
Looked After Children – Placement Sufficiency and Stability – Summary Report

Committee considering report: Communities Select Committee

Date of Committee: 08 November 2016

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To update and inform on our progress of West Berkshire ensuring good placement sufficiency and stability for our Looked After Children and Care leavers and the challenges we currently face in ensuring good outcomes are achieved and good care is delivered.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Committee considers the attached report and gives challenge and scrutiny to the arrangements in place and offer any suggestions to further strengthen our placement availability.

Executive Summary

3. Introduction

- 5.1 Every Local Authority has the duty of ‘sufficiency’ that requires it to ensure, through direct provision or commissioned services, a range of placements to meet the needs of the children in their care. Fundamentally this means providing to our children the right placement, in the right place, at the right time.
- 5.2 This approach is based on accepted commissioning principles. This means understanding and assessing need; anticipating the right number and type of placements; developing the market to meet requirements; ensuring robust procurement methods; effectively managing contracts with providers and monitoring outcomes.
- 5.3 Children and Family Services are committed to ‘getting to good’ by 2020 alongside the Council commitment. This strategy reflects the recommendations of OFSTED’s Single Inspection of Children’s Services, March 2015 and the LGA Peer Review, July 2016 which recognises the good progress that is being made in this area and ensures we are prioritising the needs of our Looked After population
- 5.4 This report also describes the activity we are undertaking to ensure that children on the edge of care, that is those children on a Child in Need or Child Protection plan, are given the appropriate support to remain at home if at all possible and all alternative options are exhausted prior to bringing children into the case of the Local Authority.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 It is considered that good progress is being made in the area of placement sufficiency but will continue to need to be a priority going forward.

5. Appendices

- (A) Report on Placement Sufficiency and Stability
- (B) LAC Benchmarking