

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

23rd OCTOBER 2008

CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER STATISTICAL UPDATE

**MIKE CARR - EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN FAMILIES
& LEARNING**

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PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To provide the Corporate Parenting Board with statistical information regarding Children Looked After by Middlesbrough Council.

BACKGROUND

2. The provision of services to children looked after is a core statutory function and corporate responsibility. Since the introduction of the Quality Protects initiative, the Government has maintained a clear focus on improving services for this group of young people. This is reflected in the range of local government targets and performance indicators relating to children looked after.
3. Government guidance for elected Members on corporate parenting identifies the need for Members to receive regular statistical updates on the numbers of children being looked after by the authority.

NUMBERS OF CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER

4. At 31 March 2008, there were 272 children looked after by Middlesbrough Council. This compares with 242 children looked after at 31 March 2007, representing a 12% increase. The following tables identify placements of children at March 2007 and placements at March 2008.

As at March 2007

with foster carers	188(78%)
placed for adoption	5(2%)
in Middlesbrough Children's Homes	12(5%)
placed home on trial, or with extended family members	24(10%)
in specialist residential placements outside of the area	12(5%)
independent living / lodgings/other	1(0.4%)

As at March 2008

with foster carers	213(78%)
placed for adoption	10(4%)
in Middlesbrough Children's Homes	11(4%)
placed home on trial, or with extended family members	17(6%)
in specialist residential placements outside of the area	17(6%)
independent living / lodgings/other	4(1%)

5. The number of children looked after as a proportion of the population is still above the national average of 54/10,000 0-17 year olds, Middlesbrough is 84.7/10,000 (a significant increase compared 78.2/10,000 in 2007).
6. The number of children young people placed with foster carers has decreased by approximately 2%, which equates to 4 children young people. The majority of foster placements are with Middlesbrough foster carers but an increasing number are in agency foster placements particularly out of area.

Foster Placement Breakdown	March 2008
Middlesbrough Foster Carers – In Middlesbrough	79
Middlesbrough Foster Carers – Outside of Middlesbrough	45
Agency Foster Care in Middlesbrough	4
Agency Foster Care outside of Middlesbrough	60
Foster Placement with Relatives or Friend	25
Total	213

7. The number of children placed for adoption has increased by 100% since 2007.
8. The number of children in Middlesbrough Children's homes has reduced from 12 children/young people to 11 (an 8% reduction).
9. The number of children/young people placed with at home or with extended family has decreased from 24 to 17, which equates to a 30% decrease.
10. The number of children in a specialist residential placement outside of Middlesbrough has increase by 42% compared to 2007.
11. There has also been an increase in independent living or supported lodgings with 4 young people now recorded in this category.

OPTION APPRAISAL/RISK ASSESSMENT

12. The prevalence of parental drug misuse, mental health difficulties and domestic violence continues to present a challenge to all agencies providing services to children and their families. The numbers of children looked after are unlikely to fall significantly in the short term.

FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND WARD IMPLICATIONS

13. There are no immediate financial or legal implications arising from this report. The report will be of interest to all Members.

RECOMMENDATION

14. The Corporate Parenting Board is asked to advise the Executive to note the contents of this report.

REASON

15. To ensure that elected Members are aware of current statistical information regarding children looked after by the local authority.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Middlesbrough Council, 2008, *Annual Performance Assessment (APA)*,
Middlesbrough Council.

Middlesbrough Council, 2008, *CLA 903 DfES Return*, Middlesbrough Council.

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