

**Decision Maker:** CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND FAMILIES POLICY  
DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> September 2022

**Decision Type:** Non-Urgent                      Non-Executive                      Non-Key

**Title:** CORPORATE PARENTING UPDATE REPORT AUGUST 2022

**Contact Officer:** Cathy Lloyd-Williams, Head of Service for Children in Care and Care Leavers  
Tel: 0208 461 7792 E-mail: [cathy.lloydwilliams@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:cathy.lloydwilliams@bromley.gov.uk)

**Chief Officer:** Richard Baldwin, Director of Children, Education and Families

**Ward:** All Wards

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## 1. REASON FOR REPORT

This report is to provide a mid-year update of the progress of Children in Care and Care Leavers in Bromley and identify progress made against the outcomes identified in the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

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## 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Committee note and comment on progress made towards the actions identified in the Corporate Parenting Strategy as laid out in the outcomes and evaluation section of this report.

## Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. Summary of Impact: Our looked after children and care leavers remain one of the most vulnerable groups in our community due to their adverse childhood experiences. The report details work undertaken to offer services and support to improve outcomes for these children and young people.
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## Transformation Policy

1. Policy Status: Not Applicable =:
  2. Making Bromley Even Better Priority (delete as appropriate):  
(1) For children and young People to grow up, thrive and have the best life chances in families who flourish and are happy to call Bromley home.
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## Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Not Applicable:
  2. Ongoing costs: Recurring Cost:
  3. Budget head/performance centre:
  4. Total current budget for this head: £
  5. Source of funding:
- 

## Personnel

1. Number of staff (current and additional):
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours:
- 

## Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Non-Statutory - Government Guidance:
  2. Call-in: Not Applicable: No Executive Decision
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## Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: N/A
- 

## Property

1. Summary of Property Implications: N/A
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## Carbon Reduction and Social Value

1. Summary of Carbon Reduction/Sustainability Implications: N/A
- 

## Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users or customers (current and projected):
- 

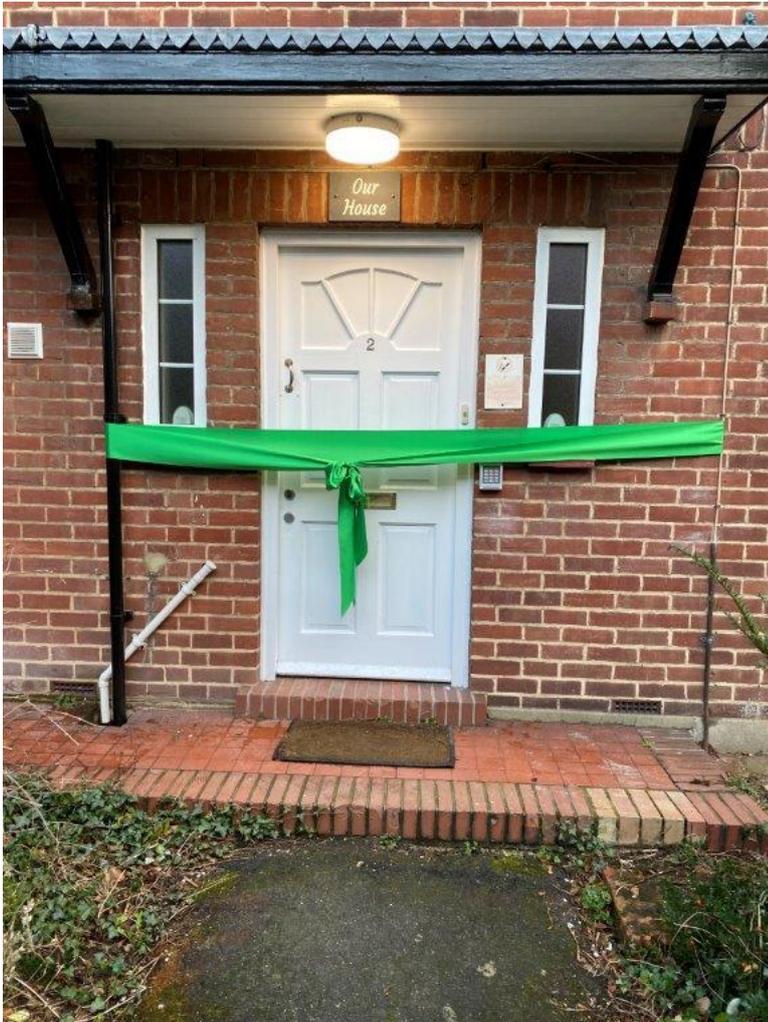
## Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: N/A

### 3. COMMENTARY

3.1 From the time of the last report in January 2022 when we were emerging from the Omicron Variant of Covid, life has increasingly returned to normal, and all our children and young people are visited face to face and staff returning to the office in the Civic Centre allows us more opportunities to meet parents, carers, and young people in person. This has allowed the team to prioritise in-person service meetings and supervisions to focus on staff development and support as part of our Covid recovery strategy.

3.2



We have been hugely fortunate to hold the grand opening of 'Our House' on the civic site in April 2022. This is a three-bed house which had been previously used by IT for many years which was redecorated and modernised by generous support from the Council. Our House is now being used for group work, to host the Children in Care Council and Care Leaver Forum and offer space for our dining club. The aim is to give our young people a sense of home and belonging on site where we can engage and support young people in creative ways that develop confidence and self-esteem.

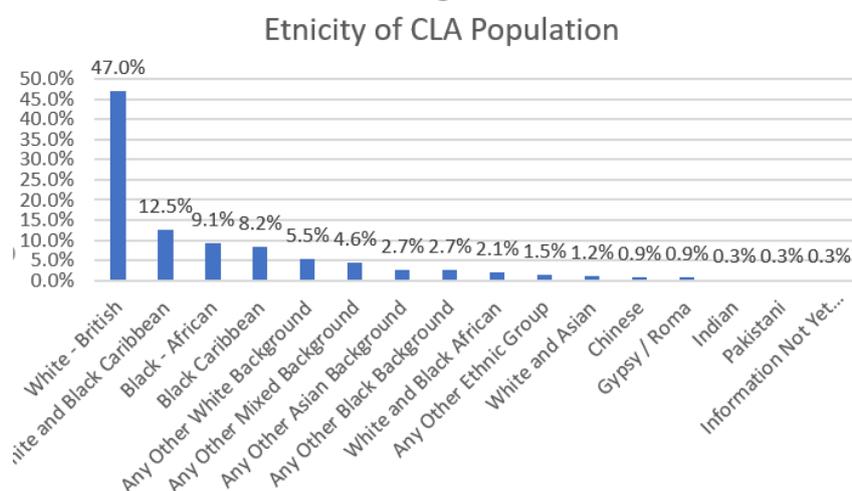
3.3 As a Service there was some considerable change in personnel following the easing of the pandemic with staff developing plans which they had placed on hold for the two years of Covid. managers in the Children Looked After (CLA) Service have worked hard to ensure all new staff are in fact permanent and able to commit to enduring relationships with our young people to develop the best service possible.

3.3 Performance remains strong. Visits to Children Looked After happen within statutory guidance at 95% across all the Services. 89% of Pathway Plans have been completed within the last 7 months, but this figure does include young people who return for a service aged over 21 whose case may have been closed for over a year, which does skew the data. Care Leaver contacts are at 86%. We continue to work with staff and the Performance Team to ensure workers are consistently meeting our key performance indicators. Children's Social Care are ambitious to deliver excellent services consistently to all children. Managers and senior managers are frequently dip sampling and auditing to provide feedback to our staff in order to support this ambition.

### 3.4 IMPACT ON VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN: Children Looked After

3.4.1 At the end of June 2022 Bromley had 336 Children in Care, which is a slight increase from 327 at the time of the January 2022 report but roughly in line with 338 at the end of March 2021. Bromley's rate of Children Looked After per 10,000 has historically always been significantly below the national average. In 2019-20, our rate was 44 per 10,000 compared to the national average of 64. This figure remained static over 2020-21 although there has been a slight increase to 45 per 10,000 in June 2022.

3.4.2 Of our Children Looked After 61% are male and 39% are female. There is a slight increase in the proportion of boys in care compared with 58% male in March 2021. This is in part a reflection of the small rise in unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) of whom we now have 12 young people under 18 in this cohort compared to 3 in March 2021. This is as a result of the Government making dispersal of young people mandatory across all Local Authorities in November last year. This population is traditionally male given the huge risks in completing lengthy journeys from countries in conflict. UASC now make up 3.5% of our Children in Care. However, boys are also more vulnerable to reception into care due to offending behaviour and criminal exploitation within the UK which is also contributes to their over representation in care. The proportion of children from Black and Minority Ethnic Children in Care has risen compared to last year. Currently 53% of our in-care population are White compared to 58% this time last year. We are currently caring for 12.5% of children with mixed White / Black Caribbean heritage, 9% of children with Black African heritage, 8% of children with Black Caribbean heritage, 5% of children with Other White heritage, 3% of children with Asian heritage, and another 8% of Mixed backgrounds as represented in the chart below. In Bromley, 77% of our population are White British and a further 6% of residents self-classify as White Irish, Traveller, or White Other heritage. We have 5% of people with Asian heritage, 3% Black African, 2% Black Caribbean and 1% Black British/Other, 4% of mixed Black African Caribbean or Asian and White heritage (23% in total from BAME groups). This clearly shows a disproportionate number of children from BAME groups in our community being represented in our care population. There has been work completed by the Bromley Safeguarding Children's Partnership (BSCP) Board and the Youth Justice Board to address disproportionate representation of Citizens of the Global Majority in statutory services. CLA services have also extended training and staff development to ensure



we are addressing the culture and identity needs of young people who do become looked after.

3.4.3 The ages and percentages our Children in Care are stated here: 16% 0–4-year-olds, 14% 5–9-year-olds both of which are in line with national averages. The number of adolescents (10–15-

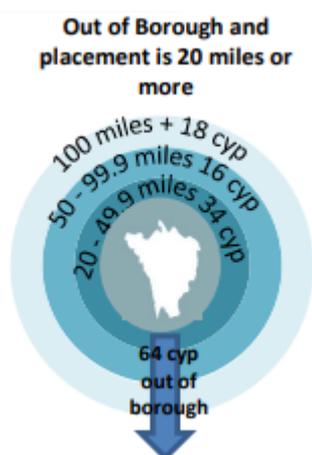
years-old) is currently 40%, remaining slightly above the London average of 39%. Our 16–17-year-old cohort represents 30% of our in-care population which is 7% below the London comparator (37%). This is partly in testament to our Staying Together Team which leads on supporting young people to repair relationships with their birth family and remain in the family home despite challenges that are causing family unrest and unhappiness at the time.

3.4.4 We currently have 233 children in foster placements (69%). This is a slight decrease from 73% (241) of our children at year end 2021. Of that number 101 (30%) are with in-house foster placements which is up from 90 at year end 2021, 92 (27%) in Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements, and 39 (12%) with connected persons / family placements. It is positive that we are supporting more young people to be placed with Bromley carers.

3.4.5 Our residential population increased over the course of the year 2020-21; from 72 at year end March 2021, to 76 as of June 2022. 23 of these young people are allocated Social Workers in the Children with Disabilities (CWD) Service and have profound learning and physical disabilities meaning care remains the most appropriate resource. A further 26 children (aged over 16) are placed in semi-independent accommodation that supports young people who may struggle to settle within a family setting and are working towards independent living. 22 children are placed in residential care due to complex emotional and behavioural needs. We have one child in a welfare secure setting and a further four families in residential assessment centres. All of these placements are kept under frequent review for suitability to meet need through a weekly Placement and Resource Panel which is chaired by the Head of Service and supported by partners in Health (CCG) and the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Service to promote better joint working and explore shared costs.

3.4.6 However, we remain ambitious in our search for long-term fostering options as a step down from residential settings for children with emotional or behavioural needs that may make significant progress in residential care and be ready for a return to family life offered within a fostering placement. The New Horizons Project within the Permanency Service is being supported by practitioners from the THRIVE Therapeutic Service to look at up-skilling carers who can support children exiting from residential care. The stability work force has also undertaken a promotional event in Spring 2022 with IFA fostering partners to strengthen relationships and promote placement choice for children with complex needs. The Associate Director for Children’s Commissioning and our Assistant Directors have met with IFA senior leads and visited residential homes in order to build stronger relationships with key providers.

3.4.7 Our percentage of young people placed 20 miles or more from the borough has slightly increased from 18% to 19%. Whilst every effort is made to keep children closer to home some children are placed at a distance due to safeguarding concerns, particularly those who were being exploited in the community. There continues to be pressure nationally around the sufficiency of placements and this area has been highlighted as requiring some innovative solutions in the Government’s Children’s Social Care Review which was published in May 2022.

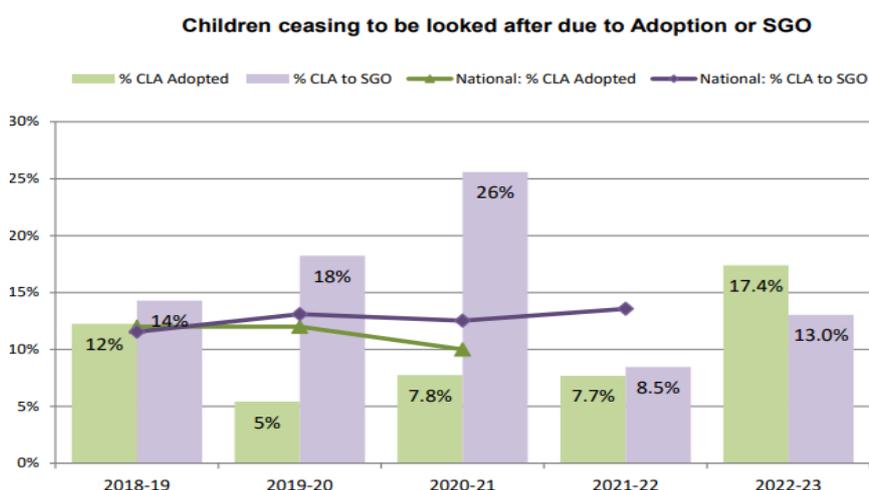


Although Bromley have joined the Commissioning Alliance to improve our opportunities to quality assure providers and centralise referrals, the pandemic and cost of living crisis has seen a number of providers struggle to recruit staff to be able to run placements safely leaving Local Authorities competing over scarce resources. Bromley are running profiling workshops with all staff to improve our quality of referrals and working hard on engagement events with providers to improve placement choice, but this does remain a significant challenge.

3.4.8 We have continued to do well in the area of long-term stability for our children. This is measured by the number of children aged 16 and under who have been in their placement for two years or more. As of March 2020, this was true of 54% of Children Looked After. This percentage rose over the course of the year to 66% in March 2021, and as of July 2022 is 70%. This is in line with national parameters and is testament to the huge amount of work we have undertaken in training staff in the 'secure base' model of care and positive joint work with colleagues in the Permanency Service to create thoughtful and effective support plans for carers when placements become fragile. We have also worked with multi-agency partners such as the Virtual School and education providers to ensure disruptions in education do not impact adversely on placement stability.

3.4.9 The number of young people who have experienced two or more placement moves over the calendar year has also risen from 7% at year-end 2020-21 to 10% which is in line with national averages. Young people experienced fewer moves during both national lockdowns with foster families and young people working together when social restrictions were universally applied but we did see a pattern; as both lockdowns eased difficulties became more openly acknowledged and several long-term arrangements sadly became unstable. We also noted that some young people who have been vulnerable in the community to peer exploitation or negative influence had a period of greater stability when lockdown measures were tightly applied across the country. Since restrictions eased, we have seen greater movement in placements and due to the demands within the placement market we are also seeing some children moving to 'bridging placements' whilst we continue to search for a suitable long-term placement which again impacts on the short-term stability indicator. We work in partnership with Commissioning colleagues in an attempt to identify suitable placements that are only rated "Good" or above by Ofsted and match the young person's needs. Staff work hard to avoid placement disruption and ensure we are doing everything possible to promote a sense of stability and security for our young people.

3.4.10 The number of children leaving care for adoption has remained fairly static for the last three years. We achieved 10 adoptions in 2020-21 compared to 8 in 2019-20. Similarly, the number of days between a child entering care and being placed for adoption has varied from 427 to 431 since 2019. There was a noticeable drop in the number of children placed for adoption and placed with carers under Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) in 2021-22. This is in part due to an unprecedented delay in court proceedings being finalised due to the pandemic. There has however been an overall reduction in the number of SGOs achieved from 27 in 2019 to 11 in 2022. New practice guidance was published in March 2021 by the Public Law Working Group which underlined the importance of the child having lived with the relative for one year prior to the making of the Order. This has led to the lengthening of care proceedings as these arrangements are monitored and reviewed to ensure they meet the child's needs.



### 3.5 Health

3.5.1 By July 2022 88% of our Children Looked After had received a health assessment in the calendar year. This should rise month on month to ensure we achieve 100% of health assessments for all Children in Care for 12 months plus by year end. 90% of young people were up to date with immunisations by July which is in fact an increase from 78% at end of year March 2020. The percentage of young people with an up-to-date dental appointment which dropped from 91% in the year 2019-20 to 64% by January 2022 is increasing and now 83% of young people have had a dental check in the last 12 months. The Service is working hard with Health colleagues to improve this figure and we have now built an alert into our database so Social Work staff are also aware of the annual renewal date of the dental check and therefore able to prompt carers to complete. Our admin support is collecting data on all children's health appointments and the Head of Service meets quarterly with CLA Health staff to review the information and ensure a proactive resolution for any child who has not attended their appointments.

### 3.6 Education

3.6.1 CLA Services work closely with the Virtual School to ensure best outcomes for Children in Care. Attendance is back to pre-pandemic levels and Bromley continues to exceed national averages in terms of attainment at GCSE level. This is in part due to initiatives such as Fresh Start and First Star Scholars that we have commissioned to provide opportunity for additional learning and tutoring to raise ambition and improve confidence. This is particularly impressive given 40% (72) of our young people have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and a further 16% (26) of young people require SEN support in school. We have 24 young people in higher education and 6 definite applications for university for this September and a further 5 potential candidates.

Outcomes for CLA	Bromley / National	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Grade 4 and above in English and Maths	Bromley	31.0%	C	38.2%
	National	17.8%	24.3%	28.8%
Grade 5 and above in English and Maths	Bromley	C	C	C
	National	7.2%	10.8%	12.6%
Average Attainment 8 Score	Bromley	19.0	18.6	26.4
	National	19.0	21.3	23.2

3.6.2 Over 70% of our Children Looked After are secondary school and over and 46 children coming into care for the first time were aged between 13 and 17 last year. Some of these children are received into care due to concerns around contextual safeguarding and can be at risk from peers or exploitative adults in the community. This cohort of children is tracked through MEGA (Missing, Exploitation, and Gang Affiliation) Panel.

3.6.3 Children presented at MEGA Panel are all predominantly discussed regarding concerns around going missing and this number has fluctuated over the year. 55% of children presented to the Panel are Looked After. This is primarily due to the additional vulnerability of children living away from their birth family who have experienced previous trauma and abuse. The number of our children who are known to MEGA Panel for concerns regarding gang affiliation has also stayed fairly static at 3. The numbers are low but associated risks of youth violence are significant and we work with statutory and voluntary sector partners to ensure multi-agency plans are in place to increase safety. Bromley have entered into a new programme of support and intervention for this cohort of young people called Your Choice which ensures young people get intensive visiting and Cognitive Behaviour Therapeutic (CBT) support. Initially our Youth Justice Service (YJS) staff were trained in these techniques and now CLA staff have been

trained to deliver this intervention to support some of our most vulnerable young people. This is an initiative in partnership with the Home Office, the London Improvement and Innovation Alliance (LIIA), the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS), and the Anna Freud Centre.

3.6.4 The number of missing episodes for CLA has also risen towards the summer months from 50 in April to 71 in June – mainly due to improved weather and lifting of social restrictions. Some of these missing episodes are tied to concerns regarding contextual safeguarding and some are also linked to unauthorised contact with family members. We risk assess all family contacts to ensure children are having positive contact and work with police, legal, and providers if we need to take emergency safeguarding action. Ofsted noted during the Focused Visit in September 2021: ‘Risks to Children Looked After are clearly understood and responded to well. Strategy meetings are held as required. Children who go missing receive a bespoke response according to their need’.

### 3.7 CARE LEAVERS

3.7.1 As of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, 261 young people were open and allocated in the Leaving Care Service (LCS) in contrast to 244 who were actively receiving services in March 2021, and this is rising exponentially. It is indicative of a strong Service that young people are more routinely choosing to stay in touch post-21. We are currently supporting 47 young people that are aged between 21 and 25. Much of this work involves supporting young people who may be completing university courses but also young people leaving custody or navigating between Adult Mental Health (MH) and Learning Disability (LD) Services. We recognise that the average age of moving out of the family home in London is 24 and with 25% of Care Leavers nationally becoming homeless at some stage in their lives we need to work with our corporate parents to support young people more effectively over a longer period of time. We have created a Transitions Panel to support young people who may have additional needs as a forum to discuss their care plan with colleagues in Adult’s Services and work effectively with Housing colleagues to ensure young people are supported into a tenancy when they are ready to be able to maintain it.

3.7.2 We are required to report on 243 Care Leavers between the ages of 17 and 21. We are in touch with 218. The 25 we are not in touch with is explained below:



There are 7 qualifying young people after their status has changed, as they returned home or were made subject to an SGO.

There are 7 former UASC who are either missing and/or Appeal Rights Exhausted.

There are 5 serving long term prison sentences.

There are 3 who disengaged and are now closed.

There are 3 who transferred from CWD to Adult Learning Disability but not to LCS.

3.7.3 In June 2022 we converted one part time Social Work post to a full time Young Person’s Advisor (YPA) post in the Leaving Care Service to try to manage demand for the Service.

Assistant Director, David Dare; Head of Service, Cathy Lloyd Williams; and Group Manager, Tom Schaub-Jones responded to an Ofsted consultation to consider whether the experience of Care Leavers should be inspected separately to the ILACS full inspection of Children's Services. It is highly likely that this will proceed from January 2023. There is also a new expectation on Services that we will collate data for the Department of Education on our leaving care population up to the age of 25. This data collection will be introduced incrementally by age from 2023.

3.7.4 Currently most young people remain with a Social Worker beyond age 18 partly to preserve established relationships and manage complex needs at their transition to adulthood but there is an expectation from Ofsted that young people will be introduced to the YPA as they turn 16 which will place additional stress on staffing resources. We are introducing a 'Move On' group for young people preparing to transition to the Leaving Care Service where they come and meet staff from the Leaving Care Service. We will however need to consider how to meet demand for dual allocation into the new year.

3.7.5 Our Care Leaver population is also 63% male and therefore young men are disproportionately represented. Young people from Black, Asian, or Mixed heritage origin also represent 48.5% of our leaving care population which is also not representative of the wider demographics of Bromley. This is also a reflection of our UASC population as we are still supporting 81 asylum seekers from countries including Sudan, Eritrea, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Albania, Iran, Iraq, and Kuwait (30% of our leaving care population).

3.7.6 We have 96% of young people in suitable accommodation which again shows improvements from 86% last year and 78% in the previous reporting year. Young people in custody are regarded as not in suitable accommodation and this accounts for all but one of the 5% in unsuitable accommodation. They will remain supported by their YPA and in receipt of a Pathway Plan to help prepare them for release back into the community. We have one young person who chose to return to family and friends after his release from custody and refused a placement. He is now bidding on his own property.

3.7.7 Some of our young people struggle to engage with statutory community mental health teams due to their own adverse childhood experiences which has left them struggling to form trusting relationships and manage regular appointments. We have been fortunate to obtain funding from the CCG and from Public Health to create a full time Mental Health Practitioner post who sits within the Leaving Care Service. The post holder offers support to young people who may struggle to engage with clinic-based support. We successfully recruited in August 2021 and to date 48 young people have been referred for a variety of interventions such as support around anxiety and depression, planning around hospital discharge, and identification of future therapy. The worker also supports the Come Dine With Me group to support young people talking about mental health and wellbeing over a meal. The Come Dine With Me group operates out of 'Our House'. Feedback has been hugely positive about the impact of the role for young people. The funding has now been agreed for a further 12 months by the CCG.

### **3.8 Education Training and Employment (ETE)**

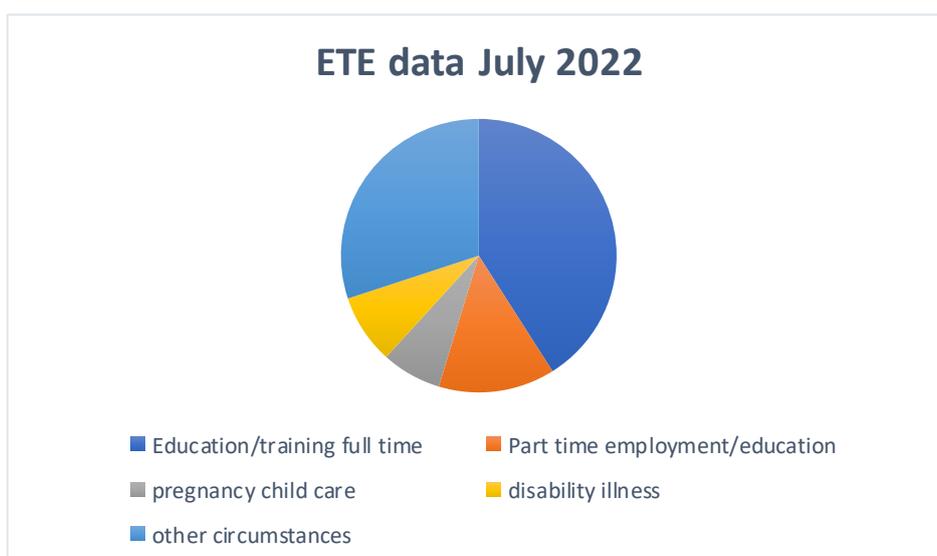
3.8.1 When the first lockdown occurred in March 2020 there was an initial negative impact on ETE as many young people who were on zero hours contracts or casual employment lost out on work. Young people aged 19-21 in ETE in fact dropped to 17% in April 2020. However, we have continued to employ our ETE Strategy of combining work with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), partners in the Bromley Education Business Partnership (BEBP), as well as the Virtual School to identify bespoke opportunities for our young people. We have also run our New Beginnings pre-employment group work programme for young people who have been Not in Education, Training, or Employment (NETE) for over three months. This group ran for the

fourth time in April and 17 young people have attended with 9 young people having secured and maintained full time education or employment subsequently.

3.8.2 We also worked with HR to create Kickstarter opportunities within the council and three of our young people were successfully employed; one as a Market Supervisor, one as a Digital Information Assistant, and another as the Active Involvement Engagement Worker. This programme has now come to an end and the young people were supported by HR and the Active Involvement ETE Worker to build on their confidence and skills and seek alternative employment. Our Care Leaver apprentice / Kickstarter role has gone on to achieve full time work in the Premier Inn. We also have two Care Leavers that have completed their Assessed Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) in Social Work, based in the Youth Justice Service in August 2022 and another Care Leaver completed a Social Work placement in CLA in May 2022. All three young people have returned to offer mentoring support to our Care Leavers aspiring to university at an event curated by the Active Involvement Team.

3.8.3 We have continued to work with partners in the Virtual School, DWP, BEBP, and our accommodation providers to identify suitable work and training experiences for our young people at our weekly Leaving Care Panel. We have slightly changed the focus and scope of the Panel to include a discussion for young people who may be in ETE but could benefit from support to raise ambition levels and ensure they have the right support to sustain jobs or training opportunities. All young people who are NETE still benefit from a pre-meet with our ETE Advisor to identify their skills talents and interests so they can be suitably matched to roles. The Panel also allows us to think holistically about a young person's needs to address any potential barriers to ETE such as unresolved immigration status or unmet mental health needs.

3.8.4 In July 2022 we have 105 out of 262 young people employed in either full time work or study (40%). We have a further 35 (13%) in part time work or study. We have a further 18 (7%) NETE due to pregnancy or childcare, and another 21 (8%) NETE due to disability. Overall, we have 77 (29%) young people who are NETE for other circumstances. This could be due to offending behaviour, unresolved immigration status, or learning / MH need. We continue to offer these young people a high level of tailored support in recognition of the benefits of the role of learning and development in improving wellbeing, increasing financial stability, and building social capital.



### **3.9 PROGRESS OF PRIORITIES AS SET OUT IN CORPORATE PARENTING REPORT 2020-21**

3.9.1 The Bromley Corporate Parenting Board revised the work streams in Easter 2021. The subgroups that had traditionally led on the activity coming out of the Board were reworked into task and finish groups in the hope that they would produce clear outcomes that would make a tangible difference for young people. These outcomes were co-created between the subgroup leads and the young people at the Living in Care Council (LinCC) / Change for Care Leavers (CfCL) residential in Easter 2021. LinCC and CfCL also took ownership of following up on the outcomes of the Bright Spots survey that we ran in conjunction with Coram in 2021 to ensure the services had acted upon the issues raised by our young people. The priorities and subsequent actions are outlined below.

#### **3.9.2 Priority 1: Having a Say**

3.9.3 Children Looked After and Leaving Care Services ran a survey for all of young people over the course of 2021 called 'Bright Spots' in conjunction with Coram. The survey is run nationally and allows us to bench mark our results against other Local Authorities. Senior leaders, young people, and social care staff met at dissemination meetings last year to discuss ideas for practice improvement and the Living in Care Council and Change for Care Leavers Forum have tracked progress on suggestions highlighted below.

3.9.4 The Active Involvement Team in conjunction with our young people have created and delivered a training package for all staff across Children's Social Care and foster carers to focus on the quality of relationships. The session included films the young people had made about race and identity as well as about their care journey. The training was delivered to the CLA Service in March 2022. It has subsequently been delivered to our foster carers, Reviewing Officers, and Social Workers in our Referral and Assessment and Safeguarding Services. The purpose is to highlight the importance of putting children's wishes and feelings at the centre of care planning.

3.9.5 The savings and pocket money policy has been reviewed and new guidelines created in response to concerns raised about young people being able to manage financially into the future. It was agreed all children's savings will be paid directly into savings accounts held by the council to ensure young people have a financial cushion on leaving care in addition to their Setting Up Home Allowance. Previously it was an expectation of carers that they set up and managed a child's savings account. It is hoped this new approach will mean that savings will be guaranteed even if a child has a disrupted care history. This scheme is due to go live in September 2022.

3.9.6 Young people continue to be involved in recruitment activity across Children's Services. Young people were involved in the recruitment for the new Director of Children's Service (DCS) as well as a Placement Officer, Young Person's Adviser, and Team Manager in the CLA Service throughout 2021-22.

3.9.7 The Young Inspectors Programme has continued during 2021 with 5 young people being trained to work alongside our Placement Officer to offer quality assurance feedback around our placement providers. This programme has offered valuable insight into what makes a difference for young people and completed 6 visits to different providers. They are due to present their findings to senior leaders on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

3.9.8 The Group Manager from the Leaving Care Service has also developed the Local Offer for Care Leavers in discussion with the Change for Care Leavers Forum. This involves consideration of revision of funds for the small cohort of young people at university. This will slightly reduce the grant to be more in line with other Local Authorities but also allow us to extend the offer to young people taking access or entry level courses pre-university. With this adjustment we will

create an additional discretionary fund for the wider cohort of young people to set towards driving lessons or additional learning. We are also looking to introduce £25 monthly financial support for young people aged 18-21 in custody who currently are not in receipt of regular monies but remain very vulnerable. The young people felt this was a fairer distribution of funding and were happy to endorse these suggestions. The Leaving Care Service are also exploring extending our Bromley employee benefits to Care Leavers in partnership with local businesses. All the above are being discussed with senior management.

### **3.9.9 Priority 2: Support, Stability and Security**

3.9.10 The support and stability subgroup has continued to look at expanding the offer of support to ensure young people achieve a sense of belonging in placement. The subgroup has agreed to promote the training package devised by the young people to include supported lodgings and IFA carers. The young people will also be involved in the preparatory training for prospective foster carers towards the autumn.

3.9.11 Their second priority has been to develop support to ensure young people leaving care have positive life-long relationships. This need is set out in the Government's Social Care Review and Bromley is taking a proactive approach to this priority. Primarily the THRIVE Service have run a support group for birth parents. This is in response to a request by young people but also in recognition that birth family will always retain huge significance for all our children despite potential adverse experiences at home. We continue to work towards rebuilding and repair of relationships after a child has come into care in the hope that positive contact can be maintained, and parents can get the support they need to better meet their child's needs. This group has so far offered support to 5 parents and will be relaunched in September.

3.9.12 The Leaving Care Service and Permanency Service have also developed better support for Staying Put Carers. This has involved a training programme and monthly support groups to ensure more carers are willing to support young people post-18 to remain in family-based placements. We currently have 25 young people in staying put arrangements which is fairly consistent year on year.

3.9.13 Lastly the subgroup have been in discussion with the Southwark Leaving Care Service about their 'lifelong links' programme. This scheme supports young people to identify and seek out helping adults with whom they want to sustain a relationship. This could be a former carer / teacher / youth worker who could offer positive support to a young person transitioning into adulthood. The subgroup are exploring ways in which a similar project could be set up in the Leaving Care Service.

### **3.9.14 Priority 3: Health and Wellbeing**

3.9.15 The health and wellbeing subgroup have two major work streams. These include a project around achieving free prescriptions for young people in care. This is being led by the Designated Nurse for CLA and partners across London.

3.9.16 The subgroup are also leading on the Come Dine With Me club for Care Leavers. The aim was to reduce social isolation and create opportunities to come together over a meal with Health professionals and talk about healthy eating and positive wellbeing. There have been three sessions so far. The last ran on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> July with 8 Care Leavers and one corporate grandchild receiving a Sunday Roast at 'Our House'.

3.9.17 We ran a programme of in-person social events over summer 2021 including a film project, a photography project, a wellbeing week, and Care Leavers Week including a trip to Brighton to offer young people opportunities to make friends and reduce isolation. We also partnered with

the Churchill Theatre to run a drama project where young people created a drama piece to present to their carers. All events were highly successful and received positive feedback. We also ran in-person events for Black History Month including a film night and a Come Dine With Me experience. We are all set to run a similar programme of events over summer 2022 and are excited to hold our first in-person Corporate Parenting Fun Day at London South East College (LSEC) in July 2022.



We were also delighted that our Celebration of Success event was able to take place in-person in conjunction with LSEC in October 2021. All the young people attended and received an award from the Mayor noting their academic and personal achievements over a challenging year.

### 3.9.18 Priority 4: Education, Training, and Employment

3.9.19 Ongoing work with the DWP, Virtual School, Active Involvement Team, BEBP, and Targeted Youth Support has seen ETE levels rise. As of January 2022, we have 70% of our Care Leavers in full or part time ETE. We will continue to partner with the Virtual School as young people receive their GCSE and A Level results in August 2022.

3.9.20 The ETE subgroup have also successfully created a mentoring scheme for young people aspiring to professional careers or university education. Out of an initial cohort of 9 we have four young people successfully partnered with a mentor that matches their chosen career path.

### 3.9.21 Priority 5: Transitions and Independence

3.9.22 Bromley joined the Care Leaver Covenant in October 2021 when they presented at the Corporate Parenting Board. This affords our young people pan-London opportunities such as access to work and training placements, access to discounts and offers for mobile technology, as well as access to counselling support.

3.9.23 The Leaving Care Service have created a 'moving on group' which has now run twice over the last 12 months. The Senior YPAs devised the group and offered sessions focused on support for young people moving into their own tenancy. This included workshops around budgeting, managing relationships, and housing rights and entitlement. We are now looking to run our first Move On group for young people moving from the CLA Service to the Leaving Care Service in October 2022 to meet the team and offer advice and support around transitions to adulthood.

3.9.24 The young people identified that they would welcome additional practical support when moving into their own tenancies, for example with putting up shelves or changing fuses. The transitions

subgroup are looking into partnerships established through the Care Leaver Covenant to identify a mechanism to provide this support in conjunction with private providers. The subgroup have also ensured that all young people moving into their own tenancy receive support through the Clarion Tenancy Sustainment teams as well as ensuring all young people have access to the 'Home Truth's House' training video. The Service is also working on an information pack accessed by QR code to include practical support available.

### 3.10 CONCLUSION

3.10.1 It has been a year of continuous development for the CLA and Leaving Care Services in response to feedback from young people. This is despite challenges around turnover of staff and changing risks around Covid. 'Our House' has been a fantastic addition to our service and allowed us to offer creative ways to engage our young people. Our Local Offer and participation programme demonstrate Bromley's commitment to improving outcomes for our young people. We are looking to roll out the Bright Spots survey again towards the end of the year which will enable our young people to feedback to us about our progress so far and develop the Services in response.

<b>Non-Applicable Sections:</b>	Financial Implications, Personnel Implications, Legal Implications, Procurement Implications, Customer Impact Implications, Ward Councillor Views
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	[Title of document and date]