

## Message from the Director of Children's Social Care

Lewisham is a diverse and vibrant Borough in South East London with a population of over 301,000. We have 68,000 children living in the borough, of which 60% are from minority ethnic groups. Lewisham is an exciting and creative place to live and work which is why we were awarded the 2022 London Borough of Culture status.

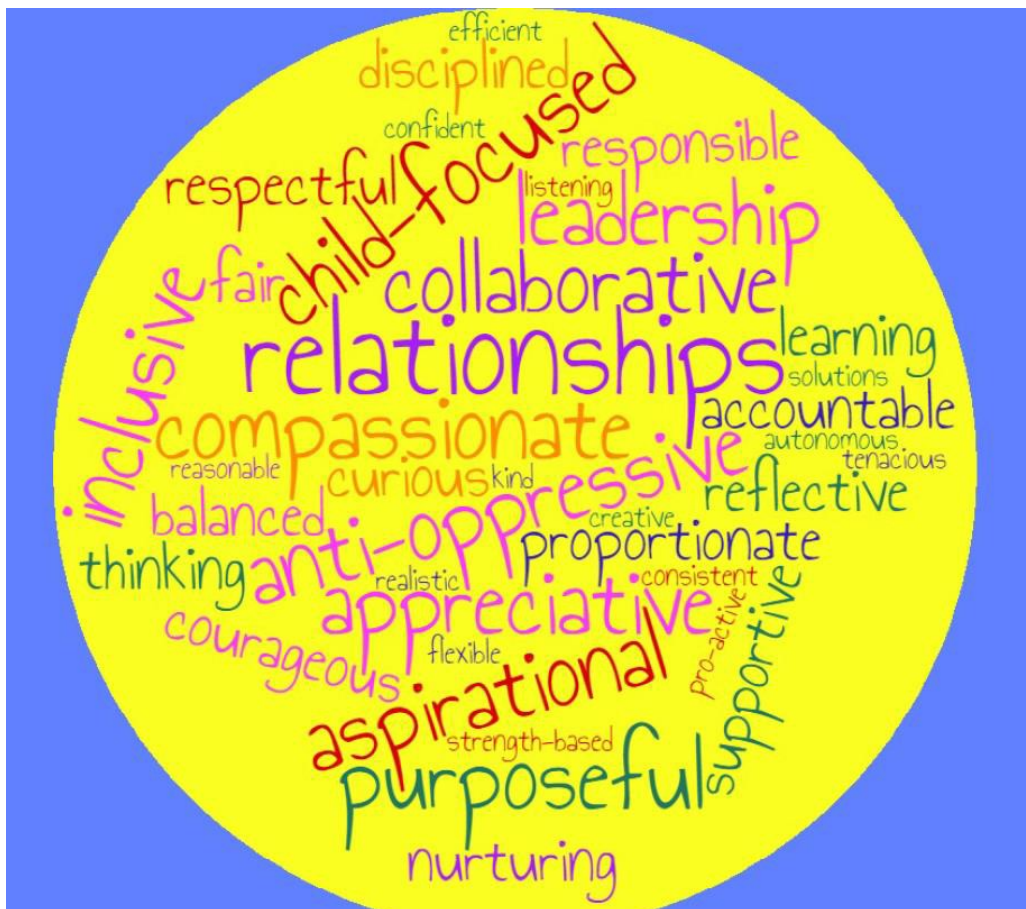


Many things have positively changed in recent years in Children's Services, I came to Lewisham in late 2018 because I could see the huge potential and I am very pleased to have been joined by Pinaki Ghoshal, as our Executive Director of Children's Services in June 2020. Pinaki is an experienced DCS who has previously worked in Manchester

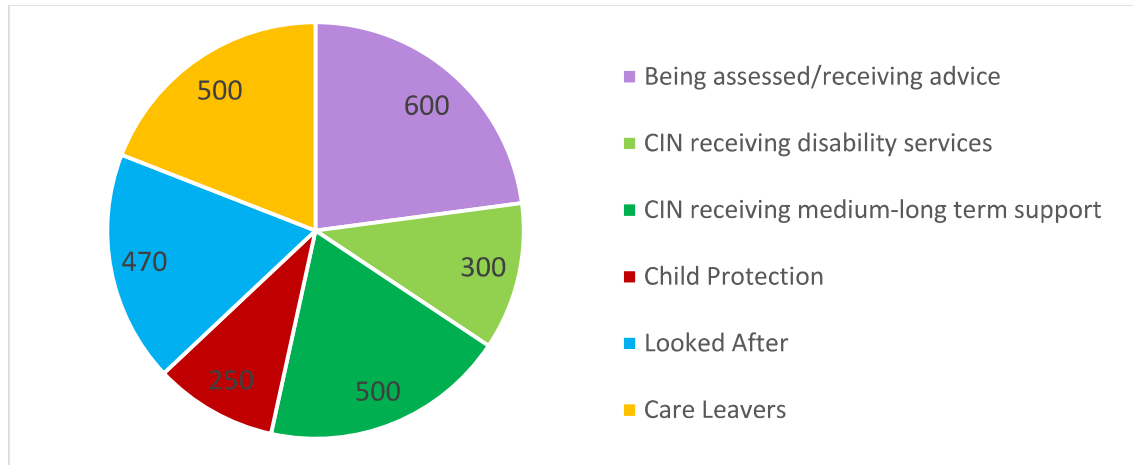
and following this, oversaw the improvement journey in Brighton and Hove to an Ofsted 'Good' rating.

Since the beginning of 2019 Lewisham Children's Social Care has completely changed its approach to developing good services to families. As part of our improvement programme we have developed our vision and values for the type of social work we want to deliver, where...

- ✓ Families are respected and supported to stay together, whenever there is safety.
- ✓ Families will tell us they understand why we are involved.
- ✓ Children will tell us their social worker has made a difference to their lives.
- ✓ Children who are in our care know we care and we won't give up on them.
- ✓ Young people who have been in our care feel confident about their future.



We are a busy London Borough with a high level of need. At any one time Children’s Social Care is working with approximately 2,600 children and young people, this includes Children with Complex Needs. (CIN = Children in Need). We have approximately 400 practitioners, managers and business support staff in the service and have made considerable gains stabilising the workforce, moving from 64% to 80% permanent staffing. In our last health check the feedback from staff was... they felt **‘valued and enjoyed working in Lewisham’**, they felt **‘well supported by their managers’** with **‘regular reflective supervision’**, they had **“good access to training”** and their **‘development was promoted’**.



We understand that describing good practice is easy, the challenge is turning a vision into reality. This needs a clear, realistic plan, inspiring leadership, supportive managers, highly skilled social workers, resources and simple effective systems that enable practitioners to keep their focus on families. That’s why we are taking a whole system approach and we have introduced Signs of Safety as our relationship based practice framework.



We know from our annual self assessment that our performance and practice is steadily improving. Whilst Covid has had an impact on our ways of working and we are currently facing increased demand, the pandemic has not set us back. **We have made significant progress which Ofsted recognised when they inspected us in June 2019 and more recently in in July 2021 for a focused visit on Children Looked After.** But we know there is a lot more to do and we have a clear pathway to achieve our ambitions. The trajectory is positive and it is a good time to be in Lewisham.

If our vision and values connect to your philosophy of practice and you have a track record of working collaboratively to deliver really good practice, then we would like you to join our team.

**Lucie Heyes MBE**  
**Director, Children’s Social Care.**

