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## Section 1 Introduction

1.1 Each child or young person has a right to be looked after following a full assessment of need. When a child becomes looked after, this will be a positive choice which is intended to meet their assessed needs and this decision will have been made, wherever possible, with the agreement of the child/young person, their family and significant others.

1.2 When a child becomes looked after, there must be a sufficient range of accommodation options available to be able to match the child to a placement that will meet his/her needs. It is our aim that children and young people experience being cared for in a nurturing environment with a sense of belonging which will support the child experiencing stability at the earliest opportunity and this can only be achieved if we have quality carers and provision is varied and can meet a range of needs.

1.3 This document sets out how Hartlepool Borough Council will ensure that there is sufficient accommodation of all types for children in care and how it will meet its sufficiency duty as laid down in Section 22G of the Children Act 1989. The Act requires local authorities to take steps that secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the authority's area, which meets the needs of children that the local authority are looking after and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the local authority's area ('the sufficiency duty')

1.4 Any placement for a child looked after will, so far as possible and in the child's best interests, enable the child to remain close to home, have continuity of education and health care provision, enable siblings to live together and ensure suitability of accommodation if the child or young person is disabled. The education and health needs of a child should be given a priority consideration where accommodation or placement change is being considered.

### The Vision

1.5 The vision is that **all** children and young people in Hartlepool are able to enjoy a happy, safe and healthy childhood, participate in making decision that affect them and are able to realise their ambitions and aspirations. We will work in partnership with children, young people and their families to support them to identify, at the earliest opportunity, what services and support they require to transform their lives.

1.6 This will be achieved through the delivery of services which are of the highest quality, timely and accessible to all. Services provided will be based upon a sound understanding of the individual needs of each child or young person and his or her unique circumstances and designed to make a real difference to their lives.

1.7 The work of Children's Services is based upon the following **values** which determine the way we will work together to achieve the vision:

- We will work to protect children from significant harm;
- We will keep children and their families at the heart of everything we do;
- We understand that every child and every family is different. We will assess each child and their family so that we can offer services to suit their needs. We will do this using an approach called the 'team around the child' model.
- We will respect each child and their family and always treat them with dignity. We will not make changes to the services we provide without good reason;
- We believe we can make the biggest difference to a child's quality of life by providing a service as soon as we find out that the child needs support from us;
- We will check our services often to make sure they are as good as they can be. We will make changes to our services if we need to;
- Our workers will be skilled and will do their jobs well. Managers will give support and guidance to the staff in their teams. All workers will get high-quality training as part of their job;
- Our services will work together to make sure we make each child's quality of life better.

1.8 To make sure that the work we do upholds the values, our **promise** to those who use our services is to:

- Treat you with respect;
- Work with you and your family to help you raise your children in a safe and caring family home;
- Employ workers who are skilled, honest and reliable and have your family's best interests at the heart of their work;
- Make sure that we keep your child's needs in mind when we make any decisions, no matter how difficult;
- Make sure that everyone involved with your child and your family understands how any decisions we make will affect them.

## Section 2 The Sufficiency Duty

2.1 Securing sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of looked after children and young people is a vital step in delivering improved outcomes for this vulnerable group. It can be best achieved through a step change in commissioning practice across all services which contribute to improving outcomes for looked after children and for children in need who are at risk of care or custody.

2.2 Where commissioning for these children and young people is already working well elsewhere in the country, we see examples of a choice of placement options, reduced placement breakdown, better links with universal and specialist services, lower numbers of children coming into care and, longterm, significantly reduced costs.

2.3 Section 22G of the Children Act 1989 seeks to improve outcomes for looked after children and young people by requiring local authorities to take steps that secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the authority's area which meets the needs of children that the local authority are looking after, and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the local authority's area ('the sufficiency duty').

2.4 The sufficiency duty requires local authorities to do more than simply ensure that accommodation be 'sufficient' in terms of the number of beds provided. They must have regard to the benefits of securing a range of accommodation through a number of providers. The accommodation must also meet the needs of children. These needs can be wide-ranging, in line with the typology which underpins the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families.

2.5 A local authority which is taking a strategic approach to securing sufficient accommodation will include in their analysis, planning and delivery, children who are in need and are at risk of care or custody. Meeting the needs of these children will have a significant impact on the ability of the local authority to provide sufficient accommodation for those they look after. This means that securing sufficient accommodation requires a whole-system approach which includes early intervention and preventive services to support children in their families, as well as better services for children if they do become looked after.

2.6 Local authorities already have a number of duties towards children within their area which are related to the sufficiency duty. In particular:

- Section 17(1) of the 1989 Act provides that it is the general duty of a local authority to provide a range and level of services to children in need (as

defined in section 17(10) of the 1989 Act) and their families in the local area which are appropriate to their needs.

- Section 20 of that Act requires local authorities to provide accommodation for children in need within their area who appear to them to require accommodation in accordance with the provisions of that section.
- Section 21 requires a local authority to accommodate certain children who are either removed or kept away from home under Part V of the 1989 Act or who are subject to a criminal court order.
- Section 22C(5) requires local authorities to place children in the most appropriate placement available. In determining the most appropriate placement for a child, section 22C(7) requires local authorities to take into account a number of factors (such as the duties to safeguard and promote welfare; promote educational achievement; ascertain the wishes of the child and family; and give due consideration to religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural background).
- In determining the most appropriate placement for a child, section 22C(7)(a) also requires the local authority to give preference to a placement with a relative, friend or other person connected with the child and who is also a local authority foster parent.
- Section 22C sets out the additional factors (in no order of priority) which the local authority must take into consideration when deciding the most appropriate placement:
  - allowing the child to live near his/her home;
  - not disrupting the child's education or training;
  - enabling the child and a looked after sibling to live together;
  - meeting the particular needs of disabled children; and
  - providing accommodation within the local authority's area, unless that is not reasonably practicable.
- Section 23(1)(a) requires a local authority to provide accommodation for a child who is in their care (by virtue of a care order).

2.7 In order to fulfil these duties, a local authority requires sufficient accommodation (and other services) to provide suitable placements for those children for whom placement within the local area is most appropriate. The sufficiency duty reinforces the duties set out above by requiring local authorities, when taking steps to provide accommodation within their area for the children they look after, to have regard also to the benefit of having:

- a number of accommodation providers in their area; and
- a range of accommodation capable of meeting different needs.

2.8 Existing good practice suggests that meeting the provisions set out in the 1989 Act can best be met through a step change in commissioning practice in which local authorities are active in managing their market and work with their partners to:

- support and maintain diversity of services to better meet the needs of looked after children including through the provision of preventive and early intervention services to reduce the need for care proceedings;
- place children within their local authority area where reasonably practicable and where this is consistent with a child's needs and welfare;
- support the market to deliver more appropriate placements and other services locally;
- have mechanisms for commissioning appropriate, high quality placements and services outside of their local area, which can meet a child's identified needs (this will be necessary in circumstances where it is not consistent with a child's welfare or reasonably practicable for him/her to be placed within the local area); and
- have in place a strategy for addressing supply issues and reducing constraints over time (methods for doing this might include building their own capacity and expertise, as well as those of local private and voluntary sector providers).

2.9 The local authority's duty in section 22G has to be understood in the context of their duty in section 22C of the 1989 Act. In accordance with section 22C(5), the overriding factor is that the placement must be the most appropriate placement available. Next, the local authority must give preference to a placement with a friend, relative or other person connected with the child and who is a local authority foster parent. Failing that, the local authority must, so far as reasonably practicable, in all circumstances find a placement that:

- is near the child's home;
- does not disrupt his education or training;
- enables the child to live with an accommodated sibling;
- where the child is disabled, is suitable to meet the needs of that child; and
- is within the local authority's area, unless that is not reasonably practicable.

2.10 There is no order of priority within the categories listed in the bullet points above. All of these are factors that have to be taken into account.

## Section 3 Local Context

3.1 Hartlepool is located on the North East coast within the Tees Valley region. It is a small unitary authority with a population of approximately 92,000. Mid-year population estimates show that there are around 21,151 children and young people under the age of 18 living in the town. The population is predominately white (97.7%) with 2.4 % of the overall population from other ethnic groups.

3.2 In 2015 take up of free early education is high with 98% of 3- and 4-year-olds accessing the free entitlement, 90% of which were accessing a provision rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted. In addition, 450 children aged 2 were accessing funded early education with 82% accessing a good or outstanding provider.

3.3 Hartlepool is one of the most deprived towns in the country with 29.1%<sup>1</sup> of children under 16 years of age living in a low-income family compared to 18.6%<sup>1</sup> nationally. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is also above average with 23.8% of primary age pupils and 20.6% of secondary age pupils claiming free school meals compared to 15.6% and 13.9% nationally.

3.4 The rate of referrals to social services in 2015 is higher than average for the North East region at 600.1 per 10,000 population under 18 compared to 596.1 in the region. This is high compared to the national rate of 548.3 per 10,000.

3.5 Hartlepool also has a high rate of children in need of social care services with 596.6 children in need per 10,000 population under 18. The average rate per 10,000 in the North East region is 451.0 and the national rate is 337.3.

3.6 In 2014, 57% of care leavers aged 19, 20 and 21 were in education, employment or training and this is above both North East and national averages of 49% and 45% respectively placing the authority in the top quartile.

3.7 Participation of 16 year olds in education and work based learning is in line with national average at 91%. Participation of 17 year olds is above the national average at 90% compared to 85% nationally.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Data relates to 2013.

## **Section 4 A Better Childhood in Hartlepool**

4.1 A Better Childhood in Hartlepool is a multi agency transformation programme supported by Cleveland Police, the CCG, the Foundation Trust and Hartlepool Borough Council. It is focused on improving relationships across families and services to strengthen family resilience and reduce family breakdown.

4.2 As part of this transformation programme Hartlepool Borough Council and its partners have developed proposals for the redesign and integration of their services in Hartlepool which will support the transformation of processes, systems and service models to help reduce the demand for higher cost statutory services and improve the life outcomes of children and families across the town.

4.3 The programme is focused on the integration of services around four key localities, centred around children's centre reach areas and school clusters. The integration of services will be initially operational from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016, with further development ongoing.

### **4.4 Vision:**

Our ambition as a children's partnership is to enable all children and families in Hartlepool to have opportunities to make the most of their life chances and be supported to be safe in their homes and communities.

### **4.5 Obsessions:**

- Children and young people have opportunities to make the most of their life chances and are safe
- Improving family relationships, strengths, skills and ability to cope
- Reducing the impact of domestic violence, mental health, drugs and alcohol misuse on children and families
- Helping parents, carers and young people to gain skills and get jobs.

### **4.6 How will we do this:**

- A workforce approach based on intervention based practice.
- A workforce that owns intervenes and takes action to meet the needs of children and families and assumes their responsibilities as agents of change.
- We will build effective relationships with the families we work with to ensure they receive the help and support they need.
- We will support families to develop their own plans making sure that all support networks available to them are used. This includes wider family networks and also workers from other organisations.

## Section 5 Current Position and Needs Analysis

5.1 The graph below (Figure 1) shows the number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan (CPP), the number of children looked after (LAC) by the authority and the number of Children in Need (CIN) in Hartlepool from 2011.

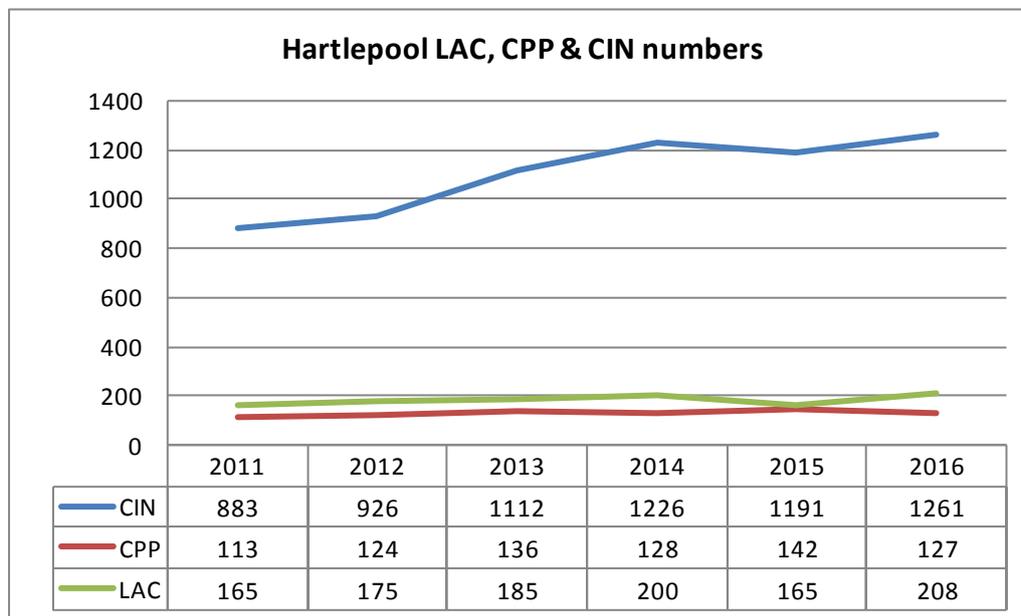


Figure 1

The number of looked after children is increasing at both a national and local level, resulting in increased demand of placements. National statistics from the Department for Education report that 70,440 children were looked after in 2015/16. This is the highest reported number since 1985 and represents a 7% increase since 2011.

After steadily rising over four years, in 2015 the number of children looked after by Hartlepool fell to the 2011 figure of 165. However, in 2016 this number increased to 208, the highest the local authority has seen in the last five years.

The number of Children in Need has increased from 2011 to 2014, dropping slightly to 1191 in 2015, and then increasing to 1261 in 2016.

Over the last five years, the number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan has remained fairly stable, with the figure standing at 127 in 2016.

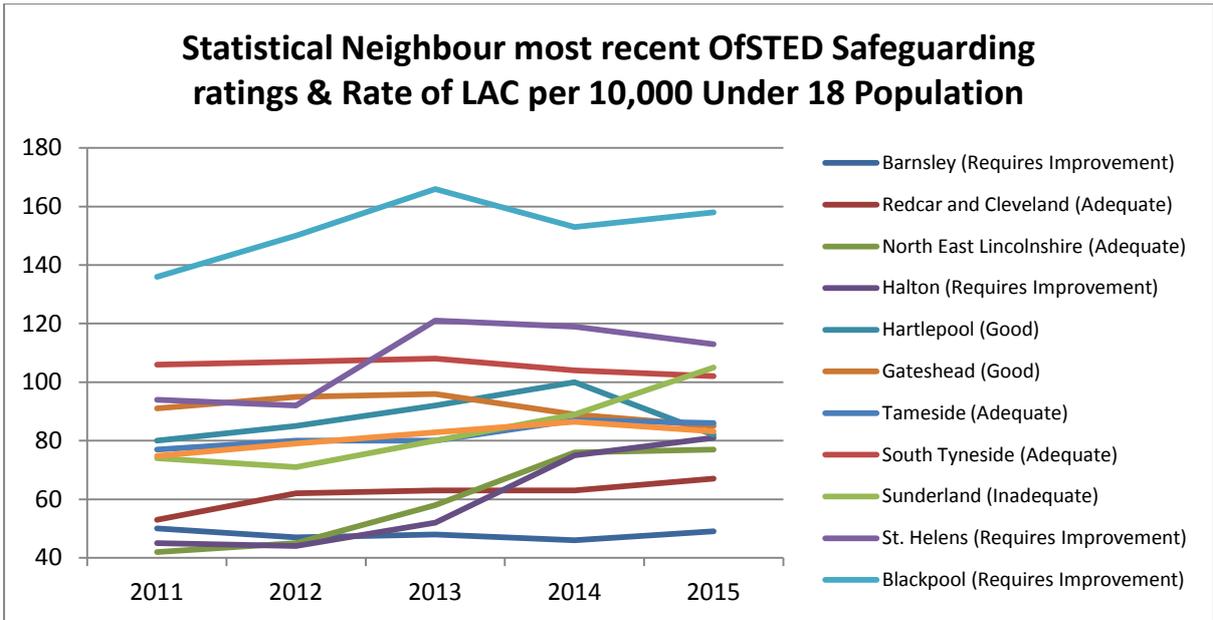


Figure 2

5.2 Hartlepool’s rate of children looked after per 10,000 is 82.0 (Figure 2) which is lower than the Statistical Neighbour average of 92.3. However, this is higher than the national average of 60.0 per 10,000. This information is based on 2015 figures and will be reviewed against 2016 data when available.

As highlighted in Section 3, there are very high levels of deprivation within the town with Hartlepool being second highest in the North East region with only Middlesbrough having greater levels of deprivation. Child poverty is increasing and there are high levels of need within the town. This is impacting significantly on how families are functioning and at times placing children in vulnerable situations necessitating their admission to care. Hartlepool Borough Council provides prevention services to support families at the earliest point when need arises, as well as intensive family support services for those children who are on the edge of care or care proceedings, nevertheless there are an above average number of children who need to be cared for by the local authority.

**5.3 Gender & age breakdown**

The following graph (Figure 3) provides a breakdown of the children looked after population by age and gender. As demonstrated, the split of children looked after by gender is fairly even, with 102 males and 106 females across the age range 0 – 18 years. However, the 10 to 15 age group consists of 12% more boys than girls which is in stark contrast to the other age groups where the number of girls is outweighs the number of boys in care.

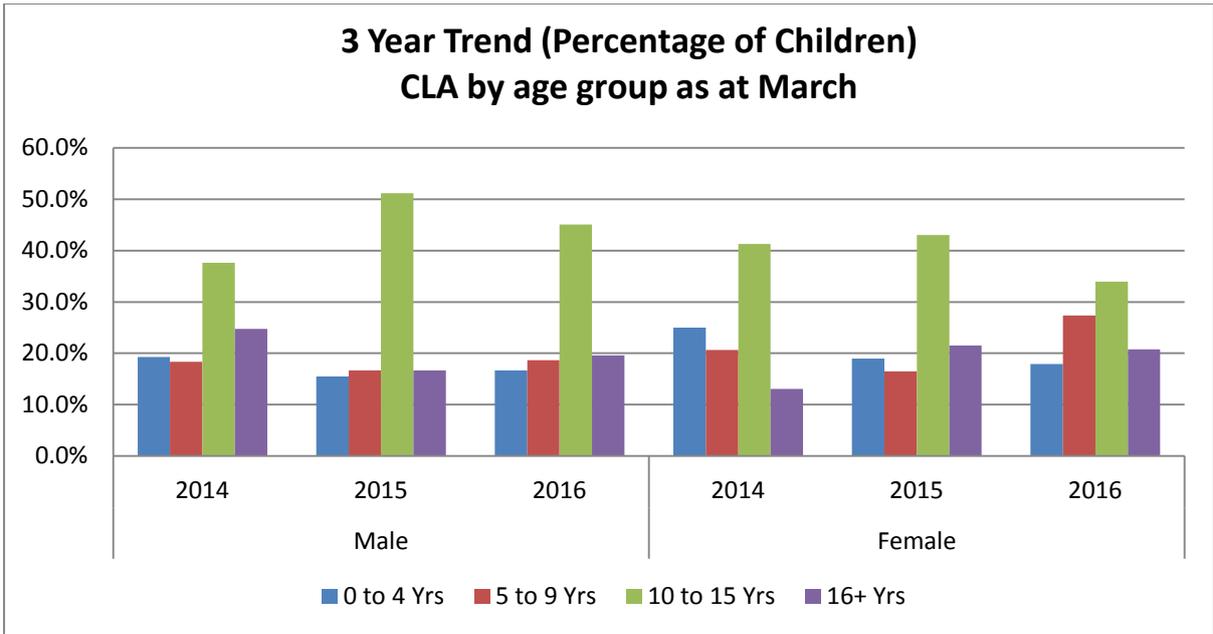


Figure 3

5.4 Ongoing monitoring will show any emerging trends in changes to the children looked after population to inform commissioning and service redesign intentions. There is a notable variation in gender in the 10 to 15 age range, with 9% more boys than girls, this is reversed in the 5 to 9 age range.

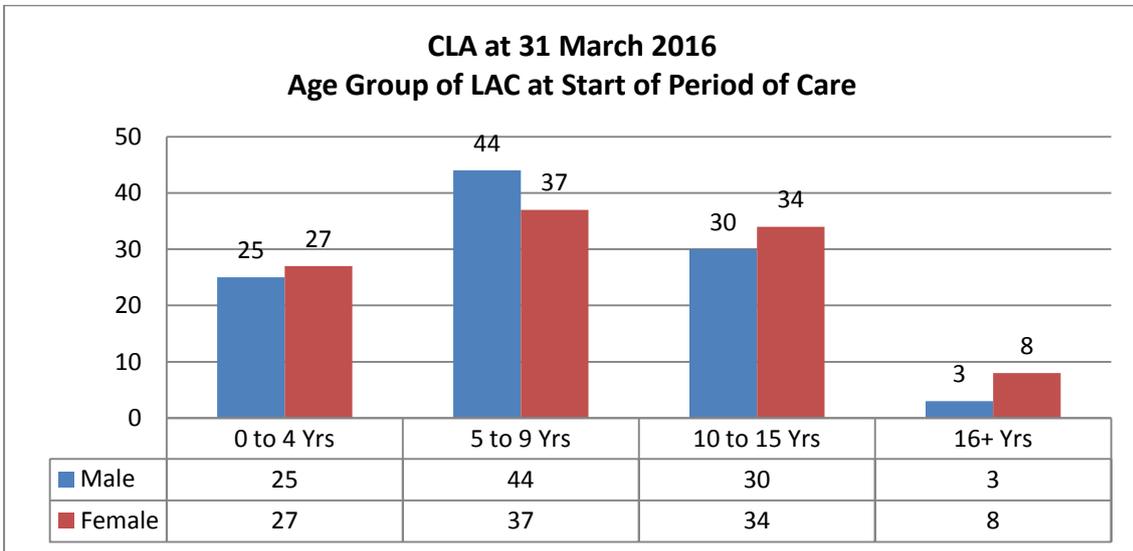


Figure 4

5.5 As the graph above shows, in 2015/16 just under 40% of the children who become looked after were aged 5-9 years, with 64% in total aged 9 or younger. The high demand for looked after placements for the younger age group is met effectively within in house fostering provision and the local authority will continue to ensure that it has a sufficient supply of foster carers to meet this need.

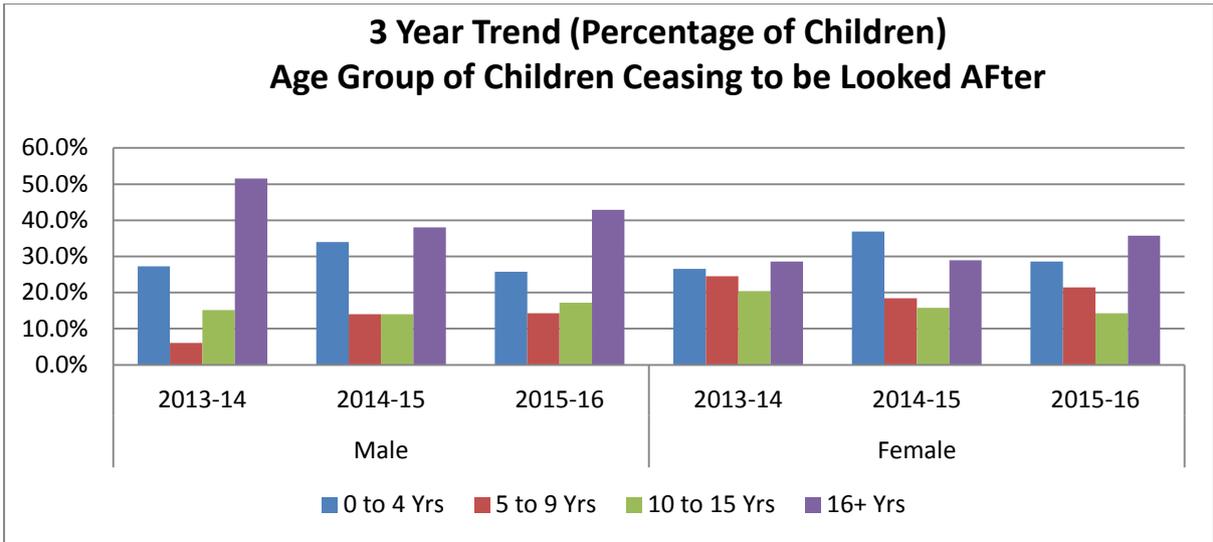


Figure 5

5.6 Of those leaving care, the highest numbers are at the 16+ years age range. As detailed in Section 6.4, the local authority will continue to support these young people in developing their pathways to independence.

Due to a change in regulations, the local authority anticipates that this will have an impact on numbers of children ceasing to be looked after.

5.7 The ages of children looked after are depicted below in Figure 6. The largest cohorts are the young people aged 15 and 16.

There are 42 young people aged 16+, of these children a small number are currently in independent living arrangements. The remaining children are either expected to 'Stay put', attend University, or require accommodation with floating support.

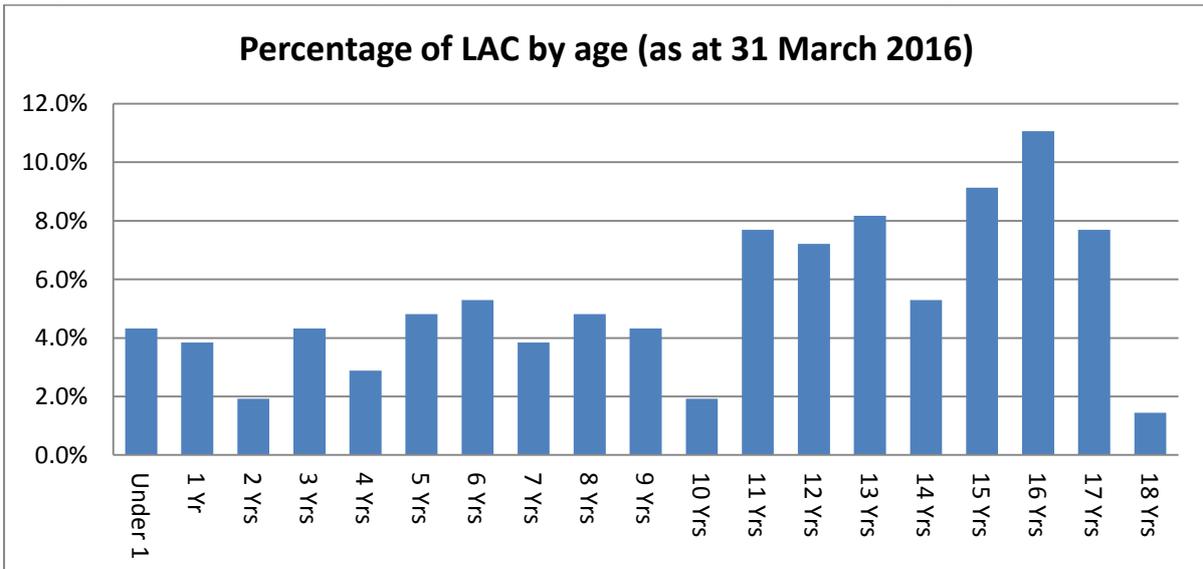


Figure 6

5.8 The majority of children in care have experienced one placement in the last year. The cases of the children who have experienced more than one move are monitored carefully, to understand the reasons and from this analysis information is used to inform future placements, with the aim of keeping our children and young people in stable, appropriate settings. (see Figure 7)

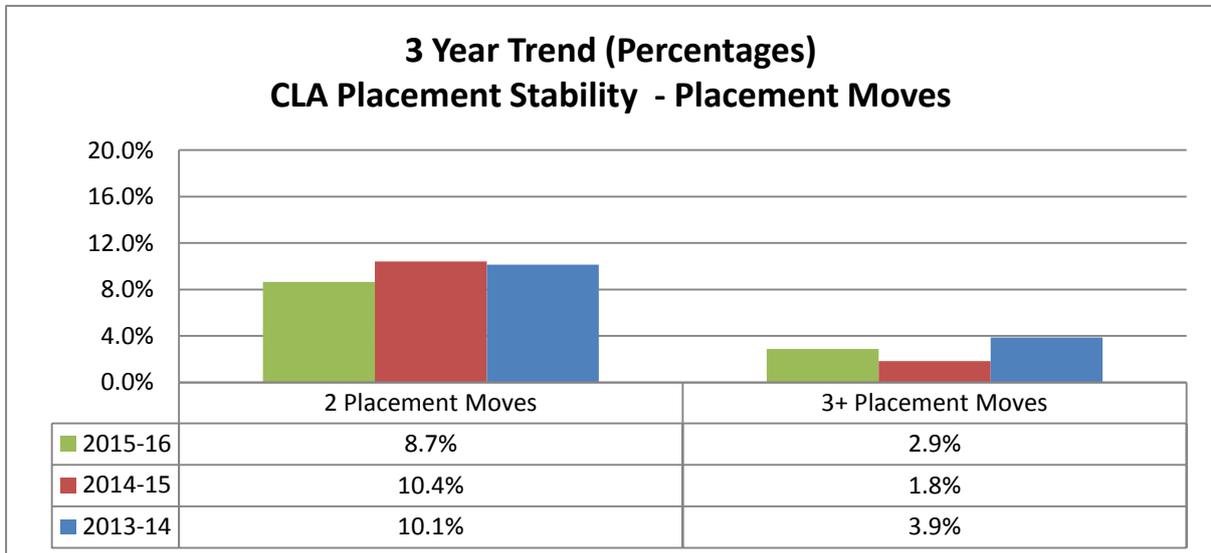


Figure 7

### 5.9 Children look after by duration of period in care

Figure 6 highlights that in 2016 there was an increase in the number of children looked after in care for less than a year, although this figure is less than the 2014 number. The number of children looked after over 10 years has reduced slightly to 7.

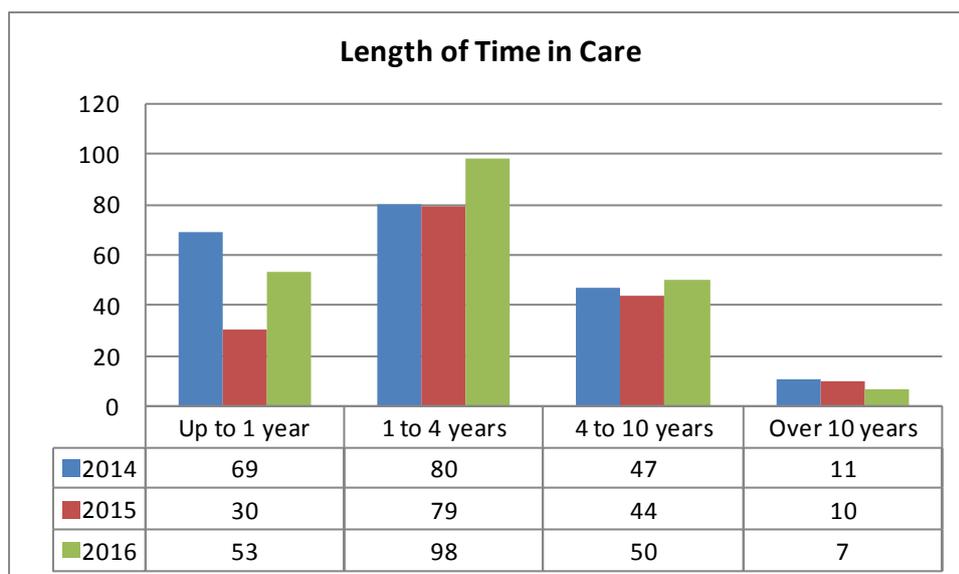


Figure 8

From the 2015/16 looked after children cohort, there were 11 sibling groups of 3 or more children/young people. This equates to 45 children which is 22% of the cohort. This continues to be a significant challenge to the local authority as this impacts on the overall numbers of children coming into care and the availability of placements to match the needs of large sibling groups.

## 5.10 Geographic Spread

Figure 7 shows that a high proportion of children looked after originate from specific wards.

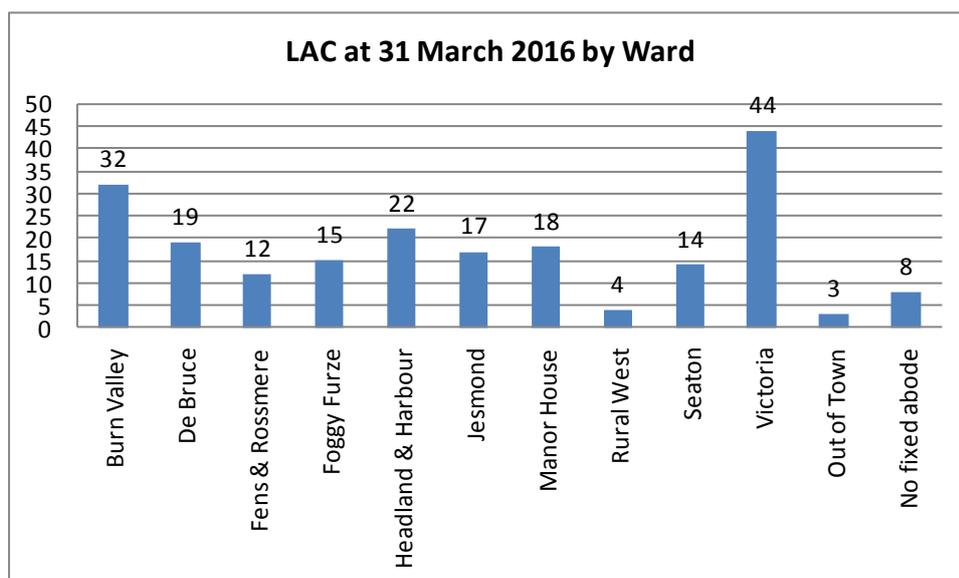


Figure 9

There are three wards with the highest rate of children looked after, with Victoria and Burn Valley wards producing the greatest numbers. This will be considered when commissioning preventative services in these areas as part of the Better Childhood in Hartlepool.

## 5.11 Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers

Hartlepool has signed up to the National Transfer Scheme which means that we have pledged to take unaccompanied asylum seeking children. The Department for Education has provided a bench mark for each local authority regarding the number of children that should be accommodated; this is set by government and calculated as 0.07% of the child population, in Hartlepool this equates to 14 children.

Hartlepool has therefore seen a rise of unaccompanied asylum seekers becoming looked after. The local authority has seen a significant increase in numbers from 2015 to 2016. A number of children have been accommodated via the national transfer scheme.

### 5.11 Looked After Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

The graph below (Figure 8) highlights the percentage of children looked after with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan or receiving SEN support.

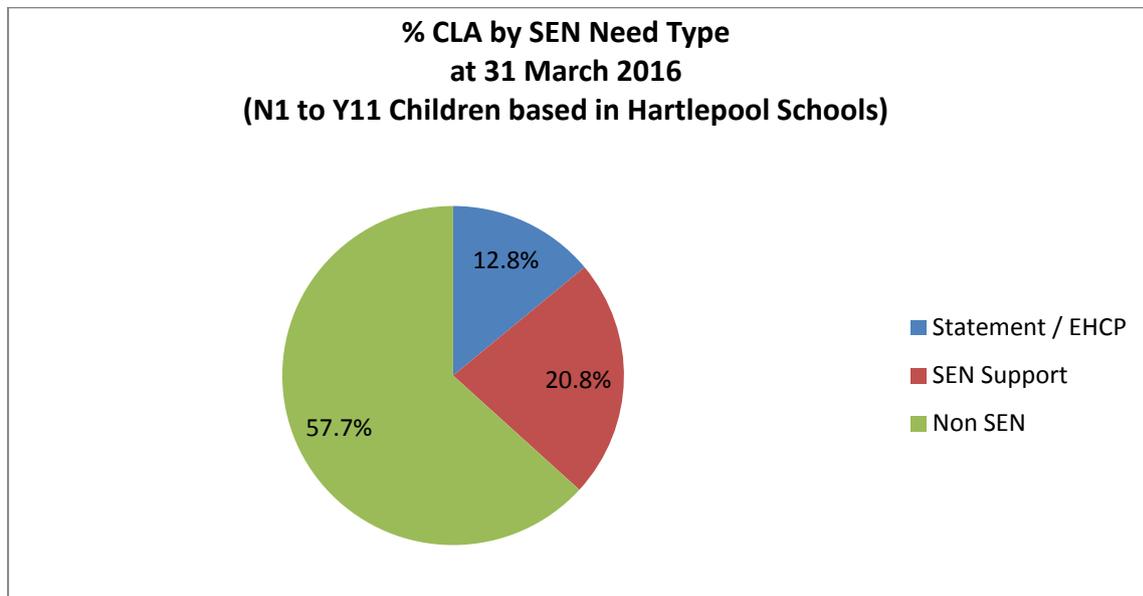


Figure 10

The percentage of all children and young people with an EHC plan across the town is 2.2% compared to 12.8 % of children looked after, this highlights that a child or young person who is looked after is more likely to have an EHC plan than a child or young person who is not in care.

### 5.12 SEMH

Data shows that there is a large cohort of children and young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs within the town. This number is increasing and is currently placing pressure on schools, academies, additionally resourced provision bases and special school provision. Data indicates that boys are significantly more likely to be diagnosed with SEMH than girls.

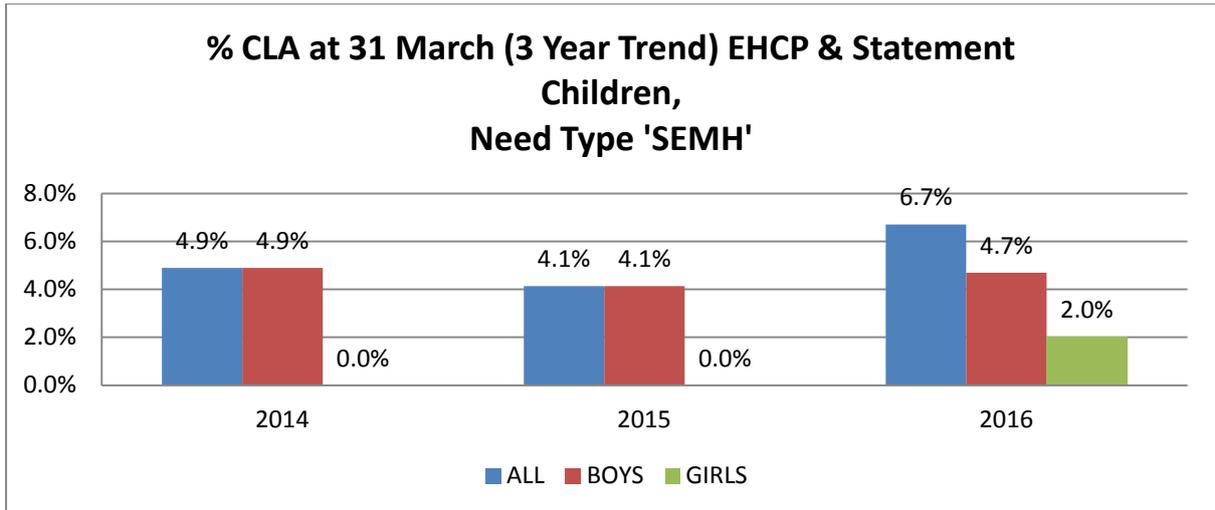


Figure 11

A review is underway to fully understand the needs of this group of children and young people to enable projections moving forwards and to explore different models that will enable more children with SEMH to be accommodated closer to home where possible.

There is currently a small number of Hartlepool children looked after with Education, Health and Care Plans or statements placed in specialist educational residential placements with all identified as children, young people with SEMH as a primary need. 100% of the current educational residential placements are outside of the Hartlepool area.

Future projections indicate that 33% of the current cohort of children and young people with SEMH whose needs potentially cannot be met by provision in area are looked after.

A small number of children looked after are accessing placements in state education provision outside of Hartlepool due to placements with external foster carers/children's homes with 20% identified as having SEMH.

The total number of children looked after accessing residential school or day provision during 2014/15 was 5, all of whom had significant complex needs, behavioural issues and/or were at risk of running/missing.

Commissioners in the Tees Valley region are currently exploring the possibility of developing further provision in the region to support this cohort of young people.

### 5.13 ASD

There is currently a small number of children looked after with Education, Health and Care Plans or statements placed in specialist educational residential placements with ASD identified as their primary need. 100% of the current educational residential placements are outside of the Hartlepool area.

#### **5.14 Virtual School**

Hartlepool's Virtual School supports placements for children looked after to ensure that all young people make progress and intervention is put in place where required.

As outlined in Section 6.6, a regional procurement exercise has recently been completed for the purchase of placements for children and young people 0 – 25 years in DfE registered, non-maintained and independent special schools and colleges. This will establish clear criteria for the use of very specialist provision for those children whose needs are currently too complex to be met within the provision available within the town.

## Section 6 Supply

In the Hartlepool and the wider Tees Valley, there is a broad range of provision which is available, provided by the local authorities and private sector. Hartlepool will continue to work with providers alongside regional partners to expand what is available, to meet the diverse needs of the children we care for.

### 6.1 Type of provision

#### 6.1.1 Fostering

##### Internal Fostering

It is the policy of Hartlepool Borough Council, as part of its strategy for children looked after to, as far as possible care, provide for placements for children through its own fostering agency. This ensures that children looked after are cared for within their home community and have continuity of education, health and family and social relationships.

Hartlepool's Fostering Service is managed and placements matched by the Fostering and Adoption Team. The service provides a range of different placements. Currently we have a total of 178 placements in the town to accommodate children by 97 registered foster carers. As at March 2016, 155 children and young people looked after were placed with internal foster carers.

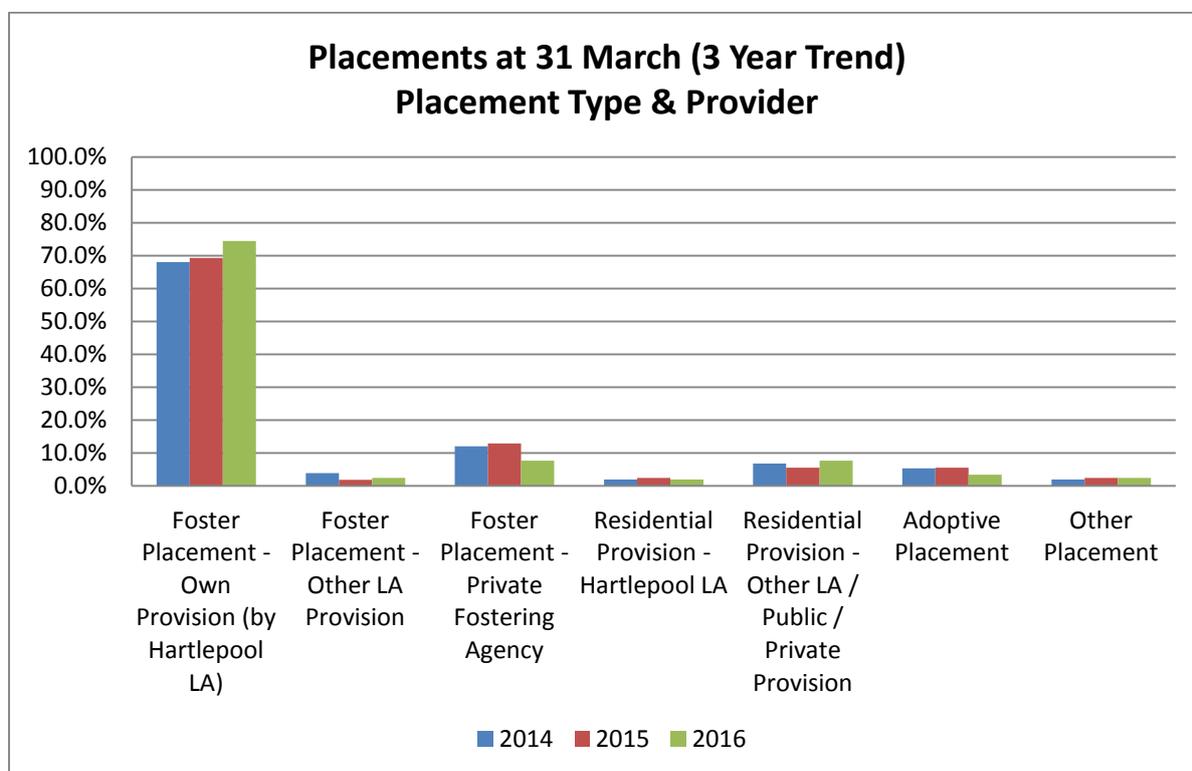


Figure 12

## **Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA)**

Hartlepool has been part of a Tees Valley Consortium Fostering Framework since January 2014. This is a regionally commissioned framework with a range of providers supplying five local authorities.

The authority has low reliance on independent fostering agencies to care for looked after children and for the vast majority of children, their needs can be best met within in house provision. Where placements are commissioned from the independent sector, this generally arises from the individual needs of the young person either through a plan for permanence that cannot be met within in house provision, or placements for adolescents with some associated challenging behaviours. As at 31st March 2016 there were 21 placements, with 11 independent fostering agencies.

We always endeavour to place within a 20 mile radius of Hartlepool unless there is an identified need relating to an individual child/young person.

### **6.1.2 Residential Care**

Foster care is appropriate to meet the needs of most children in care and is the right placement type for them. However, some children and young people find significant difficulties residing within a family home setting and residential care offers a positive choice for them. The council has a low reliance upon residential care; however for many of the children who require residential provision, they are placed in provision outside of Hartlepool. Decisions to commission residential placements for children are made through a strategic Commissioned Placements Panel which is made up of senior officers from health, education and social care. This Panel makes decisions on joint commissioning and joint funding arrangements.

### **Internal Residential**

Hartlepool has one residential children's home providing four placements. The provision was opened in 2013 and has been fully utilised since that time. The provision is currently rated as Outstanding by Ofsted as at September 2016.

Hartlepool also has two beds for children with learning disabilities within its short break service. One bed is currently being utilised meaning one bed is available and would need careful matching. The provision is currently rated outstanding by Ofsted as at September 2016.

## **External Residential**

Hartlepool joined four other Tees Valley local authorities to procure a Children's Residential Home Framework in April 2016. The Residential Framework is now the first port of call for the commissioning of independent residential provision.

Due to the recent procurement process there is insufficient data at present to assess the benefits of the framework agreement, however, the Children's Commissioning Team will work with the sub regional authorities to ascertain usage and quality of provision as part of the scheduled monitoring process.

Where children in care require an external residential provision, we will always endeavour to place within Hartlepool or the neighbouring area, unless their needs are such that for a very specific reason they require a placement outside of the borough.

When considering the rationale for these external placements, one of the primary reasons for choosing a residential placement for this cohort of young people is due to social, emotional, and mental health needs and/or the risk of running/missing.

### **6.2 Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities**

#### **6.2.1 Respite care provision**

Hartlepool Borough Council provides short break respite care support in one provision within the town. The service is available for children and young people with a learning disability, acquired brain injury or mild to moderate challenging behaviour.

Provision is available to children and young people aged from 5 – 18 years of age. There are currently 16 children and young people accessing this provision.

There are eight bedrooms in the main building. An extension which includes 2 bedrooms and a separate living area is also available as a private space for those children, young people accessing residential provision.

The provision is currently rated as Outstanding by Ofsted.

#### **6.2.2 External residential/non-residential education provision**

Hartlepool is part of a North East regional framework for placements for children and young people 0 – 25 years in DfE registered, non-maintained and independent special schools and colleges; residential and / or day placements.

The framework went live in February 2016. A review of the Quarter 1 and 2 is currently being undertaken in relation to the number of placements made via the framework and associated costs.

### 6.3 Number of Children Looked After by Placement Type

Figure 12 below shows the current placement types as at March 2016. The majority of our children looked after were in foster care placements.

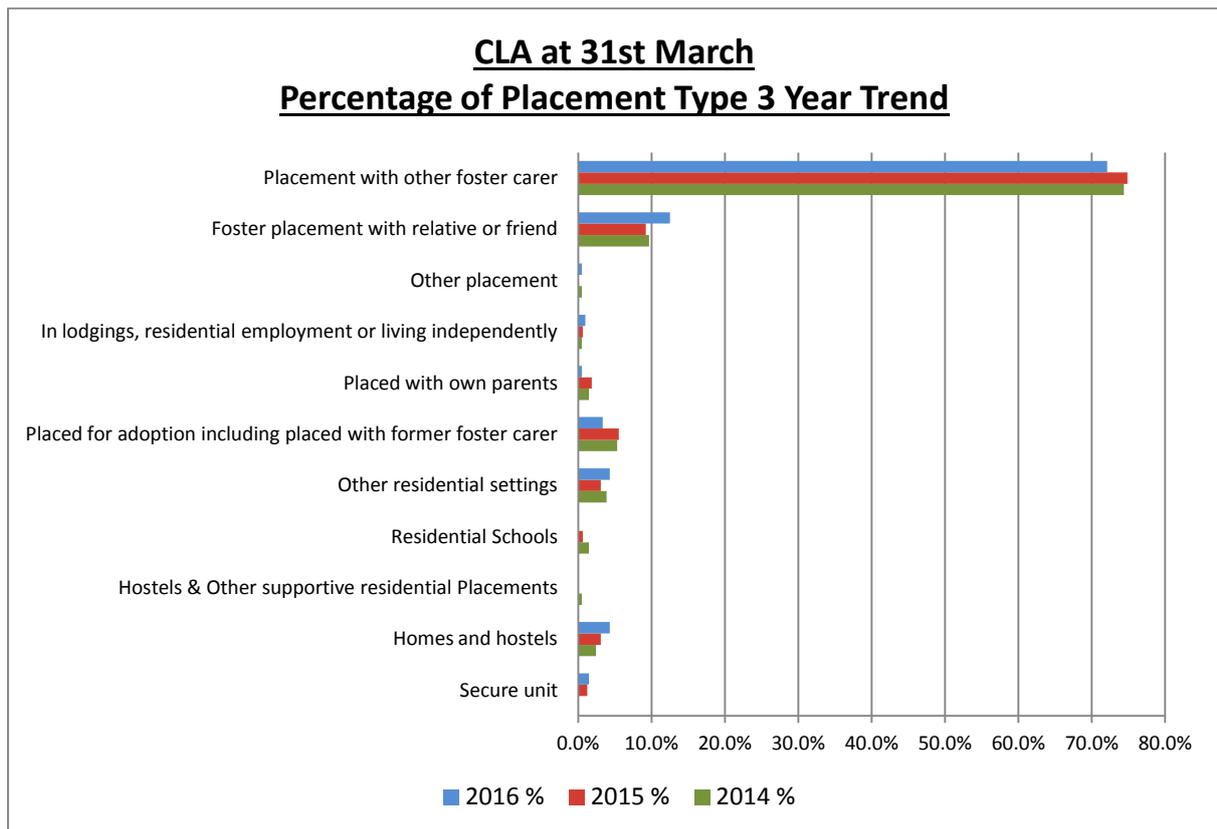


Figure 13

### 6.4 Care Leavers

When young people leave their care placement, the local authority must ensure that the accommodation they move to is suitable and appropriate to meet their needs.

For many young people, moving straight from care to independent living is too big a step. A young care leaver may be able to make a more successful transition if there is a choice of remaining with a former carer, or moving to supported lodgings or to a semi-independent option with some support, depending on the young person's needs.

At the end of March 2016, 94% of the town's care leavers were in suitable accommodation (see Figure 14). This is a slight decrease when considering previous years, however, it is worth noting that this decline relates to 4 care leavers in total.

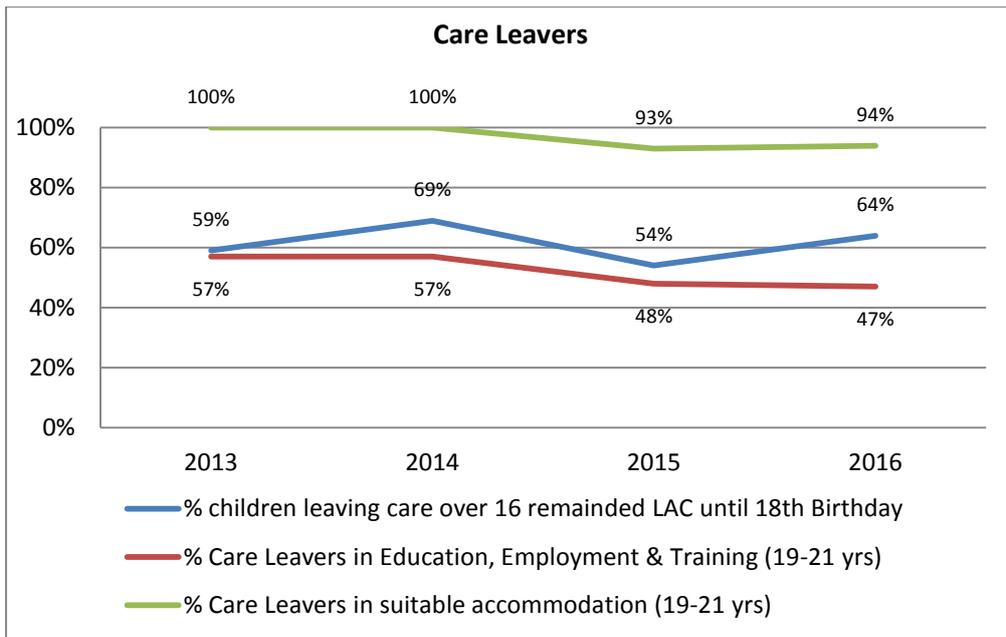


Figure 14

#### 6.4.1 Staying Put

Hartlepool has a 'Staying Put' policy to ensure that, where appropriate, a young person is able to remain with their Foster Carer following their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. This will offer the young person stability during the transition to independence and adulthood in a graduated and supported way with the encouragement of their Foster family. We currently have 11 young people accessing 'Staying Put' arrangements. 8 are with in-house carers and 3 are with independent agencies.

There is a projection that in 2017 staying put placements will increase by 9 which means this may have an impact on the number of fostering placements available for 2017 and going forward.

#### 6.4.2 Supported Accommodation & Floating Support

Hartlepool also commissions supported accommodation and supported living services for those young people who require assistance. This service is available to vulnerable 16 – 25 year olds, those young people living independent from their parents/carers who require tenancy support and to teenage parents with their own tenancy. The support aims to empower young people to take control of their own lives and focuses on;

- the development of independent living skills, such as budgeting, cooking and maintaining a home.
- transitioning towards obtaining a longer term tenancy.
- supporting young people in accessing other services within the community, as relevant to their needs.

- helping young people to overcome barriers in accessing education, employment and training.

A review of these services is currently underway, and it is anticipated that they will be retendered in Spring 2017.

### **6.4.3 Supported lodgings**

Supported Lodgings enable single people aged sixteen and above to be offered accommodation in a home environment when leaving foster care or residential care. Supported Lodgings are provided by people who can offer a bedroom in their homes, along with some level of support, to care leavers.

Hartlepool is currently reviewing its supported lodgings policy and procedure to ensure that there is a sufficient pool of providers available to meet the needs of those young people who would benefit from this support.

### **6.4.5 16+ Accommodation and Community Support**

Hartlepool has recently tendered for an approved list of providers who will source suitable accommodation using available housing in the area, and provide high quality support to the individuals within the home. The support includes facilitating access to community resources, education, social activities, supporting the development of independent living skills, personal safety and helping safeguard the young person from harm.

The following groups have been identified as a priority:

- Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers
- Vulnerable care leavers
- Young people with additional needs (SEN, mental health, etc.)
- Young people at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation / being Trafficked

## **6.5 Market Management**

Over the last 18 months, Hartlepool has been working in partnership with the Tees Valley authorities and local authorities in the wider region to procure collaborative frameworks to provide quality accommodation for children and young people for whom this provision is deemed most appropriate. This will help shape and manage the market moving forward, creating competition based on raising quality and needs based outcomes as well as reducing prices.

### **6.5.1 NE 12 Collaborative**

All of the local authorities in the North East region (NE12) have worked together as part of a regional collaborative procurement for the purchase of placements for children and young people 0 – 25 years in DfE registered, non-maintained and

independent special schools and colleges; residential and / or day placements. The procurement was completed at the beginning of 2016 with the Framework going live in February 2016.

The following points formed the basis for the rationale.

1. To ensure good and improving outcomes for children and young people.
2. To ensure relationships with all providers are good and improving; open and transparent.
3. To increase financial efficiencies and value for money in all placements.
4. To achieve financial transparency in placement costs.
5. To achieve fairness of financial contribution from Health, Education and Social Care in those instances where placements are joint funded.
6. To ensure a consistency of quality across all providers.
7. To encourage and enable growth in the local market in order to provide a range of choice and suitable placements to meet the needs of children and young people.
8. To establish 'harmonised' terms and conditions for providers and purchasers.

The NE12 group meets on a regular basis as part of the performance management processes, to share information around costs and ensure a joint approach to compliance.

### **6.5.2 Tees Valley Children's Home Collaborative**

Hartlepool, Darlington, Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland local authorities have recently procured a framework for Ofsted Registered Residential Children's Homes provision. This framework will provide Hartlepool with a structured and formal process for securing placements within the borough and wider region offering greater choice and value for money.

The framework went live on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016. Quality monitoring and assurance processes form part of the framework requirements, providing the local authorities involved with a standardised set of documentation and procedures to ensure a common approach and assessment of provision is undertaken.

The Tees Valley collaborative is committed to working with providers to achieve the desired outcomes and effecting positive change.

### **6.5.3 Future areas for collaboration**

Following the success of the North East regional collaborative work, Hartlepool is currently consulting on future collaboration in the following areas;

- Alternative education provision, particularly in relation to Social, Emotional and Mental Health provision for children and young people. This will be determined following a review of the current provision available in the town and any future recommendations which emerge from the appraisal;

- Unregulated accommodation for 16 – 18 year olds. Requests for this type of provision are increasing, a collaborative approach would improve accountability and quality of provision as well as achieving value for money;
- Short breaks (palliative care);
- Short breaks and respite care for children with LDD;
- Supported accommodation for young people with LD.

## **Section 7 Views of Children and Young People**

7.1 The Hartlepool Children in Care Council has been instrumental in developing a questionnaire that will be issued in January 2017 to all children looked after to gather their views and opinions about their placement. The findings of the survey will inform future commissioning of services and accommodation for children looked after. The outcomes of the survey will be reported in the 2017/18 Sufficiency Assessment.

7.2 As part of the NE12 partnership and in collaboration with regional parent/carer forums, Hartlepool has developed a questionnaire to be completed by children, young people and families which will be used to review future commissioned placements in the region.

## **Section 8 Conclusion**

8.1 The actions in this Sufficiency Strategy will be monitored on a quarterly basis with a formal annual review to realise Hartlepool's ambition of stability for our young people and prioritisation. This will ensure improvement continues and the changes to the number/ profile of cared for children and the internal/ external accommodation market provide appropriate influence on future actions.

8.2 Evaluation, including performance management, quality assurance and workforce development will remain a priority in driving forward Hartlepool's work in delivering quality provision for children looked after and care leavers. The key to performance in this area is ensuring the levels and quality of accommodation for cared for children across the market is maximised.

8.3 Hartlepool will continue to monitor the placement of children looked after into care provision and to explore suitable, appropriate in house placements to ensure sustainability.

8.4 The right placement at the right time and the stability for children and young people is key to performance against the sufficiency duty. All actions will focus on high quality outcomes, effectiveness in promoting safeguarding, equality and diversity for children looked after and care leavers. Hartlepool will encourage user engagement, enabling children and young people to continue to have a say in the services they receive and support the Council in further developing quality, stable placements.

## Section 9 Overview of current placements, commissioning arrangements and recommendations

	Who is it for?	Current numbers (as at September 2016)	Current commissioning arrangements	Future commissioning recommendations
<b>Foster care</b>	Foster care is the placement of choice for all children in care aged 0-17 years. Care leavers are often able to stay with their foster carers after turning 18 as part of a “staying put” arrangement.	In House <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 110 carers</li> <li>• 163 placements, (8 “staying put”)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal service level agreement</li> </ul>	Recruitment strategy implemented to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increase capacity</li> <li>• increase provision for sibling groups, permanent placements and teenagers.</li> </ul>
		IFA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 17 providers on sub-regional framework</li> <li>• 21 placements with 13 IFAs (3 “staying put”)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sub-regional IFA Framework (expires Jan 2018)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review usage and monitoring data to inform retendering exercise</li> </ul>
<b>Residential Children’s Homes</b>	Children’s homes are used for young people whose needs are best met within a residential setting.	In House <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 home x 4 beds</li> <li>• LD provision x 2 beds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal service level agreement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain existing</li> </ul>
		Independent children’s homes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 providers on sub-regional framework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sub-regional framework (expires March 2020)</li> <li>• Individual placements purchased</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review usage and monitoring data to inform retendering exercise</li> </ul>
<b>Residential/Non Residential Schools</b>	Children in care with high levels of SEN may be placed in residential special schools if local placements and/or schools cannot be identified. These schools often provide integrated therapy and may be joint funded by social care, education & health.	Independent residential/non residential schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 13 providers (22 settings) on framework</li> <li>• 4 children looked after with EHC plans placed in 4 schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional framework</li> <li>• Individual placements purchased (all places jointly funded by SEND and some also part funded by CCG)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to purchase placements from regional framework</li> </ul>

	Children in care may be placed in residential schools if local placements and/or schools cannot be identified.	Independent residential/non residential schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 children looked after placed in 6 schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual placements purchased</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review to be undertaken as part of a regional collaborative solution</li> </ul>
<b>Post-16 supported accommodation</b>	Supported Accommodation & Floating Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16-17 yr olds in care</li> <li>Care leavers</li> <li>16-25 yr olds at risk of homelessness</li> </ul>	Independent providers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young parents accommodation and floating support</li> <li>Young people's floating support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Block contracts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Services to be re-commissioned by Autumn 2017.</li> </ul>
	Supported lodgings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16 to 17 years old homeless</li> <li>left school</li> <li>assessed as a child needing to be looked after and in need of supported accommodation.</li> </ul>	Supported Lodgings providers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 providers, 6 beds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approved list of supported lodgings providers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of policy and procedure to be undertaken alongside supported accommodation retender.</li> </ul>
<b>Parent &amp; child assessment places</b>	Young parents, sometimes themselves children in care, who need extra support to care for their child(ren) and help to develop parenting skills as well as assessing their ability to safely care for their child.	Foster care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 placements with 2 IFAs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Included on IFA framework (expires Jan 2018)</li> <li>Individual placements purchased from residential assessment units</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review supported accommodation for young parents</li> </ul>