

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

## **1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

## **2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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

## **3. WHO ARE WE LOOKING AFTER**

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

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

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

#### **4. WHERE ARE OUR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN PLACED?**

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

#### **5. OPTIONS FOR PERMANENCY**

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

#### **6. CONSULTATION**

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

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

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

#### **8 COMMENTS OF THE COUNCIL SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER**

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

#### **9. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**

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

## **10. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

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

## **11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

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

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

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

---

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