

## **CABINET – 20 JUNE 2017**

### **ITEM 4 – QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

#### **Question from Councillor Howson to Councillors Harrod and Hibbert-Biles**

“How many children taken into care over the past three school years and placed 'out county' have had to wait for more than two weeks to be taken onto the roll of a school in the area where they have been moved to and what is the longest period of time a child has waited for a place at a school in the area where they have been re-located to during this period?”

#### **Answer**

Over the past three years it has been exceptional for a Looked After Child to be taken onto the roll of an out of county school in under two weeks. Indeed, of the nine cases of primary age pupils we've looked at, the quickest a pupil was placed was 12 days (there were two) and the slowest was 77 days. For the 22 secondary age pupils the picture is even worse, with 3 weeks the quickest placement and a couple taking fully 6 months to get some of our most vulnerable young people into a stable school setting.

The main reason for this completely unacceptable state of affairs is that the Council has no power to direct an academy to admit a Looked After Child. The only way we can force an academy's hand is to get a direction from the Educations & Skills Funding Agency and this, as you can see from the foregoing times, can be a very long winded bureaucratic process. The fact that it takes so long for academies to admit our Looked After Children shows how doggedly our officers pursue the matter; I suspect that many other local authorities simply give up when they meet an intransigent academy that doesn't want to take responsibility for educating their vulnerable young people.