

Agenda Item 26.

TITLE	Annual Review of the Corporate Parenting Board
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 2 September 2015
WARD	None specific
DIRECTOR	Judith Ramsden, Director of Children's Services

SUMMARY

Wokingham Borough Council is committed to being an outstanding corporate parent, and has a legal responsibility to children in care and those leaving our care. The Annual Corporate Parenting Board provides assurance that we are making progress towards that goal.

The Annual Corporate Record report sets out how Wokingham Borough Council has worked to fulfil its responsibilities over the last year using both qualitative and quantitative data and the feedback of the children and young people in our care and those who are currently leaving care.

The report provides the rationale for the Corporate Parenting Boards strategy in 2015/16.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To present to the Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2014/15 as part of our assurance to Corporate Parenting Board of delivery and impact for Children in Care

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the annual review of the Corporate Parenting Board report be confirmed and noted.

Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report and Impact Statement 2012 – 2015

1. Introduction

Wokingham Borough Council is committed to being an outstanding corporate parent, and has a legal responsibility to children in care and those leaving our care. As Corporate Parents we must replicate the care and support provided by a 'good enough parent'. We do not underestimate the challenges this poses but we know that for our children in care and care leavers, their experiences in early childhood and through their teenage years are critical in shaping their future happiness and setting the foundations for what they can achieve throughout their adult lives. Good parenting is vital, which is why the role of Corporate Parent is one of the central responsibilities of the Council.

In order to demonstrate our commitment to being good corporate parents the Council has made a *Pledge* to the children and young people in its care, adopted a **Care Leavers Charter**, and adopted a **Foster Carer's Charter**.

This report sets out how Wokingham Borough Council has worked to fulfil its responsibilities over the last year using both qualitative and quantitative data and the feedback of the children and young people in our care and those who are currently leaving care.

The report provides the rationale for the Corporate Parenting Boards strategy in 2015/16.

2. Key information

Corporate Parenting is the term used to refer to the responsibility of the Council to provide the best possible care and protection for children and young people who are "looked after". At the core of this responsibility is the moral duty to provide the kind of support that any good parents would provide their own children.

The Legal Framework: Legislation and statutory and non-statutory guidance covering the responsibilities of local authorities and their partners for children in care is extensive. The legal framework covers all aspects of a child's journey through care, including health, education and ensuring the child's voice is heard in the care process. The framework also includes regulations and guidance relevant to children's homes and fostering services providers. The below pictorial representation of this framework rightly places the looked after child at the centre:



3. Our strategic priorities 2014 - 2015

- i. To ensure the strength and effectiveness of the role of the Corporate Parenting Board thus its impact on the Corporate Parenting function of the Council as a whole
- ii. To strengthen the voice of children in care and care leavers in planning, reviewing and decision making
- iii. To consolidate progress and continue to improve the timeliness of permanency for children in care across the range of permanent options
- iv. To improve provision for care leavers in Wokingham
- v. To improve educational outcomes for children in care and care leavers in Wokingham
- vi. To improve health provision for children in care and care leavers in Wokingham

4. Partnerships

As a good corporate parent, we will use our leadership role in statutory boards to ensure that outcomes for children in care and care leavers are improved year on year. The key to ensuring that children in care receive the best possible service is to

work in partnership with other agencies from the moment children first receive services from us. The below are some of the boards/partnerships that contribute to the quality of service that children in care and care leavers receive.

Health and Wellbeing Board

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 established Health and Wellbeing Boards as a forum where the local leaders from the health and social care system work together to improve the health and wellbeing of their local population and reduce health inequalities.

Wokingham's Health and Wellbeing Board took on its statutory function from April 2013. The Health and Wellbeing board has a Children's and Young Peoples Partnership sub group.

The Health and Wellbeing Board provides oversight and accountability for the "Berkshire Health Strategy for Children in care and Young People 2012 – 2015", which sets out the action plan and priorities for improving the health outcomes of children in care and care leavers.

The Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report goes to Wokingham Safeguarding Children Board. The safeguarding board has a protocol in place with the Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure information is shared and all partner agencies appraised of developments.

Wokingham Safeguarding Children's Board

The Wokingham Safeguarding Children Board works to safeguard children and young people and protect those who are at risk. Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB) were established by the government to ensure that organisations work together to protect children and are regulated by Ofsted. The LSCB scrutinises the safeguarding of children in care, and will hold the CPB to account in this regard. The Corporate Parenting Board will report to the LSCB annually for multi-agency support and challenge. The objectives of the Board as set in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 are;

- To coordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area
- To ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes

The functions of the Board as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 are;

- To develop policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority, including policies and procedures in relation to:

- The action to be taken where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare, including thresholds for intervention;
- Training of persons who work with children or in services affecting the safety and welfare of children;
- Recruitment and supervision of persons who work with children;
- Investigation of allegations concerning persons who work with children;
- Safety and welfare of children who are privately fostered;
- Cooperation with neighbouring children's services authorities and their Board partners;
- To communicate to persons and bodies in the area of the authority the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, raising their awareness of how this can best be done and encouraging them to do so;
- To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of what is done by the authority and their Board partners individually and collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and advising them on ways to improve;
- To participate in the planning of services for children in the area of the authority;
- To undertake reviews of serious cases and advising the authority and their Board partners on lessons to be learned.

Community Safety Partnership

The Community Safety Partnership is made up of the key organisations responsible for keeping the borough safe. The partnership includes: Thames Valley Police, the Borough Council, Thames Valley Probation, Berkshire West Primary Care Trust, Thames Valley Police Authority and Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service. Priorities include hidden crimes and their impact on vulnerable people and their families, which includes work on domestic abuse and hate crime.

Local Family Justice Board

The Family Justice Board was established in March 2012 in response to the Family Justice Review. The Board is supported by a network of 45 Local Family Justice Boards. The aim of Local Family Justice Boards is to achieve significant improvement in the performance of the family justice system in local areas.

This is specifically in relation to implementing the 26 week timescale for completing care proceedings for children. The underpinning principle of this timescale is to achieve a plan for permanency for the child in order to meet their immediate and long term needs.

5. Being accountable to children in care

In 2010, following consultation with the Children in Care Council, Wokingham Borough Council made a pledge to children in care. The Children in Care Council continue to support the validity of the pledge and review the services delivery by asking children in care whether the pledge has been delivered.

In June 2013 the children in care council proposed to the Corporate Parenting Board that a separate and specific pledge to care leavers should be made. The Wokingham **Care Leavers' Charter** was formally adopted in November 2014. A draft version went to the Corporate Parenting Board in 2013 and since that date the service began working to it.

The **Foster Carer Charter** was first developed in April 2012. It was reviewed in April 2014 and sent to foster carers in December 2014.

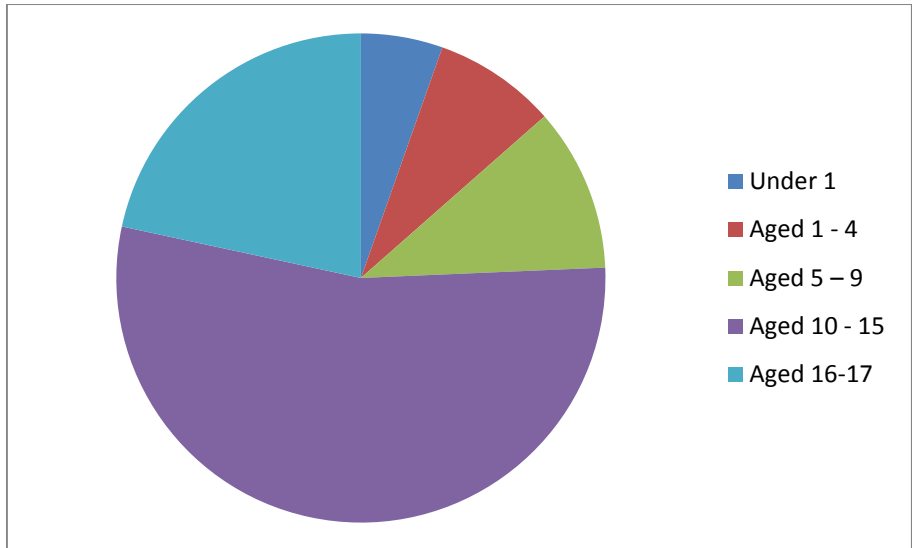
6. Our children in care

Headline data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are the corporate parent to 74 children in our care and 38 care leavers as at March 15 • We continue to care for significantly fewer children per 10,000 than our statistical neighbours , the SE region or England - there is no evidence that this is the 'wrong rate for Wokingham' • We have significantly more boys in our care in the age groups 10-15 and 16-17 • Increase of children subject to care orders in 2013 (2012 was 8) has been maintained • Children subject to section 20/voluntary care arrangements have remained steady over 3 to 4 years • Adoption rates are low

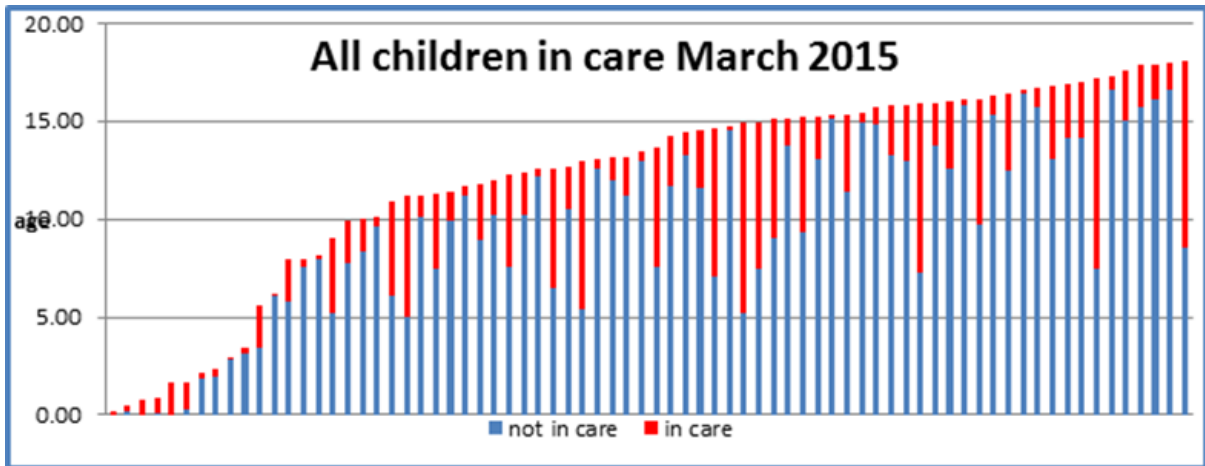
The number of children in care in Wokingham has remained relatively stable for the past few years with the highest number being 86 as at March 2013, and the lowest being 72 as at March 2012. As at March 2015 we have 74 children in our care and 38 care leavers aged under 21.

Children in care: Rate per 10,000 Children				
Area	2011	2012	2013	2014
Wokingham	21.0	20.0	24.0	20.0
SE Region	46.0	47.0	47.0	48.0
Statistical neighbours	37.9	37.8	37.9	39.4
England	58.0	59.0	60.0	60.0

Age Profile of children in care in Wokingham (March 2015)



Wokingham has noticeably reduced the number of younger children in care recently, but the number of children aged over 10 are rising, with children aged 10-15 now comprising over half our children in care.



The above graph shows the time children have spent in care, matched to their age as at March 2015 – the colour change shows when they came into care.

Time in care so far	Number of children as at 31 March 2014	Number of children as at February 2015
Under 1 year	19	24
1-2	24	12
2-3	8	16
3-4	6	4
4-5	3	2
5-6	5	2
6+	10	14
	75	74

The above table show that our children are changing the profile of how long they are staying in care. Although Wokingham has fewer children in care for between 1 and 2 years, we now have more in care for 2 to 3 years.

Ethnicity profile of children in care					
	<u>March 2012</u>	<u>March 2013</u>	<u>March 2014</u>	<u>February 2015</u>	<u>February %</u>
<u>White</u>	63	69	63	65	87.8%
<u>Mixed</u>	6	8	6	4	5.4%
<u>Asian or Asian British</u>	1	5	4	3	4.1%
<u>Black or Black British</u>	0	1	0	0	0.0%
<u>Other ethnic groups</u>	2	3	2	2	2.7%
<u>Total</u>	72	86	75	74	100%

Gender profile of children in care								
	<u>March 2012</u>		<u>March 2013</u>		<u>March 2014</u>		<u>February 2015</u>	
	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>
<u>Under 1</u>	2	0	1	3	0	2	1	3
<u>Aged 1 - 4</u>	8	4	9	4	10	3	3	3
<u>Aged 5 – 9</u>	7	6	6	9	3	3	3	5
<u>Aged 10 - 15</u>	18	8	22	11	23	15	24	16
<u>Aged 16-17</u>	10	9	13	8	12	4	14	2
<u>Aged 18+</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>Total</u>	45	27	51	35	48	27	45	29
	72		86		75		74	

National data shows a mix of around 55% boys and 45% girls, yet Wokingham's data continues to have boys slightly over-represented in the mix of children currently in care (61% boys and 39% girls). There may be a suggestion that boys in their mid-teens are over-represented.

The Legal Status of our children in care				
	<u>March 2012</u>	<u>March 2013</u>	<u>March 2014</u>	<u>February 2015</u>
<u>Care order – interim</u>	17	18	13	6
<u>Care order – full</u>	30	38	36	38
<u>Vol agreement under s20</u>	22	29	21	28
<u>Freed for adoption</u>	0	0	0	0
<u>Placement order</u>	3	1	5	2
<u>On remand, detained etc</u>	0	0	0	0
<u>Emergency order or police protection</u>	0	0	0	0
<u>Total</u>	72	86	75	74

7. Delivery against Corporate Parenting priorities

(i) To ensure the strength and effectiveness of the role of the Corporate Parenting Board and thus its impact on the Corporate Parenting function of the Council as a whole

As identified below, the Corporate Parenting Board have regularly reviewed a number of items in order to monitor progress and improvement. The below table captures the information and inputs received, which support the Board to fulfil its duties;

CPB Date	Inputs and information received
June 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering update, recruitment and end of year report • Independent Reviewing Officer Service annual report for 13/14 • Child Sexual Exploitation and children missing from care report • Presentation regarding Child and Adolescent Mental Health services • Corporate Parenting Board strategy and annual report
September 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wokingham adoption agency service update. Including future development plans • Evaluation of the education of children in care for the academic year 13/14 • Examination of results for children in care for the academic year 13/14 • Refresh of strategy and education action plan • Presentation about the 'ask me about fostering' campaign • Service Quality Improvement Plan for children in care and children on the edge of care • Wokingham Safeguarding Children Board annual report 13/14
November 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusion protocol and guidance, pupil progress for 13/14, children in care education team action plan for 14/15 • Presentation about the consultation and engagement of children strategy • Children in care pledge update • Presentation about the annual review and update of the Children in Care Council • Adoption scorecard information including timescale compliance update • Progress update of the permanency project for children in care

January 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 monthly update presentation regarding quality assurance of service for children in care • Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust presentation about health update • Care placement and education placement stability presentation • School attendance and exclusions presentation about themes and emerging issues • Update on pupil performance at key stage 2 and 3 • Update on laptop/electronic social media communications provision for all children in care/care leavers aged 16 years and over
March 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School attendance and exclusions themes and emerging issues presentation • Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust presentation about health update • Care Leader Pledge review • Young people's housing strategy • Recruitment and Retention strategy • Created the virtual School report

(ii) To strengthen the voice of children in care and care leavers in planning, reviewing and decision making

Wokingham Council is fully committed to putting the experience and feedback of our children in care and care leavers at the heart of our system in order to inform service improvements and strategic priorities, and to ensure a meaningful connectivity and accountability to our children. Information regarding children missing from care is included in the missing children annual update to the LSCB found in appendix 1.

What has gone well in 2014/15?

- The Children in Care Council tell us that we have delivered on the pledges we made in the **CIC Pledge** and the **Care Leavers Charter**
- Adoption of care leavers pledge which was reviewed at the March 2015 Corporate Parenting Board
- An interactive session with children in care and care leavers with officers and members in attendance was facilitated as an open day on 29th October 2014 hosted by the Children in Care Council.
- Listening events between senior officers within the Social work service and the Children in Care Council continued to underpin service and policy changes and developments and proved useful in testing the implementation and take up of previous service changes
- A commissioned Independent Visitor (IV) Scheme started in October 2014; there are 8 IV's due to be approved and matched to specific children in care.

- Commissioning of National Youth Support Agency (NYASS) to provide and support any children in care or care leavers who go missing , upon their return to ensure timely and independent assessment of the underlying reasons
- Work to strengthen the strategic and operational approach regarding the work to identify and safeguard children in care who are at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Strengthened the CSE framework and training
- Work to strengthen the targeted youth support service to meet the holistic needs of children in care and care leavers
- The restorative approach adopted within the children's rights service and the social work service has led to early and respectful resolution of issues that children in care have raised about the quality of their care, the service they receive or issues in general
- Strengthened Targeted Youth Services offer
- Positively discrimination within the new young commissioner (apprentice) programme to ensure 1 of the 3 posts gate kept for a suitably qualified care leaver
- There is a 'you said, we did' response to the May 2014 Children in Care Council consultation contain in appendix 2
- 92.6% of children in care attended or participated in their own review.
- 40 young people accessed 200 pieces of advocacy support
- The Children in Care Council tell us that we have delivered on the pledges we made in the **CIC Pledge** and the **Care Leavers Charter**
- Approx. 93% of statutory visits were on time. Some may not have been on time due to the Easter break and may show as not on time due to delay in recording visits.

Action taken in the year

- The annual survey of Children in Care Council regarding the pledge was conducted in January and presented to the Corporate Parenting Board on 17th March 2015.
- The annual report of the Children in Care Council was presented to the Corporate Parenting Board in November 2014
- The care leaver pledge was developed and adopted in November 2014.
- The annual survey of children in care and care leavers with a focus on safeguarding has been delivered, the Children's Rights Officer Chris Ames carried out consultations in January 2015.
- In January 2015 the Corporate Parenting Board heard that members of the Children in Care Council had taken part in interviews.

What do children in care tell us?

Overall feedback from children in care is positive and tells the Corporate Parenting Board that the promises the Council made to children in care are being delivered on. Issues continued to be raised by the Children in Care Council about the lack of

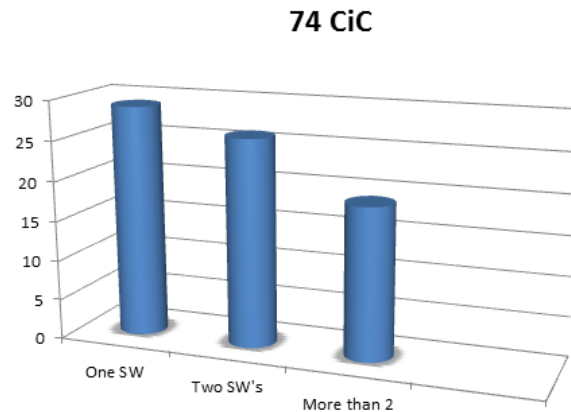
continuity of Social Worker. Creating and sustaining a skilled and stable workforce has been a key priority of 2014/15 within Children’s Services. Please see Appendix 3 for the report on the impact of the new strategic approach to recruitment, retention and training of social workers. Some notable points from some of the consultation work that has taken place includes;

<u>Consultation</u>	<u>What children in care and care leavers told us</u>
Children in care and care leaver safeguarding survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 80% of children feel safe where they live • That 47% of children feel fairly safe in town with the remaining cohort feeling very safe or that it varies • Children felt that drugs, alcohol and bullying were the biggest dangers to people their age • 77% of children felt that they either don’t worry about their safety, don’t worry much, or that it varies • 24 out of 30 young people would go to their social worker if they felt unsafe and 27 out of 30 would go to their foster carer • 55% said they never get bullied
Leaving Care Pledge survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of care leavers who took part in the survey felt; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cared for ○ Positive about the Leaving Care Pledge and said it was being fulfilled ○ Their strengths, gifts and talents were valued ○ Majority felt listened to and that their opinions were respected ○ Majority felt prepared for independent living
Children in care Pledge Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall it was found that the pledge is considered a very useful tool in ensuring that children in Wokingham’s care are supported correctly. The survey identified some issues that individual children have experienced which was useful in itself as they could be individually addressed.

What are we worried about?

- The take up of the Independent Visitor scheme is low/the approval process appears to be slow
- The skilled and well established Children’s Rights and Advocacy Worker is due to retire and we would want to ensure continuity of support for the Children in Care Council and individual young people who need her support

- The number of changes of social worker our children in care have experienced over the last year are as follows; 29 of 74 (39%) have had 1 consistent social worker; 26 of the 74 (35%) have had 2; 19 of the 74 (26%) have had more than 2 social workers in the past 12 month
- The Children's Rights and Advocacy worker is about to retire



Areas for development and next steps

- Commission a children's rights and advocacy service which ensures continuity but also adds capacity and resilience
- Establish a new pathway for children in care and care leavers to the IV scheme to overcome the current system barriers
- Invite a member of the Children in Care Council or care leaver to become a member of the Fostering Panel, the internal 'promoting permanence panel', the management committee of the virtual school, and the challenge sessions that will occur in 2015/16
- Ensure each year the Children in Care Council facilitate one of the social work development sessions or have an input into the cross service day
- Ensure the recruitment of social workers is prioritised for children in care and care leavers
- A programme of life story work that is sustainable and meaningful is needed
- That all managers are asked to ensure that their social workers who are leaving have time to say 'good bye'

(iii) To consolidate progress and continue to improve the timeliness of permanency for children in care across the range of permanent options

The Children in Care Strategy 2012-2015 set out a detailed foster care improvement plan based on audited need; this was further strengthened and invested in, in 2013/14 with the expectation that the impact would be delivered in 2014/15.

Fostering Innovation Project

The Fostering Innovation project in Wokingham which ran between November 2013 and July 2014 showed that we made great progress and measurable signs of improvement.

- In the first two months of 2014-15 enquiries increased by 50% and exceeded our target, and after three months we are on target for year to date.
- Increased attendance at Information Events by 40%. This is a critical indicator, as it measures the quality of enquiries – people who are genuinely interested are far more likely to attend an information event.
- There is a new approval process in place designed to reduce the time taken to approve new carers.

There is an average of 14 cases for full-time workers, which includes initial visits and assessment work. Carers currently receive one to one supervision during a monthly home visit.

Feedback

Consultation meetings were held with Foster Carers in January (17% of WBC foster carers attended) and February 2014 (11% of WBC foster carers attended) to follow up on the Foster Carer survey which took place in 2013. The themes and aim was to address the following;

- Foster Carer engagement in recruitment of more foster carers
- Improving the approval process through feedback from foster carers
- Improving support for foster carers
- Developing opportunities for foster carer consultations through events such as foster carer forum, conferences etc.
- What works well and what needs to change?

A foster carer survey is due at the end of May 2015.

The department have received no complaints about foster carers although have addressed fewer than five issues.

What has gone well in 2014/15?

- 3 of our foster carers stopped being foster carers because they permanently committed themselves to our children in their care and became their adoptive parents or special guardians.
- There is a new Chair of the foster panel and all panel members have been offered training in Signs of Safety
- Refreshed/awareness raising amongst staff regarding the missing from care and CSE policy.

- Feedback and support for the service was received in a live event at Chessington for carers, their own children and our children in care.
- The launch of Adopt Berkshire in February jointly commissioned by four local authorities including Wokingham, Windsor and Maidenhead, Bracknell Forest and West Berkshire. The new Shared Service will enable us to maximise the best practice that previously existed within the four authorities and to be in the strongest position to meet the challenges currently impacting on all adoption services. We expect to increase our recruitment of adopters for older children and sibling groups thus enabling an increased number of our Children in care to be placed within the Berkshire area with all the advantages that this brings, including achieving timely placements. We are also committed to expanding our pool of prospective adopters who are able to take children on a Fostering for Adoption basis, thus facilitating early placement being achieved for more young children.
- Adopted refreshed sufficiency strategy
- Implementation of the fostering innovation project continued in 2014
- Investment in and configuration of a new and dedicated Commissioning Service
- A recruitment strategy was established that involves a joint, “ask me about fostering” marketing campaign which is fronted by a short breaks carer and a new fostering page on Facebook. At March 2015 the scheme had 11 carers.
- The Family Based Short Breaks Service will continue to be a part of Bridges Short Breaks Service but will be working even more closely with the Fostering Service over the coming year as there are clear links and a need to have a continuum of service if children are wherever possible to be maintained within family settings
- Bridges Resource Centre graded as Outstanding by Ofsted
- Significant investment in foster carer training courses in 14/15 which has led to improved short and long term placement stability
- The training included Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy: This is a powerful and effective intervention with carers and child together. Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP) supports children to make sense of their past and has been developed to help children and young people who have been adopted or are in foster care.
- Therapeutic parenting training for all our foster carers based on Nurturing Attachments, as a 5 day programme with each day addressing key points essential in therapeutic parenting.
- The IRO service continues to improve and offered greater continuity of IRO to our children in care
- An INGSON audit in Sept 2014 identified that most of the cases they audited were in stable placements. Improved placement stability with the % children in care with three or more placements during the year reducing from 14% in 2011/12 to 11% in 13/14.
- An audit of case work in the Here4U Team conducted in march concluded that 10 of 13 children’s care plans were of good standard.

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Wokingham	-	-	14.0	12.0	11.0
Stat Neighbour	12.3	11.0	11.2	10.2	11.3
England	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0

Source: DfE Children in care and adoption performance tables

- The number of children in care placed under 20 miles from home remains in line with that of other South East authorities. Wokingham has 68% of its children placed within 20 miles of home compared to a statistical neighbour average of 67.3%, the SE average of 70% and the national average of 77.1%. The Wokingham figure does include SEN boarders for our figures where the child is in care. As the recording of care status for SEN boarders may vary in other local authorities therefore it is unclear whether this is included in their statistics.

	% of LAC placed within 20 miles of home
South East	70
Bracknell Forest	75
Brighton and Hove	81
Buckinghamshire	58
East Sussex	76
Hampshire	67
Isle Of Wight	85 (<i>max</i>)
Kent	71
Medway Towns	74
Milton Keynes	74
Oxfordshire	58
Portsmouth	83
Reading	65
Slough	56 (<i>min</i>)
Southampton	77
Surrey	63
West Berkshire	58
West Sussex	70
Windsor and Maidenhead	79
Wokingham	68

What are we worried about?

- Despite the increase interest and attendance at fostering events, this has not translated into increased recruitment and approvals. Targets for recruitment for foster carers and supported lodgings carers are not met

- Changes of Social Worker during the child's care pathway remain too high, despite improvements
- Access to mental health provision
- A net loss of 10 carers (to adoption, 3 resigned due to personal family reasons and 4 family and friends placements ended)
- The percentage of children placed outside our LA boundary does give rise for some concerns, with Wokingham only placing 30% of children within its boundary (68% placed within 20 miles of home community) compared to a statistical neighbour average of 54.7% and a national average of 58.1%. However this analysis can place smaller unitary authorities at a disadvantage, as can be seen from the SE Regional data:

	% LAC within LA boundary
South East	61
Bracknell Forest	60
Brighton and Hove	37
Buckinghamshire	46
East Sussex	82 (max)
Hampshire	65
Isle Of Wight	81
Kent	77
Medway Towns	52
Milton Keynes	55
Oxfordshire	67
Portsmouth	40
Reading	28
Slough	24 (min)
Southampton	43
Surrey	55
West Berkshire	50
West Sussex	75
Windsor and Maidenhead	30
Wokingham	30

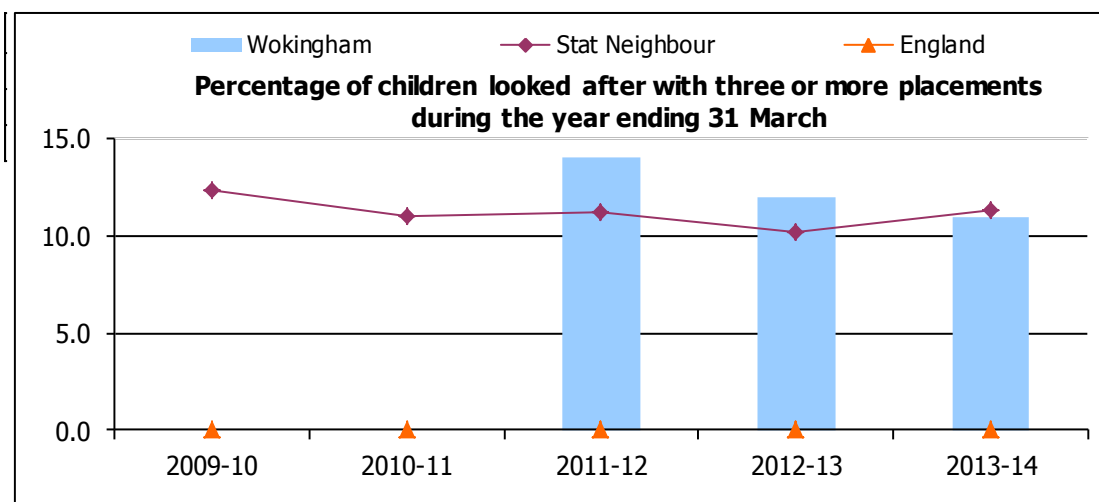
Wokingham's result of 30% is similar to that of Slough (24%), Reading (28%) and Windsor & Maidenhead (30%); perhaps reflecting local difficulty in finding suitable placements in the area. Data on the percentage of children placed more than 20 miles from home and also outside of their LA boundary shows, for our statistical neighbours:

	2012	2013	2014
Hampshire	13.0	14.0	15.0
Windsor and Maidenhead	22.0	13.0	17.0
Hertfordshire	12.0	14.0	17.0
Cheshire East	17.0	16.0	17.0
Bracknell Forest	19.0	17.0	19.0
Surrey	20.0	21.0	22.0
Oxfordshire	18.0	18.0	23.0
Rutland	-	32.0	26.0
Wokingham	28.0	23.0	30.0
Buckinghamshire	25.0	26.0	30.0
West Berkshire	19.0	20.0	32.0
Statistical Neighbours	18.3	19.1	21.8
England	12.0	12.0	13.0

The data around children placed within Berkshire and other authority areas shows as follows;

	Number of children February 2015	%
Placed In Berkshire		
Berkshire	42	56.8%
Placed outside of Berkshire		
Buckinghamshire	1	1.4%
East Sussex	1	1.4%
Hampshire	7	9.5%
Isle of Wight	4	5.4%
Kent	5	6.8%
Middlesex	1	1.4%
Northamptonshire	1	1.4%
Northumberland	1	1.4%
Oxfordshire	1	1.4%
Staffordshire	1	1.4%
Surrey	5	6.8%
Wiltshire	1	1.4%
Worcestershire	1	1.4%
	Total	41.1%
Redacted/Missing	1	1.4%
	74	100%

- The percentage of children looked after who have had three or more placements during the year ending 31st March 2014 has slightly improved although has remained relatively consistent.



Next steps

- Review the best way to ensure sufficiency of foster care and associated flexible care – approach the market to test how to make the significant change needed. Commission a task and finish group of the Corporate Parenting Board to oversee this work.
- Adopt a formal scheme which incentivises foster carers to stay in touch with care leavers who have lived with them and their family
- Invest in foster carers to support young people in life journey work
- Create greater sufficiency of provision locally for children with SEN- alternative provision, support development of 2 local specialist schools, and other specialist and new provision across the County to enable some children to remain at home and or be offered a shared care arrangement. To complete the current alternative provision review.
- The number of children in care placed more than 20 miles from their original home. At present (7th April 2015) the number and % of looked after children placed within the West of Berkshire, or within 20 miles of the West of Berkshire border: 53 (73%)
- The number and % of children placed beyond 20 miles of the West of Berkshire border: 20 (27%).
- Set target to improve/ensure all new short and long term foster placements are within 20 miles of the child's home community.

(iv) To improve provision for Care leavers in Wokingham

In 2014/15 the Children in Care Council facilitated a survey to ask care leavers if the Council has delivered on the promises set out within the **Care Leaver's Charter**. The survey had a 42% response rate. The feedback was generally positive; despite some individual young people being distressingly let down by us in the lack of attention to detail and information sharing in the past about their heritage and life journey.

The areas care leavers need services and support to improve were:

- (1) The expectations of the personal advisors need to be more clearly defined
- (2) That all care leavers files have an up to date genogram added to their files and these are shared with care leavers
- (3) That each care leaver is offered the opportunity to have an appointment with their P.A. in addition to statutory visits, to specifically share any information the young person feels they need about their background.

What has gone well?

- Our care leavers told us that overall the promises set out in the **Care Leavers Charter** have been delivered
- 40% of our care leavers are in education, employment or training. For these individuals this is an achievement
- The Council adopted the Young People's Housing Strategy
- The Staying Put policy was refreshed for launch in April 2015. 4 young people (2 with in house carers, 2 with IFA carers) were in a staying put arrangement in 13/14 and have remained in these arrangements.
- The Launch of Elevate: young people visiting Elevate Wokingham seek advice on education, employment and training. The Elevate Wokingham will:
 - Develop a programme of pre-apprenticeship activities to prepare some of our most vulnerable young people with care leavers as a specific priority group for a Wokingham Borough Council supported apprenticeship.
 - Engage vulnerable young people as soon as possible to offer a variety work experience opportunities at Wokingham Borough Council and with other local businesses
 - Build a robust data base of vulnerable young people who might be suitable for apprenticeships- through links developed with Here4U, YOS, targeted youth service, Families First, Adviza, Optalis and JCP etc.
- Apprenticeships:
 - Wokingham Borough Council Human Resources will notify Elevate Wokingham who will communicate the vacancies to vulnerable young people. Wokingham Borough Council will guarantee various groups such as care leavers an interview.
 - There are currently two care leavers with the council undertaking apprenticeships
 - Refer suitable young people who would be interested in taking on an apprenticeship and offer more support to do so, in order to make a good match.
 - Elevate Wokingham staff will help managers choose the most appropriate education course and provider for their apprenticeship.
- Launch of Shutters café pilot, which creates a platform from which to grow a robust pathway and create an impact for care leavers.
- Mainstreaming of the H4U United football team, and the associated individual achievements in employment etc.

- ICT project pilot in partnership with the Children in Care Council will underpin policy changes in 2015.

Impacts

- One of the football teams won the championship last season (2015). A team won the premier division in 2014. The team as a whole also won team of the year at Get Berkshire Active Awards.
- A care leaver was supported by a council initiative to set up her own business
- As of the end of April, 94% of care leavers that we are in touch with are in suitable accommodation. Under five care leavers are in custody.

What are we worried about

- Lack of co-ordinated virtual school input for our care leavers
- Pace of change associated with housing strategy, linked to under Strategic Development Location developments
- Transitions for children in care/care leavers who transition into adult focussed services, to ensure they receive all they are entitled to as care leavers
- The number of parents in our care leaver cohort
- Sufficient independent oversight of our care leavers pathway plans
- Lack of connectivity and offer Targeted Youth Services- Duke of Edinburgh scheme and care leavers to enhance their life experiences and life chances
- Continued lack of supported lodgings carers available
- Under five care leavers are in custody

Next steps

- Ensuring pace and delivery of Young People's Housing Strategy
- Agree Council targets for apprenticeships within and across council for care leavers and other vulnerable groups
- Extension of shutters café and pathways
- Establishing the links and benefits of DoE and care leavers work, football club and other opportunities
- Extension of leisure/wellbeing project to young women care leavers (building on the football initiative)
- Formalising the pathway/offer for adult education
- Maximising the offer from FNP to care leavers
- Maximising the Children's Centre offer to young parent care leavers
- Establish mentoring scheme to lead to sustainable and meaningful relationships for those leaving care and beyond
- Establishing a drop in scheme for young adults who are no longer care leavers but who want to access some familiar support

(v) To improve the educational outcomes for children in care and care leavers in Wokingham

“A good education is one of the most important assets which parents can pass on to their children. Local authorities, as corporate parents, have a responsibility to make sure that they encourage a culture of high aspiration and support for the children they look after”

- All Children in care must have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) which is reviewed in conjunction with their Child in Care Review. The PEP forms part of their care plan. The below table highlights some data collected around completion of PEP's.

PEPs	2012/2013 (as at 31 March 2013)	2013/2014 (as at 31 March 2014)	2014/2015 (as at 31 March 2015)	As at 24 April 2015
Children in care	88	75	74	73
Children aged 2 years or under	12 (7 yp aged 18 still recorded as LAC)	7 (5 yp aged 18 still recorded as LAC)	6	7
Children in range for PEP	69	63	68	64
Children aged 3- 17 with a recent PEP (During current academic year)	59 (85.5%)	55 (87.3%)	54 (80.6%)	56 (87.5%)
Total number of PEP's outstanding	10 (14.5%)	8 (12.7%)	14 (19.4%)	8 (12.5%)

- For those PEP's that are identified as outstanding are due to the child/young person not being in provision, are an asylum seeker, are in hospital or are new starters.
- Review of children in care receiving part-time provision:
 - All children and young people have an entitlement to access full-time education or a reduced offer. Packages of Alternative Provision may be offered.
 - We currently have 3 young people in receipt of part-time tuition equivalent to 10 hours per week and have also been referred to Alternative Provision (JAC) for additional learning opportunities. Two of these young people are starting at their identified new provision at the start of the summer term 2015 and will be in receipt of full-time provision at their new school placements. One of these placements has been significantly delayed through some confusion and inaction on the

part of the Local Authority with responsibility for that young person as he resides in their area.

- We have one placement outstanding for a child in care who is not engaging with school and will be 16 by the end of this academic year. There is another case where the young person resides out of our Borough and so it is that Local Authority that needs to identify and action the placement.
- Analysis of Exclusions Information Academic Year 2014 -2015 to date:
 - Educational provision effectiveness for children in care is scrutinised on a termly basis through a review of PEPs and through the dedicated Governor role for children in care.
 - Exclusions for all children and young people are reported on a monthly basis and considered at the termly Behaviour Lead and annual Attendance Lead meetings. For children in care this is further considered by the Executive Head at the monthly children in care meetings. For those children and young people who are in care and have identified complex needs this is further considered at the newly convened Children in Care SEN Joint Lead meetings. This group has had a positive impact both on the resolution of placements and identifying key performance issues such as exclusions.

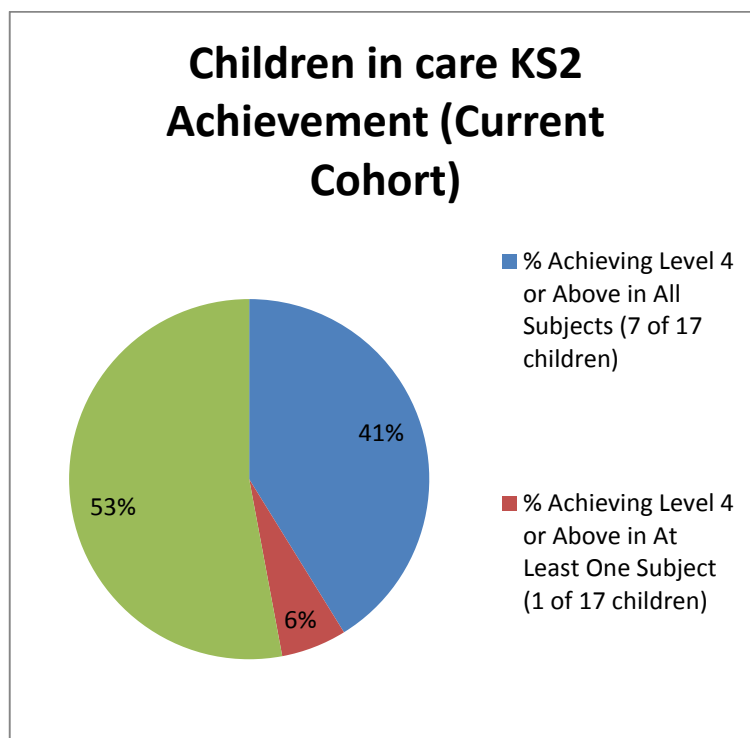
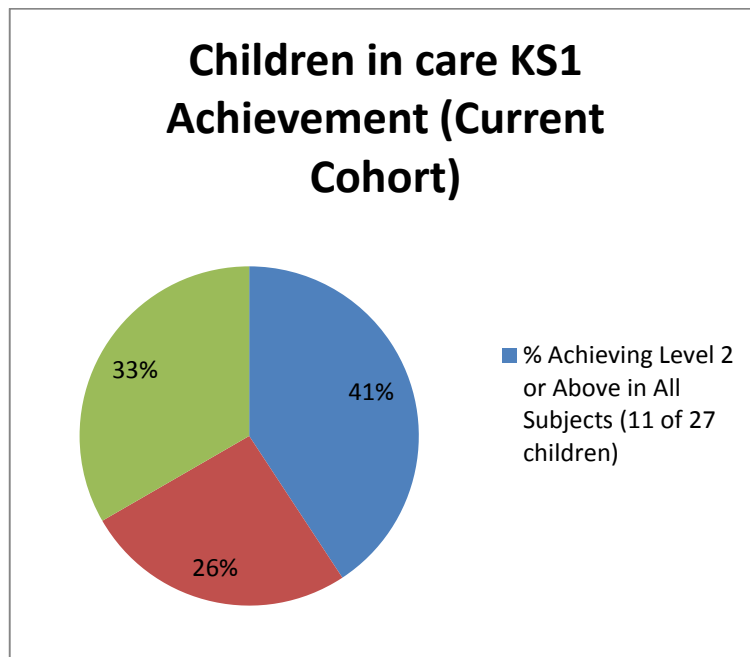
Fixed Term Exclusions for Academic Year 2014/2015 up to end of March:

Term	Number of pupils	Number of days	Type of exclusion	Reason
Autumn	1	1.5	Fixed	PDB
	1 (*)	5	Fixed	PDB
Spring	1	.5	Fixed	PDB
	1	.5	Fixed	PDB
	1(*)	5	Fixed	PDB
	1	2	Fixed	PDB

Key: PDB = Persistent Disruptive Behaviour (*) = same child

- In total 5 young people have received fixed term exclusions for demonstrating persistent disruptive behaviours and not responding to the measures put in place by the schools. Fixed term exclusions were actioned by the following schools;
 - 1 special school
 - 1 Pupil Referral Unit
 - 1 Mainstream secondary school
- There were no permanent exclusions recorded for this academic year.

Impact



- Of the 9 children who achieved below national expectations, 2 children achieved level 3 in all subjects and were thus just below the expected attainment level. 7 of the 9 children had a statement of special educational needs (6 of the SEN children attend Special Schools).
- No national data is published on the educational attainment of our children in care at KS4/GCSE due to low numbers.

ICT for Children in care

- Children's Services have provided laptops for children in care since 2009 and the feedback has been positive.
- As part of the package we commission insurance, support and helpline for children in care or their carers up to 9pm in the evenings and at weekends.
- Feedback from children in care is that they would like a choice of a range of devices. We are piloting a range of devices with children in care and will be launching the availability of wider choice for children in care early in the summer term.
- The aim is that when a child in care needs a computer device, they will be provided with a list of possible devices to choose from, they will make their choice and then the device will be provided by our provider. The list should be available in May 2015 and at that point we may then want to trial a device or two with some children in care; this should realistically be possible early in the Summer term.
- We have investigated a partnership arrangement with 02 in order for those children not in education to access the same range of devices that any young person would expect. It is proposed that this works by
 - Council setting a budget
 - Young person meets with 02 tech Guru to run through options
 - Young person decides on tech
 - Council orders it
- We have a group of young people lined up to pilot this and feedback.

What has gone well?

- Taken the opportunity to significantly reshape the approach: reconfigured learning services and created virtual school with an Executive, with a specific Head for children in care and care leavers. This structural and cultural approach adds capacity, focus through integration, sharing of skill, actual additional capacity and cross service configuration which recognises the complex needs of our children in care.
- Management committee being identified at latter end of 2014/15 for virtual school which includes elected members, educationalists, a representative of Children in Care Council, governor from local school and local business leaders.
- Director of Children's Services became chair of skills board which commissioned the new Elevate Wokingham project which offers advice and support into learning and employment, and acts as the champion for apprentices across the Council
- Refreshed and reconfigured networks between LA and designated teachers in local schools to become part of virtual school
- SEND reforms implementation and pilot schemes have been successful
- The new adult and community strategy is based around partnerships both internal and external, targeted at needs of service users prioritising vulnerable care leavers and others at risk of not participating in learning.

What are we worried about

- In 2014 we aimed to, but didn't achieve an extension of the virtual heads focus to under 5 and over 16
- Role of the Pupil Referral Unit, the functioning of the PRU and the impact on our children in care
- Lack of co-ordinated alternative provision and resource bases established in the borough and the impact on placement options (distance from home etc.)
- The number of children in care on part time role, or who were off role for a period of time in 2014
- Delay in the Virtual Head extending to care leavers

Next steps

- Full audit and mapping of all children in care and young people's education placements and f/t equivalence.
- Full audit of out of borough child in care placements and full-time equivalence.
- Where Belonging Regulations apply to out of borough placements – ensure activity is tracked and challenged where inappropriate or lacking in timeliness.
- Ensure that we meet our obligations in delivering Belonging Regulations for children placed in Wokingham that are in the care of other authorities.
- Consolidate integrated/robust approach to children in care on part time role
- Discussions with the identified school settings actioning exclusions will be held to establish the difficulties experienced and explore future options to reduce need for exclusions.
- Monitoring and reporting on children in care exclusions will be prioritised with the Executive Head receiving immediate notification or preferably early warning of likely exclusions so interventions can be actioned
- Establishment of Virtual School roll – monitoring of attendance and reporting through VSCH staff (Designated Teachers) any issues with attendance patterns or potential exclusions.
- Dedicated Education Welfare Officer for children in care to follow up attendance issues.
- Dedicated EPS for children in care to support where negative behaviours are in evidence to prevent escalation to persistent levels.
- Complete the alternative provision review and negotiate, commission, reshape and establish partnerships with range of providers to ensure sufficient, varied and sustainable alternative provision options by the summer term 2015.
- Establish and embed the new management committee of the virtual school
- Launch new allowances for children in care and care leavers who go to college and not university
- Establish bursary for care leavers who want to go back to learning

- Establish and promote pathway to learning (p/t) for care leavers who have entered work but do not yet have a maths and English GCSE and vocational qualifications
- Ensure 2 year old offer follows the child even when they have entered care system
- Test take up and promote nursery education for under 4's who enter short term care as well as long term care to ensure school readiness

(vi) To improve health provision for children in care and care leavers in Wokingham

The strategy set out some of the existing and potential challenges for the Council as Corporate Parents in ensuring the health needs of children in care and care leavers are well provided for.

What has gone well?

- Championing across all health agencies the needs of children in care and care leavers, and advocating for appropriate priority in the commissioning intentions of those agencies. In 2014 a more rigorous commissioning framework was established for comprehensive CAMHS as part of the Health and Wellbeing Board and Children's Partnership focus on improving the emotional health and wellbeing of all vulnerable children, including children in care. Monthly meetings have assured the partnership that Children in Care have been prioritised in the context of a rising high demand for CAMHS. However case monitoring in this process continues to identify Looked After Children not always receiving the multi-agency emotional health support they need. A joint strategy and action plan to improve access and effectiveness of services will be agreed by the Health and Wellbeing Board in May 2015
- Recommendations of how Corporate Parenting can best be taken forward and enhanced in this changing environment with reference to the new Public Health responsibilities of local authorities, the role of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the role of GP Consortia. As we take on the public health commissioning duties we are making inroads with health visitors, priority support for children in care, and improved access with FNP. There is a GP on Children and Young People's Partnership Board which is enabling greater links with GP Practices.

Impact

- The below data shows consistently positive performance with regard to children in care being registered with a GP or health centre

	2012/13 (as at 31 March)	2013/1413 (as at 31 March)	2014/1513 (as at 31 March)
LAC with GP or Health Centre	Not monitored	100%	100%

recorded			
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- We are required to provide information on the emotional and behavioural health of children and young people in their care. This data is collected by us through a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and a summary figure for each child is submitted to the DfE through the SSSA903 data return.

	2013/2014 (as at 31 March 2014)	2014/2015 (as at 31 March)	As at 24 April 2015
Children in care	41 in care for 12 months	73	73
Children aged 3 years or under		9	9
Children aged 17		8	6
Children in range for SDQ		56	56
Children aged 4-16 with a recent SQD	36 (63.4%)	33 (58.9%)	46 (82.1%)
Total number of SDQ's outstanding		23	8

- By the end of April, Children aged 4-16 with a recent SDQ had risen to 92.7%
- The below table identifies the timeliness of health assessments being completed within 12 months.

	2012/13 (as at 31 March)	2013/14 (as at 31 March)	2014/15 (as at 31 March)
Total LAC	81	68	73*
Completed within past 12 months	75 (92.6%)	46 (67.6%)	39 (53.4%)

NB: 1 child left care in very early April – will be corrected for SSSA903 submission

- By the end of April, the number of health assessments completed had risen to 67.1%
- The below table identifies dental checks completed on time

	2012/13 (as at 31 March)	2013/14 (as at 31 March)	2014/15 (as at 31 March)
% dental checks completed on time	100%	81.8%	89.6%

What are we worried about

- Securing CAMHS and emotional well-being services for children in care and care leavers
- Securing the pathway to FNP and close services for contraception/self-esteem work with our children in care and care leavers to avoid young parenthood
- The gaps in life story work for some of children in care and care leavers as identified in audit and via Children in Care Council advocacy
- The need to secure ongoing focus on permanency as identified in audit work – as permanency is linked to sense of self, place and security and overall emotional wellbeing
- Timeliness of health assessments.

Appendix 1 – Updated Strategic Delivery Plan to follow

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