



Corporate Parenting Committee

Wednesday 8 February 2017 at 5.00 pm

Board Room 2 - Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way,
Wembley HA9 0FJ

Membership:

Members

Councillors:

M Patel (Chair)
Conneely
Hossain
Thomas
Warren

Substitute Members

Councillors:

S Choudhary, Crane, Dixon and
Tatler

Councillor:

Davidson

For further information contact: Bryony Gibbs, Governance Officer
020 8937 1355, bryony.gibbs@brent.gov.uk

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www.brent.gov.uk/committees

The press and public are welcome to attend this meeting

Agenda

Introductions, if appropriate.

Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members.

Item	Page
1 Declarations of interests	
Members are invited to declare at this stage of the meeting, any relevant disclosable pecuniary, personal or prejudicial interests in the items on this agenda.	
2 Deputations (if any)	
3 Minutes of the previous meeting	1 - 6
The minutes of the previous meeting are attached for the committee's consideration.	
4 Matters arising (if any)	
5 Feedback from Care in Action / Junior Care in Action	
This is an opportunity for members of the Children In Care Council (CIA) to feedback on recent activity.	
6 London Regional Adoption Agency	7 - 34
The Cabinet considered a report at its meeting on 12 December 2016 seeking approval for the Council to work collaboratively with other London boroughs to continue to develop the London Regional Adoption Agency with the intention of joining the agency, when it becomes operational. This Cabinet report is attached for the committee's consideration.	
7 Brent Fostering Service Quarterly Monitoring Report 1st October - 31st December 2016	35 - 42
This report provides information to the Committee about the general management of the in-house fostering service and how it is achieving good outcomes for children. This is in accordance with standard 25.7 of the Fostering National Minimum Standards (2011). The report covers the third quarter of this reporting year.	

8 Brent Virtual School for Looked After Children - Annual Report 2015/2016 43 - 72

The purpose of the annual report is to outline the activity and impact of the Brent Virtual School during the academic year 2015-16. The report includes details of the educational outcomes of our Brent looked after children who had been in care for a year or more. It reflects on the impact of our activities and identifies areas of future development to achieve improved outcomes for our looked after children.

9 Any other urgent business

Notice of items to be raised under this heading must be given in writing to the Head of Executive and Member Services or his representative before the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 64.

Date of the next meeting: Wednesday 19 April 2017



- Please remember to set your mobile phone to silent during the meeting.
- The meeting room is accessible by lift and seats will be provided for members of the public.

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MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE Tuesday 25 October 2016 at 5.00 pm

PRESENT:

Councillor W Mitchell Murray (Chair), and Councillors Conneely, Hossain, Thomas and Warren

1. **Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest received from Members.

2. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 19 July 2016, be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. **Matters Arising (if any)**

Nigel Chapman (the Council's Operational Director for Integration and Improved Service) advised that a Member Development training session on Corporate Parenting had been arranged for December and invitations would be circulated to Members imminently.

4. **Deputations (if any)**

There were no deputations received.

5. **Feedback from Care in Action and Junior Care in Action**

Representatives from Care In Action (CIA) updated the Committee on relevant developments since the previous committee meeting. HM (CIA) advised that Nigel Chapman (the Council's Operational Director for Integration and Improved Service) had attended a joint meeting of CIA and Care Leavers in Action. During his visit, discussions were held regarding issues experienced by the young people when engaging with Brent services. Particular issues of concern had included an incident of miscommunication between a young person and their social worker's manager and a lack of clarity regarding their entitlement to financial support, which it was felt was inconsistently interpreted by staff. The suggestion by Nigel Chapman that members of CIA attend staff meetings to talk directly to members of staff about the impact of such issues, was welcomed.

KB (CIA) informed Members that a workshop had been held in June and the two issues voted to be of most importance to the young people attending were delays in decision-making and the impact on a child or young person if members of staff did not adhere to the Brent Pledge to children and young people in care. It was

emphasised that if there had to be delays in decision-making it was important that social workers were honest and communicated clearly with the young person affected.

JBK (CIA) advised that a fun-day had been held on 24 August 2016, which had been attended by children, young people, social workers and foster carers. Activities had included T-shirt designing, keep fit sessions, a raffle and a mini-zoo and it was felt that the day had been a success and was widely enjoyed. There had also been a stall for people to view the CIA website and submit suggestions for improvement. The Committee was reminded that it was National Care Leavers' Week and an event marking this would be held the following day.

The Committee thanked the representatives of CIA and sought further details of the concerns raised and the actions taken to address these. Members also questioned whether the types of issues highlighted remained broadly similar over time. In response, KB advised that issues varied considerably from person to person. Shirley Ricketts (Children in Care Participation Worker) explained that the concerns regarding financial support related specifically to care leavers and the type of expenditure that could be provided for by the local authority. The young people concerned had been directed to the Council's leaving care financial procedures document available on the website. Gail Tolley (the Council's Strategic Director for Children and Young People) informed the Committee that there would be a formal re-launch of the Brent Pledge to children and young people in care and suggested that this could be scheduled to coincide with the member training session on corporate parenting.

RESOLVED, that the update provided by representatives of Care in Action be noted.

6. **Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report**

The Committee considered the Annual Report for 2015/16 of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO), which detailed the contribution of the IRO Service in Brent. Goitom Mebrahtu (Team Manager, Safeguard and Quality Assurance) drew Members' attention to the summary of key messages for 2015-2016 and highlighted the role of the IRO service in supporting improvements made. Members heard that the timeliness of care planning and the level of participation of children and young people had improved from the previous year, whilst there had been a reduction in the percentage of children who had experienced three or more placements. Further work was required to minimise the number of changes of social worker that a child might experience. Children had said that they valued the continuity provided by their IROs and there had been incidents in which intervention by the IROs had ensured that a child had been appropriately consulted about a change of placement. Whilst Ofsted had positively mentioned the IRO service following an inspection held in October 2015, it had been highlighted that greater consistency was required in recording by IROs and an improved minutes' template had subsequently been introduced.

Members thanked the officers for the report and suggested that future reports would be improved by the inclusion of comparable figures for neighbouring authorities and national averages, along with anonymised case studies and analyses at ward level. It was noted that the fourth bullet point under paragraph 5 of the report should refer

to 11-15 years and the Committee asked officers to amend this accordingly. A Member queried the reason for the larger proportion of male children and young people in care in Brent. A concern was raised regarding the ethnic diversity of the IRO service, though the representativeness of the service in terms of gender balance was considered to be good. Members were also pleased to note the stability of the IRO service and the value that Brent's children and young people in care placed on this. With reference to the target to ensure that pathway plans were consistently available for all young people in care from the age of 16, details were sought regarding the housing options available to those young people. A Member questioned whether officers had any concerns regarding the level of use of advocacy services and clarity was sought regarding the mention in the report of a court ruling on the use of Section 20.

Gail Tolley (the Council's Strategic Director for Children and Young People) advised that discussions regarding the diversity and representativeness of the IRO Team had been held with the provider of the service, though staffing continuity was considered paramount. Further information regarding the housing options available to young people in care would be provided in a subsequent report to the Committee.

Nigel Chapman (the Council's Operational Director for Integration and Improved Service) advised that the larger proportion of male children and young people in care in Brent reflected the number of nearly all male unaccompanied minors who were looked after by the Council, along with the impact of issues such as gang affiliation. A project seeking to help address this latter issue was currently being commissioned with three other boroughs using BIG lottery funding. The project aimed to provide multi-systemic therapy to families who were committed to tackling this problem. Goitom Mebrahtu advised that advocacy services were always provided when requested, which was often at the suggestion of the IRO involved, though awareness of the service could be raised.

Addressing the query on Section 20 agreements, Nigel Chapman explained that these allowed a local authority to take a child into care with the consent of the parent or person with parental responsibility. However, a recent court ruling had determined that some local authorities had failed to actively seek parental consent for a child to be accommodated under Section 20. As a consequence of this ruling, the Council had reviewed relevant cases and returned to court to obtain Care Orders where necessary to ensure parental consent could be provided by the local authority.

Members requested that a report be provided to a future meeting of the Committee on the project currently being commissioned to provide multi-systemic therapy to families.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

7. Brent Virtual School - 2016 Provisional LAC Outcomes

Janet Lewis (Head of Virtual School) introduced a briefing paper updating the Committee on the provisional Looked After Children (LAC) academic outcomes for 2016 for Key Stages 1, 2 and 4. The cohorts for each stage were small and only included children and young people who had been in care for at least a year.

Members were reminded that a full report analysing the confirmed outcomes and including details of the Early Years' Foundation stage would be presented to the Committee in February 2017. At this time, a briefing would also be provided to the Committee on the introduction of new performance measures (Attainment 8 and Progress 8) for KS4 and the implementation from 2017 of a numerical results system for GCSEs. The figures presented for KS4 in the paper before the Committee referred to the previous performance measure of five A to C grades at GCSE.

Janet Lewis highlighted that the results for KS1 were encouraging and compared favourably to national averages. There had been significant changes to the national assessment for KS2, which meant that outcomes could not be compared to previous years. As part of these changes, a higher expected standard had been introduced, resulting in a sharp decline nationally in the percentage of children meeting this standard. Brent's LAC KS2 cohort had achieved mixed results and all were being provided with additional support in year 7. Nearly all children in this cohort had a Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and four children had Education, Health and Care plans. Three young people (seventeen per cent) of the Brent LAC KS4 cohort had achieved five A to C grades at GCSE, which compared favourably with the national average of fourteen per cent. It was highlighted that the percentage of young people in this cohort who were in employment, education or training (EET) had decreased slightly from July 2016, reflecting a move to Year 12 and subsequent decisions by some young people not to proceed with courses. The virtual school was supporting the production of PEPs for all Year 12 and 13 pupils who were looked after by the local authority and contact was being made with social workers and personal advisors.

In the subsequent discussion, Members queried whether the results achieved by the KS2 cohort of LAC represented good or poor progress for those particular children. Questions were also raised regarding how the Virtual School would support children in meeting the new, higher expected standard and Members expressed concern that thirty-three per cent of children had a placement change and eleven per cent a school change in their GCSE year.

Janet Lewis noted that progress was measured for children and that there had been some very good progress made by the KS2 cohort. A full analysis of this progression would be provided in the report due to be considered by the Committee in February 2017. The local authority ensured that all LAC were placed in good or outstanding schools, with a few exceptions to support continuity for a child. It was considered that the academic progress made by children reflected both the quality of education received in school as well as the support and encouragement they received from carers and other significant adults in their lives. The local authority therefore had an important role to play in assisting carers in nurturing a child's educational development. Addressing Members' concerns regarding placement or school changes, Chris Chalmers (the Council's Head of Looked After Children and Permanency) advised that it was highly likely that those changes would be considered positive moves, for example a move to a permanent placement.

RESOLVED, that the briefing paper be noted.

8. Brent Adoption Service Report: 1 April 2016 - 30 September 2016

Chris Chalmers (the Council's Head of Looked After Children and Permanency) presented a report on the performance and activity of the Brent Adoption Service between 1 April 2016 and 30 September 2016. Members heard that the Council's performance against the two most significant performance indicators, had continued to improve, with a reduction of nine per cent in the period from a child entering care to being placed for adoption (indicator A1) and a reduction of thirty-seven per cent in the time between the courts authorising a plan of adoption for a child and an adoptive match being approved (indicator A2). At 30 September 2016 there had been eleven Looked After Children (LAC) with a plan for adoption who had not yet been adopted. Of those eleven children, four were yet to have adoptive matches identified for them. The number of children requiring adoption continued to be lower than the number of approved adopters; there were currently seven approved prospective adoptive households and a further five adopter assessments in progress. It was explained that the Council was obliged to offer Adoption Support for a period of up to three years if an adopted child resided outside of Brent and throughout childhood for those within Brent. There were currently seventy-eight families receiving on-going post-adoption support and during the reporting period there had been six new requests for support which were being assessed. Highlighting some of the broader issues affecting adoption, Chris Chalmers advised that, from 7 October 2016, immediate changes had been made to the allocation of Adoption Support Fund monies with a cap of £5,000 placed on the amount of support available to individual children. A funding shortfall was anticipated and this could not be accommodated by the Council. Work was currently underway to quantify future need and explore more cost effective means of delivering therapeutic support. In concluding her presentation, Chris Chalmers advised that a report would be presented to the Cabinet in December 2016 on the Regionalising of Adoption, which would seek agreement, in principle, to joining a London Regional Adoption Agency (RAA).

Members commented on the significant degree of improvement against indicator A2 and suggested that comparable performance data for neighbouring boroughs should be provided. Details were sought as to why approved prospective adopters might resign and Members queried the disadvantages, if any, to joining a RAA.

Nigel Chapman (the Council's Operational Director for Integration and Improved Service) advised that the cohort of LAC was relatively small and therefore average figures recorded against the indicators A1 and A2 could be significantly affected by one child's circumstances. The Adoption Score Cards for other authorities could be viewed online and links to these would be provided in future reports. Chris Chalmers advised that adopters might have to wait a long time for a match and this could be dispiriting. Nigel Chapman further explained that the Council would have to join a RAA but could determine which model to pursue. The Council was currently a member of the West London Adoption Alliance but that did not deliver the economies of scale required. Further work was required to explore the implications for service delivery and staffing.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

9. **Brent Fostering Service: Quarterly Monitoring Report 1 July - 30 September 2016**

The Brent Fostering quarterly monitoring report was presented to the Committee by Chris Chalmers (the Council's Head of Looked After Children and Permanency). Members' attention was drawn to the corporate performance targets for placement activity and it was emphasised that these were very close to being met. There had continued to be a rise in the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) approaching the Borough for support and within this, there had been a greater number of older aged UASC entering the care system. Outlining the fostering capacity as at 30 September 2016, Chris Chalmers advised that there were twelve fostering households with one bedroom place available, which equated to approximately ten per cent of total capacity. There had been a lot of recruitment activity over the summer including attendance at a series of fun days and a very effective new social media campaign. There were currently sixteen assessments of prospective foster carers underway, which put the Council in good stead to meet the target of twelve to fifteen foster carers being approved within the financial year. A review of the retention of foster carers and how the allowance and support provision compared to other fostering agencies was being conducted, the findings of which would be reported to the Committee in the next quarterly monitoring report. An Annual Foster Carer Conference was being arranged for November 2016; this would have a theme of resilient foster carers and information would be provided on the Brent Council Pledge to Children and Young People in Care. Outlining future developments affecting the Fostering Service, Chris Chalmers detailed the development of the social pedagogy programme, which had commenced in October 2015 and comprised a training programme that had included foster carers and social workers. A principal social worker would now be appointed for the project and a steering group established to progress the project plan.

In the subsequent discussion, Members noted the growing numbers of UASC and queries were raised regarding the support provided for different types of placements, including kinship placements, foster placements and placements outside of the Borough. Nigel Chapman explained that the Council provided the same level of support, including financial support, regardless of the type of placement and the requirement to do so had been established by case law.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

10. **Any other Urgent Business**

It was noted that a briefing would be provided to members following the close of the meeting on the developing situation regarding UASC.

The meeting closed at 6.40 pm

W MITCHEL MURRAY
Chair

 <p>Brent</p>	<p>Corporate Parenting Committee 8 February 2017</p> <p>Report from the Strategic Director of Children and Young People</p>
<p>Wards Affected: All</p>	
<p>Covering Report - Creating a London Regional Adoption Agency</p>	

1.0 Summary

1.1 At its meeting on 12 December 2016 Cabinet RESOLVED that:

- i) The Council would, in principle, join a London Regional Adoption Agency, subject to detailed financial analysis and business case;
- ii) The Strategic Director of Children's Services be authorised, in consultation, with the Lead Member for Children's Services, to progress arrangements relating to the development and implementation of the London Regional Adoption Agency model; and
- iii) Cabinet agreed to progress with Option 1 - a Local Authority trading company delivery model with a strategic VAA partnership operating in a hub and spoke structure.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 That the committee consider the report submitted to the Cabinet, attached at Appendix A.

3.0 Detail

3.1 The report considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 12 December 2016 is attached at Appendix A.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications to this covering report.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications to this covering report.

6.0 Equality Implications

6.1 There are no equalities implications to this covering report.

Background Papers

None

Contact Officers

Operational Director, Integration & Improved Outcomes
Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 0FJ.
Tel: 020 8937 4456
Email: nigel.chapman@brent.gov.uk

GAIL TOLLEY
Strategic Director of Children and Young People

	<p>Cabinet 12 December 2016</p> <p>Report from the Strategic Director of Children and Young People</p>
For Action/Information	Wards Affected: ALL
<p>Report Title: Creating a London Regional Adoption Agency</p>	

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval for the Council to work collaboratively with other London boroughs to continue to develop the London Regional Adoption Agency with the intention of joining the agency, when it becomes operational. It is envisaged that it will become operational during 2017/18.
- 1.2 Following the publication of the Department for Education (DfE) paper, Regionalising Adoption (June 2015¹), the Department invited councils and Voluntary Adoption Agencies to submit Expressions of Interest in becoming part of new regionalised arrangements. In response, the Association of London Directors of Children's Services (ALDCS) with London Councils submitted a London proposition, which was approved for development in a 'scope and define' phase. Through the development of regional agencies, the DfE seeks to speed up matching, improve adoption support and achieve cost efficiencies.
- 1.3 A number of possible models for the London Regional Adoption Agency have been explored. ALDCS have recommended the creation of a new local authority owned entity operating in a hub and spoke approach. The model is expected to retain a strong local link. It is recognised that local knowledge and relationships will be essential.

¹ Regionalising Adoption (DfE, 2015)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/437128/Regionalising_adoption.pdf

- 1.4 London-level member engagement has been enabled through a Member Briefing² on the DfE's regionalisation policy. This was followed by a report to London Councils' Executive in October 2015 setting out the regionalisation project in high level terms and seeking Executive's in principle support, which was agreed. In November 2015, a London Councils Lead Member Event³ was hosted by the project team. Brent's Lead Member for Children and Young People's Services attended this event. The feedback from members subsequently informed the project vision and detailed project plan. In July 2016, a further London Councils Lead Member Event was held to share the initial options analysis and the report on legal implications of the potential models.
- 1.5 Governance of the regionalisation project will be co-ordinated under the strategic leadership of the Association of London Directors of Children's Services (ALDCS), the London Adoption Board as the multi-agency responsible body and an executive steering group made up of representatives from Local Authorities, Voluntary Adoption Agencies and London Councils.
- 1.6 Brent Council should formally agree whether to join the London Regional Adoption arrangements, or seek alternative provision. The final, detailed operational arrangements are expected to be developed by September 2017.

2 Recommendations

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- (i) Agree, in principle, to join a London Regional Adoption Agency, subject to detailed financial analysis and business case; and
- (ii) Authorise the Strategic Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Lead Member for Children's Services, to progress arrangements relating to the development and implementation of the London Regional Adoption Agency model.

3 Background

Adoption as a permanency option

- 3.1 Adoption is a way of providing new families for children who cannot be brought up by their biological parents. It is a legal process in which all parental rights and responsibilities are transferred to the adoptive family. Once adoption has been granted, it cannot be reversed. Alternative permanency options include special guardianship orders (SGOs) and long term fostering.
- 3.2 Successive governments have raised concerns that children in care may experience poorer outcomes due to a low rate of adoption as well as delays in the

² <http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/members-area/member-briefings/children-and-young-people-member-briefing/regionalising-adoption>

³ Reforming Adoption in London. Nov 6th 2015.

process. Children in care are more likely to be unemployed, to experience mental health problems, to become homeless and to have their own children removed from them. It should be noted that children in care often arrive in care with significant issues that contribute to poor outcomes; however, a poor care experience can exacerbate rather than remedy these issues. Conversely, a well-timed and good placement match can make a significant and positive difference to the long-term outcomes of children who have difficult and damaging pre-birth and early years' experiences which lead to an adoptive placement.

The Brent position

3.3 The Corporate Parenting Committee of the Council considers adoption performance within the authority on a biannual basis. Adoption activity for the period April-September 2016 was considered at the October 2016 Corporate Parenting Committee. The service was rated as 'good' following the 2015 Ofsted Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. The committee noted the continued improvement in performance.

The policy background to regionalisation

3.4 In order to improve outcomes for children in care, the Coalition Government introduced *An Action Plan for Adoption: tackling delay*⁴ with legislative changes to the monitoring of the adoption process through an Adoption Scorecard. This sets targets for Local Authorities to speed up the adoption process. In many authorities, those targets have not been met and the speed of adoption remains a concern to central government.

3.5 The Department for Education (DfE) paper, *Regionalising Adoption* proposed the move to regional adoption agencies in order to:

- Speed up matching
- Improve adopter recruitment and adoption support
- Reduce costs
- Improve the life chances of vulnerable children.

3.6 The government has reinforced their policy ambition through provisions in the Education and Adoption Act 2016. The DfE's ambition is for all local authorities to be part of a regionalised service by 2020.

3.7 Through *Adoption: a vision for change*⁵, the Department highlighted the need to draw on the best of both the statutory and voluntary sectors to ensure that systems are designed around the needs of children. It also reinforced the vision to ensure that the voice of children and adopters is at the heart of policy making and service delivery.

⁴ An Action Plan for Adoption: tackling delay (DfE, 2012)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/180250/action_plan_for_adoption.pdf

⁵ Adoption: a vision for change (DfE, 2016)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/512826/Adoption_Policy_Paper_30_March_2016.pdf

3.8 Following changes within the government during July 2016 the DfE reaffirmed a commitment to this policy. A communication from the DfE to DCSs on 15th September 2016 stated 'RAAs will make an enormous difference to some of our most vulnerable children... We and the team would welcome any further feedback on how we can best work together to deliver the great potential which RAAs have to offer...'

Working together to improve adoption services in London

3.9 London boroughs and VAAs have a history of working together to improve adoption services.

3.9.1 Pan-London joint working: In 2013, the London Adoption Steering Group was set up to enable pan-London good practice sharing and development. This group transitioned to the London Adoption Board in 2014. The London Adoption Board includes London boroughs and voluntary adoption agencies (VAAs) and is sponsored by the CVAA. The London Adoption Board has supported the collection of adoption data, facilitated best practice showcase events, advocated with external groups on behalf of London, and enabled the development of standards for adoption services.

3.9.2 Consortia arrangements: All London boroughs belong to an adoption consortium. In Brent we are a member of the West London Adoption Consortium. These consortia allow best practice sharing between local authorities and enable joint working on some aspects of the service. In some cases, services are carried out jointly between boroughs via these consortia arrangements. Examples of service areas that are carried out jointly include adopter training, recruitment activity, and joint subscriptions. There is a range of levels of integration within the different consortia. Figure 1 shows the current consortia regions.

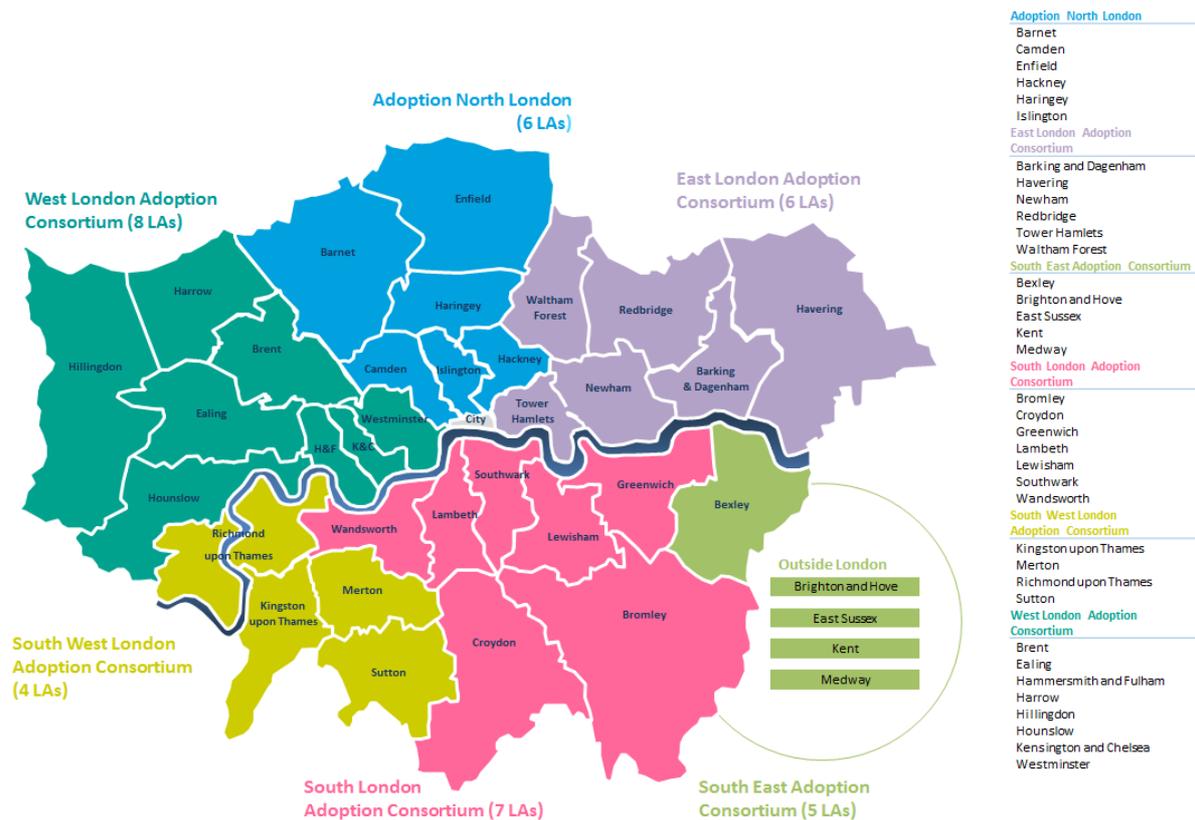


Figure 1. London adoption consortia arrangements

The engagement between boroughs and VAAs ranges from individual service contracts and spot purchase arrangements with VAAs to outsourcing the full adoption service. Many VAAs are involved in the consortia arrangements shown above.

The London Regionalised Adoption Project

Governance

3.10 Following the publication of the *Regionalising Adoption* paper the Department invited councils and Voluntary Adoption Agencies to submit Expressions of Interest in becoming part of new regionalised arrangements. In response, the Association of London Directors of Children’s Services (ALDCS) submitted a London proposition in late 2015. The DfE subsequently approved the ALDCS proposition as a “scope and define” project.

3.11 ALDCS set up and chair a Regionalisation Project Steering Group that has driven the development of the initial recommendations outlined in this document. The Regionalisation Steering Group sits under the governance of ALDCS and makes operational decisions to drive the project forward. An ALDCS reference group (5 DCS members) has also been set up to support the Regionalisation Steering Group Chair with ensuring that the views of London as a whole are represented at a senior level. A diagram of the governance arrangements is shown in Figure 2.

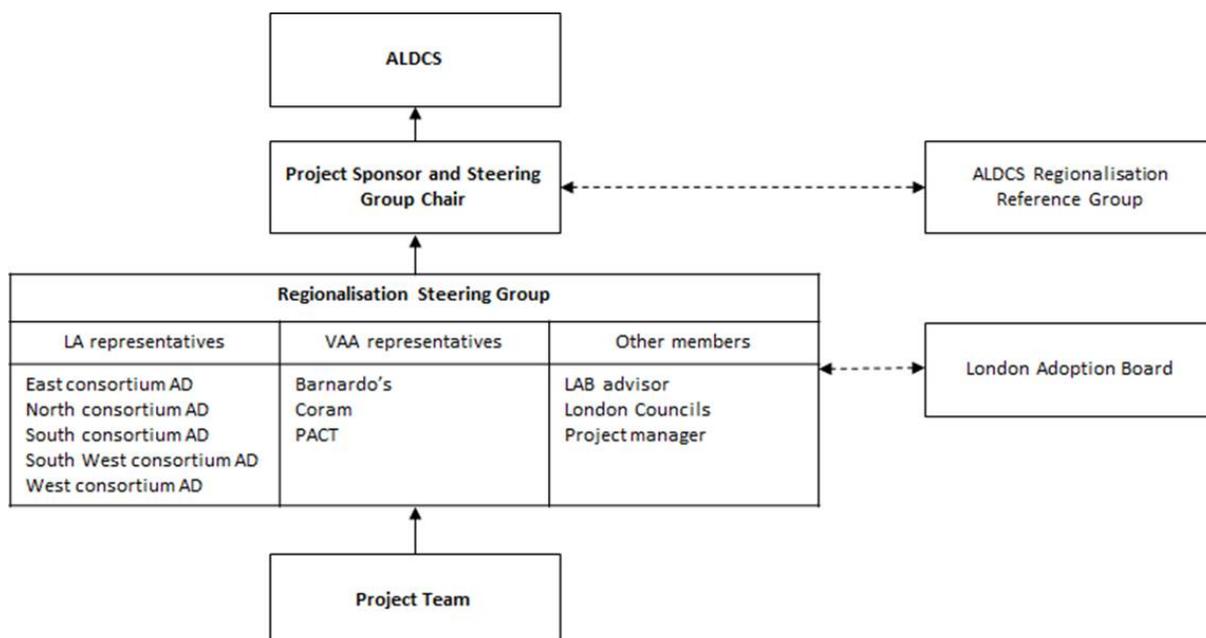


Figure 2. London Regional Adoption project governance and membership

The vision for London

3.12 The development and assessment of models for the London Regional Adoption Agency was preceded by the development of a vision for London. This vision was agreed by Directors and engaged upon with stakeholder groups.

3.13 The core of this vision is to ensure that all London's children who require adoptive families receive excellent services that meet their needs leading to excellent outcomes for them and their adoptive family. See **appendix 1** for the vision statement.

3.14 The vision highlighted a focus on achieving the best outcomes for all London's children in need of an adoptive placement and reducing any current postcode lottery of provision across the capital.

3.14.1 *Outcome performance for children and adoptive families.*

With regards to the current outcome performance, the majority of London boroughs do not achieve the national average waiting time from entry to care to moving in with their adoptive family, and there is wide variation in performance on this metric and the timeline from placement order to matching. Brent's performance however is better than the national average position and was reported to the October 2016 Corporate Parenting Committee.

3.14.2 An activity survey carried out in the first phase of the project showed variable practice regarding the use of adopters approved by other agencies (other LA or VAA), and variation in the use of the adoption support fund. These practice differences may influence the placement timelines.

3.14.3 Adopter focus groups reinforced the need to improve parity in service provision across London. In particular, they raised concerns that training availability was limited in some areas and there was inconsistent access to adoption support.

3.14.4 The performance information gathered for London suggests that there is an opportunity to improve through closer integration.

Cost and efficiency performance

3.14.5 For local authorities, the vision cites a need to support cost efficient and effective delivery that enables future flexibility. Figure 3 shows the variation in adoption numbers by borough during 2015-16. This shows that adoption is a very small service within many boroughs, which may result in inefficiencies and may reduce focus on this area within staff training and development.



Figure 3. Number of children adopted from care Q1-3 2015/16, ALB data set (unrounded)

3.14.6 There is also significant variation in cost per adoption, which partially relates to the efficiency aspects described above, but also reflects savings opportunities. An economic analysis during the first phase of work estimated the average cost per adoption in local authorities was £58,900, based on submissions from 21 local authorities, compared to an interagency fee average spend of £33,300. This does not include indirect costs, adoption allowances, Adoption Support Fund spend, and third party payments. Further analysis is required to confirm the data and identify which tasks are carried out by local authorities and not by external agencies. This will provide an indication of the window of opportunity for efficiency improvement.

3.14.7 The greatest area of saving potential was identified within staffing, but the potential models are hypothetical and need further testing in the context of the service design. Further analysis is required of local authorities with low cost per adoption and good performance on timeliness and quality to identify whether these achievements are possible to extend to other areas. The London RAA will measure performance against Adoption Leadership Board statistics, data including breakdowns, process efficiency and satisfaction. Proactive tracking

and problem solving processes will be a core function of the RAA.

4.0 Development of the Service and Delivery Model

4.1 The Regionalisation Steering Group considered a number of options for the delivery model. In order to be able to advise Boroughs, ALDCS sought legal advice regarding the proposed London scheme. In addition, there have been two events for elected members, as well as engagement with adopters, prospective adopters, and adopted young people.

Development of the high level service model

4.2 To create a London Regional Adoption Agency that best meets the needs of children and adopters in line with the expected Government guidance there was a need to consider the types of delivery vehicles and models that would make the difference in improving our specified outcomes. In January 2016, the project team held an options development workshop with LA, VAA and adopter representatives. Participants were provided with information collated from throughout the project engagement to date, and asked to identify the outcomes expected from each aspect of the adoption journey in order to achieve the vision. Groups then identified the commissioning and delivery scale required to achieve the outcomes. A diagram showing the outcomes identified in this workshop can be seen in **appendix 2**.

4.2.1 *Options analysis on the delivery model:* Building on this service design, the workshop participants were introduced to the potential delivery vehicles and structures. They agreed the desirability and feasibility criteria for scoring these vehicle/ structure combinations. These criteria were agreed by ALDCS.

4.2.2 Delivery vehicles considered: The following delivery vehicles were considered as part of the options appraisal process at either the pan-London level or the creation of multiple regional agencies:

- Single LA hosting on behalf of other LAs
- New LA owned entity
- LA-VAA joint venture
- Outsourcing to existing London VAAs

A summary of the assessment of the individual options can be found in **appendix 3**.

4.2.3 Within the above delivery models, a number of structures were considered:

- Fully centralised: a single London body
- Hub and spoke: central hub for London-wide co-ordination, commissioning and delivery, with sub-regional spokes for delivery and local commissioning under the same organisation.
- Tiered approach: top strategic tier, second strategic/ operational tier, third delivery tier.
- 'As-Is plus': current arrangement with more formalised partnerships.

4.3 Recommendation on preferred models

4.3.1 The Regionalisation Steering Group carried out scoring of desirability and feasibility criteria. The group then recommended the following options for further investigation:

- LA trading company delivery model with a strategic VAA partnership operating in a hub and spoke structure (Option 1).
- LA-VAA joint venture operating in a hub and spoke structure (Option 2).

4.3.2 At the March meeting of ALDCS, Directors received a report of stakeholder engagement in respect of the potential delivery models which could form the model for a future regionalised offer. Those preferences, based on guidance from stakeholders including VAAs, were a local authority trading company and a joint venture. Directors supported this recommendation.

5.0 Legal advice on the potential delivery models

On the direction of ALDCS, legal advisors were appointed to produce detailed advice on the two preferences.

Report coverage

5.1 The legal advice report is now complete and covers the following areas for the preferred models:

- Benefits and limitations of VAA involvement in the ownership and/or strategic partnership, with advice on the joint venture options.
- Governance implications with regard to the need for accountability to the LAs responsible for the child.
- Legal entities that would be appropriate for securing the optimum balance with non-statutory organisations.
- Income and tax implications of the models, including VAT treatment and the ability to trade with other regional agencies.
- Procurement implications of these models, with reference to Teckal exemption.
- Implications for registered charities including charitable assets and income.
- Potential staff transfer implications.

Recommended model

5.2 The report received from the legal advisors recommends that the Agency would be a not-for-profit community benefit society which is jointly owned by all of the LAs (Option 1) who wish to participate in the project from the outset (Founding Councils). The figure below shows the structure of the recommended model.

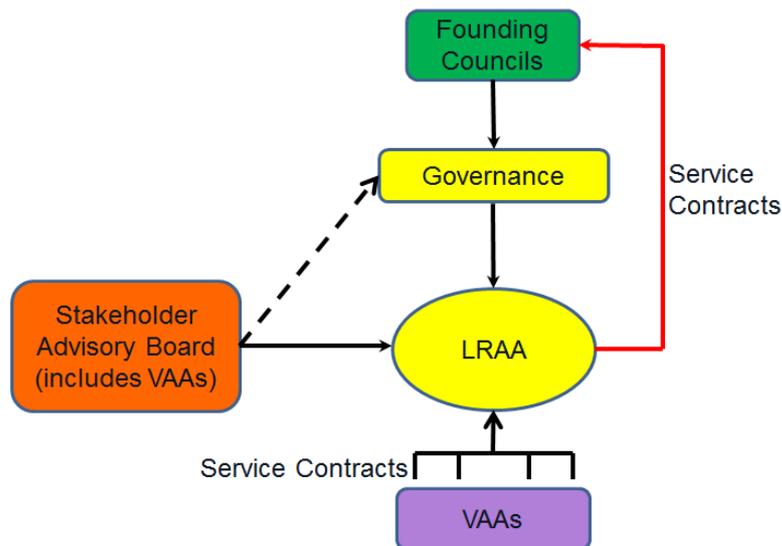


Figure 4. A multi-LA owned corporate entity working in partnership with VAAs to deliver adoption services

5.3 The Founding Councils' involvement in the Agency would be governed by a Members' Agreement. The Agency would be managed by a board of directors including officers of the Founding Councils, with places reserved for elected VAAs, and potential for other service user or stakeholder involvement. This model is quicker and cheaper to set up, and retains close VAA partnership working.

5.4 Further details on the distinctions between the two models can be seen in **appendix 4.**

6.0 Engagement and Consultation

London-level member engagement

6.1 As set out in paragraph 1.4 above there have been a number of methods for ensuring Member engagement with the regionalisation process. In July 2015, London Councils published a Member Briefing⁶ on the Department's regionalisation policy platform and informed members that ALDCS had submitted an Expression of Interest. This was followed by a report to London Councils' Executive in October 2015 setting out regionalisation project in high level terms and seeking Executive's in principle support, which was agreed.

6.2 In November 2015, a London Councils Lead Member Event⁷ was hosted by the project team. The feedback from members subsequently informed the project vision and detailed project plan. In July 2016, a further London Councils Lead Member Event was held to share the initial options analysis and the report on legal implications of the potential models.

Other stakeholder engagement

6.3 The Project Development Group has engaged with voluntary adoption agencies, adopters and prospective adopters, and children and young people during the

⁶ <http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/members-area/member-briefings/children-and-young-people-member-briefing/regionalising-adoption>

⁷ Reforming Adoption in London. Nov 6th 2015.

development of the recommendations. A list of these engagement sessions can be found in **appendix 5**.

7.0 Alternatives to joining the London regional adoption arrangements

7.1 The government requires all local authorities to join a regional agency by 2020 and this is now established in the Education and Adoption Act 2016. An option to take no action is not an available choice.

7.2 Alternatives to the London option would be to join another developing regional agency or create a new model. Other developing regional agencies have not been developed with the involvement of London boroughs. No other regional agencies have proposed a model linked to the governance of London local authorities. The London model is being developed with the complexity of the borough and provider landscape in mind. Many of the models being developed in other regions e.g. single LA host, would not be appropriate to meet this complexity of need.

7.3 Any new agency being developed would have the same timescale requirements and would need to access development funding independently. ALDCS identified that using existing arrangements (e.g. consortia) would not remove the performance and service variation across London and most current consortia regions would not achieve the DfE aims for scale. A sub-divided London would lose the benefit of the wider pool of adopters and the standardisation of service offering.

7.4 Given the policy drive from the Government and examples of good joint working in other areas of children's services, an RAA as described in this paper is considered to be the only viable option at present.

Risk management

7.5 The London Regional Adoption Project carries out risk assessments throughout the project with escalation via the Regionalisation Steering Group and ALDCS. The project plan includes expert advice on transition planning and change management. DfE funding to enable the implementation of the model is dependent on borough sign up.

7.6 Brent staff have been and will be involved in shaping the development of the new agency. The project team will work closely with staff from all founding councils to identify, mitigate and manage any risk. The final model design will be subject to consultation.

7.7 If the London Regional Adoption Agency does not progress there is a risk that Brent could be instructed to join another Regional Adoption Agency, and may have to join an RAA that it has not been part of developing.

7.8 The greatest risk to Brent lies in the potential that significant performance improvements made in the last 3 years are adversely affected by these planned structural reforms. It will be imperative that Brent staff are closely involved in the

development of the model to ensure it meets the needs of our Looked After Children.

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 Brent will need to review and approve a detailed business case before the LRAA is set up. A financial review of the arrangements is being carried out by Alma Economics. Set up costs are not yet known, the DfE have a start-up fund for RAA's, but there remains a risk that founding councils will have to contribute financially.

8.2 The efficiencies achieved by creating the LRAA should deliver a planned saving for Brent, however this will be delayed if the LRAA is not implemented until September 2017.

9.0 Legal Implications

9.1 Cabinet is asked to support Brent joining in the development of a London Regional Adoption Agency which aims to improve adoption services, and deliver all adopter recruitment, matching and support functions for all of the London Boroughs.

9.2 A legislative framework for the regionalisation of adoption services came into existence through the Education and Adoption Act 2016 (the Act) on 16th March 2016. The Council is required to join a regional adoption agency or can be forced by the Secretary of State to do so.

9.3 The Council has anticipated the implementation of the Act. It joined the Regional Adoption Agency Project for London. All London Boroughs and 10 Voluntary Adoption Agencies are included, and the continued involvement in the London RAA will best ensure an effective pan-London service. The approval of Cabinet is required to enable the Council to participate in negotiations about the delivery model for the adoption services through the London Regional Adoption Agency.

10.0 Diversity Implications

10.1 Adopters and children accessing adoption services within Brent and staff working within the current Looked After Children and Permanency Service have a range of protected characteristics under the 2010 Equalities Act. Business and implementation plans for a new service model will require a full equalities impact assessment, covering implications for both existing service users and staff employed within the services. This will help to demonstrate that the new approach represents the best option to meet diverse needs.

10.2 Accepting the recommendations will contribute to the Council's objectives to improve the wellbeing of children in the Borough, reduce inequalities and ensure Looked After Children have the best opportunities to transition to a secure family environment permanently, where they are not able to return to their own family.

10.3 The London Regional Adoption Agency plans to improve collaboration with universal services for adopted children and their families through the development of the collective voice and through the increased scale of commissioning. This will support safeguarding links with universal services.

11.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications

11.1 Adoption staff have been consulted on the proposal, which will affect a number of roles within the Children and Young People's Directorate. The London Regional Adoption Agency model recognises the need for local links with children and families, alongside a central team. As the model is developed staff will continue to be consulted. The final model is likely to involve some current staff being transferred over to the London Team via TUPE.

Appendices:

1. Regionalising Adoption: A vision for London Councils (ALDCS, November 2015).
2. Adoption journey outcome summary (Jan 2016)
3. Assessment of potential delivery models (ALDCS, March 2016, London Adoption Regionalisation – Project Update – Section 2).
4. Summary of legal advice on two preferred models; ALDCS (May 2016) London Adoption Regionalisation – Project Update
5. Engagement tracker (as at 1st June 2016); ALDCS (July 2016) London Adoption Regionalisation – Project Update

Contact Officers

Nigel Chapman
Operational Director, Integration & Improved Outcomes
Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 OFJ.
Tel: 020 8937 4456
Email: nigel.chapman@brent.gov.uk

Onder Beter, Head of Service, LAC & Permanency.
Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 OFJ.
Tel: 020 8937 4382

Email: onder.beter@brent.gov.uk

GAIL TOLLEY

STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Appendix 1 – Vision for London

Regionalising Adoption Vision for London

Background

The DfE paper *Regionalising Adoption* proposes the move to regional adoption agencies in order to speed up matching, improve adopter recruitment and adoption support, reduce costs, and improve the life chances of London's most vulnerable children. London is committed to ensuring that regionalisation delivers the best, most timely outcomes and experiences for both children and adopters.

This paper sets out the vision for London based on extensive consultation.

Vision

Our vision is to ensure that all London's children who require adoptive families receive excellent services that meet their needs leading to excellent outcomes for them and their adoptive family.

For children where adoption is the best option, we will:

- Ensure that the child and the child's journey is foremost in the new service design.
- Maximise the opportunity to find a loving family as quickly as possible.
- Provide support from the start of their journey through to adulthood, with a proactive and flexible offer to meet their educational, health and emotional needs.
- Involve children and young people in the development of the regionalised service.

For prospective adopters and adopters, we will:

- Provide clear, realistic and welcoming communication from first enquiry to post-adoption.
- Ensure that they are equipped to meet their children's current and future needs through high quality training and guidance.
- Deliver evidence-based assessment and approval processes within a consistent timeframe.
- Reduce time taken from approval to matching.
- Provide consistent post-adoption support across the region.
- Increase the diversity of adoptive parents.
- Engage with potential adopters and adoptive parents in the design of the regionalised service.

For birth parents of children being adopted, we will:

- Provide consistent access to support throughout London e.g. counselling and contact.

For local authorities (LAs), we will:

- Share learning across the region, and between the local authority and voluntary sector.
- Achieve savings and cost efficiencies, making the best use of public money.
- Match the supply of adopters to the children awaiting adoption across the region.
- Minimise complexity and ensure that barriers are not created between organisations.
- Be adaptable and responsive to manage future changes e.g. demand, legislation.
- Develop a model that allows flexibility in the level of service for individual LAs.

- Engage with universal services to enable consistent provision of adoption support.
- Identify opportunities for regionalised services to support other routes to permanence.
- Involve practitioners working in adoption services in the development of the model.
- Engage with VAAs and ASAs throughout the development of the regionalised model.

For voluntary adoption agencies (VAAs) and adoption support agencies (ASAs), we will:

- Create an organisation that recognises and utilises the expertise within the voluntary sector.
- Recognise and respond to demand and funding challenges in the voluntary sector.
- Engage with VAAs, ASAs and LAs throughout the development of the regionalised service.

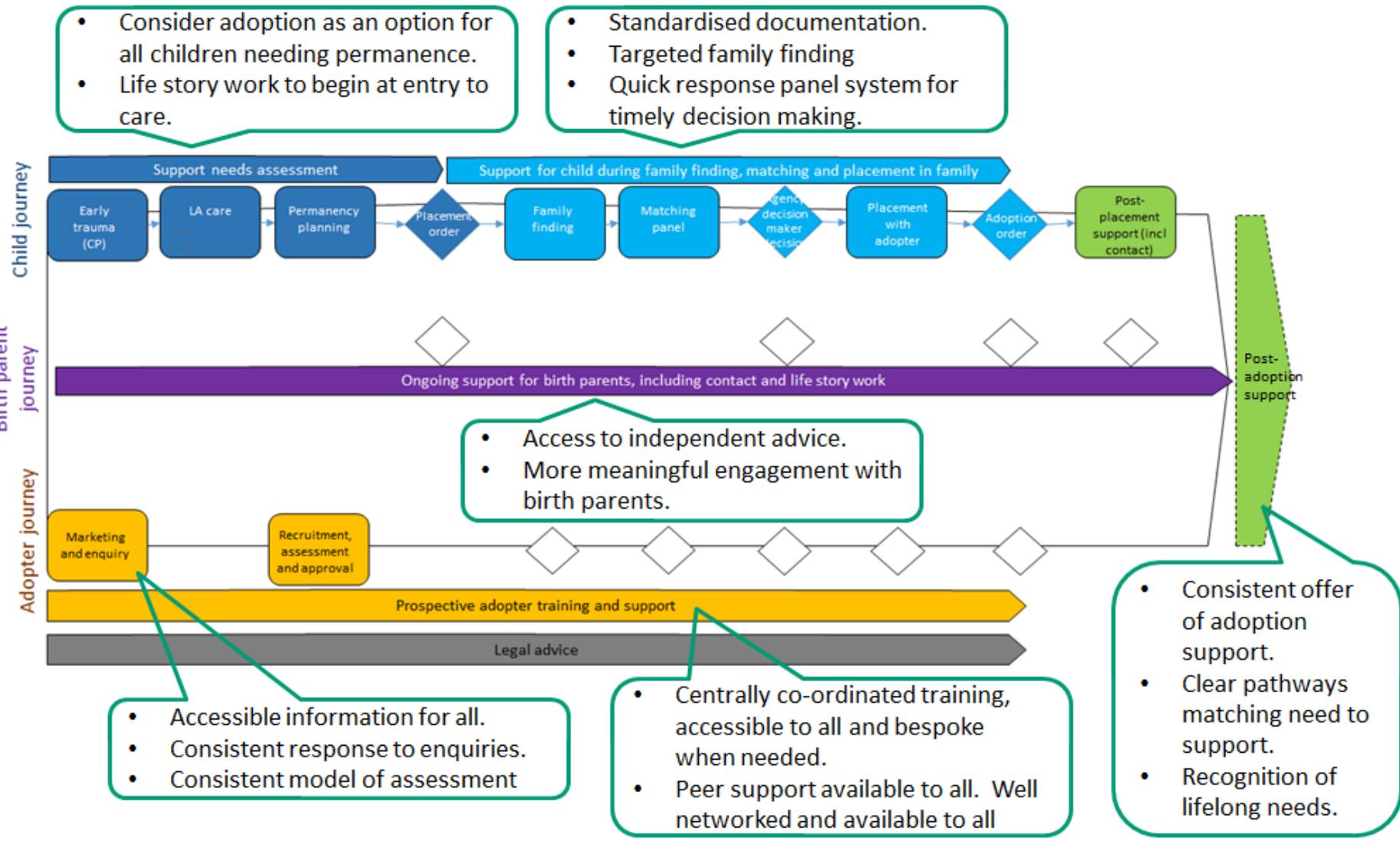
Key Design Criteria of model

- Child-centred, focussed on achieving the best outcomes for all London's children in need of an adoptive placement.
- Pan-London solution ensuring sufficient numbers of children and reducing any "postcode lottery" of provision across the capital and improving support for adopters.
- Regional focus on capacity and sufficiency ensuring equality of provision.
- Effective and high quality delivery of all statutory duties in relation to adoption and adoption support across London, utilising "Freedoms and Flexibilities" available to local authorities enshrined in amendments to the Children and Young Persons Act 2008.
- Creates an ability to work flexibly around a new London offer.
- Encompasses aspects of other permanency options into the future.
- Commits to close collaboration between all stakeholders.
- Considers the options for pooling resources and sharing responsibilities, including the legal functions currently performed by individual boroughs.
- Maintains and builds a clear relationship with London boroughs who remain responsible for the journey of the child.
- Works closely with VAA partners.
- A cost efficient and effective delivery approach enabling local authorities to deliver significant cost savings in adoption services whilst maintain high quality provision to children and families.
- The majority of funding for the regionalised model will go towards direct work to increase stable, secure, adoptive families for London's children.

Governance

Partners will work together under the strategic leadership of ALDCS, LAB as the multi-agency responsible body, and an executive steering group made up of representatives from LAs, VAAs and London Councils.

Appendix 2 – Adoption journey outcome summary



Appendix 3 – Assessment of potential delivery models (ALDCS, March 2016, London Adoption Regionalisation – Project Update – Section 2).

Preferred Delivery Models

The Regionalisation Steering Group meeting held on 24th February 2016 used scoring of the models and information collected throughout the phase to drive a discussion on the preferred models. The models were considered as combinations of delivery model (entity type) and structure (organisational configuration).

1. Delivery Models

The following delivery models were considered as part of the options appraisal process:

Model	Key points
Single LA hosting on behalf of other LAs	Steering group agreed that this option was not viable due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Scale and complexity is too large for a single LA to manage. <input type="checkbox"/> Organisational culture would be strongly influenced by the individual LA identified. <input type="checkbox"/> Likelihood of limiting membership of some LAs for political and geographical reasons.
LATC – a new LA owned entity	The steering group agreed that this model should be explored further. Key areas of discussion included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Potential for strategic partnership with VAAs in a new LA-owned entity. <input type="checkbox"/> Lower procurement risk in this model.
LA-VAA joint venture	The steering group agreed that this model should be explored further. Key areas of discussion included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> VAAs would prefer to be around the table. <input type="checkbox"/> The commissioning income stream is vital to VAAs. <input type="checkbox"/> Greater potential for competition and income generation.
Outsource to existing London VAA	This was eliminated prior to scoring as VAAs attending stakeholder forum identified significant concerns with this model as indicated in the single LA host commentary.

2. Structures

Within the above delivery models, a number of structures were considered:

Structure	Key points
Fully centralised: single London body	Steering group agreed that this option was not viable due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Inability to deliver the adoption journey as mapped <input type="checkbox"/> Reduces benefit of local knowledge and relationships.

<p>Hub and spoke: Central hub for London-wide co-ordination, commissioning, and delivery. Sub-regional spokes for delivery and local commissioning under the same organisation (not necessarily using current consortia).</p>	<p>Steering group agreed preference for this structure. Key points of discussion were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Local enough to maintain relationship with child and adopter at centre. <input type="checkbox"/> Good balance of delivery at scale while retaining clear organisational structure. <input type="checkbox"/> Configuration flexibility – elements to be commissioned or delivered in hubs or spokes <input type="checkbox"/> Long term contract options for providers servicing spokes.
<p>Tiered approach: top strategic tier, second strategic/ operational tier,</p>	<p>Steering group agreed that this option was not viable due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Similarity to current arrangements likely to lead to continuation of postcode lottery. <input type="checkbox"/> Additional tiers adding complexity to management and funding arrangements.
<p>As-Is+: current arrangement with more formalised partnerships</p>	<p>This was eliminated prior to scoring as DfE learning events identified that this would be viewed as insufficient change.</p>

3. Recommendation

The steering group recommends the following preferred models for further investigation with regards to their governance, legal implications, procurement and financial implications:

- LA trading company delivery model with a strategic VAA partnership operating in a hub and spoke structure
- LA-VAA joint venture operating in a hub and spoke structure.

Appendix 4 – Summary of legal advice on two preferred models; ALDCS (May 2016) London Adoption Regionalisation – Project Update

3. Legal advice on the potential models

3.1 Introduction

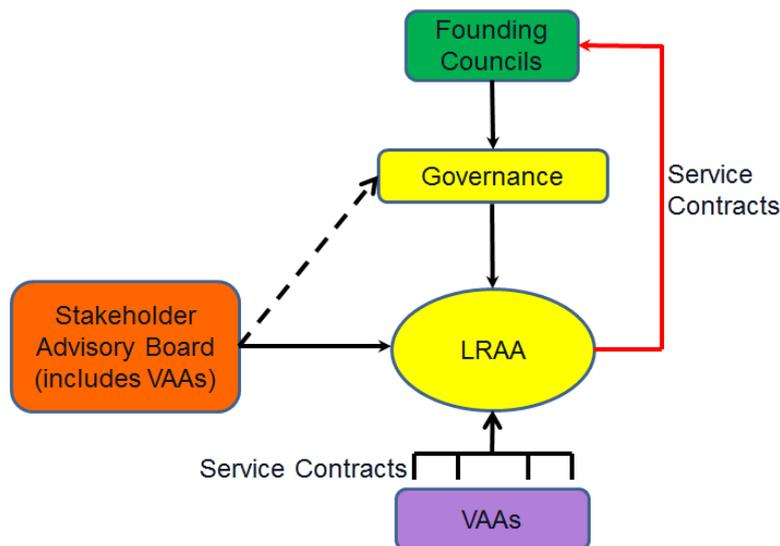
At the March meeting of ALDCS, Directors received a report of stakeholder engagement in respect of the potential legal entities which could form the model for a future regionalised offer. On the direction of ALDCS, legal advisors were appointed to produce detailed advice on the two preferences which Directors supported. Those preferences, based on guidance from stakeholders including VAAs, were a local authority trading company (Option 1) and a joint venture (Option 2).

The report has now been completed and covers the following areas for the preferred models:

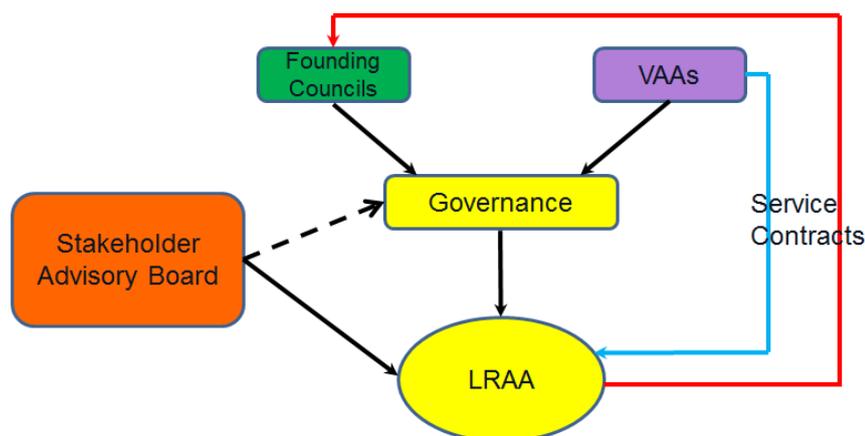
- Benefits and limitations of VAA involvement in the ownership and/or strategic partnership, with advice on the joint venture options and whether joint venture partners would need to be procured.
- Governance implications with regard to the need for accountability to the LAs responsible for the child.
- Legal entities that would be appropriate for securing the optimum balance with non-statutory organisations within these models.
- Income and tax implications of the models, including VAT treatment and the ability to trade with other regional agencies.
- Procurement implications of these models, particularly with reference to Teckal exemption.
- Implications for registered charities including charitable assets and income.
- Potential staff transfer implications.

3.2 Structure of the two options

Option 1 – the development of a multi-LA owned corporate entity working in partnership with VAAs to deliver adoption services



Option 2 – the development of a corporate entity involving both the LAs and VAAs as members/ shareholders to deliver adoption services



3.3 Comparison of the two options

The key comparison points of the two options are shown in the table below:

	Option 1 – LA owned	Option 2 – Joint venture
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Teckal company – can be set up from day one. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Joint venture would need to run procurement to identify VAA owner-partners.
Role of VAAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Role on advisory board, as well as directorships reserved for VAAs. <input type="checkbox"/> Service contracts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Full role in governance structure.
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Teckal exemption would apply as Agency would be wholly owned and controlled by the Founding Councils and will carry out the majority (>80%) of its work for those Founding Councils. <input type="checkbox"/> The Agency could use a restricted procurement procedure to establish a framework for VAAs for service contracts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> VAAs are private sector for procurement purposes, and so cannot rely on Teckal. <input type="checkbox"/> Competitive dialogue would be needed to establish terms of governance and award of service contracts. A larger exercise could prevent some smaller VAAs from taking part.
Tax	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Should be capable of satisfying HMRC’s requirement for ‘mutual trade’ status, meaning there would be no corporation tax on surpluses. <input type="checkbox"/> Service supplies by the Agency to LAs would be VAT exempt. This means that irrecoverable VAT would be incurred by the LRAA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Application of mutual trade exemption would be problematic due to the lack of a trade with the VAAs. Therefore, unless the Agency had charitable status, it would need to include provision in its business plan for payment of corporation tax.

Pensions	<input type="checkbox"/> May be considered a Designated Body if the 'connected with' test is met.	<input type="checkbox"/> Less certainty of the 'connected with' test being met to gain Designated Body status. <input type="checkbox"/> A number of VAAs operate occupational salary-related pension arrangements, subject to regulatory oversight by the Pensions Regulator.
Other		<input type="checkbox"/> VAA constitutions would need to be reviewed. A number of VAAs would need to satisfy themselves that participation in the Agency is consistent with their charitable objects.

3.4 Notes relevant to both options

- Legal form – It is recommended that the Agency would be a not-for-profit community benefit society. At this stage, it is suggested that the Agency is not established as a charity. As a community benefit society, it should be possible to achieve charitable status in the future by adopting charitable objects.
- Governance – It is recommended that member of the Agency collectively elect the board of management of the Agency. This allows members to retain the ultimate control of the board, but also permits a smaller, more focused board that has the best suited individuals on it. A board size of 8-12 is suggested, with the majority of board members elected from candidates drawn from participating LAs.
- Staff – TUPE would apply where any services currently delivered by the Founding Councils and/ or participating VAAs are transferred to the LRAA. If there are certain functions which can only be provided by an employee of a Local Authority, alternative staffing models including secondment and joint employment or dual employment could be considered.
- Future flexibility – Processes for exit from or entry to the Agency at a later date can be agreed within the Members' Agreement.

3.5 Recommended model

The report received from Trowers & Hamlins recommends that the Agency would be a not-for-profit community benefit society which is jointly owned by all of the LAs (Option 1) that wish to participate in the project from the outset (Founding Councils). The Founding Councils' involvement in the Agency would be governed by a Members' Agreement. The Agency would be managed by a board of directors including officers of the Founding Councils, with places reserved for elected VAAs, and potential for other service user or stakeholder involvement.

This model is quicker and cheaper to set up, and retains close VAA partnership working.

3.6 VAA feedback on the report

As part of their role on the steering group, VAA representatives have sought the views of the VAA stakeholder group on the legal report. A response has been received raising the following:

- A query on the consideration of Teckal as a key factor in the decision making between an LA owned entity and a joint venture.
- The viability of an option not covered in the report for the creation of an Innovation Partnership.
- Whether it allows continuation of independent VAA sales.

Appendix 5 – Engagement tracker (as at 1st June 2016); ALDCS (July 2016) London Adoption Regionalisation – Project Update

Group	Engagement	Dates/Frequency	Coverage for Project Specific Events
Adopters	Regionalisation members/DCS event	Nov	1 + 2 professional
	Regionalisation options development workshop	Jan	1 + 2 professional
	Regionalisation adopter forum I	Jan	19 adopters
	Regionalisation adopter forum II	Mar	26 adopters
	We Are Family: regionalisation discussion	Mar	1 adopter / 5 prospective
	LAB representation	Monthly meeting agenda item	1 LAB adopter rep
Children	Regionalisation drop-in event	Mar	No attendees - new approach needed
	Research and existing reports. We worked with the Coram Adoptables group to identify the experiences and ideas of children and young people. Coram have produced a detailed report focused on the needs of young people and their thoughts on regionalisation	May	Focus group: 8 young people Wider group: 100 young people Desktop research and assimilation of existing studies (studies ranging from 100 – 208 young people)
	Call for other existing research / reports from other organisations	May	Sent to newsletter database of 116
LAs	Regionalisation members DCS / event	Nov	
	QA doc for DCS	Planned - June	
	Regionalisation steering group	Monthly	Consortia–AD representation
	ALDCS meeting	Jan	
	London Adoption Board	Monthly agenda item	
	Regionalisation options development workshop	Jan	65% LAs represented
	Regionalisation panel advisors workshop	Jan	50% LAs represented
	Adoption and Fostering Network meeting attendance	Dec	
	Consortia meetings	4 x Jan, 2 x Feb	All consortia attended
	PAC-UK event: regionalisation presentation	Feb	
	LAB innovation event: regionalisation presentation	Mar	
	Heads of Communications – attendance at monthly meeting requested	TBC - July	

VAA s	Regionalisation members/ DCS event	Nov	
	Regionalisation steering group	Monthly	30% VAAs represented
	Regionalisation VAA stakeholder forum I	Dec	60% VAAs represented
	Regionalisation VAA stakeholder forum II	Jan	100% VAAs represented
	Regionalisation VAA stakeholder forum III	Feb	50% VAAs represented
	Regionalisation ALDCS-led VAA stakeholder forum	Jan	100% VAAs represented
	Regionalisation option development workshop	Jan	70% VAAs represented
	London Adoption Board	Monthly agenda item	
	Consortia meetings	4. x Jan, 2 x Feb	All consortia attended
Elected members	Elected members events	Nov June	
ALL / Additional	Regionalisation Newsletter	Monthly	116 subscribed, 41 % avg open rate
	Workforce Engagement Sessions: panels and all workers in adoption	May and June (9 sessions over 4 days at different venues)	183 invited 68 registered to date 58 attended to date 21 to attend in June 19 follow up surveys received to date

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 <p>Brent</p>	<p>Corporate Parenting Committee February 2017</p> <p>Report from the Strategic Director of Children and Young People</p>
<p>Brent Fostering Service Quarterly Monitoring Report 1st October – 31st December 2016</p>	

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information to the Council's Corporate Parenting Committee about the general management of the in-house fostering service and how it is achieving good outcomes for children. This is in accordance with standard 25.7 of the Fostering National Minimum Standards (2011).
- 1.2 The report covers the third quarter of this reporting year.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Corporate Parenting Committee is requested to review, comment on and question the contents of this report. This is to provide evidence that the management of the fostering service is being monitored and challenged in order to promote good outcomes for children.

3.0 Service Values

- 3.1 The in-house fostering function is positioned within the new LAC and Permanency Service of the Children and Young People's Directorate. The vision as set out in the 2016-17 service plan is that:
- The best foster carers are recruited for our children.
 - All placements receive high quality support, effectively targeted according to need and providing good value for the Local Authority.
 - To increase the number of children placed closer to home with our in-house foster carers.
 - Children are found permanent families without delay and within their extended family network where appropriate.

4.0 Staffing Arrangements

- 4.1 The primary in-house fostering functions are distributed across two teams:

- The recruitment and assessment of foster carers is completed within the Placements Assessment and Recruitment Team.
- The ongoing support and supervision of foster carers is the responsibility of the Fostering Support Team.

4.2 The Fostering Panel Advisor, Fostering Reviewing Officer and Fostering Development Co-ordinator roles are also managed within the LAC and Permanency Service and are line managed separately from the two operational teams in order to provide appropriate challenge within the service.

5.0 Placement Activity

5.1 The corporate performance targets for this year relating to fostering are as follows:

- Percentage of LAC placed with in-house (Brent) foster carers – annual target 35%.
- Percentage of LAC placed with a relative or family friend – annual target 15%
- Percentage of LAC placed in Independent Fostering Agencies – annual target 25%.
- Percentage of LAC overall within foster placements – annual target 75%

5.2 The overall LAC population remained stable at 351 as at the 31st of December 2016, compared with 353 on September 30th 2016.

As of the 31st December 2016:

- 90 children were placed with Brent foster carers. This represents 26% of total LAC.
- 45 Children were placed with a relative or family friend on a fostering basis. This is 13% of total LAC
- 99 children were placed with IFAs. This is 28% of total LAC.
- 67% of looked after children were living within a fostering setting at 31/12/16.

5.3 The most recent reporting period has seen the numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) approaching the borough for support stabilising. Earlier this year, between July and September 2016, the number of UASC rose from 72 to 81, which represented 23% of all looked after children in Brent compared to 20.5% in June 2016.

As of the 31/12/16 there continued to be 81 UASC. There are 19% LAC in Semi Independent accommodation as at 31/12/16, which is the same as the 19% in September 2016. The greater use of semi-independent provision in the last six months is directly linked to the large number of looked after 16 and 17 year olds, more than a third of our current LAC population.

5.4 The service operates with few vacancies so that the majority of available space with foster carers is maximised. As at 30th September 2016 there were 9 fostering households with at least one bed space available for fostering. This is approximately 10% of the total capacity of non-related households. The current carers with vacancies have a range of approval categories.

6.0 Recruitment Activity

- 6.1 The fostering service carried out four recruitment focused activities within the reporting period with the aim of raising awareness of fostering and encouraging potential foster carers to come forward within the Brent community. As this quarter encompassed the winter holiday months we were less busy with community festivals. Our main presence was at Black History month events, local sports centres and outreach within the civic centre reception area. We did however attend one community event; a Careers Fair at the Pakistani centre, which was well attended.
- 6.2 The monthly information evenings have continued to be held at the Civic Centre for members of the public to find out more about the fostering role and to enable us to determine whether an individual or family has the potential to become a carer for Brent.
- 6.3 From our own historical data as well as comparisons with other boroughs and IFAs on average 10% of enquiries move ahead to a formal application to foster, with approximately 5-6% of enquiries resulting in an approved fostering household.

The recruitment activity during the reporting period produced 54 enquiries for fostering. These enquiries resulted in 13 initial visits. Of these 13 initial visits 8 are progressing to assessment. Currently 7 are in Stage 1 and 1 assessment is being “fast tracked” into Stage 2. As of the 31st December 2016 there were 16 formal assessments in process under the 2-stage fostering assessment process.

- 6.4 The target for the service in 2016-17 is to recruit twelve to fifteen non-related foster carers during the reporting year; with a net growth of 5 fostering households once carer resignations and terminations of approval are taken into account.

We are currently projecting to recruit 11 fostering approvals by the end of March 2017. There have been 20 fostering households deregistered to date this year.

There continue to be some ongoing delays in approval of foster carers due to the slow return of information from the Disclosure and Barring Service. This is a systemic issue affecting all fostering agencies within London and has been signalled as a priority area to be resolved by the Metropolitan Police.

7.0 Fostering Panel

- 7.1 The fostering service has a Fostering Panel constituted in accordance with Regulation 23 of the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011. The service maintains a diverse and highly experienced central list of Panel members that includes an elected member. The panel chair and vice chair are independent people with professional experience of fostering and panel members include those with personal experience of the fostering system. Demand requires three panels to be held every two months.
- 7.2 The functions of the Fostering Panel are to consider:

- Each application and to recommend whether or not a person is suitable to be a Foster Carer, Connected Person(s) (Family and Friends Foster Carer) and the terms of their approval.
- The first annual review of each approved carer and any other review as requested by the fostering service, including those of a Standards of Care issue and those exploring any allegations made.
- The termination of approval or change of terms of approval of a Foster Carer.

7.3 The panel has a quality assurance role and monitors the standard of reports presented and relays any issues or concerns to the relevant manager. The panel makes recommendations to the fostering service and these recommendations are referred to the Agency Decision Maker who is the Operational Director, Integration and Improved Outcomes.

7.4 During the period 1st October – 30th December 2016, 4 panels were held and 26 specific cases discussed during these sessions. Within this group:

- new 'Family and Friends' foster carer households were recommended for approval;
- new fostering households were recommended for approval;
- 7 fostering households were found suitable to continue as foster carers following review;
- 'Family and Friends' fostering households were found suitable to continue as carers for specific children following review;
- 1 fostering household was found suitable to continue fostering following Standards of Care concerns;
- 3 fostering households were found suitable to continue following an allegation;
- 1 'Family and Friends' fostering household's approval was terminated due to the child in placement turning 18;
- 1 'Family and Friends' fostering household's approval was terminated due to the granting of a Child Arrangement Order for the child in placement;

5 fostering households resigned from their fostering role for the following reasons:

- relocation outside London;
- moving to an independent fostering agency;
- no longer having the room to foster due to son returning from university;
- not being able to meet the commitment to fostering due to securing full time employment; and
- carers deciding they needed to focus on the needs of their own birth children.

All of the recommendations made to the Agency Decision Maker were ratified.

8.0 Training and Support to Foster Carers.

- 8.1 As part of our Learning and Development offer to foster carers we provide a range of mandatory and identified training courses including sessions in evenings and at weekends.
- 8.2 During this reporting period 13 individual training courses were offered providing 118 training spaces.
- 8.3 The Fostering Development Conference took place during this quarter and offered carers the opportunity to attend a range of workshops to augment their training programme. The theme of this year's conference was "Developing Resilience" with the morning workshop led by a very engaging external trainer. The conference also provided an opportunity for foster carers to consider the Looked After Children Pledge. Feedback from those attending the event was extremely positive.
- 8.4 Overall, in this period, carers attended 141 separate learning and development opportunities. Where there is poor attendance at training by foster carers this is followed up by Supervising Social Workers, the Fostering Reviewing Officer and the Fostering Panel.
- 8.5 Foster carers receive a fortnightly newsletter, the link here gives an example of the content. <http://dmtrk.net/2K3U-ZA9D-C655ZUEM02/cr.aspx>

9.0 Monitoring Arrangements

- 9.1 All foster carers, regardless of the length of their approval with Brent, must have an annual review of their arrangements. The Fostering Reviewing Officer completed 21 annual reviews during this period.
- 9.2 During the reporting period there were two formal allegations made against the same fostering household. Both matters were referred to the local authority LADO. The first allegation was not deemed to be an allegation and the matter was closed. The second allegation led to a child protection investigation being carried out and the outcome was that the allegation was unfounded. The carer's annual review has been brought forward to February 2017 which will address the issues raised in the allegation/investigation. The review will be subsequently presented to the Fostering Panel to look at continuing suitability. In the interim, the young person was moved to an alternative placement, as the young person's needs were assessed as being more likely to be met in an alternative placement.
- 9.3 There was one Standard of Care/Serious Concern meeting held during this quarter. This matter has been resolved and the carer's review is to be presented to the Fostering Panel in March 2017, to look at suitability to foster. The carer has not been placed on hold, as the serious concern did not impact upon the young person's placement. The young person is placed on a long term basis and made his feelings known that he would not want to move.

10.0 Future Developments

10.1 In relation to the continued development of our social pedagogy programme, the social pedagogy steering group has drafted a “terms of reference” document and also held an Open Event for staff during this quarter. The purpose of the Social Pedagogy Steering Group is to map and support the introduction of the next phase of social pedagogy across the LAC service. Further training for both foster carers and social work staff is being set up with the intention of using social pedagogy as a tool to increase placement stability through the establishment of new approaches to dealing with challenging needs and behaviours of our LAC.

Staff who had completed Cohort 1 in 2015/16 were able to deliver a Social Pedagogy workshop to foster carers as part of our annual foster carers’ conference in November 2016, which was well received by carers who attended this.

10.2 We continue to work collaboratively with our west London neighbouring local authorities to deliver joint foster carer preparation training and we have also agreed to offer the same carer benefits’ package to foster carers, (from April 2016), which is delivered through the Fostering Network.

10.3 In line with our Recruitment Strategy, and our commitment to ensuring that our fostering recruitment utilises a broad range of mediums, we will engage in a second social media campaign with Net Natives during the final reporting quarter (Jan-Mar 2017). For information on Net Natives please visit <https://netnatives.com/about-us/>.

10.4 There is a greater use of Independent Fostering Agencies which also relates to our greater numbers of older LAC. We are using our data smartly to ensure that we are able to make the right placements for our LAC against a national shortage of foster carers and a very competitive market. We continue to benchmark ourselves against other local authorities. Our Brent foster carers are more able to provide placements for younger children and we are planning our next round of advertising to target foster carers for an older age group of LAC. We very much need to attract households who are able to have a teenage focus in their work with LAC. We have also been using information from exit interviews with foster carers to consider how we can improve our offer to them. We will be establishing an out of hours telephone support line for evenings and weekends so that carers can speak directly to a member of our team when they have issues which they urgently need support with.

10.5 The main activities for the fostering teams within the newly formed LAC & Permanency Service from April 2016 are as follows:

- To use the opportunity from a newly formed service to listen effectively to the voice of children and young people and embed their views into improving the quality and consistency of our fostering service. In this reporting quarter we have agreed to implement a new way of gathering feedback from our children and young people, using up to date technology which will make this more accessible to our LAC.
- To ensure that the recruitment of in-house carers continues to improve and that the impact of the digital campaign is evaluated. All of our current digital campaigns have clear evaluation plans and these are feedback into our

Marketing Strategy in order for outcomes to be measured. We also continue to meet monthly to ensure a good level of oversight and scrutiny of the recruitment and assessment process.

- To finalise the survey of current foster carers and to compare this with exit interviews completed in December 2015 to identify trends and to support service planning. This is currently being progressed as referred to in 10.4 above. When themes have emerged, we will use this information to inform our foster carer recruitment and retention.
- To ensure the foster carer training offer is monitored and the impact reflected within foster carer supervision and care of children. A good example of the way in which we tailor training to the individual needs of carers was our Annual Foster Carer conference, held in November, where each carer was allocated to a specific workshop in line with their placement type and/or learning needs.
- To ensure feedback from fostering panel is embedded into quality assurance work and development areas are progressed by team managers. Fostering Panel feedback is provided to practitioners via supervision and is used to inform annual appraisals and team plans.

Appendices / Links

- (i) Brent's 'Make a Difference' Fostering Campaign:
<https://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/children-and-family-support/fostering/make-a-difference/>

Contact Officer

Onder Beter, Head of Service, LAC & Permanency.
Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 0FJ.
Tel: 020 8937 4382

Email: onder.beter@brent.gov.uk

GAIL TOLLEY

Strategic Director of Children and Young People

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Brent Virtual School for Looked After Children

Annual Report 2015/16

February 2017



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1. Purpose of the Annual Report

The purpose of this annual report is to outline the activity and impact of the Brent Virtual School during the academic year 2015-16. The report includes details of the educational outcomes of our Brent looked after children who had been in care for a year or more. It reflects on the impact of our activities and identifies areas of future development to achieve improved outcomes for our looked after children.

Data contained in this report is for looked after children who were in the care of the Brent Council for the academic year 2015/16. The 2016 end of Key Stage assessment data relates only to those children in care in Brent for a year or more. The national LAC comparison data included in this report is from 2014/15¹. National, validated LAC data includes only children who have been in care for a year or more and because of our small numbers of eligible children in each cohort our outcomes did not feature in the 2015 national LAC data. ***Please also note that because of significant changes to national assessment at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, including the removal of national curriculum levels, comparison of LAC outcomes from previous years is not valid and has therefore not been included.***

The Annual Report will be presented to the Corporate Parenting Committee on 07.02.2017.

2. Key Messages from the 2015/16 Data²

- 24% of LAC in Brent in compulsory education in 2015/16 had been in care for less than a year
- 20% of LAC in Brent were aged 15-17 years and 68% were aged 12-17 years
- PEP completion rates continued to improve in 2015/16 and an audit conducted in June 2016 showed a considerable improvement in quality. During 2015/16 the format of the electronic PEP was thoroughly revised to produce a more 'user friendly' and efficient document. Current PEP completion for the Autumn Term 2016 is 96%
- The Key Stage 1 (7 year olds) results for those in care for a year or more (4 children) exceeded the national outcomes for all children in Reading, Writing and Mathematics. In 2015 Brent's KS1 LAC outcomes were well below the Outer London average
- The Key Stage 2 (11 year olds) cohort comprised 8 children. Of this 8, 4 (50%) achieved the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Mathematics: 3% below the national outcome (53%). In 2015 Brent's KS2 LAC outcomes were well above the Outer London average of 69%
- The Key Stage 4 (15 year olds) results were our best for a few years. 17% (3 children) of an eligible cohort of 18 achieved 5A*-C grades, including English and Mathematics. This is in line with the 2015 national KS4 outcomes for LAC: 13% in England and 15% in Outer London
- The post-16 EET data (in education, employment and training) was positive. In July 2016, 48 of the total cohort of 51 (94%) had a September Guarantee³. However the current EET figure in Year 12 (January 2017) is down to 81%; the 11 young people currently NEET (not in education, employment and training) are receiving intensive support from BVS. The Year 12 cohort comprises 58 LAC

¹ National attainment data for LAC will be available in May 2017. This Annual Report will then be updated accordingly.

² The examination data in this section is based on the numbers of LAC eligible to be included in our reported data

³ The September Guarantee is an offer, by the end of September, of a suitable place in learning to young people completing compulsory education. The Guarantee was implemented nationally in 2007 for 16 year olds and extended to 17 year olds in 2008.

- Attendance: 88%; a decline of 2% from 2014/15. This is concerning due mainly to poor attendance in KS4. Higher numbers of LAC in KS4 also affects this average
- Permanent Exclusion in 2015/16: 0. However fixed term exclusions rose in 2015/16
- Following Brent's Ofsted inspection in October 2015 BVS has been working to a post-Ofsted action plan that in particular focused on improving the completion and quality of PEPs (see above) and the raising of LAC outcomes at KS4 which in 2016 were a considerable improvement. However it must be noted that LAC cohorts vary significantly from year to year making a continuous upward improvement in outcomes impossible to sustain.

3. Role of the Brent Virtual School and the Virtual Headteacher

Role of the Brent Virtual School

The Virtual School in Brent (BVS) has the overall responsibility for the monitoring, supporting and provision of interventions to ensure that looked after children (LAC) achieve the best possible educational outcomes. BVS strives to achieve this by:

- Co-ordinating and quality assuring all Personal Education Plans (PEP)
- Monitoring and challenging schools to make effective use of Pupil Premium in line with DfE guidance
- Tracking the academic progress, attendance and exclusions of LAC
- Using tracking data to highlight individuals who are not on target to achieve their predicted outcomes and providing them with additional educational support.
- Ensuring Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) needs are identified and supported appropriately, including applications for statutory assessment
- Implementing a range of targeted interventions to raise academic standards
- Providing support and challenge to LAC, schools and carers, ensuring that expectations around achievement are high
- Ensuring effective transition between schools or specialist providers
- Encouraging LAC to have high aspirations about their futures and helping to remove barriers to further education
- Leading training for foster carers, designated teachers, school governors and bespoke training for alternative learning providers and staff in schools
- Encouraging LAC and their carers to engage in a wide range of enrichment activities
- Providing education updates for the various LAC and Permanency Panels and reminding our social work colleagues of the importance of education
- Celebrating LAC achievements.

Role of the Brent Virtual Headteacher

The concept of the 'Virtual School Headteacher' for Children Looked After was first outlined in the White Paper 'Care Matters: Time for Change' (DCSF, June 2007). Directors of Children's Services have a statutory responsibility to make sure that their local authority promotes the educational achievement of the children they look after, regardless of where they are placed.

The Children and Families Act 2014 amended section 22 of the Children Act 1989 and placed a statutory duty on all local authorities to appoint a Virtual School Head (VSH) to promote the educational achievement of its Looked After Children. It is the responsibility of the Director of Children's Services and the Cabinet Member for Children's Services to ensure that these duties are met.

The VSH role in Brent Council is held by Janet Lewis and is a strategic role that can influence practice and the use of resources across the authority.

The role was expanded in the DfE document 'Promoting the Education of Looked After

Children, statutory guidance for local authorities' July 2014. This document prescribes clearly that:

- VSHs are in place and that they have the resources, time, training and support they need to discharge the duty effectively
- VSHs have robust procedures in place to monitor the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after (including those placed and educated out of county)
- VSHs must maintain an up to date roll of their Local Authority's Looked After Children who are in school or college settings and gather information about their education placement, attendance and educational progress
- VSHs must inform headteachers and designated teachers in schools if they have a child on roll who is looked after by the VSH's local authority
- Ensure social workers, designated teachers and schools, carers and Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) understand their role and responsibilities in initiating, developing, reviewing and updating each child's PEP (personal education plan) and ensuring that identified needs are met
- Ensure up to date, effective and high quality PEPs focus on educational outcomes and that all Looked After Children, wherever they are placed, have an effective PEP
- Ensure the educational achievement of children looked after by the authority is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibility for promoting their welfare.
- Report regularly on the attainment of Looked After Children through the authority's corporate parenting structures.

Following a re-structure of Brent's Children and Young People Department in early 2016 the post of Headteacher of BVS was confirmed as a Head of Service post in its own right. The BVS Headteacher is also a regular member of the borough's Fostering Panel.

4. Brent Virtual School Members

2015/16

Janet Lewis, Headteacher

Susan Lofthouse, Interim Deputy Headteacher (01.04.15-31.01.16)

Priya Upadhyaya, LAC Information Analyst

Nayna Joshi, KS4 LAC Advisory Teacher

Anna Lewis, Interim KS4 LAC Advisory Teacher (from 01.01.16 until 31.10.16)

Margaret Curtin, KS3 LAC Advisory Teacher

Emma Gavin, KS1 and 2 and Early Years LAC Advisory Teacher

Elizabeth Hannah, LAC Educational Psychologist (0.6)

Ben Kwofie, Year 11 LAC Life Coach, Connexions Team (until 30.03.16).

2016/17

Janet Lewis, Headteacher

Sarah Miller, Deputy Headteacher (from 01.09.16)

Priya Upadhyaya, LAC Information Analyst

Nayna Joshi, KS4 LAC Advisory Teacher

Margaret Curtin, KS3 LAC Advisory Teacher

Emma Gavin, KS1 and 2 and Early Years LAC Advisory Teacher

Elizabeth Hannah, LAC Educational Psychologist (0.6)

Ben Kwofie, Year 11 LAC Life Coach, Connexions Team (until 30.03.17).

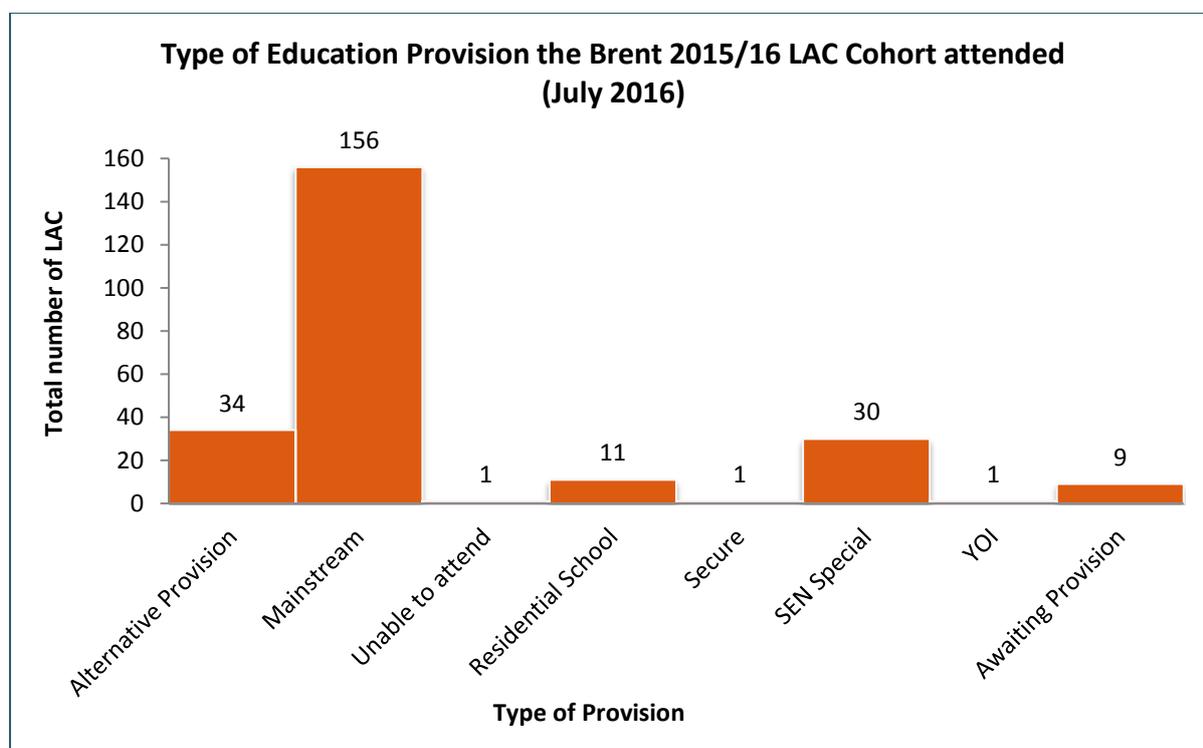
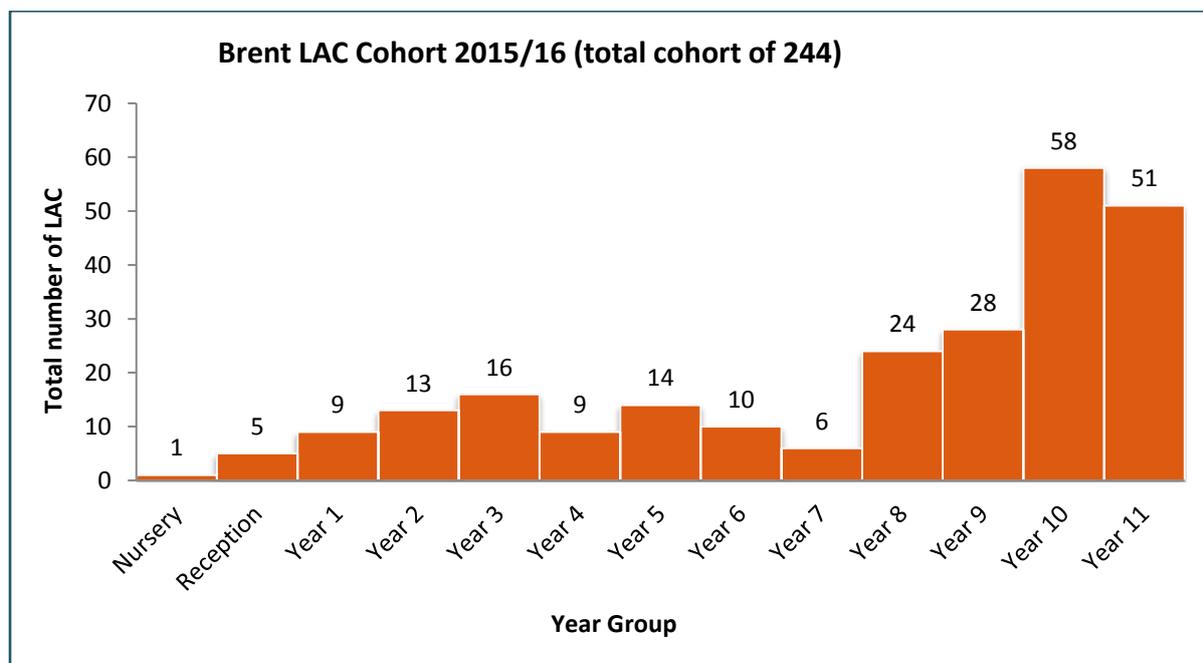
The Virtual School is currently governed by the Corporate Parenting Committee.

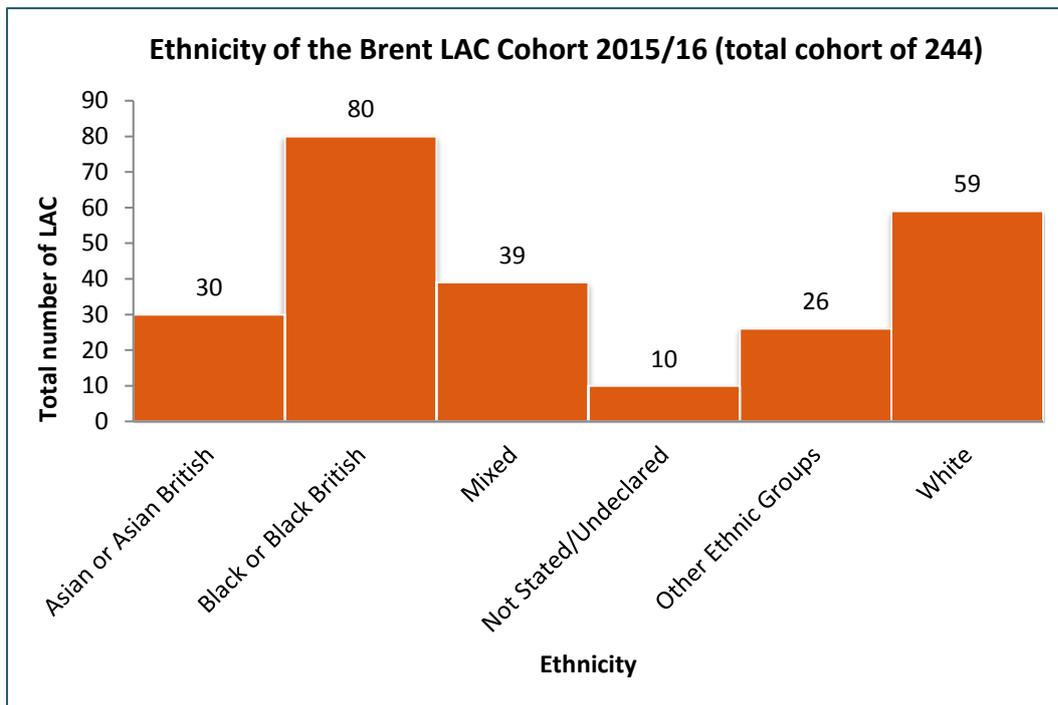
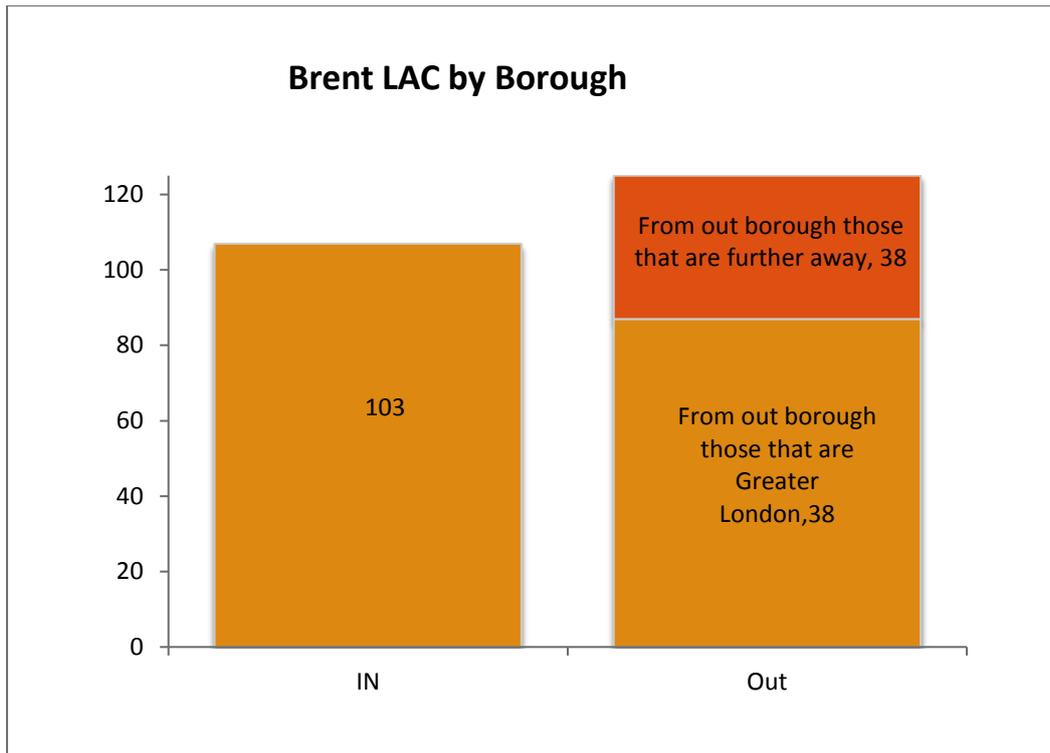
Following 3 external application rounds between March 2015 and May 2016 BVS finally appointed a substantive Deputy Headteacher, Sarah Miller, who joined the team in September 2016. Sarah brings a wealth of LAC and senior school leadership experience and is already making a significant difference to the range and quality of interventions in place to support

LAC preparing for end of KS2 and 4 assessments.

5. Brent's Looked After Children Population 2015/16: Nursery to Year 11

In July 2016 244 (Nursery- Year 11) children were looked after, 107 attending Brent schools and 125 attending schools outside the borough. Of these 125, 87 were in schools in greater London, with the remainder placed outside London, some at a significant distance.

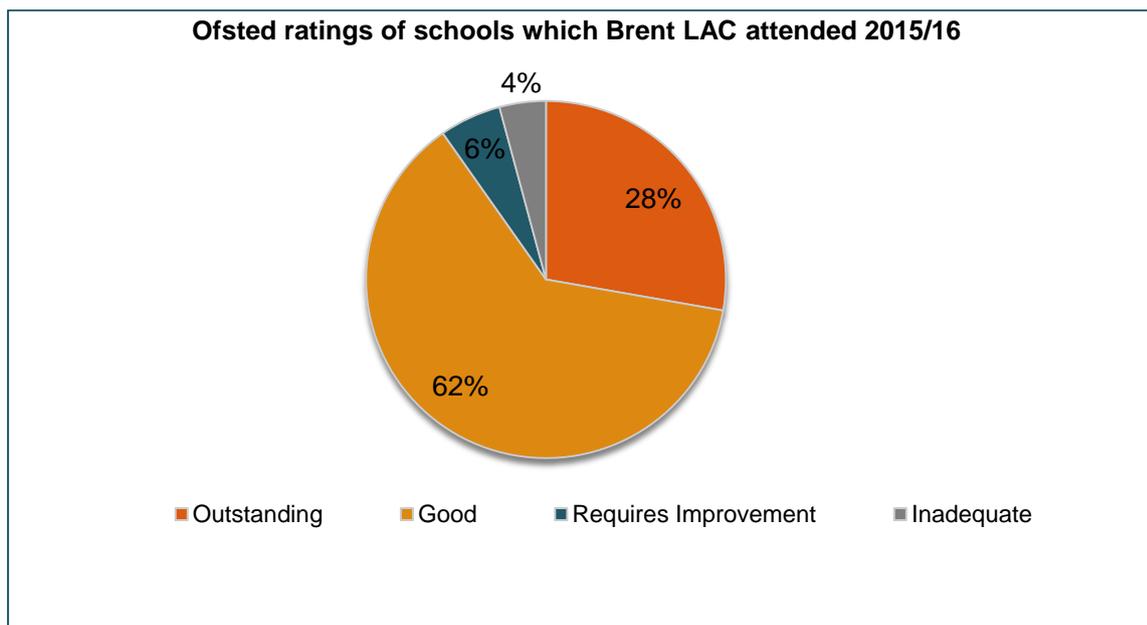




The ethnic breakdown of the 2015/16 LAC cohort broadly reflects that of the general Brent school population.

In 2015/16 90% of statutory school aged LAC attended schools that were Ofsted rated as good or outstanding, 6% (12 LAC) attended schools that required improvement and 4% (9 LAC) attended an inadequate school. BVS works hard to get our LAC into the best possible school. During 2015/16 we asked the Secretary of State to direct an academy in Brent to admit a Year 10 LAC. This process took about 6 weeks to complete.

Ofsted ratings of schools which Brent LAC attended 2015/16



BVS monitors the progress and achievement of all LAC paying particular attention to those placed in schools that are less than 'good'.

LAC Not In School

At any-time there are a few children or young people who are not in school or an appropriate alternative provision. This will be for a number of reasons: newly arrived from abroad as an unaccompanied minor with no age assessment, change of care placement making it impossible for the child or young person to attend their current school or disengagement by the young person. Where a young person disengages, BVS works with social work colleagues and schools to plan programmes to support re-engagement. Mentoring often plays a critical role in this process.

BVS monitors this roll of LAC not in school weekly and works closely with social workers and carers to secure appropriate provision. The average time to get a child or young person into school is 4 weeks. In the meantime BVS arranges 1:1 tuition funded by the Pupil Premium Grant.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

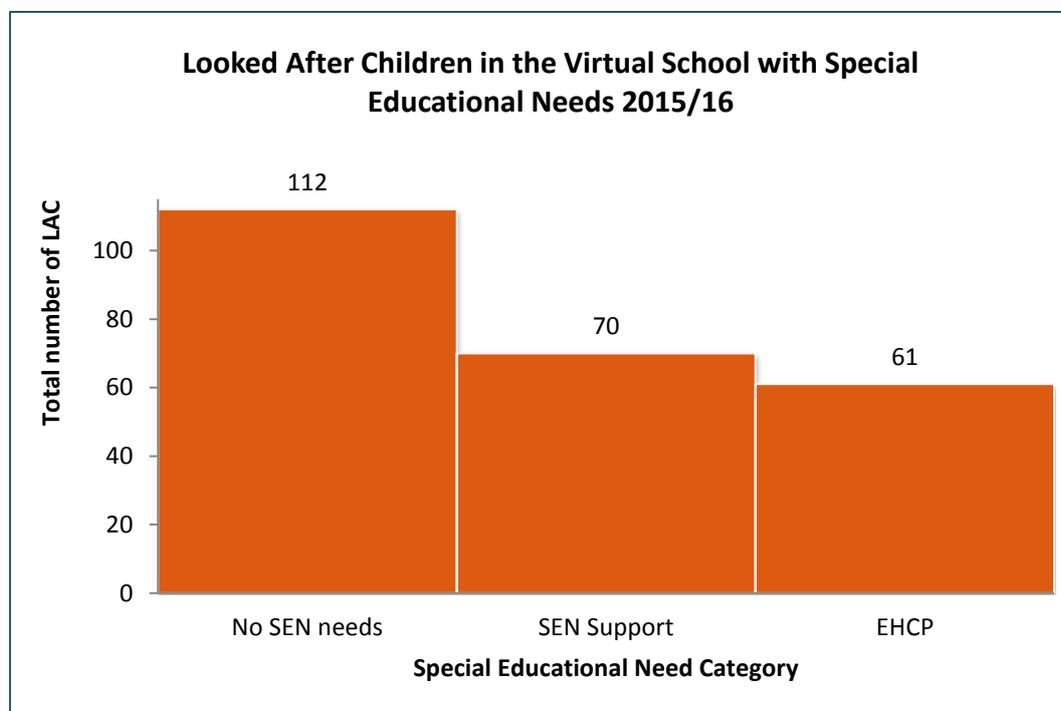
Over the past 2 years Brent has seen a significant rise in the number of UASC in care. In 2014/15 the Nursery to Year 11 LAC cohort comprised 16% UASC and in 2015/16 UASC comprised 23% of the LAC cohort.

Brent UASC come from a range of countries outside the EU, principally Afghanistan, Iraq, Albania and countries in Africa. Often they arrive without proof of age which can hamper a school admission. The majority of the UASC are in KS4 and if they are in care in the borough once their age has been agreed will be placed in the ESOL projects which are based at Queens Park and Claremont Schools. As their English improves they will be moved on to other schools in the borough. UASC in care outside Brent are referred to the relevant ESOL provision in their local area.

However it is unlikely that if they arrive in the UK during KS4 they will be eligible or able to follow GCSE courses. On the positive side many of our UASC are highly motivated to learn and some do extremely well. However they often face challenges regarding the right to remain in the UK and access to public funds once they become 18.

6. SEND

65% of the 2015/16 LAC cohort had identified SEND needs compared with 12% nationally. 28% had Education Health Care Plan (EHC plan) compared with 3% nationally; the same percentages as 2014/15. BVS tries where possible to combine annual reviews of statements or EHC Plans with PEP meetings. SEND and the meeting of these needs is a significant barrier to learning for many of our LAC.



Please note that the above graph represents LAC in Reception - Year 11

7. Brent's Looked After Children's Attainment 2015/16

Monitoring and improving outcomes for Brent LAC is a key priority for the BVS and although LAC numbers are relatively small, national and regional comparisons allow an understanding of educational and other outcomes achieved for children for which Brent Council are responsible as the corporate parent. Outcomes are reported for LAC who have been continuously looked after for at least 12 months up to and including 31 March 2016. Data is collated from the annual LAC return (SSDA903) and matched to attainment and school census data⁴.

Please note that new assessment measures have recently been introduced at Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 and that National Curriculum Levels no longer exist. Instead at KS1 and 2 children are expected to achieve at least a scaled score of 100 to meet the expected standard. Therefore comparisons of 2016 KS1 and 2 outcomes with those attained in 2015 are not appropriate. The outcome measures at KS4 (GCSE) also changed in 2016. The old measure of 5A*-C, including English and mathematics is no longer reported but for LAC purposes a comparison with 2015 GCSE outcomes is appropriate.

⁴ The national data included in this report is LAC only. Care must be taken when interpreting this information due to the small number of children and the volatility of these cohorts.

8. Early Years (Non Statutory) Provision 2015/16

1 LAC aged 2-4 years was eligible in 2015/16 to access nursery education.

2015/16 Statutory Attainment

The attainment of the Year 2 (Key Stage 1), 6 (Key Stage 2) and 11 (Key Stage 4) cohorts in 2015/16 is set out below. The national comparative data given is for 2015; the 2016 national data for LAC outcomes will not be released until May 2017.

9. Year 1 Phonics Test

The eligible cohort comprised 4 children of which 3 (75%) passed the test. The national average in 2016 was 81%. 2 further children re-took and passed the test in Year 2.

10. Key Stage 1 Statutory Attainment

Assessment for pupils in this key stage is conducted in the academic year pupils turn 7.

In 2016 a new set of KS1 curriculum tests was introduced. Schools were required to administer 2 tests for English reading and 2 for Maths (arithmetic and reasoning) during May. There is also an optional test in Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling (GPS).

At the end of KS1 teachers must make their teacher assessment judgements on reading, writing, mathematics and science for each eligible pupil using the interim teacher assessment framework. The outcomes were moderated locally. Schools are not obliged to publish the test results, and they are not reported to the government. However parents must be allowed access to their child's results on request.

In 2016 the LAC KS1 cohort comprised 13 children. Of that cohort only 4 children, eligible to take the tests, had been in care for more than a year.

KS1 TESTS for 2015-16 SFR Cohort (4 children)	Achieved Expected Standard	National Average All children
Reading, Writing and Maths	3 (75%)	60%
Maths	3 (75%)	73%
Reading	4 (100%)	74%
Writing	3 (75%)	66%

Key Characteristics of the Cohort:

- 50% (2) were in Brent schools
- 75% (3) had a change of placement in KS 1
- 50% (2) had a change of school placement during KS1

Analysis of the children who did not achieve the expected standard in KS:

- 50% had a placement move and change of school in 2015/16
- 25% of the children had an EHCP and 50% of the children were on SEN Support
- All had significant emotional and social needs relating to their LAC status.

11. Key Stage 2 Statutory Attainment 2015/16

Assessment for pupils in this key stage is conducted in the academic year that pupils turn 11.

In 2016 there were significant changes to national assessment at the end of KS2. These were:

- New curriculum and assessments
- Expected standard higher than previous Level 4
- Tests in reading and maths reported as scaled scores, not levels, with an expected standard of a scaled score of 100
- Writing teacher assessment; must meet all statements at the standard and below.

Please note that 2016 outcomes at KS2 cannot be compared with those of 2015.

The headline accountability measures for schools are:

- % achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths
- % achieving high standard in reading, writing and maths
- Progress score in each of reading, writing and maths
- Average scaled score in each of reading and maths.

Nationally in 2016 53% met the expected standard in reading, writing and maths. In 2015 80% achieved the expected standard of L4+.

In 2016 the LAC cohort comprised 10 children. 1 of these was a UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child) and not eligible to take the tests and 1 was out of year (ie a year older) who took the tests but will not be counted in Brent's official results.

KS2 TESTS for 2015-16 SFR Cohort (8 children)	Achieved Expected Standard	National Average All Children	Brent Average All Children
Reading, Writing and Maths	4 (50%)	53%	55%
Reading	5 (62.5%)	66%	
Writing	5 (62.5%)	74%	
Maths	5 (62.5%)	70%	
Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling	3 (37.5%)		

- The KS2 cohort struggled to gain the expected standards across all subjects because they did not achieve the expected standard in the new Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (GPS) test, some missing the expected standard by very few marks
- 90 % of children who did not achieve the expected standard in a subject had scored 94 points or above
- Of the children who did not achieve all the expected standards, 57 % had an EHCP or Statement and 43% were on SEN Support.

Key Characteristics of the Cohort:

- 63% (5) were in Brent schools
- 63% (5) had at least 1 change of school placement during KS2
- 63% (5) had at least 1 change of care placement during KS2
- 88% (7) were identified as having SEND with 50% (4) with EHC Plans.

1 LAC had been out of school since February 2016; arrangements were made for him to take the tests with his previous school.

BVS Interventions and support for the Year 6 Cohort:

- 2 Easter holiday booster class days
- 1:1 tuition for children who needed to close the gaps in particular subjects
- Enrichment activities: visits to the Science Museum, the Roald Dahl Museum and author workshop, Wembley Legends Day, Thoughts and Sports week
- Primary/secondary transition training for foster carers
- Pre-PEP transition meetings with secondary schools
- Ensuring children who were out of school could sit their KS2 assessments
- Learning Mentors to support with transitions and placement moves.

Rates of Progress from KS1

- 25% of children exceeded expected rates of progress in Reading, Writing and Maths
- 37.5% exceeded the expected rates of progress in Reading and Maths
- 50% made the expected rate of progress across Reading, Writing, GPS and Maths
- 25% of children made the expected rate of progress in Reading
- 37.5% made expected rates of progress in Writing
- 25% of children made the expected progress in Maths
- 37.5 % made the expected rate of progress in GPS.

Children who do not reach the expected standard in KS2 are eligible for Year 7 Catch-Up funding in their first year at secondary school. BVS has ensured that additional support is being provided for our Year 7 LAC who did not reach the expected standards and this support is documented in their Autumn Term 2016 PEP.

12. Key Stage 4 Statutory Attainment 2015/16

Assessment for these pupils is conducted in the academic year pupils turn 16.

From 2016 assessment at KS4 places more emphasis on the progress of pupils and across a broader range of subjects than previously.

The headline accountability measures for schools in 2016:

- Progress 8 (progress in 8 qualifications)
- Attainment 8 (attainment in 8 qualifications)
- % achieving A*-C in English and maths
- % achieving the EBacc
- % entering the EBacc
- Destinations (% staying in education or training at post-16).

The 2016 Year 11 LAC cohort comprised a total of 51 pupils. Only 23 of this cohort had been in care for more than a year. A further 5 of these were not eligible to take GCSE. The SFR cohort was 18. Currently BVS is only able to report outcomes using the previous KS4 performance measure of 5A*-C grades including English and mathematics.

OUTCOME MEASURE for 2015-16 SFR KS4 Cohort (18)	Brent	LAC National 2015	National Average 2015 All Pupils
5A*-C grades incl En and ma	3 (17%)	13%	60%

Comparative national LAC data will be published in May 2017. The London network of virtual school headteachers has shared some 2016 KS4 data. Croydon and Newham 2 of our statistical neighbour boroughs reported 15% and 13% 5A*-C grades including English and mathematics.

In 2014 the eligible Year 11 Brent LAC cohort achieved 9% 5A*-C incl En and ma and 0% in 2015.

Key Characteristics of the Cohort:

- 28% (5) were in Brent schools
- 33% (6) had a placement change in Year 11
- 11% (2) had a school change in Year 11
- 61% (11) were identified as having SEND with 22% (4) with EHC Plans.

Levels of Attainment and Progress at Key Stages 2 and 4

At Key Stage 4, new measures: Attainment and Progress 8 will replace the old measure of 5A*-C including English and mathematics with measures that reflect pupils' attainment and progress in 8 prescribed subjects in single scores. A similar attainment and progress scale scored approach is used to report KS2 outcomes.

Currently we are unable to report our LAC outcomes at KS2 and 4 in this way. The DfE is engaged in work with the new National Association of Virtual School Headteachers (NAVSH) to introduce national progress comparative data for LAC.

Work on monitoring current LAC progress is a main part of our work in BVS, using termly data drops collected by Welfare Call (the company that provides our electronic Personal Education Plans: PEPs). Such monitoring is enabling us quickly to identify LAC at risk of under-achievement, to challenge schools and to work with the Designated Teachers in schools to provide appropriate individual support and adapt PEPs as appropriate.

Context and Impact on Outcomes

The educational attainment of LAC is measured against the educational attainment of all children. The majority of LAC face challenges and barriers to their overall achievement that the majority of other children do not.

Last year's BVS Annual Report reflected widely on the context and reasons why LAC, despite matching the same cognitive ability range as the rest of the pupil population, do so poorly by national attainment measures. The report highlighted the impact that changes of care placement and possible school changes can have on academic progress and achievement. Recent research into LAC attainment showed a close correlation between high attainment and good school attendance in a stable school placement especially across a key stage supported by a stable care placement.

The analysis highlighted also the significantly higher percentages of SEND (Special Education Needs and Disabilities) in the LAC population and the higher number of risk factors for LAC:

- 60% of LAC experience emotional and mental health problems: 4 times higher than children generally
- 66% of LAC have at least 1 physical health issue; are 3 times more likely to drink alcohol and/or smoke; 4 times more likely to take illegal drugs; more likely to become teenage parents
- Over 25% of LAC have an EHC Plan compared with only 3% of all pupils.

Brent's LAC reflect these national statistics. In addition the majority of Brent's LAC come into care between the ages of 11-16 at a time when the challenges faced by young people are more intractable and are more likely to result in placement breakdown and change of education setting.

In 2015/16 BVS began to highlight the growing international awareness of the impact that poor attachment in the early years of a child can have on developing brains and on a child's and young person's emotional capability and this work is continuing. BVS is making use of international research led by Harvard University focusing on key aspects of child

development including: early experiences and how they affect the development of brain architecture, toxic stress and the development of resilience which is critical to academic engagement and motivation. LAC, because of neglect and/or abuse in early childhood, are more likely to suffer long term consequences in terms of their ability to learn and form relationships. Their behavior which at times can be extreme and put them at risk of school exclusion is often directly related to these early attachment issues. Please visit <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/> for more details and helpful video presentations.

BVS is now attempting to educate schools about these issues and to encourage them to adopt attachment aware ways of interacting with our LAC which will be supportive rather than punitive. In particular it is funding, through the retained Pupil Premium Grant, Attachment and LegoTheraplay Training for schools. Please see Appendix 2 for further details of this training programme and the feedback received from schools. BVS is also planning a Conference in March 2017 on attachment that will feature a key note presentation by Dr Janet Rose a leading British researcher in this area. Members of the Corporate Parenting Committee are very welcome to attend on 9th March.

BVS is also for the first time from September 2016 using the Pupil Premium Grant to fund 3 schools in Brent; 2 secondary schools and a primary school which between them educate a significant number of our LAC, to receive CAMHs support through the Targeted Adolescent Mental Health Support (TAMHs), a school's resource which places a CAMHs counsellor in a school for a day or half a day a week. Initial feedback from the schools involved indicates that this resource is making a difference in helping our young people to understand and manage their emotions.

13. Key Stage Five Attainment 2015/16

BVS did not have a dedicated post-16 advisory teacher resource in 2015/16. This was removed when the team was re-structured in 2013 going from a team of 6: a lead advisory teacher (deputy head of BVS) and 5 advisory teachers to a team of 4: a lead advisory teacher (deputy head of BVS) and 3 advisory teachers. The number of LAC has remained constant and the raising of the participation age by government to 18 has accentuated the need to ensure that post-16 LAC's educational progress is monitored and supported. From September 2016 following the appointment of a substantive Deputy Headteacher for BVS, the postholder together with the BVS Headteacher has been offering limited support to post-16 LAC; focusing particular of those who are NEET (not in education, employment or training).

It is not possible at this time to present a coherent set of Year 12 and 13 outcomes for 2016. Work continues with social workers on compiling this information and we hope to have this fully in place by the end of the Spring Term.

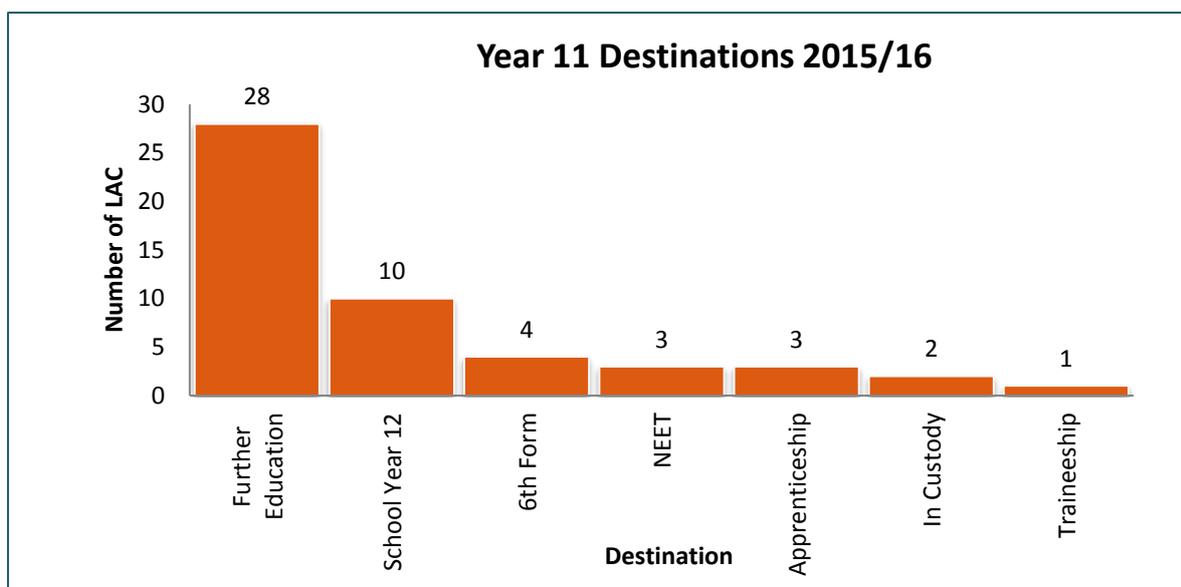
14. Destinations of LAC at 16+

The education, employment and training (EET) status of LAC in the September following completion of Year 11.

16+ LAC September Guarantees⁵

By July 2016 48 out of a total of 51 year 11 LAC had a September Guarantee. The graph below breaks this down into specific destinations.

⁵ The September Guarantee is an offer, by the end of September, of a suitable place in learning to young people completing compulsory education. The Guarantee was implemented nationally in 2007 for 16 year olds and extended to 17 year olds in 2008.



The 3 LAC identified as NEET continue to receive individual support and guidance from the BVS Life Coach.

15. Exclusions

No Brent LAC were permanently excluded in 2015/16. Fixed term exclusions were higher than in 2014/15 in terms of number of days lost to exclusion.

Please see below summary table for exclusions

Exclusion Data ⁶			
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Total number of fixed term exclusions- days	190.5	253	300
Number of pupils excluded- fixed term	38	35	45
Total number of permanent exclusions	1	1	0

In 2015/16 a number of LAC were at risk of exclusion and a proportion of KS4 LAC were directed to alternative provision to address their behaviour by their mainstream school. 4 LAC in Year 11 were in Alternative Provisions. BVS aims to work closely with schools to avoid the permanent exclusion of our LAC where possible by helping schools to find appropriate alternative provision.

16. Monitoring Attendance

Maintaining regular school attendance is fundamental to a young person achieving their potential at school. BVS recognises that monitoring LAC attendance is a key activity.

Since April 2012 the Welfare Call Service has been commissioned by the BVS to provide accurate data that enables it to monitor attendance, punctuality and exclusions for Brent LAC, wherever they live. The Welfare Call Service is used across the country by other local

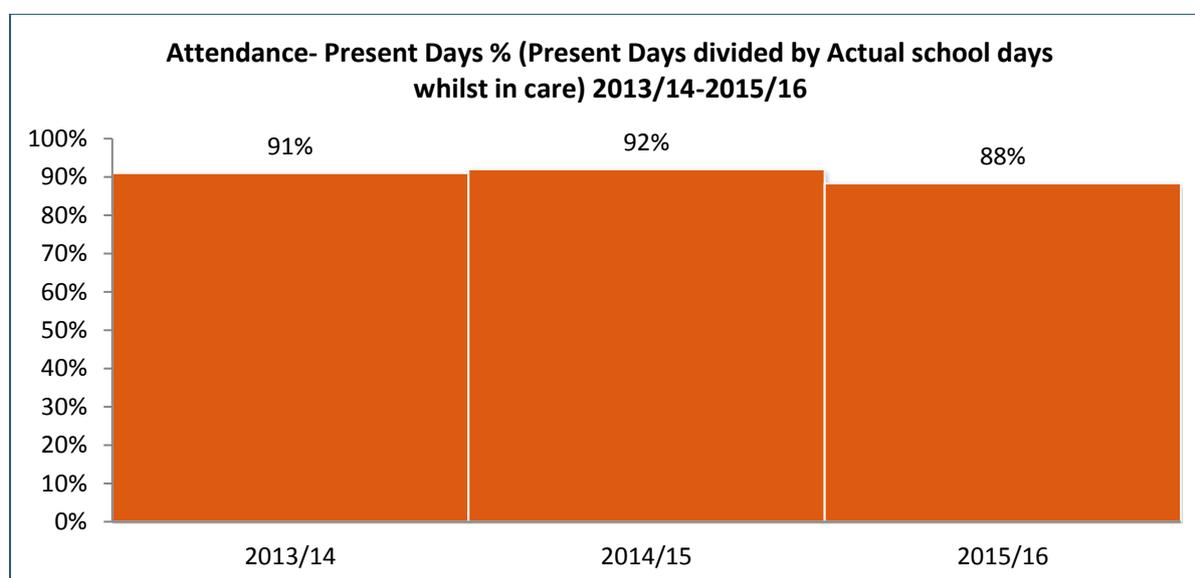
⁶ Please note that the figures included above are collected by Welfare Call.

authorities and has an excellent track record in providing a variety of accurate attendance/exclusion reports and statistics on a daily basis.

An important aspect of the service is the daily call to each school attended by Brent LAC. Once an attendance issue is raised, the Welfare Call Service ascertains whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised and the type (e.g. medical, exclusion) as well as alerting both the social worker and the carer.

BVS is able to access regular datasets regarding young people's attendance at primary, secondary, special and residential schools across the country. Welfare Call reports are sent daily to BVS. If any unusual absences or significant concerns are noted, the relevant advisory teacher will send an alert to the social worker, their manager and any involved person, for further investigation.

Attendance for Brent LAC, although below national averages, had shown significant improvement over the past 2 years. It has declined again in 2015/16. This decline reflects the increased challenge presented by larger numbers of older children entering the care system. In many cases poor school attendance is engrained. However BVS is not complacent about this and is continuously looking at ways to support better LAC school attendance.



17. Pupil Premium Grant

The Pupil Premium grant (PPG) for Brent LAC (£1900pa per LAC) is managed by the Headteacher of BVS.

The DfE provides the PPG on a financial year basis. In 2015/16 and 2016/17 BVS received £600,400 based on 316 LAC. The academic year spans 5 12ths of 1 financial year and 7 12ths of the following financial year.

BVS' policy is to provide schools with £1300 per LAC made in 1 annual payment in arrears; the £600 balance is retained for centrally funded support. Schools are asked to attach PPG spend to PEP targets which is then agreed by BVS as part of the quality assurance process of PEPs. Schools can bid for the whole £1900; each bid is approved on its merits.

In 2015/16 the retained, cumulative, balance funded the following BVS activity:

- Life Coach Ben Kwofie supporting Post-16 transition
- Easter Holiday and summer Half Term revision sessions for Year 6 and Year 11 LAC

both in Brent and elsewhere

- Additional 1:1 tuition, mentoring sessions and additional support to a number of individual LAC who were not in school for a variety of reasons or were between schools due to foster placement changes
- Attachment Training for schools provided by a national trainer.

The impact of PPG on individual LAC outcomes is variable and sometimes it is difficult to link the funding to specific improvements. BVS works hard to hold schools to account for how LAC PPG is spent and recently has been directing more funding towards helping schools understand and then address the reasons why LAC tend to underperform.

The impact of the Year 11 Life Coach, funded by PPG, continues to make a significant contribution to the support our Year 11 LAC receive in helping them to make a positive post-16 transition.

18. Training and Advice

The Virtual School staff group provide training sessions to:

- Designated Teachers (termly DT forum sessions)
- Foster Carers (bi-annually)
- Fostering Team
- Safeguarding Teams
- LAC Teams in schools
- Newly employed Social Workers.

The content of these training sessions includes, PEP and PPG processes, attachment disorders and strategies, school application and admission processes, expected roles and responsibilities.

During 2015/16 members of BVS provided the following training:

- ePEP training
- Care Planning Staff Forum Training
- Brent Governors' Forum Training
- Foster Carer Training
- Social Worker Induction Training
- Social Care Staff Forum Training
- Designated Teacher Forum: Attachment and ePEP Training.

BVS will be working closely with the new substantive Head of LAC and Permanency (arriving February 2017) to ensure that social workers receive appropriate and timely training on how to hold schools to account for the progress and attainment of Brent LAC.

19. Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

PEPs are statutory and when done well are a key driver of LAC education improvement.

During 2015/16 further steps were taken to improve both the completion rate and overall quality of PEPs with the result that by the end of the Autumn Term 2016 96% of PEPs had been completed and all were rated good or better in terms of quality. The revision of the electronic PEP and enhanced training that focused on SMART targets has made a significant contribution to the improved quality. A PEP rated good or better should contain the following:

- Input by the child or young person about their education, what is helping them learn, what they would like further help with
- SMART targets that reflect the child's or young person's input
- Helpful comments and strategies based on the child's or young person's barriers to learning that will help staff meet their needs.

Moderation of PEP targets is held half termly and termly audits of PEPs are planned.

A key part of the revision of our PEP format and process was informed by the views of our young people. Please see Appendix 3: 'PEP Feedback from Brent Care in Action Group (June 2016)' for details of this feedback. Following the revision of the ePEP format BVS revised its guidance documentation and this was issued to Designated Teachers and social workers in September 2016.

Post 16 PEPS in 2015/16 were conducted by the Social Work teams.

20. Celebrating Achievement

Each year BVS organises a celebration event for LAC and invites nominations to recognise the achievements of the children and young people. The event to celebrate achievement in 2015/16 was held on 27th January 2017 in the Grand Hall in Brent's Civic Centre. 153 children and young people were nominated by their social workers, carers or designated teachers to receive a certificate of achievement. Certificates and prizes were presented by the Mayor of Brent, the Cabinet Member for Education and the Strategic Director of Children and Young People in Brent. The event, as ever, was a joyful occasion with a wide range of achievements being recognised. For the first time BVS made some special Key Stage awards for outstanding achievement.

21. LAC Enrichment

Following the re-structure of BVS in 2013 and the reduction in the team capacity enrichment activities declined. I am delighted to report that in 2015/16 the enrichment programme was revitalised and a number of our LAC benefitted from a wider range of activities. The programme for this academic year is even better. The feedback we receive from LAC following events helps us to shape future events.

During 2015/16, BVS supported LAC in a range of enrichment activities:

- The Letterbox Project – a literacy and numeracy project which promotes home learning. Feedback from pupils is very positive and foster carers report that receiving a book each month encourages greater interest in reading
- Arvon Writing Project, funded by the John Lyons' charity
- Visits to the Roald Dahl Museum and the Science Museum
- Thoughts for Sports Activity Week
- Visit to St John's College Cambridge for LAC and foster carers.

A recent successful bid to the John Lyons' charity means that more events are planned for this academic year. As ever such activities rely on the willingness of BVS Advisory Teachers to give up weekend and holiday time to support our LAC and I am delighted to say that the team are always happy to do this.

BVS is particularly keen to ensure that we are supporting our LAC to have the aspiration to progress to Higher Education. In 2017 we hope to be part of a DfE Innovations funded project

'New Beginnings' which is being sponsored by Lord Wills and will build on our visit in July 2016 to St John's College Cambridge.

22. Current Service Plan for Brent Virtual School

The current BVS Service Plan is attached as Appendix 3. The priority for BVS is to secure a suitable post-16 resource both to support and prevent LAC from becoming NEET and to raise aspirations for Higher Education.

Janet Lewis
Headteacher Brent Virtual School
February 2017.

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Appendix 1

Arvon Writers' Bloc 1-5 August 2016

Six Brent LAC attended Writers' Bloc, a five day course for young writers that took place at the Ted Hughes Arvon Centre, Yorkshire. They were part of a group of 12, the other six were members of Harrow Virtual School for LAC. Four of our pupils were in Year 10(2015-16) and two in Year 9. The group was accompanied by two staff members each from Brent and Harrow Virtual Schools. There were two tutors, both experienced in leading workshops with a wide range of participants.

The students mostly engaged willingly in the writing sessions and particularly liked writing about personal experiences in a group where all were in Care. Each writer had an individual tutorial session with both tutors. There were notable social and therapeutic benefits - the two groups assimilated into one bigger group, relationships were built and fun was had. We arranged two afternoon trips, the first to Heptonstall Village with a visit to Sylvia Plath's grave where one of the tutors read 'Lady Lazarus' at the graveside, a moving experience for most. Our second visit was to Hebden Bridge where the group enjoyed exploring the quaint streets and market.

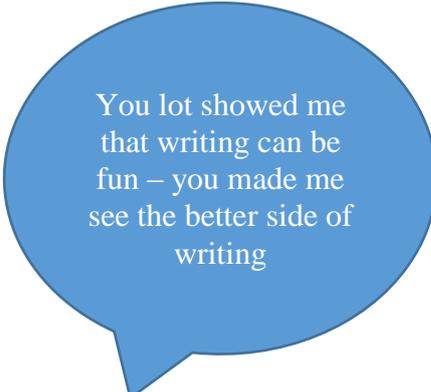
The following are the students' summing up of their experience of writing during the week:-

S...



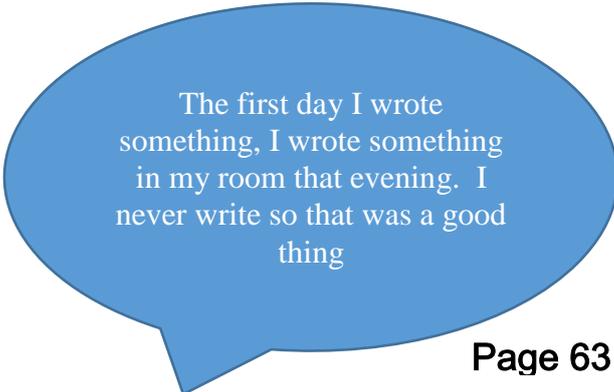
I feel more confident with my writing

J...



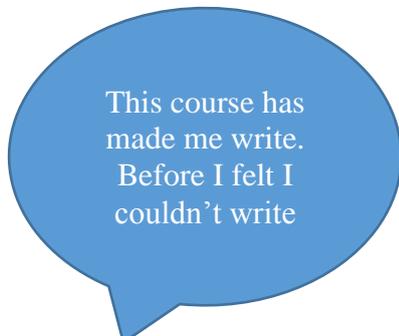
You lot showed me that writing can be fun – you made me see the better side of writing

Z...



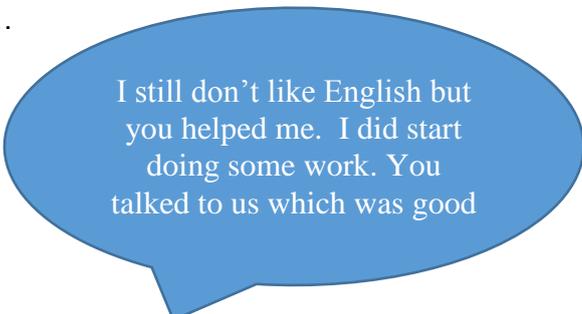
The first day I wrote something, I wrote something in my room that evening. I never write so that was a good thing

S...



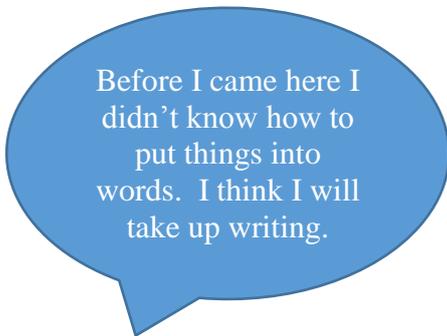
This course has made me write. Before I felt I couldn't write

H...



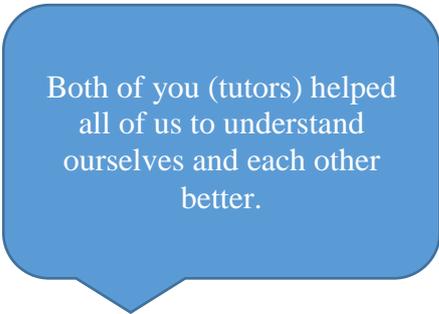
I still don't like English but you helped me. I did start doing some work. You talked to us which was good

K...



Before I came here I didn't know how to put things into words. I think I will take up writing.

And the final word came from K



Both of you (tutors) helped all of us to understand ourselves and each other better.

Evaluation: overall the Arvon week was a worthwhile and enriching experience for students, leaders and tutors. The core objective which was to help participants to improve their writing skills was achieved in that, as students reported, barriers to writing were broken down and students felt empowered to record their thoughts in written form.

On reflection, a discussion with tutors at the beginning of the week to discuss possible writing topics would be helpful as some exercises were more successful than others. Also there was too much unstructured time in the afternoons and students were bored. This could be dealt with in the future by planning a mid-week visit to a place of interest in the general area.

It is to be hoped that our young people will use the knowledge and skills acquired in their writing in school and beyond.

**Margaret Curtin and Emma Gavin
Brent Virtual School
September 2016.**



Appendix 2

Brent Virtual School Attachment and LEGO®-based theraplay Training Offer

In school training was offered to schools with one or more children and young people looked after by Brent Council. The training was provided by Susan Lofthouse of HEY Education, and was funded by the centrally retained Pupil Premium Plus. Susan has over twenty years' experience in education. She works closely with senior leaders in schools and children's social service teams, to secure the best outcomes for Looked After Children.

Susan also offers bespoke training for school staff, social workers, and carers, to help professionals understand the educational needs of children with experience of trauma and loss. She is a Master in the Psychology of Education and a member of the British Psychological Society. She has experience in mainstream, special schools, PRUs, and Local Authorities and has been the operational Lead in three Virtual Schools; she was the Brent Virtual School Interim Deputy Headteacher in 2015/16. Susan is also a member of the Hull Adoption Panel.

2 x two-hour workshops were offered:

1. From Risk to Resilience: Attachment in the Classroom

The session included:

- An overview of the key theories of attachment.
- Features of different attachment styles.
- Practical strategies to support children with experience of trauma and loss and/or attachment difficulties.
- Resources: Brain Box Cards - 40 x A6 cards.

2. LEGO®-based theraplay and construction club workshop

A group play based social skills intervention designed to improve social competence in children with social difficulties. The intervention aims to:

- Promote the development of appropriate social, communication and play skills
- Provide opportunities for children to practice social skills such as: turn-taking, listening, sharing ideas, communication, compromise, problem solving and shared attention.

The workshop included

- An overview of the key theories of LEGO®-based therapy
- Practical play based strategies to help children communicate in a fun and naturalistic way
- Guidance on how to set up a LEGO®-based intervention or club
- During the summer of 2016, the courses were delivered to the Virtual School Team, Kingsbury High School, Sudbury Primary School, Elsley Primary School, and an introduction was presented to the Brent Designated Teachers forum.

Feedback from the training:

What do you like about the “From Risk to Resilience: Attachment in the Classroom Workshop?”

“Very clear layout of the lesson, great hand-outs and materials.”

“Taking turns and personalising to child's needs.”

“Personalised to children, the activities, general vibe.”

“The practical interactive activities.”

“Very informative, well organised and well planned with all the different examples.”

“The video clips are good examples to help you understand.”

“Helps learn through play and understand their role during the intervention.”

“I liked how every strategy that was recommended to us to use with the children, we got involved in first.”

“Given practical ideas as well as the theory behind it.”

“Most of the activity was very useful.”

“I have encountered few scenarios myself especially the looked after ones, where there has been "why". It was reassuring that (most) of the things I practise is fair and right.”

“Susan was great, has so much information, I enjoyed the training.”

“Different strategies to calm the children down.”

“Brain box cards are a useful tool to calm the children.”

“Different ways to help the children we work with.”

Question	Average
On a scale of 1-5, overall, how would you rate the “From Risk to Resilience: Attachment in the Classroom Workshop.”	4.3
On a scale of 1-5, prior to the “From Risk to Resilience: Attachment in the Classroom Workshop” how much of the information that you needed did you get?	4.3
On a scale of 1-10, how likely is it that you would recommend the “From Risk to Resilience: Attachment in the Classroom Workshop” to a friend or colleague?	9

The training offer has continued into the 2016/17 academic year and a further eight schools have taken up the offer so far.



Brent Virtual School

Appendix 3

PEP Feedback from Brent Care in Action Group (June 2016)

- All the children and young people present were aware of what a PEP was and its purpose
- Ways in which the PEP was deemed to be helpful included: 'showing you ways to improve', 'helps me to know what I'm doing well in', 'helps me push myself to reach my targets', 'tracking my progress'
- The PEP was deemed not so helpful when it focused more on the negative things and when the same issues were gone over again
- Ways in which the PEP can make a difference included: 'make me change' and 'help me to be more persistent in reaching my targets',
- Missing lessons was identified as a negative consequence (for some) of attending PEP meetings
- Some children and young people wanted PEP meetings to take place after school as they did not want peers to know they were in care, others didn't mind so much. Also more discretion needed if they were called out of class to attend meetings. Key thing was that the SW or DT consults the child or young person beforehand.
- Sometimes children and young people were only told on the day that there was a PEP meeting
- Sensitivity about LAC status was raised. Children and young people felt very aware when their carers attended parents evening or meetings in school especially if they were of different ethnicity
- Not all children and young people felt they needed to attend their PEPs if their views were represented at the meeting
- One young person said she didn't feel the target setting was helpful as she didn't feel she had a say as the school set it for her
- There was a mixed response in terms of the helpfulness and quality of the home tuition arranged by the Virtual School through Fleet Tutors
- There was generally a negative response about the quality and usefulness of careers guidance interviews. Young people felt sometimes there was no follow through or the advice given was not helpful.

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Appendix 4

BVS Service Plan 2016/17

1.1 Brent 2020 – Our Service Area Action Plan

Building on the summary table in Section 5 set out your service area's action plan where applicable against the Brent 2020 key priorities

Brent 2020 – Five Key Priorities	Service Area Objective	Owner – Name & Job Title	Key Activity	Progress Milestones	Outcomes
Employment and skills	Improve attainment for LAC	Janet Lewis Ht BVS	LAC without school places admitted within 4 weeks to good or better schools	All LAC in school or appropriate provision within 4 weeks	95% LAC in good or better schools
	Improve quality of PEPs		All LAC RAG rated for prompt intervention	End of KS2 and GCSE results (Aug 16) reflect appropriate progress made	100% LAC making expected progress 80% making better than expected progress
			Re-design and re-launch of ePEP	New version in use from Sep 16	100% PEP completion rate per term Improved quality of PEPs reflected in feedback
			PEP training for SWs, and DTs		

Brent 2020 – Five Key Priorities	Service Area Objective	Owner – Name & Job Title	Key Activity	Progress Milestones	Outcomes
	Post -16 LAC support to reduce NEET		PEP awareness training for FCs	Training programme embedded from April 17	Reduction in NEET % at 17 and 19
			Create shared post-16 adviser post with Care Leaving	In post by Sep 17	
Regeneration – physical, social and environmental					
Business and housing related growth					
Demand Management		Janet Lewis	Secure more EAL/ESOL provision for KS4 LAC	Online ESOL curriculum to be introduced from Apr 17	

Brent 2020 – Five Key Priorities	Service Area Objective	Owner – Name & Job Title	Key Activity	Progress Milestones	Outcomes
	Additional provision to support UASCs	Ht BVS			
Raising income through our assets					

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