

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIAL CARE AND SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

Date: Monday 7th December, 2020
Time: 4.00 pm
Venue: Virtual Meeting

AGENDA

Please note: this is a virtual meeting.

The meeting will be live-streamed via the Council's [Youtube channel](#) at 4.00 pm on Monday 7th December, 2020

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Minutes- Children and Young People's Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel - 9 November 2020 3 - 10
4. Sufficiency & Permanency (Perceptions of Children in Care) - Further Information 11 - 28

The Executive Director and relevant Officers from Children's Services will be in attendance at the meeting to provide further information in relation to Futures for Families, Innovate Team and External Placements.

(To Follow)

5. Overview and Scrutiny Board Update

The Chair will provide a verbal update on business conducted at the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meetings held on 20 November and 3 December 2020.

6. Any other urgent items which, in the opinion of the Chair, may be considered.

7. Date and Time of Next Meeting - 18 January 2021 at 4.00pm

Charlotte Benjamin
Director of Legal and Governance Services

Town Hall
Middlesbrough
Tuesday 1 December 2020

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors L Garvey (Chair), C Dodds (Vice-Chair), C Cooke, T Higgins, S Hill, M Saunders, Z Uddin, J Walker and G Wilson

Assistance in accessing information

Should you have any queries on accessing the Agenda and associated information please contact Joanne Dixon, 01642 729713, joanne_dixon@middlesbrough.gov.uk

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIAL CARE AND SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Children and Young People's Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel was held on 9 November 2020.

PRESENT: Councillor Garvey (Chair), Councillor Dodds (Vice Chair); Councillors: Cooke, Cooper (substitute for Councillor Saunders), Hill, Uddin, J Walker and Wilson.

OFFICERS: C Breheny, S Butcher, J Dixon, R Farnham, P Jemson, G Moore and P Rudd.

PRESENT BY INVITATION: Councillor High – Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Children's Services.
Councillor Hellaoui – Chair of Corporate Parenting Board.
Councillor Higgins – Vice Chair of Corporate Parenting Board.

An APOLOGY for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Saunders.

**** DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no Declarations of Interest made by Members at this point in the meeting.

MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Children and Young People's Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel held on 12 October 2020 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

**** SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 5 - ORDER OF BUSINESS**

AGREED: In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No. 5, the Scrutiny Panel agreed to vary the order of business to consider the agenda items in the following order: 5, 6, 4.

UPDATE – OFSTED MONITORING VISIT TO THE MIDDLESBROUGH MULTI-AGENCY CHILDREN'S HUB (MACH)

S Butcher, Executive Director of Children's Services, and R Farnham, Director of Children's Care, were in attendance at the meeting to provide the Panel with an update on the recent Ofsted monitoring visit to the Multi-Agency Children's Hub (MACH).

The Panel was advised that two Ofsted Inspectors had carried out a 'virtual' monitoring visit over a two-day period on 23-24 September 2020.

During the monitoring visit, the inspectors focussed on progress made by the MACH, the 'front door' of Children's Services, particularly:-

- The quality and screening of referrals.
- The identification of, and response to, risk.
- The understanding by partner agencies of threshold decisions for social work support.
- The quality of initial assessment and planning.

A significant amount of evidence was provided before and during the visit and Inspectors held case discussions with frontline staff and held interviews with Members and Officers involved in the improvement programme.

The findings of the visit were provided immediately at the end of the second day and summarised in a subsequent letter, dated 16 October 2020. The letter would not be published on the Ofsted website, however, a copy had been circulated to all Members and partners.

In summary, the overall findings stated that the Local Authority had made some progress in the following areas:-

- Social Work practice in the 'front door' of the Service.
- The immediate response to 16-17 year old homeless young people.
- Performance monitoring including a new quality assurance framework.
- Improving strategic oversight of services for children and young people.

The Executive Director stated that Leaders acknowledged that there was still significant work to do in improving the quality of practice for children and young people in other areas of the Service.

In terms of leadership, the Panel was advised that the Inspectors found:-

- Continuing commitment from the Chief Executive and Lead Member.
- Determination and vision for improving the quality of interventions making a difference for children and families.
- Senior leaders had a realistic understanding of the endemic weakness in practice informing an appropriately focussed Improvement Plan.

In terms of the MACH, Inspectors found:-

- Substantially improved practice in the quality of referrals, screening, decision-making and management oversight.
- An exponential increase in demand due to a necessary change in the application of thresholds for service and a lack of throughput for children's cases.
- Most contacts by partner agencies were converted to referrals for a social work service, demonstrating an improved understanding of thresholds by referring agencies.

In relation to the Assessment Teams, the Inspectors found:-

- The quality of some children's assessments had improved but most were not completed within a timeframe that supported the child's identified needs.
- Risk was better understood.
- The child's voice was heard through direct work, however, children's voices and their lived experience was not consistently seen in all casework.
- Children's diversity needs and identity were narrowly understood.
- There had been a rigorous approach to safety planning for children during the Covid-19 pandemic, in particular a multi-agency approach to children living with domestic abuse during lockdown.

In brief, the visit had found substantial improvement in the MACH, referral screening and decision making and management oversight.

In terms of improvement, the visit found that high caseloads were having a demonstrative impact on the quality of social work practice for children's cases, the timescales of work completed, management oversight and the ability to embed learning from audits and training to social workers.

The Panel was informed that there would be a visit from the Commissioner for a three-day period between 9-11 November and that he would subsequently report on progress to the Minister for Education. There would be an annual conversation with Ofsted on 9 December and between now and 31 March 2021 there would be a three-day wider focussed visit across the Service. The next visit and report by the Commissioner would take place in May 2021.

During the course of discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- In response to a query, the Executive Director responded that the key areas for improvement were around the workforce and a Workforce Strategy was under development. This would

cover recruitment, retention and the offer to Social Workers in terms of overall development and the Centre for Practice Excellence. Permanence also needed to be a priority to ensure that children were moving to their forever homes as quickly as possible. At the present time focus needed to be on how the workforce and its work was managed through Covid and beyond. It was also highlighted that the recent monitoring visit had focussed on the MACH and that Social Work practice also needed to be improved in the areas of Child Protection, Child in Need and Children Looked After.

- A Panel Member asked about the increase in caseloads due to revised thresholds and it was explained that the threshold of need had previously been set too high and as a consequence, thresholds had been reduced. This meant that more work was entering the social work system, hence the reason for the increase in caseloads. The Director of Children's Care stated that there had been around a 36% increase in the number of assessments undertaken within the MACH and a large percentage of those children had gone on to require a plan either as a Child in Need, Child Protection or going on to becoming looked after.
- It was recognised that 36% was a big increase and it was queried what impact this had on children waiting to be assessed and also the financial impact on the local authority. The Panel was advised that caseloads were high which was slowing the Service's capacity to improve. Some managed teams had been brought in, particularly during Covid, within the Referral and Assessment Service and Safeguarding and Care Planning Service. The Third Innovate Team was recommissioned to look at care placements. In terms of allocating children awaiting assessment, the most vulnerable children who needed to be assessed were allocated first. There was a time period of 45 days in which to undertake an assessment and this was taking longer at the moment. The impact of this was that it then took longer for a child's plan to be put in place and longer for the child's needs to be met. A pro-active approach was being taken to carefully consider where the Service could finance bringing in Social Workers to make the biggest difference.
- The Director of Children's Care added that in terms of decision-making around children in relation to what needed to happen next for the child, October's performance data showed that 90% of decisions were made within 24 hours and 100% of decisions were made within 48 hours. It was hoped that the Panel would feel reassured that this part of the process did happen quickly.
- A Panel Member asked whether, due to high caseloads, the Service was continuing to attempt to recruit additional Social Workers. The Executive Director responded that there were some existing agency vacancies which had not been responded to. There were currently three vacancies within the Children Looked After Teams, however, difficulties in recruiting Social Workers was a national issue. Plans for a recruitment campaign were underway which would include the development of a 'micro site' with a foreword from the Executive Director, Chief Executive and Lead Member for Children's Social Care in relation to Middlesbrough's exciting improvement journey and becoming part of the team. It was added that bringing in managed teams, such as Innovate ensured good social work practice and increased capacity.
- Reference was made to one of the findings from the recent visit "... that children's identity and diversity needs were narrowly understood" and it was queried whether this could be elaborated upon. The Director explained that the service understood the needs of children in terms of religion and ethnicity, however, the broader identity of the child needed to be better understood, for example, what it was like for a nine-year-old boy growing up in Middlesbrough. In terms of improving this, it was highlighted that this would become part of the training and development around awareness and education that was being embedded within Children's Services.
- Reference was made to the finding in relation to 16-17 year old homeless young people and it was queried whether they were young people already known to Children's Services. In response it was explained that they were referring to young people who presented to the

Service as homeless and Children's Services needed to discuss the option of becoming looked after with them. This previously was not being done properly to offer them safety and security.

- In response to a query as to how many staff made up the Leaving Care (Pathways) Team, it was stated that additional resources had been put into the Team since the last Ofsted inspection. The Team consisted of Social Workers and Personal Advisors, a CAMHS Worker and Health Worker led by a Team Manager and two Assistant Team Managers.
- It was queried what the current position was with regard to sick leave within the teams and the reasons for sickness absence. The Panel was advised that regular reports had to be submitted to the DfE regarding the availability of Social Workers, including sickness absence and those within households that were self-isolating. Absence levels had decreased recently.
- Reference was made to guaranteeing interviews for young people in care/care leavers and it was queried whether this scheme was still operated by the Job Centre. The Director informed that she would need to double check this in terms of the Job Centre initiative, however, Work Readiness Practitioners within the Work Readiness Team worked specifically with young people to help them into employment, education and training and this included working with young people in care/care leavers.
- A Member of the Panel suggested that that the Lead Member for Children's Social Care could meet with relevant directors and managers with a view to prioritising available jobs or training opportunities within the Council to Middlesbrough's Children Looked After, providing they met the criteria. For example, seasonal work within Environment Services. The Executive Director advised that she would be discussing that particular issue with the Director of Environment. The Lead Member for Children's Social Care commented that Middlesbrough's Children Looked After were our young people and that it was important to help them into a working environment and he would champion those young people. It was acknowledged that access points for young people into employment created confusion and that the Council was looking at introducing transition workers to work throughout the town to help young people make decisions from leaving school into work. This would be a step in the right direction.

AGREED that the information provided be noted.

SUFFICIENCY & PERMANENCY (PERCEPTIONS OF CHILDREN IN CARE) – DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

Proposed Draft Terms of Reference for the current review topic of 'Sufficiency and Permanency (Perceptions of Children in Care)' were shared with the Panel at the meeting for consideration and comment.

During discussion, it was suggested that Term of Reference 1) be amended to include placement types.

The Democratic Services Officer agreed to make the amendment and to circulate to the Panel following the meeting, for further comment.

The proposed Terms of Reference were as follows:-

1. To examine the numbers and profile of Middlesbrough's Children Looked After population and placement types and how we compare both nationally and to statistical neighbours.
2. To establish a profile of Middlesbrough's foster carers, including current recruitment and retention initiatives and to examine the availability of placements for Children Looked After in Middlesbrough.

3. To investigate the issues around permanency, including adoption, and to examine any initiatives and areas of best practice.
4. To challenge people's perceptions of children in care and to create a better understanding of Children Looked After for everyone involved in the process.

AGREED as follows:-

1. That the suggested amendment be made to the proposed Terms of Reference and that they be circulated to Panel Members for final comment.
2. That the Chair be given authority to finalise and approve the Terms of Reference, as set out above, once all comments had been received.

SUFFICIENCY AND PERMANENCY (PERCEPTIONS OF CHILDREN IN CARE) – FURTHER INFORMATION

P Jemson, Head of Children Looked After and Corporate Parenting, and P Rudd, Head of Futures for Families and Residential Care Service Manager, were welcomed to the meeting. They had been invited to attend alongside the Executive Director and Director of Children's Care to provide the Panel with information in relation to placement stability and placement breakdowns. This followed on from the profile of Middlesbrough's Children Looked After provided at the Panel's previous meeting.

In terms of placement type and provision, it was reported that 73% of Children Looked After in Middlesbrough lived in a foster placement, this included connected persons (kinship care) placements. This had increased from 69% the previous year. The presentation included a table highlighting the placement types. There were currently 343 placements (52%) with in-house carers. This had increased from 42% the previous year and 125 private placements.

The Panel was informed that recently published data showed that 51% of Middlesbrough children were placed outside of the town, however, to provide context, from October 2020 only 18% of Middlesbrough children were currently placed more than 20 miles away from Middlesbrough, meaning that 82% of children were placed within 20 miles of Middlesbrough.

In relation to placement stability, this was higher than the national average and statistical neighbours and it was highlighted that 64% (123) of children that had been looked after for two and a half years or more had remained in the same placement for two or more years. Whilst placement moves were sometimes due to a placement breaking down, there were positive reasons for a placement move such as a child being moved to an adoptive placement.

Within the last 12 months: 469 of Middlesbrough's Children Looked After were in their first and only placement; 147 children had experienced two placement moves; 49 had three placements; seven children had four placements; eight children had five placements; three children had six placements and no children had seven or more.

There had been a slight decrease in the number of Children Looked After and, as of today, there were a total of 680 (a reduction of nine since the Panel's previous meeting).

The Panel was provided with data on placement breakdowns from the period April to October 2020 and the placement type. In October, two in-house foster placements had broken down and two independent (external) foster placements had broken down. There had been two external residential placements breakdowns during November. It was noted that there had been only one connected persons placement breakdown during the period April to October.

The Panel was informed that work to prevent placement breakdowns and improve placement

stability included:-

- Corporate Parenting Strategy
- Innovate Social Work Team
- Futures for Families
- LCS transformation to support improved Social Work practice and performance reporting
- Returning children to placements in Middlesbrough
- Data analysis – understanding the reasons why placements have ended
- Introduction of placement disruption procedure
- Support offer to fragile placements

The Chair commented that he was keen for all Elected Members to be provided with a copy of the Corporate Parenting Strategy once it had been finalised. The Chair was particularly keen to promote engagement with all Members in relation to the Strategy and on their role as corporate parents. The Chair of Corporate Parenting Board, who was present at the meeting, advised that the consultation period on the document had ended on 31 October and suggested that an all Member briefing be arranged in order for feedback on the Strategy to be shared.

A discussion ensued and the following issues were raised:-

- A Panel Member considered one important aspect of stability for Children Looked After to be education and it was queried whether there was any available data on how many children placed outside of Middlesbrough continued to attend the same school. The Director of Children's Care responded that very detailed information was held by the Virtual School and this could be provided to the Panel. Wherever possible and practical, attempts were always made to avoid changing schools to maintain consistency.
- A Panel Member noted that in October two IFA and two in-house placement breakdowns had occurred and it was queried how long the children had been in those placements prior to the breakdown. The Head of Children Looked After and Corporate Parenting advised that she would obtain the information for Members. In terms of what happened when a placement did breakdown, a process was currently being embedded with Social Workers where fragile placements were being looked at. This work was being closely carried out with the Futures for Families Team who offered intensive support to placements to try and stabilise them. Monthly Care Team meetings, with senior management oversight, were also being embedded allowing them to identify when placements were becoming unstable in order to provide additional early support to stop the placement deteriorating further. This involved collaborative working between Futures for Families, Residential and Fostering Service, Commissioning Service and the Children Looked After Teams to ensure that Independent Fostering Agencies, Futures for Families and in-house fostering were able to provide wrap around support to children in unstable placements. This was a comprehensive support package and could include respite and outreach support for children and carers.
- A Member made reference to the Children and Young People's Learning Scrutiny Panel which was looking at school exclusions and expressed concern that one particular school had a high rate of fixed term exclusions and that 90% of those exclusions were Children Looked After. It was queried whether this was being looked into. The Head of Children Looked After and Corporate Parenting advised that communication and links with the Virtual School were being strengthened and included monthly meetings with the Head of the Virtual School to review children with low attendance and those at risk of exclusion to ensure appropriate plans were in place to improve attendance and avoid exclusion. The Executive Director shared the concerns and assured Members that the issue would be carefully looked at and that it was already under scrutiny by the Children and Young People's Learning Scrutiny Panel.
- A Panel Member sought clarification in relation to the data showing five young people recorded as living in independent living places. The Director of Children's Care confirmed that these placements were Supported Lodgings Placements. Providers were similar to foster carers and

were assessed by the Service as to whether they were suitable to provide such a placement and had the necessary skills to support the young person. The placements were a move on placement from fostering before stepping into full independence.

The Chair thanked the Officers for their attendance and the information provided.

AGREED as follows:-

1. That the information provided be noted and considered in the context of the Panel's current scrutiny topic.
2. That further details be provided to a future Panel meeting in relation to Futures for Families and the Innovate Team.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD UPDATE

A verbal update was provided in relation to the business conducted at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 5 November 2020, namely:-

- Executive forward work programme.
- Middlesbrough Council Covid-19 Response – Chief Exec & Dir of Public Health.
- Executive Member update – Deputy Mayor and Lead Member for Children's Social Care (Councillor High)
- OSB Membership
- Final Report – Adult Social Care & Services Scrutiny Panel – Physical Activity for older people (65+)
- Final Report – Children & Young People's Learning Scrutiny Panel – Addressing Poverty Issues and the impact on learning.
- Final Report – Economic Development, Environment & Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel – Teesside Crematorium
- Scrutiny Panel Chairs Updates.

AGREED that the information provided be noted.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Children and Young People's Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel was scheduled for Monday, 7 December 2020 at 4.00pm.

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Children and Young People's Scrutiny Social Care and Scrutiny Panel

Monday 7th Dec 2020

Overview

Futures for Families
Innovate

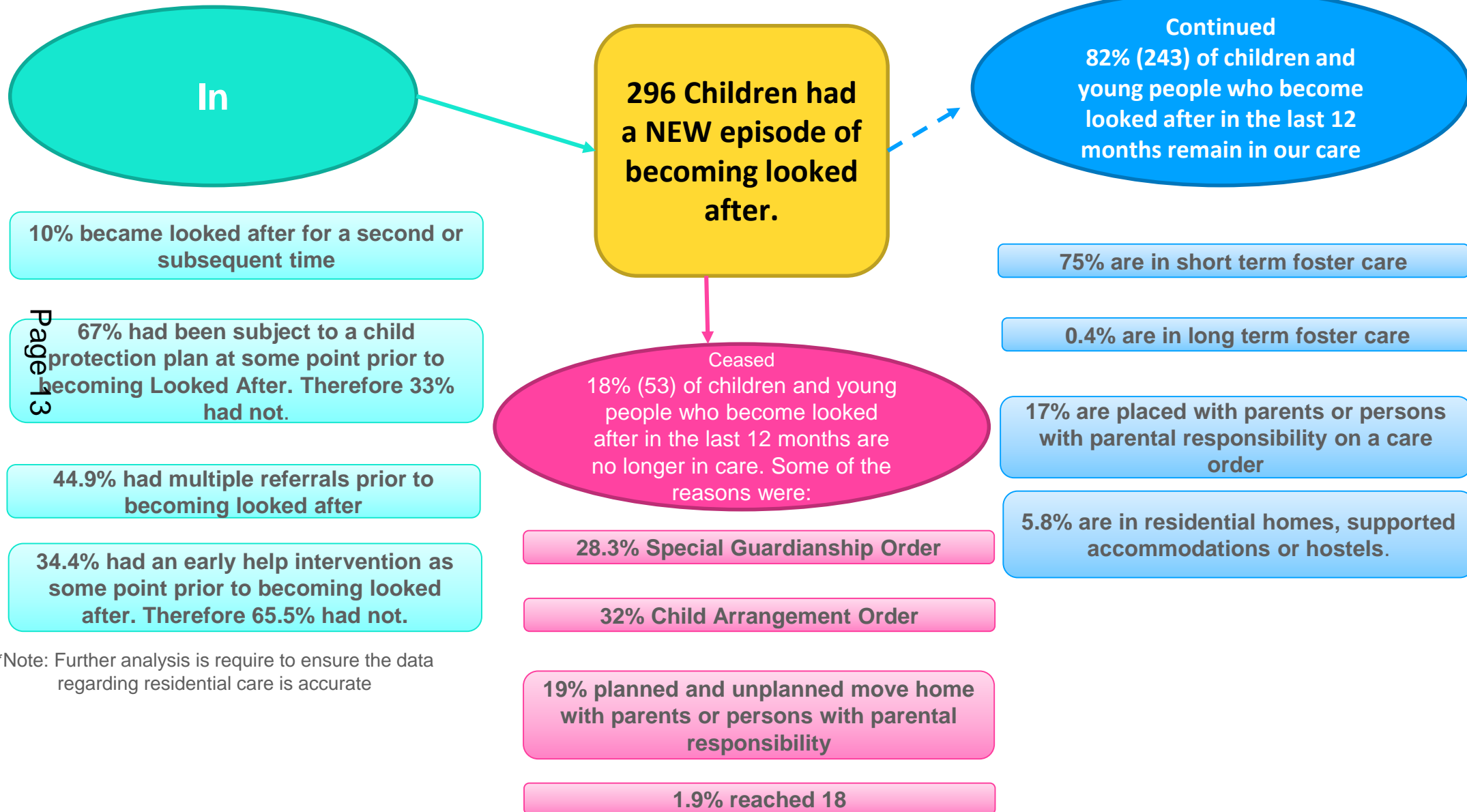
Children and Young People Looked After





What is the journey of children and young people to care and where do they go?

An analysis - 12 months of children who became CLA 31/10.



*Note: Further analysis is require to ensure the data regarding residential care is accurate

FUTURES 
FOR FAMILIES

Interventions

September

Edge of care fragile placements - 14 young people supported
Regular in-reach support from the hub - 3 young people

October

Edge of care fragile placements - 38 young people supported
Regular in-reach support from the hub - 4 young people

November

Edge of care fragile placements - 39 young people supported
Regular in-reach support from the hub - 5 young people

Impact

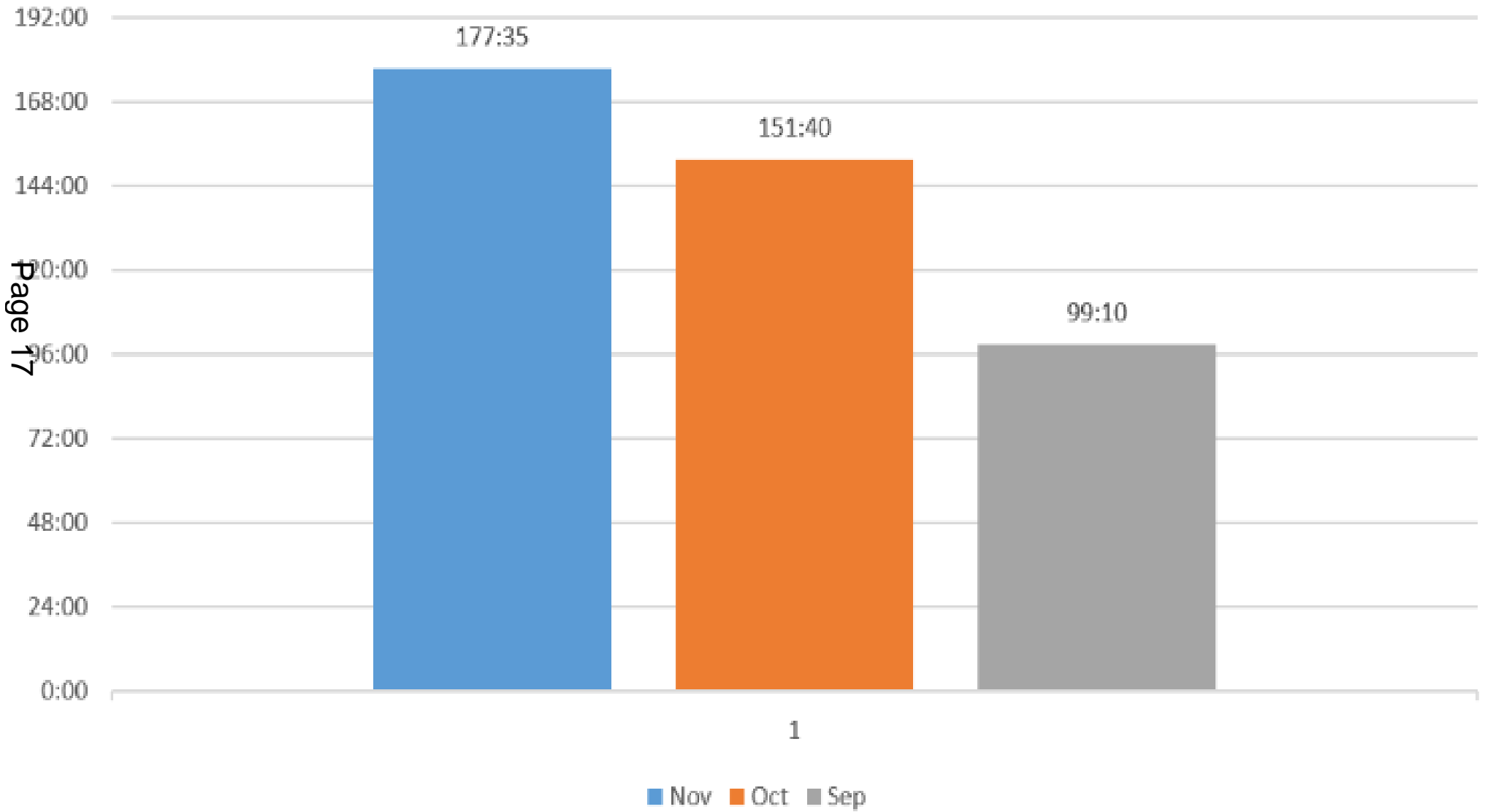
Deep Dives - 40 young peoples care experiences have been analysed. Outcomes have been shared with the social work teams and principle social worker to improve practice

Page

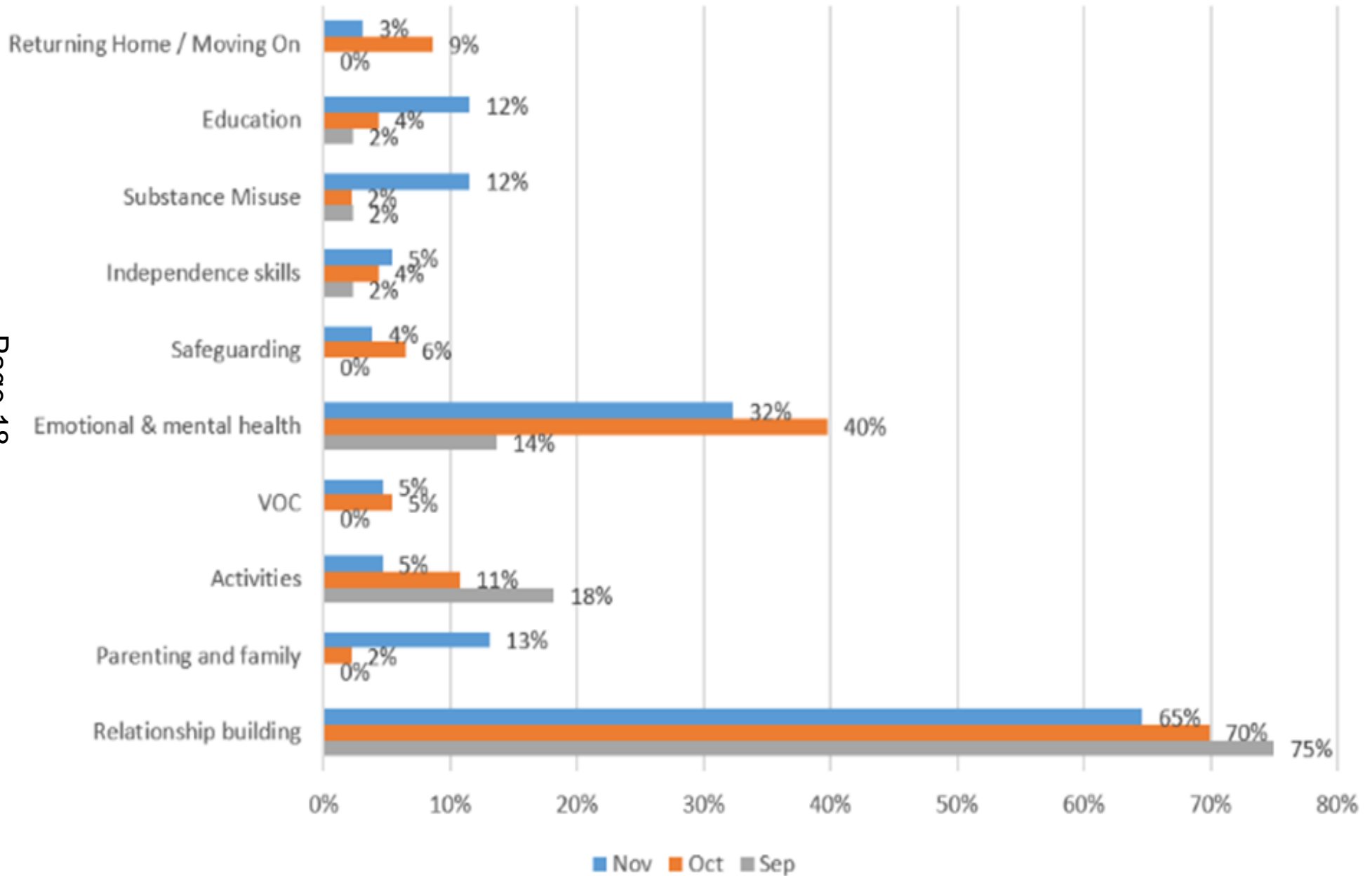
16
75% of all young people accessing FFF are receiving support (either direct or indirect) from the Life Coach. Of those accessing support 92% had no previous identified need.

Previously 32.5% of young people had an undiagnosed SLC. Of those 92% are male.

Total Direct Support Hours Each Month



Intervention Types



Impact continued.....

In the past 12 months **11 individuals** had a total of **94 missing episodes**.

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Due to targeted outreach **100% of those children** have seen a **reduction in their missing episodes of between 50-100%**

36% of those young people have **not had any missing episodes** since receiving support from FFF

FFF are supporting **9 young people to return to their families** or connected carer/foster placement from expensive residential placements.

Innovate Children and Young People's Services

A Commissioned Service



What does our current placement data tell us at a glance?

- We have not achieved long-term permanence for enough children. Therefore too many children do not know where their 'long-term' home is. This undermines their ability to create attachments, feel secure and support their emotional wellbeing.
- Placement with parents: There are too many children placed on a care order (i.e. officially looked after) however remain in their home placed with their parents.
- There are currently too many children in Residential Care and not enough children in Middlesbrough Council employed family foster placements.
- There are not enough Special Guardianship Order's as a plan of permanence despite there being a high proportion of children placed in Connected Carers (placed with family of friends). SGO's are permanent plans for children to remain in the care of family members and the LA discharges the child from being looked after. There was a reduction in the number of SGO's from 10 in Q1 2020/21 to 8 in Q2 2020/21.
- Given the numbers of children looked after and the age demographic of our CLA population, there are not enough children being Adopted. For those being adopted the timeliness of the process is not within the target timescales.

Green shoots – Innovate C/YP Services



Commissioned in July 2020 to provide a team of Social Workers to progress 90 children subject to a Care Order. The aim of the intervention was to provide permanence for children; achieve placement stability; and support children out of residential placements back into family life, thus improving outcomes for children and reducing Middlesbrough's children Looked After population.

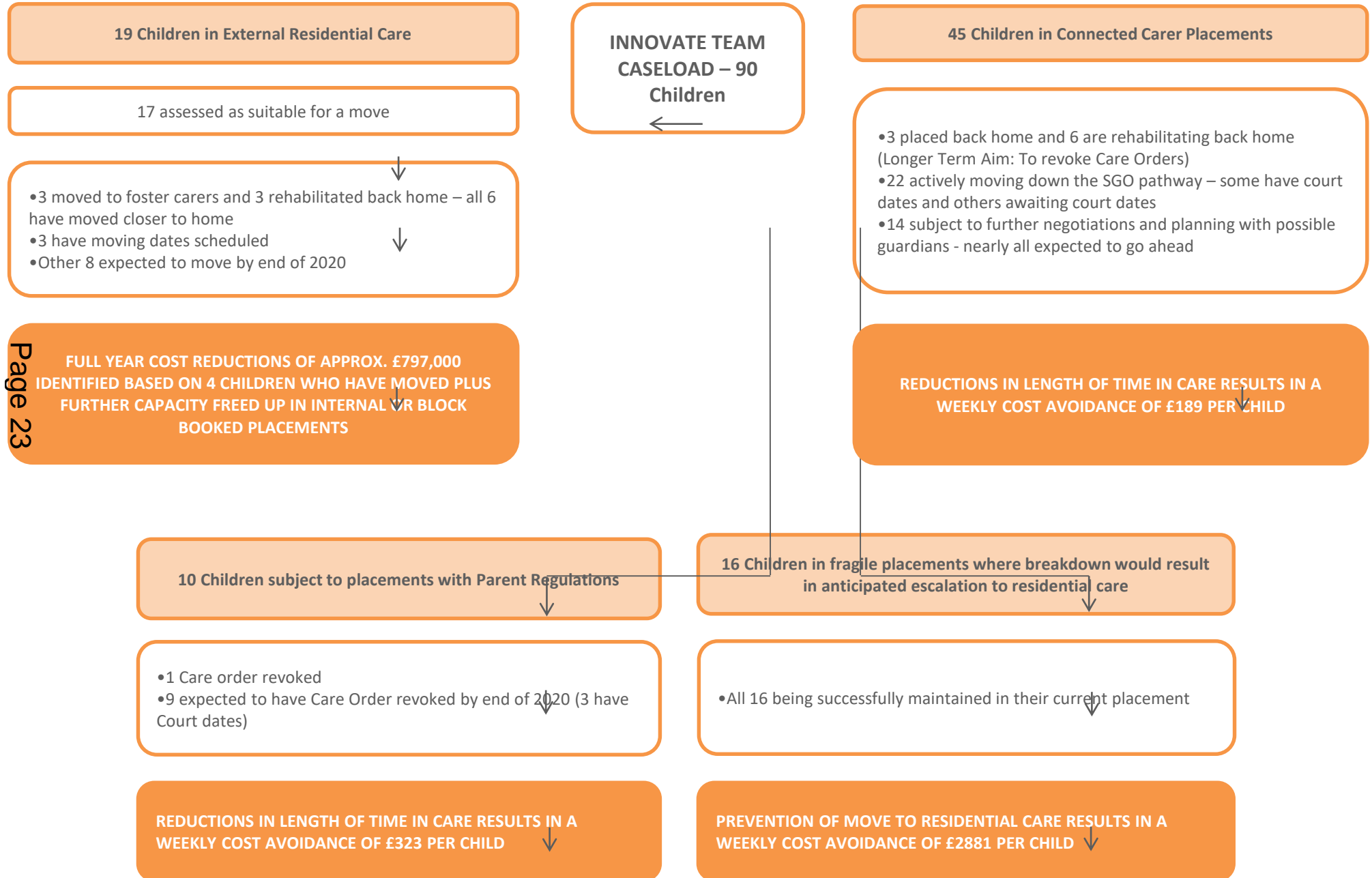
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The key cohorts for the Innovate team are as follows:

- In Residential Placements
- Placement with Parents where discharge of care order is required.
- Living with a Connected Foster Carer where the plan was to progress to SGO.
- Living with a Foster Carer where support was required to prevent breakdown and a future move.

Green shoots - Innovate

IMPACT OF THE MIDDLESBROUGH CS INNOVATE TEAM – PLACEMENT, PERMANENCY AND RESOURCE SAVINGS



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Green Shoot - Innovate

Case Study One

B H- B was removed from his mother's care due to concerns around Domestic Violence, parental mental health issues and B being out of parental control. B was placed in a residential placement and for the three years he was there, no significant concerns were raised around his behaviour, however there were concerns around B's mental health. B's care plan was residential care until the age of independence. As part of her work the Innovate CYPS Social Worker explored B's low mood and it became evident that he felt that he did not have a voice and had been left in care without being considered. B has 4 siblings, 3 whom are also 'looked after', and one remaining in their mother's care. A robust assessment identified that mother had made and sustained significant positive progress in her life therefore a rehabilitation home plan was agreed for B with a clear support plan including support from Futures for Families. At the time of writing the report B has been at home for 4 weeks and evidence suggests that it is going very well. There is now consideration being given to B's sibling **DC** (also in residential placement) being rehabilitated home. The support plan developed by the allocated Social Worker also included D as it is hoped that the positive progress that B has made will allow him to be a positive role model for his brother. There remains a significant amount of work to be undertaken for this to be successful however we are hopeful this can be achieved.

Case Study

B children have been in mother's care since initial hearing and subsequently a Care Order was made maintaining them at home. Discharge of the Care Order paperwork is in the process of being completed for next week's legal panel, where assessments have been able to evidence positive achievements, mothers capacity to safeguard and sustain this moving forward, and also the remaining vulnerabilities that require short term interventions. Records evidence that since summer of 2019 plans have been to progress discharge, however this drifted. Current assessment identifies short term interventions to strengthen mother's capacity to protect that have always been required but not fulfilled; eg. education work and clear safety planning around keeping children safe from sexual harm due to maternal uncle. Life story work was also outstanding, having never been started. This is now being undertaken.

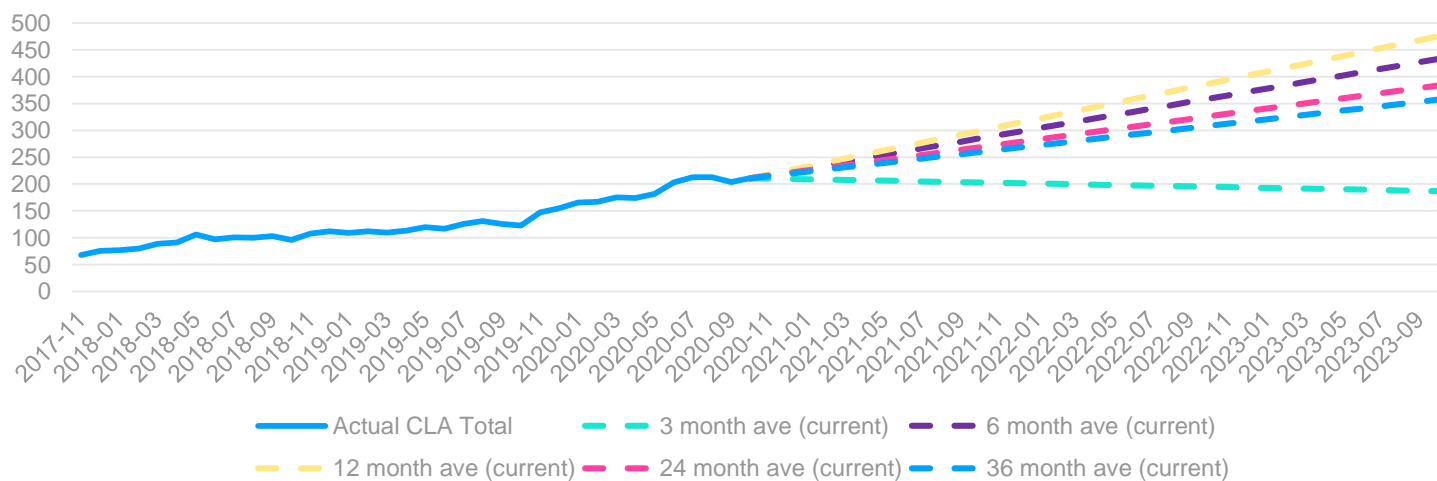
Possible green shoots: Connected Carers



- Currently 30% of our children in care are in connected carer placements.
- These are placements where children are cared for by family or friends and subject to a care order. More children in care are looked after by a family or a friend than any other placement type.
- In total 167 children ceased to be looked after in the last 12 months of which half (49.4%) exited from a connected carers placement. This means we are better at moving children onto permanence via Special Guardianship Order or return home when children are in connected carers placements than any other placement type.
- In the last 3 months there have been more connected carers placement ceased compared to those that have started. 31 connected carers placement have started compared to 33 that have ceased. Forecasting shows a decline in connected carers based on a 3 month average. This is partly due to an improvement to the through put of children in care case work and a reduction in demand. It is also due to a shift in care planning as Middlesbrough were criticised for an over-reliance on family placements and lack of exploration of other placements which may better meet the child's needs. This is beginning to be explored in case work in greater detail, although remains an area for improvement.

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Forecasts - No. of CLA per Placement Type - Foster Placement - Connected Carer



Placement Types Total by Month and Year	Connected Carer Placement Type Total
2019-11	147
2019-12	155
2020-01	166
2020-02	167
2020-03	175
2020-04	174
2020-05	182
2020-06	203
2020-07	213
2020-08	213
2020-09	204
2020-10	211

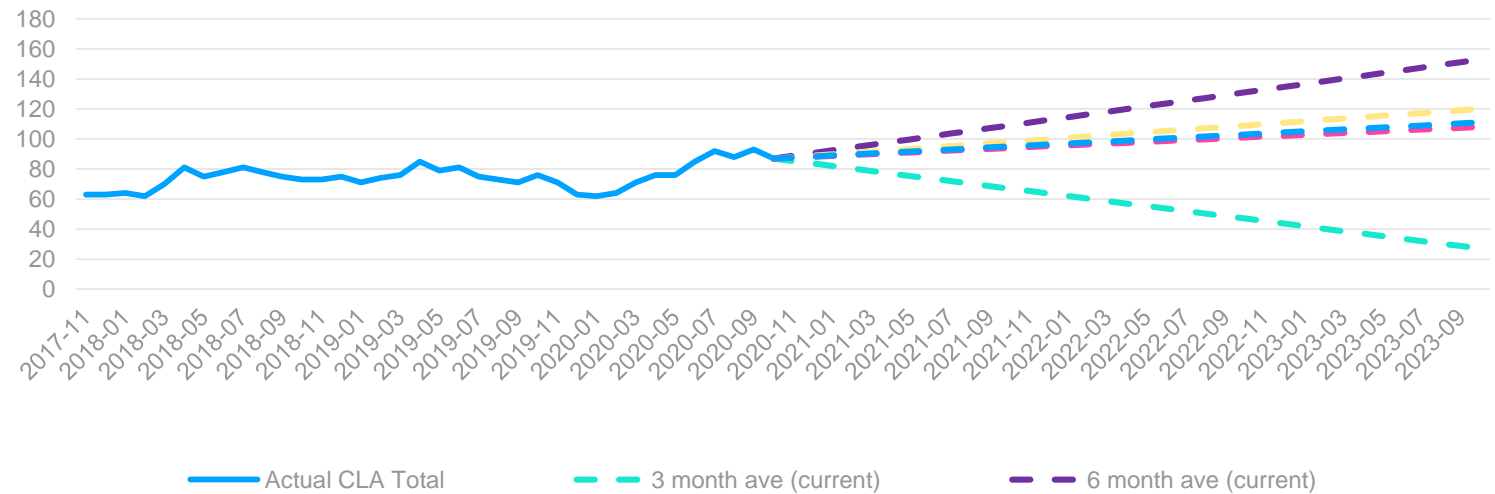
Possible green shoots - Placement with Parent



- This term refers to when a child is subject to a Care Order (i.e., looked after by the LA) and is living with a parent. Placements with parents should be seen as short term and temporary arrangements.
- The number of PWP in Middlesbrough is much greater than all comparators. This is partly due to the legacy of poor practice as the courts have not got confidence in the quality of social work practice and are therefore ordering care orders to support additional oversight. However, audits suggest care orders have not improved social care oversight of the case and the legacy of poor practice, i.e. workers have not effectively worked the case, has meant these families remain on such orders for long periods and the child should either have been taken off a care order much earlier or in some cases the children have languish in neglectful situations for too long and end up entering care.
- End of October 87 children were placed in PWP placements. This has increased 20% in the last 12 months, 13% in the last 6 months and -1% in 3 months.
- On average these children have been in this placements for 16 months. 36 children have been placed with parents for longer than a year. 21 have been open for longer than 2 years. 10 have been open for 3 years.
- Throughout in the last 3 months has improved and for the first time ever data reports that more children ceased to be looked after from this cohort of children than those that started to be looked after on this placement type. In the last 3 month there are have been 12 new placement with parents arrangements and 16 children ceased to become looked after under this arrangement.

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Forecasts - No. of CLA per Placement Type - Placed with Parents



Placement Types Total by Month	Placement with Parent:
2019-11	71
2019-12	63
2020-01	62
2020-02	64
2020-03	71
2020-04	76
2020-05	76
2020-06	85
2020-07	92
2020-08	88
2020-09	93
2020-10	87

Possible green shoots: External Residential and Fostering

We now have 177 in house fostering placements due to a concentrated effort to make best use of all of the available capacity in the system - This has involved a recruitment drive, the broadening of approval criteria and strengthening of foster care management. We have 154 IFA placements.

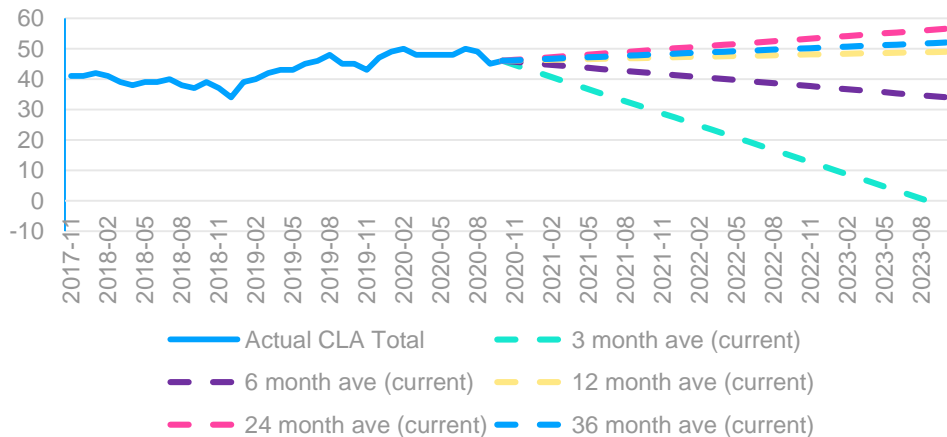
There has been a drop in external residential placements (-4% in 6 months) and an increase in fostering placements (14%).

Future for Families are working to support fragile foster placements to prevent children experiencing placement breakdowns and escalating from foster care to residential care. Of the 16 children being supported from within the Innovate team all children have maintained the current placement. The team are currently working with 41 children to strengthen fragile placements, support children to be rehabilitated to the care of family and to prevent children from becoming looked after.

Placement Sufficiency There has been a 14% increase in the number of in house foster carers compared to the same period last year. This allows social workers to maintain children in local foster care placements and reduces the cost of external foster placements.

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Forecasts - No. of CLA per Placement Type - Children's Homes (inc Secure) - External



Forecasts - No. of CLA per Placement Type - Foster Placement - In-House

