



Date of Meeting: 4th September 2019

Lead Member: Cllr Andrew Parry, Lead Member for Children's Services

Lead Officer: Mark Blackman, Corporate Director for Schools and Learning

Executive Summary:

1. In 2018, national data shows that Looked After Children (LAC) are four times as likely to have a Special Educational Need and/or Disability than all children and are just over nine times more likely to have an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) than all children (DfE 2019).
2. In Dorset, there are slightly less LAC on roll with the Virtual School at the SEN Support Stage and slightly more EHCPs than the national percentage. The numbers of young people in care with EHCPs are increasing in this current year in line with the overall increase in demand for EHCPs within Dorset.
3. The most common need identified for LAC with EHCPs is 'Social, Emotional and Mental Health' in Dorset and this is in line with national prevalence. This category of need is showing a significant increase in-year.
4. 50% of Dorset LAC with EHCPs are being educated in specialist placements (mainstream or independent) compared to other EHCPs which stands at 36%. Of those in specialist placements, 38.2% of these are outside of the county of Dorset.
5. The SEND Services and the Virtual School are working together more effectively to improve early identification of needs, assessment, support and outcomes for LAC.
6. The Local Area SEND Inspection of 2017 (Ofsted/CQC) identified four areas of weakness in the delivery of the SEND reforms in Dorset. The SEND Inspection revisit in February 2019 concluded that two of the four areas of weaknesses had shown sufficient improvement and two needed further improvement. A joint action plan covering one year has been approved by the Department of Education, is currently being delivered and on track to be completed.
7. Despite the 71% increase in demand for EHCPs since the reforms began, Dorset Council has worked hard to improve performance in issuing plans within 20 weeks, currently achieving 94% of plans within the statutory timescale which is well above the national average. The local area is focussed on producing high quality EHCPs using local and national audits to quality assure this area of work.

Equalities Impact Assessment:

There are no equalities implications arising from this report

Budget: not applicable

Risk Assessment:

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: LOW (For information only)

Residual Risk: LOW (For information only)

Climate implications:

Not applicable

Other Implications:

Sustainability; increasing demand for EHCPs (2.4 – 2.7)

Recommendation:

For information purposes only

Appendices:

Appendix A - The distribution of EHCPs for Looked After Children across the Key Stages July 2019

Appendix B - Types of provision for LAC with EHCPs July 2019

Appendix C - EHCP six-month volume and performance data January to June '19

Appendix D - Total number of Statements/EHCPs over time

Background Papers:

- The SEND Joint Strategy 2018-2021
<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/children-families/sen-and-disability-local-offer/about-our-local-offer/dorset-send-strategy.aspx>
- The SEND Recent Statement of Action 2017
<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/children-families/sen-and-disability-local-offer/about-our-local-offer/dorset-send-written-statement-of-action.aspx>
- DfE (2019) Outcomes for children looked after by local authorities in England 31 March 2018 www.assets.publishing.service.gov.uk

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Report in Full

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report provides key data on the number and profile of Dorset children and young people in care who have SEND and the work being done in partnership within teams and agencies to improve outcomes for this group.
- 1.2. This is the first SEND Services annual report to the Corporate Parenting Board. With that in mind, the report includes a brief overview of key events, priorities, challenges and improvements that have happened in Dorset regarding provision for SEND since the National SEND Reforms came into place in 2015.

2. Looked After Children with SEND – prevalence and characteristics

- 2.1. Looked after children (LAC) are significantly more likely to have SEND than their peers. In 2018, national data shows that LAC are four times as likely to have a Special Educational Need than all children and are just over nine times more likely to have an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) than all children (DfE 2019).
- 2.2. Nationally, 55.5% of children who had been looked after continuously for 12 months for whom data was available, had a SEND in 2017/2018, which consists of 29% on the 'SEN support' stage of the SEND Code of Practice and 26.5% with an EHCP. This compares to 45.7% of children in need with SEND and 14.6% of all children with SEND (DfE 2019).
- 2.3. In Dorset, there were 336 young people on the Virtual School roll in July 2019. The table below shows the number of children on the SEND Register (pre-school to Year 13) as at 10th July 2019. The numbers in table 1 below show those on SEN Support and those with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). Please note that this includes EHCPs funded by other Local Authorities, administered by Dorset Council and that the next round of national data for 2019 is not available until 2020.

SEND Stage of CoP	SEN Support	EHCP
Total number (174)	82	92
Percentage of total LAC - 51.8%	24.4%	27.4%
Percentage of total EHCPs in Dorset		4%

Table 1: SEN on virtual school roll, pre-school to year 13, including those funded by other local authorities, as at 10th July 2019

- 2.4. The table shows slightly less numbers at the SEN Support Stage and slightly more EHCPs than in the national data set. The Virtual School reports that the numbers of young people in care with EHCPs are increasing in this current year in line with the overall demand for EHCPs within Dorset. For example, in October 2018, 41 young people in care (Reception to year 11 only) had an EHCP and this number had increased to 66 young people by July 2019. This reflects a 61% increase in nine months.
- 2.5. The most common type of need for looked after children nationally in 2017/2018 was 'Social, Emotional and Mental Health' – 38.5% of looked after children with an EHCP had this type of need nationally compared to 14.6% of all children with SEND.
- 2.6. Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH) and Communication and Interaction needs (C&I) are by far the largest categories for these plans in Dorset and reflects South West Regional Virtual School register comparisons and national comparisons. In October 2018, there were 41 EHCPs for LAC in Dorset, and of these 16 had SEMH as the primary need (39%). It should be noted that at the time of this data collection, a further six children were in the process of EHC assessment, with all of these described as having SEMH as the primary need.
- 2.7. There is a fairly even distribution of EHCPs across key stages for young people in care in Dorset as can be seen in the chart in Appendix A. However, we have limited specialist provision for post 16 locally. As numbers in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 move through to post 16, the demand will continue for local specialist provision, particularly for SEMH needs. The new specialist school currently being established locally in Bovington will eventually provide for children up to age 18 but this element of the provision is likely to be established in three or four years' time.
- 2.8. As can be seen in the graph in Appendix B, 50% of EHCPs for looked after children are currently educated in specialist provision (mainstream or independent) and 36% in non-specialist mainstream or independent schools. This is a high proportion relative to all groups of EHCPs educated in specialist provision which is 39% compared to 61% in non-specialist mainstream schools. Of those LAC in specialist placements, 38.2% are outside of the county of Dorset.

3 Areas of joint service development and provision regarding LAC with SEND.

3.1 The SEND Services and the Virtual School are working together regularly to identify needs earlier and in a more preventative way:

- a. The Virtual School SENDCo has worked with the SEN Specialist Service (SENSS) to develop an early identification screener for learning needs. All LAC of primary school age will be screened on a rolling programme. The earlier identification of additional needs will lead to signposting to specialist support prior to and possibly preventing the need for an EHCP.
- b. The Virtual School SENDCo is attending SEN Decision Making Panels for professional development and joint working opportunities with SEND services and other agencies.
- c. There have been joint training sessions this year for virtual school staff on the identification of SEND, the role of the SENDCo and familiarisation with the EHCP processes.
- d. The Virtual School SENDCo meets regularly with the SEND Assessment Team Operational Manager to discuss EHCP cases and those children indicating the need for statutory assessment.

3.2. The Educational Psychology Service have a designated psychologist role for Looked After Children. The role is to support the Virtual School to identify and support individual young people with SEND in urgent need of assessment, although all the EP team also work with LAC. This work is carried out in partnership with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and is intensive work. In the Autumn Term 2018 alone, 9 EHCP plans were prioritised for EHC referral and assessment. The designated psychologist is allocated 14 days per year to provide support to the LAC SENDCo, to carry out supervision and to carry out direct casework with LAC.

3.3 The Virtual School (VS) also works in partnership with the Educational Psychology Service to promote and establish a programme of Attachment Aware Schools. The VS Development Plan reports that the June conference with designated LAC teachers helped identify schools for priority input, with Middle Schools emerging as having priority needs (Virtual School Head's Report to Governing Body – July 2019).

4. SEND Services - overview of recent developments

4.1 As this is the first SEND report to the board, the following section gives a brief overview of recent developments within SEND Service delivery in the light of the SEND reforms of 2015.

4.2 The SEND Joint Strategy for Dorset 2018-21. We wrote a SEND Joint Strategy in partnership with the Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), schools, colleges, educational settings, voluntary and community sector, children, young people with SEND and their families. The strategy sets out our vision, priorities, objectives and goals over a 3-year period. It also talks about how we are monitoring progress. You can read about the SEND Joint Strategy on our Dorset SEND Local Offer webpages at <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/children-families/sen-and-disability-local-offer/about-our-local-offer/dorset-send-strategy.aspx>

4.3 Our vision is:

- a. Children and young people in Dorset with SEND are happy and enjoy their education and social life. They and their families trust and have confidence in the support they receive.
- b. We work together to give children and young people with SEND in Dorset the best chance to succeed; enjoy family life and go to school as close to home as possible.
- c. Together we support children and young people with SEND to maximise their potential at home, in the early years, at school and at college and to prepare well for adulthood.
- d. Our young adults with SEND have opportunities to work, live independently, participate fully in their community and live full, healthy lives.

4.4 In January 2017, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) carried out an inspection of services in the Dorset area for children and young people with SEND. The inspectors were looking at how organisations, including Dorset Council, health services and schools were carrying out the changes to government policies for children and young people with SEND.

4.5 While the inspectors said we are doing some things well, they also found four significant weaknesses where we could be doing better. They asked us to produce a written statement of action (WSOA) to say what we should do to improve. The statement sets out how we are working together to make services better for children and young people with SEND. It describes what we are doing to improve on the four weaknesses the inspectors found and how we would know if things are better for children and young people with SEND.

The four outcomes in our Written Statement of Action 2017 are:

- i. A single system working together across education, health and social care for joint outcomes
- ii. Getting it right first time: appropriate, effective and timely joint assessment, planning and review of need that is personalised to the child or young person with SEND
- iii. Talking to, listening to and involving children, young people and parents and carers

- iv. Use effective monitoring and quality assurance procedures to challenge, support and develop provision.

You can read the WSOA and the improvements we have made here:

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/children-families/sen-and-disability-local-offer/about-our-local-offer/dorset-send-written-statement-of-action.aspx>

4.6 Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) revisited the local area of Dorset in February 2019. This was to decide whether the local area had made enough progress in addressing the areas within the WSOA. The inspectors told us that significant progress had been made in the first two priority areas above. However, insufficient progress had been made to improve other two areas of weakness identified at the initial inspection.

4.7 We have produced an updated action plan in response to the inspection re-visit and this has been approved by the Department of Education. The plan covers one year with milestones after three months, six months and one year. We show evidence of how the data gathered on our SEND Performance Framework informs future planning/implementation between partner agencies. The plan is about to be published on the front page of the Dorset SEND Local Offer website at <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/children-families/sen-and-disability-local-offer/about-our-local-offer/about-our-local-offer.aspx>.

5 Statutory Reporting on Dorset Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) June 2019 (Appendix C)

5.1 Number of EHCPs end June 2019 **2369**

There has been a significant demand for SEND Statutory Assessment since the start of 2015 when the SEND reforms came into place, with an 71% increase in the number of EHCPs. As can be seen in appendix D, it is forecast based on current demand and data analysis that an additional 351 EHCPs will be issued by 2021 before an incident rate of 3% is reached.

5.2 Percentage of EHCPs completed within 20 weeks **93%**

Despite the increase in demand on the assessment planning and co-ordination team, we have worked hard to improve our performance in issuing plans within the statutory timescale of 20 weeks. In October 2017, Dorset were only producing 7.1% of EHCPs within this timescale – one of the poorest performances in the country. The current national average rate is 64.9% so we have made excellent progress and this was recognised in the SEND inspection.

5.3 The quality of EHCPs is also a priority in Dorset. The first full PAN Dorset Audit of EHCPs has taken place with a focus on the ECHPs of Looked After Children. We can see from this audit that the sections within the EHCPs regarding health and social care are poor. Our new action plan focuses on these areas so we can

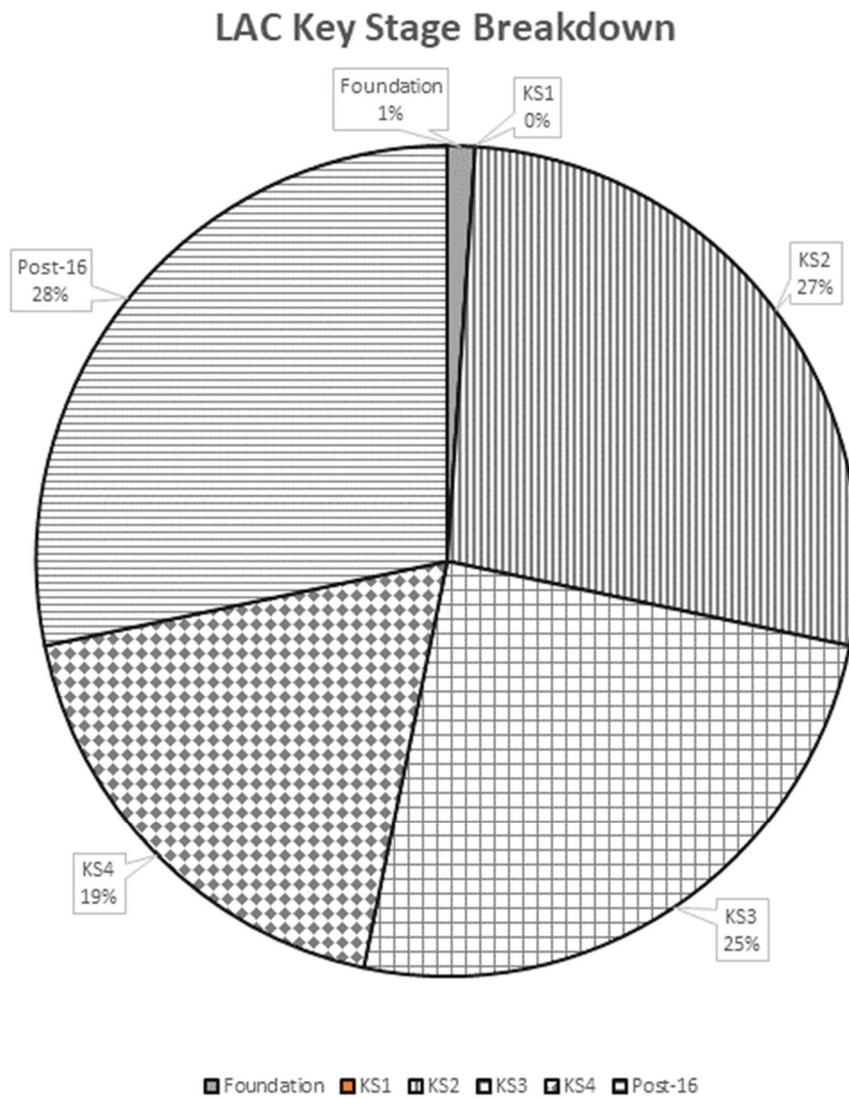
work with partners to improve the content of these sections. In addition, a more robust internal Quality Assurance audit system has been established by the SEN Assessment Leadership Team. A monitoring spreadsheet is in development to record quality of contributions from health, education & social care.

5.4 In line with the SEND Action Plan priorities, there is significant focused work currently in place to work co-productively with children and young people with SEND and their families. Participation groups of young people with SEND, including LAC have been working with senior leaders from health and education and are being actively used to support improvement projects.

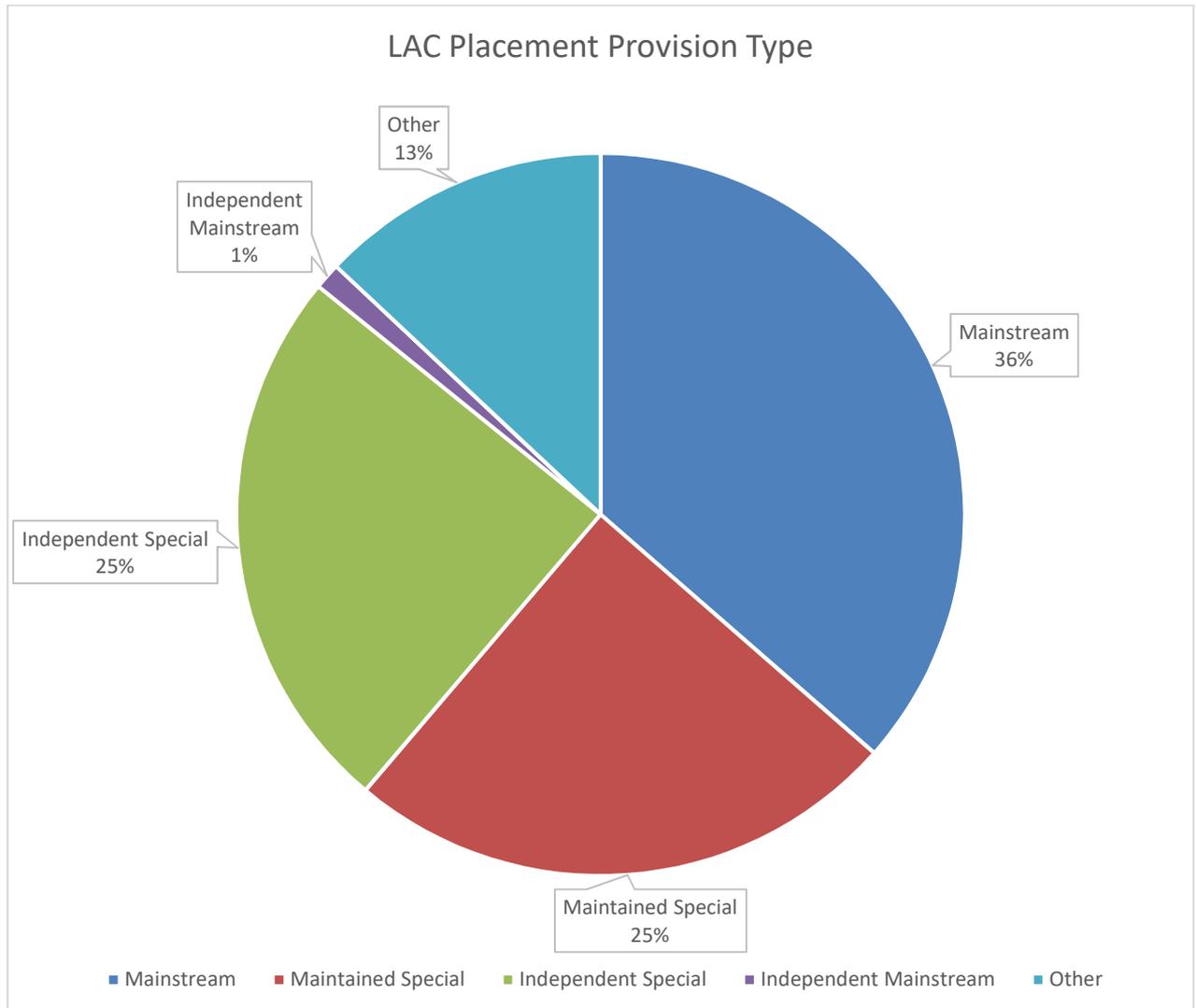
6 Future reporting to the Corporate Parenting Board

6.1 This is the first annual SEND Report to the Corporate Parenting Board. Future reports will include a breakdown of the numbers of requests for statutory assessment for LAC. Using national comparative data due to be published in early 2020 we will also report on impact of provision in terms of progress and attainment for young people with SEND who are looked after, in conjunction with the Virtual School Team.

Appendix A – the distribution of EHCPs for Looked After Children across the Key Stages – July 2019



Appendix B – Types of provision for LAC with EHCPs July 2019



Appendix C – EHCP six month Volume and performance data January to June 2019

	October 17 baseline	Jan 19	Feb 19	Mar 19	Apr 19	May 19	June 19	Notes
Requests for assessment	47	41	53	54	53	66	56	
Assessments commenced	62	67	35	64	68	69	67	
EHCPs issued	28	34	28	28	42	51	42	
No of Active EHCPs	1530	2483	2494	2515	2309	2358	2369	April '19 loss of Christchurch EHCPs
% of new EHCPs completed within 20 weeks	7.1%	85%	86%	82%	88%	75%	93%	National average completion 64.9%
% of initial decision to assess completed within 6 weeks	100%	93%	89%	92%	91%	93%	97%	
% of requests for assessment that became EHCPs	93.2%	86%	86%	88%	90%	79%	85%	National average 77.4%

Appendix D – Number of Statements/EHCPs over time

Number of Statements / EHCPs over time

