



# Walsall Council

## Corporate Parenting Board

Meeting to be held on: **Monday 5 September, 2022 AT 6.00 PM**

Meeting to be held: Council House, Walsall.

### **MEMBERSHIP:**

Chair: Councillor Wilson  
Vice Chair: Councillor Jukes  
Councillor Hicken  
Councillor A. Hussain  
Councillor I. Hussain  
Councillor Mazhar  
Councillor Worrall

### **ADVISOR**

Alison Jones (NHS Walsall CCG)

**Note:** Walsall Council encourages the public to exercise their right to attend meetings of Council, Cabinet and Committees. Agendas and reports are available for inspection from the Council's Democratic Services Team at the Council House, Walsall (Telephone 01922 654369) or on our website [www.walsall.gov.uk](http://www.walsall.gov.uk).

## ITEMS FOR BUSINESS

<b>1.</b>	<b>Introductions and Apologies</b>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Substitutions</b>	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2022.</b>	<u>Enclosed</u>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Young People Engagement and participation plan</b>	<u>Enclosed</u>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Adoption Service Report</b>	<u>Enclosed</u>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Walsall Children's Services Corporate Parenting Board Quarter 1 performance data</b>	<u>Enclosed</u>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Options for increasing the Setting Up Home Grant for young people leaving care.</b>	<u>Enclosed</u>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) and Young People cared for by Walsall Council</b>	<u>Enclosed</u>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>  Monday 14 November, 2022.	

**The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012**  
**Specified pecuniary interests**

The pecuniary interests which are specified for the purposes of Chapter 7 of Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011 are the interests specified in the second column of the following:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Prescribed description</b>
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by a member in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of a member.  This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Regulations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority:  (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and  (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to a member's knowledge):  (a) the landlord is the relevant authority;  (b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where:  (a) that body (to a member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and  (b) either:  (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or  (ii) if the share capital of that body is more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

## **Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)**

### **Access to information: Exempt information**

#### **Part 1**

#### **Descriptions of exempt information: England**

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes:
  - (a) to give any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
  - (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.
8. Information being disclosed during a meeting of a Scrutiny and Performance Panel when considering flood risk management functions which:
  - (a) Constitutes a trades secret;
  - (b) Its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the risk management authority);
  - (c) It was obtained by a risk management authority from any other person and its disclosure to the public by the risk management authority would constitute a breach of confidence actionable by that other person.

## **Corporate Parenting Board**

**Monday 4 July 2022 at 6.00 p.m.**

**Town Hall, Walsall Council House**

### **Board Members Present:**

Councillor T. Wilson (Chair)  
Councillor. Jukes (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Hicken  
Councillor I. Hussain  
Councillor A. Hussain  
Councillor Mazhar  
Councillor. Nasreen  
Councillor Worrall

### **Officers Present**

Elise Hopkins	Director, Customer Engagement
David Hughes	Children and Young Persons Champion
Helena Kucharczyk	Head of Service
Jo Manning	Group Manager
Jivan Sembi	Head of Service (Children in Care, Provider and Care Leaving Services)
Lorraine Thompson	Head of Virtual School
Sally Rowe	Executive Director Children's Services

Young people representing the Children in Care Council.

### **Welcome**

At this point in the meeting, the Chair opened the meeting by welcoming everyone present. He also noted that the meeting to the papers, which could be found on the Council's Committee Management Information system (CMIS) webpage.

## **1/22 Introductions and Apologies**

Apologies were received on behalf of Alison Jones (Advisor to the Board).

## **2/22 Substitutions**

There were no substitutions for the duration of the meeting.

## **3/22 Minutes**

A copy of the minutes of the meeting held on 4 April 2022, were submitted.

(see annexed)

## **Resolved (Unanimous)**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 April 2022, copies having previously been circulated to each Member of the Board, be approved and signed by the chairman as a correct record.

## **4/22 Introduction to Corporate Parenting Board**

The Head of Service (Children in Care, Provider and Care Leaving Services) spoke to the presentation (annexed). It was stressed that Young People were central to the Board, and representatives were in attendance alongside the Children and Young Persons Champion.

The Chair set out the role of the Board and stressed the importance of the role of the corporate parent. Members were encouraged to attend the 'Respect' training, Officers were asked for further information on the contents of the 'Corporate induction' as it was considered important that newly Elected Members were informed of their responsibilities as a Corporate Parent. It was suggested that a letter should be sent to Elected Members to remind them of their responsibilities as a corporate parent. It was agreed that this information would be circulated and that Members would then determine if this was adequate in preparing Members for the role of corporate parent.

## **Resolved**

- 1. That the Introduction to the Corporate Parenting board be noted.**
- 2. Further details on Respect training are circulated to the Board.**
- 3. The details of the Elected Member Corporate induction are circulated to the Board.**
- 4. A letter is sent to Elected Members to remind them of their responsibilities as a corporate parent.**

#### 4/22     **Young People Engagement**

The Children's and Young Persons Champion presented the report and highlighted the salient points (annexed).

Four sessions of total respect training had been delivered by care leavers with good feedback received. Future sessions were planned and feedback from Young People described the positive outcomes from delivering the training sessions:

- Increased confidence and self-esteem for young adults.
- Increased awareness for attendees on children's rights and how to promote them.
- Considerations for change in policy and process.
- Additional financial support for care leavers.
- Work experience which can be used for job applications.
- Sharing best practice ideas across multi-agencies.
- Time for reflection for staff and change in culture.
- Unlocking new skills and developing care leavers.

An update was provided on 'language that cares', this continued to be promoted within Walsall – it had been presented at several meetings across Children's Services as well as at Walsall College to multi agency partners. It was agreed that this would be circulated to Board Members.

The Board were informed that the following issues were 'hot topics' for Care Leavers:-

- Mental Health and wellbeing.
- Living alone and isolation.
- Budgeting and cost of living, household bills, food shopping, travel as well as other increases.

A Young Person in attendance described her experience of living independently. The Childrens and Young People's Champion was asked how the service was engaging with Young People who were not part of the Children in Care Council (CiC). The Board were informed that this happened through a Foster Carers newsletter, the virtual school (PEPs) and it was noted that some Young People did not want to be involved in the CIC. A piece of work was underway to consider how to effectively reach a wider range of Young People to ensure representation.

It was agreed that once welcome packs (for children coming into care) which provided information in relation to process and rights in a child friendly way were finalised that they would be shared with Board Members.

A Member congratulated Young People on their achievements, and welcomed two new Young People in attendance at the Board. A discussion ensued on the 'setting up home' grant and it was stressed by Officers that Personal Assistants encouraged Young People to spend their grant wisely and to achieve the best

value for their purchases. A Member questioned if the current allowance was adequate and requested that a briefing paper detailing the costing implications of increasing the grant to £3000 be taken to a future meeting.

The Chair stated that Board Members would be happy to be guest speakers at the Children in Care Council.

## **Resolved**

- 1. That the Young People Engagement Report be noted**
- 2. Respect training dates be circulated**
  - 1. A briefing note on the costing implications of increasing the 'setting up home' grant to £3000 be provided to a future meeting.**

## **5/22 Quarter 4 performance data**

The Head of Service (Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement) presented the report and highlighted the salient points (annexed). The Board were informed that backlogs in the courts had impacted on performance and the number of children on a full care order however this continued to decrease. Placement stability was described as stable with a challenge around placement availability and Walsall was performing better than comparators.

A Member asked for further clarity on visits which were not undertaken to timescale, the Group Manager stated that a small percentage would be expected to be completed late due to illness, and that the visit may take place 1 or 2 days late – however action plans were in place to improve this. It was also noted that delays in recording visits could cause an issue.

A Member noted that 98.9% of visits had involved the child's views, and paid credit to health partners for improving the number of children receiving up to date dental checks. Further information was sought on those Young People not in education, training or employment. Officers explained that this was improving, and an audit of care leavers had taken place with an action plan and recommendations produced to be presented to managers. It was noted that emotional health could often be a barrier to securing employment or education.

Clarification was provided that there was no backlog of EHCPs for Looked after Children.

A Young Person in attendance raised concern that it was not possible to apply for housing until shortly before a Young Person turned 18 years old. The Director stated that there should be a plan in place to prevent this situation but agreed to look at the case outside of the meeting to understand the situation and to try to prevent this in the future. The Chair suggested that the system as a whole could be considered by the Board. Further details on the allocation of housing to Young People was provided to the Board. A Member requested that a breakdown on the number of Young People in 'hostel' accommodation was provided as part of the next performance report.



## **Resolved**

- **That the Quarter 4 performance report was noted.**
- **A breakdown on the number of Young People in 'hostel' accommodation was provided as part of the next performance report.**

### **6/22 Virtual School Annual Report 2020/2021**

The Head of the Virtual School presented the report and highlighted the salient points (annexed). Members were informed that the report outlined the activity of the Virtual School and reported on the 2020-21 educational outcomes of Walsall's children in care.

Members were informed that the 2021 GCSE results (for children in the care of Walsall Council for a year or more) were the best ever results reported for children in care. The number of young people gaining 5 or more 4-9 GCSE passes increased from 29% in 2020 to 38% in 2021. This was better than regional, national, and statistic neighbour reported outcomes.

It was noted that due to reporting requirements, attendance figures were not an accurate reflection of attendance during 2021, as many children in care were engaging with education at home.

Further detail on pupil premium plus was provided and Members were assured that consideration was given as to how this funding could be used to improve academic progress of children in care.

In response to a Member question, clarification was provided that A-level results were not provided within the annual report. A discussion ensued on fixed-term exclusions and Members were informed that the virtual school worked to avoid exclusions for Looked after Children however often the Virtual School were not aware of the events until the day the incidents happen.

The Head of the Virtual School informed the Board that work was done to support the completion and the quality of PEPs.

## **Resolved**

**That the Virtual School Annual Report 2020/2021 be noted.**

## **7/22     Work Programme**

The Chair asked Members to consider the priorities for the Board in the coming municipal year.

### **Resolved:**

That Members considered the following areas to be of high priority:

- Increasing employability for young people not in education employment or training
- Young People Engagement
- Performance data
- Heath passports
- Emotional Wellbeing of Young People
- Virtual School assurance report.
- Fostering and Adoption annual reports.
- Residential homes (Members to visit and feedback to the Board).
- The FLASH service.

A Young Person suggested that the storage room at the TLC was converted into a computer room. Officers confirmed that work was under way to consider how to best use space and the Young Person was thanked for his suggestion. The Chair thanked Young People for their attendance and positive contribution to the discussion at the meeting.

There being no further business the meeting terminated at 7.37 p.m.

Signed .....

Date .....



**Title of the report: Young People's Engagement**

**Executive Summary:**

The Council4Kids, the "Children in Care Council" (CICC), is the forum where Walsall's looked after children, young people and care leavers are able to shape and influence the parenting and support that they receive.

This report describes some of the highlights of the CICC since the last Corporate Parenting Board on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

**Reason for bringing to the Corporate Parenting Board:**

To provide the Corporate Parenting Board an update on the activities of the CICC which will allow the Board to offer any support to the children, in partnership with strategic management as corporate parents for looked after children.

We are keen to ensure that the CICC is encouraged to share highlights and raise any issues and concerns they may have on behalf of care experienced young people in Walsall with a view to improving services and outcome for children in the care of Walsall Council.

The Shadow Board has been put in place to ensure that the young people are fully involved in the Corporate Parenting Board and that their views are considered as part of this process

**Recommendations:**

The Board notes the activity and events of the Children in Care Council.

**Background papers:**

Previous Young People Engagement reports.

**Corporate Parenting Pledges**

The Walsall Promise for all Children in Care and Care Leavers

**Resource and legal considerations:**

Walsall is committed to ensuring that children and young people are involved in decision making and processes that directly affect their lives through.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduced seven Corporate Parenting Principles and 2 of the principles focus on the involvement and participation of children and young people:

- Encourage children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- Take account of a child or young person's views, wishes and feelings

Article 12 United Nations Convention on the Rights of The Child says that children and young people have the human right to have opinions and for these opinions to be heard and taken seriously and taken seriously.

### **Council Corporate Plan Priorities:**

- Children have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.
- People have increased independence, improved health and can positively contribute to their communities.

### **Citizen impact:**

The services and the improvements play a key role in the quality of life and outcomes for the children, young people and families of Walsall. The Council and its partners as Corporate Parents make critical contributions to improve outcomes.

### **Environmental impact:**

None.

### **Performance management:**

The Children's Champion works with children in care and our care experienced young people to ensure that our CICC is a rich and engaging forum. Regular reports are provided to the Director of Children's Services and the Corporate Parenting Board.

### **Reducing inequalities:**


The children in care council seeks to secure improvements in the equality of services, which, when achieved will have a positive impact on our most vulnerable children, young people and their families.

### **Consultation:**

The CICC is one of the key forums through which services for children in care and care leavers seek to consult on service delivery and where children and young people are able to shape and influence the parenting they receive at every level.

### **Contact Officer:**

Full Name – David Hughes

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Report: Young People's Engagement and Children in Care Council	
1.1	<b>Meeting with Locality Managers</b>
	<p>On 7<sup>th</sup> of July a meet and greet session was held at the Transition Leaving Care Hub. We had four managers in attendance which included; Rita Homer (Head of Service for Family Safeguarding and Localities, Donna Lorde (Team Manager, Duty and Assessment West), Donna Green (Group Manager Help and Protection) and Zoe James (Team manager West Locality and Children With Disabilities).</p> <p>This prompted some really useful discussions and reflections. An introduction to what the family safeguarding model is, was provided to our young people and it was explained that we started working in this way in September 2020. Each manager gave a short introduction on what their roles were and how this directly relates to children, young people and their families.</p> <p>In short the differences to young people and their families experiencing help and support through the family safeguarding model was explored. Our young people like the idea of this family safeguarding model and felt that this is a far better way to support children and families. They felt this because the idea of having lots of professionals from different services supporting the family would be really beneficial and things may get done quicker. For example; having an adult social worker sitting in the same team as a children social worker and a mental health practitioner could mean that families get support quicker with better coordination which in turn would have a positive impact on vulnerable children. The work that families receive under this model can be long-term and short-term, some as little as 12 weeks of intervention from professionals.</p> <p>Highlights from this model were also discussed such as delays to families being either removed or avoided as part of this process.</p> <p>Following on from this we have planned to show some of our young people around different offices and workplaces where they can get to meet some of the teams within children's services. This will provide an opportunity for them to ask questions, find out more on what is on offer for children and families, see what life is like behind the doors of professionals in Walsall.</p> <p>Another great thing to come out of this was the following from our head of service Rita:</p> <p><i>Yesterday's meeting with the young people has provoked significant reflection. We were wondering if we can meet to look at a tangible plan around how we can look at some co-production in respect of service delivery/policy but with the young people being involved from the start as opposed to getting their views once a piece of work has been completed. Two key two areas are that they would like to discuss more with the children in care council is supporting and securing the views of children who are open under FS- (Family Safeguarding) how we can improve practice? Also Building our PLO (Public Law Outline) tool-kit in respect of teenagers whose parents are subject to pre proceedings.</i></p> <p>These will be considered as part of the care councils work plan Sept 2022-Sept 2023.</p>

<b>1.2</b>	<b>Total Respect Training</b>
	<p>To date we have delivered 7 sessions and continue to get positive feedback from the attendees. As previously discussed we were directed to source free council buildings to deliver the training which to date we have managed to do. We now have 6 care leavers trained to deliver this training with us and we continue to promote this to others for further recruitment. We are currently recruiting young people in care aged 14 and over to engage in a training opportunity in October to enable them to deliver Total Respect training.</p> <p>Here are some positives that come from this training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased confidence and self-esteem for our young adults</li> <li>• Increased awareness for attendees on Childrens Rights and how to promote them</li> <li>• Considerations for change in policy and process</li> <li>• Additional financial support for care leavers</li> <li>• Work experience which can be used for job applications</li> <li>• Sharing best practice ideas across multi-agencies</li> <li>• Time for reflection for staff and change in culture</li> <li>• Unlocking new skills and developing care leavers</li> </ul>
<b>1.3</b>	<b>Language that cares:</b>
	<p>The steering group has now met on two occasions, the first one at the end of June virtually on Microsoft teams and the second took place face-to-face at the beginning of August. Both of these meetings have been productive and some good ideas are being generated which we will aim to take forward. Moving forward the group will meet monthly and will be chaired by the Group Manager for Quality and Practice. We are exploring how Mosaic (ICT system) can be adapt to reflect the learning from Language that Cares. We are looking at how this language can be addressed in induction and training, how we develop a continued communication campaign and how we can embed language that cares into practice.</p> <p>It has been agreed to create a 'Walsall Dictionary' which will show the acronyms and what they stand for which will hopefully provide an answer for anyone looking through their records. To provide some alternative suggestions to the professional jargon and to encourage the use of the friendlier more understandable plain English words. This can be done in partnership with our young people and draw on similar exercises completed by other Local Authorities.</p> <p>One member of the steering group Lorraine Thomas, Virtual Head has been the first manager in Walsall to change the language used on a job description which went to advert. Lorraine feels this is something which we could do within Walsall as a collective.</p> <p>Language that cares was a focus of discussion recently at Extended Senior Leadership team and it was positive to hear how across Children Services consideration is being given to how they can promote the Language that Cares agenda. Examples of consideration being given in</p>

	Commissioning and School transport to the wording of contracts.
<b>1.4</b>	<b>Welcome Pack</b>
	One of our managers within our Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) service has works closely with print and design and practice in partnership in getting these packs printed. These are now going out to all social workers to start using with children right from the start when a child first comes into care. The children's champion and the care leaver ambassador will both help to support social care staff and embed this into their practice in order for us to have a consistent approach.
<b>1.5</b>	<p><b>Good news stories! Proud of our Care Leavers and our Transition Leaving Care Team</b></p> <p>We have a young adult who carried the queens baton for the Commonwealth Games, C has also secured her first tenancy, she is working full time and is a full time student in medical sciences, she came into care late in life but is making the most of the support on offer to her</p> <p>One young adult has been offered print &amp; design apprenticeship at the council. C has been out of education for some time now – with support from his personal advisor and impact advisor he gained the confidence and belief that he has a lot of potential and can achieve his ambition of showing of his creative side</p> <p>One young man has signed his first tenancy, after being in staying put for the last year he felt he gained the skills he needed to live on his own. He has started work at Blakemore food services and also plans to go to university. He also took part in the young person's interview panel when recruiting for personal advisors for the Transition Leaving Care team.</p> <p>After a very long wait one young man has completed his first substantive interview, although he has no outcome from it he is very happy that the process has started.</p> <p>'A' is 20 he came to the UK in 2019 when he was 17 from Afghanistan. After a long process he has been granted 5 years leave to remain, this means that he has stability and can now plan for his future, he will be supported to look at his education/ employment opportunities and also long term accommodation.</p> <p>One young lady has struggled living with family and was not able to manage her own tenancy, she made her own arrangements by approaching YMCA and doing a self-referral and representing herself in an interview- she was offered a place with them and has settled in well. She has shown resilience and determination in securing accommodation in an area she wanted to live in.</p> <p>A young man has just completed his SIA licence on the 4<sup>th</sup> August and has a security job lined up working as security at the bull ring centre</p> <p>One of our young men when he was under 18 there was significant concerns about his mental health, consideration for mental health hospital was discussed, however, he has settled at Rivers and has embraced the support on offer, he has finished 6<sup>th</sup> form at Queen Mary's grammar school and will be starting Psychology degree at</p>



	Nottingham university in September
<b>1.6</b>	<b>Children's home forum</b>
	<p>The first forums for our young people in our children's homes will happen in September and will be led by our Care Leaver Ambassador Sophia Begum in partnership with staff from the children's home. The initial sessions will consider how they want the groups to function, names for the groups and ideas of what their priorities are.</p> <p>It is hoped that these groups will be able to work closely with the Children in Care council and Care Leavers forum.</p>
<b>1.8</b>	<b>Dates for the diary</b>
	<p><b><u>Council 4 Kids group dates:</u></b> This group continues to be held once every other week. The members of our group welcome guest speaker and are happy for managers or elected members to pop along and say hello if they wish.</p> <p><b><u>Care Leavers Group:</u></b> Our care leavers group continues to meet twice per month. We run one face to face session per month and one virtual session. Our care leavers are happy to see guest speakers at their meetings and would be happy for any managers or elected members to pop into their meetings if they wish.</p> <p><b><u>Care leavers week:</u></b> Week commencing 24<sup>th</sup> October. A briefing paper has been completed to consider how elected members can be involved in the activity being offered.</p>

**David Hughes**  
**Children's Champion**



Report title:	<b>Adoption Service Report</b> <b>01 April 2021 to 31 March 2022</b>
Date of report:	21 June 2022
To:	<b>Walsall Council</b>
Produced by:	Mark Tobin Head of Service
Service:	Adoption@Heart

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## **1. Introduction and Purpose of the Report:**

This report fulfils the obligations in Adoption National Minimum Standards (2011) and Adoption Service Statutory Guidance (2011) Adoption and Children Act 2002, to report to the “executive side” of the local authority. This has guided the structure and information set out in the report below.

The report jointly covers the full year 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

It is important to note that data and information within this report is accurate as of 31 March 2022.

Adoption@Heart is a Regional Adoption Agency, providing adoption services on behalf of Sandwell, Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton Councils. The service is hosted by City of

## 2. Number, type and age of children waiting for adoption and length of time waiting:

As at 31 March 2022 23 children were waiting with Placement orders but not yet placed with adoptive families. 11 of these children were already linked with potential adopters but not yet formally matched or placed with them. 2 children were on hold for family finding due to the need for further assessments of their needs. A further 3 children were in the process of being adopted by their current foster carers so assessments were on-going. The remaining 7 children were in active family finding and not yet linked or matched to adoptive parents. 6 of the 7 children in active family finding had waited less than 3 months since the Place Orders were granted and 1 of these has waited just under 12 months.

The timescales for the 23 children waiting on Placement Orders are:

Less than 3 months:	12
Between 3 and 6 months:	3
Between 6 and 12 months:	6
Between 12 and 24 months:	2
Children waiting over 2 years:	0

### 2.1 Children Made Subject to Placement Orders

Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep
2	1	4	2	4	0

Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
3	2	2	5	4	9	38

### 2.2 Children Subject to Should be Placed for Adoption (SHOBPA) decisions as at 31 March 2022 (without Placement Order)

24

**2.3 Number of Children who had a SHOPBA during the period**

Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep
3	2	8	1	3	5

Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
5	3	6	4	2	5	47

**2.4 The Numbers of Children with PO who had a Change of Plan (away from adoption) in the Period**

7

**2.5 Number of Children Placed for Adoption during the period.**

Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep
2	2	1	1	3	1

Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
0	0	1	3	2	2	18

Financial Year:	18/19	19/20	20/21
Children Placed:	36	41	36

**3. Number of Children Adopted (April 2021 - March 2022)**

Number of children adopted in the year 29.

In year average timescale for children adopted

A10: 396

A2: 223

Adoption numbers have significantly increased this year following the delays in the previous year caused by Covid-19 and the impact on the courts. This factor together with the low number of children placed (14) in the year 2020/21 has led to the low number of children adopted in the reporting year.

The higher number of children adopted in the reporting year evidences the process of recovery in the courts, following the pandemic and the number of children placed has also increased from 14 to 22 in the reporting year.

The numbers of children leaving care nationally via adoption has reduced continuously since 2017.

Financial Year:	18/19	19/20	20/21
Children Adopted:	36	31	35

**Adoption Scorecard Performance:**

In 2014, as part of its' Adoption Reform Agenda, the government introduced Adoption Scorecards to track local authority performance and to tackle delay in the adoption system. Scorecards are produced for a 3-year rolling average, with the latest data being published for April 2018 - March 2019 (Published April 2020 as below).

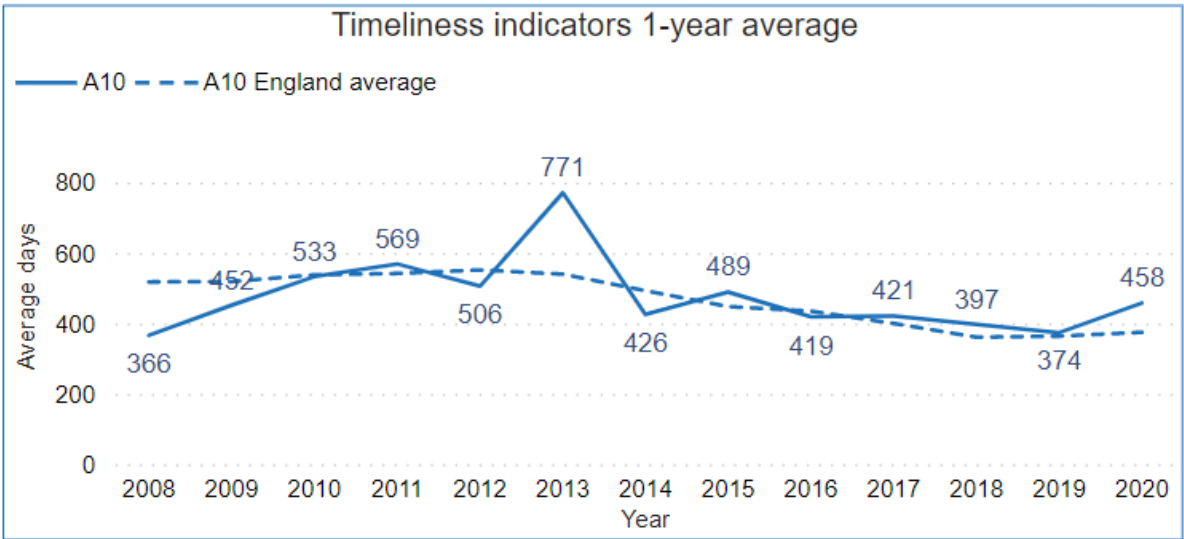
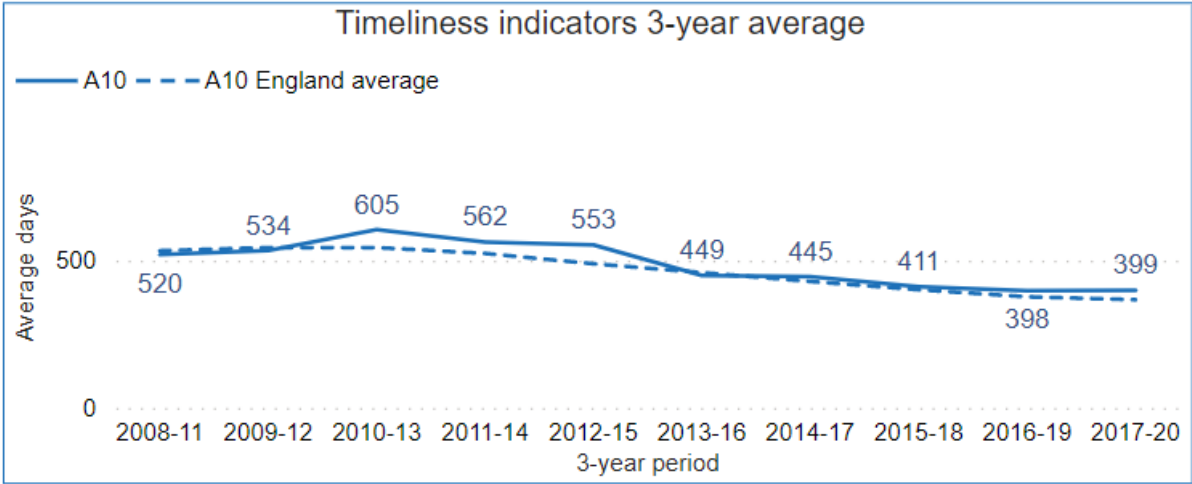
The current indicators are:

**A10** – number of days between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family. The current threshold is 426 days.

**A2** – the number of days between receiving court authority to place a child for adoption and the Agency decision about a match to an adoptive family. The current threshold is 121 days.

.

A10



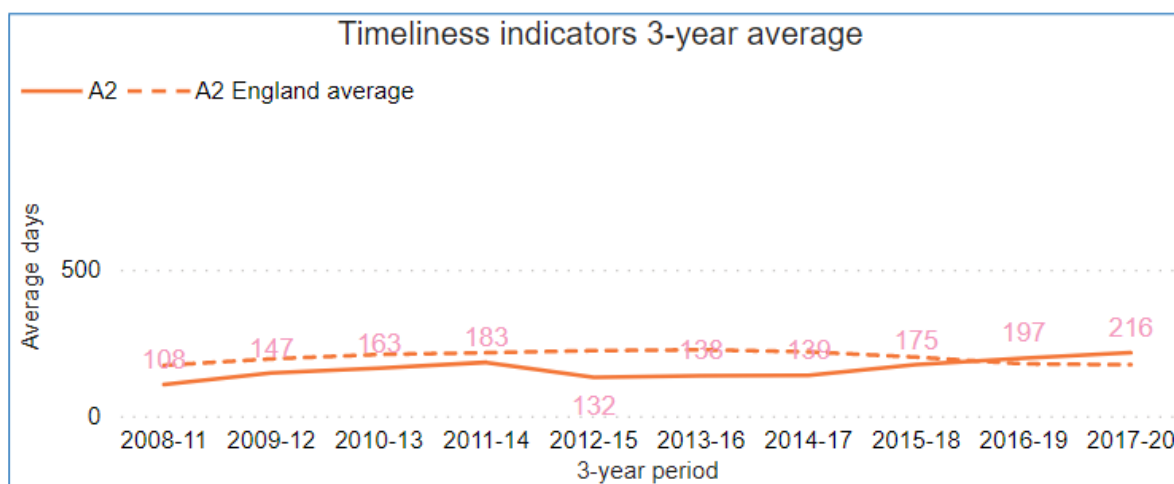
A10: Average time (in days) between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family adjusted for foster care adoptions:				
2020 average days: <b>458</b>	2020 England average: <b>375</b>	Average time in 2020 was longer than in 2019	2017-20 average days: <b>399</b>	2017-20 England average: <b>367</b>

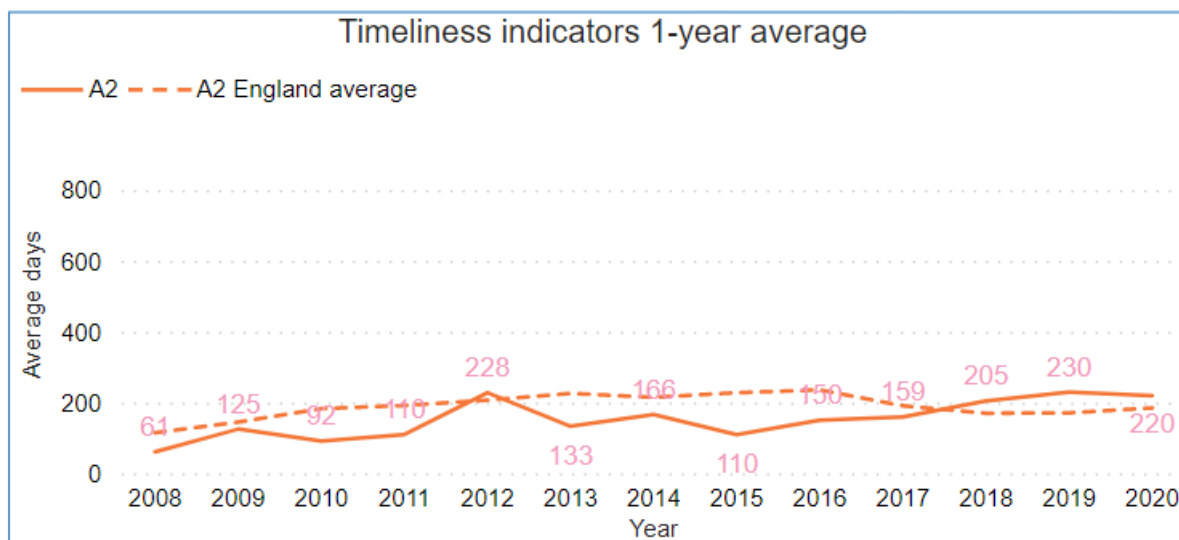
**A10** performance single year is above threshold (426) and three year average is below. Both are above the England average (375).

The single year performance is 32 days above threshold and 83 days above England average.

The three year average is 27 days below threshold and 32 days above the national average.

## A2





**A2: Average time (in days) between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family:**

2020 average days: <b>220</b>	2020 England average: <b>185</b>	Average time in 2020 was shorter than in 2019	2017-20 average days: <b>216</b>	2017-20 England average: <b>175</b>
----------------------------------	-------------------------------------	---	-------------------------------------	--

Performance for A2 is significantly above threshold for both three year average and single year. It is also above England average for both indicators.

The three year average is 110 days above the threshold (121) and 41 days above the national average.

The single year performance is 94 days above threshold and 59 days above the national average.

**Please note that published scorecard data incorporate average performance over 3 years up to and including the year 2019/20. Adoption@Heart provided adoption services for Walsall Council from April 2019, so currently the published scorecard data includes the 2 previous years.**

### 3.1 Early Permanency



There were 9 children placed in year in early permanence placements via Foster for Adopt.

#### **4. Recruitment of Adopters:**

##### **4.1 New Enquiries**

For the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, 609 new enquiries were received by the Adoption@Heart Recruitment Team.

This is in comparison to 638 enquiries received last year.

##### **4.2 Information Events**

22 virtual information events took place with 311 people attending (262 units) and six phone consultations (mix of single and joint applicants). Therefore, 44 percent of people who made an enquiry went on to receive information.

#### **5. Marketing Report:**

Marketing figures for this period are:

- 609 enquiries
- Six phone consultations and 311 people attended virtual information events
- Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 and 31 March 2022, we had a total of 20,656 website visits – made up of 15,503 unique visits
- 457 Twitter followers
- 2,142 Facebook likes
- 286 Instagram Followers

##### **Marketing brief**

The beginning of the year saw the launch of the national 'You Can Adopt' sibling campaign. Along with local PR, social media posts and a targeted Google Ads campaign, Adoption@Heart placed digital adverts on screens across the region including a digital screen on the M6 (both directions).

In September and October, Adoption@Heart took part in a black adopter's campaign, a national campaign to encourage black people to find out more about adoption. Using a toolkit of messages and artwork, Adoption@Heart ran a campaign including targeted Google Ads,

PR to regional media, digital 'page takeovers' on the Express & Star website, a sponsored story and Facebook post with the Express & Star, plus, a schedule of co-ordinated social media posts across Adoption@Heart's and partner social media channels.

In December, Adoption@Heart shared a story of two adopted brothers that wanted to donate their Christmas presents to children that go without during the festive period. The gifts were donated to Graiseley Strengthening Families Hub, which coordinated a donation drive for children in need and refugee families who had recently arrived in the city. Adoption@Heart helped coordinate the donation and shared the story with local press and via social media channels.

LGBT+ adoption and fostering week took place in March 2022 which saw the launch of the 'Be the Change' campaign, a recruitment campaign to encourage those from the LGBT+ community who are considering adoption or would like more information to come forward. Adoption@Heart had support from LGBT+ adopters to share their stories across multiple platforms including video, social media, blog posts, news articles and at a virtual information event.

Adoption@Heart has continued to offer virtual information events for prospective adopters using Microsoft Teams. These events have continued to work well and were attended by an average of 14 people per event across the year. Events are hosted by Social Workers, the Marketing Executive and an adopter, where possible. The format of video, a presentation plus Q&A session continues to provide an interactive and engaging session. Conversion from attendance to submitted EOI, continues to remain high.

Regular meetings continue to take place with the Communications Leads across the three local authorities and the Trust. The meetings are used to discuss both national and regional marketing campaigns and activities, the marketing and communications support given to Adoption@Heart by the other comms leads (utilising the knowledge of their areas and resources) and what future support is needed and how the partnership can work going forward. Ongoing plans include the possibility of a joint campaign for adoption and fostering plus working more closely together on community event attendance across the Black Country.

This year will see the launch of a further national 'You Can Adopt' campaign aimed at increasing awareness of the types of children that wait the longest for a family. The new campaign is due to launch late June 2022. Adoption@Heart also aims to make improvements to its website and grow its social media channels in order to increase reach and impact.

## **6. Requirements on the Preparation of Adoption Report Regulations:**

### **6.1 Complaints**

There were three formal complaints about the service during the twelve month period.

One related to adopter applicants who were not recommended for approval by the agency. This is delayed in stage one due to a pending IRM hearing which found in favour of the service and a subsequent review by the Local Government Ombudsman also support decision making in the service and did not uphold the applicant's complaint.

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A further complaint related to delayed applications to the Adoption Support Fund as well as a delayed later life letter (for a child placed by Wolverhampton prior to April 2019). An LGSCO referral has found against Adoption@Heart and the Council and resulted in financial compensation to the complainant.

Additionally, an adoptive parent has made a formal complaint about the level of support provided to her teenage adoptive daughter, who is estranged from her care with no plan of rehabilitation. The young person concerned does not live in the A@H region and the complaint is still in process of investigation.

## **7. Staffing:**

The service employs 32 qualified Social Workers on a permanent basis, along with six agency Social Workers, who are providing additional capacity due to vacant posts, sickness, maternity leave and additional demand created by Covid-19. Two agency Social Workers have been funded by the partner agencies for twelve months, to provide additional family finding capacity.

There are three Team Managers, with one each covering the thematic service areas. The panel team have two Panel Advisors along with a Panel Co-ordinator and three Panel Administrators.

Management capacity has been increased with the addition of a Service Manager, funded within the existing budget. A successful applicant was appointed internally and started in post 1 March 2022.

The recruitment vacancy rates have remained low since the service went live and despite Covid-19, sickness and absence rates have been minimal during the full year period of 2021/22.

## **8. Referrals to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM):**

There has been one referral to the IRM in the period and this has not yet been heard by the IRM panel. It relates to a non-approval of an adopter application.

## **9. Children's Family Finding Activity:**

The tables below contain the total numbers of children placed by the service during the year 2021/22.

### **Children placed 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022**

LA/Trust	Inhouse	Interagency	Total Placed
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Dudley	12	10	22
Sandwell	17	12	29
Walsall	13	5	18
Wolverhampton	22	12	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>103</b>

Inter-agency usage for full year is 38 percent, thus 62 percent of children were placed in house.

#### **Children Placed Foster for Adopt**

<b>LA/Trust</b>	<b>FFA Inhouse</b>	<b>FFA Interagency</b>	<b>Total</b>
Dudley	2	1	3
Sandwell	9	3	12
Walsall	8	1	9
Wolverhampton	8	0	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>32</b>

Inter-agency usage for FFA placed in full year is 15 percent.

#### **Analysis – Children Placed**

The number of children matched and placed with adoptive families in the full year is 103. This is less than the number placed in the previous year (124).

38 percent of children placed to 31 March were placed inter-agency and this represents a significant improvement on end of the previous year performance (56 percent).

The spread of children placed/matched across the four partners is closer in consistency than in previous years, albeit numbers are higher for Wolverhampton and lower in Walsall. There has been a significant increase in children placed for Dudley.

More children have now been placed in house than inter-agency for all partners, without such significant variation as was evident in previous quarters.

It is very positive that 32 children have been placed via Foster for Adopt (31 in previous year) and that 85 percent of these were placed with in house adopters. Early Permanence practice in the partnership continues to improve and has significantly increased since the establishment of Adoption@Heart.

#### **10. Adoption Panels:**

During the year all adoption panels met virtually due to the constraints and restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic. This has continued and it is not likely that panels will return to a face to face format.

Virtual panels have been largely well received by adopters who have indicated that they feel more comfortable in their own homes. There have also been benefits for Social Workers and panel members who have not had to travel.

Panel activity approvals & matches per month 2020/21 & 2021/22

	2020/21	2021/22	2020/21	2021/22
	Approvals	Approvals	Matches	Matches
April	5	5	7	10
May	4	4	16	10
June	5	8	11	13
July	7	7	8	8
August	8	3	12	5
September	7	7	19	6
October	5	3	20	11
November	7	5	7	12
December	4	3	6	3
January	6	3	6	5
February	3	10	8	6
March	6	7	11	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>103</b>

Panel membership

The Panel continues to function and is well supported by its committed members and support staff. We currently have 36 panel members on the central list who can sit on the Adoption panel. In addition, six medical advisors for the three Local Authorities and the Children's trust sit on panels on a Rota basis. There are four Panel Chairs, following the recruitment of an

additional chair.

The central list offers a good representation of members who have either been adopted or have adopted and this is seen as very positive in terms of the perspective they bring. Whilst a number have been recruited since last year, there is still further need to increase the number of males on the panel and people who are representative of the community we serve. The increase in the central list offers the opportunity to have a panel which reflects a professional perspective, independence, skill, knowledge and experience.

#### Panel training

In the period 21/22 panel members have had the opportunity to attend the following training event:

A@H Panel Development Day 02/02/2022. With the agenda items including, A@H performance, a legal update, learning reviews & disruptions, examples of matching done well and keeping in touch (KIT).

#### Panel business

Panel met on 53 occasions during 2021-2022, there are 50 panels a year for adoption matters to be heard. There is also flexibility within the panel system allowing for extra and special panels to be arranged in order to enable additional cases and emergency matters to be heard, as and when directed by the courts. This means that children do not wait and matters are dealt with in a timely manner.

The Agency Decision Makers from Dudley make all the decisions regarding the suitability for approval of all prospective adopters. The SHOBPA decisions remain in the three Local Authorities and the Trust. Agency Decision Makers are very flexible regarding early decisions in relation to matches, in order to enable transitions that work best for the child/ren for example, using school holidays.

#### Approvals

A@H is welcoming of adopters from all cultural and ethnic backgrounds, those in same sex relationships, single applicants and those with disabilities.

62 adopters were approved in this reporting period reduction of seven from the previous year. Not all adopters recommended for approval at panel were subject to Agency Decision in the year, thus 57 were formally approved in the year.

#### Feedback from Adopters about their experience at panel

Feedback from Adopters is sought after every panel. 32 responses were collated from adopters who had attended panel.

Of those who responded, 100% said that they had received enough information about panel beforehand, felt they were given enough notice, found panel members friendly, were given

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opportunity to express their views, felt they were treated fairly and found the questions they were asked relevant.

94% rated their overall experience as excellent. 6% rated their overall experience as good.

Quotes from adopters include

- *'We both felt really nervous about panel beforehand but was made to feel less nervous by the friendly panel team. Was really helpful speaking to chair beforehand too.'*
- *'Despite feeling nervous before hand, the panel was a really positive experience and we felt at ease answering questions.'*
- *'We have now experienced a face-to-face and online panel. Doing it online was extremely convenient second time around and still had the same impact as face-to-face.'*
- *'Our meeting was online and although everyone was introduced to us, when we were told that individuals were going to ask us questions it was difficult to identify them on the screen which could detract a little from the question being asked. It might be helpful for the person who is going to speak to put their hand up or wave for a very short period before starting the question, just so that we can identify the person speaking.'*
- *'Panel was an extremely positive and truly amazing experience.'*

## **11. Inspections:**

Two of the local authorities (Walsall and Wolverhampton) in the Adoption@Heart partnership were inspected in the year within the Ofsted ILACS framework. The first in Walsall was a full ILACS inspection and very positive feedback was provided by the inspectors about Adoption@Heart service and its effectiveness in meeting the needs of children and adoptive families. Inspectors in Wolverhampton, within a brief inspection process, raised no concerns about the effectiveness of the service.

## **12. Adoption Support:**

The team continues to provide all aspects of pre and post order adoption support on behalf of each of the four local authorities and now supports families pre and post order. The team commissions therapeutic services via applications to the Adoption Support Fund, plus post adoption contact, access to records and birth parent support.

It is recognised that early life adversity impacts children developmentally, emotionally, cognitively and socially and requires therapeutic support in order for children to thrive. Adoption@Heart operates a graduated approach, offering universal access to an adoption training programme and support groups delivered by staff; enhanced support includes an

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assessment of need and parenting support, individually or in groups and targeted support includes commissioning of specialist therapeutic intervention. We utilise the service of an Adoption Support Therapist employed by Adoption@Heart, as well as commissioning private and independent therapeutic services.

The starting point for accessing the Adoption Support Service is an Assessment of Need. The team undertook the following number of these in the twelve month period.

Dudley	69
Sandwell	43
Walsall	51
Wolverhampton	63
<b>Total</b>	<b>226</b>

The Adoption Support Fund was established in 2015 by the Government to help adoptive families access support and settle into their new lives following adoption. The Government committed ongoing funding for 2020-21 financial year in advance of the spending review settlement.

#### **ASF Applications completed in the year**

Sandwell	43
Walsall	51
Dudley	69
Wolverhampton	63
	<b>226</b>

#### **Post Adoption Contact**

Adoption@Heart is responsible for post adoption contact arrangements on behalf of Walsall Council. There are three full-time Family Support Workers who are responsible for administering the service. They offer support to adoptive parents and birth relatives. The service has continued remotely during Covid 19, albeit there has been delay in the exchanges at this time as access to post is limited to once a week.

Dudley	425
Sandwell	598
Walsall	826
Wolverhampton	367
<b>Total</b>	<b>2216</b>

#### **Access to Records**

The provision of birth records counselling and access to information is of vital importance in enabling adopted adults to understand the circumstances of their adoption and enhance their sense of identity. The team supported the numbers of requests below within each area.

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Dudley	20
Sandwell	12
Walsall	10
Wolverhampton	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>

### Birth Parent Support

The team also provides support to birth parents affected by adoption and the following numbers were supported by the service in the twelve month period.

Dudley	2
Sandwell	5
Walsall	7
Wolverhampton	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>

### 13. Accountability:

#### Management board

The service has continued to have in place two key layers of governance with a Management Board attended by Assistant Directors and a Strategic Commissioning Board attended by Directors of Children's Service.

The Strategic Commissioning Board has continued to meet quarterly, supported by the commissioning lead from Dudley. The chairing of this board has remained with Dudley during the year 2021/22.

An Operations Group was established in the previous year, with a view to increasing engagement, oversight and operational involvement of Heads of Service and other Managers from each partner service. This group has continued to meet monthly, chaired by the Head of Service for Adoption@Heart. The Management Board has met bi-monthly.

Management Board is chaired by the Deputy Director for Children's Social Care in Wolverhampton, as host Local Authority for Adoption@Heart.

With effect from autumn 2022, it has been agreed that the governance arrangements will change with the establishment of a new board which will be titled the Strategic Partnership Board (SPB). This will replace both Management Board and Strategic Commissioning Board and representation will be from Assistant Directors, with a Director of Children's Services chairing. This decision to streamline the governance arrangements has been made in light of the continued positive progress of the service in becoming an effective and high performing

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Regional Adoption Agency for the region. The legal agreement and related documents supporting the current governance arrangements are being reviewed to reflect this change.

**Report completed by:**



Mark Tobin  
Head of Service

# Walsall Children's Services Corporate Parenting Board Quarter 1

**Please Note: 2021-22 benchmarking data is not yet available so comparisons are against 2020-21 data. Provisional 2021-22 data has been included where available but is subject to change on verification**



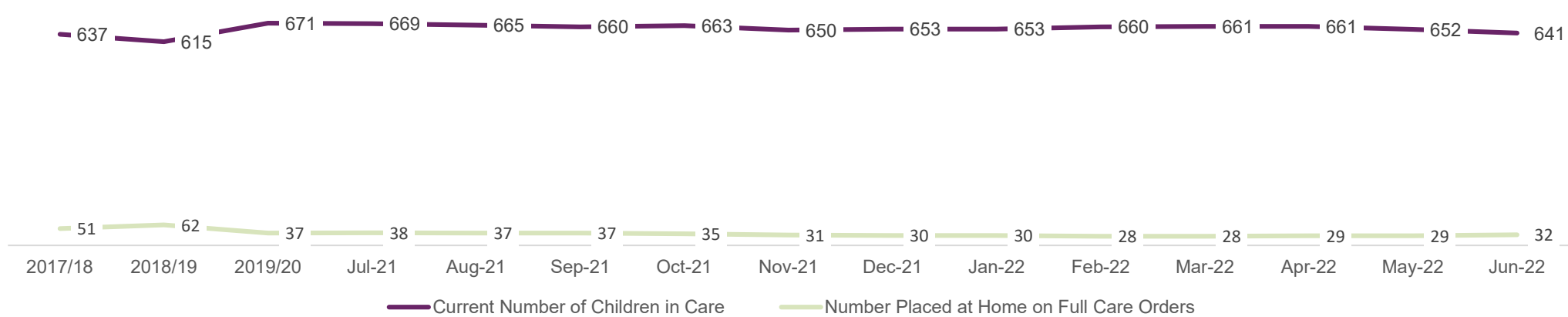
**Walsall Council**

**PROUD OF OUR PAST OUR PRESENT AND FOR OUR FUTURE**

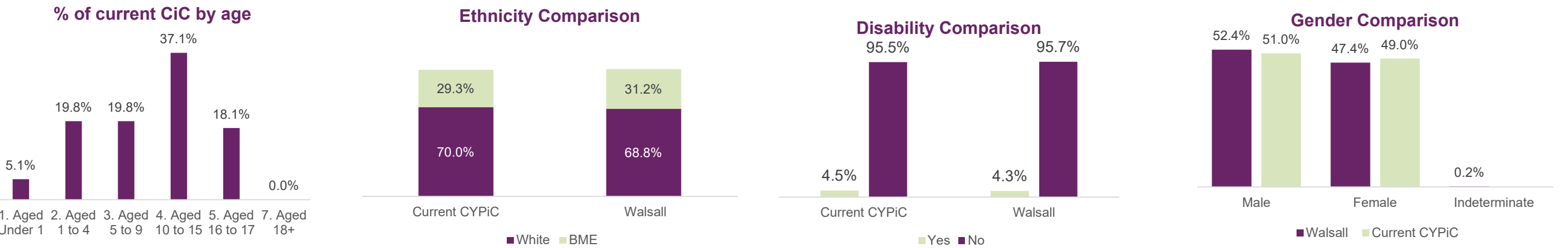
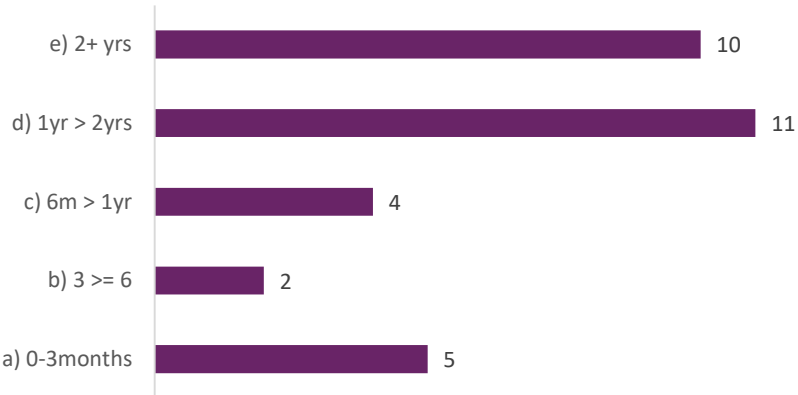
Current Children in Care (CiC) Profile



Number of Children in Care in Walsall (12 Month Rolling)



Length of Time placed at home on full care orders

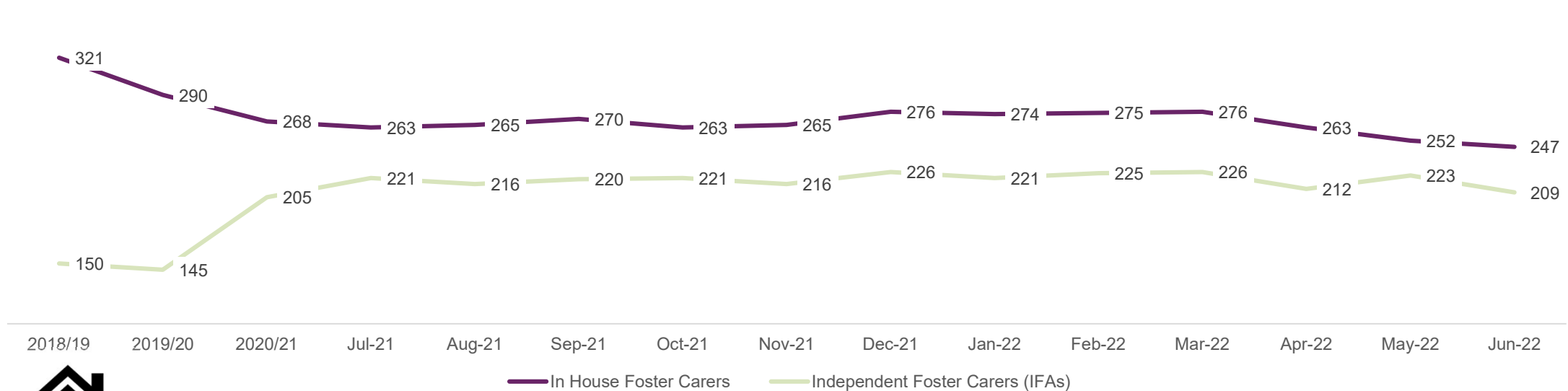


Commentary

Demographic data has been taken from the 2020 mid-year population estimates. A slightly lower proportion of Children in Care are from BME backgrounds compared to the Walsall Child and Young Person population (0-17s). A slightly higher percentage of Children in Care have a disability (4.5%), compared to the overall 0-17 population (4.3%). A slightly lower percentage of Children in Care are male (51.0%) compared to the overall 0-17 population of Walsall (52.4%).

The current Children in Care population has continued to decrease slightly from 661 at the end of 2021/22 to 641 at the end of Q1 of the current year (2022/23). The current rate of 95 per 10,000 remains below that of our statistical neighbours but is still higher than the 2020/21 England and West Midlands averages. We currently have 32 children placed at home on full care order, this is a slight decrease from 28 at the end of Q4. 21 of the 32 have been placed at home for over a year. Work is continuing with the courts to revoke care orders for children who are placed at home where appropriate.

Breakdown of Foster Placements (12 Month Rolling)



The number of CiC placed with in house foster carers and IFA's has increased but remains fairly stable.



**% CiC placed 20 mile+ from home, outside of LA boundary**

**84**  
**13.4%**

2020/21 Walsall = 11.0%  
2019/20 Walsall = 10.0%  
2020/21 West Midlands = 14.0%  
2020/21 Stat Neighbours = 16.3%  
2020/21 England = 16.0%

**% CiC 3 or more placements in a year**

**45**  
**7.0%**

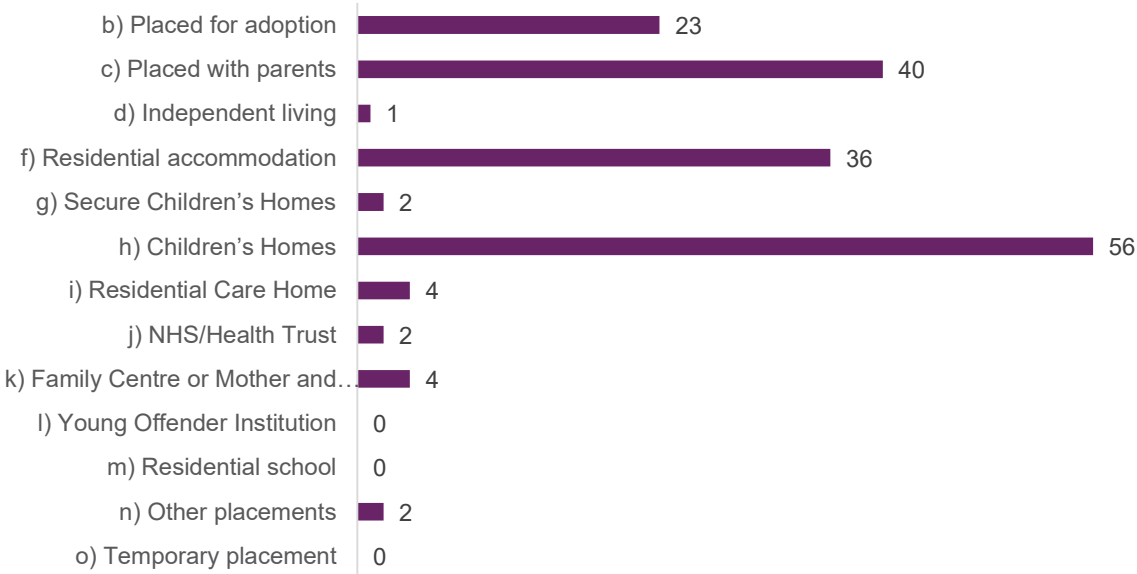
2021/22 (prov) = 6.5%  
2020/21 Walsall = 7.0%  
2019/20 Walsall = 9.0%  
2020/21 West Midlands = 8.0%  
2020/21 Stat Neighbours = 7.1%  
2020/21 England = 9.0%

**% of CiC in same placement for over 2 years if CLA for over 2.5 years**

**201**  
**73.1%**

2020/21 Walsall = 67.0%  
2019/20 Walsall = 66.0%  
2020/21 West Midlands = 71.0%  
2020/21 Stat Neighbours = 71.5%  
2020/21 England = 70.0%

Current CiC by Placement Type (non-fostered)



Commentary

Trends for children placed with in house foster carers have decreased during the first quarter of 2022/23. Currently Walsall has 247 children placed with in house foster carers, lower than the out-turn for 2020-21. Walsall has 209 children placed with independent fostering agencies. Slight fluctuations during quarter one this year.

13.4% of Walsall's CiC are placed 20 plus miles from their home address this is an increase on the 2020-21 out-turn. 7.0% of the CiC population have had 3 or more placements within a year. This is identical to the 2020-21 out-turn. The percentage of CiC in the same placement for over 2 years if CiC for over 2.5 years (73.1%) is also improving and is slightly higher than regional and statistical neighbour averages for 2020/21.



% Visits undertaken to timescale

Where a statutory visit has been undertaken to timescale in accordance with the childs plan.

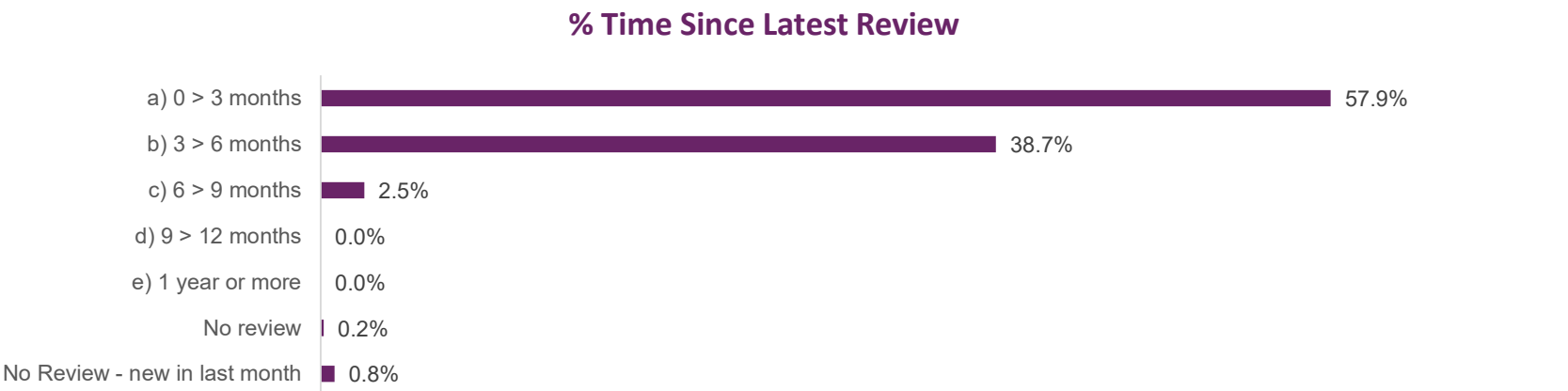
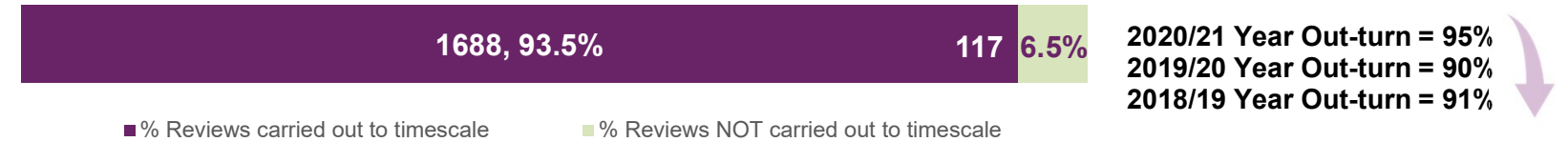
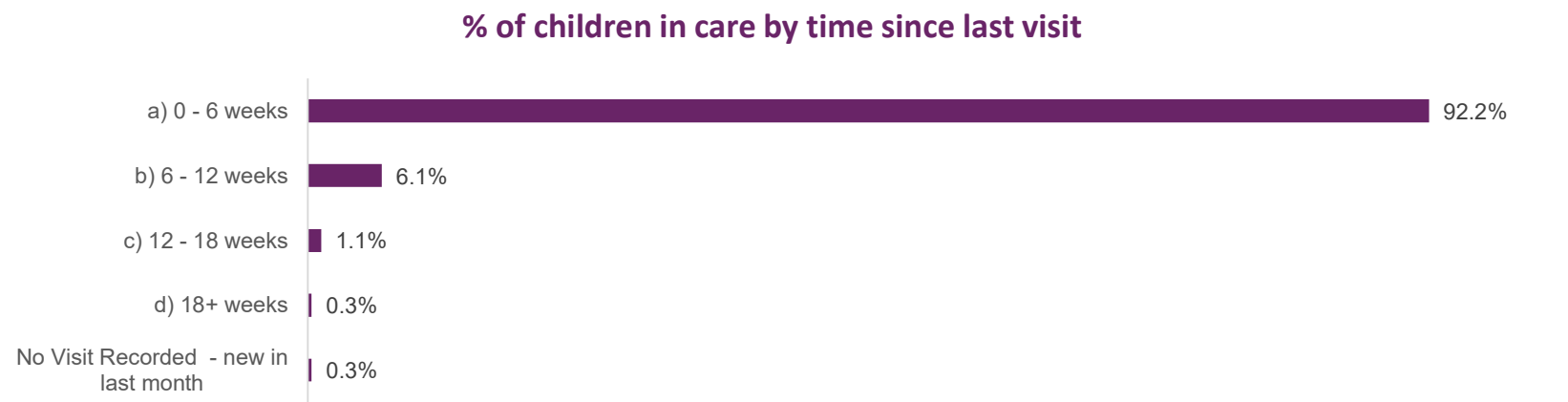
Time Since Last Visit Undertaken	Number	%
a) 0 - 6 weeks	591	92.2%
b) 6 - 12 weeks	39	6.1%
c) 12 - 18 weeks	7	1.1%
d) 18+ weeks	2	0.3%
No Visit Recorded - new in last month	2	0.3%
Total	641	100.0%



Reviews carried out within timescale (12month Rolling)

Where reviews for children looked after are carried out within timescale

Time Since Latest Review	Number	%
a) 0 > 3 months	371	57.9%
b) 3 > 6 months	248	38.7%
c) 6 > 9 months	16	2.5%
d) 9 > 12 months	0	0.0%
e) 1 year or more	0	0.0%
No review	1	0.2%
No Review - new in last month	5	0.8%
Total	641	100.0%

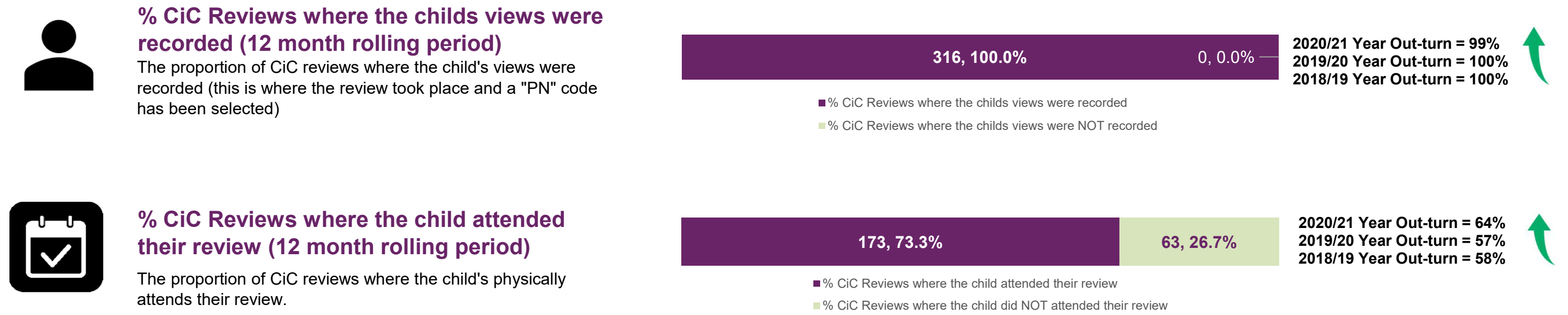


Commentary

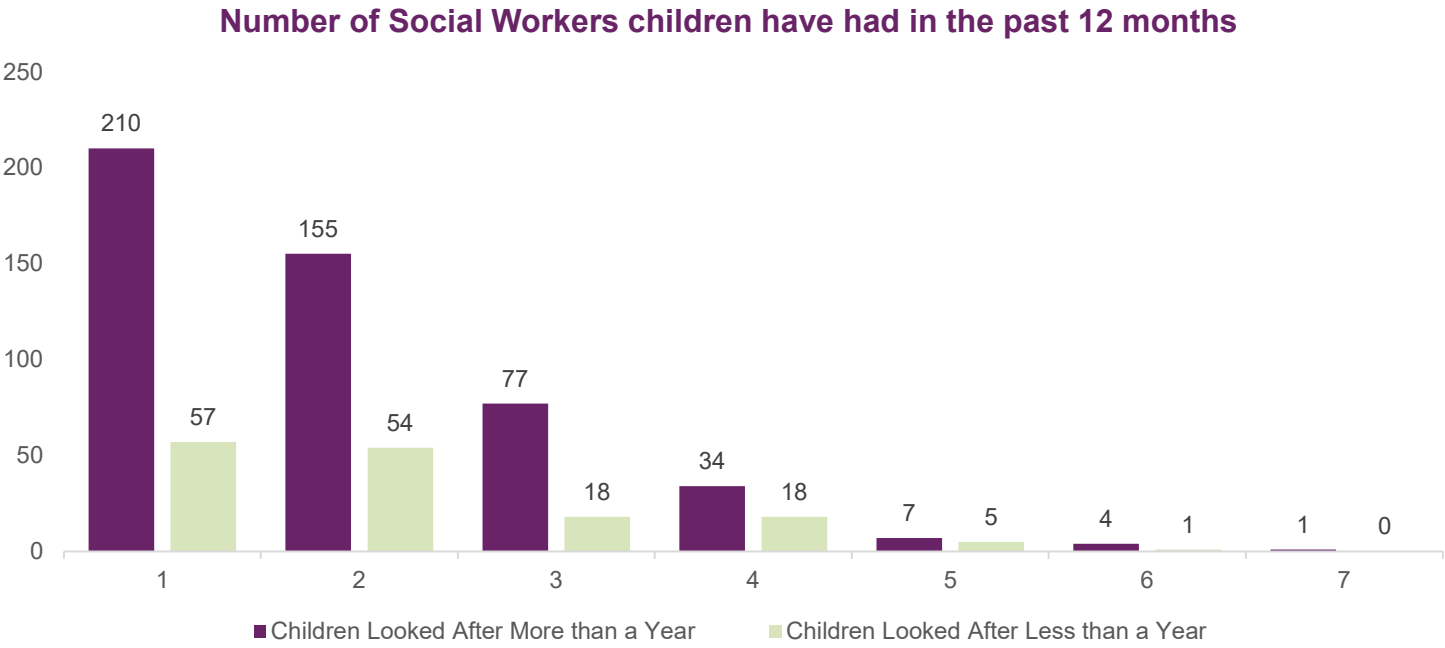
The proportion of CiC where a statutory visit has been undertaken to timescale in accordance with the child’s plan is 88.1% with 92.2% seen within 6 weeks of the previous visit or coming in care. There were 2 CiC with no visits recorded as 30th June 2022, these are new children who have entered into care during the month.

93.5% of reviews have been undertaken within timescales. 96.6% of current Children in Care have had a review within the last 6 months. 0.2% (1) children currently have overdue reviews, however, this review will have been completed on time and will be in the process of being recorded (IROs have 20 working days from the date of review to write their reports).

Views of the child



Type of Participation at Review (12 month rolling period)	Number	%
PN0 - child under 4 at time of review	422	N/A
PN1 - child attends and speaks for themselves	785	60.7%
PN2 - child attends and an advocate speaks for them	37	2.9%
PN3 - child attends and conveys their views non-verbally	18	1.4%
PN4 - child attends; does not speak for themselves / convey their views	25	1.9%
PN5 - child does not attend but asks advocate to speak for them	84	6.5%
PN6 - child does not attend but conveys their feelings to the conference	264	20.4%
PN7 - child does not attend nor conveys their view to the conference	25	1.9%
Total Reviews	1715	
No Participation Code Reported	0	0.0%



Commentary

The child's views were recorded at 100.0% of CiC reviews. This is in line with the out-turns for the previous three years and remains very positive performance.

73.3% of children attended their review in the previous 12 months. This is a significant increase compared with previous years and has been supported and enabled through the increased use of technology.

The number of children experiencing a change of social worker has decreased slightly compared to the previous quarter. The number of CiC for more than 1 year who have remained with the same social worker for the past 12 months is 210. This has increased slightly from 205 at the end of the previous quarter.

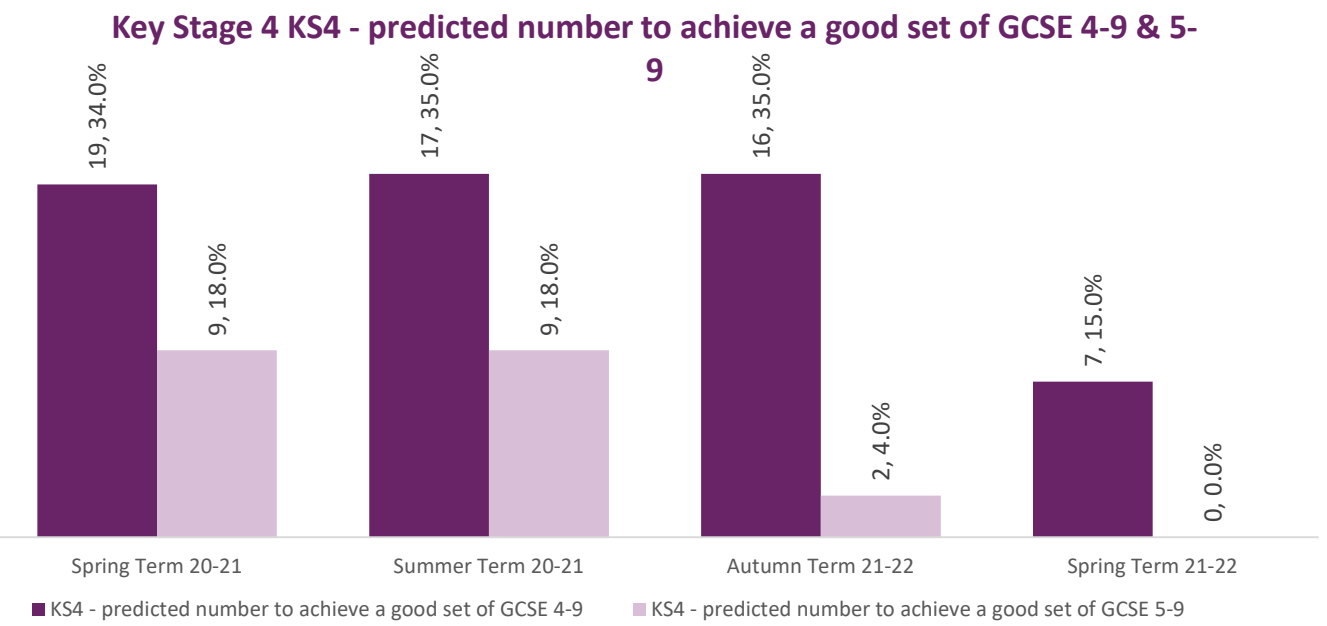
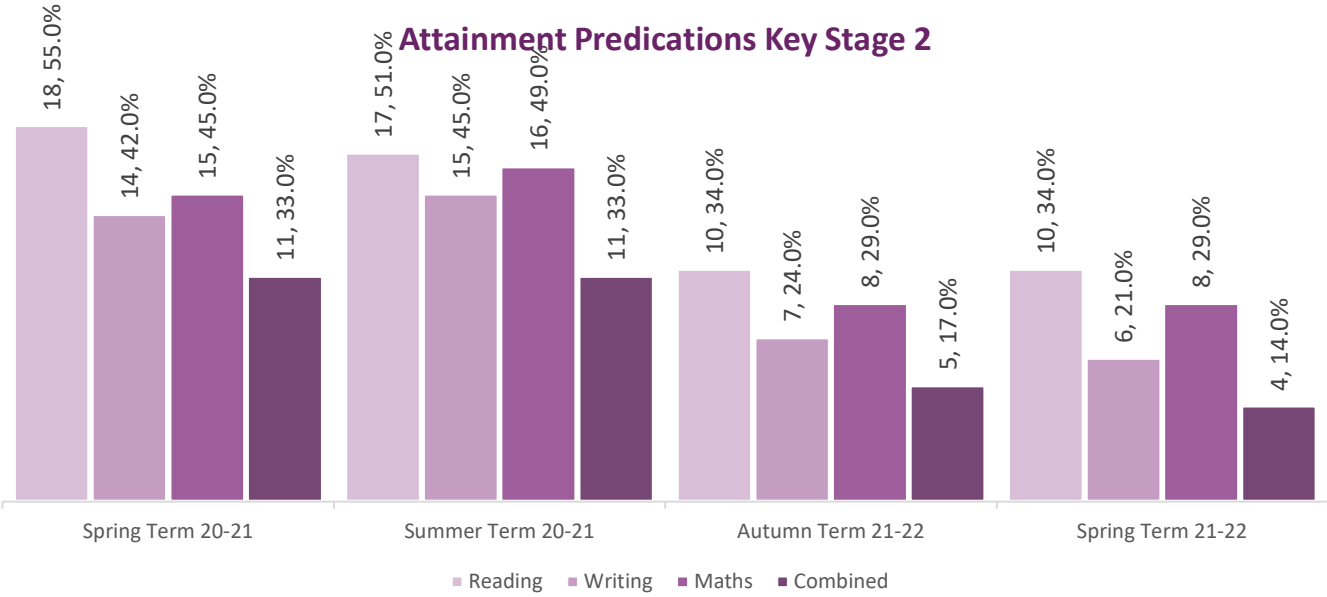
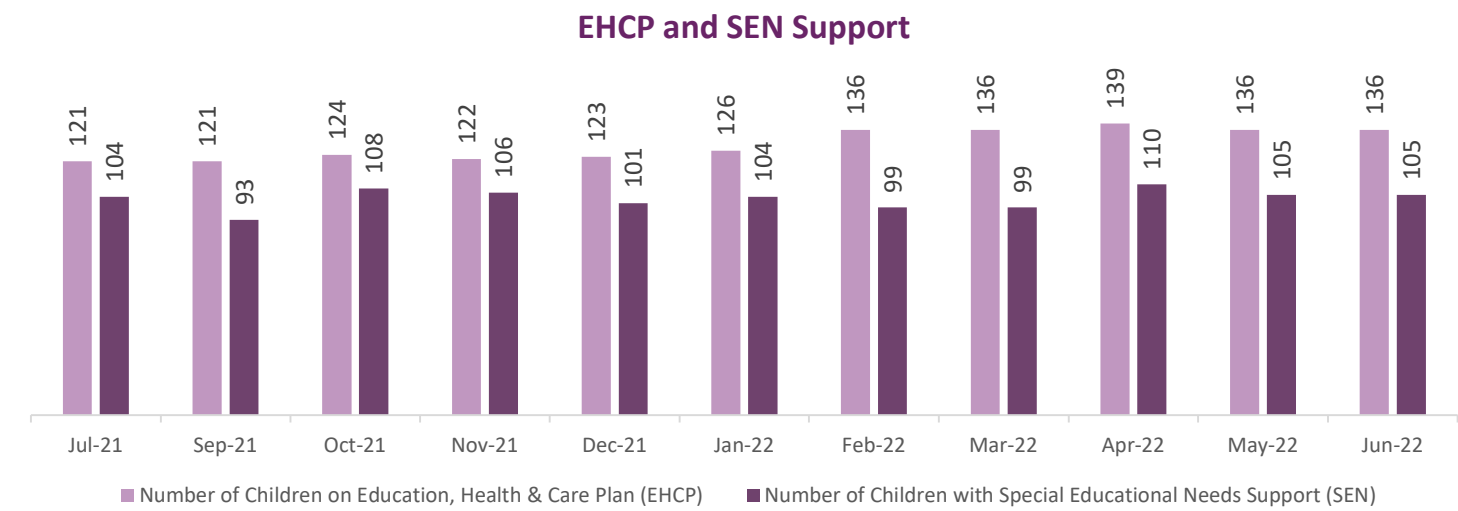
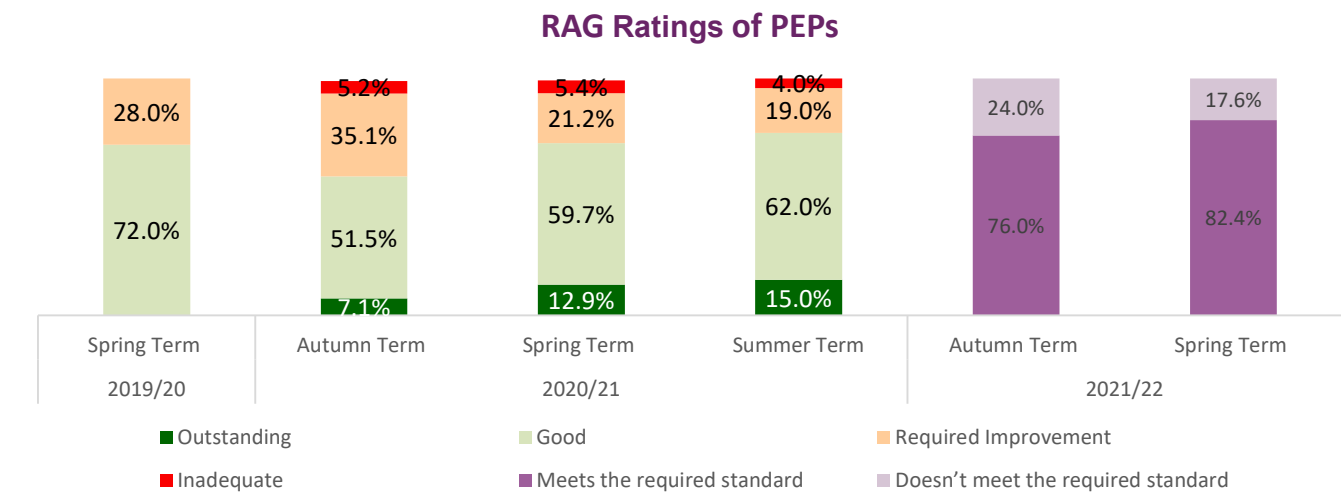


Education



RAG Ratings of PEPs

The quality assurance process changed in 2021/22 from being rated inadequate, requires improvement, good and outstanding, to meets the required and standard and doesn't meet required standard this enables us to distinguish between very good and very poor PEPs'.



Commentary

**Please Note** - The quality assurance process for the rating of completed PEPs has changed from a "RAG" system to "Meets the required standard" and "Doesnt meet the required standard"

KS2 -The percentage of children predicted to achieve the expected level of attainment for KS2 combined in reading, writing and maths in spring 2021-22 was 14% which is a significant decrease compared to spring 2020-21 (33%).

KS4 -The percentage of children predicted to achieve a good set of GCSE (4-9) reported in spring 2021-22 was 15% which is a decrease compared to spring 2020-21 (15%). The percentage of children predicted to achieve a good set of GCSE (5-9) reported in autumn 2021-22 is 4% which is a significant decrease compared to autumn 2020-21 (13%).

The number of children with an EHCP has been increasing throughout the year and is at 136, compared with 114 in April 2020.

The number of children with SEN support has decreased from 114 in April 2021 to 99 in March 2022, September 2021 (93) was the lowest month in the year.

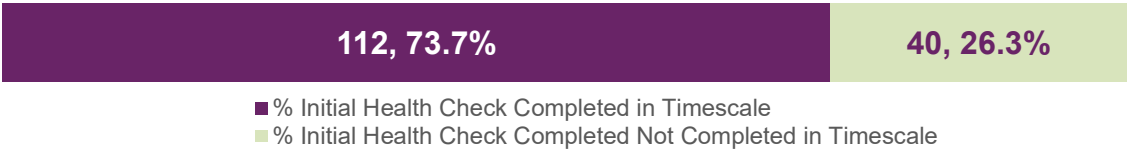


Health and Well-being



% Initial Health Check Completed in Timescale

Assessments in timescale of CiC admission for those in care for 28 days or more (12 month rolling figure)

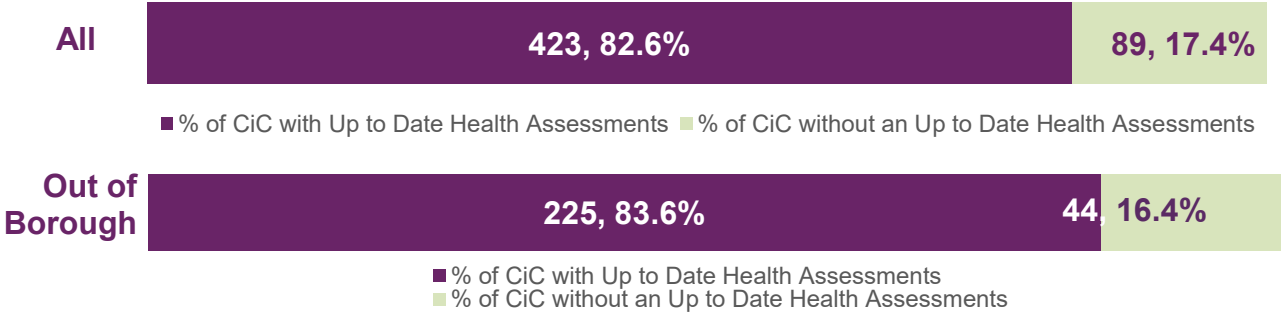


2020/21 Year Out-turn = 75%  
2019/20 Year Out-turn = 49%  
2018/19 Year Out-turn = 75%



% of CiC with Up to Date Health Assessments

Where the child is over 5 and has been in care for over a year

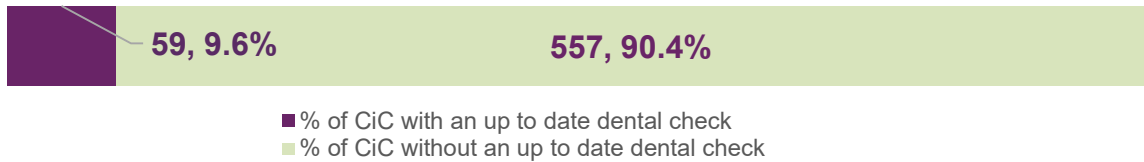


2021/22 (Prov) = 91%  
2020/21 Walsall = 85%  
2019/20 Walsall = 80%  
2019/20 West Midlands = 87%  
2019/20 Stat Neighbours = 90%



% of CiC with an up to date dental check

Where the child is over 5 and has been in care for over a year



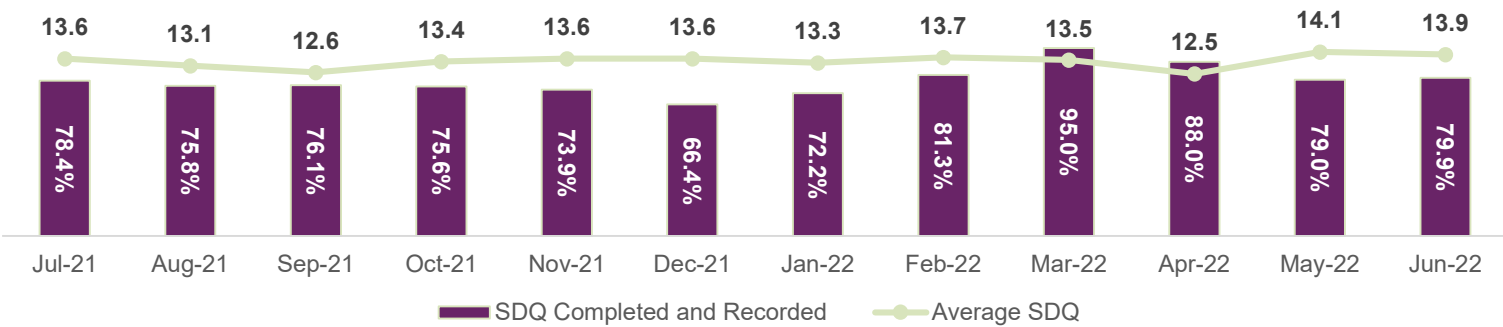
2021/22 (Prov) = 88%  
2020/21 Walsall = 43%  
2020/21 Walsall = 92%  
2020/21 West Midlands = 33%  
2020/21 Stat Neighbours = 33%

Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire should be completed for every child looked after for at least 12 months and aged 5 to 16 years-old.

Average SDQ Score				
13.9				
Breakdown				
Score	Considered	Number	% of those eligible for SDQ	% against all Children
Score 0 - 13	Normal	245	55%	39.7%
Score 14 - 16	Borderline	52	12%	8.4%
Score 17 - 40	Cause for Concern	151	34%	24.5%

Number of children looked after for at least 12 months aged 5 to 16 with an SDQ score (Rolling 12 months)



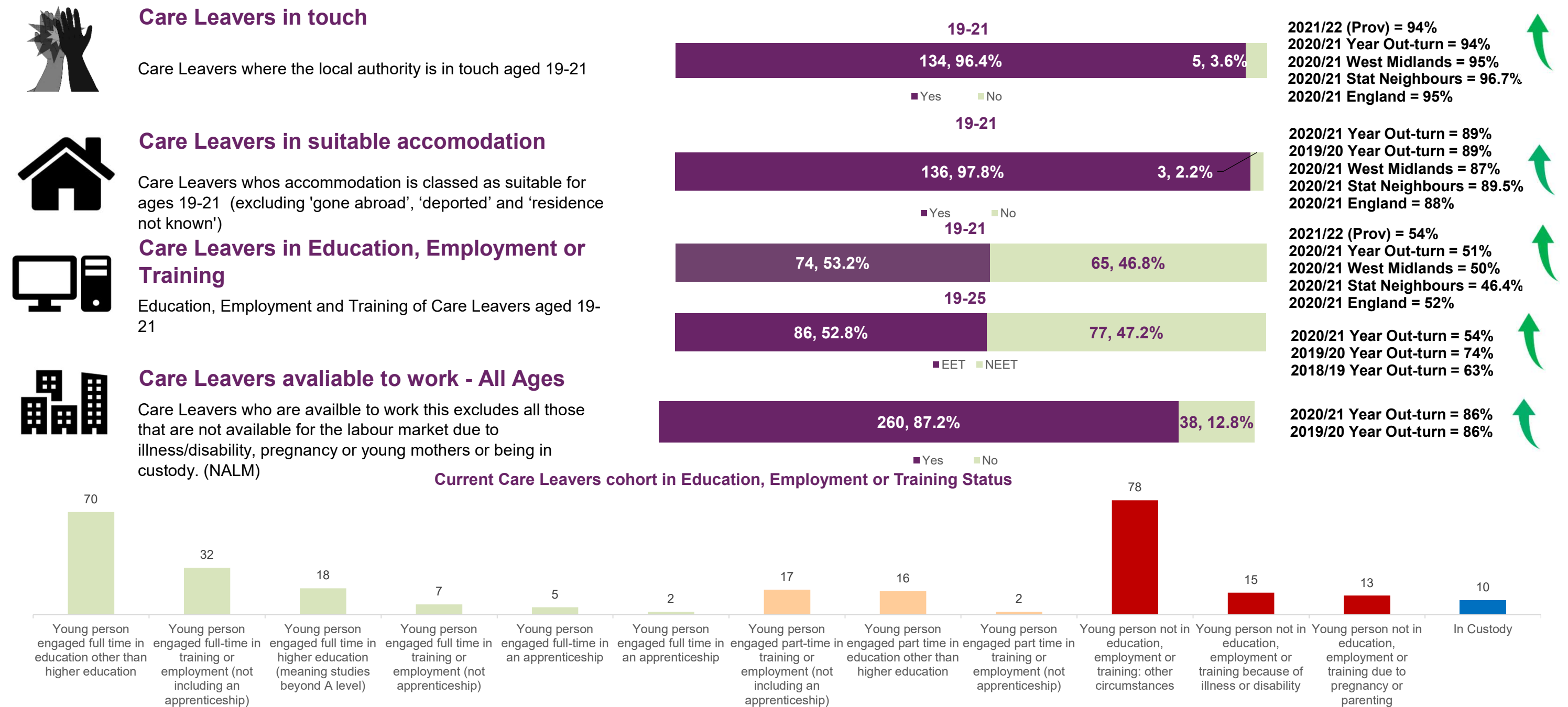
Commentary

Performance shows a slight decrease in the number of children in care have up to date health checks just under 82.1%, compared to 85% at the end of 2020/21. There has been a decrease in the percentage of children whose initial health checks are done on time 73.7% currently compared to 77% at the end of Q4 2021/22. Social Care and Health colleagues continue to work closely together to ensure that processes for notifying health when a child enters care are robust and the finalisation of health assessments is timely.

The Dental checks indicator is an indicator that increases month on month, and significant change is seen quarter upon quarter, however, provisional data shows that at the end of 2021-22 88% of children had up to date dental checks - a significant improvement on the previous year.

The proportion of SDQ's completed and recorded has decreased significantly from March (95%) compared to 79.9% June 2022. The average SDQ score is currently 13.9. This remains relatively consistent. 151 children currently have an SDQ score that suggests there may be a cause for concern in their emotional and mental well-being based on the answers they gave to the questionnaire.

Care Leavers

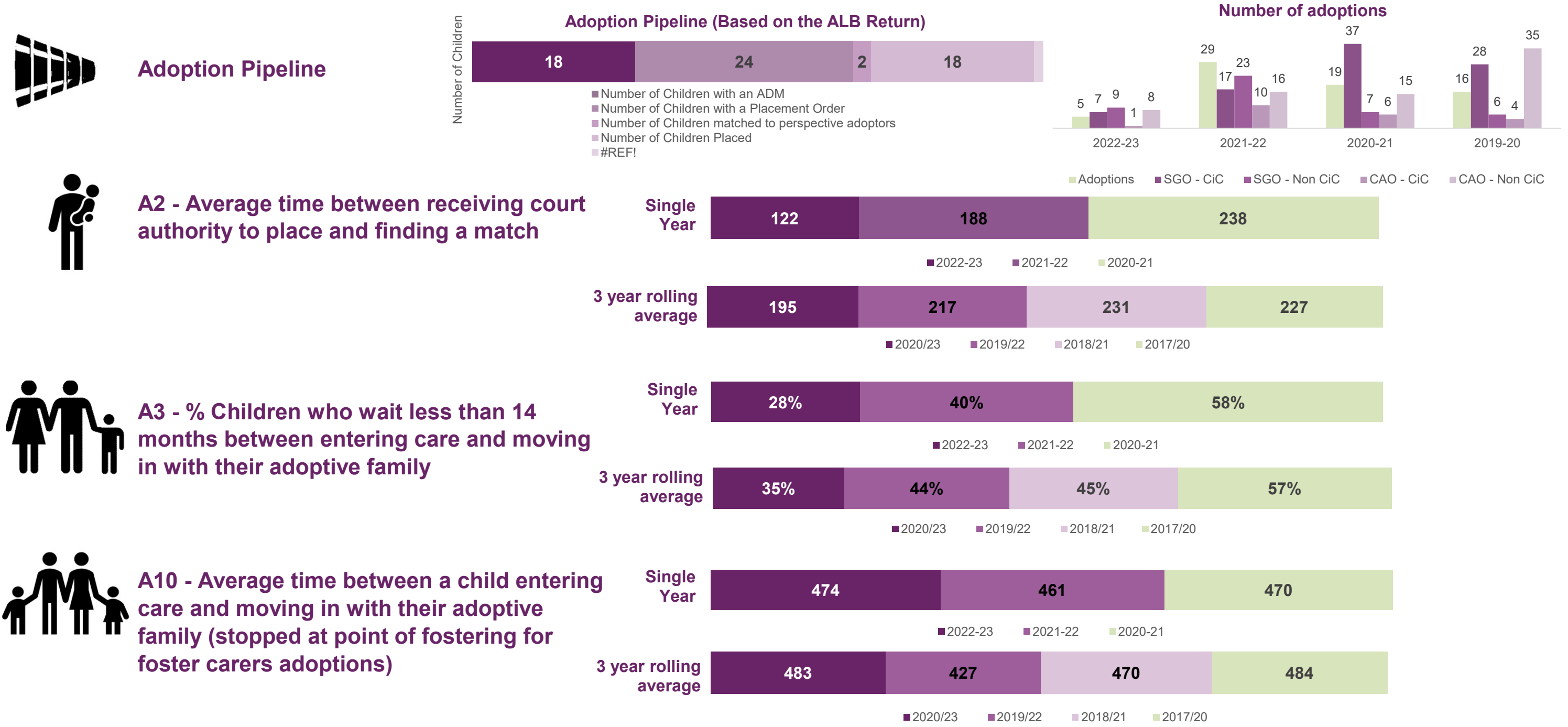


Commentary

The percentage of 19-21 year old care leavers in education, employment or training at the end of quarter 1 of 2022-23 was 53.2%, following a provisional out-turn of 54%. The 19-25 cohort has also seen a slight decrease during quarter 1.

87.2% of care leavers are available to work - excluding those not available for the labour market (NALM) due to illness, disability, pregnancy or being a young mother or because they are in custody. 10 of Walsall's care leavers are currently in custody. The number of of care leavers in suitable accommodation remains high with 97.8%.

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Commentary

There were 29 adoptions during 2021/22 based on the latest ALB data. In 2022/23 so far 5 were children were adopted.

So far during the current year, children have a current waiting less time than in 2021/22 between receiving court authority to place and finding a match - this was 188 days previously compared to 122 days in 2022/23. 35% of Children wait less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family. Between April 2022 and June 2022, 16 Children have ceased to be looked after due to special guardianship orders (7 - from care and 9 - not from care) and 9 due to child arrangement orders (1 - from care and 8 - Non not from care).

Options for increasing the Setting Up Home Grant for young people leaving care.

### **Executive Summary**

As part of our duty to our young people leaving care and ensuring that they have somewhere suitable to live, a setting up home grant should be provided to each eligible young person leaving care to assist them with necessary items that will enable them to live independently. The grant was implemented as part of the Leaving Care Act 2000. The grant was set at £2000 since its inception until April 2021.

In April 2021, the Council reviewed the provision of the setting up home grant and increased this to £2500.

This report sets out the options for increasing the Setting Up Home Grant in view of the increase in the cost of living.

### **Reason for bringing to the Corporate Parenting Board**

The Board requested an options paper setting out the financial impact of any increase in the Setting Up Home Grant. .

### **Recommendations**

- The Board is asked to consider the options

### **Background papers:**

None

### **Resource and legal considerations**

Local authority duties to young people and care leavers are set out in legislation:

- Children Act 1989
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- 

### **Performance Management**

Corporate Parenting Board ensures everyone works together to fulfil the corporate parenting role and to hold each other to account for making this happen.

- it acts as the visible organisational champion for looked after children and young people and care leavers, promoting their rights, entitlements and aspirations;
- the mobilisation and optimum use of resources available to get the best chance of success for children in care and to support care leavers to positively move on to live independently.

## **Council Corporate Plan Priorities:**

- Children have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.
- People have increased independence, improved health and can positively contribute to their communities.

## **Reducing inequalities**

The Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-2025 sets out the response to secure improvements in the equality of services, which, when achieved will have a positive impact on our most vulnerable children, young people and families. By being effective Corporate Parents for Children in Care and Care Leavers, we collectively seek to redress the disadvantage that looked after children and care leavers face.

## **Contact Officers**

Jivan Sembi  
Head of Service  
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## **Options for increasing Setting Up Home Grant for young people leaving care.**

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 As part of our duty to our young people leaving care and ensuring that they have somewhere suitable to live, a setting up home grant should be provided to each eligible young person leaving care to assist them with necessary items that will enable them to live independently. The grant was implemented as part of the Leaving Care Act 2000. The grant was set at £2000 since its inception until April 2021.

In April 2021, the Council reviewed the provision of the setting up home grant and increased this to £2500. Regionally, Walsall's offer is favourable across the region.

- 1.2 The Setting Up Home Grant is one element of financial support provided to care leavers as part of the local offer. It is an essential component to support the purchase of necessary household items that will enable young people to live independently.

- 1.3 In addition the following financial entitlements are in place:

- Council tax relief up to the age of 25 for all care leavers
- Accommodation and weekly allowances equivalent to state benefits for those who are not eligible to claim for benefits.
- Birthday ( £50 for 18<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> birthdays and £25 for 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> birthdays) and Festival allowances (£50) up to the age of 21
- The financial cost of key documents such as a passport or driving licence.
- For those in higher education at University or equivalent are offered a bursary of £2000 which is paid in 3 instalments, a weekly allowance, and vacation accommodation costs.
- To meet the cost of travel to maintain contact with family or previous carers who live at a distance to promote their network of support.
- Some education and training costs based on an assessment of need.
- Discretionary support when needed.
- Financial award for exceptional effort of £50
- Free leisure pass for those living in Walsall

### **1.4 Cost of living support payments:**

The Government is offering a range of support to help people pay their bills and our Personal Advisors will support our young people to access this support:

- Everyone in receipt of Universal Credit, Income Based ESA and eligible tax credit amounts will receive £650, paid in 2 instalments.
- Anyone in receipt of PIP or disability payments will receive £150.
- Every household will receive £400 for gas and electric payments.



In addition regionally both Severn Trent Water and South Staffordshire Water are offering discounted water tariffs totalling 70% and 60% off respectively.

- 1.5 We recognise that not all young people will receive these payments and they may not cover the costs throughout the year. Where young people are experiencing hardship and are in financial difficulty and need help with utilities, food or other essential items their personal adviser will, alongside the young person assess and support the particular need.
- 1.6 The National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum published a report on the impact of cost of living following consultation with care experienced young people in August 2022. <https://cdn.catch-22.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/NLCBF-Cost-of-Living-Report-August-2022.pdf>

*The report states “We can assume that the majority of care experienced young people are now in ongoing financial difficulty. Crisis support is no longer sufficient & having to access does not support positive self esteem and dignity. We need long term solutions which increase income or reduce outgoings and offer peace of mind and financial security.”*

The report makes the following recommendations for Government to consider:

1. Universal Credit - Make all care leavers eligible for the over 25 Rate Universal Credit from the age of 18. This is an increase from £61.22 to £77.28 per week.
  2. Universal Discounts - Reduce outgoings for young people leaving care through universal discounts to travel and utility bills.
  3. Educational Bursary: - Introduce an educational bursary for care experienced young people aged 18+ in Further education to support living costs & affordability of continuing in education.
  4. Household Support Fund: - All Local Authorities to ring fence part of their Household Support fund for care experienced young people & national government to issue guidance to support this.
- 1.7 Household Support Fund was introduced in October 2021, with funds allocated to each local authority to support vulnerable households in their area. The Government is providing an extra £500 million of local support which will be extended from this October to March 2023. Some local authorities have ring fenced part of their allocation for care experienced young people.

The allocation of the fund to Walsall from October 2022/23 has yet to be confirmed. We are working with Money, Home, Job to establish if a similar arrangement could be put in place based on anticipated need and numbers of care experienced young people known to the service.

## 2.0 Options for increasing the Setting Up Home Grant

- 2.1 The options for increasing the setting up home grant need to be considered within the context of the wider impact of the day to day cost of living expenses such as

food, clothing and utilities for care experienced young people.

The options below have been calculated based on the number of the young people in our care for 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 and projections for unaccompanied asylum seekers transferring to Walsall and new admissions to care.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
<b>Young people leaving care</b>	53	63	56
<b>Anticipated USAC</b>	7	12	12
<b>Projected young people entering care.</b>	5	5	5
<b>Total</b>	65	80	73

## 2.2 Any increases to the Setting Up Home Grant will be a new budget pressure.

Options for increasing the Setting Up Home Grant for 2022/23 are calculated for all young people leaving care from 1st April 2022 based on an increase of £500 which equates to an uplift of 20% or a 5% uplift or applying an average inflationary increase over 12 months based on Consumer Price Index (CPI).

At 17<sup>th</sup> August 2022 the average 12 month CPI was 8.5%.

<b>No of young people 2022/23</b>	<b>5% uplift</b>	<b>8.5% uplift</b>	<b>£500 uplift (= 20%)</b>
65	£ 2,625	£ 2,713	£ 3000
<b>Additional budget required.</b>	<b>£ 8,125</b>	<b>£13,813</b>	<b>£ 32,500</b>

The table below sets out the cost if a 5% uplift is applied for 2023/24 and 2024/25.

<b>No of young people 2023/24</b>	<b>5% Uplift</b>	<b>No of young people 2024/25</b>	<b>5% Uplift</b>
80	£ 2,625	73	£ 2,756
	£ 2,756		£ 2,894
<b>Additional budget required.</b>	<b>£10,500</b>	<b>Additional budget required.</b>	<b>£10,060</b>

## 2.3 Proposed options

- We consider all available options to alleviate financial pressures for care experience young people for most in need to assist with day to day living expenses in consultation with our care experienced young people.
- We agree a methodology as to how any annual increases to the Setting Up Home Grant will be calculated for 2023/24; 2024/25 and 2025/26.



**Title of the Report**

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) cared for by Walsall Council

**Executive Summary:**

This report updates the CPB on our responsibilities to and the current needs of children in our care and who have been in our care who arrived in this country as a child unaccompanied and who are seeking asylum. The report updates the board of the services provided to these children and young people by Walsall children's services and developments being made in improving that service delivery.

**Reason for bringing to the Corporate Parenting Board:**

Updating Report requested by Corporate Parenting Board

**Recommendations:**

**That:**

Corporate Parent Board note the work undertaken with and developments identified for this group of vulnerable children and young people.

**Background papers:**

None

**Corporate Parenting Pledges**

The Walsall Promise for all Children in Care and Care Leavers

**Resource and legal considerations:**

Local authority duties to young people and care leavers are set out in legislation:

- Children Act 1989
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Social Work Act 2017.

The local authority are able to claim monies back from central government to support UAS children and those young people who's immigration status is unresolved who

used to be in our care.

**Council Corporate Plan Priorities:**

- Children have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.
- People have increased independence, improved health and can positively contribute to their communities.

**Citizen impact:**

We seek to provide a service which meets our statutory responsibilities to this specific vulnerable group and redresses the disadvantages that they experience.

**Environmental impact:**

None

**Performance management:**

Corporate Parenting Board ensures everyone works together to fulfil the corporate parenting role and to hold each other to account for making this happen.

- it acts as the visible organisational champion for looked after children and young people and care leavers, promoting their rights, entitlements and aspirations;
- the mobilisation and optimum use of resources available to get the best chance of success for children in care and to support care leavers to positively move on to live independently.

**Reducing inequalities:**

The Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-2025 sets out the response to secure improvements in the equality of services, which, when achieved will have a positive impact on our most vulnerable children, young people and families. By being effective Corporate Parents for Children in Care and Care Leavers, we collectively seek to redress the disadvantage that looked after children and care leavers face. Those children and young people that are physically separated from their communities, families and cultures and whose first language is not English have additional disadvantages which we seek to redress.

**Consultation:**

In our continued development of our service to UAS children and those care experienced who were UAS children we have consulted with and will continue to work with our colleagues in education, health, accommodation providers and Impact for Change

**Contact Officer:**

Jo Manning – Group Manager

[Jo.manning@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:Jo.manning@walsall.gov.uk)

1.0	<b>Report</b>
1.1	<p>Unaccompanied asylum seeking children who arrive in the UK become children in care under section 20 of the Children Act, and the local authority has the same duties and responsibilities to them as to any child in our care until they reach 18 and beyond that into Leaving Care whilst their “right to remain” is established. If they achieve right to remain status, they continue to be entitled to Leaving Care services in addition to universal benefits such as universal credit, right to work and right to rent a property. Until their right to remain is resolved, the local authority provides them with an allowance and appropriate accommodation. A contribution for these costs is met through the Home Office.</p> <p>Children who have fled and claim asylum have in addition to the feelings and stress of not growing up or living with their family, often additional needs for us to consider: language and culture; often extreme and traumatic life experiences, fear and uncertainty about the outcome of their immigration proceedings. Often extremely resilient, they are vulnerable to CE and modern slavery through unclear or not available pathways into work or education.</p>
1.2	<p>Unaccompanied asylum seeking children who arrive in the UK become children in care under section 20 of the Children Act, and the local authority has the same duties and responsibilities to them as to any child in our care until they reach 18 and beyond that into Leaving Care whilst their “right to remain” is established. If they achieve right to remain status, they continue to be entitled to Leaving Care services in addition to universal benefits such as universal credit, right to work and right to rent a property. Until their right to remain is resolved, the local authority provides them with an allowance and appropriate accommodation. A contribution for these costs is met through the Home Office.</p>
1.3	<p>Children who have fled and claim asylum have in addition to the feelings and stress of not growing up or living with their family, often additional needs for us to consider: language and culture; often extreme and traumatic life experiences, fear and uncertainty about the outcome of their immigration proceedings. Often extremely resilient, they are vulnerable to CE and modern slavery through unclear or not available pathways into work or education.</p>
2.0	<p><b>Routes into Walsall’s Care</b></p> <p>Some children who are unaccompanied asylum seekers present themselves or are found in Walsall and therefore become Walsall’s responsibility. Of the 4 new children Walsall have looked after in the last 6 months, 1 has come into our care in this way. The majority come into our care through the National Transfer Scheme</p>
2.1	<p><b>National Transfer Scheme (NTS).</b></p> <p>The NTS became temporarily mandatory for all local authorities from November 2021.</p> <p>The scheme’s intention is to share the responsibility of care for unaccompanied asylum seeking children across all local authorities in order to be able to provide them with the care that they need and end the use of hotel accommodation for children. The scheme was voluntary for local authorities until November 2021 and Walsall participated as apart of the West</p>

	<p>Midlands group. The scheme works by taking tranches of 652 children at a time to transfer across the country. Walsall are responsible for accepting 4 in each tranche. The tranche is broken down into cycles. We are currently in cycles 12, 13, 14 and 15, tranche 4 (the cycles are being run simultaneously because of the high demand currently). On average this has meant that in recent months Walsall has started to care for one child each month (5 since April 2022) . Channel crossings have increased in frequency over the past few weeks which has meant a higher proportion of UASC coming through to the NTS, and the scheme has adapted to meet this demand through acceleration of the cycles. As a result we estimate this pressure will significantly increase over coming months. As we generally look after older children, this continuous flow will continue to impact on our Care Leaver population, which will expand.</p> <p>In determining where children are moved to within the scheme the Home Office uses a formula taking into account the existing child population and the number of supported asylum seekers, pressures on children's services and the best interests of the child. Prior to 24<sup>th</sup> August 2022, a local authority which was supporting 0.07% of its child population as asylum seekers did not need to support any further UAS children under the scheme. On August 24<sup>th</sup> 2022, to cope with high levels of demand, the Home Office made alterations to the National Transfer Scheme. The most significant changes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The threshold of 0.07% of UASC as a percentage child population was raised to 0.1%. This means that Walsall will meet this threshold when it exceeds looking after 69 children who are UAS.</li> <li>• The time frame for transfer of a child to a local authority's care when requested has been reduced from 10 working days to 5 working days. This is a significant challenge in relation to identifying both a social worker and somewhere safe for the child to live within stretched resources.</li> </ul> <p>Our estimate, based on the current demand is that for the next few months the numbers of children we will be required to look after through the scheme, will double, which will impact our resources overall.</p>	
2.2	<p>The Home Office provides the local authority supporting a child under the scheme with £143 per child per night.</p> <p>The Home Office provides the local authority £270 per week to assist in the support of former UASC care leavers.</p> <p>Following the changes made on 24<sup>th</sup> August, the Home Office has made additional funding available for all children who are moved from a hotel within the 5 day transfer window.</p>	
2.3	<p>The latest data available shows Walsall has 69,375 children aged 0-17 and 16 UAS children. Therefore the proportion of our children who are UAS children is currently 0.02%.</p>	
3.0	<b>Walsall's current UASC and Former UASC population</b>	
3.1	<p>Walsall currently cares for 16 UAS children and 37 Care Leavers who were UASC. All but one is male.</p>	
3.2	Age	Numbers of Children and Young People
	13	1

	14	0	
	15	1	
	16	3	
	17	11	
	18	5	
	19	14	
	20	8	
	21	4	
	22	5	
	23	1	
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Nationality</b>		
	Nationality	Under 18	18 and over
	Afghani	2	9
	Albanian	1	3
	Eritrean	2	5
	Iranian	4	4
	Iraqi	3	8
	Pakistani	0	1
	Sudanese	2	3
	Syrian	1	4
	Egyptian	1	0
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Care Needs</b>		
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Accommodation</b>		
	<p>Of children under 18 who are in our care as UASC, 4 live in a foster home whilst 12 live in supported semi-independent accommodation most living within Birmingham and across the West Midlands in shared properties. Due to unresolved immigration status, most young people who are asylum seekers at 18 do not have the right to hold a tenancy until their legal status is resolved, and therefore we continue to support them in this accommodation until their status is resolved and until we have been able to support them to find accommodation which meets their needs.</p> <p>Currently 32% (12) of our care experienced former UASC live independently, 60% (22) are living in supported semi-independent accommodation, whilst 8% (3) live in family settings.</p>		
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Health</b>		
	<p>Each child who begins to be cared for by Walsall Council has an initial health assessment and plan and the health needs of children who are UAS are met in the same way. These assessments should be carried out within a statutory time frame of 20 days after being in care. All UAS children, as children in our care, receive dental and optical care and their emotional wellbeing measured annually through a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire.</p> <p>Due to the lack of information we often have about a UAS child's health needs at the time of the initial health assessment and plan early time, often little is known and we have to rely on the child to self-report and health issues. Annual review health assessments undertaken a year after coming into our care are able to give us a much more holistic view on physical and</p>		

	<p>emotional health. CAMHS and FLASH consultation are open to any child who has emotional or mental health needs as a result of their history or journey here, which is most often traumatic.</p> <p>JA is 17, and came into our care at aged 13. He has additional emotional needs due to trauma from his history and journey here and distress at having no idea where any of his family are. In addition to supporting him to try and find his family through the Red Cross, he has received a FLASH service in the past. Currently his emotional needs are met through a stable warm and nurturing foster home and stable education.</p>
4.3	<p><b>Education and Employment</b></p> <p>Children who come into our care before year 12, attend school and can access the full curriculum. Children who come into our care post 16 however currently have less options available. All have opportunity to learn an accredited English course, ESOL, however we have struggled to identify additional Further Education courses for children who come into our care post 16. From September the Virtual school has developed additional capacity to support with post 16 education and we have started to work with colleagues from the Virtual School to identify how we can improve this offer for UAS children.</p> <p>UAS children or former UAS children are unable to be employed until their immigration status.</p> <p>As a result, UAS and former UAS children are disproportionately represented in our not in employment or training data, and more importantly experience uncertainty and limbo which increases their vulnerability to working illegally and being exploited.</p> <p>Due to immigration status UAS children and asylum seekers do not meet the criteria for Impact For Change to support them. One of our challenges is to offer young people work experience. We have recently met with Impact for Change, who have offered to provide informal advice on a drop-in basis, which we plan to trial in September.</p>
4.4	<p><b>Legal status</b></p> <p>Of the 37 young people aged 18 and above their legal status is as follows.</p> <p>20 have been granted Limited Leave to Remain</p> <p>15 have their applications in process</p> <p>1 has been granted the right to rent and work.</p> <p>1 is Appeal Rights Exhausted and is now supported directly by the Home Office.</p> <p>The progress of applications for asylum claims remains slow, although we have enabled video interviews to be held to prevent delay.</p>
5.0	<p><b>Participation</b></p> <p>All Care Plans, Pathway plans and other significant documents for young people are now translated into the young person's first written language. (for some children this will be English).</p> <p>Interpreters are made available whenever needed for direct work with children and young people.</p>



5.1	<p>We have recognised that our current methods of involving children in our care and young people have not enabled us to involve UASC children and former UASC sufficiently in participation work. There are challenges in that the group is not a homogenous group and they do not as a whole group live near to each other. An online participation survey of all UASC had only 4 responses, only one of whom was interested in taking part in a group. Following consultation with other local authorities in the West Midlands we are currently exploring buddying up with Telford and Wrekin who do an out of borough, Birmingham based, engagement event for their UASC bi-monthly. We hope to learn from Telford about how they engage this group of young people as well as sharing events in the future with them to learn from the young people. We are meeting with Telford and Wrekin in September to progress this further.</p>
6.0	<p>Each child or young person who has come to be cared for by Walsall as an unaccompanied minor has their own unique experience. A is just one example of the positive difference Walsall has made.</p>
6.1	<p>A is just coming up to his 19<sup>th</sup> Birthday. He became known to children's services following being arrested on a cannabis farm, further investigations led to confirmation that A had been trafficked and used as a slave by criminals. A's presentation was described as being extremely fearful, and vulnerable with high anxieties, he was placed in a foster home. When he turned 18, he moved to live in supported accommodation; initially, he was very worried about the move as he was scared his traffickers would find him, which found him not wanting to leave the house at all. Both his pa and support worker from the project has been supporting him to build his confidence, teach him new skills and offer reassurance to him showing him that he is cared for and will be supported which has seen A making good progress. A is on the ESOL course at an Adults Skill Centre, where over the last year he has made friends and is very popular amongst his peers, he now has the confidence to travel on public transport and will go out into town to meet friends for a coffee. His English is improving and he works hard to learn. He aspires to be an electrician.</p> <p>His National Referral Mechanism referral as an adult has concluded positive, which has meant he has been allocated a modern slavery advocate from the Salvation Army and he will receive additional finance of £60 per week victim supplement and have access to bespoke trauma counselling. A is still waiting for his substantive interview to start his immigration process. A has experienced significant trauma, he continues to progress, shares his good sense of humour and embraces the support on offer to him.</p>
7.0	<p><b>Analysis/ Conclusion</b></p>
7.1	<p>Walsall currently looks after 15 children who arrived unaccompanied from overseas, which is 0.02% of it's child population. The majority of children come into Walsall's care through the National Transfer Scheme. Given the pressures upon local authorities such as Kent, this scheme is likely to remain mandatory for local authorities and therefore Walsall is likely to be required to care for new children at each cycle. At times of high demand the NTS</p>



	system flexes to require local authorities to care for more children, as is the case at this time. Our UASC population is therefore likely to grow and our responsibilities to former UASC will continue to grow.
7.2	Our population of children who have arrived unaccompanied is diverse, from many nationalities, religions and cultural backgrounds and therefore their needs will continue to need to be met on an individual basis within resources available. What these children and young people have in common is experience of trauma and uncertainty about their future.
7.3	Children and young people in our care who have arrived unaccompanied are disadvantaged and vulnerable through being in the care system and in addition experience additional disadvantages in relation to language, physical separation from family and communities, cultural differences, and their immigration status meaning they are not always able to participate fully in society.
7.4	Walsall is a participant member of regional forum which helps us stay informed and share good practice with our regional neighbours in order to develop our services to meet children's and young people's needs.
8.0	Service Development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Childrens Social Care to continue to work closely with colleagues in Education, Health and Impact for Change to further improve our service and offer to those children and young people who are UAS.</li> <li>• Continue to build and develop relationships with other local authorities across the region and nationally to learn and develop our practice</li> <li>• Review of the Leaving Care Service to consider how we can meet the needs of former UAS consistently and develop expertise and service delivery through specialist PA's.</li> <li>• Continue to explore ways of engaging children and young people in participation events which meet their needs.</li> </ul>