



London Borough Bromley

Annual Corporate Parenting Report.

2018 -2019

Contents

	Introduction	Page 3
1.	Context	Page 4
2.	Legal Framework	Page 4
3.	Bromley's Profile	Page 5
4.	Delivering our Corporate Parenting Duties	Page 7
5	Snapshot of Children in Care and Care Leavers	Page 8
6	Performance and Priorities for 2018- 2019 Priority 1: Having a Say Priority 2: Support, Stability and Security Priority 3: Health and Wellbeing Priority 4: Education, Training and Employment Priority 5: Transitions and Independence	Page 15
7	Summary of 2018-19	

Introduction.

“Good, responsible parents hold together the many strands of their child’s life. They care about their child’s safety, health, education, identity, hobbies, interests, friendships and futures. They protect and support them. They are ambitious for them. They continuously know about their developments and talents. They listen and talk to their children, celebrate and share their achievements and are aware of their needs and concerns. Good corporate parenting is about mirroring this as best as we can.”

Bromley Corporate Parenting Strategy 2017 -2019

The London Borough of Bromley is committed to ensuring all of our children and young people in care and leaving care are given every opportunity to experience a safe, healthy and happy life in which they achieve their potential. We will make every effort to ensure they are able to grow up in a stable and supportive home with a sense of belonging, where they can feel cared for and cared about. Our role as corporate parents is significant and far reaching and we will exercise this with commitment and accountability across all areas of the council and partnership. Through this we will consistently ensure all our children and young people reach their potential, develop into independent, self-confident adults and enjoy their place in society.

The Corporate Parenting Duty placed upon the council’s elected members, employees and partner agencies is possibly one of the most important duties we have. In 2018-19 we have spent time listening to our children and young people to ensure that what we doing is making a positive difference and we have also taken time to reflect on how we work together as an organisation and a partnership. At times our “self-reflection” has indicated that we were not achieving the right outcomes at the right pace, however these conversations have allowed us to change what was not working well and to make significant improvements.

Being the best (corporate) parents we can be has been at the heart of our improvement journey and it clear that the quality and impact of our service delivery is making a real difference to children and young people. We however know that we have a way to go. This report will summarise the progress we have made and the areas we needs to focus on over the next 12 months.

We will continue to work on delivering the Vision of the Bromley Corporate Parenting Board:

“To collectively deliver the best services we possibly can to children looked after and care leavers in Bromley and to answer Yes....every time we ask ourselves.....Is this good enough for my child?”

1 Context

1.1. This report sets out an annual update on the corporate parenting arrangements in Bromley: focusing on activity and performance from April 2018 – March 2019. It provides an overview on key legislation and guidance alongside key performance indicators and progress for Children Looked After and Care Leavers.

1.2. This report will need to be considered alongside the annual IRO Report, the annual Fostering and Adoption Report and the annual Virtual School Report.

1.3. It is important to note that until November 2018, our services to Children Looked After and Care Leavers was judged to be Inadequate by Ofsted. Our improvement journey therefore started from a very low base, and we are very proud and thankful to our children and young people, staff, partners and elected members for the tenacity and support in helping us to improve services which culminated in Ofsted grading our services to Children in Care and Care Leavers to be Good. Our improvement journey is clearly documented in the monitoring visits undertaken by Ofsted and in the full Ofsted report published in January 2019, all of which can be found on the Ofsted website.

1.4 The information contained in this report is a summary of activity across the council. Specific performance information has been extracted from the annual SSD903 return as well as from the council's various performance reports.

2. The Legal Framework

2.1 The Children Act 1989 and the Leaving Care Act 2000 place clear statutory duties upon the Council to protect children from suffering significant harm and to provide continued financial and transition support to care leavers aged up to 21 (or 25 if in full time education) and subsequently to all care leavers up to the age of 25. Underpinning corporate parenting is a wide range of national policies, guidance, regulations and legislation, which are subject to change by High Court rulings, such as the Southwark ruling in 2009 relating to homeless 16-17 year olds and the Tower Hamlets ruling in 2013 relating to payments to friends and family (connected) carers.

2.2 The revised care planning regulations and guidance, including The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers and the Statutory Guidance on Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children March 2010, place increased emphasis on effective care planning with a focus on the child, and are designed to improve the quality and consistency of care planning, placement and case review for looked after children. They also aim to improve the care and support provided to care leavers.

2.3 The Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers (Revised May 2013) sets out expectations for local authorities in respect of planning and arranging suitable accommodation for the transition to independent living, including ‘accommodation with former foster carers (Staying Put arrangements)’. The Staying Put legislation places a legal duty on local authorities to support every care leaver who wants to stay with their foster carers until their 21st birthday. The opportunity to ‘stay put’ should apply equally to young people that have been cared for by foster carers from the local authority or independent fostering services.

2.4 In 2014 the Children and Families Act was introduced. The Act takes forward a commitment to improve services for vulnerable children. It reforms the systems for adoption, Looked after Children, family justice and special educational needs.

2.5 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 defined for the first time, in law, the responsibilities placed upon councils to ensure the best outcomes for Children Looked After and Care Leavers. These duties take up the first chapter and first paragraph in the Act and its prominence highlights the significance of this duty.

The Act outlines the Corporate parenting duties as a set principles:

- (a) *to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people;*
- (b) *to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;*

I to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;

- (d) *to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners;*

I to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;

- (f) *for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work;*

- (g) *to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.*

The Children and Social Work Act 2017, Section 3 also extended the duties of Local Authorities to provide Personal Advisors to all care leavers up until they reach the age of 25, from April 2018. Previously services to care leavers ceased when a care leaver was 21 unless they engaged in further education.

3. Bromley's Profile.

3.1. Bromley is the largest of the London boroughs, 150 km, and is diverse both geographically and in terms of deprivation. Areas in the north and east of the borough are more akin to our neighbouring inner London boroughs whilst the south of the borough is similar to rural Kent.

3.2 The population of Bromley had grown to over 330,000 in 2017 and this trend is expected to continue over the next ten years. Approximately a quarter of Bromley residents are aged 18 years and under (78,400).

3.3. The number of 0 to 4 year olds is projected to decrease by approximately 1,000 by 2026, whilst 11 to 18 year olds will increase by over 5,500. This trend is also noted in the Children Looked After population. Like many other areas, the growth in population of children and young people under the age of 18 continues to place pressures on services for children and young people including the need to ensure that there are sufficient childcare and school places available in borough.

3.4. The GLA population projection estimates show that 29 per cent of the borough's population of children and young people aged under 18 is made up of black and minority ethnic (BAME) groups. This compares to the overall population being 19%.

3.5. Bromley ranks at 183 of 326 local authorities in the 2015 Indices of Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) where 1 is the most deprived. Nine Bromley wards are ranked as more deprived than the England average in the IDACI rankings, these wards generally have the highest number of children and young people in Bromley. Attention to these indicators are particularly important when considering the reasons children and young people come into care and where we place care leavers when they move into their first time tenancies.

3.6. Educational attainment of children and young people in Bromley continues to be good at all stages, although there continues to be a gap in attainment for those eligible for Free Schools Meals (15.3 for KS4 2016 results) and with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (31.1). Similarly, there continues to be a gap in attainment between Children in Care and those who grow up within their families.

3.7 Bromley's rate of Children Looked After per 10 000 has historically always been significantly below the national average. In 2018-19, our rate was 47 per 10 000 compared to the national average of 64. In Bromley we have however seen a year on year increase in our Children in Care population since 2015 and this is in line with the national trends. As at the 31st March 2019, we had 348 children in our care compared to 310 children on the 31st March 2018. This is a 12% increase in our care population since the previous year.

3.8. As at the 31st March 2019, in addition to being corporate parents to 348 Children in Care, we also had parenting responsibilities for 254 Care Leavers up to the age of 25, although only 193 care leavers were accessing services. For 2018-19, the Local Authority was therefore the corporate parent to 602 children, young people and young adults.

4. Delivering our Corporate Parenting Duties.

4.1. In Bromley we have a well-established Corporate Parenting Board. The Board is chaired by the Deputy Leader of the Council, who is also the portfolio holder for Education, Children and Families. Children and Young people are represented by Bromley's Children in Care Council (LinCC). The Chair of LinCC is also the co-chair of the Corporate Parenting Board.

4.2. Membership of the Board is made up of senior council officers, partner agencies and organisations that are responsible for those areas which have a direct impact on the lives of children in care and care leavers. All board members must hold responsibility as key decision makers within their organisation. The current board membership includes:

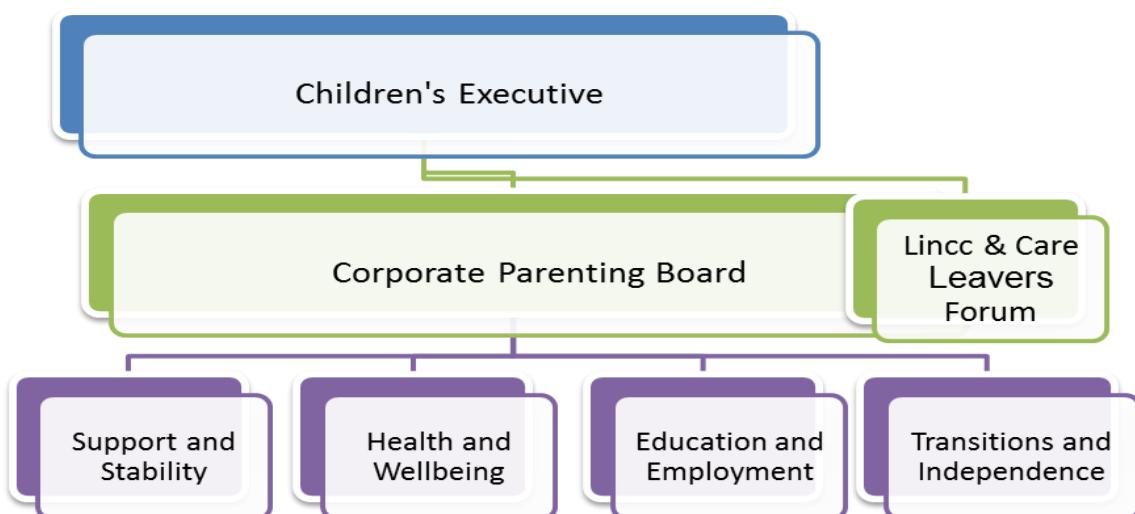
- Portfolio Holder for Education, Children and Families (Chair)
- Chair and Vice Chair of LinCC
- Director of Children's Social Care
- Director of Housing
- Director of Adult Services
- Director of Education
- Director of CYP Service, Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust
- Assistant Direct of Strategy, Performance and Business Support
- Head of Integrated Commissioning and Transformation
- Public Health Consultant
- Designated Doctor for CLA, CCG
- Designated Nurse CLA
- Head of Service, Children Looked After and Leaving Care
- Head of Service, Fostering and Adoption
- Head of Service, Youth Offending Service
- Head of Service, Quality Assurance
- Head Teacher, Bromley Virtual School
- Bromley Foster carer (Representative)

4.3. In 2018-19 meetings were scheduled to take place bi-monthly although this did not always happen due to a number of activities taking place as part of the council's improvement plan. Whilst the Board may not have met bi-monthly, key professionals and partners continued to meet regularly, in various other forums, to ensure that progress in relation to services delivered to children looked after and care leavers were prioritised. Board Meetings took place on the following dates:

- 12th April 2018
- 07th June 2018
- 24th January 2019.

4.4 The National Advisor for Care Leavers attended the Corporate Parenting Board June 2018. He made a number of recommendations about the effectiveness of the Board and these were considered together with the recommendations from the Ofsted inspection in November 2018. A review of the effectiveness and functions of the Corporate Parenting Board was undertaken in January 2019. Members agreed that they could do more and there was a clear commitment from all members to make further improvements.

The “new” Corporate Parenting Board was launched on the 24th April 2019. Key partner agencies now chair operational sub-groups and will deliver an action plan signed off by the board. The Care Leavers Forum and LinCC participate in a challenge session at each Board Meeting.



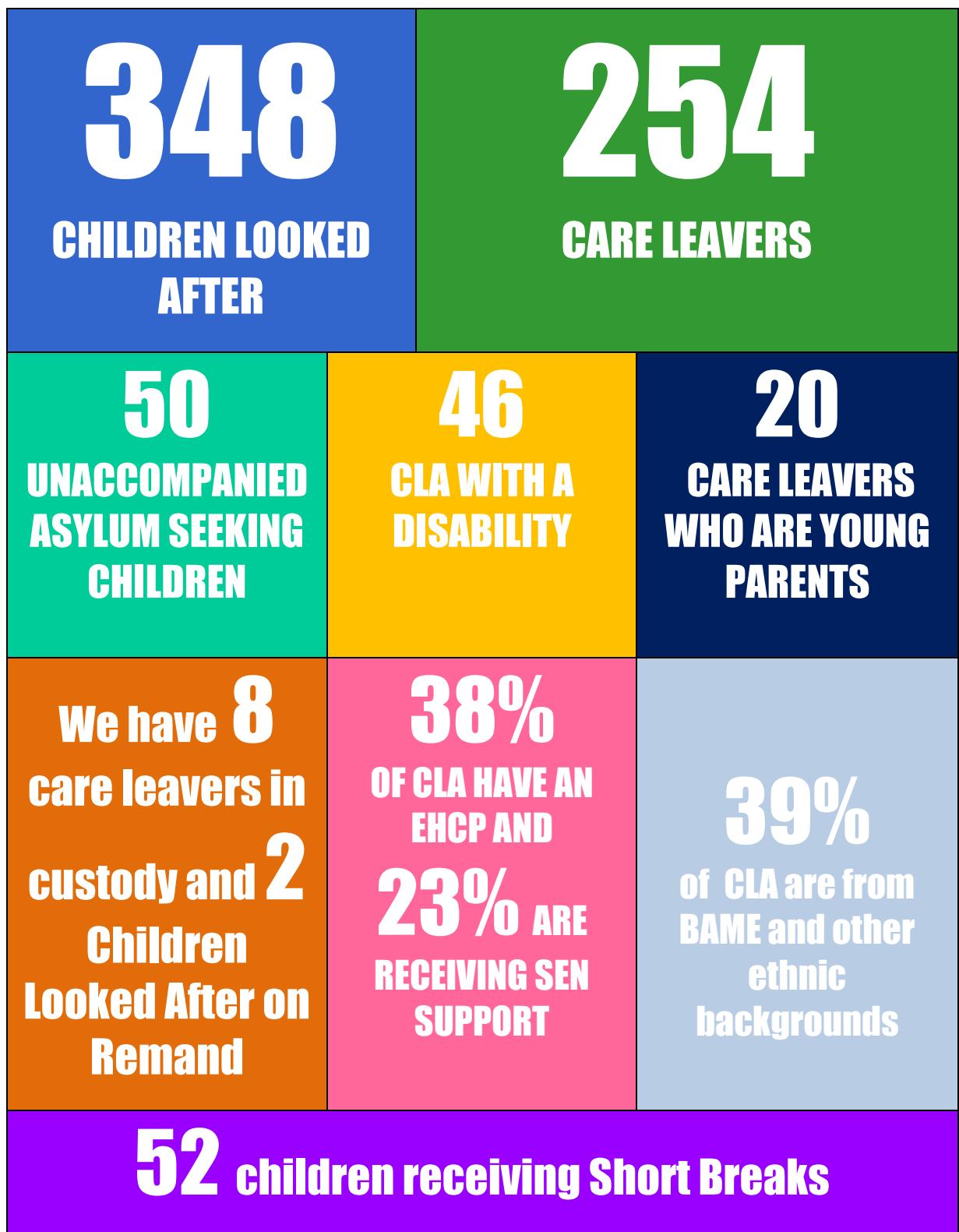
4.5. The Corporate Parenting Board will be scrutinised by the Children and Young People’s Executive and politically by the Education & Children and Families Select Committee.

4.6. The functions and scrutiny of the Corporate Parenting Board, has focused on delivering against the key priorities set out in the following strategic documents:

- Children and Young People’s Plan 2018 – 2021
- Corporate Parenting Strategy 2017 – 2019
- Children Looked After Strategy 2018 – 2020
- Care Leavers Strategy 2017 -2019
- The Bromley Pledge

5. Snapshot of our Children in Care and Care Leavers.

5.1. As at the 31st March 2019 we had corporate parenting responsibilities for:



Characteristics and Demographics of Children Looked After and Care Leavers.

5.2. Number of Children Looked After:

As at the 31st March 2019, Bromley, was responsible for 348 Children Looked After. This is an increase of 12% from March 2018. This increase is however noted in the national picture. In 2018 there was a 4% increase in the number of children being Looked After in England. The current rate of CLA per 10 000 remains below the national average and lower than a number of Bromley's statistical neighbours. Bromley's CLA population has also seen an increase due to increase in the number of unaccompanied minors accommodated during 2018-19. The table below depicts the increase in the care population since 2013.

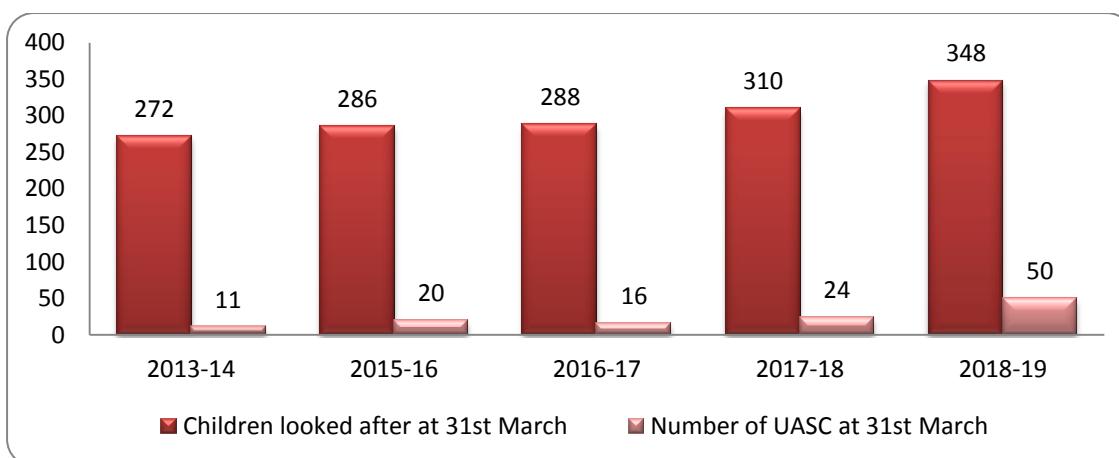
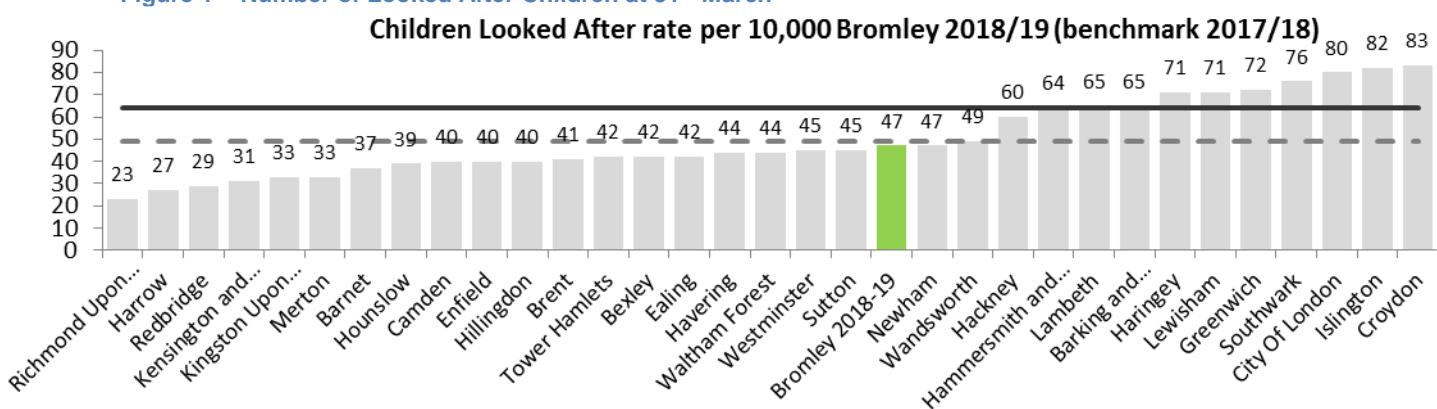


Figure 1 – Number of Looked After Children at 31st March

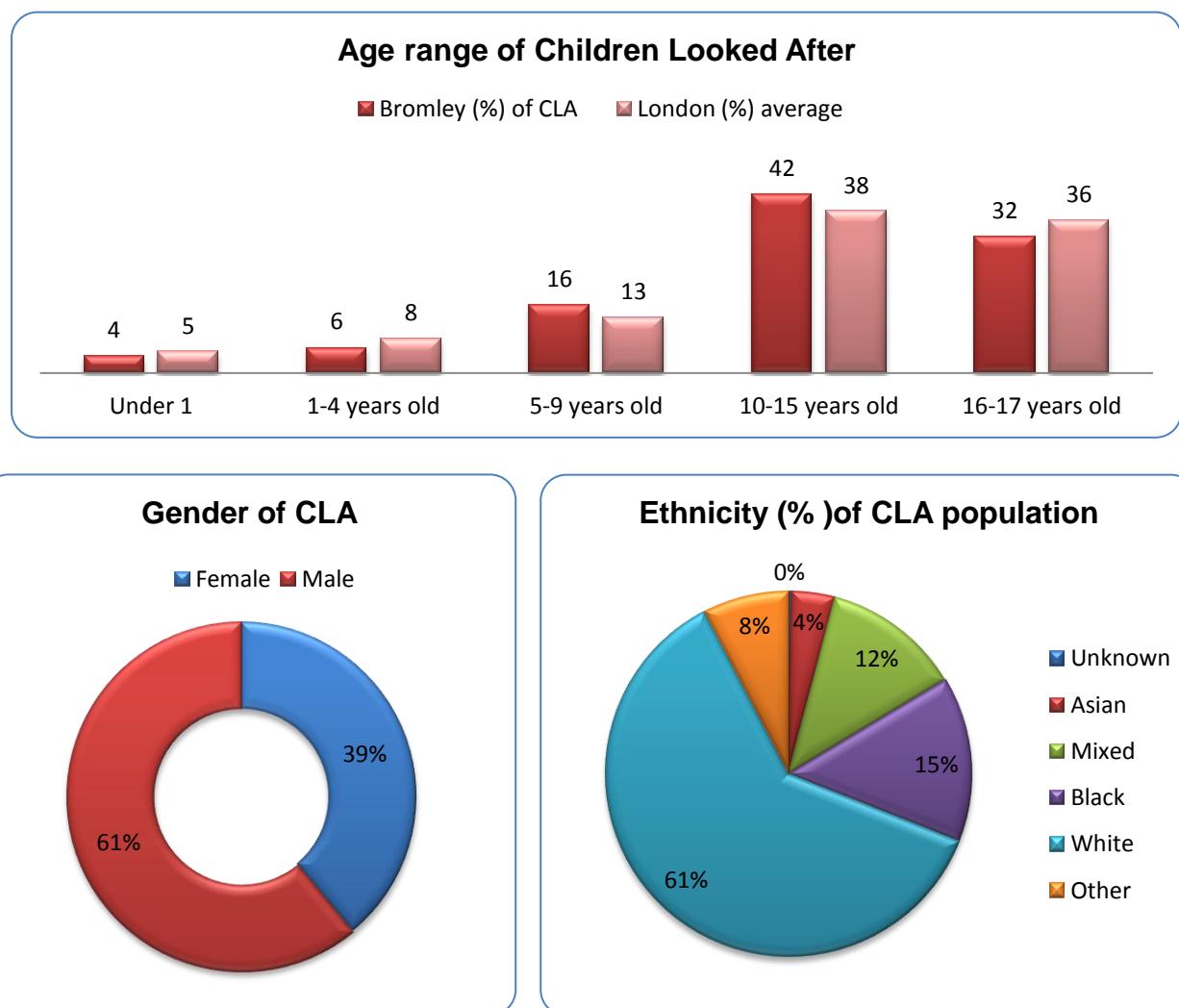


5.2. Age, Gender and Ethnicity.

The age range of our care population is largely in line with the London trend. Most LA's have seen an increase in the 10-15 year age range of children becoming looked after for the first time. In Bromley, our 16+ cohort also represents a large cohort of our CLA population. This is primarily due to the late entrants into care, complexity around family breakdown and contextual safeguarding factors as well as the number of unaccompanied minors we

have accommodated in the past 12 months. The increase in our 16+ CLA population will also place additional pressures on the Leaving Care Service over the next 12-18 months. Males are disproportionately represented in our care population. One reason may be due to our UASC cohort being predominately male. Similarly where, young people have been remanded to secure or LA care, these young people have been predominately male.

The majority of children looked after in Bromley are from a white background. Children from mixed ethnic backgrounds, Black or Black British heritage and 'Other Ethnic groups form 39% of the care population. This is significantly higher than the general Bromley children's population of which children of similar heritage is noted to be 29%.

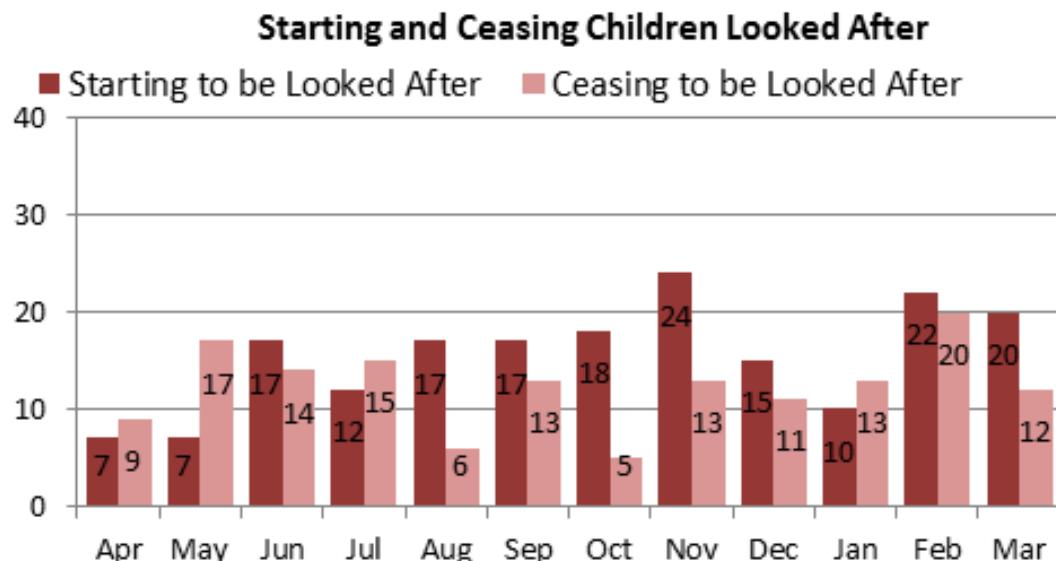


5.3 Legal Status of children currently in care.

- 16% (55 children) were subject to Interim Care Orders
- 54% (184 children) were subject to Full Care Orders
- 4% (12 children) were subject to Placement Order and had a Care Plan of Adoption
- 1% (2 children) were remanded to LA accommodation

- 26% (81 children) were voluntarily accommodated under Section 20. 50 of the 81 children were unaccompanied minors.

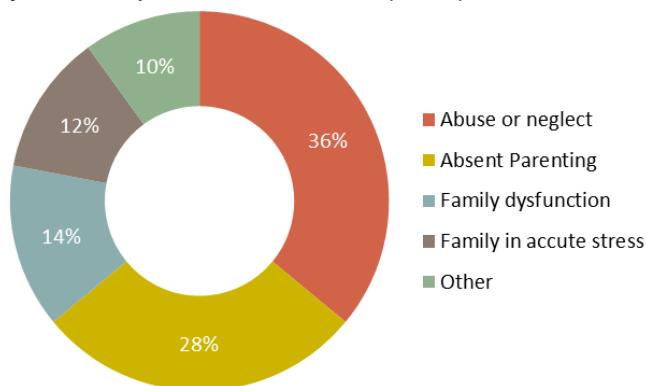
5.4. New admissions into care and children leaving care.



There was an increase in the number of children who became looked after due to a breakdown in a previous Residence Order or a Special Guardianship Order being in place. 5 Children were accommodated in 2018-19 compared to 2 children in 2017-18.

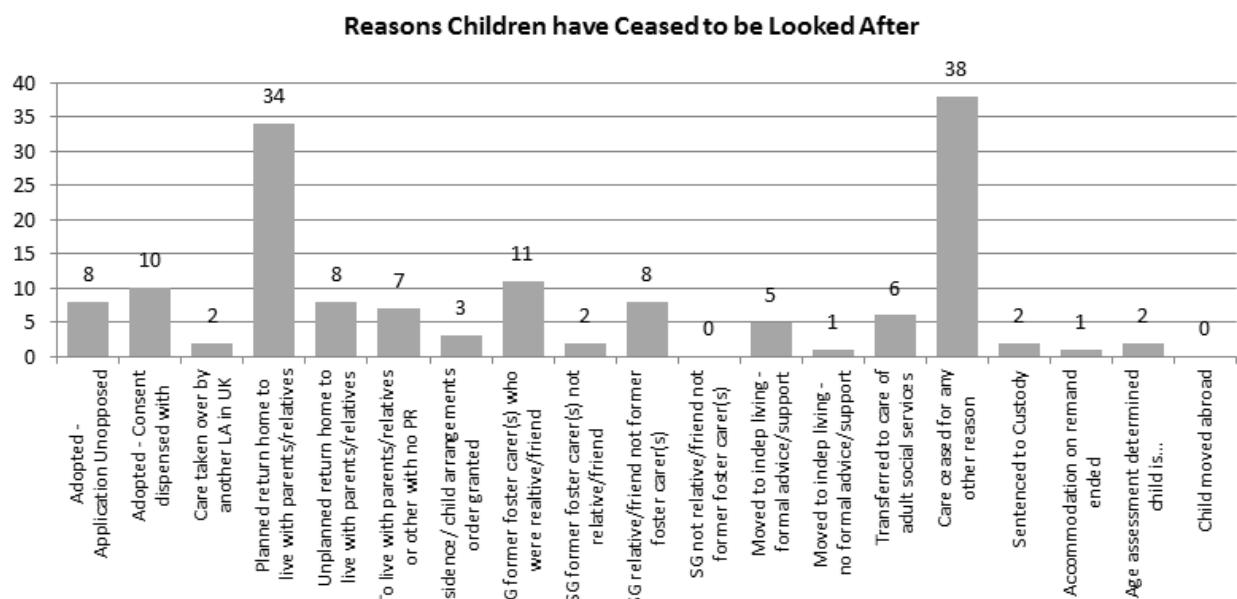
5.6. Reasons for coming into care and ceasing care.

Children and young people coming into care for a number of reasons. In 2018-19, there were 182 children and young people accommodated for the first time. The main reason children have become looked after is abuse and neglect (36%), Absent parenting (28%), family dysfunction (14%), Family in acute stress (12%) and other including Child's disability, Parental illness or disability and Socially unacceptable behaviour (10%).



70 Children and young people ceased to be Looked After in 2018-19.

The table below provides a snapshot of the reasons children and young people have ceased to be looked after. The majority of young people cease to be looked after as they have turned 18 and move into the Care Leaver cohort. It is also positive to note that 29 children left care due to permanence being achieved through adoption or a Special Guardianship Order.



5.7. Number of Care Leavers.

As at 31st March 2019, Bromley had 254 Care Leavers. 193 of the 254 Care Leavers were actively receiving a service from the Leaving Care Teams. The remaining 61 young people were not allocated, however are eligible to return for a service at any time up to the 25th birthday. It is difficult to compare this cohort to previous years as the eligibility for Leaving Care Services changed in April 2018. The introduction of the extended duties toward Care Leavers up to the age of 25 is therefore not easily compared to the Bromley Care Leaver population for previous years.

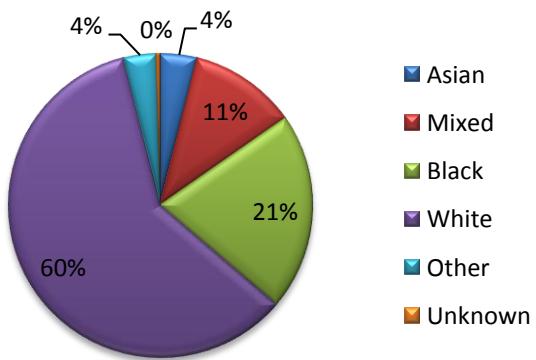
In 2017-18 Bromley had 237 Care Leavers eligible for services. This has increased to 254 in 2018- 19. Care Leavers are now able to choose whether they would like ongoing services post 21 years old. A number of care leavers feel that they would benefit from ongoing support and have therefore opted to retain the support of their personal advisor. This in itself a positive indicator for improved service delivery.

5.8. Age, Gender and Ethnicity of Care Leavers.

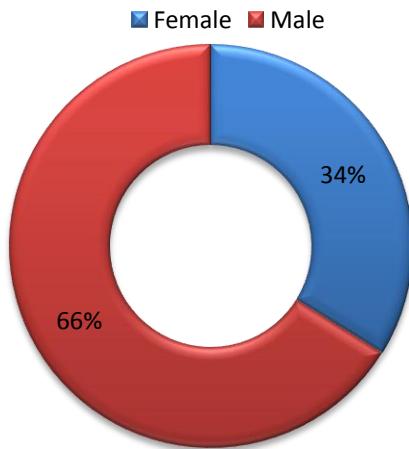
Age range of Care Leavers receiving CL services



Ethnicity (%) of CL population



Gender of Care Leavers



Similar to the Children Looked After cohort, there is an over representation of males in the Care Leaver population. Children from black and ethnic minority groups account for 39% of Bromley Care Leaver population and are also disproportionately represented compared to the general population in Bromley. Whilst a small proportion of this may be due to the increased number of unaccompanied minors in the past 12 months, this would not account for this over representation due to the number of unaccompanied minors not yet reaching 18+. Based on the current CLA cohort it clear that this trend will continue for the care leaver demographic and it will be important to understand the reasons for children from ethnic minority groups coming into care.

6. Performance and Priorities.

6.1. The Bromley Children and Young People Plan 2018-2021 (Priority 3), the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2017- 2019, the Children Looked After Strategy 2018 – 2020 and the Care Leavers Strategy 2017-2019, all outline the priorities of Children's Social Care and its partner agencies to deliver the best possible outcomes for Children Looked After and Care Leavers in Bromley. All four strategic documents broadly cover the following themes:

1. Having a Say
2. Support, Stability and Security
3. Health and Wellbeing
4. Education, Training and Employment
5. Transitions and Independence

These thematic areas (2-5) have now been established as the Corporate Parenting Board's sub-groups. A specific subgroup has not been created for *Having a Say*, as this priority features in every aspect of the work we do.

Feedback and engagement with our children and young people will support us in ensuring we are doing the right things to make a positive difference. 2018-19 has been a very busy year, the information below therefore only provides highlights for each of the areas.

Priority 1: Having a Say

Young people have a right to share their views, wishes and feelings. They will be listened to so that they shape decisions made about their lives and the services they receive.

- The Bromley Living in Care Council (LinCC) and the Care Leavers Forum meet fortnightly. Both forums are supported by the Active Involvement Team. These meetings provide a platform for children in care and care leavers to speak about things that affect them. The chair of LinCC is also the co-chair of the Corporate Parenting Board. The two forums represent the voices of care and care leaver population in Bromley.

In 2018 – 19 our CLA and Care Leavers helped shape our services by:

- Meeting with the Lead Member for Education, Children and Families, the Chief Executive, the Director of CSC and Senior managers of CSC to share views and experiences of growing up in care. Senior officers are periodically invited to LinCC meetings and events.

- Children Looked After and Care Leavers in Bromley were one of six LAs to participate in the Coram Brightspots Survey. Two surveys were conducted between June and December 2018:
 - i. My Life, My Care – For Children Looked After.
 - ii. My Life Beyond Care – For Care Leavers.

Survey findings were analysed by Coram Voice & the University of Bristol and findings were benchmarked against other Children in Care as well as against children in the general population. Care Leavers and LinCC hosted the Brightspots Survey dissemination events earlier this year. This provided an opportunity for Corporate Parents, staff and partner agencies to hear directly from young people and to contribute to co-designing an action plan to support further improvements to service delivery.

- In June 2018 LinCC members held an induction session with newly elected members. Senior Managers are regularly invited to LinCC meetings and have been invited to hear directly from young people at a coffee morning during Care Leavers week (Oct 2018).
- LinCC members attended the Annual Social Work Conference held in October 2018 and spoke about their views of what makes a good social worker.
- Elected members and staff attended the Corporate Parenting Fun Day in July 2018 and the Celebration of Achievement in February 2019. Both events provide an opportunity to engage with children and young people more informally and to develop better understanding of their experiences. These events have been well attended.
- Young people sit on recruitment panels for students, ASYE's, Team Managers and Heads of Service.
- Young people have been involved in delivering training sessions to staff and foster carers.
- At the request of LinCC, children now have their own category to nominate foster carers that they feel are exceptional and worthy of awards.
- LinCC have provided updates to the Education, Children and Families Select Committee on their role as Corporate Parents.
- 97% of children who have attended their LAC Review and participated. Children and young people are regularly visited by their IRO, social worker and an independents advocate (if required) to ensure that their views are heard and acted on.

- We have consulted with children in care and care leavers about the impact of the Pledge for Children in Care and they have been instrumental in providing feedback. Their feedback has helped us to revise our Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers.
- The LinCC newsletter provides children and young people who are placed further away with opportunity to have a voice and to share ideas. Similarly the Corporate Parenting Summer Programme held during the Summer Holidays, allows children and young people placed further away, and those who do not belong to LinCC with opportunities to engage directly with staff and to talk about their experiences.

Actions for 2019-2020.

- Respond to the findings of both Brightspots Surveys.
- Launch the new Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers – July 2019
- Establish a consultation and engagement programme for children and young people placed further away.
- Establish a standard expectation that young people will be involved in key recruitment events and interviews.
- Ensure that young people continue to have opportunities to shape their care plans and Pathway plans.

Priority 2: Support, Stability and Security

Having stable home lives, relationships and education as well as necessary support helps children and young people to achieve good outcomes in their lives.

- Short term placement stability continues to build on improvements made in 2017-18. The downward trajectory in the table below demonstrates that fewer children have had 3 or more placement moves in the past twelve months.

Short term placement stability: % children who have been in 3 or more placements this year

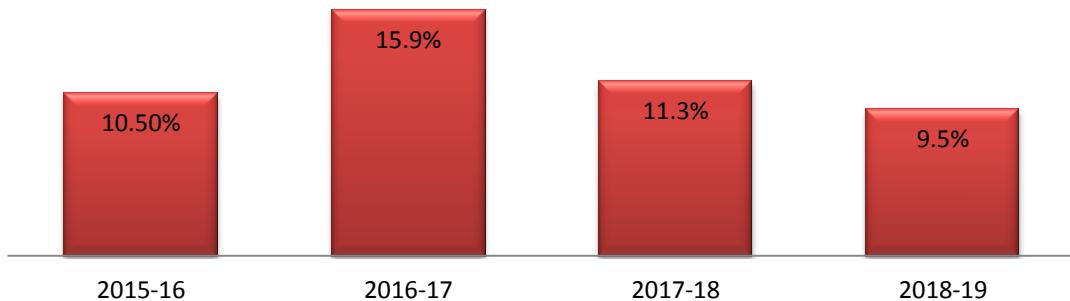


Figure 2 – Short Term Placement Stability

- Longer term placement stability is however an area that requires more focus as there has been a decline in the longer stability children experience. As part of our improvement journey where the standard of care for children in foster carer, has fallen below, what we would want for our children, we have taken a decision to change their placement. Some of these decisions have impacted on this indicator, although we are confident that the decisions to move children due concerns in relation to standard of care, was in their best interest.
- Where placement fragility is identified, managers, social workers and the fostering service work closely to ensure that children and young people and their carers are well supported. Supported from within the carers network and the multi-agency assist in stabilising fragile placements.
- Concerns around contextual safeguarding including risks around CSE, missing and criminal exploitation have also led to decisions being taken for young people to be moved for their own safety.

Long term placement stability: children under 16 years old who have been looked after for at least 2.5 years and have been in the same placement for at least 2 years

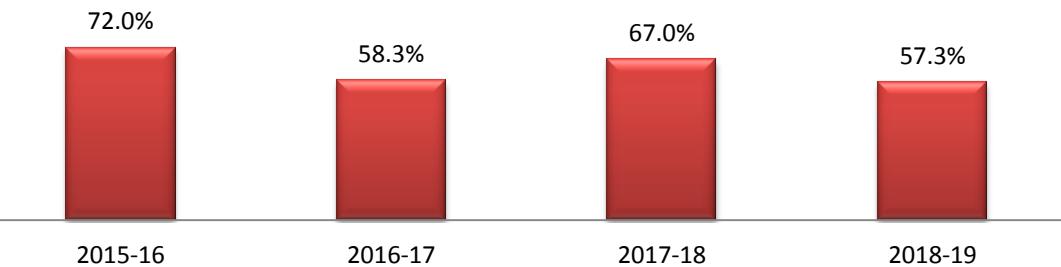


Figure 3: Long Term Stability

- Positively we have however seen a reduction in the number of children with missing episodes from 77 (2017-18) to 66 in 2018-19. We have also seen a significant decrease in the number of missing incidences for CLA which has reduced from 506 in 2017-18 to 353 in 2018-19.
- Permanency Planning for all children up to the age of 17 continues to be a priority. All children who have been looked after for more than 8 weeks have a permanency planning meeting scheduled. Permanency Planning meetings continue to take place until permanence is secured. This approach ensures that stability and security in knowing where they will grow up is prioritised for all children and young people in care. By the end of 2018-19 we had secured permanence for 108 children and young people.
- There has been a significant increase in the number of children ceasing to be looked after due to a Special Guardianship Order being made. In 2017-18 11 children were made subject to an SGO. In 2018-19, 21 children were made subject to a SGO. This is an increase of 52%.

The Adoption Score card shows that timescales for children being adopted in Bromley are also improving from a low starting point:

- A1: During 2018/19, the average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family was 450 days. There has been a improvement in the performance of the 3 year average from an average of 560 days (2015-18) to 438 days (2016-19).
- A2: During 2018/19, the average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family was 201 days. The three year average (2016-19) is 171 days. The national average for 2015-18 was 201 days (latest available data).
- A3: 58% of children (2016-19) waited less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family. This is slightly above the 2015-18 national average of 56%.
- An annual programme of accredited training is in place to provide additional support for foster carers. Other sources of support include a Fostering out of hours service which started in July 2018 which will be accessible to carers weekday evenings and 9am to 10pm during Bank holidays and weekends as well as a psychologist from Coram therapeutic services who is now within the fostering service and accessible to carers.

- Whilst recruiting in-house foster carers remains a key priority for Bromley CSC, the number of children in care and the complexity of their needs has resulted in ongoing concerns in relation to placement sufficiency and choice. The table below provides an overview of the placement types used for 2018-19. Positively there has been an improvement in the number of children placed with in-house foster carers and an increase in the number of children who has remained in their extended friends and family network.

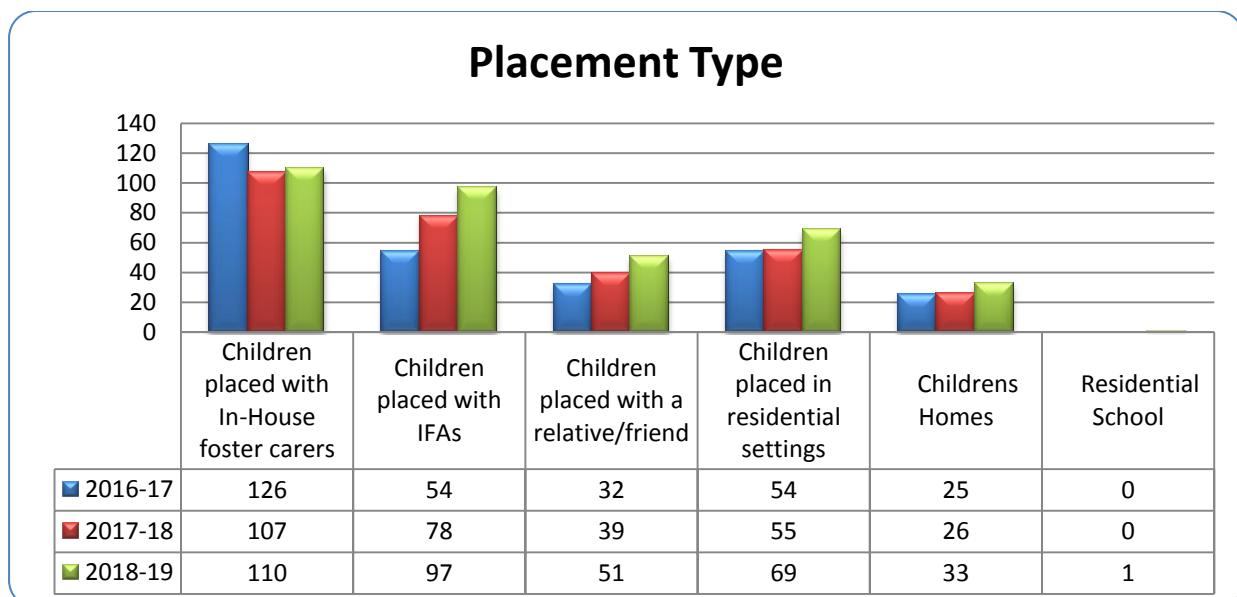


Figure 4: Placement Type

- 15.8% of Children and Young People are placed more than 20 miles away from their home. Whilst this is an improvement from 2017-18, where over 20% of children were placed more than 20 miles out of borough, we still feel that this number is too high. Our Children in Care tell us that they would like to be closer to home and we agree. Both the fostering and commissioning teams are working on strategies to recruit carers, and secure placements closer to home.
- 33% of Care Leavers aged 19-20 are currently residing in Staying Put arrangements. This is above the national average.
- The Leaving Team also works closely with Semi-Independent Providers and Foster carers to ensure that young people are well prepared for Independence. 17% of CLA aged 16+ currently have a permanence plan which supports preparation for Independence.

Actions for 2019-20

- Improve long term placement stability by offering support as soon as placements become fragile.
- Recruit foster carers who are able to manage children with higher levels of need.
- Improve placement sufficiency and choice particularly in relation to placing children and young people closer to home.

Priority 3: Health and Wellbeing

Each child and young person should enjoy good health and emotional wellbeing through a range of health services and activities

In 2018-19:

- 100% of children looked after under 5 had a health check.
- 91% of children looked after over the age of 5 had a health assessment. This is lower than last year when 95% had an up to date health assessment. We know that the reasons for delayed assessments include – children and young people being placed more than 20 miles away, availability of interpreters for Unaccompanied minors and older young people refusing to undertake a health assessment. In 2018-19 there were also some changes in the staffing arrangements for the specialist nurses for CLA. This has now been resolved and permanent specialist nurses are in post for children looked after to ensure that they are up to date with health checks and assessments
- 91% of children looked after had an annual dental check. This is an improvement from 2017-18 where 88% had a dental check.
- The emotional well-being of children in care and care leavers is a significant area of concern particularly given their experiences of trauma. SDQs (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires) is method of establishing emotional well-being. In 2017-18 the average SDQ score for children and young people in care in Bromley was 16.7. A score over 16 places a child/ young person in a banding with elevated concerns around their emotional well-being. Positively, this score has reduced to an average of 12.9 in 2018-19. A score between 0-13 indicates a normal range. The overall improvement in the scoring for Children Looked After is in line with the positive well-being indicators identified in the Brightspots Survey for Children in Care. For Care Leaver, emotional well-being continues to be worrying particularly as a number of care leavers have raised concerns about loneliness and social isolations, poor support networks and not feeling safe at home.

- In ensuring that children and young people have good access to support for emotional wellbeing, Specialist Community CAMHS has worked with Children's Social Care to plan clinical in-reach to the Children Looked After teams. The CLA and Care Leavers Service and CAMHS held the first Lunch and Learn Session in February 2019 and CAMHS have agreed to deliver consultation sessions to support social work staff.
- A CAMHS task and finish group was established in 2018-19 to consider how best to improve services to children in care and care leavers. Unfortunately, due to changes in staff in the CCG this group did not meet regularly and further work is now being undertaken to consider improvements required for children in care and care leavers. There is a clear gap in services delivery for Care Leavers, in relation to their mental health and emotional well-being, and this is being considered in the Health and Well-being subgroup which will report to the Corporate Parenting Board. .
- 25 CLA have been identified to have some concern around substance misuse. This is an increase of 1 young person since 2017-18 although there has been a sharp increase in substance misuse concerns over the past 4 years rising from 12 children to 25. This may be in line with an older cohort of CLA. Of the 25 young people where there are concerns, 16 have been offered interventions, although only 8 have taken up this offer.
- All Children Looked After aged under 18 and their carers have access to the Bromley Mytime Leisure Pass. This offer has been extended until September 2019 and is reviewed periodically. The Leaving Care Team spot purchase Leisure passes for Care Leavers. Bromley Mytime have also extended passes to children of young parents (care leavers). This offer has been well received by our young parents who have taken up opportunities to use the soft play area. Bromley Mytime have also generously offered LinCC and the Care Leavers forum opportunities to use to bowling lanes at The Pavilion. This offer has helped care leavers in particular to address some concerns around loneliness and social isolation.
- Care Leavers have reported that they do not find the current format of Health histories helpful. A revised Health Summary is also one of the recommendations made by Ofsted. A new approach currently being explored by the Health sub-group of the Corporate Parenting Board and a suitable alternative will be identified in the next 3-6 months

Actions for 2019- 2020

- Improved health interventions for Care Leavers in relation to physical health and mental health services. Consideration to be given to extending services of the CLA nurses in line with the extended duties to care leavers.
- Revised health summaries to be provided to Care Leavers.
- Bespoke outreach Substance Misuse services to be identified for CLA and Care Leavers.
- Extended Leisure offer for Care Leavers to be considered.
- Improvement in CAMHS access to CLA and a clearer offer to Care Leavers.

Priority 4: Education, Training and Employment

Young people will be helped to achieve their full potential in education and leisure activities and participate in training, work experience and employment.

As at the 31st March 2019, 208 Children Looked After of Statutory School age (5-16 years old) and 91% of CLA were making expected progress in school.

The Virtual School Head teacher and her staff are very knowledgeable about the different circumstances of all looked after children and young people. They intervene with schools where needed and are particularly mindful of the challenges for school transition, they seek to ensure placement stability and advocate well for young people.

- Most Bromley Children looked after are settled in their education settings and are making good progress. Our data shows that 75% of our children had only one school place in the last 2 years: (61%) or have had only one, positive, change of school (a further 14%) as a result of a move to permanence or a planned move to a more appropriate education provision.
- The Virtual School is consulted when a child needs to move schools because of a placement change and works hard to minimize possible gaps in education. Education Advisers visit schools all over the country to secure admissions and facilitate consultations for children with EHCP plans. Bromley admissions service works in partnership with the virtual school and has on only one occasion in the last five years had to instruct. It can sometimes be a little more challenging working with other local authorities and schools outside Bromley but the Virtual School offers support pre and post admission and generally meets with a favourable response.
- We work closely with designated teachers to ensure that we receive high quality and timely information from schools in PEP meetings. This allows the Virtual School to track and monitor the achievement of children, providing timely support and interventions where necessary. We also provide training to support designated teachers.
- The timeliness and quality of PEPs have improved, demonstrating a greater degree of engagement of social workers and schools in the PEP process. 93% of our children of statutory school age had 3 PEPs last academic year. This reflects the increased training offer for social workers and better tracking.
- **Academic outcomes 2019-19 (provisional)**
- The KS 2 cohort is so small as to render the data statistically insignificant but it is not so for the individual children. 5 of the reporting cohort of 9 children who ended YR6 in July 2019 have EHC plans and a further one is

under statutory assessment. 4 are deemed to be below the level of assessment. 4 children in this cohort achieved the expected standard in reading and grammar, punctuation and spelling (GPS). 3 achieved the expected standard in maths.

- We are mindful of the need to ensure a smooth transition to secondary school for our children and their stories being fully understood in their new settings. The Virtual School ensured that a PEP meeting was chaired by an Education Adviser for every Year 6 child and attended by the receiving secondary school. All of the autumn term PEPs in the secondary schools have also taken place with the education adviser present to ensure consistency.
- Following the second year of the 16+ Transition Project, 91% of that cohort has progressed to secure post-16 provision. This is an increase of 7% from last year's figure and a total of 13% across the 2 years. This work is extremely important for children looked after, who may not achieve in school during YR11 (or who may not have been attending) but who can thrive in a post-16 learning environment and be able to catch up with their peers. Our expectation is that supporting young people to achieve secure and appropriate post-16 provision will eventually lead to higher numbers of young people remaining in education, training or employment (ETE) post 18.
- A partnership with Fresh Start in Education during the spring and summer terms 2018 provided intensive support to YR11 students making choices about post-16 progression, ensuring that all students had a secure and appropriate offer of a place for September 2018.
- In 2018-19 16 CLA had fixed term exclusion. The impact of exclusions contributes to poor education outcomes. The Virtual School and social workers are however proactive in meeting with schools to ensure that more can be done to support children and young people in school.
- In 2018-19, 6 children had 3 or more school moves. It hoped that as longer term placement stability improves, education stability will also improve.
- The Bromley Education Business Partnership works with children looked after and care leavers through the Entry to Employment Panel which was established in May 2018 to identify work experience and apprenticeship opportunities for individuals. Further work took place over the Summer 2018 to provide work experience and apprenticeship placements. This has resulted in 11 young people applying for and being offered an apprenticeship interview and 2 work experience placements over the summer.
- 7% of Care Leaver were in Higher education compared to the National Average of 6%. 8 Care Leavers started university in September 2018.

- 38% of Care Leavers were considered to be NEET. This was lower than the national average of 39%. We are expected to see further improvements in this area as the LA is currently part of an Innovation Fund Programme sponsored by the DFE. The I-Aspire programme provides long-term 1-to-1 and group-based support for young people referred to the programme. This will be done primarily through Progression Coaches and ETE workers employed by DePaul. The Progression Coaches and ETE workers will work alongside YPAs and Social Workers to ensure that young people receive a co-ordinated and intensive level of support which will encourage engagement and improve long term outcomes in education training and employment. In Bromley we have identified 85 young people suitable for the programme and it is hoped that by September 2019 we will start seeing a significant improvement in the number of young people who are not in education, training or employment.
- The Virtual School, CLA & Care Leavers service and Fostering team continue to fund extra mural activities for children and young people in line with their interests and talents. The Virtual School also continues to use the Pupil Premium grant to provide targeted support and tuition where necessary as well as to support the wider interest of children and young people.
- In March 2019, Amey agreed to offer two Care leavers employment opportunities. These posts were ring-fenced for care leavers and this is the first opportunity offered by one of our partners. A joint arrangement was agreed between the AD for Culture, Renewal and Recreation, the Account Manager for Amey and the Head of Service for CLA and Care Leavers. Amey have put in place a creative and encouraging support package which highlights the spirit of corporate parenting and ensures that our young people are supported both in relation to work and personal development. More experienced Amey workers will offer our care leavers mentoring, opportunities to learn new skills and ensure that day to day support is in place. They will also be role models and use this opportunity to raise aspirations for our young people. Amey have also agreed to work closely with the YPAs in the Leaving Care Team to ensure that employment is sustained and that any challenges arising will be addressed as soon as possible. This approach will ensure that our young people are well supported.

The offer and support from Amey is an outstanding example of how our partners can support us in improving outcomes for our young people and this this approach sets an example for further opportunities in 2019-20

Actions 2019-20.

- Further work to be undertaken to prevent fixed term exclusions and persistent absence
- The Corporate Parenting sub-group for Education and Employment to champion apprenticeships and employment opportunities for care leaver within the councils and partner agencies.
- Further support to be offered to children in KS4.
- Extension of leisure support for Care Leavers.

Priority 5: Transitions and Independence

Young people need to be supported at all stages of transition especially when moving to adulthood. This includes helping them to develop the skills to live independently

- All Care Leavers have an allocated YPA. Pathway Plans are updated at least every 6 months. YPAs also continue use the Independence Tool Kit to assess readiness to live independently. In 2018-19 over 90% of Care Leavers had an up to date Pathway Plan.
- The Local Offer for Care Leavers was published in September 2018. The Care Leavers Service wrote to all Care Leavers providing them with written information about services available to them.
- Care Leavers hosted a Roundtable discussion and dissemination event in response to the finding of the Brightspots “My Life Beyond Care

Survey". This was the first event hosted by Care Leavers and engagement from staff and partners was well received.

- There has been an improvement in the number of care leavers who remain in touch with the LA. Improvements in service delivery and relationships with YPAs has meant that young people have opted for continued Leaving Care Services. Ongoing support helps young people transition more successfully to independence.
- Of the 193 Care Leavers currently receiving a service:
 - 93% of 17-18 year olds are in suitable accommodation. This is similar to performance in the previous year.
 - 81% of 19-21 year olds are in suitable accommodation. 5 Care Leavers are currently in custody and these impacts on the indicator for suitable accommodation. There has however been a 6% improvement in this area.
 - 33% of Care Leavers are currently in Staying Put arrangements. This is above the national average of 26%
 - 13 Care Leavers moved into their own home and started a first time tenancy. The Housing team and Leaving Care Service work closely together and young people have been positive about their experience of moving into their first home.
- A local protocol is in place with DWP which means all young people have an interview with a specialist work coach and arrangements are in place to ensure a 'no sanctions' approach for care leavers. At age 18, advance claims for benefits, and transitional payments to support the transfer on to Universal Credit if necessary are currently in place.
- Further clarification is needed from Health about a bespoke offer for Care Leavers. Similarly, further work needs to be undertaken in relation to the offer from Adult Social Care and Mental Health Services for 18-25 year olds. Only 2% of Care Leavers are currently open to Adult Services. This is far too low given the trauma and complexity of their needs. Many young people have indicated that they would benefit from more support in relation to their physical health and emotional well-being.

Actions 2019-20

- **Revise and Relaunch a Multi-Agency Local Offer for Care Leavers.**
- **Confirm arrangements for addressing the health and emotional well-being needs for Care Leavers.**
- **Deliver a group work programme to support further improvements in transitions to independence.**

7. Summary of achievements.

2018-19 has seen a rise in our CLA and Care Leavers Population. Despite the increased numbers, it is evident that we have continued to make progress in achieving positive outcomes in all areas for children and young people in our care and care leavers. We have delivered on all priority areas set out in the 3 strategies underpinning the work with children looked after and care leavers and we hope that 2019-20 will see further improvements and that our children and young people will continue to tell us that we are delivering on our corporate parenting duties. In the spirit of being the best corporate parents possible, we have revised our Pledge to our children and young people and this captures our vision for the coming year.

