

TITLE OF REPORT: Looked After Children Performance Overview

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Section 1: Purpose

This report provides statistics relating to looked after children in Gateshead and covers the period up to the end of August 2018. The report format has been revised for this latest period following consultation with members at Corporate Parenting Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October 2017. The report now focusses on providing key characteristic data linked to those children who are currently looked after, and those who started and ceased to be looked after over the previous 12 months.

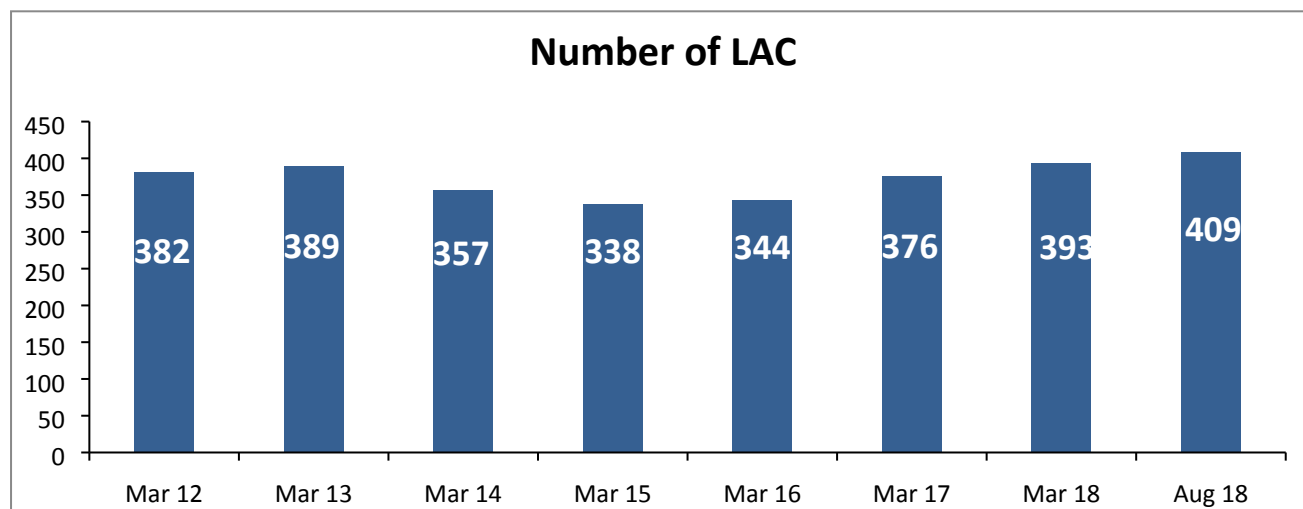
A performance scorecard is included in appendix 1, which provides the latest position for key looked after children performance measures. A summary of the performance measures is described in section 3.

Corporate Parenting Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members are asked to receive this report for information, and to identify any areas they feel they require more information about or require further scrutiny.

Looked after children statistics

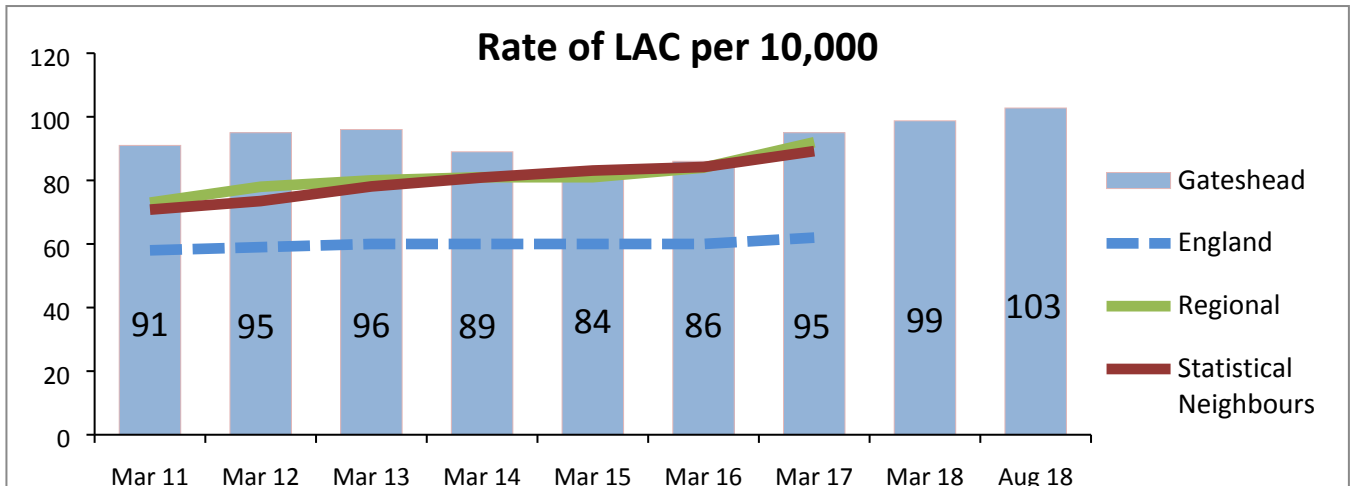
How many looked after children do we have, and how does that compare to other areas

Chart 1: number of LAC



1. Chart 1 above shows at the end of August 2018 that 409 children and young people were classed as being Looked After. Since the end of the March 2018, when the figure was 393, we have experienced an increase of 4.1% in the number of looked after children. The 409 LAC children come from 230 different families.

Chart 2: Rate of LAC per 10,000 population

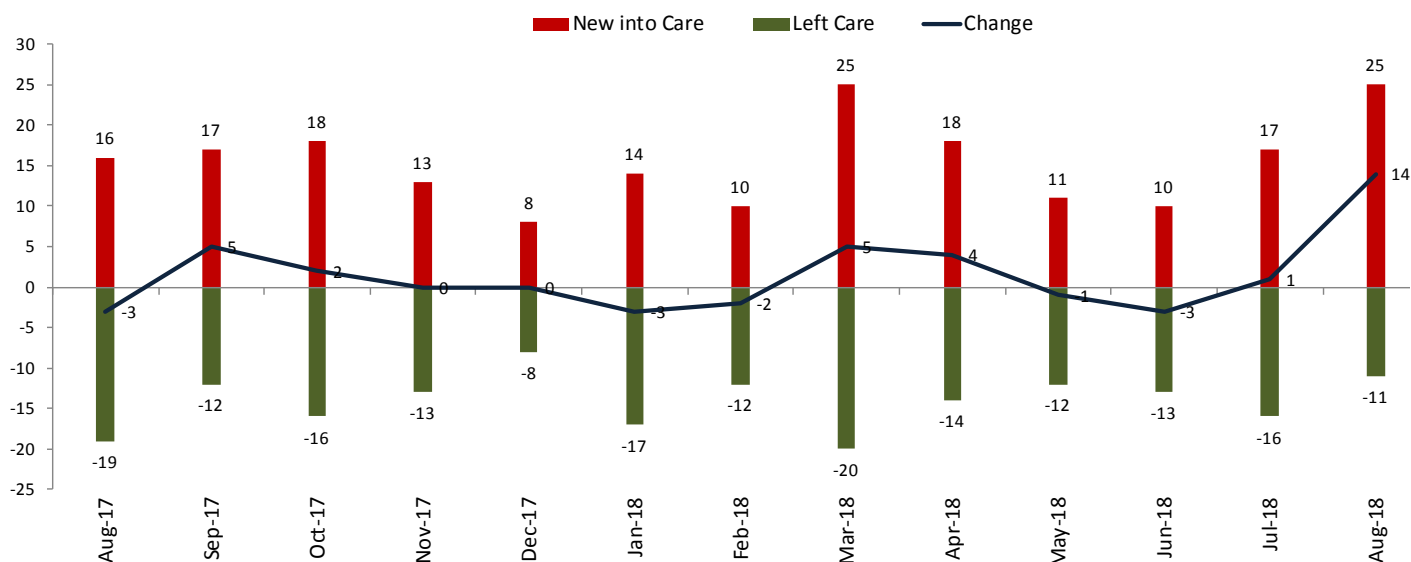


2. 409 looked after children equals a rate per 10,000 of 103. Chart 2 (above) shows our current rate of LAC compared with the latest statistical neighbour, regional and England averages. At 103 we remain higher than the latest published regional rate of 92 and 89.2 for Statistical neighbours. However, significantly higher than the latest published national rate of 62. These latest published averages are as at March 2017 and will not be updated again by the Department for education until November 2018.

How many children entered care and how many children and young people left care

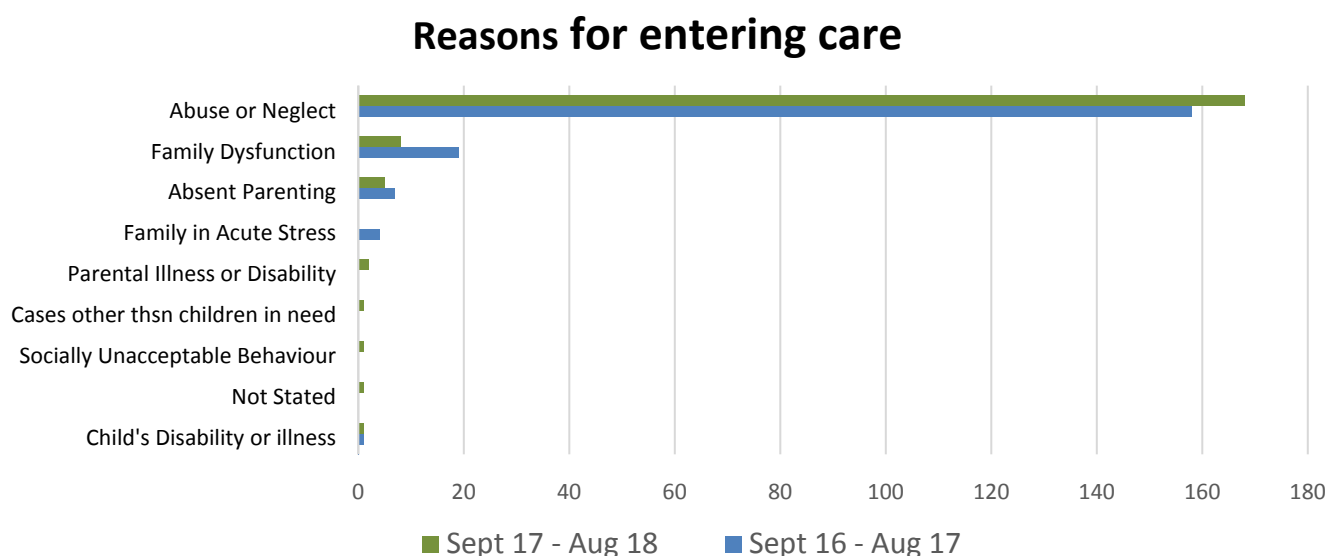
Figure 1: Number of children entering and leaving care

| | Aug-17 | Sep-17 | Oct-17 | Nov-17 | Dec-17 | Jan-18 | Feb-18 | Mar-18 | Apr-18 | May-18 | Jun-18 | Jul-18 | Aug-18 |
|---------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| New into Care | 16 | 17 | 18 | 13 | 8 | 14 | 10 | 25 | 18 | 11 | 10 | 17 | 25 |
| Left Care | -19 | -12 | -16 | -13 | -8 | -17 | -12 | -20 | -14 | -12 | -13 | -16 | -11 |
| Change | -3 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | -3 | -2 | 5 | 4 | -1 | -3 | 1 | 14 |



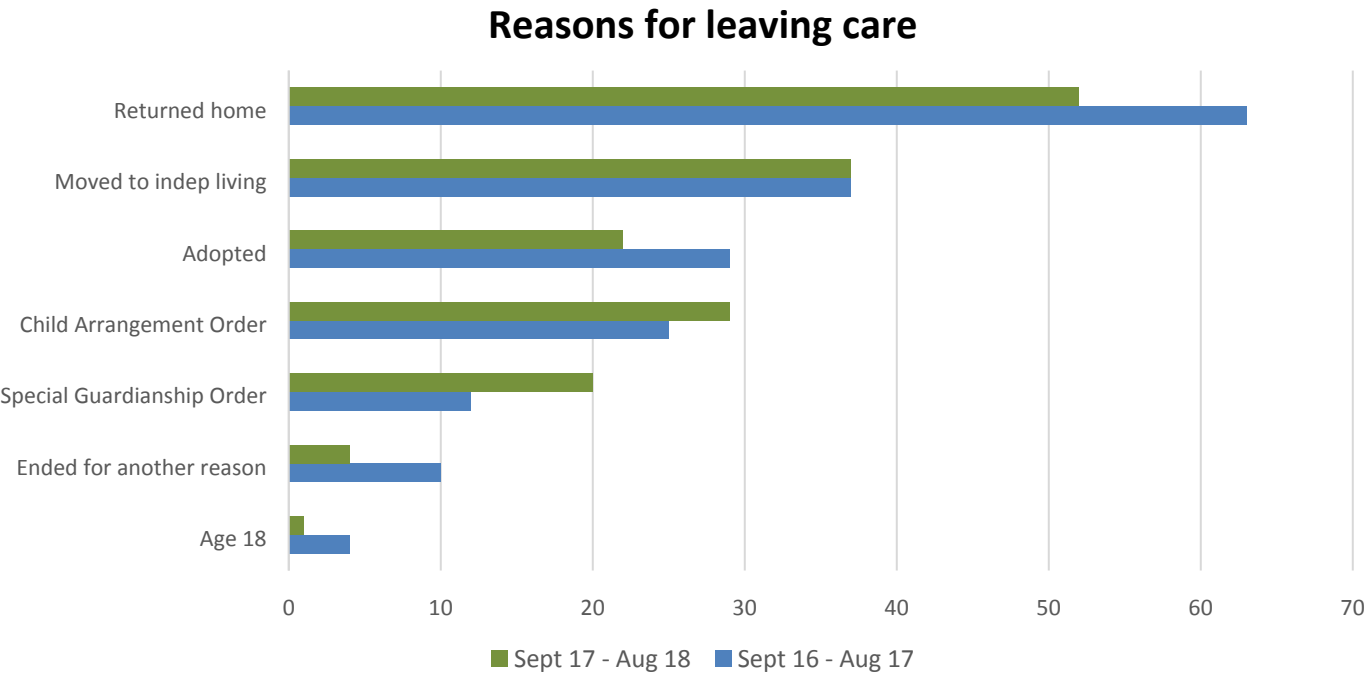
- The chart above provided the numbers of children in each month over the last 12 months who have started to be looked after (New into care) and those who ceased to be looked after (Left Care). The chart is intended to demonstrate the constant flow of children who enter and leave the LAC system and show how the LAC cohort is constantly changing.
- The black line shows the difference between the two figures in the month, and where the black line is above 0 it means more children entered care than left, and where below 0 more children left care than entered. Over the course of the last 12 months reflected in the chart (while individual monthly figures vary) on average 15 children entered care each month and 14 have left each month.
- In the 12 months ending August 2018, 187 children started to be looked after and 165 children left care, a total of 352. This compared with 189 starting and 180 children leaving, a total of 369 in the same period in the previous year.
- In the last 12 months ending August 2018 the lowest number of admissions in a month was 8 and the highest 25. While for children leaving care, the lowest number was 8 and the largest 20.

Chart 3: Primary need category for those entering care



7. Chart 3 above provides an indication of primary need categories for children who entered care. Primary need codes do not provide the exact reason for admission, which will vary by case however help in identifying the broad circumstances for why a child may need to come into care.
8. The chart shows the largest category in each year by far was *Abuse or Neglect*, which accounted for 84% of children who entered care in 2016/17 and 90% in 2017/18. The definition for the category is “*Children in need as a result of, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; also includes children at risk because of domestic violence*” (note this does not mean Domestic Violence has to be a factor in the case). The next most prevalent category in each year related to Family Dysfunction and includes children admitted to care living in a family where the parenting capacity is assessed as chronically inadequate. The definitions for each of the categories in the chart is included in appendix 3 of this report.

Chart 4: Reason why the child or young person left care

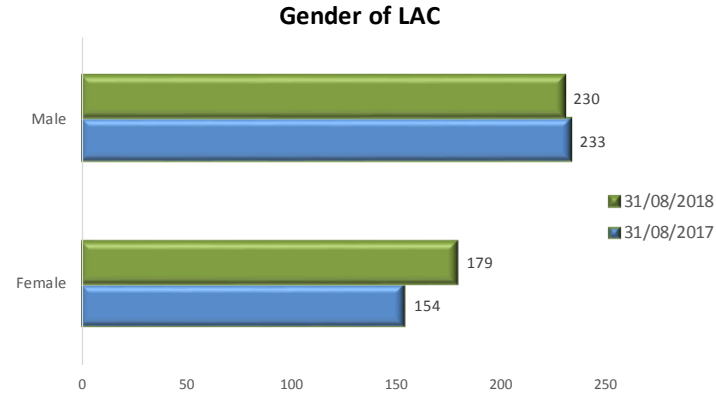
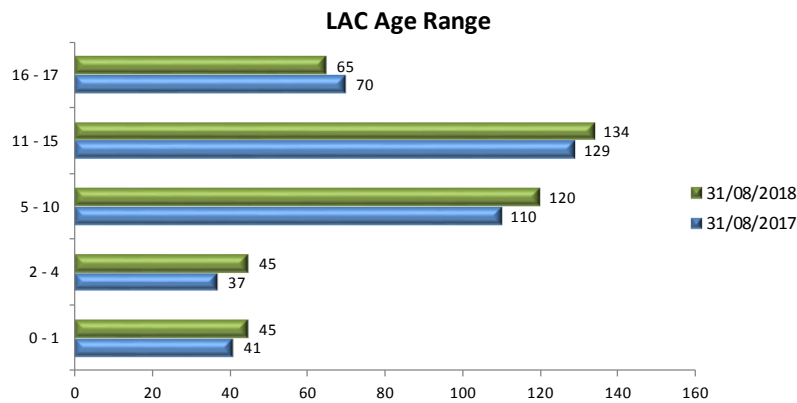


9. Chart 4 above provides the recorded end reason for those who left care in each of the last two years. 180 children returned home during 16/17 compared to 165 in 17/18.
- In 17/18, 31% of children and young people left care because of returning home, (52 actual young people) which is lower than the previous year which stood at 35% (63 actual children). Following returning home, the next largest group of young people ceased care because of a move to independent living, an equal number moved to independent living in both years (37 young people).. Those young people who ceased being in care through virtue of a move to independent living will be older young people who would also cease to be looked after through turning 18 years of age.

What are the characteristics of our current looked after population

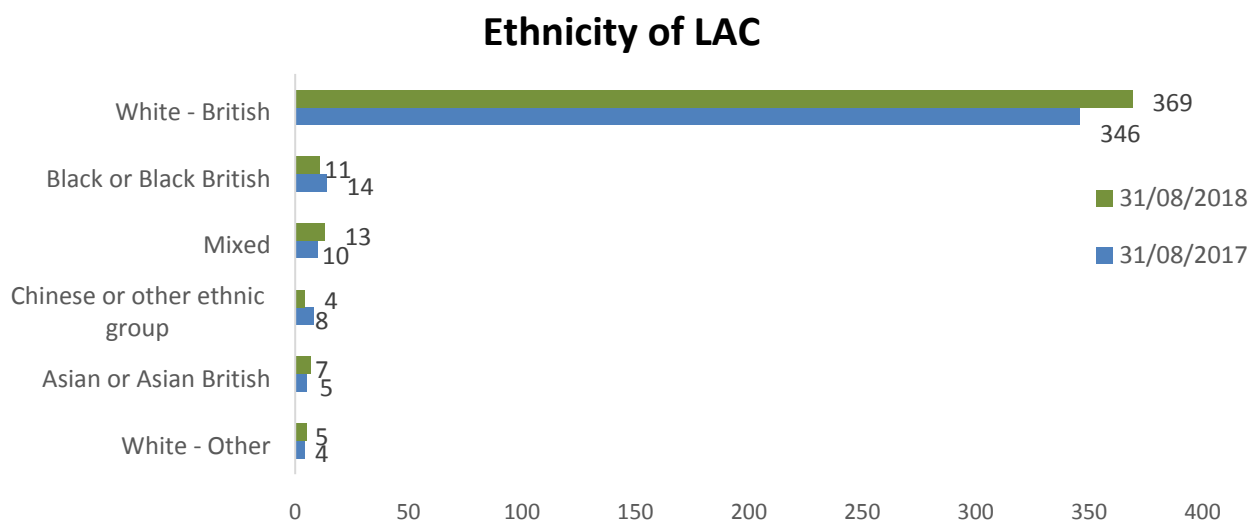
Chart 5a: Age of LAC population

Chart 5b: Gender of LAC population



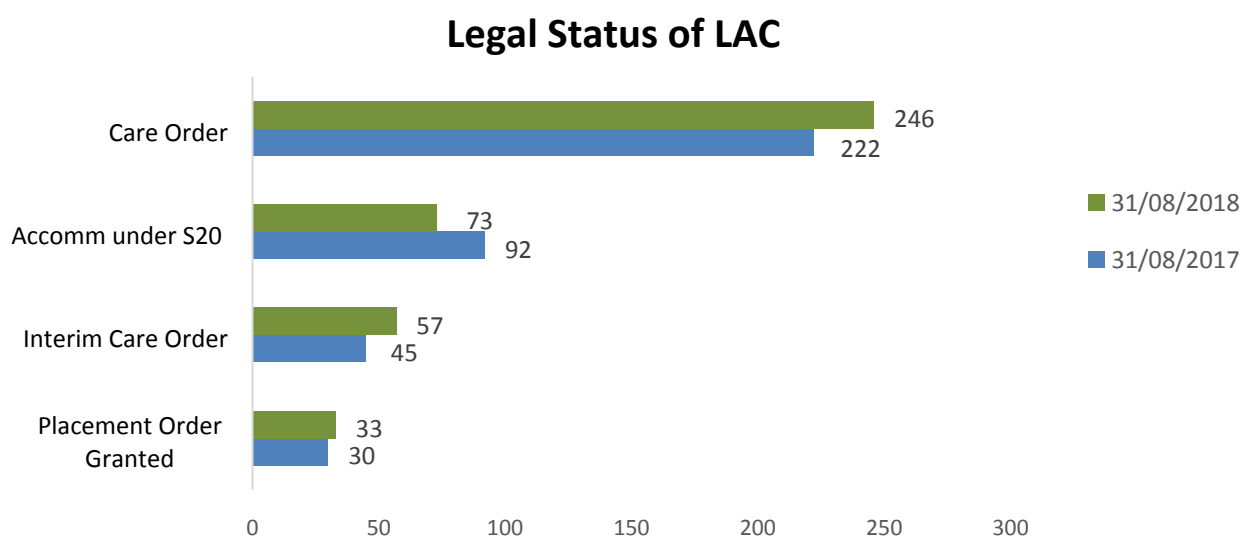
10. The age and gender of looked after children are shown in charts 5a and 5b above. Males account for the largest proportion of LAC with 230 children or 56.2% at the end of August 2018. Typically, those aged 11-15 account for the largest proportion of the LAC population, accounting for just over a third LAC at the end of August in each of the last two years.

Chart 6: Ethnicity of LAC population



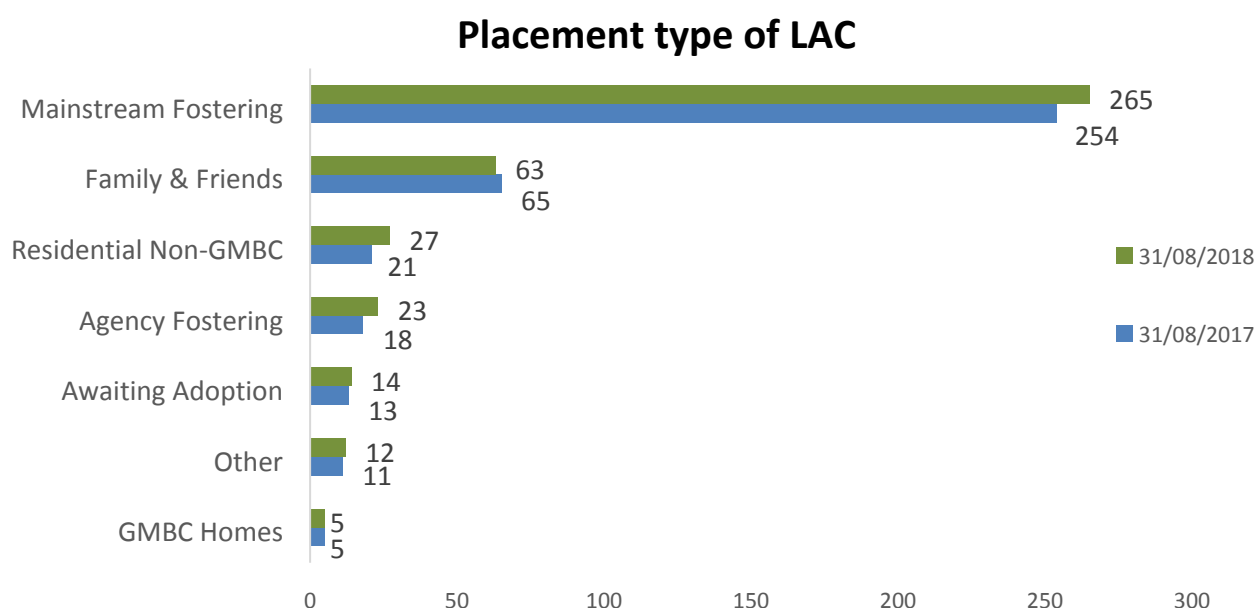
11. Chart 6 shows the ethnic breakdown for LAC at the end of August in each of the last two years. At the end of August 2017 there were 37 children from a non-white ethnic background (i.e. not White British or White Other) who were looked after, 9.6% of the total LAC population. At the end of August 2018, the number of children from a non-white ethnic background had decreased slightly to 8.6% of the total population or to 35 in actual numbers. Estimates from the latest mid-year population estimates places Gateshead's overall percentage of children from a non-white ethnic background at around 5%.

Chart 8: Legal status of LAC population



12. With the exception of the children accommodated under a S20, all legal status categories have seen an increase in line with the overall increase in LAC. Chart 8 shows the majority of our children and young people (246 or 60%) are accommodated under a Full Care Order. Interim Care Orders have increased from 45 in August 2017 to 57 in August 2018, there has also been a slight increase in those who have had a placement order granted, 33 in August 2017 to 30 in August 2018.

Chart 9: Placement Type of LAC population



13. Chart 9 (above) shows the placement type of looked after children at the end of August 2018 and the same point in 2017. The chart shows that the majority of our looked children, 265 or 64.8% at the end of August 2018 were placed in mainstream fostering. We continue to use only a small proportion of Agency Fostering placements, at the end of August 2018, 23 children were in this type of placement, which is slightly higher than the same time last year when the figure stood at 18. There has also been an increase in non-Gateshead own residential placements, increasing from 21 to 27. Family and friend's placements now account for 63 placements or 15% at the end of August 2018, similar to the figure of 65 or 16.8% at the same time last year. Family and Friends placements include kinship fostering arrangements and children placed at home with parents.
14. Figure 2 (below) shows the overall numbers of children who are placed out of borough. By out of borough we mean physically outside of the Gateshead Local Authority boundary area, this will include both Gateshead owned provision and independent. Figure 2 shows the local authority area the child is placed, which is grouped by region along with the number of those placed out of borough are in non-Gateshead Local Authority owned provision.
15. At the end of August 2018, 197 children and young people (which is 48% of the total number of LAC) were placed out of borough. Of the 197, 150 (76.1%) were in Gateshead Local Authority provision and of those, 135 were within the North East Region.
16. Figure 2 shows that we have a small number of LAC children who are placed a distance outside the North East region and around the country, in authorities such as Bradford (1), Peterborough (1), Carlisle (2), South Lakeland (4), Glasgow (1) and Barnet (3). The 3 children in Barnet at Gateshead owned provision with the remaining independent.

Figure 2: Number of children placed out of borough (OOB)

| Region | Local Authority | Aug 17 | Of which were Gateshead own provision | Aug 18 | Of which were Gateshead own provision | Change in numbers (Jan 17 to Jan 18) |
|----------------------|---------------------|--------|---------------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| North East | Durham | 51 | 46 | 66 | 57 | 11 |
| | Sunderland | 29 | 25 | 38 | 30 | 5 |
| | Newcastle Upon Tyne | 27 | 21 | 36 | 26 | 5 |
| | Northumberland | 20 | 17 | 15 | 12 | -5 |
| | South Tyneside | 10 | 10 | 9 | 9 | -1 |
| | Darlington | 1 | | 1 | | 0 |
| | North Tyneside | 1 | | 2 | | 0 |
| | Middlesbrough | 1 | | 1 | | |
| | Hartlepool | | | 1 | | |
| | Stockton | 1 | | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| | Cumbria | 1 | | 2 | | 0 |
| East of England | Dunstable | 1 | | | | 0 |
| | Peterborough | | | 1 | | |
| Yorkshire and Humber | Bradford | 1 | | 1 | | 0 |
| | Doncaster | 1 | | | | 0 |
| North West | Carlisle | 2 | | 2 | | 0 |
| | South Lakeland | 4 | | 4 | | 0 |
| Outer London | Barnet | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | -1 |
| Scotland | Glasgow | | | 1 | 1 | |
| | Dumfries & Galloway | | | | | 0 |
| Other | Adoptive placement | 11 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 0 |
| Total Number | | 164 | 134 | 197 | 150 | 33 |
| Total % | | | 81.7% | | 76.1% | |

Performance overview – Key LAC performance indicators

17. Appendix 1 at the end of this report provides a performance scorecard for 7 key looked after children performance indicators. The scorecard indicates if in year targets are currently being met, and a direction of travel compared to the same time last year.
18. In summary the scorecard shows the following, with additional detail for all the indicators is provided below:
 - 3 indicators targets are currently being met (LAC reviews within timescales and both placement stability indicators)
 - 2 indicators are currently not meeting their targets (use of adoptions and SGOs and timeliness of children being placed for adoption)
 - 2 indicators have been revised and are new this year so have no targets (care leavers in EET and suitable accommodation, however both are showing improvements from last year)

LAC reviews

19. **LAC reviews** - Ensuring a child's care plans is being reviewed and implemented in timely manner is a key priority of the Children's Safeguarding Unit. Close monitoring processes have ensured a total of 338 LAC reviews for 291 eligible LAC have been completed during April-August 2018. Of the 291, 100% have been reviewed within the statutory timescales.

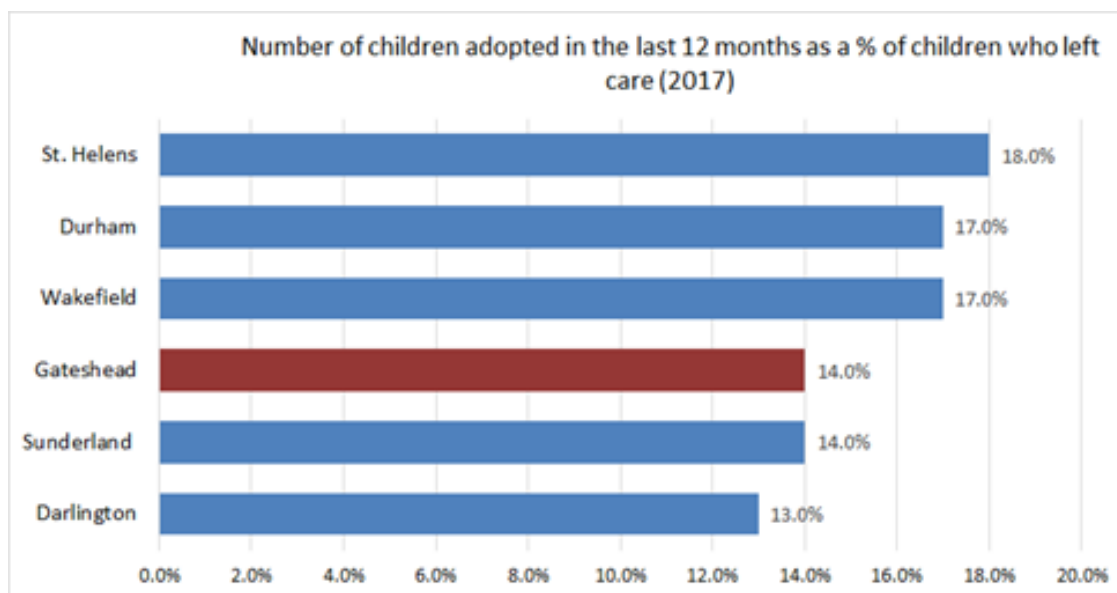
Placement Stability

20. Research shows the importance of the stability of young people's placements as important in ensuring they have positive outcomes. Overall performance in relation to affording young people stability remains good and has been for some time.
21. **Three or more placements** - at the end of August 2018, there were 8 out of 409 children looked after who had experienced 3 or more placement moves in the previous 12 months (1.96%). At the same time last year there were 5 out of a total of 391 Looked after children (1.3%). Our performance compares favourably with the national picture where around 10% of children have experienced 3 or more placement moves on average.
22. **Long-term stability** - A further measure of stability looks at the stability of those children who have been in long-term placements. There were 109 out of 133 children who have been looked after for over 2 and half years who had been living in the same placement for at least 2 years (81.95%). At the same time last year there were 96 out of 109 children in the same placement (88.1%). While this is a reduction from last year the current figures continue to compare extremely favourable to the National average which stands at around 72%.
A deep dive of the LAC in the cohort who are not in long-term stable placements has been undertaken to identify the reasons and learning from these cases. Findings will be reported back in the next OSC report

Adoption and Special Guardianship Orders (SGO)

23. **Adoptions of Looked After Children and SGO** - Chart 11 below shows there is variance across the country in the percentage of children adopted from care in the latest year. In Gateshead 14% of LAC were adopted, which is in line with the national average. Nationally however individual figures varied between 3% in Ealing to 35% in Southampton.

Chart 11: Adoption Leadership Board data (adoptions as a % of LAC)



24. The 2017 England average for children who ceased to be looked after who were adopted was 14%, and for children who left care on an SGO was 12%, a combined total of 26%. Our local target of 26% has been calculated based on this national figure. During the period April to August 2018 there were 11 children who had been looked after for over 6 months and had been adopted, 1 child has left care on a SGO. During the period there were a total of 67 children who have left care giving an overall performance of 17.9%, slightly below target. At the same time last year there were 13 (11 adoptions/2 SGOs) out of 66 (19.7%). Early indications for this indicator are positive for next year with a number of new matches already been made so far.
25. **Timeliness of placements of looked after children for adoption** - During April to August 2018, 11 adoptions took place, of which 4 were within the best interest date timescale (36%). At the same point last year there were also 11 adoptions, of which 5 were within time (45.5%). Whilst our timeliness of adoptions figure is below our target, there have been several factors which have impacted on this. Factors that attributed to cases going out of timescale include:
- Delays in DBS checks that affected a sibling group of 3.
 - Delays in family finding when trying to place siblings together.
 - Challenges around potential links not progressing due to adopters withdrawing.
 - External family finding undertaken to reflect the child's cultural background.

Care Leavers

26. An increasing focus is being placed on care leavers and the responsibility of Local Authorities to ensure they transition well into adulthood. As a result, we are now responsible for monitoring young people's accommodation and work or education status for young people aged 17,18,19, 20 and 21 years.
27. Nationally, young people leaving care have significantly poorer outcomes than their peers in relation to education, training and employment (EET). When young people enter care, some as late as 13 to 17 years of age, their educational attainment levels

are often well behind those of same age young people in the general population and therefore when they leave care they need additional support from the service.

28. **Education Employment or Training** - Of our 100 care leavers, 58 (58%) of them are in some form of education, employment and training with the remaining 42 (42%) not in employment, education or training. This figure is calculated differently to previous years so comparison is not possible, however recent trends indicate improving outcomes in this area.
29. Without young people leaving care having somewhere appropriate to live, it is unlikely that care leavers would be able to sustain education, employment or training. Improving the quality and choice of housing is crucial to improving the stability and engagement of care leavers in education, employment and training.
30. **Suitable accommodation** - This figure is calculated different to previous years so comparison is not possible, however of the 100 care leavers that are currently allocated, 99 (99%) were judged to be in suitable accommodation. The 1 case judged to be in unsuitable accommodation is in custody.

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Appendix 1: Performance Scorecard

| Ref | Theme | Indicator Description | Previous Year End 2017/18 | Current Month Previous Year (2017/18) | Performance Latest in the current year (2018/19) | Target for 2018/19 | RAG rating against current target. | Trend (Compared to same time last year) | Comments |
|-----|--|--|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--------------------|------------------------------------|---|--|
| 1 | LAC reviews | NI 066 Looked after children cases which were reviewed within required timescales | 99.47% | 100% | 100% | 100% | Met Target | → | <p>A total of 338 LAC reviews for 291 eligible LAC have been completed during April-August 2018. Of the 291, 100% have been reviewed within the statutory timescales.</p> <p>At the same time last year there were 313 out of 313 completed within time (100%).</p> |
| 2 | Placement Stability | NI 062 Percentage of looked after children with three or more placement during the year | 6.11% | 1.28% | 1.96% | 10.0% | Met Target | ↓ | <p>During the period of April to August 2018 there were 8 Looked after children (LAC) who have had 3 or more placements. The total number of LAC at the end of the period was 409 (1.96%).</p> <p>At the same time last year there were 5 out of 391 LAC had 3 or more placements (1.3%).</p> <p>At 31st March 2016, the North East average was 72%, Statistical Neighbours was 70.4% and the England average was 68%. (This is the latest published information available).</p> |
| 3 | Placement Stability | NI 063 Percentage of looked after children living continuously in the same placement for 2 years | 82.54% | 88.07% | 81.95% | 78.0% | Met Target | ↓ | <p>During the period of April to August 2018, 109 children have been in their placement for at least 2 years out of the 133 children who have been looked after for 2 and a half years or more (81.95%).</p> <p>At the same time last year there were 96 out of 109 (88.07%).</p> <p>At 31st March 2016, the North East average was 72%, Statistical Neighbours was 70.4% and the England average was 68%. (This is the latest published information available).</p> |
| 4 | Adoption and Special Guardianship Orders | LCH-CFY0-002 Adoptions of Looked After Children and SGO | 23.46% | 19.70% | 17.91% | 26.0% | Not Met Target | ↓ | <p>Adoptions of Looked After Children and SGO - The 2017 England average for children who ceased to be looked after who were adopted was 14%, and for children who left care on an SGO was 12%, a combined total of 26%. Our local target of 26% has been calculated based on this national figure.</p> <p>During the period April to August 2018 there were 11 children who had been looked after for over 6 months and had been adopted, 1 child has left care on a SGO. During the period there were a total of 67 children who have left care giving an overall performance of 17.9%. At the same time last year there were 13 (11 adoptions/2 SGOs) out of 66 (19.7%).</p> |
| 5 | Adoption and Special Guardianship Orders | NI 061 Timeliness of placements of looked after children for adoption | 72.00% | 45.45% | 36.36% | 80.0% | Not Met Target | ↓ | <p>During April to August 2018, 11 adoptions took place, of which 4 were within the best interest date timescale (36%). At the same point last year there were also 11 adoptions, of which 5 were within time (45.5%). Whilst our timeliness of adoptions figure is below our target, there have been several factors which have impacted on this. Factors that attributed to cases going out of timescale include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delays in DBS checks that affected a sibling group of 3. • Delays in family finding when trying to place siblings together. • Challenges around potential links not progressing due to adopters withdrawing. • External family finding undertaken to reflect the child's cultural background. |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|---|-----|-----|-----|---|-----|---|--|
| 6 | Care leavers | LW09 - (NI 148) Ensure Young Care Leavers are Supported to be in Education, Employment, Apprenticeships or Training | 50% | 55% | 58% | New indicator for 2017/18 - no target set | N/A | ↑ | Of our 100 care leavers, 58 (58%) of them are in some form of education, employment and training with the remaining 42 (42%) not in employment, education or training. |
| 7 | Care Leavers | LW08 - (NI 147) Ensure Young Care Leavers & Homeless are Supported to have a Safe Place to Live | 92% | 98% | 99% | New indicator for 2017/18 - no target set | N/A | ↑ | Of the 100 care leavers that are currently allocated, 99 (99%) were judged to be in suitable accommodation. The 1 case judged to be in unsuitable accommodation is in custody. |

Appendix 2: Primary need codes definitions

- **Abuse or neglect** - Children in need as a result of, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; also includes children at risk because of domestic violence.
- **Family Dysfunction** - Children whose needs primarily arise from living in a family where the parenting capacity is chronically inadequate.
- **Absent parenting** - Children whose needs for services arise mainly from having no parents available to provide for them.
- **Parental illness or disability** - Children whose main need for services arises because the capacity of their parent(s) (or carer(s)) to care for them is impaired by the parent(s) (or carer(s)) disability, physical or mental illness, or addictions.
- **Family in acute stress** - Children whose needs arise from living in a family that is going through a temporary crisis that diminishes the parental capacity to adequately meet some of the children's needs.
- **Childs disability or illness** - Children and families whose main need for services arises because of their child's disability, illness or intrinsic condition.