

**TITLE OF REPORT:** Looked After Children Performance Overview

**REPORT OF:** Caroline O'Neill, Strategic Director, Care Wellbeing and Learning

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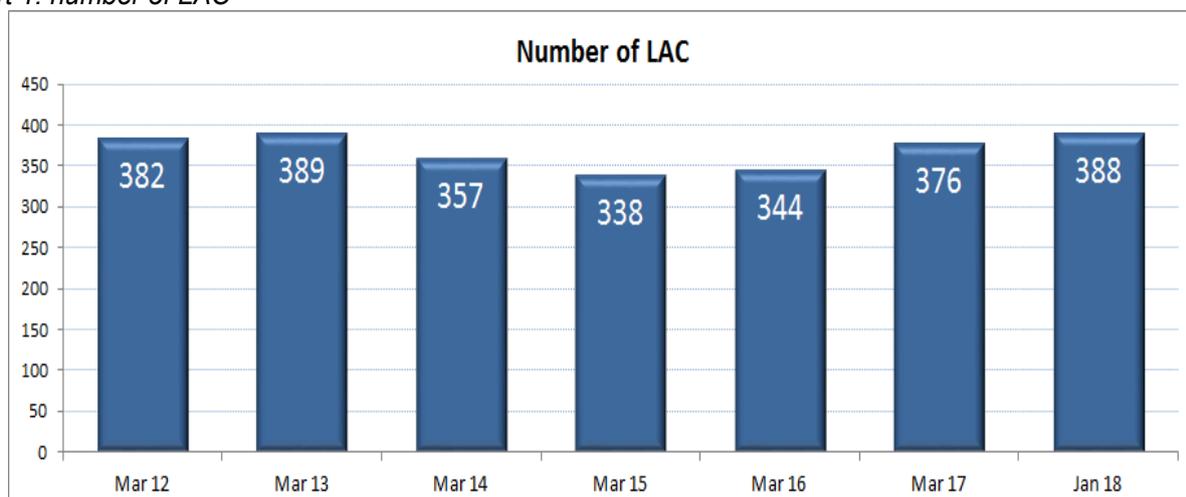
## Section 1: Purpose

- 1.1 This report provides statistics relating to looked after children in Gateshead and covers the period up to the end of January 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.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 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.

## Section 2: Looked after children statistics

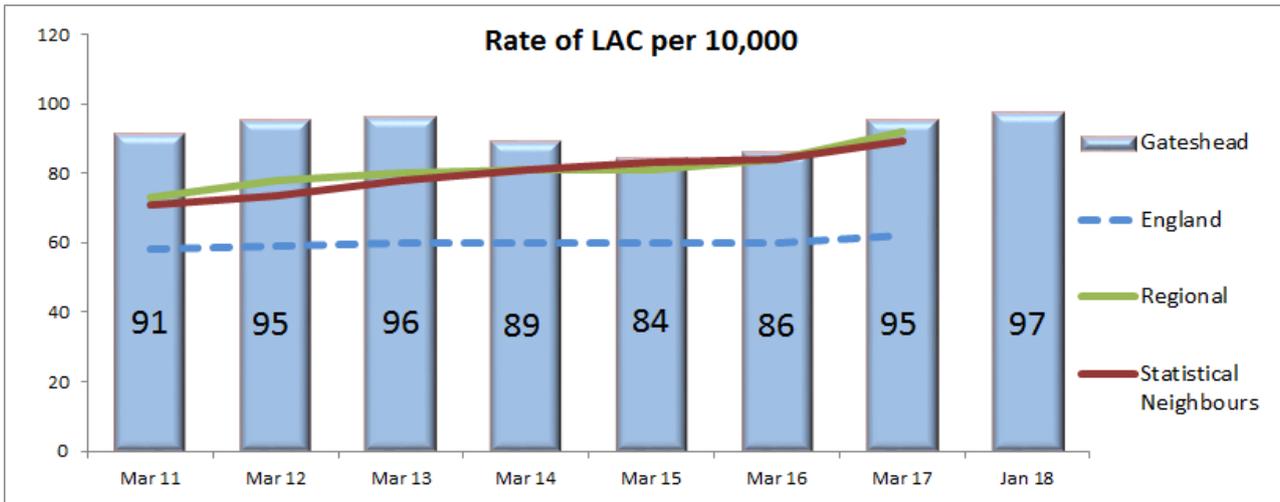
**How many looked after children do we have, and how does that compare to other areas**

Chart 1: number of LAC



- 2.1 Chart 1 above shows at the end of January 2018, 388 children and young people were classed as being Looked After. Since the end of the last financial year ending March 2017, when the figure was 376, we have experienced an increase of 3.2% in the number of looked after children. The 388 LAC children come from 263 different families.

Chart 2: Rate of LAC per 10,000 population

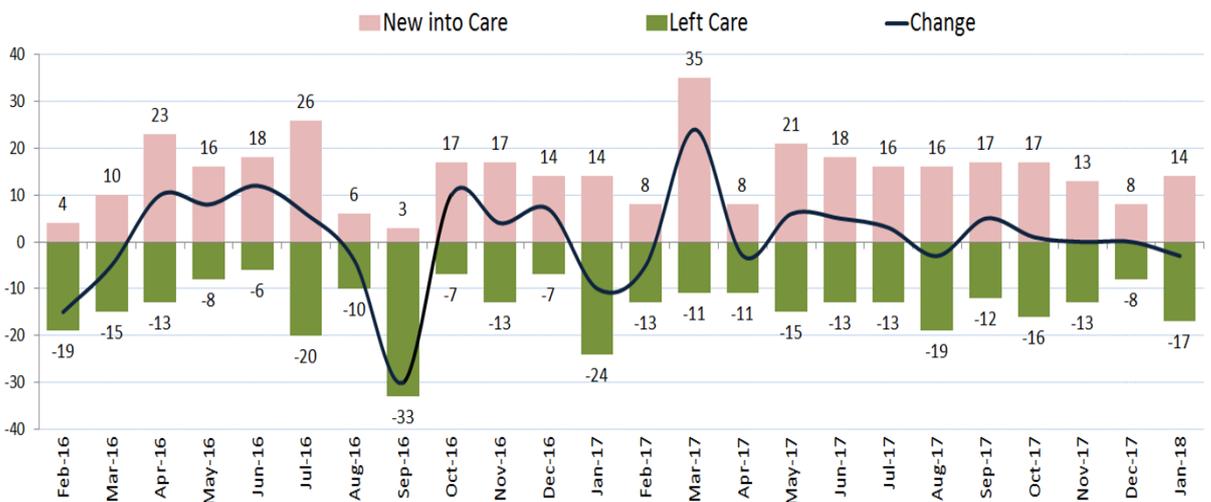


2.2 388 looked after children equals a rate per 10,000 of 97. Chart 2 (above) shows our current rate of LAC compared with the latest statistical neighbour, regional and England averages. At 97 we remain slightly higher than the latest published regional rate of 92 and 89.2 for Statistical neighbours. 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

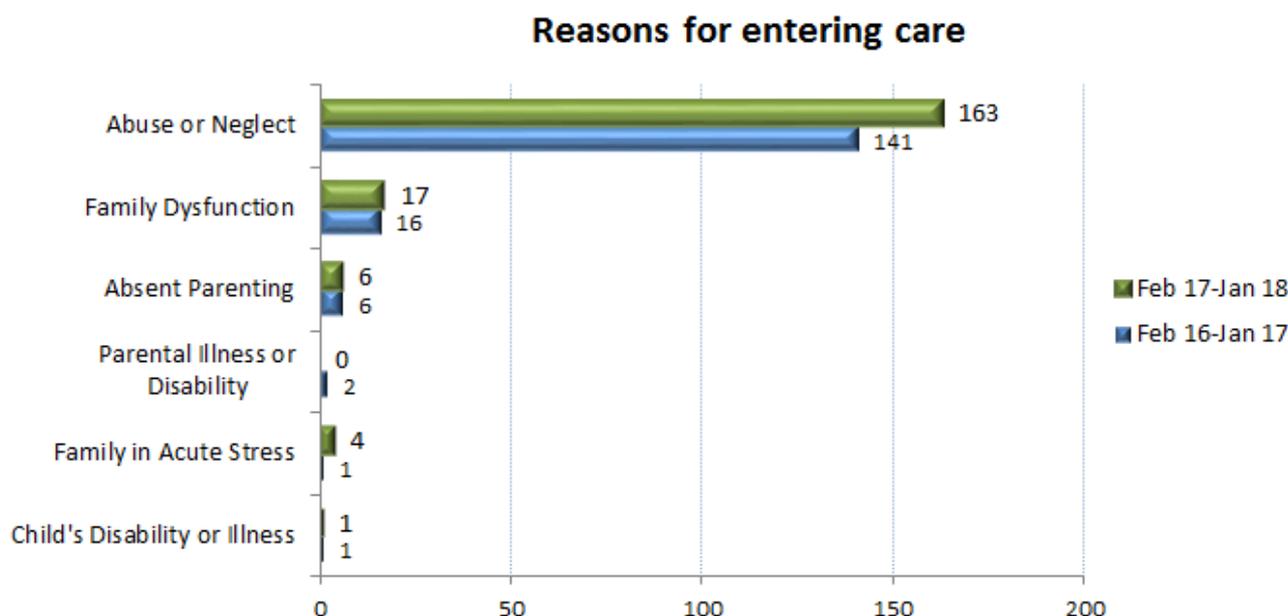
	Feb-16	Mar-16	Apr-16	May-16	Jun-16	Jul-16	Aug-16	Sep-16	Oct-16	Nov-16	Dec-16	Jan-17	Feb-17	Mar-17	Apr-17	May-17	Jun-17	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17	Oct-17	Nov-17	Dec-17	Jan-18
New into Care	4	10	23	16	18	26	6	3	17	17	14	14	8	35	8	21	18	16	16	17	17	13	8	14
Left Care	-19	-15	-13	-8	-6	-20	-10	-33	-7	-13	-7	-24	-13	-11	-11	-15	-13	-13	-19	-12	-16	-13	-8	-17
Change	-15	-5	10	8	12	6	-4	-30	10	4	7	-10	-5	24	-3	6	5	3	-3	5	1	0	0	-3



2.3 The chart above provided the numbers of children in each month over the last 2 years 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.

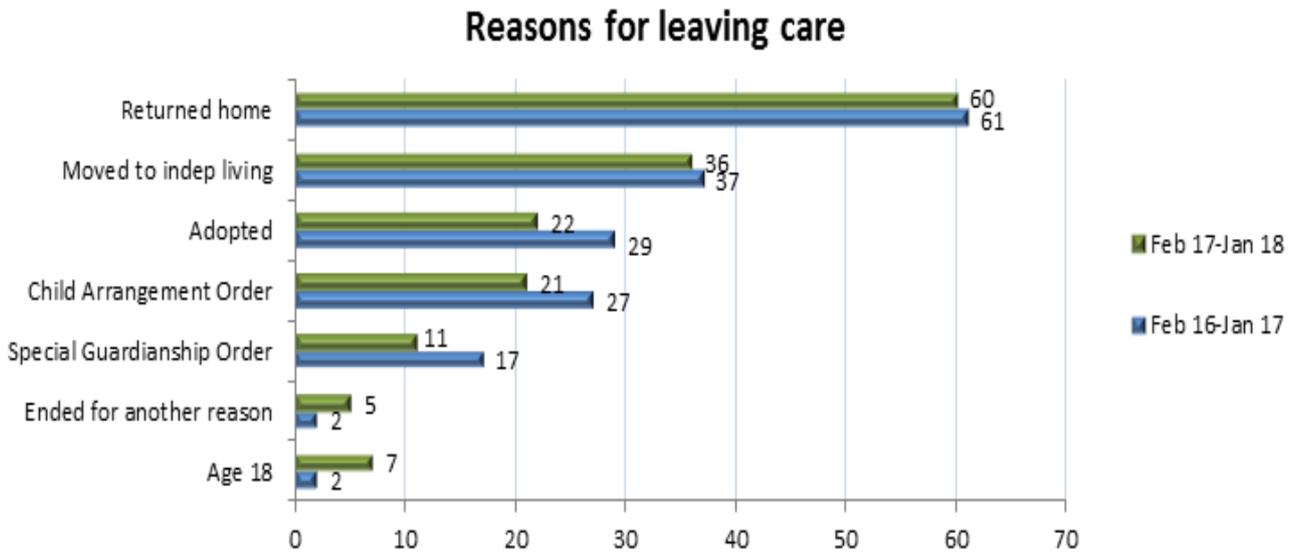
- 2.4 The black line shows the difference between the two figures in the month, and where the black line is above 0 it means more children entered care than left, and where below 0 more children left care than entered. Over the course of the last 2 years reflected in the chart, while individual monthly figures vary, on average 15 children entered care each month and 14 have left each month. In the last 12 months these figures have increased slightly to 16 entered and 13 leaving.
- 2.5 Overall LAC activity was slightly higher in the 12 months ending January 2018 with 191 children starting to be looked after and 161 children leaving care, a total of 352. This compared with 168 starting and 175 children leaving, a total of 343 in the same period in the previous year.
- 2.6 In the last 12 months ending January 2018 the lowest number of admissions in a month was 8 and the highest 35. While for children leaving care, the lowest number was 8 and the largest 19.

Chart 3: Primary need category for those entering care



- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 The chart shows the largest category in each year by far was *Abuse or Neglect*, which accounted for roughly 85% of children who entered care in each of the last two years. 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



2.9 Chart 4 above provides the recorded end reason for those who left care in each of the last two years. In both years the single largest proportion of children and young people left care because of returning home, 37.0% in the latest year ending January 2018 (60 actual young people) which is slightly higher than the previous year which stood at 34.9% (61 actual children). Following returning home, the next largest group of young people ceased care because of a move to independent living, in the latest year 22.4% (36 young people) ceased for that reason, which is slightly higher than the 18.3% (32 young people) in the previous year. 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

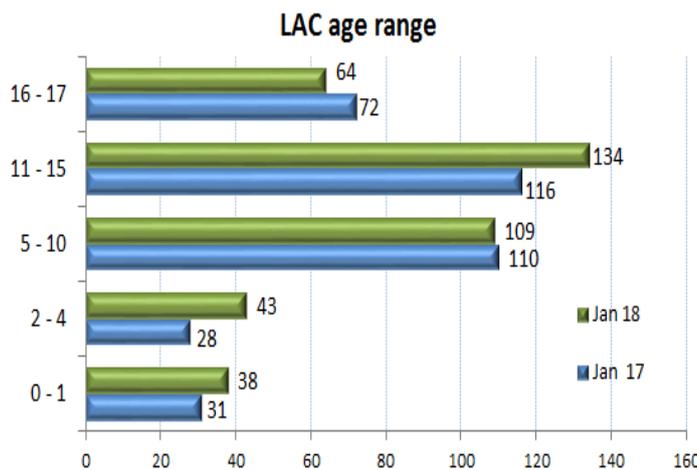
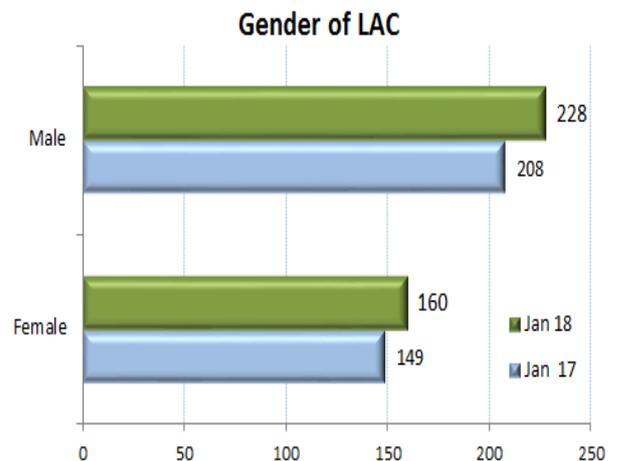
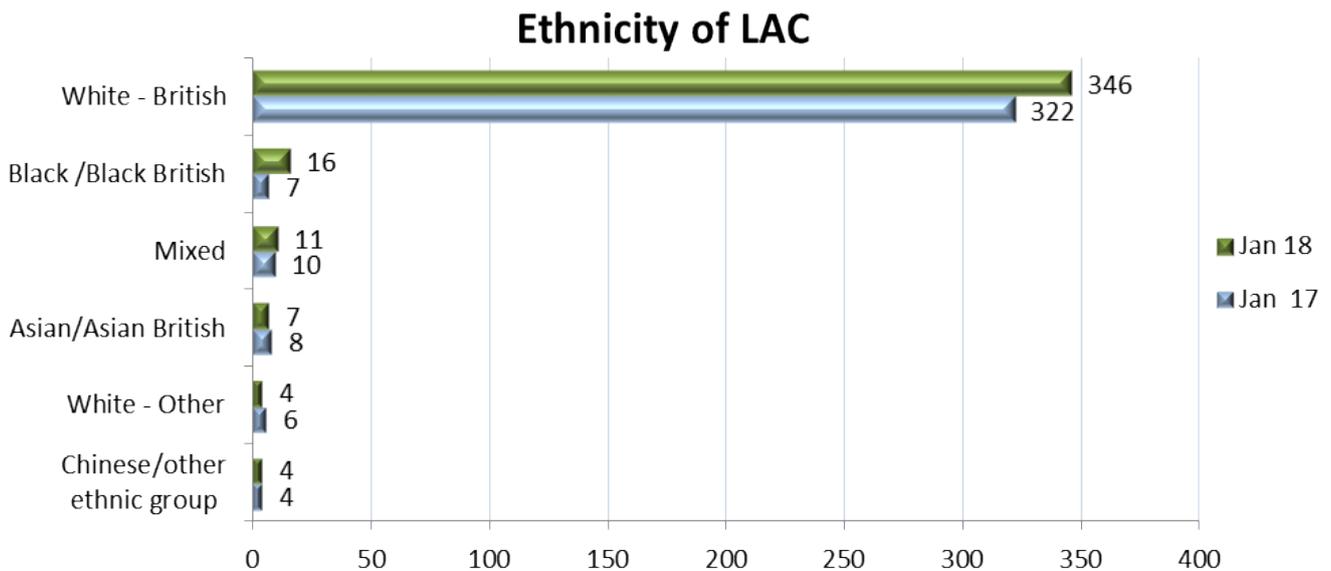


Chart 5b: Gender of LAC population



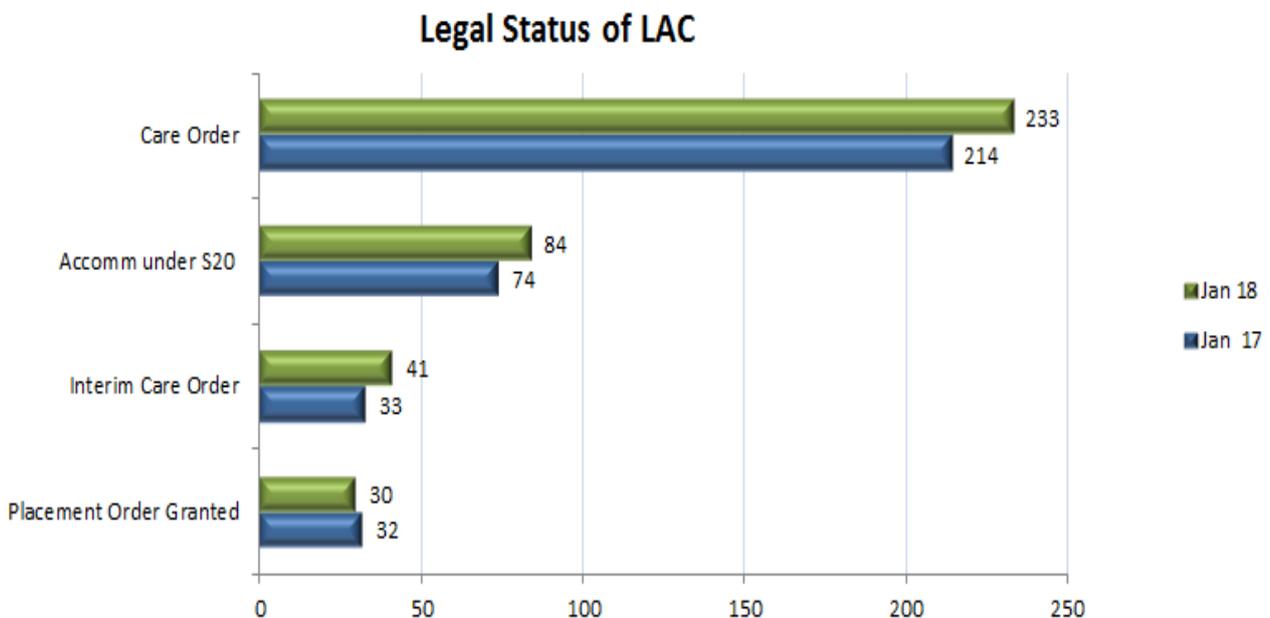
2.10 The age and gender of looked after children are shown in charts 5a and 5b above. Males account for the largest proportion of LAC with 228 children or 58.8% at the end of January 2018, this percentage is almost identical to the same point last year. Typically, those aged 11-15 account for the largest proportion of the LAC population, accounting for just over a third LAC at the end of January in each of the last two years.

Chart 6: Ethnicity of LAC population



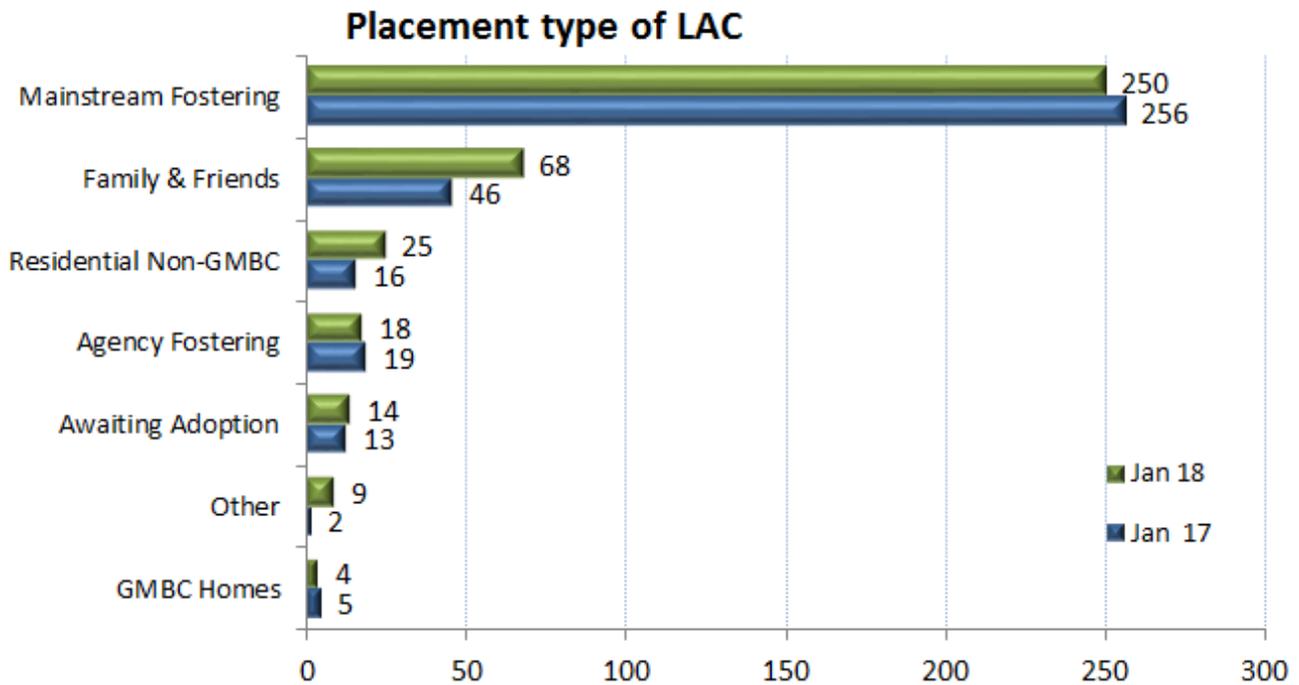
2.11 Chart 6 shows the ethnic breakdown for LAC at the end of January in each of the last two years. At the end of January 2017 there were 29 children from a non-white ethnic background (i.e. not White British or White Other) who were looked after, 8.1% of the total LAC population. At the end of January 2018, the number of children from a non-white ethnic background had increased slightly to 9.8% of the total population or to 38 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



2.12 With the exception of the children with a placement order, 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 (233 or 60%) are accommodated under a Full Care Order. Interim Care Orders have increased from 33 in January 2017 to 41 in January 2018, there has also been an increase in those subject to a S20, 74 in January 2017 to 84 in January 2018.

Chart 9: Placement Type of LAC population



- 2.13 Chart 9 (above) shows the placement type of looked after children at the end of January 2018 and the same point in 2017. The chart shows the majority of our looked children, 250 or 64.4% at the end of January 2018 were placed in mainstream fostering. We continue to use only a small proportion of Agency Fostering placements, at the end of January 2018 only 18 children were in this type of placement, which is slightly lower than the same time last year when the figure stood at 19. However, the use of non Gateshead own residential placements has increased from 16 to 25. There has been a notable increase in the number of children in family and friends placements which now account for 68 placements or 17.5% at the end of January 2018, up from 46 or 12.9% at the same time last year. Family and Friends placements include kinship fostering arrangements and children placed at home with parents.
- 2.14 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.
- 2.15 At the end of January 2018, 163 children and young people (which is 42% of the total number of LAC) were placed out of borough. Of the 163, 103 (63.2%) were in Gateshead Local Authority provision and the majority of the 86 were within the North East Region. The majority, 126 (77%), are placed in foster care, of those 13 are in Independent Foster Care placements.
- 2.16 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), Doncaster (1), Carlisle (3), South Lakeland (4), East Sussex (1), Kent (1), Dumfries and Galloway (1) and Barnet (4). The 4 children in Barnet are at Gateshead owned provision with the remaining independent.

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

Region	Local Authority	Jan 17	Of which were Gateshead own provision	Jan 18	Of which were Gateshead own provision	Change in numbers (Jan 17 to Jan 18)
North East	Durham	39	30	49	34	4
	Sunderland	29	19	31	20	1
	Newcastle Upon Tyne	23	12	26	13	1
	Northumberland	19	12	14	10	-2
	South Tyneside	9	9	11	9	0
	Darlington	1		1		0
	North Tyneside	1		1		0
	Stockton	2		1		0
	Cumbria	3				0
East of England	Dunstable	1				0
Yorkshire and Humber	Bradford			1		0
	Doncaster			1		0
	Leeds	1				0
	North Yorkshire	1				0
North West	Carlisle			3		0
	South Lakeland	3		4		0
South East	East Sussex			1		0
	Kent			1		0
Outer London	Barnet	4	4	4	4	0
Scotland	Dumfries & Galloway			1		0
Other	Adoptive placement	10	10	13	13	3
<b>Total Number</b>		<b>146</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Total %</b>			<b>65.8%</b>		<b>63.2%</b>	

### Section 3: Performance overview – Key LAC performance indicators

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 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**)

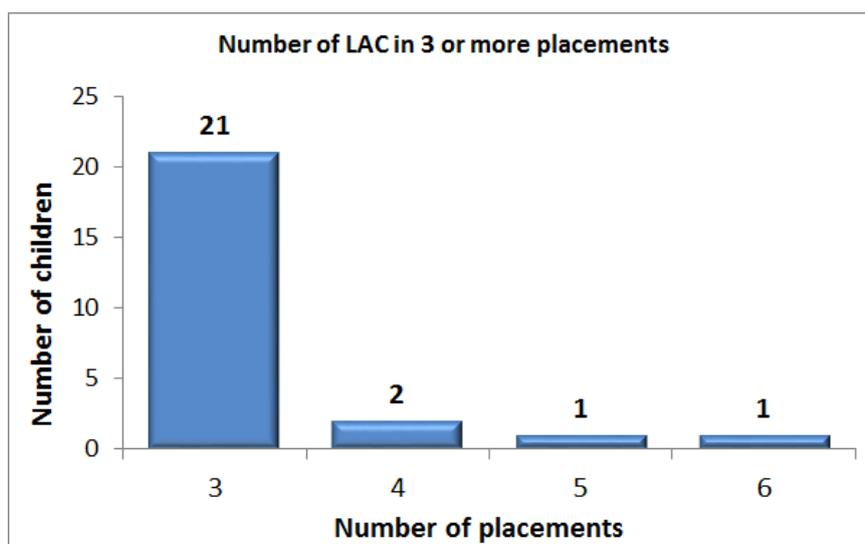
## LAC reviews

- 3.3 **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 736 LAC reviews for 366 eligible LAC have been completed during April-January 2018. Of the 366, 100% have been reviewed within the statutory timescales.

## Placement Stability

- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 **Three or more placements** - at the end of January 2018, there were 25 out of 389 children looked after who had experienced 3 or more placement moves in the previous 12 months (6.4%). At the same time last year there were 16 out of a total of 363 Looked after children (4.4%). However, 6.4% continues to compare favourably with the national picture where around 10% of children have experienced 3 or more placement moves on average.

Chart 10: number placement moves for LAC

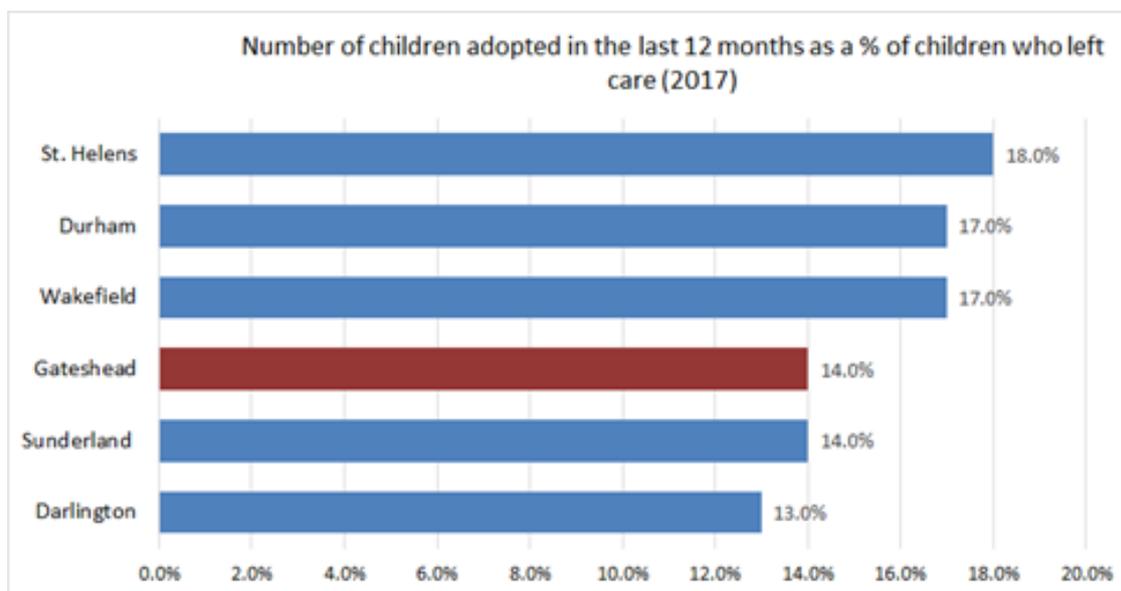


- 3.7 For the 25 children who had more than 3 or more placement moves, the chart above shows the number of actual moves they have had. It shows the majority, 21 out of the 25 have experienced 3 moves in the past 12 months, with only 4 experiencing 4 or more.
- 3.8 **Long-term stability** - A further measure of stability looks at the stability of those children who have been in long-term placements. There were 100 out of 122 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 (81.9%). At the same time last year there were 97 out of 111 children in the same placement (87.4%). 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%.

## Adoption and Special Guardianship Orders (SGO)

3.9 **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)



3.10 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 January 2018 there were 20 children who had been looked after for over 6 months and had been adopted, 11 children have left care on a SGO. During the period there were a total of 135 children who have left care giving an overall performance of 22.96%, slightly below target. At the same time last year there were 37 (22 adoptions/15 SGOs) out of 136 (27.21%). Early indications for this indicator are positive for next year with a number of new matches already been made so far.

3.11 **Timeliness of placements of looked after children for adoption** - During April to January 2018, 20 adoptions took place, of which 13 were within the best interest date timescale (65%). At the same point last year there were 22 adoptions, of which 18 were within time (82%). 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:

- Challenges of placing a sibling group of 2 children separately where it was concluded that because of both their separate complex individual needs, this was in their best interest
- Challenges around meeting timescales when children needed to be moved out of the area in order to safeguard them, and a period stability for them was required
- Issues around protracted legal proceedings when plans needed to change when mother became pregnant in order to place siblings together
- Challenges of finding an appropriate placement for a child with challenging health needs.

3.12 **Adoption Leadership Board** – Appendix 3 of this report provides data shared at the national Adoption Leadership Board (ALB) in February 2018. The data shows variance in adoption activity across the country. Key headlines from the AB discussion included:

- Overall trends in reducing numbers of adoptions and Placement Orders nationally and regionally
- General reduction in the number of adopters nationally and regionally
- Payment methods making it difficult for Regional Adoption Agencies to respond
- Lack of incentives to recruit interagency placements
- Professionals don't use the means available to see the needs of children to be placed

### Care Leavers

3.13 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.

3.14 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.

3.15 **Education Employment or Training** - Of our 103 care leavers, 59 (57%) of them are in some form of education, employment and training with the remaining 44 (43%) 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.

3.16 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.

3.17 **Suitable accommodation** - This figure is calculated different to previous years so comparison is not possible, however of the 103 care leavers that are currently allocated, 97 (94.2%) were judged to be in suitable accommodation. The 6 judged to be in unsuitable accommodation were judged based on Government guidance on unsuitable accommodation which includes:

- **In custody** - We have 3 males in custody
- **No fixed abode** - We have 1 young person who is staying with family and friends but not on a permanent basis
- **In hospital** - We have 1 female and 1 male who are in detained under the Mental Health Act

### **Contact Officer:**

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## Appendix 1: Performance Scorecard

Ref	Theme	Indicator Description	Previous Year End 2016/17	Current Month Previous Year (2016/17)	Performance Latest in the current year (2017/18)	Target for 2017/18	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	98.4%	98.5%	<b>100%</b>	100%	Met Target	↑	<p>A total of 736 LAC reviews for 366 eligible LAC have been completed during April-January 2018. Of the 366, 100% have been reviewed within the statutory timescales.</p> <p>At the same time last year there were 326 out of 331 completed within time (98.5%).</p> <p>The national average is 91%. Work is ongoing to ensure that children and young people are sufficiently engaged in their LAC reviews.</p>
2	Placement Stability	NI 062 Percentage of looked after children with three or more placement during the year	5.8%	4.4%	<b>6.4%</b>	10.0%	Met Target	↓	<p>During the period of April to January 2018 there were 25 Looked after children (LAC) who have had 3 or more placements. The total number of LAC at the end of the period was 389 (6.4%).</p> <p>At the same time last year there were 16 out of 363 LAC had 3 or more placements (4.4%).</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	88.8%	87.4%	<b>82.0%</b>	78.0%	Met Target	↓	<p>During the period of April to January 2018, 100 children have been in their placement for at least 2 years out of the 122 children who have been looked after for 2 and a half years or more (81.9%).</p> <p>At the same time last year there were 97 out of 111 (87.4%).</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-CFYO-002 Adoptions of Looked After Children and SGO	23.46%	27.21%	<b>22.96%</b>	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 January 2018 there were 20 children who had been looked after for over 6 months and had been adopted, 11 children have left care on a SGO. During the period there were a total of 135 children who have left care giving an overall performance of 22.96%. At the same time last year there were 37 (22 adoptions/15 SGOs) out of 136 (27.21%).</p>
5	Adoption and Special Guardianship Orders	NI 061 Timeliness of placements of looked after children for adoption	82.6%	81.8%	<b>65.0%</b>	80.0%	Not Met Target	↓	<p>During April to January 2018, 20 adoptions took place, of which 13 were within the best interest date timescale (65%). At the same point last year there were 22 adoptions, of which 18 were within time (82%). 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"> <li>• Challenges of placing a sibling group of 2 children separately where it was concluded that because of both their separate complex individual needs, this was in their best interest</li> <li>• Challenges around meeting timescales when children needed to be moved out of the area in order to safeguard them, and a period stability for them was required</li> <li>• Issues around protracted legal proceedings when plans needed to change when mother became pregnant in order to place siblings together</li> <li>• Challenges of finding an appropriate placement for a child with challenging health needs.</li> </ul>

Ref	Theme	Indicator Description	Previous Year End 2016/17	Current Month Previous Year (2016/17)	Performance Latest in the current year (2017/18)	Target for 2017/18	RAG rating against current target.	Trend (Compared to same time last year)	Comments
6	Care leavers	LW09 - (NI 148) Ensure Young Care Leavers are Supported to be in Education, Employment, Apprenticeships or Training	47.0%	44.8%	<b>57%</b>	New indicator for 2017/18 - no target set	N/A	↑	Of our 103 care leavers, 59 (57%) of them are in some form of education, employment and training with the remaining 44 (43%) 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	95.4%	94%	<b>94%</b>	New indicator for 2017/18 - no target set	N/A	↑	<p>Of the 103 care leavers that are currently allocated, 97 (94.2%) were judged to be in suitable accommodation. The 6 judged to be in unsuitable accommodation were judged based on Government guidance on unsuitable accommodation which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In custody - We have 3 males in custody</li> <li>• No fixed abode - We have 1 young person who is staying with family and friends but not on a permanent basis</li> <li>• In hospital - We have 1 female and 1 male who are in detained under the Mental Health Act</li> </ul>

## 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.

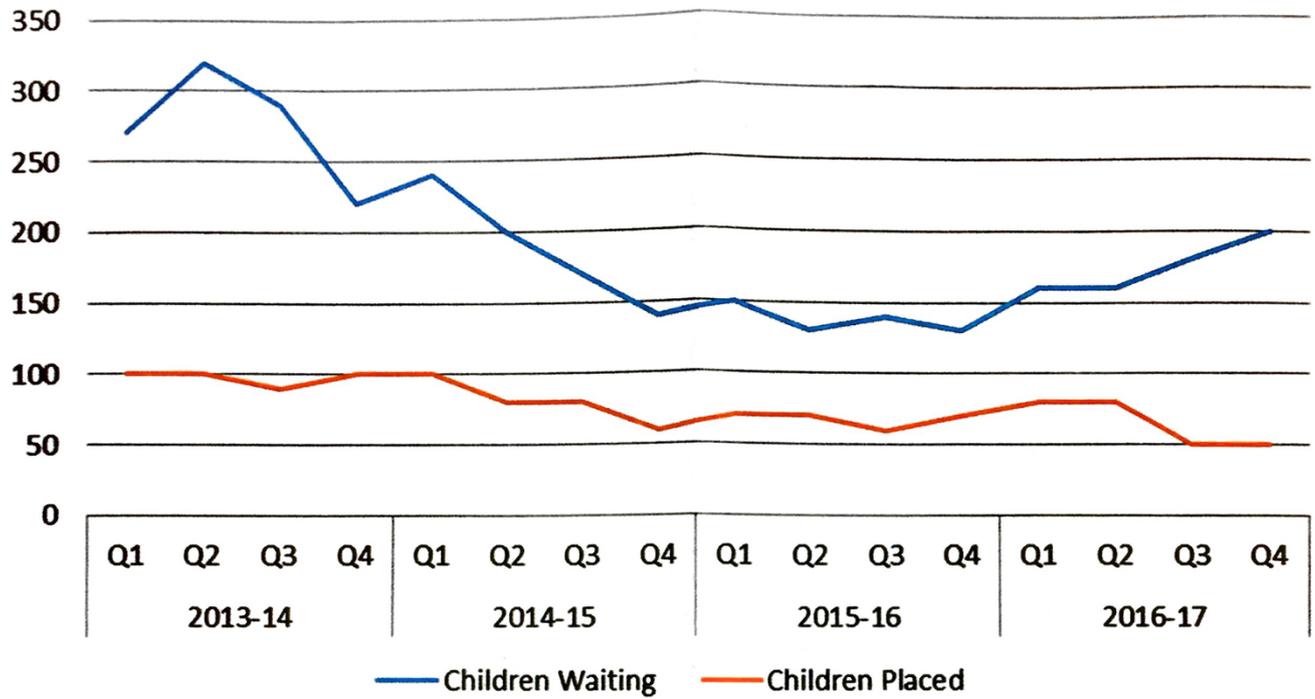
# Appendix 3: Adoption Leadership Board Data (February 2018)

ALB

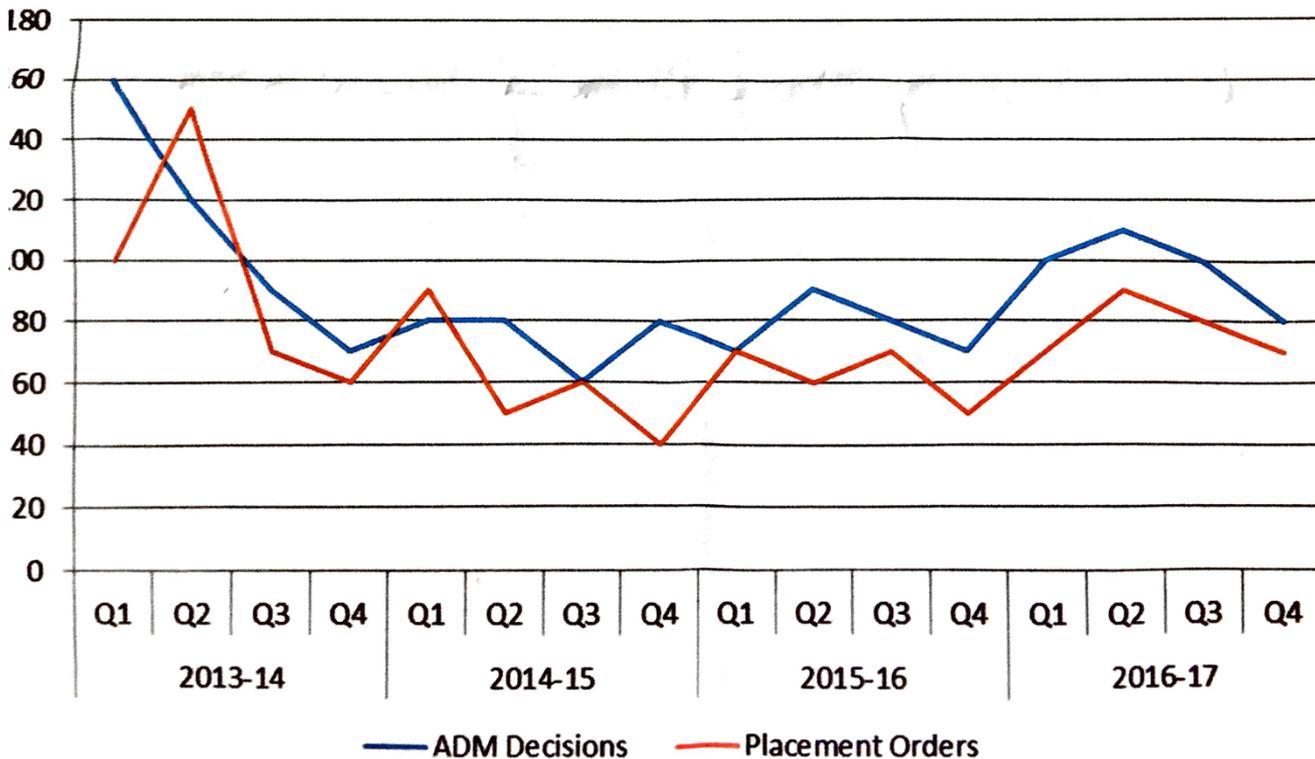
Adoption Leadership Board

North East

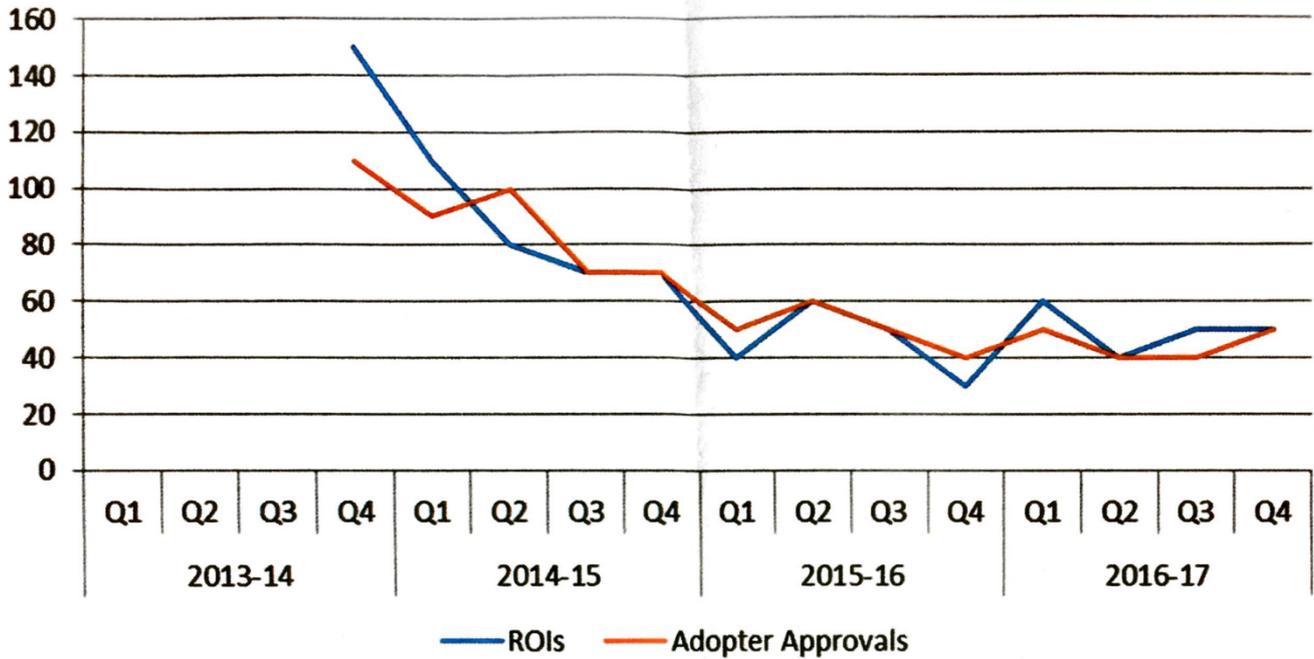
### Children waiting and placed



### ADM decisions and placement orders



### ROIs and adopter approvals



### Number of approved adopters waiting to be matched

