

CYP SELECT COMMITTEE		
Report Title	Children's Social Care Roadmap	
Key decision	No	Item No. 8
Ward		
Contributors	Executive Director of Children and Young People Director of Children's Social Care	
CLASS	Part 1	

1 Summary of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Children's Social Care Roadmap, being the strategic plan to facilitate service transformation, continuous improvement, investment and delivery of a financially sustainable budget. The report provides an update following the Children's Social Care report to PAC in September 2017.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The CYP Select Committee is invited to note and comment on the report.

3 Policy Context

- 3.1 Children Social Care continues to contribute 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.
- 3.2 Children's Social Care (CSC) contributes to the Children and Young People's Plan 2016-2018 and its 5 priorities: Be healthy, Stay Safe, Enjoy and Achieve, Make a positive contribution and Achieve economic wellbeing.

4 Local Context

- 4.1 Lewisham was last subject to a full inspection of our CSC service in November 2015, with the report published in February 2016. In December 2017 the new CSC framework for inspection was launched by Ofsted with detailed briefings planned for January 2018. The new 'Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services' (ILACS), is a programme of proportionate inspection with a more detailed focus on Local Authorities graded as 'Requires Improvement;' Lewisham along with the majority of other councils would fall into this category. ILACS will run concurrently with the

multi-inspectorate Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAI) and also include a self-assessment, annual meeting with Ofsted and focussed inspection visits outside of the main inspection. Based on current arrangements Lewisham would expect to receive a further inspection within the next 2 years or equally could receive a thematic inspection through the Joint Targeted Area Review (JTAI) inspection arrangements from any time from now onwards.

- 4.2 All aspects of CSC fall under the Ofsted regulatory framework and in effect this sets standards which the Council is required to adhere to. The local authority is not free (as with some council services) simply to 'cut its coat according to its cloth' but rather is expected to provide a service that meets requirements. If an Ofsted inspection finds (as in a number of London boroughs) that standards are not met, the Council is required to rectify this or risks CSC being removed from Council control.
- 4.3 Since the last inspection there has been significant activity to complete the Ofsted Improvement plan which has previously been reported to CYP Select Committee. The improvement plan and associated activity has led to developments in:
- Implementation of new MASH and Early help arrangements
 - Digitalisation and support for social workers with the roll out of new technology
 - Focus on data cleansing and the use of performance information to drive service improvement.
 - Implementation of a new Quality Assurance strategy and associated activity
 - Development of a comprehensive workforce strategy.
- 4.4 Given the scale of transformation within the Department, much of this work is still in train and has led to identification of further service requirements as well as opportunities that are outlined within the Roadmap. Equally there are a number of challenges that are driving local and national demand for service provision associated with economic disadvantage, increased child poverty and with intergenerational problems of mental health and deprivation, including:
- Increase in incidence of poor parental mental health linked with substance abuse, leading to neglect of children and poor attachment
 - Increase in problems of adolescent mental health (e.g. increasing incidence of self-harm, eating disorders, suicidal ideation)
 - Increase in gang involvement in drug dealing, leading to exploitation of vulnerable young people, including sexual exploitation and peer on peer abuse
 - Increase in homelessness, mobility and transience
 - Increase in Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
- 4.5 In more recent months we have seen an increase in the conversion of contacts to referral, this in turn has increased the volumes of assessment and intervention work required as outlined within Figure 1 below.

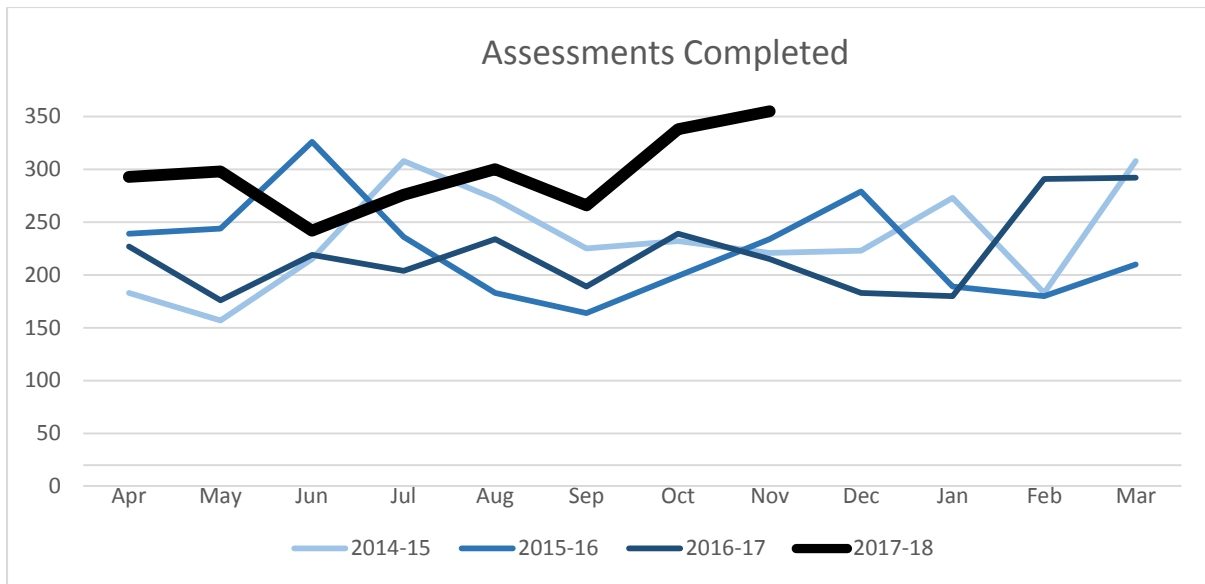


Figure 1 Assessments completed 2015-18

4.6 This has led to caseload pressures and requirements for interim action to address this.

Team	Average number of cases per social worker December 2017	
	Target	Actual
Referral & Assessment	10	22
Family Social Work Service	15	17
Social workers within LAC/Leaving Care	15	14
Personal Advisors within LAC/Leaving Care	20	24

Figure 2 Service area caseload numbers

4.7 In turn staffing pressures have impacted on budget as detailed below through:

- Service demand, since to enable social workers to operate safely and effectively appropriate capacity is needed
- Recent increases across London in agency staff, driven by the competitive market for staff
- Rates of maternity leave across the service
- Implementation of improvement plans following a critical Ofsted report published early in 2016 which rated Lewisham CSC as 'requires improvement'.

5. Budget

5.1 The Council is forecasting an overspend of £13.1m against the directorates' net general fund revenue budget. This compares to a final outturn of £7m for 2016/17 which resulted after applying £2.8m of funding for 'risks and other budget pressures' against the directorates' year-end overspend of £9.8m for that year.

- 5.2 Of the forecast the element that relates to Children and Young People's is £7.6m. The most significant cost pressures for the Directorate fall within the Children's Social Care division which amounts to £5.7m. The placement budget for looked after children is currently forecast to overspend by £2.1m. There is an additional pressure on the section 17 unrelated to no recourse to public funds of £0.8m. This budget meets the needs of families who are intentionally homeless. In addition, the salaries and wages budget shows a forecast overspend of £1.4m in line with the above demand pressures. Furthermore, a total investment of £0.6m has been made in the 'new front door' service which is designed to meet safeguarding requirements and bring costs down in the future. The unachieved historic savings across the division amount to £0.8m.
- 5.3 Over the last eight years, the Council has undertaken a major budget reduction programme to manage the difficult financial challenge it has been faced with. In the period 2010/11 to 2017/18 the Council has implemented savings of £160m, with work underway to identify and deliver a further £32m by 2019/20. The Children and Young People's (CYP) Directorate represents roughly 25% of the total General Fund spend across the Council. For its part, Children Social Care (CSC) makes up 80% of the CYP spend and 20% of the total General Fund spend across the council.
- 5.4 In 2010/11 the CYP budget was £76.4m and through the period of the government's austerity programme, it has been reduced to £48.7m, a reduction of £27.7m or 36%. The net budget in CSC was approximately £50m and is now £37.6m. Corporately this £13.8m of savings represents 9% of the total corporate savings made. This is consistent with Council decisions to protect front line services. The savings made since 2010 in CSC are shown below:

	£m
2010/11	0.2
2011/12	3.6
2012/13	0.3
2013/14	0.5
2014/15	0.3
2015/16	4.2
2016/17	1.4
2017/18	3.3
	13.8

6 National and London context

- 6.1 The Local Government Chronicle reported in August 2017 that across England, spending on children's social care is outstripping budgets by close to £1 billion, estimated to rise to £2 billion by 2020. This research found that over that last three years, around 4 out of 5 councils had overspent and that while budgets had increased by an average of 2.5%, spending had gone up by 5%. This situation has been the subject of representations to central government from the LGA and the Association of Directors of Children's Services. Nationally the number of looked after children has increased. Expectations of children's services have never been higher, yet many of the non-statutory preventative services have been eroded since the beginning of the austerity programme. DfE figures show that in the 10 years from 2006 to 2016, the number of child protection enquiries nationally increased from 72,000 to 172,000.

6.2 In 2017 London Councils released an initial report on their analysis of spend in children’s social care. Patterns of overall children’s social care spend vary significantly between boroughs over the past four years: spend increased in 13 boroughs and decreased in 8 boroughs. Lewisham is one of the boroughs where spend decreased.

6.3 The main findings from the London Councils research are below:

- Overspends are widespread in children’s social care: in 2016/17, 25 out of 28 boroughs overspent on children’s social care budgets – equating to £3.4m per borough or 9.6 per cent of aggregate budgets
- Overspends as a proportion of budgets are slightly higher in outer London (10.0% compared to 8.9% in inner London). Lewisham is 9.3%
- Amongst the 22 boroughs providing full data over the past four years, the number of boroughs experiencing overspends increased from 15 to 21 between 2013/14 and 2016/17
- Many (but not all) boroughs experienced a large increase in overspends in 2016/17, driving an increase in the average overspend from £2.3m in 2015/16 to £3.5 million in 2016/17
- The two main areas of spend are core staffing budgets and placement budgets. At an aggregate level, overspends are equivalent to 12 % of core staffing budgets (compared with 11% in Lewisham) and 18 % of placement budgets (compared with 12% in Lewisham)
- 19 out of 28 boroughs overspent on both core staffing and placement budgets in 2016/17
- Across 29 boroughs providing data, the number of LAC (start of year) fell from 9,017 in 2013/14 to 8,878 in 2016/17. This masks significant variation between boroughs – 14 boroughs experienced an increase in LAC numbers, 13 boroughs experienced a decrease and 2 boroughs experienced no change. Lewisham experienced a small decrease although in the latter part of 2017 we have started to see a small increase.

6.4 The following table compares Lewisham spend with the rest of Inner London, the figures are based on an amount per population of the 0 -17 age group. They relate to the 2016/17 budgets. The content of the costs included in the calculation may vary between boroughs.

	Total children looked after costs £	Social worker costs £
Camden	428	167
Greenwich	449	207
Hackney	327	249
Hammersmith & Fulham	471	193
Islington	517	381
Kensington & Chelsea	241	297
Lambeth	565	136
Lewisham	399	132
Southwark	462	307
Tower Hamlets	300	103
Wandsworth	238	193
Westminster	256	201

7. Roadmap for service improvement and budget reduction

7.1 The Ofsted report in 2016 identified that there needed to be a major improvement programme for CSC, focusing on greater rigor, improved recording and performance management and much better systems and processes. The work achieved so far has necessitated investment in bringing the service's IT up to date, ensuring that the social workers have phones and ipads to enable mobile and secure working, a huge data cleansing exercise and development of a new performance framework. All this has necessitated investment from the corporate centre beyond that identified in the CSC budget. Alongside this, officers have been working to analyse the budget and develop a 'road map' towards reducing budget overspends. The strategies can be summarised as follows:

- Recruiting additional foster carers to reduce reliance on high cost independent fostering agencies - £1.4m.
- Working to reduce relatively high numbers in residential placements through stronger gatekeeping, monitoring and developing homegrown alternatives - £0.5m.
- Reducing reliance on agency staff through a strong workforce strategy and encouraging agency staff to become council employees – £0.4m.
- More effective front door and early help to reduce escalation to 'high end.'
- Intervention at the edge of care to prevent high cost adolescents coming into the care system.
- Better procurement to get best possible VFM from suppliers (placements, agency staff, contracts.)
- Effective joint working with Housing Needs to reduce costs of intentional homelessness and improve housing options for care leavers - £0.5m.
- Better systems and processes to promote improved value for money and eliminate waste.

Each of these strategies is explained in more detail below:

7.2 Recruiting additional foster carers to reduce reliance on high cost independent fostering agencies

Rationale	A comprehensive and effective fostering strategy will increase the number of in-house foster carers to bring us into line and ultimately outperform our statistical neighbours and reduce the overall cost of placements. This will ensure our Looked After Children are locally placed in high quality placements, with good placement matching and choice.
ACTIONS	
<u>Undertaken</u> The contract for in-house foster care recruitment with a voluntary sector organisation has been terminated and in-house recruitment of foster carers commenced from July 2017.	<u>Planned</u> Reinvestment of £96k cost of recruitment contract into a new fostering recruitment service to demonstrate potential return from larger scale investment in recruitment of foster carers

<p>A comprehensive fostering strategy and associated action plan has been developed.</p> <p>Improved support arrangements for our foster carers has led to an increase in children placed with Lewisham foster carers.</p> <p>Limited marketing activity in 2017/18 has already led to 10 new Lewisham foster carer assessments being progressed representing a full year saving of £250k compared to IFA placement.</p>	<p>Development of in house fostering recruitment team. Recruitment is monitored to track spend, delivery and savings</p>
<p>Investment in service improvement to date £0k</p>	<p>Additional investment required To reinvest up to £400k savings for recruitment and support of additional carers on sliding scale following 'proof of concept.'</p>
<p>Savings achieved to date: £96k cost of under-performing recruitment contract recycled into in-house approach</p>	<p>Further savings planned: Potential for large scale savings: On average an in-house foster placement costs £22k per annum and an independent fostering placement costs £48k per annum. A difference of £26k per annum. If the strategy is successful and 72 independent places are moved to in-house places a saving of £1.9m would be made. After taking into account the investment costs the net saving would be £1.4m per annum.</p> <p>The strategy represents an increase of 90 in house foster care placements by April 2020.</p> <p>This can be profiled over time as follows: Year 1 £50k Year 2 £600K Year 3 £1,400k</p>
<p>How will we know it's working?</p> <p>Ratio of in-house foster carers to agency, currently 40:60 and the target is to move it to 60:40</p>	
<p>Risks Recruitment of foster carers is a slow process, with a competitive market across London Children in existing placements cannot (and should not) be moved if their placement is working well and they are settled and happy, so the change can only affect new placements</p>	

7.3 Working to reduce relatively high numbers in residential placements through stronger gatekeeping, monitoring and developing home grown alternatives

Rationale	Rigorous gatekeeping, monitoring and tracking of all residential and semi-independent placements ensures that young people are in the right placement for an appropriate length of time, with an exit strategy if appropriate. In addition tight monitoring of contracts ensures that the agreed contract is being delivered and where appropriate, the cost of the contract is brought in line with the service requirement and needs of the young person. Joint development of Lewisham provision can lead to improved outcomes for children as well as yield savings.
Overall savings target	£190k
ACTIONS	
<u>Undertaken</u>	<u>Planned</u>
<p>A Care Scrutiny (Placement Panel) meets weekly to review all new or higher cost placements</p> <p>Our placement procurement team has been strengthened to ensure the best placement at the best cost is identified; within this a Family Finder is in post to facilitate identification and transition to lower cost placements in line with a child's care plan.</p> <p>An event including both internal and external partners is planned in January to scope the development of a residential facility with wrap around foster care support and intensive support for some of our most vulnerable young people. We are fortunate to have agreed free consultancy from the Innovation Unit to progress this.</p>	<p>Identify whether it is feasible to work with a partner to develop local residential/intensive foster care provision which will reduce the need to place in high cost residential outside Lewisham. This was the substance of an Innovation Fund bid to DfE which was not successful but can be pursued if a case can be made for capital investment.</p>
Investment in service improvement to date £50k – recouped through savings in placements	Additional investment required Potential Capital Bid.
Savings achieved to date: Net £140k	Further savings planned: Will be quantified as part of developing options for local provision
How will we know it's working? Reduction in average unit placement cost Reduction in the use of residential placements Further reduction in placement breakdown due to better matching	

Risks

The market for residential care is subject to high demand and increasing unit costs in line with opportunities for private providers' profit margins.

Ofsted inspection standards for residential care make providers less willing to accept children with more complex needs; for those that will this often involves additional resource allocation, for example 2:1 staffing arrangements.

With small numbers of children with complex issues making a big impact on budget, it is challenging to predict demand and need in high cost placements.

7.4 Reducing reliance on agency staff and workforce development.

Rationale	To ensure good outcomes for children we need a stable well trained and equipped workforce. Given that each agency worker costs an additional £12k per annum when compared to those permanently employed, if we improve our recruitment and retention of social workers, we will save money.
ACTIONS	
<p><u>Undertaken</u></p> <p>A workforce strategy is in place, endorsed by CYP Select Committee November 2016 which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention strategies and developments • Recruitment developments • Procedural clarity • Consultation and communication arrangements • Learning and development <p>All Staff Forums, monthly All Managers meetings staff, Quarterly service days have been introduced across CSC.</p> <p>Revised tracking systems are in place for permanent recruitment, vacancies and agency use to improve accountability and timeliness.</p> <p>Lewisham is one of four partners (Goldsmiths University, Southwark & Greenwich Council) which form the Dfe funded South East London Teaching Partnership. This leads to a range of social work development opportunities.</p> <p>Retention of social workers is improving and is now above national benchmarks; for</p>	<p><u>Planned</u></p> <p>A new Induction policy is being launched this month.</p> <p>A revised supervision framework has been launched</p> <p>Leadership development programme agreed with the SELTP and Corporately within the Council; a new DfE bid is currently being submitted.</p> <p>The learning and development career framework has been agreed</p> <p>Social work recruitment via the DfE Step up Social Work recruitment programme is being developed within the SELTP.</p> <p>Championing Children, Transforming Futures transformation programme based on a systemic model of social work intervention continues in development and delivery.</p> <p>We are reviewing our demand management strategies and capacity for children in need as well as management capacity to improve system management, drive performance outcomes to ensure continuous</p>

the first 6 months of 2017/18 turnover was 3.4% against the national turnover rates for CSC of 15.1%	improvement in our delivery.
How will we know it's working?	
Reduced level of agency workers – target 10%. Will never be 0% because of maternity and long term sickness cover. Ongoing improvement in retention, internal and external audit validation of service effectiveness.	
Risks	
Social work pay and the housing market may drive social workers to agency work or higher salaried authorities; social workers are nationally in high demand still.	
Caseload pressures particularly in the Referral and Assessment services increase the risk of staff turnover and impact on improvement strategies.	

7.5 More effective front door and early help to reduce escalation to 'high end'

Rationale	More effective early help and an effective front door will give families the support when they need it and reduce escalation to higher cost services, in particular becoming looked after
ACTIONS	
<u>Undertaken</u>	<u>Planned</u>
<p>A new MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) Early Help team and front door team has been set up to support families to avoid the need for more statutory intervention; to better assess levels of need and match to service and meet Ofsted requirements.</p> <p>There are a range of partners sited within the MASH</p> <p>A 'Continuum of Need' has been developed to give clarity on responsibilities for service provision for CSC and partners agencies across the ascribed levels of need.</p> <p>Referrals to partner agencies from the MASH are tracked to ensure engagement and promote outcomes sought.</p> <p>A revised Early Help Assessment has been developed and rolled out across the partnership.</p>	<p>The formal launch of our new Early Help arrangements to further promote this across the partnership in March 2018.</p> <p>Complete partnership engagement in the MASH with recruitment of SLAM links.</p> <p>Address continued high referral rate from the police by achieving a better common understanding of thresholds.</p>

Revised Early Help Training is being delivered by the Early Help Team.	
Investment in service improvement to date £600k	Additional investment required £0k
Savings achieved to date: £0k	Further savings planned None prior to 2020
How will we know it's working? Tracking numbers of referrals accepted by CSC Increased engagement of families with early help services Slowing demand on specialist CSC services Service quality audits (and multi-agency audits carried out by LSCB) and Ofsted inspection	
Risks Impact will take time to deliver, important that service is allowed time to embed. The needs of the partnership for safeguarding support may outstrip supply	

7.6 Intervention at the edge of care to prevent high cost adolescents coming into the care system

Rationale	Lower cost early help key worker support for adolescents in crisis and at risk of coming into care will prevent escalation and future high placement costs
ACTIONS	
<u>Undertaken</u> The First Options service is now in place. This consists of redeployed formerly ESF funded key workers as team to support adolescents in crisis, linked with early help service and front door/MASH. The First Options Team have been: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provided with a Departmental induction - Trained through the SELTP In restorative approaches - Trained in trauma informed practice The numbers of young people who have been prevented from becoming LAC in the first 2 quarters of 2017 is 54; the number of delayed/planned admission to care through the work of the team is 1; the number of young people successfully rehabilitated home from care 1; this amounts to cost avoidance of c£600k (based on half the costs of 54 young people not entering care	<u>Planned</u> Keep the effectiveness of the team under review and improve links with other relevant early help services (Youth First and YOS) to maximise support for young people and impact on outcomes. Evaluation of qualitative impact is being undertaken currently by Goldsmith's University as part of the SELTP arrangements.

and 1 rehabilitation home, unit costs are based on in house foster care rates.)	
Investment in service improvement to date £300k per annum	Additional investment required Ongoing commitment to fund staff
Savings achieved to date: Cost avoidance of c£600k	Further savings planned Cost avoidance of at least £500k per year
How will we know it's working? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of children where the young person remains with their family post intervention - Number of delayed/planned admissions to care 	
Risks None	

7.7 Better procurement to get best possible VFM from suppliers (placements, agency staff, contracts)

Objective/rationale	Improved procurement and contract management across children's social care will improve value for money in a volatile and fragmented market place
ACTIONS	
<u>Undertaken</u> A contract officer is now in place to ensure monitoring of individual placement agreements, recharges and discounts are applied. We have maintained a private provider framework agreement with Independent Fostering Agencies, to achieve cost volume and placement discounts, avoiding cost increases for the last 8 years. A South London consortium Innovation Dfe bid in was successful and is currently being developed to better commission and procure savings on residential care.	<u>Planned</u> Ongoing participation in South London Consortium and any other partnership arrangements which deliver savings
Investment in service improvement to date £40k	Additional investment required £0k
Savings achieved to date: £160k	Further savings required £0k
Key performance outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduced unit costs for placement costs - Individual placement agreements in place 	

Risks

The market for residential care is subject to high demand and increasing unit costs in line with opportunities for private providers' profit margins.

Ofsted inspection standards for residential care make providers less willing to accept children with more complex needs; for those that will this often involves additional resource allocation, for example 2:1 staffing arrangements.

With smaller numbers making a big impact on budget it is challenging to predict demand and need in high cost placements.

7.8 Effective joint working with Housing Needs to reduce costs of intentional homelessness and improve housing options for care leavers

Objective/rationale	To minimise the cost of intentional homeless needs and to ensure that the most cost effective housing is provided for care leavers
ACTIONS	
<p><u>Undertaken</u> The cost of care leavers accommodation has been reduced by commissioning of approved provider supported housing units.</p> <p>Systems are in place to ensure all housing benefits are claimed for all care leavers in semi-independent accommodation.</p> <p>Additional Shared Housing Units have been jointly procured with housing for young people outside of Lewisham.</p> <p>A joint Housing/CSC Strategy group is in place and meets regularly.</p> <p>Housing partners sit on the weekly Care Scrutiny panel and have now joined MASH.</p> <p>Arrangements for response to young people presenting as homeless has been strengthened and joint training with CSC and Housing undertaken.</p> <p>Any external housing funded by CSC due to intentional homelessness is now procured through Housing to ensure vfm.</p> <p>A review panel has been put in place for all intentional homelessness cases which has assisted reductions in projected spend.</p>	<p><u>Planned</u> A new contract is currently out to tender for semi-independence providers to ensure quality and improved vfm.</p> <p>Additional 10 housing units from preferred providers are being commissioned for young people under 18 to avoid spot purchase.</p>

A CSC bid has been successful to the DCLG Controlling migration fund for support for our care leavers in semi-independent accommodation.	
Investment in service improvement to date £0k	Additional investment required £0k
Savings achieved to date: £1,600k	Further savings planned £500k
Key performance outcomes	

7.9 The overall summary of savings planned are as follows

Ref	Strategy	Savings	
		Made £'000	Future £'000
6.2	Recruiting additional foster cares		1,400
6.3	Reduce residential places	190	500
6.4	Reducing agency staff		400
6.5	More effective from door		
6.6	Intervention at edge of care		500
6.7	Better procurement	160	
6.8	Reduce Intentional homelessness and improve care leavers	1,600	500
	TOTAL	1,950	3,300

8 Conclusion

8.1 This report gives an overview of the service requirements, budget position and Roadmap for service improvement and delivery of a balanced budget. This can only be achieved through transformational change with investment in safeguarding services to ensure a robust response to need and service improvement, whilst promoting value for money and eliminating waste to allow for savings and reinvestment, for example through better procurement of support for our care leavers. A key development is our fostering strategy in delivering improved outcomes for our children whilst delivering good value for money and high quality care. All the initiatives which are being undertaken and are described in this report involve a degree of systems change and therefore require careful planning and investment and understandably do take time to embed full impact. The problems faced by Lewisham are common across London and beyond. London Councils are working with the LGA on lobbying strategies to highlight the scale of the problem.

9 Financial implications

- 9.1 There are no specific financial implications to this report although it concerns the council's finances.

10 Legal implications

- 9.1 Services to children and families in Lewisham are provided pursuant to the relevant legislation, namely the Children Act 1989, the Care Standards Act 2000, Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, Adoption and Children Act 2002, Children Act 2004, Children and Young Persons Act 2008, Children and Families Act 2014 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017. In addition, there are transitional responsibilities for young people with additional needs, set out in the Care Act 2014 and related regulation and guidance. As referred to in this report, many of the Council's services are provided by way of duties owed to individuals, and there is limited scope for the exercise of discretionary decision – making save following clear and analytical professional assessment, taking into account relevant factors and having regard to the scope of the support required.

11 Crime and disorder implications

- 11.1 Children's Social Care works very closely with Youth Offending as they work with many of the same young people and their families. The police are key partners in the MASH and LSCB and Children and Young People Directorate is a key part of the Safer Lewisham Partnership.

12 Equalities implications

- 12.1 CSC is designed to promote equality of opportunity by giving children a better start in life than they would without the service's intervention. The service inevitably deals predominantly with those who are disadvantaged economically, in terms of disability, health and other protected characteristics.

If there are any queries on this report please contact Sara Williams, Executive Director for CYP sara.williams@lewisham.gov.uk, Stephen Kitchman, Director for Children's Social Care Stephen.kitchman@lewisham.gov.uk