

Why is this issue important?

Most young people in care say that their experiences are good and that it was the right choice for them.¹ However, evidence indicates that their outcomes are often worse than other children and young people. Children and young people looked after are much more likely to be unemployed, involved in crime and identified as having a substance misuse problem.²

Both young women and young men in and leaving care are more likely than their peers to be teenage parents.³ In 2015, the Centre for Social Justice reported that the leaving care population represents about 1% of young people,⁴ yet it is estimated that:

- 24% of the adult prison population have been in care⁵
- 11% of homeless young people are care leavers⁶

Evidence suggests that mental health problems are over four times more likely for children looked after compared to their peers.⁷

Key outcomes

- ***Emotional well-being of looked after children (Public Health Outcomes Framework)***
- ***Families are given early help to prevent the need for a Child Protection Plan***
- ***Those with a Child Protection Plan are kept safe and receive appropriate services to help children remain with their broader families and avoid unnecessary reception into care***
- ***Children who are looked after do well in school, and are healthy, and care leavers secure employment, further education or training and suitable accommodation***

¹ Biehal, N. et al. (2014) [Keeping children safe: allegations concerning the abuse or neglect of children in care: final report](#). London: NSPCC

² NICE. Costing report: Promoting the quality of life of looked after children and young people; October 2010.

³ Freedom of Information Requests by Centre for Social Justice [sent 11/11/14]. 103 local authorities responded, 93 were able to give data

⁴ Ibid; Office for National Statistics, Population Estimates for UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, Mid-2013, Office for National Statistics, 2014

⁵ Ministry of Justice, Prisoners' childhood and family backgrounds Results from surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) longitudinal cohort study of prisoners, London: Ministry of Justice, 2014, p8

⁶ Homeless Link, Young and Homeless 2014, London: Homeless Link, 2014, p11

⁷ Children looked after by local authorities in England Guide to the SSDA903 collection 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016, p99

Impact in Brighton & Hove

Brighton & Hove's rate of referrals, assessments and initial child protection conferences in 2014/15 is above the England average and the average of our statistical⁸ and contextual neighbours.^{9,10}

The number of children subject of a child protection plan has fallen from a peak of 423 as at August 2015 to 361 as at May 2016; a 15% decrease. However, our rate per 10,000 (70.8) remains higher than the 2014/15 national average (42.9), the statistical neighbour average (42.1) and contextual neighbour average (57.9).

The number of children looked after (CLA) has fallen from 470 as at May 2015 to 437 as at May 2016; a 7% decrease.

The number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) has risen from nine as at May 2015 to 34 as at May 2016; UASC now represent 8% of CLA, up from 2%.

The number of CLA excluding UASC has fallen from 461 as at May 2015 to 403 as at May 2016; a 13% decrease. However, the rate per 10,000 (85.7) remains higher than the 2014/15 national average (60), statistical neighbour average (59.5) and contextual neighbour average (82.5).

The number of open clients has fallen from a peak of 2,460 as at May 2015 to 2,079 as at May 2016; a 15% decrease.

Though some do well, the educational achievement of children looked after as a group remains unacceptably low, with 20% of children looked after and 16.9% of Children in Need in Brighton & Hove achieving five A*-C GCSEs including English and Maths compared to 61% for all pupils in Brighton & Hove in 2015.¹¹

Brighton & Hove continue to evaluate practice and effectiveness, through serious case reviews and management/multi agency reviews, along with regular audit activity and quality assurance

⁸ Statistical Neighbours (SN) are ranked in order of statistical closeness, with the top SN being closest: Bournemouth, Bristol, Reading, Bath and North East Somerset, Sheffield, Portsmouth, York, Leeds, Bromley, Southend-on-Sea

⁹ Contextual neighbours are our 10 nearest authorities in terms of contextual factors based on Public Health analysis of deprivation, alcohol, drugs and mental health. Doncaster, Redcar and Cleveland, Bournemouth, Lewisham, Halton, Haringey, Torbay, South Tyneside, Lambeth, North East Lincolnshire

¹⁰ 2014-15 Children in need census

¹¹ 2014-15 children in need census matched to the national pupil database, 2014-15 CLA-NPD matched data, Key stage 4 attainment data 2015

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processes. Changes to case law and timescales for conducting care proceedings are affecting practice and procedures for care planning for children looked after.

Where we are doing well

59% of care leavers in the year ending 31st March 2015 were in education, employment or training, better than the 2014/15 national average of 48% and statistical neighbour average of 51.1%. Brighton and Hove's performance is ranked 20th highest out of 152 local authorities.

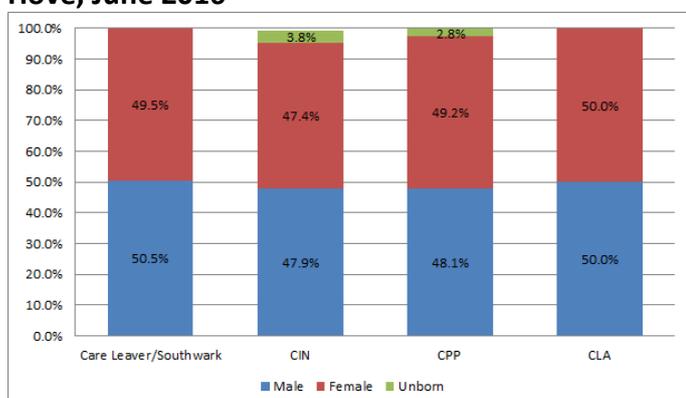
Of the 215 children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 30th June 2016, 33 (15.3%) ceased to be looked after due to a special guardianship order (SGO) being granted. This compares with the national average of 11% for the year ending 31st March 2015 and statistical neighbour average of 12.4%.

The social work service has reorganised to provide small social work teams, based on relationship practice, which follow the pathway of the children from assessment through to resolution/leaving care. This provides consistency of relationship to the child and family and helps to achieve better outcomes.

Local inequalities

Figure 1 shows the gender breakdown of Care Leaver cases, Children in Need (CIN), children who are the subject of a Child Protection Plan (CPP) and children looked after children (CLA).

Figure 1: Social care activity by gender, Brighton & Hove, June 2016



Source: Carefirst Data June 2016

There are more female children subject of a CPP with; 49.2% female, 48.4% male and 2.8% not known (unborn). This compares to the England

average where 50% of children who are the subject of a CPP as at 31st March 2015 are male and 48% are female (2% unborn or unknown gender).

Half of CLA in the city were male compared with 55% of CLA in England.

Almost a quarter of CiN and CLA are non-White British compared to 21% of children aged under 18 in the city at the time of the 2011 Census (Table 1).

Table 1: Social care activity by ethnicity, Brighton & Hove, June 2016

Ethnicity	Care Leaver/Southwark %	CIN %	Total CPP %	Total LAC %
Asian or Asian British	9.8%	4.5%	2.0%	2.3%
Black or Black British	6.7%	4.2%	2.0%	5.5%
Mixed	8.2%	8.6%	13.8%	7.1%
Other Ethnic Groups	4.1%	1.9%	0.8%	5.7%
White	71.1%	69.2%	76.1%	77.1%
Not Stated	0.0%	2.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Information Not Yet Obtained	0.0%	6.7%	5.1%	2.3%
Unknown	0.0%	2.2%	0.3%	0.0%
White British	67.0%	63.9%	71.1%	72.9%
BME	33.0%	24.5%	23.6%	24.8%

Source: Carefirst data June 2016

A greater proportion of children who are the subject of a CPP are in younger age groups, whereas a greater proportion of children looked after are aged 10 or over.

Brighton & Hove has a higher proportion of children looked after aged under one (8% at 31st March 2016 compared to 5% nationally) and a higher proportion aged 16 and over (28% compared to 22% nationally).

As at March 2016, 13% of children subject of a CPP were aged under one (compared with 10% nationally) and 29% were aged 10-15 (compared with 26% nationally).

There is a correlation between wards with high deprivation and high need: Moulsecoomb and Bevendean and East Brighton have the highest rates of Children in Need while the Hove Park and Withdean have the lowest rates.

There are significant issues around both alcohol and drugs misuse in Brighton & Hove and local prevalence of mental illness continues to be generally higher than England. Research has been carried out into why Brighton & Hove has such high rates of social care activity compared with similar areas. Ranking local authorities in terms of

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contextual factors (deprivation, alcohol, substance misuse and mental health), Brighton & Hove was 36th worst of 121 authorities - within the top third worst authorities. The city is now not an outlier in terms of the CPP and CLA rates when these factors are accounted for.

Of the 385 children currently subject of a CPP, 173 (45%) had parental domestic violence recorded as a factor. Of the 103 children who had been subject of a CPP for a second or subsequent plan, 41 (40%) had parental domestic violence recorded as a factor.

In 2014/15 the Department for Education published data showing that Brighton & Hove had twice the percentage of CPP episodes with mental health identified (65.4% compared to 32.5% nationally). Over half (52.6%) of episodes had domestic violence recorded compared to 48.2% nationally.¹²

Predicted future need

Budgetary savings to this authority will provide challenges to service delivery. There are accommodation challenges for low income families, with temporary accommodation often needing to be provided out of area.

There are some key preventative/support services which are ending, which are likely to impact on levels of earlier help and therefore greater presentation to statutory services.

Key evidence and policy

The Department for Education is responsible for child protection in England. It sets out policy, legislation and statutory guidance on how the child protection system should work. Child Protection legislation, policy and guidance <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/england/legislation-policy-guidance/>

Recommended future local priorities

The Social Work service is looking to embed the new model of practice and work to support the development of a stable, competent and confident work force through reflective groups/supervision,

access to specialisms from lead practitioners and ongoing workshops and learning opportunities.

Key links to other sections

- Education; Domestic and sexual violence; Substance misuse and alcohol; Sexual health; Not in education, employment and training, Young Offenders, Improving Health.

Further information

Department for Education Data, Research and Statistics

www.education.gov.uk/researchandstatistics

Department for Education Statistical Gateway

www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/whatsnew.shtml

Research in Practice www.rip.org.uk/

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¹² These were factors identified at the end of assessment as a proportion of episodes assessed in the year and with assessment factors recorded.