



**DARLINGTON**

Borough Council

# Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Agenda

9.30 am

Monday, 31 October 2022

Council Chamber, Town Hall, Darlington. DL1 5QT

**Members of the Public are welcome to attend this Meeting.**

1. Introductions/ Attendance at Meeting
2. Declarations of Interest
3. To approve the Minutes of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 5 September 2022 (Pages 3 - 6)
4. Adoption Tees Valley Annual Report 2021/22 –  
Report of the Service Manager Adoption Tees Valley  
(Pages 7 - 48)
5. Learning and Skills Annual Report 2021/22 –  
Report of the Assistant Director, Education and Inclusion  
(Pages 49 - 54)
6. Performance Indicators Quarter 1 2022/23 –  
Report of the Group Director of People  
(Pages 55 - 84)
7. SEND Written Statement of Action –  
Report of the Assistant Director, Education and Inclusion  
(Pages 85 - 114)

8. Childcare Sufficiency Task and Finish Review Final Report –  
Report of the Chair of the Task and Finish Review Group  
(Pages 115 - 120)
9. Work Programme –  
Report of the Group Director of Operations  
(Pages 121 - 136)
10. SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM(S) (if any) which in the opinion of the Chair of this Committee are  
of an urgent nature and can be discussed at this meeting
11. Questions



**Luke Swinhoe**  
**Assistant Director Law and Governance**

**Friday, 21 October 2022**

**Town Hall**  
**Darlington.**

**Membership**

Councillors Ali, Bell, Crudass, C L B Hughes, L Hughes, Johnson, Lucas, Preston, Snedker, Sowerby and Willis

**Statutory Co-optees**

Malcolm Frank and Carly Stonier

**Non Statutory Co-optees**

Maura Regan, Tim Fisher, Janet Woodcock, John Armitage and Sally Hudson

If you need this information in a different language or format or you have any other queries on this agenda please contact Allison Hill, Democratic Officer, Operations Group, during normal office hours 8.30 a.m. to 4.45 p.m. Mondays to Thursdays and 8.30 a.m. to 4.15 p.m. Fridays email: [allison.hill@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:allison.hill@darlington.gov.uk) or telephone 01325 405997

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 5 September 2022

**PRESENT** – Councillors Crudass (Chair), Ali, C L B Hughes, L Hughes, Johnson, Snedker and Willis

**STATUTORY CO-OPTees** – None

**NON-STATUTORY CO-OPTees** – None

**APOLOGIES** – Councillors Lucas and Preston, Carly Stonier, John Armitage

**ABSENT** – Councillors Bell, Sowerby, Malcolm Frank, Maura Regan, Tim Fisher and Janet Woodcock

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE** – Allison Hill (Democratic Officer), Tony Murphy (Assistant Director Education and Inclusion), Chris Bell (Assistant Director of Children's Services) and Ken Ross (Public Health Principal)

### CYP9 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at this meeting.

### CYP10 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 27 JUNE 2022

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 27 June 2022.

**RESOLVED** – That the Minutes of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 27 June 2022 be approved as a correct record.

### CYP11 DESIGNATED OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

The Assistant Director of Children's Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to present the Annual report and update Members on the progress and performance of the Designated Officer, April 2021 to March 2022 and to highlight the required actions for April 2022 to March 2023.

The submitted report outlined the function of the Designated Officer in line with national guidance and the requirement of all organisations working with children in Darlington to have policies and procedures in place on what their organisation should do when an allegation is made against an employee/volunteer who has contact with children.

It was reported that these policies and procedures were in line with Darlington Safeguarding Partnership multi-agency procedures.

Members questions related to the processes in place for the Designated Officer to be notified about any referrals from education settings and if the Council were confident that

there were sufficient procedures in place within schools to report incidents; and requested clarification on the future priority to examine where the Designated Officer service will be best placed within the local authority.

The Assistant Director of Education and Inclusion confirmed that there were sufficient policies and procedures in place as to what organisations should do when an allegation is made and these are in line with the Darlington Safeguarding Partnership Multi-agency procedures; and specifically in relation to schools, proactively brief them on any legislative changes.

Members also requested further information on non-substantiated cases and how those were dealt with and also the reasons for these case not reducing.

**RESOLVED** – (a) That the Annual Report and the work undertaken during 2022/23 and the priorities of the Designated Officer service for 2022/23 be agreed and noted.

(b) That all agencies consider how to promote the role of the Designated Officer within their own organisation.

## **CYP12 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PUBLIC HEALTH OVERVIEW**

The Director of Public Health submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide an update of the Children and Young People Public Health interventions and programs namely the Healthy Lifestyles Survey 2021, Children's Health Profile for Darlington and the 0-19 Service.

It was reported that the Healthy Lifestyles Survey has been delivered for 12 years with a total of up to 8,624 pupils across 33 primary and secondary schools completing the survey annually; the survey of 2021 was the first full survey completed following the pandemic and included some specific topics and questions that had been developed and agreed by young people, schools and other professionals to reflect the impact of the pandemic on young people; and results from the survey can be fed back to young people so that they are aware and understand the lifestyle and behaviour choices of their peers and can use this to inform their own choices and decisions.

The Child Health Profile is produced annually by Public Health England (now Office of Health Improvement and Disparities OHID) for every local authority area in England and provides a snapshot of child health in this area. It is designed to help the Authority; health services and other stakeholders improve the health and wellbeing of children and target Public Health interventions that can improve child health at a local level.

It was reported that the profile for Darlington this year when compared to the England averages showed that the health and wellbeing of children in Darlington was mixed and some key indicators such as breastfeeding, smoking in pregnancy and obesity were worse compared to England; whilst other indicators such as vaccination uptake, admission to hospital for common health conditions being better or similar when compared to England.

With regard to the 0-19 Service, provided by Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust, this continues to perform well, achieve well against the statutory and contract performance targets and the service continues to receive positive feedback from parents and carers and



other users of the service.

It was also reported that the Service had continued innovative work in relation to infant feeding and introduced new interventions including new ante natal virtual sessions, training for staff and peer supporters and also more collaborative working with Family Centres; has worked towards reaccreditation for the UNICEF Gold Baby Friendly award; continued work with schools including a new 'drop in' offer to schools post pandemic and close working and liaison with specialist mental health teams in Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Mental Health Trust; and the Service continued to enhance and improve the digital offer which proved to be very successful during the pandemic and lockdown.

Members questions to the Public Health Specialist related in particular to smoking and vaping; increasing obesity rates locally and how Public Health comment on future use in terms of planning applications for takeaways within Darlington; the impact of obesity especially in the disadvantaged areas; Public Health input towards the Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Document; and how the Healthy Lifestyles Survey is completed within schools and if the survey was representative of all schools within the borough.

The Public Health Specialist advised Members that the function of Public Health was to advise on all policies although in relation to planning there were limitations on the Director of Public Health intervention by national legislation.

Members also requested that they receive more specific data, especially in relation to the Healthy Lifestyles Survey compared to national data.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

### **CYP13 CHILDREN'S SERVICES SELF-ASSESSMENT 2022 - OVERVIEW**

The Assistant Director of Children's Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide Members with the Annual Self- Assessment for Children's Services to enable constructive 'critical friend' challenge to take place and drive improvement in public services.

It was reported that Children's Services update each quarter an assessment of social work practice, inclusive of Early Help, based on changes in performance data. To bring the information into a stand-a-lone easy read document an annual self-assessment overview document is completed.

It was highlighted that the aim of the self-evaluation was to answer three questions: What do we know about the quality and impact of social work practice in our local authority; How do we know it; and What are our plans for the next 12 months to maintain or improve practice. The self-assessment is used as part of Ofsted's ILACS Annual Engagement Meeting and plays an important role in their understanding of local authorities and how they work.

Members questioned how progress on quality is measured; how the voice of the Social Workers working with children is captured; and how the authority plan to deal with the future effect of fuel costs on Care Centres and Foster Carers.

The Assistant Director Children's Services acknowledged that the uncertain economic climate

may have an impact on Foster Carers considering their current position and advised that there was work on going with existing carers also for potential barriers due to the economic uncertainty and also as a result of the recent pandemic.

**RESOLVED** – That the report is noted.

#### **CYP14 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Group Director of Operations submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to this Scrutiny Committee's work programme and to consider any additional areas which Members would like to suggest should be included in the previously approved work programme

Councillor Johnson proposed a mid-year review of the Medium Term Financial Plan in relation to Children's Services and Councillor C Hughes suggested that Members review the recent work undertaken by this Scrutiny on the Effects of the Pandemic on our Children and Young People and re-examine the recommendations against progress made to date.

The Democratic Officer advised Members that the Annual report of the Darlington Safeguarding Partnership will now be heard at the ordinary meeting scheduled for 19 December, 2022.

**RESOLVED** – (a) That the work programme be noted.

(b) That a Quad of Aims be produced in line with the previously approved procedure for the suggested additional items to the Work Programme of this Scrutiny Committee.



# Adoption Tees Valley Annual Report 2021-22



“Adopting Sam is the best thing we’ve ever done. He has changed our lives. The house is alive, and life is full of so much fun now. We feel blessed everyday”

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### Glossary

ADM- agency decision maker /Agency Decision  
 PO- Placement Order  
 RAA- Regional Adoption Agency  
 VAA- Voluntary Adoption Agency  
 AO- Adoption Order  
 ASF- Adoption Support Fund  
 VSH- Virtual School Head

## **1. Introduction**

This is the Annual Report of Adoption Tees Valley, which is the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA), for the 5 Local Authority Councils of Darlington; Hartlepool; Middlesbrough; Redcar and Cleveland; and Stockton.

This Annual Report covers the period of 1.4.21 - 31.3.2022.

## **2. Executive Summary**

ATV has continued with slightly lower levels of adoption activity overall within this year, with numbers of children being placed with adoptive parents reducing from 82 in the previous year to 78 in this year. Some Local Authorities have increased numbers of children placed, and adopted, others have reduced. Middlesbrough has seen a continuing rise in the numbers of children placed for adoption. Stockton and Redcar and Cleveland have also had a slight increase compared with the previous year, while Hartlepool and Darlington have seen numbers decrease.

The regional picture is reflected nationally, with fewer children with an adoption plan, and PO, during this year.

The timeliness of moving in with adoptive parents has improved significantly in this year. Adoption Tees Valley has improved on its own timeliness since last year and is better than England average by a considerable margin. ATV has reduced the average time between entering care and becoming moving in with adoptive parents by 27 days – now 383 days, and is 43 days better than the government target, of 426 days. ATV also sits at 62 days better than the England average for this year.

The timeliness of finding a family and matching with adoptive parents has also improved, with ATV having reduced this average timescale by 64 days, to 174 days. Although ATV remains outside of government target timescale, of 121 days, the England average has been 198 days in this year, against which ATV is performing well.

All this means that for many children in this region, we are finding families and helping children to achieve their permanence via adoption more quickly. There are always exceptions, however, for most children there is significant improvement.

Local Authority Decisions that adoption is their “best interests” plan for the child have reduced from 99 to 78, and Placement Orders granted have also reduced from 78 to 74.

A significant legal ruling, the Somerset judgement, has impacted on adoption activity, which is analysed in section 4 below. We know that 14 children were delayed in being matched and placed due to this ruling: the actual number

due to be placed would have exceeded the previous year's placements numbers and been equal to the previous 5 year high.

More children have been placed with ATV approved adopters in this year, and fewer with external Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAA's). 25% of all placements have been external compared with 36 % in the previous year. Of the 19 children placed with external VAA's, almost half have been placed within this region. We continue to seek to find families in, or close to the Tees Valley region. We know this has long term benefits for identity, and for providing timely access to adoption support, from the professional network who know the child.

The number of adoption support assessments have almost doubled this year, from 55 to 106, with a further 94 second and third time assessments, to access therapeutic support from the Adoption Support Fund (ASF). The numbers of children receiving education support from the ATV education support worker has increased to 77.

Adopter approvals are reduced on previous year, from 62 to 46. This is a concerning picture, and further analysis is offered in the section below.

We are proud that our service has been awarded the Coram BAAF Early Permanence Quality Mark in this year, in recognition of meeting the standards and criteria for this award. The feedback was that the ATV submission was a strong bid, and our strategic and operational work was recognised.

ATV was a pilot RAA for the new Adoption Support Audit, being evaluated against criteria in the national Blueprint for Adoption Support. The feedback was positive, with our Education Support service being highlighted as an exemplary strength.

ATV recognises and values the huge contribution that staff across the whole team make to children's lives, and the experiences of adoptive families. Thanks, and recognition go to all of the team members for their work. Also, to the social care workforce across Tees Valley who have worked together on strengthening the service to adopted children, their adoptive families, and birth families.

### **3. Governance**

The RAA is governed by a Board, which comprises the 5 Directors for Children's Services of the 5 Local Authorities within the partnership. There are 2 non-Executive Directors, who were recruited to the Board in 2020, and who are adoptive parents who have adopted through ATV.

The Service Manager for ATV attends all Board meetings and presents information to enable oversight of the performance of the RAA, strategic



direction and operational practice. The Board has a role in being assured of the quality of adoption work in Adoption Tees Valley, and receives information on quality, outcomes, and proposed improvements.

Board meetings are held quarterly. Strategy, performance, finance, and overall delivery of the adoption service are considered at each Board meeting.

The Chair of the Board is Sue Butcher, DCS at Middlesbrough Children's Services, and it is now agreed Chair tenure will be for 2 years.

In each of the 5 LA's there is an Adoption Lead Officer who is responsible for ensuring that the RAA is delivering effective and high quality adoption services for the children in its area. The Adoption Lead Officer is registered with Ofsted. Adoption Leads meet with the Service Manager and Team Managers of ATV monthly.

The Lead Elected Members of the Council with responsibility for Children's Services, for each Local Authority area meet bi-annually with the Board and Service Manager, to oversee the work of ATV, and be kept informed of key developments.

#### **4. Somerset Ruling**

The Somerset Ruling has been a significant legal ruling in relation to adoption cases, which took place in November 2021, and had a significant impact on adoption activity nationally, and locally.

A summary of the issue, as presented by Coram BAAF is outlined below.

On 24 November the High Court handed down a judgement in *Somerset County Council v NHS Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group & Anor* [2021] EWHC 3004(Fam) dealing with the lawfulness of placement orders made in ten separate cases. The court found that the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) had not made the decision that the child should be placed for adoption in accordance with the Adoption Agencies Regulations (AAR) 2005.

It appears that in these cases in Somerset, and possibly in many others, the Agency Medical Adviser had not completed the Child's Permanence Report as required by Regs 15 & 17 of the AAR 2005. She had not given advice on whether the child needed to have a medical examination and had not written a summary of the state of the child's health. In practical terms this omission had very little effect on the making of the ADM's decision, as she had full medical information from the initial health assessment of the child and any medical reports filed during court proceedings. In each case the medical adviser provided a full medical report before the child was matched to prospective adopters, and the local authority believed that this was an effective use of the limited medical advisor's time that they had available.

The Court however found that the breach of the Regulations was so fundamental that it could render the application for a placement order invalid. The ADM did not have a medical qualification to enable her to interpret the medical reports provided and the initial health assessments did not include a comprehensive assessment of the child's future medical needs. The Court therefore considered each of the cases in detail. In each case, the judge was satisfied that the medical adviser would not have requested a further medical examination and would not have expressed a medical opinion that would have undermined the decision that the child should be placed for adoption.

The reach, and impact of the Somerset ruling has had a profound effect nationally and regionally on adoption activity within this year and has led to a significant re-examination of the medical advice provided to Agency Decision Makers (ADM) in coming to their decision that adoption is the Local Authority plan for the child. Specifically, whether the requirements of Adoption Agencies Regulation 15 and 17 (2005) were met in each case. Each of the 5 Local Authorities within the ATV Regional Adoption Agency has reviewed the ADM decisions made and considered whether a revised ADM was required. This issue came to light prior to the end of 2021, however, the final ruling by the most senior Family Division Judge, Sir Andrew McFarlane, was not made until April 2022, providing absolute clarity on how Local Authorities were to act, in relation to any breaches of Adoption Agencies Regulations (2005). An interim ruling was made in February 2022, giving some direction to Local Authorities, and each Local Authority made its own decision as to the legal interpretation and course of action in relation to these cases.

In summary, the key matters of breach of compliance were:

- Medical Advisor summary not provided for the CPR, in respect of regulation 15, and Regulation 17 (AAR 2005). These are in relation to the Agency Medical Advisor decision as to whether an examination of the child, any further reports and examinations are necessary, and a summary on the state of the child's health, provided to the ADM, in the CPR, for the purposes of making the agency decision that adoption will be the child's plan.
- The appointment of the Medical Advisor: The Judge in Somerset raised questions around the appointment of the Medical Advisor, and it was highlighted that Medical Advisors needed to be appointed in their role, although regulations make no specific requirements as to how, and what matters must be followed in appointing them.

ATV worked closely with each Local Authority and sought legal advice for the RAA in relation to the national legal ruling, and local Teesside Courts actions and directions. In total, 67 children were reviewed pre- placement, to clarify the compliance of the ADM, with respect to the Medical Advisor summary, provided in the Child's permanence Report. Local Authorities each followed their own legal advice as to the degree to which they would wait for final ruling, or proceed to revise the ADM, where any breach of compliance was identified. Where the LA did not feel it could proceed until the final Judgement, a case-by-case decision was made in respect of each child, as to how to proceed.

14 children had matches with adoptive parents delayed, awaiting final judgement on how to proceed.



A further cohort of 60 children delayed were those already placed with adoptive parents, but not yet adopted. The Teesside Courts suspended all adoption hearings, awaiting the final president Ruling, to be directed on how to proceed. The likely numbers of children adopted in this year would have been significantly higher than the 78 orders that were granted and are reported.

The impact of the Somerset Judgement was delay for children in either moving in with adoptive parents, or in being adopted from care. Many adoption hearings are taking place in July 2022 when it is hoped that all children will have been adopted, who would have been earlier.

For some children, the LA was able to proceed to place the child through early permanence, thus enabling the child to be placed with their prospective adopters with less delay.

For some children, they were delayed by weeks and months, in being matched with their prospective adopters, and ATV remains in "catch up" for children who have required matching, once the LA ADM has agreed the placement, confirming compliance.

In recovering from the significant workload generated by the Somerset Judgement, it should be noted that in ATV all children have had an adoption medical, carried out by an experienced, and qualified paediatrician, who is a Medical Advisor. In most cases the adoption medical has been conducted prior to the ADM decision, however, the required summary has not always been in place, in the correct format. Adopters have always had the full medical information prior to being matched with a child, and the right family has been selected for children, based on their capacity to meet all needs, including the health needs of the child, as set out in the adoption medical. Additionally, the agency takes seriously the NMS 13.6, whereby prospective adopters are given the opportunity to meet with the medical advisor, prior to matching panel, in order to fully understand the health needs of the child, and future care implications arising from their health needs.

It has been important to review and revise procedures and practice in light of the Somerset Judgement. In Tees Valley, there have been multiple forums, and a number of cross-agency workstreams, to review and revise procedure and practice.

Actions:

- All LA 's have reviewed their procedures, and processes for the making of the Agency Decision, to ensure compliance with AAR (2005) and specifically Regulations 15 and 17.
- All LA 's have formally appointed their Medical Advisor.

- A procedure and process flow chart for Medical Advice, prior to ADM has been drafted and consulted on. This is in place, to guide on requirements for ADM decision making.
- A regional ADM workshop has been held in the NE region, facilitated by Coram BAAF, to assist ADM's with understanding the regulations and case law in relation to ADM role for adoption.
- Each LA has strengthened its position with respect to the Agency Advisor to the ADM.
- Multi agency meeting has taken place with medical advisors, to review requirements, and to consult on matters which impact on achieving the medical advice, in a timely way.
- A multi-agency/multi professional meeting has taken place with the CCG to address capacity issues for Medical Advisors in the Teesside region. Work is underway, to map out a shared process pathway, to account for timescales, and regulatory requirements to meet the health input requirements for adoption, and capacity issues for medical advisors.

## **5. National Adoption Development - Regional Context**

The Government issued the National Adoption Strategy in 2021 [Adoption strategy: achieving excellence everywhere - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/adoption-strategy-achieving-excellence-everywhere), which sets out an overarching strategic vision for adoption, aiming for a consistent England wide offer to children, and families by way of adoption services and support. The RAA Leaders forum is highlighted as the central group for change and development in thematic elements of the strategy. Through the strategic vision, focus is brought to areas of recruitment of adopters; effective timely matching for children; early permanence; adoption support.

ATV, and the ATV Board have maintained strategic and operational focus on the key areas that are outlined in the strategy.

The ATV Strategic Priorities were developed in the context of the national strategy, and were set out in the Biannual report, 2021.

Within this year, the DfE has invested significant funding into the RAA leaders forum, mapped against key workstream areas.

ATV has worked collaboratively with pan regional RAA 's- Adopt North East, and Adopt Coast to Coast, and with regional Voluntary Adoption Agencies to bid for funding for an Early Permanence (EP) Sufficiency Project, which is now underway. The aim of this project is to increase access to, and sufficiency of EP placements for children, through more sharing of prospective adopters who can offer EP, and developments to improve support to EP carers, and birth families.

At the time of writing, further bids are underway for national funding, which have been made within the following financial year, and will be reported on more fully within following reports.

See Adoption Support - section 8 for more national developments in Adoption Support.

## **6. Adoption Activity**

### **6.1 Marketing Campaigns**

There have been key lines of marketing approach this year, supported by 3 campaigns, focussing on attracting more prospective adopters to ATV.

To promote needs, ATV set out 3 clear campaigns in 2021-22:

- **National Adoption Week** (October 21) this campaign focussed on telling the story of adoption through voices less heard such as adopted people, social workers and birth parents. Adoption Tees Valley utilised the national campaign assets alongside regionally generated materials such as blogs, press releases and radio, the campaign featured in the Evening Gazette, Northern Echo and on BBC Tees Radio.
- **“Priority” children campaign** (November 22) Adoption Tees Valley ran a campaign aimed at recruiting more adopters for priority children, in particular sibling groups and those with additional needs. The campaign featured two films with a same sex couple who adopted siblings, one through early permanence and another couple who adopted a child with additional needs having already had a biological child. The campaign was well received and picked up by ITV News, local radio and press.
- **Early permanence campaign** (March 22) -ATV ran a campaign to raise awareness of early permanence, the campaign featured a series of blogs from an adoptive family of 3 children, the adopters was featured in local press and radio Zetland/BBC Tees.

The ATV website ([www.adoptionteesvalley.org.uk](http://www.adoptionteesvalley.org.uk)) is the largest source of enquiries, and enquirers can request a call back, seeking an initial conversation with one of our team to discuss their interest.

This year ATV introduced a new blog area of the website to be able to promote key messages and stories within the adoption area. The RAA also launched an Instagram social media channel. Social media channels remain some of the most successful in the adoption arena with the highest follower numbers.

Enquiries were down compared to 2020-2021. There have been 2 key technical issues which have impacted on the online marketing, and it is felt

both issues impacted on the agency online market position and led to a loss of enquiries. These issues have now been addressed. The marketplace also remains extremely competitive with RAA's and VAA's advertising in the Tees Valley.

Number of ATV recruitment campaigns year to date	3
Number of enquiries arising from campaigns year to date	131
Number of all Adopter enquiries year to date ( all methods )	287
Number of ATV enquiries converted to ROI	61
% of ATV enquiries converted to ROI	22%
Number of adoptive families attending information events	123
Social media followers	11,724
Website visits	16,819

## 6.2 Recruitment and Assessment of Adopters

	Total 2020-21	Q1-Q2 2021-22	Q3-Q4 2021-22	Total 2021-22
Initial Visits to prospective Adopters	92	36	35	71 down 22%
Stage 1 Starts	63	24	22	46 down 26%
Stage 2 Starts	62	25	27	52 down 16%
Adopter Approvals	62	24	22	46 down 25%
Numbers in assessment at the end of the period	40	34	39	Down 2.5%
Numbers waiting to be matched at end of period	36	21	29	N/A
Timescale S1 (Govt target 60 days)	93	97	106	Up 12% England average- whole year period 121 days
Timescale S2	127	134	146	Up 14%

(Govt target 121 days)				England average- whole year period 146 days
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Although marketing overall has been strengthened, recruitment activity has seen a decline over the last year, compared with the previous year. The impact on enquiry levels is noted above.

Further analysis highlights a number of key factors but is mostly associated with the impact of the pandemic as it has progressed, coupled with economic factors for people wanting to adopt.

The service initially saw an increase in numbers of people interested in, and wanting to adopt a child, during year 1 of the pandemic.

ATV has had a decrease by 26% of people wanting to commence an assessment in this year, and a 25% decrease in numbers of adopters approved.

Nationally, the figure is a decrease on previous year of 4%, however, a lesser drop than in the Teesside region.

Adopters in assessment at the end of the year, compared with the previous year has remained very similar (39, c/w 40). Taking account of 40 already in assessment at the end of the previous year, it is evident that a number of adopters have not concluded the assessment process and have dropped out. The service saw a higher number than expected of adopters either withdrawing, or not progressing to stage 2 for several reasons. The service remains committed to generating families for children who are suitable and ready to adopt, and reflection of applicants during the pandemic is that a higher number of people started the process but did not conclude.

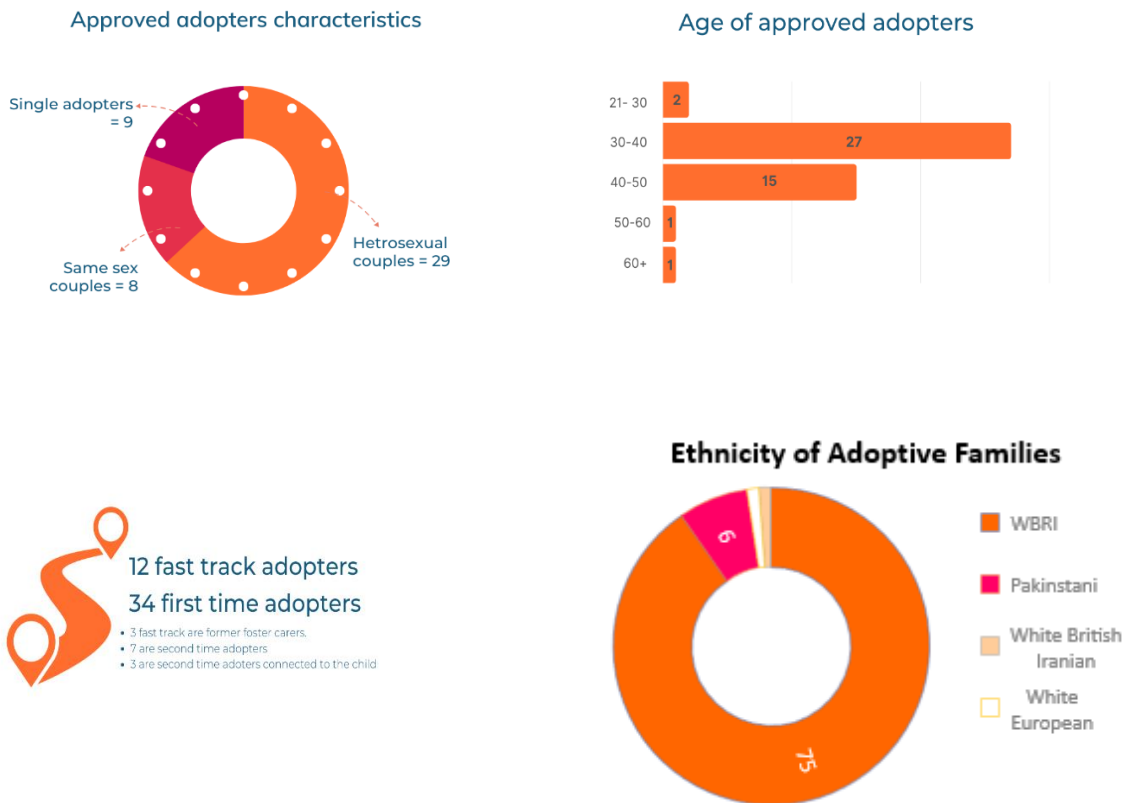
There was a reduction in numbers of adopters waiting to be matched with children during this year, with more progressing to match. Of the approved adopters waiting many have been readily available, and matched with Tees Valley children, resulting in a reduced pressure on the external agency budget at the end of this financial year.

Timescales for stage 1 and stage 2 assessments have been longer than is aimed for, and longer than government targets. However, the ATV timescales are better than England average. There have been 3 cases which have skewed timescale average figures, for reasons understood by the service, which include circumstances of an adopter family, and transfer of cases due to staff sickness in ATV.

Difficulties in obtaining adult health reports from GP's have impacted on the timescales for assessment, in a significant number of cases, pushing some approvals into the following year. A small number of GP practices have

been very difficult to work together with, around achieving the adult adopter medical. The service has used the Safeguarding GP to raise the profile and impact awareness for delays in adopter medicals, however, this issue remains problematic.

### Demographics of adopters approved



Of fast-track adopters - 3 are former foster carers of the child, 7 are second time adopters, 3 are second time adopters who are connected to the child, having adopted an older sibling.

#### Key successes:

- Improved recruitment activity towards the latter part of the year.
- More ATV adopters being matched with children, reducing pressure on ATV budget.

#### Key Challenges

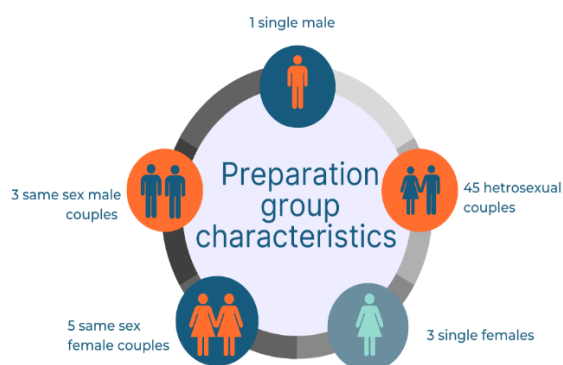
- Adopter approval numbers have reduced this year, and more are required to meet Tees Valley children's needs.
- Work with GP practices has been challenging.
- Timescales for assessment have therefore been impacted.

- Achieving adopters for the range of children and needs of children has been challenging.
- There has been a reduction in EP carers approved in this year.
- More adopters of different ethnicities required

### 6.3 Preparation to Adopt Training

7 Preparation to Adopt Training courses were delivered, each comprising 4 days.

A total of 57 family units attended preparation training.



The content of the course is regularly reviewed to reflect new research and learning from practice. Adopter feedback is sought after each course and is used to inform any changes to the content or to the experience for applicants.

#### *Early Permanence preparation training*

In addition to the standard preparation to Adopt Training, a total of 3 additional Early Permanence (EP) training programmes were run.

The service originally commenced EP training over a half day period with applicants. However, following review of practice, and preparation for prospective adopters, it was decided to develop ATV practice in line with the Coram BAAF programme. Two of ATV social workers have now undertaken the Coram BAAF "Train the Trainers" programme, and the 2 day course is now the standard training offer for ATV Early Permanence Carers.

12 families have undertaken the EP training course within this year.

#### *Friends and Family Training*

Friends and Family Training is a new development in the year 2021-22 and is a short addition to the Preparation to Adopt programme, delivered by one of

the ATV social workers. The aim of the course is to support the network of adoptive parents, through giving them an introduction to the needs of children and parenting concepts delivered to the adoptive parents.

A total of 9 courses were delivered in the year and a total of 120 friends and family of adoptive parents attended

*Some feedback from attendees:*

*I feel much more aware of the process the adopters are going through and how I might support them through this. I am confident that this is going to be a positive experience and I'm really looking forward to welcoming a child into our family. I feel that I have increased my awareness of the issues and barriers that children who are adopted may face and how to support the adopter in parenting.*

*I wasn't aware that there would be, where possible contact with the birth parents. Which when explained that it was helpful for the needs of the child being placed made perfect sense.*

*It has really enabled me to see the process that the adopters/friends will be going through and the difficult things that they will face, helping me to be more aware of the support that they will need through the journey that they are embarking on.*

#### 6.4 Children Referred

	Q1&Q2	Q3 &Q4	Full Year	
Early Notifications 2019-20	88	76	164	
Early Notifications 2020-21	98	97	195	19% increase
Early Notifications 2021-22	77	102	179	8% decrease on previous year

#### 6.5 Referrals by Local Authority

Year	DBC	HBC	MBC	R&CBC	SBC	TV
2020-21	26	28	58	31	52	195
2021-22	27	15	61	37	39	179

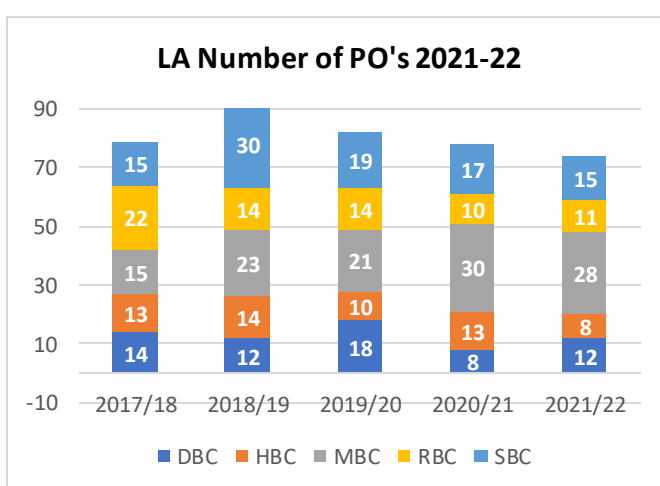
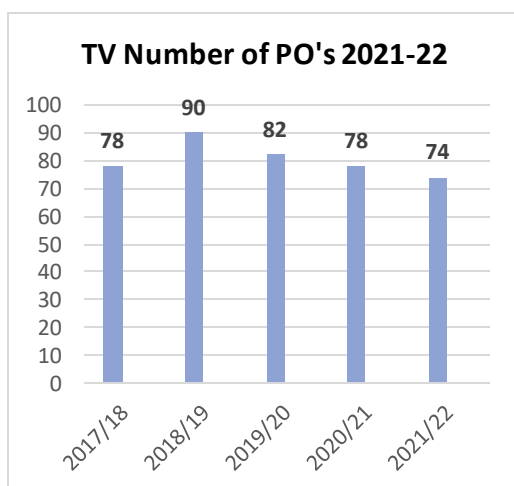
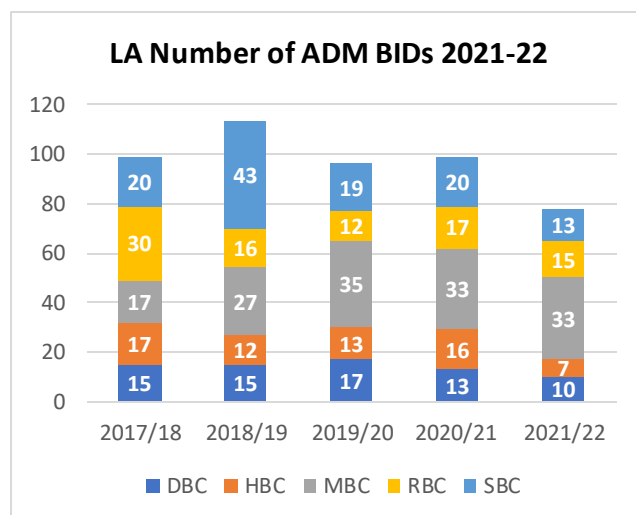
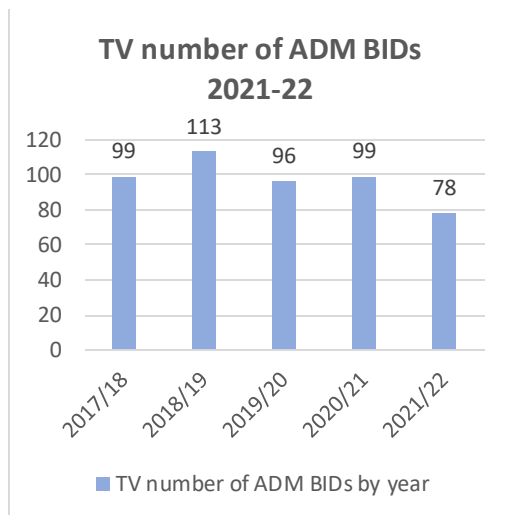


A notable increase in referrals from Redcar and Cleveland, and a small increase from Middlesbrough, while Hartlepool and Stockton saw a drop in referrals, within the reporting period. Darlington remain at similar levels.

Approximately 60 % of children referred go on to have an adoption plan. The Service monitors the children referred to enable active family finding from the earliest possible point in time.

**6.6 Agency Decisions that Adoption is the child's plan (ADM) and Placement Orders (PO)**

	ADM ATV	ADM National		PO ATV	PO National	
<b>2020-21</b>	99	3840		78	3027	
<b>2021-22</b>	78	3316		74	2846	
<b>Inc/Dec</b>	-21 %	-14%		-5%	-6%	

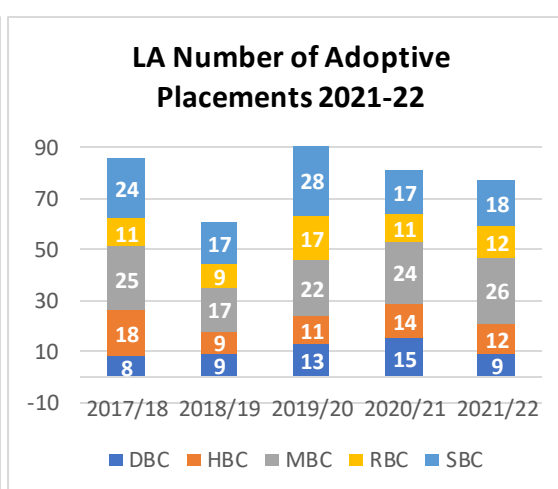
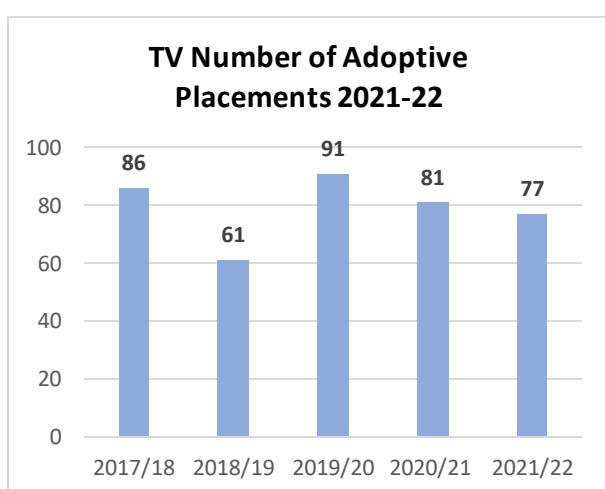


Agency Decisions that adoption is the child's plan, and Placement Orders granted, decreased both nationally, and regionally, compared with the

previous year. The Somerset ruling is a factor which had some impact in the final quarter of the year, with Courts granting fewer PO's while the outcome of the ruling was awaited. ADMs were also impacted as the Local Authority decision makers were required to be fully confident on compliance of health information, for the ADM decision. Even accounting for this temporary delay, there is some reduction in adoption activity, which may be accounted for by an overall reduction in children looked after, and greater numbers progressing to placement within family, via SGO.

### 6.7 Children Matched and Placed

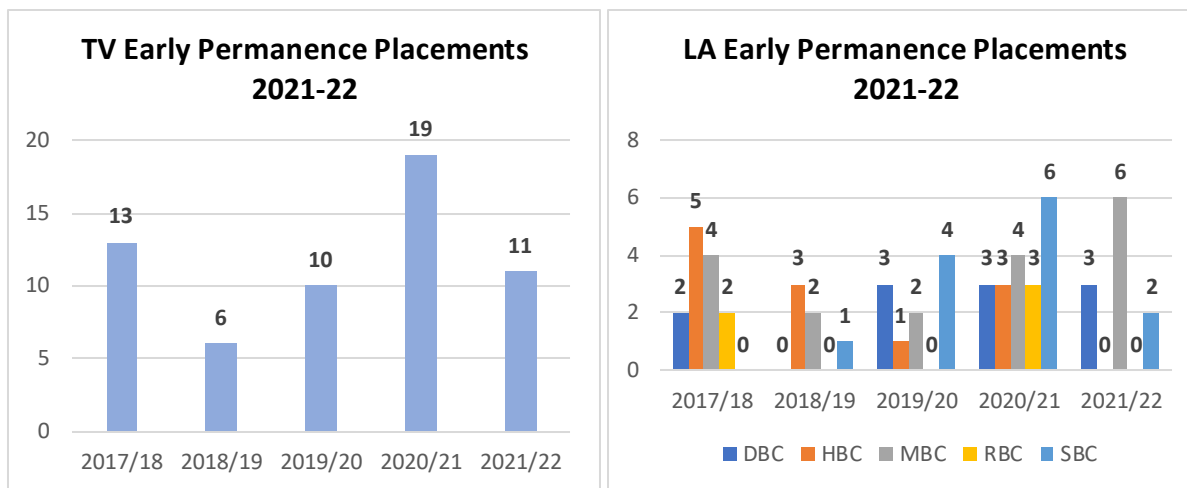
	Totals 2020-21	2021-22 Q1 and Q2	2021-22 Q2 and Q3	2021-22 Totals
ATV children placed with ATV adopters	52	44	14	58
ATV Children placed with external adopters	30	12	7	19
External children placed with ATV adopters	2	0	0	0
<b>Total ATV children placed</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Total placements</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>77</b>



Placements of children for adoption are reduced by 7% within this year. This figure is impacted by the Somerset ruling, with a number of children being delayed into placement, pending the final Somerset ruling.

A positive factor is that there were 10 less external placements in the year, with 58 children placed with ATV adopters, compared with 52 in the previous year.

### 6.8 Early Permanence



Early permanence has been an area of continued national and regional development. The service manager chairs the national Early Permanence Working Group, which is a strategic forum taking forward national development, across the RAA and VAA sector, building on the best practice, and utilising research and data analysis to seek greater consistency in the offer across England.

Nationally, there is a greater exploration of Early Permanence, Fostering for Adoption (FFA) and Concurrent Planning Placements (CPP) . Practice behind EP, including work with care planning social work teams, and fostering services is underway.

ATV has begun to experience cases where a child placed for EP has been reunified with parents following full assessments and Court determination of the final plan. Through these cases, ATV has learned that more support is needed for EP carers generally, and most especially where a child they have been caring for may be re-unified. The service was able to access some very timely help from the South West region, to implement an EP support group, however, this area will require strengthening moving forward.

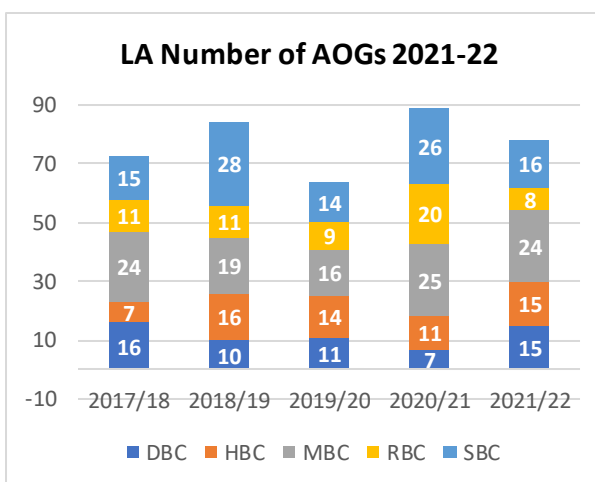
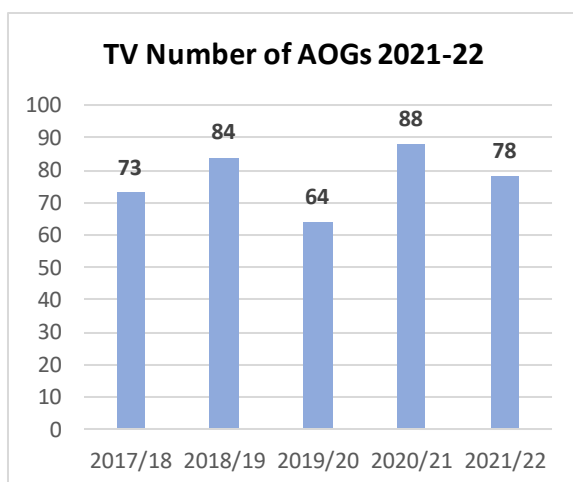
The regional EP Sufficiency project is tasked with addressing EP support to carers across the region.

One impact of children re-unifying is that the service has had a drop in adopters wishing to undertake EP and the managers of the service have needed to address some of these impacts- taking a step back, before revising plans to progress the Early Permanence Strategy Phase 2. The service has strengthened and reviewed its own practice, in line with learning, and practice guidance from other areas.

- The Preparation and support to EP carers has been strengthened
- The service is clearer about the fostering task, and out come possibility of reunification from the outset with all carers
- The Team manager for Recruitment now has a monthly forum with Fostering Managers
- The service is delivering positive messages about birth parents, and positives of children being able to live with birth parents, as a core message from Information Evenings onwards
- More adopters are able to contribute to EP preparation, as we deliver more of these placements.
- An adopter led support group is available to EP carers.
- A leaflet for birth parents is available on the website.
- The service is planning more work with Workforce development teams across the region, to embed EP as a learning module for social workers.

### 6.9 Adoption Orders Granted

	DBC	HBC	MBC	R & CBC	SBC	Total
<b>2020-21</b>	7	10	25	20	26	88
<b>2021-22</b>	15	15	24	8	16	78



Adoption Orders were lower, with a high number being delayed due to Courts not granting the final order, until the out come of the Somerset ruling. Adoption orders were down by 11% on the previous year. There was notable variation in the levels of adoption activity in each of the Local Authorities. Of note is that Redcar and Cleveland saw a significant decrease in numbers of Adoption Orders granted, from 20 to 8. Stockton also saw a decrease from 26 to 16 over the 2 years. Darlington and Hartlepool saw significant increase in numbers of children adopted from the previous year, with both having 15 children adopted. Middlesbrough dropped by one.

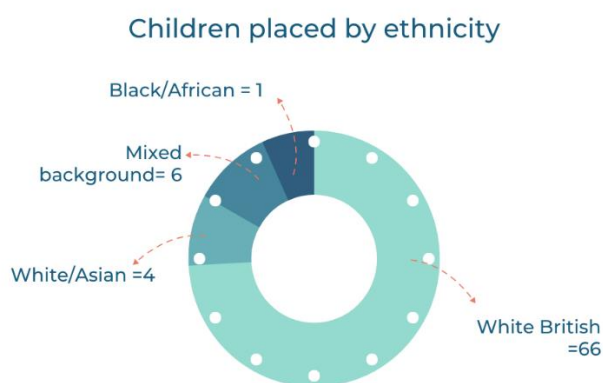
## 6.10 Characteristics of children

### *Age at the time of moving in with the adoptive family*

0-12 months	1-2 yrs.	2-3 yrs.	3-4 yrs.	4-5 yrs.	5+ yrs.
46	12	8	5	4	2
60%	15%	10%	7%	5%	3%

The majority of children who moved in with their adoptive family in this period were under 12 months, and 75% were under 3 years.

### *Ethnicity of Children Placed*



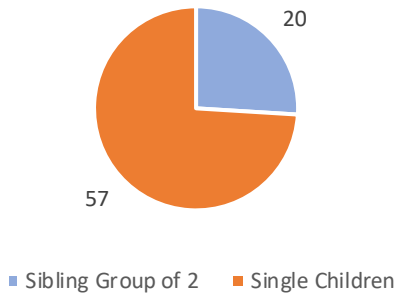
86 % of children who have moved into their adoptive family are of white British backgrounds. Of children with minority ethnic heritage, there is a range of backgrounds, with no predominant minority ethnic group for children requiring adoption.

Of the 11 children who were of minority ethnic background, 7 were placed with prospective adoptive parents of similar/same ethnicity, while the remaining 4 children were placed with white British adoptive parents. Where possible, the RAA will seek to match with adopters of a similar racial and ethnic background to the child, taking account that some children have mixed ethnicity, with one white parent. Matching takes account of how white parents will promote the needs of a black child, including opportunity for social family and community links with black children and families, and ways in which adopters will actively seek to help the child with their identity.

This is an area for continued focus, see Panel Chair summary.

### *Siblings/Additional needs*

### Children Placed



In this year, 57 children (74%) were placed as single children, and a further 20 children (26%) were placed in a sibling group of 2. There were no larger siblings groups placed within this year.

### Gender

38 children placed were male, and 39 were female

#### Children placed by gender



### 6.11 Children waiting with a PO, not placed as of 31.3.22

38 children had a PO and were not yet placed on that date.

35 of these children had a clear link, and were proceeding to match, with some children proceeding to match with their foster carers, who wished to adopt them.

2 children were awaiting a revocation of the PO, due to change in circumstances.

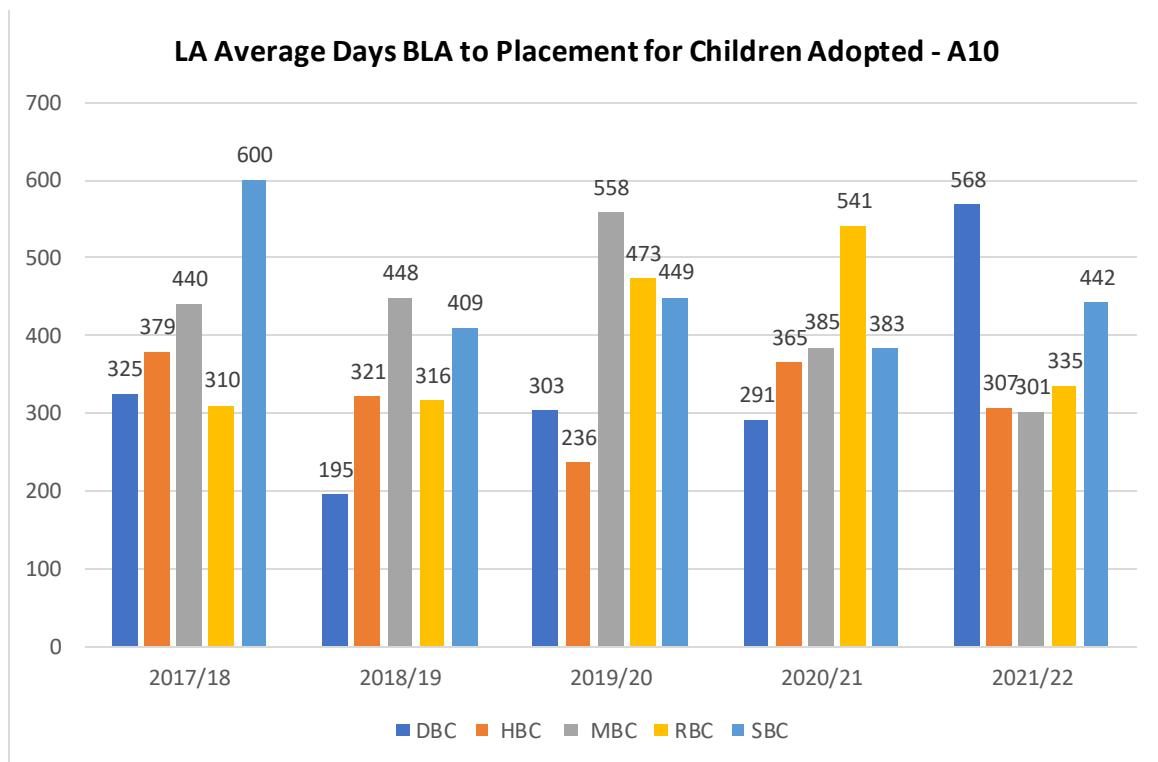
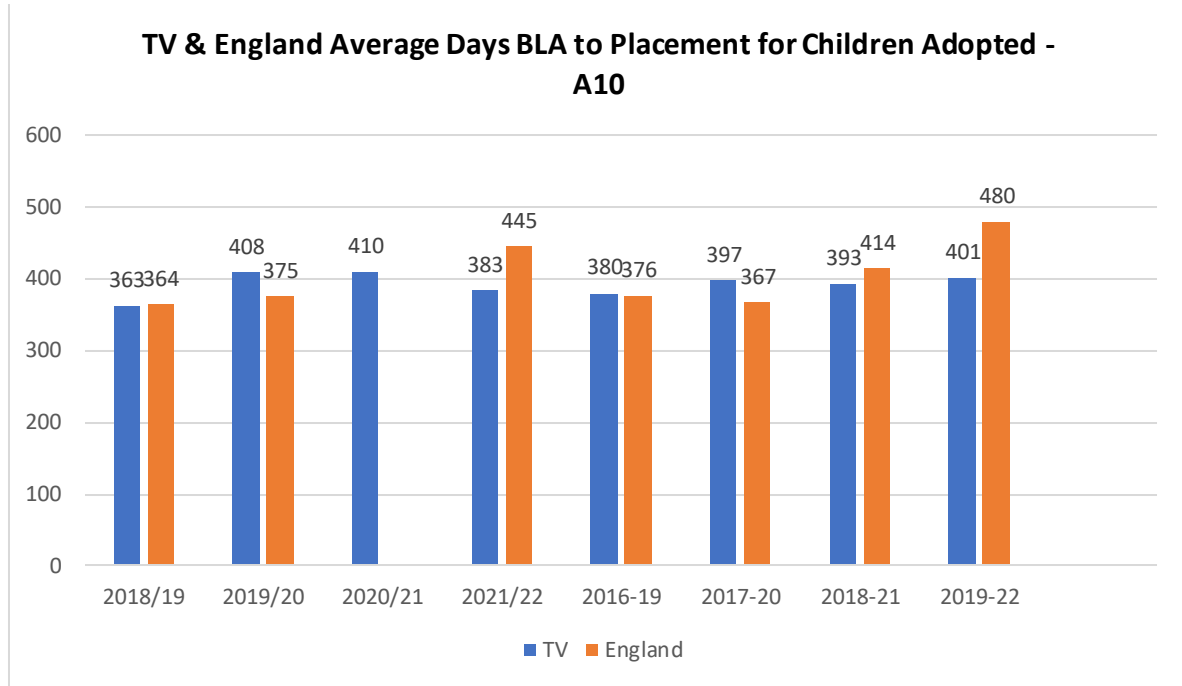
1 child was unlinked.

ATV has steadily improved the outcomes for children, once the PO is granted, through earlier family finding, and linking work. It is a huge success to be working with a very small number of children, for whom a family has not been identified by the time the PO is granted.

### 6.12 Children's timescales for adoption

Children's timescales are calculated for children adopted in that year. The total figure for adopted children is 78, broken down by local Authority, as in section 6.9 above.

#### Became looked after to moving in with adoptive parents (A10) (days)



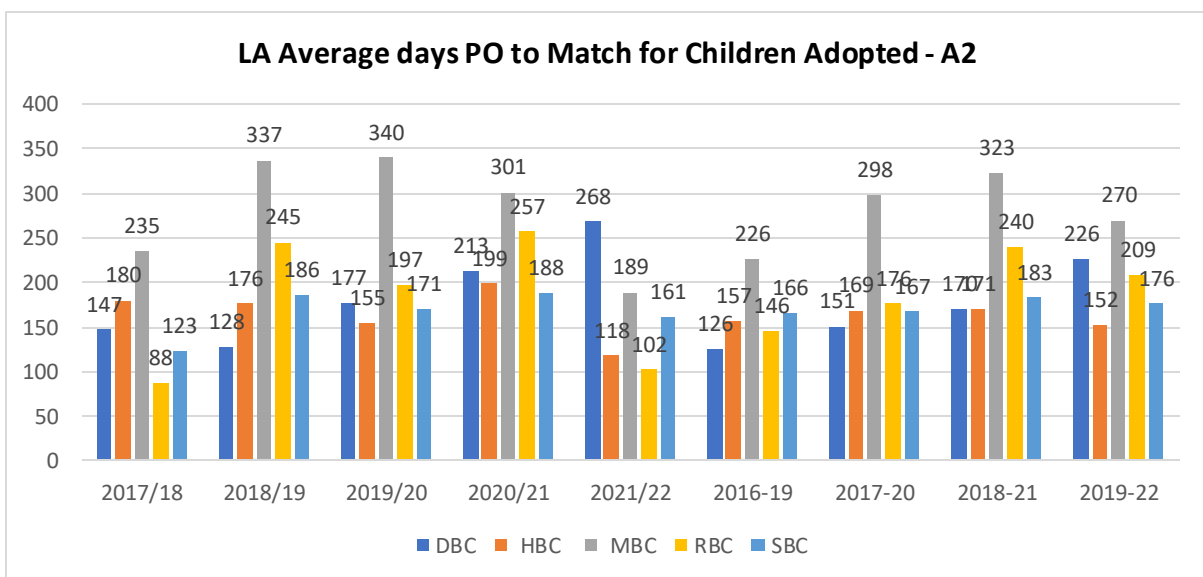
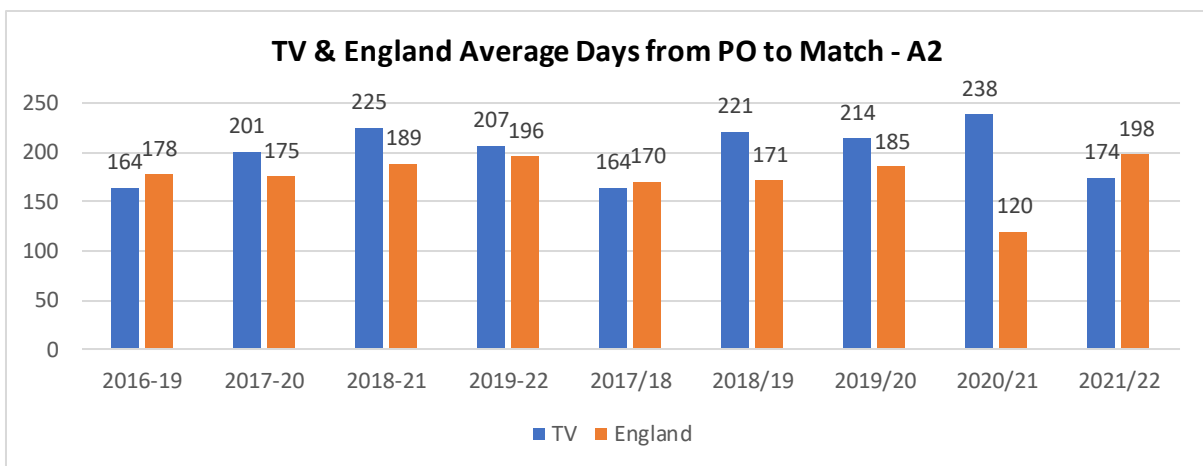
Timeliness for children to find and move in with their adoptive family has significantly improved this year, and ATV is performing well ahead of the

national average in this year. ATV has reduced the average timescale by 27 days and is 62 days under the England average. The government target timescale is 426 days, so ATV is currently well ahead of this.

This is reflective of strengthened work embedding early notifications and early family finding for children. It is recognised that this year there are fewer children with complex needs who have been adopted, with a smaller number overall of siblings and children over age 5, which will also impact on timeliness.

Considering each Local Authority, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland have all seen improvement and a reduction in this timescale within the year, while Darlington and Stockton have had on average longer waiting times. In each Local Authority, the circumstances of the child are understood, with siblings forming the children for whom timescales have been longer, sometimes related to legal proceedings.

**Placement Order to Match (A2) (days)**





The timeliness of matching a child with adopters following court authorisation to place (Placement Order) has also improved significantly this year, with ATV average reducing from 238 days to 174 days- a reduction of 64 days. England average in this year was 198 days: ATV has operated at 24 days below England average. Looking at the individual Local Authorities, only Darlington has had a higher day count, while all other LA's have a reduced PO to match timescale, and Redcar and Cleveland, Middlesbrough and Hartlepool showing significantly reduced timescales in this year. This is a significant improvement for ATV, and partners and is indicative of embedding the Information sharing protocol, and work to family find and plan matching at earlier stages. It is also indicative of fewer children in the "Priority" group, in this current year, as outlined in section 6.10 Characteristics of Children placed. Government target timescales are 121 days, and ATV and partners will continue to work on earlier permanence for children, through earlier family finding.

### **6.13 Disruptions**

There has been 1 disrupted placement this year, prior to the making of an adoption order. A disruption meeting was held with key stakeholders for learning, across the Agency, and Local Authority, and to inform the child's future plan, and needs. ATV has held an all staff learning event, taking account of this disruption, and previous disruptions, from previous years.

## **7. Adoption Panel**

ATV has welcomed Karen Simmons, as a new Independent Panel Chair in this year. Karen started with the service following the retirement of Sue Holton, one of the initial Independent Chairs. Karen is an experienced care planning senior manager, having previously worked as Assistant Director in a NE Local Authority. She brings a wealth of relevant adoption knowledge, and knowledge of Local Authorities, and regionalisation of adoption.

An Adoption panel Chair report has been produced by one of the Independent Chairs, in consultation with the other Independent Chair, and with Vice Chair, as required by Adoption National Minimum Standards (2014) 17.2.

The full report is made available to the Board at ATV; the Managers and staff of the service; panel members.

This report is for second period of the year 1.10.21-31.3.22

Data reported within the panel chairs report is detailed within the information above and will not be repeated.

The chair reports as follows:

There are 27 Central List members, with 5 new members in this period, and 1 member resignation. All new central list members have had induction into the role of panel, and their contribution, and to the Agency.

- Over this reporting period, the Agency undertook a consultation exercise with key stakeholders to review the potential for face-to-face Panels to resume. Following further deliberation, the Agency has elected to continue with Virtual Panels and will review this position in September 2022.

While it is recognised that face to face Panels may provide Panel members with the opportunity to consolidate working relationships and for applicants to have direct contact with Panel, this is agreed to be outweighed by benefits of Virtual Panels. The advantages of Virtual Panels are seen to be the accessibility of Virtual Panels for applicants and prospective adopters who may be at some distance to the Agency, and to placing social workers. Panels have also benefitted from the presence of Medical Advisers, whose regular attendance has been supported by the use of Virtual Panels.

There has been no interruption to Panel business due to technical or internet access issues. The quality of discussion between Panel members and attendees is not reported to have been impeded through virtual Panels. To mitigate risks to Panel business, applicants are prepared by ATV social workers to use Teams before Panel. Panel prepare and agree questions for applicants which are shared with them in advance of Panel.

Panel business runs smoothly with all relevant paperwork provided in advance. Panel minutes are available promptly for Panel members' oversight. The process of authorising the Panel minutes has now been amended so that the final Panel minutes is always signed off by the Panel Chair.

- The quality of CPRs is seen to be inconsistent, ranging from very good examples to poor. One particularly good example of a CPR has been identified which was comprehensive in its content and used clear accessible language which was considered to be helpful in later life for the child to make sense of their journey.

Where CPRs were seen to be of good quality, there was a clear explanation of the child's journey, consideration of birth parents' circumstances and those of siblings and an understanding of the child's experience of being cared for. There were strong examples of where the child 'came to life' from the page with a good description of them as individual children.

- The quality of APRs and matching documentation was generally seen as being of good quality with a clear articulation of the steps taken by all stakeholders when a match is under consideration and a clear rationale consistently provided to support a match. The evidence in the APRs confirmed that the matching process works well with the involvement of the

Agency's Medical Adviser, use of a Chemistry Visit and planning through Matching and Selection meetings. The oversight of a link social worker from ATV is seen as being critical to ensure the smooth running of matching arrangements and the quality of matching documentation for external matches.

The use of the Adoption Support Plan in its new format has been well received and provides a clear view to Panel about support to be made available to children and prospective adoptive families at the point of matching. The view of the Panel Chairs is that APRs would benefit from specific evidence of an assessment of the child's needs in their prospective adoptive family so that it is clear how the Adoption Support Plan is to meet these.

Panel feedback was that APRs be explicit particularly in transcultural and transracial matches about how the identify and cultural needs of the adopted child are to be promoted.

There appears to be a blanket approach regarding the frequency of Letterbox contact with it often being set at twice per year regardless of the likelihood of this being successful. Further consideration is required in APRs on an individual case basis about the reasons behind proposals regarding Letterbox contact.

In terms of Early Permanence, the best examples include the matching and decision-making documents to provide clarity regarding the initial matching considerations relating to the Early Permanence arrangement. It is proposed that all matches where there has been an Early Permanence arrangement include the decision-making documents which agreed the initial placement.

- Prospective Adopters Reports are generally received by Panel as being of a high quality with a sound assessment of prospective adopters' strengths and vulnerabilities.

Strong examples of those seen were where evidence in the PAR was explicitly triangulated with third party information particularly personal referees. The only area for improvement identified was for consistency in terms of style with reports being a standard set that reports are succinct and avoid repetition from one section to another.

## **Thematic strengths and areas for improvement for ATV Panel Business and Management of Panel**

### **Strengths**

- Panel is well organised with Panel paperwork made available to Panel members in a timely way
- The Panel benefits from child focused Panel members from a wide range of backgrounds.
- Panels are quorate with no delays to Panel business
- The quality of assessment and decision making for children has been positive over this last reporting period.

- There are good examples of early permanence and sustained efforts to match children to meet their diverse needs including appropriate use of external matches
- The Panel have appreciated the knowledge and expertise the team manager group have brought to Panel when acting as Panel Advisers. It is anticipated that a dedicated Panel Adviser role will bring consistency to the quality assurance of documents to Panel and Panel's own quality assurance function.

### Areas for Development

- Regular quarterly meetings between the Panel Chairs and ATV's ADM to strengthen communication and their respective quality assurance roles
- Although the Agency has continued to successfully recruit to the Central List, further recruitment is planned to achieve a diverse Panel membership including members who are care experienced
- Strengthening the Quality Assurance role of Panel through a specific Quality Assurance item on the agenda of each Panel meeting
- Joint training between Panel members and ATV to develop joint understanding of Panel's quality assurance function.
- Observation of Panel by Local Authority ADMs to provide assurance.

## 8. Adoption Support

Adoption support is a key strategic priority, both nationally through the National Adoption Strategy, and locally, through the agreed ATV board strategic priorities.

Adoption Tees Valley continues to operate the 3 Tier model of Adoption Support

**Tier 1** is universal support which includes:

- a post adoption support plan for all new children placed, as recommended by the Adoption UK Adoption Barometer report (2020)
- One year post order adoption support from the named social worker
- paid for access to the Adopter Hub (PACT UK) for all new prospective adopters, through matching and placement, until the Adoption order is granted.
- Engagement events such as support groups, and activity days
- Monthly ATV newsletter
- Access to the closed facebook group for ATV adoptive parents, and prospective adopters, with up to date local information around activities, benefits and information on adoption
- Facilitation of all indirect contact via letterbox arrangements

**Tier 2** Targeted support, relevant to the level of need:

- Therapeutic Parenting courses, as detailed below

- Access to Education support from the ATV Education Support Worker
- Support for Letter box contact where requested
- Some direct facilitation of contact between adopted children and birth family members

**Tier 3** Support accessed through an adoption support assessment completed by a qualified and experienced adoption support social worker, addressing higher levels of need:

- Assessment for therapeutic intervention, accessed through the ASF
- Allocation of a social worker, either as a single qualified worker for the family, or as part of a multi-disciplinary team, working across multiple agencies (e.g. LA/CAMHS)
- Adoption allowances, which are paid by the relevant local Authority

## 8.1 Adoption Support Audit

In February 2022 ATV was invited to be a pilot RAA for a new Adoption Support Audit, geared at helping the national system co-ordinate a consistent and unified framework for evaluating adoption support, examining strengths of the ATV RAA offer, and those areas for development.

ATV Service Manager, Adoption Support team, and the ATV Board welcomed the opportunity to be involved in this audit, as it offers an independent assessment and evaluation of the ATV offer, against the "Blueprint for Adoption Support".

Overall, feedback has been positive with many areas of strength identified. In particular, the ATV Education Support offer, delivered by a skilled and experienced educationalist, funded by the collective of 5 Virtual Schools (VS) in Tees Valley, was identified as exemplary. The Auditor felt this element of the ATV offer demonstrated an innovative use of the VS funding for previously looked after children, and through the interview with the Education Support Worker, and evidence provided, the impact of Education Support was able to be positively evaluated.

An area of development is for more strategic partnership working with health. This has been debated at the ATV Board following discussion on the audit findings, and there are now plans underway for a Strategic Board to oversee multi-disciplinary work between Children's Services and Strategic Health, in relation to Children in Our Care, and Adopted Children.

An action plan has been developed following the Audit, which is being progressed through ATV, with partner Local Authorities, and in dialogue with services contributing to an adoption support offer.

### **Future National Strategic Developments in Adoption Support**

- The national RAA system is currently working with the ASF to develop a nationally agreed outcomes framework for adoption support. A pilot is underway, testing out models of outcome measures. It is intended that the benefits to the child and family of any funded therapeutic input will be able to be evaluated, which will impact on evaluation of quality and impact of service delivery by providers.
- The ASF has been confirmed for the next 3 years, and a new method for agreeing funding has been implemented, with all work being invoiced in arrears.
- The Department for Education has confirmed funding via the Spending Review for future delivery of a programme of Centres for Excellence, which are multi-disciplinary teams centred around RAA's, delivering a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary connected adoption support offer for children and families. The 2 pilot Centres for Excellence, in One Adoption West Yorkshire, and Adoption Counts were positively evaluated in the e cory's third evaluation of RAA's. It is anticipated that funding criteria will be rolled out in Autumn 2022, and ATV will seek to maximise opportunities to work in partnership to promote multi-disciplinary working.

## **8.2 Developments in Adoption Support ATV**

Reported at the last annual report was a decline in numbers of assessments completed, and a slight reduction in drawn down funds from the ASF, to provide therapeutic support to adopted children, those placed for adoption, and their families.

A further challenge for the service was the long waiting lists for access to an adoption support assessment, which could be several months.

Development over this period:

- Waiting lists have been addressed through a review and re-structure of the adoption support assessment process. A new 2-hour adoption support assessment is booked and completed via telephone, by one of the adoption support social workers, following any enquiry, or duty referral. These assessments are booked with the adoptive parent, and provide an adoption support assessment within 10 days, which enables gathering of the required information on which to submit an application to the ASF, and consideration of any tier 1 or tier 2 provision which can be offered, to the family without delay. Allocation to a

social worker remains a challenge, in some cases, however, the new process is enabling the Adoption Support Manager to assess all new cases and prioritise accordingly.

- Development of direct work with children and young people has been subject to re-focus over this year. In December 2021 the ATV Board agreed an increase in resource for dedicated adoption support workers (none social work qualified). The service has been able to build on some project work undertaken during 2020-21 with a group of young people, and a film was made around their experiences in education during 2021. The service has now appointed 2 further full-time adoption support workers and has been able to dedicate the equivalent of 0.5 FTE post to direct work with children. The project is managed by one of the Assistant Team Managers, Di Cox.
- The service has continued to build on the delivery of therapeutic parenting groups, and tier 1 groups which are available to all adopters. The service has partnered with the Sage Gateshead, to bring the “Loud and Clear” music project to ATV, with weekly music sessions taking place for pre-school children and their parents.

### 8.3 Adoption Support -Referrals and Assessments

	2020-21	2021-22	
Number of adoption support referrals	83	106	
Access to Files requests/completed	36	40	
Adoption Support Assessments completed	55	106 +94 repeated assessments	(Repeat assessments not reported previous year)
Successful application to ASF	166	200	
Unsuccessful application to ASF	0	0	
Value of applications to ASF	£637,551 + £70,965 Covid	£718,302	
Education Support Cases during year	59	77	

Number of Post Box Contract Agreements	279	956 *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Methodology for measures have changed within the year. Now reported- new letterbox contracts set up.</li> </ul>
Birth parent Support Referrals		42	
Children returned to Local Authority care Following Adoption order granted		6 ( all older children/teenagers)	Information has not been reported previously.

New adoption support assessments have almost doubled on the previous year, and the data now includes those children and families where a second or third assessment has been undertaken, for further funding application to the ASF.

The picture is that many children require a further period of therapy, and this means that ATV remain involved, overseeing review of the therapeutic input, and any further social work support, or involvement that is required.

The service has addressed challenges around delays in families being able to access an adoption support assessment, through an initial assessment, which meet statutory requirements. This early assessment enables consideration of services which can be offered more quickly. Crucially, this allows the application for therapy to be made to the ASF at an earlier stage.

On 31.3.22 there were 20 families awaiting allocation for an adoption support assessment, however, at the time of writing this has reduced to 0 families waiting, which is a significant achievement for the Adoption Support Service, and of course for families. Allocation to a social worker, where required may take longer, however, initial involvement, and an offer of some additional support is enabled more quickly.

Challenges remain in relation to access to wider supports which are not available within ATV, and which are accessed through the Local Authority in which the family live, or from health and third sector providers.

During the year there were 28 children also open to local Authorities, either in Child in need or Child protection teams. A further 15 children were open to CAMHS services, or have been during this year.



The service is working towards a more integrated approach to adoption support, to prevent family breakdown, and the long term impact on children and young people, and their families, where needs are not met, and support is not provided in a timely way.

In this year, although just one child had a disruption prior to adoption order, there were 6 older young people whose adoption placement broke down, and who returned to the care of the Local Authority. These children are being reviewed, to analyse factors which impacted on their breakdown, which will inform future multi-agency work.

#### *Adopter Hub*

The service has continued the contract with the Adopter Hub, which is an on line resource and support service delivered by PACT UK. The service originally commissioned this service through covid funding in 2020-21. The Adopter Hub has now been integrated into preparation and support of adopters, with specialist and up to date webinars and information on a range of relevant topics for adoption and caring for adopted children. The service commissions 200 licenses, and adopters paid membership commences from the start of stage 1 and is ended at a time when there is a need to enable more new applicants to register.

#### *Newsletter and ATV Facebook*

The service provides a monthly newsletter for adopters, which was positively fed back on in the survey of adoptive parents, 2021.

The service has a closed facebook site for adoptive parents registered with ATV, which is a further source of disseminating information, resources, information about events, and general adoption updates.

### **8.4 Therapeutic Providers- Commissioned services**

ATV has operated a providers List, for therapeutic input since 2019. The commissioning strategy is to achieve better outcomes and quality of intervention, through a procurement and commissioning process.

The Framework was opened up again for additional Providers in 2021, and a further 3 providers were awarded Preferred provider status.

The framework is now due for a full re-tender, and this process has commenced.

### **8.5 Therapeutic parenting and Supporting the Sensory needs of children**

These are targeted towards families who may need additional support to assist with attachment and emotional needs, including behaviours which bring challenge to parenting, and for the child.

Providers on the Framework have been invited to deliver group therapeutic parenting training.

The following group sessions have been delivered, funded via ASF:

- Nurturing Attachments – a 3 day programme, following the Kim Golding DDP model delivered by the Kim Golding Foundation. This was attended by 3 families.
- Future Stars Sensory integration – a 10 week programme for parents and children, to support sensory development and integration. A total of 5 families attended.
- Non Violent Resistance Training for parents who have experienced violence or threats from children placed. This is a 10 week programme, aimed at helping parents to share, reflect and learn around the communication needs of their child, and support to reduce the dynamic of violence. The programme is delivered by a trained therapeutic leader, who is also an adoptive parent. This programme has run twice in ATV in this period, providing help to 19 families.

## 8.6 Education Support

As detailed above, Education Support service is seen as a significant strength of the Adoption Support offer at ATV.

77 families have received a service from the Education Support Worker, many of whom also are “open” to the Adoption Support team for tier 3 services.

Leanne Albesson, Education Support Worker highlights:

Education support has been very much about raising awareness of the needs of the adopted children and highlighting the impact of early trauma, which adopted children have experienced in many cases.

There have been 8 cases where the children successfully changed education provision to one which has a greater understanding and can meet their needs, and families feel supported.

There were 9 cases where after support intervention, the children were added to the Special Educational Needs register and received additional support.

There were 2 cases of the child “school refusing” which has now changed due to the school have more support for the children in terms of higher needs funding. 9 of the children received EHCP’s to secure support. Of these 9, 1 of the children was not previously on the SEN register and spent the majority of the day out of the classroom. School now have a better understanding of the child, and their support needs, associated with adoption and early life experiences.

Additionally, the Education Support Worker has undertaken training related to adopted children and their needs for designated teachers in one local

Authority; training in trauma and attachment across 3 schools, and has contributed to the production of the ATV Young people's film on education experiences. She has also supported the peer review process in one Local Authority- Redcar and Cleveland.

In 2021 the Education Support Worker post was confirmed as a permanent post within ADT, with agreement from the 5 VS Heads and the ATV Board, in order to secure continuity of the service.

## 9. Non-Agency Adoptions

<b>Enquiries for Step Parent Adoptions</b>	50
<b>Assessments Completed</b>	6 (plus 4 withdrawn)
<b>Adoptions Granted</b>	6
<b>Assessments awaiting allocation</b>	60

One social worker is allocated to undertake step parent adoption assessment work. This is the maximum current resource that ATV can reasonably allocate, given the assessment, family finding and adoption support work for Children in Our Care, and adopted children that is required.

The demand for step parent assessments is increasing, and presents a troubling dilemma for ATV and for the ATV Board, as this essentially private family law work competes for the stretched resources of LA's. Currently, ATV is unable to allocate any more than 1 worker to these non-agency adoptions, as there is demand for recruitment, assessment, placement and support work for children on our care, requiring adoption.

Children in Step Parent families are largely children who are already secure, stable, live with and have relationships with their parents and carers. The child and family wish is to confirm this via Court Order, however, demand issues are present in this region.

## 10. Staffing

ATV had the following organisational structure, within the year:

Service Manager	1 FTE	Marketing Officer	0.5 FTE
Team Manager – Recruitment and Assessment	1 FTE	Qualified SW's undertaking assessments, family finding, matching and placing children, preparation training	10.9 FTE
Team Manager – Adoption Support	1 FTE	Qualified social workers undertaking adoption support, and lead on Letter Box	5.15 FTE

Assistant Team Manager- Family Finding; Permanence Champion; Adoption Support	2 FTE	Qualified social worker role undertaking stepparent adoptions	1 FTE
Business Manager	1 FTE	Senior Business Support Business Support Apprentice BS	1 FTE 1.8 FTE 1.0 FTE
		Adoption Support workers Letter box Co-Ordinator Education Support Worker	1.4 FTE 0.8 FTE 0.95 FTE

Staffing budget is £1,334,892 per annum.

As part of the ATV Review, analysis and comparison was made with 14 RAA's, who had published financial information.

The average staffing costs per unit cost of adoption across all 14 RAA's was £21,738 while ATV average staffing cost was £18,569, with a variance of £3169 under the average staffing cost, per unit cost of adoption.

A business case was made to Board in October 2021 for an additional 2 FTE social workers; 0.6 FTE Panel Manager and Advisor; 1.4 Adoption support workers (unqualified). Increase in social workers is to invest in more internal assessments, and in Panel Manager it is to improve quality of Panel function, and to ensure all regulatory aspects are met.

The ATV Board agreed these posts in January 2022, and recruitment has commenced to fill the posts. At the time of writing not all posts are filled, although recruitment has taken place.

### *Staff Engagement*

Staff have had a survey as part of the overall review of ATV within this year.

The reviewer felt the responses were very positive, and included comments such as:

- "I have always felt so passionate about being involved in creating the best possible outcomes for vulnerable children. I feel like everyone at ATV shares this passion and uses their high levels of knowledge, skills and experience to find loving families for vulnerable children across the Tees Valley, who are unable to live with their birth family for whatever reason"
- "Nice atmosphere to work in - both staff and managers - all helpful and welcoming. Feel that making a difference to children's lives opportunity and feel listened to regarding developments and improvements"

- “Seeing the difference, we make to children and families alike is worth the at times extremely hard work that goes into each and every case. From where we started to where we are now feels like a lifetime away and I’m excited to see where we go in the next 3 years”.
- “I have really supportive managers, I’m trusted to get on with my work, I feel valued”.

When asked the question “What do you think Adoption Tees Valley could improve on?”, one staff member said

- “I feel like I’m stuck in a ‘structure’ with no scope for progression”.

Several staff referred to the need for more staffing resource due to high workloads and the need to improve timeliness, post-adoption requests and referrals, life story books and letterbox services. The survey feedback taken alongside analysis of value for money, and unit cost of adoption, should inform a review of capacity to manage volume of work in ATV.

Within the survey, 94 % of staff said they felt they had the opportunity to develop innovative and creative practice.

### *Staff Training*

Staff have the opportunity to select a variety of training opportunities which are on offer from the host Council, Stockton, or from one of the other LA’s. Training is regularly offered from the Tees Safeguarding Hub and also from the RAA and CVAA programme.

All staff have now been advised to maintain their training via the Stockton individualised learning portal.

2 Assistant Team Managers have started the Stockton Council Level 5 Management Qualification, via an apprenticeship, and 1 Senior Business Support Officer is undertaking the Level 3 Supervisor Apprenticeship.

Additionally, ATV have contributed to Middlesbrough Redcar and Cleveland and Darlington training programmes on adoption, including for IRO’s.

### *Staff Absence*

Staff absence due to sickness in this year is 259 days, which is 7.7 days per staff member.

Staff absence has largely been in relation to a small number of staff with periods of absence over 3 months in this year. There has been some impact of covid related absence, although within this year this has not led to a significant loss of any member of staff. Staffing absence has had impact on the overall resource within ATV, and additional temporary staffing has been put in place to provide some cover, but the service has run at a lower level of staffing overall.

### *Staff Turnover*

During this year 3 members of staff have left the service, one who has been on maternity leave, and 2 have retired.

## **11. Quality Assurance**

National Minimum Standard 25.

The following mechanisms are in place for managing and monitoring the work of the agency, and the quality of work.

- The Review of ATV was a wide reaching review, to assess progress of the RAA against the agreed objectives that were set out at the implementation of the RAA. The report was completed in this year, and was presented to Board, with a development plan.
- The adoption support service was a pilot for an independent audit of adoption support. A report was produced and presented to Board. Strengths are reported in the main body of this report.
- Tracking systems to enable regular monitoring of children and adopter progress; timeliness, and outcomes. Tracking highlights barriers to be addressed, for example, delays in GP reports have been addressed with the assistance of the Safeguarding GP. Tracking highlights cases to be escalated within the LA where there is risk of drift and delay.
- Tracking of children enables focussed discussions with Adoption Lead officers quarterly, or as required, to ensure that individual children's plans are progressed in a timely way, and that thematic practice issues within Local Authorities are addressed. A performance, assurance and challenge meeting (PAC) has been held with the Adoption Lead for each LA, quarterly following ASGLB and ATV Scorecard data returns. The output is the LA Adoption Lead report to their respective LA Performance Monitoring Forums.
- Permanence Champions for each Local Authority ensure that children's referrals and plans are understood, and progressed to adoption where applicable, in a timely way.
- ATV attends one Local Authority (Middlesbrough) Permanence Monitoring Group, monthly, and the Gateway panel monthly, to assist with the improvement journey for that LA, and with quality and timeliness of practice for children.
- The Balanced Scorecard (BSC) is generated quarterly detailing key performance data, user feedback and satisfaction measures; complaints/compliments; finance. This is presented to the Board quarterly, which has a role in questioning, challenge and being satisfied as to the effectiveness of the service.
- The Adoption Panel has a quality monitoring role in the Service around business presented to it, for consideration and advice. As detailed in

section 7, there are plans to develop training for LA 's, as part of strategic workforce development planning.

- The Adoption Panel Chairs meet with the Service Manager and provide a report bi-annually to the Service Manager, which will be presented to the Board; Panel; and to the team, for learning and improvement where required.
- Staff performance is monitored via supervision, which is monthly for all staff.
- A case practice audit tool has been developed. Case practice audits were undertaken, across a sample of case records, with managers independent of that case, and the worker. These were collated into a thematic audit report for board to consider.
- Most staff, and all managers have had an annual appraisal.
- Most central List members and Panel Chairs have an annual appraisal. Panel chairs now request that the agency collates themes from appraisal for the annual report. Panel training has been delivered to panel members arising from feedback from panel appraisals.
- Team meetings take place monthly, and are used to convey policy and practice information, involve staff in developments and any quality improvements that are required.
- Adopter feedback has been sought via a survey.
- The Service Manager, and Team Manager, post adoption support, have reviewed and monitored work undertaken by external agencies for post adoption support, to ensure that work supports outcomes and delivers best value.

## 12. Finance

Adoption Tees Valley is joint funded as a shared service under the Education and Adoption Act (2016) and is a joint funded on a shared basis, with the allocations of funding per LA as detailed below.

### **2021/22 Financial Year End Position**

At the end of the 2021/22 financial year, Adoption Tees Valley overspent by £25,000, which has been funded from the ATV reserve. This leaves only a very small balance in reserves of £1,200

<b>Expenditure Heading</b>	<b>Budget 2021/22</b>	<b>Actual Outturn</b>	<b>Variance year end</b>
Employees	1,331,000	1,434,000	103,000
Running Costs	287,000	275,000	(12,000)

Support Service Costs	113,000	114,000	1,000
Interagency Fees	500,000	677,000	177,000
Income	(2,231,000)	(2,475,000)	(244,000)
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>(24,000)</b>

### **Interagency Fees**

Interagency fees are payable for those children matched with adopters who are not recruited by ATV. The budget for interagency fees is £500,000 and was overspent by £177,000. This led to additional contributions from each Local Authority, as follows:

	<b>Budgeted Contribution to Interagency Fees</b>	<b>Actual for 2021/22</b>	<b>Additional Contribution for 21/22</b>
<b>ATV Interagency 2021/22</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>677,000</b>	<b>177,000</b>
Darlington - 20.2%	101,000	137,000	36,000
Hartlepool - 14%	70,000	95,000	25,000
Middlesbrough - 27.2%	136,000	184,000	48,000
Redcar & Cleveland - 14%	70,000	95,000	25,000
Stockton - 24.6%	123,000	166,000	43,000

Key areas of overspend:

- Staffing- temporary cover for maternity leave, and staff to cover sickness absences.
- Additional costs due to 12 month post placements costs, where child placed with VAA's. This is due to adoption orders being held up.

### **New Funding Formula from 1.4.22**

As part of the ATV review the funding formula for running costs- the core cost budget, and for interagency fees was reviewed, to take account of the actual split of business in the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 years of operation. The review considered some aspects of an activity based costing model, and actual business undertaken on behalf of each Local Authority in the first 3 years.

A new funding formula has been recommended, and signed off, by the Board, and by Directors of Finance in all 5 LA's.

The future split from 1.4.22 will be as follows:



	DBC	HBC	MBC	R&CBC	SBC
Core running costs (2018-2022)	16.2	13.5	31.8	16.7	21.8
Core running costs 2022 onwards	14.6%	14.9%	28.1%	15.5%	26.9%
Interagency fees (2018-2022)	20.2%	14%	27.2%	14%	24.6%
Interagency Fees 2022 onwards	14.6%	14.9%	28.1%	15.5%	26.9%
Support costs (2018-22)	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%
Support costs 2022 onwards	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%

### 13. Development Plan for ATV

Area for Development	Plans – at Oct 2021	Progress	Next steps
Strengthening voice and involvement of adopted children in ATV	Appointment to a dedicated YP worker, to support inclusion and involvement	Equivalent of 0.5 FTE adoption SW allocated to children's work. Groups commencing Sept 22, with some additional work over summer 2022.	Project led by an ATV manager, to increase children and young people involvement in ATV commenced. Plans for new Guide to Adoption and group work, for different ages.
Strengthening preparation and assessment of adopters, to support more adopters taking	Strengthening assessment to support pathway will continue	Challenges remain around adopters for Priority children. New tailored	Pilot for tailored assessment will be reviewed internally, and continued if effective.

more children with additional needs		assessment process in pilot. Adopter Hub is targeted at helping prospective adopters continue to develop.	Modules for adding more "add on" training pre and post approval.
Strengthening sufficiency of adopters, through increased marketing	Invest to save business case for more assessment capacity to recruit internal adopters	Challenges in adopter recruitment this year. Staffing increased by 2 FTE SW's, not yet fully in post.	New allocation of SW to oversee enquiry process, to ensure no gaps, and to improve timeliness. Wider marketing strategy.
Taking early permanence strategy to the next stage – phase 2	Support regional EP co-ordinator role and continue to progress EP development with regional partners.	Regional EP co-ordinator in post. Phase 2 EP strategy underway, based on learning from Phase 1.	Continue to work with pan regional EP sufficiency project. Support the Concurrency Project. Build on adopter support for EP carers. Phase 2 training to regional LA's in EP.
Strengthen partnership working, including with early help, to strengthen support to adopters when they need it.	Adoption Support audit. Revised work with Early help partners.	Plans still underway. New region wide strategic health board has been scoped, and due to commence.	Plans being proposed to ATV Board for strengthened adoption support, in line with national model, and ATV adoption support audit.
Continuing to address life story book model.	Support CSW's where needed to complete LS books.	LSB's are now embedded as the responsibility of the CSW.	
Continuing to address timescales for adoption support assessments	The adoption support audit will assist with reviewing service	Restructure of the way in which ASA's are completed- to reduce waiting	Continue to embed the model and strengthen the early offer.

	delivery and offer.	times and provide early access to ATV supports. Currently, none waiting.	Focus on return to care cases for impact evaluation.
Taking forward Panel improvements to maintain a streamlined approach to panel, and quality CPR's	Recruit to Panel Manager post	Panel Manager/Advisor now in post. Action Plan is in place for Panel work.	Further development of integrated QA of panel activity, and involvement of LA ADM's Panel training to reflect needs and gaps.
Continue to develop a focus on children's diversity needs, and welcoming/increasing prospective adopters from ethnic minority backgrounds	Identified through ATV Review	Allocation of a senior SW and Recruitment Manager to this area of work	Community development as part of recruitment More evidence of consideration of diversity needs of children, in CPR's and in matching, including early permanence Panel member diversity to be strengthened.

Vicky Davidson Boyd

Service Manager

Adoption Tees Valley 22.7.22



**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
31 October 2022**

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**LEARNING & SKILLS ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide Members with an update on the performance of the Learning & Skills Service for academic year 2021/22.
2. To allow Scrutiny members oversight of, and an opportunity to challenge, the performance of this externally funded service.

**Summary**

3. The pandemic impacted on the Learning and Skills service and delivery, and to a degree still continues to do so, with an impact on both learner numbers and subsequent income. However, staff responded magnificently and continued to deliver throughout, making a very successful transition to online teaching and learning when needed.
4. The service aims to grow provision whilst continuing to respond to employer and community need.
5. The service was inspected by Ofsted in June 2022, retaining its assessment of 'Good' overall.

**Recommendation**

6. It is recommended that Members note the content of this report.

**Tony Murphy**  
**Assistant Director Education and Inclusion**

**Background Papers**

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report

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S17 Crime and Disorder	The service supports the Council’s crime and disorder responsibilities, young people engaged in learning are less likely to engage in anti-social behaviour
Health and Wellbeing	The service actively promotes health and wellbeing
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	The service promotes sustainability
Diversity	The service actively supports the diversity agenda
Wards Affected	The service offers provision across all of Darlington
Groups Affected	The service offers learning for 16-18 year olds and adults
Budget and Policy Framework	The service is externally funded. This report does not impact on the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Council Plan	The service contributes to the priorities in the Council Plan allowing people to develop their potential, improve their skills and help improve their employment opportunities
Efficiency	Scrutiny of performance is integral to optimising outcomes
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

## MAIN REPORT

### The Learning & Skills Service

7. The Learning & Skills Service is the external training arm of the Council and is funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) to provide learning and skills provision for the local community. The service has been an Ofsted 'Good' provider since 2004.
8. The service provides a range of training from Pre-entry Level to Level 5, including:
  - 16-18 study programme and diploma courses
  - Adult education, including basic skills such as English, maths and ICT
  - Community Learning, including employability
  - Family Learning
  - Intensive Support
  - Distance Learning
  - English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
  - Apprenticeships
9. Learning & Skills supports some of the most disadvantaged adults, young people and families in Darlington and contributes to the priorities of both the Children and Young People's Plan and the Council Plan. Often the provision delivered provides a stepping-stone to those taking their first steps back into learning and a number of past learners have moved on to higher level learning at Darlington College and other providers.
10. Teaching takes place across three main sites: the Coleridge Centre, Bennet House and the units at Lingfield Way, as well as in a number of school and community settings.
11. Apprenticeship provision includes Health and Social Care, Business Administration, Motor Vehicle, Site Joinery and Leadership and Management.

### Learner Numbers

12. In 2021/22 the service supported 1,177 (913) learners (previous year's numbers in brackets) across a wide range of programmes, including:
  - 49 (54) 16-18 year olds on study programme
  - 428 (420) people on Adult Skills courses
  - 667 (388) people on Community Learning
  - 33 (51) Apprenticeship starts

### Funding

11. The overall funding generated from the ESFA and TVCA for the Learning & Skills Service in 2021/22 was £1,007,210 (£992,019). This was split as follows:
  - £221,801 (£195,663) 16-18 Study Programme (ESFA)
  - £462,760 (£415,666) - Adult and Community Education (TVCA)
  - £66,776 (£53,802) - Adult and Community Education (ESFA)

- £224,501 (£232,340) - Apprenticeships (ESFA / Employers)
- £6,501 (£12,324) - Adult Learning Loans (ESFA / SLC)
- £24,871 (£82,224)– Other Income

## Performance

12. Due to the impact of the pandemic on post 16 providers no achievement rates were published nationally in 2019/20 or 2020/21 therefore are no national benchmarks for comparison. However locally produced performance data shows:

Provision Type	Overall Achievement Rate		
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22 (Provisional)
16-18	69.91%	78.4%	92.3%
Adult Skills	84.31%	73.8%	87.0%
Community Learning	95.05%	98.5%	97.2%
Apprenticeships	87.23%	84.0%	86.4%

13. The achievement rate percentage is calculated by multiplying the number of learners who complete their course by the percentage of those that sat their exams / assessments and passed

## Learner Progression

14. Learner progression, or the positive destination rate, measures the percentage of learner who move into education, employment or training after completing a course with Learning & Skills. The pandemic has impacted on some areas more than others, particularly those seeking to go into employment.

Provision Type	Positive Destination Rate		
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22 (Provisional)
16-18	54%	90%	73%
Adult Skills	78%	72.25%	84.5%
Community Learning	79.5%	75.0%	87.5%
Apprenticeships	81%	83%	81%

## Learner Satisfaction

15. Learner satisfaction (those rating the service good or above) dropped from 95.75% in 2019/20 to 91% in 2020/21. This was largely due to the fact that a number of learners were unhappy that they were unable to access face to face support due to Covid restrictions. However, it has now risen to 92% in 2021/22.

## Employer Satisfaction

16. Employer Satisfaction rose from 92.5% in 2019/20 to 100.0% in 2020/21. However, in 2021/22 95% of employer responses rated the service good or above.



## Observation of Learning, Teaching and Assessment

17. Over the last two years with the restrictions on face to face teaching it has been difficult to undertake observations of learning, teaching and assessment. However, of those observations undertaken in 2019/20 (4 - 100%), 2020/21 (13 – 100%) and 2021/22 (10 - 90%) were rated Good or above.

## Impact of Covid

18. The service responded very quickly to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic and made a very successful transition to online learning via Google Classroom and Equal, a distance learning platform. Unfortunately, in some instances it proved very difficult to recruit learners onto courses, particularly those people who struggled with IT or who needed face-to-face support on courses like basic English and maths. The pandemic also impacted in some areas on performance, destination outcomes and learner satisfaction despite the best efforts of the staff. With the limiting of restrictions we are now seeing improvements in all areas.
19. The difficulties highlighted above and the lack of access to external delivery settings caused by Covid meant the service could not achieve the growth in learners and funding it had planned for. Funding is generated by the number of learners / qualifications delivered. The easing of restrictions in academic year 2021/22 saw some recovery in learner numbers and subsequent funding.

## Ofsted Inspection Outcome

20. The service was inspected in June 2022 and retained its overall grade of 'Good'. The inspectors looked at eight discrete areas;

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Education programmes for young people	Good
Adult learning programmes	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Provision for learners with high needs	Good

21. Only three areas for improvement were identified, all of which are being addressed.
- Ensure that all tutors use information about learners' starting points to effectively plan learning that meets individual needs
  - Ensure that all learners benefit from a range of work experience opportunities
  - Ensure that tutors receive appropriate training to enable them to continue to develop their teaching skills
22. The report highlighted the fact that the service is meeting the needs of the local community and local businesses, learners were well supported and that the service was well led.

## Challenges Ahead

23. The service drew heavily on its reserves during Covid but that has now slowed, and it is hoped that by the end of academic year 2022/23 with increased learner numbers and prudent expenditure there will be a balanced budget.
24. The service was awarded a further three-year funding contract by TVCA for Adult Skills in 2021/22 and continues to respond to the demands of local skills needs. However, there are also potential uncertainties if the TVCA devolved funding model starts to diverge from what the rules and requirements were under the ESFA.
25. The government proposed a review of the further education funding system in their white paper 'Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth' which was published in January 2021. A part of the proposals in the white paper a consultation on a 'New Further Education Funding and Accountability System' was launched on 15 July 2021. At present the service has no indication of the likely impact any funding reforms will have on Learning & Skills or the TVCA devolved funding.

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 31 October 2022

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### PERFORMANCE INDICATORS QUARTER 1 2022/23

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#### Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with an update on performance against key performance indicators.

#### Summary

2. This report provides performance information (April 2022 – June 2022) in line with an indicator set agreed by Monitoring and Coordination Group on 2 July 2018, and subsequently by Scrutiny Committee Chairs.
3. It is suggested monitoring focuses on issues and exceptions, and relevant Assistant Directors will attend the meeting to respond to queries raised by the committee regarding the performance information contained within this report.
4. Where indicators are reported annually, quarterly updates will not be available.

#### Where are we performing well?

5. 79.6% of referrals were screened and completed within 1 day during Q1 2022/23. Although below the target of 90%, this is a continuing improvement when compared with previous quarters. A small number of referrals took over 3 working days to be completed in Q1 2022/23 (1.9%) which is an improvement on 5.6% for the same period last year and is within our threshold of 5%.
6. 16.1% of the children referred during Q1 2022/23 have been re-referred to Children's Social Care within 12 months of a previous referral, which is below the threshold of 18% and an improvement on the same period last year.
7. 100% of children with a Child Protection (CP) plan, and 100% of Children in Care (CiC) have an allocated social worker.
8. 100% of children with a Child Protection (CP) plan, and 98.8% of Children in Care (CiC) had their reviews completed within timescale.
9. 273 Children were in our care at the end of June 2022, excluding the unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (7), this is just above the number of Children in Care (CiC) in June 2021 (264) and below that in June 2020 (291). Work continues to safely reduce the number of children coming into care.

10. 25.0% of the children ceasing to be in our care did so due to return home to their parents, 20.0% had a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) / Child Arrangement Order (CAO) granted to a relative and 15.0% were adopted.
11. 89.1% of statutory CiC visits were completed within timescale during Q1 2022/23. This is in line with the target of 90%.
12. 10.4% of our Children in Care, as at June 2022, have had 3 or more placements within the previous 12 months which is in line with our internal target (10%).
13. 67.0% of our Children in Care aged under 16 (who have been looked after for at least 2.5 years) have been in their current placement continuously for at least 2 years as at June 2022.
14. 6.5% of our Children in Care have needed to be placed 20 or more miles away from home as of June 2022. This is a positive performance and below our target of 10%.
15. 19.6% of Care Leavers were not in employment, education, or training (NEET) which is positivity below target of 30% and 98.2% of care leavers were in suitable accommodation.
16. 60.7% of our care leavers were in training or employment (30.4% in full time, 30.3% in part time) as of June 2022, and 19.7% were engaging in education (5.4% of which are in studies beyond A level).

Where do we need to improve?

17. 79.0% of our C&F assessments were completed within timescale in Q1 2022/23. This is below Q1 2021/22 performance of 90.4% in timescale, however, that was with 58.3% less assessments needing to be completed as we continue to see a rise in assessments required.
18. 75.0% of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC) were held within 15 working days from the strategy meeting / section 47 being initiated, excluding transfer-in conferences, during Q1 2022/23. Darlington's performance has dipped this quarter, additional processes have been put in place to address this.
19. At the end of June 2022, the percentage of children becoming subject to a CP plan for a second or subsequent time within 2 years of the previous plan ending was 25.0%, above the 6% target, however, relates to 2 families.
20. At the end of June 2022, 8.3% of children ceased to be subject to a CP plan in Q1 2022/23 after being subject to the plan for 2 or more years. The plans had been confirmed as appropriately opened for this length of time and the families are now in a position where they can be confidently closed to CP and a CiN plan put in place.

21. 73.2% of children received a statutory CP visit within 10 working days during Q1 2022/23, with a further 14.3% of visits taking place 1 or 2 days outside this. This is below the target of 90%.
22. 28.8% of children due a health review during Q1 2022/23 and 19.2% due a dental check assessment have had one completed.

### **Recommendation**

23. It is recommended:

- a) That performance information provided in this report is reviewed and noted, and relevant queries raised with the appropriate Assistant Director.

**James Stroyan**  
**Group Director of People**

### **Background papers**

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Sharon Raine Head of Performance and Transformation: Extension 6091

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report supports the Council's Crime and Disorder responsibilities
Health and Well Being	This report supports performance improvement relating to improving the health and wellbeing of residents
Sustainability	This report supports the Council's sustainability responsibilities
Diversity	This report supports the promotion of diversity
Wards Affected	This report supports performance improvement across all Wards
Groups Affected	This report supports performance improvement which benefits all groups
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	This report contributes to the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) by involving Members in the scrutiny of performance relating to the delivery of key outcomes
Efficiency	Scrutiny of performance is integral to optimising outcomes.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report may have an impact on their emotional and physical health, social development, education and future employment.



**DARLINGTON**  
Borough Council

# Children's Social Care Performance & Practise Report

**Quarter 1 (April - June 2022)**

**Scrutiny**

# Scrutiny

## Q1 2022-23 Performance Summary

**Referral:** 79.6% of referrals received during Q1 2022/23 were completed within 1 working day and 1.9% took over 3 working days to complete. Extensive work regarding referral enquiries has been required for some cases requiring further information from third parties and further contacts with the family. This has resulted in completion taking longer than the statutory timescale. However, the additional work has been to the benefit of the child.

**Re-Referrals:** 16.1% of the children referred during Q1 2022/23 have been re-referred to Children's Social Care within 12 months of a previous referral. This is positively below the internal target of 18%.

**Early Help:** 387 Early Help Assessments were started during Q1 2022/23, 10.3% of which were started by an external agency.

**Missing:** Of the children and young people who were reported missing from home, 80.9% have been offered a return home interview within the 72-hour timescale. Where the co-ordinator cannot engage the child or young person, discussion takes place with parents, carers, teachers or social workers to offer insight around reducing the missing episodes. Of those who went missing, 21.2% were a Child in Care accounting for 51.8% of the missing episodes.

**Children & Families Assessments:** 324 children had a single assessment carried out during Q1 2022/23. Social workers completed 79.0% of the C&F assessments within timescale during Q1 2022/23. This is negatively below our internal target of 90%.

**Section 47 Enquiries:** 63 section 47 enquiries were started during Q1 2022/23 involving 115 children, 2 of which were subject to a Child Protection plan (CP) at the time of the enquiry.

**Child Protection Conference timeliness:** 75.0% of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC) were held within 15 working days from the strategy meeting / section 47 being initiated, excluding transfer-in conferences, during Q1 2022/23 (25.0% that were not in timescale relate to 2 families). Darlington's performance has dipped this quarter, additional processes have been put in place to address this to aid improvement going forward.

**Child Protection Plans:** 104 children were subject to a Child Protection plan (CP) as at the end of June 2022. This is a 9.5% increase compared to the 95 children who were subject to CP at the end of June 2021. Darlington currently has a of 46.0 rate per 10,000 population for children subject to a CPP. 100.0% of CP cases were allocated to a social worker and all of the CP reviews were carried out in timescale. 8.3% of children ceased to be subject to a CP plan in Q1 2022/23 after being subject to the plan for 2 or more years. The plans had been confirmed as appropriately opened for this length of time and the families are now in a position where they can be confidently closed to CP and a CiN plan put in place. At the end of June 2022, the percentage of children becoming subject to a CP plan for a second or subsequent time within 2 years of the previous plan ending was 25.0%, above the 6% target and relates to 2 families.



**Child Protection Statutory visits:** 73.2% of Child Protection statutory visits were completed within 10 working days in Q1 2022/23. Although the internal target (90%) has not being met, a further 14.3% of visits were held on working day 11 and 12.

**Children in Care:** 280 children were in care as of June 2022, 7 of which are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. During Q1 2022/23 a total of 27 children came into the care of the DBC and a total of 20 children ceased to be in care.

**Children in Care Reviews:** 100.0% of Children in Care (CiC) were allocated to a qualified social worker. 98.8% of the reviews have been completed within required timescales during Q1 2022/21.

**Children in Care Statutory visits:** 89.1% of statutory visits for Children in Care (CiC) were completed in timescale during Q1 2022/23. This is in line with our internal target of 90%.

**Children in Care Placements:** 10.4% of Children in Care (CiC), as of June 2022, have had 3 or more placements within the previous 12 months. This is in line with the internal target of 10%.

69.1% of our Children in Care aged under 16 (who have been looked after for at least 2.5 years) have been in their current placement continuously for at least 2 years. This is negatively just above our target of 68.0%.

6.5% of our Children in Care have been placed 20 or more miles away from home as of June 2022, which is positively below our target of 10.0%. This relates to young people who have been placed in residential care due to their disability / placed with family / or placed for adoption, and this provision is not available within 20 miles.

**Initial Health Assessments:** We are awaiting the official data from CDDFT to confirm the percentage of the children, that came into our care during Q1 2022/23, had a health appointment within 20 days.

**Health and Dental Reviews:** 28.8% of children due a review health assessment by June 2022 have had one completed. 19.2% of Children in Care, that were due a dental check assessment by June 2022 have had one completed.

The percentage of children who have refused their medical checks has decreased throughout the year, with 10.6% refusing their health review and 5.5% refusing their dental review. Although they are refusing, they are continually reminded of the benefits of having a check-up and encouraged to take part.

**Care Leavers:** 98.2% of care leavers were in suitable accommodation at the end of June 2022 with 1 young person in custody. The percentage of care leavers who were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) continues to be positively below the target set of 30% at 19.6% at the end of June 2022. 19.7% of our care leavers were engaging in education (5.4% of which are in studies beyond A level) and 60.7% young people were in training or employment (30.4% in full time, 30.3% in part time).

## REFERRALS: TIMELINESS

**DEFINITION** Percentage of referrals completed within 1 working day and over 3 working days. Referrals completed within 1 working day indicates that decisions regarding the services required are made in a timely manner to minimise drift and delay and to ensure that children are safe.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**

In Q1 2022/23, 79.6% of the children had their referral completed within 1 working day. This is a positive increase when compared with 68.0% in Q1 2021/22 and 77.8% in Q1 2020/21, however, this is still below our 90% target. 1.9% referrals took over 3 working days to be completed in Q1 2022/23 which is positively below our target of 5%.

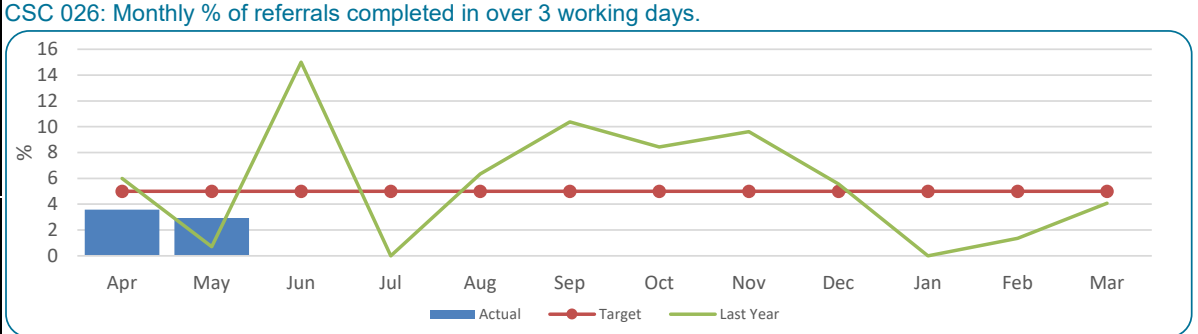
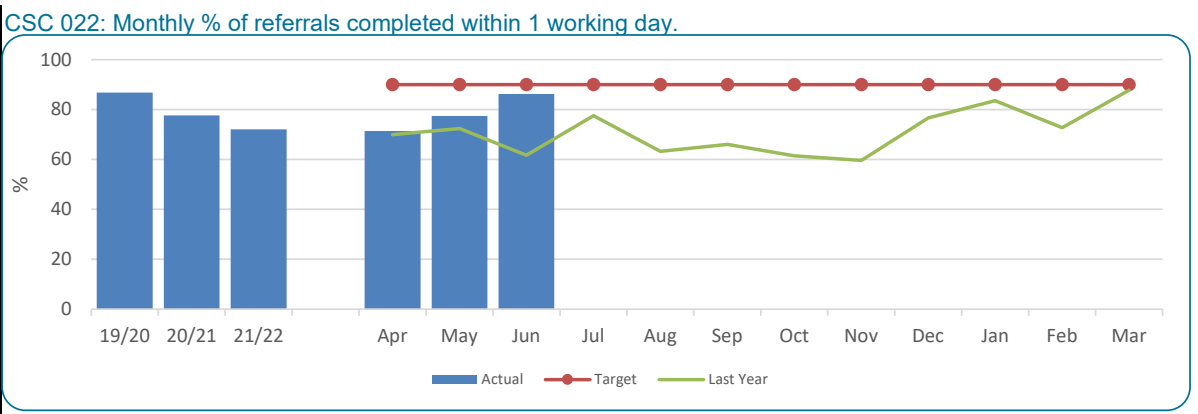
All referrals that are completed out of timescale are reviewed by the service manager to ensure delay was unavoidable. A summary of the reasons are as follows:

- Difficulties in contacting the family for further information
- Awaiting further information from a 3rd party
- Confirming allocation to the required service.

No negative impacts on the families have been highlighted because of these delays.

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		CSC 022	CSC 026
		Monthly % of referrals completed within 1 working day.	Monthly % of referrals completed in over 3 working days.
<b>In Month Performance</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>5%</b>
	Apr-22	71.4	3.6
	May-22	77.5	2.9
	Jun-22	86.2	0.0
	Jul-22		
	Aug-22		
	Sep-22		
	Oct-22		
	Nov-22		
	Dec-22		
	Jan-23		
	Feb-23		
Mar-23			
<b>Annual Trend</b>	2019/20	86.8	1.6
	2020/21	77.7	4.7
	2021/22	72.1	5.6
	2022/23	79.6%	1.9%



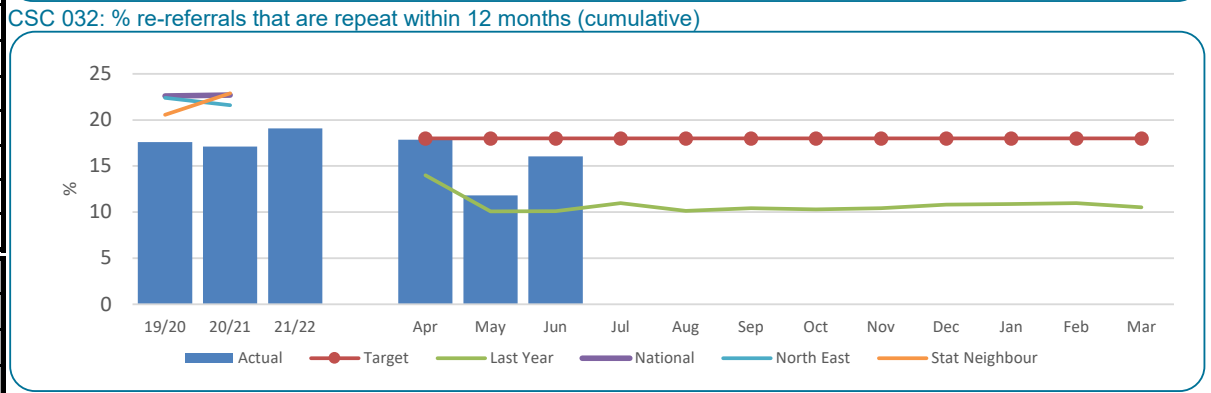
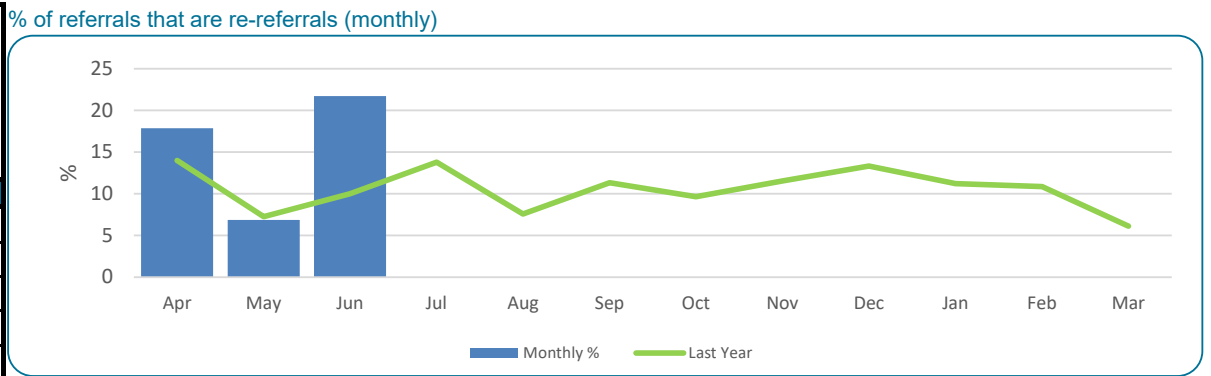
## REFERRALS: RE-REFERRALS

**DEFINITION** Percentage of re-referrals that are received within 12 months of a previous referral (based on referral start dates and in line with DfE definition). A re-referral to Children's Social Care could be an indication that the previous referral was inappropriately closed down without addressing the initial concerns or issues.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS** We have seen an increase in re-referrals this quarter compared to previous years. Cumulatively we are still positively below our 18% target with 16.1% of the referrals being repeated within 12 months of a previous referral starting.

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		CSC 034	CSC 032	
		Monthly number of re-referrals that are repeat within 12 months	% re-referrals that are repeat within 12 months (cumulative)	% of referrals that are re-referrals (monthly)
<b>In Month Performance</b>	<b>Target</b>		<b>18%</b>	
	Apr-22	15	17.9	17.9
	May-22	7	11.8	6.9
	Jun-22	30	16.1	21.7
	Jul-22			
	Aug-22			
	Sep-22			
	Oct-22			
	Nov-22			
	Dec-22			
	Jan-23			
	Feb-23			
	Mar-23			
<b>Annual Trend</b>	2019/20	205	17.6	
	2020/21	171	17.1	
	2021/22	143	19.1	
	2022/23	52	16.1	



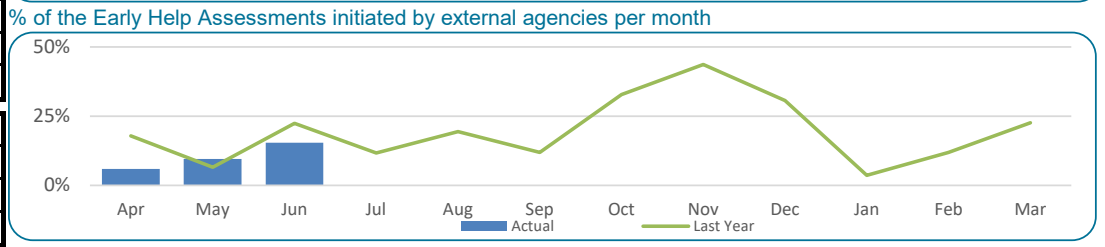
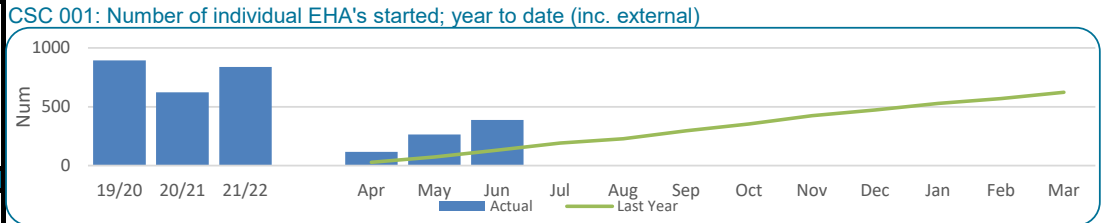
**EARLY HELP ASSESSMENTS: STARTED**

**DEFINITION** The number of individual Early Help Assessments (EHA) started in month and year to date, including those initiated by external agencies. The start date of the EHA is taken from the form created date in Liquid Logic and the start date of the external EHA is taken from the contact date when the agency informed us of the EHA.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS** 387 Early Help Assessments (EHA) were started in Q1 2022/23, 10.3% (40) of which were initiated by external agencies. This is an increase on Q1 2021/22 (230 EHA's) but with a decrease on the proportion of externally started EHA's (18.7%).

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		CSC 002	CSC 001		
		Total number of individual EHA's started in month (inc. external)	Number and percentage of the EHA's initiated by external agencies per month		Number of individual EHA's started; year to date (inc. external)
In Month Performance	Target			TBC	
	Apr-22	117	7	6.0%	117
	May-22	147	14	9.5%	264
	Jun-22	123	19	15.4%	387
	Jul-22				
	Aug-22				
	Sep-22				
	Oct-22				
	Nov-22				
	Dec-22				
	Jan-23				
	Feb-23				
	Mar-23				
Annual Trend	2019/20	893	265	29.7%	893
	2020/21	623	127	20.4%	623
	2021/22	839	161	19.2%	839
	2022/23	387	40	10.3%	387



**MISSING: EPISODES**

<b>DEFINITION</b>	The number of episodes of children going missing in Darlington, who are a Child in Care.
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<b>PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS</b>	<p>The total number of missing episodes in Q1 2022/23 was 199 involving 66 individual children. 14 of these were a Child in Care (CiC) and accounted for 103 of the episodes.</p> <p>Children in Care continue to dominate the number of missing episodes and with 8 of the 14 children having more than 3 reported episodes in the quarter, totalling 95 episodes of missing. The total missing episodes for CiC has increased when compared to Q1 2021/22 which was 51 episodes, but for the same number of children and young people (14). When children are looked after by other authorities but cared for in Darlington, the ERASE Team have been alerted and provided with relevant information to ensure that the young people have been appropriately placed.</p>
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		CSC 215		CSC 246				
		Total number of missing episodes and children involved in month		Missing - Children in Care with DBC		Of which are in a placement more than 20 miles from home		
In Month Performance		Episode	Child	Episode	Child	Episode	Child	
		Apr-22	57	27	33	6		
		May-22	62	30	29	9		
		Jun-22	80	34	41	10	1	1
		Jul-22						
		Aug-22						
		Sep-22						
		Oct-22						
		Nov-22						
		Dec-22						
		Jan-23						
		Feb-23						
		Mar-23						
Annual Trend	2019/20	351	136	129	24	32	10	
	2020/21	370	152	107	30	15	4	
	2021/22	582	174	253	31	22	4	
	2022/23	199	66	103	14	1	1	

**ASSESSMENTS**

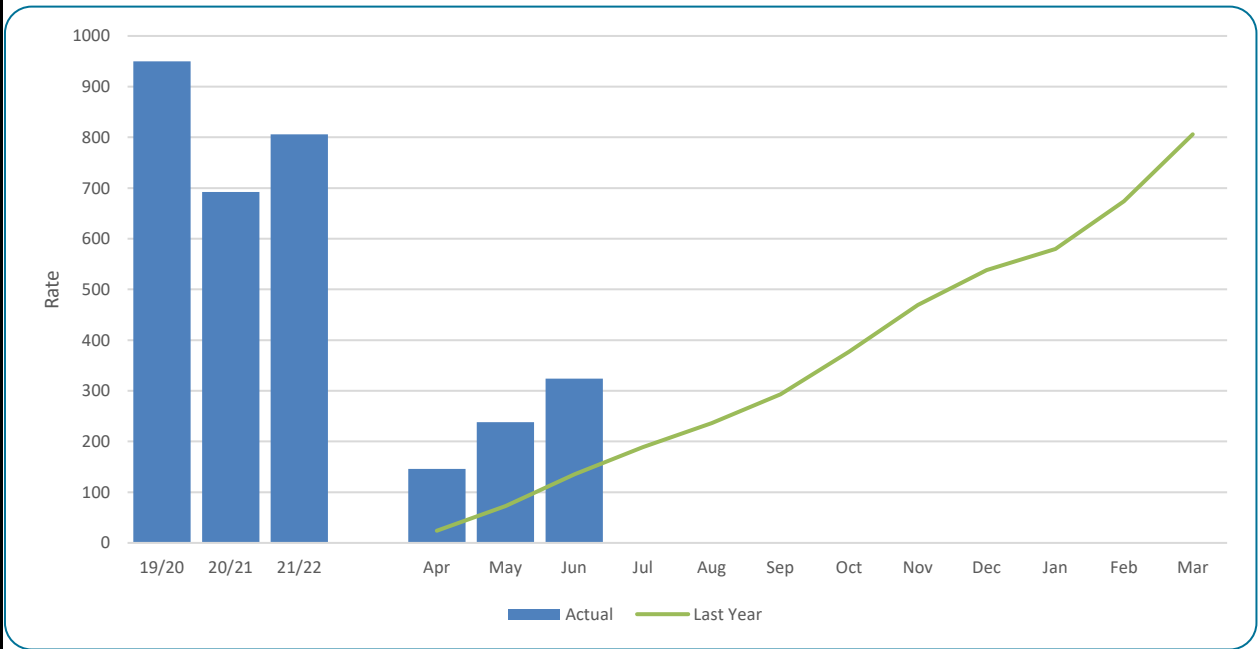
**DEFINITION** Cumulative number of Children & Families assessments completed.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS** 324 children had a C&F assessment completed in Q1 2022/23. This is an increase when compared to Q1 2020/21 (142) and Q1 2021/22 (135) but comparable to Q1 2019/20 (337).

CSC 036

Number of C&F assessments completed year to date

Number of Children & Families assessments completed year to date



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In Month Performance	Number of C&F assessments completed year to date	
	Apr-22	146
	May-22	238
	Jun-22	324
	Jul-22	
	Aug-22	
	Sep-22	
	Oct-22	
	Nov-22	
	Dec-22	
	Jan-23	
	Feb-23	
Mar-23		

Annual Trend	Number of C&F assessments completed year to date	
	2019/20	950
	2020/21	692
	2021/22	806
2022/23	324	

## ASSESSMENTS: TIMELINESS

**DEFINITION**  
 Of those assessments completed in a period, the percentage completed within 45 working days.  
 A process indicator as a proxy measure for improved child safety and how quickly services can respond when a child is thought to be at risk of serious harm. Local authorities should investigate and address concerns in a timely and efficient way.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**  
 79.0% of our C&F assessments were completed within timescale in Q1 2022/23. This is below Q1 2021/22 performance of 90.4% in timescale, however, that was with 58.3% less assessments to complete.

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CSC 038

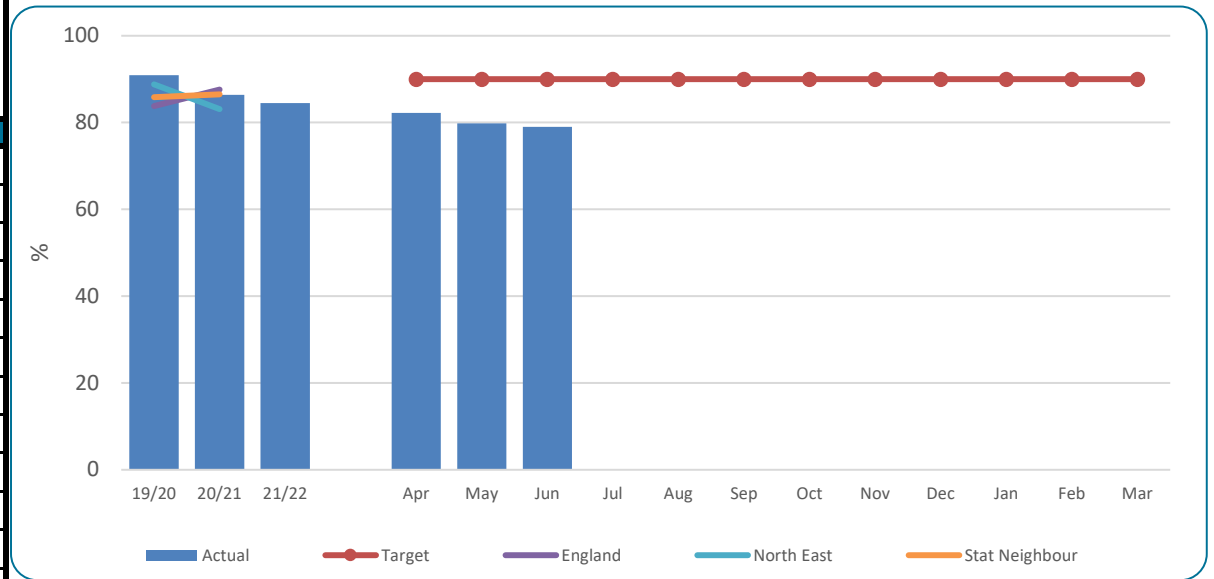
% C&F Assessments completed within 45 working days (year to date)

% C&F Assessments completed within 45 working days (year to date)

In Month Performance	target	90%
	Apr-22	82.2
	May-22	79.8
	Jun-22	79.0
	Jul-22	
	Aug-22	
	Sep-22	
	Oct-22	
	Nov-22	
	Dec-22	
	Jan-23	
	Feb-23	
	Mar-23	

Annual Trend		
2019/20	90.9	
2020/21	86.4	
2021/22	84.5	
2022/23	79.0	



**SECTION 47 ENQUIRES: STARTED**

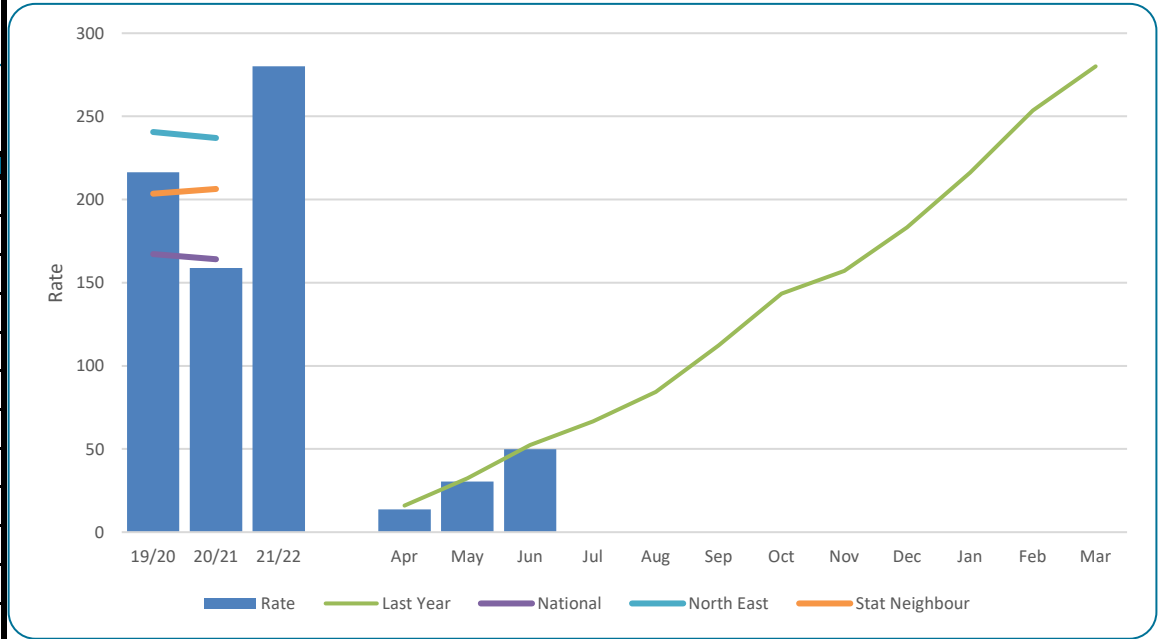
**DEFINITION** Number of children who have had a section 47 enquiries started monthly and year to date and the actual number of enquires started.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS** In Q1 2022/23, 115 children had a section 47 enquiry started.

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		CSC 166	CSC 164
		Number of children who had a section 47 enquiry	Rate of section 47 enquiries started per 10,000 of the 0-17 population (Cumulative)
<b>In Month Performance</b>	Apr-22	31	13.7
	May-22	38	30.5
	Jun-22	46	49.9
	Jul-22		
	Aug-22		
	Sep-22		
	Oct-22		
	Nov-22		
	Dec-22		
	Jan-23		
	Feb-23		
	Mar-23		
	<b>Annual Trend</b>	2019/20	486
2020/21		358	158.9
2021/22		633	280.1
2022/23		115	49.9

Rate of section 47 enquiries started per 10,000 of the 0-17 population (inc. children already on CPP)





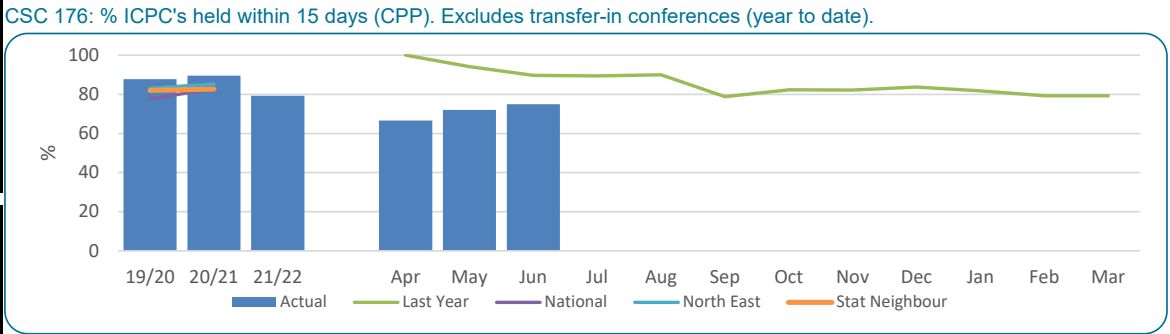
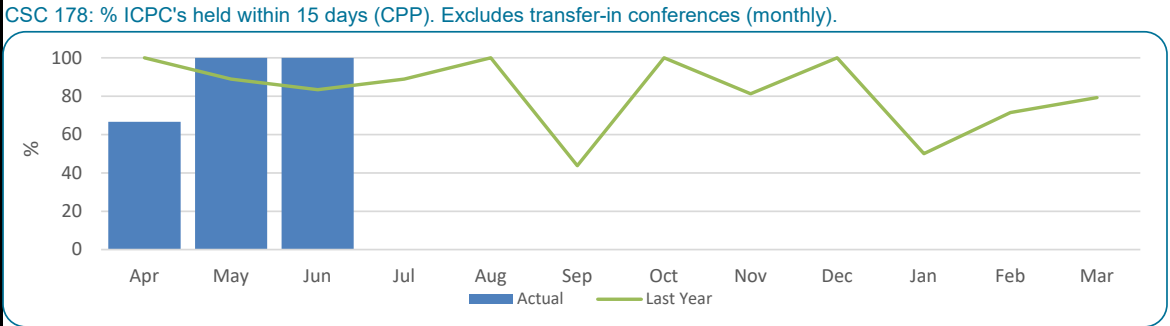
**INITIAL CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES: TIMELINESS**

**DEFINITION** Of those Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) held within the period (excluding transfer ins), the percentage recorded in the Safeguarding Unit workbook where Child Protection strategy meeting / section 47 enquiry to ICPC are within 15 days (CPP). This provides an indication of how quickly the safety of the child is considered by a multi-agency meeting.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS** At the end of Q1 2022/23, 75.0% of the Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC) were held within 15 working days from the strategy meeting / section 47 being initiated, excluding transfer-in conferences. The 2 families that did not have their ICPC within timescale, was in April 2022 and due to late conference notification.

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		CSC 178	CSC 176
		% ICPC's held within 15 days (CPP). Excludes transfer-in conferences (monthly).	% ICPC's held within 15 days (CPP). Excludes transfer-in conferences (year to date).
<b>In Month Performance</b>	<b>Target</b>		<b>95%</b>
	Apr-22	66.7	66.7
	May-22	100.0	72.0
	Jun-22	100.0	75.0
	Jul-22		
	Aug-22		
	Sep-22		
	Oct-22		
	Nov-22		
	Dec-22		
	Jan-23		
	Feb-23		
Mar-23			
<b>Annual Trend</b>	2019/20	87.7	87.7
	2020/21	89.5	89.5
	2021/22	79.3	79.3
	2022/23	100.0	75.0



## CHILD PROTECTION PLANS

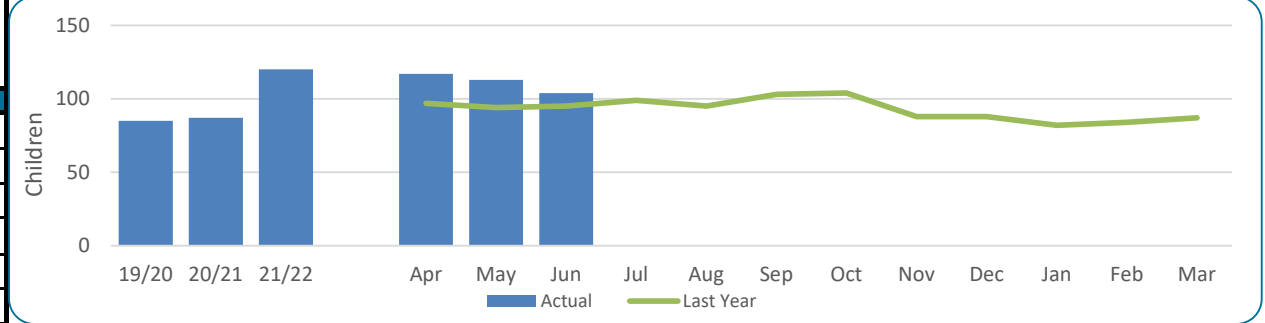
**DEFINITION** Number of children subject to a Child Protection plan at the end of the month.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS** 104 children were subject to a Child Protection plan (CP) as at the end of June 2022. This is an increase on the 95 children who were subject to CP at the end of June 2021.

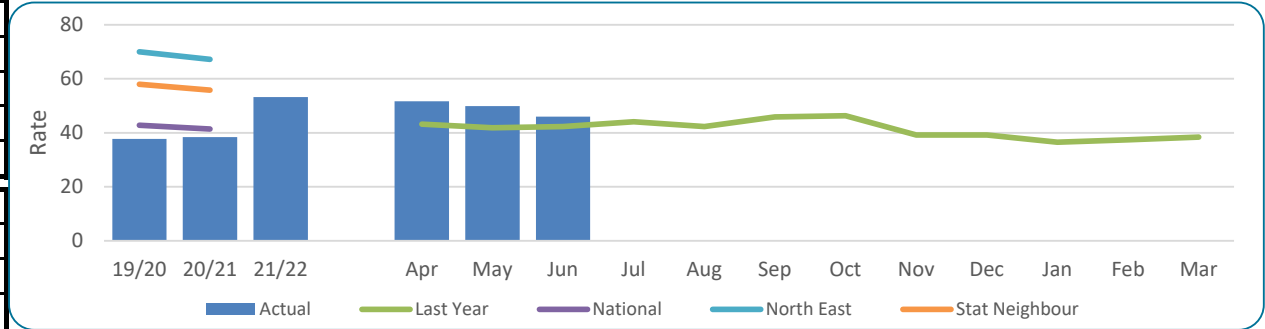
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		CSC 182	CSC 181
		Number of children subject to a CP plan	Rate of children subject to a CP Plan per 10,000 population
<b>In Month Performance</b>	Apr-22	117	51.7
	May-22	113	49.9
	Jun-22	104	46.0
	Jul-22		
	Aug-22		
	Sep-22		
	Oct-22		
	Nov-22		
	Dec-22		
	Jan-23		
	Feb-23		
	Mar-23		
	<b>Annual Trend</b>	2019/20	85
2020/21		87	38.4
2021/22		120	53.3
2022/23		104	46.0

CSC 182: Number of children subject to a CP plan



CSC 181: Rate of children subject to a CP Plan per 10,000 population



## CHILD PROTECTION PLANS: ALLOCATION & REVIEWS

**DEFINITION**

The percentage of children subject to a Child Protection (CP) plan at the end of the month and who at that date had had a plan continuously for at least the previous 3 months, whose case was reviewed within the required timescales.

Reviews are a key element in delivering CP Plans and effective reviews should ensure the provision of good quality interventions. This indicator is a proxy for the measurement of effectiveness of the interventions provided to children subject to a CP plan. "Working Together to Safeguard Children" guidance requires that the first review should be within 3 months of their ICPC and thereafter at intervals of no more than 6 months.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**

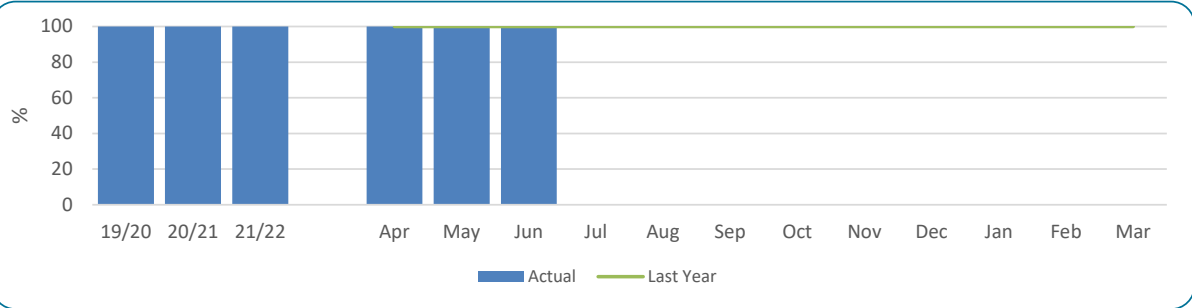
100% of Child Protection Cases were allocated to a qualified social worker.

100% of Child Protection reviews have been completed within the required timescales.

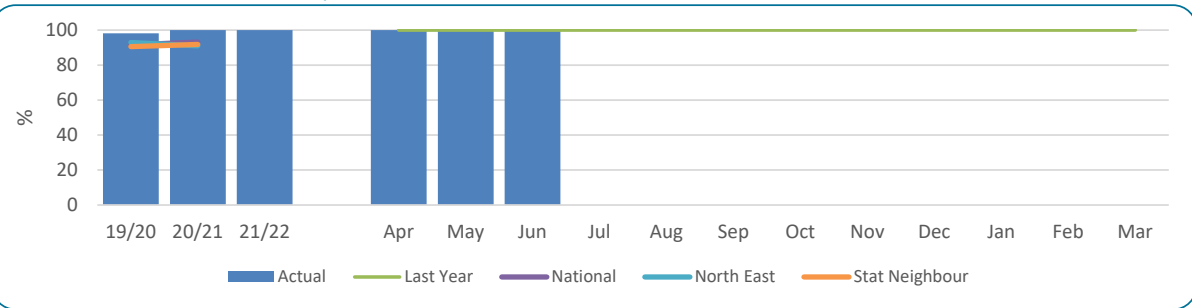
Page 71

		CSC 183	CSC 191
		% of children with a CP plan allocated to a qualified social worker	% of children whose CP plan was reviewed within the timescales.
<b>In Month Performance</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
	Apr-22	100.0	100.0
	May-22	100.0	100.0
	Jun-22	100.0	100.0
	Jul-22		
	Aug-22		
	Sep-22		
	Oct-22		
	Nov-22		
	Dec-22		
	Jan-23		
	Feb-23		
	Mar-23		
<b>Annual Trend</b>	2019/20	100.0	98.2
	2020/21	100.0	100.0
	2021/22	100.0	100.0
	2022/23	100.0	100.0

CSC 183: % of children with a CP plan allocated to a qualified social worker



CSC 191: % of children whose CP plan was reviewed within the timescales.



### CHILD PROTECTION PLAN: TIME PERIODS

**DEFINITION** Percentage of children ceasing to be subject to a Child Protection Plan who had been subject to a Plan for 2 or more years, and percentage of children becoming subject to a Child Protection Plan for the 2nd or subsequent time within a) 2 years of a previous plan, and b) with a previous plan at any point. These indicators reflect the underlying principle that professionals should be working towards specified outcomes which, if implemented effectively, should lead to all children not needing to be the subject of a Child Protection Plan within a maximum of two years, or becoming subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**

25.0% of the children became subject to a CP plan for a second or subsequent time within 2 years of the previous plan ending.

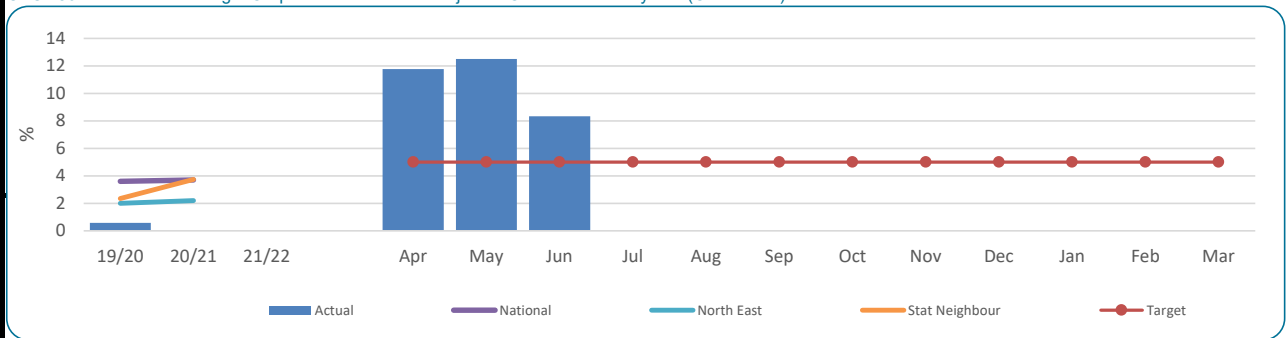
8.3% of children ceased to be subject to a CP plan in Q1 2022/23 after being subject to the plan for 2 or more years. The plans had been confirmed as appropriately opened for this length of time and the families are now in a position where they can be confidently closed to CP and a CiN plan put in place.

We are negatively above all our percentage targets in regard to CP time periods but appears more substantial due to the low numbers we have starting and ending CP plans.

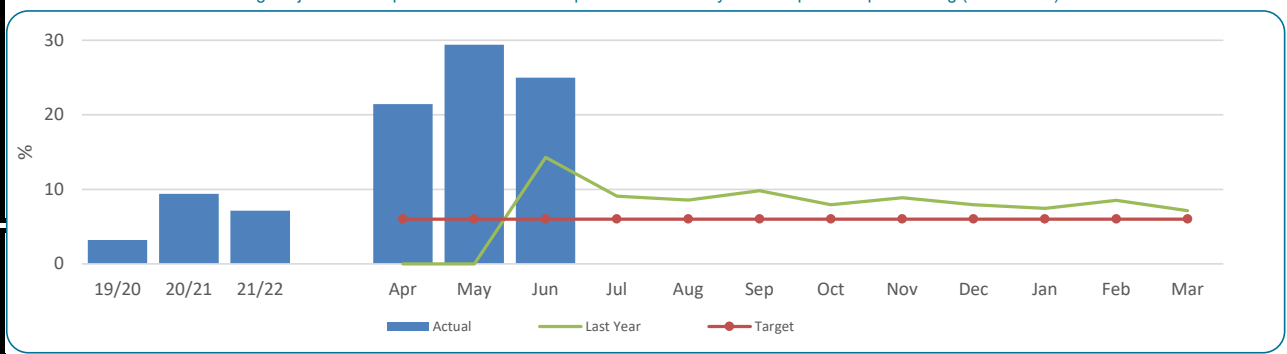
Page 72

		CSC 186	CSC 188
		% children ceasing a CP plan who had been subject to CP for 2 or more years (Cumulative)	% of children becoming subject to a CP plan for a 2nd or subsequent time within 2 years of a previous plan ending (Cumulative)
<b>In Month Performance</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>6%</b>
	Apr-22	11.8	21.4
	May-22	12.5	29.4
	Jun-22	8.3	25.0
	Jul-22		
	Aug-22		
	Sep-22		
	Oct-22		
	Nov-22		
	Dec-22		
	Jan-23		
	Feb-23		
Mar-23			
<b>Annual Trend</b>	2019/20	0.6	3.2
	2020/21	0.0	9.4
	2021/22	0.0	7.1
	2022/23	8.3	25.0

CSC 186: % children ceasing a CP plan who had been subject to CP for 2 or more years (Cumulative)



CSC 188: % of children becoming subject to a CP plan for a 2nd or subsequent time within 2 years of a previous plan ending (Cumulative)



## CHILD PROTECTION: STATUTORY VISITS

<b>DEFINITION</b>	Percentage of children subject to a Child Protection (CP) plan who had all statutory visits carried out within timescales and percentage of Child Protection statutory visits completed within timescale monthly and year to date.
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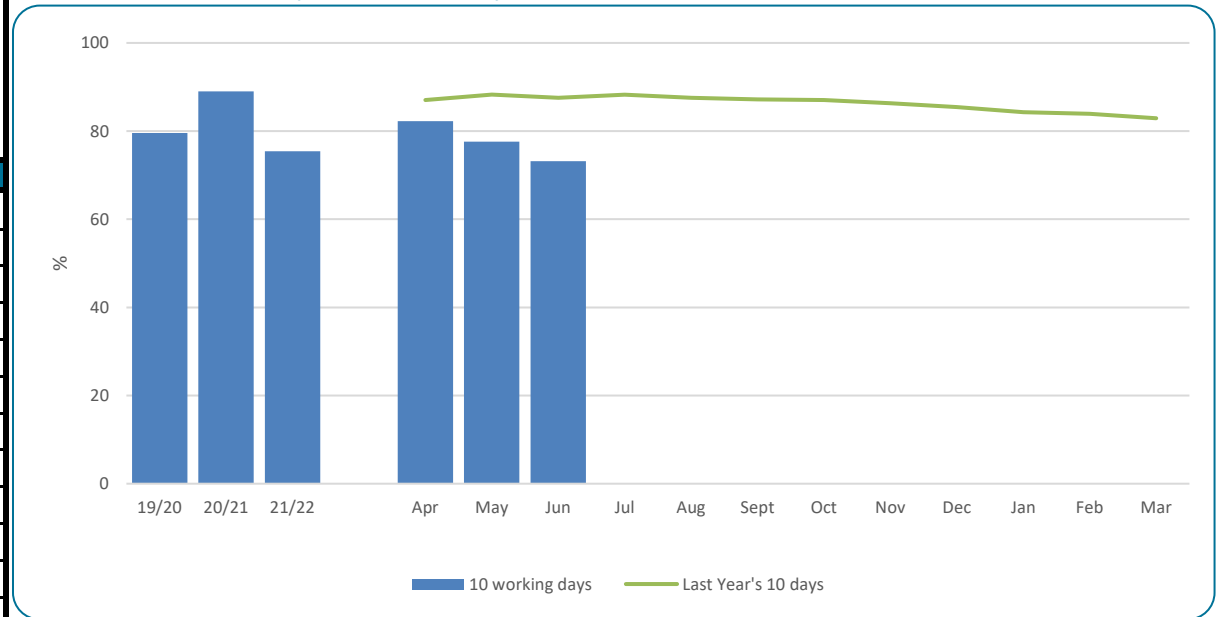
<b>PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS</b>	73.2% of Child Protection statutory visits were completed within 10 working days in Q1 2022/23. Although the 10 day target (90%) has not being met, a further 14.3% of visits were held on working day 11 and 12.
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CSC 252a      CSC 252b

	Target	% CP visits completed within 10 working days within the month	% CP visits completed within 10 working days year to date (cumulative)
	<b>In Month Performance</b>		<b>90</b>
	Apr-22	82.2	82.2
	May-22	72.8	77.6
	Jun-22	62.3	73.2
	Jul-22		
	Aug-22		
	Sep-22		
	Oct-22		
	Nov-22		
	Dec-22		
	Jan-23		
	Feb-23		
	Mar-23		
<b>Annual Trend</b>			
	2019/20	79.6	79.6
	2020/21	89.0	89.0
	2021/22	75.4	82.9
	2022/23	62.3	73.2

% Child Protection statutory visits completed year to date



## CHILDREN IN CARE

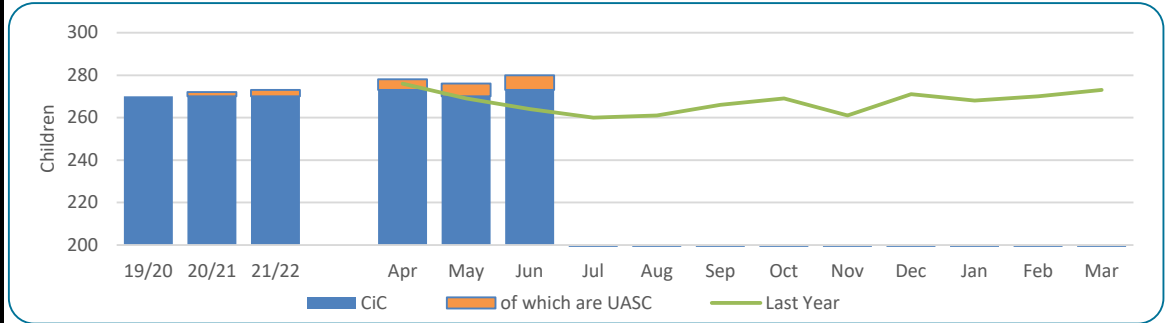
**DEFINITION** Number of Children in Care (CiC) at the end of each month and of which are Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child (UASC).

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**  
 280 children were in care as at June 2022, 7 of which are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.  
 The rate of children in care per ten thousand population is higher than June 2021 (117.2) but below June 2020 (129.6).

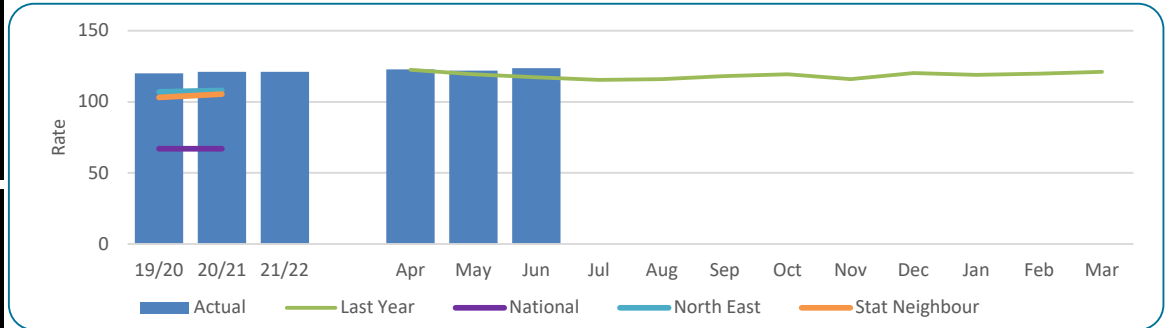
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		CSC 201		CSC 200	
		Total number of Children in Care	Of which are identified as a UASC	Rate of CiC per 10,000 population	
<b>In Month Performance</b>	<b>Target</b>			<b>95</b>	
	Apr-22	278	5	122.8	
	May-22	276	6	122.0	
	Jun-22	280	7	123.7	
	Jul-22				
	Aug-22				
	Sep-22				
	Oct-22				
	Nov-22				
	Dec-22				
	Jan-23				
	Feb-23				
	Mar-23				
<b>Annual Trend</b>	2019/20	270		120.0	
	2020/21	272	2	121.1	
	2021/22	273	3	121.2	
	2022/23	280	7	123.7	

CSC 201: Total number of Children in Care



CSC 200: Rate of CiC per 10,000 population



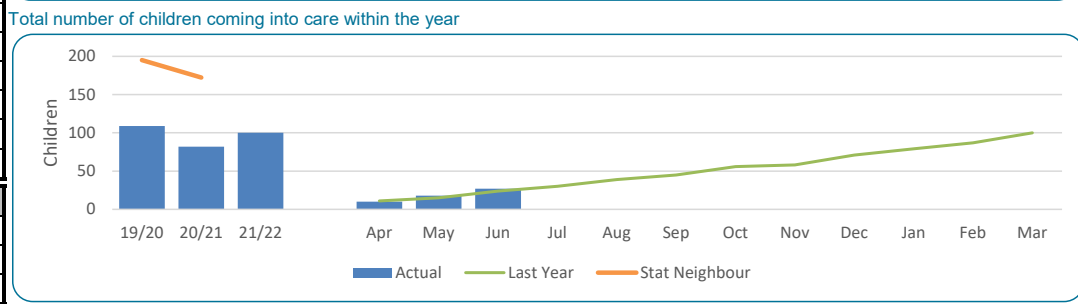
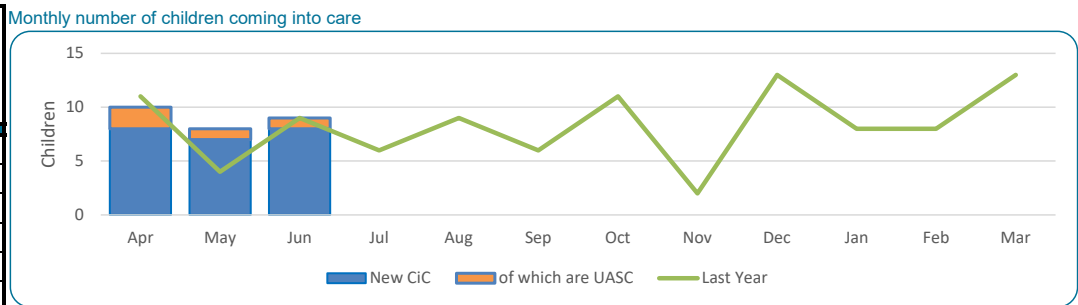
**CHILDREN IN CARE: COMING INTO CARE**

**DEFINITION** Number of children coming into the care of the local authority during the month and year to date and where they are an unaccompanied asylum seeking child (UASC). type.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS** 27 children from 22 families came into care in Q1 2022/23. This is a slight increase when compared with the 24 children who came into care in Q1 2021/22, but a decrease from Q1 2020/21 (29 children) and Q1 2019/20 (37 children). 4 young people came into care after being accepted by the Home Office as UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child).

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		CSC 209	CSC 208	
		Monthly number of children coming into care	Cumulative number of children coming into care	of which are UASC
<b>In Month Performance</b>	Apr-22	10	10	2
	May-22	8	18	1
	Jun-22	9	27	1
	Jul-22			
	Aug-22			
	Sep-22			
	Oct-22			
	Nov-22			
	Dec-22			
	Jan-23			
	Feb-23			
	Mar-23			
	<b>Annual Trend</b>	2019/20	109	109
2020/21		82	82	2
2021/22		100	100	2
2022/23		27	27	4



## CHILDREN IN CARE: CEASING CARE

**DEFINITION** Number of children ceasing to be a Child in Care during each month and year to date and their destination when they ceased being in care.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**

20 children and young people ceased to be in care in Q1 2022/23. This is a decrease when compared with the 32 children who ceased in Q1 2021/22, but an increase from Q1 2020/21 (8 children).

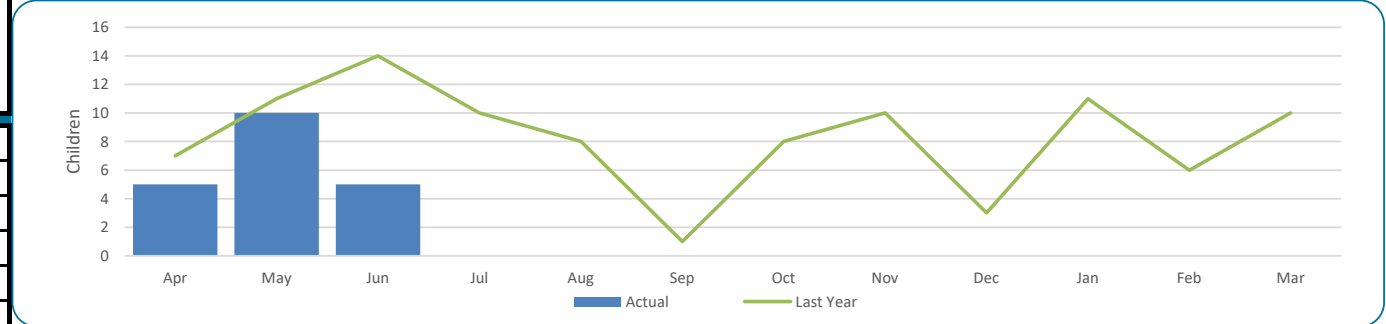
Of the children and young people who did cease CiC:

- 40.0% due to turning 18 and becoming a care leaver.
- 25.0% returned home to their parent(s).
- 20.0% had a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) / Child Arrangement Order (CAO) granted to a relative.
- 15.0% were adopted

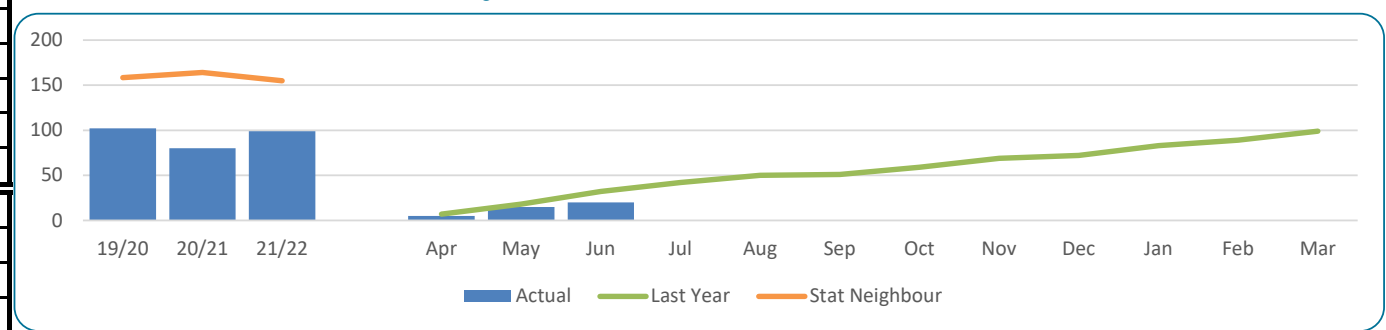
The proportion of children who returned home to their parent(s) has increased when compared to Q1 2021/22 (9.4%) and Q1 2020/21 (0%).

		CSC 212	CSC 211
		Monthly number of children ceasing care	Cumulative number of children ceasing care
<b>In Month Performance</b>	Apr-22	5	5
	May-22	10	15
	Jun-22	5	20
	Jul-22		
	Aug-22		
	Sep-22		
	Oct-22		
	Nov-22		
	Dec-22		
	Jan-23		
	Feb-23		
	Mar-23		
	<b>Annual Trend</b>	2019/20	102
2020/21		80	80
2021/22		99	99
2022/23		20	20

CSC 212: Monthly number of children ceasing care



CSC 211: Cumulative number of children ceasing care





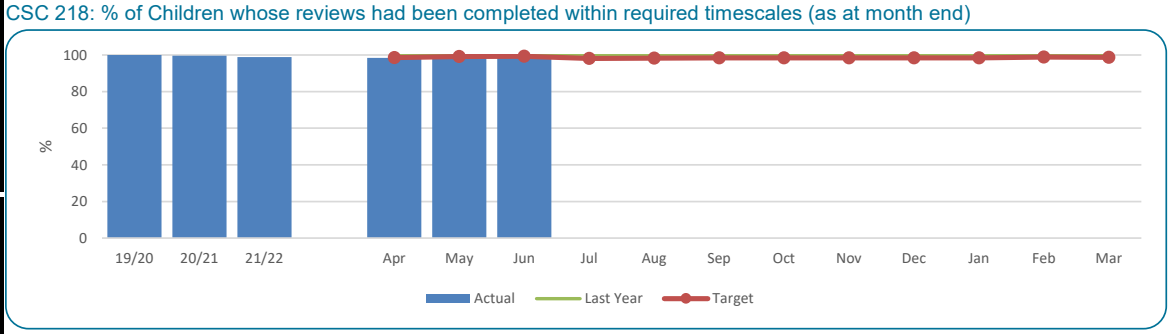
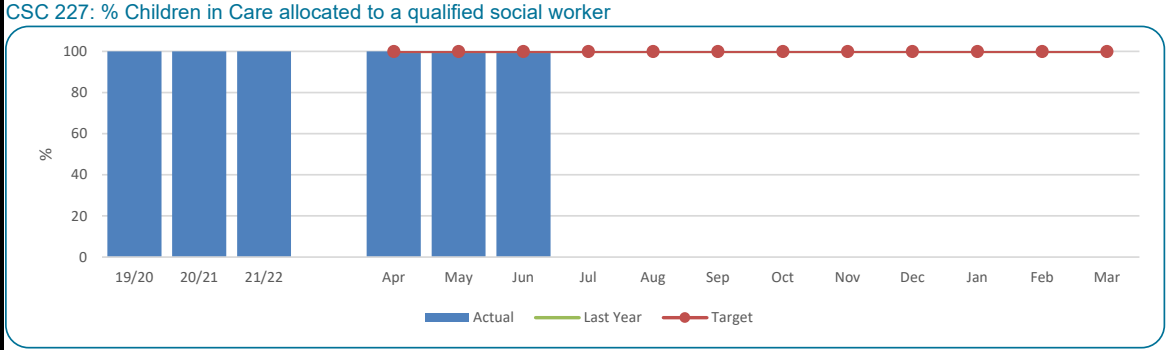
## CHILDREN IN CARE: ALLOCATION & REVIEWS

**DEFINITION**  
 The percentage of Children in Care (CiC) which should have been reviewed during the year ending 31 March that were reviewed on time and the percentage of Children in Care that were allocated to a qualified social worker at the end of the month. The purpose of the review is to consider the plan for the child's welfare, to monitor the progress of the plan and amend it as necessary in light of changed information and circumstances. The statutory intervals are within 20 working days of placement, then within 3 months and 6 monthly thereafter, but reviews may be rescheduled or held inside these intervals if there are significant changes to the child's care plan.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**  
 100% of Children in Care (CiC) are allocated to a qualified social worker and 98.8% of the reviews have been completed within required timescales.

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		CSC 227	CSC 218
		% Children in Care allocated to a qualified social worker	% of Children whose reviews had been completed within required timescales (as at month end)
<b>In Month Performance</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
	Apr-22	100.0	98.5
	May-22	100.0	99.1
	Jun-22	100.0	98.8
	Jul-22		
	Aug-22		
	Sep-22		
	Oct-22		
	Nov-22		
	Dec-22		
	Jan-23		
	Feb-23		
	Mar-23		
<b>Annual Trend</b>	2019/20	100.0	100.0
	2020/21	100.0	99.6
	2021/22	100.0	98.8
	2022/23	100.0	98.8



## CHILDREN IN CARE: STATUTORY VISITS

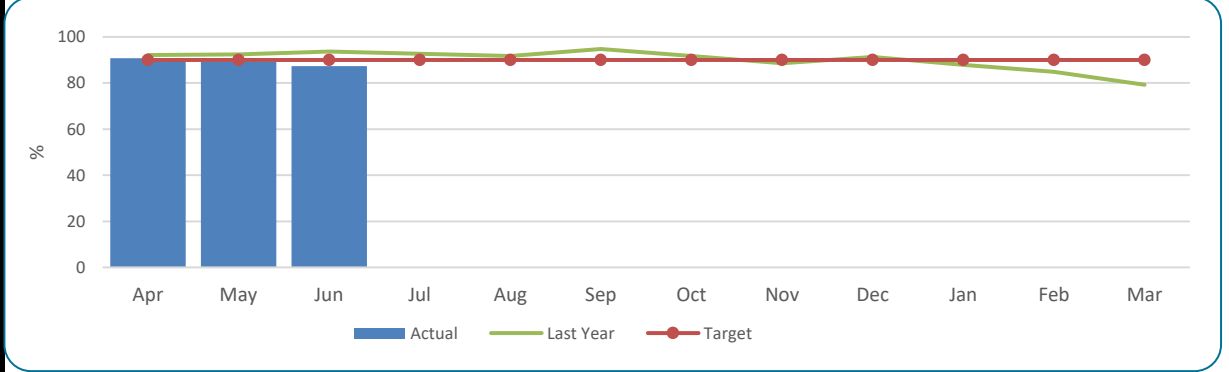
**DEFINITION** Percentage of Children in Care (CiC) who had all statutory visits completed within required timescales each month and year to date.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS** 89.1% of statutory visits for Children in Care (CiC) were completed in timescale in Q1 2022/23. This is in line with our internal target of 90%.

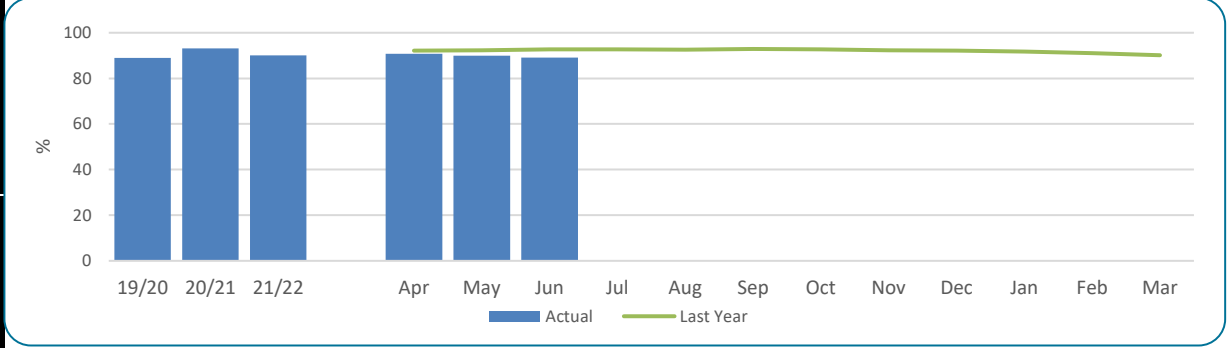
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		CSC 260a	CSC 260b
		% CiC visits completed in timescale within the month	% CiC visits completed in timescale year to date
<b>In Month Performance</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>
	Apr-22	90.8	90.8
	May-22	89.1	89.9
	Jun-22	87.3	89.1
	Jul-22		
	Aug-22		
	Sep-22		
	Oct-22		
	Nov-22		
	Dec-22		
	Jan-23		
	Feb-23		
	Mar-23		
<b>Annual Trend</b>	2019/20	89.0	89.0
	2020/21	93.1	93.1
	2021/22	90.1	90.1
	2022/23	87.3	89.1

CSC 260a: % CiC visits completed in timescale within the month



CSC 260b: % CiC visits completed in timescale year to date



## CHILDREN IN CARE: PLACEMENTS

**DEFINITION** Of those Children in Care (CiC) at the point in time (excluding series of short-term placements), the percentage that had 3 or more separate placements in the previous 12 months; who (under the age of 16 years) had been in their current placement for 2 or more years. and who were placed more than 20 miles away from their home address. Proper assessment and an adequate choice of placements to meet the varied needs of different children are essential if appropriate stable placements are to be made. Inappropriate placements often break down and lead to frequent moves. Nevertheless, the circumstances of some individual children will require 3 or more separate placements during a year if they and others are to be kept safe.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**

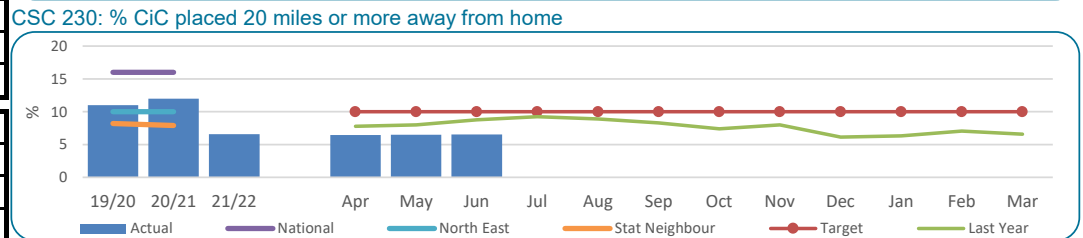
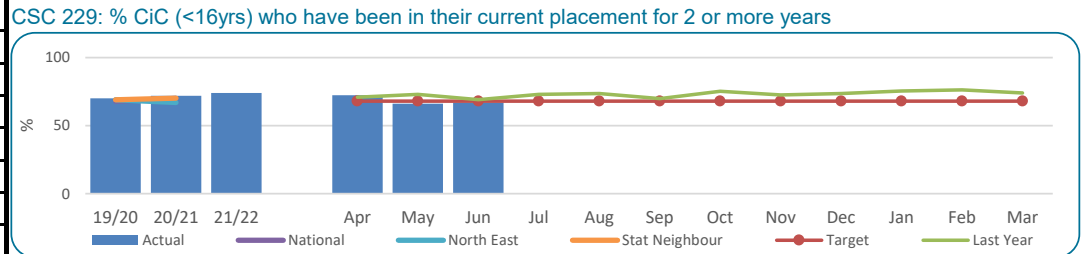
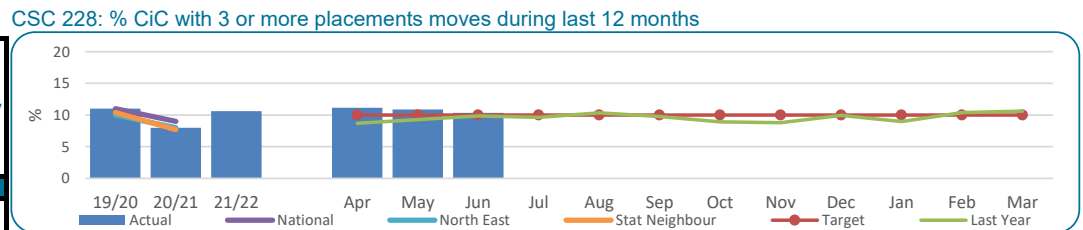
10.4% of our Children in Care, as at June 2022, have had 3 or more placements within the previous 12 months. This is at internal target (10.0%), and above the 9.9% as at June 2021.

Currently, 67.0% of our Children in Care aged under 16 (who have been looked after for at least 2.5 years) have been in their current placement continuously for at least 2 years. This is just below our 68% target and was due to new placement move, ceasing to be in care and some children turned 16 so no longer recorded in this measure.

6.5% of our Children in Care have needed to be placed 20 or more miles away from home as at June 2022. This is positively below target of 10% and that of June 2021 (8.8%). All these placements have been confirmed by team managers to be appropriate for the child enabling them to have the best support either with family links or specialised care.

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		CSC 228	CSC 229	CSC 230
		% CiC with 3 or more placements moves during last 12 months	% CiC (<16yrs) who have been in their current placement for 2 or more years	% CiC placed 20 miles or more away from home
<b>In Month Performance</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>10%</b>
	Apr-22	11.2	72.3	6.4
	May-22	10.9	66.1	6.5
	Jun-22	10.4	67.0	6.5
	Jul-22			
	Aug-22			
	Sep-22			
	Oct-22			
	Nov-22			
	Dec-22			
	Jan-23			
	Feb-23			
Mar-23				
<b>Annual Trend</b>	2019/20	11.0	70.0	11.0
	2020/21	8.0	72.0	12.0
	2021/22	10.6	74.0	6.6
	2022/23	10.4	67.0	6.5



## CHILDREN IN CARE: INITIAL HEALTH ASSESSMENTS

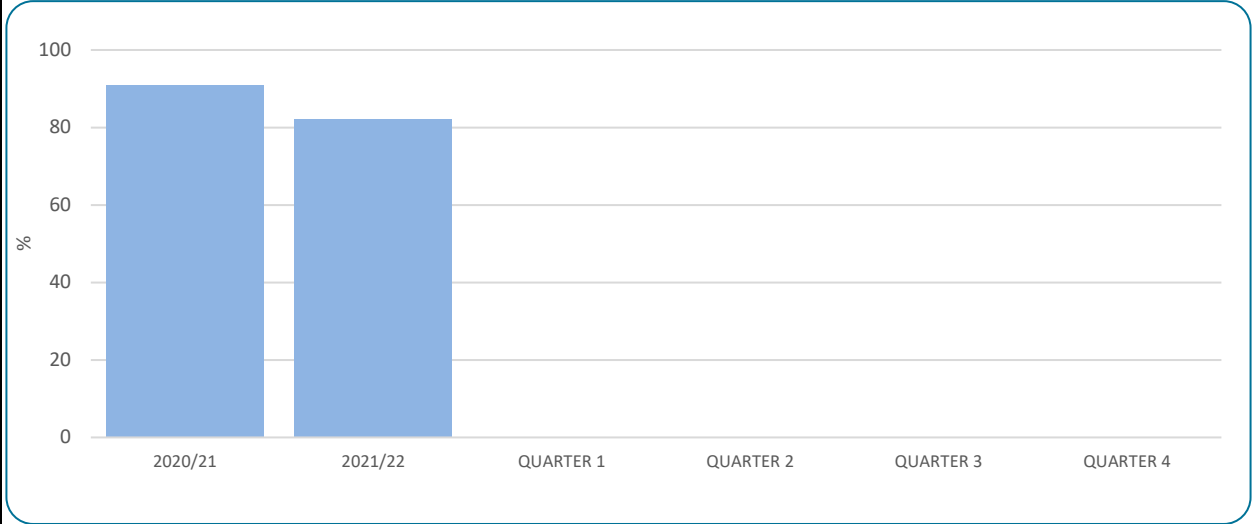
<b>DEFINITION</b>	Percentage of Initial Health Assessments completed within 20 working days of a child coming into our care year to date (data from Health).
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<b>PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS</b>	We are awaiting the official data from CDDFT to confirm the percentage of the children, that came into our care during Q1 2022/23, had a health appointment within 20 days.
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		Completed IHA within 20 working days (by Health)
		Target
<b>In Month Performance</b>		<b>95</b>
	Apr-22	
	May-22	
	Jun-22	TBC
	Jul-22	
	Aug-22	
	Sep-22	
	Oct-22	
	Nov-22	
	Dec-22	
	Jan-23	
	Feb-23	
	Mar-23	
<b>Annual Trend</b>	2019/20	72.9
	2020/21	90.9
	2021/22	82.1
	2022/23	

Completed IHA within 20 working days (by Health)



## CHILDREN IN CARE: HEALTH ASSESSMENTS

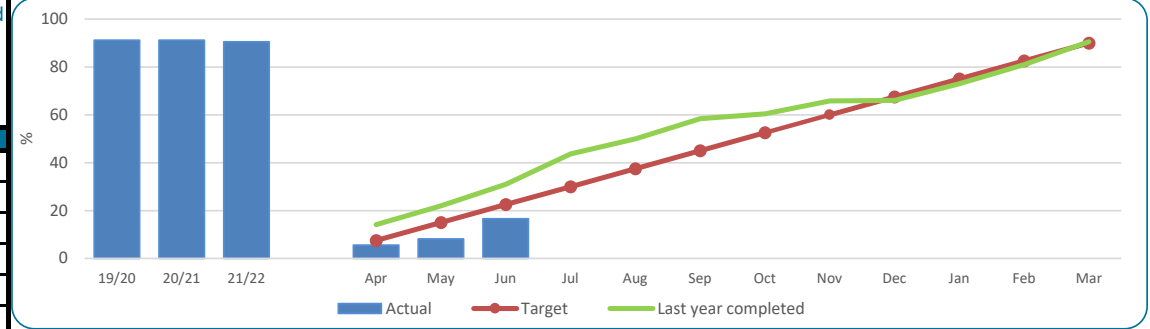
**DEFINITION** Of the Children in Care (CiC) at 31 March who had been in care continuously for at least 12 months, the percentage who have had their Review Health Assessment (RHA) completed and the percentage who have an up to date Health Check (excludes any who will turn 18 before 31st March). Children in Care share many of the same health risks and problems as their peers, but often to a greater degree. These indicators track the participation of our Children in Care's health as a proxy for monitoring the general health and wellbeing of the children, as well as providing a check on the effectiveness of joint working with Health to secure good health outcomes for Children in Care.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS** 28.8% of children due a review health assessment by June 2022 have had one completed.  
Of the children who did not have a health review, 10.6% of them are refusing to have one completed at this time. Although they are refusing, they are continually reminded of the benefits of having a check-up and encouraged to take part.

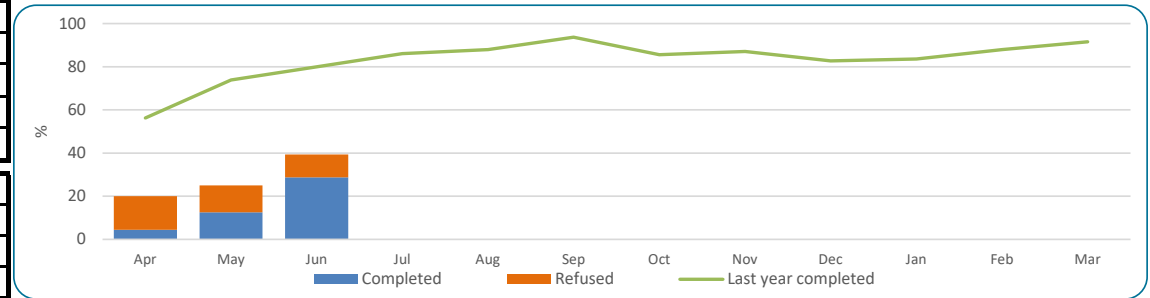
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		CSC 250	CSC 250b	
		% of CiC who have an up to date health checks	% of CiC refusing engagement in their review health check (in month)	% of CiC who had a review health check completed (year to date)
<b>In Month Performance</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>90%</b>		<b>90%</b>
	Apr-22	5.6	15.6	4.4
	May-22	8.1	12.5	12.5
	Jun-22	16.5	10.6	28.8
	Jul-22			
	Aug-22			
	Sep-22			
	Oct-22			
	Nov-22			
	Dec-22			
	Jan-23			
	Feb-23			
	Mar-23			
<b>Annual Trend</b>	2019/20	91.2	3.1	93.3
	2020/21	91.2	3.7	91.2
	2021/22	90.5	3.7	91.6
	2022/23	16.5	10.6	28.8

CSC 250: % of CiC who are up to date for a review health check



CSC 250b: % of CiC due a review health check (year to date) that have had one, and % that refused



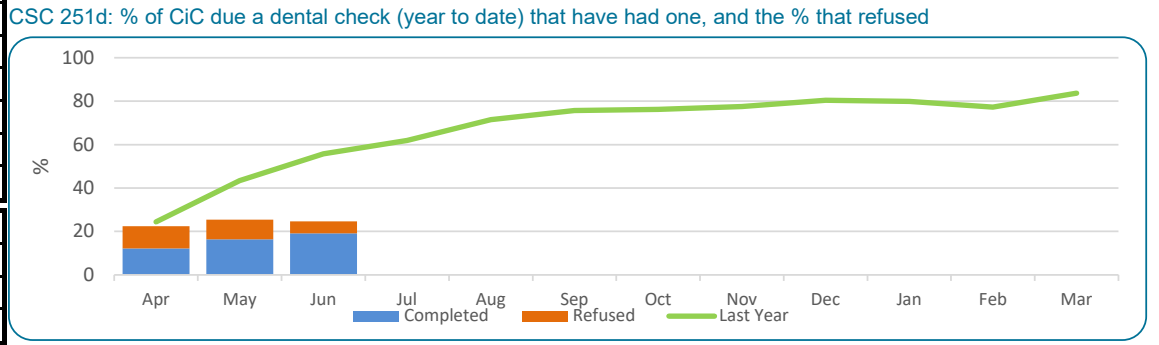
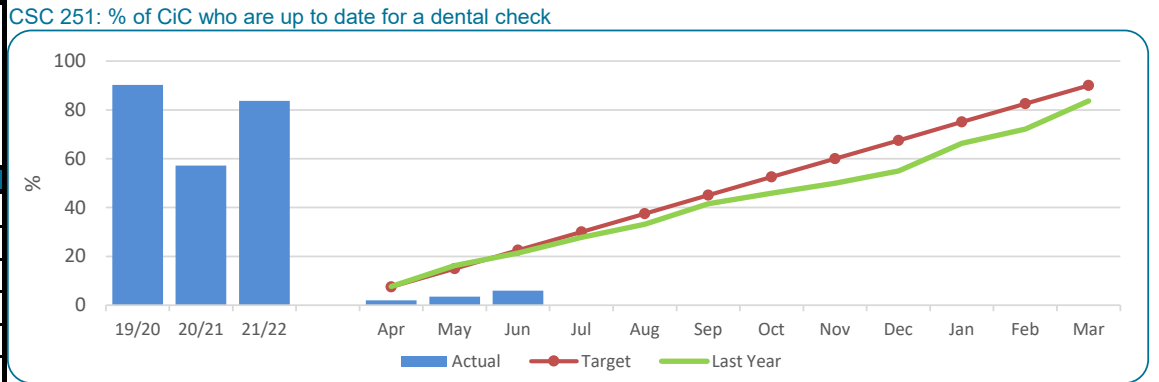
## CHILDREN IN CARE: DENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENTS

**DEFINITION** Of the Children in Care (CiC) at 31 March who had been in care continuously for at least 12 months, the percentage who had had their teeth checked by a dentist during the previous 12 months, and the percentage who had had an annual health check during the previous 12 months (excludes any who will turn 18 before 31st March). Children in Care share many of the same health risks and problems as their peers, but often to a greater degree. These indicators track the participation of our Children in Care with dental checks as a proxy for monitoring the general health and wellbeing of the children, as well as providing a check on the effectiveness of joint working with Health to secure good health outcomes for Children in Care.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS** 19.2% of children due a dental check assessment by June 2022 have had one completed.  
Of the children who did not have a dental check, 5.5% of them are refusing to have one completed at this time. Although they are refusing, they are continually reminded of the benefits of having a check-up and encouraged to take part.

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		CSC 251		CSC 251d	
		% of CiC who have an up to date dental check	% of CiC refusing engagement in their dental check (in month)	% of CiC who had a dental check completed (year to date)	
<b>In Month Performance</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>90%</b>		<b>90%</b>	
	Apr-22	2.0	10.2	12.2	
	May-22	3.5	9.1	16.4	
	Jun-22	5.9	5.5	19.2	
	Jul-22				
	Aug-22				
	Sep-22				
	Oct-22				
	Nov-22				
	Dec-22				
	Jan-23				
	Feb-23				
	Mar-23				
	<b>Annual Trend</b>	2019/20	90.2	3.1	90.2
2020/21		57.2	2.8	57.2	
2021/22		83.7	2.6	83.7	
2022/23		5.9	5.5	19.2	



## CARE LEAVERS

**DEFINITION** Former relevant care leavers split to show the young people who, at 31st March, will be aged 19-21. The percentage who were in suitable accommodation at their most recent contact, and the percentage who were not in employment, education or training at their most recent contact.  
This measures accommodation and employment outcomes for young people formerly in care - a key group at risk of social exclusion.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**

98.2% of our care leavers aged 19-21 were in suitable accommodation at the end of June 2022.

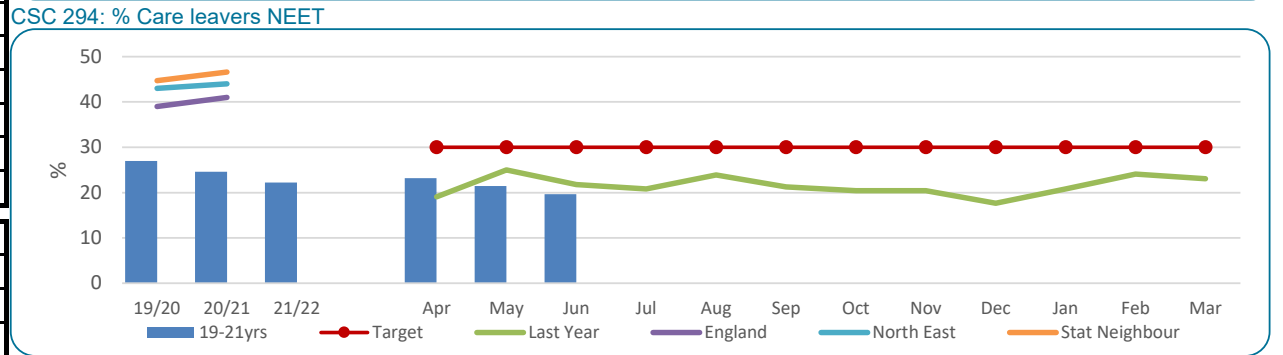
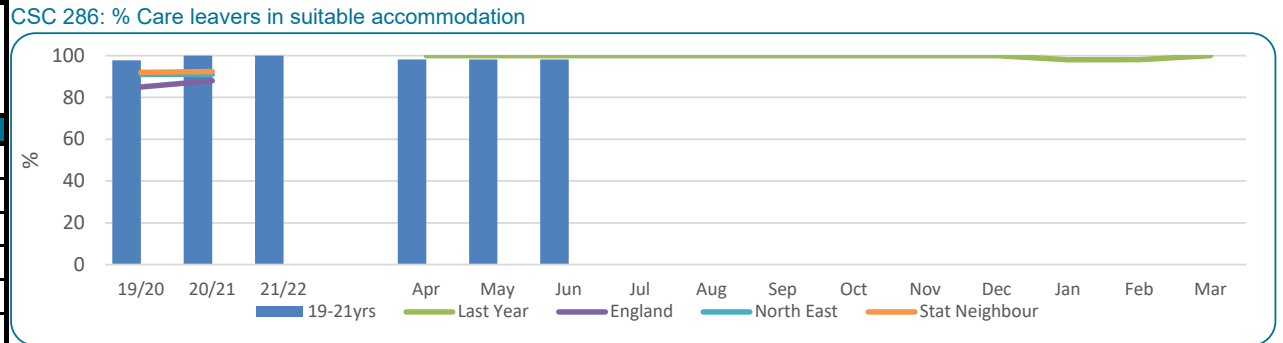
Of the young people (aged 19-21), as of 30th June 2022, the following were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).

- 1.8% because of illness or disability
- 10.7% because of other circumstances
- 7.1% because of pregnancy or parenting.

This equates to 19.6% of our care leavers which is positively below the internal target of 30% NEET.

19.7% of our care leavers were engaging in education (5.4% of which are in studies beyond A level) and 60.7% young people were in training or employment (30.4% in full time, 30.3% in part time).

		CSC 286		CSC 294	
		% Care leavers in suitable accommodation		% Care leavers NEET	
<b>In Month Performance</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>90%</b>		<b>30%</b>	
	Apr-22	98.2		23.2	
	May-22	98.2		21.4	
	Jun-22	98.2		19.6	
	Jul-22				
	Aug-22				
	Sep-22				
	Oct-22				
	Nov-22				
	Dec-22				
	Jan-23				
	Feb-23				
	Mar-23				
<b>Annual Trend</b>	2019/20	97.8		27.0	
	2020/21	100.0		24.6	
	2021/22	100.0		22.2	
	2022/23	98.2		19.6	



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## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY 31 OCTOBER 2022

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### SEND WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ACTION

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#### SUMMARY REPORT

##### Purpose of the Report

1. To update scrutiny committee on the Ofsted/CQC Inspection on the provision of Special Educational Needs (SEND) support in Darlington and the subsequent development of a Written Statement of Action (WSOA), **see Appendix A.**

##### Background

2. Between January 2022 and 1 February 2022, the local area of Darlington was inspected by Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) and CQC (Care Quality Commission). The inspection was to see how well the area had put in place the changes across all services that the Children and Families Act 2014 requires for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families.
3. In particular, it assessed how well Darlington Borough Council, Schools, Academy Trusts and all parts of the Health Service identify and meet the needs of children and young people with SEND, as well as the outcomes they achieve.
4. This inspection is not graded, but a detailed letter is produced. Whilst the lead inspector identified a number of strengths in the local area, there were also two areas of significant weakness identified across Darlington.
5. The significant weaknesses identified were:
  - (a) The ineffectiveness of meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND and the impact of this on their outcomes.
  - (b) Poor preparation for adulthood and post-19 opportunities for children and young people with SEND.
6. Some 80% of local areas inspected over the past year by Ofsted/CQC have had similar outcomes in their letters, requiring them to produce a Written Statement of Action (WSOA), implementation of which is monitored quarterly by the DfE and NHS England prior to a full reinspection by Ofsted/CQC. All other Tees Valley LAs were required to produce a WSOA following their Local Area Inspection. Together with Health, DBC is required to produce a WSOA to address the issues set out above.
7. Whilst many of the issues are common to most local authorities (reflecting some of the challenges arising from the Children and Families Act 2014), it is recognised that there are

actions which local leaders will need to deliver. We were already undertaking changes prior to the inspection. The report has highlighted the need for us to accelerate these changes and implement the required improvements.

### **Recommendations**

8. It is recommended that scrutiny note the written statement of action.

**Tony Murphy**

**Assistant Director, Education and Inclusion**

## Background Papers

Tony Murphy : Extension 5637

S17 Crime and Disorder	The service supports the Council's crime and disorder responsibilities, young people engaged in learning are less likely to engage in anti-social behaviour
Health and Wellbeing	The service actively promotes health and wellbeing
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	The service promotes sustainability
Diversity	The service actively supports the diversity agenda
Wards Affected	All wards will be affected
Groups Affected	All families of learners with special education needs
Budget and Policy Framework	Services for SEND are supported through the Dedicated Schools Grant
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Council Plan	This work will support the aim to provide excellent services for children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND) - implement a new SEND strategy, increase the number of SEND places in schools and work to raise SEND funding levels from central government
Efficiency	The work will support efficient use of resources to support SEND
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This work will have a positive impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers

## MAIN REPORT

### Darlington Action Plan

9. The immediate action taken in response to the inspection outcome was that the SEND Assurance Executive and SEND Implementation Group coordinated a response by education, health and social care to the Ofsted/CQC inspection.
10. The WSoA has been created by the local area partnership and has involved a number of co-production approaches. We have surveyed across the partnership receiving 74 responses from Parent/Carers, Children and Young People, Health, Education and Social Care professionals. We also hosted a co-production event with good participation from Parent/Carers. Health, Education and Social Care professionals.
11. All actions have clear dates and a named lead in the WSoA to ensure that delivery can be clearly monitored through the described governance arrangements with monthly, quarterly and annual check points. The governance will monitor not only actions but the detailed outcome measurements so that as a local area we are clearly aware of the impact of the actions taken.
12. The SEND Assurance Executive will have strategic overview of the WSoA and the implementation of the agreed actions to improve the outcomes for children with SEND in Darlington. The overarching aim is to ensure a joint responsibility for addressing the significant weaknesses highlighted by Ofsted/CQC. The executive will also ensure there is pace to the implementation of improvements and sustainable impact for children and young people with SEND.

### Monitoring

13. The WSoA was approved as being fit for purpose by Ofsted on 9 September 2022. The delivery of the WSoA will be subject to quarterly monitoring by DfE/NHS England and a full re-inspection will be undertaken by Ofsted/CQC around 18 months after the WSoA has been approved.



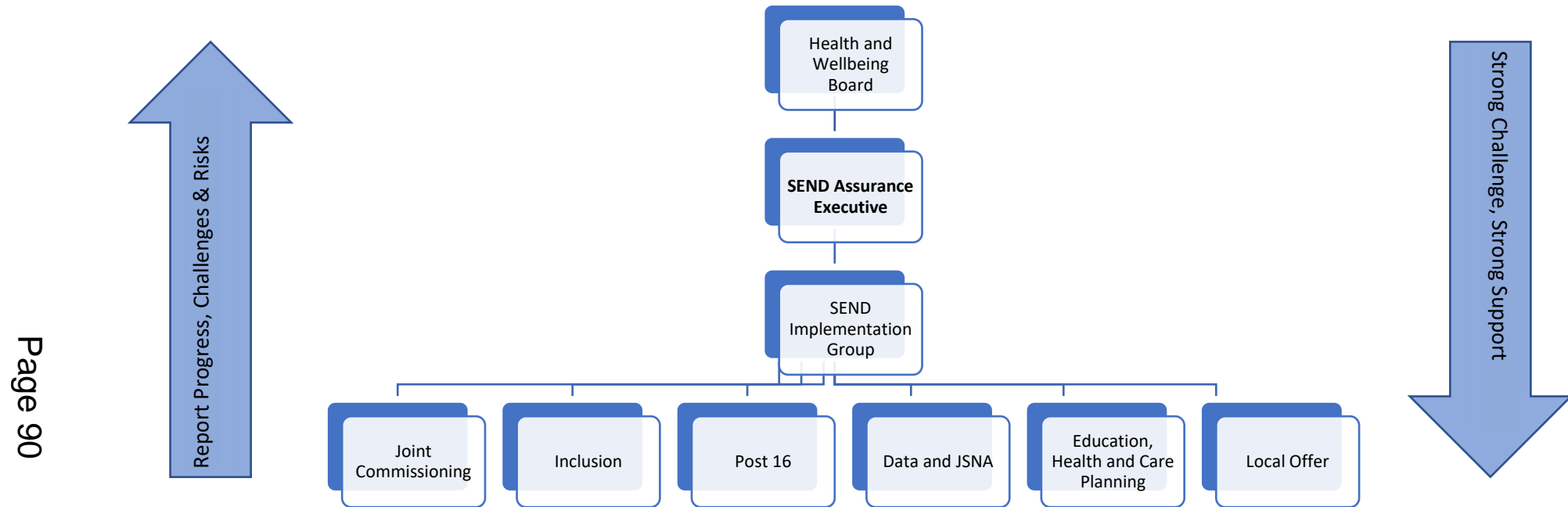
# **Darlington Special Education Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) Local Area**

## **Written Statement of Action (WSoA)**

**August 2022**

## Governance

The governance structure is in place to ensure progress in the delivery of the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) and the wider SEND agenda.



## Written Statement of Action (WSOA)

The WSoA is Darlington's response to areas of significant weakness identified as part of the OFSTED and CQC inspection, January 2022.

1. The effectiveness of meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND and the impact of this on their outcomes
2. Poor preparation for adulthood and post 19 opportunities for children & Young people with SEND

The written statement has been created by the local area partnership and has involved a range of coproduction approaches. We have surveyed across the partnership receiving 74 responses from Parent/Carers, Children and Young People, Health, Education and Social Care professionals. We also hosted a co-production event with good participation from Parent/Carers, Health, Education and Social Care professionals.

The Written Statement of Action (WSOA) has been created as a high-level implementation and monitoring document. It uses plain English to support and model the coproduction and accessibility of the document which will be available on the Local Offer.

The WSoA is an integral part of the continuing improvement journey for children and young people with SEND being undertaken by the Local Area partners.

## Monitoring the WSoA

The WSoA is in the form of an action plan and will be used to monitor progress and completion of actions. It will also be used to measure the achieved outcomes to ensure the impact of the actions against agreed targets.

### Monitoring Schedule

	Frequency	Forum
Leadership and Operational Delivery	Monthly	SEND Implementation Group
Strategic Assurance	1/4ly	SEND Assurance Executive
Wider "place based" Governance	Annually	Health and Wellbeing Board

### Monitoring Actions

Actions will be monitored against progress and delivery within the given time frames using a **BRAGG** rating as below, this will be assessed and updated monthly.

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<b>Completed Embedded Sustained (B)</b>	<b>Major concerns (R)</b>	<b>On track, some concerns (A)</b>	<b>On track, no concerns (G)</b>	<b>Not started, not due (G)</b>
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### Monitoring Outcomes

Outcomes will be measured against timeframe and agreed outcome targets using the RAG rating below. Outcome targets are quantified whenever possible in terms of time, a percentage or number of improvements, the RAG rating will be updated monthly. This allows the lead to update the SEND Implementation Group, and governance, of any success, progress, risks, delays or problems. It will help the local area keep a record of how things are going and what happens on our improvement journey.

<b>Impact Not Measured Or Negative Impact</b>	<b>Impact being measured Either Neutral or (not yet measured)</b>	<b>Positive Impact Both Measured and Demonstrable</b>
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**Named Individuals for Action Delivery**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Alex Sinclair	Director (Tees Valley)	North East and North Cumbria ICB
Chris Bell	Assistant Director Children's Services	Darlington Borough Council
Dianne Gage	Inclusion Lead Officer	Darlington Borough Council
Helen Ellison	Head of Education Partnerships	Darlington Borough Council
James Stroyan	Group Director of People (Joint DASS/DCSS)	Darlington Borough Council
Jo Heaney	Head of Commissioning, Strategy and Delivery - Children and Young People (Tees Valley)	North East and North Cumbria ICB
Jo Littler	Head of SEND and Inclusion (Interim)	Darlington Borough Council
Joanne Shutt	Young People's Involvement and Opp. Worker	Darlington Borough Council
Kevin Kelly	Head of Learning Disabilities and Mental Health	Darlington Borough Council
Melanie Dickinson	Schools Admissions and Transport Manager	Darlington Borough Council
Michele Dickens	Strategic Commissioning Manager – SEND	Darlington Borough Council
Nic Childs	Commissioning Lead – Children and Young People (Tees Valley)	North East and North Cumbria ICB
Nicole Madden	Commissioning Delivery Manager (Tees Valley)	North East and North Cumbria ICB
Paul Richardson	Head of Employability and Skills	Darlington Borough Council
Ruth Kimmins	Designated Clinical Officer	North East and North Cumbria ICB
Seth Pearson	Chief Executive	Darlington Partnership
Sukhdev Dosanjh	Head of Commissioning	Darlington Borough Council
Tony Murphy	Assistant Director Education and Inclusion	Darlington Borough Council
Wendy Excell	Performance, Analysis and Strategy Manager	Darlington Borough Council



### The effectiveness of meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND and the impact of this on their outcomes

1.1	Strategy Link	Actions	Actioned by	Action Completed	Action Monitoring (BRAGG)	Outcome targets	IMPACT Monitoring (RAG)
Information to be shared across agencies without the need to keep telling their story	Joint Commissioning  Inclusion  EHCP	Consult with parent/carers, children & young people on alternative methods of collecting/collating/sharing views for statutory assessment and implement agreed process	Jo Littler	October 2022		Dec 2022 In post assessment follow up 90% of parents will say the process was effective in sharing with recognisable coproduction.	
		Implementation of new electronic process - DBC purchase new Education Management System (Liquid Logic Eyes) enabling single family record view and parent/carer portal	Tony Murphy	Sept 2023		Dec 2023 In post assessment follow up, audit of process shows effective transfer of information and tell it once approach	
story so far (success, progress, risks, delays)							Date

1.2	1. The effectiveness of meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND and the impact of this on their outcomes						
Issue to be addressed	Strategy Link	Actions	Actioned by	By when	Action Status (BRAGG)	Outcome targets	IMPACT (RAG)
Responsiveness to understanding and planning for changing needs	Joint commissioning  Data & Performance	Develop a comprehensive SEND Data Dashboard for all pupils with SEN and align with SEND Strategy	Nicole Madden  Wendy Excell	Dec 2022		March 2023 Partners use the dashboard to identify existing and emerging need	
	EHCP	Ensure alignment between the services being commissioned and the data available about needs in Darington	Michele Dickens  Nic Childs	Mar 2023		March 2023 The SEND dashboard is part of the commissioning process for new service provision and delivery	
		Conduct deep dive into recent tribunal to see what lessons can be learned and action plan developed to implement findings	Jo Littler	Dec 2022		April 2023 There will be a 50% reduction in tribunal cases	
		Audit Process to be established to facilitate Placement Planning for predicted and emerging needs.	Jo Littler	Dec 2022		July 2023 There will be a reduction in the percentage of children and young people with an EHC plan receiving their education in out of authority provision to 10%	
story so far (success, progress, risks, delays)							Date

1.3	1. The effectiveness of meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND and the impact of this on their outcomes						
Issue to be addressed	Strategy Link	Actions	Actioned by	By when	Action Status (BRAGG)	Outcome targets	IMPACT (RAG)
Parents, carers and some school leaders are unclear about the Areas plans to ensure appropriate additional support for children with SEN including those with EHCPs	SEND Executive Group	Finalise new SEND Strategy including communication strategy	Tony Murphy  Jo Heaney	Dec 2022		March 23 Routes for accessing information including through the Local Offer, education providers, SENDIASS, partner provider agencies are monitored. Local services report a 50% fall in the number of contacts where parents have not known how children are supported, for example, through the graduated response	
	Inclusion	Further develop and agree the borough wide standard SEND Support Offer linked to graduated response	Helen Ellison	April 2023		Sept 2023 A 10% year on year reduction in the numbers of parental referrals for statutory assessment across academic year.	
						Sept 2023 A 20% year on year reduction in the numbers of requests for specialist provision for children and young people whose needs could continue to be met mainstream education.	
						Sept 2023 100% of requests for managed moves will have been screened for SEND prior to submission and request will reduce overall year on year by 10%	

						Dec 2023 The number of referrals for statutory assessment declined will reduce to 10% or less.	
						Dec 2023 The numbers of statutory assessments carried out that result in an EHC plans being issued will reduce to 75%	
						Dec 2023 The number of EHC plans issued that name mainstream provision will increase to 95%	
						Year End 2023/24 Exclusions and suspensions for pupils with EHC plans and SEN Support will reduce by at least 10%	
story so far (success, progress, risks, delays)							Date

1.4	1. The effectiveness of meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND and the impact of this on their outcomes						
Issue to be addressed	Strategy Link	Actions	Actioned by	By when	Action Status (BRAGG)	Outcome targets	IMPACT (RAG)
Resourced provision is not used effectively or known about		Consult on all current resource provision and outreach in Darlington. especially with children, young people and families.	Jo Littler Michele Dickens	Dec 2022		Jan 2023 Children, Young People and their parents will have been surveyed and responses collated to inform wider review. Minimum of 50% survey response	
		Conduct a review of all resourced provision and outreach within Darlington to ensure that the resources meet the needs demonstrated by data regarding the uptake and usage of places measured against audit of existing and emerging need.	Jo Littler Michele Dickens	July 2023		Sept 2023 Darlington will be commissioning resourced provision and outreach in line with the review outcome and needs identified by the data dashboard.	
		Ensure all commissioned SEND provision have service level agreements that have an outcomes framework to ensure clarity about expected outcomes. Includes the requirement that children, young people and families are independently surveyed on at least an annual basis to assure satisfaction of service delivery	Jo Littler Michele Dickens	July 2023		Dec 2023 75% of surveys will report satisfaction or above for all commissioned provision in Darlington	
						Dec 2023 All commissioned provision will be meeting the outcomes as specified in SLA's on at least 90% of outcomes measures	
		Review all central and commissioned support services to identify roles	Jo Littler Michele Dickens	July 2023		Dec 2023 The local authority will have an outcomes based framework in place	

		responsibility and outcome measures				for quality assurance of commissioned SEND provision with clearly identified roles for this process. Quarterly monitoring visits will be carried out and all provision will have met the required standards in 90% of outcomes measures.	
story so far (success, progress, risks, delays)							Date

1.5	1. The effectiveness of meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND and the impact of this on their outcomes							
Issue to be addressed	Strategy Link	Actions	Actioned by	By when	Action Status (BRAGG)	Outcome targets	IMPACT (RAG)	
Families experiencing long waiting times for health services	Data & Performance	Review waiting lists for all paediatric health services	Jo Heaney	Dec 2022	Green	Jan 2023 Recovery plans in place for all services where waiting lists are beyond national and/local trajectories	Yellow	
						Sept 2023 Reduction of 5% in waiting list times for all paediatric services in line with recovery plan		
		Parents/Carers and children and young people consulted to develop an understanding of the support they require whilst waiting to access services		Jo Heaney	Dec 2022	Grey	April 2023 Co-produced action plan formulated and agreed.	Yellow
							April 2023 75% of families with suspected neuro divergent children report to feeling adequately supported by the Family Support Service whilst awaiting assessment	
story so far (success, progress, risks, delays)							Date	

1.6	1. The effectiveness of meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND and the impact of this on their outcomes						
Issue to be addressed	Strategy Link	Actions	Actioned by	By when	Action Status (BRAGG)	Outcome targets	IMPACT (RAG)
Inaccessibility and under promotion of the local offer	The Local Offer	Identify good practice examples of “local offer”	Tony Murphy Sukhdev Dosanjh	Oct 2022		Nov 2022 Local Offer best practice and upkeep understood	
		Engage with Children, young people and families to identify the best options for a new “local Offer”		Dec 2022		Jan 2023 Best option for local offer identified and design process underway.	
		New “Local Offer” designed, created and launched Ensuring accessibility, promotion and universal use		July 2023		Sept 2023 Footfall on the local offer will increase by 50%	
					Sept 2023 Feedback feature in Local Offer will report 75% satisfaction rate		
story so far (success, progress, risks, delays)							Date



1.7	1. The effectiveness of meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND and the impact of this on their outcomes							
Issue to be addressed	Strategy Link	Actions	Actioned by	By when	Action Status (BRAGG)	Outcome targets	IMPACT (RAG)	
EHC Plans do not consistently contain sufficient detail for a plan to be delivered and reviewed	EHCP	QA of EHCP completed assessments and reviews with contributing advice to be conducted on a termly basis with training needs to be identified and implemented through education, health (DCO) and social care (DSCO).	Jo Littler Ruth Kimmins	Dec 2022	Green	Jan 2023 75% of new quality assured plans will have an overall rating of satisfactory or above.	Yellow	
						Jan 2023 100% of EHC plans will have been transferred to the newest format.		Yellow
		Consultation with all key stakeholders, regarding Annual review process to include suggested ways to improve	Jo Littler Ruth Kimmins	Mar 2023	Grey	April 2023 Clear guidance produced for all statutory annual review participants duties. Plan for implementation finalised for next academic year (Sept 2023).	Yellow	
		New Annual review processes in place, to emphasise outcomes for provision made and clarity around when changes are required to an existing EHCP.	Jo Littler Ruth Kimmins	Sept 2023		Sept 2023 Plan in place to improve the quality of existing plans primarily at phase transfer and as required in individual circumstances		Yellow
						Dec 2023 Audit of EHC plans annual reviews shows 75% are satisfactory or above		
story so far (success, progress, risks, delays)							Date	

1.8	1. The effectiveness of meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND and the impact of this on their outcomes						
Issue to be addressed	Strategy Link	Actions	Actioned by	By when	Action Status (BRAGG)	Outcome targets	IMPACT (RAG)
<p>Opportunities to encourage more children and young people with experience of the care system to socialise meet new friends and improve their confidence around others are limited.</p>	<p>Inclusion  Local Offer</p>	<p>Ensure clear links between Care Leavers Local Offer and SEND Local Offer, to ensure flow of information and better access.  (Care leavers OFSTED focused visit Nov 2021 service was seen as very positive)</p>	<p>Tony Murphy  Sukhdev Dosanjh</p>	<p>Sept 2022</p>	<p style="background-color: #92d050;"></p>	<p>Dec 2022 Traffic between Care Leavers local offer and SEND local offer and vice versa measured.</p>	<p style="background-color: #ffc107;"></p>
		<p>Mirror Care leavers local offer across all Children and Young people with experience of the care system in Darlington.</p>	<p>Chris Bell  Tony Murphy</p>	<p>Sept 2023</p>	<p style="background-color: #92d050;"></p>	<p>Dec 2023 All care reviews clearly demonstrate that children and young people have access to opportunities to socialise, meet new friends and improve their confidence.</p>	<p style="background-color: #ffc107;"></p>
		<p>Linking to ongoing work including the “Promise Tree” reporting structure as developed by young people themselves and Darlo Care Crew (Children in Care Council)</p>	<p>Chris Bell  Tony Murphy</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p style="background-color: #92d050;"></p>	<p>Ongoing Checked via Corporate Parenting Panel with engagement from Children in Care, Care Leavers and Council Members</p>	<p style="background-color: #92d050;"></p>
<p>story so far (success, progress, risks, delays)</p>							<p>Date</p>

1.9	1. The effectiveness of meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND and the impact of this on their outcomes						
Issue to be addressed	Strategy Link	Actions	Actioned by	By when	Action Status (BRAGG)	Outcome targets	IMPACT (RAG)
Leaders do not use information to plan, provide and review what services are available to children and young people with SEND and their families	Data & Performance  Joint Commissioning	Data dashboard to be reviewed/ used at SEND Implementation Group, Joint Commissioning Board, SEND Assurance Exec and shared with HWB	Jo Heaney  Tony Murphy	Dec 2022		Jan 2023 Darlington has a clear governance system that ensures and assures that the key targets within its SEND strategies are happening and led by data and intelligence	
		Ensure Implementation group has representation across whole system to reflect the breadth of the wider SEND agenda. The Implementation group works together on a strong challenge and strong support basis	Jo Heaney  Tony Murphy	Dec 2022		Jan 2023 The SEND Implementation Group reflects the whole system in Darlington with clear voice of Children, young people and families. The group works collaboratively across the full SEND Agenda	
		New SEND Strategy to be developed based on coproduction, data, SEND inspection, SEND Green Paper and work already undertaken by SEND Implementation Group	James Stroyan  Alex Sinclair	March 2023		April 2023 Darlington has a new SEND Strategy in place that has been co-produced and is owned by the whole partnership.	
		Develop more creative way to hear the Voice of Children and young people e.g., forum, focus groups, wider communication method (internet, social media, etc....)	Jo Heaney  Tony Murphy	Dec 2022		April 2023 Consultation with children and young people will be complete and action plan developed to capture their voice through active engagement	

						July 2023 In survey 75% of children and young people will report that they have been able to participate and influence the whole SEND agenda	
story so far (success, progress, risks, delays)							Date

1.10	1. The effectiveness of meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND and the impact of this on their outcomes						
Issue to be addressed	Strategy Link	Actions	Actioned by	By when	Action Status (BRAGG)	Outcome targets	IMPACT (RAG)
Ensuring aspirations of CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE are captured and are reflected in their EHCP's EHCP	Data & Performance	Develop young person SEND Forum to develop good practice guidance for practitioners	Joanne Shutt Sukhdev Dosanjh	Jan 2023		Jan 2023 Representative group on young people developed with clarity around roles and responsibilities	
		Ensuring ALL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE have access to SENDIASS if requested	Sukhdev Dosanjh	Jan 2023		Jan 2023 100% of all appropriate requests for SENDIASS support by children and young people are being met	
		SEND Health Facilitator to be appointed to give independent advice & support for children and young people in health matters	Jo Heaney	Jan 2023		April 2023 SEND Health Facilitator will have an action plan for delivery to support children and young people, and their families	
						July 2023 Follow up with survey users will indicate 75% rated the service satisfactory or above	
		Deep dive QA to be implemented on a termly basis	Jo Littler	March 2023		Dec 2023 90% of quality assured plans & related advice will be rated satisfactory or better on preparation for adulthood.	
		QA on all initial plans	Jo Littler	March 2023		Sept 2023 100% of EHC plans will contain children and young person views and aspirations, appropriate to age and development	

		QA on all reviews for Y9 onwards	Jo Littler	March 2023		Dec 2023 100% post Year 9 reviews will show appropriate discussion of preparation for adulthood and Outcomes	
story so far (success, progress, risks, delays)							Date

1.11	1. The effectiveness of meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND and the impact of this on their outcomes						
Issue to be addressed	Strategy Link	Actions	Actioned by	By when	Action Status (BRAGG)	Outcome targets	IMPACT (RAG)
Rising absence and suspension from schools need to be addressed	Inclusion	The development of the Inclusion Strategy will contain advice and targets for improving attendance and suspensions in all schools in line with recently produced national guidance	James Stroyan Alex Sinclair	July 2023		Dec 2023 Reduce the persistent absence rates for pupils with an EHC plan by 10%	
		Establish key criteria and legal processes for supporting schools with absences	Dianne Gage	July 2023		Dec 2023 Reduce the number of fixed term suspensions for pupils with SEND in Darlington by 10%	
story so far (success, progress, risks, delays)							Date

1.12	1. The effectiveness of meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND and the impact of this on their outcomes						
Issue to be addressed	Strategy Link	Actions	Actioned by	By when	Action Status (BRAGG)	Outcome targets	IMPACT (RAG)
Children and young people with SEND have not achieved well or attained highly, particularly at the end of Key Stage 4	Inclusion	Ensure monitoring of achievement of children and young people both those with SEN support and those with EHC plans at end of key stage 4 on an individual school basis.	Helen Ellison	Oct 2022		March 2023 Children and young people's achievement at specific key stages is part of SEND Data Dashboard and monitored by SEND Governance Model	
		Support schools to share best practice of SEN support within mainstream education by building on SENCO network to influence whole school agenda, rather than specialist support.	Helen Ellison	Jan 2023		Jan 2023 Best practice is shared across all Darlington Schools support a reduction in managed moves	
						Sept 2023 20% reduction in referrals to specialist provision year on year	
						Sept 2023 15% reduction in requests for EHC plans year on year	
						Sept 2023 Attainment at key stage 4 at least is in line with national and regional data.	
story so far (success, progress, risks, delays)							Date



2.1	2. Poor preparation for adulthood and post 19 opportunities for children & Young people with SEND						
Issue to be addressed	Strategy Link	Actions	Actioned by	By when	Action Status (BRAGG)	Outcome targets	IMPACT (RAG)
<p>Children and young people with SEND, <b>especially those without an EHC plan</b>, want more support to understand the world of work, further education opportunities and training, including apprenticeships, clearly.</p>	<p>Local Offer  Post 16</p>	<p>DBC will work in partnership with Youth Employment UK to map provision, understand YP and their experiences, barriers and challenges and support employers to create quality youth-friendly opportunities for young people including inspiration and work experience activity</p>	<p>Seth Pearson</p>	<p>Dec 2022</p>	<p style="background-color: #92d050;"></p>	<p>Oct 2023 Youth Voice Survey will indicate improved understanding of employment and training opportunities available</p>	<p style="background-color: #ffc107;"></p>
		<p>Review the independent careers information advice and guidance offer in Darlington for all children and young people with SEN support and ECH plans</p>	<p>Paul Richardson</p>	<p>Jan 2023</p>	<p style="background-color: #d3d3d3;"></p>	<p>Oct 2023 the proportion of young people who are NEET in Darlington will be at least in line with regional and national rates or below.</p>	<p style="background-color: #ffc107;"></p>
		<p>Ensure this is captured in the local offer  Ensure this is available for those not accessing provision within Darlington (through attending Out of Area, or</p>			<p style="background-color: #d3d3d3;"></p>	<p>Sept 2023 100% of children and young people with SEN support and EHC plans show evidence of independent careers information advice and guidance in Darlington</p>	<p style="background-color: #ffc107;"></p>

		absent from their provision, or NEET)				Sept 2023 Independent careers information advice and guidance offer in Darlington will have a clear presence on the Local Offer, with the footfall increasing month on month.	
		Review the work experience offer in Darlington for all children and young people with SEN support and ECH plans	Paul Richardson	Jan 2023		Oct 2023 The proportion of young people who are NEET in Darlington will be in line with regional and national rates or below.	
		Ensure this is captured in the local offer				Sept 2023 Revised work experience opportunities will be available in Darlington for 100% children and young people with SEN support and EHC plans	
		Ensure this is available for those not accessing provision within Darlington (through attending Out of Area, or absent from their provision, or those Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)				Sept 2023 Work experience opportunities in Darlington will have a clear presence on the Local Offer with the footfall increasing month on month.	
story so far (success, progress, risks, delays)							Date

2.2	2 Poor preparation for adulthood and post 19 opportunities for children & Young people with SEND						
Issue to be addressed	Strategy Link	Actions	Actioned by	By when	Action Status (BRAGG)	Outcome targets	IMPACT (RAG)
Support for young people transitioning into adulthood to access appropriate health care.	Post 16	Develop Health Transition Pathways across all children & young people's acute services	Ruth Kimmins	Dec 2022		Dec 2022 Health transition pathway developed and in place across all services within acute setting	
		Test transition pathway/model across paediatrics and OT services				April 2023 Transitions plans will have been piloted with 5 children and young people and their families in Paediatrics and OT. The learning will be used to inform the wider roll out across all services within the acute setting	
						Sept 2023 50 % of children and young people identified as needing to transition to Adults Services will have commenced on transitions pathway	
		Process will be developed to ensure all children and young people with a Learning Disability will be flagged on GP records and will be invited for their 14 plus annual health check	Ruth Kimmins	April 2023		April 2024 The numbers of children and young people taking up annual health check will be at least maintained but be stretched to 86% by April 2024 to allow for a full year effect	
story so far (success, progress, risks, delays)							

2.3	2 Poor preparation for adulthood and post 19 opportunities for children & Young people with SEND						
Issue to be addressed	Strategy Link	Actions	Actioned by	By when	Action Status (BRAGG)	Outcome targets	IMPACT (RAG)
Opportunities for children and young people with SEND to learn how to travel independently needs to be readily available	Post 16	Review of independent travel training offer.	Melanie Dickinson  Michele Dickens	Dec 2022		March 2023 Independent Travel Training will be provided for all young people who are eligible	
story so far (success, progress, risks, delays)							Date

2.4	2 Poor preparation for adulthood and post 19 opportunities for children & Young people with SEND							
Issue to be addressed	Strategy Link	Actions	Actioned by	By when	Action Status (BRAGG)	Outcome targets	IMPACT (RAG)	
Post 19 offer	Post 16	Ensure Darlington’s Youth Employment Initiative service identifies, and targets support for unemployed YP with SEND between the ages of 18 and 25 (initiative covers 18-29)	Tony Murphy	Dec 2022	Green	Sep 2022 Baseline dataset established of current employment support levels for young people with SEND	Yellow	
						April 2023 20% increase of young people supported with a personal plan		Yellow
		Review current response to employment support for those young people furthest from employment, including supported employment, supported internships, Traineeships and support towards work.	Paul Richardson	Dec 2022	Green	Jan 2023 Clear understanding of destinations across young people with SEND	Yellow	
		Map local opportunities for education, training and employment, post 18, for young people with SEND and publish on local offer	Paul Richardson Kevin Kelly	Dec 2022		Jan 2023 Comprehensive gap analysis better support towards work. This will form the basis of further action.		Yellow
		To have a clear, co-produced preparation for Adulthood pathway which details roles and responsibilities of all key stakeholders	Paul Richardson Kevin Kelly	Mar 2023		Grey		

	Updated post 16 and post 19 information available via Local Offer	Paul Richardson Kevin Kelly	July 2023		Dec 2023 Young people and families can access clear information of opportunities, services, support and advice available.	
					Dec 2023 Footfall on this area will be monitored and will see an increase of 50%	
					Dec 2023 More than 75% of those responding with feedback after accessing this area of the local offer will respond positively	
	Establish Darlington SEND employment partnership to develop the best routes into employment for young people with SEND. This will include young people, parents, employers, colleges, supported employment providers and Darlington Borough Council.	Paul Richardson Kevin Kelly	April 2023		April 2023 Partnership established and baseline dataset identified of current number of young people with SEND accessing a full range of employment opportunities	
April 24 20% increase in the number of young people accessing a full range of employment opportunities						
story so far (success, progress, risks, delays)						Date

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 31 OCTOBER 2022

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### CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY TASK AND FINISH REVIEW – FINAL REPORT

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#### SUMMARY REPORT

##### Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an update of the Childcare Sufficiency Task and Finish Group, established by this Scrutiny Committee to gain a better understanding of childcare sufficiency and the general supply within the borough and the barriers to the provision of childcare provisions.

##### Summary

2. At a meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on 21 February 2022, Members received a report on the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2021/22 and discussed areas of the borough where they felt that sufficiency was not meeting demand. It was therefore requested that further information be brought to Members on demographical/community data.
3. At the Scrutiny meeting held on 27 June 2022, following further information provided by the Assistant Director, Education and Inclusion, Members agreed to undertake a piece of work around this via Task and Finish Review Group.
4. A meeting of the Task and Finish Group was held on 26 September 2022 and a note of the meeting and discussion is attached (**Appendix 1**).

##### Findings

5. Members recognised that there are no immediate concerns around overall sufficiency in the borough and that sufficiency issues were not solely in the gift of the Council to solve but recognised that the Childcare Act 2006 does place a statutory duty on Council's 'to secure, as far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient childcare to meet the requirements of parents in their area'.
6. The provisions of the Act recognise that it may not be practical for a local authority to secure childcare to meet the requirements of every parent.

7. The Act also allows local authorities to provide support to childcare providers (including financial support) or to provide childcare itself, if no other provider is willing to do so (section 8, Childcare Act 2006).
8. Members felt that the Council was doing everything reasonably practicable to provide childcare for a number of families around the borough who required it.
9. The discussions which took place at the Task and Finish Review Group are summarised at **Appendix 1**.

### **Conclusion**

10. The Review Group considered that one area where the Council could provide assistance was in communicating the availability of jobs in the childcare sector and recommended that this Council include this communication of jobs in Events Planning, Jobs Initiatives, Publications and Digital communication.
11. Members also requested that Cabinet make our local Members of Parliament aware of the concerns highlighted with regard to provision of sufficient childcare to meet the needs of our families.

### **Recommendation**

12. It is recommended that the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee considers and approves the findings and recommendations of the Task and Finish Review Group.

**Councillor Paul Crudass**  
**Chair of Childcare Sufficiency Task and Finish Group**

### **Background Papers**

None

Allison Hill : Extension 5997



S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for Crime and Disorder
Health and Wellbeing	Good quality early education and childcare for children from birth to 14 years old and 18 years old for those young people with a disability, will assist in improving the health and well being of Darlington's 0 to 14/18 population and assists working families.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are no carbon impact or climate change implications in this report.
Diversity	There are no specific proposals within the report that impact on diversity issues. All providers must meet their duties under the Equality Act 2010 when delivering education and childcare.
Wards Affected	All wards
Groups Affected	All children aged 0 to 14 years/18 years for those young people with a disability will benefit from being able to access high quality, education and childcare in the Borough.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	Not a key decision
Urgent Decision	Not an urgent decision
Council Plan	Access to high quality, affordable and reliable education and childcare will improve the quality of life and the health and well being of children and young people in the Borough and will also enable their parents to access or maintain training or work opportunities.
Efficiency	There are no specific proposals within the report that impact on efficiency.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	Access to good quality early education and childcare places in the borough improves the life chances of 2 to 4 year olds who are Looked After Children or who have left care and also, provides support to families.



**Childcare Sufficiency Task and Finish Review Group**  
**26 September 2022**  
**Via Microsoft Teams**

**Present:**

Councillors Crudass, C Hughes, Snedker and Willis.

**Officers:** Tony Murphy, Assistant Director Education and Inclusion  
Helen Ellison, Head of Education Partnerships  
Allison Hill Democratic Officer

**Purpose of Meeting:**

To better understand childcare sufficiency and the general supply within the borough and to discuss the barriers to sufficiency issues.

**Points Discussed/Raised at the Meeting:**

- There is currently overall sufficiency within the borough.
- Childminders numbers have fallen but it was not clear if this was a fall in demand or people making other choices in terms of employment.
- A fall in childminder numbers has been seen nationally and not just in Darlington.
- The Early Years Education Strategy Group considers the challenges facing the sector and helps to inform the work of officers.
- The Education White Paper did not cover Early Years.
- The cost of childcare is making parents relook at their budgets. The latest increase to the hourly rates for early years entitlement funding was inadequate to meet the cost of statutory provision (15/30 hrs) often resulting in cross subsidisation from the parents and carers paying fees.
- Provision for disabled children is included in the local offer but specific cases were not discussed, however Members noted that places for disabled children must be monitored as part of the sufficiency assessment as a priority.
- The sector, whilst cooperative, is limited to the amount of data it can supply to the Council because of stretched staff and their focus on their primary objectives of care. There is some survey overload so Council officers have to be mindful.
- A potential decrease in future requirements triggered by a declining birth rate will impact on the sector going forward. Schools facing falling numbers may look to expand into nursery provision in the future.
- The upward pressure on wages as employers compete for workers is making childcare jobs less attractive financially.
- Providers feedback is that recruitment and retention is the biggest threat to provision at present, in particular for level 3 trained staff. A dialogue amongst partners must continue.
- Training opportunities available in Colleges and our Learning and Skills offer should be monitored to ensure that appropriate level 3 training opportunities are available.

- Boosting the profile of childcare within schools as a potential career opportunity is to be encouraged.
- Officers were keen to supply data that is helpful to Scrutiny Members, and welcome suggestions.

**IT WAS AGREED** – An area item identified where Members felt the Council could increase its support was by raising the awareness of job opportunities in the early years sector and recommend that every opportunity to do this be taken in Council events and communications.

Members also agreed to make our local MP's aware of the pressures in the sector caused by rising wages and declining, in real terms, funding for statutory entitlement provision.

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
31 OCTOBER 2022**

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**WORK PROGRAMME**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To consider the work programme items scheduled to be considered by this Scrutiny Committee during the 2022/23 Municipal Year and to consider any additional areas which Members would like to suggest should be included.

**Summary**

2. Members are requested to consider the attached draft work programme (**Appendix 1**) for the 2022/23 Municipal Year which has been prepared based on Officers recommendations and recommendations previously agreed by this Scrutiny Committee in the last Municipal Year.
3. Once the work programme has been approved by this Scrutiny Committee, any additional areas of work which Members wish to add to the agreed work programme will require the completion of a quad of aims in accordance with the previously approved procedure. (**Appendix 2**)

**Recommendations**

4. Members are requested to note the work programme and consider any additional items which they may wish to include.

**Luke Swinhoe  
Assistant Director Law and Governance**

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Author: Allison Hill

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for Crime and Disorder
Health and Well Being	This report has no direct implications to the Health and Well Being of residents of Darlington.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are no issues which this report needs to address.
Diversity	There are no issues relating to diversity which this report needs to address
Wards Affected	The impact of the report on any individual Ward is considered to be minimal.
Groups Affected	The impact of the report on any individual Group is considered to be minimal.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
Council Plan	The report contributes to the Council Plan in a number of ways through the involvement of Members in contributing to the delivery of the Plan.
Efficiency	The Work Programmes are integral to scrutinising and monitoring services efficiently (and effectively), however this report does not identify specific efficiency savings.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

5. The format of the proposed work programme has been reviewed to enable Members of this Scrutiny Committee to provide a rigorous and informed challenge to the areas for discussion.
6. The Council Plan sets the vision and strategic direction for the Council through to May 2023, with its overarching focus being ‘Delivering Success for Darlington’ .
7. In approving the Council Plan, Members have agreed to the vision for Darlington which is a place where people want to live and businesses want to locate, where the economy continues to grow, where people are happy and proud of the borough and where everyone has the opportunity to maximise their potential.
8. The vision for the Children and Young People portfolio is :

**‘a borough where young people get the best start in life, can maximise their potential and are safe’**

to maximise the potential of our young people by working with partners to maximise educational achievement; working to remove barriers to young people reaching their potential and working at a Tees Valley level to match jobs with skills and training.

#### **Forward Plan and Additional Items**

9. Any Member seeking to add a new item to the work programme will need to complete a quad of aims. **Appendix 2**
10. A copy of the Forward Plan has been attached at **Appendix 3** for information.

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## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Topic	Timescale	Lead Officer	Link to PMF (metrics)	Scrutiny's Role
<b>Performance Management and Regulation</b>	Q1 31 Oct 2022 Q2 19 Dec 2022	Sharon Raine	Agreed set of indicators	To receive quarterly monitoring reports and undertake any further detailed work into particular outcomes if necessary
<b>Learning and Skills Service Annual Report</b>	31 October 2022	Paul Richardson		Annual Report to demonstrate challenge
<b>Adoption Tees Valley Annual Report 2021/22</b>	31 October 2022	Vicky Davidson-Boyd, Service Manager, Adoption Tees Valley		Annual monitoring
<b>SEND Written Statement of Action</b>	31 October 2022	Tony Murphy		To update scrutiny committee on the Ofsted/CQC Inspection on the provision of Special Educational Needs (SEND) support in Darlington
<b>Childcare Sufficiency Task and Finish Review Final Report</b>	31 October 2022			To report the findings and recommendations of the Group
<b>IRO Annual Report</b>	19 December 2022	Martin Graham	CSC201	To examine the Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officer for Looked After Children
<b>Children and Young Peoples Plan</b>	19 December 2022	Christine Shields		Annual Report

Topic	Timescale	Lead Officer	Link to PMF (metrics)	Scrutiny's Role
<b>Darlington Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report</b>	19 December 2022	Ann Baxter, Independent Chair		Annually monitoring
<b>Ofsted Inspection Report</b>	19 December 2022	Chris Bell		To update Scrutiny on the outcomes of the recent Ofsted Inspection of Childrens' Services
<b>Medium Term Financial Plan</b>	9 January 2023 Special Meeting	Elizabeth Davison		To consider the MTFP and scrutinise those areas within the remit of this Scrutiny Committee
<b>2022/23 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment</b>	27 February 2023	Tony Murphy/Nicola Davies		Annual Report
<b>Children's Services Self-Assessment - Overview</b>	September 2023	Chris Bell		To provide Scrutiny with the Annual Self-Assessment for Children's Services so that constructive 'critical friend' challenge takes place to drive improvement in public services
<b>Children and Young People Public Health Overview and Childhood Healthy Weight Plan</b>	September 2023	Ken Ross	PBH 009 PBH 013c PBH 016 PBH 018 PBH 020 PBH 021 PBH 054	Annual Monitoring

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Link to PMF (metrics)</b>	<b>Scrutiny's Role</b>
<b>Local Designated Officer Annual Report</b>	September 2023	James Stroyan		To examine the Annual Report and assure Members that allegations made against staff who work with children are reported and how they are actioned

**REVIEWS PENDING**

<b>Autism Provision Review Group</b>	Final Report to Health and Housing on 14 April 2021.  Cross Party Joint Working Group to be established – ongoing.	Christine Shields		To review the provisions and services and contractual arrangements between this Council and our providers who provide the Autism provisions, diagnoses and support services for Darlington
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**MEMBER BRIEFINGS**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Link to PMF (metrics)</b>	<b>Scrutiny's Role</b>
Tees Valley Combined Authority Education and Skills – Role and Funding	4 February 2022	Shona Duncan, Head of Employment, Education and Skills, Tees Valley Combined Authority		Joint presentation to CYP and Economy and Resources Scrutiny to receive specific information on the funding allocation as it relates to this authority and where the spend (adult education up to 28 years) is being focused.

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Link to PMF (metrics)</b>	<b>Scrutiny's Role</b>
Meet with Young People (Council or Schools Councils/Youth Partnership)	22 February 2022	Joanne Shutt		

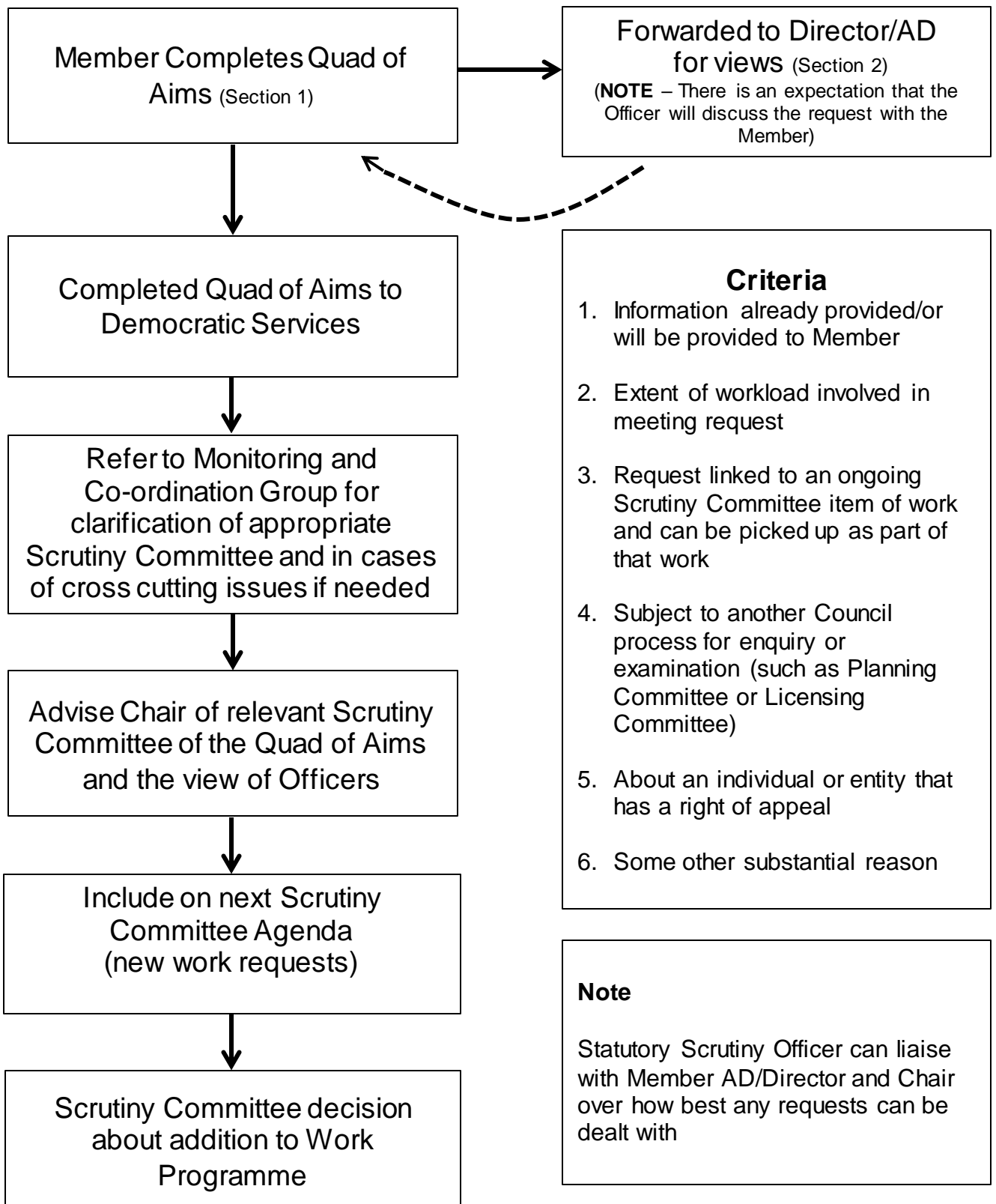
**ARCHIVED ITEMS**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>When considered</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Scrutiny's Role</b>
<b>SEND - Outcomes for Parents following Covid-19</b>	4 January 2021	Carla Scaith Darlington Parent Carer Forum	To continue to monitor SEND/ EHCPs. To receive the survey results from the Parent Carer Forum SEND Survey and to receive information relating to experiences of the Parent Carer Forum.
<b>Trauma and Horizon Scanning</b>	23 August 2021	Paige Thomason/ Martin Webster	To examine how Children's Services are starting to embed and respond to Trauma.
<b>Looked After Children Off-framework.</b>	23 August 2021	Jane Kochanowski	To examine the current situation with those placed off framework, commissioning of accommodation and costs
<b>Adoptive Services</b>	Item request approved by Scrutiny at the meeting held on 29 June 2020 – Not progressed	Vicky Davidson-Boyd	To examine how the Regional Adoption Agency is serving Darlington and to examine how the Coronavirus Pandemic has affected adoption
<b>Early Help services available for new mothers</b>	20 December 2021	Joanne Benson	To examine services available post and pre pandemic
<b>Developing Darlington Care Collective</b>	20 December 2021	Christine Shields/Martin Webster	To provide an Update on the Care Collective
<b>Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2025/26</b>	Special 10 January 2022	Elizabeth Davison	To consider the MTFP 2022/23 to 2025/26 and make any views, and in

			particular, those in relation to those services and finances which are specifically within the remit of this Scrutiny Committee
<b>Accessibility Strategy</b>	21 February 2022	Tony Murphy/ Eleanor Marshall	Progress to date in respect of the review of the Special Educational Needs (SEND) Accessibility Strategy 2017-2020
<b>Vulnerable Pupil Panel</b>	25 April 2022	Tony Murphy/Calvin Kipling	To examine the mechanics of the vulnerable pupil panel and to learn about the process and what the scale of the attendance challenge is
<b>Missing and Exploited Young People</b>	27 June 2022	Alison Poulter	To provide Scrutiny with an update following concerns over the increase in numbers of missing

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## PROCESS FOR ADDING AN ITEM TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEE'S PREVIOUSLY APPROVED WORK PROGRAMME



**PLEASE RETURN TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

**QUAD OF AIMS (MEMBERS' REQUEST FOR ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED BY SCRUTINY)**

**SECTION 1 TO BE COMPLETED BY MEMBERS**

**NOTE** – This document should only be completed if there is a clearly defined and significant outcome from any potential further work. This document should **not** be completed as a request for or understanding of information.

<b>REASON FOR REQUEST?</b>	<b>RESOURCE (WHAT OFFICER SUPPORT WOULD YOU REQUIRE?)</b>
<b>PROCESS (HOW CAN SCRUTINY ACHIEVE THE ANTICIPATED OUTCOME?)</b>	<b>HOW WILL THE OUTCOME MAKE A DIFFERENCE?</b>

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**Signed Councillor .....**

**Date .....**



**SECTION 2 TO BE COMPLETED BY DIRECTORS/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS**  
**(NOTE – There is an expectation that Officers will discuss the request with the Member)**

	Criteria
1. (a) Is the information available elsewhere? Yes ..... No ..... If yes, please indicate where the information can be found (attach if possible and return with this document to Democratic Services) .....	1. Information already provided/or will be provided to Member
(b) Have you already provided the information to the Member or will you shortly be doing so? .....	2. Extent of workload involved in meeting request
2. If the request is included in the Scrutiny Committee work programme what are the likely workload implications for you/your staff? .....	3. Request linked to an ongoing Scrutiny Committee item of work and can be picked up as part of that work
3. Can the request be included in an ongoing Scrutiny Committee item of work and picked up as part of that? .....	4. Subject to another Council process for enquiry or examination (such as Planning Committee or Licensing Committee)
4. Is there another Council process for enquiry or examination about the matter currently underway? .....	5. About an individual or entity that has a right of appeal
5. Has the individual or entity some other right of appeal? .....	6. Some other substantial reason
6. Is there any substantial reason (other than the above) why you feel it should not be included on the work programme? .....	

**PLEASE RETURN TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

**Signed** ..... **Position** ..... **Date** .....

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**PLEASE RETURN TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**



# DARLINGTON

Borough Council

## FORWARD PLAN FOR THE PERIOD: 7 SEPTEMBER 2022 - 28 FEBRUARY 2023

Title	Decision Maker and Date	Page
Ingenium Parc – Proposed Development Update	Cabinet 11 Oct 2022	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Peer Review	Cabinet 11 Oct 2022	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Treasury Management Annual and Outturn Prudential Indicators 2022/23	Cabinet 11 Oct 2022	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Annual Audit Letter 2020/21	Cabinet 8 Nov 2022	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Council Tax Exemption for Care Leavers 2023/24	Cabinet 8 Nov 2022	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Council Tax Support - Scheme Approval 2023/24	Council 24 Nov 2022 Cabinet 8 Nov 2022	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Darlington Transport Plan	Council 24 Nov 2022 Cabinet 8 Nov 2022	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Final Version of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPD) Design Code - Skerningham Garden Village	Cabinet 8 Nov 2022	12

Land at Faverdale - Burtree Garden Village Development	Cabinet 8 Nov 2022	13
Project Position Statement and Capital Programme Monitoring - Quarter 2	Cabinet 8 Nov 2022	14
Revenue Budget Monitoring - Quarter 2	Cabinet 8 Nov 2022	15
Housing Services Fire Safety Policy	Cabinet 6 Dec 2022	16
Mid-Year Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management 2022/23	Council 26 Jan 2023 Cabinet 6 Dec 2022	17
Maintained Schools Capital Programme - Summer 2023	Cabinet 10 Jan 2023	18
Quarter 2 - Council Plan 2020/23 - Delivering Success for Darlington - Performance Report	Cabinet 10 Jan 2023	19