

Report to:	RESILIENT COMMUNITIES AND CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Mrs Diane Booth, Director of Childrens Services
Date of Meeting	12 April 2018

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CHILD PROTECTION

1.1 To provide an overview of the status of Looked After Children and Child Protection in Blackpool.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To consider the information, provide challenge and identify any areas that require further scrutiny.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure Members are informed about the ongoing work in relation to Looked After Children and Child Protection and are able to hold services to account.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options considered:

Not applicable.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is:

- Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

5.0 Background Information

5.1 Blackpool continues to address the high demand for services, which are amongst the highest in the country. Blackpool has a high rate of referrals, assessments, Section 47

Enquiries, Child Protection (CP) Plans and children looked after. In ensuring any reductions are managed safely social work practices have been reviewed, a risk sensible operating model has been recently introduced to assist in the effective management of risk as well as introducing improved care planning and management oversight in respect to decision making. All children looked after cases have been reviewed as well as children subject to Child Protection Plans to ensure those in place are appropriate and effective. Work continues with partners via the Improvement Board to monitor the effectiveness of plans to manage demand and, through the Board, challenging targets have been set to bring Blackpool more in line with national, regional and statistical neighbours.

5.1.1 Blackpool has safely looked at all aspects of interventions from contacts through to adoptions and reductions in significant areas have been seen.

5.1.2 The following outlines performance against key indicators in respect of looked after children and child protection. This gives an indication of progress against targets and this in conjunction with audit findings gives a holistic picture of quantitative and qualitative outcomes.

5.2 Child Protection

5.2.1 Children become subject to Child Protection Plans following a Section 47 (s47) enquiry having established a child(ren) are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm and are in need of protection via a Child Protection Plan. Not all Section 47 enquiries result in the need for a child(ren) to become subject to Child Protection Plans.

- The number of Section 47s remains high, but there has been a significant reduction of 55% from a high in May (167) to the lowest in January (76). There were 90 in February. Over the year there has been a 21% reduction in Section 47 enquiries completed.

Number of Section 47 Enquiries

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
No of S47 (Month)	153	167	158	145	140	119	100	99	120	76	90	
No of S47 (Rolling Year)	1968	1952	1900	1854	1859	1815	1749	1684	1669	1609	1558	
No of S47 (Rate Per 10k)	688.0	682.4	664.2	648.1	649.9	634.5	611.4	588.7	583.5	562.5	544.7	

- The number of children and young people subject to a Child Protection Plan has reduced to 309 in February 2018 from a high of 387 in August 2017. This is a 20% decrease and the numbers continue to fall month by month. 82% of children subject to a CP Plan are aged under 13.

Number of Children Subject to a Child Protection Plan

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
No of CP Plans (Snapshot)	368	383	374	379	387	378	360	367	353	331	309	
No of CP Plans (Rate Per 10k)	128.6	133.9	130.7	132.5	135.3	132.1	125.9	128.3	123.4	115.7	108.0	

Number of Children Subject to a Child Protection Plan Aged 13+

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
No of CP Plans (Snapshot)	368	383	374	379	387	378	360	367	353	331	309	
No Aged 13+ (Snapshot)	76	77	75	86	90	80	74	77	71	64	57	
% Aged 13+ (Snapshot)	20.7%	20.1%	20.1%	22.7%	23.3%	21.2%	20.6%	21.0%	20.1%	19.3%	18.4%	

- The % of Child Protection plans three months or less have reduced to 11.5% which is a significant reduction and below most local authorities in the region.

Child Protection Plan Categories

- The number of children and young people currently subject to a Child Protection Plan has further reduced to 294 (as at 23 March 2018).
- A breakdown of Child Protection Plan Categories is shown below:

CP Plan Category	Number	%
Emotional abuse	157	53.4%
Neglect	133	45.2%
Physical abuse	45	15.3%
Sexual abuse	19	6.5%
Total CP Plans	294	

5.2.2 Note - the sum of Categories is greater than the sum of Child Protection Plans because a child on a Child Protection Plan can have more than one category. The majority of children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan under the category of Emotional Abuse will be in relation to the impact of domestic abuse upon the child(ren).

5.3 Looked After Children

- For the first time in a number of years the number entering care has remained stable at 15/16 per month.
- The number exiting care has slowed in recent months. There is a Discharge Plan in place looking at discharge of care orders for those children in placements with parents or looked after children who are in long term foster care who could secure permanence via a Special Guardianship Order (SGO). In

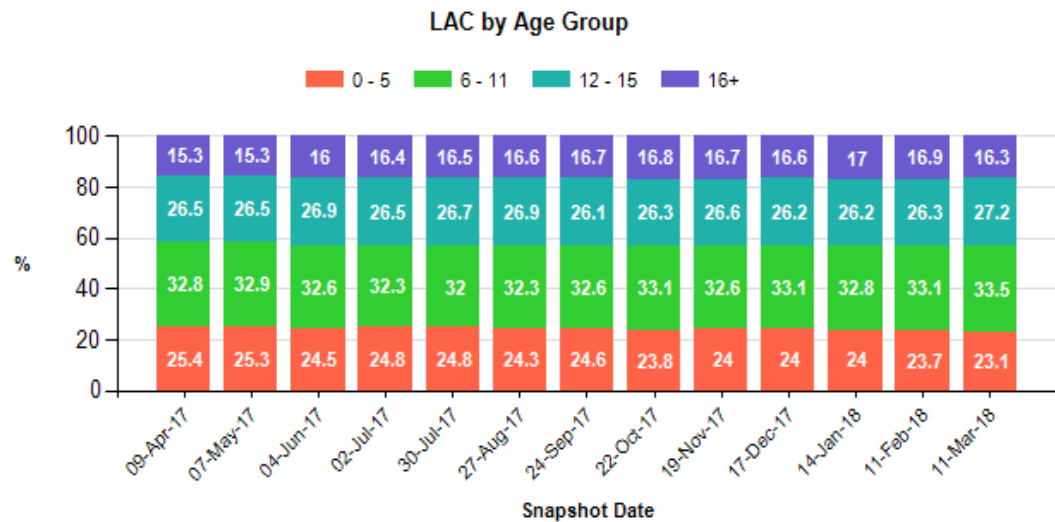
addition to those who are subject to a care order we are also considering those children who are presently subject to care proceedings and looking at where appropriate to do so a disposal of an SGO or plan for adoption. We project 80-100 children and young people exiting care in the next three to nine months through any of the above routes. This will provide a secure and permanent placement for these children.

- The total number of looked after children has fallen (548 in June 2017 – 526 in February 2018 (22 less)).

Number of Looked After Children

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
No of LAC (Snapshot)	543	546	548	539	531	531	530	534	536	529	526	
No of LAC (Rate Per 10k)	189.8	190.9	191.6	188.4	185.6	185.6	185.3	186.7	187.4	184.9	183.9	

- Placement stability of CYP experiencing three or more placements remains a challenge. This is due to the availability of placements for adolescents exhibiting challenging behaviour
- The breakdown of looked after children by age below shows that 56% of looked after children are aged 11 and under. A number of those aged between 0-5 will have a plan for adoption and will cease being a looked after child once the adoption order is granted



5.4 Open Cases

- The number of cases open (including Child Protection and Looked After Children) has decreased by 12% from a high in April (2,070) to a low in January (1,820). This represents 250 less cases open.

- Excluding Child Protection and Looked After Children there has been an 18% decrease (212 less) from a high in April 1193 to a low in January of 981.

Number of Open Cases (Including CP and LAC)

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
No of Open Cases (Snapshot)	2070	2065	1969	1986	1951	1927	1887	1928	1878	1820	1892	
No of Open Cases (Rate 10k)	723.6	721.9	688.3	694.3	682.0	673.7	659.7	674.0	656.5	636.3	661.4	

Number of Open Cases (Excluding CP and LAC)

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
No of Open Cases (Snapshot)	1193	1157	1080	1093	1055	1040	1015	1037	1053	981	1078	
No of Open Cases (Rate 10k)	417.1	404.5	377.6	382.1	368.8	363.6	354.8	362.5	368.1	342.9	376.9	

6.0 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

None.

8.0 Legal considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Human Resources considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Equalities considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Financial considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Risk management considerations:

12.1 None.

13.0 Ethical considerations:

13.1 None.

14.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

14.1 None.

15.0 Background papers:

15.1 None.