North East Lincolnshire Council, 2021 Sufficiency Needs Analysis

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Number of Young People in Care - long term and local trends

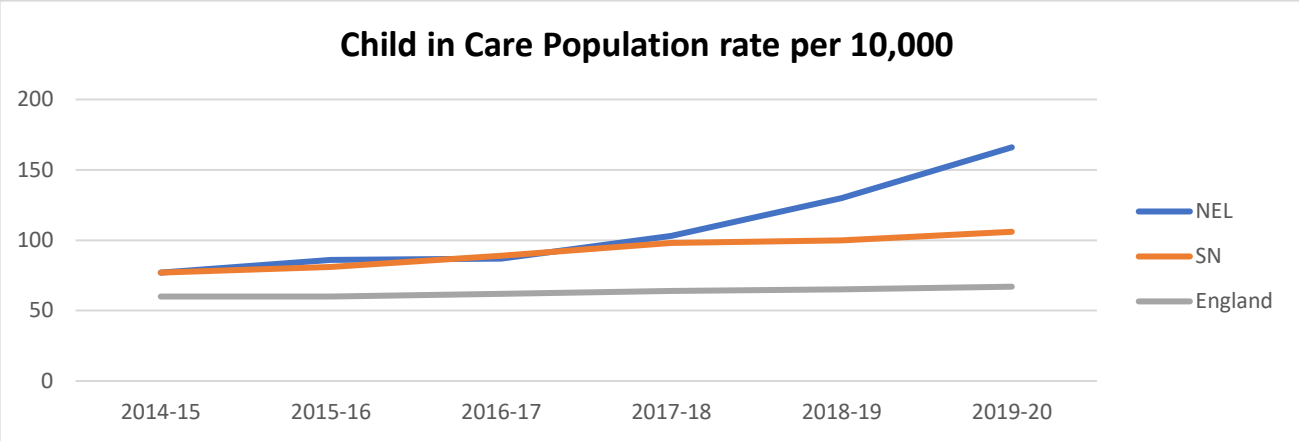
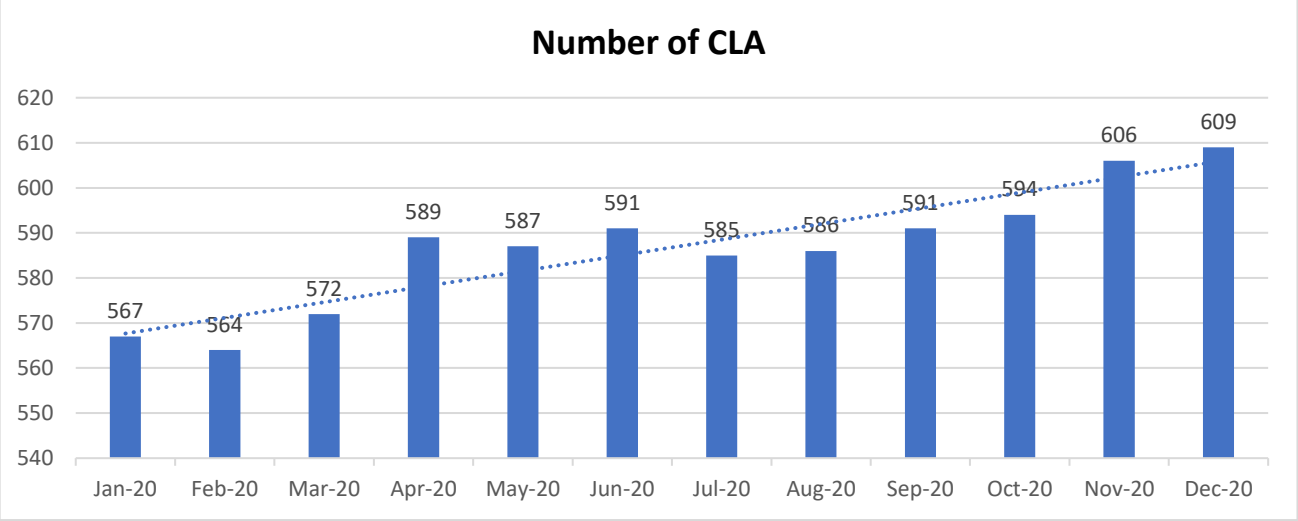


Table 1 - Children in Care at month end - 12-month trend

Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20
567	564	572	589	587	591	585	586	591	594	606	609

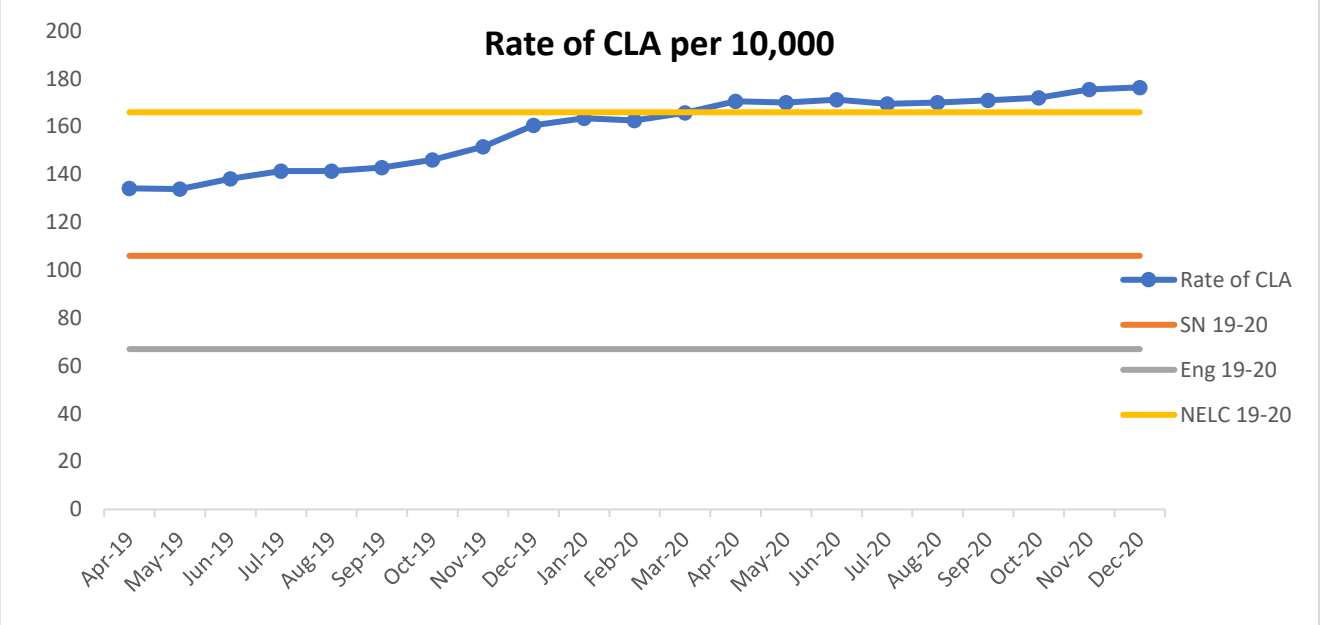


Commentary
The Children in Care population has steadily increased over the past twelve months from 567 to 609, with the average population throughout the period being 587. NEL are above national and statistical neighbours. 17 (3%) of CLA as of 31st March 2020 were unaccompanied asylum seekers (UASC), this is below the national average of 6% but above the stat neighbour average of 2%. Our hypothesis for why the CLA population has risen so much more quickly than other areas is that there has been no sound or consistent basis to our decision-making for children on the edge of care

as well as providing less effective early help and support than is needed.

Over the coming financial year, we will revitalise edge of care provision and ensure that decisions about children coming into care are taken following careful consideration at the Legal Gateway Panel. This panel will review what work has been undertaken prior to the panel and what evidence there is to suggest that becoming Looked After is the best option to meet the child's needs. We will also consider and record exit plans and medium to long-term planning at the point of a child becoming CLA.

Because of the presence of Immingham Docks in the borough, NELC receives higher numbers of UASC than neighbouring authorities. It is expected that the total number of UASC we have in care may rise as high as 25. A team manager will be recruited to lead on UASC and ensure that they are all well supported.



Commentary

As of 31st March 2020, NEL had 572 CLA which equates to a rate of 166 per 10,000. This is substantially higher than the stat neighbour average of 106 and the England average of 67 per 10,000. The numbers of CLA have increased by 28% since March 2019, whilst Stat neighbour and all England averages have seen increases in the number of CLA over the last year the increase is much smaller.

Gender of Young People in Care

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Male	172	197	240	305
% Male	58%	56%	54%	53%
Female	125	157	208	267
% Female	42%	44%	46%	47%
Total	297	354	448	572

Commentary on Gender ratios

The average gender split of CIC in the last financial year was 47% female and 53% male. This means that we need approximately 38 more places for males than for females.

This differs from the England average of 44% female, 56% male.

This suggests that more females and fewer males are brought into care in North East Lincolnshire than would be expected. More work needs to be done to understand this.

Brothers and sisters

Size of sibling group	Number of families
1	168
2	78
3	37
4	19
5	4
6	3
7	1
9	2

Commentary on brothers and sisters

Some families in NEL are large. This means that we sometimes need to find homes where up to nine brothers and sisters can live together. Whilst finding homes for such large families can be difficult, we think it is vital that brothers and sisters can live together when they come into care, unless there are good reasons for this not to happen.

We will make sure that when we are recruiting new foster carers, we try to recruit some who are able to look after big groups of brothers and sisters.

Children Placed by Age and Placement Type (March 2020)

	Age Band									
Placement Type	Under 1		1 to 4		5 to 9		10 to 15		16+	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Foster Care	9	6	29	23	36	41	58	53	4	13
Children's Homes					3		24	9	4	9
Foster Care with relative of friend	6	3	25	33	16	30	19	10	7	5
Placed for Adoption				1						1
Placed with parents	5	2	9	8	8	7	7	5	5	1
Secure									2	1
Semi Independent Accommodation							1		24	12
NHS/ Health Trust	2									
Family centre and mother and baby unit	1									
Residential School									1	

Commentary on Children Placed by Age and Placement Type

The chart above shows that the majority of children are placed in Foster care with the same number of males (136) and females (136). The highest proportion being in the age group 10 to 15 years is 21% of males.

Nationally 72% of children were living in foster care and 13% were in some form of residential provision including semi-independent living.

The figures above show NELC having 74% in foster care and 15.7% in some form of residential.

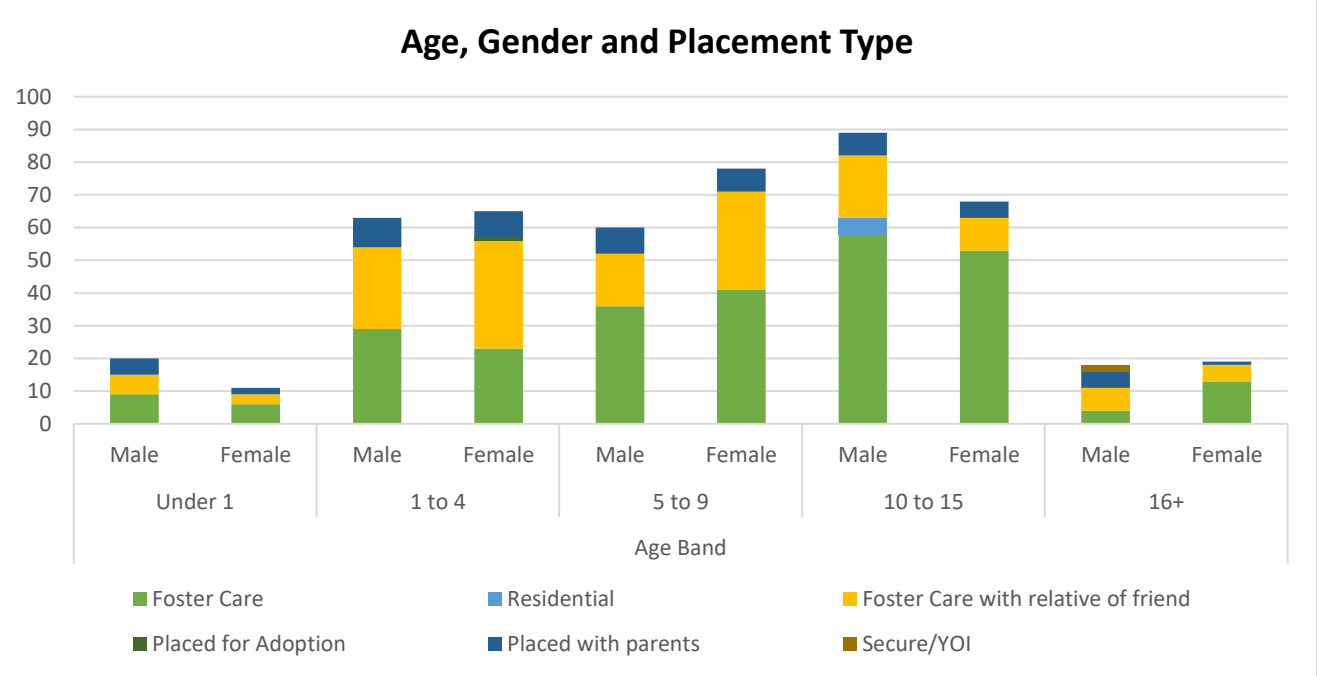
Only 8.5% of children are in children's homes which is not high, however we have a significant number of children in care living in semi-independent living. It is not clear that SIL is the best option

for all these young people.

Over the next period, we will ensure we review all of those currently living in SIL and introduce a clear risk assessment process for any new children being considered for SIL.

56 children are living with IFA carers, mostly because of a lack of available in-house care.

Age, Ethnicity and Placement Type 0f Young People in Care



Commentary on Age, Gender and Placement Type

The chart above shows that 60% of Children in Care are between the ages of 5 and 15 with the largest cohort being young people aged 10-15 (32%).

Currently 64% of foster placements are approved for children aged 10-15.

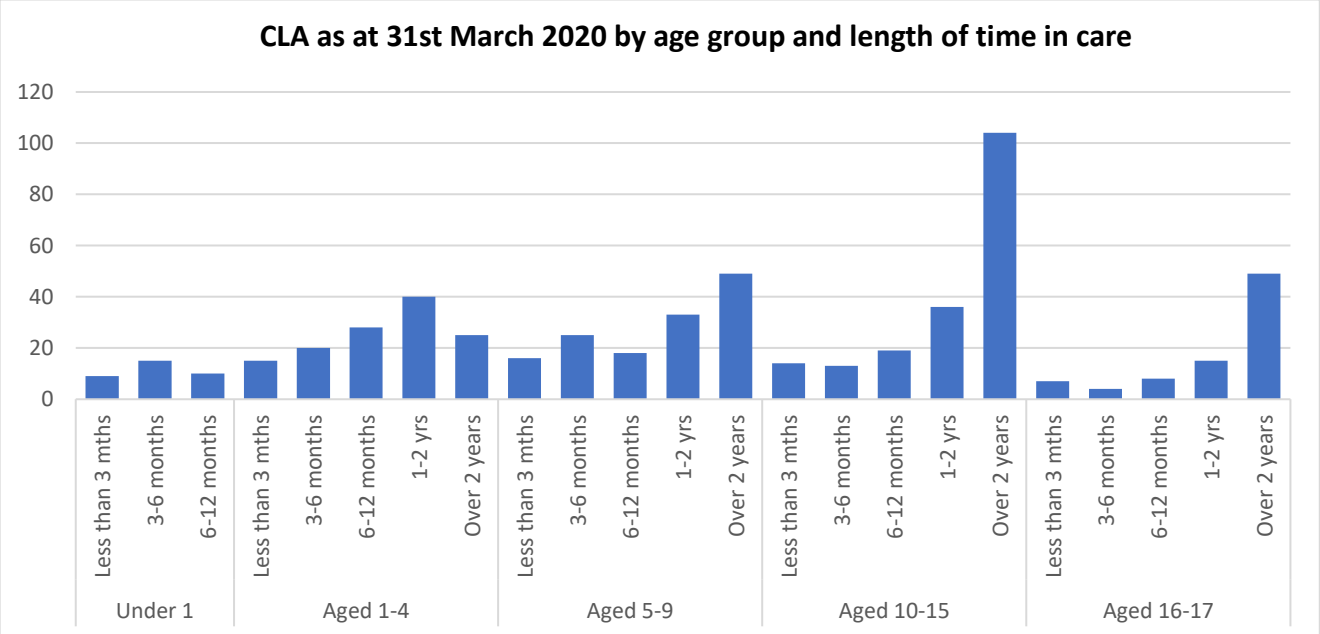
Whilst this suggests that we have foster carers capable of providing homes for our largest cohort of children, there is currently almost no availability of carers for this group.

NELC needs a recruitment process that targets those who would be able to meet the needs of older teenagers.

Ethnic origin of children looked after on 31 March 2020	Number	Percentage
White	528	92.3
Mixed	23	4.0
Asian or Asian British	3	0.5
Black or Black British	7	1.2
Other ethnic groups	11	1.9

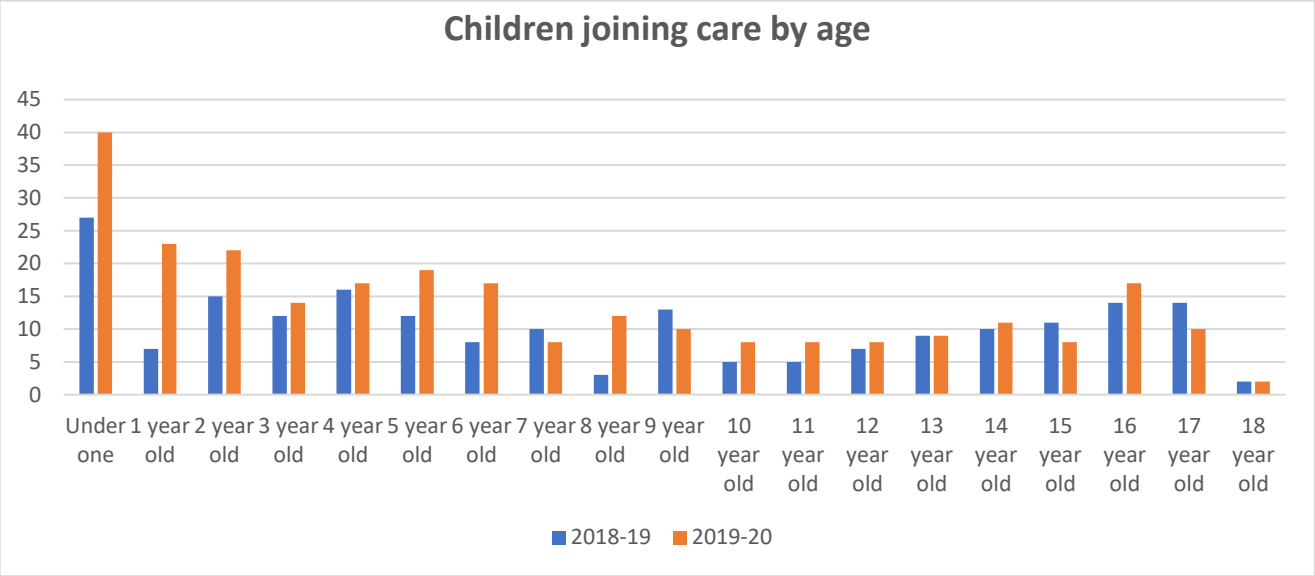
Commentary on Ethnicity
92% of CLA as of 31st March 2020 were white-British, which is a decrease from 97% seen pre-2018 which is largely due to rise in numbers of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. 90.8% of school pupils in NEL were recorded as being white British in January 2015 (NELC, School Census, January 2015). 95.4% of the resident population in NEL is white British (ONS, 2011 Census). The proportion of white British children in care broadly matches the demographic makeup of the borough. However, the largest other ethnic group in NEL is white other (1.7%) whereas the largest other group in care are from mixed backgrounds. More work needs to happen to better understand if children from mixed backgrounds are brought into care more frequently than those from other backgrounds.

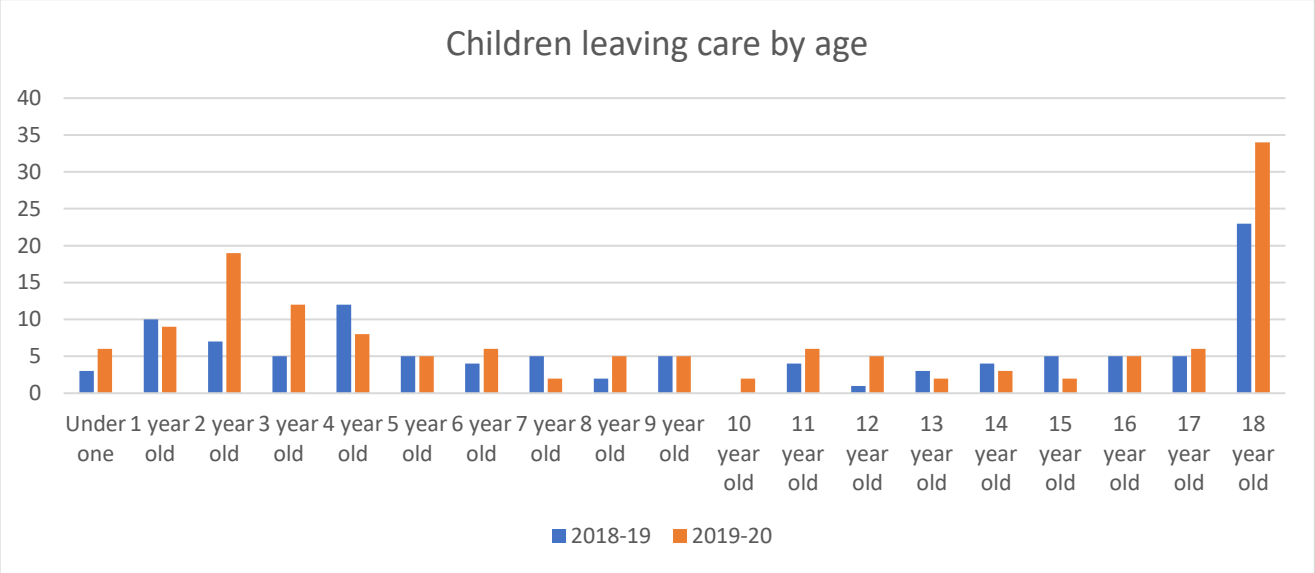
Length of Time in Care



Commentary on Length of time in care
Of the children looked after as of 31st March 2020, 351 (61%) children had been looked after for at least 12 months with the average length of time in care being 2 years and 4 months as of 31st March. On average Stat neighbours had 70% and England had 71% children looked after for at least 12 months as of 31st March 2020. Banding the length of time in care by age group, there is a sharp peak in the number of children aged 10-15 who have been in care for over 2 years. We can see that children in NEL are generally in care for over two years suggesting that they are needing a significant period before being able to safely leave state protection. This compares with a national average of 2 years in care. We also have a greater percentage of children who have been in care for less than 12 months than the national average. This is unsurprising considering the rapid increase in the CLA population over the past year. Whilst it is not clear why children from NEL spend longer in care than those from other areas, it may be, in part, because of the current instability of the workforce. Frequent changes of social worker inevitably slow children's progress through the care system as it takes a while for each new worker to understand their caseload and to be able to work optimally with children and their families. If NELC wish to see the numbers of CLA decrease, they may wish to focus on reducing the length of time children spend in care. A reunification programme and increased focus on permanence planning is expected to result in the average time in care reducing. The introduction of a strong training offer through the social care academy and a focus on providing good quality supervision to staff is expected to reduce staff turnover and therefore will contribute towards children not remaining in care any longer than is necessary for their wellbeing. The impact of Covid 19 on the work of the courts is likely to cause delays in children leaving care because of delays to court cases being heard.

Care Joiners and Leavers





Commentary

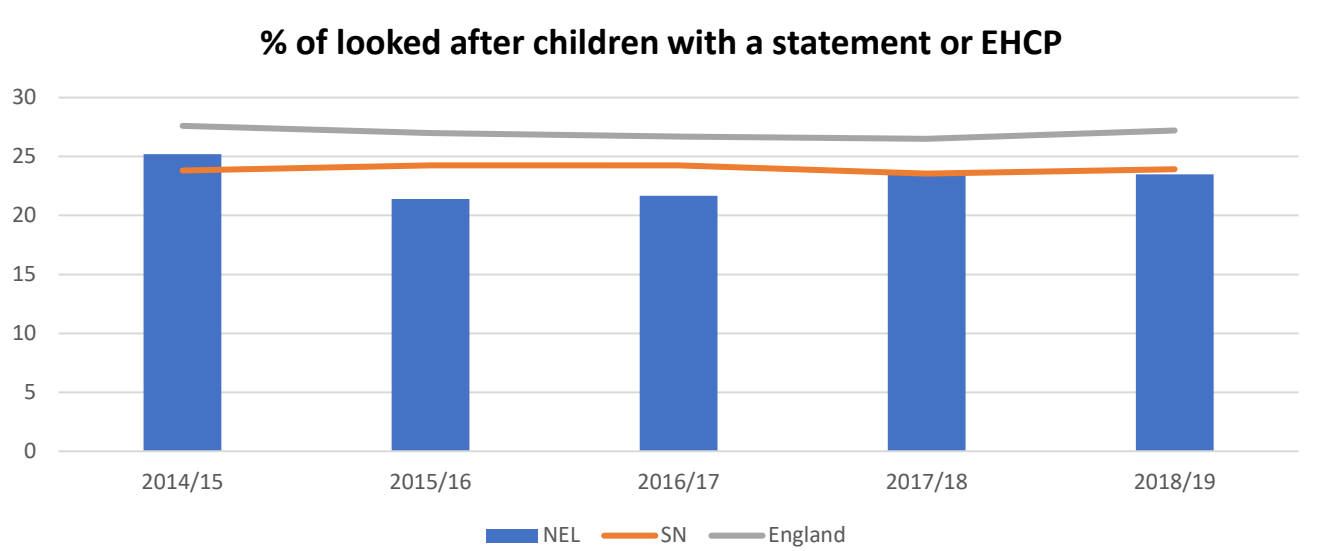
The number of children entering care in 2018-19 was 200, this increased to 263 by 2019-20. The largest age group for both years was the under ones.

The number of children leaving care in 2018-19 was 108, this increased to 142 by 2019-20. The largest age group for both years was 18-year-olds.

Over the past two years we can see increasing numbers of young children are coming into care. Between 18/19 and 19/20, an additional 47 children aged 5 or under were brought into care. This suggests that NELC's ability to safely support families to look after young children has reduced or there has been a change to the level of risk considered manageable by social workers.

NELC would benefit from considering how to provide extra support to families of young children so that they can provide safe care.

Young People in Care with SEN

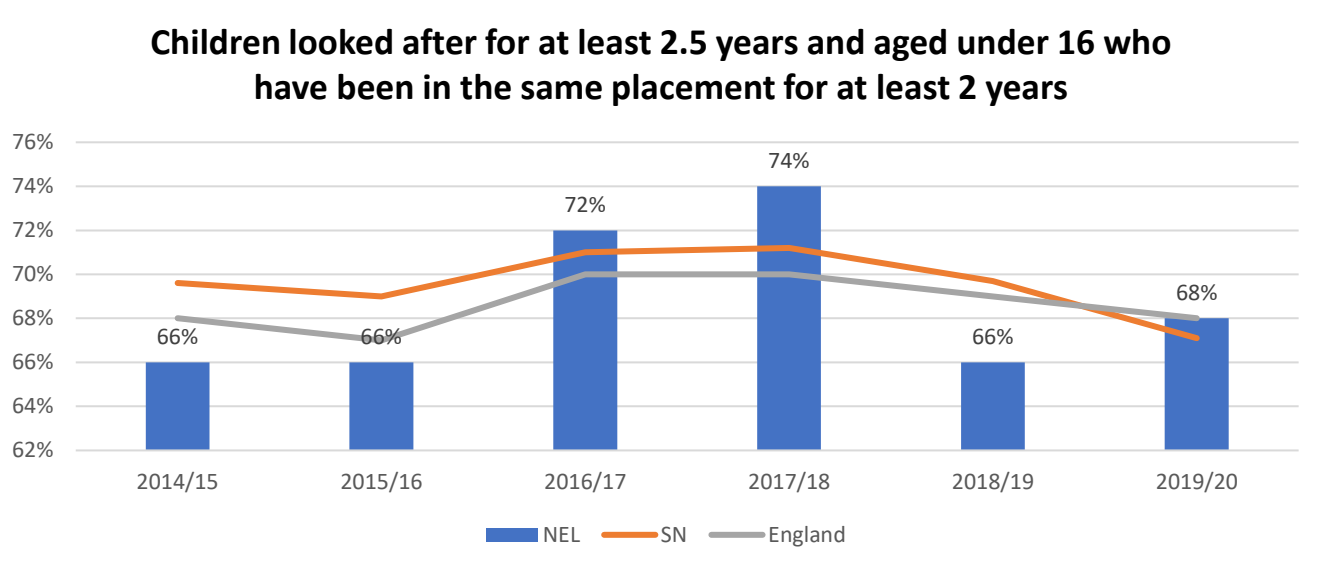


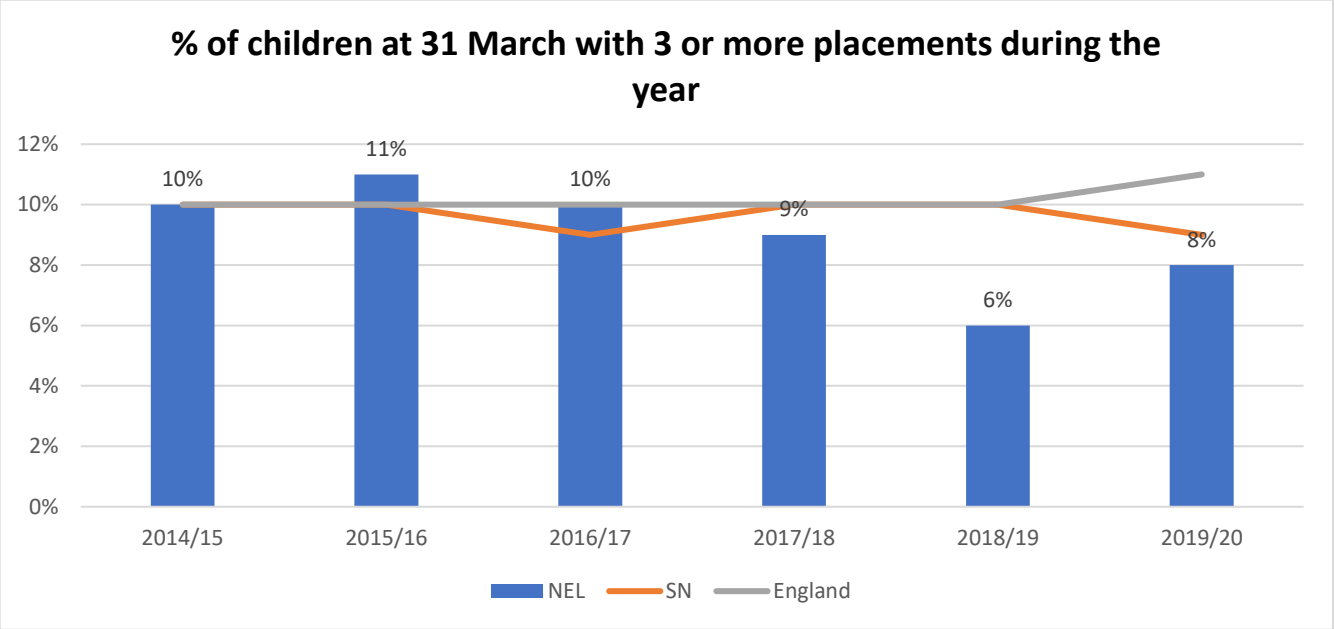
Commentary on young people in care with SEN

In NEL, the proportion of looked after children with special educational needs (SEN support or an EHC plan) is 54.9% (2018/19). This is less than the average for Children's services near neighbours for NEL. In NEL, the proportion of looked after children with SEN support is 31.4% (2019), which is greater than the average for Children's services near neighbours for NEL (31.3%). In NEL, the proportion of looked after children with an EHC plan is 23.5%, for the period 2018/19, which is less than average for statistical neighbours (23.9%).

Anecdotal evidence suggested that there were high numbers of children in NEL with an EHCP. However, this data shows that amongst CLA, the proportion with an EHCP I in line with expectations.

Placement Stability





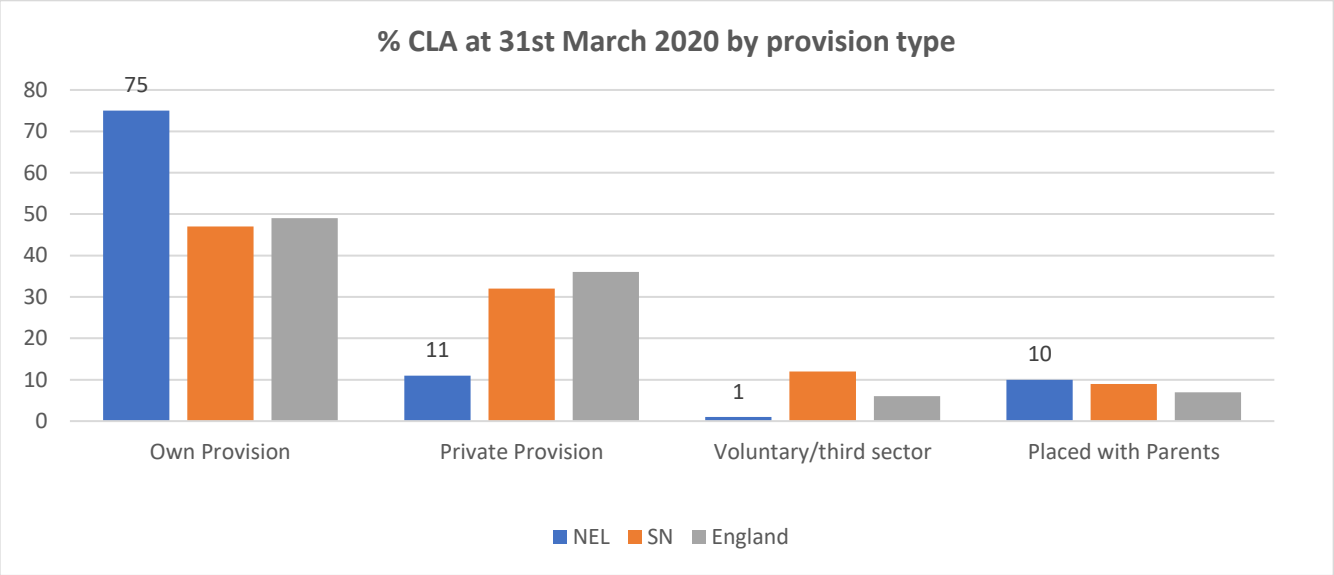
Commentary on placement stability

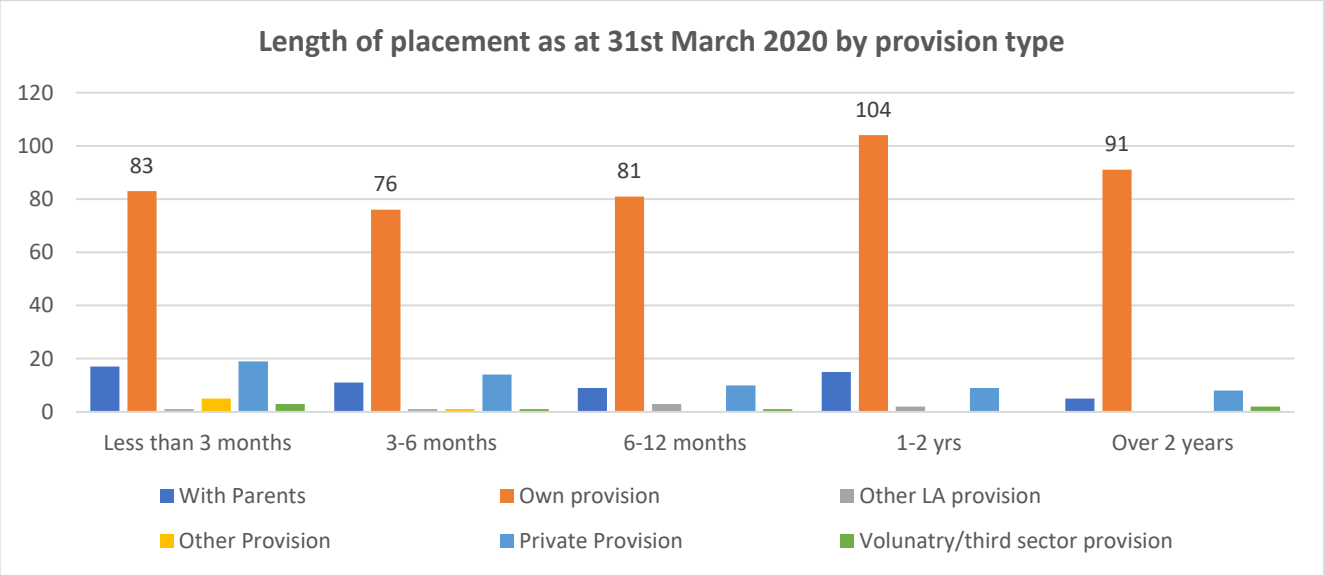
In North East Lincolnshire, 8% of looked after children on 31 March for the financial year 2019/20 had been in three or more placements during the year, this is less than the Children's services near neighbours for North East Lincolnshire average of 9% on 31 March for the financial year 2019/20. 68% of children looked after on 31 March, in North East Lincolnshire, who had been looked after continuously for at least 2.5 years in the same placement/placed for adoption and their adoption and their adoptive placement together with previous placement, last for at least 2 years, which is greater than the Children's services near neighbours for North East Lincolnshire average of 67%.

Placement stability in NEL has been better than statistical neighbour and England averages since 17/18. The situation in 18/19 was especially positive and whilst 19/20 was not so positive, it is still better than comparators.

Although this is positive, 8% of children having more than three placements in the year represents almost 50 individuals. It will remain a priority to support our children to be able to live in stable, loving homes.

Current Provision





Commentary on current provision
429 (75%) of the 572 looked after children as of 31st March 2020 were placed in our own provision. NEL have a considerable higher number placed in own provision than comparators with stat neighbour (47%) and England average (49%). However, this is a declining trend from a high of 87% seen in 2014-15. This is likely due to the increasing numbers of CLA in NEL. If we are to meet local sufficiency needs, we should plan for the following: • 75% in foster care – 15% friends and family; 60% NELC and IFA carers • 10% in a children's home

- 10% placed with parents.
- 5% other arrangements

If CLA remains at 600 this would mean that we would require:

- 360 NELC and IFA foster placements
- 60 children's home placements

If CLA reduces as planned to 450 we would require:

- 270 NELC and IFA foster placements
- 45 children's home placements

NELC currently has 227 foster placements with 109 carers.

Consequently, we can expect to have to purchase IFA care for between 40 and 130 children (depending on overall CLA numbers)

NELC has 41 places in its children's homes although 11 of those are purely for respite.

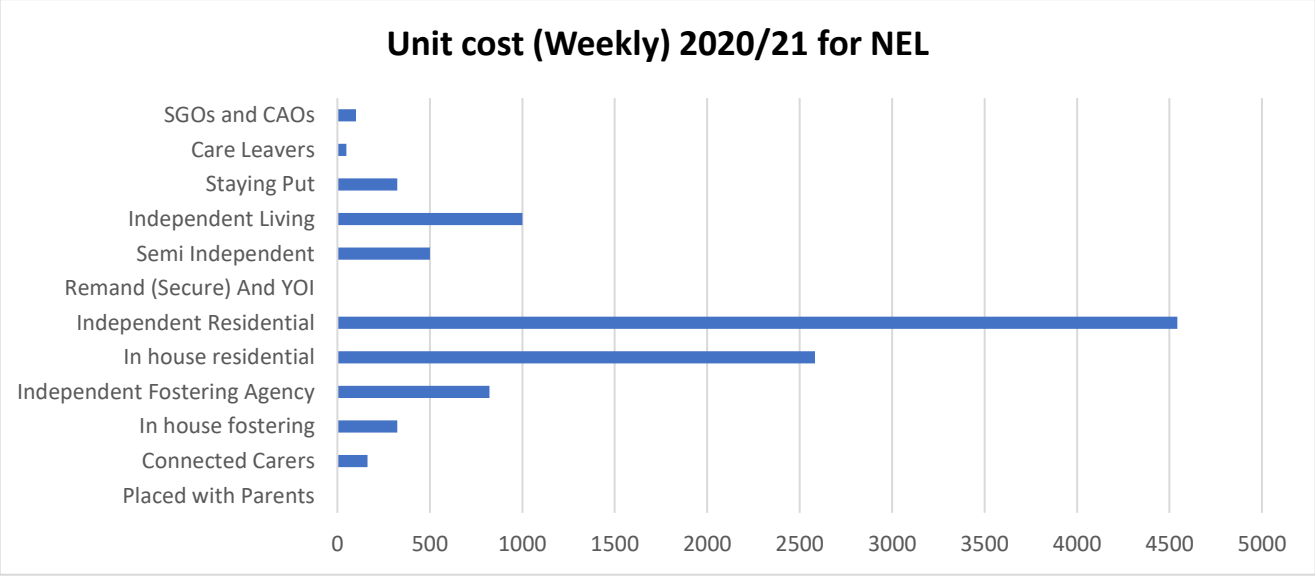
NELC can currently expect to have to purchase care in a children's home for 15 to 30 of its children.

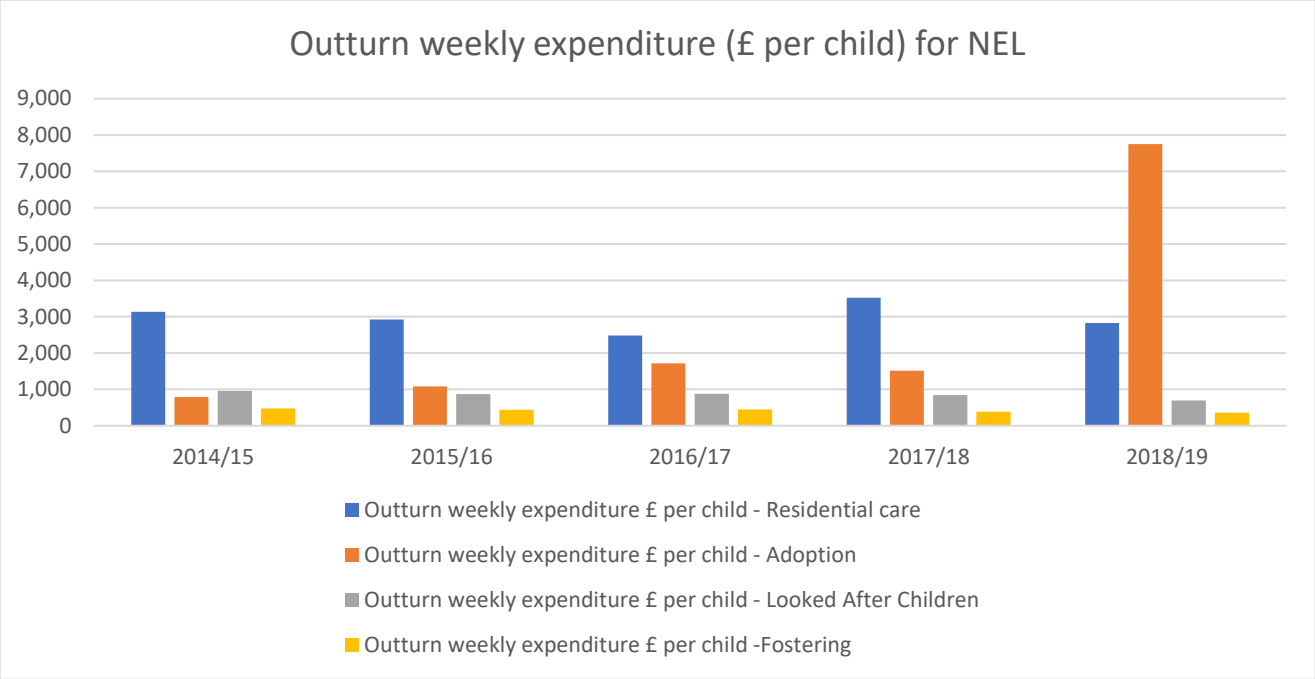
Whilst we hope to minimise our use of purchased care, because of the complex needs of children who require fostering or residential care, it is unlikely that NELC will ever be able to match all its CLA, to in house provision. We will continue to need access to a range of specialist homes from the private sector.

- NELC should expect to need between 23 and 30 SIL homes.

Currently we have 35 places in a mixture of supported living and supported lodgings (including the staying close pilot). This means that we should have sufficient SIL provision, however we do not know that we have the right range of provision.

We will review outcomes for those living in SIL to make sure that they are all thriving in their homes.





Commentary on weekly outturn expenditure

In NE Lincs weekly expenditure per child for looked after children stands at £695 in 2018/19, this is less than the previous period (£845) and less than Children's services near neighbours for North East Lincolnshire average (£1,055).

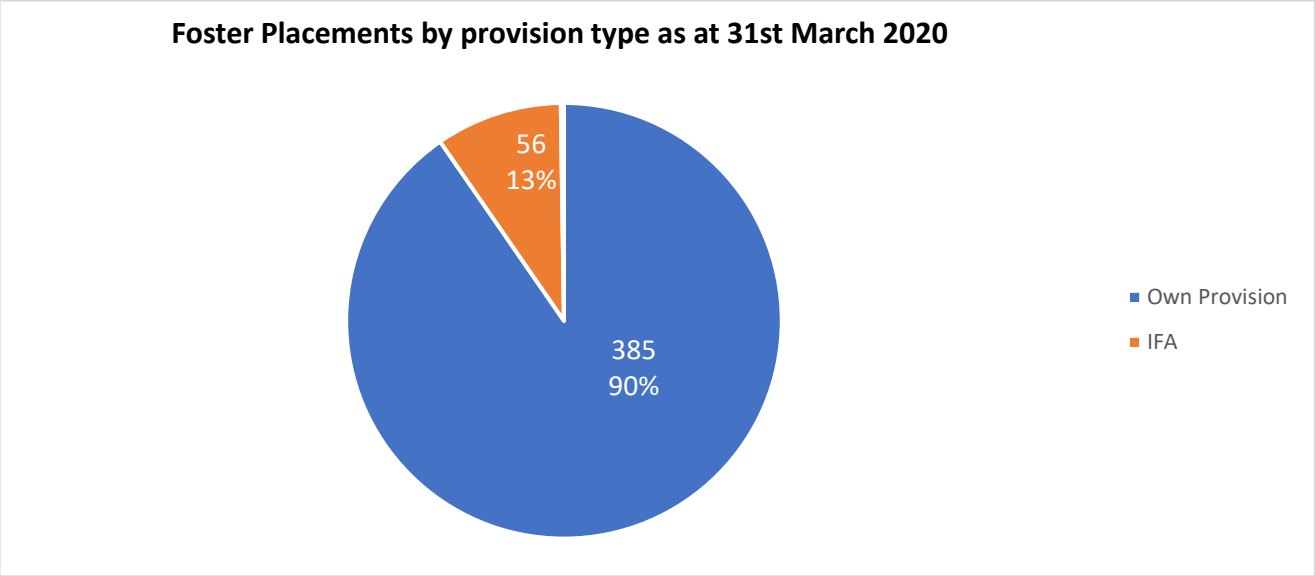
For fostering the weekly expenditure is £360 in 2018/19, this is less than the previous period (£390) and less than Children's services near neighbours for North East Lincolnshire average (£537).

Weekly expenditure in NE Lincs for adoption is £7,750 in 2018/19, this is greater than the previous period (£1,515) and greater than Children's services near neighbours for North East Lincolnshire average (£2,116). This was due to the low number of adoptions in year.

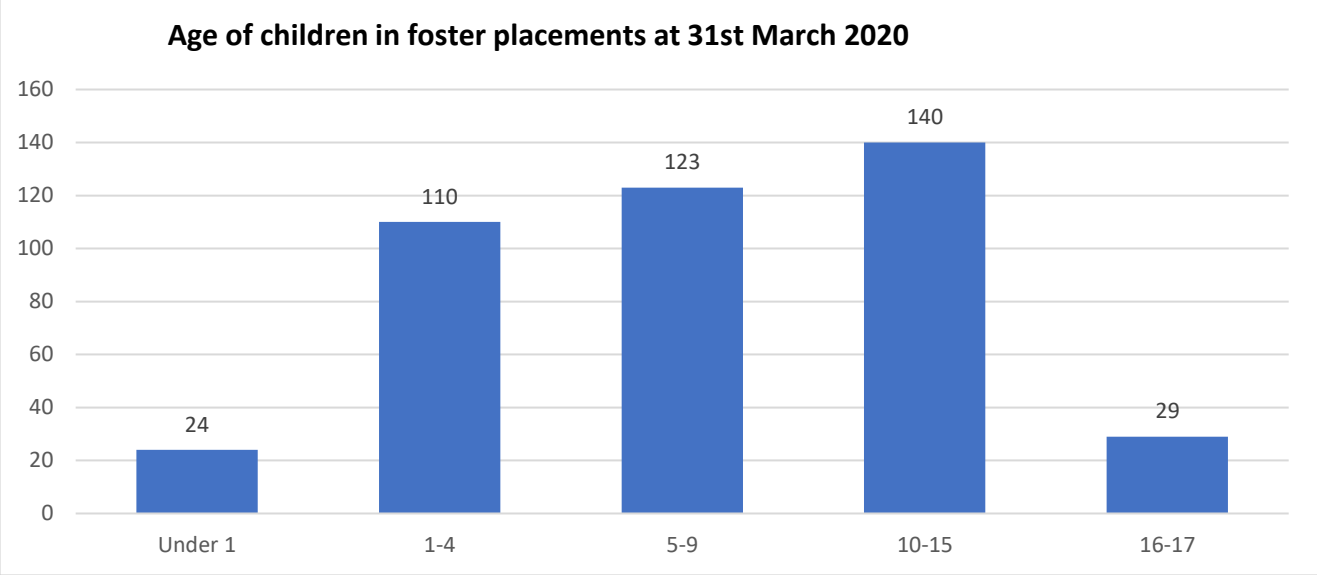
Budgets for CLA in NEL have not been significantly revised in recent years, despite the numbers of children in care doubling. This has led to the reduced sum being spent on each CLA.

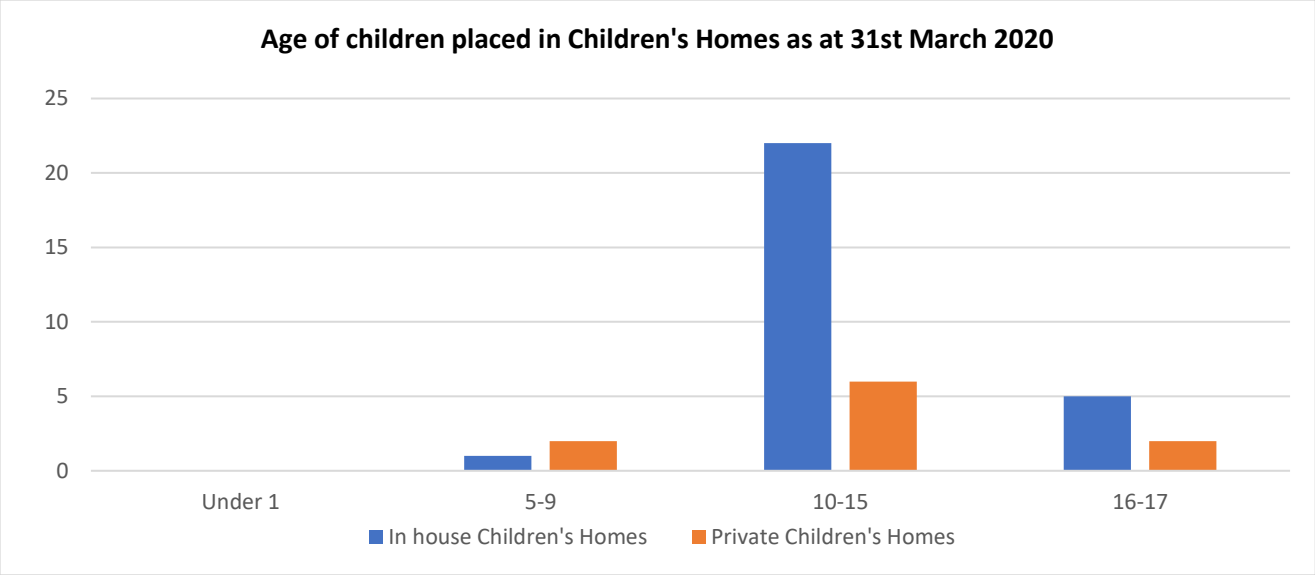
From April 2021, the CLA budget will be increased to better reflect current numbers. However, the budget will still be based on a lower target number of CLA than we currently have. This will improve the budget position for children's social care, but there will still be significant pressure unless we are safely able to reduce the numbers of children in care in line with expectations.

Fostering



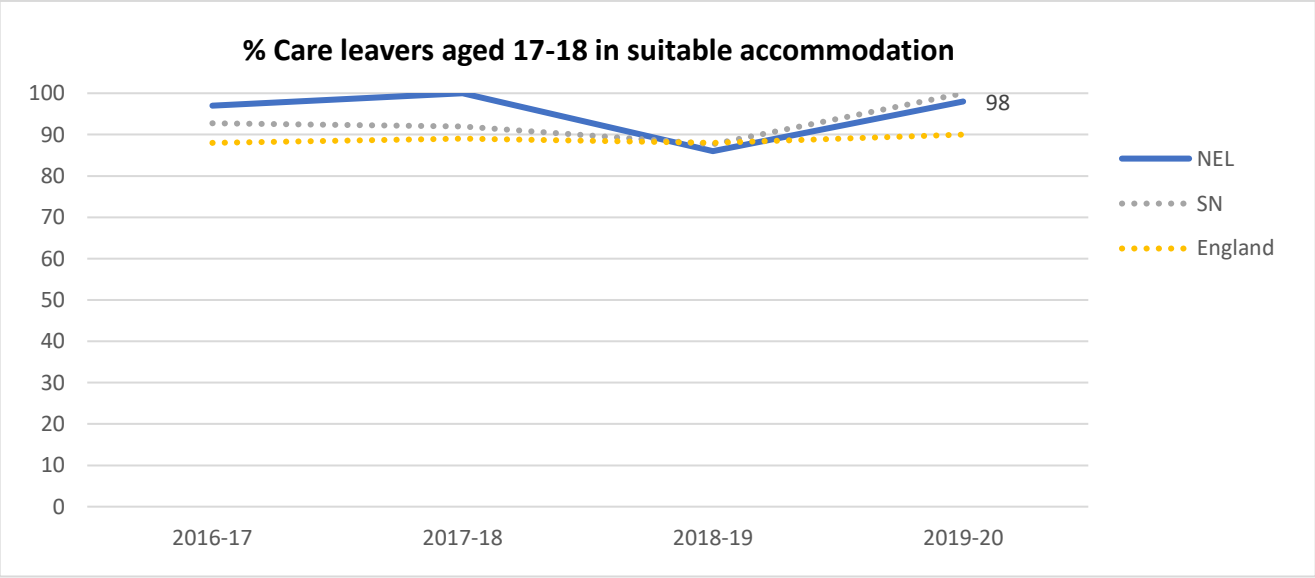
Foster placements

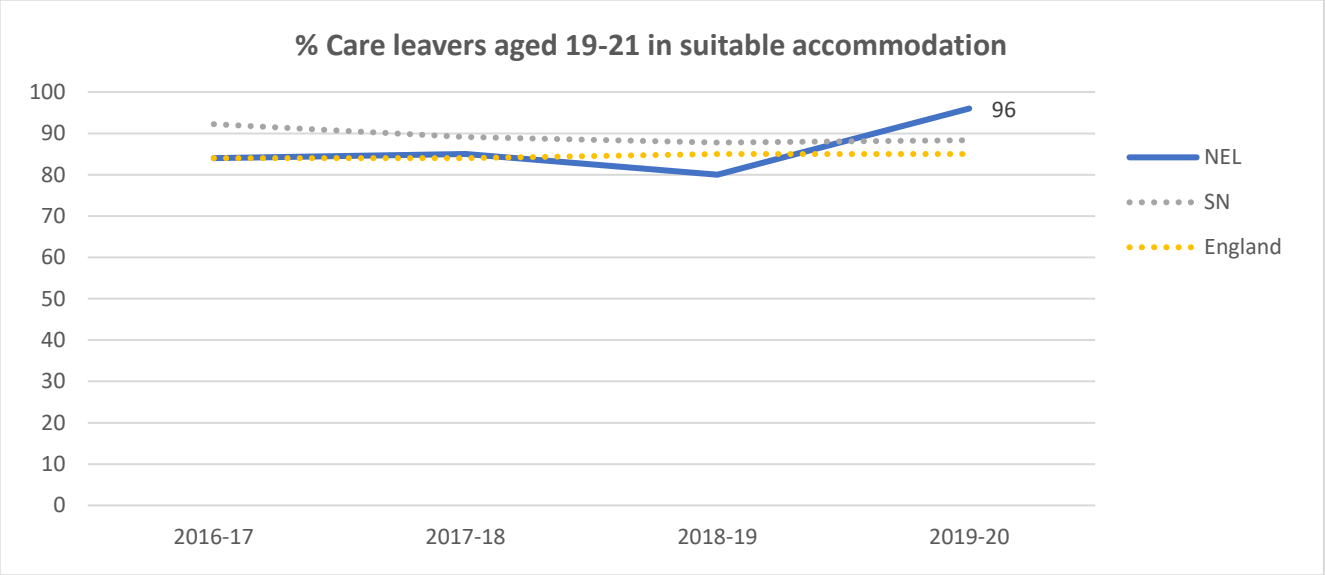




Commentary
The 10- to 15-year-olds is the largest age band of children in foster care with (140). In house children's homes are used for the ages 10 to 17 years more than private children's homes. NELC is fortunate in being able to provide such a high proportion of homes to CLA from in-house resources. The cost of our in-house provision is considerably less than purchased care. To better understand how to make the best use of our provision, NELC should start monitoring occupancy rates for its children's homes and foster carers.

Percentage of Care Leavers in suitable accommodation



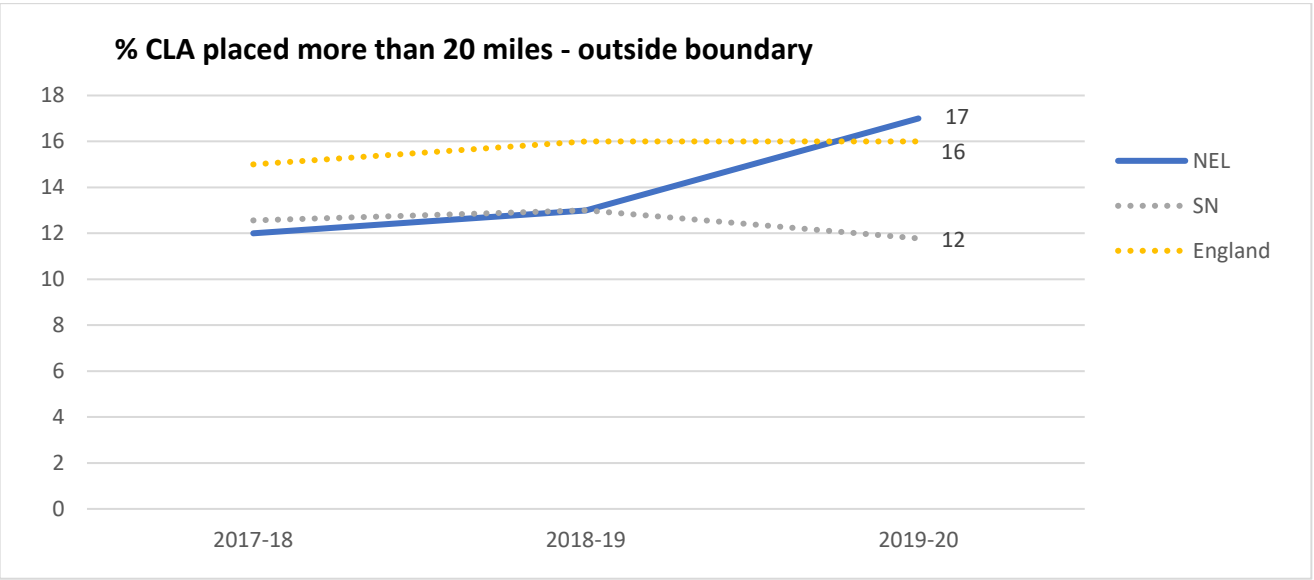


Commentary on Suitable accommodation

42 (98%) out of the 43 care leavers aged 17-18 in 2019-20 were in suitable accommodation. This is slightly below stat neighbours 100% but well above England average of 90%. 1 care leaver was in custody which is unsuitable.

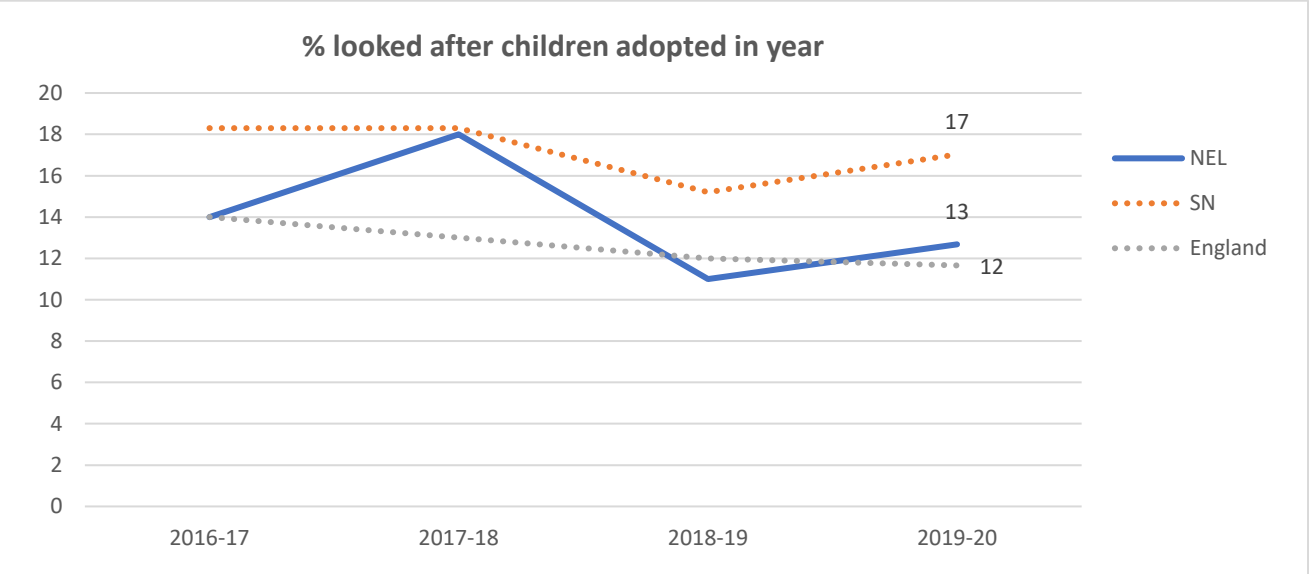
The high percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation shows that NELC is effective at supporting young people with their housing. Further work needs to be done to understand the different types of housing they live in and how well this meets their needs.

Children placed out of area.



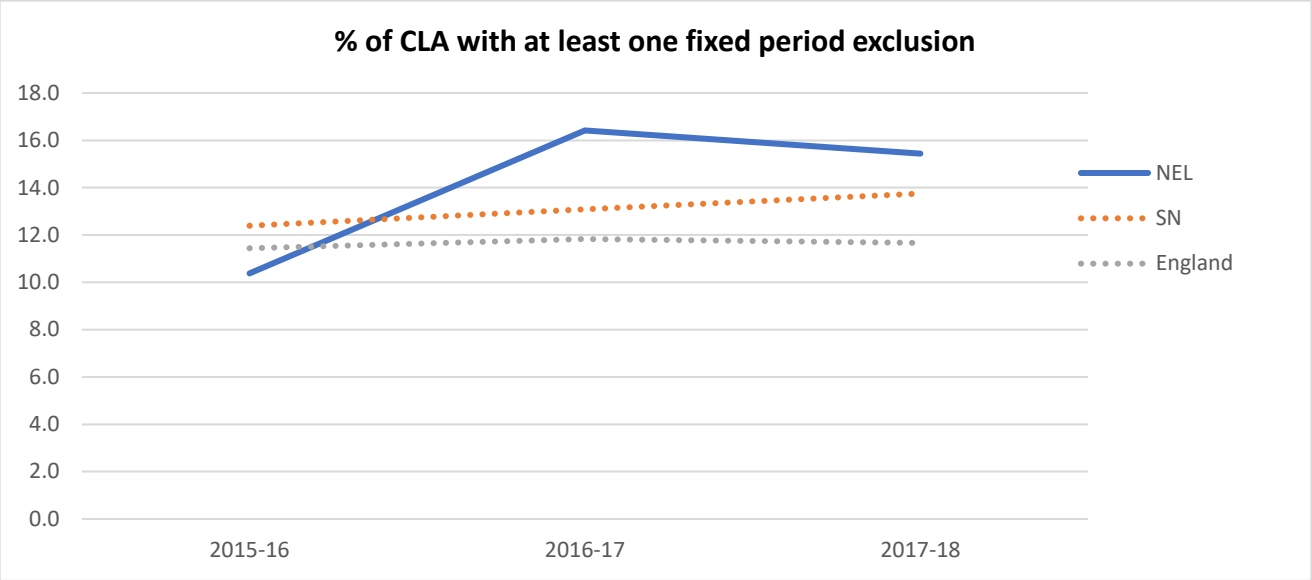
Commentary on placed out of area
Increase in 2019-20 of children placed over 20 miles from home and outside of LA boundary to 17% due to increased numbers of CLA and the pressure this puts on placements. NEL are above the stat neighbour average of 12% but in line with England average of 16%. Despite having a lot of in-house provision, there are few private sector providers who have a large presence in the local area. There is just one private children's home in the borough. As part of our drive to improve the care we are able to provide we will seek to encourage independent fostering agencies and children's home providers to focus more of their provision in NEL.

Adoption and Permanence

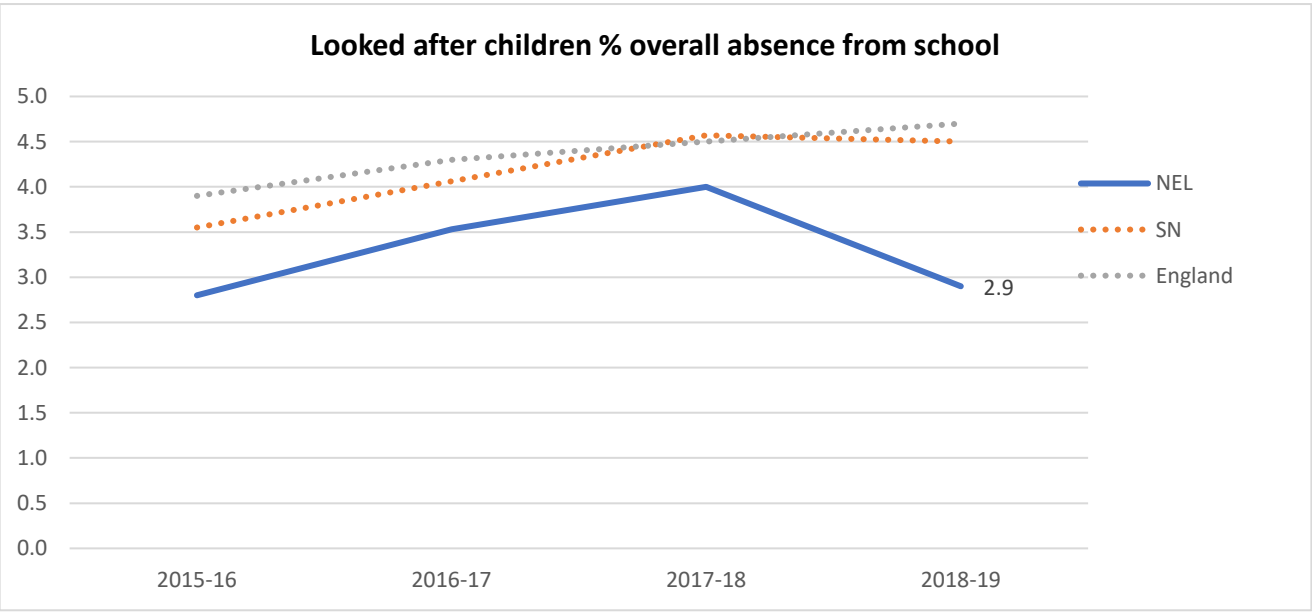


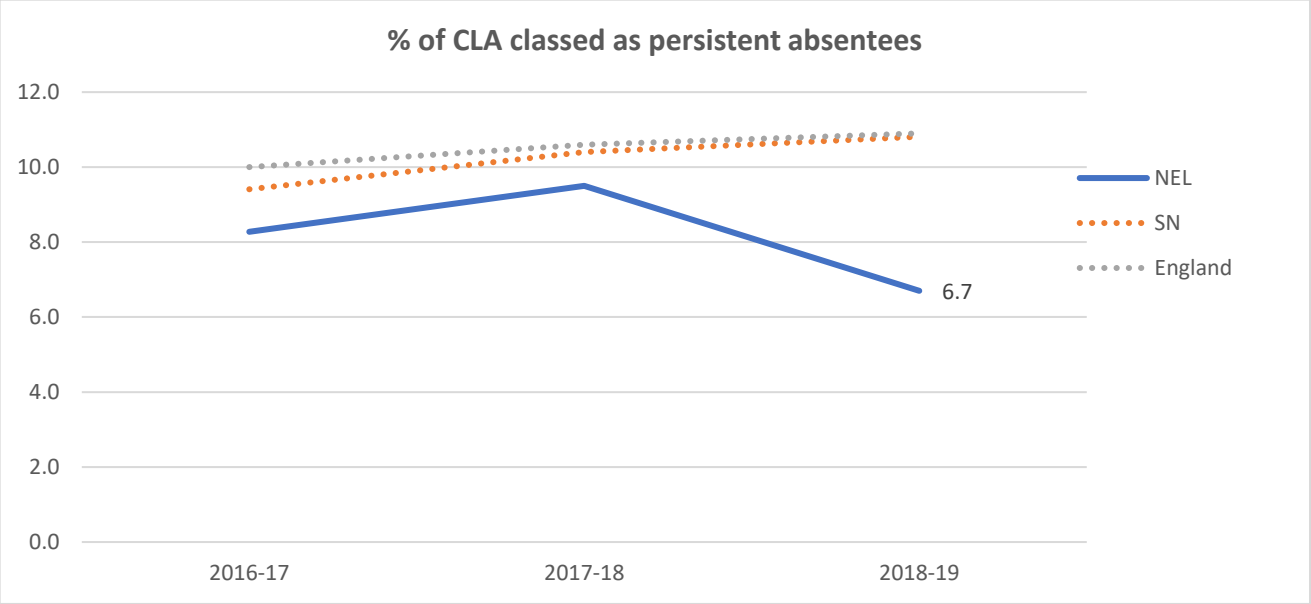
Commentary on adoption
18 (13%) of the children ceasing to be looked were adopted in 2019-20. This is an increase from 11 children adopted in 2018-19. NEL are above England average of 12% but below stat neighbour average of 17%. Because of a variety of reasons including improvements in IVF success rates, Re B (A Child) and Re B-S, adoptions have declined in recent years and this is mirrored locally. Adoption remains the preferred option for children who cannot return to their family and we will continue to work with the Regional Adoption Agency (One Adoption North and Humber) wherever a plan for adoption is appropriate.

Education and Absence



	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
NELC %	13.11	7.79	8	10.38	16.4	15.4
National %	10.27	10.25	10.42	11.44	11.83	11.67
Regional %	8.59	9.36	10.35	11.72	12.06	12.21
All Children %	1.92	1.86	1.98	2.11	2.29	2.33





Commentary on exclusion and absence

23 (15.4%) of the 147 children looked after had at least one exclusion in the year. This is higher than statistical neighbour average of 13.8% and England average of 11%. Children looked after are five times more likely to receive a fixed period exclusion compared to all children nationally. Fixed period exclusions for all children have increased nationally but NEL had a spike in 2017-18 for secondary age CLA.

6.7% of CLA were classed as persistent absentees in 2018-19 which is a drop from 9.5 in 2017-18. NELC are outperforming stat neighbour and England average of 10.9%. The overall absence rate of looked after children from school in 2018-19 for NEL was 2.9% of sessions missed. This is lower than the stat neighbour average of 4.5% and England average of 4.7%.

Whilst it is promising to see the reduction in days missed by CLA from NEL, the disruption to schooling caused by the pandemic will certainly have curtailed our children's ability to benefit from education.

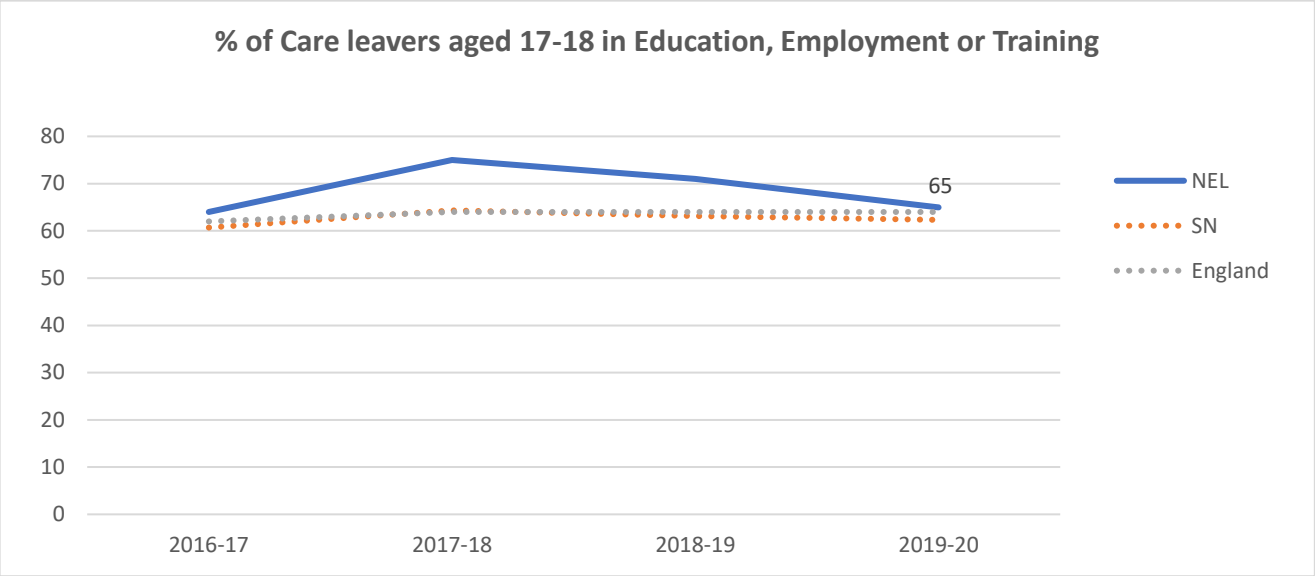
NELC will explore ways of supporting our children and young people to accelerate their learning.

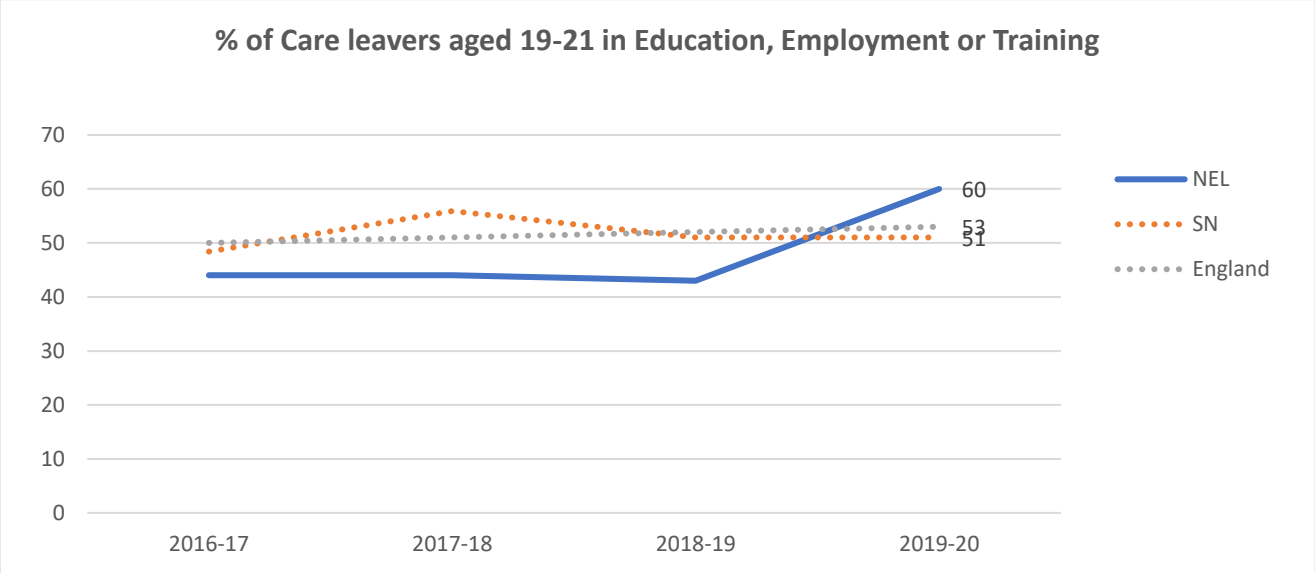
Key Stage 4

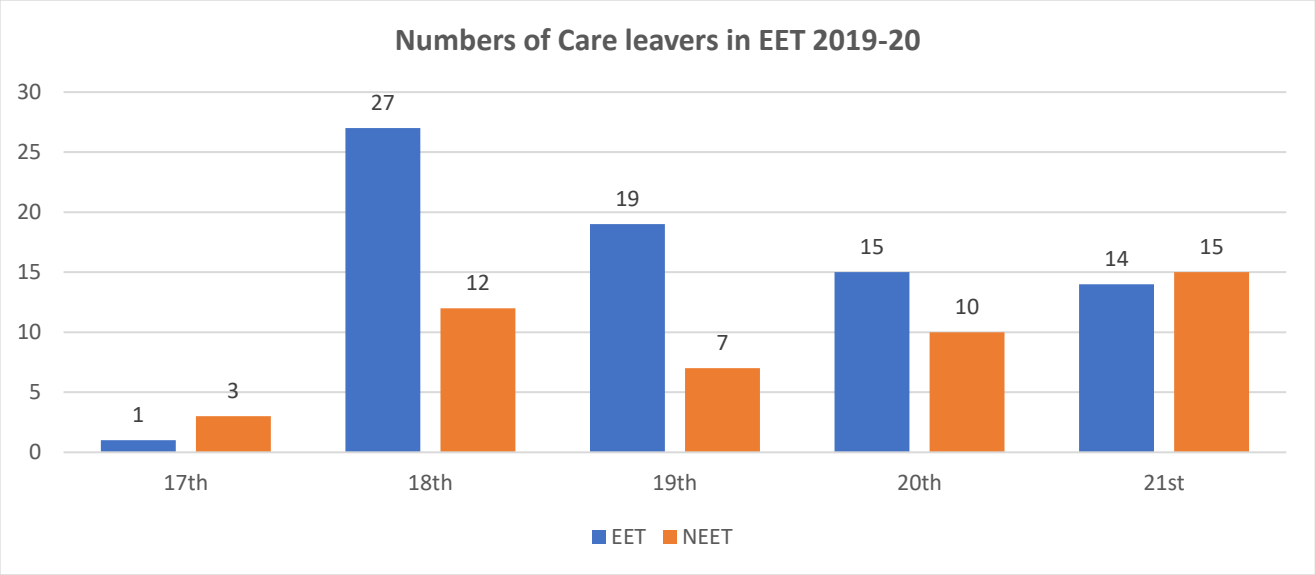
	NEL	NEL	NEL	Stat neighbour	England
	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2018-19	2018-19
Average Attainment 8 scores of looked after children at KS4	21.2	16.3	17.1	18.06	19.2
Average Progress 8 scores of looked after children at KS4	-1.55	-1.31	-1.53	-1.31	-1.23
GCSE grades 4–9 in English & Maths	33.3%	33.0%	21.2%	-	18%

Commentary on Key Stage 4
Average attainment 8 is an average score across best 8 GCSE results. Average attainment for children looked after in NEL decreased in 2017-18 but has increased slightly in 2018-19 to 17.1. Attainment is however still below stat neighbour and England average of 18.1 and 19.2, respectively. Average Progress 8 score is usually between -1 and +1. A score of +1 means that pupils in that school achieve one grade higher in each qualification than other similar pupils nationally. A score of -1 means they achieve one grade lower. Average progress for CLA has declined slightly in 2018-18 with an average of one and half grade less than expected in each qualification. On average stat neighbours and England averages show a decline of 1.3 or 1.2 grades lower than expected. NEL are therefore performing worse than stat neighbour or England average. Because the numbers of CLA in KS4 is low, the performance data is highly erratic. Although young people's results show a reduction in performance, it is not clear that this reflects a real issue. Despite the limited usefulness of the data, it remains the case that children in care do less well than their peers and NELC through the work of its virtual school will continue to support all our young people to fulfil their potential.

NEET/EET


% of Care leavers aged 17-18 in Education, Employment or Training
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
65
2016-17
2017-18
2018-19
2019-20
NEL
SN
England


% of Care leavers aged 19-21 in Education, Employment or Training
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
60
53
51
2016-17
2017-18
2018-19
2019-20
NEL
SN
England



Commentary on Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training

Of the 43 care leavers aged 17-18, 28 (65%) were in education, employment, or training (EET) at their birthday window, whilst 15 (35%) were not in education, employment, or training (NEET). This is a drop on the previous 2 years performance. The % of children in EET is however still slightly above the stat neighbour average of 62% and England average of 64%.

48 care leavers aged 19-21 were EET (60%), whilst 32 were NEET (40%). This is an increase in the % of EET from 43% recorded in 2018-19. NEL's % of EET for care leavers aged 19-21 is now higher than both stat neighbour (51%) and England average (53%).

Although 32 young people are recorded as NEET, we are aware that almost 20 are currently unavailable for work or training, primarily because of illness or parenting young children.

More needs to be done to support care experienced young people to benefit from education, or training.

NELC will explore widening the education available to our young people by establishing apprenticeships and traineeships targeted at young people leaving care.

Health Assessments

	NELC	NELC	NELC	Stat neighbour	England
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2019-20	2019-20
Number of children looked after on 31 March who had been looked after for at least 12 months	232	287	351	334	56780
Number of children whose immunisations were up to date	225	285	329	308	49860
Number of children who had their teeth checked by a dentist	218	272	329	292	48610
Number of children who had their annual health assessment	230	287	320	307	51350
Percentage of children whose immunisations were up to date	97	99	94	93	88
Percentage of children who had their teeth checked by a dentist	94	95	94	88	86
Percentage of children who had their annual health assessment	99	100	91	93	90
Percentage of children whose development assessments were up to date	100	100	100	95	88

Commentary on Health Assessments
329 (94%) of the children looked after for at least 12 months as of 31st March were up to date with their immunisations. This is a drop on previous years but is still above stat neighbour and England averages. 329 (94%) had their teeth checked in 2019-20 which is in line with previous years and is well above stat neighbour (88%) and England average of 86%. 320 children (91%) had an annual health check in 2019-20 which is a drop from previous year's high performance and is below stat neighbour average of 93% but is still above the England average of 88%. 100% of the 65 children aged four and under on 31st March 2020 and looked after for 12 months or more had up to date development assessments. NELC performance on these measures is strong. However, despite regular health assessments, it remains the case that not all health conditions experienced by CLA are well managed. This is particularly the case for young people with mental health difficulties. We will ensure over the next period that we further our partnership with the CCG to ensure that our

children and young people receive the healthcare that they need.

Emotional Health – SDQ

	NELC	NELC	NELC	Stat neighbour	England
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2019-20	2019-20
Total number of CLA looked after for at least 12 months aged 5 to 16	183	210	254	256	42500
Total number of CLA looked after for at least 12 months aged 5 to 16 with an SDQ score	155	181	231	216	34280
Percentage of children for whom an SDQ score was submitted	85	86	91	83	81
Average score per child	15	15	15	14	14
% Banded SDQ score: Normal	45	40	48	50	49
% Banded SDQ score: Borderline	12	16	19	13	13
% Banded SDQ score: Concern	44	44	33	37	38

Commentary on SDQs

231 (91%) of the 254 children who were CLA for at least 12 months and were aged between 5 and 16 had an SDQ completed in 2019-20, which is an increase from 86% in 2018-19. This is above stat neighbour average of 83% and England average of 81%.

The average score per child was 15 compared with stat neighbour and England average of 14.

NEL have seen a higher number of Normal scores and a smaller number of Concern scores in 2019-20.

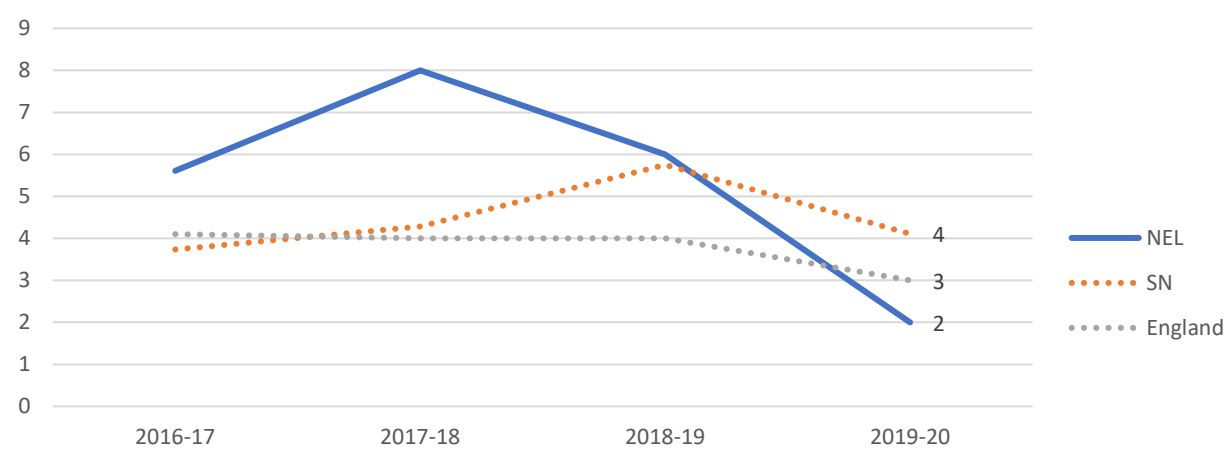
- 48% of children were scored as Normal which is in line with stat neighbours and England average.
- 19% were banded Borderline which is higher than stat neighbours and England average of 13%.
- 33% were banded Concern which is lower than Stat neighbours (37%) or England average (38%) and is lower than previous years.

NELC has a higher average SDQ score than comparators but fewer children demonstrating scores that are of concern (33% NEL vs 38% England). However, 33% of our current CLA population is 200 children with mental health difficulties that significantly affect their ability to thrive.

The new Barnardo's Haven scheme aims to provide mental health support for young people in NEL.

NELC will continue to build on strong partnership with the local CCG to monitor the impact of the Haven project and commission other services that our young people need.

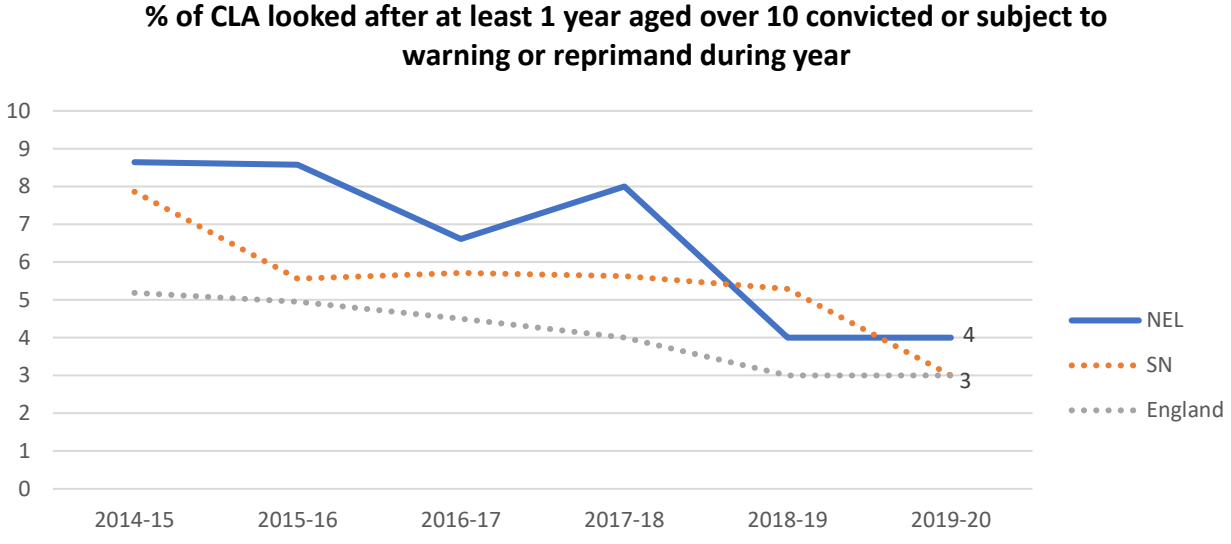
Substance Misuse



Commentary on Substance Misuse
351 children were looked after for at least 12 months, seven of which were identified as having a substance misuse problem. This is a reducing trend from a peak of 18 children in 2017-18, even though the numbers of looked after children for 12 months or more have increased considerably since 2017-18. Of the seven children, 100% accepted and received an intervention during the year. This is better than the stat neighbour average of 42% and 45% England average. Substance misuse is not a regular problem for young people in care in North East Lincolnshire. We will continue to monitor this to ensure that performance remains strong.

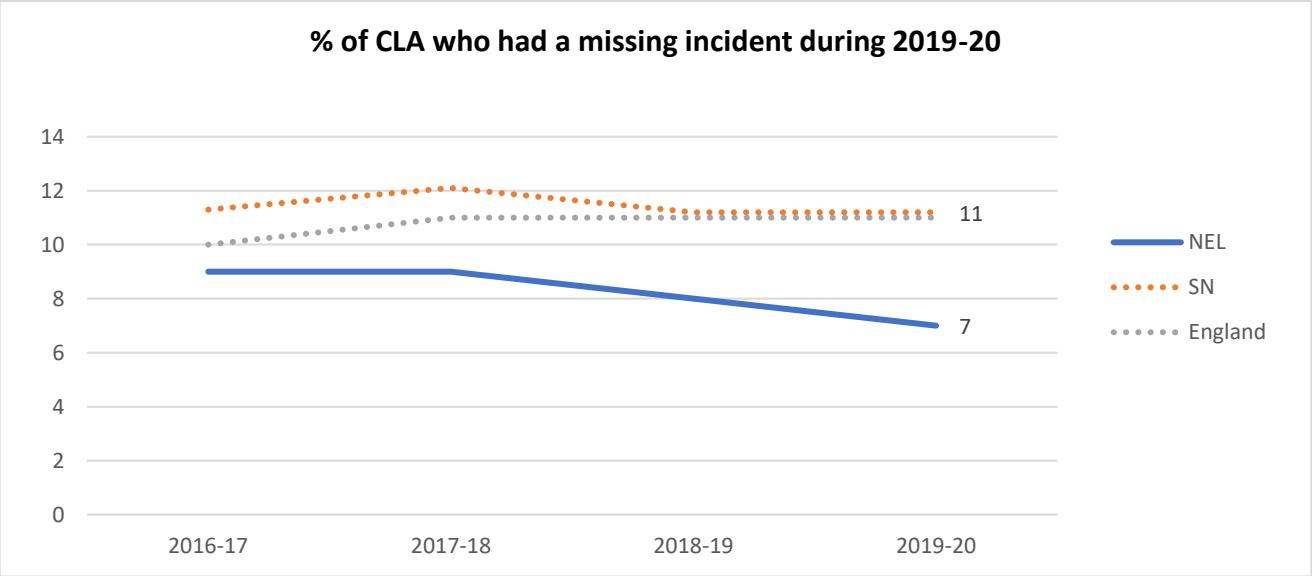
Offending

Reducing the use of custody



Commentary on Offending
Nine children who were looked after for 12 months or more and were aged over 10 were convicted or subject to warning or reprimand during 2019-20. This is an increase from six children in 2018-19, however the % of the CLA population aged over 10 and looked after for more than one year has remained the same at 4%. This is due to an increase in the number of children in the cohort. NEL is slightly above the stat neighbour and England average of 3%. Like other areas, NEL has been a target of county lines drug gangs. Thankfully, the numbers of our young people convicted remains low in part because of the success of the council's GRAFT programme. We hope to further improve the safety of our children by establishing a contextual safeguarding hub to advise on complex cases of criminal exploitation.

Children Missing from Care



Commentary on Missing
Of the 712 children looked after at any point in 2019-20, 51 (7%) had a missing incident during the year. 31 of the 51 had more than one missing incident in year. There were 175 missing incidents recorded in year for Looked after children. NEL has performed consecutively better than stat neighbour or England average in the last few years. Whilst it is positive that relatively few children go missing from care in NEL, we are not effectively monitoring return home interviews. Consequently, we cannot be assured that all young people who go missing have the chance to discuss their concerns with someone. We will ensure that we begin to monitor the offer and take up of return home interviews. We will also discuss with the Police their offer of welfare checks to those who go missing.