

REPORT TO: Policy and Performance Review Committee

MEETING DATE: 29 January 2013

BY: Executive Director (Services for People)

SUBJECT: Children's Wellbeing Performance - Looked After Children and Children on the Cusp of Care

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To report to Committee on performance in relation to Looked After Children and children on the cusp of care as at 31 December 2012.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:-
- i. Note the content of the report.
 - ii. Use the information provided in the report to assess and query performance where appropriate.

3 BACKGROUND

This report is provided to the Policy and Performance Review Committee to inform Members of the work which Children's Wellbeing colleagues are undertaking with partners to ensure that the needs of East Lothian's most vulnerable children are met. Information is provided on activity and outcomes and on a range of key improvements which are being implemented. The data provided relates to activity and outcomes as at 31 December 2012. The information contained in this report is drawn from a number of sources including the monthly statistical digest, the service highlight report, Aspireview and the social work integrated information system, Frameworki.

3.1 Referrals, Activity and Staffing:

The 0-18 population in East Lothian increased by 4% (Mid -Year Population Estimates (GRO(S)) between 2005 and 2011 and is projected to increase at an even greater rate over the next ten years.

- 3.2** During the financial year ending 31 March 2003, Children’s Wellbeing received 1,625 referrals but by the financial year ending 31 March 2013 it is anticipated that the service will have received almost 3,000 referrals, an increase of over 80%. During the same ten year period, the number of Looked After children has increased from 181 to 208 (increase of 15%).
- 3.3** Children’s Wellbeing is responding to these increased service demands whilst operating with 151.9 FTE staffing as opposed to 159 FTE at the beginning of the 2012/13 financial year (a staffing reduction through ‘natural wastage’ of 4.7%). East Lothian has a much lower rate of Children’s Wellbeing (services) staff than the Scottish average (5.2 per 1,000 0-18 population compared with 7.2 nationally). It has less than half the rate of staff than Edinburgh and is considerably lower than the other former Lothian authorities of Midlothian and West Lothian. Information about management and admin structures is no longer collected or published by the Scottish Government so reliable comparative data does not exist in the public domain. However, informal benchmarking (in relation to shared services etc.) has shown that East Lothian’s Children’s Wellbeing has a small management structure that has been reducing.

Staffing of Social Work Services– Children’s Services (excluding management and Admin) as at October 2010

	Number of Staff WTE	WTE Rate per 1,000, 0-18 pop
Edinburgh	1,004	12.2
Scotland	7,754	7.5
Midlothian	111	6.3
West Lothian	238	6.0
East Ayrshire	144	5.9
East Lothian	110	5.2
East Dunbartonshire	100	4.6

3.4 Looked After Children

National Context

“Looked After Children” are defined by the Children (Scotland) Act. They include (section 25) children who are “accommodated” on a “voluntary” basis, with the agreement of parent/child, and those who are looked after on a compulsory basis (section 70), either at home or accommodated in care, under a Children’s Hearing supervision requirement. In all cases there is statutory regulation which governs their care. Accommodation under section 25 only occurs when this is the only way of safeguarding the welfare of the child.

The most recent national statistics relating to 31 July 2011 showed there were 16,171 children looked after by local authorities in Scotland. The number of children looked after has increased every year since 2001, and is at its highest since 1981. At the Corporate Parenting Conference organised by East Lothian Council (November 2012), Tam Baillie reinforced the widely held view in Government and by academics that this trend will only increase. In 2001 the rate per 1,000 (0-18 population) was 9.3 and by 2011 the rate had reached 14.6.

Thirty four per cent of children looked after were **at home** with parents. Nearly a quarter (24%) of children looked after were with **foster carers** provided by the local authority, with a further 7% looked after by foster carers purchased by the local authority. The number of children looked after by foster carers or prospective adopters has increased in Scotland every year since 1993. Foster care is the most effective form of care.

One of the biggest changes in care has been the proportion of children and young people who are in formal **kin care** (children who are looked after by friends or relatives). In 2003 there were 1,518 children and young people in formal kin care which was 13.3% of the looked after total, by 31 July 2011 there were 3,963 children and young people in formal kin care representing 24.5% of the looked after population. Kin-care is the least expensive form of care away from home.

The proportion of children looked after in **residential care** was 9 per cent nationally, and is now at its lowest since data recording began. The number of children in residential care had been fairly static between 2000 and 2007, but since 2007 there has been a decline. Residential care is the most expensive form of care for our most vulnerable and challenging children and young people.

Looked After Benchmarking as at 31 July 2011

The following authorities have been used to benchmark with, either because they are of a similar size or they share similar practice to East Lothian. They include the former Lothian authorities. The information in the table below is the most up-to-date published data available until the CLAS (Children Looked After Survey) 2012 is produced the Scottish Government later this year.

	Looked After Children	Home Supervision	Foster Care /Community	Residential Care	Rate per 1,000 0- 18 Population
East Ayrshire	508	153	309	46	19.6
Midlothian	302	91	176	35	16.2
East Dunbartonshire	145	46	74	25	6.3
Edinburgh	1,362	435	821	106	15.4
West Lothian	447	170	222	55	10.7
East Lothian	201	60	119	22	8.7
Scotland	16,171	5,437	9,259	1,475	14.6

3.5 East Lothian Looked After Children (LAC)

The situation has not changed dramatically in the intervening period (since July 2011). East Lothian has 207 Looked After children and young people (as at 31 Dec 2012). This represents a rate per 1,000 of 9.2 (0-18 population) as against a national rate of 14.7. The *relative* affluence of the county explains to a certain extent why the LAC rate is below the national average but successive inspection reports and our own performance management data can evidence that good social work practice and early intervention have contributed to this relatively low total. The three inspections that took place in 2012 gave East Lothian the following grades (out of 6)

Adoption Service (October 2012) Quality of Care and Support Quality of Staffing Quality of Management and Leadership	4 (Good) 5 (Very Good) 4 (Good)
Fostering Service (October 2012) Quality of Care and Support Quality of Staffing Quality of Management and Leadership	4 (Good) 5 (Very Good) 4 (Good)
Pathway Resource Centre (November 2012) Quality of Care and Support Quality of Environment Quality of Staffing Quality of Management and Leadership	5 (Very Good) 5 (Very Good) 5 (Very Good) 4 (Good)

The Care Inspectorate and Child Protection Inspections of 2011 also reported very positively on our services.

As at 31 December 2012) over 73% of our Looked After children were accommodated (i.e. with foster carers, in Formal Kin Care (with friends /relatives) or in residential care, including secure accommodation). Generally speaking), the cost of caring for accommodated children is significantly more than Looked After children who are not accommodated (i.e. on Home Supervision).

Placement Type	Number of Children and Young People	East Lothian Rate per 1,000	National rate per 1,000
Home Supervision	56	2.5	4.9
Foster Care	97	4.3	4.8
Formal Kin Care	28	1.2	3.6
Residential Care	27	1.1	1.3
Total	207	9.1	14.6

i. Home supervision

Despite a rise in the overall number of Looked After Children, the number of children on Home Supervision has fallen to 56 and now accounts for only 27% of the total. Three years ago, when the overall total of looked after children was similar to the number it is today, Home Supervision stood at over 38% so there has been a significant shift. One explanation is believed to be the number of children who the Social Work and Integration team deal with on a voluntary basis that is, without a referral to the Children’s Hearing for a Supervision Requirement, under the Children (Scotland) Act which makes them “looked after at home. Nationally, the educational outcomes of attainment, attendance and exclusion are lowest for children on home supervision. However, in East Lothian, the academic achievement of children looked after at home (those achieving English and Mathematics at Grade 3 or above) has always been very good compared with other authorities. The last published statistics by Audit Scotland in 2008/09 showed East Lothian ranked in first place for this indicator. The small number of young people in this cohort means that variations occur frequently but Tariff scores for East Lothian S4 pupils who are Looked After away from home have been greater than the National average scores over the past 6 sessions with the exception of 2 years.

ii. **Accommodated children**

Scottish Government evidence suggests that children with many placement moves perform less well academically than those with only a few placement moves. This is also true of the general wellbeing of an accommodated child. East Lothian has 23.1% of its accommodated children with 3 or more placement moves, considerably lower than the national average of around 30%.

Foster Care

East Lothian has a history of having a healthy fostering resource, and this has led to more children being placed in foster care than residential compared to the national average. There are currently 97 children and young people in Foster Care in East Lothian; 60 foster care families. There has been a steady increase in the number of children with Foster Carers – exactly 6 years ago there were 20 fewer children and young people than today.

Approximately £50,000 is paid out each week to Foster Carers to look after the children in our care. Until relatively recently, East Lothian had sufficient Foster Carers to meet demand but because of illness and retirements we have had to purchase a few external foster placements. The average cost of a placement is over £400 per week and we have had as many as 5 purchased placements at any one time during the year.

Level 3 foster carers have been developed and supported in order to meet more complex children's needs in East Lothian. Foster Carers are actively being recruited to grow our local capacity to extend our care at home foster care provision.

Formal Kin Care (with friends/relatives)

Kinship care is defined as care by family or friends:

- Non-statutory or informal kinship care – close relatives can care for children without any involvement by the local authority. We may be involved in offering discretionary financial support to these families.
- Formal kinship care – formal kinship care happens when the child is looked-after and accommodated under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. Relatives providing formal kinship care are legally entitled to financial support from us.

The group of children in a formal kin care arrangement has been increasing nationally whilst in East Lothian the reverse has been true. 30 months ago there were 47 children and young people living with formal kinship carers and now we have 27 (a fall of 43%). Currently the rate per 1,000 of children in formal kinship care in East Lothian is 1.2 compared

with a national average of 3.6. We are considering how we can support kinship carers better. East Lothian is not able to meet the Fostering Network finance payment levels as recommended by Scottish Government. There are a further 26 children and young people in informal kinship care (not Looked After) who are receiving support and/or payments. We now have 93 kin care families on our wider mailing list.

Residential and Secure Accommodation

At 31 December there were 27 children and young people in residential care, 15 of these were in establishments that are out-with East Lothian. The rate per 1,000 is 1.2 as opposed to a national rate of 1.3. 12 young people are in our 2 local residential units, 14 were in residential schools and 1 young person was in secure accommodation (as at 7 Jan 2013 there were none). A few of these children have severe disabilities/Additional Support Needs. Until two years ago it was relatively uncommon to have any East Lothian young people in secure accommodation. However, there has been a large rise in admissions as a result of young people presenting very challenging behaviour at a time when existing resources were stretched. This has had a big impact on residential expenditure given the high costs of secure care.

The cost of residential school placements are variable, but rose significantly from £1,561 per week in 2000 to £2,397 per week in 2005 or 10.5% per annum over the period, and are now generally around £2,600, while the costs of secure places are much higher at over £5,000 per week. In such cases, each child is funded for core costs, plus often additional funding for the specific needs of the child, which are required by the schools and funded by social work, so whilst the numbers in residential care have remained relatively stable; the cost of care has risen considerably.

3.6 Children on the Child Protection Register

The national average rate per 1,000 0-15 population of children on Child Protection Registers throughout Scotland was 2.8 (as at 31 July 2011). East Lothian's rate has traditionally been above the national average and despite being set against a rising 0-15 population and a huge increase in referrals to the register, the actual numbers have remained broadly in the 55 to 75 band. One factor that might explain why we have a higher than average rate is that under the Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures for Edinburgh and the Lothians a child cannot be removed from the Child Protection Register because they have become Looked After, except by a Review Case Conference. Currently around 20% of registrations in East Lothian are of Looked After Children. Many authorities outwith the Lothians deregister children as soon as they become Looked After. Some of the children on the Child Protection Register in East Lothian

might otherwise be looked after, but partner agencies tend to feel Child Protection is a more protective system.

There has been considerable debate in Scotland as to whether a high rate of registration is a negative or positive thing. It is important not to look at child protection in isolation – it should be seen as part of a range of measures to protect vulnerable children. East Lothian’s higher than average rate per 1,000 on the Child Protection Register is more than offset by the very low rate of children on Home Supervision.

Number of Children on Child Protection Registers as at 31 July 2011

	Number of Children on CPR	Rate per 1,000 0-15 population
Midlothian	158	10.2
Edinburgh	244	3.4
East Lothian	60	3.2
East Ayrshire	65	3.1
West Lothian	94	2.7
East Dunbartonshire	26	1.4
SCOTLAND	2571	2.8

3.7 How we manage performance

Performance is monitored closely within Children’s Wellbeing and performance data is used extensively to inform the planning process.

Frameworki is the client based integrated information system which provides information for the Monthly Digest, Aspireview, the weekly Child Protection Register review, the weekly Duty workload report, Time Interval reports, budget reports, inspection reports, HGIOC, the Commissioning Strategy, the Single Outcome Agreement, business plans and the Integrated Children’s Services Plan. Issues and areas for further investigation are raised at the Chief Officer’s Group, Senior Management Group, Operational Management Group or at the Service Evaluation meetings held by the Children’s Services Development Team and taken forward. Individual performance issues can be addressed at team meetings or through the supervision process.

A LAC monitoring group meets quarterly to take an overview of all children who are looked after and consider whether we should be moving towards permanency/adoption

All looked after children are reviewed after 6 weeks and then after 3 months to ensure that it is appropriate that they remain looked after /

accommodated. The Children's Hearing reviews supervision requirements at least every 6 months.

The multi-agency screening group (MASG) looks at very early intervention. It is a partnership between Children's Wellbeing, Health, Education, Police, etc. to screen cases & decide what intervention is required by whom.

The External Panel is run jointly with Education and acts as gate-keeper, access to external resources. The Internal Panel is similar but it looks at alternatives to accommodation gate-keeping, including early years.

IRD reviews occur for retrospective reviews of Child Protection decisions and there are meetings with the Reporter to look at common issues. Fostering / permanency / kin care panels also meet regularly.

3.8 Key Performance Improvement Areas.

A review of the performance data tells us that the demands on the Service are increasing at a faster rate than the budget available for Children's Wellbeing services. Greater social and economic deprivation and an increasing 0-18 population suggest that need for a children's social work service will only increase. Children's Wellbeing is in the middle of a Service Review which is attempting to restructure the service to meet the needs of the vulnerable children and young people and families in East Lothian within the financial constraints of the new economic climate. The future focus for Children's Wellbeing, as identified by the Service Review, will be threefold:

- i. protect and intervene early to support vulnerable children in or on the cusp of care.
- ii. protect children and young people from harm/abuse meeting our statutory obligations
- iii. improve longterm life chances of children and young people who have a disability or are looked after by the Council

3.9 Key areas of work

Key areas of work for the service revolve around the Integrated Children's Services Plan, the Children's Wellbeing Plan and the Commissioning Strategy. The aim of the Commissioning Strategy is to make families more resilient, increase capacity in East Lothian and to adopt intelligent commissioning externally due to the variable cost of residential provision

Specific work

Work is underway to achieve a reduction in the total number of looked after children in East Lothian (as a rate per thousand of the 0-18 population) by early intervention and greater use of informal kin care:-

- A reduction in the number of accommodated children (in residential care, with friends and relatives, and in foster care) in East Lothian (as a rate per thousand of the 0-18 population)
- Increasing the numbers of foster carers (the cheapest and best option) / residential places so we have sufficient capacity to meet the needs of East Lothian children
- Increasing numbers of children placed for Adoption through the Adoption Plan
- An increase in both formal and informal kin care where we are developing our policy and guidance.
- A reduction in the proportion of children educated outwith East Lothian
- An increase in the number of young people receiving After Care services who are in positive destinations
- Strengthening families and developing strategies and practices that work. in particular with the purpose of effective early Intervention, especially in the early years. This links to the work of the Early Years Review
- A family focused and joined-up approach to the problems of drugs, alcohol, domestic violence and neglect.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Our Commissioning Strategy links to the national framework agreement being developed by Scotland Excel which will support the strategic commissioning of social care services by local authorities. The secure care contract was the first national children's social care contract in Scotland, and contracts for foster care and children's residential care services are currently in development.

The new Children and Young People Bill will be introduced to Parliament this year will embed the rights of children and young people across the public sector in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and improve the availability of integrated early learning and childcare by increasing the funded annual provision

It will support implementation of the [Getting it right for every child](#) approach by putting in place legislation that ensures all children and young people from birth up to leaving school have access to a Named Person and a single planning process is in place to support those children and young people needing the involvement of a range of services. It will also propose that the right of young people leaving care to ask for help from a local authority is raised from the age of 21 to 25, a

clear definition of Corporate Parenting is put on statute, a new 'order' is put on statute to support the parenting role of kinship carers and use of Scotland's Adoption Register by local authorities is made compulsory.

The Early Years Framework highlights the importance of all national and local agencies, the third sector and independent sector working together to deliver improved outcomes for our children. The key messages are:

- the importance of the early years for a child's development and future life;
- movement from crisis management to prevention and early intervention;
- interventions in the early years can generate significant financial savings;
- shift from doing things for people, to enabling them to support themselves;
- universal services should be used to improve outcomes for children;
- services should be delivered using the child centred approach of GIRFEC;
- it is vital to have a well trained and well supported workforce.

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This report is not applicable to the well being of equalities groups and an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Financial - The service budget out-turn as at 30 November 2012 was Budget: £7,512,515 with an Actual spend of £8,456,964: an overspend of £944,449. The areas of overspend remain those associated with the carry forward of the 2011/12 budget shortfall of £560K, and ongoing overspend against external/secure placement provision and 'Section' budgets

Personnel - A staffing reduction of 4.7% since April 2012 has consisted predominantly of support staff but this in turn has impacted on frontline workers The Climbie Report recommended that caseloads of vulnerable children for workers should number no more than 14. East Lothian Children's Wellbeing workers have average caseloads of 15.5. There is a balance to be struck between workforce planning and risk management.

Other - None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Children's Wellbeing Monthly Digest summary statistics

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DECEMBER 2012
CHILDREN'S SERVICES
KEY SUMMARY STATISTICS

ACTIVITY DATA AND OUTCOMES

	DECEMBER 2012	INCREASE	REFERRALS CUMULATIVE	
NUMBER OF REFERRALS	190	-32	2177	
			EAST LoTHIAN RATE PER 1,000 (0-18 POPULATION)	SCOTTISH AVERAGE RATE PER 1,000 (0-18 POPULATION) (2011)
TOTAL CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER	207	3	9.1	14.7
TOTAL LOOKED AFTER AT HOME	56	3	2.5	4.9
TOTAL LOOKED AFTER IN FOSTER CARE	97	-2	4.3	4.8
LOOKED AFTER FORMAL KINCARE (FRIENDS/RELATIVES)	27	1	1.2	3.6
LOOKED AFTER RESIDENTIAL	27	1	1.2	1.3
<i>(NUMBER IN RESIDENTIAL CARE WHO ARE IN SECURE ACCOMMODATION)</i>	1	-1		
PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN IN EXTERNAL RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENTS	55.6%			
NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN EAST LoTHIAN RESIDENTIAL CARE UNITS AGED UNDER 12	0	0		
NON LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (SEBN) PLACED IN RESIDENTIAL CARE (50% Children's Wellbeing Funding)	4	2		
UNALLOCATED LAC	0	0		
UNALLOCATED LAAC	1	1		
% OF LAC ACCOMMODATED AWAY FROM HOME	72.9%	-1.0%		
% OF LAAC WHO HAVE 3 OR MORE PLACEMENT MOVES	23.1%	-0.4%		
CHILDREN IN PRIVATE FOSTERING ARRANGEMENT	1	0		
CHILDREN IN INFORMAL KINSHIP CARE	26	0	EAST LoTHIAN RATE PER 1,000 (0-15 POPULATION)	SCOTTISH AVERAGE RATE PER 1,000 (0-15 POPULATION) (2011)
NUMBER OF CHILDREN ON CHILD PROTECTION REGISTER	71	0	3.8	2.9
NUMBER WHO ARE ALSO LOOKED AFTER	15	-4		
CHILDREN WHO APPEAR ON THE CHILD PROTECTION REGISTER WHO HAVE BEEN REGISTERED PREVIOUSLY	9	0		
PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN ON THE CHILD PROTECTION REGISTER FOR MORE THAN 6 MONTHS	37%	-5%		
NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN RECEIPT OF AFTERCARE SERVICES	34	0		
% RECEIVING AFTERCARE SERVICES WITH PATHWAY COORDINATOR	91%	3%		
% RECEIVING AFTERCARE SERVICES WITH PATHWAY PLAN	79%	0%		
% OF ELIGIBLE CARE LEAVERS WHO ARE OFFERED AN AFTER CARE SERVICE	72%	-2	SCOTTISH AVERAGE	
% RECEIVING AFTERCARE SERVICES IN EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING	32%	3	30%	
CHILDREN RECEIVING DAYCARE	22	0		
NUMBER OF YOUNG CARERS ON FRAMEWORKI	56	3		
	Cumulative from 1-Jan 2012			
NUMBER OF VIEWPOINT REPORTS COMPLETED OR IN PROGRESS	94	2		

