

LAC Scrutiny Data

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report contains information on the number and demographics of looked after children in Tower Hamlets, as well as key performance measures drawn from annual SSDA903 returns and local performance reporting (as of 31st August 2016), broken down by the following categories:
 - LAC Stability
 - LAC Health
 - LAC Education
 - LAC Permanency
 - LAC Care Leavers
- 1.2. The latest 2015/16 comparator data is not yet published for all measures – the outstanding information will not be available until March 2017. Some measures are new or have changed, and therefore tables are sometimes incomplete where data is not available. Some data is not or cannot be calculated locally on regular basis.

2. Executive summary

- 2.1. LAC numbers are increasing over last year, 288 in January to 321 in December, however the general trend over last 10 years is a steep reduction in rate of looked after children in Tower Hamlets, from 79 per 10,000 children in 2005 to current position of 49 per 10,000. This reduction is in line with Inner London, and to a lesser extent the whole of London. The national rate has increased slightly over the same period.
- 2.2. Our age profile has maintained a similar position to London's overall, with an increasing number of 16 and 17 year olds in care – up from 24% in 2011 to 33% in 2016. Currently 170 LAC are male (53%), and 150 female (47%) – this is a more balanced position than nationally or across London. The ethnicity of looked after children broadly reflects the wider TH population, with the two largest groups being Bangladeshi and White British by ethnic origin, in that order.

LAC Stability

- 2.3. Placement stability has been as good as, or better than, the national and London average for the last 5 years. Long term stability has been well above the national and London averages in recent years. The percentage of children placed more than 20 miles from their homes has been in line with or better than performance in London over the last 4 years, though it has been increasing in the last two years. Continued strong performance in review timeliness and participation is evident from the annual performance figures.
- 2.4. The first published performance for new LAC “missing” measure (2014/15) showed Tower Hamlets as having a slightly lower incidence of missing LAC than London and nationally. However, in the last 18 months, there has been a huge increase in focus on children missing from care, home and education. This has led to an increase in awareness amongst professionals

about what constitutes missing or absence from a placement, which is believed to be driving the increase in “missing” episodes recorded for LAC. Nationally and regionally there has also been a slight increase, and data for other London boroughs indicates trend seen in TH is being repeated elsewhere.

- 2.5. LAC offending in 2015/16 remained better than London average (5% compared to 6%) and in line with national position. It is half what was recorded for 2010/11 period.

LAC Health

- 2.6. Annually reported performance for completion of annual health and dental checks has remained in line with England and statistical neighbours over the last few years, though performance for both health and dental checks in 2015/16 has deteriorated. Strengths and Difficulty Questionnaire coverage was high in 2016 and average difficulty score remains below the level of concern. Levels of substance misuse amongst LAC have increased in the last two years and are higher than the last published averages for London and nationally.

LAC Education

- 2.7. Historic performance data shows that whilst LAC lag behind other children in terms of educational attainment, Tower Hamlets LAC in general do better than the average for their LAC peers in England and London. In 2016, there was very good performance at KS2 (although with a small cohort of children) and improvement at KS4. Persistent absence rates improved notably, and absence levels remained in keeping with previous years.

LAC Permanency

- 2.8. The percentage of children returning home to parents/family has been increasing in the last couple of years and has generally been higher than London or national averages. Adoption and SGO outcomes for children leaving care in 2016 dropped significantly compared to previous years, but already show signs of improving in April-August data.
- 2.9. Achieving desired timescales for all adoptions has been challenging due a range of factors, particularly a handful of children with special circumstances which have drawn out the process across multiple years. As a result, average timescales have increase in the last couple of years, but in the majority of cases reasonable timescales are being achieved for children and their adoptive parents.

Leaving Care

- 2.10. Children leaving care continue to achieve good outcomes in relation to suitable accommodation and being in employment, education or training. However, due to a drop in performance in 2015/16 for percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation, it is not clear whether we will retain position above London and national average.

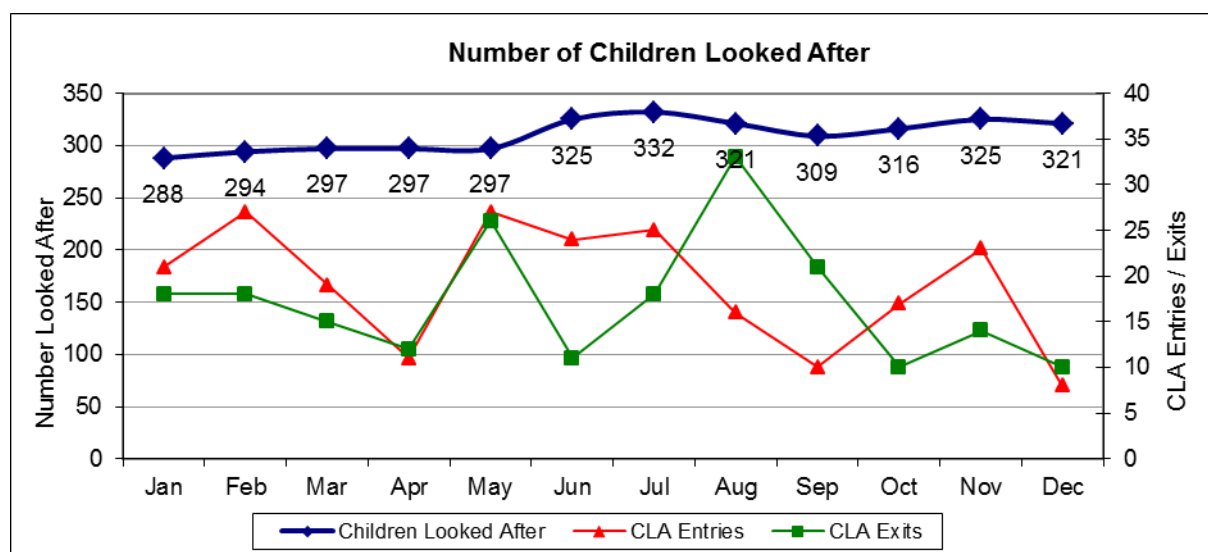
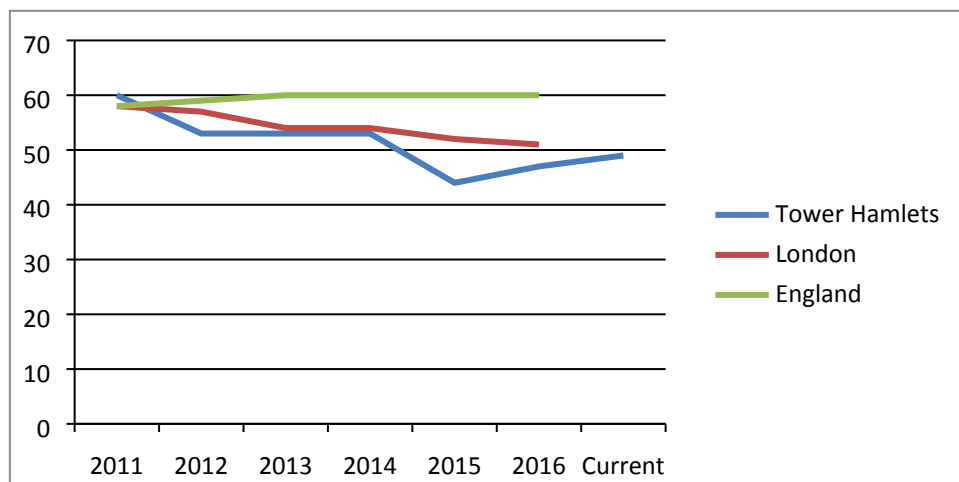
3. Current LAC profile

3.1. LAC numbers and demographics

3.1.1. The rate of LAC per 10,000 children has been reducing in line with reductions across Inner London and London over the last several years. Current rate of 49 per 10,000 is only slightly below London rate of 51 per 10,000

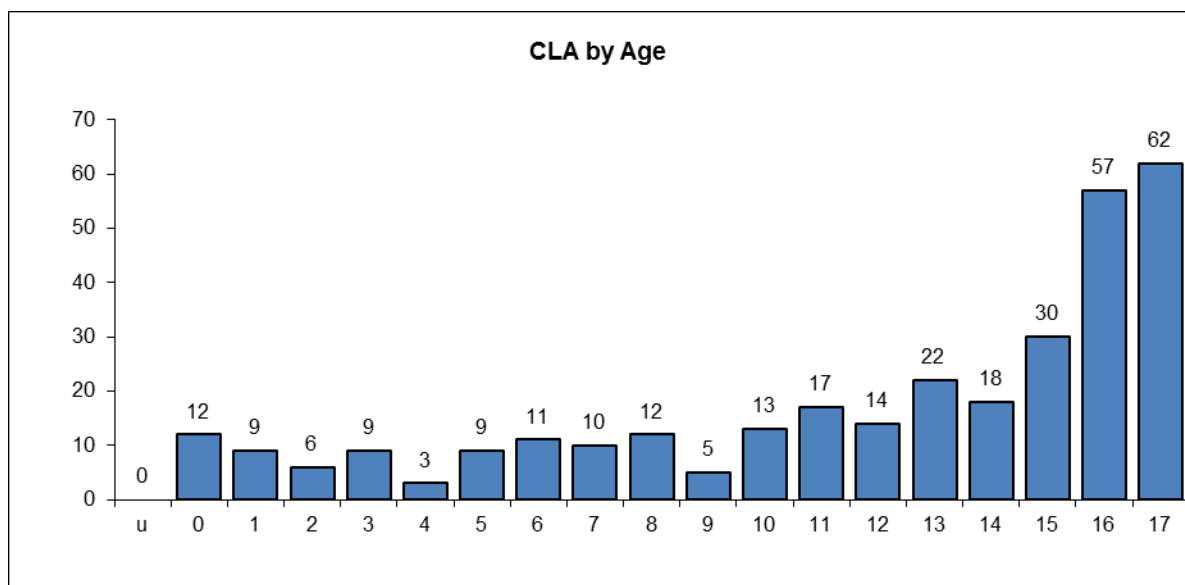
3.1.2. Currently, there are 321 children looked after (as of 31st December 2016) – this is an increase of 33 compared to January 2016.

Children looked after rate per 10,000 children aged under 18	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Current
Tower Hamlets	60	53	53	53	44	47	49
London	58	57	54	54	52	51	
England	58	59	60	60	60	60	
Tower Hamlets- LAC Numbers	325	295	305	325	275	297	321



3.1.3. There has been a shift towards 16+ age category for LAC over the last 5 years, up from 24% in 2011 to 33% in 2016, with corresponding reductions in 1-4 years group and 10-15 years group.

3.1.4. Our age profile has maintained a similar position to London's overall, and distinct from England due to the higher proportion of older teenagers in care.

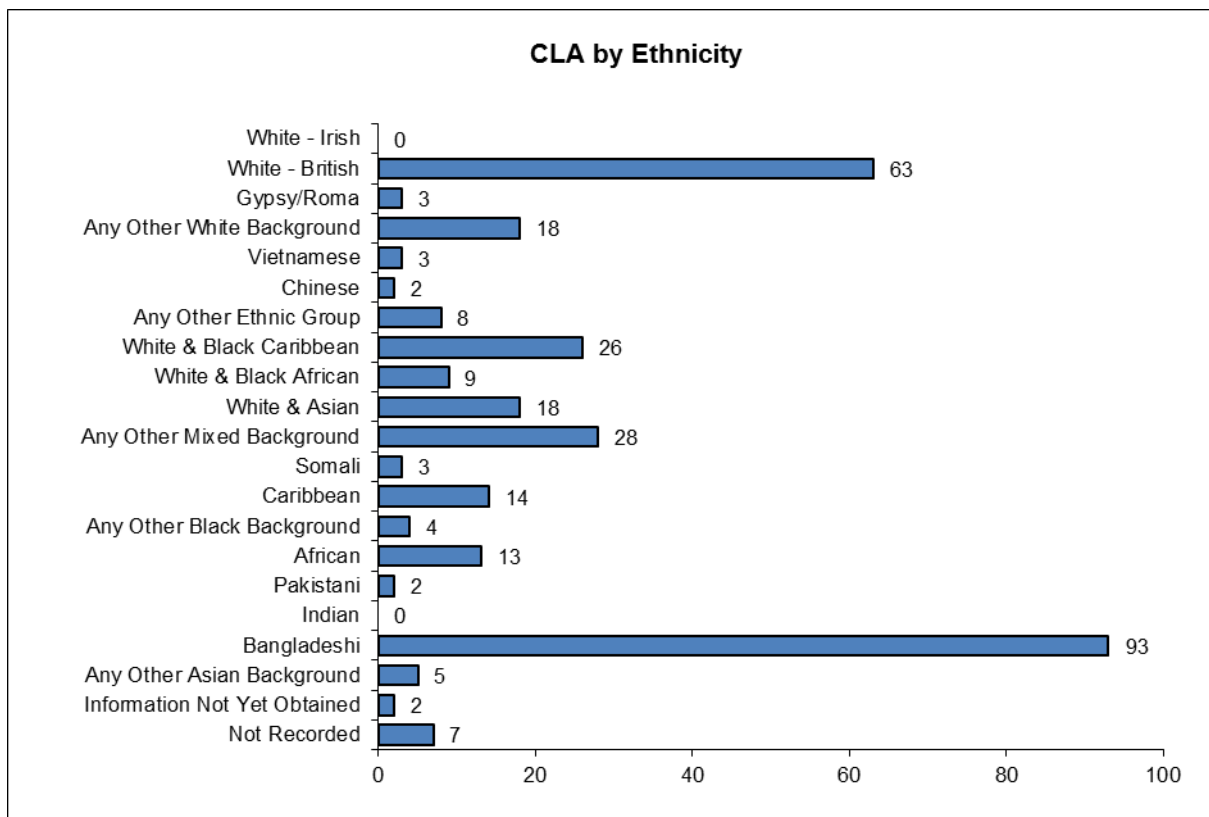


Tower Hamlets LAC by age category (%)	2011	2016 (current)	Diff
Under 1	6	4	-2
1-4 yrs	14	8	-6
5-9 yrs	13	15	-2
10-15 yrs	42	36	-6
16 or over	24	37	13

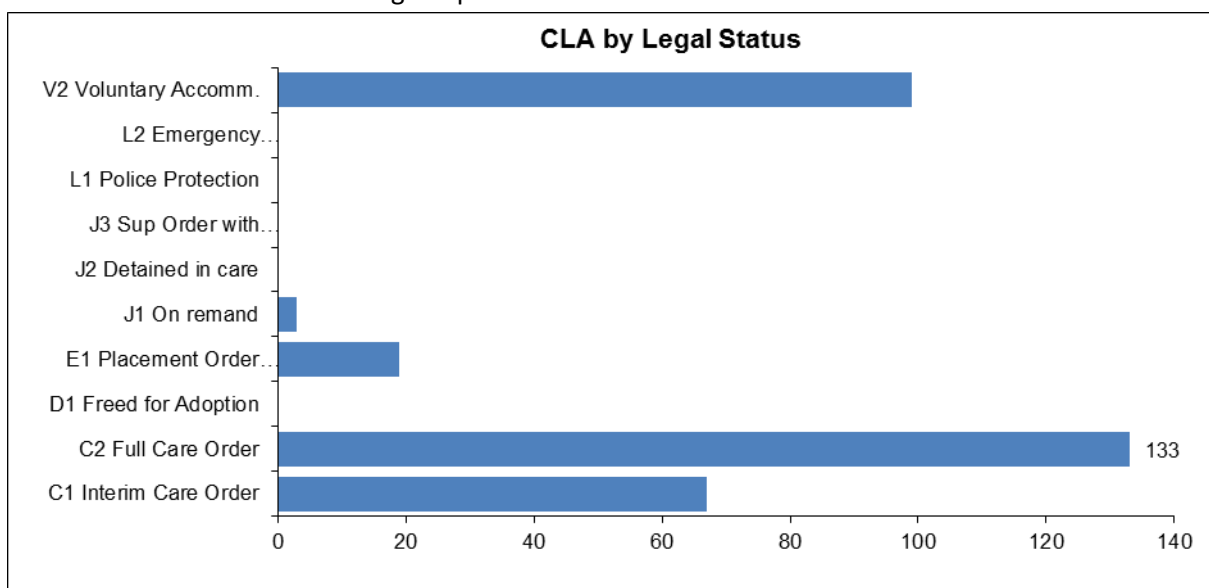
LAC by age category (%)	TH 2016 (current)	England 2014/15	TH – Eng Diff	London 2014/15	TH – Lon Diff
Under 1	4	5	0	4	1
1-4 yrs	8	15	-6	10	-1
5-9 yrs	15	21	-7	16	-2
10-15 yrs	36	38	-1	38	-1
16 or over	37	22	13	33	2

3.1.5. Currently 170 LAC are male (53%), and 150 female (47%) (n.b. 1 child currently recorded as unknown) – this is a more balanced position than nationally or across London. Nationally, 55% of LAC are male, 45% are female. Across London, 58% of LAC are male, 42% are female.

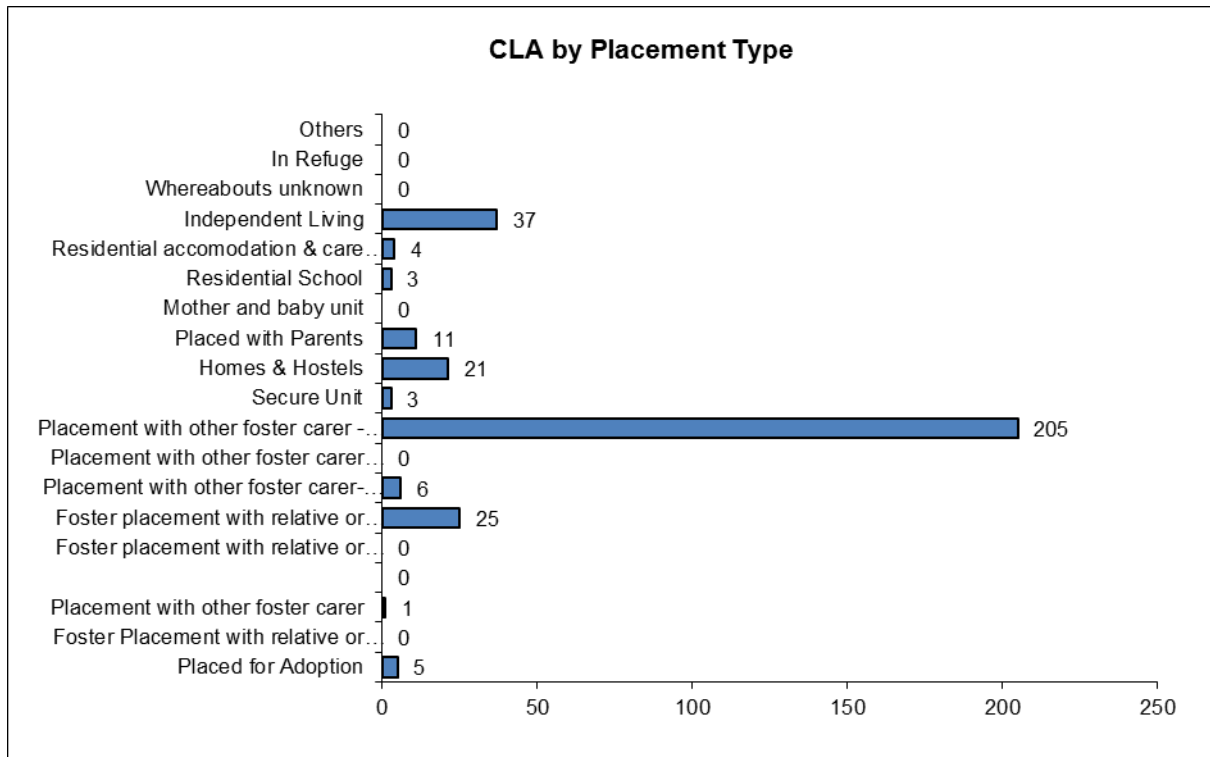
3.1.6. The ethnicity of looked after children broadly reflects the wider population, with the two largest groups being Bangladeshi and White British by ethnic origin, in that order.



3.1.7. 31% of looked after children are currently looked after as a period of voluntary accommodation, 62% of LAC are on an interim or full Care Order, and 6% are currently on Placement Orders awaiting adoption.



3.1.8. The majority of children are placed with foster carers – 74% when included all forms of foster placement.



3.2. LAC Stability

3.2.1. Placement stability, as measured below, has been in line with the national and London average for the last 5 years. Long term stability, as measured in the second table below, has been well above the national and London averages in recent years.

Percentage children at 31 March with three or more placements during the year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	YTD
Tower Hamlets	11	11	12	11	12	11	13
London	12				11	n/a	
England	11	11	11	11	10	n/a	

Percentage children looked after for more than 2.5yrs and of those, have been in the same placement for at least 2yrs or placed for adoption	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	YTD
Tower Hamlets	68	72	69	79	78	80	87
London	70				67	n/a	
England	68	68	67	67	68	n/a	

3.2.2. The percentage of children placed more than 20 miles from their homes has been in line with or better than performance in London over the last 4 years, and has reduced in 2015/16 to be below regional and national averages (see table).

3.2.3. Published data for percentage of **new placements** placed 20 miles or more away from home during 2015/16 shows TH at 11%, London 15% and England averaging 18%, which is a positive position.

% of children looked after at 31 March, placed more than 20 miles from their homes, outside LA boundary	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	YTD
Tower Hamlets	21	17	15	13	18	15	n/a
London	18	17	18	18	18	18	
England	12	12	12	13	14	18	

3.2.4. The first published performance of new LAC “missing” measure showed Tower Hamlets as slightly better than London and nationally, with 5% compared to 6% for both comparator groups.

3.2.5. Locally, in the last 18 months, there has been a huge increase in focus on children missing from care, home and education. This has led to an increase in recording which is believed to be driving the increase in “missing” episodes recorded for LAC.

3.2.6. Nationally and regionally there has also been an increase in % LAC going at missing at some point during the year, suggesting similar changes in focus on and recording of this issue. In London, TH was joint 5th highest rate of missing LAC, with Kensington & Chelsea and Merton, the boroughs with greater % LAC missing during year were: Wandsworth (16%), Camden (17%), Brent (20%), Richmond Upon Thames (22%).

3.2.7. Current performance is 17.6% of LAC had a recorded missing episode in the last year (as at 31st December). Performance has been stable at this level for the last several months.

Percentage of Children Looked after whom had a missing incident during the year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	YTD
Tower Hamlets					5	15	17.6
London					6	10	
England					6	9	

3.2.8. Please note national comparator figures for this measure are no longer published

3.2.9. Continued strong performance in review timeliness is evident from the annual performance figures, however issues with recording and FWi reports are persistently under-reporting in year performance figures.

% of LAC receiving all their reviews within statutory timescales	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	YTD
Tower Hamlets					85.5	88.7	58.2

% of LAC who participated in their review	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	YTD
Tower Hamlets					92.4	89.4	83.2

3.2.10. LAC offending in 2015/16 was better than London average (5% compared to 6%) and in line with national position. It is half what was recorded for 2010/11 period.

% of looked after children subject to a conviction, final warning or reprimand during the year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	YTD
Tower Hamlets	10.8	6.5			5	5	n/a
London	6.1	6.9	5.9	5.7	6	6	
England	7.3	6.9	6.2	5.6	5	5	

3.3. LAC Health

3.3.1. Annually reported performance has remained in line or better than England and statistical neighbours over the last few years, however in 2015/16 performance has deteriorated.

3.3.2. Issues with processes around health and dental checks between LBTH and NHS organisations still lead to recording delays that mean in year figures under-represent performance. Work is being carried out between organisations to agree more efficient and robust processes for tracking and recording this activity.

% of LAC who had been looked after continuously for at least 12 months, who had up to date:						
Annual health assessment	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Current
Tower Hamlets	95.2	77.5	90.2	91.9	84.8	82.9
Stat Neighbour	88.2	93.3	92.8	93.7	92.8 (Lon)	
England	86.3	87.3	88.4	89.7	90	
Development assessment (under 5s only)	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Current
Tower Hamlets		83.3	100	100	100	n/a
Stat Neighbour	86	97.7	92.3	97.1	92.7 (Lon)	
England	80.2	84.3	86.8	89.4	83.2	
Immunisations	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Current
Tower Hamlets	85.7	80	78	89.2	75.8	n/a
Stat Neighbour	90.3	83	90.2	89.4	84.1 (Lon)	
England	83.1	83.2	87.1	87.8	87.2	
Teeth check by a dentist	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Current
Tower Hamlets	88.1	97.5	92.7	89.2	81.8	56.0
Stat Neighbour	82.1	88.4	83	84.0	88.2 (Lon)	
England	82.4	82	84.4	85.8	84.1	

3.3.3. The “total difficulty score” is scored between 0-40, based on answers to the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire conducted annually for all looked after children aged between four and 16 (inclusive) at the date of their latest assessment, who have been looked after for at least 12 months on 31st March that year.

3.3.4. On an individual basis a score of 13 or below is normal and 17 and above is a cause of concern (between 14-16 is borderline). For local authorities, their overall average score will give an indication of the level of "concern" there is across the local authority. Despite an increase in 2014/15, average scores for Tower Hamlets have been generally below the level of concern and lower than London and national averages.

3.3.5. Processes for ensuring all children received SDQs were interrupted during 2015 which has had an impact on coverage during two financial years, this has been rectified and coverage has recovered during 2015/16, and is once again above national and London averages.

Emotional and Behavioural Health of Looked after Children – average Total Difficulty Score	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	YTD
Tower Hamlets	14.2	13.1	12.7	12.5	14.2	12.6	n/a
London	13.6	13.6	13.5	13.4	13.2	13.3	
England	13.9	13.9	14	13.9	13.9	14.0	

% of eligible children for whom an SDQ score was submitted	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	YTD
Tower Hamlets	n/a	74	90	50	58	90	n/a
Stat Neighbour	n/a	73.4	80.7	70	73.3	tbc	
England	n/a	71	71	68	72.0	75	

3.3.6. Substance misuse levels have shown signs of increasing in last two years and are above the 2016 London and national averages:

Percentage identified as having a substance misuse problem during the year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	YTD
Tower Hamlets	9	4.8	4.5	4.4	11	12.6	n/a
London	5.6	5.7	5	6.1	6	5	
England	4.3	4.1	3.5	3.5	4	4	

3.4. LAC Education

3.4.1. From 2016 new performance measures have been introduced at both KS2 and KS4 meaning direct comparison to previous years is not possible. The 2016 LAC KS2 cohort size was 9 children (1 with SEN) and the percentage achieving the new measure of having met the expected standard met expected standards in Reading, Writing and Maths was 66.6%, better than the borough average for all children.

Children in Care reaching level 4 in Reading, Writing and Maths at Key Stage 2	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	YTD
Tower Hamlets	n/a	73	71	67	20	n/a	n/a
London	n/a	47	59	54	58	n/a	n/a
England	n/a	42	45	48	52	n/a	n/a

3.4.2. The LAC cohort for KS4 was 21 children (8 with SEN) and 24% achieved the 5+ A* to C GCSE's including English and Maths.

Children in Care Achieving 5+ A* to C GCSE's inc. English and Maths	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	YTD
Tower Hamlets	23.1	16.7	25	11.5	19.4	24	n/a
London	16.5	17.1	20.7	15.2	16.8	n/a	n/a
England	13.6	14.9	15.5	12.2	13.8	n/a	n/a

3.4.3. LAC persistent absence has fallen from a 23% high in 2014/15 to just 10% - the lowest level in 5 years for LAC in care for 1 year or more. This is despite a tightening of the persistent absence threshold to 10%. Overall attendance of LAC in care 1 year or more is 92.39%, relatively unchanged from the previous year. Tables below show historic absence levels by authorised and unauthorised absence for LAC children – TH figures are typically in line with London and England averages.

% unauthorised absence from school of children who have been looked after continuously for at least 12 months	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	YTD
Tower Hamlets	1.5	1.2	1.1	0.6	0.8	n/a	
London	1.6	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.2	n/a	
England	1.5	1.2	1.1	1	1	n/a	
% absence from school of children who have been looked after continuously for at least 12 months	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	YTD
Tower Hamlets	4.9	4.8	4.9	4.1	3.8	n/a	
London	5.4	4.7	4.5	4.3	4.3	n/a	
England	5.5	4.7	4.4	3.9	4	n/a	

3.5. LAC Permanency

3.5.1. The percentage of children returning home after a period of being looked after dropped to 37% in 2013/14 but has increased since then to 40.5% in 2015/16. With the exception of 2013/14, Tower Hamlets has persistently returned a higher percentage of children in care home to parents/family than national or regional average.

Percentage of children returning home after a period of being looked after	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	YTD
Tower Hamlets	48	54	51	37	40	40.5	n/a
London	44	39	40	39	37	34	
England	39	37	35	34	34	29.9	

3.5.2. The percentage of children being adopted from care or made subject to a special guardianship order has lagged slightly behind London performance over the last few years. Performance in 2015/16 was lower than the previous year, but shows signs of immediately improving based on data for period covering April-December 2016.

% LAC who ceased to be looked after because of a special guardianship order during the year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	YTD
Tower Hamlets-Number	15	15	10	10	15	6	15
Tower Hamlets-%	7	7	7	6	8	2.4	9.6
London	5	7	8	10	11	9.5	
England	7	8	10	11	11	12.1	

Percentage of Looked After Children adopted in year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	YTD
Tower Hamlets-Number	10	10	15	15	20	15	9
Tower Hamlets-%	5	5	8	8	10	7	6
London	7	8	9	10	9	8	
England	11	13	14	17	17	15	

3.5.3. Historic data is based on three year rolling average, as per the DFE Adoption Scorecard measures

3.5.4. In Tower Hamlets, timescale performance has been impacted by a number of “outlier” cases which have taken multiple years to conclude. For example, a case where looked after children have been abducted and taken out of the country by parents whilst remaining legally in our care.

3.5.5. Time taken to secure a match to an adoptive family have increase over the last few years, though is currently broadly in line with last published adoption scorecard London and England figures.

Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family	2008 2011	2009 2012	2010 2013	2011 2014	2012 2015	2015/16	Current (annual)
Tower Hamlets	513	521	586	549	645	733	559
London		720	711	675	635		
England	625	636	647	628	593		

Average time between a LA receiving court authority to place a child and deciding on a match	2008 2011	2009 2012	2010 2013	2011 2014	2012 2015	2015/16	Current (annual)
Tower Hamlets	52	90	159	173	265	345	285
London		181	209	216	228		
England	173	195	210	217	223		

3.5.6. The average length of care proceedings had begun reducing during the 2012-2015 three year period, and has maintained that for 2015/16 financial year, where the average was only 29 weeks – the national target set is 26 weeks. As of Dec 16 it was 27 weeks (figure to be verified)

Average length of care proceedings	2008 2011	2009 2012	2010 2013	2011 2014	2012- 2015	2015/16	Current
Tower Hamlets	55	58	56	53	44	29	32 (as of September)
London	53	55	55	51	44		
England	52	53	51	48	39		

3.6. Care Leavers

3.6.1. Tower Hamlets has generally exceeded London and national averages for Care Leavers in suitable accommodation. 2014 performance may under-represent true performance for that year due to transitional issues with new recording requirements for 19/20/21 year olds. 2016 performance is equal with best performance locally in last six years, but current performance is slightly lower and in line with national average.

Care Leavers - Suitable accommodation %	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	YTD
Tower Hamlets	94	92.7	90	67.6	92	94	83.8
London	90	90.7	88	81.5	83	82	
England	90	88.3	88	77.8	81	83	

3.6.2. Percentage of Care Leavers in education, employment or training has remained steady over the last three years, and above both the London and National averages.

Care Leavers - Education, Employment or Training	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	YTD
Tower Hamlets	87	65	85	61	56	58	70.3
London	66	59	64	54	53	54	
England	61	58	58	45	48	49	