



## Corporate Parenting Panel

**Date**      **Friday 25 October 2024**  
**Time**      **9.30 am**  
**Venue**     **Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham**

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### **Business Part A**

#### **Items which are open to the public and press**

- 1 Apologies for Absence
- 2 Substitute Members
- 3 Minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2024 (Pages 3 - 10)
- 4 Declarations of Interest
- 5 Number of Children in our Care and Care Leavers  
- Verbal update from Head of Children's Social Care / Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children
- 6 Ofsted Updates  
- Verbal update from Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children
- 7 Proud Moments  
- Verbal update from Service Leads
- 8 Annual Adoption Service Report 2023-24
  - i) Report of Head of Children's Social Care (Pages 11 - 32)
  - ii) Presentation (Pages 33 - 38)
- 9 Mind of My Own
  - i) Report of Head of Children's Social Care (Pages 39 - 48)
  - ii) Presentation (Pages 49 - 56)
- 10 Performance Update
  - i) Report of Corporate Performance Manager (Pages 57 - 66)
  - ii) Presentation (Pages 67 - 74)

- 11 Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chair of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.
- 12 Any resolution relating to the exclusion of the public during the discussion of items containing exempt information.

### **Part B**

#### **Items during which it is considered the meeting will not be open to the public (consideration of exempt or confidential information)**

- 13 Regulation 44 Visits - Internal Children's Homes  
- Presentation of Head of Children's Social Care (Pages 75 - 78)
- 14 Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chair of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.

**Helen Bradley**

Director of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall  
Durham  
17 October 2024

To: **The Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel:**

Councillor M Simmons (Chair)  
Councillor M Walton (Vice-Chair)

Councillors R Adcock-Forster, C Bell, J Clark, S Deinali, J Griffiths, T Henderson, C Hunt, B Kellett, L Mavin, D Oliver, S Quinn, A Reed, K Robson, K Rooney, A Savory, P Sexton, C Varty, J Watson and M Wilson

#### **Co-opted Members:**

J Bell, C Brown, M Johnson, J McCarthy, E Reed, W Taylor, F Tweddle, R Woods and Children in Care Council representatives

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**Contact: Jill Hogg**

**Tel: 03000 269 711**

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## DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Corporate Parenting Panel** held in **Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham** on **Friday 13 September 2024** at **9.30 am**

### **Present:**

**Councillor M Walton (Vice-Chair in the Chair)**

### **Members of the Committee:**

Councillors R Adcock-Forster, J Clark, S Deinali, J Griffiths, C Hunt, L Mavin, D Oliver, S Quinn, A Reed, K Rooney, C Varty and M Wilson

### **Co-opted Members:**

Billie Leigh, Luke, J Bell, M Johnson, W Taylor and K Watson

### **Also Present:**

Jasmine Aikin – Lawyer, Children, Adults and Health

Anne Haigh – Centre Manager, Aycliffe Secure Centre

Rachel Harris – Service Improvement Manager

Rebecca Harrison – Project Worker, Investing in Children

Nathan Head – Team Manager, Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

Deb Loraine – Service Manager, Countywide Services

Lee Mullaney – Deputy Head Teacher, Aycliffe Secure Centre

Lee Peacock – Participation and Engagement Officer

Rachael Riley – Operations Manager, Children Looked After and Care Leavers

Martyn Stenton – Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children

Jayne Watson – Senior Partnerships Officer

## **1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Simmons, C Bell, B Kellett and A Savory, Co-opted Members J McCarthy and Rebecca Woods and Officers R Farnham, R Johnson and M Stubbs.

## **2 Substitute Members**

K Watson substituted for J McCarthy.

### **3 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held Friday, 19 July 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **4 Declarations of Interest**

No interests were declared.

### **5 Corporate Parenting Panel Terms of Reference**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Early Help, Vulnerable Children, and Inclusion, and Head of Children's Social Care in respect of the Corporate Parenting Panel Terms of Reference (for copy of report see file of minutes).

The Head of Early Help, Vulnerable Children, and Inclusion, Martyn Stenton reminded the Panel that the Terms of Reference for the Panel were reviewed regularly, to ensure they were fit for purpose. He noted the Terms of Reference are in line with the Local Government Association Key Lines of Enquiry. He explained that the Panel were asked for their comments on the Terms of Reference in respect of being fit for purpose, and for delegated authority for the Head of Early Help, Vulnerable Children, and Inclusion and Head of Children's Social Care, to manage the work programme.

#### **Resolved:**

- (i) That the Panel agree that the Terms of Reference remain fit for purpose and continue to raise the profile of the panel's work.
- (ii) That delegated authority be given to the Head of Children's Social Care and the Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children to manage the Corporate Parenting Panel's work programme.

### **6 Care Experience - Protected Characteristic**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Children's Social Care in respect of Care Experience being adopted by DCC as a Protected Characteristic (for copy of report see file of minutes).

The Panel heard from Luke and Billie Leigh as regards the work they had undertaken in looking at adopting Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic across DCC, including an overview of the consultation responses from surveys conducted by DCC and IIC.

*Councillor S Quinn entered the meeting at 9.41am*

Luke noted some young people had not understood what a protected characteristic was, and some had said they did not want 'another label' given to them as care experienced young people. Billie Leigh noted that while care experienced young people faced a number of barriers, they did not want their care experience to define them, with Luke adding that many were resilient and would simply answer 'I am fine'. Luke noted that a number of the young people that had responded explained that they did not wish to retell their personal story repeatedly. The Panel noted that care experienced young people could often think about what other people thought about them. Luke and Billie Leigh explained that it was hoped the work could help change the narrative for care experienced young people. They added that the majority of those who had responded supported adopting care experience as a protected characteristic.

Luke and Billie Leigh referred the Panel to a number of slides with quotes from the young people and noted the next steps, including a motion to be put to Full Council.

The Chair thanked Luke and Billie Leigh, with Councillor C Hunt adding her thanks for an excellent piece of work. The Chair added the work was very professional and had taken on board the points made by the Panel previously.

The Senior Partnerships Officer noted it was hoped that it would be considered at the October meeting of Council, with those involved to be invited to the meeting accordingly.

**Resolved:**

- (i) That the report be noted.
- (ii) That the Corporate Parenting Panel present the motion to Council proposing the adoption of the principles of protected characteristics for care experienced young people be agreed.

## **7 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children Annual Update**

The Committee considered an update report and presentation of the Head of Children's Social Care in respect of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC), presented by UASC Team Manager, Nathan Head (for copy of report see file of minutes).

The Team Manager explained the formation of the Team, and the numbers of referrals from the Home Office's Nation Transfer Scheme (NTS) with currently 84 UASC in the care of the Team, within a threshold capacity of 98 for that scheme, along with 54 care leavers being supported by the service.

He explained this was a rolling threshold, and that Durham was accommodating the majority of the North East transfers, noting the next nearest in numbers within the region being Sunderland with approximately 50 UASC. He explained the different issues that could be faced by UASC and gave examples of how young people were progressing, with a number studying at University, and one who had graduated and was pursuing a career in the NHS. He noted the range of activities to help with social inclusion, with Community and celebration events including for Eid, cricket days, and weekly football sessions. He noted there was UASC representation on the Children in Care Council, and explained the toolbox and welcome packs that were made available. He added there was a strong multi-agency approach taken locally, as well as a consideration of the wider regional approach being taken.

The Team Manager explained that there were a number of challenges, including the delays at the Home Office in processing asylum claims, as well as uncertainty with any changes the new Government may make to the Illegal Migration Act, which states that people who had entered the country “illegally” will forgo the right to claim asylum. He added other challenges included the difficulty in securing foster homes for young people under 16 years old in the North East, and the support given to those UASC who had suffered trauma. He concluded by giving examples of events and activities that had been arranged for UASC and the positive feedback that had been received.

The Chair thanked the Team Manager and noted the fantastic work of the Team, adding she was disappointed with the time taken to process asylum claims by the Home Office. She added she was pleased to hear about the UASC that had taken the opportunity to study at university, and securing employment after graduating, contributing positively to our economy and society.

The Chair asked what happened to those who reached 25 years old, without having asylum granted by the Home Office. The Team Leader noted that Local Authorities supported care experienced young people / care leavers up to the age of 25, so this support would continue. He noted that if the Home Office decision was to deny asylum, there was an appeals process. He added that it would be hoped that a UASC would not get to the age of 25 before an asylum decision had been made, and noted the processes, including looking to engage Human Rights experts.

Councillor J Clark noted the point raised under the previous item, where care experienced young people often had to repeat their stories, noting that must be especially difficult for those UASC who may have experienced trauma, especially if there were language barriers. She asked what was in place to assist UASC in terms of lessening the need for them to repeat their story, so

that professionals already had the information to hand. The Team Manager noted UASC were allocated a social worker, and they were advocates for those young people. He added they were highly skilled and had a number of tools alongside a multi-agency approach. Councillor J Clark applauded the range of activities that had been provided for the UASC and noted the fabulous work of the Team.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

## **8 Annual Health Update**

The Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children and Children in Care NENC ICB, Karen Watson, presented the Annual Health Update (for copy of report and presentation see file of minutes).

The Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children and Children in Care updated the Panel on issues relating to services the NENC ICB commissioning, with County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust providing medical services for care experience young people and those with a plan for adoption, with Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust providing Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). She explained as regards the services that were commissioned by the Council's Public Health Team, with Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust 0-25 Service providing Review Health Assessments for Durham children living within the Local Authority boundary.

The Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children and Children in Care provided update information as regards the six local priority areas in relation to:

1. Improving access to a local dentist to increase compliance for dental health assessments for Children in Care in Durham.
2. Ensuring the needs of children from Durham who are living out of area and improving compliance of Out of Area (OOA) health assessments within statutory timeframes.
3. To understand the number of Children in Care accessing CAMHS services and to have assurance that their needs are fully met.
4. To increase the compliance of primary care GP information to inform Initial Health Assessments (IHAs) and Review Health Assessments (RHAs) - a digital solution to improve the quality of GP information is being redeveloped.
5. Every care experienced young person should be offered a health passport to understand their health history.
6. To ensure that unaccompanied asylum-seeking children have access to services and support to meet their needs.

The Panel were informed of the 2024/25 priorities from the national perspective, in relation to work being undertaken around new NHS numbers for children who are adopted, and with the national group working with NHS England looking at NHS numbers for UASC, to help prevent duplicate NHS numbers. The Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children and Children in Care noted Durham priorities including CLASP development day; continued Health Partnership meeting; and focus on the Young Peoples priority 'Physical and Emotional Health – right person, right service, right time'. She noted that first steps would include: to consider any mapping of emotional wellbeing services; and to strengthening the notification process to health when young people come into care.

The Panel learned of the work of the ICB Children in Care Priority Group, noting the Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children and Children in Care was the lead for that workstream. Members noted areas of work included: benchmarking tools; dental recovery pathway; development of a Children in Care Dashboard; Care Leavers' Pathway for GPs; Digital Health Passport; Early Deaths of Care Experienced; and Children in Care Week.

**Resolved:**

That the report and presentation be noted.

## **9 The Full Circle Annual Performance Report**

The Panel received the Annual Performance Report of the Full Circle Service covering the period from April 2023 to March 2024 (for copy of report and presentation see file of minutes).

The Service Manager, Deb Loraine and Team Manager, Louise Woolfe explained that the Full Circle Service provided therapeutic input and supported trauma informed approaches to practice throughout Children's Services, as well as offering both post-adoption support utilising the Adoption and Special Guardianship Fund (ASGF), and traded services to other Local Authorities to become more financially sustainable longer term.

The Chair thanked the Officers for their presentation, noting the issues identified and the changes that were being made accordingly.

**Resolved:**

That the report and presentation be noted.



## **10 Award Nominations**

The Service Improvement Manager, R Harris noted that the Council had been nominated in two categories for the Children and Young People Now awards 2024. She noted that one was for “The Leaving Care Award” for the work in relation to the Next Venture Fund, the other nomination being for Luke specifically, in respect of the “The Children's Achievement Award”. She added the awards ceremony was to be held in London on 28 November. The Chair led the Panel in congratulating all involved as regards the nominations and wished them the best of luck for the day.

## **11 Exclusion of the Public**

### **Resolved:**

That under Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely discussion of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

## **12 Aycliffe Secure Centre Quarterly Update Report (including Regulation 44 Visits and School Update)**

The Panel received a report and presentation of the Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children presented by the Centre Manager, Ann Haigh and Deputy Head Teacher, Lee Mullaney from the Aycliffe Secure Centre.

They provided the quarterly update which included an update in relation to the school and an overview of Regulation 44 visits and regulatory body ratings of the Independent Children’s Residential Homes in which Durham children / young people are placed (for copy of report see file of minutes).

### **Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

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**Corporate Parenting Panel**

**25 October 2024**

**Annual Adoption Service Report  
2023/24**



**Report of Head of Children’s Social Care, Children and Young People’s Services, DCC**

**Electoral division(s) affected:**

None

**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 Annual review of the Adoption Service for 2023/24 including the identification of service priorities for 2023/24.

**Executive summary**

*Adopter Recruitment*

- 2 From 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, DCC’s Adoption Team received:
  - (a) 115 initial enquiries. 35 initial visits were carried out.
  - (b) 22 information sessions held via Teams, facilitated by DCC and Together For Children (TFC) social workers.
  - (c) Information, counselling, and preparation courses (ICP) has been delivered on a shared basis between Durham and TFC adoption teams.
  - (d) Nine ICP courses delivered out of a planned 12. Three of the 12 needed to be cancelled due to very low numbers.

*Matching*

- 3 Matches for children with adopters continues to be carried out in a timely manner, with a clear drive to promote early permanence (EP) care for children.
  - (a) 83 children had an Agency Decision Maker (ADM) decision for a plan of adoption.
  - (b) 65 children have been granted a Placement Order.

- (c) 51 Adoption Orders have been granted in this year.
- 4 Early Permanence is a priority and within this period seven children have been placed in this arrangement.
- (a) 2 x DCC EP carers,
  - (b) 4 x TFC EP carers,
  - (c) 1 x external voluntary agency EP carers.

### *Panel*

- 5 Panel continues to provide a high level of scrutiny and reflection in relation to the adopters and with matches.
- (a) 22 Adoption Panels have been held.
  - (b) Approval of 15 prospective adoptive households.
  - (c) The plan of adoption for a relinquished baby.
  - (d) 41 matches for children with adopters of which five were sibling groups of 2. All matches were recommended and latterly ratified by ADM.
  - (e) 21 matches were with DCC approved adopters,
  - (f) Eight matches were with prospective adopters from our partner spoke, TFC.
  - (g) 12 matches were with other Local Authorities, RAA's or Voluntary Adoption Agencies.
  - (h) All panel recommendations for children 's matches were ratified by the ADM within the timescale of 7 days following panel.
  - (i) Recruitment for new panel members is ongoing.
  - (j) In this timeframe 3 new members have been appointed, however three panel members have resigned due to personal circumstances.
  - (k) No applicants have been presented to the Independent Reviewing Mechanism (IRM) within this year.
  - (l) No family (adoptive) breakdowns have taken place in this year.

### *Keeping in touch – formerly known as Post Box contact*

- (a) 188 birth parents have been supported in writing their Post Box letter or understanding the process.
- (b) 420 letters were received and checked.
- (c) DCC had a total 713 keeping in touch agreements in place.

### *Post adoption support/Adoption Support Fund*

- 6 This continues to be an increasing area of work in volume and complexity.
- (a) 151 active post adoption support cases relating to therapeutic needs and past trauma for adopted children and young people.
  - (b) 152 applications were made to the Adoption Support Fund.
  - (c) Total value of ASF approvals = £571,554

### *Non agency adoption*

- (a) 19 initial visits completed, with 15 resulting in an assessment commencing.
- (b) Eight Adoption Orders have been granted.
- (c) Three completed assessments are waiting to be finalised at court
- (d) 13 assessments are ongoing although not all will result in the families making an application to court.

### *Access to adoption records*

- 7 Access to records for adopted adults wishing to access their adoption records is undertaken by Adoption Social Workers.
- (a) 34 adopted adults requested this service.

### *Support to birth parents/grandparents whose children/grandchildren are in Care proceedings with plans of adoption.*

- (a) 23 birth parents / grandparents have requested and received support regarding their children's/grandchildren's adoption, by the Adoption Support Worker.

## **Recommendation**

- 8 A detailed report covering all areas of the Adoption Team's work has been written and submitted to assist CPP members to fully understand the complex and differing nature of all areas of work covered by the team. The Corporate Parenting Panel is requested to note the contents and agree the proposed priorities.

## Background

- 9 The annual report sets out the performance and the direction of travel for the Adoption Service as a spoke in the Regional Adoption Agency, Adopt Coast to Coast.

## Service Priorities

- 10 Key priority areas for 2023/24:
- (a) Focus on the importance of relationship-based practise where an adoption social worker who takes an initial enquiry from a potential adopter maintains the allocation throughout the assessment process where possible. This is to allow consistent trusting relationships to be built and try and prevent a drop off after the initial enquiry.
  - (b) To work collaboratively with our partners in Adopt Coast to Coast to recruit, assess and approve adopters in a timely manner. Identifying any challenges to ensuring that timescale are met within stage 1 and stage 2 of the assessment process and working with partners such as the police and health to overcome those barriers.
  - (c) Continue with the review of the matching process to ensure the process in Durham and TFC are in line with each other, that this progresses as quickly as possible and that there is robust information gathered, shared and recorded about the match of possible adopters to children.
  - (d) To ensure children's plans of permanence via adoption are progressed at an early a stage as possible and to develop a new process to assist with the identification and tracking of these children. Work alongside TFC to share information at Children Waiting Meetings about unborn children who could be placed in Early Permanence from birth and match them with adopters going through the assessment process who could be approved before the child is born.
  - (e) To continue to recruit new Panel members to the Central List. This will ensure quoracy and prevent the possible situation of having to stand a panel down due to lack of available Panel members.
  - (f) To provide high quality post adoption support to adopted children and young adults, supporting them to access therapy via the Adoption Support Fund. Consideration to be given to the structure of the adoption team and whether Post Adoption Support should be managed differently.

- (g) To enhance and develop keeping in touch for adopted children and their birth families, ensuring that where possible relationships with birth families are built with adopters to facilitate different forms of keeping in touch such as more children adopted spending some direct time with birth family members.
- (h) To increase participation including using feedback from young people and children who have a brother or sister adopted.

## **Conclusion**

11 The update will provide an overview of the annual performance from the adoption service.

## **Authors**

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

No legal implications.

### **Finance**

All high-level payments are approved by senior management.

### **Consultation**

Feedback from various persons involved in adoption is gathered to enhance practice.

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

The adoption service embraces equality and diversity throughout all of the areas of work carried out.

### **Climate Change**

The effect of overuse of vehicles is given full consideration and where appropriate TEAMS/virtual calls are used. Visits to adopters are made using the most cost effective and environmentally friendly method possible.

### **Human Rights**

Human rights are considered in all areas of adoption.

### **Crime and Disorder**

DBS and safeguarding checks are carried out to ensure persons wishing to adopt are safe to do so.

### **Staffing**

The adoption team has a strong, stable workforce.

### **Accommodation**

Spectrum 8, Spectrum Business Park, Seaham is the base for the Adoption Team.

### **Risk**

Risks to children are minimised through numerous checks in the assessment process of adopters, during the matching process and through to the Adoption Order being granted.

### **Procurement**

No implications.

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**Adoption Team Annual Report  
April 1 2023 – March 31 2024**



*A hand made Thank You card from the birth child of an adopter*

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# Durham County Council Adoption Service

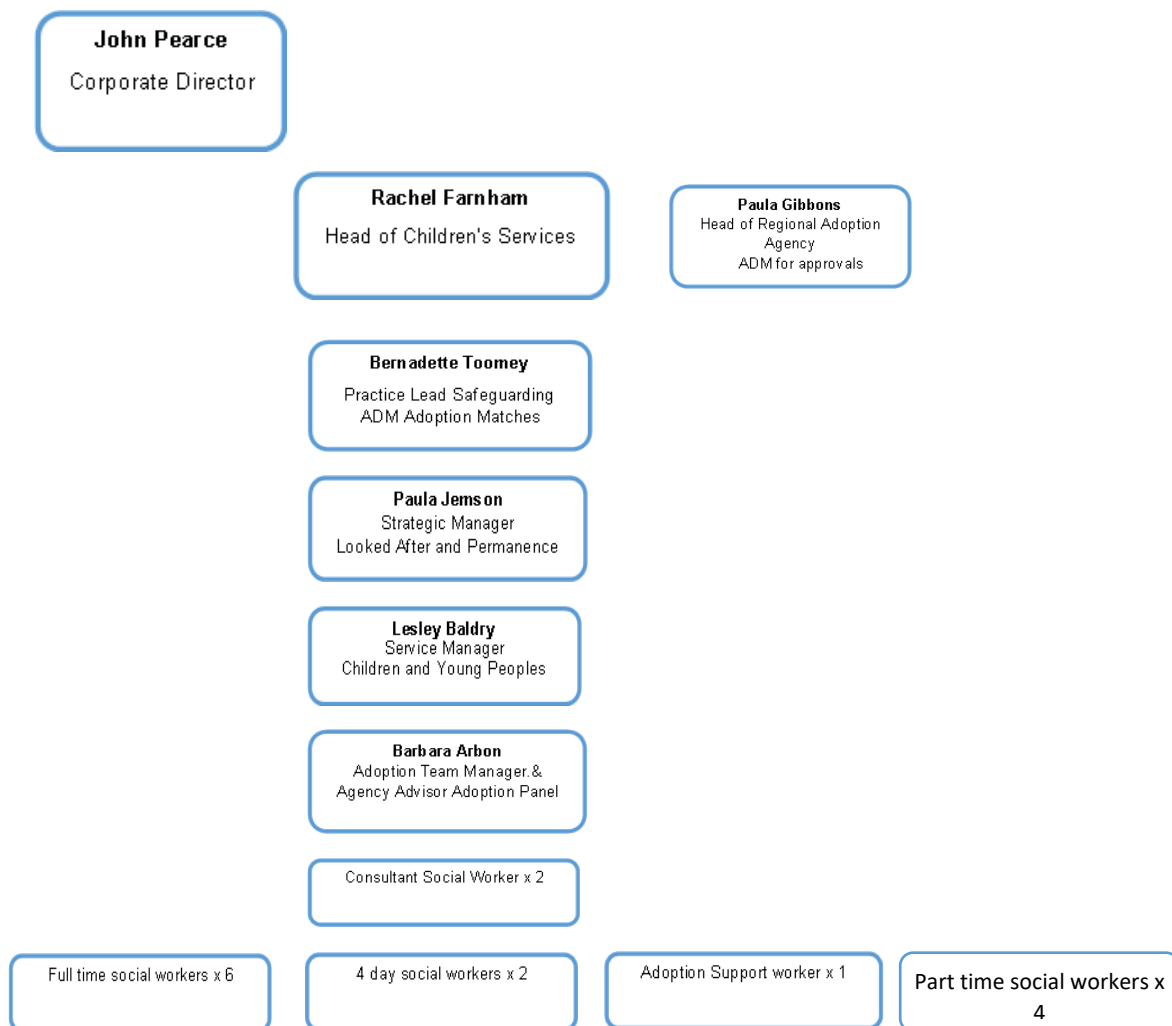
## 1. Introduction

This annual report covers all adoption activity within Durham County Council (DCC), a 'spoke' within the Regional Adoption Agency, Adopt Coast to Coast. This is a partnership 'hub and spoke' model between Durham and Together for Children (TFC).

The Statement of Purpose for Durham Adoption Service was updated at the time of writing this report and once agreed by Senior Management, a copy will be provided to OFSTED as per the Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003.

Adoption National Minimum Standards 25.6 (2011) states that written reports are provided on the management, outcomes, and financial state of the Agency, every six months. A report was submitted in Autumn 2023 covering April to September 2023. This report considers the full financial year, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2024.

## 2. Durham Adoption Team Staffing



- Due to staff sickness and additional work within the adoption team such as the increased workload within the arena of Post Adoption Support applications and non- agency adoptions, there have been 2 full time and 1 part time agency social workers employed within the team over this year, 1 full time and 1 part time remain in post until September 2024.
- 2 x student Social Workers have been provided with placements within the team over this period.
- The Adoption Team has recruited 1 part time Social Worker within this period, who is yet to commence her role.
- 2 Adoption Panel Chairs are independently employed. Barbara Brelsford and Sandie Dixon. Jane Lowther is the Vice Chair. Within this year Jane has not needed to cover any panels as Vice Chair.
- Duty is covered on a rota basis by the Social Workers within the team. There is a main duty worker along with a backup duty worker Monday to Friday 8.30am – 5pm, 4.30pm on Fridays. There is also an initial visit rolling rota, which allows a fair dissemination of such visits and Stage 1 allocations across the team.

### **3. Recruitment**

#### **3.1 Enquiries, information sessions and Initial visits**

- 115 initial enquires. 35 enquiries progressed to an initial visit. This is a decrease from the previous year of 267 initial enquiries which resulted in 80 initial visits. The reduction is in part due the marketing post being vacant for 3 months whilst the recruitment process was concluded. The cost of living crisis is also believed to have contributed to recruitment challenges. Responsibility for leading on recruitment is held with the RAA hub and enquiry numbers are monitored monthly. For enquiries who do not respond to communication from the adoption social worker the RAA has an agreed timeframe of 1 month to keep the enquiry open with regular attempts to make contact with the person/persons before closing the enquiry down. An email, voicemail, text or letter are always sent advising of this closing down but inviting them to return at anytime in the future.
- 22 information sessions held via Teams and facilitated on evenings and Saturdays by DCC and TFC social workers. Attendance is not mandatory. The aim is to provide further basic information to assist the applicant in deciding if adoption is what they wish to do. An adoptive parent shares their journey, this is valued by those attending These events are usually attended pre-Stage 1.

### **3.2 Stage 1**

#### **Training for prospective adopters**

Mandatory 3-day Information, counselling, and preparation courses (ICP) have been delivered. This is not mandatory for current foster carers or 2<sup>nd</sup> time adopters-

- Between April and December DCC and TFC facilitated the ICP training with workers from the same spoke. From January 2024 the training has been delivered by one DCC worker and one TFC worker.
- There were monthly sessions planned, 9 took place with DCC facilitating 3 sessions, TFC 3 sessions and DCC and TFC jointly 3 sessions.

### **3.3 Stage 2**

- 15 adoptive households approved. This is a decrease from the previous year where 41 households were approved as outlined within recruitment above.
- At the end of this reporting period, there were 12 prospective adopter households in Stage 1.

### **3.4 Training in stage 2**

- Optional 2-day training session with a focus on Early Permanence (EP). Within the stage 1 ICP training EP is covered, providing an overview, which allows participants the insight necessary to decide if they wish to consider this route to adoption. Should a prospective adopter be clear they do not wish to become parents via this route they can opt to not attend in stage 2. However, should EP be a route they choose the training is mandatory. Early Permanence continues to be a key priority, as it allows children to experience a reduced number of care givers and moves allowing for stronger attachments to be formed much sooner.
- 8 households were approved who wished to consider early permanence as a possible option.
- The 1-day therapeutic parenting training, which is mandatory has been delivered during Stage 2. This is delivered on a shared basis with TFC staff. 2 experienced Social Workers within DCC's Adoption Team deliver this training bi-monthly. This training supports the attendees to help the child with their emotional healing.
- Paediatric first aid training has been delivered, provided by a qualified expert in this field.

## **4. Panel**

There has been a continued drive to recruit new panel members. This continues to be a priority to ensure the Central List has a range of panel members available to ensure quoracy.

In the last year we have successfully recruited 3 new panel members however, 3 panel members have resigned due to their own circumstances.

#### **4.1 What was presented to panel in this period:**

- 41 matches for children with prospective adopters of which 5 were sibling groups of 2. All matches were recommended and subsequently ratified by ADM.
- 15 adopter approvals were considered. 15 adoptive families were recommended and latterly ratified by ADM.

The quality of reports being presented to panel continues to be of a very high standard. Panel members and Chairs have regularly provided positive feedback to Social Workers, their Managers and Senior Managers.

Below is a compliment received by a panel chair:

*I'm emailing to let you know about the quality of the work undertaken with the above children, particularly by the social workers involved in the Keeping in Touch agreement. Great thought has been put into how best to maintain and develop their relationship through keeping in touch and this has resulted in a range of methods being used including physically meeting up but also using cards, videos and letters in between directly seeing each other. On behalf of panel, please pass on to all those concerned our thanks for the hard work being done for these children and their prospective adopters.*

#### **4.2 Training and development for panel members and chairs**

- Panel members have also received face-to-face training within this period held together with the RAA partners. The training related to the matching process for children with adults.
- DCC panel members also received a hybrid training session on the safeguarding process.
- In respect of training for panel members and chairs, Barbara Arbon, has provided a variety of literature, research, practice updates and information to each member/Chair via email throughout the year. Any such information is discussed in AOB at the end of panel.
- Adoption Service Manager attends some panel meetings and provides updates to the panel on service developments.
- Bi-annual Adoption Panel Meetings were held attended by the strategic, service and team managers of the adoption service. Views of panel members on the panel process and quality of reports are shared and any developments are agreed.



- Panel Members had their annual appraisals from April to June 2023, undertaken by Barbara Arbon jointly with either Sandie Dixon or Barbara Brelsford. Panel chair appraisals were also carried out by ADM.

#### **4.3 Adoption Panel/Independent Reviewing Mechanism**

Adoption Panel has been held 22 times over this 12-month period. Panel is held fortnightly, and additional panels held when necessary to prevent delays for children. 1 of the 22 panels held was an additional panel. No applicants have been presented to the Independent Reviewing Mechanism (IRM) within this year.

### **5. The Child's Journey**

- In this reporting period, 83 children had an ADM decision for a plan of adoption, in the previous year this was 60.
- 65 Children have been granted a Placement Order, compared to 54 in the previous year.
- In this period, 40 children were matched at Panel. This is a decrease from the previous year of 58 children being matched.
- 29 of these children being matched within the RAA; of which 21 matches were with DCC approved adopters, 8 matches were with prospective adopters from our partner spoke.
- 12 matches were with other Local Authorities, RAA's or Voluntary Adoption Agencies.
- This is a decrease from the previous year, where 17 children were placed with external providers.
- 51 Adoption Orders have been granted for DCC children within this period. An increase on the previous year where 43 Adoption Orders were granted.
- 18 children are living with prospective adopters but not yet adopted.
- 12 children's plans were changed from adoption to long-term fostering.

No disruptions have happened within this period.

## **6. Budgets**

The budget position at the end of this reporting period is;

- DCC placed 6 children with 6 approved adoptive households from our partner spoke TFC.
- 24 DCC children were placed with 23 approved DCC adoptive households.
- TFC placed 2 children with 2 DCC approved adoptive households.
- 2 children from 2 other Local Authorities were matched with DCC adopters.
- 19 children were placed externally to Adopt Coast to Coast with inter-agency fees costing £342,284 which is a decrease from the previous year's cost of £515,185. This was 7 sibling groups of 2 children and 5 individual children, all of which were older children or young children with complex health needs.

## **7. Family Finding**

Fortnightly family finding meetings have been held with our partner spoke to consider children with plans of adoption and adopters who are approved or in assessment that may be suitable matches for DCC children. Early matching is key in preventing delays for children.

Profiling events/activity days have been held and facilitated or attended by DCC staff. Manager consent is needed before a child can be either taken to an activity day, their profile shared at a profiling event or with adoption agencies external to coast to coast. Management consent to family find externally to the RAA is sought when no in-house adopters can meet the needs of some DCC children. Such children tend to be those with additional health and/or disability needs, older children and sibling groups. However external searches have been needed for children who in the past would have been easier to find adoptive homes for.

### **7.1 Activity days**

- Activity Days are held to family find for children with additional needs, sibling groups or older children. The days allow prospective adopters to interact with the children through fun and enjoyable activities, such as arts and crafts, sports, and games, to establish whether they feel an emotional connection. It aims to broaden prospective adopters thinking in regards to ages and needs of children and if they feel able to consider children they otherwise would not consider.

- DCC hosted 1 activity day in September 2023. From DCC there were 4 families of 2 children and 1 family of 3 children. Of these DCC children a brother and sister progressed to a match.
- Due to a national shortage of adopters the next planned Adopt Coast to Coast activity day in January 2024 was cancelled.

## **7.2 Profiling events**

- Profiling events are the same as that for an activity day, however no children attend this event. Adoption family finders and if possible, children's Social Workers and Foster Carers attend. Each adoption agency has a stand where profiles and photographs of children are displayed. Prospective adopters from around the country are invited to attend and they have the opportunity to talk directly with Social Workers and carers about the children. As with activity days, the aim is to broaden prospective adopters' thinking about the child or children they are open to considering as a match for themselves.
- DCC have hosted 1 profiling event this year in May 2023. 2 further Adopt Coast to Coast profiling events were planned for November and January but were cancelled, again due to a national shortage of adopters.

## **7.3 Early Permanence (EP)**

- 7 children have been placed in this arrangement. 2 x DCC EP carers, 4 x TfC EP carers, 1 x external voluntary adoption agency EP carers.
- Early Permanence meetings are held as soon as possible once adoption via EP is being considered as a possible plan. The child's plan is then tracked by the Permanency Monitoring Group chaired by a senior manager.

Further regular weekly monitoring is undertaken by the adoption team manager and adoption social work consultants, The tracker is viewed fortnightly by the Service Manager.

There is a focus within Children Waiting Meetings held jointly with our RAA spoke colleagues fortnightly to identify children who could be placed under Early Permanence and match with adopters at an early a stage as possible.

## **8. Keeping in touch – formerly known as Post Box contact**

Keeping in touch continues to improve with the Adoption Support Worker and named Business Support Worker allocated to ensure letters are processed and uploaded

promptly between adopters, birth family and the children. Work remains ongoing to complete the final uploads of historic letters to LCS records. Historic indirect contact agreements have now been completed and uploaded to LCS.

- DCC have 713 keeping in touch agreements in place, of which 420 letters were sent in either by birth family members or by adopters. Each letter was reviewed to ensure they were appropriate before sending on to the recipient.
- 188 birth parents have been supported in writing their keeping in touch letters. This has been facilitated in various ways including one to one work with birth parents to write their letters, occasionally with parents who themselves are not able to read or write.
- The adoption support worker has managed to re-establish keeping in touch between some birth parents and their children and has also established not only indirect keeping in touch between some children, but also direct, which has been extremely positive.

## **9. Post Adoption Support Services**

Overall, there has been a significant increase in each area of adoption support services which are a statutory requirement for each Local Authority.

### **9.1 Adoption Support and Special Guardianship Fund assessments**

This area of work has been increasing nationally over the last few years and does have an impact as stated previously on adoption social workers case load capacity.

- 151 children have been supported through successful 'assessments of need' completed by Social Workers within the Adoption team. This is an increase from 94 the previous, this is a 61% increase.
- 152 claims were made to the Adoption Support Fund on behalf of children in need of therapeutic support relating to adoption issues. This is an increase on the 116 from the previous year. This equates to an increase of 31%.
- Total Amount for Approved claims by the ASGSF 2023/24 = £571,554

There have also been some children who have also received services from our colleagues within the Safeguarding teams at either Child in Need or Child Protection levels alongside the support received from the post adoption support services. The allocated Adoption Social Workers have attended various meetings as part of the Team Around the Family in all cases.

The Adoption Service also provides:

Support, advice, and counselling to birth parents and those who are affected by adoption. This task is undertaken by the Adoption Support Worker.

- 23 birth parents / grandparents have requested and received support regarding their children's/grandchildren's adoption.

### **9.1 Access to Adoption Records**

Access to records for adopted adults wishing to access their adoption records. Is undertaken by Adoption Social Workers.

- 34 adopted adults have requested this service

### **9.2 Non-Agency Adoption**

The number of referrals and complexities of this area of adoption work are increasing.

In this reporting period there have been:

- 19 enquiries were responded to, with 15 resulting in an assessment commencing.
- 8 Adoption Orders have been granted.
- All assessments completed have progressed to applications being made to court.
- 13 assessments are ongoing.

### **9.3 Adoption Support Allowance**

Financial support is payable under Part 3 of the Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005 to an adoptive parent for the purpose of supporting the placement of the adoptive child or the continuation of adoption arrangements after an Adoption Order is granted. The Adoption Support Allowance is means tested and is reviewed annually.

- 119 children received ASA.

## **10. Key priority areas for 2023/24**

- Focus on the importance of relationship-based practice where an adoption social worker who takes an initial enquiry from a potential adopter maintains the allocation throughout the assessment process where possible. This is to allow consistent trusting relationships to be built and try and prevent a drop off after the initial enquiry.

- To work collaboratively with our partners in Adopt Coast to Coast to recruit, assess and approve adopters in a timely manner. Identifying any challenges to ensuring that timescales are met within stage 1 and stage 2 of the assessment process and working with partners such as the police and health to overcome those barriers.
- Continue with the review of the matching process to ensure the process in Durham and TFC are in line with each other, that this progresses as quickly as possible and that there is robust information gathered, shared and recorded about the match of possible adopters to children.
- To ensure children's plans of permanence via adoption are progressed at an early a stage as possible and to develop a new process to assist with the identification and tracking of these children. Work alongside TFC to share information at Children Waiting Meetings about unborn children who could be placed in Early Permanence from birth and match them with adopters going through the assessment process who could be approved before the child is born.
- To continue to recruit new Panel members to the Central List. This will ensure quoracy and prevent the possible situation of having to stand a panel down due to lack of available Panel members.
- To provide high quality post adoption support to adopted children and young adults, supporting them to access therapy via the Adoption Support Fund. Consideration to be given to the structure of the adoption team and whether Post Adoption Support should be managed differently.
- To enhance and develop keeping in touch for adopted children and their birth families, ensuring that where possible relationships with birth families are built with adopters to facilitate different forms of keeping in touch such as more children adopted spending some direct time with birth family members.

**Barbara Arbon**  
**Adoption Team Manager**  
**April 2024**

## Appendix 1

### **Adopt Coast to Coast 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 Panel Chair reflections for this reporting year**

During this reporting period, Durham County Council Adoption Service has continued to operate a more flexible hybrid panel whereby members are able to choose their preferred or more convenient method of attendance. The majority of panel members now attend in person and some online, for example, prospective adopters living a distance away from the office base. It is common practice for our two medical advisers to appear online given their pressured clinic responsibilities and appointments.

We are committed to creating an environment which is welcoming and enabling and that approach applies equally to social work staff as well as prospective adopters and staff from other adoption agencies.

Along with the Agency Adviser, it is customary for the Panel Chair to meet with the prospective adopters prior to coming into the panel room, in order to outline the composition and arrangement of the panel. That approach seems to be generally well received and appreciated in what otherwise has the potential to be a daunting experience.

It is also common practice for the Panel Chairs to inform the Agency Adviser if we have any concerns about gaps in information in the paperwork prior to the Panel meeting wherever possible. There is a commitment to avoiding the need to defer making a recommendation on the basis of needing further specific information which creates unnecessary anxiety for the applicant. Close liaison is maintained between the Panel Chairs and the management within the agency, who are always responsive to any requests for additional information or clarity.

Panel members are aware that they have the potential to make an influential contribution to good practice and are supported to grow in confidence about the important role that they can play. They read the panel papers in advance and come fully prepared to contribute to the meeting. Much of the information seems to be becoming increasingly more complex and distressing in its content.

During the reporting period, Durham Adoption Panel has been fortunate in retaining a core of well-established and knowledgeable panel members as well as recruiting new members who are proving to be an asset as they become increasingly more experienced. That is not to say, however, that there are still occasions when the Panel may only just be quorate, with a particular struggle to identify a social work member!

Overall, the panels are used to working together as a group and function best when members know each other.

The quality of social work reports and assessments continue to be of a high standard, and it is clear from the feedback, that prospective adopters feel well supported and valued. We are pleased to see the evidence of good direct work with children, including the children of prospective adopters, shown through drawings and letters attached to reports.

Adoption support services are likely to be crucial to the success of the placement, we note that Adoption Support Plans have greatly improved. They are more individualised, detailed, creative and well explained.

We are seeing impressive planning for introductions, intended to support families and children through the transition to adoptive families. This often includes examples of real dedication by foster carers.

It is gratifying that Early Permanence continues to be a key priority for the Adoption Service. Regrettably, some of our looked after children where adoption is believed to be a potential outcome, spend protracted periods of time with their foster carers until a court has reached a decision about their final care plan. As already stated within the report, Early Permanence offers stability at a very early stage, preventing multiple moves and the associated trauma of separation and loss of attachment figures.

The process for Early Permanence is now well embedded, with oversight from senior managers but where Early Permanence is not progressed the rationale is not always clear in the paperwork.

Panel Chairs have noted the Adoption Team's progress in gearing the delivery of its work in relation to ensuring inclusivity, throughout the advice and enrolment process for potential adopters. The team's flexibility in delivering assessment and training has allowed work to be done with people in different circumstances. The results can be seen in the diversity of potential adopters coming to panel in relation to gender and sexuality, though applicants are more likely to be white than from an ethnic minority.

The lack of diversity in the make up of panel is, however, a recognised issue with panel members being mainly White British and predominantly female.

Last year's reflection regarding Keeping in Touch arrangements raised some significant concerns. We are pleased to report that there has been a real improvement. There is increasing focus on the importance of assessing what arrangement is right for a child, and developments in technology are starting to enable the team to be more creative in how they consider facilitating Keeping in Touch arrangements.

It is our experience that prospective adopters are open to maintaining Keeping in Touch arrangements. This is particularly evident with arrangements to keep in touch with foster carers whose knowledge of and support to the child is valued and appreciated by them.

Medical advisers continue to provide detailed and informative medical summaries worded so that complex information is presented in a way that helps non medical panel members understand it

And finally, sincere thanks to our panel members who are so conscientious and spend a significant amount of their own time in preparing and contributing towards securing a permanent future for our looked after children. Excellent administrative arrangements also continue to be provided and are key to the effective functioning of the panel.

Adoption service staff should also be commended for their much appreciated efforts.



# Adoption Annual Report

Barbara Arbon, Adoption Team Manager  
Lesley Baldry, Adoption Service Manager.



# Understanding the adoption team

- There are 12 social workers, 2 consultant social workers, a family worker and a team manager
- The team complete assessments and training of adopters, family finding for children with plans of adoption and provide Post Adoption Support.
- The family worker has reunited separated children and supports adoptive families.
- The adoption team works closely with the permanence team who are the allocated social workers for the children.
- Adoption Panels are held every two weeks and there are two panel chairs.

# Performance 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

- Enquiries have significantly reduced from 267 in the previous year to 115.
- 15 adoptive families have been approved down from 41 in the previous year.
- 41 matches for children were approved. 29 within the RAA.
- 83 children had a plan of adoption up from 60 in the previous year.
- 7 children were Early Permanence.
- 713 Keeping in Touch Arrangements are in place.
- 152 children have been supported via Post Adoption Support.

# Future Priorities

- Focus on the importance of relationship-based practice where an adoption social worker who takes an initial enquiry from a potential adopter maintains the allocation throughout the assessment process where possible. This is to allow consistent trusting relationships to be built and try and prevent a drop off after the initial enquiry.
- To work collaboratively with our partners in Adopt Coast to Coast to recruit, assess and approve adopters in a timely manner. Identifying any challenges to ensuring that timescales are met within stage 1 and stage 2 of the assessment process and working with partners such as the police and health to overcome those barriers.
- Continue with the review of the matching process to ensure the process in Durham and TFC are in line with each other, that this progresses as quickly as possible and that there is robust information gathered, shared and recorded about the match of possible adopters to children.
- To ensure children's plans of permanence via adoption are progressed at an early a stage as possible and to develop a new process to assist with the identification and tracking of these children. Work alongside TFC to share information at Children Waiting Meetings about unborn children who could be placed in Early Permanence from birth and match them with adopters going through the assessment process who could be approved before the child is born.

# Future Priorities

- To continue to recruit new Panel members to the Central List. This will ensure quoracy and prevent the possible situation of having to stand a panel down due to lack of available Panel members.
- To provide high quality post adoption support to adopted children and young adults, supporting them to access therapy via the Adoption Support Fund. Consideration to be given to the structure of the adoption team and whether Post Adoption Support should be managed differently.
- To enhance and develop keeping in touch for adopted children and their birth families, ensuring that where possible relationships with birth families are built with adopters to facilitate different forms of keeping in touch such as more children adopted spending some direct time with birth family members.
- Increase participation informing team development, a recent session has taken place with a young person in care who has children in her family adopted.

# Compliments and Feedback

- *Second time adopter: first time did not consider EP, this time we decided to do the training, the psychologist information was really useful. The training elevated all our worries. If we had had the training the first time, we would have probably had considered early permanence.*
- *I'm emailing to let you know about the quality of the work undertaken with the above children, particularly by the social workers involved in the Keeping in Touch agreement. Great thought has been put into how best to maintain and develop their relationship through keeping in touch and this has resulted in a range of methods being used including physically meeting up but also using cards, videos and letters in between directly seeing each other. On behalf of panel, please pass on to all those concerned our thanks for the hard work being done for these children and their prospective adopters.*

**Corporate Parenting Panel**

**25 October 2024**

**Mind of My Own**



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**Report of Rachel Farnham, Head of Children's Social Care, Children and Young People's Services, Durham County Council**

**Electoral division(s) affected:**

Countywide

**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update regarding how Mind of My Own is being used within the Children in Care and Care Leavers Service and the steps that are being taken to increase the usage of Mind of My Own.

**Executive summary**

- 2 Mind of My Own are applications that children and young people can use to express their views, wishes and feelings regarding decisions that are being made about them and other relevant topics. Mind of My Own applications are accessible and enable children and young people to speak out, at a time that suits them. The applications capture the child's true authentic voice as opposed to an interpretation of what they have said.
- 3 Mind of My Own was launched in Durham in 2021 which is when practitioners started to be trained. Since then, Mind of My Own has been used across the service and we are continuing to see the benefits of it.
- 4 We know that Mind of My Own isn't being used as effectively as it could within the Children in Care and Care Leavers teams and additional measures are in place to increase this.

**Recommendation**

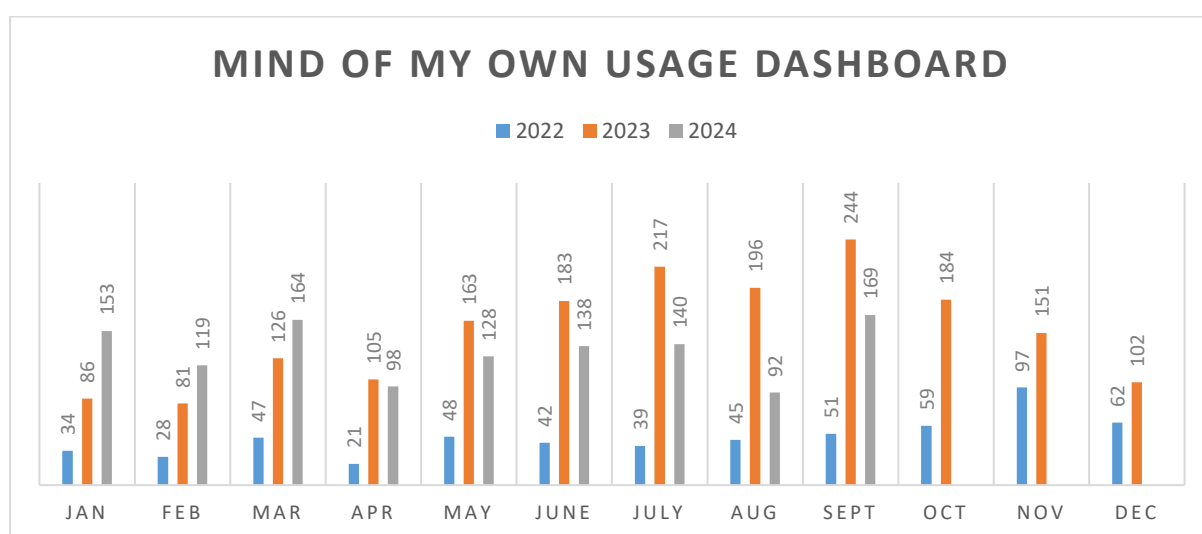
- 5 Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to:
  - (a) Consider the content and recommendations of this report.

## Background

- 6 Mind of My Own offers a suite of applications that children and young people can use to express their views, wishes and feelings at a time that suits them. Mind of My Own co-produce the applications with children and young people, which ensures they look the way children and young people want them to and include topics that children and young people have said are relevant and useful to them. The applications regularly change and are added to, depending on the feedback of children and young people.
- 7 The applications cater for different ages and needs, Mind of My Own 'One App' is developed for older children, as this application enables children and young people to create their own accounts which can be used on any device at any time. It also includes scenarios such as 'This is Me' and 'Preparing for Adulthood' which are aimed at older young people.
- 8 The 'Express' application is designed for younger children or children with additional support needs. It is a fun and interactive way for children who may struggle to communicate, to express their wishes and feelings. It is colourful and has sensory sounds. Both applications can be used independently but can also be used with support from a practitioner via the practitioner's space.
- 9 A brilliant feature of Mind of My Own is the accessibility feature. This ensures that the applications are accessible to a wide range of children and young people. The applications can be changed into over 100+ different languages which means they are accessible for children/young people who do not use English as their first language.
- 10 Durham Children's Social Care launched Mind of My Own in February 2021 and began training practitioners, initially within Children in Care Teams, Fostering, Residential Children's Homes and with Independent Reviewing Officers. A group of children and young people were also involved in creating posters to help others to understand what Mind of My Own is and how to sign up. Their work with this was nationally recognised by Mind of My Own and they won an award at an awards ceremony, 'Vox Con', for their creativity. From May 2021, training was made available for all Children's Social Care Teams and Early Help.
- 11 There was a refreshed launch of Mind of My Own in June 2023, to celebrate and share more widely the fantastic examples we have of children and young people expressing their views and the impact this



was having, and to encourage further usage. An appreciative enquiry was shared where children, young people and practitioners shared their experiences of using Mind of My Own. A 'hearts and minds' video was created which included Rachel Farnham (Head of Children's Social Care) and Martyn Stenton (Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children) talking about the benefits of Mind of My Own and the expectation that all children and young people are offered Mind of My Own, where appropriate. Following the refresh, there was a significant increase in Mind of My Own being used generally across the service (see table below). In May 2024, Durham received an award at Mind of My Own's annual awards 'Vox Con' for 'Standout Organisation.' This award was chosen based on usage, our sentiment towards Mind of My Own and our dedication to making it work within our Local Authority.

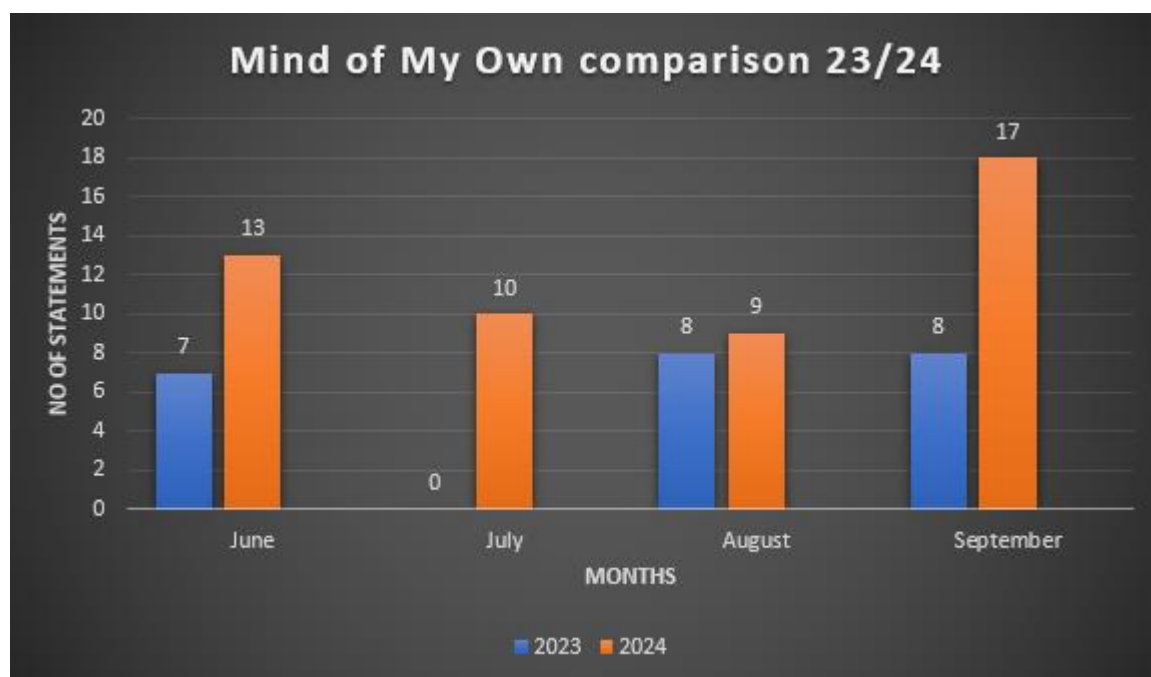


### Update regarding Mind of My Own usage within the Children in Care and Care Leavers Service

- 12 An overview of Mind of My Own was provided to Corporate Parenting Panel in November 2023, which was part of a wider participation and engagement update. It was requested that the next update would be specific to the Children in Care and Care Leavers teams.
- 13 It is important to note that Mind of My Own is just one method used to seek children/young people's views. The service uses a variety of other creative ways to capture the voice of children/young people, depending on their preference and what works best for that child/young person at that time. Such methods include direct work with children/young people, direct conversations, creative play, surveys, participation and engagement groups, independent visitors and through advocates. 69 children are currently accessing independent visitors and 24 children are waiting to be matched with a visitor. There is a recruitment

campaign currently with a plan to have 100 children matched by early 2025. 12 new volunteers are currently being inducted.

- 14 Whilst there has been some progress evident in recent months with regards to usage of Mind of My Own, this continues to be at a much slower pace than we would expect.
- 15 The below table compares usage of Mind of My Own from June, July, August and September 2023 to those same months within 2024. This includes usage across the Children in Care and Care Leavers teams including the Permanence team and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) team. The data also includes where Mind of My Own has been used within children's homes as the children residing in those homes have a social worker from the Children in Care teams. The data does not include fostering who primarily have used Mind of My Own to capture children's views for foster carers reviews. This data does not include children in care open to Families First Teams.



- 16 Whilst the data shows progress from the previous year, the number of statements received within this service compared to the number of children is significantly low. It is expected that only a small number of statements would be received by the Permanence team as they primarily work with much younger children who have a plan of adoption.
- 17 Data regarding Mind of My Own usage has recently started to be included in monthly performance meetings to drive increased usage across the Children in Care and Care Leaver's teams.

## **Support**

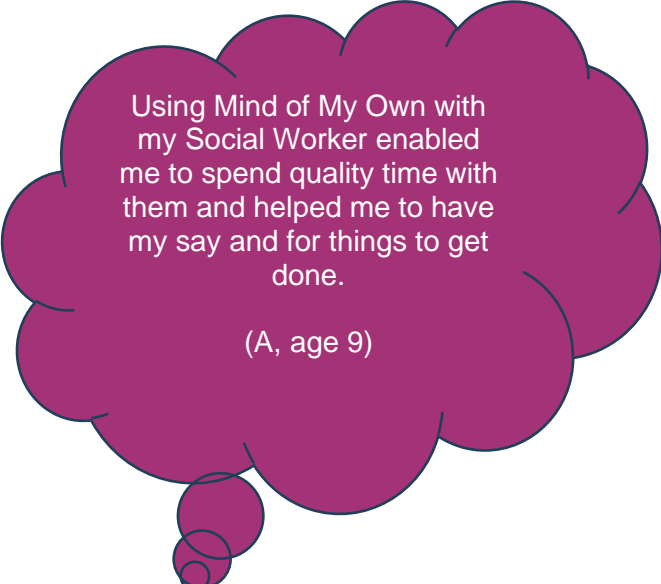
- 18 Each team throughout Children's Social Care has a Voice and Change Champion. Champions play an important role in ensuring that the children and young people we are working with have every opportunity to be listened to and their voices heard. Champions are expected to attend monthly Mind of My Own Project Groups and quarterly Voice and Change Champions Meetings. The focus of these meetings is to share learning, work together to overcome any barriers and take learning back to their teams to drive practice.
- 19 Due to staff turnover, there have not been consistent champions throughout the Children in Care teams, and this has impacted on increasing the use of Mind of My Own. More recently, champions have been identified for most teams. Since having champions in most teams, it was recognised that full Project Groups weren't having the desired impact, therefore, this year, these groups have been held in addition to targeted Project Groups that have focused on a specific service area. Three targeted Project Groups have been held for the Children in Care and Care Leavers teams this year; Mind of My Own recognise this approach as good practice.
- 20 Each team has been offered a refresher Mind of My Own demonstration and are aware of the support available for Mind of My Own.

## **Training**

- 21 A 90-minute online Mind of My Own training session is offered to all practitioners. Following completion, practitioners are signed up to their own practitioners' space to support children and young people to use the applications. They will also be able to support children and young people to sign up independently where age appropriate.
- 22 Due to staff turnover within Children in Care Teams it has been difficult to maintain a full complement of trained practitioners. This is currently being closely monitored and practitioners within this service are automatically booked onto training.

## **The Impact of Mind of My Own**

23 We have some brilliant examples of how Mind of My Own is making a difference to children and young people that are using the applications. Feedback from children and young people in our care has been included below. This includes feedback from a young person who uses Mind of My Own regularly and resides outside of County Durham.



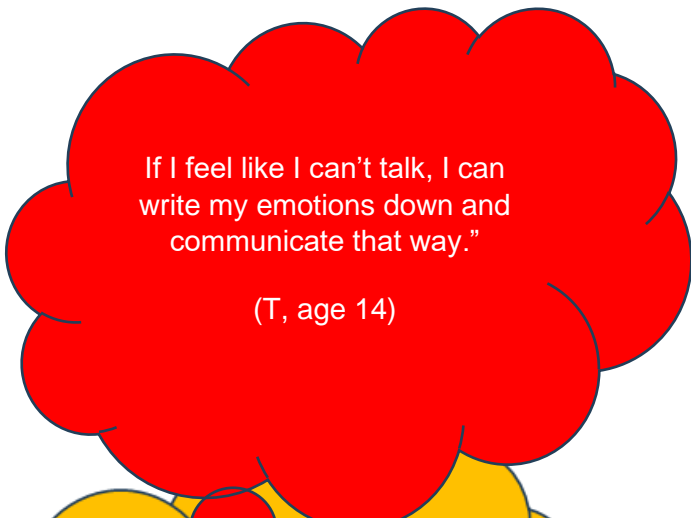
Using Mind of My Own with my Social Worker enabled me to spend quality time with them and helped me to have my say and for things to get done.

(A, age 9)



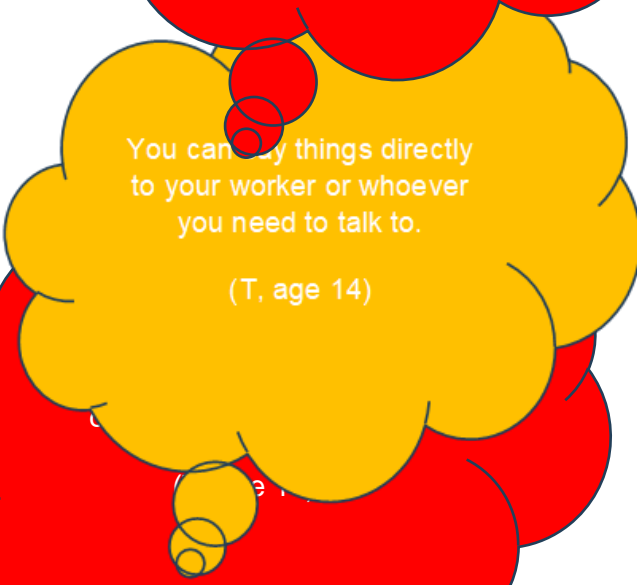
I like the pictures as it helps me to understand things better.

(C, age 10)



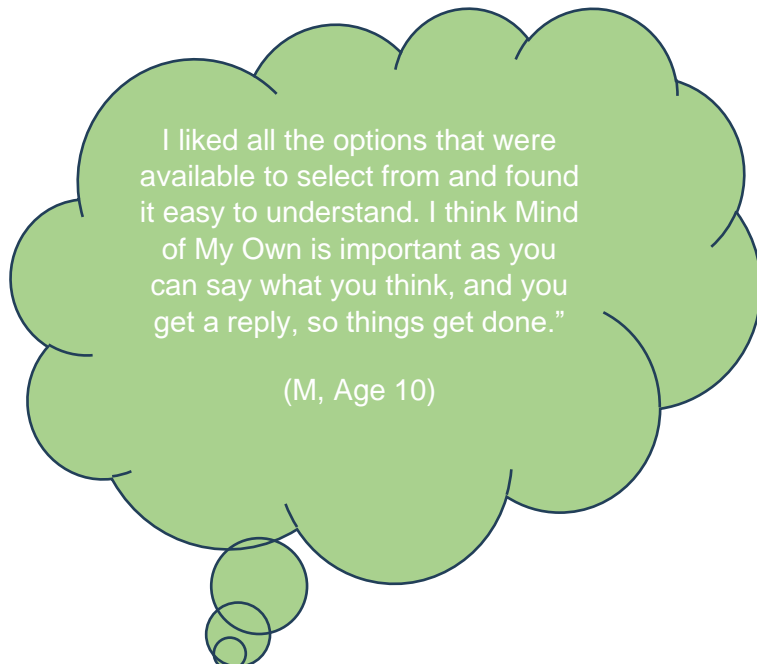
If I feel like I can't talk, I can write my emotions down and communicate that way."

(T, age 14)



You can say things directly to your worker or whoever you need to talk to.

(T, age 14)



I liked all the options that were available to select from and found it easy to understand. I think Mind of My Own is important as you can say what you think, and you get a reply, so things get done."

(M, Age 10)

- 24 Some children who have used Mind of My Own who reside in children's homes have also provided some feedback (see Appendix 2)
- 25 Where children and young people use Mind of My Own, they are benefitting from it, and it is having a positive impact. However, some children and young people don't wish to use it due to feeling they can communicate with their worker using other means such as telephone or text message. Some young people feel it is immature for them and some have reported that their carer advocates on their behalf. County Durham is working with Mind of My Own to ensure our children/young people are involved in Mind of My Own coproduction sessions so our children/young people can feedback their views directly to Mind of My Own regarding the applications. Children and young people who don't wish to use it will also be encouraged to share their views so that Mind of My Own can hear about some of the barriers and potential solutions.

### **Next Steps**

- 26 Service wide Mind of My Own briefing to be held.
- 27 Ensure all practitioners are trained throughout the service.
- 28 Continue targeted Project Groups within this service area.
- 29 Include Mind of My Own data in performance reporting.
- 30 Continue to progress and review the Mind of My Own action plan which has been developed by the Children in Care Service in collaboration with Fostering and Independent Reviewing Officers.

### **Conclusion**

- 31 Mind of My Own applications are a fantastic addition to ensure that children and young people can express their views, wishes and feelings regarding things that are important to them.
- 32 We know that for a number of reasons, Mind of My Own isn't being used as well as it could be within Children in Care and Care Leaver teams. To improve this area of practice and increase future usage, there is a refreshed tailored training and support offer, and Mind of My

Own usage data will be included in monthly performance reporting to monitor progress at a team and service level and provide assurance of impact and improvement to the leadership team.

**Authors**

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

**Article 12, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child-** “Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them and to have their views considered and taken seriously.”

**The Children Act 1989** places a legal duty on Local Authorities to ascertain the child's wishes and feelings.

### **Finance**

The contract with Mind of My Own was renewed in 2023, therefore, there are no additional financial implications.

### **Consultation and Engagement**

Consultation with children and young people has been included within this report.

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

Mind of My Own prides itself on equality and diversity and has brilliant accessibility features and language support.

### **Climate Change**

Not applicable.

### **Human Rights**

Not applicable.

### **Crime and Disorder**

Not applicable.

### **Staffing**

Staffing to manage assigning Mind of My Own statements is currently in place.

### **Accommodation**

Not applicable.

### **Risk**

Should a child identify that they feel ‘unsafe’ ‘scared’ or ‘unhappy’ this triggers a safety link which identifies that the statement may need to be responded to much more quickly. It is expected that children are advised that Mind of My Own is not an emergency service.

### **Procurement**

Not applicable.

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## **Appendix 2: Mind of My Own feedback from children residing in residential children's homes.**

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### **How did you find out about Mind of My Own?**

*A – “I found out about Mind of My Own from my key worker after a keyworker session with him. I use it because I enjoy the noises, the photo it takes of me and talking about my feelings.”*

*C- “Because A was doing it.”*

*M- “Staff told me.”*

### **What do you use it for?**

*A- “To be good.”*

*C- “To tell H things.”*

*M- “Just for fun and to answer about my life.”*

### **What do you like about it?**

*A- “That it takes my photo.”*

*C- “There are activities on it.”*

*M- “I like the pictures.”*

### **Do you think Mind of My Own gives you the chance to have your opinions heard?**

*A- “Yes.”*

*C- “I can choose the answers.”*

*M- “Yes.”*

### **What would you say to anyone who's considering using Mind of My Own? –**

*A- “It's good.”*

*C- “I like doing it and its good.”*

*M- “That it is a good thing to use to learn.”*



# Mind of My Own

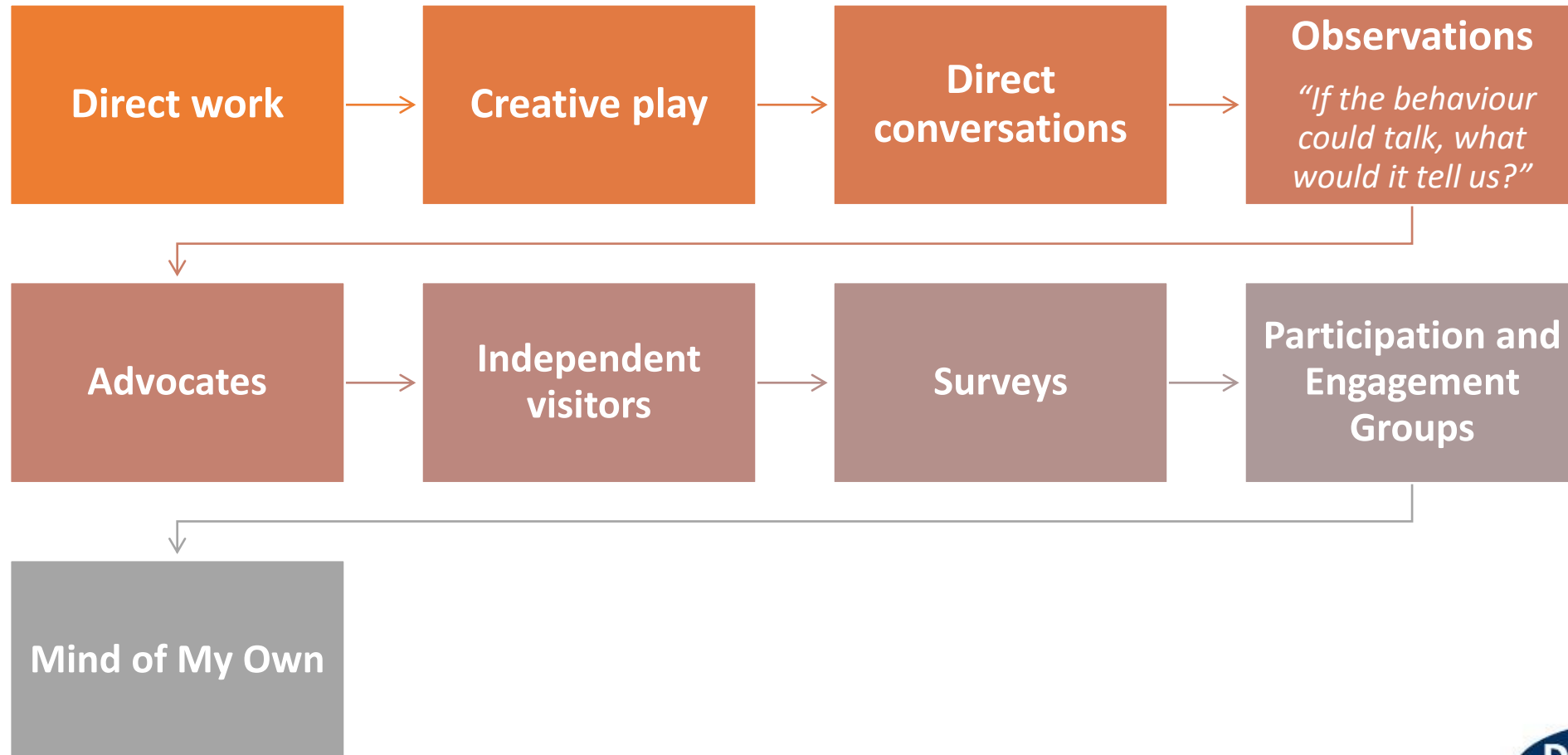
Children in Care & Care Leavers



# What is Mind of My Own



# Listening to Children & Young People



# What impact is Mind of My Own having on the children and young people who are using it?

I like the pictures as it helps me to understand things better.

(C, age 10)

If I feel like I can't talk, I can write my emotions down and communicate that way."

(T, age 14)

You can say things directly to your worker or whoever you need to talk to.

(T, age 14)

Using Mind of My Own with my Social Worker enabled me to spend quality time with them and helped me to have my say and for things to get done.

(A, age 9)

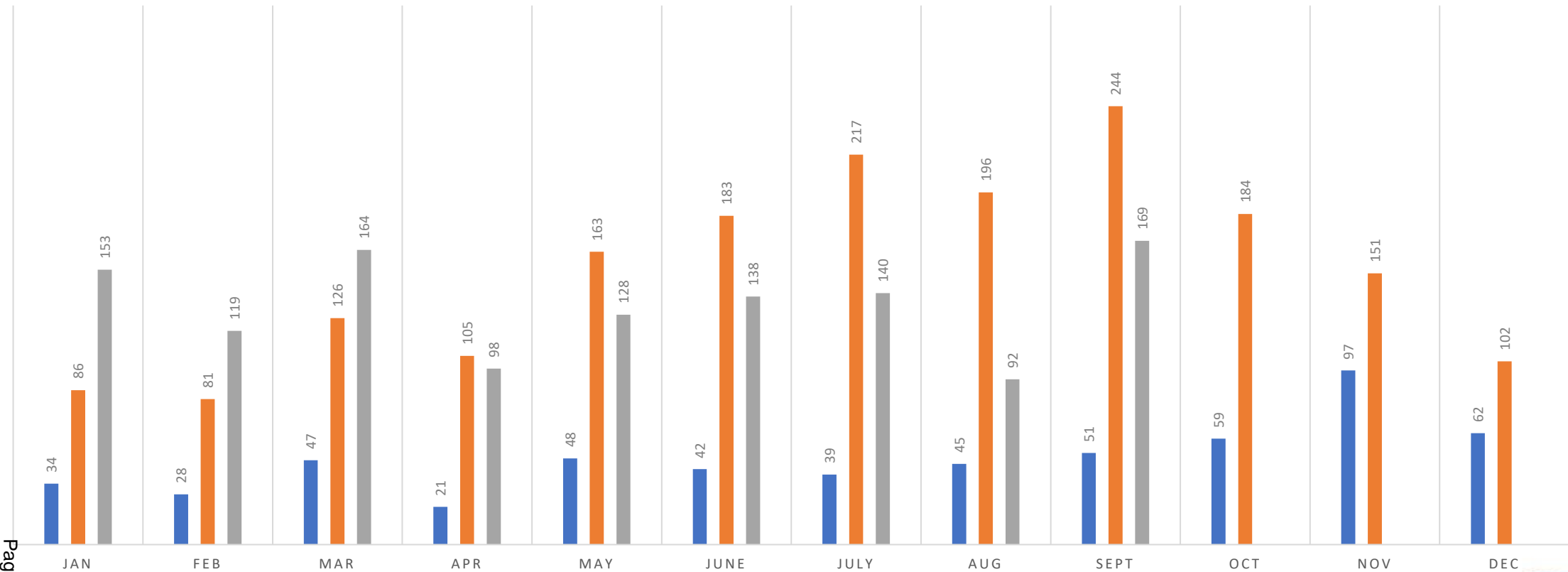
I liked all the options that were available to select from and found it easy to understand. I think Mind of My Own is important as you can say what you think, and you get a reply, so things get done."

(M, Age 10)

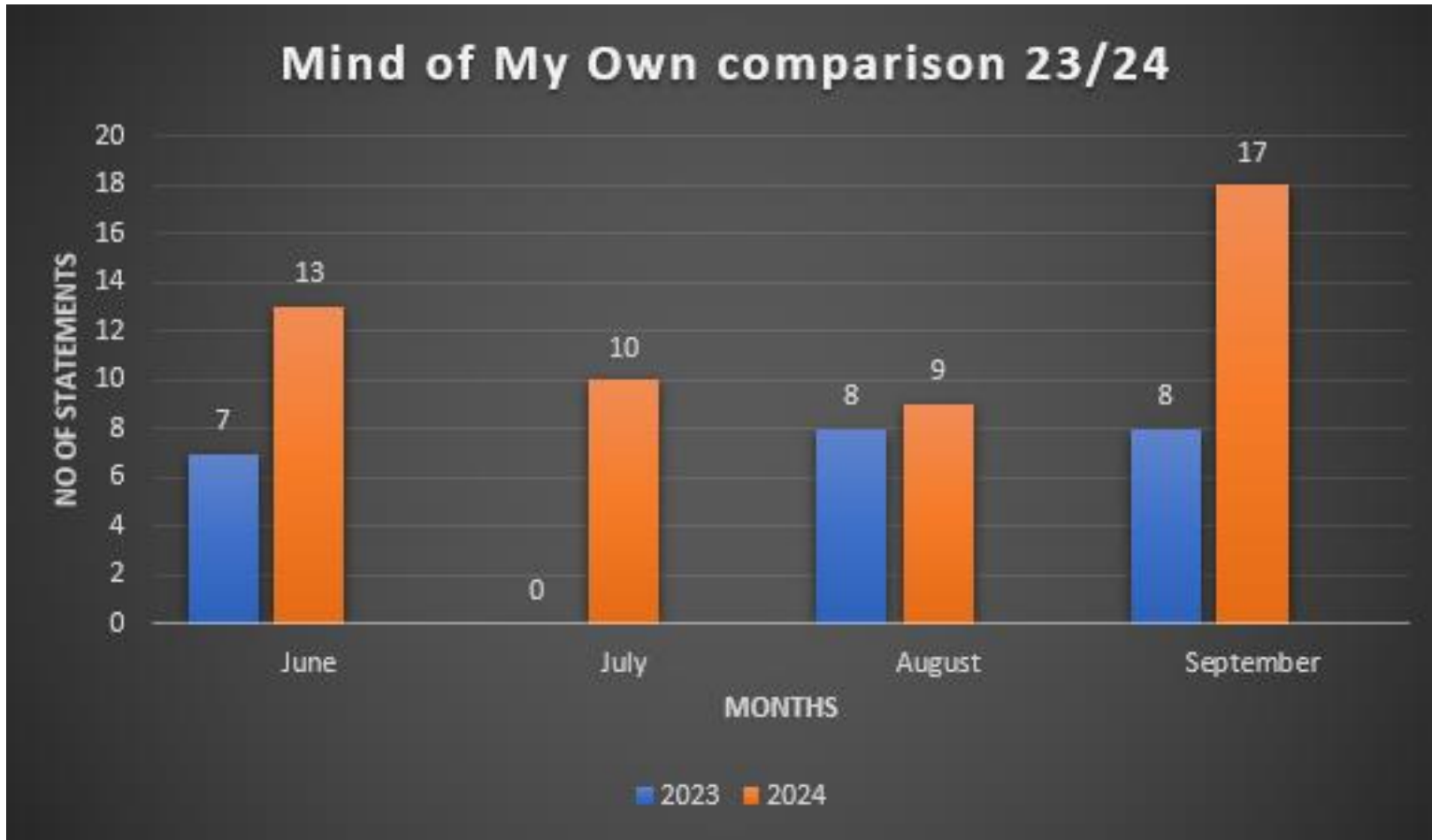
# Mind of My Own Usage Across the Service

## MIND OF MY OWN USAGE DASHBOARD

■ 2022 ■ 2023 ■ 2024



# Mind of My Own usage across Children in Care & Care Leavers



# What Are We Doing To Increase Usage of Mind of My Own?

Service wide briefing

Closer monitoring and progression of training

Targeted Project Groups

Data being included in performance meetings

Co-production sessions with children & young people

Support sessions directly through Mind of My Own for practitioners and parents/carers

Progression of a Mind of My Own service plan

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**Corporate Parenting Panel**

**25 October 2024**

**Performance Update**



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**Report of Stephen Tracey, Corporate Performance Manager,  
Durham County Council**

**Electoral division(s) affected:**

None.

**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 The purpose of the presentation is to provide the Corporate Parenting Panel with an overview of performance in relation to children in our care and care leavers.

**Executive summary**

- 2 The Strategy Team Leader – Children and Young People’s Services will deliver a presentation at the meeting giving an overview of performance.

**Recommendation**

- 3 Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to note information contained within the presentation and comment accordingly.

## **Background**

- 4 A quarterly performance management framework is presented to Corporate Parenting Panel which is structured around the Local Government Association's Key Lines of Enquiry for Corporate Parenting Panel members.

## **Conclusion**

- 5 Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel will be sighted on performance in relation to children in our care and care leavers and will have an opportunity to discuss performance at the meeting.

## **Other useful documents**

- Quarterly Performance Scorecard

## **Author**

Helen McAloon

Tel: 03000 268 026

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

We have a statutory duty to comply with all duties in relation to the children and young people who are in the care of DCC

### **Finance**

N/A

### **Consultation**

N/A

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

N/A

### **Climate Change**

N/A

### **Human Rights**

N/A

### **Crime and Disorder**

N/A

### **Staffing**

N/A

### **Accommodation**

N/A

### **Risk**

N/A

### **Procurement**

N/A

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## County Durham Corporate Parenting Panel: Performance Management Framework

What are the characteristics of our cohort of children in care and care leavers?

<i>Measure</i>	<i>2018/19</i>	<i>2019/20</i>	<i>2020/21</i>	<i>2021/22</i>	<i>2022/23</i>	<i>2023/24</i>	<i>Q1 2024/25</i>	<i>England</i>	<i>North East</i>
Rate of CLA per 10,000 u18 population [Number]	85 [840]	92 [914]	96 [949]	99 [985]	107 [1067]	119 [1223]	<b>120</b> <b>[1197]</b>	<b>71</b> <b>(2022/23)</b>	<b>112</b> <b>(2022/23)</b>
Age and length of time in care							See presentation	N/A	N/A
CLA Placement breakdown							See presentation	N/A	N/A
Percentage of CLA placed over 20 miles (outside LA boundary)	7%	8%	9%	10%	11% [117/1071]	10.6% [129/1213]	<b>11.2%</b> <b>[133/1184]</b>	17% <b>(2022/23)</b>	<b>10%</b> <b>(2022/23)</b>
Number of children placed for adoption	24	31	39	37	26	22	<b>26</b>	N/A	N/A
Percentage of CLA who are unaccompanied asylum seeking children [Number] u18	0.4% [3]	0.1% [1/914]	0.1% [1/949]	2% [18/982]	5% [53/1067]	6.7% [81/1213]	<b>6%</b> <b>[76/1197]</b>	9% (2022/23)	5% (2022/23)
Social worker caseloads							See presentation	N/A	N/A

Do our partner agencies understand their role in supporting us as corporate parents?

Measure	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Q1 2024/25	England	North East
Percentage of CLA with a missing incident during the year	5%	6%	7%	10%	10% [143/1427]	10.7% [171/1592]	15% [223/1442]	11% (2022/23)	11% (2022/23)
Percentage of children on Child Exploitation and Vulnerability Tracker that were CLA^					35% [51/144]	23% [62/269]	20.5% [67/327]		
Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire - Average score	14.1	13.6	13.5	14.1	14.8	14.9	Reported annually	14.4 (2022/23)	14.4 (2022/23)
Percentage of looked after children aged 10 and above convicted or subject to a Youth Caution or Youth Conditional Caution during the year [number of children]*	5% [17]	3% [11]	3% [11]	2% [12]	3% [15]	3.8% [20]	4.1% [28/690]	2% (2022/23)	3% (2022/23)

How are we giving children and young people the chance to express their views, wishes and feelings? How do we know those are being acted on?

Measure	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21 [Provisional]	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Q1 2024/25	England	North East
Number of CLA accessing an independent visitor			16	69 (59 CDYJS, 10 AFC) 15 waiting for match	46 (45 CDYJS, 1 NEPACS)	63 (61 CDYJS, 2 NEPACS)	64 (62 CDYJS, 2 NEPACS)		

**Are we providing stable environments for children in our care?**

<i>Measure</i>	<i>2018/19</i>	<i>2019/20</i>	<i>2020/21</i>	<i>2021/22</i>	<i>2022/23</i>	<i>2023/24</i>	<i>Q1 2024/25</i>	<i>England</i>	<i>North East</i>
Percentage of CLA with 3 or more placements during the year	11% [93/840]	8% [74/914]	8% [73/949]	12% [122/985]	9% [101/1067]	10.7% [130/1213]	<b>12%</b> <b>[141/1197]</b>	<b>10%</b> <b>(2022/23)</b>	<b>9%</b> <b>(2022/23)</b>
Percentage of CLA continuously for 2.5 years or more aged under 16 who were living in the same placement for at least 2 years	62% [186/298]	65 [ 203/314]	67% [225/338]	64% [239/371]	68% [263/389]	70.5% [280/397]	<b>68%</b> <b>[273/403]</b>	<b>69%</b> <b>(2022/23)</b>	<b>68%</b> <b>(2022/23)</b>
Average number of days between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, adjusted for foster carer adoptions (A10) [Last 12 months]	431 [2015-18]	428 [2016-19]	439 [2018-2021]	466	423	491	<b>474</b>	<b>454</b> <b>(Q1 2022/23)</b>	N/A
Average time between an LA receiving court authority to place a child and the LA deciding on a match to an adoptive family (A2) [Last 12 months]	190 [2015-18]	192 [2016-19]	178 [2018-2021]	144	157	169	<b>161</b>	<b>184</b> <b>(Q1 2022/23)</b>	N/A
Percentage of children adopted from care (as % of total children leaving care) [number of children adopted shown in brackets]	12.3 [39 of 316]	16% [55 / 352]	18% [54 / 304]	19% [65]	18% [65/360]	14.5% [55/379]	<b>12%</b> <b>[54/441]</b>	10% (2021/22)	<b>13%</b> <b>(2021/22)</b>
Number of Mainstream Foster Carers (Approved in period YTD)	26	12	21	29	12	23	<b>17</b>	N/A	N/A
Number of Friends and Family Foster Carers (Approved in period YTD)	129	121	190	150	219	TBC	<b>TBC</b>	N/A	N/A
Number of Adopters (Approved in period YTD)	22	25	47	40	35	15	<b>17</b>	N/A	N/A

### What are we doing to look after the health and wellbeing of children in our care?

Measure	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Q1 2024/25	England	North East
Initial Health Assessments completed within 20 working days of the child becoming looked after	63%	73%	73%	59%	65%	59%	59%	N/A	N/A
CLA with the required number of health assessments	93%	94%	91%	93%	95%	84%	86%	89% (2022/23)	92% (2022/23)
CLA who have had a dental check	86.0%	87%	41%	85%	95%	77%	80%	76% (2022/23)	76% (2022/23)
CLA whose immunisations were up-to-date	99%	99%	90%	91%	82%	78.9%	Reported annually	82% (2022/23)	84% (2022/23)
CLA whose development assessments were up to date (CLA 12+ months and aged 5 or younger at 31 March)	95%	97%	83%	99%	97%	94.1%	Reported annually	88% (2022/23)	90% (2022/23)
% CLA identified as having a substance misuse problem in the year	2.0%	2.0%	Data Error	1.0%	1.0%	1.4%	Reported annually	3% (2022/23)	3% (2022/23)
Percentage of new presentations to drug and alcohol treatment during period who were CLA [Number] YTD	10% [18 of 185]	10% [21 of 216]	TBC	17% [27/149]	13% [17/126]	14% [23/168]	11% [6/56]	44% (2020/21)	33% (2020/21)
Care leavers aged 17-21 who are pregnant or mothers (as a % of female care leavers)		26.3% [25/95]		29% [32/111]	19% [22/114]	24% [27/115]	23% [33/142]	N/A	N/A
Care leavers aged 17-25 who are pregnant or mothers (as a % of female care leavers)				30% [39/132]	24% [33/137]	30% [40/135]	19% [33/170]	N/A	N/A



**What are outcomes like for our care leavers?**

<i>Measure</i>	<i>2018/19</i>	<i>2019/20</i>	<i>2020/21</i>	<i>2021/22</i>	<i>2022/23</i>	<i>2023/24</i>	<i>Q1 2024/25</i>	<i>England</i>	<i>North East</i>
Percentage of care leavers age 18-21 who have stayed with their foster carer	N/A	N/A	N/A	21% [50]	18% [44]	14% [39]	<b>14%</b> <b>[39]</b>		
Percentage of care leavers aged 17-18 in education, employment or training (EET)	61% [48/79]	65% [ 55/84 ]	76% [59/78]	67% [56/84]	65% [68/104]	64.7% [77/119]	<b>63%</b> <b>[65/104]</b>	<b>66%</b> <b>(2022/23)</b>	<b>63%</b> <b>(2022/23)</b>
Percentage of care leavers aged 17-18 in suitable accommodation	86% [68/79]	90% [ 76/84 ]	95% [74/78]	93% [76/84]	86% [89/104]	94.1% [112/119]	<b>98%</b> <b>[102/104]</b>	<b>91%</b> <b>(2022/23)</b>	<b>93%</b> <b>(2022/23)</b>
Percentage of care leavers aged 17-18 in higher education	0% [0]	0% [0]	0% [0 / 78]	6% [5 / 83]	0% [0/104]	1.7% [2/119]	<b>1%</b> <b>[1/104]</b>	<b>3%</b> <b>(2022/23)</b>	<b>3%</b> <b>(2022/23)</b>
Percentage of care leavers aged 19-21 in education, employment or training (EET)	51% [80/156]	54% [ 94/175 ]	56% [110/197]	61% [134/218]	56% [127/228]	47% [116/247]	<b>45%</b> <b>[81/179]</b>	<b>56%</b> <b>(2022/23)</b>	<b>52%</b> <b>(2022/23)</b>
Percentage of care leavers aged 19-21 in suitable accommodation	86% [131/156]	83% [ 144/175 ]	90% [177/197]	85% [186/218]	84% [192/228]	79.4% [196/247]	<b>92%</b> <b>[165/179]</b>	<b>88%</b> <b>(2022/23)</b>	<b>89%</b> <b>(2022/23)</b>
Percentage of care leavers aged 19-21 in higher education	7% [11/156]	9% [16/175 ]	6% [11/197]	8% [18/218]	9% [21/228]	7.3% [18/247]	<b>10%</b> <b>[18/179]</b>	<b>6%</b> <b>(2022/23)</b>	<b>8%</b> <b>(2022/23)</b>

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# Performance Update Children in Our Care / Care Leavers

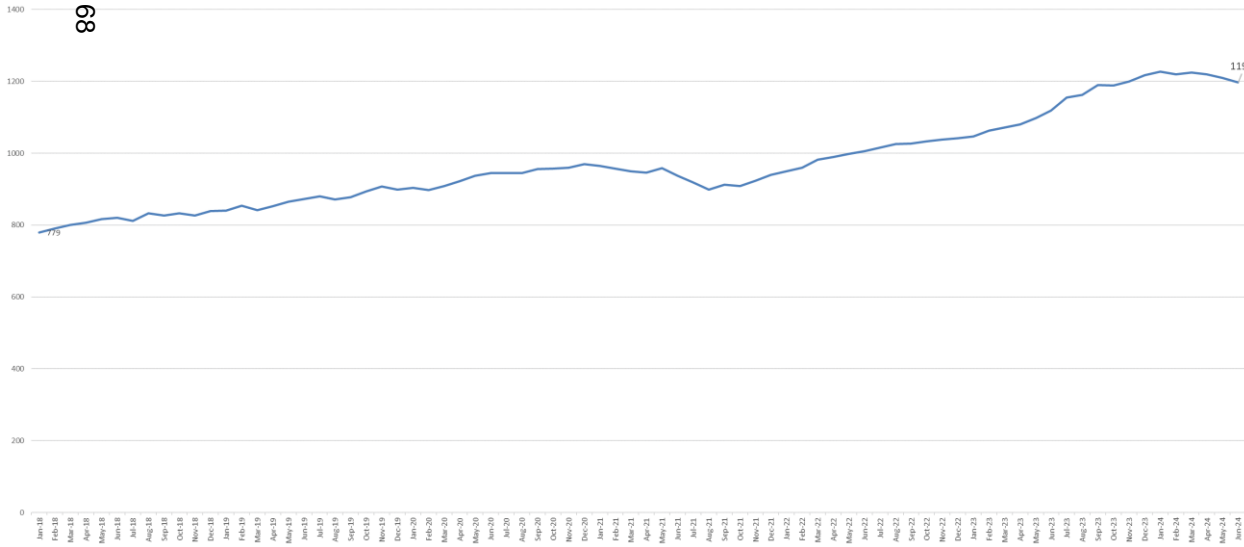
Q1 2024-25



# Children in Care: 1,197

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Monthly CiC Numbers



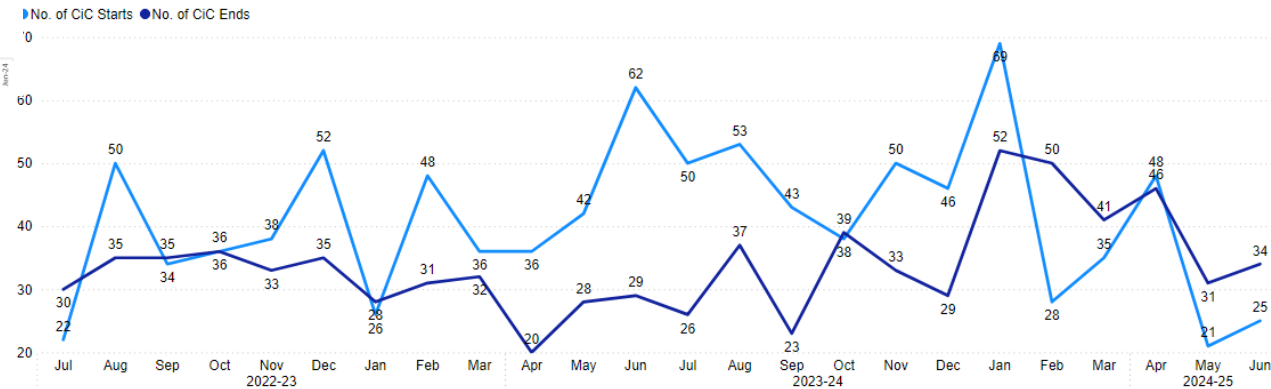
## 76 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

This has decreased from 79 UASC in Q4, however will remain high due to the National Transfer Scheme

Increase in u1 CiC starts as % of all CiC starts against same period 2022-23 (24% vs 21%) also increase in volumes (124 vs 101)

Decrease in age 1-4 year olds (98 vs 101) and 10-15 year olds (107 vs 115).

Increase in 5-9 year olds (86 vs 105)



**506** children became a child in care July 2023 – June 2024

**441** children left care July 2023 – June 2024

CiC volumes have continued to increase in comparison to Q1 of 2023/24, however volumes have been declining since April 2024. The current rate (120 per 10k children) is now above latest (2022-23) national (71), regional (112) and statistical neighbour averages (113).

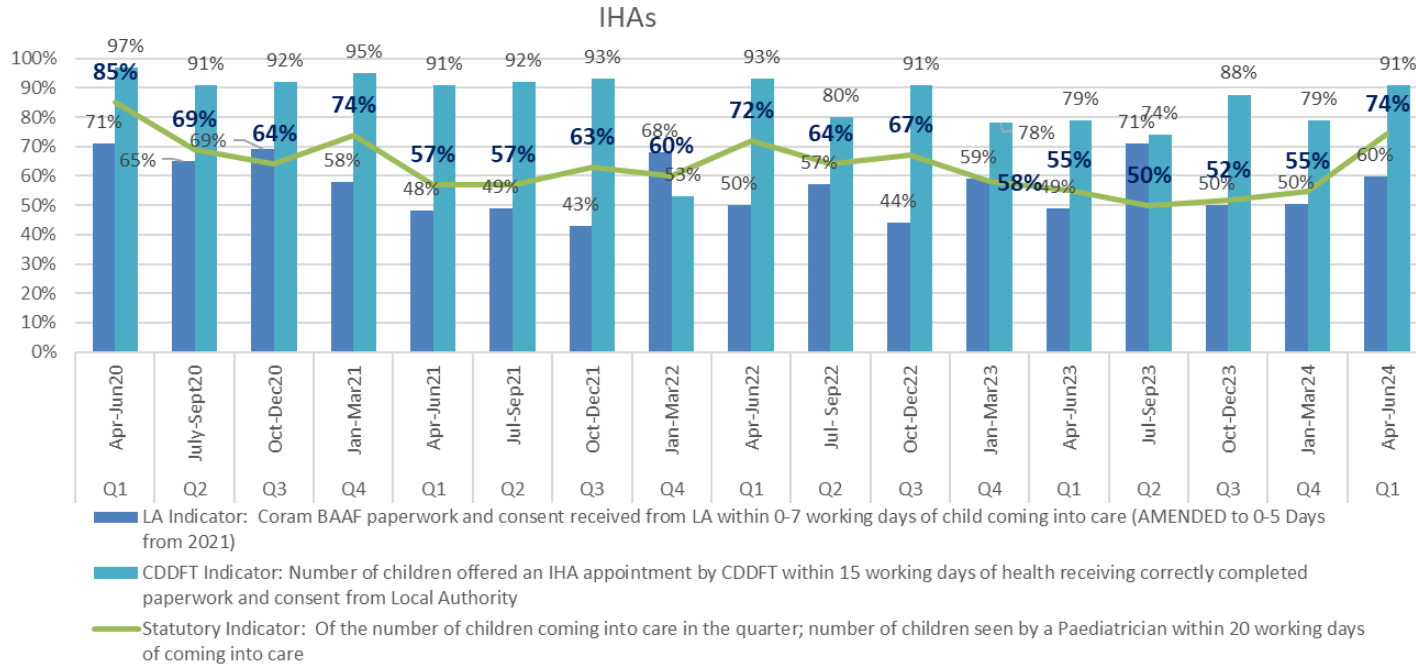
41% of children have been in care for less than 12 months whilst a fifth have been in care for 5 or more years

	a) 0-3 Months	b) 3-6 Months	c) 6-12 Months	d) 1-2 Years	e) 2-5 Years	f) 5+ Years	Grand Total
<b>No.</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>1197</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>100%</b>



74% of Social Workers in our Children in Care and Care Leavers Teams had fewer than 25 cases, 3% with 30+

# Initial Health Assessments

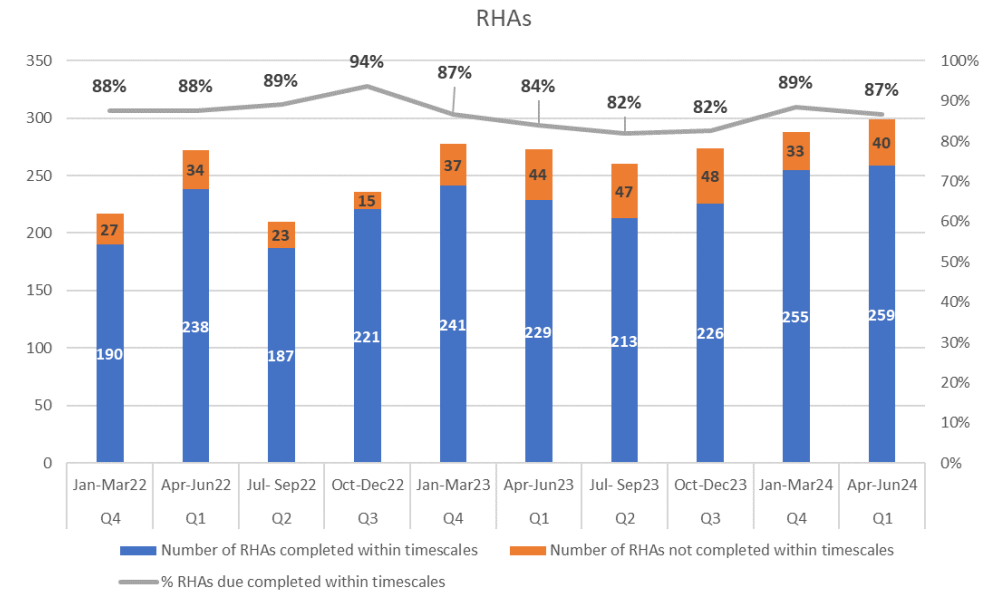


A rise to nearly three quarters of children in care received an Initial Health Assessment within 20 working days of coming into care in the quarter.

Stabilising numbers of children coming into care has affected this indicator

Required paperwork submitted in timescale has also improved to 60%

# Review Health Assessments

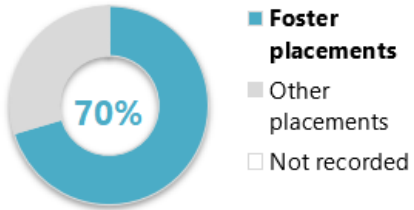


Review Health Assessments completed within timescale remains higher – 40 out of timescale in quarter 1

# Placements and Placement Stability

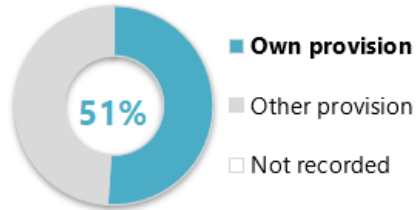
## CLA placements by type and provision

### Foster placements



LA 2022-23	72%
SNs 2022-23	68%
Eng 2022-23	68%

### Own provision



LA 2022-23	58%
SNs 2022-23	55%
Eng 2022-23	44%

A higher proportion of children in Durham are placed in foster placements and in in-house provision to our benchmarks. With the exception of Statistical Neighbours relating to in-house provision.

Placement Stability remains an ongoing area of focus – children with 3+ homes in one year is just above benchmarks

Long term stability is now slightly higher than benchmarks

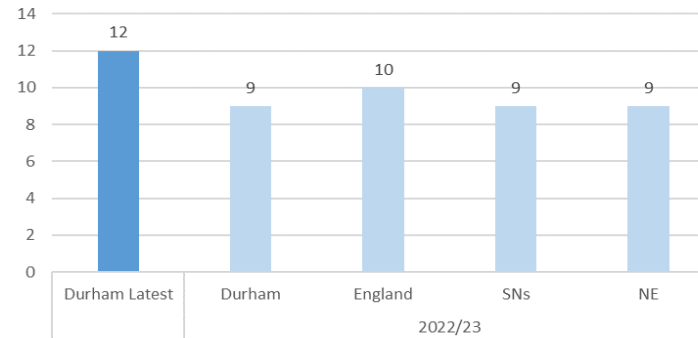
## Children in Family Settings:

Reduction in proportion but increase in numbers

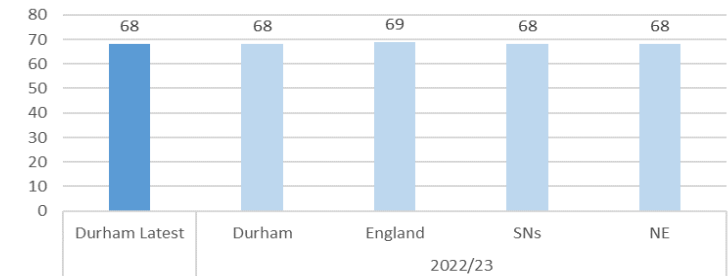
Reduction in number and % in in-house FC

Increase in other placement types

% CiC with 3+ homes in year



% CiC for at least 2.5 years and aged under 16 who have been in the same home for at least 2 years



Placement Type	04-Jun-19		11-Mar-20		03-Jul-24		No. Change	% Change on Jun 19	No. Change	% Change pre-COVID
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%				
Friends and Family	134	15%	126	14%	192	16%	58	43%	66	52%
IFA	126	15%	159	18%	275	23%	149	118%	116	73%
In House Foster Care	422	49%	430	48%	380	32%	-42	-10%	-50	-12%
Placed for Adoption	24	3%	23	3%	27	2%	3	13%	4	17%
Placed With Parents	66	8%	62	7%	104	9%	38	58%	42	68%
<i>Family Settings</i>	772	89%	800	89%	978	82%	206	27%	178	22%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>866</b>		<b>902</b>		<b>1192</b>		<b>326</b>		<b>290</b>	

# Missing Children

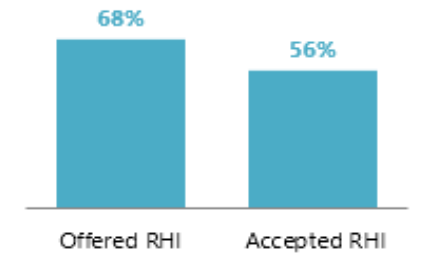
170 of 1405 looked after children had a missing incident in the last 12 months

	Latest data	LA 22-23	SNs 22-23	Eng 22-23
Number of all CLA with a missing incident	170 of 1405	143		
Percentage of all CLA with a missing incident	12%	10%	11%	11%
Total number of missing incidents for all CLA	1234	996		
Average number of incidents per CLA who went missing	7.3	7.0	8.0	6.4

## Missing incidents - return home interviews

	Latest data	
Missing children offered return interview	115 of 170	68%
Missing children not offered return interview	37 of 170	22%
Missing children return interview offer not recorded	6 of 170	4%
Missing children where return interview was n/a	12 of 170	7%

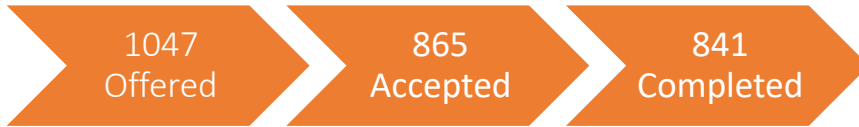
	Latest data	
Missing children accepted return interview	64 of 115	56%
Missing children not accepted return interview	47 of 115	41%
Missing children return interview acceptance not recorded	4 of 115	3%



**156**  
Children in care

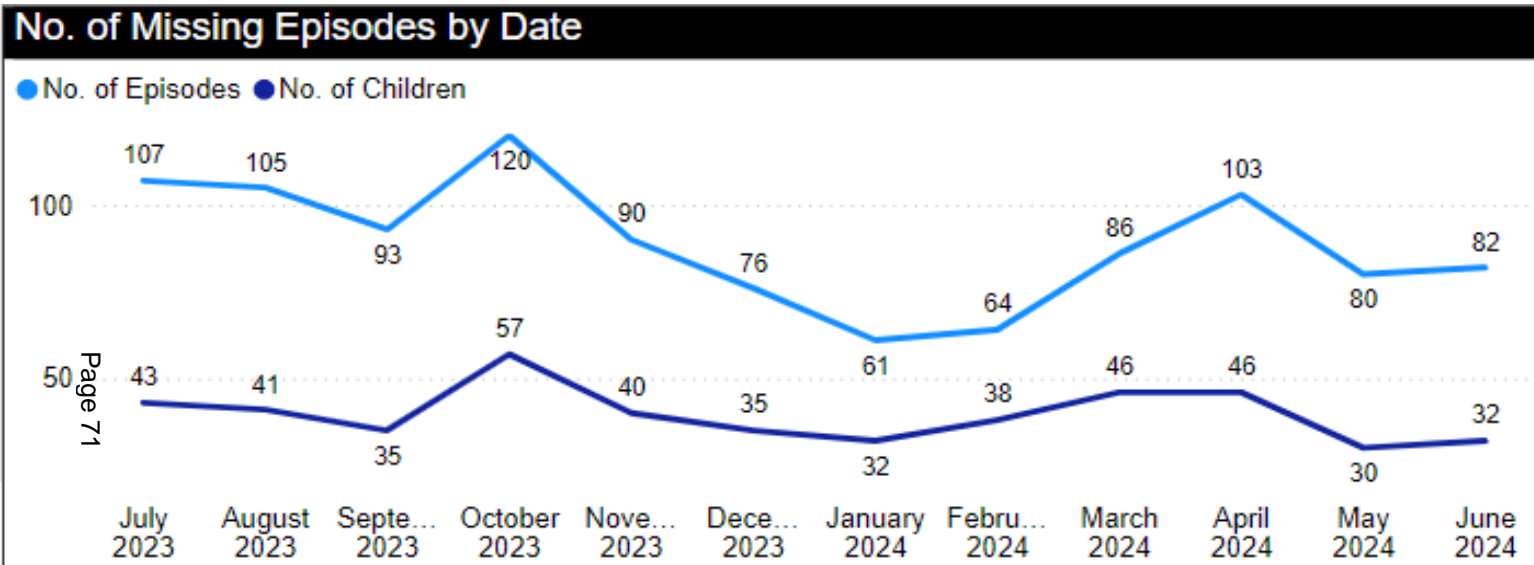
**1067**  
missing episodes

## Return to Home Interviews

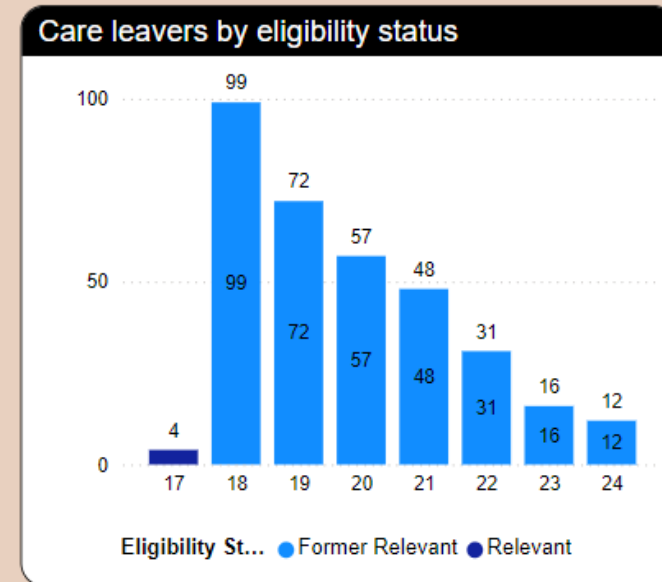
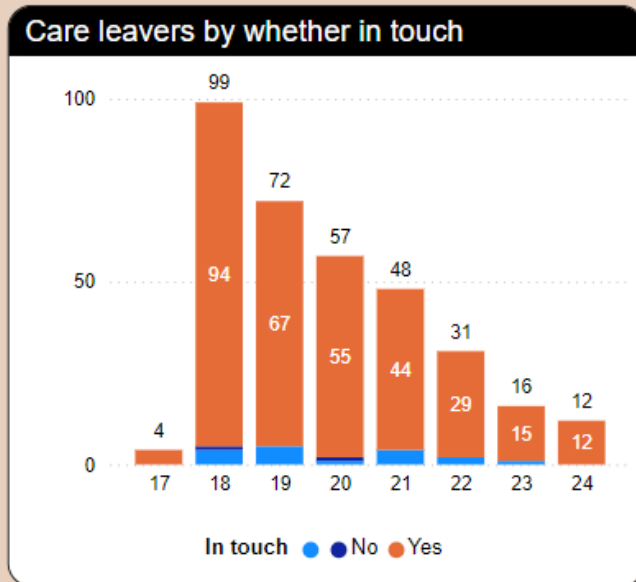
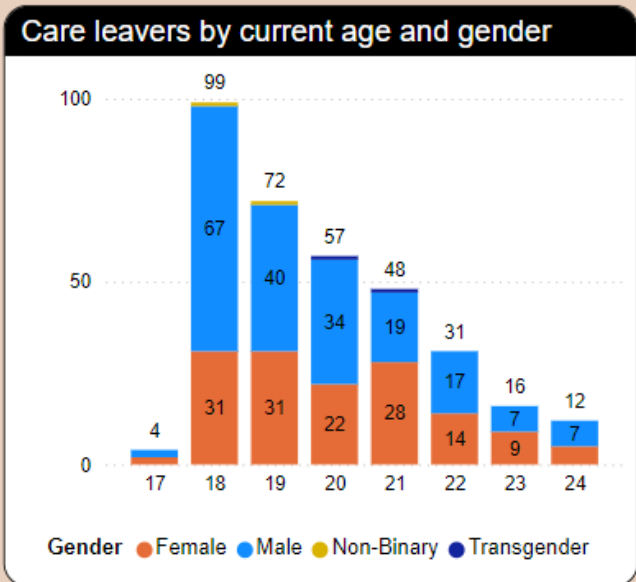


There was a monthly increase in the volume of missing episodes and number of children in care with a missing episode since January. However, this has since decreased in May and June. It is usual to see higher volumes of missing episodes in warmer months yet these volumes go against this theory.

High rate of completion of return to home interviews (97%)



# Care Leavers 280 Relevant or Former Relevant Care Leavers aged 17-21



50 of our care leavers are recorded as being unaccompanied asylum seekers (UASC) 44 are former relevant status and 6 eligible

Of the 44, 43 are male aged 18-24, 1 female.

We currently have 119 eligible YPS team monitoring open cases in addition to the 280 aged 17-21.

### Care Leavers by Age Group and Whether in Touch

Age group	17-18		19-21		22-24		Total	
	In Touch	YN	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	98	95%	166	94%	56	95%	320	94%
No	5	5%	11	6%	3	5%	19	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Care Leavers by Age and Whether in Touch

In touch	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	Total
No	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Yes	4	94	67	55	44	29	15	12	320
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>339</b>

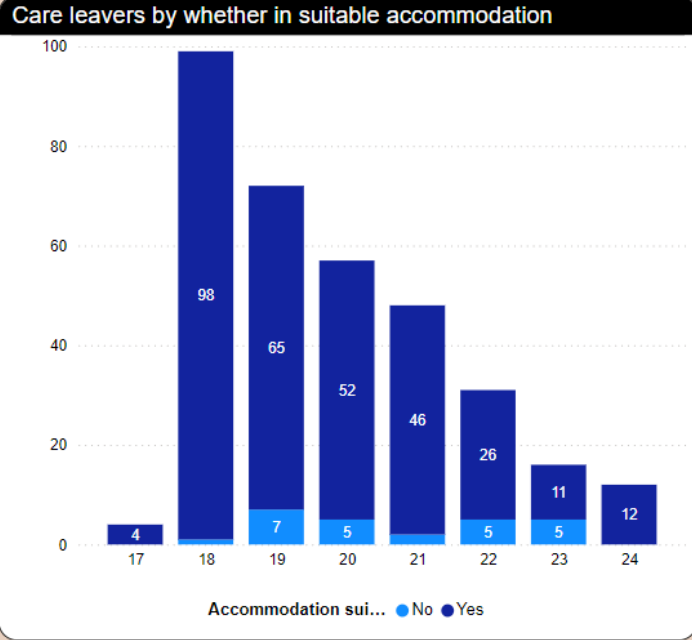
### Care Leavers by Eligibility Status

Eligibility status	No.
Relevant	4
Former Relevant	335
<b>Total</b>	<b>339</b>

461 children are with the Care Leavers Team aged between 16-24



# Care Leavers – Suitable Accommodation



**Care leavers by whether in suitable accommodation and age group**

Age group	17-18		19-21		22-24		Total	
Accommodation	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	102	99%	163	92%	49	83%	314	93%
No	1	1%	14	8%	10	17%	25	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>100%</b>

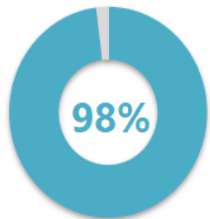
**Care leavers in unsuitable accommodation by age and type**

Accommodation code	18	19	20	21	22	23	Total
S - No fixed abode / homeless		1	1		3		5
V - Emergency accommodation		1					1
W - Bed and breakfast						1	1
X - In custody			3	3	2	2	4
Y - Other accommodation	1	2	1				4
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>25</b>

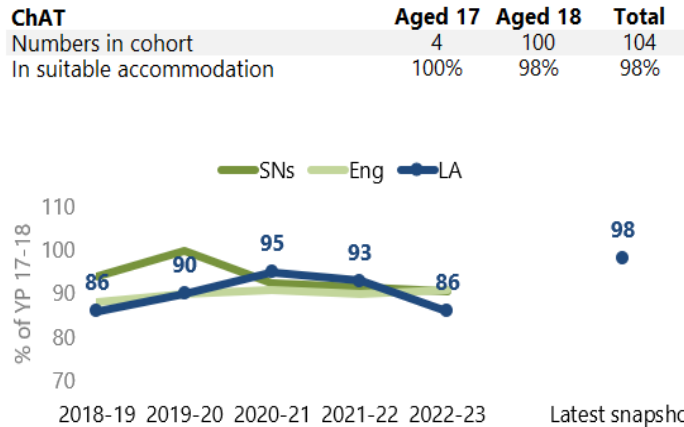
The proportion of care leavers in suitable accommodation aged 17-18 is 98% (above benchmarks) and for ages 19-21 is 92% (above benchmarks)

Majority in unsuitable accommodation are in custody

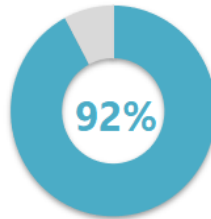
Accommodation suitability of 17-18 year olds (relevant/former relevant)



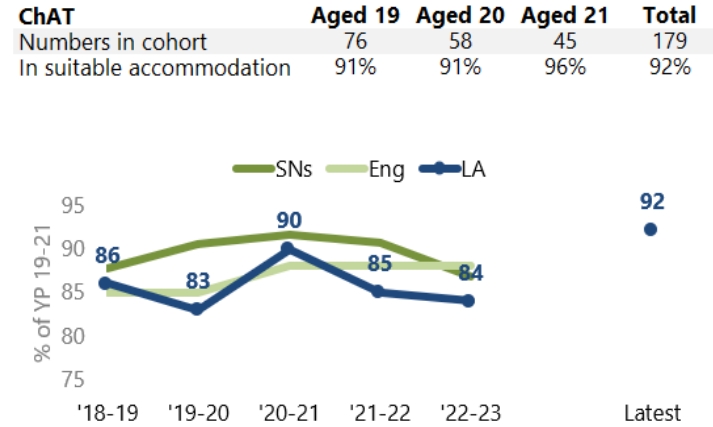
98%  
 Suitable accom  
 Not suitable  
 No information



Accommodation suitability of 19-21 year olds (former relevant)

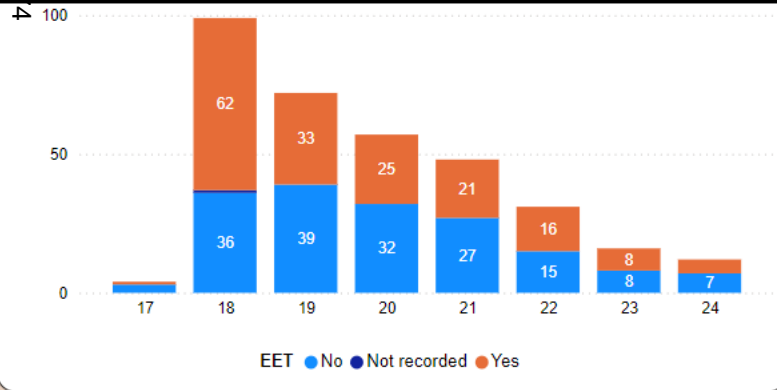


92%  
 Suitable accom  
 Not suitable  
 No information



# Care Leavers - Education, Employment or Training

Care Leavers by Whether in Education, Employment or Training (EET)



Care Leavers by Main Education, Employment or Training (EET) Activity and Age Group

Age group	17-18		19-21		22-24		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	63	61%	79	45%	29	49%	171	50%
Not recorded	1	1%					1	0%
No	39	38%	98	55%	30	51%	167	49%
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>100%</b>

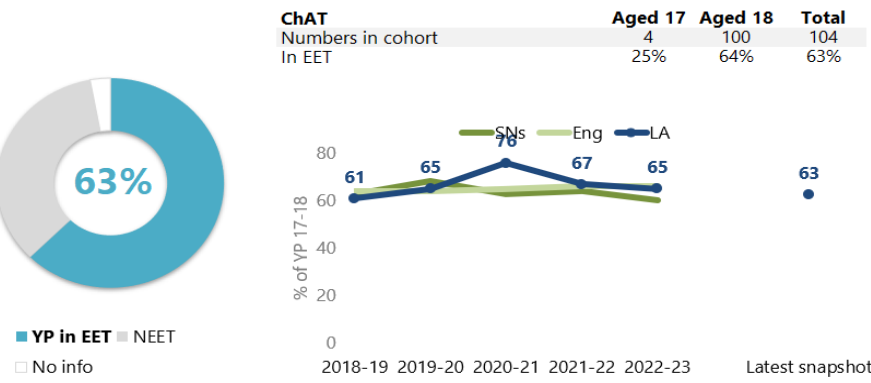
The proportion of care leavers in Education, Employment or Training aged 17-18 is 63% which is below all benchmarks.

Care Leavers not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) by Main Education, Employment or Training (EET) Activity

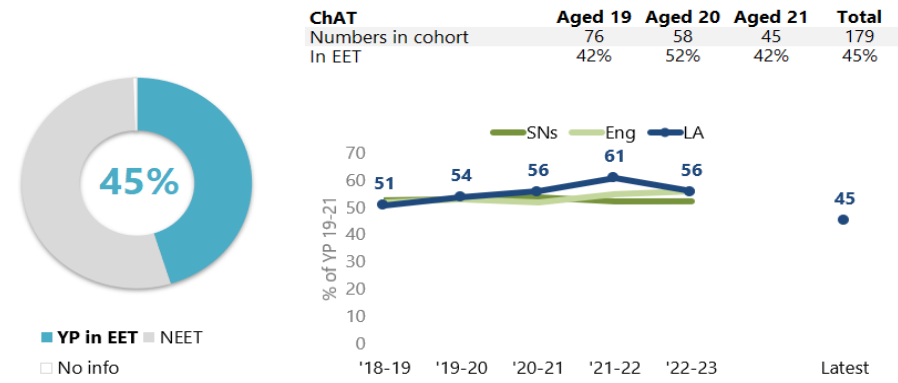
Main EET activity	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	Total
G6 - Young person not in education, employment or training due to pregnancy or parenting		3	3	9	6	4	2	3	30
G5 - Young person not in education, employment or training: other circumstances	2	23	19	14	5	6	4	1	74
G4 - Young person not in education, employment or training because of illness or disability	1	10	17	9	16	5	2	3	63
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>167</b>

For those aged 19-21 this is 45%, also below benchmarks

Education, Employment, or Training (EET) of 17-18 year olds (relevant/former relevant)



Education, Employment, or Training (EET) of 19-21 year olds (former relevant)



By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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