

Key Messages for Children Looked After

Extract from "*Annual review of Safeguarding and Looked After Children data 2012*"

- The rate of children looked after was below national and statistical neighbour average rates but has been increasing sharply in recent months.
- The increases in section 47s and other indicators of safeguarding activity suggest that the children looked after rate may continue to rise for the foreseeable future.
- More than two thirds of children starting to be looked after do so as a result of abuse and neglect and this is higher than the national average.
- The proportions of children on Care Orders and Placement Orders are above the national average whilst the proportion accommodated under section 20 is half the national rate.
- In order to gain a better understanding of the issue, we need to put in place robust arrangements to record incidents of children missing from care.
- Almost three quarters of children looked after are in foster placements but this is slightly below the national rate whilst one in ten is placed with parents and this is double the national rate.
- The proportion of children looked after placed outside local authority boundaries is almost half the national rate.
- The net gain in children looked after as a result of other authorities placing their children within Lancashire rose to 390 and we remain the third biggest net importer of children nationally.
- Around half of children looked after are placed in the County Council's own provision and this is below national and regional average rates.
- Long term and short term placement stability is good.
- The proportions of children looked after with up to date immunisations and dental checks remain slightly below the national average.
- The proportion of children looked after identified as having substance misuse problems is higher than the national average and the proportion refusing treatment appears quite high.
- School attendance and fixed term exclusion rates for children looked after are better than average.
- Levels of educational attainment are generally in line with national average rates.
- The proportion of care leavers in employment or training has dropped by more than half over the last year.
- The proportion of care leavers in education, employment and training and the proportion in suitable accommodation are now some way below national average rates.
- The proportion of children looked after cautioned or convicted remains above the national average.
- Adoption, Residence Order and Special Guardianship Order rates are all above the national average.
- The time taken in processing adoptions needs to improve in order to meet Government thresholds.
- The proportion of children looked after returning home to live with parents or relatives has fallen and is below average.