



# **Children in our Care Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy 2020-21**

DRAFT

**CONTENTS:**

<b>Paragraphs</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Page Numbers</b>
	Statement from Director of Children’s Services	3
1.0 – 1.5	Introduction	4
2.0 – 2.8	Strategic Content	4 - 6
3.0 – 3.11	Children In Our Care	6 - 8
4.0 – 4.11	Scope of Provision Available in Stockton	8 - 11
5.0 – 5.1	Placement Occupation & Trends	12
6.0 – 6.30	Outcomes	12 - 19
7.0 – 7.13	Finance and Performance	20 - 23
8.0 - 8.10	Sufficiency Priorities and Commissioning Intentions 2018-2020	24 - 26
9.0	How Will We Measure Success?	26

## **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, September 2020

DRAFT

## **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. This strategy is a statutory requirement set out in Section 22G of the Children's Act 1989.
- 1.2 This duty requires 'local authorities to take steps that secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the authority's area which meets the needs of children that the local authority are looking after, and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the local authority's area (the Sufficiency duty)'.
- 1.3 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 to 2021 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.
- 1.4 During 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.
- 1.5 Please note that due to the impact of COVID 19, comparator data at a Tees Valley, England and statistical neighbour level has not yet been published. Therefore a proportion of the indicators within this document reference the latest available verified data for 2018-19. Where this is the case this is clearly referenced. A new strategy will be produced during 2021 and will include comparator data once released.

## **2.0 Strategic context**

- 2.1 In July 2020, the Council set out its vision and hopes for the Borough within the Council Plan 2020-2023 with three key priorities for Stockton-on-Tees to be:
- A place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm
  - A place with a thriving economy where everyone has opportunities to succeed
  - A place that is clean vibrant and attractive.
- 2.2 The Council has committed to playing its part in bringing about this vision for the borough by being:
- A council that is ambitious, effective and proud to serve.
- 2.3 As a Directorate, Children's Services is undergoing a significant journey of transformation and change which is reflected in the priorities within its business plan which include:
- A stronger focus on the importance of early years
  - Closer working with schools on vulnerable children and an integrated support approach

- A more integrated approach to assessment and support, which gets multi agency support to families as soon as possible and helps to build capacity in families
- An approach to understanding needs which is faster, is less reactive and threshold based and enables support to be provided earlier
- Enable greater consistency in our contact with families – so they do not experience multiple moves of workers, hand offs and transfers
- Integrated support for young people
- A new approach to working with the most vulnerable young people who have experienced significant trauma and exploitation
- A more child centric structure which prioritises the journey and voice of the child
- A clear plan to re-shape our approach for children in our care
- A clear plan to re-shape our approach for children with special educational needs and disabilities

2.4 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.

2.5 As part of the Council's commitment to its corporate parenting responsibilities, it set out a pledge of 7 promises to all of the children and young people in its care within the Our Family strategy 2018-21

<https://www.stockton.gov.uk/media/1584887/our-family-our-strategy-for-children-in-and-leaving-our-care-2018-21.pdf>

2.6 The Strategy promises that children and young people will:

- be involved in their care and treated as individuals
- have productive relationships: family, friends and community life
- have suitable accommodation and support to meet their needs
- be safe
- be healthy
- get the best education and skills
- be supported in the transition to adulthood and as care leavers.

2.7 The number of children in our care has been rising, year on year, and this has continued during 2019/20. There have been significant increases in the number of pre-teen and teen admissions which have, in turn, increased the demand for and nature of placements, particularly external placements. With demand for placements increasing across the region and nationally, the cost of external placements has increased significantly.

2.8 During 2019/20, we began testing the 'Valuing Care' approach which provides a way to consistently explain, record and track needs and outcomes for children in care. It is a new way to assess, plan for and review the progress of children in care, which focuses on their needs, strengths and aspirations. Rather than focusing on risks, this

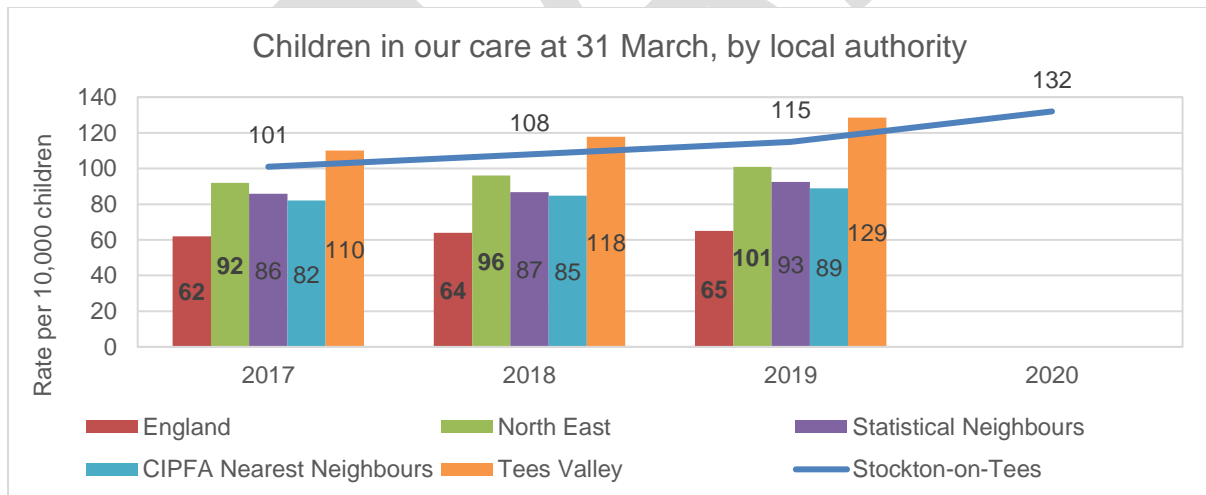
new approach supports professionals around the child to clearly identify the need of the young person and the support they require in and outside of their placement to achieve their goals. This work is still early in its inception but will continue to develop over the coming year. From the test work that has taken place to date, we are confident that using this approach will help us to ensure that, when we do have to place a child or young person away from their family of origin, the placement will support and help to reduce their needs.

2.9 It is acknowledged that this strategy will only be of benefit if it is owned by key decision makers and used to inform service planning and development. The Corporate Parenting Board continues to 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 continues to develop.

### 3.0 Children in Our Care, Stockton-on-Tees

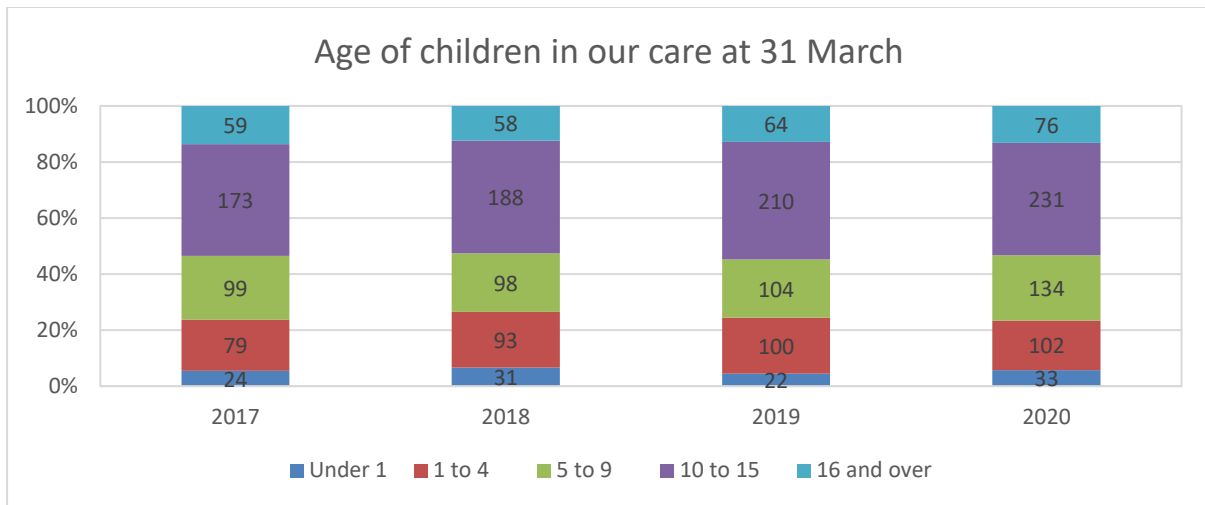
3.1 This section sets out the information on the numbers and rates of children in our care as at 31<sup>st</sup> March each year, alongside comparator data where possible. As noted earlier in the strategy, there has been a delay to the publication of verified comparator data due to the system response to COVID 19. Data has been sourced from the DFE Statistical First Releases (SFR) for the years 2017-2019 with locally available data included where available for 2020.

#### 3.2 Overall Rates of Children in our Care



3.3 The overall rate of children has continued the increases seen in previous years. At 31 March 2020, a total of 576 children were in our care, a higher rate than the latest data for England, North East, statistical neighbours and CIPFA comparator groups, but remaining lower than for the Tees Valley. Compared to the position at 31 March 2019, the percentage rate of increase equates to 13.9% for Stockton, more than twice the rate increase from 2018 to 2019 (6.8%).

### 3.4 Characteristics of Children in our Care



#### 3.5 Age

In line with previous years, children aged 10 and over account for more than half the highest proportion of children in our care. This brings Stockton in line with England and the North East who have historically seen higher proportions of children aged 10 and over in care.

#### 3.6 Gender

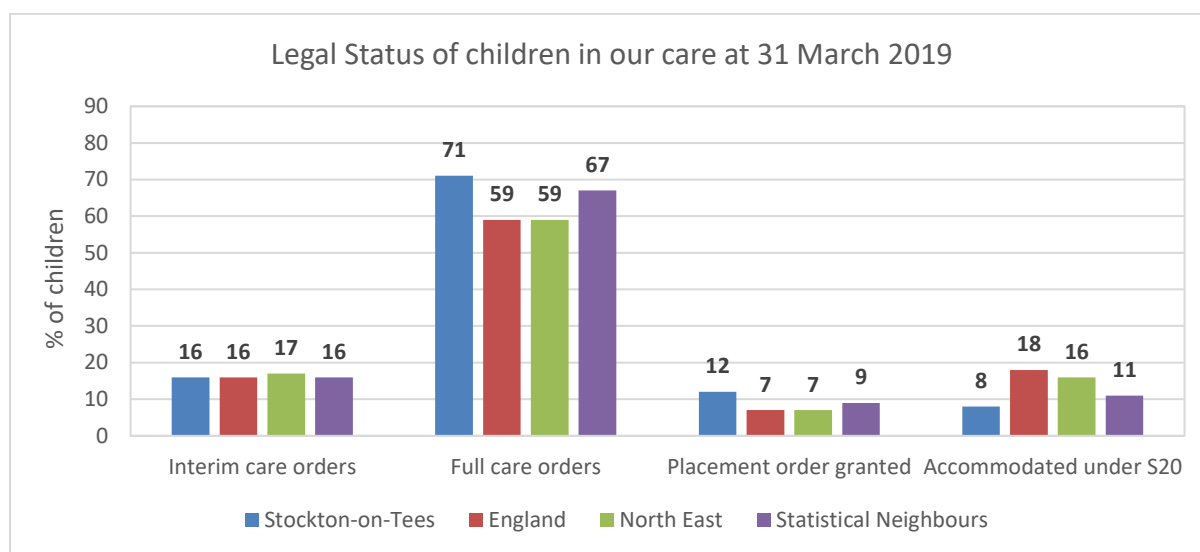
On average, since 2017, 53% of the children in our care have been male, slightly lower than for England and the North East. There has been a reduction in the proportion of males of 6.4% since 2017 compared to a 7.9% increase for females in contrast to the regional and national picture where the proportions have remained relatively static over the same period.

#### 3.7 Ethnicity

The majority of children who are in our care in Stockton are of white ethnic origin. Between 2017 and 2020 this has averaged 90%. This is slightly lower than the North East over the same period (an average of 92%), in line with our statistical neighbours but higher than for England (75%).

3.8 As a result of this stability, the rate of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) children coming into care has remained stable over the same period accounting for an average of 3% of Children in Our Care.

### 3.9 Legal Status



3.10 Of the children in our care at 31 March 2019, a higher proportion were accommodated on a Full Care Order than for comparator groups with fewer children accommodated under an Interim Care Order.

3.11 The use of Section 20 arrangements has been steadily decreasing, nationally, regionally and locally. Stockton's rate of reduction from 2016 is 68%, a faster rate of reduction than for England and comparator

## 4.0 Scope of Provision Available in Stockton

### 4.1 External Residential Provision

Provision	Capacity	SBC young people placed as of 30 Sep 2018	SBC young people placed as of 30 Sep 2019	SBC young people placed as of 30th April 2020	Focused model of care delivered	OFSTED rating
Old Vicarage Stillington (Spark of Genius)	5	4	4	2	Medium to long term residential for children and young people aged between 7 and 17 years of either gender.	Good
Red Plains Hartburn (Spark of Genius)	5	4	3	1	Medium to long term residential for children and young people aged between 7 and 17 years of either gender.	Outstanding
Fairview Thorpe Thewles (Spark of Genius)	5	2	4	3	Medium to long term residential for children and young people aged between 7 and 17 years of either gender.	Outstanding
No 57 (Peebles)	3	0	0	0	Medium to long term residential for children and young people aged between 8 and 17 years of either gender. Provide care for children with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties.	Good
The Willows (Josh's Place)	5	0	0	0	Medium to long term residential for children and young people with	Good



					Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties	
Elm Bank (Witherslack)	5	0	0	0	Medium to long term residential for females aged between 8 and 17 years and have experienced trauma. Specialist Child Sexual Exploitation	Good
Beech Lodge (Hennessy Group)	5	0	1	4	Medium to long term specialist home that provides support to children and young people aged between 3 and 19 years old of either gender who experience emotional and behavioural difficulties, including mental health and associated conditions.	Good
Huntercombe House (Atlas Health Group)	10 (plus 5 respite)	4	3	3 (plus 1 respite)	Long term care for children and young people with learning disabilities aged between 7 and 17 of either gender. Also provides short breaks for up to 5 children and young people	Good

#### 4.2 In House Residential Provision

Provision	Capacity	SBC young people in placement as of 30 Sep 18	Focused model of care delivered	SBC young people in placement as of 30 April 2020	Focused model of care delivered following a review of in house residential service between 2018 and 2019	OFSTED rating
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.	4+1	No change	Outstanding
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.	4+1	No change	Good
Tilery House	3	3	Medium to long term residential for children and young people aged between 7 and 17 years of either gender.	3	Turn Around Home, short term care with interventions including therapeutic support, tailored to needs of child and family working towards reunification or step down into foster care.	Good
Rose House	3	3	Medium to long term residential for children and young people aged between 7 and 17 years of either gender.	3	No change	Good
Oak View	Not in place at Sept 2018			5	Medium to long term residential for children and young people aged between 7 and 17 years of either gender.	Good
Our Place	Not in place at Sept 2018			5	Edge of care provision, offering short break and intervention packages including therapeutic support for children on the edge of care or in fragile placements	Not yet inspected

### 4.3 Supported Housing Accommodation

4.4 Supported Housing Accommodation is available in Stockton for young people aged 16 – 25 years and provides support for young people who are aged 16 -17 and homeless, and for young people who are in our care and leaving care.

Type of placement	Capacity
<p>Sanctuary St. James</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>6 flats on a licence agreement or an Assured Short Hold Tenancy dependant on need of young person</p>
<p>Sanctuary 155</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>6 flats on a licence agreement or an Assured Short Hold Tenancy basis dependant on need of young person + 1 emergency accommodation on a licence agreement</p>
<p>Parkfield Hall</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>10 flats on a licence agreement or an Assured Short Hold Tenancy basis dependant on need of young person + 1 emergency accommodation on a licence agreement</p>
<p>Supported Lodgings</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>9 Providers offer up to 12 placements to young people on a licence agreement</p>

4.5 A tender exercise took place earlier this year with the ambition to develop an enhanced support accommodation service delivery model, whilst retaining 22 units available for young people. As part of this process, a new contract has been awarded to Parkfield Hall (North Star Housing) to deliver 10 units of accommodation plus one emergency crash pad under a new, fluid support system based on the Valuing Care approach with a range of support hours offered. This new service model embeds the Valuing Care assessment into the support delivered to ensure it is reactive and tailored to individual young people’s needs as they develop their tenancies and move towards independence. It is anticipated the new model will enable more young people to be placed in commissioned services, and allow placement stability and limit evictions.

4.6 The remaining 12 units (plus Crash Pad) will continue to be delivered by the above range of providers for a further year whilst market engagement takes place with potential providers. This engagement is to test interest in developing a dispersed system in which support is wrapped around young people who live in their own properties in the community. Dependent upon market feedback, a separate tendering exercise will take place later in the year.

#### 4.7 Foster Care as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020

4.8 In the Fostering Team there has been a sustained increase in numbers of fostering households, primarily as a result of the steep increase in connected care placements.

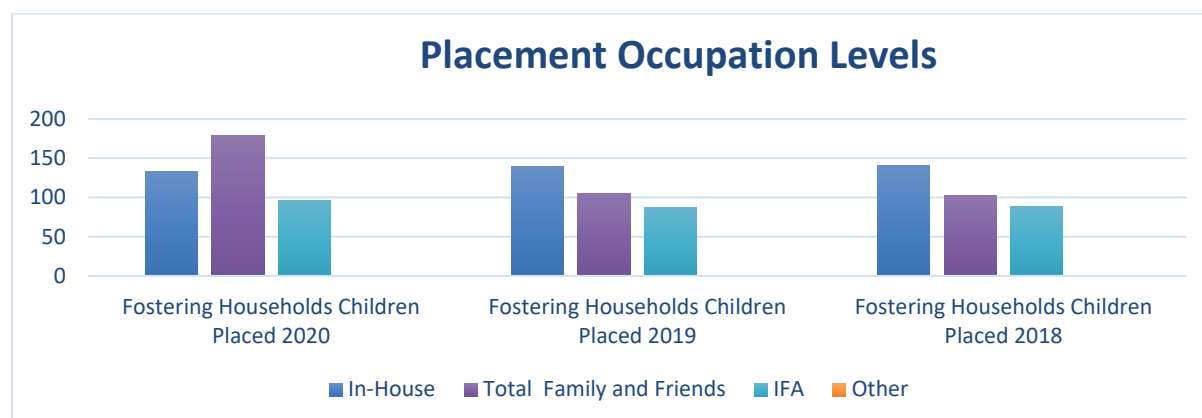
Collection Year	Number of Households	Number of places
2017	161	315
2018	180	340
2019	182	354
2020	218	398

4.9 The number of approved connected carers has consistently grown from a figure of 55 connected carers (fully and temporarily approved) in 2017 to 112 in 2020. The tight timescales and complexities of connected foster care have meant that all members of the Team have had to support this growth area and this has impacted on capacity to recruit and assess non-related carers or offer in-team training to all foster carers. Despite a number of agency and temporary social workers being recruited, work outstrips capacity. There are currently 42 connected carer assessments allocated within the Team and a further 8 awaiting allocation.

4.10 Referrals for fostering placements have also been at a very high level and the ability to place children both inhouse and via Independent Fostering Agencies has been impacted. Referrals for non-emergency placements and long-term fostering are often active for several months without an appropriate fostering resource being identified. This is particularly evident for older children, those of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background and those children needing regular respite in order to support their permanent placement either within another fostering household or within their birth/adoptive family. There are currently 33 active referrals for placements (many of which are for sibling groups); 13 of these referrals are for regular respite.

4.11 Caseloads in the Fostering Team are on average 18-20 approved fostering households plus 1-2 assessments per Full Time Equivalent social worker, or for those social workers focusing on connected care assessments, 6-8 assessments plus 2-5 approved fostering households. In addition, the team are responsible for the recruitment of new foster carers as well as pre and post approval training and support. Caseloads across the Northern region differ significantly with some fostering teams having significantly lower caseloads and others that are comparable. It is notable that those with lower caseloads achieve legislative timescales for fostering work, where those with lesser capacity and high caseloads do not.

## 5.0 Placement Occupation & Trends



5.1 The above chart indicates that there is an upwards trend year on year on the use of Family and Friends with a slight downward trend in the use of both Inhouse and Independent Fostering Agency placements. This is in line with our ambition to keep children within their family networks wherever appropriate and possible.

## 6.0 Outcomes

Data taken from LAIT (2019)

Indicator	Stockton	North East	Statistical Neighbours	England	Latest National Rank
Average progress score for Children in Our Care in Reading at Key Stage 2	1.3	1.00	-0.96	-0.20	27
Average progress score for Children in our Care in Writing at Key Stage 2	0.5	0.7	-0.69	-0.80	37
Average progress score for Children in our Care in Maths at Key Stage 2	1.40	0.20	-0.72	0.33	14
Average Attainment 8 score for Children in our Care at Key Stage 4	21.20	20.60	19.79	19.20	44
Average Progress 8 score for Children in our Care at Key Stage 4	-1.42	-1.37	-1.47	-1.23	99
Percentage of unauthorised absence from school by Children in our Care continuously for 12 months or more	0.9	1.5	1.54	1.4	28
Percentage of Children in our Care who are classed as persistent absentees	7.5	10.4	10.37	10.90	15
Percentage of Children in our Care for 12 months or more	25.4	25.3	23.72	27.2	N/A

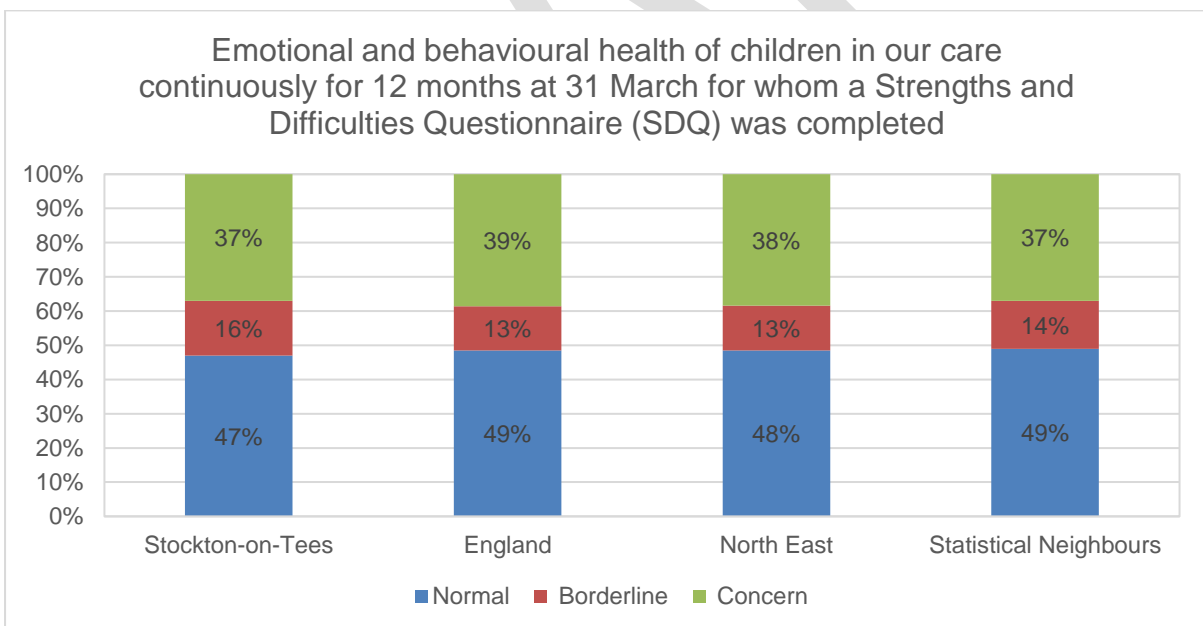
with a statement of SEN / EHCP					
--------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--

6.1 Comparisons with 2018 data shows an improvement in some of the outcomes for the headline indicators.

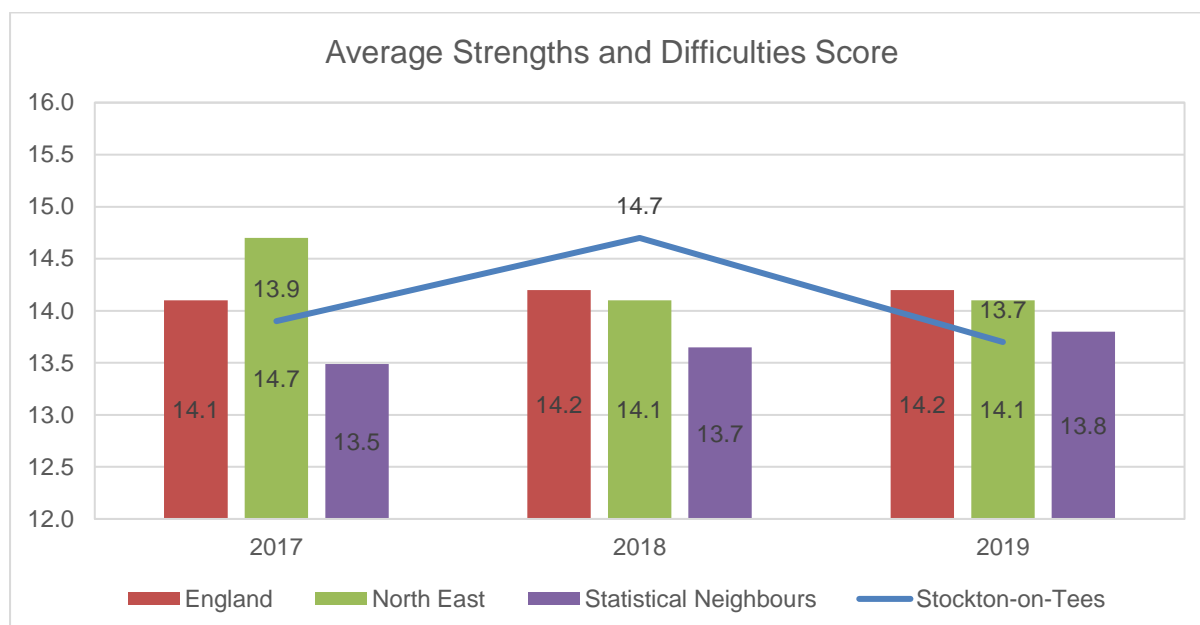
6.2 The average progress score for children in our care at Key Stage 2 in Reading has improved from 2018 and is above that for comparator groups. Progress in Writing at Key Stage 2 has improved from 2018 and is now above the performance of comparator groups but below the regional average. There has been a significant improvement in Maths at Key Stage 2 from 2018 and is better than for all comparator groups. At Key Stage 4, the average attainment score (the achievement of pupils across 8 subjects including English and Maths) has improved from 2018, with our performance above the performance of our comparator groups and nationally. However, Progress 8 score (comparing pupils Key Stage 4 results with those of other pupils nationally with similar prior attainment) has declined. Whilst it is now above our statistical neighbours it is below the performance of our comparators in the North East and England.

6.3 Instances of absenteeism has declined by 0.30 and remains below the Unauthorised absences of our comparator groups. Although the proportion of those classed as persistent absentees has increased slightly, it remains better than for all comparator groups.

**6.4 Health and Wellbeing**

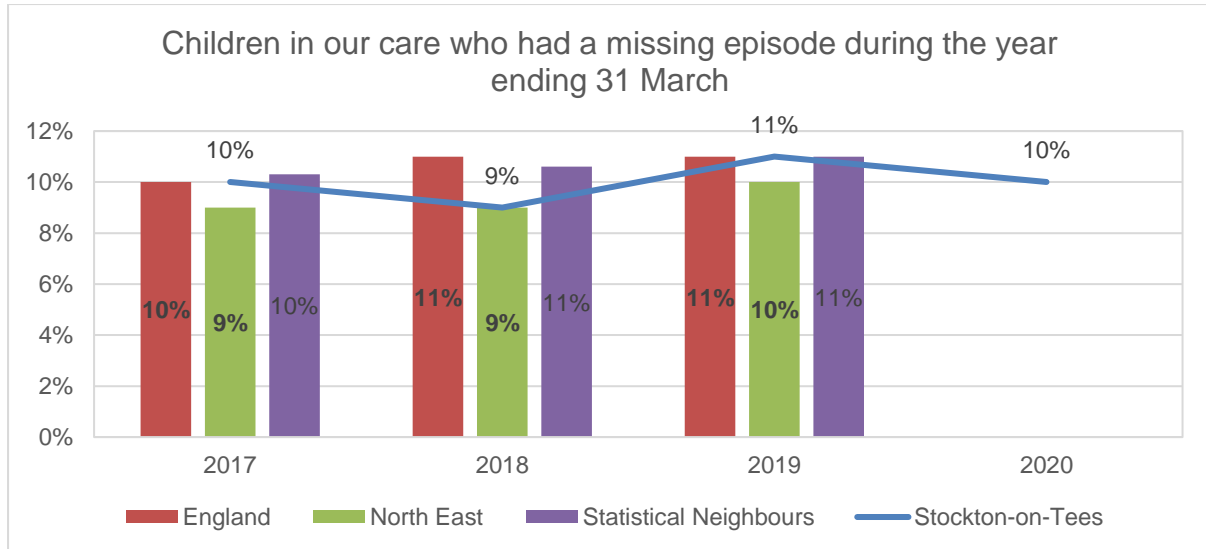


6.5 Of the children who have been in our care continuously for 12 months or more, the responses for those answering the Strengths and Difficulties is broadly in line with our comparators. There has been very little change in those responses over the last 5 years.



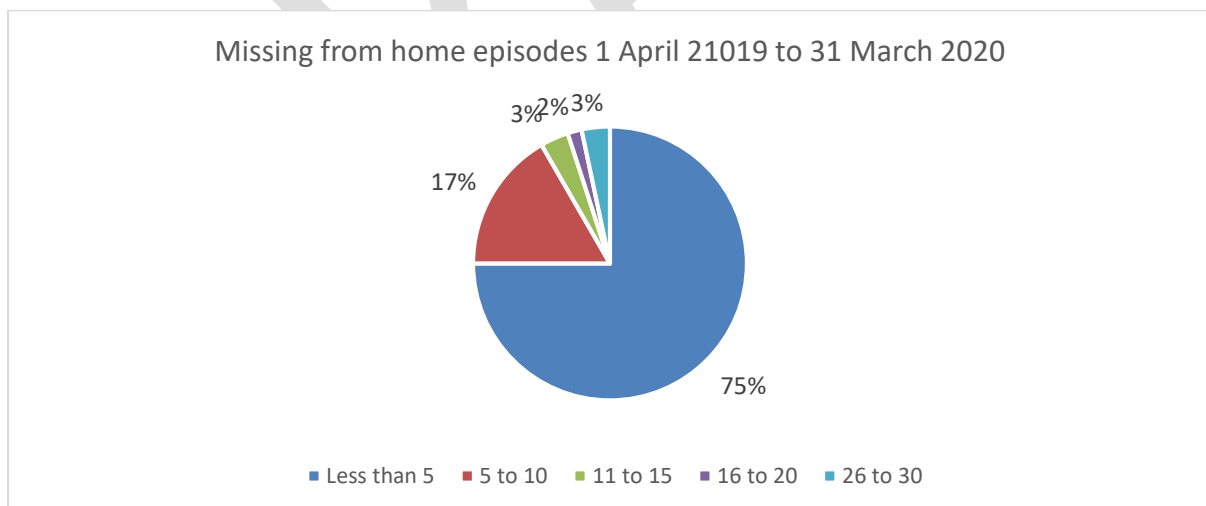
- 6.6 The average strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) score reduced slightly in 2019 in comparison to the previous year. There has been some variability in recent years but the average score has remained within the 'normal' range. As with any 'average', this indicator can mask the more extreme scores at either end of the scale. Placement instability figures and the slight rise in the average SDQ score for 2018 may be linked and this will be kept under review.
- 6.7 In line with the national picture, the proportion of children in our care who have been identified as having a substance misuse problem remains relatively small. From 2012 to 2019, the average has been 4% for the eligible cohort across Stockton and all comparator groups.
- 6.8 There has been some decline in recorded health outcomes for children who have been in our care for 12 months. The percentage of children having their review health assessment has reduced this year, although 100% of universal developmental reviews undertaken by a health visitor were up to date. There has also been a reduction in the number of children in our care with an up to date dental review this year, putting us out of step with both the North East and England. The proportion of those with up to date immunisations has reduced slightly from 92% to 91% and although better than for England is below North East and Statistical Neighbour averages. A multi-agency task and finish group, with strategic oversight from Corporate Parenting Board, has been established to consider the health and wellbeing needs of children in our care, how to make the review health assessment process more meaningful, particularly to older children and young people, and to coproduce a solution with children, young people and carers.

## 6.9 Missing Episodes



6.10 The proportions of children in our care who have been reported as missing from their placement has remained relatively stable. For 2020, 10% of children in our care had a missing episode, in line with the North East and slightly better than for our Statistical Neighbours and England.

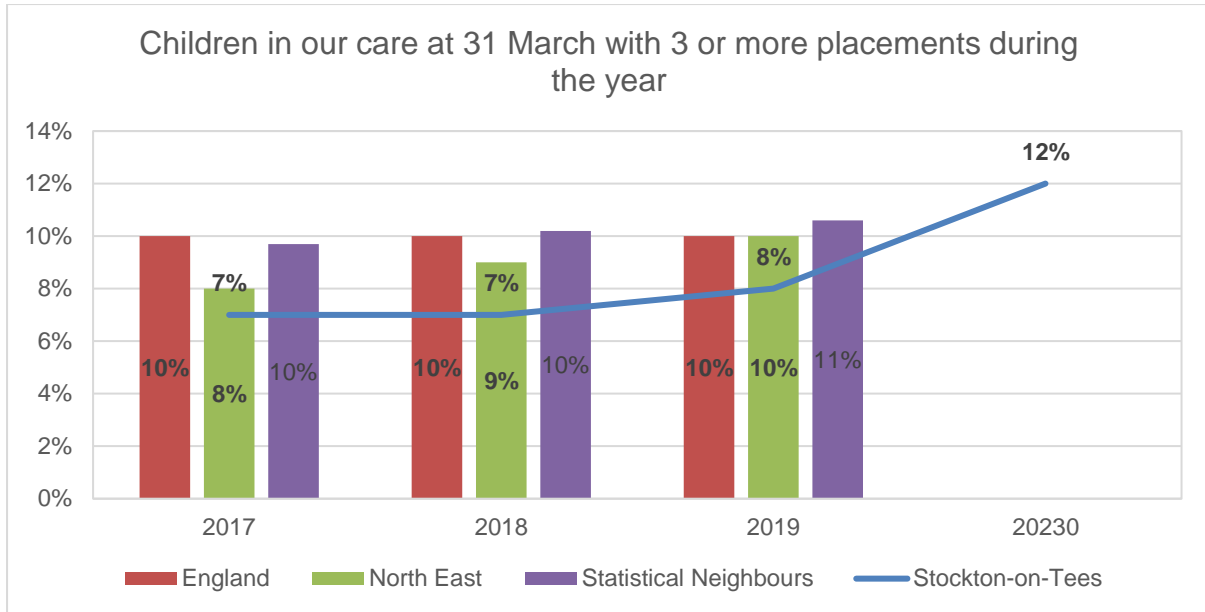
6.11 During the year to 31 March 2020, there were 227 missing episodes for 60 children in our care recorded within Stockton (excluding children from other local authorities). The majority of children (75%) had less than 5 missing episodes in the period. 89% of missing episodes were for less than 24 hours duration.



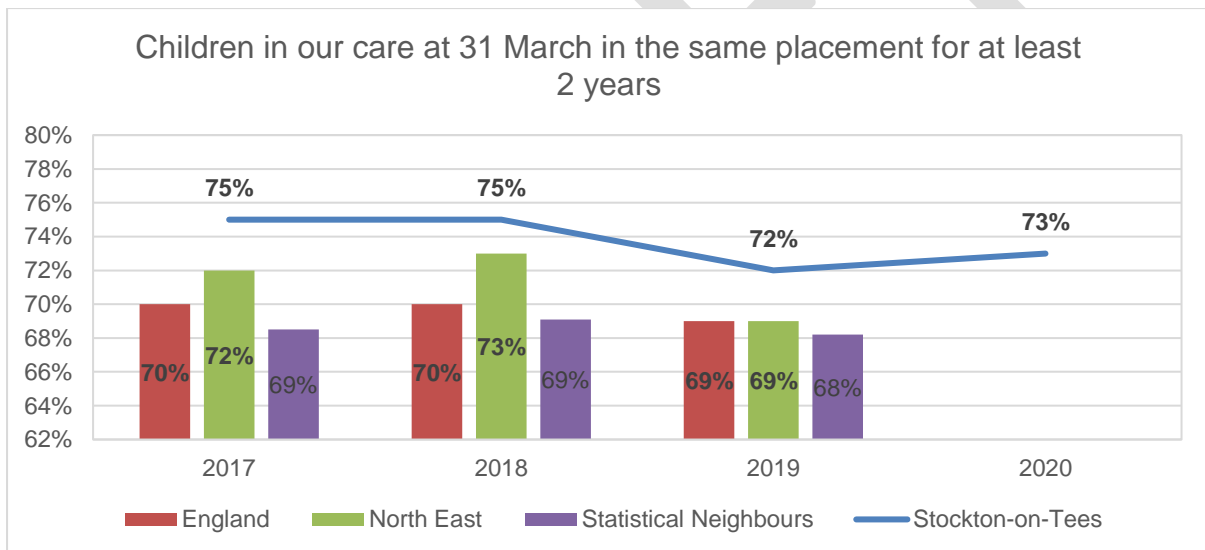
## 6.12 Children in Our Care and who have offended

6.13 Numbers of children in our care for 12 months or more who have offended remain relatively small. For 2020, 4% of looked after children aged 10 to 17 were convicted or subject to a final warning or reprimand during the year, which is in line with the North East and Statistical Neighbours, but slightly higher than for England (3%). Since 2012, Stockton has seen a reduction of over 55% in offending behaviour of children in our care, better than for all comparator groups.

### 6.14 Overall Short Term Placement Stability



### 6.15 Overall Long Term Placement Stability



6.16 There has been a slight decrease in short term stability for children in our care. At 12%, we are seeing more children with 3 or more placements in the year than for comparator groups. However, long term stability has improved from the previous year. The proportion of children who have been in their placement for at least 2 years (or are placed for adoption and their adoptive placement together with their previous placement, last for at least 2 years) remains better than for comparator groups.

### 6.17 Stability by placement type

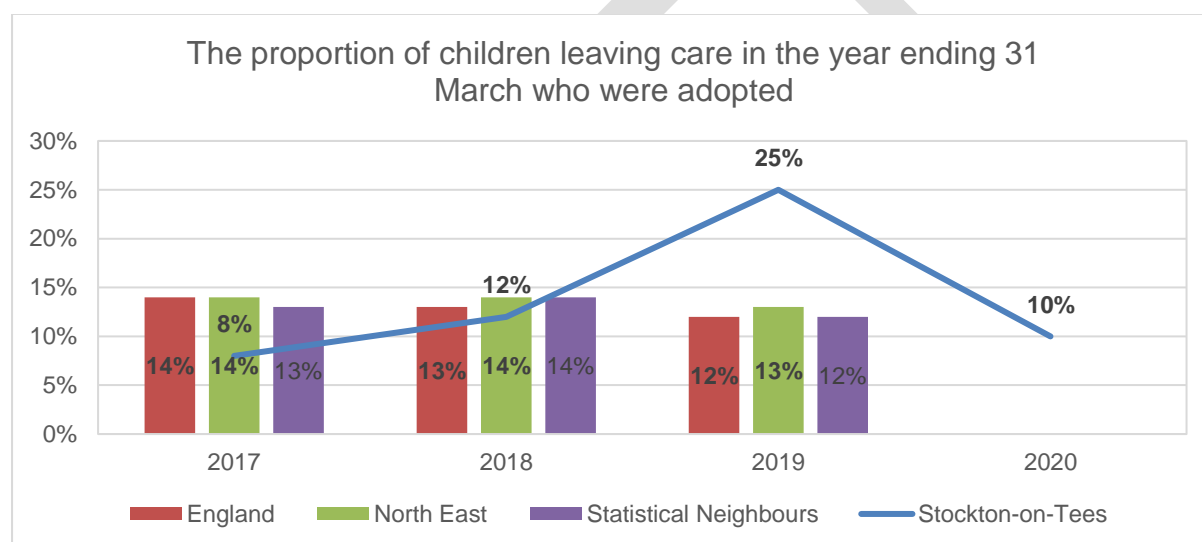
6.18 We know that children placed in family and friends arrangements are more likely to experience stability than those placed in other care arrangements. Placements in these arrangements continues to increase.



6.19 We know that children and young people placed in residential care are likely to have the most challenging and complex needs and are more likely to experience a number of disrupted placements. We also know that through the early identification of appropriate residential placements, robust impact assessments and planning in place, the greater the 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. There have been no disrupted placements in our internal residential homes in the period for a significant period of time. This cannot be said of the experiences of children and young people placed in external residential placements who may be given up to 28 days notice to leave and in some instances less than 24 hours.

6.20 We continue to have significant stability in our internal provision. Transitions are carefully planned and supported, often with lengthy outreach packages that support step down to foster care, return home to family or moves to independent living.

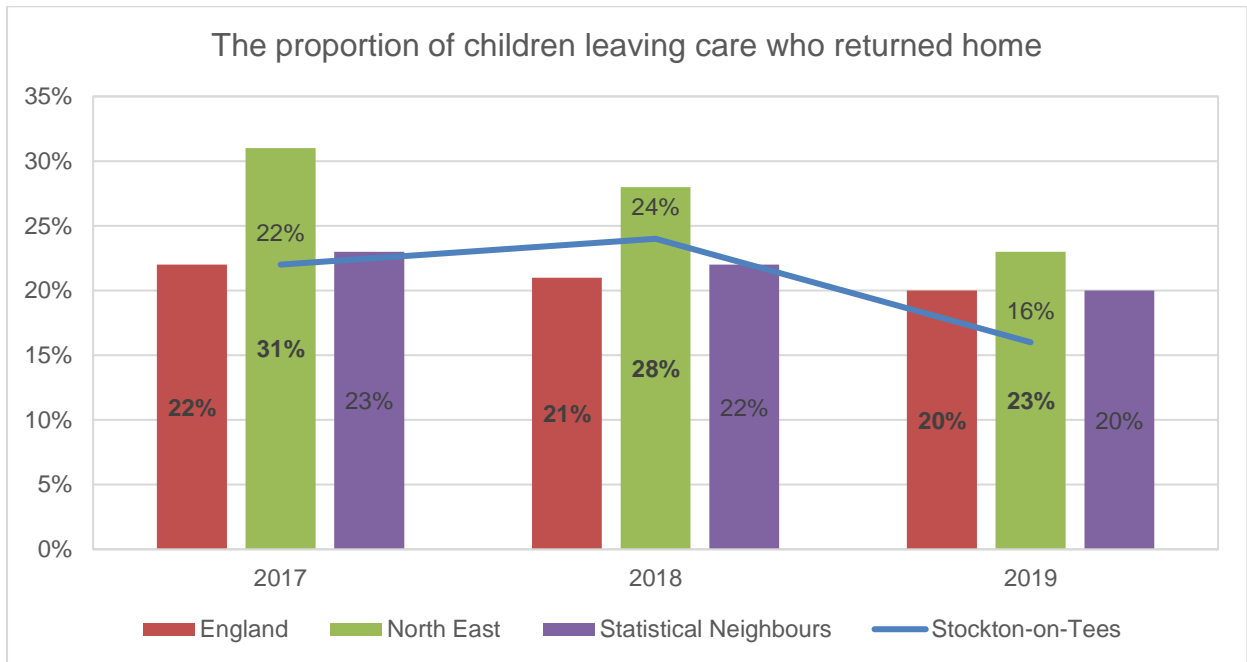
### 6.21 Children Leaving Care



6.22 The increase in the proportion of children leaving care who were adopted has not been sustained in 2020, reducing significantly from 2019. Performance has now fallen below that of comparator groups.

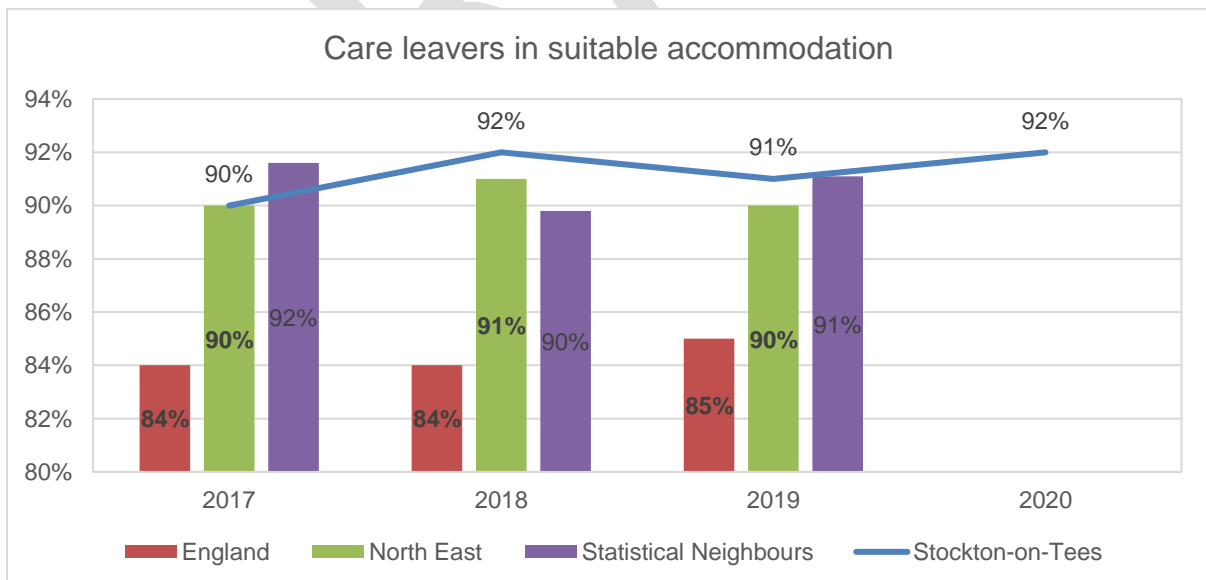
6.23 Whilst there does not appear to be a specific reason, in comparison with the previous reporting year, there has been a decrease in the number of Adoption Orders granted. It would appear the numbers may rise and fall in a fairly regular pattern depending on when a Placement Order was granted for a child, when a child was Matched with Adopters and when the Adoption Order was granted. Although there was a decrease, the number of children in an adoptive placement at 31 March 2020, along with the number of children with a Placement Order for whom, at that time, a Match between child and adopter had either been approved or was waiting to be approved, it is expected that there will be an increase in the number of Adoption Orders granted at the end of the current reporting year at 31 March 2021.

### 6.24 Returning home



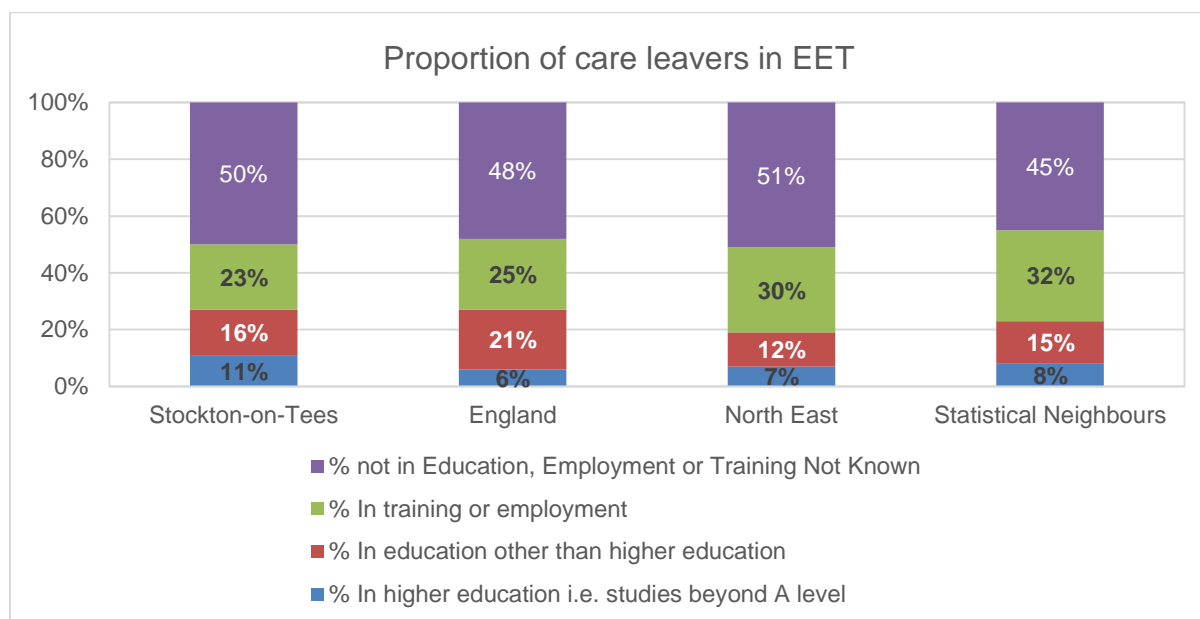
6.25 In line with the national picture, the numbers of care leavers who return home to live with their parents or relatives as part of the care planning process has reduced steadily over the last 3 years, with the rate of reduction higher for Stockton than for our comparators. Our 'Going Home' work stream continues to explore how we can develop a culture and vision for services which promotes safe and sustainable reunification within families to help increase the proportion of children and young people who leave care to return home safely to their families.

**6.26 Care Leavers Accommodation**



6.27 Stockton continues to perform well in this area, maintaining high proportions of care leavers placed in suitable accommodation.

**6.28 Education, Employment and Training**



6.29 The number of care leavers in Employment, Education or Training aged 19-21 has continued to increase year by year – albeit slightly - since 2016. A significant contributory factor for this increase has been the pro-active approach of both the Virtual Schools Service, providing early support around transitions for Children in our Care, and the Leaving Care Team Personal Advisors being involved with young people from the age of 16. The increase in accommodation options and the development of ‘staying put’ has helped to provide much needed stability for young people, which is fundamental in creating the foundation for successfully being in Education, Employment or Training and increasing aspirations. The extensive financial support available to Care Leavers has also helped to increase this number. This includes the financial package for those attending University (which is nearly twice the rate of Care leavers attending higher education nationally) and for those in employment or training and living independently i.e. Council Tax Exemption and the use of Discretionary Housing Benefit to ensure young people are not disadvantaged by taking an apprenticeship.

6.30 Partnerships are also important with the Leaving Care Team working closely with Youth Direction, Virtual School and the Department for Work and Pensions, alongside social workers, education providers and the Resource Service.

## 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	2018/19 Net expenditure	2019/20 Net expenditure	Increase/Decrease Since 2012/13
	£	£	£	£				
Adoption Service	249,889	623,827	520,065	204,093	513,282	783,303	865,651	246%
External Residential Care	5,205,502	5,125,604	5,567,360	7,300,553	8,483,875	8,054,379	8,613,955	65%
Independent Fostering Agency	4,992,060	5,089,653	4,027,814	3,592,505	3,102,002	3,412,537	3,805,918	-24%
In-house Fostering Service	2,142,061	2,228,915	2,279,542	2,879,231	3,229,605	3,702,137	4,081,308	91%
In-house Residential Care	1,692,055	1,748,426	1,860,672	1,863,396	1,860,642	1,885,768	2,205,863	30%
Leaving Care	470,989	615,433	703,321	1,027,158	1,324,665	1,376,929	1,404,755	198%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>14,752,556</b>	<b>15,431,858</b>	<b>14,958,774</b>	<b>16,866,935</b>	<b>18,514,071</b>	<b>19,215,053</b>	<b>20,977,450</b>	<b>42%</b>

**Please note**

- These only include direct placement costs incurred and no staff costs
- These are the net costs so include income such as DSG funding, CCG income and Spark Rental Income/Profit Share.
- Leaving Care includes Supported Accommodation and Independent Living Allowances as well as Parkfield and Fairways Contracts.(Now Parkfield and 155 Norton Road <Sanctuary>)
- In House Fostering includes Kinship (Friends and Families) Carers.
- In House Children's Home does NOT include respite establishment (Hartburn Lodge)

### 7.2 Average Costs as at March 2020.

	Average Cost of Placement £	Highest Cost Placement £	Lowest Cost Placement £	Average Weekly cost £
External Residential Home	211,852	414,796	109,096	4,063
Internal Residential Home	99,105	N/A	N/A	1,901
External Fostering Placement	40,377	65,108	32,545	774
Internal Fostering Placement	16,528	22,264	7,878	317

**Please note:**

- Average cost of external placements excludes parent and baby units and respite. DOES include high cost placements at secure units.
- Children's Homes beds as follows:
  - Princess Ave excluded as changed purpose half way through the year and staff covered other homes - not a true average
  - Our Place (Vulcan Way) excluded as opened part way through the year and has low staff costs and high set up costs - not a true average
  - Tilery House 3
  - Rose House 3
  - Ayton Place 4
  - Piperknowle 4

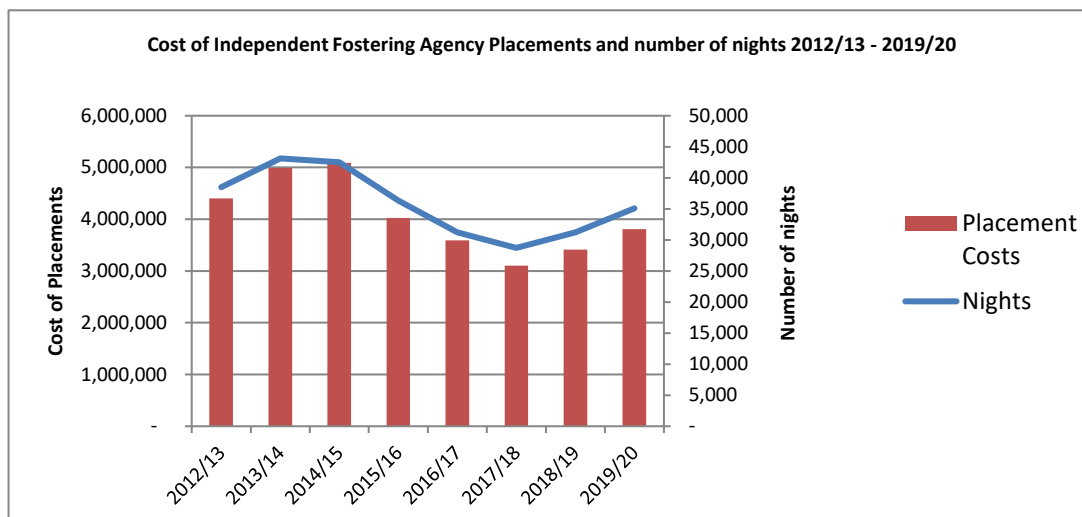
### 7.3 Independent Fostering Agencies Numbers of Nights and Placements Costs

Year	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Nights	38,508	43,128	42,493	36,347	31,237	28,715	31,237	35073.78
Placement Costs	4,400,269	4,992,060	5,089,652	4,027,816	3,592,504	3,102,002	3,412,537	3,805,918

**Please note:**

- Figures taken from trend analysis month end figures

## 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

2019/20 @ March 2020 BC	Stockton In-house £	% of average placement cost	Independent Fostering Agency £	% of average placement cost
Average cost of placement	16,528	N/A	40,377	N/A
Fostering Allowance paid to carer per placement				0%
Overheads per placement				0%

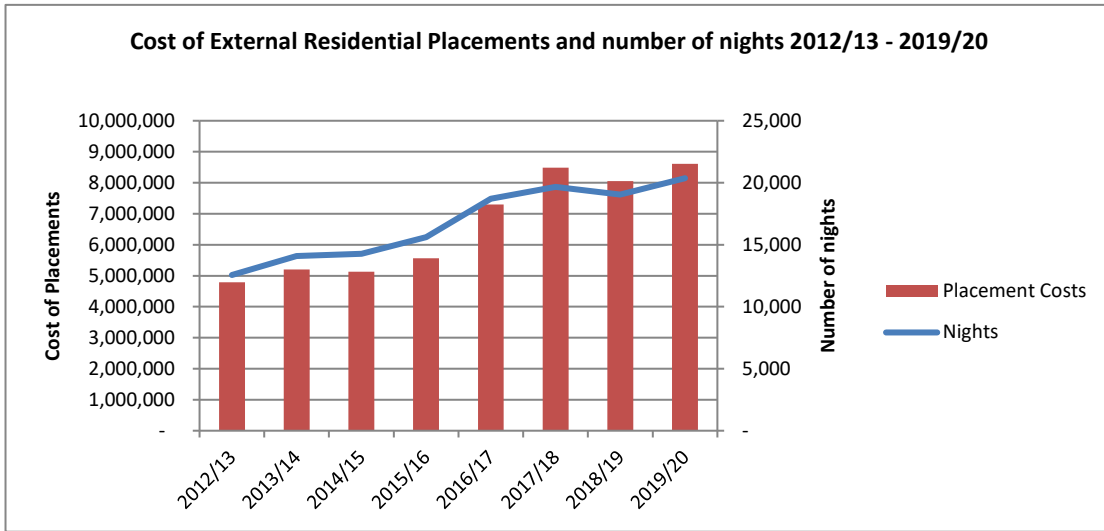
## 7.6 External Residential Care Numbers of Nights and Placements Costs

Year	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Nights	12,560	14,082	14,264	15,604	18,706	19,674	19,053	20,367
Placement Costs	4,791,308	5,205,502	5,125,604	5,567,360	7,300,553	8,483,875	8,054,379	8,613,955

**Please note:**

- Figures taken from trend analysis month end figures - average for the year

### 7.7 Cost of External Residential Placements & Number of Nights Purchased 2012/13-2019/20

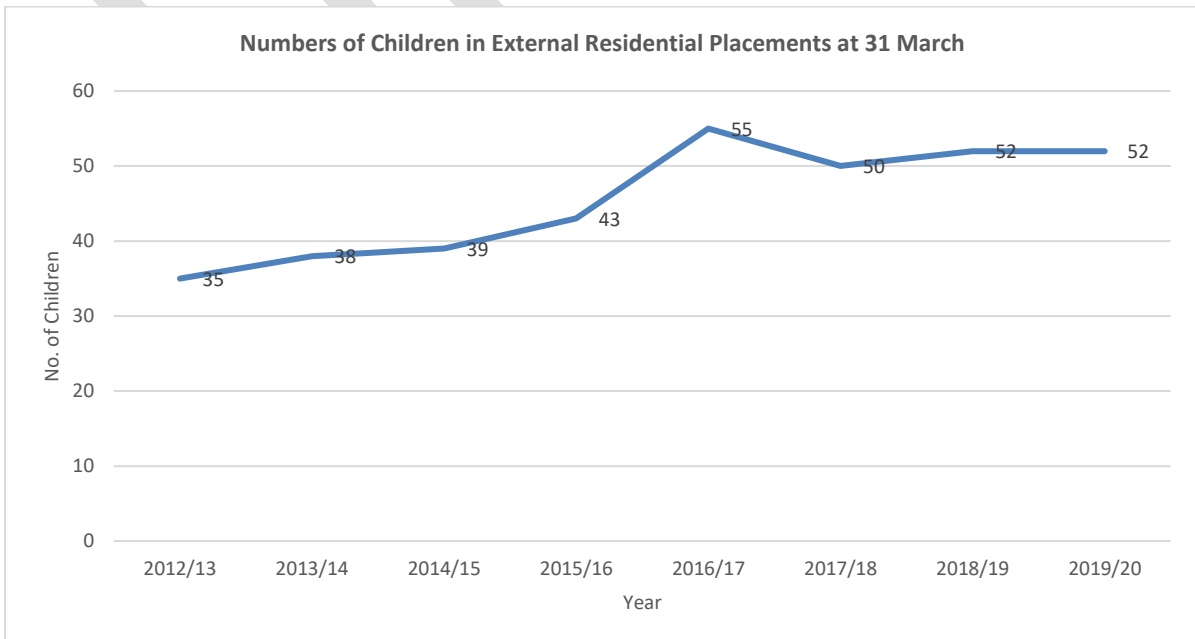


7.8 We have seen an increase in expenditure been across the board, with External Residential Placements accounting for the majority of the expenditure. These placements are more than twice the average weekly cost of Internal Residential Placements.

7.9 The number of Children in Our Care has increased significantly across this period, and, alongside the greater cost per placement, has caused the large increase in spend.

7.10 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.

### 7.11 Numbers of Children in External Residential Placements at 31 March



- 7.12 There has been an increase in the numbers of children in external placements of 65% from 2012/13. In particular, there has been a significant rise from 2015/16 (over 54%). 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.
- 7.13 Financial analysis highlights that there have been some significant increases in expenditure since 2012/13; an overall 42% increase. This is not a sustainable position and highlights the need for continuing innovation in how we commission / deliver services.

DRAFT

## **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 a significant increase in the number of children in our care during the last three years and the reliance on provision out of the area is not diminishing. The need for residential placements is an upward trend.
- 8.3 The complexities of the children and 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 Whilst there is an upward trend in placements with family and friends, this is 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 Council's 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 that 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.
- 8.9 During 2019, we have:
- enhanced our new Edge of Care model, including further development of restorative approaches. We have implemented Family Group Conferencing as part of our planning processes with families and Our Place, our Edge of Care provision is in place.
  - delivered efficiencies within the Foster Care Service and continue to explore collaborative opportunities with other LA's to develop and increase capacity of foster carers across Tees Valley and the North East region.
  - completed work with Dartington Research, the results of which will feed into the Children's Transformation agenda.
  - increased our in-house children's home capacity with an additional 5 bed home in place and have updated our Turnaround model.



- completed our review of the procedures around admission into our care, including strengthening funding arrangements and agreement processes. This will give us greater focus on continuous financial monitoring of placements in order to achieve best value and purpose.
- explored models to improve emotional wellbeing and implemented three therapist roles to increase resilience amongst children in our care.
- strengthened and embedded our approach to a Regional Adoption Agency through the implementation of Adoption Tees Valley, and we continue to work on aligning processes between the Tees Valley Authorities.
- improved the use of our Short Breaks and After School provisions through combining the services and will continue to review this area via the Children's Transformation agenda.

#### 8.10 During 2020, we will:

- redevelop early help services, working with our partners, to better support children, young people and families at an earlier stage, with the ambition to keep children and young people safely within their homes and communities. This will be further addressed via our Children's Transformation agenda.
- continue to look at increasing social work capacity and develop smarter ways of working to enhance support to children, young people and families. This will be further addressed via our Children's Transformation agenda.
- remain committed to improving the outcomes of children in our care. We will extend our use of the Valuing Care approach with a clear focus on the needs of the child or young person to help us to ensure that, when we do have to place them away from their family of origin, the placement will support their needs and help to reduce them over time.
- continue to develop our Going Home work stream with a culture and vision for services which promotes safe and sustainable reunifications within families
- continue to research opportunities to develop innovative approaches to support Special Guardianship arrangements and will be review the support package for carers.
- explore the feasibility of working collaboratively with the Tees Valley councils to increase in house residential care capacity.
- continue to explore improved commissioning approaches for external placements in order to deliver strong placement matches and 'best value', including reviewing and strengthening the NE12 solution.
- work with our partners across the children and young people's mental health system to ensure that the emotional health and wellbeing needs of children in our care are prioritised and appropriate support and services are accessible.

- work to prioritise the health needs of children and young people in our care and coproduce a model which will improve recorded health outcomes within the next 3 years.
- continue to review the functioning of our in-house children's homes in order to deliver on the coming home, going home work stream. Further work to increase our in-house children's home capacity is ongoing.
- continue to 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.
- continue to work on improvements in the range of accommodation and support packages for Care Leavers and seek to commission a dispersed accommodation model in which support is wrapped around young people who live in their own properties in the community.

## **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. We receive positive feedback from children in our care, care leavers, foster carers, adopters and residential staff– and the broader 'Team Around the Child'
9. 'Value for money' commissioning approaches
10. Improved educational outcomes for the Children In Our Care