

## **CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

**12 OCTOBER 2015**

### **PERFORMANCE REPORT UPDATE**

#### **REPORT OF HEAD OF SERVICE: LOOKED AFTER**

##### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide the Corporate Parenting Board with an updated position on performance information for Looked After Children in Sunderland.
- 1.2 The performance report informs members of the current position of the Council as 'Corporate Parent' and demonstrates that elected members are aware of their role as corporate parents. It updates members on the current performance of the Council in meeting this responsibility, and on action taking place to further improve outcomes for those children and young people for whom the Council has a parenting responsibility.

##### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 When a child becomes looked after, he or she enters a system in which their care and upbringing is managed by professionals and paid carers. This has two major consequences for the child. Firstly, in addition to the problems of needing to re-form attachments, he/she moves into a world of paid, and sometimes changing, carers, where life is managed through formal and legal processes. Secondly, in addition to learning to cope with this world, they have lost the continuity of parental management of their access to services and opportunities.
- 2.2 The Corporate Parenting responsibility is shared by the Council as a whole. All members, not just those with an interest in Children's Services, are 'Corporate Parents'.
- 2.3 For 'Corporate Parenting' to replicate the quality of care afforded by a 'good parent', each agency and professional involved needs to consider how they can be proactive, within their own remit, on behalf of looked after children, and for all agencies to strive for ever stronger collaborative working so that the whole of the 'corporate parent' can be greater than the sum of its parts.

##### **3. CURRENT POSITION – LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

- 3.1 The Quarter 1 Looked After Children scorecard is attached at annex 1.

3.2 The number of Looked After Children has increased during the period April – June 2015 when compared to the end of March. This increase was an expected outcome of the activity to address drift and delay and embedding the process of the PLO panel. Robust systems are being implemented to keep track of the children subject to Section 20, previously an area which resulted in delayed planning for children and young people. In Sunderland the courts will frequently continue the S20 status, rather than change to an Interim Care Order. This will account for some of the S20 children in this cohort.

3.3 The number of children living more than 20 miles outside of the LA boundary is 61 of the cohort of Looked After Children at the end of quarter 1. Whilst the percentage of the cohort remains stable, the numbers have increased as the overall cohort increases. The service will shortly be commencing an accommodation panel to scrutinise all placements being made, this will act as a scrutiny panel and ensure that young people are being placed within the right placements with the right level of support.

The number of beds within internal residential provision will be extended as will the number of external providers within Sunderland, this will enable some young people to be returned from external provision based outside of the LA boundary where appropriate.

3.4 The stability of placements has improved across both indicators with the number of 3+ moves decreasing and the length of placement increasing. Further work will be undertaken to further improve this stability for our Looked After children. The service are in the process of pulling together some additional residential provision to better meet the needs of our young people and working with a number of providers to stimulate the local market.

3.5 The information relating to care leavers looks at the cohort during April – June 2015 who should have been contacted within their birthday window as defined by the DFE. The cohort relates to 37 young people of 210 care leavers of which:

8 young people have been recorded as being in suitable accommodation  
30 young people have been recorded as not in education, employment or training.

0 young people have been recorded as being in higher education

#### **4. CURRENT POSITION - ADOPTION SCORECARD**

4.1 The nationally published scorecard is currently available up to the end of March 2015 attached at Annex 2.

4.2 Adoptions

- In Q4 2014/15 there were 30 children with a decision to adopt who had not yet been placed.
- In Q4 2014/15 there were 10 children with a placement order who had not yet been placed and had been in care for 18 months+.

- The average length of time a child had been waiting with a placement order but not placed was 835 days
- There were no placement orders granted in Q4 2014/15.
- 10 children were placed with adoptive families in Q4 2014/15.
- There were 10 children adopted in Q4 2014/15.
- The average number of days from a child entering care and moving in with a family was 483 days. This has improved in Q1 of 2014/15 with the average number of days reducing to 442, this compares favourably with regional and national comparators who were reported to be 505 and 533.
- The average number of days from the Local Authority receiving Court Authority to place a child and matching to an adoptive family was 206, this has improved further in Q1 2015/16 as the average number of days has reduced to 160 which compares well to a regional comparator 219 and nationally at 234.

#### 4.3 Adopters

- There were 5 registrations in Q4 2014/15.
- There were 10 adoptive families approved in Q4 2014/15
- There were no adoption orders granted or matches made in Q4 2014/15.
- There were 30 prospective adopters not yet approved at the end of Q4 2014/15.
- There were 10 approved adopters awaiting a match at the end of Q4 2014/15.
- The average number of days from registration to approval in 2014/15 was 229 days.
- The average number of days from approval to new matches was 106 days.
- The average number of days between registration and new matches was 331 days

It is difficult when reviewing the adoption scorecard to make accurate comparisons to other authorities and regions as data relating to this is often suppressed within the adoption scorecard due to low numbers and this is shown with an x within the report.

## 4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to consider and comment on the performance information provided.

