

DECISION-MAKER:	Council		
SUBJECT:	Annual Corporate Parenting Report 2016/2017		
DATE OF DECISION:	19 th JULY 2017		
REPORT OF:	CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE		
<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY			
N/A			

BRIEF SUMMARY

The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations (2011) require Local Authorities to provide an annual report on the outcomes for Looked After Children (LAC). This report fulfils that requirement, and provides a profile of Southampton's looked after children and care leavers for the year 2016-17.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

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| (i) | That Council review and comment on the contents of this report. |
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REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

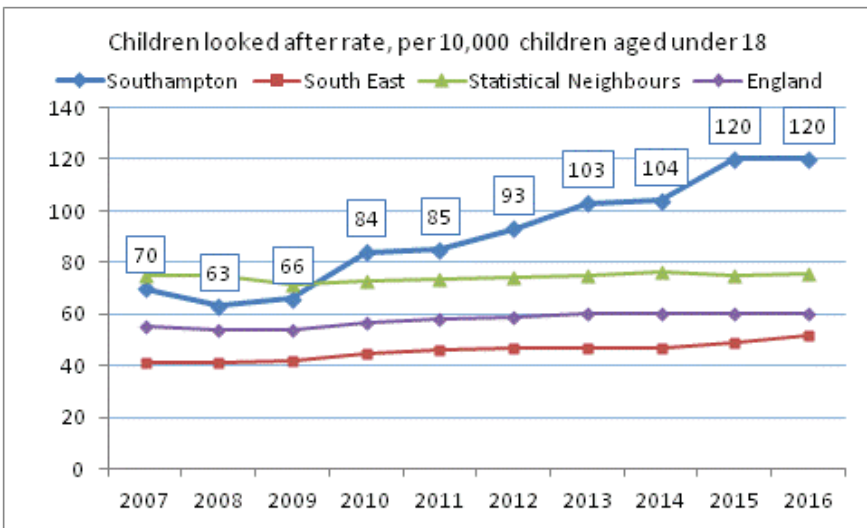
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| 1. | To provide evidence alongside with other reporting and scrutiny panels that our CIC are appropriately monitored and will also inform the ongoing work in raising out comes for CIC in Southampton. |
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ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

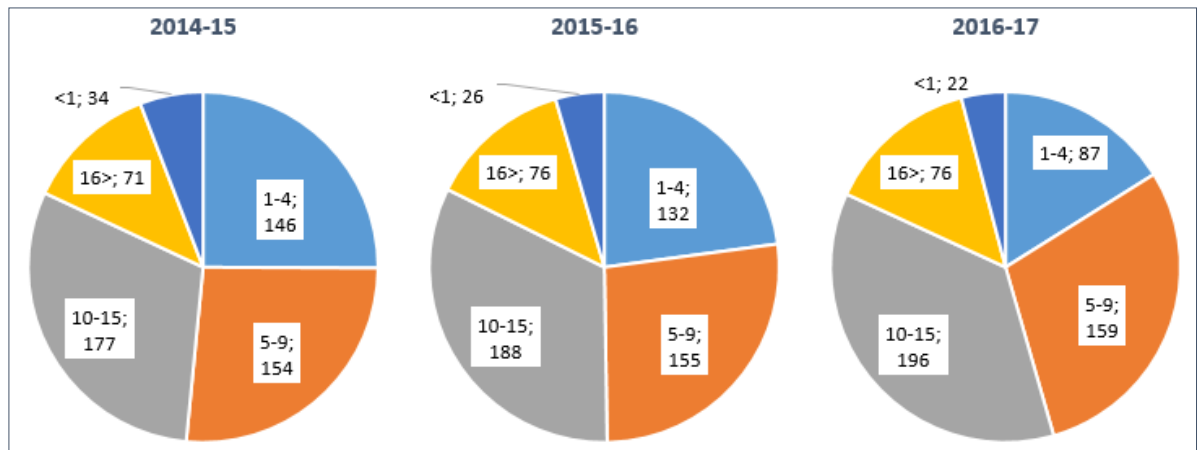
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| 2. | N/A |
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DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)

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| 3. | The term 'corporate parenting' emphasises that we should have the same interest in and aspirations for children and young people in care (or leaving care) as we would for our own children. Looked after children are those children and young people from birth to 18 years of age who are unable to remain with their family and are cared for by the local authority. This can be through a voluntary agreement reached with their parents or by virtue of a court order. Some are looked after by family or friends who have been approved as a foster carers. Looked after children and those leaving care are some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children in the community. |
| 4. | The term 'care leaver' refers to a looked after child/young person aged 16+ who is transitioning from childhood into adulthood. Local authorities have a statutory obligation to support care leavers until they are 21 years old. In addition the Children and Social Work Act 2017, Royal Assent 27 th of April 2017 introduces the additional requirement to offer support to persons aged under 25 who are former relevant children. The extended support role of the foster carer into adulthood will require focus and we are required to produce a 'Care Leavers Covenant' which includes a clear local offer of entitlements. Young people who have been in Special Guardianship arrangements but |

	were previously in care also have entitlements to a leaving care service.																																																							
5.	<p>The concept of Corporate Parenting, introduced in The Children Act 2004, places collective responsibility on local authorities to achieve good parenting for all children in public care (duties of local authorities towards looked after children were listed before, in Children Act 1989, Part III, S. 22 onward). “Corporate Parent” defines the collective responsibility of the council, elected members, employees and partner agencies for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children who are looked after in public care. Good corporate parents champion every opportunity to help children and young people in care to achieve their full potential and to have a successful transition into adulthood. Elected members in Southampton carry out this duty through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regular meetings between the Cabinet Member for Education and Children’s Social Care and the Service Director, Children and Families Service. 2. Scrutiny of regular reports at the Corporate Parenting Committee 3. Representation from the Young People in Care Council at some meetings and additional meetings including members of this group and the Lead Cabinet Member. 4. The Children and Families Scrutiny Panel led by Elected Members robustly examines the work and performance of services and outcomes for children and young people in the City and includes a targeted focus upon children in care and care leavers. 																																																							
6.	<p>Profile of looked after children and care leavers</p> <p>As at 31st March 2017, 540 children and young people were looked after in Southampton, in contrast to 31st March 2016 when there were 590 looked after children. At the end of financial year 2014-15 this figure was 580. The number of looked after children in Southampton is significantly higher than Statistical Neighbours, however the number has decreased compared to the previous year. The rate of looked after children per 10,000 children in Southampton was 120 last year, compared to 76 (statistical neighbour average) and 60 (England average). At the end of 2016-17, Southampton’s rate per 10,000 was 110.</p>  <table border="1" data-bbox="502 1355 1372 1881"> <caption>Children looked after rate, per 10,000 children aged under 18</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Southampton</th> <th>South East</th> <th>Statistical Neighbours</th> <th>England</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2007</td> <td>70</td> <td>40</td> <td>76</td> <td>55</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2008</td> <td>63</td> <td>40</td> <td>74</td> <td>53</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2009</td> <td>66</td> <td>41</td> <td>73</td> <td>54</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2010</td> <td>84</td> <td>44</td> <td>73</td> <td>56</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2011</td> <td>85</td> <td>45</td> <td>74</td> <td>57</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2012</td> <td>93</td> <td>46</td> <td>74</td> <td>58</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2013</td> <td>103</td> <td>46</td> <td>75</td> <td>59</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2014</td> <td>104</td> <td>47</td> <td>76</td> <td>60</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2015</td> <td>120</td> <td>48</td> <td>76</td> <td>60</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016</td> <td>120</td> <td>50</td> <td>76</td> <td>60</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Southampton	South East	Statistical Neighbours	England	2007	70	40	76	55	2008	63	40	74	53	2009	66	41	73	54	2010	84	44	73	56	2011	85	45	74	57	2012	93	46	74	58	2013	103	46	75	59	2014	104	47	76	60	2015	120	48	76	60	2016	120	50	76	60
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7.	<p>In 2016-17, 167 children became looked after, and 220 ceased to be looked after, compared to 2015-16 when 210 children started, and 204 ceased to be looked after. Of the 167 who started in 2016-17, 21 children had been looked after before, at some point in their lives. The number of children who became looked after for a second or subsequent time in 2015-16 was 23; this was a reduction of 20 from 2014-15.</p>																																																							

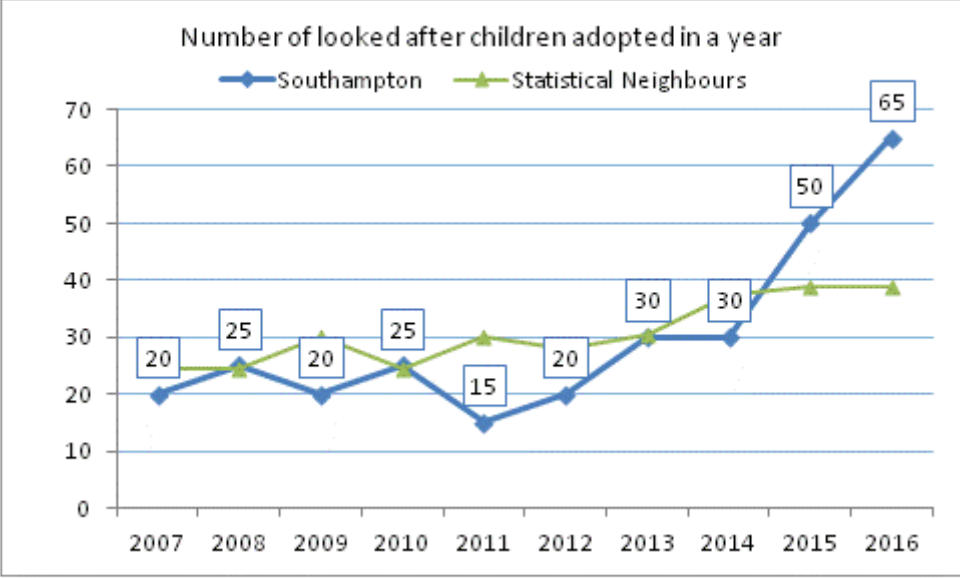
8. At 31 March 2017, the largest proportion of children in care in Southampton was aged 10 to 15, as illustrated in the graph below. Of children starting to be looked after in 2016-17, 4.1% were aged under 1 and 16.1% aged 1-4. Under 5s are our most vulnerable group and this indicates a focus on early intervention with this cohort, outcomes of which can also be seen in the graph below, which show a clear reduction in the proportion of younger children aged 0-4 in care.

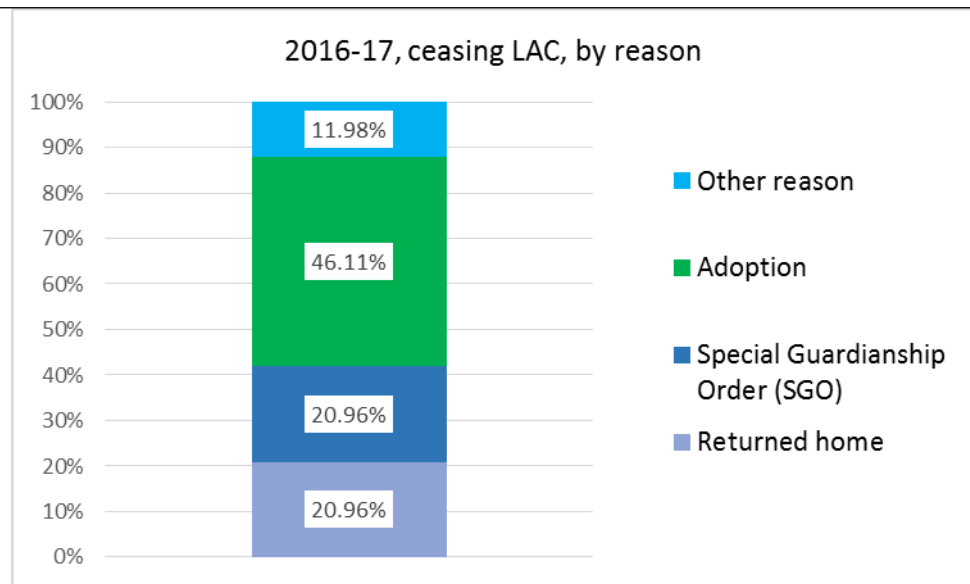


9. Overall, there continues to be more boys than girls looked after. At the end of 2016-17, there were 301 boys (55.7%), and 239 girls (44.3%) looked after. This is similar to the previous year, with 56% of looked after children were boys and 44% girls.

10. In 2015-16, white children continued to represent the largest cohort of looked after children at 78.8%. This is in line with national figures for 2016, with 75.4% of looked after children being white in England. 2016-17 data on ethnicity has not yet been published.

11. **Achieving Permanence**
 As at 31st of March 2017, according to internal data, 77 children were placed with adoptive families, compared to 65 in 2016 and 50 in 2015. The latest annual published numbers of adoptions for Southampton are shown below, with Statistical Neighbour's performance shown for comparison (2016-17 data will be published later on in the year).

	 <p style="text-align: center;">Number of looked after children adopted in a year</p> <p style="text-align: center;">◆ Southampton ▲ Statistical Neighbours</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Southampton</th> <th>Statistical Neighbours</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2007</td><td>20</td><td>25</td></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>25</td><td>25</td></tr> <tr><td>2009</td><td>20</td><td>30</td></tr> <tr><td>2010</td><td>25</td><td>25</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>15</td><td>30</td></tr> <tr><td>2012</td><td>20</td><td>25</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>30</td><td>30</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>30</td><td>30</td></tr> <tr><td>2015</td><td>50</td><td>38</td></tr> <tr><td>2016</td><td>65</td><td>38</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Southampton	Statistical Neighbours	2007	20	25	2008	25	25	2009	20	30	2010	25	25	2011	15	30	2012	20	25	2013	30	30	2014	30	30	2015	50	38	2016	65	38
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12.	<p>The average length of time between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family in 2012-15 was 674 days, compared to 697 in 2011-14 and 691 in 2010-13. The latest three year averages including data for 2016 had not been published at the time of writing this report.</p>																																	
13	<p>Plans for returning children home when it is safe, and arranging for children to leave care, are considered as part of usual business and a full analysis of our looked after cohort took place in 2015-16. In 2015-16, the rate of ceasing looked after episodes was 42.6 in 10,000 0-17 year olds, compared to 40.7 in the previous year. Data for 2016-17 has not been published yet, but internal data shows that in 2016-17, 220 children ceased to be looked after (45 per 10,000 children). The rate of new looked after children per 10,000 0-17 year olds was 34 (167 children), a reduction from the previous year when the rate was 43.8. The latest internal data indicates that this year, there have clearly been fewer new children starting to become looked after than ceasing.</p>																																	
14.	<p>There are a number of initiatives in place to support children to remain with families wherever possible, including reunification programmes, edge of care interventions and a robust review of all our children’s permanence arrangements. Of significance, a high proportion of our looked after children are subject to either an interim or full Court Order. This means a Court has agreed with the local authority that a child has met the threshold of ‘significant harm’. To return them to their family therefore requires the Court to agree it is the correct course of action and it is safe. These plans are also scrutinised and ratified by independent reviewing officers and Court advisors. Alternative permanent options such as special guardianship, adoption and child arrangement orders are therefore the only way forward in many cases.</p>																																	
15.	<p>Of the children who ceased to be looked after in 2016-17 (167 in total), 35 returned home to live with their parents, 35 ceased due to Special Guardianship Order arrangements, and 77 were adopted. In 2015-16, of the children who ceased to be looked after, 27.5% were enabled to return home to live with their parents or placed with relatives 30.4% were adopted and 15.2% were granted a Special Guardianship Order (SGO).</p>																																	
16.	<p>The graph below shows the proportions of children who ceased to be looked after in 2016-17, by reason.</p>																																	



Progress continues to be made in this area but it continues to be a challenge balanced against the complexities and number looked after.

17.	<p>Education of Looked after Children</p> <p>The 2016/ 2017 Head teacher’s Annual Report for the Virtual School will be available early in the Autumn term and will reflect the work of the school over the 2016/2017 academic year. The Virtual School continues to work with schools both in and out of the city focussing on fully engaging our young people in education and on closing the gap in outcomes between looked after children and their peers.</p>						
18.	<p>At the end of the last academic year 82% of looked after children attended schools judged to be good or better by Ofsted. At the end of April 2017 this figure had dropped slightly to 80%.</p>						
19.	<p>Pupil attendance is monitored and regularly followed up .A recent review by the Principal Education Welfare Officer judged the work of the virtual school on attendance to be at least good and taking all the appropriate action to support and maintain good attendance.</p>						
20..	<p>Personal Education Plans are written three times a year and are produced collaboratively between social workers, schools, foster carers and the virtual school. The completion rate of Personal Education Plans at the end of the academic year 2015/2016 was 80%. The average for the first two terms of 2016/17 stands at 91%.</p>						
21.	<p>Training for the implementation of an ePEP system is underway and all schools and social workers who work with looked after children will complete their training by the end of the first week in September. New guidance on the allowed uses of the pupil premium will also be introduced.</p>						
22.	<p>The educational outcomes data in this report is for the year 2015/2016. This is the confirmed data which did not become available until March 2017. The numbers represent the percentages of pupils reaching the national baseline and above and offer a comparison against the outcomes for all pupils nationally and against the outcomes for all children looked after nationally.</p>						
23.	<p>Key Stage 1 (Year 2, Age 7) 50 pupils</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Subject</td> <td style="width: 15%;">All pupils</td> <td style="width: 15%;">All CLA</td> <td style="width: 15%;">All CLA</td> <td style="width: 15%;">Southampton</td> <td style="width: 15%;">Southampton</td> </tr> </table>	Subject	All pupils	All CLA	All CLA	Southampton	Southampton
Subject	All pupils	All CLA	All CLA	Southampton	Southampton		

	nationally	nationally	Southampton	12months + CLA	Less than 12 months CLA
Reading	74.2%	50.2%	60%	50%	70.8%
Writing	65.7%	38.5%	46%	42.3%	50%
Maths	72.8%	46.5%	50%	46.2%	54.2%
Science	82%	59.4%	58%	57.7%	58%

The outcomes for this age group compare favourably against the outcomes for looked after children nationally.

24. Key Stage 2 (Year 6 age 11) 40 pupils

Subject	All pupils nationally	All CLA nationally	All CLA Southampton	Southampton 12 months+ CLA	Southampton Less than 12 months CLA
Reading	66%	40.8%	40%	44%	33.3%
Writing (Teacher assessment)	74%	45.9%	40%	40%	40%
Maths	69.8%	41.9%	40%	44%	33.3%
Grammar, punctuation, spelling	72.5%	44.3%	45%	48%	40%
Combined reading, writing, maths	53.5%	25.7%	20%	24%	13.3%

The outcomes for this group are broadly very close to the national data for looked after children. In common with national outcomes the children in this age group who had been in care for over a year did better than those children who had only been in care a short time.

25. Key Stage 4 (year 11 age 16) 38 pupils. 9 pupils had been in care for less than 12 months.


Subject	All pupils nationally	All CLA nationally	All CLA Southampton	Southampton 12 months + CLA	Southampton Less than 12 months CLA
Attainment 8 score	48.6	20.9	20.0	19.6	21.2
Progress 8	-0.08	-1.46	-1.56	-1.42	-2.15
English and maths (A*-C)	59.5%	15.9%	5.3%	3.4%	11.1%
5+ inc E+M (A*-C)	53.7%	12.1%	2.6%	0.0%	11.1%
Any Qualification	97.3%	74.2%	73.7%	75.9%	66.7%

The outcomes for KS4 continue to present the greatest challenge. Progress 8 outcomes are within 0.1 of the national CLA outcomes.

26. Looked After Children and young people share the same health issues and problems as their peers but often to a greater degree. They often enter care less “healthy” than their peers, in part due to the impact of poverty, abuse, neglect and inadequate parenting. They are more likely than the general population to have been exposed to

	harm in utero - e.g. drug and alcohol misuse .This can have a lifelong impact on the child affected.
27.	Most children become looked after as a result of abuse and neglect. Although they have many of the same health issues as their peers, the extent of these is often greater because of their past experiences. Almost half of children in care have a recognised mental health disorder and two-thirds have special educational needs. Delays in identifying and meeting their emotional well-being and mental health needs can have far reaching effects on all aspects of their lives, including their chances of reaching their potential and leading happy and healthy lives as adults (Promoting the health and well-being of looked after Children DE, DH 2015).
28.	The NHS has a major role in ensuring the timely and effective delivery of health services to looked-after children. The Mandate to NHS England, Statutory Guidance on Joint Strategic Needs Assessments, Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies and The NHS Constitution for England make clear the responsibilities of CCGs and NHS England to looked-after children (and care leavers). In fulfilling those responsibilities the NHS contributes to meeting the health needs of looked-after children in three ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning effective services • Delivering these through provider organisations • Delivering through individual practitioners providing coordinated care for each child.
29.	Under the Children Act 2004, health professionals have a legal responsibility to promote the health and wellbeing of all children who they are responsible for, this is particularly pertinent with regard to vulnerable cohorts such as LAC. 'Promoting the Health and Wellbeing of Looked After Children' (DE DH 2015) sets out a framework for the delivery of care from health and social services to ensure their effectiveness to support and deliver care to LAC.
30.	NHS Southampton CCG employs a Designated Nurse for LAC (Head of Safeguarding) and Designated Doctor for LAC to assist the CCG in fulfilling their responsibilities as commissioner of services to improve the health of LAC. The Designated professionals also provide strategic oversight and advice working closely with health providers, Local Authorities, health care planners and commissioners to promote the welfare of LAC locally and out of area.
31.	NHS Southampton City CCG as the responsible commissioner for Southampton Looked After Children commission an annual report from Solent NHS Trust LAC Health Team in order to assure itself that services delivered to LAC are meeting expectations. In addition to Designated Professionals, NHS Southampton CCG commissions a bespoke LAC Health Service from Solent NHS Trust.
32.	<p><u>Current Solent NHS Trust LAC Workforce</u></p> <p>During 2016/17 the team has expanded to increase capacity in the team and improve services for the children and young people .At the end of this financial year the workforce consists of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 admin posts, plus a joint post with Southampton City Council • 1 Lead / Designated LAC Doctor /medical advisor for Fostering and Adoption • 1 sessional Dr Medical advisor for fostering • 2 sessional LAC Drs • 1 B7 Named Nurse on secondment until June 2017 • 1 B6 Specialist LAC Nurse

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 B5 LAC Nurse • 2 B6 Community Paediatric Medical Service nurses shared across LAC, Child Protection & Neuro-Disability teams • 1 B3 Clinic Support Worker (2 further posts appointed to in April 2017) 										
33.	<p>Competency Frameworks are now in place for Nursing and Support roles in line with the Intercollegiate Framework (2015). Support Workers are undertaking training to support public health and behaviour change interventions. This is a new role to ensure smooth running of all clinics and to develop and pilot group interventions to improve the health & wellbeing of children & young people, this will include support for children, young people and Foster Carers with healthy eating, weight management and physical exercise information. The Support Worker role will contribute to an improvement in the numbers of children attending for health assessments and ensure that SDQ paperwork is completed by Carers and children. The flexibility provided by the additional staffing in the team should allow for any fluctuations in the number of children coming into care.</p>										
34.	<p>Whilst locally, the numbers of LAC fluctuate they have reduced over the past 12 months to around 540 in total with the majority living in the Southampton area or within a 20 mile radius. There are still many children placed out of area. NHS Southampton CCG retains responsibility for them all and funds the out of area health assessments as part of the responsible commissioner guidance Who Pays? Determining responsibility for payments to providers (see pages 12 and 13 of that guidance) (DH 2013). Ensuring that all LAC placed out of area receive quality and timely health assessments and have access to health services remains a challenge . Over the past 12 months the Designated Doctor has developed a “ standard quality “ Health assessment and Health care plan that we send to out of area health providers to give an indication of the standard expected for Southampton Looked after children and young people . Once completed, the assessments are then quality assured by the Designated Doctor before payment to the out of area provider is agreed. The quality of these assessments is variable. Any of substandard quality are discussed with the Out or area teams to ensure that the child or young person has a thorough assessment that meets our standard. The Performance with out of area health assessments has remained a challenge .This is a nationwide issues .Over the course of the 12 months, our performance has generally improved. To some extent this is out of our control, as it relies on other Health providers being able to see our children, within timescales.</p>										
35.	<p><u>Annual Reporting figures from Solent NHS trust Health of LAC team (April 2016 – March 2017)</u></p> <p>Table 1: Percentage data reporting</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="327 1601 1497 2132"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="327 1601 874 1691">KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR / MEASURE</th> <th data-bbox="874 1601 1497 1691">March 2016 – April 2017</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="327 1691 874 1780">1. Annual reporting of percentage of children with an up to date dental check.</td> <td data-bbox="874 1691 1497 1780">66%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="327 1780 874 1915">2. Annual reporting of number of children who have been advised or whose foster careers have been advised of the need for a dental check.</td> <td data-bbox="874 1780 1497 1915">100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="327 1915 874 2004">3. Annual reporting of percentage of children who are up to date with immunisations</td> <td data-bbox="874 1915 1497 2004">90%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="327 2004 874 2132">4. Annual reporting of percentage of children with up to date review health assessment in timescales</td> <td data-bbox="874 2004 1497 2132">77 % (under 5 years of age / 6 monthly) 69 % (over 5 years of age/annually)]</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR / MEASURE	March 2016 – April 2017	1. Annual reporting of percentage of children with an up to date dental check.	66%	2. Annual reporting of number of children who have been advised or whose foster careers have been advised of the need for a dental check.	100%	3. Annual reporting of percentage of children who are up to date with immunisations	90%	4. Annual reporting of percentage of children with up to date review health assessment in timescales	77 % (under 5 years of age / 6 monthly) 69 % (over 5 years of age/annually)]
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	5. Annual reporting of percentage of OOA children with up to date review health assessment in timescales	56% (under 5 years of age/6 monthly) 68% (over 5 years of age/annually)
	6. Annual reporting of percentage of children within initial health assessment in timescales	82 %
36..	<p>Exception reporting (now hotspots) has enabled Solent to appreciate further information as to why children and young people are not seen within timescales for the health assessment. Challenges are still evident in relation to non-attendance at health appointments which is monitored monthly by the LAC health team and details shared with the LAC Children's Social Care team managers at 6 weekly joint meetings.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">  LAC Soton Hotspots Report v3 March 2017 </p>	
37.	<p><u>Immunisations :</u></p> <p>For Children in Care immunisation rates are 90% (2016/17) slightly higher than the national average of 87.1% which does not include the school leaver booster, administered via GP practices.</p>	
38.	<p><u>Dental Health :</u></p> <p>At Health assessment children and young people of all ages are offered advice about dental health 100 % of the time. This includes identifying children who are not registered with a Dentist. If carers or young people are not able to do so then we can refer to Community Dental services across Southampton. Recorded attendance at Dental appointment remains Low at approximately 65 %. All children over 3 years of age, and any children under the age of 3 years where there are concerns should be having regular dental checks. This is an area that needs ongoing work to improve attendance and ensure accurate recording of attendance at Dental appointments. This will be looked at by the LAC health team over the next 12 months as an area that needs improvement.</p>	
39.	<p><u>Care Leavers - Health</u></p> <p>There is a strong offer of health support to care leavers even though the service is commissioned to age 18 only. Young people who have had a background in care are more likely than their peers to have poor social outcomes in later life and the specialist health team continue to actively support many young people beyond the age of 18 years. The specialist LAC team have already developed processes to support care leavers and will continue to work with the designated professional to engage care leavers. Engaging care leavers to improve the uptake of health reviews is now the dedicated responsibility of a LAC Nurse with a change in communication methods and venues offered for health reviews. Closer working with the voluntary sector to consult young people on their health needs will lead to some project work in 2017. The changes piloted in quarters 3 and 4 of 2017 have seen a significant improvement with 100% of care leavers having contact with the team by the end of these quarters. The changes piloted including targeting young people who do not wish to attend a health assessment,</p>	

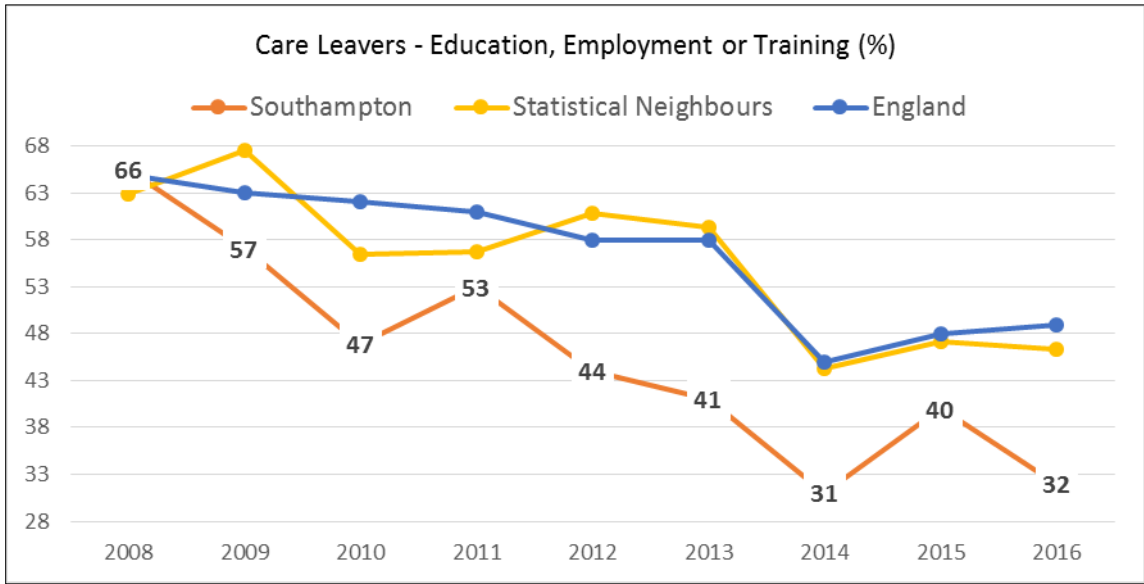
	with letters inviting them to contact the team if they change their mind, and detailed health care plans with “generic “important health advice.
40.	<p><u>Care leavers</u></p> <p>There has been continued progress against some measures of performance for young people leaving care but further work is still required to improve and maintain a consistently good level of outcomes and opportunities. Due to high numbers of looked after children demands on the service have increased and this requires further consideration in terms of resource. The percentage of care leavers who were still in contact with Social Services in 2014-15 was 89.0% and 90.1% in 2015-16. The latest figures for Southampton show that at the end of Quarter 2 2016-17, 98.5% of care leavers were still in contact. Clearly, this is a positive increase and provides opportunities for practitioners to work with young people to address and deliver improved outcomes in relation to identified needs.</p>
41.	<p>The city’s strategic approach to sourcing and accessing suitable accommodation for young care leavers includes a “staying put” offer for care leavers to continue to reside with their current foster carer(s). Joint working between the Care Leavers/Pathways Team and the Housing Needs Team is positive, with weekly housing panels in place. This ensures that the most appropriate housing and support is identified as part of the young person’s pathway planning process, including access to a secure tenancy with SCC or one of the City’s Housing providers. A joint protocol between the relevant agencies to ensure all partners understand their roles and young people experience a planned and supported transition to independent living is in place. This includes a shared commitment by agencies to adopt a ‘corporate parenting’ approach for care leavers. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 also expects we will need to consider ‘staying close’ arrangements for young people leaving care out of county to ensure they maintain good support networks if they wish to remain near to their residential home and link workers.</p>
42.	<p>The latest figures for Southampton show that at the end of Quarter 2 2016-17, 88.1% of care leavers were in contact and in suitable accommodation. The total number of care leavers being supported by Southampton at 31st of March 2016 was 176. 117 (82.4%) of these young people were in contact with the Local Authority and in suitable accommodation. 25 (17.6%) were deemed to live in unsuitable accommodation. 34 care leavers were not included in this cohort and therefore excluded from the above percentage calculation as they were either not in touch (and therefore it was not known whether their accommodation was suitable), or the young person had died, or returned home to live with parents or someone with parental responsibility for a continuous period of six months or more.</p>
43.	<p>Looking at the previous years’ figures, at the end of March 2015, 78% of care leavers were in contact and in suitable accommodation. This represented an upward trend in performance of 8% since March 2014, when the percentage was 70. Outcomes in the area continue to improve although the service recognises that activity in this area must continue to drive improvement upwards.</p>
44.	<p>Local Authority continues to be committed to the national Care Leavers Charter; with an allocation of £2,000 for all Care Leavers to support transition to independence; the creation of a more robust and effective Young People in Care Council; the development of a Facebook page to promote ongoing contact and support beyond their 25th birthday and to improve partnerships that enable Care Leavers to access apprenticeships, work experience, further and higher education.</p>
45.	<p>The City currently undertakes a pathway needs assessment at 15yrs and 9 months for each young person who will remain looked after and therefore become a care leaver. It</p>

continues to be acknowledged that this planning process should be commenced earlier to ensure stronger plans which have comprehensive 'buy-in' from young people and involve carers and the entire professional network at each stage of planning. Auditing outcomes are well established to monitor and then check that the Pathways team is focussing upon improving the quality and timeliness of plans. It is expected that all young people have a complete and robust pathway plan in place by the age of 16 years and 3 months.

46.

Education, Training and Employment for care leavers

According to latest published figures (2016), 32% of care leavers were in education, employment or training (EET) on their 19th, 20th and 21st birthday. This is compared to the end of 2015, when 40% of 19-21 care leavers were in education, employment or training. Southampton care leavers in EET have fared less well compared to statistical neighbours (46 %) and England (49 %). At the time of writing, figures for 2017 have not been published.



47.

Employment Training and Education remains a key priority improvement area, and a range of focussed activities are in place to secure better outcomes and performance. These include:

- Improved tracking of personal education plans for year 10 and 11 looked after pupils transitioning towards independence.
- Monitoring and tracking of the cohort of young people not engaged in education, training and employment with partners within the council, educational provision and the third sector (including monitoring and reporting 16-17 year old Care Leavers to Corporate Parenting, which is over and above the statutory reporting requirement).
- The provision of a dedicated worker from the Council- led City Deal programme to assist in supporting employment outcomes for those young people who are referred through the Pathways Team.
- Recruitment of a part-time Careers Advisor to provide careers information advice and guidance, and ensure that systems are in place to support and track the young people from KS4 through to fully engaging in post 16 provision. A focussed tracking of those at risk of becoming not in education training or employment.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An offer of a placement or apprenticeship within the Council to care leavers, and prioritisation in the Council’s apprenticeship recruitment which is extended to work experience and work taster sessions. • A dedicated careers event planned for Care Leaver’s week. • An offer of mentoring and support via corporate parenting committee members is currently being explored. • Inclusion of Care Leavers as one of the three priorities for Connect, Southampton’s Strategic partnership, to enable mentoring and placements through local major employers. • Access to funded enhanced traineeships (pre-Apprenticeship) through EU funded programme, including work placements, English and Maths support and expenses payments for the young people • A NEET prevention system for the City including a process to identify Risk of NEET in school, which includes Children in Care status. These young people are then referred to support including during summer holidays and into progression post- 16 • Case conferencing systems to ensure full support is in place <p>It should be noted that funding and provision of services to support NEET young people fluctuates through external grant availability.</p>
48.	<p><u>Participation and engagement of children and young people</u></p> <p>The active participation of children and young people is a key priority for Children’s Services and its partners. The additional support of Southampton’s young people’s participation worker last year has been welcomed. We are now changing our arrangements by bringing our Looked After participation in house. We are currently advertising for a dedicated Looked After Children / Care Leaver participation worker to work with the teams to increase participation activities, including the children and young people in care councils. Consultation is gradually feeding into service development.</p>
49.	<p>Children and young people have been involved in a number of activities over 2016/2017, including making ‘welcome boxes’ for children coming into care and the production of an awareness raising DVD. We have regular young people attendance at our corporate parenting committee meeting and Care Leavers have presented their views in a number of ways. Young people have also worked closely with the fostering team to design and produce information leaflets for children and young people coming into care. We continue to work with Coram Voice through the Bright Spots survey to gain our looked after children’s views and comments on life in care to inform our practice. It is our ambition to include young people in our recruitment activities in the coming months.</p>
50.	<p>Every year we hold our annual awards event which recognises the achievements and contribution of children and young people looked after and care leavers. This year we are going to link this to a careers event.</p>
51.	<p>The Children in Care Council (in Southampton called the Young People In Care Council – YPiCC) directly supports the Corporate Parenting Committee to measure and monitor the effectiveness and quality of ‘Corporate Parenting’ to children and young people in accordance with the views and experiences of the children who are in care. Our committee remains fully committed to listening to the voice of service users and the active involvement of children and young people within the decision-making processes.</p>
52.	<p><u>Children Missing from Care</u></p> <p>Overall percentages of looked after children having a period missing from care were</p>

lower in Southampton in 2016, 5% compared to Statistical Neighbour (8.1%) and England (9.0%). There was, however, an increase in the average percentage compared to 2015, when the figure was 1%. At the end of quarter 4 2016-17, the number of looked after children missing for 24 hours or more was 12 (2.2% of all looked after children). Robust missing from care procedures remain in place and the individual cases of missing children are tracked and scrutinised by managers on a daily basis.

The graph below shows that compared to Statistical Neighbour and England averages, Southampton had a somewhat lower percentage of looked after children going missing during the year. Figures for 2017 are not yet available for this indicator.



53. Barnardo’s currently deliver a return ‘safe and well’ service for Southampton children and young people with the contract due to end in July 2017. When a child/young person returns from going missing, Barnardo’s are notified and then contact that child/young person to identify any issues or concerns that are ongoing for them. Information on the matter is then passed to the relevant ‘lead professional’ via the MASH and this is used to help inform future safety and protection planning where relevant. The Local Authority works with the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board’s ‘Missing, Exploited and Trafficked’ Group (MET) to identify particular concerns for individual children, and areas of the City, and then addressed these matters through the sharing of intelligence amongst agencies, joint planning and targeted interventions. Barnardo’s only cover children and young people who live in the Southampton area. We are currently looking at other options for delivery which will offer a timely response which also reaches out to young people placed out of county.

54. **Placements of Children and Young People.**
 Southampton has a number of children and young people placed out of county both in residential and independent fostering arrangements. In 2017/18 we need to explore options to bring children and young people closer to home where they can access appropriate provision, local services and support networks. This will include initiatives to expand our service to meet the needs of our LAC cohort and increased focussed recruitment activity for in house carers.

55. **The Recruitment of Foster Carers**
 The Fostering Team’s recruitment target for 2016/17 was to recruit 20 new mainstream fostering households and 21 was achieved. During the year there were 207 enquiries

	<p>of which 121 progressed to referral and 103 resulted in an Initial Home Visit, where they were provided with more in depth information about fostering. Of the 103 IHV, 39 prospective foster carers submitted an application forms and 21 of these progressed to assessment and approval.</p>
56.	<p>In comparison to the previous two years the overall figures are lower. In 2014/15 there were 271 enquiries, 45 applications and 31 approvals and in 2015/16 there were 304 enquiries, 45 applications and 33 approvals. This reduction in numbers can be attributed to a number of factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The realignment of the Recruitment and Assessment team in July. • The vacancy of the Marketing and Recruitment Officer post for part of the year and the subsequent reduction in recruitment events during this period. • Increased market competition from neighbouring local authorities and independent agencies, leading to market saturation. • The industry reporting a downward trend in local communities responding to fostering campaigns.
57.	<p>In order to ensure a range of foster carers that can meet the needs of Southampton's looked after children a range of marketing and recruitment activities have taken place during the year. These have included outreach work; advertising; press coverage; online posts/websites/Facebook. Despite the lower numbers there has been increased interest on social media and the internet;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering and adoption e-alert subscribers has increased from 35 to 604. • Fostering and adoption Facebook page likes increased by 490 to 1,130. • Average monthly hits on fostering web page have increased from 1,401 to 2,264, along with an increased average spend on the page from 6 seconds to 1 minute and 50 seconds.
58.	<p><u>Connected Persons Assessments</u></p> <p>Between 1st April 2016 and 31st March 2017 the Friends and Family team had received 245 referrals in relation to assessing connected persons' fostering placements. During the period 57 viability assessments were completed which lead to 25 Regulation 24 assessments being undertaken and 22 fostering assessments, although 6 were not completed due to the applicant withdrawing or not being suitable.</p> <p>As of 31st March 2017 there were 52 approved connected persons fostering households that were fostering 83 looked after children. The Friends and Family team are responsible for ensuring that these carers meet the fostering standards as set out in the National Minimum Standards. An area for service development in 2017/18 is for the supervising social workers to support their carers completing the Training Support and Development Standards (TSDs).</p>
59.	<p><u>Special Guardianship Orders</u></p> <p>The Friends and Family team also undertake Special Guardianship assessments for connected persons carers, court ordered assessments and for private arrangements. In 2016/17 the team assessed 19 Special Guardian applicants and this relates to 33 children who were looked after at the time the SGO was granted and 6 non-agency SGOs. This is a significant difference to the previous year when 24 children left care through a SGO being granted. This increase reflects the team's positive contribution to ensuring children achieve both psychological and legal permanence away from the care system.</p>
60.	<p><u>Summary of priorities for 2016/2017</u></p> <p>This report has summarised the progress made in a number of key areas as well as identifying where alternative approaches are being planned to enhance and improve our service delivery.</p>

61.	The numbers of children in care at the end of March 2017 had reduced significantly, and they continue to gradually reduce due to focussed attention on timely focussed interventions, SMART planning and permanence opportunities. Further initiatives and options are being developed to strengthen available support to children and young people on the edge of care to remain in the care of their own families.
62.	In 2017/18 a high priority is to explore options to bring children and young people closer to home where they can access appropriate provision, local services and support networks. We also need to ensure we have a good stock of suitable accommodation for our care leavers.
63.	We need to improve our educational outcomes The virtual school are working hard to address outcomes for children in care, in particular the outcomes for KS4 which continue to present the greatest challenge.
64.	The LAC Health team will be focusing on improvement of attendance and accuracy of recording of attendance at Dental appointments.
65.	We have seen further improvements in our performance for care leavers, however the area of education training and employment remains a challenge and needs to be a key area of focus in coming months. As a whole council we are striving to improve our offer of opportunities to include work tasters and work experience opportunities as well as apprenticeships. We are also seeking to develop mentoring opportunities and closely tracking young people who are likely to become 'NEET.'
66.	It has been another busy and challenging year for Southampton's Fostering Service. Whilst the use of independent fostering providers dropped by 30 placements in the over the year, the service still struggles to provide in-house places for children and young people with more challenging and complex profiles. The fostering service now has sufficient foster carers for preschool and younger children. The marketing focus for the coming year will be to recruit prospective foster carers who offer a home to children with complex needs, older young people and larger sibling groups. In order to achieve this consideration must be given to an enhanced fostering service with sufficient support to foster carers.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	
There are no new resource implications arising from this report	
<u>Capital/Revenue</u>	
	N/A
<u>Property/Other</u>	
	N/A
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u>	
	The Children Act 2004 places a duty on local authorities to take collective responsibility for good parenting of children in care and looked after.
<u>Other Legal Implications:</u>	
	The corporate parenting responsibilities must be carried out having regard to the

	Equalities Act 2010, the Human Rights Act 1998 and all other pervasive legislation.	
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS		
	The proposals set out in this report are wholly consistent with the Council's Policy Framework.	
KEY DECISION?	No	
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	N/A	
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>		
Appendices		
1.	N/A	
Documents In Members' Rooms		
1.	N/A	
Equality Impact Assessment		
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Im Assessments (ESIA) to be carried out?		No
Privacy Impact Assessment		
Do the implications/subject of the report require a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) to be carried out.		No
Other Background Documents		
Equality Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection at:		
Title of Background Paper(s)		Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)
1.	N/A	