

Corporate Parenting Panel Agenda



To: Councillor Alisa Flemming (Chair)

Councillors Janet Campbell, Jerry Fitzpatrick, Maria Gatland,
Maddie Henson, Shafi Khan, Helen Redfern

Co-Optees:

Virtual School Head: Shelley Davies, Angela Griffiths, Sarah Bailey;
LAC Nurse/Doctor: Ian Johnstone, Simon Wilkinson, Sue Goode, Lyn
Glover;

Children in Care Council: Emily Collinsbeare, Julie Ralphs;

Care Leaver: Ashleigh Searle;

Foster Carers: Angela Christmas, Manny Kwamin and Martin William;

Health Commissioner: Fiona Simmons, Sally Wadsworth; Amanda Tuke and
Connie Ikhifa

A meeting of the **Corporate Parenting Panel** which you are hereby summoned to attend, will be held on **Wednesday, 16 January 2019** at **5.00pm** in **F10, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon, CR0 1NX**

JACQUELINE HARRIS BAKER
Director of Law and Governance
London Borough of Croydon
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8 Mint Walk, Croydon CR0 1EA

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www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings
Tuesday, 8 January 2019

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting.

If you require any assistance, please contact the person detailed above, on the right-hand side.

N.B This meeting will be paperless. The agenda can be accessed online at
www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings

AGENDA – PART A

1. Apologies for absence

To receive any apologies for absence from any members of the Panel.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting (Pages 5 - 18)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 21 November 2018 as an accurate record.

[To Follow]

3. Disclosures of interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct and the statutory provisions of the Localism Act, Members and co-opted Members of the Council are reminded that it is a requirement to register disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs) and gifts and hospitality to the value of which exceeds £50 or multiple gifts and/or instances of hospitality with a cumulative value of £50 or more when received from a single donor within a rolling twelve month period. In addition, Members and co-opted Members are reminded that unless their disclosable pecuniary interest is registered on the register of interests or is the subject of a pending notification to the Monitoring Officer, they are required to disclose those disclosable pecuniary interests at the meeting. This should be done by completing the Disclosure of Interest form and handing it to the Democratic Services representative at the start of the meeting. The Chair will then invite Members to make their disclosure orally at the commencement of Agenda item 3. Completed disclosure forms will be provided to the Monitoring Officer for inclusion on the Register of Members' Interests.

4. Urgent Business (if any)

To receive notice of any business not on the agenda which in the opinion of the Chair, by reason of special circumstances, be considered as a matter of urgency.

5. Update on actions agreed at previous meeting(s)

To update the Panel on any agreed actions from the previous meeting.

6. Children in Care Performance Scorecard (Pages 19 - 22)

The Children in Care Performance Scorecard of November 2018 is attached.

7. Placement, Stability, Sufficiency; Performance and Population (Pages 23 - 54)

This report serves to update the Panel on our current cohort of looked

after children, and the key issues of placement sufficiency, stability and permanence.

8. Health of Looked After Children (Pages 55 - 62)

The report appended is in response to the Panel's request for an update on health of looked after children.

9. Education & Employment & Not in Education or Training (NEET) Young People (Pages 63 - 70)

This report provides information about the Care Leaver's education, employment and training and those not in education or training.

10. Annual Report of the Virtual School (Pages 71 - 96)

This report is in response to the panel's request for an overview of the work of the Virtual school including data in relation to educational outcomes for children looked after.

11. Review of the Fostering Allowances (Pages 97 - 100)

This report reviews the fostering allowances provided to foster carers.

12. How has the Panel helped Children in Care today?

For the panel to consider how its work at the meeting will improve services for children in care.

13. Work Programme (Pages 101 - 102)

To consider and approve the Panel's work programme for the municipal year 2018/19.

14. Exclusion of the Press and Public

The following motion is to be moved and seconded where it is proposed to exclude the press and public from the remainder of a meeting:

"That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within those paragraphs indicated in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended."

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Indicator Number	Indicator Title	Polarity	2018/19									RO	2018-19 Target	RAG	2018-19 YTD or latest	Comparative Data				
			Apr-18	May-18	Jun-18	Jul-18	Aug-18	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Croydon 2017-18					England 2017-18	Stats Nbr Average 2017-18	Croydon 2016-17	England 2016-17	Stats Nbr Average 2016-17
LAC 1	Number of LAC at the end of the month		789	794	779	780	771	784	799	813	WT	NA		813	783			785	478.09 (Average)	507 (Average)
LAC 2	Rate of LAC per 10,000 under 18 population		83.2	83.8	82.2	82.3	81.4	82.7	84.3	85.8	WT	NA		85.8	83.0			83.0	62.0	54.1% (average)
LAC 2a	Rate of LAC per 10,000 under 18 population excluding UASC		50.9	52.1	52.5	53.1	52.7	53.1	54.9	55.3	WT	NA		55.3	52.0			42	42	48
LAC 3	Number of LAC at the end of the month who are Local LAC (Non-UASC)		482	494	498	503	499	503	520	524	WT	NA		524	484			396	448	457
LAC 4	Number of LAC at the end of the month who are UASC		307	300	281	277	272	281	279	289	WT	NA		289	309			390	4560 (Total) 30 (Average)	51 (Average)
LAC 10	Percentage of LAC for whom a visit has taken place within statutory timescales (6 weekly Visits)	BIB	90%	92%	90%	85%	88%	89%	83%	91%	WT	95%		89%	88%					
LAC 11	Percentage of LAC children with an up to date review	BIB	61%	77%	78%	82%	84%	95%	95%	95%	AFS	95%		83%	68%					
LAC 12	Percentage of LAC who have participated in Reviews (aged 4+) in the month	BIB	80%	79%	78%	77%	79%	73%	71%	82%	AFS	80%		78%	78%					
LAC 13	Percentage of LAC with a Personal Education Plan (PEP) reviewed in the last 6 months (Need to get the EPEP Number from the Virtual teams)	BIB	25%	23%	23%	22%	18%	15%	17%	15%	WT	85%		20%	66%					
LAC 14	Percentage of eligible LAC with an up-to-date Care Plan	BIB	95%	95%	89%	87%	84%	96%	85%	84%	WT	95%		84%	92%					
LAC 15	Percentage of eligible LAC with an up-to-date Pathway Plan	BIB	49%	48%	50%	49%	51%	60%	60%	58%	WT	80%		58%	48%					
LAC 16	% of children in care for at least 12 months for whom health assessments are up to date.	BIB	62%	67%	71%	67%	74%	82%	81%	85%	ATW T	75%		85%	80%			66.5%	89.4%	94.2%
LAC 18	% initial health assessments delivered within 20 working days of date child became looked after.	BIB	17%	15%	23%	14%	18%	11%	17%	0%	ATW T			14%	15%					
LAC 19	Percentage of LAC that have been in care for 12+ months, that have had same social worker for last 6 months	BIB	62%	61%	64%	65%	70%	68%	58%	55%	WT	60%		55%	65%					
LAC 20	Percentage of LAC under 16 in care for more than 2.5 years: in the same placement for 2+ years	BIB	82%	80%	80%	77%	80%	76%	73%	70%	WT	75%		70%	73%					

Indicator Number	Indicator Title	Polarity	2018/19										RO	2018-19 Target	RAG	2018-19 YTD or latest	Comparative Data				
			Apr-18	May-18	Jun-18	Jul-18	Aug-18	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Croydon 2017-18	England 2017-18					Stats Nbr Average 2017-18	Croydon 2016-17	England 2016-17	Stats Nbr Average 2016-17	
LAC 21	Percentage of LAC at end of month with 3 or more placements during the year	SIB	9%	9%	9%	9%	8%	9%	7%	7%	WT	8%		7%	9%			9%	10% (average - 2016)	11.6% (average - 2016/17)	
LAC 22	Percentage of LAC placed <20 miles from home	BIB	81%	81%	83%	81%	83%	82%	83%	83%	WT	90%		83%	81%			42%	74.2%	68.4%	
F 1	Total number of foster carer households	BIB	236	235	229	228	230	233	236	236	WT	NA		236	239			260 Households (2016/17)	288 (average 2016/17)	152 (average 2016/17)	
F 3	Percentage of Annual Reviews of Foster Carers completed on time	BIB	87%	92%	93%	92%	88%	86%	84%	81%	WT	95%		81%	81%						
F 4	Percentage of Foster Carers' most recent announced visit within timescales	BIB	80%	76%	78%	75%	64%	73%	72%	72%	WT	85%		72%	77%						

Indicator Number	Indicator Title	Polarity	2018/19									RO	2018-19 Target	RAG	2018-19 YTD or latest	Comparative Data					
			Apr-18	May-18	Jun-18	Jul-18	Aug-18	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Croydon 2017-18					England 2017-18	Stats Nbr Average 2017-18	Croydon 2016-17	England 2016-17	Stats Nbr Average 2016-17	
AD 0	Number of Adoption Orders achieved in the month	BIB	0	2	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	VW	NA		9	9				28.6	26
AD 1	Number of children for whom the agreed plan is adoption (ADM)	BiB	48	49	0	1	0	1	1	5	VW	NA		105	431						
AD 2	Number of children waiting to be matched to an adopter		22	27	19	19	18	17	17	18	VW	NA		18	18						
AD 7	Average time between a child entering care and moving in with the adoptive family , for children who have been adopted (days) (12 Months rolling average)	SIB	0	543.2	521.22	523.2	0	0	0	0	VW	558			309			696 (2014-17) 3 yr average	520 (2014-2017) 3 yr average	554.5 (2014-2017) 3 yr average	
CL a	Care Leavers with an Up-to-date Pathway plan	BIB	74%	74%	82%	86%	82%	83%	82%	87%	WT	95%		81%	69%						
CL 1a	Percentage in employment, education, or training (EET) on their 17th to 21st Birthday	BIB	63%	63%	63%	61%	64%	66%	64%	63%	WT	60%		63%	75%	84%	81%	53% (19-21 yr olds)	50% (average 19 to 21 yr olds)	50.2% (average 19 to 21 yr olds)	
CL 3a	Percentage in suitable accommodation on their 17th to 21st Birthday	BIB	84%	84%	85%	83%	90%	92%	90%	91%	WT	85%		91%	75%	84%	81%	77% (19-21 yr olds)	84% (19-21 yr olds)	81.5% (19-21 yr olds)	
MC 8	Number of missing episodes started in month - LAC missing from placement	SIB	162	178	176	148	181	206	186	216	HD			1,453	871			525 (all missing incidents not single episodes)	399.5 (average) Experimental	543 (average) Experimental	
MC 9	Number of found episodes in the month (missing episodes only) - LAC missing from placement		168	171	179	151	175	204	182	213	HD			1,443	638						
MC 10	% of found episodes in month (missing episodes only) where RHI was offered to child - LAC missing from placement	SIB	99%	98%	96%	98%	98%	91%	79%	72%	HD	NA		91%	72%						
MC 11	% of Total found episodes in month (missing episodes only) where RHI was offered and accepted (RHI DONE) - LAC missing from placement	SIB	55%	53%	55%	47%	62%	58%	55%	56%	HD	NA		55%	44%						

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Agenda Item 7

REPORT TO:	Corporate Parenting Panel 16 January 2019
SUBJECT:	Placement stability, sufficiency, permanence and population: Croydon's LAC Sufficiency Plan
LEAD OFFICER:	Jennifer Wade, Head of Service - Commissioning and Procurement (Children, Families, Education)
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Alisa Flemming Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning
WARDS:	ALL
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON: This supports Croydon's Corporate Plan outcome "our children and young people thrive and reach their full potential." It also supports the Council's statutory duty as per The Children Act 1989 and DfE's <i>Statutory Guidance on Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children</i> (2010).	
FINANCIAL IMPACT This report has no direct financial implications and will be delivered within existing resources. Effective placement sufficiency planning will enable to Council to be best positioned to achieve placements which and good value and high quality.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 To note the key features of Croydon's LAC population and placement patterns
- 1.2 To agree Croydon's LAC Sufficiency Plan 2018-21.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report serves to update the Panel on our current cohort of looked after children, and the key issues of placement sufficiency, stability and permanence.
- 2.2 The LAC Sufficiency Plan (attached) provides a profile of our looked after children and current placement patterns, identifying key sufficiency issues to inform planning and commissioning. This is a 3 year plan which will be reviewed annually.
- 2.3 As Corporate Parent, the council, elected members, employees, and partner agencies, have collective responsibility for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children who are looked after by the council. The Council has a specific statutory duty around placement sufficiency for looked after children, as set out in the attached Plan.

3. WHO ARE WE LOOKING AFTER

- 3.1 Currently, we have 799 children in care. 520 are "local" looked after children and 279 are unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC). This has

increased slightly since 2017/18 when we had 780 looked after children (annual figure), but numbers fluctuate month to month and have remained broadly steady overall.

- 3.2 The LAC Sufficiency Plan provides a detailed profile of our looked after children.

4. WHERE ARE OUR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN PLACED?

- 4.1 The majority of our looked after children (86%) are living in foster placements, and stability is generally good, with 73% LAC under 16 in care for more than 2.5 years staying in the same placement for 2+ years (at end October 2018). We also make use of residential placements and semi-independent accommodation. This is profiled in section 6 of the LAC Sufficiency Plan.

5. OPTIONS FOR PERMANENCY

- 5.1 Ensuring that looked after children have good and timely options for permanency is an ongoing area of focus for us. Permanency options include long term fostering, foster to adopt, adoption and special guardianship orders. This is profiled in section 7D.
- 5.2 We will be doing further work to ensure we make timely progress for our looked after children (for example, where adoption is the agreed plan), to avoid drift and delay.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 This plan has been developed in consultation with children's social care and commissioning and procurement. It includes details of our arrangements in involve children and young people in influencing their care and commissioning more broadly.

7. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 This plan will be delivered within existing resources within Children's Social Care and Commissioning & Procurement. Any specific financial impacts arising will be considered as part of a separate report through commissioning and procurement governance arrangements.

8 COMMENTS OF THE COUNCIL SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

- 8.1 There are no specific legal implications of this report.

9. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 9.1 There are no specific human resources implications of this report.

10. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 10.1 Effective sufficiency planning supports the Council to identify placements that best meet the needs of individual children and young people in care, including any needs arising from ethnicity/race, religion and belief, disability, pregnancy and maternity, sex, sexual orientation and gender reassignment. Any specific equalities impacts arising from placement commissioning will be explored separately and included as part of a report through the commissioning and procurement governance arrangements.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 11.1 There are no environmental impacts of this report. Any issues arising will be explored as part of a separate report.

12. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

- 12.1 There are no crime and disorder implications of this report.

CONTACT OFFICER: Jennifer Wade, Head of Service - Commissioning and Procurement (Children, Families, Education)

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London Borough of Croydon

**Looked After Children
Sufficiency Plan**

2018-2021

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 - Semi independent accommodation
 - Adoption/special guardianship
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Executive summary

Our looked after children cohort is unique. We have 783 children and young people who are looked after. Of these 488 are local looked after children and 295 are unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) (31 March 2018). Croydon has the one of the highest number of looked after children of any London borough. This is due, in part, to the high numbers of UASC looked after by the borough as a result of a Home Office National Assessment Centre being located in Croydon. However, our cohort is gradually changing with a reduction in the numbers of UASC and an increase in the numbers of local children.

Having the right placement in the right place, at the right time is critical to achieving placement stability and the best outcomes for our looked after children overall.

A high proportion of our looked after children are placed with foster carers (86%) provided through a mixed economy of in-house foster carers and independent fostering agencies. Up to 10% of Croydon looked after children are placed in semi-independent accommodation and 4% in residential placements (as at March 2018).

We have effective commissioning arrangements in place with the aim of ensuring we have the right placement at the right time for all children. This includes an improved model for in house foster carer recruitment, a framework contract providing access to high quality IFA placements, and a framework contract for the provision of standard and complex semi-independent accommodation placements. There is still more we need to do, however, to ensure that we have a choice of placements to meet even the most complex needs. We are working collaboratively as part of the South London Commissioning Programme to commission residential placements. We will continue to work hard to ensure that, through our commissioning and placement process, we are able to maximise the use and value of these options to best meet individual needs.

Placement stability is good with 74% of LAC (under 16 and in care for more than 2.5 years) remaining in the same placement for at least two years. This means children are benefitting from consistent relationships with their carers. A high proportion of Croydon looked after children (81%) also benefit from placements close to home (within 20 miles from home).

We are continuing to work hard on strengthening permanence for our looked after children, including through adoption and Special Guardianship Orders, as well as long term fostering. We need to continue to increase the pace at which we identify and implement permanence options for children where this best meets their needs, and avoid drift and delay. We have agreed processes and stronger practice to ensure that options for permanency are always considered and can be progressed at the earliest possible stage.

Our care leavers have effective support which means that a high proportion (83%) have suitable accommodation and 53% are in employment, training and education (at 31 March 2018). The Council has made a strong commitment to supporting care leavers, and set out a range of support and services available from across the council and its partners, in our local offer for care leavers, published in September 2018. This can be viewed at: <https://www.croydon.gov.uk/healthsocial/families/local-offer-for-care-leavers> . We will also continue to focus on ensuring effective pathway planning at an early stage.

We currently have a range of early help and support available to vulnerable children and young people and their families. Croydon's Partnership Early Help Strategy and delivery plan, agreed in October 2018, will allow us to provide a more effective, joined up, locality based, all age early help offer for our children. As the strategy is implemented and begins to impact, this will enable us to

prevent escalation, where safe to do so, and the demand on statutory services. This includes the number of looked after children. For young people with more significant needs, we also have a particular focus on strengthening our support for vulnerable adolescents, including those on the edge of care, those who go missing from care, or who are at risk of exploitation.

This plan presents the current needs and services available for children who are looked after, fulfilling our duty to provide sufficient accommodation. Our analysis of needs and implementation of actions in our key sufficiency areas is an ongoing task and this three-year plan will be refreshed annually to reflect this.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. We believe that children should grow and achieve within their own families when it is in their best interests and is safe for them to do so. The majority of children and families are strong and resilient and have good networks and resources to meet their needs. Some families will experience difficulties from time to time. However, there will be some children and young people who need to live, either in the short term, or permanently, with substitute carers.
- 1.2. We want to ensure that **we have the right placements available at the right time and in the right place to make sure our looked after children are safe, healthy and happy, and will aspire to be the best they can be.** Securing sufficient accommodation that meets the needs of looked after children is a vital step in delivering improved outcomes for this vulnerable group. It is also a vital factor in improving placement stability, which in turn is a critical success factor in achieving outcomes for looked after children.¹
- 1.3. This plan provides a profile of our looked after children and care leavers, and our existing placement patterns, identifying ongoing and future needs. It forms a key part of our commissioning process for placements. It also summarises our wider offer of services provided to support our looked after children including services for care leavers, children considered to be at risk of becoming looked after, and early help services. As well as achieving positive outcomes for children and families, these services support the reduction in demand and impact on statutory services and prevent escalation, where safe to do so, to statutory and specialist services, including care. This continuum of support and services, alongside our placements for children and young people who are looked after, are vital to achieving our overall vision and outcomes for Croydon children and families.

Our Sufficiency Duty

- 1.4 This plan fulfils our sufficiency duty under The Children Act 1989 and set out in DfE's *Statutory Guidance on Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children* (2010).
- 1.5 Local authorities have a statutory duty to take strategic action to ensure that there is sufficient accommodation for children and young people who are looked after. This is a responsibility that can best be delivered with the support and contribution of our statutory partners.

Section 22G of the Children Act 1989 ('the 1989 Act') requires local authorities to take steps that secure, so far as reasonably practicable, **sufficient accommodation within the authority's area, to meet the needs of children who the local authority are looking after**, and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the local authority's area ('the sufficiency duty')

As set out in the statutory guidance, this also means having provision in place for earlier preventative action to support children and families so that fewer children become looked after, including those children and young people on the edge of care or at risk of custody.

- 1.8 Local authorities and their partners are recommended to:

¹ *Statutory Guidance on Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children* (March 2010).

- Systematically review the current situation in relation to securing accommodation which meets the needs of looked after children and care leavers;
- Have regard to the standard for commissioning practice set out in the guidance; and
- Develop or enhance their strategic commissioning processes so that all relevant services, including universal services, make a full contribution to meeting the needs of looked after children and children in need, who are at risk of care or custody;

1.9 This plan was last published in 2017. The 2018-21 plan will be agreed by and progress reported to Croydon’s Corporate Parenting Panel. The data and actions will be reviewed annually.

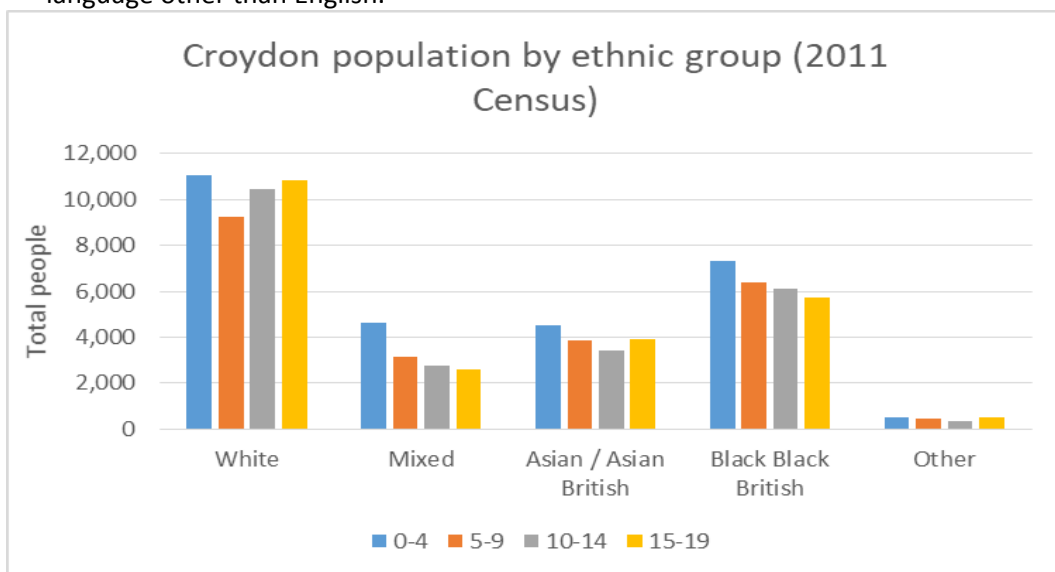
2. Croydon context

2.1 Croydon is a young, diverse London Borough with a population of 384,837² and in 2041 this is expected to reach 463,000³. Croydon has the 2nd highest population in London.

2.2 155,755 (40.5%) of the population is aged 30 or under (London 42.1%). 102,985 (26.8%) of the population are 0-19. (London 24.8%)⁴

2.3 Over the past 10 years, the 0-19 population has grown by 11.6%. By 2024, it is expected to reach an estimated 113,332⁵. Whilst the 0-4 age group are predicted to see the most limited growth during the same period (1%), they are set to remain as the largest age group within the 0-19 population.

2.4 Croydon has a diverse population. About 56.1% of the Croydon 0 to 24 population comes from non-white ethnic groups (London 51.2%) and 29.6% of Croydon residents were born outside of the UK, compared with 36.7% in London.⁶ 33.2% of school children have a first language other than English.⁷



² ONS Mid-Year Estimates 2017

³ GLA Housing led projections 2016

⁴ ONS Mid-Year Estimates 2017

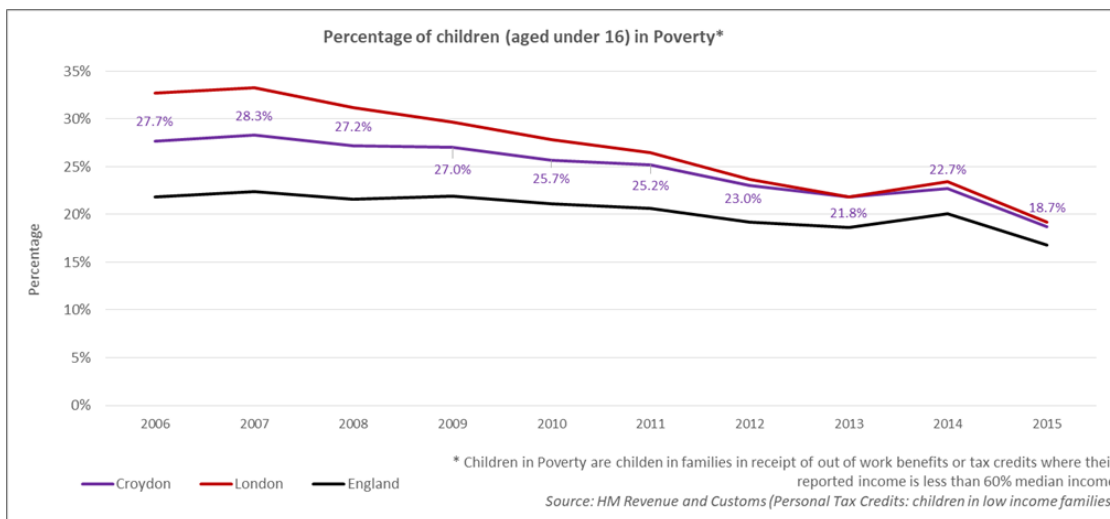
⁵ GLA Housing led projections 2016

⁶ Census 2011

⁷ School Census May 2018

- 2.5 Croydon is the 19th most deprived borough in London. 2.7% of people in Croydon live amongst the 10% most deprived area in the country and 21.9% live amongst the 20% most deprived.⁸

In 2015 18.7% of Croydon’s children were living in poverty. This is the 17th highest rate in London.⁹



- 2.6 Children’s social care is continuing to experience rising demand. There were 5186 open referrals at 31st March 2018. This represents a 28% increase from 31st March 2017 where there were 3708 open referrals. There had also been a 13% increase in the number of referrals open at any point from 8214 to 9612. Similarly, the number of children with Child Protection Plans increased by 39% from 349 to 568.¹⁰
- 2.7 Croydon has the one of the highest number of looked after children of any London borough. As of the end of March 2018 there were a total of 783 looked after children in Croydon, of these 295 were UASC and 488 were local looked after children.¹¹

3. Vision, Aims and Objectives

- 3.1 Croydon’s overarching vision for children is:

Children and young people in Croydon will be safe, healthy and happy, and will aspire to be the best they can be. The future is theirs.

- 3.2 We believe that every child should have the opportunity to reach their full potential. We believe that children should grow and achieve within their own families when it is in their best interests and it is safe for them to do so. By working together, we will develop flexible services which are responsive to children and families’ needs.
- 3.3 The delivery of Croydon’s Improvement Plan 2017/18 and Improvement Plan Refresh 2018/19 has given us renewed focus on strengthening our services for children and young

⁸ Indices of Deprivation 2015
⁹ HM Revenue and Customs 2015
¹⁰ CIN Summary 2017/18
¹¹ 2017/18 Croydon 903 submission (unpublished)

people following our Ofsted inspection in July 2017 which judged services to be inadequate. The work to strengthen our social work practice throughout the plan will have a positive impact for children and young people in care, or on the edge of care. Specific actions relating to our looked after children include:

- *Improving permanence planning across the wider service to ensure that the planning and timeliness of adoption improve for all children. Ensure that there is focused family-finding activity for children with adoption plans, to minimize delays.'*
- *Improve outcomes for care leavers.*

3.4 Our JSNA (joint strategic needs assessment) will also inform our ongoing service planning and commissioning for looked after children and across children's services, along with further work to strengthen operational data and business intelligence.

3.5 As a Council, Croydon is establishing a vision for the future which will shape the way that we support children and families, including those who are looked after. This will provide for:

- A system wide approach, with joint pooled resources and pathways
- operating across organisational boundaries
- An outcome focussed approach delivering long term sustainable solutions
- for individuals and families to secure resilience and independence
- A shift from acute provision to an increase in prevention and early help
- activity
- Evidence based services that are built around customer need
- Locality based delivery where appropriate- one of six key themes is "preventing issues becoming problems with services that are designed to identify issues early on and target support... to deliver long-term sustainable solutions" – and this will shape our approach to children and young people and their families.

4. **Our commissioning approach**

4.1 To meet the requirements of the sufficiency duty, local authorities, working with their partners, are expected to practise a level of commissioning which is commensurate with the standard outlined in the statutory guidance, covering six areas:

- individual assessment and care planning;
- commissioning decision;
- strategic needs assessment;
- market management;
- collaboration; and
- securing services.

4.2 To strengthen individual assessment and care planning, we have reviewed our placement process and made some initial improvements to streamline our approach, including a revised referral process. We are continuing to work on improving placement and associated business support processes, with the Placement team joining the Commissioning and Procurement division. In order to ensure the right placement at the right time, we need to ensure that we are able to use individual assessment and care planning effectively to inform decisions about individual placements commissioning.

4.3 Alongside this plan, we are completing a thorough needs assessment of children and young people as part of the JSNA (based on an analysis of available data) to inform service

planning and commissioning across Children's Services. Continued analysis of need and projection of demand will continue to inform placement commissioning.

- 4.4 Our category management approach provides effective support for strategic commissioning and market management, as part of the wider category management offer for children's social care. This includes the development of new commissioning and contracting models and multi borough integrated commissioning solutions. Our new commissioning models are developed through market engagement and closer collaboration with other local authorities and offer flexibility, incentives and opportunities for increased efficiencies, placement availability and improving outcomes for our looked after children and care leavers. This includes direct action to increase our own provision where appropriate (see section 7 on fostering, residential placements and semi-independent accommodation).
- 4.5 Croydon is working collaboratively with 11 other boroughs to develop an on-line integrated solution for residential and foster care placements, commencing January 2019. This work is led by the South London Commissioning Programme which is hosted by Croydon and funded with the support of a DfE Innovation Grant. As well as enabling Croydon to commission placements based on outcomes and needs of the children and young people, working with partner boroughs provides the leverage required to shape the market and the information required to look at our sufficiency in a more joined up, strategic way.
- 4.6 We are also embedding a refreshed contract management framework that effectively monitors achievement of individual outcomes and overall organisational performance with greater scrutiny on the quality of support provided to children who are looked after, those reported missing and at risk of exploitation, including child sexual exploitation. Engagement with children and young people underpins our new commissioning and contract management approach.
- 4.7 Embedding Safeguarding through commissioning and contract management guidance brings together a joint corporate approach for improving safeguarding practice across all commissioned services for children and adults.

Listening to children and young people

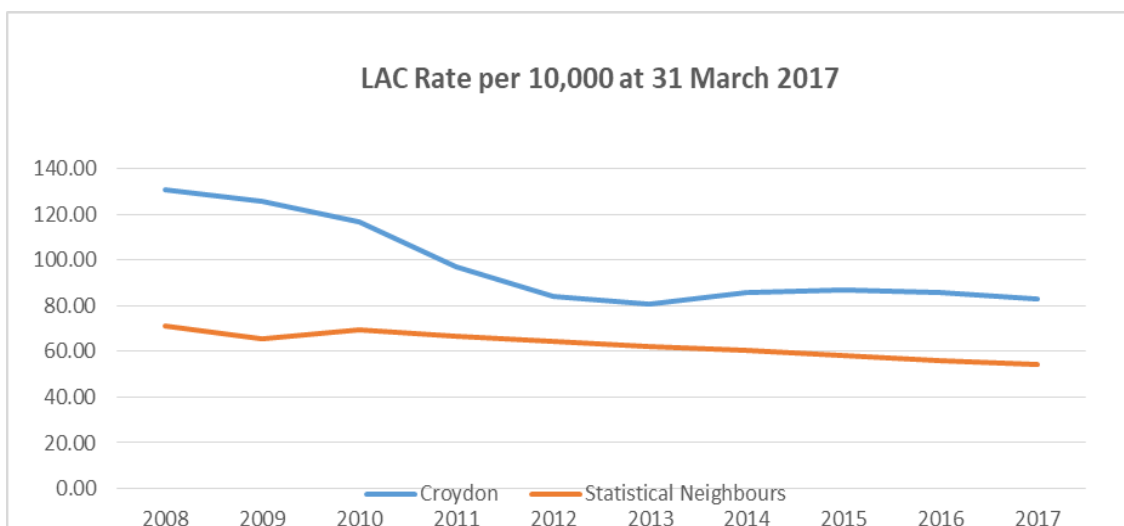
- 4.8 We want to ensure that Croydon's looked after children and care leavers are actively engaged and fully participate in decision-making about the services and organisations that routinely involve them. This includes decisions about their individual care through participation in LAC reviews.
- 4.9 We will strengthen the involvement of children and young people in our children in care council. This means that a wider representative group of young people are actively involved in informing our service design and delivery, and feedback from children is captured. This feedback informs quality assurance activity and service improvements. We specifically plan to involve the Children in Care Council in telling us what they would like from foster carers and/or their placements.
- 4.10 Work is also underway to enable young people to influence commissioning processes. Through the Young Commissioners programme, young people will be involved in commissioning activity across the Council, including services for Children and Young People. Croydon looked after children also have the opportunity to be involved in the South London Commissioning Programme's reference group from October 2018, which will help to shape the South London wide approach to commissioning residential placements.

5. Our looked after children profile

- 5.1. Our looked after children and young people are children aged from birth to 18 for whom children’s services have statutory responsibility for their care. Our care leavers are young people aged 18-25, in accordance with the duties under the Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- 5.2. Croydon has the one of the highest numbers of looked after children of any London borough.

We have 783 looked after children of whom 488 are local looked after children and 295 277 are UASC.¹²

- 5.2 This is annual figure for 2017/18, accurate at 31 March 2018. Since then, numbers have increased slightly to 799 at end October 2018, including 520 local looked after children.
- 5.3 There are ongoing small fluctuations in the overall number, and constant change within the cohort - 426 children started to be looked after in the 12 months to March 2018 and 442 ceased to be looked after.¹³
- 5.3 The Croydon LAC rate of 83 per 10,000 population (31 March 2017 and 31 March 2018) is higher than both the national average of 62 and our statistical neighbours’ average of 54.1 (31 March 17).



- 5.4 Croydon’s high rates of looked after children are, in part, due to our large UASC cohort which has resulted from the location of National Assessment Centre in Croydon. Of Croydon’s looked after children, 49% were UASC in March 2017 and 38% in March 2018. Nationally the average percentage in March 2017 was 6% and in Kent it was 26%. Our rate of LAC per 10,000 for local children only is 52 (31 March 2018).¹⁴

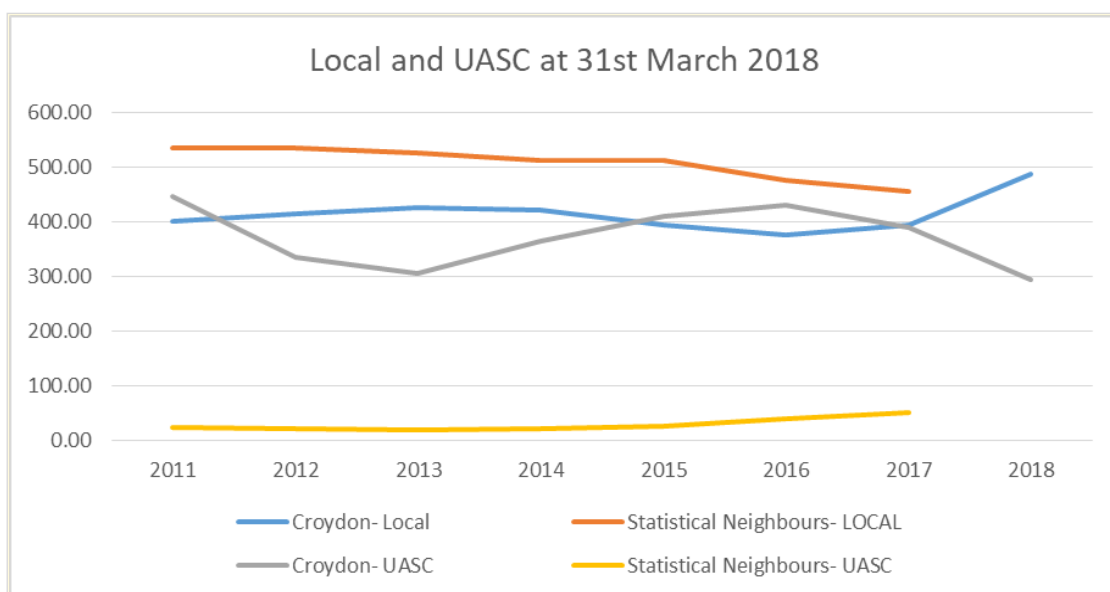
¹² 2017/18 Croydon 903 submission (unpublished)

¹³ 2017/18 Croydon 903 submission (unpublished)

¹⁴ DfE SFR 2017 – 2016/17 903 data

- 5.5 However, following national changes in April 2017, we have seen a gradual decrease in our cohort of UASC. UASC arriving in Croydon are now managed through the pan-London rota (16/17 year olds) and more importantly the National Transfer Scheme (age 15 and under).
- 5.6 However, in the case of the National Transfer Scheme, the point at which a UASC become looked by Croydon and the point at which they transfer to another LA can be slow. This impacts on Croydon's need for short term placements for those who then move on. It also sometimes causes concern for the young persons' welfare, sometimes resulting in them not moving at all, and limits the ability to do long term planning from the outset.
- 5.7 Our overall numbers of looked after children have remained steady.

Whilst the overall number of looked after children is stable, the makeup of Croydon's looked after child population is changing, with a reduction in the proportion who are UASC and an increase in the proportion of "local" children and young people¹⁵.



- 5.7 Croydon's number of local looked after children has increased over 12 months (31 March 2017 to 31 March 2018) from 395 to 488, an increase of 24%. The current number (end October 2018) is 520. This is the highest number of local looked after children in over five years.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Croydon- Local	400	415	425	420	395	375	395	488

- 5.8 In addition to Croydon's large looked after children population, there are increasing demands across children's social care. We have seen an increase in the number of referrals to children's social care we keep open from 5195 in 2016/17 to 7090 in 2017/18 (as at 31st March 2018), an increase of 27%. Our referrals per 10,000 have increased from 550.1 to 750.7 against an England average of 548.2. Our rate of children in need was 392.7 per 10,000 in 2016/17 and increased by 28% to 549.1 per 10,000 in 2017/18 against an England

¹⁵ DfE SFR 2017 – 2016/17 903 data

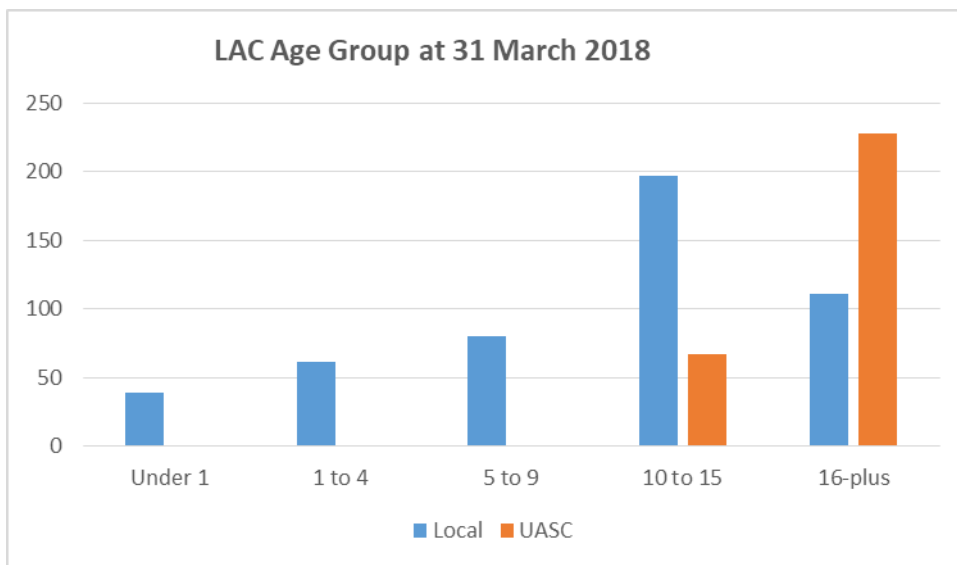
average of 330.4.¹⁶ Following this spike in demand, we are seeing a reduction to date during the current financial year (2018/19).

- 5.9 Therefore it is possible that our cohort of local looked after children may see a further increase in the coming 12 months. This means that the number of children who are looked after in Croydon overall, and therefore the demand for placements, is likely to continue to be steady in 2018/19, even if numbers of UASC continue to decline.
- 5.10 Longer term, the impact of the early help and support for children on the edge of care (see section 8) should see an impact on reducing the numbers of local looked after children.

Gender and age profile

A high proportion of children and young people who come into care in Croydon are 10-15 years old (33% / 264) or 16+ (43% / 339).

- 5.10 Whilst the age profile of children coming into care is influenced by the high numbers of UASC in Croydon, who are primarily aged 16+, it also reflects high numbers of local children over the age of 10 entering care.¹⁷



- 5.11 The overall gender split as at March 2018 was 33% female to 67% male¹⁸. The proportions of female to male for each age vary year-on-year. However, the higher proportion of male looked after children remains, as our UASC are predominately male.

Siblings

- 5.12 235 (30%) of our looked after children have siblings who are also looked after. This comprises 134 sibling groups of 2, 36 groups of 3 and 15 sibling groups of 4 or more.

Diversity

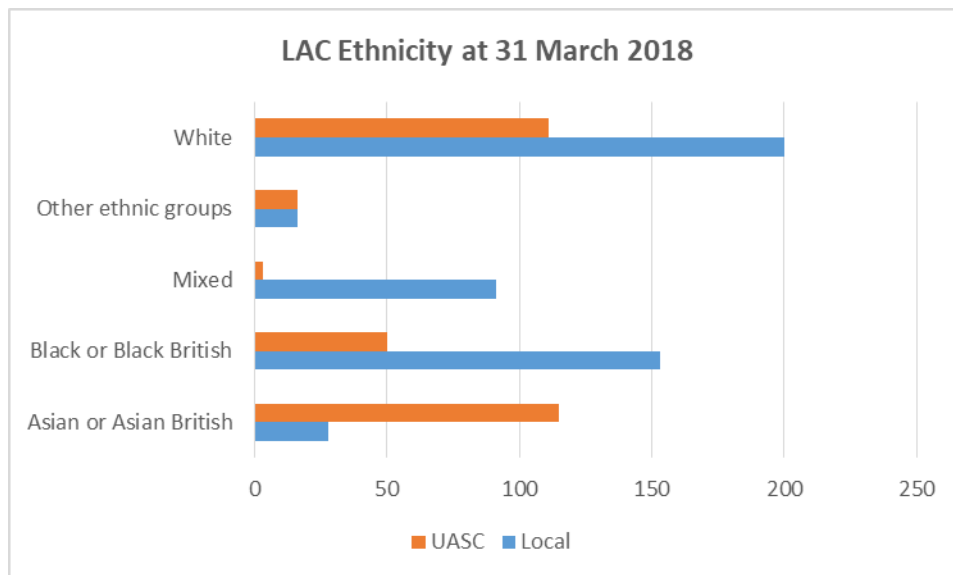
Our looked after children are ethnically diverse, as is the borough as a whole. This is true for our local looked after children as well as for UASC.

¹⁶ CIN Census 2017/18 submission

¹⁷ 2017/18 Croydon 903 submission (unpublished)

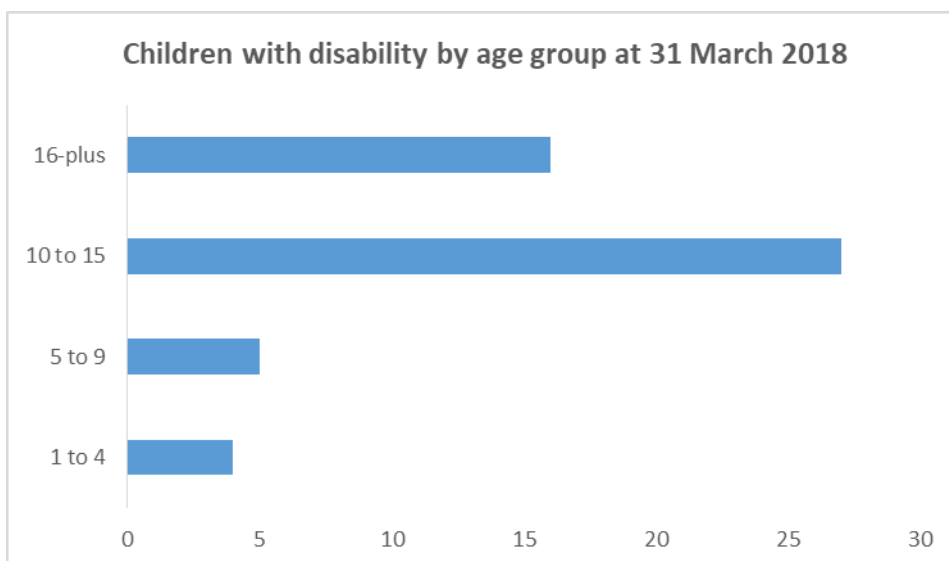
¹⁸ 2017/18 Croydon 903 submission (unpublished)

- 5.13 Nearly 39%¹⁹ of local children in care are white or white British (compared with 55% of the total population²⁰), 28% are black, or black British (compared with 20% of the total population); 17% are from mixed or other backgrounds (compared with 6.6% of the total population); and 15% Asian or Asian British (same proportion as all of Croydon).
- 5.14 The ethnic profile of UASC who began to be looked after in 2017/2018 differs. 35 % are Black, nearly 39% are Asian and 26% are white.
- 5.15 A high proportion of children in Croydon’s care overall are Muslim (26% as at 31 March 2018)²¹ compared to 8% of population who are Muslim in Croydon overall.²²



Looked after children with a recorded disability

- 5.16 51 (7%) of Croydon’s looked after children were recorded as having a disability, of whom 15 had multiple disabilities.²³



¹⁹ 2017/18 Croydon 903 submission (unpublished)

²⁰ Croydon Observatory Census data 2011

²¹ 2017/18 Croydon 903 submission (unpublished)

²² Croydon Observatory Census data 2011

²³ CRS 31 March 2018

Reasons for becoming looked after and legal status

- 5.17 The main reason for becoming looked after almost half of looked after children in 2017/18 was abuse or neglect (46%). This is similar to previous years. The second most recorded reason was absent parenting, often due to alcohol or substance misuse, domestic abuse, mental health issues or a combination of these factors.²⁴
- 5.18 Of the local children looked after as at 31 March 2018, 42% were subject to a Care Order and 54% were looked after under Section 20. All UASC looked after had a legal status of single period of accommodation under Section 20 due to absent parenting.²⁵

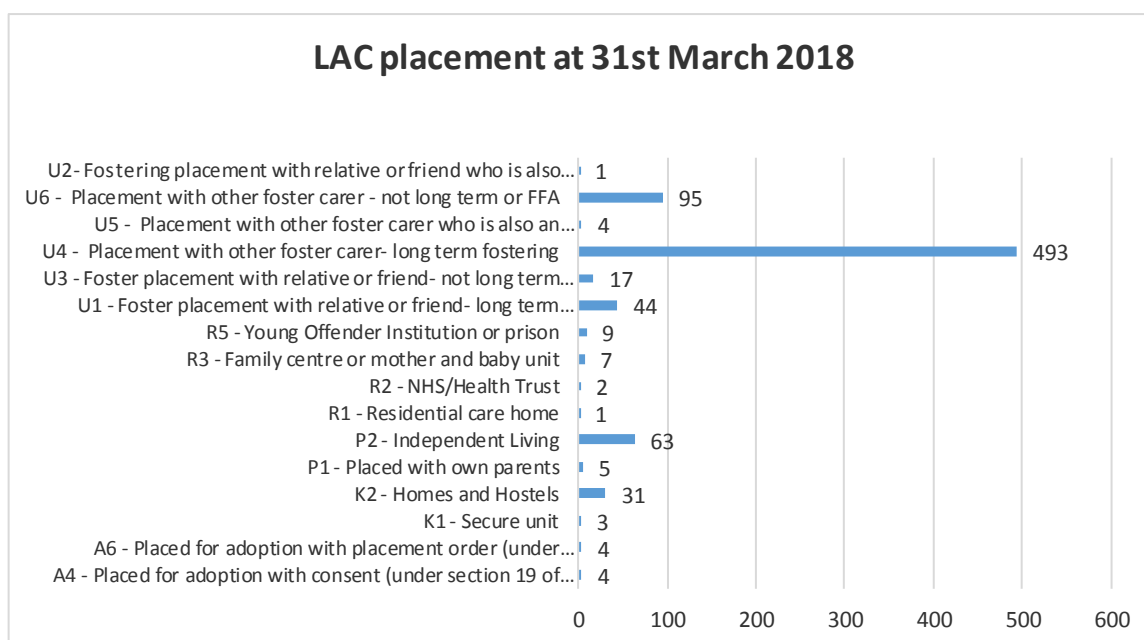
Care leavers

- 5.19 Croydon currently has 676 care leavers aged 19-21 at 31 March 2018.²⁶ This number has reduced slightly to 650 at end October 2018.

6. Placements

The majority of Croydon looked after children are placed with foster carers. Smaller numbers are placed in residential placements or semi-independent accommodation.

- 6.1 Croydon has the highest proportion of looked after children who have foster placements in London. 654 children (89% of our looked after children) were in foster placements at 31 March 2018.



A large proportion of Croydon looked after children benefit from stable placements close to home.

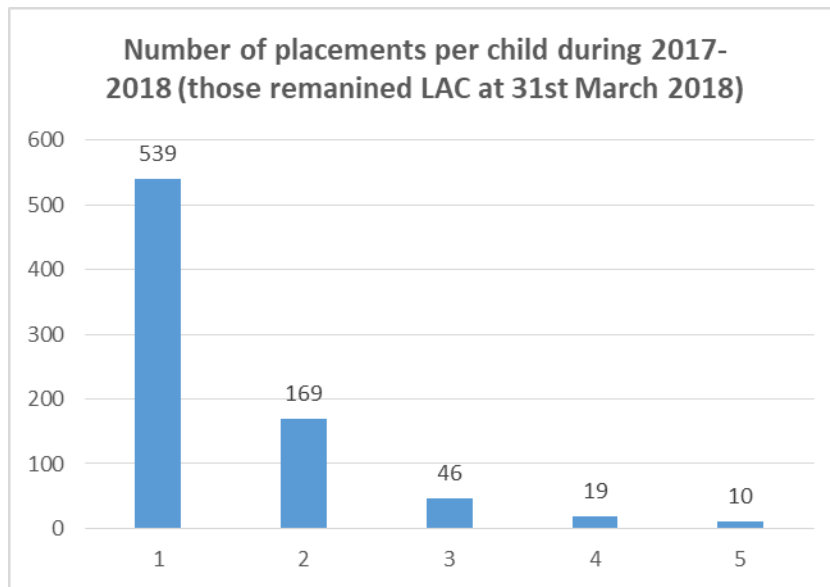
- 6.9 Croydon has a high placement stability rate. 69% of looked after children had only 1 placement during the year 2017/18. 10% had 3 or more placements. For children who have

²⁴ 2017/18 Croydon 903 submission (unpublished)

²⁵ 2017/18 Croydon 903 submission (unpublished)

²⁶ 2017/18 Croydon 903 submission (unpublished)

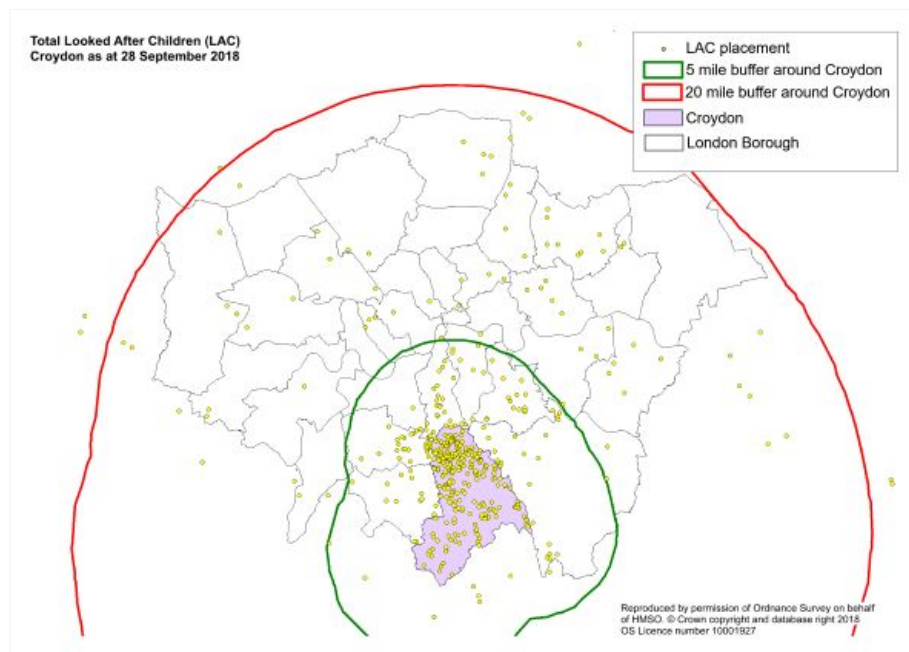
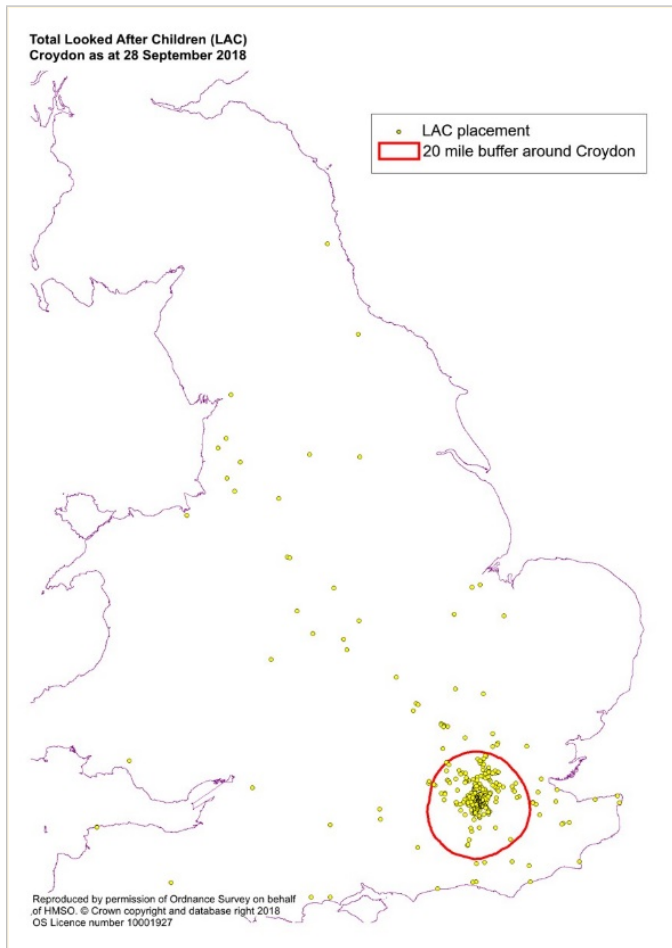
been in care for 2.5 years or more, 77% only had one placement during the year, and 3% had three placements or more.



6.7 Croydon has a high demand for local placements with 92% of all looked after children placed less than 20 miles from home at 31st March 2018. 62 children (8%) were placed more than 20 miles outside of Croydon's boundaries.²⁷

6.7 As at 28 September 2018, 52% are placed in Croydon, 23% are placed outside Croydon, but within 5 miles of the Croydon border, 25% are placed further than 5 miles from the Croydon border, and 12% are placed further than 20 miles from the Croydon border.

²⁷ 2017/18 Croydon 903 submission (unpublished)



7. Sufficiency Areas

A. Fostering

- A1. Of our 654 foster placements, 62 (9%) children were being cared by parents or family friend member. Over half (34) of these children were under the age of 10.²⁸ The remaining 592 looked after children in foster placements are placed either with Croydon in-house foster carers or through an independent fostering agency (IFA).

In house foster care recruitment and assessment

- A4. Croydon had 237 foster care households as at 12 October 2018 who provided 337 in-house foster placements.²⁹ At October 2018, 85% of our foster carers had one or more child placed with them. 43% (103 families) had 2 or more children placed with them.³⁰

Placement Numbers per Family	Number of Carers / Families	Total Placement
1	98	98
2	74	148
3	25	75
4	4	16
No Placement	36	No Placement
Grand Total	237	337

- A5. The number of foster carers is relatively stable, with 50 new foster carers approved over the last three years. Ongoing recruitment of new carers is vital to maintain and grow our overall cohort of in-house foster carers. A larger cohort of in house carers would increase our ability to respond to the demand for foster placements. Wherever possible, in-house foster carers offer a flexible and more cost effective way to offer placements with foster carers, and are considered first before looking externally to IFAs.
- A6. However, turnover of foster carers, the introduction of staying put and the emphasis on long term placements means that there is increased pressure on our placements. In particular, 62 (26%) of our foster carers are aged 65 or above (30 of whom are 70 or above). This means that we need successful recruitment to maintain numbers, as well as to grow.
- A7. Croydon’s foster care recruitment and assessment service has been provided externally through a commissioned service since June 2015. Following a review of the delivery model and the development of a new recruitment pathway, this contract is ending. We have commissioned Coram (Thomas Coram Foundation for Children) to work with the Council from November 2018, managing the transformation of the service and facilitating the transfer back in house in November 2020. The Council has also been successful in obtaining grants for targeted recruitment for UASC and enhancing the skills and knowledge of our in-house foster carers working with UASC through a focused training programme.

Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs)

- A8. A Framework Agreement for IFAs was established in August 2016 for a period of three years with an option to extend for a further year, for the provision of standard placements, Parent and Child, remand and complex and challenging needs placements. The framework agreement is designed to create greater choice and flexibility in the range of provision in and outside the borough. The framework contract was refreshed in August 2018 resulting in the re-tiering of 30 providers who actively continue to provide services for Croydon. The refresh process identified an improvement in the overall quality of providers commissioned to deliver this service, with 90% being rated as Good and Outstanding by Ofsted.

²⁸ 2017/18 Croydon 903 submission (unpublished)

²⁹ CRS report on foster carers 12/10/2018.

³⁰ CRS report on foster carers 12/10/2018.

- A9. Of the 296 children and young people in IFA placements, the majority (84%) are framework placements. Off-framework placements are generally linked to overall market capacity for complex placements and to specific needs of a child.
- A10. There is an increasing demand for Parent and Child placements, as well as placement for children and young people with complex placements, which the Council is working with providers to meet to continue meeting their needs.
- A11. Croydon has a very competitive market for fostering and semi-independent placements, which is reflected in the large number of other children and young people looked after by other local authorities who are placed in Croydon. This puts additional pressure on the availability of placements in Croydon and impacts on the overall risk profile for our vulnerable adolescents placed within the borough.

Fostering as a route to permanency

- A12. Prioritising foster placements as a route to permanency is important for both local looked after children and UASC and searches for foster placements give consideration as far as possible to a long term plan for the child. When it is acknowledged that the long term plan for the child is for them to remain in foster care in the current placement, work is undertaken to agree the match through presenting the case to either the Fostering Panel or to a Matching Panel, offering long term stability to the child and foster carer. At 31st March 2018, 537 of a total of 654 foster placements (82%) were recorded as long term fostering. There were a further 5 placements with a plan to adopt.³¹

Staying Put

- A13. Social workers develop the pathway plan for young people approaching their 18th birthday and work with the young person and their foster carers to consider whether staying put is the most appropriate plan for each young person. At 31st March 2018, there were 25 care leavers who were staying put with their foster carer.³² At 31 October 2018, this had increased to 47.

Future needs for fostering

- *In-house foster placements that can meet the needs of Croydon children and young people:*
 - *Ethnically diverse*
 - *Can offer placements for older children and young people (10+) as well as younger children and babies*
 - *Can offer placements for children with complex needs*
 - *Can offer parent and baby placements*
- *Maintain and increase number of in-house foster carers*
- *Focus on effectiveness of arrangements for long term fostering placements to support permanency.*

Actions:

1. Implement our new model for foster carer recruitment and assessment, working with a new delivery partner

³¹ CSC Monthly dashboard, 31 March 2018

³² 2017/18 Croydon 903 submission (unpublished)

2. Target the recruitment of in-house foster carers to Croydon's profile of looked after children and young people, including carers who can offer specialist and long term care.
3. Ensure options for permanency are considered and progressed, including long term fostering and fostering for adoption.
4. Implement revised staying put offer to ensure more young people have the opportunity to stay with their foster carer for longer.
5. Implement revised allowances for foster carers by April 2019.

B. Residential placements

- B1. We know that most children are most often better supported by families rather than being placed in residential care. Therefore, residential care is being used to meet specialist and specific needs where fostering does not currently offer the best option for the child. Croydon expects placements to be outcome focused, with a view to bringing the child home or close to home in Croydon. All residential placements are reviewed regularly by the Placement Stability Panel.
- B2. We have experienced an increase in residential placements (homes and hostels), however this remains below the national average. 31 children (4 %) are in residential placements (children's home, secure unit or hostel) as at end March 2018³³ against a national average of 11%. Children in residential are aged 9 to 17. 41% are 9-13 years old and 59% 14 to 17 years old, with equal distribution of gender.
- B3. Residential placement option are considered where they are the best fit for a young person's needs, either short or long term, including where a family-based placement is not suitable.
- B4. Currently, Croydon spot purchases from London Care Service contracted resources. Under the umbrella of the successful South London SEN Commissioning Programme, 11 boroughs have agreed to work with Croydon to establish an integrated commissioning solution for the commissioning of good quality residential placements for looked after children, at a fair price. As well as enabling Croydon to commission placements based on outcomes and needs of the children and young people, working with partner boroughs provides the leverage required to shape the market and the information required to look at our sufficiency in a more joined up, strategic way. There are clear benefits of moving away from spot purchasing to working together using an integrated commissioning solution such as a DPS including economies of scale, better pricing and discounting arrangements, agreements on the same contracts terms and conditions, sharing good practice & intelligence.

Future need for residential placements

- *Ongoing need for outcomes based residential placements, including short term placements and placements for young people with complex needs.*
- *Residential placements closer to home*
- *Residential placements that represent good value for money*

Actions:

³³ SSD 903 2017 -2018

1. Continue to work in partnership with other South London boroughs to establish an Integrated Commissioning Solution (Dynamic Purchasing System) for the outcomes based commissioning of Residential Placements.

C. Semi Independent accommodation

- C1. 63 looked after young people are living semi-independently (at 31 March 2018).³⁴ Our current cohort of young people in semi-independent accommodation is split equally between local young people and young people who are UASC.³⁵

The use of semi-independent accommodation continues to be the highest used type of placement after fostering placements.

- C2. Semi-independent accommodation can be offered where an assessment of independence skills indicates that the young person is ready to move towards greater independence.
- C3. The needs of looked after young people accommodated within semi-independent provision have significantly shifted from the previous year. 2016/2017 data shows that 80% were standard placements and 20% complex placements; however this position significantly changed by late 2017 with approx. 73% CLA placed in complex placements (24 hour / solo placements).
- C4. Croydon established a new Framework Agreement for Semi Independent Accommodation and Support Services for children looked after aged 16 and 17 in January 2017 for an interim period of 2 years (with an option to extend for a further two years). 22 providers were appointed to this Framework for the provision of standard and complex placements offering 24 hour units and support hours. This offers a good range of quality assured providers that effectively meet the demand for this service. This approach provides consistency in the commissioning and utilisation of semi-independent placements, and a continuum of support for young people moving from care to living independently in the community.

Future need for semi-independent accommodation

- *Ongoing need for semi-independent accommodation for both local looked after children and UASC, including a high proportion of young people with complex needs.*

Actions:

1. Ensure a sufficient and effective range of semi-independent options for young people through the semi Independent accommodation and support framework.

D. Adoption /Special Guardianship Orders

³⁴ 2017/18 Croydon 903 submission (unpublished)

³⁵ 2017/18 Croydon 903 submission (unpublished)

- D1. Planning for permanence is a key focus area for us, including effective planning and timeliness of adoption where this best meets children's needs, and focused family-finding activity for children with adoption plans, to minimise delays.
- D2. We have a clear expectation for planning for permanency at every stage of the child's journey, and monitor the time it takes from a permanence option being identified for a child, and that placement being formally recognised as a permanent placement.

Adoption

- D3. Croydon's percentage rate of adoption (4% at 31 March 2017 and 2.3% at 31 March 2018) is lower than the national average (14% at 31 March 2017). However, Croydon has a high proportion of UASC and these children are not normally placed for adoption, which negatively affects Croydon's performance rating on adoption.
- D4. The Croydon trend reflects a similar reduction in the number of adoptions as nationally due to a reduction the number of placement orders and the number placed for adoption. Whilst the numbers have reduced, Croydon is continuing to place children for adoption or where this is in the child's best interests and at September 2018, there were 19 children who were placed with families and are awaiting an Adoption Order.
- D5. Croydon is both recruiting its own adopters, utilising already approved and waiting adopters, and purchasing adopters from independent agencies. Croydon also took advantage of the grant from the DfE to purchase adopters from other agencies. In Croydon there were 37 approved adopters awaiting for a match as at 31 March 2018.³⁶
- D6. Significant improvements have been made in the average time it takes between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family. At the end of 2017/18 the average time was 309 days, below the DfE threshold of 487 days.³⁷
- D7. It remains a challenge to secure adoptive families for children who have complex needs and/or disabilities, sibling groups and children from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups. Therefore, our recruitment strategy is focused on improving the performance in this area. Croydon is also focusing on recruiting 'Foster to Adopt' carers. These are approved adopters who have a dual approval to foster a child and subsequently adopt the child when the LA is granted an order to place for adoption.
- D9. Croydon plans to further develop this model through the regionalisation agenda, and through internal recruitment. This resource will be closely aligned to our pool of existing in-house foster carers, approved and waiting to ensure babies and toddlers who become looked after are placed with foster to adopt carers. This will help to avoid placement moves and secure stability early on, contributing to better outcomes for the child.
- D10. Croydon is one of ten London Boroughs who will come together to form the South London hub of the London Regional Adoption Agency. London Borough have been working together, supported by funding from the Department of Education, to develop this model. From April 2019, Adopt South London will take over the recruitment and assessment functions regarding adopters as well as the adoption support functions offering an opportunity to further strengthen our practice.

Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs)

³⁶ 2017/18 Croydon 903 submission (unpublished)

³⁷ DfE SFR 41/2016, 29 September 2016

- D11 25 children ceased to be in care as a result of a Special Guardianship Order in 2017/18. This is a reduction compared to 35 in 2015 /16 and 35 children in 2014/15³⁸.
- D12. Croydon has invested in six social worker posts to undertake SGO and Connected Carer assessments which will help ensure that SGOs can be identified and progressed effectively where this best meets the child's needs.

Future needs for adoption and SGOs

- Targeted increase in number in the number identified adopters and long term foster carers, to match the needs of our looked after children and ensure that adoptive families can be identified more quickly.
- Stronger intelligence regarding permanency and progress to prevent drift and delay and increase speed and overall numbers for whom permanency is achieved.

Actions:

1. Increase in the numbers of children leaving care through adoption, achieving a minimum of 20 adoptions each year.
2. Recruit more adoptive families for disabled children, BME groups and to keep siblings together.
3. Increase the number of foster to adopt families
4. Continue to improve performance in placing children through SGOs

E. Leaving Care

Croydon has the largest number of care leavers in London and one of the largest numbers of care leavers nationally.

- E1. The Leaving Care Service supports 676 care leavers aged 19-21, as at 31 March 2018.

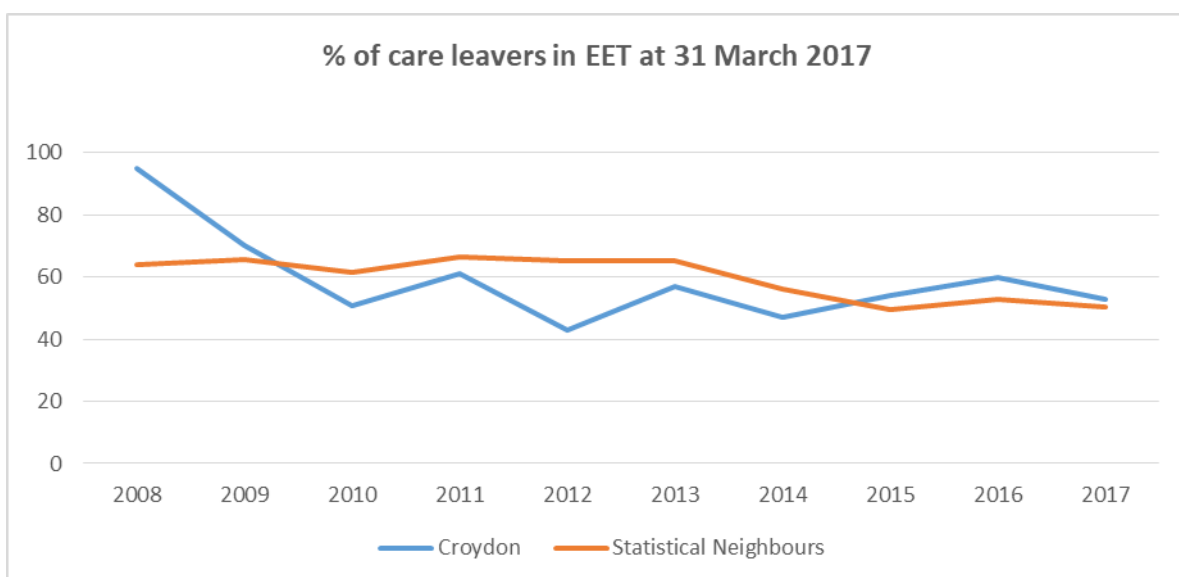
Gender	Aged 19	Aged 20	Aged 21	Grand Total
Female	54	49	46	149
Male	197	176	154	527
Grand Total	251	225	200	676

- E2. Croydon is unusual in that a high proportion of our care leavers, in common with our LAC cohort, are currently UASC.
- E3. Croydon Care Leavers' Local Offer, published in September 2018, outlines the services available and will be the benchmark against which we will measure our delivery. The leaving care service has expanded in size and reach as a result. The local offer will help ensure that all young people leaving care know what support is available, and PAs will follow up at each review meeting to confirm that they are aware of the offer.
- E4. Planning for leaving care starts before the young person's 18th birthday to establish their ambitions and aims for the future. The Leaving Care Team allocates a Personal Advisor to each care leaver who is 17 and over and amongst other duties they work with young people and the young person's social work team on the plans each young person has beyond their

³⁸ 2017/18 Croydon 903 submission (unpublished)

18th birthday. 98% of care leavers and 48% eligible looked after children had an up to date pathway plan at 31st March 2018³⁹.

- E5. At 31 March 2018, 76% of Croydon’s care leavers were in suitable accommodation.⁴⁰ This is a slight decrease compared to 31 March 2017 (77%), and lower than the national rate (84%) and statistical neighbours (82%).⁴¹
- E6. The housing needs of looked after young people approaching the age of 18 are considered through a housing panel who consider the options for each young person including the Landlord Guaranteed Rent Scheme or private tenancy. As far as possible, locations close to support networks, including relatives, or friends, colleges, or work are sought. Floating support may be offered if needed through Supported Housing Service. This panel also plans for those leaving semi-independent accommodation at 18.
- E7. We have a high number of care leavers living in independent accommodation, 492 as at 31st March 2018, of whom 334 are UASC⁴². Croydon has a range of options to support care leavers, to live independently and the Leaving Care team is proactive in supporting these young people; in meeting their housing needs and providing continued support with things like setting up home, budgeting for rent and other household costs, and links to other support services, once a home is found. The team works actively with the landlords to ensure tenancies are maintained and reduce the risk of eviction.
- E8. Croydon has a higher than average proportion of care leavers in education, training and employment (53%)⁴³, which enables young people to maintain a positive outlook and as consequence they are more likely to be stable in their accommodation. This decreased slightly to 50% in 2018.⁴⁴



- E9. Looking at Croydon’s current cohort of 16 and 17 year old LAC and care leavers (at Nov 2018) provides a further insight:

³⁹ CSC Monthly Dashboard 31 March 2018
⁴⁰ 2017/18 Croydon 903 submission (unpublished)
⁴¹ DfE SFR 41/2016, 29 September 2016
⁴² CSC Monthly Dashboard 31 March 2018
⁴³ DfE SFR 2017 – 2016/17 903 data
⁴⁴ 2017/18 Croydon 903 submission (unpublished)

16/17 year old LAC & Care Leavers - Participation Type (Nov-18)			
	Total	In Borough	OOB
Apprenticeship	2	2	0
6th Form	32	12	20
FE College	204	103	101
Secure	7	0	7
Employment	11	5	6
Other Post 16	3	0	3
Training ESFA Funded	2	0	2
Totals	261	122	139

- E10. A high proportion (78%) of post-16 LAC/care leavers are in college provision and low proportion (12%) in school sixth forms. The high volume of UASC in this age group is thought to be a contributing factor as school sixth forms curriculum is A' level dominated. UASC (particularly those who have arrived during key stage 4) are less likely to have received the required GCSE grades at age 16 to gain entry to A' level courses in academic year 12. The low apprenticeship rate is typical for this age group, as this tends to be a more popular option at 18+.
- E11. Croydon has a number of care leavers who present with additional risk or vulnerability from their involvement as victims of all forms of exploitation, or from involvement in gangs and/or criminal activity. We work closely with statutory services including the HM Prison Service and probation to ensure that discharge of young people from prison is done in a safe and planned way and they receive appropriate support in the community upon release.
- E12. An area of pressure on our services is accommodation costs of the young people who have no recourse to public funds, because their asylum claim has failed or they have exhausted all right so appeal to stay in the UK. As at May 2018 Croydon was home to 166 such young people. The policy of the Council in this area is currently under review.

Actions:

1. Implement and deliver the Local Offer, ensuring that care leavers know their entitlements and the support available to them so that they experience improved outcomes
2. Continue to work to better integrate pathways of access between children's social care, Gateway and Welfare, and Housing Need services, to ensure that planning for independent accommodation at a strategic and individual level happens at as early a stage as possible.

8. Support for children and families

- 8.1 As well as making arrangements for sufficient placements where a period of time in care is the right option for the child, we have support in place for children, young people and families to address emerging needs and issues before they escalate.
- 8.2 Early help means taking action to support a child, young person or their family early in the life of a problem, as soon as it emerges. For children who have been in care and are

returning to their family, these services can offer ongoing support to the child and family, to maximise the opportunity for the child to continue to be safe and achieve good outcomes. For other families, early help can prevent difficulties becoming more significant and escalating to the point of requiring social care involvement.

- 8.3 For young people already experiencing difficulties, we have targeted support available to either prevent care becoming necessary, or to support them through a period of time care with a view to returning home.

Early Help

- 8.9 Croydon's Partnership Early Help Strategy and delivery plan, approved in September 2018, will provide a joined up, effective early help offer for children aged 0 to 18 years and their families; which is delivered on a locality, evidence based model through a shared partnership approach to collectively delivering universal and early help services. It will enable families, communities and all professionals to:
- Respond quickly and effectively to the need for early help
 - Intervene and provide support to stop an issue escalating
 - Ensure there is consensual and partnership approach to working with all children and their families
- 8.10 The proposed delivery model is shaped around three Early Help locality hubs which provide a locality base for bringing together a range of practitioners and close collaboration and alignment of services.

Targeted support - children on the edge of care

- 8.2 To provide a better response to vulnerable adolescents before their needs escalate to this level, as well to the needs of looked after children, we have established a dedicated adolescent service. This services aims in particular to reduce risks around exploitation.
- 8.3 We have also established a collaborative partnership with Family Action, a national charity that has received funding to work with a local authority, to deliver an intensive support pilot for 30 families for 12 months from Sept 2018. Three family action practitioners offer an additional intensive Edge of Care Service to improve outcomes for children and families through either intensive, time-limited support to families (where a child is on the edge of care and child care proceedings are likely/imminent or intensive), or time-limited support to enable a better transition out of care. The Service is designed to enable us to pause before child care legal proceedings begin and give a family with a child on the edge of care a final opportunity to make positive progress through intensive, time-limited support tailored to their needs. Family Action will provide an evaluation and cost benefit analysis at the end of the pilot year, leading to a fully developed and evaluated Edge of Care model which Croydon, along with other local authorities, can adopt in the longer term.
- 8.4 If concerns about the care and protection of a child or young person have been identified, a S20 placement may be agreed by the Edge of Care Panel. A S20 placement may in particular be agreed if it is considered by a Family Group Conference (FGC) that significant progress can be made in resolving concerns within a specified period of separation for the child or young person from the care of their parent/guardian, and a commitment exists to resolve the presenting issues. This is intended as a temporary measure with a clear plan for the child or young person returning home at the agreed end date, or to undertake care proceedings if concerns are not resolved. The Council is developing a new FGC offer that will see the service developing more capacity in house and expanding support to children and families at PLO stage and early help. Ultimately this aims to reduce the number of young people coming into care / remaining in care.

Young people at risk of homelessness

- 8.5 The Council commission services from CAYSH, who are based at the Turnaround Centre, to be the first point of contact for 16/17 year olds who may have homelessness issues. CAYSH work with young people and their families to determine homelessness. This work will include assessment, support, advice and guidance and mediation between 16-17 year olds and their parent / carers.
- 8.6 Where a 16-17 year old is identified as being immediately homeless, this triggers a duty under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 to initiate an assessment of need. Young people have to give consent to such assessments.
- 8.7 The assessment of need will determine if the young person meets the criteria of the Southwark Judgement. If the criteria is met, we have a duty to offer accommodation under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989. If the young person does not want to become looked after and we do not consider that their needs are such that we should override their wishes in order to safeguard them, they will be signposted to housing services, including CAYSH, as they will be deemed being in priority need.

9. Summary of actions

	Action
Fostering	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement our new model for foster carer recruitment and assessment, working with a new delivery partner 2. Target the recruitment of in-house foster carers to Croydon's profile of looked after children and young people, including carers who can offer specialist and long term care. 3. Ensure options for permanency are considered and progressed, including long term fostering and fostering for adoption. 4. Implement revised staying put offer to ensure more young people have the opportunity to stay with their foster carer for longer. 5. Implement revised allowances for foster carers by April 2019.
Residential placements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work in partnership with other South London boroughs to establish an Integrated Commissioning Solution (Dynamic Purchasing System) for the outcomes based commissioning of Residential Placements.
Semi-independent accommodation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure a sufficient and effective range of SIA options for young people through the semi Independent accommodation and support framework.
Adoption and Special Guardianship Orders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase in the numbers of children leaving care through adoption. 2. Recruit more adoptive families for disabled children, BME groups and to keep siblings together. 3. Increase the number of foster to adopt families
Leaving Care	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement and deliver the Local Offer, ensuring that care leavers know their entitlements and the support available to them so that they experience improved outcomes 2. Continue to work to better integrate pathways of access between children's social care, Gateway and Welfare, and Housing Need services, to ensure that

	planning for independent accommodation at a strategic and individual level happens at as early a stage as possible.
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Agenda Item 8

REPORT TO:	Corporate Parenting Panel 16th January 2019
SUBJECT:	Health of Looked After Children
LEAD OFFICER:	Wendy Tomlinson (Head of Corporate Parenting) Fiona Simmons (Designated Looked After Children Nurse)
CABINET MEMBER:	Alisa Flemming, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Learning
WARDS:	ALL
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT: A caring city: Provide safer, high quality, integrated healthcare and social care services close to home with a focus on maternity, children and young people, and mental health services. Corporate Parenting.	
FINANCIAL IMPACT No financial considerations.	
FORWARD PLAN KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO: N/A	

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1 Corporate Parenting Panel to note the report which is an update on arrangements for improving health outcomes for Croydon's Looked After Children and the needs of Croydon's Looked After Children identified through health assessments and referrals to Croydon's Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The corporate parenting responsibilities of local authorities include having a duty under section 22(3)(a) of the Children Act 1989 to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children they look after, including eligible children and those placed for adoption, regardless of whether they are placed in or out of authority or the type of placement. This includes the promotion of the child's physical, emotional and mental health and acting on any early signs of health issues.
- 2.2 The report appended is in response to the Panel's request for an update on health of looked after children.

3. DETAIL OF YOUR REPORT

The report on “Assessing the health and wellbeing of Croydon’s looked after children” is appended.

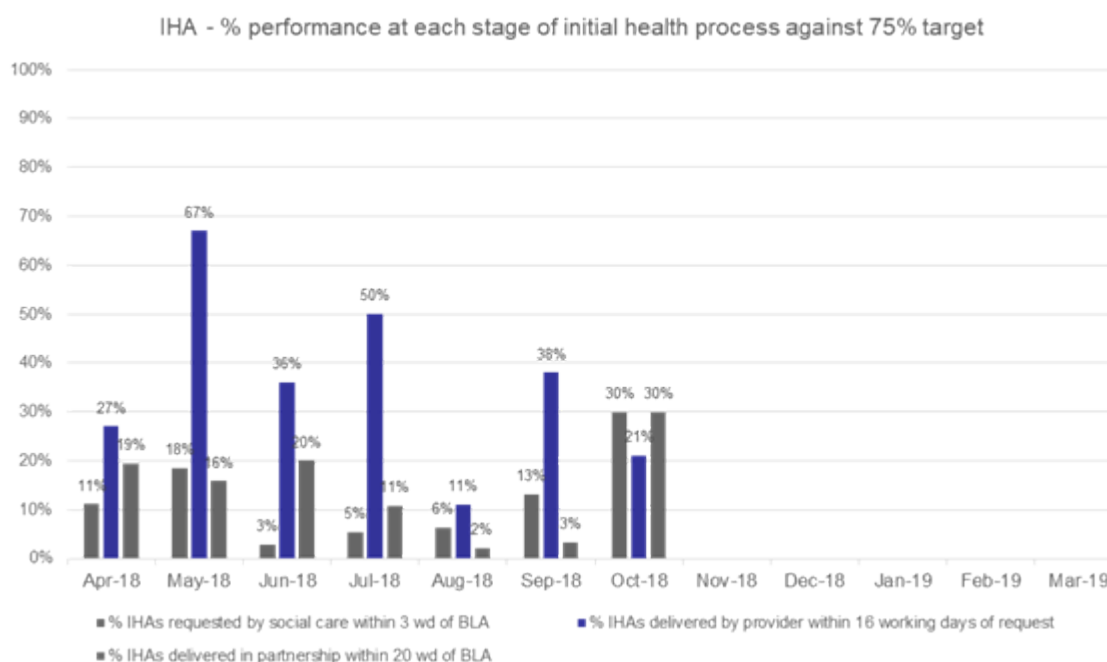
3.1 The process for LAC health assessments

- When a child or young person becomes looked after in Croydon, a referral is made into the health service by the administrators in Social Care. Notification to health professionals of the child’s details, including address and date of becoming looked after is shared by secure email. LAC health administrators arrange for a Looked After Children health assessment to be completed according to statutory timescales - within 20 working days of becoming looked after.
- When a child or young person is due a review a health assessment- either 6 monthly for a child under 5 years old, or yearly for children over the age of 5 and up to 18 - a referral is sent to health partners so that an appointment could be offered for a health assessment.
- The current process does not allow for timely notification of placements and looked after status into the health system. A LEAN review group has been established to evaluate the current process and develop one that allows for the sharing of timely and accurate information. Group membership includes Social Care and Business Support managers, the operational leads for LAC health, and the Project Manager in the Children’s Improvement Team. The governance for the group rests with the Partnership Task Group and the Children’s Improvement Board, and the overall aim is for the Looked After Children’s population in Croydon to access good quality, timely health services that meet their health needs and improves their health outcomes.

3.2 Delivery of initial health assessments for looked after children

- Improving the timely delivery of initial health assessments is a priority for the LAC health partnership in 2018/19. All our LAC should receive an initial health assessment.
- Our local targets are as follows:
 - 75% of new LAC will be referred to the LAC Health team for initial health assessments within 3 working days of the child becoming looked after
 - 75% of initial health assessments will be delivered within 16 working days of the referral
 - 75% of initial health assessments will be delivered within 20 working days of the child becoming looked after.
 - These targets will be reviewed and reset for the period 2019/20, to ensure that most children who are a part of the Croydon LAC population are accessing services according to statutory timescales

- The chart below shows that there is considerable work to do to achieve target performance;
 - Social Care and Health services are working in partnership to resolve issues.
 - Social Care Improvement are in the process of completing a LEAN process review covering the pathway from the child becoming looked after to the referral to the LAC nursing team to ensure the 3 working days referral target can be met. Actions from these meetings are escalated into the Partnership Task Group.
 - The Head of Children and Maternity Integrated Commissioning on behalf of Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group has agreed additional clinics within resources to ensure the 16 working days delivery target can be met.



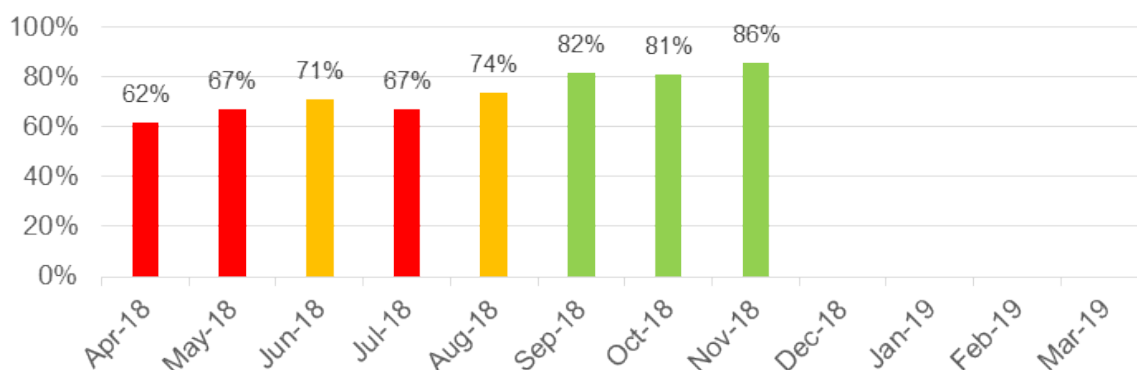
3.3 Delivery of review health assessments for looked after children

- Improving the delivery of review health assessments is Looked After Children (LAC) Health Partnership priority for 2017/18 and 2018/19. LAC must receive an annual review health assessment if they are aged 5 to 17 years, or two reviews if they are aged under 5.
- Following a demand and capacity review in 2017/18, Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group agreed immediate additional funding for the Looked After Children nursing team and a further cash injection was approved at the start of 2018/19.
- Based on the agreed additional CCG funding 1.6 WTE specialist LAC nurses and 0.6 WTE business support have been in place since the start of Sep 2018

and this has enabled a significant increase in the number of review health assessments delivered. The chart below shows the improvement over the year with current performance exceeding the target of 75% set at the start of the year.

- The target of 75% was initially set as an aspirant target for the course of 2018/19 in light of the health provider previously not meeting service delivery targets set by the CCG. The provider service has exceeded the 75% target and this will be reviewed and reset with the aim of reaching a higher target of between 95% to 100%.
- The priority for the last quarter of the year for review health assessments will be to improve on the delivery of health assessments for Croydon LAC placed locally and in other areas, by achieving a higher rate of health assessment completion. Where the local LAC health team is unable to deliver health assessments, there will need to be negotiation with LAC health counterparts in the areas where the children and young people are placed, to achieve this.

% LAC in care at least 12 months with up to date health assessments which is KPI reported at year end to Department for Education (target is 75% for 18/19)



3.4 **Looked After Children access to emotional wellbeing and mental health services**

3.4.1 The LAC CAMHS service is commissioned by Croydon Council from the South London and Maudsley Trust who also provide a CAMHS service to the wider population in Croydon commissioned by the Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). Compass (as part of Off the Record Counselling Service) is also commissioned by Croydon Council to provide specialist counselling services for looked after children who are unaccompanied minors, refugees, and economic migrants.

3.4.2 The CAMHS team accepts referrals of looked after children and young people with emotional, behavioural and mental health difficulties. In 2017 / 18 CAMHS received 101 referrals for Croydon LAC and accepted 91 (90%). So far in 2018 44 referrals were received by CAMHS and 29 (66%) accepted (data from the London Dataset 2017 / 2018). The team offers an initial consultation following referral to explore the most appropriate response to meet the needs of the child or young person referred.

This may involve:

- assessment and treatment for the child or young person,
- working with the child or young person's foster carers, residential staff
- or, where appropriate, working with the birth family,
- supporting professionals' network meeting
- support for foster carers; e.g "Fostering Changes" which is a twelve week course which runs twice yearly for foster carers. This course covers the effects of disrupted attachment and trauma on children's emotional well-being as well as providing practical strategies for managing behaviours.

3.4.3 The Croydon CAMHS service has had a recent restructure. One aim of this restructure was to increase the size of the team working with vulnerable children including children who are looked after. Another aim was to increase accessibility to wide range of therapeutic modalities for looked after children. The team which has the most contact with looked after children is the Getting Support with Risk team. This is made up of:

- Iris Varales – Team Leader
- Dr Michaela Murray – Clinical Psychologist - part time
- Dr Jo Webb- Clinical Psychologist- part time
- Dr Simon Wilkinson – Consultant Psychiatrist – part time
- Alison Floyd - Family Therapist- full time
- Maxine Oteng – social worker
- Sydney Dennis – YOS diversion officer
- Dr Ali Ibrahim – Specialist trainee in psychiatry
- Dr Su Chakrabarti - Specialist trainee in psychiatry
- Jo Blankson – Administrator

- 3.5 Croydon CAMHS provides consultation advice and support to the LAC Social Work Teams, Supervising Social Workers and the Virtual School staff team on both a regular and an ad hoc basis, to ensure oversight of all looked after children and young people's emotional well-being and mental health needs. This involves identifying behaviours and presenting difficulties that indicate need for further assessment or CAMHS support, supporting care planning and review processes, offering a direct referral route into the CAMHS service and prompting strong working relationships between Social Care and CAMHS.
- 3.6 Croydon CAMHS does not offer a differentiated service offered by Tier and referrals or interventions are not processed in this way. Once a LAC YP is accepted for a CAMHS service they are able to access any assessment or treatment that is considered appropriate (irrespective of Tier) and referrals are accepted for LAC YP (0-18yrs) at a lower threshold than the generic mental health or neuropsychiatric service (generally considered to be a Tier 2 & 3 service). This group also get priority access to assessments and treatment as part of CAMHS funding agreements and in recognition of their particular vulnerabilities. A network meeting/consultation is offered as a first appointment, to explore what is going to be most helpful and what mental health concerns have been raised. Children and young people requiring assessment and intervention, are offered a specialist CAMHS assessment, including neuropsychiatry, mental health and cognitive assessments and evidence based interventions, such as cognitive behaviour therapy, family therapy, Dialectical behavior therapy (DBT)-informed therapy, trauma-focussed therapy and narrative exposure therapy.
- 3.7 Specific traumas within the UASC population (as for any young person) are assessed on an individual basis rather than adopting a standardised response and the focus is on assessment of need and offering the most appropriate evidence-based intervention. This could include watchful waiting, Trauma-focused CBT, Narrative Exposure Therapy (NET) and/or EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitising Reprocessing). These CYP are also able to access evidence based treatment for other conditions such as depression and anxiety.
- 3.8 The LAC CAMHS team also offers:
- Network meetings for foster carers, social workers, teachers and other relevant professionals in a young person's life to discuss their mental health and how best to support them
 - Fostering Changes Courses: 12 week programme which runs twice yearly for foster carers. This course supports foster carers to form a greater understanding of the effects of disrupted attachment and trauma on children and young people's overall development and provides practical strategies for managing behaviour.
 - A regular drop in slot for foster carers to discuss any concerns they might have about their child's mental health with a CAMHS clinician.
- 3.9 LAC CAMHS also offers a training programme to Children's social care to support the awareness raising and development of the childrens services workforce in relation to emotional and mental health needs for children and young people, providing training on emotional and mental health development, attachment, trauma and role of CAMHS.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 This report has been produced in collaboration between health commissioners, Designated professionals, health provider leads and Croydon Local Authority social care managers

5 FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial considerations arising from this report.

6. COMMENTS OF THE COUNCIL SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

- 6.1 There are no legal implications of this report.

7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 7.1 There are no human resources implications of this report.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1 This report is not proposing a change in policy or service.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 9.1 There are no environmental implications of this report.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

- 10.1 There are no crime and disorder implications of this report.

CONTACT OFFICER: Wendy Tomlinson, Head of Corporate Parenting and
Fiona Simmons, Designated Nurse for Looked After Children
and Young People

APPENDICES: None

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REPORT TO:	Corporate Parenting Panel 16th January 2019
SUBJECT:	Education & Employment & Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) Young People
LEAD OFFICER:	Nick Pendry Director of Early Help and Children’s Social Care
CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr Flemming Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Learning
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON:	
FINANCIAL IMPACT None.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- For information purposes only.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Whilst in care/care leavers are much more likely to be NEET than their non-looked after peers, we do perform better than both national and statistical neighbour averages.
- 2.2 Former UASC young people are much more likely to be in EET than non-UASC care leavers.
- 2.3 A larger proportion of 16/17 year olds in care/leavers attend college that their non-looked after peers but less are in school sixth forms, suggesting they are more likely to be following vocational pathways and/or lower level courses.
- 2.4. There are financial incentives available for in/care leavers to remain in EET.

3. OVERVIEW

Statutory Duties

- 3.1 All young people are required to stay in appropriate education, employment or training (EET) until their 18th birthday. This includes:
 - Staying in full-time education, at a school sixth form or college
 - Learning whilst you work, e.g. traineeships and apprenticeships

- Getting a job with specified training, e.g. formal employer-led training such as the armed forces
 - Volunteering for more than 20 hours a week in combination with accredited learning
- 3.2 Local authorities are statutorily required to track the participation of all 16 and 17 year olds who are resident within their borough, identify those who are NEET and offer appropriate support into sustainable EET until they reach age 18.
- 3.3 In addition local authorities are required to track EET outcomes for care leavers until their 21st birthday. This means that data in this report will refer to (unless stated otherwise):
- Looked after children/care leavers information will be for those young people for whom Croydon is the corporate parent, irrespective of which borough they reside in
 - Total cohort comparative data (all 16/17 year olds) will relate to all young people residing in Croydon, which will also include looked after children/care leavers from other boroughs who live in Croydon.
- 3.4 Post-16 (sixth form) education attainment is covered in the Annual Report of the Virtual School and therefore not covered within this report.

Financial Support

- 3.5 Young people in care or care leavers aged 16-18 years are eligible for a Bursary of £1200 per annum if they are studying an eligible programme of 30 weeks or more (pro-rata payment for shorter programmes). Payment is made directly to the young person.
- 3.6 Neither Local Authorities nor schools/colleges receive Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) for post-16 learners. ESFA funded education establishments do receive an additional £480 for each full-time student they have enrolled who is in care or a care leaver. This is determined by the number of enrolled students who claim the Bursary in the previous academic year.
- 3.7 Care leavers in Higher Education are eligible for a HE Bursary of £2000 over the course of their study as well as any entitlement to Student Finance. Under the Children Act, the local authority also has a duty to provide assistance (including contribution to expenses) for young people continuing in education or training.

16/17 Year Old Participation

- 3.8 Data is current (unvalidated - Nov-18), but please note that not knowns are high at this time of year due to new academic year participation information still being collected and recorded. Typically, NEET rises and not known reduce following completion of autumn census' and stabilisation of autumn term movement of students between providers. For this reason, official annual data is based upon a Dec-Feb monthly average which is published in late spring.

Current 16-17 Year Old Participation (un-validated Nov-18)				
	All 16/17 year old Croydon residents	Croydon LAC/care leavers only		
		All	Of which: In-borough	Of which: OOB
Number of young people	8663	313	144	169
Not Known %	11.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Participating* %	86.4%	83.4%	84.7%	82.2%
NEET %	1.4%	16.6%	15.3%	17.8%
NEET + Not Known %	13.3%	16.6%	15.3%	17.8%

*Includes young people in secure accommodation

3.9 The participation statuses of all Croydon LAC and care leavers are known, in comparison to almost 12% of the overall cohort for whom we do not have a known participation status.

3.10 Of the 313 LAC/care leavers, 207 (66%) are UASC.

3.11 52 LAC are NEET: 30 (14.5% NEET rate) of these are UASC compared to 22 (20.7%) local young people, meaning that local LAC/carer leavers are more likely to be NEET than UASC.

3.12 The LAC/care leaver NEET rate is much higher than for the total cohort. Although the NEET rate for the total cohort is likely to increase as not knowns decrease, it is typically 2% to 2.5%, so still significantly lower. LAC/care leavers equate to approximately 3.6% of the total cohort. However, they typically account for c14% of total NEET.

3.13 Of the 52 NEET LAC/care leaver young people, 22 went to Croydon schools with the remaining 30 going to schools in 21 other boroughs. Local authorities are required to support all NEET young people aged 16/17 years who reside in their borough.

16/17 year old LAC & Care Leavers - Participation Type (Nov-18)			
	Total	In Borough	OOB
Apprenticeship	2	2	0
6th Form	32	12	20
FE College	204	103	101
Secure	7	0	7
Employment	11	5	6
Other Post 16	3	0	3
Training ESFA Funded	2	0	2
Totals	261	122	139

3.14 For statutory post-16 tracking purposes we aren't required (nor do we) collect information on courses or levels of study, we just have to ascertain where they are (e.g. college, school sixth form, apprenticeship etc.)

- 3.15 A high proportion (78%) of post-16 LAC/care leavers are in college provision and low proportion (12%) in school sixth forms. However, the high volume of UASC in this age group is probably a contributing factor as school sixth forms curriculum is A level dominated. UASC (particularly those who have arrived during key stage 4) are less likely to have received the required GCSE grades at age 16 to gain entry to A level courses in academic year 12. The low apprenticeship rate is typical for this age group, as this tends to be a more popular option at 18+.
- 3.16 Popular colleges are: Croydon (57), John Ruskin (27) East Surrey (14) and Lambeth (13).

18-21 Year Old Participation

- 3.17 Activity is measured within 2 months of the young person's birthday.

	Total	Former UASC	Non Former UASC	Comparative Data	
				England 2016/17	Statistical Neighbours 2016/17
EET	406	292	114		
EET %	64%	74%	47%	50%	50.2%
NEET	232	101	131		
NEET %	36%	26%	53%	50%	49.8%

- 3.18 The number of NEET young in care/care leavers across the whole 16 to 21 year old age group is 284, meaning the majority (81%) are 18+. As with 16/17 year olds, UASC care leavers are more likely to be participating in EET than their non-UASC peers. Croydon EET and NEET rates are better than both the national average and our statistical neighbours. NEET rates do rise quite significantly at 18+, which suggests that raising the compulsory participation age from 16 years to 18 years has been successful, but the impact is high NEET rates at 18+.

3.19 Within this cohort participation as at 31 October 2018 was as follows:

Activity	Total	Former UASC	Non Former UASC
F1 - Young person engaged full time in higher education (i.e. studies beyond A level)	45	27	18
F2 - Young person engaged full time in education other than higher education	225	185	40
F3 - Young person engaged full time in training or employment	88	57	31
G4 - Young person not in education, employment or training because of illness or disability	23	9	14
G5 - Young person not in education, employment or training: other circumstances	162	75	87
G6 - Young person not in education, employment or training due to pregnancy or parenting	17	4	13
P1 - Young person engaged part time in higher education (i.e. studies beyond A level)	3	0	3
P2 - Young person engaged part time in education other than higher education	8	4	4
P3 - Young person engaged part time in training or employment	37	19	18
Unknown - Due to Lack of Contact	3	0	3
(blank)	27	13	14
Total	638	393	245

Support

3.20 A range of support is provided to NEET young people, both as part of the 'generic' local NEET offer to all 16/17 year old Croydon residents and also specific LAC/care leavers targeted support by the Virtual School. NEET young people residing in other boroughs are eligible for support offered by their home borough.

3.21 Generic 16/17 year old offer in Croydon:

- All NEET young people (and their parent/carer) residing in Croydon are

contacted by phone, text, letter and occasional door knocking offering advice, guidance and support;

- Monthly 'Youth Opportunities' bulletin detailing local opportunities such as apprenticeships, work programmes, courses and volunteering;
- Invitations to attend Croydon Works events and local careers activities;
- We also have one NEET caseworker which is co-funded by Youth Engagement and Gateway to provide support to those young people and/or their families eligible for various benefits;
- Availability of information on the Young Croydon website;
- Increased capacity to provide intensive support to NEET young people being planned for 2019/20 (subject to budget growth agreement).

Virtual School offer:

- Regular (monthly) monitoring of all LAC NEET young people (all);
- Dedicated Education Advisor to provide advice, guidance and support (12);
- Joint working with YOS (2)
- In the 17/18 academic year we introduced 1-2-1 tuition for those NEET looked after young people who require additional support, particularly with English and maths, to enable them to access and sustain full-time courses, employment or training (on an individual needs basis).

3.22 Support for those over 18 primarily comes from Croydon Works, CALAT and the Work and Health Programme run by REED. A dedicated NEET caseworker from Gateway acts as the primary link with the Leaving Care Team.

3.23 However a large number of NEET young people choose not to engage, despite frequent contact attempts and offers of support.

Employment and volunteering

3.24 Care leavers are employed in various roles across the Council, but there is scope to increase this via the apprenticeship programme. Some difficulties have been experienced in relation to care leavers (and others) employed as apprentices on the Council's apprenticeship terms and conditions, particularly in relation to financial viability for those on Universal Credit and/or with childcare needs. The Employment Pathway Strategy (draft Nov-18) makes specific provision for care leavers – To develop a package of support for care leavers interested in Council apprenticeships. This must consider Universal Credit implications. A volunteer care leaver is supporting the Children in Care Council and a peer mentoring programme is also in development for rollout early in 2019.

Higher Education

3.25 As at 31 October 2018 88 care leavers aged 18-25 were in Higher Education; 45 were aged 18-21 and 43 were aged 22 or over. It is not uncommon for care leavers to be more ready to enter Higher Education at a slightly older age than their non-care peers.

70% of the care leavers at university are former unaccompanied minors.

25 young people are at universities outside of London, including Brighton,

Sheffield, Bristol, Leeds, Anglia Ruskin and Leicester. The remainder at London universities, including City University, South London and Middlesex. Many of these young people commute to university from Croydon.

Prior to university young people had been at a wide range of schools and colleges with John Ruskin College, Croydon College and South Thames the top three feeder institutions.

4. CONSULTATION

Not applicable

5. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable

6. COMMENTS OF THE COUNCIL SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

Not applicable

7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

Not applicable

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

Not applicable

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Not applicable

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

Not applicable

CONTACT OFFICER: Julie Ralphs, Education Commissioning and Youth Engagement ext 60893 and Fiona Mackirdy, Service Manager, Leaving Care ext 47688.

APPENDICES: None

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REPORT TO:	Corporate Parenting Panel January 2019
SUBJECT:	Virtual School Annual report
LEAD OFFICER:	Robert Henderson, Executive Director Children, Families and Education Department
CABINET MEMBER:	Alisa Flemming, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Learning
WARDS:	ALL
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT:	
<p>A caring city: Provide safer, high quality, integrated healthcare and social care services close to home with a focus on maternity, children and young people, and mental health services.</p> <p>Corporate Parenting.</p>	
FINANCIAL IMPACT	
No financial considerations.	
FORWARD PLAN KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO: N/A	

1.	RECOMMENDATION
1.1	Corporate Parenting Panel to note the annual report from the Virtual school.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The corporate parenting responsibilities of local authorities include having a duty under section 22(3)(a) of the Children Act 1989 to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children they look after, including eligible children and those placed for adoption, regardless of whether they are placed in or out of authority or the type of placement. This includes the promotion of the child’s physical, emotional and mental health and acting on any early signs of health issues.

- 2.2 This report is in response to the panel’s request for an overview of the work of the Virtual school including data in relation to educational outcomes for children looked after.

3. DETAIL OF REPORT

THE CROYDON CLA COHORT 2017-2018 (Overall Numbers and Demographics)

- In 2017-18 726 children and young people were in care continually for 12 months.
- A total of 884 children were in care at any time throughout the academic.
- During 2017-2018 a total of 50% of CLA attended schools in borough and 50% of CLA were placed in schools out of borough.
- In September 2017-18 a total 717 children were placed in the care of Croydon. This went up to 884 by July 2018. This saw an increase of 167 CLA into care between September 2017-July 2018 (18.9%). (A full breakdown of the respective cohorts is provided in the table below).
- Of the total number of CLA in care at the end of the academic year, 59 (6.67%) attended special schools and 33 (57.9%) of these special schools were schools outside of Croydon.
- Of the 217 children and young people recorded as having SEN needs, 107 CLA had an EHCP, 100 were on the SEN register and 11 CLA were receiving SEN support. (Please see percentage breakdown of the overall CLA numbers in the chart below).
- In 2017-18, 71% of the number of children and young people in care were made up of 71% males compared to 29% females.
- With regards to CLA ethnicity, of the 884 CLA, 483 children and young people were recorded as *local* compared to 401 young people who were recorded as *Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking* minors. (Please see the full ethnic breakdown of the CLA cohort for 2017-2018 below).

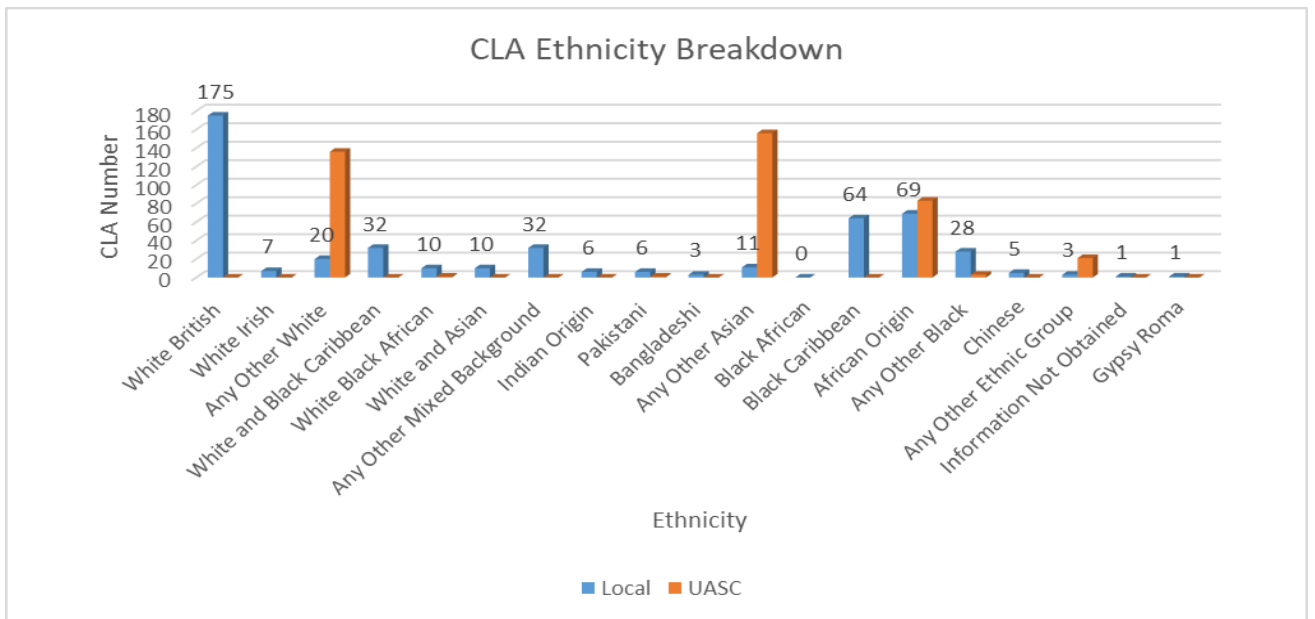
Table 3.1: Cohort Breakdown

Cohort Breakdown	Beginning of the academic year September 2017		End of the academic Year July 2018	Percentage increase of CLAs + ↑
Nursery Age	18 CLA		27 CLA	33% + ↑
Primary Age (KS1-KS2)	105 CLA		142 CLA	26% + ↑
Secondary Age (KS3-KS4)	251 CLA		346 CLA	27% + ↑
Post 16 Age (KS5)	343 CLA		369 CLA	7% + ↑

Table 3.2. SEN CLA Breakdown

SEN Category	Number of CLA	% of the overall CLA Cohort
CLA with an EHCP	107	12%
CLA on the SEN Register	207	21%
CLA SEN Support	100	11%

Bar Chart: 3.3 Croydon CLA Ethnicity Breakdown



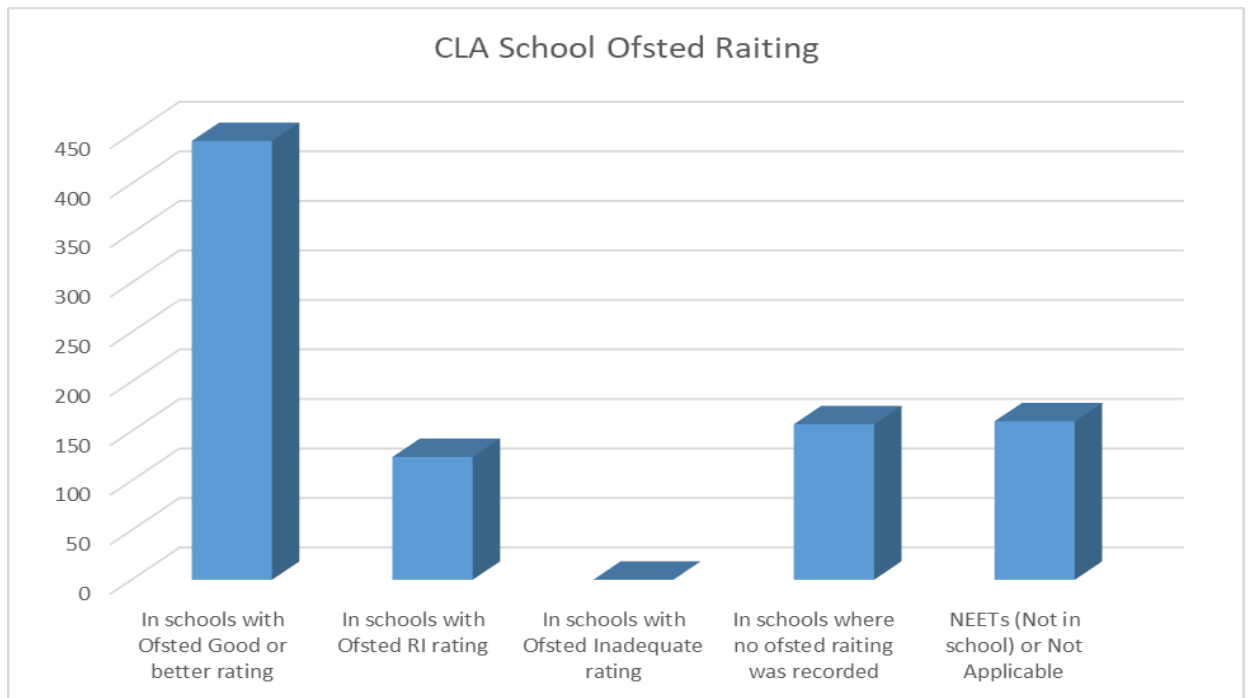
School Ofsted Rating

At the end of 2017/18, 78.1%% of statutory school age CLA attended schools rated by Ofsted as 'Outstanding' or 'Good'.

The Ofsted rating of a school where the child moves in-year is an increasing priority for Croydon and there is a now a dedicated section in the e-PEP to monitor school moves more closely.

Table 3.4: School Ofsted Rating

	Number	%
In schools with Ofsted Good or better rating	443	78.1%
In schools with Ofsted RI rating	124	21.9%
In schools with Ofsted Inadequate rating	0	0%
In schools where no ofsted rating was recorded	157	18%
NEET (Not in education) or Not Applicable	160	18%



¹. Where possible, children are placed in schools rated 'good' or better. However, if a child comes into care while in a school rated less than good it is often inappropriate to move their school place simply on the basis of the Ofsted rating of their current school.

4. Children Looked After educational Outcomes 2017/18:

4.1 EYFS (5 year olds) Reportable cohort: 8

The phonics screening check is taken individually by all children in Year 1 in England. It is designed to give teachers and parents and carers information on how children are progressing in phonics. It is aimed at helping to identify whether a child will need additional support at this stage so that they do not fall behind in this vital early reading skill.

OVERALL

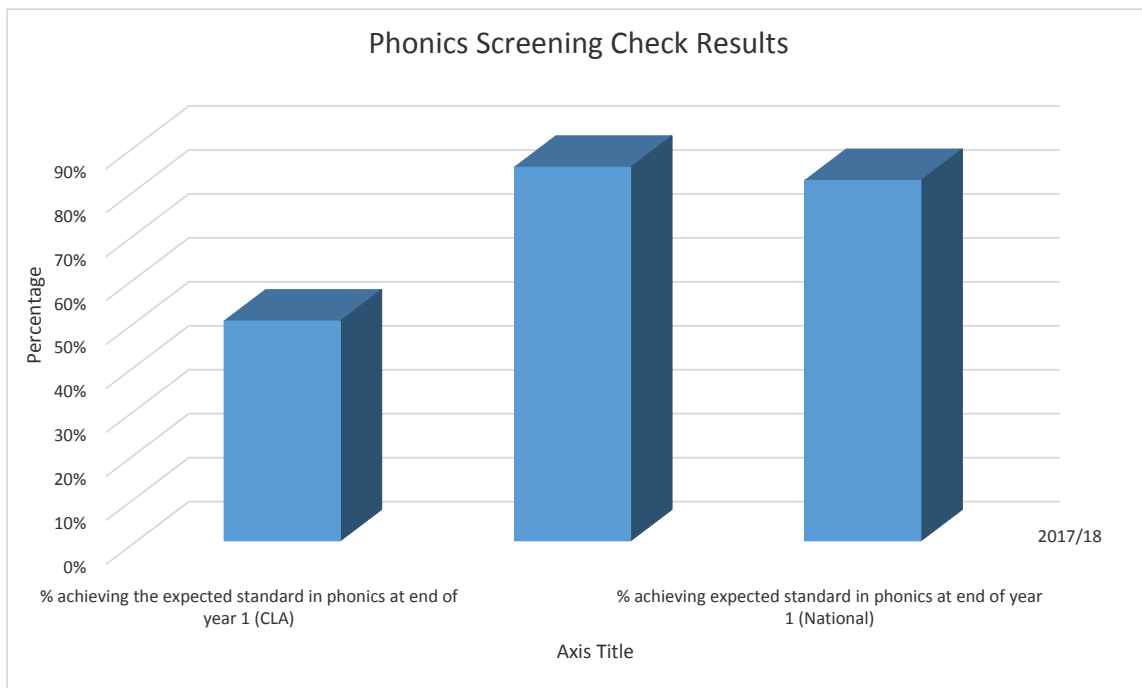
4.2 Phonics Screening Check

Table: Phonics Screening Results

Phonics screening	No. in cohort	No. in cohort eligible	No. of CLA achieving the expected standard	% of CLA achieving the expected standard
2016/17	15	10	4	40%
2017/18	16	8	4	50%

Table: Phonics Screening : Comparisons

Phonics Screening Check	% achieving the expected standard in phonics at end of year 1 (CLA)	% achieving expected standard in phonics at end of year 1 (Croydon)	% achieving expected standard in phonics at end of year 1 (national)
2017/18	50%	85%	82%



- In the 2017-2018 academic year there was an overall increase in those achieving

the expected standard in phonics screening by 10%.

- Phonics screening check, performance in 2017/18 was better than in the previous year with 50 % of children gaining the expected level. (4 out of 8 eligible pupils)
- Of the 4 who did not achieve the expected standard, 1 child missed the expected standard by 2 marks, 1 child was disapplied by their school, and the other 2 children were well below the expected standard. 62.5% of the full cohort gained the expected standard. (10/16)

4.3. **Key Stage 1 (7 year olds)**

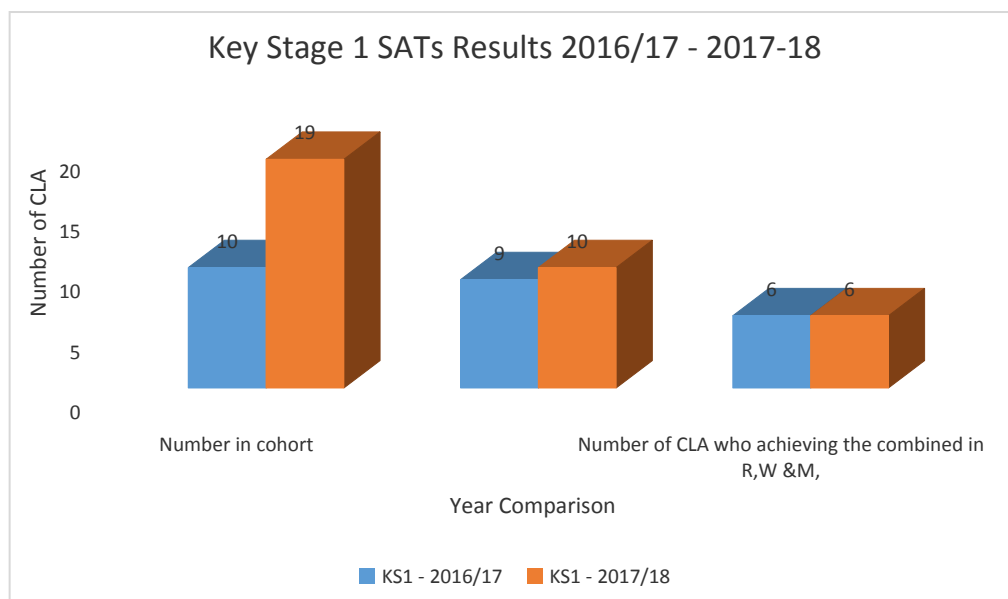
Reportable cohort: 10

Children in English schools take SATs twice during their school career. The first time is in Key Stage 1, when they will have tests in Year 2, at the end of infants (aged 7). They are tested in mathematics and English (reading and spelling, punctuation and grammar). Teachers generally try to keep the testing procedure informal; the papers are not strictly timed, and are usually taken in a normal classroom situation. On 14 September 2017 it was confirmed that the KS1 SATs will be made non-statutory (so schools will be able to choose whether to administer them or not) from 2023. Until then children will continue to be assessed in May during Year 2.

KS1 SATs	Number in cohort	Number eligible	Number of CLA who achieving the combined in R,W &M,	% of CLA achieving the expected standard in combined R,W & M
KS1 - 2016/17	10	9	6	66%
KS1 - 2017/18	19	10	6	60%

% of CLA working at expected standard for the eligible cohort (2017-2018)

	%
Working at the expected standard in reading	70%
Working at the expected standard in writing	60%
Working at the expected standard in mathematics	70%
Working at the expected standard combined	60%



- KS1 performance in 2017/18 SATs fell by 6% compared to the previous year, with 60% of children, gaining the required levels in combined reading, writing and mathematics. (6/10).
- Of the four who did not achieve the expected standard, 1 achieved the expected standard in reading and mathematics, but not in writing and 1 was working at well below the expected standard in all subjects. The other two were not entered for testing across any of the subjects.

- 42.11% of the full cohort gained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics (8/19)
- One pupil who did not count in the data achieved a *Greater Development* standard in reading and mathematics.
- There was an overall de-increase in 2017/18 from the previous year in those achieving the expected standard in combined reading, writing and mathematics by 6%.

4.4 Key Stage 2 (11 year olds)

Reportable cohort: 20

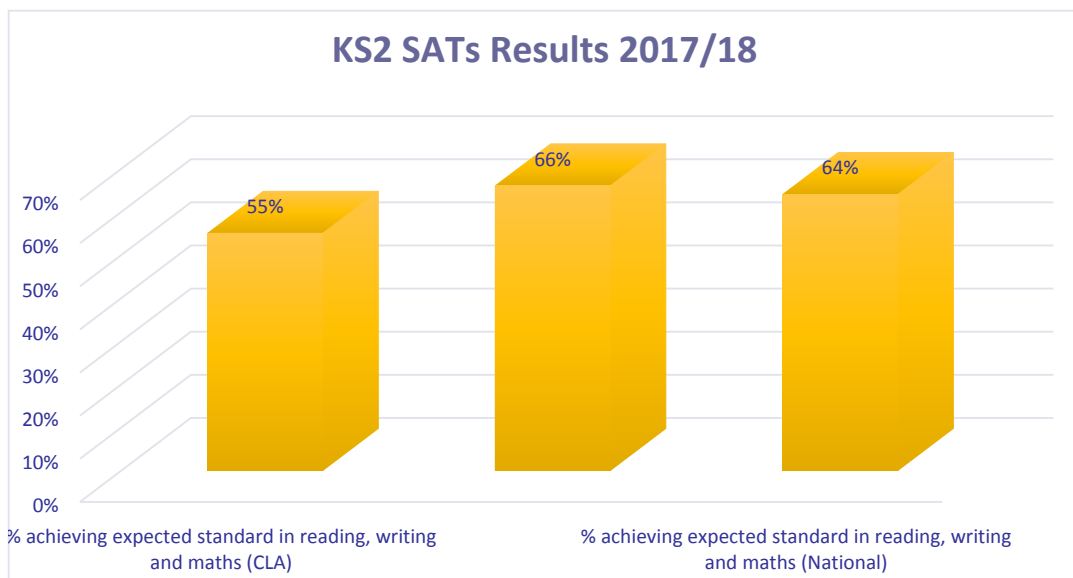
The next time a child will take SATs will be in Key Stage 2 in Year 6, aged 11. More formal than Key Stage 1, these written tests (in English, mathematics.

KS2 SATs	Number of CLA in cohort	Number of CLA eligible	Number of CLA achieving the combined in R,W & M	% achieving the expected standard
KS2 - 2016/17	18	14	5	36%
KS2 - 2017/18	33	20	11	55%

% of CLA working at expected standard for the eligible cohort 2017-2018

	%
Working at the expected standard in reading	55%
Working at the expected standard in writing	55%
Working at the expected standard in mathematics	60%
Working at the expected standard combined	55%

KS2 SATs	% achieving expected standard in reading, writing and maths (CLA)	% achieving expected standard in reading, writing and maths (Croydon)	% achieving expected standard in reading, writing and maths (National)
2017/18	55%	66%	64%



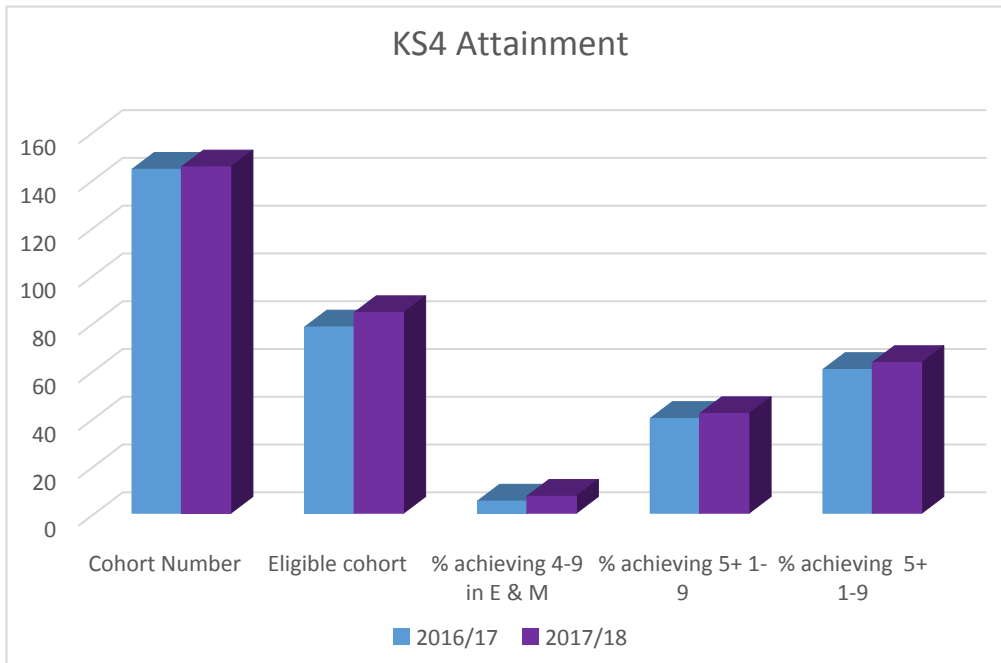
- KS2 performance in 2017/18 improved with an overall 55% of our looked after children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2017-2018 there was an overall increase in those achieving the expected standard by 19% in combined reading, writing and mathematics.

- 48% of the full cohort of children achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics (16 out of 33 pupils), of the 16 children who did not gain the expected standard, 7 children were not entered for testing by their school and 2 children achieved at a greater depth standard in Reading.
- One pupil who did not count in the data achieved at the greater depth standard in Reading, Writing and Mathematics.

4.5. Key Stage 4 (16 year olds)

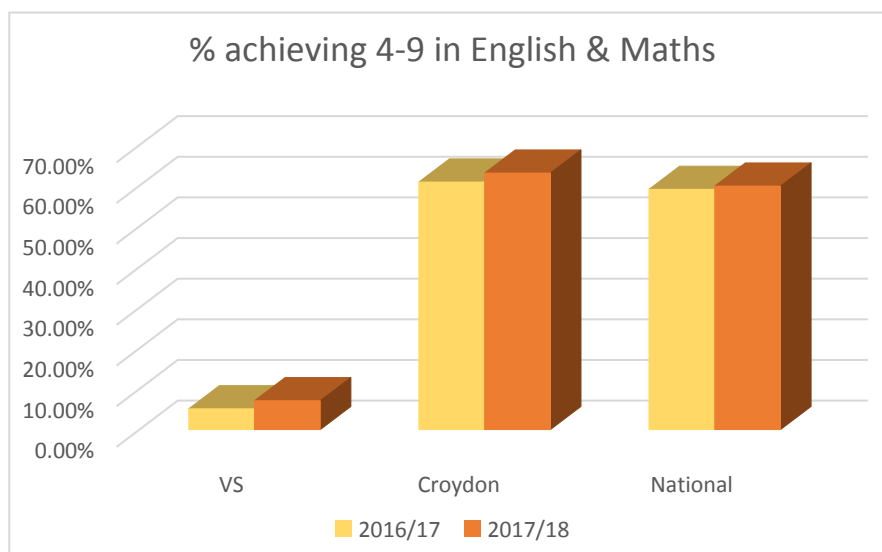
Reportable Cohort: 145

	Number in cohort	Eligible Cohort	% achieving 4-9 in English & Maths	% achieving 5+ 1-9	% achieving at least 1 grade 1-9
2016/17	144	78	5.1%	39.7%	60.2%
2017/18	145	84	7.1%	41.7%	63.1%



Comparison with local and national data
% achieving 4-9 in English & Maths

	VS	Croydon	National
2017/18	7.1%	63.1%	59.9%
2016/17	5.1%	60.9%	59.1%



- The number of children achieving the expected standard of grade 4 and above in English & Maths has increased by 2% this year.

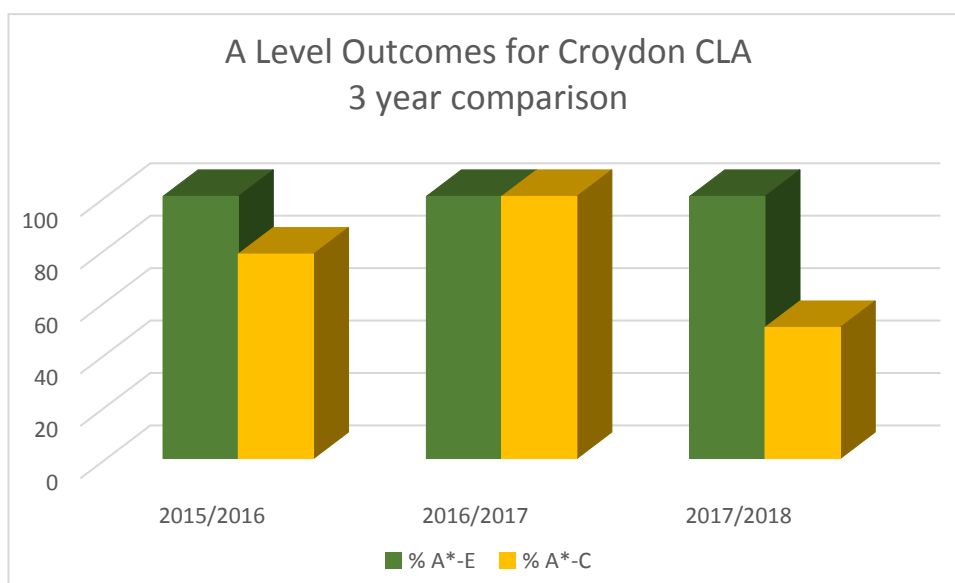
- Whilst the number of our cohort achieving the expected standard continues to be low compared to local and national outcomes, we continue to see an increase in the number of children achieving 5+ GCSEs.
- An increase is also seen in the attainment of 1+ GCSE grade which can be an exceptional achievement for some students, in particular our UASC cohort who often still have limited English at the end of Key Stage 4.
- When comparing the Croydon CLA attainment with local and national data, we see that whilst there remains an attainment gap Croydon CLA has made a 2% increase compared to 0.9% nationally.

Please note that validated data for Attainment 8 is not yet available for CLA outcomes

4.6 Key Stage 5 (18 year olds)

Reportable Cohort: 139

	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018
% A*-E	100	100	100
% A*-C	78	100	50



- The trend of 100% pass rate at A Level has continued for the last 3 years.
- In 2017/2018, 50% achieved 100% A*-C.
- We continue to see a decline in the number of students enrolling for A Level courses as more students opt for vocational courses.
- L3 BTEC results continue to be good with 36% of the cohort achieving Distinction* grades in 2017/2018.
- 7 year 13 students completed GCSEs in Maths & English all in conjunction with a vocational diploma course at either Level 2 or Level 3 standard.
- The remainder of the cohort studied Level 1 diplomas or entry level ESOL courses in line with their academic needs.

- In year 12, 18 students were entered for GCSEs to provide the opportunity to achieve a grade 4 or above in English and Maths.

5. SUMMARY OF KEY SUPPORT, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

5.1 Virtual school support for the education of our looked after children:

- Providing advice, guidance and support for children and young people and professionals working with our young people through increased participation in PEP meetings, professional meetings, re-integration meetings, post exclusion meetings, Team Around the Child (TAC) meetings as well as Looked After Child (LAC) reviews.
- Funding and organisation of the Letterbox book club scheme
- One to one tuition for looked after pupils identified as underachieving.
- Additional 'booster' 1:1 tuition to support children in Year 6 and Year 11 with targeted preparation for SATs and GCSEs.
- 'Exam Ready' booster sessions for KS2 children preparing for SATs and KS4 young people preparing for GCSEs run by 'Fix Up'.
- Individual casework; school admission application submissions (both in borough and out of borough), EHCP needs assessment request submissions, residential home education provision quality assurance visits, mentoring and counselling for young people.
- Aim Higher University trips for looked after children and care leavers and Post 16 Conference
- Jamie's Farm residential visits for primary, Secondary and UASC cohorts. Jamie's Farm acts as a catalyst for change, enabling disadvantaged young people to thrive academically, socially and emotionally. This is done through a unique residential experience and rigorous follow-up programme, combining farming, family and therapy.
- A more rigorous quality assurance process of pupils e-PEPs (Personal Education Plans)
- Primary to secondary 'transition' workshops delivered in partnership by VS staff and Croydon Music Arts which included information on how to handle change, making new friends, organisation skills and support with confidence building.
- Ongoing development and delivery of the Virtual School Interim Provision. This incorporates the initial assessment which informs the teaching and individualised education plans for each young person attending the provision. The provision is open to Croydon CLA irrespective of where they live and currently we have young people travelling from Brent, Lambeth, Merton and Southwark.
- Counselling for CLA being delivered by COMPASS

- Access to our attached Educational Psychologist to support with the EHCP assessment process and for NEET CLA to inform appropriate placement, in particular our UASC students who arrive with little or no prior information
- Attendance at SEN panel meetings and compiling the submission for a needs assessment to be progressed
- Provising pupils with a resource to support reading, writing and mathematics piloted with KS2, KS4 and UASC CLAs.
- The launch of the “Gifted and Talented” project for a group of primary, Key Stage 3 and Key stage 4 children and young people
- Supporting the Refugee Council via the Croydon Young Refugee Network, and Cricket Project
- Croydon looked after children in year 6 were involved in a week long transition programme of activities, aimed at preparing them for their transition to secondary school, held jointly by Croydon Virtual School staff members and the team at Croydon Music Arts. This year's summer school explored transition to secondary school through music. The course concluded with a graduation ceremony held at Heathfield House, Training Centre, in Croydon.
- Letterbox is a national programme that provides personalised reading materials, games and exercises directly to CLA. The aim is to improve our CLA with confidence in learning, and to increase the confidence of the carers helping them at home; most importantly it is an opportunity for the whole family to engage in learning activities including the carers’ own children.
- The Virtual School commissioned Achievement for All to deliver the Achieving Well-Being Programme for 10 schools to build capacity amongst staff to acquire the skills, knowledge and tools to support vulnerable children, especially CLA, and to improve their emotional wellbeing and success within the classroom which will lead to improved attainment and attendance and reduce exclusions.
- A specific package of online support for Children Looked After, supporting their social and emotional well-being. Lexia enables students of all ages and abilities to master essential reading skills. The program can be used as a component of any literacy curriculum, and the needs of both primary and secondary schools can be met, at very little cost, when compared to traditional approaches, which are often difficult to manage.

5.2 **Impact of VS restructure:**

- The Virtual school restructure was implemented in February 2018 the rationale for the restructure was so that the team are structured like a school with a focus on pupil outcomes.
- Appendix 2 shows the current structure of the school following the restructure.
- The new structure is now well embedded, although during the last 12 month the headteacher has been absent. Despite this there has been a smooth transition into

the new roles. Staff are now much more focussed on supporting pupils to achieve better outcomes and ensuring that there is virtual school attendance at the PEP meetings for our vulnerable students or those where we have concerns.

5.3. **Key achievements 2017/18**

- In the 2017-2018 academic year there was an overall increase in those achieving the expected standard in phonics screening by 10%.
- Phonics screening check, performance in 2017/18 was better than in the previous year with 50 % of children gaining the expected level. (4 out of 8 eligible pupils)
- KS2 performance in 2017/18 improved with an overall 55% of our looked after children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2017-2018 there was an overall increase in those achieving the expected standard by 19% in combined reading, writing and mathematics.
- There has been a small improvement in the number of fixed term exclusions for statutory school age CLA in 2017-2018 .
- In 2017-2018 there were no permanent exclusions for statutory school age CLA.
- There has been an improvement over the past five years in the number of permanent exclusions for Croydon Children Looked After. The challenge is to maintain this positive trend.
- The Virtual School Interim Provision has been developed further during the year. This has including a redesign of the programme to add variation to the day as well as improving the English skills of the students. This provision is attended by new arrivals to the UK whilst they await a school place. The programme seeks to support life and culture skills as the children adapt to UK life and education provisions. We have had an opportunity to move into a new classroom within a local school which has enabled us to be a part of the mainstream environment. This has proved to be extremely positive. A varied programme is provided including cookery with an experienced cookery teacher, English, Maths, Science and Geography as well as a Sports programme to help healthy life style and well-being. We also have a trained counsellor who teaches PSHE providing the opportunity to assess learners and identify needs such as PTSD and trauma. .
- In 2016/17 the cumulative attendance for Croydon CLA at statutory school age was 91.99%. In 2017/18 this figure rose to 93.4%. This has been achieved by using the PEP document to help to focus schools, foster carers and social workers on attendance by encouraging schools to engage the work of their education welfare officers earlier with Croydon CLA. In addition to this, education caseworkers were allocated to target students with low attendance to put into place appropriate interventions to improve attendance.

5.4 **Key Challenges 2017/18:**

(Please see appendix 2 'Action Plans addressing key challenges')

5.4.1 **Access to Education:**

- Persistent absence rates in the most recently published figures (2017) for Croydon Children Looked After are still high at 18%, and 34% for post 16. This is an area of focus that continues to be a priority for the Virtual School.
- Croydon Children Looked After who do not have a full time school offer. An ongoing focus area will be to reduce the wait time for children and Young People without a school place, accessing a part-time timetable or being educated offsite.
- **Narrowing the gap:** The results for all Croydon schools and all schools nationally have improved this year so the gap remains similar between the Croydon and national across the core subjects. The results for Croydon Children Looked After are still substantially below, in all the key stages compared to Croydon and national averages and continues to be an area of focus for Croydon Virtual School.
- **Children not in education and training (NEETs):** weekly tracking of our children and young people out of education, employment or training has helped us to identify children and young people not accessing education in much more timely focused way. What this means for us as a service, is that Virtual School Senior Leads are able to allocate children and young people out of education to a Virtual School Advisory Teacher who will be assigned the role of supporting the process of admission into schools more effectively. This is working well across statutory school age and Post 16, however, the challenge is the rising number of CLA into care versus the wait times when placing children. The challenge is increased more so when placing children and young people into schools that are out of borough.

5.4.2 Personal Education Plans (PEPs):

- The launch and roll out of e-PEP (the new e-platform for recording the child/young person's Personal Education Plan) as well as internal team training, social worker and school Designated Teacher training has been a big focus area for Croydon Virtual School and continues to be an area of challenge. The initial launch during this academic year has inevitably impacted on the overall PEP stats for 2017-2018.
- The number of Personal Education Plans (e-PEPs) that are in date and completed has fallen to 22%, at the end of the 2017/18 academic year.
- Rising cohort size: The number of Children Looked After in Croydon is increasing rapidly. The total number has increased from **726** CLA in September 2017 to **884** in July 2018.
- Targets and The Young Person's Voice: The PEP targets and child's voice is not always captured effectively in the e-PEP so it is not always taken into consideration when targets are set by some schools. The challenge is to ensure that the young person's voice informs our practice and priorities.
- As part of the restructure a new quality assurance role that has recently been appointed to. Quality assurance remains a focus of improvement for the team in terms of the speed in which PEPs are being quality assured. To mitigate against this we have employed two temporary members of staff, both of which have teaching qualifications, to support with this process.

- Greater partnership working is being developed with our social care colleagues to ensure that social workers are well supported with the PEP process and the importance of education being part of our looked after pupils plans.

VIRTUAL SCHOOL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT 2017/18

To fulfil its training and development role, members of the Croydon Virtual School staff team have taken part in and/or led a series of training events to particularly support the introduction of e-PEP.

Designated Teacher Drop in Sessions (Surgeries)

Individual training for new Designated Teachers, as required, on the role of the DT, how e-PEP works, the 'PEP' and how Children Looked After should be supported in school.

Termly Designated Teacher 'Arena'

Training covered this year has included:

- Ongoing e-PEP (system) training
- Trauma training, 'The impact of trauma on vulnerable children and CLAs'
- Teaching and Learning strategies to support vulnerable children
- Attachment Awareness Training
- 'What does a good e-PEP look like?' including 'Writing good SMART targets'.

Bespoke training for social workers, schools and other organisations

During 2017-18 a range of training was provided at the request of individual schools and other groups. This included:

- Training for school teams including teachers and senior practitioners in schools across Primary, Secondary and Post 16 providers
- e-PEP system training
- The Virtual School team, co-locating across the social care teams, throughout the week, to support with more general enquiries around e-PEP and or children in young people in education.
- Social Worker training (particularly induction of newly qualified staff on regular Tuesday afternoon sessions)
- Individual and small group training for Designated Teachers and other school staff working with CLAs
- Supporting CLAs in the classroom

Partnership working both external and internal:

- Continued engagement with the National Association of Virtual School Heads at regional and national level.
- Virtual School participation in various local authority strategy groups – including; *Corporate Parenting Panel, Missing Mondays, Fair Access Panel, Fostering Panel, LAC Managers Meetings, YOS resettlement Panel.*
- Increased 'cross-border' working' with neighbouring Virtual Schools. The challenge here is to meet the needs of Croydon children placed in care out of authority and to support the virtual schools of other authorities that have CLA attending Croydon schools.
- The Virtual School has attended the SEN SAG panel and Social Care MARP panel as well as many placement planning meetings (for children moving out of borough). This enables the Virtual School to participate and contribute to key decision making processes and plan for effective and smooth school transitions.
- The Virtual School continues to play a key role in the South London and South East Post 16 Virtual School and DMS network. This network brings together local colleges

and post 16 Virtual school representatives to improve the collaborative work across the region between colleges and virtual schools to improve the overall outcomes for post 16 students. This has built stronger links with local virtual schools and colleges leading to an improved sharing of data and good practice to support our young people.

6. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

6.1. There are no financial considerations arising from this report.

7. COMMENTS OF THE COUNCIL SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

7.1. There are no legal implications of this report.

8. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

8.1 There are no human resources implications of this report.

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT

9.1 This report is not proposing a change in policy or service.

10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

10.1 There are no environmental implications of this report.

11. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

11.1 There are no crime and disorder implications of this report.

CONTACT OFFICER:

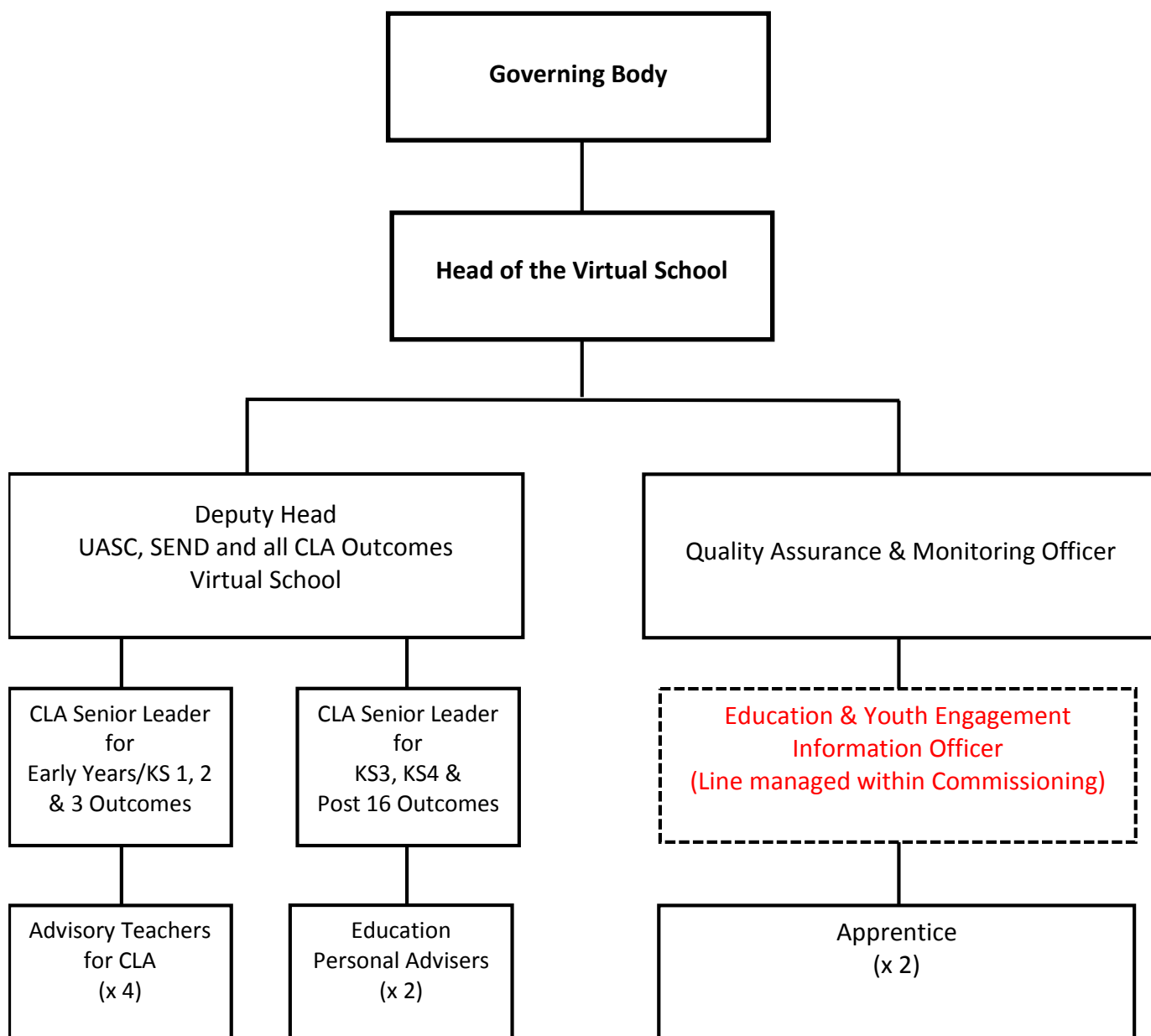
Shelley Davies, Head of Education standards, Croydon Council

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Not applicable

APPENDIX 1: Current Structure for the Virtual School

Virtual School



APPENDIX 2: Action Plans addressing key challenges

How the Virtual School are addressing the key challenges in 2018/19?

All the challenges outlined above are addressed in the Virtual School Action Plan 2018/19.

Appendix A includes a summary of the information in the action plan. For each identified area of challenge the following information is summarised:

- What the Virtual School are currently doing to improve or address this?
- What requirements are needed to make this work?
- What are our performance indicators / success criteria?
- Evaluation of the impact of Virtual School actions?
- What we will do to improve further in 2018/19?

Challenge 1 – Access to Education

<p>What is the challenge?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent absence rates in the most recently published figures (2017) for Croydon Children Looked After are too high (18%) and above national average for Children Looked After. • There has been an improvement over the past five years in the number of fixed term exclusions for Croydon Children Looked After. The challenge is to maintain this positive trend. • Croydon Children and Young People who are Looked After who do not have a full time school offer. Focus on children without a school place, accessing a part-time timetable or being educated offsite. • For post 16 students, low prior attainment limits the courses that they are able to access.
<p>What we are doing to address / improve this?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily attendance was previously collected by Welfare Call for all Croydon Children Looked After. (Since autumn 2018 this has now been commissioned to Stat Solutions). • Stat Solutions to notify the Virtual School if the child or Young Person is not at school and no reason provided for the absence as a safeguarding measure. • Poor attendance, exclusions, late marks and children not on a full time school roll are highlighted in the Virtual School weekly report. • This information is scrutinised in the Virtual School performance meeting and is used to monitor ongoing issues and track where children are not accessing a full time offer and/or are attending alternative provision • Virtual School contact the Designated Teacher or the Social Worker to challenge how the attendance issue is being addressed and request that strategies are recorded in the child's e-PEP and reviewed every term. • Monthly child level attendance information forwarded to Social Care colleagues to see if they can work with the carer and school to improve attendance • Virtual School works alongside social care colleagues at permanence and leaving Care on Tuesday afternoons to support and advise on education issues. • Tracking and monitoring of school moves to challenge any school moves to settings not rated 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted.
<p>What requirements are needed to make this work?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated Teachers to record the current strategies to address attendance, exclusions and alternative education arrangements in the e-PEP and to review and update these this work regularly.
<p>What are our performance indicators / success criteria?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve persistent absence rates for Croydon CLA to be in line with national average • Reduce fixed term exclusion rates for Croydon CLA to exceed the national average • All Croydon CLA to access a full time school offer • Any CLA who is not in education to be placed on a school roll within 20 working days • CLA to attend good or outstanding schools from current proportion of 78.1% towards a target of 100% by August 2019

<p>Evaluation of the Impact of Virtual School Actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Virtual School has a rich amount of data concerning attendance and exclusions and on young people not accessing school full time. • Trends and issues are identified promptly and tracked more effectively. • However, persistent absence rates are still too high and are not reducing as much as compared to previous years. Personal Education Plans do not all include strategies being employed to address issues and circumstances around children on a part time timetable or accessing alternative provision. • The Virtual School is consulted on the suitability and current Ofsted rating of school moves. This has improved since making school move planning part of the PEP process
<p>What we will do to improve further?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and challenge the school of any child with poor attendance or exclusions and ensure school record the strategies being used to address this issue in their PEP, and when these strategies will be reviewed. • Monitor and challenge all relevant services regarding any child without a school place or not accessing a full time timetable and support the Admissions Service and the Children Missing from Education Team to ensure all children have a full time offer. • Reinforcing procedures and protocols with Children Missing from Education (CME), the Admissions Service and SEN to ensure the education of looked after children is not disrupted • For children whose education is disrupted, ensure the e-PEP provides details on extra help that will be provided to help the child make up learning that has been missed • Ensure any Alternative Provision that may be accessed is approved as part of the PEP with a good quality registered provider and that progress at the offsite provision is regularly reviewed. • Work with the Social Care Service to investigate and improve the links between school attendance and social care placement and provide targeted training for Croydon residential home staff to address the poor attendance rates at these settings compared to other social care placements. • Continue to attend the Education Health Care (EHC) SAG panel more regularly and the Social Care Resources and Placement Panel (MARF) to ensure the Virtual School contribute to decisions concerning the education needs of Croydon CLA • Deliver a Virtual School Arena meeting in 2019 that highlights access to education issues. • Formalise the process and procedures of addressing access to education issues across all education phases including Early Years and Post-16
<p>Lead Officer</p>	<p>Shelley Davies</p>
<p>Who is progress reported to?</p>	<p>Annual reporting to Schools Forum Board Quarterly reporting to Corporate Parenting Board</p>
<p>Review Date?</p>	<p>Spring 2019</p>

Challenge 2 – PEPs

<p>What is the challenge?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for school age CLA that are in date and are high quality has fallen and is currently between 22% in date. The number of in-date Early Years and Post-16 PEPs is lower still.
<p>What we are doing to address / improve this?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver ongoing training on e-PEP for Designated Teachers and Social Workers Hosted regular e-PEP drop in surgeries to support Designated Teachers and Social Workers e-PEP guidance produced and made available to all Designated Teachers and Social Workers to support them during the meeting Ongoing examples of an 'outstanding' school age e-PEP created as a training resource for school professionals Monthly lists of out of date e-PEPs are sent to Social Care Team Managers to raise at social worker supervision Quality assure a sample of PEPs to ensure consistency Termly reminders sent to schools via email to update attainment and progress in the PEP Pupil Premium withheld from schools if there is no engagement in the PEP process
<p>What requirements are needed to make this work?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We require Designated Teachers and social workers to keep the e-PEP updated, regularly review the strategies, targets and actions included in the plan and to use the PEP as a live document.
<p>What are our performance indicators / success criteria?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All CLA to have a high quality personal education plan in place that details how school is supporting the child to meet all of their educational needs and that is reviewed and updated termly
<p>Evaluation of the Impact of Virtual School Actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PEP completion rates are below the target level of 85% The training and drop in sessions for DTs and social workers (although well received) only attracted small numbers of participants. The samples of e-PEPs that have been quality assured showed variable PEP quality
<p>What we will do to improve further?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving to a new way of working by January 2019 whereby Senior members of the Virtual School are more office based and have more time to monitor and scrutinise e-PEPs and follow up with school and social worker if a PEP is out of date. Advisory Teachers to Quality assure their own caseloads' e-PEPs (particularly for those children's PEP meetings that they have attended). Ensure the e-PEP contains challenging but realistic attainment and personal development targets and assigns clear accountabilities for actions so the Virtual School can monitor these. Training with schools so that they use the e-PEP as a live document and review regularly. Ensure the e-PEP takes into account the child's Educational Health & Care Plan (EHCP) and/or the social care plan where necessary Rigorous tracking and monitoring of Pupil Premium spend to ensure this is used appropriately to raise the attainment of looked after children and support them to achieve the targets in their PEP Pupil Premium to be withheld until school provide evidence in the PEP how it is being used to raise attainment

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly monitoring of PEP numbers in-date through a new dashboard report which will be discussed and scrutinised at the team meeting. • Formalise the PEP training offer for schools, Social Care and the Fostering Service and target schools where completion rates are low • Create an example of an early years and post-16 'outstanding' PEP to use as a training resource • Implement a rigorous system of PEP quality assurance with regular feedback to DTs and social workers
Lead Officer	Shelley Davies
Who is progress reported to?	Quarterly reporting to Corporate Parenting Board
Review Date?	Spring 2019

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REPORT TO:	Corporate Parenting Panel – 16th January 2019
SUBJECT:	Fostering Allowances Review
LEAD OFFICER:	Robert Henderson, Executive Director for Children, Families and Education Executive Director Nick Pendry, Director of Early Help and Children’s Social Care / Wendy Tomlinson, Head of Corporate Parenting
CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr Alisa Flemming, Lead Member for Children
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON:	
<p>In accordance with the Corporate Plan that: Our children and young people thrive and reach their full potential, the council stated that we will ‘champion the interests of children and young people in our care and support care leavers into successful young adulthood’. In order to support our children in care, we must support our foster carers and have clear expectations of them, coupled with remuneration that is competitive and recognises the value of the work they do.</p>	
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	
<p>Local benchmarking has been undertaken which has examined the foster carer payment schedules of 7 other London Boroughs. Financial mapping of current payments to Croydon carers and the options going forward will require significant growth in order to meet market changes and to become competitive.</p>	
KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.:	
1. RECOMMENDATIONS	
<p>A review of current Fostering Allowances is underway. Panel are requested to agree that a proposal document be brought to the next meeting.</p>	

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 Fostering Allowances have not been increased in Croydon since 2014. It is common practice in most London Boroughs and Independent Fostering Agencies to agree an annual uplift in line with inflation. In order to align Croydon Fostering Allowances to respected competitors, a review is necessary. The Panel will be aware that a new provider is currently recruiting foster carers for Croydon, with an expectation that allowances will be reviewed before those carers are approved. The Corporate Parenting Panel have had sight of the Sufficiency Plan, set out to understand and meet Croydon’s duties to our Looked After Children under Section 22G of the Children Act 1989. We recognise there is a need for developing carers who can care for children and young people who have some of the most challenging needs.

3. DETAIL

- 3.1 Given that Croydon's Fostering Allowances have not been reviewed or uplifted since 2014, it has been deemed necessary to undertake some benchmarking and consultation in order to develop a new payments schedule. Most Local Authority's make differential payments based on the age of the child. Croydon is similar in this respect. Additionally there are payments for carers who are available to take children in an emergency, usually out of business hours, and these are paid a small retainer for the service. Other specialist payments exist, such as for foster carers who take care of Looked After Children who are parents themselves.
- 3.2 Where Croydon differs from more common practice is in the payments to carers who are required to care for children who have additional needs or present additional challenges. In Croydon, those payments are paid based on the needs of the child and have often been agreed as a way of compensating the carer for the additional challenges that exist in taking care of Looked After Children with greater than average needs.
- 3.3 More common practice, is to pay those carers based on the skills of the carer, regardless of the needs of the child. This of course requires careful matching by placing social workers to ensure that these carers do in fact take care of children who require their level of expertise. Examples abound but include older children who are at risk from a number of 'contextual' safeguarding issues, such as exploitation, including sexual exploitation, involvement in dealing illegal drugs, gang affiliation and carrying and using weapons or other violence.
- 3.4 Paying carers based on skills, requires careful definition of required skills and other expectations, plus assessment and tracking of those skills as well as regular input to ensure such skills stay current. This is being considered as part of the review and to inform the new provider about expectations. While difficult to measure at this stage, it is also hoped that one outcome will be that more of Croydon's Looked After Children can live with Croydon Foster Carers, inevitably closer to home and overall, at better value for money.
- 3.5 Changes have already been made and are being finalised to remove the responsibility for children and young people's savings from individual foster carers, and return it to the Council so that tracking entitlements for young people is simpler and financially safer. This will have an impact on what carers are paid.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 A working group is exploring options. Included are Fostering Service staff, colleagues from Commissioning and Improvement and accountancy staff from the Council's finance department. Very importantly, two foster carers from the Croydon Foster Carers Association have contributed thus far to the review.

5 FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 To be confirmed in forthcoming report.

6. COMMENTS OF THE COUNCIL SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

6.1 None at this stage.

7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

7.1 None likely, given that Foster Carers are not council employees.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.1 It is intended that changes will align Croydon's foster carers to their counterparts in other South London Boroughs and will afford clarity to the allowance schedule and expectations.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

9.1 Not applicable

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

10.1 Not applicable.

11. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION

11.1 That the Panel agree to consider a report at the next meeting.

The Fostering Handbook will be appended to the review and recommendations report for next Panel.

CONTACT OFFICER: Wendy Tomlinson, Head of Corporate Parenting. X 65413.

APPENDICES: None

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Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme 2018/19

Proposed Dates	Tues 17 July 2018 5pm	Wed 5 Sept 2018 5pm	Wed 21 Nov 2018 5pm	Wed 16 Jan 2019 5pm	Wed 6 Mar 2019 5pm	Thur 25 April 2019 5pm
Standing Agenda Items	Update on actions agreed at previous meetings Children in Care Performance Scorecard Work Programme How has the Panel helped Children in Care today?	Update on actions agreed at previous meetings Children in Care Performance Scorecard Work Programme How has the Panel helped Children in Care today?	Update on actions agreed at previous meetings Children in Care Performance Scorecard Work Programme How has the Panel helped Children in Care today?	Update on actions agreed at previous meetings Children in Care Performance Scorecard Work Programme How has the Panel helped Children in Care today?	Update on actions agreed at previous meetings Children in Care Performance Scorecard Work Programme How has the Panel helped Children in Care today?	Update on actions agreed at previous meetings Children in Care Performance Scorecard Work Programme How has the Panel helped Children in Care today?
Proposed Agenda Items*	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Role of Panel Members & Terms of Reference 2. Staying Put 3. Children and Social Work Act 2017 4. Review of Fostering Services 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Independent Reviewing Officer – Annual Report 2. Leaving Care and Housing (inc. care leaver care offer) 3. Staying Put Update 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Placement Stability, Sufficiency; Permanence and Population 2. Engagement and Achievement (Inc. Complaints and Learning opportunities) 3. Children missing from Care 4. Annual Report of Adoption Service 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Health of Looked After Children 2. Education & Employment, NEET (Not in Education Employment or Training) Young People 3. Annual Report of the Virtual School 4. Review of the Fostering Allowances 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fostering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual Review of the Statement of Purpose - Recruitment and De-Registration - Fostering Action Plan update - Adoption Statement Purpose 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Annual Report of Corporate Parenting Panel

*All proposed items to include a short section detailing 'how it relates to the Improvement Plan'

Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme 2018/19

			and Panel – inc. plans/update of regional adoption agency 5. Care Leavers Offer Review			
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*All proposed items to include a short section detailing 'how it relates to the Improvement Plan'