



Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report 2010/11

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***Please note:**

The performance data available for 2010/11 has reflected the national indicators. There is a need to move from a focus on performance of the operation of the systems to more outcomes based information. This will be more qualitative, for example the experience of the child/young person in the planning process and the quality of the plans. This will be a priority for the next year to develop alongside the operational teams. The Unit is also developing performance data that reflects the performance of the review function.

Introduction

In order for the aspirations and expectations for Children in our Care and Care Leavers to be realised, it is important that the Board responsible for achieving them receives regular reports that set out the progress and obstacles against the agreed outcome that Cheshire East is making every day better for our children and young people. This report is part of that process. As a national requirement, its primary purpose is set out in the Independent Reviewing Officer's (IRO) Handbook (section 7.2)

This report will provide an overview of the national context and local picture including the outcomes for cared for children and the performance of the conference and review team. It will include case studies in order to demonstrate experiences of our cared for population and care leavers. It will also set out the policy which will be shared with service users and which includes how the service might remove barriers to ensure better outcomes for children.

The requirement of the Corporate Parenting Board is to challenge and scrutinise this report and move to consider and agree the recommendations and actions required.

Context for the report

The Independent Review Officer (IRO) role within Cheshire East Council is carried out by Independent Safeguarding Chairs (ISC's). It is a dual function, reviewing cared for children and children subject to child protection plans. This report focuses on the role in respect of cared for children. The report will refer to ISC's as IRO's for ease. It is within the statutory guidance that an annual report is written, and this report reflects contributions from Children's Service's and the advocacy service for Cared for Children commissioned from Barnardo's. It covers all children and young people that the Authority has corporate parenting responsibilities for.

1. National and local context for development of the service:

There has been a IRO service for Cared for Children for a number of years, but following a national review of the role, central government produced The IRO Handbook and gave it statutory status. This was fully implemented in April 2011 as part of changes to Children and Young Persons Act 2008. The principles of the new regulations require:

- Increase scrutiny and oversight of the child's care plan
- Increase participation of children and young people and their families
- Securing greater stability for children
- Care plans must be robust enough to meet court requirements
- Clear processes of assessment, care planning, intervention and review to improve experience and outcomes for cared for children.

Summarised below are the key national changes to the role and function of the IRO within the new regulations, as introduced by the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and the actions required locally to implement this:

| Relevant Legislation | Action | Reasoning | Current Status for Implementation in CE |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Section 25A(1) 1989 Children Act | When a child first becomes cared for, a named individual must be appointed by the local authority as the IRO for the child | The intention is that each looked after child should have a named IRO to provide continuity in the oversight of the case and to enable to IRO to develop a consistent relationship with the child | Achieved. All children have an allocated IRO, and has continuity with the same chair. |
| Section 25B (1) Children 1989 Act | IRO to monitor the local authority's performance of its functions in relation to the child's case. | This duty extends the IRO's monitoring role, which was previously confined to the authority's functions in respect of the review. The intention is to give the IRO a more effective independent oversight of the child's case and ensure that the child's interests are protected | Partly Achieved. The Safeguarding Unit has implemented a Quality Assurance framework (audits). IROs are integral in pairing up with Auditors and providing peer support. We have completed two cycles, Child Protection and Children in need cases. Progress is being made through the audit steering group and a report was agreed by SMT on 20.04.11 Each IRO oversees cases demonstrated in ICS |

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|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | | casework discussion, but further work is necessary to develop further Quality Assurance measures. |
| Section 25B (1)(c) 1989 Children Act | IRO to ensure that the local authority give due consideration to any views expressed by the child | This requirement is intended to reinforce the local authority's duty under section 22(4) and (5) of the 1989 Act to ascertain and give due consideration to the wishes and feelings of the child when making any decision with respect to the child | Partly Achieved. Pre meetings with Children have started. Currently we achieve approx 50% The most challenging visit to undertake is prior to first review (within 20days) arguably the most important one, but with very short timescales this proves challenging to achieve. All minutes evidence wishes and feelings Introduction of QA feedback forms for all parents and children at all reviews. |
| Regulation 36(2) of the Regulations | IRO's have the authority to adjourn review meetings if they feel that the process would be unproductive | This new flexibility is meant to prevent the meetings becoming a 'tick box' exercise. So, for example, the IRO might use this flexibility because there is a lack of key documentation or because the child has not been consulted about the purpose of the review. | Partly Achieved. This and other Standards has been agreed with Social Care colleagues. Each team has a link 'IRO' Meetings would be adjourned but the aim is to prevent the necessity for this to occur with good planning. |
| Regulation 36(1)(b) of the Regulations | IRO's must speak in private with each child prior to each review so that the IRO personally establishes the child's wishes and feeling about the issues to be covered at the care planning meeting | This requirement is intended to ensure that the child is properly consulted on matters relating to his/her care and is given the time to contribute to the content of the meeting | Achieved. Every child is spoken too privately before every review starts. |
| Section 25B(3) | Referral by an IROs of a case | The intention of this change is to | Achieved. The dispute resolution |

| | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1989 Act | to Cafcass should no longer seem a last resort, but can be considered at any time | reinforce the authority of the IRO to challenge poor practice around the child's case. | process protocol has been implemented and has been successfully used once for cared for children this reporting year. |
| Section 6.1 6.11 | Dispute resolution and complaints | Must be placed on child's file IRO must be informed about any child making a complaint on behalf of a child | Operational teams to complete Achieved. Updated spreadsheet on complaints regularly shared with IROs |
| Sec 6.13 | IRO must have provision of legal advice | This is to ensure needs of child are met | Not fully Achieved. Regional response has been gauged. CEC is currently drafting a protocol for potential regional adoption, a report has been agreed by SMT on 26.05.11. |

2. Performance report

The next section will look at performance information. **Appendix 5** is the Cared for Children monitoring report 2010/11. A number of themes arising from this are discussed in the next sections.

Ensuring children's care is planned well and is timely

It is vital that the Local Authority collate performance information regarding cared for children to ensure there is a way of analysing that practice is ensuring that the best possible outcomes are being achieved. The information in this section is used to ensure children's care planning is timely and well planned; wishes and feelings are gathered of children and carers; and that all children's needs are being met holistically to ensure better outcomes. As with any performance information there are limitations to the data and some areas have been supplemented by case studies to illustrate the impact of practice for individuals. A more outcomes accountability framework is being developed over the next year and this should improve the information available to ensure that best practice becomes every day practice.

Number of Reviews Chaired by an IRO

The number of cared for children reviews chaired by an IRO in 2010/11 was 1352. The number of reviews chaired held in 2009/10 was 1154. This shows an increase of 198 (17%).

The number of children cared for in Cheshire East increased throughout 2009/10 reaching a peak in September and October 2010 of 472. This figure was considered to be out of step with statistical neighbours and robust action was taken to monitor and review the admissions process to ensure that formal safeguarding action was being taken at the earliest stage where need was recognised, avoiding children experiencing harm where this could be managed without removing them from home. The most recent figures demonstrate a gradual reduction in the Cared for population and an increase in the numbers of children subject to a plan. The national context is significant as the external Inquiry into the death of Baby Peter was reported in December 2008 and Lord Laming published his report, "The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report" in March 2009. This was followed by a national increase in the numbers of cared for children and children subject to a plan. Since the peak in Cheshire East, the care for population has reduced to a figure of 438 (7%) as at 31.03.2011. See **Appendix 5** for full graphs, with statistical breakdowns.

| | |
|----------|-----|
| April 09 | 350 |
| March 10 | 432 |
| March 11 | 438 |

Following the significant increase in the cared for population, Children's Services responded positively by securing a significant uplift in staffing levels. At disaggregation, April 2009, the review team had 3.5 chairs covering child protection and cared for children. By April 2011 the team had 6.5 - an increase just under 50%, which has reflected the increased workload in respect of cared for children. The business support team remains under review and has received extra resources and processes have been streamlined to create efficiencies.

There was national concern that the 'Southwark Judgement' (made in May 2009), may result in a significant increase for Local Authorities (LA) in their Cared for Children population. This judgement states that all 16-17 year olds who are homeless have the legal right to be offered the services of Children and Families and given the option of being 'looked after' (Sec 20CA89). The LA has a duty to support these young people and this includes the provision of aftercare services for those accommodated longer than 13 weeks after their 16th birthday. In Cheshire East, we have not seen a rise in numbers because of this judgement, although there is currently a challenge through judicial review that some young people were not recognised as being eligible.

The increase in the numbers of cared for children has been an area that has required further interrogation, particularly as stated earlier the figure makes Cheshire East an outlier in its statistical neighbour group. There are clear strategies in place within Social Care to ensure the right children come into care, reflective of their needs for safeguarding action and that where it is appropriate, orders are discharged or for children/young people to return home safely. However, there has been concern that when comparative data is considered, that the Cared For population is disproportionately high in Cheshire East for the demographics of the child population. The reasons for this have been reviewed at both a strategic and operational level and some important changes have been introduced to ensure that

children do not become Cared For until it is the most appropriate action to safeguard the child, and the decision is overseen and agreed by an appropriate manager.

There is also a greater emphasis that plans are robust and timely in enabling parents and families to resume care of their children with support wherever this is safe and possible. It has also required a review of the effectiveness of early intervention safeguarding processes to ensure that help is provided when a need is identified to prevent escalation of difficulties and potential harm to the child. These changes are now being monitored within the performance reporting framework to review how effective they are. An area of development with partners over the forthcoming year is in the creation of a multi agency risk assessment tool to inform the CAF at the earliest stage and ensure effective provision of services to families at the earliest possible point.

The Number of Pathway Plans for Care Leavers chaired for a Pathway Plan Coordinator

The preparation of a Pathway Plan happens towards a cared for child's 16th birthday and takes over when a care plan ends. It will consider what support a young person needs to live independently and look at education and training needs as well as cultural and identity needs. Pathway plans for cared for children are completed by the Pathway Plan Coordinator and then reviewed by this role between the ages 18 to 21, at least once every 6 months, until the age of 21 or 24 if they remain in education (some young people leave care before 18 but continue to be reviewed by the IRO) Within many other Authorities Personal Advisors within the leaving care service review their own plans. The process in Cheshire East allows the role of the Pathway Plan Coordinator to add a level of independence and rigour and promoting a better experience for care leavers as there is robust oversight by an independent person, and continuity is provided through the provision of a single person to deliver the service and develop expertise.

The number of Pathway Plan initials and reviews for care leavers chaired by the Pathway Planning Co-ordinator in 2010/11 was **227**. This is an increase from 2009/2010 by **22**. A future (2011/12) challenge is the legal requirement which came into force April 2011 to review former relevant care leavers, (age 18-21) if they have a change of accommodation, and to manage this within 28 days of the move.

The number of pathway plans overdue in 2010/2011 was **48** out of a possible **227** (21%). This delay ranged from less than 1 week to over 4 weeks. The Pathway Planning Co-ordinator has a high caseload and has during part of the year not had business support. It is expected that this will improve over the next year.

Attendance at reviews in 2010/2011 by young people were **110** out of a possible **227** (48%)

In analysis of the reasons for the figure, the detailed explanation would suggest that some reviews are held through professionals, particularly those for young people with severe learning disabilities supported by Adult Services, where it is not constructive to hold a face to face review. It is vital to improve on the young person's

contribution, however there must be a recognition that young people will make choices about being engaged in their reviews and steps to improve this must also take account of personal choice. The attendance at a review is only one method for engaging with the young person in the process of planning for them, and the range of creative opportunities needs to be maximised. This is a priority work stream for the next year. See also 4 below.

Occasionally a set review date with a care leaver will need to be cancelled at short notice if the young person has other commitments, and this either causes a late review or review through professionals. It is estimated this is in approximately 30% of cases, which can prove challenging at times.

The Pathway plan Coordinator has managed to absorb this extra case load within the last 12 months. We will continue to encourage attendance and engagement by young people at their meetings but recognise the challenge when some care leavers are dis-engaged from this process, developing creative ways to engage with young people is common for the co-ordinator who completed on review via text messaging-

The development of the 16+ Service, has really seen benefits for young people. The Pathway Planning Co-ordinator has seen significant improvement in communication with young people and between herself and the team. This is leading to a greater engagement of young people with planning once they have left care. The figures over the coming year should improve on young people engagement in their pathway plans.

3. Timeliness of Care for Children Reviews

It is essential that reviews are held on time. The potential impact on the children and young people if they are not can result in plans not being implemented; situations are allowed to drift without adequate oversight and challenge to ensure that the child's needs are at the heart of all decision making. Some 'drift' in planning for cared for children and care leavers has been a feature of cared for children in Cheshire East historically and it is crucial that IRO's oversee plans robustly and bring together professionals with carers and children with their families to plan together how to improve the outcomes for that child/young person. Research has shown us that when we plan well and in a timely fashion the outcomes are better.

Of the 1352 reviews, 77 were late (5.7%). The first review should be held with 20 working days of coming into care, the second within the 3rd month and thereafter at 6 monthly intervals. The reviews can be held more often if the needs of the child require this. At time of writing the figure given above is yet to be finalised, it may go down, once final administrative checks are made. The reasons for late reviews are usually in the following categories.

- 1) Late due to poor notification by Social work staff therefore too late to organise a review (most common when a child become subject to an ICO)
- 2) Late due to staff sickness – unable to re-arrange at short notice

3) Late due to staff shortages and case transfers

In order to improve on this practice a number of actions have been taken. With regard to late notification, a protocol has been written with Social Care explaining the timescales and that all late notifications will be challenged with Practice Consultants. Each IRO is linked to a team and teams are offered support with regard to this protocol with Social Workers.

The development of the Unit Coordinator role and extra business support in Social Care should ensure that Social workers can prioritise non business tasks and such information can be given to the Unit by Unit Coordinators.

The next year should see a reduction of case transfers as the new service embeds and therefore should not significantly affect figures next year.

4. Ensuring children's wishes and feelings are part of their care planning and Reviews

It is vital that children's wishes and feelings are actively sought and integrated within care planning and service delivery. By involving the child in decision making it is more likely that the children will understand and therefore agree their care plan and this will facilitate the process of achieving better outcomes. Similarly if professionals having a better understanding of the perspective of the child and they will shape their services accordingly. We are making constant improvements to our service delivery.

Local Authorities have been required to include in the SSDA 903 return, data on the participation of children at statutory reviews. Local authorities must "provide the method of participation of the last review held in the year". There are a number of participation codes to record:

- whether a child was present and made a contribution
- expressed their views through an advocate or another medium or played no part in the planning process

The figures for Cheshire East over the last year are as follows:

| Method Of Communication Code | Method of Communication | Total |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| PN0 | CHILD AGED UNDER 4 | 271 |
| PN1 | CHILD ATTENDS SPEAKS FOR SELF | 388 |
| PN2 | CHILD ATTENDS ADVOCATE SPEAKS | 21 |
| PN3 | CHILD ATTENDS NON-VERBAL VIEWS | 8 |
| PN4 | CHILD ATTENDS VIEWS NOT GIVEN | 4 |
| PN5 | ADVOCATE REPRESENTS CHILD | 444 |
| PN6 | CHILD USES FACILITATIVE MEDIUM | 26 |
| PN7 | CHILD'S VIEWS NOT PRESENTED | 57 |
| (blank) | (this group will be given more detailed categorisation over coming weeks, as remedial work is completed on the data) | 133 |
| Total | | 1352 |

In 2010/2011 the child made a contribution in 82% of reviews. In the previous year (2009/2010) this figure was 83%. However as the total number of children was greater, this was an actual increase of 50 children who contributed to their review. An increase would have been expected year on year as the systems for consultation become more embedded and the IRO handbook now has statutory status. In considering the situation in Cheshire East that may have contributed to this figure, there have been changes in IROs for children (due to staff vacancies) and in Social Workers which may have led some children feeling less engaged in the process.

- 21 children expressed their views through an advocate out of 1352 reviews in 2010/11 and an average cared for population of 450 over the year (5%).

- 57 (13%) played no part in the process out of 1352 reviews in 2010/11.

The Local Authority have a duty to try and promote involvement of children and young people and over the next year a priority area for development will be with the IROs looking at more creative ways to engage children and young people in the process and gathering greater evidence of the engagement with children by developing better feedback systems regarding reviews and other services delivered over the coming year. The team are looking at young people chairing their own reviews. Recently Child A 'chaired' her meeting, send out invitations, held professionals to account and enjoyed being at the centre of the process!

Children are currently invited to reviews where appropriate to their age and understanding. They will receive an invitation that is designed to be understandable according to their needs. A visit ahead of their review will be offered in some cases and certainly a slot with a chair ahead of the meeting on the day. If the child/young person does not attend, every effort is made to gauge their wishes and feelings via carers or other means of direct contact. Some children receive a letter with the outcome of the meeting. This would be something that needs to be embedded across the team, when capacity allows, as a matter of good practice.

The service needs to constantly develop its method of engaging young people and children within reviews and as part of our quality assurance framework we are addressing this constantly. The priority areas over the next year are to gain user feedback and develop systems including the use of software to engage young people in expressing their wishes and feelings. There is a challenge about how broader outcomes for children in Cheshire East's Care are evidenced and the direct impact that the IRO role is making.

The Quality Assurance section on Page 21 gives further detail on how information from children is shaping our services.

5. Advocacy for children in care and the Children in Care Council

Over the past year there has been a full review of the Advocacy Service offered to CE cared for children and young people. As result of this the Advocacy Contract has now been updated to meet current needs and has been delivered by Barnardos since December 2010. The remit has widened and all service users of Social care can access this service. This has meant children who are subject to a child protection plan, children with disabilities and children in care (care leavers) can all make use of this vital service. This represents an important improvement in the Local Authorities service to the children it is engaged with The contract is closely monitored, there are clear performance outcomes agreed within the contract and a steering group operates to develop the work. A part of the monitoring that takes place requires Barnardos to report on what difference their service is making to children's outcomes.

The support function to the Children in Care Council (CICC) also sits within the Advocacy contract as part of Barnardos service. Since January 2011 there has been a 're-launch' of the Council with an emphasis on the support and advocacy children in care receive. The council consists of 6-10 young people all in Cheshire East's care. They meet monthly and are supported by Barnardos and a participation officer from Connexions. Their agenda will be varied and will cover topics that they want to progress around issues that affect them i.e. 'sofa surfing' (Cared for children/care leavers sleeping on each others sofa's), taxis from school issues, and contact with family members. They have recently reflected on their achievements this last year and also produced an action plan of what they want to focus on in the coming 12 months (set out below). The Council is considered a key body and is given high status within the senior management team. For example the Director and the Lead Member for Children's Services have attended the Council on more than one occasion to both hear the views personally and to demonstrate direct accountability to the young people.

The CICC have listed their Achievements below:

Cheshire East Children in Care Council Achievements 2011:

- Providing Independent Safeguarding Chairs consultation on their role
- Attendance Corporate Parenting Board – January 2011
- Reviewing terms of reference of CICC
- Supporting recruitment of Barnardos staff
- Setting up the CICC Website
- Producing a newsletter
- Developing an action plan for coming year
- Producing consultation on fostering for scrutiny committee

These achievements have had a potential positive impact for all the children in care in Cheshire East. By providing these children with a collective voice it has helped the council design services and ensure cared for children know how to access advice and support.

Cheshire East Children in Care Council Action Plan 2011:

The council have set out below what their action plan for the forthcoming year is:

- Being allowed pets in foster and residential care
- Sofa surfing
- Social work practice: frequent changes in social worker to children
- Speed of response from social worker – too dependent on the individual
- Holding a council meeting in a residential unit to encourage participation and discuss provision
- Transition to independence: Clear information on entitlements and what is available in terms of support at different stages
- Level of practical support (eg; decorating)Events (eg: awards/ celebration)

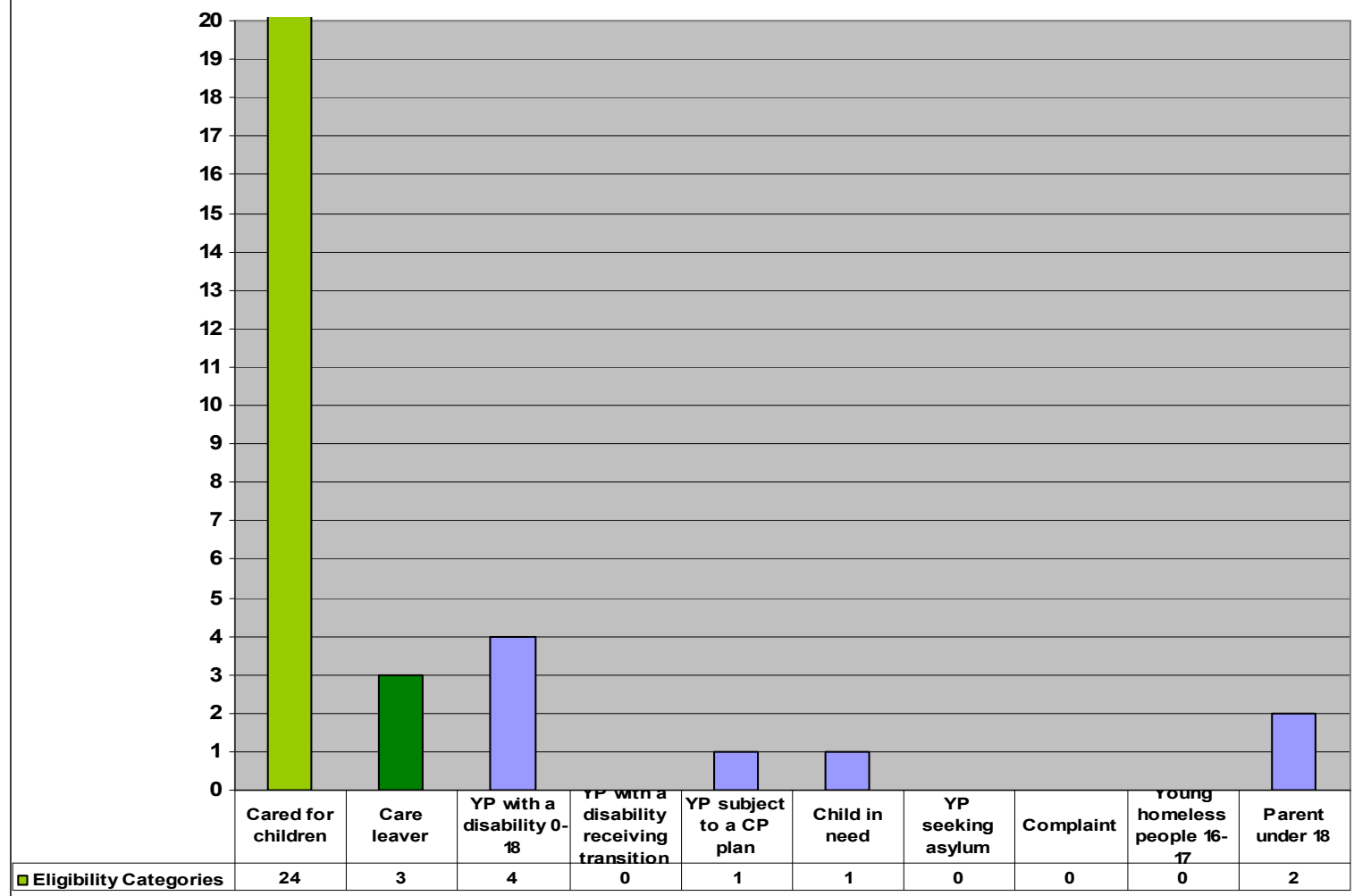
- Fundraising (for jumpers/ CICC laptop)
- Information pack on what rights young people have (eg: right to access records)
- How to hear younger children's voices and voiding labelling
- IROs: Ground rules and preparation for reviews
- Accuracy of letters
- Format of reviews
- Level of choice about being "in the spotlight"
- Annual survey from Cheshire East for young people – 'how well have we done this year?'

These issues represent significant strides in the young people developing their plans for the Council and a healthy challenge to the services that are responsible for their care and well-being. The CICC frequently have visitors and have recently had the Lead member, Director of Children's Services and David Mellor the Independent Chair of LSCB Board. These produce a great opportunity to consult with young people and ensure their wishes and feelings are being promoted throughout the authority and in service development, and ensure they have a direct voice with lead senior managers hold them to account.

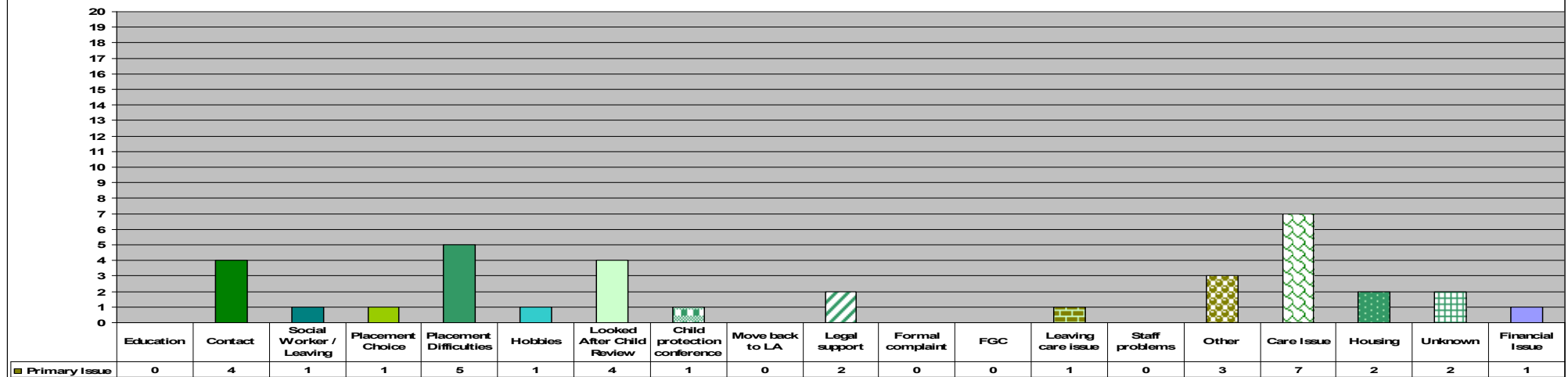
The CICC were also involved during February in recruitment for sessional advocates for Barnardo's independent advocacy service. Council members formed a young people's panel to successfully recruit two new advocates for Barnardo's service. Following some training around interviewing skills, young people grilled candidates around their experience, values, understanding of the advocacy role, knowledge of safeguarding and commitment to equalities. CICC also joined the recruitment panel for the residential service and IROs this year.

The following two graphs show the activity of the contract in the last quarter of 2010/11.

Cheshire East Referrals Dec 2010-March 2011



Cheshire East Referrals by Primary Issue Dec 2010-March 2011



The following case study provides a more qualitative view understanding of the advocacy work.

Young person's issues

Two young people, D and E were transferred to Barnardo's from the previous provider. They wanted support and advocacy in representing their views in respect of contact with their birth families. In 2010 a court ruling had been made about this which they felt did not take account of their wishes to have less contact.

Nature of intervention

The advocate explained to D and E the role of the service, and in the first instance contacted their Social Worker and IRO to check previous involvement and history. These professionals had also felt that the children's views had not been fully accounted for in the court ruling, and asked for a written record of the children's views for file to add to those prepared by the previous service provider. The advocate then returned to the children to discuss their options for how or whether to take the issue forwards. After reflecting on this over Christmas, the children asked for legal advice, and were supported to attend and brief a local solicitor identified by the Children's Legal Centre. This solicitor then liaised with the previous Guardian and obtained court details from the foster carer. The solicitor wants to take the case forward and a meeting has been arranged with this person and the children for next week. It was important that the children had the space and opportunity to express their views. The children had time to reflect on their options before making a decision to proceed in taking the issue forward.

Impact on the young person

The impact is not known yet as the situation is ongoing. It is hoped that the older child's views will be given greater weight this time, although in many ways the younger child is more vocal about her wishes. It is also hoped that the eventual outcome is that both children feel they have had the opportunity for their voice to be heard more than previously.

6. Ensuring parent's wishes and feelings are part of children's care planning

An important part of planning effectively for Children in care and in carrying out the statutory duties is to promote the involvement of parents in the care planning of their children. Children will often remain in contact with their birth families many of whom still exercise parental responsibility in partnership with the Local Authority.

There was previously a gap in the collation of information for parental involvement in the review process for their children. This has been addressed and quarterly monitoring is now in place and a comprehensive picture will be provided next year. The reasons for non attendance are as follows:

- Children and young people specifically requesting they do not attend

- Parent deceased
- Unknown
- Placement order granted
- Unaccompanied asylum seekers
- Lack of priority by social workers to invite and give good notice to parents.

The Unit ensures that all parents do receive minutes from all reviews, and where special orders are in place, an overview summary is provided. This is common when it is not appropriate for parents to remain actively involved in decision making, i.e adoption.

The Unit have had a successful workshop with a whole family to obtain direct service user feedback and have more planned in the next year 2011/12. This has proved a challenge. Encouraging families to become involved in user feedback has been difficult but the Unit is confident that the Unit can improve its systems for recording views and use this information to inform the service planning, delivery and ultimately improve outcomes. The Unit staff regularly consult with the Children in Care Council but there is a need to develop further systems for establishing feedback from cared for children's experiences of these processes.

An area for development over the next year is to increase parental participation particularly within Pathway plan meetings over the next 12 months. This is particularly acute as research has suggested that many children who have been cared for return to their families after they cease to have Cared for status. Many of these young people although deemed adults, remain vulnerable and have difficult or dysfunctional relationships with their families.

7. Ensuring good quality professional participation in Cared for Children Reviews and Pathway Plan meetings

Good quality professional planning is vital to improving the outcomes for cared for children and care leavers. If all relevant agencies contribute towards the care plan it means that the child will receive the right service in a timely fashion and help prevent placement breakdowns, ensuring emotional and educational needs are appropriately met. There is no national indicator in respect of key professional attendance and it has therefore been challenging to try and capture relevant data that reflects not just attendance but active and meaningful participation. In order that we can be sure that agencies are contributing we monitor the contribution of agencies via Personal Education Plans (PEPs), Health assessments and Strength and Difficulty questionnaires (SDQs – a measure to look at emotional well being). These reports should help coordinate the overall care and pathway planning.

Timeliness of reports: A performance area of concern is the lack of reports available for reviews 3 days before the meeting should take place. This is a basic tool for the IRO to prepare for the child's review. An over-all figure for this year

cannot be provided and so the concern is based on reporting and anecdotal evidence, therefore efforts will be made to capture this in the forthcoming year. As well as collating the information, work will be done to support the teams and key professionals to improve over the next year.

The performance indicators that have been identified to measure professional participation area and drive improvement are set out below. Data will be collected on a monthly basis and reported within a quarterly report over the next year:

- % attendance at meetings
- % key reports available at meetings Education and Health
- % report available before meetings
- % shared with child ahead of reviews

As part of the support process the IRO's have recently re-established the protocol with Social Care about the core expectations of workers ahead of cared for reviews and child protection conferences. This has been agreed by Senior Managers, and re-launched and distributed. The IRO's have also been assigned a Group Manager and will be visiting all team meetings to share this document and ensure staff understand the importance of these standards, and consider what is needed to support them in meeting them.

8. Removing barriers to ensure better outcomes for children

As part of the monitoring function, the IRO has a duty to monitor the performance of the Local Authority's (LA) function as a corporate parent and identify areas of excellent and poor practice. This should include identifying patterns of concerns emerging not just in relation to individual children but also more generally in the collective experience of cared for children. Where these more general concerns around service delivery are identified, the IRO should immediately alert senior managers. On an individual basis the primary task of the IRO is to ensure the care plan reflects the child's needs and that the actions set out in the plan are consistent with the LA's legal responsibilities towards the child. As Corporate parents each LA must act for the children they care for as a responsible and conscientious parent would act.

Enclosed in **Appendix 4** is the IRO Policy and **Appendix 1** contains the dispute resolution policy. These documents set out the underpinning processes used in Cheshire East to remove professional barriers to ensure the best outcomes for our cared for Children. Under the new regulations we have a duty to promote the role and ensure families can access the policy. Over the next year this will be developed into usable formats and made available for families and provided ahead of meetings. It will also be published on the intranet.

The Unit would expect an increase in use over the next year ensuring it is used appropriately and demonstrating a better outcome for a child. Collecting data on the use of the Dispute resolution process is important to demonstrate that challenge happens between the Unit and Social Care and that the Unit can act as a critical friend. The Dispute Resolution policy needs further embedding over the next few

months. The IRO Policy needs to be agreed through our governance processes and subsequently published over coming months.

The dispute resolution process has only been used once in the last 12 months for Cared for Children (once for Child protection). This case relates to a specialist placement request that was declined, despite having a clear assessment. The matter was resolved within 4 weeks and the specialist placement was granted when the IRO went straight to the DCS with her concerns. The child is now in placement.

Important themes emerging from reviews during last year

IROs have voiced concern that there is a variance in the quality of commissioned placements for our Cared for Children which hasn't always provided the best environment for children and care leavers. **Appendix 2** notes a case study where the use of an agency placement has had a detrimental effect on achieving good outcomes for the child concerned. This concern in relation to the children and young people of Cheshire East is also echoed in research where agency placements and out of authority placements mean services aren't always delivered as effectively as they could be. The reasons for this are partly in relation to commissioning arrangements, and the quality of these agencies. Another factor is the difficulties of ensuring a robust process when the child is a significant distance away coupled with a lack of local knowledge to tackle difficulties if they arise. This is particularly significant when the most challenging cared for children are sometimes those who are placed in accommodation some distance away. In response to this concern, Social Care are currently reviewing all agency and out of borough placements. We are aware that the new commissioning team are also addressing these issues systematically. As a Unit and as IRO's there remains a responsibility to identify any concerns about a placement and develop a plan that reduces any identified risks within them.

The Unit has also had concern that CAMHS services have not always been able to respond to the needs of young people over 16 as swiftly as the young person requires. Care leavers particularly are waiting 6-12 months for an appointment. This has been reported to the service commissioner and there are agreements that ways to improve the delivery to this group of young people who may also be disaffected and disengaged with services.

The impact of organisational change and the consequent transition between workers of cases has been an additional area of concern for the IRO's. There is case evidence to suggest that the arrangements between social work teams have on occasion led to delay, uncertainty and in many cases no plan regarding the transition between workers and teams. IROs have noted carers and children feeling unclear about who new workers are and no clear procedure about how the transitions should take place. The IRO's have raised these cases as they occur with Senior Managers and accessed other forms of resolution for children including use of the advocacy service. Clearly the major reorganisation is now complete and there is evidence that the teams are more settled, with clarity over allocation of cases. It is to be expected that this is not a significant feature in the forthcoming year.

Lack of clear, timely care planning has also led to delays in permanency planning. Performance reporting via PARIS shows a care plan/pathway plan was available for 915 children (68%). However this is a 'tick box' and IROs would add that the quality of a care plan document with detailed planning is often not of a high enough standard. The team have tried to quantify this by carrying out random samples of cases. Out of 8 sampled, only 1 had a clear plan written and up to date. By the second review (4 months) the IRO's often do not have presented to them a clear care plan for the child(ren) as required in policy. The IRO's recognise the need for support in improvement in this area including further awareness raising around this issue with operational staff.

It is vital that everybody involved in care planning for children is clear about the plan, and that a permanency plan is in place to avoid drift. IROs will ask the Social Worker to complete this and submit within a certain timeframe following the review if it is not present within the review.

Embedding a quality assurance framework and fit for purpose service

Overview of team

Collecting performance information to ensure good outcomes for children also involves looking internally at the Safeguarding teams own performance. In the last 12 months there has been a review of the teams functions to ensure it is fit for purpose in meeting the requirements to ensure children are safeguarded appropriately and have better outcomes within the care system. This review has also taken account of the changing pattern of work loads and the new expectations within the IRO Guidance document. The Principal Safeguarding Manager is managed directly by the DCS, formally this role was managed by a ADCS. The challenge arm of the unit has been strengthened. The unit acts as a critical friend to Social Care. We are developing a protocol with a neighbouring Authority to provide reciprocal independent legal advice for IRO's.

The team has experienced huge development since disaggregation in April 2009. The Child Protection Co-ordinator's and the IRO role is now integrated across the Team. At the time it was envisaged that this would allow greater efficiency, flexibility and develop the skills of the team, however this model is currently under review to ensure this is the most effective way of delivering the service. The consequence of the 'dual' role is that some of the quality assurance data below is difficult to separate as it is collected for both child protection and cared for children.

The team are a very experienced group with operational management experience. They have embraced the changes in role well. For most of them they had not completed the dual role previously, but have achieved the transition well, within the context of the re-organisation of the Council and particularly social care services.

The team have worked hard to maintain consistency over the last 2 years since disaggregation. Their case loads had reached 110-120 at points but have reduced to an average of 80. All 7 IROs are all White, British and female apart from one male. Cheshire East demographics are similar with a very small ethnic minority population, however minority groups are over represented within children in care data,

particularly children from Poland (9 out of 442 cared for children – 2%)). It is vital that we understand and meet the needs of the children we are serving. Care is taken to ensure IROs are appropriately matched with cared for children wherever possible.

The Unit also have benefited from the Pathway Plan Coordinator moving into the team, from the cared for service. The role oversees the pathway plans as young people prepare for independence, and once they leave care. It is vital that the role carries a level of independence like IRO's to ensure robust challenge. This has provided our service with an overarching view of the child and young person's journey through and aftercare.

The Unit also has responsibility for quality assuring the foster carer role, ensuring national foster care standards are met. The appointment of a dedicated IRO to oversee foster carer reviews has allowed this process to be independently overseen and challenged. The annual foster carer review policy has been re-written, and shaped to include all stakeholders including parents of children placed with carers. The role will also undertake chairing 'disruption' meetings.

The team have developed a quality assurance framework to ensure our own systems are 'fit for purpose'. There is a vital need to demonstrate evidence of good quality practice and therefore good outcomes for cared for children and care leavers.

Below sets out the strands of quality assurance within the team:

- 1) Quality Assurance Framework – (themed audits across all social care delivery) – monitoring the performance of the outcomes of cared for children

This was launched July 2010. Two cycles have been completed. Our first theme covered child protection cases and the theme for cycle 2 is children in need cases. The Audit team are IROs and Group Managers and Practice Consultants. Senior managers and Lead Member will also be included in the pool in the future. We are working on user and partner participation to triangulate the findings. A steering group has now been established to guide this work and report directly into Senior Management Team. A Policy has been written and audit tool refined following feedback on effectiveness

The team recently carried out audits of all cared for children 'placed with parents' under the regulations, to ensure that these arrangements were still suitable. This included over 60 cases which will now lead to a number of identified suitable cases applying the Courts for discharge of orders.

- 2) Quality Assurance of the Team – monitoring the performance of the team

There are a number of strands in place to ensure regular good quality feedback is gained to improve practice and service delivery:

- During a pilot period initially every meeting was quality assured with a range of questions that all participants answered including children and their families. These were collected and feed into a bi-annual report (see **appendix 4**). Currently all families including children are still routinely being asked at

meetings for their experiences of the reviews and professionals periodically, focusing on identified themes.

- Minutes of Reviews are regularly audited, from each IRO every 3 months by the Manager and feedback given via supervision of with every chair and to the business manager about quality of minutes, taken by secretaries and by IROs.
- User feedback sessions- we held a successful session with a whole family in Autumn last year but have been able to engage any further families despite efforts made. This is a critical issue where we must perform better, and act creatively to achieve. We must embed through our services. This will have priority focus over the next year.
- Observations of the team in Reviews take place regularly by the Manager.
- Practice Workshops for the team are held each month which focus on development, including areas to improve practice i.e minute taking standards, new legislation etc.

Concluding comments

Overall the team have strengthened its business model over the last 12 months and has a clear vision and shared belief in the direction of the team. The organisation is embedding its corporate parenting responsibilities and the Board maturing in its understanding of the role it has.

It is vital that the Safeguarding Unit as a whole develop their performance management information and begin to use it more effectively to inform practice, notably gaining meaningful feedback from children and their families to focus delivery and outcomes for children.

Recommendations

| recommendation | action | lead | timescale |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Reports for Reviews arrive 3 working days before the meeting, and where appropriate are shared with the child by the social worker. | | Safeguarding Manager (C&Rs) and Principal Manager Cared for Children | June 2011 |
| That Social Workers inform the | | Safeguarding Manager (C&Rs) and Principal | June 2011. |

| | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Unit within 2 working days of a child coming into Local Authority Care | | Manager Cared for Children | |
| The IROs should have access to independent legal advice when challenge to the actions of the Local Authority on behalf of a Cared for child is required. | | Safeguarding Principal Manager and Legal Team manager – People | September 2011 |
| Performance data needs to be further developed to allow greater understanding of the performance within the Safeguarding Unit and in the delivery of social care services to the cared for children of Cheshire East | | Safeguarding Manager (C&Rs) and Performance and Data Manager. | June 2011 |
| Childs participation increases in a meaningful way via a clear action plan between Social Care and Safeguarding Unit. | | Safeguarding Manager (C&Rs). | December 2011 |
| All Children ahead of their first review have a pre-visit from a chair to gain their wishes and feelings and explain what to expect from the meeting. | | Safeguarding Manager (C&Rs). | December 2011 |

Appendix 1 Dispute Resolution Process

“Each local authority must have a written policy regarding the manner in which the child’s case will be reviewed and provide the child, the parents and any other person whose views the authority consider to be relevant (e.g. the child’s foster carer) with a copy. This should include information on the role of the IRO and action that can be taken in the event that decisions made at a review are not implemented.”

Dispute Resolution

The amended Children Act 1989 and Regulations (see section 25B(1) of the 1989 Act) say that the Independent Safeguarding Chair (formerly IRO) must:

- a) monitor the performance by the LA of their functions in relation to the child’s case
- b) participate in any review of the child’s case
- c) ensure that any ascertained wishes and feelings of child concerning the case are given due consideration by the appropriate authority
- d) perform any other function which is prescribed in Regulations.

The primary task of the IRO is to ensure that the care plan for the child fully reflects the child’s need and that the actions set out in the plan are consistent with the LA’s legal responsibilities towards the child. As corporate parents each LA must act for the children care for as a responsible and conscientious parent would act.

There are now two clear and separate aspects to the function of the IRO:

- chairing the child’s review
- monitoring the child’s case on an ongoing basis

In exercising both parts of this role the IRO must ensure that the child's current views, wishes and concerns have been established and taken in account, where appropriate.

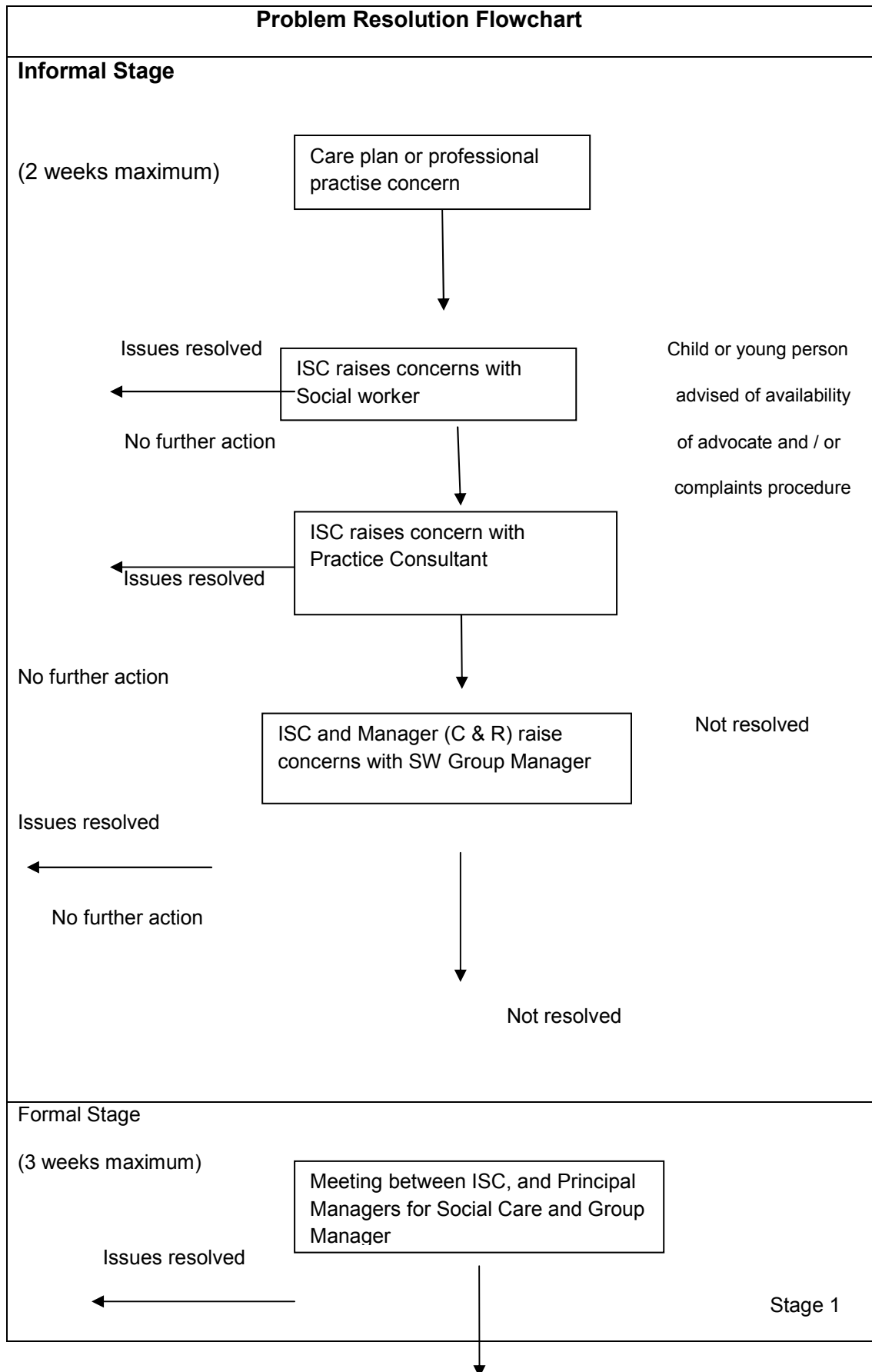
As part of the monitoring function, the IRO also has a duty to monitor the performance of the LA's function as a corporate parent and to identify any areas of poor practice. This should include identifying patterns of concerns emerging not just around individual children but also more generally in the collective experience of cared for children. Where these more general concerns around service delivery are identified, the IRO should immediately alert senior managers to these concerns.

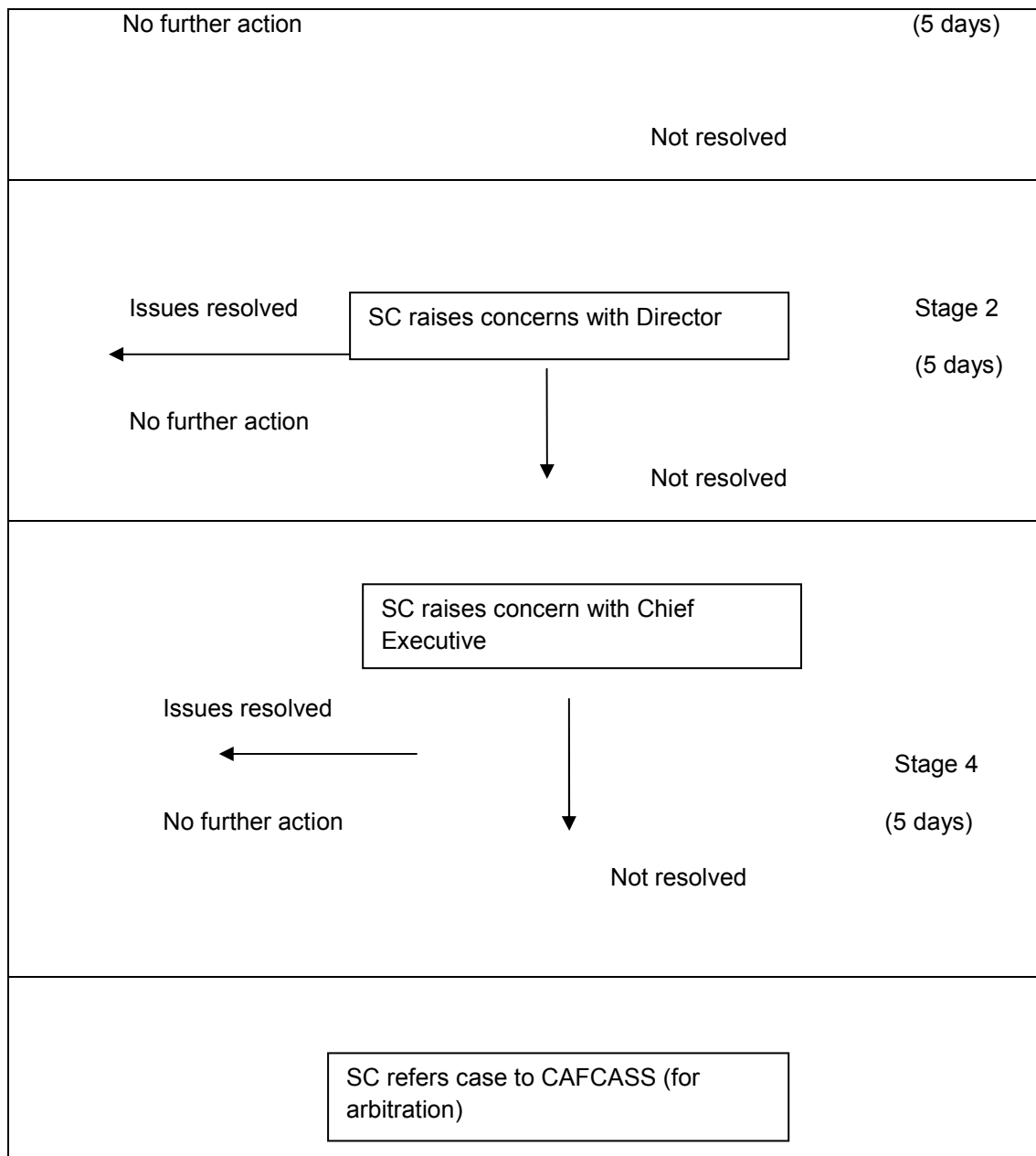
Resolution of problems

The IRO is responsible for their actions and decisions and where there are concerns about practice or issues in relation to the care plan, they are required to document what action they have taken to resolve matters.

Whenever the IRO is concerned about any aspect of the case that impacts on the care plan they should resolve matters as quickly and as informally as possible. If this proves ineffective the formal problem solving process should be entered into.

The IRO can involve CAFCAS at any stage. The flowchart below illustrates the formal problem solving process.





Please note : para 6.2 IRO Statutory guidance provides for the IRO to bypass any stage of the L.A 's Dispute Resolution Process, where absolutely necessary.

Appendix 2 IRO Case Studies

Case Example

These 2 young boys were accommodated in February 2010 following an adoption breakdown. Their first placement was with a single f/carer (Cheshire East) but they had to move on in the summer, after one of the boys was assaulted by the long-term foster child.

There were no in- house carers available for the boys so they were placed with agency carers – unfortunately this placement was a long distance away from school (their stability).

They stayed there for a couple of months over the summer and then moved to another agency carer – (still nothing in-house available). These carers were said to be joint carers and approved as long-term . However, it has emerged that the female carer is effectively a single carer as her partner is away for long periods. She has struggled to care for the boys – who are very challenging, but has appeared not to have been open and honest with the SW. SW feels that the fact that the carers were not known to her before – nor was the agency and its staff – plus the distance in the first agency placement, this has impacted negatively on her ability to protect the children in placement.

The boys are now facing another move because of concerns about the placement – I understand from the SW that they are finding it difficult to identify suitable carers. This has impacted on the children’s emotional well being, and stability.

Case Study 2

Pathway Planning

Z is an asylum seeker child who is 19 years old and living in a “Staying Put” foster care placement.

It had been agreed by a senior manager that Z could remain in foster care until 21 and this is recorded in the Pathway Plan.

Z has lost his appeal for leave to remain in the UK but has not received his removal directions. Therefore 16+ service eligibility as a “former relevant” care leaver remains in place.

The Pathway Plan Coordinator was informed that the funding for this placement should stop, the reason being that the Home Office would now be liable for funding and support for this young person.

Home Office funding would not cover the accommodation costs of this placement.

Notwithstanding the Human Rights of this young person and the standing up of the Pathway Plan, the Pathway Plan Coordinator felt that there was a point in law that needed raising.

Pathway Plan Coordinator checked on this point of law and found the following judgement, see in Bold and underlined for law decision.

Accommodation Duties towards Former Relevant Children

On 12 October 2010, the Court of Appeal handed down its judgment in R (on the application of SO) v London Borough of Barking and Dagenham [2010] EWCA Civ 1101. This note provides a summary of the practical implications of this very important judgment for those who support and advise young people who are or were looked after by social services.

What was the outcome of the case?

The Court of Appeal judgment, in reversing the decision of the lower court, contains two important decisions:

1. Local authorities have a general duty to provide a former relevant child with accommodation to the extent that his or her welfare requires it.

2. In considering whether a former relevant child's welfare requires the provision of accommodation, the local authority is not permitted to take account of whether or not that former relevant child might be eligible for accommodation and support from the Home Office pursuant to its asylum support functions (previously carried out by the National Asylum Support Service and generally still referred to as NASS).

Although the Claimant was a failed asylum seeker, the judgment has important implications for all young people who were looked after by social services prior to turning 18 and not just asylum seekers and failed asylum seekers.

Those leaving care duties are owed until the young person turns 21 and some of the duties may continue up to a maximum age of 24 if the young person continues to pursue a programme of education set out in his or her pathway plan.

The Pathway Plan Coordinator recommended that the 16+ service Practice Consultant referred to our legal services and also recommended that the 16+ worker applied for advocacy services. Z can no longer have his own legal advice from a solicitor due to the failed appeal.

Therefore all changes to this Pathway Plan are on hold until the above are investigated.

Previously interpreter support was not felt to be needed due to the young person's grasp of English. However in this case the Pathway Plan Coordinator has referred for an interpreter to attend the Pathway Plan Review.

Case Study 3

This is an example of how independence from Budget Holding responsibilities can enable challenges to be made to the local authority in regard to care leavers they are responsible for.

C and B -sisters

Siblings were accommodated in September 2007 on a PPO.

Care Orders were granted in May, 2008.

The girls were placed together in a foster placement and have remained together in the same placement, which was made long term in 2008.

The girls have slowly disclosed what they have suffered at home and this has led to them feeling more able to express their wishes and feelings over time.

May 2010 review

C had some issues in respect of contact. In her letter to the IRO she advised that she "feels that she would like to consider a reduction in contact with her birth family down to once a year. "

She felt that the contact made B angry and brought back bad memories for all three of the children.

In view of the contact arrangements for all the girls being unsettled, the IRO made a recommendation that there needed to be a review of all contact arrangements for the three girls, taking into consideration their individual wishes and feelings and the impact on them of all contacts. She recommended a full reassessment of their needs and a child- focus meeting.

This recommendation was felt important particularly as grandparents were said to be making application to court to amend the contact they had agreed at the care proceedings.

October 2010 review

The review heard that the court had agreed changed arrangements for Mr & Mrs M lengthening the visit to 5hrs, and that the Local Authority were proposing to respond to this by increasing the contact offered to mother and to the other grandparents, to two sessions of 2½ hours each, to begin in January 2011.

In the Review meeting the foster carer advised that this was likely to be contrary to C's wishes and feelings as she has been very clear that she only wants contact with her mum once a year and that 2 hours (agreed at the final hearing of care proceedings) was already too long.

In view of this, the Independent Reviewing Officer recommended that an advocate be offered to C to represent her views.

Subsequent to the meeting the Independent Reviewing Officer provided the foster carer with NYAS packs to give to the children, advising that they should be supported in sharing their views.

The advocacy contract with Cheshire East ,was then changed to Barnardo's and the children were visited by an advocate and were then taken to see a solicitor who agreed to represent their wishes (only the 2 older ones as B's views were less clear due to her behavioural issues).

May 2011-

Update from SW on the contact issue received, advising he was completing an initial statement with a view to looking at a sect.34(4) Contact Order. This would enable the Local Authority to legally manage contact in line with the girls' wishes and feelings –an agreed outcome of the Legal Gate-keeping meeting held.

To date, the IRO has not been advised of a court date to hear the application.

Appendix 3 Quality Assurance Report

QUALITY ASSURANCE QUESTIONNAIRE

Background: Since the 1st October Independent Safeguarding Chairs within Cheshire East have been asking all participants, including children and parents, within Cared for Reviews, and Child Protection Conferences to complete a standardised feedback form (children have an adapted form).

The decision to begin this collation of feedback data followed a pilot project in the summer of 2010, during which several Chairs asked participants in meetings to complete a more comprehensive form which explored the quality of how the meeting was chaired, general 'housekeeping' during meetings, preparation for the meeting, and individuals participation to the meeting. The results of this pilot project were then fed back to the LSCB in September 2010 for consideration.

The collected data provided insight into various areas of multi agency practice (for example lack of reports shared at meetings), as well as performance of the safeguarding chair.

The decision was therefore made to continue with this Quality Assurance monitoring in a scaled down format; primarily focusing on the service and experience the Safeguarding Team delivers to participants, especially families, during meetings.

Current Study: The forms have comprised of 12 questions asked of all participants, who are also asked to identify themselves by name and professional/family status. Questions have concentrated on general 'housekeeping' issues such as venue, time keeping, invitation, preparation etc; and on the performance of the Chairs ability to ensure views were heard, purpose was clarified, and whether decisions were made clear. The Chair is also asked to be rated using the Ofsted categories of Outstanding, Good, satisfactory and inadequate. 427 forms were returned during this period. Please note, not all questions have been answered on all of the forms (which explains the discrepancy in total number of responses for each listed question).

The figures listed below correspond to the period between the 1st October 2010, and the 26th November 2010.

Not all of the 12 questions have been 'analysed'; however the four questions listed below appear to be most pertinent to IRO's, in order to assess how we are performing overall, and pull out organisational and practice themes from the meeting.

| | | | | | |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 4. | Did you have time to consider any written reports before the meeting started? | Yes 298 | Some 52 | No 63 | |
| 5. | Was the purpose of the meeting clear? | Yes 420 | Some 6 | No 1 | |
| 9. | Were the decisions of the meeting clear? | Yes 391 | Some 6 | No 1 | |
| 10. | Was the Meeting | Too short 3 | Appropriate 407 | Too long 14 | |
| 12. | Please say how well you think the meeting was Chaired | Outstanding 154 | Good 250 | Satisfactory 13 | Inadequate 5 |

Analysis of Data:

As can be seen from the above table, general feedback is positive, with 154 participants describing the Chair as Outstanding, and 250 as Good. 13 stated the Chair was satisfactory and 5 as inadequate. This 'score' has afforded Chairs the opportunity to pick up concerning feedback with participants in order to try and rectify any dissatisfaction or to flag complaints or concerns.

Other themes for the data suggests that participant do not always have the opportunity to consider reports before the meeting starts. However this may be due to lack of availability from the social worker, or because participants, including report writers, may arrive late. None the less this data serves as a reminder for the Safeguarding unit to factor in reading time for all meetings when considering the arrangements and time- planning for meetings.

Most of the respondents considered that the information around both the purpose of the meeting, and decision making was clear (with just 7 out of a possible 427 giving a neutral/negative score for each).

Finally, most respondents thought that the length of the meeting was appropriate, with just 14 thinking the meeting was too long, and 3 thinking it was too short.

Overall this appears to provide a positive over-view of participants experiences in meetings.

Other Observations

- Some professionals have complained about being asked to complete the questionnaires, as they appear to find it time consuming and repetitive.
- Professionals are not always identifying themselves by name/profession.
- Family members (including children) are currently less likely to complete the document, despite this group being our main 'target'.
- The amount of written feedback varies, with some chairs attracting more detailed 'additional' comments.
- Families are more likely to score neutrally/negatively, and this can be linked to the outcomes for them in the meetings.

Questions and future considerations:

In considering the above information it would be helpful for the following issues to be discussed within either practice meetings, or team meetings. Do we need to continue with the forms for every meeting, or should we do set periods of QA monitoring to avoid QA form fatigue (eg. one month every three months)?

- How are Chairs 'selling' the form, and can this have an impact on the quality of information provided?
- How are we using the data, and can we gather more 'usable' information from it (perhaps by changing the questions from time to time to focus on specific areas of practice/planning)?
- How useful is the data, and how can this impact on the safeguarding units performance?
- Should we change the format/questions on the standardised form?

Appendix 4 IRO Policy for children

NOW THAT YOU ARE CARED FOR BY CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

There are some things that you need to know!

1. The Government will make sure that we care for you in a way that is good for you and listens to your views. We will do this by:

- Following the IRO Guidance which became law on 1st April 2011

- An Independent Safeguarding Chair (as we are known in Cheshire East) will be allocated to you as soon as you come into care.
- We will try to make contact with you before your first review meeting, which will happen within 4 weeks of the date you came into care.
- We will make sure that we explain to you about the review meetings and we will check your views and wishes about your plan.

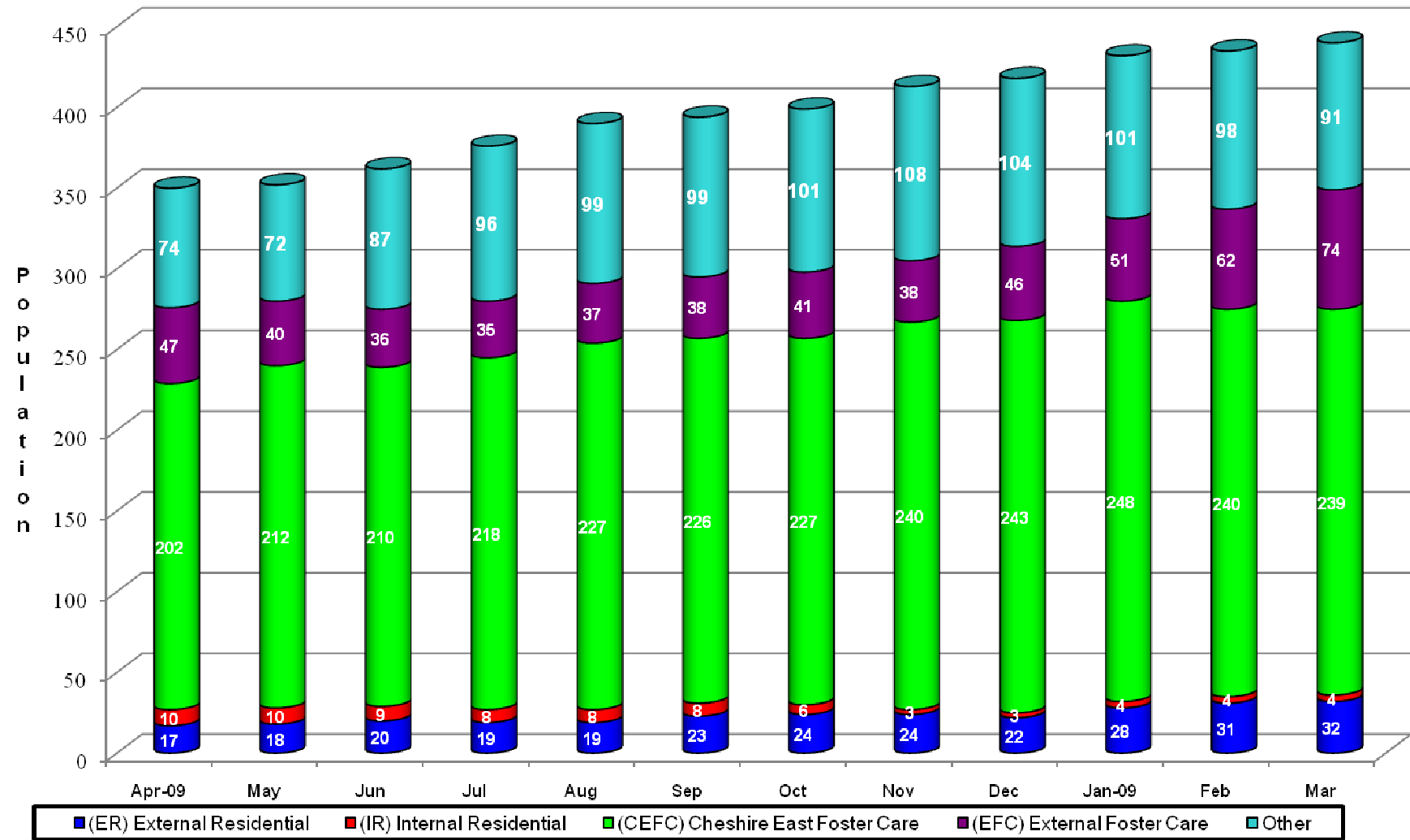


- If you have any complaints or worries, we will help you to sort these out through either the complaints procedure or through getting you an independent advocate from Barnardos (cheshire@barnardos.org.uk) .

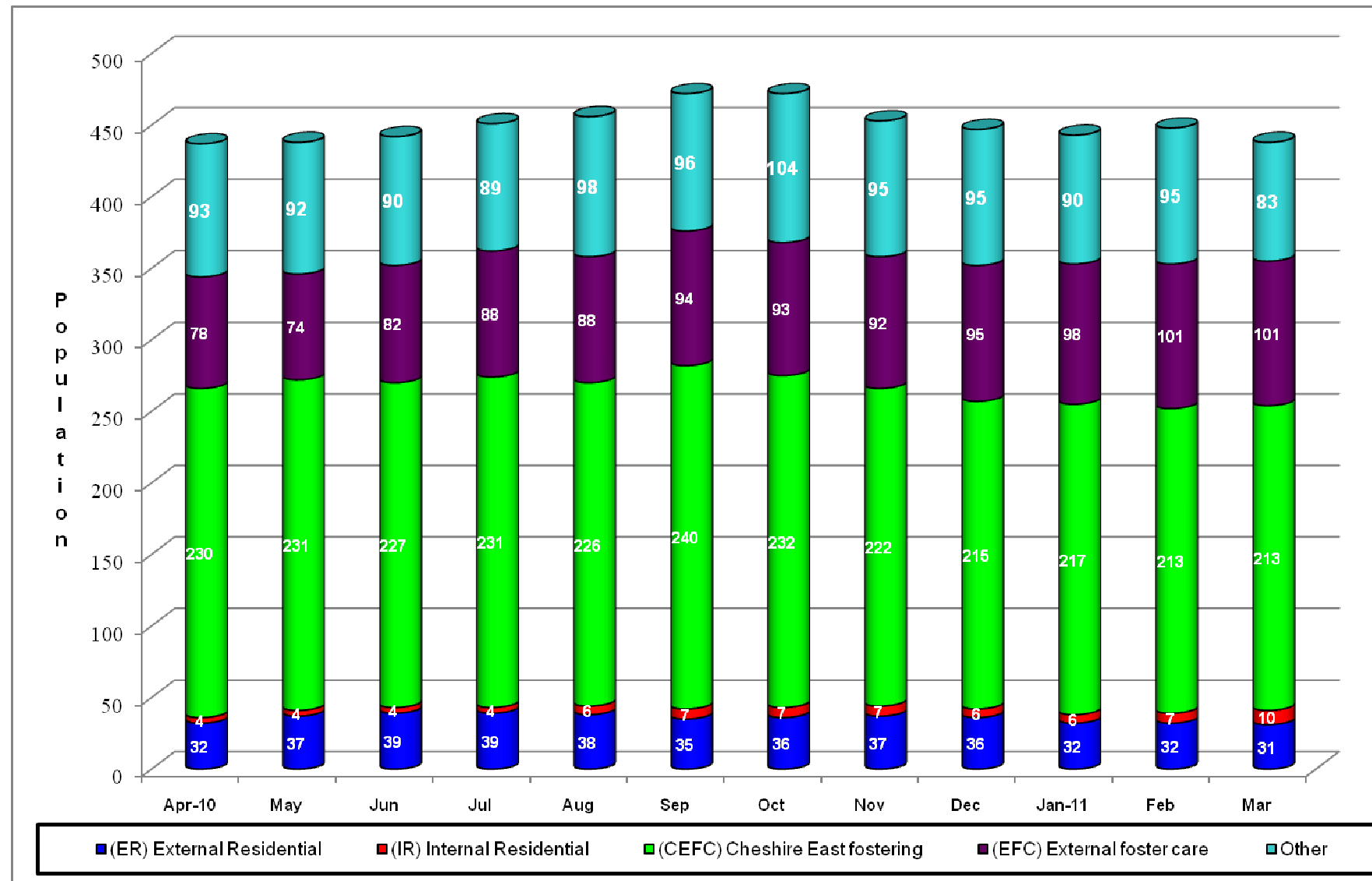
Cared for children Monitoring Report April to March 2011

JA Hall

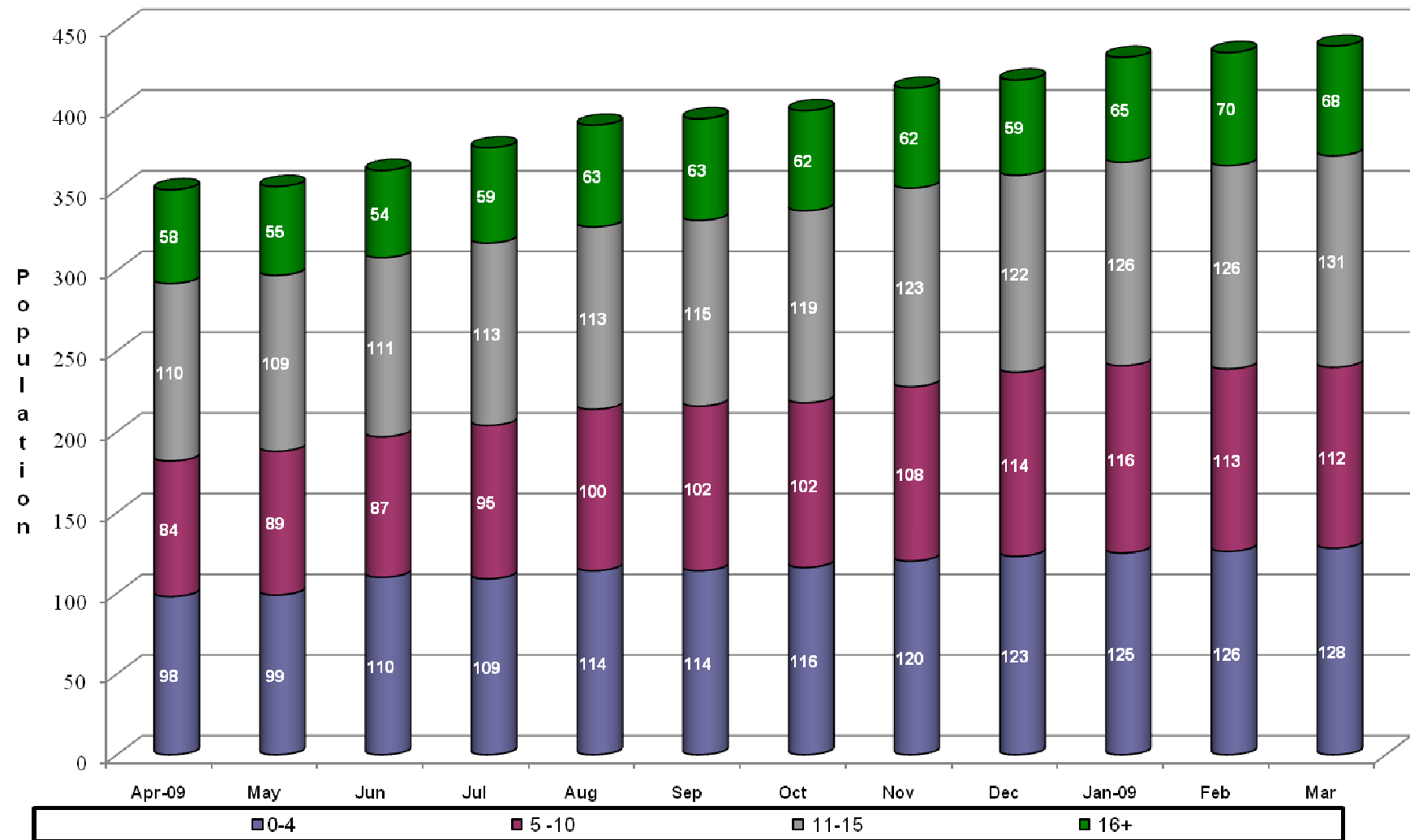
1 Cared for Children Population by placement type 2009-2010



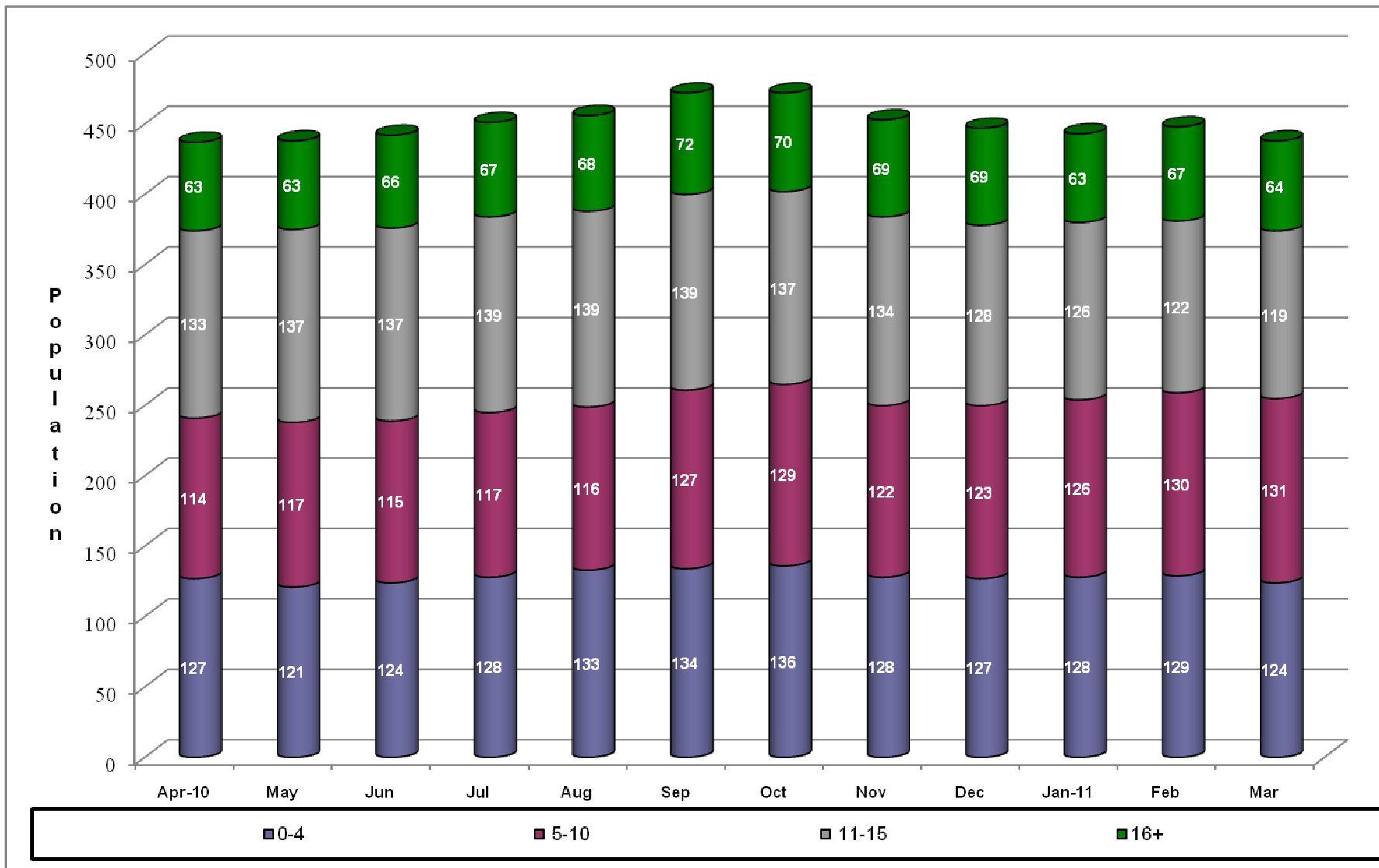
2 Cared for Children Population by Placement type April 2010 to March 2011



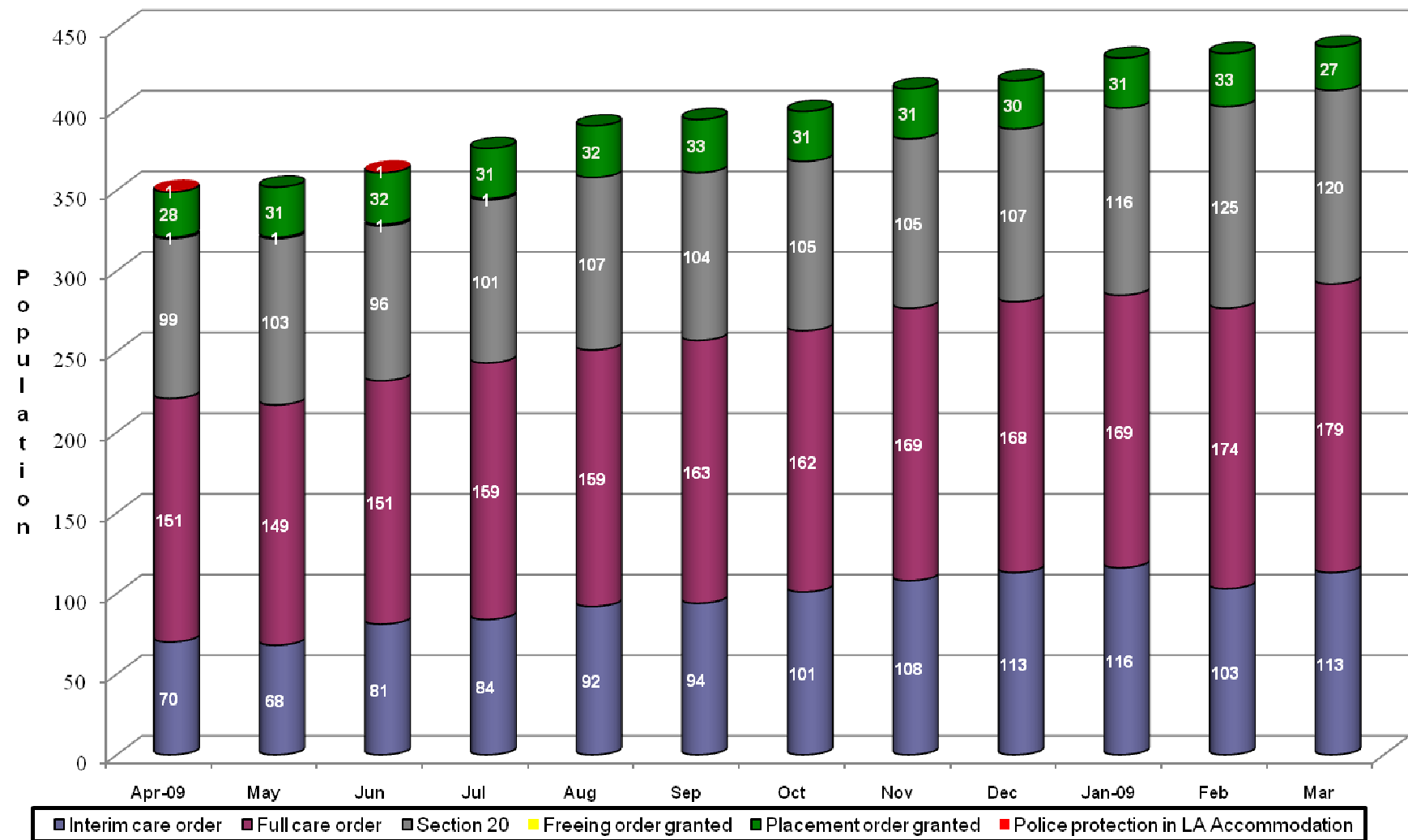
3 Cared for Children Population by Age April 2009 to March 2010



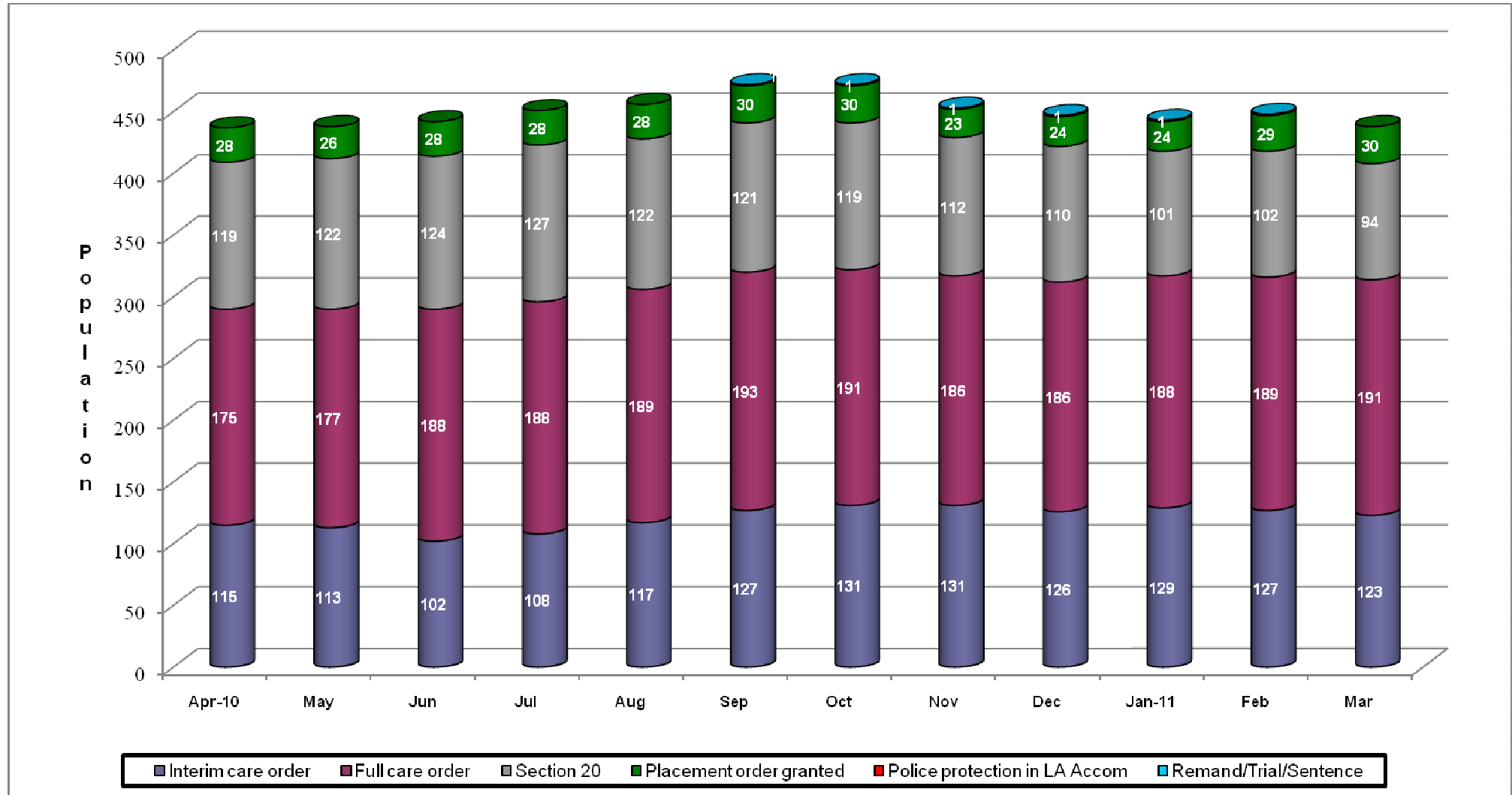
4 Cared for Children Population by Age April 2010 to March 2011



5 Cared for Children Population by legal status April 2009 to March 2010



6 Cared for Children Population by legal status April 2010 to March 2011



Total cared for population

Breakdown of Other placements

| Placement Type | Average 10 /11 | February 11 | March 11 |
|----------------|----------------|-------------|----------|
| ER | 35 | 32 | 31 |
| IR | 6 | 7 | 10 |
| CEFC | 225 | 213 | 213 |
| EFC | 90 | 101 | 101 |
| Other | 93 | 95 | 83 |
| All | 449 | 448 | 438 |

Ratio of Fostering-Residential Placements

| Placement Type | Average 10 / 11 | Feb 11 | Mar 11 |
|----------------|-----------------|--------|--------|
| Fostering | 88.5% | 89% | 88.5% |
| Residential | 11.5% | 11% | 11.5% |

| | Feb 11 | Mar 11 | Mar 11 % |
|----------------------------------|--------|--------|-------------|
| Family Centre Mother & Baby Unit | 7 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Independent Living | 7 | 7 | 1.6% |
| Missing – Whereabouts Unknown | 0 | 0 | 0.0% |
| NHS/Health/medical/nursing care | 2 | 1 | 0.2% |
| Other Placement | 0 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Placed for Adoption | 16 | 17 | 3.9% |
| Placed With parents | 63 | 58 | 13% |
| Residential Accom. Not Reg. Home | 0 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Secure unit outside LA Boundary | 0 | 0 | 0.0% |
| YOI or Prison | 0 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Total | 95 | 83 | 19% |

Placed with parents information

| Gender | 0-4 | 5-10 | 11-15 | 16+ | Total |
|--------|-----|------|-------|-----|-------|
| Male | 14 | 10 | 6 | 0 | 30 |
| Female | 6 | 17 | 3 | 2 | 28 |
| Total | 20 | 27 | 9 | 2 | 58 |

Ratio of Internal-External Placements

| Placement Type | Average 10 / 11 | Feb 11 | Mar 11 |
|----------------|-----------------|--------|--------|
| Internal | 65% | 62% | 63% |
| External | 35% | 38% | 37% |

Ratio of Internal- External Residential Placements

| Placement Type | Average 10 / 11 | Feb 11 | Mar 11 |
|----------------|-----------------|--------|--------|
| Internal Res. | 15% | 18% | 24% |
| External Res. | 85% | 82% | 76% |

Ratio of Internal Foster Care – External Foster Care Placement

| Placement Type | Average 10 / 11 | Feb 11 | Mar 11 |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------|--------|
| Internal foster | 71% | 68% | 68% |

| | | | |
|------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| External foster | 29% | 32% | 32% |
|------------------------|------------|------------|------------|

Cheshire East Foster Carer Approvals

| | Respite | Family and Friends | Mainstream | Total |
|---------------|----------------|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Apr 10 | 1 (1) | 1 (1) | 0 | 2 (2) |
| May 10 | 0 | 2 (3) | 0 | 2 (3) |
| Jun 10 | 0 | 3 (4) | 0 | 3 (4) |
| Jul 10 | 0 | 4 (6) | 0 | 4 (6) |
| Aug 10 | 0 | 2 (5) | 0 | 2 (5) |
| Sep 10 | 0 | 0 | 3 (5) | 3 (5) |
| Oct 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Nov 10 | (1) | 2 (2) | 0 | 2 (3) |
| Dec 10 | 2 (2) | 1 (3) | 1 (1) | 4 (6) |
| Jan 11 | 1 (1) | 1 (1) | 0 | 2 (2) |
| Feb 11 | 0 | 2 (2) | 0 | 2 (2) |
| Mar 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 4 (5) | 18 (27) | 4 (6) | 26 (38) |

Cheshire East Foster Carer Resignation and De-registration

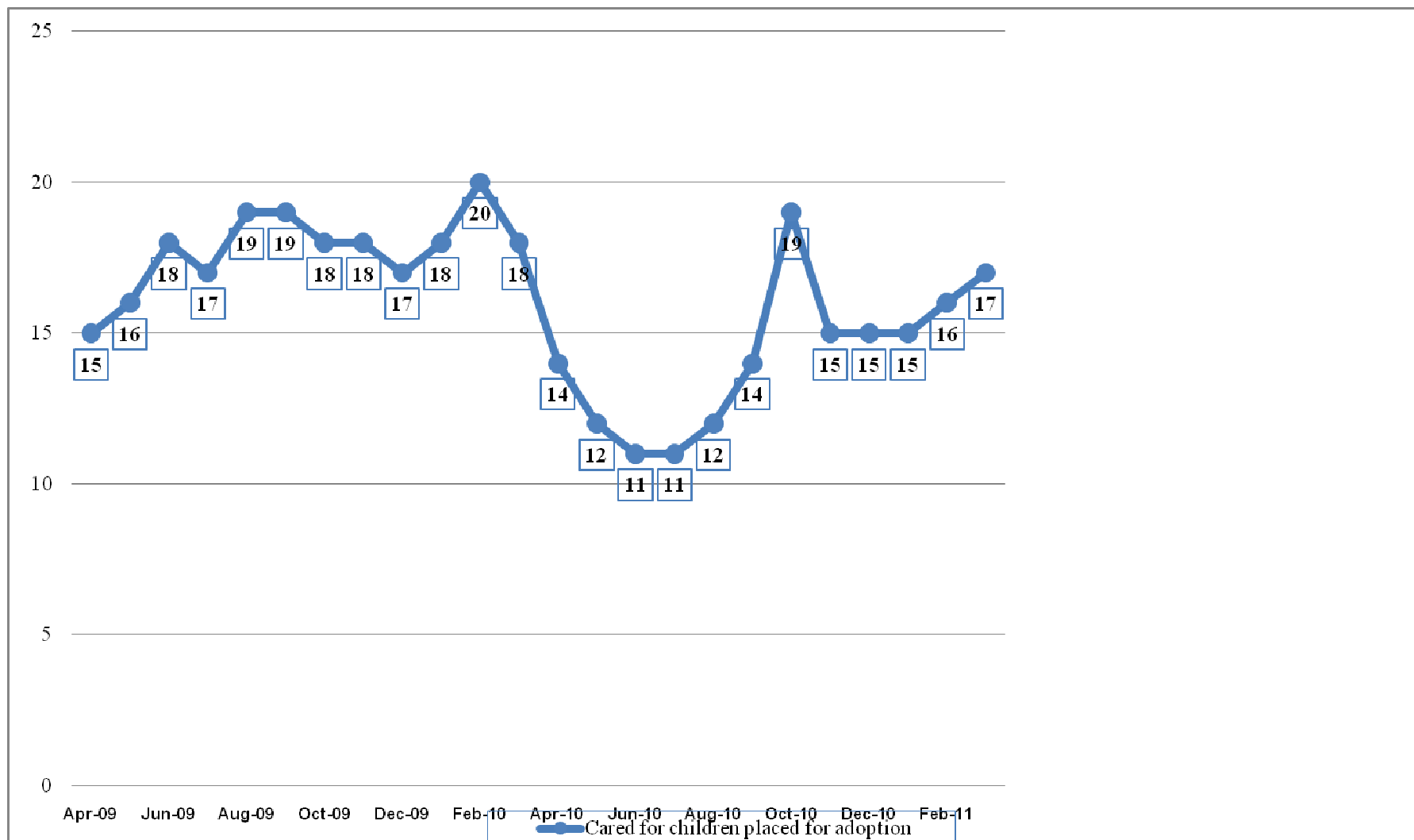
| | Respite | Family and Friends | Mainstream | Total |
|---------------|----------------|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Apr 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| May 10 | 0 | 1 (-1) | 1 (-3) | 2 (-4) |
| Jun 10 | 0 | 0 | 5 (-15) | 5 (-15) |
| Jul 10 | 0 | 2 (-2) | 1 (-2) | 3 (-4) |
| Aug 10 | 0 | 0 | 1 (-2) | 1 (-2) |
| Sep 10 | 1 (-3) | 3 (-3) | 1 (-1) | 5 (-7) |
| Oct 10 | 0 | 1 (-2) | 1 (-1) | 2 (-3) |
| Nov 10 | (-1) | 0 | 1 (-3) | 1 (-4) |
| Dec 10 | 0 | 0 | 2 (-4) | 2 (-4) |
| Jan 11 | 0 | 1 (-2) | 2 (-5) | 3 (-7) |
| Feb 11 | 1 (-1) | 2 (-5) | 2 (-4) | 5 (-10) |
| Mar 11 | 0 | 1 (-1) | 3 (-4) | 4 (-5) |
| Total | 2 (-5) | 11 (-16) | 20 (-44) | 33 (-65) |

Carer approved in Nov 10 was approved as F&F carer for 1 and respite for 1 Carer resigned in November was Mainstream carer 3 children and respite 1 child

Cheshire East Foster Carer Reasons for Resignation and De-registration

| | Ill Health | Deceased | Retirement | Personal reasons | Change of circumstances | Adopted cared for children | Safeguarding issues | Total |
|--------|------------|----------|------------|------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|----------|
| Apr 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| May 10 | 1 (-3) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 (-1) | 0 | 0 | 2 (-4) |
| Jun 10 | 0 | 0 | 3 (-10) | 2 (-5) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 (-15) |
| Jul 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 (-4) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 (-4) |
| Aug 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 (-2) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 (-2) |
| Sep 10 | 0 | 0 | 1 (-3) | 1 (-1) | 3 (-3) | 0 | 0 | 5 (-7) |
| Oct 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 (-1) | 1 (-2) | 0 | 0 | 2 (-3) |
| Nov 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 (-4) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 (-4) |
| Dec 10 | 0 | 1 (-2) | 1 (-2) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 (-4) |
| Jan 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 (-5) | 0 | 1 (-2) | 0 | 3 (-7) |
| Feb 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 (-3) | 2 (-5) | 1 (-2) | 0 | 5 (-10) |
| Mar 11 | 0 | 0 | 2 (-3) | 1 (-1) | 1 (-1) | 0 | 0 | 4 (-5) |
| Total | 1 (-3) | 1 (-2) | 7 (-18) | 14 (-26) | 8 (-12) | 2 (-4) | 0 | 33 (-65) |

7 Cared for children placed for adoption, April 2009 to March 2011



8 Placements made April 2010 to March 2011 (New cared for children mainstream only)

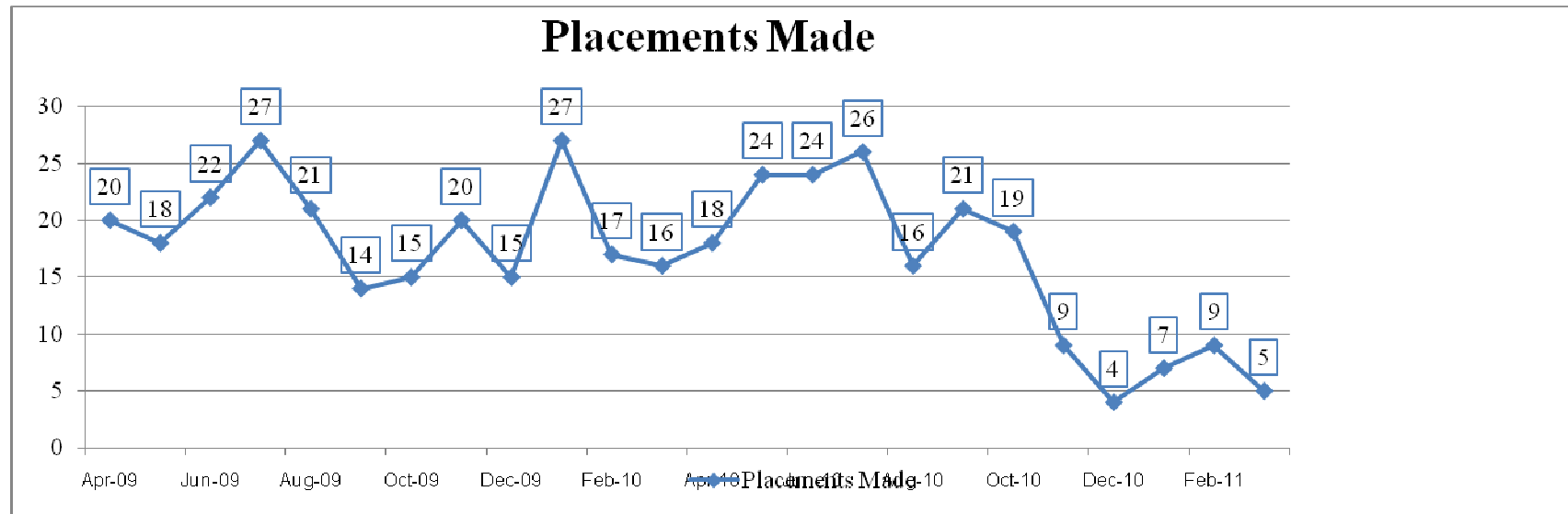
| | External Residential (13) | Internal Residential (0) | External Foster Care (36) | Internal Foster Care (92) | Other (41) |
|---------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| | Number | Number | Number | Number | Number |
| Gender | | | | | |
| Female | 3 | 0 | 17 | 35 | 17 |
| Male | 10 | 0 | 19 | 57 | 24 |
| Age | | | | | |
| 0-4 years | 0 | 0 | 16 | 43 | 21 |
| 5-10 years | 1 | 0 | 7 | 24 | 14 |
| 11-15 years | 6 | 0 | 13 | 19 | 4 |
| 16+years | 6 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 2 |
| Ethnicity | | | | | |
| Afghan | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Any other Ethnicity | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Black – African | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Black – Caribbean | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|----|---|--------|--------|--------|
| Other Asian | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Moroccan | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Pakistan | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Vietnamese | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| White – British | 10 | 0 | 31 | 80 | 38 |
| White Asian | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| White & Black African | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| White & Black Caribbean | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 0 |
| Other mixed background | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| White – Other | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Other ethnic group | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Not stated | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sibling Groups | | | | | |
| 2 Children | 0 | 0 | 8 (16) | 5 (10) | 7 (14) |
| 3+ Children | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 (26) | 2 (6) |

9 New Cared for Children placements Made, April 2010 to March 2011 (Mainstream only)

| Month | Placement Type | | | | | |
|--------|----------------|----|-----|------|-------|-----|
| | ER | IR | EFC | CEFC | Other | ALL |
| Apr 10 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 18 |
| May 10 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 18 | 3 | 24 |
| Jun 10 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 15 | 2 | 24 |
| Jul 10 | 2 | 0 | 9 | 3 | 12 | 26 |
| Aug 10 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 16 |
| Sep 10 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 18 | 1 | 21 |
| Oct 10 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 12 | 4 | 19 |
| Nov 10 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 9 |
| Dec 10 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 4 |
| Jan 11 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 7 |
| Feb 11 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 9 |
| Mar 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| Total | 13 | 0 | 36 | 92 | 41 | 182 |

10 Placements Made April 2009 to March 2011 (Mainstream only)



11 Reason for admission into care April 2010 – March 2011 (mainstream only)

| Admission reason | 0-4 | 5-10 | 11-15 | 16+ | Total |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Abuse or neglect | 56 | 27 | 19 | 5 | 107 |
| Disability | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| Parental illness/disability | 6 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 10 |
| Family in acute stress | 7 | 8 | 9 | 5 | 29 |
| Family dysfunctional | 10 | 6 | 8 | 1 | 25 |
| Socially unacceptable | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Absent parenting | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| Total | 80 | 46 | 42 | 14 | 182 |

12 Locality of admission into care April 2010 – March 2011 (mainstream only)

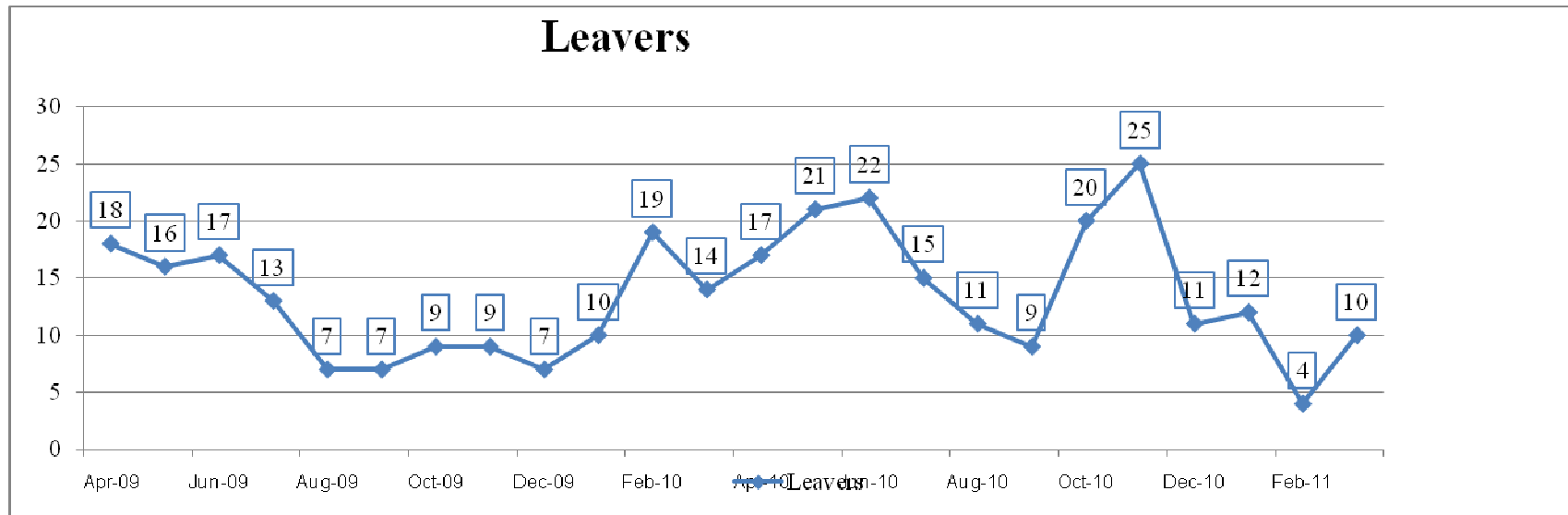
| Locality | 0-4 | 5-10 | 11-15 | 16+ | Total |
|--------------|-----|------|-------|-----|-------|
| Crewe | 47 | 23 | 20 | 1 | 91 |
| Congleton | 11 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 31 |
| Macclesfield | 19 | 8 | 13 | 6 | 46 |
| Disability | 0 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 7 |
| Access | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 6 |
| Adoption | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

| | | | | | |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Total | 80 | 46 | 42 | 14 | 182 |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|

13 Leavers April 2010 to March 2011 (Mainstream only)

| | Placement Type | | | | | |
|--------------|----------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Month | ER | IR | EFC | CEFC | Other | ALL |
| Apr 10 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 17 |
| May 10 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 17 | 3 | 21 |
| Jun 10 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 13 | 4 | 22 |
| Jul 10 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 15 |
| Aug 10 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 11 |
| Sep 10 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 9 |
| Oct 10 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 8 | 9 | 20 |
| Nov 10 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 15 | 5 | 25 |
| Dec 10 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 11 |
| Jan 11 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 12 |
| Feb 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Mar 11 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 10 |
| Total | 18 | 0 | 25 | 84 | 50 | 177 |

14 Leavers April 2009 to March 2011 (Mainstream only)



15 Reason for young people leaving care April 2010 – March 2011 (mainstream only)

| Reason ceased | 0-4 | 5-10 | 11-15 | 16+ | Total |
|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Returned Home | 25 | 20 | 20 | 3 | 68 |
| Supervision order | 7 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| Residence order | 8 | 10 | 4 | 0 | 22 |
| Adoption | 13 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 17 |
| Independent | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 10 |
| Mum and baby unit | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Reached 18 years | 0 | 0 | 0 | 39 | 39 |
| Care order expired | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Returned to family/friends | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Sentenced | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Special Guardianship Order | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Care order discharged | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Total | 57 | 36 | 28 | 56 | 177 |

16 Locality of leavers from care April – March 2011 (mainstream only)

| Locality | 0-4 | 5-10 | 11-15 | 16+ | Total |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Crewe | 34 | 19 | 15 | 13 | 81 |
| Congleton | 8 | 7 | 5 | 26 | 46 |
| Macclesfield | 10 | 6 | 8 | 13 | 37 |
| Disability | 3 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 8 |
| Adoption | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Access | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Total | 57 | 36 | 28 | 56 | 177 |

17 Children in care for 3 years or more as at 31st March 2011

| | External Residential (7) | Internal Residential (5) | External Foster Care (23) | Internal Foster Care (89) | Other (32) |
|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| | Number | Number | Number | Number | Number |
| Gender | | | | | |
| Female | 2 | 0 | 13 | 43 | 20 |
| Male | 5 | 5 | 10 | 46 | 12 |
| Age | | | | | |
| 0-4 years | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 2 |
| 5-10 years | 0 | 1 | 5 | 25 | 21 |
| 11-15 years | 5 | 2 | 12 | 41 | 4 |
| 16+years | 2 | 2 | 5 | 18 | 5 |
| Ethnicity | | | | | |
| Afghan | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Any other Ethnicity | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Black – African | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Black – Caribbean | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Gypsy Roma Traveller | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Other ethnic group | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|----|----|----|
| Other mixed background | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Moroccan | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Pakistan | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Vietnamese | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| White – British | 7 | 5 | 22 | 82 | 31 |
| White& Asian | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| White & Black African | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| White & Black Caribbean | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| White other | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Other Asian background | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 7 | 5 | 23 | 89 | 32 |

