



## **FOSTER CARE SERVICES NORTH WEST**

### **Annual Report - October 2006**

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# INTRODUCTION

This report provides a summary of activity within Foster Care Services during the period September 2005 – October 2006.

We continue to provide a fully integrated service comprising of our professional carers, our social workers and team of teachers commissioned by the Agency from the National Teaching & Advisory Service.

In this report, we have included more detailed information relating to the types of placements we are currently providing, the types of referrals we receive and from which areas, and the rate at which new carers are being assessed and approved.

We are pleased to be able to report again that we enjoyed a very successful agency inspection from CSCI. We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the commitment, professionalism and hard work of all our foster carers, social work staff and all managers and administrative staff. We appreciate and are grateful for the efforts of all our colleagues, including those in local authorities working in partnership with us.

We would be very happy to provide further details or clarification regarding any of the areas covered within this report.

## THE STAFF TEAM

Six full-time and one part-time Social Workers and the Team Manager directly support the Agency's carers, their households and fostered placements

Together with other staff members, they provide an integrated support service to the foster carers.

The staff roles, briefly, are as follows: -

**Principal Manager** – The registered manager and person with overall responsibility for the service provision and operational management of the Agency.

**Team Manager/Deputy Manager** – Manages the operation of the social work team and deputises for the Principal Manager

**Project Manager/Deputy Team Manager** – Deputises for the Team manager, co-ordinates the recruitment of foster carers, the support to junior carers, supervises Sessional Form F. Writers and has a specialist caseload.

**Supervising Social Workers** – Six full-time, one part-time. One Supervising Social Worker manages the Fostering Panel. The social workers supervise and support the foster carers, assess foster care applications, facilitate the five local support groups, supervise the matching and provision of placements and provide training to foster carers.

**Foster Carer Support Workers** – Two part-time who provide some individual, practical support to foster carer household.

**Business Manager** – Manages the contracts with purchasers, liaises with local authorities that are referring for placements and takes initial details prior to matching.

**Finance/I.T. Manager** – who processes all payments to carers and provides I.T. support.

**Administrators** – Three full-time staff that provide all administrative support to the Agency.

**Independent Reviewing Officer** – Two qualified social workers who are independent of the Agency and chair the foster carers' annual reviews.

Each Supervising Social Worker usually supervises eight carer households, some of which will have three young people in placement. Each social worker will undertake one or two assessments of foster carer applicants and make initial visits to enquirers interested fostering.

### **24-Hour On-call Service**

The social work team and their managers staff the on-call service. This ensures that advice and support is always available to the Agency's foster carers and their households 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, all year round.

### **Activities and Holidays**

The Agency's social workers facilitate Carers' Support Groups and take part in Agency activities and holidays each year.

The children's Christmas Party was held at the Millbrook Centre in Stockport on December 18<sup>th</sup>.

This year we have organised open coffee mornings in February, June and December. This is an opportunity for all foster carers to drop in and socialise with staff and other carers.

There was a BBQ and Fun Day at the David Lloyd Centre in Trafford in the summer.

The Agency's annual holiday in August was at the Devon Cliffs Holiday Centre near Exmouth in Devon. Two social workers accompanied 14 families for a week.

The Project Manager co-ordinates recruitment of foster carers. Last year two open days were held, and one will be held this year at the Agency's offices.

Regular staff and team meetings are held to ensure good communication and information sharing. We have an established and well-experienced staff team with a positive team spirit.

A strong point for the Agency is staff retention. The average length of employment for all staff at the Agency is five years.

## **TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Agency has a commitment to continuous professional development for all personnel.

Training and development needs and requirements are identified at monthly supervision, annual appraisals, and at foster carers' annual reviews.

Training opportunities are provided by in-house courses and workshops, by independent trainers and external courses. Membership of BAAF and Fostering Network ensures notification of courses and workshops being presented by these organisations.

If foster carers are able to identify and access training locally which is relevant to the fostering task, they can discuss this with their Supervising Social Worker, and funding will be considered.

Foster carers who attend training will receive certificates which should be added to their portfolios as evidence of ongoing training and development.

Social Workers should keep a record of their attendance at training in order to evidence their professional development for purpose of ongoing registration with the General Social Care Council.

Multi-disciplinary training is encouraged, and in-house courses are attended in mixed groups of social workers, foster carers, support workers and teachers. This approach brings a wider perspective to training experiences and aid working in partnership.

# SUMMARY OF TRAINING PROVIDED

## Training Provided at FCSNW Offices 2006

<u>Date</u>	<u>Course</u>
14.09.05	Supporting and Promoting Education for LAC (2)
05.11.05	Induction 1
12.11.05	Induction 2
28.02.06 (Day 1)	Caring for Neglected and Traumatized Children
01.03.06 (Day 2)	Caring for Neglected and Traumatized Children
29.06.06 (Day 3)	Caring for Neglected and Traumatized Children
09.05.06 (Day 4)	Caring for Neglected and Traumatized Children
07.03.06	Disability and Trauma
15.03.06	Disability and Trauma
16.03.06	Disability and Trauma
13.05.06	Induction 1
20.05.06	Induction 2
06.06.06	Working Positively with Aggressive Boys (Day 1)
07.06.06	Working Positively with Aggressive Boys (Day 2)
27.06.06	Supervision Within Family Placement (Day 1)
28.06.06	Supervision Within Family Placement (Day 2)
23.09.06	Induction 1
30.09.06	Induction 2
26.09.06	Safe Handling & De-escalation Skills (Day 1)
27.09.06	Safe Handling & De-escalation Skills (Day 2)

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND AWARDS**

As part of the Agency's continuing investment in the social care workforce, recognised qualifications and awards undertaken and attained by foster carers and staff.

National Vocational Awards at Level 3 in caring for children and young people and in preparing for independence are the recognised qualification for foster carers. This year two more foster carers have been awarded the NVQ Level 3. We are delighted that now 13 of our carers hold the award and that one is qualified as an Assessor.

It is worthy of note here that a high number of our approved foster carers hold professional qualifications in teaching, nursing, social work and childcare.

Two members of the administrative team hold the NVQ Level 3 award in administration.

The social work team members all hold a recognised social work qualification, one has the post-qualified award, two are holders of the PQ1 and two hold the practice teaching award.

The Principal Manager has been awarded the NVQ Level 5 in management.

**October 2006**

## **RECRUITMENT**

We continue to be very active in the recruitment of foster carers. A member of the social work team co-ordinates recruitment and is able to deliver an immediate response to enquirers, following this up with a personal contact visit.

In the previous 12 months, 150 enquiries have been received and responded to. Enquiries are generated from a number of sources; this includes Yellow Pages, Directory Enquiries, our website, listing on the websites of Commission for Social Care Inspection, BAAF and Fostering Network, networking in local communities.

In addition, we hold recruitment open days, both at our offices and at local community venues. Four open days have been held in the last year, both during the day and evenings.

Foster carers and social work staff are available at these to provide information and talk informally about fostering. Open days are advertised in the local press and by leaflet distribution. However, the main source for recruitment of new persons to fostering continues to be by word of mouth.

We have a successful recommendation scheme that rewards our foster carers who introduce an applicant who becomes an approved foster carer for the Agency.

In the last 12 months, we have approved seven new foster care households who can provide a total of 14 places. We have received application forms from 12 households who are in the process of being assessed.

**David Edwards**

**October 2006**



**Working in partnership**

**with**

**Foster Care Services (NW)**

**Annual Review**

**1 September 2005 – 31 July 2006**



## **NT&AS Mission Statement**

### **NT&AS philosophy:**

We believe all young people have the right to participate in a high quality education that prepares them for a successful adult life regardless of challenging life circumstances, including placement in public care, family difficulties or a range of special needs.

### **NT&AS is committed to:**

- Campaigning to challenge practices that discriminate and devalue young people
- Actively promoting the entitlement of all young people to high quality and sustainable education based on the premise of educational inclusion
- Listening and responding to young people in a meaningful way enabling them to express their views and to provide advocacy where needed
- Promoting understanding of the particular significance of education for young people in need within the policies, procedures and practices of public agencies and relevant professional services.
- Recruiting and retaining the best staff, training them to the highest possible standards to enable them to provide a high quality service in a variety of settings, working in partnership with other agencies and professionals.

## Introduction

Foster Care Services NW) commissioned the National Teaching and Advisory Service to provide an education casework service (as determined by the NT&AS Partnership Agreement) which commenced in November 1997 and was revised in March 2004.

NT&AS has worked closely with Foster Care Services (NW) to establish a protocol to support the development of joint working practices. This has been instrumental in the development of shared objectives to meet the education and care needs of young people placed within Foster Care Services (NW). Foster Care Services (NW) has developed a multi agency referral and review system to ensure joined up working.

NT&AS has provided casework services for all young people cared for by Foster Care Services (NW). NT&AS has also provided training for foster carers to inform working practice and to promote positive educational outcomes.

The partnership between FCS(NW) and NT&AS seeks to implement and prioritise the objectives as outlined in Every Child Matters Green Paper (2004):

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Achieving economic well being

NT&AS is committed to working to current government targets for LAC, in order to achieve and surpass national expectations for young people referred, in the areas of:

- Attendance
- Attainment and progress
- Access to educational provision

This is achieved through the following services:

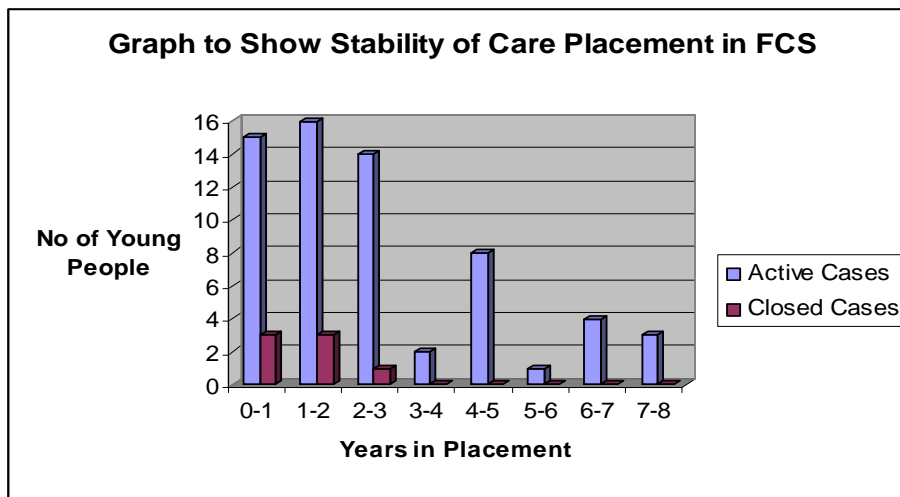
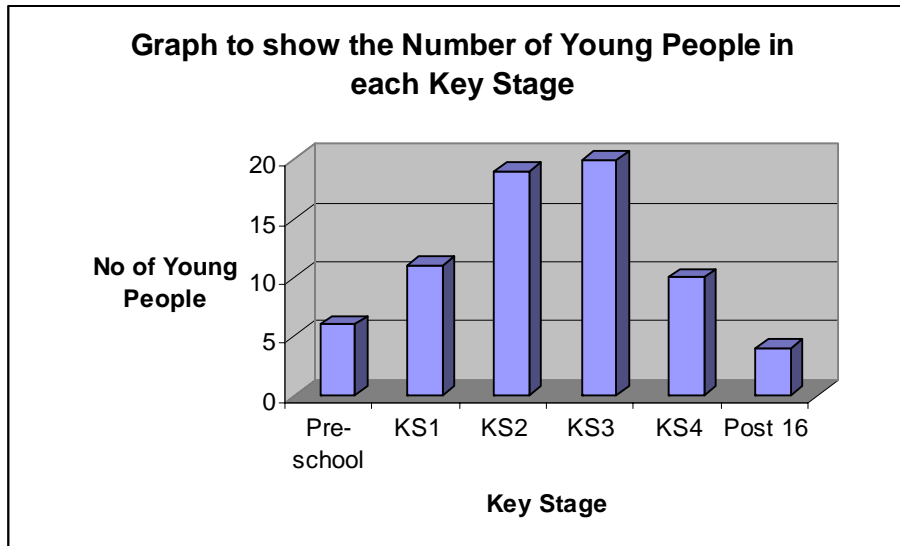
- the researching and writing of comprehensive education background reports for the young people to inform planning
- attendance at LAC reviews
- completion of education reports for LAC reviews and for LEA assessments
- half termly update reports of NT&AS action on behalf of FCS NW
- inclusion planning with social workers, carers, FCS link workers and school to ensure multi agency working
- regular inclusion meetings to ensure the stability of education placements
- assessment of young people's academic abilities and potential
- assessment of young people's social needs and interests
- Identification of gaps in learning and skills
- 1:1 work to prepare young people for a return to education
- intensive initial support to school placement
- identification of strengths and needs in school including areas for ongoing support
- direct support in school to ensure young people were able to meet the expectations of schools with regard to their code of behaviour
- direct support in school to improve academic outcomes
- attendance at meetings in school to advocate for young person
- advice and support for carers to help ensure good school attendance and to support the completion of homework
- representation to residing LEAs and placing authorities regarding the needs of young people and the identification of appropriate education placements
- liaison with representatives from a number of LEAs to ensure that the needs of young people were recognised
- comprehensive recording of casework services
- catch up sessions to ensure coursework is in place
- every young person has a named, allocated, NT&AS teacher

## Client group September 2005 – September 2006

### SEN

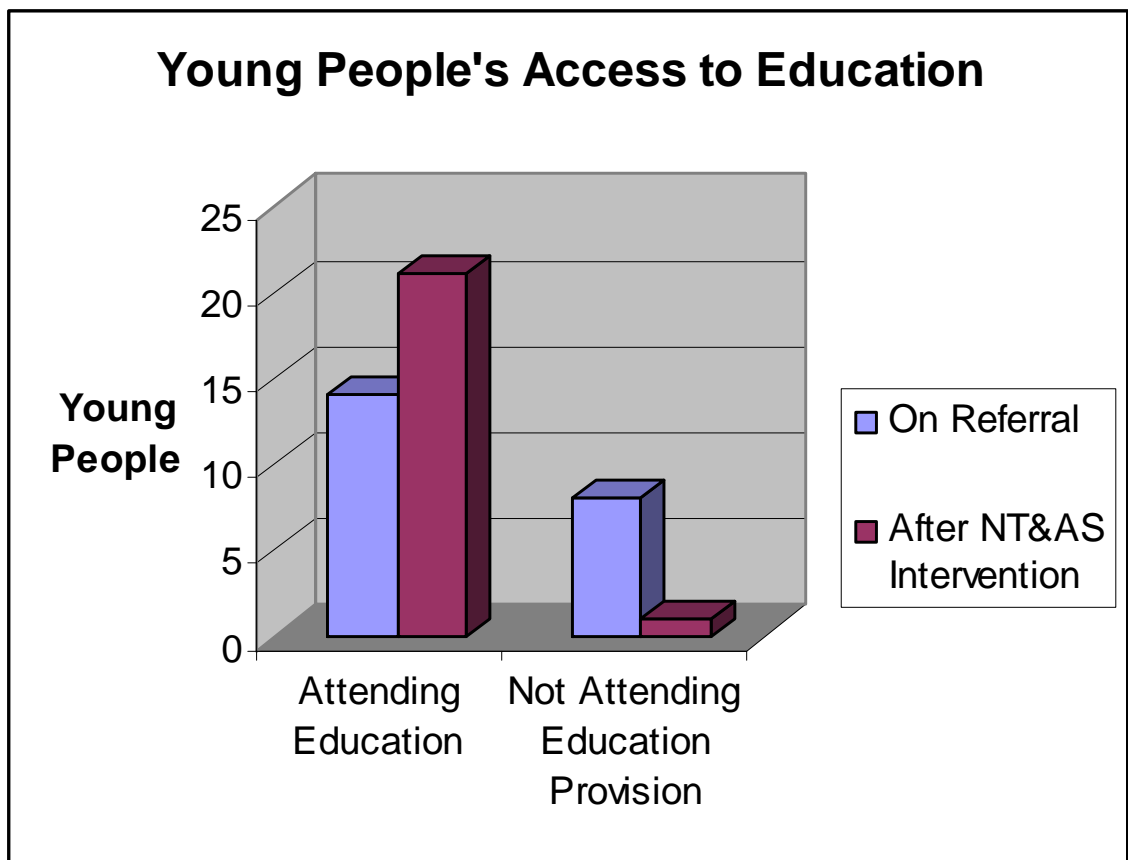
During the academic year 2005 –2006 NT&AS worked with 70 young people, referred by Foster Care Services (NW).

- 36 (51%) of the young people referred were on the Special Educational Needs code of practice
- 10 (14%) had full statements of Special Educational Needs.
- 5 young people had statements in respect of Emotional Behavioural Needs, 5 in respect of learning needs.



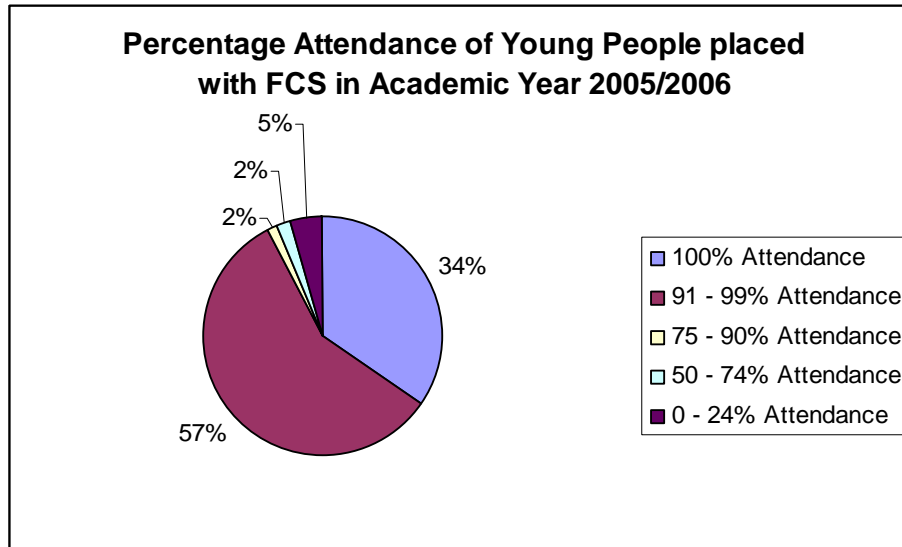
## Outcomes

- NT&AS worked with 70 young people, 22 of whom were referred in the academic year 2005/2006.
- Of the 22 young people referred, 8 were not accessing education provision on referral. NT&AS accessed education placements for 7 young people within 20 school days of going into placement (meeting the target set in the DFES Statutory guidance: Duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children (July 2005)). The 8<sup>th</sup> Young Person was referred at School Leaving age and was supported to access a local Connexions service.



- Of the 48 remaining young people referred to NT&AS, all continued to access full-time education provision during 2005/2006 (see attendance statistics).

## Attendance and Attainment



This graph indicates the attendance at possible sessions of all young people worked with by NT&AS during the Year 2005 -2006. 81% of young people achieved over 91% attendance.

## Attainment

### Key Stage 1

One young person took SAT's at Key Stage One (On referral to NT&AS). The results are as follows:

SUBJECT	LEVELS OF ATTAINMENT		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
ENGLISH	1	0	0
MATHS	1	0	0

The target level at Key Stage 1 is Level 2

### Key Stage2

Five young people took SAT's at Key Stage 2. Four of this cohort had identified special educational needs. The results are as follows:

SUBJECT	LEVELS OF ATTAINMENT			
	N	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
ENGLISH	0	3	1	1
MATHS	1	0	1	3
SCIENCE	1	0	0	4

The target level at Key Stage 2 is Level 4  
 20% achieved target levels in literacy, 60% in maths and 80% in science, compared to 43% of the LAC population and 86% of the population at large.

### Key Stage 3

Seven young people took SAT's at Key Stage 3. Four of this cohort had identified special educational needs. The results are as follows:

SUBJECT					
	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7
ENGLISH	1	3	1	1	0
MATHS	1	3	0	1	1
SCIENCE	1	4	0	2	0

The target level at Key Stage 3 is Level 5.  
 33% achieved the target level in English; 33% in maths and 33% in science. This compares to 23% of the LAC population and 70% of the population at large.

Overall SAT's results obtained within FCS (NW) have exceeded the outcomes for LAC and at key stage 2 have exceeded the results of the general population in maths and science.

### Key Stage 4

Two young people took examinations at the end of KS4; both young people had identified Special Educational Needs. The graphs below show the results of those examinations.

S B COP - A	
Subject	Level
GCSE MATHS	E
GCSE ENGLISH	E
GCSE SCIENCE	F
½ GCSE ICT	E
½ GCSE RE	E
ASDAN	SILVER AWARD
CACHE FOUNDATION IN CHILDCARE	DISTINCTION

S A COP – S	
Subject	Level
GCSE ENGLISH	G
GCSE MATHS	G
ENTRY LEVEL SCIENCE	Pass
ENTRY LEVEL ICT	Pass

100% of young people taking GCSE or its equivalent achieved 1 GCSE compared with 56% of the looked after population and 97% of all children

### SEN code of practice key:

N no additional provision

A school action – placed on SEN register, progress monitored

P school action plus – Individual Education Plan is in place, funding allocated to schools

Q assessment in process for proposed Statement of SEN

S completed statement with allocated resources

## Training

NT&AS training was offered to FCS carers and link workers during the year 2005-2006. The programme was designed to provide an overview of the educational system and to establish understanding of shared goals and objectives included the following components:

- The education of looked after children
- The structure of schools
- An introduction to special educational needs
- Personal Education Plans
- NT&AS casework process
- Working together
- Admissions and exclusions
- Social inclusion
- Barriers to educational success
- Government policy for Looked After Children (Every Child Matters)

## **Conclusion**

Stability of placement within FCS(NW) has been a major factor in successful educational outcomes for young people at every key stage. In turn stable educational placements and rapid identification of education placement has resulted in increased stability of care placement. Joint working has enhanced both educational and care provision for young people placed within FCS(NW). As a result levels of attendance and attainment have surpassed government targets for LAC in all stages and that of the general population at Key Stage 3. The commitment of both agencies to meeting the objectives set out in Every Child matters has been demonstrated at all levels.

Helen Davis & Hannah Hulme  
December 2006

## PLACEMENTS AND REFERRALS - 1.11.2005 TO 31.10.2006

The Agency had 41 Carers on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2005, rising to 45 Carers by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2006. This includes 2 fostering families who provide short-term breaks to our full-time Carers.

During the period 1<sup>st</sup> November 2005 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2006 referrals were received from over 40 different Local Authorities, some of which refer regularly to the Agency.

### Referrals/Placements during the period 1<sup>st</sup> November 2005 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2006

Percentage of referrals <b>RECEIVED</b> by the Agency		Percentage of referrals <b>PLACED</b> with the Agency
19%	aged from 0 years to 4 years	12%
26%	aged from 5 years to 10 years	9%
51%	aged from 11 years to 15 years	40%
2%	aged over 16 years of age	None
2%	Mother & baby	1%

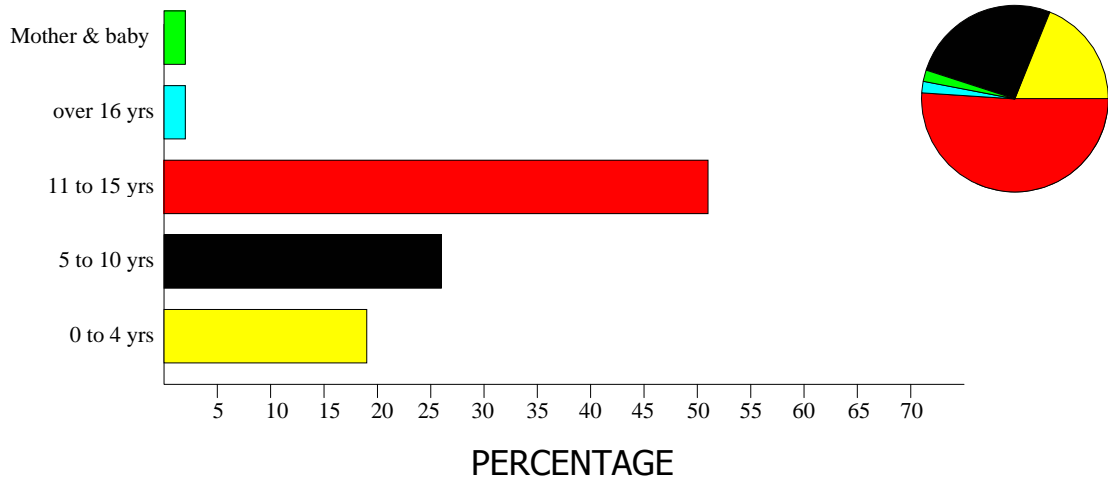
Of the placements made with the Agency, 72% were placed in an emergency.

### Placements leaving during the period 1<sup>st</sup> November 2005 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2006

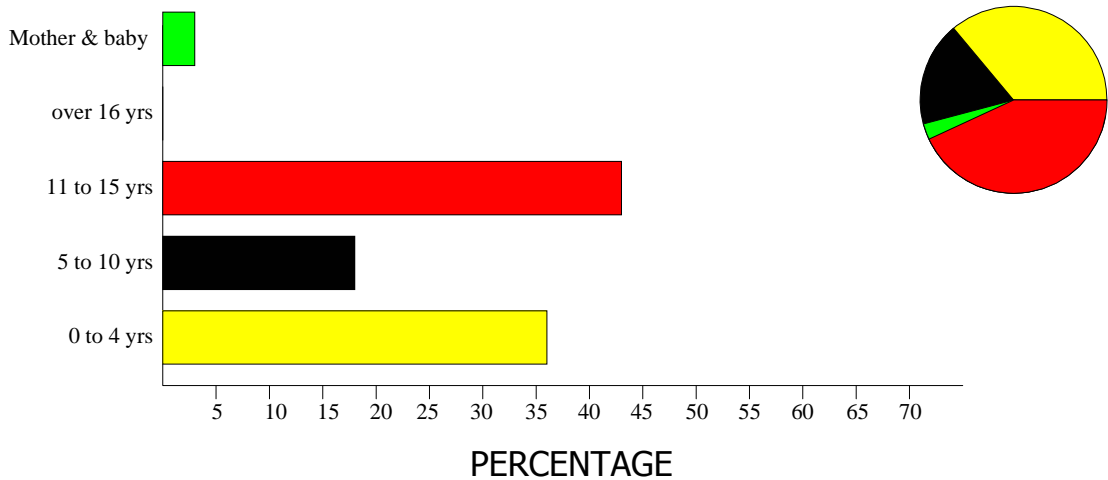
Percentage of placements <b>LEAVING</b> the Agency	
10%	aged from 0 years to 4 years
17%	aged from 5 years to 10 years
49%	aged from 11 years to 15 years
24%	aged over 16 years of age

Of the 29 young people who left the Agency, 5 were unplanned endings.

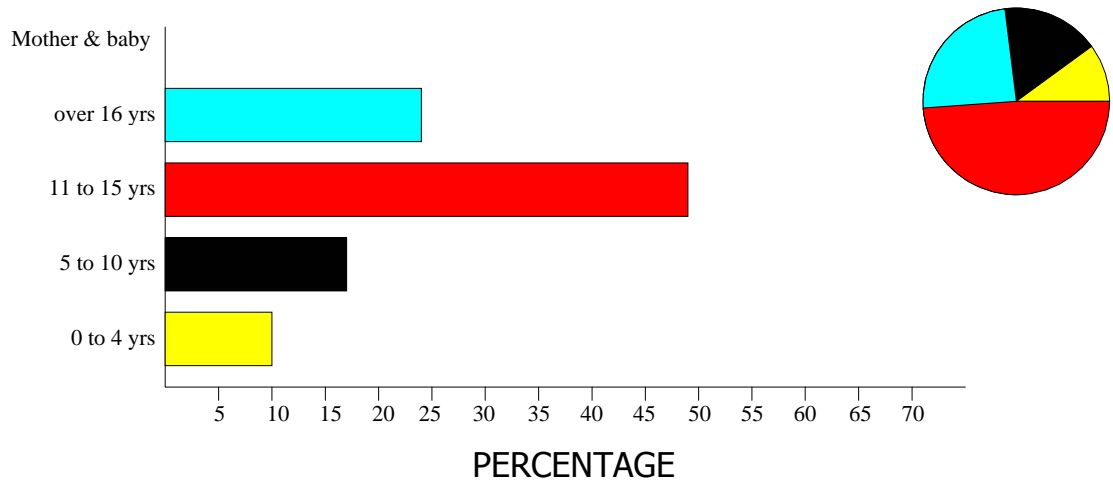
**REFERRALS RECEIVED DURING THE PERIOD 1.11.05 >> 31.10.06**



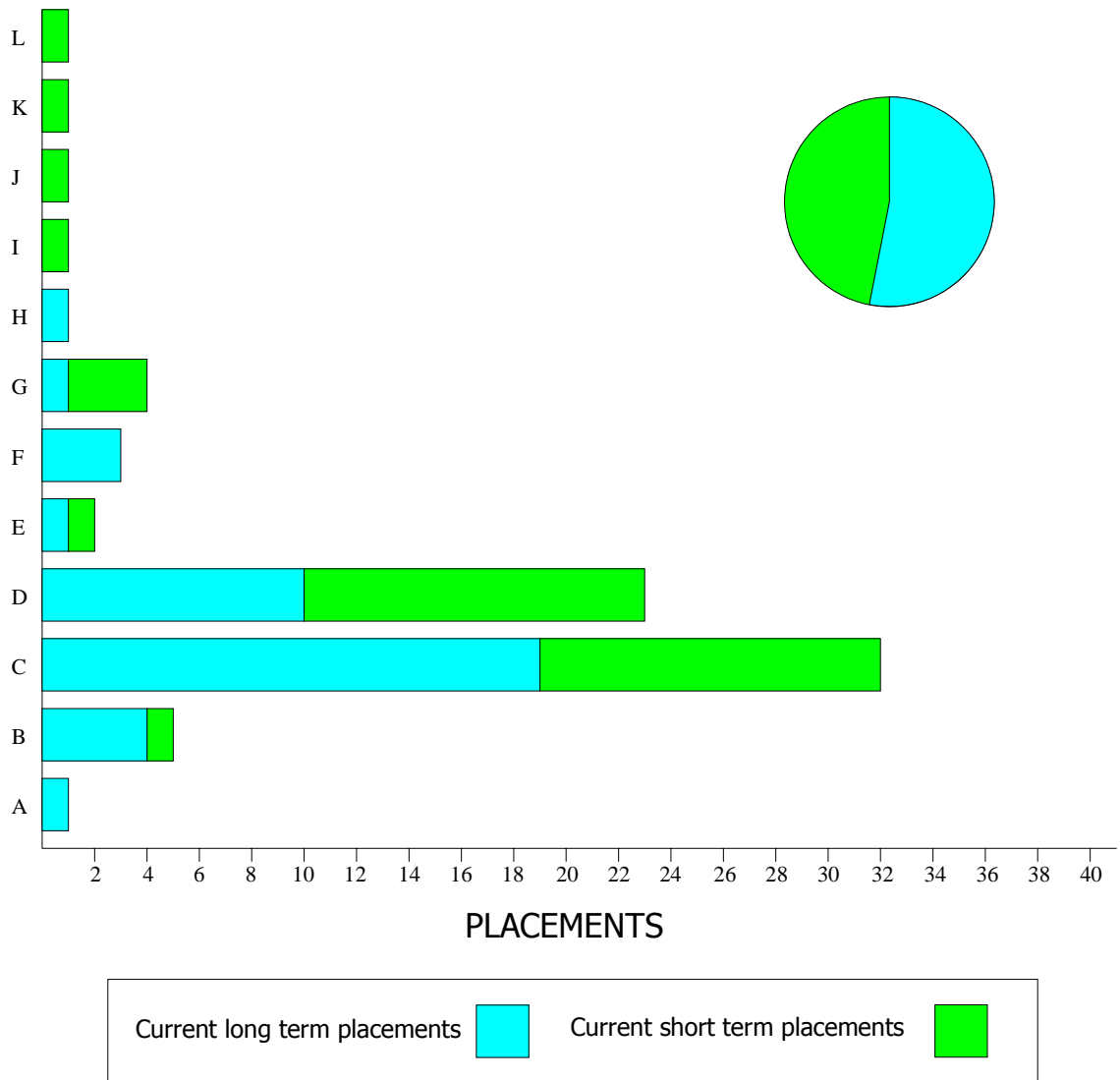
**REFERRALS PLACED DURING THE PERIOD 1.11.05 >> 31.10.06**



**PLACEMENTS LEAVING DURING THE PERIOD 1.11.05 >> 31.10.06**



## CURRENT PLACEMENTS (as at 31st October 2006)



53% of the current placements have been made on a long term

The age profile for young people currently placed is as follows:

<u>long term basis</u>		<u>short term basis</u>
1%	aged from 0 years to 4 years	18%
13%	aged from 5 years to 10 years	24%
32%	aged from 11 years to 15 years	5%
7%	aged over 16 years of age	0%