

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

Corporate Parenting Board

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN STATISTICAL UPDATE

Executive Member for Children, Families & Learning: Cllr Mike Carr

Director of Children, Families & Learning: Gill Rollings

2nd February 2012

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

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

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

2. It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board advise the Executive to note the statistical update on children looked after.

IF THIS IS A KEY DECISION, WHICH KEY DECISION TEST APPLIES?

3. It is over the financial threshold (£75,000)
It has a significant impact on 2 or more wards
Non Key

DECISION IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE

4. For the purposes of the scrutiny call in procedure this report is

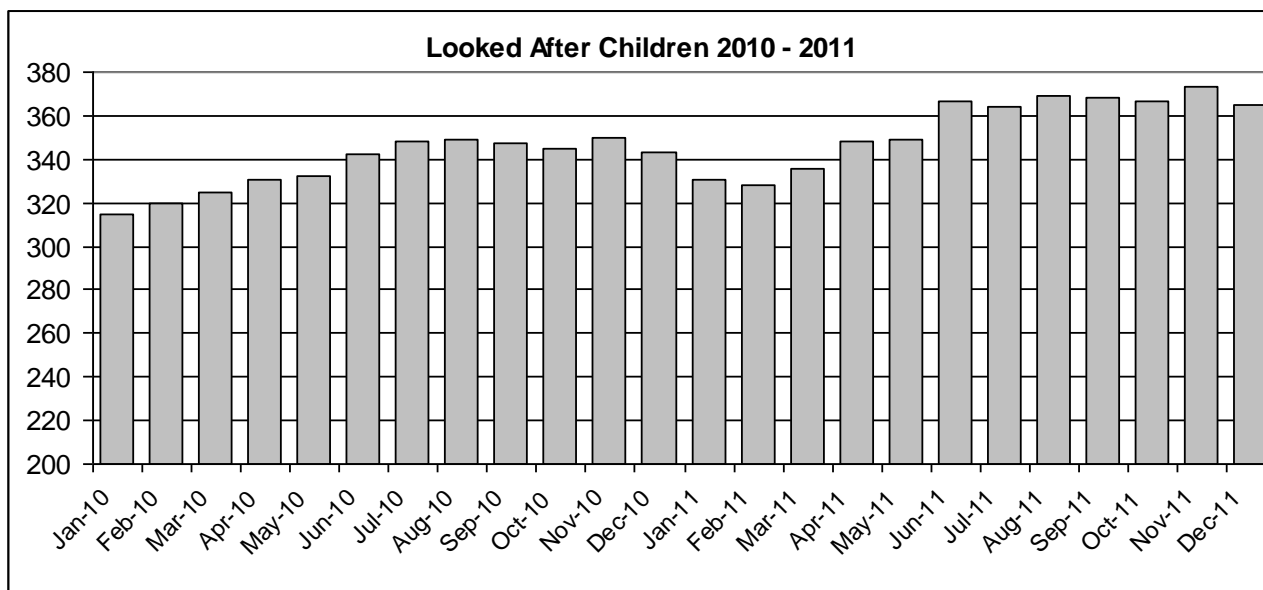
Non-urgent
Urgent report

BACKGROUND & EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

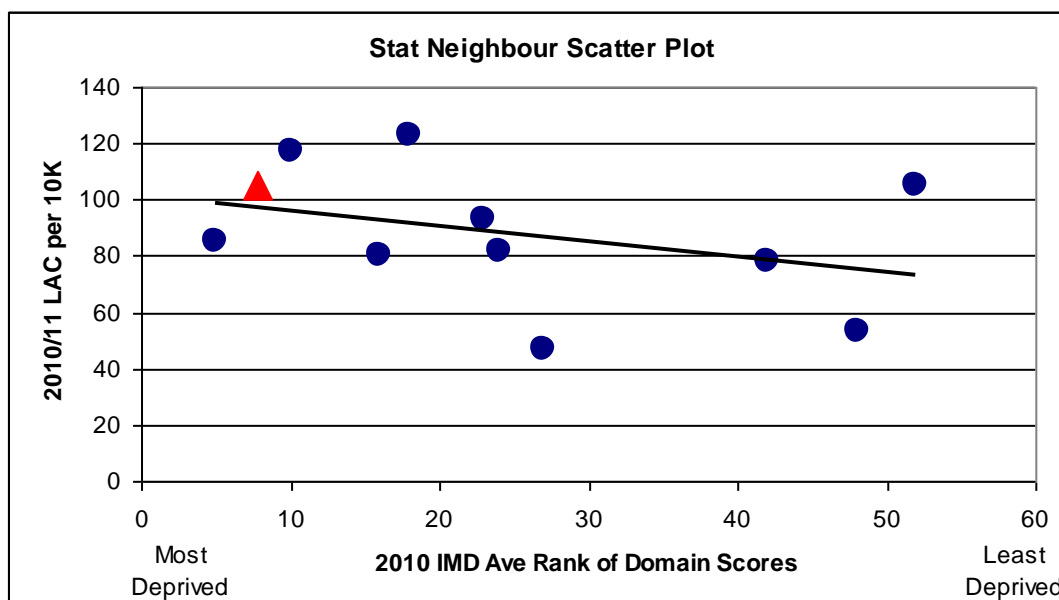
5. The provision of services to looked after children is a core statutory function and corporate responsibility. For over a decade, the government has maintained a clear focus on improving services for this group of young people. This is reflected in the range of local government targets and performance indicators relating to looked after children.
6. 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 LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC)

7. The number of LAC showed a 10.3% increase between January 2011 (331) and December 2011 (365). The number has been consistently in the high 360s for the second half of 2011.

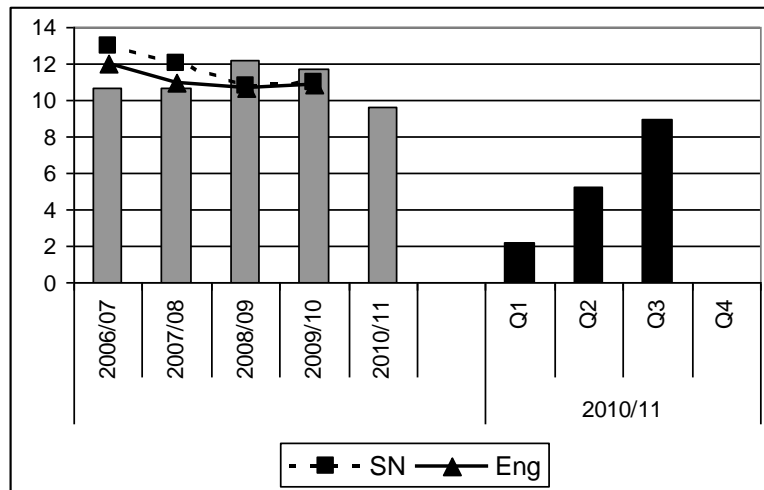


8. The rate of LAC per 10,000 under-18s increased from 103 to 107 in 2010/11 compared with a national average of 59 and an average for Middlesbrough's statistical neighbours of 88. When weighted for relative deprivation levels Middlesbrough's rate (triangle) appears to be broadly in line with the trend for its statistical neighbours.

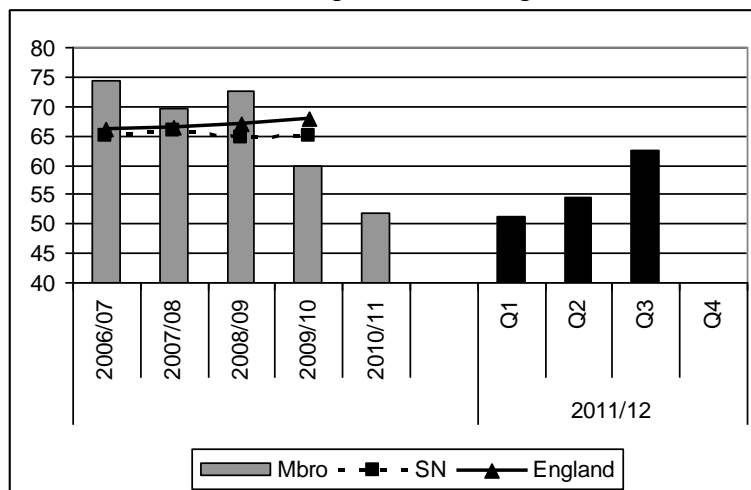


STABILITY OF PLACEMENTS

9. The percentage of LAC who had three or more separate placements during the year (NI 62), reduced from 11.7% to 9.6% in 2010/11. In quarter 3 of 2011/12, the proportion stands at 9.0% which is slightly higher than for the same period in 2010/11 (8.2%).

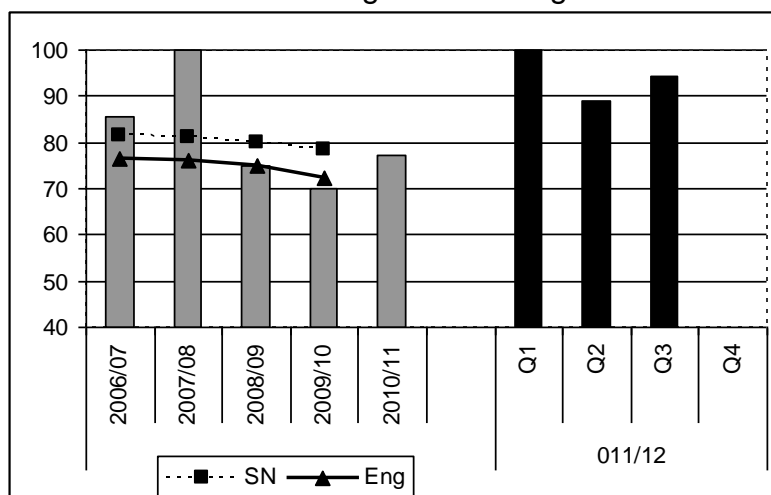


10. The percentage of children looked after who had been living in the same placement for at least two years (NI63) has improved into quarter 3 of 2011/12, standing at 62%, which is better than the year end position for the last two financial years and is broadly in line with the statistical neighbour average.



ADOPTION PLACEMENTS

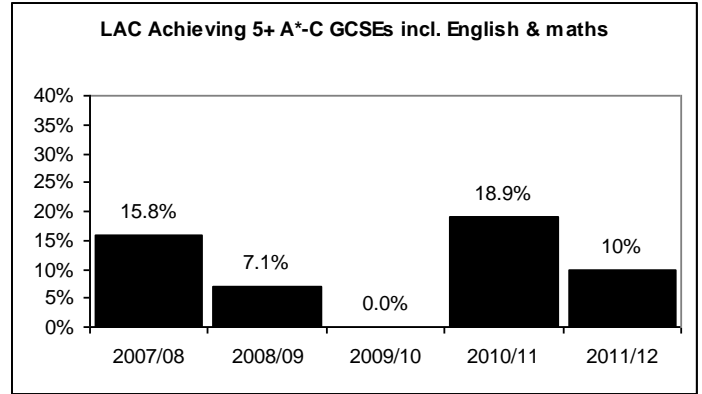
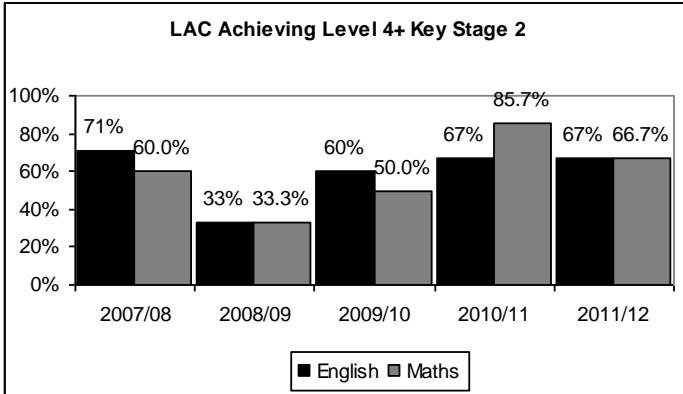
11. The percentage of looked after children placed for adoption within 12 months of the decision being made (NI 61) has improved significantly into 2011/12, rising from 77.3% at the end of 2010/11 to 94.4% in quarter 3 of 2011/12. This remains well above the available comparator averages for 2009/10, which indicate a national average of 72.4% and a statistical neighbour average of 78.5%.



12. The cohort of children for this indicator is typically small and can vary significantly from year to year.

EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER

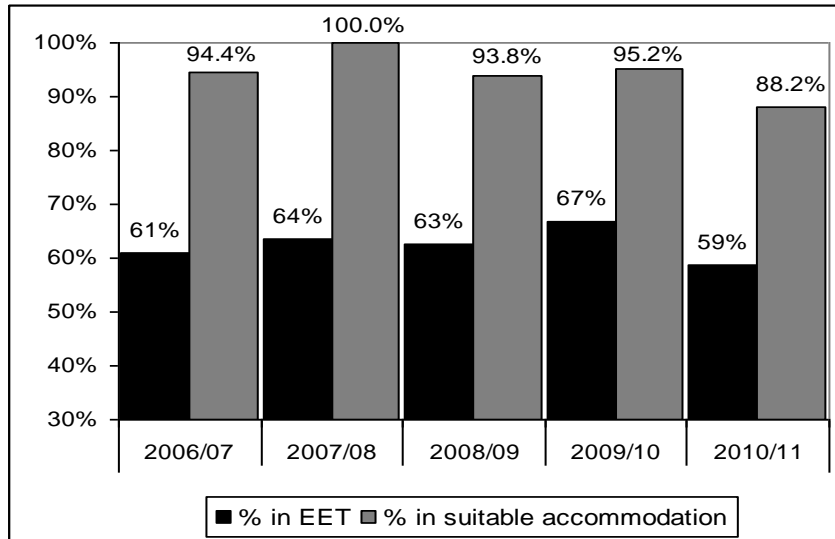
13. LAC achievement at Key Stage 2 in the 2011 test results appeared in the top quartile for both English and maths. Results for 2010 were affected by the fact that only a quarter of local primary schools administered the tests.



14. GCSE results for looked after children appeared in the bottom quartile for 2011. The cohort size showed a significant change between years falling from 35 for 2010 to 20 for 2011.

CARE LEAVERS

16. Outcomes for care leavers were showing a decline year on year at the end of the 2010/11 financial year:



17. The percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation (NI 147) has increased to 91% in quarter 3 of the current financial year. With just one young person deemed to be in unsuitable accommodation. The percentage of care leavers in employment, education or training (NI 148) has declined further to 46%, representing 5 young people in a cohort of 11.

18. A more detailed report on the destinations of, and the support provided for, care leavers is included on the agenda.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

19. All social care services are delivered within a framework of anti-discriminatory practice and there are no specific issues arising from the information presented within this report.

OPTION APPRAISAL/RISK ASSESSMENT

20. The sustained high numbers of children looked after by the local authority continue to put increased pressure on the services providing support for children and their families.

FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND WARD IMPLICATIONS

21. There are no immediate implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

22. It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board advises the Executive to note the statistical update on children looked after by the local authority.

REASON

23. To ensure that elected Members are aware of current information regarding outcomes for children looked after by the local authority.

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