

CYP SELECT COMMITTEE		
Report Title	Safeguarding Services 6-monthly report	
Key Decision	No	Item No. 6
Contributors	Director Children's Social Care	
Class	Open	Date: 30 January 2018

1. Purpose and Summary of the Report

1.1 This report provides an overview of safeguarding activity between 1 April 2017 to 30 November 2017. The report does not comment on Child Sexual Exploitation as this is the subject of a separate stand-alone report to the CYP Select Committee.

1.2 The report will cover the following areas:

- Policy and legislative context of safeguarding activity.
- Referrals received
- Overview of children subject to child protection plans
- Enquiries made under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 where there are concerns that children are at risk of significant harm.
- Safeguarding children from inappropriate conduct by people who work with them in a voluntary or paid capacity.
- Serious Case Reviews.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to note and comment on the contents of the report.

3 Policy and Legislative Context

3.1 Children's Social Care is governed and delivered under the auspices of statutory legislation, regulation and guidance. The key legislative framework and guidance for this are outlined below via:

- [The Children Act 1989](#) imposes a statutory duty on local authorities to safeguard children in their area.
- [The London Child Protection Procedures 2016](#) have been adopted by all London Local Authorities and LSCBs.
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015](#), HM Government, provides a national framework and the core requirements which agencies and professionals must satisfy in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

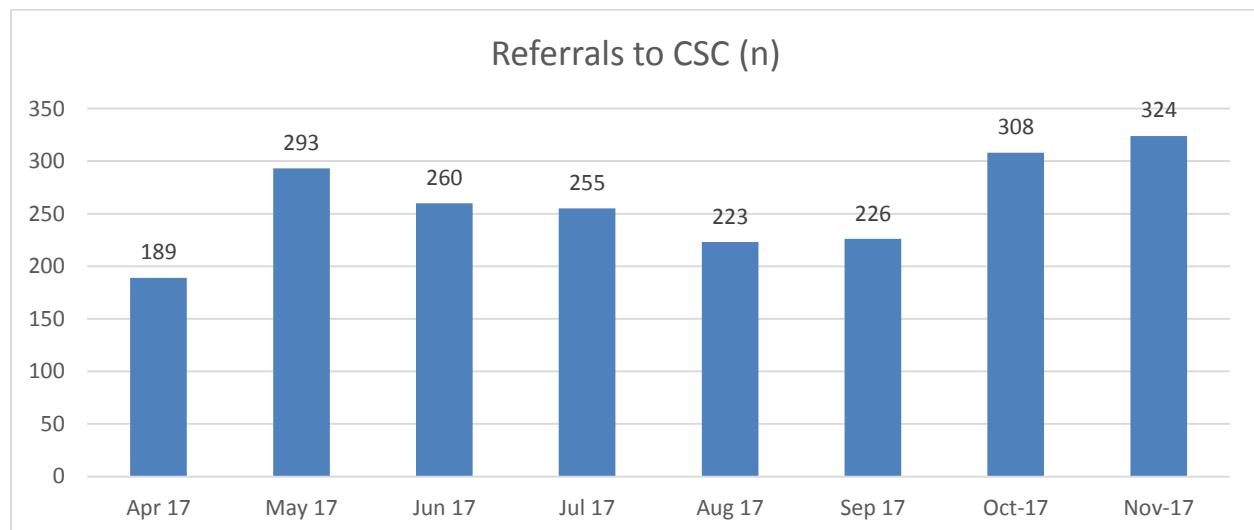
4 Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Early Help

4.1 The refocus upon MASH arrangements and the provision of a new Early Help Team that was launched early in 2017, was reported to last Select Committee Meeting on 13th July 2017.

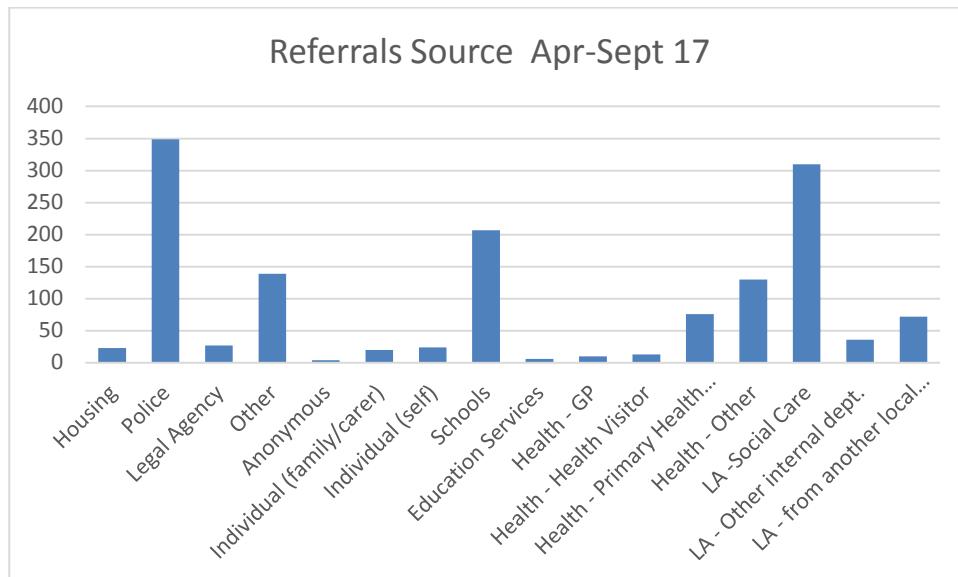
- 4.2 As reported, a new online referral form (replacing the Common Assessment Framework tool as referral to CSC) was launched alongside the new MASH arrangements and is the main tool for safeguarding referrals and other access routes were phased out. Telephone enquiries, of course, remain. Requests for more targeted support also come through this route.

5 Numbers of Referrals to Children's Social Care

- 5.1 The graph below (Graph 1) shows the number of referrals received by Lewisham's Children's Social Care (CSC) from June to the end of Nov 2017.
- 5.2 The graph below (referrals from 1st April to 30 November 2017) indicates that there has been a significant increase in the number of referrals in October 2017 to Nov 2017. The average number of referrals for the period shown is 259, and there has been a 101(number) increase to the end of November from August 2017. The dip in August and September 2017 coincided with summer holidays.
- 5.3 Current analysis suggests that the introduction of the new referral pathways and refreshed thresholds reported previously has resulted in this increase in referrals and consequently assessment work. The increased volume of work coming into CSC via EH and MASH arrangements will be subject to scrutiny and monitoring through weekly Senior Management Team in CSC.



Graph 1
Source: LCS



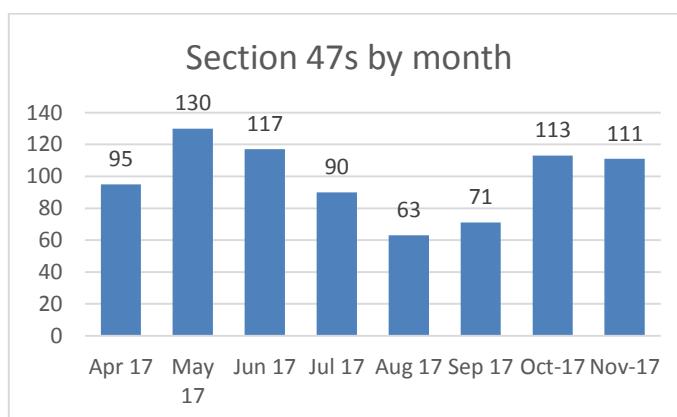
Graph 2

Source: LCS

- 5.4 The above graph shows referrals to CSC by the agency referring. The majority of referrals habitually come from the Police, Schools or Health. All of the aforementioned agencies are above the average for this period (n=90). Police represent 24.1% of the total referral numbers, schools 14.3%, and all Health partners, 15.8%. Another significant proportion of referral work is generated internally (21.4%) as colleagues across services and departments in the Council raise concerns or requests for services in respect of children's needs.

6 Enquiries under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989

- 6.1 A section 47 enquiry is the response undertaken when there is a concern that a child is at risk of, or has suffered, significant harm. These enquiries can also follow when a child is taken into Police Protection or is made subject to an Emergency Protection Order. The investigation enables services working together to safeguard children led by CSC to decide whether further action is needed to protect the child/ren. A total of 679 children and young people were subject to Section 47 enquiries from 1st April to 30th November 2017.
- 6.2 As with referral information, the numbers of s47s dropped off in April, August and September largely due to the spring and summer breaks.



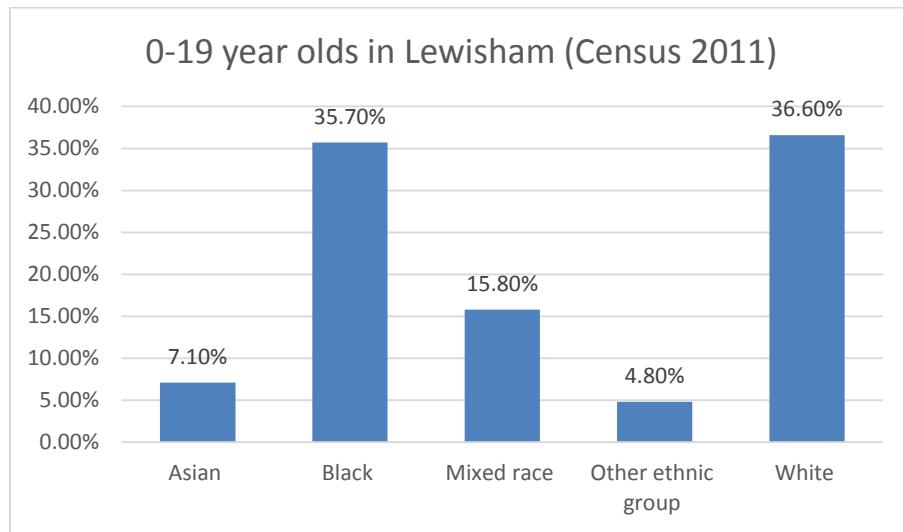
Graph 3

Source: LCS

- 6.3 The figures below at table 1 relate to the proportions of children and young people who were the subject of s47 enquiry work. The highest proportions are children of Black African or Black Caribbean ethnicity, (21.3% and 19.7% respectively). The other significant proportion is those children or young people who are White British (20.6%). These proportions tend to reflect the overall proportions of 0-19s in the borough drawn from the last full Census in 2011, although it is difficult to correlate the information directly as categorisation is not comparable to how ethnicity is drawn from Census information. However, it is shown here in an attempt to draw comparison with the local population of Lewisham.
- 6.4 Previous audit work completed at the time of the new MASH arrangements coming online found that, overall, s47 work and the threshold applied for this work was appropriate. That is to say, children were not becoming subject to enquiries unnecessarily, we are however exploring trends in ethnicity and review of earlier intervention and awareness, particularly in relation to referrals of physical abuse . Further audit work will be carried out as part of monthly audit work looking at re-referrals to ensure that responses are reflective of children's needs and now that the MASH has been in operation for almost one year.

Section 47s by Ethnicity	%
Any Other Asian Background	4.1%
Pakistani	0.5%
Black - African	21.3%
Black Caribbean	19.7%
Any Other Black Background	7.8%
Chinese	0.5%
Any Other Mixed Background	7.0%
White and Asian	0.7%
White and Black African	0.7%
White and Black Caribbean	7.7%
Information Not Yet Obtained	3.6%
Any Other Ethnic Group	2.2%
White - British	20.6%
Any Other White Background	3.7%

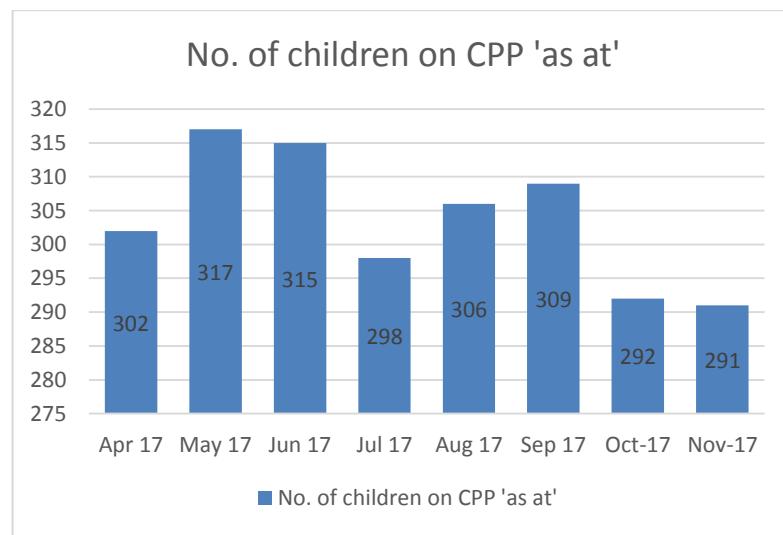
Table 1



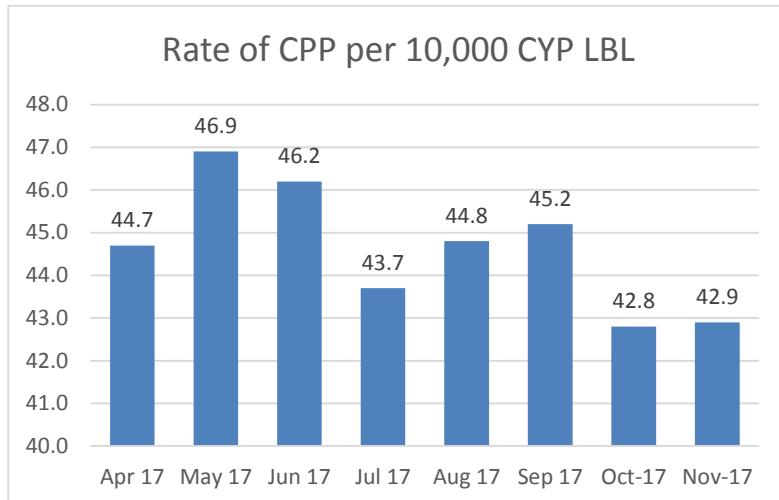
Graph 3
Source: Census 2011

7 Children Subject to Child Protection Plans

- 7.1 When a section 47 enquiry (of the CA 1989) concludes that children require a multi-agency child protection response, then an initial Child Protection Case Conference is convened. Children become subject to child protection plans via a multi-agency child protection conference. Using the Strengthening Families model the conference focuses in on what is working well and what requires further attention to address the risk factors affecting children and improve outcomes for them. Conferences are chaired by Child Protection Conference Chairs who are sited within the Quality Assurance Service. The Child Protection Plan drawn up at conference with the family in attendance, addresses the specific areas of concern for individual children. By setting down the framework and processes by which families work with the professional network, a focused response to family recovery is provided which promotes the child's welfare and safety.



Graph 4
Source: LCS



Graph 5

Source: LCS

7.2 The graphs above (4 and 5) show the number and rates (per 10,000) of children subject to plans. As can be seen, there are fluctuations in the numbers of children becoming subject to child protection plans. This can be due at times to large sibling group families where the children either become subject or cease to be subject. The expected target for numbers of children is 290 and currently the number is 291. As numbers of children subject to plans decline due to appropriate step down to Child in Need Plans or step up to proceedings for care, the rate of children commensurately declines. When children become subject to a child protection plan, the conference specifies the category of harm. These are:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

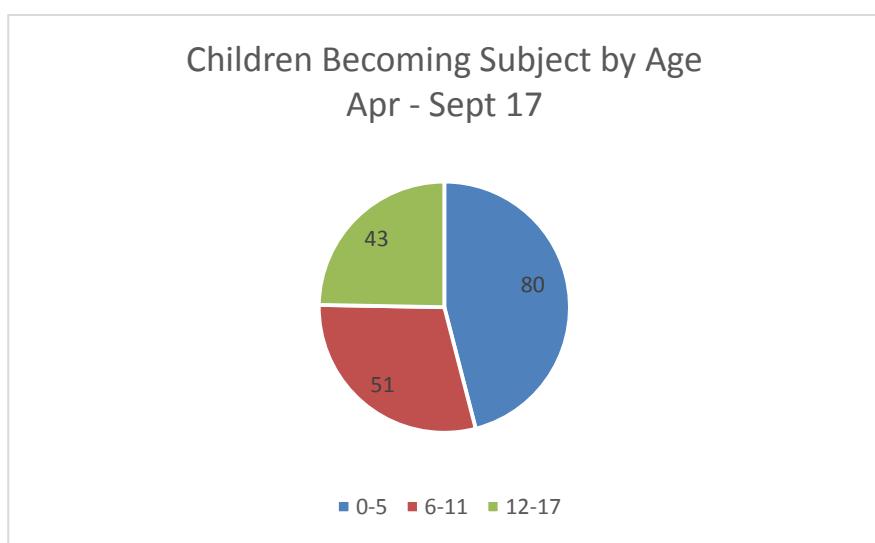
7.3 For some children and young people, the concerns for their wellbeing pertains to more than one category and as on the table below, a small number may have multiple concerns.

Children becoming subject to CP Plans by category April to Sept 2017	n
Physical Abuse	15
Emotional Abuse	72
Sexual Abuse	3
Neglect	72
Multiple	5
Total	167

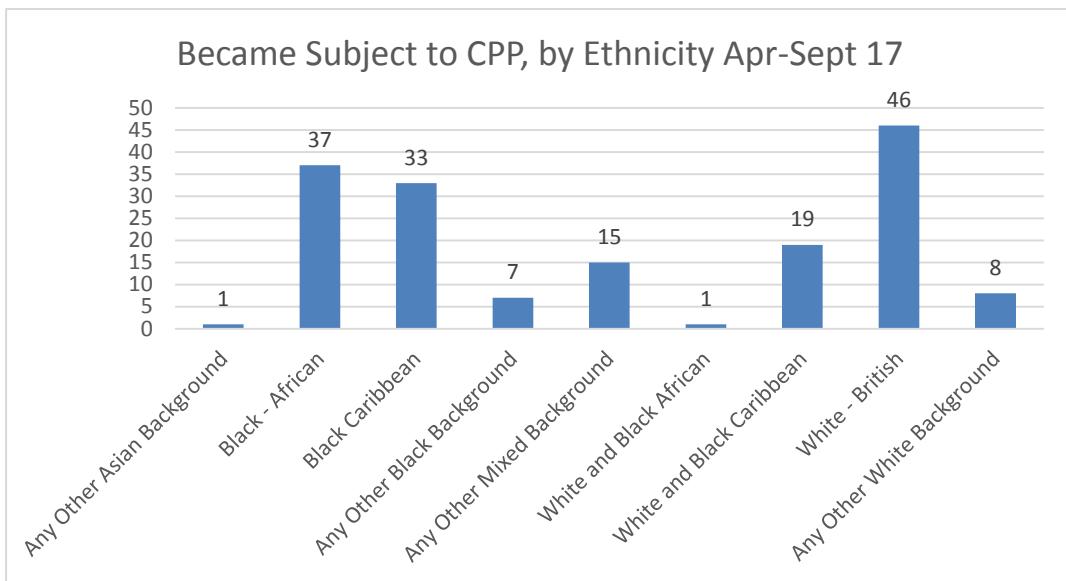
Table 2

Source: LCS

- 7.4 In the period from April to September 2017, 167 children became subject to plans. The category of neglect remains the most likely reason for children and young people to be placed on a plan with emotional abuse the second main category.
- 7.5 As can be seen, the other categories of harm are not as well used as the categories of either neglect or emotional harm. Most children within these two main categories will often be living with families where there are substance and alcohol dependency problems, issues of domestic abuse, mental and physical health issues culminating in sustained and sometimes chronic neglect.
- 7.6 In conjunction with the Lewisham Safeguarding Children Board we have developed and are rolling out an updated Neglect Strategy and Children's Social Care has focused audit activity within our monthly and thematic audit programmes to capture the quality of our neglect response. A current audit is underway focusing upon early years children (under 2s) and neglect factors.
- 7.7 The Service Managers for Family Social Work and Quality Assurance track cases monthly to ensure that cases do not drift on plans unnecessarily. Remedial social work and targeted support from the multi-agency network should demonstrate impact by the 2nd review conference at 9 months. We have instituted a monitoring process between Child Protection Chairs and Team Managers to review progress of children's plans before the second review conference to maintain a focus on the plan and effect change for children. This timeframe allows work to be refocused at the Child in Need tier with parental engagement or alternatively examine whether legal proceedings should be considered.
- 7.8 The pie chart below shows the numbers of children becoming subject to CP Plans by age group. The highest number is in the 0 to 5 years age range as might be expected with the need to protect vulnerable children at a very early age, although the other two age ranges (6 to 11 years and 12 to 17 years) is also significant. The emotional abuse category tends to correlate more with older age children, whilst neglect factors will correlate with the under fives. That is not to say that neglect does not affect those children in the older age categories.



Graph 6
Source: LCS

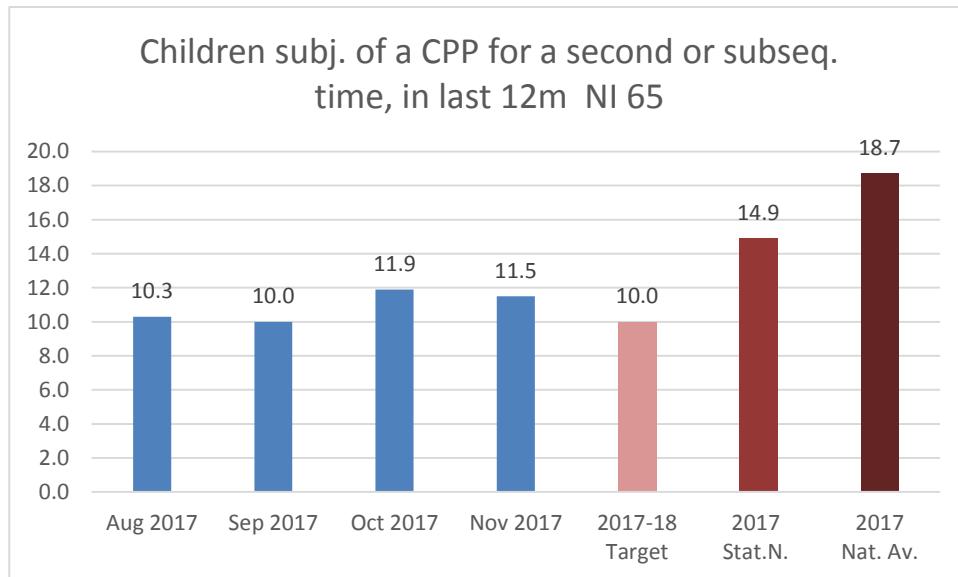


Graph 7

Source: LCS

- 7.9 The graph above shows children becoming subject to plans by ethnicity (number). As can be seen, the higher number is children who are white British ($n = 46$, 20.6%). The highest proportionately, is with children of Black African ethnicity. This was 21.3% ($n=37$) and those of Black Caribbean ethnicity are also significantly represented (19.7%).
- 7.10 The ethnicity of children subject to plans at each threshold stage (from s47 through to ICPC and CP Planning) requires continued scrutiny and oversight to ensure that children are not overrepresented (in comparison to the local population).
- 7.11 Activity to address the reasons for any child or young person being on a Child Protection Plan for more than two years has delivered dividends as the relevant families are responded to via Child in Need (CIN) processes or Pre-Proceedings work is commenced. As at 5th January 2018, we currently have no children who have been on plans for more than two years and 51 who have been on plans for a year. For some of those the Court has not agreed the Care Plan of removal under Care Orders, and therefore, the potential risks remain to the child despite the Authority seeking an Order and as such child protection plans have remained.
- 7.12 This is a particularly difficult tension to manage as families could perceive that the Court has agreed that there is no risk to the children remaining at home; rather than the Court not finding a threshold for permanent removal. An additional perception amongst some in the multi-agency network is reluctance to remove children from Plans even though there is a concurrent Order in place (parallel planning).

- 7.13 The graph below shows those children who have been on plans for a second or subsequent time. For some children and young people a further period on a child protection plan is not necessarily an indicator of poor support and may indicate a change in family circumstances. For some families the arrival of an additional child can tip them back into a previous pattern of neglect that had shown improvement; for others it can be the arrival of a new partner or the death of a previously protective adult such as an involved grandparent.
- 7.14 The proportion of children subject to repeat child protection plans was reported as at 11.5% at the end of November 2017. This is below our statistical neighbours (14.9%) and the national average (17.9%). This remains an area of scrutiny and oversight by management to decide whether a higher threshold (i.e., care proceedings) be applied when children are subject to repeat plans.



Graph 7
Source: LCS

8 Serious Case Reviews (LSCB)

- 8.1 There are currently two Serious Case Reviews underway. One is likely to conclude in the next quarter, and one has only just started with the first SCR Panel meeting held in December. Both SCRs have Practitioner Events aligned to the work of the SCR Panels to ensure that the Panel and the Overview Author receive as much practice based information from those services directly involved with the children and families concerned.
- 8.2 The Local Safeguarding Children Board will report fully on both later in the year.

9 The Designated Officer (formerly the Local Authority Designated Officer - LADO)

- 9.1 The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is a statutory role defined in statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children.' The Designated Officer is responsible for the management and oversight of allegations against people that work with children. It is not an investigative role but provides specialist advice and support to employers where an alleged harm is perpetrated on a child or young person, or an alleged offender is employed. The investigative responsibility is retained by the individual's employer or the Police if an offence is alleged and requires investigation and action to be taken.
- 9.2 The LADO oversees all referrals in respect of allegations against people who work with, or come into contact with, children. The LADO will convene strategy meetings where it is necessary to do so, e.g., where there is enough evidence to demonstrate that the allegation has substance or a strategy meeting will provide further substantive information to decide whether an allegation is founded.
- 9.3 The LADO will follow through on allegations to conclusion, liaising with other governing bodies such as the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Ofsted and other local and Government agencies.
- 9.4 An annual report is provided to the LSCB on the work of the Designated Officer. Below is a table of outcomes in relation to referrals received by the LADO to enquire into the allegations made and received. In total for 2016/17, the LADO received 215 contacts in and 130 referrals resulting in 87 strategy meetings.

CATEGORY	Outcomes of LADO referrals (n)
FALSE	1
Unsubstantiated	34
Unfounded	10
Substantiated	27
Outcome pending	3
Malicious	1
NFA	54
TOTAL	130

Table 3

Source: LADO Allegations Tracker 2016/17

10 Legal Implications

- 10.1 There are no specific legal implication arising from this report. Lewisham CSC provides children's safeguarding and support services in accordance with the statutory framework provided by the Children Act 1989 and successive statutory requirements.

11. Crime and Disorder Implications

11.1 The police are key partners in safeguarding children.

12. Equalities Implications

12.1 Equalities factors are addressed in the body of the report. Further scrutiny of ethnicity in local populations versus those children's ethnicity when entering safeguarding and child protection processes is required to ensure that children are not over represented in comparison to local demographics.

13. Environmental Implications

13.1 None.

12. Background documents and originator

12.1 If there are any queries on this report, please contact Stephen Kitchman, Director, Children's Social Care on

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