

Agenda

Corporate Parenting Board

**Wednesday, 27 January 2021, 2.00 pm
Online**

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Corporate Parenting Board

Wednesday, 27 January 2021, 2.00 pm, Online

Membership:

Andy Roberts (Chairman)	Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families
Rob Adams	Wychavon District Council
Helen Dyke	Wyre Forest District Council
Lucy Hodgson	Worcestershire County Council
Charlie Hotham	Worcestershire County Council
Mike Johnson	Worcester City Council
Nyear Nazir	Redditch Borough Council
Fran Oborski	Worcestershire County Council
Jane Potter	Worcestershire County Council
Margaret Sherrey	Bromsgrove District Council
Tom Wells	Malvern Hills District Council

Agenda

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Corporate Parenting Board

Thursday, 8 October 2020, Online only - 2.00 pm

	Minutes
Present:	Mr A C Roberts (Chairman), Mr R C Adams, Ms H Dyke, Dr C Hotham, Mr M Johnson, Ms N Nazir, Mrs F M Oborski, Mrs J A Potter and Mr T A L Wells
Also attended:	Justine Bishop, Sally Branchflower, Charlie Dickens, Beverley Downing, Dr Catherine Driscoll, Sarah-Jayne Foster, Adam Johnston, Dr David Lewis, Peter Little, Heather Manning, Collette Maynard, Tina Russell, Richard Taylor, Shannon and Thomas
234 Apologies	Apologies had been received from Lucy Hodgson and Selina Rawicz.
235 Confirmation of the Minutes	The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 July were agreed as a correct record.
236 Review of Previous Action Points	It was agreed that, due to the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on service delivery, previous action points would be suspended.
237 Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Council	<p>The Board received a presentation on the Children in Care Council and the Care Leavers Council from the Participation and Engagement Manager. She also showed a brief video that had been created by a young person to highlight the participation offer for children and young people in care in Worcestershire and the benefits that young people could gain from getting involved.</p> <p>Every local authority was required by law to organise a Children in Care Council. This was a forum for children and young people who were looked after to share their views with the decision makers. There were three groups currently running:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Big Voices gave children from birth to the age of about 11 the chance to meet other looked after children in a relaxed environment and provided an opportunity for Worcestershire Children First (WCF) to consult with the children on a range of issues to shape services. For example, responses from children had been used when developing questions to ask in the recruitment of

foster carers.

- Who Cares, We Care was the name for Worcestershire's Children in Care Council and was open to children from the age of 12.
- Speak Out was the group for care leavers from age 17 to 25. The age range for each group was not set but involvement would be led by the needs of the young people. These two groups met separately on a monthly basis.

COVID-19 had had a huge impact and engagement had been more sporadic and needed to be approached in a more flexible way. Although the formal groups had been paused, officers were still keeping in touch with individuals.

Examples of Who Cares, We Care's recent activity were given. The Board was told about the benefits to young people of involvement in the participation groups including improving their confidence and self-esteem, and developing life skills. A number of events had been planned for this year but had had to be postponed due to the COVID pandemic, including an early years celebration and a looked after children's fun day.

Children in care were also members of the Young People's Panel which had been a great success and had supported the recruitment of a number of prospective candidates (including the Participation and Engagement Manager herself). The young people had received training which led to a recognised qualification and were professional and passionate about choosing the right candidate. The team had since been inundated with requests for young people to be involved in other recruitment exercises.

It was recognised that a formal forum was not right for all young people and other opportunities were available. It was important that all children in care were aware of the range of opportunities open to them. Future plans included increasing the number of members and the diversity of the young people involved, developing participation webpages and building closer links with Corporate Parenting Board Councillors.

Members were reminded that 26 October to 1 November was Care Leavers week and this year's theme was 'Careers'. Although there would be no corporate parenting fair in October, there were plans for a virtual event in the future.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and the following main points were raised:

- It was confirmed that Speak Out currently had 11 members, and nine young people were trained to sit on interview panels. Who Cares, We Care currently had three members and there was a clear need to recruit more.
- In response to a question about the involvement of Worcestershire children who were currently living out of county, Members were informed that lockdown and the subsequent increase in the use of virtual meetings had made attendance much easier for children living outside of Worcestershire as everyone was joining on line.
- The Director of Children's Social Care and Safeguarding confirmed that participation groups were promoted to children when they were received into care. However, she noted that the point of entry may not be the best time for this and it may be more appropriate to ask Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) to introduce the groups as part of quality assurance and feedback at mid-way reviews.
- A programme of webinar events was being planned to reach out to all young people in care and highlight the opportunities to engage with the work of the Corporate Parenting Board outside of formal Board meetings. It would be helpful to have wider Board Member participation in this.
- It was confirmed that virtual open sessions were being held for young people to log on and find out more about participation activities. A social media campaign had also been run over the summer.
- In response to a Member question about the geographical spread of those involved, it was confirmed that currently the majority were based in Worcester but the aim of future recruitment would be to expand this.
- In relation to the impact of lockdown on the mental health of young people, the Board was reminded that social workers had continued to be in touch with all young people in care and there had been a particular focus on care leavers, especially those in semi-independent supported living. Some young people had struggled but, on the whole, the majority had coped. It was noted that young people were used to communicating virtually.
- The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families confirmed that an ongoing

238 Return to School

focus on hard to reach groups was at the heart of the work.

- The Chief Executive of WCF reported that a survey of children, young people and families focusing on mental and emotional well-being was being undertaken in conjunction with the Worcestershire Health and Care Trust. This would cover all children, not just those in care, and feedback would be shared with the Board.

The Board received a presentation from the Headteacher of the Virtual School on the return to school in September for children who are looked after.

The following main points were noted:

- Attendance for all pupils in care since the start of the academic year was 92.2% which was above the national and Worcestershire rates for all children.
- Attendance figures were very positive and something to be celebrated.
- 77.4% of pupils had 100% attendance. The focus would now be on those who had less than 90% attendance. Out of a full cohort of 473 pupils, only 9 children had not attended school at all.
- As of 28 September, 94% of children with an Education, Health and Care Plan had returned to school.
- An increasing number of children and young people had returned to school over the first five weeks of term.
- 15 young people had received a fixed term exclusion since the beginning of term which was no higher than usual for the start of the autumn term.
- The virtual school was undertaking a range of targeted and universal interventions to further improve school attendance levels. These included working with Education Welfare Officers, supporting and advising schools through the termly Personal Education Plan process and working collaboratively with social care and school colleagues.
- Members were reminded that Pupil Premium could be used to support emotional wellbeing as well as academic needs. It was confirmed that all looked after children were supported whether they were placed in county or elsewhere.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and

		<p>the following main points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to a question about how children living out of county were supported, Members were informed that caseworkers would visit schools in the usual way. The aim was for there to be no distinction between in county and out of county schools, although it was acknowledged that different local authorities would have different policies and there may not be the same relationship with the exclusion and attendance officers. • As a caveat to the figures in the presentation, Members were informed that 20% of schools had not yet made attendance returns to the DfE (covering looked after and non-looked after children). Figures for looked after children covered 97% of the cohort and were collected through Welfare Call. • It was confirmed that attainment and progress was tracked for both in county and out of county children and some differences could be seen, although it was acknowledged that it was often the most complex cases that saw children placed out of county.
239	Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews	<p>The Chairman thanked the Virtual Headteacher for attending the meeting.</p> <p>In order to accommodate officer availability, the Chairman amended the order of the remaining agenda items.</p> <p>The Director of Children's Social Care and Safeguarding reminded the Board that there were two Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs) currently in progress. Both were likely to be completed in 2021. The Board would receive a more detailed presentation when the reviews were completed including a discussion of the learning points.</p>
240	Children with Disabilities and SEND	<p>The Director of Children's Social Care and Safeguarding reminded Members that it had been part of Children's Services' vision for some time to improve services for children with disabilities and SEND. Although services had not yet moved to the ultimate vision, work had been ongoing as part of the wider service improvement agenda and the action plan following the SEND inspection.</p> <p>Moving towards further service improvement would involve a complex programme of work taking 18 months</p>

to two years to complete and divided into four phases. The ultimate vision would be to have a 0-25 service of quality taking children with Special Educational Need and Disabilities from early in their lives through to young adults. The work would include all stakeholders including children, parents, carers, children's social care, the CCG (as commissioners and providers of services), specialist education providers and adult social care.

Officers were in the process of creating a document which would present the vision to stakeholders. A further report would be brought to the Corporate Parenting Board in the future. When discussing this report, it would be important for the Board to maintain its focus on children in care. Members were informed that there were currently 35 children with disabilities who were in the care of the local authority.

241 Quarterly Data Report

The Director of Children's Social Care and Safeguarding informed Members that, on the whole, the data in the quarterly data report had not been significantly impacted by COVID-19.

Throughout lockdown, social workers had kept in touch with looked after children by virtual contact and this had worked well. As soon as workers were able to return to physical contact they had done so. However, this had not been the case for all as, for some children, young people and parents, the virtual method of contact had been a better experience. For some young people it was an emotional challenge to see their parents and seeing them virtually had made this easier. Families would now be offered a mix of virtual and face-to-face contacts and feedback would be taken from each family. This would be reviewed going forward.

242 Developments to the Care Leavers and Outreach Service

Members received a presentation from the Group Manager, Placements and Sufficiency, who informed the Board that she had now also taken on responsibility for the Care Leavers Service. This was a positive development with the aim of getting the best outcomes for Worcestershire's care leavers.

The Care Leavers Service would link up with the Outreach Service which provided support to looked after children aged 16 plus, who were living in supported and semi-supported living. Merging the two services would improve outcomes for young people and would mean they would have one consistent worker at an early stage (a Personal Adviser) to support their transition to adulthood. The intention was to ensure that staff were as

skilled as possible, including providing training to deliver ASDAN qualifications. There would be a whole service approach to support care leavers from age 16 up until 24 or 25. Although there would be a combined service, each branch would retain its specialty, with the roles of Outreach Workers and Personal Advisers remaining separate.

Members were reassured that, in bringing the two teams together, the service for young people would not be disrupted. The combined service would have the oversight of one Group Manager but would retain the specialist knowledge of the individual teams.

The Director of Children's Social Care and Safeguarding informed the Board that feedback from young people had expressed concern about duplication in the system with individuals having overlapping conversations with different support workers. This change would allow young people to develop a relationship with one worker and would enable the service to ensure best use of resources. Staff in both services were very positive about the changes.

243 Work Plan

No amendments were made.

244 Apprenticeships

The Board received an update on apprenticeships and traineeships with particular reference to children who were looked after by the local authority.

The Assistant Director of HR, OD and Engagement asked Members to focus on three areas:

- How the organisations they represented could support the strategy;
- How the work could more closely focus on care leavers; and
- How more care leavers could be directly attracted on to apprenticeships and traineeships.

The new apprenticeships strategy had been agreed in February 2020 and covered both apprenticeships and traineeships.

With reference to traineeships, the team was working closely with the 16-19 NEET Prevention Team. Traineeships were part of an education and training programme which offered skills development and work experience to young people who wanted to find a job but may not have the necessary skills and experience. The aim was for young people to move from a traineeship on

to an apprenticeship or into employment. It was important for the two schemes to work together. A traineeship was not intended for the most disengaged young people or for those who were already in employment.

The apprenticeship scheme was a structured programme which had already seen real successes, providing a qualifications platform at all levels of the organisation, right up to level 8 (an MBA or other leadership and executive qualification). An apprenticeship would involve learning on the job, with the apprenticeship levy covering training costs but not the individual's salary. For an organisation, an apprenticeship could be an important succession planning tool.

The scheme had a real focus on care leavers including:

- The development with the Commercial Team of a Social Value policy to encourage businesses in the Council's supply chain to take on care leavers as apprentices or trainees.
- The creation of an internal taskforce with the sole focus of supporting care leavers into work or skills programmes.
- Ensuring the Levy Transfer policy required businesses to create opportunities for disadvantaged groups including care leavers.

It was important to recognise some of the challenges the scheme faced. These included:

- Many care leavers' areas of interest were not offered by the County Council.
- The number of opportunities for care leavers to be supported through an apprenticeship or traineeship was low, although this was starting to change.
- Current working conditions (ie working from home) were not always conducive to supporting traineeships.

In terms of future action, the new apprenticeship strategy provided a clear focus on care leavers and provided the basis for managers to provide more individual support for young people leaving care. Every vacancy in WCC and WCF would be shared with the Care Leavers Team to establish whether any were of interest to care leavers. Any care leavers who wanted to apply would be supported through the recruitment process.

The Head of Learning and Development informed Members that, with reference to the prioritisation of care leavers, the County Council was following the Department for Education Model which allowed for an exception to the standard recruitment process. This recognised that it was not helpful to subject care leavers to the same rigorous recruitment and selection processes. The Recruitment Team had a dispensation from the DfE which meant that any care leavers interested in a position would be guaranteed an interview (provided they met the minimum requirements) and offered one to one support.

A Member suggested that it would be important to liaise with district councils as they were also significant employers and had significant supply chains, including in the leisure sector. The Assistant Director agreed to take forward the suggestion that the Chief Executive of the County Council could discuss this further with the Chief Executives of the District Councils. This could also be discussed via the Local Enterprise Partnership. The Chairman agreed that there was a much broader base if the organisations worked together.

A Member expressed support for the scheme and suggested, in relation to corporate parenting, it showed progress being made in treating children who were looked after with the same care that individuals would treat their own children. It was suggested that contracts with major suppliers should include a requirement to take on apprentices, in particular those who were leaving care. Members were informed that this was already part of the conversation with suppliers via the Commercial Team.

Further support for the apprenticeship strategy was expressed by Members of the Board and the proposal to extend available opportunities outside of the council into the wider business world was welcomed.

At the suggestion of the Director of Children's Services, it was agreed that details of the team's contacts in district councils would be circulated to District Councillors on the Board to allow them to further support the combined corporate parenting responsibility. The Director went on to suggest that it would be helpful to have tangible targets for each organisation in relation to offering apprenticeships and traineeships to care leavers with organisations holding each other to account and challenging each other to take forward the practical work.

It was confirmed that under new rules recently introduced following the Government's COVID-19 recovery plan, employers or training organisations could claim up to £1000 to help with an apprentices' costs such as travel or uniforms.

**245 Future Meeting
Dates**

Noted.

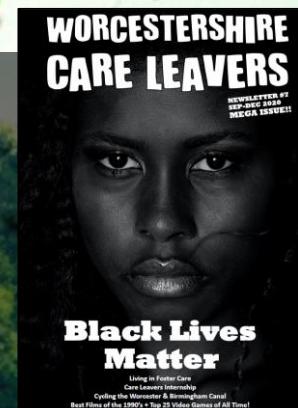
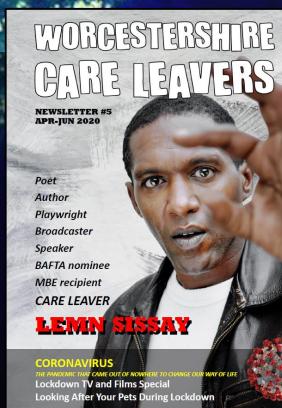
The meeting ended at 4.10 pm

Chairman

WORCESTERSHIRE CARE LEAVERS

**ANNUAL
CARE
LEAVERS
REPORT**
October 2020

Worcestershire
Care Leaver
Mackenzie



Featuring the input of our Care Leavers

CONTENTS

The Care Leavers Report for this year includes a number contributions directly from our young people themselves. The following articles appeared in various Care Leavers Newsletters between October 2019 and September 2020. The newsletter is a vehicle to get information across to our young people and also a way for them to communicate with each other, highlighting their interests and achievements.

OCT-19 Utelka's music career
 OCT-19 Events / Pics
 NOV-19 Mohammed's story
 NOV-19 Jayden's uni article
 DEC-19 Kat's story

APR-20 Alfie's pets and mental health article
 MAY-20 Luke's COVID photo essay
 AUG-20 Luke's poems
 SEP-20 Jalal's foster care article
 SEP-20 Nicky's foster care article
 SEP-20 Mackenzie's photos



Also included in this report are a number of further articles and information sheets:

A Celebration of Achievements
 Care Leavers – A Year in Numbers
 Care Leavers – What Has Gone Well & What Needs to Happen
 Care Leavers and Outreach Teams Structure Chart



The Care Leavers Newsletter is produced in-house by the Care Leavers Team
 And features regular contributions from our cohort of Care Leavers.

UTELKA JOHNSON

We have an up and coming star among us who has agreed to do a what will be a World Exclusive Interview for the Care Leavers Newsletter.

Mark Burtenshaw, Utelka's Personal Advisor, says: "I can tell you this – she has got the X Factor and when I was lucky enough to see her audition for college and again for the Birmingham Gospel Choir she has a voice that moved me to tears."

Utelka is about to embark on a fantastic journey both as an artist as she releases her own music and at University in London.

Introducing Utelka

I'm 20 years old from Worcestershire but decided to move to Birmingham to embark on my music career. I'm a multi-instrumentalist, I sing mainly, write, play piano and I try to produce. I do try to use the things I learn in my career in my daily life. I feel like my experiences have shaped me to have a quirky and bold personality wise but sometimes so I feel shy and vulnerable too.

Challenges I've Overcome:

A problem I've overcome would be handling rejection and anxiety, being nervous to ask for anything whether that's help or opportunities because I'm scared of rejection. It's crazy really, I definitely have changed my perception, I've come to learn my insecurities are incorrect and I shouldn't let them stop me progressing. For the most part I've learnt that most of the people around you really do want you to do well.

How to get your music online:

I recently released my EP called Asphyxiology on all major streaming platforms. I always thought it was almost impossible to put music out but it's super easy. The way to get your music on Spotify you can sign up to online aggregators which you pay for a yearly fee to have the access to upload your music to all the major streaming platforms, it's super easy and accessible. A couple sites are CDBaby and Distrokid. You can also work collaboratively with another artist and release music through their label.

My Inspiration:

My biggest musical inspiration is definitely Michael Jackson, his musical ability and impact within the music industry was just phenomenal. I constantly strive to replicate his same musical values.



*My love for music really stemmed from my upbringing.
I was always trying to imitate other singers, sitting on
the stairs singing up to my mum.*

Where did your love for music start?

I didn't always know I wanted to do music as a career to be honest. It wasn't until I'd dropped out of college that I realized it was what I wanted to do. My love for music really stemmed from my upbringing. I was always trying to imitate other singers, sitting on the stairs singing up to my mum. She always used to play a variety of different genres which opened my eyes to the many styles I could pursue. Music has been an emotional outlet which has proved more than vital on many occasions. It's helped me to deal with many different situations when I would've struggled otherwise.

Living independently:

Living Independently is very scary at first you know when you first moved in to your own place and you're on your own you feel vulnerable you feel lonely you feel like the smallest fish in the biggest pond however when I have my down days I really do look myself , so surprised and think "wow I'm doing well for myself, and I'm just doing this you look at how much progress you've made yourself". It's something to be proud of and makes you grown up more. It's all life but stay positive and keep your head screwed on.

Where will you be in Five Years

In 5 years time I will hopefully be performing and doing the same thing as now. I would have graduated and established myself as an artist.

Finally my advice to other people who've been in my situation would definitely be don't be scared to do something new, break out of that cycle. Learn from your mistakes to save future pain and also take every opportunity to better yourself , grab that with both hands.

Asphyxiology can be bought on the following platforms:

amazon **APPLE MUSIC** **boomkat**

Listen to the single 'Crazy' on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wL9TuyVE5qk>



I've come to learn my insecurities are incorrect and I shouldn't let them stop me progressing. For the most part I've learnt that most of the people around you really do want you to do well.

Care Leavers Events 2019

events

October Cookery Session



In October we held a **Cookery Session** to show some of our young people the basics of cooking. It might sound like a strange thing to organise an event for but it is an essential skill for living independently in the future. A number of Care Leavers came along and at the end of the session they sat down with the PA's to enjoy the fruits of their labour.

2019 was a busy year for our Care Leavers Events, including our Summer BBQ and Picnic in the Park (see previous newsletters for pics). We rounded off the year with a bunch of new events and raised money to keep them coming in 2020.



October Bake Sale

Also in October we held a **Bake Sale** to raise money for future activities for our Care Leavers.

A number of staff from across Worcester Children First baked at home and brought their creations in for the rest of us to sample (and lazy but equally generous staff bought cakes and brought them in to sell!).

The event was a success and over £400 was raised, giving the team money to put on more events for our young people in 2020.

Thanks to all involved!





Earlier in the year we also hosted a **Creative Session** and invited some of our young people along to try out their artistic skills in a variety of projects aimed at giving them some space and freedom to try something new in a safe environment.

December Christmas Dinner

We also treated a few Care Leavers to a lovely **Christmas Dinner** at the Cob House in Martley. A very fine time was had by all and the food wasn't bad either! The offer of joining the team for an Xmas dinner – along with all of our events – is open to all Care Leavers so speak to your PA if you'd like to participate in future.



December Ice Skating

December saw us take some Care Leavers to Webbs of Wychbold's ice rink for a bit of skating – not as easy as you'd think if you were out of practice! A fantastic time was had by all and with no casualties or hospital visits the event was a resounding success. These activities are open to all Care Leavers and it would be nice to see some new faces joining in next year!

UASC – Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

Perceptions of Britain

Britain can be a gateway to a better life for the few who make it and avoid exploitation. UASC children have their needs met – basic needs such as shelter and food - and they can access a support network of social workers, foster carers, teachers and healthcare professionals. These things offer a young person the chance to build a normal life, something most of us take for granted.

The numbers of UASC children coming to this country are small and their safety is in danger if they stay in their home countries.

There were 2,307 asylum applications from UASC in the year ending March 2018, a 25% decrease compared to the previous year, falling after two consecutively high years.

Of the 2,218 initial decisions relating to UASC made in the year ending March 2018, 1,245 (56%) were grants of asylum or another form of protection, and an additional 374 (17%) were UASC leave (granted to UASCs refused asylum, but eligible for temporary leave).

And, to show that our system of checks is working:

A further 27% of UASC applicants were refused. This will include those from countries where it is safe to return children to their families, as well as applicants who were determined to be over 18 following an age assessment.

The Care Leavers Team is part of the network structure UASC children can count on whilst they are in the UK and we work hard to ensure they feel safe and comfortable in their new home. In Part 2 of this article, we will look at how we help them and what our service means to them.

Mohammed's Journey

as told to PA Mark Burtenshaw

As a PA I get to meet some incredibly inspirational young people. Mohammed is one such young man and he has agreed to share his story so that he can raise awareness around the issue of UASC children.

A refugee's story is often complicated, but they are just people getting on with their life when things suddenly change. Born in Sudan into the Zagawa tribe, he lived in troubled times with his family in a place called Alfashir. The Jangaweed Party were the ruling tribe and they had turned upon the Zagawas.

You may recall BBC reporters sending back images of a regime turning on its own people in the Darfur region of Sudan, with clear instances of genocide. Mohammed was very young when the troubles began and life was about avoiding the wrong people, in the wrong places. Mohammed recalled how one day he went to school aged 14 and little did he know that he would never return home, would never see his mum again. Arrested at school and detained without reason, placed in prison cells, tortured for weeks, beaten by men with batons, forced to walk in the scorching heat,

shouted at... the abuse was endlessly repeated.

Mohammed was then suddenly taken and enslaved in an army officer's home where he was forced to do all the jobs for the household. For dinner he ate the scraps left by the children.

It was here he planned his escape and after several weeks of moving a water container nearer to the back wall without drawing attention to himself he was able to jump over the wall in the middle of the night and run for his life. Mohammed ran most of the 20km to a town called ZamZam where he sought help from a fellow Zagawa tribe member who helped him to escape into Chad. Mohammed's journey into Libya involved him getting lifts in cars with fellow refugees fleeing the country. He walked with a camel train across the desert. He had to survive in Libya for two years, where fellow Zagawa Tribesman gave him shelter. Mohammed waited for his opportunity, washing cars and helping shopkeepers. It was a very stressful time because he didn't know what tomorrow would bring.

The Gadaffi regime fell in Libya and the country fell into chaos. Mohammed made his way to Tripoli and this led to him taking a chance on a boat to Italy. By this time he was 16 and had made contacts who advised him after a month hiding in Italy he could get on a train to Nice and then journey through France to the port of Calais.

A further month at the Calais refugee camp ensued, with failed attempts to board lorry after lorry, but eventually he made his way across the Channel nearly 2½ years after he went to school that fateful morning.

Next Issue:

We hear more about Mohammed and how he managed since arriving in the UK in 2009.



Settling into University

I've just completed my first semester at university and id say I've settled in well. When I first got here, I was exceedingly nervous needing to literally force myself to go say hello to my flat mates. There are a few things that really helped me adapt to this new environment. One of the first thing was developing good relationships with my flatmates, for me this gave me some people to go out with and some friendly faces around campus. On top of this as they build their social circle, they can introduce you to others as well. Another thing that helped me was setting up my room properly. By this I mean for the first week or so I lived out of boxes and a suitcase which made it difficult to feel at home in this new place. Although it may seem simple unpacking can really influence how you feel in this new place.

When it comes to meeting new people outside of your flat, I've found success in a few ways. The first one is social events, one of the first I went to was with a flat mate and that was the pool competition. Although my skills in pool are lacking it introduced me to

a large amount of people many of which I still talk to. The next thing that helped me was before a lecture or in a practical talking to those around me a bit. Nothing huge just some small talk but this again allows you to really build the number of friendly faces around you. University is a place where you can really try things out, so do something new. All University's will offer a wide range of facility's for example for me I've met plenty of people while working out or rock climbing. Its worth while showing up and trying these things even if you don't want to you don't have to go again!

My main piece of advice for settling in would be this – put yourself in a position where you will meet people similar to yourself. For example If you love reading join the book club or if you have a passion for karate join the club for it. I suggest this because once you have a group of people you can talk to you tend to feel more at home.

***Text by Worcestershire
Care Leaver Jayden***



My Story by Care Leaver Kat



As I was waiting for my 18th birthday which I didn't want it to come, for most teenagers it meant to be a time to celebrate instead i was worrying about what was going to happen, I was thinking "Where am I going to live", "How am I going to cope on my own", "What about bills and earning an income to support myself", "Am I going to have enough food and electric?".

A week before my 18th birthday I received a letter from housing saying I have a flat I don't know how to quite deal with it I didn't know if I should be happy or if I should be worried, "I need to start packing but I have no boxes....Where can i get boxes from?" As I didn't know I just used black bin bags, placing each item into the bag and just keep the stuff I really need until the end. I didn't really have

anything to show other than 4 black bin bags.

The day finally came where I had to move into my own flat which was very empty and big and let's not forget overwhelming. I met this woman from Fortis who had the contract but as she was going through it I didn't really understand what she was saying. I agreed with her then signed the bottom of a piece of paper then she went. I looked around and just wanted to cry it was so dirty - and the floor, there was no words for that. I was just thinking where am I going to sleep? I had nothing, not even a blanket. I had no privacy, no blinds or nothing. That's when my PA support worker took me to Argos. We bought an air bed, blanket, cover and curtains. Oh yeah, let's not forget I needed a microwave, kettle, bowls and plates etc so I could eat for the next week. We ordered from my Care Leavers Setting Up Home Grant. I had £1500 which sounds like a lot but it really isn't when you are kitting out a whole flat!

After we went shopping we had to ring British Gas to register my electric and gas. I didn't have a clue what to do so I got my PA to talk me through it. Once that was done I had to ring loads more people, apply for housing benefit AND Income Support which was a lot of paperwork! It just became more overwhelming as the day went on. But after everything had been done I was in my flat with the bits we had bought that day. I did start to relax a little my depression and anxiety started to calm down. I asked my next door neighbour for the Wifi password as I had an iPhone so I could watch my soaps with a cup of tea and played music while putting things away. This helped as I

was feeling a little lost and lonely, and very strange, not what how I was expecting I would feel the first night in my new home.

Nobody ever tells you how hard it's going to be when you get your own place at a young age. It seems like a good idea until it actually is happening, then you are juggling trying to deal everything at once. It carries on like that for the first couple of months while your first payments for everything come out of your bank, get used to going to the Job Centre, do even more paperwork and try to find a job on top of that.

The first year flew by, along with this my stress levels had gone down as I was getting used to living on my own. However I felt I was on top of it I was doing ok.... I didn't need the support they were offering me. I was managing my flat, looking for work, what more did I need to do? It still hit me though, when I received a bill or a letter which I didn't understand, when this happened I would just put it in the drawer and act like it was never there. Before I knew it I was in arrears with near enough everything; council tax (because I didn't know there was such a thing!!) Gas, Water.

During this time I had to swap from Income Support to Universal Credit which works completely differently, It was difficult to get my head



around but I was getting a lot more money... or so I thought! To my HORROR I found out that Universal Credit had been paying my rent straight to me and I was supposed to pay Fortis myself. (that's why I was getting so much money!!).

I must have been in over £2000 of debt/arrears by this point. What was I going to do?! People around me started to notice I was struggling so I was given a YSS worker and had a change in PA. I realised at this point I needed to start accepting the help I had been offered as the bills in that drawer were growing; the size of the pile, the amount I owed and how much was worrying about them. The first thing my PA did was to contact Council Tax as I was a Care Leaver I didn't need to pay so this was the first weight off my mind. They then asked to see my bills and asked if I sorted this or that and when I said 'no' they helped me make phone calls to arrange repayment plans, made applications to charities to help me with my rent arrears as I was at risk of losing my flat, my home, where I had just begun to feel was my own. It was arranged for my Housing Element to

be paid direct to my landlord so I didn't need to worry about losing my home any more. I did some budgeting work and started to manage my money much better. YSS also helped me with my confidence and were looking to help me get into a sport or hobby which made me feel good about myself.

Once I had contacted the different companies and set up some repayment plans and thankfully had some help from charities for some of my debts I felt so relieved. It was amazing I didn't have to worry when the next letter was going to be.

Two years later I had to move to a new flat for my safety. I saw this as a fresh start. I was going to do everything properly this time and tackle things 'head on'. Because I knew what I had to do, with my PA I sorted everything out straight away instead of waiting until the last minute. Yes, I had a bed to sleep on. Yes, I had a cooker and microwave and everything else so it was definitely less stressful and less depressing. At my old place I had a walk-in shower the first thing I did when I signed my contract (which I understood this time) and got the keys I went straight into the bathroom and saw a bath! I was more excited about having a bath than anything else... It's always the little things which goes along way. My new flat didn't have any carpets or flooring so

my main worry was about using so much heating to keep it warm.... I had learned how expensive Gas and Electric were from my old flat!! Luckily my PA had an idea and applied to a local charity, explaining my story, and I was awarded funding to get flooring I had my whole flat done in grey lino in hallway and living room and grey carpet in the bedroom. When you get flooring it does just makes your place feel complete and more like a home.

I did still need a little help with my budgeting skills and did now and then have to ask for a little money for gas and electric when I was really struggling but this time round I am actually DOING it for myself! I can say I wouldn't have come all this way without the support I was given. I'm very grateful for the help I received when I was in a rubbish place with bills and my own health.

If you are a Care Leaver speak up and ask for support, whether it be at the beginning or whenever, please do because as you can tell from my story it's not as easy to sort out once you are in a mess. Ask your support worker for help, they will tell you what you can be entitled to and extra support. Now fight it before it's too late!

*I hope you enjoyed
my journey as much
as I enjoyed sharing
it with you!*



How Pets Help Me With My Mental Health

By Care Leaver Alfie in his own words.

Living the best life possible isn't always easy I'm not going to lie and say that my life is 100% better with animals but it is a lot easier to deal with my mental health problems.



I am currently unable to have an assistant dog so I'm training my cats Gizmo (stripey) and Beetle (black) to come to me when I'm upset. Beetle also sleeps on my back or my chest depending on which way I'm sleeping. I also spend most of my time training him to sit stand on two legs, to spin, high five and jump.

Cats are great animals. They don't need as much maintenance as a dog but they also mean that you don't have to leave the house other than to get their food and litter (I however walk my cats twice a week on leads as this is great for my cats as I don't allow them out unless they're on leads).

My fish were my first animals I got once I lived alone. I have 6 and their names are Comet, Star, Moon, Parana, Lion and Lynx. They are very therapeutic to watch - I could sit there for hours!

The best pets I have are my rats – they are 7 months and 3 months old. My first rats where Rhubarb and Apple and my new rats are Mash and Beans. I love my animals, all of them. My rats keep me company whilst I do my college work or my random stories that I like to write. It's great fun and they are easy to keep as well but can get expensive.

For someone who is unable to leave the house and can't concentrate for very long, my animals have helped me open up - they give me a reason to wake up in the morning and talk. Even though they can't talk back I still talk to them!

If you struggle with mental health (or know someone who does) I'd recommend getting animals, even just fish or a hamster - something that won't judge you when you're upset, something that you can watch, cuddle



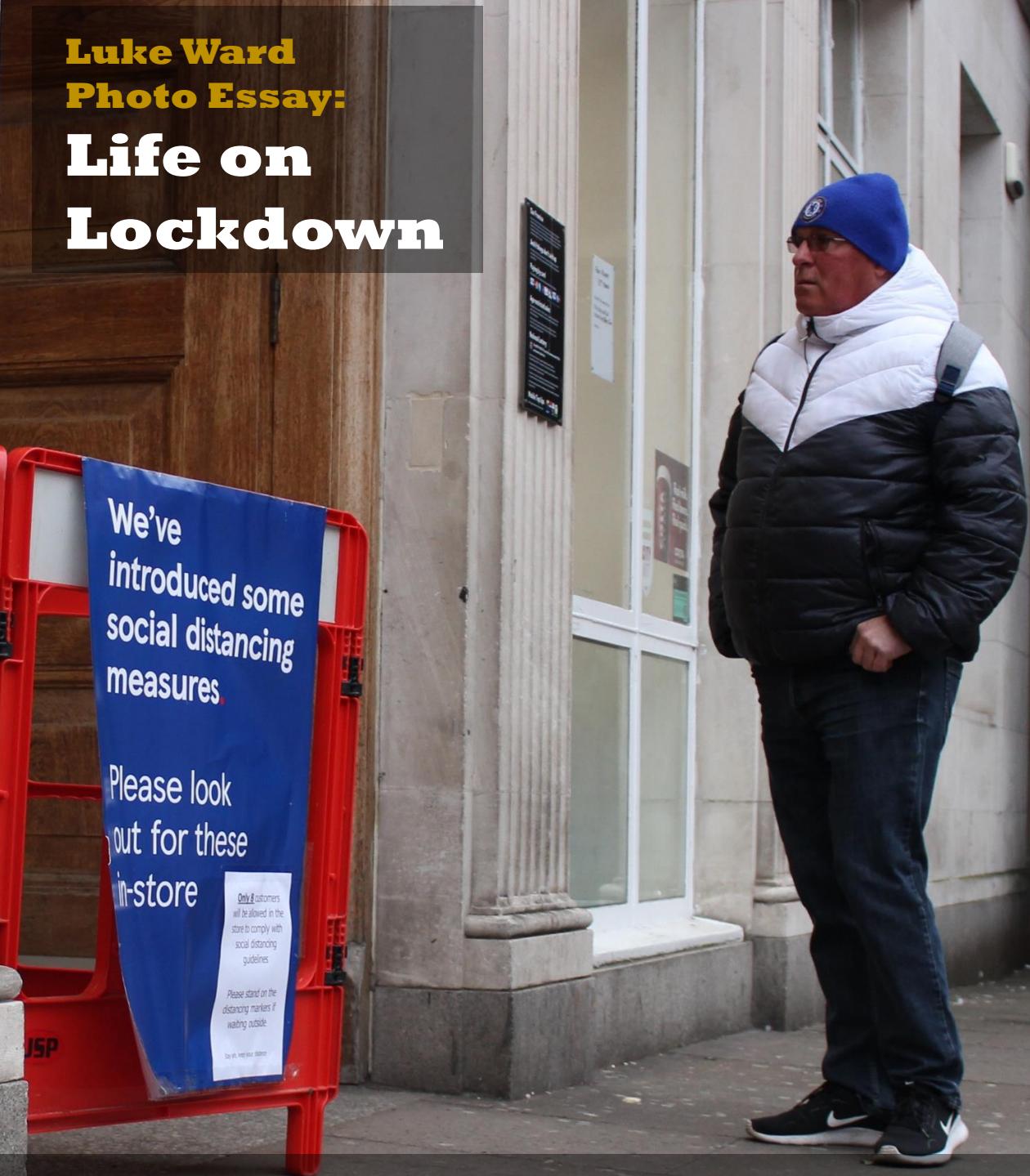
or talk about, something that you are going to love and care for not just for now but for their entire life.

I hope to speak again soon. I'm Alfie and this is my report about how my animals help me with my mental health problems.



**Luke Ward
Photo Essay:**

**Life on
Lockdown**



This series of work is called Life on Lockdown and is focused on documenting the outbreak of Covid-19 during 2020. My aim for this project was to capture how everyday life had changed, and how society had conformed to the new rules that have been set in place by the British Government. To achieve this, I photographed every time I went out for a short exercise or when going out for essential food shopping. This allowed me to document this event from my own perspective, and make sure that I was sticking to the new laws that have been set in place to help protect us.





I documented everything from shops and businesses shutting down, signs and posters informing the public to maintain social distancing or stay indoors to endless empty streets and empty shelves. I wanted to create an archive of work that would stand to show future generations how the United Kingdom came to adapt and overcome this deadly virus. My main inspiration for this series of work was Dorothea Lange and her documentation of The Great Depression in America during the 1930's. I found it really interesting how she was able to capture what life was like at the time, and document the struggle and hardships that families were going through. This translated into my series of work because I wanted to capture how society is dealing with this unprecedented event, and how changes have been bought into place to change our everyday lives, hence the series name 'Life on Lockdown'.



LUKE WARD

Luke is one of our many talented Care Leavers – last issue we published a photo essay he'd contributed based on pictures he'd taken during lockdown. Luke also writes poetry and on the following pages are some of the poems he's submitted for our newsletter.

The word on everyone's lips



Coronavirus, it's the word on everyone's lips,
Finding its way onto all forms of
social media,
And into all newspapers and print.
It's on all the radio's and TV sets,
And it's forever on people's minds.
People are cautious and prefer to
stay inside,
Watching the world go by,
Behind the safety of their
window blinds.

Stay inside, protect the NHS,
That's all we hear nowadays,
But really all people want,
Is to go outside and see family and friends.
The days seem to go so slowly,
And the long inevitable boredom has set in,
However it beats being stuck inside a hospital,
Whilst you're face down on the bed getting help with breathing from a machine.

Indeed the disease may be easing, and the lockdown may be over,
But please remember to stay safe when you go out to see each other.
Before going out, remember the words Covid-19,
Because if you don't and you're not careful, it could still come for you or me



This is me

Growing up life seemed so tough, no confidence, no money, living rough. My life seemed over before it had even started, It left me feeling broken and downhearted. No one to turn to, no one that cared, going through life feeling scared.

Growing up and getting fostered, that is when my life began to blossom. No need to worry, a helping hand, my foster mom who understands. The love and support that was so desperately desired, made me feel happy and for the first time, inspired.

Growing up and attending high school, time to work and fulfil my potential. Working hard and getting the grades, that is how dreams are successfully made. Long nights of homework and revision, so that I could achieve and succeed in my vision.

Growing up and finding photography, that is when life started to make sense to me. Finally, I had found something that I was good at, something to improve on, my destiny. Through that viewfinder I capture the world, in my own unique perspective, capturing the true beauty of life onto a film negative. No longer am I the one who hides from photos, but instead is the one composing them.

Growing up and going to College, for the first time a sense of purpose and independence. Meeting new people, trying new things, having an idea of what my future could bring. I learn so much here about my practice, and myself. Time passes here as quickly as the train I take on my commute, and any hate I have towards the world disappears like the scene outside the carriage window.

Growing up and finding love, someone to reach out to and hug. Someone that inspires, someone funny, someone that makes a rainy day seem sunny. Someone beautiful and someone kind, a person who still remains by my side.

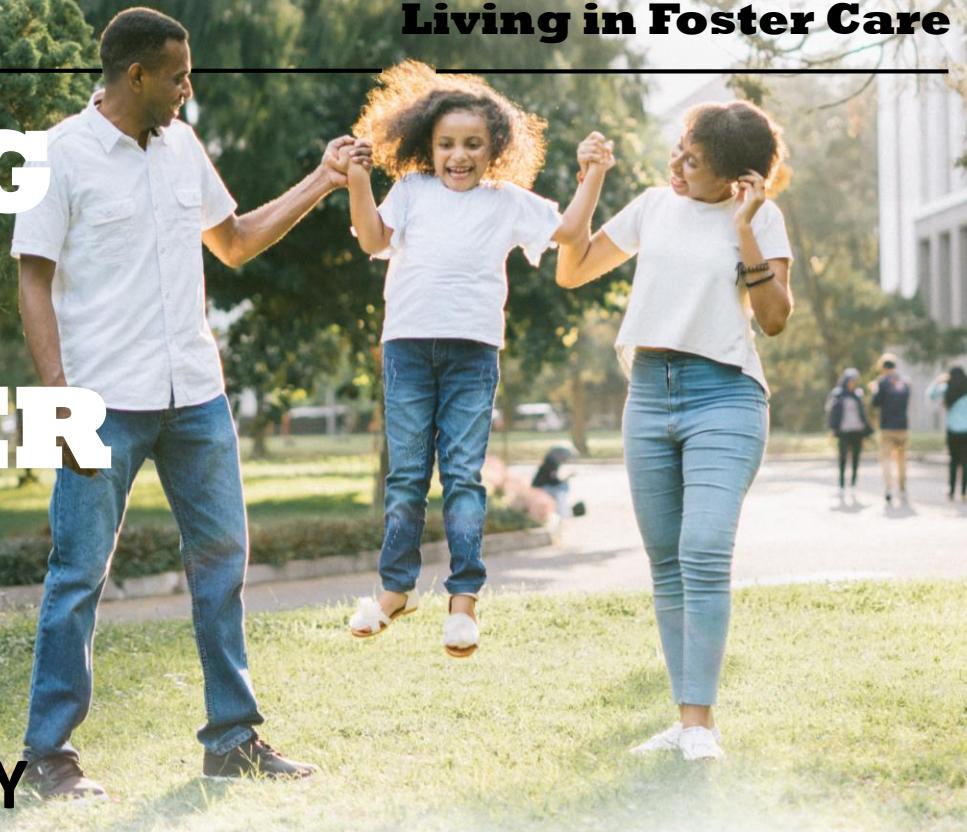
Growing up and achieving my dreams. Making it to university and defying adversity. Realising my true potential and being positively influential. Shaking off the stigma of being a care leaver, forgetting my past and looking to the future. Having hobbies and friends, feeling good, these days I feel understood. I am 19 and it seems, I have a great life filled with opportunities, right ahead of me.



Butterfly

My heart flutters as you walk near,
And the butterflies awaken once again.
Your eyes meet mine and time stops,
And then like the passing of the wind,
You are gone.
The butterflies inside,
They shrivel up and die,
And my heartbeat once again,
Settles back into the rhythm of monotonous life.

LIVING IN FOSTER CARE



JALAL'S STORY

My name is Jalalludien. I am 19 years old, am originally from Afghanistan and I am a student with Croydon College studying Health and Social Care .

I live in London but have been involved with Worcestershire care services since 2017. I had such a great connection with my foster carer that when I turned 18 I remained living with her under Staying Put. It was based on trusting each other, understanding, being on time for any meetings or social events. They all made me feel like part of a family.

In the beginning I had some basic problems, for example I found it difficult being with a new family, in a strange new place. I was scared of making any mistakes that might cause problems. The hardest thing was sometimes mis-understanding the English language when communicating – it took me a long time to learn to be more fluent in English.

We had such a great time together in my foster home. They helped me to apply for school and then college, receiving my support money on time, with food and clothing. They helped me during the times I missed my biological family.

The most helpful thing that I received from my foster carer and my social workers was an ability to become independent. They all helped me to stand on my own feet and improve myself. I found new things I really like - music, art and films. I found that I really enjoyed simple things like cooking and going shopping. I now feel like the UK is a home. I'm never bored here!

With all the support I've received, I would like to give back something to a new generation. I would like to become a doctor or a social worker when I finish my time at University.



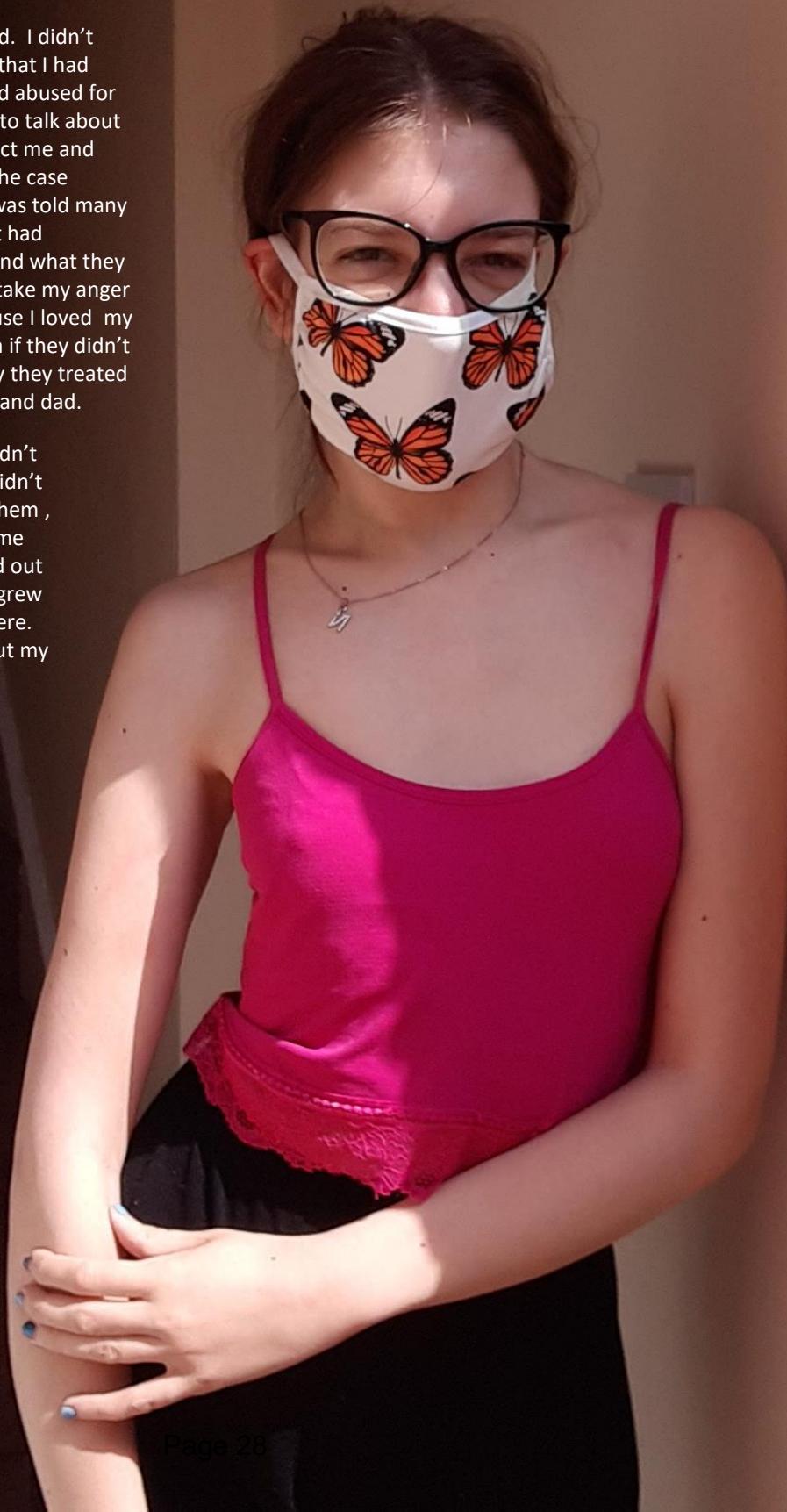
NICKY'S STORY

Hi, My name is name is Nicky, I wanted to share my experience of being in foster care

I went into care when I was 15years old. I didn't know why at first, until later I got told that I had been neglected by my own parents and abused for many years of my life. It's hard for me to talk about it. My parents were supposed to protect me and keep me safe, but clearly that wasn't the case because I had to be taken into care. I was told many things when I was younger about what had happened but I didn't always understand what they meant and I was angry for a while. I'd take my anger out on others that cared for me, because I loved my parents and the rest of the family even if they didn't love me and I couldn't understand why they treated me badly, but they were still my mom and dad.

My first foster home was okay, but I didn't get on with them that well because I didn't understand anything; why I was with them , or how long they were going to keep me before they got rid of me, but it turned out they did love me and our relationship grew during the few months of me being there. They were was great foster parents, but my stay with them was only short term.

My second care home was amazing, we lived on a farm where we had horses, cats and lots of dogs that we rescued from Romania. The foster family were amazing and so supportive through my tough time of coping with being away from home and being in a new environment once again. They knew how angry I was and every emotion I showed them they understood and helped get me through . They helped me overcome everything, all my fears and worries and they showed me new things that I didn't know before. I was with them for 2-3 yrs and I was part of their family, but when I had to leave them it was very sad because we all had a connection and we had made many good memories together. I told them I would never forget them and that they were doing a great job and they should never stop, because every child they take in always left happy, like me. I said I would always be in touch with them and visit them every now and



then as they gave me the best few years I could have ever asked for. I'm happy that they always made sure I felt safe and made sure that I was part of their family.

My next foster home was amazing at first and I stayed there after I turned 18. After a while we both started to disagree on certain things. We always made up after every argument we had, but it still was with us, every hurtful word we had said to each other in that moment, but because we loved each other we always forgave each other. We both knew that we weren't good together as when we were home we would often argue and have tensions between us. We both decided that it would be best for me to move out and get myself a flat and be more independent and not have the strain on our relationship, then our relationship would be more stronger and now it is.

I'm 19 now, going to be 20 in a few months and I have never been better. Yes, it was hard for the first month or so getting my flat ready and leaving my memories behind, but I knew I would still be in contact with the person I'd lived with and that we could still meet up whenever we wanted and have a catch up.

Getting all my bills set up and taking in deliveries in, while also being at college was very hard, but it is now worth it, because I have made my new flat my home now and I feel more independent and more like an adult than ever. Yes, I may need help every now and then, but that is normal. I've had a really bad past and I suffered very much when I lived back with my mom and dad as well as having some bad times in care, but the majority of it was very happy and I've learnt many things and still have people who I have met that love me and accept me, but my scars are still here and my past is still with me, but that is okay. It just shows my strength and that I have survived a lot and I know I will get to where I want to get to, because the people who actually care for me will get me there and will support me through all my tough times like they have always done.

Every foster child deserves to be loved and cared for and doesn't deserve to be treated badly at all, or have to live in a home that they don't feel safe in or welcomed. We want a place to feel safe and cared for and where we will be encouraged to be successful and achieve the goals that we want to achieve. Yes, we may not have our real family behind us, supporting us, but we will be accepted into a new home which will make us feel loved and cared for and we will learn from our mistakes and grow stronger and wiser. The new family you live with will support you through your tough times and cry and laugh with you. They may disagree with you and take actions you don't like, but that is because they care and want the best for you. They will teach you right from wrong and will teach you important lessons that you will take with you and will teach your own beautiful children one day.

Being in care isn't all bad, it can be a gift and shows that there are foster parents out there, who want to give a child the world, give them the best childhood that they deserve and they will be proud of you no matter what and will support you through anything, any choices you make they will support those too. They will be proud of you when you go to college; when you get your first little job, also when you get your first little flat and they will be proud of you and you will be proud of yourself for how far you have come and how much you have achieved.

Trust me, being in care can be such a great thing and is a time to cherish. You will make many good memories and build so many good relationships that you will keep forever. Unfortunately, it does have some effect on us knowing that sometimes we can't see our real family or meet new family, but just know you will be okay, you will feel safe again. You will be in a home where you are loved and cared for no matter what and will be happy.

Our social workers who have helped find us a great foster home to live in are so amazing. They work so hard, always want the best for the children in care and will always make sure they have everything and also they make sure that we are happy. They will help us even if we refuse it, they will just wait until we come to them and ask for help. They are amazing and as children and young people we are grateful and I can't thank every single one of them enough for how much they have done and how they have made my life much more happier and achievable.

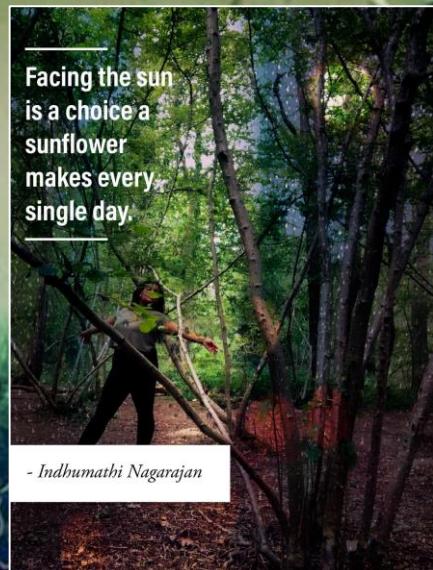


GO WHERE YOU
FEEL MOST ALIVE

Mackenzie is a Worcestershire Care Leaver and enjoys getting out and about with her camera – here are some of the results, with quotes provided by Mackenzie.



Mackenzie Buckle Photos



**WORCESTERSHIRE
CARE LEAVERS**

**WORCESTERSHIRE
CHILDREN FIRST**

A Celebration of Achievements





Education Achievements

We in the Care Leavers and the Looked After Children Teams are really proud of our young people's achievements, not just this year but every year. This document aims to present some of the feedback from our young people and our staff, and will show that despite the difficulties presented by a highly unusual year everyone has got on with things and great things have been accomplished!

“ A big well done to one of my young people, Feven, who has today been told that she has been accepted into the University of Wolverhampton on a Public Nursing Degree!!! Feven arrived into the U.K as an unaccompanied asylum seeking child in 2015 from Eritrea, speaking no English and has worked so unbelievably hard to work her way up from a basic entry level ESOL to starting an undergraduate degree next month!

I have been her PA for 4 years now and not only has language been a struggle for her, she has also had to manage on an impossibly low income and huge battles with Birmingham City Council in respect of council tax so it has not always been easy by any means! ”



Abi Talbot, PA

One of my young people, Chloe, achieved 3xD* (distinctions) in her health and social care course and will be going on to study social work at Birmingham University. She blows me away every time I see her with her maturity, resilience and level headedness, she will make an amazing social worker. I can't take any responsibility at all for this as she was already driven and determined when I met her but I'm really happy to be a part of her journey going forwards.

“More brilliant news. Knocks me back to see what our young people achieve despite the traumas they have experienced and with good support in place, someone alongside to celebrate good times and help though the difficult times. ”

Carol Johnson, Team Manager

Naomi Preston, Social Worker

Kyle gained 6 GCSES and is now completing health & social care course. Foster carers stated Kyle refused to put pen to paper when he arrived 6 years ago, so we are all very proud of him gaining a massive 6 GCSE's!!

Sue Muller, PA

Fiyori, one of my young people who is from Eritrea, has been accepted into Bristol University to complete foundation in Biomedical Science. Fiyori has shown such determination and is now looking forward to her move to Bristol. Really inspiring stuff!

Lee-ann Wilson, LAC Team

Chloe was one of my girls before 18 and such a great talented girl, so I'm proud of her in this instance. I have a young person that I am really proud of – Aimee, who is going to go into sixth form at Trinity high and is destined for University. Aimee is not sure of her option yet as she is also in the Royal Marines (and is already a lance corporal). She did exceptionally well in her mocks, and is hoping to have done as well this year but is worried due to COVID-19 but she is a very determined, educationally minded girl so I have no doubt she will go far.



**Sarah Stock, Social Worker**

Clayton has started Level 1 Sports and Services at HOW College Redditch, and hopes to progress to Level 2 Public Services when he meets the entry requirements for maths and English GCSE, with ambition to be a police officer.

Also, another one of my young people would have achieved higher grades if she had sat her exams - her final grades were marked lower than her previous predicted grades by her school as she was not attending lessons however she'd worked very hard to revise independently. She has started Level 1 hair and beauty at Telford college with GCSE English and Functional Skills entry 3 maths. She is engaged and enthusiastic, relishing the fresh start.

**Cass Fennell, PA**

My young person Anthony completed a diploma qualification in Travel & Tourism. The reason why I'm highlighting his achievement is that Anthony was falling behind halfway through his course, he was struggling with low self-esteem which affected his motivation for learning and achievement. Myself, college staff and mom, realised that Anthony was finding it difficult to submit his coursework and he was not on target for passing. With collaborative work, Anthony was put on an Education Support Plan. However, Anthony was still finding it difficult to engage with the plan but with continuous support, he was able to complete and submit all his coursework on time to achieve his diploma. I spoke with Anthony today and he was excited to share his good news with me, he said he was happy I had helped him and had believed in him, Anthony said he was happy he did not quit his course.

It's always nice to hear good news and I'm really pleased that our young people have been out there getting some great results from their exams. All the hard work does pay off and their futures are looking really bright!

Kerry Nicholl, Team Manager

**Rhys Davies,
Team Manager**

“Our Care Leavers often have additional challenges to contend with whilst going through education, often moving to adulthood quicker than their peers. I think managing that makes their achievements even more worthy of recognition.”

Naomi Preston, Social Worker

I had lots of concerns for one of my young people when she came into care, however she is thriving doing her hairdressing apprenticeship and working full time in the salon.

Laura Perry, PA

Charlie English Peach has started a BA (hons) in Applied Humanities at uni. He also got a triple pass for completing a recent BTEC L3 Extended Diploma in IT

Also, some positive partnering with Mencap who accepted one of our Care Leavers with additional needs on to their Supported Internship course when no other courses seemed appropriate for her.

Rachel Davies, PA

Nicole Prasher who has achieved her year 2 in Law. Last year was a really difficult year for Nicole with her struggling with her mental health and some personal crisis along the way. However, she has gone on to give birth to a baby girl in the summer and has returned to virtual lectures so far year 3 so fingers crossed.

Rachel Davies, PA

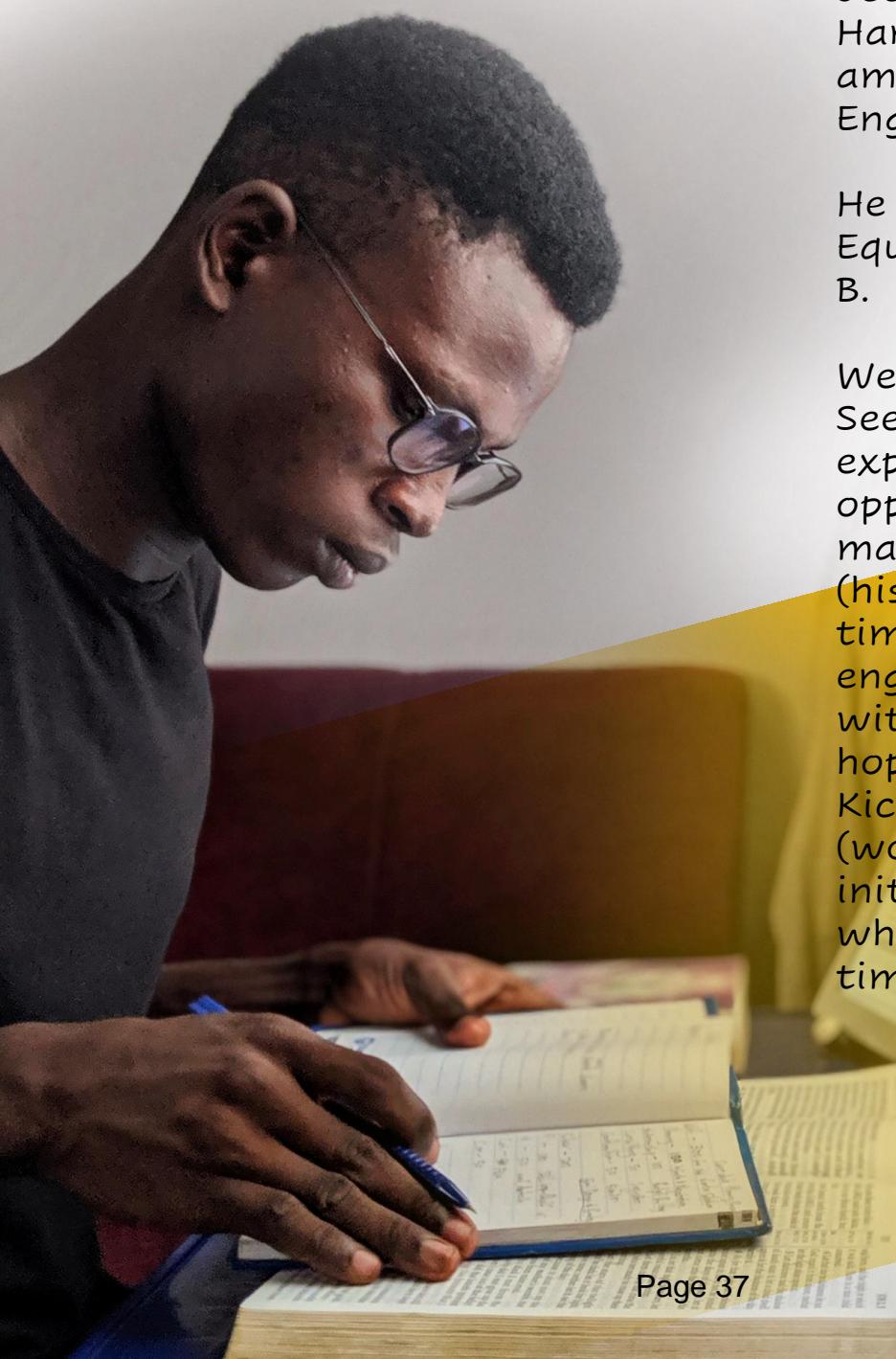
I have Emily Bell who achieved clear passes for her year 3 Classical History and Archaeology now entering into he year 4 specialist subject may go on to do a doctorate she is capable of it so lets wait and see how this year goes.

**Laura Perry, PA**

Megan Fletcher also passed her Performing Arts course at Sixth Form and has progressed on to college to develop her acting skills further and prepare herself for moving on to Higher Education.

Rose Jarvis, PA

Three of my young people – Mabast Rasuli, Karso Tofiq and Abdul Malik – are all engaging positively in Level 1 and Level 2 Esol Courses and thoroughly enjoying them! And Zia Mullakhail has recently enrolled on a Level 2 Public Services course having completed his Level 1 with plans of becoming a police officer.

**Claire Amphlett, Social Worker**

Chantelle is now attending Kidderminster College and studying hairdressing and she is really enjoying this. She has also been successful at getting her a part time job at a local restaurant and is managing this alongside her college commitments.

Rose Jarvis, PA

A YP who has recently been allocated to me – Harry Williamson – did amazingly well in his English GCSEs!

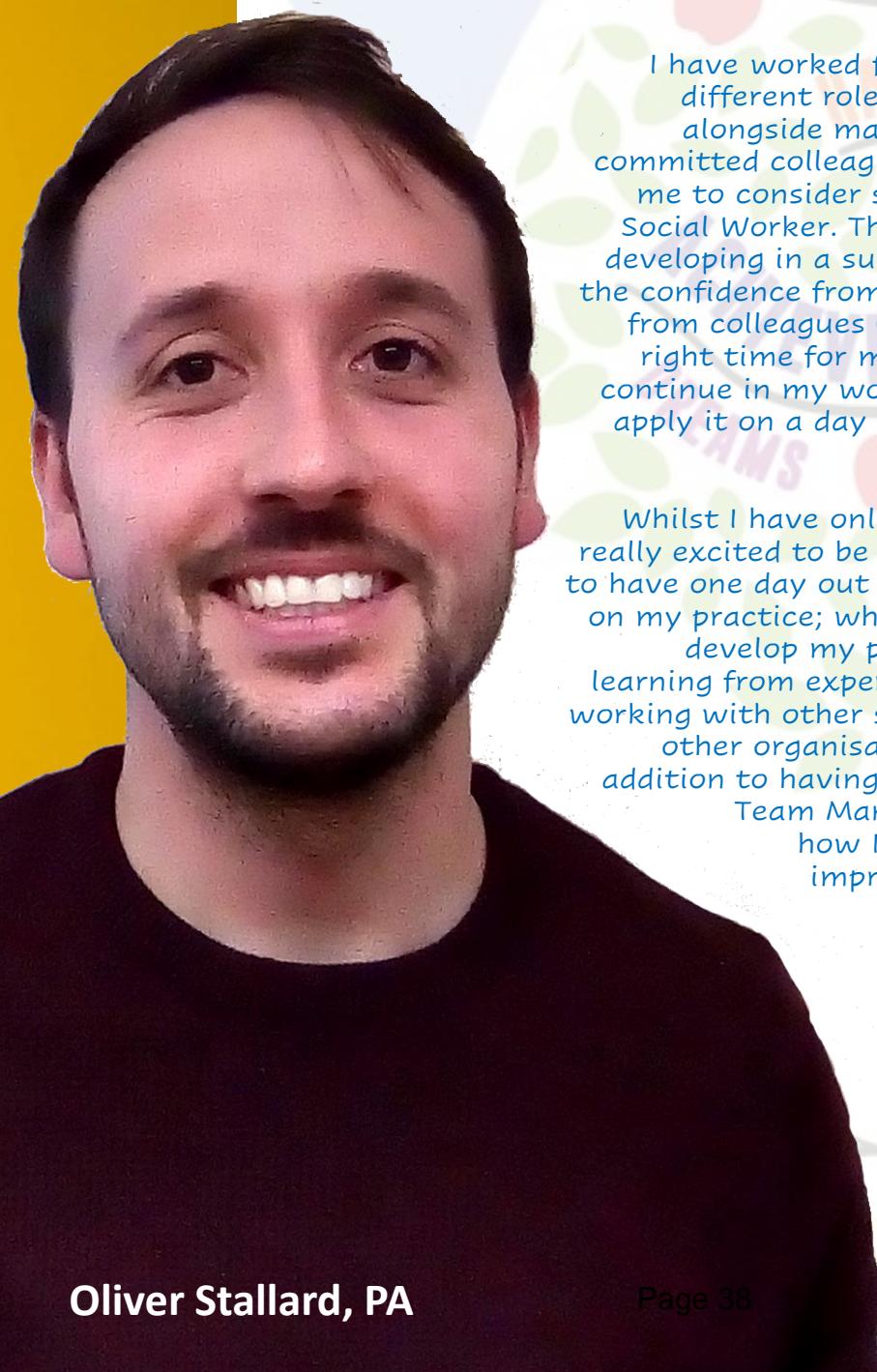
He got 6 in English – Equivalent to A / High B.

We have referred him to Seek and Reach to explore work experience opportunities outside of mainstream education (his preference at this time) and he is engaging really well with his mentor; he is hoping to enrol on the Kick Start Programme (work experience initiative) in November which may lead to full time employment.

Staff Achievements

Carol Johnson, Team Manager

I successfully completed the NAAS in December (National Assessment and Accreditation System for child and family social workers) as a practice supervisor and well demonstrated or strongly demonstrated in all areas.



Oliver Stallard, PA

Nicky Edge, PA

I've taken one of my outside work interests a little further and have gone back to college to complete a Level 2 Diploma in Manicure, Pedicure and Gel Nails. Fitting the time in around work was difficult and the level of detail involved in such a simple sounding course was more than I expected – we had to learn about the biology of the hand for instance and the paperwork for the course was sometimes a bit of a drag. This said, I passed and I'm proud of myself for doing it.

I have worked for Children's Services in a few different roles in the past and have worked alongside many inspiring and hard-working committed colleagues who had often encouraged me to consider studying to become a qualified Social Worker. The combination of working and developing in a supportive "unqualified role" and the confidence from encouragement and guidance from colleagues (past and present) made it the right time for me. This alongside being able to continue in my working role whilst studying and apply it on a day to day basis really appealed to me.

Whilst I have only just started the course, I am really excited to be provided with the opportunity to have one day out each week to study, to reflect on my practice; why we do what we do. I hope to develop my practice as a front line worker, learning from experts in their field, in addition to working with other social work apprentices across other organisations and Local Authorities, in addition to having the support of my colleagues, Team Manager and Practice Educator in how I can apply this knowledge and improve my support and service to the Young People and their families I work with.

At the present time I hope to continue in my role as a Personal Advisor for the Care Leavers Team, however 3 years is a long time and I hope the course will give me an insight in to other areas of Social Work for Worcestershire Children First that I may wish to consider in the future.

WORCESTERSHIRE CARE LEAVERS

2019-2020

12 months in numbers

1

New Manager of
Participation Group

5

In-house produced
newsletters

5597

KIT Calls to check
our young people
are safe and well
during COVID-19

1362

Visits to young people

689

Young people that we can
offer support to on a daily
basis

7

% of our Care Leavers
attending university (the
national average is 6%)

8

New Personal Advisers
welcomed into the team
in the last 12 months

26

Personal Advisers
making up the North
and South Care
Leavers Teams

128

Young people with
complex needs helped
into stable housing by
our specialist DFE
Personal Advisers

296

Care Leavers aged 21+ who we
help when they need additional
levels of support

239

Completed Pathway Plan
Reviews



WORCESTERSHIRE CARE LEAVERS

What has gone well?

- The recent merge with the Outreach Team
- KIT calls to all our young people to keep in touch during COVID-19
- New staff have been recruited, including additional management capacity for the teams with Carol Johnson providing increased cover
- 2 Personal Advisers are completing social work apprenticeships
- Development of A4 Handout sheets for Care Leavers and staff
- Additional newsletters have been created
- We have increased our usage of social media platforms during Covid 19 (to provide events, virtual quizzes etc)
- The start of the Complex Care Leaver Scheme to help prevent homelessness and ensure our most complex young people have access to suitable accommodation

What needs to happen?

- Develop PAs and Outreach roles to better integrate
- A resource for sharing knowledge (currently being developed on a shared drive)
- Re-vamp local offer by updating the document
- Development of an induction pack for Care Leavers, containing the Local Offer and other documentation they will find useful)
- Build links with adult services to smooth out referral and assessment processes
- Improve training and support to residential and foster carers to ensure young people are more adequately prepared to leave care, including offering ASDAN to those in foster care



The Care Leavers Team and Outreach Team Structure Chart



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CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD WORK PROGRAMME 2021

	Agenda Item	Lead
	27 May 2021 (Reports by 12 May)	
	<i>Quarterly data report (Q4 - 20/21) – For noting</i>	Tina Russell /Tony Leak
	8 July 2021 (Reports by 23 June)	
	5 October 2021 (Reports by 20 September)	
	<i>Quarterly data report (Q1 - 21/22) – For noting</i>	Tony Leak
	23 November 2021 (Reports by 8 November)	
	<i>Quarterly data report (Q2 - 21/22) – For noting</i>	Tony Leak
	<u>Standing Items</u>	
	Quarterly Data reports Q3 20/21 (Jan 21) Q4 20/21 – (April 21)	
	<u>To Be Scheduled</u>	

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Corporate Parenting Board Dataset

Measure	Jan-20	Feb-20*	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Target	Eng 19/20	Stat Nbrs 19/20
1 Number of Looked After Children	812		831	826	820	824	816	829	834	829	836	837		796	761
2 Percentage of Looked After Children subject to s20	14%		13%	13%	13%	13%	13%	13%	12%	12%	12%	12%		17%	22%
3 Number of Looked After Children who are Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers	33		32	30	26	26	25	24	23	20	21	20			
4 Number of Looked After Children open to Children with Disability teams	37		37	37	40	40	35	34	34	35	39	39			
5 Number of Looked After Children placed outside the County	213		214	217	212	216	234	236	231	194	217	219 (26%)		41%	33%
6 Number of Looked After Children placed more than 20 miles from home, outside the County		117	116	113	115	112	117	118	116	116	115 (15%)	12%		16%	18%
7 Number of Looked After Children placed more than 20 miles from home, total		138	137	135	142	140	143	144	143	144	143 (17%)			20%	26%
8 Percentage of Looked After Children with 3 or more placements in previous 12 months	8.5%		9.6%	7.0%	8.0%	7.9%	8.0%	6.9%	6.6%	7.0%	7.2%	6.9%	10%	11%	12%
9 Number of Looked After Children placed in Foster Care/ with a Relative or Friend	606		615	614	607	607	604	618	620	618	622	629 (75%)	75%	72%	72%
10 Number of Looked After Children placed for Adoption	22		23	23	25	23	17	18	17	15	13	11 (1%)		3%	3%
11 Number of Looked After Children placed with parents	36		38	37	39	42	40	38	38	41	38	34 (4%)		7%	5%
12 Number of Looked After Children in Independent/Supported Living	46		54	52	49	54	54	58	53	56	60 (7%)				
13 Number of Looked After Children in Children's Homes (1)	95		94	92	92	90	92	92	91	92	96	93 (11%)	10%	13%	15%
14 Number of Looked After Children in Secure Accommodation	3		2	3	3	4	5	5	5	5	4	3 (<1%)			
15 Number of Looked After Children in Other (2)	4		5	5	5	4	4	4	5	5	7	7 (1%)		5%	6%
16 Number of Looked After Children in Bed and Breakfast	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
17 Number of repeat Looked After Children within 12 months	0		0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1%		
18 Percentage of Looked After Children with an up to date Care Plan or Pathway Plan	78%		96%	96%	95%	96%	96%	96%	95%	98%	98%	97%	100%		
19 Percentage of Looked After Children with an up to date health assessment	72%		65%	59%	75%	79%	78%	78%	79%	82%	78%	76%	90%	90%	85%
20 Percentage of looked after children of school age with an up to date Personal Education Plan at term end	n/a		n/a	100%		100%						100%	95%		
21 Number of Children in care of WCC aged 16/17 that are Not in Education/Employment/Training - (placed in or out of county)	28		20	22	22	28	30	32	13	25	29	30			
22 Number of Looked After Children who went missing	24		23	12	15	23	17	16	20	18	15	21			
23 Number of "missing" incidents involving Looked After Children	62		49	27	18	35	27	23	37	40	16	27			
24 Number of Looked after Children recorded as vulnerable to Child Sexual Exploitation	48		44	27	25	26	20	19	18	18	17	15			
25 Number of Looked after Children recorded as experiencing Child Sexual Exploitation	1		1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1			
26 Number of council foster carers - households		147			145			143			142				
27 Number of care leavers open for services - all ages	362		359	385	381	379	377	378	370	380	382	384			
28 Number of care leavers open for services - age 18-20	286		287	293	291	293	289	287	281	284	277	273			
29 Number of care leavers open for services - age 21- 25	76		72	92	90	86	88	91	89	96	105	111			
30 Percentage of care leavers open for services "in touch" - all ages	75%		74%	n/a	86%	86%	90%	90%	95%	95%	96%	95%	95%	{90%}	{87%}
31 Percentage of care leavers open for services in suitable accommodation - all ages	90%		87%	n/a	84%	86%	93%	92%	93%	93%	94%	94%	95%	{85%}	{85%}
32 Number of care leavers open for services in Bed and Breakfast (all ages)	2		3	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	2			
33 Percentage of care leavers open for services that are in Education/Employment/Training - all ages	52%		52%	n/a	46%	46%	48%	47%	51%	51%	52%	52%	85%	{53%}	{54%}
34 Percentage of care leavers open for services with an up-to-date Pathway Plan - age 18-20	84%		85%	80%	67%	57%	28%	31%	25%	30%	40%	48%	95%		

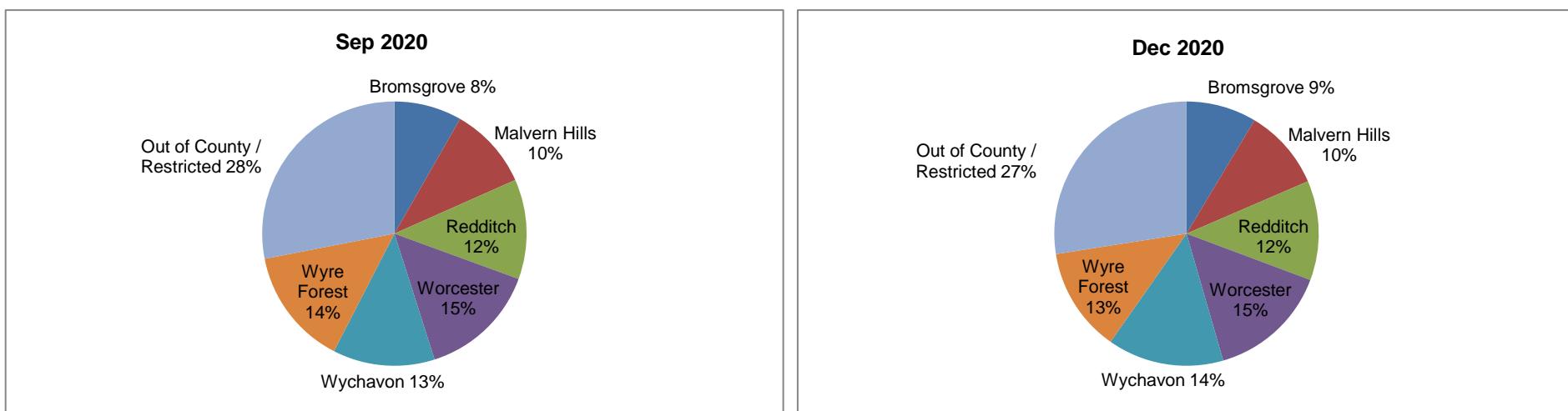
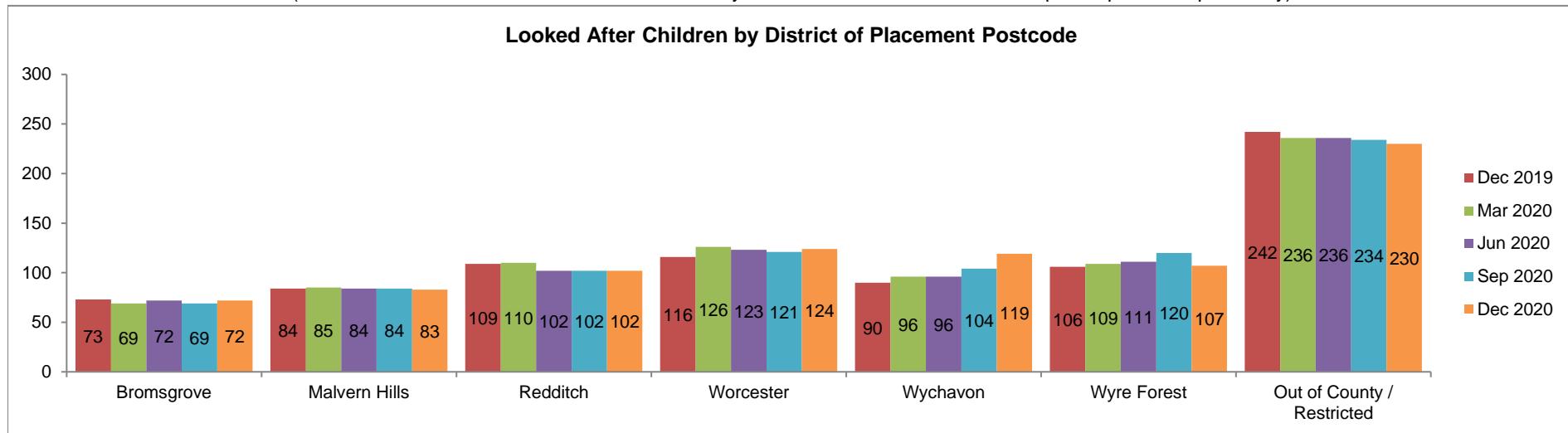
NB - Children's social care implemented its new case management system at the end of February 2020, so data was not available at this point.

(1) - Definition amended from October 2020 from 'all residential' to 'Children's homes' to enable benchmarking with national figures. (2) Other 'residential' moved to this row.

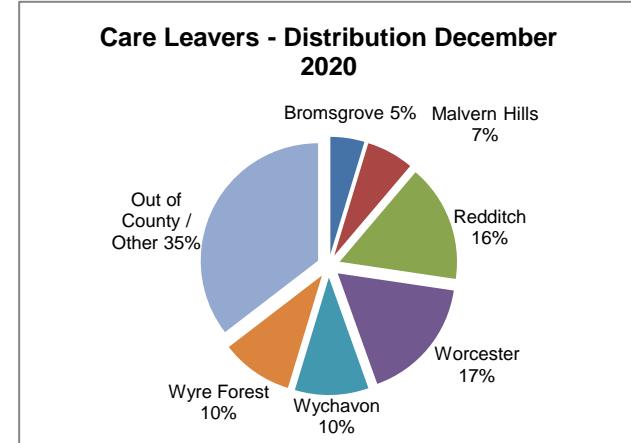
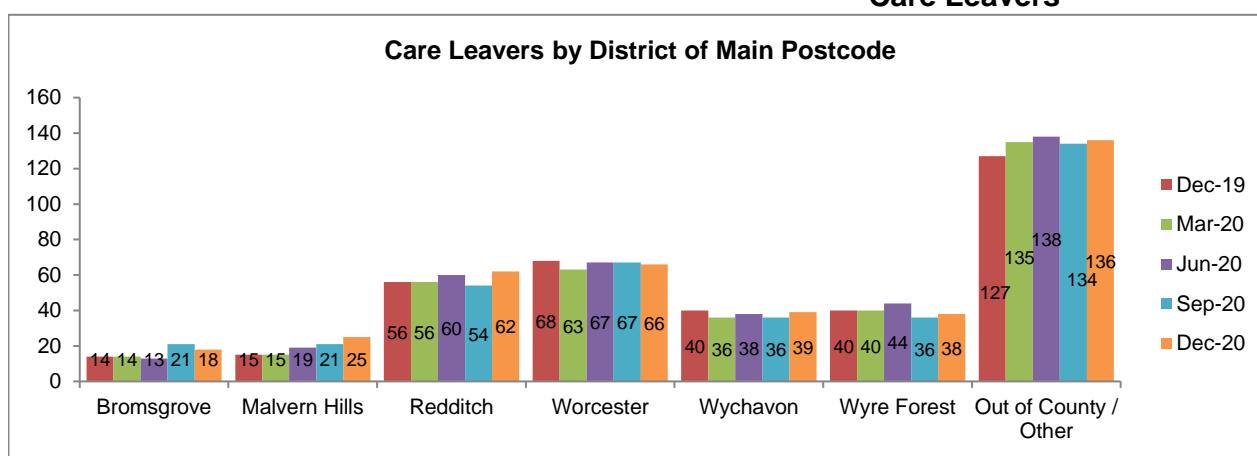
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District Profiles Looked After Children

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

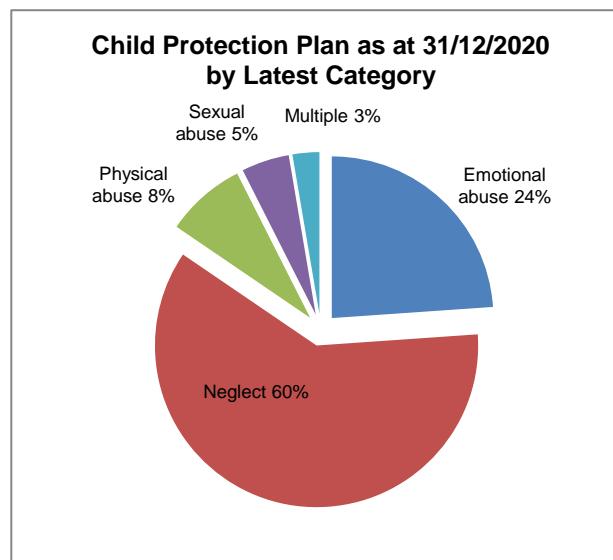
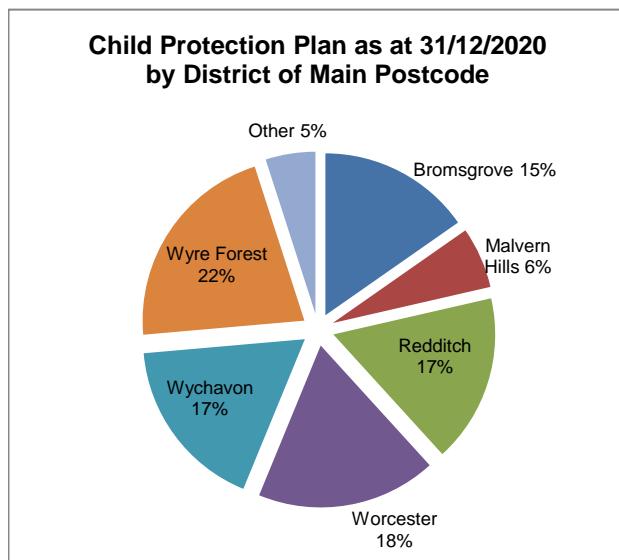


N.B. Numbers below 10 have been suppressed in charts



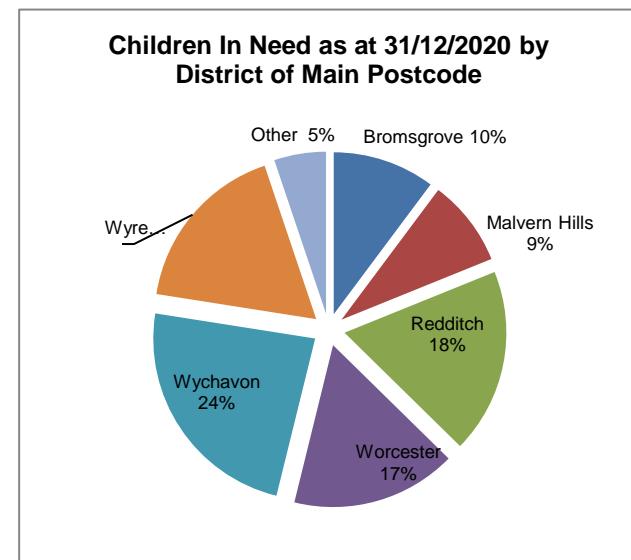
Child Protection

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



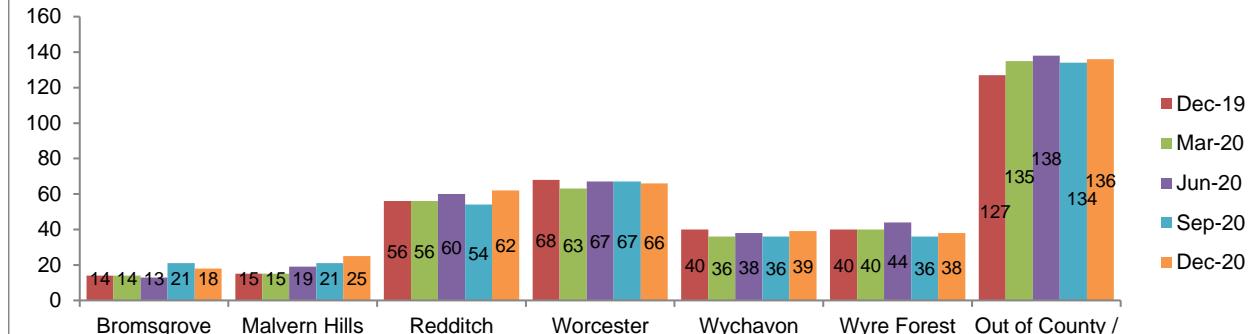
Children in Need

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

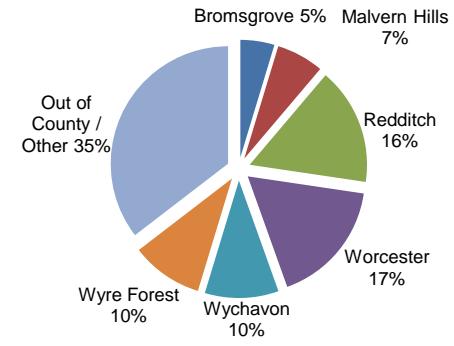


Care Leavers

Care Leavers by District of Main Postcode

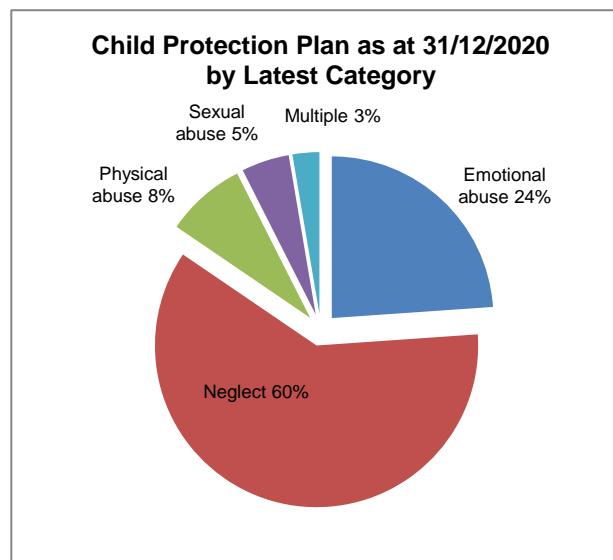
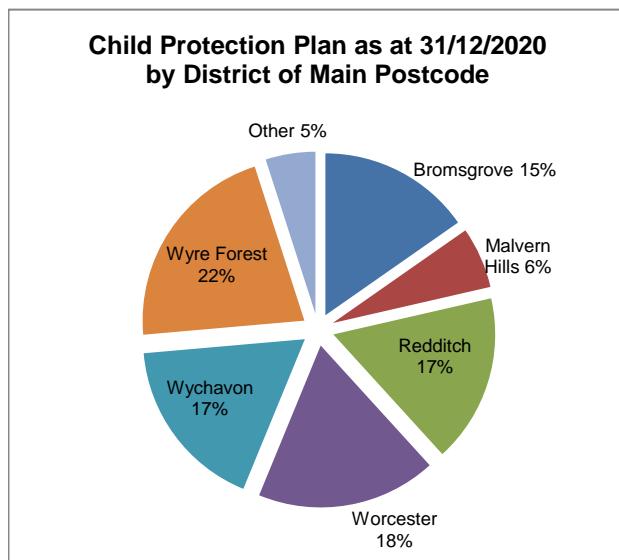


Care Leavers - Distribution December 2020



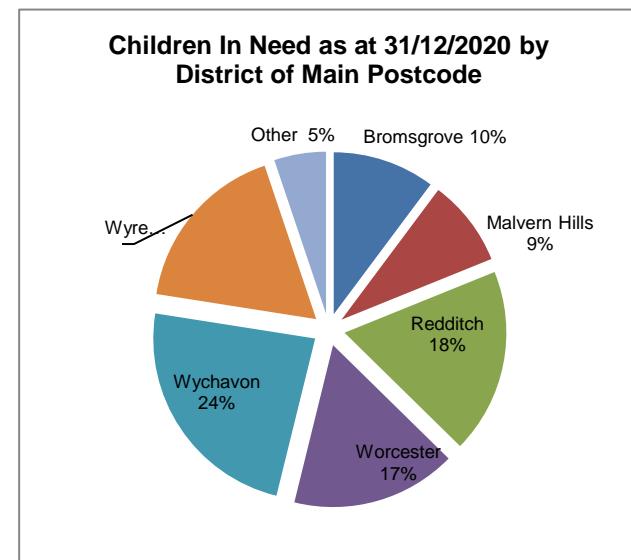
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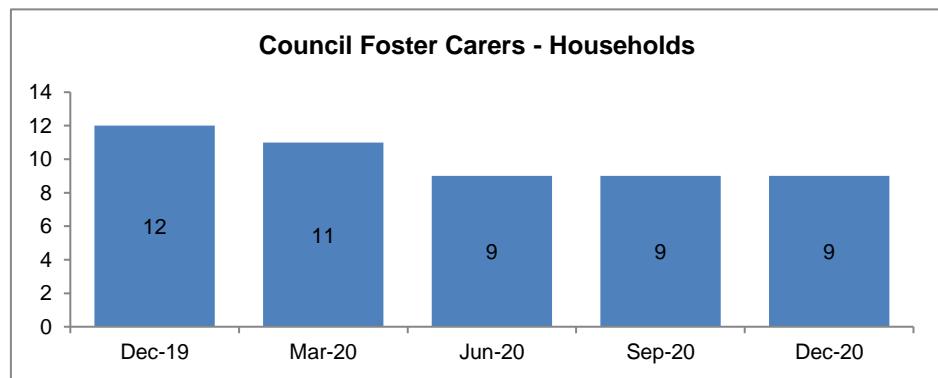
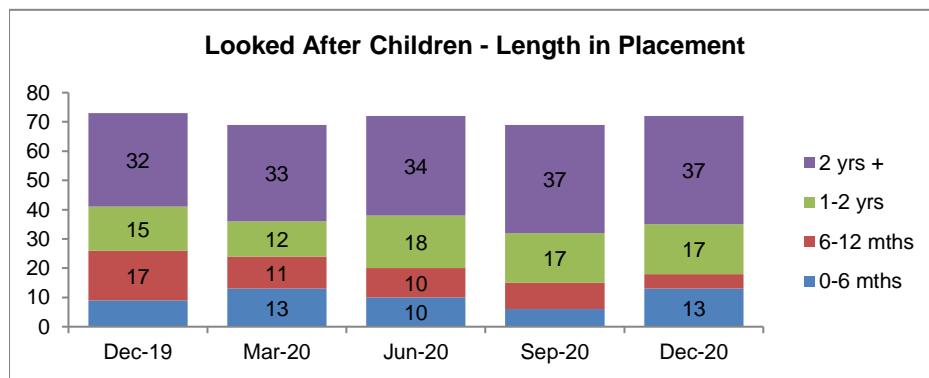
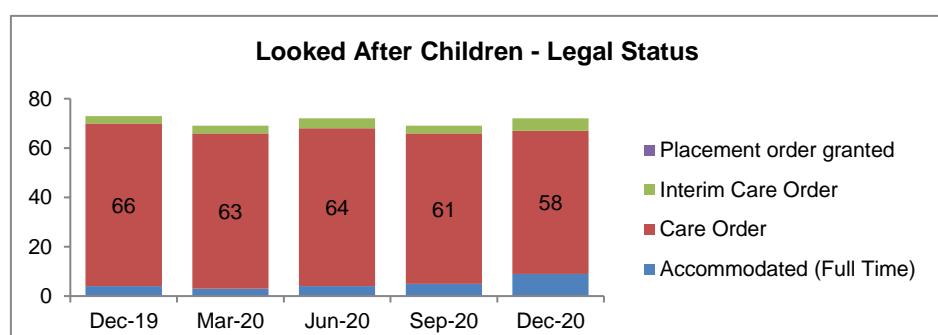
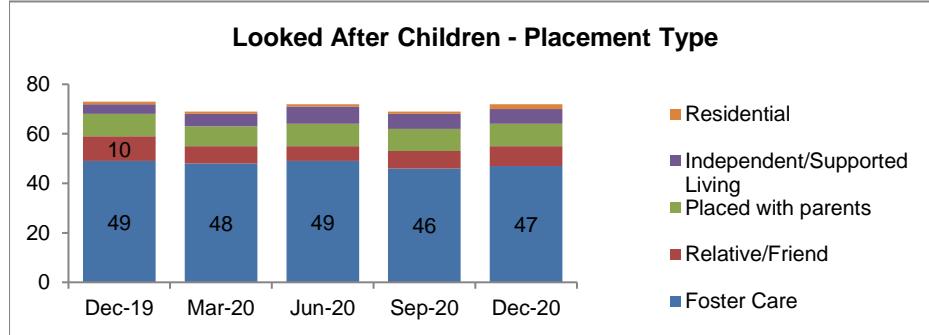
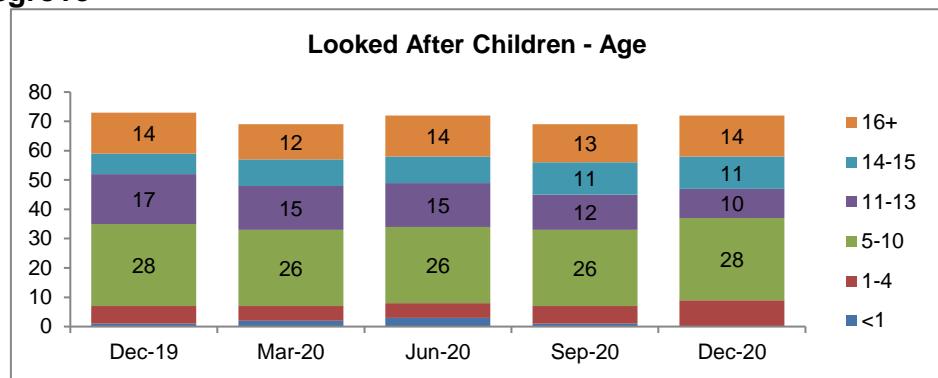
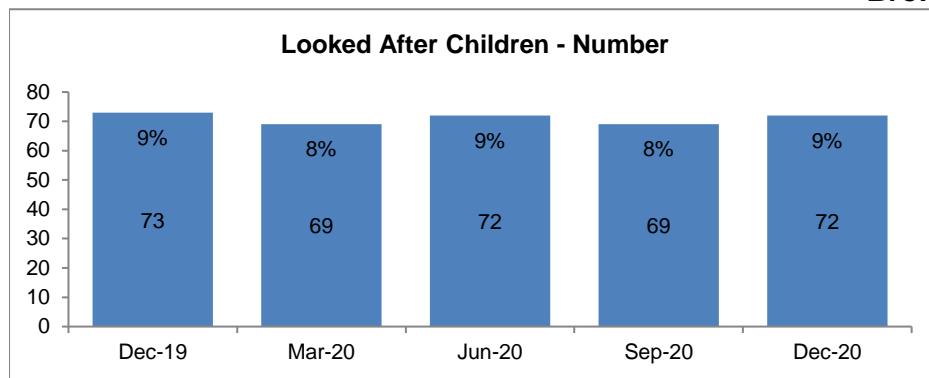
(Children who meet the threshold for significant harm and are subject to a Child Protection Plan)

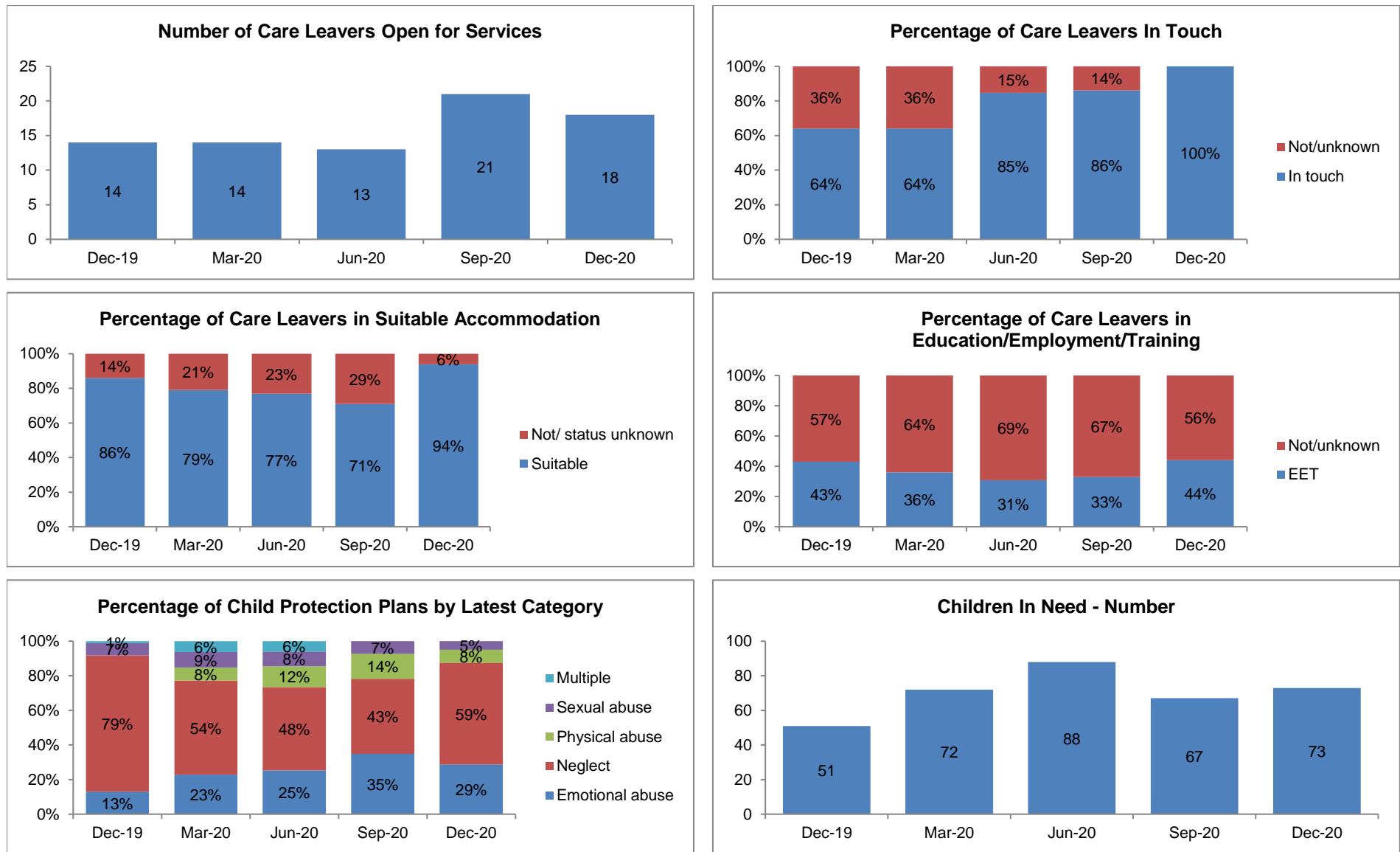


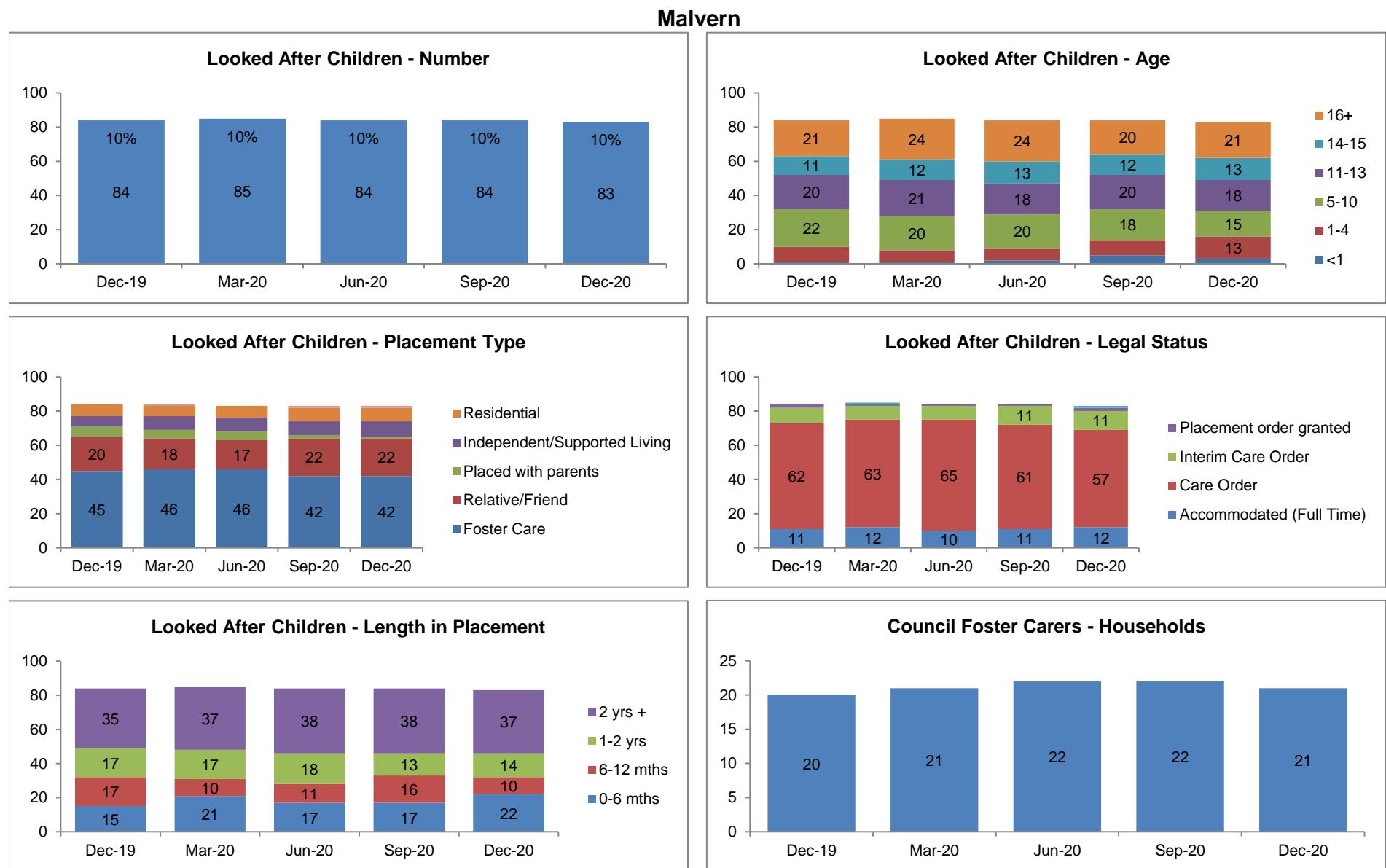
Children in Need

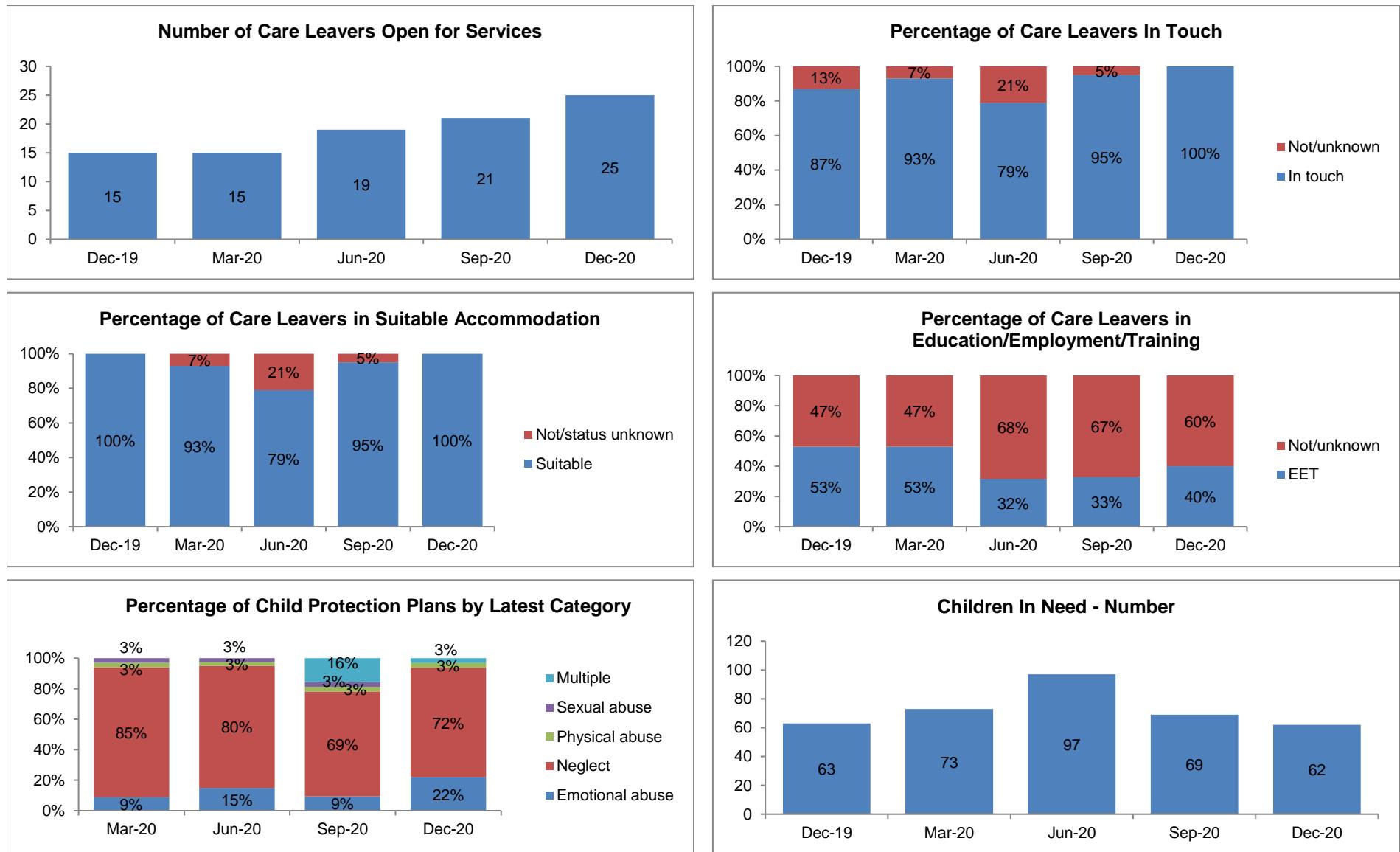
(Children who are open to Social Work intervention and are not Looked After or on a Child Protection Plan)

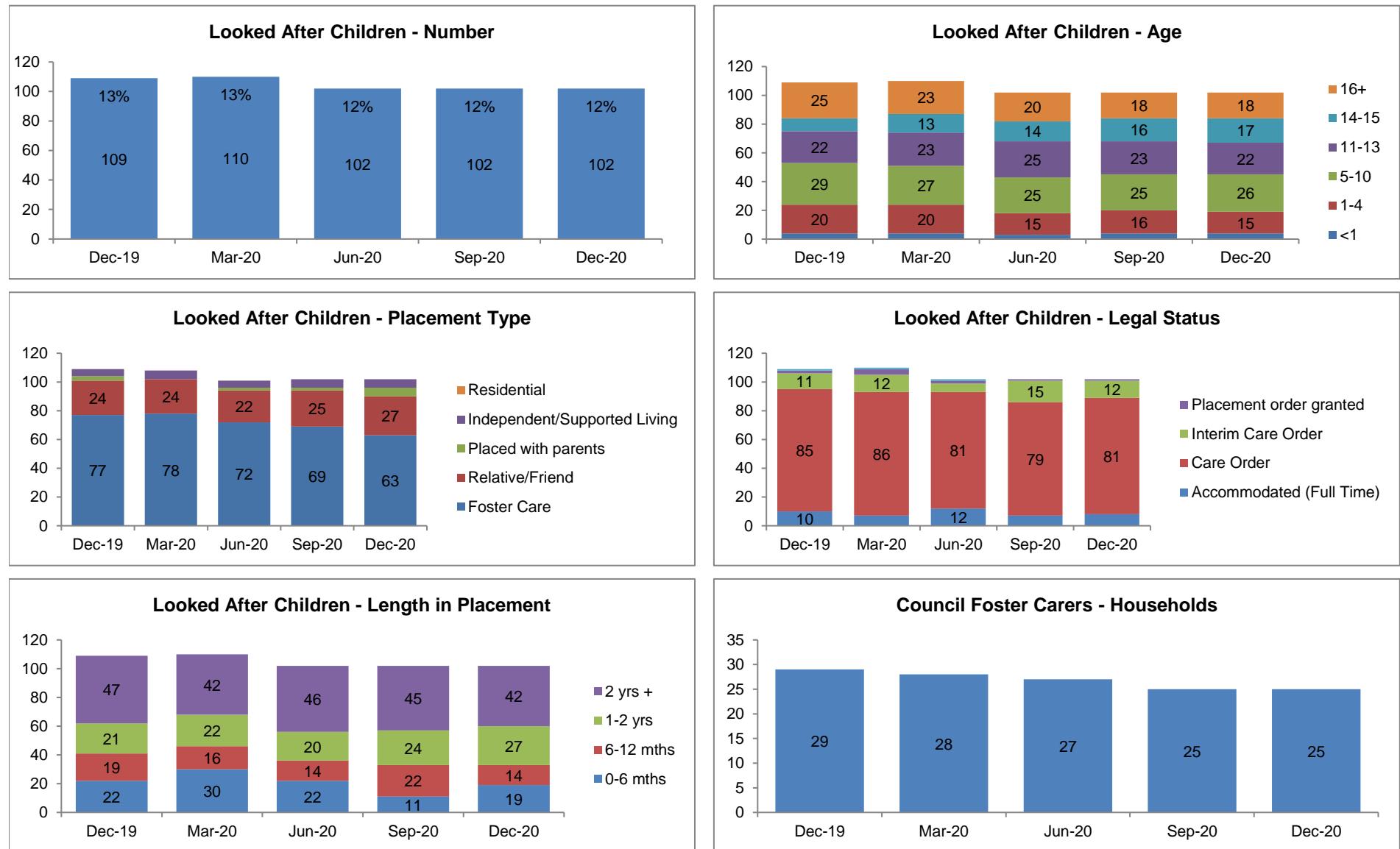


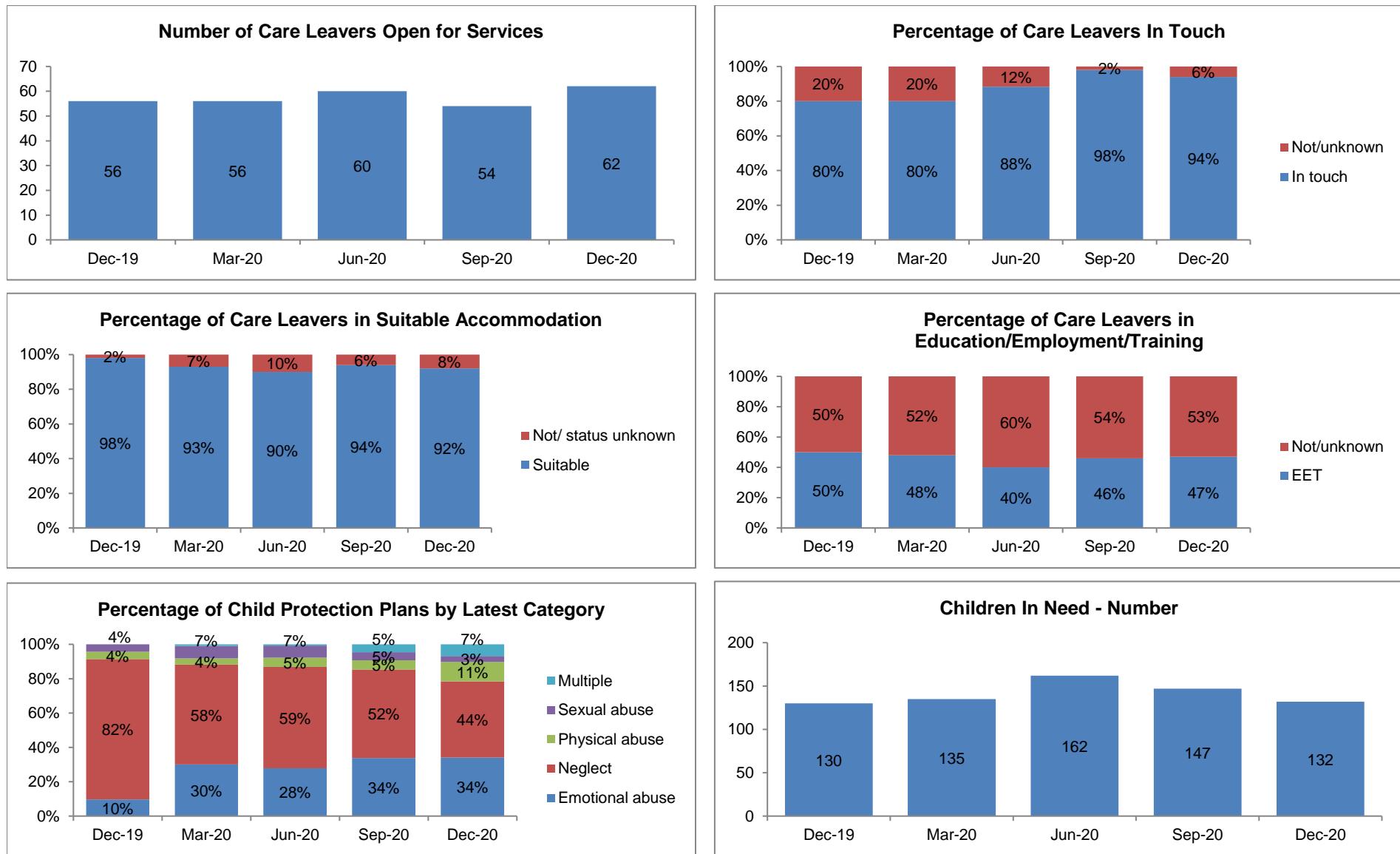
Bromsgrove

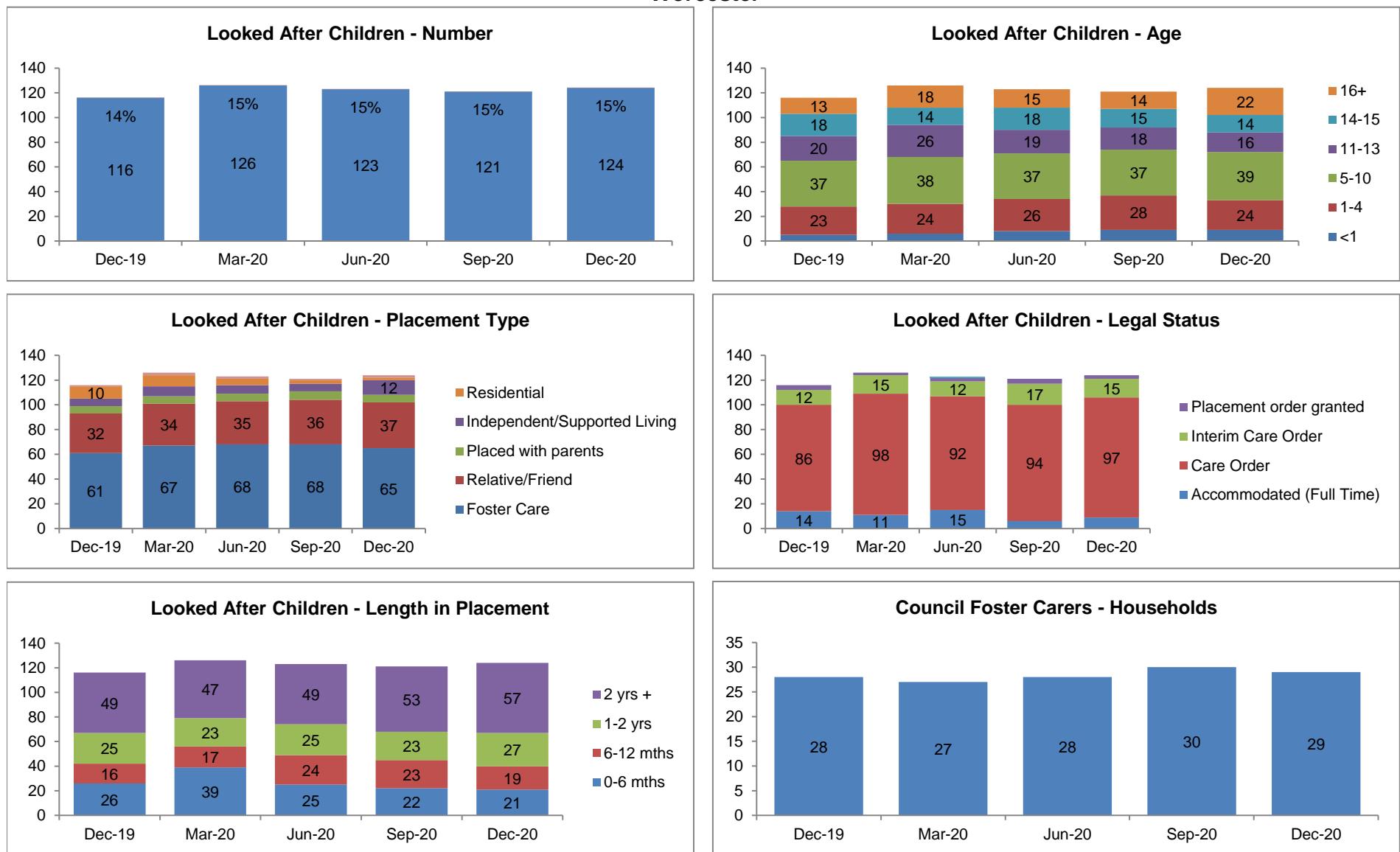


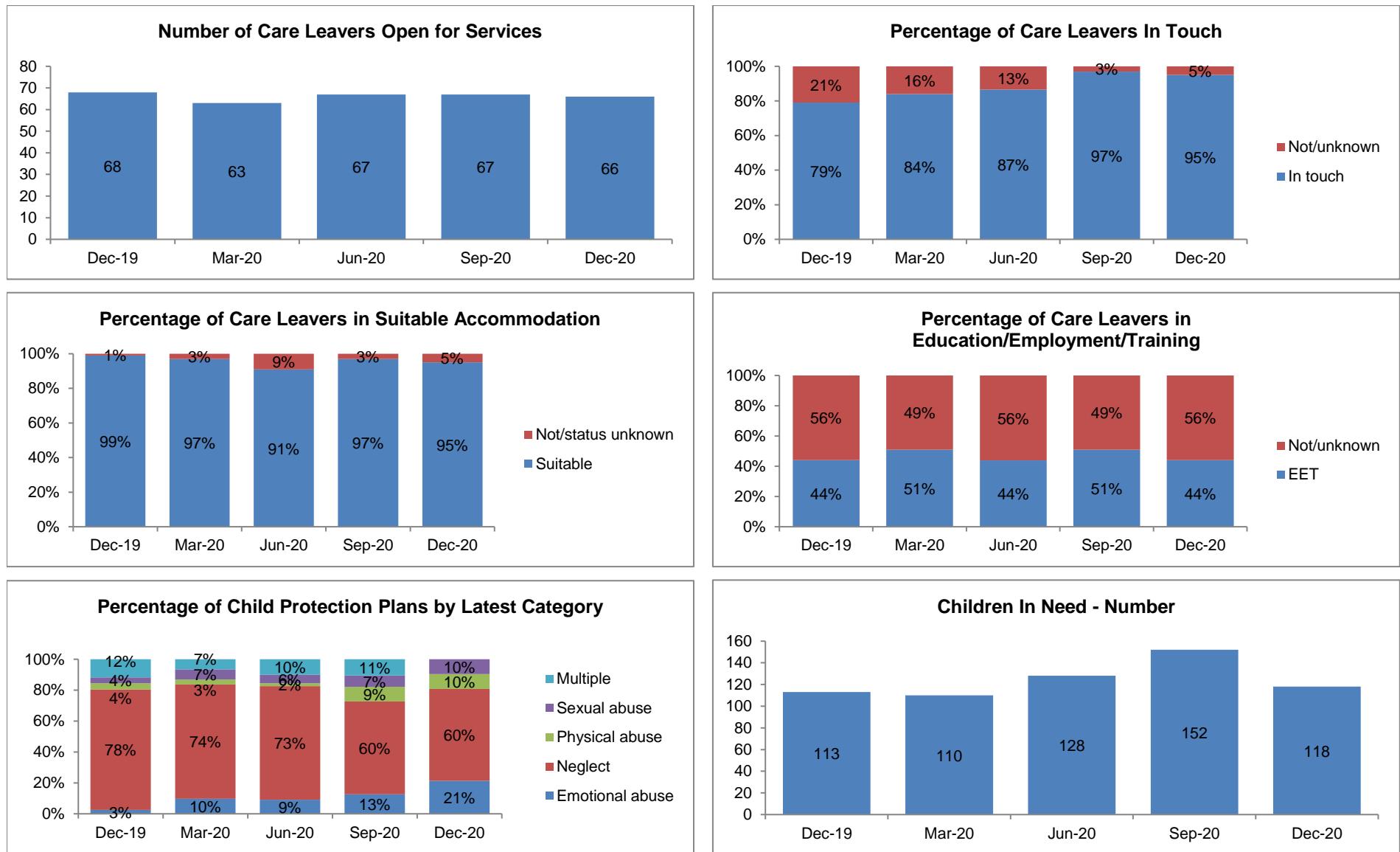




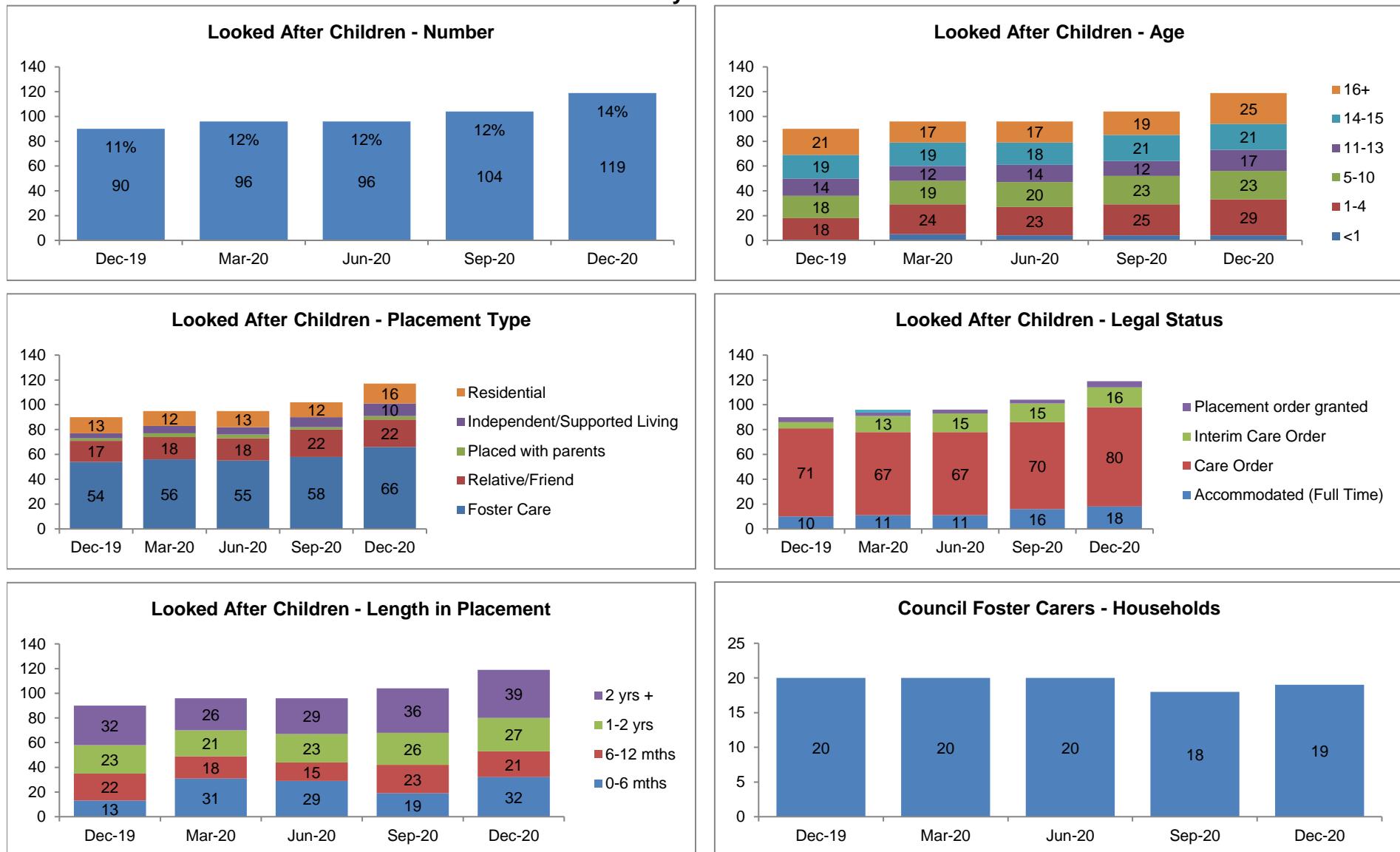
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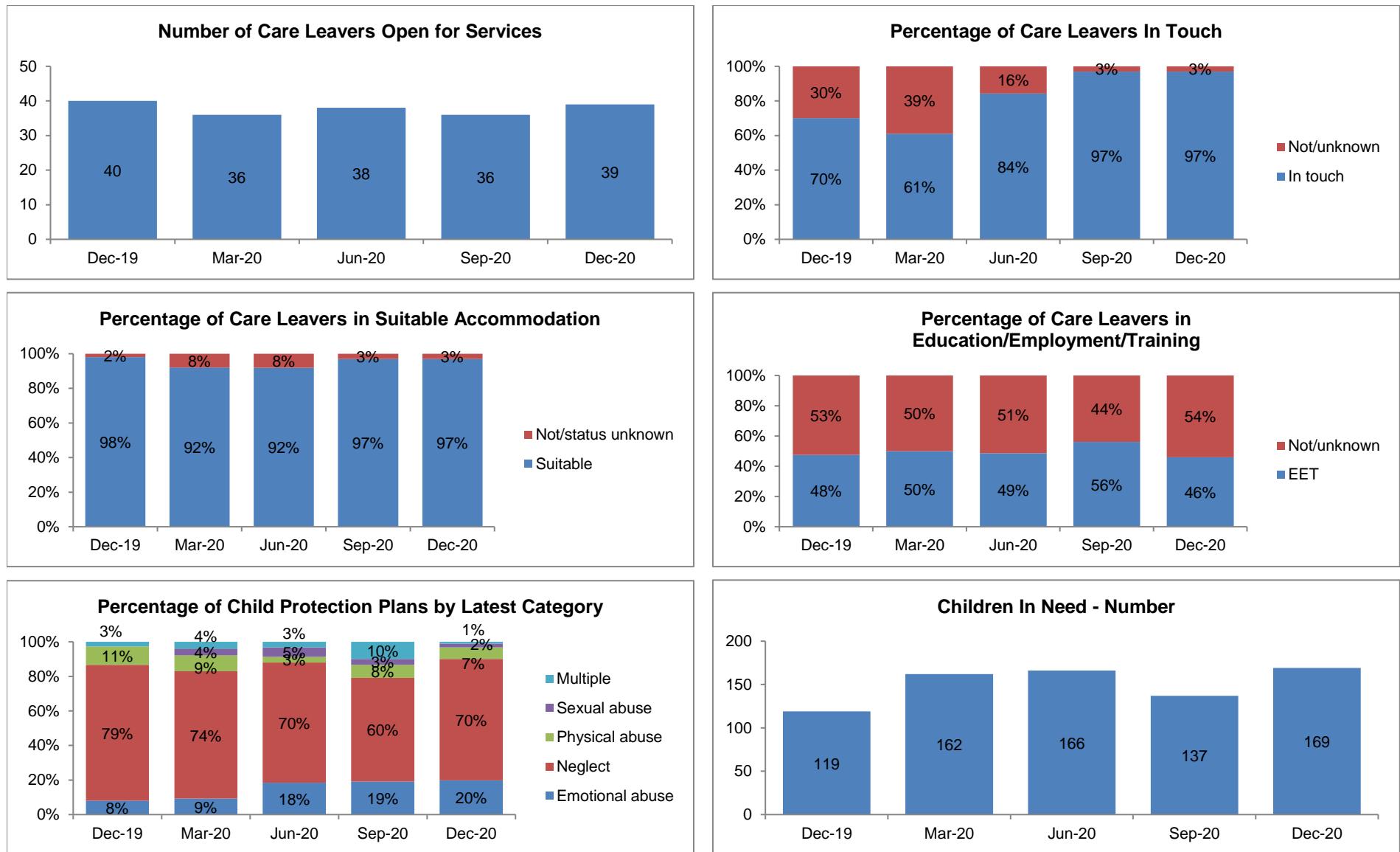


Worcester



Wychavon





Wyre Forest