

CYP SELECT COMMITTEE		
Report Title	Outcomes for Looked After Children	
Key Decision		Item No. 7
Ward	All	
Contributors	Director, Children's Social Care	
Class	Open	Date: 1st March 2016

1. Summary and Summary of the Report

- 1.1. As corporate parents for Looked After Children the Council has a responsibility to ensure all children and young people have the best opportunities and life chances. The report summarises the outcomes they have achieved in the last year in the areas of placement stability, health and education attainment. It also provides information regarding children who are missing or are at risk of child sexual exploitation.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 This report updates CYP Select committee on outcomes for Looked After Children.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 Members are asked to note and comment on this overview of the key outcomes for Looked After Children.

4. Policy Context

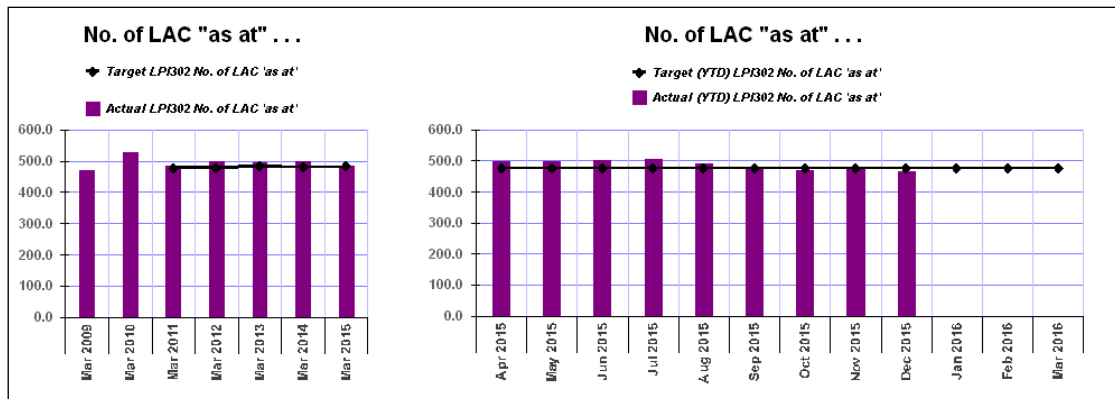
- 4.1 All Councillors have a special responsibility for Looked After Children and are accountable for the corporate parenting of some of the most vulnerable children in Lewisham and should be supporting the young people to receive appropriate parenting, education and health care so that they can reach their full potential. Services are provided in the context of legislation and the Children and Young People's Plan sets out the priorities for our Looked After Children.

Ofsted Inspection

- 4.2 Lewisham was inspected by Ofsted between 26 October – 20 November 2015. The judgement for children's services overall was that they require improvement to be good. Services for children Looked After were seen as Good as were Leaving Care and Adoption which are sub sections of the Children Looked After and achieving permanence judgement.
- 4.3 To date, 78 local authorities across England have been inspected under the current framework, of those 24 were found to be Good 45 Require improvement and 9 inadequate with regards Children looked after & achieving permanence.

5. Number of Looked After Children

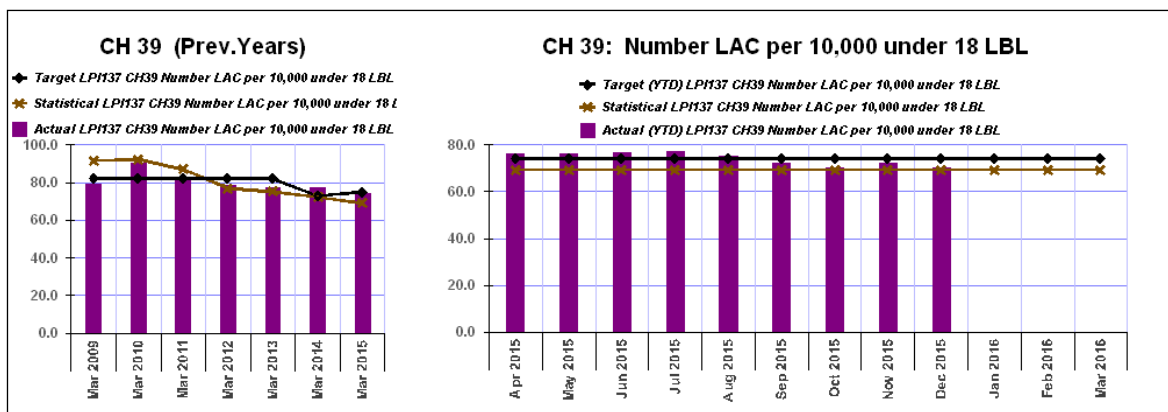
- 5.1 Since the last report was submitted the number of looked after children has remained stable at around 500. The current figure is 467. This excludes regular respite arrangements (as at 31/12/15).
- 5.2 Of the total cohort 48 are permanently looked after disabled children (as at 31/12/15). Of these children, 14 are placed in residential provision due to their high level of need. The remainder are looked after by foster carers and receive community support to address their needs arising from their disabilities.



- 5.3 Performance for the number of children who leave care as a result of permanent arrangements via Special Guardianship and adoption is strong, placing Lewisham in the top quartile nationally.

The LAC per 10,000 population in Lewisham under 18

- 5.4 The graphs below indicate the number looked after as 70 per 10,000 of the under 18 population. This figure has reduced since April 15 bringing us closer into line with our statistical neighbours.

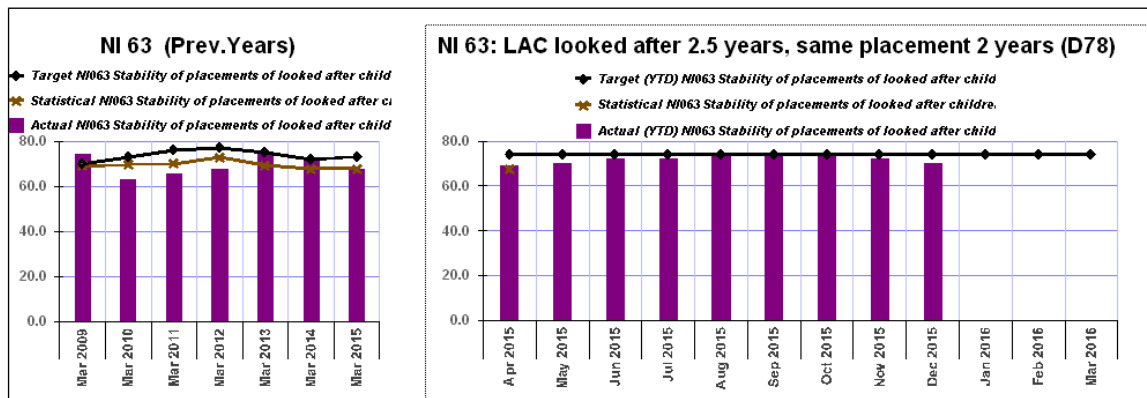


6. Placement Stability

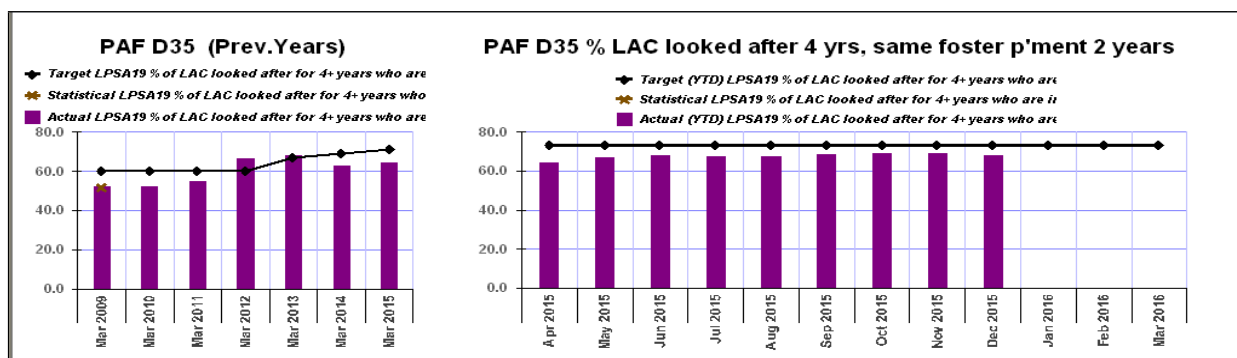
- 6.1 The stability which our looked after children experience is a priority for the Council and continues to be among the highest priorities for the service. Achieving placement stability for children in long term care is key to improving their outcomes in other areas.

- 6.2 Every child and young person looked after by Lewisham has an individual care plan which reflects their individual and unique needs. We have a statutory duty to review these plans within a month of them becoming looked after, a second review is held after three months and at six monthly intervals thereafter.
- 6.3 Each review considers whether remaining in care is the correct plan. Where it is safe for them to do so, children will return to the care of their parents or another extended family member. If this arises as a result of care proceedings, appropriate orders are given to ensure the carer has parental responsibility.
- 6.4 For all children under 10 we consider whether a plan for adoption is in their best interests. Adoption provides both stability and good outcomes for children. We try to achieve this for as many children as possible, if the court has agreed adoption is the best outcome and has granted the appropriate order.
- 6.5 From 1/4/15 until 31/12/15 twenty six children have been adopted. A further thirteen children have been placed with adoptive families.
- 6.6 81.60% of our looked after children are living with foster carers. The remainder live in residential units or specialist health units (CWD). A small number are being assessed with parents as part of a rehabilitation plan. We would like as far as possible to increase the numbers of children living with foster carers as family life provides better outcomes and is a more cost effective option. This is difficult to achieve for all young people due to the complexity of their needs and challenging behaviours. Currently 18.40% young people live in residential care.
- 6.7 Since July 2014 we have been developing 'Staying Put' arrangements. This initiative allows young people to remain in foster care until the age of 21. If they are in full time education they can also remain with their foster family during holidays from college/university. Encouraging the use of Staying Put is likely to support placement stability in the longer term. Currently we have 26 young people subject to Staying Put arrangements.
- 6.8 Over the last two years we have introduced an evidence based approach known as The Secure Base. The majority of social workers have been trained in this approach and together with colleagues in the child's network for example CAMHS they provide support to try and prevent placement breakdown. This is a therapeutic approach in addition to practical support provided to both the children and their carers.
- 6.9 The service has also run a group work project with funding, via Headstart with eight young people. The group used poetry and spoken word with both children and carers to assist the development of relationships and support placement stability.
- 6.10 Social workers and IRO's work together to identify children who may be living in fragile placements. This is done in order to ensure we convene a placement stability meeting at an early stage. Placement moves are not agreed until everything possible has been done to resolve the difficulties.

6.11 Performance in this area is measured in two ways. The chart below looks at the under 16 cohort and measures those who have been looked after 2.5 years and have been in the same foster placement for at least 2 years. The total number of children is 170 of which 118 meet the target. Team managers look in detail at the circumstances of the remaining 52. The reasons for instability are complex and as described above each child has an individual care plan which includes a strategy to manage the instability.

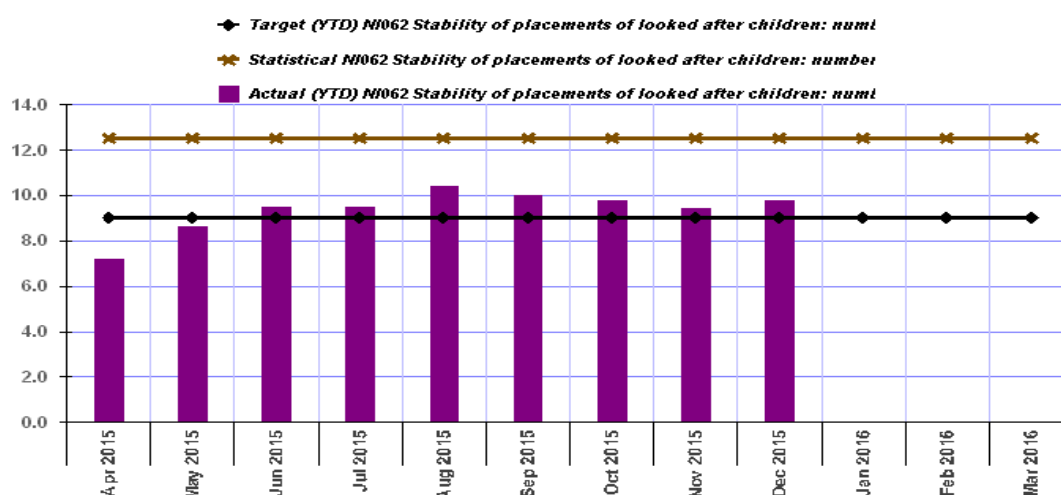


6.12 The chart below looks at the looked after children population including 16-18 year olds who have been looked after continually for 4 years or more and who have been in the same foster placement for at least two years. The DFE has ceased publishing data for this indicator, which means we can longer compare ourselves with statistical neighbours.



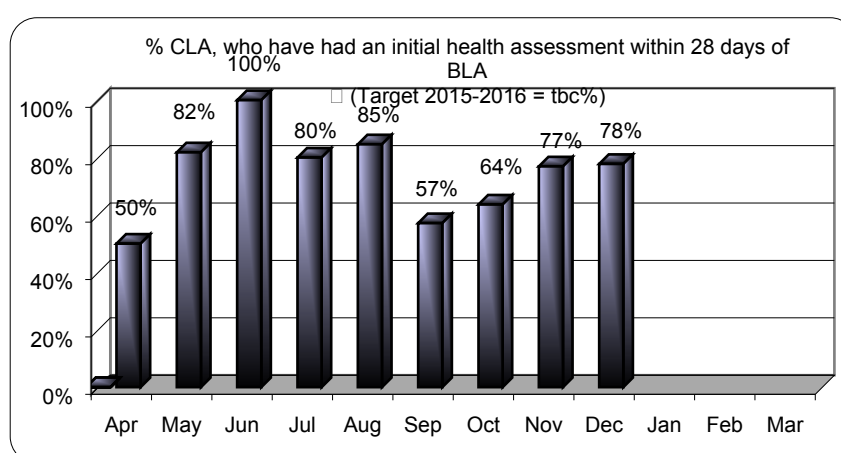
6.13 The bar charts below show the number of children and young people who have experienced 3 or more placement moves in the last 12 months. For some younger children 3 moves may be seen as positive for example, a child safeguarded in a foster placement, assessed with a parent and then placed permanently with an adopter within 12 months. Three or more moves for older children are more likely to reflect their challenging needs and instability. Currently, performance for Lewisham is in the top quartile nationally and significantly ahead of our statistical neighbours.

NI 62 PAF A1 % LAC 3 or more placement moves during year



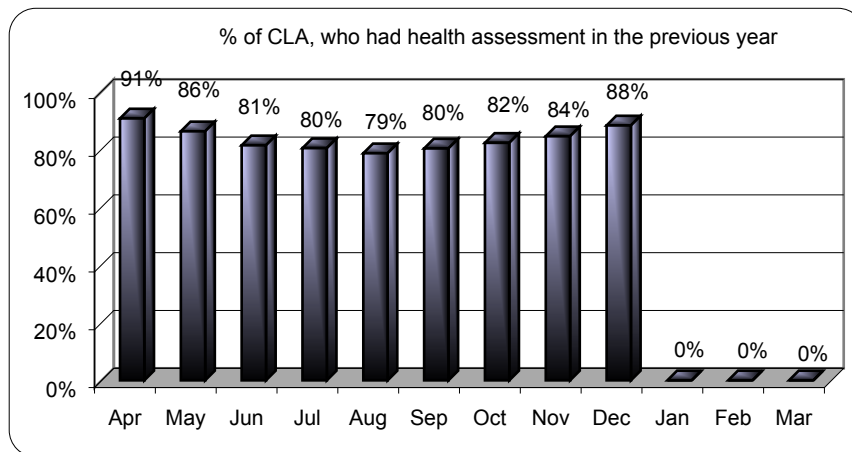
7. Health Outcomes

- 7.1 Many of the children looked after by Lewisham have experienced abuse and neglect. Their physical health needs have often not been met, many of them have not received adequate primary health care including universal services such as immunizations and dental care.
- 7.2 Within 20 working days of becoming looked after, all children are required to have an initial health assessment which will assess their needs and plan appropriate treatment. Some of the older young people are reluctant to attend such appointments which largely explains the figures below. These young people are tracked by our Looked After Children's nurse and the majority do eventually agree to the assessment when the adults caring for them provide the appropriate support.
- 7.3 The variations below reflect two significant issues including parents refusing to grant consent until the matter proceeds to court and those young people who are resistant. The DFE does not publish comparative data for this indicator.



- 7.4 The chart below represents the number of looked after children who have received an annual health assessment. As with initial assessments it is often the older group in this cohort who will refuse to comply with this expectation. The Lewisham figure was 91.4% overall in March 2015. This was down on the 2014 figure which was 97.4%. This was at least in part caused by the difficulties in arranging health assessments for LAC outside of the borough, particularly those placed in Kent. In September of 2015 a

second LAC nurse was recruited to address this issue and the graphs below indicate performance is now beginning to improve.



7.5 The emotional well being of the children in our care is an additional health area we place significant focus on. In Lewisham we have a dedicated team within CAMHS known as Symbol who provide a service to children in borough and within reasonable travelling distances. For those children placed any distance from Lewisham we refer to local services and ensure their needs are met with the support of colleagues from the commissioning team.

8. Safeguarding Looked After Children

8.1 Following the publication of the Jay Report in August 2014 we have offered training to all social workers in working with children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation. We have a team manager who takes a lead in this area within the service. In September 2015 children's social care created a senior SW post to work across services and with stakeholders outside the council.

8.2 The Ofsted report commented that individual case work in relation to CSE is effective but strategic work across the partnership is underdeveloped. This will be addressed within the Ofsted Action plan with this post holder supporting inter agency work. Children who go missing are a second group of LAC for whom safeguarding concerns often arise. Going missing is one of the behaviours associated with young people becoming at increased risk of sexual exploitation.

8.3 In March 2015 there had been 71 episodes of young people missing for more than 24 hours, these episodes relate to 43 young people who have been missing for this period on more than one occasion. This is an improvement on the previous year where the total missing episodes was 82.

8.4 Social workers and independent reviewing officers continue to work together to ensure all those children for whom we have concerns are the subject of strategy meetings which result in robust plans to keep them safe.

8.5 In March 2015 the 7.5% of young people were identified as having a substance misuse problem this is line with SN at 7.1%. The number of young people aged 10/17 who have received a final warning, reprimand or conviction was 7.7% in 2015 up from 5.2% in 2014 but in line with SN at 7.2%.

8.6 Social workers and independent reviewing officers continue to work together to ensure all those children for whom we have concerns are the subject of strategy meetings which result in robust plans to keep them safe.

9. Adoption

9.1 In order to undertake a full range of duties the service is required to be a registered Adoption agency. This allows us to undertake statutory duties in relation to both adopters and children who require adoptive families.

9.2 In 2013/14 28 of our children left care as a result of being adopted in 2014/15 the figure was 33. So far this year 29 of our children have been adopted and we expect this figure to rise further before 31/03/15. A further 13 children have been matched and placed with adopted families during that timeframe.

9.3 Adoption performance is measured in a three year rolling scorecard. Between 2012/15 11% of children leaving Lewisham's care were made subject to adoption orders. This compares with 11% statistical neighbors and 16% England.

9.4 8% of the cohort are from BME groups compared to 6% with statistical neighbors and 9% England.

9.5 Of the cohort 2% of Lewisham children were aged 5 or over. This compares to 3% statistical neighbours and 5% England.

9.6 A further key indicator is the time taken to achieve this. If we look at the number of weeks between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family, in Lewisham the average was 532 days, the total across England was 593 days.

9.7 What these figures demonstrate is that Lewisham has good outcomes in terms of the numbers of children adopted but they also achieve positive outcomes for BME groups and older children, sometimes considered 'hard to place' and that this is still achieved in the best possible timescale for the children.

9.8 The service was part of a DFE pilot regarding how adopters access therapeutic support for children. The recommendations made during the pilot phase were accepted. Since June 2015 Adopters following an assessment can apply to a central fund for finance to purchase therapy. Currently local authorities do not have to contribute to this fund although it is anticipated this will change in the future as part of the governments overall plan for Adoption reform.

10. Education

10.1 Appendix One gives data for years 2013/14 to provide a context only. The statistical first release which provides this data has been delayed this year by the DFE and is unavailable at the time of writing.

10.2 The Virtual School has provided the following data from its own monitoring.

10.3 KS2 combined English and maths attainment has risen from 50% to 63%. KS4 attainment has risen from 19% to 21%. 87% of Year 12 students are on course to achieve their individual attainment targets. In September 2015 all our year 12 cohort had an education or training offer. Those who have since not pursued plans are being

offered ongoing support to find alternatives. Attainment and attendance of Lewisham Looked After Children compares well with other local authorities and was praised by Ofsted.

- 10.4 The service currently supports 38 young people up to the age of 25 who are attending University.
- 10.5 In addition to individual care plans, all looked after children have a Personal Education Plan. This plan is drawn up jointly with the school and foster carers to ensure all of those involved with the child or young person are supporting their educational potential and achievement.
- 10.6 The Virtual School has increased its staffing capacity in order to support the educational outcomes for our Looked After Children and consists of the following posts.
- Headteacher
 - Deputy Headteacher/Secondary Lead
 - Primary Lead
 - KS5 Post 16 Coordinator
 - Office Administrator
 - Attendance and Welfare Officer
 - High Intervention Officer
 - High Intervention Officer
 - Family Therapist
 - Clinical Psychologist
- 10.7 The additional CAMHS staff allows the Virtual school to provide clinical and behavioural support to children and young people as the need arises. They can also provide an out reach service which prevents children living outside of the borough experiencing delays. Ensuring our LAC remain in school and reach their academic potential supports outcomes in other areas of their life, particularly placements stability, emotional well being, resilience and opportunities to go to higher education and employment.
- 10.8 The Virtual School is working with social workers, foster carers, and schools both within and outside Lewisham to ensure the children's educational needs are prioritised They manage pupil premium and ensure the funds are spent on resources which directly impact on the education attainment of individual children rather than generic supports in schools.
- 10.9 The Virtual School has developed a website which like other schools will give information to pupils, parent/careers and Social workers.
- 10.10 Lewisham Virtual School has offered two full days mandatory training to all social workers in the LAC & Leaving Care service and Lewisham designated teachers.
- 10.11 The training offered gave Social workers knowledge of current expected attainment levels and target setting for pupils in school. It was specifically designed to support social workers to improve the quality of PEPs. Given an audit undertaken in October 2015 demonstrated this was an area requiring improvement The setting of academic targets is the responsibility of designated teachers who have also benefited from training.

- 10.12 Further training is planned for Social workers, in other services, and foster carers in February and March.
- 10.13 One of the priorities for the Virtual School is the monitoring of children's attendance. The graph below demonstrates the current position.

**OVERVIEW OF LAC @ 8.1.2016
ATTENDANCE 1.9.15 – 8.1.16**

**RECEPTION – YEAR 11
TOTAL LAC = 294**

Yr Nos	Attendance %
R - 7	98
1 - 10	98
2 - 16	97
3 - 11	96
4 - 23	98
5 - 21	96
6 - 18	98
7 - 24	94
8 - 30	97
9 - 30	92
10 - 39	86
11 - 65	89

Total attendance 01/9/15- 08/01/16 = 93.18%

11. Financial Implications

- 11.1 The placement budget for Looked after Children for 2015/16 is £22,263 million.
- 11.2 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

12. Legal Implications

There are no particular legal implications arising from this report

13. Crime and Disorder Implications

- 13.1 There is significant evidence nationally that looked after children come into contact with the youth justice system at a higher rate than the general population. There has been a reduction in these numbers since 2010. Looked after children are still more than twice as likely to be drawn into the criminal justice system. Currently, 25% of cases open to Youth Offending Service are looked after children. 10% of these are looked after by other local authorities, 15% by Lewisham.
- 13.2 The offending rates of looked after children vary in accordance with the length of time spent in care and by type of placement. However, the reoffending rates for looked after children are in line with others in the youth offending service cohort.
- 13.3 Risk factors that may predict involvement in criminal activity are similar to those that may predict looked after status.

13.4 The youth remand provisions in the Legal Aid Sentencing and punishment of Offenders (LASPO) Act 2012 came into force in December 2012. This made significant changes to the remand framework for 10-17 year olds. The Act imposes a new scheme for remands of children. All children and young people that are remanded to youth detention accommodation will become a looked after child. If this period is for 13 weeks or more they will meet the criteria of a leaving care child.

14. Equalities Implications

14.1 Lewisham's Comprehensive Equalities Scheme (CES) 2012-16 sets out the Council's strategic objectives with regard to improving the life chances and quality of life of Lewisham residents. The Equality Act 2010 provides the statutory framework for the CES.

14.2 By describing the work that the Council is undertaking to promote and safeguard the well being of vulnerable children in the borough, this report directly contributes to the following CES objectives:

- tackling discrimination, victimisation and harassment
- improving access to services
- closing the gap in outcomes
- increasing participation and engagement

15. Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

16. Background documents and originator

If there are any queries on this report, please contact Tina Benjamin on 0208 314 7808.

Appendix One

		No of Looked After Children 2013	No of Pupils Achieving Expected Level 2013	Looked After Children Lewisham 2013	Looked After Children Statistical Neighbours Ave. 2013	Looked After Children National Average 2013	All Children in Lewisham 2013	Number of Looked After Children 2014	Number of Pupils Achieving Expected Level 2014	Looked After Children Lewisham 2014	Looked After Children Statistical Neighbours Ave. 2014	Looked After Children National Ave. 2014	All Children in Lewisham 2014
KS1	Reading	7	3	43.0	62.5	69.0	89.0	15	9	60.0	76.0	71.0	91.0
	Writing	7	3	43.0	57.8	61.0	85.0	15	10	67.0	65.0	61.0	89.0
	Maths	7	2	43.0	60.0	71.0	92.0	15	9	60.0	77.0	72.0	94.0
KS2	Reading Writing Maths	19	7	44.0	55.0	45.0	83.0	20	10	50.0	50.0	48.0	79.0
	Grammar Punctuation Spelling			39.0	56.0	45.0		20	11	55.0	53.0	49.0	76.0
	Reading	19	11	61.0	73.0	63.0	90.0	20	15	75.0	68.0	68.0	87.0
	Writing	19	8	56.0	64.0	55.0	88.0	20	14	70.0	60.0	59.0	89.0
	Maths	19	11	61.0	65.0	59.0	90.0	20	12	60.0	64.0	61.0	85.0
	Science	19	8	42.1	np	np	89.0		n/a	n/a	np	np	89.0
GSCE	5+A*-C	36	12	44.4	42.6	36.6	79.0	42	7	25.0	22.0	31.1	59.0
	5+A*-G	36	20	55.6			94.2	42	0	np	n/a	n/a	92.7
	1+A*-G	36	27	75.0			98.6	42	0	np	n/a	n/a	97.6
	1+A*-C	36	18	50.0			n/a	42	0	np	n/a	n/a	n/a
	A*-C in Eng & Maths			27.8	23.0	16.2		42	6	supp 14.3	20.0	15.7	55.3
	5+A*-C +EM	36	10	25.0	22.5	15.3	58	42	5	supp 11.9	17.0	14.4	51.3
	5+A*-G +EM	36	18	50.0			91.9	42	0	np	n/a	n/a	89.2