

CYP SELECT COMMITTEE		
<b>Report Title</b>	Report on Safeguarding Services	
<b>Key Decision</b>	No	Item No. 6
<b>Ward</b>	All	
<b>Contributors</b>	Director Children's Social Care	
<b>Class</b>	Open	Date: 5 <sup>th</sup> September 2018

## 1. Purpose and Summary of the Report

1.1 This report provides an overview of safeguarding activity between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018 and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2018. 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:

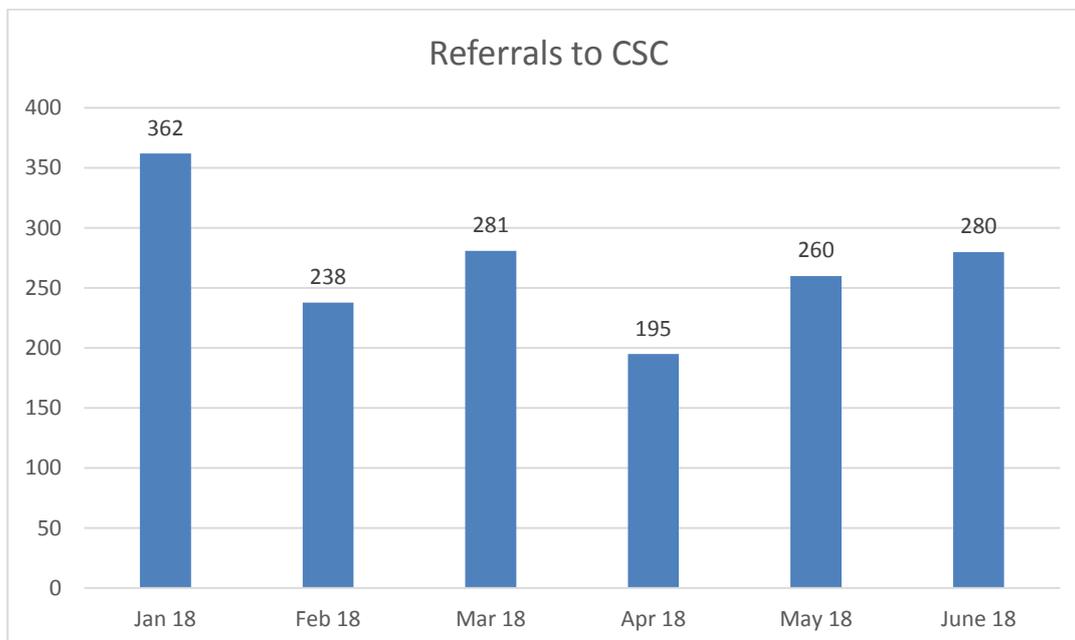
- [The Children Acts of 1989 and 2014](#), and subsequent guidance and regulations, impose a statutory duty on local authorities to safeguard children in their area.
- [The London Child Protection Procedures 2017](#) have been adopted by all London Local Authorities and LSCBs.
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#), 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 Select Committee Meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2017. Since that time there have been reviews of the functioning of the MASH and a review of the effectiveness of the Early Help offer is planned for the Autumn. As a result of the MASH review there will be changes made in order to streamline and simplify business processes to ensure that the safeguarding potential of this area of service is maximised.
- 4.2 As reported previously, a new online referral form and a version in Word (replacing the Common Assessment Framework tool as referral to CSC) were launched alongside the new MASH arrangements and continue to be the single method for safeguarding referrals for professionals, with other access routes being 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**

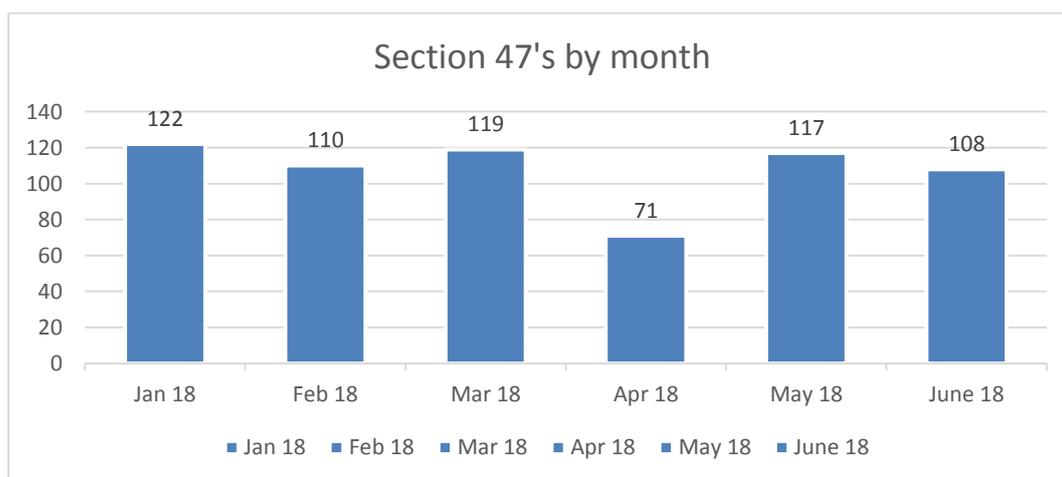
- 5.1 The graph below (Graph 1) shows the number of referrals received by Lewisham's Children's Social Care (CSC) from January to the end of June 2018. The numbers represent an average of 22% of contacts made to the MASH. So in June 2018, 1733 contacts were processed by the MASH of which 279 converted to a referral to Children's Social Care. The key activity of the MASH therefore needs to be understood as the safe triage of all the contacts made the aim being to ensure that children get the right service at the right time.
- 5.2 The graph below (referrals from 1 January to 30 June 2018) indicates that there was a significant increase in the number of referrals in January (362). The average number of referrals for the period shown is 269. There are seasonal fluctuations in rates of referral relating to such factors as school holidays.
- 5.3 Current analysis suggests that the introduction of the new referral pathways and refreshed thresholds reported previously resulted in an 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 monthly multi-agency audit.



Graph 1  
Source: LCS

## 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 647 children and young people were subject to Section 47 enquiries from 1 January to 30 June 2018.
- 6.2 As with referrals numbers fluctuate particularly around times when schools are closed.



Graph 3 Source: LCS

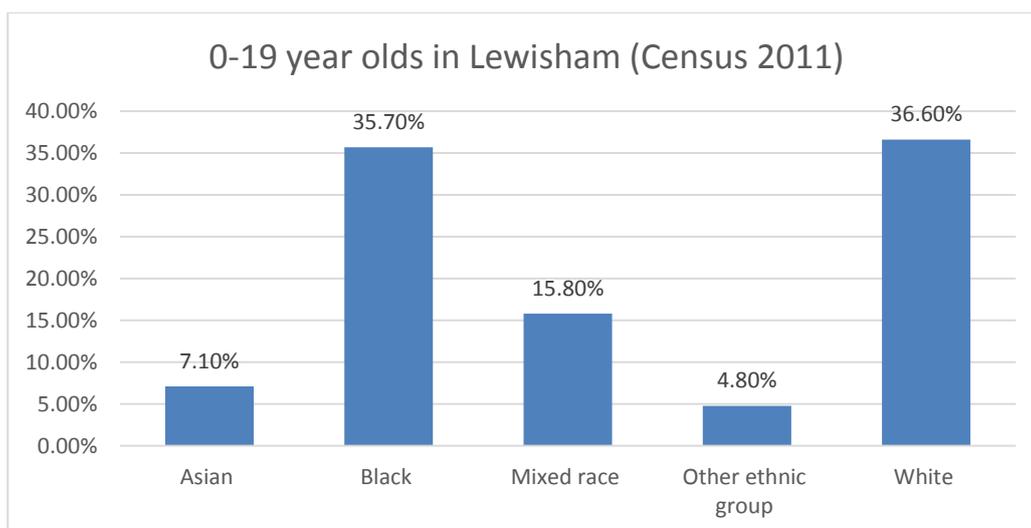
- 6.3 The figures below at table 1 relate to the proportions of children and young people who were the subject of s47 enquiry work. The highest proportions are children of Black African or Black Caribbean ethnicity, (20.4% and 13.9%

respectively) and those children or young people who are White British (19.8%). 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 looking at repeat referrals will be carried out as part of the monthly audit programme.

<b>Section 47's by Ethnicity Jan18-Jun 18</b>	
Any Other Asian Background	3.7%
Pakistani	0.6%
Black- African	20.4%
Black Caribbean	13.9%
Any Other Black Background	11.3%
Chinese	0.9%
Any Other Mixed Background	6.3%
White and Asian	0.6%
White and Black African	2.2%
White and Black Caribbean	7.0%
Information Not Yet Obtained	0.6%
Any Other Ethnic Group	4.0%
White - British	19.8%
Any Other White Background	8.7%

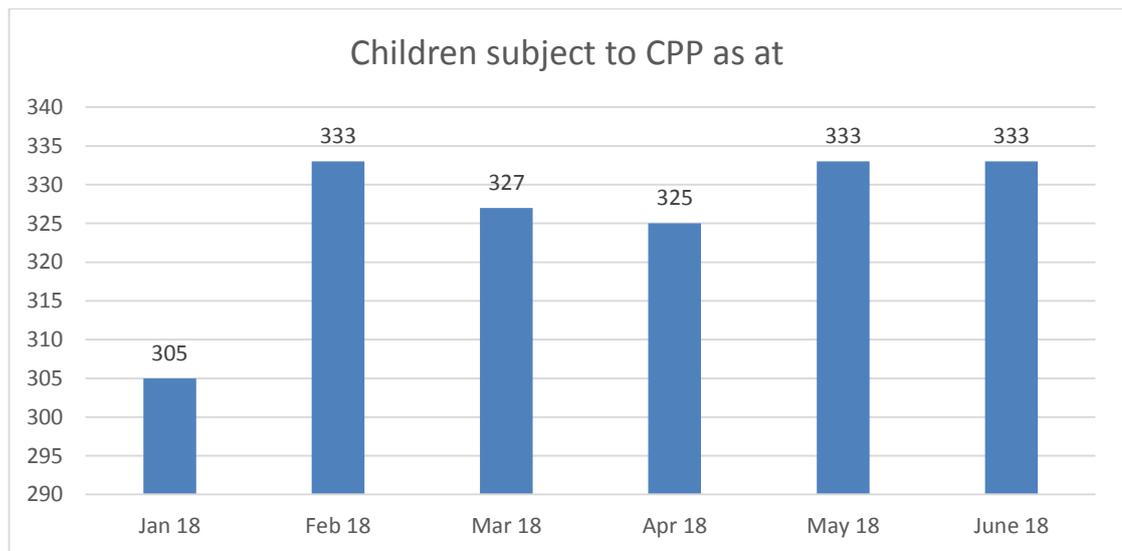
**Table 1**



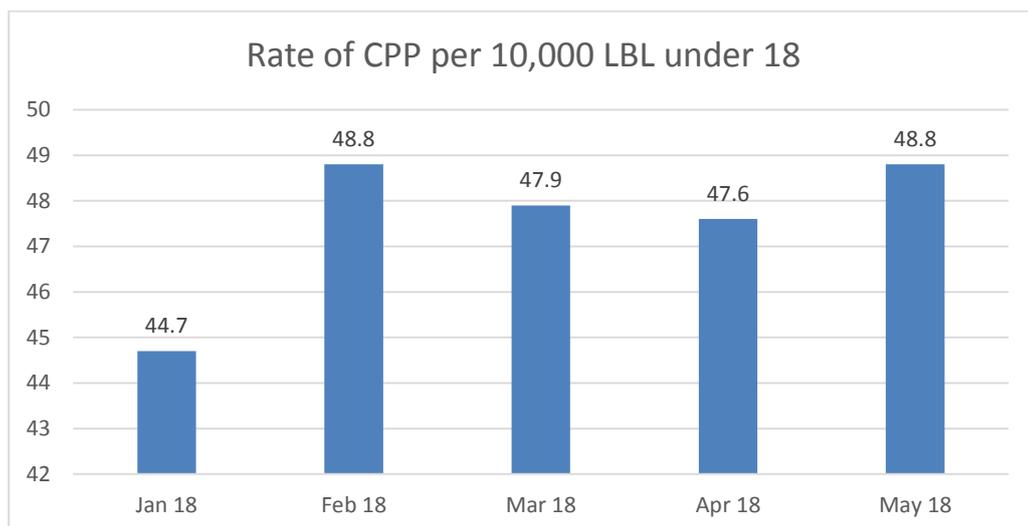
Graph 3  
Source: Census 2011

## **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 the subjects of 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 subjects of plans. As can be seen, there are fluctuations in the numbers of

children becoming the subjects of 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 to plans. The expected target for numbers of children is 290; currently the number is 333. One hypothesis in relation to a consistent increase in the numbers of children who have become the subjects of Child Protection Plans is that this is directly related to the increase in referrals and assessments being undertaken following the introduction of the new MASH arrangements and adjustments to the application of thresholds. However, some neighbouring Local Authorities are also experiencing a rise in the numbers of children becoming the subjects of Child Protection Plans and we are beginning to explore with them the possible reasons for these regional trends and how they compare with national trends. Another hypothesis is that the rise in criminal and sexual exploitation as a national issue is contributing to increasing numbers of adolescents being made the subjects of Child Protection Plans. Alternative approaches to these issues are being explored, such as the use of Adolescent Risk Meetings in these circumstances instead of Child Protection Case Conferences.

7.3 The most recent available comparative national data and with our statistical neighbours was published in October 2017. At that time the average rate per 10,000 child population for our statistical neighbours was 38.5 and nationally was 43.3. Further analysis is required in order to understand the rise in children becoming the subjects of Child Protection Plans.

7.4 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

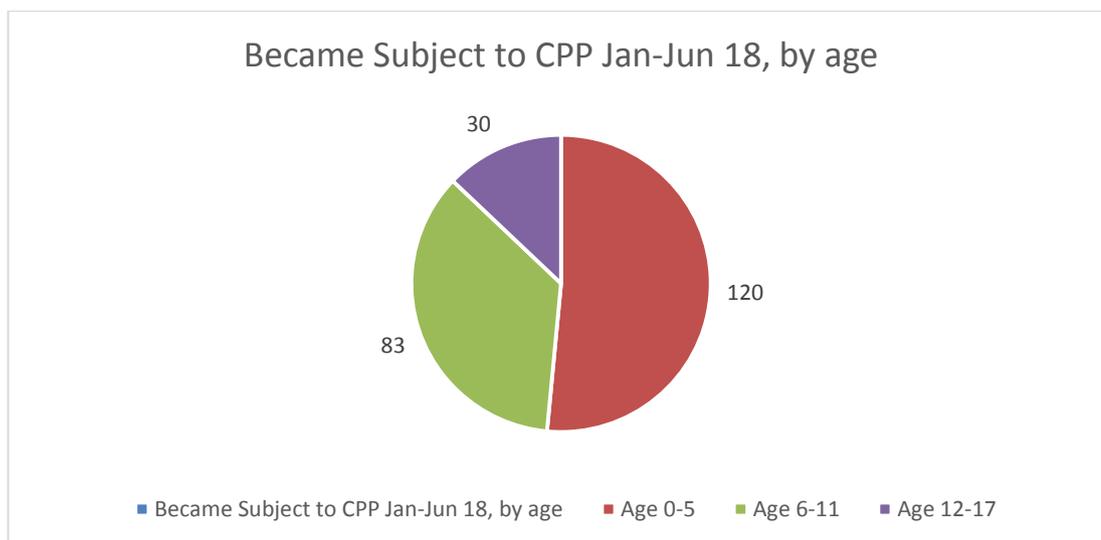
For some children and young people there are concerns for their safety and wellbeing in relation to more than one category. It may on occasion be appropriate to use more than one category if each reaches the threshold for significant harm and a specific risks might otherwise be underestimated. It is acknowledged that emotional harm is very frequently associated with other categories. However, multiple categories should not be used as a “catch all” to cover all potential eventualities. (As at 01/08/18 4 children were recorded as being the subject of Child Protection Plans under more than one category).

<b>Became Subject to CPP Jan-Jun 18, by category of abuse</b>	
Emotional abuse	83
Multiple	0
Neglect	121
Physical abuse	21
Sexual abuse	8

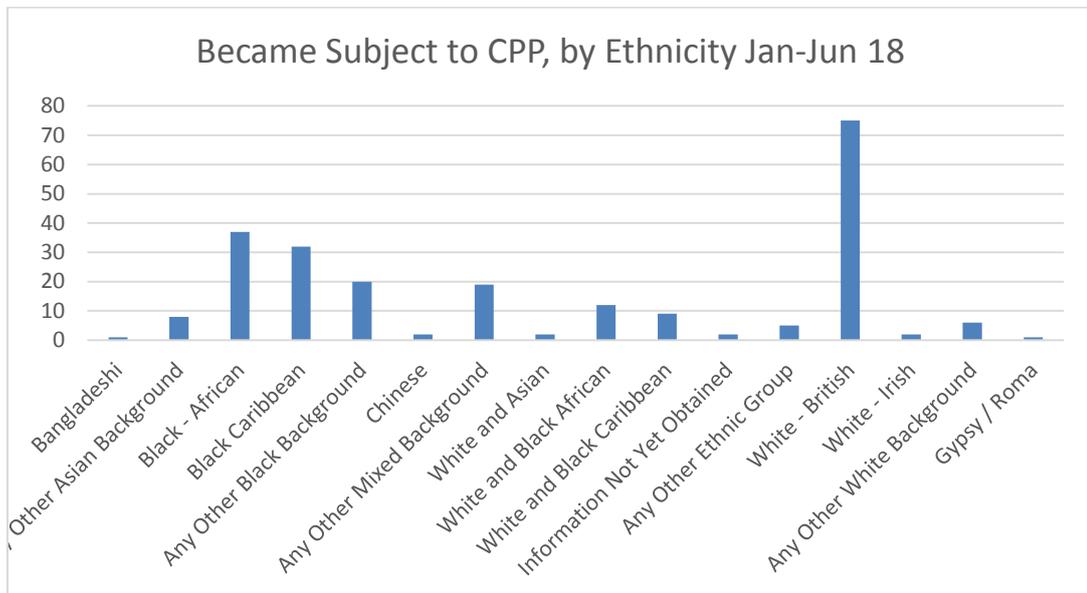
Table 2  
Source: LCS

7.5 In the period from January to June 2018, 233 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.

- 7.6 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 and mental and physical health issues culminating in sustained and sometimes chronic neglect.
- 7.7 In conjunction with the Lewisham Safeguarding Children Board we have developed and rolled out an updated Neglect Strategy, including lunchtime briefings and the introduction across the LSCB partnership of a neglect toolkit based on the widely used graded profile. Audit activity within our monthly and thematic audit programmes has also aimed to capture the quality of our neglect response, including an audit in January 2018 focussing on neglect in relation to children aged 2 or under.
- 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) are 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

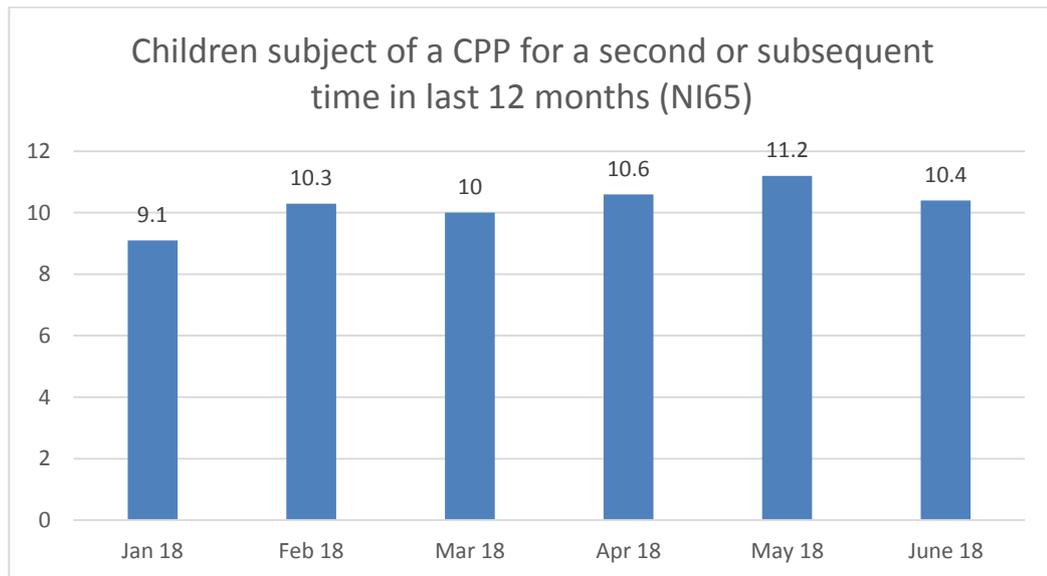


Graph 7  
Source: LCS

- 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= 75, 32.2%). Black African was 15.9% (n=37) and those of Black Caribbean ethnicity are also significantly represented at 13.7% (n=32).
- 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). We have identified for example that whilst White British children represent 19.8% of S47 enquiries they represent 32.2% of children who are made the subject of Child Protection Plans. This suggests a greater proportion of S47 enquiries in relation to White British children are resulting in Initial Child Protection Conferences with decisions to make them the subject of a plan and this will require further analysis.
- 7.11 The Service Managers for Family Social Work and Quality Assurance track cases monthly to ensure that cases do not drift on plans unnecessarily. Social work and targeted support from the multi-agency network should demonstrate impact by the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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. To strengthen this system we are now introducing further monitoring at 18 months.
- As at 16<sup>th</sup> August 2018, we have 7 children from 2 families who have been on plans for more than two years. However, current case planning suggests it is very likely all 7 children will be stepped down to Child in Need Plans at their next review conferences before the end of September.
- 7.12 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.

- 7.13 The proportion of children becoming subjects of repeat Child Protection Plans was reported as at 10.4% at the end of June 2018. This is below our statistical neighbours (14.9%) and the national average (18.7%). This nevertheless remains an area of scrutiny and oversight by management to decide whether legal processes need to be considered when children are subject to repeat plans.



Graph 7  
Source: LCS

## 8 Serious Case Reviews (LSCB)

- 8.1 In the period December 2017 to June 2018, the LSCB completed and published 2 SCR's, which were both published anonymously on the NSPCC website, due to the risk that significant media interest could negatively impact the family. Normally, all reviews published in Lewisham are published on the LSCB website <https://www.safeguardinglewisham.org.uk/lscb/lscb/serious-case-review/serious-case-review> The recommendations from both reviews have been placed in a comprehensive action plan, which is being monitored by the LSCB's Task Group on Case Reviews.
- 8.2 Currently, there are 3 SCR's being undertaken, 2 of which are nearing completion, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> midway through the process. The LSCB will report fully on the reviews when they become public.

## 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 2017/18, the LADO received 332 contacts, resulting in 160 (48.2%) being taken forward for referral and 83 strategy meetings. (This compares to 215 contacts in 2016/17 resulting in 130 (60.4%) being taken forward to referral and 87 strategy meetings).

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>Outcomes of LADO referrals (n)</b>
<b>False</b>	5
<b>Unsubstantiated</b>	38
<b>Unfounded</b>	7
<b>Substantiated</b>	16
<b>Outcome pending</b>	3
<b>Malicious</b>	0
<b>NFA</b>	91
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>160</b>

Table 3  
Source: LADO Allegations Tracker 2017/18

## 10 Legal Implications

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

## **11 Financial Implications**

11.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report

## **12. Crime and Disorder Implications**

12.1 The police are key partners in safeguarding children.

## **13. Equalities Implications**

13.1 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.

## **14. Environmental Implications**

14.1 None.

## **15. Background documents and originator**

15.1 If there are any queries on this report, please contact Jean Imray, Interim Director, Children's Social Care on  
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