

# Analysis of the rise in looked after children (LAC)

February 2019

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# Brief

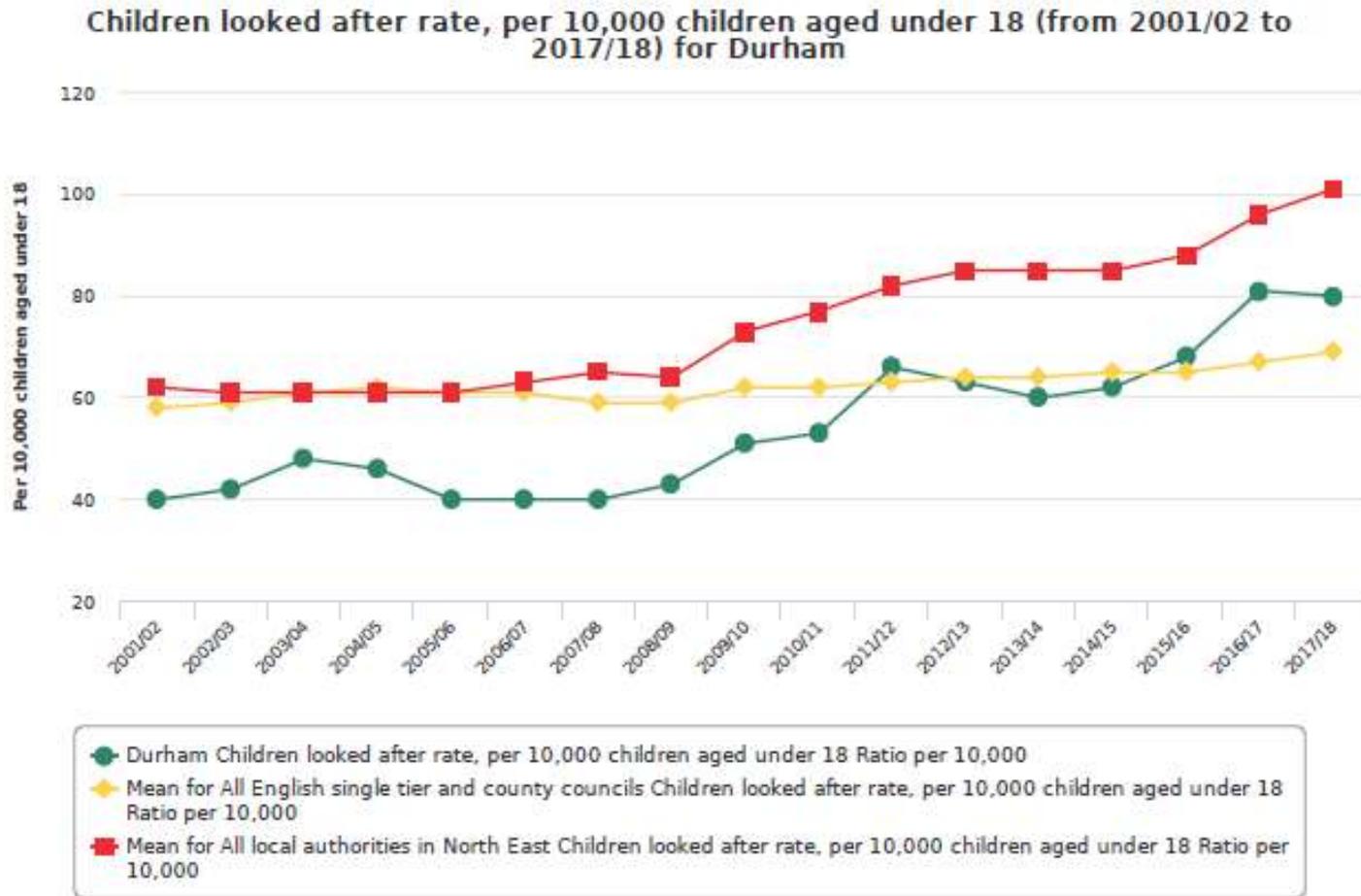
Provide further analysis and insights about the increase in numbers of looked after children.

- **Context**
- **Demand and Throughput**
- **Policy Changes**

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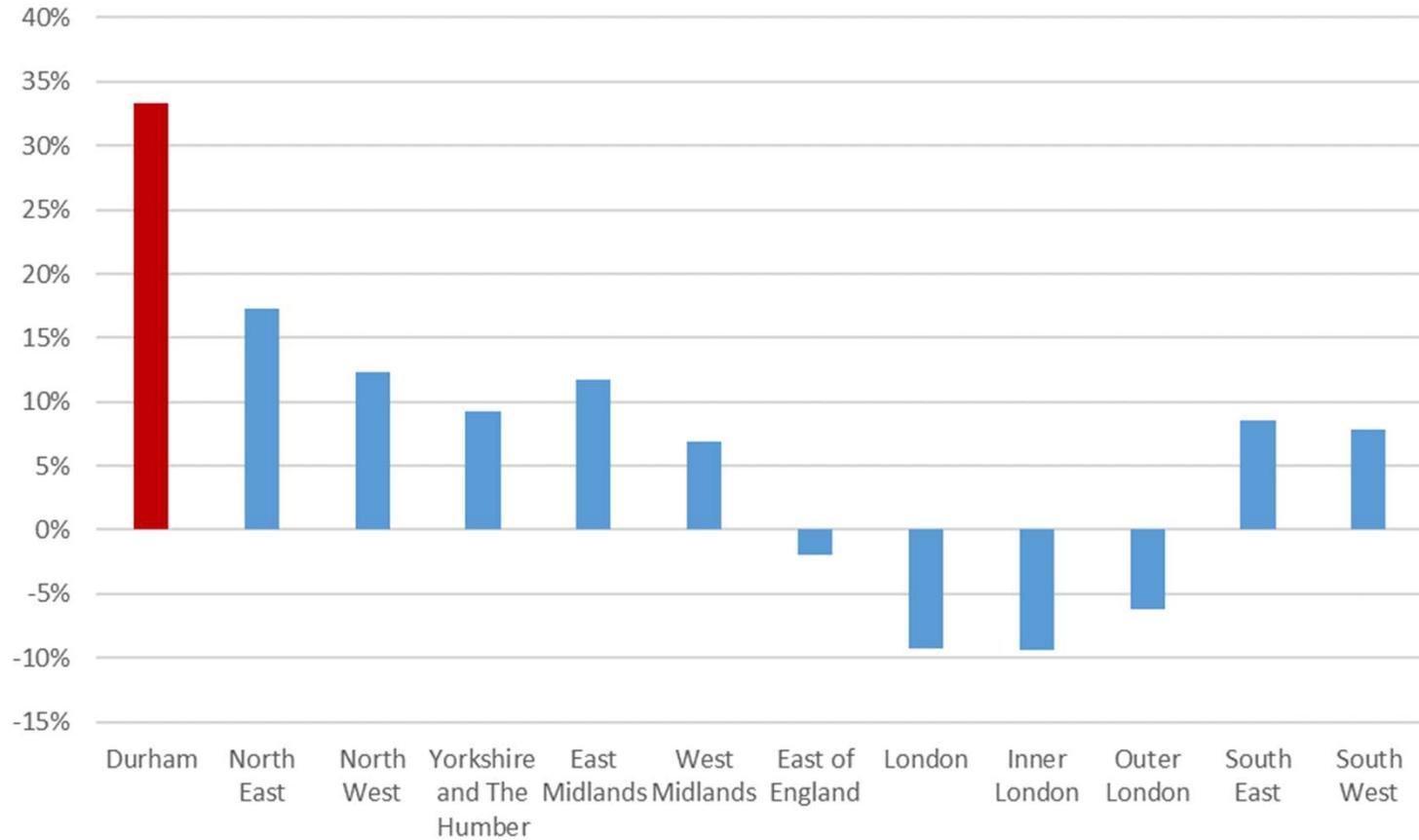
# Looked after children rate



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# Change in LAC by Region

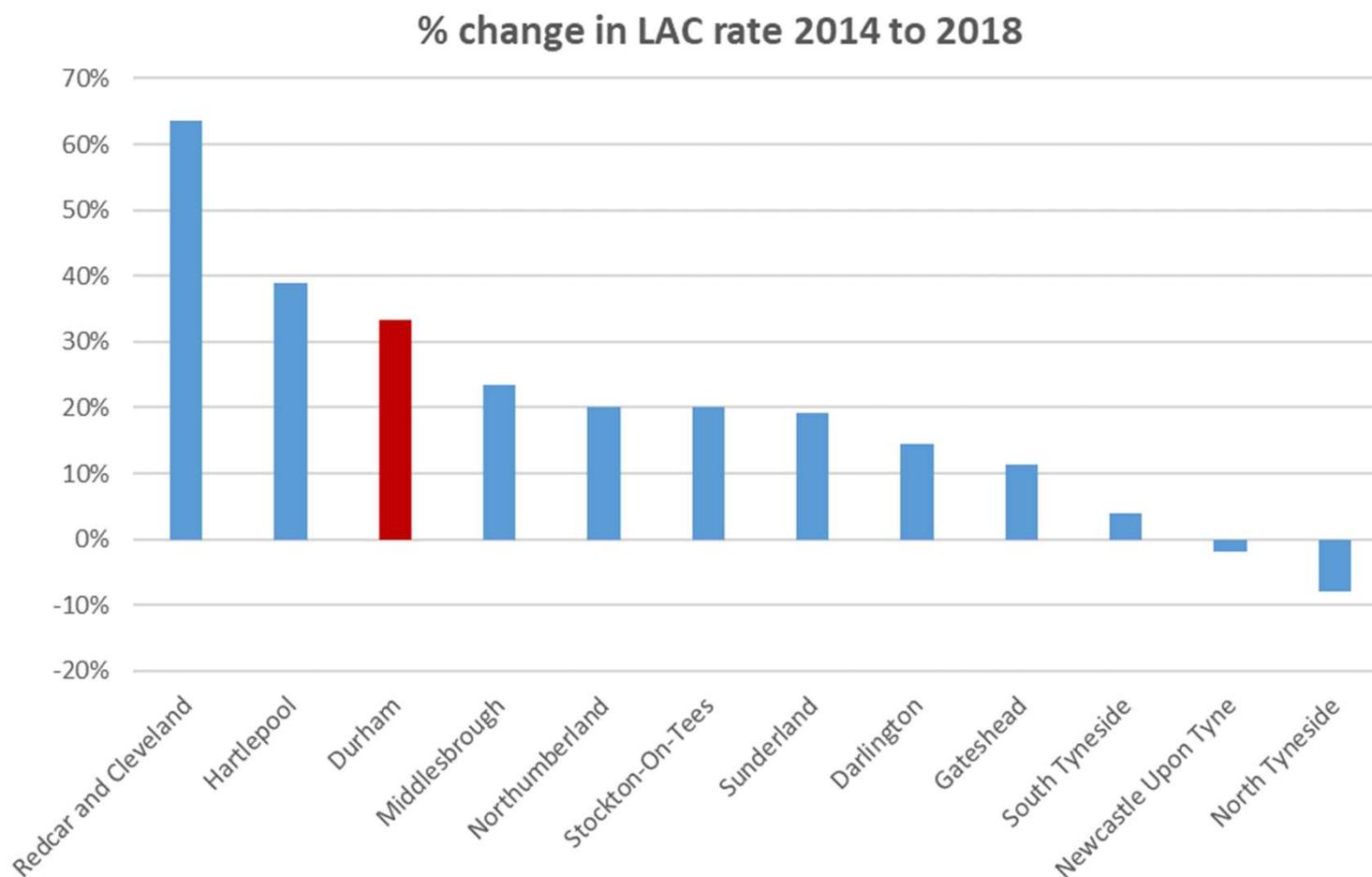
% change in LAC rate 2014 to 2018



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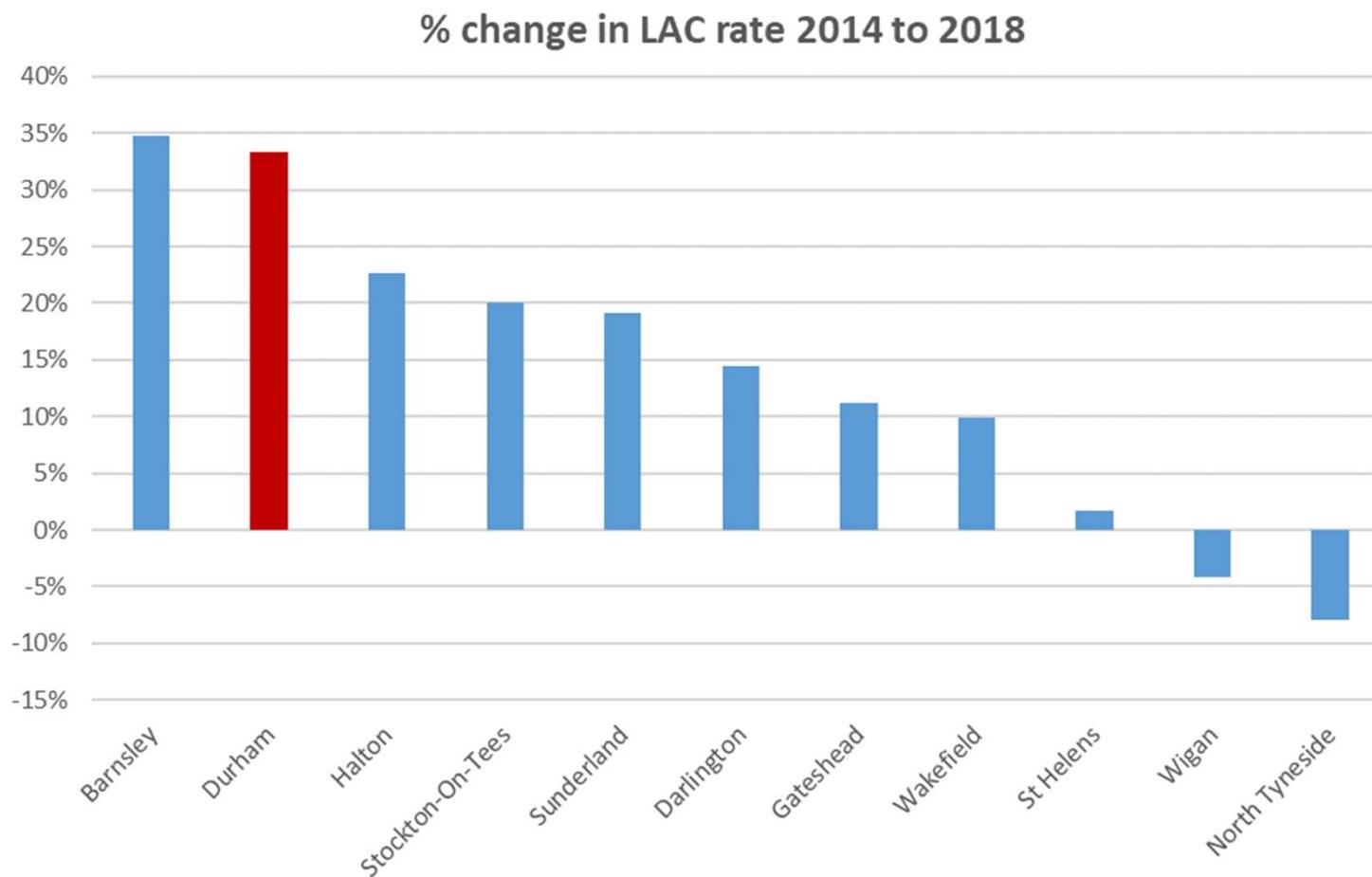


# Change in LAC Regional Neighbours



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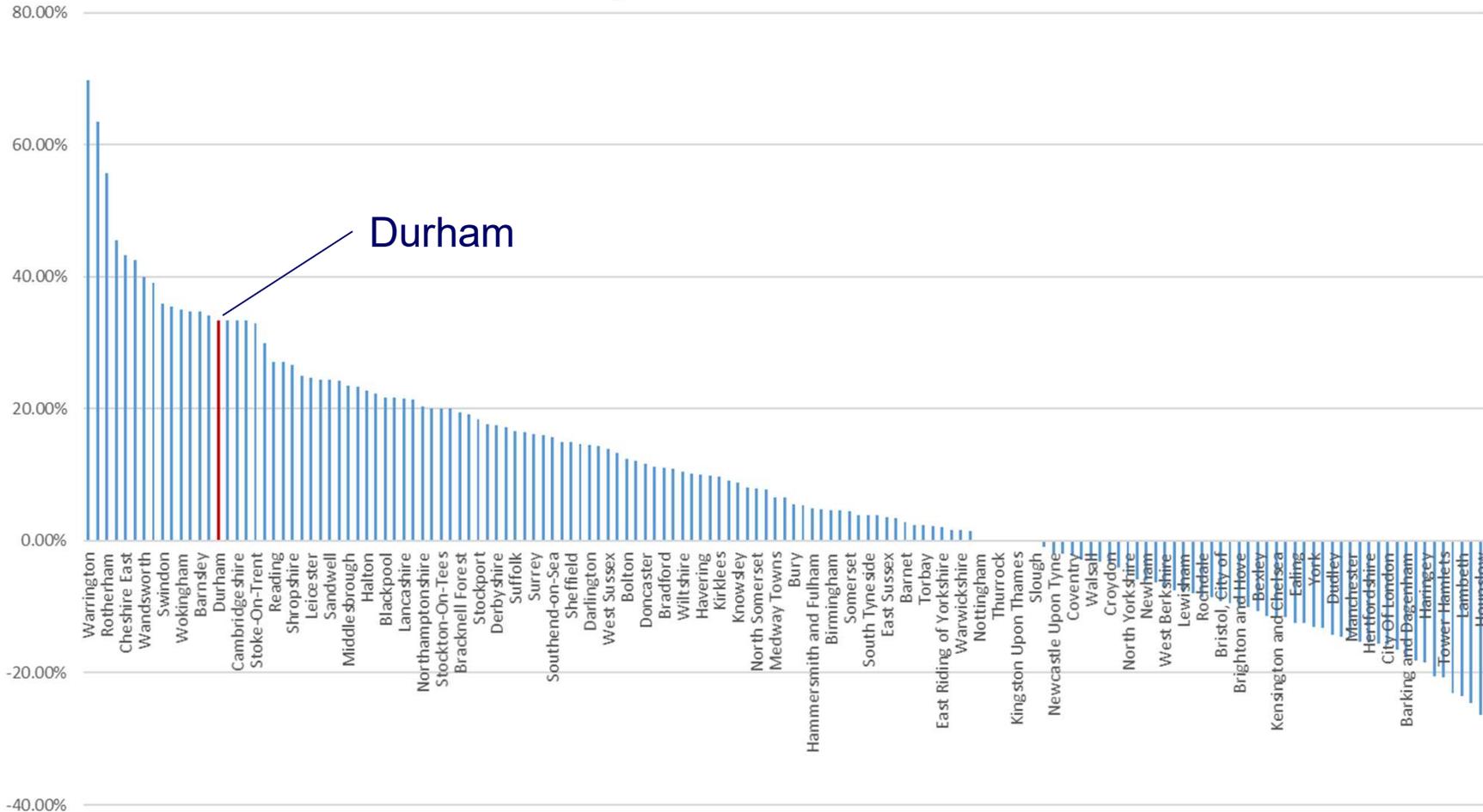
# Change in LAC Stat Neighbours



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# Change in LAC by LA

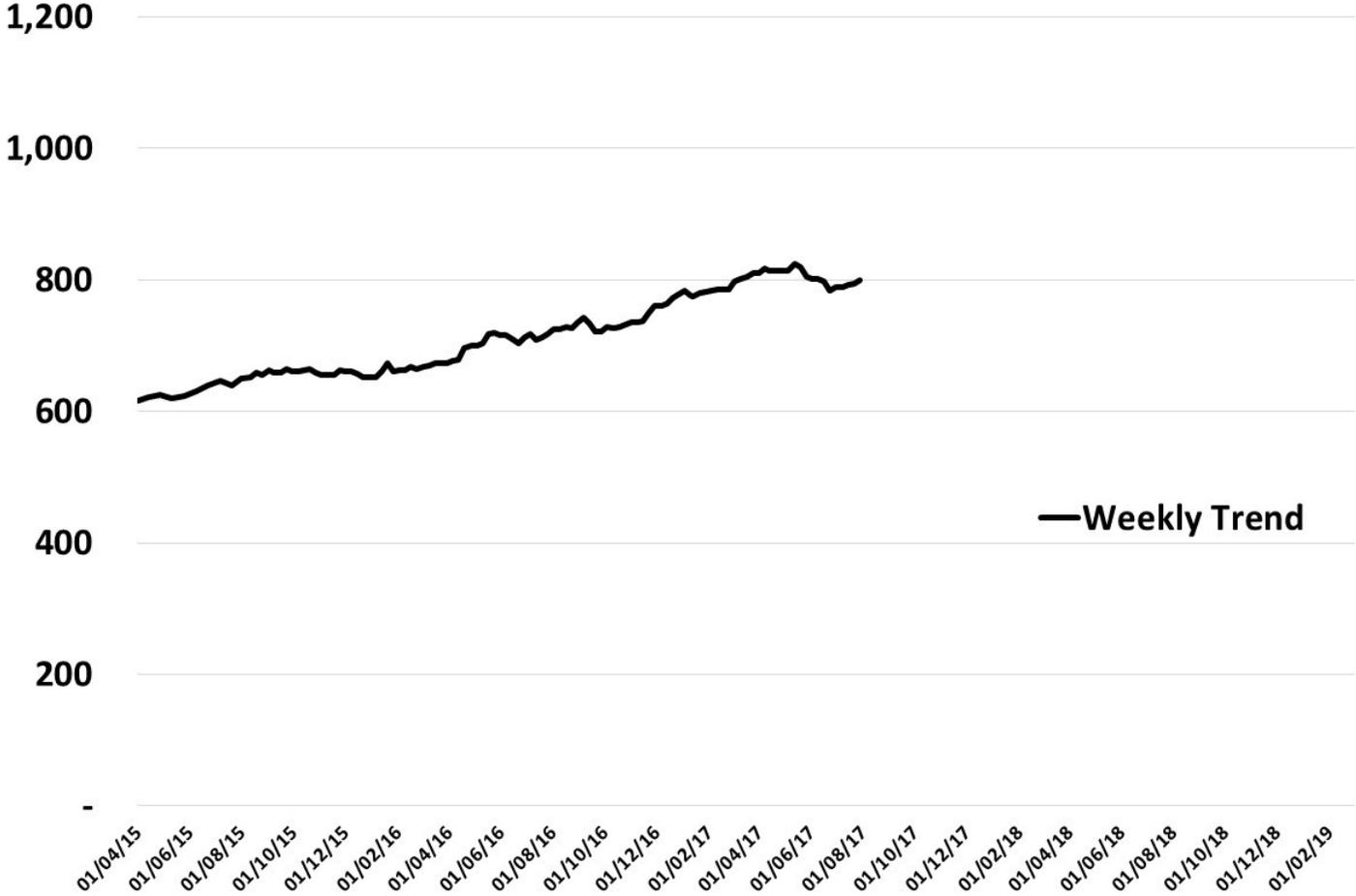
% change in LAC rate 2014 to 2018



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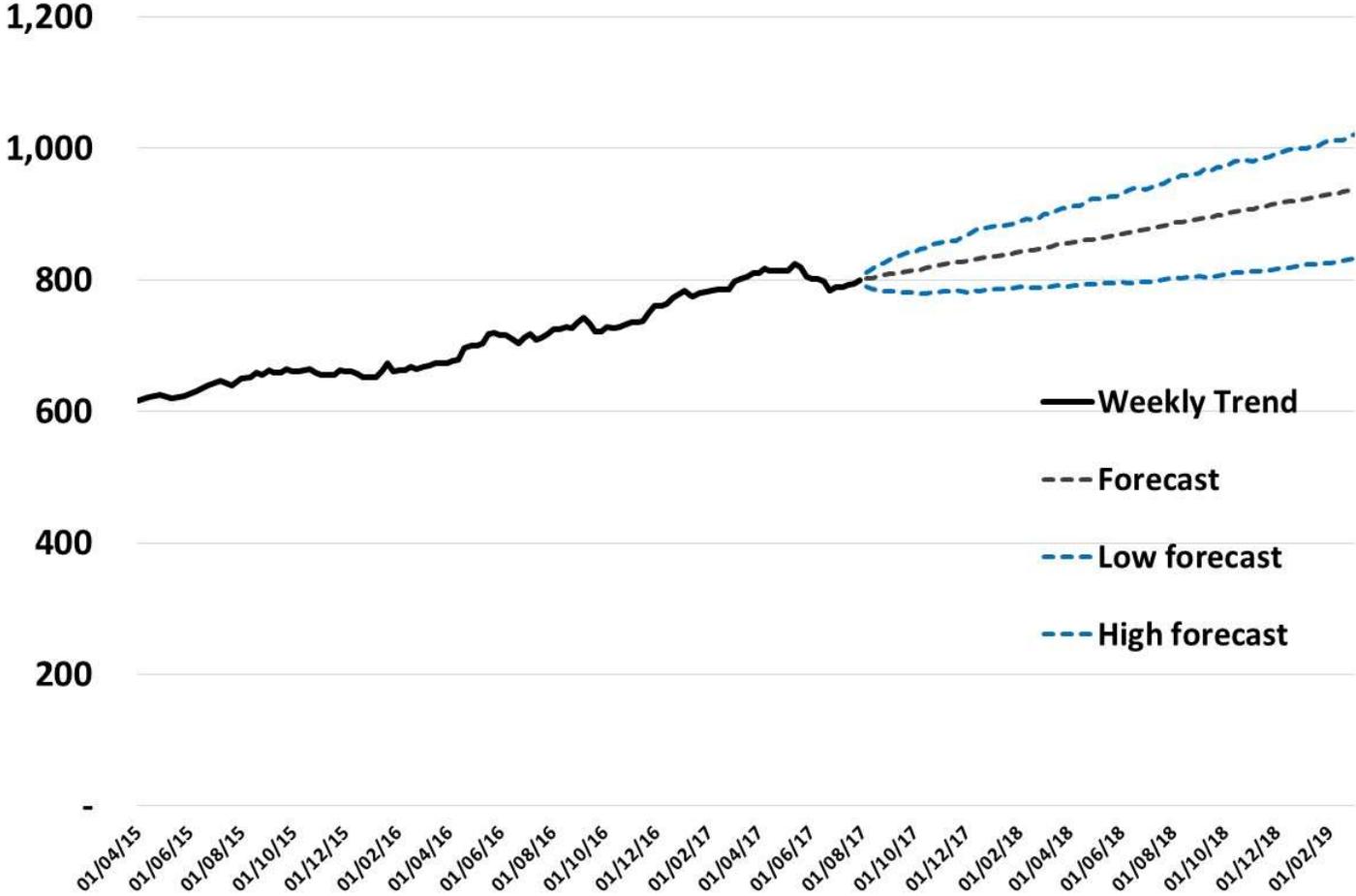
# Weekly LAC numbers - trend



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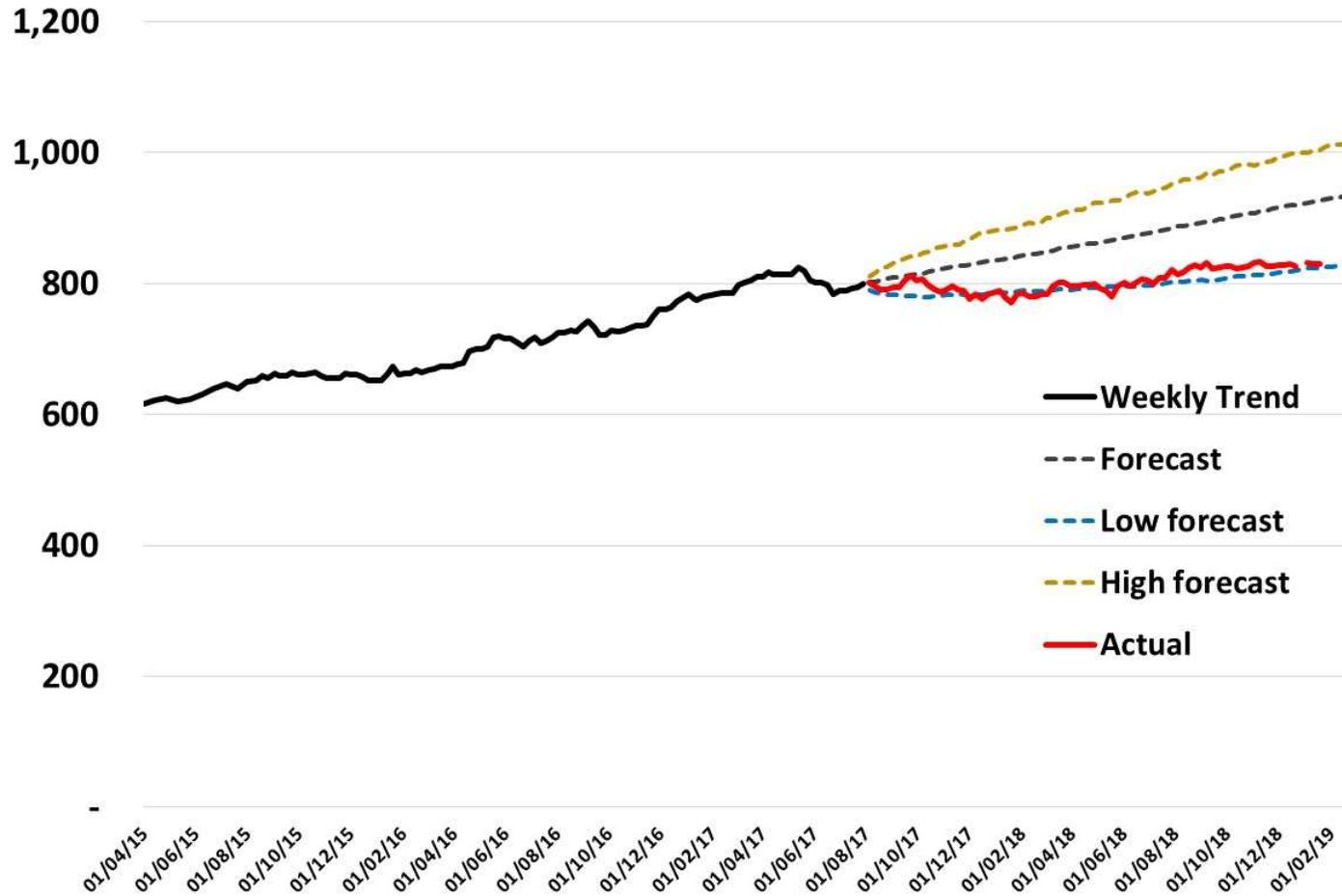
# Weekly LAC numbers - trend



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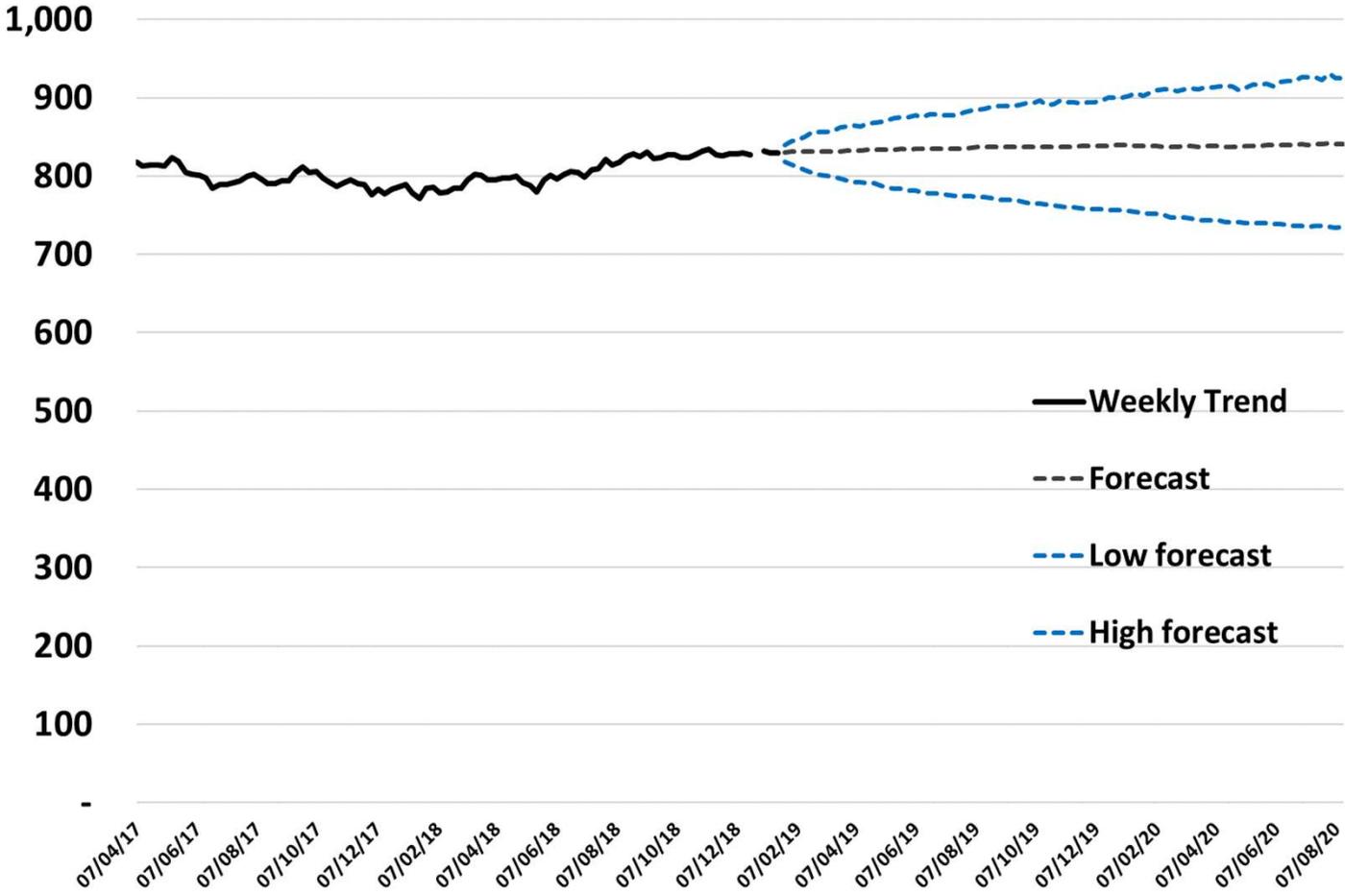


# Weekly LAC numbers - trend



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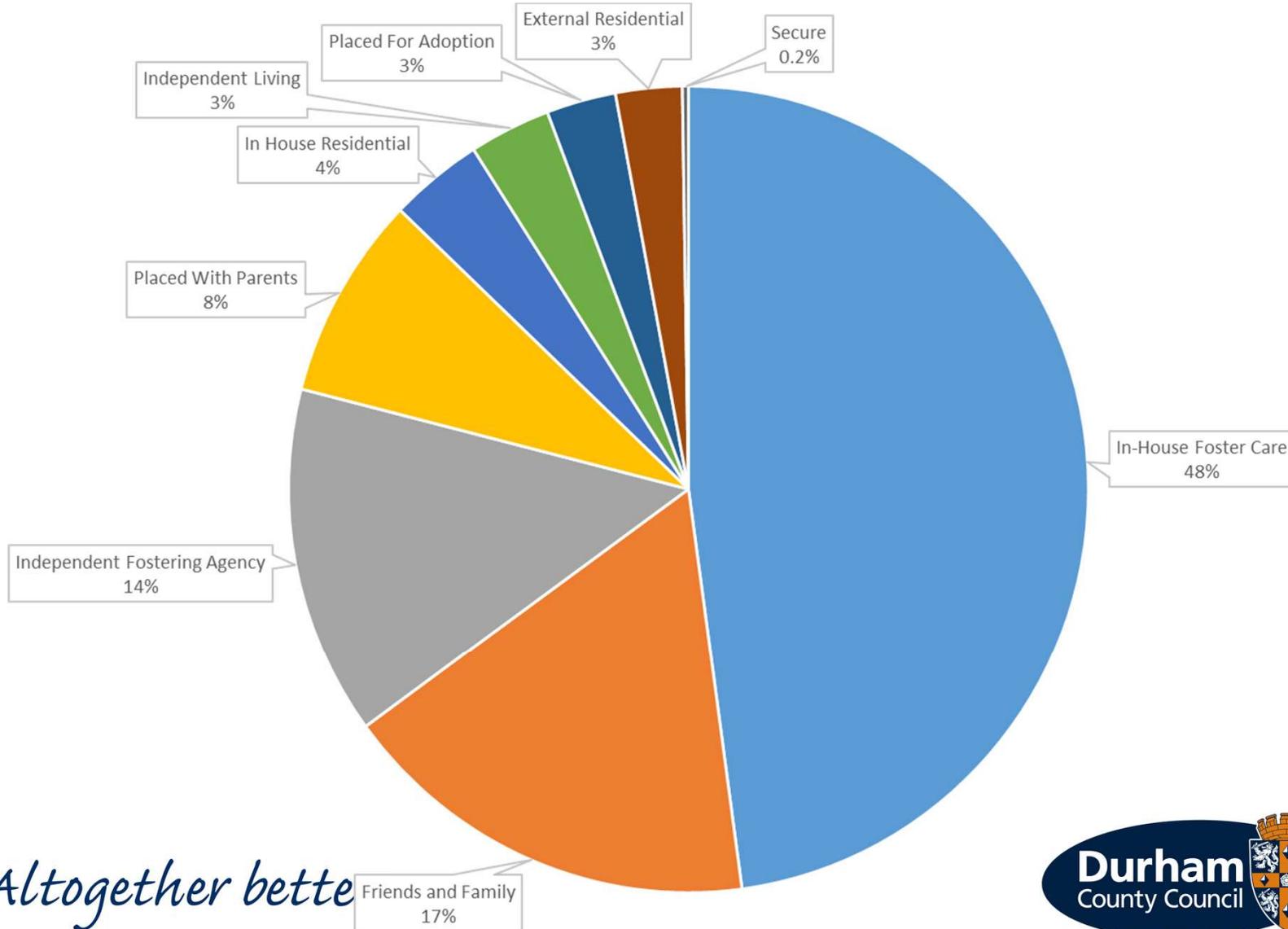
# Weekly LAC numbers - trend



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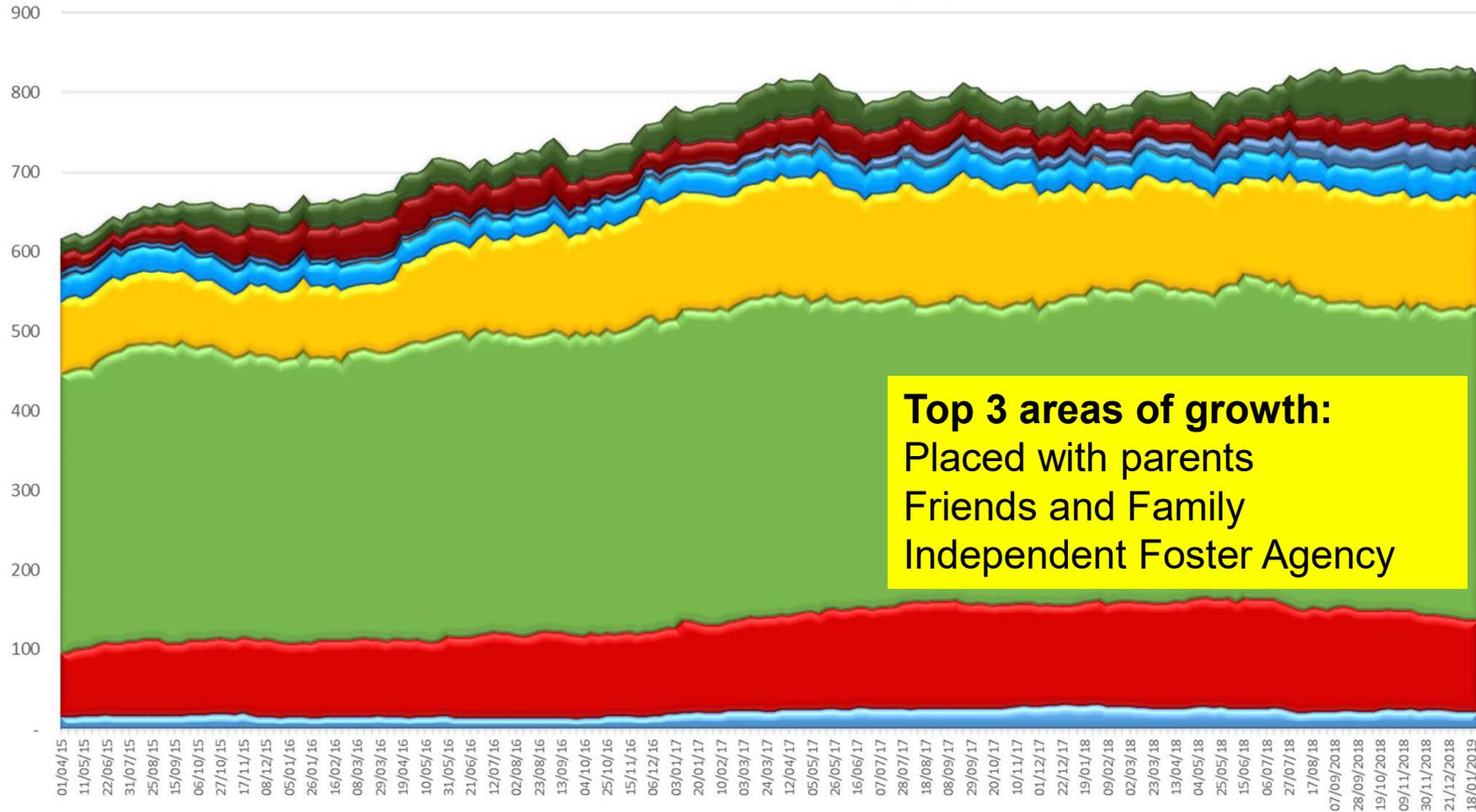


# LAC Placement Types



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# LAC Placement Types



- External Residential (incl. children's homes and res school)
- lfa
- In House Foster Care
- Friends and Family
- In House Residential (incl. Children's homes)
- Secure (incl. YOI and prisons)
- Independent Living (incl. Supported Lodgings)
- Placed For Adoption
- Placed With Parents

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# Context Summary

- Long term LAC numbers are increasing in line with North East trend.
- But Durham has had the joint 25<sup>th</sup> biggest increase nationally based on last five years.
- However, current levels are low compared to 2015-17 trajectory.
- Using the trend since mid-2017 projection remains stable for next 18 months.

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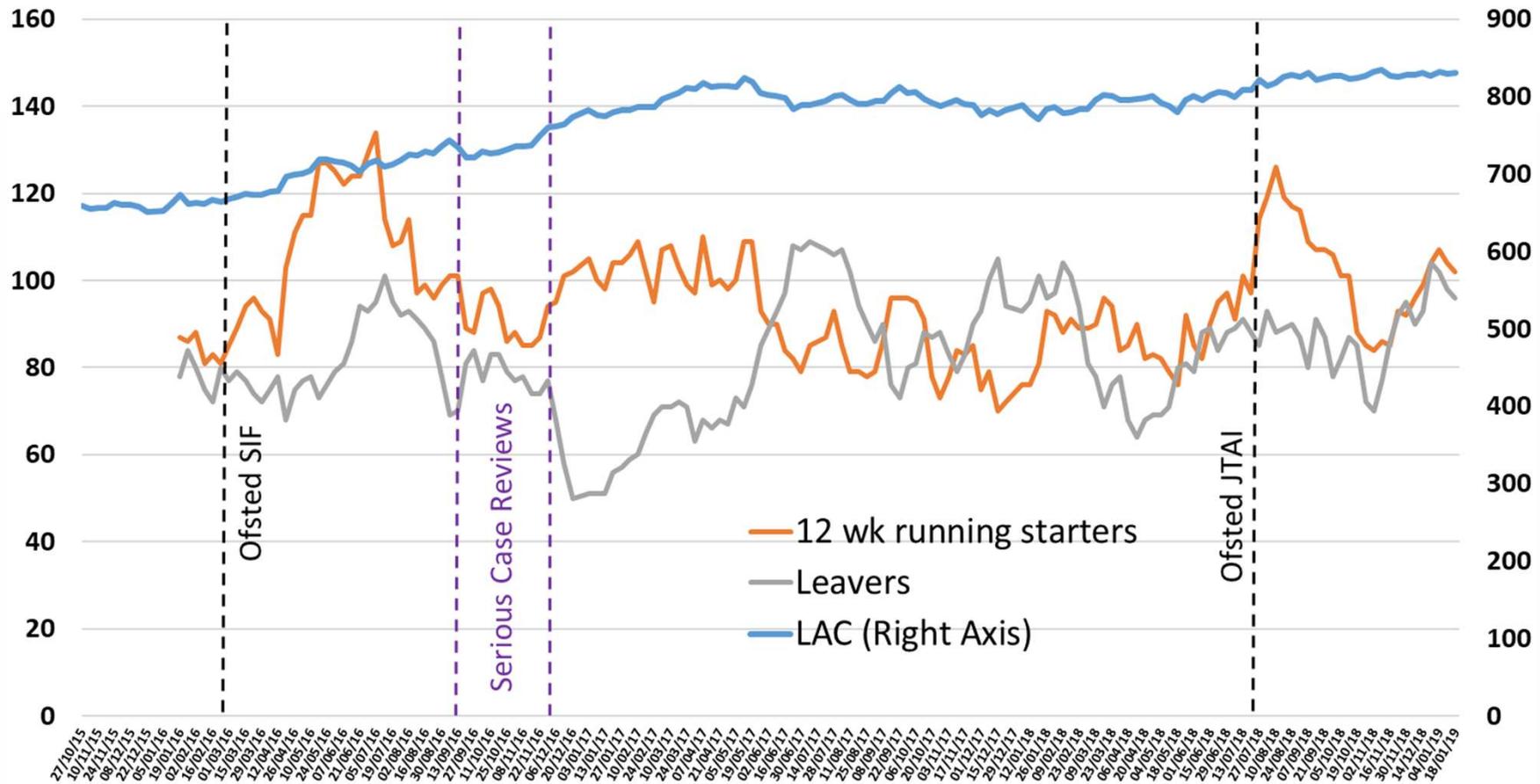


# DEMAND AND THROUGHPUT

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## 12 week Cumulative CLA Starters/Leavers Comparison

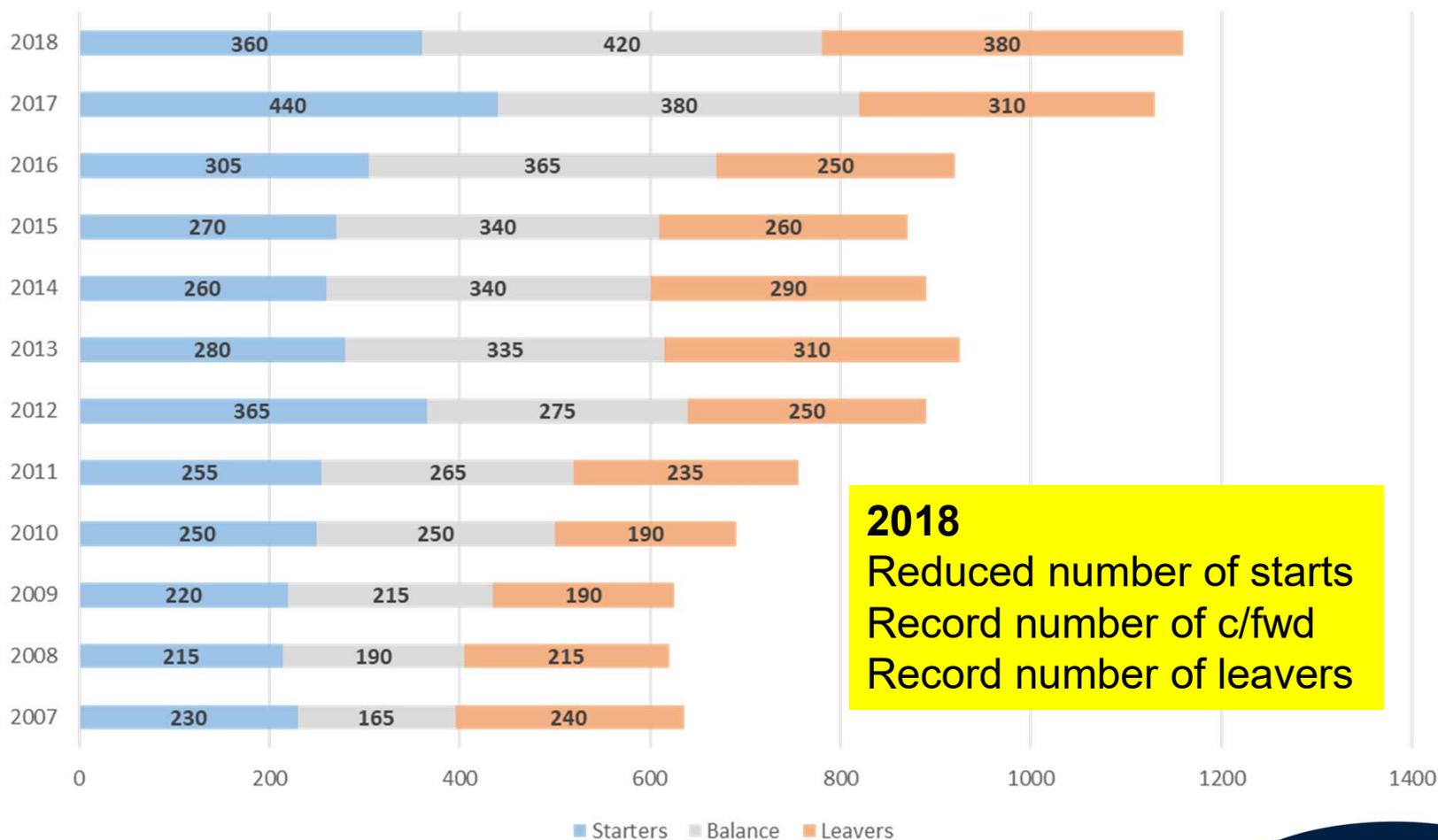


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# Throughput, starters and leavers

Children looked after during the year

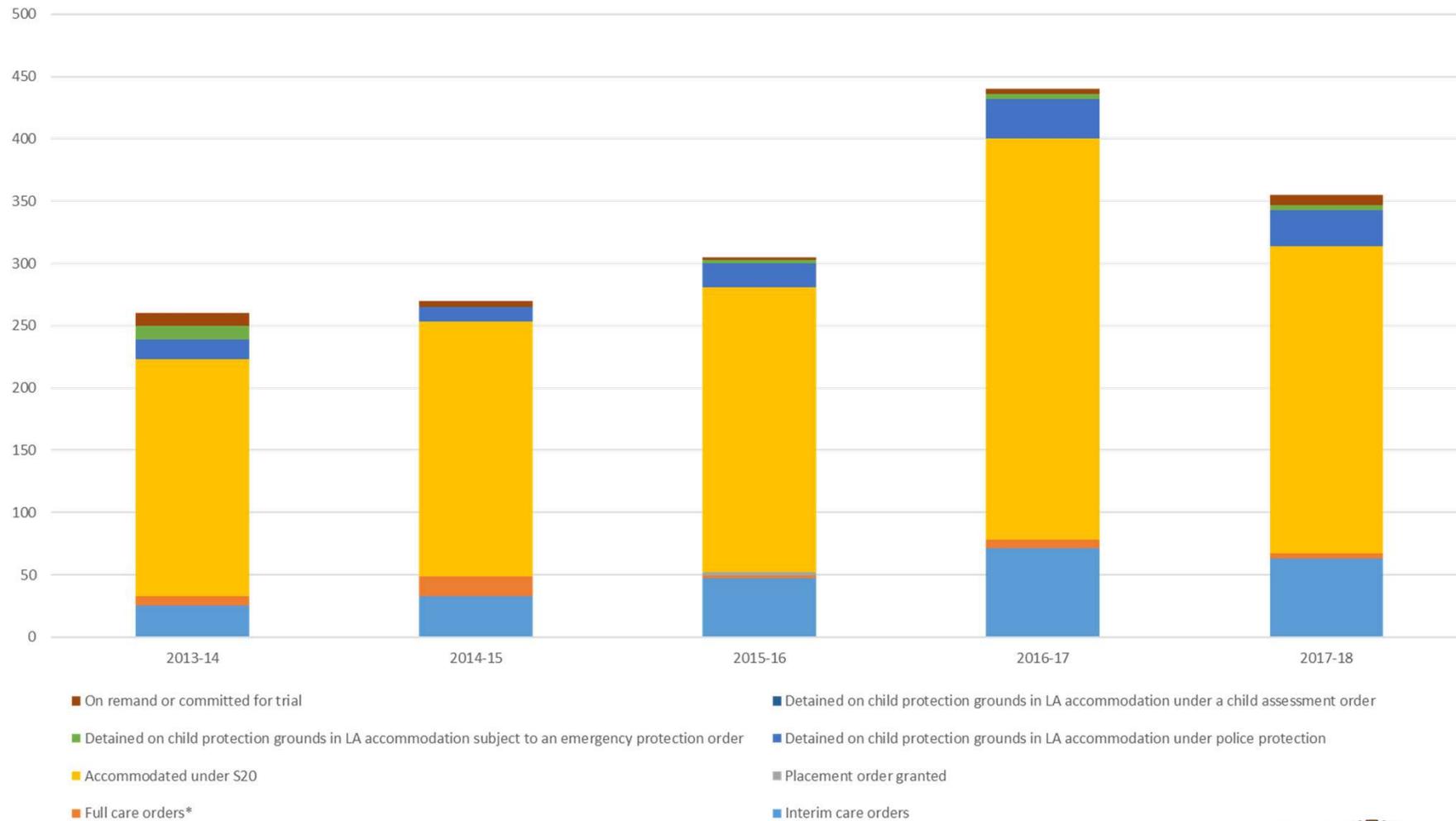


**2018**  
Reduced number of starts  
Record number of c/fwd  
Record number of leavers

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# LAC starts

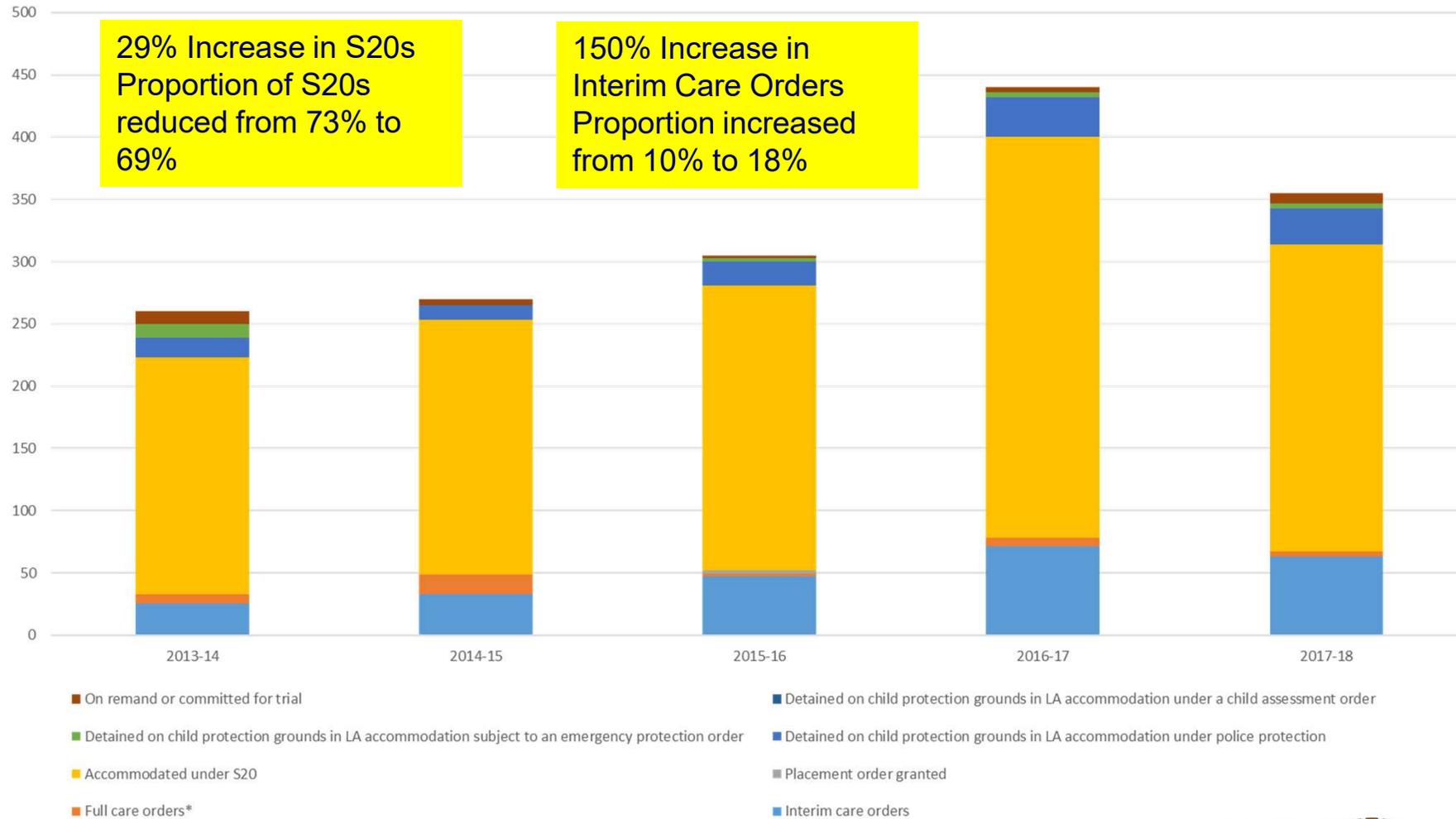


\*Some numbers have been estimated due to suppression in published figures as numbers were small

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# LAC starts



\*Some numbers have been estimated due to suppression in published figures as numbers were small

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# LAC ceased

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Change since 2016/17	% change since 2016/17
Returned home to live with parents or relatives as part of care planning process	27% (69)	39% (97)	23% (71)	33% (123)	52	73%
Returned home to live with parents or relatives not as part of care planning process	0	2% (6)	11% (33)	13% (47)	14	42%
Adopted	17% (45)	12% (30)	17% (53)	14% (53)	0	0%
Special guardianship order	21% (54)	20% (50)	20% (62)	14% (54)	-8	-13%
Left care to live with parents, relatives or other person with no parental responsibility	0	1% (2)	9% (27)	8% (31)	4	15%
Moved into independent living	9% (23)	9% (22)	8% (25)	8% (30)	5	19%
Residence order granted	3% (9)	5% (13)	7% (20)	7% (26)	6	30%
Care ceased for any other reason	23% (60)	12% (30)	4% (14)	3% (11)	-3	-20%
Number of children who ceased to be looked after during the year	260	250	305	375	70	23%

53% of those returning home as part of care planning process are aged 0-4

Children returning home NOT as part of care planning process more evenly spread across ages

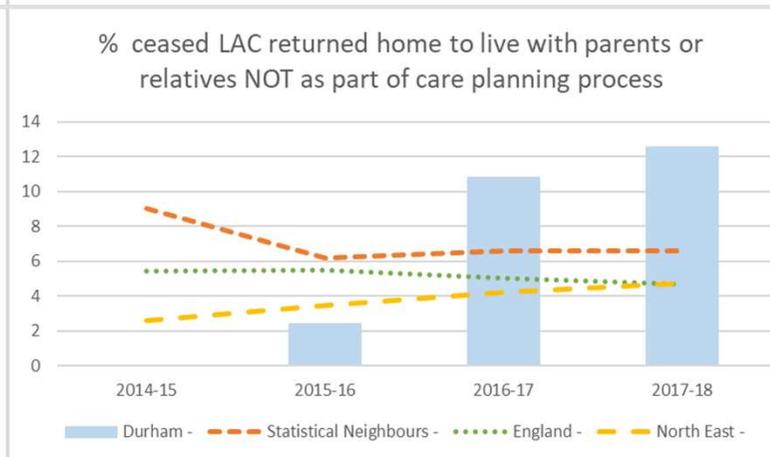
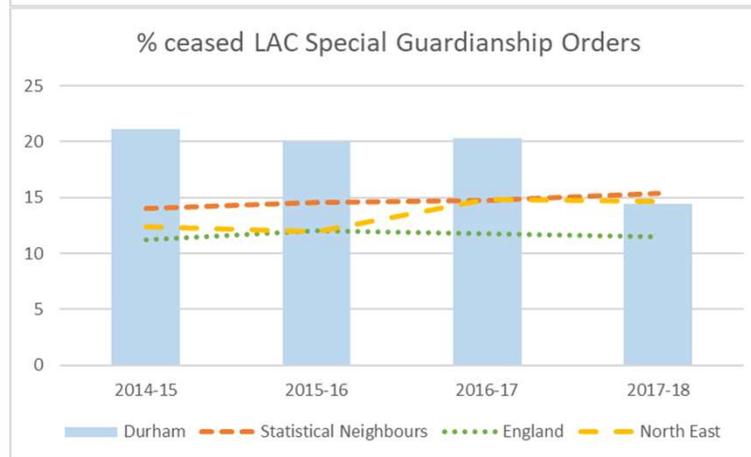
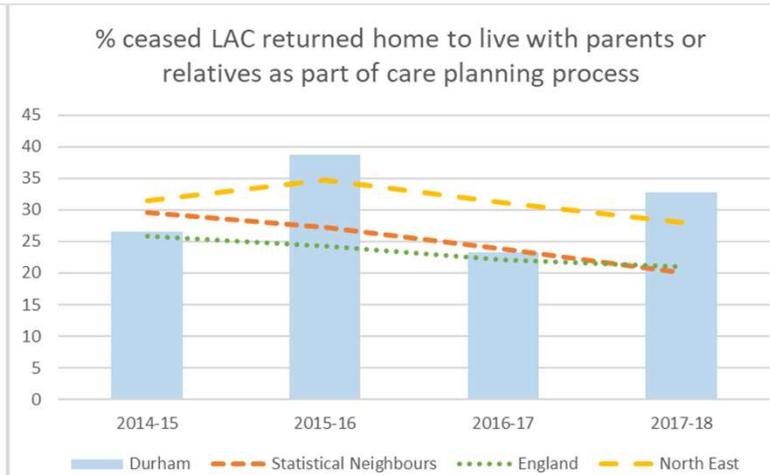
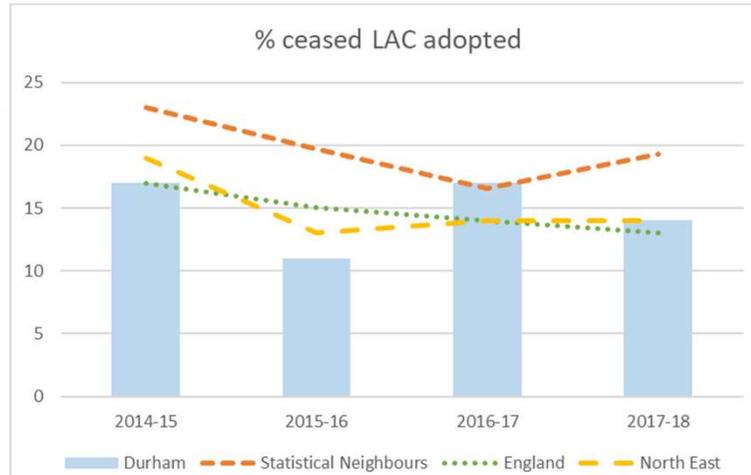
60% of those who left care to live with parents, relatives or other person are aged 16-18

\*Some numbers have been estimated due to suppression in published figures as numbers were small

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# LAC ceased



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# Demand and Throughput Summary

- **LAC starts have reduced by 18%** for 2018 but record number of LAC carried forward and ceased.
- Overall, **numbers through-the-year** remain high historically.
- **LAC starts** - Increased number of S20s since 2014 but proportion reduced. Increase in interim care orders.
- **LAC ceased** - Increase in LAC returning to live with parents, relatives or other person with no parental responsibility. (Age seems to be a factor but need to check validity of these trends).

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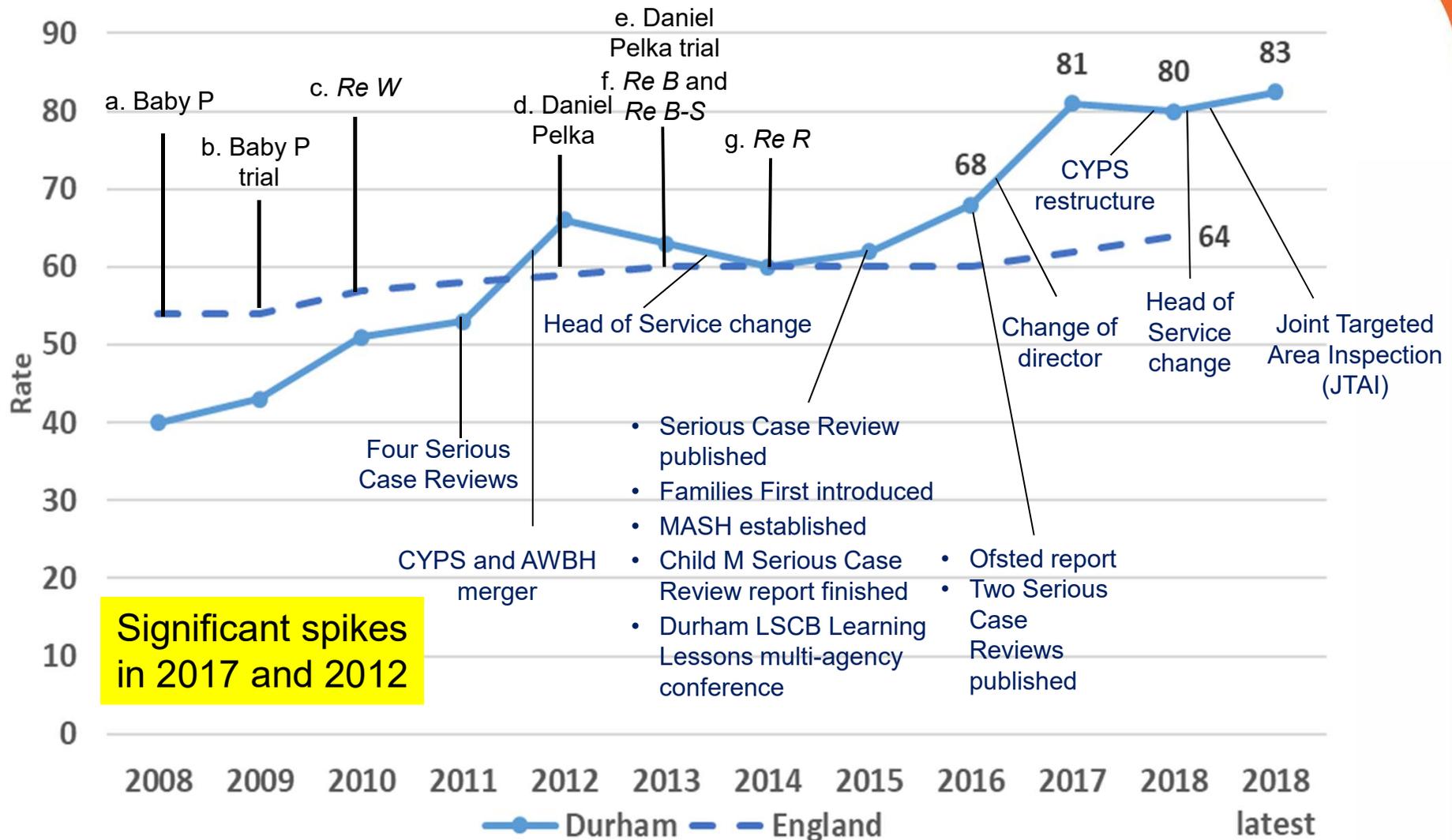


# POLICY DRIVERS

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# National and Local Policy Drivers



Significant spikes in 2017 and 2012

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# The London effect

- Three factors lie behind the decrease in London numbers
  - Unaccompanied asylum seeking children
  - Shorter-term placements
  - Social care management best practice
- Assistant directors reporting:
  - No discernible relationship between LAC and children subject to a CP plan
  - Or between increased availability of early help and a reduction in LAC

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# Social care management best practice

- Knowledge and understanding of LAC population
- Controlling entry
- Encouraging exit
- Decreasing the duration
- Alternatives to care

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# Overall Summary and Conclusions

- Number of LAC increased substantially between 2014 and 2017.
- Since then levels have stabilised but numbers throughout the year remain relatively high (i.e. starts and leavers high).
- Wide variety of policy drivers nationally/locally.
- Reducing duration of care is key but difficult to address.
- Best practice described by London Councils being implemented in Durham (e.g. Edge of Care).
- Need to evaluate impact of restructure and other changes on duration of care.

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