

ASSOCIATION OF DIRECTORS OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES LIMITED



SAFEGUARDING PRESSURES PHASE 3

With many thanks to:

All local authorities who participated in this research
and yet again provided responses with such positivity;

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Views expressed in this report are based on evidence provided by local authorities and other sources during the project. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in the report, we cannot guarantee its accuracy or currency.

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On Behalf of ADCS

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1 Introduction

At its annual policy seminar in February 2010, the ADCS Council of Reference agreed the importance of having analysis of recent, national data to evidence changes in safeguarding activity and commissioned research to evaluate the impact of increased safeguarding activities and budget pressures associated with those increases. The timing was particularly relevant given the heightened attention in both the sector and the public following the death of Peter Connelly in 2007.

Now just over two years on, local authorities continue to report further increases in safeguarding activity and associated pressures, and ADCS has commissioned further research (Phase 3) to update the evidence gathered in the first two phases in 2010, and to include a key focus on permanence. The aims are:

- a) To identify what extent the trend of an increase in safeguarding activity has continued in England; what changes there have been in the past two years and what are the reasons for the change;
- b) To provide analysis of the different permanency routes for children looked after.

This will provide some of the evidence to enable ADCS to achieve their priority for 2012/13 (stated in the 2011/12 annual report), as *“ensuring that reforms to the family justice system, to adoption and to broader children in care services result in a re-shaping of services, professional practice and relationships with service users that genuinely improve outcomes for children, young people, their families and carers.”* (ADCS, 2012a)

Throughout this research, ‘safeguarding activity’ generally means child protection, e.g. referrals to children’s social care, assessments, Section 47s, children subjects of child protection plans and children looked after. ‘Safeguarding issues’ refer to presenting issues such as neglect, sexual abuse, physical abuse, risky behaviour, domestic abuse, etc.

2 Summary Of Previous Phases

The Phase 1 research report (ADCS, 2010a) in April 2010 provided analysis from 105 local authorities covering 73% of the England 0-17 population and evidenced significant increases in all safeguarding activities except granting of Full Care Orders, against a relatively static population. In the two years between December 2007 and December 2009, there was a 33% increase in children who were subjects of a child protection plan, and an 8% increase in the number of children looked after at period end.

Phase 2 (ADCS, 2010b) took the initial work further, exploring reasons for the increases, cost pressures and the effect of, and on, partner agencies. The final report was based on responses from 87 local authorities (57%), covering 60% of the England 0-17 population. Although the information gathered was based on a smaller sample than the initial phase, it reinforced the increase in safeguarding activity and concluded there were a range of reasons causing the increase, some of which were seen as positive steps forward in better awareness and improved safeguarding of children and young people.

Key messages were:

- Evidence of increases in initial contacts; referrals; children subjects of a child protection plan and children looked after;
- A significant increase in children aged 16 and 17 who were looked after, which respondents stated was largely due to the Southwark Judgement¹;
- Local authorities reported a range of reasons for the increase, including heightened anxiety and increased both public and professional awareness (partly due to the death of Peter Connelly); implementation of CAF; better promotion of safeguarding; more coherent multi-agency processes; a rise in domestic abuse and the economic downturn;
- The 2009/10 budget for children's services was thought to be insufficient to meet increasing needs, with a 5.9% overspend forecasted across 43 authorities;
- Crude calculations to quantify the increase in resource and cost implications showed that there would need to be an additional 63,000 hours per year per agency spent in child protection meetings alone and an additional £173m per year to resource placements for the *additional* numbers of children looked after. The cost across England to undertake all initial contacts, referrals and initial assessments in 2008/9 would have been approximately £243 million;
- Clear indications that the child population in England was set to increase overall by 5.5% by 2019, but with regional variations in the size of population growth. The effect of the forecasted population growth alone would equate to an additional 3,000 looked after children by 2019 and an additional 1,900 children who are subjects of child protection plans;

¹ The Southwark Judgement, made by The House of Lords (G vs Southwark) in May 2009 is a piece of case law that obliges children's services to provide accommodation and support to homeless 16 and 17 year olds.

- Many of the reasons for the increase in the volume of safeguarding activity over the two year period were expected to continue: the effects of the Southwark Judgement; increased public and professional awareness; improved multi-agency training; more complex cases where parental factors are affecting the children such as domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental health, were cited as continuing influencing factors.

3 Methodology

A data collection form was sent to Directors of Children's Services in all 152 local authorities in England for return by 13th August 2012 (See Appendix B). As with Phase 2, the timing was planned to coincide with the completion of the Children In Need (CIN) Census. (DfE, 2011a)

A range of information was requested, which local authorities could return in entirety or in part only, and local authorities were asked to complete only those questions within the relevant parts that they were able to. Response rates are given as a percentage of those who returned the relevant part.

1. ADCS Phase 3 Data Collection Form:

1.1 - Children's social care data: Statistical data from the DfE's SSDA903, CIN Census and Section 251 financial returns² together with local data about source, reason and profile of children and young people who are subjects of various safeguarding activities such as initial contacts, referrals, child protection plans, and looked after;

1.2 - 18 qualitative questions aimed at safeguarding leads in each authority;

2. A copy of the local authority's Ofsted Adoption Quality Assurance and Data Return which was due for return to Ofsted by 30th June 2012;

3. Anonymised permanence data of children who ceased to be looked after in 2011/12 under Adoption Order, Special Guardianship Order or Residence Order, to allow analysis of permanency processes and timescales.

Follow up questions were addressed to authorities to provide additional information as required.

² The DfE statutory annual returns from which some of the required statistics are generated: <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/>

The data collection was promoted through a range of regional and national groups, weekly ADCS bulletin reminders and direct telephone follow up. This approach to maximising responses was effective, as response rates were greater than in Phases 1 or 2 and substantially higher than average response rates for such surveys.

4 Response Rates

115 local authorities, 76% of all local authorities in England, provided information covering 8,732,408 children and young people aged 0-17 - 79% of the total population³. The equivalent coverage when using the 2011 Census data is 8,929,374, also equal to 79% of the total population. A comparison of response coverage by region and by local authority type showed negligible differences in the coverage between the two sets of population data.

Of the optional data collection:

- a. 81 authorities (53%) provided finance data;
- b. 85 authorities (56%) answered a range of qualitative questions;
- c. 63 authorities (41%) provided anonymised data about permanence. This latter response rate is significantly better than anticipated.

Two late returns were received after the extended final date for submission and although it was too late to incorporate their statistics, their qualitative information has been included and they are shown as having responded in the response rate.

A summary of response rates by region and type of local authority is provided below.

Region	Responses			0-17 Population coverage (2010 MYE)			
	Respon- dents	Total LAs	% total LAs	Response Coverage	No Response	All LAs (2010 MYE)	% total 0-17 pop.
East Midlands	9	9	100%	929,698	0	929,698	100%
East of England	10	11	91%	1,116,472	126,542	1,243,014	90%
London	23	33	70%	1,205,901	489,446	1,695,347	71%
North East	11	12	92%	491,755	30,263	522,018	94%
North West	16	23	70%	1,106,906	367,521	1,474,427	75%
South East	13	19	68%	1,341,983	484,358	1,826,341	73%
South West	12	16	75%	875,096	180,365	1,055,461	83%
West Midlands	12	14	86%	870,551	324,025	1,194,576	73%
Yorks & The Humber	9	15	60%	794,046	310,441	1,104,487	72%
England	115	152	76%	8,732,408	2,312,961	11,045,369	79%

Figure 1: Responses by Region – data

³ Based on ONS 2010 mid-year population estimates (ONS 2011a).

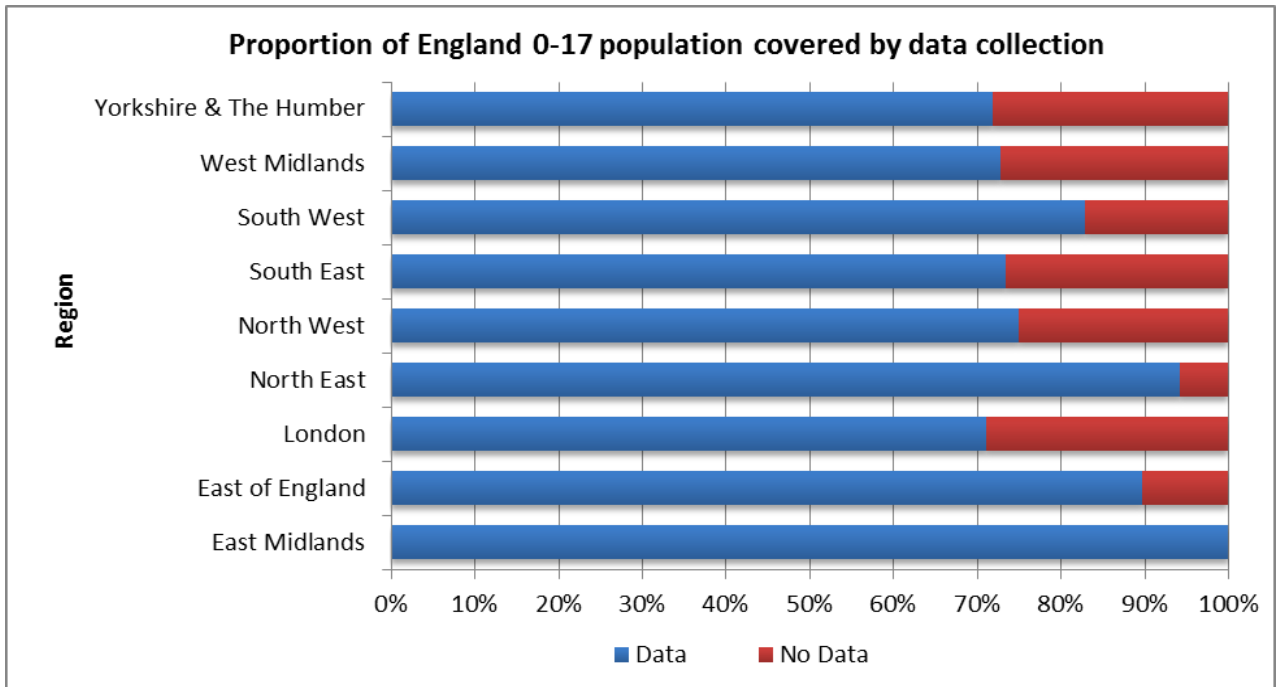


Figure 2: Responses by Region - chart

Type of Authority	Responses			0-17 Population coverage (2010 MYE)			
	Respon- dents	Total LAs	% total LAs	Response Coverage	No Response	All LAs (2010)	% total 0-17 pop.
London Borough	23	33	70%	1,205,901	489,446	1,695,347	71%
Metropolitan	26	36	72%	1,728,608	719,878	2,448,486	71%
Shire	24	27	89%	3,862,778	535,903	4,398,681	88%
Unitary	42	56	75%	1,935,121	567,734	2,502,855	77%
England	115	152	76%	8,732,408	2,312,961	11,045,369	79%

Figure 3: Responses by type of authority – data

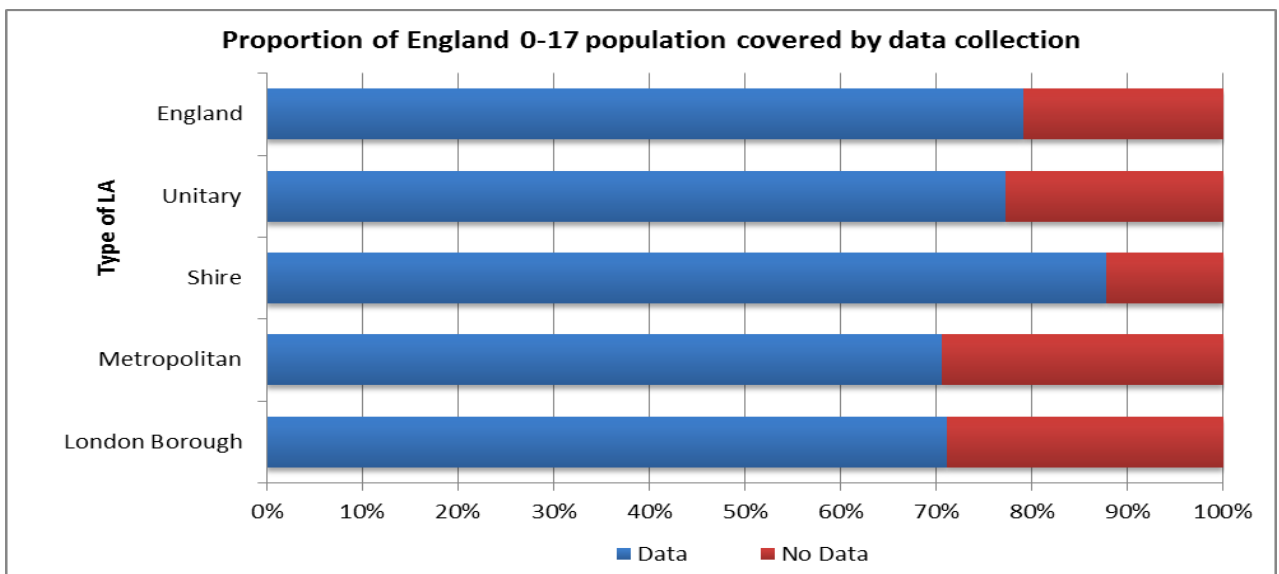


Figure 4: Responses by type of authority – chart

5 Current Context

Whilst the background of two years ago remains, there are additional policy, legislative, social and economic factors which provides a more complex context in which safeguarding services are planned and delivered, and which affect the outcomes for children and young people. A brief summary of some of these major factors is provided below, and also described in *The Emerging Priorities Facing Children's Services 2012 Report* (C4EO, 2012).

This summary of context is not exhaustive but is necessary, together with analysis of population data, to understand the environment in which this research and changes in safeguarding activity have taken place. A timeline in Section 10 further illustrates this.

The Children & Families Bill, expected to be introduced early in 2013 will be key new legislation. It will introduce a single assessment process and joint care plans for children with SEN or disabilities, reforms to care proceedings, adoption, and family law and strengthen the powers of the Children's Commissioner.

5.1 Safeguarding Policy and Legislation

Since 2010, marked changes to safeguarding policy are taking place following Prof. Eileen Munro's review of child protection; *The Munro Review of Child Protection, Part One – A Systems Analysis* in October 2010; *The Interim Report – The Child's Journey*, reported in April 2011 and the final report, *A Child Centred System*, in May 2011, followed by the government's response in July 2011 (DfE, 2011b); and Munro's *Progress report, moving towards a child centred system* in May 2012 (Munro, 2012).

In light of Munro, significant revisions to DfE's statutory guidance, *Working Together To Safeguarding Children* was the subject of consultation between June and September 2012 (DfE, 2012a). It proposes three separate guidance documents: 1) Working together to safeguard children: draft guidance on what is expected of organisations individually and jointly, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; 2) Managing individual cases: the framework for the assessment of children in need and their families: draft guidance on undertaking assessments of children in need through to child protection planning; and 3) Statutory guidance on learning and improvement: proposed new arrangements for Serious Case Reviews, reviews of child deaths and other learning processes led by Local Safeguarding Children Boards.

DfE published a national action plan for tackling child sexual exploitation in November 2011 (DfE, 2011c) and a subsequent progress report in July 2012 (DfE, 2012b), which includes a series of actions and which draws on reviews in this area of safeguarding. In June 2012, at

the request of the Secretary of State for Education, the Deputy Children’s Commissioner for England, Sue Berelowitz, published her emerging findings from the Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation by Gangs. The Secretary of State asked Ms. Berelowitz to give particular consideration to children in care in order to establish: What evidence is there that looked after children are at increased risk of sexual exploitation?; Are there any changes required in legislation, guidance or practice to assist the protection of looked after children from sexual exploitation?; Are there any changes required in legislation, guidance or practice to improve responses to looked after children who go missing? The Deputy Children’s Commissioner’s report is due to be published in November.

5.2 Adoption and Permanence for Looked After Children

In March 2012, the Government published an *Action Plan for Adoption* to reform the system for adoption (DfE, 2012c). In “Adoption and Fostering: Tackling Delay” (DfE, 2012d), the DfE is consulting on a number of proposals relating to adoption and fostering. The key issues within the consultation are:

- Reducing the time taken to make placements;
- Requirement to refer children to the Adoption Register if prospective adopters cannot be found by local agencies;
- Introduction of a national gateway;
- Strengthened performance regime for local authorities with the introduction of scorecards and diagnostic assessments;
- Reforms to the role of Adoption Panels;
- Increasing the number of prospective adopters and foster carers;
- Speeding up the processes for the assessment and approval of prospective adopters;
- Contact arrangements for children in care;
- The placement of sibling groups;
- Reforms to post-adoption support;
- Reforms to criteria for matching children with prospective adopters.

Further scrutiny of looked after children and permanence has been provided by:

- A Court judgment in July 2012 about two children whose legal status was freed for adoption but for whom adoption was no longer the plan and no appropriate care plans were in place. The judgment drew specific attention to the failings of the independent reviewing officer who did not monitor the children's care plans and whether their legal status remained appropriate;

- Publication in June 2012 of a parliamentary report from the joint APPGs' Inquiry into children who go missing from care (Parliament, 2012);
- April 2011 - revised regulations, guidance and national minimum standards for children's homes;
- Voluntary quarterly adoption data collection from local authorities requested by DfE commencing July 2012, with the first quarter 2012/13 data due to be published in November 2012.

5.3 Family Justice Review

The Family Justice Review (Ministry of Justice, 2011) and subsequent family justice modernisation programme (Judiciary 2012) proposes "judicial solutions to the problems which are identified in the Family Justice Review through strong judicial leadership and management together with robust case management of proceedings by the requirement to have a welfare timetable for each child based on evidence and research".

5.4 Early Help and Family Support

Since Phase 2, the evidence, policy and practice in early help and family support has developed substantially including Graham Allen's Review of Early intervention (Allen, 2011). Over the past two years, there has been an Early Intervention Foundation established; introduction of the Early Intervention Grant for local authorities which replaced and reconfigured existing funding; new policy and development around troubled families and family intervention projects, to name but a few.

5.5 Children's Services Inspections

At 31st July 2012, every local authority in England had been subject to an Ofsted Safeguarding and Looked After Children Inspection.⁴ Published data about inspections of children's services in the figure below shows that there were a greater proportion of inspections where judgements of good or outstanding were made, and fewer inadequate judgements in the period to 31 July 2012. However, as the inspections covered a period of

⁴ apart from Isles of Scilly

three years, and some local authorities may have had their inspections in 2009, it is not viable to analyse any correlation between inspection judgements and levels of change in safeguarding activity across authorities.

	Safeguarding Services - overall effectiveness		Services for Looked After Children - overall effectiveness	
	Between 1 June 2009 and 30 June 2011	Between 1 June 2009 and 31 July 2012	Between 1 June 2009 and 30 June 2011	Between 1 June 2009 and 31 July 2012
Outstanding	1%	3%	0%	1%
Good	29%	36%	44%	52%
Adequate	45%	44%	53%	45%
Inadequate	25%	16%	3%	2%
Total number of inspections	73	158	73	158

Figure 5: Summary of Ofsted Inspection Judgements: Overall effectiveness grades for safeguarding and services for looked after children inspections.⁵

Source: Ofsted (2011) and Ofsted (2012a)

From May 2012, a new interim safeguarding inspection framework has been implemented (Ofsted, 2012b). Meanwhile, Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission, Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary, Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation and Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Prisons have consulted on the introduction of a new joint inspection of multi-agency arrangements for the protection of children in England (Ofsted, 2012c). These inspections will focus on the effectiveness of local authority and partners’ services for children who may be at risk of harm, including the effectiveness of early identification and intervention. Arrangements for this new multi-agency inspection framework will be published by April 2013 and commence in June 2013.

5.6 Sector-led Improvement

Over the past two years, improvement in children’s services has developed into a more sector-led approach with the eradication of a number of government field forces and the establishment instead of a model of central and regional sector-led and self-supporting frameworks led by the Children’s Improvement Board (CIB). CIB has six policy strands to support and drive performance improvement in the future. The six policy strands are:

⁵ Please note for all charts within this report: Percentage total may not total exactly 100% (i.e. 99.9% or 100.1%) due to rounding.

Munro and Social Work Reform; Early and Foundation Years; Adoption, Care and Family Justice Review; Youth; Data; and Integrated Workforce.

In addition to its work to support local authorities in policy implementation across the six strands mentioned above, the CIB also commissions targeted sector support to assess and identify early warning signs of authorities at risk of declining performance, to engage in discussion, challenge and diagnosis of what needs to be done and how, leading to the marshalling and brokering of support, following up on progress and evaluating impact. CIB is also engaged in supporting the development of effective peer challenge, and work to enable better challenge and support for self-assessment.

5.7 Health Services

Major reforms to the health service following the Health and Social Care Act 2012, will see management of community health services transfer from primary care trusts to GPs through clinical commissioning groups (CCGs). In this transition year (2012/13), there is a large degree of organisational change as the new arrangements take effect. Health & Wellbeing Boards are being established in each local authority, and the 'Report of the Children and Young People's Health Outcomes Forum' (DH, 2012) sets out recommendations for the new health system relating to children and young people.

5.8 Welfare Reforms

The Welfare Reform Act 2012, which is to be implemented in three phases from January 2013 to 2017, heralds significant reform of the benefits system through the introduction of a Universal Credit and a range of other changes which together with the Local Housing Allowance caps will affect a significant number of families.

5.9 Tickell Review of Early Years

Dame Clare Tickell's review of early years (Tickell, 2011) recommended that early years practitioners should give particular focus to three 'prime areas' of learning and development: communication and language, personal, social and emotional development, and physical development. The review further recommends that the Early Years Foundation Profile is simplified and shared with parents, and that everyone who works with under-fives should hold at least A-levels or equivalent qualification.

5.10 Population

5.10.1 Population Data

Population data for rates per 10,000 of the 0-17 population throughout this report are based on ONS 2010 Mid-Year Estimates (MYEs) (ONS, 2011). Some data from the 2011 census has subsequently been published but detailed 2011 MYEs for England and English local authorities will not be available before November 2012 at the earliest. Some headline 2011 MYE data has been published for England and Wales and is referred to in this section, but as 2011 data was released during analysis, and as DfE statistical publications use the latest MYEs (i.e. 2010 at present) for rates per capita, rates in this report are on the same basis for consistency and comparability.

The ONS 2010 MYEs state that the total England 0-17 age population was 11,045,369. The 2011 Census data gives a total 0-17 population of 11,336,960, an increase of 2.6%.

A number of local authorities have reported significant population change due to inward and outward migration, with population increases tending to be in more deprived areas. Appendix A compares populations using rounded population data for the 0-17 population based on ONS Subnational Population Projections 2010 and Interim 2011 data⁶. The list is ranked by population change, and this is set against the highest Indices of Deprivation Affecting Children (IDACI) score for each local authority (CLG, 2011). The results have been formatted to show largest population increase in red, through to largest decrease in green, and IDACI score (highest deprivation levels) in red through to lowest scores in green. Several clear examples of the trend reported above can be seen as a result.

5.10.2 Population Forecasts

The latest population estimates for England and Wales show that the child population continues to grow, as can be seen by the population pyramid chart below. The ONS commentary notes *"The sharp narrowing of the pyramid for people aged around 10 years, a consequence of low numbers of births at the turn of the century, and the broadening of the base of the pyramid due to a higher numbers of births in recent years"* and *"There were 405,700 more children aged under five in 2011 than there were in 2001"*⁷ (ONS 2012b)

⁶ 2010 data www.ons.gov.uk/ons/about-ons/what-we-do/publication-scheme/published-ad-hoc-data/population/june-2012/2010-based-snpp-person-population-figures-of-all-areas-by-sex-by-syoa.zip and 2011 <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/snpp/sub-national-population-projections/Interim-2011-based/index.html>

⁷ 2011 Census - Population and Household Estimates for England and Wales http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_270487.pdf

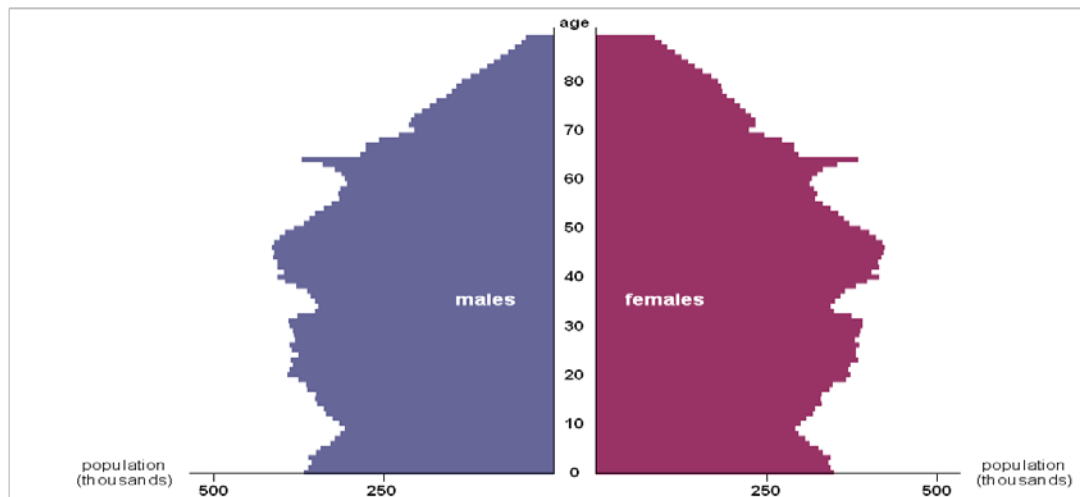


Figure 6: Population by age and gender – 2011 census. Source: ONS

ONS population projections (ONS 2011b) predict an increase in the 0-17 population in England from the 2010 baseline until 2028 when the population is set to peak at 12,682,100. A subsequent decrease in the population is then projected, reaching 12,497,600 in 2035. The rate of increase, the annual percentage change, is also predicted to increase in most years until 2019, and again from 2033 onwards. This is in contrast to the projections available in the previous phase of this research which predicted a sustained (if variable) year-on-year increase in the 0-17 population until 2033 from a 2008 baseline.

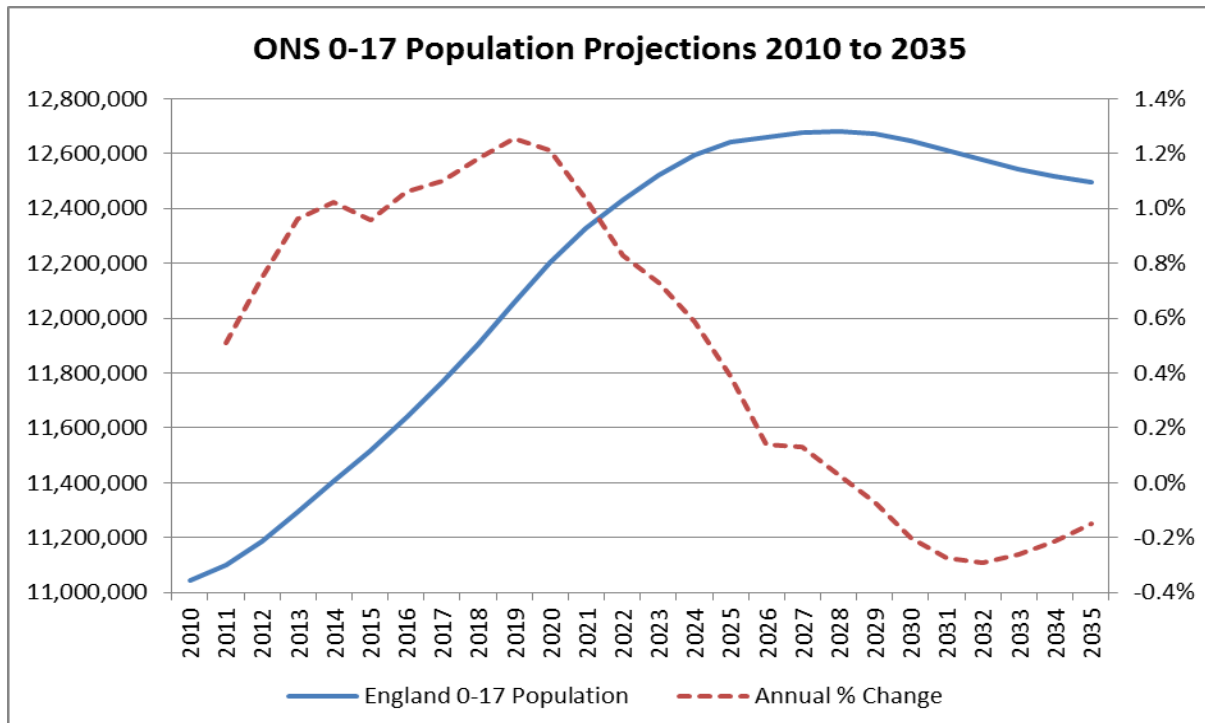


Figure 7: ONS Population projections.

The same population projections, viewed by region, show that by 2035 all regions are predicted to have increased 0-17 populations when compared to the 2010 baseline (in the North East this increase does not begin until 2012 after a one year reduction) . However the size of this increase will vary considerably, and larger increases are projected during the intervening years.

Despite differences in the patterns of change, the overall 25 year *percentage increase* in the England 0-17 population is higher according to the 2010 based projections at 13.2%, compared to an 11.5% increase predicted by the 2008 based projections.

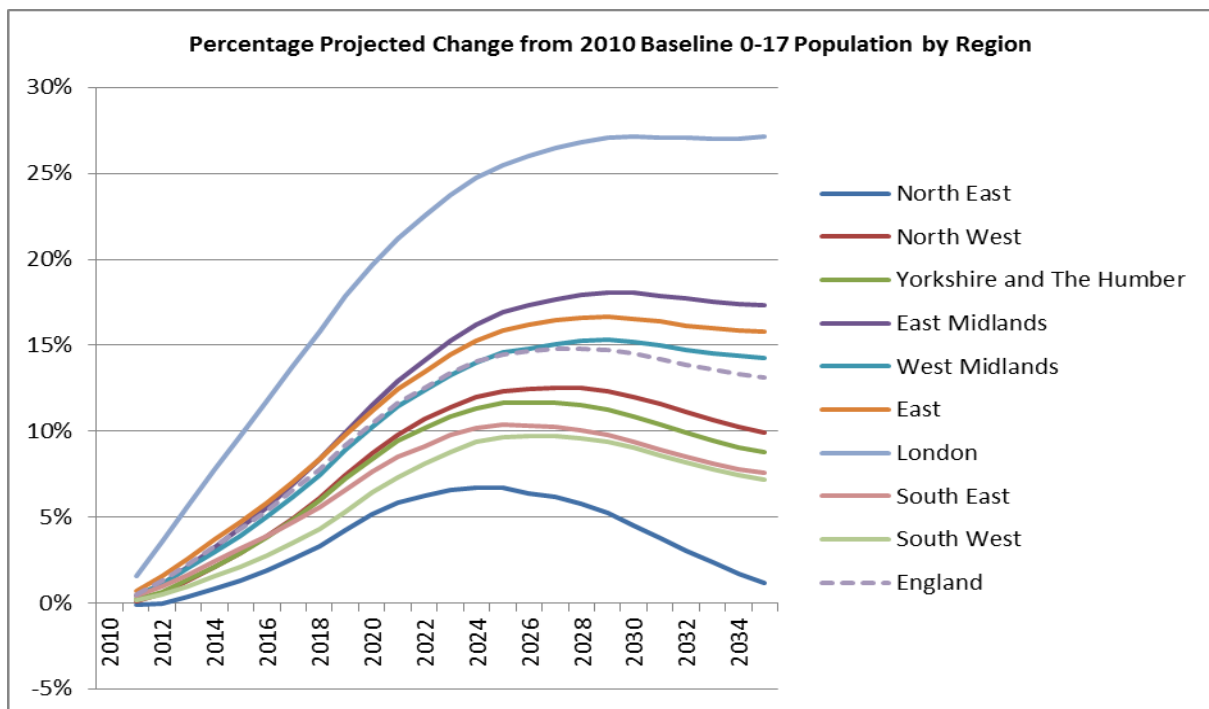


Figure 8: ONS Population projections by region. Source: (ONS 2011b)

From 2012, the pace of population growth is set to increase annually for all regions until 2024. The greatest overall increase is projected for London at 27.1%, and the least overall increase for the North East at 1.2%. In 2025 the pace of the increase begins to reduce in the North East and in 2026 in the South East and by 2031 this trend will be common to all regions.

5.10.3 Implications

There are clear indications that the child population in England continues to increase and the projected rise in population will undoubtedly have consequences for numbers of children in need, children who are subjects of child protection plans and looked after children.

Rates of looked after children and of children subjects of a child protection plan per 10,000 increased in 2011, and rates of looked after children increased further in 2012. But even applying the projected population changes to the 2011 rates, and assuming no further relative increase per head of population, would result in an additional 4,200 children subject to a child protection and an additional 6,400 looked after children by 2020 through population increase alone.

In the qualitative questions, 50% of respondents stated that changes in population or the profile of children in their area had made a difference to safeguarding activity. 13 local authorities added that their population had increased and also become increasingly diverse in terms of a higher proportion of black and minority ethnic (BME) families, the number of languages spoken and different cultural approaches to parenting. They commented that the increasing diversity of the population had also increased the complexity of assessment, safeguarding and permanence planning activities, sometimes dealing with difficult immigration issues and complex family structures.

Three authorities said they have experienced an increase in inward migration to their area from neighbouring areas, due to cheaper housing. Other socio-economic and demographic factors such as multiple occupation, an increase in families with no recourse to public funds, and an increase in low income families were also cited as key factors.

The population changes were reported to also affect other children's services provision, such as school place planning.

6 Findings – Activity Data

6.1 Initial Contacts and Referrals

Local authorities are required to submit the date of referral for children in need cases open during the year as part of the DfE Children In Need Census, but there is no longer a requirement for them to report initial contacts. Local authorities now have more flexibility in their use of client record management systems, and are not forced down a specific route or definition of what an initial contact is or when/if to record these.

A referral is defined by DfE as 'a request for services to be provided by children's social care and is either in respect of a child not previously known to the local authority, or where a case was previously open but is now closed. New information about a child who is already an open case does not constitute a referral. (DfE, 2011a)

6.1.1 Initial Contacts

Valid data was provided by 69 local authorities, showing a total of 960,941 initial contacts received in 2011/12 which equates to 1,853 initial contacts per 10,000 0-17 population, compared to 1,835 in 2010/11 (1.0% increase), and 1,223 in 2007/8 (51.5% increase). Between 2010/11 and 2011/12, 55% of authorities reported an increase in receipt of initial contacts and 45% reported a decrease, with significant variances between authorities, as the figure below illustrates.

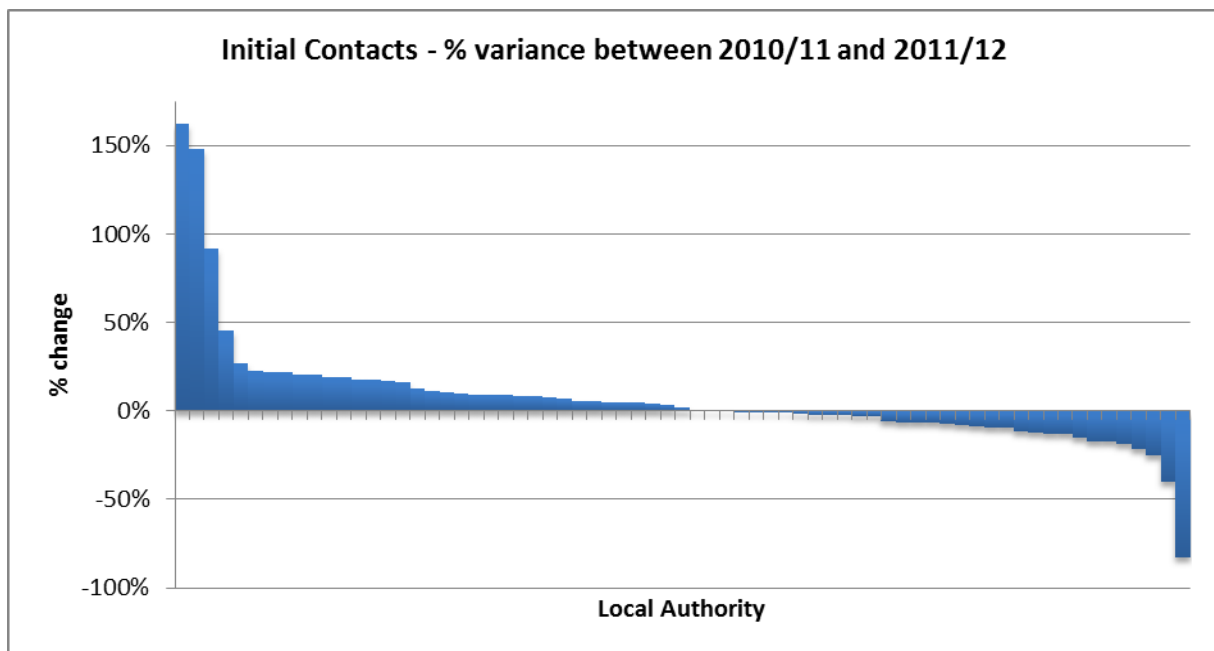


Figure 9: Initial Contacts – variance between 2010/11 and 2011/12 by local authority

The 27 authorities who supplied data in both Phases 2 and 3 evidenced an average 66.4% increase between 2007/8 and 2011/12 with 89% of authorities reporting an increase over five years.

These variations are not necessarily indications of increasing or decreasing activity, as authorities develop their own early help processes and ‘front door’ arrangements for children’s social care, or implement improved recording or workflow measures.

6.1.2 Referrals

88 authorities providing data received a total of 361,712 referrals in 2011/12, equivalent to 546 referrals per 10,000 0-17 population and a very slight reduction on the previous year (555). Of the 41 authorities which provided data for both Phases 2 and 3, there was an average increase of 15.2% over the five years from 2007/8 to 2011/12. In Phase 2, we reported an increase in the rate of referrals of 17.3% between 2007/8 and 2009/10 and a rate of 557 per 0-17 population based on 56 local authorities providing data.

This average figure would seem to indicate that the average national rate of referrals is slowing down, but this is not the case as it masks significant variances between authorities. There are seven authorities with an increase of over 50% over two years, 90.8% being the largest increase. Three authorities have experienced a one third reduction in referrals over the two years and seven a third reduction over five years.

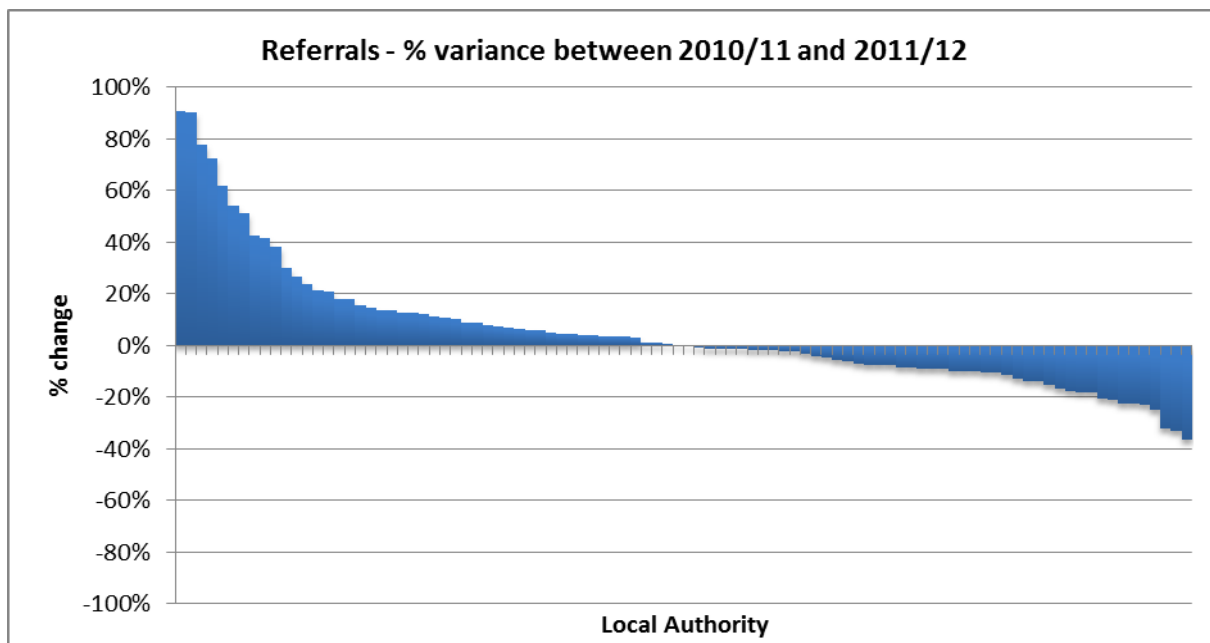


Figure 10: Referrals – variance between 2010/11 and 2011/12 by local authority

When comparing changes over five years, the increase in initial contacts has been at a much steeper rate than referrals as the figure below illustrates. The data used is an average number per authority rather than per population to provide a true indication of the increase in numbers without the population effect.

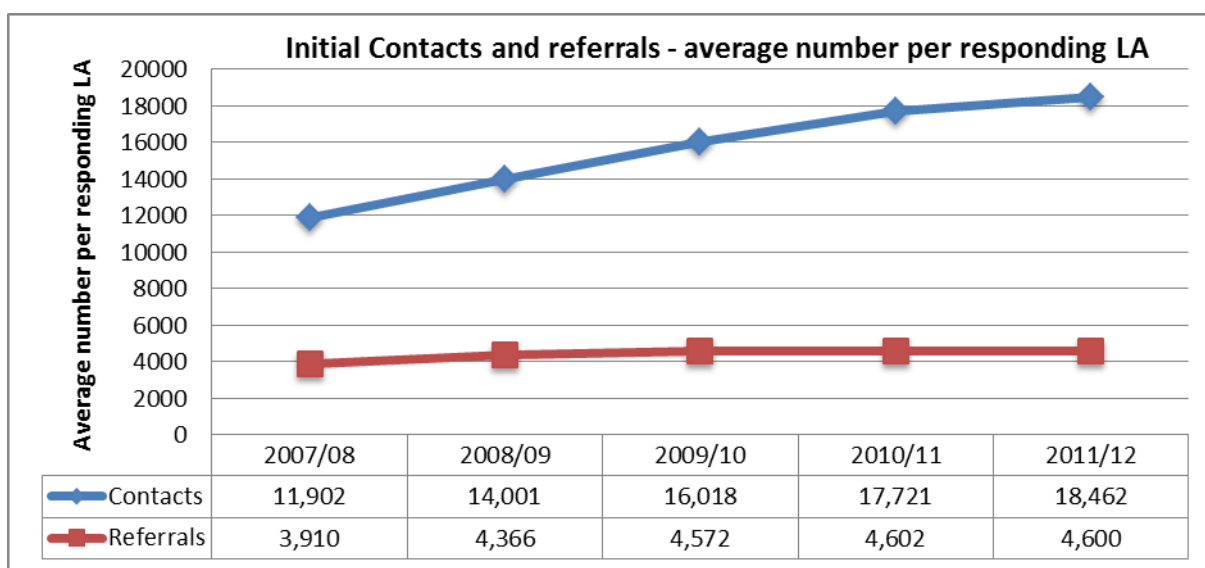


Figure 11: Initial Contacts and Referrals – average number per responding authority.

6.1.3 Source of Initial Contacts and Referrals

Local authorities provided data about the source of initial contacts and referrals aggregated to: education; police; health; parent/carer/family member and all other. Examples of the source within the 'all other' category includes housing, adult social services, voluntary organisations, other local authorities and other departments within the local authority.

Although the numbers of contacts and referrals have increased as evidenced above, the sources of these remain proportionally similar over the five years from 2007/8 to 2011/12 with some exceptions:

- The proportion of initial contacts from health professionals has increased from 10.8% to 11.3%, but the proportion of referrals from health professionals has decreased from 14.7% to 13.8% during the same period;
- There is an increase in the proportion of initial contacts from police (3.2 percentage points of total distribution), and the police remain the main source of both initial contacts and referrals;
- The proportion of referrals from education has increased from 11.7% to 14.3%. The proportion of both initial contacts and referrals that are from self, friend or family members has reduced by four percentage points in initial contacts and by 4.6 percentage points in referrals.

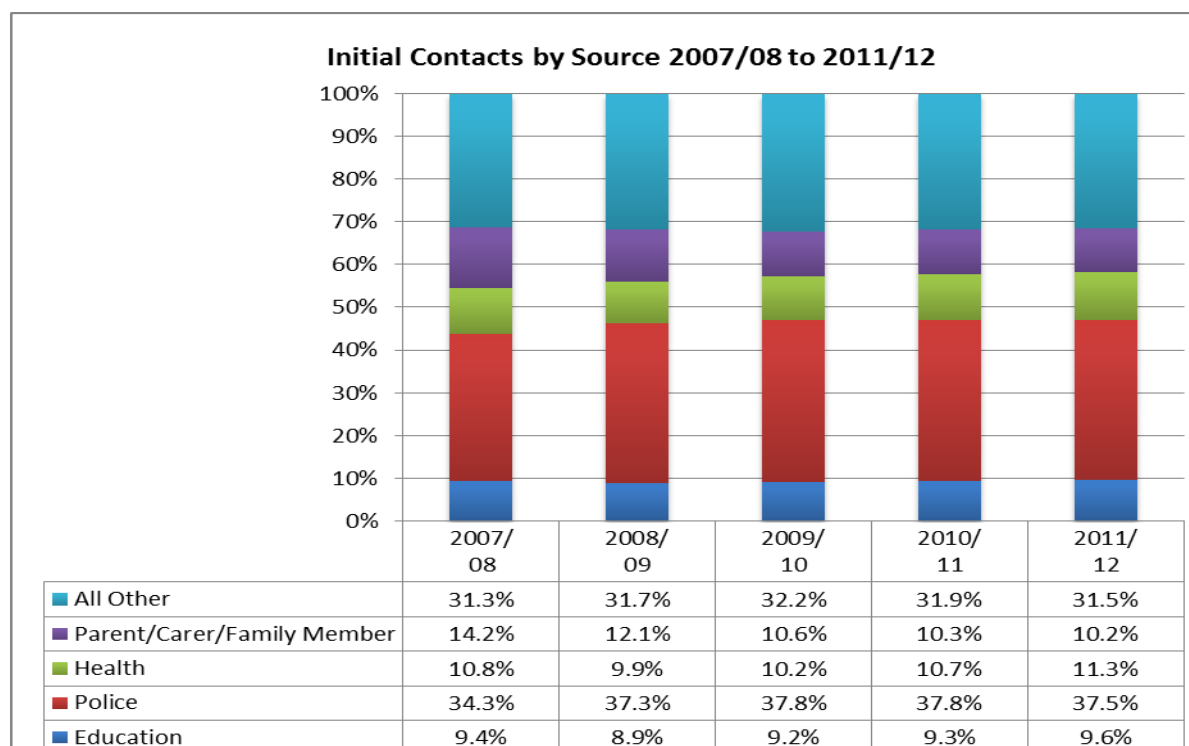


Figure 12: Initial Contacts by Source

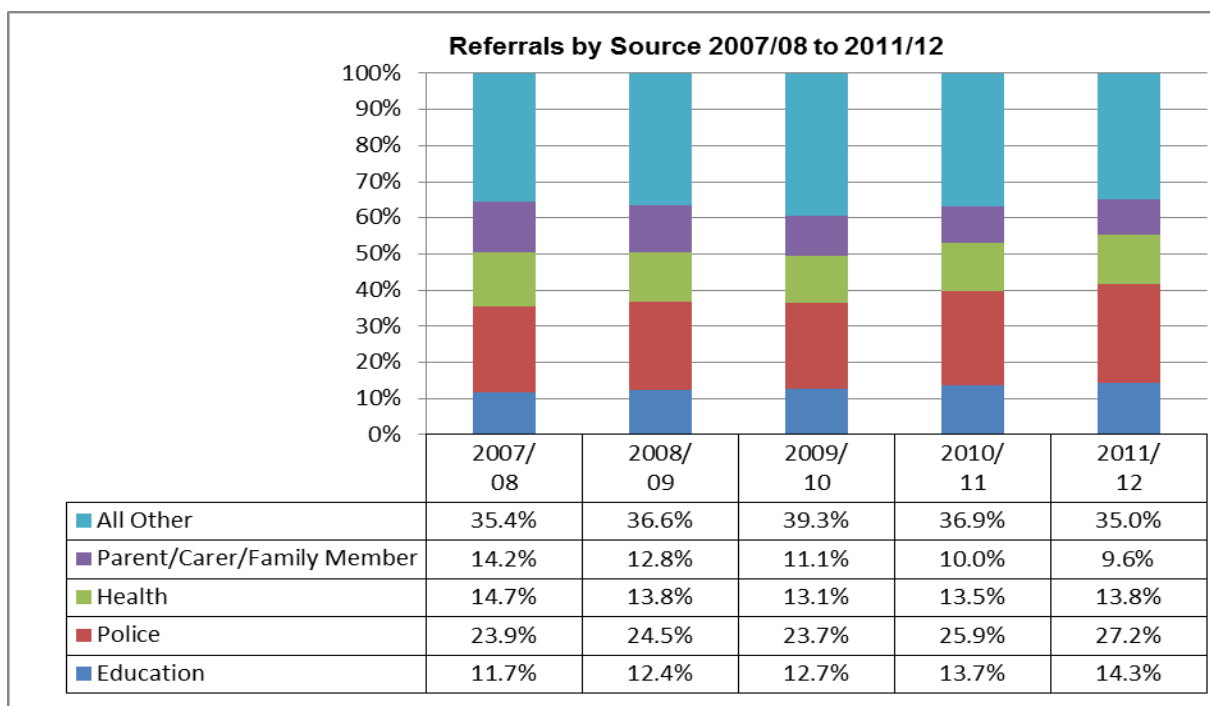


Figure 13: Referrals by Source

The change in proportion of initial contacts and referrals between 2007/8 and 2011/12 is further illustrated below.

	Education	Police	Health	Parent/Carer /Family Member	All Other
Initial contacts	0.1%	3.2%	0.5%	-4.0%	0.2%
Referrals	2.6%	3.3%	-0.9%	-4.5%	-0.4%

Figure 14: Percentage point difference in distribution between 2007/8 and 2011/12

6.1.4 Reason for Referral

Local authorities were asked to provide the primary need codes for children on referral, on becoming looked after and who were looked after at 31st March. These enable us to identify the predominant reason for the child coming to the attention of children's social care departments and any changes year on year.

The need codes are defined for each case by the local authority according to guidance provided by DfE (DfE 2011a) which are well established within local authorities:

- N1 Abuse or neglect
- N2 Child's disability or illness
- N3 Parental disability or illness
- N4 Family in acute stress
- N5 Family dysfunction
- N6 Socially unacceptable behaviour
- N7 Low income⁸
- N8 Absent parenting
- N9 Cases other than children in need⁹
- N0 Not stated

Over the five years, there is a 14.9 percentage point increase in the proportion of referrals for abuse or neglect (N1) and a 15.6 percentage point decrease in the proportion of referrals recorded as 'not stated' (N0). The latter would indicate better capture of information by intake teams, and as such it is difficult to identify which changes by category of need are as a result of a real increase, and which are due to improved recording. However data from 2009/10 onwards provides a more robust comparison.

It is possible to deduce that referrals for reasons of abuse or neglect (N1) continue to be the predominant reason for referral (44% of all referrals), and 'cases other than children in need' has shown a decrease from 6.7% to 1.9% of all referrals which may be linked to thresholds or what is considered a referral. Section 8.3 provides further information in support of this.

⁸ Defined by DfE as 'Children, living in families or independently, whose needs primarily arise from being dependent on an income below the standard state entitlements'.

⁹ Originally defined by DfE as 'Casework which is required for a legal and administrative reason only and there is no child in the case who is in need', this code is now intended to be used for 'Children who have been adopted and, although they are no longer a child in need, receive adoption support from social services immediately after adoption.'

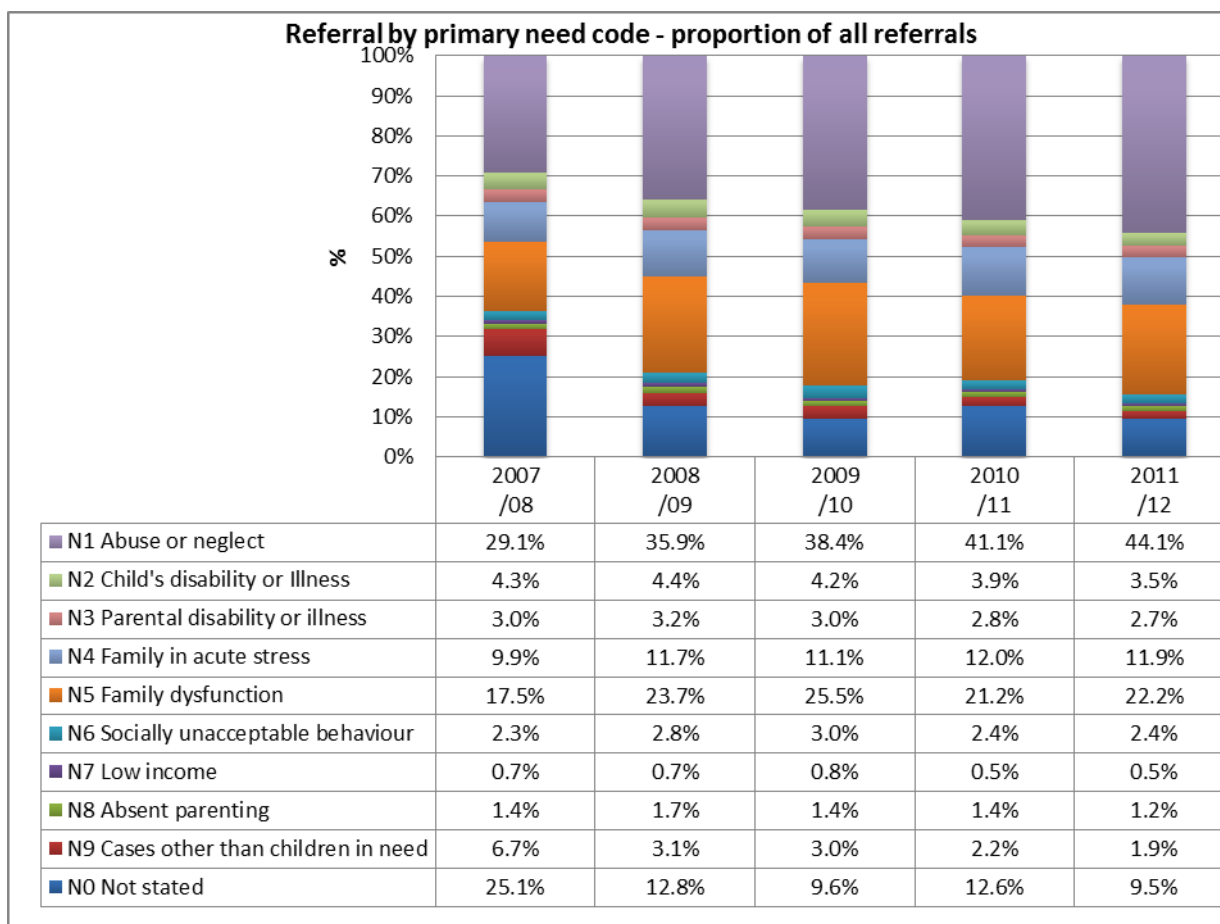


Figure 15: Referrals by category of need

6.2 Children Subjects of Child Protection Plans

This data includes children who become subjects of a child protection plan at any time between 1st April and 31st March (i.e. initial plans) and those that are subject of a plan at 31st March, no matter how long they have been subject to a plan for, which provides a snapshot at one point in the year.

6.2.1 Children Becoming Subjects of Child Protection Plans

106 authorities provided valid data about numbers of children becoming subjects of child protection plans during the year by category of abuse and age band. Data was not collected on children becoming subjects of child protection plans for a second or subsequent time.

There were 37,546 children becoming subjects of child protection plans in 2011/12 within the responding authorities – a rate of 46.5 per 10,000 0-17 population and a 7.9% increase on the previous year (2010/11). More local authorities reported an increase in the number of children becoming subjects of child protection plans than reported a decrease between the two years (67.0% of authorities reported an increase, whilst 31.1% reported a decrease)

within a range of +92.5% to -43.7%. There was a 51.1% increase in the number of children becoming subjects of child protection plans across the 64 authorities who provided data in both Phases 2 and 3 over the five years between 2007/8 and 2011/12. 61 of these authorities (95%) experienced an increase in number of children becoming subjects of child protection plans over the five years, 20 of whom saw increases ranging between 75.2% and 286.7%.

6.2.2 Category of Abuse on Initial Child Protection Plan

Of the 106 authorities providing valid information in Phase 3, neglect continues to be the most prevalent category of abuse, although it appears to show a decline compared to previous data on distribution of category of abuse. This is in line with Phase 2 research which showed a reduction in the proportion of initial plans under the category of neglect from 45.8 (2007/8) to 43.1% (2009/10), and with published DfE data which reports the 2010/11 proportion as 42.5%.

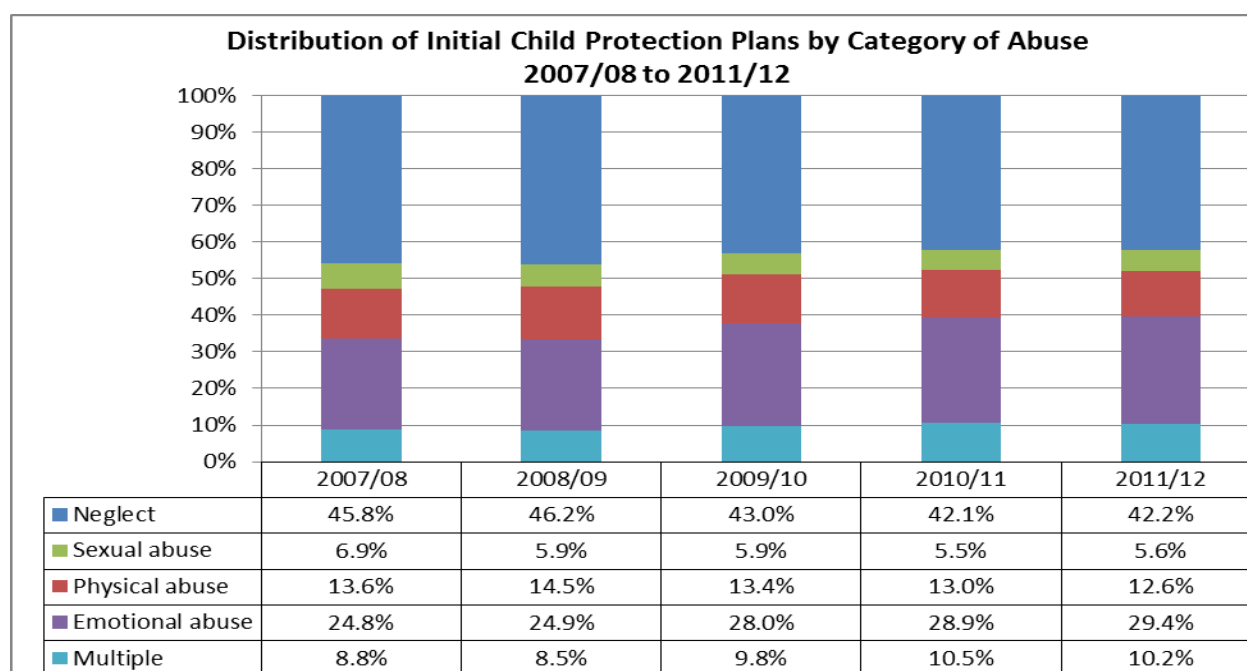


Figure 16: Children becoming subjects of a child protection plan – proportion of total by category of abuse.

There is an increase in the use of the ‘multiple’ category from 8.8% of all plans to 10.2%. This category is defined as “for when more than one category of abuse is relevant to the child’s current protection plan or where no category is recommended in ‘Working Together 2010’” (DfE, 2011a).

This increase has been investigated further to highlight that:

- 51 out of the 106 authorities used the 'multiple' category in 2011/12 compared to 61 the previous year, and the usage in some authorities has increased significantly. Approximately 25% (27) authorities had reported more multiple categories than the England average of 10.2% in 2011/12;
- One Yorkshire authority is an outlier for recording of the multiple category (63.1% of all initial child protection plans were under the 'multiple' category' in 2010/11 and 66.6% in 2011/12), having previously recorded very low numbers or not at all under this category. There are pockets of higher use of the multiple category amongst authorities, with no particular region showing any significant difference;
- A potential hypothesis for the increase in use of the multiple category is that cases are increasingly complex with no single prevalent category of abuse.

6.2.3 Age on Becoming Subject of a Child Protection Plan

104 authorities provided valid data which indicate an increase in the proportion of children becoming subject of child protection plans who are under 1 (4.3 percentage point difference) or 16+ (1.4% percentage point difference). The same pattern can be seen in those who are subject of child protection plans at 31st March.

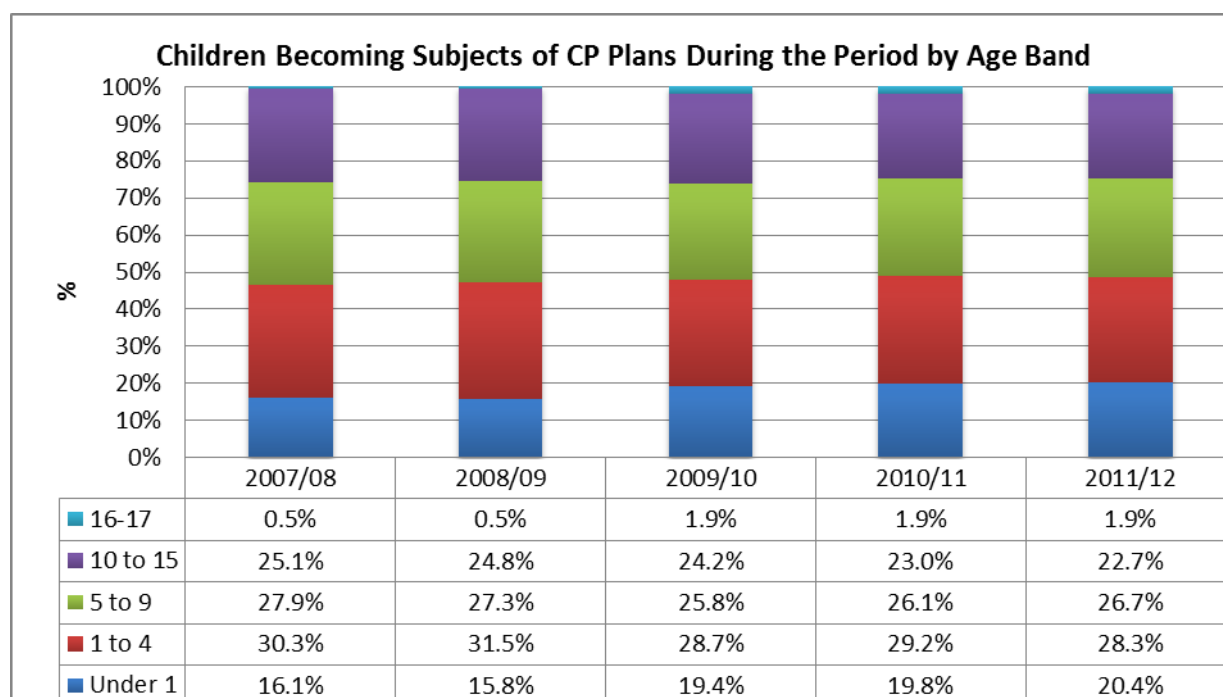


Figure 17: Children becoming subjects of a child protection plan by age band

6.2.4 Children Subjects of Child Protection Plans at 31st March

There were 30,860 children subject to child protection plans in 106 responding authorities at 31st March 2012, equivalent to 38.8 children per 10,000 0-17 population and a 2.8% increase on the previous year. Again, the small overall increase marks a great variation between authorities as 60 out of the 106 responding authorities (56.6%) had seen an increase in the number of children subjects of child protection plans between 31st March 2011 and 31st March 2012, and 42.4% had seen a decrease. The largest increase in the year was 75.8% and the largest decrease was 37.5%. The range, from 9 to 112 children subjects of child protection plans per 10,000 0-17 population is in line with the range reported by DfE for 2011 of 7 to 107.

When considering the change over a five year period however, there has been a 49% increase in the number of children who are subjects of child protection plans from 31st March 2008 to 31st March 2012 of those responding to Phase 2 and 3, indicating that the rate of increase in many authorities is reducing.

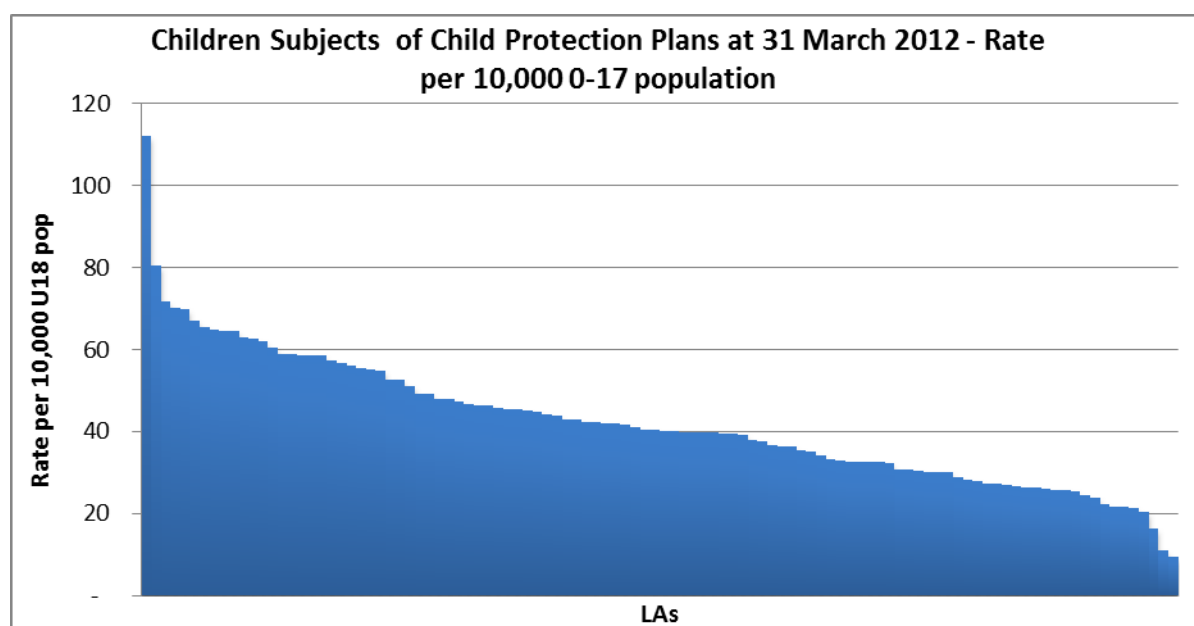


Figure 18: Rate per 10,000 0-17 population for responding LAs – children who were subjects of child protection plans at 31 March 2012

6.2.5 Children Subject of Child Protection Plans At 31st March by Category of Abuse

The categories of abuse of child protection plans at 31st March has shown relatively little change between 31st March 2011 and 31st March 2012, but some shift since five years ago. There is an increase in the ‘multiple’ category (as detailed in analysis of children becoming subjects of child protection plans); an increase in emotional abuse, decrease in sexual abuse and a decrease in neglect.

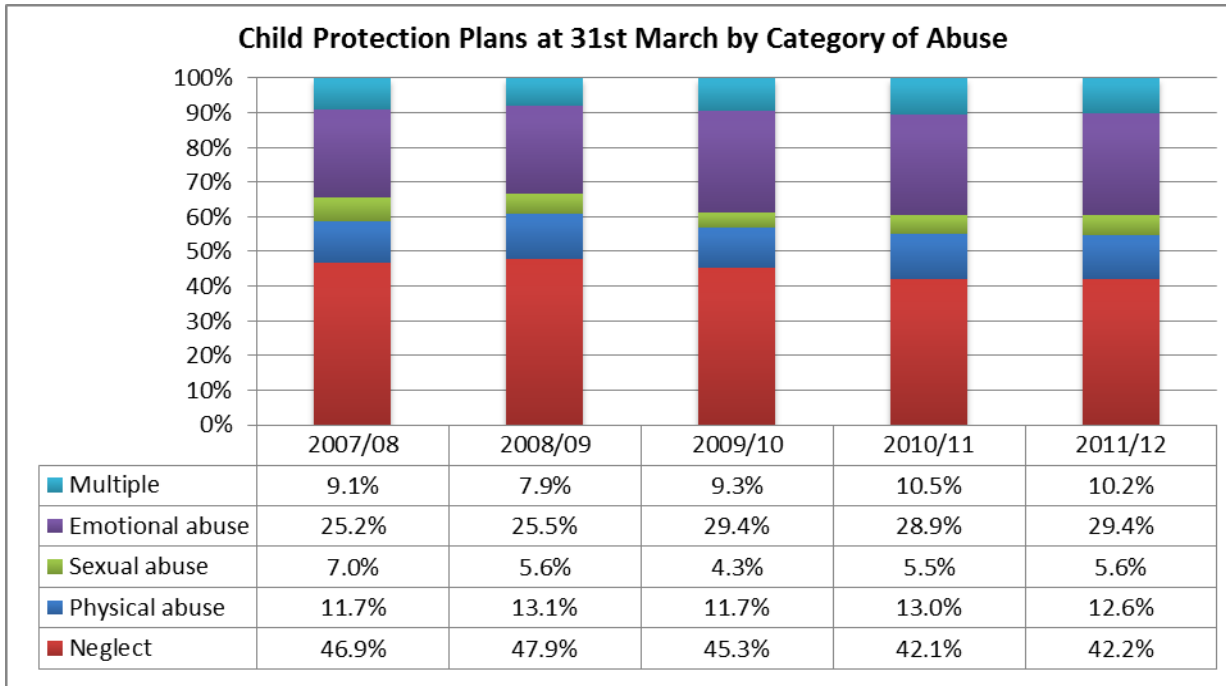


Figure 19: Rate per 10,000 0-17 population for responding LAs – children who were subjects of child protection plans at 31 March 2012

6.2.6 Children Subjects of Child Protection Plans at 31st March by Age

The patterns of increase/decrease in age bands of children subject of child protection plans at 31st March largely aligns with those *becoming* subject of plans already detailed, i.e. a rise in the number of children aged under 1. Age bands are similar across all regions with the exception of the North East which appears higher for under 1, 1-4 and 5-9 years.

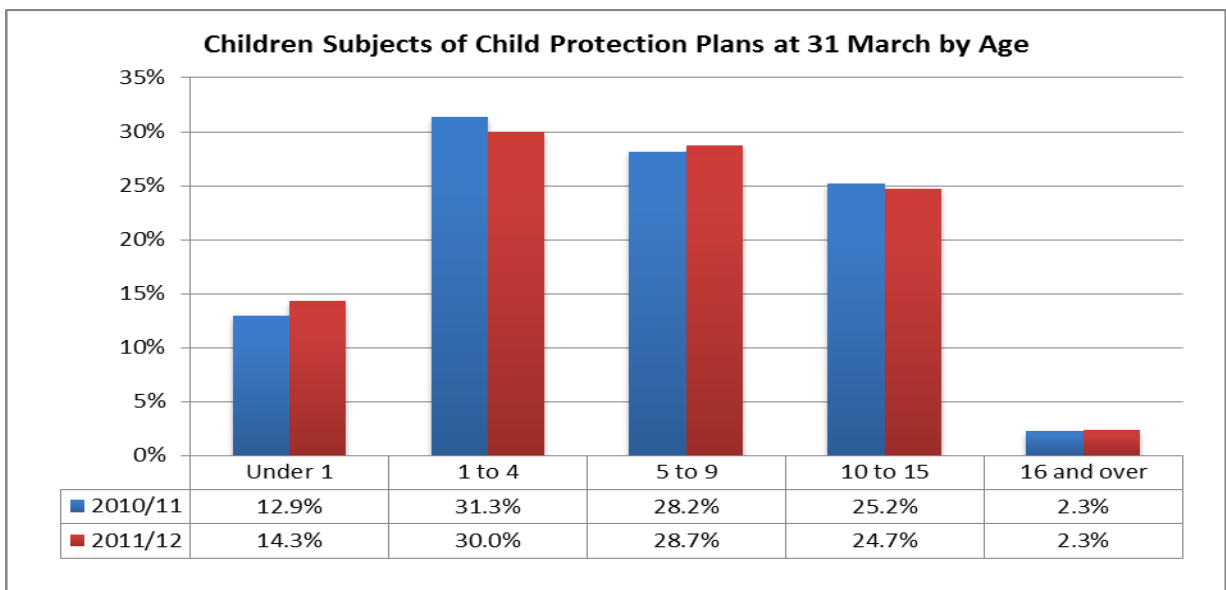


Figure 20: Number per 10,000 0-17 population for responding LAs – children who were subjects of child protection plans at 31 March 2012

6.3 Children Becoming Looked After and Looked After at 31st March

Local authorities were asked to provide data about children becoming looked after during the year (i.e. between 1st April and 31st March) and who were looked after at 31st March by age and category of need. This data is provided to DfE in the annual SSDA903 collection and analysis here has been validated where possible against their first data release published on 25th September 2012 (DfE 2012e).

6.3.1 Children Becoming Looked After

103 local authorities provided valid data about children becoming looked after, reporting a total of 21,431 children becoming looked after compared to 20,500 the previous year – an increase of 4.5%. This equates to 27 children becoming looked after per 10,000 0-17 population in 2011/12, compared to 25.8 in 2010/11 and 20.8 in 2007/8, a 4.5% increase overall. However not all local authorities have experienced an increase in the numbers of children becoming looked after, and of the 103 reporting authorities, 60 reported an increase on the previous year (the largest increase was 70.1%) and 42 authorities reported a decrease in the number of children becoming looked after on the previous year (with the largest decrease being -30.9%).

6.3.2 Children Becoming Looked After By Category of Need

The distribution of children becoming looked after by category of need shows minor changes in most categories. There is a 2.6 percentage point increase in abuse and neglect (N1); a 1.8 percentage point increase in child's disability (N2); and a 3.8 percentage point increase in family dysfunction (N5). The largest change is a reduction in children becoming looked after due to absent parenting (N8) at 7.2 percentage points, although this accords with falling numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children. The use of 'low income' (N7) as a reason for a child becoming looked after may merit further investigation

Neglect (N1) remains the largest category, in both absolute and relative terms, accounting for over half the children who become looked after.

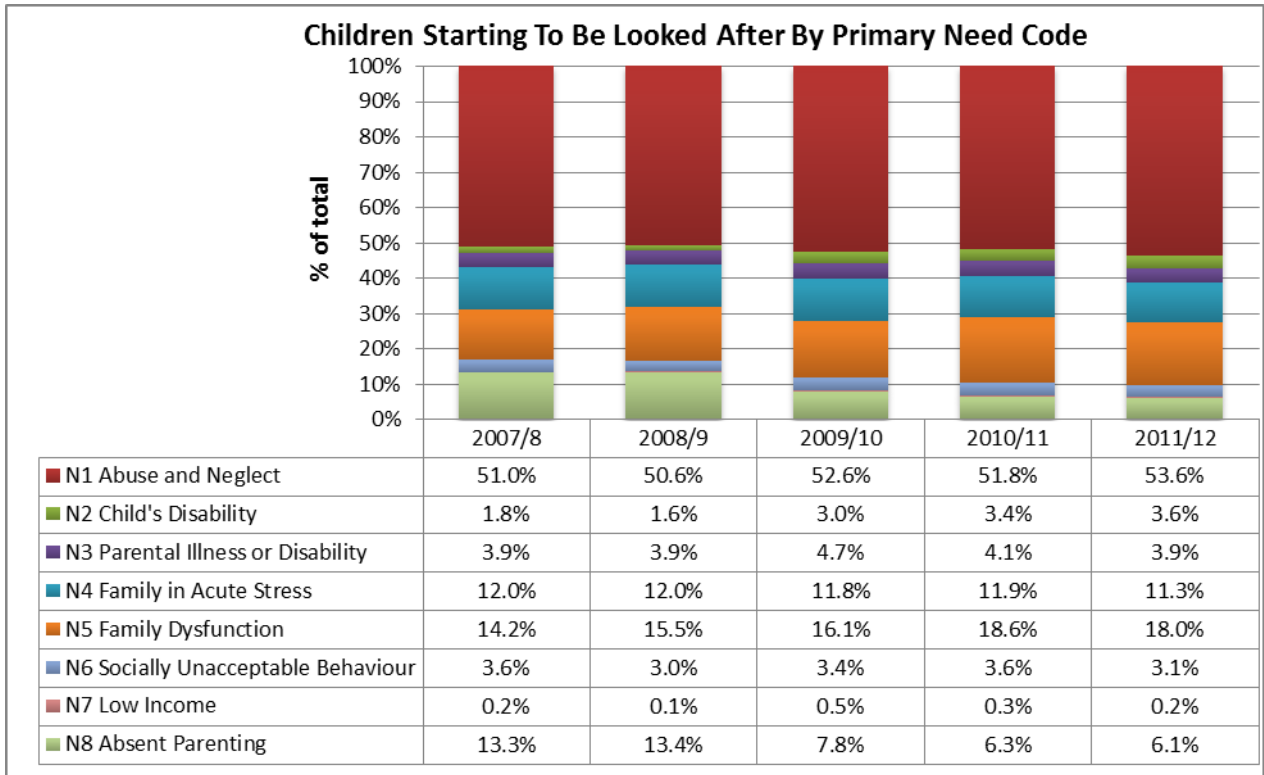


Figure 21: Children becoming looked after by need code

6.3.3 Children Becoming Looked After by Age Band

Data provided by respondents indicated an increase in the proportion of children becoming looked after between 2010/11 and 2011/12 in all age groups except 10-15, but there are regional variations, as illustrated in the second figure below.

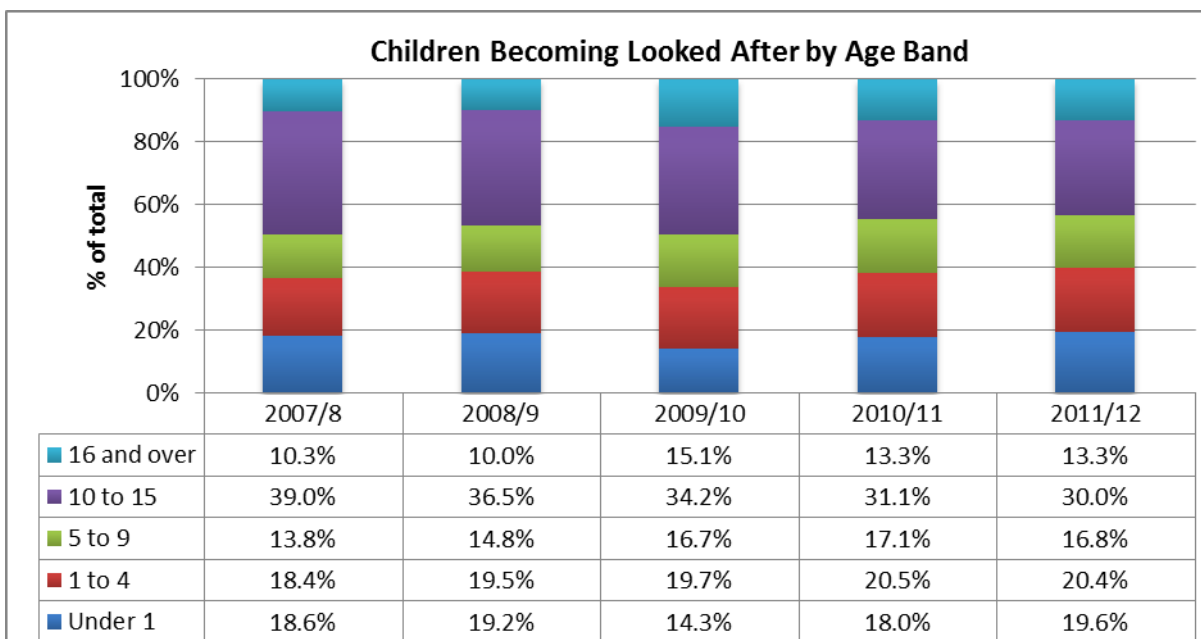


Figure 22: Children becoming looked after by age band

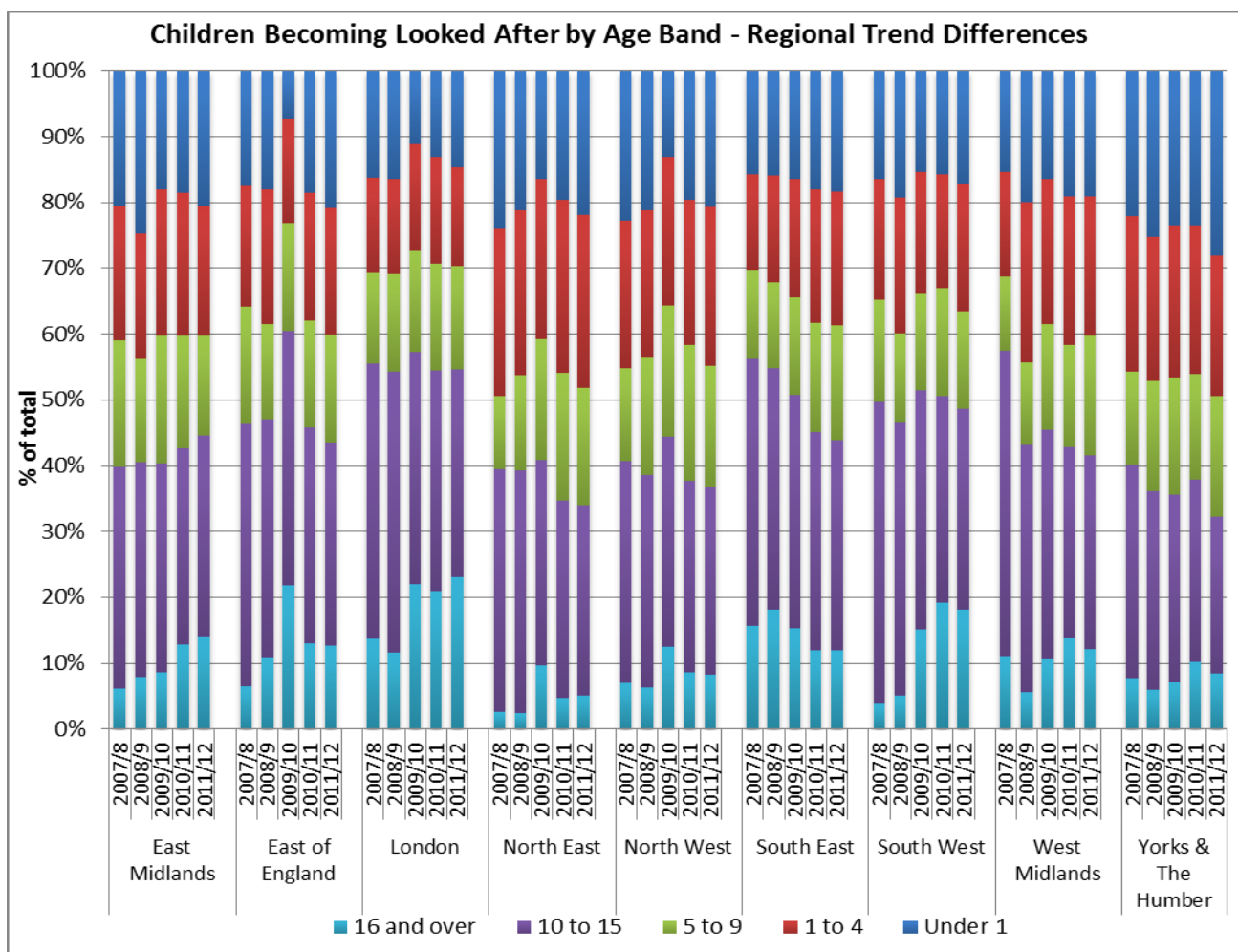


Figure 23: Children becoming looked after by age band – regional analysis

6.3.4 Children Looked After At 31st March 2012

104 authorities provided valid data covering 47,111 children and young people at 31st March 2012, representing a rate of 58.3 per 10,000 0-17 population and a 3.3% increase on the previous year (excluding children looked after for a series of short term breaks). This compares to the recent DfE data (DfE 2012e) showing a 2.3% increase in the same period for all England. 71 (68%) responding authorities reported an increase between 31st March 2011 and 31st March 2012, and 31 (29.8%) local authorities reported a decrease. The largest increase was 34.7% and the largest decrease was 14.4%. One authority reported no change.

6.3.5 Children Looked After Under a Series of Short Term Placements (V3 And V4)

The numbers of looked after children above excludes children accommodated under a series of short term breaks (DfE legal status codes V3 and V4), as data published by DfE in statistical releases exclude this group of children. Children cared for in this way normally live at home, but are accommodated by a local authority in a pattern of short episodes of care in order to give their parents (or guardians) some “respite” from the normal duties of looking

after a child. They are, however, still considered to be ‘looked after children’ whilst they are receiving a short break and as the local authority must review, and fund, the child’s placement in the same way they do children who are continuously looked after, it is important to consider them.

The figure below illustrates the decline in the number of children receiving short breaks under legal status V3 and V4 in those 106 local authorities who provided data.

	LAC Excluding Respite	Respite Care only (V3, V4)	Total LAC Including Respite	Proportion who are respite
2010/11	45,595	4,305	49,900	8.6%
2011/12	47,111	3,031	50,142	6.0%
% variance	3.3%	-29.6%	0.5%	

Figure 24: Summary of Looked After Children and children accommodated under a series of short term breaks.

Data about children receiving short breaks during the year is collected by DfE annually in the same return as all looked after children. Information about the reason for short term break (although they tend to be children with disabilities) and the periods of short breaks have not been collected in this Phase but may be the subject of further case study work.

6.3.6 Children Looked After by Legal Status

The proportion of looked after children by legal status varies between local authorities and regions, but of those 104 providing valid data, there appears to be an increase on the previous year in Placement Orders in 2011/12 on the previous year, and 74% of local authorities showing an increase over this period. There are slightly fewer children accommodated under Section 20 than the previous year. Over half of children are looked after at 31st March are subject of an Interim or Full Care Order (59.7%).

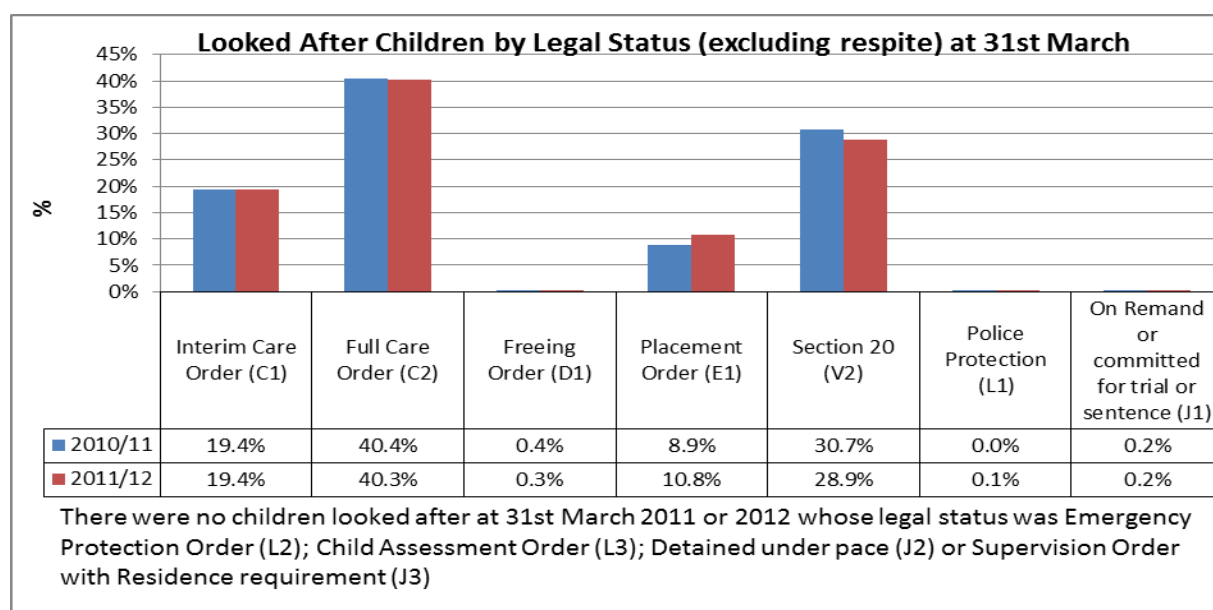


Figure 25: Summary of Looked After Children by legal status at 31st March

There does not appear from this data to be an increase in the proportion of children looked after under an Interim Care Order or Full Care Order. However, when we compare the above data to historical DfE statistical data (2007/08 onwards) for all England (DfE 2012e), it appears that there has been a trend that more children are looked after at 31st March under an Interim Care Order, and fewer are subjects of a Full Care Order.

	Interim Care Order (C1)	Full Care Order (C2)	Freeing Order (D1)	Placement Order (E1)	Section 20 (V2)
2007/08	15	48	1	7	29
2008/09	15	44	1	8	32
2009/10	19	41	-	8	32
2010/11	20	40	-	10	30
2011/12	20	40	-	11	29
% variance 2007/8 to 2011/12	33%	-17%	-	57%	0%

Figure 26: proportion of children looked after at 31st March by legal status – DfE published data

Analysis of the in-year churn of looked after children by legal status would provide a valuable insight into the use of Emergency Protection Orders and Police Protection, but also changes and duration of the legal status of children.

6.3.7 Placements of Looked After Children at 31st March 2012

109 local authorities provided valid data, reporting that the largest proportion (63.3%) of children looked after at 31st March 2012 were with foster carer other than with relative or friend (Q2). A total of 12.1% children were placed in residential accommodation.

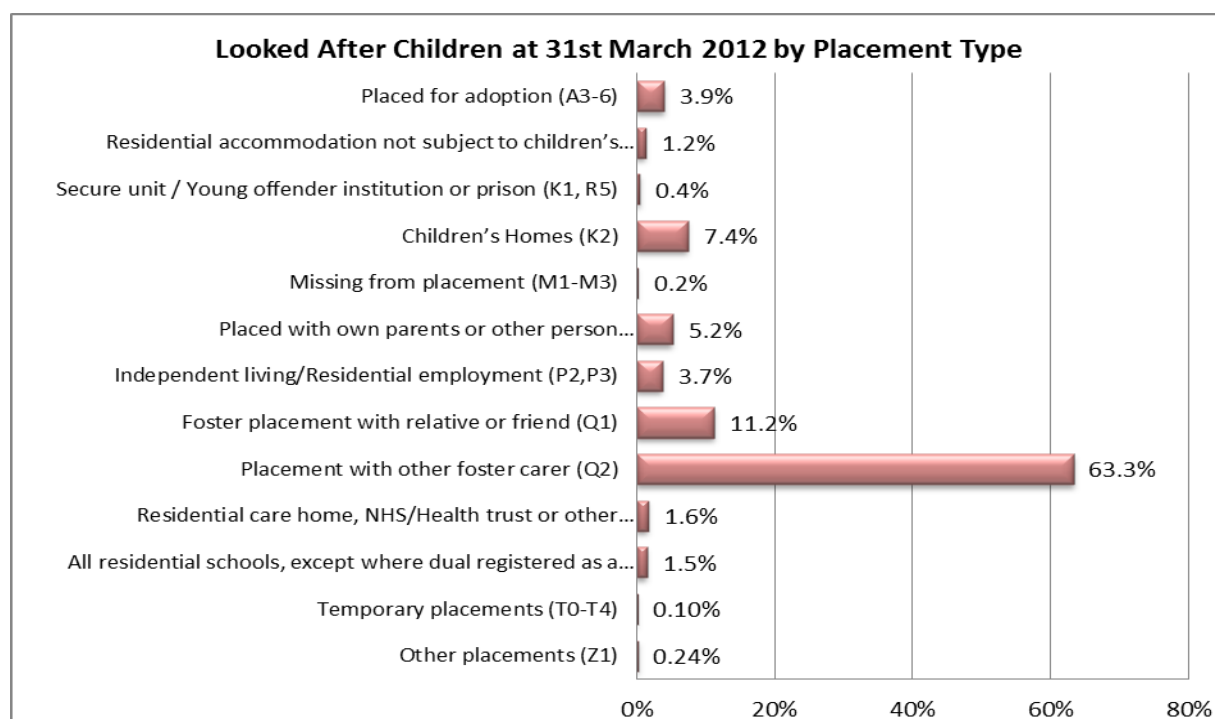


Figure 27: LAC by placement type – 31st March 2012

Although changes are slight and may not be sufficiently significant to be of note, over the two year period there has been:

- A slight reduction in placed at home from 5.9% to 5.2% of the total LAC population;
- An increase in the number of children in 'other placements' (Z1)¹⁰ – from 0.15% of the total LAC population to 0.24%;
- There are small numbers of children missing from care (M1, 2 & 3) but an increase from 31st March 2011 (64) to 31st March 2012 (83). Data provided in 2012 is done so in a high profile context and is a snapshot at 31st March only. It does not represent activity throughout the year.

From this placement data, it is not possible to identify how many children are placed with agency foster carers, and how many with own local authority foster carers.

6.3.8 Long Term Stability of Placements

Long term stability of placement is defined as the percentage of looked after children aged under 16 at 31 March who had been looked after continuously for at least two and a half years who were living in the same placement for at least two years, or are placed for adoption and their adoptive placement together with their previous placement together last for at least two years. It is a key measure as stability is known to improve outcomes.

Of the 96 authorities providing data about long term placement stability in 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 there was a very slight decrease to 67.7% (-1.2 percentage points). 38 local authorities reported an improvement in long term stability (the largest improvement was 16.2 percentage points), whilst 57 reported deterioration in the stability of placements (the largest decrease was 26.7 percentage points).

Overall and compared with nationally published data for the previous years, placement stability across responding authorities has improved over the five year period.

<i>Responding LA average</i>	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
National Data	65.0%	66.4%	67.8%		
ADCS Phase 3 data				68.9%	67.7%

Figure 28: Long term stability of children looked after – trend

¹⁰ 'Other Placements' are those where the placement does not reasonably fit any of the other categories provided above.

In terms of regional differences, six regions reported an overall decrease in the stability of placements ranging from -0.4 to -4.1 percentage points.

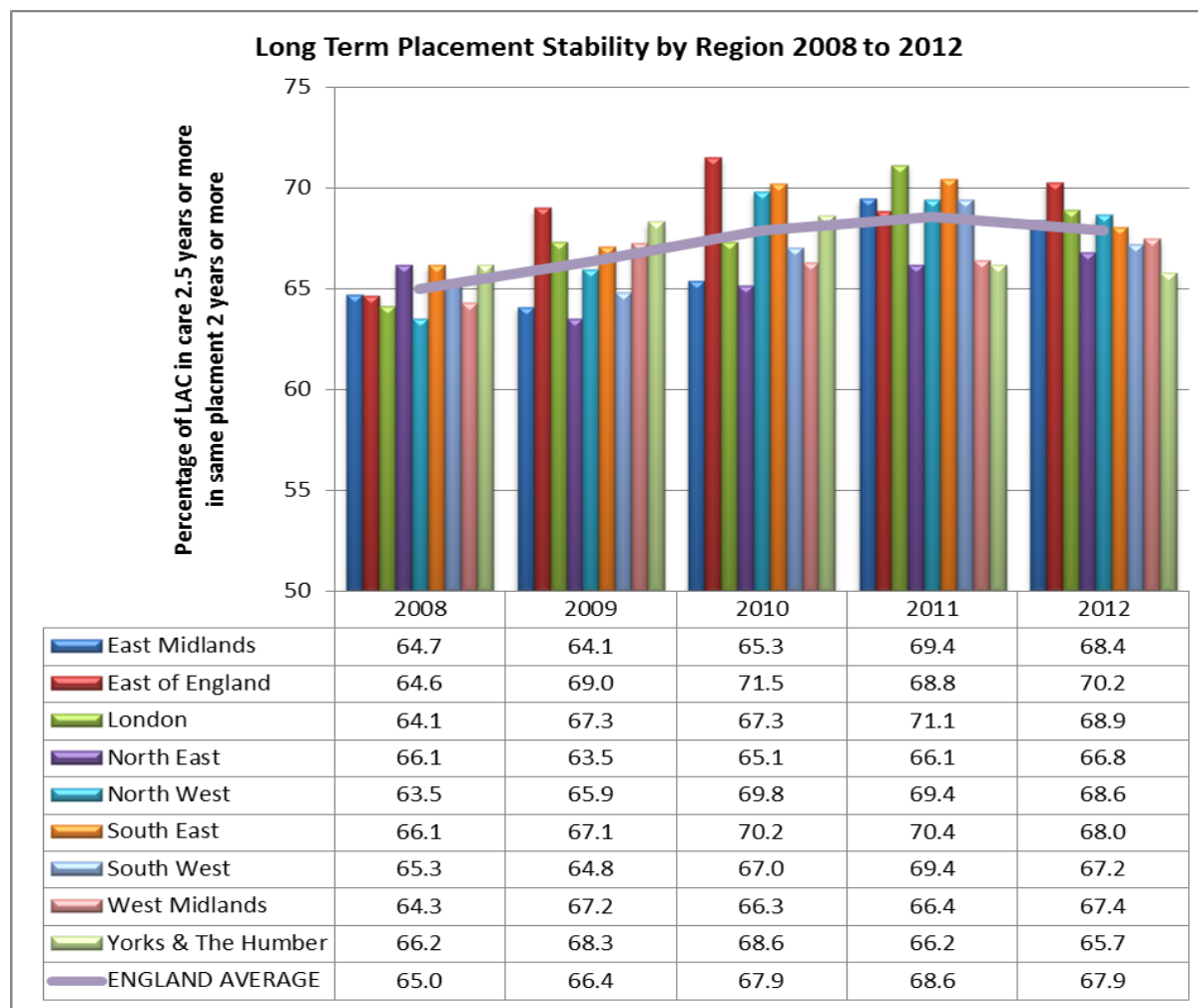


Figure 29: Long term placement stability by region. Source of historic data: DfE statistical releases

The figure below shows that in 2010/11, long term stability varied from 50.5% to 86.3%, whereas in 2011/12 the spread was marginally narrower being between 51.4% and 82.8%.

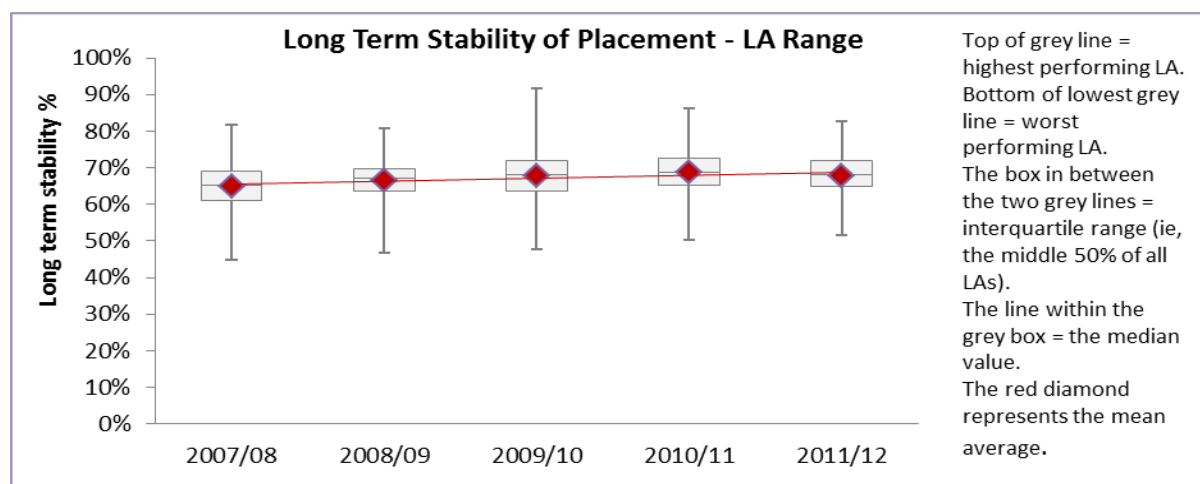


Figure 30: Long term stability – results of all responding local authorities.

One authority in the qualitative questions felt that higher number of looked after children generated poorer placement stability - "linked to high level of LAC/pressure on availability of foster placements etc so difficulty in matching appropriately" although this is not borne out by the data. From the above chart together with the correlation chart below, we can surmise that although the number of looked after children has risen consistently, long term placement stability in many local authorities has not significantly deteriorated.

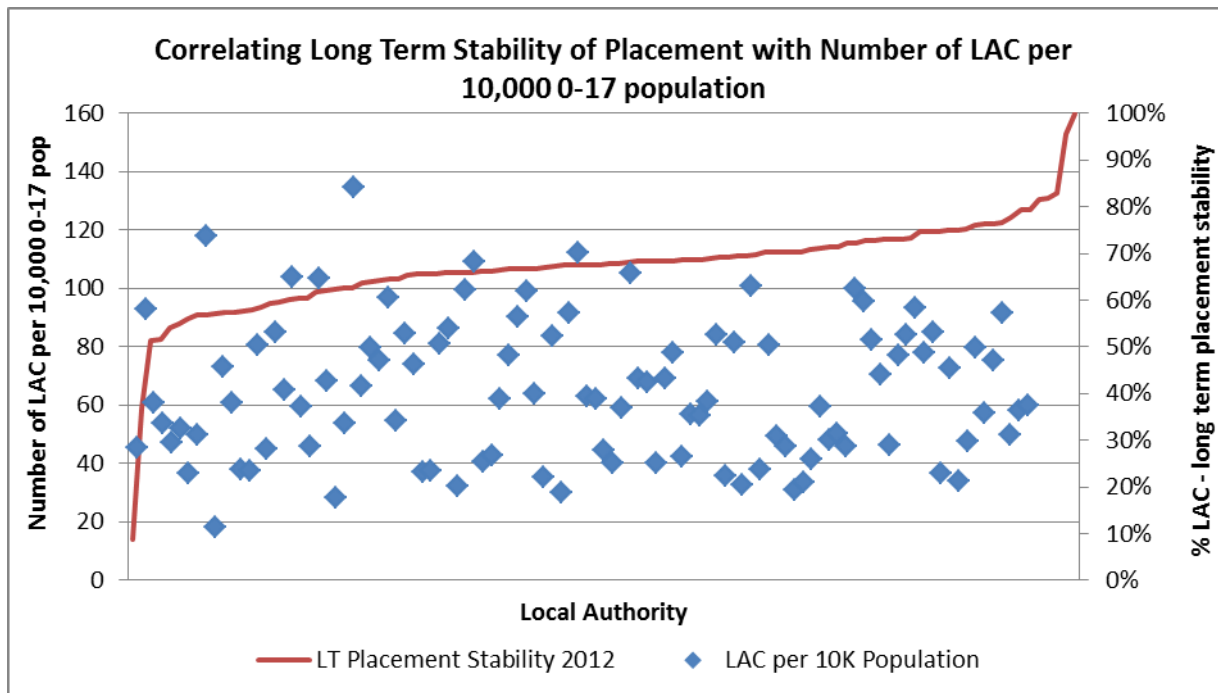


Figure 31: Long term stability – correlation of number of LAC per 10,000 0-17 population with long term placement stability indicator – 31 March 2012.

Some planned placement changes may be made in a child's best interests, but placements can break down for a variety of reasons, including because they are not sufficiently well-matched to children's needs, or of sufficient quality, or because they are not well supported.

Local authorities were specifically asked if they had changed the placement of a looked after child with the risk of sexual exploitation as the main cause of the placement move, and if so, to tell us the impact this had on the young person and their permanency. 40 authorities confirmed they had, and 37 had not, with approximately three quarters who expressed a view stating that the impact on the young person was positive. Further analysis and insights from local authorities into sexual exploitation are provided in Section 8.1.2.

6.3.9 Children Looked After at 31st March by Need Code and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

Of the 111 local authorities providing data, there was little change overall in the category of need of children looked after at 31st March 2012 compared to a year ago, apart from a one percentage point reduction in absent parenting (N8) of whom there were 2,531 children at 31st March 2012. This reduction is in line with a reduction in unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) as already reported. 102 local authorities report a total of 1,545 UASC at 31st March 2012. The variance between authorities is, however, marked with 30 authorities experiencing a decrease in UASC and 52 authorities an increase, but the most extreme percentage changes relate to very small absolute numbers.

In terms of all children looked after at 31st March, abuse or neglect (N1) continues to be the main reason children are looked after. There were 46 children reported to be looked after at 31st March due to 'low income' (26 of whom were in one local authority) and eight children (two local authorities) where reason for being looked after was not stated. This category is generally not used as reason children are looked after.

There is a wide variation in category of need across authorities, which could be due to specific issues within the area or differences in practice and recording. For example:

- One London authority is an outlier for the proportion of children who are looked after with the stated category of need as 'parental disability or illness (N3)' in both 2010/11 and 2011/12 (26.4% and 22.6% respectively) compared to the average of 4.0 and 3.8;
- A North East authority is an outlier for 'family in acute stress (N4)' in both years (49.0% and 45.9% respectively).

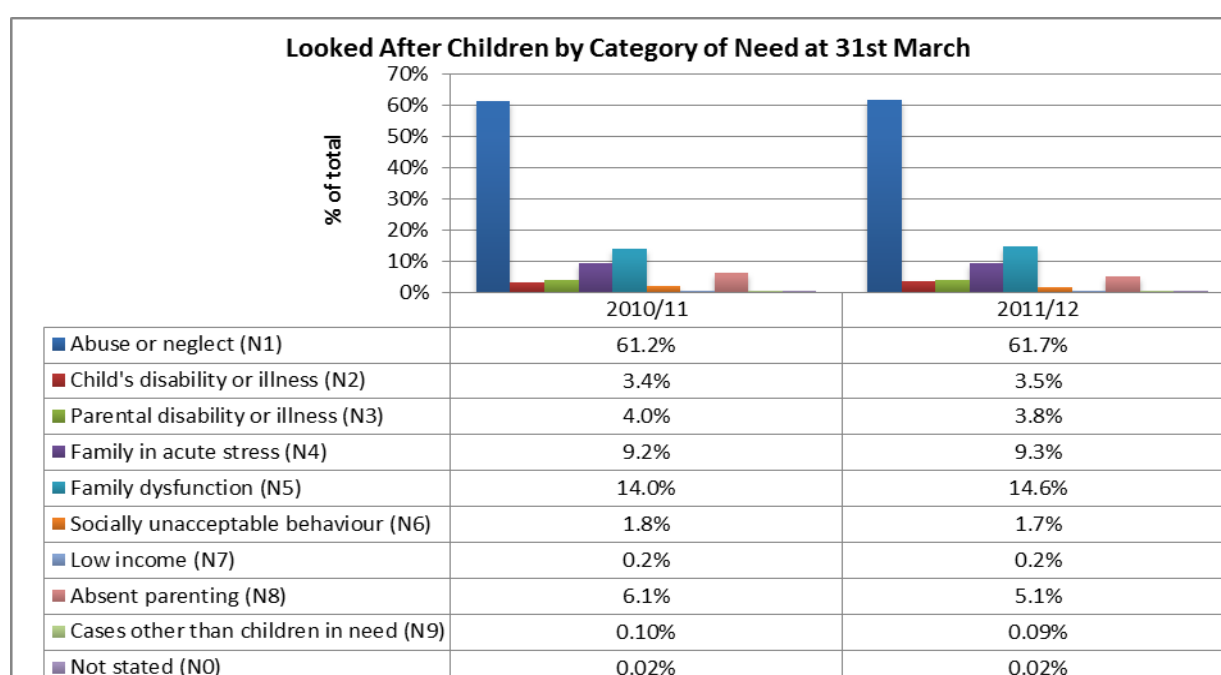


Figure 32: Looked After Children by Category of Need

6.3.10 Children Looked After At 31st March by Age Band

There is a slight change in the proportions of looked after children by age band between 2010/11 and 2011/12. The largest proportion is aged 10 to 15. 12,009 children looked after are aged under 4.

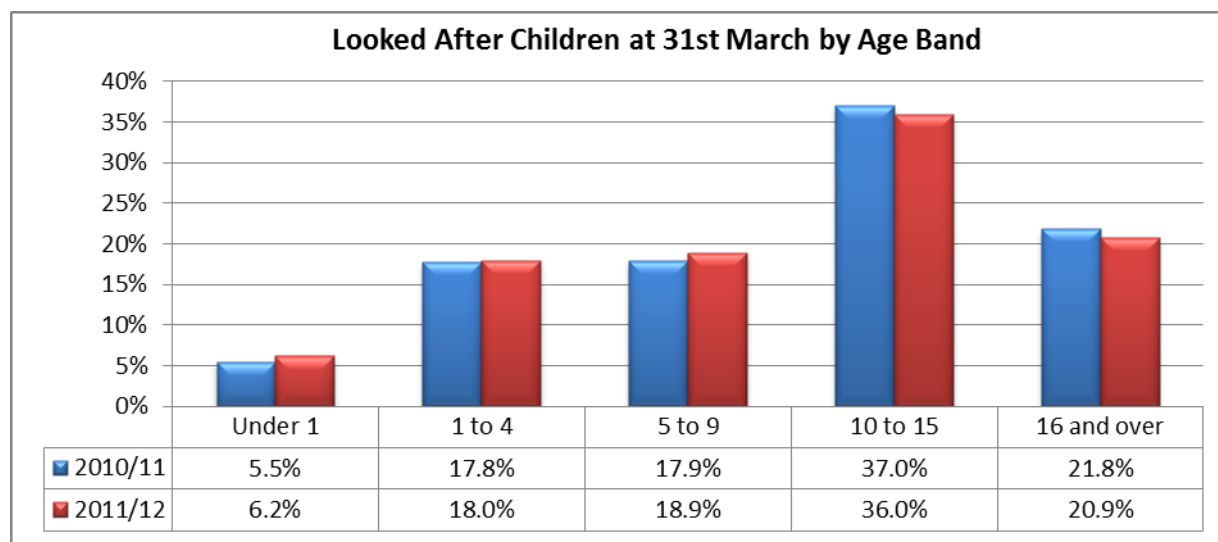


Figure 33: Age band of children looked after at 31st March

Comparing the last two years with previous years according to data published by DfE (DfE, 2012e), confirms a longer trend in the increase in the proportion of younger children (aged under 4) who are looked after, although the percentage point variances are small.

	Under 1	1 to 4	5 to 9	10 to 15	16 and over
2007/08	5	15	17	42	20
2008/09	5	16	17	41	21
2009/10	6	17	17	39	21
2010/11	6	18	18	37	21
2011/12	6	19	19	36	20
Percentage point change 2007/8 to 2011/12	+1	+4	+2	-6	0

Figure 34: Age band of children looked after – all LAs. Source: (DfE, 2012e)

The variance in the ages of children looked after between local authorities is marked. For example in one authority, 2.2% of all looked after children at 31st March 2012 are Under 1 and 43.1% are 16 and over; yet another local authority has 11.4% of looked after children Under 1, and 24.6% are 16 or over.

6.4 Children Ceasing to be Looked After and Permanence

Reasons for children ceasing to be looked after (with a focus on types of permanency) was a key area to investigate in this research. Information has been collected from a number of sources:

- Data collection from 102 local authorities covering 19,841 children about the number of children ceasing to be looked after by reasons;
- Validation against the DfE 903 national statistical first release (DfE, 2012e);
- Analysis of anonymised child level data submitted by 63 local authorities, covering 2,936 children;
- DfE Adoption scorecards (DfE, 2012f).

6.4.1 Children Ceasing to be Looked After

The chart below illustrates how the data collected by ADCS as part of this research at both aggregated and child level data, although a much smaller sample, provides a representative sample when compared to published DfE data.

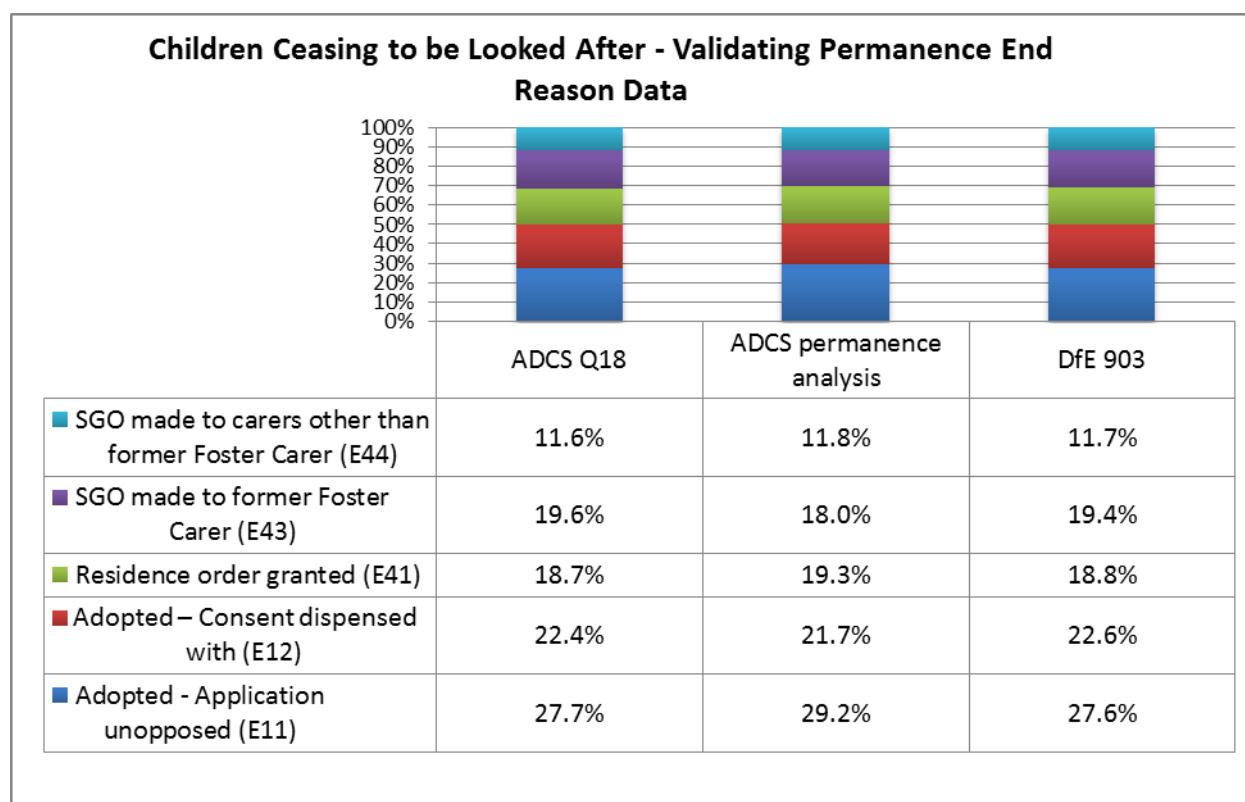


Figure 35: Children ceasing to be looked after – validating permanence end reason data – ADCS Data collection question 18, permanence data analysis and DfE 903 statistical first release.

Valid responses were received from 105 authorities covering 19,684 children who ceased to be looked after during 2011/2012, equating to 25.1 children per 10,000 0-17 population. In terms of reasons for children ceasing to be looked after, there are relatively small changes in the end reason for children leaving care on the previous year, and a more marked difference in numbers. The largest reason for leaving care remains return home (37.2%), but this has also seen the largest percentage decrease over two years from 39%. The proportion achieving permanence through either adoption, SGO or RO has increased from 21.3% to 23.6%, and 13.2% leaving care in 2011/12 went on to independent living.

There are surprisingly high levels of 'ceased for any other reason' (E8) which could be explored as part of follow up analysis, but which chimes with DfE published statistics for the last five years which show 20% of children leave care for any other reason across England.

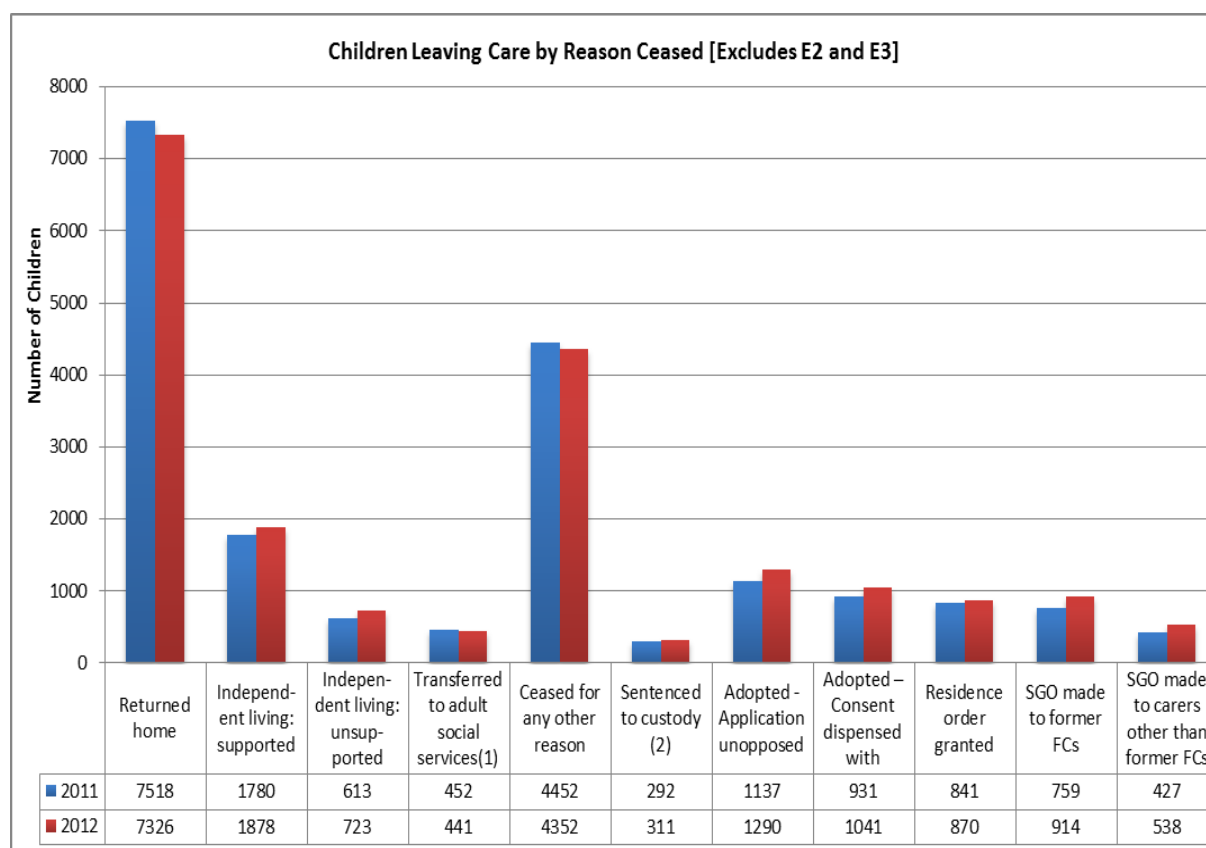


Figure 36: Children leaving care by reason ceased. Note: Categories 'Died' and 'Care taken over by another LA' excluded due to small numbers (<1% of total for each).

(1) "transferred to residential care funded by adult social services" - Young people generally transfer from child to adult health services at 16, from child to adult social care services at 18.

(2) Sentenced to Custody: If a looked after child is sent to prison/ young offenders institute, their status is dependent on their legal status. If a looked after child is subject to a Care Order (Section 31 Children Act 1989) then they remain looked after regardless of being sentenced to custody. If however a child is accommodated by a voluntary agreement under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989, then they cease to be looked after when they are admitted to custody.

6.4.2 Children Ceasing to be Looked After by Age Band

There is some difference in the proportion of children leaving care by age band, with the largest increase in the under 1 and 1 to 4 age groups. Over a third of children looked after do not leave care until they are aged 16 or over. 2011/12 data published by DfE is broadly in line with these findings, although changes are less pronounced in the full national data.

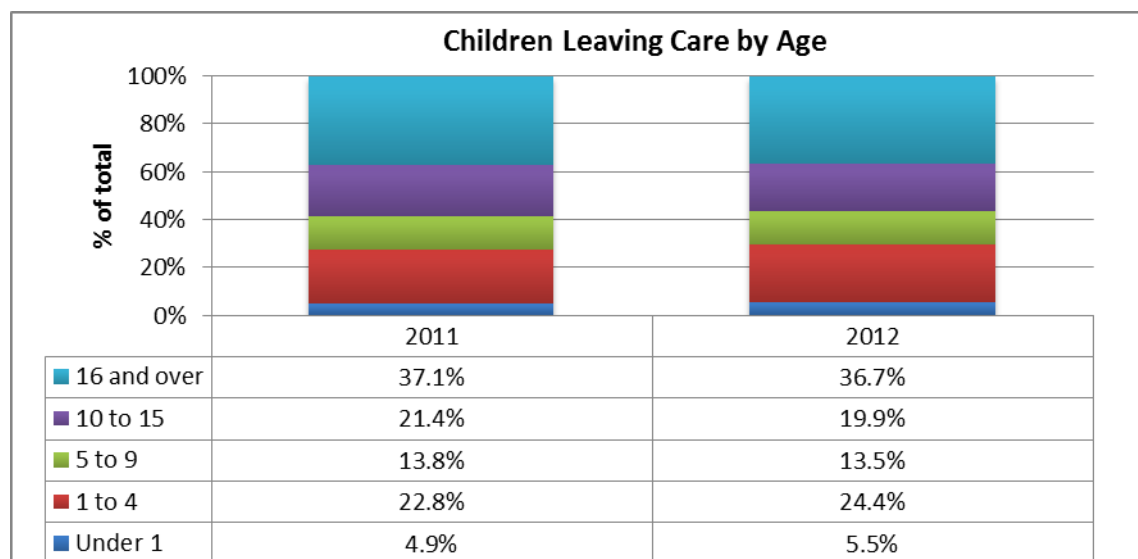


Figure 37: Children leaving care by age

6.4.3 Change in Agency Decision to Adopt

This information is part of the DfE 903 statutory return, in which guidance states that *“This decision would be taken after a review has been made of the child’s case under regulation 36 of the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005. If it is decided that the child should no longer be placed for adoption, the local authority should revise the child’s care plan and apply to the court to revoke the placement order. Any suspended care order will be resurrected. The local authority is required to regularly review the child’s case. The local authority may decide to remove the child from the home of the prospective adopters or the prospective adopters may return the child to the local authority. If either scenario happens, it does not automatically mean that adoption is no longer the plan for the child. The local authority may well place the child with other prospective adopters”*¹¹ (DfE, 2011d).

Reasons for reversal of decision to adopt could be:

- RD1 The child’s needs changed subsequent to the decision;
- RD2 The Court did not make a placement order;
- RD3 Prospective adopters could not be found;
- RD4 Any other reason.

¹¹ DfE SSSA903 guidance notes, section 2.7.2

In response to the question relating to children for whom there had been an agency decision to adopt which subsequently changed, 94 Local Authorities (61.8%) submitted data covering 429 children. According to DfE data, the total number in 2010 was 380 children and 310 in 2010/11, indicating that the 2012 all England figure is significantly increased on previous years.

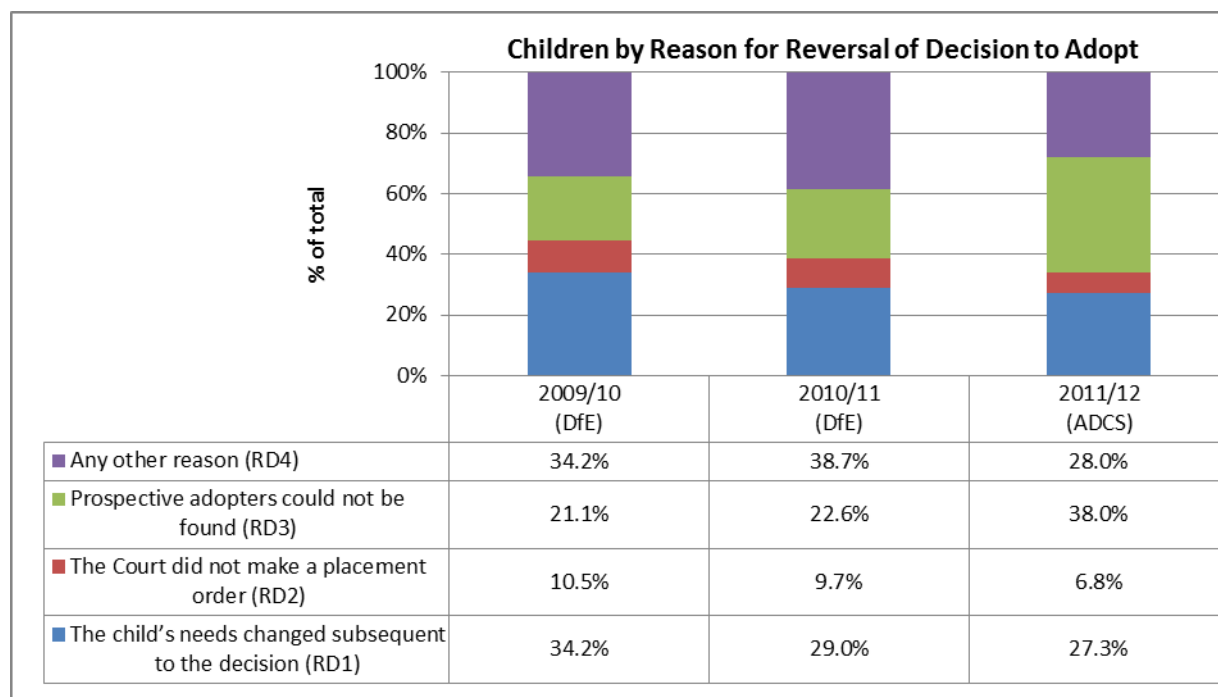


Figure 38: Children by reason for reversal of decision to adopt.

In terms of the data provided to ADCS as part of this research, the main reason why agency decision changed (38%) was because no adopters could be found. Absolute numbers are very small and therefore to be treated with caution. However:

- 6.8% (28 children) and the smallest proportion, changed plans because 'the Court did not make a placement order'. This percentage has reduced steadily over three years from 10.5% in 2009/10;
- Less than a third of plans changed because 'the needs of the child changed', 27.3% (112 children), from 34.2% in 2009/10;
- 38.0% (156 children), the largest proportion was for children whose plans changed because 'no prospective adopters could be found'. This is almost double the rate of 21.1% in 2009/10. In 24 authorities the reason 'no prospective adopters could be found' accounted for 50% or more of the reversals and in 12 local authorities the reason 'no prospective adopters could be found', was the **only** reason for reversal.

There may be numerous possible explanations as to why authorities are making more initial adoption decisions which are subsequently reversed, and further feedback was requested from a sample of local authorities in order to understand these changes in more detail. Their responses included examples of:

- Change so as not to separate siblings for whom 'whole sibling group' adopters could not be found;
- Children whose needs, behaviour, or diagnoses had changed;
- Alternative placements found with family members;
- Carers of siblings wishing to pursue SGO rather than adoption;
- Children whose level of need, functioning or age proved to be a barrier.

Specific cases cited which appeared typical were:

“Adoption disruption – some attachment issues but the disruption meeting identified that the adopters had very unrealistic expectations which was a significant factor which led to disruption. Despite a high level of direct work and reassurance, child lost all confidence in the concept of adoption and has settled with foster carers who have now gone on to offer permanence”.

“Young siblings who have very complex emotional needs (sexual abuse) required on-going assessment of their emotional needs through the family finding process, assisted by a psychologist. Comprehensive family finding locally and nationally over an 18 month period identified no potential links – children now matched with their foster carers as their permanent placement.”

6.5 Analysis of Anonymised Child Level Data Sample

Local authorities were asked to provide anonymised data relating to "all children leaving care during 2011/12 through Adoption, Special Guardianship (SGO), or Residence Order (RO), i.e. with SSDA903 Reason Episode Ceased codes E11, E12, E41, E43 and E44." Data described the children's characteristics - age, gender, ethnicity, whether or not disabled, whether or not part of a sibling group - and their reasons for leaving care, and placement type at the point of leaving care. Dates of entry and exit from care were requested for all included records, and additional key milestone dates throughout the adoption process were requested for children adopted.

The format of the data was closely aligned to the voluntary DfE quarterly adoption survey to minimise burden on local authorities, the key difference being that data was only collected on children who had left care during the year 2011/12 and was wholly anonymised.

Individual child level permanence data was received from 63 local authorities (41.4%), covering 3,013 children. After data quality checks, 77 records were excluded, and the final analysis is therefore based on 2,936 children. Comparison with DfE’s 2012 statistical first release data (DfE 2011e) shows a clear match between the coverage of the sample, and between the proportions of the sample that were adopted or leaving care through SGO and RO. This suggests that the sample analysed is broadly representative of the national data.

	DfE SFR (151 LAs)		ADCS (63 LAs)	
Adoption	3440	50.1%	1489	50.7%
SGO	2130	31.0%	885	30.1%
RO	1290	18.8%	562	19.1%
Total	6860		2936	

Figure 39: Comparing numbers from DfE 903 return and ADCS Phase 3 research

The data collected for this research and the national published data clearly show that the use of SGOs and ROs has increased to the point where they now effectively account for half of all permanence decisions, with adoption making up the other half. According to the published data, 13% more children left care via any permanence route in 2011/12 than in 2010/11, but this comprised a 12% increase in adoptions, a 20% increase in SGO and an 8% increase in RO (15% increase combined).

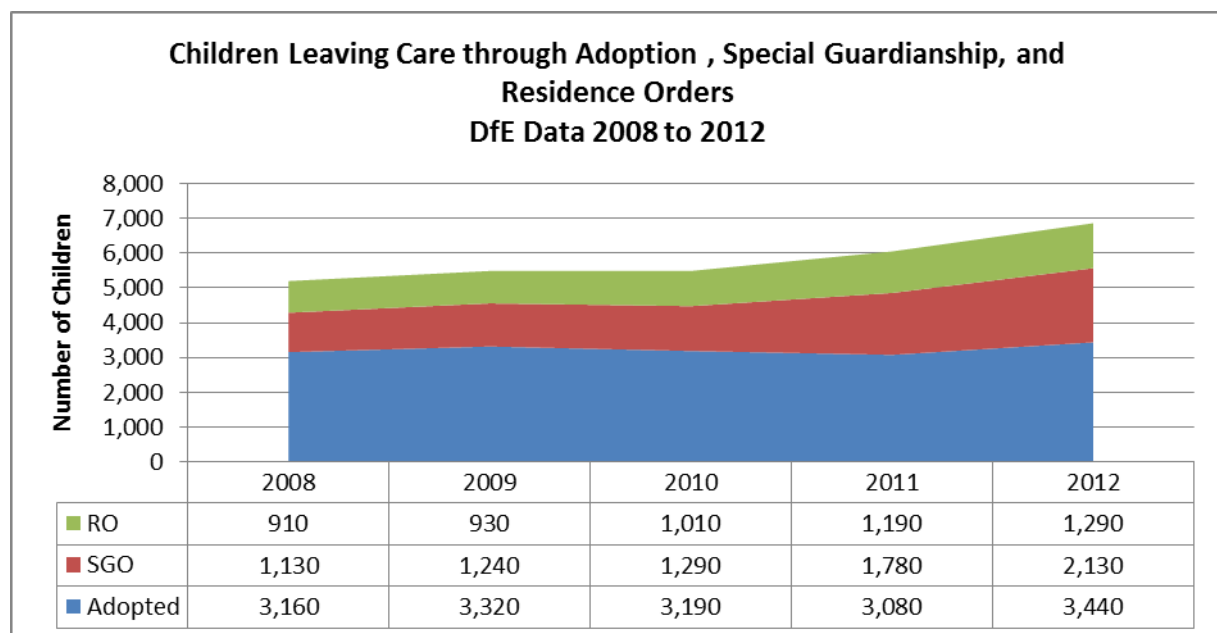


Figure 40: Children leaving care through adoption, special guardianship and residence orders . Source: DfE statistical first release 25 September 2012

6.5.1 ADCS Data

The full breakdown of children leaving care during 2011/12 in each category was as follows:

	Breakdown		Aggregated	
	Number	%	Number	%
Adopted - Application for an adoption order unopposed	852	29.0%	1489	50.7%
Adopted – consent dispensed with by court	637	21.7%		
Residence order granted	562	19.1%	562	19.1%
Special guardianship made to carers other than former foster carers	346	11.8%	885	30.1%
Special guardianship made to former foster carers	526	17.9%		
Special Guardianship Order*	13	0.4%		
Total	2936		2936	

Figure 41: Breakdown of children leaving care by end reason

*13 records did not distinguish between the type of SGO.

The number and proportions of adoptions and SGO / RO across local authority types shows that adoption was slightly more prevalent than other permanence options in all types of local authorities except in London Boroughs where the reverse is true.

Type	Number of children			Percentage	
	Adoption	SGO/RO	Total	Adoption	SGO/RO
London Borough	173	221	394	43.9%	56.1%
Metropolitan	350	316	666	52.6%	47.4%
Shire	582	542	1124	51.8%	48.2%
Unitary	384	368	752	51.1%	48.9%
Total	1489	1447	2936	50.7%	49.3%

Figure 42: Adoption, SGO and RO by type of authority

However, when one looks at the figures by region, adoption is slightly more prevalent than other permanence options in only five of the nine regions. The opposite was true in the remaining four. There appears to be no rationale for regional differences, which are too small to be significant.

Region	Number of children			Percentage	
	Adoption	SGO/RO	Total	Adoption	SGO/RO
East Midlands	197	147	344	57.3%	42.7%
East of England	285	313	598	47.7%	52.3%
London	173	221	394	43.9%	56.1%
North East	105	113	218	48.2%	51.8%
North West	185	170	355	52.1%	47.9%
South East	61	58	119	51.3%	48.7%
South West	183	143	326	56.1%	43.9%
West Midlands	97	101	198	49.0%	51.0%
Yorks & The Humber	203	181	384	52.9%	47.1%
Total	1489	1447	2936	50.7%	49.3%

Figure 43: Adoption, SGO and RO by Region

The overwhelming majority of children leaving care through any permanence route are aged 1 to 4 (59.6%), with the 5 to 9s being the second largest cohort (26.9%). Despite an increased focus of attention on the Under 1 age group in the past year this group remains small, accounting for just 2.1% of children. Perhaps surprisingly for this age group almost five times as many Under 1s left care through SGO and RO than through adoption. In fact, the totals for SG and RO outnumber adoptions in all age groups other than the 1 to 4s. For older children, 10 and over, there are over seven times as many SGO and RO as adoptions.

Age	Number of children				Percentage			
	Adoption	RO	SGO	Total	Adoption	RO	SGO	Total
Under 1	11	27	23	61	0.7%	4.8%	2.6%	2.1%
1 to 4	1069	266	414	1749	71.8%	47.3%	46.8%	59.6%
5 to 9	369	161	261	791	24.8%	28.6%	29.5%	26.9%
10 to 15	37	99	159	295	2.5%	17.6%	18.0%	10.0%
16 Plus	3	9	28	40	0.2%	1.6%	3.2%	1.4%
Total	1489	562	885	2936				

Figure 44: Children leaving care to different permanence options in 2011/12 by age band¹² Note: Total refers to total leaving care through the stated permanence route.

Boys and girls are relatively evenly distributed across the broad permanence categories.

Gender	Adoption	RO	SGO	Total
Female	48.8%	47.7%	52.0%	49.6%
Male	51.2%	52.3%	48.0%	50.4%

Figure 45: Children leaving care to different permanence options in 2011/12 by gender

2,909 children had a valid ethnicity recorded. Overall numbers are small for ethnic groups other than the White group, which includes 'White British' children who account for 79% of the total sample. Comparison of the proportions of ethnic groups in the sample with those children who were looked after at 31st March 2012, suggest that minority ethnic groups other than 'Mixed' are under-represented in the permanence sample, whilst the White group is over-represented.

Ethnic Group	Percentage in Permanency Sample	Percentage of LAC at 31 st March 12*
Asian	2%	4%
Black	4%	7%
Mixed	10%	9%
Other	1%	2%
White	83%	78%

Figure 46: Children leaving care in 2011/12 by ethnicity compared to LAC at 31st March

*source, DfE SFR percentage of ethnic group totals **excluding** refused or not available.

The total proportion of children who were subjects of an SGO and RO by broad ethnic groups is higher than the total for adoption in all groups other than White. This appears to support the view that alternatives to formal adoption are more common with minority ethnic communities, but may also be related to the availability of adopters from minority ethnic groups. However, despite a reasonable sample size numbers of children are small and variances need to be treated with caution. This may be an area for further research.

Ethnic Group	Number			Percentage of Ethnic Group	
	Adoption	SGO / RO	Total	Adoption	SGO / RO
Asian	21	33	54	39%	61%
Black	40	85	125	32%	68%
Mixed	125	172	297	42%	58%
Other	7	14	21	33%	67%
White	1278	1134	2412	53%	47%
Total	1471	1438	2909	51%	49%

Figure 47: Children leaving care to different permanence options in 2011/12 by ethnicity

2,190 children in the permanency sample were identified as having a disability or no disability, and data was not available or was unknown for the rest of the sample. Children with a disability represent just under 5% of the total. For non-disabled children, 50.4% left care through adoption. For disabled children, the figure was 56.1%.

	Number of children				Percentage		
	Adoption	RO	SGO	Total	Adoption	RO	SGO
No disability	1051	385	647	2083	51%	19%	31%
Disability	60	13	34	107	56%	12%	32%
Total	1111	398	681	2190	50.7%	18.2%	31.1%

Figure 48: Children leaving care to different permanence options in 2011/12 by disability

1,742 children in the permanency sample were identified as being part of a sibling group or not, and data was not available or was unknown for the rest of the sample. Numbers who were and were not part of a sibling group were almost equal. For children who were not part of a sibling group, 60% left care through adoption. For children who were part of a sibling group the figure was 49%.

Sibling Group	Number of children				Percentage		
	Adoption	RO	SGO	Total	Adoption	RO	SGO
Not part of Sibling Group	527	127	220	874	60%	15%	25%
Part of Sibling Group	423	184	261	868	49%	21%	30%
Total	950	311	481	1742	54.5%	17.9%	27.6%

Figure 49: Children leaving care to different permanence options in 2011/12 by sibling group

6.5.2 Length of Time in Care

The majority of children (59.1%) leaving care for permanence options spent less than two years in care (for the period which ended with the permanence decision).

Time spent in care	Under 2 Years	2-3 Years	3-4 Years	Over 4 Years
Adopted - Application for an adoption order unopposed	39.8%	39.7%	11.5%	9.0%
Adopted – consent dispensed with by court	41.4%	33.3%	17.7%	7.5%
Residence order granted	87.2%	8.2%	0.7%	3.9%
Special guardianship made to former foster carers	63.3%	10.5%	4.4%	21.9%
Special guardianship made to carers other than former foster carers	87.3%	7.5%	1.2%	4.0%
Total	59.1%	23.2%	8.3%	9.4%

Figure 50: Timescale from becoming looked after to permanence – anonymised sample

The figure highlights the largest to the smallest percentages in gradients from green to red. This method of depicting values has been used within the report to show prevalence more visually.

Although there are some variations in the detailed figures, a very similar distribution pattern is observed using the aggregated data from question 21 of the social care data collection part of this research, where local authorities submitted numbers per time period as opposed to child level records (99 authorities provided valid data for this question, 59 of whom also supplied child level data).

Time spent in care	Under 2 Years	2-3 Years	3-4 Years	Over 4 Years
Adopted - Application for an adoption order unopposed	34.5%	34.2%	19.4%	11.9%
Adopted – consent dispensed with by court	39.5%	33.1%	19.2%	8.2%
Residence order granted	80.7%	10.6%	4.6%	4.1%
Special guardianship made to former foster carers	58.9%	17.3%	6.1%	17.6%
Special guardianship made to carers other than former foster carers	79.1%	14.5%	3.0%	3.4%
Total	54.5%	23.8%	12.0%	9.7%

Figure 51: Timescale from becoming looked after to permanence – Question 22 of the data collection (n=99 LAs). The figure highlights the largest to the smallest percentages in gradients from green to red. This method of depicting values has been used within the report to show prevalence more visually.

Both distributions show that the highest proportions for each permanence option leave care in under 2 years, but these rates are higher for RO and SGO than for adoption. Proportionately more adopted children will be in care for longer periods than their RO and

SGO counterparts, other than in the case of SGO made to former foster carers where an uncommonly high percentage will have been in care for four years or more. This is in line with the use of SGO as a successful permanence option where foster carers have a long term relationship with the fostered child but where adoption may not be a viable option.

Whilst numbers of disabled children are low, it is clear that they spend proportionately longer in care before a permanence order than their non-disabled counterparts.

Disabled Child	Under 2 Years	2-3 Years	3-4 Years	Over 4 Years
No disability	59.2%	23.1%	8.4%	9.3%
Disability	39.3%	25.2%	15.0%	20.6%
Total	58.2%	23.2%	8.7%	9.9%

Figure 52: Timescale from becoming looked after to permanence – disabled children

The difference is not so marked for children who are part of sibling groups, though a slightly lower proportion of those with siblings left care within two years, and for a slightly higher proportion this was four years or more.

Sibling Group		Under 2 Years	2-3 Years	3-4 Years	Over 4 Years
Not part of Sibling Group	Number	530	202	79	63
	%	60.6%	23.1%	9.0%	7.2%
Part of Sibling Group	Number	472	217	76	103
	%	54.4%	25.0%	8.8%	11.9%
Total	Number	1002	419	155	166
	%	57.5%	24.1%	8.9%	9.5%

Figure 53: Timescale from becoming looked after to permanence – sibling groups

There is almost no difference in the distribution of the genders by length of time in care.

Gender	Under 2 Years	2-3 Years	3-4 Years	Over 4 Years
Female	59.2%	23.0%	8.1%	9.6%
Male	59.2%	23.1%	8.4%	9.3%
Total	59.2%	23.1%	8.5%	9.5%

Figure 54: Timescale from becoming looked after to permanence – gender

6.5.3 Length of Time Before Agency Decision

1,489 children in the sample were adopted. The largest proportion (43.2%) experienced an interval of 6-12 months between entry into care and the agency decision to adopt. In total the interval was 12 months or less for 72.8% of children, including those where the decision was made before entry and where the two occurred on the same day.

	Number of children	Percentage
Decision Before Entry	52	3.5%
Same Day	19	1.3%
0-3 Months	83	5.6%
3-6 Months	285	19.5%
6-12 Months	645	43.3%
1-2 Years	347	23.3%
2-3 Years	34	2.3%
3-4 Years	10	0.7%
Over 4 Years	14	0.9%
Total	1489	

Figure 55: Interval between entry into care and agency decision to adopt

However, children who experienced an interval of six months or less between entry into care and the agency decision, were most likely to leave care in under two years. For children where the decision was made beyond a six month interval, the balance tipped, and a greater proportion would be in care for two years or more than for less than two years. Whilst decision making for children with more complex needs, who may also be expected to spend longer in care, may be a lengthier process, this underlines the importance of timely decision making for swifter exits from care and is in line with the government's focus on timeliness of decision making in relation to adoption reform.

	Under 2 Years	2-3 Years	3-4 Years	Over 4 Years	Grand Total
Decision Before Entry	48	2	1	1	52
Same Day	14	3	2		19
0-3 Months	68	11	2	2	83
3-6 Months	202	60	11	12	285
6-12 Months	252	277	76	40	645
1-2 Years	19	195	101	32	347
2-3 Years		2	17	15	34
3-4 Years			1	9	10
Over 4 Years				14	14
Total	603	550	211	125	1489

Figure 56: Length of time in care by interval between entry into care and agency decision.

Higher proportions of children who have a disability tend to feature in the two years plus categories, when compared to their non-disabled counterparts, but the numbers involved are very small.

	DISABLED CHILDREN					
	Number of children			Percentage		
	No Disability	Disability	Total	No Disability	Disability	Total
Decision Before Entry	24		24	2.3%	0.0%	2.2%
Same Day	16		16	1.5%	0.0%	1.4%
0-3 Months	52	4	56	4.9%	6.7%	5.0%
3-6 Months	206	14	220	19.6%	23.3%	19.8%
6-12 Months	446	22	468	42.4%	36.7%	42.1%
1-2 Years	261	13	274	24.8%	21.7%	24.7%
2-3 Years	26	5	31	2.5%	8.3%	2.8%
3-4 Years	8		8	0.8%	0.0%	0.7%
Over 4 Years	12	2	14	1.1%	3.3%	1.3%
Total	1051	60	1111			

Figure 57: Length of time from decision to entry – disabled children

However more children who are part of sibling groups experienced longer intervals between entry into care and agency decisions. In terms of gender and ethnic group, there is little difference.

	SIBLING GROUP					
	Number of children			Percentage		
	Not part of sibling group	Part of sibling group	Total	Not part of sibling group	Part of sibling group	Total
Decision Before Entry	16	31	47	3.0%	7.3%	4.9%
Same Day	13	4	17	2.5%	0.9%	1.8%
0-3 Months	33	13	46	6.3%	3.1%	4.8%
3-6 Months	122	47	169	23.1%	11.1%	17.8%
6-12 Months	217	184	401	41.2%	43.5%	42.2%
1-2 Years	104	117	221	19.7%	27.7%	23.3%
2-3 Years	10	20	30	1.9%	4.7%	3.2%
3-4 Years	4	3	7	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%
Over 4 Years	8	4	12	1.5%	0.9%	1.3%
Total	527	423	950			

Figure 58: Length of time from decision to entry – sibling group

6.5.4 Length of Time Before Placement Order

1,362 of the 1,489 children adopted were subjects of a placement order with a valid placement order date prior to their adoption order. Here the critical interval between entry into care and the Placement Order is up to 12 months, beyond which the tipping point is reached and more children will spend two plus years in care than will leave within two years.

	Under 2 Years	2-3 Years	3-4 Years	Over 4 Years	Total
Same Day	8	4	2		14
0-3 Months	16	5	2		23
3-6 Months	100	19			119
6-12 Months	302	199	48	28	577
1-2 Years	72	303	117	42	534
2-3 Years	1	8	34	22	65
3-4 Years			3	11	14
Over 4 Years				16	16
Total	499	538	206	119	1362

Figure 59: Length of time before Placement Order

Whilst the 35 black children in the sample appeared to experience a proportionately longer interval between entry into care and the granting of a Placement Order than children from other ethnic groups, this is not statistically significant due to the small sample size.

	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other	White	Total
Same Day	6.7%	0.0%	1.7%	0.0%	0.9%	1.0%
0-3 Months	0.0%	2.9%	1.7%	0.0%	1.6%	1.6%
3-6 Months	6.7%	5.7%	7.6%	0.0%	9.0%	8.8%
6-12 Months	33.3%	28.6%	44.1%	50.0%	42.3%	42.0%
1-2 Years	46.7%	51.4%	37.3%	25.0%	39.2%	39.4%
2-3 Years	0.0%	5.7%	3.4%	0.0%	5.0%	4.8%
3-4 Years	6.7%	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	1.0%	1.0%
Over 4 Years	0.0%	5.7%	3.4%	25.0%	0.8%	1.2%
TOTAL NUMBER	15	35	118	4	1172	1344

Figure 60: Length of time before Placement Order by ethnic group

Again, children who are part of sibling groups tend to experience longer intervals between entry into care and the granting of a Placement Order than children without siblings.

	SIBLING GROUP					
	Number of children			Percentage		
	Not part of sibling group	Part of sibling group	Total	Not part of sibling group	Part of sibling group	Total
Same Day	6	4	10	1.3%	1.0%	1.2%
0-3 Months	7	5	12	1.5%	1.3%	1.4%
3-6 Months	42	27	69	9.2%	6.9%	8.1%
6-12 Months	201	143	344	43.9%	36.6%	40.5%
1-2 Years	166	171	337	36.2%	43.7%	39.7%
2-3 Years	23	29	52	5.0%	7.4%	6.1%
3-4 Years	5	6	11	1.1%	1.5%	1.3%
Over 4 Years	8	6	14	1.7%	1.5%	1.6%
Total	458	391	849			

Figure 61: Length of time before Placement Order by sibling group

6.5.5 Length of Time Before Matching

1,430 children who were adopted had a valid date of matching with adopters prior to their adoption order.

	Under 2 Years	2-3 Years	3-4 Years	Over 4 Years	Grand Total
Same Day	10				10
0-3 Months	6				6
3-6 Months	33				33
6-12 Months	271	12	2	3	288
1-2 Years	238	448	47	11	744
2-3 Years		83	143	29	255
3-4 Years			16	43	59
Over 4 Years				35	35
Total	558	543	208	121	1430

Figure 62: Length of time before matching

Here the critical interval between entry into care and matching is again up to twelve months, beyond which the tipping point is reached and more children will spend two plus years in care than will leave within two years. The difference here is severe. 95% of children matched within 12 months left care in under two years.

For those matched beyond 12 months 72.2% remained in care for two years or more. Children with disabilities and those who are part of a sibling group spend longer in care because they are more difficult to find a match for and therefore unlikely to be matched within 12 months of entering care.

	SIBLING GROUP					
	Number of children			Percentage		
	Not part of sibling group	Part of sibling group	Total	Not part of sibling group	Part of sibling group	Total
Same Day	7	3	10	1.4%	0.8%	1.1%
0-3 Months	3	2	5	0.6%	0.5%	0.6%
3-6 Months	18	3	21	3.6%	0.8%	2.3%
6-12 Months	115	56	171	22.7%	14.4%	19.1%
1-2 Years	247	204	451	48.8%	52.3%	50.3%
2-3 Years	85	85	170	16.8%	21.8%	19.0%
3-4 Years	16	27	43	3.2%	6.9%	4.8%
Over 4 Years	15	10	25	3.0%	2.6%	2.8%
Total	506	390	896			

Figure 63: Length of time before matching – sibling groups

	DISABLED CHILDREN					
	Number of children			Percentage		
	Not Disabled	Disabled	Total	Not Disabled	Disabled	Total
Same Day	2		2	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%
0-3 Months	6		6	0.6%	0.0%	0.6%
3-6 Months	23		23	2.3%	0.0%	2.1%
6-12 Months	208	8	216	20.5%	13.8%	20.1%
1-2 Years	527	23	550	51.9%	39.7%	51.3%
2-3 Years	182	18	200	17.9%	31.0%	18.6%
3-4 Years	41	5	46	4.0%	8.6%	4.3%
Over 4 Years	26	4	30	2.6%	6.9%	2.8%
Total	1015	58	1073			

Figure 64: Length of time before matching – disabled children

6.5.6 Length of Time from Placement Order to Matching

The government's 'Adoption Scorecard' measures "the average time it takes for a local authority to match a child to an adoptive family once the court has formally decided that adoption is the best option"¹³ and currently sets an expected threshold of seven months (213 days). Whilst the scorecard uses three year averages, the numbers and percentages of children for whom the scorecard threshold has been met from the 2011/12 sample data would be as follows:

	Number	Percentage
Matched within 7 months of Placement order	889	65.9%
Not matched within 7 months of Placement order	459	34.1%
TOTAL	1348	

Figure 65: Length of time from Placement order to matching – adoption scorecards.

	Number	Percentage
Same Day	12	0.8%
0-3 Months	112	7.8%
3-6 Months	199	13.9%
6-12 Months	849	59.4%
1-2 Years	222	15.5%
2-3 Years	25	1.7%
3-4 Years	4	0.3%
Over 4 Years	7	0.5%
Total	1430	

82.0%

Figure 66: Time from Matching to Adoption Order

Once matched with adopters, 82% of children leave care within 12 months. The main characteristic to exert an influence over this is membership of a sibling group.

¹³ this equates to the Placement Order date for those children subject to such an order

	SIBLING GROUP					
	Number of children			Percentage		
	Not part of sibling group	Part of sibling group	Total	Not part of sibling group	Part of sibling group	Total
Same Day	3	5	8	0.6%	1.3%	0.9%
0-3 Months	24	33	57	4.7%	8.5%	6.4%
3-6 Months	80	27	107	15.8%	6.9%	11.9%
6-12 Months	323	225	548	63.8%	57.7%	61.2%
1-2 Years	68	90	158	13.4%	23.1%	17.6%
2-3 Years	3	8	11	0.6%	2.1%	1.2%
3-4 Years	1	1	2	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%
Over 4 Years	4	1	5	0.8%	0.3%	0.6%
Total	506	390	896			

Figure 67: Timescale from Matching to Adoption Order – sibling group

Summarising the distribution of the length of time between key points for the sample groups shows that the interquartile range (the middle 50% of all children) reach specific milestones and are adopted within relatively close timeframes, and averages will be distorted by the top quartile and bottom quartiles (including some outliers) where the range of weeks is far greater.

6.5.7 Placement Prior to Permanence

Adopted Children

The great majority of adopted children (78.0%) were placed "for adoption *with placement order not with current foster carer*" immediately prior to their adoption.

	Number	Percentage
Foster placement with relative or friend	3	0.2%
Placed for adoption with consent not with current foster carer	143	9.6%
Placed for adoption with consent with current foster carer	45	3.0%
Placed for adoption with placement order not with current foster carer	1161	78.0%
Placed for adoption with placement order with current foster carer	123	8.3%
Placement with other foster carer	14	0.9%
Total	1489	

Figure 68: Placement prior to permanence – adopted children

However, within these placement types the greatest proportion of children to leave care within two years were placed "for adoption with consent not with current foster carer". The distribution for children placed "for adoption with consent with current foster carer" is unusual with around one third leaving care in under two years and two-three years respectively, but over a quarter leaving in over four years. Only for children placed "for adoption with placement order with current foster carer" did more children leave care in two-three years than in under two years.

	Number					Percentage of Placement Type			
	Under 2 Years	2-3 Years	3-4 Years	Over 4 Years	Total	Under 2 Years	2-3 Years	3-4 Years	Over 4 Years
Foster placement with relative or friend				3	3	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Placed for adoption with consent not with current FC	78	35	20	10	143	54.5%	24.5%	14.0%	7.0%
Placed for adoption with consent with current FC	15	14	4	12	45	33.3%	31.1%	8.9%	26.7%
Placed for adoption with PO not with current FC	479	454	155	73	1161	41.3%	39.1%	13.4%	6.3%
Placed for adoption with current FC	25	44	29	25	123	20.3%	35.8%	23.6%	20.3%
Placement with other FC	6	3	3	2	14	42.9%	21.4%	21.4%	14.3%
Total	603	550	211	125	1489	40.5%	36.9%	14.2%	8.4%

Figure 69: Placement prior to permanence by length of time by length of care

The figure highlights the largest to the smallest percentages in gradients from green to red. This method of depicting values has been used within the report to show prevalence more visually.

SGO and RO Children

The majority of children becoming the subjects of SGO were placed in "Foster placement with relative or friend" (70.6%) prior to the granting of the order, followed by children placed "with other foster carer" (27.3%), with other placement types accounting for negligible proportions of children.

For children becoming the subjects of RO the highest proportion were placed "with own parents or other person with parental responsibility" (37.9%), followed by "Placement with other foster carer" (30.2%), and "Foster placement with relative or friend" (29.3%). Again other placement types accounted for negligible proportions of children.

	Number of children			Percentage		
	RO	SGO	Total	RO	SGO	Total
Children's Homes	2		2	0.4%	0.0%	0.1%
Family centre or mother and baby unit	3	2	5	0.6%	0.2%	0.4%
Foster placement with relative or friend	159	606	765	29.3%	70.6%	54.6%
Other placements	9	13	22	1.7%	1.5%	1.6%
Placed with own parents or other person with parental responsibility	206	3	209	37.9%	0.3%	14.9%
Placement with other foster carer	164	234	398	30.2%	27.3%	28.4%
Total	543	858	1401			

Figure 70: Placement by reason leaving care

1 child with an SGO was recorded as being placed for adoption with a placement order and has been excluded from this table.

The majority of children becoming the subjects of RO (87.3%) left care within 2 years.

	Under 2 Years	2-3 Years	3-4 Years	Over 4 Years
Children's Homes	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%
Family centre or mother and baby unit	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Foster placement with relative or friend	91.8%	5.7%	0.6%	1.9%
Other placements	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Placed with own parents or other person with parental responsibility	79.1%	12.1%	0.0%	8.7%
Placement with other foster carer	93.9%	4.3%	1.2%	0.6%
Total	87.3%	7.9%	0.7%	4.1%

Figure 71: Length of time leaving care by placement type – Residence Order

The majority of children becoming the subjects of SGO (73.3%) left care within 2 years, but the second highest proportion (14.6%) left care in 4 years or more. This may be taken as further evidence that whilst SGO can be used to effect swift exits from care they may also provide suitable alternatives to long term foster care, including for placements with relatives or friends.

	Under 2 Years	2-3 Years	3-4 Years	Over 4 Years
Family centre or mother and baby unit	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Foster placement with relative or friend	76.9%	7.9%	3.1%	12.0%
Other placements	92.3%	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Placed with own parents or other person with parental responsibility	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Placement with other foster carer	62.4%	12.0%	3.4%	22.2%
Total	73.3%	9.0%	3.1%	14.6%

Figure 72: Length of time leaving care by placement type – Special Guardianship Order

In the aggregated data collection request for this research, 93 local authorities provided information about 3,799 children ceasing care and the length of time from entry into care to moving in with their permanent family. The conclusions (see figure below) reflect the same findings as the analysis of the anonymised permanence sample that permanency is achieved in less time for the children who cease care due to an SGO or RO.

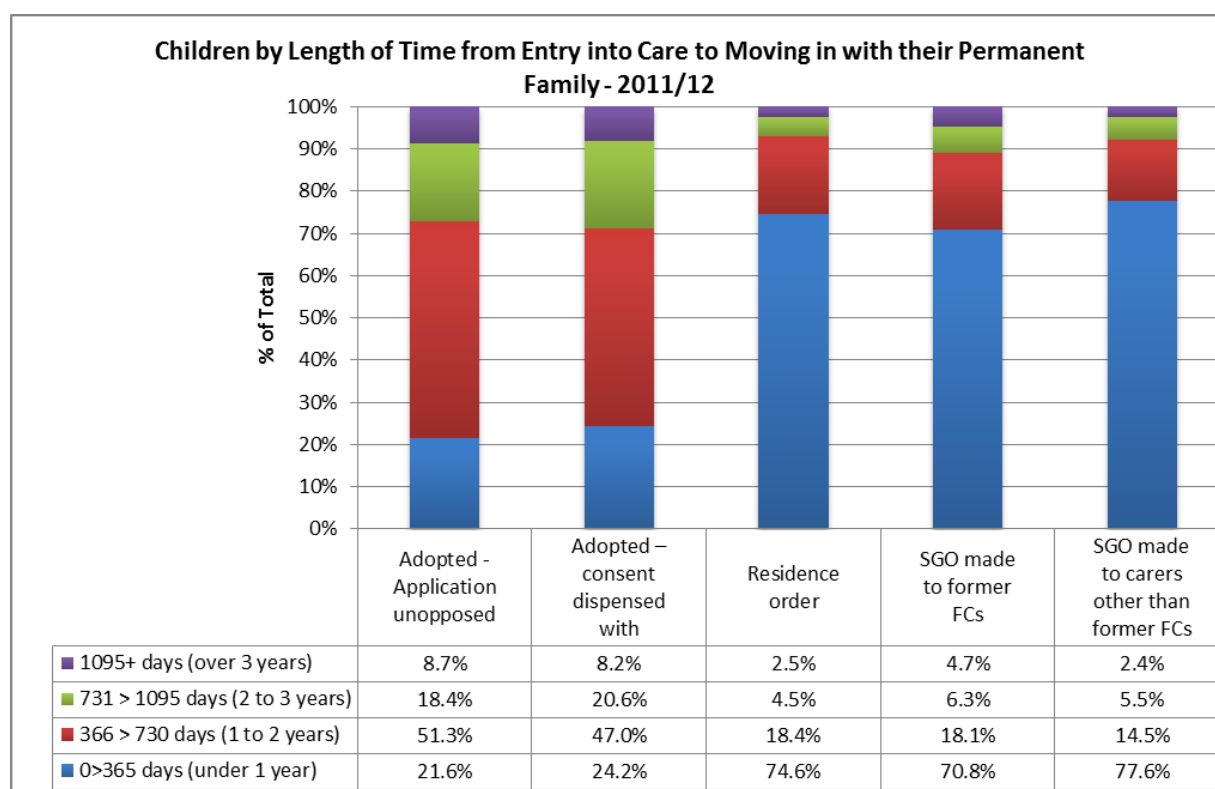


Figure 73: Data from statistical data collection covering 3,799 children in 93 local authorities - length of time from date started to be looked after, to date of moving in with their permanent family

7 Findings – Resources

7.1 Finance

The Phase 2 research report included ‘counting the cost’ – trying to quantify the additional spend which the reported increase in safeguarding activity would have generated, using cost units for activities such as initial contacts and referrals calculated by Loughborough University (Holmes *et al*, 2010). The same detailed analysis of cost was not planned for Phase 3, but commentary about resources is a critical factor in evidencing changes in safeguarding activity and its impact.

Despite significant reductions nationally in funding for local authority children’s services, local authorities have protected (and in some cases increased) spending on children’s social care in order to meet increased demand. How local authorities have managed to do this varies and it is difficult to demonstrate from the finance data returned, how local authorities are funding their statutory duties in the face of rising demand. DfE’s Section 251 returns are notoriously inconsistent and this data supplied by local authorities cannot be reconciled with what they are telling us about the funding pressures they are experiencing in children’s social care for that reason.

33 authorities (47%) had experienced reductions in budgets for safeguarding and 33 LAs (47%) reported that they had not (four responses were unclear). 25 authorities reported that reductions have been made in early help and/or other targeted services, and 16 stated that the required savings have been through procurement efficiencies, management or organisational redesign without reducing the budget of front line statutory children’s social care services. Nine local authorities reported that budgets for safeguarding and looked after children have been protected, but there are huge pressures to reduce costs and likely cuts in future which was challenging when also recognising that statutory services responsibilities have to be met.

For around a third of those local authorities responding, they described budget reductions which are “carefully planned and managed to reduce impact” without resulting in a cut in front line workers, but some felt as one authority stated *“it is too soon to be able to comment on any impact of this change”*.

Some clear examples of strategy to funding social care were given. As one authority stated:

“The Children’s Social Care budget has been protected from reductions by the council over the past two years. Savings have been realised in specific areas e.g. placements due to the reduction in numbers looked after but the savings have been used to fund growth in other areas within children’s social care e.g. a new intervention service for children and young people on the edge of care.”

7.2 Commissioning

Respondents were asked what changes had been made to commissioning services for looked after children and commissioning specialist or independent assessments required by Courts in the last two years.

78% of those responding reported that they had changed the way they commission services, with improved commissioning and cost savings reported by many of them. 35 authorities report use of regional/sub-regional frameworks to manage Independent Foster Care (IFC) and other placements which are effective in addressing both cost and quality with 14 either in the process of reviewing or about to review their foster carer provision and commissioning of foster care placements. Nine authorities have increased in-house foster care to reduce the reliance on more expensive agency foster care placements, and three authorities reported that they are struggling with a supply of foster carers and increasingly dependent on IFC, whilst one authority reported that it is harder to place older children in IFC as they are choosing to take younger children with less complex needs.

There was a very mixed response to how authorities commission specialist and independent assessments, including the relationship with Court and any changes in number of assessments. 18 authorities commission from an approved list, or have service level or framework agreements with providers; whilst 20 spot purchase and 14 undertake specialist assessments in-house. 11 reported that developing a better working relationship with Courts, which involves some element of challenge, to reduce external specialist assessment can be effective, though difficult. The impact of additional direction by the Court was reported by five authorities as sometimes not needed, and resulted in additional cost and delay.

7.3 Staffing

Local authorities were asked “have there been any significant changes to social work staffing in your authority over the past two years? For example: changes in number of qualified or unqualified social workers; recruitment; use of agency staff; or integrated working?” The responses indicated a range of experiences, but the most prevalent comment was that the use of agency staff has reduced or remains low – over four times as many authorities had experienced a reduction than those who reported that agency staff usage remains high, or has increased.

In terms of the size of the social work staffing establishment, 20 authorities stated that there has been an increase in posts to cope with additional pressures. Some report difficulty recruiting experienced and qualified social work staff, noting the challenges of neighbouring authorities offering more lucrative packages to workers. It also appears from a significant proportion of respondents that there is an increase in the recruitment of newly qualified social workers. Three authorities reported difficulties recruiting front line managers and one commented that *“this is a real and worrying pressure as it reduces management oversight”*.

However, ten authorities reported a more stabilised workforce with reduced turnover and others comment that changes to front line staff is minimal as most reductions in staff costs have been at senior management level, or through restructuring to provide a different model of service resourcing.

Data about staff employed by children’s social care services from the National Minimum Data Set for Social Care (NMDS-SC) which authorities complete on a voluntary basis and published by DfE (DfE, 2012g), support these findings, stating that the majority (92%) of the children’s workforce were directly employed by the local authority and the remaining 8% of staff were bank or pool workers. Staff were generally permanently employed (85%) while 7% were temporarily employed.

8 Findings – Local Authority Views and Experiences

85 (56%) local authorities answered 18 qualitative questions about safeguarding pressures, which provide a clear view of the reasons behind the continued overall increase in safeguarding pressures, although not all authorities answered all questions.

8.1 Reasons for Increases in Safeguarding Activity

Responses from local authorities suggest a myriad of presenting issues which have caused an increase, together with some explanations as to why, in some part reinforcing ‘known’ prevalent factors and in some cases offering new one.

The single most quoted increased presenting issue in safeguarding activity, including children becoming looked after, for those authorities who have experienced increases is domestic abuse and associated issues. As one local authority put it – that *“toxic trio of domestic abuse, parental mental health and substance misuse”*. Other parental issues reported are largely drug use, an increase in parental disability, isolated families and large sibling groups. One authority reported an increase in the removal of children from parents who had children removed previously.

In terms of age, nine authorities report an increase in children under four years old, and many report an increase in 16+, largely due to the Southwark Judgement. Challenging behaviour generally was also felt by some to contribute to the rise in safeguarding activity.

Trafficked children and forced marriages were reported by at least one local authority to be a factor for them. Child sexual exploitation, or increased awareness of it, was also an issue quoted frequently and this is investigated in more detail in Section 8.1.2. Ten respondents also reported an increase in the use of Police Protection and an increase in care proceedings. One local authority reported a 40% increase in the number of care proceedings. This accords with the CAFCASS data.

When asked what is the *reason* for the increase, it was difficult to give any one reason and a combination of factors contributed – those authorities who did not implicitly state this certainly implied it. Reasons, in addition to the presenting factors above, included:

- Effects of recession as families come under more stress, financial constraints and changes in housing costs, meaning families move into areas of cheaper housing;
- Raised awareness of abuse, especially neglect, amongst other professionals leading to more frequent referrals, and also heightened public awareness;
- The impact of early help, which initially has identified more children, with sharper decisions around very young children and starting care proceedings earlier to secure the wellbeing of children; conversely, some authorities felt that the reduction in targeted services in their area, especially the 5-16 year group, is a factor in the increase;
- Better systems and processes, including development of multi-agency safeguarding hubs; integrated teams and service redesign;
- Some reported that children are either remaining subjects of child protection plans, or remaining looked after for longer;
- Change in thresholds (See Section 8.3).

8.1.1 Neglect

Analysis of children who are subjects of child protection plans by category of abuse has been provided within the previous sections, however, the data on this could be construed as conflicting. DfE 903 statistical first release data for 2011 says: “Overall, for those children who started to be looked after during the year the main reason why they were provided with a service is because of abuse or neglect (54 per cent). This percentage has increased each year since 2007/8 when 48 per cent of children were provided with a service for this reason”.

Whilst nationally (and locally) there has been a greater focus on neglect, an increase in other types of abuse was also suggested by respondents, including an increase in sexual abuse, physical abuse (especially in some cultures and in babies); and also emotional abuse. In addition, seven local authorities reported an increase in the complexity of cases and multiple needs which has had a dual impact on services (rise in number, rise in complexity). These factors could explain why the number of children subjects of child protection plans for neglect does not represent a growing proportion of all plans, but the use of the 'multiple' category does.

8.1.2 Child Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse and Risky Behaviours

Although the proportion of children subjects of a child protection plan for sexual abuse has reduced to 5.6% of all plans, authorities reported a rise in child sexual exploitation and risky behaviours. We asked local authorities whether they had experienced a rise in any particular safeguarding issue or reason for children becoming looked after over the past two years, why this is and also "for older looked after children, have you experienced any changes (increase or decrease) in risky behaviours, sexual exploitation or use of welfare secure accommodation", and to describe what the changes have been and the impact on the local authority in terms of resources.

25 authorities reported an increase in child sexual exploitation, with five stating that they have not seen an increase – there does not appear to be any specific regional variances from responses received. Other risky behaviours such as missing children, drug use, gang related activity, including an increase in youth violent crime within the home, increase in self harm, and increase in young people with mental health issues or challenging/complex behaviour were all mentioned by at least one local authority.

It was noted by some that it may not be that behaviours have changed, but that there are increased recognition and awareness, especially around child sexual exploitation, as local authorities develop more robust processes for identification and action. One local authority described how investment in a joint police/social care team dedicated to child sexual exploitation has made a positive difference.

Section 6.3 reports that 40 local authorities had changed the placement of a looked after child with the risk of sexual exploitation as the main cause of the placement move and roughly three quarters reported this as a positive move. For some, the placement was made away from home to 'break the link' and for 12 young people, welfare secure accommodation was used. The quotation below provides an insight into these circumstances.

“We have identified a small number of female adolescents partaking in risky behaviour and putting themselves at risk of sexual exploitation. We have used a welfare bed for one of these young females. In the other cases we have put in strategies to make them safer and disrupt the negative influences surrounding the risk, alongside other agencies. Where this has not been successful within our own resources we have commissioned external placements to move them away from the assessed risks. The use of such external placements is expensive and has impacted on budgets. All these moves have affected their placements and their permanency. In some cases they have experienced several moves in a relatively short period of time due to their risky behaviour and the impact this has on other children within the placement.”

DfE (DfE, 2012h) provides evidence of the increase in number/percentage of children accommodated in secure children’s homes where the type of placement was “child placed by local authority on welfare grounds”, as the figure below illustrates.

	Numbers					Percentages				
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Child detained or sentenced and placed by the Youth Justice Board	180	160	115	129	131	69%	58%	48%	64%	59%
Child placed by local authority in a criminal justice context	20	25	30	13	17	8%	9%	13%	6%	8%
Child placed by local authority on welfare grounds	60	90	95	60	73	23%	33%	39%	30%	33%

Figure 74: children accommodated in secure children’s homes at 31st March by type of placement.

Source: Children Accommodated in Secure Children’s Homes at 31 March 2012: England and Wales Table 3.

Those responding to the questionnaire also refer to the increased cost associated with external placements or welfare secure accommodation.

8.2 Reasons for Decreases in Safeguarding Activity

45 local authorities reported a reduction in the number of children subject of a child protection plan at 31st March 2012 from the previous year, and 33 authorities reported a reduction in the number of children looked after for the same time period.

Those local authorities which have seen a decrease in any aspect of safeguarding activity provided information about the mechanisms which have helped to achieve the reductions:

- A more dedicated children in need service, resulting in a reduction in the number of children subjects of a child protection plan and children looked after;

- A decrease in neglect due to a strong targeted support sector (multi-agency locality teams and children's centres); strong partnerships with schools and universal health services and commitment to support via CAFs;
- A decrease in referrals, mainly domestic abuse, as a result of social work presence in the local police station; or better screening by the police before a referral is made, which cuts overall numbers and has a positive impact on capacity to assess;
- An overall reduction in child protection plans due to a reorganisation of how child protection conferences are done which borrows elements of the signs of safety approach;
- Decrease in referrals (by 15% in one local authority) and also children subjects of child protection plans or looked after associated with an increase in effectiveness of early help, CAF, greater understanding of the thresholds for social care;
- Decrease in referrals due to new screening, assessment or multi-agency 'front door' services, such as Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH);
- Reduction in children subjects of child protection plans due to introduction of single proportionate assessment model;
- Referrals decreased due to focussed multi-agency training on thresholds and risk assessment, opened professional advice line, strengthened prevention (step down) service;
- Reduction in child protection plans coincided with implementation of strengthening families conference model.

Some individual authorities and regions were able to share reports, audits or performance reports and research that had been undertaken, sometimes on a multi-agency basis to try to identify factors causing the increase in their area to assist in targeting resources and improvement at the right place. 67% of respondents (30 out of 45) stated that they would be happy to share any strategies they have to reduce the numbers of children who are either starting to be looked after or the length of time they are looked after or other safeguarding improvements. This positive approach to sharing 'what works' reflects the culture of the sector as a whole and mechanisms for facilitating this are being supported by the CIB sector led support; C4EO's validated local practice; Ofsted; LGA's knowledge hub and other fora for sharing learning amongst authorities.

8.3 Have Thresholds to Children’s Social Care Services Changed?

59 (71%) respondents reported that there has been no change to thresholds during the past two years and 11 felt that there had been more consistent application of the thresholds. London local authorities reported using the pan London Child Protection procedures which include publication of thresholds.

Only 27% of local authorities responding felt that thresholds for accepting referrals had changed, and reasons were given as:

- Better targeted support which has assisted in managing demand, and better step-down, with an emphasis away from a threshold based service to more inclusive offers of early help, greater use of TAC and CAF;
- Thresholds had been found by Ofsted on inspection to be too high, and have since been relaxed, leading to a high number of referrals;
- Some respondents felt that changes in partner practices and greater risk averseness following the death of Peter Connelly had meant that pre-social care intervention services had changed their thresholds to become more risk averse.

8.4 The Impact of Early Help on Safeguarding Activity

35% of authorities believe that early help has started to affect safeguarding activity, although for some this is as an increase in safeguarding activity as a result on uncovering unmet demand; and for some it is to decrease safeguarding activity through earlier support. 19 (21%) local authorities felt early help has not yet affected safeguarding - it was ‘early days’ and too soon to see an impact (positive or negative). 26 respondents reported that it was still early days in developing and implementing their early help provision and it is difficult to evidence current effect early help has/will have on safeguarding. Further progress is expected once planned early help work in the authorities has progressed.

There was an overwhelming view that early help does play a crucial part in affecting safeguarding activity or will more so in time, as one authority stated: *“A recent audit found that one third of cases referred to Social Care would have been diverted if services intervened earlier”*.

Ten respondents reported having early help in place which is showing evidence of success. Outcomes vary, from a long term benefit of improving partnership working, to reducing numbers of referrals. Three respondents however reported an increase in referrals and safeguarding activity as a result of implementing early help services – earlier identification of unmet need and development of early help services has heightened awareness of child protection issues and thresholds.

An Eastern Region authority stated: “Our numbers of children subject to CP plan, Care proceedings and our LAC population continue to reduce (in line with our plans). This is as a result of the success of our early help and prevention strategies. Well embedded partnership working, a mature and well understood CAF processes and thresholds as part of a staged model of intervention have been key. Joint working as part of this model has allowed the partnership to identify gaps in provision and to jointly plan and realign resources to tackle these. The maturity of staged model supports smooth transitions for families as they move both up and down the stages”.

Five respondents have early help services in place which are being evaluated as to their outcomes and some made comment about the need to ensure early help programmes are evidence based.

“We have established an intensive intervention service for children and young people (aged 11-17) living with their families but on the edge of care. We are currently procuring a Multi-Systemic Therapy project funded on a payment by results basis through a Social Impact Bond. This is a pioneering model of delivery which will be closely monitored and evaluated”.

“We have an ‘alternatives to care’ team and are developing a model based on Functional Family Therapy which will target troubled adolescents and attempt to work with them within their families. We have developed a joint service with our housing department to better manage demand arising from the Southwark Judgement in relation to 16 and 17 year olds”.

“Multi-agency locality teams and the interface with our revised ‘front door’ to services, the Triage and Assessment Team.”

“Targeting fourth criteria for troubled families and children on the edge of care, our ‘parents under pressure’ model is used to assess the impact on reducing numbers of LAC and introducing a new intensive model combining short break and clinical psychology with the family. This model has been very successful for prevention of children with severe disabilities needing residential care and is being extended to LAC.”

8.5 Organisational Factors Affecting Safeguarding

The level of organisational change reported in local authorities is significant. Nine stated the government funding cuts were a major driver for re-organisation.

16 respondents had undergone internal organisational change and restructure with mixed descriptions of the effect from an 'unsettling initial effect' to very positive. Types of reorganisation range from joint adults/children's/other directorates or other significant restructuring to reshape how social work is lead and delivered, including contracting out services and becoming a 'commissioning authority'. Shared services and integration were cited as a focus within reorganisation with longer term advantages. 15 authorities said they were restructuring the front door or implementing children's hubs/practices (akin to GP practices) such as MASH, multi-agency triage, integrated approach to troubled families and early help. For some, it was too early to say what the longer term effects of organisational changes will have on outcomes for children and young people.

Respondents reported that partner agencies, especially health and police, are also experiencing significant reforms and budgetary pressures but there remained a strong commitment at individual level to working together to safeguard children and good partnership working reported by authorities, although four commented on high health visiting caseloads, one authority reported difficulty recruiting senior health staff to designated/named roles, and a concern was expressed by one authority about future funding contributions by partners to the LSCB.

20 authorities reported uncertainly, confusion and concern in relation to health reforms. There was, however, recognition that despite the changes, good relationships are safeguarding children and safeguarding remains a priority.

In other children's services, cuts and changes to youth services, targeted services such as educational support and educational psychology, schools (including emergence of more academies) were reported to impact (either positively or negatively) on safeguarding.

8.6 The Impact of Policy and Key Changes

Local authorities were asked what impact national and local policy changes, including those currently being planned, have on safeguarding activity and achieving appropriate permanence for children and young people. There were very mixed responses with an overarching view that it is difficult to predict the overall effect of the considerable number of changes and the national and local policy context is complex in terms of inter-dependencies and potential for unintended consequences. As one authority stated *"the national policy picture seems confused and fragmented"*.

The two changes most frequently cited by respondent were the Family Justice Review, which was largely welcomed by authorities as having a positive impact, although some commented that it could put additional pressures on social work staff as it is more resource intensive. Secondly, new adoption regulations and targets will have a significant impact on capacity, but which will improve outcomes.

The national policy and legislative changes described in Section 5 were all felt to have an impact on safeguarding, with a mix of positive and negative impacts described.

8.7 Direction of Travel

57 (67%) responding authorities believe that the trajectory for quantity of safeguarding activity and the numbers of looked after children will continue to increase. 19 (22%) felt the numbers would level or reduce and nine authorities didn't comment. Some felt there would be an increase in the number of child protection plans in the future, but a decrease in the number of looked after children.

Those who foresee a continued rise, provide reasons such as a continued rise in complexity of cases, continued increases in population and inward migration and the continuation of the recession, exacerbated by welfare reforms. The impact of welfare benefit changes was cited by one authority as a potential cause for increased child poverty and domestic abuse.

In terms of internal factors, some felt a rise for two years or so would be apparent whilst early help services are embedded and effects begin to be felt, but there was also concern about the effect of funding reductions and, as one authority put it *“projected continued rise will be tougher on already stretched budgets and will be exacerbated by other emerging needs – e.g. elderly frail people in the community.”*

A downward trajectory would be because of a greater focus on permanency planning and moving looked after children on more quickly, recruitment of adopters and new legislation around adoption. Some of those predicting a fall in numbers of children subjects of child protection plans and children looked after reported increased early help services and robust children in need plans.

9 Considerations and Challenges

Some of the considerations and challenges expressed in Phase 2 remain equally relevant. Changes in performance indicators, statutory data collections and especially financial returns mean that obtaining trend data so often essential for measuring and forecasting demand, and for improving services, is more difficult. Data and research relating to safeguarding and permanence is, and will continue to be, provided by a number of organisations both nationally and regionally. Awareness of these as part of the evidence continuum provides a more robust base from which to effect change.

One of the more recent publications from CAFCASS (CAFCASS, 2012) reports that the number of care applications has increased by 61.6% and that whilst the pattern is not uniform, there has been an increase in the number of care applications made by local authorities every year since 2008/09.

DfE's Adoption and Special Guardianship England Data Pack (DfE, 2011e) states: *"Children leaving care through adoption or special guardianship or residence orders are more likely to have entered care due to abuse or neglect than the overall LAC populations"*. Furthermore, the data indicates that longer placement times are especially apparent for: black children (not mixed ethnicity); older children; children adopted by a sole adopter; London local authorities.

A research question posed as part of Phase 3, albeit a secondary and smaller part, is to identify if change in safeguarding activity in England is a national, or an international phenomenon (i.e. are other countries facing the same safeguarding pressures resulting in an increase in child protection and children looked after).

Analysis from a number of western countries together with a literature search has highlighted that there are inherent difficulties in comparing data. Between countries, there are differences in the understanding of the term child abuse, together with differences in the legislation, processes and data that is reported. (Munro *et al* 2011a, Munro *et al* 2011b, Gilbert *et al* 2012). We do know from latest available statistics that other countries (USA, Australia, Northern Ireland and Wales) have all seen increases in child protection activity, but that Scotland hasn't.

The evidence in this Phase 3 research is from a substantial base of 115 local authorities, together with other data and sources of evidence used to triangulate findings and provide a clear as picture as possible of the safeguarding pressures facing local authorities and their partner agencies at present, and the difference from two and five years ago. However, apart from the permanence sample, the data is largely aggregated, single datasets without the ability to 'drill down'.

This research is very much ‘information’ based and does not set out to make any judgments about practice or policy. It includes analysis of ‘how many’ children and in some part their characteristics, using universally used variables such as primary need codes, end reasons, age band and so on, to try and identify reasons for any change in numbers. A limitation of the research is therefore that it is high level, aggregated data, and does not provide the rich drill down into smaller cohorts, or compare datasets and more qualitative information about the journey of the child, and more importantly, what their outcomes are. The evidence provided describes part of the journey of groups of children collectively, not whether it has been a good journey.

Debbie Jones, in the ADCS annual report 2011/12 (ADCS, 2012a) states that *“we must constantly remind ourselves, each other and the wider policy-making world that each individual child has a range of needs and many will come into contact with more than one part of the system throughout their childhoods. That experience should be coherent, consistent and well navigated by the professionals leading at every stage. This means designing and delivering policy initiatives that are child-centred, joined up and understood by the workforce who will implement them”*.

Notwithstanding that, the evidence presented here targets strategic managers, policy makers and leaders not just in children’s services but everyone who touches the lives of these children to understand that now more than ever, the myriad of factors which have, are, and will emerge, will affect the child, their family and the services they are provided with. Areas identified from this research which may merit further enquiry are provided in Appendix C.

10 Conclusion

Views and experiences from local authorities together with analysis of the data have provided evidence of a continued, though not universal, rise in safeguarding activity nationally and also internationally. Some authorities are beginning to see a decrease in numbers of referrals, children subjects of child protection plans and children looked after, whilst others face a steeper increase, which does not appear to be linked to any one reason but rather a composite of many factors which are social, economic and demographic, and which appear to be getting more acute and more prevalent.

“Social work teams are experiencing increased demand for services and support. The council have been committed to maintaining investment in early help tier of services and in particular around Multi Agency Locality Teams and Children's Centres who are currently 'stemming the flow'. But as the local population increases, without additional funding we will be unable to maintain this level of delivery”

- Respondent

There has been a significant increase in child population and reports of migration to areas of cheaper housing. Changes are also occurring following the implementation of changes to housing benefit; this will probably continue next year with the introduction of Universal Credit and the changes to Council Tax benefit; and the impact of the changes to remand, specifically the conferment of looked after status to young people on custodial remand, it is difficult at this juncture, to foresee what all of these changes will make to the demography of certain areas.

Predictions of factors affecting safeguarding activity made in Phase 2 are clearly borne out by the evidence presented here: *“Many of the reasons for the increase in the volume of safeguarding activity over the past two years will continue: the effects of the Southwark Judgement; increased public and professional awareness and improved multi-agency training; and better awareness of complex cases where parental factors are affecting the children such as domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental health”*.

As one authority stated that: *“the more you look, the more you find” syndrome is positive for the population in identifying their needs but the resource to meet those needs remains static and therefore stretched. In some respects early help has uncovered concerns which already existed and this is further compounded by awareness raising around specific subjects such as child sexual exploitation or domestic abuse.*

-Respondent

The authorities which have seen a reduction in their safeguarding activity, through implementation of effective early help services, implementation of different strategies to manage child protection, or work with children on the edge of care, are committed to sharing these with others, and do so through various methods.

There are an equal, and growing, number of children leaving care to permanence through Special Guardianship and Residence Orders to those leaving care through Adoption. In general, children who leave care through SGO and RO spend less time in care than those who are adopted, and there are characteristics of individual children which might influence their journey towards permanence, such as disability, or being part of a sibling group. The data clearly demonstrates the relationship between key intervals in the adoption process and length of time in care, and associated ‘tipping’ points beyond which more children are likely to spend longer in care.

The graph below re-emphasises the rise in SGOs and ROs as a viable route to permanence.

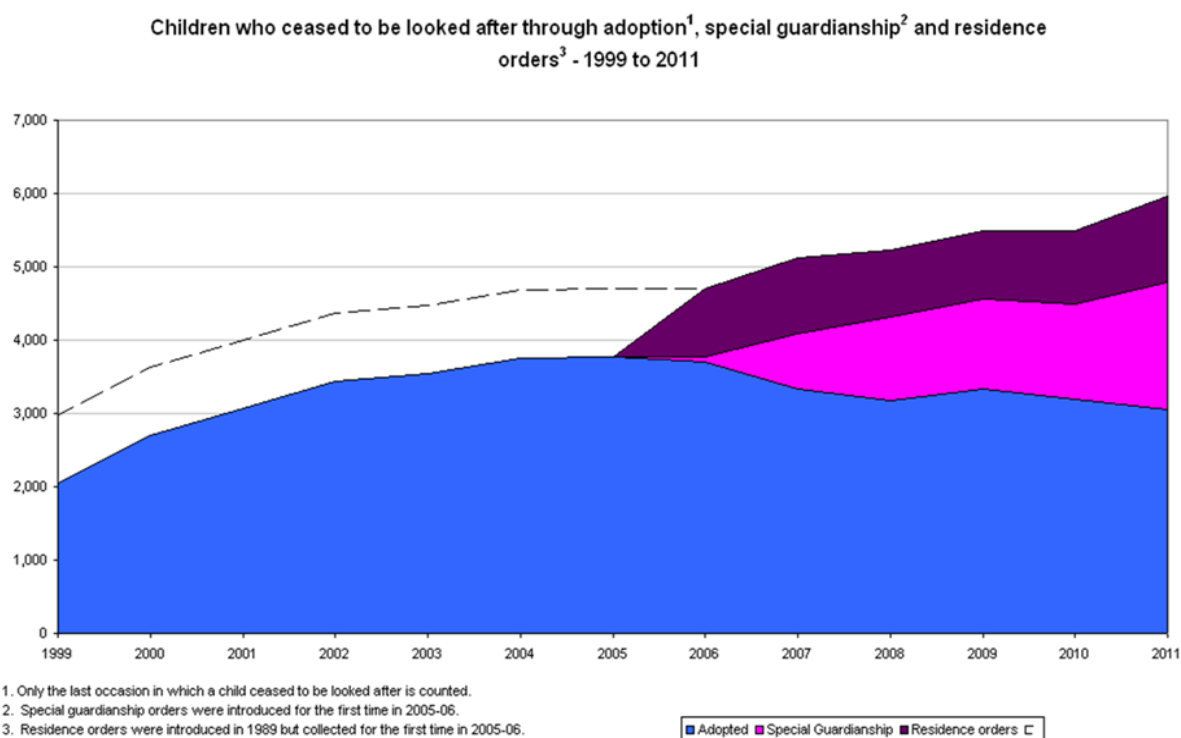


Figure 75: children who ceased to be looked after through adoption, special guardianship and residence orders. Source: DfE Adoption and special guardianship England data pack, May 2012

The backdrop to planning and delivery of children’s services is both busy and in a state of flux. The C4EO report *The Emerging Priorities facing children’s services* (C4EO, 2012) refers to Debbie Jones presidential speech which opened the ADCS annual conference in July, where she stressed the importance of being on the front foot, particularly with regard to children in care reforms and school reform. C4EO’s report states that *“these appear to be two of the strongest agendas which continue to challenge LAs, and the consequence of these reforms will be felt far into the future, in all likelihood whatever changes that any new government will make. In addition to the significant reforms themselves, the ‘ripple effect’, i.e. the impact of other services and consequences of the reforms, will be additional challenges for DCSs and children’s services at any level to try and foresee and address.”*

Given the inter-dependencies of the impact of local and national policy changes and early help to reduce the numbers of children subject of child protection plans and looked after children, the business of forecasting how such numbers may change becomes ever more complex.

A timeline overleaf maps influential events and activities against a summary of five year safeguarding activity, to illustrate the complex landscape against which this is set.

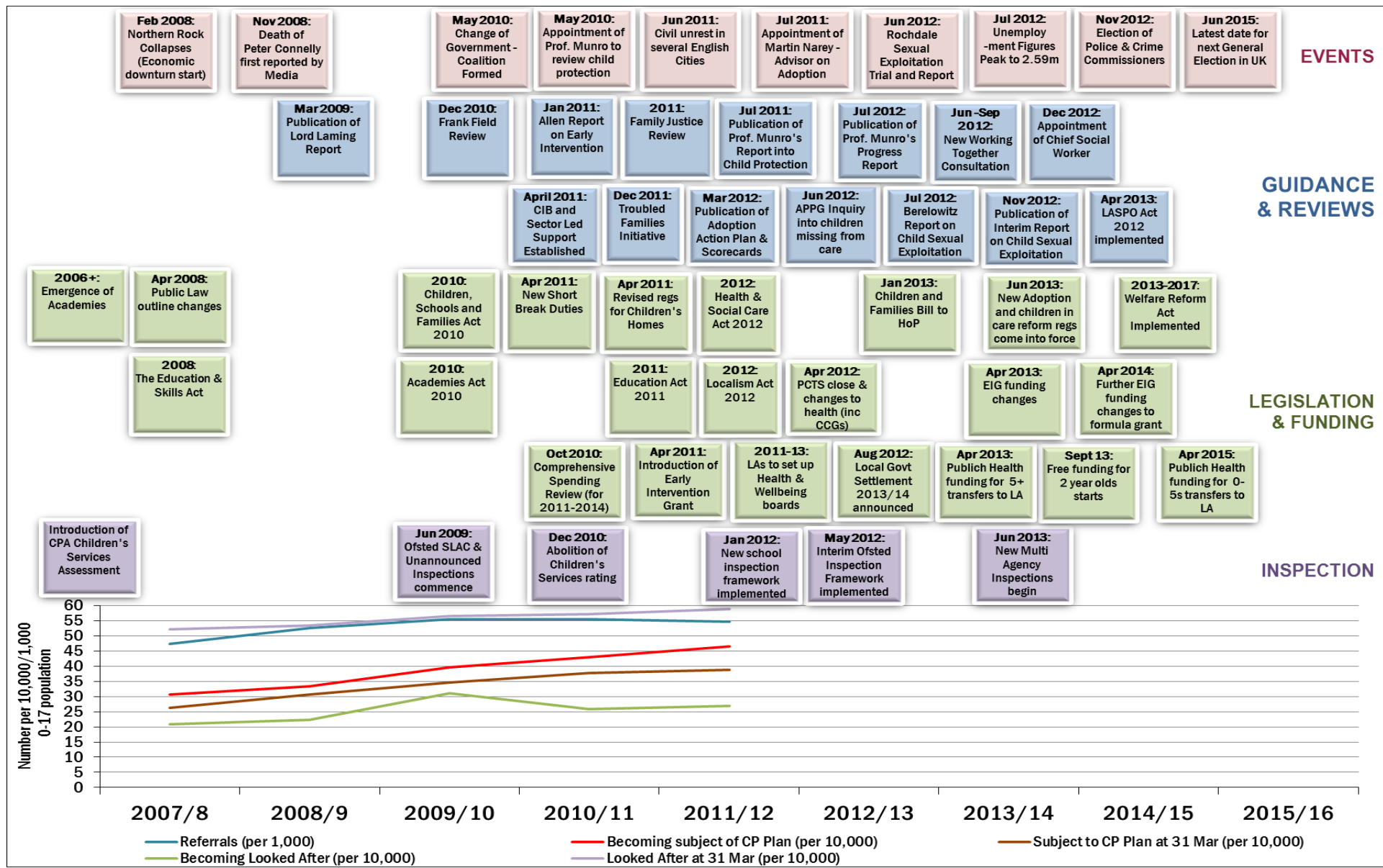


Figure 76: Timeline - Mapping Key Dates Against Safeguarding Activity

Note: There are other key dates that have not been included here. Key Dates may not match exactly to the timeline at the bottom

Many respondents cite the challenge of budgeting that balances continuing social care services in response to increased demand and implementing effective early help services as one of their biggest challenges, with a recognition that once effective early help services are implemented, they will start to see a reduction in referrals, children subjects of child protection plans and looked after, but after a potential rise as cases of unmet need are identified. In the meantime, the costs of providing for the increased safeguarding activity including high cost provision such as secure welfare placements; transport and contact; legal fees for the increase in care proceedings and human resources required to ensure children are protected, are likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

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APPENDIX A: Population Estimates and Indices of Deprivation by LA

Local Authority	REGION	LA TYPE	2010 POP	2011 POP	CHANGE	2010 IDACI
Brent	Outer London	London Borough	59100	70500	19.29%	39.3
Slough	South East	Unitary	31700	37400	17.98%	26.7
Haringey	Inner London	London Borough	49800	57600	15.66%	45.3
Newham	Inner London	London Borough	68000	78100	14.85%	47.8
Greenwich	Outer London	London Borough	54200	61500	13.47%	36.3
Manchester	North West	Metropolitan	95900	108500	13.14%	43.4
Ealing	Outer London	London Borough	68500	76800	12.12%	32.5
Nottingham City	East Midlands	Unitary	56000	62500	11.61%	39.2
Hounslow	Outer London	London Borough	51800	57600	11.20%	30.7
Portsmouth	South East	Unitary	38300	42500	10.97%	26.5
Leicester City	East Midlands	Unitary	70200	77800	10.83%	36.7
Waltham Forest	Outer London	London Borough	55600	61600	10.79%	38.0
Reading	South East	Unitary	30200	33400	10.60%	23.2
Lambeth	Inner London	London Borough	54700	60400	10.42%	39.3
Croydon	Outer London	London Borough	81300	89200	9.72%	27.6
Bristol, City of	South West	Unitary	80500	87600	8.82%	28.5
Enfield	Outer London	London Borough	72600	78900	8.68%	39.9
Salford	North West	Metropolitan	47000	50800	8.09%	32.3
Barking and Dagenham	Outer London	London Borough	49800	53800	8.03%	40.4
Hackney	Inner London	London Borough	52300	56500	8.03%	47.8
Birmingham	West Midlands	Metropolitan	254200	274400	7.95%	37.4
Harrow	Outer London	London Borough	50800	54800	7.87%	24.4
Bournemouth	South West	Unitary	29500	31800	7.80%	22.0
Southampton	South East	Unitary	42900	46200	7.69%	28.9
Sheffield	Yorks & The Humber	Metropolitan	105200	113200	7.60%	25.6
Peterborough	East of England	Unitary	40900	44000	7.58%	27.2
Redbridge	Outer London	London Borough	66100	71000	7.41%	29.0
Wandsworth	Inner London	London Borough	52000	55800	7.31%	28.3
Derby	East Midlands	Unitary	53200	57000	7.14%	26.6
Sandwell	West Midlands	Metropolitan	69800	74600	6.88%	33.1
Brighton and Hove	South East	Unitary	46700	49900	6.85%	23.2
Trafford	North West	Metropolitan	48500	51800	6.80%	16.1
Luton	East of England	Unitary	49000	52300	6.73%	30.3
Wolverhampton	West Midlands	Metropolitan	52700	56200	6.64%	33.5
Lewisham	Inner London	London Borough	59700	63600	6.53%	35.9
Tower Hamlets	Inner London	London Borough	52100	55400	6.33%	59.0
Southwark	Inner London	London Borough	55500	59000	6.31%	36.6
Southend-on-Sea	East of England	Unitary	35200	37400	6.25%	24.8
Milton Keynes	South East	Unitary	58400	62000	6.16%	20.6
Bradford	Yorks & The Humber	Metropolitan	129000	136600	5.89%	29.5
Swindon	South West	Unitary	44200	46600	5.43%	17.4
Hillingdon	Outer London	London Borough	61100	64400	5.40%	26.4
Gateshead	North East	Metropolitan	38300	40300	5.22%	25.8
Stoke-on-Trent	West Midlands	Unitary	51800	54500	5.21%	31.3
Darlington	North East	Unitary	21800	22900	5.05%	22.5
Liverpool	North West	Metropolitan	84700	88800	4.84%	37.7
Barnet	Outer London	London Borough	79400	83200	4.79%	23.2
Islington	Inner London	London Borough	34700	36300	4.61%	48.6
Newcastle upon Tyne	North East	Metropolitan	51700	54000	4.45%	32.5
Walsall	West Midlands	Metropolitan	60700	63300	4.28%	30.1
Bexley	Outer London	London Borough	52200	54200	3.83%	19.7
North Lincolnshire	Yorks & The Humber	Unitary	34200	35500	3.80%	20.7
Thurrock	East of England	Unitary	37100	38500	3.77%	21.3
Doncaster	Yorks & The Humber	Metropolitan	62900	65200	3.66%	24.4
York	Yorks & The Humber	Unitary	34700	35900	3.46%	13.6
Medway	South East	Unitary	59000	61000	3.39%	21.6
Halton	North West	Unitary	27300	28200	3.30%	27.4
Oldham	North West	Metropolitan	54800	56600	3.28%	30.2
Dudley	West Midlands	Metropolitan	65600	67700	3.20%	23.1
Kirklees	Yorks & The Humber	Metropolitan	94000	96900	3.09%	21.8
Coventry	West Midlands	Metropolitan	68500	70600	3.07%	28.5
Rochdale	North West	Metropolitan	49200	50700	3.05%	29.6

Local Authority	REGION	LA TYPE	2010 POP	2011 POP	CHANGE	2010 IDACI
Kent	South East	Shire	313500	322700	2.93%	17.8
Telford and Wrekin	West Midlands	Unitary	37800	38900	2.91%	25.4
Plymouth	South West	Unitary	49500	50900	2.83%	23.2
Kingston upon Hull, City of	Yorks & The Humber	Unitary	53200	54700	2.82%	34.1
Wigan	North West	Metropolitan	66100	67900	2.72%	20.0
Bolton	North West	Metropolitan	62900	64600	2.70%	25.2
Poole	South West	Unitary	28500	29200	2.46%	18.0
Leeds	Yorks & The Humber	Metropolitan	151500	154900	2.24%	22.5
Nottinghamshire	East Midlands	Shire	158700	162100	2.14%	17.4
Northumberland	North East	Unitary	60100	61300	2.00%	18.5
South Gloucestershire	South West	Unitary	55900	57000	1.97%	11.7
Hammersmith and Fulham	Inner London	London Borough	32000	32600	1.88%	35.7
Shropshire	West Midlands	Unitary	60000	61100	1.83%	13.2
Hertfordshire	East of England	Shire	248900	253400	1.81%	13.6
Staffordshire	West Midlands	Shire	168300	171300	1.78%	14.9
Wiltshire	South West	Unitary	101800	103600	1.77%	11.5
Hampshire	South East	Shire	275600	280200	1.67%	12.1
Warrington	North West	Unitary	43300	44000	1.62%	14.4
Norfolk	East of England	Shire	162600	165100	1.54%	18.3
North Tyneside	North East	Metropolitan	39700	40300	1.51%	21.1
Cambridgeshire	East of England	Shire	125800	127700	1.51%	12.6
Middlesbrough	North East	Unitary	31400	31800	1.27%	35.3
Stockport	North West	Metropolitan	59900	60600	1.17%	15.8
Merton	Outer London	London Borough	42900	43400	1.17%	20.5
Leicestershire	East Midlands	Shire	132400	133900	1.13%	11.3
Herefordshire	West Midlands	Unitary	35500	35900	1.13%	14.6
Rotherham	Yorks & The Humber	Metropolitan	55500	56100	1.08%	23.4
Wirral	North West	Metropolitan	66900	67600	1.05%	25.5
Northamptonshire	East Midlands	Shire	154400	156000	1.04%	16.3
Suffolk	East of England	Shire	149800	151200	0.93%	14.7
Westminster	Inner London	London Borough	35800	36100	0.84%	35.2
Tameside	North West	Metropolitan	48100	48500	0.83%	24.9
Barnsley	Yorks & The Humber	Metropolitan	48400	48800	0.83%	24.1
Surrey	South East	Shire	245700	247000	0.53%	10.0
Blackburn with Darwen	North West	Unitary	38400	38600	0.52%	29.8
East Sussex	South East	Shire	104000	104300	0.29%	18.1
Bedford Borough	East of England	Unitary	35700	35800	0.28%	20.2
Warwickshire	West Midlands	Shire	111500	111800	0.27%	13.9
Solihull	West Midlands	Metropolitan	44900	45000	0.22%	15.9
Buckinghamshire	South East	Shire	115400	115500	0.09%	10.4
Derbyshire	East Midlands	Shire	156400	156500	0.06%	16.6
North East Lincolnshire	Yorks & The Humber	Unitary	34300	34300	0.00%	27.5
Wakefield	Yorks & The Humber	Metropolitan	68400	68400	0.00%	21.9
Havering	Outer London	London Borough	51000	51000	0.00%	19.1
Isles of Scilly	South West	Unitary	400	400	0.00%	2.7
Cheshire East	North West	Unitary	75000	74900	-0.13%	12.2
Oxfordshire	South East	Shire	138200	138000	-0.14%	12.2
Stockton-on-Tees	North East	Unitary	42400	42300	-0.24%	21.8
Bury	North West	Metropolitan	42100	42000	-0.24%	18.7
Worcestershire	West Midlands	Shire	115000	114700	-0.26%	15.2
Bromley	Outer London	London Borough	68900	68700	-0.29%	17.5
Central Beds	East of England	Unitary	56600	56400	-0.35%	12.5
Isle of Wight	South East	Unitary	26200	26100	-0.38%	20.8
Hartlepool	North East	Unitary	20500	20400	-0.49%	30.1
North Yorkshire	Yorks & The Humber	Shire	119400	118700	-0.59%	11.6
Kingston upon Thames	Outer London	London Borough	34100	33900	-0.59%	15.1
Durham	North East	Unitary	100700	100100	-0.60%	23.0
West Sussex	South East	Shire	165400	164400	-0.60%	13.2
Essex	East of England	Shire	297500	295600	-0.64%	16.5
Calderdale	Yorks & The Humber	Metropolitan	45600	45300	-0.66%	21.2
Lancashire	North West	Shire	245400	243200	-0.90%	18.8
Lincolnshire	East Midlands	Shire	140600	139300	-0.92%	16.9
Sefton	North West	Metropolitan	54800	54200	-1.09%	20.4
Bath & North East Somerset	South West	Unitary	34100	33700	-1.17%	12.7
Cumbria	North West	Shire	96700	95500	-1.24%	15.9
Gloucestershire	South West	Shire	123800	122200	-1.29%	14.7

Local Authority	REGION	LA TYPE	2010 POP	2011 POP	CHANGE	2010 IDACI
Cornwall	South West	Unitary	104000	102600	-1.35%	18.8
Blackpool	North West	Unitary	29300	28900	-1.37%	31.2
Wokingham	South East	Unitary	36100	35600	-1.39%	6.6
East Riding of Yorkshire	Yorks & The Humber	Unitary	64900	64000	-1.39%	12.3
Camden	Inner London	London Borough	39600	39000	-1.52%	36.3
Sutton	Outer London	London Borough	43900	43200	-1.59%	17.2
Somerset	South West	Shire	110600	108800	-1.63%	14.6
South Tyneside	North East	Metropolitan	30100	29600	-1.66%	27.8
Devon	South West	Shire	143100	140600	-1.75%	14.6
Torbay	South West	Unitary	25300	24800	-1.98%	24.6
Sunderland	North East	Metropolitan	56000	54800	-2.14%	26.3
Bracknell Forest	South East	Unitary	27200	26600	-2.21%	10.6
Cheshire West & Chester	North West	Unitary	67400	65900	-2.23%	16.3
Redcar and Cleveland	North East	Unitary	28400	27700	-2.46%	25.9
Knowsley	North West	Metropolitan	33600	32700	-2.68%	34.7
Richmond upon Thames	Outer London	London Borough	41900	40700	-2.86%	10.5
Windsor and Maidenhead	South East	Unitary	33700	32600	-3.26%	9.1
Dorset	South West	Shire	80200	77500	-3.37%	13.0
St Helens	North West	Metropolitan	37700	36400	-3.45%	25.3
North Somerset	South West	Unitary	43000	41500	-3.49%	14.3
West Berkshire	South East	Unitary	36700	35400	-3.54%	10.4
Kensington and Chelsea	Inner London	London Borough	29900	26700	-10.70%	19.7
Rutland	East Midlands	Unitary	9100	8000	-12.09%	6.4
City of London	Inner London	London Borough	900	700	-22.22%	13.3

APPENDIX B: Data Collection Form

ADCS SAFEGUARDING PRESSURES NATIONAL RESEARCH: PHASE 3 - SAFEGUARDING PRESSURES AND PERMANENCE

In September 2010, the ADCS published 'safeguarding pressures' - research from 87 LAs evidencing increases in safeguarding activity and exploring hypothesis behind the increase. The full report together with the ADCS policy commentary can be found at:

<http://www.adcs.org.uk/news/safeguarding-pressures.html>

In this next phase of work, ADCS will be updating the research undertaken in Phases 1 and 2 following reported continued rises in some areas and providing a new focus on all forms of permanence to evidence:

- a) to what extent the trend of an increase in safeguarding activity has continued in England; what changes have there been in the past two years and what are the reasons for the change;
- b) is the increase a national, or an international phenomenon (i.e. are other countries facing the same safeguarding pressures resulting in an increase in child protection and children looked after);
- c) analysis of the different permanency routes for children looked after.

Key principles of the project are:

- to keep the amount of information being requested of LAs as proportionate as possible;
- ensure synergy and avoid overlap with other research and projects which have/are being undertaken on this topic.

As much of the quantitative data as possible will be taken from existing sources such as DfE returns, and we apologise that we are not able to take this directly from the DfE for 2011/12. Your assistance in providing this data and your views and experiences, to achieve a national picture would be appreciated.

This research is conducted in two parts. The first is a request for two documents listed below, but you may only wish to answer some of the questions or provide some of this information. That is acceptable, as part responses will still be appreciated and fully utilised. The second part is a request for those LAs who would be willing to provide anonymised child level data to allow the analysis of different permanency routes for children looked after. If you would be happy to provide this, please email Carole Brooks on the email address below to confirm your consent and to arrange submission.

PART 1:

- **ADCS Phase 3 Data Collection Form** (this excel workbook).
 - Section 1** - Children's social care data. Contacts, referrals, child protection and looked after children data from the 903 and CIN Census, together with finance information.
 - Section 2** - Qualitative questions for a strategic manager or DCS within your LA to answer, providing your experiences and views.
- **Ofsted Adoption Quality Assurance and Data** (also known as Adoption Agencies Dataset). Please send us a copy of your LAs Ofsted adoption agencies dataset, which was due for return to them by 30th June 2012.

PART 2:

- **Anonymised Permanence Data** provided by those authorities who are happy to share this data, to allow us to analyse permanency processes and outcomes.

We will again provide you with a copy of the full report and share excel workbooks for benchmarking with you. We understand that local authorities would like all data to assist in benchmarking with statistical neighbours. We will be happy to share a workbook of individual authority data with national/regional analysis, if you give consent for us to share your LA data.

Brief guidance notes for completion where appropriate have been provided in this workbook, but if there is anything you are unsure of, or you would like to discuss the project in more detail, please do contact Carole Brooks (lead researcher) on the email below.

Thank you,

Please return your responses by **15th August 2012** to:

carole.brooks@adcs.org.uk

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT YOU DO NOT HAVE TO SUPPLY ALL THE INFORMATION IF YOU ARE NOT ABLE TO, AND PART RETURNS ARE ACCEPTABLE AND WILL BE USED.

If you have any queries about the data collection, please send Carole an email with your contact telephone number and she or a member of the team will respond to you promptly.

**ADCS SAFEGUARDING PRESSURES NATIONAL RESEARCH: PHASE 3
- SAFEGUARDING PRESSURES AND PERMANENCE**

YOUR DETAILS

NAME OF LOCAL AUTHORITY:

CONTACT NAME:

JOB TITLE:

TELEPHONE:

EMAIL:

I give permission for this information to be shared with other authorities, naming my LA.

YES / NO

I will be participating in Part 2 of the research and returning the anonymised child level data form.

YES / NO

Finally, would you be prepared to have a 30 minute telephone interview with the researchers to share your experiences and views about changes in safeguarding activity and all forms of permanence for children looked after, in more detail, if required?

YES / NO

**ADCS SAFEGUARDING PRESSURES NATIONAL RESEARCH: PHASE 3
- SAFEGUARDING PRESSURES AND PERMANENCE**

SECTION ONE: CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE DATA

We would like to make it as easy as possible for you to provide the information required and have kept to statutory return information as much as possible - if you would prefer, please do substitute the categories in questions 1 and 2 with your own existing categories that you use. You may wish to add this as a new worksheet.

CONTACTS AND REFERRALS

1 Initial contacts received in the period - number by source <i>(please use your own categories instead of these if easier)</i>	2010/11	2011/12
Education		
Police		
Health		
Parent/Carer/Family Member/child or young person		
All Other		
2 Referrals received in the period - number by source <i>(Please use your own categories instead of these if easier)</i>	2010/11	2011/12
Education		
Police		
Health		
Parent/Carer/Family Member/child or young person		
All Other		
3 Referrals received in the period - number by Primary Need Code <i>(CIN Census data module 3)</i>	2010/11	2011/12
Abuse or neglect (N1)		
Child's disability or illness (N2)		
Parental disability or illness (N3)		
Family in acute stress (N4)		
Family dysfunction (N5)		
Socially unacceptable behaviour (N6)		
Low income (N7)		
Absent parenting (N8)		
Cases other than Children in Need (N9)		
Not stated (N0)		

CHILD PROTECTION PLANS

4 Number of child protection plans <u>starting</u> during the year, by category of abuse <i>(CIN Census data module 4)</i>	2010/11	2011/12
Neglect		
Physical Abuse		
Sexual Abuse		
Emotional Abuse		
Multiple/Not Recommended		
5 Number of child protection plans <u>starting</u> by age band <i>(CIN Census data module 4)</i>	2010/11	2011/12
Under 1		
1 to 4		
5 to 9		
10 to 15		
16 and over		
6 Number of children subject to a child protection plan at <u>31st March</u>, by category of abuse <i>(CIN Census data module 4)</i>	2010/11	2011/12
Neglect		
Physical Abuse		
Sexual Abuse		
Emotional Abuse		
Multiple/Not Recommended		

7 Number of children subject to a child protection plan at 31st March , by age (CIN Census data module 4)	2010/11	2011/12
Under 1		
1 to 4		
5 to 9		
10 to 15		
16 and over		
CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER (SSDA903 data)		
Question 8 below asks for numbers of children looked after by legal status including respite codes (V3 and V4) . This is the only question where you should include children receiving respite. All other questions (9 onwards) relate to looked after children excluding those receiving respite (legal status codes V3 and V4).		
8 Number of children looked after at 31st March by legal status	2010/11	2011/12
Interim care order (C1)		
Full care order (C2)		
Freeing order granted (D1)		
Placement order granted (E1)		
Single period of accommodation under section 20 (V2)		
Accommodated under an agreed series of short-term breaks, when individual episodes of care are recorded (V3)		
Accommodated under an agreed series of short-term breaks, when agreements are recorded (i.e. NOT individual episodes of care) (V4)		
Under police protection and in local authority accommodation (L1)		
Emergency protection order (L2)		
Under child assessment order and in local authority accommodation (L3)		
On remand, or committed for trial or sentence, and accommodated by LA (J1)		
Detained in LA accommodation under PACE (J2)		
Sentenced to CYPA 1969 supervision order with residence requirement (J3)		
ALL NUMBERS OF CHILDREN IN THE QUESTIONS BELOW SHOULD BE EXCLUDING RESPITE (LEGAL STATUS V3 AND V4)		
9 Number of children looked after at 31st March by placement type	2010/11	2011/12
Placed for adoption with parental/guardian consent with current foster carer or with a freeing order where parental/guardian consent has been given (A3)		
Placed for adoption with parental/guardian consent not with current foster carer or with a freeing order where parental/guardian consent has been given (A4)		
Placed for adoption with placement order with current foster carer or with a freeing order where parental/guardian consent was dispensed with (A5)		
Placed for adoption with placement order not with current foster carer or with a freeing order where parental/guardian consent was dispensed with (A6)		
Residential accommodation not subject to Children's homes regulations (H5)		
Secure unit (K1)		
Children's Homes (K2)		
In Refuge (section 51 of Children Act) (M1)		
Whereabouts known (not in Refuge) (M2)		
Whereabouts unknown (M3)		
Placed with own parents or other person with parental responsibility (P1)		
Independent living with or without formal support (P2)		
Residential employment (P3)		
Foster placement with relative or friend (Q1)		
Placement with other foster carer (Q2)		
Residential care home (R1)		
NHS/Health Trust or other establishment providing medical or nursing care (R2)		
Family centre or mother and baby unit (R3)		
Young Offender Institution or prison (R5)		
All Residential schools, except where dual-registered as a school and children's home. (S1)		
All types of temporary move (see paragraph above for further details) (T0)		
Temporary periods in hospital (T1)		
Temporary absences of the child on holiday (T2)		
Temporary accommodation whilst normal foster carer is on holiday (T3)		
Temporary accommodation of 7 days or less not covered by codes T1-T3 (T4)		
Other placements (Z1)		

10 Number of children looked after at 31st March by primary need code	2010/11	2011/12
Abuse or neglect (N1)		
Child's disability or illness (N2)		
Parental disability or illness (N3)		
Family in acute stress (N4)		
Family dysfunction (N5)		
Socially unacceptable behaviour (N6)		
Low income (N7)		
Absent parenting (N8)		
Cases other than Children in Need (N9)		
Not stated (N0)		
11 Number of children looked after at 31st March by age band	2010/11	2011/12
Under 1		
1 to 4		
5 to 9		
10 to 15		
16 and over		
12 Number of children looked after at 31st March by Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking (UASC) status (SSDA903 guidance 2.5)	2010/11	2011/12
UASC (code 1 on SSDA 903)		
13 Number of children looked after at 31st March by type of plan	2010/11	2011/12
<i>We know that many LAs will not be able to answer this question without a considerable amount of work, depending on your current children's social care system. We would be grateful for those LAs who can easily provide it to do so, as it will provide part of the evidence base, but please do feel free to leave this question blank if you don't readily have this data.</i>		
Remain with family through provision of support (applies to LAC placed with parents)		
Return to birth family		
Long term foster care		
Adoption		
Live with relatives/friends		
Independent living/supported living in the community		
Residential		
Unknown		
Other		
14 Stability of placements	2010/11	2011/12
Number of looked after children looked after continuously for 2.5 years		
Of which: number living in same placement for at least 2 years		
15 Number of children starting to be looked after in the year by primary need code	2010/11	2011/12
Abuse or neglect (N1)		
Child's disability or illness (N2)		
Parental disability or illness (N3)		
Family in acute stress (N4)		
Family dysfunction (N5)		
Socially unacceptable behaviour (N6)		
Low income (N7)		
Absent parenting (N8)		
Cases other than Children in Need (N9)		
Not stated (N0)		
16 Number of children starting to be looked after by age band	2010/11	2011/12
Under 1		
1 to 4		
5 to 9		
10 to 15		
16 and over		

17 Number of children <u>ceasing</u> to be looked after by age band	2010/11	2011/12		
Under 1				
1 to 4				
5 to 9				
10 to 15				
16 and over				
18 Number of children <u>ceasing</u> to be looked after by reason (SSDA903 XML Schema "REC")	2010/11	2011/12		
Died (E2)				
Care taken over by another LA in the UK (E3)				
Returned home to live with parents, relatives, or other person with parental responsibility (not under a residence order or special guardianship order) (E4)				
Moved into independent living arrangement and no longer looked after: supportive accommodation providing formalised advice/support arrangements (E5)				
Moved into independent living arrangement - no longer looked after: accommodation providing no formalised advice/support arrangements (E6)				
Transferred to residential care funded by adult social services (E7)				
Period of being looked after ceased for any other reason (E8)				
Sentenced to custody (E9)				
Adopted - Application for an adoption order unopposed (E11)				
Adopted – consent dispensed with by court (E12)				
Residence order granted (E41)				
Special guardianship made to former foster carers (E43)				
Special guardianship made to carers other than former foster carers (E44)				
19 Number of children by reason for reversal of decision to adopt (SSDA903 guidance 2.7.3). This should be completed for any child where the decision is made that the child should or should no longer be placed for adoption, to enable us to analyse where there has been a change in the permanence plan for the child.	2010/11	2011/12		
The child's needs changed subsequent to the decision (RD1)				
The Court did not make a placement order (RD2)				
Prospective adopters cannot be found (RD3)				
Any other reason (RD4)				
20 For children ceasing to be looked after in 2011/12 for the end reasons below, please indicate for each placement type the number of children by length of time from date started to be looked after, to date of moving in with their permanent family.	0>365 days (under 1 year)	366 > 730 days (1 to 2 years)	731 > 1095 days (2 to 3 years)	1095+ days (over 3 years)
Adopted - Application for an adoption order unopposed (E11)				
Adopted – consent dispensed with by court (E12)				
Residence order granted (E41)				
Special guardianship made to former foster carers (E43)				
Special guardianship made to carers other than former foster carers (E44)				
21 For children ceasing to be looked after in 2011/12 for the end reasons below, please indicate for each placement type the number of children by length of time from date started to be looked after, to date ceasing to be looked after	0 > 730 days (under 2 years)	731 > 1095 days (2 to 3 years)	1095>1460 days (3-4 years)	1461+ days (over 4 years)
Adopted - Application for an adoption order unopposed (E11)				
Adopted – consent dispensed with by court (E12)				
Residence order granted (E41)				
Special guardianship made to former foster carers (E43)				
Special guardianship made to carers other than former foster carers (E44)				

FINANCIAL DATA

ADCS know the limitations of using the DfE Section 251 financial return to measure out-turn. However, in the absence of any other national financial data collection to assist us in capturing this information, we would ask you to either complete as much of the table below as you are able, or to supply your own budget statement information as you feel appropriate.

22 Total Expenditure (Section 251 return - table A1 - row numbers refer to 2011/12 out-turn)	2010/11		2011/12		2012/13	
	Budget	Outturn	Budget	Outturn	Budget	Forecast
Residential care (row 4)						
Fostering services (row 5)						
Other children looked after services (row 6)						
Short breaks (respite) for looked after disabled children (row 7)						
Children placed with family and friends (row 8)						
Education of looked after children (row 9)						
Leaving care support services (row 10)						
Asylum seekers services - children (row 11)						
Total Children Looked After (row 12)						
Child death review processes (row 13)						
Commissioning and social work (includes LA functions in relation to child protection) (row 14)						
Local safeguarding childrens board (row 15)						
Total Children and Young People's Safety (row 16)						
Direct payments (row 17)						
Short breaks (respite) for disabled children (row 18)						
Other support for disabled children (row 19)						
Intensive family Interventions (row 20)						
Other targeted family support (row 21)						
Universal family support (row 22)						
Total Family Support Services (row 23)						
Adoption services (row 24)						
Special guardianship support (row 25)						
Other children's and families services (row 26)						
Total Other Children's and Families Services (row 27)						
Total Children's Services Strategy (row 28)						
23 Costs for looked after children	2010/11		2011/12			
	Cost	Days	Cost	Days		
Own provision: Residential						
Purchased provision: Residential						
Own provision: Fostering						
Purchased provision: Fostering						
Transport						

**ADCS SAFEGUARDING PRESSURES NATIONAL RESEARCH: PHASE 3
- SAFEGUARDING PRESSURES AND PERMANENCE**

SECTION TWO: YOUR EXPERIENCES AND VIEWS

Throughout, safeguarding activity means referrals to children's social care, initial assessments, S47s, children subject to child protection plan and children looked after. Where we have referred to 'safeguarding issues', these are presenting issues such as neglect, sexual abuse, forced marriages, domestic violence, use of emergency short term periods of care, etc. Whilst the boxes for your responses can be extended, please do provide any supporting or more detailed information in other formats, e.g. in Word document, if you would find it easier.

CHANGES IN SAFEGUARDING ACTIVITY

<p>1 If your LA has seen an increase in a particular aspect of safeguarding activity, why do you think this is? Please include references to any evidence you have.</p>	
<p>2 If your LA has seen a decrease in a particular aspect of safeguarding activity, why do you think this is? Please include references to any evidence you have.</p>	
<p>3 Have changes in population or profile of children in your area made a difference to safeguarding activity? If so, please tell us how.</p>	
<p>4 Do you think that thresholds have changed in the past two years in your authority? If "yes", how, and what has been the impact on safeguarding activity?</p>	
<p>5 What part do you feel early intervention has played so far in your LA in affecting safeguarding activity?</p>	
<p>6 Has your LA experienced a rise in any particular safeguarding issue, or reason for children becoming looked after over the past two years? Why do you think this is?</p>	
<p>7 For older looked after children, have you experienced any changes (increase or decrease) in risky behaviours, sexual exploitation or use of welfare secure accommodation? If yes, please describe what the changes have been and the impact on your LA in terms of resources.</p>	
<p>8 Has your LA changed the placement of a looked after child with the risk of sexual exploitation as the main cause of the placement move? If yes, please tell us the impact this had on the young person and their permanency?</p>	

CONTROLLING FACTORS

<p>9 Are there any organisational changes within your LA or partner organisations which are either negatively, or positively impacting on safeguarding? If so, who, and how?</p>	
<p>10 Has your LA experienced any changes in commissioning of services for looked after children in the last two years? For example, your approach to commissioning, the cost of commissioned placements including agency foster care, transport, contact, etc.</p>	

<p>11 What are your arrangements for managing the commissioning of independent or specialist assessments required either by the Court, or that you have commissioned yourself? What is the impact of additional direction by Courts?</p>	
<p>DEMAND VERSUS RESOURCES</p>	
<p>12 Has there been any reduction in budgets for safeguarding, LAC or early help services over the last 2 yrs? Please provide information about these and what the impact has been on your authority.</p>	
<p>13 Has there been any significant changes to social work staffing in your authority over the past two years? For example, changes in number of qualified or unqualified social workers; recruitment; use of agency staff; integrated working?</p>	
<p>HORIZON SCANNING</p>	
<p>14 Direction of travel: In your opinion, what is the trajectory for quantity of safeguarding and looked after children (e.g. Will numbers of children continue to rise).</p>	
<p>15 What impact do national and local policy changes, including those currently being planned, have on safeguarding activity and achieving appropriate permanence for children and young people?</p>	
<p>16 What do you think are some of the key changes we will see in the next two to three years that will influence this?</p>	
<p>17 Would you be willing to share any strategies you have to reduce the numbers of children who are either starting to be looked after or the length of time they are looked after. Please tell us about any specific cohorts, for example older children, sibling groups?</p>	
<p>FURTHER INFORMATION</p>	
<p>18 Do you have other evidence of changes [increases or decreases] to safeguarding pressures in your area? This may be from locally or regionally commissioned research, from consultations or surveys, or from service reviews.</p>	

APPENDIX C: Areas That May Merit Further Enquiry

- a. What are the outcomes for children when a child protection plan ceases and whether there is evidence that length of child protection plans makes a difference, analysing the length and number of plans, together with how many children subject of a child protection plan go on to become looked after. Although data was not available for this research, DfE collects this information in the 903 return. Our hypothesis is that longer (lifelong) child protection plans facilitate a child remaining with its family and that the 'threat' of separation is diminished and therefore families are more likely to cooperate to address their risk behaviour and/or poor parenting and ultimately this will reduce the numbers of children taken into care.
- b. The use of 'multiple' as a category of abuse for child protection plans has risen, from 8.8% of all plans to 10.2% and whilst 48% of authorities use this category, the usage by a small number has increased significantly. A potential hypothesis for the increase in use of multiple categories is that cases are increasingly complex with no single prevalent category of abuse.
- c. How we develop a robust overview of children looked after throughout the year to identify the significant 'in-year churn' and identify the cohorts of looked after children by types of plan and length of time looked after rather than a snapshot of those looked after on 31st March or who start or cease during the year.
- d. The apparent reduction in responding authorities in the number of children accommodated under a series of short term breaks set against the reported, though small, increase in numbers of children looked after for reason of child's disability.
- e. Deeper analysis of the stories behind the different permanency routes for children and young people. Is there a wider increase in the number of children where the decision to adopt has been reversed, and investigate in more detail the reasons why, especially those where prospective adopters are not found.
- f. How much of the changes in safeguarding activity over five years (especially initial contacts and referrals) are due to changed policy decisions, societal issues, improved safeguarding or data capture. This is especially pertinent to reasons for referral (including 'other than CIN' and 'unknown'); use of placement code 'any other placement (Z1)' and reason for ceasing to be looked after 'care ceased for any other reason (E8)'.
- g. Although absolute numbers are low, in what circumstances would local authorities use 'low income' as a reason for children becoming looked after.

- h. 16 and 17 year olds represent 21% of looked after children at 31st March 2012 with a rise in those becoming looked after and a slight increase to 1.9% of those becoming subjects of child protection plans. How can we better understanding the current and foreseeable context for this group of children in light of the continued effect of the Southwark Judgement; the economic climate and welfare reforms; risky behaviour and the raising of the school age.