



Corporate Parenting Committee

Wednesday 25 July 2018 at 5.00 pm

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

Membership:

Members

Councillors:

M Patel (Chair)
Conneely
Gbajumo
Kansagra
Thakkar

Substitute Members

Councillors:

Ezeajughi, W Mitchell Murray,
Patterson and Sangani

Councillors:

Colwill and Maurice

For further information contact: Joe Kwateng, Governance Officer
020 8937 1354, joe.kwateng@brent.gov.uk

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The press and public are welcome to attend this meeting

Notes for Members - Declarations of Interest:

If a Member is aware they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest* in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent and must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item.

If a Member is aware they have a Personal Interest** in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent.

If the Personal Interest is also a Prejudicial Interest (i.e. it affects a financial position or relates to determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission, or registration) then (unless an exception at 14(2) of the Members Code applies), after disclosing the interest to the meeting the Member must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item, except that they may first make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to the matter, provided that the public are allowed to attend the meeting for those purposes.

*Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:

- (a) **Employment, etc.** - Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit gain.
- (b) **Sponsorship** - Any payment or other financial benefit in respect expenses in carrying out duties as a member, or of election; including from a trade union.
- (c) **Contracts** - Any current contract for goods, services or works, between the Councillors or their partner (or a body in which one has a beneficial interest) and the council.
- (d) **Land** - Any beneficial interest in land which is within the council's area.
- (e) **Licences** - Any licence to occupy land in the council's area for a month or longer.
- (f) **Corporate tenancies** - Any tenancy between the council and a body in which the Councillor or their partner have a beneficial interest.
- (g) **Securities** - Any beneficial interest in securities of a body which has a place of business or land in the council's area, if the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or of any one class of its issued share capital.

**Personal Interests:

The business relates to or affects:

(a) Anybody of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management, and:

- To which you are appointed by the council;
- which exercises functions of a public nature;
- which is directed is to charitable purposes;
- whose principal purposes include the influence of public opinion or policy (including a political party of trade union).

(b) The interests a of a person from whom you have received gifts or hospitality of at least £50 as a member in the municipal year;

or

A decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting, to a greater extent than the majority of other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the electoral ward affected by the decision, the well-being or financial position of:

- You yourself;
- a member of your family or your friend or any person with whom you have a close association or any person or body who employs or has appointed any of these or in whom they have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000, or any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are a director
- any body of a type described in (a) above.

Agenda

Introductions, if appropriate.

Item	Page
1 Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members	
2 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.	
3 Deputations (if any)	
To hear any deputations received from members of the public in accordance with Standing Order 67.	
4 Minutes of the previous meeting	1 - 6
To approve the minutes of the previous meeting as a correct record.	
5 Matters arising (if any)	
To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.	
6 Corporate Parenting Committee Induction: Role and Responsibilities	
Members will receive a presentation on the role and responsibilities of the Corporate Parenting Committee.	
7 Update from Care In Action Members	
This is an opportunity for members of Care In Action (CIA) to feedback on recent activity.	
8 Annual Corporate Parenting Report 2017/18	<u>Report to follow</u>
The committee is asked to consider the Annual Corporate Parenting Report 2017/18.	

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).

10 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 60.

Date of the next meeting: Tuesday 30 October 2018



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.



MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE Thursday 26 April 2018 at 5.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor M Patel (Chair) and Councillors Conneely, Hossain and Thomas

Also Present: Councillor McLennan

1. **Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members**

Nigel Chapman (Operational Director, Integration and Improved Outcomes) advised that he was representing Gail Tolley (Strategic Director Children and Young People), who was on annual leave and had submitted apologies for the meeting.

2. **Declarations of interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 February 2018 be approved as an accurate record.

4. **Matters arising (if any)**

Nigel Chapman (Operational Director, Integration and Improved Outcomes) provided the following updates:

- Minute item 6, Resolution i)
A foster carer would be invited to attend the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Committee.
- Minute item 6, Resolution ii)
The summary of the National Fostering Stocktake report had been included in the report for agenda item 8, the 'Brent Fostering Service Quarterly Monitoring Report: 1 January to 31 March 2018'.
- Minute item 9, Resolution iii)
The Assistant Director, Brent CCG would be invited to attend the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Committee.

5. **Update from Care In Action Representatives**

Representatives from Care in Action provided a detailed update on the activities of the group since the previous meeting of the committee. Members heard that as part of a procurement process undertaken through the West London Alliance Framework Agreement, ND and HM had taken part in the evaluation of semi-independent placement/accommodation providers. ND further advised that two LAC

nurses had attended the recent CIA meeting during which the group discussed the proposal to develop a health passport. The CIA had proposed that the health passport could be encompassed within the Pathway Plan app currently being developed. ND also highlighted the work she had undertaken via the 'Elements' project, which included a range of confidence boosting activities culminating in an art exhibition. This had been held at the Wembley Stadium Learning Zone and had been very successful.

CM outlined the results of a recent meeting which had focussed on how safe LAC and Care Leavers felt in a range of different settings including at home, college and on social media. The feedback had largely been that young people felt safe at home and at school/college and had good days and bad days on social media, though generally felt protected by the control they had over this medium. The young people had expressed that being around people who had taken drugs or were drunk would make them feel unsafe. The importance of having people to talk to such as teachers and friends was highlighted. Responding to a question from the Deputy Leader of the Council, CM confirmed that the new lighting in the borough was brighter but had not yet been installed everywhere. ND added that there should be a greater concentration of lighting in certain areas such as parks.

JBK spoke on the feedback gathered from LAC and Care Leavers about what they felt made a good social worker, an activity which had been undertaken for World Social Worker Day. The responses had included listening to young people and acting on what was being shared. The committee also heard that the Voice in a Million concert had taken place on 14 and 15 March 2018 to raise awareness of Children in Care and had been an inspirational event.

HM explained that she had recently been elected as Deputy Chair for the relatively new London wide Children in Care Council. The London Children in Care Council had three campaigns focusing on education, money management and accommodation. HM advised that the meeting of the London Children in Care Council had been useful but there was room for improvement and it was intended to invite Directors of Children's Services from the London Boroughs to future meetings to help kick start initiative. HM further noted that officers from the Digital Team had been working with CIA members to develop proposals for the Pathway Plan app.

PE explained that CIA had recently reviewed the Local Offer and it had been agreed that the content should be streamlined into a small booklet version. The design would mimic the Care Leavers' Charter. Members of Care Leavers in Action had discussed the Children and Social Work Act 2017 which was updated on 1 April 2018 and sought confirmation of the implications of the update. Onder Beter explained that LAC/Care Leavers after the age of 21 could continue to be supported up to the age of 24 if they chose. PE concluded his update by announcing that he had stood down as Chair of Care in Action due to commitments in his personal life. PE advised that it had been a rewarding role and thanked the committee for their interest and support.

In the subsequent discussion, the committee reflected on the issue of loneliness for young people. Sarah Miller (Head of Inclusion and Headteacher, Brent Virtual School) highlighted the work being undertaken around support for LAC and Care Leavers attending university, advising that the possibility of establishing a phone support line staffed by a trained counsellor was being explored. The counsellor, in

addition to providing direct support, would have the option of engaging with the university's pastoral support services and the young person's personal advisor. The closure of youth facilities was discussed as a contributing factor, as members of the CIA expressed that these were considered safe spaces in which young people could interact and engage with each other in positive ways. Councillor M Patel (Lead Member for Children and Young People) highlighted that Brent Council's successful bid to be the Borough of Culture 2020 would provide opportunities to host activities for young people, who had been at the heart of the bid. Nigel Chapman added that discussions were being held about youth provision in Brent and work was underway to update the youth services webpage and to develop a youth service app for council and other community services. It was agreed that the youth services app should be trialled by CIA.

The Chair thanked the members of CIA for the comprehensive updates provided and congratulated HM on her election as Vice Chair of the London Children in Care Council. The committee thanked PE for his hard work and dedication to the role of Chair of CIA and wished him well in his future endeavours.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the update provided by Care in Action representatives be noted;
- ii) That the Strategic Director, Children and Young People ensure that members of Care in Action have the opportunity to trial the Youth Services app;
- iii) That the committee's thanks be extended to PE for his dedication shown to the role of Chair of Care in Action.

6. **Annual Report - Brent Virtual School**

Sarah Miller (Head of Inclusion and Headteacher, Brent Virtual School) introduced the Annual Report of the Brent Virtual School (BVS) 2016/17. Members attention was drawn to summary statement of impact for 2016/17 set out at paragraph 2 of the report. There were 219 school age Brent LAC and the committee heard that: 95 per cent of these children were in good or outstanding schools; there had been no permanent exclusions for this cohort; and there had been fewer temporary exclusions. Academic attainment had been strong, with Year 2 and Year 6 attainment higher than national averages for LAC. Sarah Miller emphasised that the Virtual School also offered an exciting enrichment programme, illustrated at Appendices 1 and 2 to the report. This programme included theatre trips, outdoor activities, celebration events and trips to universities.

Sarah Miller highlighted that a significant change in the support offered by the Virtual School was the extension of support to KS5 (post 16). This support had been increased in 2016/17, with the establishment of a Personal Advisor for Years 12 and 13 in the BVS. A key remit of the BVS was training, which was offered to social workers, foster carers and designated teachers in schools, among others. Sarah Miller emphasised that it was really important to help schools understand the context of LAC and similarly, to ensure that foster carers have high aspirations for the children they cared for. In concluding the introduction, Sarah Miller noted that

there was a key challenge going forward with regard to KS4 attainment, with a high percentage of children coming into care quite late.

During Members' discussion, queries were raised regarding apprenticeships and work experience opportunities for Year 12 and 13 LAC and the tutoring support provided to these young people. Further information was subsequently sought on: the training offered to schools; the relationship between Brent's schools and the Virtual School; the progress made regarding exclusions; and, the new Enrichment Co-ordinator post.

Responding to the queries raised, Sarah Miller advised that the BVS identified the 'destinations' of all Year 11 pupils for the start of the next academic year. These destinations could include apprenticeships or sixth form and a Year 11 Life Coach was available to help those pupils choose their next steps. A tutoring programme was provided by the BVS and Brent had recently run a pilot programme in conjunction with the Institute of Education, London University, which provided one to one tutoring in core subjects for Year 11 LAC. The pilot had revealed that tutoring was particularly effective when delivered by a teacher at the school attended by the pupil. Other support provided included mentoring, mental health support and supporting exam retakes or delaying exams to the next academic year where appropriate.

Sarah Miller emphasised that the BVS worked to build good relationships with schools. It was known that LAC would do less well when not in a mainstream setting so it was very important that everything was done to prevent exclusions and to help schools understand the needs of LAC. Training was open to all Brent schools and this was very positively received. Much of the day to day work of being the Head Teacher of the Virtual School was to challenge potential exclusions and persuade schools to consider alternative measures such as changes to timetables and pastoral support. Historically the key contact in a school was the Designated Teacher for LAC, often the Head or Deputy Head Teacher. With regard to the Enrichment Officer post, Sarah Miller advised that this was new to the BVS and was funded by the John Lyons Charity, following discussions around a lack of capacity for event organisation within the BVS.

The Chair thanked the officers for their contribution to the meeting.

RESOLVED: that the Brent Virtual School Annual Report for 2016/17 be noted.

7. Brent Adoption Service Report - 1 October 2017 - 31 March 2018

Onder Beter (Head of Service for Looked After Children and Permanency) introduced the Brent Adoption Service Report, 1 October 2017 to 31 March 2018. Members' attention was drawn to the performance data set out at section 4 of the report. The committee heard that performance against the two most significant indicators had continued to improve, these being A1 - the time taken from a child entering care to being placed for adoption, and A2 – the time from receiving court authority to place a child for adoption and a match being approved. There had been a 26 per cent improvement for A1 since the previous reporting period and at 378.7 days, this was significantly lower than the national average of 558 days. Similarly, there had been a 12 per cent improvement for A2 since the previous reporting

period, and this measure too fell significantly below the national average. Members were informed that there had been nine children adopted in 2017/18 and as at 31 March 2018, there were 12 children with a plan of adoption who had not yet been adopted, the reasons for which were set out in the report. Outlining adopter recruitment activity, Onder Beter highlighted that at 31 March 2018 there were five adoptive households waiting for an adoptive placement.

Members were subsequently directed to section 6 of the report which set out service improvements. Onder Beter noted that Brent's first Child Appreciation Day was being organised. These days aimed to bring all professionals working with the child to meet prospective adopters, share information and show appreciation of the child's journey. A festive party for kinship carers had also been held for the first time and had been very well received. Quarterly support groups had been established for Special Guardianship Carers and monthly drop in sessions were now held for Birth Parents. In concluding his introduction, Onder Beter reminded members of the impending regionalisation of Adoption and advised that a report was scheduled to be submitted to the Cabinet in September 2018 detailing proposals for how this would proceed.

In the following discussion, the committee questioned whether support for the letter box exchange had commenced. Members queried whether the level of adoptive households was in keeping with the numbers of children being placed for adoption and sought particular comment on the efforts to recruit Somali adopters. Members also sought clarification on the financial implication of a Brent adopter being matched with a child from another local authority area and requested details of matching considerations for LGBT adopters.

Responding to the queries raised, Onder Beter advised that he would seek confirmation on the progress of the letterbox exchange. With regard to the number of adoptive households, recruitment activity would be accelerated in the coming months to reflect the national increase in the number of children waiting to be adopted. The activities aimed at recruiting Somali adopters had generated a number of enquiries, one of which had progressed to an assessment but work would be ongoing. Nigel Chapman explained that a standardised transfer fee was charged for an adopter being matched with a child from another local authority area. With regard to the process of matching a child with prospective adopters, each case was judged separately and the prospective adopters' wishes and strengths would be taken into consideration.

The Chair thanked the officers for their contribution to the meeting.

RESOLVED: that the Brent Adoption Service Report, 1 October 2017 to 31 March 2018 be noted.

8. Brent Fostering Service Quarterly Monitoring Report: 1 January to 31 March 2018

Onder Beter (Head of Service for Looked After Children and Permanency) introduced the Brent Fostering Service Quarterly Monitoring Report: 1 January to 31 March 2018. Members were advised that there had been a slight improvement in the number of children placed with in house Brent foster carers (29.4 per cent against the corporate performance target of 35 per cent). There had also been a

slight reduction in the numbers of children placed with Independent Fostering Agency carers (27.3 percent, against a target of 25 per cent). Nigel Chapman (Operational Director, Integration and Improved Outcomes) highlighted that the numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) had started to decline, in part due to the national transfer scheme.

With reference to a high profile case which had recently appeared in the media in relation to another London authority, a member queried whether Brent council had ever experienced any complaints regarding LAC being pressured by foster carers to follow particular religions or ways of life. Further queries were raised regarding the support, financial and practical, provided to UASC to go through the process of obtaining British Citizenship.

Nigel Chapman assured the committee that the training and approval process for foster carers emphasised the likelihood of having to care for a child of a different faith or culture and the need to be able to positively promote a child's heritage. Religion and cultural background were considerations of the matching process and would be aligned when possible. Onder Beter reiterated that the training provided to foster carers made it clear that they needed to be respectful of the religious beliefs of the children and indeed their birth parents.

Addressing the committee's queries on the support provided to UASC in relation to the citizenship process, Onder Beter advised that the statuses of all LAC were being reviewed to identify those without British citizenship and to develop action plans. For those young people going through the process, in addition to providing general support, the council would sign post young people to specialist forms of support such as the Refugee Law Centre.

The Chair thanked the officers for their contribution to the meeting.


RESOLVED: that the Brent Fostering Service Quarterly Monitoring Report: 1 January to 31 March 2018 be noted.

9. Any other urgent business

The Chair noted that for two members of the committee, Councillors Hossain and Thomas, the current meeting would be their last as Brent Councillors, as they were not seeking re-election on 3 May 2018. The Chair expressed her thanks to Councillors Hossain and Thomas for their significant and valued contribution to the Corporate Parenting Committee.

The meeting closed at 7.08 pm

M PATEL
Chair

 Brent	Corporate Parenting Committee 25 th July 2018
	Report from the Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services
Brent Fostering Service Quarterly Monitoring Report: 1st April to 30th June 2018 (Quarter 1)	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	N/A
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
No. of Appendices:	N/A
Background Papers:	N/A
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Nigel Chapman Operational Director, Integration and Improved Outcomes Onder Beter, Head of Service for Looked After Children and Permanency

1.0 Purpose of the Report

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).

2.0 Recommendation(s)

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 Detail

3.1 Service Values

The in-house fostering function is positioned within the LAC and Permanency Service of the Children and Young People's Directorate. The vision for the service as set out in the 2018-19 service plan is that:

- Caring and loving families will be found for children without delay and within their extended family network where appropriate.
- Diversity needs including disability, race, religion, language and culture will always be considered when placing a child.
- Placements will be well matched to children's individual needs. The best foster carers will be recruited for our children.
- We will increase good quality local placements for children by securing more in-house fostering placements. We will recruit, assess and approve new foster carers with the aim to have 5 net fostering households in the end of financial year taking into account termination of approvals and resignations.
- There will be a decrease in the number of resignations/de-registrations of foster carers as a result of appropriate support and well-established, positive relationships with foster carers.

3.2 Staffing Arrangements

The new Service Manager with management oversight of the Fostering Support Teams, Kinship and Adoption and Post-Permanency Teams, has been in post since 16th April 2018.

The benefits of the recent service realignment will allow continuity of relationships between foster carers and their supervising social workers, more independent scrutiny and challenge through the fostering reviewing process and a development programme for foster carers better aligned with other staff training arrangements. Through these changes, the service aims to recruit and retain more foster carers that will have a positive impact on outcomes for children and young people. Wider benefits to children and young people will be the creation of stronger relationships with social work teams through smaller team structures with a greater focus on staff learning and development.

3.3 Placement Activity

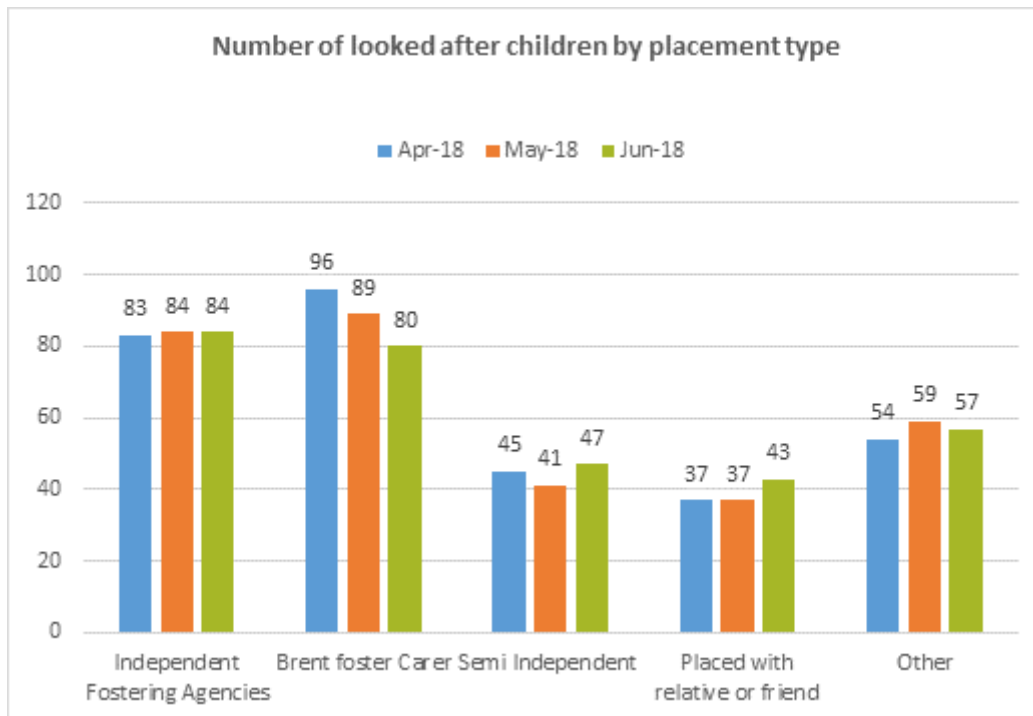
The corporate performance targets for 2017/18 were as below:

- Percentage of looked after children placed with in-house (Brent) foster carers – annual target 35% - the actual percentage was 29.4%
- Percentage of looked after children placed with a relative or family friend – annual target 15% - the actual percentage was 11.8%

- Percentage of looked after children placed in Independent fostering agencies – annual target 25% - the actual percentage was 27.1%
- Percentage of looked after children overall within foster placements – annual target 75% - the actual percentage was 68.7%

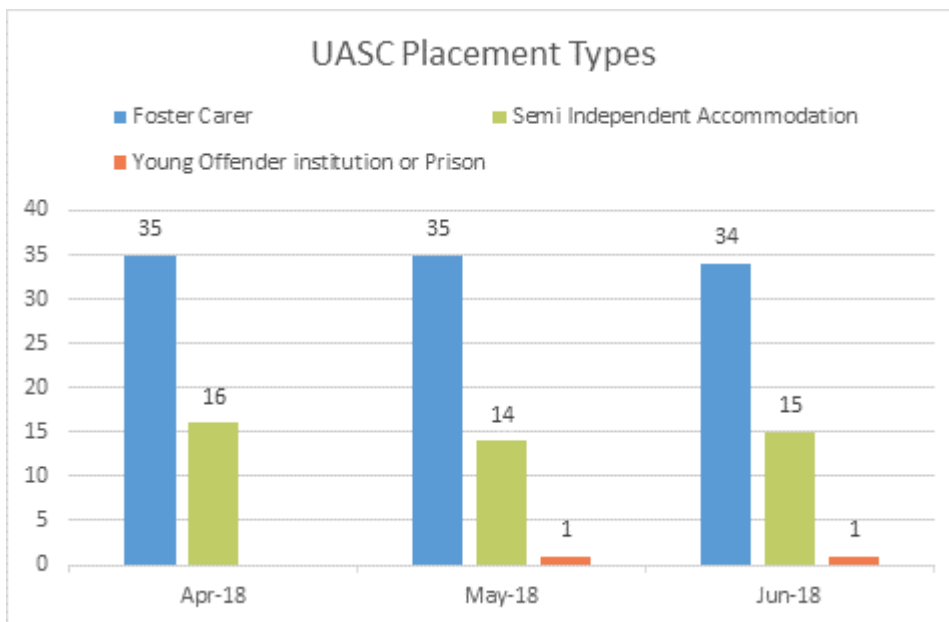
As of the 30th June 2018:

- 80 children were placed with Brent foster carers, compared to 92 children as at 31st March 2018. This represents 25.6% of total looked after children.
- 85 children were placed with IFAs, same as previous quarter (Jan – Mar 2018). This is 27.2% of the total looked after children population.



- There are 47 looked after children (aged 16-17) in semi Independent accommodation (residential accommodation not subject to Children’s Home Regulations) as at 30/06/2018, which represents 15.1% of all looked after children.
- 43 children were placed with a relative or family friend on a fostering basis as of 30th June 2018. This is 13.7% of total looked after children.
- 208 looked after children were living within a fostering setting on 30th June 2018. This is 67% of the total of all looked after children. This is a similar position to the end of Q4 where the percentage was 68.7% of LAC.

As of 30th June 2018 Brent looked after 50 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC), 2 fewer than the previous quarter. 15 UASC are placed in semi-independent accommodation, 34 are placed in foster care and 1 is placed in a Young Offender Institution.



3.4 Recruitment and Assessment

The fostering service carried out 8 recruitment focused activities within the reporting period with the aim of raising awareness of fostering and encouraging potential foster carers to contact Brent Fostering Service. During this quarter, the main presence was during Foster Care Fortnight (14 – 27 May 2018) when a double decker bus was hired to travel across the borough, visiting local supermarkets and sports facilities. A drone video was used to capture and publicise the recruitment activity. Additionally, there were 3 information evenings held monthly at the Civic Centre, providing an opportunity to members of the public to find out more about the fostering role and to enable Brent to determine whether an individual or family has the potential to become a carer for Brent.

The recruitment activity during the reporting period produced 34 contacts (telephone calls or emails requesting further information) and 25 enquiries (expressing serious interest in becoming foster carers) in relation to fostering. Of these, 10 possible referrals were identified and of those applicants, 7 people wished to continue the process and be visited by social workers. As of the end of Q1, there were 2 formal assessments in process – one is in stage 1 and the other in stage 2.

The target for the service in 2018-19 is to recruit 5 net fostering placements within the reporting year once carer resignations and terminations of approval are taken into account. We have achieved a total of 2 new fostering household approvals with net growth of 1 fostering household in Q1. This is due to lower than anticipated conversion rates from referrals to 'initial visits' as 7 out of 10 referrals resulted in initial visits and only 1 of the initial visits conducted in Q1 has progressed to a full assessment. Reasons for not progressing beyond the initial visit stage included: issues around the applicants' financial stability; immigration status; applicants' changing their mind; and applicants' decision to remain with their current agency.

Additionally, a number of assessments have not progressed during the stage 1 and stage 2 assessment process. In Q1, 3 out of a total of 9 assessments ended in Stage

1, 1 assessment ended in Stage 2, and 1 assessment has been deferred for 6 months. The reasons for ending these assessments are varied and include:

- Applicants' personal circumstances changed due to bereavement or ill health;
- One case where it became evident that the applicant's level of proficiency in English was not sufficient;
- Applicants' lack of transparency, or lack of communication with their partner and with the agency.

More recruitment activities have been scheduled for the next 3 months with a specific target in areas that may provide more potential carers with a spare room, that include: a leaflet drop in Cricklewood, Brent Cross, Kensal Rise and Kensal Green; two days in Moberly Sports Centre (based in Kensal Rise); Chalkhill Festival; and another Facebook campaign.

Additionally, one staff member within the fostering team has been assigned a specific task of contacting those people who had expressed an interest in fostering with Brent in the past but had asked for more time to consider their decision further, in case they are now ready to proceed to initial visit.

3.5 Fostering Panel

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 service was pleased to retain the same councillor who has sat on the panel previously after the local elections. The panel chair and vice chair are independent people with professional and personal experience of fostering and panel members include those with personal experience of the fostering system. Current demand requires three panels to be held every two months.

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 or 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 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.

The panel has a quality assurance role and monitors the standard of reports presented to it and relays any issues or concerns to the relevant manager. The panel makes recommendations to the service and these recommendations are referred to the Agency Decision Maker who is the Head of Service, LAC and Permanency.

During the period 1st April – 30th June 2018, 3 panels were held with 11 specific cases discussed during these sessions. Within these cases:

- 2 new fostering households were recommended for approval;
- 6 fostering households were found suitable to continue as foster carers following review;
- 1 fostering household's approval was terminated due to a failure on the part of the foster carer to meet 6 out of the 7 fostering standards (The foster carer had resigned in the last period of reporting);
- 2 fostering households resigned from their fostering role – one to join another local authority and one relocated away from Brent (both fostering households had resigned in the previous reporting period);

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

3.6 Training and Support to Foster Carers

The Fostering Development Co-ordinator has been in post since January 2018 and released the new 2018-19 training calendar for foster carers last month. The feedback thus far has included positives in relation to the varied programme of courses offered, the varied locations in which the sessions are run (spread throughout the borough), the new co-ordinator herself and the fact that fewer courses are cancelled at short notice.

During this reporting period, 15 individual training courses were offered. These courses were as below:

- Training Support and Development Standards (TSDS) Coaching session (these are the 7 standards by which every approved foster carer is measured and the portfolio to be completed within 1 year of approval at panel; within 18 months for Family and Friends Carers)
- Preventing placement breakdowns
- Record keeping
- Attachment
- Staying Put, Transitions and Independence
- Autistic Spectrum Disorders
- Managing and de-escalating conflict
- Finance for foster carers
- Play with me! Child focused play
- Professional Boundaries
- Role of Brent's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) – to coordinate all allegations and concerns made against a person who works with children
- Dealing with disobedience
- Developing good bedtime routines
- Raising confident children
- Managing aggression

The carers' feedback about training sessions has been very positive. For example, carers found it useful to understand the allegations process and the role of the LADO in the Brent's LADO training session. The carers also felt that the professional boundaries training session was well presented, which made them feel comfortable and at ease to share their thoughts within the group discussions. Carers also noted a refresher course should be provided for future, which has already been agreed. Carers reported the managing and de-escalation training session was very informative and interactive. They were able to discuss conflict and how matters are best resolved using various strategies. The trainer feedback stated that the carers need a better understanding of the TSDS and to take more opportunities to support each other to attend training.

3.7 Monitoring – reviews, allegations, complaints

A total of 15 annual fostering household reviews were held in this period. A total of 7 reviews scheduled for March had to be deferred as a result of staff absence from work.

The 7 reviews which were scheduled for March have been completed. Cover arrangements continue to be provided through Aidhour, who are familiar with the expectations and standards required. Annual reviews due in April have been completed and they are currently working through reviews for May and June. It is hoped that this arrangement will remain in place until the staff member resumes work in August 2018.

During this quarter, there was one new allegation made about a foster carer that is currently being investigated by the LADO. In addition, the previously outstanding allegation (from the previous reporting periods) that was due to be reviewed has been reviewed and recommendations have been made for taking to Fostering Panel.

The Panel Advisor and the ADM hold quarterly meetings to review all feedback received from the Fostering Panel to review learning to disseminate within the service to improve social work practice. In this period, the following actions were taken as a result of fostering panel feedback:

- Performance issues raised by the Fostering Panel were addressed by managers directly with the relevant workers;
- Learning from the panel feedback continues to be used in supervision to support Supervising Social Workers to feel more confident to address early signs of possible Standards of Care and feel able to address them in a timely manner.

Team Managers continue to discuss these cases as case examples in their team meetings to disseminate the learning and also use the cases within group supervision.

3.8 New Developments

Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS)

Brent's Children's Services were inspected by Ofsted in May 2018. The Ofsted Report will be mentioned in the next quarterly report as it was published outside of this reporting period.

Social Pedagogy

This approach is being embraced by the fostering service. It provides an additional toolkit for direct work with carers to assist them in developing the way in which they can work with children and young people. The Developmental Lead for Social Pedagogy sits within the fostering teams now and offers consultations and joint home visits with the aim of reducing placement breakdown before issues become too great. Two social workers are being trained as Social Pedagogical Practitioners and receive group supervision in this task by the Developmental Lead. This is expected to provide better service for foster carers and improve placement stability for children.

Out of Hours support for Foster Carers

A proposal has been made to offer a specialist out of hours service for foster carers, delivered by supervising social workers who have existing relationships with carers. This is intended to support recruitment and retention of foster carers. A pilot is planned to commence by the end of July and the committee will be provided with an update in the next quarter.

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