

# Corporate Parenting Panel Agenda



To: Councillor Alisa Flemming (Chair)

Councillors Shafi Khan, Bernadette Khan, Jerry Fitzpatrick, Maria Gatland and Helen Redfern

## Co-optee Members

Virtual School: Shelley Davies, Angela Griffiths, Sarah Bailey  
CLA Designated Health Professionals: Dr Julia Simpson, Fiona Simmons  
Health Commissioners: Pasquale Brammer, Roneeta Campbell-Butler  
Health Providers: Lyn Glover, Sue Goode  
EMPIRE: Young People and Council Staff  
Care Leaver Representative; Ashleigh Searle  
Foster Carer Representatives: Angela Christmas, Manny Kwamin

A meeting of the **Corporate Parenting Panel** which you are hereby summoned to attend, will be held on **Wednesday, 11 November 2020** at **5.00 pm**. This meeting will be held virtually. Members of the Committee will be sent a link to remotely attend the meeting in due course.

JACQUELINE HARRIS BAKER  
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Tuesday, 3 November 2020

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020 8726 6000 x84246 as detailed above

## **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 - 14)**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 29 September 2020 as an accurate record.

**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)**

**6. Children In Care Performance Scorecard (Pages 15 - 18)**

The Children in Care Performance Scorecard for September 2020 is attached.

**7. Engagement, Achievement and Complaints Report (Pages 19 - 24)**

The report of engagement, achievement and complaints is attached.

**8. Exam Results, Exclusion and SEN (Pages 25 - 32)**

The exam results, exclusion and SEN report is attached.

**9. Initial Health Assessment and Review Health Assessment Report**  
(Pages 33 - 40)

The initial health and review health report is attached.

**10. Update on Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Offer for Children Looked After** (Pages 41 - 50)

The emotional wellbeing and mental health offer for children looked after update report is attached.

**11. Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2019-2020** (Pages 51 - 70)

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the achievements, progress and challenges in meeting the needs of Croydon's Children Looked After and Care Leavers in 2019/2020.

**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 71 - 72)

To consider and approve the Panel's work programme for the municipal year 2020/21.

**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.”

## Corporate Parenting Panel

Meeting of Corporate Parenting Panel held on Tuesday, 29 September 2020 at 5.00pm. This meeting will be held virtually.

### MINUTES

**Present:** Councillor Alisa Flemming (Chair);

Councillors Shafi Khan, Bernadette Khan, Jerry Fitzpatrick, Maria Gatland and Helen Redfern

**Co-optee Members:**

Virtual School: Shelley Davies, Sarah Bailey

EMPIRE: Suzanne, Louisa (care leavers) and Porsha Robinson (Youth Service Coordinator – Council staff)

Care Leaver Representative; Ashleigh Searle

Foster Carer Representatives: Angela Christmas, Manny Kwamin

**Also**

**Present:**

Councillor Janet Campbell

Councillor Robert Ward (Chair of the Scrutiny Children and Young People Sub-Committee)

Nick Pendry (Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care)

Rodica Cobarzan (Head of Service - Social Work with Children Looked After and Carer Leavers)

Sara Lewis (Children's Housing Representative)

**Apologies: Co-optee Members:**

Health: Connie Ikhifa

Health Commissioners: Pasquale Brammer, Roneeta Butler-Campbell and Laura Saunders

### PART A

**24/20 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 29 September 2020 were agreed as an accurate record.

**25/20 Disclosures of interest**

There were none.

**26/20 Urgent Business (if any)**

There was none.

**27/20 Terms of Reference**

The Chair made note to the terms of reference prior to the Ofsted inspection. Members of the Panel discussed the potential additional role of safeguarding representative to attend the Panel meetings. It was noted that the Child Protection Sub-Committee existed under the Independence Board framework, where working together policy sets out the relationship of working with partners.

**28/20 Update on actions agreed at previous meeting(s)**

The Head of Social Work, Children Looked After and Care Leavers talked through the actions which had been completed.

Officers updated the Panel with the status of the actions agreed at the previous Panel meeting.

In regards to the actions in March 2020:

1 – The pathway plans for future reports, what was being measured and how up to date the pathway plans were, officers informed that every eligible young person must have a pathway plan updated every six months.

2 – To address the issue of pathway plan for a smooth transition, officers informed that there was a new pathway plan that captured better the voice of young people and work was underway with staff and carers to better support transitions.

The foster carer co-optee commented that the definition on the appropriate accommodation for care leavers, and Shared Life was essential for SEN and those on special needs. The Chair added that young people previously spoke about opportunities to Staying Put. Officers informed that that Shared Life was a true assessment of a child and their needs and this was where the carer lived. The Shared Life scheme was within every local authority and was used to assess eligibility of the criteria of which children would be entitled to the Shared Life scheme. This was generous and not much lower in payments for fostering.

Panel Members commented on the pathway planning which was statutory in a young person's journey and emphasised that the dashboard needed to provide a more detailed data and information of what needed to be reviewed.

## 29/20 Children in Care Performance Scorecard

The Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care and the Head of Social Work, Children Looked After and Care Leavers spoke to the report, and had summarised the performance scorecard in detailed. In summary:

Children in care: Officers informed that the numbers of looked after children had reduced within the last six months, and there was also a reduction of unaccompanied asylum seeking children in care. The number of children returned home and no longer looked after had decreased.

Visits: Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the number of home visits had fluctuated and much of the visits were being held virtually. In September a decision was made for the return of face-to-face visits.

Performance: Officers highlighted the major issues and challenges within the care planning service where the service continued to underperform. Pathway plans and care plans needed to be completed within six months, which was an issue within the service. There was auditing of cases across the services and officers had noticed improvements in the quality of practice, and though this was good, there was room for more quality and compliance.

Health assessments: Officers informed that the review health assessments and initial health assessments had been impacted due to consent from parents. There was lack of consent from children placed out of borough and young people were declining assessments. It was said that foster carers could work more with young children around this.

Fostering: The foster care service had improved and remained stable, and the number of foster carers was similar to the numbers at the beginning of last year to date.

Adoption: The adoption service was now formed as part of the regional agency along with eight other boroughs and this was working very well. Officers highlighted that the service had eleven children placed in adoption.

Care Leavers: Officers highlighted of similar issues where the service had more room for quality improvement. It was noted that with regards to pathway plan the scorecard measured the pathway plan from 18 to 25 years, though the pathway was not legally required from 22 years of age unless planned. Since April, care leavers were continuingly being supported by staff who enquired of services they required as care leavers also had a need.

Housing and accommodation: There had been a lot of work with the commission and housing department close to a young person's 18th birthday. Officers informed that they had placed eleven young people in social housing as opposed to last year where there was a low number of just one young person placed in social housing. This was a significant improvement.

The Panel discussed the information they heard and a number of questions and comments was put forward to officers.

The care leaver representative raised questions on the reduction of numbers of children in care and wanted clarity on whether the reduction was due to early intervention, and also whether the coronavirus pandemic was addressed as the number of children in care was proportionally higher; officers responded that there was more flexibility in working with families to meet the needs of the young person. The service was down in numbers and they were working effectively to affect change.

Further questions regarding suitable accommodation for a young person on their 21st birthday was asked, and officers informed that a young person was often provided with an appropriate accommodation. The use of a semi-independent accommodation was not considered appropriate as the objective was to embed the idea of a family home a young person can reside in. Officers further informed the Panel on the legal requirement, which was very low and was measured on a scorecard. The Panel heard that social workers and their young person were together to seek what was considered their ideal suitable accommodation. Housing options could increase as figures in price was lower than neighbouring boroughs, and the shared life accommodation was further mentioned as an alternative option.

The Panel would like to see a comparative as the numbers was not portraying a true picture. The Children's Housing Representative spoke to the Panel advising that their service worked closely with children services. She informed that young people aged 17 and 18 if very independent, would receive a 1-bed/studio property to their needs. An area of support network was always taken into consideration to ensure what the young person had was appropriate. Housing options in general was specifically for care leavers.

Panel Members commended the work around PEPs which had done very well. There was concern that the children looked after health assessment and pathway plans was persistently in need of improvement, and raised questions to whether there was changes to threshold in assessments. Officers responded that the service was less firm and fast on threshold, and focused more on working with families to support change. This included the team visiting families out of working hours two or three times a week to support families. The purpose for this was to support change and resources available for threshold decisions, though this area needed improvement to push for progress. Officers further noted that indicators were red, and that they were working very hard to change this improvement, quality and performance and staffing. All staff within the service was now permanent, and this stability was hopeful to better performance.

Panel Members questioned the health assessments, noticing the very low numbers, the reduction in children looked after (CLA) figures and also wanted to understand why the local children had reduced whether this was due to lack of visits. Officers informed that there were some young people over the coronavirus pandemic lockdown who were not seen. The rate of taking



children into care post lockdown had also not increased, and this was being looked into further. There was fifty-four local children noted that required accommodation. Historically, there had been more care proceedings, though this had reduced as the service was proactively working with families, and thus the numbers were not substantial to investigate.

Further questions on the availability of the 2021 targets was requested, and the Chair confirmed that the targets were set with the Improvement Board with the improvement journey. Officers added that the service reviewed the targets and set them looking for realistic targets.

The Chair noted the challenges within the service and highlighted that there should be a focus on reducing numbers coming into care.

The Chair of the Scrutiny Children and Young People Sub-Committee was present at the Panel meeting and participated in the discussion, highlighting that the challenges within the service was raised at the last Children's Scrutiny meeting, where there were a number of children in care unseen, particularly children in need (CIN) children. Escalation was having to understand accessibility since lockdown, which was currently unknown.

**ACTION: To inform the Panel of the CLA figures relating to health assessments to next panel meeting.**

Panel Members further raised questions on suitable accommodation within the borough and other resources or opportunity sites such as the Croydon Park Hotel to address the housing needs of the leaving care system. It was noted that the Croydon Park Hotel had been considered and the need for temporary accommodation felt at this stage was pressing. Officers added that there was a reflection on the vulnerability of the young person and consuming too many young people in the same place. Having dedicated flats in new builds had been discussed with the housing department for young people to be part of the community, which would be an ongoing promotion for our care leavers.

Members further commented for care leavers to be on the dashboard to have a measurement on their destination. Further comments of the lack of support given to young people on their journey to university was discussed and Members would like to see change.

**ACTION: To update the Panel with data relating to support given to young people in universities.**

### **30/20 Exam Results, Exclusion and SEN**

This item was adjourned to be heard at the November Panel meeting.

**31/20 Engagement Achievement (inc. complaints and leaving care opportunities)**

This item was adjourned to be heard at the November Panel meeting.

**32/20 Annual Report of Virtual School**

The Head of Virtual School spoke to the report and shared that within the last six months in education, things had been different to what was considered normal. Within the report was information for the whole of the last year.

Some of the highlights from the virtual school included the PEPs which exceeded their targets for 2019/20 and was quality assured as 'outstanding'; and the youth funds had seen five young person or a looked after child start in the Leaving Care Academy as apprentices. They would directly be involved with the panel and other parts of the service, and this was a proud moment. The work was broadly in line with Key Stage 4. The cohort was a different group many with additional needs.

There was also outstanding results with the younger children who ranked second overall nationally for Key Stage 1-2 progress; and eighteen young people was confirmed to be going to university.

Panel Members congratulated the work achieved by the Virtual School. It was a celebratory to students achieving such great work within the society. Though there were positive compliments to the virtual school, it was noted that there were two young person who were permanently excluded due to extreme circumstances. Members enquired of the extreme circumstances reported in the report and the subsequent pathway provided to the young person. Officers informed that the exclusion was a consequence to a large public disturbance within a criminal nature, and thus it was difficult for the two young persons involved to remain within the school safely. Members wanted clarification that students who were looked after were not managed by that process.

The care leaver representative commended on the young people acknowledging that the current pandemic did not affect their performance in education, which was a great achievement. Comments were made regarding the proposed apprentices to ensure that the care leavers were supported, seen and treated as professionals and not treated any different, due to their experience. Officers informed that they were working with the youth service coordinator around the recruitment for apprentices to ensure young people do not have a negative experience.

The foster career representative also noted the good work achieved from virtual school in looked after children and summer events that took place. This was a two-hour face to face event that was only offered to school year 11; and though it was a missed opportunity for the young people of all ages to benefit from this, it was understandable. Reflecting the report, it was noted that the

virtual school were able to support children particularly vulnerable. There were two cases where children were not able to attend school during the lockdown and this needed to be added to the chart within their report to reflect a true picture especially if virtual school was involved. Officers welcomed the information shared to review in further detail.

Further comments included the notion that virtual school teachers working from home and was able to complete PEPS, but also foster carer was helping to educate children at home, and those carers who accommodated unaccompanied asylum seeking children found it difficult to help and support. Further support and face to face teaching would have helped foster carers who were struggling. It was also a highlight as some of the carers turned into full-time teachers.

Virtual school were also working on individual packs for students in preparation for another possible pandemic lockdown. Officer further informed that the review of foster carers was in progress and officers were reviewing how carers could receive direct support. There was a proposal for a cohort of 17 young people who needed more support. Virtual school taught some of the young people and a lot of resourcing was shared with the young people who in return was overwhelmed. Going forward, officers would have audit for foster carers' experience around this work.

Panel Members welcomed the good comprehensive report provided and again appreciated the good work virtual school had achieved over the years. Members addressed the great comments recorded by Ofsted and appreciated the young people who had worked so hard throughout the year and during the pandemic. The challenges noted within the report was the attendance of young people, and Panel Members questioned whether the poor attendance was during the difficult pandemic period or whether it was an issue during school. Officers responded that attendance had been a concern prior to the coronavirus pandemic. Though this issue was small and a significance for attendance at school, it was a high issue against the national cohort. Officers were undertaking a more detailed piece around tracking, which had been followed closely. Some had thrived during lockdown and remained in better places than previously, and officers were looking at slow progress as they returned. Officers further informed that PEPs and targets were in place, achievement and attendance in school was a key focus as well as PEPs.

The Chair appreciated hearing testimonies first hand from foster carers and young persons who had a transformative and opportunity in education, and also teachers, young persons and foster carers building relationships with each other. Further, the Chair commended the team and their hard work with the PEP.

**33/20 Mentoring and Careers Guidance for Looked After Children and Care Leavers Mentoring and Independent Visitor work**

The Head Teacher of Virtual School speak to the report.

The report drew a number of different strands and scheme across the council; independent visitor's services and the largest number of young persons have mentors. With the virtual service mentoring scheme, there were nineteen mentors trained, some from council and others from local business who met with their young person weekly across the year to help. Officers further informed that the mentoring continued during the coronavirus pandemic, though there was a small number due to referrals. The young people part of the scheme had positive things to say about the mentoring service.

In response to Panel Members questions relating to the low numbers of looked after children not having mentors, whether they know how to ask for a mentor, and whether there is enough adults to take on the role, officers informed that there were enough volunteers to help take on the mentoring role. Social workers would advertise the mentoring with their young person, however, the low numbers had been a result to some young people having a lot of adults in their life and may not require any further adults for additional support, though there were some young people who did require additional support. Officers noted that there had not been a huge uptake for mentoring and there were additional options offered.

Further comments was shared by the Panel informing that the youth service needed clarity for the mentoring programme to know what was best suited for the young people. Panel Members wanted to see more complaints covered within the report. Officers acknowledged the comments and what needed to be followed up.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the report.

**34/20 How has the Panel helped Children in Care today?**

- Comments were made that there were many committees and panels overlapping and also with new government arrangement. With regards to the RAG rating, there was a lot of overlapping and Panel Members would like to see a pathway with more clarity to who was doing what to avoid duplication.
- There were consensus comments that it would be useful to have joint meeting in terms of government review to comment on, with a small of people to discuss.
- Comments of sharing and holding officers in account to education and mainstream, and observing the fantastic work achieved and also suitable accommodation around this.
- Comments on the challenges that had come forward though the pathway plans and an earlier challenge from last meeting relating to driving the aspirations around young people, and aims for university

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and beyond, had been beneficial to hear and push back from the Panel.

**35/20 Work Programme**

This item was adjourned to be heard at the November Panel meeting.

**36/20 Exclusion of the Press and Public**

This was not required.

The meeting ended at 7.06pm

**Signed:**

**Date:** .....

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Indicator Number	Indicator Title	Polarity	2019/20												2020/21						RO	2020-21 Target	RAG	Comparative Data				
			Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20				2019-20 YTD or latest	2020-21 YTD or latest	England 2018-19	Stats Nbr Average 2018-19	
MC 8	Number of missing episodes started in month - <b>LAC missing from placement</b>	SIB	203	224	256	266	258	190	192	207	249	246	220	165	134	177	191	195	197	171	HD	NA	Grey		173			
MC 9	Number of found episodes in the month (missing episodes only) - <b>LAC missing from placement</b>		203	230	252	268	249	200	188	211												HD	NA	Grey		0		
MC 10	% of found episodes in month (missing episodes only) where RHI was offered to child - <b>LAC missing from placement</b>	SIB	99%	98%	99%	99%	99%	99%	90%	89%												HD	NA	Grey		#N/A		
MC 11	% of Total found episodes in month (missing episodes only) where RHI was offered and accepted (RHI DONE) - <b>LAC missing from placement</b>	SIB	71%	63%	60%	58%	51%	62%	57%	60%												HD	NA	Grey		#N/A		
CLA 1	Number of CLA at the end of the month		836	840	849	838	836	838	826	806	831	803	807	807	787	788	777	767	765	764	RC	NA	Grey	807	764	78,150		
CLA 2	Rate of CLA per 10,000 under 18 population		88.1	88.5	89.4	88.3	88.1	88.3	87.0	84.9	87.5	84.6	85.0	85.0	82.9	83.2	82.0	80.8	80.6	80.5	RC	NA	Grey	85	80	65.0		
CLA 2a	Rate of CLA per 10,000 under 18 population excluding UASC		58.8	59.1	59.6	58.8	58.5	57.7	56.7	54.0	57.0	54.5	55.3	55.6	54.6	55.0	54.6	53.8	53.7	54.2	RC	NA	Grey	56	54	27.0		
CLA 3	Number of CLA at the end of the month who are Local CLA (Non-UASC)		558	561	566	558	555	548	538	513	541	517	525	528	518	521	517	511	510	515	RC	NA	Grey	528	515	73080		
CLA 3b	Number of Ceased CLA in the month who are Local CLA (Non-UASC)					19	9	11	19	3	6	16	10	7	21	9	13	21	12	11	RC	NA	Grey	7	11			
CLA 4	Number of CLA at the end of the month who are UASC		279	279	283	280	281	290	288	293	290	286	282	279	269	267	260	256	255	249	RC	NA	Grey	279	249	5,070		
CLA 4b	Number of Ceased CLA in the month who are UASC					5	5	10	10	6	10	30	10	9	9	5	9	7	7	8	RC	NA	Grey	9	8			
CLA 5	Number of new CLA in month (total)		31	34	22	23	24	33	27	20	16	33	22	21	23	7	22	17	20	15	RC	NA	Grey	306	104			
CLA 6	Number of new CLA in month who are UASC		14	11	9	7	13	16	18	15	11	24	7	7	2	3	3	4	6	3	RC	NA	Grey	152	21			
CLA 10	Percentage of CLA for whom a visit has taken place within statutory timescales (6 weekly Visits)	BIB	95%	96%	93%	92%	92%	92%	96%	95%	96%	96%	94%	89%	96%	93%	93%	88%	98%	93%	RC	95%	Amber	94%	93%			
CLA 11	Percentage of CLA children with an up to date review	BIB	88%	90%	91%	93%	94%	93%	85%	93%	93%	93%	92%	95%	94%	95%	96%	97%	96%	95%	AFS	95%	Green	92%	95%			
CLA 12	Percentage of CLA who have participated in Reviews (aged 4+) in the month	BIB	77%	73%	72%	69%	75%	72%	78%	71%	69%	68%	78%	71%	76%	68%	80%	74%	77%	68%	AFS	80%	Red	73%	74%			
CLA 13	CLA 13 - Percentage of CLA at SSA (Statutory School Age) with a Personal Education Plan (PEP) reviewed & completed in the last 6 months.	BIB	61%	78%	85%	87%	95%	95%	95%	89%	95%	84%	70%	77%	83%	85%	89%	95%	95%	94%	RC	85%	Green	84%	90%			
CLA 14	Percentage of eligible CLA with an up-to-date Care Plan (6 months)	BIB	87%	98%	98%	99%	83%	84%	84%	83%	94%	94%	93%	87%	82%	79%	76%	86%	89%	91%	RC	95%	Amber	87%	91%			
CLA 15	Percentage of eligible CLA with an up-to-date Pathway Plan	BIB	60%	64%	67%	68%	80%	74%	76%	79%	77%	80%	88%	86%	83%	81%	81%	72%	74%	74%	RC	95%	Red	86%	74%			
CLA 16	% of children in care for at least 12 months for whom health assessments are up to date.	BIB	85%	80%	83%	88%	90%	88%	85%	85%	82%	82%	79%	80%	82%	80%	83%	86%	88%	87%	RC	95%	Amber	80%	87%			
CLA 17	% initial health assessments requested for health service within 3 working days of date child become looked after.	BIB	54%	47%	63%	58%	38%	34%	60%	44%	65%	52%	40%	35%	11%	33%	63%	42%	63%	55%	RC	NA	Grey	49%	44%			
CLA 18	% initial health assessments delivered within 20 working days of date child became looked after.	BIB	82%	73%	84%	74%	63%	46%	89%	81%	60%	70%	33%	47%	59%	67%	89%	50%	61%	TBC	RC	95%	Grey	67%	65%			
CLA 19	Percentage of CLA that have been in care for 12+ months, that have had same social worker for last 6 months	BIB	58%	63%	64%	59%	64%	61%	57%	61%	61%	61%	62%	59%	69%	71%	72%	68%	71%	72%	RC	65%	Green	59%	72%			
CLA 20	Percentage of CLA under 16 in care for more than 2.5 years: in the same placement for 2+ years	BIB	72%	74%	76%	78%	79%	78%	79%	79%	79%	79%	78%	77%	70%	70%	66%	73%	74%	72%	RC	75%	Amber	77%	72%			
CLA 21	Percentage of CLA at end of month with 3 or more placements during the year	SIB	8%	8%	9%	9%	7%	8%	7%	8%	7%	8%	8%	8%	7%	6%	6%	6%	5%	5%	RC	8%	Green	8%	5%			
CLA 22	Percentage of CLA placed <20 miles from home	BIB	84%	84%	84%	84%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%	84%	84%	84%	83%	84%	84%	84%	83%	RC	90%	Amber	84%	83%			
CLA 23	Number of CLA allocated to CWD		30	34	35	36	36	36	33	34	34	34	30	28	28	29	29	29	28	26	MB	NA	Grey	28	26			
CLA 24	Percentage of CLA for whom a visit has taken place within statutory timescales (Allocated to CWD teams)	BIB	93%	97%	100%	94%	89%	92%	92%	97%	97%	94%	77%	96%	96%	100%	100%	100%	100%	88%	MB	95%	Amber	96%	88%			
CLA 25	Number of CLA who returned home (E4A, E4B, E13, E41)	BIB	0	13	5	4	10	7	10	4	2	5	7	5	11	2	7	9	2	4	RC	NA	Grey	72	21			
F 1	Total number of foster carer households	BIB	231	235	237	236	238	237	231	230	228	231	229	230	234	235	240	238	235	238	RC	NA	Grey	230	238			

Indicator Number	Indicator Title	Polarity	2019/20												2020/21						Comparative Data						
			Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	RO	2020-21 Target	RAG	2019-20 YTD or latest	2020-21 YTD or latest	England 2018-19	Stats Nbr Average 2018-19
F 2	Percentage of DBS Checks within time	BIB	97%	97%	97%	97%	98%	98%	99%	97%	97%	98%	99%	98%	96%	96%	96%	97%	97%	96%	RC	95%	Green	98%	96%		
F 3	Percentage of Annual Reviews of Foster Carers completed on time	BIB	95%	92%	91%	84%	85%	87%	80%	83%	87%	94%	95%	95%	97%	98%	98%	98%	95%	95%	RC	95%	Green	95%	95%		
F 4	Percentage of Foster Carers' most recent announced visit within timescales	BIB	79%	79%	78%	64%	69%	77%	79%	77%	79%	91%	86%	79%	92%	96%	94%	95%	92%	96%	RC	95%	Green	79%	96%		



Indicator Number	Indicator Title	Polarity	2019/20												2020/21						RO	2020-21 Target	RAG	Comparative Data					
			Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20				2019-20 YTD or latest	2020-21 YTD or latest	England 2018-19	Stats Nbr Average 2018-19		
AD 1	Number of children for whom the agreed plan is adoption (ADM)	BiB	0	0	4	2	2	3	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	IF	NA	Grey	11	0		
AD 2	Number of children waiting to be matched to an adopter		10	15	13	13	9	12	12	12	12	15	19	17	24	24	24	20	16	13	IF	NA	Grey	17	13				
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	0	570	570	600	570	566	504	504	477	531	550	548	548	553	553	538	562	IF	558	Green	550	562				
CL a	Care Leavers with an Up-to-date Pathway plan	BIB	89%	83%	87%	85%	85%	83%	85%	84%	79%	82%	82%	79%	83%	91%	91%	77%	83%	84%	MM	85%	Amber	79%	84%				
CL 1	Number of Care Leavers in employment, education, or training (EET) on their 17th to 21st Birthday		424	414	381	384	385	369	356	397	372	376	394	388	377	384	367	358	347	405	MM	NA	Grey	388	405				
CL 1a	Percentage in employment, education, or training (EET) on their 17th to 21st Birthday	BIB	65%	64%	59%	64%	65%	69%	65%	64%	64%	65%	64%	64%	63%	63%	61%	60%	58%	62%	MM	85%	Red	64%	62%				
CL 2	Number of Care Leavers not in employment, education, or training (NEET) on their 17th to 21st Birthday	SIB	233	236	261	211	211	199	193	219	211	205	218	217	220	224	236	236	242	245	MM	NA	Grey	217	245				
CL 2a	Percentage not in employment, education, or training (NEET) on their 17th to 21st Birthday	SIB	35%	36%	41%	36%	35%	35%	35%	36%	36%	35%	36%	36%	37%	37%	39%	40%	42%	38%	MM	NA	Grey	36%	38%				
CL 3	Number of Care Leavers in suitable accommodation on their 17th to 21st Birthday		592	582	518	557	557	534	549	572	549	557	594	586	576	585	581	572	573	573	MM	NA	Grey	586	573				
CL 3a	Percentage in suitable accommodation on their 17th to 21st Birthday	BIB	90%	90%	85%	94%	93%	94%	94%	93%	94%	95%	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%	MM	90%	Green	96%	96%				
CL 4	Number not in suitable accommodation on their 17th to 21st birthday	SIB	37	34	39	37	39	36	35	45	37	27	23	23	26	25	25	24	21	23	MM	NA	Grey	23	23				
CL 5	Percentage in touch with the authority from 17th to 21st birthday	BIB	95%	94%	91%	99%	94%	89%	87%	97%	94%	92%	96%	95%	94%	92%	91%	89%	89%	91%	MM	95%	Amber	95%	91%				

**Additional Notes:**

ng the totals by the 11 local authorities in Croydon's statistical neighbours group  
Supervisions figures calculated by not including the assessment service since Sep 2018  
\* New Supervision Policy applied Since Jan 2019

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# Agenda Item 7

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Corporate Parenting Panel 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Engagement and Achievements, Complaints and Leaving opportunities</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Rodica Cobarzan Head of Children Looked After and Leaving Care Service</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>Cllr Alisa Flemming Cabinet Member for Children, Young People &amp; Learning</b>
<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>PUBLIC/EXEMPT:</b>	

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT:**

## **POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON:**

Include here a brief statement on how the recommendations address one or more of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities:

[Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022](#)

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

*None.*

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

To note the achievements and successes of LAC children, complaints that LAC children have made and what has been done about it, and also what the leaving opportunities are/have been for care leavers.

### **1. Key achievements and success of LAC Children**

*E.M.P.I.R.E summer programme for CLA*

- 1.2** The EMPIRE Team summer offered an unprecedented 72 activity sessions for young people aged 8-18 covering local and online events across the borough; all bookable by email and ranging from 1hr -3 days duration. A total of 85 different young people accessed this provision in total which is the greatest ever involvement we've seen.
- 1.3** We worked very hard on communication and publicity this year through the Young Croydon website and social media. We were really pleased with the

take up from colleagues in Children's social care and early help teams in supporting the young people they work with to book onto activities.

- 1.4** There was a well-attended dedicated 'Youth Voice Day' for organisations to bring young people (not just CLA) they are working with together with the Youth Engagement Team supported groups (locality youth forums, young mayor and deputy, CYAC and Empire).
- 1.5** A direct outcome of this is a series of yearlong events –led by our CLA- debating and advocating on issues of race and ethnicity- chaired by the young mayor.
- 1.6** A consultation session has taken place between our Care Leavers forum and the Planning department. This explored the future development of Croydon area and ideas about how to best make this reflect young people's needs and wishes. This work will be ongoing.
- 1.7** The Young Mayors' careers event on 21<sup>st</sup> August at BoxPark; for all young people who may want to consider their education, training and career options whether they are waiting for exam results or not. Speakers and providers picked by the young mayor and deputy.
- 1.8** The Youth Engagement Team also offered 9 additional targeted sessions over the summer for looked after young people, children and young people living in temporary accommodation along London Road and those vulnerable to having a poor transition from primary to secondary school. These were accessed by CLA in some cases.
- 1.9** Over 65 UASC young people attended a mixture of online and in person sessions over the first 3 weeks of August. All socially distanced and CV19 secure we were able to provide vital social opportunity and teaching in English and Mathematics daily to groups of 15 young people at a time. Feedback was unanimously positive and the only critiques were that they wished we had more available for longer periods.
- 1.10** Our first ever KS1 and 2 literacy and communication development pilot took place for a week in August based at the ARC animal education centre in Selsdon. This took some serious CV-19 preparation including bubble setup and teaching handwashing procedures and mask wearing. However we felt it was too vital an experience for the 10 children to miss. The group, all aged 6-11 accessed a whole range of animal care tasks from feeding, cleaning and handling, to designing enclosures and learning all about the exotic collection which includes Meerkats, Skunks, Sugar babies and tortoises .Evaluations form parents and carers showed that 100% children wanted to continue and to attend again.
- 1.11** Apprenticeships begin (October 2020)- 3 new colleagues have joined the VS team as Young Director, Assistant Director and soon a participation youth worker. These colleagues beat an exceptional field to these newly designed

roles as advocates and champions for the voice and experience of E.M.P.I.R.E.

## **2. Complaints from LAC and Care Leavers**

- 2.1 During 2019-2020 there were 56 complaints in total from children in care and care leavers.
- 2.2 Complaints received for children in care related to poor communication with between children, their families and professionals. Concerns are also raised regarding the lengthy process for assessments, including age assessments and the lack of clarity regarding the process. Concerns were also received regarding Social Workers completing home visits without prior notice.
- 2.3 Care leavers complaints usually relate to delays in service provision, a lack of customer empathy and poor communication. A significant proportion of these complaints relate to and are often prompted by housing issues. Specifically the lack of affordable, sustainable and suitable accommodation and the lack of availability of social housing.
- 2.4 Resolutions include ongoing support further advice, housing repairs and savings being paid.
- 2.5 With the Complaints and FOI Coordinator working closely with Managers, turnaround times and responses have improved from 43% to 64%.
- 2.6 There have also been a number of other improvements. Regular service meetings discussing managing complaints and dealing with complaints is also now a priority, which has also increased everyone's awareness on the importance of dealing with complaints. The detail of what goes into a response has also improved, with Service Managers and Team Managers providing more information in their response.
- 2.7 Responses to care leavers has improved significantly. The service manager now meets with our commissioned advocacy service (Barnardo's) monthly to review the progress of complaints, to better understand the role of the advocate and to help advocates understand our legal duties to young people and the barriers to resolving housing issues. We have kept Barnardo's informed of service developments and opened up a much better line of communication. The number of escalations has reduced as a result.

## **3. Leaving care opportunities**

- 3.1 Currently, 62% of our young people aged 18-21 are engaged in education, training or employment. Covid 19 has had an impact, particularly on those previously engaged in employment. We have put in place measures to help provide a greater number of opportunities:
  - In May of 2020, a full time NEET prevention Officer was appointed to the Post 16 Participation & NEET Service and is based in the Leaving Care

Service. She is the conduit between external providers and employers and the leaving Care Service and also carries out direct work with young people to link them with opportunities.

- A new group – CLIPP (Care Leavers in Poverty Prevention) has been established with representatives from the DWP, Youth Engagement and NEET services, Leaving Care staff and educational establishments.
- 5 apprenticeship posts have been established and recruited to. All in post by 05/10/20. 2 are based in the Virtual school and will be championing mentoring schemes for young people which will promote education and mentoring opportunities
- As part of the new local offer, incentives such as driving lessons are being made available to young people to remain in education.

### 3.2 *Analysis of the data*

#### 3.3 Of the 245 (40%) who are NEET;

- 38 are unable to work or study due to illness or disability.
- 17 young people are not in education, training or employment due to pregnancy or parenting.
- 17 are in custody
- 32 young people are “all appeal rights exhausted” and unable to work or continue in education

### 3.4 *Next Steps/future plans*

- Establish NEET panel for 16+ supporting young people transition to leaving care with internal and external stakeholders.
- Strengthen the role and influence of Personal Advisers for young people aged 16+ rather than 18+ through a much earlier allocation of a PA. This will improve post 18 planning, including access to education, training and employment and ensuring that aspirations are high.
- Plan to develop and Educational Championship scheme across Croydon Council senior leadership team and members
- We believe that young people are more likely to achieve when remaining living with their foster carers beyond age 18. We are revising the Staying Put policy and procedures alongside a package of training to foster carers and their staff support with a view to increasing the number of young people Staying Put.
- Young people tell us that affordable accommodation is vital when considering whether to progress to higher education. A review of accommodation is taking place which is aimed to widen the accommodation offer.

## 4. **DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS** **N/A**

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Rodica Cobarzan, Head of Service, Children Looked After and Care Leavers.

**APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT**

*None.*

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:**

*None*

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# Agenda Item 8

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Corporate Parenting Panel 11 <sup>th</sup> November 2020
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	SEND, Exclusions and results update from Virtual School
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	Sarah Bailey
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	Cllr Alisa Flemming Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Learning
<b>WARDS:</b>	All
<b>PUBLIC/EXEMPT:</b>	

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT:**

Additional data to supplement the annual report of last month which needed more collation time due to CV\_19- this current update is the most recent figures and information available to us, as requested by panel (October 2020)

## **POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON:**

Include here a brief statement on how the recommendations address one or more of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities:

[Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022](#)

**FINANCIAL IMPACT: None**

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

None

- 1. Results update on 2019-2020 academic year**
  - 1.1 As previously shared with panel, due to CV-19 there is no statutory national reporting of any examination results this year, for any age group. As such there will be no national tables or benchmarks published.
  - 1.2 All KS2 results were submitted as part of the annual report. There are no changes to that teacher assessed data.
  - 1.3 National comparative data for Croydon CLA (2019) has just been finalised and will stand this year as the most recent benchmarked data.

- 1.4 We are delighted that our KS2 progress and attainment data ranks us 2<sup>nd</sup> nationally out of 343 authorities. This is an exceptional set of results that we strive to build on and maintain into 2020-21. (First 2 rows in the table below)
- 1.5 Our KS2- KS4 progress 8 results in 2019 have also been confirmed as ranking 2<sup>nd</sup> nationally again out of 343 authorities. (4<sup>th</sup> row in table below).

Attainment	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Rank	Quartile	Latest England Ave
% of Leaked After Pupil Reaching the expected standard in Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling		-	-	63.0	76.0	2	A	53.0
% of Leaked After Pupil Reaching the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths		-	-	58.0	53.0	8	A	37.0
Children Leaked After - KS4 Average Attainment 8 Score		19.5	11.5	14.7	21.1	46	B	19.2
Children Leaked After - KS4 Average Progress 8 score		-1.1	-0.65	-0.97	-0.43	2	A	-1.23
% LAC Achieving 9-4 pass in English and maths GCSE			-	13.80	22.4	26	B	18.0

- 1.6 Moving into a new academic year where exams will, we believe, occur (20-21) albeit slightly later than originally planned. We will be striving to support our new Y11 cohort who have missed significant schooling due to CV 19 to attain and progress as well as possible.

## 2 Key stage 4 update

	No. of CLA	5+ 9-4 (EM)	%	5+ 9-1 (EM)	%	5+ 9-1	%	1+ 9-1	%	EL	%	Not verified	%
All Yr 11s	146	11	8	42	29	58	40	77	53	25	17	38	26.
NI101	71	9	13	30	42	44	62	57	80	2	2.9	10	14

- 2.1 8% of the full year 11 cohort achieved 5 or more GCSE Passes at 4 and above including English and Maths. This rises to 13% when we look just at the NI101 cohort, or those young people who would've counted in reportable data if results were being collated nationally this year. This is a slight decrease on last year's 15%. However, the cohort make-up (as detailed in the annual report) differs significantly and makes the 2 years incomparable.
- 2.2. 42% of year 11s taking this year secured 5 or more GCSEs at grades 9-1 (including either English and Maths). This rises to 58% when we allow for 5+ results at 9-1 in any subjects. This is above the national CLA average for last year which 36%
- 2.3 We still have a number of students' results (26%) of the whole cohort for whom confirmations aren't received. Some of this is due to delays in BTEC and similar equivalent course results being verified and some is due to schools not responding to enquiries. We are still chasing the final 38 out of 146 results.

2.4 Considering the unprecedented and significant disruption to education and the removal of exams that students faced this year, we are pleased that results are broadly similar to last years. They are all in line with 2018 national averages for CLA students.

### 3. **Key stage 4 students with SEND (EHCP or school support)**

	Number	5+ 9-4EM		5+ 9-1 (inc at least one at 9-4)		5+ 9-1		1+ 9-1		EL		No Results		Nothing Received	
Total Yr 11	146	11	7.53%	42	28.77%	58	39.73%	77	52.74%	25	17.12%	38	26.03%	6	4.11%
Total EHCP	13	0	0.00%	1	7.69%	3	23.08%	6	46.15%	1	7.69%	6	46.15%	0	0.00%
Total ASP	13	2	15.38%	9	69.23%	11	84.62%	11	84.62%	0	0.00%	1	7.69%	0	0.00%

3.1 The breakdown here shows that out of 146 students only 13 had EHCPs. The average for such a cohort is 13%. This is an usually low number for a CLA and suggests many more may have undiagnosed needs. This would be compounded by the fact that more than 58% came in to the care system during year 11, either as UASC or locally, so would not have received the identification and support of their SEND by Virtual Schools early enough. Of the 6 young people with EHCPs who did not attain any qualifications, 5 attend PMLD or residential school and have highly complex needs.

### 4. **Key stage 5 update**

4.1 Centre assessed grades have now finally been collated and confirmed for most of our Year 13 CLA. This proved very challenging with the demands CV10 placed on colleges and sixth forms across the country. The figures below represent a really concerted effort on the part of social care colleagues to get centres to release results to as at VS (Which they don't have to do statutorily for this age group).

	Number	L3	L1/2	EL	In other	Nothing confirmed
Total Yr 13	164	13	29	22	85	15
NI101	150	13	26	19	78	14

4.2 All 13 of our cohort who took level 3 or equivalent courses passed and have achieved either their chosen university place or a second choice through clearing.

4.3 26% of the whole cohort achieved results at Level 1 or above. We are still awaiting 7% of results.

- 4.4 The results offer some exceptional individual performances for some of our young people. Of the 12 students, who took a full complement of A Level or equivalent courses, 100% secured a place at a higher education institution
- 1 Yr 12 student achieved Distinction\* and Distinction in her AS levels
  - 1 Yr 13 student achieved three Distinction\*, one in each of her Level 3 BTECs
  - 1 Yr 13 student achieved A\*AAA in his A levels- and will now study Neuroscience at Cambridge.
- 4.5 Almost 52% (85) of the year 13 cohort were not in education that results in examinations. This breaks down into:
- NEET= 49 (30% whole cohort -below national average CLA in this age group -39% 2018)
  - EET (including apprenticeships, traineeships and employment)= 36 (22% whole cohort).
- 4.6 This year's (20-21) our post 16 team in collaboration with NEET team, is on reducing numbers of year 13s who are NEET and ensuring progression for those who will take Entry level or level 1/2 qualifications this year- 79% UASC or SEND cohort.
- 4.7 Ensuring those with university level qualifications can get there and have appropriate support to attain their level 3 qualification is a focussed piece of work led by one Advisory teacher.

## 5. Exclusions of CLA in the Academic year 2019/20

### 5.1 *Permanent exclusions*

5.2 There were **2** permanent exclusions of (Secondary) Croydon CLA during the 2019/20 academic year, which is an increase on the previous year's figure of 0. Each of these cases were an extreme incidence of behaviour (with criminal consequence) that was unable to be mitigated despite intense collaboration and involvement of the VS with the school.

5.3 There were **0** permanent exclusions of primary age pupils. Additional permanent exclusions were issued by schools to Croydon CLA during 2019/20 (one primary age & 2 secondary age), which were subsequently rescinded/revoked following the intervention of the Virtual School.

5.4 A further 3 Croydon CLA were at risk of permanent exclusion, but these never proceeded to permanent exclusion following the intervention of the Virtual School and securing of EHCPs to allow for movement to appropriate specialist settings. (Identifiable pupil data cannot be included here for safeguarding reasons.)

5.5 *Fixed term exclusions*

5.6 A total of 60 Croydon CLA received a total of 106 fixed term exclusions during the 2019/20 academic year. This represents 12.1 % of Croydon's statutory school age CLA cohort of 493 .This is broadly in line with last year (18/19) when a total of pupils with fixed term exclusions, which represented 11.8% of an eligible cohort of 501.

5.7 Broken down by those Croydon CLA in 2019/20 who are educated in Croydon and those who are educated in other local authority areas the figures are as follows:

School location	2018/19		2019/20	
	No. of Croydon CLA receiving 1 or more FPEX	No. of FPEX issued to Croydon CLA	No. of Croydon CLA receiving 1 or more FPEX	No. of FPEX issued to Croydon CLA
Croydon school	35	59	34	65
Out of LA school	24	48	26	41
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>106</b>

5.8 The out of borough vs in borough split for exclusions is one that VS needs to explore this coming year as it is a pattern that more in borough CLA are fixed term excluded than out. This requires further exploration to understand why the trend exists and look closely at more collaborative work between VS and the Learning access and Inclusion teams to address the matter as a priority in 2020-21.

5.9 Virtual school focus between January and July 2019/20 was on avoiding permanent exclusions and in training staff in 'highest exclusion risk' establishments to work in ways that will have longer term effects on reducing the need for permanent exclusion. This, coupled with our attendance at primary FAP made a difference at the younger year groups and helped sustain some pupils who were at risk.

**6. SEND and CLA in Croydon**

6.1 As at 12.10.2020 there are 105 CLA Young people between 2 and 19 with Education Health care Plans. This is 14.8 % of the current total Virtual School CLA population of 708.

- 6.2 Of these 69 are Statutory School age (4-16). This represents 19 %. These figures are significantly lower than the national average which in 2018 was 35% for CLA cohort.
- 6.3 There are a further 103 young people recorded as receiving SEND support at school. (14.5%) This is slightly above national average. Of these, 77 are statutory school age (21.5%). This is in line with national average.
- 6.4 Every CLA young person of statutory school age has a VS advisory teacher, who attends PEPs and scrutinises data and school's plans. Our workers will explore SEND provision and suggest it may be needed. They liaise closely with the SEND team and Social workers for young people who are in the assessment process. And with coordinators, for those who have EHCPs already.
- 6.5 From January 2020, we are piloting linking PEPs to SEND Annual Reviews for 26 young people whose cases are held in the CWD team.
- 6.6 We have an Advisory teacher who used to be an EHCP coordinator who advises our team and supports colleagues.
- 6.7 We have access to a CLA educational psychologist (EP) who has supported our advisory teachers to secure 6 new EHCPs since September 2019. There are 5 more CLA who currently have EHCPs in process as at Sept 2020. The EP team worked with 41 school/VS identified CLA this year-assessing, advising and supporting schools to better meet their needs.
- 6.8 Our Deputy Headteacher Angela Griffiths leads on a CLA with SEND action plan which is being designed in collaboration with SEND service, health and CAMHS in order to ensure a more strategic approach to meeting the needs of all our CLA who have diagnosed or undiagnosed SEND.

## **7. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

**WILL THE SUBJECT OF THE REPORT INVOLVE THE PROCESSING OF 'PERSONAL DATA'?**

**YES/NO**

**HAS A DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT (DPIA) BEEN COMPLETED?**

**YES/NO**

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**CONTACT OFFICER:** Sarah Bailey, Virtual School Headteacher, 020 8726 6000 Ext: 88758

**APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT**  
*None*

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:**  
*None*

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<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Corporate Parenting Panel 11 <sup>th</sup> November 2020
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Initial Health Assessments and Review Health Assessments for Looked After Children
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	Roneeta Campbell-Butler Lead Commissioner, Children and Families
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	Cllr Alisa Flemming, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Learning
<b>WARDS:</b>	ALL
<b>PUBLIC/EXEMPT:</b>	

**SUMMARY OF REPORT:**

This report will explain the current performance and pathways for the Initial Health Assessment and Review Health Assessments for Children Looked after.

**POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON:**

The commissioning and provision of effective, safe and efficient services for children and young people who are looked after supports the corporate objective “Our children and young people thrive and reach their full potential”

These services are commissioned by the Children and Families Integrated Commissioning Team to meet the statutory requirements as outlined in the “Promoting the health and wellbeing of looked-after children 2015” statutory guidance.

Through working on behalf of both the CCG and Council, the team aims to develop high quality services where health and social care services are appropriately integrated to improve health outcomes for children and young people.

A Designated Doctor and Designated Nurse are employed by the CCG to support commissioning functions by providing expert clinical advice. This is to ensure that services delivered offer value for money and the CCG is assured that the children and young people in the care of the borough are being safeguarded, and their health needs identified and met.

[Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022](#)

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

There is no direct financial impact to the Local Authority on the delivery of the Initial and Review Health Assessments.

The South West London CCG fund the clinical professionals with Croydon Health Services to provide the Initial and Review Health Assessments.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to review and note the performance of the initial and review health assessments and the actions that have been undertaken to reduce the risks associated with delivering the statutory assessments.

## **1. Background and Context**

As at September 2020, there are 764 children in care, of these 515 are local and 249 are Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC). Since April 2020, on average, Croydon accepted 21 new children and young people into care per month and on average, 9 per month arrived as an UASC. During the 'lockdown' and due to tighter boarder controls, Croydon accepted 3.5 per month.

Improving health outcomes for vulnerable young people, including Children Looked After (CLA) and care leavers, is a key partnership priority set out in our plan for improvement 2019/2020<sup>1</sup> (action 6.2). This includes the provision of a detailed, high quality assessment of children's health needs and ensuring that appropriate services are developed to meet their needs and improve their health outcomes.

Following the Ofsted Inspection outcome in February 2020 a Children looked after (CLA) and Care Leavers (CL) Health and Wellbeing multi professional improvement plan (April 2020 – March 2021) has been developed which aims to:

1. To promote children's health and wellbeing requirements as their corporate parents
2. To improve partnership working between, Education, Children's Social Care and Health partners to ensure health needs of looked after children are prioritised
3. To strengthen management grip and oversight of CLA Health performance to drive improvements in timeliness and quality of all CLA Health indicators
4. To ensure more children looked after and those leaving care benefit from having timely health interventions

The delivery of this plan is managed by the Children Looked After Strategic Group, chaired by Rodica Cobarzan – Head of Social Work and Care Leavers. In addition

This report aims to explain the current performance rates for delivering the health assessments for children looked after and the improvements made against the delivery plan.

## **2. Governance Arrangements and Performance Oversight**

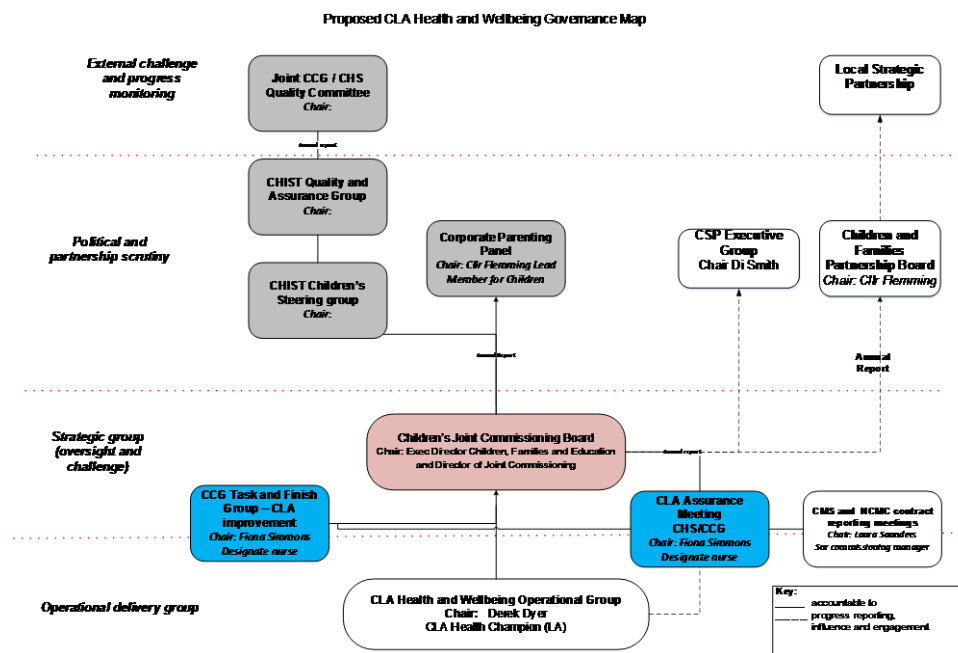
- 2.1. The delivery of health assessment for looked after children is the responsibility for both the local authority and the health provider. To ensure the processes are in place to enable strategic and operational oversight, a multi-agency Improvement plan was developed. This plan is overseen by the Head of Social Work and Care leavers, whilst the day to day delivery of the plan is managed through the CLA Operational Group, chaired by Derek Dyer Service Lead for CLA and Care leavers. Once a week, a multi-agency meeting is conducted to review IHA referrals, ensuring that assessments progress through the assessment pathway.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.croydon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Childrens-plan-for-improvement-2019-20-Final.pdf>

- 2.2. To provide clinical oversight and quality assurance, the Clinical Commissioning Group with the health provider, Croydon Health Services, provide strategic oversight through the Croydon Health Services Steering Group and the CLA Assurance meetings. Performance and risks are reported to these groups and then escalated through to the CHIST Steering Group and Joint Commissioning Group, as explained in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1



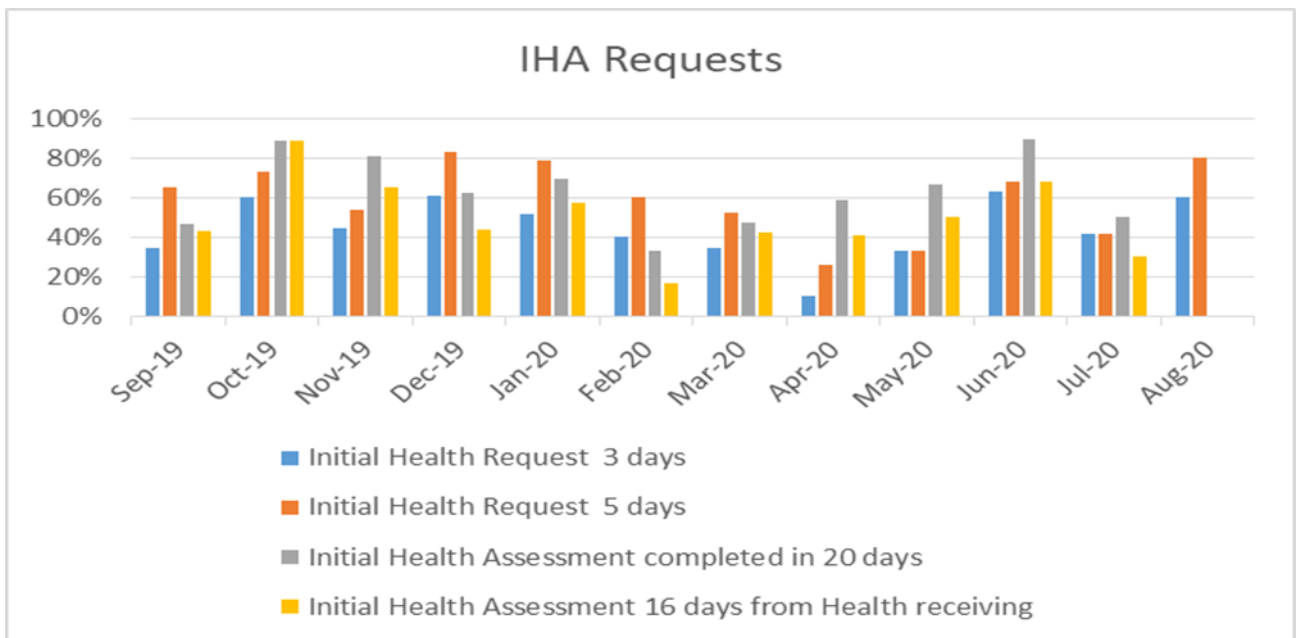
### 3. Initial Health Assessment Performance

- 3.1. The Initial Health Assessments are delivered by community paediatricians at the North Croydon Medical Centre with clinics available on Tuesday and Saturday and Croydon Medical Services, where clinics are available Monday to Friday.
- 3.2. In February 2020 a Partnership performance dashboard was created that aims to provide a single view of performance from both children social care and Croydon Health Services. This enables the Partnership to start reviewing the current health assessment pathways in line with statutory guidance and locally agreed targets; including:
- 3.2.1. Number of requests made in 3 working days (locally agreed target)
  - 3.2.2. Number of requests made in 5 working days (statutory guidance)
  - 3.2.3. Number of IHA's delivered in 16 working days (locally agreed target)
  - 3.2.4. Number of IHA's delivered in 20 working days (statutory guidance)
- 3.3. During the 1<sup>st</sup> wave of the coronavirus pandemic, the IHA's were delivered virtually (via telephone or video call) and face to face. Figure 2 explains that performance for IHA has fluctuated between April and August 2020. As at August 2020 (YTD); 57% of IHA's were referred to the health services within

5 days and 61% have been delivered within the 20 day turnaround time. The average turnaround time for an IHA in August was 13 days. Unfortunately, the target of 95% has not been met for these indicators.

- 3.4. A weekly meeting of children that have entered care that week takes place every Friday (as recommended by Ofsted). The aim is to ensure referrals are made to CHS on time (at least within in 5 days) and progressed accordingly through the IHA pathway. Since this was implemented in April, performance has improved. The CLA Operational Group (which meet monthly) will address issues that have arisen for not meeting performance targets. The reasons for not meeting targets will vary, from the referral not being provided to health on time or the CLA declining the assessment or the child has been placed out of area, which can cause delays in the assessment turnaround time.

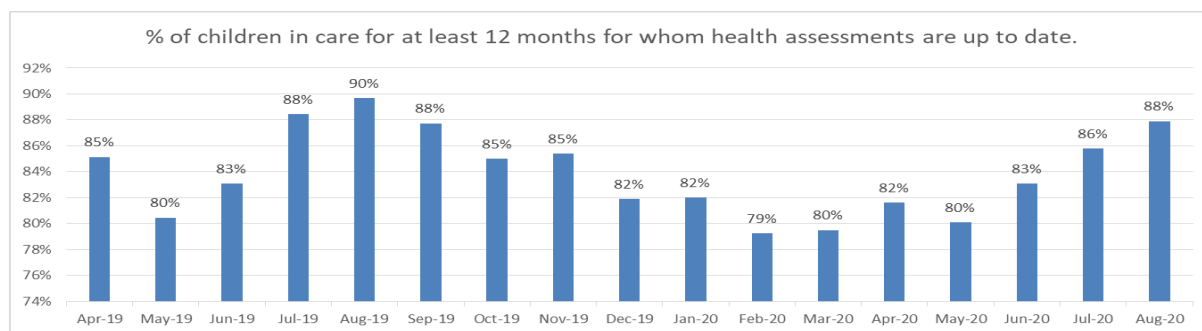
**Figure 2**



#### **4. Review Health Assessments Performance**

- 4.1. Review Health assessments are carried out by the Croydon Health Services Nursing Team and clinics are available Monday to Friday. The Croydon Health Service are able to identify children that are due an RHA and will contact Children Social Care to ensure referrals are made. Hence, there are no performance targets centred on referral turnaround times. Figure 3 shows monthly performance from April 2019 to August 2020. Whilst performance has remained between 79%-90% within this time period, it is still under the target of 95%.

**Figure 3**



- 4.2. As part of the performance monitoring process; The CLA health team will also review reasons why children and young people will miss their review health assessments. This data has only started to be recorded and shared within the partnership. A snap shot of the month of September identified that 54 RHA's were offered; 40 were completed 8 CLA cancelled and 5 cancelled due to CLA health staff sickness. The team saw 10 that had previously declined and 5 were missing.
- 4.3. To improve the turnaround time for referrals outstanding RHA's will be reviewed at the weekly meetings, as will decliners. The CLA Operational team continue to work with the team to deliver the RHA's on time.

## **5. Health Passports**

- 5.1. Health Passports have been developed in consultation with children and young people and aim to provide care leavers with a summary of their health, based on clinical records and the health assessment processes they would have participated in. The CLA Nursing team are responsible for issuing you these. The Health Passport has just been launched in August and to date 12 Health Passports were provided during the month of August.

## **6. Planned Actions to improve the health assessment performance and quality**

The partnership recognise that, though we have seen improvements in areas and we are still a long way off from meeting the statutory and local targets set. Below are a list of improvements that are working towards, in line with the Improvement Plan:

- Children Social Care are working with health colleagues to promote integration of the health and social care systems in which health assessment are recorded by developing a 'portal' in which health assessments can be transported into young people's CRS.
- A virtual "Health Road Show" is being developed where social workers will have the opportunity to hear from a range of clinicians, including specialist nurses, sexual health, immunisations, to promote the health for looked after

children and importance of the health assessment process (over the next 12 months)

- Development of the Health Champions roles within children social care; providing a professional platform for social workers to champion the health of looked after children ensuring processes for the RHA and IHA process are adhered to.
- The development of the CLA Health Needs Assessment, which aims to improve the local understanding of the health needs of CLA and to inform the future direction, priorities and commissioning of the services supporting their health needs (January 2021)
- A workshop with the CLA health team was organised by the Children and Families Commissioning team. The outcome will support the development of a renewed nursing specification and identify areas of improvement.
- Clinicians to meet with EMPIRE to consult on the health assessment process (November 2020)
- Review and audit is underway for all CLA that have a SEND and a disability, in preparation for the SEND inspection.

6.1. **Options - N/A**

6.2. **Future savings/efficiencies**

The delivery of the Health Assessments do not have a direct financial impact on Croydon Council as the South West London (Croydon) Clinical Commissioning Group commission and fund these assessments. The costs associated to deliver health assessments and health passports, in line with statutory requirements are indicative due services and some staff undertaking roles across safeguarding, community paediatrics and children looked after.

**Table 1 Indicative funding amounts for Delivering CLA Health Assessments 2020-2021**

<b>Funding Amount</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Number of assessments</b>
£108,000	Additional capacity to deliver Initial Health Assessments	360 per year or £300 per assessment.
Circa £120,000	Croydon Health Services to provide a Children Looked After Designated Doctor and for Community Paediatricians to deliver Initial Health Assessments. This is a portion of a block contract for community paediatric services.	The designated doctor provides strategic oversight and quality assures the IHA process. Currently the designated doctor is fulfilling a named doctor function and will triage and undertake review health assessments. 6 assessments per month or 72 per year. In the last 3 months, this averaged 9 per month
Circa £70,000	Designated Nurse post, whose role is to provide strategic oversight and quality assure the review health assessment process. This is a statutory function and sits within the CCG.	No assessment delivered, but will quality assure a proportion of the RHA's.
Circa £23,000	Head of Service (Safeguarding)	Manages the CLA Nursing team and oversees the running of the service. This is portion of the overall role.
£397,000	The Children Looked After Nursing team for the timely delivery of Review Health Assessments. This includes a part time Named Nurse and 3 specialist nurses	The CLA nursing team offer around complete on average 50 review health assessments per month or circa 600 per year in addition to health passports for care leavers, which commenced in September 2020.
<b>Total Funding for Health Assessments Circa £718,000</b>		

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<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Corporate Parenting Panel 11 <sup>th</sup> November 2020
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Update on Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health (EWMH) Offer for Children Looked After
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	Nana Bonsu, Head of Service for Systemic, Clinical Practice and Adolescent Services Pasquale Brammer, Head of Commissioning and Procurement (Children, Families and Education)
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	Cllr Alisa Flemming
<b>WARDS:</b>	All
<b>PUBLIC/EXEMPT:</b>	

**SUMMARY OF REPORT:**

The panel requested an update on mental health services and support for children looked after, following a detailed CAMHS report brought to panel earlier this year.

There has been a number of changes for EWMH delivery in 20/21 and this report sets out the new model of access and delivery for children looked after in Croydon.

**POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON:**

Include here a brief statement on how the recommendations address one or more of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities:

[Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022](#)

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

N/A

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

N/A For Information Only

**1. Changes to the Referral Process**

- 1.1 In February 2020 all referrals for Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health services began to come in through the children's services Single Point of Contact (SPOC). Communication was sent out to schools and Primary Care networks with details of the new referral form to be used for all referrals.
- 1.2 The emotional wellbeing and mental health services in SPOC are comprised of South London & Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (CAMHS and the Child

Wellbeing Practitioner programme), Croydon Drop In, Off the Record counselling services and access to NSPCC Emotional Wellbeing Service (for sexual assault and abuse).

- 1.3 The **CWP programme** is part of the national Children's and Young People's Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (CYP-IAPT) programme. It provides an early intervention service to those young people who would not previously have met the threshold for a mental health service. The team provides brief, low-intensity, evidence-based, guided self-help interventions for children, young people and their parents/carers where the child or young person has mild to moderate emotional or behavioural difficulties.
- 1.4 **Croydon Drop In** is a local charity, providing services such as outreach and Talkbus in school and community settings across the borough. It provides AQS-accredited advice & advocacy services on issues such as benefits, school exclusions, housing and employment; key work & therapy for pregnant mums and families with children aged 0-2 (Parent Infant Partnership) and trauma-informed therapeutic and counselling services for 4 – 25 year olds
- 1.5 **Off the Record** is a charity providing counselling to young people 14 to 25 who live, study, work or have a GP in the borough of Croydon. The charity has an online counselling service for young people 11 to 25, a project providing support, information and activities for young carers aged up to 25 (minimum age 7), a project providing counselling for refugees, asylum seekers and forced migrants aged 11 to 25 (sometimes through interpreters) and a Community Development Service seeking to ensure equal access to all mental health services (including statutory services) to minority communities in Croydon.
- 1.6 **National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)** is a national charitable organisation commissioned across the South West London region of clinical commissioning groups, to provide an Early Emotional Support Service to children and young people up to 18 years old. The Early Emotional Support service provides mental health and emotional wellbeing assessments and support to children and young people who have been victims of child sexual abuse, as well as their non-offending families and carers. The service is provided to children and young people registered with a general practitioner, meeting the referral criteria and offers all child sexual abuse victims the following;
  - Assessment of emotional needs and risk
  - Brief intervention and family support
  - Targeted outward referral e.g. referral to CAMHS through SPOC, school counselling/nurse, with support from experts.

- 1.7 **Croydon CAMHS** is the commissioned specialist child and adolescent mental health service for children and young people up to the age of 18 years who are presenting with moderate to severe mental health or neuropsychiatric disorders resulting in significant functional impairment and requiring a high level of multidisciplinary assessment and/or treatment.
- 1.8 New referrals for children and young people requiring an assessment for service will be made by completion of the new EWMH referral form submitted through the SPOC portal. The SPOC team will triage all referrals, ensuring that those young people also requiring a council led service such as early help or social care assessment are opened on the system and referred for assessment.
- 1.9 Those young people referred for a mental health assessment will be triaged by the SPOC CAMHS worker and either internally referred within CAMHS (if requiring a Tier 3 or 4 service) or to the VCS providers (if Tier 2 or young carers)
- 1.10 For young people already open to Children's Social Care, clinical consultations will be carried out by the new in-house clinical service team. These consultations will determine whether referrals will be required for any wider emotional wellbeing services, to be accessed from SLAM, our VCS services, or the Council's in-house clinical service.
- 1.11 *Internal Referral Pathway;*
- 1.12 Clinical therapists are located within Early Help and CSC services. Prior to a social worker/practitioner seeking a referral to the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health service, via SPOC good practice would dictate that a clinical consultation should take place with the clinical therapist linked within their service. This should be done via a service request on CRS.
- 1.13 This is to ensure an appropriate use of resources and enabling timely responsiveness. Social workers and practitioners should only do so, where waiting for a consultation with the clinical service in Croydon will not lead to further increased/significant risks to a child or young person. If it is felt that the concerns are significant then a referral to EWMH via SPOC should be made.
- 1.14 Following an in house clinical consultation there are a number of outcomes:
- A) The social worker/practitioner is supported to think of new ideas or techniques and continues to support the family.
  - B) It is a suitable referral for a clinical therapist to provide treatment. The clinical therapist proceeds to have a joint meeting with the social worker/practitioner, child (where appropriate), young person, family/carer setting out clearly the parameters of the work, which must have a clear link to the child/young person's plan.

- C) The clinical consultation has established that a referral should be made to the EWMH service, as risks have been identified that are beyond tier 2.
  - D) If a referral is required for tier 3, the clinical therapist will liaise with EWMH for a consultation to ascertain whether a specialist CAMHS service is required.
  - E) At all times clinical therapists must hold in mind risk factors beyond the scope of their knowledge and/or service and signpost to A&E and/or GP.
- 1.15 To ensure good practice, clinical therapists must routinely enquire whether any previous clinical consultations have taken place, if recommendations were followed and the outcomes. This will help to ensure that clinical consultations are not repetitive and are being used appropriately.
- 1.16 The clinical consultation with recommendations should be recorded on the child's file in CRS by the clinical therapist.
- 1.17 Clinical therapists will make use of reflective peer supervision meetings, as an additional resource to discuss practice in a multi-disciplinary forum. Good working relationships with EWMH colleagues will act as an additional resource.
- 1.18 *External Referral Pathway;*
- 1.19 On receipt of the referral SPOC practitioners will do initial screening and background police / social care checks, before passing referral onto the EWMH team.
- 1.20 EWMH/SPOC practitioners will manage referrals to ensure that the child/young person is directed to the most appropriate service.
- 1.21 EWMH will make a clinical judgement as to the most appropriate level of support service and direct the referral as required.
- 1.22 If the referral is for a child/young person already known in the service and EWMH have assessed that a specialist CAMHS service is not necessary, then the referral can be signposted to a clinical therapist within the Croydon clinical service. The EWMH practitioner will alert the social worker and respective clinical therapist within the appropriate service to advise that a clinical consultation needs to take place.
- 1.23 The clinical consultation should take place within 5 working days of the clinical service being in receipt of the signposting from EWMH. The clinical consultation should take place with the allocated social worker, manager and if possible the referrer, to gain a greater understanding of matters, holding in mind risk and the need to signpost to A&E or GP, if acute risk is identified.

- 1.24 It might be, that following the clinical consultation, further risks/information are identified that were not known at the point of SPOC/EWMH referral. The clinical therapist must have a consultation with EWMH to determine whether a tier 3 intervention is required or other provision.
- 1.25 If the child is not known to the service, following triage EWMH will ascertain whether the criteria for specialist CAMHS has been met. If not then the referral can be signposted to CDI, Off the Record, family support services, parenting services, other voluntary support services, online counselling and self-help resources.
- 1.26 For children who have a mental health diagnosis and concerns are noted with regards to presentation, a referral to the SPOC/EWMH service should be made. These children meet the threshold for Tier 3 CAMHS services and therefore CAMHS are the specialist provision for this. Clinical governance and risk management needs within the CAMHS service that has the resources and specialists to manage such demands.
- 1.27 For children or young people who are not able to make use of a CAMHS offer, discussions should be had with the clinical in house service, with regards to scope and capacity to undertake any work. Any matters pertaining to risk management must be clearly set out.
- 1.28 Currently the clinical in house service alongside the voluntary sector are able to meet the needs of our CLA cohort who meet a Tier 2 level of specialist intervention. This includes direct work, support to networks and the provision of group work where this is appropriate given the current COVID restrictions. The in house service also deliver bespoke training as required.
- 1.29 Clinicians are employed by the local authority and therefore record on the same data system as used within the service, Liquid Logic. Consultations are requested via social workers and practitioners which is noted on the child/young person's file. Clinicians record their notes on the same system, enabling a seamless approach to practice that is cohesive.
- 1.30 Data from the SPOC shows that from February 2020 to date, there were 499 referrals for EWMH. Of these approximately 297 were accepted. CAMHS data would provide intelligence regarding the demographics of these referrals.
- 1.31 Data for Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 shows that of the 1379 CYP accessing treatment following referral to our EWMH services, the following access numbers were recorded specifically for Children Looked After in our commissioned services – SLaM, Croydon Drop In and Off the Record;

	<b>Q1 &amp; Q2 TOTAL for (20/21)</b>
<b>Children Looked After</b>	211
<b>Care Leavers (over 18's)</b>	17
<b>TOTAL CLA and Care leavers</b>	<b>228</b>

## **2. Council Funding of CAMHS Services;**

- 2.1 In 2020, Croydon Council made the decision to end the contract with SLaM to deliver a range of mental health services directly for children looked after and children within social care.
- 2.2 Previously the Council funded SLaM CAMHS to provide the following services;
- Early Intervention (parenting) Programmes
  - Children with Disabilities (CWD) Advice and Support
  - Youth Offending Service Advice and Support
  - Safeguarding post (contribution)
  - Systemic practitioner post in NPT (contribution)
  - Children Looked After (CLA) service
- 2.3 Due to a number of capacity and recruitment issues within SLaM CAMHS, and the development of a new in house clinical offer, Children's Services made the decision to withdraw the majority of the funding from September 2020. The Council has continued to fund the Early Intervention Programmes for 21/22.
- 2.4 SLaM attempted to recruit to the CLA Service numerous times with no success. It was agreed that the Council would take over the delivery of this service and recruit within the new in house clinical service.
- 2.5 The new in house clinical service is an in house preventative service, accessible to Education, Early Help and Children's Social Care practitioners. As we know many children with emotional well-being and mental health needs do not meet the threshold criteria for CAMHS, and current provisions in the non-statutory sector are not sufficient. The service is aimed to offer the right help at the right time whilst also reducing the need for costly level 3 interventions.
- 2.6 The development of the in house clinical service will enable timely responses to needs for children, young people and their networks. Doing so should ensure that breakdowns within family networks or placements will reduce, as

support is responsive and bespoke. Social workers, practitioners and foster carers have been supported to develop their knowledge and skills, with regards to emotional well-being and mental health. The objective is to support greater awareness, enabling greater alignment of support, and increasing capacity to manage the needs of our children and young people when experiencing challenges with their emotional well-being and mental health. This is an invest to save model and provides value for money, given the high costs put upon the local authority as a result of family and placement breakdowns.

- 2.7 As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and other restrictions, the current in year savings will be £220k. We are conscious however when we resume to more normal functioning and the resumption of normal services, this underspend might not be the case for the coming year end spend.
- 2.8 A team of clinicians will also be on hand to offer support at all levels of the continuum of need, from Early Help right through to Children's Social Care. Within Pan London thresholds the clinical service will work with families from level 2a (Early Help) to level 4 (Specialist Acute).
- 2.9 The interventions will not only be timely but also flexible and bespoke, tailored to the family's needs. By adopting this model we will not only be responding earlier to children's needs and preventing escalation into more costly services, we will also be freeing up CAMHS to better manage those cases that meet their criteria.
- 2.10 Where there are concerns regarding the emotional well-being and mental health of a child or young person who is CLA, a consultation can take place with the clinical in house service. This is on the proviso is that doing so, will not lead to a delay in assessment or treatment if the young person poses a risk to themselves or others. Where there is evidence that a child or young person's presentation is indicative of a worsening in their mental health, then a referral to SPOC/EWMH is required. A triage assessment will take place with a view to decision making regarding service provision. Matters pertaining to an emergency will require attendance at A&E.
- 2.11 75% of our CLA have an SDQ. This tool is used for early identification of needs with regards to emotional well-being and mental health. This is a marked improvement from early on in the year. There has been a workshop for staff in CLA as a means of supporting their understanding of SDQ's and consider next steps.
- 2.12 The wider services offering support to children and young people in Croydon are also still accessible for Children Looked After, including the following;

### 2.13 *'Trailblazers' Mental Health Support Teams (MHST) in Schools -*

2.13.1 Croydon has two Trailblazer programmes Wave 1 and 2, to support children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health needs in schools. The programme is led by South West London STP and funds two MHST based in identified clusters of schools. The teams provide support, advice and brief interventions in 19 primary schools, 8 secondary schools, 7 special schools and 1 college. The MHST also link into existing wider EWMH provision in the borough.

2.13.2 **Cluster 1** focused on reducing inequalities in health in exclusions and building emotional resilience and **Cluster 2** focused on reducing inequalities in health with a focus on reducing youth violence

2.13.3 The whole programme for 20/21 will cost £4.2m across all areas, however a number of the income funding streams will cease. Additional funding will need to be sought to cover these costs and to maintain current levels of provision.

### 2.14 *Kooth*

2.14.1 Kooth is an anonymous online support service accessible to children and young people in Croydon. Kooth provides information, advice, articles, chat forums and 1-1 online chat functions delivered by trained psychologists. The service is commissioned across the 6 South West London boroughs.

### 2.15 *Chat Health*

2.15.1 Croydon Health Services provides an anonymous text service for young people to ask questions, get advice and support from school nurses.

## 3. **CCG Mental Health Investment:**

3.1 In 2021 SWLondon CCG (Croydon) has invested into mental health services in the borough. The investment total across both adults and children's services is approximately £4m – this has been allocated against key priorities, growth against demand, and service improvement.

3.2 Of the above, £450,000 has been allocated to children's services and provision including increasing capacity within Tier 3 CAMHS crisis care in the hospital and community; increased capacity in the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for EWMH referrals and triage; and a Transitions worker for across our VCS providers and Tier 3 CAMHS to support young people transitioning to adult services.

3.3 In addition, investment has been allocated to our voluntary sector partners to increase capacity of counselling and online counselling; development of digital services to increase access for young people, and increase and development of the BAME service offer for children and young people including outreach.



- 3.4 Within the investment, funding is also being made available for the development of the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Localities offer. This will allow named workers in the identified localities working within early help and alongside primary care and schools in the area, to provide a link into EWMH services and early interventions.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 Key stakeholder engagement was undertaken for the changes to the referral process through a SPOC partnership group that met regularly over a 12 month period. The group consisted of provider colleagues from SlaM CAMHS, Croydon Drop In and Off the Record, Social Care colleagues from the assessment team and CSC Improvement Team, and Commissioning.
- 4.2 The development of the referral process and form included GP clinical leads for mental health who advised on the wording, recording, and promotion. The EWMH referral form was promoted via the GP Clinical Network on three occasions and to the Local Medical Committee (LMC).

#### **5. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 5.1 *Future savings/efficiencies*
- 5.2 The reduction of the SLaM contract by the council has also created a financial saving of approximately £300k per annum from 21/22. This can therefore be utilised within the in house clinical team now supporting children in early help and social care, including CLA.

#### **6. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

N/A

#### **7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**

N/A

#### **8. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

N/A

#### **9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

N/A

#### **10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT**

N/A

## 11. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

N/A

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### **CONTACT OFFICER:**

Nana Bonsu, Head of Service for Systemic, Clinical Practice and Adolescent Services: and  
Pasquale Brammer, Head of Commissioning and Procurement (Children, Families and Education).

### **APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT**

None

### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:**

None

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Corporate Parenting Panel 11 November 2020</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Annual Report - Corporate Parenting 2019/2020</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Nick Pendry Director- Early Help and Children’s Social Care</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>Cllr Alisa Flemming Cabinet Member for Children, Young People &amp; Learning</b>
<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>PUBLIC/EXEMPT:</b>	<b>NA</b>

**SUMMARY OF REPORT:**

The role of ‘Corporate Parent’ is a collective responsibility of the Council. The Panel provides a forum for Elected Members to champion the needs of Croydon’s Children in Care and Young People Leaving Care. The Panel supports and monitors the performance of the Council and its partner agencies in caring for and supporting Children Looked After and Young People Leaving Care, in our borough. The panel priority is to meet with the Children in Care Council – EMPIRE to improve Corporate Parenting in Croydon and ensure that our Children and Young People’s voices are heard.

The Annual report outlines the key information about our children looked after and care leavers, the services they receive and a summary of the work presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel in 2019-2020.

**POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON:**

Croydon Council’s Corporate Plan priority is that our children and young people thrive and reach their full potential. Specifically that :

- Children and young people in Croydon are safe, healthy and happy, and aspire to be the best they can be
- Every child and young person can access high quality education and youth facilities
- Getting more young people involved in taking part in local democracy and in tackling the issues that matter most to them

[Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022](#)

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

None in relation to this report

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. CPP to note the work undertaken with children looked after and care leavers and other services that support their care and wellbeing during 2019/2020

## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the achievements, progress and challenges in meeting the needs of Croydon's Children Looked After and Care Leavers in 2019/2020.
- 1.2. There is a statutory requirement to provide information on a number of areas that relate to the improvement of outcomes for Children looked after and care leavers. Croydon is committed to ensuring all our children and young people are given every opportunity to experience good care and achieve their potential. As corporate parents we are taking steps to ensure that our children are provided with a wide range of services in order to support their individual needs and help them grow up feeling supported and with a sense of belonging.
- 1.3. As corporate parents we need to understand our strengths, our areas of challenge, and take actions to address any identified improvements. Overall 2019-2020 remained a challenging year for us as corporate parents as we have continued our journey of improvement that started following an inadequate Ofsted rating in 2017.
- 1.4. During 2019-2020 our efforts focused on :
  - Updating our Croydon placement sufficiency strategy and working on increasing the range and options of accommodation available for our children and care leavers
  - Working towards improving the health of children looked after
  - Increasing our children access and support to remain in educational employment and training (EET)
  - Reviewing Children Social care performance to improve care planning for our children
  - Improving our children placements stability and permanence planning
  - Increasing practical and financial support to our foster carers, including staying put rates
  - Improving compliance with statutory requirements and good practice
  - Improve our direct work with children and workforce stability
- 1.5. In February 2020, our services to CLA and Care Leavers have been the subject to an Ofsted ILACS, our work was rated as requiring improvement to be good with the overall work of the Children Social Care being rated as Good.

## **2. Corporate Parenting Panel**

- 2.1. The statutory guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services (in Croydon this is the Executive Director, Children, Families and Education) and the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning, states that the Council has a responsibility to act as an effective and caring corporate parent for all children looked after and care leavers. There is a strong emphasis on improving educational attainment, providing stable and high quality placements and proper planning for when young people leave care. The council takes its responsibility for Children looked after

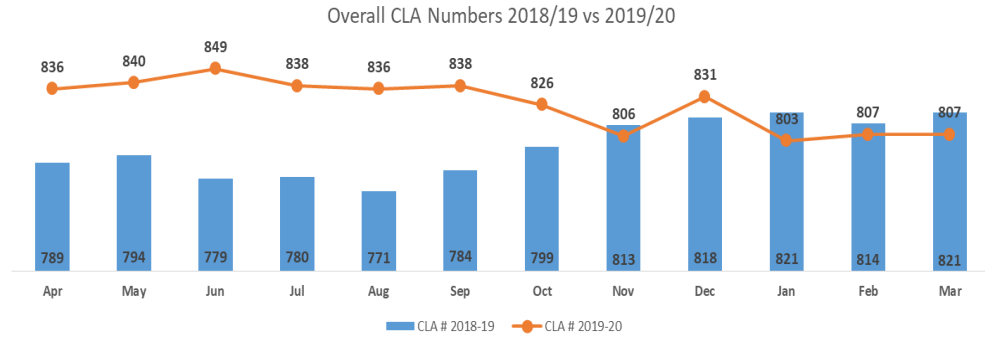
and care leavers very seriously and closely monitors the services provided to these young people to ensure that all Children looked after and care leavers are safe, healthy and happy and aspire to be the best they can be.

- 2.2. The term 'Child Looked after' refers to any child or young person for whom the local authority has, or shares, parental responsibility, or for whom care and accommodation is provided on behalf of their parent/s. The term "child" can refer to any child or young person aged 0 to 18 years. The council also has a duty and responsibility to those young people who leave their long-term care from the age of 16 years until they reach the age of 25 years.
- 2.3. A cross-party Croydon Corporate Parenting Panel of elected members, looked after young people, foster carers and cross council senior officers has been in place since 2007. The panel provides governance and challenge to ensure that outcomes for Children looked after continue to improve via regular panel meetings throughout the year, meeting with young people to hear directly from them their views and experiences of service offered.
- 2.4. The panel will review outcomes for services to Children Looked After and Young People Leaving Care, including Management Information and Performance Indicators monitoring all aspects of Children in Care. The data details the following:
  - The number and age range of Children Looked After;
  - Health information;
  - The distance children are placed from their home address;
  - Education attainment and attendance;
  - Personal Education Plan compliance;
  - The number of young people not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET);
  - The number of statutory visits completed within the timeframe;
  - The number of Children and Young People who have up-to date plans.
- 2.5. Corporate Parenting panel has also considered a number of detailed reports and topics:
  - Educational progress of children looked after
  - Health outcomes of children looked after
  - Fostering annual report and placement stability
  - Voice of the child and care leaver / participation
  - Looked After Child placement sufficiency
  - Adoption and permanence information
  - Independent Reviewing Service, impact and outcomes
  - Local offer and pledge for our Care Leavers
- 2.6. Our priorities for 2020-2021 based on the analysis in this annual report, Ofsted recommendations and our broader understanding of our children looked after and care leavers we have identified the following actions as our priorities for the year ahead that we are already working on:

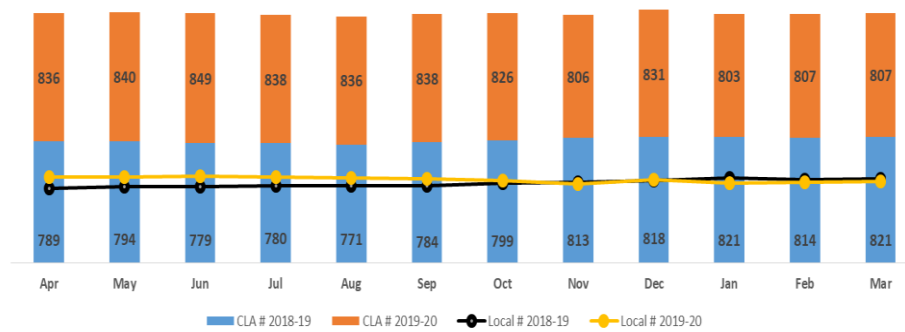
- **Accommodation & Support:** Increase accommodation range for our children and Care Leavers so that they have a choice of placement and as a result experience placement and emotional stability and good care. In order to achieve this we continue to focus on our recruitment activity for Croydon Foster Carers and refresh our Commissioning Framework. We are working in a more proactive way with all partners and our clinical team to match children early to increase support in placements and promote stability.
- **Health & Wellbeing:** Improve our children and care leavers' emotional wellbeing. We are focusing on the take up of Strength and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQ) with Children Looked After and how this is used in our Health Assessments so Young People are supported not only with their physical but emotional needs early ,in a systemic way. We are making better use of our Systemic Clinicians to support our direct work with children, carers and families. We have additional emotional support workers who provide services to our children and Care Leavers.
- **Transitions & care and pathway planning:** Improve preparation for independence for Care Leavers and reduce the number of children and young people who experience poor outcome. Our focus has been on proactive care and Pathway planning that identifies clear routes and objectives to transition from dependent to independent lives. We would like to see clear ways for our Care leavers to access a housing pathway that will meet their need. We have updated our “local offer” and are working on updating our “staying put” policy.
- **Engaging in education or training:** Improving our support and offer for care leavers so we can increase our young people who are continuing to learn or engage in work. We are working with Virtual School and Youth engagement team to promote learning and work opportunities for our care leavers to reduce the number of children who are not in education, training or employment.

### 3. Children looked after: Demographics, health and education

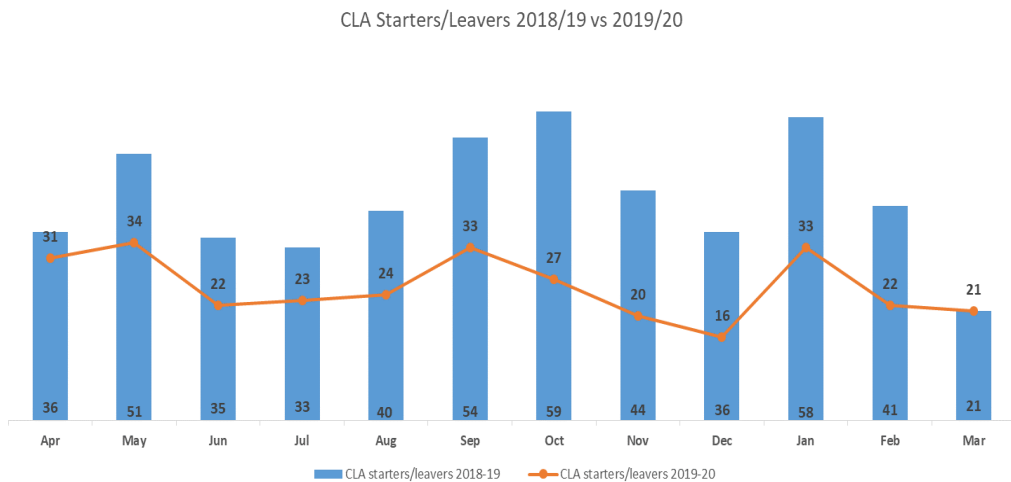
- 3.1. Overall there has been a slight decrease in the total numbers of Children looked after (CLA) in Croydon since April 2019. This is in part a reflection of the investment in our early help and families services but also due to increase in the quality of our services as noted by Ofsted.



3.2. There has been a slight change in the proportion of local CLA compared to UASC. In April 2019 there were 558 Children Looked after recorded as “local” children and 279 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC). By March 2020 the number of UASC remained static with same number of children being in our care and a slight reduction in the number of local children.



3.3. Between April 2019 and March 2020 the average number of children coming into Croydon Council’s care each month has reduced from the previous year.



3.4. In April 2019, Croydon had 88.8 Children Looked After per 10,000 population, this reduced to 85 per 10,000 by end of March 2020. This is significantly above the average of 65 per 10,000 nationally and 53.7 per 10,000 for London and makes Croydon an outlier amongst our statistical neighbours. After excluding UASC, Croydon had 55.8 Children Looked After per 10,000 population at the

end of March 2020, a position relative to its statistical neighbours but still above London averages.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Croydon</b>	<b>87.00</b>	<b>83.00</b>	<b>81.00</b>	<b>86.00</b>	<b>85.00</b>
<b>Statistical Neighbours</b>	<b>56.30</b>	<b>54.20</b>	<b>54.60</b>	<b>53.70</b>	
<b>England</b>	<b>60.00</b>	<b>62.00</b>	<b>64.00</b>	<b>65.00</b>	

- 3.5. **Age & Gender:** The majority of our CLA are between 10-17 years old. 65% of our children in care are male, 30% of which are UASC, 35% of our children are female and only 5% are UASC.

<b>AGE AT 31 MARCH 2020</b>			
<b>MALE</b>		<b>FEMALE</b>	
Under 10:	17.7%	Under 10:	28.6%
10 - 17:	82.3%	10 - 17:	71.4%

- 3.6. **Ethnicity:** We are looking after a wide range of children from a diverse cultural and ethnic background. 38% of our children are recorded as White, 26% are recorded as Black or Black British, 19% are recorded as Asian or Asian British and the rest are recorded as mixed or other ethnic group.

<b>ETHNIC ORIGIN OF CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AT 31 MARCH 2020</b>	
White British and White Other	38%
Mixed	14%
Asian or Asian British	19%
Black or Black British	26%
Other ethnic groups	3%

- 3.7. **Type of placement:** In March 2020, 84% of our children were placed in Foster placements (compared with 72% of SNs and England Average data 2018/19). This is a slight improvement from last year and over 56% being placed with in-house foster carers. This is above the SNs 37% and England 50% rates for 2018/2019. Only 4% were in a Residential provision and just 7% in an unregulated semi-supported provision. The rest of our children were placed with prospective adopters or living with parents.
- 3.8. **Reasons for coming into care:** Local children looked after (CLA) are in care as a result of "Abuse and Neglect", whilst our UASC enter care due to "absent parent".

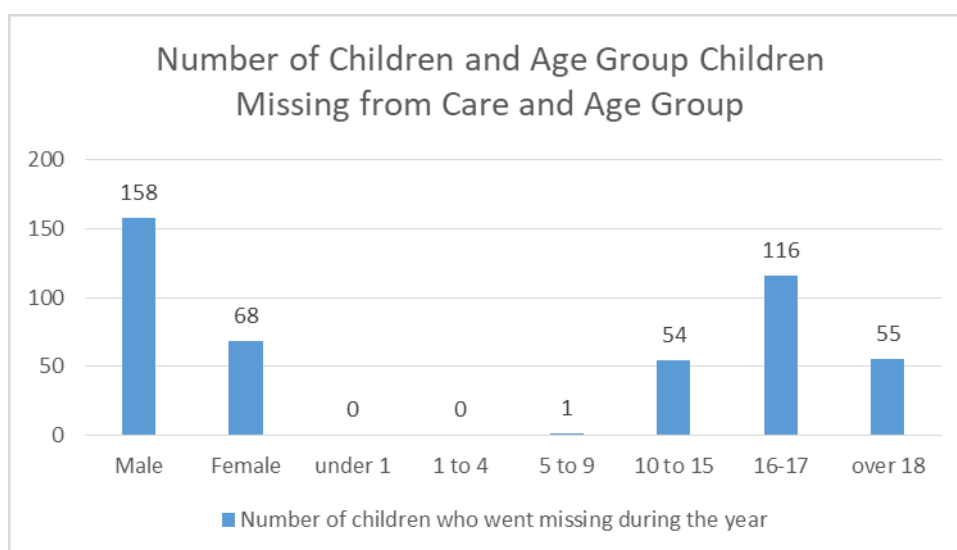
#### **CLA START 2019-2020**

<b>Category of Need</b>	<b>%</b>
N1 - Abuse or Neglect	42%
N2 - Child's Disability	1%



N3 - Parental Illness or Disability	1%
N4 - Family in Acute Stress	4%
N5 - Family Dysfunction	9%
N6 - Socially Unacceptable Behaviour	1%
N8 - Absent Parenting	43%
<b>Grand Total</b>	100%

3.9. **Children missing from care:** Children looked after are more likely to go missing than any other children we are involved with as a council. On average, 82% of all missing children are looked after. When found in average 96% of children are offered a return home interview and 63% of children and young people participate in conversations about the reasons why they go missing and complete this interview with an independent person. Children at risk of exploitation benefit from effective multi-agency information sharing. Action plans developed through the multi-agency complex adolescent's panel are increasingly comprehensive and well targeted. Risk assessments are not yet consistently used and the quality of subsequent action plans to reduce risk to children is variable. Well-targeted work to identify adults who may present a risk to children leads to successful disruption activity. There has been a slight increase from last year (20%) number of children going missing from care (22%).



3.10. **Involvement with Youth Offending Service:** Our children in care remain overrepresented in the criminal justice system, however figures are in line with our statistical neighbours.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	
<b>Croydon</b>	6.00	6.00	6.00	5.00	5.00	0.00
<b>Outer London</b>	6.00	5.00	4.00	3.00		-1.00
<b>Statistical Neighbours</b>	7.25	6.00	5.43	6.00		0.57

<b>England 970</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>3.00</b>		<b>-1.00</b>
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#### 4. Health for Children Looked After

- 4.1. In 2019-2020, we have continued to face challenges in achieving our targets in terms of delivering timely initial health assessments for our children looked after, albeit a slight improvement has been noted. An action plan was regularly reviewed and performance challenged at the bi monthly, multi- agency Children Health Strategic Board and monthly Operational Groups that is focused on promoting timely health interventions.
- 4.2. Processes have been updated in order to improve efficiency in planning and referring children who enter care for Initial Health Assessments and our Health partners have further put in place strategies to improve quality assurance. Health Champions are now in place in all services to promote better practice in relation to health outcomes.
- 4.3. Work has taken place in terms of developing a “Health passport” for our care Leavers and although the implementation was delayed due to COVID, but it is now in operation.
- 4.4. **The graph** below outlines year performance on a number of key health indicators :

<b>Looked after children</b>	<b>2020</b>
Percentage of children with health assessment @31st March	<b>84%</b>
Percentage of children with development assessment @31st March	<b>83%</b>
Percentage of children with immunisations @31st March	<b>71%</b>
Percentage of children with dental checks	<b>72%</b>

#### 5. Education of children looked after

- 5.1. **Schools:** In the academic year Sept 2019- July 2020, the Virtual School worked with 676 children and young people who were in care (CLA) continually for the whole 12 months (including eligible and relevant Care Leavers.) Virtual school works on behalf of all children and young people of ‘educational age’ which means ages 3-18 in school years, nursery to year 13. This is 60 more CLA who were in care long term, than in the same period last year suggesting more placements are now lasting longer and stability has increased.
- 5.2. During 2019-2020 a total of 51% of children and young people attended schools in borough and 49% were placed in schools out of borough.

- 5.3. **Special educational needs and disabilities:** 29% of the CLA cohort between 3 and 18 years old were recorded as having SEND needs in the academic year 2019/2020. Of these, 14% had an EHCP and 15% were classified by schools as receiving SEND support.
- 5.4. Of the total number of children looked after at the end of the academic year, 69 (8%) attended special schools, a drop on 13% last year.
- 5.5. At the end of 2019/20, 90% of statutory school age CLA attended schools rated by Ofsted as 'Outstanding' or 'Good'. Compared to 80.1% the previous year.
- 5.6. Virtual School continued to work with Croydon town school-CTS (11-16) and Croydon Town College-CTC (16-25) as our interim provisions for newly arrived young people. The provisions offer a full curriculum complement and intensive ESOL as well as school readiness and preparation for understanding how schools and education in the UK work. There are 20 places at CTS and the school was full throughout the 19-20 with a waiting list. The college had 6 places in 19-20.

*Educational Attainment at the end of 2020 academic year*

- 5.7. 2019/2020 Academic Year was an unusual year with Covid19 happening nearly half way through that changed the way our children were able to access education. The Virtual School report presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel in September 2020 provides a detailed account of our children progress and challenges.
- 5.8. Our Virtual School noted that formal grades were not submitted to examination boards by schools for EYFS, Year 1 pupils or KS1 pupils. Therefore data about our children progress will all be collated and analysed internally over the autumn term by the Virtual School and an updated data report will be presented to the Corporate Parenting panel. Some of the data submitted is hard to compare to previous years, however we are very proud of our children achievements and not least thankful to the support their carers provided to continue their learning.
- 5.9. **Personal educational plans (PEPs):** Percentage of CLA at SSA (Statutory School Age) with a Personal Education Plan (PEP) reviewed & completed on a 6 monthly basis has continued to improve during 2019/2020. The average completion and review within timescale rate was over the 85% target throughout the year. Our Virtual School designated teachers and Virtual Head teacher have been working to improve our children in care access to learning and support progress.
- 5.10. **Exclusions:** There were 2 permanent exclusions of (Secondary) Croydon CLA during the 2019/20 academic year, which is an increase on the previous year's figure of 0. There were no permanent exclusions of primary age pupils. Each of these cases were an extreme incidence of behaviour that was unable

to be mitigated despite intense collaboration and involvement of the VS with the school.

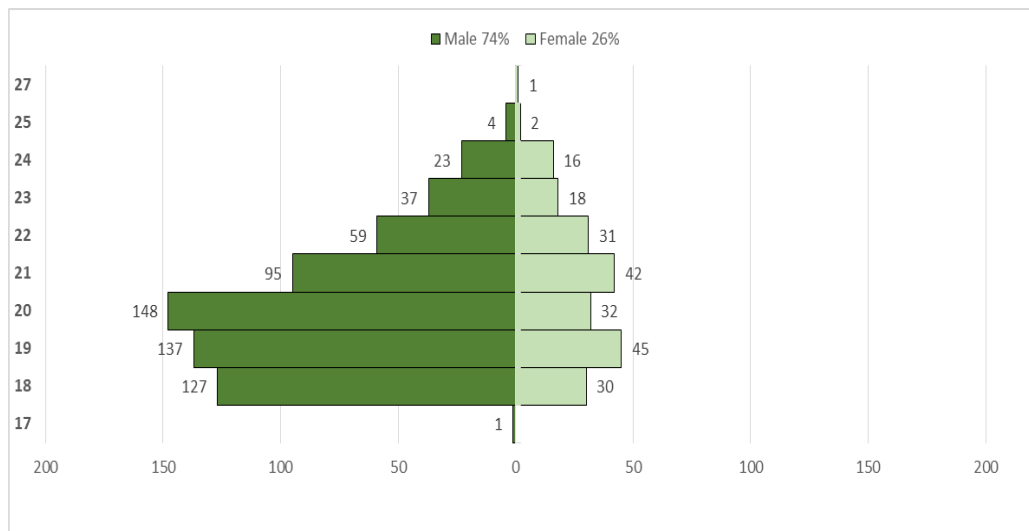
## 6. Care Leavers: Demographic profile, health and education

6.1. The Children & Social Work Act 2017 introduced a new duty on local authorities, to provide Personal Adviser (PA) support to all care leavers up to age 25, if they want this support.

6.2. The duty commenced from 1 April 2018.

6.3. As of March 2019, there were 779 young adults in Croydon's care leaver population, which has seen a steady increase over the last year. By March 2020 there were 848 young people supported by our Leaving Care Service.

6.4. **Age and Gender:** 74% of our carer leavers are male and 26 % are females. The majority of our care leavers are between 18-21 years of age but our number of young people aged 22-25 who continue to receive support has increased during the year.



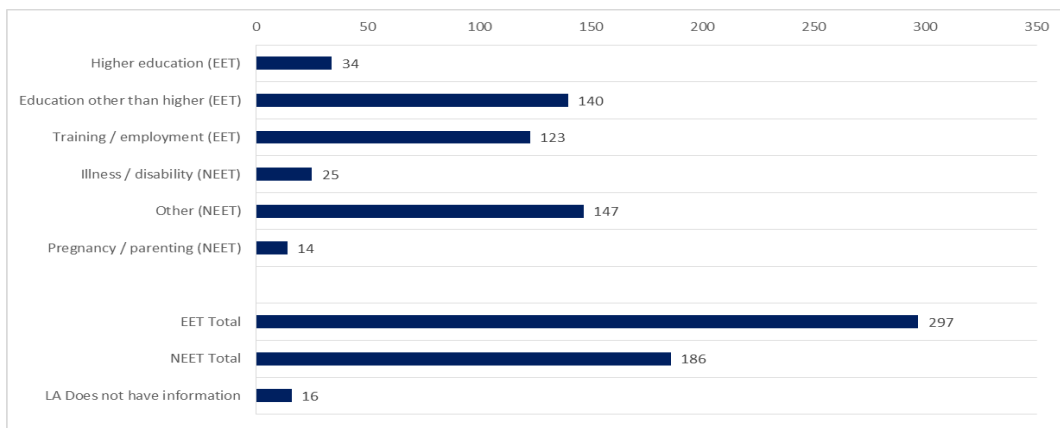
6.5. **Ethnicity:** In terms of ethnicity, 33% of our care leavers are recorded as Black or Black British, 31% as White British or White Others, 25% recorded as Asian or Asian British, 8% are recorded as other ethnic group and 4% are recorded as mixed heritage.

Ethnic background	
White	31%
Mixed	4%
Asian or Asian British	25%
Black or black British	33%
Other ethnic group	8%

6.6. **Pathway planning:** All our care leavers should have pathway plans which details how we work together to support them in all aspects of their lives .Our

performance in terms of completing the plans has increased slightly in 2019/2020 and 84% of care leavers have had up to date plans. However, we are aware that the quality of our planning and how we have engaged care leavers in building their own plans has not been as good as required. We introduced a new pathway plan format that is helping to reflect young people's views and strengthen planning. Implementation of this new approach is incremental, targeting those who have been assessed as having greater vulnerability, but it is still in its early stages and senior managers are aware that they need to accelerate the pace of recent developments.

6.7. **Education, Employment and Training (EET):** Of Croydon's care leaver population aged 19-21, an average of 60% were in either full time or part time EET during 2019/2020. This is an area of concern for us as the figures are slightly lower than the national average, however our performance has improved from previous year (49%) and is the best recorded performance for the last 5 years.



6.8. **Placement stability and accommodation:** The vast majority of Croydon's care leavers are living in accommodation classed as Independent Living, predominantly Private Tenancies and Landlord Bond Schemes. A small number (38 in March 2020) were living with their former foster carers ("staying put"), a figure that has been broadly lower than England average.

6.9. Our records indicate that from our 18-21 care leaver's cohort an average of 93% were recorded to be in suitable accommodation, however we know that young people are not always happy with where they live and this is further aggravated after the 21st birthday when their entitlements change and choice of accommodation might reduce further.

6.10. Through DFE funding two homeless prevention workers based with gateway Links supported our care leavers throughout 2019/2020 in many areas related to accommodation needs. We supported our care leavers so they did not become homeless.

## 7. Health for care leavers

7.1. In 2019-2020, we have continued to face challenges in achieving our targets in terms of delivering timely health assessments for our children looked after,

it would be fair to assume that as a result young people transition into adulthood might not have had a full understanding of their health needs.

- 7.2. Our care leavers receive their “health histories” in form of a letter from our commissioned health providers, but due to Data Protection these have not been shared with Social care, therefore we do not record how many young people have received and kept these for their future. Work has taken place in terms of developing a “health passport” for our care leavers and although the implementation was delayed due to COVID the health passport is has been implemented from September 2020. It was further agreed that with consent from our young people a copy of their health passport will be kept in the CRS record for future reference and also to track that they receive these.
- 7.3. Emotional health for our care leavers has been an area of ongoing concern as a large number of children and care leavers have additional emotional needs resulting from their early life experiences as well as how they experienced the care system.
- 7.4. Throughout 2019/2020 the following emotional wellbeing services were available to our staff or young people (some newly developed) :
  - Consultations with CAMHS for staff in order to support CLA and Care Leavers
  - Support from CAMHs 1:1 work with young people
  - Our Systemic lead has designed a training programme around the “tree of life narrative” approach that will support social work practice with our children and care leavers
  - Consultations with Systemic Clinical Lead to support work with CLA and Care Leavers
  - A drop in service from local emotional health support service for young people who may not engage with traditional clinic services has started but has temporary stopped due to COVID
  - 3 Emotional Health workers were appointed through DFE funding to support unaccompanied asylum seeking children and adults
  - Off the Record – continue to provide valuable emotional support to our young care leavers

## **8. Fostering**

- 8.1. As of March 2020, Croydon Fostering Service has continued its work with CORAM to promote the recruitment of foster carers. Our priority is particularly in finding homes for older children, sibling groups, children with disabilities and long-term placements.
- 8.2. The Corporate parenting panel would be aware that since November 2018, Croydon’s Council and CORAM have been partners in the recruitment of foster carers and targets for 2019/20 were set out in the Sufficiency Strategy and within the Recruitment and Retention strategy, but those have not led to increase in our foster carers numbers. This partnership comes to an end in October 2020.

- 8.3. As of March 2020 the Fostering Service had a total of 235 approved fostering households that offer respite care, short term foster carers and long term foster carers. This include the “Connected Persons Foster Carers” who are approved to care for specific children. At the end of the year, 378 children looked after were placed with Croydon approved Foster carers.
- 8.4. In 2019, a full review of the fostering service created an opportunity to identify the gaps in practices, and put in place an extensive programme of improvement that led to a significant improvement in compliance with National Minimum Standards for Fostering (MNS).
- 8.5. The introduction of the two Fostering Reviewing Officers has meant that the carers’ reviews are chaired by an independent person, not the allocated Supervising Social Worker. This allows opportunities to identify both support needs for carer and children in their care and consider how suitable Foster carers remain to foster for Croydon. This process added a layer of quality assurance and timeliness to the carer’s annual reviews. For example, in terms for the Foster Carers Annual Reviews completion in timescales performance was 97% for the year.
- 8.6. The Fostering Panel was reviewed in 2019 and a new Panel Chair was appointed and took his role in April 2020. Further work to expand on panel membership and central list was also completed to increase diversity, skills and knowledge.
- 8.7. There has been extensive consultation with Foster carers on different aspects of the service practices including terms of the financial package, and the new Financial Policy which was implemented from 31 January 2020.
- 8.8. The service has broaden the training programme offer to Foster carers albeit this had to be re-adjusted due to COVID to online training.
- 8.9. Our Fostering service, is making progress but we are continuing to work on our partnership with CFCA and provide high support and high challenge to our carers in order to see our children growing and developing into confident adults.
- 8.10. We are very proud of our Foster carers, some of which contributed to a number of events and activities to promote fostering for Croydon and talked about their passion and commitment to fostering. Our Foster carers are providing good homes for our children, we are thankful and value their commitment and care they give to our children.

## **9. Adoption & Permanence**

- 9.1. Croydon Council no longer operates as an Adoption Agency. Adopt London South (ALS) is our Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) and was established in July 2019 (with staff TUPE completed by September 2019) as part of the wider

Adopt London RAA partnership. ALS is one of the four RAAs that provides adoption services across 23 London Boroughs.

- 9.2. ALS is the largest partnership involving 9 Local Authority services: **Croydon**, Kingston and Richmond operating as AFC, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, Sutton, Merton and Wandsworth. ALS recruits and assesses new adoptive families and finds families for children in partnership with the LA's.
- 9.3. ALS is a shared service hosted by Southwark Council and managed through a robust partnership agreement and management board. Croydon is part of the board.
- 9.4. ALS also provides post adoption support to families, children and adopted adults. Services are also available for birth parents and a letterbox system enables indirect contact between birth families and children.
- 9.5. In 2019-2020, 11 Croydon children were adopted. An average of 17 children were waiting to be matched with a prospective adoptive family. Average time between entering care and moving in with an adoptive family, for children who were adopted (553 days) has reduced from the previous year(651) but is still slightly above our SN's(549) and England average (486). Our number of children waiting for a match has reduced significantly and we are continuing our work to improve the timeliness our achieving permanence.
- 9.6. During the year a further 14 children left our carer after the court granted a Special Guardianship Order to their carer, family members and/or friends.
- 9.7. ALS reported a 6% increase in the number of prospective adopters recruited but noted that this has not met their target set for year one but this is improving in year two.
- 9.8. Post Adoption Support has been a significant challenge due to Croydon transferring 116 cases, compared to 28 from all the other 8 boroughs, Croydon agreed to fund this work for a year. A sessional worker has resolved 56 cases, but there are 50 of these cases still waiting, mostly over a year already. This work will be completed this year.

## **10. Voice of children and young people in our care**

- 10.1. In December 2019, Rees Centre University of Oxford and Coram Voice undertook the Bright Spots survey: Your Life, Your Care: a survey of the views of looked after children and young people aged 4-18yrs in Croydon. 316 children in care responded to the survey. This accounts for 41% of our children in care population.
- 10.2. Children aged between 4-11yrs were positive about their care and their relationships with their social workers and carers. Virtually all reported they were fine.



- 10.3. The majority (84%) of children aged 8-18yrs in Croydon felt that their lives were improving: a similar proportion as children and young people in other LAs.
- 10.4. However a number of older children and young people (11-18yrs) who gave negative responses felt uncared for and ignored. Young people felt that carer relationships were poor and they were unable to talk to carers about things that mattered to them, and/or thought their carers did not notice how they were feeling.
- 10.5. 79% of the children who responded live with foster carers, 7% live with family and friends, the rest of children and young people live in residential, supported or semi-supported accommodation.
- 10.6. Some of our children reported that they had too many changes of placements and did not have good friends (12%).
- 10.7. 96% of children aged 8-11yrs; and 69% of young people (11-18yrs) trusted their social worker in comparison with 88% in other LAs. In comparison with other LAs, levels of trust in social workers were very similar in the younger age groups but much lower in the older 11-18yrs age group. This might be due to the changes of Social Worker as 70% of YP reported having had 2 or more Social Worker in the last 12 months.
- 10.8. There was a larger proportion (16%) of young people in Croydon who felt their carers were uninterested in their education compared to young people in other LAs and compared to their peers in the general population. 82% of young people answered that they were taught independence skills 'all or most of the time' or 'sometimes' but 18% reported this was 'hardly ever' or 'never' true. Nearly one in five felt they were not being given life skills and prepared for independence.
- 10.9. Children and Young people were asked how they feel about their future- 57% were positive about their future, 26% were moderately positive about their future whilst 17% had low scores and did not feel positive about their future.
- 10.10. Since this survey we started work with our staff to further consider our work with children and training is to be provided.
- 10.11. We have recruited a Young Director, Assistant Director and other Apprentices, who are all Care Leavers and we hope to use their support and expertise to improve training and support to carers.
- 11. Independent visiting & Mentoring & Advocacy**
  - 11.1. The Independent Visiting service continues to be a great success and a Coordinator and two other staff members are recruiting and supporting volunteers in their work with children in care.

- 11.2. We have a large cohort of children who have little or no access to family and friends and our Independent Visiting Service plays an important role in providing an additional outlet for our children in care.
- 11.3. Many of our children looked after and care leavers, including unaccompanied minors access services from Bernardo's and other community Advocacy Services, which increases their social network and provides safety and support
- 11.4. Our Children access mentoring, independent visitors or community services from :
- Independent Visitor Service
  - Learning Mentor Volunteer Scheme
  - Young Roots- Department for Education grant funded mentoring Scheme
  - Croydon Council UASC mentoring scheme (run by YP from migrant background)
  - Community Services: Red Cross, Refugee Council etc.

**12. Overall progress of our Children Looked after and Care Leavers and Corporate parenting functions noted by Ofsted Inspectors**

- 12.1. In February 2020, Ofsted completed an ILACS inspection of children's social care services in London Borough of Croydon.
- 12.2. The Ofsted Report noted that *"Children's services in Croydon have improved dramatically since the last inspection in 2017, when they were judged to be inadequate. Services for children and their families have been transformed as a result of strong corporate and political support, substantial investment, and the appointment of highly experienced senior managers. The current executive director for children, families and education and the director of early help and children's social care were appointed towards the end of 2018. Building on the changes that had already been made, they quickly grasped the full extent of the improvements that were required, and they have systematically and effectively tackled the weaknesses"*.
- 12.3. The Ofsted inspection noted that the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers still *"requires improvement to be good"*.
- 12.4. The areas of improvement identified have been :
- *"The quality of written plans for children in care and care leavers.*
  - *Services for care leavers, particularly the range of suitable accommodation, responses to emotional health needs and preparation for independence*
  - *Placement sufficiency for children in care, and accommodation for care leavers."*
- 12.5. Ofsted noted that *"Social workers across our practice system work hard to enable children to remain in the care of their families whenever in safe to do so"*. Ofsted noted the positive work of our Systemic Clinical team that

supported our work with families and an established Edge of care team in providing additional support to families to avoid the need for children becoming looked after.

- 12.6. Ofsted also noted *“When it is not possible or appropriate for children and young people to remain at home decisive action is taken and children are accommodated timely. Such decisions are made after detailed assessments and made by a care panel which is chaired by a senior manager, to ensure sound and consistent decision-making”*.
- 12.7. We are aware that once children enter our care they benefit by having good stable placements and positives relationships with their Social Worker. Historically the effectiveness our work with children looked after has been undermined by the high turnover of staff and the frequent changes of social workers. This longstanding legacy continue to have an impact for children in care. Some children are reluctant to engage meaningfully with a new worker as they feel that the worker will move on quickly.
- 12.8. In 2019/2020 our focus has been on recruiting permanent Social Workers with a passion of working and supporting children looked after and we hope to retain more stable workforce that will have a more positive impact on our children lives. Ofsted has also *“The majority of workers know the children well and are focused on building meaningful relationships. Children are now seen regularly, and records of visits increasingly outline a purpose and focus on key aspects of the care plan. Careful consideration is given to the diverse needs of all children and young people, and this is embedded in day-to-day practice. Social workers are skilled in direct work and in engagement with children.”*
- 12.9. Our Children Looked after benefit from regular reviews, and letters to children from IROs are increasingly child-focused and written in sensitive, child-friendly language. This is a new development and we are working to support more young people to participate in the reviews in a more meaningful way. The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO's) are now monitoring better planning and overall a significant improvement was made in relation to children having an up to date review , The average performance was 92% . This is an area of ongoing improvement.
- 12.10. Ofsted noted that *“Foster carers are provided with a good learning and development offer, and they are positive about the support that they receive. Senior managers have made improvements to the fostering service and are currently working with an external organisation to increase foster carer recruitment and retention levels.”*

### **13. Key achievements**

- 13.1. Reduced the number of children who experience changes of Social Workers but this remains an area of priority for us
- 13.2. Increased performance in all areas of practice with particular focus of relational working and supporting children and young people to develop better

relationship with their Social Workers, however this is an area we are not where we would like to be

- 13.3. Our children are placed close to home which means in most cases we can continue to support them to remain in their communities and keep positives links with their birth family, when is safe to do so
- 13.4. Our UASC and their Foster Carers have had additional support (through Controlled Migration Fund) and 8 Foster carer were trained to deliver specific training to all our Foster carers in relation to complexities of looking after migrant children. Over 60 Foster carers have now attended this training that is ongoing
- 13.5. Our partnerships with the Home Office and LAPS meant that other London Boroughs continued to support us with the Transfer processes for new UASC
- 13.6. Our Unaccompanied Minors arriving in the UK have had timely access to education /learning opportunities
- 13.7. Since April 2019 there is careful consideration for all new children entering through the Care Panel chaired by the Director and there is increase focused on increasing families resilience in accordance with the principles of the Children's Act 1989 is that the best place for children is within their family, network and community.
- 13.8. Our vulnerable children in care who are at risk of abuse and exploitation and reviewed regular via our Complex Adolescent panel or MACE

#### **14. Conclusion**

- 14.1. As Corporate parents we have made a significant amount of progress in 2019/2020 towards making our children experiences of care better, but we also know that we can improve our services further.
- 14.2. All our Corporate Parenting services welcome visits and feedback from elected members and ask for their ongoing support for our children and young people. Whether this is through sharing in the children's achievements at our celebration events such as the VS award ceremonies or through more formal training events
- 14.3. Members and all Council staff are essential in being champions for our children and young people in care, to ensure their voice is heard. We also ask our elected members to promote the recruitment of foster carers for our Fostering service and assist our vision to have more good families, to care for our children and young people.
- 14.4. Whilst we acknowledge there is a way to go before we can report that our children are all happy in our care, we also have to acknowledge the huge steps made as already noted by Ofsted and would want to say thank you to all staff, partner agencies and elected members who have contributed over the last

year, in supporting Corporate Parenting to make a difference to the lives of the children and young people in our care.

**15. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

**15.1. WILL THE SUBJECT OF THE REPORT INVOLVE THE PROCESSING OF 'PERSONAL DATA'?**

Yes

**15.2. HAS A DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT (DPIA) BEEN COMPLETED?**

No

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Rodica Cobarzan; Head of Service, Social Work with Children Looked after and Care Leavers

**APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT**

*None*

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:**

*None*

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# Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme 2020/21

Meeting date	Wed 1 July 20 <b>CANCELLED</b>	Tues 29 Sept <b>RESCHEDULED</b>	Wed 11 Nov	Thurs 10 Dec <b>NEW</b>	Wed 13 Jan 21	Wed 3 Mar	Wed 28 Apr
Theme	SUFFICIENCY	EDUCATION	HEALTH	SUFFICIENCY	ADOPTION	CARE LEAVERS	FOSTERING
Item	Terms of Reference	Exam Results Exclusion SEN	IHAs	Residential Care (Part B paper – 37 children)	Summary of ASL Adoption activity	Care Leavers and Support for Care Leavers	Annual Report of Fostering Service and Panel  Statement of Purpose
Officer							
Item	Residential Care (Part B paper – 37 children)	Mentoring and Careers guidance for LAC an CL Mentoring and IV work	RHAs	Update on the South Commissioning Programme (Service/Strategy)	Croydon Social Care update on children with a plan for adoption	Leaving Care Offer and pledge	Recruitment and Deregistration
Officer							
Item	Update on the South Commissioning Programme	Engagement Achievement (inc. complaints and leaving opportunities)	CAMHS	IRO Annual Report	CIC Performance Scorecard	CIC Performance Scorecard	Review of Fostering Services Escalation Policy for Foster Carers
Officer							
Item	IRO Annual Report	Annual Report of Virtual School	CIC Performance Scorecard	CIC Performance Scorecard			CIC Performance Scorecard
Officer							
Item	CIC Performance Scorecard	CIC Performance Scorecard	Annual Report of Corporate Parenting (19/20)				Annual Report of Corporate Parenting Panel
Officer							
Item							

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