



**Corporate Parenting Committee
21 July 2015**

**Report from the Strategic Director of
Children and Young People**

For Action

Wards Affected:
ALL

Annual Corporate Parenting Report 2014-2015

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations (2011) require Local Authorities to provide an annual report on the outcomes for Looked After Children (LAC) which has to be presented to the Corporate Parenting Committee. This report fulfils that requirement, provides a profile of Brent's looked after children and care leavers for 2014 -2015 and reports on the work of the Committee, highlighting strengths and areas for development in supporting looked after children in Brent (Terms of Reference, 2014).

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Corporate Parenting Committee is requested to review and comment on the contents of this report. This is to provide evidence, alongside other reporting and scrutiny requirements, that the care of Brent's looked after children is appropriately monitored.

3.0 Corporate Parenting

- 3.1 The concept of Corporate Parenting was introduced in The Children Act 2004, and places collective responsibility on local authorities to achieve good parenting for all children in public care. "Corporate Parent" defines the collective responsibility of the council, elected members, employees and partner agencies for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children who are looked after in public care. Elected members in Brent carry out this duty through:

1. Weekly meetings between the Lead Member for Children and Young People, the Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Department and the Operational Director, Children's Social Care
2. Regular meetings between representatives of Care in Action (which is Brent's Council for Children in Care), with the Lead Member, Strategic Director, and Operational Director

3. Attendance of CIA representatives at the Corporate Parenting Committee.
4. The quarterly Corporate Parenting Committee, which is chaired by the Lead Member for Children and Young People with cross party member representation.
5. Scrutiny of regular reports at the Corporate Parenting Committee

4.0 Corporate Parenting Committee 2014-2015

4.1 In the year 2014-2015 the Corporate Parenting Committee has provided scrutiny and challenge in relation to:

- a. Quarterly Performance Data-the Committee Members scrutinised the performance reports and commented on areas of strength and development.
- b. Adoption and Fostering reports (bi-annual and quarterly) – the Committee members considered information about the general management of the adoption service and fostering service and how they are achieving good outcomes for children. The members requested clarity in relation to the review of foster carers and the matching of children with adopters and foster carers
- c. Care Quality Commission report –Review of Health Services for Looked After Children and Safeguarding in Brent (2014).The Assistant Director of the Brent Clinical Commissioning Group presented the findings of the report and the progress on the action plan, both of which were interrogated by Committee members.
- d Annual Independent Reviewing Officer Report- The IRO manager presented the annual report on the service and outcomes for children, describing progress through the year and advising on the improvements in the service since more robust management arrangements had been put into place.
- e Annual Report of Educational Outcomes – The Committee members considered information on the attainment of Looked After Children and the plans for future improvements.
- f Supporting the work of the Care in Action groups-The Committee Members are appraised of and make comment on the departments response and practice in relation to the issues and suggestions raised by the Care in Action groups.

5.0 Participation of children and young people, and care leavers

5.1 Brent Care in Action (CIA) is Brent's established Children in Care Council which promotes participation and encourages young people to take an active part in shaping the services they use in order to make improvements and respond to their needs. The work of the Participation Officers is to provide a forum for the children and young people in care to share their views and to ensure that service improvements are linked directly to the young people's feedback. The group have been active in discussing a number of issues relating to being in care and leaving care and have contributed ideas leading to improvements in practice. They also participate in a range of activities for example visiting Wembley Stadium prior to taking part in a Chance to Ask session with a panel of Social Care officers, including the Head of Service for Care Planning, the IRO manager, The Virtual School Head

and a fostering supervising social worker and going into central London to attend the All Party Parliamentary Group for care leavers.

The groups have worked on the following projects throughout the year:

- a. Establishment of a CIA Care Leavers group, to focus on the needs of older care leavers. This group is in addition to Junior CIA (7-12 years and CIA (13-18years).
- b. Consultation on independence preparation- the CIA group were able to give valuable insight and suggestions on how the department could better prepare young people for independence.
- c. Advised regarding Coming into Care packs- both the Junior CIA and CIA group helped to update and finalise the content of the two different information packs which are provided to young people when they come into care.
- d. Training at Staff forums- a small group of young people presented to a group of social workers their experience of care and having a social worker. The staff found this helpful and the discussion in relation to access to social workers led to improved communication with young people.
- e. Involvement in recruiting staff- members of CIA have been involved in interviews to appoint Heads of Service and the Head of the Virtual School.
- f. Representation at the All Party Parliamentary Group- this was an opportunity for young people to meet other care leavers from across the country and have an input into national issues for care leavers.
- g. Input into the tender for semi-independent provision- a group was part of the panel to consider the providers for the tender and were instrumental in ensuring better quality provision
- h. Consultation leaflets – all of the groups have been involved in feedback on the appropriateness of leaflets for young people and a number have been re-designed as a result.

6.0 Profile of looked after children and care leavers

6.1 As of 31st March 2015 Brent had 325 children and young people looked after, in contrast with 345 looked after on 31st March 2014. This represents 46.2 LAC (looked after children) per 10,000 head of child population in 2014/15. In 2013/14 the figure for Brent was 48.0 per 10,000. This contrasts with the rate for statistical neighbours of 62.1 per 10,000 head of child population. Over the last four years the number of looked after children in Brent has reduced from 390 (March 2011) to 325 (March 2015). Whilst there is no single definitive explanation for the overall reduction there are likely to have been a variety of contributory factors including a greater emphasis on preventative services, improved permanency planning and an older care population.

6.2 There are currently 215 Care Leavers (18 – 24 years old) who are supported by the CPCIC service.

| | Under 1 | 1 to 4 | 5 to 9 | 10 to 15 | 16+ | Under 10 | 10+ | Total |
|-----------------------------------|---------|--------|--------|----------|------|----------|------|-------|
| Brent (number) 14/15 | 13 | 22 | 53 | 127 | 110 | 88 | 237 | 325 |
| Brent (number) 13/14 | 15 | 40 | 55 | 125 | 110 | 110 | 235 | 345 |
| Brent (%) (13-14) | 4 | 12 | 16 | 36 | 32 | 32 | 68 | 100 |
| Stat Neighbour (%) (13-14) | 4.8 | 11.4 | 15.3 | 38.2 | 29.9 | 31.5 | 68.1 | 99.6 |
| England (%) (13-14) | 6 | 17 | 20 | 37 | 21 | 43 | 58 | |

Source: DfE Children looked after in England including adoption

Table 1. Brent LAC population by age and 2013/14 comparison with statistical neighbours

6.3 Over 61% of the care population in Brent is aged 13 and over. There are 47 unaccompanied asylum seeking children in this number compared with 30 in March 2014.

6.4 Children in Care by Age and Gender

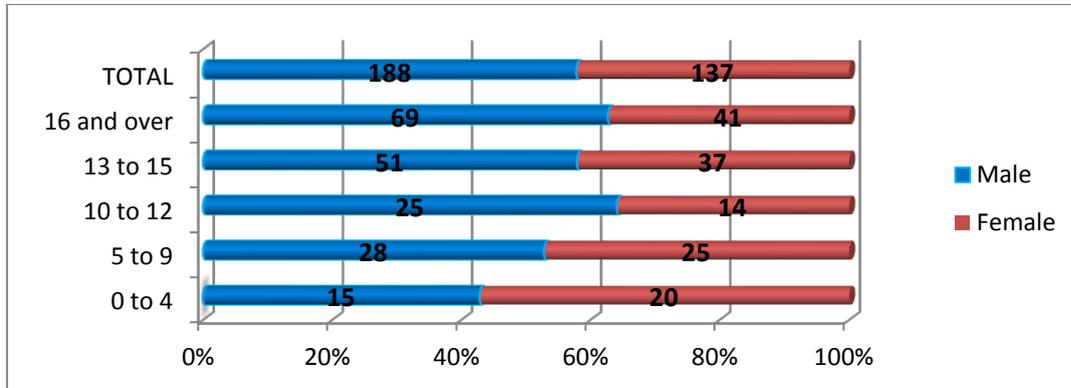


Table 2. Overall percentage of Brent LAC by age and gender.

In most age groups the percentage of males is higher and this is broadly in line with the national picture for LAC.

6.5 The ethnicity of children looked after

The ethnic breakdown of children and young people in care, is 35.1% Black or Black British, 28.6% White; 16.0% Asian or Asian British and 18.8% mixed parentage and other ethnic groups. The percentage of Black children looked after by Brent remains the highest proportionally, however there has been a 3.2% increase of Asian children and an 8.2% increase of White children looked after by Brent since 2013.

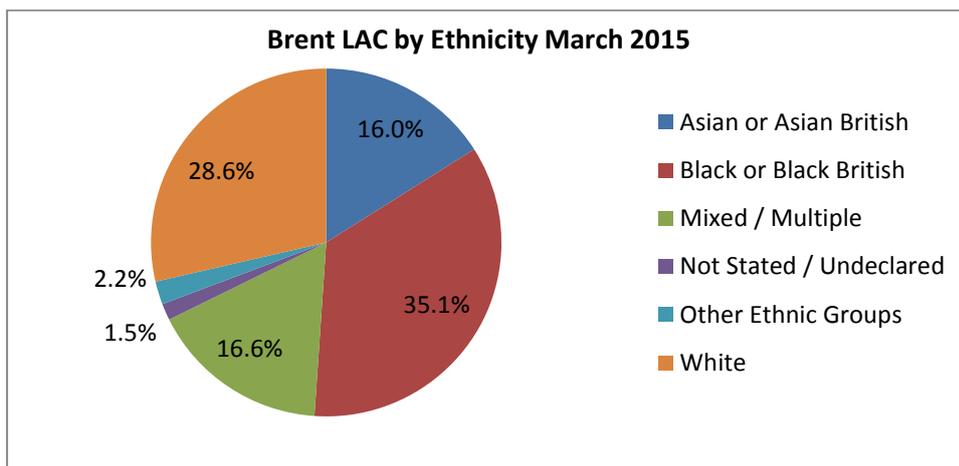


Diagram 1 Ethnicity of Brent LAC 2015

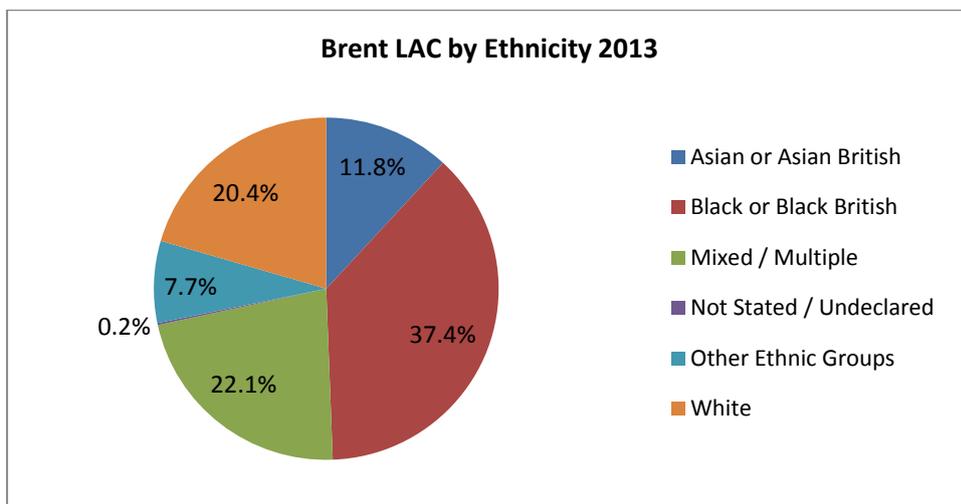


Diagram 2 Ethnicity of Brent LAC 2013

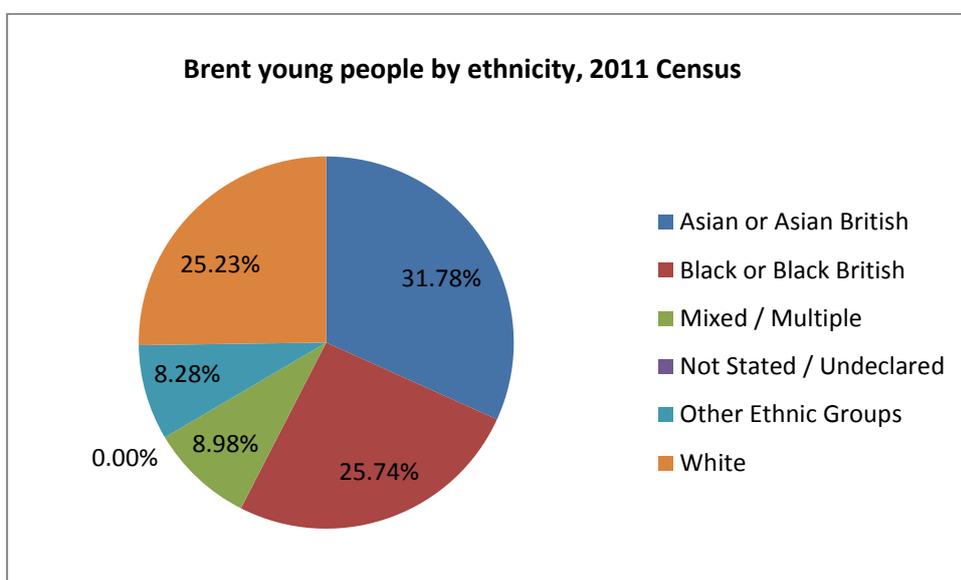


Diagram 3 Ethnicity of young people in Brent 2011 Census data

7.0 Placements of Looked after children in Brent

| As at 31st March 2015 | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|----------|
| Children in Care | No. | |
| <i>Number of Children in Care</i> | 325 | % |
| Placement type | | |
| Placed for Adoption | 1 | 0.3% |
| Fostering | 244 | 75.1% |
| Placed with Parents | 10 | 3.1% |
| Residential setting * | 70 | 21.5% |
| Placement Location | | |
| In Borough | 134 | 41.2% |
| Out Borough | 191 | 58.8% |
| Within Neighbouring Boroughs | 75 | 23.1% |
| Outside Neighbouring Boroughs | 116 | 35.7% |
| Children placed >20 miles from Brent | 56 | 17% |

| Legal Status | | |
|---------------------|-----|-------|
| Section 20 | 133 | 40.9% |
| Section 38 | 35 | 10.8% |
| Section 31 | 142 | 43.7% |
| Section 23 | 4 | 1.2% |
| Placement Order | 11 | 3.4% |

Table 3 Brent LAC by placement type, placement location and legal status

*Note - children and young people, defined as living in a residential setting includes those in a residential care home, secure accommodation, semi-independent units, Mother & Baby Units, Young Offender institution or Prison, and Residential Schools.

- 7.1 In 2014/15, 25 young people were in a residential care home. There has been a reduction in the number of children placed within residential care home settings over the last two years. Comparable data has shown a reduction of 24% (7 children) between April 2013 and March 2015.
- 7.2 Of the total LAC population 41.2% of children were placed within the borough of Brent. There were 23.1% placed outside of Brent's boundaries but within a neighbouring borough and 18.5% of the total population were within 20 miles of Brent. The percentage of the total LAC population placed more than 20 miles away from Brent is 17.2%. In total 82.8% of LAC were placed within 20 miles of Brent.
- 7.3 The figure for children placed more than 20 miles from Brent is consistent with the percentage for 31st March 2014(17%) which was lower than our statistical neighbours with a percentage of 19.4% and the England average of 17.4%
- 7.4 **Stability of placements.**
As at 31st March 2015, 44 (13.5%) children had three or more placement moves during this period in comparison to 58 children (17%) during the same period the previous year. This significant improvement is attributable to a number of factors including focussed and timely permanency planning and matching of placements. Analysis of the data in relation to stability of placements shows that the majority of LAC with 3+ placements are the older group of teenagers with challenging behaviour. This figure of 13.5% places us nearer to our statistical neighbour figure in 2014 of 11.8%. Continuing to improve the placement stability indicator is a key priority for the Placements and Care Planning Service in 2015.
- 7.5 The impact of the stability of placement and worker can be seen in the outcomes for young person A. A was accommodated at the age of 7 due to significant concerns regarding physical abuse. She presented with serious emotional difficulties and had a number of placements including a therapeutic unit. When she was 11 years old she moved to foster care where she stayed until moving to her independent accommodation. The stability, security and continuity have been of enormous benefit to her and she became very much part of the family. The family was not a cultural match but she and the foster carers embraced each others cultures. Socially she is very confident and is well able to speak her mind. Academically she did very well and in her GCSE's, achieving 3 A's, 4 B's and 5 C's. She is now studying for her A Levels and wants to go to University and her aim is to study Science at Cambridge. She is also working at weekends in Specsavers

and they are encouraging her to take part in their Postgraduate training in Ophthalmology. She has had the same IRO since she was placed in care and has also had consistent social workers.

8.0 Permanency and Care Proceedings

8.1 Adoption

8.1.1 There are two key routes to permanency for looked after children: adoption and placement under a Special Guardianship Order. Between 01.04.14 and 31.03.15 12 children were adopted and 30 became subject to a Special Guardianship Order. In the previous year 10 children were adopted and 20 placed on a Special Guardianship Order.

8.1.2 As at 31.03.15 the three year average time in days between a child entering care and moving in with his/her adoptive family was 544 days. This shows a significant improvement on the figures over the previous three years and places Brent's performance above the national average. (See table)

| | 2009-12 | 2010-13 | 2011-14 |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Brent (days) | 854 | 694 | 600 |
| Stat neighbour (days) | 724 | 698 | 652 |
| England (days) | 636 | 647 | 628 |

Table 4. Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted (days) - Three year average(.Source: DfE Adoption Scorecard)

8.1.3 Brent's performance around the timeliness of placements for adoption has improved significantly over the last three years and is now above the national average. There is however sometimes a tension between pursuing improved timelines and what is best for a child. In Brent we have always prioritised what is best for the child. As an example, we recently successfully placed a sibling group of three for adoption, despite this placement being significantly outside of timescales.

8.2 Care Proceedings.

8.2.1 The number of care proceedings initiated by the department to protect children has risen steadily over the last five years, from 33 in 2009 to a high of 72 in 2013/14. The figure dropped slightly in 2014/15 to 66 although this actually represented more children (124, as against 122) than in the previous year. In 2014/15 six families of between 4-7 children were subject to proceedings.

8.2.2 The timeliness for the completion of care proceedings has significantly improved since 2013 from an average of 58 weeks to 29 weeks in 2014-2015.

| TABLE 6 | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | 2014-15 |
|------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Brent (weeks) | 58 | 41 | 29 |
| Stat Neighbour (weeks) | 55 | 46 | 35 |
| England (weeks) | 48 | 37 | 30 |

Table 6 Cafcass Care Application Average Duration in Weeks by Year End (Source CAFCASS)

8.2.3 During 2014-15 there were a number of complex cases, some with an international element or complex health needs of the child which prevented the care proceedings completing within the 26 weeks as set in the Family Justice Review. However the improvement in Brent's performance has been substantial and the current performance is among the top 15% in London, as seen in the map below.

8.2.4 The map below shows Brent's position in relation to other London boroughs.

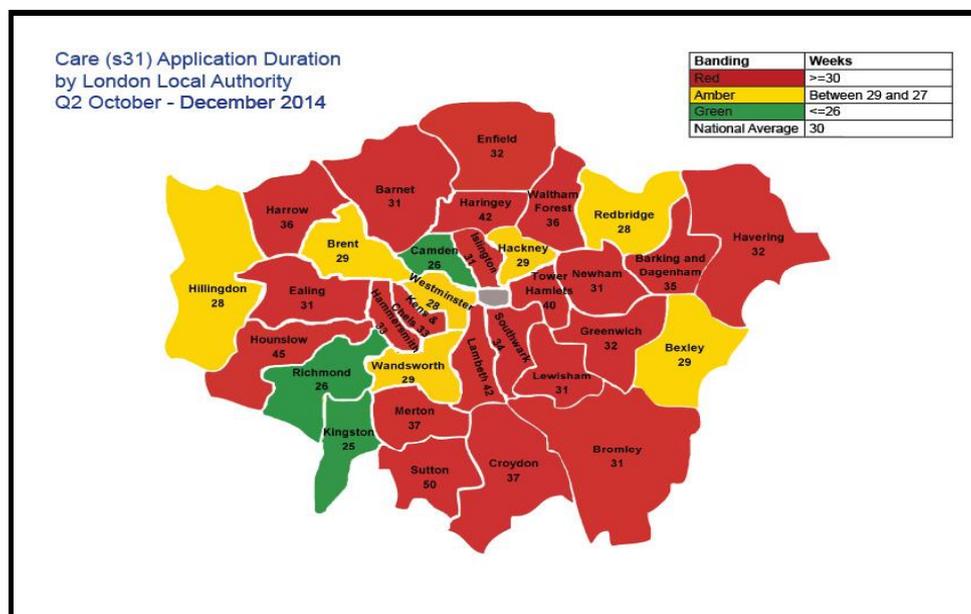


Table 7: CAFCASS map Care Application duration by London Borough

9.0 Health

9.1 Local authorities have a responsibility to ensure that all looked after children have regular health checks (twice per year for children under 5 years and annually for those over 5 years), dental checks and receive appropriate immunisations.

9.2 There were 198 looked after children who had been looked after by Brent for 12 months or more at the 31st March 2015. Of these 191 (96.5%) had an up to date health assessment which is an improved figure from 2014 (88%). The percentage for dental checks and immunisations however were both lower than the previous year. (See table 9) Scrutiny of the data indicates that there are gaps in the recording of this information in relation to those young people in semi independent provision. This will be addressed through the care review process and the health assessments. More frequent monitoring reports will be scrutinised by managers to identify potential gaps at an earlier stage.

- 9.3 The Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is a brief questionnaire filled in by parents, teachers or carers which measures areas of emotional and behavioral difficulty, and asks whether the carer considers this to be a problem. This tool is used to identify those children who may need additional support. In 2014-15, 74.3% of looked after children(who had been looked after for 12 months or more) had a Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire completed which is a significant improvement on 42% from the previous year. All those identified as in need of support were referred to the tier 2 CAMHS service.

| | 13/14 Submission Number | 13/14 Submission Percentage | 14/15 Submission Number | 14/15 Submission Percentage |
|---|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Number LAC as at 31/03/2015 who have been LAC more than one year | 155 | | 198 | |
| Number aged 4 -16 eligible for an SDQ | | | 152 | |
| Number with an SDQ recorded | 65 | 41.94% | 113 | 74.34% |
| Annual health assessment | | 90.70% | 191 | 97.00% |
| Up to date development assessment (under 6s only) | | 88.30% | 10 | 100.00% |
| Up to date immunisations | | 86.00% | 155 | 79.30% |
| Teeth checked by a dentist | | 95.30% | 168 | 87.90% |

Table 8 Percentage of children looked after, who had been looked after continuously for at least 12 months, who had an annual health assessment or up to date development assessment (under 5yrs), up to date immunisations and teeth check during the year ending 31 March

- 9.4 An OFSTED/CQC inspection of Safeguarding and Looked after Children Services in Brent in October 2011 judged that the 'being healthy' standard for Looked after Children (LAC) was inadequate. However in July 2014 a Review of Health services for Children Looked After and Safeguarding in Brent was undertaken by the Care Quality Commission and noted that there has been substantial improvements in the quality of initial and review health assessments for children looked after.
- 9.5 The report also highlighted that 'the newly appointed children looked after nurses have made significant progress in engaging young people who had previously refused to attend for their health assessment through a concerted programme of assertive outreach'. There was also evidence of young people engaging in the process in signing consent and contributing to the health action plan. This engagement continues and contributes to the higher percentage of health assessments undertaken.
- 9.6 The CQC noted that there was some concern regarding the timeliness of initial health assessments. This has been addressed by the quality assurance group for children looked after services which is jointly chaired by Brent CCG and LB of Brent and has responsibility for monitoring provision of care.
- 9.7 Currently there are no looked after children children or young people with a significant or limiting health problem. Recently we had concerns regarding a young person with diabetes which was not sufficiently managed by the family or the young

person. The risks were reduced by joint working with the specialist health service provision and obtaining appropriate legal orders to safeguard the young person.

9.8 Children and young people in care are supported to engage in healthy leisure activities and we have a number of young people who have done well in football, gymnastics and Taekwondo.

10.0 **Children Missing from Care**

10.1 The current government statutory guidance on *Children Who Run Away and Go Missing from Home or Care* was published in January 2014. Brent Local Safeguarding Board developed a protocol for children who go missing from home or care. This protocol is designed to support the effective collaborative safeguarding response from all agencies involved when a child goes missing. It aims to provide guidance for assessing both the risk of the child going missing and the risk to the child when they are missing. The Protocol describes appropriate staff/agency actions to locate the child, to affect their return and to identify the issues which caused, and may continue to cause, the child to go missing.

10.2 In year ending 31st March 2015, 82 children and young people in the care of Brent were recorded as missing at some point within the year. Within this group, 17 of the children and young people had returned the same day, 11 were missing for 1 day, 17 were missing for 2-5 days in total. In addition 22 young people had a total of between 6-20 missing days in the year with the majority of this group (18) having a number of periods missing of 2-5 days. The remaining 4 young people in this group had a longer period of 13-17 days missing in the year.

10.3 The final 15 young people each had a total of more than 20 days missing throughout the year. The majority (8) of these 15 young people were 17 year old females. Another was a 14 year old female who was later found to have with travelled with her mother to France. Legal orders such as care orders and collection orders were sought in relation to five of these females in order to find them and/or safeguard them in a placement away from the area. The remaining young women were persistently staying with friends without informing the placement.

10.4 The concerns in relation to the 6 young men centred on possible gang affiliation and criminal activity. All of the young men were found alternative placements and offered support to break the gang lifestyle behaviours.

10.5 The risks in relation to all the young people were considered within the Missing protocol and relevant orders were sought to find and safeguard the most vulnerable.

10.6 There is a "Missing Children" panel in place that meets on a monthly basis, chaired by the Operational Director. This tracks all children missing from both care and home and advises on plans to keep the children safe, including cross referencing with other panels addressing gang relations and CSE risks. It includes representation from all key agencies including the police, community safety, health and education. All children who go missing receive a "safe and well" interview with a police officer and a return interview with a social worker when they return. The service analyses any emerging trends from these interviews.

Child Sexual Exploitation.

- 11.0** A multi-agency Child Sexual Exploitation Sub-Group of Brent's Safeguarding Children Board has been established to address the needs of children and young people who are at risk of or currently experiencing sexual exploitation. Its focus is prevention and protection. This group is addressing the risk within the LAC/Care Population.
- 11.1** Any looked after child or young person where there are concerns in relation to CSE is referred to the Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation Panel (MASE). This is the key operational panel with responsibility for tracking children who are specifically at risk or who are being sexually exploited and has been running since November 2013. In this time the panel has reviewed over 80 children. In the year 2014-2015 the panel reviewed 7 looked after children/young people. The panel has good representation from all agencies and is responsible for ensuring that the agencies are working effectively together so that children are safe. It also reviews individual safeguarding plans to ensure that the multi agency response is robust.
- 11.2** The MASE chair links with the chairs of the Pathway Multi Agency Partnership (PMAP a multi- agency meeting that shares information and identifies plans for children vulnerable to gang lifestyles) and the Missing Panel on a regular basis. The meetings of the chairs identify emerging themes, areas of overlap and address specific geographical locations, venues, children or groups who are causing concern. Any specific safeguarding concerns requiring immediate action are picked up directly outside of the meetings. There is a strong link between CSE and children who go missing. For some young people at risk of serious harm it is one of the 'push' factors in them running away from home and placements.
- 11.3** Children who are already deemed vulnerable, particularly those looked after by the Local Authority, are at disproportionate risk of being sexually exploited by older men who they may view, in certain circumstances, as their 'boyfriends'. All looked after children who were in residential care in July 2014 were audited specifically for risks around CSE and where concerns were identified, the appropriate actions were put into place. The cases were subsequently reviewed and the children found to be safe. There is now a much greater recognition of the risks in relation to CSE and specific training has been provided for social workers. Residential and semi-independent units notify the social workers of any concerns but also are required to provide monthly updating reports which are overseen by the placements team. This provides a second point of scrutiny.
- 11.4** LSCB leaflets are available for both carers and looked after children and they have been distributed to young people through their carers/social workers. There has been training for Brent foster carers. Any LAC child at risk of CSE is now referred to the MASE in Brent and in the area in which they are living.
- 11.5** There is support for young women affected by CSE from the Barnardos Young Women's Project. Referrals to this service are made by social workers. CSE is also an area of expertise in the Outreach and Detached Team in the Youth Service, along with a specific project targeting LGBT young people through the MOSAIC program. The referral pathways and commissioning intentions for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service are being revisited to ensure that there is a coherent service available to young people in Brent and that these are reflected in a service which is jointly commissioned between the Clinical Commissioning Group and the Council.

11.6 Additionally, a Safer London Senior Young Persons Worker, funded by the Mayor's office started in Brent in January 2015. Their key role is to carry a small caseload of affected young people, train up to 250 professionals and provide advice and support to the MASE, BSCB sub group and individual social workers when required. A bid for a second worker has just been submitted.

12.0 **Education of Looked After Children**

12.1 **The 2013/14 LAC Cohort**

12.2 The Brent Virtual School outcome data for 2013/14 is based on the actual number of children in care as of 23/07/14 (end of the academic year).

12.3 The total Brent LAC cohort as of 23/07/2014 was 344 (0-18 years). 51% of the cohort attended a school in Brent.

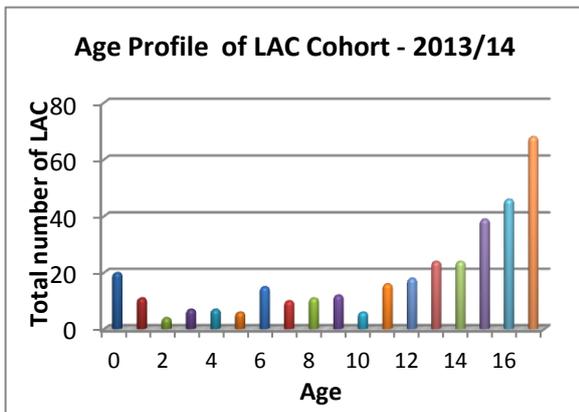


Table 9 Profile by age of LAC at 23/7/14

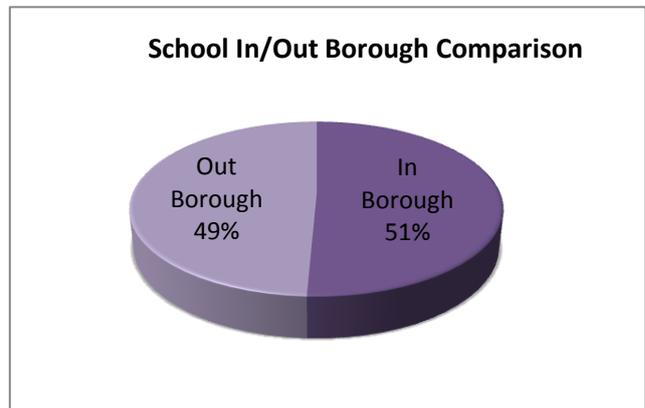


Table 10 LAC attending a school in Brent

12.4 **The Personal Education Plan for LAC (PEP)**

The Personal Education Plan (PEP) for LAC became statutory in 2006 (Section 52 Guidance) and the document is part of the Care Plan for the child. The PEP identifies both short and long-term targets and ensures that the child's progress is monitored. An audit tool has been set up by the Virtual School to sample PEP's over all year groups and includes a check list which measures various levels of information and the quality of the targets set.

The responsibility for the completion of the PEP rests with the Designated Teacher for the school and the Social Worker. The pilot for the new electronic PEPs took place in 2013-2014 academic year and from September 2014 the Virtual School have gone live with the e-PEP system. This will simplify and enhance the PEP process.

Please see table below, which illustrates PEP completion rates from 2010 to date.

| | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2013-14 |
|----------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| PEP Completion Rate | 72% | 75% | 97% | 85.51% |

12.5 Key Stage 1

12.6 For Key Stage 1 in 2013/14, the outcomes for Reading, Writing and Maths were better than those achieved in 2012/13 and in line with the national averages for looked after children.

Table 11

| | 2013 Brent LAC (Cohort of 10) | 2013 All Brent | 2014 (Cohort of 7) | 2014 All Brent |
|----------------|---|----------------|---|----------------|
| Subject | KS1 % Achieving at least Level 2 | | KS1 % Achieving at least Level 2 | |
| Reading | 50% | 89% | 71% | 89% |
| Writing | 50% | 86% | 71% | 87% |
| Maths | 70% | 91% | 71% | 91% |

Table 11 Key stage 1 outcomes 2013/14

12.7 Key stage 2

Performance in 2014 was lower than in the previous year.

| | 2013 Brent LAC (Cohort of 10) | 2013 All Brent | 2014 (Cohort of 13) | 2014 All Brent |
|--|-------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| | KS2 % at least Level 4 | | KS2 % at least Level 4 | |
| Reading | 70% | 86% | 46% | 90% |
| Writing | 70% | 84% | 23% | 87% |
| Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling | 70% | 79% | 23% | 81% |
| Maths | 70% | 87% | 54% | 88% |

Table 12 Key Stage 2 outcomes 2013/14

12.8 Key stage 4

The achievement of those LAC who have been in care for more than 12 months is reported in the Statistical First Release published by the DfE and for the 2014 academic year shows a figure of 28% of Brent LAC achieving 5A*-C grades at GCSE . However in 2014 Brent actually had 33 Year 11 pupils eligible to take

GCSE examinations of whom only 9% achieved 5A*-C grades including English and Mathematics. Of the 33 pupils, 18 were in mainstream provision and the remaining 15 were in Alternative Provision, Residential Schools or SEN specialist provision.

The impact of a significant number of young people entering care at an older age with a potentially chequered educational history is identified as the reason for the difference of these two figures.

| | 2013 Brent LAC (Cohort of 10) | 2013 All Brent | 2014 (Cohort of 13) | 2014 All Brent |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|----------------|
| | KS2 % at least Level 4 | | KS2 % at least Level 4 | |
| Reading | 70% | 86% | 46% | 90% |
| Writing | 70% | 84% | 23% | 87% |
| Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling | 70% | 79% | 23% | 81% |
| Maths | 70% | 87% | 54% | 88% |

Table 13: Key stage 4 outcomes 2013/14

- 12.9 The small numbers in the cohorts make realistic comparisons with statistical neighbours unreliable
- 12.10 In order to support looked after children in KS2 and KS4 for this academic year (2015) booster classes in Maths and English were offered during the Easter school break. All of the of the Year 6 children and the majority of Year 11 pupils resident in Brent took up the offer and gave positive feedback. Year 11 pupils were offered more tuition during the May half term break. Similar sessions will be offered in the future.
- The feedback from a year 11 student was “the teachers were very good and it helped me a lot”. Another felt it helped her improve her writing skills and several commented that they now understood some things better e.g. percentages and past and present tenses in English.
- In addition the Virtual School has been providing extra 1:1 tuition for Year 11 pupils who are underperforming in relation to their prior attainment. More generally the VS has been encouraging all schools to use the PPG for LAC for 1:1 tuition. Feedback from young people suggests that this is the best use of this additional funding.
- A recent focus on PEP completion and the RAG rating of more complex LAC is helping the Virtual School to identify better those pupils who are likely to require extra help to meet expected outcomes. The Virtual School is supporting these pupils through closer working with social workers and designated teachers in schools.
- 12.11 Other young people have commented on their academic achievements since being in care : Female aged 14 “I’m proud of raising my reading level to what it should be

for my age – when I first went into care I couldn't read. I am also proud that I have raised my attendance record for school from about 60% to 99%".

12.12 **Key stage 5**

12.13 The Key Stage 5 cohort sitting AS and A2 Levels was 13% of the post-16 LAC population in Brent.

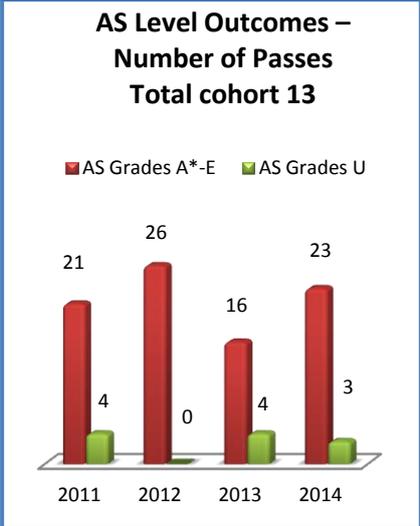


Table 14. AS level outcomes 2013/14

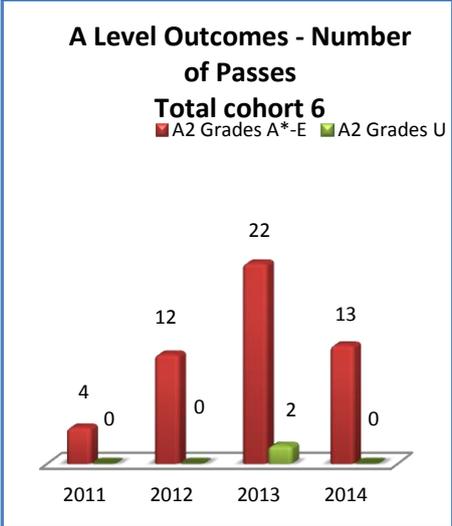


Table 15 A level outcomes 2013/14

12.14 In 2014, 39% of Brent looked after children achieved 3 levels of progress within the 2014 academic year compared with the national average of 35%.

13.0 **Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training**

13.1 Local authorities are measured on the percentage of care leavers who are engaged in education, employment or training (EET). In previous years this was measured at age 19, however this changed in the current year and we are now measured across three years from 19-21 years. This obviously leads to a decline in the figures as the likelihood of remaining in EET over three years is less than over a one year period and as care leavers get older a percentage lose contact with their social workers for a range of reasons. As at 31st March 2015, 53% of Brent's care leavers aged 19-21 years, were in education, employment or training, whilst 29% were NEET. In addition the social care staff have been unable to keep in touch with 18% of this group. As can be seen from the table below the percentage of young people in EET decreases with age and correlates with the percentage of young people who maintain contact with staff.

| Age | NEET | %NEET | EET | %EET | Not in Touch | %Not in Touch | Total |
|--------------|------|--------|-----|--------|--------------|---------------|-------|
| 19 | 23 | 35.38% | 38 | 58.46% | 4 | 6.15% | 65 |
| 20 | 20 | 28.99% | 40 | 57.97% | 9 | 13.04% | 69 |
| 21 | 19 | 23.46% | 36 | 44.44% | 26 | 32.10% | 81 |
| Total | 62 | 28.84% | 114 | 53.02% | 39 | 18.14% | 215 |

| Age | In touch | In touch% | Total |
|--------------|----------|-----------|-------|
| 19 | 55 | 84.62% | 65 |
| 20 | 57 | 82.61% | 69 |
| 21 | 53 | 65.43% | 81 |
| Total | 165 | 76.74% | 215 |

Table 16 Care Leavers EET, NEET, In touch

- 13.2 The table below show the comparison for 2013-2014 with England and the statistical neighbours in relation to those in education, employment and training. Brent has a higher percentage in EET than both England and our statistical neighbours.

| | All care leavers now aged 19, 20 and 21 | In Education, Employment or Training (EET) | | | |
|--------------------|---|---|--|---------------------------|------------------|
| | | In higher education i.e. studies beyond A level | In education other than higher education | In training or employment | Total number EET |
| Brent (number) | 220 | 65 | 35 | 55 | 155 |
| Brent (%) | 100.0 | 30.0 | 15.0 | 25.0 | 70.0 |
| Stat Neighbour (%) | 100.0 | 9.9 | 25.4 | 17.7 | 52.4 |
| England (%) | 100.0 | 6.0 | 19.0 | 20.0 | 45.0 |

Table 17 Care leavers aged 19, 20 and 21 by activity 2013-14

- 13.3 In 2013-14 Brent had a higher proportion of care leavers in higher education at 30% than both the statistical neighbours at 9.9% and England at 6%, a higher percentage in training or employment (25% vs 18% for neighbours), but a lower percentage in further education (15% vs 25%). Overall, the position for care leavers in Brent is significantly better than that of our statistical/benchmark neighbours.
- 13.4 In 2014-15 academic year, 4 LAC (6% of the 17 year old cohort) went onto Higher Education, including one to study Politics and Philosophy at the University of Lancaster and another to study Sociology at Loughborough. There are currently 35 Brent LAC studying at universities across the country (SFR, December 2014).

- 13.5 The Brent Apprenticeship Programme is open to all young people in Brent and six posts are ring-fenced for LAC. We have successfully supported four young people into a position on this year's apprenticeship programme.
- 13.6 One young person currently on an apprenticeship and supported by social care staff gave the following feedback- *"Overworked but its ok, I'm good at my job. The customers say that I am an example of what customer service should be". In relation to the support she receives- "Social care have not always worked in my best interest but I like where I have ended up, my current worker keeps me informed, is efficient and genuinely goes out of her way for me".*
- 13.7 Another young person wrote- *"This year I have done an apprenticeship and although I was keen at the beginning I became dishearten by the weekend work, which I then changed to suit my needs and I feel a lot better about the job. I have applied for a full time position and hope to get the job and work my way up to eventually being part of management. The service provider Capital Apprentices have been good support for our progression and my Personal Advisor has helped me by supporting me and guiding me through things such as entitlements with housing benefit and council tax etc. overall this year has been rocky and I feel so proud of myself to have achieved as much as I have but this isn't the end I'm not where I want to be but I'm defiantly on my way".*
- 13.8 The Fixed 4 Your Future (F4F) Project was funded through the Big Lottery (BIG) Youth in Focus funding stream between 2011 and 2014. The Lead Partner was Prospects Services Ltd, which currently delivers the main Connexions contract on behalf of the Council. The project worked with 175 care leavers throughout the programme. Of the 175, 125 moved into or remained in EET as at July 2014. Between July and October 2014, a further 21 care leavers were recruited to F4F additional to the 175 and supported 13 of the 21 to remain or move into EET during that period.
- 13.9 Following on from the F4F project, a life coach has been funded through the Virtual School to support the current year 10 and 11 who are looked after to remain in education, employment or training.
- 14.0 **Summary.**
- 14.1 Improving the outcomes for looked after children and care leavers and narrowing the gap between looked after children and their peers remains the key focus of the work of the service and the Corporate Parenting Committee. This report has summarised the progress made in a number of key areas as well as identifying areas where performance has not been as good as we had expected and where further focused work is required.
- 14.2 The number of care proceedings initiated by the Department remains at quite a high rate, but their timeliness has increased dramatically, meaning that children are waiting for shorter periods of time for decisions to be made about their future. Those children being adopted wait less time for those adoptions to take place. The stability of placements for children has improved, with fewer experiencing multiple moves. This should translate into improved educational outcomes in the future as it means that the young people will have greater educational continuity.
- 14.3 The health outcomes for young people are generally good and the monitoring in relation to health assessments, mental health and developmental assessments for

younger children have all improved, although there has been a small drop in the timeliness of immunisations and dental checks which is being pursued.

14.4 The educational performance of Brent LAC declined during the year amongst the older age group. Developing a comprehensive understanding this is always complicated by the low numbers in the cohort, but a range of actions has been put into place to address this and the early evidence suggests there will be a significant improvement in the 2015 results. The number of care leavers remaining in education, training or employment continues to be good and we have above average percentages in either further or higher education.

14.5 There have been improvements in partnership working to safeguard children missing from home, care and education and in relation to children and young people at risk of CSE. The tracking information available on looked after children who are missing has improved significantly and this is cross referenced with CSE and gangs data to identify young people at risk and ensure that plans are keeping them safe. The communication between agencies has led to greater intelligence regarding particular “hotspots” where vulnerable young people gather and interventions to raise awareness in the community.

15.0 **Priorities for 2015-2016**

15.1 Research indicates that whilst looked after children generally suffer from poorer educational outcomes than the general population, this disadvantage tends to decrease the longer the children/young people remain in care. It is a departmental priority to improve their educational outcomes and this links to both the need to improve the stability of placements (and therefore educational stability) for the older group and to support carers to manage the changing needs and expectations within the placement. A number of foster carers and social workers have recently completed the social pedagogy training which will assist in developing the skills required for carers to manage challenging behaviour without the requirement to move placement.

15.2 Ensuring that we have the right placements to meet children’s needs is, and continues to be, a priority. We aim to recruit more local Brent foster carers as well as continuing to reduce our reliance on expensive residential care placements, where it is appropriate to do so. Working with the West London Alliance we aim to develop more provision that is better matched the needs of our children and young people with the most complex difficulties.

15.3 A significant number of young people have attended further education and university over recent years and it remains a priority is to ensure that these numbers remain high and that all of our looked after children have the opportunity to reach their potential and maximise their career prospects . The way that the Virtual School works has been refreshed and their staff are working more closely with care planning staff and are beginning to identify those young people who may need extra support at an earlier stage. Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are being used more effectively to identify children’s needs, set realistic goals and to put support into place quickly.

15.4 A future challenge for the coming year is supporting our 16-18 year olds in further education. We are developing links with the local colleges and working closely with Connexions workers to better track the progress of this group.

15.5 Working with looked after children with significant levels of vulnerability including those who are gang affected and those at risk of sexual exploitation will continue to

be a priority. The department will continue to work closely with key partners and build on the successes of the current year to both better identify these young people and to ensure that the appropriate services are put into place to support and keep them safe.

Contact Officers

Ann Holmes
Head of Service, Care Planning and Children in Care
Civic Centre, Engineers Way, Wembley Brent
020 8937 4382

Janet Lewis
Head of Virtual School
Civic Centre, Engineers Way, Wembley Brent
020 8937 3813

Graham Genoni
Operational Director, Children's Social Care
Civic Centre, Engineers Way, Wembley, Brent
020 8937 4091

GAIL TOLLEY
Strategic Director Children and Young People.