



Children in our Care Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy January 2019

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STATEMENT FROM DIRECTOR OF CHILDRENS SERVICES

This strategy delivers on our statutory responsibility for sufficiency planning, and is part of our suite of documents for children in, and leaving our care, but is about so much more.

It is about our commitment to corporate parenting overall, and in particular the right for every child to live safely and securely when they are not able to live with their own parents for whatever reason.

It sets out the challenges we face associated with the increasing numbers of children in our care, and how we plan to respond to those challenges. It is our most detailed analysis and assessment yet, and is a strategy which underpins much of our current work on transformation – aiming to reduce, safely, the number of children who need to be in care, seeking to ensure that more children can stay in their family networks, but continuing to provide high quality care, accommodation and support when children need to be in our care, for however long.

There can be no more important role we play as a Council than this.

Martin Gray
Director of Children's Services, January 2019

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This strategy document sets out how Stockton on Tees Borough Council intends to meet its duty to ensure that there is a range of sufficient accommodation and services to meet the needs of children in our care.
- 1.2 This strategy analyses outcomes and findings from local and comparative national data into the needs of children in our care and children leaving care. It also describes our ambitions for effective commissioning and modelling of services from 2018 – 2020 to keep children and young people safe and connected to their communities, wherever this is safe and possible. Many children tell us this is what they want.
- 1.3 Throughout this period, we will continue to work with our children in our care, care leavers and key partners to develop and refine our plans and priorities.

2.0 Strategic context

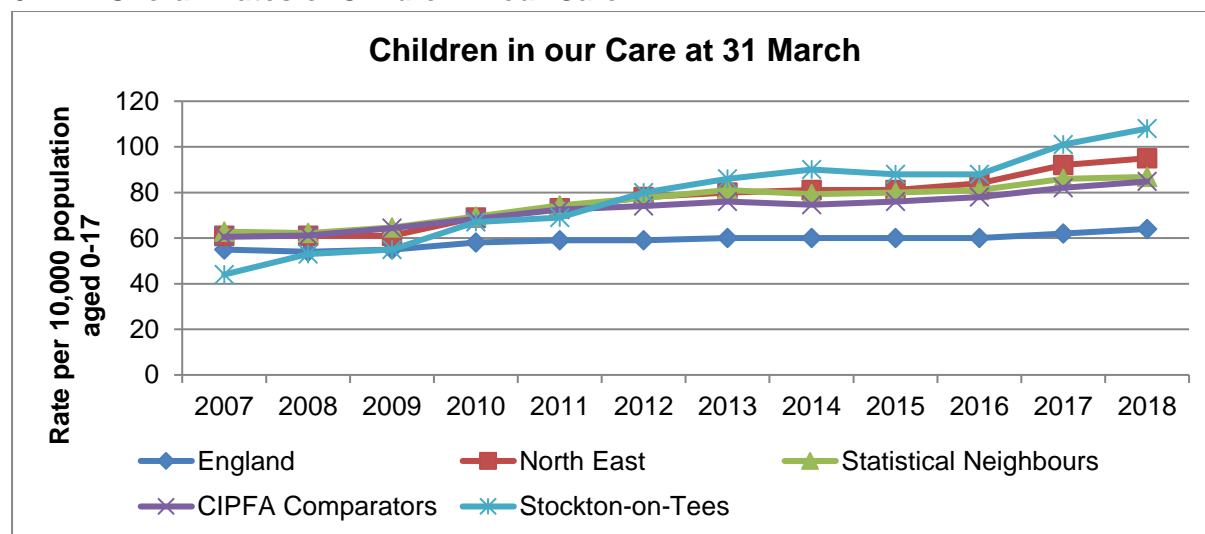
- 2.1 The Council believes that for most children and young people, the best place to live is with their family of origin. However, there are some children and young people who need to live, either in the short term or permanently, in other care arrangements. We will where possible place them with alternative nurturing and supportive families. If they cannot live in a family home, they will live in a children's home which replicates family life as closely as possible or in some cases for older young people they will live in supported accommodation as they move towards independence.
- 2.2 The number of children in our care has been rising, year on year, with some large increases in the number of pre-teen and teen admissions. In turn this has increased the demand for placements and influenced the nature of placements, particularly external placements. The numbers and cost of external placements has increased significantly.
- 2.3 In 2017, the Council launched the **Children's Services Strategy** containing five key priorities:
 - 1) **Giving children the best start in life**
 - 2) **Focusing on schools and learning outcomes**
 - 3) **Delivering effective early help – supporting families**
 - 4) **Safeguarding and protecting vulnerable children, backed by outstanding social work practice**
 - 5) **A consistent and relentless focus on better outcomes for children in our care and leaving our care**
- 2.4 The Council will achieve these by:
 - 1) Listening to the voice of the child and those we work with
 - 2) Working restoratively with families, reducing the need for our intervention
 - 3) Ensuring a focus on quality of practice
 - 4) Challenging our own role, being innovative and being an effective partner
 - 5) Using intelligence and evidence to make a bigger impact
 - 6) Being efficient and productive – smarter working and financial sustainability.

- 2.5 To this end, a number of local initiatives have been launched within the Council that will directly influence this Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy. These include a Smarter Working Review into children’s social care; and a Review of approaches and provision for children in our care. For the latter, the Council has commissioned a national charity to support our work.
- 2.6 As with any initiative, this strategy will only be of benefit if it is owned by key decision makers and used to inform service planning and development. To this end, the newly created Corporate Parenting Board will be responsible for the oversight and updating of the Sufficiency & Commissioning Plan. The Board will ensure that this remains a living document that is reviewed and refined as our knowledge and understanding of the needs of children in our care develops.

3.0 Children in Our Care, Stockton-on-Tees

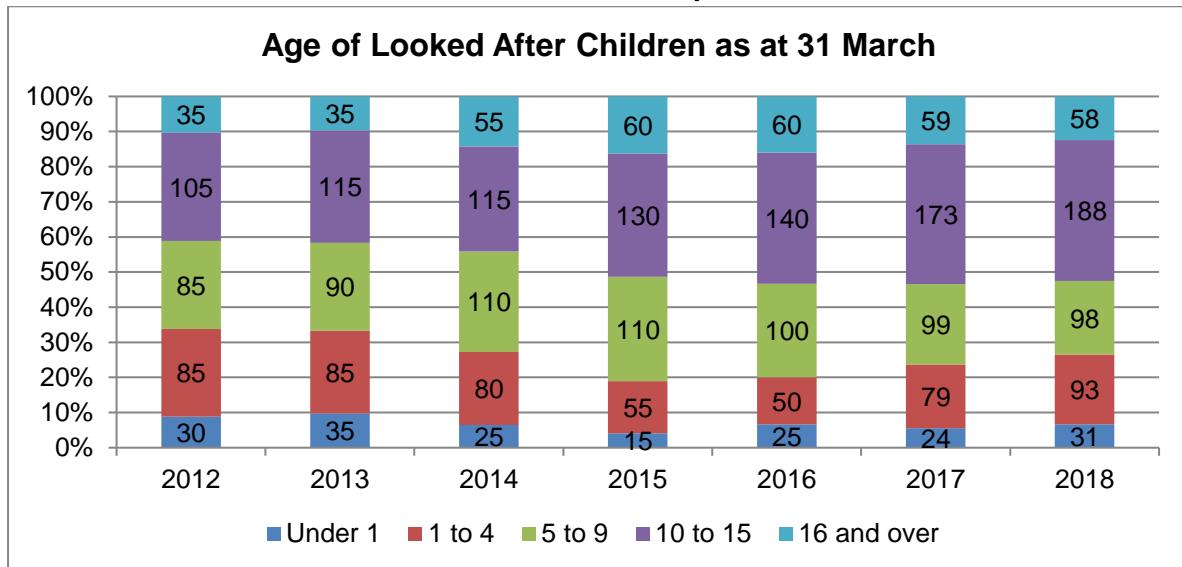
3.1 This section sets out the information on the numbers and rates of children in our care, alongside comparator data. The data has been sourced from the DFE Statistical First Releases for the respective years. England and North East data has been taken directly from the SFR’s whilst our DFE Statistical Neighbours and CIPFA Benchmark group has been locally calculated.

3.2 Overall Rates of Children in our Care



3.3 The rate of children Looked after at 31 March has increased consistently from 2007. At 31 March 2018, a total of 468 children were looked after, a higher rate than for England, North East and statistical neighbours and CIPFA comparator groups. Compared to the position at 31 March 2017, the percentage rate of increase equates to 6.5% for Stockton, higher than for England (3.1%) and the North East (3.2%).

3.4 Characteristics of Children in our Care – update stats



3.5 There has been some change in the age profile of children in our care, with a significant increase in those children aged 10 and over. Since 2015, this age groups equates to more than half of the children in our care. This brings Stockton in line with England and the North East who have seen higher proportions of children aged 10 and over from 2012.

3.6 Gender

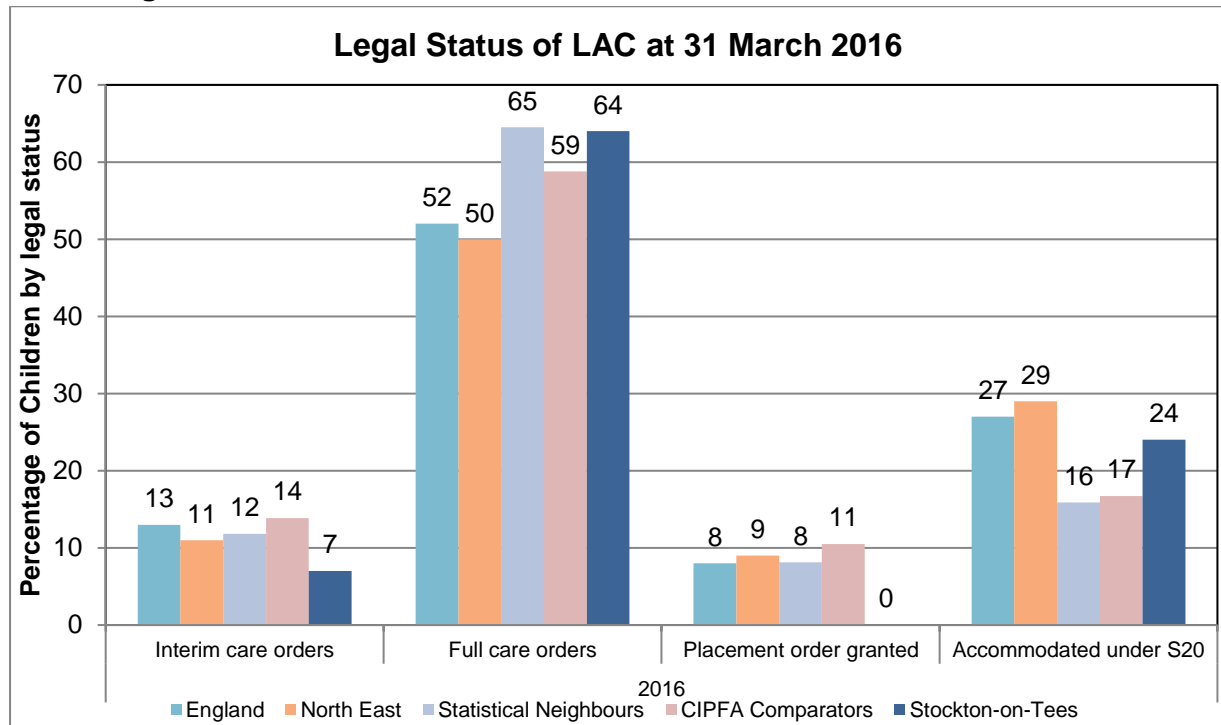
On average, 54% of the children looked after at 31 March 18 have been male, in line with England and the North East. This is slightly higher than for the general population in Stockton where males account for approximately 51% of the population.

3.7 Ethnicity

The majority of children who are looked after in Stockton are of white ethnic origin. Between 2012 and 2016 this has averaged 91%. This is broadly in line with North East over the same period (an average of 93%) and our statistical neighbours (an average of 92%). Although slightly higher than for our CIPFA Benchmark group (an average of 89%) we are much higher than for England (an average of 77%).

3.8 As a result of this stability the rate of BAME children becoming looked after has remained stable over the same period accounting for an average of 3% of Looked-after Children.

3.9 Legal Status



3.10 Of the children looked after at 31 March, a higher proportion were accommodated on a Full Care Order than for England, the North East and our CIPFA comparator group. Fewer children were accommodated under an Interim Care Order than or comparators. Although, a higher proportion of children were accommodated under a Section 20 than of CIPFA benchmark group and statistical neighbours although below England and the North East.

3.11 In line with the National picture there has been a reduction in the use of Section 20 arrangements from 2012. Stockton has in the main, sustained a lower of Interim Care Orders than for comparator groups over the same period, but a rise in the use of Full Care Orders.

4.0 Scope of Provision Available in Stockton

4.1 Joint Venture with Spark of Genius NE

Provision	Capacity	SBC young people placed as of 30 Sep 2018	Focused model of care delivered
Old Vicarage Stillington	5	4	Medium to long term residential for children and young people aged between 7 and 17 years of either gender.
Red Plains Hartburn	5	4	Medium to long term residential for children and young people aged between 7 and 17 years of either gender.
Fairview Thorpe Thewles	5	2	Medium to long term residential for children and young people aged between 7 and 17 years of either gender.

4.2 In House Residential Provision

Provision	Capacity	SBC young people in placement as of 30 Sep 18	Focused model of care delivered
Piper House	4 + 1 Care Leaver	4 + 1	Medium to long term residential for children and young people aged between 7 and 17 years of either gender.
Ayton Place	4 + 1 Care Leaver	4 + 1	Medium to long term residential for children and young people aged between 7 and 17 years of either gender.
Tilery House	3	3	Medium to long term residential for children and young people aged between 7 and 17 years of either gender.
Rose House	3	3	Medium to long term residential for children and young people aged between 7 and 17 years of either gender.

4.3 Supported Housing Accommodation is available in Stockton for young people aged 16 – 25. It is available for young people who are aged 16 and 17 and homeless and for young people who are looked after and leaving care.

Type of placement	Capacity
Sanctuary St. James A commissioned service providing self-contained units of accommodation within a block. Support is on site and 24 hours and included in each package of support is 15 hours of 1.1 support to young people.	6 flats on a licence agreement or a Assured Short Hold Tenancy dependant on need of young person
Sanctuary 155 A commissioned service providing self-contained units of accommodation within a block. Support is on site and 24 hours and included in each package of support is 15 hours of 1.1 support to young people.	6 flats on a licence agreement or a Assured Short Hold Tenancy basis dependant on need of young person + 1 emergency accommodation on a licence agreement
Parkfield Hall A commissioned service providing self-contained units of accommodation within a block. Support is on site and 24 hours and included in each package of support is 15 hours of 1.1 support to young people.	10 flats on a licence agreement or a Assured Short Hold Tenancy basis dependant on need of young person + 1 emergency accommodation on a licence agreement
Supported Lodgings An in-house service which is aligned to the fostering service. Accommodation and support is provided within family homes following a successful assessment and training process.	8 Providers offer up to 12 placements to young people on a licence agreement

4.4 In- House Short Breaks Provision

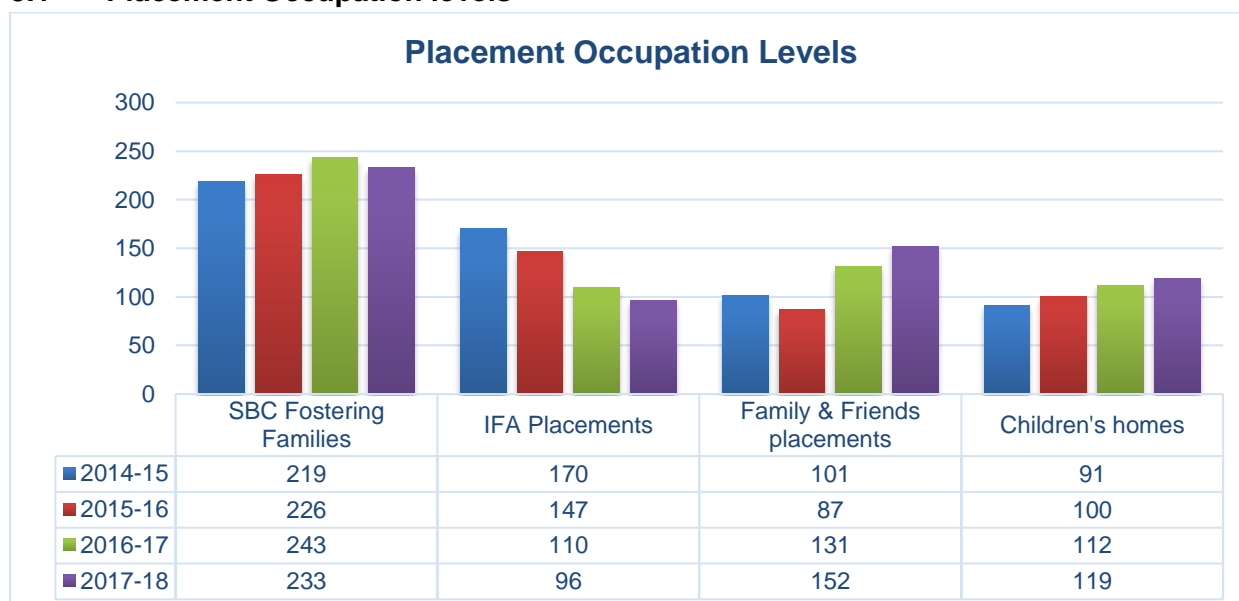
Provision	Capacity	Focused model of care delivered
Hartburn Lodge	Up to 6 young people	Short Break provision for disabled children and young people between 6 and 17 years of either gender.
Oasis	Up to 6 young people	After school and day care short break provision for children and young people between 5 and 17 years of either gender who have severe learning disability and complex needs.
Our Place	Up to 5 young people plus intervention	Short Break provision for children and young people on the edge of care or in unstable placements

4.5 Foster Care as of 31st March 2018

Type of Foster Care	Fostering House Holds	
In-House	114	141
Family and Friends	34 (approved)	102
IFA		88

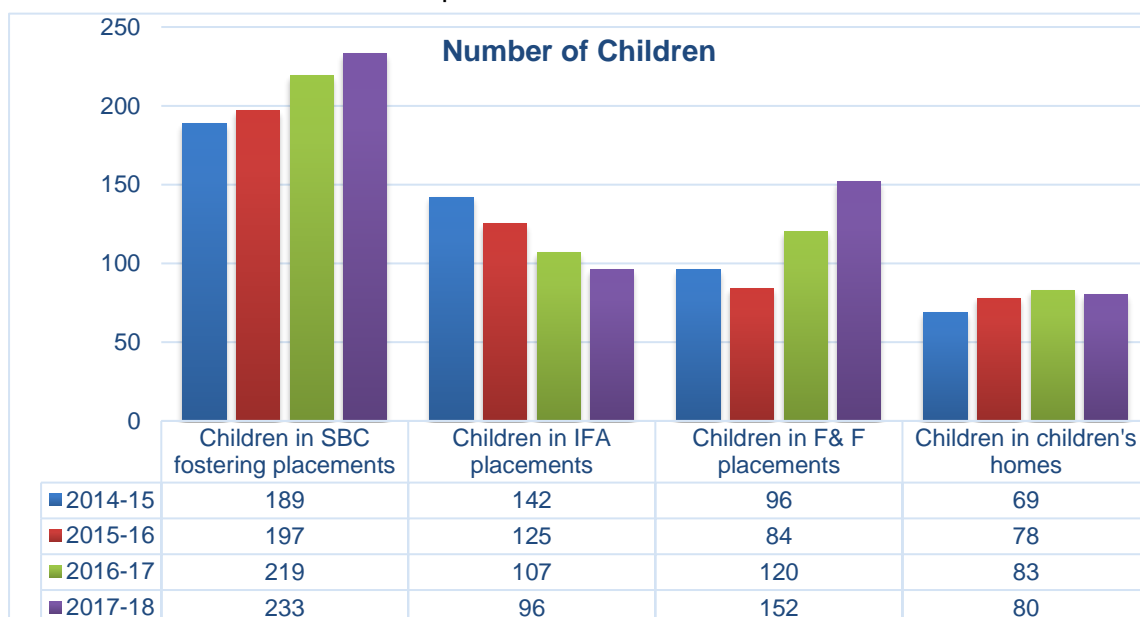
5.0 Placement Occupation & Trends

5.1 Placement Occupation levels



5.2 The above chart is data relating to placements taken up and one child could have been in a number of placements. The graph indicates that there is a slight upwards trend year on year on the use of in house Fostering Families and downward trend in the use of IFA placements. Similarly we have seen an upward growth in the placement of children in children's homes reflecting the growth in the adolescent cohort. Most notably has been the increase in Family and Friends placements with an increase of 51% from 2014 to 2018.

5.3 The chart below illustrates the number of children who accessed those placements and demonstrates a similar picture to the data above.



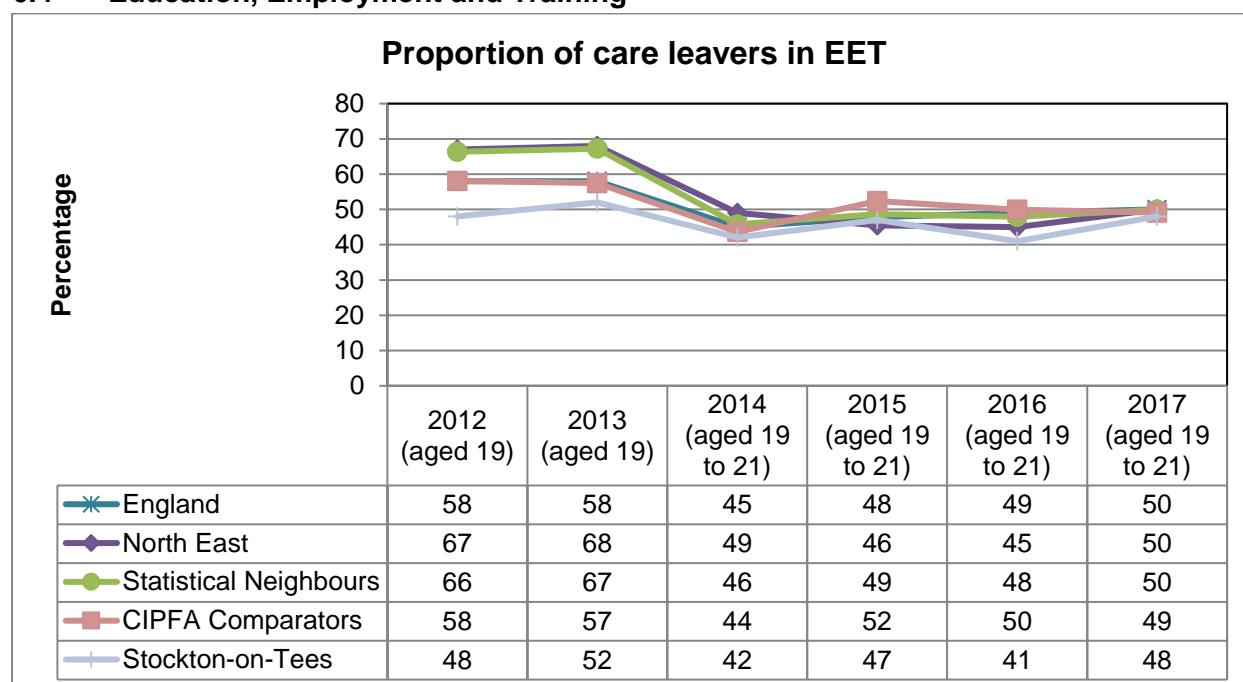
6.0 Outcomes

Data taken from LAIT (2017)

Indicator	Stockton	North East	Statistical Neighbours	England	Latest National Rank
Average progress score for Looked-after Children in Reading at Key Stage 2	-1.1	-0.2	-0.18	-0.7	81
Average progress score for Looked-after Children in Writing at Key Stage 2	0.5	0.2	-0.12	-0.9	35
Average progress score for Looked-after Children in Maths at Key Stage 2	-0.4	-0.5	-0.08	-1.1	54
Average Attainment 8 score for Looked-after Children at Key Stage 4	20.7	20.1	19.56	19.3	56
Average Progress 8 score for Looked-after Children at Key Stage 4	-0.9	-1.31	-1.26	-1.18	32
Percentage of unauthorised absence from school by Children Looked After continuously for 12 months or more	0.6	1.2	1.42	1.2	18
Percentage of Looked-after Children who are classed as persistent absentees	4.5	8.3	9.13	10	1
Percentage of children looked after for 12 months or more with a statement of SEN / EHCP	24.2	26	21.47	26.7	N/A

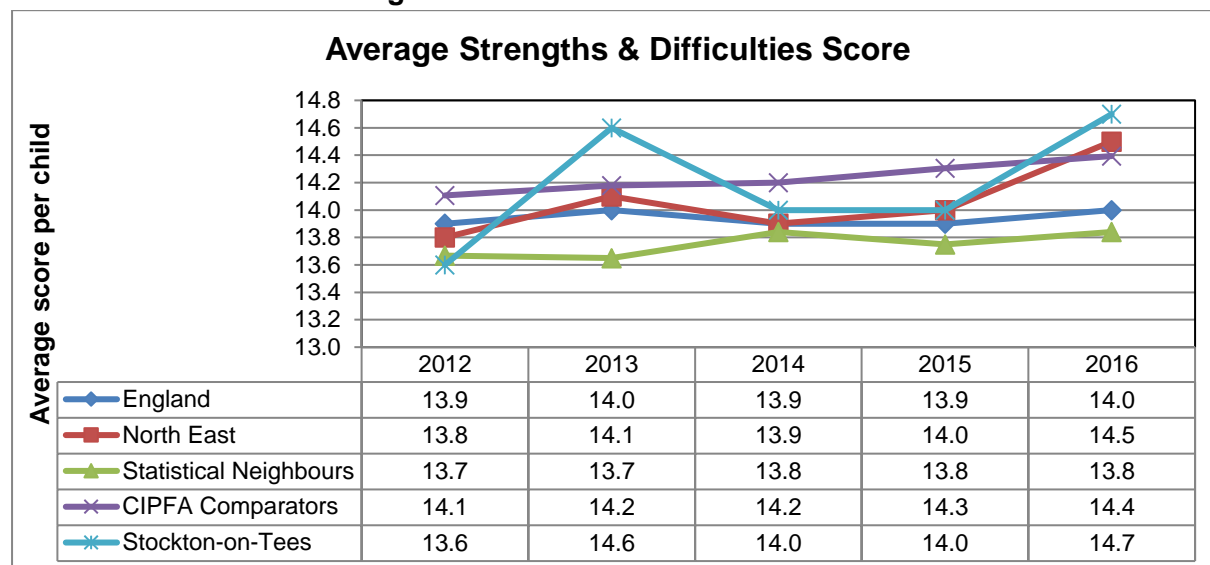
- 6.1 Comparisons with 2016 data shows an increase in outcomes for many of the headline indicators. Average Attainment 8 score has declined but is still above comparator groups and above the national score.
- 6.2 The average progress score for children in our care at Key Stage 2 in Reading is significantly below that for comparator groups, but has improved from 2016. Progress in Writing at Key Stage 2 is above comparator groups and well above the national figure. The average progress score in Maths has also improved since 2016, is slightly below our statistical neighbours but well above national. At Key Stage 4, the average attainment score (the achievement of pupils across 8 subjects English and Maths) although having decreased from 2016, is better than for comparator groups and above the national score and the Average Progress 8 score (comparing pupils Key Stage 4 results with those of other pupils nationally with similar prior attainment) is above benchmark groups, with pupils making more progress than pupils nationally with similar starting points.
- 6.3 There are fewer instances of unauthorised absences than for our comparator group and the proportion of those classed as persistent absentees is less than half the rate for England.

6.4 Education, Employment and Training

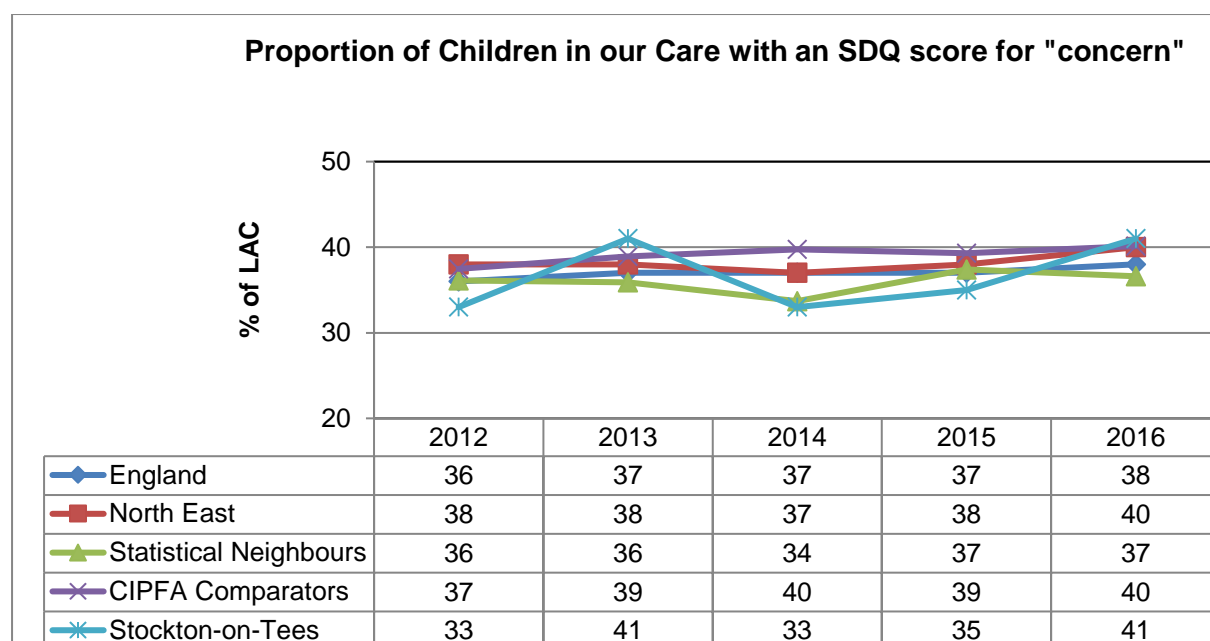


- 6.5 The percentage of care leavers who are in education, employment or training is broadly in line with comparator groups and increasing from 2016 performance at a much higher rate.
- 6.6 A higher proportion of care leavers (aged 19 to 21) were in Higher Education than for comparator groups. At 10.0% this is higher than for England (6.0%) North East (7.0%) and our Statistical Neighbours (7.6%) although this has decreased from 2016 performance of 16.0%).

6.7 Health and Wellbeing



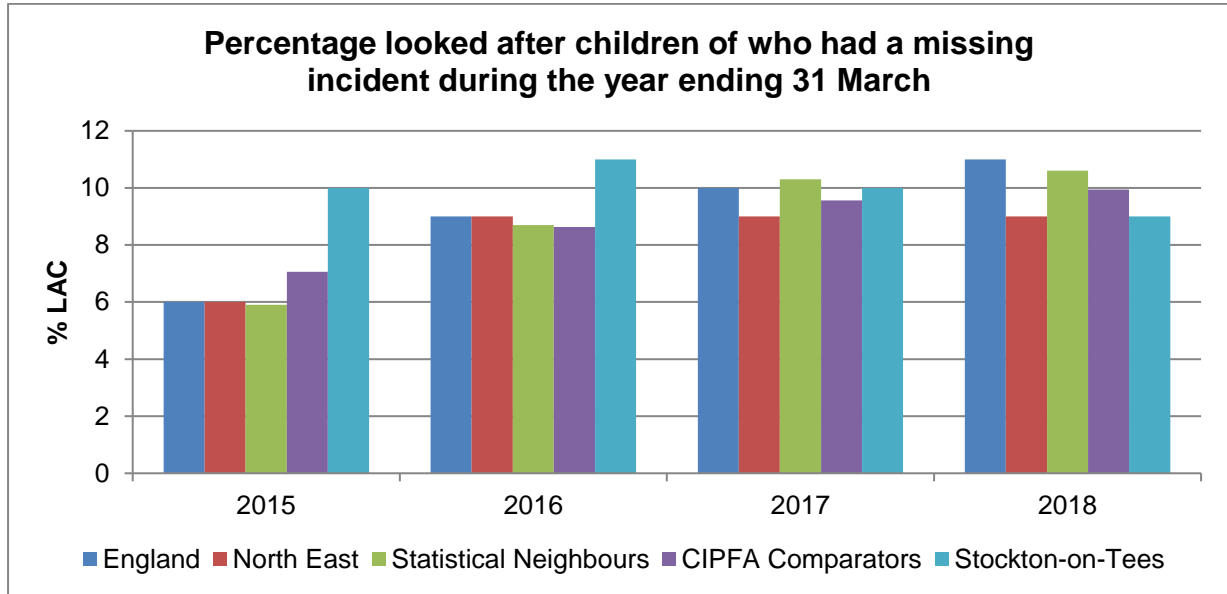
- 6.8 Of the children who have been in our care continuously for 12 months or more, their average score on the Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire for emotional and behavioural health is higher than for our comparators. Average scores of 14 to 16 indicates a higher proportion of children whose score indicated a borderline cause for concern.



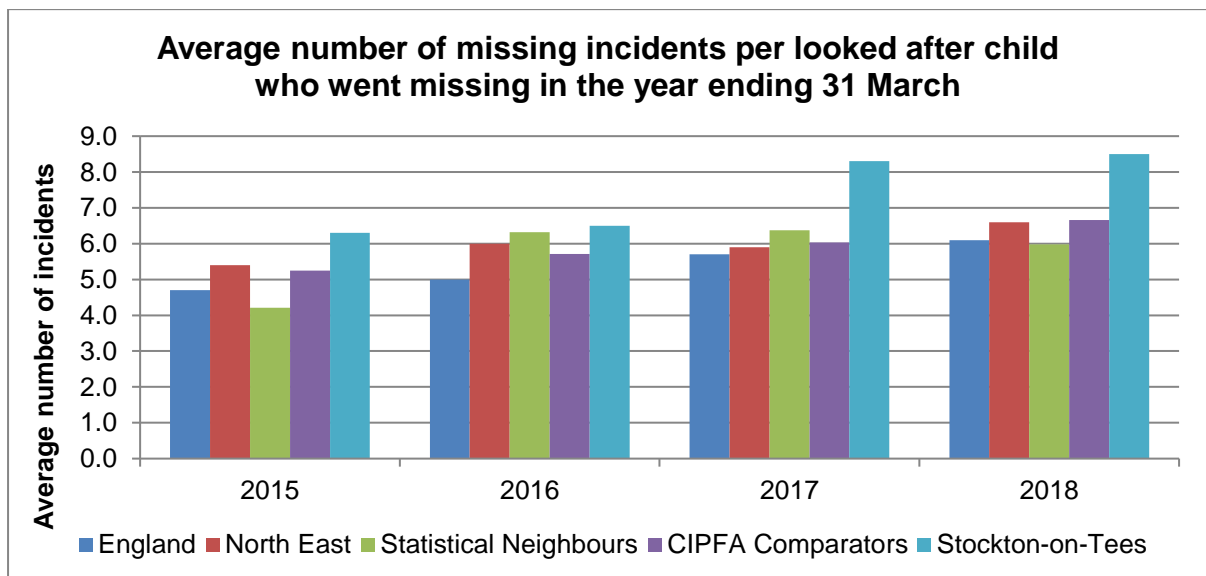
- 6.9 A slightly higher proportion of children in Stockton had a score of 17 or over indicating a cause for concern than for our comparator group.
- 6.10 In line with the national picture, the proportion of children who have been identified as having a substance misuse problem remains relatively small. Indeed from 2012 to 2015, the average has been 4% for the eligible cohort across Stockton and all comparator groups.

6.11 There has been a reduction in the numbers of children who have been in our care for 12 months or more from 2015 for their health outcomes. The proportion of those with up to date immunisations has reduced from 91.7% to 89.1% (below comparator groups), up to date dental checks from 94.6% to 81.8% (below comparator groups) and annual health checks from 94.6% to 92.7% (although remaining higher than for comparator groups). Although these reductions are small, analysis has begun to understand what is happening.

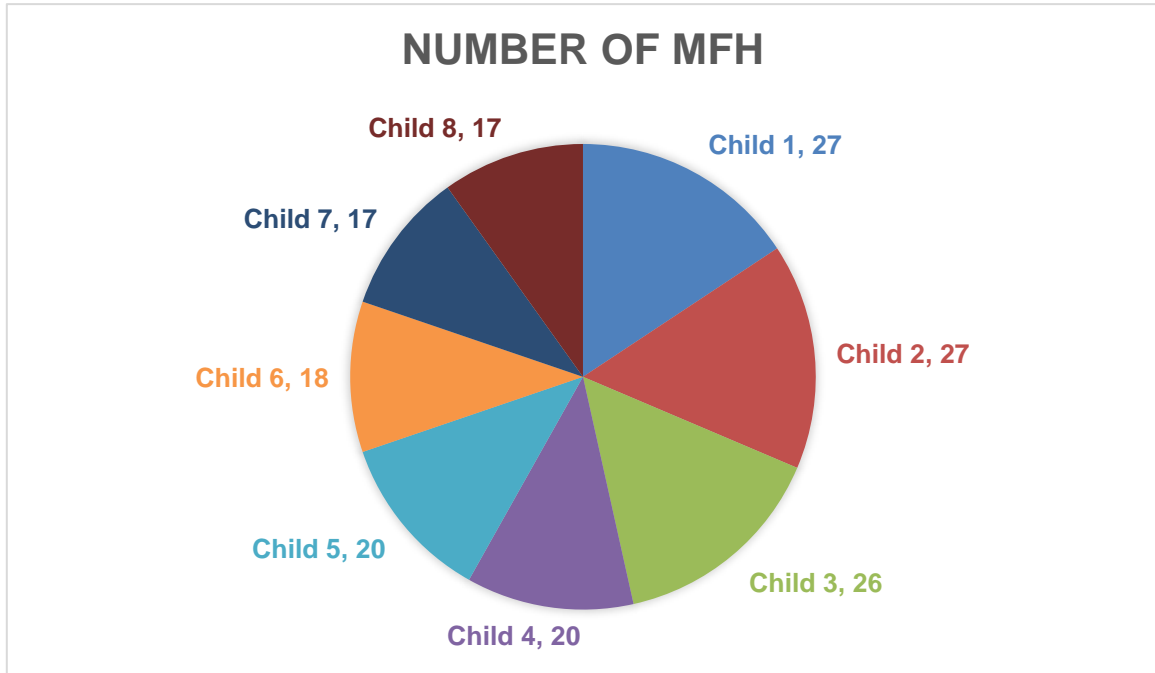
6.12 Data relating to Children who are looked after and have been reported as missing



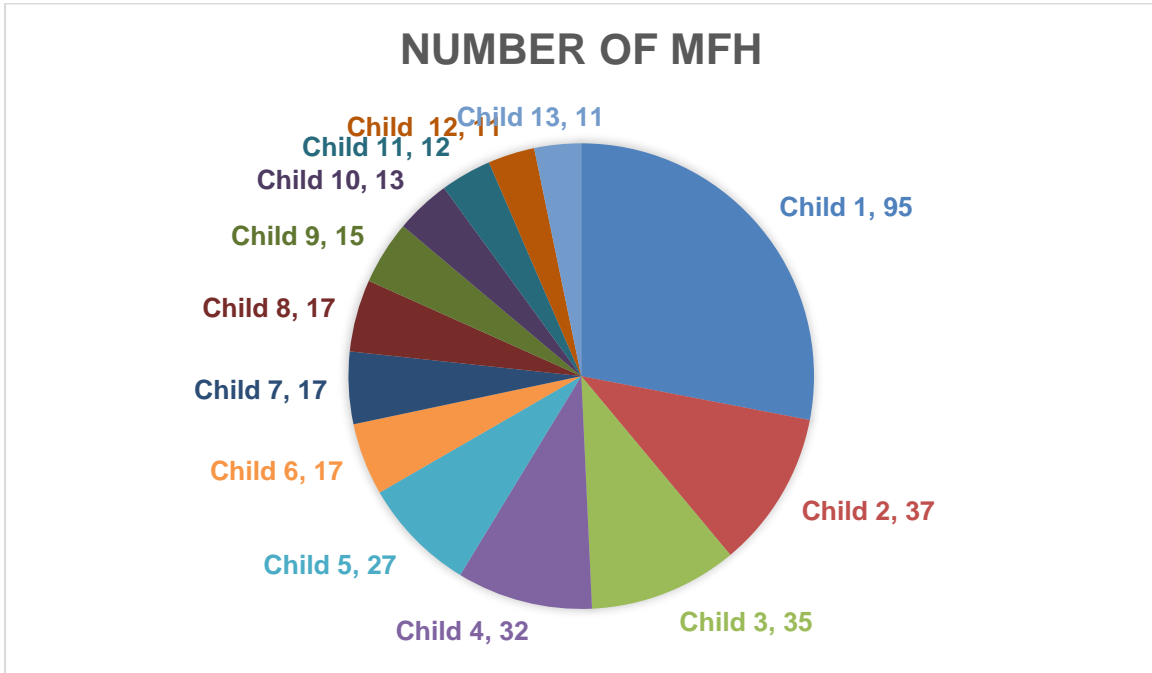
6.13 This is a relatively new measurement, so there is a lack of historical trend date. However, the above table suggests that Stockton has a higher proportion of episodes of children missing than for the comparator group, with a higher average number of episodes per child although this is reducing. Stockton has established a Vulnerable, Missing, Exploited and Trafficked multi-agency partnership to explore local trends and local responses.



- 6.14 The tables on the document show percentages, which must be read with a cautionary note. The first chart is showing 10% of children in our care in Stockton had a missing episode in 2015 compared with 6% for England, the North East and Statistical Neighbours but it doesn't give the overall actual figures, i.e. 10% of how many episodes compared with 6% of how many episodes, so we can't know for sure that it is a true comparison.
- 6.15 We do know however that our local statistics tell us that in the year 2015, 309 missing episodes for 55 children in our care were recorded. This included children placed in Stockton and those placed outside Stockton.
- 6.16 Of note 172 of the episodes were recorded for just 8 children, as illustrated below:

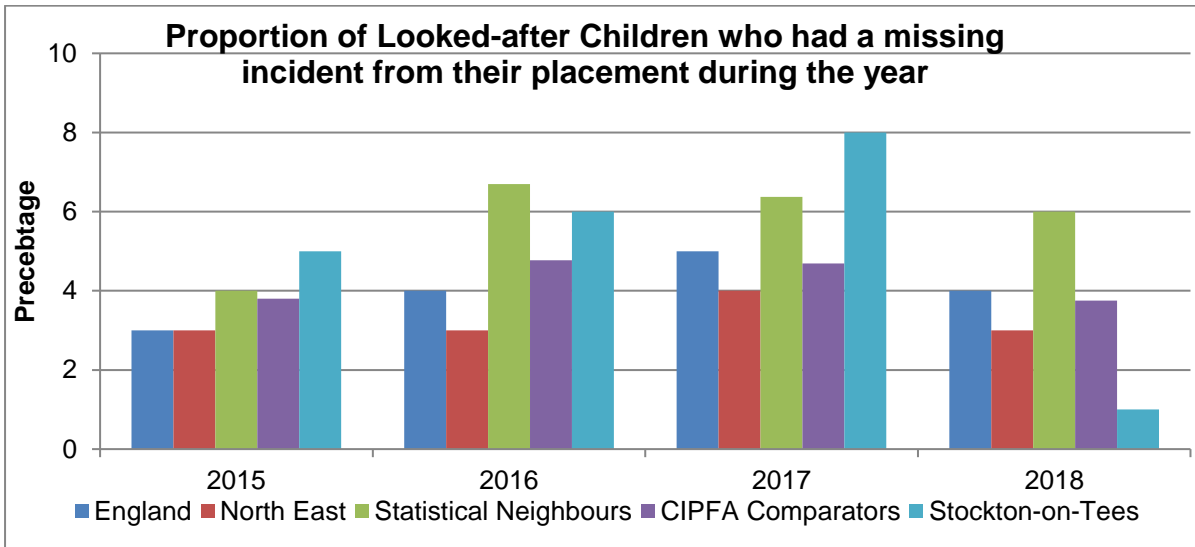


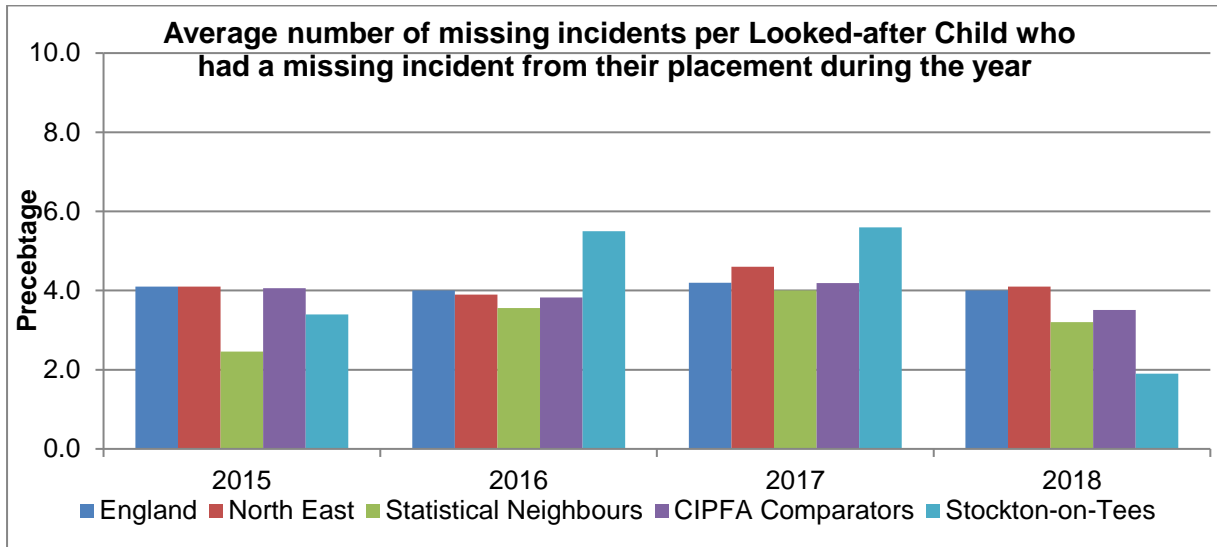
- 6.17 In addition, a further 16 children had between 4 and 10 missing episodes recorded.
- 6.18 In the year 2016, there were 456 missing episodes recorded for 59 children in our care. 315 episodes were recorded for just 13 children, including 1 child with 95 episodes indicating that there is not a culture of children in care going missing and that the worry of missing children from care relates to small numbers in Stockton.



6.19 A further 10 children had between 4 and 10 missing episodes recorded.

6.20 The proportion of children missing from their placement has reduced from 2015 although at a much faster rate than for comparator groups.

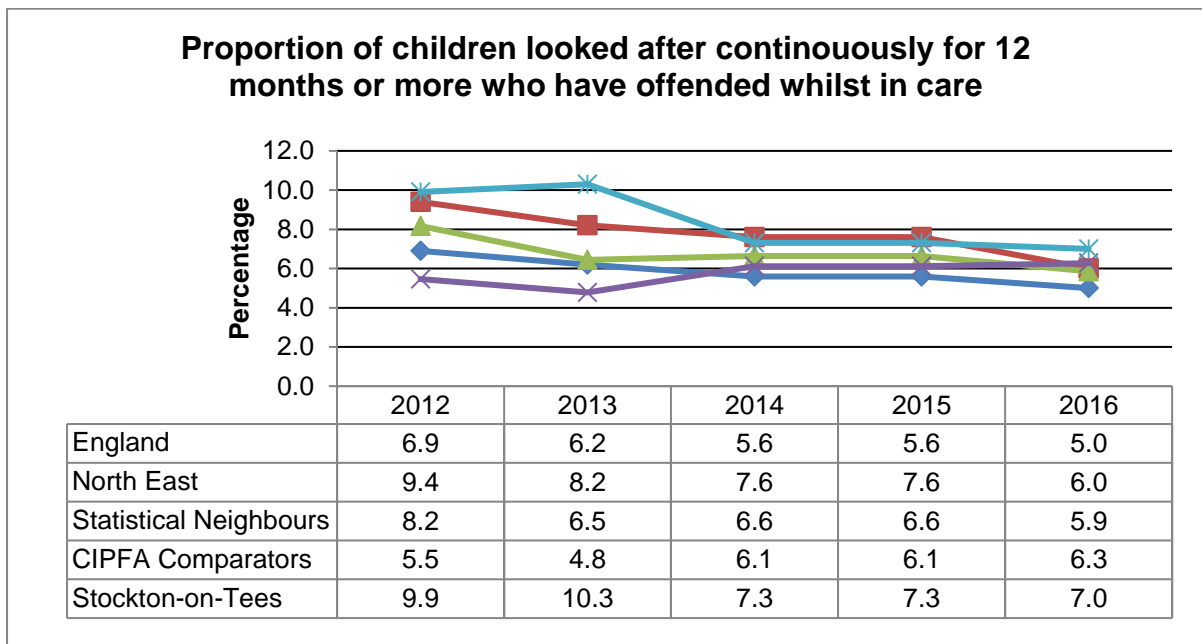




6.21 There has also been a corresponding reduction in the average number of episodes per child from the 2015 and is now lower than for comparator groups.

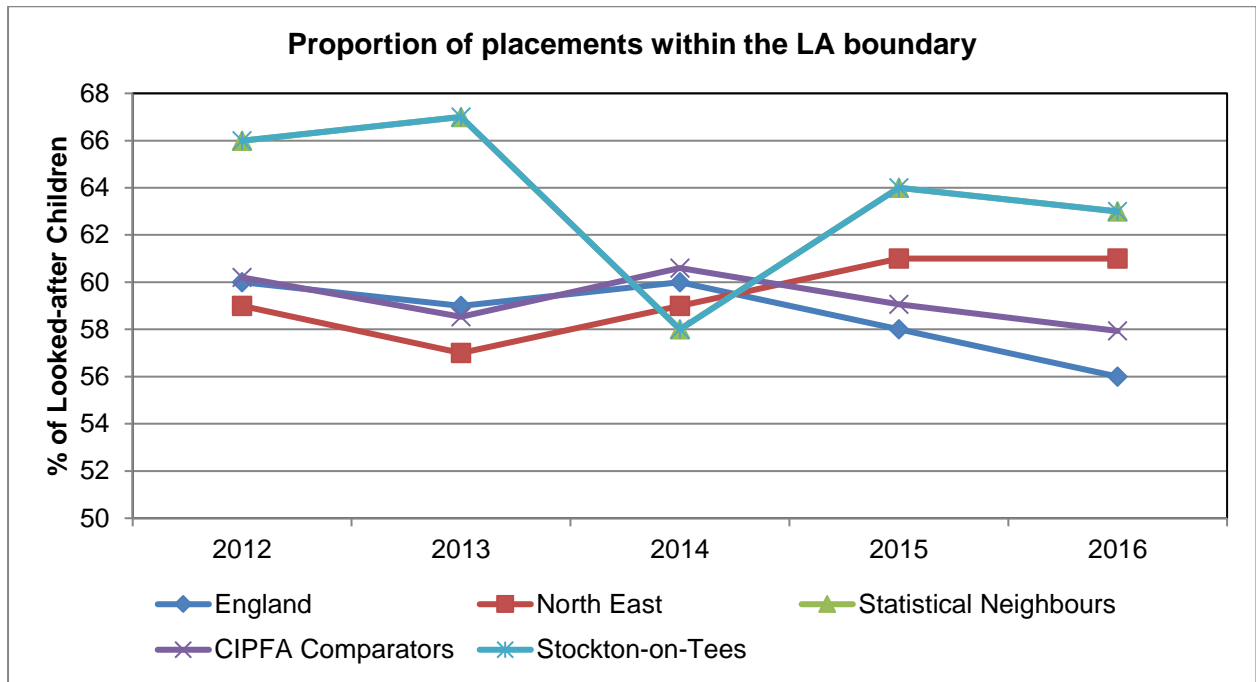
6.22 However it is difficult overall to proportionate this as differing authorities collect and record this data differently.

6.23 Children in Our Care and who have offended



6.24 Numbers of children in our care for 12 months or more who have offended have reduced from 2012. However, Stockton had a higher proportion of children offending than comparator groups for 2016, although numbers within the cohort remain very small.

6.25 Distance from Home



6.26 Historically Stockton has been in a position to be able to in the main, place more children within the LA boundary than our comparator groups.

6.27 Importantly, the majority of Stockton’s placements were “close to home”, being less than 20 miles from the child’s home. In 2016, only 7% of placements were in excess of 20 miles compared to 11% for the North East and 18% for England.

6.28 It must be noted however this is a changing position with increasing numbers of children becoming looked after, older and more complex against a back drop of underdeveloped local provision able to meet the needs of this cohort.

6.29 Overall Short Term Placement Stability

		2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
% of Looked-after Children who had 3 or more placement during the previous year	Num	27	40	30	37	36	33
	Den	341	371	383	380	383	440
	%	7.9%	10.8%	7.8%	9.7%	9.4%	7.8%

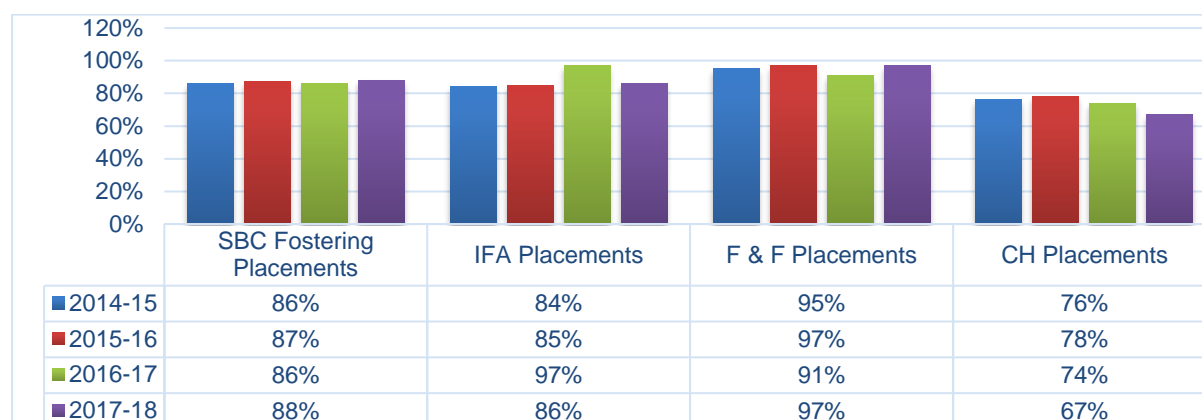
6.30 Overall Long Term Placement Stability

		2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
% of Looked-after Children who have lived in the same placement for at least 2 years (aged under 16)	Num	43	60	58	88	118	139
	Den	76	102	112	147	170	186
	%	56.6%	58.8%	51.8%	59.9%	69.4%	74.4%

6.31 There has been a positive reduction in the number of placement moves for Looked-after Children while the length of time children are in their placement has increased.

6.32 Stability by placement type

6.33 The graph below demonstrates the level of stability achieved in each service area. Of note is that those children placed in family and friends arrangements are more likely to experience stability than those placed in other care arrangements.

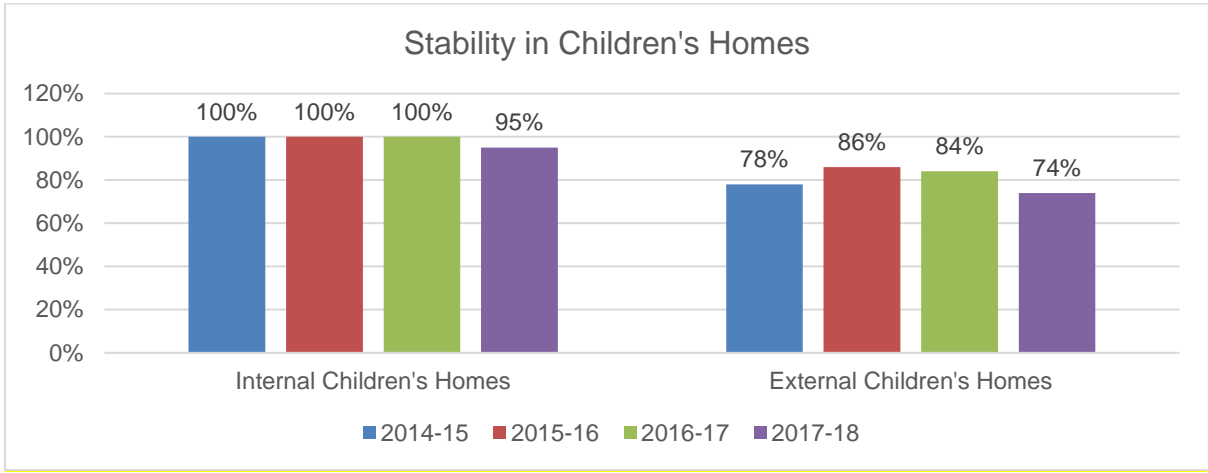


6.34 We know that those children placed in residential care are likely to be the most challenging and complex group of young people and likely to experience a number of disrupted placements. That said however we also know that early identification of appropriate placements, robust impact assessments and planning in place, the greater is likelihood of stability. We know that children and young people who are placed in our internal residential provision are more likely to experience stability than those in external residential provision as the table below demonstrates.

Year	Placement Type	Number of Placements	Distinct Children
2014-2015	Internal Children's Home	17	17
	External Children's Home	51	40
2015-2016	Internal Children's Home	19	19
	External Children's Home	58	50
2016-2017	Internal Children's Home	17	17
	External Children's Home	77	65
2017-2018	Internal Children's Home	19	18
	External Children's Home	85	63

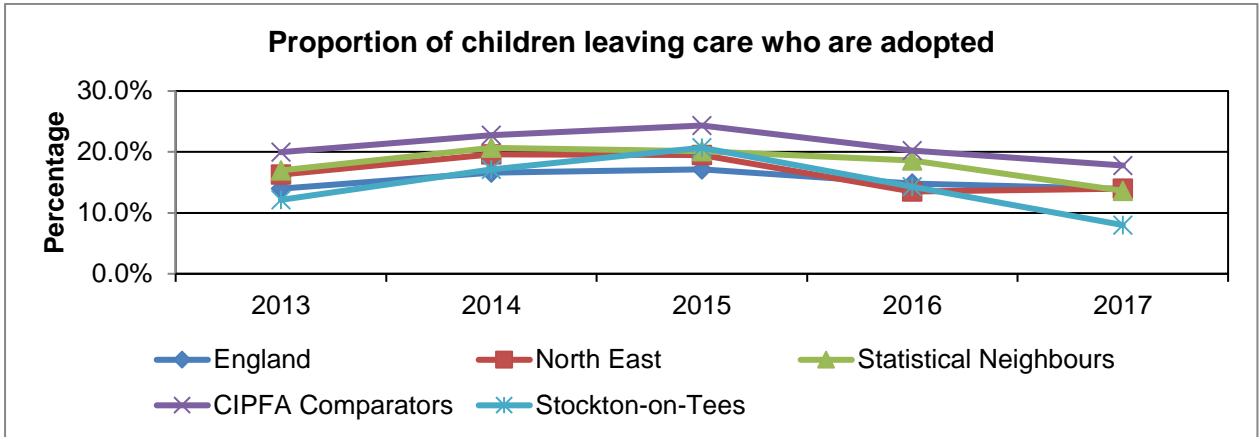
6.35 2017-2018 data has seen the greatest instability in residential care and the greatest number of disrupted placements in external provision, 63 children have had 85 placements.

6.36 In order to fully appreciate this data the figures have been translated into percentages and graph format below.

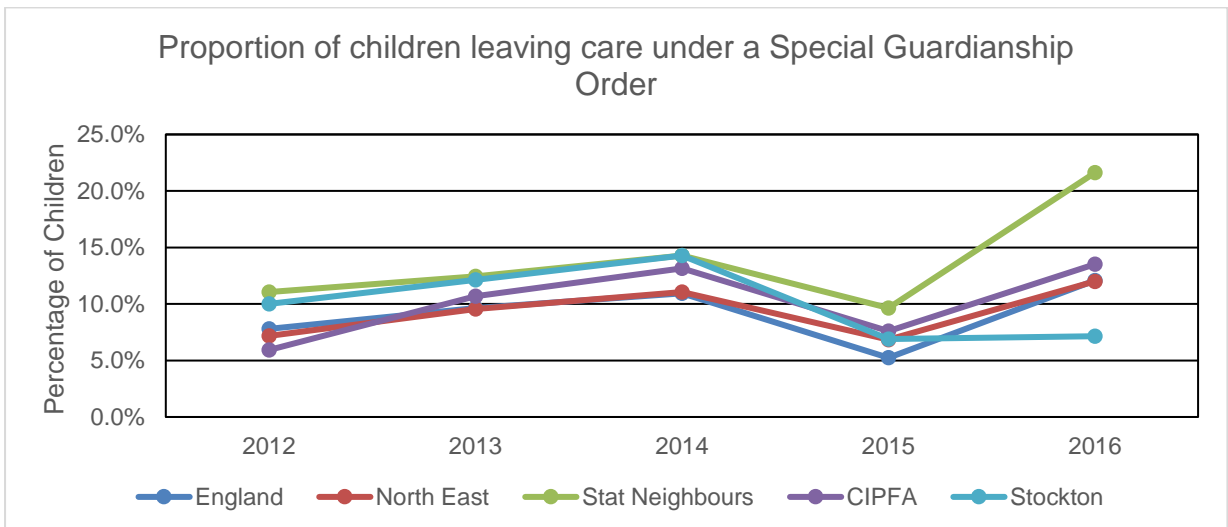


6.37 This data evidences that over the past 4 years we have seen significant stability in our internal provision. The only incident of instability to be experienced was by one young person who moved from one home to another in order to create capacity for a young person who had a number of moves in external provision prior.

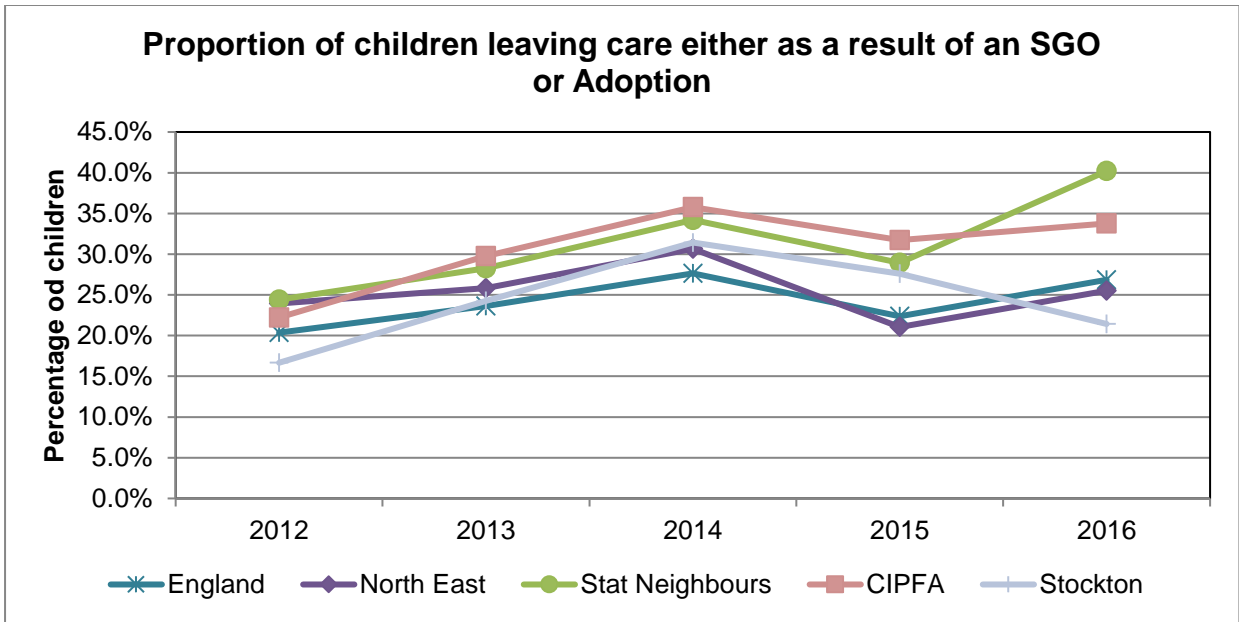
6.38 Adoption and Special Guardianship Orders



6.39 The proportion of children leaving care due to adoption has shown a steady decline since 2015 and is below that of all comparator groups.

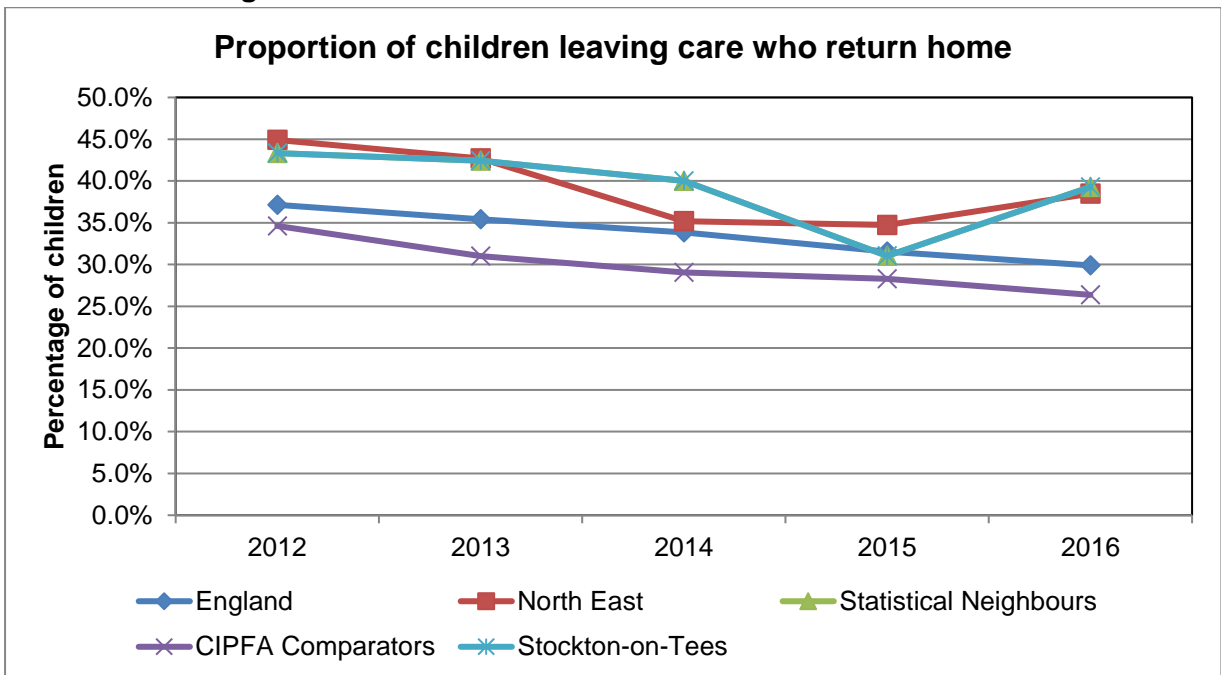


6.40 In contrast to an increase in the use of SGO's by benchmark groups, Stockton's has decreased.



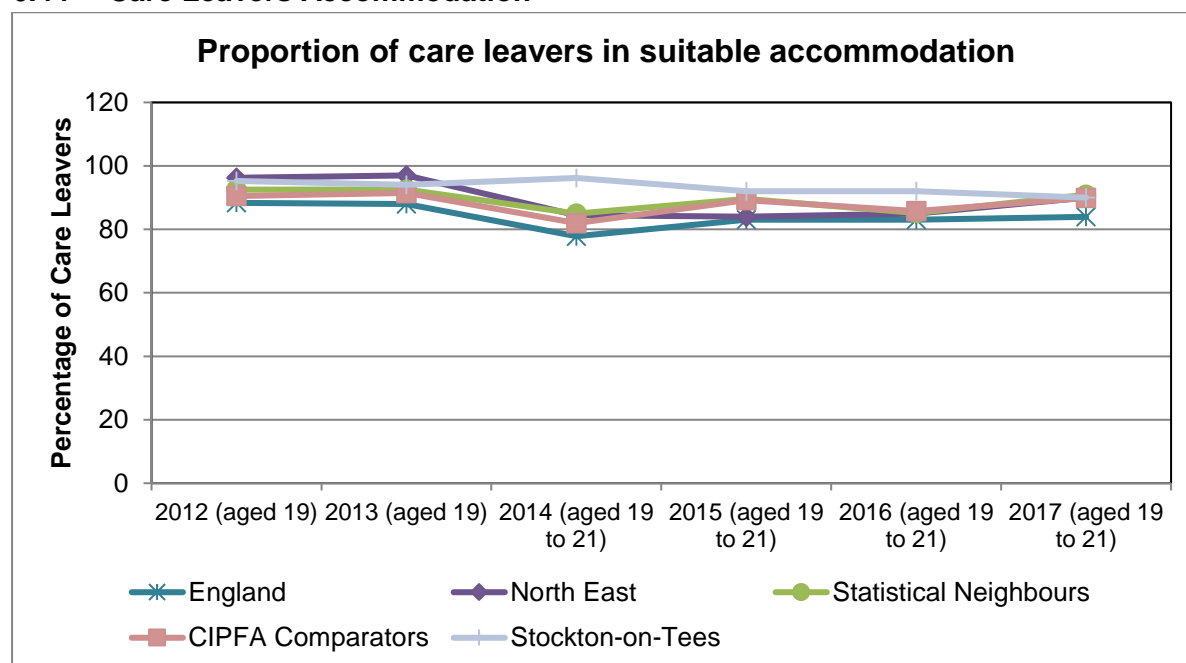
6.41 In contrast to a rising trend for our comparator groups, Stockton has seen a reduction in the use of adoptions and SGO's.

6.42 Returning home



6.43 Higher proportions of children in Stockton are returning to their parents or relatives on leaving care, either as part of the care planning process or as intelligence informs us by voting with their own feet and returning of their own accord.

6.44 Care Leavers Accommodation



6.45 Stockton performs well in this area, maintaining high proportions of care leavers placed in suitable accommodation.

7.0 Finance and Performance

7.1 Net Expenditure

Service Area	2013/14 Net expenditure £	2014/15 Net expenditure £	2015/16 Net expenditure £	2016/17 Net expenditure £	2017/18 Net expenditure Forecast at Q2 BC	Increase/Decrease Since 2012/13
Adoption Service	249,889	623,827	520,065	204,093	491,000	96%
External Residential Care	5,205,502	5,125,604	5,567,360	7,300,553	8,525,296	64%
Independent Fostering Agency	4,992,060	5,089,653	4,027,814	3,592,505	3,087,000	-38%
In-house Fostering Service	2,142,061	2,228,915	2,279,542	2,879,231	3,158,000	47%
In-house Residential Care	1,692,055	1,748,426	1,860,672	1,863,396	1,828,669	8%
Leaving Care	470,989	615,433	703,321	1,027,158	1,333,000	183%
Grand Total	14,752,556	15,431,858	14,958,774	16,866,935	18,422,965	25%

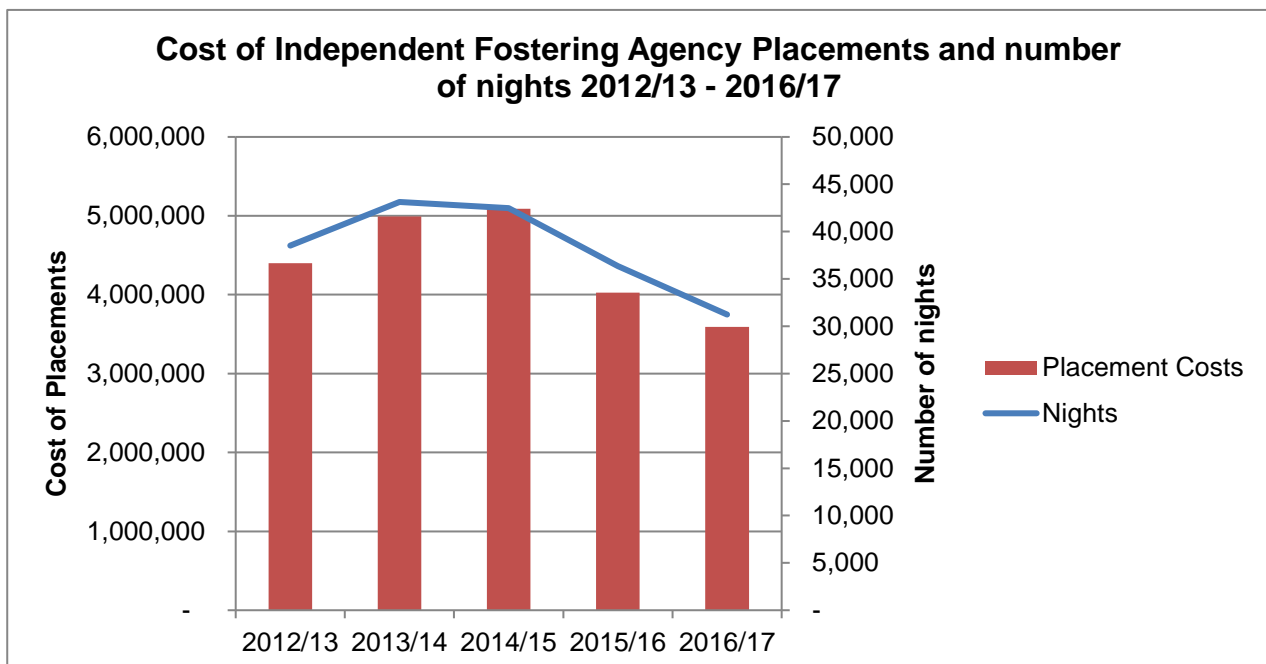
7.2 Average Costs as at Nov 2017 BC.

	Average Cost of Placement £	Highest Cost Placement £	Lowest Cost Placement £	Average Weekly cost £
External Residential Home	195,214	302,412	109,077	3,744
Internal Residential Home	94,183	N/A	N/A	1,806
External Fostering Placement	41,471	87,252	32,545	795
Internal Fostering Placement	15,542	22,264	13,834	298

7.3 Independent Fostering Agencies Numbers of Nights and Placements Costs

Year	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Nights	38,508	43,128	42,493	36,347	31,237
Placement Costs	4,400,269	4,992,060	5,089,652	4,027,816	3,592,504

7.4 Cost of Independent Fostering & Number of Nights Purchased 2012/13-2016/17



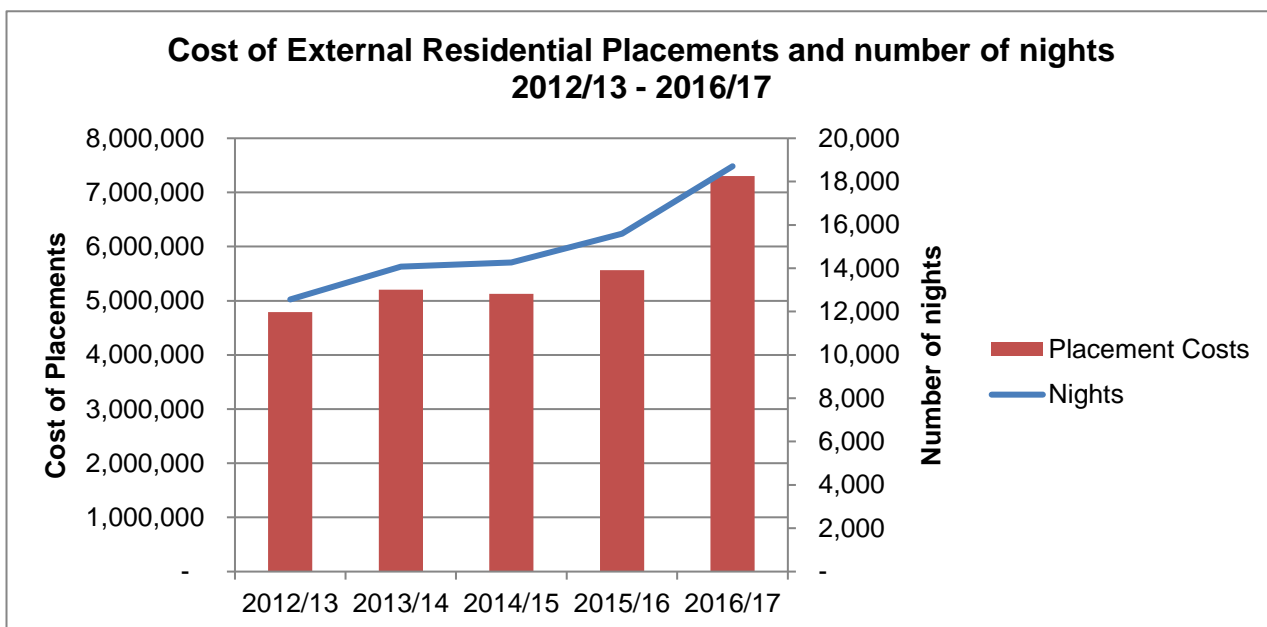
7.5 Comparison of In-House Fostering and External IFA costs

2017/18 as at Nov BC	Stockton In-house £	% of average placement cost	Independent Fostering Agency £	% of average placement cost
Average cost of placement	15,542	N/A	41,471	N/A
Fostering Allowance paid to carer per placement				0%
Overheads per placement				0%

7.6 External Residential Care Numbers of Nights and Placements Costs

Year	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Nights	12,560	14,082	14,264	15,604	18,706
Placement Costs	4,791,308	5,205,502	5,125,604	5,567,360	7,300,553

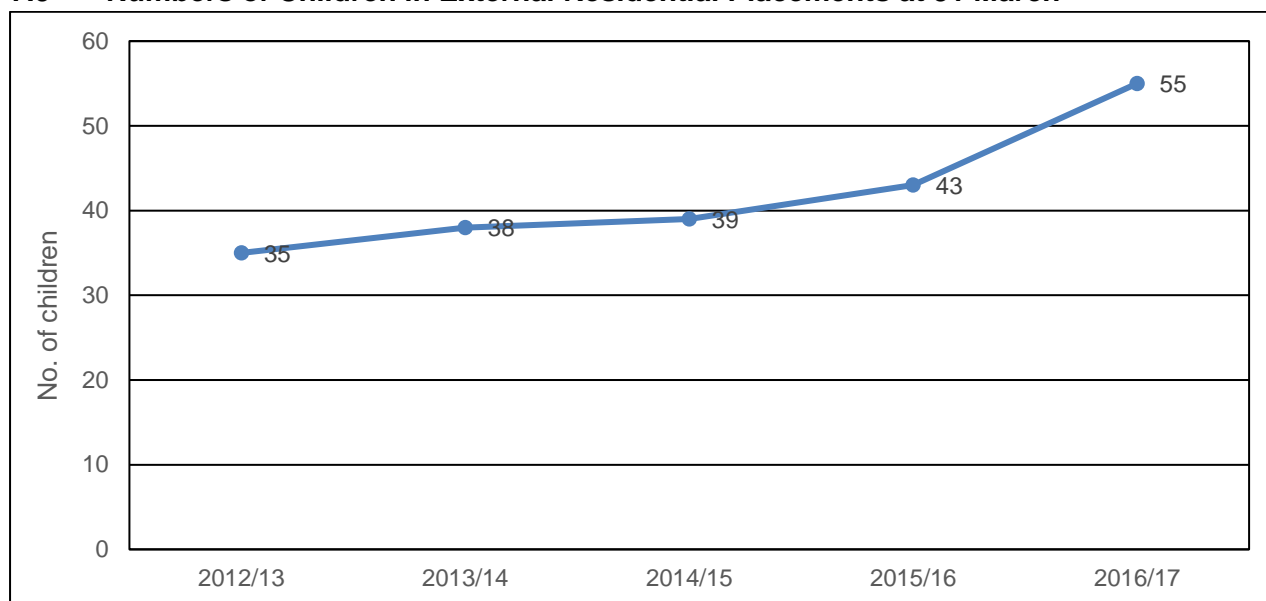
7.7 Cost of External Residential Placements & Number of Nights Purchased 2012/13-2016/17



7.8 We have seen an increase in expenditure been across the board, with External Residential Placements accounting for the majority of the expenditure. These placements are more than twice the average weekly cost of Internal Residential Placements. The only exception to this has been the reduction in the cost of IFA placements. The latter has been achieved through initiatives to encourage foster carers towards Stockton by robust market strategy and word of mouth. Foster carers

comment that the support they receive from our internal fostering service and the child's social worker attracts them to want join Stockton from IFA's.

7.9 Numbers of Children in External Residential Placements at 31 March



7.10 There has been an increase in the numbers of children in external placements of 57.1% from 2012/13. In particular there has been a significant rise from 2015/16 (over 27.9%). This is in line with the national picture leading to increased competition for available places by local authorities, contributing to the increasing cost of placements. External placement costs for 2016/17 were 31% higher than in the previous year.

7.11 Financial analysis highlights that there have been some significant increases in expenditure since 2012/13; an overall 25% increase. This is not a sustainable position to be in and highlights the need for continuing innovation in how we commission / deliver services.

8.0 Sufficiency Priorities and Commissioning Intentions 2018-2020

8.1 We know the number of children coming into our care continues to rise, placing unprecedented financial pressures and challenges to the Local Authority in meeting its statutory duty.

8.2 There has been an increase of 126 children in the last 2 and a half years from 377 to 503, which is an extra 33% more Children In Our Care and the reliance on provision out of the area is not diminishing.

8.3 The need for residential placements is an upward trend. In 2012, 10% of placements, this peaked in 2016/17 to 14%. At the start of Jan 2019, 13% of all CIOC were placed in residential provision.

8.4 The complexities of the young people requiring placements is such that internal fostering placements and placements with Independent Fostering Agencies are becoming increasingly difficult to source. This is likely to increase instability and placement breakdowns for children in our care.

- 8.5 We know there is an upward trend in placements with family and friends placing additional pressure on services to support those placements appropriately.
- 8.6 In response to these demands and its commitment to achieving the best possible outcomes for the children and young people of Stockton on Tees, the Council intends to have a wide reaching approach in its Sufficiency planning and will not focus on placements sufficiency in isolation.
- 8.7 This Statement is not a standalone document, it provides the background data and its comparisons forms the basis from which the Councils priorities have been derived. It will be kept live and data will be updated in order that emerging patterns and trends can be identified in order priorities are kept under review.
- 8.8 We are focusing on the following and we will continue to record, monitor and report on progress and a wide range of indicators at a corporate and partnership level, including the Corporate Parenting Board.
- We are redeveloping early help services, with our partners, to better support children, young people and families at an earlier stage, and by keeping children and young people safely within their homes and communities.
 - Enhance our new Edge of Care model, including further development of restorative approaches and Family Group Conferences. Exploration of the value of more intensive therapeutic programmes of support to children, young people and families
 - We are seeking to increase social work capacity and develop smarter ways of working to enhance support to children, young people and families
 - *Going Home* work stream commenced in 2018 to explore how we can develop a culture and vision for services which promotes safe and sustainable reunifications within families
 - Exploration of innovative models of peer / network support within our fostering services, including the development of the Mocking Bird model.
 - Review the Foster Care Service with the purpose of explore further efficiencies within the team.
 - Research opportunities to develop innovative approaches to support Special Guardianship arrangements
 - Working with Dartington Research to test the application and value of Dynamic System Modelling to help us understand in real time the operation of our early help and social care system; to manage 'flow', to anticipate placement trends, and monitor the impact of strategies.
 - Improved commissioning approaches for external placements that deliver strong placement matches and 'best value', including reviewing and strengthening the NE12 solution.

- Review the full procedures around admission into our care, including strengthening funding arrangements and agreement processes. This will include greater focus on continuous financial monitoring of placements in order to achieve best value and purpose.
- Exploration of models to improve emotional wellbeing and resilience amongst children in our care
- We will review the functioning of our in-house children's homes in order to deliver on the coming home, going home work stream. Specifically, to create capacity for short term to medium term placements for complex teenagers where the ultimate aim is to return home.
- We will explore opportunities through the Joint Venture and Tees Valley solutions to achieve our key objectives to keep more children and young people safely connected to their communities.
- Re-model in house provision to build on current placement stability and create increased cost efficiencies for those young people in need a residential care.
- Maintain improvements in the range of accommodation and support packages for Care Leavers.
- Strengthen and embed our approach and delivery of the Regional Adoption Agency, in order that more children leave care through adoption.
- Make positive use of Short breaks provision, including the promotion of the Short Breaks Grant to provide families of children with disabilities and additional needs with needed breaks from caring, while the child benefits from the opportunity to take part in social opportunities. Thus reducing the potential of family breakdown.

9.0 How Will We Measure Success?

1. Children and young people are protected from harm, are supported to be the best they can be in life and are resilient
2. More children and young people safely remain connected with their communities
3. More children and young people are safely and sustainably reunified with their families
4. We know who children in our care and care leavers are, how many of them there are, their needs and how best to meet them
5. We are able to undertake careful placement matching, thus enabling more successful placements
6. We provide a range of effective support and interventions to children in our care and to their carers thereby increasing placement stability

7. Children and young people are enabled to exit care, as directed by their care plan
8. Improved educational outcomes for the Children In Our Care
9. We receive positive feedback from children in our care, care leavers, foster carers, adopters and residential staff and broader 'team around the child'
10. 'Value for money' commissioning approaches