



CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE
18 February 2020

ITEM 10

Report sponsor: Suanne Lim, Director Early Help
& Children's Social Care
Report author: Judy Levitt, Team Manager
Children's Permanence Team

Exit from Care – September to December 2019 Progress Report

Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update of the Children's Permanence Team performance. The work of the Children's Permanence Team is an essential part of Early Help and Children's Social Care's overall sufficiency strategy. The team has had a significant impact on safely reducing numbers of children in care over the year and in doing so, providing year on year financial savings for the local authority.
- 1.2 In summary, between April 2017 and March 2018, five children exited care providing a total saving of £81,553. Between April 2018 and March 2019, ten children exited care, providing a total saving of £215,833.83. Between April 2019 and December 2019, twelve children exited care providing a total saving of £582,598.49.

1.3 Children and Young People's Summary

In the last three months, the team has been fully staffed, with three full time Social Workers (one post is what we call a job share post), one half time Children's Practitioner and a full time manager, who manages all of the Children's Permanence Team.

The Exit from care side of the team work with children and families/carers to see whether children and young people still need to be in care or if they can safely move to family and friends or live permanently with their foster carers. This report will show some of the work done by the team and help us decide how we do things in the future.

Recommendation(s)

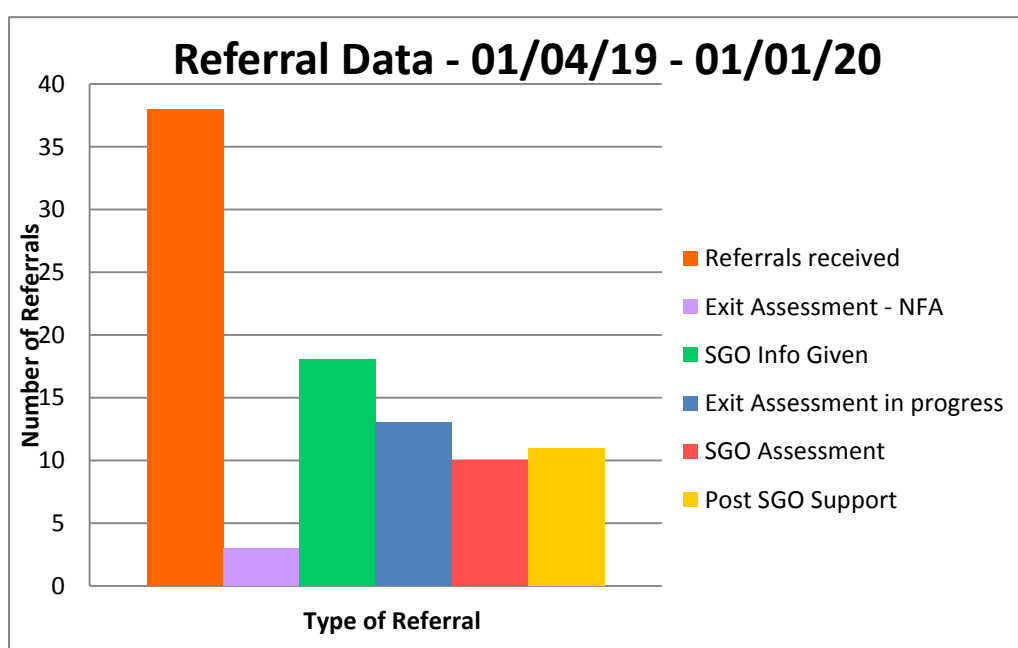
- 2.1 To note the contents of the report and make suggestion as necessary

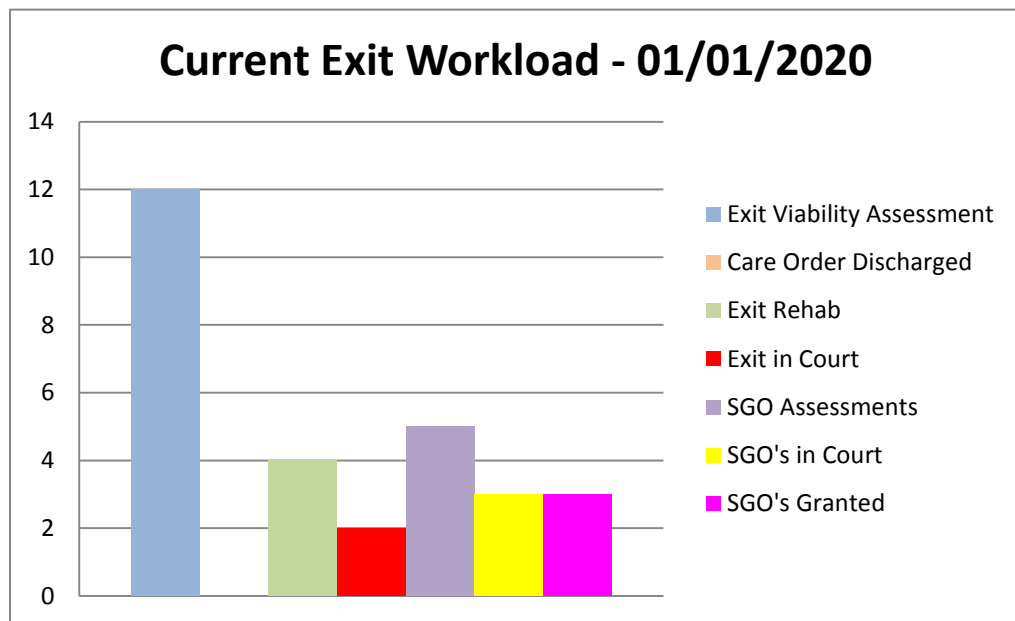
Reasons

- 3.1 To assure the Corporate Parenting Committee that any exit from care is undertaken safely, appropriately and legally for each child or young person.

Supporting information

- 4.1 The exit from care team was established in 2013 to enable children and young people safely return to the care of their immediate or extended family. There are occasions where existing foster carers apply to become their child's permanent carer.
- 4.2 The exit from care team was integrated into a wider Children's Permanence Team in 2019 which brought together both the exit from care work and the statutory adoption assessment work into a single team. The Children's Permanency Team is fully staffed comprising one manager, six social workers and one children's practitioner.
- 4.3 **Referral and Caseload Data**





- 4.4 The target for the team is to safely exit 15 young people from care by April 2020. Children return to the care of family members or remain permanently with their foster carer after application to the court for a Special Guardianship Order by the local authority. The social worker must be satisfied following a thorough assessment that this is the right placement for the child or young person in order for them to achieve their full potential during their childhood and also prepare them sufficiently for adulthood. The team provide ongoing support to the family following a Special Guardianship Order being made and depending on the needs presented, additional therapeutic support can also be provided.
- 4.5 Between September and December 2019, three children had safely exited care following the recommendation and granting of Special Guardianship Orders. The total number of children that have exited care by December 2019 is twelve.
- 4.6 There are two children scheduled for exit from care between January and March 2020 and a further four carers being assessed as Special Guardianship carers.
- 4.7 **Future Planned Work**
The team are planning to expand their service offer to complete initial viability assessments for family members at an earlier stage. This is to ensure the local authority maintain active contact with family members so opportunities are not missed when circumstances change within families. The viability assessments will provide clear recommendations about what steps need to take place for this to be a viable plan in the future. This work will be monitored on a quarterly basis and plans re-visited in the child's statutory six month Looked After review. In addition there will be an intended focus on absent fathers who may not have been considered for many years as potential carers for their children.

Public/stakeholder engagement

5.1 N/A

Other options

6.1 N/A

Financial and value for money issues

7.1 The combined savings for the local authority between April 2019 and December 2019
£582,598.49

Legal implications

8.1 No Implications

Other significant implications

9.1 None

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal	Olu Idowu	7.2.20
Finance	Alison Parkin	6.2.20
Service Director(s)	Suanne Lim	6.2.20
Report sponsor	Suanne Lim	6.2.20
Other(s)		

Background papers:

List of appendices: NA