

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD
25th June 2009

**CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER
STATISTICAL UPDATE**

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

**GILL ROLLINGS - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND
LEARNING**

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. 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 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 2009, there were 276 children looked after by Middlesbrough Council. This compares with 272 children looked after at 31 March 2008, representing a 1.47% increase. The following tables identify placements of children at March 2008 and placements at March 2009.

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%)

As at March 2009

with foster carers	214(77.5%)
placed for adoption	4(1.5%)
in Middlesbrough Children's Homes	11(4%)
placed home on trial or with extended family members	22(8%)
in specialist residential placements outside of the area	18(8%)
independent living / lodgings / other	7(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 86.8/10,000.
6. The number of children young people placed with foster carers has decreased by approximately 0.5%, which equates to 1 child/young person. 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 2009
Middlesbrough Foster Carers – In Middlesbrough	75
Middlesbrough Foster Carers – Outside of Middlesbrough	32
Agency Foster Care in Middlesbrough	7
Agency Foster Care outside of Middlesbrough	70
Foster Placement with Relatives or Friends	29
Other LA Foster Carer	1
Total	214

7. The number of children placed for adoption has decreased by 3.5% since 2008.
8. The number of children in Middlesbrough Children's homes has remained at 11 children/young people, which is the maximum capacity in Middlesbrough children's homes.
9. The number of children/young people placed at home or with extended family has increased from 17 to 22, which equates to a 30% increase.
10. The number of children in a specialist residential placement outside of Middlesbrough has increased by 6% compared to 2008, which is one young person.
11. Of the 7 children/young people recorded as being in independent living/ lodgings / other, 4 are in independent living or supported lodgings, one is in a Mother & Baby Unit and a further two are in secure units.

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 statistical update on children looked after.

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, 2009, *CLA 903 DfES Return*, Middlesbrough Council.

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