



Coporate Parenting Board

Date: Thursday, 12 November 2020
Time: 3.00 pm
Venue: A link to the meeting can be found on the front page of the agenda. MS Teams meeting.

Membership: (Quorum 3)

Kate Wheller (Chairman), Richard Biggs (Vice-Chairman), Ryan Holloway, Stella Jones, Andrew Kerby, Cathy Lugg and Andrew Parry

Chief Executive: Matt Prosser, South Walks House, South Walks Road, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1UZ (Sat Nav DT1 1EE)

For more information about this agenda please telephone Democratic Services on 01305 or Kate Critchel, Senior Democratic Services Officer Tel: 01305 252234 - kate.critchel@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk



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Members of the public wishing to view the meeting from an iphone, ipad or android phone will need to download the free Microsoft Team App to sign in as a Guest, it is advised to do this at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the meeting.

Please note that public speaking has been suspended. However Public Participation will continue by written submission only. Please see detail set out below.

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AGENDA

Page No.

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman to open the meeting and note any apologies, for absence.

2 MINUTES

5 - 16

To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2020.

3 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

To receive any Declarations of Interest.

4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To receive questions or statements on the business of the committee from town and parish councils and members of the public. Public speaking has been suspended for virtual committee meetings during the Covid-19 crisis and public participation will be dealt with through written submissions only.

Members of the public who live, work or represent an organisation within the Dorset Council area, may submit up to two questions or a statement of up to a maximum of 450 words. All submissions must be sent electronically to kate.critchell@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk by the deadline set out below. When submitting a question please indicate who the question is for and include your name, address and contact details. Questions and statements received in line with the council's rules for public participation will be published as a supplement to the agenda.

Questions will be read out by an officer of the council and a response given by the appropriate Portfolio Holder or officer at the meeting. All questions, statements and responses will be published in full within the minutes of the meeting.

The deadline for submission of the full text of a question or statement is 8.30am on Monday 9 November 2020.

5 INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT (2019/20) AND QUALITY ASSURANCE AND REVIEWING OFFICER "HOW TO CAPTURE A CHILD'S VOICE IN A REVIEW" (15:05)

17 - 38

To consider an update from Karen Elliott, Head of Quality Assurance and Partnerships and Quality Assurance Reviewing Officer.

6 FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVER FINANCES (15:30) 39 - 46

To consider a report from Matthew Chislett, (Service Manager Corporate Parenting and Permanence) and Simon Fraiz-Brown (Service Manager, Adolescent Services).

7 ACTION FOR CHILDREN UPDATE (16:00) 47 - 52

To consider a report from Lynne Giles (Dorset Advocacy Independent Visitors Service) - Action for children update.

8 KEY DATA OVERVIEW (16:20) 53 - 66

To consider a report from Matt Chislett (Service Manager Corporate Parenting and Permanence).

9 YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHALLENGE CARDS (16:30) 67 - 70

An update on the challenge cards. Matt Chislett (Service Manager Corporate Parenting and Permanence) to report.

10 ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD FROM LAST FORMAL CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD (16:40)

To consider a proposed change in the boards meeting time and extending membership for head teacher and police representative (s).

11 URGENT ITEMS

To consider any items of business which the Chairman has had prior notification and considers to be urgent pursuant to section 100B (4) b) of the Local Government Act 1972. The reason for the urgency shall be recorded in the minutes.

12 EXEMPT BUSINESS

To move the exclusion of the press and the public for the following item(s) in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of paragraph 2 of schedule 12 A to the Local Government Act

1972 (as amended).

The live stream meeting will end at this point.

13 UNREGISTERED PLACEMENT PROVISION

71 - 76

Claire Shiels (Corporate Director – Commissioning, Quality & Partnerships) to report.



DORSET COUNCIL - CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2020

Present: Cllrs Richard Biggs, Ryan Holloway, Andrew Kerby, Cathy Lugg, Andrew Parry and Kate Wheller

Apologies: Cllrs Stella Jones

Also present: Cllr J Somper, Lead Member for Safeguarding

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Elaine Okopski (Dorset Parent Carer Council), David Alderson (Senior Advisor, Schools and Learning Service), Antonia Dixey (CEO Participation People), Louise Drury (Quality & Assurance), Karen Elliott (Head of Quality Assurance & Partnerships), Simon Fraiz-Brown (Service Manager - Adolescent Services), Lynn Giles (Children's Services Manager, Dorset Advocacy and Independent Visitors Service), Ann Haigh (Participation Worker, Participation People), Mark Blackman (Corporate Director - Education and Learning), Theresa Leavy (Executive Director of People - Children), Stuart Riddle (Senior Manager), Kate Shelley (Communications Officer), Sarah Jane Smedmor (Corporate Director - Care & Protection) and Liz Eaton (Democratic Services Officer)

1. Election of Chairman

That Cllr. Kate Wheller be elected Chairman for the year 2020/2021 but it was noted that Cllr. Andrew Parry would be Chairman for this meeting.

2. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

That Cllr. Richard Biggs be appointed Vice-Chairman for the year 2020/2021.

3. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Stella Jones.

4. Declaration of Interest

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were made at the meeting.

5. Terms of Reference

The Board noted the Terms of Reference referred to the former Dorset County Council and needed to be amended to read Dorset Council. They agreed to the amendment of the following paragraph:

“The Board will ensure the voice of children and young people influence decision making and service development and delivery.”

To read:

“The Board will ensure young people know how their voice, insights and lived experiences have impacted decision making and service development and delivery.”

Resolved

1. That the Terms of Reference be amended to read Dorset Council and not Dorset County Council.

2. That the Terms of Reference be amended to read: “The Board will ensure young people know how their voice, insights and lived experiences have impacted decision making and service development and delivery.”

6. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2020 were confirmed and would be signed when the opportunity arose.

7. Public Participation

There were no public questions or statements received at the meeting.

8. Care Leavers Update

The Corporate Parenting Board considered a report by the Executive Director of People – Children on Care Leavers Update.

Officers informed the Board they were in touch with 98% of care leavers who had a team of Personal Advisers (PA's) making contact with them regularly. During COVID-19 lockdown contact had been made weekly. There were 5 young people who did not want to have contact. A customer satisfaction text message service had been set up, officers had received 100% positive feedback from care leavers using that system. The Authority had also received feedback on the New Belongings programme with engagement from approximately 70 care leavers which was positive.

The Authority was in line with the national trend and had approximately 56% of care leavers who were not in education, employment or training (NEET). This was an ongoing challenge as until recently there had not been enough PA's employed but that had now been addressed and currently a PA was allocated when a young person was 17½ years old. The Care Leaver Local Offer and Finance policy had to be finalised and established. There were approximately 94% of care leavers in suitable accommodation and about 6% who were not in suitable accommodation, housing for care leavers had to be a priority for the Authority.

One member asked whether there was any way that care leavers could get priority on the housing list. Officers confirmed there was a draft policy out for

consultation which would increase the priority on the housing list for care leavers.

Officers mentioned it was challenging for young people to have their first tenancy which could quite easily go wrong. A range of options and offers was required to ensure young people did not take a tenancy before they were ready to do so, officers needed to ensure the processes and procedures with housing colleagues were right. There were 8 young people in bed and breakfast at present which officers were unhappy with but it was noted there was a significant number of units being made available for care leavers in Weymouth.

One member asked whether officers had drafted an acceptable standard of bed and breakfast accommodation for young people. Officers confirmed housing colleagues were very cautious and mindful about when and where bed and breakfast accommodation was provided. It was acknowledged that some young people liked being in bed and breakfast accommodation even if the Authority did not like it for them. A consultation regarding this should be considered by the Corporate Parenting Board.

One member thought that perhaps the Authority should think about loans and how young people could get onto the property market. It was noted that Foster Carers received money they were supposed to save for the young people and perhaps the training foster carers received ought to highlight that they should be saving for the young people or helping them to save.

The Executive Director of People – Children commented she knew that some young people had savings and would report back to the next formal meeting of the Board regarding the current position on how many young people had savings.

Members referred to the Child Trust Fund which young people reaching the age of 18 were eligible to access and asked whether there were other monies available for young people that they were not aware of. Officers would report back at the next formal meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board on the financial wellbeing of Dorset's care leavers aged 18 during this month and going forward.

The Executive Director of People – Children mentioned that leaving care children had access to a leaving care grant and would report back to the Board with the financial position of Dorset's care leavers and what funding/grants were available to them

Officers confirmed that members should have been invited to a presentation from Coram Voice to be held on 23 September 2020 relating to the New Belongings programme. As some members had not received an invitation the Service Manager – Adolescent Services would ensure they had.

One member asked if the Authority's procurement policy could include providing apprenticeships for LAC as it was a large organisation and should be doing something to help young people obtain employment.

The Executive Director of People – Children summed up that officers were concerned about the number of young people that were NEET but a number of young people had apprenticeships and also moving to higher education.

Resolved

1. That the Executive Director of People – Children provide a report to the next formal meeting of the Board on the 12 November 2020 relating to the financial position of young people and care leavers aged 18 during this month and going forward.
2. That the Executive Director of People – Children would report back to the next formal meeting of the Board on the 12 November 2020 on the financial position of Dorset's care leavers and what funding/grants were available to them.
3. That the Service Manager – Adolescent Services invite members of the Board to a presentation from Coram Voice to be held on 23 September 2020 relating to the New Belongings programme.

9. Corporate Parenting Data Set

The Corporate Parenting Board considered a report by the Executive Director of People – Children on the Corporate Parenting Data Set.

The Executive Director of People – Children informed the Board there was a much larger population of older young people in care than younger and the number of young people who had been with the Authority for a long time was larger than those who had not. The numbers who had come into care were managed on a monthly basis a large number were younger and coming into care through the courts. The Authority had not seen the same number of young people leaving care due to COVID-19 and received a directive not to exit 18 year olds due to COVID-19. A number of court hearings had been delayed and deferred significantly with several young people waiting to hear the outcome of their final hearing.

Officers informed the Board there was a little bit of disparity between information held on MOSAIC and health colleagues. A health liaison group was being set up to ensure the data held was replicated by health colleagues. In terms of emotional wellbeing an Emotional Wellbeing Group had been established. During October the focus would be on the health of our young people.

In terms of safety focus had been on missing children and child exploitation. In Dorset both absent and missing episodes were recorded as a missing episode which meant there might be an over-representation on missing episodes. Since the last meeting 14% of young people had a missing episode which was higher than the national average. Officers would be offering more meaningful interviews for those young people who went missing in an aid to reducing the missing episodes.

The Executive Director of People – Children mentioned that officers continued to see a challenge where children were moving from one placement to

another which was not what officers would be looking for. For those placed too far away from home it was hoped to have a strategy in place to have them closer to home. Work was underway to increase the number of Permanency Plans in place for children.

Officers were concerned about the difference between the National and Dorset rate for young people in Education which was being focussed upon and considerable work was ongoing with schools to improve the outcomes for Dorset young people

The Executive Director of People – Children confirmed Dorset had a Regional Adoption Agency in operation which they were looking to review. The Authority needed to be confident enough adopters were being recruited for young people. With COVID-19 there had been real challenges around the number of children being available for adoption. She mentioned the data for Care Leavers – Pathway Plan would be available at future meetings of the Board.

Members were concerned that the Initial Health Assessments were not all completed within the statutory time and confirmed there was disparity between the east and west of the county on this.

The Executive Director of People – Children considered going forward the Corporate Parenting Board needed to be a multi-agency Board to ensure both aspects of medics were available. She confirmed this was on a risk register owned by her and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

One Member asked why clinicians couldn't visit the young people in their own home or give them the choice to have the visit in their own home or a medical setting. It was noted that young people would not want clinicians coming into their homes to do this and better to look to a nurse led service away from the home where young people could talk about what had happened to them. There would also be a problem around timings with clinicians travelling to appointments where focus was required on getting appointments completed on time.

One member noticed the number of carers that had resigned had risen from 44 to 64 and asked if carers had actually resigned or whether they were no longer fit for purpose. The Executive Director of People – Children commented the figures would be a mixture of people where concerns had been raised it was not uncommon that some carers who were significantly older had poor health or died and independent fostering agencies would take over.

One member asked whether officers drilled down on the accusations against foster carers as it looked as though most were unfounded and it would be good to know why they happened and whether they could be pre-empted.

Officers confirmed that all allegations were investigated and drilled down and looked at very carefully. Regarding health assessments officers confirmed

what they were looking at in the data sets were children placed at a distance and how a stronger health agenda was brought forward for the young people.

One member asked whether any data was collected on the parents of children coming into care as to whether they had been in care themselves and whether that care was in Dorset.

The Executive Director of People – Children confirmed that some care leavers did become parents and officers worked hard to support them. The average age of parents where there was an issue was the over 25-30 year old parents. Some care leavers stayed in touch until they were 26 years old.

Noted

10. **Sufficiency Strategy**

The Corporate Parenting Board considered a report by the Executive Director of People – Children on Children in Care Placement Sufficiency.

Officers mentioned the information in the report indicated the approach being taken by the Authority. Dorset had a lot of children in care and far too many of them were sent outside of Dorset which was not good for them. The Authority needed to improve the number of foster carers that were available for Dorset children, that related to how the Dorset Fostering Service was developed and how we worked with fostering agencies that operated within Dorset. Officers were also looking at specialist schemes and short break schemes for disabled children. The Harbour Scheme was a way of providing this. Work was well underway to convert a building in Dorchester Road, Weymouth to become a children's home. Currently there were 60 children in residential care placed with external providers.

There were a number of providers who were in the grey area of providing unregistered care for children and wanted to move into becoming registered children's home providers.

Officers were looking at a blended approach for disabled children and support for them as outlined within the report. Supported housing in Kirtleton Avenue would provide a quality base for care leavers.

The contract arrangements and quality assurance had been strengthened with a Quality Assurance Officer starting in September who would address issues with providers.

One member referred to access to out of county placements an example being where some young people were placed in Somerset, access was quite easy as opposed to those placed further away in Blackpool where it was more difficult to gain access to them. Officers explained the exploitation issues that surfaced in Rochdale were due to a lot of vulnerable people being housed in one place and that was why the Authority wanted to bring young people back into Dorset where they would be less vulnerable.

One member was very pleased to hear that another unit was going to be provided for young people in Weymouth but felt the Authority should think about providing a unit in the north of Dorset as it was unacceptable that so many young people were so far away from the county.

The Executive Director of People – Children commented she had inherited 62 children in residential care which was far too many and would like the number to be nearer 25. Things would change but not overnight.

Officers confirmed they were looking at permanency planning and getting those young people who were placed out of Dorset back into Dorset.

Members liked the progress made so far but thought one aim should be that unregistered accommodation should not be used at all for Dorset children and young people. It was asked who decided that independent agencies and unregistered provision could move into Dorset to provide registered accommodation as this would require agreement from Ofsted. Officers confirmed that was the approach being adopted and it was seen as compliance rather than an aim. Officers had extensive conversations with Ofsted regarding the registration of accommodation and Ofsted were working the Authority on acceleration of approval for Dorset's applications.

One member confirmed that a positive statement was required that Dorset would not and did not sanction using unregistered providers.

Noted

11. Corporate Parenting Strategy

The Corporate Parenting Board considered a report by the Executive Director of People – Children on the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

Officers informed the Board there were 479 children in Dorset's care and that everyone employed by Dorset Council and Councillors were Corporate Parents. The strategy set out key priorities and how success was measured. In terms of values Dorset Council was collaborative, strength based and restorative. The six priorities and ambitions to being an effective Corporate Parent were set out in the report.

Channels of feedback and communication – it was important how officers received feedback from young people. In terms of measuring success that would be relevant in how successful young people were.

One member considered the Strategy was the way forward as he thought the Corporate Parenting Board were siloed as a body and that the whole of Dorset Council and the staff should be aware of their legal responsibilities. When looking at policies there was nothing on looked after children and everything had an effect on the children. They thought the policy should go to full council and be adopted by full council.

Officers confirmed that in terms of Corporate Parenting it should be throughout the Council. When new staff joined the Authority Corporate Parenting should be part of their induction so they were aware of their Corporate Parenting responsibilities.

The Executive Director of People – mentioned the Corporate Parenting Strategy was to be signed off by the Corporate Parenting Board and the pledges were areas where we would want greater join up within the wider council from the point of governance and process it was important the Board signed this off.

Officers confirmed the challenge was to recruit foster carers and what opportunities could be offered by having apprenticeships.

Members asked how this was all to be measured. The Board would be looking at data sets comparing national data.

One member thanked officers for the strategy commenting that it was something all councillors should be aware of and felt it should be discussed at one of the all council briefings with perhaps Councillor Parry informing all councillors of the work of the Corporate Parenting Board and that it was everyone's responsibility.

Discussion was had on how best to inform councillors of the strategy. Councillor Parry thought it would be better to inform members through a Webinar and was also happy to have young people attend a full Council meeting. The Chief Executive of Participation People wondered if it would be useful to ask young people about their experiences of being in care and ask care leavers to speak at full Council, this would have more of an impact on people. She had placed a link on the chat bar to a film which was about fostering carers and shown to young people on induction days, she would email the link to members of the Board.

Members agreed the Strategy.

Resolved

1. That Dorset's Corporate Parenting Strategy for 2020 – 2023 be approved.
2. That a Webinar be held to inform councillors of the Strategy and arrangements made for care leavers to attend a future meeting of full Council to share their experiences of being in care.
3. That the Chief Executive of Participation People email the link to the film to members of the Board.

12. Exempt Business

Decision

That the press and the public be excluded for the following item(s) in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of Paragraphs 1

and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

13. **Annual Report from Virtual School**

The Corporate Parenting Board considered the Virtual School Head's Report 2019/20.

The Corporate Director for Education and Learning explained the virtual school used to work as an individual entity within the Directorate but now worked with all sections of Children's Services.

The Virtual School Head referred to the Dorset STAR Awards being held virtually on the 10 October 2020 to which all members of the Board were invited. He mentioned the report highlighted the work of children not on full-time timetables. There were about 40% of young people with an educational need, EHCP or fixed term exclusion. Section 3 looked at reducing NEET and transferring from year 11 to year 12. The unvalidated GCSE results were looking positive for a number of young people and 7 young people would be moving to university this year. More young people would be attending colleges this year with 20 attending Weymouth College from September 2020. Eight young people had gained employability skills awards. Section 7 of the report looked at Pupil Premium and the quality of Pupil Education Plans (PEP) ensuring that objectives were focussed and targeted. The report highlighted the excellent work of the Governing Body.

One member thanked officers for a detailed report but had a question around Pupil Premium and Pupil Premium Plus and was concerned that some of that money was not being spent properly and asked if that had now been addressed. The Virtual School Head confirmed that it was with a full action plan and issues being addressed in an ongoing way. An audit review had been undertaken and outcomes that had been highlighted were work in progress. The auditors would return the early part of next year and it was anticipated the Virtual School would be in a stronger place with actions completed.

Noted

14. **Unregistered/Unregulated placement provision**

The Corporate Parenting Board considered a report by the Executive Director of People – Children on Unregistered Placements.

The Executive Director of People – Children updated members on the current position regarding unregistered placements. Planning permission for one placement to become registered had been refused but all other placements were moving towards registration. She explained the placements were all houses and bungalows that were perfectly clean and tidy places where young people could have a good positive time although some of the young people had extremely challenging behaviours.

Members registered their disappointment that planning permission had been refused as they knew how hard officers had worked at trying to obtain registration. They asked the cost per week of a placement. The Executive Director of People – Children confirmed the cost would be anything from £8,000 to approximately £14,000 per week.

One member suggested writing to all foster parents to thank them on behalf of the Board for the way they had coped during the lockdown period. Officers confirmed they had already been thanked. She went on to inform the Board that a number of young people in care enjoyed lockdown and benefitted from not being at school and also formed a stronger bond with their foster family.

Noted

15. CLICC Update and Challenge Cards

The Participation Worker from Participation People updated the Board on what the young people had been doing during lockdown. There had been some cookery sessions carried out over ZOOM and as a result a care leavers cook book had been put together to give to every child leaving care, it was also hoped to sell the book to raise funds. They were publishing a bi-monthly newsletter for a trial period. Carey Camp had taken place, albeit on the wettest day in August, 20 young people turned up about 40% of whom were new and had not attended before. A consultation event had been arranged for the 21 October 2020 and on Wednesday evenings pet care sessions will be held for the young people. The Children in Care and Care Council had made a film the link to which had been placed on the chat bar to this meeting.

Members were pleased to note that Carey Camp went ahead despite the weather, it was important for young people to be able to enjoy themselves.

One member asked if there had been any progress in respect of previous challenge cards that had been issued. Officers confirmed they were currently looking at the spreadsheet to see what was outstanding and would ensure they were back on track and report back to a future meeting of the Board.

Cllr Wheller asked for a copy of the updated spreadsheet.

Resolved

That officers send a copy of the updated spreadsheet relating to the challenge cards to Cllr Wheller.

Before the closure of the meeting the newly elected Chairman thanked the Board for electing her and explained she had a lot to catch up on during her time absent from the Corporate Parenting Board. The Executive Director of People – Children confirmed she would liaise with the Chairman regarding agenda setting.

Duration of meeting: 3.00 - 5.47 pm

Chairman

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Corporate Parenting Board

12 November 2020

Independent Reviewing Officers Annual Report April 2019/ April 2020

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr A Parry, Children, Education, Skills and Early Help

Local Councillor(s):

Executive Director: T Leavy, Executive Director of People - Children

Report Author: Jane Stuart
Title: Quality Assurance Manager (Interim)
Tel: 01305221351
Email: jane.stuart@dorsetcc.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Recommendation:

Members are requested to note the content and actively consider and comment upon the strengths and future recommendations.

Reason for Recommendation:

To be assured that the report has identified the strengths and areas for development that will strengthen the work we do as corporate parents and ensure children and young people in Dorset will be happy and safe and have opportunities to reach their goals.

1. Executive Summary

This Annual Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Report provides quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to the IRO Services in the Dorset Council area as required by statutory guidance. The IRO Annual Report must be presented to Corporate Parenting Board and the Safeguarding Children Partnership.

2. Financial Implications

NA

3. Climate implications

None identified.

4. Other Implications

At the beginning of 2020 a worldwide Pandemic started and on 23 March 2020 the UK was advised that all unnecessary social contact should cease. The pandemic continues and has impacted the way we have implemented our statutory duties.

5. Risk Assessment

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

6. Equalities Impact Assessment

7. Appendices

None

8. Background Papers

None

Purpose of report

The report is provided by the Manager of the Independent Reviewing Officer for the scrutiny of the members of the Corporate Parenting Board and in accordance with the statutory guidance for independent reviewing officers and local authorities on their functions in relation to case management and review for looked after children.

This report identifies the context of the service, where the service is performing well and areas for further development including where urgent action is needed.



Dorset Council: Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report 2019/2020

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Page 21	Forward plan 2020/2021

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Dorset Council is committed to delivering services which ensure that children and young people in Dorset will be happy and safe and have opportunities to reach their full potential. We want to make Dorset a better place for all children and young people. We will ensure that children and young people are at the heart of all we do. In order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Dorset we will listen to children, young people and their families and involve them in decisions that affect them.

"Looked after children and Care Leavers deserve the best experiences in life, from excellent parenting which promotes good health and educational attainment, to a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and skills in order to have an enjoyable childhood and successful adult life. Stable placements, good health and support during transition are all essential elements, but children will only achieve their potential through the ambition and high expectation of all those involved in their lives." The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations, volume 2 care planning placement and case review.

- 1.2 This is Dorset's ambition and motivation.
- 1.3 This Annual Report is available for the scrutiny of the members of the corporate parenting board and Safeguarding Children's Partnership. This report is also a public document and will be on Dorset's Council's website to be accessed by children and parents.
- 1.4 The Independent Reviewing Officers' Service, more recently identified as Quality Assurance and Reviewing Officers (QARO) Service from 1 September 2020, is set within the framework of the updated Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Handbook, which was introduced in April 2011. The responsibility of the IRO has changed from the management of the review process to a wider overview of the case by 'monitoring the child's case on an ongoing basis'. The statutory duties of the IRO are to;
- Monitor the performance by the local authority of their functions in relation to the child's care journey.
 - Participate in any review of the child
 - Ensure that any ascertained wishes and feelings of the child are given due Consideration
 - Perform any other function which is prescribed in regulations.

- 1.5 “The Independent Reviewing Officer must be the visible embodiment of our commitment to meet our legal obligations to this special group of children. The health and effectiveness of the IRO service is a direct reflection of whether we are meeting that commitment, or whether we are failing.”¹
- 1.6 The IRO Service sits within the Safeguarding and Standards section of Children’s Services with its core responsibility of reviewing care plans for children in care and monitoring and challenging the Local Authority in respect of its corporate parenting and safeguarding responsibilities.
- 1.7 The IROs are independent but managed within Children’s Services and hold no line management responsibility for any children in care. They are qualified experienced social workers with significant children’s social work experience. There seven IROs (6.2) full time equivalent are of mixed gender (2 males, 4 females) and ethnicity. The workforce is relatively stable, with all but one IRO a permanent employee and this year we have seen one of IROs retire after a significant period of time with us. The service is led by an experienced fulltime IRO manager. Where additional support is required to meet the needs of our children, or when there are periods of sickness or absence, this is drawn from our pool of experienced Child Protection Chairs.
- 1.8 This report provides a summary of work completed by the IROs and is a summary and analysis of how we are meeting these obligations.

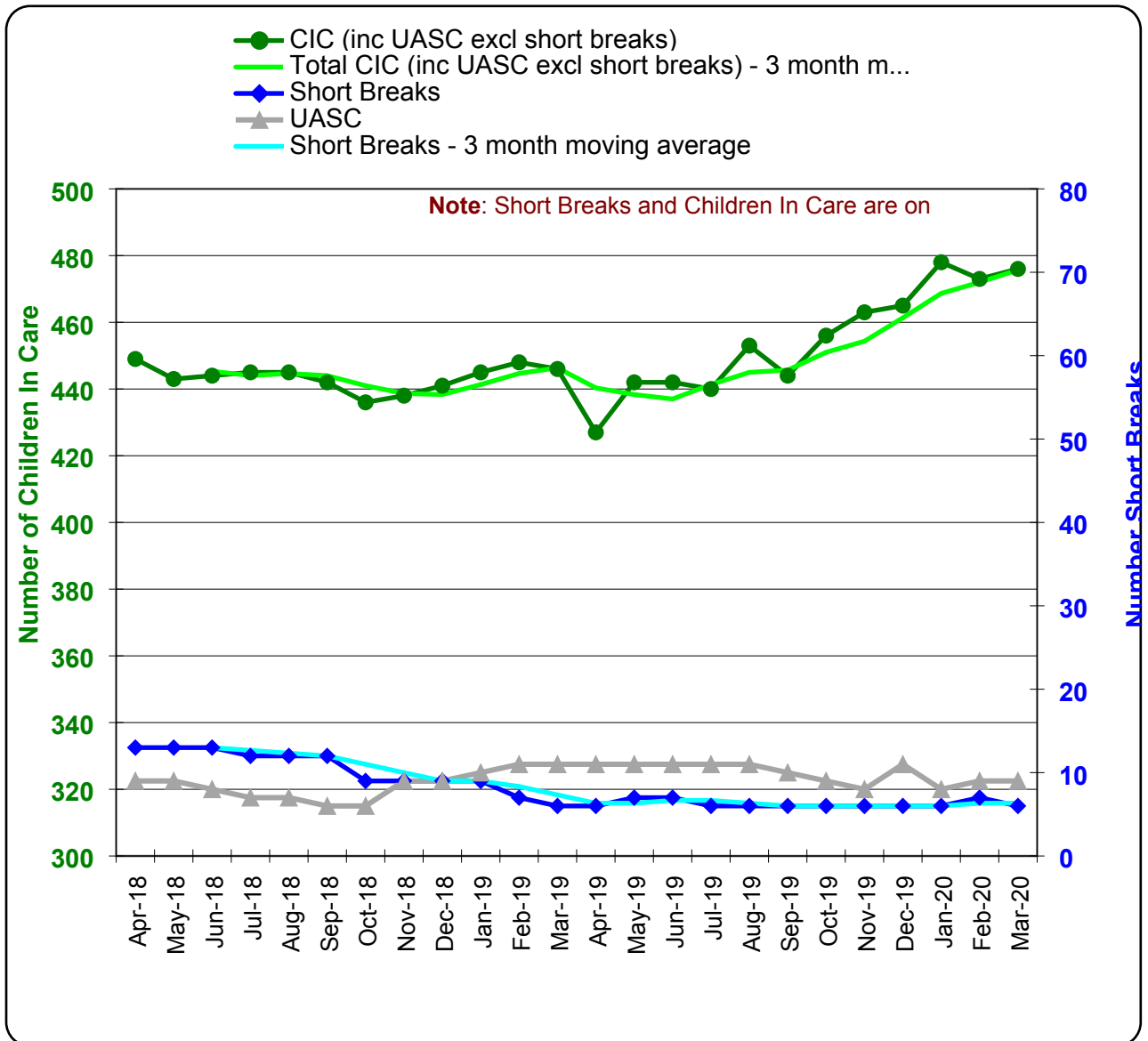
2. Quantitative information - Children in Care Population

2.1 Profile of Dorset’s Children in Care

- 2.2 There were 474 children and young people in care that Dorset were responsible for as at 31 March 2020 and despite a short de-crease in April 2019 this has steadily increased during the last 12-month period. The decline was mainly due to local government re-organisation, where children from the Christchurch are transferred to the newly formed BCP unitary authority. Prior to this the children in care numbers had remained consistent since January 2018 until the end of March 2019.
- 2.3 8% of the children in care population are from black and minority ethnic groups which reflects the diversity of the Dorset school age population.

¹ The Rt Hon Lord Justice Jackson.

2.4 Number of children in care April 18 to March 2020 (diagram1)

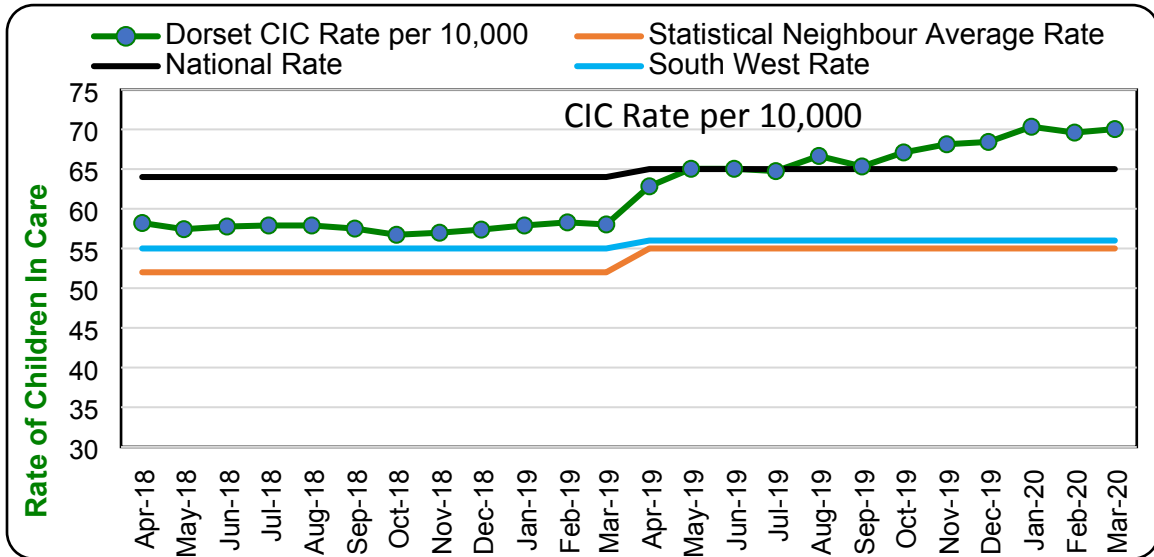


2.5 Between April 2019 and March 2020, the children in care population rose significantly

2.6 In April 2019 a brief reduction related to the 33 children and young people in Christchurch, Bournemouth and Poole council as part of the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

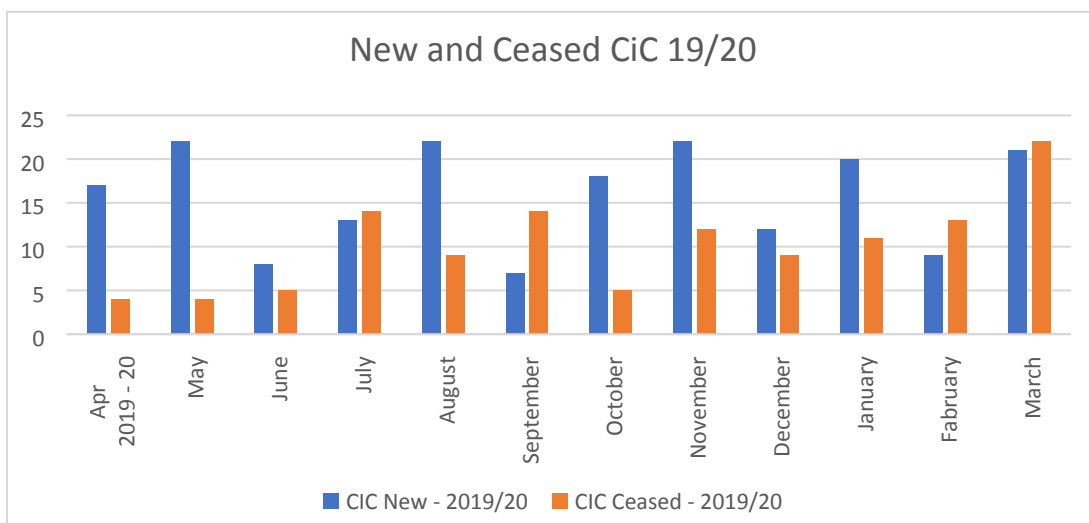
2.7 With the increasing number of children coming into care from April 2019 combined with the reduction of the child population from 76,861 to 68,138 due to the LGR in April 2019, the rate increased to 62.7. This continued to rise reaching 70 per 10,000 in April 2020 which was significantly higher than our comparators (see diagram 2).

2.8 Children in Care Rate per 10,000 population (Diagram 2)



2.9 We sometimes see children coming into care at points of crisis in their family life where with earlier intervention this might have been prevented. Our quality assurance audits continue to identify that although there are some areas of good practice that this is not consistent, our social work practice needs to be strengthened for children in care.

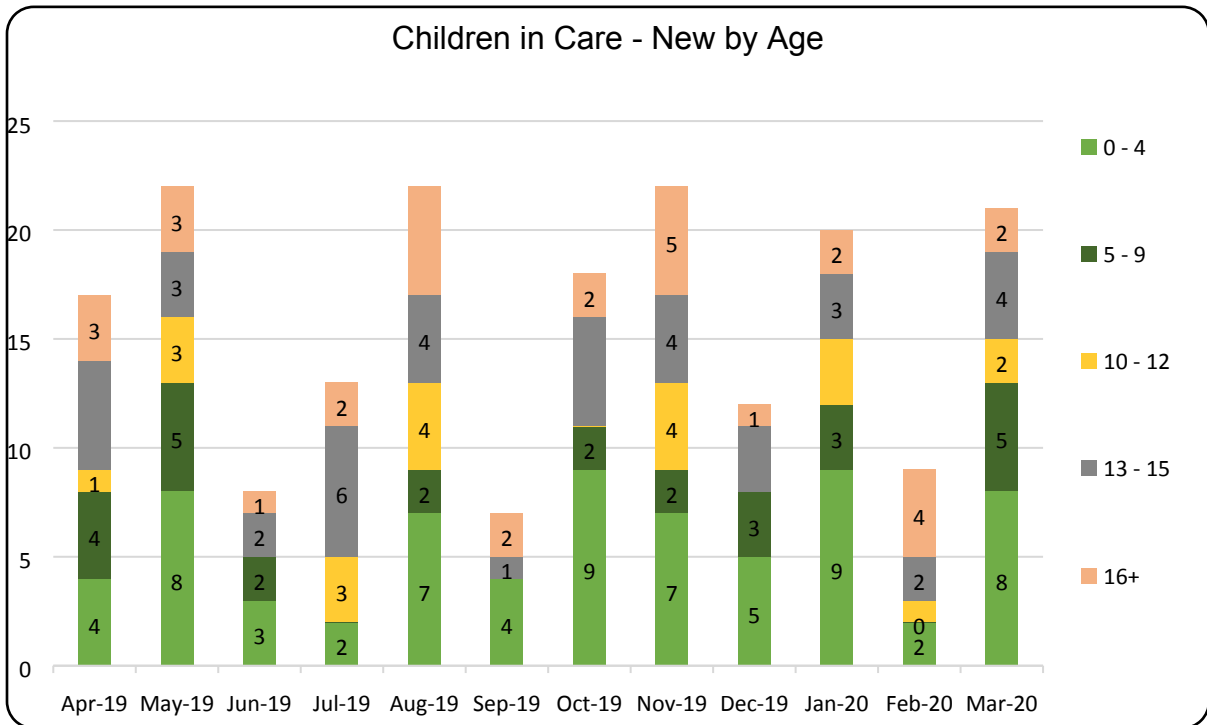
2.10 Number of new and ceased children in care (diagram 3)



2.11 It is clear that in this year more children became looked after than ceased (see diagram 3). Social workers have been supporting high numbers of children and there has been drift in permanence planning. IRO and Management oversight did not always provide the level of scrutiny that was required to ensure that planning was robust for children, and in particular for those children who had been in care for longer than 6 months under section 20 arrangements or those placed at home with parents subject to a Care Order. The IRO is fundamental in supporting practice improvement and their 'footprint' needs to be strengthened to ensure scrutiny and challenge and continued focus in these areas of practice.

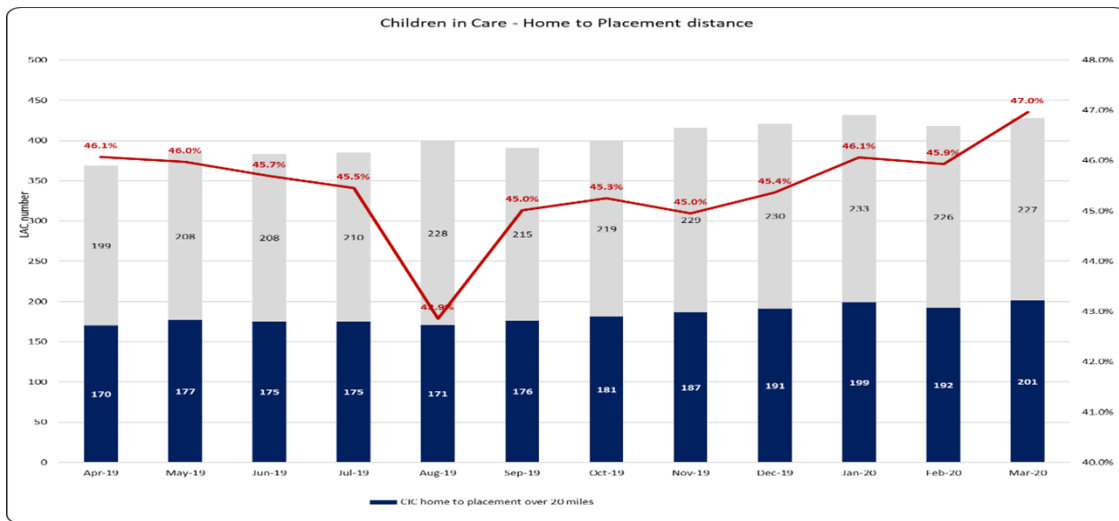
2.12 Our focus on tracking pre proceedings continues and will ensure that when entering the court arena evidence will be available to support conclusion of the proceedings within 26 weeks. In doing so plans for permanence will be twin tracked to reduce any further delay to secure permanence in the child's timeframe. Going forward steps will be taken to ensure that care orders are revoked where required as part of the planning in returning children to their families. IRO scrutiny of this planning will be key.

2.13 **Children in care – By Age** (diagram 4)



2.14 We have seen an increase in the number of 0-4-year olds coming in to care and a reduction of 5-9-year olds compared to the previous year which is in line with the national figure (2019) where there was also a decrease in the 5-9 age range.

2.15 **Distance placed from home address in Dorset (diagram 5)**



2.16 The majority of our children are cared for in family placements, but we know that too many are placed in residential provision and away from their local area.

2.17 At the end of March 2019, 47% of children in care were placed more than 20 miles from their home address which is an increase from last year which was 41.4%. This is below the national figure from 2018 to 2019 where 73% of children in care lived within 20 miles from their home address. In 2019 a strategy for placement sufficiency was agreed which enabled a change to the Authority’s commissioning approach by becoming more active in bringing more providers into Dorset to ensure that provision was closer to home.

2.18 Dorset have a high number of children in care and as a result we are occasionally challenged by the lack of suitable placement availability for children with very complex needs. On 31 March 2020 there were 2 children placed in unregistered placements. As an additional safeguard for children in these placements, monthly visits are undertaken by the Child Protection chairs similar to ‘Regulation 44 of the Children’s Homes Regulations 2015’ visits. This additional scrutiny and oversight include:

- An opportunity for any child, parent or member of staff to speak to the chair alone
- A check on the physical condition of the home.
- An assessment of the standard of care provided.
- A check of the daily log, complaints record, sanctions record and restraint record.

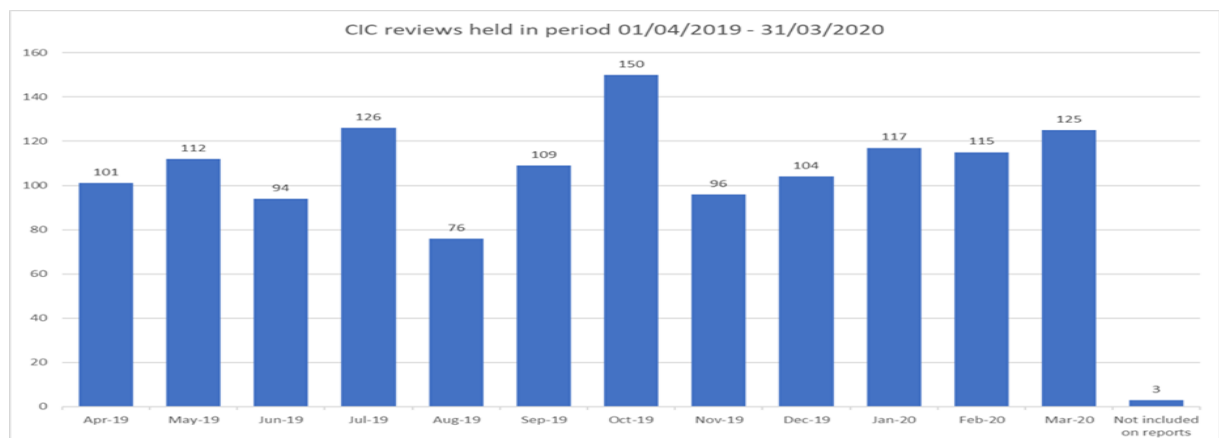
2.19 On 31 March 2020 there were 36 young people placed in unregulated placements, these young people were over the age of 16 requiring support to live independently rather than needing full time care. A Review of all children in unregulated provision is also being commissioned to gain assurance that all their needs are being met.

3. Quantitative and Qualitative Information – IRO Service

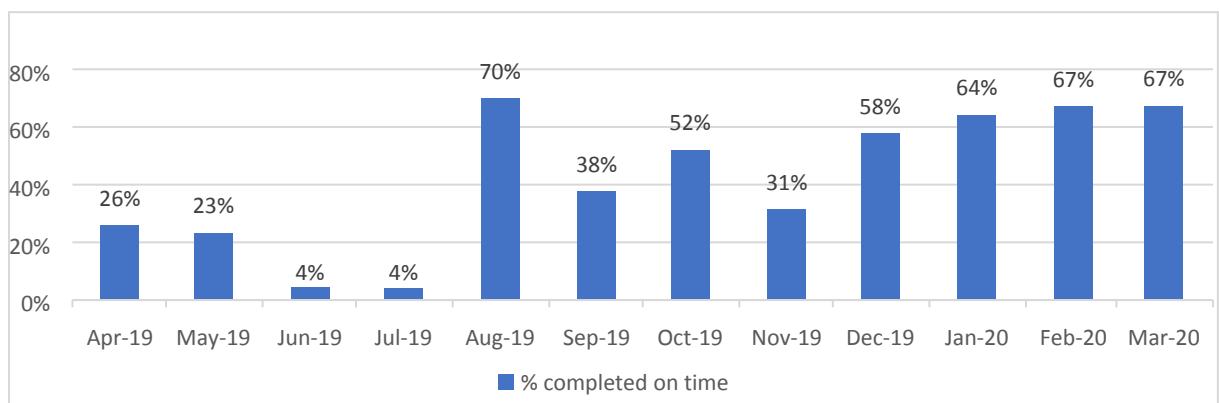
3.1 Quantitative information about the IRO service:

3.2 The IRO service completed 1,241 reviews between 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, the percentage that took place on time was 95.25%, showing an improvement in performance compared to the previous year (18/19). Those that were unable to be held in timescales were predominantly for legitimate reasons such as the young person was ill or a placement change that meant it was in the child’s best interests to move the date resulting in a slight delay.

3.3 Number of children in care reviews (Diagram 6)



3.4 Timeliness of minutes for children in care reviews (diagram 7)



3.5 Diagram 7 highlights that the timeliness of sharing minutes of the reviews are not shared as quickly as we would like them to be. The performance in this area has varied quite significantly and some level of sustained steady improvement towards the end of the year. However, this will be a focused area of improvement moving forward to ensure timeliness is achieved and maintained.

3.6 Quality and impact of the IRO service:

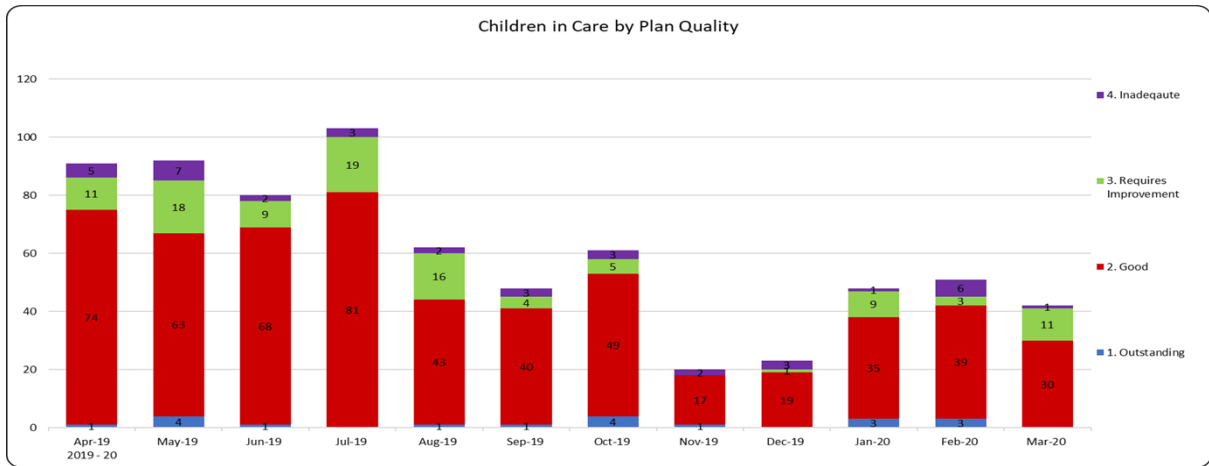
3.7 The IRO Service measures the quality of the care plan by a combination of data collection and auditing. The service IRO monitoring form is completed following every child in care review, enabling a range of factors to be reported on including quality of the care plan. The judgment is based on the Ofsted judgements and takes the following into consideration:

- The reason for the child coming into care, that the purpose of the planning is clear and, in a language, that the child can understand
- It clearly conveys the child’s wishes and feelings to ensure their voice is heard
- The plan is SMART
- That there is a contingency plan
- There is clear management oversight and the plan is authorised by the manager
- The plan is evidenced based and informed by research

3.8 Out of 1,223 Care Plans completed between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020. 82.67% were graded good and outstanding, although this is a slight decrease in the previous year, we have more in the outstanding category than 2018/19. However, those inadequate have remained consistently low at 3.5%.

3.9 Quality of care plans (diagram 6)

Grading	2018/19	2019/20
Outstanding	1.85%	3.11%
Good	83.72%	79.56%
Requires Improvement	10.85%	13.83%
Inadequate	3.58%	3.52%



3.10 Since November 2019 an audit schedule has been implemented that involves 20 children’s cases being audited collaboratively and moderated every month across the service which include children in care.

3.11 Some of the strengths identified include:

- Positive audit findings with adherence to children in care agenda with minutes formulated into letters to children.
- Recording is clear and concise
- Children’s voices are heard and recorded.
- Plans are SMART
- Return to home or family is considered
- Challenge of ‘Requires Improvement’ care plans by the IRO
- Some evidence of IRO escalation.

3.12 Areas to strengthen include:

- Consistent quality of care plan
- Ensure care plans capture the child’s needs and voice
- Outcomes should relate to child’s assessed needs
- Use of language – ‘plain English’
- SMART Care plans
- Quality and timeliness of statutory visits
- Not always up to date care plan

3.13 The service developed an ‘aide memoire’ to support the quality, timeliness of children in care statutory visits and what to include such as: seeing the child alone, addressing any outstanding actions from the child in care review and to consider whether all the child’s needs are being met.

3.14 To support this and ensure we are learning from themes and trends an escalation and tracking process is in place. Escalations can be informal initially to try and resolve those that are minor improvements or actions required. However, if IRO's are concerned about drift and delay or plans for the child and cannot be easily resolved the escalation policy is invoked. Between April 2019 to March 2020 IROs have challenged practitioners and managers formally on 20 Occasions with only one raising to level 4 to the DCS.

3.15 Escalations (Diagram 8)

Level	Responsible Officer	Number of escalations
Level 1:	Team Manager / Operational Manager	10
Level 2:	Service Manager	5
Level 3:	Assistant Director Children's Services	4
Level 4:	Director of Children's Services	1
Level 5:	Referral to CAFCASS	0

3.16 Escalations in this period were in relation to evidencing a child had been visited; delay in completing assessments; delay in starting therapy; changes in social worker; delay in permanency meetings and proceedings to court; delay in receipt of reports for the review meetings. Resolution was in the majority achieved between the same working day and within 7 days.

3.17 We would expect a higher number of formal escalations following audit findings which will be a focus going forward. Consideration is being given to standardising and monitoring informal escalations.

4. Oversight of the IRO service.

4.1 Supervising our IROs is important to ensure we maintain quality and impact of the IRO role. Staff supervision covers the five functions of supervision:

- Managerial function. This covers performance of the individual and triangulates against KPI dashboard. Linking the individual to the organisation.

- Information, audit and observation and feedback
- Continuing professional development.
- Training and annual appraisals to ensure we have a strong knowledgeable confident team.
- Personal support. This is an essential element of quality supervision for the individual.

4.2 All IROs have accessed dedicated regular supervision, alongside group sessions, development sessions and training. All IROs have an annual Personal Development Review (PDR)

5. Children and young people participation

5.1 Number of children attending reviews

5.2 Attendance at reviews (diagram 9)

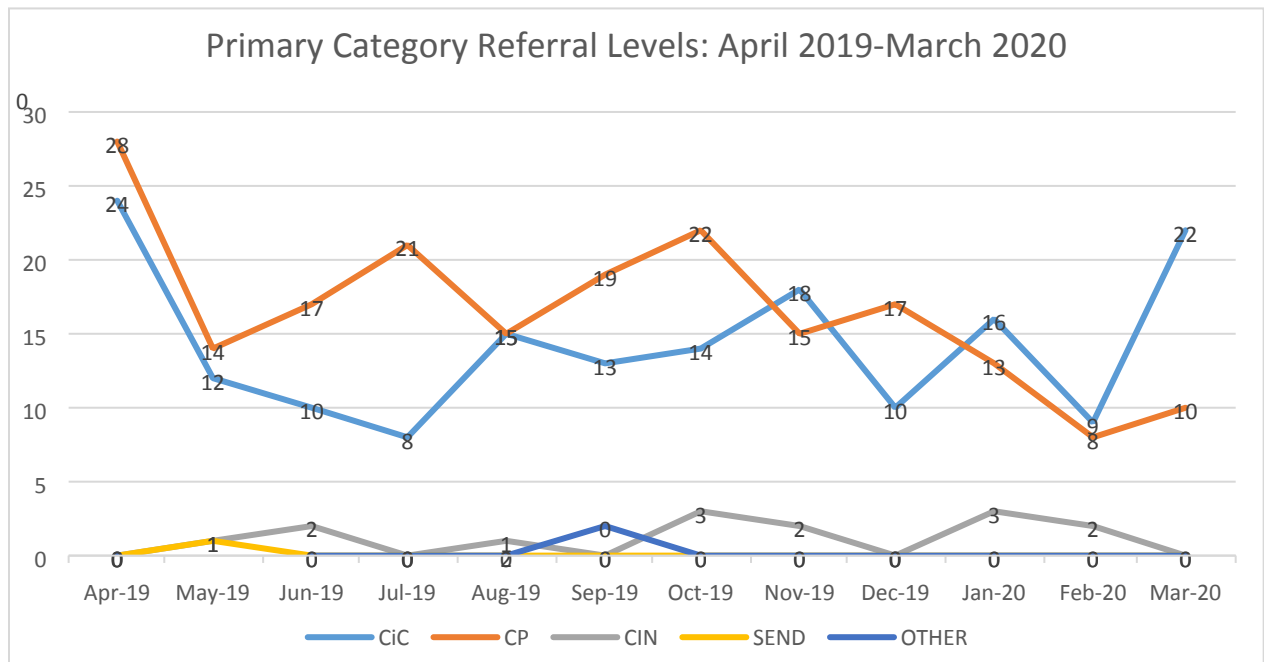
CIC Review participation	2019 - 20											
	Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20
PN0 - Aged under 4 at the time			20	10	12	19	20	12	20	25	19	23
PN1 - Attends and speaks for him/herself			37	58	38	47	63	51	46	50	53	47
PN2 - Attends and advocate speaks			4	2	6	5	5	1	2	2	7	3
PN3 - Attends and communicates non-verbally							2		1	1	1	1
PN4 - Attends but no contribution												
PN5 - Not attends but advocate represents			1	3	3	4	11	5	5	1	7	5
PN6 - Not attends but provides views			20	32	12	17	41	18	19	23	18	35
PN7 - Not attends no views conveyed			7	10	2	9	3	6	8	2	3	2
Not known			7	12	4	10	11	8	7	15	10	11
Total	0	0	96	127	77	111	156	101	108	119	118	127

5.3 A small minority of children did not attend reviews or convey their views to the meeting. It is accepted that some children choose not to attend or participate. Every child or young person aged 4 plus are invited to engage in their review. This is supported by the use of advocates. There has been a drive to help children and young people to be more actively involved in their Children in Care reviews through strengthening the use of advocacy. A new system was put in place in February 2019 for social workers to be alerted to refer new into care who are 8y+ for an advocate to be assigned unless the child or young person decides to “opt-out”.

5.4 The Advocacy service is commissioned by Dorset Council with Action for Children. The IRO Monitoring report captures at child level whether the child/young person chooses to advocate for themselves, requests an advocate or has chosen someone else. The majority of our children are supported by an advocate who attends with the young person but can speak and represent themselves. This is positive that our young people feel able and are supported to do this as we want the review to be the child’s meeting.

5.5 Children/Young People are able to raise a complaint against the Local Authority and are also supported by advocacy to do so if they wish.

5.6 **Advocacy referrals to Action for Children April 2019 to March 2020** (diagram 10)



5.7 171 referrals for advocacy were made during the last year and this is an increase on the previous year.

5.8 Advocacy was provided for 28 children in care who were living outside of Dorset for the period December 2018 to November 2019. In the same reporting period, they attended meetings with the young person on 270 occasions

5.9 Approximately 92 children have been matched with an independent visitor for the period March 2019 to March 2020. As of October 2020, we have seen 83% increase in of children being matched with an Independent visitor since the start of the contract in December 2017.

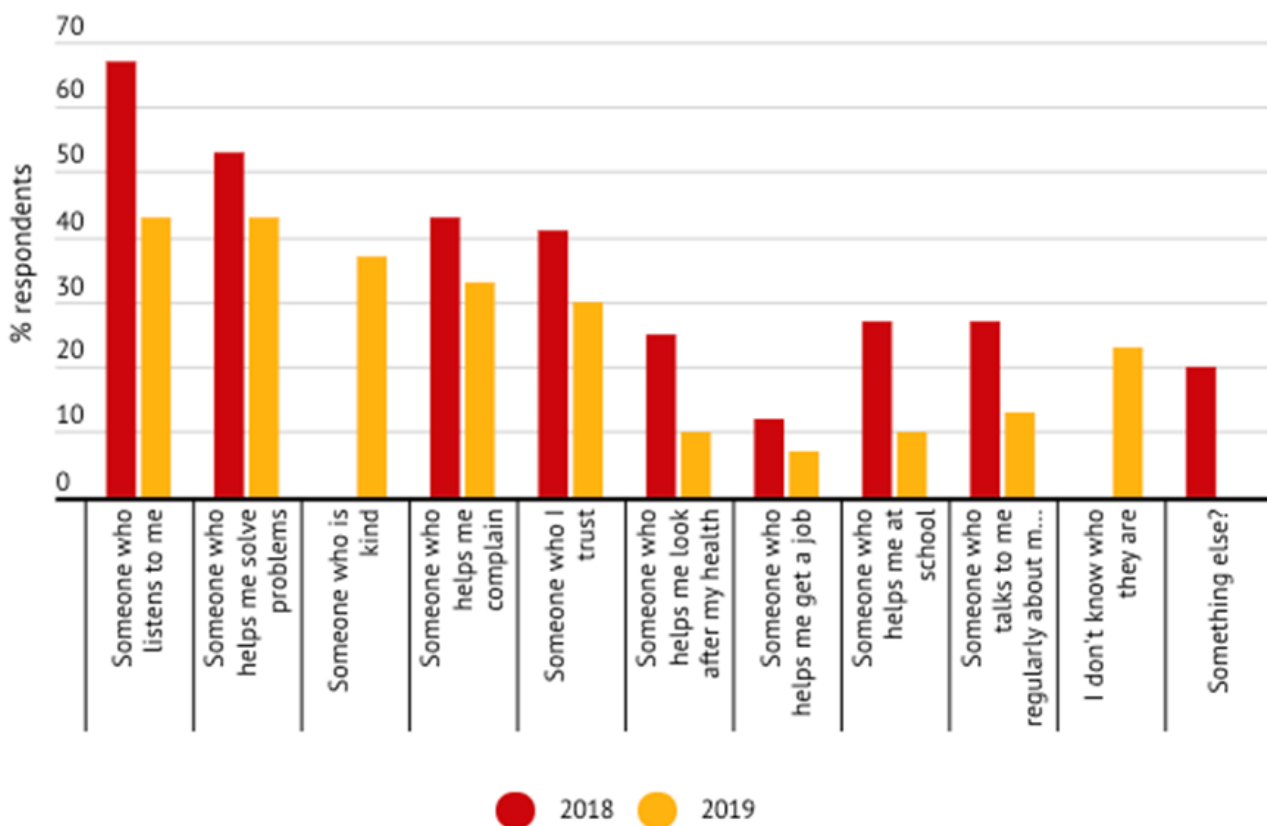
5.10 Feedback from young people is very positive -

I'm really happy. My IV is the best person. We get along and understand each other, she's always funny. She's understanding, helps me look at decisions and make choices and see whether it is a good or bad idea based on what may happen. I rate my IV.

5.11 A new into care pack was devised in collaboration with our children and young people in August 2018. This included information regarding decision making, children in care reviews, IROs, the Dorset Promise and complaints.

5.12 The Care Leavers and Children in Care Council (CLiCC) undertake a user satisfaction survey supported by Participation People. In 2019 they had 44 responses from 11 to 25-year olds; this is 16% of young people in care and care leavers. This is what they said about the IRO service.

5.13 **Young Person’s perceptions of IRO (Diagram 11)**



Graph showing % of participants answering the question, "what is an independent reviewing officer?" Participants could tick multiple boxes.

"Something else" comments included:

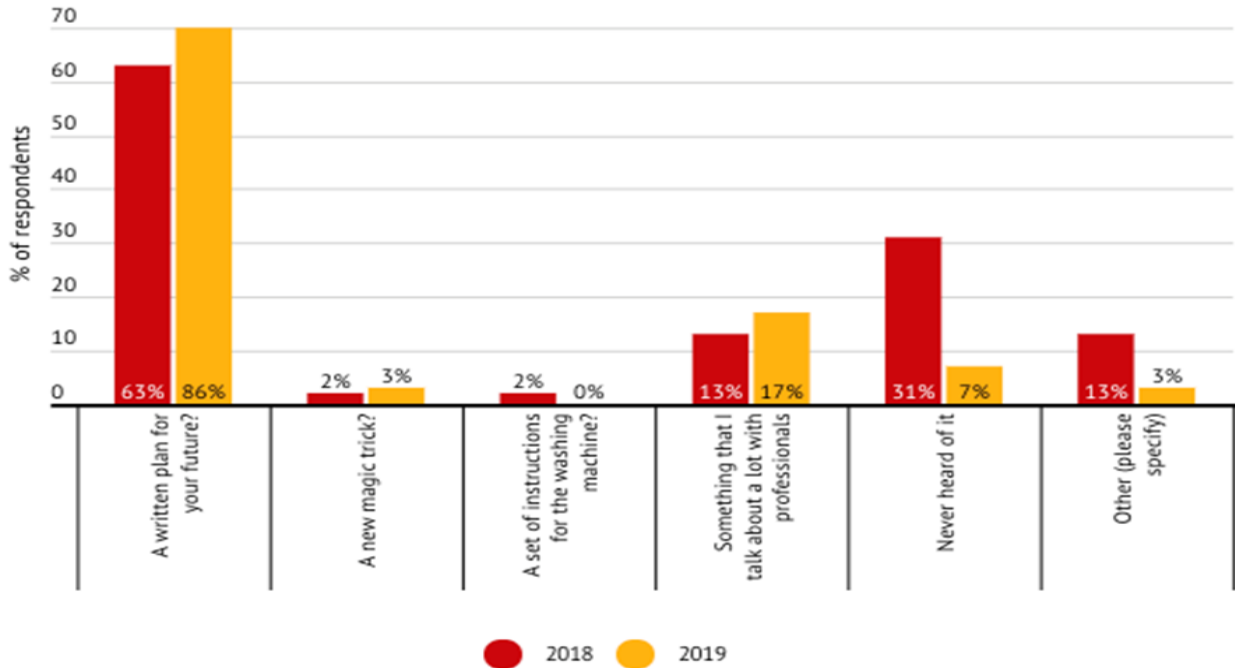
- Makes my voice heard at chair's review.
- Makes sure the Social Worker and other professionals are supporting me and my decisions.

CLiCC observed that:

- Over 20% did not know what an IRO is.
- Only 30% thought that their IRO was kind.
- IRO's need to do some work on promoting what they do for young people. We would love to help them!

- We wondered how IRO's are recruited and managed - and if "kindness" was one of the things Dorset Council look for in an IRO. If they don't, we think they should! We would love to help design a recruitment and induction activity that looks for kind IRO's to increase the "kindness factor".

5.14 Young people's perceptions - care plan (diagram 12)



Graph showing % of participants answering the question, "what is a care plan?" Participants could tick multiple boxes.

"Something else" comments included:

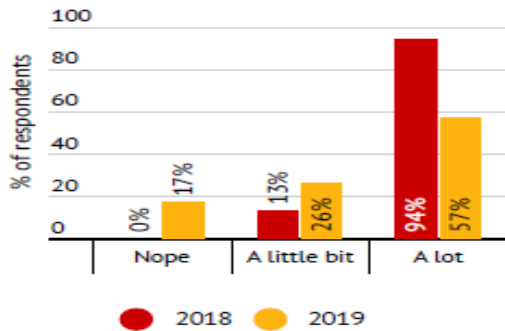
- A plan of the young person's care that never gets followed up or completed.

CLiCC observed that...

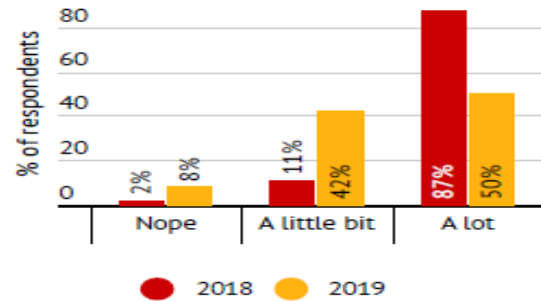
- More young people know what a care plan is this year, compared to last year. This is great news!
- Overall, the figures are an improvement to last year. Yay!
- It's not good that someone said that care plans do not get followed up or completed. We wondered why this was, and how often this happens? It might be worth a closer look from both a young person's perspective and a social worker perspective?

5.15 Are you happy, safe and supported? (diagram 13)

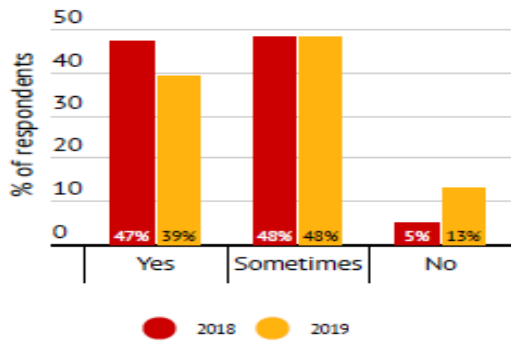
Are you happy, safe and supported?



Graph showing % participants answering the question, "are you treated fairly?"



Graph showing % participants answering the question, "do you feel safe and supported?"



Graph showing % participants answering the question, "are you happy?"

6. Progress on the work plan identified for 2019 to 2020.

6.1 Establish a Dorset Model for children in care reviews.

- Work is underway to develop a person-centred approach to children in care reviews led by the Principal Social Worker and Principal Education psychologist.

6.2 To review the children in care meeting notes format and improve timeliness of distribution.

- Letters are now sent in the first person to children and young people and feedback has been very positive. Although there has been an upward trend in performance in timeliness continued focus on this is required.
- 6.3 Improvements in the tracking of permanence plans.
- A report was developed to support tracking of completed permanence plans which led to a steady increase in the percentage completed.
- 6.4 Improvements in performance data, drawing on the information captured by IROs at each Child in care review.
- This was developed with further work identified for mosaic improvements to support improved reporting and tracking.
- 6.5 Introduction of a Mid-way check in policy with a target of undertaking checks on a 1/3 of the CIC population.
- This requires further development and focus.
- 6.6 Exploration of employing an IRO who lives in the midlands
- This was not pursued due to the change in strategic direction to support Dorset Children being looked after in Dorset by Dorset carers
- 6.7 Reducing the need for Looked After status, with the proposed introduction of a dedicated Edge of Care Service.
- This formed part of the blueprint for change re-structure and is now in development.
- 6.8 A reduction in overall Children in Care numbers.
- This remains a strong focus and forms the basis of the strengthening services plan to reduce the rate of children in care to become more in line with our comparators and good and outstanding authorities.
- 6.9 Improved permanence tracking by the IROs and children's social workers.
- A Permanence tracker was developed, and this continues to be an area of focus.

7. Forward Plan for 2020 to 2021

- 7.1 Securing long term permanence for child at an appropriate time – A Permanence Panel will be established to prevent drift and delay. This will focus on all new children in care and at other points in the child’s journey where there needs to be additional scrutiny to ensure permanence. This will include consideration of the child returning home or to other family members where safe to do so.
- 7.2 IRO practice standards will be introduced to support robust scrutiny and oversight in the right place at the right time further developing the impact of the QARO role for all our children in care right through to leaving care.
- 7.3 We have listened to our children in care and will implement a system to support them to identify who their IRO is, understand their role including making sure that they know that the IRO can help support them. This will be addressed by the provision of IRO one-page profiles for all children in care.
- 7.4 The Escalation Policy will be reviewed and refreshed to support both informal and formal escalations. This is to ensure we will capture and learn from themes and trends identified where we can strengthen quality of practice.
- 7.5 The QARO role will enable us to identify case examples on a regular basis to consider the journey of the child to understand the impact and outcomes achieved for those children. This enables us to build on identified good practice and learn what we need to strengthen.
- 7.6 The offer of Family Group Conferences will be brought forward to earlier in the child’s journey to ensure that all options for children to return home to family have been explored and that of managing supervising family time for the child and their family.
- 7.7 Our Practice Framework will be delivered to enable us to work with our families in a restorative strength-based way which supports us to deliver person centred approaches to children in care reviews.
- 7.8 We will include children from the children in care council as part of the interview process for all permanent QAROs to ensure that we take into consideration their views on what they regard as important qualities in a QARO.

- 7.9 It is important for us to ensure that these actions are delivered and that therefore additional governance arrangements will be put in place to enable progress and tracking of these. This will be through regular updates to our CPB to ensure we have the right scrutiny and oversight of this.

Footnote:

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

Corporate Parenting Board 12 November 2020 Savings for Children in Care and Care Leaver Finances

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr A Parry, Children, Education, Skills and Early Help

Local Councillor(s):

Executive Director: T Leavy, Executive Director of People - Children

Report Author: Simon Fraiz-Brown

Title: Savings for Children in Care and Care Leaver Finances

Tel: 01305 224776

Email: s.fraiz-brown@dorsetcc.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Recommendation:

That the Corporate Parenting Board:

- (i) Note and support the review of existing policy and processes relating to savings for Children in Care.
- (ii) Note and support the development of a Financial Support Framework for Care Leavers.

Reason for Recommendation:

To ensure that Corporate Parenting Board members are aware of the current position regarding finances and savings for Children in Care and Care Leavers in Dorset, and the work underway to develop this further.

1. Executive Summary

At its meeting on the 9th September 2020, the Corporate Parenting Board requested a report relating to the financial position of young people and care leavers aged 18 including what funding and grants were available to them.

As Corporate Parents, Dorset Council must ensure that all eligible young people leaving our care receive the financial help and support to which they are entitled.

This report provides the Corporate Parenting Board with the current position and arrangements in place regarding financial support to Care Leavers and sets out the current arrangements relating to savings for Children in Care.

2. Financial Implications

There are no additional or direct financial implications arising from this report which relates to the current position. The report is provided to advise the Corporate Parenting Board of the current arrangements in place for Children in Care savings and Care Leaver Finances.

Any development of a new financial policies and processes as a result of our co-production work with children and young people will be undertaken through appropriate Council decision making and governance processes.

3. Well-being and Health Implications

Financial literacy and security underpin wellbeing.

4. Climate implications

N/A

5. Other Implications

N/A

6. Risk Assessment

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

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

7. Equalities Impact Assessment

This report identifies how the team delivering services to eligible looked after young people and care leavers and works from the same basic principles in terms of equality and equal opportunity.

Whilst each young person is unique with individual needs, the overarching legislative framework and Dorset Council policy seeks to ensure all young people are treated equitably.

This report seeks to advise the Corporate Parenting Board of current arrangements and therefore an Equalities Impact Assessment is not applicable however any future policy development will be subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment.

8. Appendices

N/A

9. Background Papers

None

10. Care Leavers Services

10.1 Context:

- (i) Young people cease to be looked after at the age of 18, although some children in care may choose to leave care before this. However, the local authority continues to have responsibilities towards them until at least the age of 25. These duties and responsibilities vary according to the circumstances of the young person and their length of time in care prior to the age of 16. There are currently 266 young people receiving an active leaving care service from Dorset Council.
- (ii) Feedback from our Care Leavers Forum has indicated that Care Leavers do not feel they have been equipped with the skills to properly manage their money and to budget effectively. This was echoed by some of the Care Leavers that responded to the New Belongings “Your Life Beyond Care” survey.
- (iii) This report focuses on how Dorset Council financially supports those that leave our care, including the provision of savings whilst children and young people are in our care.

10.2 Children in Care – Current Financial Provision

- (i) The policy for all children who are in our care is that there is a commitment that a savings account is set up and this is reviewed as part of Children in Care Review. However, the amount to be saved is agreed between the child's social worker and the foster carer's social worker. Additionally, the ability to open a savings account is not included in the Delegated Scheme of Authority, which means that foster carers require the specific permission of the child's social worker in order to open a savings account.
- (ii) At present, the balance of any savings accounts is not systematically recorded and therefore we cannot say how many children have savings accounts and how much savings they have. Furthermore, as these savings accounts are not monitored we are unclear as to whether young people in our care make use of these savings before they reach 18, potentially to purchase a larger item such as a laptop for college, or to help with getting a car or car insurance.
- (iii) Children and young people fostered by Dorset Council Foster Carers – The Fostering Fees and Allowances Policy states that foster carers are expected to provide pocket money from the weekly allowance they receive from Dorset, although it does not specify how much. There is no stated expectation in the document that foster carers will set up and contribute to savings for a child or young person placed with them. Furthermore, provision of savings does not form part of the Foster Carer's Annual Review.
- (iv) Children and Young People placed with Independent Fostering Agencies - The Framework for Independent Fostering Agencies does set out an expectation that foster carers will provide pocket money and savings. However, these amounts also are agreed between the child's social worker and the foster carer's social worker.
- (v) The Sharefound Foundation 'Sharefound' - The Share Foundation, or 'Sharefound' for short, has been running the Department for Education's Junior ISA scheme for Children in Care and young people since 2012, during which time it has benefited over 125,000 young people. Before that, it was making additional voluntary contributions to the Child Trust Funds of Children in Care and, as from 2nd October 2017, The Share Foundation took on responsibility for the Child Trust Fund scheme from the Official Solicitor in addition to the Junior ISA scheme.

The Junior ISA is provided for every child and young person under the age of 18 who has been in care continuously for at least one

year. The Child Trust Fund scheme applies for children born between 1st September 2002 and 2nd January 2011; the accounts were set up within one year of birth. Dorset Council are statutorily required to provide details to ensure accounts can be opened.

The Share Foundation will administer the accounts, which are held with selected Junior ISA providers: this includes supplying information on their progress through the local authority concerned. A young person may look to move their ISA at the age of 16 and can take direct control for the account from the age of 18. Responsibility for an account can also be shifted to a care giver with parental responsibility prior to a young person's 18th birthday at the request of the local authority.

The Share Foundation will provide information and guidance to the young person to support them in preparing for adult life and handling money. The young person will also be encouraged to raise the value of their account through voluntary contributions.

10.3 Children in Care - Next Steps

- (i) The service intends to undertake a review of existing policy and processes relating to savings for Children in Care through co-production with Children in Care, Care Leavers and carers.

10.4 Financial Support to Care Leavers:

- (i) At present our Care Leavers receive a range of financial support through the Care Leaver budget. This support covers all aspects of a Care Leaver's life as they move into adult life. Additional detail on this financial provision is set out below, but this might include:
 - a. Housing and living independently
 - b. Access to learning and training, including university
 - c. Documentation and identity
 - d. Support with pregnancy and maternity
 - e. Keeping in touch
 - f. Emergency Financial Assistance
- (ii) This financial support is currently allocated on a case by case basis when either a Care Leaver asks for it, or when their Personal Adviser identifies the need for it. At present Dorset Council do not have a clear framework which sets out financial entitlements for care leavers and have not so far operated a defined value for a setting up home allowance.

- (iii) Although based on individual needs of care leavers, this has meant that finances provided can vary from person to person.
- (iv) **Housing and living independently** – These payments may include a contribution to help a young person to set up home which they can use to purchase electrical goods, kitchen equipment and utensils, bedding and furniture.
- (v) In addition, the Council may also provide the young person with rent in advance and a deposit where they move into Housing Authority properties and help with short term storage and removal costs. Dorset Council has also agreed that Care Leavers are exempt from Council tax where they are in their own property and receive a 25% contribution to council tax where they live in a shared property within the Dorset boundary.
- (vi) **Access to learning and training** – Dorset Council currently provides financial support in several ways to support Care Leavers to access employment education and training.
- (vii) Significant investment has gone into encouraging Care Leavers to go to university and this academic year we have 39 Care Leavers enrolled on University courses, all supported by specialist Personal Advisers.
- (viii) In certain circumstances we also pay for specific courses or training including online courses on a full-time or part-time basis. We are also able to provide a contribution to specific equipment or resources such as a laptop, specialist clothing or safety boots. Additionally, we can contribute towards travel to access a particular place of learning or an apprenticeship and help with childcare costs where required.
- (ix) **Documentation and Identity** – Most Care Leavers will have all the documentation they need for adult life but in some cases the Care Leaving Service will pay for the cost of a passport, driving licence or other document as required.
- (x) **Support with pregnancy and maternity** – Where a Care Leaver is pregnant or has a baby, financial support is provided to ensure mum has access to maternity clothing and can attend key appointments and maternity classes.
- (xi) **Keeping in Touch** – Dorset Council provides financial support to Care Leavers to remain in touch. This includes provision of a Dorset Council SIM card with free calls, text and up to 20GB of data

per month and a contribution towards transport to visit family members and significant others.

- (xii) **Emergency Financial Assistance** – As much as Personal Advisers try to support our Care Leavers to manage their money, there are inevitably times when some young people need additional assistance. These situations are dealt with on an individual basis and are usually dealt with by a bank transfer, but the team have access to All Pay cards which enable them to make purchases in emergencies including a small supermarket shop.

10.5 Financially related support to Care Leavers:

- (i) Beyond the direct financial provision to Care Leavers, there is also significant activity to support Care Leavers to become independent adults. The Care Leaver Service works in partnership with a range of services and organisations to access the help and support to which they are entitled such as benefits and grants as well as advice and guidance into education, employment and training.
- (ii) The following is not an exhaustive list but is intended to give an insight into the range of activity that Personal Advisers might be involved in to support a Care Leaver.
- a. Support to claim Universal Credit. The team have recently agreed a joint working protocol with the Bridport and Weymouth Job Centre Plus teams to achieve advance claims for Care Leavers, for any proposed sanctions to be discussed with the Personal Adviser before being applied and identify additional support in finding work.
 - b. Support in access to grants and bursaries. The Personal Advisers will help Care Leavers with applications to any which are available. Many colleges and universities have schemes which provide additional financial support to Care Leavers, but there are also charities, local community groups and businesses which do this too.
 - c. Access to work experience and voluntary work for care Leavers interested in a specific field of work, or currently unable to undertake paid work.
 - d. Access to a business mentor under a scheme run by the Chamber of Commerce.
 - e. The Rees Foundation contributes towards the funding of driving lessons for Care Leavers wishing to learn to drive.
 - f. The Children in Care Nurses provide a survival kit on or around a Care Leavers 18th birthday.

- (iii) The Care Leaving service does not currently provide birthday gifts or any gifts around specific festivities such as Christmas, Eid or Diwali. Currently the service does not offer assistance with any additional winter fuel payments.

10.5 Development of Care Leaver Financial Support Framework

- (i) Work is underway to review and update the Care Leaver Financial Support Framework. Work has been informed by feedback from the Coram Voice New Belongings Survey and the intention is for the new Framework to set out all the different financial support that a Care Leaver is entitled to from Dorset Council.
- (ii) The specific areas that will be the focus of Framework are taken from best practice seen in other areas and are likely to include:
 - Housing and setting up homes
 - Employment, education and training including support for apprenticeships
 - Emergency financial assistance
 - Consideration of Personal Budgets
- (iii) The aim is to shift financial support provided to Care Leavers from an ad-hoc basis to a consistent and equitable offer than can be easily understood by Care Leavers.
- (iv) The Framework will be progressed through the appropriate Dorset Council governance and decision-making channels.

11 Recommendations – The Corporate Parenting Board is asked to:

- (i) Note and support the review of existing policy and processes relating to savings for Children in Care.
- (ii) Note and support the development of a Financial Support Framework for Care Leavers.



ADVOCACY

Short term, issue-based support for individual children/young people to ensure their voices are heard when decisions are being made about them, or if they wish to make a complaint.

This is a link to young people talking about Advocacy [Why is Advocacy important?](#)

Those who can access the service are Children/young people: In the care of /Leaving Care of Dorset Council aged 0-25years; Those aged 0-18 and: Involved in Child Protection processes; Children in Need; Wishing to make a complaint; with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) undergoing transition from Children's to Adult's Services; Capacity and Best Interests assessments for young people under the Mental Capacity Act

How much did we do ?

Year 1 Dec 17 – Nov 18	Year 2 Dec 18 – Nov 19	Year 3 to date 10 months
---------------------------	---------------------------	-----------------------------



Referrals received

279

383

448

Monthly average referrals up 96% from Year 1



Individual young people we supported

249

281

332



Episodes of advocacy completed

265

367

426

Some young people ask for advocacy more than once per year



Meetings we attended with or for YP

183

270

318



Advocacy episodes for Children in Care living outside Dorset

31

28

74

An episode of advocacy can last a few weeks or a few months



Young people we supported through the Complaints procedures

9

14

16

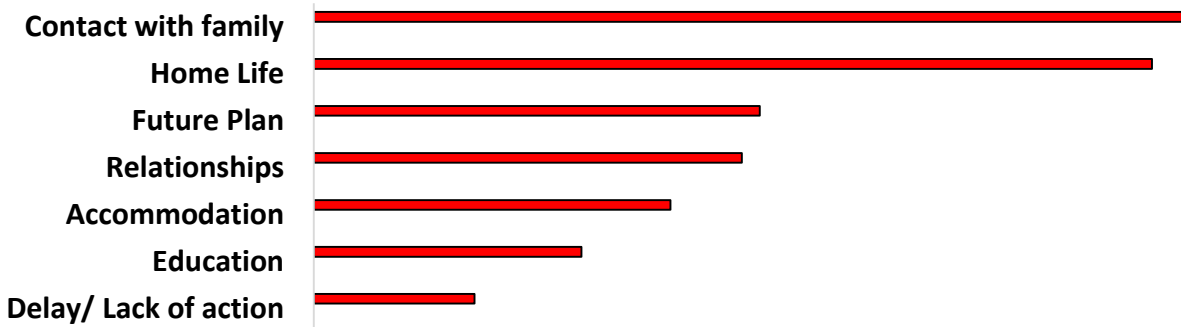
We raised **£55,847** in voluntary income for this service through our fund raising activities

Since the start of the contract 49% of referrals have been for Children in Care, of which 18% were for Care Leavers, 46% for those within the Child Protection arena, 3% CIN, 1% SEND Transition and 1% not stated.





Top issues raised by young people during Advocacy



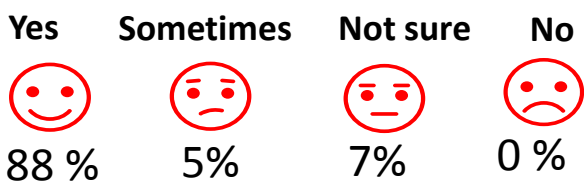
We provided **133 episodes of advocacy** to Dorset Children in Care living away from Dorset and travelled far and wide. To Kent, Wales, Reading, Cambridge, Sheffield, Surrey, Blackpool, Cambridge, Derbyshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Peterborough, Sheffield, Snowdonia, and Warrington to name a few

How well did we do ? This is what young people said....

“By having an advocate I “.....



Did your advocate get your views right ?



“My advocate was amazing. I recommend advocacy 100%. she helped me a lot, she was really committed to our cause and she helped me emotionally and got my views out to the world and she really educated me about my rights, and she was very understanding and a nice lady”

Were you satisfied with the service?



Would you recommend the service?



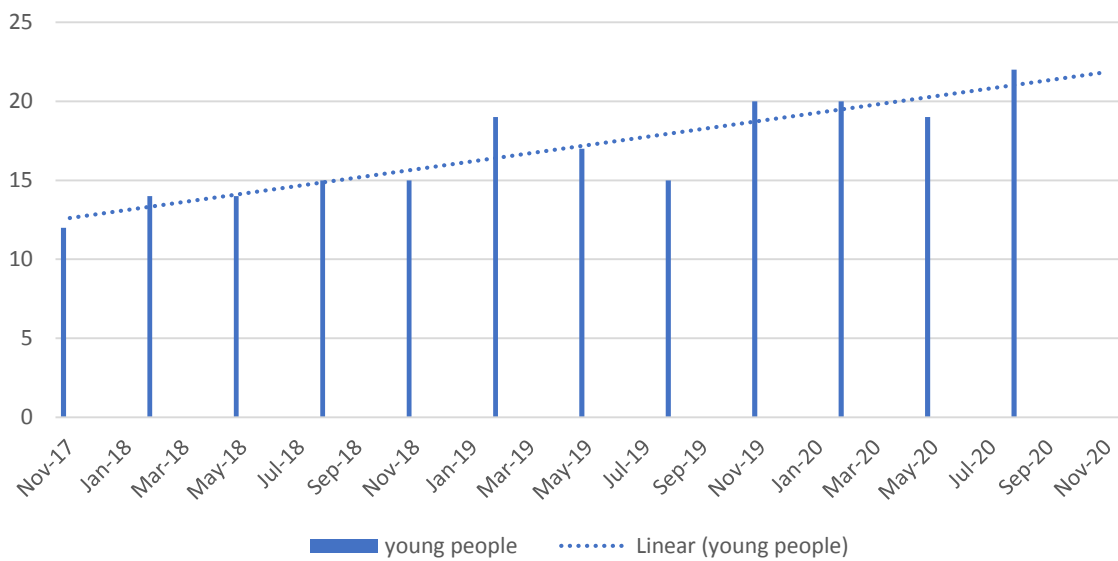


Independent Visitors (IVs)

Carefully recruited, screened and trained volunteers who are matched with individual Children in Care to offer support, friendship, mentoring and positive activities. Typically meet every 3-4 weeks - matches can last many years

How much did we do ?

Number of young people matched with an Independent Visitor from start of project to present



4.6% of Dorset CIC have an IV – compared with a national average of 3.5%



9 new volunteers recruited in Year 3 bringing our total to 33 volunteer IVs



83% increase in young people with IV from start of the contract



7 young people living out of county are supported by an IV



14 IVs have been in the role for more than **2 years**



40 individual young people have had an IV since the start of the contract

How well did we do ? We regularly review the service with young people, carers, IVs, and key workers

“It’s helped him to trust people. He’s been let down so many times and his IV always turns up” (foster carer)

“It’s definitely having a positive influence on him and it helped him settle into his placement, seeing someone he knows regularly” (Social worker)

“It’s brilliant, supportive, constant and makes him feel wanted -as it is a volunteer and not someone who gets paid” (social worker)

“(The IV) is a positive male role model for someone who has only ever had really negatives males in their life” (foster carer)

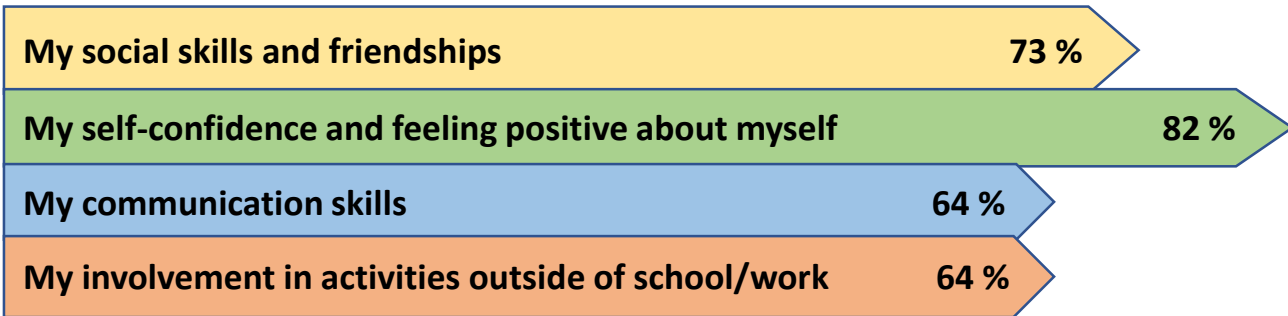
“Thank you for your support with all the other young people you see - you provide a valued and necessary service :-)” Social Worker



Independent Visitors continued

What difference did we make?


Percentage of young people who thought that having an IV has helped them in the following areas




Two of our volunteers were shortlisted for a Stephenson Award and one volunteer won the Dorset Young Volunteer of the Year Award



I find it easy to talk to my IV, and we've tried new things like ice skating. I would recommend my Independent Visitor. I enjoy my visits.




I'm very happy. I'm more interactive with other people and able to let my own expression out. She helps me. She's very talkative, helpful to me and trustworthy. I'd recommend an Independent Visitor to others.



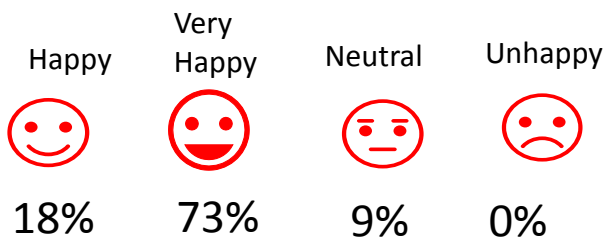
"Everyone should have a Jerry."




The IVs help build your confidence and show you how to go out and show you independence. They help you not to be stuck in your room. It should be available after your 18 too"



How young people feel about their IV match....



I'm really happy. My IV is the best person. We get along and understand each other, she's always funny. She's understanding, helps me look at decisions and make choices and see whether it is a good or bad idea based on what may happen. I rate my IV.





DORSET ADVOCACY AND INDEPENDENT VISITORS Impact of Covid and Achievements. Page 5

Impact of Covid-19 on the service

- All Action for Children services in Dorset continued to offer a service throughout the lockdown period. Advocates and Independent Visitors have used a variety of means to remain in contact with children and young people.
- The Advocacy service was busier than ever, and staff operated at full capacity and met with the growing demand for the service. At the height of the lockdown between April and June we saw 103% increase in Advocacy referrals
- The volunteer Independent Visitors used creative ways to hold sessions with their young people during lockdown – holding virtual cooking sessions, drawing challenges, sending art and crafts packs to make together and sending books, cards and gifts. Two young people leaving care received money from the Action for Children Emergency Fund.
- We have now returned to a mixture of some face to face contact with young people, and some virtual, depending on individual circumstances/preferences and following all guidelines.
- We successfully trained a new cohort of volunteers during lockdown with a combination of face to face and virtual training sessions

Some of our Achievements

- Successfully collaborated with Dorset colleagues to implement an 'early notification' advocacy system to broaden our reach. This year we extended this to include all CIC review meetings. This has tripled the number of referrals through this route.
- Some of our IVs took part in the National Independent Visitor networks #Right Friend Campaign to promote the role of IVs nationally and raise awareness of the difference an Independent Visitor can make to the life of children in care. [Here is the link](#)
- Continued to make the service more efficient and significantly improved our reach within existing funding (which was reduced by 11.5% due to local government reorganisation)
- Implemented 'Mind of My Own' app and portal to enhance current service and support continued increase in reach and capacity.
- Designed and implemented E-Learning modules – "Introduction to Advocacy" and "Introduction to Independent Visitors" now available to all professionals via Dorset Council's Learning platform
- Facilitated a photography exhibition of young people's portraits of their Independent Visitors
- We took 2 Dorset Children in Care and their IVs to London to meet our patron the Duchess of Cambridge and take part in a photography workshop with her.
- Hosted three events across Dorset to celebrate Action for Children's 150th Birthday and showcase our services
- Matching Children in Care who live a long way from Dorset with a volunteer IV remains difficult
- The main challenge we face is how to maintain/extend the reach of the service within current resources. This is especially difficult when our ability to fundraise (like all charities) is severely compromised in the present economic climate.

To find out more about our services, make a referral, volunteer or donate.....

Call 01202 525643 or 01305 753657.

Text 'call me' to 07889 604216

Check out our website [here](#)

Or just type Action for Children Dorset into your browser

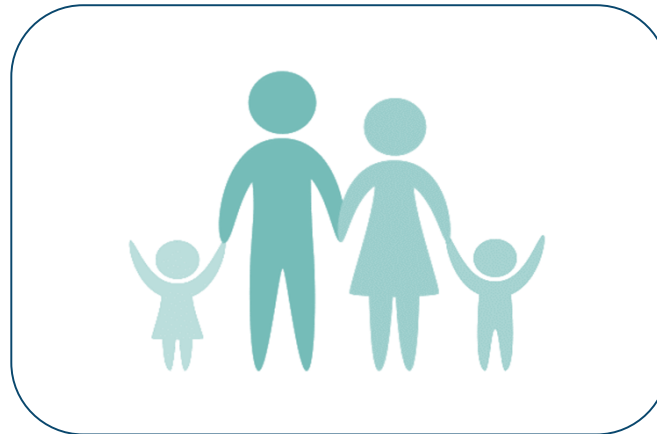
E-mail bdpadvocacy@actionforchildren.org.uk



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Corporate Parenting Data Set

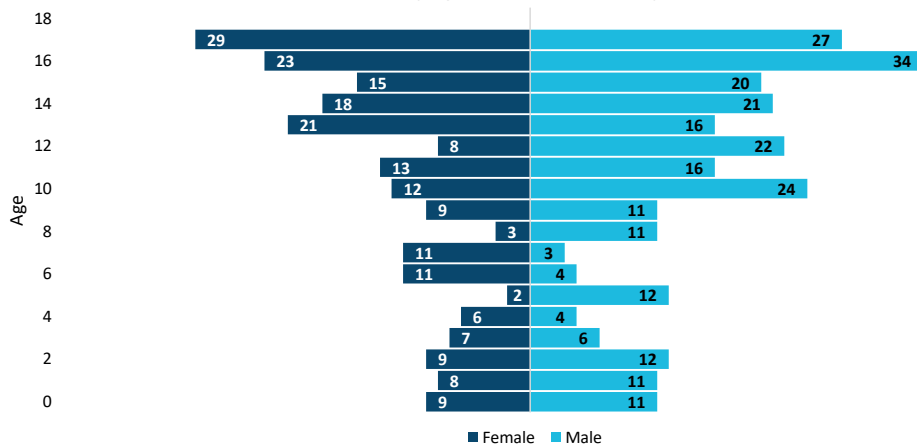
People - Childrens



September 2020 Data

Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (People)

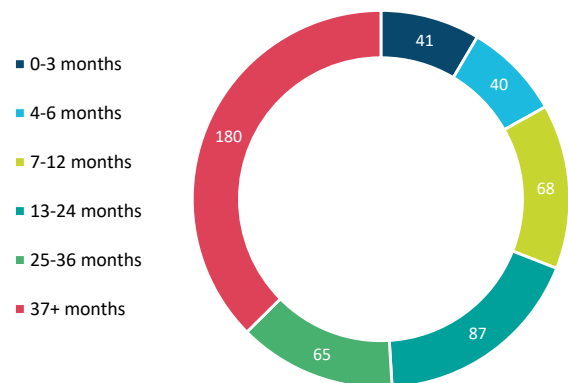
Children In Care by Age & Gender at 30th September 2020



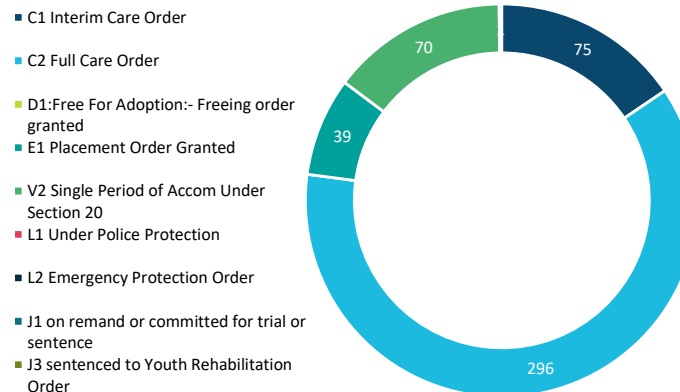
Comments:

Our Children In Care cohort in relation to age and gender grouping remain consistent with previous months.

Duration in Care at 30th September 2020



Legal Status at 30th September 2020



Corporate Parenting Data Set

People - Childrens

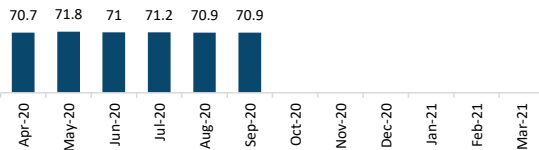
Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (People)

PROFILE



Page 55

Rate of Children In Care per 10,000



National 18/19: **65**

Dorset 18/19: **54**

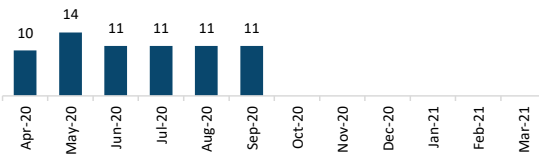
Statistical Neighbours 18/19: **55**

Outstanding SN 18/19 Range: **44 - 57**

Comments:

Whilst our Current Children in Care continues to put Dorset as an outlier against good and outstanding statistical neighbours and the national average, we continue to improve training and track permanence planning to prevent drift and ensure all options of permanence are robustly explored. Whilst our rate per 10,000 is the same as last month this is a positive sign as we have had an additional five unaccompanied asylum seeking children who are now in our care.

Number of Children who have come into Care



Dorset 18/19: **157**

Statistical Neighbours 18/19: **234**

Outstanding SN 18/19 Range: **163 - 350**

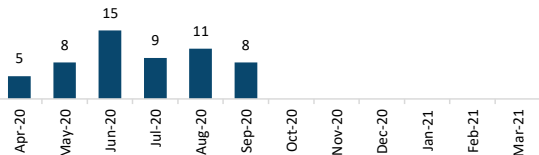
Comments:

We experienced an increase number of children coming into care than ceasing in care in the month of September. This included five unaccompanied asylum seeking children

We continue to focus on ensuring that where necessary and whenever possible that children enter our care in a planned way with improved line of sight. Strengthened locality working and the development of the Adolescent Service will support this.

Attention is being given to ensuring that plans for reunification and permanence are progressed in a timely way.

Number of Children who have ceased to be in Care



Dorset 18/19: **198**

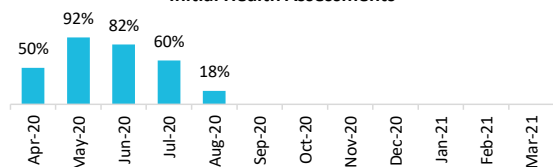
Statistical Neighbours 18/19: **213**

Outstanding SN 18/19 Range: **149 - 343**

Benchmarking Note:

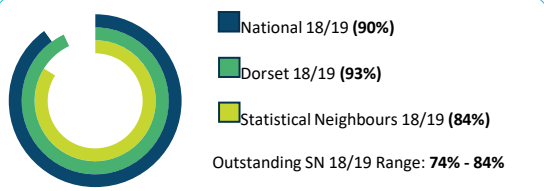
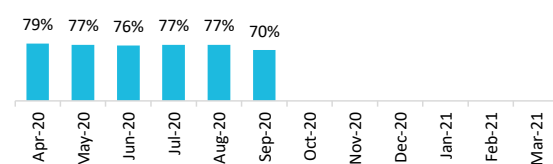
Good and Outstanding Statistical neighbours include Wiltshire, East Sussex and Suffolk. The latest available benchmarking data has been included.

Initial Health Assessments



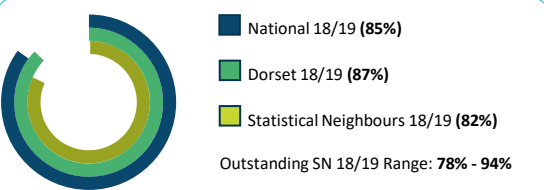
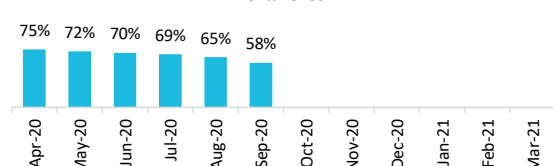
Comments: Septembers data will be included for the next meeting. % Initial Health Assessment (IHA) monthly IHA Data is reported 2 months after the month is due, this is because we have to allow for the data to fall into the month due, i.e. a child accommodated on the 31 June would not be calculated until 31 July. Benchmarking data is currently not available. We have seen a significant reduction in performance in completing IHA's. We have now implemented better measures to ensure improved management oversight of this process in real time, reducing and preventing delay in completing and sharing relevant documents with health. Processes have now been put in place to ensure more timely completion.

Review Health Assessments



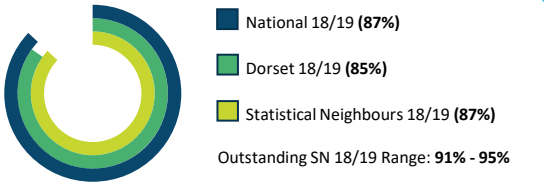
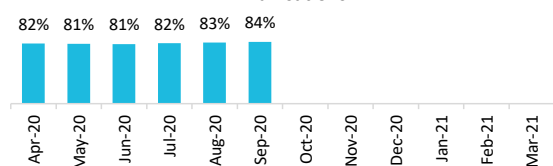
Comments: The RHA's in April were lower than normal due to the team being redeployed to support other health colleagues during the initial phase of Covid-19. Figures shown on graph are taken from ChAT (for children in care for 12 months or more), however the data supplied directly from NHS is different and shows April 71.4%, May 95.2%, June 91.3%, July 85.2%, August 93.8% and September 85.7%. Dorset Council and Health partners are working together to ensure better consistency in data. If there is a second wave of COVID-19 health staff have agreement not to be redeployed and ensure that RHA and IHA remain a priority task to be completed.

Dental Check



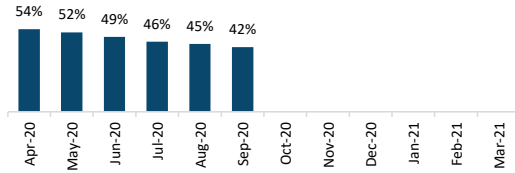
Comments: Figures shown on the graph are taken from ChAT (for children in care for 12 months or more) however the data supplied directly from the NHS is different. NHS data shows Dental CIC up to date with dental screening for the month of those due an RHA, target of 80%, April 92.9%, May 90.5%, June 91.3%, July 96.3% August 93.8% and September 92.9%

Immunisations

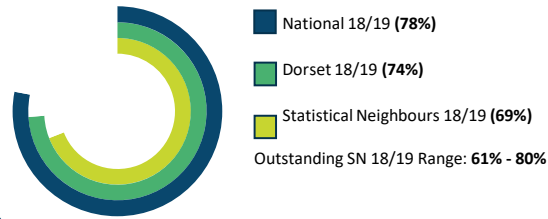


Comments: Data shows Immunisations CIC are up to date with the UK Immunisation schedule for the month of those due an RHA supplied directly from the NHS.

% of children for CIC for at least 12 months age 4-16yrs with completed SDQ assessment



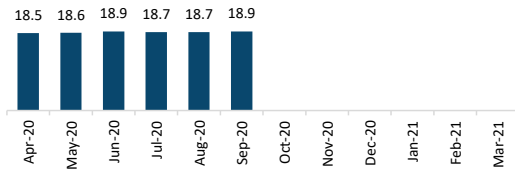
Children age 4-16 with Completed SDQ Assessment



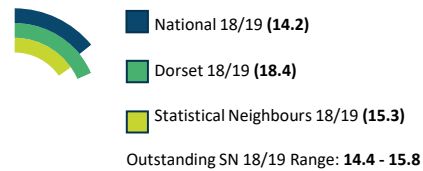
Comments:

Number of children in care continuously for at least 12 months and aged 4 to 16 for whom an SDQ score was received via the Children in Care return (SSDA903). An SDQ score is required of all children aged 4-16 on the date of the last assessment. Figures are taken from Mosaic
Completion of SDQs is lower than our Statistical Neighbours and Nationally. The challenge is to embed completion of an SDQ by the parent or carer as a minimum requirement as part of the health assessment. The ownership of this will sit with the social worker. There will be a training and tracking programme to support implementation.

Average SDQ Score for Assessments within last 12 months for CIC for at least 12 months aged 4-16yrs



Average SDQ Score



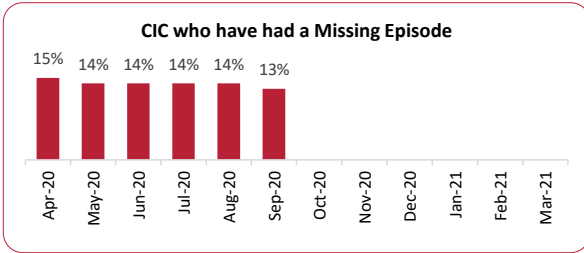

Comments:

A score below 14 is best. Dorset's average score of 18.9 indicates that the emotional and social presentation of our children in care is a concern and which is an indication that wellbeing is poor. As the percentage of completion is low this could indicate that an SDQ is only completed when there is a concern hence the high average score.
The new practice will be to use the score proactively to intervene early and use it to inform interventions and access specialist services if appropriate. Any score over 14 will result in a consultation with the social worker, parent/carer, young person and children in care nursing team to analyse the scoring and act if needed. A training programme will support the implementation of this process.

Corporate Parenting Data Set

People - Childrens

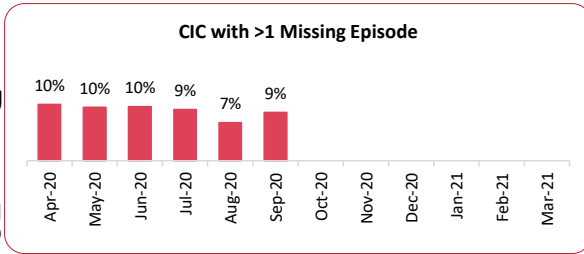

Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (People)

- National 18/19 (11%)
- Dorset 18/19 (13%)
- Statistical Neighbours 18/19 (11%)

Outstanding SN 18/19 Range: 9% - 11%

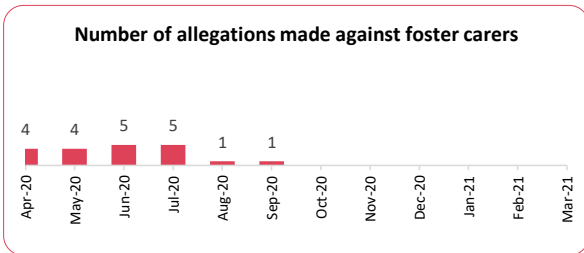
Comments:
13% of our Children in care have had a missing episode which is an improving picture, however, leaves Dorset as an outlier when compared to the national and statistical neighbour. The Philomena Protocol is being implemented by Dorset Police and is also being rolled out nationally across police forces. It will replace the missing persons passport. This will improve our data quality in this regard.

- National 18/19 (7.2%)
- Dorset 18/19 (7.4%)
- Statistical Neighbours 18/19 (7.0%)

Outstanding SN 18/19 Range: 4.1% - 7.6%

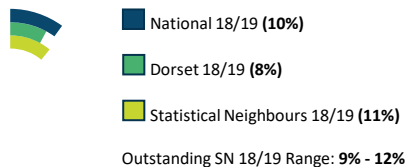
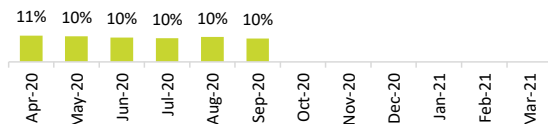
Comments:
There remains ongoing work to improve practice including partner agencies such as police of when to report a child missing who is in care and this will lead to better data in this regard. We remain a statistical outlier with our current data set to our statistical neighbours and national averages.



Dorset 18/19: 15
Dorset 19/20: 27
Statistical Neighbours 18/19: 10
Outstanding SN 18/19 Range: 5 - 20

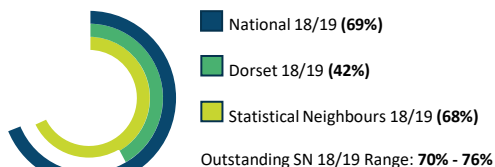
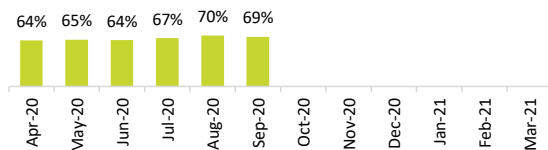
Comments:
Of those allegations made, the number substantiated are as follows: April 2020 - 0, May 2020 - 1, June 2020 - 1, July 2020, August 2020 - 1, September 2020 - 0 and 1 on going.

Children in Care with 3 or more Placements



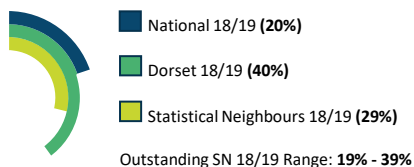
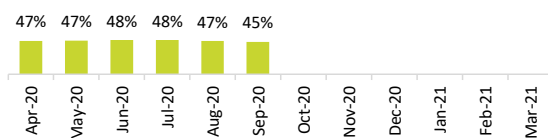
Comments:
 Dorset is performing better than our statistical neighbours. We continue to use stability meetings as a way of offering support early to reduce crisis escalating and placement break down. Harbour outreach team are also now working with our children where placement break down has been identified. This will support placement stability for our children. Figures are taken from Mosaic.

CIC 2.5 Years in same placement for 2+ Years



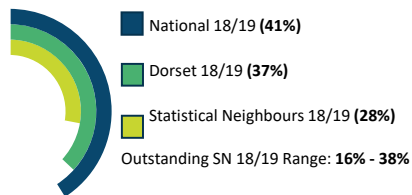
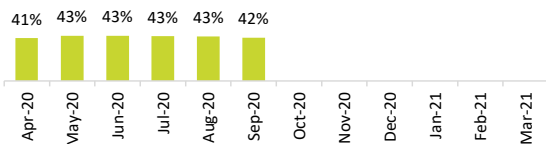
Comments:
 This continues to be an improving picture as we develop practice to ensure that where possible children receive permanence and stability earlier.

CIC Living 20+ Miles from Home Address



Comments:
 We continue to have too many children who are placed away from their local community and are not yet settled in their permanent placement. Recruiting local carers for local children is central to our sufficiency strategy. There is an ongoing recruitment drive underway.

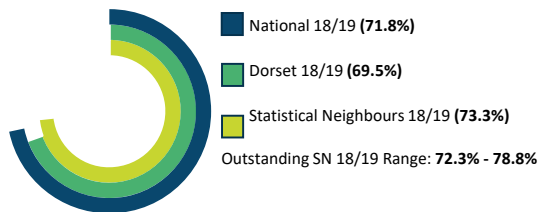
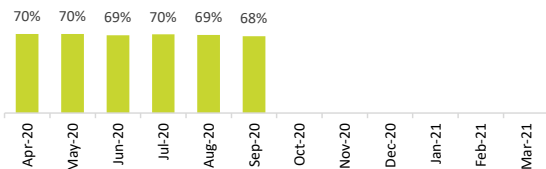
CIC Living Outside Dorset Council Area



Comments:

We continue to have too many children placed out of their local area and not yet settled in their permanent placement. We continue to review permanence plans for our children. This is an improving picture.

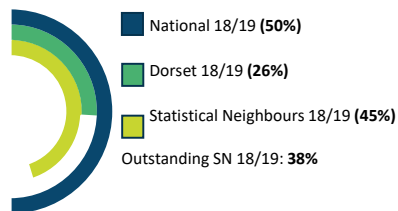
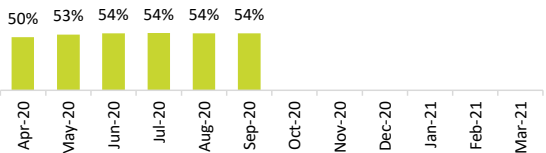
Children in Care Living in Foster Placement



Comments:

The majority of our children continue to live in a family home. There remains some level of hesitance from our carers in having children placed with them due to the current pandemic. We continue to be in regular contact with our carers and mindful not to add any pressure to do anything that they do not feel comfortable with. Figures are taken from ChAT.

CIC Living in a Commissioned Placement



Comments:

Figures are taken from ChAT and include children in care as at the end of each month. Includes all placements that are not in Dorset provision.

Corporate Parenting Data Set

People - Childrens

Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (People)

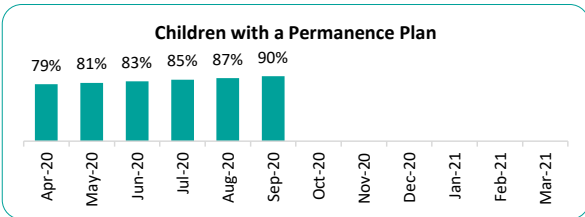
INDICATOR	National 18/19	Dorset 18/19	SNs 18/19	Outstanding SN 18/19 Range	Aug-20	Sep-20
% Children in Care with an Education Health and Care Plan	27%	27%	34%	27.0% - 43.3%	32%	33%
% Looked After Children with a Personal Education Plan					98%	95%
% all Children in Care Unauthorised absence	1.4%	1.7%	1.0%	0.4% - 1.8%	Not Available	Not Available
Average Attendance % for Looked After Children of school age					Not Available	Not Available
% Children in Care who have been in care for 12 months who have had at least one Fixed Term Exclusion	11.7%	12.1%	13.6%	10.1% - 15.6%	Not Available	7%
% all Looked After Children on reduced timetable					Not Available	Not Available

County and National data is not available for 2020 year due to Covid-19 pandemic. The use of this indicator , for accountability, is suspended. Dorset Council continues to support our schools to provide the best education for all.

INDICATOR	National 18/19	Dorset 18/19	SNs 18/19	Outstanding SN 18/19 Range
% Children in Care achieving expected standards in Key Stage 2 Maths	51%	57%	49%	35% - 46%
% Children in Care achieving expected standards in Key Stage 2 Writing	50%	43%	46%	32% - 42%
% Children in Care achieving expected standards in Key Stage 2 Reading	49%	43%	47%	25% - 37%
Average Attainment 8 score for Children in Care	19.2	14.4	15.4	14.9 - 17.8
Average progress 8 score for Children in Care	-1.23	-0.96	-1.42	- 0.93 - -1.33

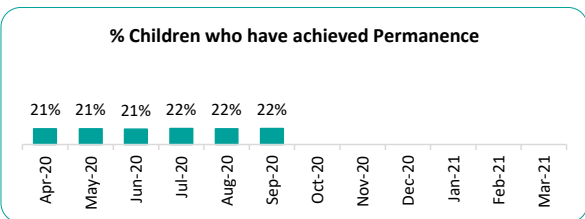
Comments:

Data is now provided on a termly basis and there will be further updates at the end of this school term.



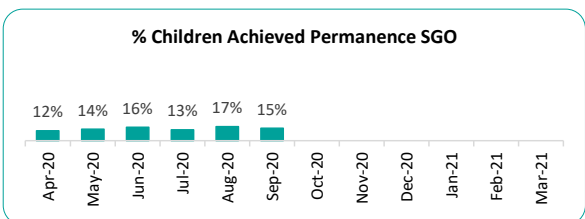
Comments:

Permanence planning continue to be a improving picture for our children. We continue to hold fortnightly permanence panels, complete themed audits and dip samples. Figures taken from Mosaic for children in care for 4 months or more at the end of each month.



Comments:

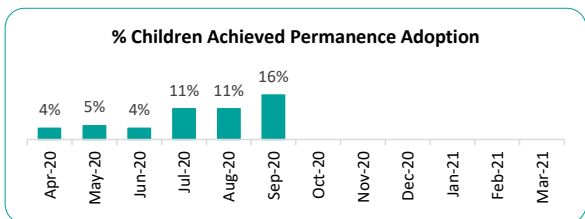
We are developing permanence training for our work force to improve our performance in this regard. Figures taken from Mosaic.



- National 18/19 (13%)
 - Dorset 18/19 (7.6%)
 - Statistical Neighbours 18/19 (10.7%)
- Outstanding SN 18/19 Range: 8.7% - 12.5%

Comments:

Figures are taken from ChAT and include children who left care in the last 6 months.



- National 18/19 (12%)
 - Dorset 18/19 (17%)
 - Statistical Neighbours 18/19 (15.6%)
- Outstanding SN 18/19 Range: 16% - 23%

Comments:

Figures are taken from ChAT and include children who left care in the last 6 months.

INDICATOR	Dorset 18/19	Dorset 19/20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20
Number of approved foster carers (All)	186	202	203	207	208	210	206	205
Number of new households recruited – separate connected persons out	Mainstream: 21 CP: 14	Mainstream: 22 CP: 18	Mainstream: 2 CP: 1	Mainstream: 1 CP: 3	Mainstream: 2 CP: 2	Mainstream: 1 CP: 0	Mainstream: 0 Temporary CP: 1	Mainstream: 1 CP: 0 Temporary CP: 3
Number of households de-registered – exclude connected carers	16	22	1	0	3	0	1	2
Number of households resigned	44	64	1	0	3	0	5	4
Number of allegations made against foster carers that were substantiated	Data not available	14	0	1	1	1 on-going	0	0

Comments:

For the 'number of new households recruited' a figures has been given for each mainstream and connected persons.

The 'number of households de-registered' just includes mainstream de-registrations.

A clear action plan is in place to look at improving the level of foster carer availability.

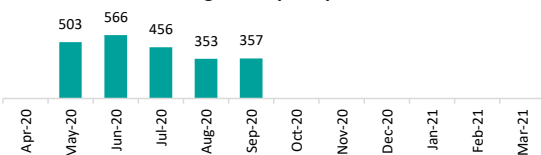
We continue to have foster carers who are hesitant to have children placed with them due to vulnerabilities and Covid-19. We remain in regular contact and are mindful not to add any pressure to do anything that they do not feel comfortable with.

To date we are finding placements for all children newly entering care. We have a small cohort of children for whom we are taking longer to progress with planned moves e.g. from residential to foster homes. A meeting with the social workers, fostering and commissioners has been helpful to review the children's profiles and see how we can support to find the foster family or residential home for our children.

The biggest pressure remains for parent and child placements and where these are court ordered.

INDICATOR	Dorset 19/20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20
Number of adoptions finalised in year	16	0	0	0	6	2	2
Number of children living in adoptive placements pending adoption orders	-	-	23	25	18	19	20
Number of children with a match identified	-	5	3	1	0	0	2
Number of children where family finding is ongoing	-	-	15	29	20	19	28
Number of revocations of Placements Orders	2	2	6	7	8	8	7
Number of adoptive families recruited	60	2	7	4	6	3	5
Number of adoptive Families in assessment	-	-	38	42	42	42	45

Average number of days between entering care and having an adoptive placement



National 18/19: **486**

Dorset 18/19: **433**

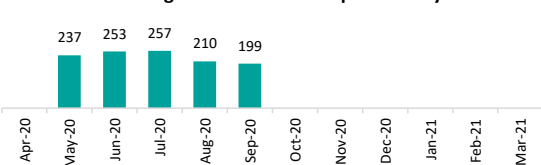
Dorset 19/20: **412**

Statistical Neighbours 18/19: **453**

Comments:

Progress in this area remains positive. During Covid-19 restrictions, children continued to move to their adoptive placements and we have not needed to use any of the Adoption Act amendments agreed for the period of Covid-19.

Average No. of days between a child receiving a PO & being matched to an adoptive family



National 18/19: **201**

Dorset 18/19: **137**

Dorset 19/20: **203**

Statistical Neighbours 18/19: **176**

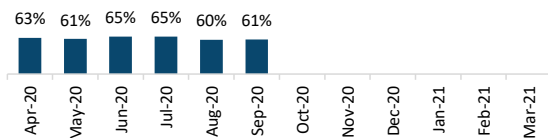
Comments:

Progress in this area remains a focus.

Comments:

Dorset have continued to perform well among statistical neighbours for the time a child starts in care and moves to their adoptive family. New permanence planning oversight for senior leaders through placement tracking meetings is providing scrutiny and challenge. All data is taken from Aspire Adoption Agency.

With an up to date Pathway Plan



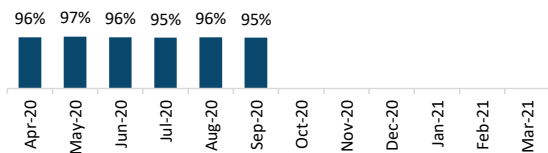
Comments:

Benchmarking data currently not available.

While the completion of Pathway Plan is positive, the Pathway Plan template on Mosaic does not reflect the richness of conversation that takes place when completing these with our young people. Work is underway with New Belongings which will look to strengthen how plans are recorded.

Figures taken from Mosaic for all Care Leavers at the end of each month.

Living in Suitable Accommodation (19-21)



- National 18/19 (85%)
- Dorset 18/19 (85%)
- Statistical Neighbours 18/19 (86%)

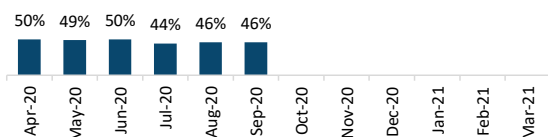
Outstanding SN 18/19 Range: 80% - 91%

Comments:

Safe and Suitable accommodation is an important starting point to support our young people with a good transition into adulthood, good health (including mental health), gaining qualifications and moving into employment.

Figures are taken from ChAT based on current care leavers at the end of each month.

In Employment Education or Training (19-21)



- National 18/19 (52%)
- Dorset 18/19 (47%)
- Statistical Neighbours 18/19 (53%)

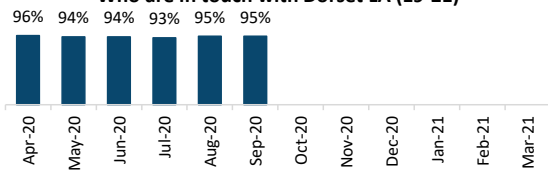
Outstanding SN 18/19 Range: 50% - 54%

Comments:

We are strengthening our service offer and working with Virtual School to ensure every child in care has a confirmed offer.

Figures are taken from ChAT based on current care leavers at the end of each month.

Who are in touch with Dorset LA (19-21)



- National 18/19 (93%)
- Dorset 18/19 (76%)
- Statistical Neighbours 18/19 (93%)

Outstanding SN 18/19 Range: 87% - 96%

Comments:

We are in touch with most of our care leavers and during the Covid-19 lockdown period were in touch with our care leavers weekly. The team tries to locate young people with whom we have lost contact by various means.

Figures are taken from ChAT based on current care leavers at the end of each month.

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Corporate Parenting Board - Action Tracker

Meeting & Date	Progress		
	Action	Name/Role	Description

Progress			
Challenge or Action and date	Name/Role	Response	Further Action/Oversight
1	THF & MP	From a Children's Services perspective we commission two services: SEND home to school travel and Childcare travel (the latter funded by C&P budgets). Both projects were scheduled to progress and conclude within the 2019/20 period. However due to wider changes within Children's Service's transformation programme both were delayed. I am pleased to report that the SEND travel commissioning project commenced in January and will have delivered against its objectives by the end of May. I have attached a Project Brief FYI (is probably TMI for CPB, so happy to advise you on what you distil from it). In terms of Childcare transport, there is recognition that there are a number of issues in terms of customer experience, beyond-budget spend and internal processes. Dorset Travel are keen to progress this, and it is listed in the Corporate Transformation Plan. In terms of resource to progress from Children's Services, this is still to be identified and a timescale agreed. It is likely to follow after the SEND travel project.	Thomas Fowler did not update CLiCC in April due to COVID will update 10 November 2020. . 1.SEND travel commissioning was further delayed with the outbreak of coronavirus. This was due to reallocation of project staff to the emergency response, and more importantly in recognition that it would be very challenging to co-produce the work with families during those early days of the pandemic. This was agreed with the DPCC. The work resumed in September from both a Children's Services and Place perspective and is aligned with the Corporate Transformation Plan, with additional drivers following recommendations from a SWAP audit. Work is progressing at pace, with a number of recommendations hopefully in place by the end of the calendar year. I would be happy to provide an update for the CPB in January. 2.Work to review and improve Childcare travel arrangements have not formally commenced from Children's Services. However, Dorset Travel, as articulated by Polly, and reviewing a number of their operational procedures as part of their transformation plan which will bring benefits to this service arrangement.
2	THF	Business cards have been printed and will be used after BPFC as some workers will be changing their contact details. We will ensure the cards are used as soon as colleagues are in their new posts.	Update CLiCC agreed format on Card and we will ensure staff are aware and carrying them. Staff will be reminded of this in their respective teams.
3	RH & Rick Perry	Requests that Identity and gender and listening skills are included – specifically active listening to understand and acknowledge the lived experience of the young person and sitting with them in that experience, rather than focusing on resolving issues or looking at what they have done to contribute to the situation.Mental health and emotional wellness - Young people would particularly like support from their foster carers around exams and school work and on pressures around this. They want carers to focus on this in a positive way through putting tools in place to support e.g. helping with revision alongside treats. They want carers to reinforce positively rather than any focus on negatives e.g. if you don't work hard/do well you won't get results and that won't result in a good education/job etc (which builds up pressure and stress). Focus should be on support in the here and now.Teenage behaviour - Young people want foster carers to acknowledge and accept teenage behaviour for what it is – normal behaviour for their age – rather than catastrophising it or always seeing it in the context of their pre-care and care experiences.Conversations around placement experience – Young people would like foster carers to be able to facilitate normal conversations with them around their experience in placement – to be asked what's going well, what the carers could do differently. They would like foster carers to be able to take feedback from them and to be able to have those conversations in a comfortable and loving way. They also need to know what the expectations are of them. DC also have a new fostering quality Assurance framework which is starting in February 2020	Meeting scheduled with Matt Chislett, John Heron, CLiCC and Participation People to discuss how CLiCC can have involvement and perhaps co-produce the training. Meeting to be arranged for end of November beginning of December 2020.
4	DATA P TEAM - Information Compliance Officer	Technically any child with capacity to understand what they are reading has a right to their information. We have to air on the side of caution when the records are troubling but, with a support worker, there should not be any issue. If a child is not considered to be competent then an adult with parental responsibility may exercise the child's rights on their behalf. A young person, like anyone else, can submit a request for information via our e-form or via paper form. Perhaps if the individual is of a younger age it would be more appropriate for a form to be completed with the assistance of a support worker. Please note, we cannot insist on anyone completing a paper form or an e-form and a SAR can be submitted in anyway (doesn't even have to be in writing). As soon as personal data is requested it can technically become a formal request but obviously the clock would be stopped until we have proven identity and have sufficient information to action the request.	Recommend that some CYP's test this! Participation People will support young people to make this request and no requests to date have been made.
5	DA	Virtual School will attend LAC Social Care team meetings again to remind social workers about Virtual School role in helping improve School-Social Services communication. At Designated Teacher for LAC training in February and the next Headteacher Briefings, Virtual School will remind teachers and Heads about how important it is to communicate/respond to social workers for LAC and Virtual School enquiries in order to support Looked After young people in their schools. Question back: What sort of problems are young people saying that they are having at school? We are asking so that we can better help and respond. Problems that Virtual School already engage with are teachers not understanding young people's needs and some incidents of bullying that we pick up directly with the schools/Designated Teachers.	Response from CLiCC please? Not specific. Issues at school, YP feels that they have to repeat information as the school and young person have differing views.
6	KS - Independent Reviewing Officer	The responsibility for completion of the Delegated Authority document sits with the Social Worker. The document should be completed within the Placement Planning meeting at the Foster Placement held within 72 hours of the start of the Placement, best practice would be before the placement starts. The Team Manager is responsible for supervising this process. Practice issue as to non-completion of Delegated Authority raised by the Corporate Director with relevant Service Managers. Team Managers should oversee in the early stages of the looked after status – November 2019 MOSAIC request made for an additional question to be added to the IRO Monitoring form to enable a measure of whether a Delegated Authority form has been completed – November 2019 Practice issue discussed with IROs – to prompt discussion at the First LAC Review with Social Worker. A copy of the Form provided to IROs to give to Social Workers to complete.	Authority for day-to-day decision making about a Looked After Child should be delegated to the child's carer(s), unless there is a valid reason not to do so. A Looked After Child's Placement Plan should record who has the authority to take particular decisions about the child. It should also record the reasons where any day-to-day decision is not delegated to the child's carer. Decisions about delegation of authority should take account of the Looked After Child's views, and consideration should be given as to whether a Looked After Child is of sufficient age and understanding to take some decisions themselves.
7	RH Fostering and Permanency Manager	Copy of Letter to Foster Carer from fostering service manager. Young people in care have issued us a number of challenges as a service, reflecting on their experiences of care and supporting us to improve the care all children and young people of Dorset receive. I'm passing one of their challenges on to you! One of the things they have asked is that when their social worker visits, you facilitate the opportunity for them to see their social worker alone, without them having to ask for this, or you asking them if they want to see the social worker alone. Young people tell us that it can feel awkward to ask for this in front of you and they are worried that they may offend you if they do. It is a requirement for social workers to see looked after children and young people on their own. I'm sure you will understand how important this is for our young people too, as they may want to discuss issues which are personal to them and which they feel awkward discussing in front of you. Please can you always provide an opportunity for our looked after children to see their social workers on their own therefore, whenever they visit.	Social workers will see our children on their own and be reminded of this as good practice.
8	MT	Some people's job titles do have to be 'named' in a certain way because they have a legal responsibility and people they work with and people from outside the Local Authority need to know who to go to when they want to contact them. Our suggestion would be for us to produce clear information to you about what the people do in a brief summary that can be clearly explained by the officer. The Director has asked for all staff to have a 'one page profile' which introduces the worker or officer in a friendly 'about me' page. We hope this will help, these will be produced by all workers this year. Perhaps you could help us with some of these?	One page profile done for core roles and reminder to staff to use in key meetings such as in child in care reviews.

9	Children in foster placements want to be treated as part of the family. It is hurtful to go to respite care when the rest of the family have their holiday. How can you help children in foster care be part of family holidays?	MT	If it that the foster carer needs a break, then the young person should be given something fun to do. All looked after children should have a holiday. Sometimes it might be a passport problem. We should help families holiday together. We could look at producing a CLiCC holiday and mini break guide with activity days, could you help us with this? For example a list of preferred places for young people to have breaks and mini breaks that could be recommended to young people and foster carers. We are going to do some work with our foster carers to look at when respite is requested and the reason for this is so that we can support them to support children and young people at family events and occasions, where it's appropriate for the child.	Different terminology for respite. Will revisit in Training, Placement Planning meetings and CIC reviews. Work ongoing.
10	Care Leavers have told us they don't feel equipped with skills to properly manage their money and to budget effectively. What is in place to help give young people these life skills? What else can be done?		The information available for 18 – 25 currently is informative and accessible online e.g. The Mix, Stepladder to Achievement. So thoughts are around how we can get engagement – an idea has been to develop an app for these young people. Colline to investigate with Emma Powell. Look at setting up some consultation groups with Participation People so that we can ask a range of young people what they need/want from budgeting and managing their money. Nicky to discuss possibility with Antonia and set up in February. Discuss involvement of Foster Carers at the next Foster Carer Forum in early March. Rebecca and Nicky to workshop advice around feedback from the consultation groups. Nicky to draw up expectations of banks and their offers and to present at the meeting. Look at the offers from other LAs and see if we can incorporate any ideas. Nicky to do some research and feedback. Meeting to be set up for the end of February to review progress. Nicky to send out invites. Nicky to draw up expectations of banks and their offers to present at the meeting. Look at the offers from other LAs and see if we can incorporate any ideas. Nicky to do some research and feedback. Meeting to be set up for the end of February to review progress. Nicky to send out invites. We are hoping to have a preliminary offer to be discussed at the end of March. If you have any thoughts/ideas, please feel free to contact me. If you would like to be included at our next meeting, then you are very welcome – please let me know and I will send you an invite. - (26th Feb meeting)	This should be put on foster carer forums agendas. Pathway plans should include this. Staff and carers should give young people more responsibility and not over-react when mistakes are made. Mark Blackman will make it his personal mission to get local banks and businesses to support. Not just for care leavers but an ongoing learning journey for all children in care. Update 24.02 meeting update - Nicky W to meet with CL and CLiCC to discuss suggested training. RH and NW to meet with FC's at FC forum to encourage the FC conversations about money management - NW has recommended website - money advice service.org for information and training.
11	What would be the BEST way for children in care and care leavers to tell you about our experiences of being in care?		We think that all staff should attend "What is it like to be a child in care?" training session and CLiCC could deliver smaller sessions at team meetings. Perhaps you could select a relevant film or make one and we could include it on staff induction training. Also IRO's could encourage the discussion at LAC reviews. Co-production events, themed corporate parenting meetings and LAC reviews are all ways for you to communicate how it feels to be a child in care. Perhaps if you don't wish to attend formal meetings you could send in a Vlog for members and Officers to watch.	
12	It's great to see decision makers and Corporate Parents at activity days. It would be even better to see more. We challenge you to commit to attending and encouraging others to attend.	Paul Beecroft Comms	We're starting a new, fortnightly email to all CS staff from the middle of Feb so can plug in that and we also have a Members' Newsletter that goes out monthly. If someone can give me the details, I can arrange for them to be publicised in those two newsletters and also in the events section on the intranet.	
13	Is it possible for there to be just 1 number to contact about health concerns, regardless of age, gender etc? Could there be a drop-in clinic rather than making appointments?	PE/Jenna Pitt/Jill Wain	Please see our response below: We have one number and email for all nurses which is 01305 361127 and dhc.dorset.lac@nhs.net. We are also in discussions to have a duty mobile phone so that young people can text us for advice and support. We have been running drop in clinics for our LAC/ Care leaver service in some of the supported housing accommodation alongside 'Attend Anywhere', virtual drop ins. Feedback would be welcome if this would be helpful to roll out further or if there are any suggestions of which area young people would access a drop in for LAC Nurses. Many thanks Jenna	Team Lead (Dorset) Specialist Nurse for Looked After Children Looked After Childrens Health Team
14	When working on the PEP cards for the welcome pack, we found out that money can be made available for hobbies and leisure activities, not solely for schooling. Some of our care leavers were not aware of this. How will you make all Children in Care aware of what they are able to claim?	DA	The only funding available to the Virtual School to support young people from the age of 3 (Pre-School) through to 16 (Year 11) in "improving their educational progress and attainment" is Looked After Children's Pupil Premium Looked After Children's Pupil Premium is given in to the Virtual School by the Department for Education to be used to support the education-based targets in young people's Personal Education Plans These objectives should be focused on improving a young person's educational progress and attainment as directly as possible, but sometimes for this improvement to happen the young person needs to feel more confident and happier in order to be "ready for learning" Where the young person, their foster carers and social workers recognise this as an important need, LAC Pupil Premium is sometimes used to pay for a young person to join a particular after-school activity, an after-school club, a gym membership, scouts and other such activities.	24.02 meeting update - Nicky W to meet with CL and CLiCC to discuss suggested training. RH and NW to meet with FC's at FC forum to encourage the FC conversations about money management - NW has recommended website - money advice service.org for information and training.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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