

Corporate Parenting Board

**Annual Report
September 2022**



What is a corporate parent?

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 says that when a child or young person comes into the care of the local authority or is under 25 and was looked after by the local authority for at least 13 weeks after their 14th birthday, the authority becomes their corporate parent. As corporate parents we:

- **Act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing of those children and young people**
- **Encourage them to express their views, wishes and feelings, and take them into account, while promoting high aspirations and trying to secure the best outcomes for them**
- **Make sure they have access to services**
- **Make sure they are safe, with stable home lives, relationships and education or work**
- **Prepare them for adulthood and independent living**



We aspire to and push for the best possible outcomes for Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

What is the Corporate Parenting Board? (CPB)

The Corporate Parenting Board in Worcestershire provide leadership and a governance structure for corporate parenting to drive forward the outcomes for looked after children and care leavers. It oversees the board's strategy and promotes our pledges to children in care and care leavers.

The board is chaired by Councillor Andy Roberts – Lead Member for Children and Families. It has representation from Councillors from the six districts and includes key stakeholders from housing and youth justice.

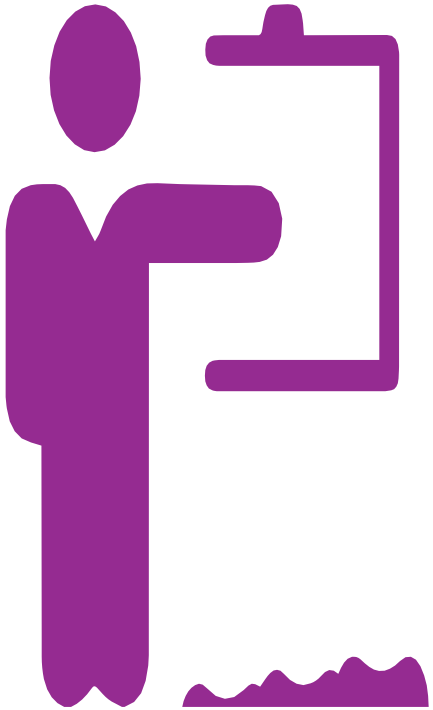
What have CPB done in 2021/22?

In the last year the Corporate Parenting Board has scrutinised, challenged, endorsed and contributed to a range of issues. These include:

- **Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking children**
- **Health Assessments**
- **A Serious Case Review**
- **Fostering Improvement Plan**
- **IRO Annual Report**
- **WCF Sufficiency Strategy**
- **Kickstart Scheme**



Worcestershire's Corporate Parenting Board pledges



CPB members, in collaboration with the Participation team, have recently designed and signed up to a series of pledges. **The pledges constitute a commitment from CPB members to actively promote and contribute to the resolution of challenges young people face.**

Pledges include seeking to attract new foster carers to WCF; actively celebrating young people's achievements and success and supporting work experience and job opportunities.

Being a Corporate Parent necessitates the same expectations, care and support that a parent would provide to their own child

Worcestershire's Corporate Parenting Board

Pledges to our Looked After Children and Care Leavers

2021-2024



We will listen to your voice and support you to be involved in decisions about your life.



We will help you stay in touch with your family, friends, and anyone else who is important to you and support you to return home if able to do so.

We will support you to have a safe, positive, secure, and stable home to live in.



We will encourage and support your learning and development of life skills.

While helping you to access opportunities, to engage those young people not in employment, education, or training (NEET).



We will support you to access services and resources that maintain your physical and emotional wellbeing.

As your corporate parents, we will celebrate your progress, personal milestones, and achievements.



We will help to promote good fostering environments that caters for all individuals and their personal needs, particularly promoting the fostering of teenager's.



Progress in the last year

WCF is currently responsible for 947 looked after children and 406 care leavers.

- It is WCF's aim to ensure all children in care receive a family caring experience: WCF has slightly more looked after children placed in foster care at 72% than the national average.
- It is WCF's aim to secure a kinship care placement wherever possible. Kinship placements have proven far more stable for looked after children with very few breaking down: Kinship carers account for 23% of WCF's fostered children.
- WCF seeks to minimise placement disruption for children and young people, recognising the importance of placement stability in terms of maintaining relationships, connections and support: 7.1% of children experienced three or more placements in the last year. This compares favourably to the previous year's figure of 8% and the national average of 11%. 73% of children have remained in the same placement for over 2 years.
- Supported provision for looked after children is key in enabling young people to successfully transition into adulthood and independence: The amount of young people residing in supported semi-independent provision has increased to 7% which represents a good news story in supporting and enabling young people to transition to independence.
- Permanency is paramount in instilling a sense of security, stability and belonging to children and young people: The duration in care continues to improve with 31% of looked after children achieving permanence out of care in less than 12 months through Adoption, Special Guardianship and Child Arrangement Orders. This compares favourably to the previous years figure of 23% and the 2020/21 figure of 18%. This reflects timeliness and effective planning within care proceedings. There has also been an increase in reunification to parents care where safe and appropriate and the revocation of care orders.



Progress in the last year - continued

- Worcestershire Children First Fostering (WCFF) are registered as an independent fostering agency and as such, are subject to stand alone Ofsted inspections and scrutiny: [Following the inspection of the fostering service in September 2021 with a judgment of Requires Improvement to be Good, the WCFF Improvement Plan has made significant headway and progress.](#)
- Striving to maintain contact and engagement with care leavers is vital in being able to successfully plan WITH a young person and ensure they are appropriately supported: [Care Leavers 'in touch' has increased from an already high figure to 95%. Feedback from care leavers \(where 175 young people contributed\) demonstrates that 95% feel listened to by their Personal Advisor; 88% feel included in their pathway planning; and 90% felt it was easy to contact their Personal Advisor.](#)
- It is incumbent upon all authorities to ensure the support to care leavers is encapsulated within an up to date and thorough Local Offer: [The care leaver offer is considered "comprehensive" following feedback from the National DFE lead and the regional survey. The Financial Offer has been revised to care leavers to include support with driving lessons, grants to set up home and winter allowance for example. The offer was commented upon as "generous" by the National DFE lead.](#)



Areas of further focus

- Retaining foster carers and recruiting new carers (particularly for teenage young people) is a key component of WCF's Sufficiency Strategy. In turn this results in enabling more children to remain within county, maintaining connections and relationships and less reliance on a provider led external market: There are a decreasing number of children cared for by Worcestershire carers at 16%. Whilst this is reflective of a national difficulty in recruiting carers WCF is focussed on strategies to retain current carers and recruit new carers with the 'buddy carer' support strategy.
- Residential care should only be utilised for those young people where no other placement type can adequately meet their complex and challenging needs: The numbers of children in residential care has risen from 11% to 12% in the last year. Placement demand derives from breakdown in birth family or previous care placement and due to the lack of foster placements, the demand for residential care has increased.
- As corporate parents, WCF aspires to support care leavers into the first rung of employment: The need to secure care leavers in apprenticeship schemes remains a priority. Significant opportunities via WCC's capital building are being pursued along with strategies to promote targeted business events for care leavers.
- All looked after children have experienced trauma and attachment disorder. It is incumbent upon all agencies to support the emotional health and wellbeing and mental health of all children and young people: In a survey WCF undertook with all looked after children and care leavers, consistent feedback was received illustrating a lack of understanding of what mental health services were available and difficulties in being able to access services and support. WCF leads continue to promote the needs of children and young people within a multitude of mental health forums and boards given this is a key area where young people themselves are clearly stating they do not know where and how to access support. The 'Connect' scheme is being developed to combat social isolation for young people and the Integrated Service for Looked After children has been revised to focus on emotional health and wellbeing in a more targeted manner.



Worcestershire's Corporate Parenting Board Chair

Councillor Andy Roberts – Lead Member for Children and Families



[Click here to hear Councillor Roberts talking about his role as Corporate Parenting Board Lead](#)

Corporate Parenting Board Champions

Local District Councillor's, as members of the Corporate Parenting Board, have become 'Champions' to promote and develop key issues for young people - feeding back to the board and sharing positive outcomes that can be promoted in the other districts. Champions lead on one of the following:

- **Housing and council tax**
- **Employment**
- **Leisure and cultural activities**
- **Fostering**
- **Education**
- **Being a Care Leavers Ambassador**

District Lead for Bromsgrove & Care Leavers Ambassador

"More routine support with setting up bills and services when moved into my own tenancy. Wasn't much space to talk about my mental health and felt I was signposted to GP and mental health services" Quote from a care leaver

"My main goal is to educate staff on what it is like to be on the receiving end of the love that they can give and how much difference it makes from treating them as a human."
Quote from a care leaver

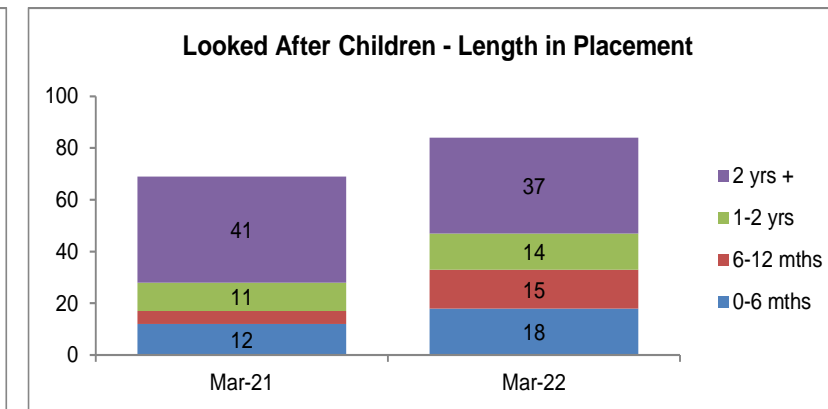
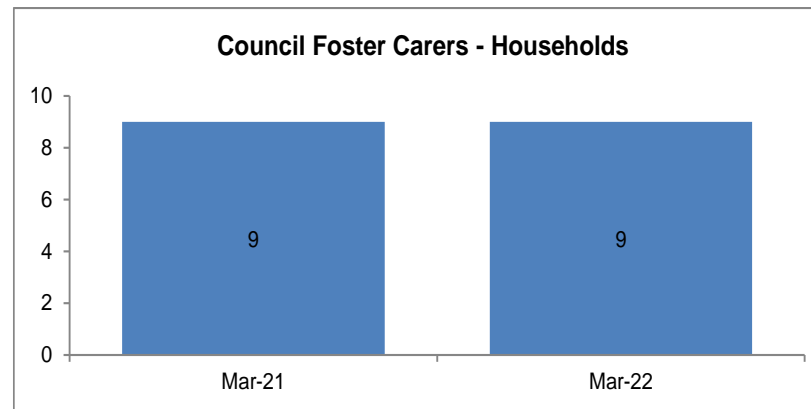
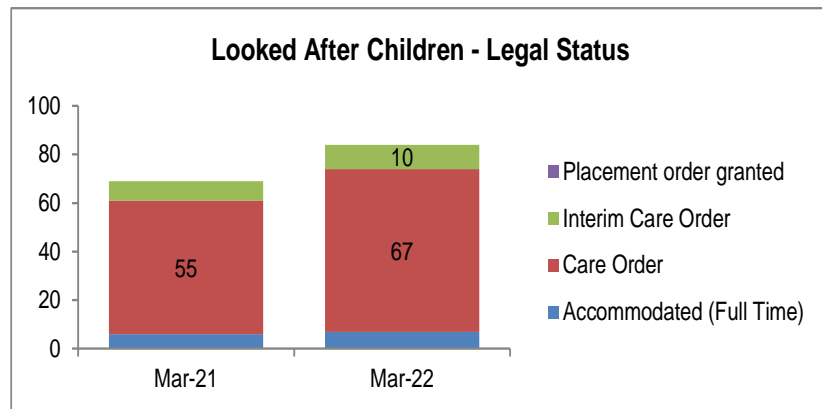
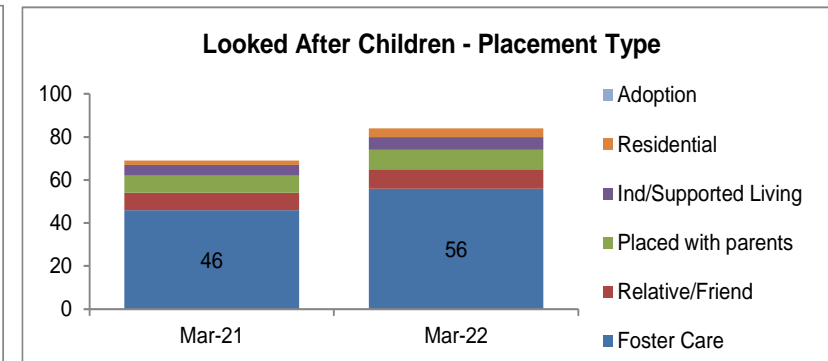
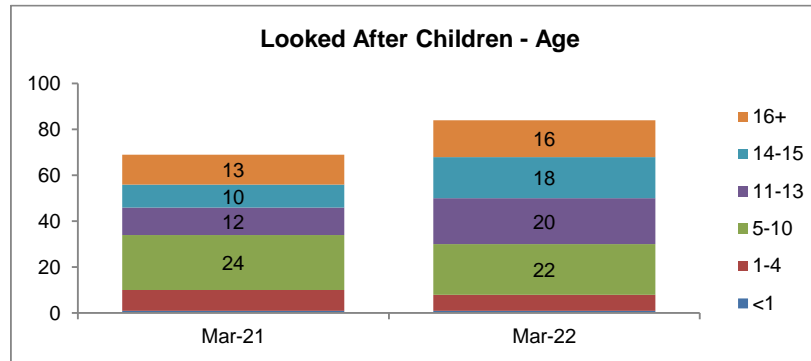
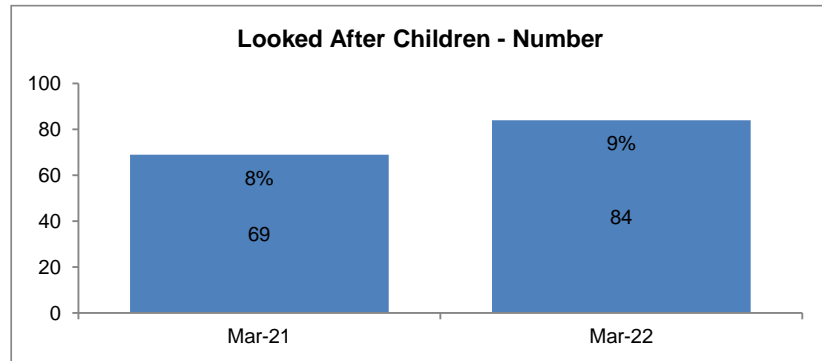


[Click here to listen to Worcestershire Care Leavers talking about support they need and have received](#)

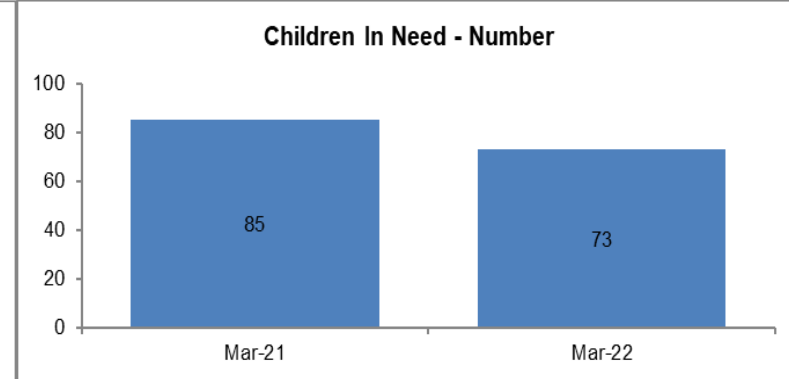
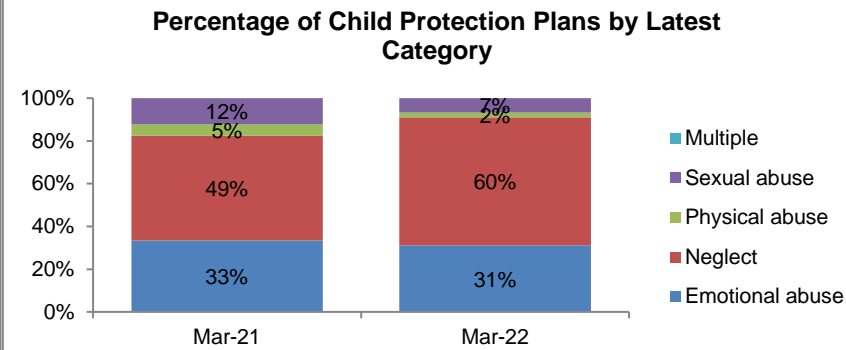
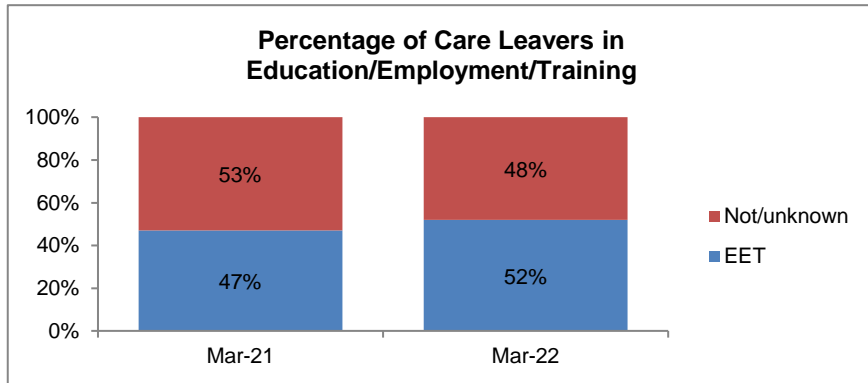
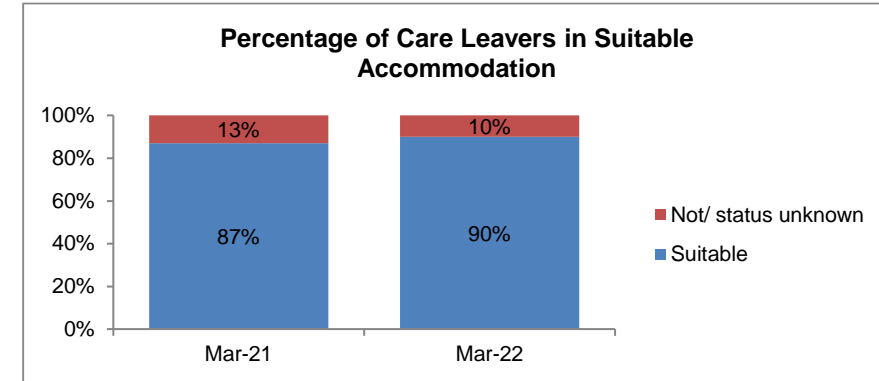
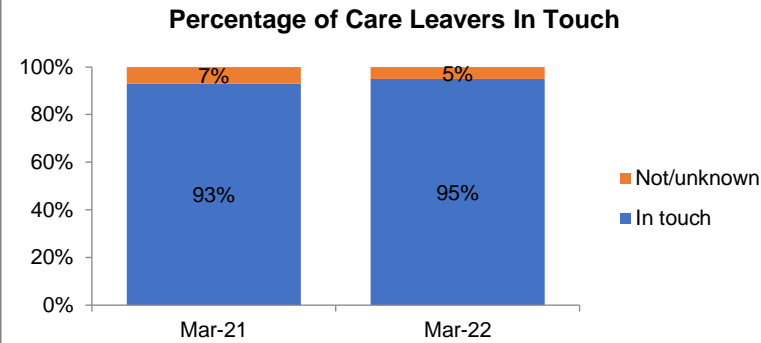
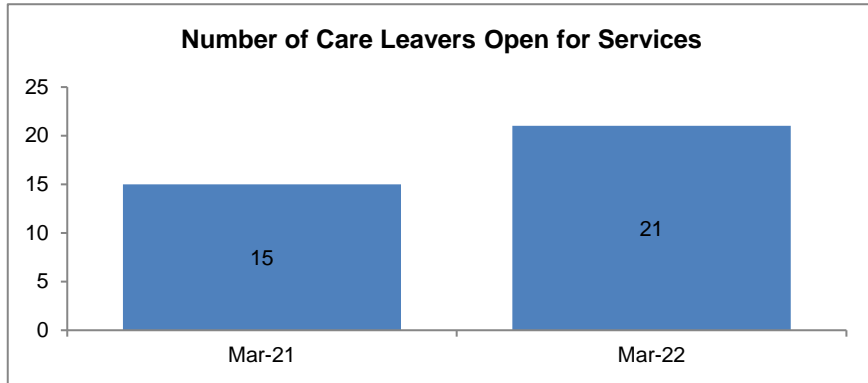
Care Leavers Ambassador Priority

- Improve access to mental health, wellbeing and support services for Care Leavers

District Profiles for Bromsgrove Looked After Children



District Profiles for Bromsgrove Care Leavers, CP & CIN



District Lead for Malvern & Fostering Champion

"Although I am a foster care kid and care leaver, I never felt like that when I was with my family as they have always treated me as their own. The two people who have brought me up have made me the person I am today. I want to reiterate how important it is that people have a home that is stable and parents or parent figures who are loving and caring."

To be
confirmed

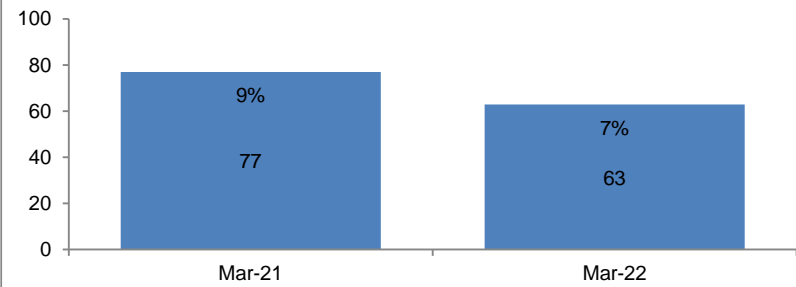


[Click here to listen to
Worcestershire Young People
talking about their fostering
experiences.](#)

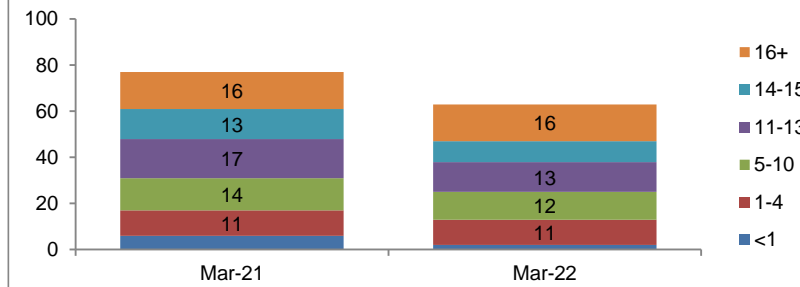
Fostering Champion Priority

District Profile for Malvern Hills Looked After Children

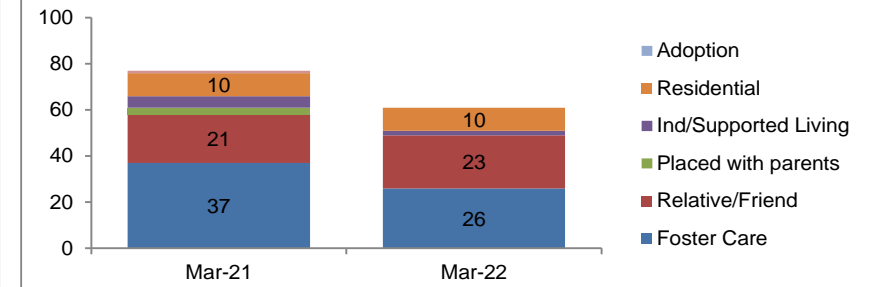
Looked After Children - Number



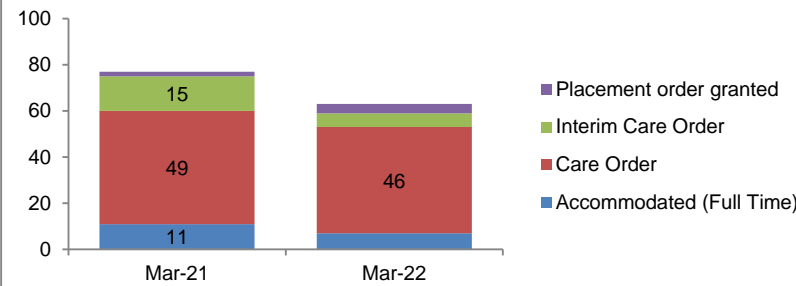
Looked After Children - Age



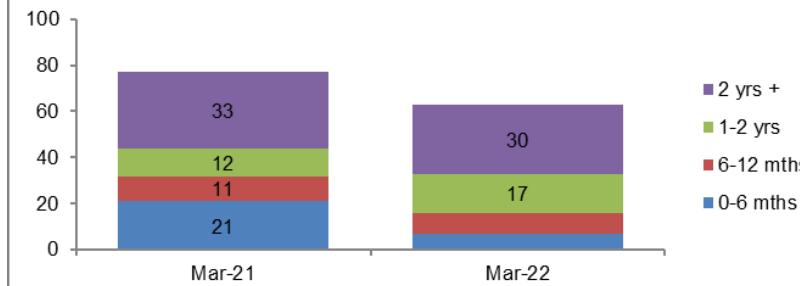
Looked After Children - Placement Type



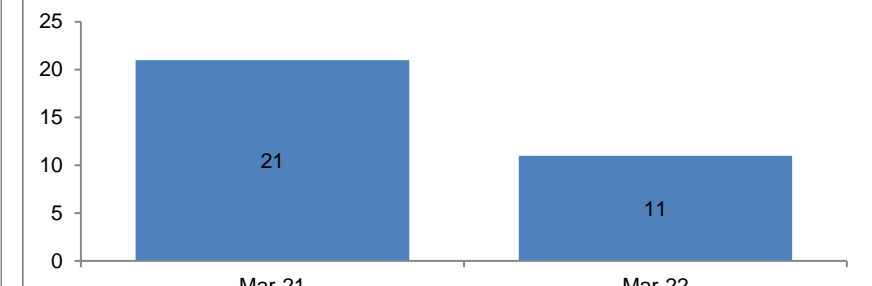
Looked After Children - Legal Status



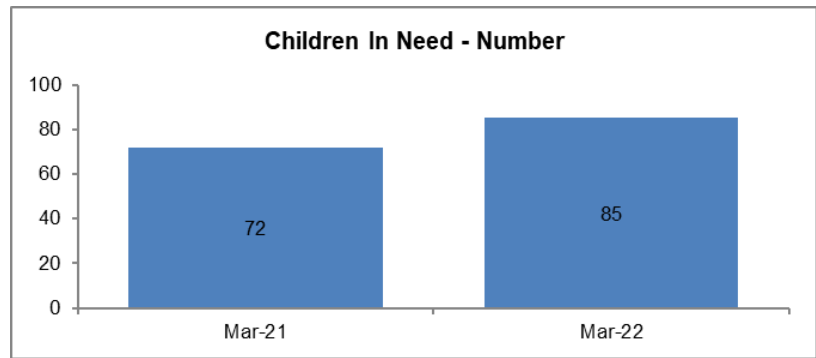
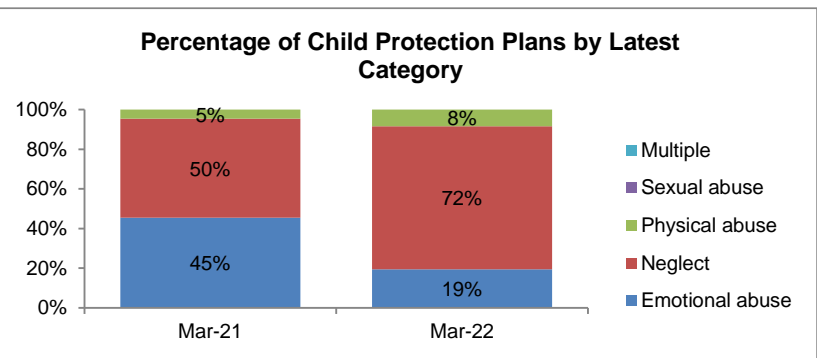
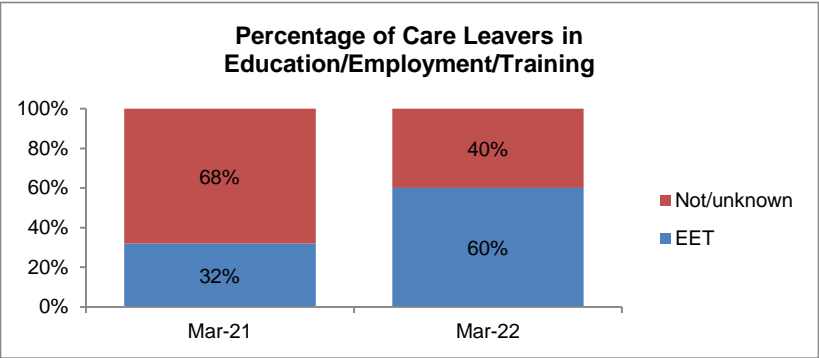
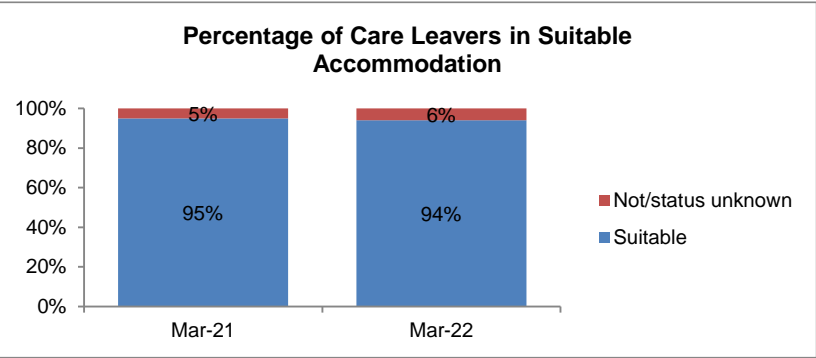
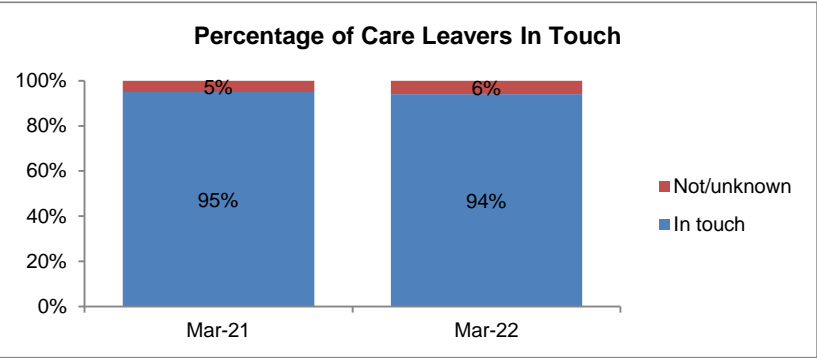
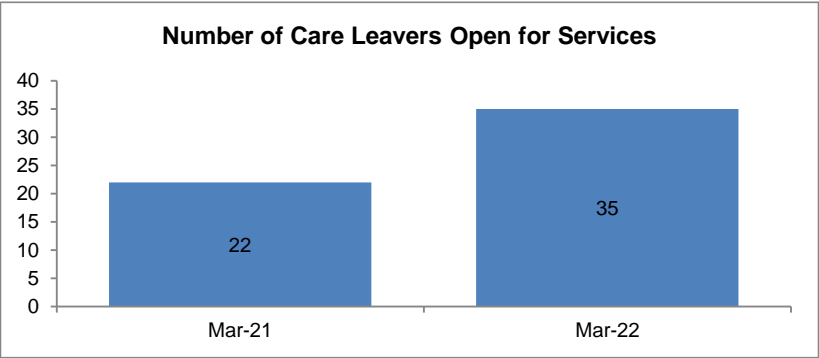
Looked After Children - Length in Placement



Council Foster Carers - Households



District Profile for Malvern Hills Care Leavers, CP & CIN



District Lead for Redditch & Employment Champion

"The kickstart programme is run by universal credit to help people get back into the work system. It's more support than you'd normally get coming into a job. I get qualifications whilst doing this. It's pretty cool." Quote from a care leaver

PA: "If you hadn't received that support from us (WCF) what might of happened?" Care leaver: "I probably wouldn't have gone to work."

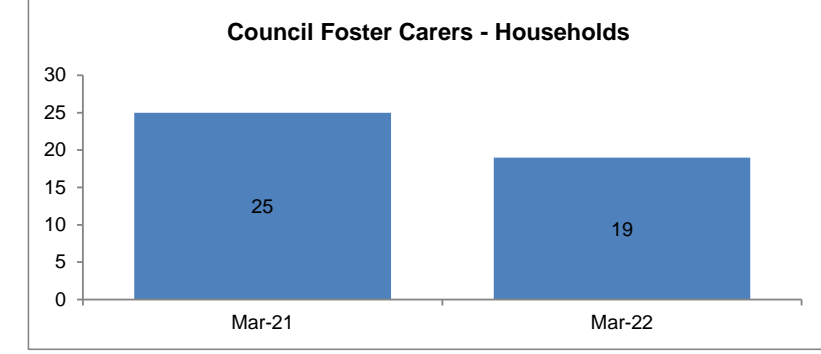
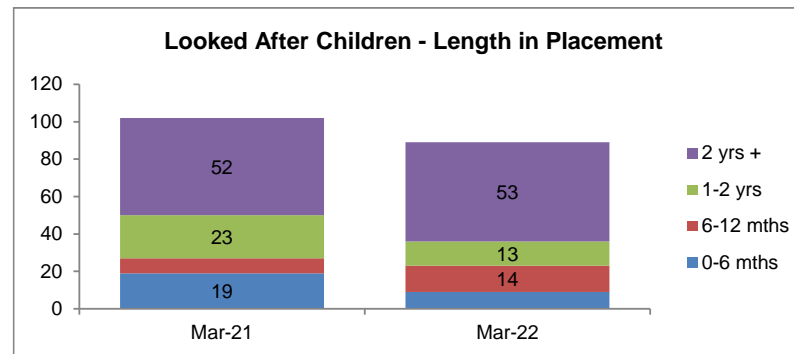
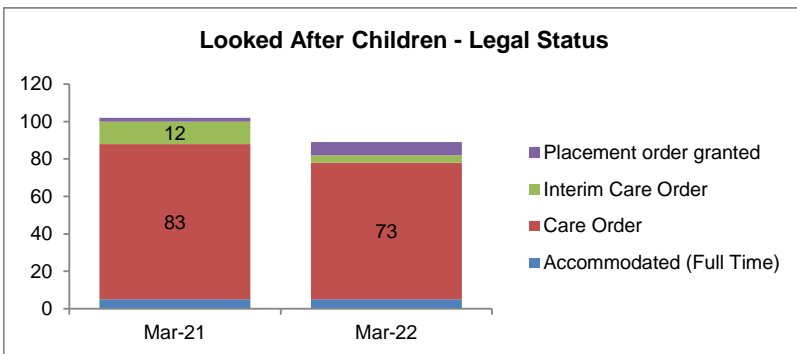
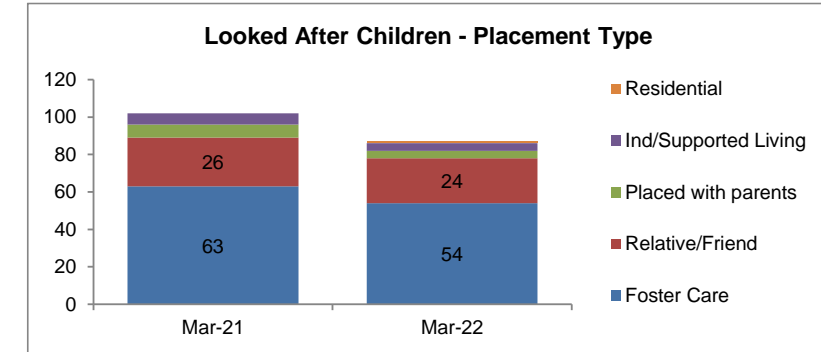
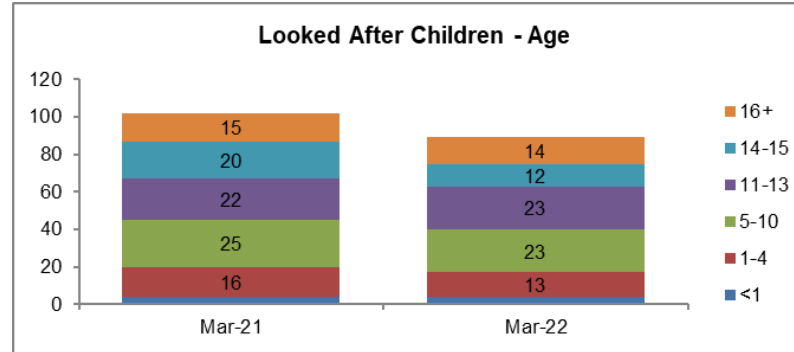
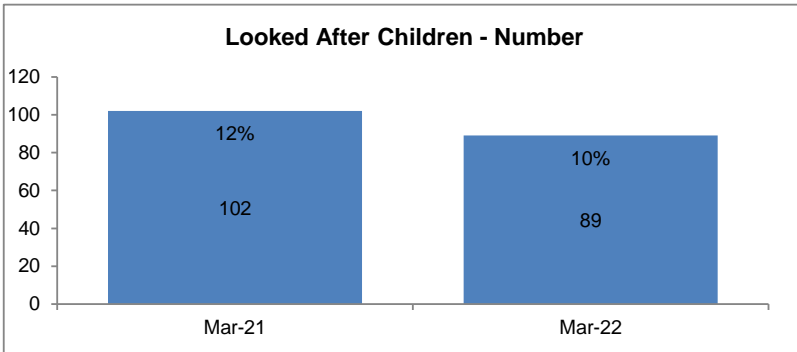


[Click here to listen to Councillor Nyear talking about her role as Employment Champion and Worcestershire Young People talking about their employment experiences.](#)

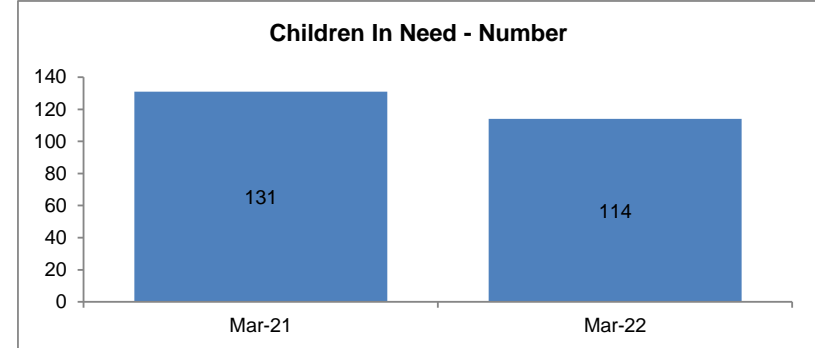
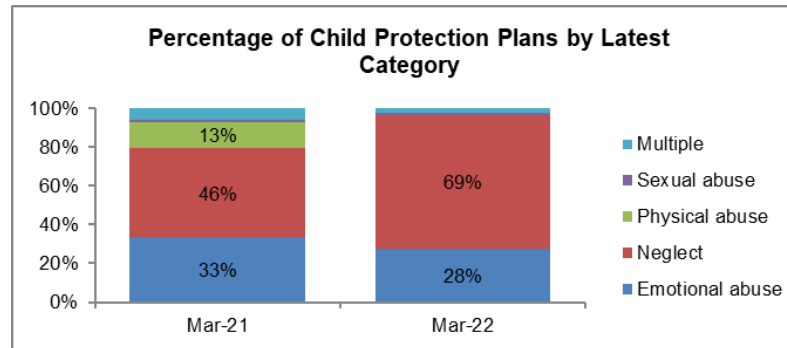
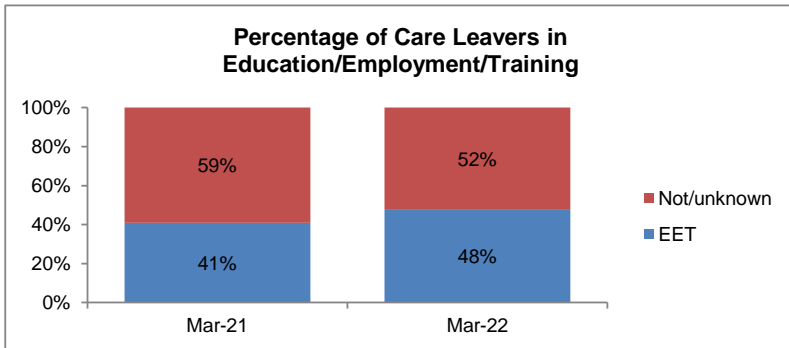
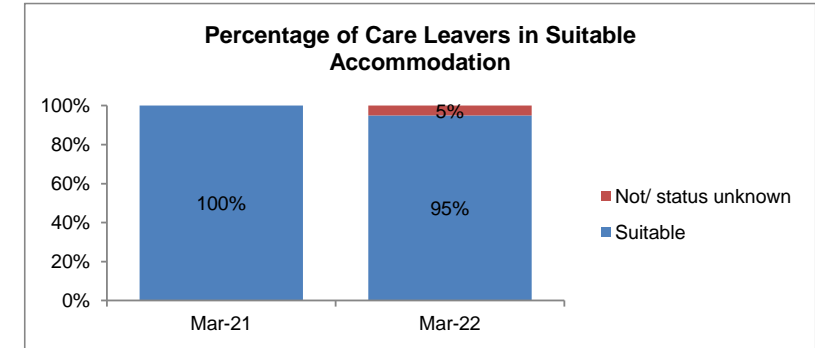
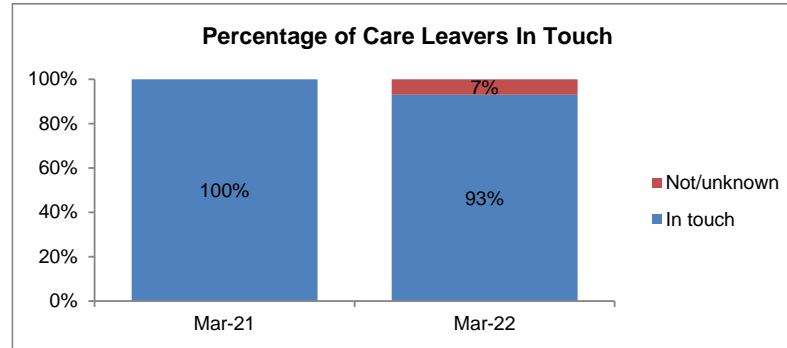
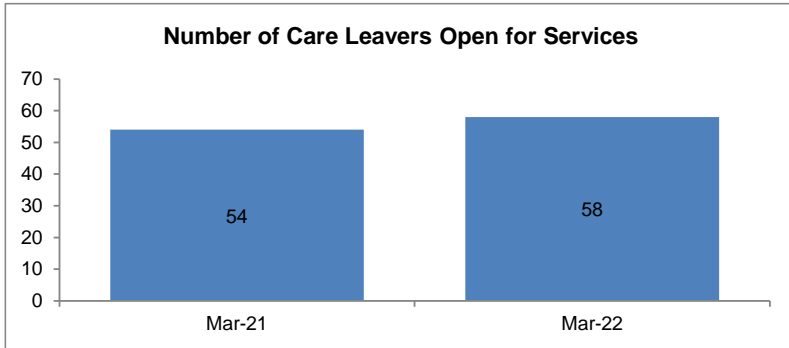
Employment Champion Priority

- To remove barriers care leavers face to accessing employment

District Profile for Redditch Looked After Children



District Profile for Redditch Care Leavers, CP & CIN



District Lead for Worcester City & Education Champion

"I'm taking A level computer science, physics and maths. I going to go to uni, I'm hoping to get a degree in computing or physics or maths. I'm hoping to get a job based on all three of those things." Quote from a young person previously in foster care

"I feel like I have been supported a lot financially. I had a £2000 bursary to go to uni. I could also get some extra bursaries to help with art supplies. Emotionally one of my care people left on the day I went to uni. It would be beneficial to have one person or less people. In my time of being a care leaver I have had 3 or 4. Care leavers are the people who need the most support and consistency because we are the most damaged. It helps people become less damaged." Quote from a care leaver



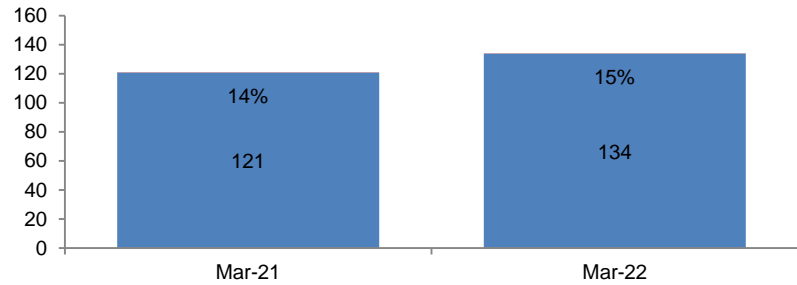
[Click here to listen to Councillor Lamb talking about his role as Education Champion and Worcestershire Young People talking about their experience of education.](#)

Education Champion Priority

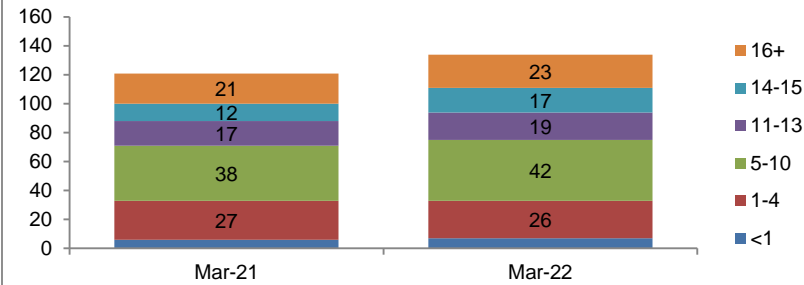
- How do we best support young people to achieve their potential?

District Profiles for Worcester City Looked After Children

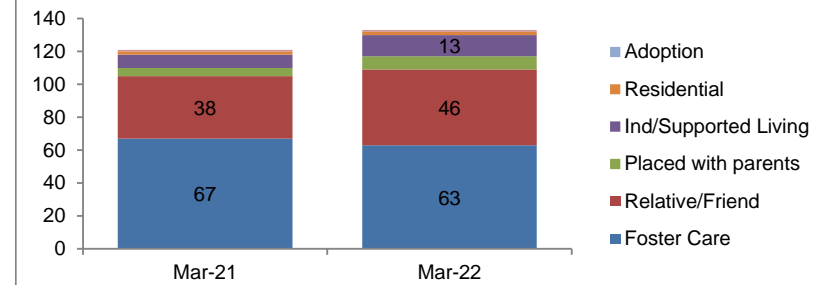
Looked After Children - Number



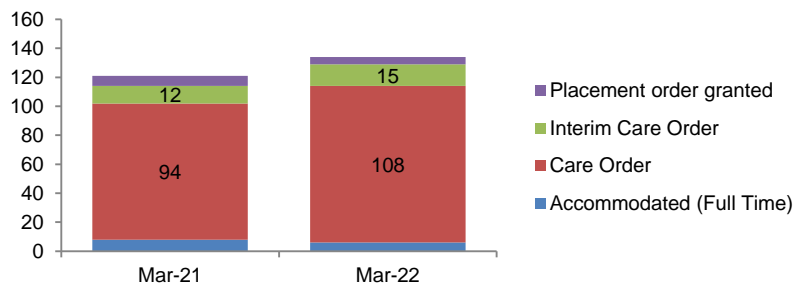
Looked After Children - Age



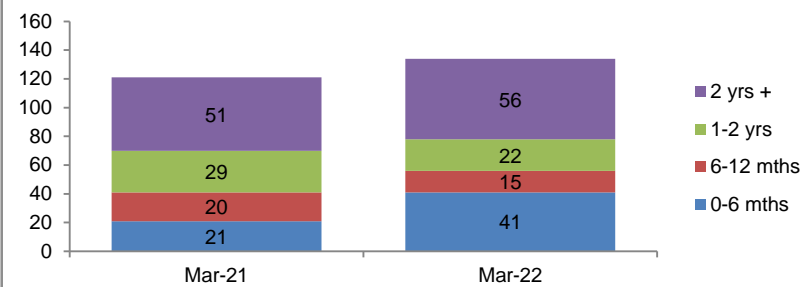
Looked After Children - Placement Type



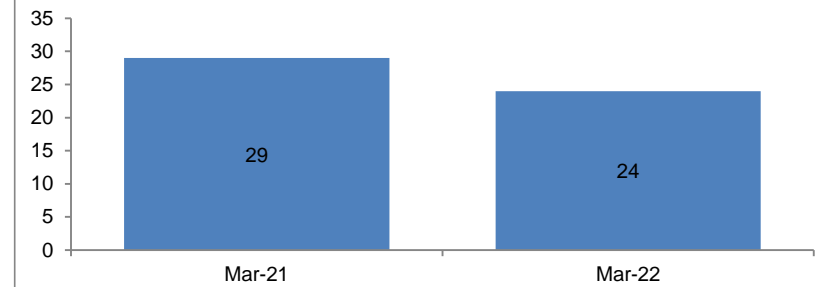
Looked After Children - Legal Status



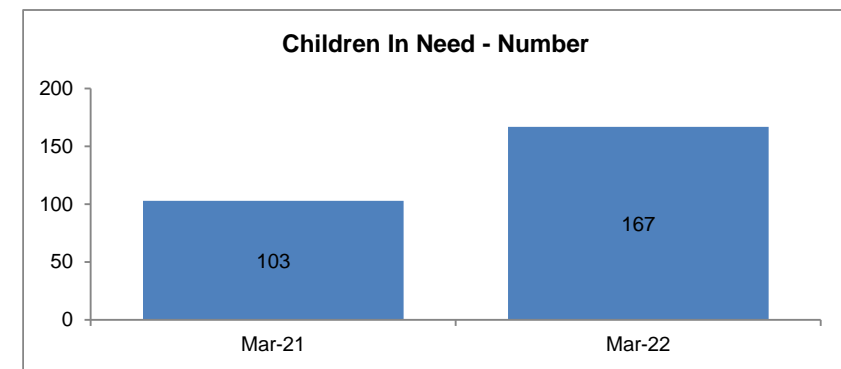
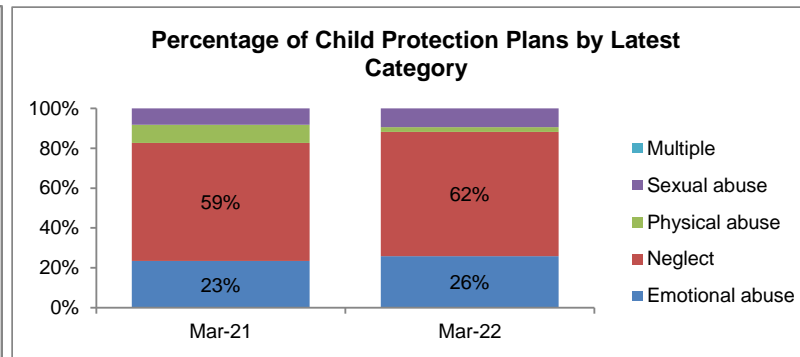
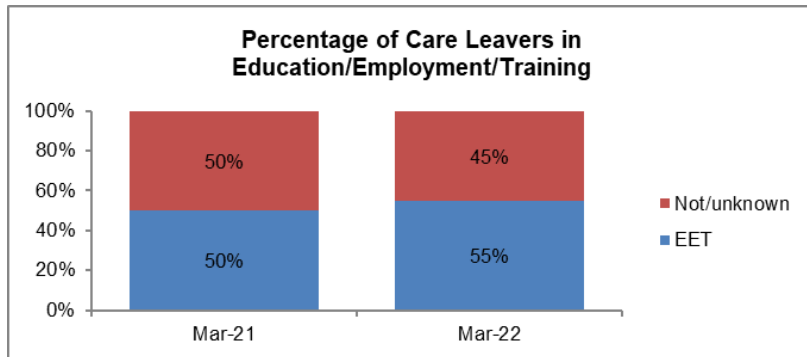
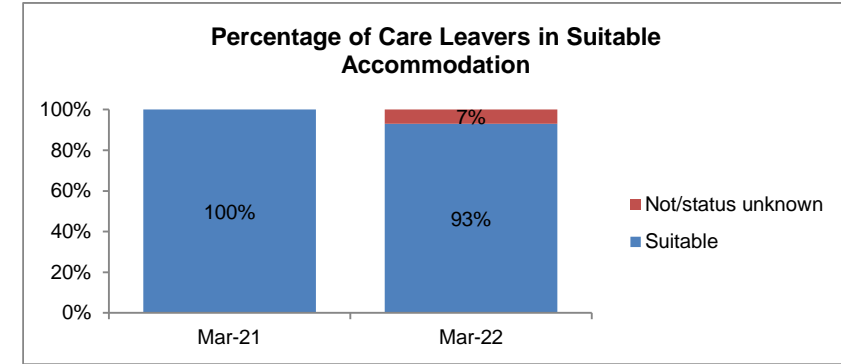
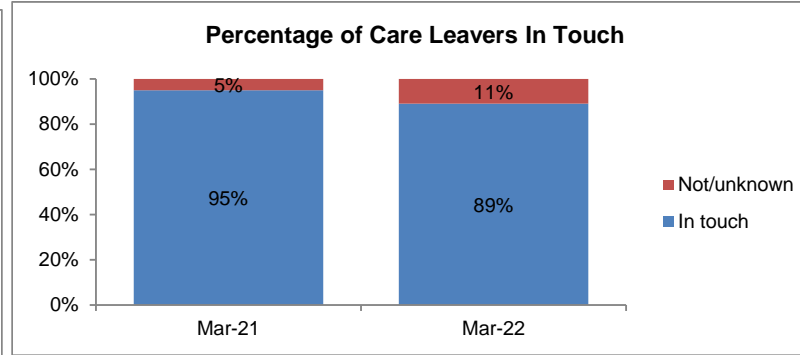
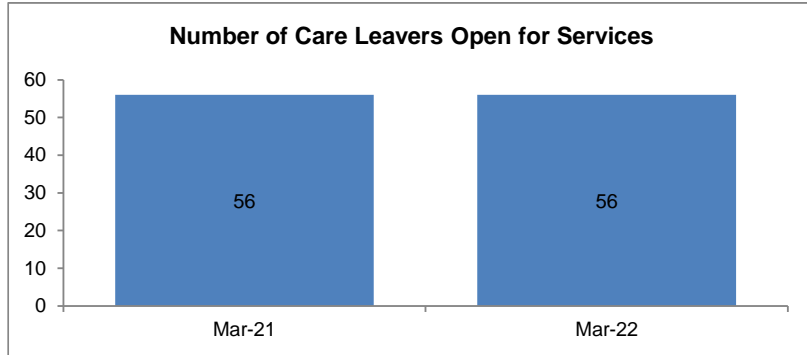
Looked After Children - Length in Placement



Council Foster Carers - Households



District Profiles for Worcester City Care Leavers, CP & CIN



District Lead for Wychavon And Leisure and Culture Champion

"My workers helped me get into college and I now play football too at college and have made new friends. I also attend the gym often. My workers have helped me with any appointments, and I have a new bike" Quote from a care leaver

"Having a bike will make a massive difference to my mental health. It's going to allow me to go out and socialise more and help with my physical state, my rehabilitation, muscle gain and flexibility." Quote from a care leaver



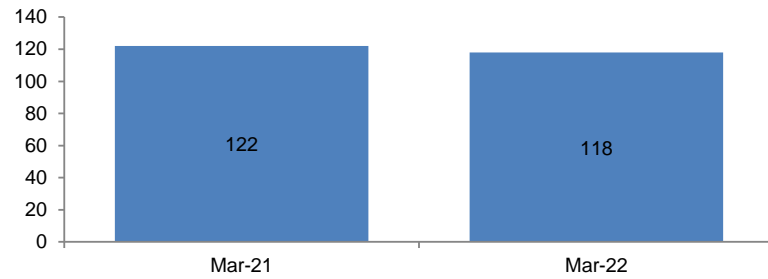
[Click here to listen to Councillor Adams talking about his role as Leisure & Culture Champion and Worcestershire Young People talking about their experience of leisure & culture.](#)

Leisure and culture champion priority

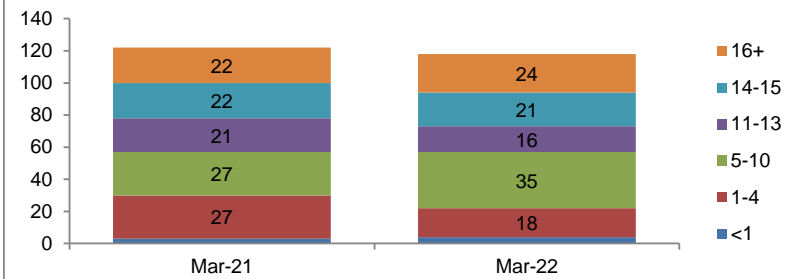
- Support looked after children and care leavers to access leisure activities throughout the county

District Profiles for Wychavon Looked After Children

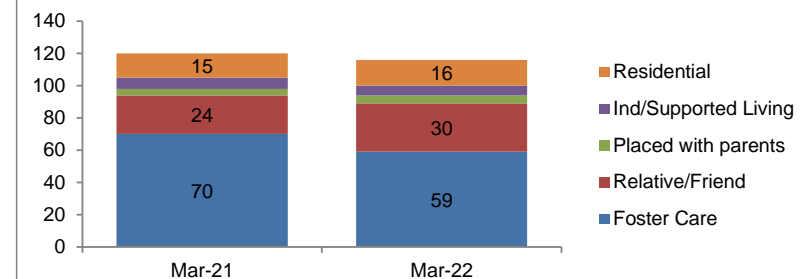
Looked After Children - Number



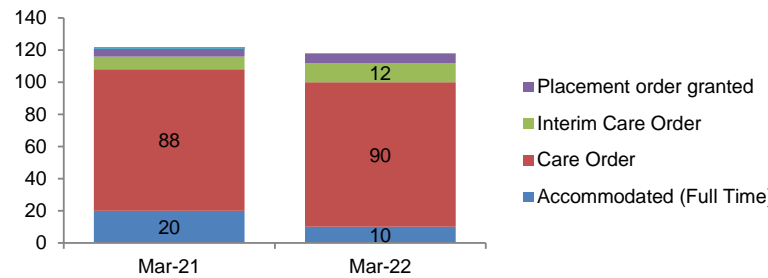
Looked After Children - Age



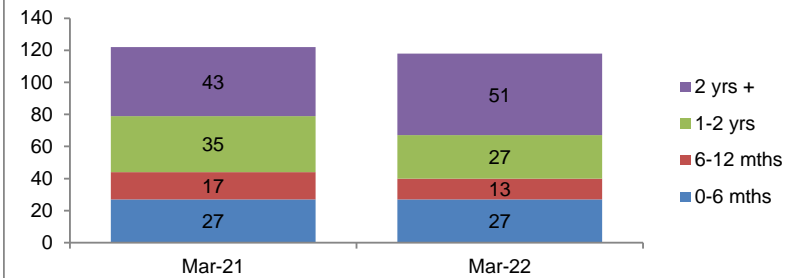
Looked After Children - Placement Type



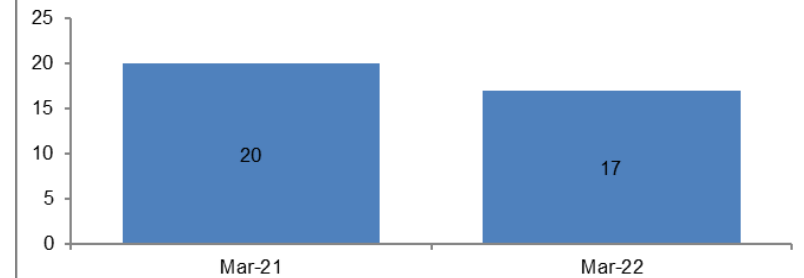
Looked After Children - Legal Status



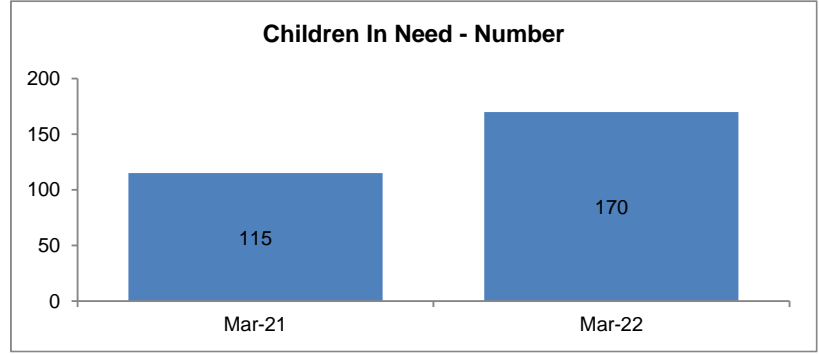
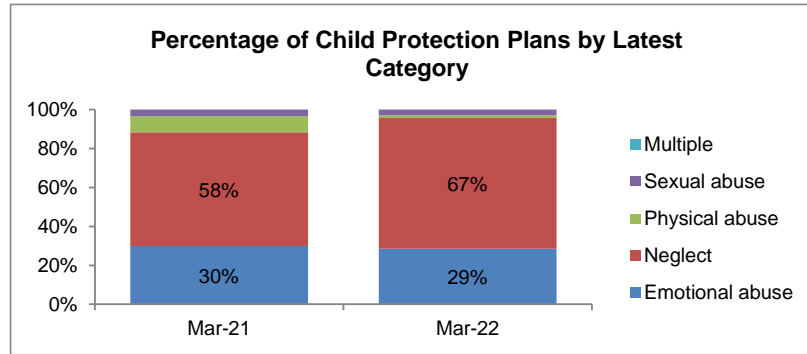
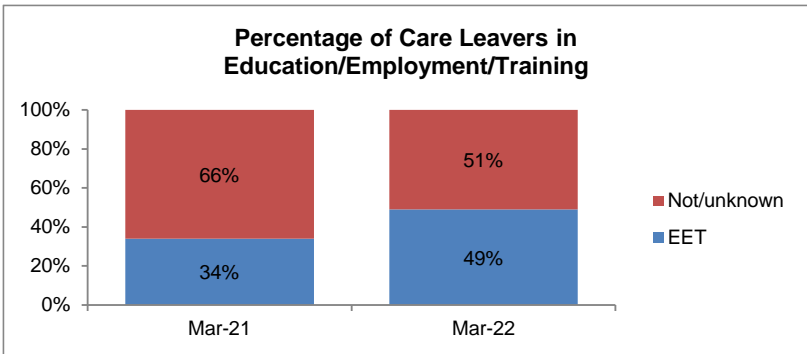
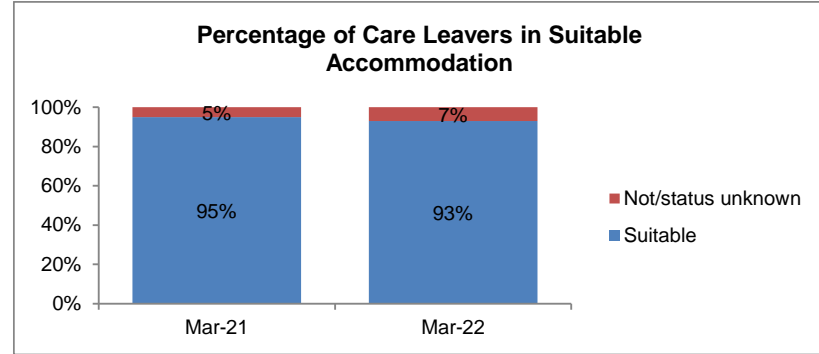
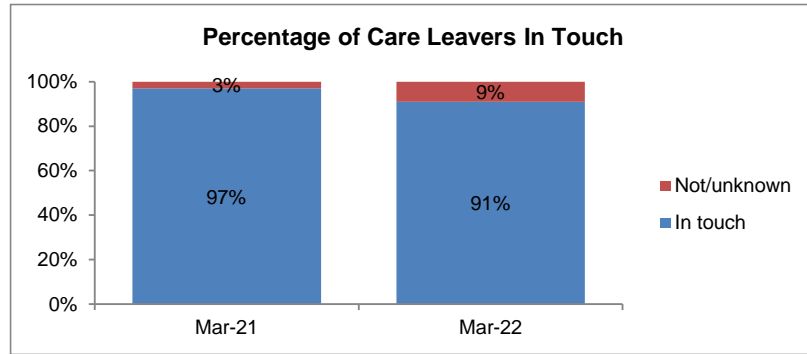
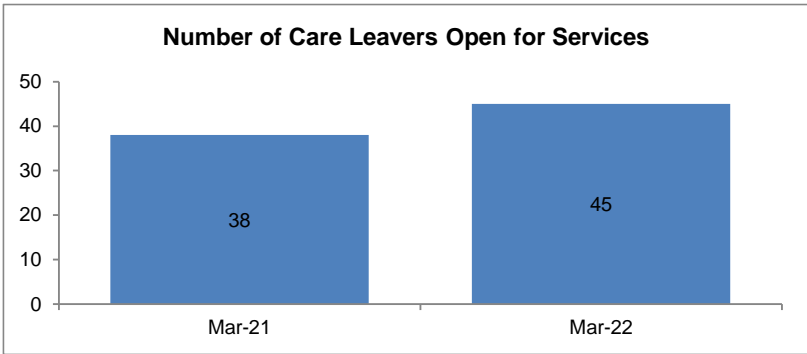
Looked After Children - Length in Placement



Council Foster Carers - Households



District Profiles for Wychavon Care Leavers, CP & CIN



District Lead for Wyre Forest And Housing, including Council Tax Champion

"I would like help with accommodation and college because I wanted to do a course in construction"
Quote from a care leaver



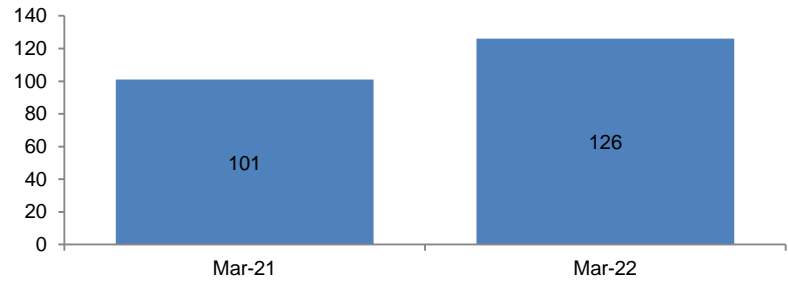
[Click here to listen to Councillor Oborski talking about her role as Housing and Council Tax Champion and Worcestershire Young People talking about their housing and council tax experiences.](#)

Housing, including council tax champion priority

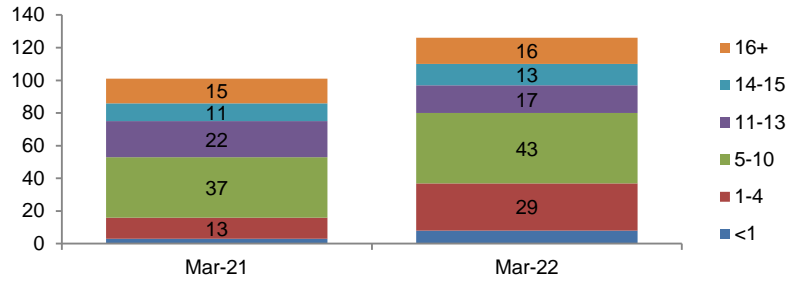
- Supporting care leavers outside of the county with their council tax arrangements
- Supporting young people with accessing suitable housing and support with living

District Profiles for Wyre Forest Looked After Children

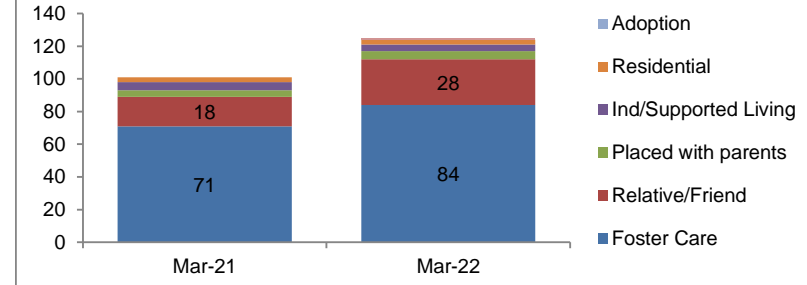
Looked After Children - Number



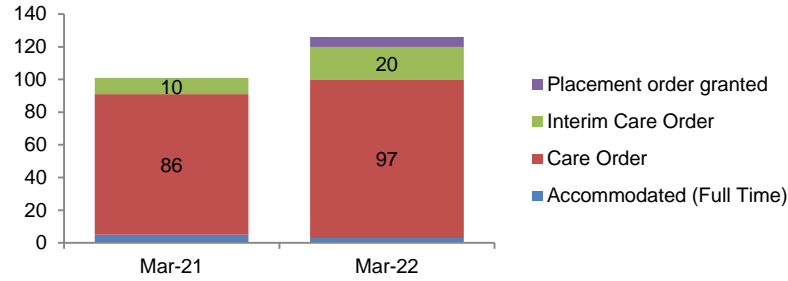
Looked After Children - Age



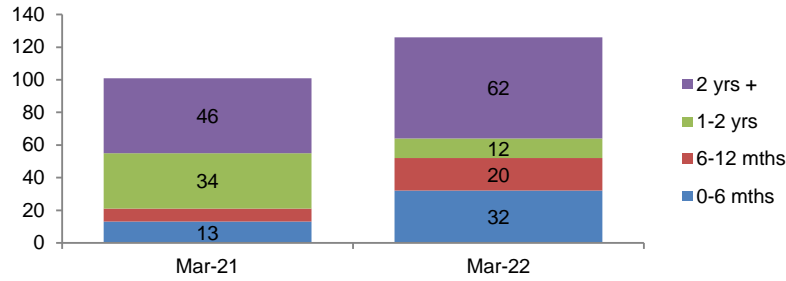
Looked After Children - Placement Type



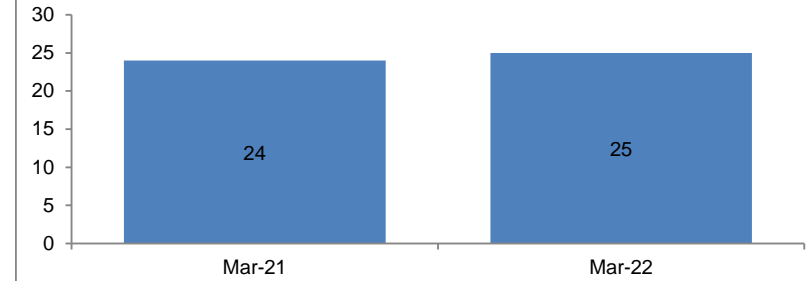
Looked After Children - Legal Status



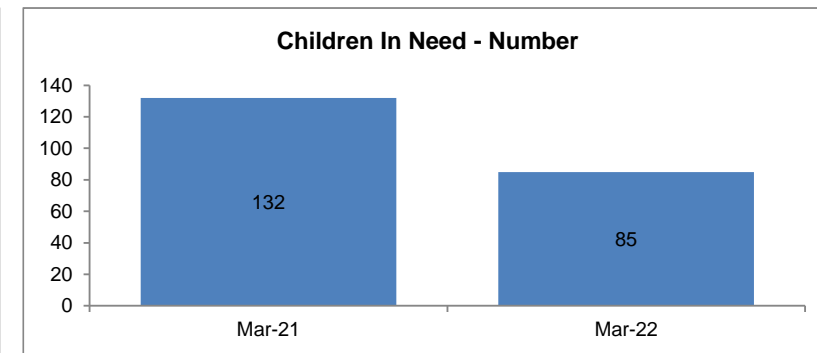
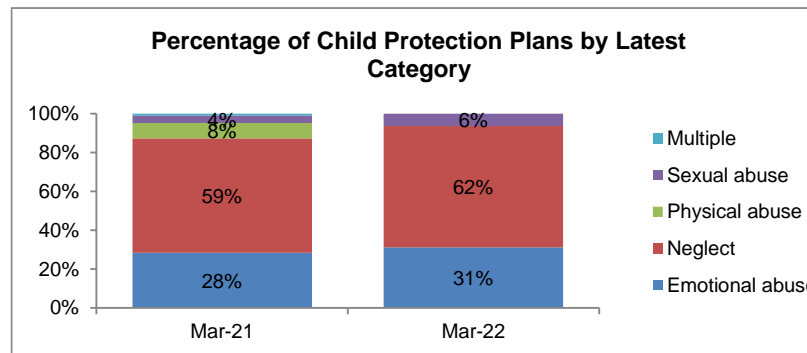
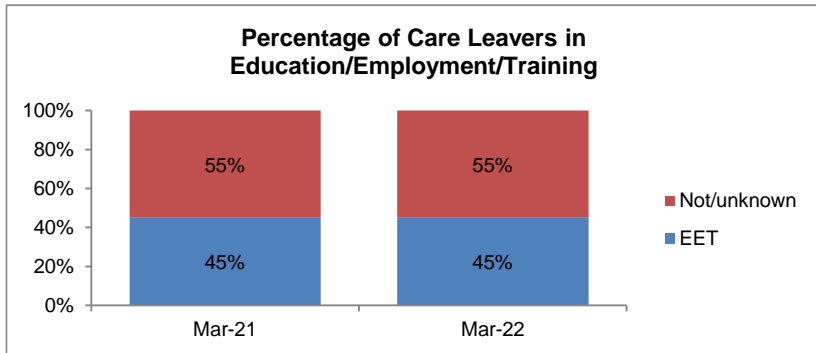
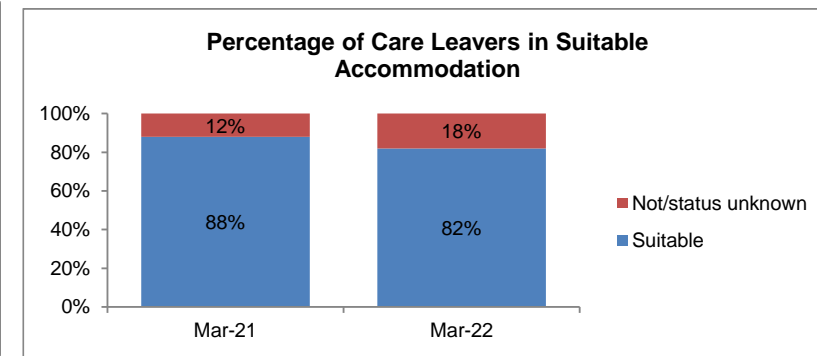
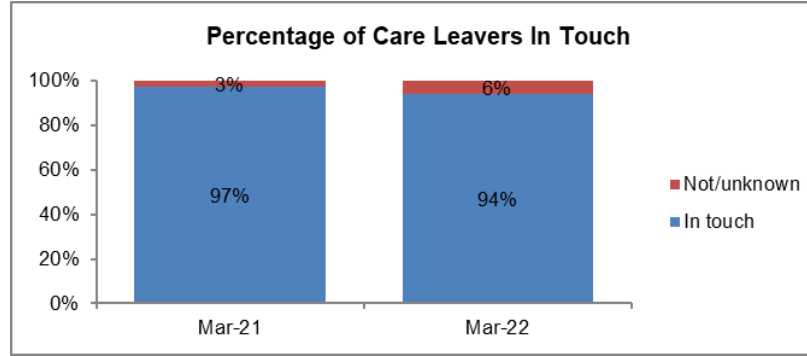
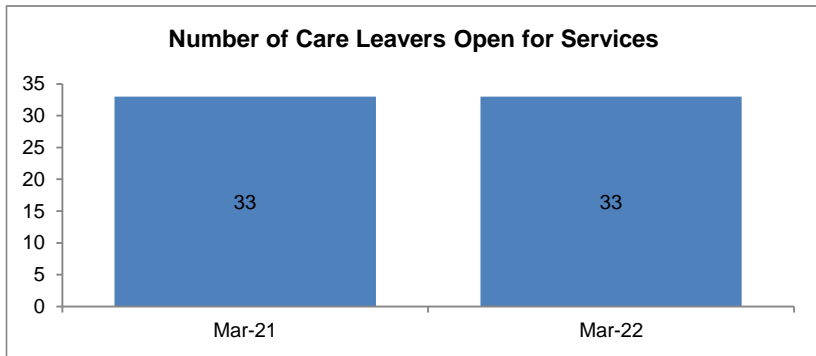
Looked After Children - Length in Placement



Council Foster Carers - Households



District Profiles for Wyre Forest Care Leavers, CP & CIN

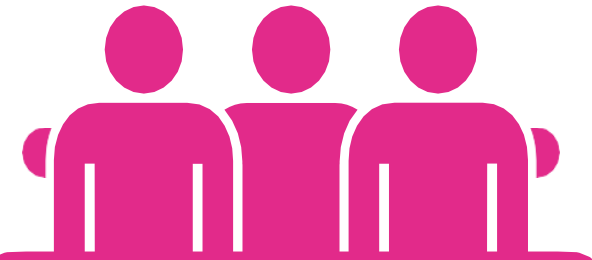


Conclusion

“Thank you to everyone who has helped put this report together. It has celebrated successes over the last year and emphasised our commitment to the Corporate Parenting Board pledges. Our request is that you use your links, platforms and connections to share the information as widely as possible.”



Councillor Andy Roberts
Lead Member for Children and Families
Corporate Parenting Board Lead



**We aspire to and push for
the best possible
outcomes for Looked
After Children and Care
Leavers.**

Next Years Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report

With such strong and committed elected members the next CPB annual report will be drawn from a years' worth of district based 'champion' focus and updates along with feedback on the direct experiences of children and young people.

