

# Family & People Services Policy & Scrutiny Committee

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<b>Classification:</b>	General Release
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Annual Looked After Children and Care Leavers Report 2017/18</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	Nicky Crouch
<b>Cabinet Member Portfolio</b>	Councillor Heather Acton, Cabinet Member for Children
<b>Wards Involved:</b>	All
<b>Policy Context:</b>	City for Choice / Heritage / Aspiration
<b>Report Author and Contact Details:</b>	Nicky Crouch, <b>Head of Looked After Children and Specialist Services</b> <a href="mailto:ncrouch@westminster.gov.uk">ncrouch@westminster.gov.uk</a>

## Annual Looked After Children and Care Leavers Report

### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report is for information only, providing an overview of the Local Authority's activity to support looked after children and care leavers and the outcomes achieved.
- 1.2 Outcomes for looked after children are often poorer than they are for those not in the care system due to the trauma and losses they have experienced in their lives. We aspire to improve the outcomes for our looked after children and care leavers and closely monitor their progress and needs to inform intervention and the delivery of services.

### 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 the Local Authority were looking after a total of 204 children in care and supporting 175 care leavers.
- 2.2 Through the course of the year (April 2017 to March 2018) 159 children had come into care of which 104 were UASC and 138 children had left our care (of which 83

were Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children - UASC).

- 2.3 In the year 2017/18 a total of 104 unaccompanied minors were located in Westminster and 35 were dispersed through the PAN London agreement. As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 Westminster were looking after 69 UASC and supporting a further 68 as care leavers.
- 2.4 Trend analysis indicates that numbers of looked after children from Westminster City Council's resident population are reducing whereas the numbers of unaccompanied minors being located in Westminster are increasing – pushing our total numbers up. This has financial implications – including the capacity and capability of the workforce to manage increasing demand.
- 2.5 There has been a decrease in the number of children aged 0-5 coming into care and an increase in the numbers of children aged 14 plus – who now account for 65% of our total care population. This reflects the growing numbers of UASC and is likely to mean that numbers of children leaving care will increase - creating a resource pressure.
- 2.6 Outcome measures for looked after children are broadly above national average across all key performance indicators.

### **3. Introduction**

- 3.1 Looked After Children are those children who's care arrangement is provided by the local authority. In these circumstances the local authority has a responsibility to safeguard and promote their welfare and to act as good parents so they can reach their full potential.
- 3.2 Following the implementation of the children and Social Work Act 2017 local authorities have duties and responsibilities to those young people who leave care after the age of 18 years and up to the age of 25.
- 3.3 Children who are looked after by the local authority have generally experienced abuse or neglect; or they are considered beyond parental control or abandoned (as in the case of unaccompanied minors).
- 3.4 Children in care are looked after in a range of settings, which include prospective adoptive families, foster care, friend and family placements and residential children's homes/schools. Where possible children will be reunified with their birth family alternatively we will seek to secure a permanence plan for children in a timely way and those who require long term care will access a wide range of services to support them in respect of their placement, education, health and emotional well-being. In some cases this will involve intensive intervention and clinical support to address the impact of trauma and effects of abuse and neglect.

3.5 Generally the corporate parenting strategy details the council's commitment to looked after children including annual priorities. However, the focus this year has been the disaggregation of the Tri-borough arrangement and maintenance of the service standards whilst this process was complete. It is anticipated that the corporate parenting strategy will be updated 2018/19.

#### 4. Local Profile of Looked After Children

4.1 The care population in Westminster is changing; whereas the numbers of children coming into care from the generic population are reducing, the numbers of UASC arriving in Westminster are increasing – pushing total numbers up. See table (A).

**Table A: New LAC starters**

	0-5	6-13	14+ (excl. UASC)	14+ UASC	Total
<b>2015/16</b>	23	26	29	26	104
<b>2016/17</b>	35	31	30	50	146
<b>2017/18</b>	21	11	25	105	162

4.2 When a child or young person comes into the care of the local authority there are range of placement options:

- Kinship foster care (placement with extended family supported and regulated by LA)
- Foster care
- Independent foster care (private agency)
- Residential care
- Supported lodgings
- Other (semi-independent, independent housing)

4.3 In 2017/18 28 of the 33 children aged 0-13 (85%) were placed with foster carers (kinship, LA and independent agencies) – see table B below:

**Table B: New starters aged 0-13, Placement Type**

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
<b>Kinship Foster Care</b>	11	12	1
<b>LA Foster Care</b>	24	26	22
<b>Independent Foster Care</b>	8	9	3
<b>Residential Care</b>	7	10	7
<b>Supported Lodgings</b>	-	-	-
<b>Other</b>	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	50	67	33

4.4 In 2017/18 the majority of 14+ coming into care we placed in either supported lodgings or semi-independent accommodation. This reflects the high numbers of unaccompanied minors coming into Westminster who are almost all aged 16 & 17 years. See table C below:

**Table C: New starters aged 14**

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
<b>Kinship Foster Care</b>	2	3	-
<b>LA Foster Care</b>	10	40	43
<b>Independent Foster Care</b>	2	3	12
<b>Residential Care</b>	7	5	4
<b>Supported Lodgings</b>	21	15	35
<b>Other</b>	12	13	35
<b>Total</b>	54	78	129

4.5 It is interesting to note that the numbers of children across all ages placed with kinship carers at the outset of care has reduced significantly. This will need to be better understood so as to ensure that when children can live with extended family and it is safe for them to do so – we are supporting this arrangement.

4.6 Importantly 83% children coming into care are placed within a 20-mile radius of Westminster. Children remaining in close proximity to their parental home affords better opportunity to maintain important relationships with friends and family and to maintain attendance at existing schools.

4.7 The numbers of children ceasing to be cared for are becoming increasingly less than the numbers coming into care – meaning that overall numbers of children in care as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 are higher than preceding years. This reflects the increasing number of UASC and numbers of children aged 14+ in the cohort – see table D below:

**Table D: Children ceasing LA care**

	0-5	6-13	14+	Total
<b>2015/16</b>	19	24	72	104
<b>2016/17</b>	33	27	72	132
<b>2017/18</b>	15	8	117	140

4.8 The reasons behind children leaving care include returning home, placement with relatives under special guardianship orders, adoption or the young person reaches 18 years old and becomes a care leaver. A further reason can be when a responsibility transfers to another local authority. There has been a PAN London agreement to share responsibilities for UASC up to each authority's quota (0.07 per 10,000 population). The table below details the numbers and reasons for leaving care:

**Table E: Reasons for children ceasing LA care**

	2015/16			2016/17			2017/18		
	0-5	6-13	14+	0-5	6-13	14+	0-5	6-13	14+
<b>SGO</b>		4	3	6	2		3		
<b>Adopted</b>	5			8			2		
<b>Returned home</b>	9	12	10	413	18	9	8	5	11
<b>Care assured by another LA</b>						12			46
<b>Reach 18 and a care leaver</b>			58			51			56
<b>Other</b>	5	8	1	5	7		2	3	4

4.9 The low number of SGO and Adoption Orders reflect a reduction in the number of court proceedings but needs further analysis so as to ensure those children who can leave care – do so and do so in a timely way.

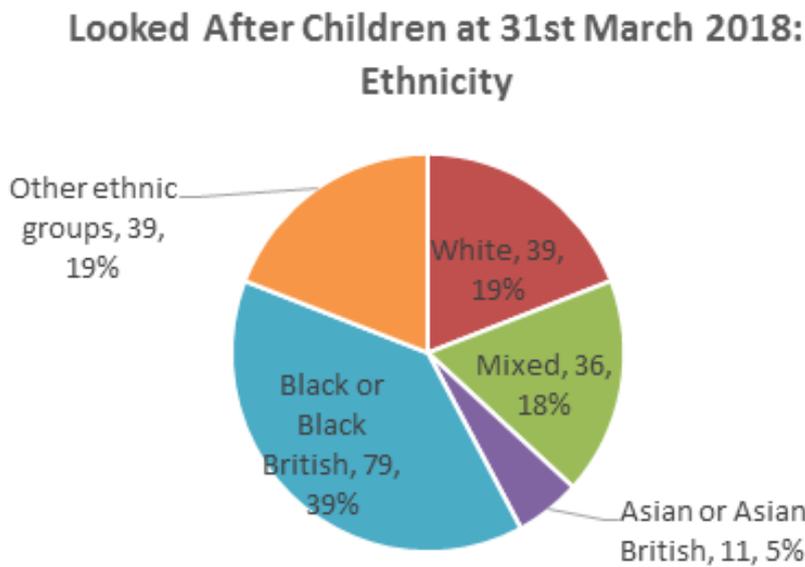
4.10 The average length of time a child spends in care is interesting to understand. The adoption scorecard requires that we understand the number of days between a child becoming looked after, the making of the Placement Order when the plan for adoption is agreed and the date of placement with the adoptive carers. For all children there can be a wide range of determinants that impact the length of time a child spends in care. Over the past 5 years the duration of care has been reducing – with a very small increase this year – see table F below:

**Table F: Average duration of care (in years)**

	0-5	6-13	14+	Total
<b>2015/16</b>	0.7	0.5	3.0	2.1
<b>2016/17</b>	0.6	0.4	2.0	1.3
<b>2017/18</b>	0.8	1.6	1.5	1.4

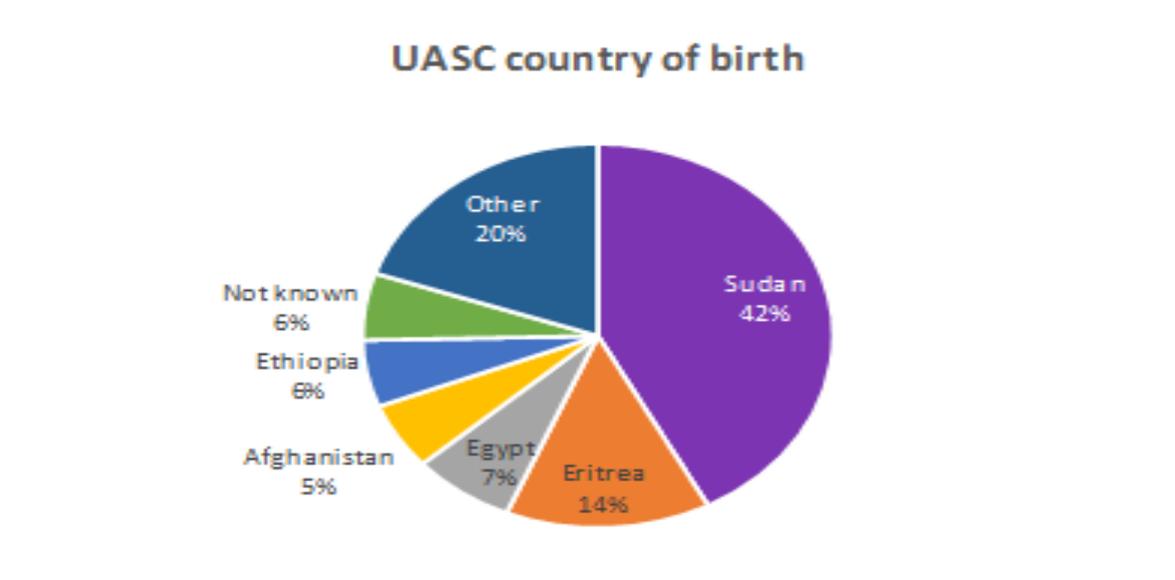
4.11 In terms of ethnicity, as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 the ethnic profile of our looked after children is as follows:

**Table G: Ethnicity of children in care**



4.12 The originating countries of our UASC population in care as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 is as follows:

**Table H: Originating countries of Looked After UASC**



4.13 The majority of unaccompanied minors arriving in Westminster are from Sudan 42% with 14% coming from Eritrea, 7% Egypt, 6% from Ethiopia and 5% from Afghanistan.

## **5. Outcomes**

### **5.1 Safeguarding Outcomes for Looked After Children and Care Leavers**

- 5.101 Children who are subject to frequent placement moves are less able to form positive attachments with carers which makes them more vulnerable to forming unsafe relationships with other adults or their peer group and disengagement from education and positive activities. The number of placement moves that children have is carefully monitored to ensure plans are adapted and additional services introduced to make placements more resilient where required. In 2016-17, 5% (8 children) of looked after children experienced three or more placement moves, a decrease on the previous year where there were 11% (18 children) of children with three or more placement moves.
- 5.102 As a geographically small borough, not all looked after children are able to live within Westminster when they are in care. However, there are significant efforts at both the local and national level to reduce the distance at which looked after children are placed from their borough of origin. While there are a small minority of children who are more effectively safeguarded by being placed at a distance such as those young people identified to be at risk due to gang affiliation or child sexual exploitation (CSE), the consistent lack of foster placements in Inner London means that many children need to be placed in other local authority areas, although usually these are a 20-mile radius. Of the children and young people looked after at 31 March 2018, just under 83% were placed within 20 miles of Westminster, and 61% of children placed in foster placements were placed with in-house foster carers compared to 67% in 2016-17. Additionally, there are currently 8% care leavers who continue to live with foster carers under a “staying put” arrangement, an initiative which enables care leavers to continue to live in their foster placement when they become young adults to support them with their transition to living independently.
- 5.103 Looked after children are at greater risk of going missing than their peers due to their turbulent life experiences, and are therefore vulnerable to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE). Children with frequent placement moves, more fragile attachments and late care entrants are more likely to go missing and this behaviour in turn impacts upon the stability of any new placements. There was a total of 184 missing episodes regarding children in care during 2017-18, which includes a small number of individual young people who had frequent repeat missing episodes. This compares to 150 missing episodes in the preceding year 2016-17. A robust process is in place that ensures management oversight and that missing children are visited and interviewed in order to address any potential safeguarding issues that the child may be encountering either within or outside the placement.

5.104 With specific reference to children at risk of CSE and CCE there continue to be a number of monitoring and practice systems in place to identify those assessed to be at risk and to provide a comprehensive support package to ensure that risks are reduced. This includes monthly Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) meetings chaired by the Police and Children's Services, a shared risk assessment tool, a common pathway to services coordinated through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), clear data sets and problem profiles, a range of training and awareness-raising initiatives, and a CSE lead practitioner based in the Integrated Gangs Unit who undertakes direct work with those assessed to be at risk of CSE and gang related activity. This work is being extended to include those children at risk of criminal exploitation.

5.105 As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 Westminster had a total of 36 children identified at risk of CSE, however only one of these was a looked after child. The data analysis is improving to help us understand where risk is decreasing, over what timescales and where risk is increasing.

## **5.2 Health Outcomes for Looked After Children**

5.201 Looked after children and young people share the same health risks and problems as their peers but often to a greater degree. They often enter care with greater health needs than their peers in part due to the impact of poverty, abuse, neglect and chaotic parenting. A key role for social workers, foster carers and LAC nurses is to educate and support looked after children in relation to healthy eating, exercise and dental care and address any areas at concern.

5.202 Local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that health assessments are carried out for every looked after child in their care. Of the 111 Annual Health Assessments (for children who have been in care for a year) 98% were carried out on time.

5.203 The Local Authority has a duty to act as a 'good parent' in relation to the health of looked after children. The proportion of children with up to date immunisations in 2017/18 was 97% compared with 100% 2016/17 and 99% the year before. There has been a drive to ensure that young people receive their school leaver booster (diphtheria tetanus and polio), to ensure that eligible girls are receiving the human papilloma vaccination (HPV) and that unaccompanied minors receive immunisations that they missed when living in their country of origin or when transient.

5.204 Dental health is an integral part of the Health Assessment. The local authority and NHS Trust are required to ensure that are looked after children receive regular check-ups with a dentist. 97% of all children in care for twelve months at 31 March 2018 had their teeth checked by a dentist. In comparison with 98% the previous year

- 5.205 Due to the nature of their experiences prior to and during being looked after, many looked after children may have poor mental health. This may be in the form of significant emotional, psychological or behavioural difficulties. Where appropriate children may access direct intervention from the specialist LAC Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) which is co-located with the social work team, from the CAMHS services local to their placement or from commissioned provision. Services are also able to access support and consultation from the LAC CAMHS Team and Westminster's own internal clinical team.
- 5.206 100% of children in care for twelve months aged 4 to 16 years had a strengths and difficulties questionnaire completed. In comparison to 98% in 2016/17 and 89% the year before. The average score for looked after children was 12 which is higher than the general population which is 7. A score of 14 is indicative of mental health problems.

### **5.3 Educational Outcomes for Looked After Children**

- 5.301 Detailed analysis of each cohort of pupils in 2017/18 indicates Westminster looked after children and care leavers continue to make good progress in most areas and have obtained their predicted levels and grades.
- 5.302 Changes in the assessment, marking and reporting procedures used by schools and Local Authorities in were introduced 2017/18, including:
- GCSEs in England have been reformed and will be graded with a new scale from 9 to 1, with 9 being the highest grade. The new GCSE content is much more challenging and fewer grade 9s will be awarded than A\*s. English Language, English Literature and Maths have already moved onto this new grading system, with an additional 20 subjects to follow in 2018 and the remaining transitioning by 2019.
  - The new grades have been introduced to signal that GCSEs have been reformed and to better differentiate between students of different abilities.
  - The DfE has advised schools and Local Authorities that it would be incorrect and misleading to make direct comparisons showing changes over time.
  - The introduction of Progress 8 and Attainment 8 last year is the measure by which schools are now being judged.
  - There are significant difficulties in using the new methods for calculating the attainment of Looked After Children. Many pupils do not have prior attainment data, making it difficult to calculate progress, pupils at KS4 often achieve non GCSE qualifications and the new methods do not take into account the particular educational journey of each pupil. Virtual School Heads are currently in discussions with the DfE as to the most appropriate method to report attainment and progress from 2016.
- 5.303 In light of the above context, attention should be paid to individual stories and progress each child/young person rather looking at the headline outcomes.

5.304 Historically, Westminster’s Looked after Children and Care Leavers have achieved good outcomes at the end of Key Stage 2, Key Stage 4 and with their routes into Further and Higher Education.

- 2017’s GCSE were above the national averages for LAC
- KS2 outcomes were above the national averages for LAC
- The number of Post 16 LAC in education, employment or training is high compared to national averages
- The number of care leavers in Higher Education has remained consistently high and above the national averages.

### **Progress and attainment at Key Stage 1**

There was only 1 pupil in the reporting cohort in Westminster. They made expected progress, exceeding age related expectations in their writing and age related expectations in Science.

### **Progress and attainment at Key Stage 2 (Table I)**

There were 6 pupils in the reporting cohort in Westminster. Westminster Looked After Children achieved particularly well and show a narrowing of the gap between national averages across each area this academic year, with our children achieving above the national average across all areas.

	<b>New expected standard reading</b>	<b>New expected standard grammar, punctuation and spelling</b>	<b>New expected standard Maths</b>	<b>New expected standard in all areas</b>
<b>WCC LAC (6)</b>	67%	67%	67%	67%
<b>All pupils</b>	75%	78%	76%	64%

All pupils received the support of the Virtual School and had an up to date PEP. Close collaboration between professionals has ensured that the majority of pupils are now in more stable care and school placements. There is evidence that Pupil Premium was used to good effect to improve progress. There remains work to be done with schools to ensure they are equipped with effective strategies to support these pupils effectively into KS3 and KS4.

### **Progress and attainment at Key Stage 4 (Table J)**

There were 11 pupils in the reporting cohort in Westminster.

It is difficult to compare this year's grades to previous years due to the introduction of numbered grades instead of lettered grades for English Literature, English Language and Mathematics and a range of other subjects. The educational background of many LAC makes this a complicated procedure; many LAC do not have prior attainment data or arrive in to care during KS3 or KS4 making it very difficult to give an accurate score. As yet the Virtual School is still in the process of finalising these figures, therefore for the benefit of this report, the old performance measures have been used.

This year represents a significant increase in the overall attainment of pupils at KS4, despite the complex nature of the cohort. This cohort had a range of needs, with 4 of the cohort having Education Health Care Plans in place and two young people on SEN support. Despite a range of complex needs, young people made good progress. In particular, one young person gained 6 9's (the new A\*\*), two 8's (A\*) and one 7 (A).

	<b>5 A-C including English and Maths</b>	<b>5 A-C</b>	<b>5 A-G</b>	<b>1 A-G</b>
<b>WCC LAC 2017-18</b>	45%	45%	73%	82%
<b>WCC LAC 2016-17</b>	23%	31%	46%	62%

The cohort was supported by a series of interventions to improve attainment and progress. This included the creative use of Pupil Premium to support the training of school staff, which enabled them to have a better understanding of the required interventions to support pupils, the use of 1-1 tuition and the provision of in-class support. Effective use of Pupil Premium was monitored by the PEP process and the Virtual School's tracking system. Specific projects were organised to support high achieving pupils (e.g Look to the Future) and to support SEN pupils. All pupils except one have a school or college placement for this academic year and it is expected many will continue to progress.

#### 5.305 Post 16 & Care Leavers:



***Jamie's Farm NEET Project – June 2018***

**Table K: EET**

<b>Current EET (internal reporting)</b>	<b>Westminster</b>		
	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>% of 16 and 17 year olds who are EET</b>	76%	70%	62%
<b>% of 18-25 year olds who are EET</b>	69%	60%	60%
<b>% attending university (18-25)</b>	15%	10%	12%
<b>% of apprenticeships (18-25)</b>	4%	4%	4%

Westminster continues to perform above the national and London averages with our Care Leavers, however, we are constantly striving to improve the number of young people who are in Education, Employment and Training and this remains a key area for improvement.

In the last academic year there have been a series of complex 16 and 17 year olds who have been late entrants into care and an influx in unaccompanied asylum seeking young people. They arrive often with complex histories, significant trauma and entrenched behaviour that will take time to change. The Virtual School work closely with the wider network to support these young people in moving away from gang affiliation and moving them away from being school refusers.

While some progress has been made in addressing the issues and barriers around sustaining education, training and employment for care leavers, the number of care leavers who are NEET remains high and this remains a key area for improvement. We are working on continuing to develop partnerships with Council colleagues and with businesses outside the Council to create a wider range of ambitious, stimulating and rewarding apprenticeships and employment opportunities specifically for Westminster care leavers. There have been a number of very successful cases where long term NEET young people have been successfully re-engaged in training or employment and we are continuing to explore how we can build more capacity in this area.

At the end of March 2018, 60% of care leavers were in education, employment or training (those NEET included young parents, those with significant mental health concerns, missing UASCs and those in custody). This includes 25 care leavers that are attending university and a further 5 that are off to university in Autumn 2018. This is above the national average for care leavers. Four care leavers obtained university degrees in Summer 2018 and several have made significant progress through their degrees and have moved into either their second or third years.

It is also worth noting that in the most recent DfE statistical release, Westminster has 25% of Care Leavers in Higher Education in the 19-21 cohort and is currently ranked number one in the country.

The Virtual School has also initiated a number of projects and initiatives to improve the employability of care leavers. These include:

- A monthly EET panel to track and monitor EET performance
- A pilot with Jamie's Farm which provided tailored, intensive support for NEET young people (50% of whom are no longer NEET)
- The setting up of weekly advice drop in sessions for care leavers
- The development of wider links with the Leaving Care team and other services to ensure a continued focus on care leavers across the wider council
- The development of a duty rota to enable young people and social workers to meet with Virtual School staff and receive tailored support on a weekly basis
- The use of Partnership Working with a variety of organisations to provide greater capacity

There remains a major challenge in reducing NEET levels for care leavers. There are a high of care leavers in custody, a high number of care leavers with complex needs, particularly those young people who came into care late, and an increase in the number of UASCs who have recently transitioned in to the Leaving Care Service. The Virtual School and the LAC and Leaving Care Service is working together to tackle these issues and to improve our understanding of the needs of specific groups of care leavers.

UASC who arrive in the UK late in their education often struggle to attain in line with their peers and additional language and learning support is made available to support their transition. Additionally UASC who do not have a positive decision regarding their immigration status may be unable to engage in paid employment, some training/apprenticeship opportunities and higher education.

## 6. Attendance and Exclusions (Table L)

	<b>Westminster</b>		
	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>Average attendance R-11</b>	92%	88%	88%
<b>Number with one or more fixed term exclusion</b>	14	19	21
<b>Number with permanent exclusion</b>	0	0	0

The attendance figures for 2018 remains stable in comparison to 2017 and the figure can largely be attributed to the profile of new entrants to care and their complex needs and school history prior to entering care. There were again no permanent exclusions in 2017-18. This reflects the work the Virtual School undertakes directly with schools, social workers and carers in developing strategies to avoid permanent exclusion. There were 21 pupils with one or more fixed term exclusion in 2017-18, this represents the stricter behaviour policies that are being implemented by academies and a number of young people who came into care attending schools that were unable to meet their needs.

## **7. Engagement and Participation**

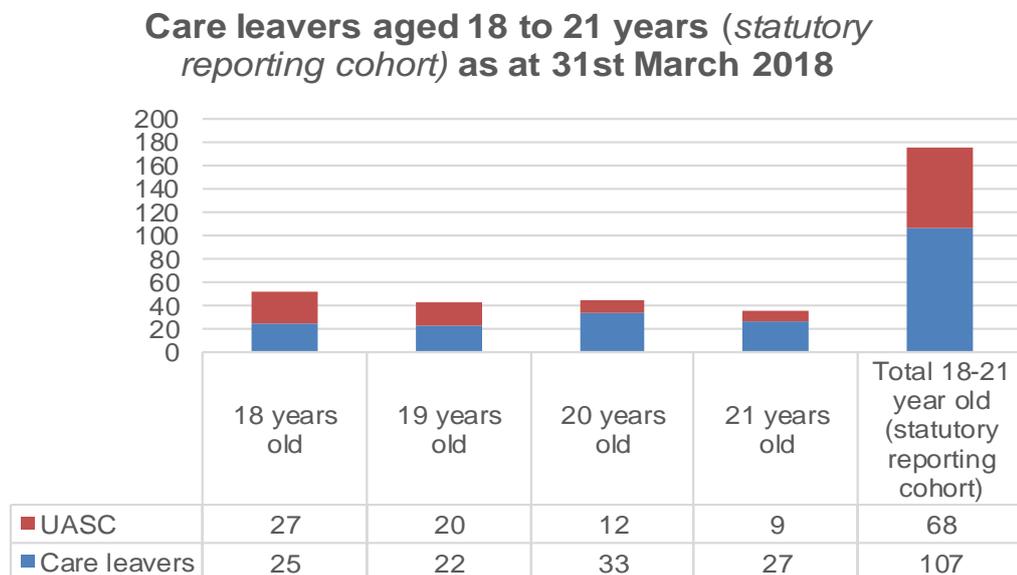
- 7.1 Westminster offers an extensive programme of participation for both looked after children and care leavers, providing them with opportunities to participate and engage within the service. This programme includes a variety of groups, consultation events, projects as well as recreational and enrichment activities. In doing so, it is recognised that the children and young people we work with want to participate in different ways and in varying degrees. Some young people want direct involvement in consultation and decision making whilst others might want to attend a group or activity. This means that we have a core group of looked after children and care leavers that frequently participate within all aspects of the programme and more specific opportunities that attract many of the wider population. In doing so, we recognise that the children and young people we work with want to participate in different ways and in varying degrees. Some young people want direct involvement in consultation and decision making whereas others might want to attend a group or an activity. Working in this flexible manner means that Westminster has a core group of looked after children and care leavers that frequently participate within all aspects of the programme as well as providing opportunities for others placed further out of borough to participate differently.
- 7.2 Consultations were carried out with looked after children and care leavers throughout 2017/18. A thematic approach is used whereby children and young people are consulted quarterly. The following topics were consulted on from April 2017 March 2018: Missing Consultation, Local Offer work, What do you want out of a foster carer and what do you want out of children's services.
- 7.3 The findings of these consultations are being taken forward by the Corporate Parenting board and will inform the updated Corporate Parenting strategy.
- 7.4 Other groups, activities and events which are part of the participation programme include a Tuesday cooking group, Winter Festivities Party, annual Sayers Croft Residential trip, a wide ranging enrichment activities programme and an annual Education Awards Ceremony. A number of looked after children and care leavers also participated in a creative arts group programme that focuses on self-esteem and emotional wellbeing. A celebration event that showcased their work was held at Tate Britain and resulted in several of them going on to participate in a London wide Tate youth arts programme. Overwhelmingly positive feedback received from participants has resulted in the programme being re-commissioned.

## **8. Outcomes for Care Leavers**

- 8.1 The Leaving Care Service assists, befriends and advises young people to make a successful transition from the Council's care to independent living in the community.

- 8.2 Care leavers move into the Leaving Care Service at the age of 18 when they officially leave care and become an adult. At this point, they are allocated a Personal Advisor who takes full case responsibility. The Pathway Plan sets out the support available for all aspect of their life, with a particular emphasis on securing settled accommodation and appropriate education, employment and training (EET). The Plan is reviewed every six months until the young person is 21, or later if they are a) completing an agreed course of education, training and employment b) they request ongoing support up to 25.
- 8.3 There were 175 care leavers in the statutory reporting cohort of 18 to 21 years at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018, of whom 68 were UASC.

**Table M: Care Leaver Cohort (including UASC).**



- 8.4 At the end of March 2018, 58% of care leavers aged 19, 20 and 21 years old were in education, employment or training (those NEET included young parents, missing UASCs and those in custody). This includes 25 care leavers that are attending university and a further 5 that are off to university in Autumn 2018. This is above the national average for care leavers. 5 care leavers obtained university degrees in Summer 2018.
- 8.5 A key priority is improving the availability, choice and promotion of apprenticeships and employment for care leavers. Westminster’s Virtual School publicises vacancies on a weekly basis to care leavers, provides drop in sessions and individualised packages to support care leavers in accessing and sustaining employment and training. This includes support with writing CVs, interview preparation and accompanying young people to interviews. Current apprenticeships include within the Council, working for an MP, working as a trainee practice manager within the NHS, as a sous chef with News UK, with a dry

lining firm following the successful completion of a construction course and with a car manufacturer.

- 8.6 76% of care leavers were in suitable accommodation at March 2018. Of those not in suitable accommodation the majority (19%) were either in custody, deported former unaccompanied minors or missing to avoid deportation. No care leavers were evicted from their final stage accommodation or living in bed and breakfast accommodation. A joint Housing and Leaving Care Service Panel meets to agree nominations and review what additional interventions some care leavers require to address their needs and enable them to eventually live independently and manage a tenancy. There is a joint funded Care Leaver Housing and Employment Coach. This post supports care leavers to manage a tenancy, to budget and manage on an income, to become economically active and financially self-reliant via sustainable employment.
- 8.7 Westminster City Council continue to provide financial support to care leavers who are liable to pay council tax charges through a 3 years exemption. This model has been adopted by many local authorities in an attempt to support care leavers with the transition to managing adult finances.

**NICKY CROUCH  
HEAD OF SERVICE FOR**

**LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN, CARE LEAVERS & SPECIALIST SERVICES**

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact Report Author**  
[ncrouch@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:ncrouch@westminster.gov.uk)