

Children's Care & Support



Corporate Parenting Annual
Report 2017 - 18





1. Being a Corporate Parent

- 1.1 Looking after and protecting children is one of the most important jobs that councils do.
- 1.2 When a child or young person comes into the care of the Local Authority or is under 25 and was in our care for 13 weeks before their 14th birthday, the authority becomes their corporate parent.
- 1.3 Being a corporate parent is one of the key roles for Officers and Councillors, that is to act for those children in our care and care leavers, as a parent would for their own child.
- 1.4 The Local authority has a duty to:
 - Keep them safe in a family setting (wherever possible), with opportunities to forge positive relationships, achieve their full potential in education, employment or training.
 - Promote their physical and mental wellbeing.
 - Listen to their voice, take their wishes and feelings into account whilst securing the best outcomes for them.
 - Celebrate each child's young person's uniqueness and have high aspirations for them.
 - Prepare them for adulthood and independent living.

2. Profile of our children

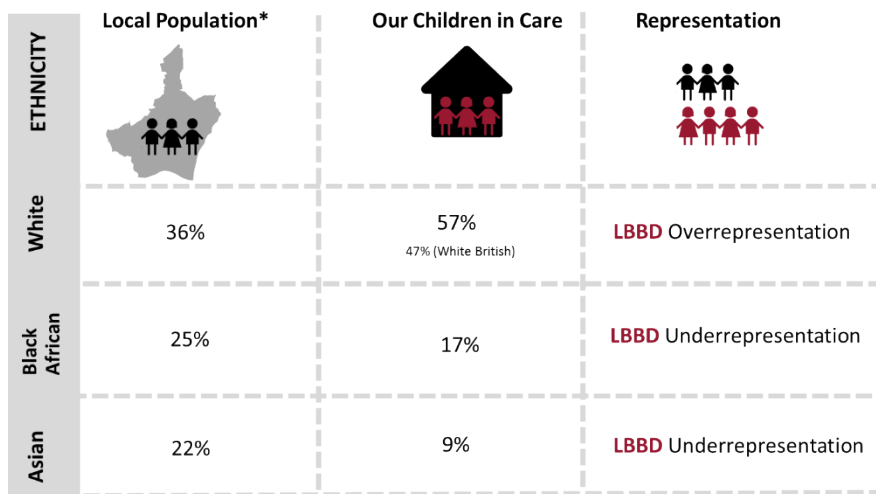
2.1 **Our 0-9 population is underrepresented in care, with 10-17-year olds being overrepresented. Boys are overrepresented, making up 53% of all those in care.**

2.2

	Local Population	Our Children in Care	Representation	National Children in Care
AGE RANGE				
0-4	34%	17%	LBBB Underrepresentation	20%
5-9	30%	18%	LBBB Underrepresentation	21%
10-15	27%	39%	LBBB Overrepresentation	37%
16-17	9%	26%	LBBB Overrepresentation	22%

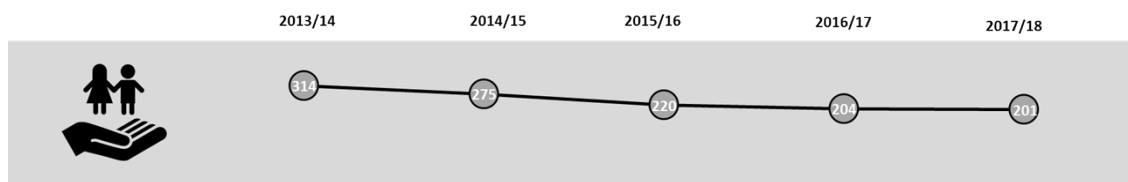
2.3 **White ethnic groups are overrepresented in care, with Black African and Asian groups being underrepresented in care relative to the local population.**

2.4

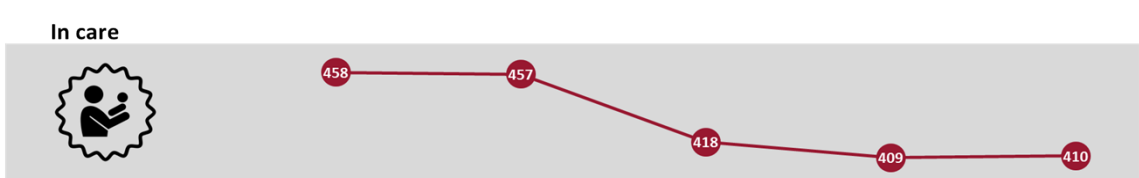


2.5 2014-2017 has seen a downward trend in children entering care and children in care, with minor trend fluctuations in 2017/18

2.6



2.7



* Note axes are different to scales so comparison between trend lines is not possible.

2.8

Current Legal Status	2017/18 Q4	SN Average 16/17	London Average 16/17	National Average 16/17
Sec 20	18.1% (73)	33%	42%	29%
Interim Care Order	19.8% (81)	12%	9%	11%
Full Care Order	54.2% (221)	44%	40%	49%
Placement Order	5.5% (23)	10%	8%	11%
Other	2.4% (10)	1%	1%	<1%

3. Successes in 2017-18

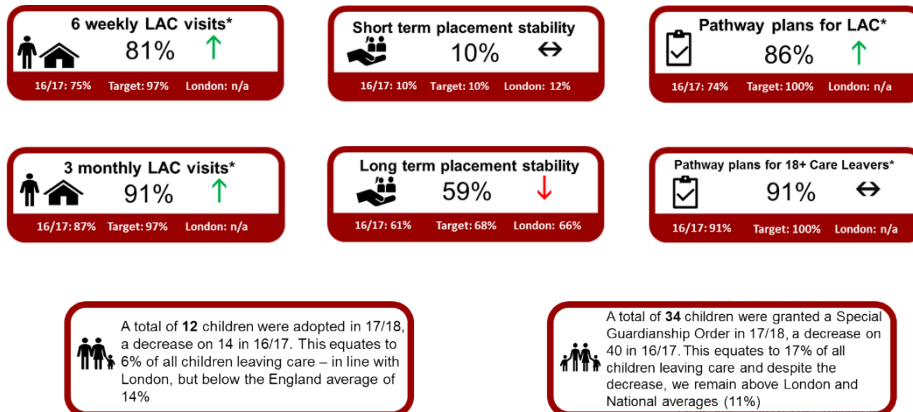
- 3.1 The Takeover event was extremely successful as 5 children in care and care leavers from the Children in Care Council (Skittlz) organised the entire event and ran the session. The issues that were agreed as the priorities have formed the basis of work for this year's Members' Corporate Parenting Group.
- 3.2 Reinstatement of the free leisure pass which was requested by Skittlz and actively supported by the Lead Member for Children.
- 3.3 Increase in representation at Skittlz from a wider age range of children and young people.
- 3.4 Two LAC consultations resulting in 100 responses.
- 3.5 Two internships for Care Leaver graduates within the Council.
- 3.6 Two workshops focussing on NEET and Care Leavers being one of the cohorts. Four dedicated apprenticeships for Care Leavers will hopefully be delivered in 2018-19.
- 3.7 Implementation of the Mockingbird programme with one Constellation established and working well, evidencing positive impact on placement stability for the children in this group. A further 3 Constellations are planned for 2018-19.
- 3.8 Reintroduction of Children in Care Awards Ceremony and 5th Leaving Care Awards ceremony with good attendance by Members at both events.

4. Promise 1: To make sure you get the best care

- 4.1 23 professionals trained via Total Respect training led by Care Leavers. Autumn session planned for foster carers
- 4.2 Active Children in Care Council, with key achievements over the past year including involvement in recruitment of Director of Social Care, reinstatement of free leisure passes for LAC, development of child friendly PEPs and contributing to the development of the Office for the Children's Commissioner CiC Digital Hub.
- 4.3 Extensive LAC survey conducted twice a year with 100 respondees. Positives from most recent consultation include that 95% of LAC aged under 16 are able to contact their social worker, 85% of 8-15 year olds feel listened to and know how to make a complaint.
- 4.4 5 LAC participated in a takeover of Members' Corporate Parenting Group in January 2018, with forward plan for MCPG developed.
- 4.5 Strong links between CiC Council and Principal Social Worker, with the voice of the child group established.

5. Promise 2: To look after you and treat you well

5.1



Key = ↑ Improving performance since 16/17, ↔ Similar performance to 16/17, ↓ Declining performance since 16/17
* Due to data recording issues immediately after the implementation of liquid logic in March, the end of February figure is given

5.2 3 in 4 of our children are placed with foster and kinship carers, this is in line with national, London and Statistical Neighbours. Since 2014 the number of children placed more than 20 miles from home has increased from 14 to 22%. However, just over 75% of children live in the borough or in surrounding boroughs enabling them to maintain connections with school, family, friends etc.

5.3

% of children placed In Borough	35.5% (145)
% of children placed out of Borough	62.1% (254)
% of children placed for adoption (undisclosed location)	2.4% (10)
% of Children placed 20 miles plus from home	22.0% (90)

5.4 Performance on short term placement stability is good – the % of children with three or more placements during the year was 10%. This is the same as the national average and less than the London and Statistical Neighbour averages.

5.5 Long term placement stability – children aged under 16 who have been in care for at least 2.5 years and in the same placement for 2.5 years was slightly worse from the previous year at 58.5% (60.8%). However, 13 (9%) children moved were for positive reasons such as rehabilitation to their

family or moved from residential care to foster care. If these changes had not occurred our performance would have been in line with the national performance (69%) and above London (66%).

- 5.6 A further 5 (4%) children took themselves back to family and these arrangements were considered and supported to achieve the best outcomes possible. The majority of children who moved due to placement breakdown were generally children who had very challenging behaviour and this is an area of ongoing focus for the next year as it is acknowledged that a long-term placement breakdown has very negative implications on the outcomes for children and young people.
- 5.7 Introduction of Mockingbird Fostering Programme. This is a national scheme that originated in the USA and provides a high level of support to children and their carers who are in the 'constellation' and it is anticipated that the scheme will positively impact on long term placement stability. A further 4 constellations are being planned for 2018-19.
- 5.8 There will continue to be a focus on placing all children with adoptive families where their care plan is adoption in a more timely way. Although the timeliness performance on the adoption scorecard is a concern, a number of complex children continue to be placed with adoptive families. These include sibling groups, disabled children and children aged 5+, which is an excellent outcome for these children as they now have a lifelong family.
- 5.9 5.8 Adoption performance has been subject to a high level of scrutiny this year by Children's Select Committee and two workshops which included senior managers and the Lead Member for Children's Services. Performance on adoption breakdowns remains strong – this is the fifth consecutive year where we have had no breakdowns pre or post order where we are in contact with the adoptive families.

6. Promise 3: To help you be healthy

- 6.1 92% of all children who have been in care for a year or more had a health check last year. This includes the development of Health Plan to address any needs identified.
- 6.2 All looked after children referred to community paediatric services and CAMHS within Barking and Dagenham have a Referral to Treatment (RTT) within 4 weeks, compared to national standard of 18 weeks.
- 6.3 Dental checks unfortunately declined during this period from 89% to 84% as more older children actively refused a dental check.
- 6.4 The looked after medical and nursing teams are both fully staffed with good working relationships between providers and commissioners to ensure that children placed outside of Barking and Dagenham requiring medical services can be referred to private providers to ensure timely treatment where indicated.

- 6.5 A monthly meeting takes place between Health and Children’s Services to ensure that children who are out of the local area or who may need special arrangements are offered appropriate appointments.
- 6.6 There is effective scrutiny of looked after children’s health assessments to ensure that all looked after children’s health needs are met.
- 6.7 A dedicated CAMHS worker has been appointed to work directly with a small number of children and to ensure their needs are addressed within local CAMHS services and who liaises with services out of area if necessary. This worker also offers support to foster carers and is developing alternative ways to engage children and young people with support for their emotional wellbeing.

7. Promise 4: To get the best education

7.1 Our Virtual School leads on ensuring our children get the best education and below are the successes of this reporting year.

- All our children are in good or outstanding schools
- 93% have an updated personal education plan
- 36% GCSE Maths and English (compared 18% of the national LAC cohort)

7.2 **The Virtual School supports our young people in many ways:**

Training for foster carers

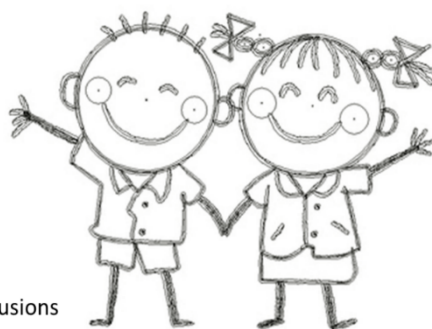
1:1 support in the classroom

In school support for behaviour

Initiatives such as Beanstalk

Monitoring attendance and exclusions

Training for designated teachers



A safety net to support students at risk of exclusion

Training for social workers

PP+ funding to support schools with additional purchases

Mental health support via the Boxall Initiative


PEO Champions – to ensure that PEPs are of the highest quality

8. Promise 5: To be successful in life


8.1 There has been a significant focus on Care Leavers this year which has included 2 workshops on NEET that were attended by the Lead Member for

Children and other Members with a particular interest in this area. Care Leavers were one of the vulnerable groups considered in these workshops which led to an agreement for an additional weekly payment on top of apprenticeship salaries to enable young people to cope financially. This is no longer required now apprenticeships in LBD pay the London Living Wage. Two Care Leavers also became paid Interns within the Council who presented to MGP about their positive experiences and highlighted lessons to be learnt for the future.


8.2



A total of **262** young people were supported by the Learn 2 live team throughout 17/18, with **188** being open as of the end of March



59% of our care leavers were in education, employment or training during 17/18, an increase on our 16/17 performance of 58%. This is higher than the London (52%) and National (50%) averages



80% of our care leavers were living in suitable accommodation in 17/18, similar to our 16/17 performance. Of those that were classed as not in suitable accommodation, 3% were in prison and 17% we are not in contact with.

- 8.3 The recommendations of the Takeover event at MCPG are being developed and a special MCPG will take place in September 2018 focussing purely on care leavers, their concerns, issues and successes.
- 8.4 A new initiative took place this year in partnership with Youth Reality Homes, a 16+ provider that works with our Leaving Care Service providing accommodation and support. A 2-week trip to Ghana was organised and 4 LBD Care Leavers attended alongside other Care Leavers from Newham and Tower Hamlets.
- 8.5 The initiative was developed to address the limited opportunities available to 'disadvantaged' care leavers, to benefit from a 'Gap Year' experience – often enjoyed by young people from more affluent and stable backgrounds. The trip was a huge success, where 7 young people travelled to Ghana to volunteer and learn more about the country and its heritage. It had a significant, positive and lifelong impact on their lives. There were also many outcomes that young people said that they achieved because of participating including; improved self-confidence and self-esteem, increased ability to empathise, resolve conflicts and self- management. Working with and for children in care in Ghana, provided the young people with a valuable learning experience. They were left with a greater understanding and appreciation of the cultural norms, perspectives, and the practical way of life for Ghanaians living rurally. The young people visited a local orphanage, met with Ghanaian dignitaries etc on their return, they gave a presentation to professionals to talk about their experiences and the impact on their lives.

9. Key challenges

- Young people's engagement with pathway planning to ensure they are prepared for independent living.
- Offering appropriate and affordable move on accommodation to care leavers due to the shortage of social housing.
- Improving employment, education and training opportunities for care leavers to increase the number post 18 who are EET.
- Developing creative ways to engage and consult with children in care and care leavers which will inform service planning and practice.
- Ensuring placement stability is improved upon and a wider range of care provisions are available to meet different needs.
- Improving the offer to support children and young people's emotional wellbeing outside of CAMHS.