



# **LAC & Care Leaver Cohort Review July 2015**

## **London Borough of Merton**

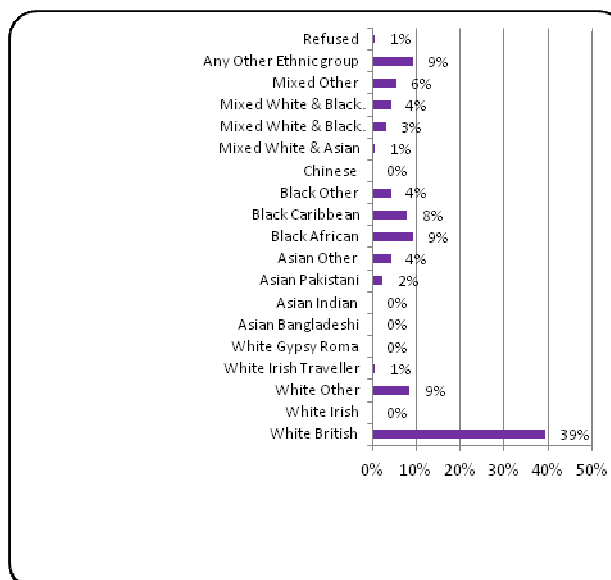
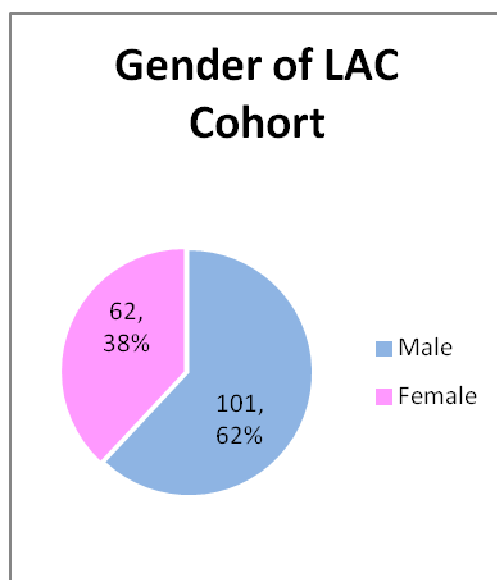
Issue Date	Author	Date Of the Next Review	Lead officer
August 2015	Sarah Daly	November 2015	SM

## LAC Cohort

- There are currently 163 looked after children. Of these 101 (62%) are male, and 62 (38%) are female.
- There continues to be a significantly larger number of children in the 14+ cohort (89), whilst the 0-5 cohort is small with only 21 children in this cohort.
- The majority of children looked after in Merton are from a white background. Mixed ethnic backgrounds, Black or Black British heritage and 'other ethnic groups' have looked after children proportions greater than the resident population.

**Table 1-3 – Age, Gender and Ethnicity of LAC cohort**

No	5	6	5	3	1	1	2	10	3	5	9	7	5	12	8	20	25	36
Age	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17



## Children Aged 5 and Under

**Table 4 – Length of time accommodated (0-5 years)**

Length of time accommodated	Number of children
3-4 Years	1
2-3 Years	5
1-2 Years	1
≤ 1 Year	14

- Of the 163 Looked after children 21 are aged 5 or under.
- Of these 21, 6 are placed under S20 CA 89 and 6 children are on Interim Care Orders. There is appropriate care planning in place for all of the children accommodated under S20 and they have all been considered at the monthly

0-5 Tracking Meeting. The remaining 9 children are subject to placement orders.

- Of the 6 children in the 2- 4 year cohort 5 are part of 2 sibling groups. All but one of the children in this cohort are now in their adoptive placements adoption order applications made to the court.

### Children on Placement Orders

- There are currently 12 children who have a legal status of Placement Order. All of these children have a parallel plan that includes adoption as one possibility.
- Of the 12 children with placement orders 9 are living with their prospective adopters. For the remaining children 1 is matched with carers and introductions are underway. For the remaining 2 children family finding is ongoing (both these children are considered 'hard to place' due to their age, ethnicity and additional needs).
- We have one relinquished baby who is accommodated under S20 but in his adoptive placement (in line with court process)

**Table 5 – Children with placement orders/placed for adoption**

	Age	Date LAC	ADM	Placed for adoption	Adoption Order
	7	5.3.10	19.3.12	22.5.13	Adoption hearings on-going – case transferred to high court due to complexity – next court hearing will be October 2015..
	7	5.6.08	20.1.09	Placement disruption	Parallel plan in place and bridging placement being sought.
	3	10.5.12	17.9.13	10.5.12 (placed with foster carer)	Match agreed at Panel in August 2015.
	2	21.5.13	17.9.13	23.5.12 (placed with foster carer)	Match to be presented at Panel in August 2015.
	5	01.05.13	11.12.14		Foster carer has withdrawn application - Family finding
	0	22.9.14	26.11.14	28.4.15	Placed with Adopters
	0	24.10.14	13.3.15	08.07.15	Placed with Adopters
	7	29.4.13	20.11.13		Introductions ongoing
	2	7.5.13	01.11.13	26.11.14	Adopters have put in application.
	4	22.4.13	1.11.13	03.02.15	Adopters have put in application.
	3	22.4.13	1.11.13	03.02.15	Adopters have put in application.
	1	2.9.14	26.11.14	28.04.15	Adopters have put in application.

	1	24.11.14	20.03.15	27.04.15	Adopters have put in application.
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### Children aged 6-13

- There are 53 looked after children in the age cohort 6-13 years. The majority of these (29 children) have a plan for long term fostering and are subject to Full Care Orders. 1 is subject to an Interim Care Order and there are on-going care proceedings. 20 children aged 6-13 are accommodated under S20 arrangements.
- 3 children in this cohort are subject to placement orders and were referenced in table 3. 1 is in an adoptive placement but there are significant complexities being dealt with through the courts. For 1 child the care plan for adoption is actively being pursued as part of a broader permanence parallel plan. For one child a successful match has been agreed and introductions will commence in August 2015.

### Children aged 14 and 15

- There are 28 looked after children in the age cohort 14-15 years. 13 of these young people are accommodated under S20 arrangements, 10 are subject to Full Care Orders. 5 are subject to Interim Care Orders.

### Young People aged 16 and 17

- 61 (37%) of our LAC population are aged 16 and 17 years.

**Table 6 – Age of young person and year accommodated**

	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008-1997
16 years	5	9	4	0	3	1	0	2
17 years	12	12	8	1	2	0	0	1

- Of the 163 looked after children 25 young people are aged 16 and 36 are aged 17.
- In the year 2015-16 we have accommodated thirteen 16 and 17 year old young people.
- 5 young people (38%) in this cohort have been accommodated as a result of their UASC status and 2 (15%) have been accommodated following joint CSC and Housing assessments (Southwark). The reasons for accommodation are set out in table 7
- Of the 13 young people 5 are no longer in our care (3 have successfully returned home and 2 have left care having turned 18). Of the remaining 8 young people 4 are UASC, 1 is Southwark and 2 are accommodated due to their anti-social/criminal behaviours all of which are factors over which we have little control in terms of accommodation decision making.

**Table 7 – Reason for accommodation**

	Age	Previous CSC involvement?	Reason for accommodation
	17	No	UASC
	17	No	Concerns relate to anti-social behaviour and gang affiliation (no longer LAC as 18 years)
	17	No	UASC
	17	Yes –since 2010	Previous LAC young person. Concerns relate to anti-social behaviour. (Has since discharged himself from care).
	17	No	UASC (no longer LAC as 18 years)
	17	Yes – some previous involvement relating to mother’s mental health.	Remand to LA care
	17	No	UASC
	16	No	UASC
	16	Yes – significant concerns in respect of CSE and missing episodes. Previously accommodated under S20	Accommodated following concerns relating to CSE and mother’s ability to safely parent. However care plan of accommodation was not felt to be effective and YP has now returned home – (ongoing intervention in place).
	17	Yes – previous issues relating to relationship between YP and his mother	Southwark – issues relating to domestic violence and threats to family. YP presenting as isolated.
	17	Yes – significant history relating to anti-social behaviour and gang affiliation. Received a custodial sentence in 2014.	Planned discharge from YOI – placed in semi independent placement.
	17	Yes – significant historical involvement. YP had a long period in accommodation, including secure accommodation when he was younger due to persistent missing episodes and anti social behaviour.	Accommodated as a relevant child – YP presented as homeless following breakdown in his relationship with his mother
	17	No	Southwark – issues relating to historic sexual abuse and domestic violence (successful rehabilitation home following resolution of issues).

**Care Leavers (18-25 years)**

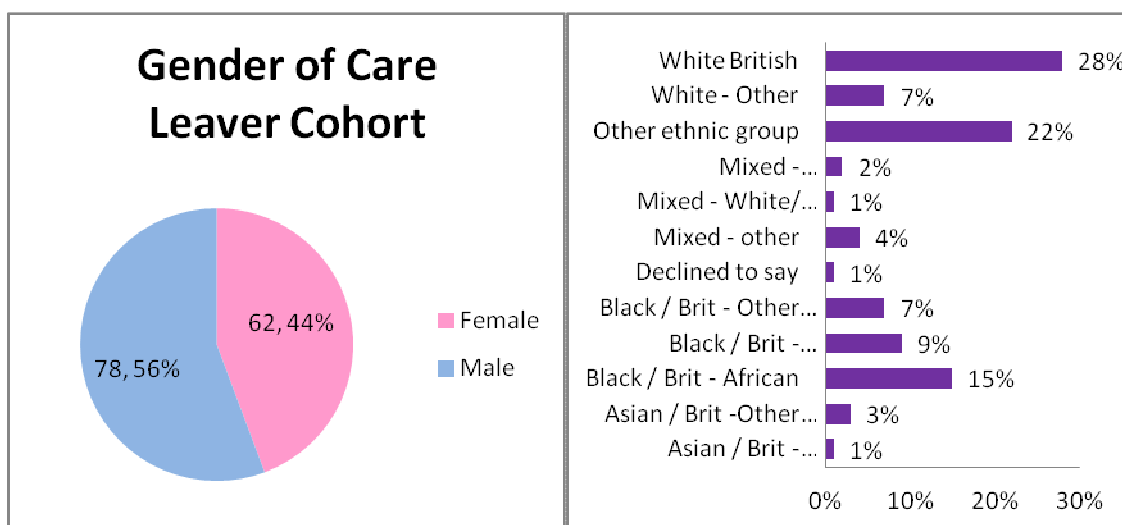
Children’s Social Care has a range of duties and powers to provide after care advice and assistance to these young people, and to those who have been accommodated

by other specified agencies. Good corporate parents will provide young people with help and support to access education, employment and training opportunities and to find accommodation suitable to meet their needs.

We currently have a care leaver population of 140 young people. 136 have a legal status of 'former relevant' and 4 have a legal status of 'qualifying' (status is dependent on the length of time in care and the age that the young person was accommodated).

**Table 8-10 – Age, Gender and Ethnicity of Care Leaver cohort**

<b>No.</b>	40	39	22	20	8	5	3	2	1
<b>Age</b>	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26



All care leavers are allocated to a social worker or personal advisor and all have a pathway plan in place which identifies the interventions that are in place to support the young person achieve positive outcomes whilst focusing on their move towards independence.

The work in this area is measured against specific performance indicators in the following areas:

- In touch
- NEET
- Living in suitable accommodation

### In Touch

The DfE SSD903 return currently gathers 'in touch' information for all care leavers aged 19/20 and 21 years. For this return the definition is that there is 'contact'

between your local authority and the young person eligible for care leaver support around 3 months before and one month after the young person's birthday.

In the SSD903 return for 2014/15 we reported that the % of care leavers aged 19/20/and 21 and 'in touch' was 77%. There has been some improvement in our contact with this cohort July data showing a figure of 85% (69/81 young people).

In terms of our whole care leaver cohort the July data indicates that we are currently 'in touch' with 125 out of 140 young people (89%). Of the remaining 15 young people 1 has advised us that they do not require us to provide a service to them and 14 are refusing contact

In addition to this performance measure the 'Care Leaver Regulations' set out that the practitioner must visit the care leavers at no less than 2 monthly intervals. Due to the current reporting limitations of the CSC information system (Carefirst) we are not able to provide a report detailing the regularity of care leaver visits undertaken by the 14+ Team. In order to ensure worker and management oversight of the scheduling of visits each individual practitioner maintains a tracking sheet which is reviewed on a monthly basis.

## **NEET/ETE**

The number of care leavers who are not engaged in education employment or training has become an area of focus for us as we have seen a year on year decline in performance in this area. As part of the Care Leaver Task Force we have reviewed the intervention resource in this area and have now agreed that we will recruit to an ETE worker to be based in the Virtual School to work solely with the care leaver cohort. In the interim period the 2 students based in the 14+ Team have undertaken a piece of work with the Virtual School start to address this issue.

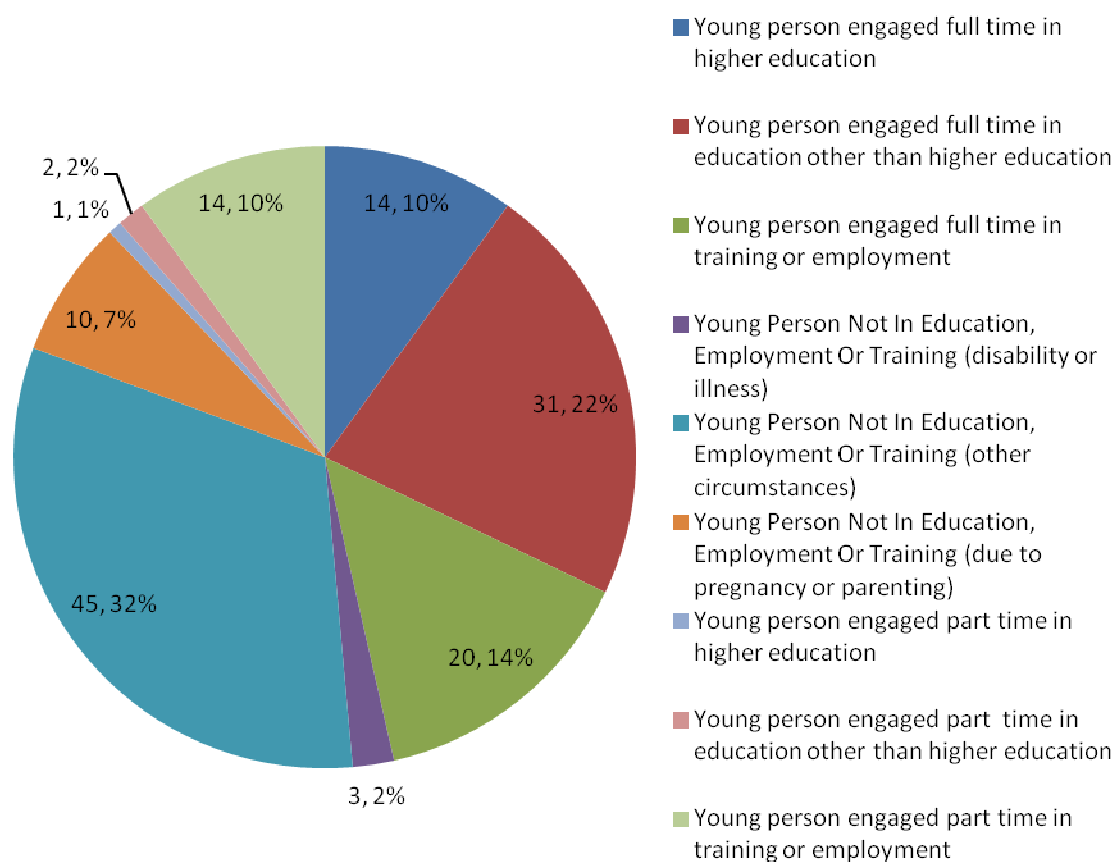
In the SSD903 return for 2014/15 we reported that the % of care leavers aged 19/20/and 21 who were in education, employment and training was 41%. There has been some improvement in the activity data for this cohort with the July figure showing 49% (40/81) young people in ETE.

In terms of our whole care leaver cohort the July data indicates that 82 out of 140 young people (59%) are currently engaged in employment education and training.

The following table sets out the type of ETE activity that the young people are engaged in.

**Table 11 – NEET/ETE Activity**

## NEET/ETE Activity



### Accommodation

The legal framework for care leavers aims to make sure that they receive the right support and services in their transition to adulthood, including access to accommodation. General homelessness legislation also provides a safety net for young care leavers experiencing homelessness.

The legislation most relevant to care leavers' accommodation needs is the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, which imposes accommodation duties on local authorities to support certain categories of looked-after children and care leavers.

Accommodation is to be regarded as suitable if it provides safe, secure and affordable provision for young people.



In the SSD903 return for 2014/15 we reported that the % of care leavers aged 19/20/and 21 living in suitable accommodation was 76.3% and for this cohort there has been little change with the July data 76.5% (62/81 young people).

In terms of our whole care leaver cohort, the % currently living in appropriate accommodation is 82%. Table 12 sets out some context for the unsuitable accommodation cases.

**Table 12 – Suitable Accommodation July 2015**

Type of accommodation	Number	Context
Suitable	115	Placements include independent housing, semi independence, supported lodgings, staying put and living with parents
Unsuitable – No in touch	15	We have no up to date information
Unsuitable – No fixed abode	2	Currently staying with friends and being supported to make housing applications in their local areas.
Unsuitable – Accommodation not seen	3	Asylum young people who are still in contact with their social worker but we are not aware of their current location
Unsuitable - Custody	2	Custody can never be considered appropriate
Unsuitable – Other accommodation	3	These young people are living with friends and are not/cannot pursue their own accommodation

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