

Unaccompanied and separated children and young people

22nd June 2021

Key Messages

- Croydon could absorb the needs of 0.07% of the child population into the existing service like any other Local Authority. 66 children would equate to just over 4 social workers
- Croydon needs to accept no new under 18's until numbers naturally reduce. The NTS needs to be mandatory
- The consequence of 3 or 4 times above the 0.07% over many years is the high number of care leavers who were formally unaccompanied children, where the gap in grant funding is greatest
- If additional savings have to be made this will compromise the council's ability to provide safe statutory services to all children and families
- Improved efficiency for children looked after and care leavers' accommodation will reduce the costs of care for all children and young people. However this is unlikely to have an impact in the short term

Unaccompanied children

- The Home Office Asylum Intake Unit at Lunar House is a national point of entry for unaccompanied children, and Croydon has taken responsibility for the large number of unaccompanied children presenting there for many years
- Croydon has provided good care and support, building up practice expertise with a regional and national reputation
- The National Transfer Scheme (NTS) is a voluntary arrangement administered by the Home Office to share responsibility for unaccompanied children fairly across the country. The NTS sets a threshold of 0.07% of a borough's child population. In Croydon this would be 66 children
- For at least 15 years the majority of London boroughs have agreed to a voluntary pan-London rota. Administered by Croydon and supported by London Asylum Seekers Consortium hosted in Westminster, participating boroughs accept over 16s arriving at Lunar House, with Croydon taking responsibility for under 16's
- The Home Office grant is not intended to be full cost recovery. It is assumed that the needs of a relatively small number of children (up to 0.07% of the child population) can be absorbed into the 'business as usual'
- The funding gap increases as children turn 18; former unaccompanied children make up almost 60% of care leavers

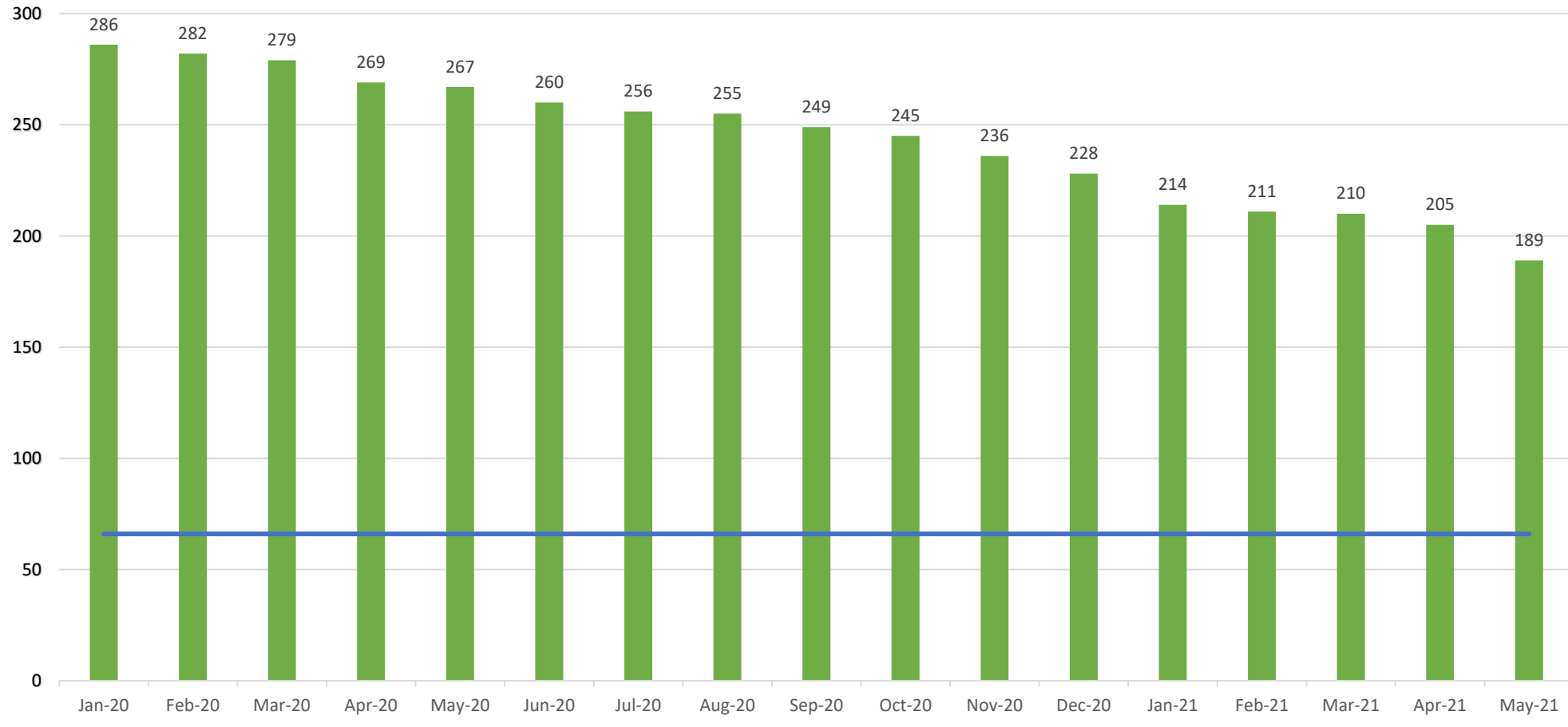
Unaccompanied asylum seeking children

Local Authority	Population of 0-17 year olds ONS mid-2019 estimate	Unaccompanied asylum seeking children looked after at 31 March 2019-20	% of 0-17 population who are UASC	Government 0.07% quota	Number of UASC +/- Government 0.07% quota
Croydon	94,931	270	0.28%	66	204
Portsmouth	43,756	99	0.23%	31	68
Westminster	48,791	89	0.18%	34	55
Islington	42,424	67	0.16%	30	37
Solihull	47,549	69	0.15%	33	36
Hammersmith & Fulham	37,032	51	0.14%	26	25
Billingdon	74,077	102	0.14%	52	50
Liverpool	96,052	130	0.14%	67	63
Kent	343,839	426	0.12%	241	185
Camden	52,407	52	0.10%	37	15
Manchester	122,914	115	0.09%	86	29
Waltham Forest	66,757	57	0.09%	47	10
Lambeth	62,085	52	0.08%	43	9
Newham	86,068	72	0.08%	60	12
Haringey	59,847	47	0.08%	42	5
Brent	77,687	61	0.08%	54	7
Enfield	84,309	64	0.08%	59	5

Source: DfE LAC statistics 2019/20 ONS Mid Year Estimates

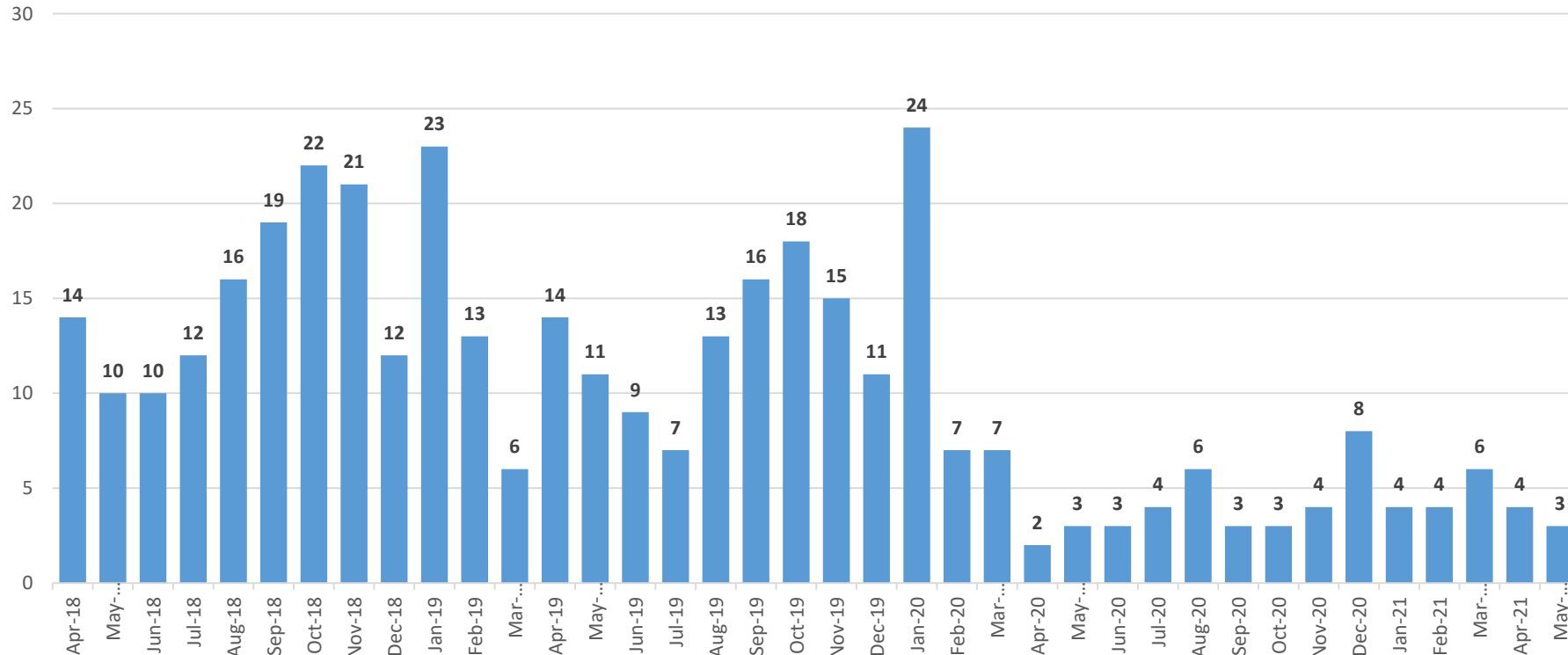
Unaccompanied children – numbers in care over time

Unaccompanied Children numbers
January 2020- May 2021



Unaccompanied children – monthly new arrivals

Number of new CLA who are UASC Apr 18 to May 21



Support for Croydon from London and central government

- Out borough placements – boroughs have agreed to the transfer of care arrangements for 21 children
- Extension of the pan-London rota to under 16's for 3 months – 26 boroughs have agreed from 1st June 2021
- 5 children transferred to councils outside of London through the NTS by the Home Office
- Secondment of the highly successful age assessment team to the Home Office for a year in the first instance to work on a regional footing
- Financial contribution from the Home Office to the duty social work presence at Lunar House
- Virtual immigration meetings to expedite decisions for children and young people
- Child-centred planning and collaborative working across London boroughs where there is a change of care responsibilities

Consequences for all children and young people in Croydon

- The capitalisation direction means Croydon has to balance the budget. Additional savings would need to be found on top of the existing MTFS savings
- The projected budget gap of over £4m is the equivalent of the over 70 social workers
- This level of saving would compromise the council's ability to discharge its statutory duties to all children, young people and families in Croydon

The consequence of care, in summary...

Scenario: reduction of 40 UASC and no new entrants	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total
Cases:				
< 18	170	81	66	
> 18	476	522	509	
Net cost £'000:	5,246	5,652	5,507	16,405
Net effect of case reduction	-150	-732	-1,242	-2,124
Age Assessment Team	-321	-69		-391
Daily Home Office Duty	-204	-204	-204	-613
Net cost £'000:	4,571	4,646	4,061	13,278

The consequence of care, in detail...

Scenario: reduction of 40 UASC and no new entrants	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Cases:			
< 18	170	81	66
> 18	476	522	509
Costs £'	£'000	£'000	£'000
Staffing	1,947	2,032	1,996
Internal Recharges	1,568	1,462	1,396
Placements	13,596	9,675	8,337
Legal	585	640	625
Corporate Recharges	1,694	1,580	1,508
Sub-total Expenditure	19,390	15,389	13,863
Home Office Grant	-14,819	-10,743	-9,802
Net Expenditure	4,571	4,647	4,061

2019/20 Benchmarking – London Boroughs

London Borough	UASC numbers (Mar 2020)	2019/20 Costs / UASC		
		Unit Cost	Employee Cost	Other Costs
Southwark	44	135,091	-	135,091
Croydon	270	95,141	16,533	78,607
Greenwich	43	86,512	-	86,512
Havering	31	81,548	9,613	71,935
Wandsworth	37	74,459	12,919	61,541
Newham	72	72,611	4,694	67,917
Merton	29	69,931	-	69,931
Lewisham	49	63,429	9,510	53,918
Bromley	22	63,136	8,364	54,773
Richmond	24	54,458	-	54,458
Camden	52	52,712	404	52,308
Sutton	21	51,571	-	51,571
Harrow	37	51,189	14,297	36,892
Lambeth	52	50,673	6,192	44,481
Westminster	89	50,607	3,933	46,674
Hounslow	46	49,326	-	49,326

Brent	61	46,508	-	46,508
Ealing	43	40,558	7,233	33,326
Islington	67	39,448	-	39,448
Haringey	47	38,085	64	38,021
Kingston upon Thames	27	30,407	-	30,407
Bexley	33	28,909	-	28,909
Hillingdon	102	18,922	13,147	5,775
Barnet	65	10,692	-	10,692
Hammersmith and Fulham	51	7,569	961	6,608
Redbridge	47	362	-	362
Barking and Dagenham	39	-	0	0
City of London	0	-	-	-
Enfield	64	-	-	-
Hackney	45	-	-	-
Kensington and Chelsea	0	-	-	-
Tower Hamlets	38	-	-	-
Waltham Forest	57	-	-	-

Benchmarking - Limitations

2019/20 Costs / UASC (< 18) = 270			
Croydon	Direct	Indirect	Total
Employee Costs	10,585	5,948	16,533
Other Costs	72,170	6,437	78,607
Total	82,756	12,385	95,141

2019/20 Costs / Asylum Seeking Children and Young People (< 18 & > 18) = 784			
Croydon	Direct	Indirect	Total
Employee Costs	3,645	2,048	5,694
Other Costs	24,855	2,217	27,071
Total	28,500	4,265	32,765

Additional indirect costs

Additional indirect costs not included and not quantified:

- Education

- School places
- Controlling Migration Fund
- DSG

- Health

- Immediate and often urgent physical and mental health needs
- Capacity to meet all children and young people's needs

NTS Update

- Proposals for a voluntary national rota system announced on 10th June 2021 as the new NTS which is hoped will begin operation in July 2021
- All LAs to receive an uplift of £30 per week to £270 for care leavers back dated to 1st April for young people who fall within the Home Office Grant Funding eligibility criteria
- Initial estimates are an additional **£547,500** per annum for Croydon
- Not all former UASC care leavers are Home Office grant funded including those who:
 - are in hospital
 - are in custody
 - are all appeals rights exhausted (ARE)
 - are over 21 and not in education but have immigration status
 - those with no current immigration status
- A £3m exceptions fund to support local authorities facing legal costs relating to age assessment challenges or experiencing exceptional costs. Details yet to be provided

CYP Accommodation Benchmarking Summary

Results – Summary of IFA – Placements sourced in 2020

Generally speaking, the boroughs that report cheaper prices than us have, or have only recently, ended internal frameworks which have held prices down for 4-5 years. This is generally the legal life span of a framework.

Most of those boroughs buying new placements on the more open market from 2020 onwards are finding a similar issue to Croydon in terms of pricing.

The comparison to actual placements made on a spot purchased basis, and London Care Services in 2020 with these boroughs, shows that rates are broadly in line with what we were quoted on the APPA

Borough	Average fee (Nov 2020)
Sutton	£900
Croydon	£946
Lewisham	£950
Lambeth	£1050
Bexley	£1100
Greenwich	£1150
Merton	£1150

Results – Summary of Residential – Placements sourced in 2020

- Residential is a sellers market, similar to the housing market where providers have immense power to dictate costs to the local authority.
- SLCP data and national data shows general upward cost trends. Benchmarking appears to show Croydon rates are in the middle.
- Boroughs with lower rates than LBC tend to be spending more on semi-independent accommodation

Borough	Average fee (Nov 2020)
Bexley	£3800
Lambeth	£4300
Croydon	£4623
Lewisham	£4800
Sutton	£5000
Merton	£5500

Results – Summary of Semi-independent, Current Average Fee (Jun 2021)

- We are on average spending more here than our neighbours. Though everyone is currently spending very high amounts on young people who historically should have been in residential – this has in effect led to cost shunting from the residential budgets.
- Croydon has recently closed a number of very high cost semi-independent placements, and moved a number of young people out of semi into IFA. This will leave a higher cost cohort within them, which takes the average up

Borough	Average Framework fee	Average Spot fee
Greenwich	£900	Report 0 spend
Sutton	£1300	£3300
Croydon	£1383	£2242
Lewisham	£1500	In excess of £3000