

**From:** Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education  
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**To:** Corporate Parenting Panel – 1 June 2018

**Subject:** **REVIEW AND UPDATE OF THE SUFFICIENCY, PLACEMENTS AND COMMISSIONING STRATEGY - 2015-2018**

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Summary:** This report provides the Corporate Parenting Panel with a progress update of the Sufficiency, Placements and Commissioning Strategy.

**Recommendation:** Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to NOTE the progress against the strategy and the plan to develop a new strategy for 2019 onwards.

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The KCC Sufficiency, Commissioning and Placements Strategy 2015-2018, was endorsed by the Corporate Parenting Panel in 2015. A review and update of the strategy was presented to the Board in January 2018.
- 1.2 This report provides the latest update on progress on the current strategy and outlines key developments which will inform the next sufficiency strategy from 2019 onwards.

## **2. Financial Implications**

- 2.1. The authority makes a significant financial commitment of £31m to meet its statutory responsibilities to provide a sufficiency of accommodation for Children in Care and Care Leavers. This includes the provision of residential placements, independent fostering agency placements, semi-independent and shared accommodation and housing related support.
- 2.2. A “Total Placement Service” programme of work is in implementation to drive better value in delivering the KCC Sufficiency strategy. The programme will enable more accurate forecasting of future trends and be used to inform and develop a new sufficiency strategy from 2019. The project will help to establish spend and the varying costs of statutory placements and ensure a transparent and consistent process going forward. The aim is to bring the purchasing of all placements into one service, to ensure robust and consistent practice, to forecast more accurately and to better forward plan and develop the market of provision.

## **3. Review of Current Performance - Sufficiency, Placements and Commissioning Strategy (2015-18)**

- 3.1 The current Sufficiency Strategy outlines four challenges; delivery of which is measured by the achievement against the eight measures as set out at Appendix 1.

3.2 The table outlined below provides a summary of the challenges and supporting measures.

**Table 1: Sufficiency Strategy – Key Challenges and Supporting Measures**

<p><b>Challenge 1:</b> The need for effective support and practice to ensure that as many children as possible are able to remain living at home with their families</p>	<p><b>Measure 1:</b> We will expect to see a constant number of Children in Care maintained in the context of increased demand and activity</p>
<p><b>Challenge 2:</b> Provision of effective support and availability of suitable accommodation to meet the needs of Care Leavers</p>	<p><b>Measure 2:</b> We expect to see an increase in the percentage of Care Leavers who are living in suitable independent accommodation</p>
<p><b>Challenge 3:</b> Access to high quality placements that support children in care to have stability and to achieve positive outcomes</p>	<p><b>Measure 3:</b> We expect to see an increase in the number of children placed within 20 miles of their originating address for Children with Disabilities and those in the west of the county</p>
	<p><b>Measure 4:</b> We expect to see the percentage of children remaining in the same placement for two years to remain stable</p>
	<p><b>Measure 5:</b> We expect to grow and diversify the skill, capability and capacity of our in house foster carers</p>
<p><b>Challenge 4:</b> Quality of practice and support to meet the needs of Children in Care, improving their experience of care and achieving permanence</p>	<p><b>Measure 6:</b> We expect to see a reduction in the number of Children in Care that have three or more placement moves per year</p>
	<p><b>Measure 7:</b> We expect to see a continued reduction in the length of time it takes between entering care of the Local Authority and an Adoption Order being granted.</p>
	<p><b>Measure 8:</b> An increase in the number of children in permanent long term fostering placements</p>

3.4 The current performance dashboard is attached at Appendix 1.

3.5 On the whole, progress against the 8 measures has improved or remained stable, building on a gradually improving picture over the last year. There has been a decrease in the performance of measure 3 and measure 5. The Fostering Service have been addressing this issue, as outlined below. These actions along with the market review and implementation of the Total Placement Service will be used to inform the strategy for the remaining part of 2018 and the development of the new strategy from 2019.

- 3.6 In order to improve performance in relation to measure 3, Kent Fostering have expanded the Specialist Fostering Team for Disabled Children to enhance the support package that can be offered to foster carers of disabled children. This has enabled the team to facilitate additional support groups, conferences, training and activity days for children, to improve our retention of our existing carers and promote the recruitment of new carers into the service. The Fostering Service have Foster Carer Ambassadors, who specialise in caring for children with a disability, that support to recruit new carers in all areas of Kent.
- 3.7 A market review has been undertaken which identifies the current provision, the profile of children placed away from home and the associated costs. A market strategy is in development which will be used to inform the next sufficiency strategy. Engagement will now take place with current providers to review the potential to expand provision in Kent.
- 3.8 Kent's longest standing foster carers providing short breaks recently received recognition for their work on national television. This will be used for further recruitment and promotional opportunities locally. To improve the indicator for the West area, Kent Fostering have undertaken a targeted recruitment campaign in this area including leaflet drops into all primary age children's school book bags and radio adverts, which has increased the attendance at our information events. This has also been undertaken in North Kent and will be replicated across the county in 2018.
- 3.9 Since the requirement for a sufficiency strategy was first introduced by Government in 2011, Kent has undergone significant change in the numbers of children in care and care leavers, including the challenges presented with the significant rise in numbers of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people in 2015/16. To enable a more integrated approach to planning, a review of accommodation-based support for Care Leavers and Vulnerable 16/17 year has established demand across the sector, the gaps and the strengths and the potential to reshape current provision including new opportunities through the provision currently known as Housing Related Support. A procurement process will commence shortly to recommission this provision and ensure priority is given to homeless 16/17-year olds, Care Leavers and Children in Care.
- 3.10 In April 2018, the implementation of the Total Placement Service began, which brings together the function of matching children and young people to appropriate placements into one team. The vision is for one central team to source all placements for children and young people using accurate data regarding the availability of in house fostering placements across Kent. Phase One of the service has been achieved, with Social Work staff from the Fostering area support teams now co-located with what was previously the Access to Resources Team. This enables the searching and matching of in-house foster placements to be sourced centrally along with external placements. By the end of 2018, Phase Two and Three of the new service will be implemented. This will be bringing in the function of sourcing external short breaks placements for disabled children and the provision of accommodation for the Care Leavers service.

#### **4. Conclusion**

- 4.1 Performance against the key measures of the 2015-18 sufficiency strategy is broadly good but with on-going improvements needed in two areas (In house Fostering and local placements for Disabled Children). The new sufficiency strategy for 2019 onwards will take account of these issues as well as the learning from the development of the Total Placement Service and the market engagement currently underway to reshape the market.

## **5. Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The strategy meets the requirements of The Children Act 1989 and all other relevant Legislation.

## **6. Recommendations**

- 6.1 Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to NOTE the progress against the strategy and the plan to develop a new strategy for 2019 onwards.

## **7. Background Documents**

Kent County Council's Sufficiency, Placement and Commissioning Strategy, 2015-2018:  
<http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/childrens-social-care-and-families-policies/children-in-care-sufficiency-strategy>

### **Lead Director**

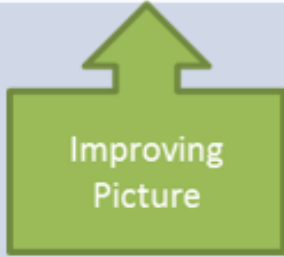



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**Appendix One: Sufficiency, Placements and Commissioning Strategy 2015-18 – Performance Summary June 2018**

Challenge	Measure	Current Performance	Direction (Since previous quarter)
<p><b>Challenge 1:</b> The need for effective support and practice to ensure that as many children as possible are able to remain living at home with their families</p>	<p><b>Measure 1:</b> We will expect to see a continued constant number of children in Care in the light of increased activity and demand.</p>	<p>The Citizen LAC population has remained fairly constant over the last six months. The number of UASC entrants into care has begun to fall and has fallen from a rate of 12.2 per 10,000 LAC population (403 UASC) in June 2017 to 7.0 per 10,000 LAC population at 233 UASC.</p>	
<p><b>Challenge 2:</b> Provision of effective support and availability of suitable accommodation to meet the needs of Care Leavers</p>	<p><b>Measure 2:</b> We expect to see an increase in the percentage of Care Leavers who are living in suitable accommodation</p>	<p>At the end of March, 2018, 93.2% of Care Leavers who were contactable are in suitable accommodation, a rise from 91.8% of Care Leavers in March 2017. Ofsted (June 2017) stated “Through a proactive strategic and operational response, leaders have made good progress in increasing the sufficiency of accommodation for the unexpectedly large group of care leavers.”</p>	
<p><b>Challenge 3:</b> Access to high quality placements that support children in care to have stability and to achieve positive outcomes</p>	<p><b>Measure 3:</b> We expect to see an increase in the number of children placed within 20 miles of their originating address for children with Disabilities and those in the West of the County</p>	<p>Numbers of disabled children being placed within 20 miles of home has remained constant in the last year to end of March 2018, at 64 children at any one time. The numbers of children from the West of the County being placed within 20 miles from their home has decreased from 232 in March 17 last year, to 201 this year. There is a continued focus on recruitment of Foster Carers in the West of the County to improve this target.</p>	
	<p><b>Measure 4:</b> We expect to see the percentage of children remaining the in the same placement for two years to remain stable</p>	<p>There has been a marginally improving picture over the past three years, with 69.4% of children who have been LAC for at least 2.5 years remaining in the same placement. Short term stability is a focus of work currently in SCS. The implementation of the Sense of Belonging Service has supported the delivery of this target.</p>	

Challenge	Measure	Current Performance	Direction (Since previous quarter)
<b>Challenge 3:</b> Access to high quality placements that support children in care to have stability and to achieve positive outcomes	<b>Measure 5:</b> We expect to grow and diversify the skill, capability and capacity of our in house foster carers	The % of children placed in KCC foster placements has decreased from 66.2% in March 2017 to 63% in March 2018. The introduction of the Total Placements Service will serve to improve this target.	
<b>Challenge 4:</b> Quality of practice and support to meet the needs of Children in Care , improving their experience of care and achieving permanence	<b>Measure 6:</b> We expect to see a reduction in the number of Children in Care that have three or more placement moves per year	There has been a decrease in the number of children who have had 3+ placement moves in the last year from 13.4% in Sept 2016 to 11.4% in March 2018. There is currently a sense of stability programme to support carers and further developments are being implemented to support this target.	
	<b>Measure 7:</b> We expect to see a continued reduction in the length of time it takes between entering care of the Local Authority and an Adoption Order being granted	The overall trend shows a clear reduction in the number of days over the last year from 474.8 in Dec 15 to 364.6 in Sept 16, to 285.6 in March 18 which shows a continued level of consistent progress within the adoption service.	
	<b>Measure 8:</b> An increase in the number of children in permanent long term fostering placements	There has been an increase in the proportion of children with permanent foster care plans In March 2017 56.6% of the LAC cohort had permanent foster care plans selected in their care plan. In March 2018 this increased to 58.0%.	