

**REPORT TO:** Safer Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 12 November 2013

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director Children & Enterprise

**PORTFOLIO:** Children, Young People and Families

**SUBJECT:** Children in Care and Children in Care of Other Local Authorities (CICOLA's)

**WARD(S)** Borough-wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To highlight risks and concerns regarding fragmented commissioning and quality assurance of this vulnerable cohort.
- 1.2 To ascertain senior management and partnership support of this priority area and to address concerns appropriately.
- 1.3 To present an update report regarding the current numbers of Children in Care of Other Local Authorities (CICOLA's) and the possible impact on services with Halton.

1. **RECOMMENDATION: That** The Board note the progress made on notification and ask for a further report to be presented in six months

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The Commissioning Partnership has highlighted Children in Care as a priority within the new Commissioning Framework.
- 3.2 There is currently a health action plan for children in care that has been completed by Bridgewater. There is also a local authority action plan for Children in Care. There are some cross cutting themes such as the notification process that are duplicated within both plans.
- 3.3 The Children in Care strategy is required to be refreshed to ensure local and national political changes are reflected and outcomes appropriately achieved.
- 3.3 With CCG's in place and changes within Bridgewater there is a need to review these plans and the governance arrangements and structure of the Children in Care Partnership Board to ensure commissioners and providers are held to account to deliver improvements in standards and outcomes for children in care. There is a need to integrate plans and work streams to ensure joint improvements are made.

- 3.4 Cheshire West and Chester and Halton are developing a joint Children in Care Participation Service. This service will allow the young people in care to reflect their views within the action plan. The Children in Care will be able to support the development of the strategy/action plan and the changes with the board structure through the children in care participation service.
- 3.5 Within the current notification process Local Authorities have statutory duties in determining the most appropriate placement for a looked after child. It is mandatory that the placing social worker informs the looked after nurse in the new authority. However it is now understood that this is a national problem as social workers are not informing placing authorities about these children and young people.
- 3.6 It had been agreed that the Looked After Nurse (Bridgewater) would keep the up to date CICOLA list, however there is a need to review this process to ensure that the authority is fully aware of the children. The LAC Nurse has recently informed commissioners that they do not have access to all children and young people who have been placed in the borough due to the lack of other authorities notifying the looked after children.
- 3.7 The revised Children in Care Partnership board will be tasked at prioritising the notification process and how to improve the quality is improved for children coming into and leaving the borough.
- 3.7 The CCG have recently been working with Bridgewater to audit current practice to help improve standards and have concerns with the following areas:
- the timely production of paperwork for medicals
  - the priority attached to the medicals by other services
  - resource issue as only 1 nurse available
  - Time taken by social care to provide paperwork for initial medicals from the time of entry to care.
  - Length of time from receipt of paperwork to clinic date
  - Length of time to receive the medical report
  - Length of time from receipt by the LAC team to send out the report to social care
  - Length of time between health assessment request sent out to HV/SN and return of paperwork
  - Length of time from receipt of notification to receiving records from the placing authority
  - The notification process
  - The placing authority lack of requesting a health assessment?
  - The young person having unmet health needs on arrival
- 3.8 There has been development in Bridgewater where the LAC nurse will be moved to Lister Road to be co-located with the Community Paediatricians and School Nursing. The move to One Bridgewater would also result in additional admin support to the Halton service to allow the production of the

data required by the CCG to enable us to claim from other CCG's for work done by Ann/our other health professionals so we can offset against bills received.

- 3.9 At any time there are a total of around 60,000 children that are looked after in the UK – this represents 0.5% of all children. Over the course of any year a total of 85,000 children will spend some time being looked after. Nationally 40% of children remain looked after for less than 6 months with 15% being looked after for 5 yrs or longer.

#### **4.0 THE NOTIFICATION PROCESS**

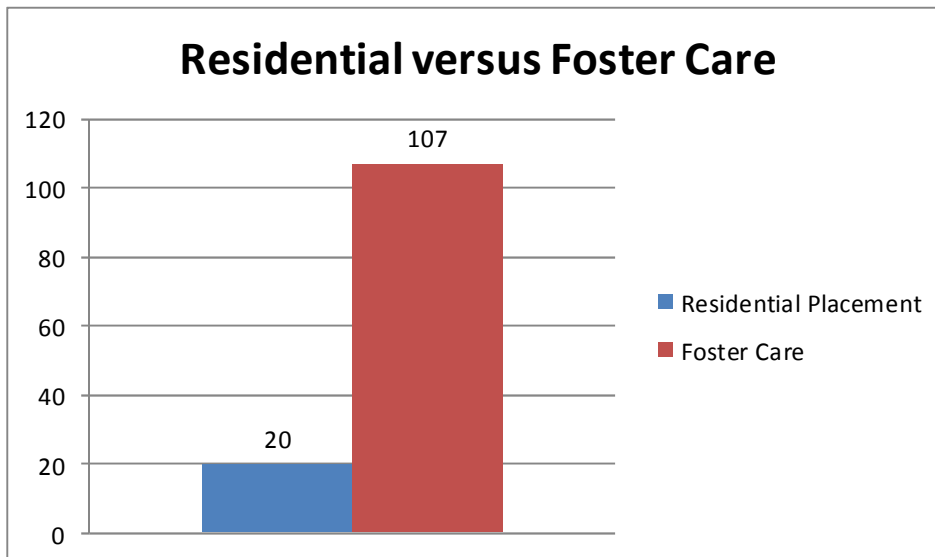
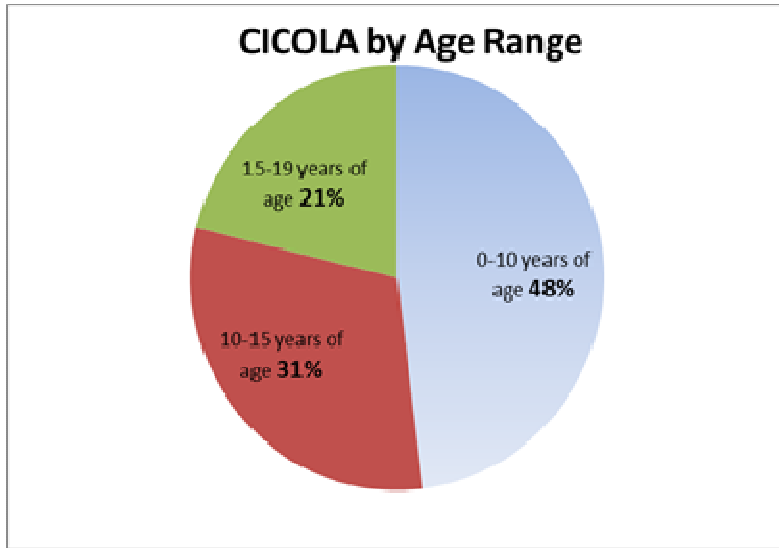
- 4.1 The current notification process for authorities is that the placing social worker should notify the new authority with a notification form. Although this is mandatory and expected there have been instances where this has not been completed. Instances where it is recognised that there has been a delay or lack of completion then the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be informed to ensure a complaint is returned to the local authority raising safeguarding concerns.
- 4.2 The LAC nurse currently provides the local authority a monthly update of the list. The Looked after Child Nurse should also implement an initial health assessment. This is required to be completed within 2 weeks of a child's placement.
- 4.3 To improve the accuracy of the list Halton Borough Council have also developed a provider forum where all the providers are asked to complete and return when CICOLA's arrive into the borough. The process is repeated when the child leaves the placement and is discharged from the provision.
- 4.4 The Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) will also be engaging the GP's within this process and encouraging the GP's to complete a notification to the local authority.
- 4.5 Further work is being implemented to ensure all children are accounted for and attend appropriate educational provision.
- 4.6 A request has also been made regionally to ascertain if there are good examples of maintain accuracy of an integrated list. There has been no positive feedback at the moment. The government are consulting on a new policy to be launched later this year 'Reforming children's homes care' and 'Improving safeguarding for looked after children'. This policy will have three functions with one of them being to improve the notification process:
- 1) Prior to a new provider opening a Childrens home a risk assessment will be completed between the police, local authority and the new provider which will inform Ofsted in relation to registering the provider /provision and refusing
  - 2) The provider will notify the local authority when a young person is new to the placement and area as well as when they leave.

- 3) Improve provider standards in preventing child sexual exploitation.
- 4.7 It is acknowledged that despite the new consultation Halton borough Council and its partners need to work together to improve the notification process. There are further improvements required which will improve the accuracy of the list:
- 1) To focus on just Halton children and young people as currently St Helens children and young people are still on the list.
  - 2) To have separate sheet/section for end of placement/children leaving Halton (To include where have they gone to.
  - 3) To have mandatory start date of the placement
  - 4) The CCG have also stated that they would want date of initial health assessment completed onto list
  - 5) To have the child's current school placement included onto the list
  - 6) To have when the child leaves the placement
- 4.8 The governance arrangements of the Children in Care Partnership Board is currently being reviewed along with terms of reference and membership.
- 4.9 The Board will be responsible for developing an integrated strategy and action plan being accountable to the safeguarding board and commissioning partnership.
- 5.0 The Children in Care Participation service will support the development of the plans to ensure that the young person's perspective is part of the process.
- 5.1 To review the Healthy Care Sub Group and review the Terms of Reference, membership and purpose of the group.
- 5.2 Further work is undertaken to get a more accurate picture on how many CICOLA's reside in Halton, ensuring that the procedures around notifications of CICOLA's are appropriately utilised.

## **6.0 CICOLA PROFILE**

- 6.1 Below is an attached table demonstrating where the numbers of children are predominantly coming from. There are currently 138 Children on the CICOLA list (11 of these have an unknown address). It is not known where 7 children have come from. Recent work with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has led to the development of a joint CICOLA list.
- 6.2 The main referrer into the borough is Liverpool followed by Knowsley. It is worth noting that there has been a significant reduction of CICOLA's moving into Halton from boroughs many mile away.

<b><i>Placing Local Authority</i></b>	<b><i>Age of child 0-10</i></b>	<b><i>Age of child 10-15</i></b>	<b><i>Age of child 15-19</i></b>
Knowsley	12	1	2
Manchester	1	1	2
Liverpool	26	10	7
St Helens	4	0	0
Wakefield	1	0	0
Essex	0	1	0
Warrington	3	5	2
West Yorkshire	1	0	0
Lancashire	2	0	2
Shropshire	0	0	2
East Berks	0	0	1
South Staffordshire	1	0	0
Huddersfield	0	1	1
Buckinghamshire	0	0	1
Cheshire East	2	2	1
Wirral	2	0	1
South Devon	0	1	0
Leeds	1	0	2
Sefton	0	3	0
Blackburn/Darwin	0	1	0
London	0	0	2
Oxford	0	1	0
Rochdale	1	0	1
Birmingham	0	0	1
Aylesbury	0	0	1
Salford	0	1	0
Wigan	0	3	0
Oldham	0	2	0
Wakefield	1	0	0
Derbyshire	0	0	1
Brent	0	0	1
Telford and Wrekin	0	1	0
Cheshire West and Chester	2	1	1
Wolverhampton	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>33</b>



## 7.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no policy implications

## 8.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

No other implications

## 9.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

### 10.0 Children and Young People in Halton

Children in Care are a Children's Trust priority area

### 11.0 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Children in Care are a Children's Trust priority area

**12.0 A Healthy Halton**

Children in Care are a Children's Trust priority area

**13.0 A Safer Halton**

Children in Care are a Children's Trust priority area

**14.0 Halton's Urban Renewal**

Children in Care are a Children's Trust priority area

**15.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

A risk analysis will need to be undertaken as apart of the ongoing work around CICOLA's

**16.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

The nature of this work is to support equality and diversity

**17.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Equality Impact Assessment (2011)	Contracts Commissioning Team, Second Floor, Rutland House	& Barbara Butterworth