



## Corporate Parenting Committee

**Monday 4 February 2019 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:** Bryony Gibbs, Governance Officer  
020 8937 1355, [bryony.gibbs@brent.gov.uk](mailto:bryony.gibbs@brent.gov.uk)

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**[www.brent.gov.uk/committees](http://www.brent.gov.uk/committees)**

**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 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  |
|--|-------|
| <b>1 Exclusion of the Press and Public</b>   |       |
| <p>The committee is advised that the public may be excluded from meetings whenever it is likely in view of the nature of the proceedings that exempt information would be disclosed. Meetings of the Corporate Parenting Committee are attended by representatives of Care In Action (CIA), the council's Children in Care Council. The committee is therefore recommended to exclude the press and public for the duration of the meeting, as the attendance of CIA representatives necessitates the disclosure of the following category of exempt information, set out in the Local Government Act 1972: - information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.</p> |       |
| <b>2 Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members</b>  |       |
| <b>3 Declarations of interests</b>   |       |
| <p>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.</p>   |       |
| <b>4 Deputations (if any)</b>  |       |
| <p>To hear any deputations received from members of the public in accordance with Standing Order 67.</p>   |       |
| <b>5 Minutes of the previous meeting</b>   | 1 - 8 |
| <p>To approve the minutes of the previous meeting as a correct record.</p>   |       |
| <b>6 Matters arising (if any)</b>  |       |
| <p>To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.</p>   |       |
| <b>7 Update from Care In Action Representatives</b>  |       |
| <p>This is an opportunity for members of Care In Action (CIA) to feedback on recent activity.</p>  |       |

**8 Brent Looked After Children Health Annual Report 2017-2018 by NHS Brent Clinical Commissioning Group and Brent LAC Health Team - London Northwest University NHS Trust (LNUHT)** 9 - 34

This report combines NHS Brent CCG and the Provider Health reports for Looked After Children (LAC). The health provider is London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust (LNUHT). The report outlines the delivery of health services to LAC by the London Borough of Brent, in line with National Statutory Guidance, and reviews performance indicators, clinical work undertaken by the LAC health team, service improvements and plans for further development.

**9 Feedback from Looked After Children: Outcome of Bright Spots Questionnaire 2018** Report to follow

This report presents feedback from Looked After Children provided via the Bright Spots Questionnaire 2018.

**10 Brent Fostering Service Quarterly Monitoring Report: Quarter 3: 1 October to 31 December 2018** 35 - 44

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).

**11 Verbal update on 'Regionalisation of Adoption'**

Members will be provided with a verbal update on the progress made with regard to the Regionalisation of Adoption.

**12 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: Wednesday 24 April 2019**



- 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** **Tuesday 30 October 2018 at 5.00 pm**

PRESENT: Councillor M Patel (Chair), Councillor Conneely (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Gbajumo, Kansagra and Thakkar

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

None

2. **Declarations of interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **Deputations (if any)**

None.

4. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 July 2018 be agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

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

There were no matters arising.

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

JBK advised that a Junior Care in Action meeting had been held in October and this had been greatly enjoyed by the children. The children had been able to take part in a range of activities including baking, arts and crafts and board games. JBK advised that he had played basketball and football with the Junior Care in Action members. LM (Vice Chair, CLIA) added that the annual Summer Fun Day held in August had also been successful event, with 33 children and young people attending, alongside foster carers, Brent CYP staff and the Corporate Parenting Committee Chair, Councillor Patel (Lead Member for Children's Safeguarding, Early Help and Social Care).

HS (Chair of Care Leavers in Action (CLIA)) advised that she was part of the London Children in Care Council, and was currently working on a social action project with this group to raise awareness of three key issues: education, accommodation, and money management. Working with a team of colleagues, HS, advised that she was involved in running focus groups across the London boroughs and had recently held sessions in Bexley and Greenwich. HM added that a questionnaire was being devised regarding the Brent Pledge and Care Leavers' Charter. It was intended that this would be sent out to all Brent children and young

people in care and care leavers via social workers, key workers and foster carers. It was anticipated that the survey would be completed by the end of January 2019.

LM informed members that CIA had been considering how to reach more children in care and help them to feel part of the group, even if they were unable to attend meetings. A quarterly newsletter had been proposed, This idea would be explored further and an update would be provided to the committee in due course. JBK stated that he had recently met with young people from the Bromley Children in Care Council (CiCC) to explore how CiCC groups were run, including whether they met with their corporate parents. Bromley CiCC were leading on the project and hoped to survey at least two more CiCCs. The outcome of the surveys would be shared once the project was complete. JBK advised that he had also picked up a few ideas from Bromley CiCC, including how to get help in producing the aforementioned newsletter. JBK explained that he would shortly be joining the Care Leavers in Action group and was keen to support other young people in becoming more involved in the Care in Action group.

## **7. Enrichment activities for older Looked After Children and Care Leavers - Summer 2018**

Onder Beter (Head of LAC and Permanency) introduced the report detailing enrichment activities provided for Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Leavers between June and September 2018. The activities aimed to tackle the challenges of isolation and loneliness experienced by older children in care and care leavers. The enrichment activities supplemented a raft of existing support for care leavers and were intended to help build the young people's confidence and self-esteem.

Onder Beter provided an overview of the enrichment programme which included one-off activities as well as regular structured activities. Members' heard that feedback from the young people taking part in the activities had been very positive. Noting the success of the Care Leavers' Hub which had attracted just under 30 young people to the most recent event, Onder Beter advised that it was hoped that a regular schedule could be put in place for the Hub to support those young people in maintaining their friendships. A WhatsApp group had been set up for the young people to help them keep in touch and it was understood that this was well used. A particularly exciting initiative was the weekly football between care leavers and staff that was now taking place, with a mini tournament planned for 31 October 2018. In concluding his introduction, Onder Beter drew members' attention to a short presentation providing photographs and a video of some of the activities that had been undertaken.

The committee welcomed the provision of the activities described for Brent's Looked After Children and Care Leavers. They subsequently sought further detail from officers regarding the potential to hold the Care Leavers Hub more frequently, noting the value of having such a supportive structure in place. In response, Onder Beter acknowledged that there was a definite appetite amongst the young people for more Hub sessions but explained that the majority of the activities were facilitated by staff volunteering their time. Additional resource was currently being sought to maintain the activities. Gail Tolley (Strategic Director, Children and Young People) noted that the decision regarding resources lay with councillors when determining the council's budget. Comparative data regarding the spend on Care in

Action and Care Leavers evidenced that Brent was a lean service when considered against other boroughs.

Members subsequently sought feedback from the young people in attendance who had taken part in some of the activities. The committee heard that the Tall Ships voyage had been a great experience, with phones banned, dolphins spotted and sailing skills learnt 'on the go' during the week-long trip. The WhatsApp group had also been well received, with care leavers using it to keep in touch and to arrange to meet up.

**8. Brent Fostering Service Quarterly Monitoring Report: Quarter 2: 1 July to 30 September 2018**

Onder Beter (Head of LAC and Permanency) introduced the Brent Fostering Service monitoring report for the period 1 July to 30 September 2018. Members' heard that the number of Brent Looked After Children (LAC) within foster placements was 69 percent, an increase of five percent from the same reporting period of previous year. This was positive as it represented a reduction in the number of young people placed in semi-independent accommodation. Onder Beter further highlighted that the number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) had fallen from 81 in September 2016 to 46 in September 2018. This reduction reflected both a more efficient national way of working with UASC and a number of children turning 18 and leaving the care system. In concluding his introduction, Onder Beter drew the committee's attention to the 'new developments' section of the report which included comment on the report 'Foster Care in England', published in February 2018 and the government's response 'Fostering Better Outcomes' published in July 2018. The implications of the reports for Brent had been considered and the current service plan addressed areas for which continued improvement was required in order to respond consistently to each of the ambitions set by the government.

The Chair thanked Onder Beter for his introduction to the report and welcomed three Brent Foster Carers to the meeting. Members' invited the Foster Carers to share their experiences of fostering for Brent and sought particular feedback on the support and training provided. The committee heard that Brent was a good agency to work with and when issues arose, these were resolved with the help of supervising social workers and team managers. The foster carers expressed that the children they cared for were part of their families, a view shared by their birth children, and though there were challenges to be met, it was rewarding and enjoyable. The foster carers spoke on the importance of involving and consulting their birth children and emphasised that they weren't just foster parents but rather they were all a foster family. They highlighted the significance of the relationships for their birth children and the challenges that this could pose. A suggestion was made that it would be helpful for birth children from fostering households to be able to meet other children and young people in the same position as themselves. In response to this proposal, Nigel Chapman confirmed that the Fostering Network had undertaken work on this matter.

Discussing training, the foster carers stated that the training they received was good and always helpful. It was noted that it was not always easy to attend the training as they tended to be held during the day. Nigel Chapman advised that training could be accessed online and it was felt that there were sufficient training

sessions held outside of the usual times. However, it was acknowledged that these arrangements would not be suitable for everyone. Onder Beter further explained that this kind of feedback was essential as it meant that officers could identify particular households where more targeted training support could be provided via the supervising social workers. He further informed members that exit interviews were held for any foster carers leaving the service and these included a particular question on training, the information from which would be used to inform the Fostering Learning and Development service. In response to a query from the committee, Onder Beter advised that it was not possible to offer child care for all foster carers to attend training as this would be too costly, instead the training offer was designed to be flexible and further support could be provided directly via the supervising social workers. Gail Tolley explained the role of a nominated carer and advised that this would be an appropriate source of childcare.

In concluding the discussion, members expressed their thanks to the Brent Foster Carers for the care they provided to the children placed with them.

RESOLVED:

That Brent Foster Carers be invited to attend a further meeting of the Corporate Parenting Committee in a year's time and that if appropriate, the invitation be extended to birth children living in a Brent Fostering Household.

## **9. Children's Commissioner's 2018 Stability Index for Children in Care**

Nigel Chapman (Operational Director, Integration and Improved Outcomes) introduced the report on the Children's Commissioner's 2018 Stability Index (SI). The SI was launched in 2017 by the Children's Commissioner as an annual measure of the stability of the lives of children in care. The 2018 SI primarily used the data from 2015/16 and 2016/17 and provided an analysis based on several data measures. The 2018 SI found out that whilst many children in care had stable arrangements, too many experience instability in different aspects of their lives. Some children were reported to experience repeat changes of placements, of school or with social workers. The SI has established that some children were more likely to experience instability, such as those with additional behavioural and emotional needs, those new to care and children in pupil referral units.

Nigel Chapman outlined the findings for Brent from the 2018 SI, noting that these related to three key stability indicators: changes of placement; changes of school; and changes of social worker. With regard to the first of these indicators, Brent had 14 per cent of children who had experienced two or more placements, compared to ten percent nationally. Nigel Chapman advised that this largely resulted from a higher proportion of older children in care in the Brent LAC population and explained that older children in care often exhibited more challenging behaviours. It was emphasised however, that the council was working to reduce this percentage. With regard to the number of changes of school places, Brent had eight percent of children who had experienced a mid-year school move in 2016/17 and four percent with at least one school move in both 2015/16 and 2016/17. The national average for this was ten percent and four percent respectively. This reflected the work of Brent's virtual school, foster carers and social workers in supporting children to remain in their school places, and in particular, to avoid exclusion. In addressing, the number of social worker changes for Brent's children, Nigel Chapman



highlighted that this was not as good as the national average and emphasised that this was an issue for many London Boroughs due to the London labour market and the pay differential between agency and permanent social workers. Brent had made significant improvement to the proportion of agency staff over the last few years and additional measures had recently been approved by the council to offer welcome and retention payments for certain hard to recruit to social worker positions. It was anticipated that this would lead to further improvements by the following year.

The Chair thanked Nigel Chapmen for his introduction to the report.

In the subsequent discussion, the committee sought details of the support offered to LAC to prevent them from being groomed by gangs. Questions were raised regarding the recruitment and retention of social workers. Members welcomed the realignment of CYP social work activity which meant children did not have to transfer to a different team and therefore a different social worker when reaching the age of 13. The committee questioned whether placement breakdowns could be avoided with greater resources. Members sought clarity on whether foster carers were recruited with Brent's particular placement needs in mind and a member of Brent's Care Leavers in Action questioned how Brent ensured that applicants entered into fostering for the right reasons. Questions were raised by Brent Care Leavers regarding additional support being developed for care leavers and how this would be communicated to them. A member asked whether tenancy breakdowns had occurred for any Brent Care Leavers and care leavers expressed that earlier support and information about how to cope living independently would be beneficial.

In response to the issues raised in the discussion, Gail Tolley advised that some young people might enter care due to vulnerability to gang recruitment or involvement in gang activity. In such cases, young people would be placed with carers outside of the area. Risk of gang affiliation was also contributor to placement moves for young people in care. Onder Beter added that specific programmes and support were provided to children according to their individual needs.

With regard to the recruitment and retention of social workers, Nigel Chapman explained that the council was doing a lot of work to continue to improve the proportion of permanent social work staff employed by the council. In addition to the welcome and retention payments previously referred to, the council had implemented a different social work structure which provided a closer relationship between management and social work practice. The new structure also provided better support and progression routes for newly qualified social workers.

Nigel Chapman advised that foster carer recruitment followed a thorough process which took at least six months to complete. Foster carers' approval was reviewed annually by the Fostering Panel. The council also undertook robust commissioning in the use of Independent Fostering Agencies which recruited and reviewed their own foster carers. Nigel Chapman expressed that more could always be done with additional resources and noted as an example that housing was often a limiting factor in being able to foster a child and therefore more fostering households could be created by improving housing opportunities. The council had recently created a rapid response team to provide better out of hours support for parents, with the aim of helping to prevent children needing to enter the care system. This new team

however had been created by redirecting an existing resource and was a reprioritisation of the existing support provided by the council.

Onder Beter addressed Members' questions regarding support for care leavers, noting the introduction of 'staying put arrangements', which allowed young people to remain within their fostering placement after leaving care. Members were informed that regular workshops were held for care leavers on tenancy issues and money management. Gail Tolley emphasised that there had been no tenancy breakdowns for Brent's Care Leavers' in recent years. Onder Beter further advised that additional workshops, facilitated by Public Health, on a range of health issues faced by care leavers including physical health, relationships and substance abuse would shortly be available. A new post had been created in the team to support placement stability. The purpose of the role was to identify placements where additional support may be needed for the carer and young person. Onder Beter highlighted that mental health support for care leavers was lacking nationally and whilst this was an issue being looked at by the government and by CCGs the council was not funded to provide additional support. The council's current provision was therefore resourced via the Virtual School and through grant funds. This provision included projects such as the Element project which aimed to build confidence and self-esteem through the arts and crafts. A further post had been created, staffed via the Brent CCG, to direct the relevant mental health support services for those young people placed out of borough. Gail Tolley added that foster carers played an important role in preparing young people for independence after care and the council would need to identify how it could better support foster carers in this role.

Onder Beter confirmed that along with usual channels of communication, such as via social workers and personal advisors, the care leavers Whats App group could be used to inform care leavers of any new support available. Officers welcomed any additional suggestions from care leavers about the best way to let them know of new forms of support.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contribution to the discussion.

10. **Brent Council Children and Young People Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Annual Report 2017-2018**

The Committee considered the Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) for 2017/18, which detailed the contribution of the IRO Service in Brent. Goitom Mebrahtu (Review, Engagement and Participation Manager) drew Members' attention to the summary of key messages for 2017-18 and highlighted the role of the IRO service in supporting improvements made. Members heard that performance in the completion of pathway plans had improved from the previous years; young people felt involved in decision making about their lives; and, 100 per cent of children were spoken with on their own prior to their LAC reviews. Goitom Mebrahtu further noted that social workers and managers were receptive to IRO challenge and there was a good rapport with Children's Guardians. There had been fewer LAC reviews held in this reporting period due to the reduced number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) and there had also been an improvement in the timeliness of LAC reviews from the previous year following the introduction of monthly reporting on this area.

The Chair thanked Goitom Mebrahtu for his introduction to the report and invited questions from the committee. Queries were subsequently raised regarding the completion of transition reports for young people moving to semi-independent provision. Goitom Mebrahtu advised that these should be completed by social workers for each young person in care when they reach seventeen years and three months of age. Nigel Chapman added that the stability of the IRO service enabled many young people in care to have the same IRO throughout, and this was very beneficial. A member of Care Leavers In Action confirmed that it had been great having the same IRO.

**11. Brent Adoption Service Report: 1 April - 30 September 2018**

Onder Beter (Head of LAC and Permanency) introduced the Brent Adoption Service Report for 1 April 2018 to 30 September 2018, highlighting that there had been continued improvement with regard to the timeliness of adoptions. Members' attention was subsequently drawn to the update on the regionalisation of adoption. The committee heard that an information and engagement session had been held for Lead Members across London and senior leaders in October 2018 to share details of progress made in creating the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) between Brent, Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster, Hounslow, Ealing and Hillingdon councils. Currently, a detailed business plan was being developed by a project co-ordinator on behalf of the seven boroughs, with the intention that this would be presented to Brent's Cabinet in January 2019. The new RAA model would be implemented incrementally from April 2019. Gail Tolley reminded the committee that the regionalisation of adoption was a statutory requirement.

The Chair thanked Onder Beter for his introduction to the report.

In the subsequent discussion the committee questioned whether there were any concerns regarding the provision of support for particular families following the cap on financial support available to individual children through the Adoption Support Fund. Nigel Chapman advised that there were no concerns in this area and explained that the council had been very good at getting value out of the available funds. Onder Beter added that work was underway to commission services for post adoption support at a London-wide level which would further ensure best value could be obtained.

**12. Any other urgent business**

None.

The meeting closed at 7.00 pm

COUNCILLOR MILI PATEL  
Chair

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# Brent Looked After Children (LAC) Annual Report 2017-2018

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Jointly undertaken by NHS Brent CCG and Brent LAC  
Health Team - London Northwest University NHS Trust  
(LNWUHT)

Agenda Item 8

# Looked After Children

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- Looked After Children are those children in the care of the Local Authority, resident with foster carer's, in residential homes or with family members
- Care Leavers are those children who have been Looked After and are now being supported to live independently, with an age range of 18 to 25 years

# Executive summary

- This report combines NHS Brent CCG and the Provider Health reports for Looked After Children (LAC). The health provider is London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust (LNWUHT) – Brent
- The report outlines the delivery of health services to LAC by the London Borough of Brent, in line with National Statutory Guidance
- It reviews performance indicators, clinical work undertaken by the LAC health team, service improvements and plans for further development
- Page 11 This report covers the commissioning aspect of the service as well as the provider aspect of delivery, for ease of reading and to demonstrate the joint working partnership across health
- For the purposes of this report - the timescale is from 01 April 2017- 31 March 2018
- The national year is for the previous financial year due to time taken for reporting

# Brent LAC population

| LAC by Age Group | Under 1 | 1 to 4 | 5 to 9 | 10 to 15 | 16 and over | Total |
|------------------|---------|--------|--------|----------|-------------|-------|
| England 2016-17  | 3820    | 9170   | 14100  | 28540    | 17040       | 72670 |
| Brent 2017-18    | 16      | 25     | 31     | 119      | 127         | 318   |
| Brent 2016-17    | 12      | 21     | 40     | 108      | 138         | 319   |
| Brent 2015-16    | 13      | 16     | 54     | 132      | 121         | 335   |

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| Gender               | Male       | Female     |
|----------------------|------------|------------|
| Brent 2017-18        | 199        | 119        |
| <b>Brent 2016-17</b> | <b>206</b> | <b>113</b> |
| Brent 2015-16        | 206        | 130        |

**63% Male and 37% Female**

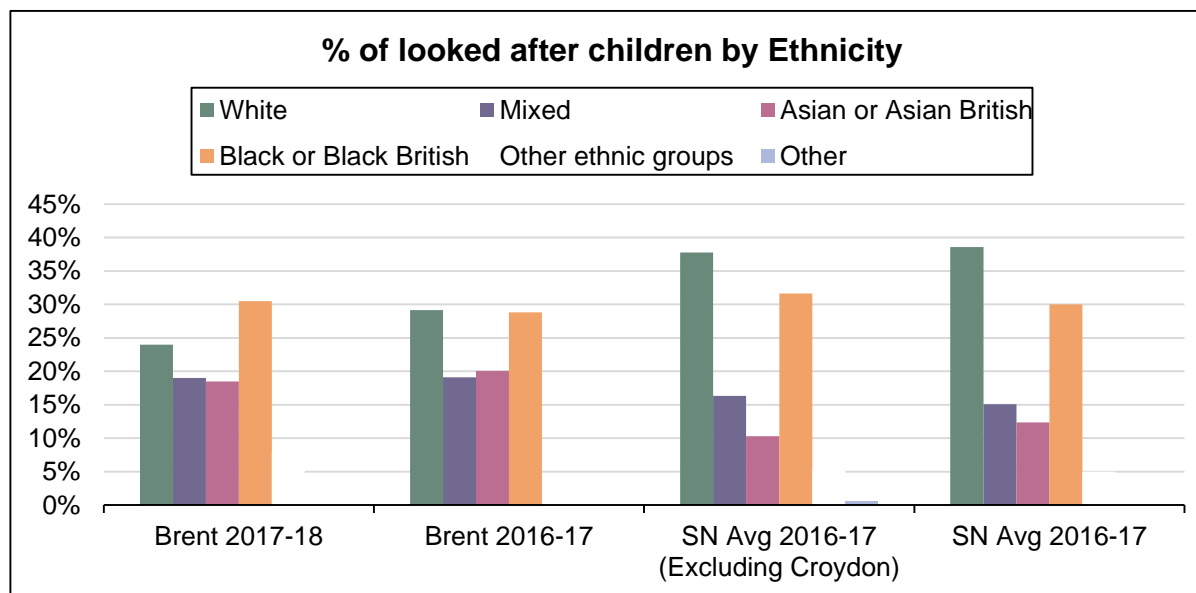


# Brent LAC population 2017/18

- Between April 2017 and March 2018 a total of **318** children were accommodated by Brent LA. There were **319** children looked after at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, which is in effect a 0.32% decrease. This represents **42** LAC per 10,000 head of child population against the rate for England of **62** per 10,000 head of child population.
- Children aged 16 years and over make up the highest proportion of Brent LAC (**39.9%**) compared to **43.3%** at the end of March 2017. Over 77% of the care population in Brent are aged 10 and over, compared with 56% in 2012.
- Of the **318** children looked after at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018, there was an increase in children looked after aged 0-4 years and aged 10-15 years compared to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

# Ethnicity of LAC in Brent as at 31st March 2018

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Brent is ethnically diverse: **66.4%** of the population is Black, Asian or other minority ethnicity (BAME). An increase from 2011, when BAME groups made up **63.7%** of the population

# Placement of Brent's LAC as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018

| LAC by Placement Type  | England<br>2016-17 | Brent<br>2017-18 | Brent<br>2016-17 | Brent<br>2015-16 |
|--|--------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Foster placements  | 53420              | 212              | 204              | 236              |
| Placed for adoption  | 2520               | 4                | 8                | x                |
| Placement with parents   | 4370               | 8                | x                | x                |
| Other placement in the community   | 3090               |                  | x                | 0                |
| Secure units, children's homes and semi-independent living accommodation | 7890               | 81               | 94               | 85               |
| Other residential settings   | 1080               | 9                | x                | x                |
| Residential schools  | 130                | 4                | 6                | x                |
| Other placement  | 160                | 0                | 0                | 0                |

# Distribution of Brent LAC – comparison across the years

| Number of LAC in Brent Placement                                   | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2017-18   |
|--|---------|---------|-----------|
| Placed in Brent  | 188     | 174     | 134 (42%) |
| Placed in London   | 118     | 127     | 124 (39%) |
| Placed out of London   | 76      | 85      | 60 (19%)  |
| Total Brent LAC  | 382     | 386     | 318       |
| Nos. of LAC who left care (ceased) not included in the total above | 118     | 96      | 175       |
| Total LAC notified during this period including nos. ceased        | 500     | 482     | 493       |

# Monitoring timeliness of Health Assessment, Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and Targets for LAC in 2017/18

The statutory requirements include

- All LAC should receive an initial health assessment (IHA) within 20 working days of child becoming looked after this includes booking and completing assessment as well as completion of the Health Action Plan (HAP)  
Children under 5 years receive a review health assessment (RHA) every 6 months
- Children and young people over 5 – 18 years will receive review health assessments (RHA) every 12 months

# Timeliness of Notifications and Statutory Health Assessments (HA)

- The majority of health assessments for LAC are completed by the LAC Health Team within statutory timeframes. Meeting these timeframes relies heavily on the LAC Health Team receiving prompt notification from the LA about children requiring HA. A number of these notifications are delayed resulting in increased pressure on the LAC Health Team. This is closely monitored during the bi monthly Joint Quality and Monitoring Meetings

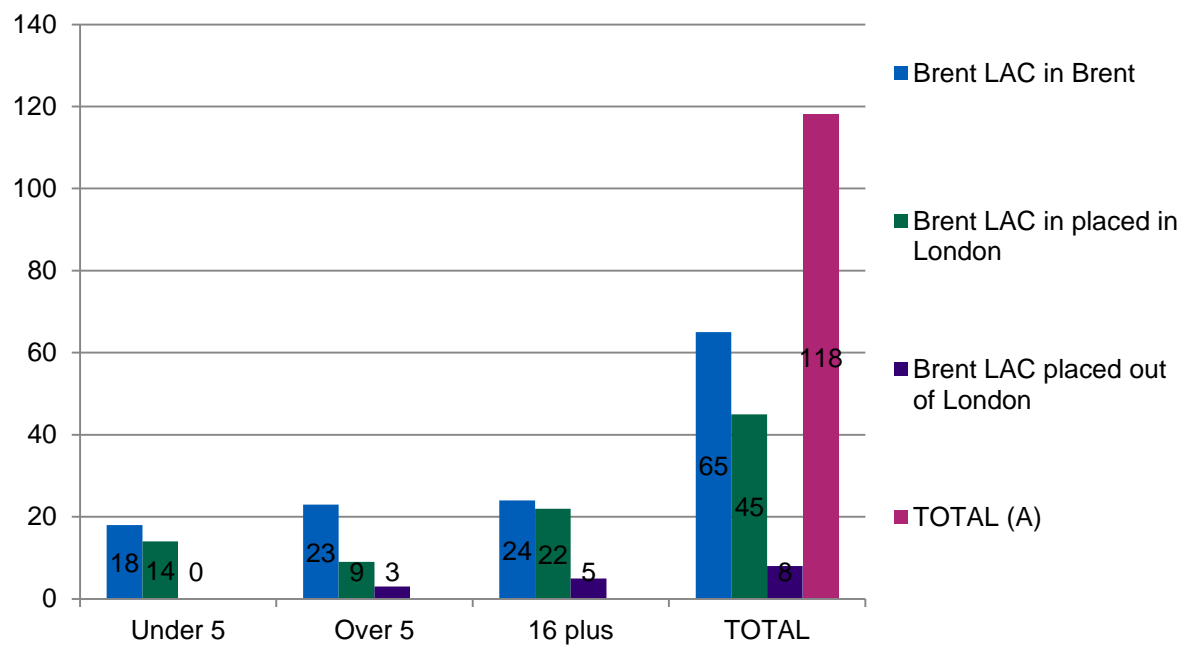
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The purpose of the HA is to identify health needs promptly so that the appropriate care and treatment can be arranged

- Health and social care have joint responsibility and to work together to ensure the timeliness and quality of HA's for LAC. A joint protocol has been developed to clarify processes, arrangements and accountability
- When Children and Young People (CYP) are placed in secure accommodation they undergo a comprehensive health assessment tool (CHAT) undertaken by an independent nurse professional commissioned by NHSE. Often there is no communication in respect of health needs with the placing provider service and there is a delay in sending the health information back to Brent. There is no national standard pathway to ensure that all CYP placed in secure accommodation undergo a health assessment in a timely manner

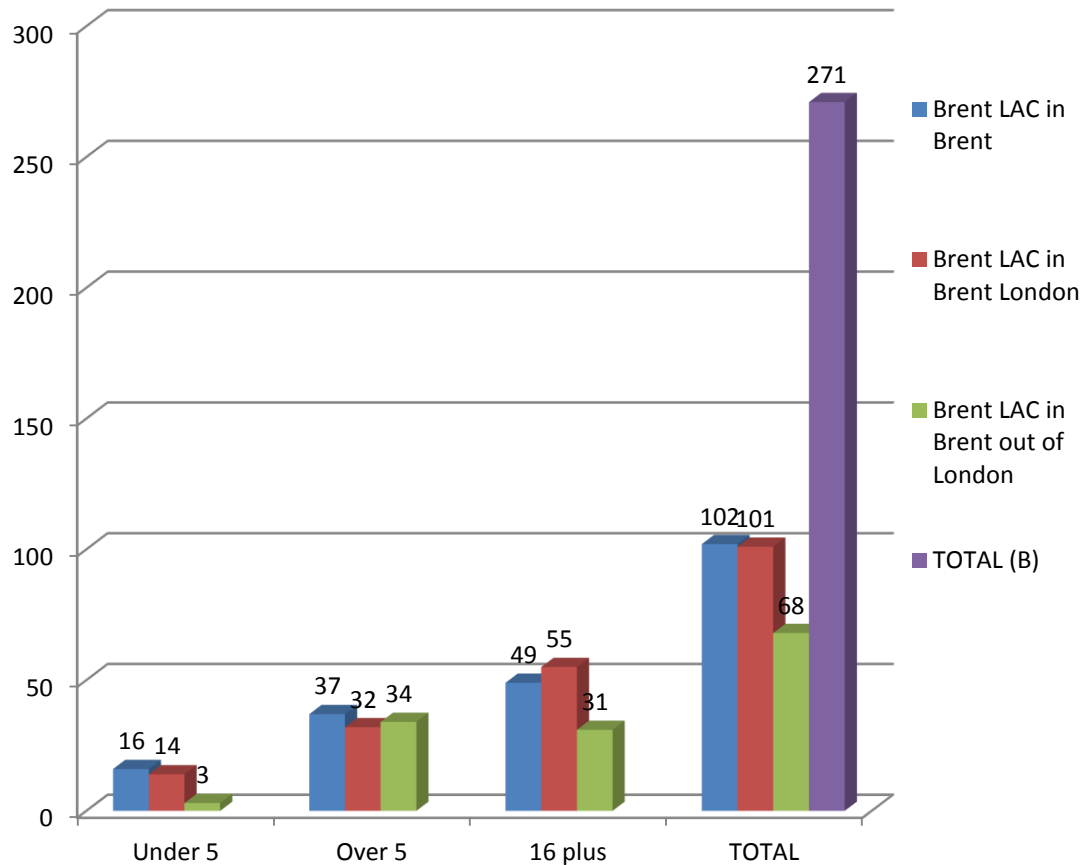
# Initial Health Assessments (IHA)

## LAC IHA carried out for the period of April 2017 to March 2018



# Review Health Assessments (RHA)

## LAC RHA carried out for the period of April 2017 to March 2018





# Quality Assurance of Health Assessments & Health Plans

- An audit of health assessments was conducted which looked at quality. It was completed in partnership with the health provider
- Key areas of the audit were thoroughness of assessments, identification of health needs, consents, voice of the child, quality assurance and record keeping, developmental and education needs, risk factors and substance abuse and identified health needs
- Brent's audit tool has been borrowed across the north west sector and will be used across the 8 NWL CCGs

# Areas for improvement

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- Considering and recording of who is present in the room with the child needs to be recorded with specific consideration that teenagers need to be offered the opportunity to be seen alone
- Improved tracking of immunisations, dental, vision and completion and analysis of SDQ's are required across the partnership
- Transition – which looked at how we can support those that leave care at 18

# Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

- September 2014 the SEND reforms came into effect as part of the Children and Families Act 2014
- Brent had a joint Ofsted and CQC inspection of SEND from 15th - 19th May 2017
- The inspection highlighted the interface between LAC with disabilities and their additional needs and help required including education. Following this inspection work has progressed between the LA and LAC health service to link the educational health care plan (EHCP) processes. The LAC health assessments make specific consideration to the additional needs that a child or young person may have under pertaining to a disability. They will refer to the EHC Plans and also may be asked to provide input into the health aspects of the EHCP. Work is on-going to try and have a better overview of vulnerable youths in prisons and to highlight whether their disabilities and specifically learning needs are being addressed and met

# Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) in Brent

- An unaccompanied asylum-seeking child (UASC) is an individual, who is under 18, who has applied for asylum in his/her own right, is separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who by law or custom has responsibility to do so

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| Year  | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|-------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Total | 30   | 48   | 64   | 74   | 56   |

- 17.6% (56) of Brent LAC population (March 2018)

# A review of the health needs of Brent UASC was done in December 2017 by Dr O. Boleti, Dr M. El-Hassan, Dr S. Wijesinghe, Dr A. Boroda

- The review provided an overview of the demographics of Brent's UASC - who we are seeing and what are their health needs?
- This was done to assist in planning the commissioning and provision of services to meet the complex holistic needs of UASC

# Method

- The Looked After Children health assessment records of all the UASC seen in Brent between March 2016 to October 2017 were reviewed
- Data was recorded in an excel spread sheet and analysed by clinicians within the team. All information was held confidentially
- Statistics were gathered from the home office publications and from the Refugee Council

# Findings

- The majority of UASC were males (94%), aged 16-17 years (43%), from Afghanistan (42%) – national trend
- UASC in Brent were mainly placed at foster care placements (54%), semi- independent placement mainly offered to 16-17 years age group (81%)
- Psychological symptoms were reported in 60%, leading to a referral to mental health or counselling services – in line with national findings
- High BMI and neurological complaints were not evident – the rest is in keeping with national data recorded
- In spite of the frequently reported physical symptoms, the majority were readily treatable non-acute conditions – a national common finding
- An interpreter was booked for all appointments, regardless of whether the child spoke English or not, as per statutory requirements
- Most of the children were interested in education and had ambition to pursue a career (90%)

# Conclusions

- There is a need for a holistic approach. All UASC in Brent need to be registered at the GP and have their immunisations, hearing, vision and dental health needs assessed prior to their health assessment
- There is a need for a clear pathways for screening of TB, blood borne viruses and sexually transmitted diseases
- More effort, time and training is needed by health professionals to facilitate UASC discussing their worries and past experiences of abuse
- Engaging the wider health economy in understanding their roles in meeting the complex health needs of this vulnerable group of children



# Participation and voice of the child

- Prior to a health assessment taking place an informed consent is sought from all children and young people who are able to provide it
- The views and wishes of LAC are captured throughout the health assessment and help to inform the resulting health action plan
- Children and young people are routinely asked to complete a feedback questionnaire after every health assessment. These are audited annually by LNWUHT
- Consultation events with the Children in Care Council & Time to Ask sessions
- Care Leavers are routinely asked to take part in the recruitment and interviews of new health staff
- A Care Leaver is invited to the bi monthly Local Partnership meetings, stays for the duration of the meeting to participate and share views

# Monitoring health outcomes for LAC 2017/18

- **Annual Health Assessments – 93.18 % of LAC had received their statutory health assessment.** Nationally **89%** had their annual health check, compared to **90%** in 2016 and 2015
- **Substance Misuse – 16.82% of Brent's LAC population for more than one year were identified as having a substance misuse problem.** This shows an increase of **6.32%** compared to 2016/17
- **Annual Dental Checks – 88.18% of LAC in Brent had an up to date dental check compared to 87.5% in 2016/17.** This is higher than the national average of **86%**

# Monitoring health outcomes for LAC 2017/18

- **Immunisations – 71.7% of LAC for more than one year were reported to have up to date immunisations** remains stable compared to **71.36%** in 2016/17. This is lower than the national average of **84.6%**
- **Up to date Development Assessment (under 5's) – 100% of children had received their developmental assessment.** This is higher than the national average of **89%**

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**Under 18 Conception's – There were 71 (13.3%) conceptions reported in Brent** compared to **18.8%** England average. There is no specific conception rate data for Brent children in care

- Eligible LAC in Brent showed that **47%** had a completed SDQ. Nationally of the 38,010 children aged 5 to 16 years, who were looked after at 31 March 2017 for at least 12 months, 28,810 (**76%**) had a SDQ score reported. Work is currently in progress to improve this

# Priorities for 2018-2019

- LNWUHT and Designated Nurse for LAC Brent CCG to contribute to the induction and update training for new and existing Social Workers
- Designated Professionals for LAC to contribute actively to the bi monthly Local Partnership Panel
- Brent CCG to work with key partners to review existing substance misuse services for children and young people in Brent
- Designated Professionals LAC to repeat quality of HAP's annually (rising Care Leavers)
- Brent LAC Health Team to continue to monitor data on all LAC who have a completed SDQ's
- During their statutory HA's all Care Leavers should be encouraged to register onto the online system in order to access their own GP records
- LNWUHT to continue to encourage Care Leavers to access up to date health information via the 'NHS go' App
- LNWUHT and Brent CCG to continue to monitor the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children and implement a health check list for this service group
- Implement and monitor the NHS National Tariff Payment System (2018-19) in Brent to reduce the unwarranted variation in the health delivery and commissioning arrangements for LAC

# Documents


- <C:\Users\Brigid2\Desktop\2017-18 LAC Annual Report\Item 6.3 Annual Report for Looked After Children and Care Leavers in Brent 2017-2018.pdf>

View in NHS Brent CCG website embedded within  
05/12/2018 'Governing Body Meeting Papers'

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- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-health-and-wellbeing-of-looked-after-children--2015>
- [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/664995/SFR50\\_2017-Children looked after in England.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/664995/SFR50_2017-Children_looked_after_in_England.pdf)

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|                         | <b>Corporate Parenting Committee</b><br>4 February 2019                                   |
|  | <b>Report from the Strategic Director of<br/>Children and Young People's<br/>Services</b> |
| <b>Brent Fostering Service Quarterly Monitoring Report:<br/>Quarter 3: 1 October to 31 December 2018</b> |   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Wards Affected:</b>   | All  |
| <b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>  | N/A  |
| <b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b><br>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act) | Open   |
| <b>No. of Appendices:</b>  | N/A  |
| <b>Background Papers:</b>  | N/A  |
| <b>Contact Officer(s):</b><br>(Name, Title, Contact Details)   | Nigel Chapman<br>Operational Director, Integration and Improved Outcomes<br><a href="mailto:Nigel.chapman@brent.gov.uk">Nigel.chapman@brent.gov.uk</a><br><br>Onder Beter,<br>Head of Service for Looked After Children and Permanency<br><a href="mailto:onder.beter@brent.gov.uk">onder.beter@brent.gov.uk</a> |

## 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 Department. 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 Fostering Support and Assessment Teams consist of two team managers, 11 social work posts and one marketing and recruitment officer post. The newly recruited Marketing and Recruitment Officer is due to join the team in January 2019.

As previously mentioned, two social work positions are being kept vacant until March 2019 to support budgetary pressures elsewhere within the LAC and Permanency service, as the workload can be safely managed until the end of the current financial year. In addition, a social worker in the team went on maternity leave in December 2018 so the team are covering her cases.

### **3.3 Placement Activity**

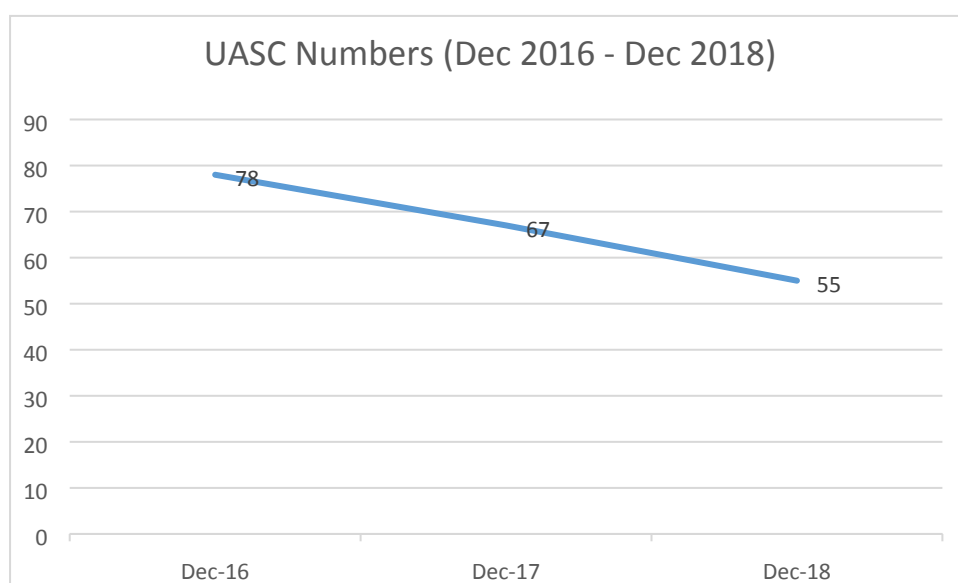
The total number of looked after children as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018 was 302 which is an increase from the end of Q2 of 6 children, however this is a reduction of 21 children from 323 in December 2017.



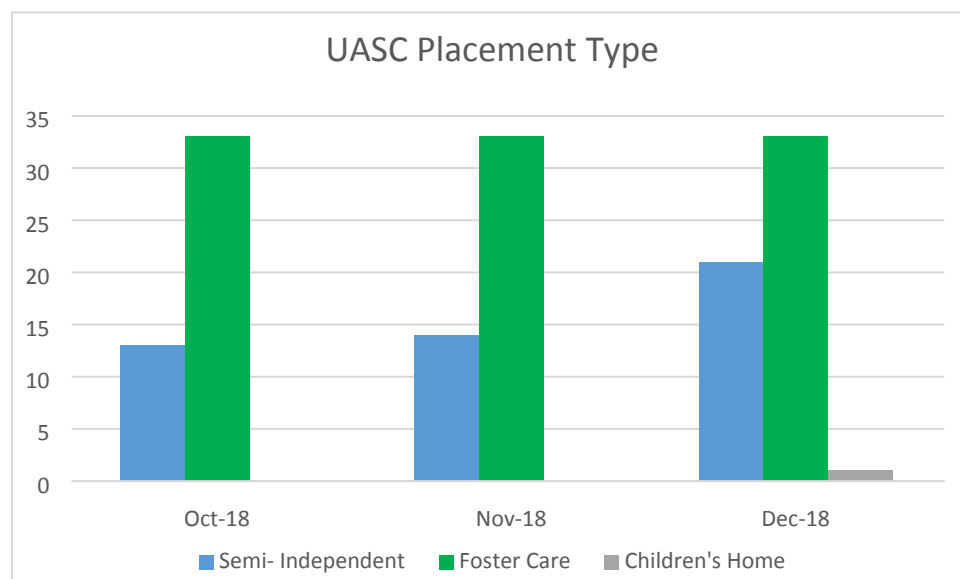
The corporate performance targets for 2018/19 were as below:

- Percentage of looked after children placed with in-house (Brent) foster carers – annual target 35% - the actual percentage as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018 was 24.8% (75 children), a reduction from 26% (77 children) compared in the previous quarter;
- Percentage of looked after children placed with a relative or family friend – annual target 15% - the actual percentage as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018 was 11.6% (35 children) compared to 13.9% (41 children) in quarter 2;
- Percentage of looked after children placed in Independent fostering agencies – annual target 25% - the actual percentage as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018 was 26.5% (80 children) compared to 28.7% (85 children) in quarter 2;
- Percentage of looked after children overall within foster placements – annual target 75% - the actual percentage as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018 was 63.58% (192 children) compared to 69% (204 children) at the end of quarter 2.
- There were 54 looked after children in semi-independent accommodation (residential accommodation not subject to Children's Home Regulations) as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018, which represents 17.8% of all looked after children. This number is an increase from 43 in quarter 2 (25.6% increase).

As of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018 there were 55 UASC, 9 more than at the end of quarter 2, 12 fewer than this time in December 2017.



21 UASC are placed in semi-independent accommodation, compared to 13 in Quarter 2, 1 UASC is in a residential children's home, and 33 UASC are placed in foster care which is the same as quarter 2.



### 3.4 Recruitment and Assessment

Within the reporting period, the fostering service carried out some low level recruitment focused activities with the aim of raising awareness of fostering for Brent and encouraging potential foster carers to make enquiries with Brent Fostering Service. During this quarter, the main focus was on outreach events. The service attended *The Job Show* event in Wembley Stadium as part of the West London Alliance on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2018 generating a good amount of interest, all of which have been followed up. Most of them have not proceeded to assessment as they were not suitable for a variety of reasons. Nevertheless, the opportunity to raise awareness of Brent's Fostering brand was achieved and the team managers remain in contact with the organiser to engage in any future similar events.

With regards to the targeted leaflet drops, undertaken in Kensal Rise and Kensal Green due to the housing stock in that area and possible spare bedrooms for fostering, there was no increase in enquiries, however, as this was undertaken leading up to the Christmas period, this could be one of the reasons and this is something that will be revisited in the forthcoming months.

The Facebook campaign continues, which is more about raising awareness around fostering but also provides some enquiries, which filter through to Brent Fostering's internal email address. All enquiries received via this system are responded to on a daily basis. Through this forum, there has been an increase in approved foster carers

liking Brent's page and enquiries. With the new marketing and recruitment officer joining the team in January, digital presence will be managed by her – she suggested some good ideas as part of her interview so we are looking forward to develop this area.

Even though a plan of action was devised to increase the monitoring of recruitment activity, the numbers for recruitment enquiries have not proven fruitful and the numbers of enquires have not significantly increased. It is hoped that the marketing and recruitment officer will bring fresh ideas for increasing numbers but alongside this, a joined up approach is explored with neighbouring authorities – Ealing in the first instance – to pool resources. This is discussed further at the end of this report under **3.8 New Developments**.

The recruitment activity during the reporting period produced 39 contacts (website, telephone calls or emails requesting further information) and out of the 39, 8 people expressed a serious interest in becoming foster carers. However, through further discussions many had decided that fostering was not for them. Of these 8 possible prospective carers: 2 people had a successful initial visit and progressed to stage 1 of the assessment process; 2 are being visited by social workers in January 2019; 2 withdrew from the process for various reasons; 1 was not contactable; and 1 had a negative initial visit.

Therefore, as of the end of Q3, there are 2 assessments in stage 1 and 2 assessments in stage 2 – both of these are scheduled to come to fostering panel in March 2019.

The assessment, recorded in the report from Q2 as being in stage 1, progressed to stage 2 but the applicants subsequently withdrew as they felt that they did not have the time for fostering.

In addition, the assessment that was due to be presented to the fostering panel in December had to be deferred pending further work. This is due back to panel in February 2019.

During this quarter, we have facilitated 4 information evenings 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. Brent Fostering continues to feature in every edition of The Brent magazine; we have received helpful constructive feedback as to how to make this more eye catching to members of the public, which we will be tasking the marketing and recruitment officer with when she starts.

Performance meetings remain weekly to ensure that the focus remains strongly on increasing numbers. Alongside this, we are looking at improving sufficiency via smarter matching during the placement searches to ensure we utilise as many of vacancies as possible.

### 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 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; and
- 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 1<sup>st</sup> October – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018, 4 panels were held with 16 specific cases discussed during these sessions. Within these cases:

- 2 new 'family and friends' fostering household was recommended for approval, providing placements for 4 children;
- 1 'family and friends' fostering household was found suitable to continue as foster carers following a standards of care investigation;
- 6 fostering households were found suitable to continue as foster carers following review, 1 of whom increased their approval numbers thus providing a possible additional placement;
- 1 fostering household was put on hold for 6 months following a standards of care investigation;
- 2 fostering households' approvals were terminated due to a failure on the part of the foster carers to meet the required fostering standards; and
- 4 fostering households resigned from their fostering role – 2 felt that Brent's financial package was not competitive enough, 1 considered that they had naturally come to the end of their fostering career and one had never fostered since approval for various reasons. With regards to the financial package offered by Brent, whilst the allowance may be lower than some statistical

neighbours, it is still above that recommended by Fostering Network and the additional support offered by way of: more frequent visits from supervising social workers; a varied learning and development programme; reduced membership of local gyms; and the foster carer's summer trip and winter ball add to the support and balance out the package offered.

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

A joint annual training day for fostering panel members and the kinship care and fostering teams' staff is held as per statutory regulation; the next one has been moved to 8<sup>th</sup> February 2019 to accommodate the facilitator, the focus of which will be a combination of the National Fostering Stocktake and the Government's response (as noted in the previous report), radicalisation in relation to the fostering role and criminal exploitation and county lines.

### **3.6 Training and Support to Foster Carers**

#### Training and development

The feedback regarding the courses offered continues to be positive.

During this reporting period, 23 individual training courses were offered ranging from diverse subjects such as 'Equality & diversity' to 'Childhood trauma & attachment' & 'Professional record keeping'.

The carers' feedback has been positive for most sessions. We have had increased attendance for some trainings sessions such as 'Sexuality & Gender' following feedback from annual reviews. Carers thoroughly enjoyed attending and the sessions will run again in the next years training programme.

#### Social Pedagogy

The Social Pedagogue organised a 'Common Third' art intervention during the autumn half term for both foster carers and their children. This was open to both in-house foster carers and carers with independent fostering agencies who care for Brent looked after children aged 10 – 18 years.

The 'common third' is a social pedagogic model devised to create situations where both foster parent and foster child meet on equal terms, that is they share a common potential to learn, using activity and action. The experience of learning together has been found to help the relationship to develop.

The focus of this session was 'commonalities and differences'. Further Common Third Workshops for Foster carers and their foster children for the half-term periods are currently in planning. We are planning to share the positive feedback from both the carer and the child (anonymously) via the fostering newsletter to increase interest for the next intervention.

Supervising Social Workers continued to have the offer of attending social pedagogy surgeries with social pedagogue, reflecting and receiving advice on methods or

models to be used to help the situations. Also Supervising Social Workers continue to have the opportunity to engage with the Social Pedagogue as and when required.

One of the learners for the Level 3 Diploma in Social Pedagogy has left Brent. The remaining learner continues to receive mentoring by the social pedagogue through their course. And it is anticipated that they will successfully complete their course by the end of January 2019.

### **3.7 Monitoring – reviews, allegations, complaints**

#### **Reviews:**

A total of 32 foster carer annual review meetings were scheduled to take place in this period. 7 of these reviews were cancelled: 3 of these carers had resigned so no longer required reviewing; 2 carers were granted Special Guardianship of the children in their care and were therefore no longer foster carers; and 2 were due to personal circumstances of the foster carers. Of those reviews that did take place, they were all held within timescales.

During this quarter, there were no allegations or complaints.

The Agency Advisor and the ADM continue to 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. The next meeting is scheduled for 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019.

### **3.8 New Developments**

#### Foster Carer's Ball

This event was held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2018. Positive feedback received from those attending was: "we enjoyed the evening", "lots of fun" and "I think it was a good thank you for the work we are doing". Constructive feedback was received from carers who were unable to attend: "we could not get child care for our fostered children so could not attend" (a number of carers gave this feedback) and "it is better in November, I am less busy".

The fostering teams have been proactive in responding to this and have already planned a number of working groups to plan for the forthcoming year in terms of social events and support groups. They have come up with some creative ideas and look forward to bringing foster carers on board to take this forward.

#### Brent's response to *Fostering Better Outcomes 2018*

As outlined in Q2's report, the response from the government, *Fostering Better Outcomes*

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/727613/Fostering\\_better\\_outcomes\\_.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/727613/Fostering_better_outcomes_.pdf), to Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers' report, [Foster](#)

[Care in England](#), was published in July 2018. The fostering teams and senior management in the LAC and Permanency Service have been working together to formulate an action plan to address the areas identified from this report as being areas for development:

- Improving the consultation of current and past looked after children to use their views to drive improvements;  
We are looking to involve Care in Action, Junior Care in Action and Care Leavers in Action, with support from the Children in Care Participation Officer, to address this point.
- Improving the recognition of foster carers as valued experts who best know the children they care for across children and young people's services and with partner agencies;  
This is the focus of the LAC and Permanency staff forum on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2019.
- Making peer-to-peer support more structured for foster carers and their children;  
The fostering teams have agreed to set up working groups focusing on particular areas of interest – birth children of foster carers, social events for carers, improving support group provision, peer-to-peer support and recognition of achievements – and are taking these forward with the foster carers during support groups to be guided by the carers and their children.
- Developing partnership working and commissioning of placements to ensure that matching is driven by the needs of the child, not cost;  
Senior managers in LAC and Permanency and Forward Planning Performance and Partnerships are working together to drive improvements in this area.
- Developing a creative approach to deciding which individual social worker is best placed to offer support to the foster family in long-term placements;  
This
- Exploring the use of regional consortia and/or neighbouring local authorities for combined needs-led and targeted marketing and recruitment and commissioning and integration.

We recognise that, despite extensive efforts, we are not making substantial progress. In order to address this, as part of the Council's published consultation on the 2019-20 and 2020-21 budget there is a proposal to explore the option of a shared fostering service with other West London authorities. Should this budget proposal be accepted by the Council then it will be progressed with a view to implementation during 2020-21. Senior managers in Brent and Ealing are exploring the possibility of taking this forward. These discussions are in the very early scoping stages.

We will continue to update this meeting in terms of progress in relation to the above.

**Report sign off:**

**GAIL TOLLEY**

Strategic Director, Children and Young People

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