

# Agenda

## Corporate Parenting Board

**Thursday, 12 July 2018, 2.00 pm**  
**County Hall, Worcester**

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## DISCLOSING INTERESTS

There are now 2 types of interests:  
**'Disclosable pecuniary interests'** and **'other disclosable interests'**

### WHAT IS A 'DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST' (DPI)?

- Any **employment**, office, trade or vocation carried on for profit or gain
- **Sponsorship** by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party of your member or election expenses
- Any **contract** for goods, services or works between the Council and you, a firm where you are a partner/director, or company in which you hold shares
- Interests in **land** in Worcestershire (including licence to occupy for a month or longer)
- **Shares** etc (with either a total nominal value above £25,000 or 1% of the total issued share capital) in companies with a place of business or land in Worcestershire.

**NB Your DPIs include the interests of your spouse/partner as well as you**

### WHAT MUST I DO WITH A DPI?

- **Register** it within 28 days and
- **Declare** it where you have a DPI in a matter at a particular meeting
  - you must **not participate** and you **must withdraw**.

**NB It is a criminal offence to participate in matters in which you have a DPI**

### WHAT ABOUT 'OTHER DISCLOSABLE INTERESTS'?

- No need to register them but
- You must **declare** them at a particular meeting where:
  - You/your family/person or body with whom you are associated have a **pecuniary interest** in or **close connection** with the matter under discussion.

### WHAT ABOUT MEMBERSHIP OF ANOTHER AUTHORITY OR PUBLIC BODY?

You will not normally even need to declare this as an interest. The only exception is where the conflict of interest is so significant it is seen as likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest.

### DO I HAVE TO WITHDRAW IF I HAVE A DISCLOSABLE INTEREST WHICH ISN'T A DPI?

Not normally. You must withdraw only if it:

- affects your **pecuniary interests** **OR** relates to a **planning or regulatory** matter
- **AND** it is seen as likely to **prejudice your judgement** of the public interest.

### DON'T FORGET

- If you have a disclosable interest at a meeting you must **disclose both its existence and nature** – 'as noted/recorded' is insufficient
- **Declarations must relate to specific business** on the agenda
  - General scattergun declarations are not needed and achieve little
- Breaches of most of the **DPI provisions** are now **criminal offences** which may be referred to the police which can on conviction by a court lead to fines up to £5,000 and disqualification up to 5 years
- Formal **dispensation** in respect of interests can be sought in appropriate cases.

**Corporate Parenting Board**  
**Thursday, 12 July 2018, 2.00 pm, County Hall, Worcester**

**Membership:** Mr A C Roberts (Chairman), Ms P A Hill, Mrs L C Hodgson, Dr C Hotham, Cllr Mike Johnson, Mrs F M Oborski, Cllr. Gerry O'Donnell, Mrs J A Potter, Cllr Gareth Prosser, Cllr Margaret Sherrey, Cllr Juliet Smith and Cllr David Watkins

**Agenda**

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| <b>YOUTH VOICE GROUPS MEETING TAKE OVER</b> |   |                |
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| 10  | <b>Future Meeting Dates</b><br><br>20 September 2018 – Corporate Parenting Training<br><br>11 October 2018<br>29 November 2018<br><br>At 2pm at County Hall |                |

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To obtain further information or a copy of this agenda contact Kate Griffiths, Committee Officer, on 01905 846630, KGriffiths@worcestershire.gov.uk

Date of Issue: Tuesday, 3 July 2018

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## Corporate Parenting Board

Thursday, 7 June 2018, County Hall, Worcester - 2.00 pm

### Minutes

#### Present:

Mr A C Roberts (Chairman), Dr C Hotham,  
Cllr Mike Johnson, Mrs F M Oborski, Mrs J A Potter,  
Cllr Margaret Sherrey and Cllr Juliet Smith

#### Also attended:

Kate Bailey, Adam Benkalai, Alison Brill, Judy Chadwick,  
Catherine Driscoll, Gwen Fennell, Kate Griffiths, Ryan  
Hepworth, Vicki Hylan, Jeremy Newell, Selina Rawicz  
and Tina Russell.

#### 134 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Sally Branchflower,  
Ellen Footman, Pattie Hill and Gareth Prosser. Jeremy  
Newell attended for Ellen Footman.

The Chairman welcomed two new members to the  
Board. Mike Johnson who would be representing  
Worcester City Council and Juliet Smith, representing  
Wyre Forest District Council.

#### 135 Confirmation of the Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 March  
2018 were agreed to be a correct record of the meeting  
and were signed by the Chairman.

#### 136 Review of Previous Action Points

Minute 131: Planning for April's Keep in touch visits -  
Some visits had gone ahead but as they had been  
organised before the local elections some Councillors  
had not been available to take part. It was hoped that  
further visits would be organised in future.

#### 137 Not in Education, Employment and Training Update

Judy Chadwick from Babcock Prime, as the Strategic  
Lead for young people Not in Education, Employment or  
Training (NEET) explained that all Local Authorities have  
statutory obligations to ensure there were suitable  
education and training places for young people over  
compulsory school age but under 19 and for those up to  
25 with a Learning Disability Assessment or Education,  
Health Care Plan.

Local Authorities must identify those covered by the duty,  
ensure there was a sufficiency of places and promote  
participation. Local Authorities also had to provide  
strategic leadership by ensuring services worked  
together with partners such as Local Enterprise  
Partnerships, Jobcentre Plus, employers, health services

and police. Work was also done with neighbouring authorities.

Following significant work between 2013 and 2016, the number of NEETs in Worcestershire was at the low rate of 2.8% identified as true NEETs and 1.30% as unknown. This combined figure of 4.1% was low compared to 6.7% across England and 7.7% across the West Midlands. The number of Looked After Children who were presently NEET in Worcestershire Care Services was 23.

In the past year Babcock had been looking at barriers to inclusion and highlighted that the most vulnerable children could not access the services as they were not structured to support them. Since December 2017 Babcock's post 16 services had been re-structured and in future one of the NEET case workers would focus on Looked After Children.

The County Council offered a number of programmes to support Looked After Children which included study programmes, careers advice, on-line information, work experience and apprenticeships. Business mentoring was planned to start in the autumn when 10 young people would be matched with mentors from business and a bid had been put into the European Social Fund to help NEETs in North Worcestershire. It was felt that great strides had been made in joined up working.

During the discussion the following points were made:

- Board members were concerned that there had been a number of redundancies in the Post 16 team at Babcock but it was explained that the new structure meant that Babcock was not just offering a careers service which Looked After Children may find difficult to access. The new structure would be more accessible with a Seek and Reach programme and a mentoring service,
- Although the figure for NEETs at less than 3% could be seen as good news it was still too high. The Careers Service was not good for some young people and the County Council as Corporate Parent needed to do more to find placements for Looked After Children within the 'family firm',
- It was agreed that a target should be considered that so many apprenticeships should be filled by Looked After Children,
- Members wondered why current vacancies could not be matched to Looked After Children. An

example was given of someone looking for a Mechanics apprenticeship which may be difficult to find within the County Council. Members felt however that partner organisations such as the Fire or Ambulance Service should be able to help,

- The Chairman suggested that Looked After Children could receive help with their CVs and they could then be presented to those recruiting to positions at the Council. This suggestion was amended to have the list of vacancies shown to the young people so they had more control over applying for the vacancies which they felt were suitable for them,
- It was felt that all contractors within Districts should be asked to commit to supporting work placements for Looked After Children,
- Health Services should also be involved to help prepare vulnerable young people for work. It was clarified that that was the role of the Health and Care Trust and would probably already be part of the package of mental health support and in the first instance GPs would need to refer young people for such programmes,
- As the referral system to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) often took a long time it was felt that some additional recommendations were needed
- It was clarified that some of the figures looked different because some were recorded when the September guarantee of places for young people had been in place, but then later on not all places were taken up,
- Colleges had recognised that there was an issue with some youngsters not having the required qualifications in order to access college courses and more bridging courses were now in place,
- Take Over days were mentioned when young people were able to experience work placements but it was felt that more could be done to offer work experience.

### **ACTIONS:**

- a) Judy Chadwick to consider if a target could be set for the numbers of apprenticeships given by the Council which were filled by Looked After Children,**
- b) Selina Rawicz and Judy Chadwick to consider the procedure to enable the list of Council Vacancies to be shown to all Looked After Children Who were looking for work. For**

**138 Unaccompanied  
Asylum Seeking  
Children**

**appropriate positions they would be interviewed first,**

- c) The County Council, Districts and Partners of the Board to consider how they support our looked after children and care leavers to have access to the 'Family Firm' through work experience, apprenticeships and job opportunities,**
- d) District Councils to consider how their own commissioning could ensure contracts include a 'social value added' measure to offer Looked After Children and Care Leavers work and training opportunities.**

Adam Benkalai, Team Manager for Looked After Children explained that there were 23 unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children in Worcestershire. The Children had been picked up by the police at service stations and had been handed straight over to the Looked After Children team. The Looked After Children Team worked with the Home Office on their Asylum applications.

The children often had no personal possessions and most had been trafficked and were vulnerable to exploitation. The children may have been badly treated or be experiencing mental health difficulties. It was challenging at times for social workers to help them as they often had no information about their childhood and backgrounds. Often the children did not know their birthday due to cultural differences to birthdays, so an age assessment needed to be carried out, which then needed to be agreed by the home office.

How the young people were dealt with depended on the status assigned to them by the home office so options needed to be in place while the decision on their status was awaited. Most young people would get leave to remain until they turned 18.

Of the 23 unaccompanied asylum seeking children looked after by Worcestershire most were not placed in Worcestershire. This was mainly because the young people chose to live in other areas like Birmingham, where there were established communities and their cultural needs were better met.

During the discussion the following points were clarified:

- Social Workers had to follow statutory guidelines for visits to Looked After Children which said that visits should take place at least every 6 weeks regardless of where the young person was placed,

**139 Corporate Parenting District Events**

- Legislation meant that responsibility for Looked After Children remained with Worcestershire even when the Children were placed in different authorities,
- The children all had links to education where they were living, which helped to set up a network of support to keep the child safe, as well as the support they received from the social worker assigned to them,
- Work was being done nationally to ensure that duties to unaccompanied asylum seeking children were shared around different authorities. Worcestershire had not yet signed up to that agreement,
- A large number of the young people had been placed in Birmingham as they had more experience of dealing with different nationalities and were better able to meet their cultural needs than rural areas of Worcestershire
- There was no dedicated social worker for Asylum seeking Children but each one was placed directly with the Through Care Permanency Team. This was a positive change recently, ensuring that children don't need to have unnecessary changes of social worker. The Lead Team Managers were Adam Benkalai and James McDonald.

**The Chairman thanked Adam for the update regarding Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.**

The Corporate Parenting District Events had been organised by a cross party working group set up the previous Council Chairman, Anne Hingley. The Working Group had included representatives from each District, and each County Councillor had been asked to contribute £100 from their divisional fund towards the visits.

The Working Group had been disbanded but it was hoped that the Corporate Parenting Board would support the work of the group going forward. It was suggested that District Councillors should take an active role within these events and could request £100 from their County Councillor's divisional fund. Other funding opportunities open to districts should also be explored.

It was suggested that the Corporate Parenting Board needed to suggest to the District Councils that a group should be set up to continue the work.

**ACTION**

**140 Work Plan**

**The Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Board supported the continuation of the Corporate Parenting District Events and would write to District Councillors to encourage a group to be set up to organise these events.**

The July meeting of the Board would be organised by Youth Voice Groups but would also include the IRO Annual Report, the Board's Annual Report and data from Quarter 4.

An additional meeting had been scheduled for **20 September** 2pm – 5pm for training for Board members.

The October meeting would then deal with:

- Virtual School update
- Social Tenancy Rents
- Quarter 1 Data
- Healthy Care Steering Group Annual Report

**141 Future Meeting Dates**

**Meeting dates for 2018**

**12 July 2018**  
**20 September 2018 (ADDITIONAL MEETING)**  
**11 October 2018**  
**29 November 2018**

The meeting ended at 3.25pm

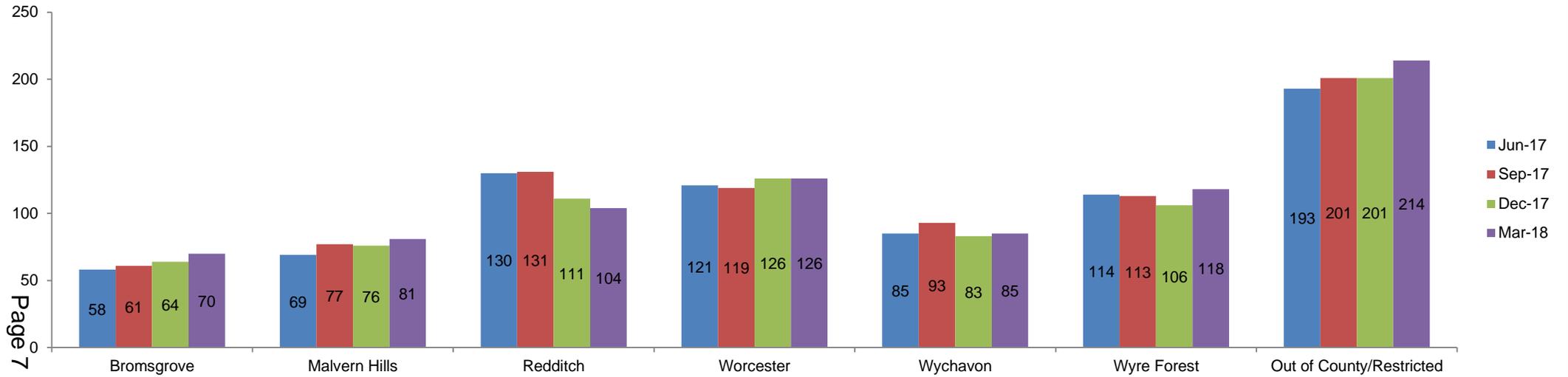
Chairman .....

# District Profiles

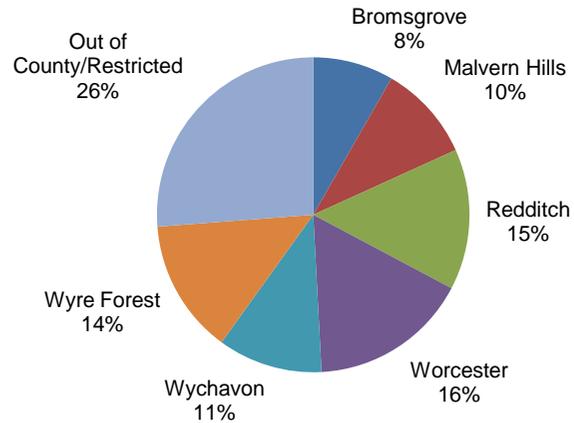
## Looked After Children

(Children who are in the care of the Local Authority and for whom the Council has corporate parent responsibility)

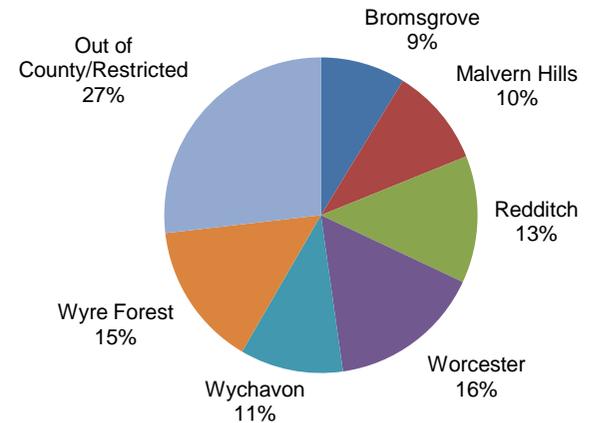
### Looked After Children by District of Placement Postcode



### December 2017



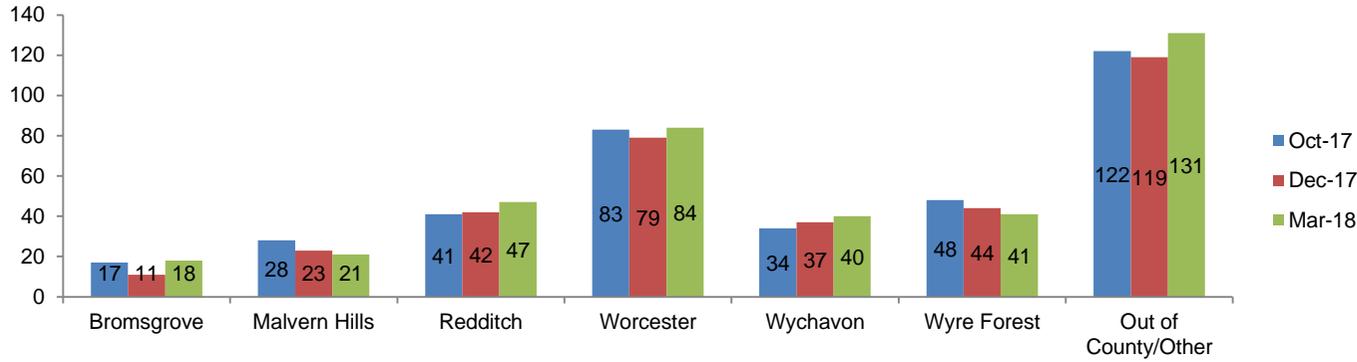
### March 2018



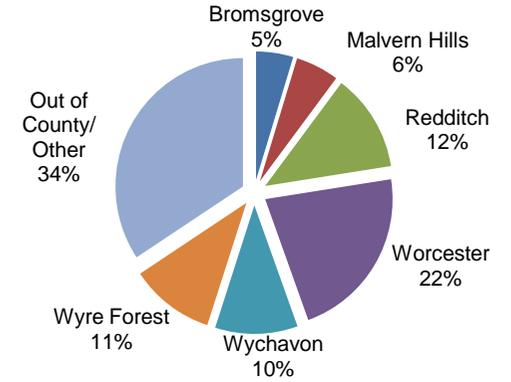
NB Numbers below 10 have been suppressed in charts

## Care Leavers

Care Leavers by District of Main Postcode



Care Leavers - Distribution March 2018



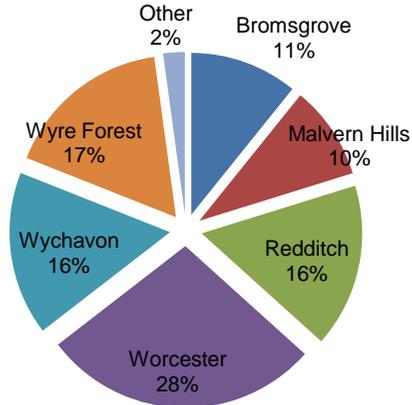
## Child Protection

(Children who meet the threshold for significant harm and are subject to a Child Protection Plan)

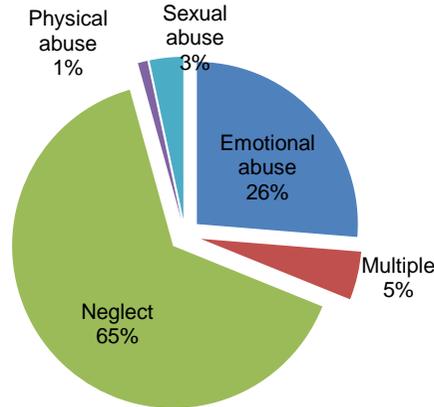
## Children in Need

(Children who are open to Social Work intervention and are not Looked After or on a Child Protection Plan)

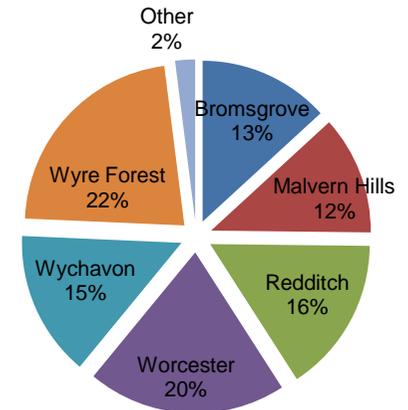
Child Protection Plan as at 31/03/2018 by District of Main Postcode



Child Protection Plan as at 31/03/2018 by Latest Category

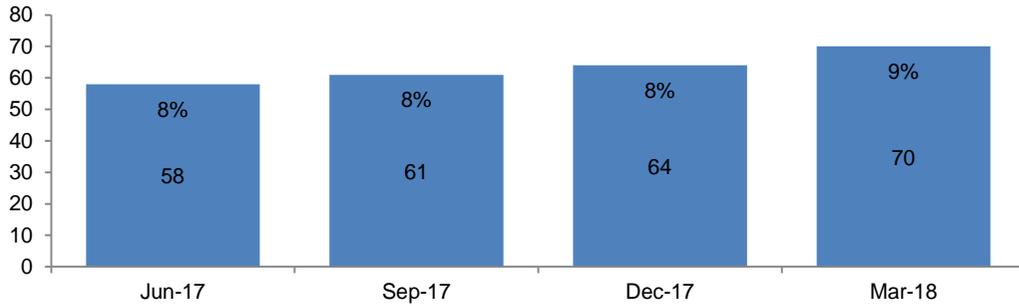


Children In Need as at 31/03/2018 by District of Main Postcode

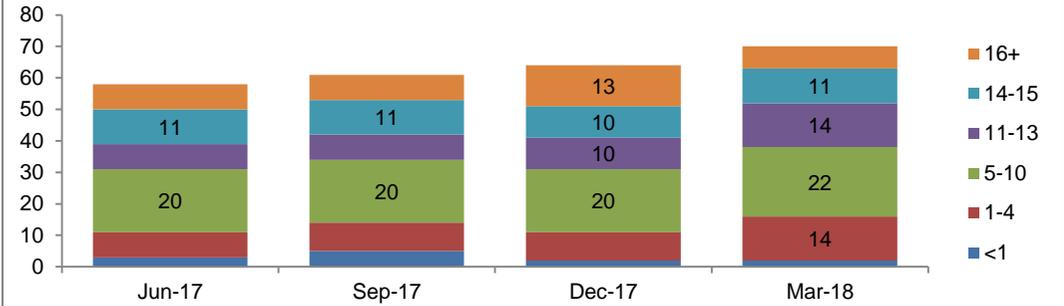


# Bromsgrove

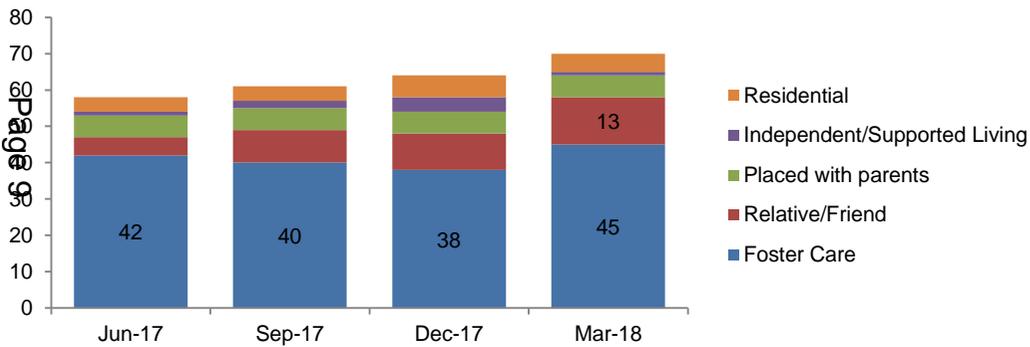
## Looked After Children - Number



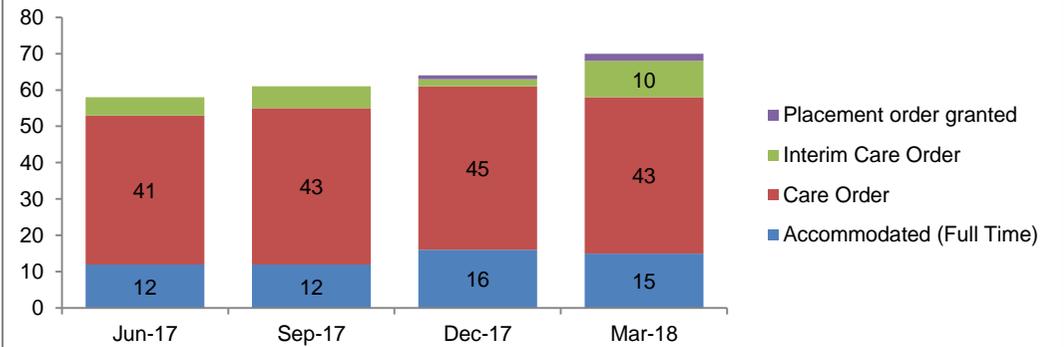
## Looked After Children - Age



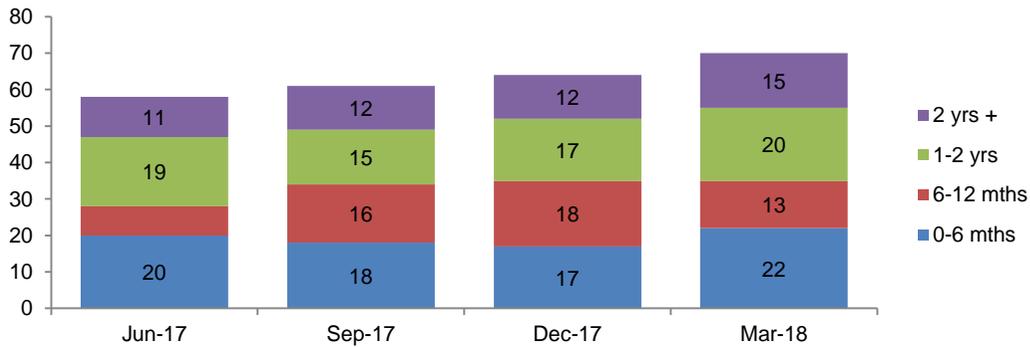
## Looked After Children - Placement Type



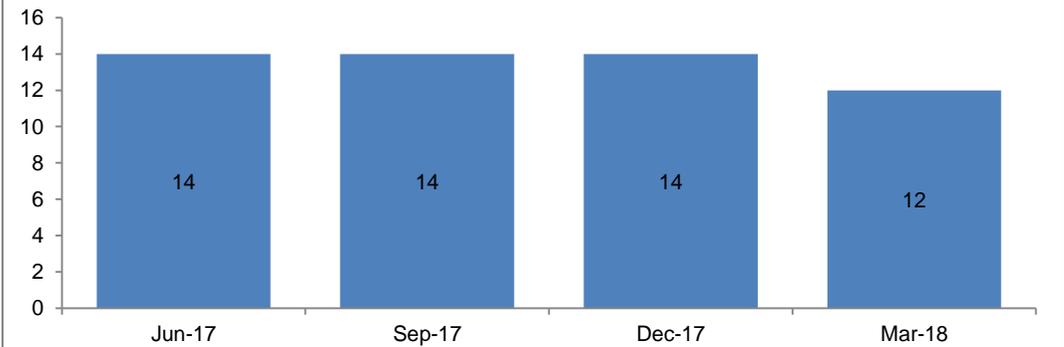
## Looked After Children - Legal Status



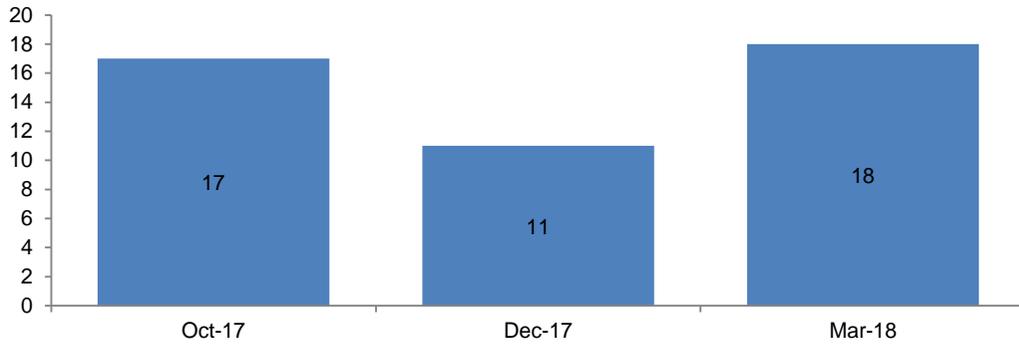
## Looked After Children - Length in Placement



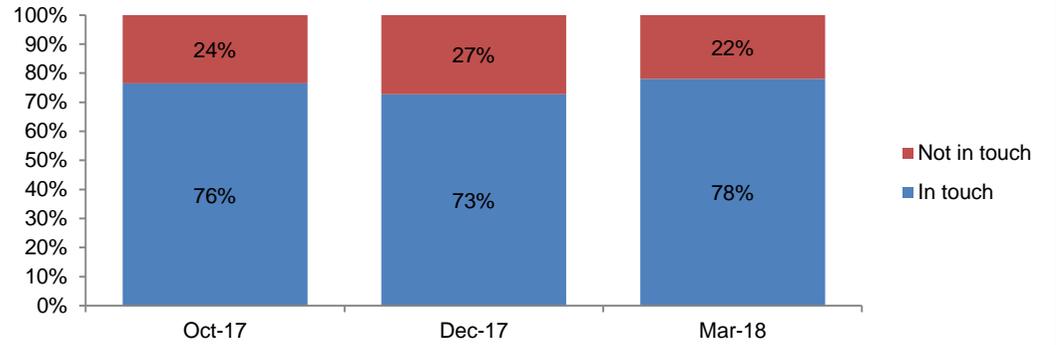
## Council Foster Carers - Households



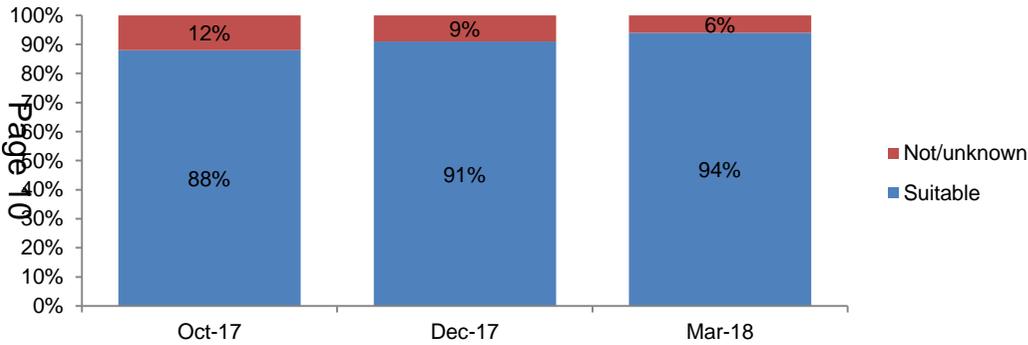
**Number of Care Leavers Open for Services**



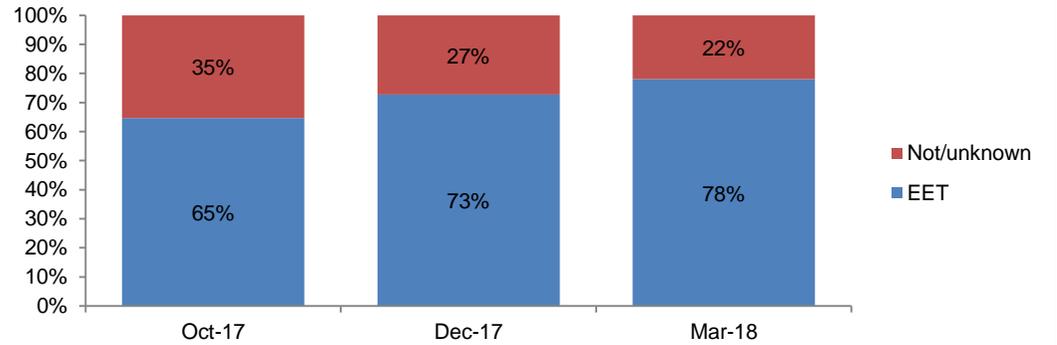
**Percentage of Care Leavers In Touch**



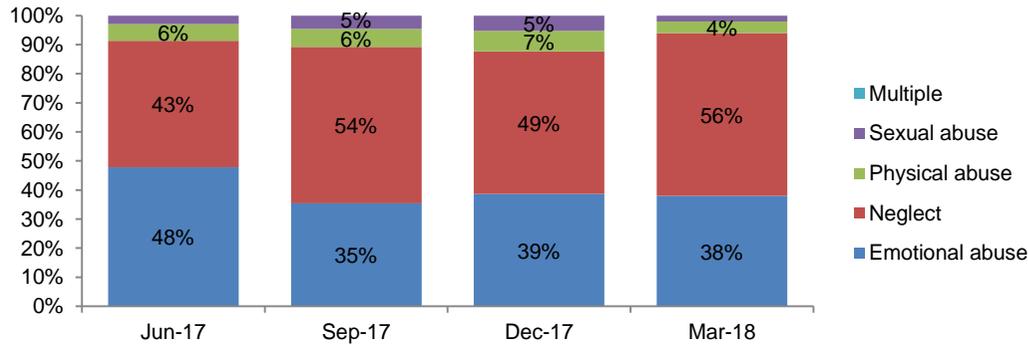
**Percentage of Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation**



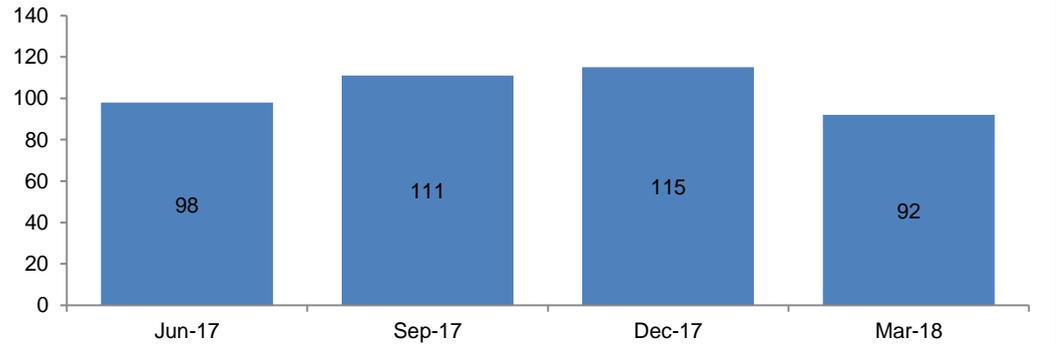
**Percentage of Care Leavers in Education/Employment/Training**



**Percentage of Child Protection Plans by Latest Category**

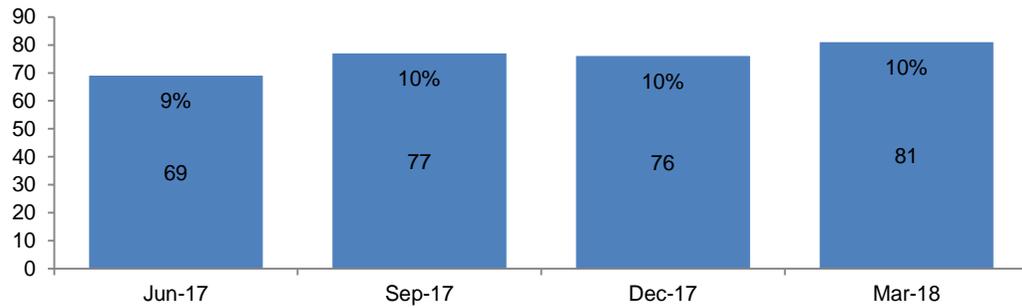


**Children In Need - Number**

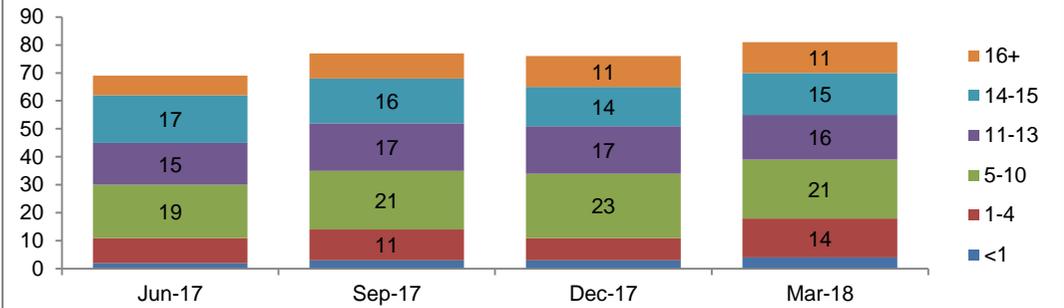


## Malvern

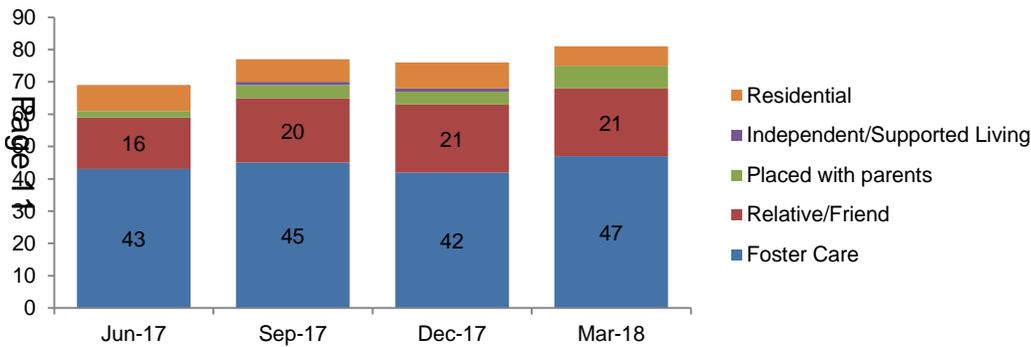
### Looked After Children - Number



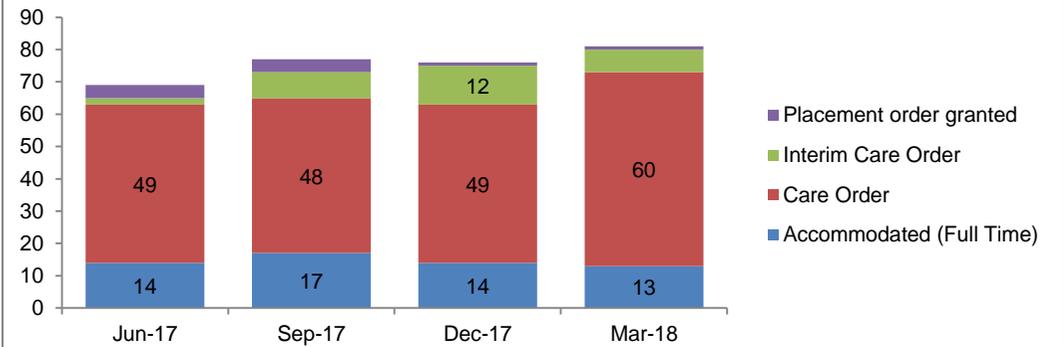
### Looked After Children - Age



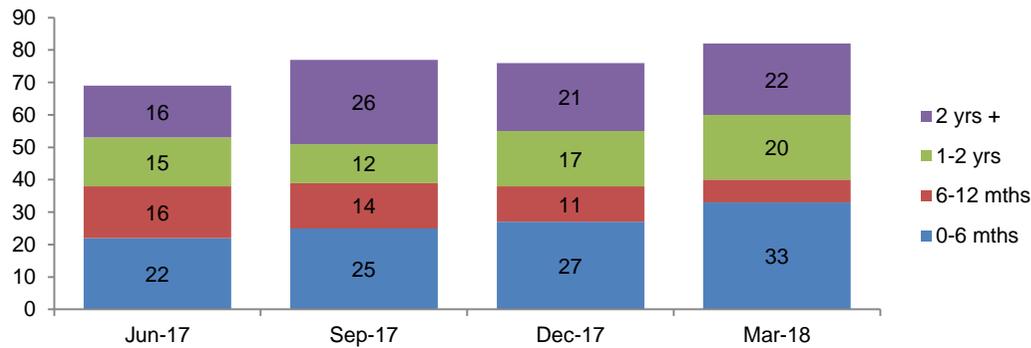
### Looked After Children - Placement Type



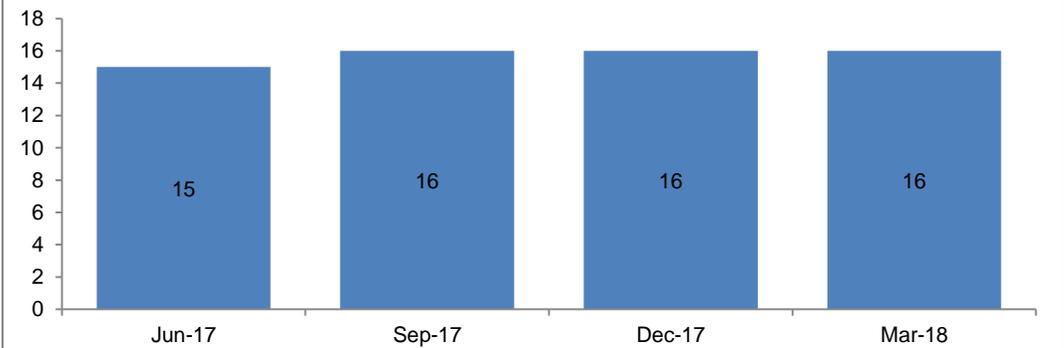
### Looked After Children - Legal Status



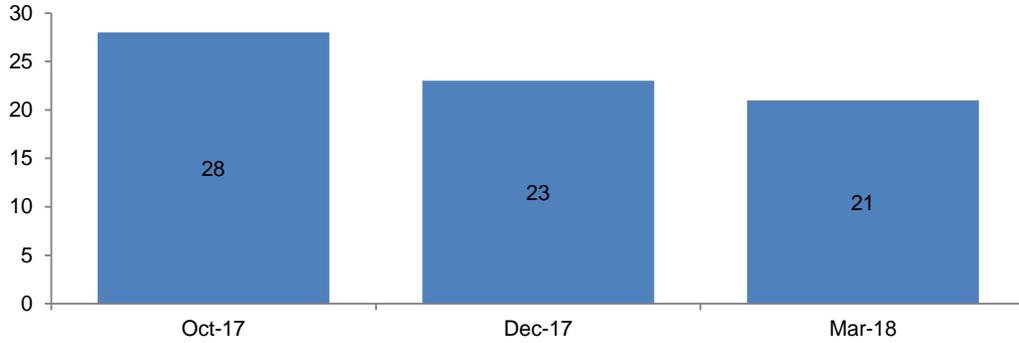
### Looked After Children - Length in Placement



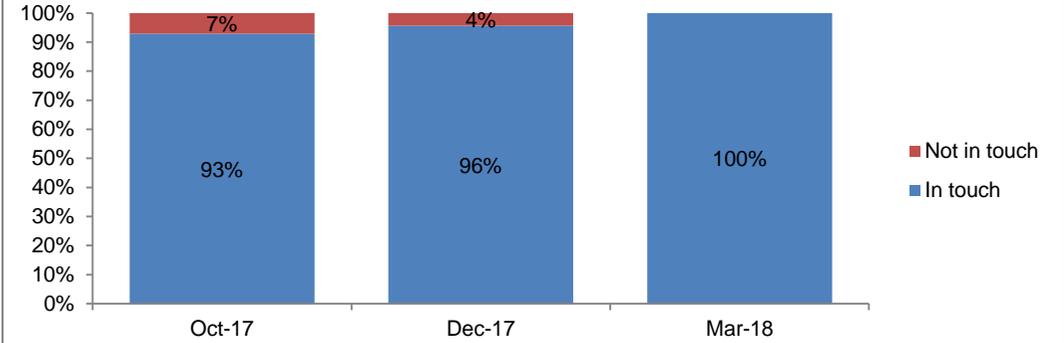
### Council Foster Carers - Households



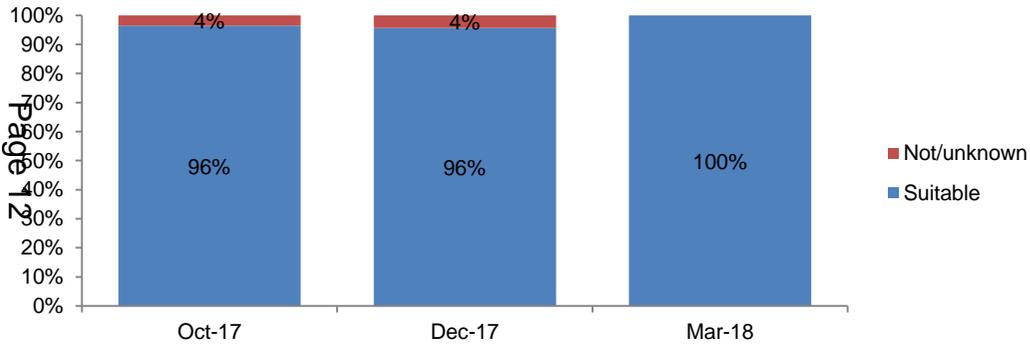
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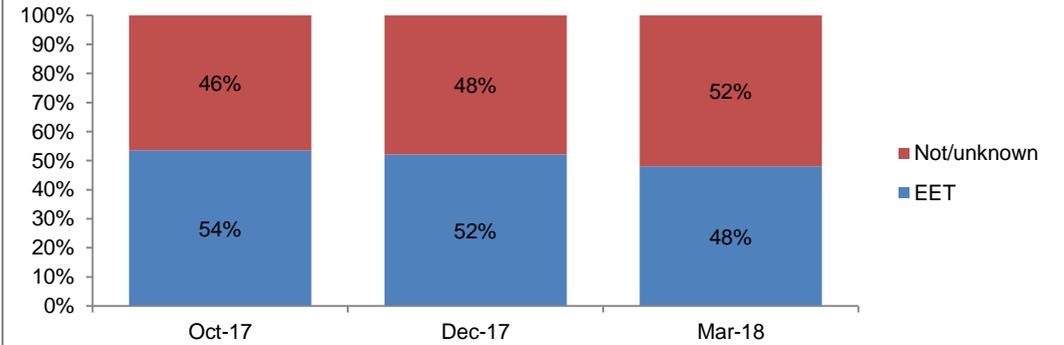
**Percentage of Care Leavers In Touch**



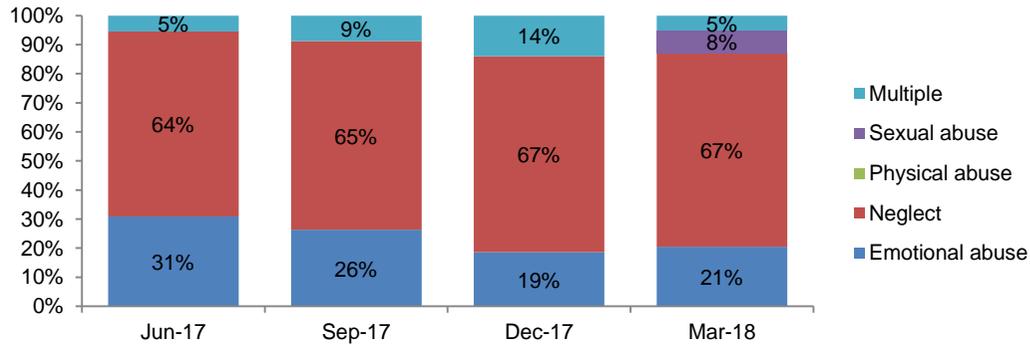
**Percentage of Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation**



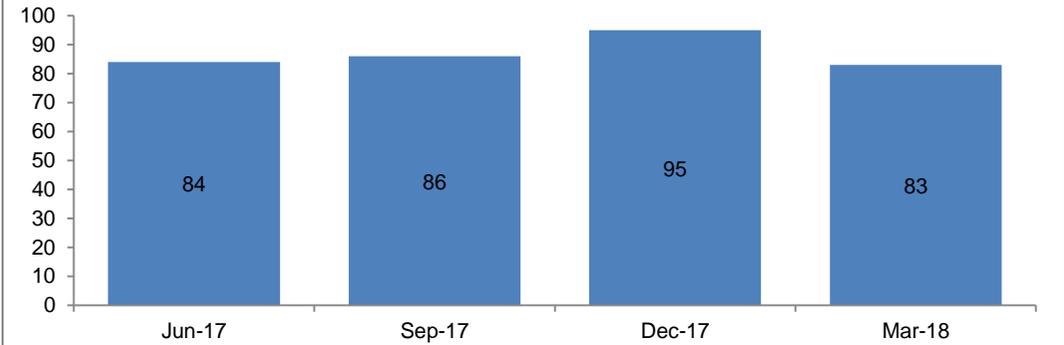
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**Percentage of Child Protection Plans by Latest Category**

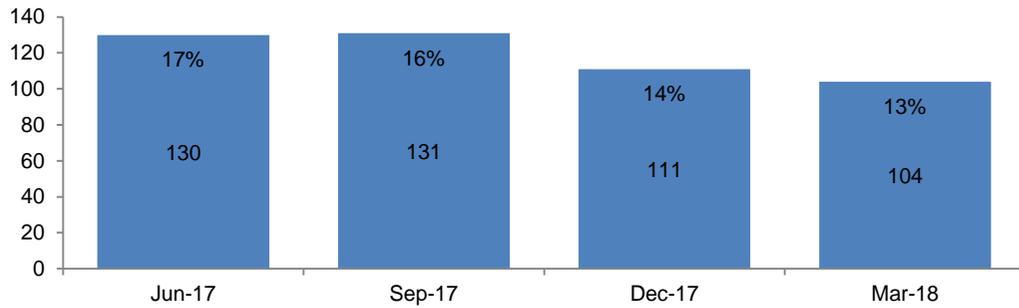


**Children In Need - Number**

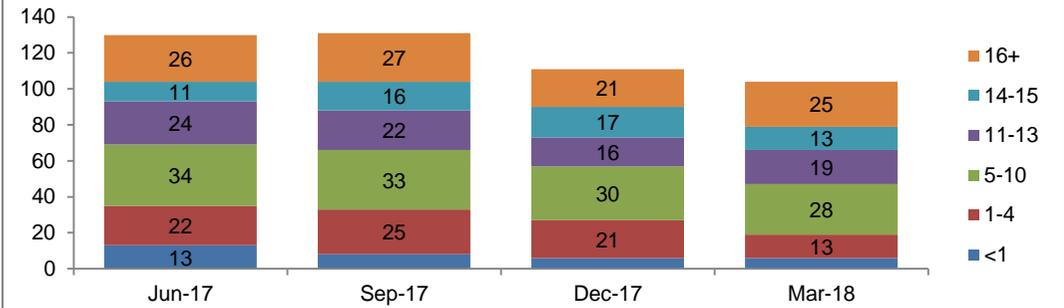


## Redditch

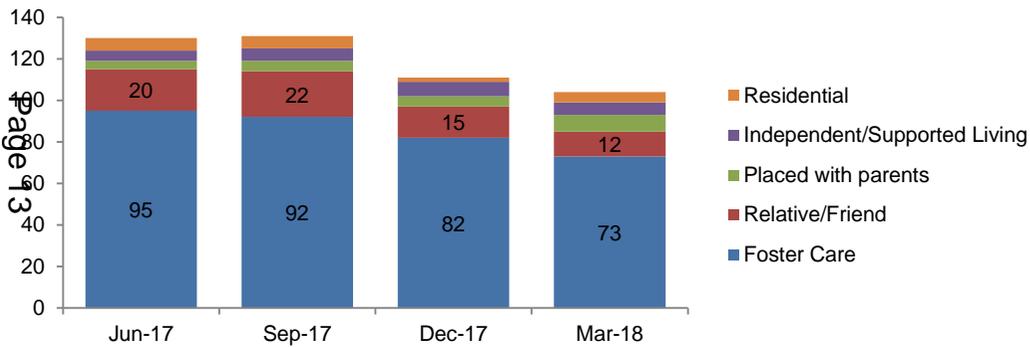
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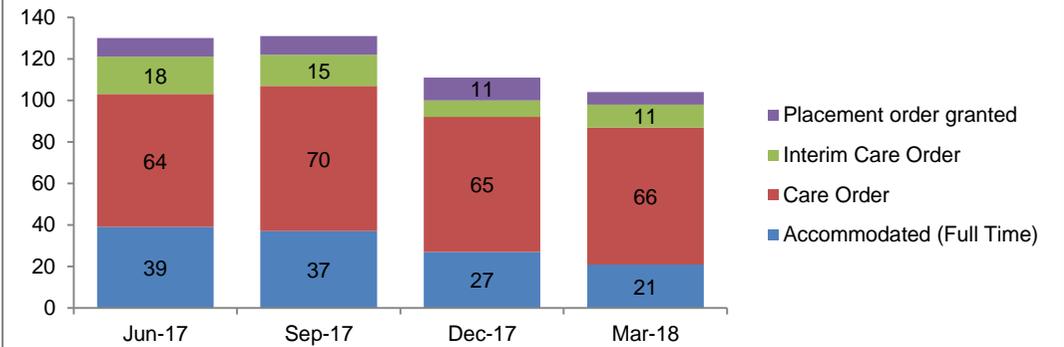
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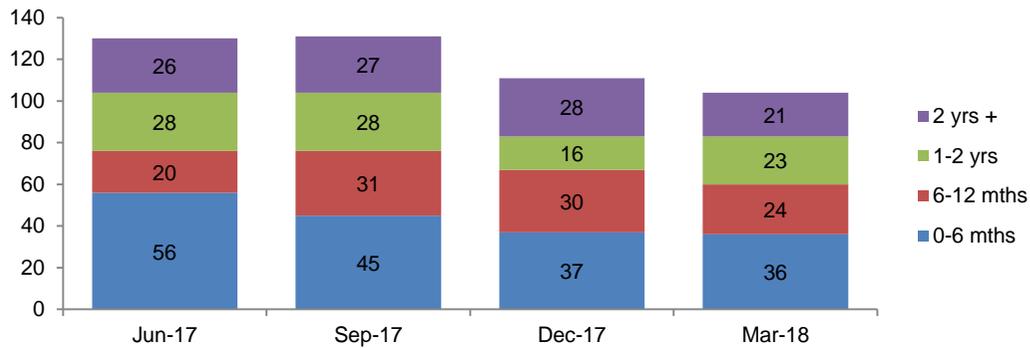
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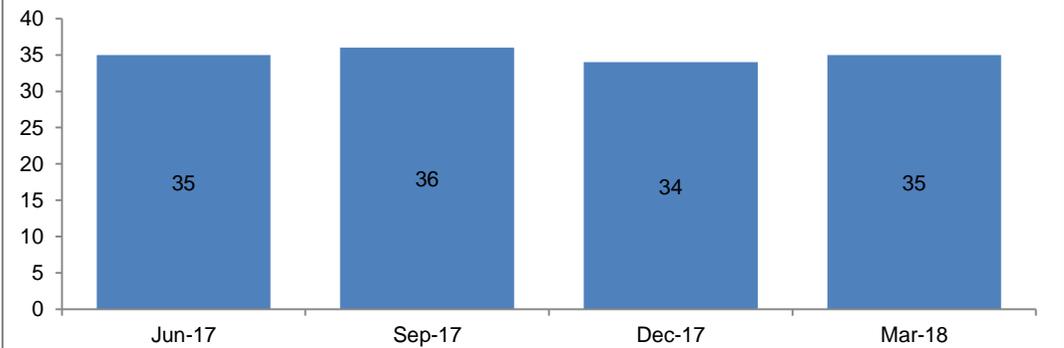
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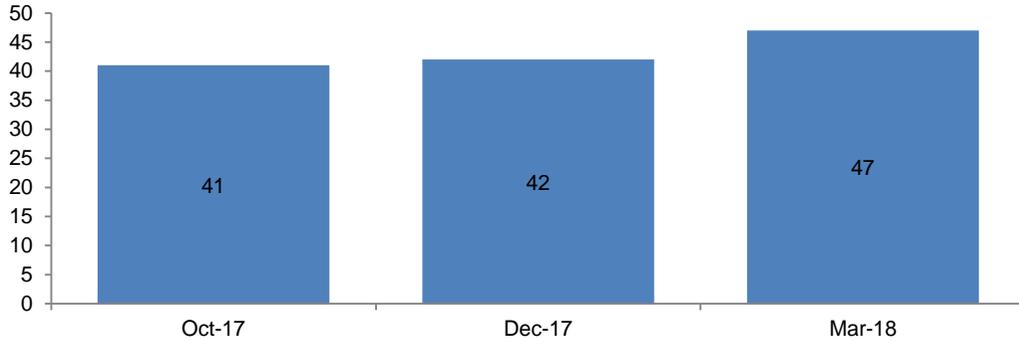
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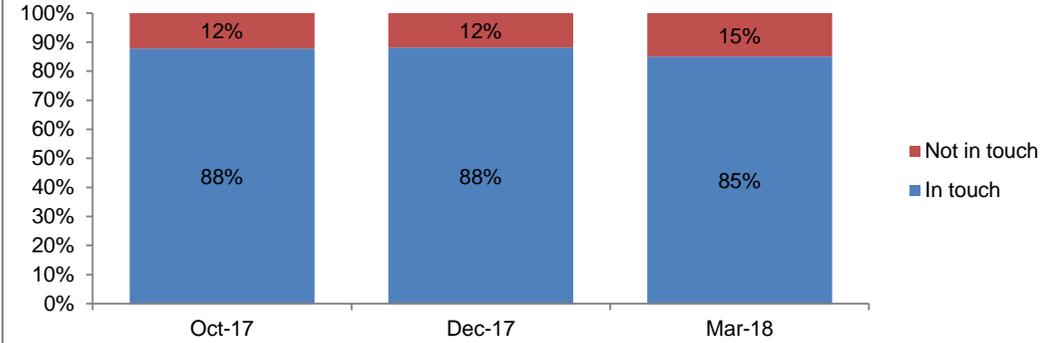
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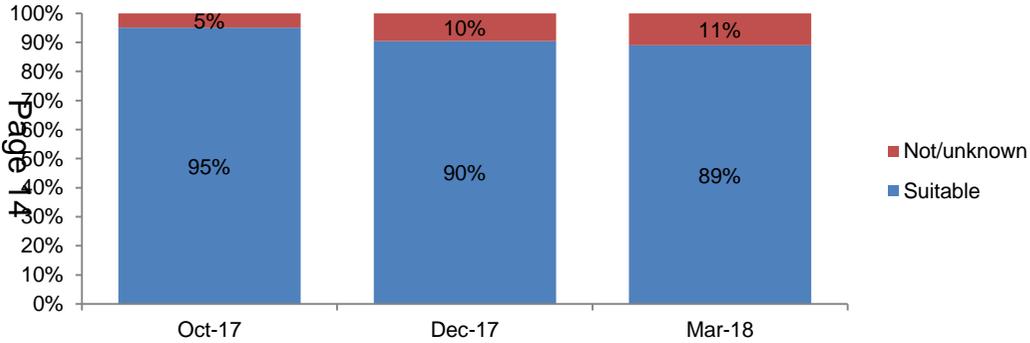
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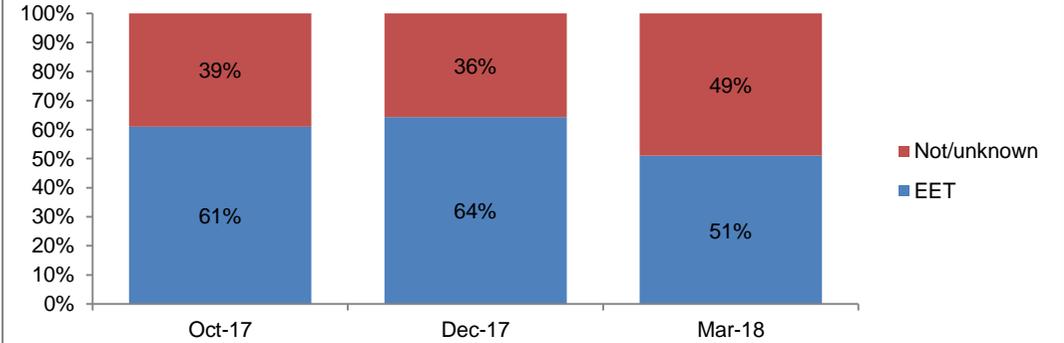
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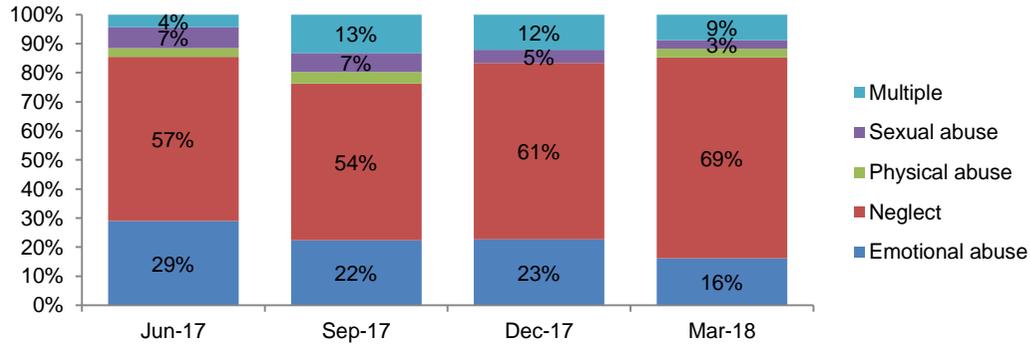
**Percentage of Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation**



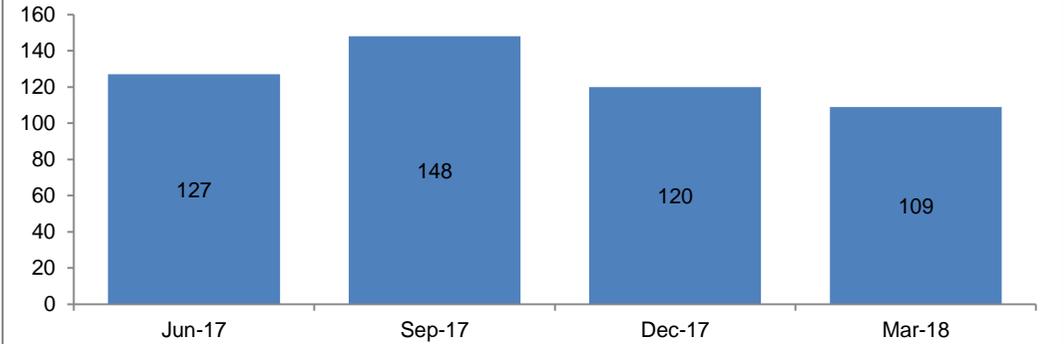
**Percentage of Care Leavers in Education/Employment/Training**



**Percentage of Child Protection Plans by Latest Category**

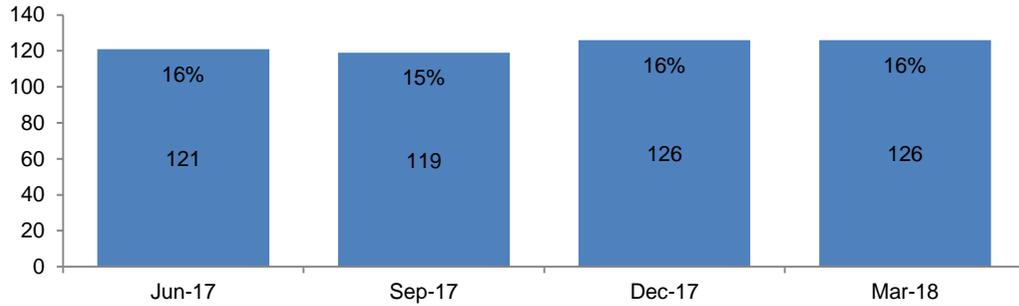


**Children In Need - Number**

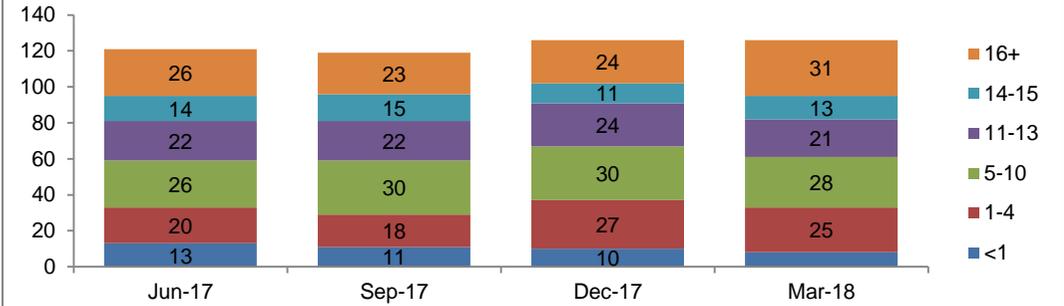


## Worcester

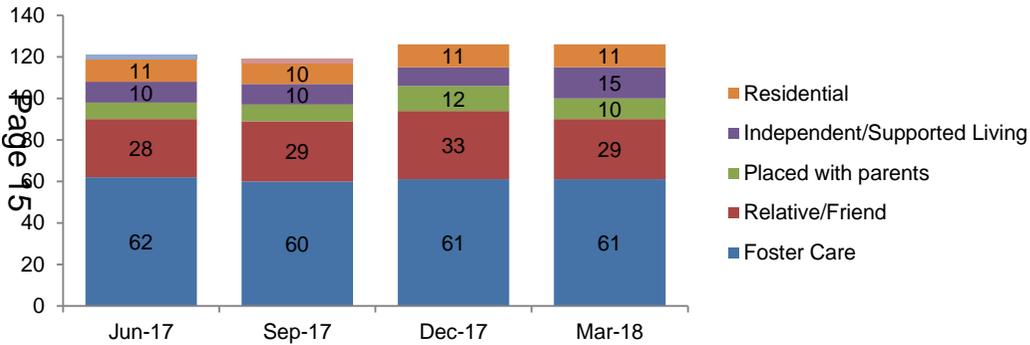
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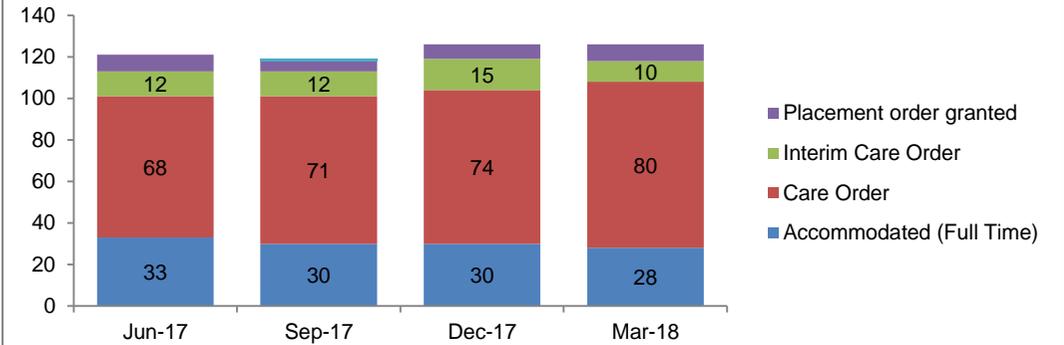
### Looked After Children - Age



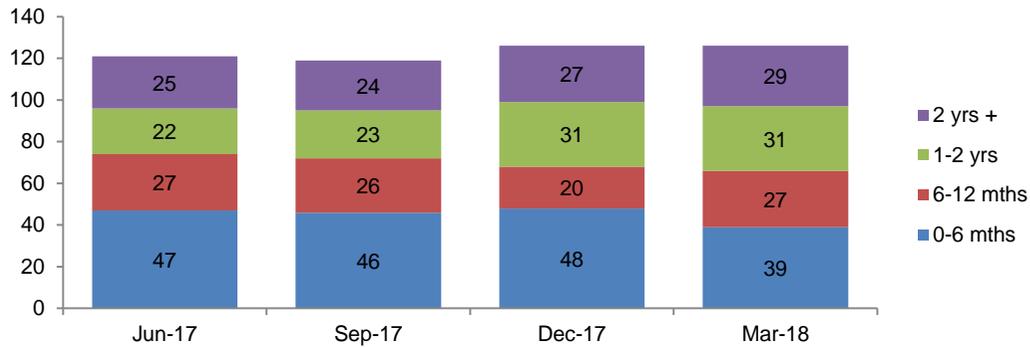
### Looked After Children - Placement Type



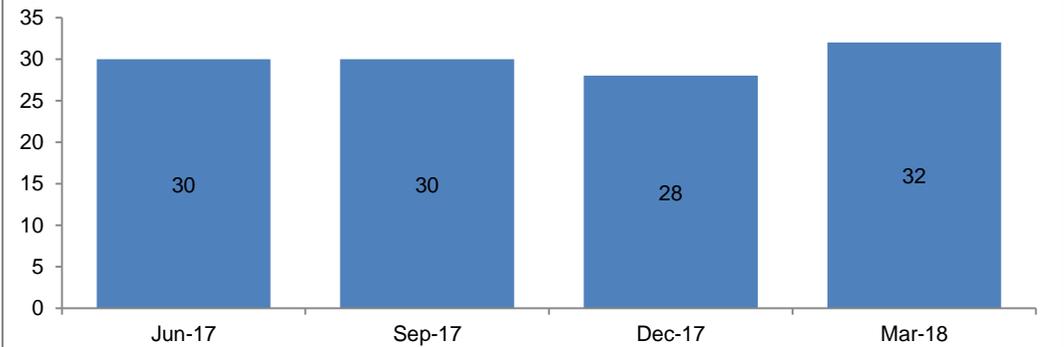
### Looked After Children - Legal Status



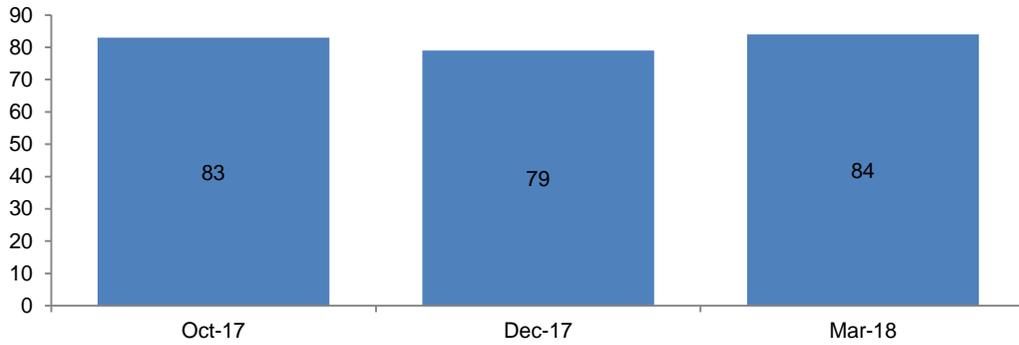
### Looked After Children - Length in Placement



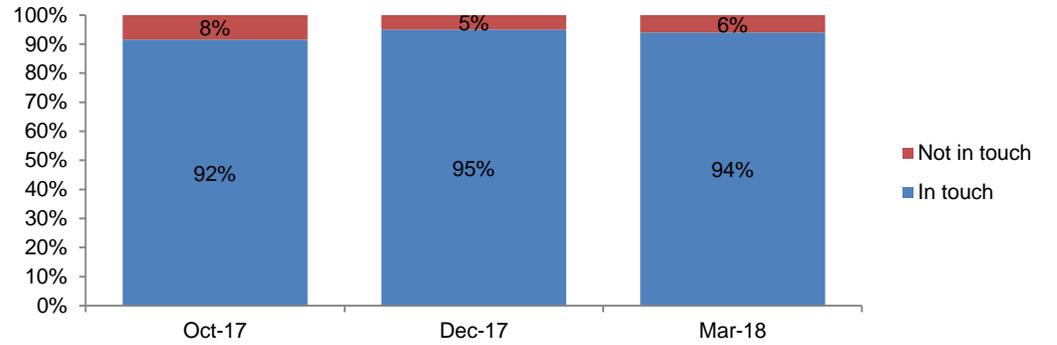
### Council Foster Carers - Households



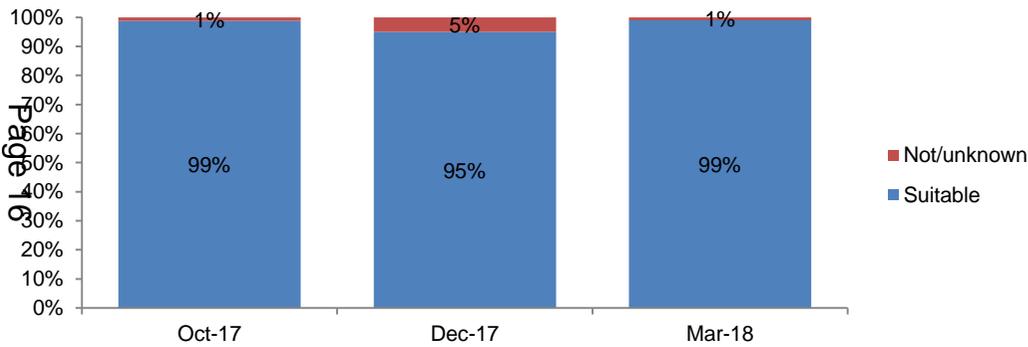
**Number of Care Leavers Open for Services**



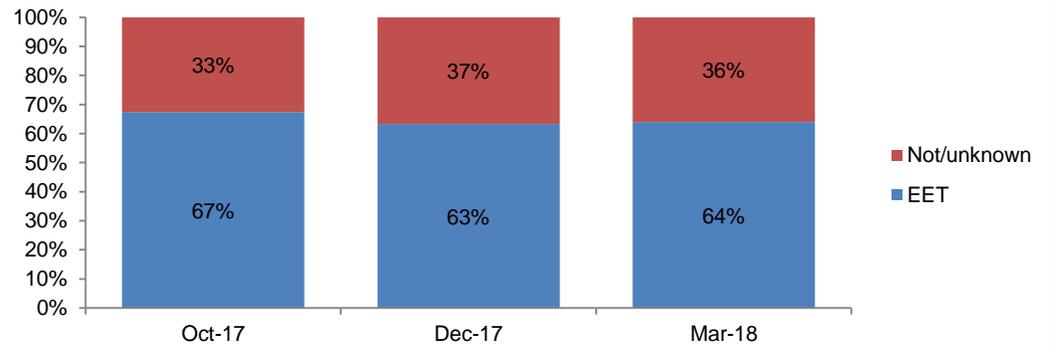
**Percentage of Care Leavers In Touch**



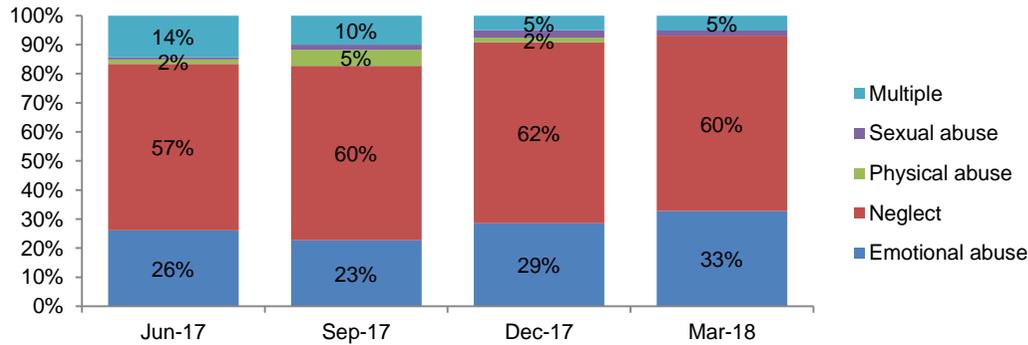
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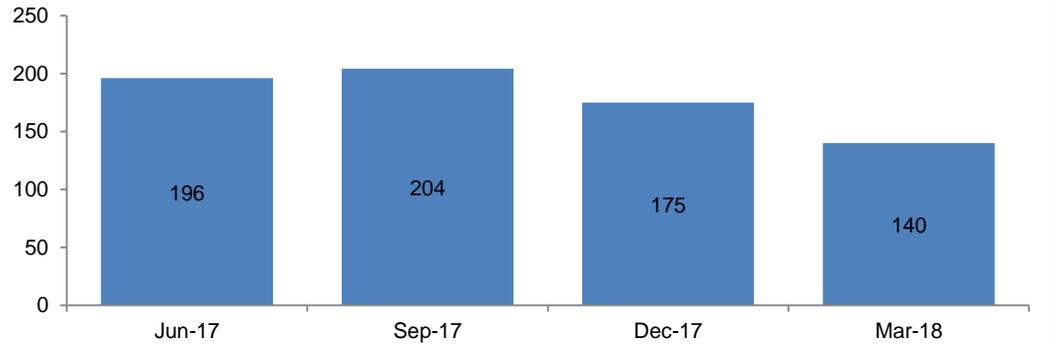
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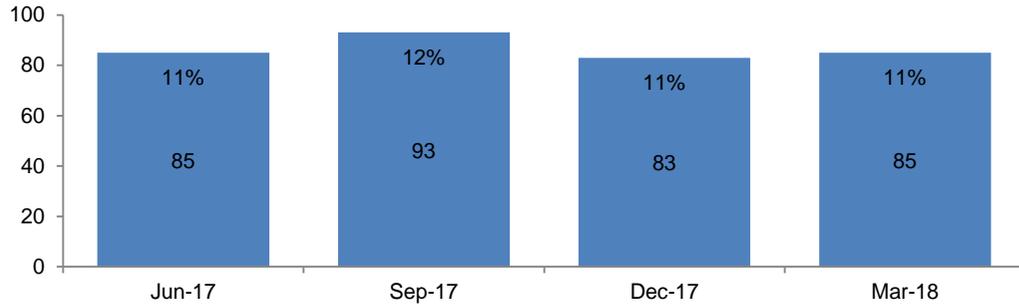


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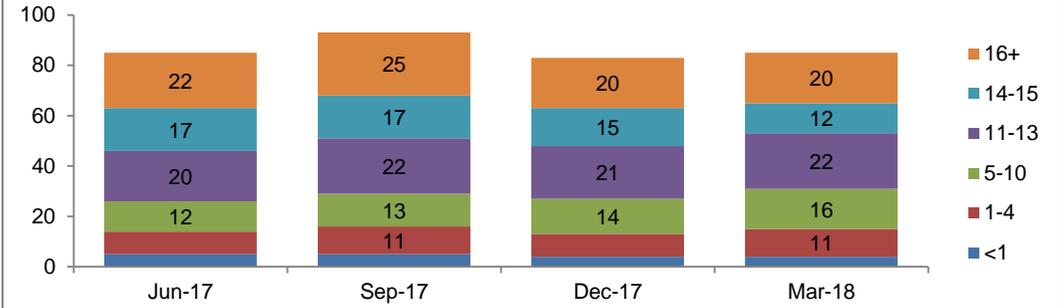


# Wychavon

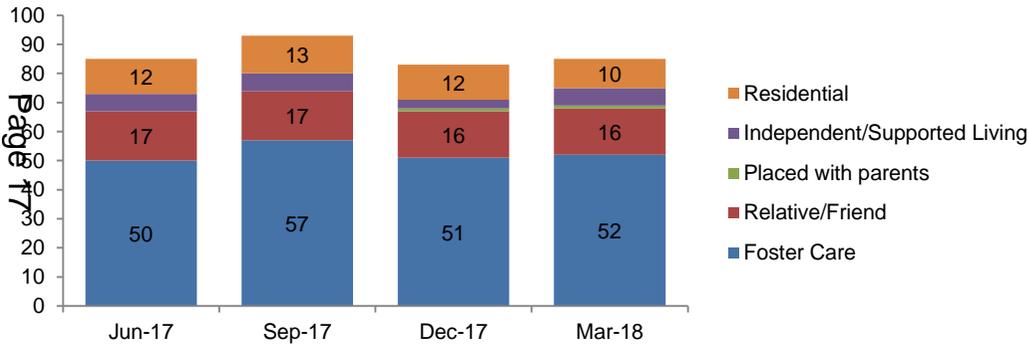
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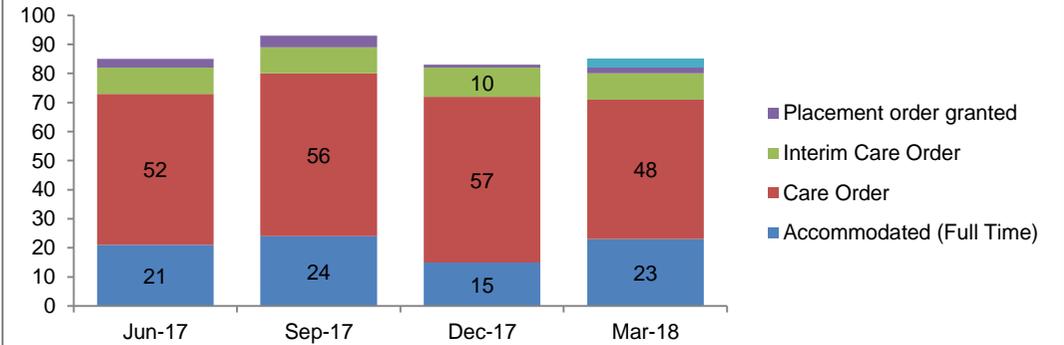
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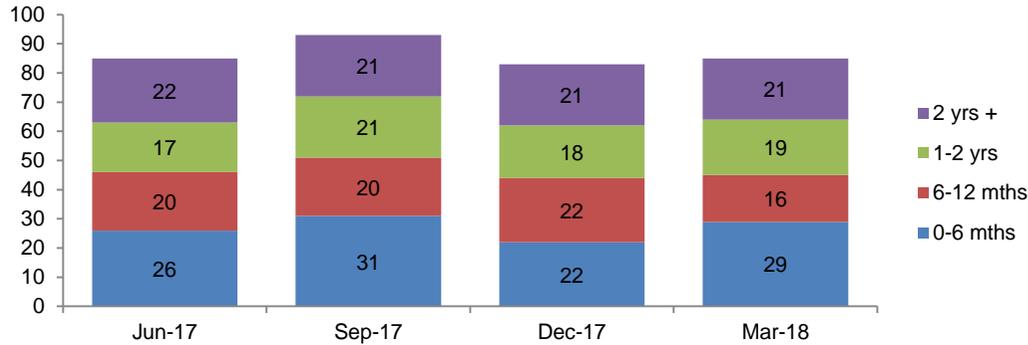
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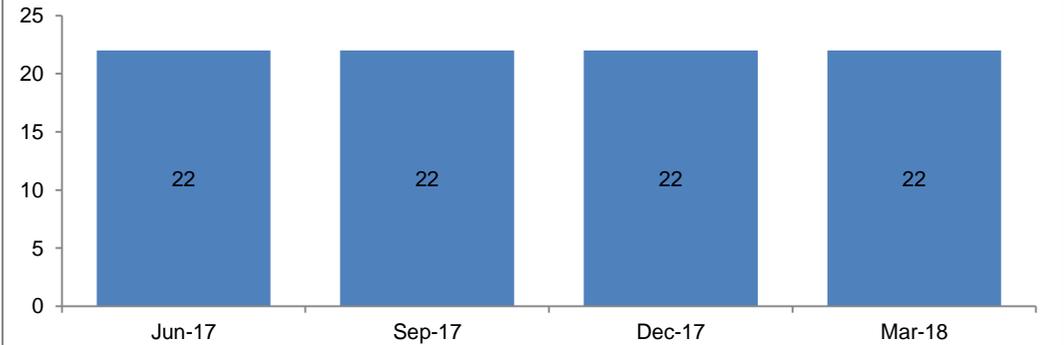
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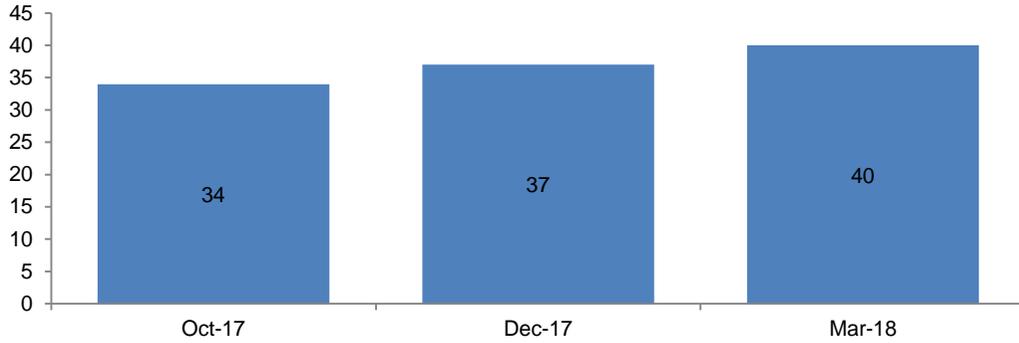
## Looked After Children - Length in Placement



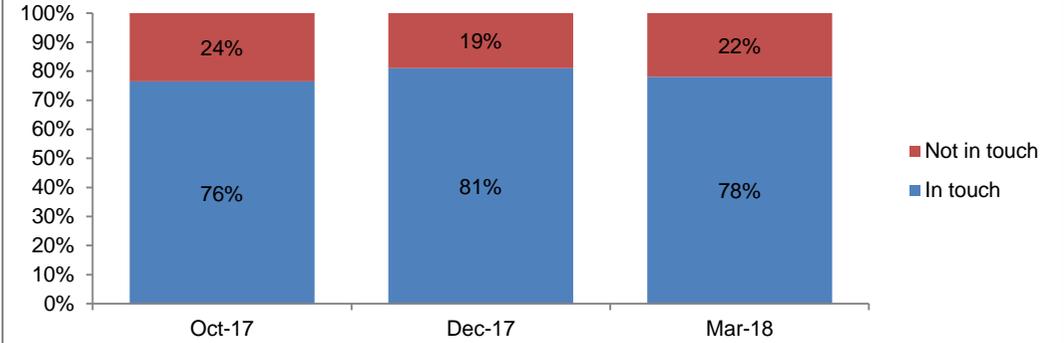
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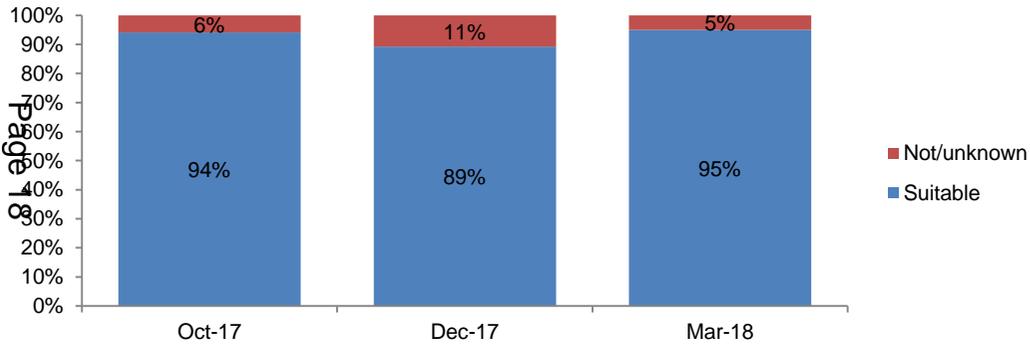
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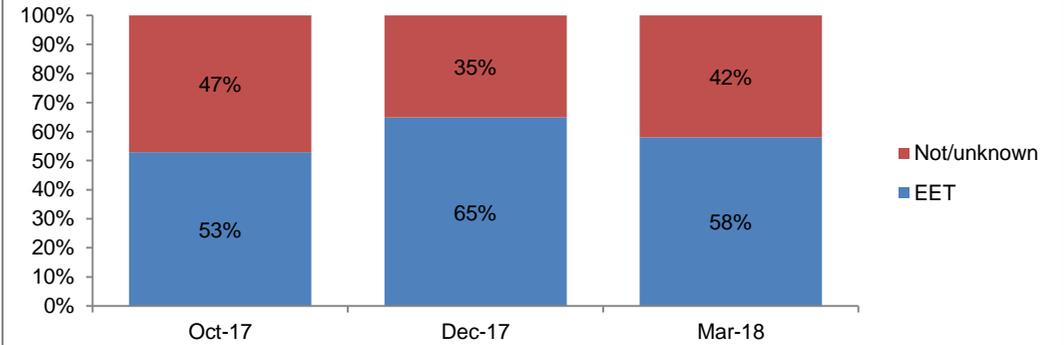
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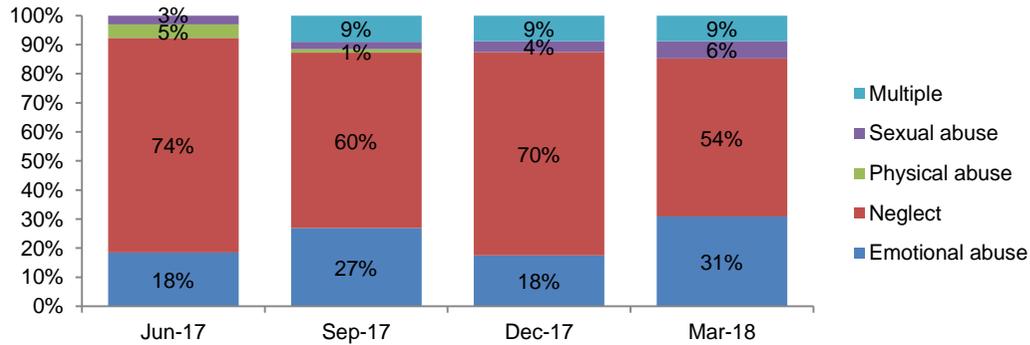
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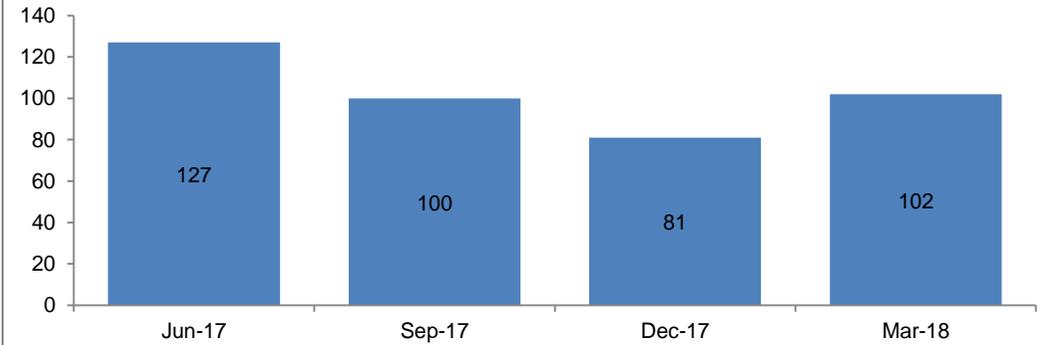
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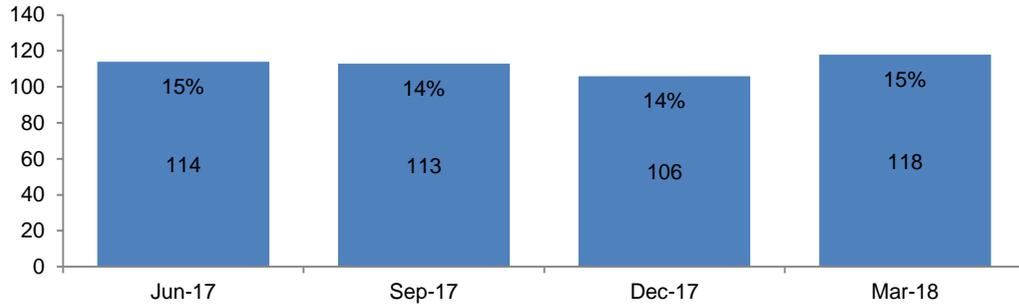


**Children In Need - Number**

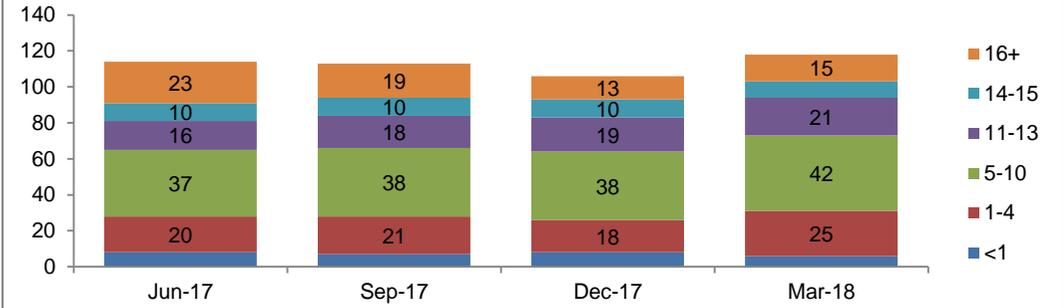


# Wyre Forest

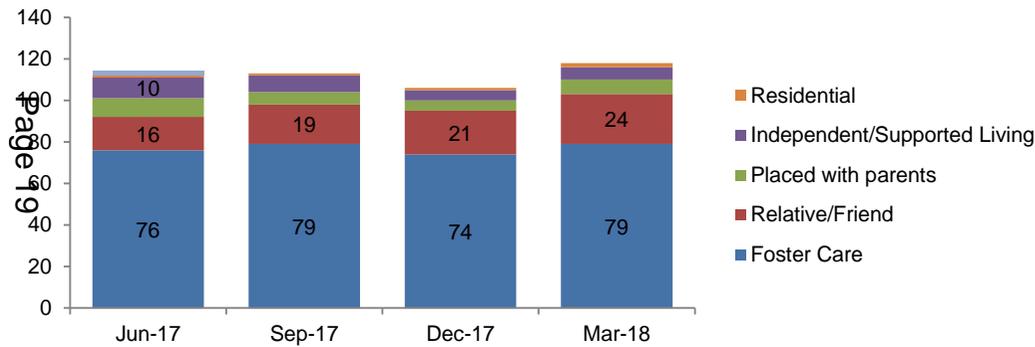
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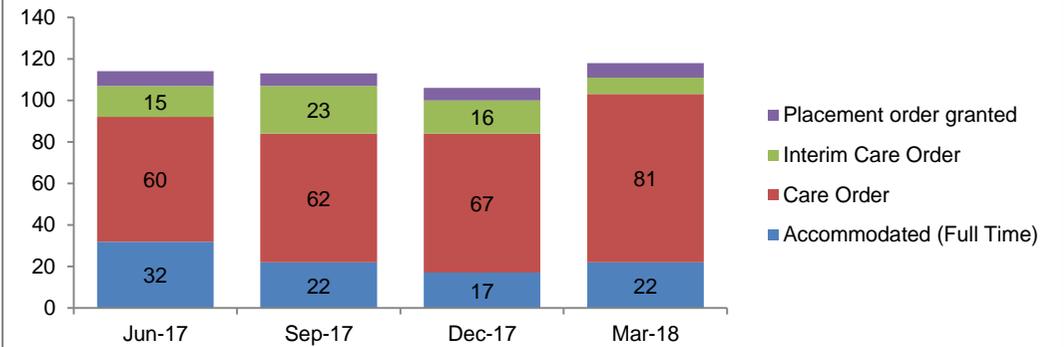
## Looked After Children - Age



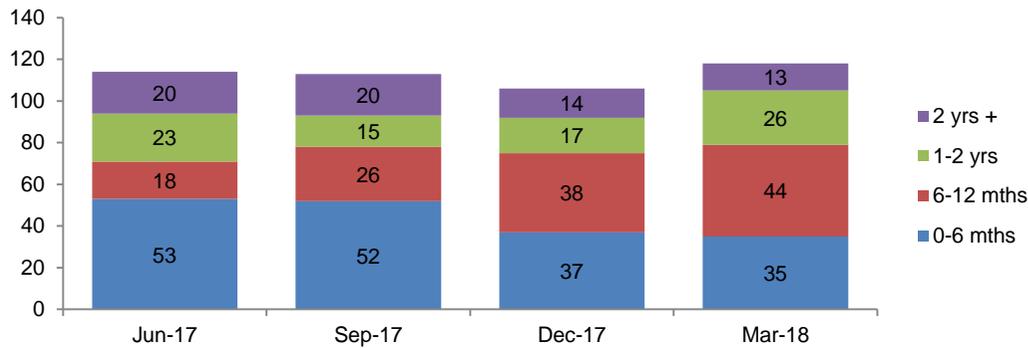
## Looked After Children - Placement Type



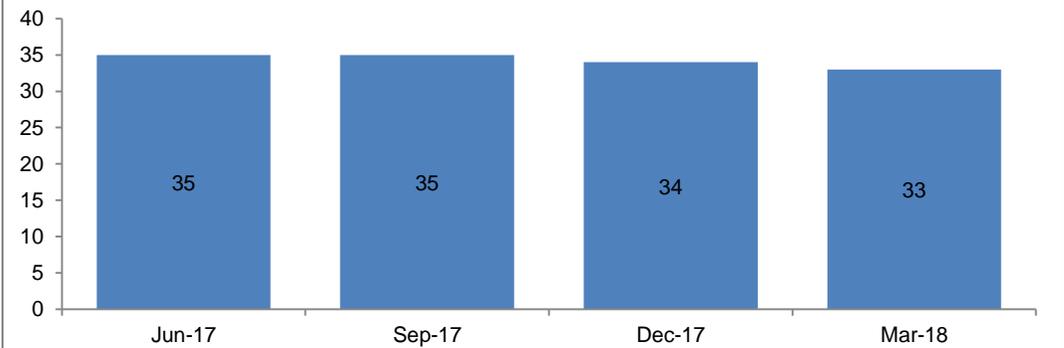
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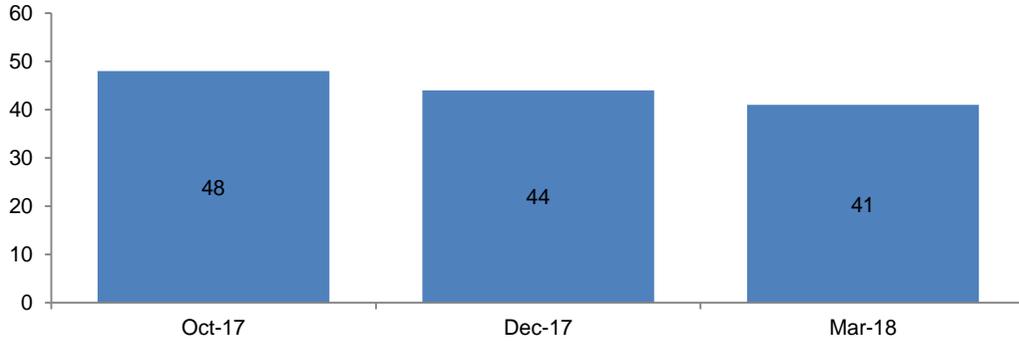
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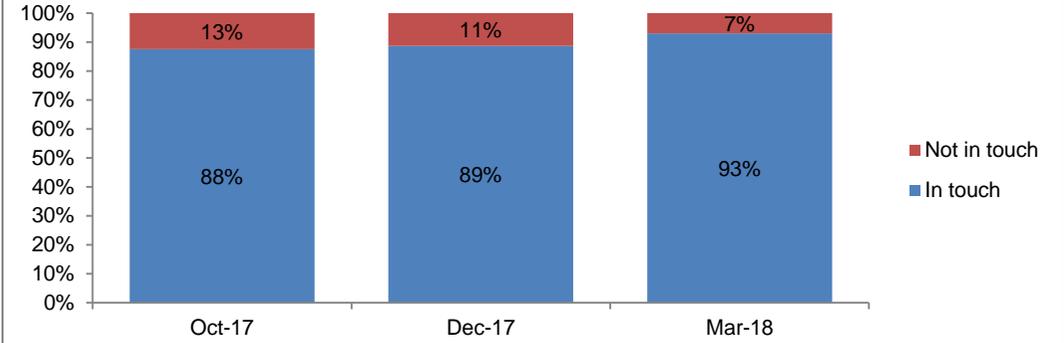
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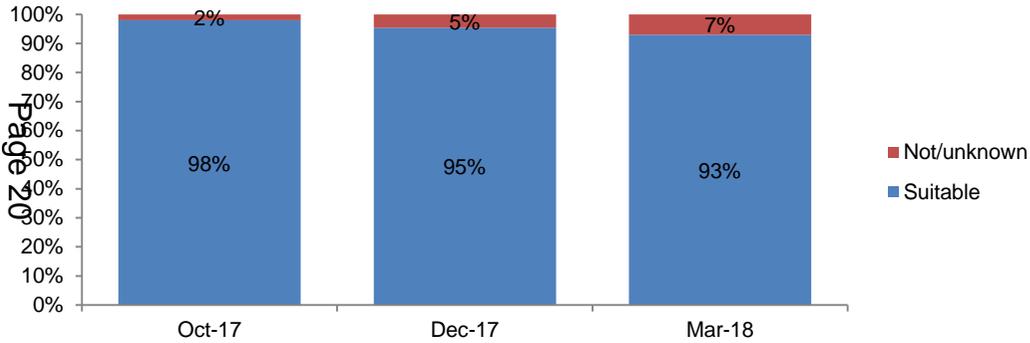
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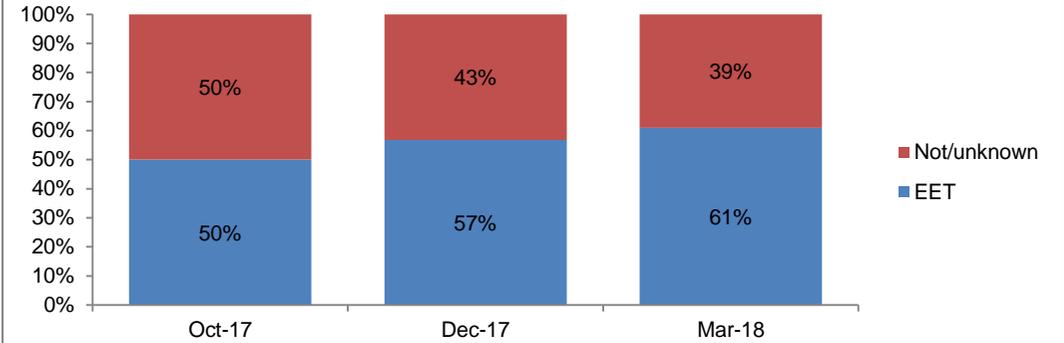
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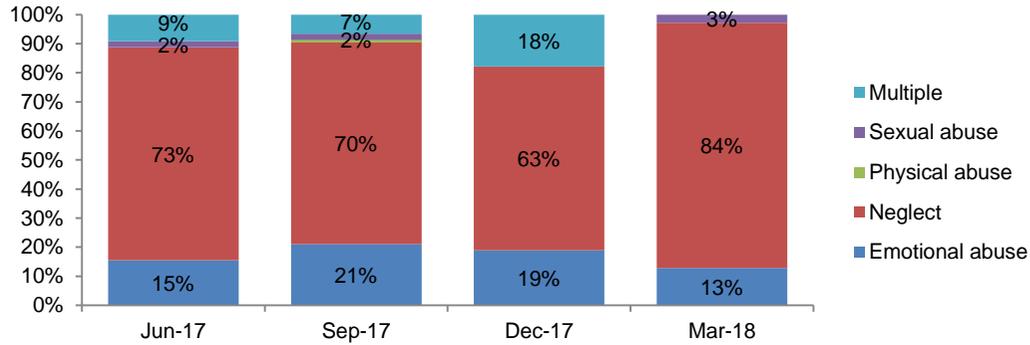
**Percentage of Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation**



**Percentage of Care Leavers in Education/Employment/Training**



**Percentage of Child Protection Plans by Latest Category**



**Children In Need - Number**



Corporate Parenting Board Dataset

| Measure  | Apr-17                  | May-17 | Jun-17 | Jul-17 | Aug-17 | Sep-17 | Oct-17 | Nov-17 | Dec-17 | Jan-18 | Feb-18 | Mar-18    | Target | Ntl 16/17  | Stat Nbrs   |
|--|-------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-----------|--------|------------|-------------|
| 1 Number of Looked After Children  | 765                     | 771    | 770    | 777    | 788    | 795    | 781    | 778    | 767    | 786    | 792    | 798       |        | [715]      | [553]       |
| 2 Number of Looked After Children who are Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers                                       | 29                      | 29     | 31     | 30     | 30     | 30     | 32     | 28     | 29     | 27     | 25     | 24        |        |            |             |
| 3 Number of Looked After Children open to Children with Disability teams                                     | 33                      | 35     | 34     | 34     | 31     | 32     | 30     | 31     | 31     | 26     | 22     | 29        |        |            |             |
| 4 Number of Looked After Children placed outside the County  | 152                     | 152    | 158    | 164    | 163    | 163    | 164    | 166    | 170    | 176    | 181    | 182 (23%) |        | 36%        |             |
| 5 Number of Looked After Children placed more than 20 miles from home, outside the County                    |                         |        | 84     |        |        | 87     |        |        | 87     |        |        | 97 (14%)  | 12%    | 14%        |             |
| 6 Percentage of Looked After Children with 3 or more placements in previous 12 months                        | 13.2%                   | 13.4%  | 12.4%  | 13.3%  | 12.7%  | 11.8%  | 11.4%  | 10.9%  | 10.3%  | 10.6%  | 11.5%  | 12.5%     | 10%    | 10% (2016) | 12.3%(2016) |
| 7 Number of Looked After Children placed in Foster Care  | 455                     | 450    | 447    | 439    | 441    | 448    | 433    | 439    | 431    | 437    | 434    | 436 (55%) | 75%    | 74%        |             |
| 8 Number of Looked After Children placed with a Relative or Friend   | 114                     | 126    | 123    | 129    | 134    | 137    | 138    | 140    | 140    | 152    | 153    | 148 (19%) |        |            |             |
| 9 Number of Looked After Children placed for Adoption  | 30                      | 34     | 34     | 40     | 38     | 35     | 33     | 29     | 26     | 24     | 28     | 29 (4%)   |        | 3%         |             |
| 10 Number of Looked After Children placed with parents   | 40                      | 41     | 39     | 38     | 39     | 40     | 41     | 41     | 43     | 44     | 44     | 48 (6%)   |        | 6%         |             |
| 11 Number of Looked After Children in Independent/ Supported Living  | 45                      | 37     | 42     | 43     | 45     | 45     | 45     | 37     | 36     | 38     | 37     | 42 (5%)   |        |            |             |
| 12 Number of Looked After Children in Residential Care   | 72                      | 75     | 79     | 81     | 82     | 82     | 86     | 88     | 87     | 89     | 92     | 93 (12%)  | 10%    | 15%        |             |
| 13 Number of Looked After Children in Secure Accommodation   | 3                       | 2      | 2      | 2      | 1      | 2      | 1      | 1      | 1      | 0      | 1      | 1         |        |            |             |
| 14 Number of Looked After Children in Other  | 6                       | 6      | 4      | 5      | 8      | 6      | 4      | 3      | 3      | 2      | 3      | 1         |        | 1%         |             |
| 15 Number of repeat Looked After Children within 12 months   | 0                       | 0      | 1      | 2      | 0      | 5      | 2      | 1      | 0      | 3      | 2      | 1         | 1%     |            |             |
| 16 Percentage of Looked After Children with an up to date health assessment                                  | 41%                     | 53%    | 54%    | 57%    | 58%    | 60%    | 62%    | 63%    | 64%    | 66%    | 66%    | 61%       | 90%    | 89%        |             |
| 17 Percentage of Looked After Children aged 16 /17 with an up to date Pathway Plan                           | 34%                     | 48%    | 54%    | 55%    | 59%    | 54%    | 53%    | 45%    | 50%    | 47%    | 42%    | 40%       | 100%   |            |             |
| 18 Percentage of looked after children of school age with an up to date Personal Education Plan              |                         | [41%]  | [62%]  | [71%]  | [70%]  | 75%    | 78%    | 78%    | 85%    | 82%    | 83%    | 81%       | 95%    |            |             |
| 19 Number of Worcestershire's Looked after Children aged 16/17 that are Not in Education/Employment/Training | 15                      | 16     | 15     | 19     | 23     | 16     | 25     | 26     | 26     | 24     | 25     | 23        |        |            |             |
| 20 Number of Looked After Children who went missing  | 17                      | 22     | 22     | 23     | 26     | 29     | 22     | 22     | 19     | 15     | 16     | 13        |        |            |             |
| 21 Number of "missing" incidents involving Looked After Children   | 27                      | 42     | 36     | 50     | 61     | 45     | 42     | 30     | 32     | 21     | 21     | 21        |        |            |             |
| 22 Number of Looked after Children recorded as vulnerable to Child Sexual Exploitation                       | New measures introduced |        |        |        |        |        |        | 43     | 44     | 47     | 47     | 46        |        |            |             |
| 23 Number of Looked after Children recorded as experiencing Child Sexual Exploitation                        | New measures introduced |        |        |        |        |        |        | 5      | 5      | 8      | 8      | 9         |        |            |             |
| 24 Number of council foster carers - households  |                         |        | 161    |        |        | 164    |        |        | 160    |        |        | 170       |        |            |             |
| 25 Number of care leavers open for services - all ages   | New measures introduced |        |        |        |        |        | 373    | 384    | 355    | 359    | 377    | 382       |        |            |             |
| 26 Number of care leavers open for services - age 16-20  | New measures introduced |        |        |        |        |        | 294    | 299    | 301    | 300    | 309    | 305       |        |            |             |
| 27 Number of care leavers open for services - age 21- 25   | New measures introduced |        |        |        |        |        | 79     | 85     | 54     | 59     | 68     | 77        |        |            |             |
| 28 Percentage of care leavers open for services "in touch" - all ages  | New measures introduced |        |        |        |        |        | 86%    | 86%    | 86%    | 88%    | 87%    | 87%       | 95%    | [92%]      | [88%]       |
| 29 Percentage of care Leavers open for services in suitable accommodation - all ages                         | New measures introduced |        |        |        |        |        | 90%    | 90%    | 89%    | 91%    | 89%    | 89%       | 95%    | [84%]      | [82%]       |
| 30 Percentage of care leavers open for services that are in Education/Employment/Training - all ages         | New measures introduced |        |        |        |        |        | 59%    | 59%    | 61%    | 59%    | 59%    | 57%       | 85%    | [50%]      | [48.5%]     |
| 31 Percentage of care leavers open for services with an up-to-date Pathway Plan - all ages                   | New measures introduced |        |        |        |        |        | 69%    | 65%    | 62%    | 49%    | 56%    | 56%       | 95%    |            |             |

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# Worcestershire Children's Social Care



## Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report 2017/2018



**Author:** Sally Branchflower

Safeguarding Quality Assurance Manager

May 2018

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## **Introduction**

*"Looked after children and Care Leavers deserve the best experiences in life, from excellent parenting which promotes good health and educational attainment, to a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and skills in order to have an enjoyable childhood and successful adult life. Stable placements, good health and support during transition are all essential elements, but children will only achieve their potential through the ambition and high expectation of all those involved in their lives." The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations, volume 2 care planning placement and case review.*

This is our aspiration for our children and care leavers in Worcestershire.

### **Purpose of report:**

In order for the aspirations and expectations for Children in our Care and Care Leavers to be realised, it is important that this Annual report is available for the scrutiny for the members of the corporate parenting board. This report is also a public document and will be on the Worcestershire Council council's website.

This report provides a summary of work completed by the IRO service in Worcestershire for the period of April 2017-April 2018

This report will;

- Identify what the strengths are in the IRO service
- Identify what the areas are for development in the IRO service
- Outline improvement actions the service has undertaken in the last year
- Identify key priorities for the next year
- The report will be child centred and incorporate their views and wishes

### **Context:**

The responsibility of local authorities is to provide Looked after Children and care leavers the best possible experiences in life and support their hopes wishes and aspirations as any good parent should, this is our privileged role as corporate parents.

The Children Act 1989 [amended 2004] and the Care Planning Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010 specify the duties of the local authority to appoint an IRO

when a child first becomes looked after. The IRO should ensure that the local authority gives due consideration to any views expressed by the child and the IRO has a responsibility to monitor the local authority's performance of its functions in relation to the child's case.

The regulations clearly specify circumstances when the local authority should consult with the IRO, for example, proposed change of placement, change of education plan, or serious incident. They also specify the actions that the IRO must take if it is felt that the local authority is failing to comply with the Regulations or is in breach of its duties to the child.

The statutory duties of the IRO are to (section 25b (1), 1989 Act

- Monitor the performance by the local authority of their functions in relation to the child's care journey.
- Participate in any review of the child
- Ensure that any ascertained wishes and feelings of the child are given due consideration
- Perform any other function which is prescribed in regulations.

The primary task of the IRO is to ensure that the care plan for the child fully reflects the child's current needs and that actions in the care plan are consistent with the LA legal responsibilities towards the child.

There are now two clear and separate aspects of the function of the IRO;

- Chairing the child's review meeting and monitoring the child's care journey on an ongoing basis.
- The monitoring function should include identifying any areas of poor practice or drift and delay in care planning that impacts directly on the child and should be appropriately escalated. Equally the IRO should also recognise and celebrate good practice that has positively impacted on the child's care experience.

## **1. The IRO service in Worcestershire**

The IRO service is situated within the Safeguarding Quality Assurance Unit alongside child protection coordinators and the administration team.

There is a practice manager for the IROs and one for the CP chairs both the practice managers' report directly to the Group Manager for SQA.

We have a diverse team of IRO in terms of gender and ethnicity and age and all bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the team. All have been Team Managers and service managers and senior Cafcass officers.

Full establishment for the Worcestershire IRO service is 11fte. We currently have 10/11 permanent staff and one vacancy which is currently being recruited to.

The IRO handbook suggests caseloads for IROs should be between 50-70 to undertake all core functions, this has been a challenge with rising numbers of looked after children and we had 3 members of staff off long term sick and caseloads in January were in the high eighties, however since the return of 2 members of staff and retaining the agency member of staff, we have been able to reduce caseloads to approximately 73-76 per whole time equivalent worker, this number is anticipated to reduce further when we have an additional IRO starting in July.

The impact this has had on children is that IROs have been able to increase visits to children before reviews and have adequate preparation and admin time  
We currently have 793 looked after children.

## **2. Staff supervision/training**

The Practice Manager supervises all the IROs and the senior administrator and also provides professional supervision to the Participation and Engagement Officer; supervision is undertaken on a monthly basis either 1-1 or Group Supervision

### **Staff supervision covers the four functions of supervision:**

- **Managerial function**

This covers performance of the individual and triangulates against KPI dashboard information, audit and observation and feedback

- **Continuing professional development**

All IROs are encouraged and supported in their professional development through training and annual appraisals to ensure we have a strong knowledgeable confident team.

- **Personal support**

This is an essential element of quality supervision for the individual, we all have additional pressures, outside of work as a manager it is important to understand what these are to minimise them impacting on the IROs work.

- **Linking the individual to the organisation**

This aims to minimise the risk of becoming isolated and encourages workers to look at the whole organisation and their collective role of partnership working to improve outcomes.

**Supervision Audit:**

All IROs have accessed dedicated monthly supervision, either through group sessions, development sessions or individual sessions. 100% of staff have received this, the only exceptions' have been for those IROs who have been off work that month due to sickness.

|            |          |           |           |             |                |
|------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|----------------|
| April 2017 | May 2017 | June 2017 | July 2017 | August 2017 | September 2017 |
| 100%       | 100%     | 100%      | 100%      | 100%        | 100%           |

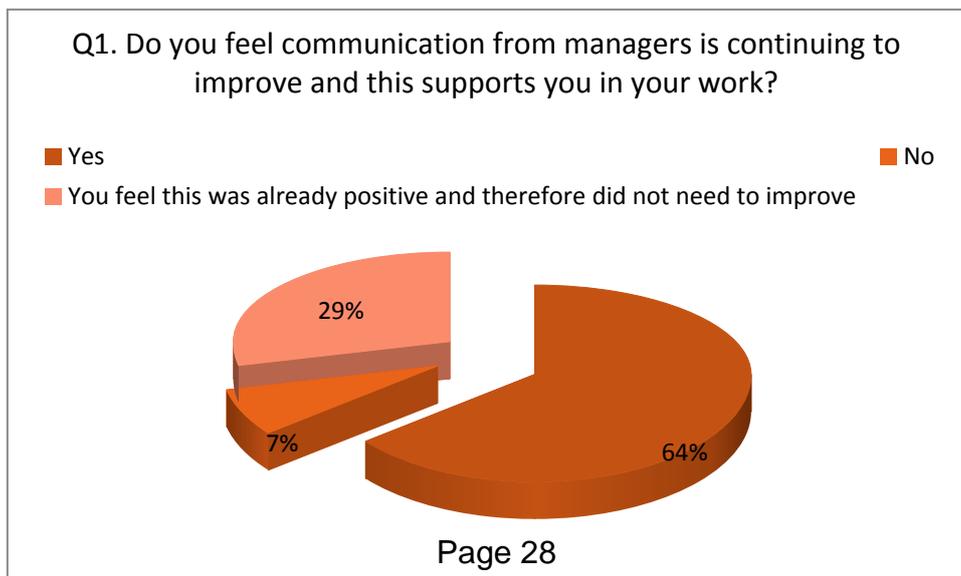
|              |               |               |              |               |            |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|------------|
| October 2017 | November 2017 | December 2017 | January 2018 | February 2018 | March 2018 |
| 100%         | 100%          | 100%          | 100%         | 100%          | 100%       |

**Health Check Findings February & March 2018 – SQA Unit**

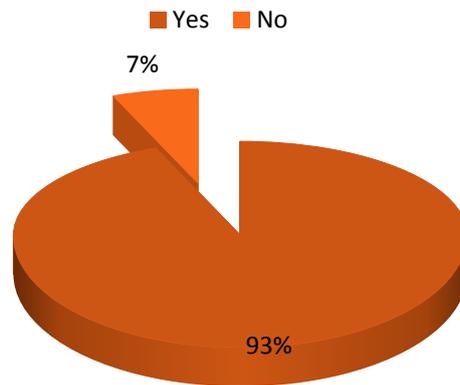
The Local Government Association document (Delivering standard 1: The social work health-check; LGA, November 2014) states that: “All employers should: complete, review and publish an annual ‘health-check’ or audit to assess whether the practice conditions and working environment of the organisation’s social work workforce are safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led”.

The health-check is an important tool in supporting and delivering effective social work. It is a key element and covers the requirement to have a ‘clear social work accountability framework’. In Worcestershire this is one way we want to hear the views of Social Workers and the experiences they have in this role. Worcestershire Children's Social Care now undertakes quarterly Health Check's with Social Workers from across the service to act as a barometer for service improvement from the voice of Social Workers.

**Safeguarding Quality & Assurance**

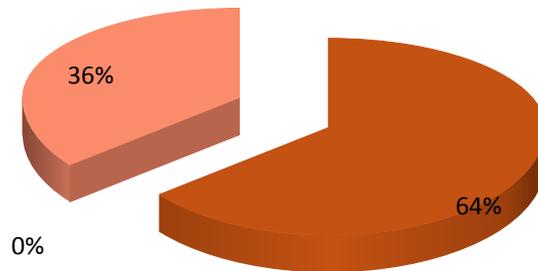


Q2. Do you receive monthly dedicated time for supervision and review of your performance?



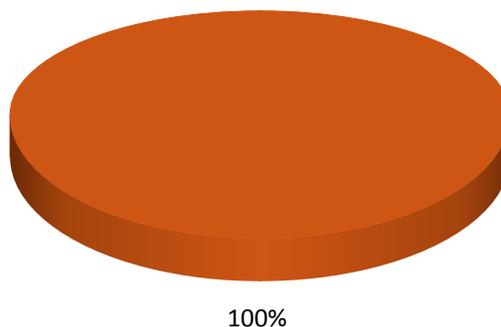
Q3. Have you experienced improvement in line manager supervision and support? Are your concerns dealt with effectively?

■ Yes ■ No  
■ You feel this was already positive and therefore did not need to improve



Q4. Are you encouraged to attend training?

■ Yes ■ No  
0%



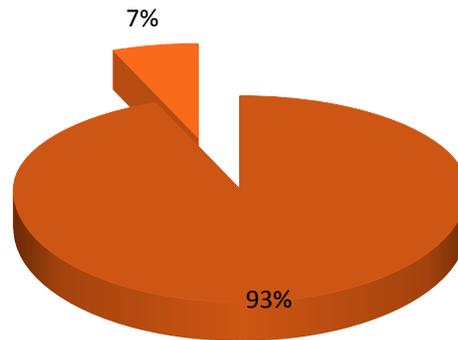
Q5. Have you experienced a reduction in case load?

■ Yes ■ No



Q6. Do you find the Practice Standards and Frameworki developments useful in practice?

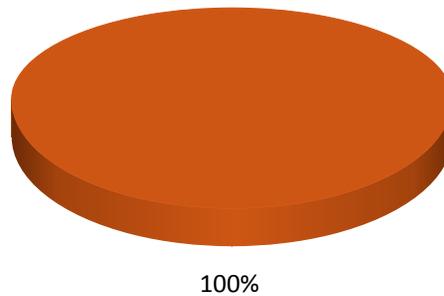
■ Yes ■ No

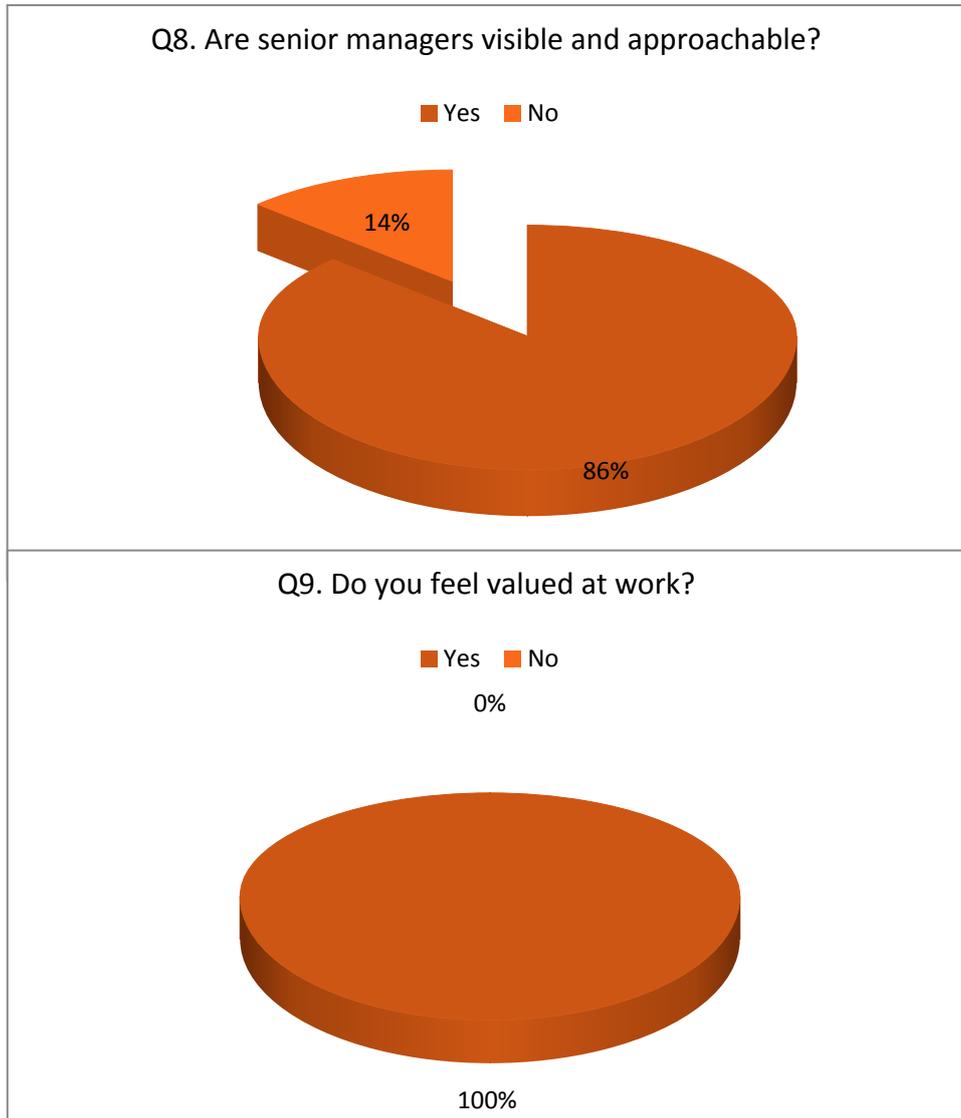


Q7. Do you know who the Principal Social Worker is and how to access him to share your views?

■ Yes ■ No

0%





In addition to monthly supervision the service has a number of forms and mechanisms to ensure that we are sharing information and promoting practice development:

- Monthly Meetings: Monthly team meetings/whole service meetings where information is shared from across the service, ideas are brought to the table, and we invite speakers in and track agreed team actions.
- Development Meetings: these meetings are held approximately every 6 weeks where as a service we look at feedback from young people and partners new government legislation/initiatives. We reflect on what is going well and what we need to do differently, it is a forum for sharing ideas and learning.
- Signs of Safety: The whole team have completed the 2 x day signs of safety training and are using a strengths based approach to look after review meetings. We have five practice Champions within the IRO cohort we will be introducing Signs of Safety practices into our meetings through Appreciative Enquiry and Group Supervision.

- Social Work Forum: the Social Work Forum is a monthly meeting for any Social Work Qualified Staff member to attend; this is open to Independent Reviewing Officers and is an opportunity to share views of working in Worcestershire.
- End to End: the End to End Leadership Meetings are bi-monthly meetings for all Senior Managers, Front Line Managers, Advanced Practitioners and IROs/CP Chairs from across the service. This is a forum to share and celebrate good practice, disseminate key information and build relationships with wider staff.

### **3. Value of the IRO service by partners**

The feedback from social workers and team managers has not been sought formally as part of our service business plan to date. But anecdotal feedback is manager's experiences of the service vary, dependent on which IRO they are working with.

Managers speak of very positive helpful interactions with IROs that really do assist in care planning and the relationship is open and honest. Equally some managers have found the IRO relationship to be fraught and confrontational and unhelpful at times, this is an area of development for the service.

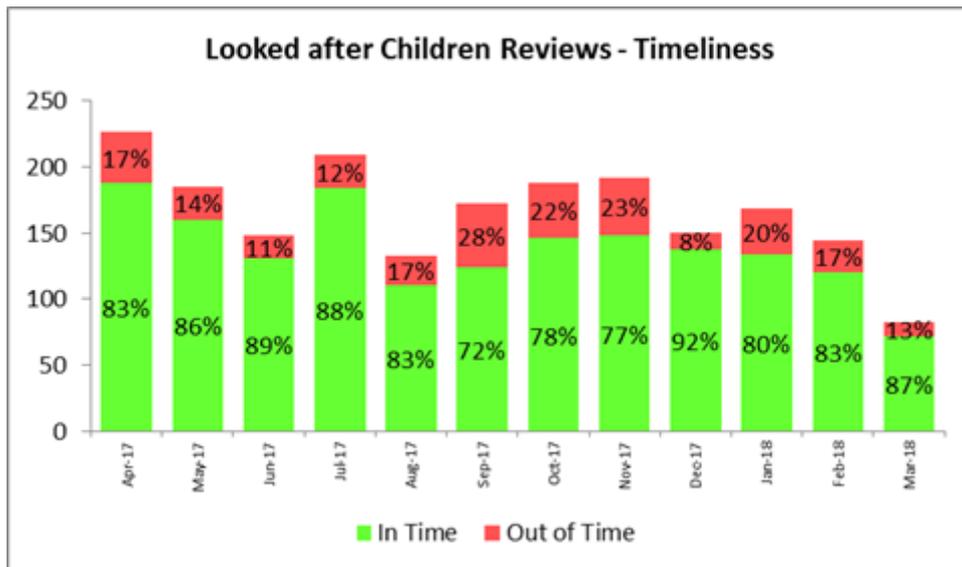
Our vision is to have a consistent approach across the IRO service, in terms of practice, that is based on strengthening relationships with social workers, Team and Group managers, but also providing consistent robust challenge where required. Children and carers have told us they value the IRO service and feel it does make a positive difference to the lives of looked after children.

We will be seeking formal feedback as part of our 18/19 service Business plan.

### **4. Looked after Review Meetings**

The first looked after review meeting should take place within 20 days of the child becoming looked after. The second/permanency review should take place within 3 months after the first review and the subsequent review should take place at 6 monthly intervals.

Please see below table that evidences reviews completed in timescales over the last 12 months.



There has been considerable sickness of 3 workers over the last 12 months, and this has had a significant impact on looked after reviews taking place in timescales as they have been covered by existing IROs.

Other factors are late notifications of change of circumstances reports to the IRO service; this should be completed by the SW when a child becomes looked after this triggers allocation to an IRO. If the notification is late it reduces the window to get the first review meeting being held within 20 days.

Other factors include some reviews being adjourned due to updated assessments not being available for the permanency review which means the IRO is not in a position to ratify the care plan.

It is a priority for the service to ensure Looked after Child Reviews take place within statutory timescales in order to ensure there is no drift and delay in quality assuring the Local Authorities care plan for a child in care. We have poor performance in this KPI this year and it is a priority to improve in 18/19.

## 5. Consultation with looked after children

What we have done to improve?

- We have introduced a new revised feedback form for children and young people following their Looked after Child Review. This was formally launched at the beginning of May 2018. Over the first month of the new form we received 17 feedback forms from Young People.
  - 82% reported that they understood why they were looked after.
  - 94% reported that they were able to talk to their IRO on their own.
  - 76% were clear on their plan moving forward following their review.
  - 70% reported that professionals in their network did what they agreed to do.
  - 94% knew who to contact their IRO if they wished to between Reviews.
- We held a consultation event with looked after children in October 2017 where 28 children and their carers attended and gave us their views on how the meetings could be better. Children and young people told us;

- Make my meetings happy
  - Let me decide who comes
  - Don't want my meeting in an office
  - I want to say what is discussed
  - Let me have my say in the meeting
  - Make things better
  - Can we have some juice and biscuits
- We have embedded this valuable learning and are now changing the way meetings are held, ensuring they are more child focussed by using a strengths based approach by asking them;
    - Who they want at their review
    - Where they want their meeting to take place
    - What do they want to talk about
    - Minutes of meetings are now aligned to this so they are easier for children and young people to read and mean something to them
  - Our new approach has been shared at Corporate Parenting Board, Social Work Forum (June 2018), and fostering forums (May 2018).
  - We have developed IRO introduction cards for all IROs.



IRO Introduction  
Card (Example).pub

- We held another 11+ consultation event on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May to ask our older children what we can do to improve their meetings. They told us;
  - Ensuring Meetings are fun and engaging
  - Meetings not to be held in Offices
  - The record of the meeting needs to be shorter
- We are piloting Mind of My Own (MOMO) in June 2018 to seek more qualitative information regarding consulting our looked after children.
- The whole of the organisation is proactively seeking feedback on the services we deliver so consultation will be evident in every part of the business over time.

## 6. Children's participation and attendance

### **Attendance & Participation:**

We have now started to capture this information more robustly through the use of a developed Dashboard and current figures demonstrate some improvement however the need for a relentless focus on improving children's participation and attendance at their Looked after Reviews; the below data capture key headlines in respect of Attendance and Participation in March, April and May 2018.

|   |                 |                 |                 |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Attendance (PN1, PN2, PN3 & PN4):         | 60.0% (84/140)  | 67.6% (94/139)  | 62.7% (84/134)  |
| Participation (PN1, PN2, PN3, PN5 & PN6): | 95.0% (133/140) | 93.5% (130/139) | 91.8% (123/134) |

### Looked After Review Timescales:

There is an improving picture in respect of Looked after Child Reviews being held in timescales.

|  | Mar 2018            |                     |                    | Apr 2018           |                    |                    | May 2018           |                    |                    |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|  | In time             | Total               | Percentage in time | In time            | Total              | Percentage in time | In time            | Total              | Percentage in time |
| First LAC reviews completed on time      | <a href="#">10</a>  | <a href="#">18</a>  | 55.6%              | <a href="#">15</a> | <a href="#">25</a> | 60.0%              | <a href="#">6</a>  | <a href="#">9</a>  | 66.7%              |
| Second LAC reviews completed on time     | <a href="#">11</a>  | <a href="#">13</a>  | 84.6%              | <a href="#">18</a> | <a href="#">20</a> | 90.0%              | <a href="#">8</a>  | <a href="#">8</a>  | 100.0%             |
| Subsequent LAC reviews completed on time | <a href="#">125</a> | <a href="#">129</a> | 96.9%              | <a href="#">69</a> | <a href="#">78</a> | 88.5%              | <a href="#">60</a> | <a href="#">64</a> | 93.8%              |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>146</b>          | <b>160</b>          | <b>91.3%</b>       | <b>102</b>         | <b>123</b>         | <b>82.9%</b>       | <b>74</b>          | <b>81</b>          | <b>91.4%</b>       |

### Venues:

The below information demonstrates a changing picture of where Children's reviews are being held and this is in direct response to the feedback of our children and young people. There has been a month on month improvement of the number of reviews being held in children's placements.

| Venue   | Mar 2018           |               | Apr 2018           |               | May 2018           |               | Total      |
|---|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|------------|
|   | No. of reviews     | % of reviews  | No. of reviews     | % of reviews  | No. of reviews     | % of reviews  |            |
| Placement                                     | <a href="#">59</a> | 34.7%         | <a href="#">65</a> | 36.5%         | <a href="#">72</a> | 41.9%         | 196        |
| School  | <a href="#">68</a> | 40.0%         | <a href="#">50</a> | 28.1%         | <a href="#">55</a> | 32.0%         | 173        |
| Other   | <a href="#">17</a> | 10.0%         | <a href="#">12</a> | 6.7%          | <a href="#">18</a> | 10.5%         | 47         |
| Office  | <a href="#">26</a> | 15.3%         | <a href="#">51</a> | 28.7%         | <a href="#">27</a> | 15.7%         | 104        |
| <b>Total number of reviews for each venue</b> | <b>170</b>         | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>178</b>         | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>172</b>         | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>520</b> |

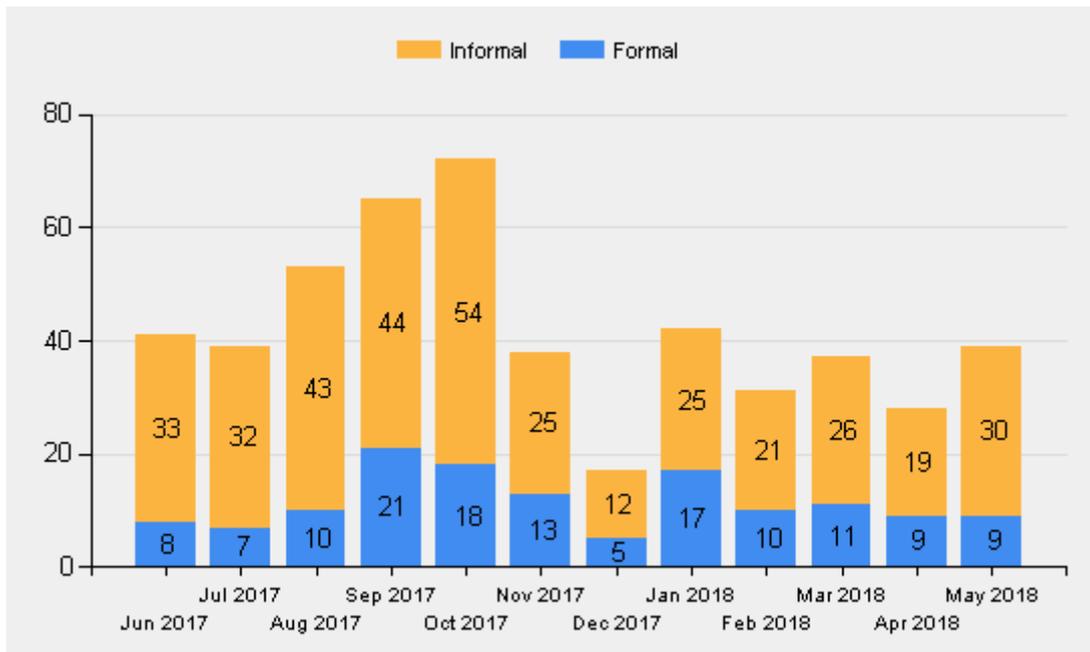
### What have we done?

- We have updated the looked after Children's electronic form, this is where IROs record the participation and attendance of children and young people at their meeting. This generates information regarding participation and attendance rates and where the meeting took place.
- We are working hard to reduce the number of meetings in offices and increase the number of meetings in placement; this has been quite a challenge as there has been some reluctance from carers to agree to have meetings in the child's placement. In addition historically there have always been a high number of meetings in offices so it has required a shift and change in practice. Current figures for April evidence 36.5% of meetings are taking place in placement and approx. 27% are taking place in schools and offices and the remaining 7% is taking place elsewhere, this is still an area for significant improvement. I have asked all IROs to look at meeting venues arranged for the next 6 months and any scheduled in offices to be moved where possible.

## 7. Dispute Resolution Process

SQA introduced a DRP process last in June 2017; this is clear in terms of written process, with clear timescales; however the application of the DRP process amongst the IROs is very variable – the application of when a DRP should be used and when it is used is not consistent across the IRO Service.

As a service we are now able to demonstrate the volume of both Formal and Informal DRPs since this was introduced see graph.



However, we are unable at present to produce an analysis of the reporting and the key themes of DRPs; this will be developed within the SQA Business Plan moving through 2018/2019. This will include understanding the consistent use of DRPs and key headlines and themes, bringing out learning and feeding this back into the service.

## 8. QA Processes and Systems

The role of Independent Reviewing Officer in quality assuring the Local Authorities care planning for children is essential to overall service improvement. To further develop the service and ensure that it is robust, we will build a Quality Assurance system around the IRO Service which includes; Practice Observations, Service User Feedback and Auditing – this will triangulate learning and ensure a greater level of management of oversight of the service.

### What have we done?

- We have developed an SQA dashboard for the service that provides statistical performance live data this enables us to have a relentless focus on participation and attendance at meetings and also the timeliness of reviews. These are key performance indicators in ensuring we are responding in the statutory timescales for children to ensure no drift and delay.
- Where meetings are taking place – a greater focus on these being either in placement or where the child would like this to take place.
- We are developing the dashboard to evidence if minutes of meetings have been distributed within 20 working days of the meeting currently we manually collate these figures but this is an area for improvement.
- We have developed an audit schedule which will include the IRO undertaking mid-point audits on their children who are having a six monthly review cycle and will be able to collate information re themes and learning and this went live in April 2018.

### The initial findings included:

| What are we worried about?   | What's Worked Well?   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minutes were not child centred and were too long</li> <li>• Minutes lacked analysis from the IRO</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child's Voice was evident</li> <li>• Evidence of an alternative communication method so a child with complex disabilities was able to attend their review</li> </ul> |

- Every IRO will be observed twice annually by the IRO Practice Manager of them chairing looked after review meetings, an observation audit template will be completed and saved on the IROs supervision folder and learning will be discussed in supervision and at evidenced at future observations
- IRO minutes will be audited for quality and consistency
- Service user feedback and consultation will inform how the service delivers its core business
- Staff supervision and annual appraisals will track development and performance of the individual IRO
- IRO practice manager attends the regional meetings with 14 other local authorities to share information practice and learning

## 9. Essex Diagnostic

Essex undertook a specific IRO Diagnostic by visiting the service on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2018, during this time they:

- Held initial discussion with the IRO Practice Manager and Group Manager
- Observed two Looked after Child Reviews
- Undertook 12 case file audits focusing on IRO Records
- Conducted a focus group with IROs

The Key Findings were:

| What are we worried about? | What's working well? | What do we need to do? |
|----------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
|                            |                      |                        |

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caseload numbers for IROs were too high (they have now reduced and continue to do so)</li> <li>• A clear pathway and model of Looked after Reviews is not evident</li> <li>• Children not consistently at the centre of their reviews</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IROs are passionate about the children they work with</li> <li>• The Practice Manager knows the service well, including both strengths and areas for development</li> <li>• The IRO Team is stable with a permanent workforce</li> <li>• Universally positive about the management support they receive</li> <li>• Good example of the voice of the child being brought into a looked after review – a strengths based approach to the meeting</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a model to Looked after Reviews</li> <li>• Develop a clear workflow on levels of responsibility in terms of Looked after Reviews</li> <li>• Develop Communication with the wider Service</li> <li>• IRO Introduction Card to be developed</li> <li>• Develop the IRO Footprint</li> <li>• Application of the DRP Process and response</li> </ul> |
|---|--|---|

## 10. Signs of Safety

In Worcestershire we are introducing a new approach to our work with children and families; this approach is called Signs of Safety.

The Signs of Safety approach, seeks to strengthen assessments and maximise family participation and where possible they actively contribute to solutions to keeping their child safe. Using the Signs of Safety approach professionals supporting families work together to:

1. Look at what's going well in the child's life - the strengths.
2. Understand who is worried and why - the worries and concerns.
3. Identify what needs to be done to build on the strengths, reduce the concerns and keep the child safe - the outcomes.

The approach expands on the assessment to encompass strengths and signs of safety that can be built upon to stabilise and strengthen a child's and family's situation. The approach is designed to help professionals and families throughout assessment and intervention.

All IROs have all attended Signs of Safety Training and there are 5 Practice Champions for the service; we will work to introduce these strengths based principles into meetings to support and develop family participation.

## 11. Signs of Safety Summary of the IRO Service

| <b>What are we worried about?</b>  | <b>What's Worked Well?</b>  | <b>What do we need to do?</b>   |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DRP process is not yet effective or consistently applied</li> <li>• Inconsistency in practice from IRO service</li> <li>• Poor timescales for chairing Looked after review meetings particularly first reviews</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All vacant posts recruited to</li> <li>• Stable workforce</li> <li>• Regular meeting schedule and formal supervision structure</li> <li>• Office move in the South and the North of the county</li> <li>• Consultation events</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IRO foot print to be more evident on the file</li> <li>• Midpoint audits, 30 to be completed each month.</li> <li>• Minutes and recs to be shorter and smarter</li> <li>• Improved timeliness of looked after reviews</li> <li>• Further development of</li> </ul> |

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff sickness.</li> </ul> | <p>resulting in a change in practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SQA dashboard developed</li> <li>• Service user feedback strengthened</li> <li>• MOMO being piloted</li> <li>• Joint Cafcass day was successful</li> <li>• Introduction of the audit schedule</li> <li>• Mid-point audits introduced</li> <li>• IRO case note types evident</li> <li>• IRO introduction cards in place</li> <li>• Essex diagnostic was helpful in supporting the changes we are making</li> <li>• Increase in meetings taking place in placement</li> <li>• New operating model with smaller teams</li> <li>• SOS training</li> <li>• Reduced caseloads.</li> <li>• IRO rota introduced.</li> <li>• Permission to recruit an additional IRO</li> </ul> | <p>the dashboard to evidence timescales of minutes being finished and distributed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MOMO and service user feedback to improve</li> <li>• DRP- improved consistent application</li> <li>• Review meetings to evidence strengths based approach where the child is central to planning.</li> <li>• Improved attendance and participation.</li> <li>• Strengthening relationships with key stakeholders</li> </ul> |
|---|--|--|

## 12. IRO Feedback

*"It was definitely more young person focussed which allowed the young person to understand the point of the review and how we can support her"*

*"Your calm and friendly voice really accommodates good conversation"*

*"I want to say thank you to my IRO and my Social Worker for being such a big help"*

**What Do  
Other's Say  
About the IRO  
Service?**

*"I am extremely grateful for your empathy shown today and it is really pleasing that we have a good relationship now which is in my son's best interest"*

*"Really liked my meeting my IRO looks out for me and is reliable"*

*"I think my IRO is very effective at helping and puts my needs first"*

### 13. Key Service Priorities – Action Plan for 2018/2019

|    | <b>Priority</b>                  | <b>Action</b>   | <b>Outcome/Value for Children</b>  |
|----|----------------------------------|---|--|
| 1. | Dispute Resolution Process (DRP) | <p>Redesign the DRP Process to ensure that this is fit for purpose and is useable &amp; accessible for both IROs and Social Work Teams. This is consistently applied by IROs and responded to by Team Managers in a timely way.</p> <p>To be able to provide a quarterly analysis of the use of DRPs and the key learning for the service to close the loop and continuously learn.</p> | Effective use of DRPs will ensure children's plans are being effectively managed by the Local Authority.   |
| 2. | Mid-Point Audits                 | IROs will undertake mid-point Audits on children's files between the 6 monthly reviews.   | This will ensure the IROs footprint is evident within children's files and ensure independent review and scrutiny of the Social Work Teams action for the child. This will form part of a quarterly Audit/Learning report. |

|    |                       |  |  |
|----|-----------------------|--|--|
| 3. | Signs of Safety       | <p>To develop a clear Signs of Safety approach to Looked after Children Reviews to ensure these embrace the principles of the strengths based approach.</p> <p>This will ensure that these capture the voice of the child, are strengths and relationship based and are inclusive of wider family members.</p>                     | <p>The value for children will be an inclusive review that is meaningful and accessible for children and will work towards increasing participation and attendance at reviews.</p>                 |
| 4. | Service User Feedback | <p>Continuously seek out service user feedback to improve services for children who are looked after.</p> <p>This will be achieved through;<br/>           Consultation Events<br/>           Mind of My Own (MoMo)<br/>           Service User Feedback Forms<br/>           Audits<br/>           Compliments and Complaints</p> | <p>The design of the service is continuously influenced by the voice of the child so that the service is focused on their needs and is an approach of nothing about children without children.</p> |

# Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report

2017-2018



# COMMITMENT TO THE BOARD

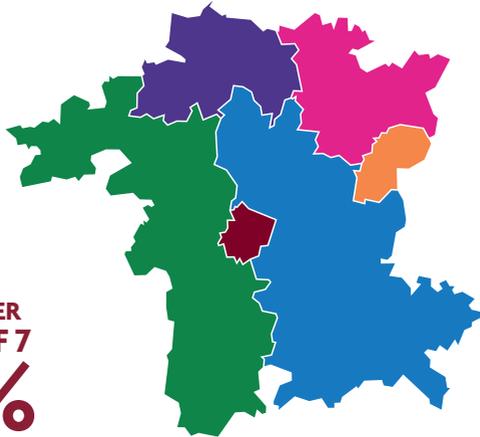
April 2017 - March 2018 Meetings

WYRE FOREST  
0 OUT OF 7

0%

MALVERN  
6 OUT OF 7  
86%

WORCESTER  
2 OUT OF 7  
29%



BROMSGROVE  
4 OUT OF 7

57%

REDDITCH  
3 OUT OF 7  
43%

WYCHAVON  
4 OUT OF 7  
57%

## ANDY ROBERTS

Lead Member for Children and Families and Chair

6 out of 6\* - 100%



## FRAN OBORSKI

County Councillor and Vice Chair

6 out of 7 - 86%



## CATHERINE DRISCOLL

Director of Children, Families & Communities

5 out of 7 - 71%



## TINA RUSSELL

Assistant Director Children's Social Care

7 out of 7 - 100%



## YOUTH VOICE GROUPS

Youth Voice Reps

7 out of 7 - 100%



## JAKE SHAW

Lead Officer for Corporate Parenting Board

7 out of 7 - 100%



# APRIL 2017

| Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | Sun |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|     |     |     |     |     | 1   | 2   |
| 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   |
| 10  | 11  | 12  | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16  |
| 17  | 18  | 19  | 20  | 21  | 22  | 23  |
| 24  | 25  | 26  | 27  | 28  | 29  | 30  |

We heard from **Gwen Fennell** the **Virtual School Head** about:

- The **new EPEP** (online Personal Education Plan) which was designed to involve children and young people.
- **Attachment Aware Schools Programme** - supporting schools to understand the needs of our looked after children and the importance of building relationships.



The joint protocol with **Warwickshire and West Mercia to Reduce the Offending and Criminalisation of Children in Care** was endorsed by the Board.



**West Mercia  
POLICE**



**Warwickshire  
POLICE**

**CARE LEAVER STRATEGY** setting out our commitment and priorities to **Care Leavers** was signed off by **Cabinet**



Our **CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY** was signed off by Cabinet ensuring that Corporate Parenting is **everyone's responsibility**



**County Council Members** sign up to **Corporate Parenting Training** ensuring that they understand their role as corporate parents.

**KEY ISSUES DEBATE** at Full Council took place. This was opened by **Dr Catherine Driscoll**. There were **presentations from our young people** to raise awareness and ensure corporate parenting is understood through the **voice of children and young people**.

**BY THE END OF THE 2016/17**  
**98%** OF MEMBERS HAD UNDERTAKEN THE TRAINING  
**56** OUT OF **57**

# JUNE 2017



**Joint Housing Protocol** initiated by the Board to ensure all our care leavers have **suitable accommodation** to live in.

“I would like to thank all the members of the board and in particular the young people who attend in order to make a difference to children and young people’s lives.”

**Marc Bayliss**  
The Former Chair stepped down



“I am really pleased to be the New Chair of the Board and keen to ensure that we work all together to make a real difference to looked after children and care leavers in Worcestershire. I want to ensure that the Board puts children and young people’s voices at the centre of what we do”

**Andy Roberts**  
New Lead Member for Children & Families & New Chair



The **role of the chair** is to ensure that **everyone plays their part** to make a difference to children & young people’s lives.

**Meetings made Public**  
The Board agreed this change to **raise the profile of Corporate Parenting in Worcestershire** and make it easy for everyone to access information from the meetings.



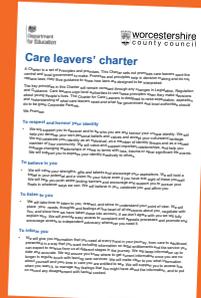
| Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | Sun |
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|     |     |     | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   |
| 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  |
| 12  | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16  | 17  | 18  |
| 19  | 20  | 21  | 22  | 23  | 24  | 25  |
| 26  | 27  | 28  | 29  | 30  |     |     |

**The Care Leavers Setting Up Home Grant** was increased up to **£2,000** to better support care leavers moving into their new home.



**Worcester County Council sign up to the Care Leavers Charter**

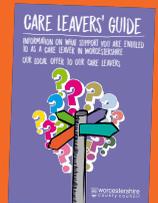
The Charter is a set of **principles and promises** that care leavers want the central and local government to make.



The Charter for Care Leavers is designed to raise **expectation, aspiration and understanding** of what care leavers need and what it means to be good Corporate Parents.

### Care Leavers' Guide

This was shared with the Board that outlines Worcestershire’s offer to Care Leavers.



# JULY 2017

| Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | Sun |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|     |     |     |     |     | 1   | 2   |
| 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   |
| 10  | 11  | 12  | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16  |
| 17  | 18  | 19  | 20  | 21  | 22  | 23  |
| 24  | 25  | 26  | 27  | 28  | 29  | 30  |
| 31  |     |     |     |     |     |     |

## Virtual School Update

We heard about:

**Mentor Link** - all Schools in Worcestershire have been offered the opportunity of a long term mentoring service that will provide Looked After Children with one to one support from professionally recruited mentors. There were 28 pupils already working with Mentor Link.

**NEET Prevention Programme** - funding has been secured for every Looked After Child, in Year 10. This will allow them to have intensive Information, Guidance and Mentoring to support young people to be in some form of Employment Education or Post-16 Training.



Chief Executive & Young People Lead Council Leadership Exchange

- Set of **Promises** created to ensure **all Directorates** within the county council take responsibility for Corporate Parenting



**Dr Catherine Driscoll** opened the new Youth Voice Group offices



## Nothing about Us Without Us!

All local authorities should have a Children in Care Council. In Worcestershire we have 3!!

- **Big Voices Little Kids**
- **Who Cares We Care**
- **Speak Out**



The Youth Voice Groups are split into different age groups and provide the **voice of looked after children and care leavers**. They help to **shape and influence** the wide range of services for children and young people.

## IRO ANNUAL REPORT 16/17

This highlighted some things we were not doing very well in Looked After Children Reviews

- PARTICIPATION 
- TIMELINESS 
- ATTENDANCE 
- The Board challenged the Safeguarding Quality Assurance Service & Independent Reviewing Officers to take action

# OCTOBER 2017

| Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | Sun |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|     |     |     |     |     |     | 1   |
| 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   |
| 9   | 10  | 11  | 12  | 13  | 14  | 15  |
| 16  | 17  | 18  | 19  | 20  | 21  | 22  |
| 23  | 24  | 25  | 26  | 27  | 28  | 29  |
| 30  | 31  |     |     |     |     |     |

The Board heard a very powerful and moving presentation from Care Leavers about what difference we were making.

The Board was also set some challenges in their **Wish List**. 2 of these have been progressed:

- **Council Tax** exemption for care leavers!
- Consider the **Pathway Plan** as a core document in a young person's Looked After Review!

More work is needed on:

- Extending **training flats** county wide
- **Work with housing** to provide accommodation for young people who need a lot of support
- Having a joined up **Prevention of Eviction Policy** to stop young people being evicted from their accommodation

## Care Leavers Week

'Family Firm' campaign launched to raise awareness of Corporate Parenting and the role in ensuring our young people are given opportunities within the council.



## Youth Voice Group WEBINAR



**ASK US! TELL US!** Lead Member, Andy Roberts; Director of Children, Families & Communities, Catherine Driscoll; Assistant Director, Tina Russell and Lead Officer, Jake Shaw were questioned and challenged by children and young people on issues important to them.



# NOVEMBER 2017

| Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | Sun |
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| 13  | 14  | 15  | 16  | 17  | 18  | 19  |
| 20  | 21  | 22  | 23  | 24  | 25  | 26  |
| 27  | 28  | 29  | 30  |     |     |     |

## District Data Profiles Go Live

Helping to **raise the profile** of looked after children and care leavers in each of our 6 districts.

The data allows each district to understand the number of children and young people in their area. It also allows important information like how many care leavers are in suitable accommodation or not in employment, training or education.

This is an important way of ensuring **all districts** take **ownership** of their corporate parenting **responsibilities** and are active in **improving outcomes** for our looked after children and care leavers.

We heard again from **Gwen Fennell** our **Virtual School Head Teacher**. Whilst there is lots still to do we did hear about some good progress being made:



**Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2** - more children and young people were achieving the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths compared to last year



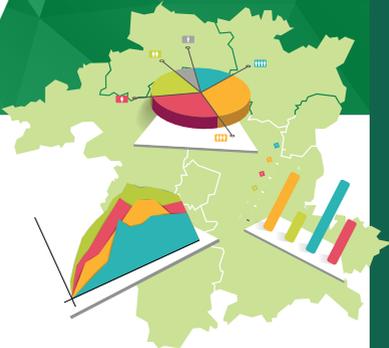
**Key Stage 4** has also seen improvements in GCSE English and Maths



The proportion of looked after children that were in **education, employment or training** had increased



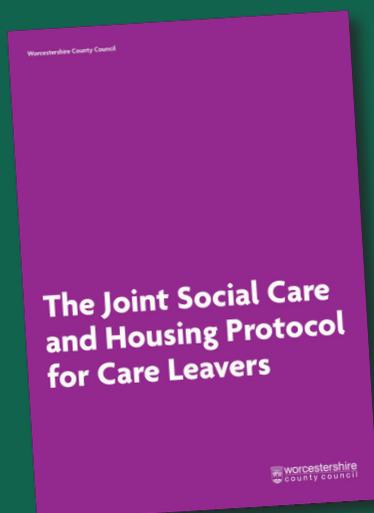
19 of our **Care Leavers** were also attending **University**



The **Joint Social Care and Housing Protocol for Care Leavers** is endorsed.

The Protocol is a key part of the **Worcestershire's Care Leaver Strategy 2017-2019**. It helps to confirm our collective **corporate parenting responsibilities** towards care leavers to ensure our young people achieve the best outcomes possible.

Importantly it works to ensure all care leavers have suitable accommodation and to **end the use of B&B** accommodation for Care Leavers.



# FEBRUARY 2018

| Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | Sun |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
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| 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  |
| 12  | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16  | 17  | 18  |
| 19  | 20  | 21  | 22  | 23  | 24  | 25  |
| 26  | 27  | 28  |     |     |     |     |

## Leisure Passes

We heard from young people that 2 Districts have reduced their Leisure Pass offer to Looked after Children and Care Leavers. We heard how important this is to looked after children and care leavers.



Young People challenged the board and wanted to see equity across all the districts.

The **Youth Voice Groups** will want more of an update come the day of the **'Take Over'** Board!



## Looked After Children's experience and journey into care

Tina Russell Assistant Director Social Work Safeguarding Services, presented 3 children's experiences and journey into care.

The children's lives we heard about helped the Corporate Parenting Board members to understand the different reasons why children come into the care and the difficulties children and families experience.

## Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Consultation Event Update



Picking up on the **Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Action Plan** to support participation, attendance and timeliness, the IRO's organised an activity based consultation event.

We heard about the **IRO activity based event** engaging young people through play.

### The young people did:

- Painting
- Nature art
- Biscuit decorating
- Sensory games
- Lots more crafts and fun

### Young people said:

- Make my meetings happy
- Let me decide who comes
- Don't want my meeting in an office
- I want to say what is discussed
- Let me have my say in the meeting
- Make things better
- Can we have some juice and biscuits?

# MARCH 2018

| Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | Sun |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|     |     |     | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   |
| 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  |
| 12  | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16  | 17  | 18  |
| 19  | 20  | 21  | 22  | 23  | 24  | 25  |
| 26  | 27  | 28  | 29  | 30  | 31  |     |

The Corporate Parenting Board met the **Through Care Management Team** to hear about how services for looked after children and care leavers have been brought together within one central hub.

This change is to ensure that children receive a **joined up service** that supports children achieving the **very best outcomes**.

## Introducing the new Through Care Management Team!



Districts confirm sign up to **Council Tax exemption** for Care Leavers up to 25.

- 4 Districts confirmed
- 2 going through governance

This step shows the financial commitment by Districts to Corporate Parenting and to our Care Leavers

Planning also took place for our Corporate Parenting **Keeping in Touch Events**.

These events gave Corporate Parenting Board members an opportunity to meet with staff, carers, children, young people and families.

## Corporate Parenting Board Members keeping in touch with the experiences of Children and Young people including:

Attending a Young Person's Pathway Plan Meeting

Meeting foster carers and Kinship Carers

Observing an Edge Of Care Panel

Attending a Looked After Children's Review

Visiting our children's homes

Meeting with our 4 Care Leaver Peer Mentors

Visits to St. Basil's - Supporting Living Accommodation

# CHAIRMAN'S EVENTS

The **Chairman Anne Hingley** chose Looked After Children and Care leavers as her area of focus in 2016/17 and set up a Cross party working group to show Worcestershire's commitment to Looked After Children and Care Leavers & raise the profile of Corporate Parenting. 4 events have taken place and 4 more coming up before the end of June.

**Cllr Rob Adams - Wychavon, October 2017 half-term**

**'Big Dig'** archaeological test pit digs where young people got to excavate and find relics in people's back gardens.

**Cllr Fran Oborski - Franche First School, Wyre Forest, 19 Nov 2017**

**Children's party** including face painting, bouncy castle, disco, indoor archery, pizza, ice cream and a magician.

**Cllr Steve Mackay - Worcester City, 22 February 2018**

**Tea with the Mayor of Worcester** Steve Mackay and a **Tour** of the **Guildhall** and the **Commandery**.

**Cllr Charlie Hotham - Bromsgrove Fire Station, 7 April 2018**

**Fire Station Activity Afternoon** - which included tour of station, rides in fire engine, smoke room, car cutting, yard drills from the Young Firefighters, food and more. **In association with PRIME Fire Mentor Service** and **Hereford and Worcester Fire Rescue Service**.

**Events still to come**

**Worcester Cathedral - 29 April 2018**

**Thanksgiving Service** at **Worcester Cathedral** with Hymns and intersessions for all our Looked after Children and Care Leavers. Youth Voice Groups in attendance and introducing hymns.

**Cllr Lucy Hodgson - The Malvern Cube, 12 May 2018**

**Tea Party**, games and activities for all.

**Cllr Patti Hill - Abbey Stadium, Redditch, 19 May 2018**

**Mini-Olympics** - Abbey Stadium sport activities, food, bouncy castles and more.

**Cllr Rob Adams - Aston Hall Farm, 3 June 2018**

**Final all district event** - Trailer ride around farm, feeding lambs, cows, pigs, ducks, crafts and activities, food and refreshments and much more.



# YOUTH VOICE GROUP HIGHLIGHTS

We ran the Leadership Exchange with the Chief Executive - which resulted in 'Promises' to Looked After Children and Care Leavers

Interviews, Interviews and More Interviews - including the new Chief Executive and Group Manager for Through Care

We supported the Virtual Schools Education Awards

Representative on Worcestershire Youth Cabinet



Assembly at local school to promote Youth Voice Groups

We hosted the Youth Voice Group Regional Event with 14 local authorities



We organised our annual Fun Day



Pushed to get rid of Council Tax for Care Leavers up to the age of 25

Organised Celebration Event for looked after children and care Leavers

Helped to commission the digital tool for young people MOMO

**MOMO**  
MIND OF MY OWN

Helping to promote Fostering and Adoption at Worcestershire PRIDE



Recruited awesome Designated Nurses for Looked after Children



We hosted our First Webinar that put questions to key people in Social care like the Director and Lead Member

Presented at the Foster Carers Conference

# OUR PLAN FOR 2018

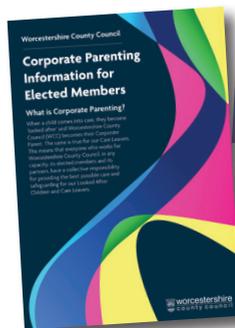
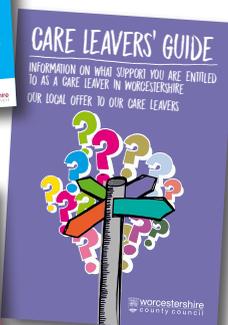
- **Keeping in Touch Events**
- Youth Voice Group **'Take Over'** of the Board
- Implementation of **Signs of Safety** - supporting how we work with children, young people and families
- **Refreshed Service Improvement Plan** - Version 2  
This includes:
  - » **Edge of Care** - supporting families so children can live at home, where it's safe to do so
  - » **Permanence** - securing children and young people their future home
  - » **Sufficiency** - making sure that we have good foster care, children's home and independent living placements for children and young people in Worcestershire
  - » **Engagement and Participation** - ensuring children, young people and families are listened to and involved
- Ensuring **Corporate Parenting Strategy** is achieved
- Continued work on, our **Corporate Parenting Pledge**
- Supporting **Care Leaver Wish list** and **Strategy**

Youth Voice Groups want to see:

- **Consistency** of Social Workers
- Better **transitions** to Leaving Care
- **Improved support** from PAs
- The **same offer** of **Leisure passes** across all districts

Youth Voice Groups like:

- Outreach 
- Youth Voice Team 





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**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD  
12 JULY 2018**

**WORK PROGRAMME**

|                          | Agenda Item   | Lead   |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| <b>20 September 2018</b> |   |  |
|                          | CPB Training  |  |
| <b>11 October 2018</b>   |   |  |
|                          | Virtual School<br>- Annual Virtual School Report<br>- Worcestershire Virtual Self-evaluation Summary 2016/17<br>- Virtual School Improvement plan 2017/18 | Gwen Fennell   |
|                          | Social Tenancy Rents  | Rhys Davies  |
|                          | Quarter 1 Data<br>- Looked After Children, Care Leavers and Placements<br>- District Data – Looked After children and Care Leavers                        | Jake Shaw and Tina Russell<br>Tony Leak / Donna Duggan |
|                          | Healthy Care Steering Group Annual Report   | Barbara Carter   |
| <b>29 November 2018</b>  |   |  |
|                          | Serious Case Reviews  | Tina Russell   |
|                          | Quarter 2 Data<br>- Looked After Children, Care Leavers and Placements<br>- District Data – Looked After children and Care Leavers                        | Jake Shaw and Tina Russell                             |
| <b>January 2019</b>      |   |  |
| <b>March 2019</b>        |   |  |
|                          | Placements and Sufficiency  | Jake Shaw and Barbara Carter                           |

## AGENDA ITEM 9

|  |  |                            |
|--|--|----------------------------|
|  | - Fostering, Residential and Outreach  |                            |
|  | Quarter 3 Data<br>- Looked After Children, Care Leavers and Placements<br>- District Data – Looked After children and Care Leavers | Jake Shaw and Tina Russell |
|  | April 2019   |                            |
|  |  |                            |
|  |  |                            |
|  | May 2019   |                            |
|  | Quarter 4 Data<br>- Looked After Children, Care Leavers and Placements<br>- District Data – Looked After children and Care Leavers | Jake Shaw and Tina Russell |
|  |  |                            |
|  |  |                            |
|  | To be scheduled  |                            |
|  | Health Assessments update  |                            |
|  | Housing and transitions  |                            |
|  | Care leavers updates   |                            |