

Cabinet Background document



7. Addressing the costs of care and support for unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people in Croydon (Pages 3 - 26)

Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member Children, Young People & Learning, Councillor Alisa Flemming

Officer: Interim Executive Director Children, Families & Education, Debbie Jones

Key decision: no

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Children, Families and Education

Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC)

Report for GPAC

February 2021

Risk Register UASC

	There is a risk that...	Consequence / Impact	Risk Owner Accountable for Delivery	Mitigating Actions Taken	Risk Rating (Impact x Likelihood)
1	Numbers of UASC / care leavers looked after increase	The significant and increasing numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) / 'care leavers looked after' arriving within the borough (above the national average) places substantial additional financial pressures on the Council in order to deliver its statutory obligations.		Engagement with the DfE, Home Office and MHCLG to address the funding imbalance, costs of supporting Home Office operations in the borough, supported transfer of UASC to other LA's and support with advancing immigration applications for current young people. Undertaking Human Rights Assessments for Care Leavers who are Appeal Rights Exhausted. Continued use of the pan London rota to place 16-18 young people with partner LA's. Engagement in the consultation for the plan to restart the National Transfer Scheme.	5 x 5 = 25 RED

Funding rates for UASC and former UASC care leavers

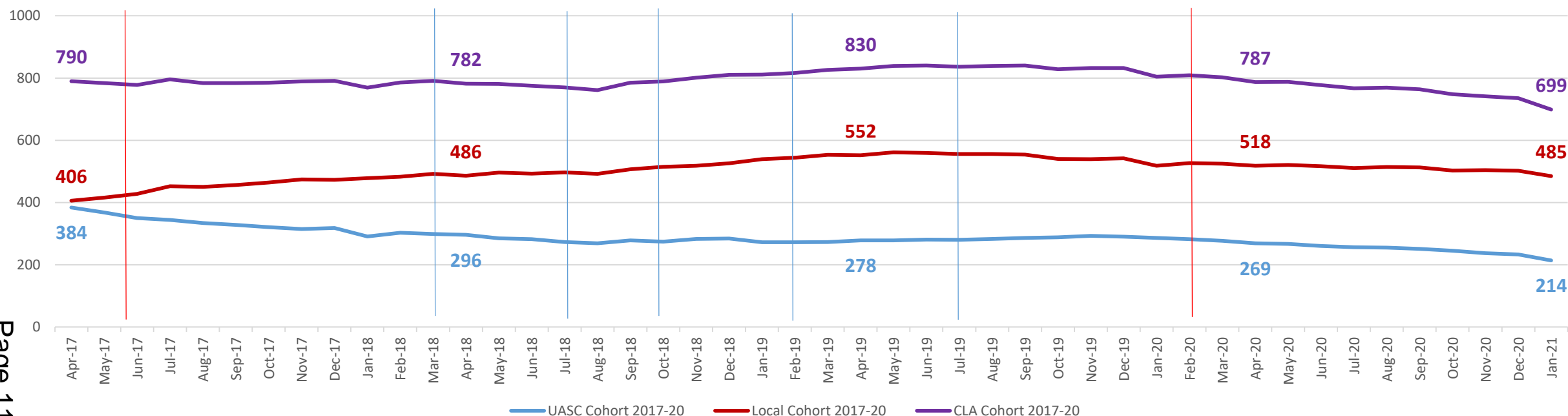
- The Funding rates for Croydon and all Local Authorities who look after UASC above the 0.07% threshold increased in April 2020. We now receive a flat rate of £143 **per night per child** until they reach 18 years old.
- The rate for the previous year was £137.50 **per child per night** for under 16 year olds and £114 per night per child for 16 – 17 year olds.
- Croydon receives the national rate of £240 **per week** for each former UASC care leaver who is in range for grant funding. Grant funding stops if a young person is declared Appeal Rights Exhausted, is over 21 years old and not in a recognised programme of education or training, if their asylum claim is declared as not being valid or if in custody or subject to a long term hospital admission.

2019/2020 UASC expenditure and Income (Finance)

		2020-21		2019-20
		December Forecast		Final Outturn
APPEALS RIGHTS EXHAUSTED (ARE)	EXPENDITURE	2,959,591		2,732,666
APPEALS RIGHTS EXHAUSTED (ARE)	INCOME	0		0
		2,959,591		2,732,666
C1232R : CHILDREN IN CARE (UASC)	INCOME	-15,355,700		-13,326,688
C1232R : CHILDREN IN CARE (UASC)	EXPENDITURE	17,063,384		23,562,257
		1,707,684		10,235,569
C1233R : LEAVING CARE (UASC)	INCOME	-4,459,000		-3,213,645
C1233R : LEAVING CARE (UASC)	EXPENDITURE	6,399,042		3,807,967
		1,940,042		594,322
TOTAL		6,607,317		13,562,557
Average Costs per day				
		UASC (up to 17 years old)	2020/21*	2019/20
		Average costs per day	£176.00	£176.00
		Average fund per day	£143.00	£125.75
		Variance (average)	£33.00	£50.25
*assumed 2020/21 average costs per day the same as 2019/20				

Children Looked After – UASC and Local Children

CLA cohort, by local/UASC Apr 17 - Jan 21



CLA numbers peaked for all CLA and local children in April 19 and since then have continued to reduce month on month.

Total CLA end of January 2021 was 699, with Local CLA 485 and UASC 214

229 local CLA are in Croydon in house fostering

99 UASC are in Croydon in house fostering

153 local CLA are in external IFA fostering placements

106 UASC are in external IFA fostering

Local Authority	Population of 0-17 year olds ONS mid-2019 estimate	Unaccompanied asylum seeking children looked after at 31 March 2019-20	% of 0-17 population who are UASC	Government 0.07% quota	Number of UASC +/- Government 0.07% quota
Croydon	94,931	270	0.28%	66	204
Portsmouth	43,756	99	0.23%	31	68
Westminster	48,791	89	0.18%	34	55
Islington	42,424	67	0.16%	30	37
Solihull	47,549	69	0.15%	33	36
Hammersmith & Fulham	37,032	51	0.14%	26	25
Billingdon	74,077	102	0.14%	52	50
Liverpool	96,052	130	0.14%	67	63
Kent	343,839	426	0.12%	241	185
Camden	52,407	52	0.10%	37	15
Manchester	122,914	115	0.09%	86	29
Waltham Forest	66,757	57	0.09%	47	10
Lambeth	62,085	52	0.08%	43	9
Newham	86,068	72	0.08%	60	12
Haringey	59,847	47	0.08%	42	5
Brent	77,687	61	0.08%	54	7
Enfield	84,309	64	0.08%	59	5

Current UASC ONLY

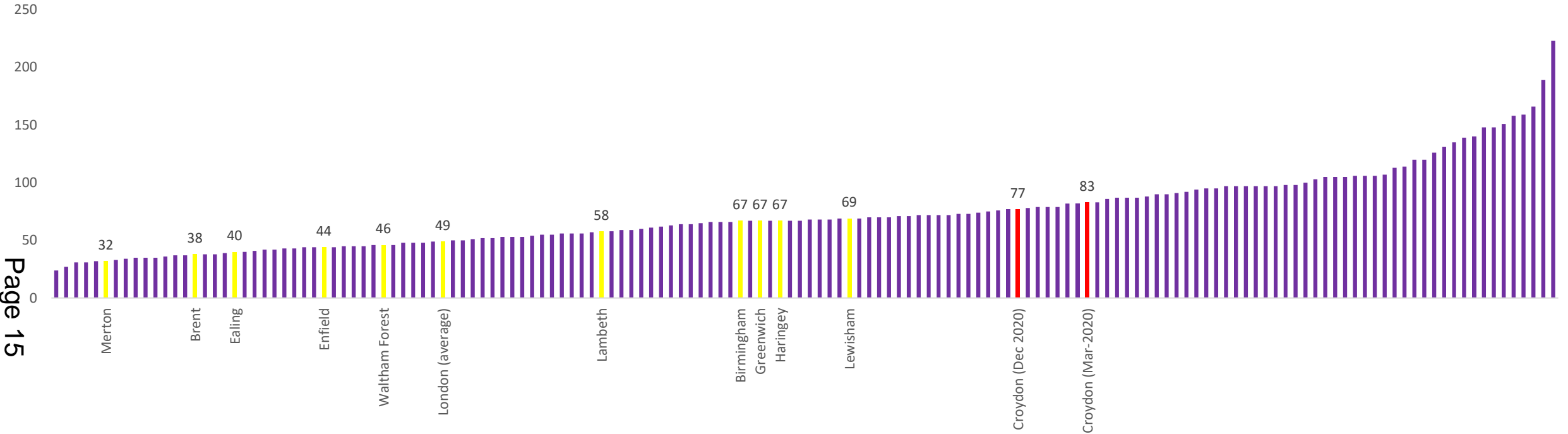
	N8A – Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child								
Need code									
Current Care Leavers and Nationality									
Nationality and current age	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	Grand Total
Afghan	20	32	27	17	9	3	3	1	112
Albanian	21	20	42	22	16	2		1	124
Angolan				2					2
Chinese					1				1
Congolese (DRC)				1		1			2
Congolese (RC)		1		1			1		3
Egyptian	2	1	1	1					5
Eritrean	12	16	12	14	10	6			70
Ethiopian	4	7	8	3					22
Guinean				1		1			2
Iranian	4	2	4	2			1		13
Iraqi	2	3	4	1			1		11
Ivorian			1						1
Kuwaiti			3	1					4
Nigerian							1		1
North Korean	1		1		1				3
Pakistani		2							2
Palestinian				1					1
Russian					1		1		2
Sierra Leonean	2								2
Somali	1		1			1	1		4
Sri Lankan		1							1
Sudanese	2	1	1	3		1	1		9
Syrian	2	2	2	3	1	1			11
Ugandan						1			1
Vietnamese	13	6	13	3	2				37
Grand Total	86	94	120	76	41	17	10	2	446

		N8A – Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child							
Child's Category of Need									
Current CLA and Nationality									
Nationality and current age	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Grand Total	
Afghan			6	10	14	16		46	
Albanian	1	1		4	19	42		67	
Algerian					1			1	
Angolan						2		2	
Burundian					1			1	
Chadian					1	1		2	
Egyptian						3		3	
Eritrean					5	6	1	12	
Ethiopian						1		1	
Gambian						1		1	
Guinean (Bissau)						1		1	
Iranian				1	1	4		6	
Iraqi					1	1		2	
Kuwaiti						2		2	
Mauritian				1				1	
Pakistani				1				1	
Serbian						1		1	
Sierra Leonean		1						1	
Somali						1		1	
Sri Lankan					1			1	
Sudanese					1	4		5	
Vietnamese			3	6	21	22	1	53	
Grand Total	1	2	9	23	66	108	2	211	

National Benchmarking of overall CLA numbers (Local and UASC)

CLA Cohort per 10,000 against National Benchmarking DfE 19/20

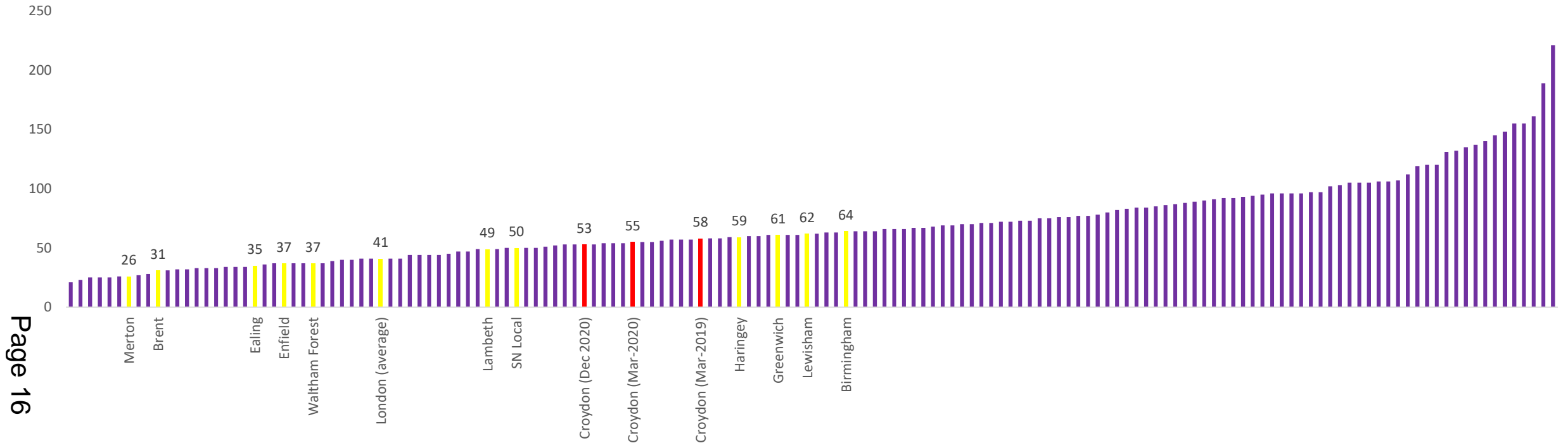
CLA rate/10k
31 Mar 2020



At the time 31.03.20 published benchmarking Croydon had 83/10k of CLA inclusive of our 0.34 UASC quota
End of December 2020 Croydon CLA are 77/10k, a reduction of 6/10k per 0-17 population since March 2020

Source:DfE LAC statistics 2019/20 & ONS Mid Year Estimates

CLA Local Rate 19/20



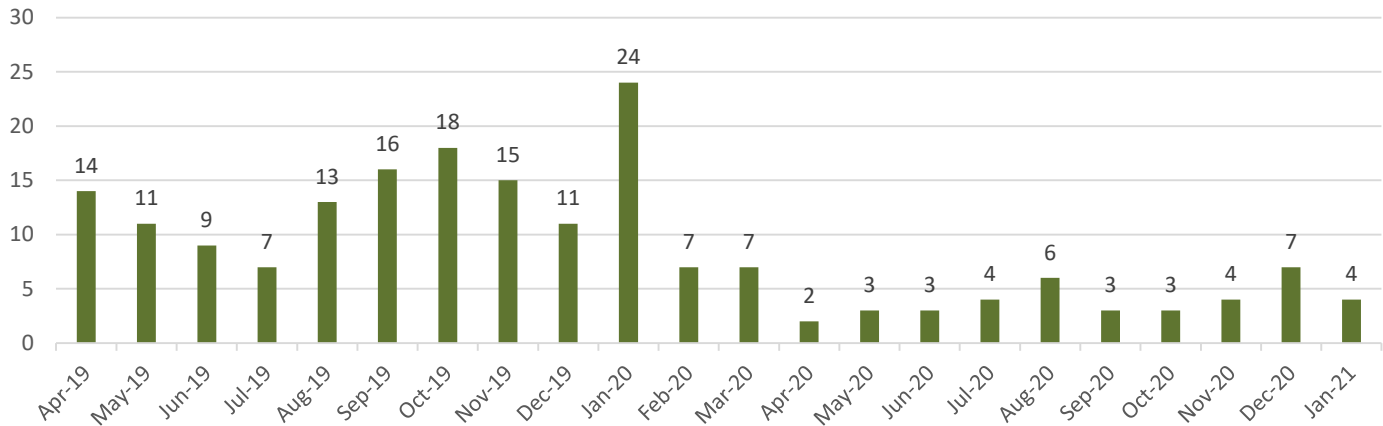
If we compare just our Local CLA figures for National Benchmarking at 30.03.20 we had a local CLA population of 55/10k, a reduction of 5/10k since March 2019.

December 2020 local CLA figures for Croydon are 53/10k, against a SN avg. Local CLA 50/10k and a London avg. of 41/10k

Source:DfE LAC statistics 2019/20 & ONS Mid Year Estimates

Impact of Covid-19

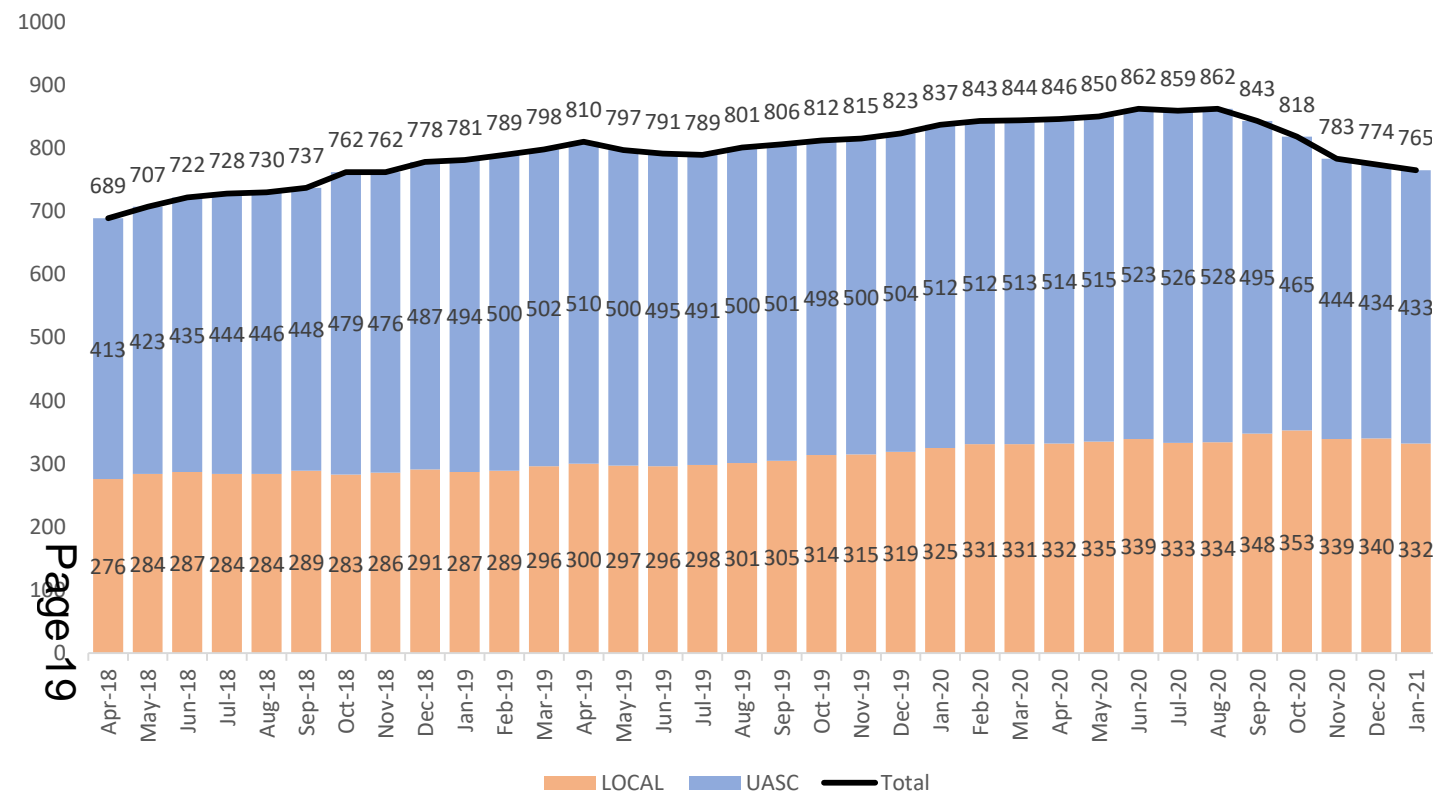
Number of new CLA in month who are UASC
Apr 19 - Jan 21



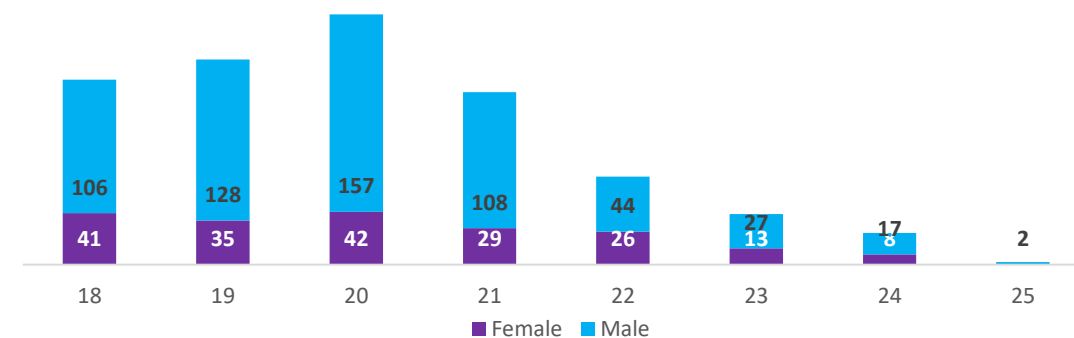
- Croydon have continued to support children and young people who arrive at Lunar House throughout the pandemic
- Since March 2020 Croydon duty social workers have supported **108** young people who are 16+ to be transferred to our London partners via the voluntary pan London arrangements/rota
- During the same period, Croydon has accommodated **46** UASC children aged under **16**
- The declining number of UASC we look after is directly linked to COVID restrictions in the UK, mainland Europe and now across the world, reducing the movements of people and freight
- Throughout 2020 most UASC children and young people have presented at costal ports as movement into the UK switched to small craft. This is linked to the reduced movements of vehicles across the UK boarder and increased checks

Former UASC Care Leavers

Care Leavers Numbers Since April 2018



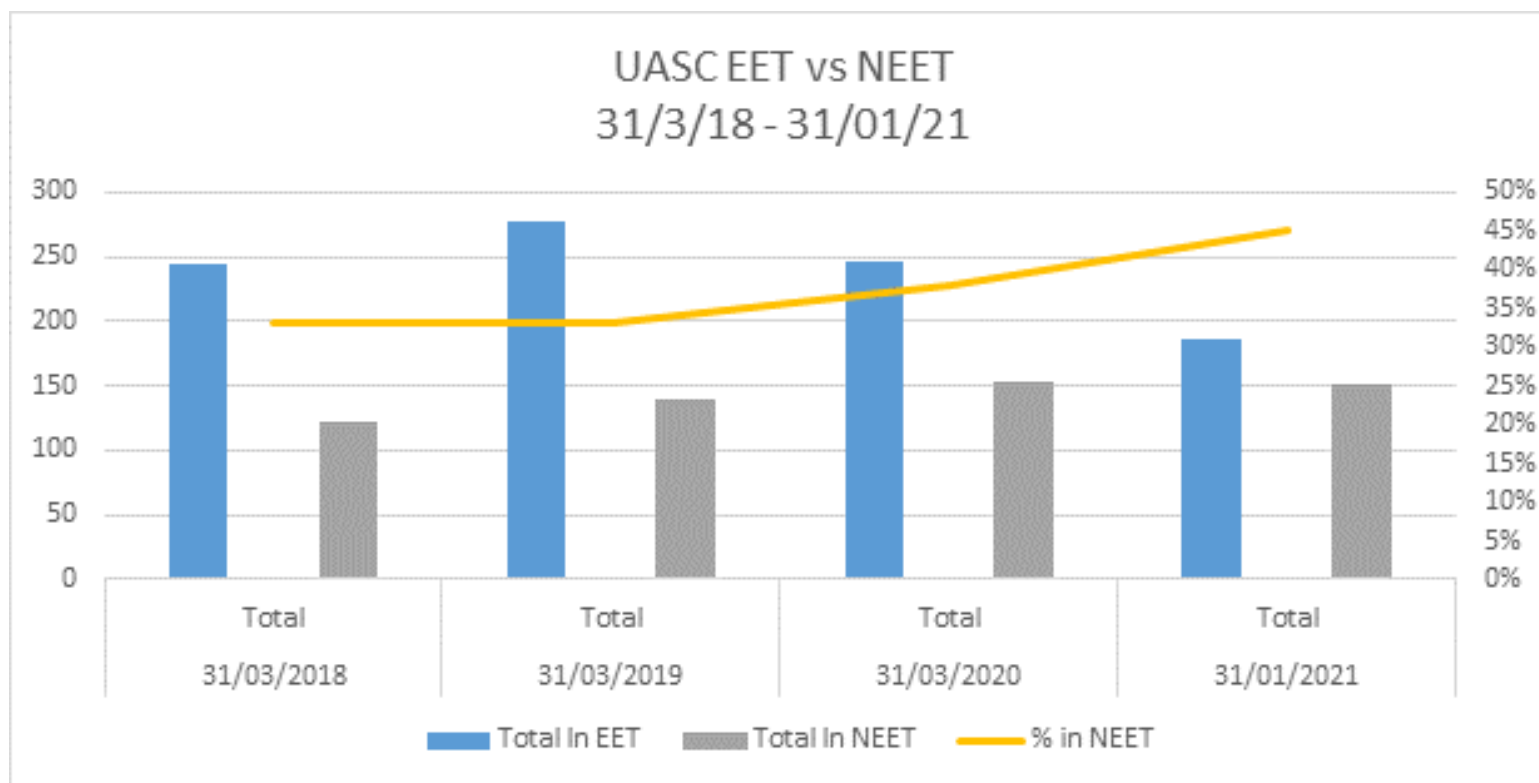
Care Leavers by Age and Gender



Due to our historical and continued high numbers of UASC we have an increasing care leaving population (18 – 25 year olds) that has for many years had a disproportionate number of UASC compared to our local young people.

Whilst the number of new UASC arrivals have reduced, our current cohort continue to age into our Leaving Care service where funding reduces dramatically.

Education, training and employment statistics for our UASC population



This continues to be an area that the Council are working on to address, the impact of Covid has meant that this has been more difficult and the statistics reflect this.

Pan London and NTS Consultation

- Croydon continues to be supported to relieve pressure of new arrivals at Lunar House via the voluntary pan London rota. As a result of COVID-19 restrictions, most London boroughs have fallen below the pan London threshold for receiving new referrals from the rota and have been very supportive throughout the pandemic.
- The government is currently consulting on a new framework in order to restart the National Transfer Scheme. We continue to wait for the outcome of the consultation but would like to see local authorities mandated to take UASC, alongside the direct transfer of new arrivals from port areas such as Croydon. We would hope that local authorities who are below the agreed threshold will do this in order to share the burden.

Key forward risks

- The continued financial impact on Croydon due to the clear disproportionality in relation to the number of UASC which inevitably feeds into the numbers of former UASC care leavers.
- Our modelling indicates that if the number of children and young people in the council's care remains the same the numbers will reduce to 0.07% by 2031-32. Until that time Croydon is accommodating children at an annual cost of between £5.4 - £7.5m.
- If the number of new arrivals increase to Lunar House then local authorities' capacity within the current pan London rota could be placed under pressure. Croydon needs an effective National Transfer scheme so that new arrivals can be fairly dispersed. The risk is that the new arrangements, when confirmed, could fail as the previous scheme.
- Croydon continues to carry additional costs due to the nature of the asylum intake unit in our borough. These include providing duty social workers, the administering of the pan London arrangements and our age assessment team.
- Education - school places commissioned for unaccompanied children and young people are currently funded by a combination of Pupil Premium Grant; Dedicated Schools Grant and Controlling Migration Fund. The latter funding stream is at risk from 2021/22, creating a pressure of £350k from March 2021. Continuing DSG funding is dependent on annual decisions by the School Forum.
- Health - the immediate and often urgent physical and mental health needs of UASC puts significant pressure on the rest of the system, impacting residents' ability to access services more quickly, benefit from earlier intervention thus preventing the escalation of problems and reducing costs in the long term.
- Capitalisation request - The impact of the high numbers of unaccompanied children and young people in previous years has undoubtedly contributed to the Council's current financial position, and our modelling suggests that without decisive action this will continue for many years to come. It would compound the already unfair position for Croydon if these additional historic and future costs have to be funded and repaid as part of the loan requested from central government.

Ongoing work with Home Office

Croydon Children's Services are in conversation with the DfE, Home Office and HMCLG requesting additional practical and financial support which include the following:

- Requesting that new arrivals are directly transferred to local authorities who are under the 0.07% threshold.
- That current Croydon UASC who are in placements in other areas are transferred to the care of the host local authority (accepting statutory and financial responsibility).
- A direct request for additional funding for the exceptional costs due to the location of Lunar House, this includes the cost of our duty function and undertaking age assessments for children age disputed by the Home Office, with the associated legal costs.
- That children in our care and care leavers asylum applications are prioritised, so those who are granted leave to remain can access universal services such as Housing Benefit and Universal Credit.
- Support transferring young people to Home Office accommodation and support who are Appeal Rights Exhausted and cannot return home.

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