

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

Corporate Parenting Board

CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER STATISTICAL UPDATE

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

Executive Director of Children, Families & Learning: Gill Rollings

18 January 2011

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

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

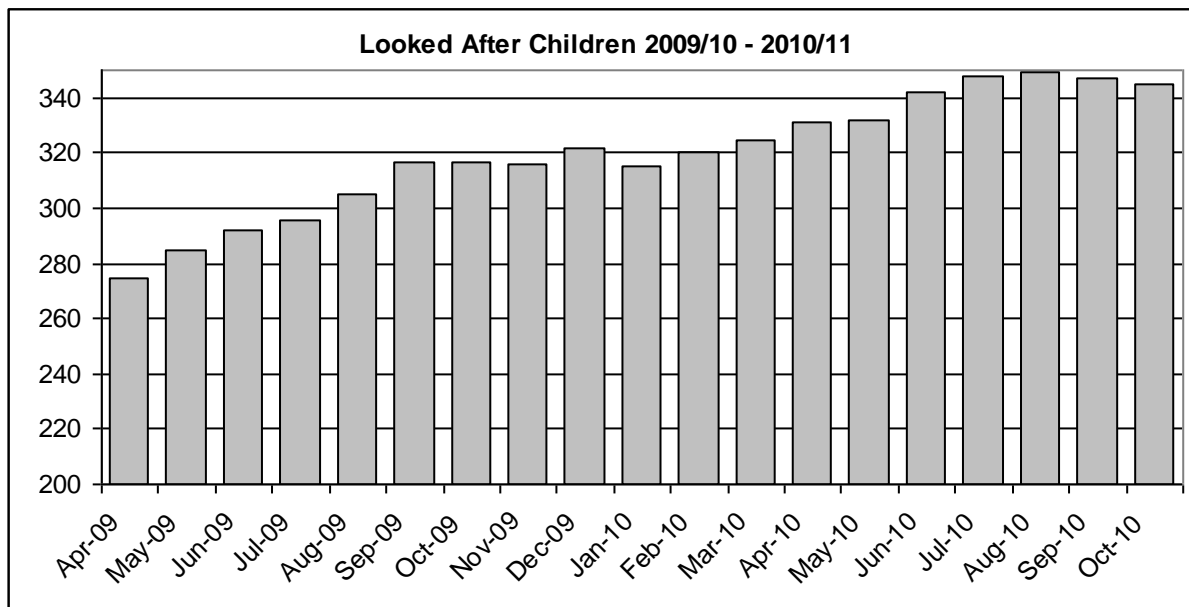
BACKGROUND & EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

5. The provision of services to 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.

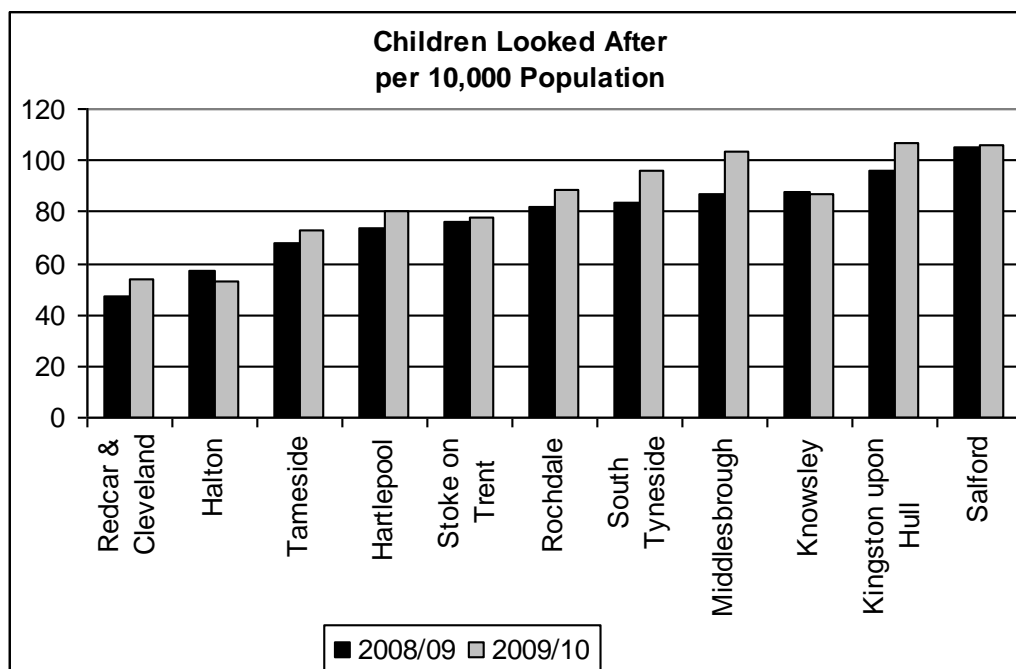
- Government guidance for elected Members on corporate parenting identifies the need for Members to receive regular statistical updates on the numbers of children being looked after by the authority.

NUMBERS OF CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER

- The number of looked after children has shown signs of stability moving into the second half of 2010/11 with a small but consistent reduction between August and October 2010. As at the end of October 2010 there were 345 children looked after by Middlesbrough Council. This represents a 6% increase on March 2010 compared to the 19% increase experienced between March 2009 and March 2010.

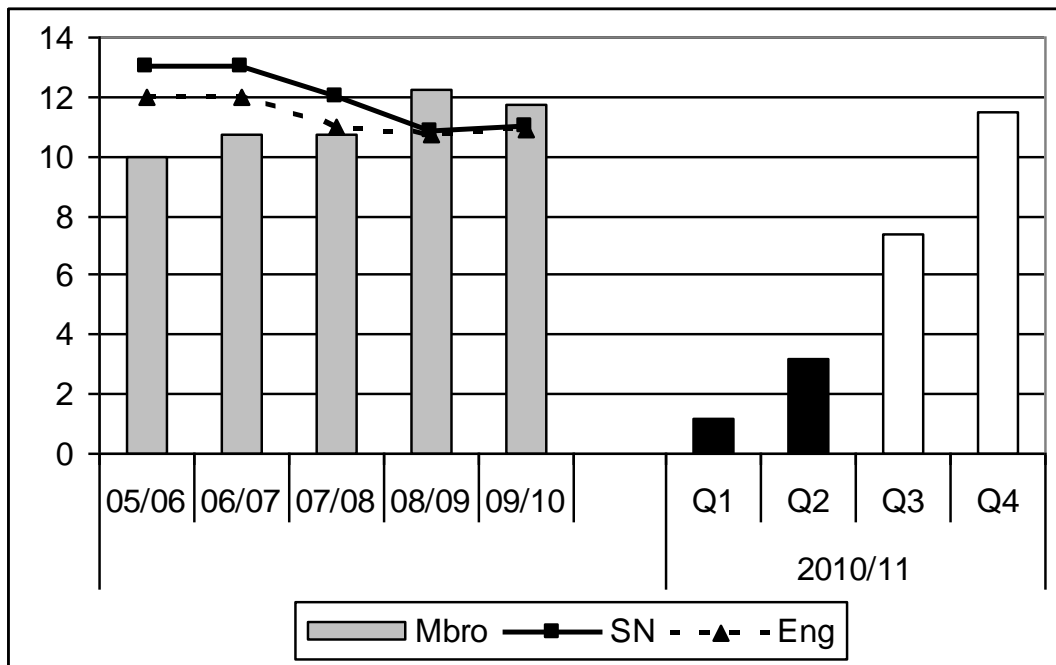


- Comparative data for 2009/10 indicates that the number of children looked after per 10,000 0-17 year-olds in Middlesbrough (103) is significantly above the averages for England (58), the North East (69) and Middlesbrough's group of statistical neighbours (84), which all show year on year increases. Whilst Middlesbrough's rate is not the highest amongst the group, it does show the greatest increase year on year, 19% compared with an average increase of 7%.

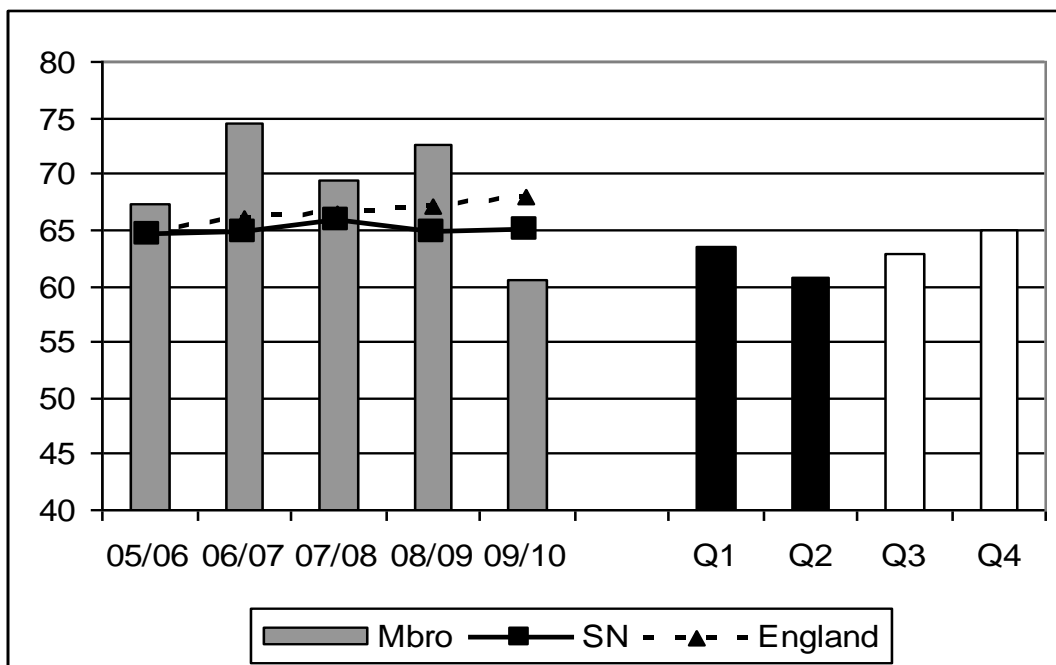


STABILITY OF PLACEMENTS

9. The percentage of children looked after who had three or more separate placements during the year (NI 62) has improved slightly in 2009/10 from 12.4% to 11.7%. Performance for the first two quarters of 2010/11 is above target, indicating a reduced number of young people in this category by the year end.



10. Comparative data for 2009/10 indicates that Middlesbrough’s performance was worse than regional (10.4%) and national (10.9%) averages. Middlesbrough’s performance was also above the average for its group of statistical neighbours (11.0%) with Middlesbrough placed at the mid-point for the range of results amongst the group.
11. The percentage of children looked after who had been living in the same placement for at least two years (NI63) dropped below national (68%) and statistical neighbour (65%) averages for the first time in five years. Performance in the first half of 2010/11 is at a similar level, which indicates that the target to be in line with statistical neighbours (65%) by the year end is achievable.

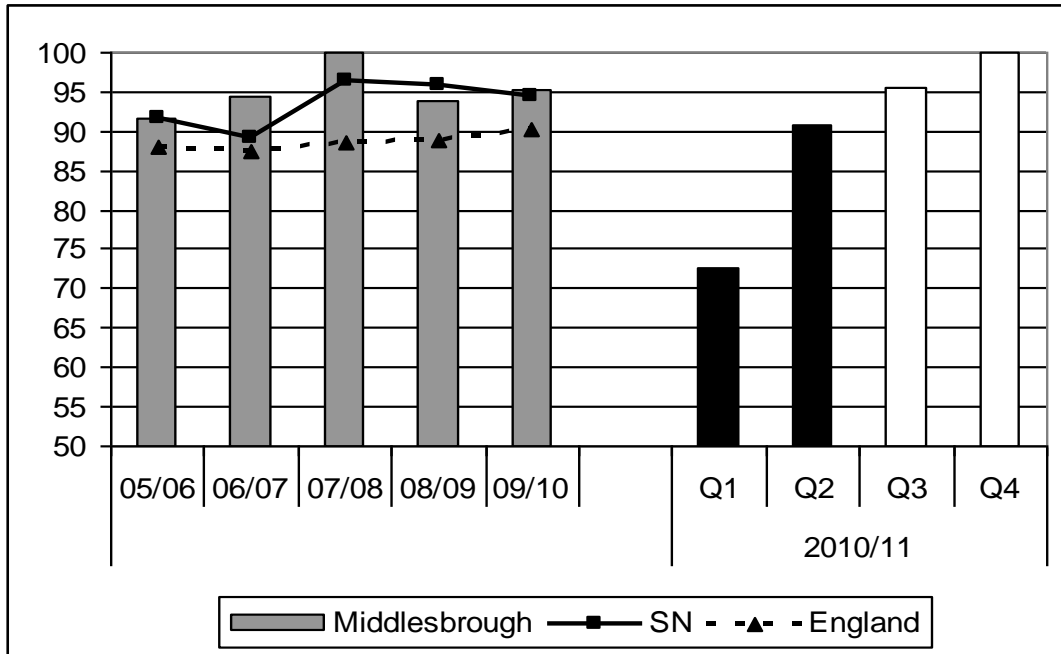


EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER

12. The Corporate Parenting Board asked for a separate report on the educational achievement of children looked after for its January 2011 meeting.

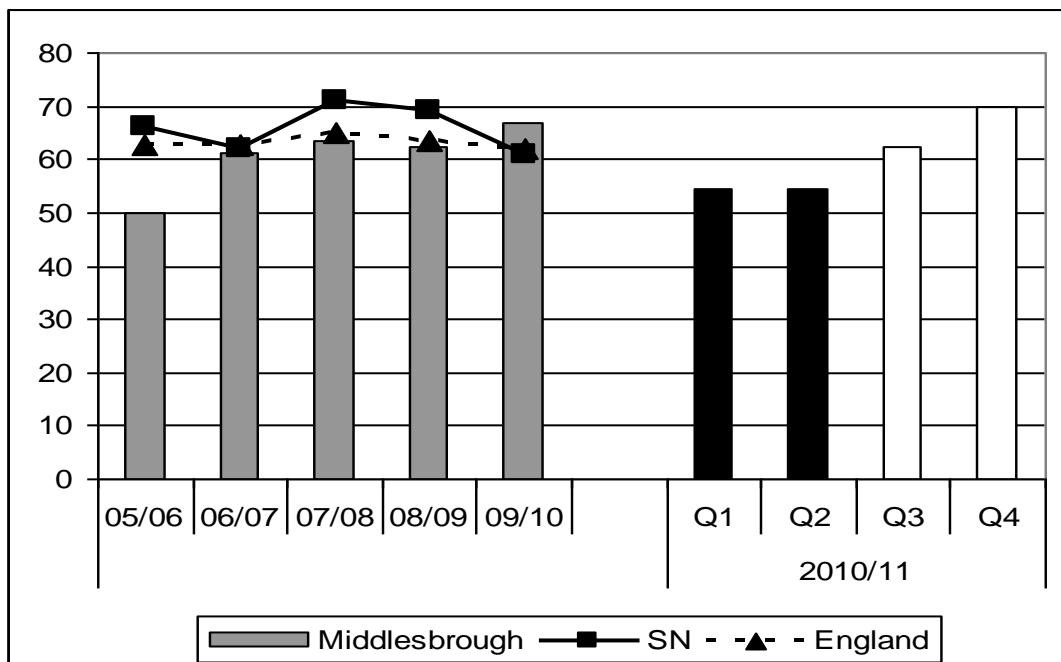
CARE LEAVERS

13. The percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation (NI 147) at 95.2% remained above both the available national (90.3%) and statistical neighbour (94.5%) comparators in 2009/10.



14. Performance between quarters 1 and 2 in 2010/11 showed significant improvement, bringing the indicator back on track to achieve similarly high levels by the year end.

15. The percentage of care leavers in employment, education or training (NI 148) at 66.7% was well above both the national (62.1%) and statistical neighbour (60.8%) comparators for 2009/10.



16. Performance in the first half of 2010/11 is below the 2009/10 outturn figure, but is above performance levels for the same period in 2009/10.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

17. 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

18. The sustained high numbers of children looked after by the local authority continues to put increased pressure on the services providing support for children and their families. Targeted improvements to strengthen the front of house arrangements for children's social care services will take effect from early in 2011 and will improve the quality of assessments and the subsequent referrals to appropriate support services, which is expected to reduce the pressure on the looked after system. Further action to strengthen local CAF arrangements in 2011 will also contribute to the process of targeting referrals more appropriately for multi-agency support in the first instance.

FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND WARD IMPLICATIONS

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

RECOMMENDATION

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

REASON

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

BACKGROUND PAPERS

22. The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:
- Middlesbrough's 2010 Children in Need (CiN) census return to the Department for Education (DfE)
 - Statistical First Releases derived from the CiN census and issued by DfE
 - CFL's Safeguarding Performance Workbook for quarter 2 of 2010/11

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