

<b>CYP SELECT COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>Report Title</b>	Outcomes for Looked After Children	
		Item No. 7
<b>Contributors</b>	Director of Children's Social Care Service Manager, LAC, Leaving Care & Adoption	
<b>Class</b>	Open	Date: 28 February 2017

## 1. 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 incidence of children going missing or being 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 as follows:
- a) identifying and protecting children and young people at risk of harm and ensuring they feel safe, especially from:
    - Domestic violence and abuse
    - Child sexual exploitation
    - Serious youth violence
    - Child abuse and neglect
    - Deliberate and accidental injury
  - b) Reducing anti-social behaviour and youth offending.
  - c) Ensuring that our Looked After Children are safe.
- 4.2 The proposals are also aligned with the Corporate priority of promoting young people's achievement and involvement and protection of children: better safeguarding and joined up services for children at risk.

4.3 The report contributes to five of the key priority outcomes of Lewisham's Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2020:

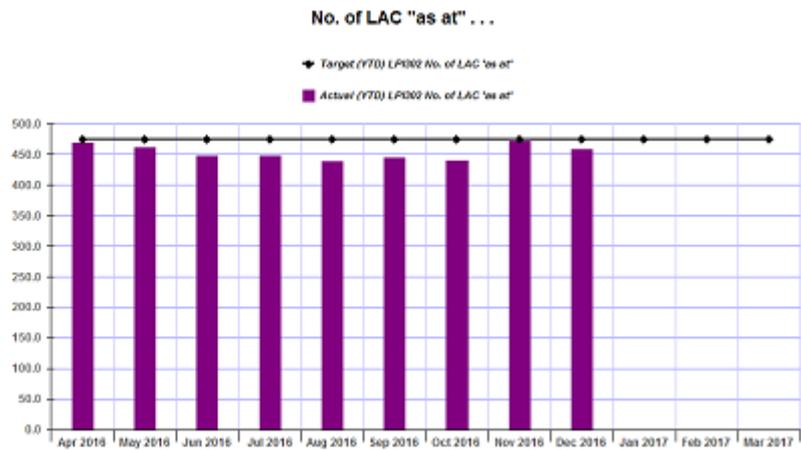
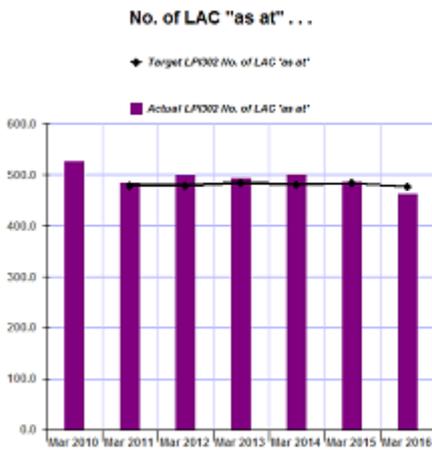
- **Ambitious and achieving** – where people are inspired and supported to fulfil their potential
- **Safer** – where people feel safe and live free from crime, antisocial behaviour and abuse
- **Empowered and responsible** – where people are actively involved in their local area and contribute to supportive communities
- **Healthy, active and enjoyable** – where people can actively participate in maintaining and improving their health and well-being
- **Dynamic and prosperous** – where people are part of vibrant communities and town centres, well connected to London and beyond.

## 5. Ofsted Inspection of 2016

- 5.1 Following the Ofsted Inspection which concluded in January 2016, Ofsted approved the Department's action plan drawn up to address the recommendations. This committee has had oversight of this document and regular updates.
- 5.2 The Ofsted recommendation for the LAC service was to ensure that life story work is completed for all looked after children. Life Story work as it suggests, is work social workers undertake with children looked after, to help them understand why they are not able to live with their birth parents. It helps them come to terms with this decision and in most cases allows us to ensure the children and their extended families can continue to have appropriate levels of contact. It is also important to support the children's emerging identity and supports positive self-esteem.
- 5.3 Such work needs to be ongoing, to reflect changes in the children's age and developmental stage. As a service we have made life story work a priority in supervision, team and service meetings over the last twelve months.
- 5.4 The advanced practitioner has run workshops and provided individual sessions to support social workers to undertake what can be emotionally challenging work. The independent reviewing service is monitoring the progress of life story for all children at six monthly intervals, during the children's LAC reviews.

## 6. Number of Looked After Children

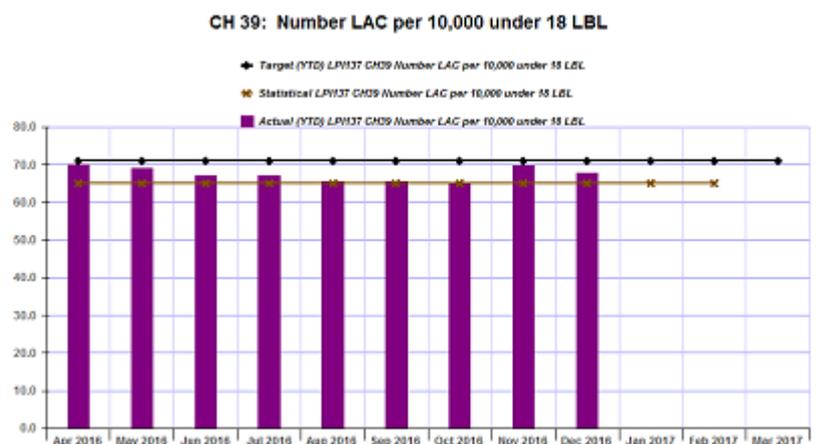
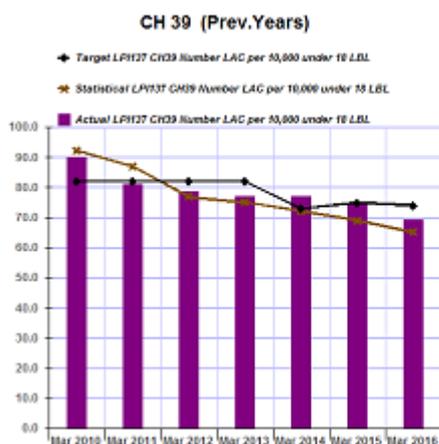
- 6.1 Since the last report was submitted, the number of looked after children has remained stable at around 475. The current figure is 458. This excludes regular respite arrangements (as at 31/12/16).
- 6.2 Of the total cohort 47 are permanently looked after disabled children (as at 31/12/16). Of these children, 30% (14 children) are placed in residential provision due to their high level of need. The remaining 70% (33 children) are looked after by foster carers and receive community support to address their needs arising from their disabilities.



6.3 Performance (as at March 2016) for the number of children who leave care as a result of permanent arrangements via Special Guardianship and adoption remains strong. For both Adoption and SGO's Lewisham performs better than our statistical neighbours and just below the England average.

### The LAC per 10,000 population in Lewisham under 18

6.4 The graphs below indicate the number looked after as 67.8 per 10,000 of the under 18 population. (Dec 2016) This figure has reduced for the last two years, bringing us closer to with our statistical neighbours. We have systems in place to ensure that children do not become looked after unnecessarily and where possible that support is provided within family or community networks. Family support services are provided by a variety of community organisations and we have recently reviewed and expanded our Early Help offer to better support and co-ordinate provision, this includes a new Early Help team, recommissioning of our Family Intervention Service, which is now delivered by the 'Core Assets' organisation and the development of our edge of care rapid response service, 'Families First'. In addition all children who become looked after are reviewed at a weekly panel.



## 7. Placement Stability

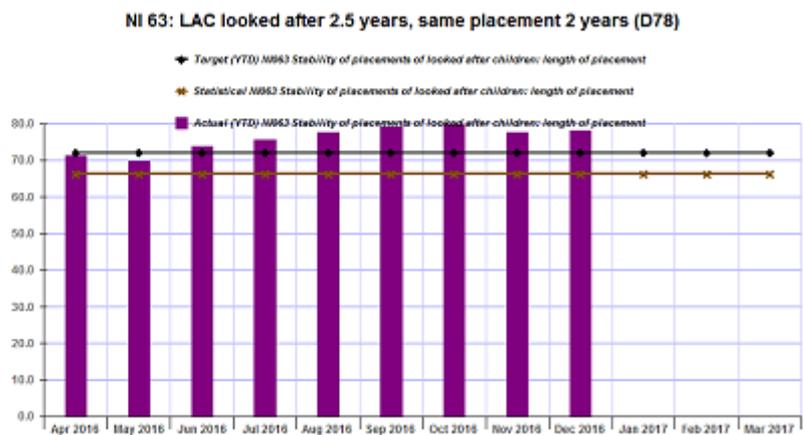
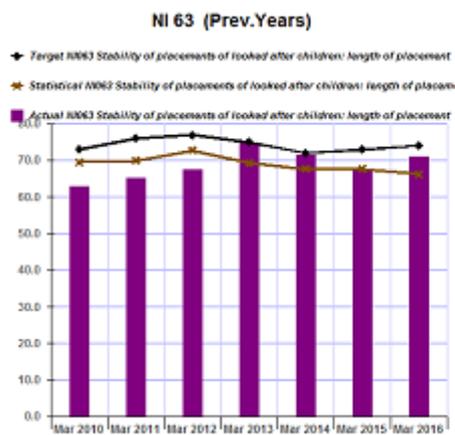
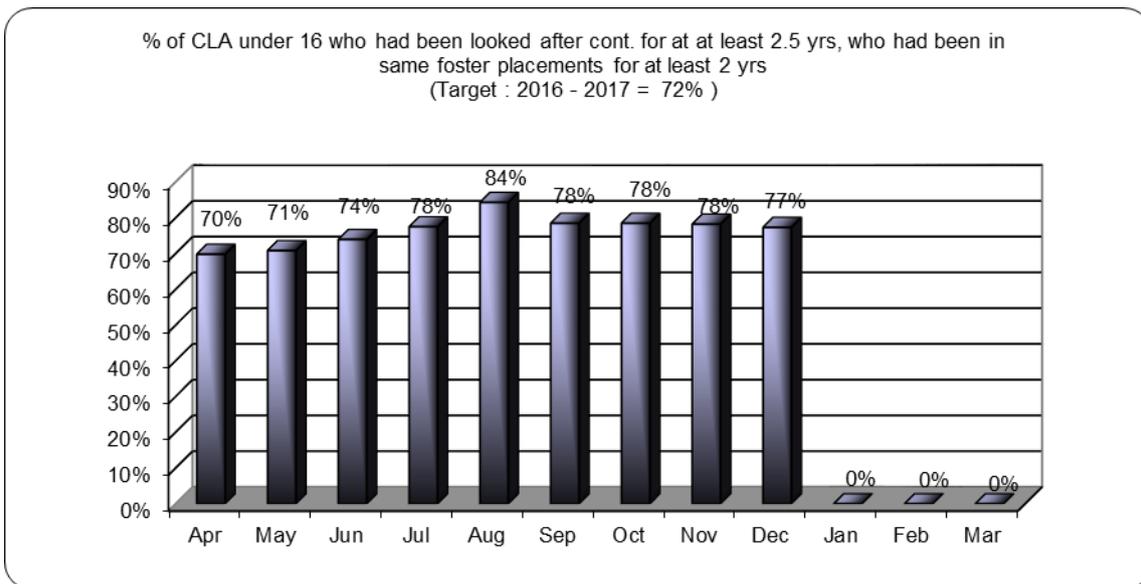
7.1 The stability which our looked after children experience is a priority for the Council and continues to be among the highest priorities for the service. Achieving placement stability for children in long term care is key to improving their outcomes in other areas.

- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 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.
- 7.4 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.
- 7.5 From 1/4/16 until 31/12/16 fourteen children have been adopted. A further eleven children have been placed with adoptive families.
- 7.6 As at Dec 2016 78.4% (359 children) of our looked after children are living with foster carers. The remainder live in semi-independent, residential units, YOI's or specialist health units. 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 18.6% of our young people live in residential care which is higher than our statistical neighbours.
- 7.7 At the end of March 2016 17% of the children looked after by Lewisham lived more than 20 miles from their primary address. This is lower than our statistical neighbours but higher than the England average.
- 7.8 For most children we would want them to be in close proximity to Lewisham, for consistency at school and family contact. For a small number of young people distance is part of an agreed care and safeguarding plan. In other cases the type of specialist provision is not available within 20 miles and therefore a 'distant' placement is agreed. All such decisions have to be agreed by the Director of Children Social Care (CSC).
- 7.9 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 35 young people subject to Staying Put arrangements. The figure in this report last year was 26.
- 7.10 Over the last three years we have introduced an evidence based approach known as The Secure Base. Ongoing training (for new staff) in this model is provided 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.
- 7.11 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.

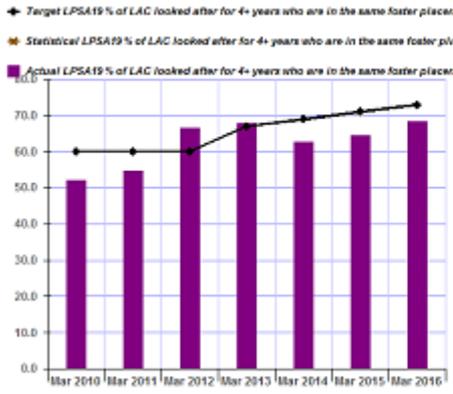
7.12 When the social worker recommends a move this is agreed at a panel chaired by the Director of Children’s Social Care and includes representation from others, for example the Independent Reviewing Officer service and the Virtual School.

7.13 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 in this cohort is 150 of which 116 meet the target. Team managers look in detail at the circumstances of the remaining 34. 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.

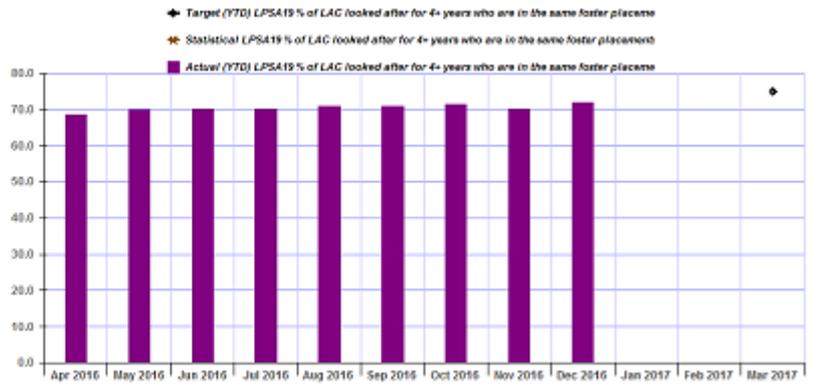


7.14 The chart below looks at the looked after children population including 16-18 year olds who have been looked after continually for 4 years or more and who have been in the same foster placement for at least two years. The DFE has ceased publishing data for this indicator, which means we can no longer compare ourselves with statistical neighbours.

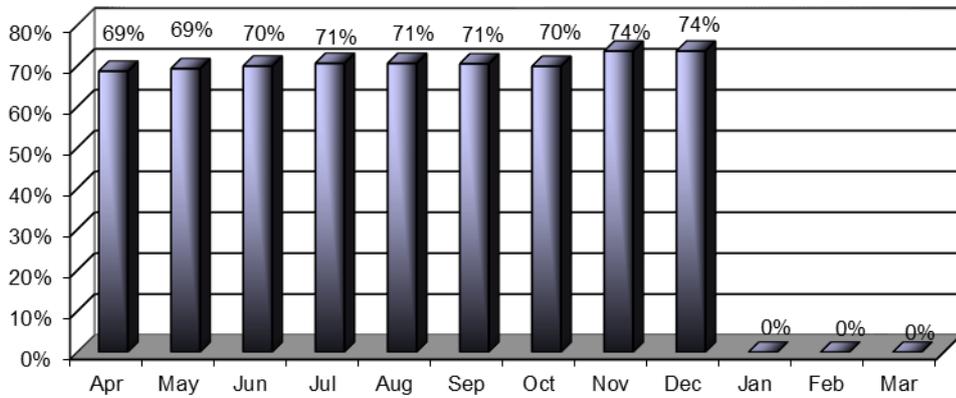
PAF D35 (Prev.Years)



PAF D35 % LAC looked after 4 yrs, same foster p'ment 2 years

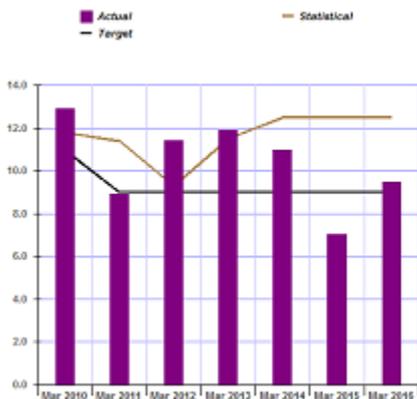


% of CLA who had been looked after cont. for at least 4 yrs, who had been in same foster placements for at least 2 yrs (Target : 2016 - 2017 = 75%)

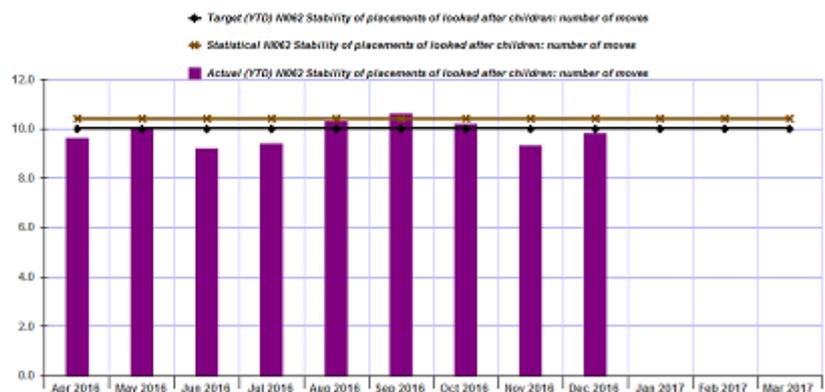


7.15 The bar charts below show the number of children and young people who have experienced 3 or more placement moves in the last 12 months. For some younger children 3 moves may be seen as positive for example, a child safeguarded in a foster placement, assessed with a parent and then placed permanently 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 slightly better than our statistical neighbours and the national average.

NI 62 % LAC 3 or more placement moves

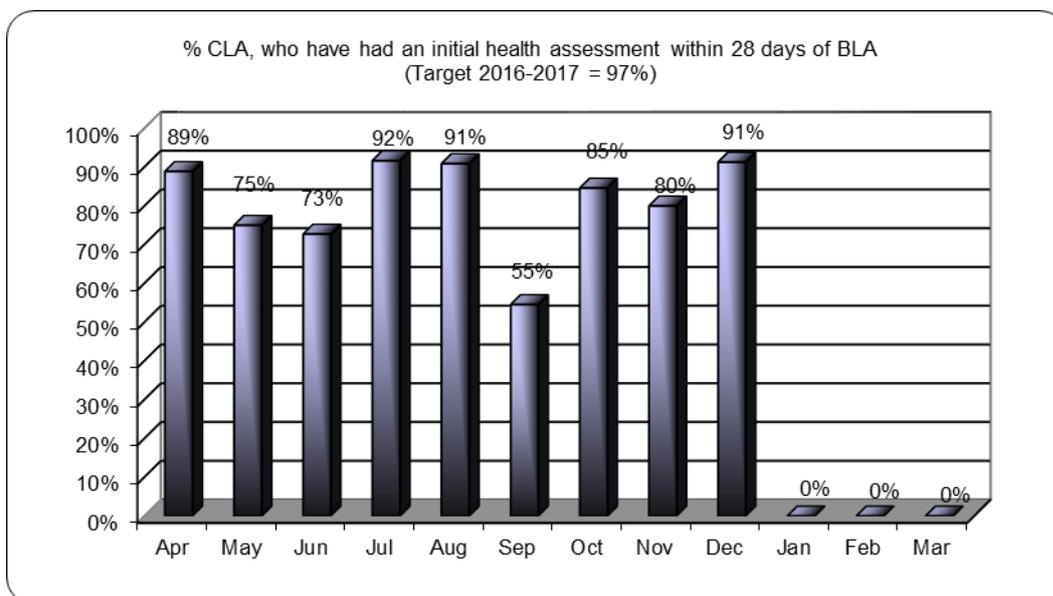


NI 62 PAF A1 % LAC 3 or more placement moves during year

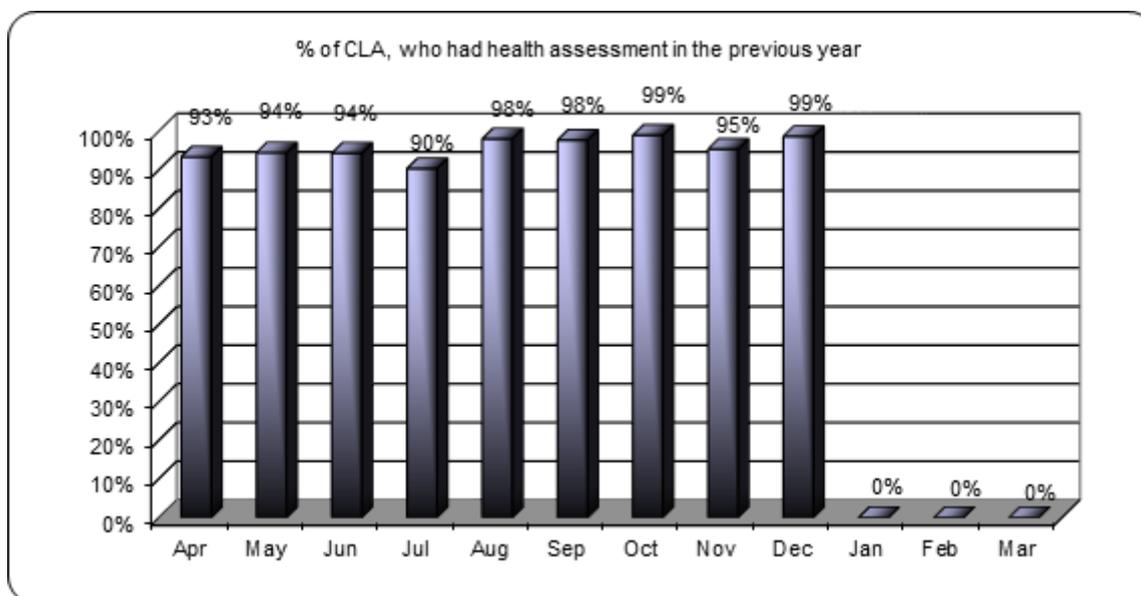


## 8. Health Outcomes

- 8.1 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 immunisations and dental care.
- 8.2 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.
- 8.3 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.



- 8.4 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 at the end of March 2016 was 95.4. This was an improvement on the 2015 figure when the figure was 91.4%. This figure is higher than our statistical neighbours (91%) and the England average (at 90%). This demonstrates the ongoing progress which started following the appointment of a second LAC nurse. It also evidences the ongoing joint work undertaken by social workers and the LAC nurses to ensure those young people who refuse a health assessment when they first become looked after do agree at a later stage once they have developed trusting relationships with professionals.



8.5 To support close working the LAC nurses now offer a monthly drop in session at Laurence House. This allows the staff to discuss a variety of issues, and ensure outstanding concerns are addressed and each child's care plan is being addressed in a timely manner.

8.6 The emotional wellbeing 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. Carers for children assess their wellbeing through the use of a standardized strength and difficulty questionnaire. In Lewisham (as at March 16) the average score was 13.7% this places Lewisham in line with statistical neighbours and the England average.

## 9. Safeguarding Looked After Children

9.1 In addition to the six monthly report to Select Committee on all missing children, the following is an update in relation to LAC. In March 2016 there had been 140 episodes of young people going missing, these episodes relate to 56 young people who have been missing during the year on more than one occasion. The indicators to date in this financial year, show the number and frequency of children going missing has increased.

9.2 Officers consider that the learning regarding missing children presented to this Committee, and the links to sexual exploitation means there is increased reporting both in relation to children living at home and LAC. A number of the LAC who became looked after as teenagers, have been missing from home on frequent occasions and this has become part of their behaviour and response to difficult situations. We are also concerned that a small number of children are going missing in circumstances which links them to gangs and criminal activity. With this cohort we are working closely with colleagues in YOS, the police and community safety to address the concerns.

9.3 In December 2016 a new independent service was commissioned from the St Christopher's Runaways Project to work with missing children. St Christopher's will provide return interviews for all LAC children who go missing. They also attend a weekly operational multi agency meeting, for Missing, Exploited and Trafficked (MET)

children, as detailed within the MET strategy. This meeting looks at these children both individually and collectively across the Borough. As a service this also allows for analysis of findings and reporting of trends. Additional data and trend analysis will be used to inform practice and planning.

- 9.4 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 and Missing from Care meetings which result in robust plans to keep them safe.
- 9.5 In March 2016 8% of young people were identified as having a substance mis-use problem this is slightly higher than our statistical neighbour at 7% and the England average at 4%. The Young Person's Health and Wellbeing Service is offering an integrated and accessible service that focuses on the three main risk predictors of teenage ill-health (substance misuse, risky sexual behaviour and poor mental health). The service prioritises prevention and early help, enabling young people to better manage their own health and wellbeing.
- 9.6 The number of young people aged 10/17 who were convicted or subject to youth caution was 11% in 2016. This figure has risen and now puts Lewisham above our statistical neighbor at 7% and the England average at 4%.
- 9.7 This is obviously of concern and demonstrates the need for even closer working relationships between CSC and Lewisham YOS and those in other areas where children are placed. Key to reducing the offending figure will be the early identification of young people at risk and implementing interventions to assist for example the use of mentors. This is an area where the LAC & Leaving Care service also work closely with the Virtual school as there are also links between young people being excluded/absent from school and offending. CSC is active, following the recent YOS inspection in implementing an improvement plan.

## **10. Adoption**

- 10.1 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.
- 10.2 In 2014/15 33 of our children left care as a result of being adopted and in 2015/16 the figure was 36. So far this year 14 of our children have been adopted. A further 11 children have been matched and placed with adopted families during that timeframe. It is likely that most of these children will be adopted before the end of the year. However even if all 11 orders were granted this would still show a significant drop from the two previous years.
- 10.3 The reason for this is a reduction in the number of placement orders (the order required to legally place a child for adoption) granted in 2015/16. This change in practice within the courts relates to case law issued in 2013. Officers are aware from the South London Adoption consortium, in which we are active members, that other LAs are experiencing a similar trend.

10.4 Adoption performance is measured in a three year rolling scorecard. The outcomes for 2013/16 are represented in the chart below

<b>Children placed for adoption</b>	Apr 13- Mar 14	Apr 14- Mar 15	<b>Apr 15- Mar 16</b>
<b>Number of children placed for adoption</b>	27	36	<b>19</b>
With families approved by Lewisham	20	23	<b>12</b>
With families through inter-agency placements	7	13	<b>7</b>
Number of children placed with single adopters	3	5	<b>1</b>
Number of children placed with gay/lesbian adopters	3	3	<b>2</b>
Number of children placed with foster carers	1	1	<b>2</b>
Male / Female	14/13	20/16	<b>13/6</b>
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
White UK (including European)	18	15	<b>8</b>
Mixed heritage (incl mixed white parentage)	7	13	<b>7</b>
Black African Caribbean	2	3	<b>1</b>
Black African	0	3	<b>3</b>
Black African Caribbean / Black African	0	0	<b>0</b>
Asian	0	2	<b>0</b>

10.5 These figures demonstrate 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.

10.6 Since May 2015, the Adoption Support Fund has been fully implemented. The team undertakes adoption support assessments and makes applications to the Adoption Support Fund. As of 31 March 2016, 22 adoptive families received therapeutic support via the fund.

## **11. Education**

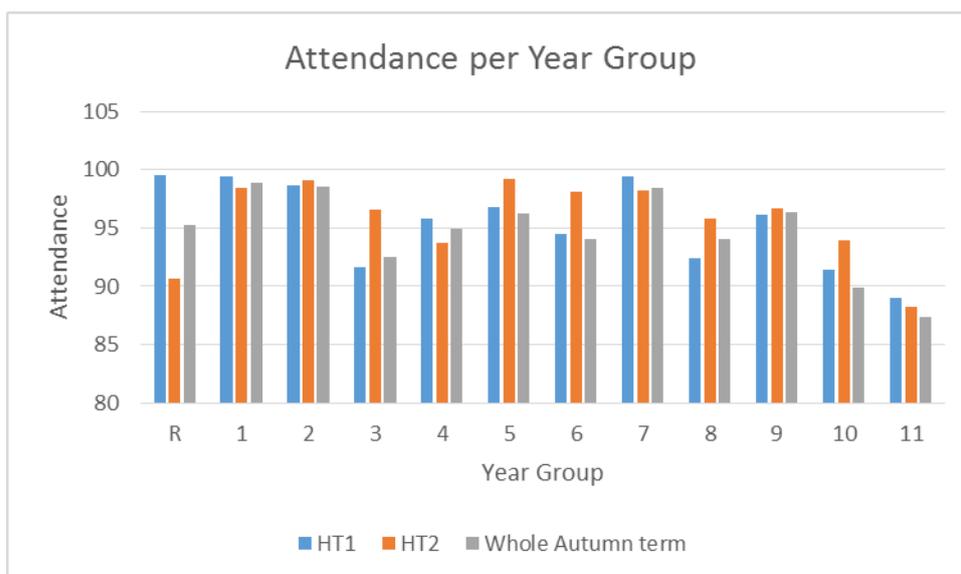
11.1 Appendix one provides the outcomes for KS2 (age 11) and GCSE(age 16) results at the end of the last academic year (July 2016).

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

11.3 The service currently supports 35 young people up to the age of 25 who are attending University.

11.4 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.

- 11.5 The Virtual School works very closely with the LAC & Leaving Care service in order to improve educational outcomes for our Looked after Children Head teacher
- 11.6 The additional CAMHS staff placed within the Virtual school 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.
- 11.7 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 the pupil premium grant and ensure the funds are spent on resources which directly impact on the education attainment of individual children rather than generic supports in schools.
- 11.8 The Virtual School has developed a website which like other schools will give information to pupils, parent/carers and Social workers.
- 11.9 One of the priorities for the Virtual School is the monitoring of children's attendance. The graph below demonstrates the current position.



Half Term 1 data was collated for the period 01/09/16 – 21/10/16. Half Term 2 data was collated for the period 31/10/16 – 21/12/16. The whole half term data was collected for the period 01/09/16 – 31/12/16. This data is not an average of the two half term but real time data collated in January 2017 once all attendance had been collected by Welfare Call. Marks are often changed daily therefore the data is as real as the time it is collected.

- Every year group except Y11 has above 90% attendance for Half Term 1 (HT1) and Half Term 2 (HT2).
- Whole Autumn Term attendance is above 90% in every year group except for Y10 and 11.

### **Half Term 1**

- 1 Overall attendance = 93.7% (01/09/16 - 21/10/16)
- 2 140/279 children 49.8% of children maintained 100% attendance for half a term
- 3 37/279 children had UA\* = 13.3%

4 42/279 children were PA\* - 15.1%

### **Half Term 2**

- 1 Overall attendance = 93.8% (31/10/16 - 21/12/16)
- 2 142/281 children 50.5% of children maintained 100% attendance for half a term
- 3 39/281 children had UA = 13.9%
- 4 37/281 children were PA = 13.2%

### **Whole Autumn Term**

- 1 Overall attendance = 95.3% (01/09/16 - 21/12/16)
- 2 95/281 children 33.8% of children maintained 100% attendance for the whole term
- 3 57/281 children had UA = 20.3%
- 4 45/281 children were PA = 16%

UA\* – *Unauthorised absence*

PA\* – *Persistent absence = attendance below 90%*

## **12. Financial Implications**

- 12.1 The placement budget for Looked after Children for 2016/17 is £22.3 million.
- 12.2 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

## **13. Legal Implications**

- 13.1 There are no particular legal implications arising from this report.

## **14. Crime and Disorder Implications**

- 14.1 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, 20% of cases open to Youth Offending Service are looked after children. (This rises to 40% of those sentenced to custody). 25% of these are looked after by other local authorities, 15% by Lewisham.
- 14.2 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.
- 14.3 Risk factors that may predict involvement in criminal activity are similar to those that may predict looked after status.
- 14.4 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.

## **15. Equalities Implications**

- 15.1 Lewisham's Comprehensive Equalities Scheme (CES) 2016-2020 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.

15.2 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

Looked after children are a significant group in equalities terms as they are at high risk of poor outcomes.

## **16. Environmental Implications**

16.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

## **17. Background documents and originator**

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

## Appendix One

### Primary – 2016 SATs Results

Total cohort 19

6 children disapplied of which 5 have SEN

KS2 Expected +	Reading	Writing	Maths	RWM	Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling
Lewisham LAC (13)	54% 67%	85% 77%	62% 73%	38% 56%	77% 75%
Male (8)	50% 62%	88% 71%	63% 71%	38% 51%	75% 69%
Female (5)	60 % 72%	80% 84%	60% 75%	40% 61%	80% 81%

These are age related expectation and based on previous year on year data we can assume that they will be above the national average for CLA. Figures in blue are for Lewisham Y6 cohort (not LAC) in 2016.

### Secondary – 2016 GCSE Results

5 A-C Including English and Maths

11/50 students were targeted

8/50 achieved

Child	Surname	In Care for more than 12 months	Gender	GCSE 5 A-C	Final Result A-C
A	A	Y	M	Yes	Yes
B	C	Y	M	Yes	Yes
C	K	Y	F	Yes	Yes
D	M	Y	M	Yes	Yes
E	M	Y	F	Yes	Yes
F	O	Y	F	Yes	Yes
G	O	Y	M	Yes	Yes
H	R	Y	F	Yes	Yes

16% (8/50) achieved Grade C or above for English and Maths

<p>(figure also applies to basics indicators)5 A-C Including English and Maths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>26% (13/50) achieved Grade C or above for English</li> <li>22% (11/50) achieved Grade C or above for Maths</li> <li>22% (4/8) of males and 12.5% (4/32) females achieved Grade C above for English and Maths</li> </ul>	<p>5 A-Gs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>46% (23/50) achieved 5 A-G</li> </ul>
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