

The concept of Corporate Parenting was introduced in 1998 by the Secretary of State for Health, Frank Dobson, who outlined the duties of members towards looked after children:

“For children who are looked after, your council has a legal and moral duty to try to provide the kind of loyal support that any good parents would give to their children...you should do your utmost to make sure that those children in public care get a good start in life...”

For most children, parents hold together the main strands of their lives, and maintain the knowledge of their child’s history, circumstances and development. Good parents keep abreast of their child’s progress and tailor their support and advocacy according to their own aspirations for the child and their understanding of his or her needs. As children grow and develop, good parents listen to their views and encourage their aspirations.

When a child becomes looked after, he or she enters a system in which their care and upbringing is managed by professionals and paid carers. This has two major consequences for the child. Firstly, in addition to the problems of needing to re-form attachments, he/she moves into a world of paid, and sometimes changing, carers, where life is managed through formal and legal processes. Secondly, in addition to learning to cope with this world, they have lost the continuity of parental management of their access to services and opportunities

The Corporate Parenting responsibility is shared by the Council as a whole. All members, not just those with an interest in Children’s Services, are ‘Corporate Parents’.

For ‘Corporate Parenting’ to replicate the quality of care afforded by a ‘good parent’, each agency and professional involved needs to consider how they can be proactive, within their own remit, on behalf of looked after children, and for all agencies to strive for ever stronger collaborative working so that the whole of the ‘corporate parent’ can be greater than the sum of its parts.

This annual report of the Corporate Parenting Board includes information and analysis on the performance of the Council and partners in relation to looked after children. It also includes a summary of the review of the Corporate Parenting Board undertaken in 2012/13 and an outline of the new membership arrangements agreed at Annual Council in May 2013.

1. Sunderland's Looked After Children in 2012/13

At the end of March 2013 there were 449 children and young people looked after by Sunderland. This is an increase of 24 children from the end of December 2012, and equal to 80 children for every 10,000 children in the general population of the city.

The increase in the number of children looked after compared with March 2012 is largely due to 27 extra children in Family or Friend Foster placements, but there are also 18 extra children in mainstream foster care placements.

Three quarters of children in local authority provided foster care are in temporary placements; 15% are in permanent placements

More girls than boys are looked after aged under 10, while more boys are looked after aged over 10. More 14 year olds are looked after than any other age group

2. Sunderland's Looked After Children in a Regional Context

| Local Authority | 31st March 2011 per 10,000 Rate | Looked After Children on 31st March 2012 | 31st March 2012 per 10,000 Rate |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Middlesbrough | 104 | 350 | 111 |
| South Tyneside | 105 | 315 | 106 |
| Newcastle Upon Tyne | 102 | 550 | 101 |
| Gateshead | 95 | 385 | 95 |
| Darlington | 86 | 205 | 90 |
| Hartlepool | 81 | 175 | 86 |
| Stockton-On-Tees | 69 | 335 | 80 |
| North East | 78 | 4115 | 78 |
| North Tyneside | 71 | 300 | 74 |
| Statistical Neighbours | 73 | N/A | 74 |
| Sunderland | 73 | 390 | 71 |
| Durham | 53 | 660 | 66 |
| Redcar and Cleveland | 53 | 170 | 62 |
| Northumberland | 45 | 280 | 46 |

In recent years Sunderland has had a lower number of looked after children than other authorities in the North East. The table opposite shows that seven out of the 12 North East Authorities had a higher proportion of looked after children in 2012.

The current rate of 80 children per 10,000 is higher than the North East average, but is lower than half of authorities in the region.

Sunderland was one of only two North East authorities where the rate of Looked After Children reduced in the twelve months to March 2012.

Sunderland is currently above both the Statistical Neighbour average of 74 per 10,000 and the North East average of 78 per 10,000.

Sunderland continues to have a lower proportion of looked after children than half of North East Authorities

3. Where were our looked after children living on March 31st 2013?

Children in Foster Care

As of 31st March 2013, 342 Sunderland children were living with foster carers

Children placed with Relative or Friend Approved Foster Carers increased by 2 compared to December, compared to a rise of 28 in quarter 3

Externally commissioned foster care placements remained at 35 from December

No children were recorded as “missing” from their placement during quarter 4 of 2012/13, compared to 22 children in the previous three quarters

Children in Residential Care

54 children were living in children’s homes at the end of March, four more children than at the end of December

30 children were placed in Local Authority provided residential settings, the same as in December

Children Placed for Adoption

30 children were placed for adoption, an increase of 10 children from the end of December

Family Placements

Reduction in proportion of children placed either with Foster Carer or placed with an adoptive family, to 83% at the end of March from 84% in December

The proportion of children in family placements is greater than 2012 National comparator (79%), although the same as the North East average (83%)

| | Foster Placement Inside LA | Foster Placement Outside LA | Children's Home Inside LA | Children's Home Outside LA | Placed for Adoption | Placed with Parents | Independent Living | Residential School |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| LA Adoption | | | | | 1 | | | |
| Adoption Org | | | | | 8 | | | |
| OLA Adopters | | | | | 4 | | | |
| LA Foster Care | 1 | 7 | | | | | | |
| Relative/Friend Foster Care | 8 | 3 | | | | | | |
| External Foster care | 3 | 9 | | | | | | |
| LA Residential | 1 | 1 | 27 | 3 | | | | 1 |
| Private Residential | 6 | 9 | 3 | 8 | | | | |
| Secure Residential | | | | 2 | | | | |
| Placed with Parents | | | | | | 1 | | |
| Independent Living | | | | | | 6 | 7 | |
| Total Children | 2 | 1 | 30 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 1 |
| | 4 | 0 | | 3 | 0 | 6 | | |
| | 1 | 1 | | | | | | |

Permanency in Local Authority Provided Foster Care

39 of the 259 children (15%) who are placed with Local Authority provided Foster Carers are in permanent placements, 4 fewer than in December

A further 27 of those 259 children (10%) are in Long Term Task Centred placements with Local Authority provided Foster Carers, 2 more children than in December

The remaining 193 children (75%) are in Temporary Foster Care placements

4. Demographic Breakdown of Looked After Children

246 Boys and 203 Girls were looked after on 31st March 2013. The split of 45% girls and 55% boys is the same as the England and North East Averages. 54% of girls and 41% of boys are aged under 10. 33 girls under the age of two are looked after compared to 24 boys.

14 year olds are the largest age group in total and for girls alone. For boys the largest age group are 17 year olds

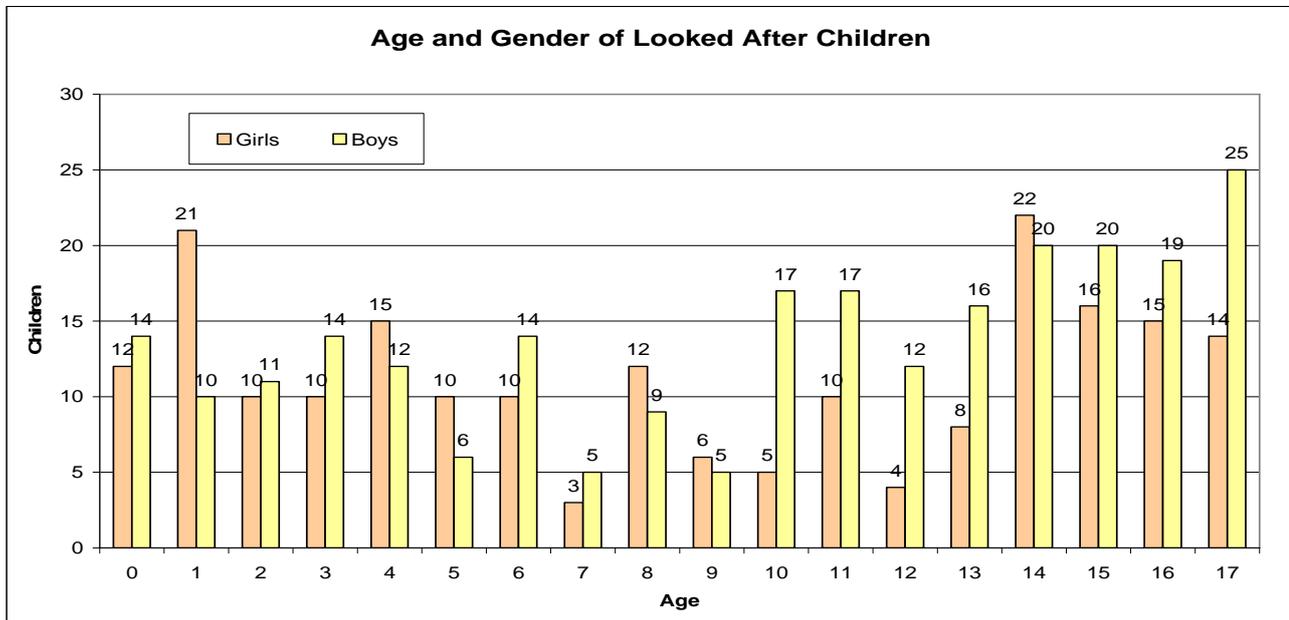
95% of children are White British, higher than in the rest of the North East (94%), although lower than in March 2012 (96%)

Of North East Authorities only Northumberland (3%) and Durham (2%) had a lower proportion of BME children in their looked after population

9 boys and 8 girls were looked after from BME backgrounds on 31st March 2013.

3 children did not have their ethnicity recorded

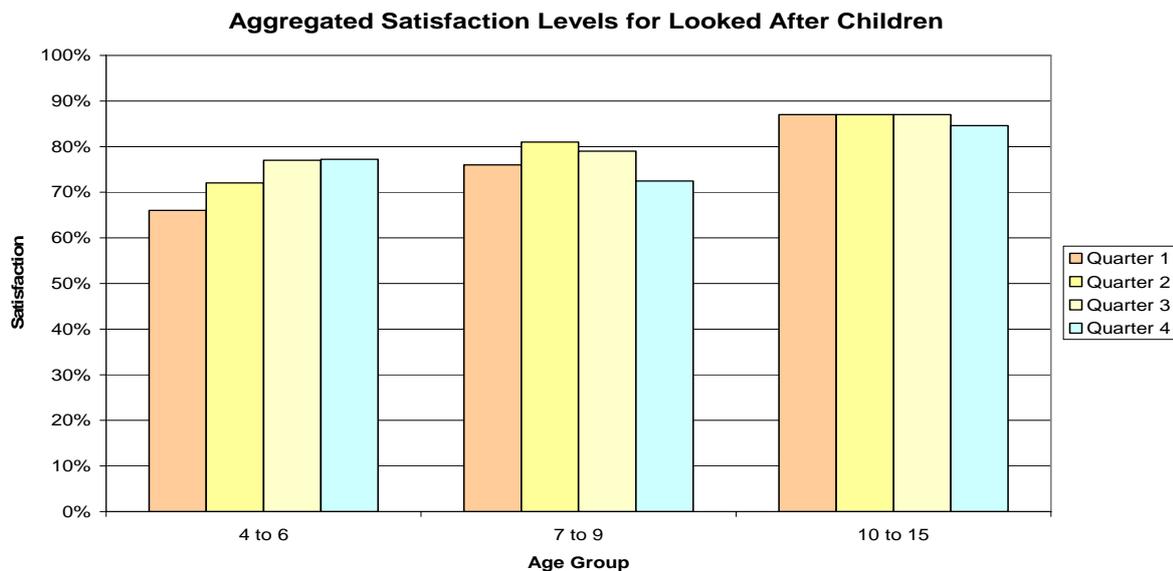
| | Female | Male | Total |
|---|--------|------|-------|
| White British | 193 | 235 | 428 |
| Any Other Mixed Background (White & Any Other) | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Other Ethnic Group Chinese | 3 | | 3 |
| Asian Or Asian British Bangladeshi | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Black Or Black British African | | 2 | 2 |
| Black Or Black British | | 2 | 2 |
| Undeclared/Unknown | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Not Yet Defined | | 1 | 1 |
| White Any Other White Background | 1 | | 1 |
| White & Asian | | 1 | 1 |
| White & Black Caribbean | | 1 | 1 |
| White Irish | 1 | | 1 |
| Total | 203 | 246 | 449 |



5. Children and Young People's Views

Overall Satisfaction Score

Aggregated satisfaction levels by Age Group (below chart) shows a decline in satisfaction for 7 to 9 years olds from 79% in quarter 3 to 72% and a slight decline for 10 to 15 year olds from 87% to 85% but has remained stable for those aged 4 to 6 years.



7 to 9 year old questionnaire responses

Eight children completed the Viewpoint questionnaires from this age group during quarter 4.

Strengths

All children in this age group responded that they felt "safe", that they go to school everyday, and that they were "happy" at school.

Areas for Development

This age group expressed negative responses when asked about whether they could see their family when they wanted to; that their friends could visit them in placement, that their social worker spoke to them about their future and only 25% have a life story book or sufficient information about the people they know.

10 to 15 year old questionnaire responses

22 children completed the Viewpoint questionnaires from this age group during quarter 4.

Strengths

This age group responded positively when asked whether they felt "safe" (91%); all children are helped to fully or mostly understand their care plan; and all had someone to talk to about their health.

Areas for Development

This age group responded negatively when asked about the quality of their life story book and about their contact with friends and family.

6. Children Living in Stable Placements

This is an area of performance that the Corporate Parenting Board monitors closely, as placement stability underpins all positive outcomes for looked after children.

The Long Term Stability measure has improved since quarter 2, with an annual outturn almost identical to that of 2012/13

Two more children have stable placements compared with a year ago, although a larger cohort means a reduced percentage.

The Short Term Stability indicator has improved since the previous year, although the three year average figure will be affected negatively due to reduced performance against the 2009/10 outturn

Some children are not included in the short term stability indicator due to a Missing Episode, this impacts on one in ten children within the cohort

6.1 Long Term Stability: Children in the same placement for more than two years

114 children had been looked after for more than two and a half years on 31st December 2012. Of these, 78 (68.4%) had been in the same placement for two years

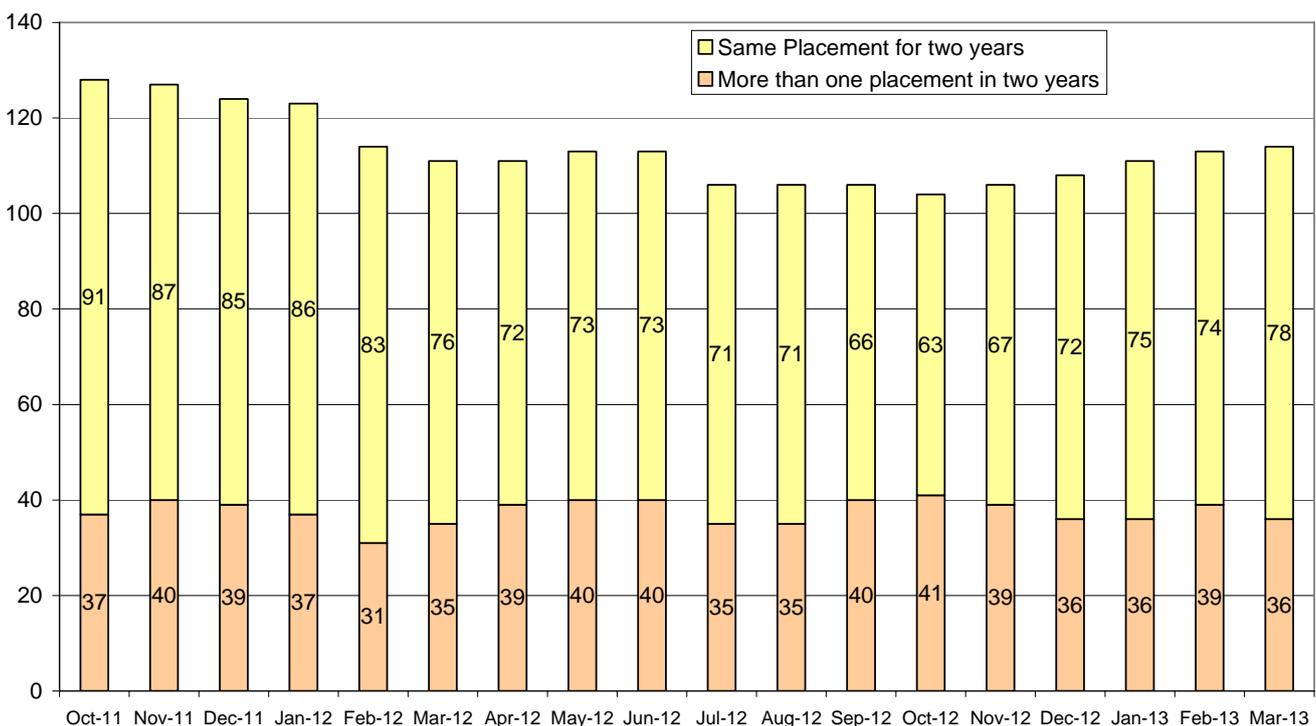
This indicator has increased 6.1 percentage points since the end of June 2012

The indicator is 0.1 percentage points below the year end figure for 2011/12

Two more children have been in stable placements for over two years at March 2013 (78 children) compared to March 2012 (76 children)

The number of children who had more than one placement in the previous two years has remained stable – one fewer child in March 2013 than in October 2011
52 children (11.6%) lived in three or more placements during the twelve months up to 31st March 2013

Long Term Stability: Under 16s Looked After for over 2.5 years



6.2 Short Term Stability: Children with more than 2 placements in the year

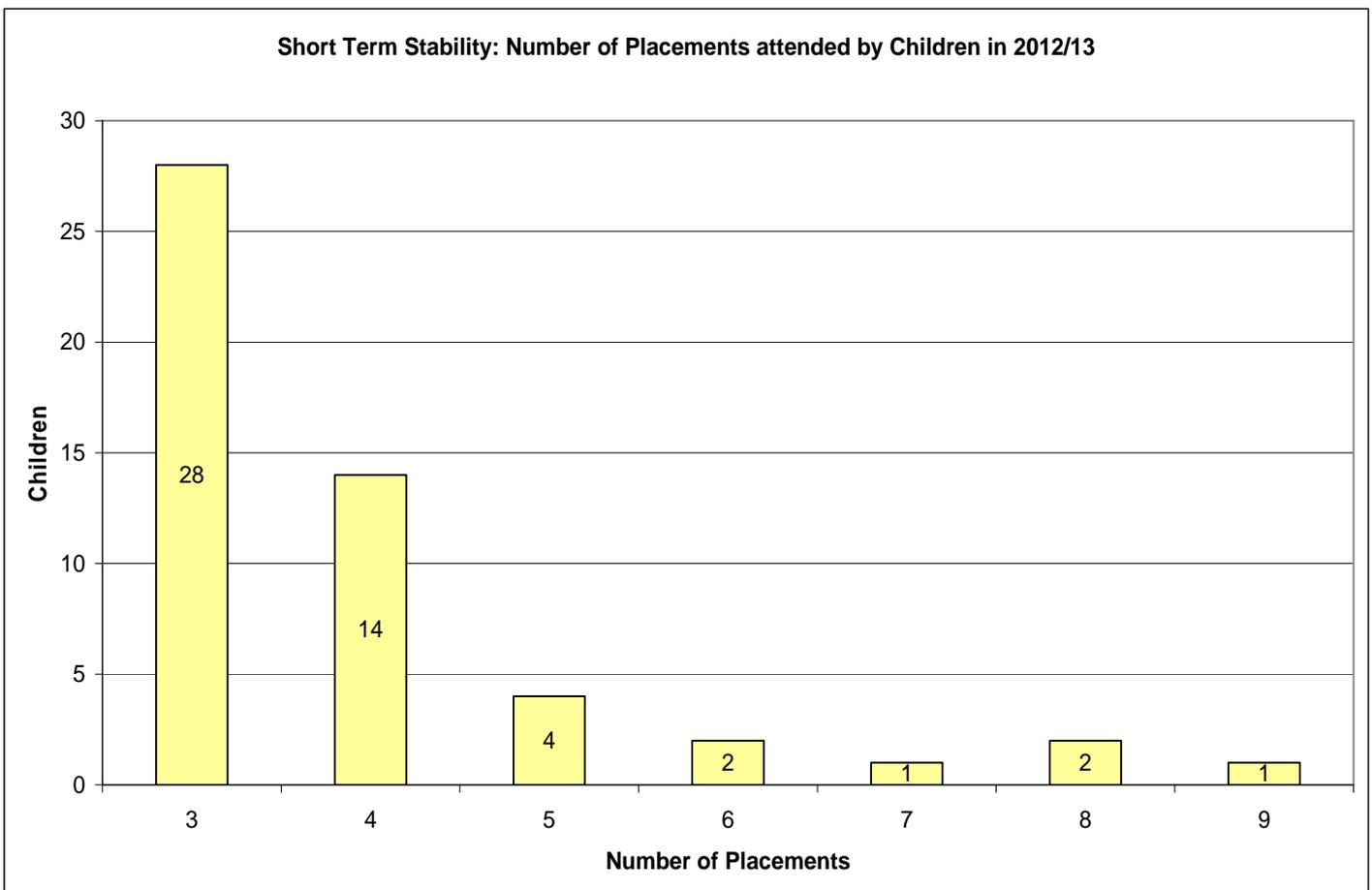
The March 2013 outturn is 0.3 percentage points better than March 2012 (11.9%), although it remains above the National average of 11% and the North East average of 10.4%

5 children are only included in the numerator due to a missing episode from their placement, if they were removed then the indicator would be 10.5%

Over half (54%) of children who have had more than 2 placements in the year have had only three, another quarter have had four.

Seven out of the 10 children who had more than four placements during the year were subject to at least one "Missing Episode" during the year

No children were recorded as missing from placement during the January – March period of 2013



7. Adopted from the Care of the Local Authority

Over the course of 2012 /13 the Corporate Parenting Board has had a number of presentations and discussions about adoption. Although Board members acknowledge the excellent performance in relation to the number of children leaving care through adoption, they are concerned about the length of time it takes for some children to be adopted.

The number of children adopted in 2012/13 is below the total for 2011/12, although greater than the two previous years

33 children were adopted from care in the year between April 2012 and March 2013.

Two children were adopted by their Foster carers without going through the Family Finding process or being placed for adoption – these children do not therefore count towards the Adoption Journey measures

7.1 Adoption “Whole Journey” – length between entering care and being placed for adoption

Sunderland had the longest Whole Journey length in the north east for 2009-12 at 694 days. This was 55 days above the National Threshold of 639 days.

Adoptions account for 18% of children leaving care, a reduction on the figure for 2011/12, but still above the national

The average “Whole Journey” length for children adopted up to quarter 4 was 671. Sunderland were in the third quartile nationally, with 111 local authorities achieving a faster whole journey time for their adopted children days – an improvement on the 697 days for those adopted up to quarter 3

The 3-year average for the “Whole Journey” is expected to improve for 2012/13. % of the children adopted in the year to quarter 4 were placed for adoption within the

55 639 day threshold. This is improved on the 2011/12 three year average (54%), although below the England average (56%) and the north east average (63%)

The length of the “Whole Journey” to Adoption improved by an average of 26 days during the year April 2012 to March 2013, although it remains below the national threshold

| Whole Journey - Distance from 639 day Threshold for 2009 - 2012 | |
|---|-------------------------|
| | Distance from threshold |
| Hartlepool | -190 |
| Darlington | -150 |
| Redcar and Cleveland | -142 |
| South Tyneside | -92 |
| Middlesbrough | -82 |
| Newcastle Upon Tyne | -77 |
| Gateshead | -53 |
| Durham | -50 |
| North Tyneside | -50 |
| Northumberland | -32 |
| Stockton-On-Tees | +35 |
| Sunderland | +55 |
| ENGLAND | -3 |
| Statistical Neighbour Average | -54 |
| North East Average | -122 |

7.2 Adoption “Family Finding” – length between court authority to place and deciding on a match to an adoptive family

The average Family Finding length for the 31 children in the 2012/13 adoption journey cohort was 279 days, an improvement on the 312 days for those children adopted in quarter 3, but 66 days over the national threshold

13 of the 31 children in the adoption journey cohort were matched within the 213 day threshold.

Of the 18 children who took longer than 213 days to match, 9 were adopted within the 639 day Whole Journey threshold. None of these children took longer than 300 days to match

11 of the children who were matched with an adoptive family within the threshold were aged under the age of four; two of the children were aged four. Five children aged 5 or more were matched with an adoptive family; all of these took more than the 213 day threshold for matching to be completed

During the three year period 2009-12 Sunderland was 24 days over the threshold, one of four north east authorities to be over the 213 day mark

| Family Finding - Distance from 213 day Threshold for 2009 - 2012 | |
|--|-------------------------|
| LA | Distance from threshold |
| South Tyneside | -160 |
| Newcastle Upon Tyne | -104 |
| Hartlepool | -87 |
| Gateshead | -79 |
| Northumberland | -76 |
| Durham | -40 |
| North Tyneside | -11 |
| Redcar and Cleveland | +4 |
| Middlesbrough | +21 |
| Sunderland | +24 |
| Stockton-On-Tees | +56 |
| Darlington | Did not provide Data |
| ENGLAND | -18 |
| Statistical Neighbour Average | -47 |
| North East Average | -92 |

8. How well do looked after children do at school?

Key Stage 2

2012 outcomes are above those for 2011 in Maths, and in English and Maths combined, in spite an increase in the number of children who had a statement of SEN. However, Sunderland LAC are performing below their national counterparts and below all children nationally in English and Maths.

2012 - Key Stage 2 outcomes for looked after children

Achieving Level 4: English

| Sunderland LAC | National LAC 2012 | National all pupils |
|----------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 36% | 60% | 85% |

Achieving Level 4 Mathematics

| Sunderland LAC | National LAC 2012 | National all pupils |
|----------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 36% | 56% | 84% |

Achieving Level 4 English and Maths:

| Sunderland LAC | National LAC 2012 | National all pupils |
|----------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 36% | 50% | 81% |

Key Stage 4 in 2012

This indicator only considers Key Stage 4 pupils who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months:

In summer 2012 33 Sunderland looked after young people were eligible to sit GCSEs. Of these, 36% of the cohort were subject to a statement of special educational needs and 42% were at School Action or School Action Plus. Despite this, Sunderland outcomes for LAC were the highest in 5 years, and were above the national counterparts for all outcomes except where English and Maths were included.

1 A*-G - Sunderland Ranked

| Sunderland LAC | National LAC 2011 |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 82% | 72% |

The percentage of Sunderland LAC achieved 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-G:

| Sunderland LAC | National LAC 2011 |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 79% | 50.6% |

The percentage of Sunderland LAC achieved 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*- C:

| Sunderland LAC | National LAC 2011 |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 48% | 26.1% |

The percentage of Sunderland pupils achieved 5 or more GCSEs including English and Maths:

| Sunderland LAC | National LAC 2012 |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 12% | 15% |

Key Stage 4 results for LAC improved in 2012:

- % achieving 5+A*-C including English and maths improved from 7% to 12% which is the highest percentage in 5 years. However, the outcomes were still 3% below their national comparatives.
- % achieving 5A-C grades improved from 36% to 48% and 5A-G grades from 52% to 79% which is above the national outcomes for LAC and is the highest percentage in the last 3 years
- 82% achieved at least 1 GCSE pass, which was an increase of 11% on 2011 results.

9. Staying out of Trouble – offending of children who are looked after

This is an area of performance that the Corporate Parenting Board is very concerned about.

Offending in Sunderland in 2011/12 was 16.1%, higher than offending in England and the North East

24 young people have received substantive outcomes in the first nine months of the year, in line with the same period in 2011/12

Over half of offences took place in the community in Sunderland

Offending Behaviour in 2011/12
In Sunderland 16.1% of Looked After Children had received a substantive outcome in 2011/12. This was more than twice the offending rate for England (6.9%) and also higher than offending in the North East as a whole (9.4%). Sunderland had the highest offending rate in the North East.

Offending Behaviour in 2012/13
At the end of December 2012 the offending rate was 13.3%. This equates to 24 young people receiving substantive outcomes between April and December 2012 from a cohort of 181. This is in line with offending behaviour in the same period in 2011/12 when 25 young people received substantive outcomes (13.6 % of the cohort).

Characteristics of Offenders
Of the 24 young people who received outcomes between April and December 2012, 87.5% were male. The age breakdown of the young people at 31st December 2012 is shown below:

| Age | Male | Female | Total |
|--------------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| 13 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| 14 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| 15 | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| 16 | 7 | 1 | 8 |
| 17 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| Total | 21 | 3 | 24 |

The majority of young people who offended were living in Sunderland residential homes at the end of the December 2012 (42%). The table below shows the placements at the end of December.

| Placement | Total |
|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Sunderland Residential Home | 10 |
| Sunderland Foster Care | 3 |
| Placed with Parents | 2 |
| Independent Living | 2 |
| External Placement | 6 |
| Secure Accommodation | 1 |
| Total | 24 |

Outcomes & Offences

24 young people received 51 outcomes between April and December 2012. The table below shows the substantive outcomes received in order of seriousness.

| Outcome | Total |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Reprimand | 4 |
| Final Warning | 5 |
| Sentence Deferred | 1 |
| Absolute Discharge | 5 |
| Conditional Discharge | 6 |
| Referral Order | 6 |
| Reparation Order | 5 |
| Youth Rehabilitation Order (YRO) | 12 |
| YRO & Compensation | 4 |
| Detention & Training Order (DTO) | 3 |
| Total | 51 |

The substantive outcomes received related to 92 offences committed between December 2011 and November 2012. Four young men; one aged 13 and three aged 16 were responsible for 57% of all offences committed.

Theft and shoplifting were the most common offences (25%) with the majority being committed in the community in Sunderland. Criminal Damage accounted for just under a fifth of all offences (17.4%), half took place in a residential home and half were committed in the community.

Over half of offences were committed in the community in Sunderland. The table below shows where offences were committed.

| Location of Offence | Total |
|--|--------------|
| Residential Home | 29 |
| Sunderland (in the community) | 43 |
| Sunderland (in the community) - Unoccupied Sunderland Council Building | 4 |
| School | 4 |
| Out Of Area | 11 |
| Location Unknown | 1 |
| Total | 92 |

10. Moving On - How well do young people who grow up in care fare as young adults?

This is another area that members of Corporate Parenting Board have given attention to over the past year.

At March 2013, 82% of 19 year olds were in suitable accommodation

At March 2013, 64% of 19 year olds were in employment, education or training

The Care Leavers cohort changes in April 2013 to include young people celebrating their 20th and 21st birthdays

Outcomes for Care Leavers in 2012/13

At the end of March 2013 there were 45 young people in the 2012/13 cohort who had celebrated their 19th birthdays since April. Three young people were supported by the Learning Disability teams.

During the 4 months around their 19th birthday 88.9% (40 young people) were in contact with the Leaving Care Service or with their Learning Disabilities Social Worker. Of the 45 young people currently in the cohort, five were not in contact; therefore their EET and accommodation situations cannot be counted.

Of the young people in contact, all except three were living in suitable accommodation (82%), 2 of whom have yet to have their status confirmed. The majority of young people had successfully moved to independent living with the support of the Leaving Care Service, as also highlighted in the Care Leavers Data Pack. The table below shows the suitable accommodation of those young people who were in contact.

| Accommodation | Total |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| With Parents or Relatives | 4 |
| Semi-independent | 7 |
| Community home/res care | 1 |
| Supported Lodgings | 3 |
| Ordinary Lodgings | 1 |
| Independent Living | 16 |
| Foyers and similar accomm | 2 |
| With Former Foster Carers | 3 |
| Total | 37 |

Over half of the cohort (64.4%) were in employment, education or training, including two young people who were continuing their studies at university. Nine young people were not in education, employment or training on or around their 19th birthday, two young people had not yet had their EET status confirmed therefore are assumed to be NEET (included in Unknown/Not in Contact). The table below shows the EET situations:

| EET Situation | Total |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Full time higher education | 2 |
| Full time education other than higher | 7 |
| Full time training or employment | 9 |
| Part time in training or employment | 11 |
| NEET other circumstances | 9 |
| Unknown/Not in Contact | 7 |
| Total | 45 |

Care Leavers Monitoring 2013/14

DfE announced changes to the performance monitoring of young people leaving care from 2013/14. The cohort will monitor care leavers who are eligible for support and whose 19th, 20th and 21st birthdays fall within the collection period, a cohort of 153 in 2013/14. The data collection will continue to monitor whether care leavers are in contact, in suitable accommodation and whether they are in employment, education or training.

11. Review of Corporate Parenting Board

11.1 In September 2012 the Lead Member for Children and Young People commissioned a review of the Corporate Parenting Board and asked the Stewart, Children's Policy lead to lead it. Young people from the Change Council were invited to be members of the review group.

11.2 The terms of reference were agreed by the Corporate Parenting Board in November 2012. It was agreed that the Review would look at how the Corporate Parenting Board operates – what works well and what could be improved.

Including consideration of how Corporate Parenting Boards/Panels work elsewhere. and report back to Corporate Parenting Board in February 2013, with recommendations, with a view to taking a report to Cabinet in March 2013.

11.3 The Recommendations of the review were:

11.3.1 Membership of the Corporate Parenting Board should be amended to members of Children's Scrutiny Panel and a representative from each of the People Boards, as well as the Lead Member for Children's Services and the Policy Lead for Children's Services.

11.3.2 All other elected members should be invited as participant observers to the Corporate Parenting Board, as all members have corporate parenting responsibilities.

11.3.3 The Corporate Parenting Board should agree an Annual Workplan, with items against each date in the calendar, to ensure wide spread of topics. Young people from Change Council should be involved in setting the workplan for the year, in an annual event for members and young people.

11.3.4 Other agenda items can be added by Members or young people to augment the items on the annual workplan.

11.4 New membership arrangements
The Annual Full Council on the May 2013 agreed that the constitution will be changed to

- Children's Services Portfolio Holder
- Children's Services Policy Member
- 2 members of Scrutiny Committee
- Representatives of each of the People Boards