

**BOROUGH OF POOLE**

**PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
(CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE)**

**27 SEPTEMBER 2017**

**ANNUAL CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS REPORT**

**2016-2017**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform Members of the annual performance data and outcomes for children in care and care leavers for the period April 2016 -March 2017.
- 1.2 To advise of service developments and quality standards for children in care and care leavers.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider the contents of the report in depth and to identify areas where it may wish to receive further information or analysis on the outcomes for children and young people to ensure that outcomes for children and young people improve further.
- 2.2 Members are asked to consider the report findings and identify any key areas which require further focus on during the year ahead.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Corporate Parenting Working Group monitors the progress and outcomes for children in care and care leavers and ensures the Councils children in care and care leaver service is delivered effectively. The Corporate Parent Improvement Plan sets annual objectives and targets for service delivery.
- 3.3 Children in Care and Care Leaver services within CYPSC are delivered through the Children in Care Team, Pathways Team, Adoption and Permanence Team (Aspire from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017) and Fostering Team. Support and services are also provided by partner agencies in Health and Education by the Children in Care Nurse, Clinical Psychologists (CAMHS) and the Virtual School for Children in Care.
- 3.4 Children and young people in care are supported to actively participate and express their views to shape service delivery. Advocacy and Independent Visiting services are available to children and young people and they are encouraged to engage with the Children in Care Council.

#### **4. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: KEY PERFORMANCE DATA AND OUTCOMES**

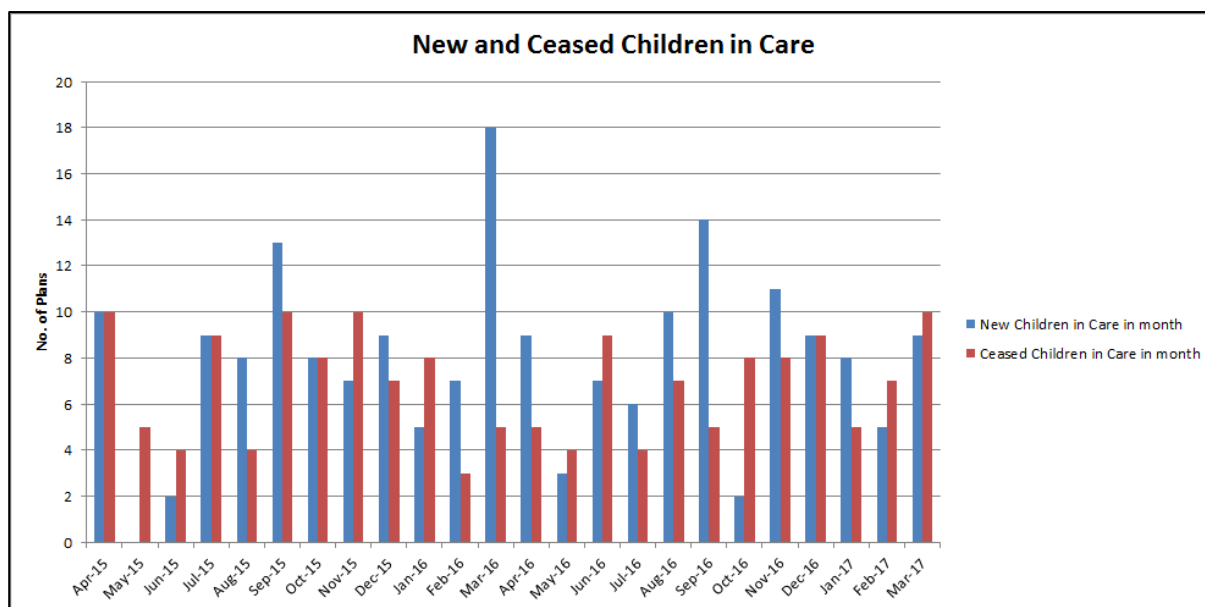
- 4.1 There are a range of local and Government performance indicators which provide an overview of service performance and outcomes for children in care and care leavers as of the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016. The data has been taken from the Children Social Care Year End Performance Report 2016/17 which will be updated following further statutory reporting over the course of the year. There may be slight variations which are noted going forwards.
- At the end of 2016/17 there were 194 children in care in Poole, which is a 4.30% increase compared to the previous year. Poole is considerably higher than statistical neighbours, South West, and England rates. Poole's rate at the year end was 65.09 per 10,000 populations.
  - Poole has seen a significant rise in the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) arriving in Poole during 2016-2017. At year end this number had risen to 20 which is almost 0.07% of the child population. The number of UASC has been a growing proportion of all looked after children throughout the year and in June 2017, 28 unaccompanied young people were accommodated .
  - The most recent comparator information is from March 2016, at which point the England average was 4.0 UASC per 10,000 children. Poole's rate was 6.71 per 10,000 population in March 2017 and has risen since.
  - The legal status of children in care has changed slightly since the previous year. The proportion of children on an Interim Care Order has reduced from 21% to 12%, whilst the proportion on a Full Care Order has increased from 41% to 44%. The proportion with a Placement Order Granted has increased from 9% to 16%, and the proportions that are Section 20 have reduced from 29% to 28%.
  - In 2016/17 93.01% of children in care visits were carried out on time, compared to 90.90% last year.
  - In 2016/17 97.81% of children in care reviews were carried out on time compared to 97.0% in the previous year.
  - The vast majority of children in care in Poole are in a placement provided by the Borough of Poole (65.13% at year-end). 22.56% were in private provision.
  - Of the children in care in 2016/17, 10.83% were placed over 20 miles from home (17 children). This is a reduction compared to the previous year (12.00%) and remains below comparators.
  - In 2016/17 7.73% of the children in care at the year-end had been in 3 or more placements during the year. This is a significant reduction compared to 2015/16, when 12% of children in care had 3 or more placement moves. Please note this indicator has been updated to align with the government definition.
  - At the end 2016/17 there were 88 care leavers open to CYPSC, compared to 77 in the previous quarter, an increase of 15.58%.
  - At the end of 2016/17, the Borough of Poole was 'in touch' with all but 4 of its care leavers, equating to 95%.

- The majority of care leavers are in supported lodgings (26%) or independent living (24%).
- In 2016/17 4.76% of all care leavers were living in unsuitable accommodation. All of the care leavers in unsuitable accommodation were aged 19 or over; 3 of them were in custody and 1 living independently but unsuitably.
- In 2016/17 63.10% of care leavers were in full time education, employment or training and 15.48% were in part time education, employment or training. 21.43% were not in employment, education or training.
- The majority of children in care are male (70%), White British (78%) and do not have a disability (88%). 69% are aged 10 and over, with 34% aged 15 and over. 15% are aged under 5.
- 12 children were adopted in 2016/17

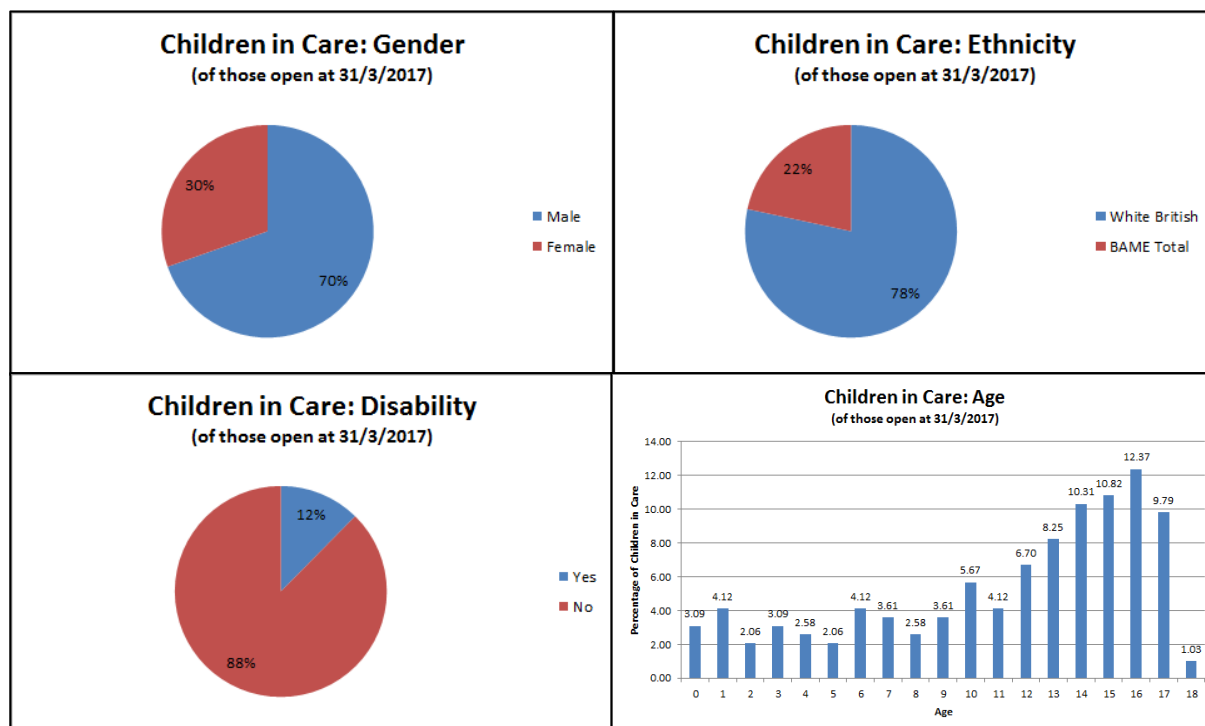
## 5. **PROFILE OF CHILDREN IN CARE AND PERFORMANCE**

- 5.1 The number of children entering care during 2016/2017 fluctuated across the year. There was an average of 7.75 children entering care each month during the year. The number of children leaving care has generally remained more stable, with an average of 6.75 children leaving care each month. Table 1 below illustrates those entering and leaving care over a 2 year period.

Table 1

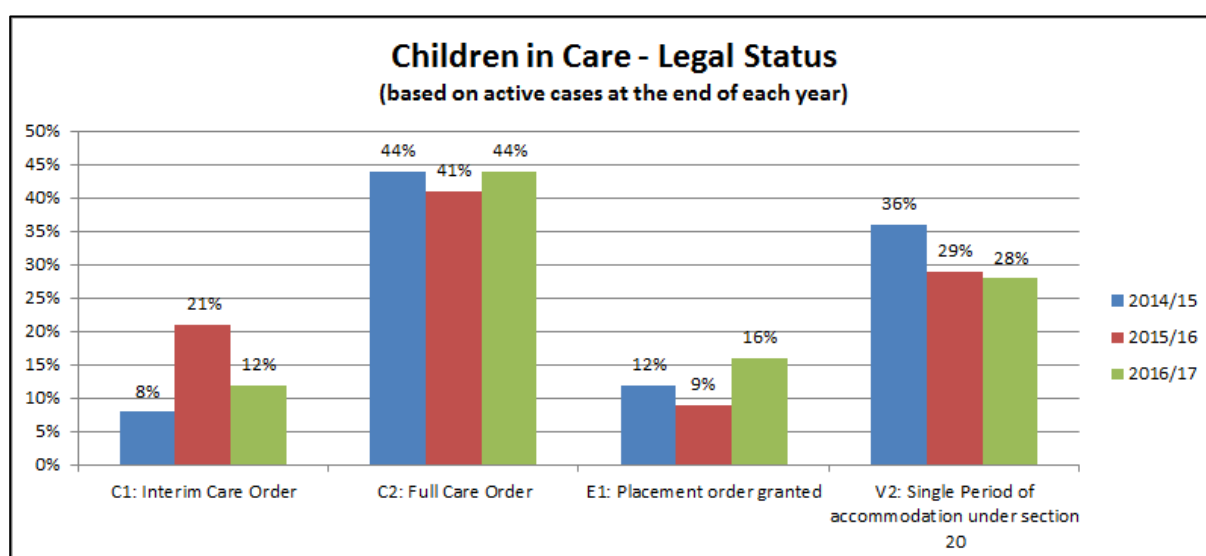


- 5.2 Poole has a predominantly male, White British and older child in care profile. This profile is similar to Poole's local children in need cohort and also reflects the rise in older male children coming into care.



5.3 The legal status of children in care has changed slightly since the previous year. The number of children on an Interim Care Order reduced from 21% to 12%, whilst children subject to a Full Care Order increased from 41% to 44%. This suggests a decrease in the number of new care proceedings being initiated in the year with existing proceedings being concluded and final legal orders granted. The proportion of children with a Placement Order increased from 9% to 16% over the year. This correlates with the increase in children that came into care and into proceedings in early 2016. See Table 2

Table 2

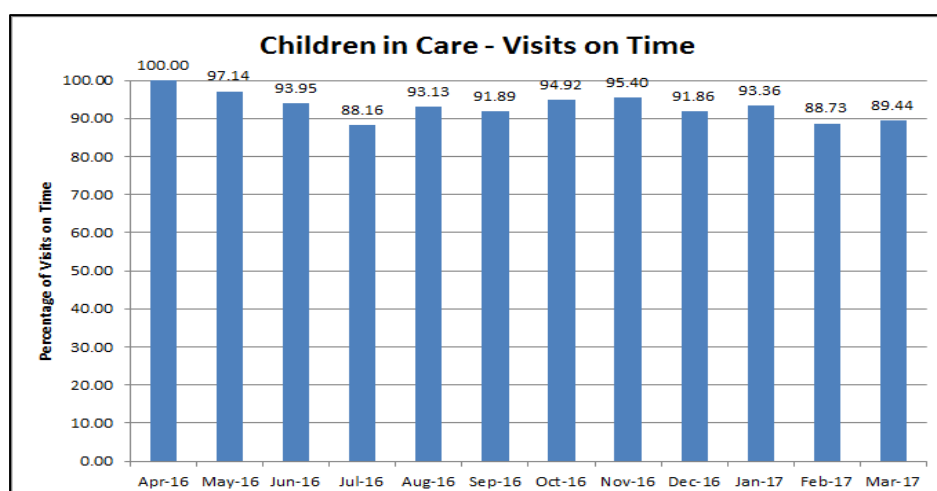


5.4 The number of children accommodated voluntarily (without a legal order) under Section 20 Children Act 1989 reduced from 29% to 28%. It is noteworthy that with the significant rise in the number of unaccompanied children over 2016/17 there has been a small decrease overall in the number of children who are accommodated

under section 20. This can partly be attributed to launch of the revised joint homelessness protocol between CYPSC and Housing in relation to 16 and 17 year olds and the revised Care and Permanence Panel which focuses on all children entering care.

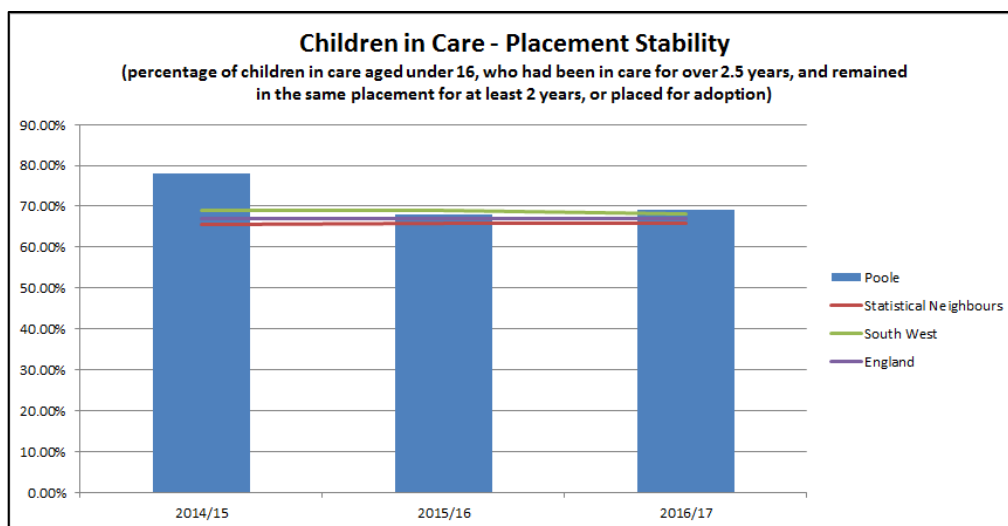
- 5.5 For the majority of children in care in Poole, their placement is provided by the Borough of Poole (65.13% at year-end). 22.56% children are in private provision such as residential children's homes, independent fostering, residential schools and a small number are with their parents.
- 5.6 There has been a continuing reduction in the number of children placed in children's residential homes together with a reduction in the number of children placed 20 miles from Poole. Of the children in care in 2016/17, 10.83% were placed over 20 miles from home (17 children). This is a reduction compared to the previous year (12.00%) and remains below comparators.
- 5.7 Placement provision has been a focus for the Children in Care and Pathways Teams and with Senior Management support, children who can either return to their own families or be placed in family based placements and where possible closer to Poole this has achieved. This focus will continue to be embedded for children and young people within their care planning.
- 5.8 All new placements of children in care are overseen by the Principal Manager Team, IRO Manager, Commissioning Officer and Service Unit Head through the Care and Permanence Panel which was established in September 2016. The Panel considers all new placements in care, placement moves; thresholds for care and proceedings and reunification plans. The Child Health and Disability Team have been included within the panel process for consistency of practice and decision making.
- 5.9 Children in care are visited on a regular basis by social workers which assures us of their safety and well being, appropriateness of placement provision and develops relationship based social work practice and intervention. In 2016/17 93.01% of children in care visits were carried out on time, compared to 90.90% last year.
- 5.10 The focus for the year ahead is to further improve on the visiting pattern to reach a target of 97% on the understanding that for older children in care there are occasions they miss or refuse visit and on occasion's children may be unwell. Table 4 shows the visiting patterns over the year which includes all children in care aged 0-17 years across all teams in CYPSC and Child Health and Disability Team (CHAD).

**Table 4**



- 5.11 In 2016/17 97.81% of children in care reviews were carried out on time, compared to 97.0% in the previous year. The annual IRO report will provide further information in respect of children in care reviews and the role of the IRO services.
- 5.12 In 2016/17 the number of children in care who had 3 or more placements during the year reduced from 12% to 7.73%. This suggests that children are placed in stable placements which are appropriate and matched to their needs and they do not move placement frequently. It is important that the of number of placement moves children experience are minimised as stability of placement leads to improved outcomes. It will be helpful to further consider which children and young people moved and for what reasons to ensure any trends are identified.
- 5.13 In 2016/17 the number of children that had been in care for over 2.5 years who remained in the same placement for 2 years or more, or placed for adoption increased from 68% to 69.23%. This is a further indicator of stability for children and young people in care (Table 6)

Table 6

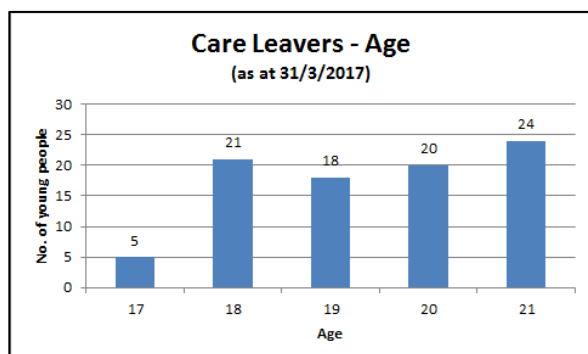


- 5.14 The main reasons children left care in 2016/17 were planned returns to parents (20.73%), unplanned returns to parents (15.85%) and moving into independent living arrangements (15.85%).

## 6. CARE LEAVERS PERFORMANCE

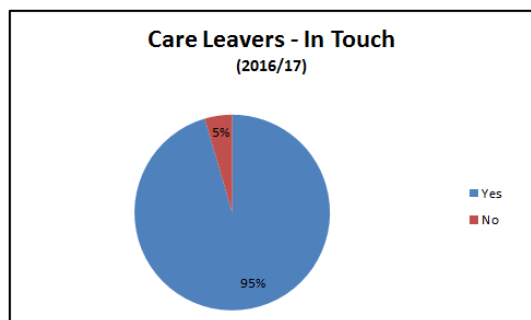
- 6.1 The number of care leavers has risen to 88 compared to 77, an increase of 15.58% across the year.

Table 6



- 6.2 The Pathways Team make sustained efforts to keep in touch with care leavers and at the end of 2016/17, the Borough of Poole was 'in touch' with all but 4 of its care leavers, equating to 95% which is an improved picture from the previous year of 93.3%.

Table 7



- 6.3 In 2016/17, 95.24% of care leavers were living in suitable accommodation with 4 young people living in unsuitable accommodation. Plans are in place to work with these young people to ensure they access and maintain suitable accommodation.
- 6.4 In 2016/17, the role of the Employment, Education and Training officer continued to support young people in accessing, education, training or employment. 78% of care leavers were in education employment or training with 63.10% in full time education, employment or training and 15.48% in part time.
- 6.5 The number of young people who 'stayed put' with their former foster carer is 7 across the year but an additional 8 young people remained with their foster carer in a supported lodgings arrangement or shared lives carer. The data collation around the number of young people staying put presents challenge as there are historical arrangements which are taken into account and those who convert to an adult care placement.

## 7. **HEALTH**

- 7.1 Resource within the Children in Care Nursing Team has increased over 2016-2017 from 1.4 wte to 3.0 wte to include additional nursing time as well as emotional wellbeing practitioners to support the emotional health of children in care and care leavers. Dedicated support is also provided by CAMHS staff for children in care including a specialist social work post and psychology support to both individual children and foster carers.
- 7.2 The Annual Health Report for Children in Care will include further information in respect of these developments and performance. In 2016/17, 90% of children had up to date immunisations, 87% had dental checks and 96% had an annual health assessment. It is noted that the initial health assessment performance has improved since late 2016 where it to 60% completion due to the designated medical advisor leaving post. This has now been addressed and the Key Performance Indicator for Initial Health Assessments within 20 working days for 207/18 is 95% and included within the Corporate Parent Improvement Plan.
- 7.3 CAMHS provision remains an area of increasing demand and for creative individual packages of therapy to be made available for children in care in a timely manner.

## **8. EDUCATION**

- 8.1 Strategic and operational oversight of the education of all children in care, including young people in residential care, or placed outside of the Borough is provided by the Virtual School head. Each child and young person in care will have an individual Personal Education Plan (PEP) or for those over 16 years, an education, training and employment plan. There is a comprehensive audit plan in place to monitor the quality of Personal Education Plan by the Virtual Head and the education support team attend personal education planning meetings.
- 8.2 The number of young people achieving at KS4 remains an area of focus and actions are in place to improve the number of young people who achieve GCSE grade C and above. Young people have been able to access additional tuition and 1:1 tuition to provide them with the support needed to achieve.
- 8.3 The special educational needs of children in care will be overseen through the appointment of a SENCO to the Virtual School team. Increased partnership work is being developed between the SEND Teams and CYPSC to monitor the provision and achievement of children in care with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). There is a key performance target for the completion of the EHCP for children within care at 100% within 20 working weeks.
- 8.4 The Employment, Education and Training Officer for young people aged 16 years has worked in partnership with several service units within the Borough of Poole and local employers to provide work experience opportunities. During 2016/17 Care2work placements were provided for young people at a variety of different settings from retail shops to Leisure Centres. 3 further work experience placements are in the process of being set up,
- 8.5 In 2016/17 a number of young people completed a Level 2 Award in Employability. The award has had particular success in engaging hard to reach young people. The course focuses on building confidence and self esteem, teaching skills to promote themselves effectively in the job market and provides them with an understanding of the requirements of work and employers. The course promotes a positive attitude to work and empowers young people to apply for employment, training or further education.
- 8.6 There are a number of care leavers currently undertaking Higher Education and several Care Leavers recently completed their Access to Higher Education courses, securing conditional places to start university courses in September. 2017

## **9. CHILDREN IN CARE AND PATHWAYS: OVERVIEW OF SERVICE AND DEVELOPMENTS.**

- 9.1 The Children in Care Team in 2016/17 focused upon reunification and placement provision for children to move from residential care to family based placements. The team has also achieved permanency for children through adoption and special guardianship with their foster carers. The team focused on missing children and strengthening performance in respect of return home interviews and embedding this practice within the team.



- 9.2 With the increased number of unaccompanied asylum seeking older children, the Pathways team focused upon service development, linking with the Red Cross and International Care Network. The Pathways Team has recently recruited a dedicated social worker for unaccompanied asylum seeking children and a young person joined the interview panel exercise for this recruitment process.
- 9.3 The Borough has also engaged and attended the South West Councils Forum in respect of the development of services for unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people.
- 9.4 The Borough of Poole has continued its membership with the National Care Leavers Benchmarking Forum ( NCLBF). The forum shares good practice , provides information on legislation changes and hosts conferences and consultation events. This will be of particular assistance with the forthcoming changes to the role of the Personal Advisors being raised for young people up to the age of 25 years in 2018.
- 9.5 In 2017/2018 the Pathways Team will be reviewing the 'pathways plan' for young people and developing a revised plan which is young person focused. The Poole Care Leavers Forum which was established in early 2017 will contribute to this review and provide consultation and feedback in other service areas.

## **10. FOSTERING SERVICE AND PLACEMENT PROVISIONS**

- 10.1 The number of children placed in in-house fostering provision is 65% which is broadly in line with previous years.
- 10.2 Recruitment remains a challenge to Local Authorities across England and Wales. In September 2016, the Borough launched a marketing approach using digital media and revised advertising. This led to an increase in the number of enquiries which were received from new prospective foster carers to 86 in the whole year. Further work is being undertaken in respect of the fostering dataset in respect of household numbers, placement capacity and conversion rates from enquiry through to approval. 19 foster carer applications were progressed to stage 2 during 2016/17 which is the formal stage of the assessment but 6 withdrew after considering the role further.
- 10.3 In 2016/17 24 new fostering households were approved. Of the 24, 14 were for mainstream fostering families, an increase from 8 on the previous year and 10 connected fostering families, a decrease from 16 in the previous year. The drop in the number of connected persons fostering may be the result of several families achieving an alternative order at an early stage in legal proceedings.
- 10.4 There have been small numbers (under 10) of standards of care concerns raised in respect of fostering households during 2016/17 which have been dealt within in line with the managing concerns protocol.
- 10.5 In 2016/17, 13 foster carers resigned from the fostering service. All foster carer resignations have been presented to Fostering Panel for their information.
- 10.6 Foster Carer consultation events have been held over the year and in 2017/18 the fostering fees and allowances will be revised taking into account the DFE

recommended fostering allowances. There is a Fostering Team Plan which will take forward a number of developments for the year ahead.

- 10.7 Supported Lodgings (SLP) accommodation remains the main placement provision for older young people in care aged 16 plus through to 21 years. The supported lodgings scheme has 23 approved carers with capacity for 33 placements. There are small numbers of vacancies within the provision at any one time.
- 10.8 In 2016/17, 5 sets of new SLP carers were approved with 5 new assessments currently underway.
- 10.9 The Pathways Team and Principal Manager for Children in Care participated in the tendering exercise for a new supported housing and high needs accommodation provision for young people aged 18 plus. This provision will be able to provide accommodation for care leavers where appropriate.
- 10.10 The Borough continues to provide a dedicated care leavers training flat which has recently become available following a lengthy period of time and also a 6 bedded unit commissioned through BCHA for older young people in care and care leavers with more complex needs.

## **11. CHILD HEALTH AND DISABILITY**

- 11.1 As of 31 March 2017, there were 10 Looked After children with severe or substantial disabilities in residential placements and residential schools for whom Child Health and Disability (CHAD) were the responsible Team.
- 11.2 For the small number of children with complex disabilities who require residential provision, commissioning is undertaken jointly across Social Care, Education and Health with reference to the SEN framework and Health's Continuing Care criteria. As at March 2017, children with complex disabilities were placed in the following residential provisions:
  - Victoria Children's Home (Livability)
  - Hill House School (Cambian)
  - Purbeck View School (Cambian)
  - Forum School (Cambian)
  - Galena (Embrace Group)
- 11.4 All children have access to an Advocate and an Independent Visitor service is also available.
- 11.5 Transitions for young people with a disability who will need Adult Services are managed within a clear pathway.
- 11.6 CHAD commission residential respite services to support the needs of children, including Looked After Children, with disabilities and their families. These are:
  - Lily's Place (Diverse Abilities) Voluntary Sector: Short Breaks for children with physical disabilities and learning disabilities.

- Victoria Children's Home (Livability) Voluntary Sector: Short Breaks for children with physical disabilities and complex health needs

- 11.7 Over the last year Wessex Lodge, an Autism Wessex residential respite service has closed as has a Health Short Break service provided by Dorset Health University Foundation Trust (DUFT). This has meant that there are now no residential respite services in Poole or the immediate neighbourhood for children and young people with autism or challenging behaviour. Commissioning of residential short term break services for children with a disability is being addressed through the Pan Dorset Joint Commissioning group as well as more locally.
- 11.8 Children requiring short term breaks can, in addition, access a Shared Care scheme using family placements. This scheme is run by the CHAD Shared Care team. During 2016-17 there were 19 available shared carers providing potentially 21 overnight places at any one time. 27 children were linked with shared carers during the course of the reporting year.
- 11.9 Children referred to shared care have increasingly more complex health / challenging behaviours. The CHAD shared carers include 3 with adapted properties who take complex health needs.
- 11.10 Where appropriate children's placements currently joint funded by CCG (Health). Numbers of children accessing the service have decreased slightly from the previous year. There has remained a steady turnover of placements, as needs change, children reach 18 and new referrals have been matched. Some of the reduction may be explained by the increasing use of direct payments and personal budgets to purchase care and respite.
- 11.11 In light of the negative Ofsted inspections of two residential schools and the closure of two respite units, the Council needs to take a strategic view about both short breaks and residential services for disabled children. The main difficulties have centred on very high staffing turnover and inexperienced staff working with very complex and vulnerable children and young people with disabilities. A thematic look at the workforce in the private and third sector across Children's and Adult services would be useful to find out if there is anything from a commissioning strategy perspective we can do to mitigate against this.

## **12 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL, POOLE CARE LEAVER FORUM, ADVOCACY AND INDEPENDENT VISITING**

- 12.1 PKIC, the Children in Care Council has engaged in a variety of positive activities and consultation events over the past year including making a new 'DVD Green Light Lets Go'. PKIC Members have participated in music events, interviewed prospective staff members, and will be actively engaged in the preparations of Children in Care Celebration event which will be held in the autumn of 2017. The PKIC Annual Report is available to CPWG with an updating briefing report and newsletter on the outcomes of the Talkback Survey. The commissioning arrangements for the Smoking Hot Project are being confirmed for the year 2017-2018.

- 12.2 The Pathways Team and participation worker established the Poole Care Leaver Forum in early 2017 and a small number of care leavers attended to help shape future service developments and provide feedback on their experiences. The PKIC Annual report provided to CPWG provides further information for the year 2016/17.
- 12.3 Independent Visiting and Advocacy has been commissioned through Action for Children with an increase in referrals for advocacy in recent months which is positive.
- 12.4 The Independent Visiting service has recruited 10 Independent Visitors for Poole and Bournemouth area and Poole has several young people receiving an Independent visiting service.

### **13 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 13.1 The number of residential placements for children in care placed in children's homes has been reduced. It has been necessary to use Independent Fostering Agency placements to enable children to be placed in family based arrangements whenever possible. Measures are in place to monitor placements and the MTFP. Robust oversight is being provided by the Service Unit Head, Principal Managers and the Placements Commissioning and Development Manager to monitor and mitigate as far as possible the financial impact of placements.

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**Date: 6/7/17**

September 2017 / ktm