

Corporate Parenting Board

# Annual Report

## 2018-2019



September 2019



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## Purpose of Report

To highlight the work of the Corporate Parenting Board during the academic year September 2018-August 2019. The report will go on to identify feedback from young people and identify an action plan for the next academic year.

## Key Points

### 1.0 Background

Sandwell's Corporate Parenting Strategy (2017-2020) identifies the following 5 outcomes:

- Looked after children obtain a good education
- Care leavers obtain jobs
- Looked after children have good health and wellbeing
- Looked after children and care leavers are ready for adulthood
- Looked after children placed outside Sandwell are not disadvantaged.

The strategy goes on to highlight how these outcomes will be delivered:

### Councillors:

- Will be provided with information about issues that affect young people in care.
- Will make sure that they talk to looked after children and young people and take into account their views on how the Council is run.
- Will help secure opportunities for looked after young people and care leavers with apprenticeships.
- Will provide challenge and support those services charged with delivering education achievement and progress.
- Will champion the needs of looked after children and care leavers.

- A lead Councillor from the Corporate Parenting Board will be linked with each of the work streams.
- Will regularly receive a 'Corporate Parenting Matters' Newsletter, which will include positive stories, event updates, upcoming events and news updates relating to the Corporate Parenting role.

### **Council Officers and Partner Agencies:**

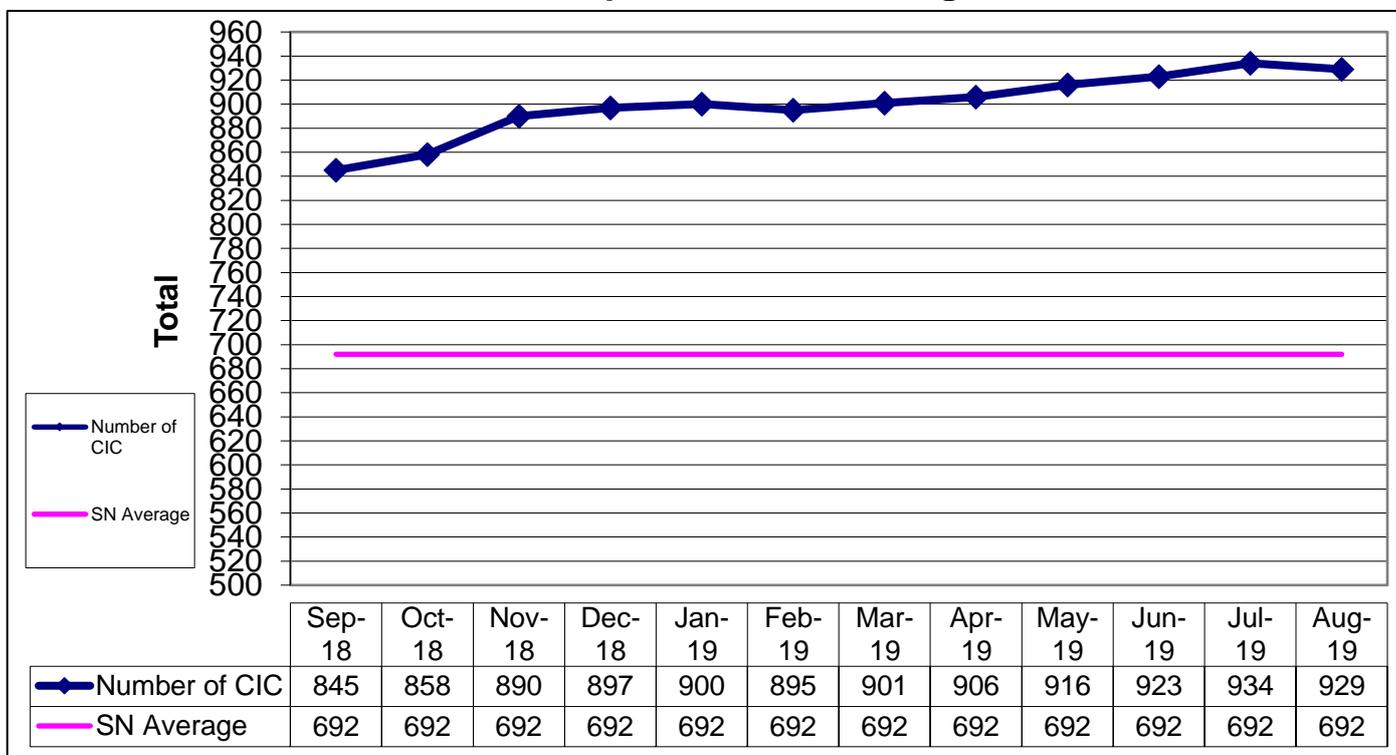
- Will know about the Corporate Parenting strategy and think about how this affects all parts of their day-to-day work.
- Will help develop council services to make sure that the Corporate Parenting strategy is being put into practice.
- Will help looked after children and young people to gain work experience, apprenticeships and job opportunities.
- Will regularly receive a 'Corporate Parenting Matters' Newsletter, which will include positive stories, event updates, upcoming events and news updates relating to the Corporate Parenting role.

### **Involve Looked After Children and Care Leavers:**

- A version of the strategy will be developed to be more reader friendly so young people can understand the strategy.
- Corporate Parents have an ongoing commitment to seek the views of young people in the following ways:
  - Looked After Children reviews
  - Statutory visits
  - Children in Care Council
  - Care Leavers Forum
  - Advocacy Service
  - Mind of My Own Map
  - Day-to-day ways when coming into contact with Social Workers and Independent Reviewing Officers.

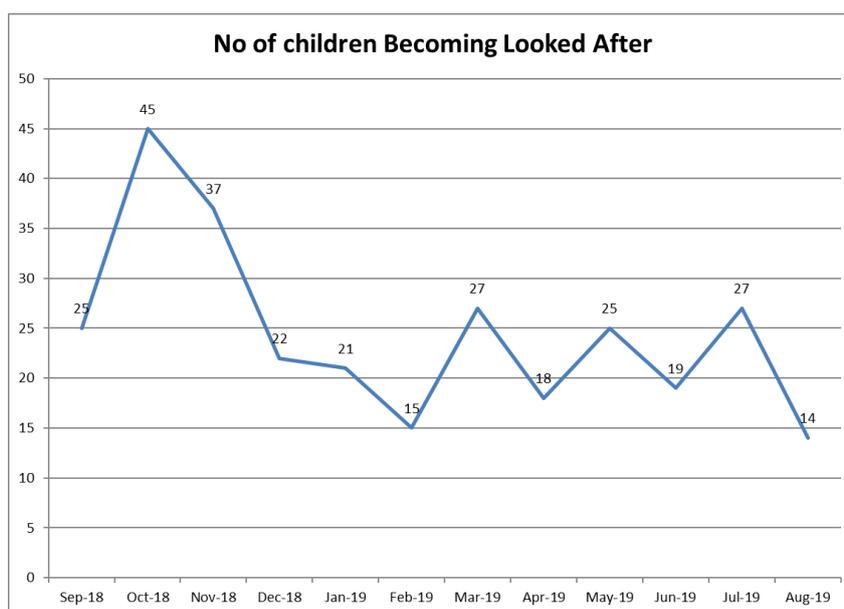
## 1.1 Context:

### 1.1.1 Social Care Activity and Performance Information: Children in Care Between September 2018 – August 2019



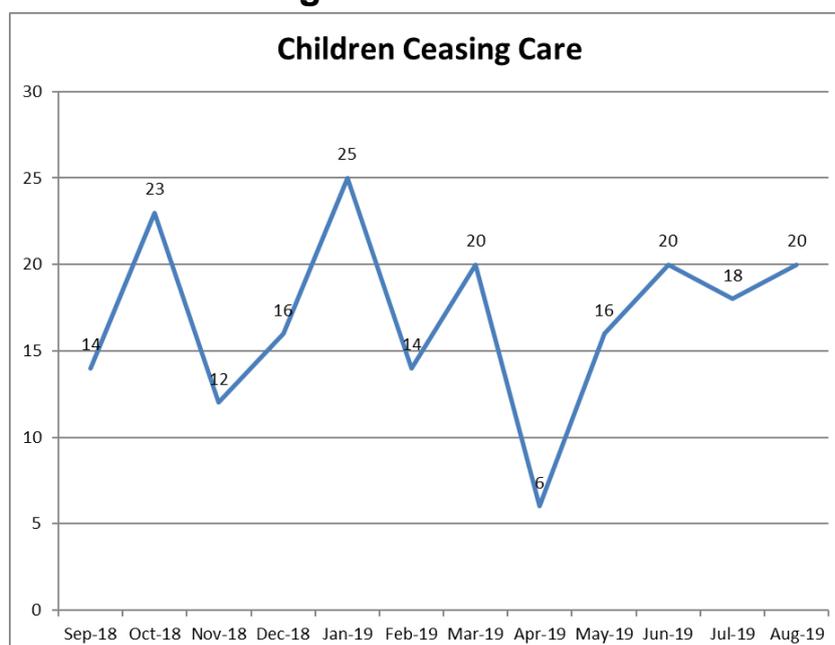
There were 929 children in care in Sandwell at the end of August 2019, this is a rate of 113.4 per 10,000.

### Number of Children Coming into Care



295 children entered care between September 2018 and August 2019.

## Number of Children Ceasing Care



204 children have ceased care between September 2018 and August 2019.

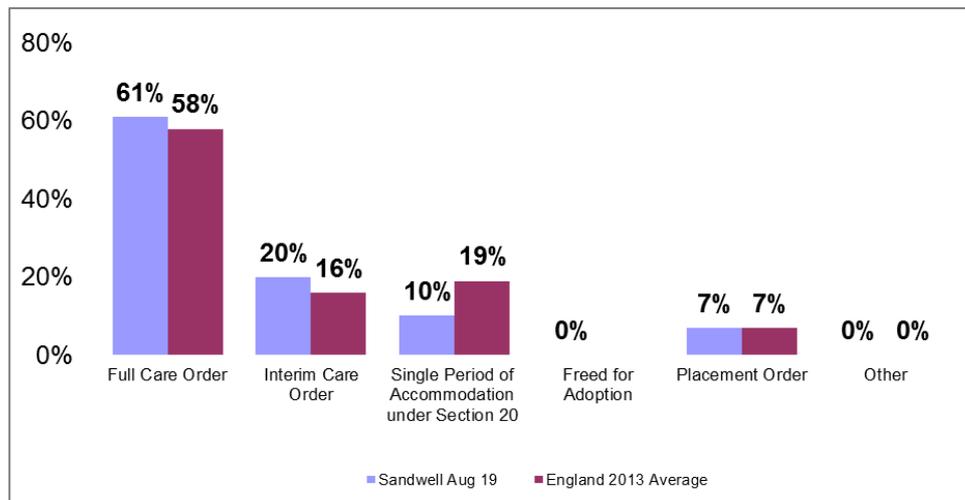
## Children Ceasing Care – End Reason

END Reason Child Ceased LA	Sandwell	Sandwell %	England 2018 Average
Returned Home(C)	13	6%	26%
Adopted - application unopposed (C)	22	11%	7%
Independent Living - Supported (C)	71	35%	13%
Adopted, consent dispensed with (C)	2	5%	6%
Child Arrangement Order Granted	7	3%	4%
Independent Living - Unsupported (C)	2	1%	2%
Special Guardianship Order made to Former Foster Carers (C)	9	4%	6%
Special Guardianship Order made to Carers other than Former Foster Carers (C)	0	0%	5%
Transferred to Other Local Authority (C)	3	1%	2%
Other (C)	17	8%	19%
Sentenced to Custody (C)	5	2%	2%
Transferred to Adult Social Services (C)	0	0%	2%
Left care to live with parents, relatives, other person with no parental responsibility	41	20%	5%
Care Order Discharged	4	2%	-
Supervision Order	8	4%	-
Service User Deceased	0	0%	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>104%</b>	<b>100%</b>

During the reporting period:

- 41% of children ceased care due to turning 18
- 26% returned home
- 16% were adopted
- 4% were granted Special Guardianship Order to former foster carers
- The remaining 13% were made subject to Supervision Orders, sentenced to custody, Child Arrangement Order or any other reason.

## Children Looked After by Legal Status as at August 2019

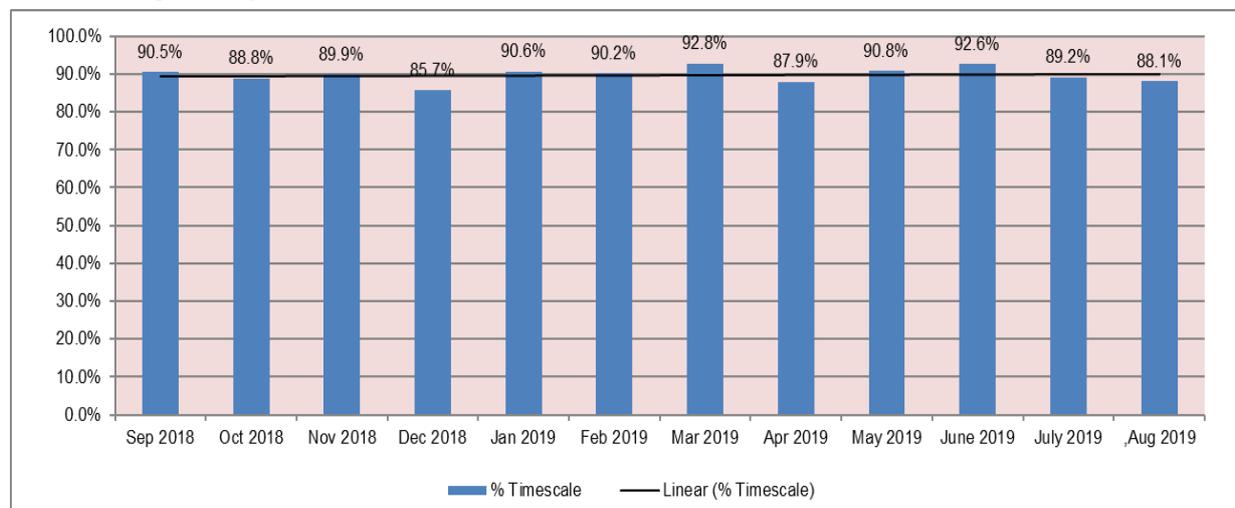


## Children Looked After by Placement Type as at August 2019

Type of Accommodation	Sandwell Aug 19	Sandwell Aug 19%	England 2018 Average
Foster Placement - Internal Foster Carer	155	17%	73%
Foster Placement - Connected Carer	198	21%	
Foster Placement - External	353	38%	
Placed with Parents	77	8%	6%
Residential Homes - In House Provision	0	0%	11%
Residential Homes - External	49	5%	
Secure Accommodation	2	0%	
Independent Living	57	6%	
Placed For Adoption	28	3%	3%
Family Centre or Mother and Baby unit	2	0%	7%
Other Placements	8	1%	
NHS/Health Trust or other Establishment Providing Medical or Nursing Care	0	0%	
Not Recorded	0	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>929</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

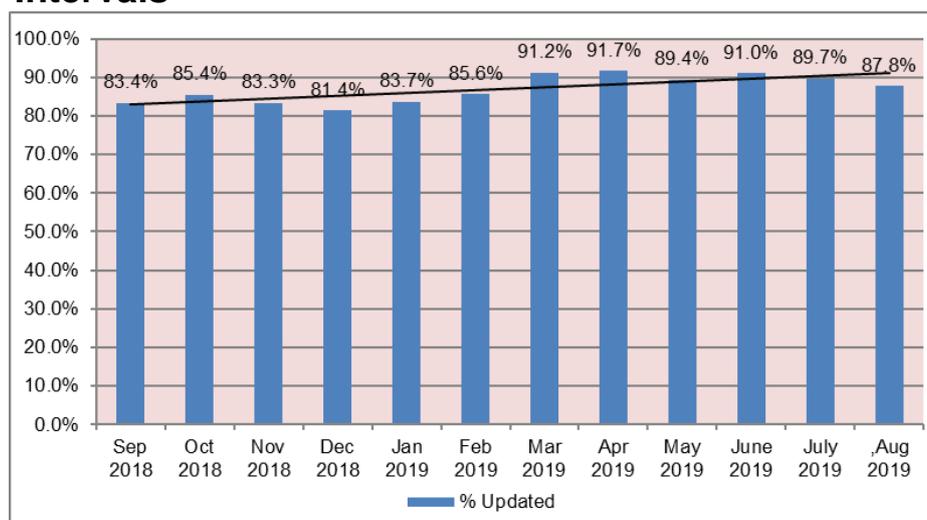
76% of children in care in Sandwell are currently placed in a Foster Placement.

## Percentage of Looked After Children Visited in Accordance with Statutory Requirements



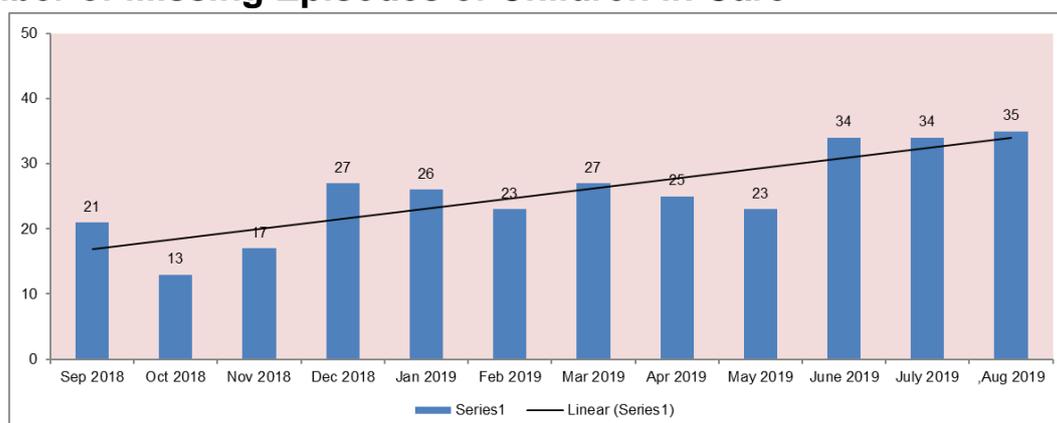
The average percentage of visits for the period was 89.8%.

## Percentage of Looked After Children Plans Updated Within Six Monthly Intervals

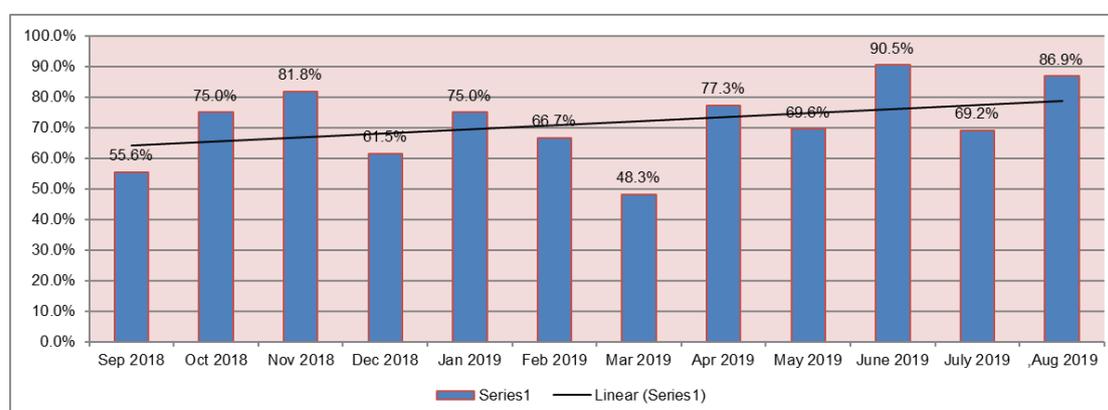


98.7% of children in care have a plan in place and the average that were updated within six months for the period was 87%.

## Number of Missing Episodes of Children in Care



## Return Interviews within 72 Hours

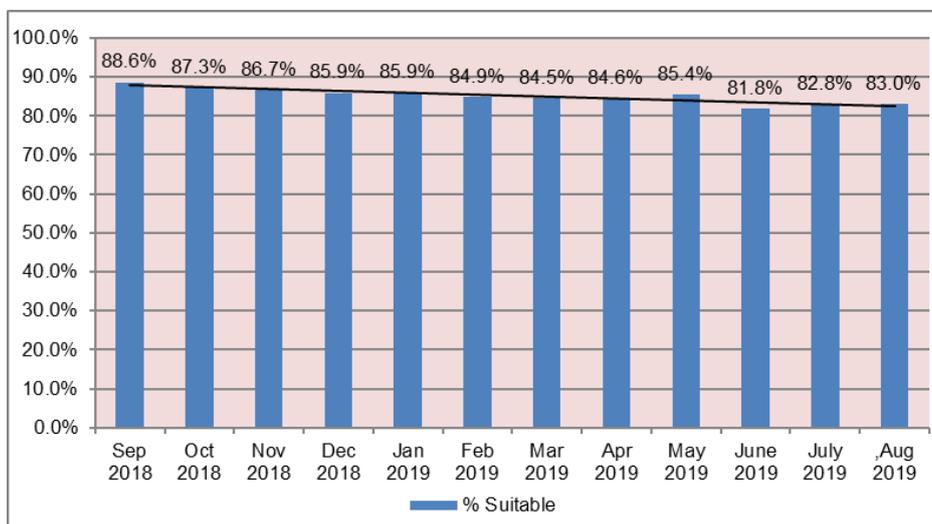


Over the last 12 months the average percentage of children in care missing was 25. Carers and providers have been informed over the past 12 months that if young people have not returned to their placement, even if they are answering their phones to the carers, they are still considered to be missing. On this basis carers/providers have been reporting all missing episodes. There has been a drive on this nationally with a rise in both national and statistical neighbour figures.

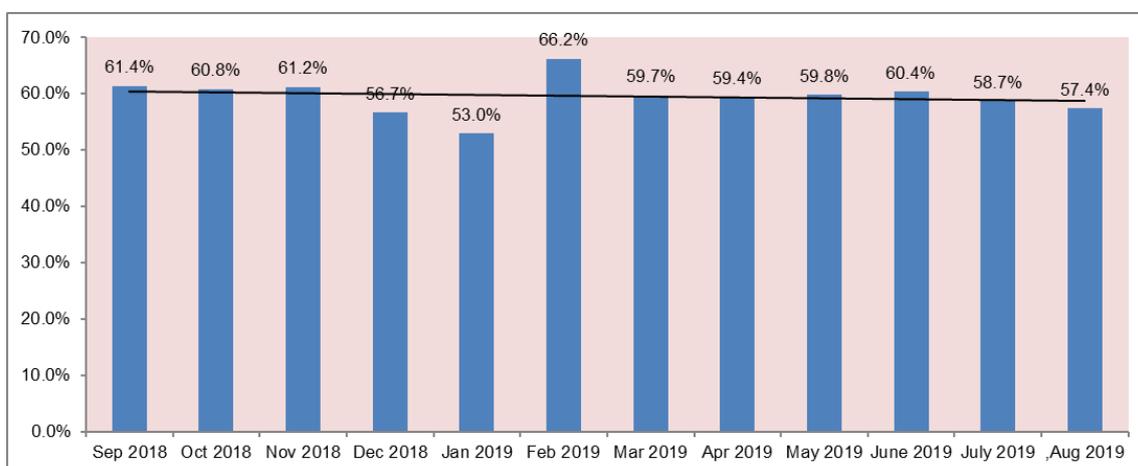
The average percentage of return interviews offered, accepted and conducted within 72 hours over the period was 71.5%.

## Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation

The average percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation for the period was 85.1%.



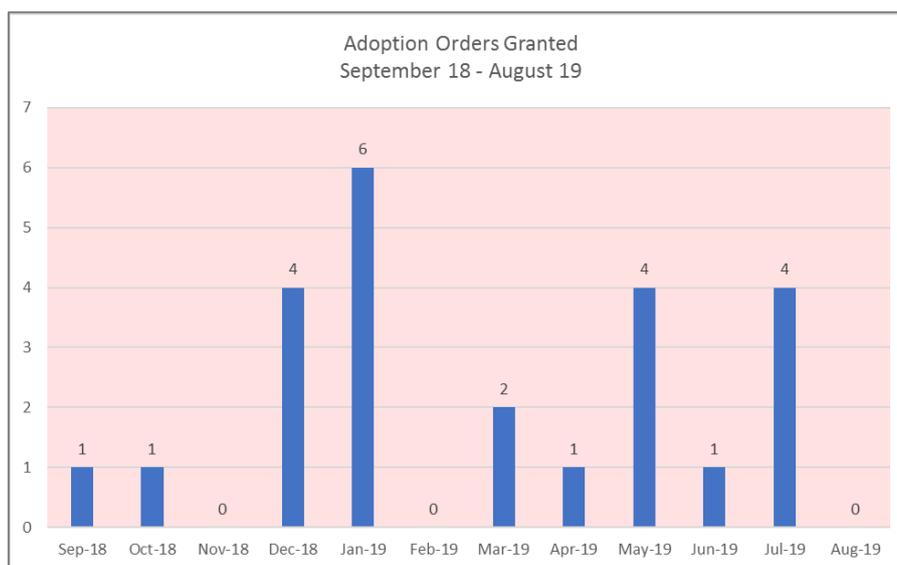
## Looked After Children Pathway Plans in Place 15 Years and 9 Months+



The percentage of children in care over 15 years and 9 months with a Pathway Plan decreased over the year by 4%.

September 2018 to August 2019 – average was 59.6%.

## Adoption Orders Granted



In April 2019 the delivery of adoption services was transferred to the Regional Adoption Agency, Adoption@Heart. During the reporting period a total number of 14 adoption orders were granted via Sandwell Children’s Trust adoption service and 10 adoption orders were granted via Adoption@Heart.

### 1.1.2 Health Activity and Performance Information:

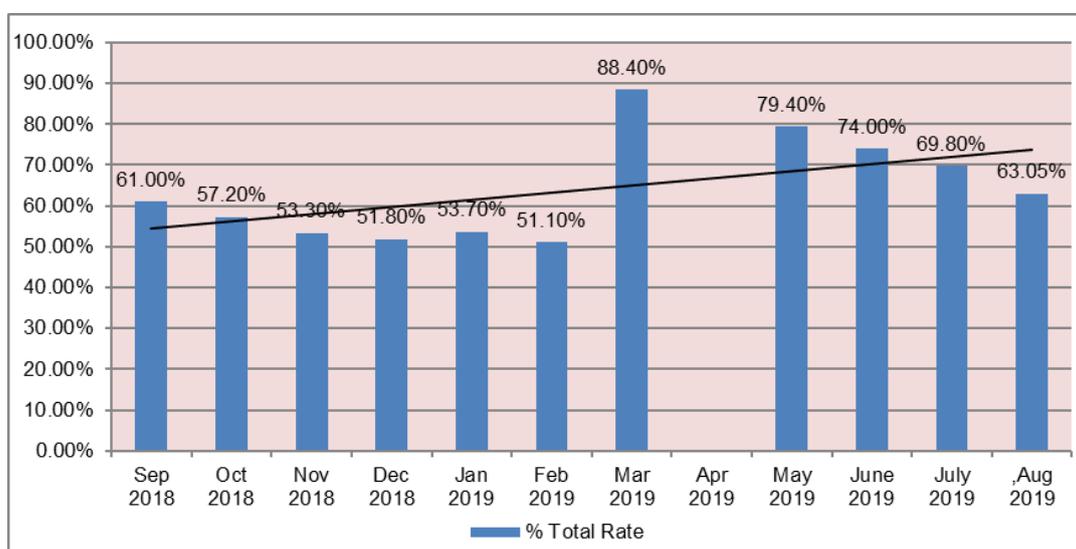
#### Initial Health Assessments

Initial health assessments have been closely monitored throughout the year. 94% of children entering care were seen within 20 working days; from receipt of notification from the Children’s Trust.

#### Review Health Assessments

During the reporting period 89% of review health assessments have been completed, ensuring that the national target of 85% is surpassed. The overall completion rates for the year demonstrate a positive picture, and sustained advancement.

## Children in Care for over 12 months with a current health assessment and dentals



The average percentage of children in care for over 12 months with current health assessments and dental checks was 58.6%.

Completion of health assessments for children in care in Sandwell and West Birmingham is monitored by the Designated Nurse through a range of mechanisms. Quarterly auditing is undertaken with regard to initial and review health assessments to examine timescales of completion, communication and quality compliance. Continuous improvement is achieved through considered feedback and education.

### Voice of the child

Modifications within the health assessment tool now ensure that the child's voice is captured within the completed Review Health Assessments (RHA's). Practitioners discuss the wishes and feelings of the child during the assessment and they are clearly documented. By capturing the voice of the child within the assessment documentation there will be a coherent 'journey' available for the child. It will evidence those professionals undertaking the assessments are able to analyse attitudes and behaviour in order to make necessary referrals and engage appropriate support for the child.

The inclusion of discussions regarding Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Sexual Health also helps to identify children that may be at risk or are possible victims of CSE. The process supports the delivery of the Sandwell Safeguarding Children Board CSE strategy.

A questionnaire is given to children entering care to capture their voice and focus on ensuring that they receive the best possible service; capturing how they were received into the clinic and their overall experience. Responses were considered in two separate groups: ‘Under 11-year olds’ and ‘Over 11-year olds’. Feedback from these groups highlight some of the elements of the experience that are most important to our young people.

In the under 11-year old group, over 70% of the respondents agreed that the following statements were true:

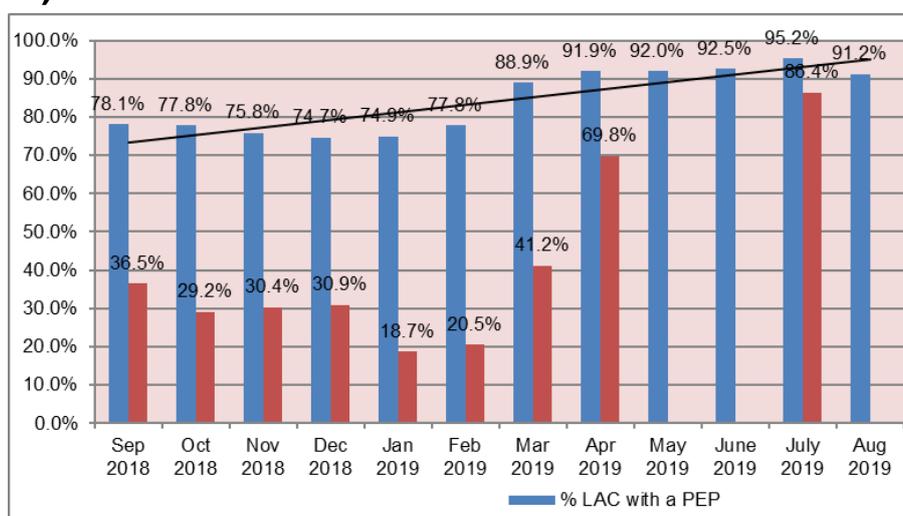
- Bright and colourful with things to do in the waiting room
- Calm atmosphere
- Knew my name, said please, hi, goodbye
- Reassured me, shouldn’t be nervous

In the over 11-year old group, over 60% of respondents agreed that the following statements were true:

- Understood my problem
- Really listened to me, didn’t rush me
- Respected as a person, weren’t bossy/pushy
- Talked to me in a way I could understand
- I got something positive from the people I met

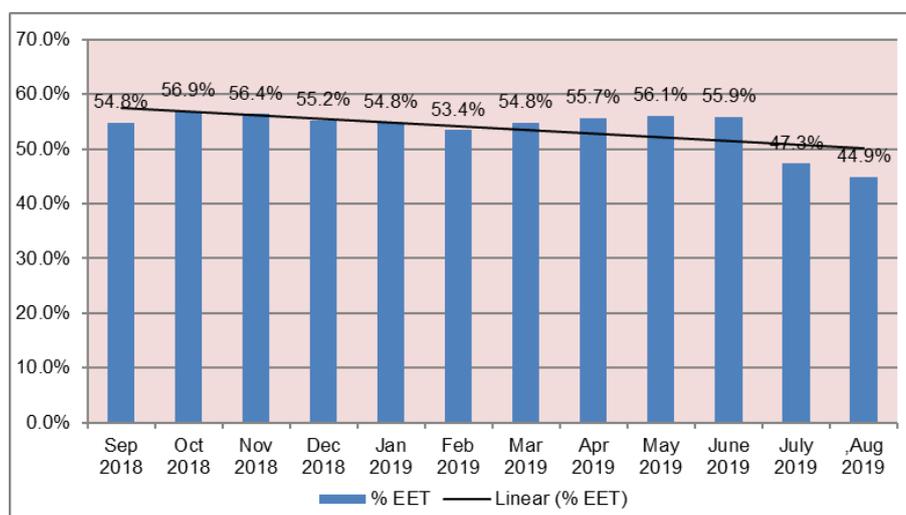
### 1.1.3 Education Activity and Performance Information:

#### Percentage of Looked After Children with a Personal Education Plan (Aged 5-16)



The average percentage of children in care with a Personal Education Plan was 84.2%.

## Care Leavers Aged 16+ Engaged in Employment, Education and Training



The average percentage of Care Leavers aged 16+ Engaged in Employment, Education and Training was 53.9%.

### Breakdown of NEET Figures:

- Young person not in education, employment or training due to illness or disability: 33
- Young person not in education, employment or training due to other circumstances: 143
- Young person not in education, employment or training due to pregnancy or parenting: 27

### Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

- Attainment outcomes have risen from 2017/2018 with the percentage of children achieving Good Levels of Development doubling to 37%; with sharp increases in children's Literacy (+13%) and Maths (+13%) skills.
- Significantly, those children attending schools in borough have a higher success rate than peers out of borough (+32% difference). This is due in part to the impact of the innovative EYFS Looked After Children Chat, Play, Read Home Intervention Programme; developed in partnership between Early Years Colleagues and the Virtual School. Of the 6 children selected (3 amber and 3 red), 4 (3

red and 1 amber) achieved their Good Level of Development (GLD) with the other 2 making progress from their starting points.

### **Key Stage 1**

- Girls outperformed boys in all measures.

### **Key Stage 2**

- Combined Reading Writing Maths (RWM) standards have risen by 12% and the gap is closing rapidly to all peers in Sandwell; there is a 3-year rising trend. Significant percentage rises are noticeable in Writing (+22%) and Maths (+15%) from the previous year.
- A significant contributor of the rise in attainment of in borough children was the Virtual Schools Year 6 Intervention Programme (Enrolment at a Tuition Centre, Tuition and Psychological/Emotional Support). At the start of the programme the children (7) were 'working towards' in a total of 20 elements (Reading, Writing, Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPAG), Maths). Following the programme this was reduced to 6. There was an up-lift in 14 of the elements (moving from 'Working Towards' to 'Expected+') with 4 of the children achieving their GLD's.

### **Value Added from Children's Starting Points KS1 to KS2:**

- In Reading and Writing Sandwell children in care are making greater progress than children in care nationally, all Sandwell peers and all children nationally. There is a 3-year trend in improved outcomes in RWM.

Attainment is rising in Key Stages where we had coverage by Virtual School Education Development Officers who developed comprehensive intervention programmes.

## **2.0 Corporate Parenting Board**

The Corporate Parenting Board is accountable to Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council and is strategically placed to ensure that the Council effectively discharges its role as Corporate Parent for all the children and young people in its care and those aged 18-25 who were previously in the Council's care. The Board is co-chaired by the Council's Lead Member for Children's Services (the Cabinet Member for Best Start in Life) and the Chair of the Care Leavers' Forum. The Board is made up of:

- Chair and Co-Chair of the Looked After Young People's Board
- Chair and Co-Chair of the Care Leavers' Forum
- Six elected Members of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, including the Lead Member for Children's Services
- Official Observer – Leader of the Council
- Participant Observer – Chair of the Children's Services Scrutiny Board
- Participant Observer – Vice Chair of the Children's Services Scrutiny Board
- Advisors to the Board – Sandwell Council Officers, Sandwell Children's Trust Officers, Relevant Partner Agencies

The role of the Corporate Parenting Board is to ensure the delivery of the seven national Corporate Parenting Principles (2018), which are:

- To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people;
- To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;
- To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;
- To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners;

- To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;
- For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
- To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

The Corporate Parenting Board works with children in care and care experienced young people to identify the priorities driving the work of the Board.

## 2.1 Meeting Frequency and Structure

A key change during this reporting period has been the move towards bi-monthly meetings with a separation between those held specifically for the business elements of the Corporate Parenting Board and those held specifically for engagement with young people and their Corporate Parents. Priorities set at the beginning of the academic year will drive the work of the Board through 2019/2020. A key change is for the Board to facilitate 'Task and Finish Groups' in place of the previous 'Priority Working Groups', aiming to complete tasks within groups that, once completed, can move onto the next task without the restriction of working under specific priority groups.

The priorities of the Board link closely to the Corporate Parenting Principles which, alongside the action plan that has been developed, will guide the Board and its Members as a measurement of success.

## 2.2 Achievements of the Board

Some of the notable achievements of the Board during this reporting period have been as follows:

Achievement	Corporate Parenting Principles
Corporate Parenting training delivered to Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes for those children and young people</li> </ul>
Young People Co-Chair Corporate Parenting Board Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;</li> <li>To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people</li> </ul>
100% Council Tax paid for care leavers extended to age 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living</li> </ul>
50% Council Tax paid for care leavers extended to age 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living</li> </ul>
Local Offer and Care Leavers Covenant launched	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners</li> </ul>
Health Passport launched	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people</li> <li>To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people</li> <li>To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners</li> </ul>
Young people involved in interview and induction processes for Sandwell Children's Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;</li> </ul>

Achievement	Corporate Parenting Principles
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people</li> </ul>
Care Leavers able to register for housing from age 16 and are automatically placed in priority band 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work;</li> <li>To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living</li> </ul>
Supported achievement events for children and young people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Virtual School Celebration Event</li> <li>Voices Heard</li> <li>Visit to Walsall Council to share good practice</li> <li>Care Leavers Festival</li> <li>Care Leavers Event</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes for those children and young people</li> <li>To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;</li> <li>To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people</li> </ul>

## 2.3 Feedback

As well as the key achievements noted above, young people are encouraged to submit feedback to the Board in the format of:

- What has gone well?
- What are you worried about?
- What needs to be done next?

Below are some examples of the feedback and actions over the previous year:

- There was a need to ensure that each of the Vision 2030 ambitions included the view of children in care and care leavers

- Young people invited relevant Councillors and Directors to attend their respective boards to discuss Vision 2030
- The Young Peoples Engagement Working Group presented to the Board in respect of actions and progress:
  - Use of processes to embed the voice of children and young people in Trust actions – induction and training, audits and recruitment
  - Proposed delivery of more mandatory Councillor training next year (2020)
  - Young people would like to receive updates on issues that have been raised at the Board
- Young people should have a choice to have the Health Passport as an App, paper copy to be kept by care management
  - Health Passport to be delivered via an App.

## 2.4 Next Steps

- To collaborate with partners and young people to determine priorities of the Board
- To collaborate with partners to determine project deliverables and measures of success
- To develop the above into an action plan to be agreed by the Board
- To refresh the Corporate Parenting Strategy incorporating the agreed action plan
- To review both the strategy and action plan every 6 months to ensure progression
- To develop an annual report to provide updates on progression of the Board.

### 3.0 Glossary of Abbreviations

<b>CIC</b>	Children in Care
<b>CPB</b>	Corporate Parenting Board
<b>CSE</b>	Child Sexual Exploitation
<b>EET</b>	Education, Employment or Training
<b>EYFS</b>	Early Years Foundation Stage
<b>GLD</b>	Good Level of Development
<b>IHA</b>	Initial Health Assessment
<b>IRO</b>	Independent Reviewing Officer
<b>KS1</b>	Key Stage 1
<b>KS2</b>	Key Stage 2
<b>KS4</b>	Key Stage 4
<b>LAC</b>	Looked After Children
<b>LAYPB</b>	Looked After Young People's Board
<b>MOMO</b>	Mind of my Own
<b>NEET</b>	Not in Education, Employment or Training
<b>PEP</b>	Personal Education Plan
<b>RHA</b>	Review Health Assessment
<b>RWM</b>	Reading, Writing, Maths
<b>SCT</b>	Sandwell Children's Trust
<b>SSCB</b>	Sandwell Safeguarding Children Board
<b>YP</b>	Young People