

**Report of the Assistant Director (Performance,  
Commissioning & Partnerships) to the meeting of the  
Corporate Parenting Panel to be held on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2019**

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**Subject:**

**CHILDREN PLACED OUT OF BRADFORD**

**Summary statement:**

Report on the numbers of children; services offered; challenges and sufficiency plans

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**Portfolio:**

Children & Families

**Overview & Scrutiny Area:**

Children & Families

## 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The LA has a duty to secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within its area to meet the need of children whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation in the local authority area. This is referred to as 'the sufficiency duty'.

This applies for children who are looked after including accommodation for care leavers.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 There has been a significant rise in the number of CLA over the last 15 months; the current number CLA is 1202.

This is a 23.2% increase, of this increase 15.8% are aged between 10-17.

### 2.2 Provision

- 2.2.1 There is a good level of own provision compared to purchased provision.

63% of provision of accommodation for CLA is provided by the local authority.

#### 2.2.3 Comparison

Statistical Neighbours – 53%

England Average – 53%

(Children Services Analysis Tool (ChAT May 2019))

### 2.3 Type

Type	Internal	External
Foster Placement	367	125
Friends & Family Placement	342	-
Placed with Parents	149	-
Children's Home	50	53
Placed for Adoption	2	20
Independent Living	2	80
Custody, Mother & Baby, Supported Lodgings & Hospital	2	10

### 2.4 CLA Placed out of Area

- 2.4.1 CLA are placed out of area for a number of reasons, some move to Bradford placements in foster care that are outside the 20 mile boundary counted for this indicator. These will be Bradford foster carers or connected friends and family placements.

**2.4.2** Some young people are placed outside of Bradford due to known risks that are apparent and as part of their care plan.

**2.4.3** Over the last 12 months there has been a significant increase in the number of CLA placed into purchased provision purely because of the availability of placements in area, a number of these will be outside of Bradford.

**2.4.4** Internally Childrens Homes placements have remained static, placements into internal fostering since January 2018 has risen by 23%, placements in external purchased fostering has risen by 110%. Placements made in purchased Children home provision has raised by 35%. The number of CLA placed into a purchased provision has risen by 92% since January 2018.

**2.4.5** The current costs associated with these 216 purchased placements is 15.74m based on a full year projected cost.

## **2.5 Location of Placements**

**2.5.1** The graphs below show all CLA placed more than 20 miles from the Bradford boundary.

### **CLA in our Foster Care provision Placed out of area (F&F)**

Cheshire	1
Cleveland	1
Co. Durham	1
Confidential	1
East Riding of Yorkshire	4
Lancashire	2
Leicestershire	1
Lincolnshire	3
Liverpool	1
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE	1
North East Lincolnshire	1
North Humberside	4
North Yorkshire	3
Northamptonshire	1
Northumberland	1
Nottingham	3
Scotland	3
South Yorkshire	3
West Yorkshire	42
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>77</b>

### **CLA in purchased provision out of area**

Cheshire	1
Co. Durham	5
Cumbria	2
Durham	1
Greater Manchester	4
Kent	2
Lancashire	19
Lincolnshire	4
Norfolk	1
North Humberside	3
North Lincolnshire	1
North Yorkshire	3
Scotland	1
South Yorkshire	6
St Helens	1
Staffordshire	1
Warwickshire	2
West Yorkshire	63
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>120</b>

## 2.6 % of CLA placed more that 20 miles for their homes outside the Bradford boundary

LA, Region and England	2016	2017	2018	2019
Bradford	10.00	11.00	10.00	10.10
Yorkshire & Humberside	14.00	14.00	14.00	-
Statistical Neighbours	14.30	15.00	18.75	-
England	14.00	14.00	15.00	-

## 2.7 The Private Sector

**2.7.1** CLA numbers are rising locally and nationally, there are a finite number of external providers of foster care and more importantly residential care. Data from the Independent Childrens Home Association shows that there are on average between 400 / 500 referrals per month nationally to the private residential sector.

**2.7.2** This often means that despite a children social care referral stating a specific need there may be no availability and the best available placement will be taken. This can mean that children and young people are placed at distance into a setting that might not be the best match. There are a number of actions in place to try to address this including developing more flexible provision locally; working with the market to have more local provision and increasing the number of in- house Foster Carers

**2.7.3** Bradford utilises the White Rose Framework to commission placements wherever possible however often no option is available. This has meant a number of off framework placements have been made and a rise in the use of unregulated placements.

There have been increasing circumstances of permission to accommodate a young person being given by Head of Service and no placement being available. This effectively means a child or young person remaining in the current placement.

**2.7.5** Bradford has a block contract of 10 beds with a provider called Hexagon., and utilises these within homes in Bradford. This has recently been reviewed and extended for a further year. As part of the review it increased from 8 beds to 10 as it is good quality provision and the block contract is more cost effective. The commissioning team is currently reviewing to see fi there are further opportunities to use block contracts.

## **Key Issues**

### **2.8.1 Managing Risk**

**2.8.2** When CLA are placed into a private children's home out of area, it is important that a risk assessment is undertaken with the local Police, placements teams and safeguarding team in the LA to ensure that they are aware a young person is being placed into area. A written notification is sent to the LA so that the CLA nursing team, Virtual School and Local Authority are aware. This is supposed to also happen when a child is placed in Bradford from another authority, but does not always consistently do so. This is being addressed through individual conversations with local authorities and raising this through regional and national networks.

**2.8.3** The SW should ensure that a team around the child meeting is held promptly so that a strategy can be developed to safeguard the young person.

**2.8.4** Bradford have experienced a number of situations in out of area placements where the local Police to an external children's home have put significant pressure on the home when a young person has been going missing or risk is seen to be escalating. Ultimately this can result in placement disruption; providers are run as businesses and are Ofsted registered and police concern may trigger a poor Ofsted judgement. An inadequate inspection outcome for a private provider will mean that LA's will not place their children. As a result placements end often with limited notice.

### **2.9 Support**

**2.9.1** When Children are placed at distance support to the placement when problems are occurring cannot easily be provided, SW's undertake statutory visits on a monthly basis and these are increased when needed however distance from Bradford does mean that young people can be isolated at times when they need increased support.

**2.9.2** This is more apparent in the following areas:

- Contact with family and friends
- Accessing local CAMHS services
- Accessing education

**2.9.3** A social worker will be expected to refer into and build relationships with local agencies to support the placement, the virtual school and SEN teams will support as will Bradford CAMHS. There are however often delays in being able to access services for young people when they move into a new area and new referrals need to be made.

## **2.10 Quality of Placements**

**2.10.1** All external placements have an individual placement agreement (IPA) which outlines the provision and outcomes that are expected.

**2.10.2** The placement coordination team will undertake contract management checks, however the reality is that it is the Social Worker and Independent Reviewing officer that visit the placement, speak to staff and the young person and escalate concerns back to service when issues arise.

**2.10.3** A review is currently underway to strengthen these arrangements, it is rare that escalations happen and this needs to become part of our internal quality assurance process to ensure support is put into placements when needed and that providers are held to account for the IPA that has been agreed. Placement Coordination will contact providers to address concerns.

## **2.11 Sufficiency Plans**

**2.11.1** A strand of the improvement plan is to increase local sufficiency; this covers a number of areas

- Increase internal fostering
- Revise emergency fostering offer
- Increase local Children Homes capacity
- Ensure sustainability of B Positive Pathways
- Reduce length of time in care by effective permanence planning
- Revise commissioning strategy
- Sustain build on Mockingbird Family Model

All of these areas are being worked on to deliver improved local sufficiency.

## **3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

**3.1** None

## **4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL**

**4.1.1** There are significant costs associated with purchased provision, the sufficiency plans are to re align this funding in more innovative local solutions ensuring wherever possible CLA remain in local provision and do not experience multiple placements.

## **5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

**5.1** The sufficiency work plan is part of the ofsted improvement plan and governance is through the improvement board.

## **6. LEGAL APPRAISAL**

**6.1** No legal issues

## **7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

### **7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**

**7.1.1** This report evidences the increasing numbers children that we are caring for and the service is developing to meet the needs of this diverse group of children

### **7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

Not applicable

### **7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS**

Not applicable

### **7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

Not applicable

### **7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

Not applicable

### **7.6 TRADE UNION**

Not applicable

### **7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS**

To be discussed with ward councillors at the point agreement is reached on the proposed site for new provision.

### **7.8 AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

None

### **7.9 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING**

CLA being placed at distance from Bradford should raise a number of concerns for the corporate parenting panel, support to these young people and ensuring that the quality of the provision is monitored is paramount, increasing the use of technology to remain in contact with CLA such as face time and Skype should be explored wider in the council. These tools are the norm for young people and professionals also should embrace innovation as a way of remaining in touch to compliment routine visits. Currently not all social workers are able to access this relevant IT when away from the office.

## **7.10 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT**

None.

## **8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS**

None.

## **9. OPTIONS**

That the corporate parenting board support the work being undertaken in the sufficiency plan to improve the level of provision locally.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The views of the CPP on the option set out in Section 9 of this report are requested.

## **11. APPENDICES**

None.

## **12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None.