting strategy. Information available from Children’s Social Care and relevant partners, including education and health, has been collated and where possible analysed in comparison with previous years and national or regional data to help understand trends, areas of good performance and areas to improve.

Looked after children population

The following information summarises Herefordshire’s LAC population, relative to similar comparator local authorities and those with similar levels of deprivation using 2015/16 data.

LAC rate relative to Comparator Authorities



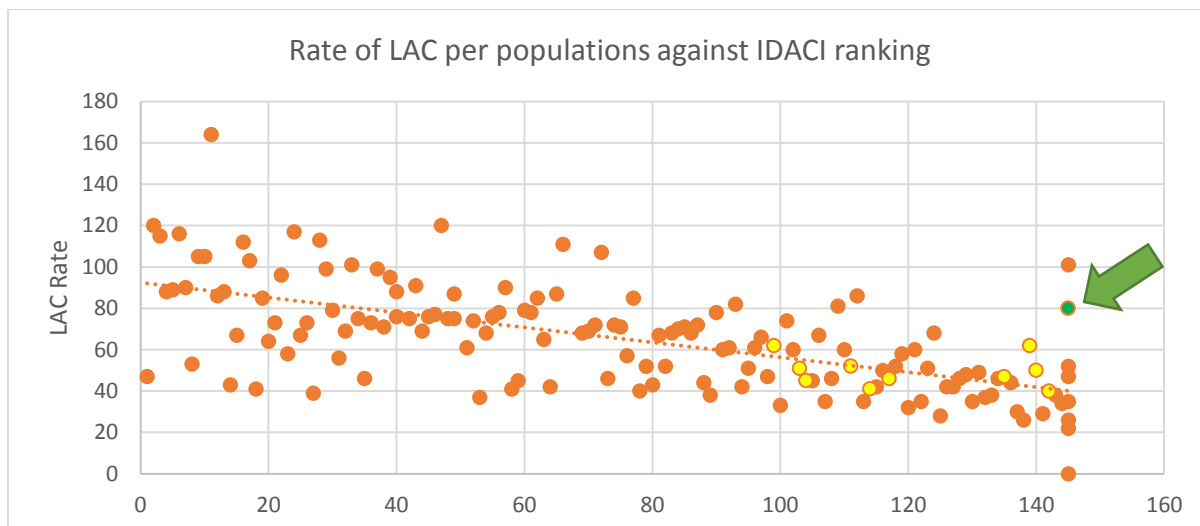
As can be seen from the graph above, Herefordshire’s LAC population is considerably higher than that of our comparator authorities. An approximate rate across our statistical neighbours is 50 LAC per 10,000 under 18 population, however Herefordshire’s rate has grown during 2015/16, for the fifth year in a row, to 80 children per 10,000 population. If Herefordshire’s rate for looked after children was consistent with our comparator authorities, this would equate to approximately 180 LAC children at any point in time.

In addition, a national average line is shown in red on the above graph, again, Herefordshire’s rate is higher than this average and if we were to be in line with the national average rate, we would need to reduce our LAC to around 217, a reduction of around 70 children

LAC rate relative to Deprivation Levels

If we were to compare Herefordshire’s rate of LAC children against authorities with similar levels of deprivation, this also shows the Authority as an outlier. There are 3 methods of calculation the IDACI (Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index) rates. Highlighted in the graph below is our LAC rate compared to the proportion of children within the most deprived 10% of LSOAs.

This chart indicates that Herefordshire (identified with the arrow), is a significant outlier. As described above, there are three differing measure of IDACI; both of the other calculations, which aren’t displayed, are consistent with the graph below.



Comparing to the trend line, Herefordshire’s LAC rate should be closer to a rate of 40 LAC per 10,000 children, half of the current level, which would mean actual LAC children numbers might need to be closer to 145.

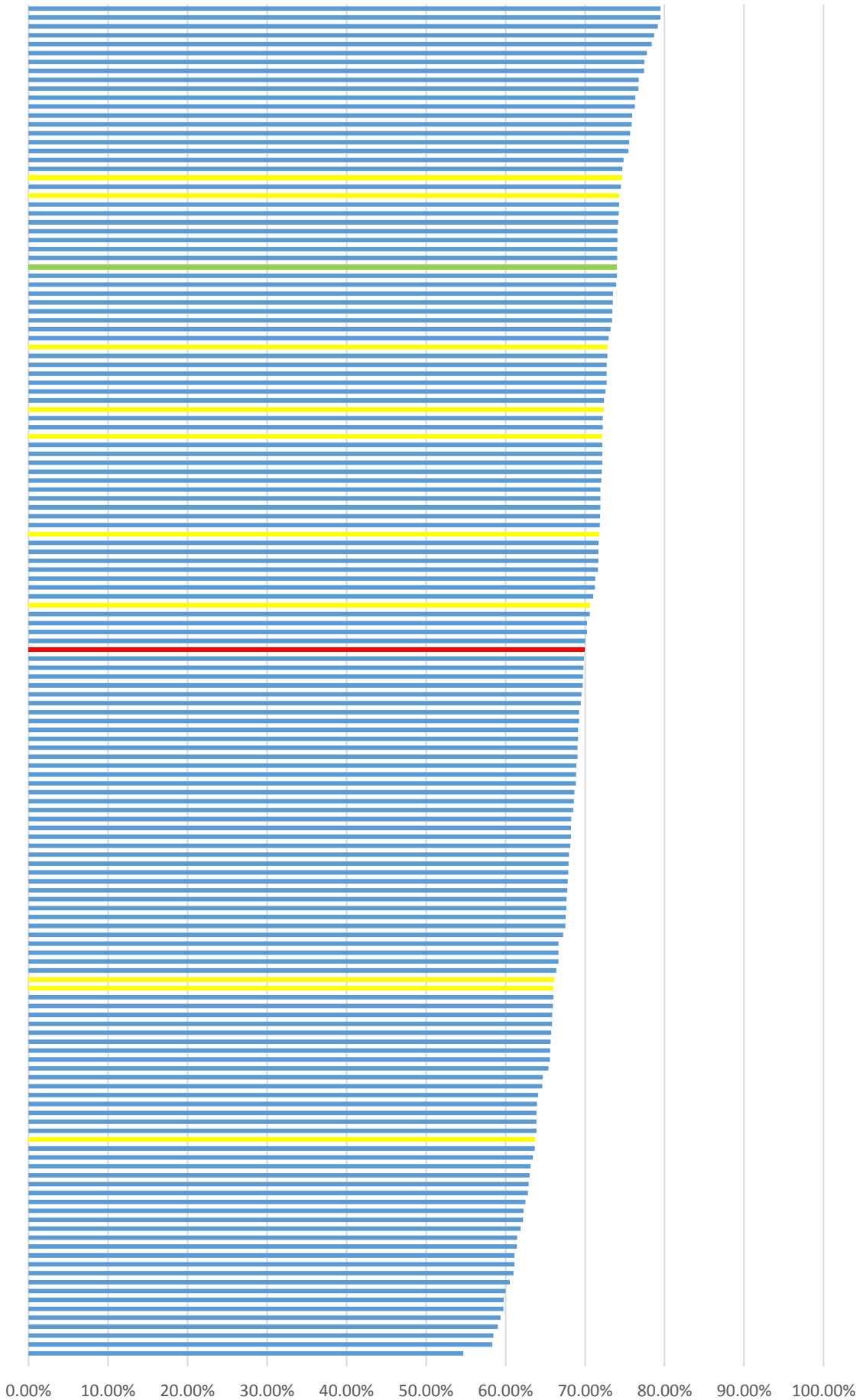
The table below shows Herefordshire’s comparator authorities, their LAC rate and where they rank for their IDACI (population living in most deprived 10% of LSOAs). Comparing these values to the national trend line, all of our comparators have LAC levels consistent with their IDACI ranking. These points are highlighted in yellow on the above chart

	LAC Rate	IDACI Ranking
Wiltshire	40	142
Cornwall	41	114
Gloucestershire	45	104
Somerset	46	117
Shropshire	47	135
Devon	50	140
East Sussex	51	103
Suffolk	52	111
Dorset	62	139
Norfolk	62	99
Herefordshire	80	145

LAC Turnover

The graph on the following page shows a rudimentary calculation of turnover of LAC for Herefordshire compared to other councils. It shows the number of LAC at 31st March 2016 as a percentage of the total number of LAC supported during the year. A higher percentage indicates that the LAC turnover is lower, potentially as a result of children remaining LAC for longer. Herefordshire sits in the highest quartile with 74% of all LAC children supported in the year open at year end, suggesting that LAC turnover is slower than the national average of 69.9%. Again, similar authorities to Herefordshire (as above) have been highlighted on the graph in yellow for comparative purposes.

LAC Turnover



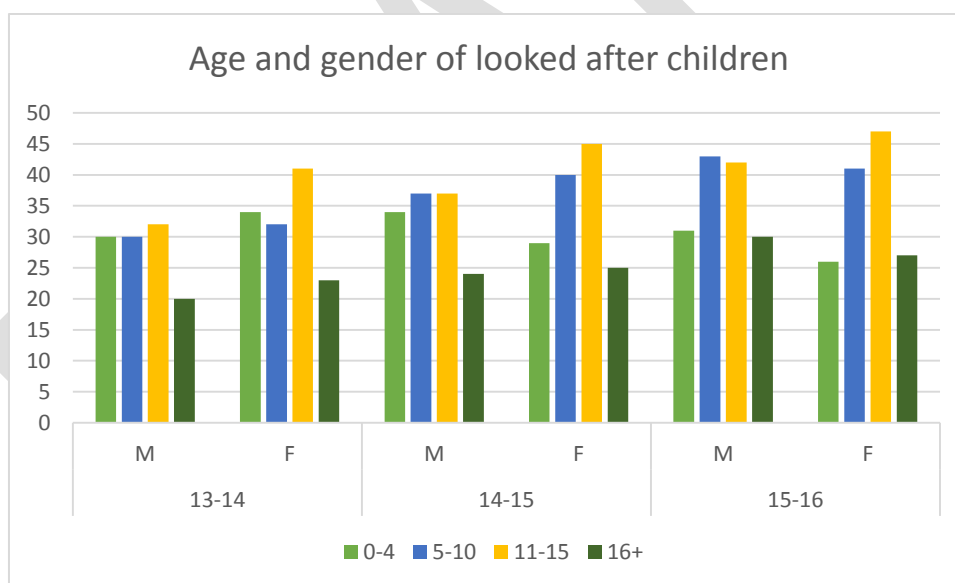
Age and gender

National data reports that on 31 March 2016, 56% of children looked after were male, 44% female and these proportions have varied little over recent years. In Herefordshire 51% of looked after children were male and 49% were female.

The age profile nationally has changed over the last four years, with a steady increase in the number and proportion of older children. 62% of children looked after were aged 10 years and over in 2016 compared with 56% in 2012. There has been a reduction in the number and proportion of children aged 1-4 years (from 18% of the looked after population in 2012 to 13% in 2016), and a slight decrease in the number and proportion of children aged under 1 year (from 6% in 2012 to 5% in 2016).

In Herefordshire the numbers of looked after children aged 0-4 and aged 16+ have remained relatively stable since 2013/14. There have been significant increases in the age groups 5-10 and 11-15 with total numbers rising from 64 and 73 in 2013/14 up to 84 and 89 respectively in 2015/16. In view of the ages of these children they are more likely to remain in care long term than those admitted to care at a younger age.

The care planning for children in these middle age brackets is different to those in the youngest and oldest age brackets. As a Service more attention is required on achieving permanence for children within these age groups.



Ethnicity

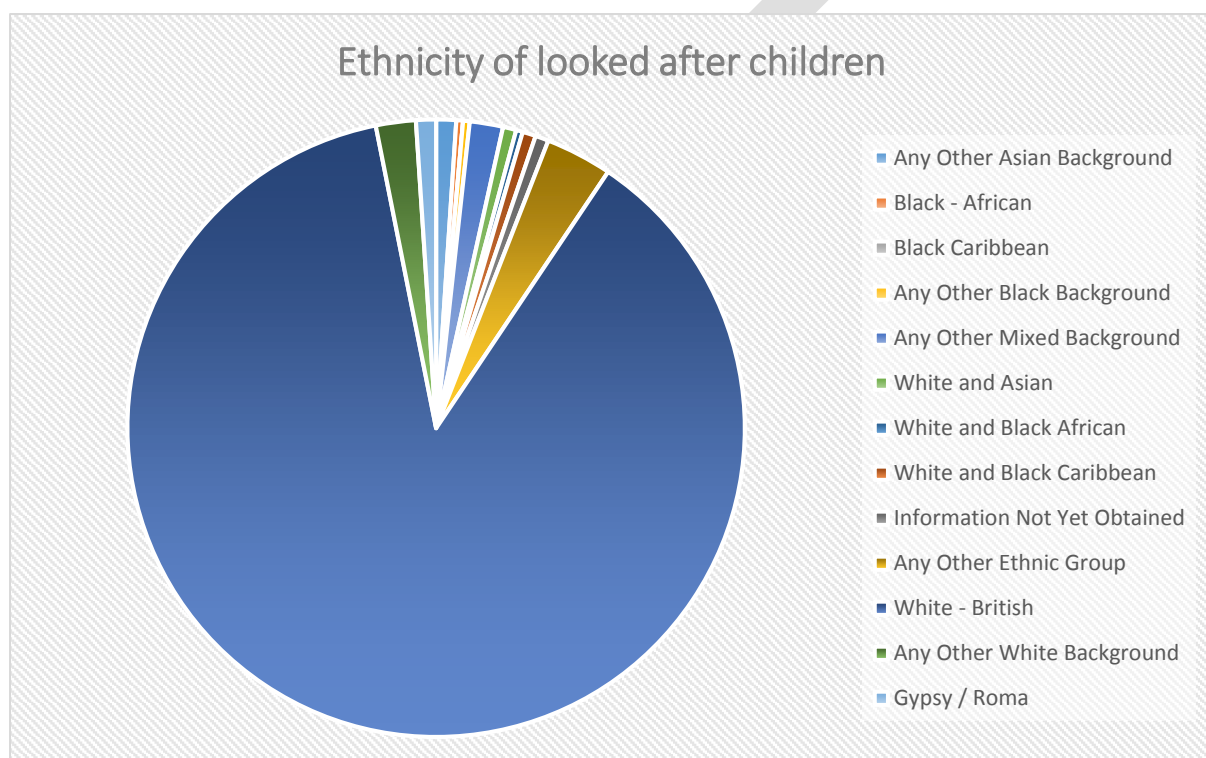
As the chart below demonstrates looked after children are overwhelmingly White British with only very small numbers of children from other ethnic backgrounds. In 2011 94% of the population within Herefordshire was White British with 4% White: Other. This group was growing at the fastest rate and represented the increased number of migrants from Eastern Europe. The number of children from this background within the LAC population was 3% and so it is reasonable to expect these numbers to increase.

The data indicates that 3 children are from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller background. However those who know families were able to identify 18 looked after children whose families would identify themselves as Gypsy, Roma or Travellers. It seems likely that children and families ethnicity is being

recorded on the basis of their appearance to professionals rather than by being asked how they identify themselves and therefore there is a risk that needs arising from cultural identity are being missed.

The LAC population includes 5 children who were unaccompanied asylum seeking children and this number is set to rise during the next couple of years. This will impact upon the ethnic mix of the looked after population as a whole.

Herefordshire is not well placed to meet the demands of a diverse looked after children population. Social Care staff have often have very limited experience of working with children and families from diverse backgrounds and this is true of other services within the community.



Children with a disability

There are 31 looked after children allocated within the Children with Disabilities team. However data on children with a disability is currently not consistently recorded on Mosaic meaning that analysing the numbers and needs of those children with a disability is quite difficult.

The Report of the Designated Doctor for looked after children reported on the 14th March 2017 that she was aware of:

- 11 children of primary school age attending Blackmarston School
- 11 children of secondary school age attending Barrs Court School
- 2 children in Herefordshire residential placement
- 2 children in out of County specialist residential placements.

Further work to understand the profile of our looked after children in relation to disability is required.

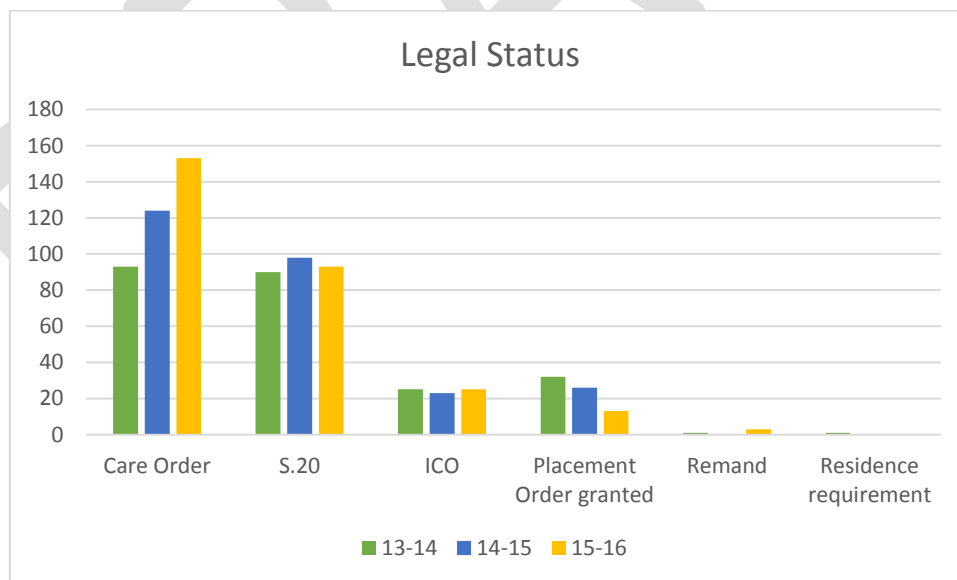
Legal status

Nationally the numbers and proportion of children looked after on a care order have continued to increase. In 2016, 65% of children looked after at 31 March were looked after under a care order, up from 61% in 2015 and up from 59% in 2012. Voluntary agreements under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989, which have fluctuated slightly over recent years, have dipped slightly during 2016 from 28% in 2015 to 27%.

In Herefordshire 53% of children were looked after under a care order and 32% of children were looked after under voluntary agreements in 2016. A review of children looked after under voluntary agreements was completed during Summer 2016 which identified 24 children out of 95 who required their care plans to be progressed or reviewed to ensure that they were being cared for under the correct legal framework. This work is now almost complete and the Local Authority has initiated care proceedings for a number of these children. Clearer systems are now in place to ensure an early review of legal status when a child is admitted to care and so it is likely that the proportions of children looked after under a Care Order will rise over the next few years.

Nationally Placement orders have shown some growth over the same time period with a decline more recently, from 12% in 2012 up to a high of 14% in 2013 and 2014 before falling to 8% in 2016. The National Adoption Leadership Board has linked this trend to the impact of two relevant court judgments, known as Re B and Re B-S. Herefordshire can observe a similar trend with just 5% of looked after children the subject of a Placement Order in 2016 which has reduced from 13% in 2014.

The graph below shows the changing trends in legal status of children who are looked after in Herefordshire. Although the number of children looked after voluntarily (Section 20) has remained relatively stable the number of children subject to a full care order has increased significantly and consequently the proportion of children looked after under Section 20 has reduced.



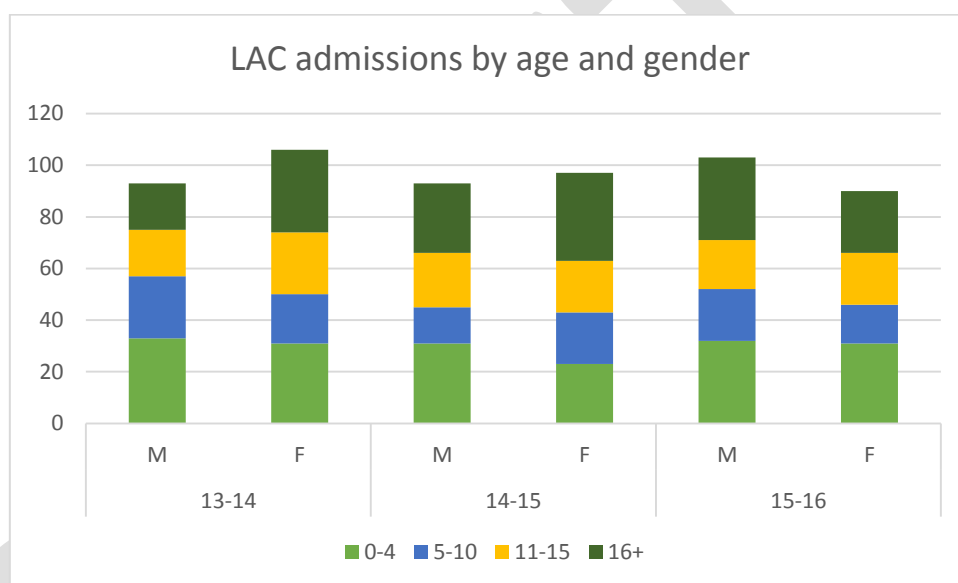
Admissions to care by age and gender

Nationally the percentage of children starting to be looked after aged 10 to 15 has remained constant at 29% over the last four years whilst the proportion aged 16 and over has increased steadily, from 12% in 2012 to 18% in 2016. In both cases this means the actual numbers have been increasing. The increase in admissions to care for those aged over 16 is due to the increased

numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children within the UK. Over the same period, the proportion aged under 1 has fallen from 21% in 2012 to 18% in 2016; the proportion aged 1 to 4 years has fallen from 20% in 2012 to 18% in 2016, whilst the proportion aged 5 to 9 years has remained stable at 17%.

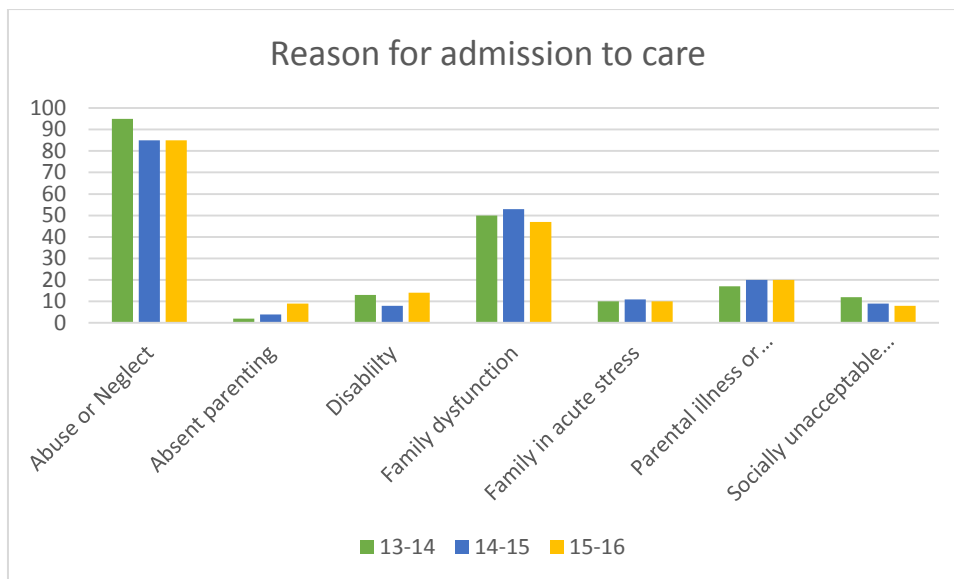
In Herefordshire the number of children admitted to care each year has remained relatively consistent with 126 admissions in 2013/14, 124 in 2014/15 and 121 in 2015/16. In 2016 the proportions of children admitted to care at different age groups do not differ significantly to those reflected nationally.

If the first 3 quarters of 2016/17 are used as a predictor to forecast admissions during quarter 4 then a total of 96 children would be admitted to care during the year which is a significant reduction on previous years. As overall numbers of children in care have not decreased this would indicate that fewer children are leaving care proportionately and so further focus on permanency planning for children is required to ensure that children do not remain in care longer than is necessary.



Reason for admission to care

As would be expected the principal reason for admissions to care are abuse or neglect. There is no evidence of any change in patterns to reasons for admission to care except in the increase of children admitted to care due to absent parents. This primarily relates to the increasing numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children and is expected to continue to rise over the next couple of years.



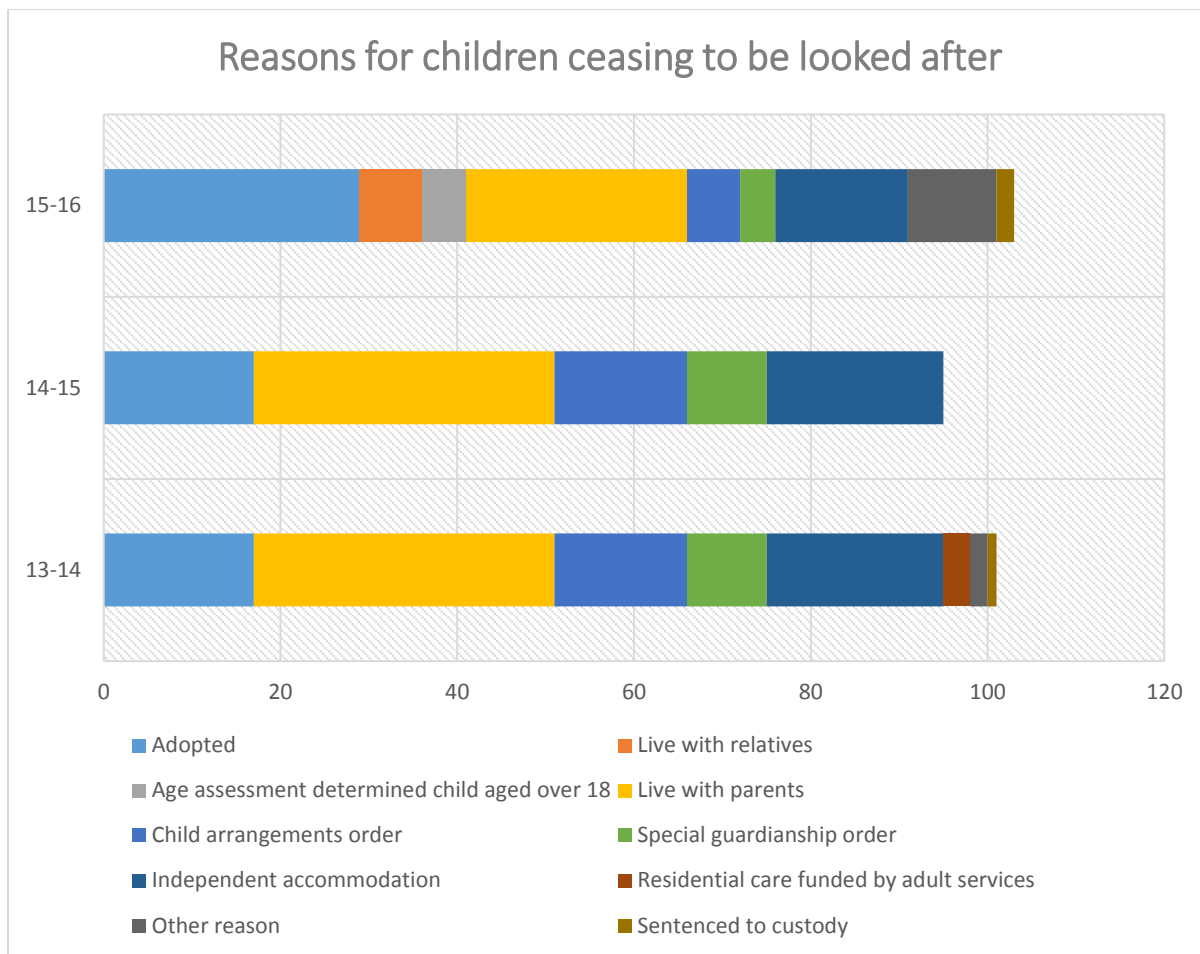
Reason for children ceasing to be looked after

Nationally in 2016, 2,480 children aged under 1 year ceased to be looked after. The percentage of under 1's ceasing to be looked after has increased from 5% in 2012 to 8% in 2014 where it remained stable to 2016. The proportion of children aged 1 to 4 ceasing to be looked after increased from 25% in 2012 to 28% in 2014, likely to reflect the large rise in adoptions during this period, but has since fallen steadily, back to 25% in 2016. In Herefordshire 28% of children ceased to be looked after due to having been adopted in 2016 which was higher than 17% in 2014 and 18% in 2015.

7,970 (25%) children ceased to be looked after on their 18th birthday which compares with just 10% in Herefordshire.

Of the 31,710 children ceasing to be looked after in 2016, 10,880 (34%) returned home to their parents or relatives. This compares with 31% who returned to live with parents or relatives in Herefordshire.

Nationally 3,830 children ceased care due to a special guardianship order (12%). This is an increase of 8% on 2015 and an increase of 78% on 2012. This compares with 4% of children who ceased care due to a special guardianship order in Herefordshire in 2016 which had decreased from 9% in 2014 and 2015. Further work is required to encourage and support carers who are long-term matched with children to pursue an application for a Special Guardianship Order where this is in the best interests of children.



Placements

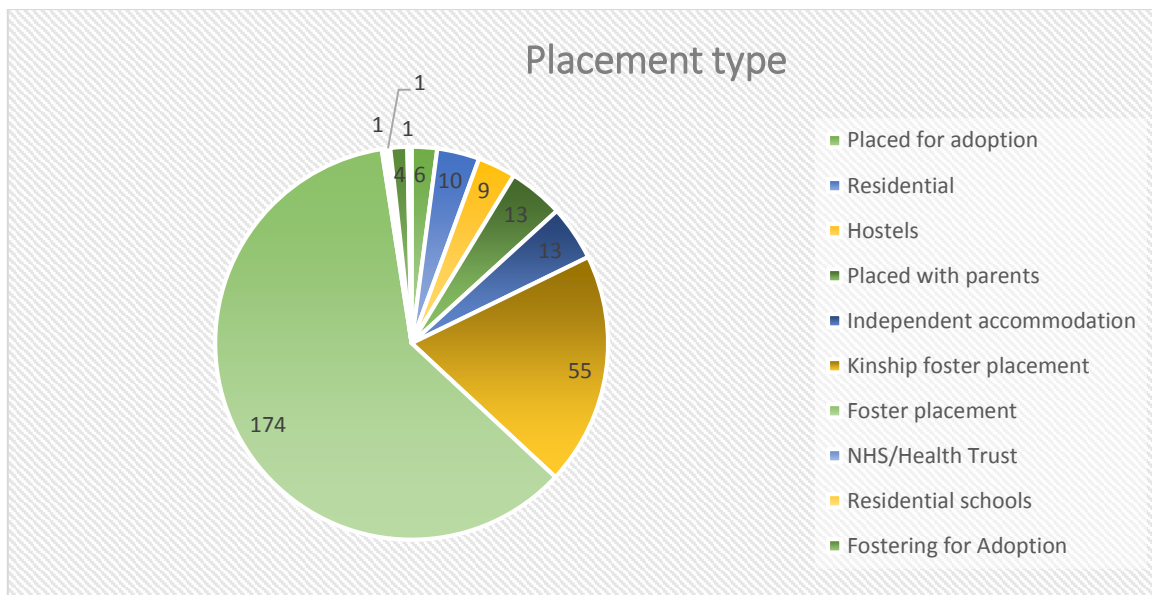
Placement type

Nationally 74% of looked after children were cared for in foster placements in 2016. This compares with 81% in Herefordshire. Of the looked after children who were in a foster placement nationally almost one in six (16%) were being fostered by a relative or friend as compared to 24% in Herefordshire. This demonstrates that Herefordshire is performing well in enabling children to live with families and with their own family where this is possible. The high numbers of children placed with relatives in comparison to national data is likely to relate to the low numbers of SGO's in comparison with other areas.

320 children (1%) were in placements where the carer is also an approved adopter (fostering to adopt) or where they were subject to concurrent planning and Herefordshire also had 1% of looked after children in foster to adopt placements.

In 2016, 5% of looked after children were placed with parents and this has remained stable over the last five years. Herefordshire also had 5% of looked after children placed with their parents.

Nationally 14% of children were living more than 20 miles from their local authority boundary. In Herefordshire this percentage has reduced from 23% in 2014 to 11% in 2016.



Placement stability

Nationally of all looked after children at 31 March 2016, 68% (48,200) had one placement during the year, 21% had two placements and 10% had three or more placements. In Herefordshire the number of children with three or more placements has reduced from 6% in 2014 to 3% in 2016.

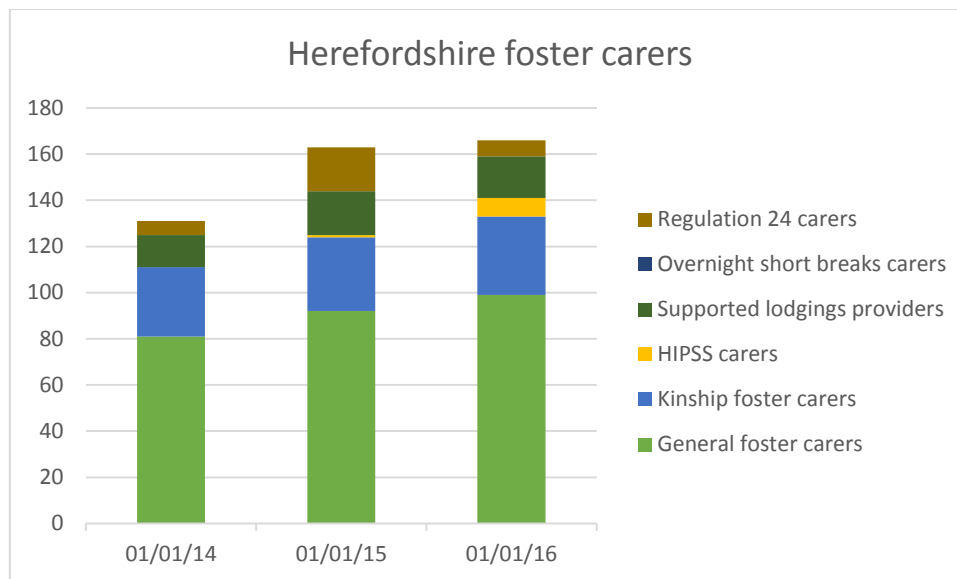
Children in stable placements of at least 2.5 years has improved significantly from 35% in 2013/14 to 70% in 2015/16. This compares with a national average in 2015/16 of 68%.

Approved foster carers

The number of Herefordshire foster carers and supported lodging providers has increased from 131 to 166 between 2014 and 2016. There has been a particular growth in the number of general foster carers from 81 to 99 during the period with the number of kinship carers remaining relatively stable. The number of Regulation 24 carers increased during 2014 but reduced again during 2015 indicating that a more planned approach to placements with family and friends is being achieved.

The Herefordshire Intensive Placement Support Service (HIPSS) commenced in September 2014 to provide placements for children and young people with the most complex needs as an alternative to residential care. The model supports carers and children and young people to help achieve long term placement stability within Herefordshire.

The overnight short break service was brought in-house from the 1st April 2016 and has been successful in recruiting carers.



HIPSS and TISS

Herefordshire Intensive Placement Support Service (HIPSS) and the Therapeutic Intervention and Support Service (TISS) were commissioned in 2014 to work jointly with our fostering service to recruit and support specific foster carers to provide placements as an alternative to residential care; to provide consultations for staff and foster carers and direct work services for children and young people. Since April 2015 HIPSS have worked with a total of 22 young people. Of these 5 have been supported to return to live with their birth family; 3 to live independently; 6 stepped down to foster placements of which 2 were kinship placements; 2 are in residential care and 5 young people are placed with HIPSS carers currently.

TISS has provided 74 consultations during 2016 regarding individual children, 35 consultations to the Edge of Care team and 1 to the 16+ team. A programme of regular consultations for 16+ team has been planned to continue into 2017. Evaluation forms completed by those attending consultations indicate that the service is highly valued by professionals particularly in understanding the behaviour of children and young people and planning approaches to support and manage their behaviour. TISS has also delivered training on a wide range of topics to Social Workers, foster carers, family support workers, independent reviewing officers, a training provider and SENCO team. Again evaluation shows this training to be highly valued by participants.

Children's views

As part of the LAC review process children are asked to complete a consultation form and/or participate in the review meeting. Although this enables children's views to be understood and responded to on an individual basis at the moment this information is not collected in a way that enables it to be collated or reported upon across our looked after population.

The Children in Care Council repeatedly state that they dislike consultation forms and so more effective methods of consultation that children and young people like need to be developed.

Currently very few children contribute to reviews of their foster carers.

Disruption of foster, SGO, adoption, re-admissions to care

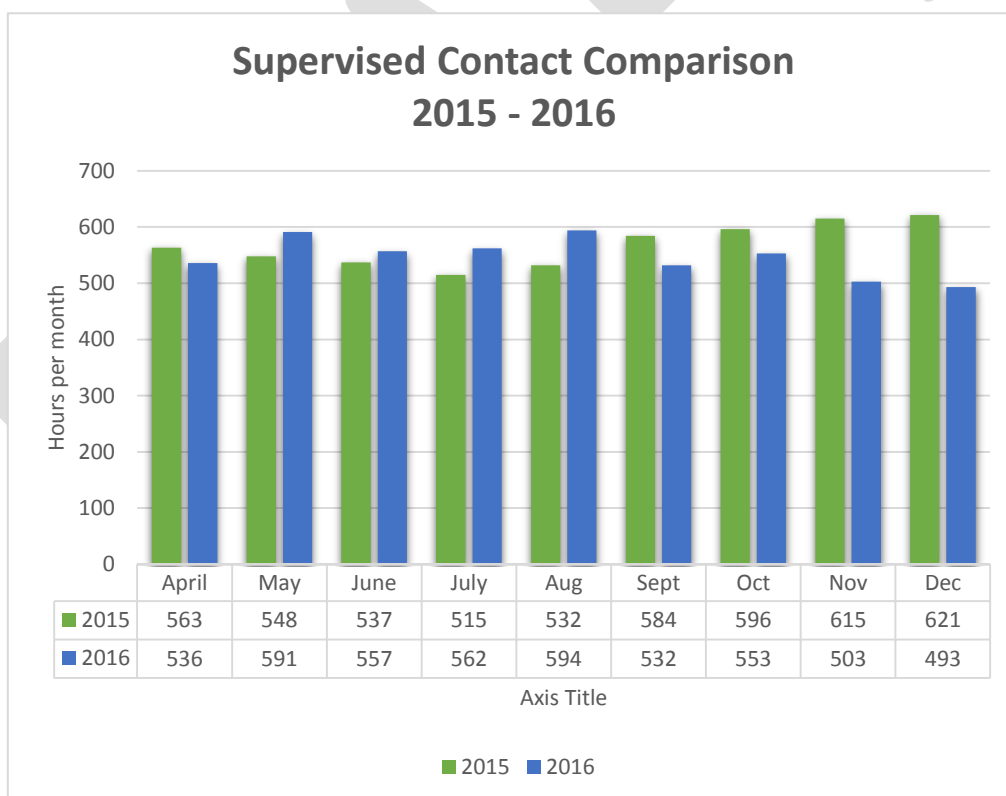
Herefordshire is performing well in relation to placement stability but more needs to be done to embed the process of consolidation meetings into practice to minimise the risk of placement disruptions.

During 2015 and 2016 there were 7 children from 4 families who were admitted to care due to a disruption in their SGO. The children varied in age at which the SGO's were made and ages that they disrupted.

No children experienced an adoption disruption during 2015/16 or in 2016/17 to date.

Contact

The bar chart below shows the contact figures for a 9 month period in 2015 compared with 2016. There has been a decrease in the number of contact hours provided compared with 2015, averaging out at 21 hours less contact per month in 2016. However, the service is a flexible one with obvious peaks and dips in referrals when the service has to respond to requests, especially when cases are in proceedings. The reduction in contact hours has been achieved through active challenge by the contact team in relation to ensuring that contact is at levels that are in the best interests of children; several long term cases coming to an end in 2016 and non-LAC cases being directed to private organisations if they need support in managing family contact.



In 2015 there were 12.5 FTE staff providing supervised contact within the service, this has now reduced to 8.4 FTE staff so the service is now working more efficiently. Transporting of children to and from contact sessions has drastically reduced as this was taking up valuable time when staff were not available to be supervising contacts. Also administrative processes have been reviewed and amended to ensure efficient use of time.

Views of service users

The Contact service regularly seeks feedback from children, young people, birth families, foster carers and social workers regarding the quality of the service provided. Feedback from children and young people is very mixed reflecting the emotional impact that contact has for them whilst feedback from adults is generally quite positive.

Workforce in Children's Social Care

Five teams are principally responsible for supporting looked after children: two Child Protection and court teams; the Looked after Children Team; the 16+ Team and the Safeguarding & Review Service. The Child Protection and Court teams have 23 full-time equivalent (FTE) social workers; LAC team has 9.8 FTE social workers; the 16+ Team has 5 FTE social workers and 7 personal advisors; the Safeguarding and Review Unit has 6.8 FTE Independent Reviewing Officers. The Child Protection and Court teams have experienced a lot of instability over the last couple of years with high numbers of agency staff and a high number of relatively newly qualified permanent Social Workers. Recruitment and retention is gradually improving. There are no vacancies in any of the other teams. Looked after Children can also be supported by the Children with Disability team. There are vacancies in this team which are currently the subject of an ongoing recruitment exercise. Across the social work workforce we have 80% of our posts filled with permanent staff, 11% occupied by agency staff and 9% unfilled.

Education

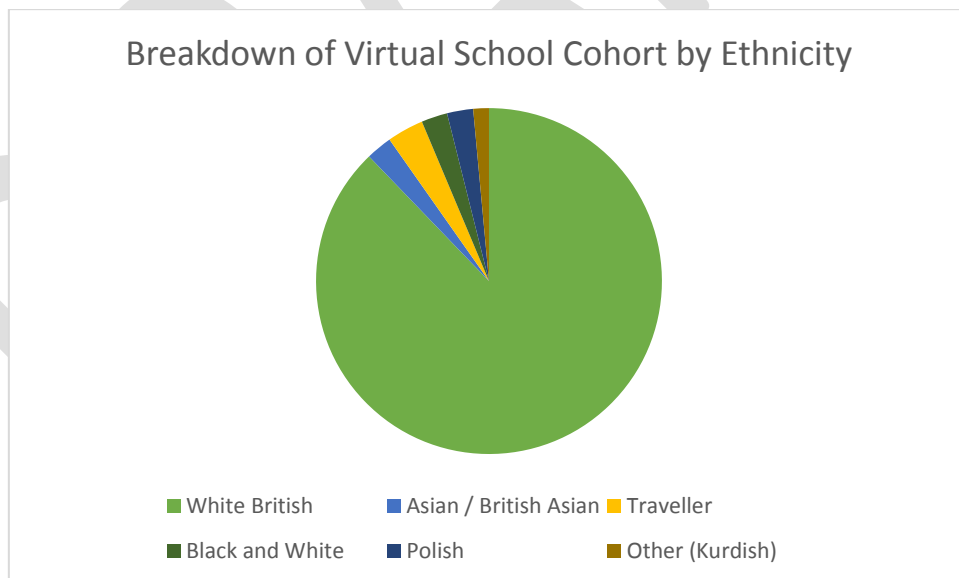
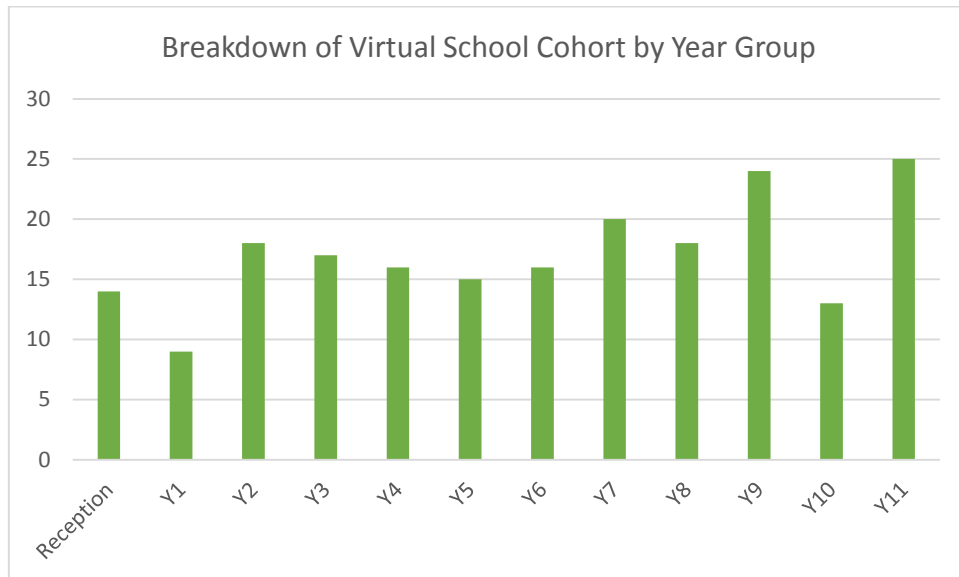
Virtual School roll and characteristics

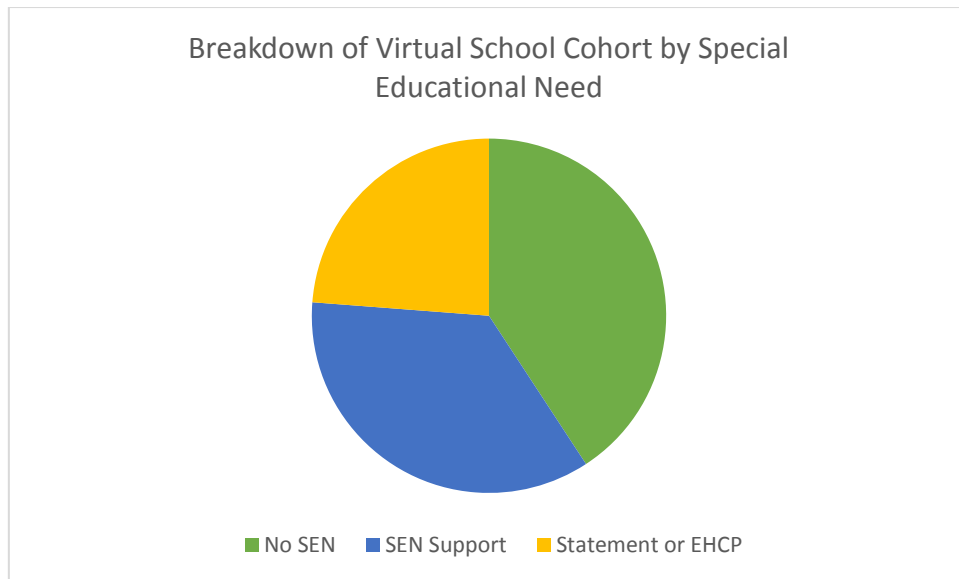
During 2015/16 there were 205 children supported by the Virtual School in Reception Year to Year 11. This is the highest number of children the Virtual School has ever supported. The number of pupils forming the cohort of having been looked after for 12 months as at 31 March in line with the Outcomes for Looked after Children Statistical First Release published each December was 124. A further 39 children in young people were supported by the Virtual school in either Early Years settings (19) or further education / training (20). There were 15 young people who were attending education in alternative provision.

Research completed by the Rees Centre regarding the key factors contributing to the low educational outcomes of young people in care in secondary schools in England reveals that controlling for all factors, the following contribute to the educational progress of young people in care:

- Time in care. Young people who have been in longer-term care do better than those 'in need' but not in care, and better than those who have only been in short term care – so it appears that care may protect them educationally.
- Placement changes. Each additional change of care placement after age 11 is associated with one-third of a grade less at GCSE.
- School changes. Young people in care who changed school in Years 10 or 11 scored over five grades less than those who did not.
- School absence. For every 5% of possible school sessions missed due to unauthorised school absences, young people in care scored over two grades less at GCSE.
- School exclusions. For every additional day of school missed due to fixed-term exclusions, young people in care scored one-sixth of a grade less at GCSE.
- Placement type. Young people living in residential or another form of care at age 16 scored over six grades less than those who were in kinship or foster care.

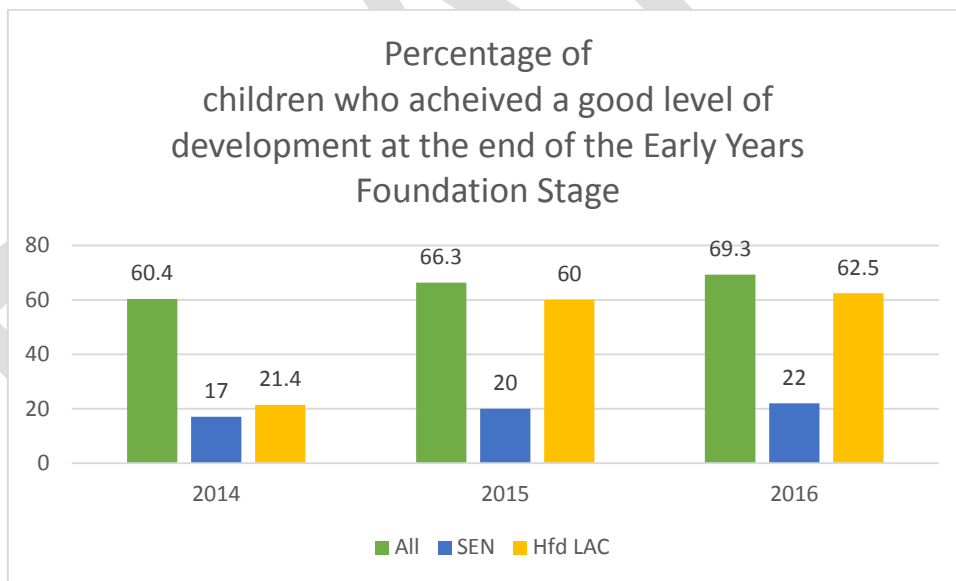
- School type. Young people who were in special schools at age 16 scored over 14 grades lower in their GCSEs compared to those with the same characteristics who were in mainstream schools. Those in pupil referral units with the same characteristics scored almost 14 grades lower.
- Educational support. Young people report that teachers provide the most significant educational support for them but teachers suggest that they need more training to do this effectively.



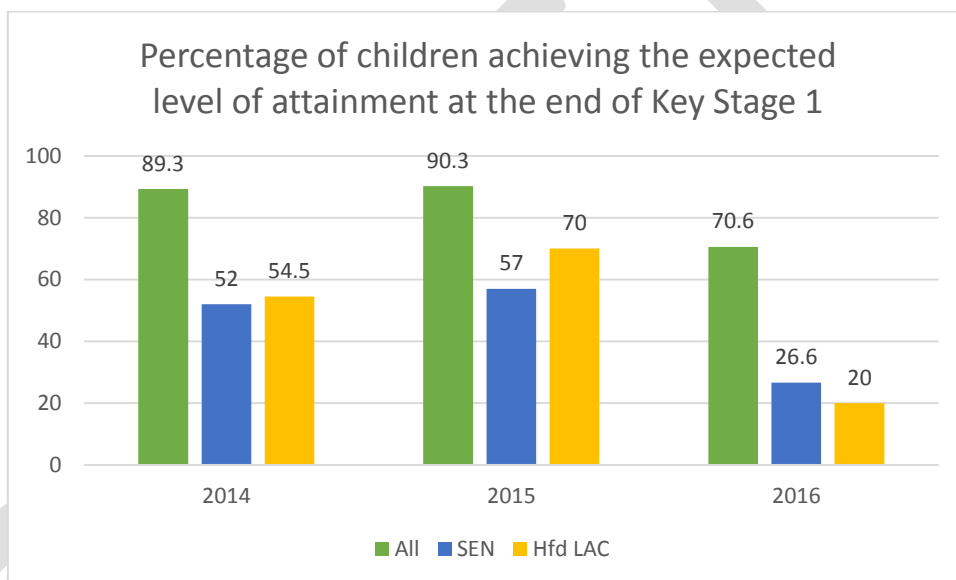
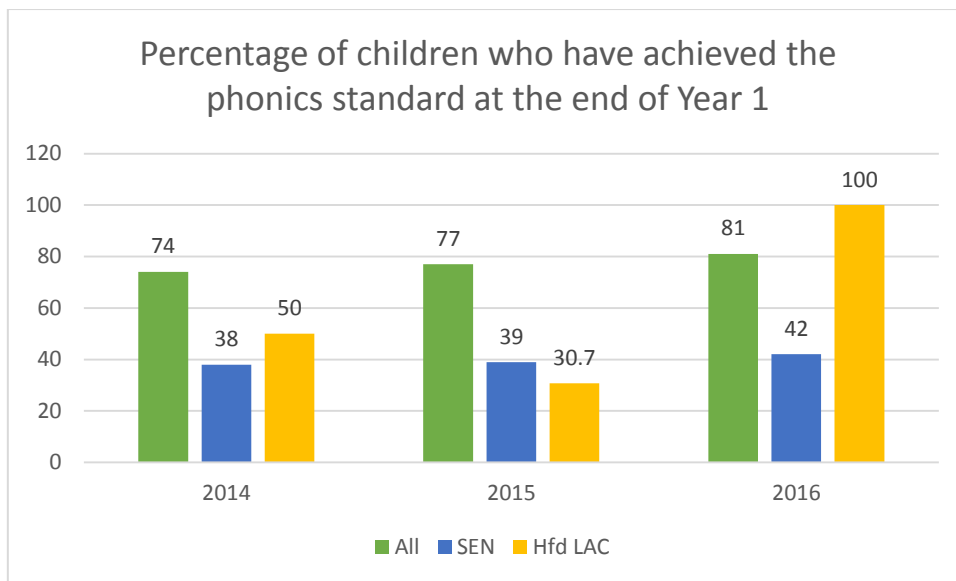


Educational achievement

There remains a significant gap in achievement between looked after children in Herefordshire and the general population. The graphs below indicate that although progress is narrowing across most key stages there is still a large gap. Achievements at Key Stage 4 are only slightly above those children with Special Educational Needs.



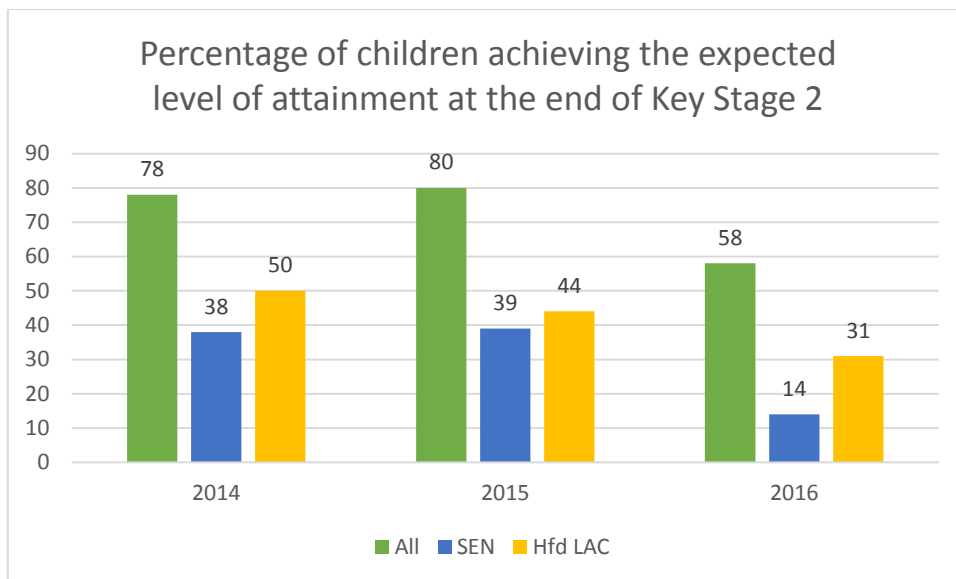
It is encouraging to see that looked after children out performed their peers in achieving the phonic standard at the end of Year 1 in 2016 although in levels of attainment they were significantly poorer.



At Key Stage 2 the 2016 cohort contained 13 children who had been looked after for 12 months at the 31st March 2016. Measures for 2 of these children was unavailable as they were educated in Wales. These children still count in our data as outlined below.

Table showing percentage of children achieving expected level in reading, writing and maths at the end of KS2

	Herefordshire LAC cohort size	All non-LAC (England)	All non-LAC Herefordshire pupils	Herefordshire LAC	Gap nationally (% points)	Gap locally (% points)
2015	14	80%	80%	44%	36	36
2016	13	53%	52%	31%	22	21



At Key Stage 4 the difference between Herefordshire LAC and all non-LAC nationally has reduced from 38.4 percentage points to 29.8 percentage points.

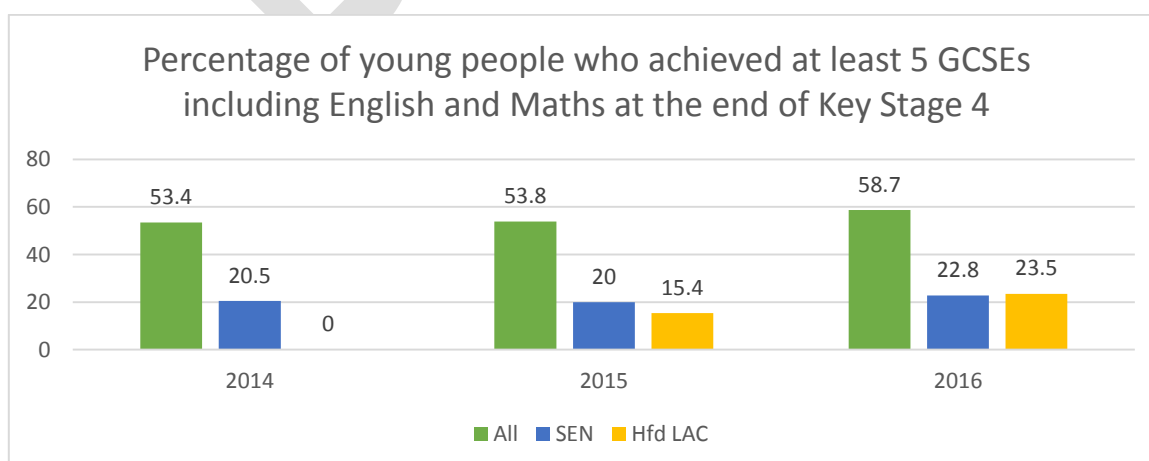
The difference between Herefordshire LAC and Herefordshire non-LAC is larger than the gap between Herefordshire LAC and non-LAC children nationally.

This may be accounted for as 8 (47.1%) of the cohort were not educated in Herefordshire schools.

This would indicate that Herefordshire's looked after children have diminished the gap this year.

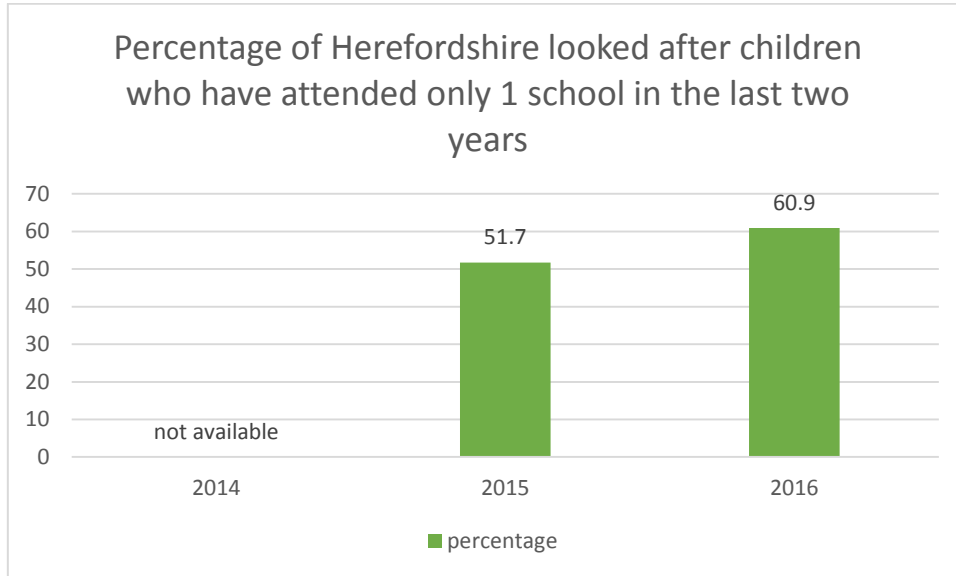
Table showing percentage of children achieving 5 GCSES grade C or above including English and maths at the end of KS4

	Herefordshire LAC Cohort Size	All non-LAC (England)	All non-LAC Herefordshire children	Herefordshire LAC	Gap nationally (% points)	Gap locally (% points)
2015	18	53.2%	57.5%	15.4%	38.4	42.1
2016	17	52.8%	57%	23%	29.8	34

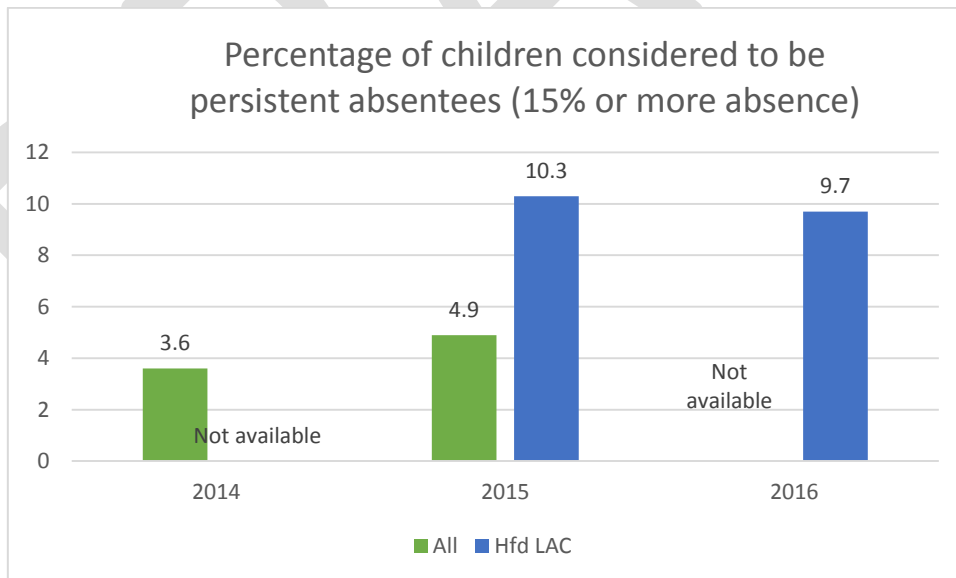


School moves

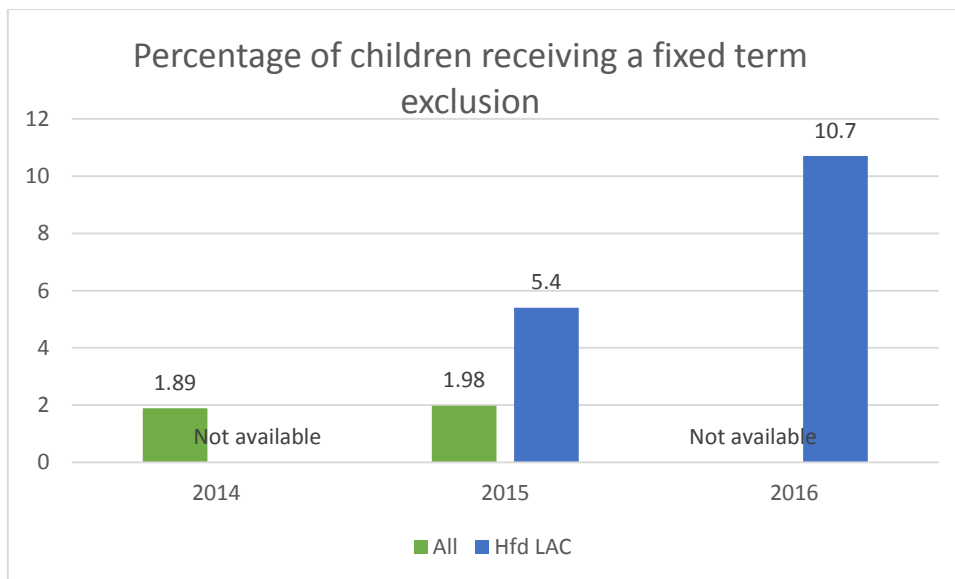
The number of looked after children who had a school move in the last two years has reduced. School moves are almost always as a direct result of a placement move. Therefore if placement stability improves the number of school moves will decrease. Stability in education is directly related to an improvement in attainment.



School attendance & exclusion data



Although this data is incomplete there is evidence of a significant rise in fixed term exclusions for looked after children during 2016 although this is thought to be due to having more accurate data.



Health

Health assessments and routine health care

The LAC health team commit to completing health assessments for children placed in neighbouring local authorities wherever possible to ensure continuity. Compliance with timescales for completion of health assessments is poor whether children are placed in our outside of County. For Initial Health Assessments this is largely due to delays in notification by Social Care. Additionally there are inaccuracies in the quality of the data reporting which has been prioritised for improvement.

The numbers of children registered at GP's, having all relevant immunisations and dental checks increases between the initial and review health assessments indicating an improved attention to healthcare of children once they become looked after.

Targeted work to improve access to 'hard to reach- high risk' young people, particularly those in the 16+ age group has been effective, with a substantial reduction in the numbers of young people declining a health assessment.

Health issues

During 2015/16 there were 23 young people who were identified as abusing alcohol, tobacco and/or other substances. Health promotion work is undertaken during each Health Assessment as appropriate, with referral or signposting to relevant agencies when needed.

Nationally 4% of looked after children were identified as having a substance misuse problem during the year.

A snapshot survey of young people open to the 16+ team was completed in July 2016. Out of the 136 young people there were 25 who were pregnant and/or parents.

Currently systems do not enable us to have an understanding of the interventions offered or the impact that they have across our looked after children population.

The LAC health team has targeted completion of SDQs in 2015-16 resulting in an improvement in return rate for SDQs from 66% in 2014-15 to 77% in 2015-16. Although focus to date has been on improving completion there is little evidence of the SDQ's being used effectively to inform care planning.

On 31st March 2016 one looked after child was placed in a hospital.

A report prepared by CAMHS in March 2017 stated that the total number of LAC on CAMHS caseload was 31 including 5 with Learning Disabilities. CAMHS were unable to differentiate the data between Herefordshire looked after children and those placed from out of County although about 25% were placed by other local authorities. The data does not include Herefordshire children placed out of County.

- The caseload has an even split between male and female
- Most LAC (26) are White British or White other background
- 79% of the LAC caseload has been with CAMHS for a year or less
- The 13% who have been on caseload for more than 3 years are likely to be for regular medication reviews
- Of the discharges between April 2016 and February 2017 (74) most LAC had been on the caseload for 7 – 12 months
- The pattern of referrals for LAC is unpredictable with 10 in April 2016, 12 in July 2016 and 6 in February 2017; there are fewer referrals in September (3) and December 2016 (1).
- 85.5% of LAC initial referrals are seen within 4 weeks (CAMHS KPI); there can be delays as social workers cannot always provide essential information or attend key appointments
- 96% of LAC waiting for treatment are seen within 18 weeks (CAMHS KPI) with 74% seen within 8 weeks.

Health Key Performance Indicators 2015-16

Children in Care Team WVT	2015-16
Total Statutory Health Assessments Completed on Herefordshire CYP	288
Refused Medical	2
SHA all Hfd Children including those placed OOC done elsewhere	331
SHA Hfd Children placed OOC completed by Hfd	6
SHA Hfd Children placed OOC completed externally	35
IHA's Attended	92
IHA's in timescale	24 (26%)
RHA's Attended	196
RHA within timescales	60 (31%)
DNA Rate Overall	Not available
Immunisation up to date total	247 (86%)
Immunisation up to date IHA	71

Immunisation up to date RHA	176
Compliant dental KPI total	211 (73%)
dental compliant IHA	52
Dental compliant RHA	159
Compliant Registered with G.P. Total	268 (93%)
GP Registration IHA	80
GP registration RHA	188
Substance misuse identified in over 9 years	23
SDQ recorded (RHA only)	108 / 140 77%
Need for CAMHS identified	Not available
Developmental delay identified in under 5 year old	15
Abbreviations:-	
SHA - Statutory Health Assessment	DNA - Did not Attend
IHA - Initial Health Assessment	KPI - Key Performance Indicators
RHA - Review Health Assessment	SDQ's - Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire
OOO - Out of County	

Offending

“In Care, Out of Trouble” an independent review chaired by Lord Laming published in 2016 found that 94% of looked after children in England and Wales do not get into trouble with the law. However children in care are significantly over-represented within the criminal justice system.

Nationally 5% of looked after children (aged 10+) were convicted or subject to a final warning or reprimand during 2015/16.

The Youth Offending Team monitor and report on the numbers of looked after children that are on orders to them within their performance reports. This data includes children who are placed by other Local Authorities in Herefordshire and Herefordshire’s looked after children placed in County. It does not include Herefordshire looked after children who are placed outside of the County. On the 31st March 2016 there were 3 Herefordshire looked after children who were open to the Youth Offending team which when reviewed again in January 2017 had risen to 8.

Children’s social care do not currently have a system that enables monitoring and reporting of looked after children who offend.

It has been agreed that the Youth Offending team will complete a more detailed analysis of offending within this small group so that an understanding of how a child’s care status and offending behaviour are linked for our own children. It is planned that this will be presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel early in 2017.

A regional protocol to reduce offending and criminalisation of children in care has recently been agreed based on restorative justice principles. The impact of this protocol will need to be monitored and will require training for foster carers and children's social care staff if the full potential of the protocol is to be realised.

Participation

In Herefordshire 60% of children and young people participated in their reviews during 2015/2016. Participation includes children and young people attending and/or contributing to their review, either themselves and/or with the support of an advocate. Of the 40% who did not participate in their review, 23% were aged under 4. The remaining cohort of 17% are reported not to have attended or contributed to their review, however it is not possible from data reporting to understand the age range of this group or the reasons for their non-participation.

A part-time participation worker is employed to support all children and young people's participation across Herefordshire. This worker facilitates the Children in Care Council (CICC) that meets monthly and is regularly attended by a committed group of children and young people. The CICC is regularly attended by 10 young people which represents approximately 3% of the LAC population. The CICC is represented at the Corporate Parenting panel.

The CICC have completed a self-assessment of the effectiveness of themselves and have an action plan to address areas that they would like to improve upon.

A survey of views of all looked after children is planned to take place during March 2017. The findings will help inform priorities for the Corporate Parenting strategy.

Complaints and compliments

Children's Social Care received a total of 36 complaints between April 2015 and December 2016 that related to the LAC team or 16+ team. Currently it's not possible to analyse data based on children's legal status so it is likely that other complaints regarding looked after children were received by other teams. Of the complaints received 11 were directly from children or young people. The main themes within complaints were about the quality of service received and/or poor communication.

Compliments have only been collated since July 2016 and again do not include looked after children who are allocated to teams other than LAC and 16+. In this period 22 compliments were received – 19 relating to the 16+ team.

Advocacy and Independent Visitor service

NYAS are commissioned to provide issue based advocacy, support with complaints and an independent visitor service for looked after children.

Their 2015/16 report stated that 21 children and young people supported by them were looked after and 17 were care leavers. Since July 2016 quarterly reports from NYAS includes specific reporting on looked after children which will enable a better understanding of any themes or learning arising from the input of NYAS. Based on the one quarter's data available the main issues that looked after children and young people requested support with were regarding contact with family, issues with their placement, concerns about support for leaving care, concerns about the relationship with their Social Worker and promotion of their general views and feelings.

In the last quarter 20 children and young people had the support of an independent visitor. Five of these were children and young people living out of County. Feedback from children and young people using this service is very positive.

Safeguarding

A monthly audit programme is completed by managers in Children's Social care. During 2015/16 case file audits were completed for 44 looked after children. The audit format used for looked after children not in the 16+ team specifically asks if the child is safe. 33 of these audits were completed during the year and in 30 the child was assessed to be safe, in 1 case this section had not been completed and in a further 2 the young people were presenting with high risk behaviours but carers were assessed to be managing risks well with support from the professional network.

A further 11 case file audits were completed during the period on young people within the 16+ service. This audit tool does not specifically ask about safety. General comments within the audits indicate the difficulties of working with this age group who often make decisions that place themselves at risk. It is evident that the lack of a coherent risk management tool is impacting upon the team's ability to consistently assess and manage risky behaviours.

Children who go missing

Nationally there were 8,670 children who were recorded as missing at least once in 2016. This corresponds to 9% of the cohort of 100,810 children who were looked after at some point during the year. These children had 43,000 missing incidents which is an average of 5 missing incidents per child who went missing. 4,430 children were away from their placement without authorisation in the year. There were 17,560 incidents of children being away without authorisation, an average of 4 per child.

Most missing incidents were short, 89% lasted two days or less and the median number of days per missing incident was 1 day. However we need to be cautious interpreting this figure as the duration of missing incidents is collected in days so a child who went missing for a short period late one evening, but was found early the next morning would be counted as being missing for 1 day even if they were only missing for a few hours. Half of missing incidents were by children who were placed in children's homes or hostels, and a further 35% of incidents were by children in foster placements.

In Herefordshire during the 12 month period October 2015 to October 2016 there were a total of 412 missing episodes recorded of which 106 related to Herefordshire looked after children. Of these, 67 return from missing interviews were completed for Herefordshire's looked after children. During the early part of the year interviews were only offered on "eligible" children. The approach has now changed and all children are offered a return interview. On some occasions a child may refuse an interview or be missing so regularly that interviews are not completed prior to them being missing again. One looked after child accounted for 16 missing episodes between April and July 2016.

This data does not include Herefordshire's looked after children placed out of County. The numbers of children placed out of County that go missing is likely to be significantly under reported as we are reliant upon the host Local Authority informing us. Although the child's Social Worker would be informed the methods of recording this information are inconsistent. In these cases the child's Social Worker is responsible for completing the return from missing interview. The system does not yet enable collation and analysis of data for this cohort of looked after children.

Further work is required to develop consistent recording practices for children placed out of County so that reliable data can be collated and themes addressed. Reducing the number of children placed out of County would further reduce the risk.

Children at risk of sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) risk assessments were completed on a total of 85 children between October 2015 and October 2016. Of these children 20 were looked after. In addition to these the CSE co-ordinator is aware of 3 looked after children placed out of County who are at medium or high risk of CSE. However, similarly to the data on missing episodes for children placed out of County this data is unreliable.

There is a need for further work to develop data collection so that it is possible to reliably report on the extent to which children in care are at risk of CSE and to ensure appropriate action is taken regarding the particular needs of looked after children.

Children subject to child protection processes

In the last 12 months 31 looked after children were the subject of a strategy meeting after their admission to care. Of these a Section 47 investigation was completed for 11 children. 10 of the strategy meetings took place within a few days of the child being admitted to care. This is a likely indicator that the reason for the strategy discussion was in response to events prior to their admission to care rather than due to events after they became looked after. Of the 11 children who were the subject of a Section 47 investigation 4 were completed within a few days of their admission to care.

Preparing for independence

Keeping In Touch

Nationally 23,000 (87%) of 19, 20 and 21 year old care leavers were in touch with the local authority, up from 86% in 2015 and up from 82% in 2014. A further 8% were not in touch, for 3% the young person no longer required services and for 2% the young person refused contact. The percentage 'in touch' varies by age; 90% of 19 year olds were in touch, compared to 88% of 20 year olds and 83% of 21 year olds.

In Herefordshire 69% of care leavers were "in touch" at the age of 19. This data was reported manually as data was not recorded in a way that enabled it to be extracted from Mosaic at that time. Clearly this is significantly below that achieved nationally. At this point it is difficult to be certain whether this is an accurate reflection of performance or not.

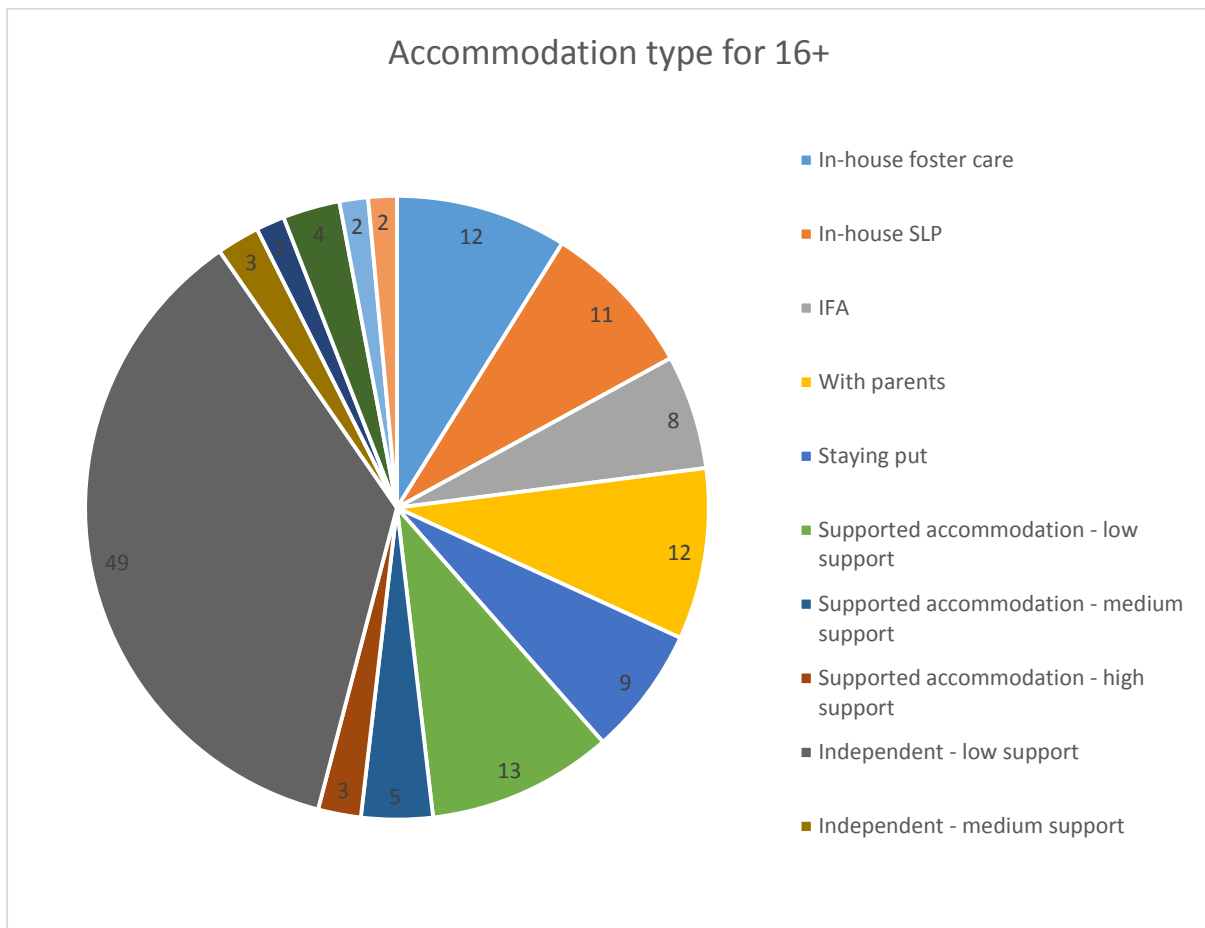
At the end of 2016 90% of care leavers had a Pathway plan in Herefordshire which was the same as 2015.

Accommodation

Nationally 21,500 of former care leavers (83%) aged 19, 20 or 21 years were in accommodation considered suitable, a further 1,780 (7%) were in accommodation considered unsuitable and for 2,770 (11%) the accommodation suitability wasn't known. The most common type of accommodation was living independently – 9,830 (37%) were living independently in 2016, down from 10,310 (39%) in 2015 and down from 10,640 (40%) in 2014. Over the same time period the proportion living with parents or relatives increased from 10% to 12%, the proportion living with former foster carers increased from 4% to 6% and the proportion in semi-independent transitional accommodation rose slightly from 9% to 10%. Based on data collected for the first time in 2016 and released as experimental statistics, 10% of 17 year old care leavers were recorded as being in custody, higher than for older care leavers where the figure was 3% for 18 year olds, and 4% for 19, 20 and 21 year olds.

A snapshot survey of need was completed in July 2016 for all cases open within Herefordshire’s 16+ team. Of the 136 young people being supported at the time it was assessed that their current accommodation provision was not meeting the need for 26 young people. However none of these young people required a higher level of support than what they were already receiving, except for two young people who were of no fixed abode.

The diagram below shows the type of accommodation young people were currently living in.



Of the 136 young people:

- 32 were assessed to have mental health needs
- 31 were assessed to have substance misuse problems
- 18 were assessed to have difficulties due to domestic abuse
- 28 were at risk of offending and/or anti-social behaviour
- 25 were pregnant and/or parents
- 62 were NEET
- 34 were assessed to be socially isolated
- 17 had some form of disability or disorder e.g. ADHD

16+ education, training and employment

Based on 2016 national data, of the 26,340 former care leavers aged 19, 20 and 21 years old 40% were not in employment, education or training (NEET), compared with 14% of all 19 to 21 year olds. The percentage of care leavers who are NEET has risen by one percentage point in each of the last 2

years. The increase is seen in the categories for NEET due to illness or disability, and NEET due to pregnancy or parenting. NEET due to other reasons has decreased, from 27% in 2014, to 25% in 2015, to 23% in 2016.

However, as well as an increase in the percentage of 19 to 21 year old care leavers who are NEET, there has also been a rise in the percentage of those who are in training and employment. The rise in both categories is a result of having information about a greater proportion of the population. In 2016 24% of former care leavers aged 19 to 21 years old were in training and employment, an increase from 23% in 2015 and up from 20% in 2014.

In Herefordshire data relating to whether care leavers are NEET has been recorded manually last year and prior to that was not recorded or reported accurately at all. At the end of March 2016 there were 50% of care leavers who were NEET – significantly higher than the national average.

Currently Herefordshire has 167 Eligible, Relevant, Former Relevant and Qualifying care leavers.

60.5% are in education, employment or training. 39.5% of the total number of care leavers are attending further education, the remaining 21% of care leavers are in training or employment

The general NEET figure for Herefordshire is 3.3%.

University

Thirteen care leavers are attending University. This is a higher number than has previously been achieved.

Apprenticeships

It is not known how many young people who hold an apprenticeship are looked after or care leavers. This is a gap in our knowledge and will be addressed in the strategy.

Care leavers who are parents

There are 25 care leavers who are also parents. Of these:

- 3 have children currently on child protection plans
- 5 have had children accommodated and subsequently adopted
- 1 has had a S47 investigation that was concluded with no further action
- 5 have children who were historically on child protection plans
- 10 have had social care involvement at a child in need level
- 1 has a child with no Social Care involvement at all

Leadership

In 2003 the DfES published 'If this were my child... A councillor's guide to being a good corporate parent' and all elected members in Herefordshire should receive a copy. An e-learning module regarding corporate parenting was available and completion was expected by all Councillors following the last elections however feedback indicates that the training was poor.

There is an established Corporate Parenting Panel which meets bi-monthly. The Panel is well attended by a committed group of Councillors, Officers and relevant partners. However the Panel does not have a Terms of Reference and has tended to focus upon receiving reports and information relating to Corporate Parenting responsibilities. The Panel is not able to evidence its impact in driving change and improvement.

As a broader Council there is good will and support for Corporate Parenting however it is difficult to see how this translates into action that delivers change and there are no initiatives in place currently that demonstrate commitment to supporting looked after children and care leavers e.g. work experience, apprenticeships or employment schemes.

References

Children looked after in England (including adoption) year ending 31 March 2016, Department for Education, SFR 41/2016, 29 September 2016

Local Authority Data Matrix 2016

The Educational Progress of Looked After Children in England: Linking Care and Educational Data
Judy Sebba, David Berridge, Nikki Luke, John Fletcher, Karen Bell, Steve Strand, Sally Thomas, Ian Sinclair, Aoife O'Higgins, 2015

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Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

5 July 2017

Work Programme

Meeting date: 5 July 2017		Despatch: 27 June	
Item	Description	Report Author	Comments/Outcome
Corporate Parenting Strategy 2017 – 2020	To review the draft Corporate Parenting Strategy. Provide comments and recommendations to cabinet prior to key decision scheduled for 20 July. Attached as appendices: Adoption Service and Fostering Service Annual Reports.	Gill Cox	
Briefing	Children and Young People Plan update.		
Meeting date: 2 October 2017		Despatch: 22 September	
Outcomes of casework peer review	To consider the outcomes and recommendations emerging from the peer review of social work casework. To consider if the outcomes provide assurance and agree any comments and recommendations to the council and cabinet.	Chris Baird	
Children's wellbeing self-assessment	To consider the outcomes and any recommendations emerging from the self-assessment exercise. To consider if the outcomes provide assurance and agree any comments and recommendations to the council and cabinet.	Adam Scott	
Herefordshire Children's Safeguarding board annual report	To consider the annual report and any recommendations contained within it. To assess if the report provides assurance and make comments and recommendations to the council and cabinet.	Sally Halls, Steve Ecclestone	

Training	Children's Wellbeing Statutory responsibilities Children's mental health to include identification of autism, Asperger's syndrome, dyslexia and behavioural problems.	CAMHS - CCG	
Briefing	Early Years – Health Visitors and School Nurses.		
Meeting date: 4 December 2017		Despatch: 24 November	
Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	To seek the views of the committee on the draft medium term financial strategy (MTFS) 2017-21 and the budget proposals for 2017-18 relating to Children's Wellbeing.	Audrey Harris	
Outcomes of Safeguarding Peer Review	To consider the final outcomes and provide comments/recommendations to the cabinet member.	Chris Baird	
Outcome of regional peer challenge of Herefordshire self-assessment	To consider the outcomes of the regional peer challenge and provide comments/recommendations to the cabinet member.	Adam Scott	
Training	LGA peer – talk regarding CYP scrutiny		
Briefing	Children's Bereavement Services Corporate Parenting Strategy implementation	Contract Gill Cox	
Meeting date: 22 January 2018		Despatch: 12 January	
School Examination Performance	To consider school performance of summer 2017 and make recommendations to cabinet on how the effectiveness of the school improvement framework and strategy could be enhanced.	Lisa Fraser	
Children and Young People Plan	To consider the draft Children and Young People Plan.	Chris Baird	
Briefing	Children's dental health and services	Lyndsey McHardy	

Meeting date: 16 April 2018		Despatch: 6 April	
TBC	TBC		

No Background Papers

