

Looked After Children: trends in numbers, rates & spend

Including the Cordis Bright Looked After Children Stress-Test

October 2018

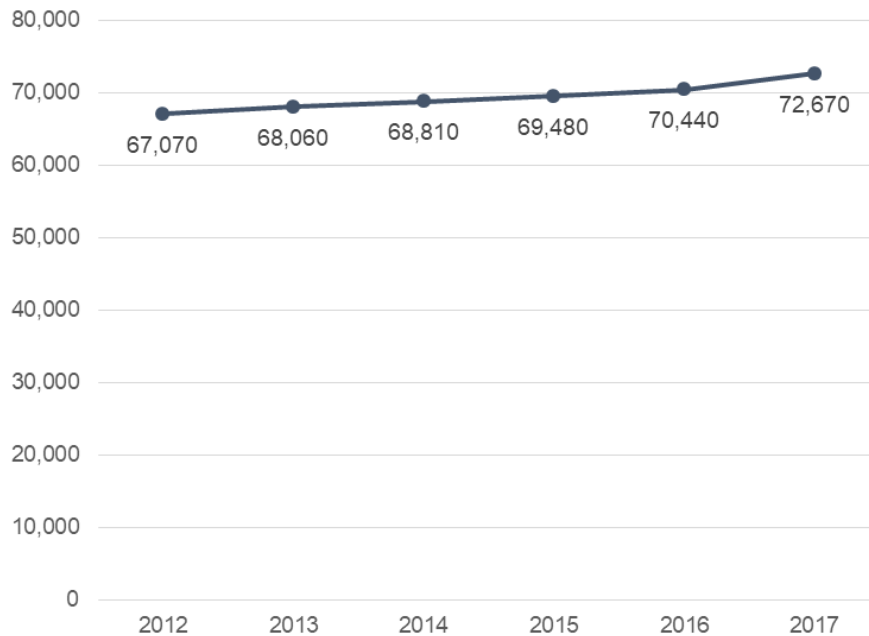


Introduction

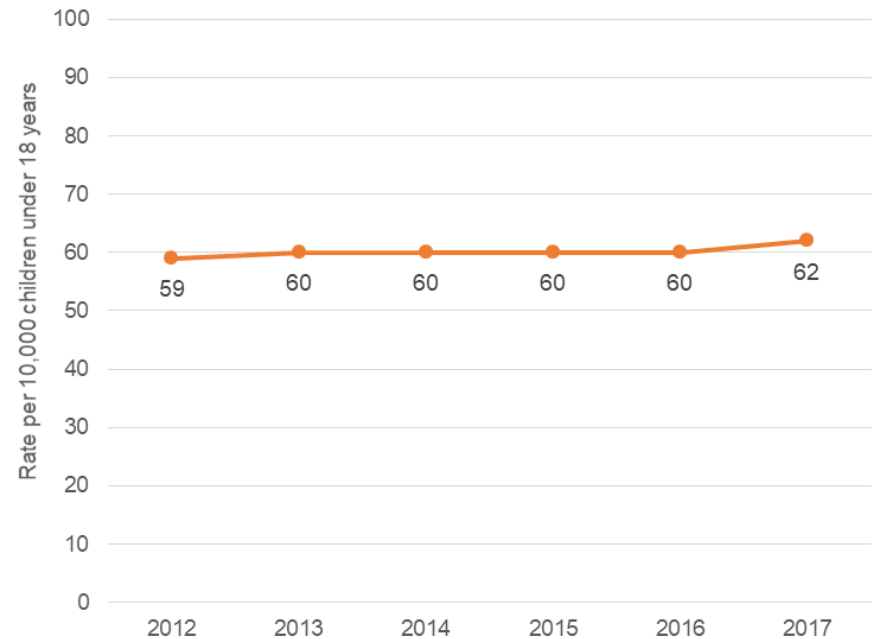
- This document uses publicly available data to examine recent trends in the numbers, rates and spend on Looked After Children (LAC) in England.
- The first section presents national trends from 2012 to 2017 (the most recent date for which data is available).
- The second section examines trends across local authorities.
- As part of this, it highlights those local authorities that we think, from the data, may be experiencing the most pressures in catering for LAC.
- We also highlight local authorities that may be sites of effective practice.

Number & rate of Looked After Children

Number of looked after children in England



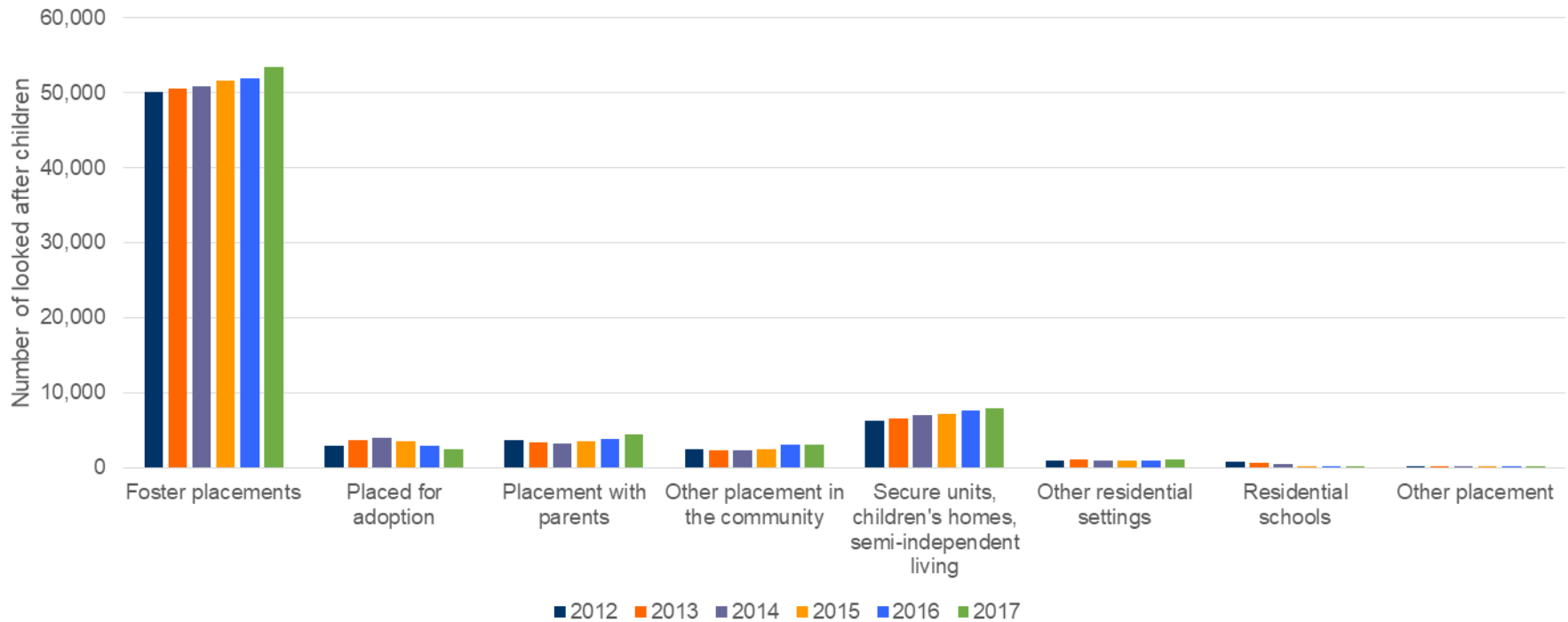
Rate of looked after children in England



Between 2012 and 2017, the number of LAC at 31 March increased from 67,070 to 72,670. This represents an increase of 8.3%. The rate of LAC remained relatively static (at 60 per 10,000) until 2016, with a slight upturn in 2017 (to 62 per 10,000). This suggests that, more recently, the number of LAC is increasing slightly faster than the overall growth in the child and young person population.

Placement of Looked After Children (count)

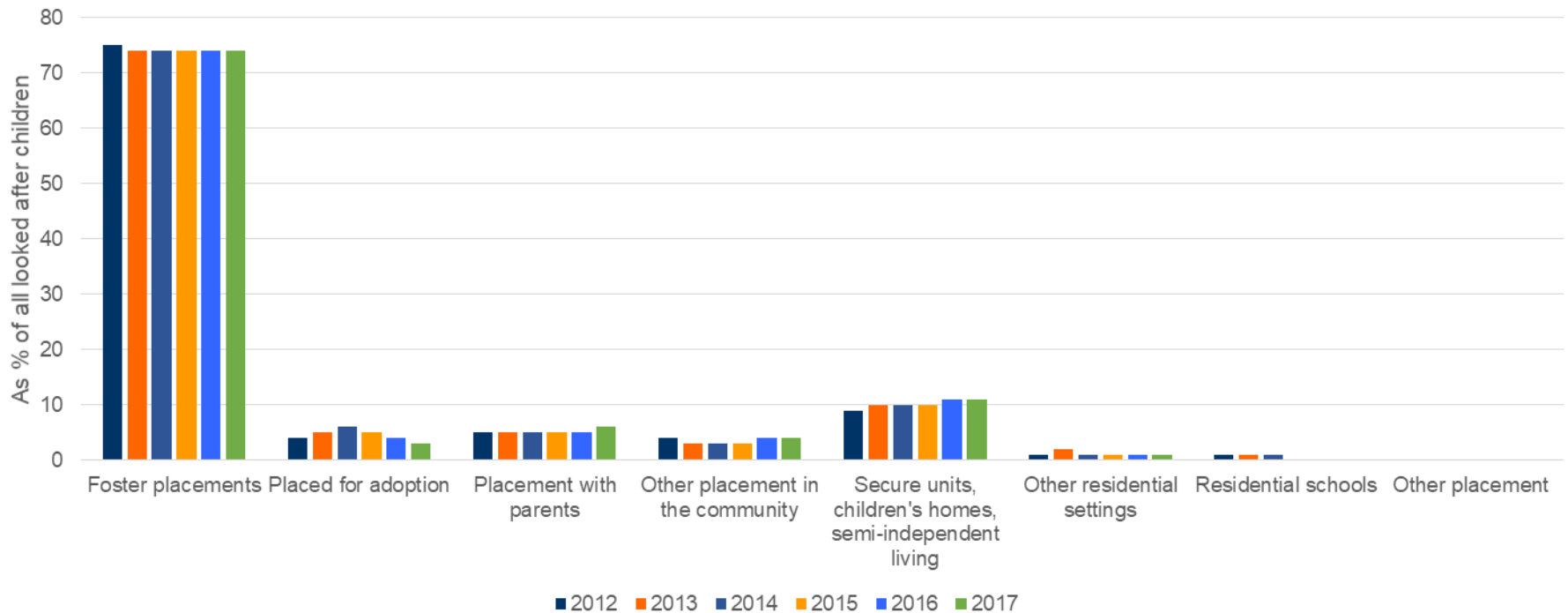
Placement of looked after children (count)



A large number of LAC are placed in foster care and numbers have increased year-on-year. The next largest number of LAC are placed in 'secure units, children's homes and semi-independent living'. Since 2014 the number of children placed for adoption has fallen consistently, while placements with parents have risen consistently in the same time frame.

Placement of Looked After Children (%)

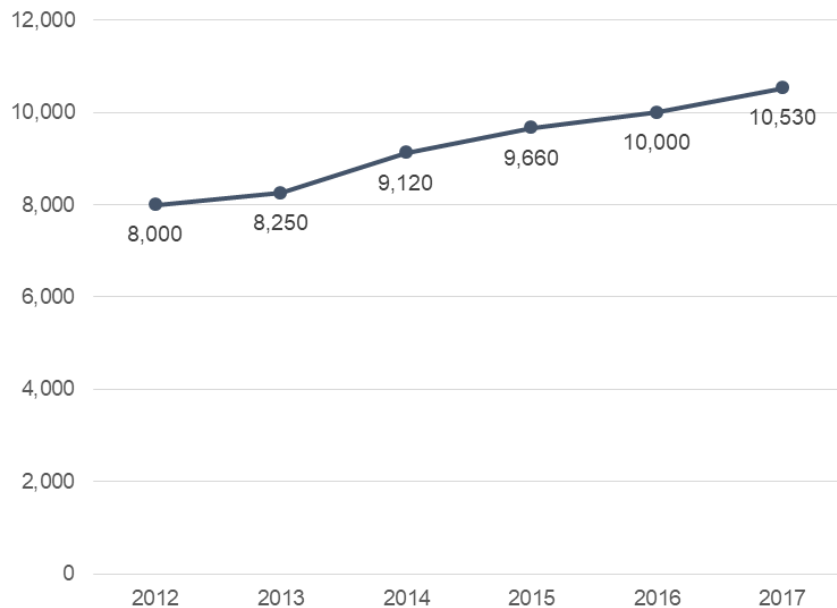
Placement of looked after children (%)



In terms of percentages, the placements of LAC in different types of setting have remained relatively stable. There has been a slight increase over time in placements in 'secure units, children's homes, and semi-independent living'. There has also been a fall in the proportions placed for adoption.

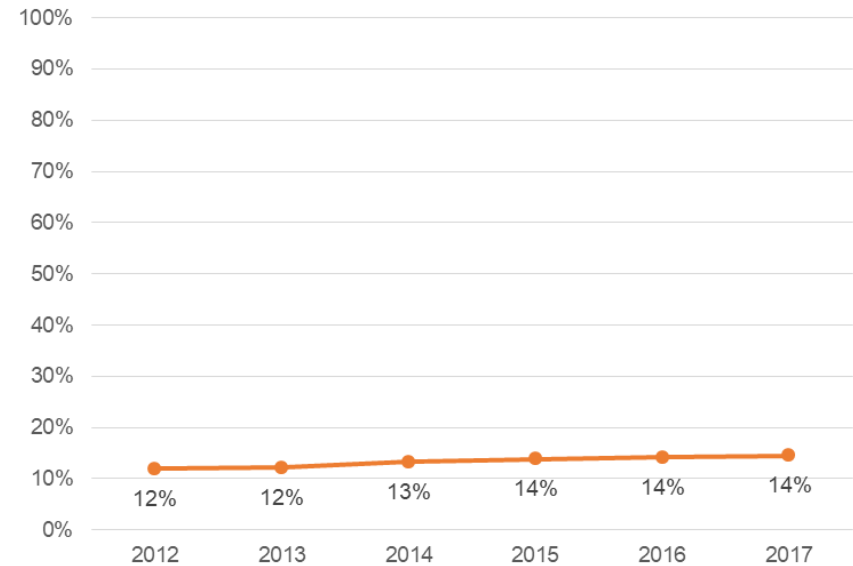
Placement of LAC 20+ miles away & outside of local authority boundary

Number of LAC placed out of LA boundary and over 20 miles from home at March 31



The number of LAC being placed more than 20 miles away and outside the local authority boundary has increased from 8,000 in 2012 to 10,530 in 2017, i.e. +32%.

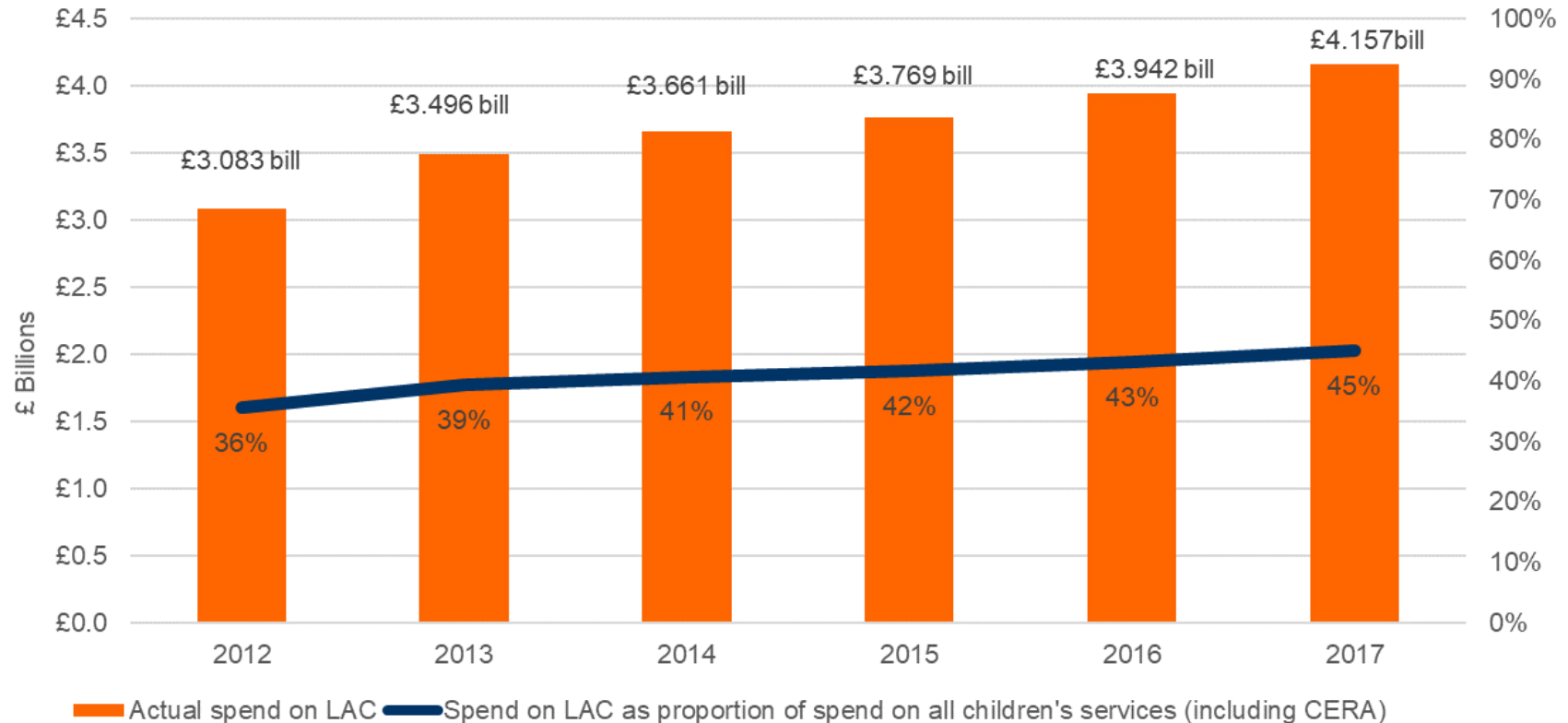
Percentage of LAC placed outside LA boundary and over 20 miles from home at March 31



The overall proportion of LAC placed far from home has increased from 12% in 2012 to 14% in 2017. This suggests that the increase in numbers is driven only partly by increases in the population.

Total spend on LAC

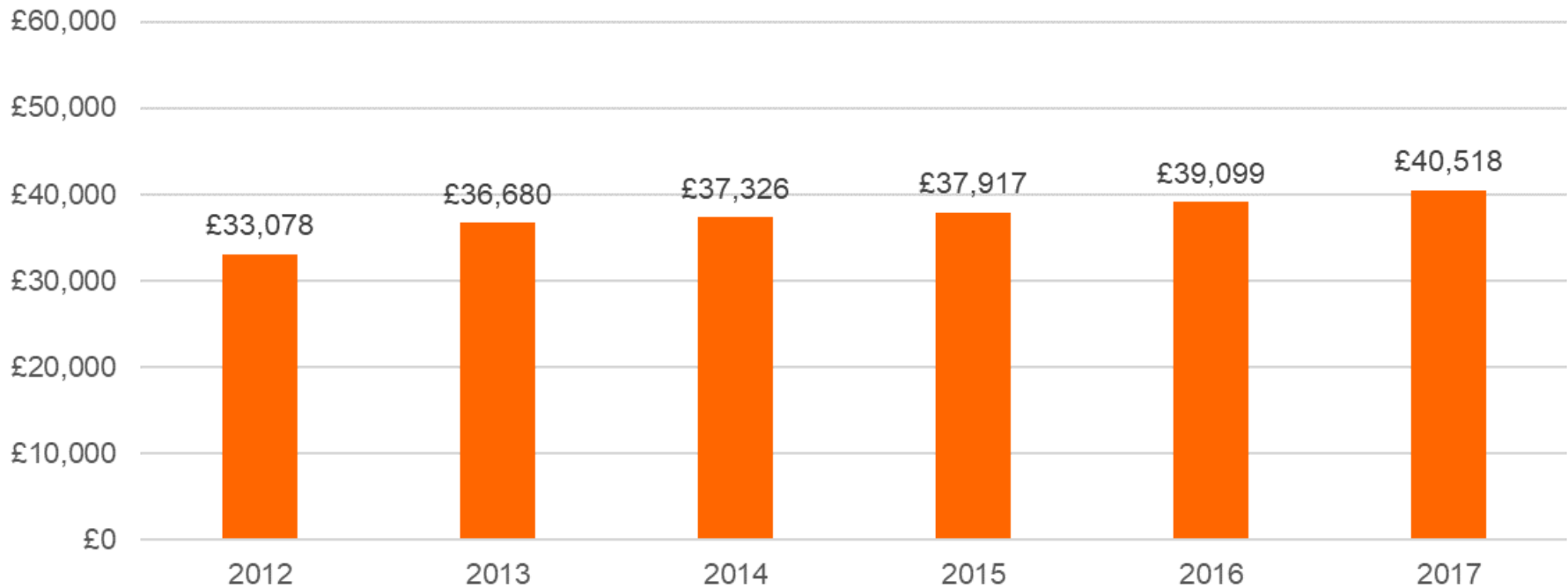
Total LA spend on LAC by local authorities (£billions)



Total spending by local authorities on LAC has increased year-on-year, from £3.083bn in 2012 to £4.157bn in 2017. This is an increase of +35% since 2012. CPI inflation over this period was 12%. Over this period, spending on LAC absorbed an increasing proportion of total spend on children's services, i.e. from 36% in 2012 to 45% in 2017.

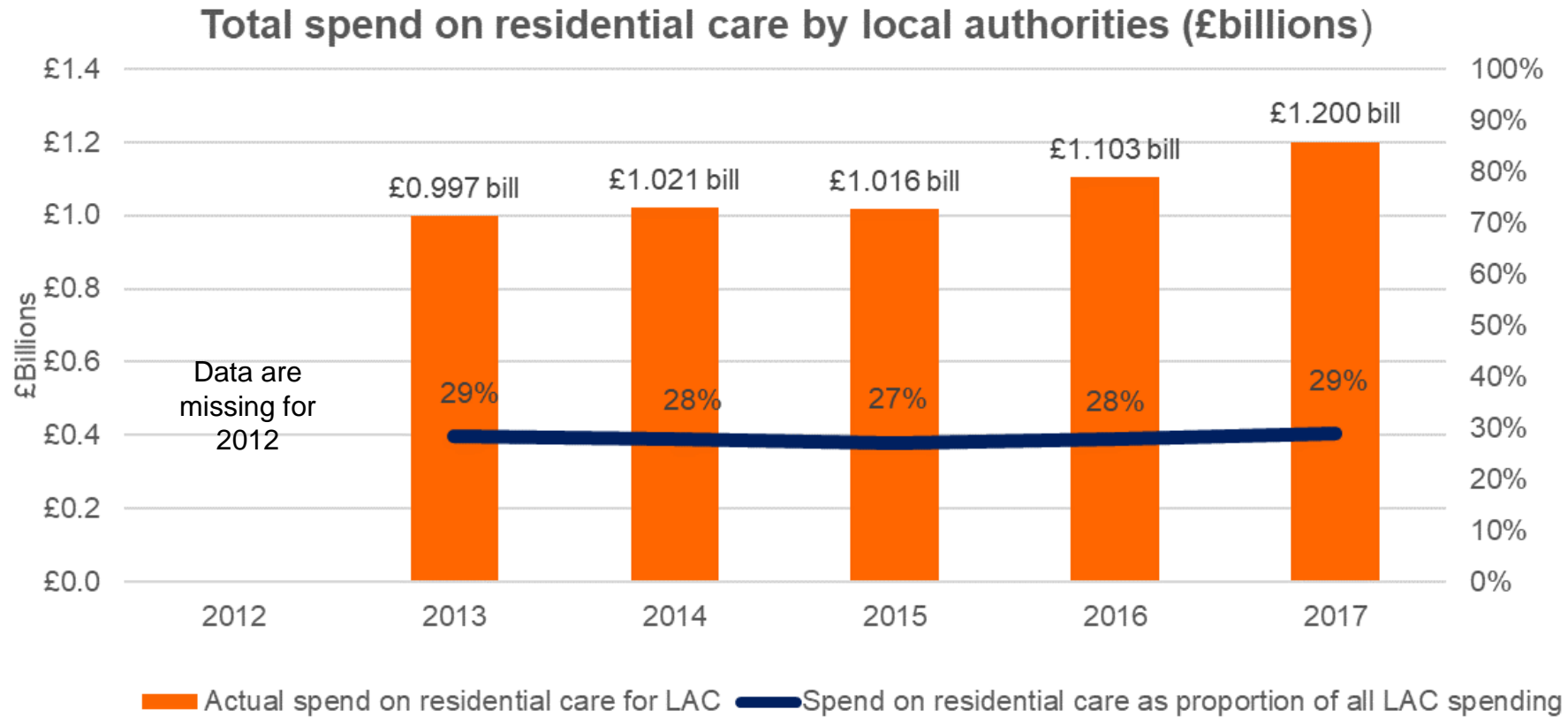
Spend per Looked After Child per year

Average spend by local authorities per child looked after during the year to March 31



The average spend per LAC has also been increasing year-on-year. The average has increased from £33,078 to £40,518, i.e. +22%. CPI inflation over the same period was 12% and uplift in total numbers of LAC over the course of a year was 10%. This suggests that spend per LAC has remained constant from 2012 to 2017.

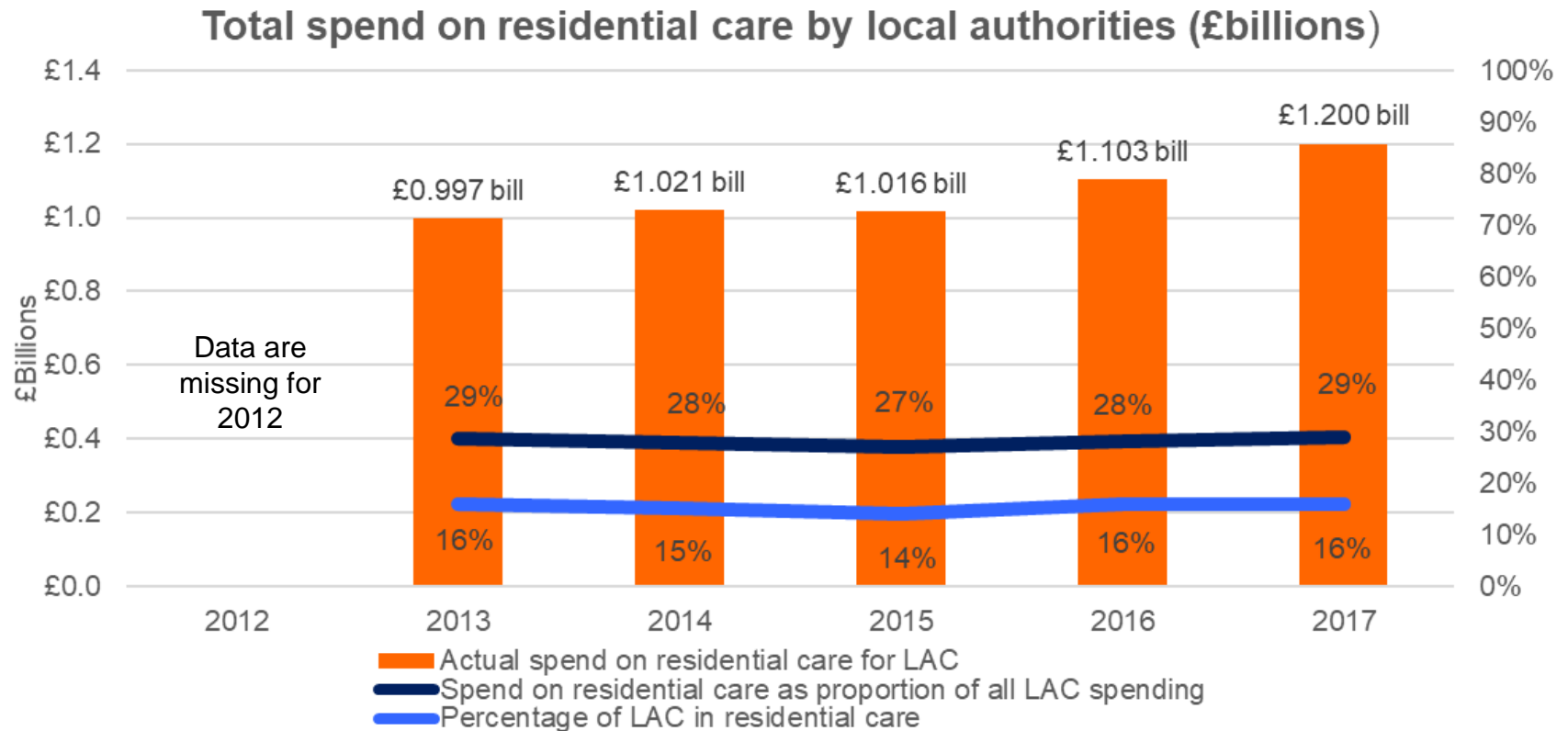
Spend on residential care for LAC (1)



1

Total spend on residential care has increased from £0.997bn in 2013 to £1.200bn in 2017, i.e. +21%. CPI inflation over this period was 9%, so this represents a real terms increase. Since 2015, spending on residential care as a proportion of all LAC spending has increased slightly, i.e. from 27% to 29%.

Spend on residential care for LAC (2)



2

This chart demonstrates that part of this increase in level and proportion of spend is likely to be explained by increases in the percentage of children placed in residential care since 2015, i.e. from 14% in 2015 to 16% in 2017.

The Looked After Children Stress-Test

The national averages disguise substantial differences between local authorities



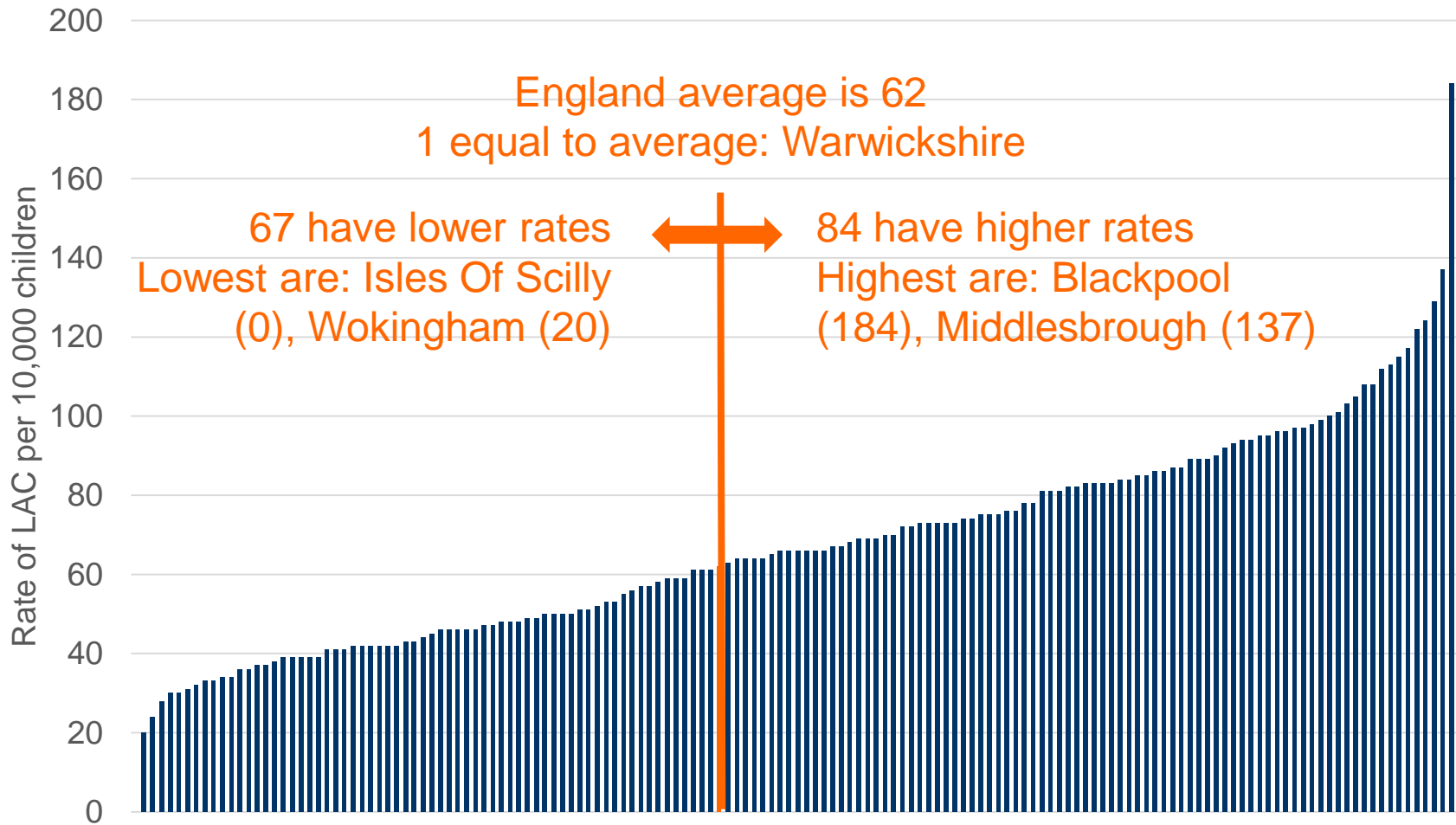
Introduction to the stress test

- The national averages disguise substantial differences between local authorities in numbers, rates and spend on LAC.
- This section examines these differences and highlights those local authorities that the data suggests might be experiencing the most challenges in catering for Looked After Children.
- The indicators included in the analysis are shown opposite.

Indicators in the stress test

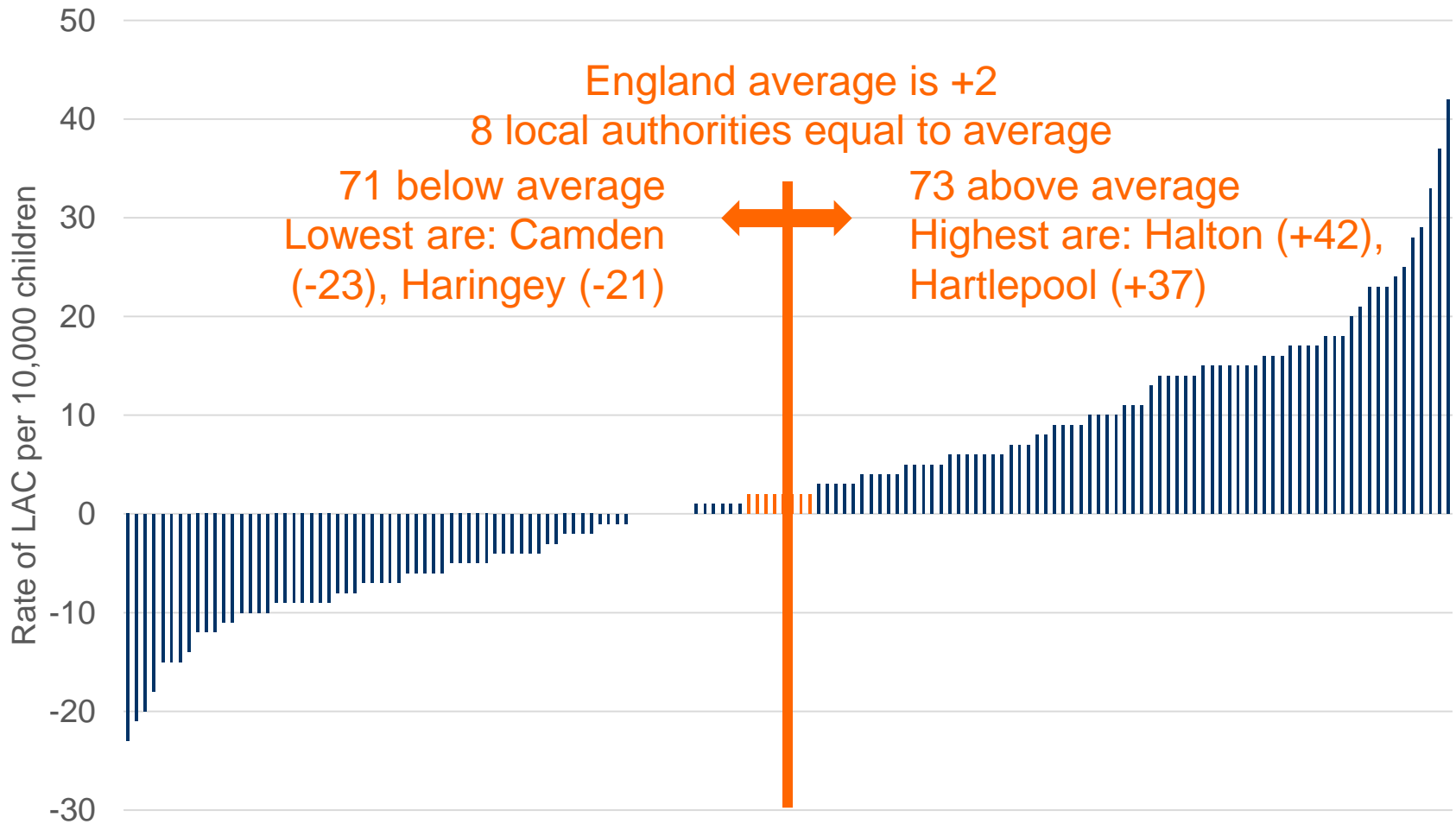
- Rate of LAC (2017)
- Change in rate of LAC (2013 – 2017)
- Percentage of LAC in residential care (2017)
- Change in percentage of LAC in residential care (2013 – 2017)
- Percentage of LAC 20 miles or more from home and outside of local authority boundary (2017)
- Change in percentage of LAC placed in residential care (2013 – 2017)
- Percentage of children's services budget spent on LAC (2017)
- Change in percentage of children's services budget spent on LAC (2013 – 2017)
- Percentage of LAC budget spent on residential care (2017)
- Change in percentage of LAC budget spent on residential care (2013 – 2017).

Rate of LAC (2017)*



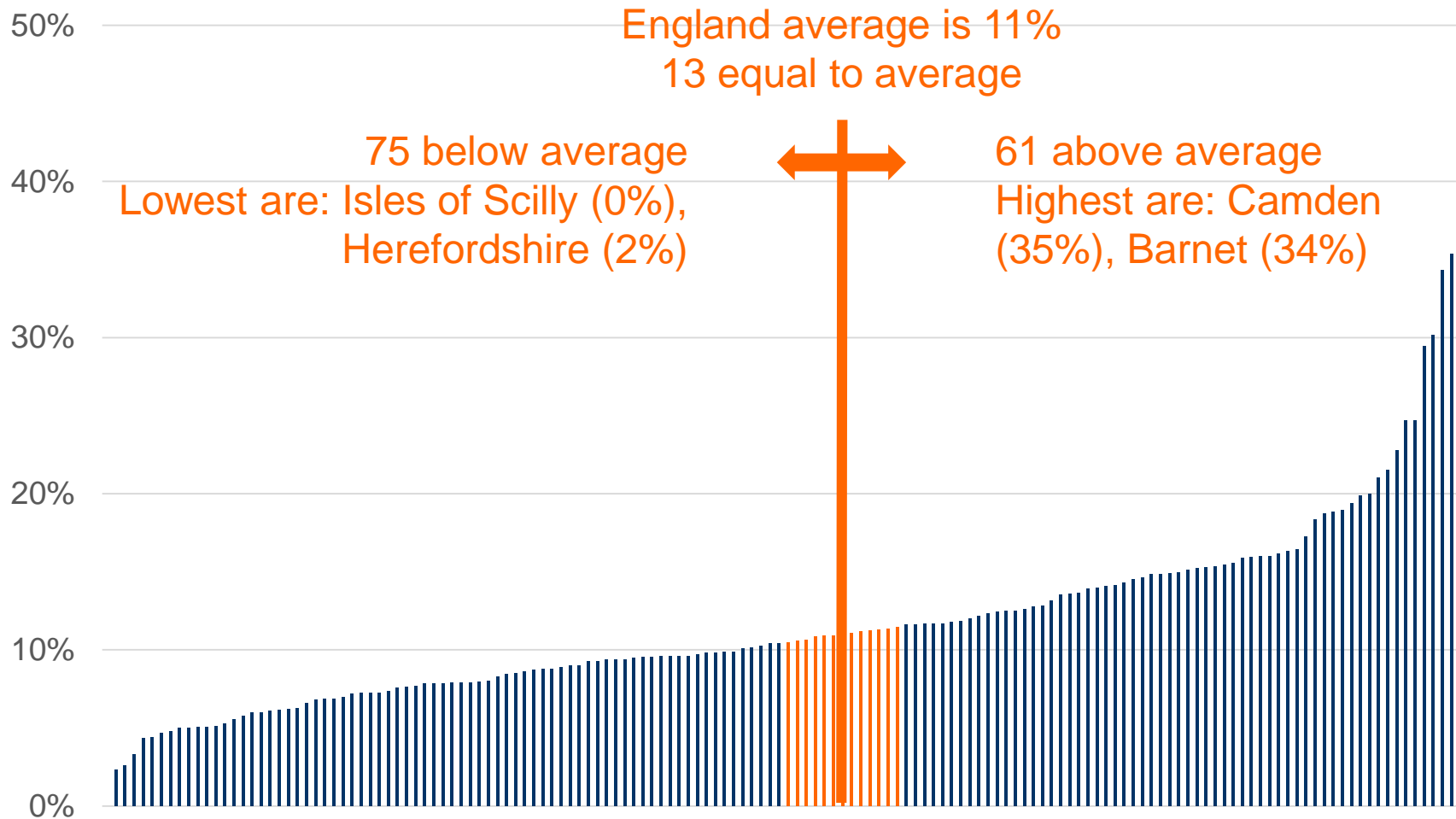
* At 31 March 2017

Change in rate of LAC (2013 – 2017)*



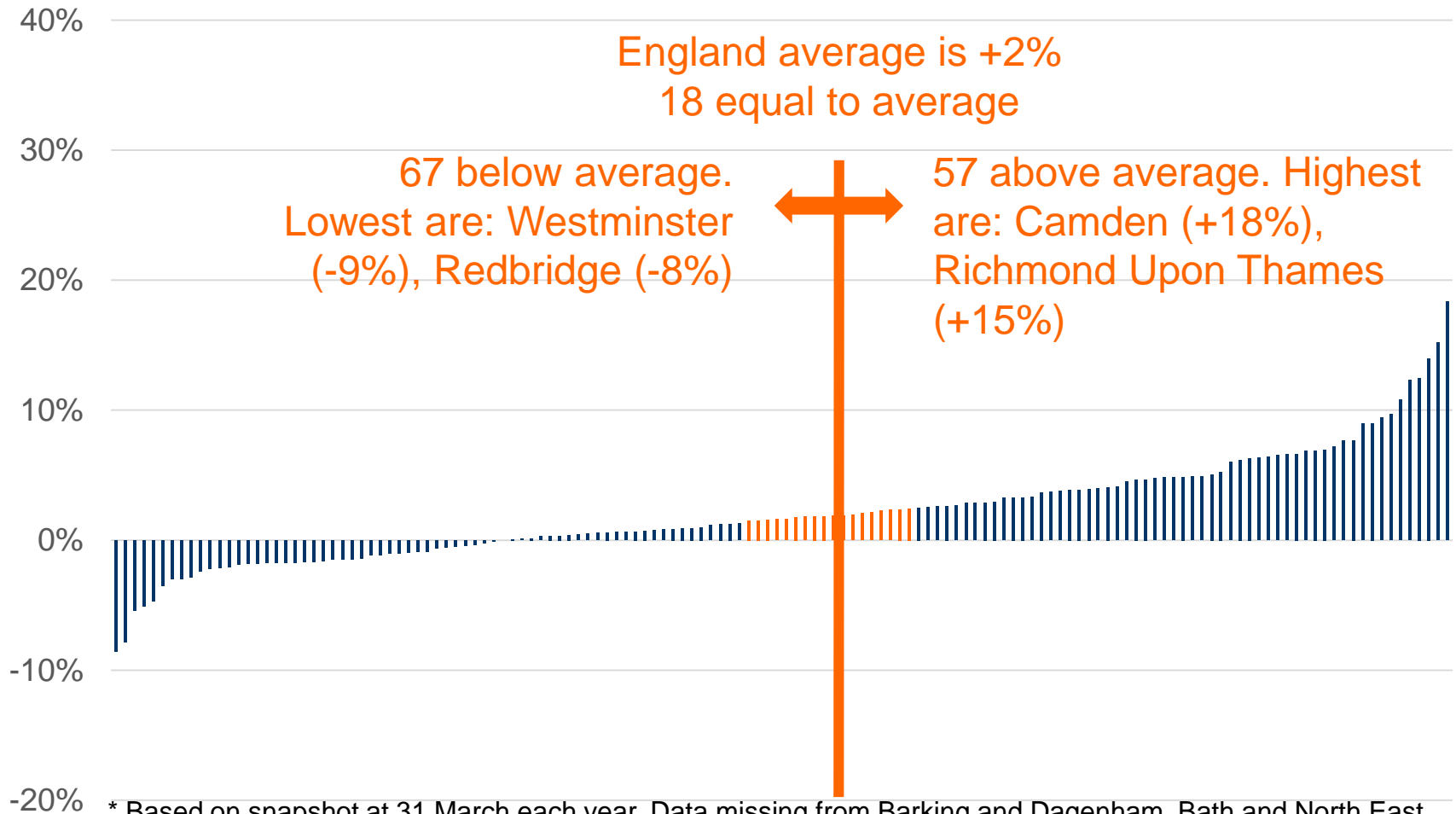
* Based on snapshot at 31 March each year

Percentage of LAC in residential care (2017)*



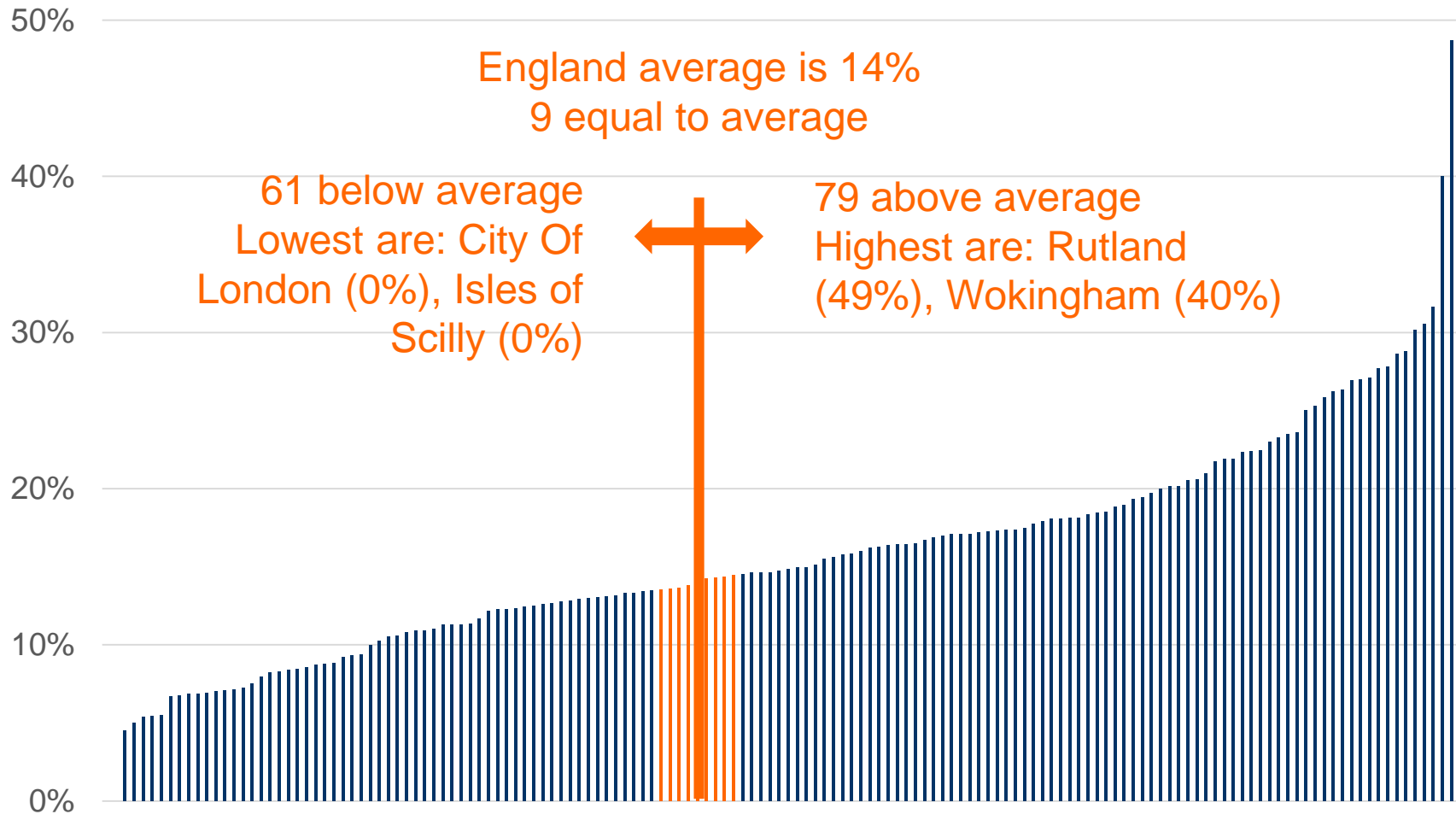
* Based on snapshot at 31 March 2017. Data missing for City of London, Rutland and Sutton for reasons of confidentiality.

Change in percentage of LAC in residential care (2013 – 2017)*



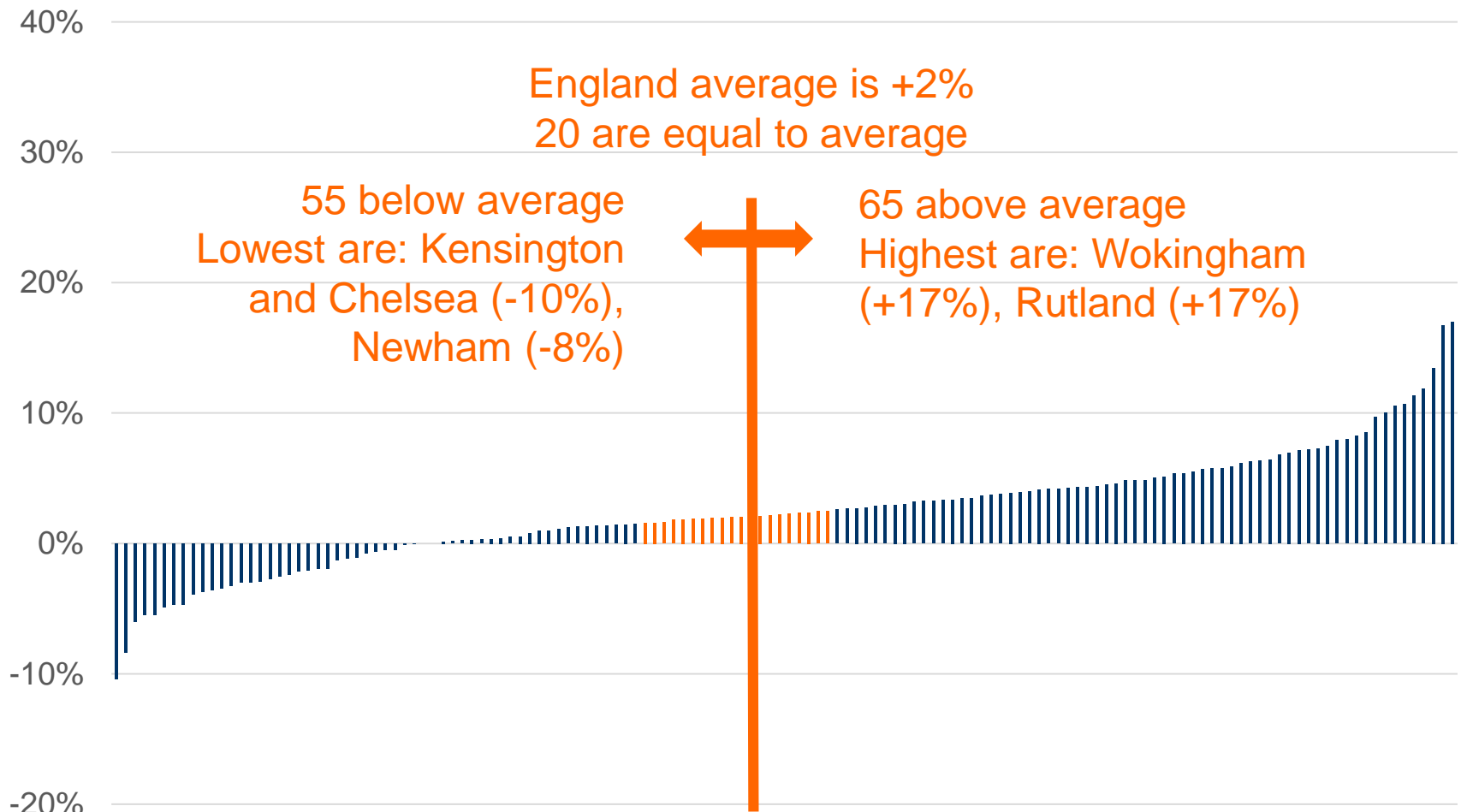
* Based on snapshot at 31 March each year. Data missing from Barking and Dagenham, Bath and North East Somerset, Bournemouth, City of London, Poole, Rutland, South Gloucestershire, Sutton, Swindon and Thurrock for reasons of confidentiality.

Percentage of LAC placed 20+ miles away & outside of LA boundary (2017)*



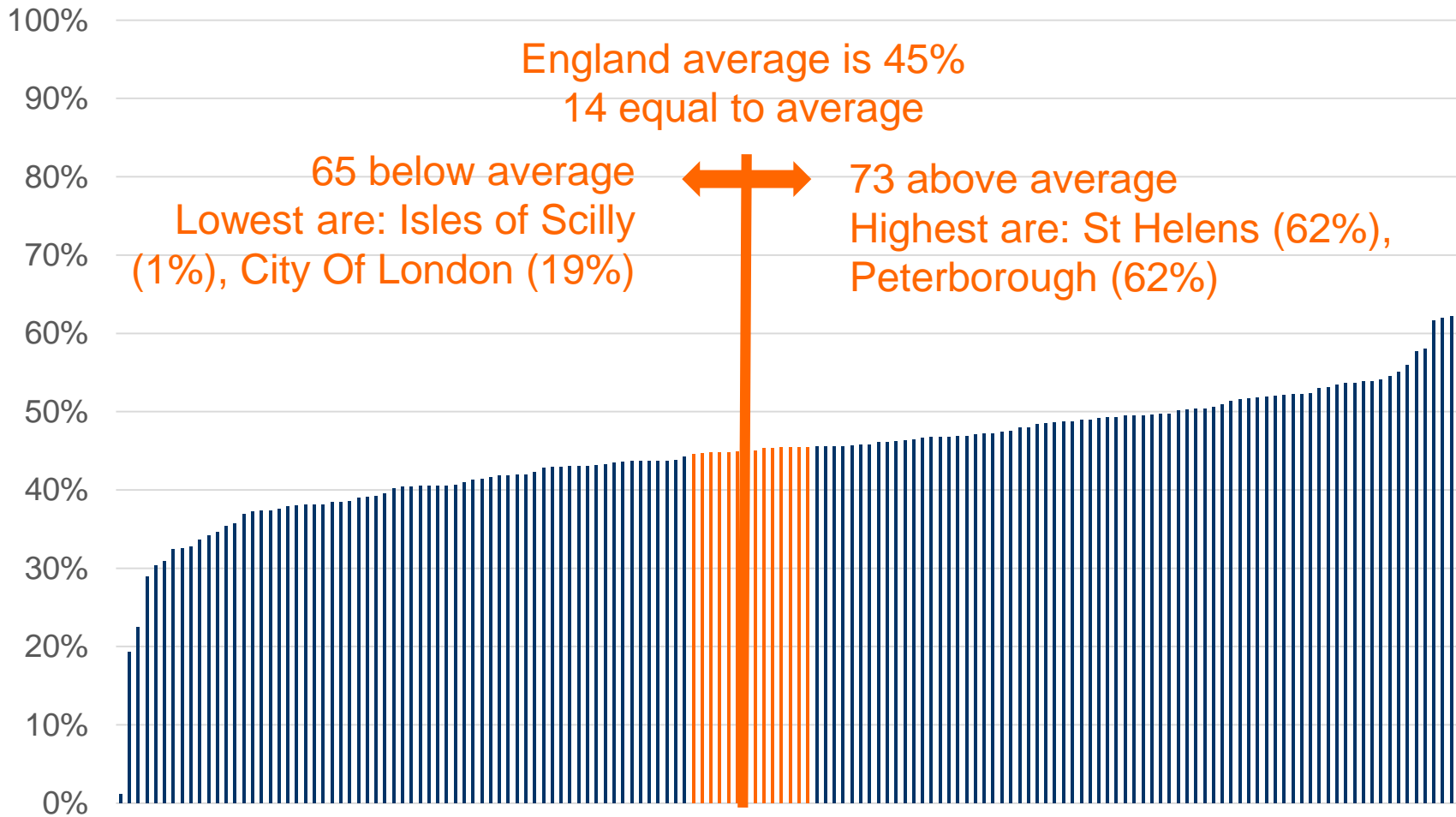
* Based on snapshot at 31 March 2017. Data missing for Darlington, Solihull and St Helens for reasons of confidentiality for reasons of confidentiality.

Change in percentage of LAC placed 20+ miles & outside LA boundary (2013-17)*

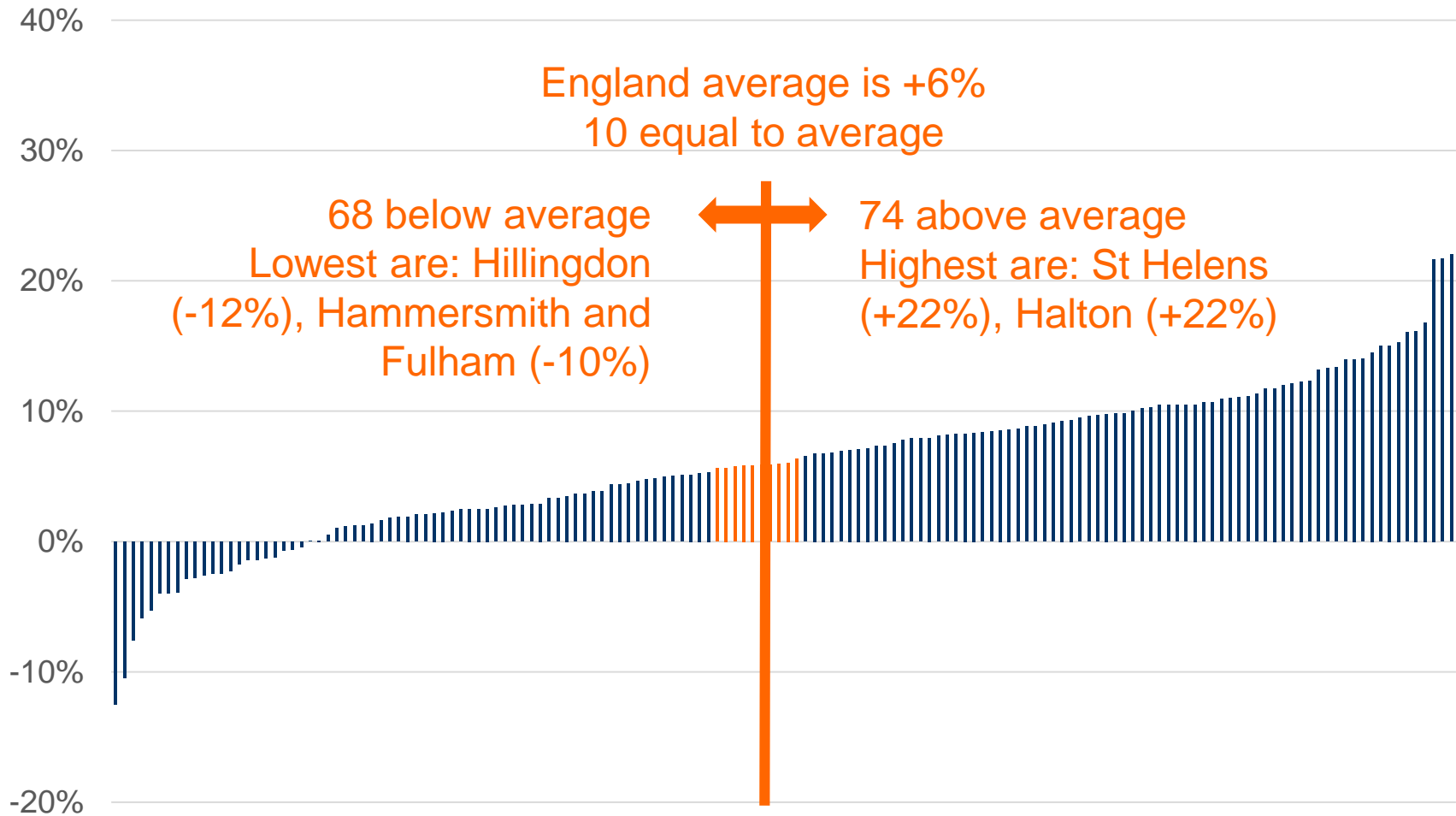


* Based on snapshot at 31 March each year. Data missing from Bolton, Darlington, Halton, Hartlepool, Oldham, Richmond Upon Thames, Solihull, South Gloucestershire, St Helens, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan for confidentiality reasons.

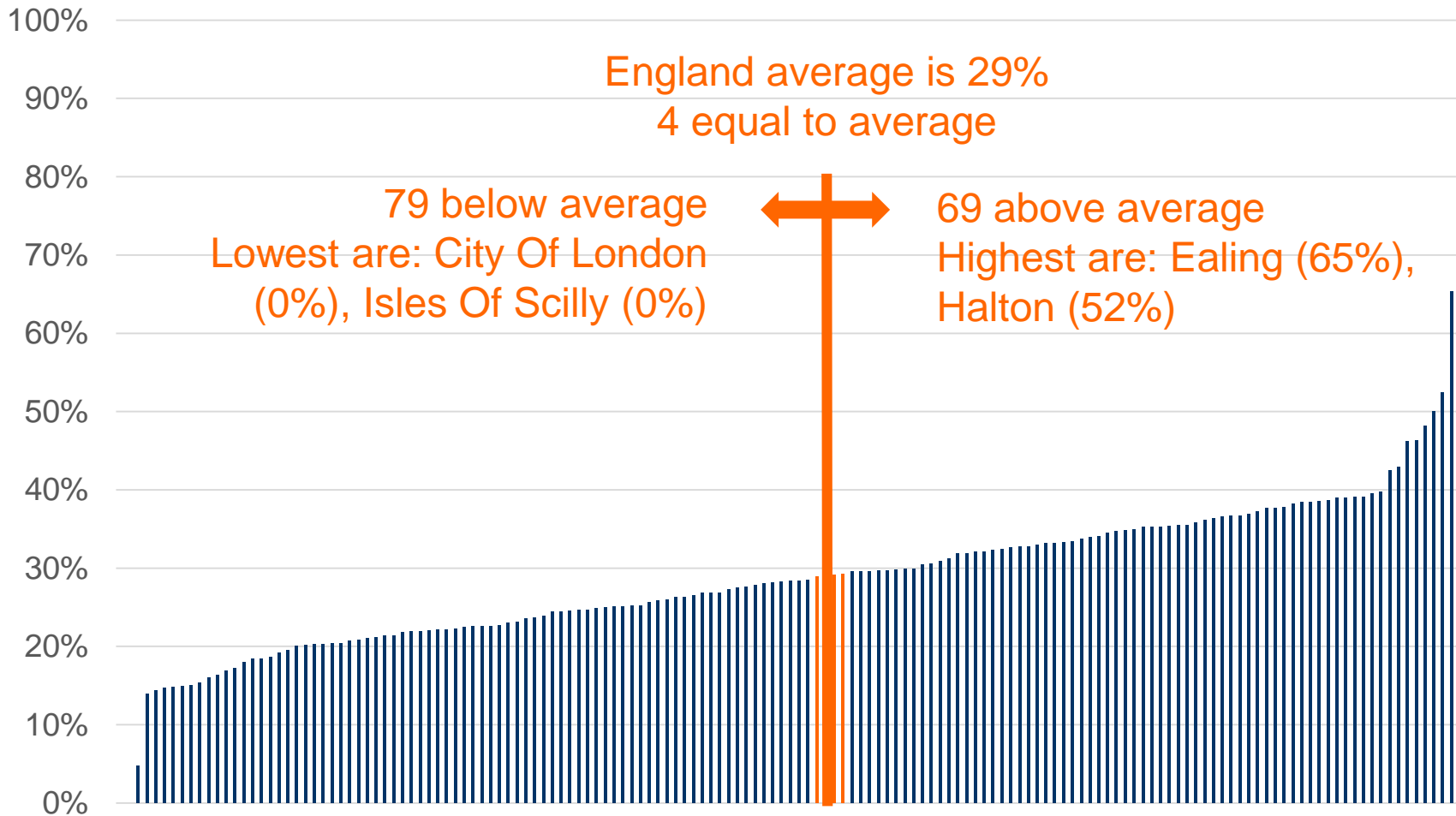
Percentage of children's services budget spent on LAC (2017)



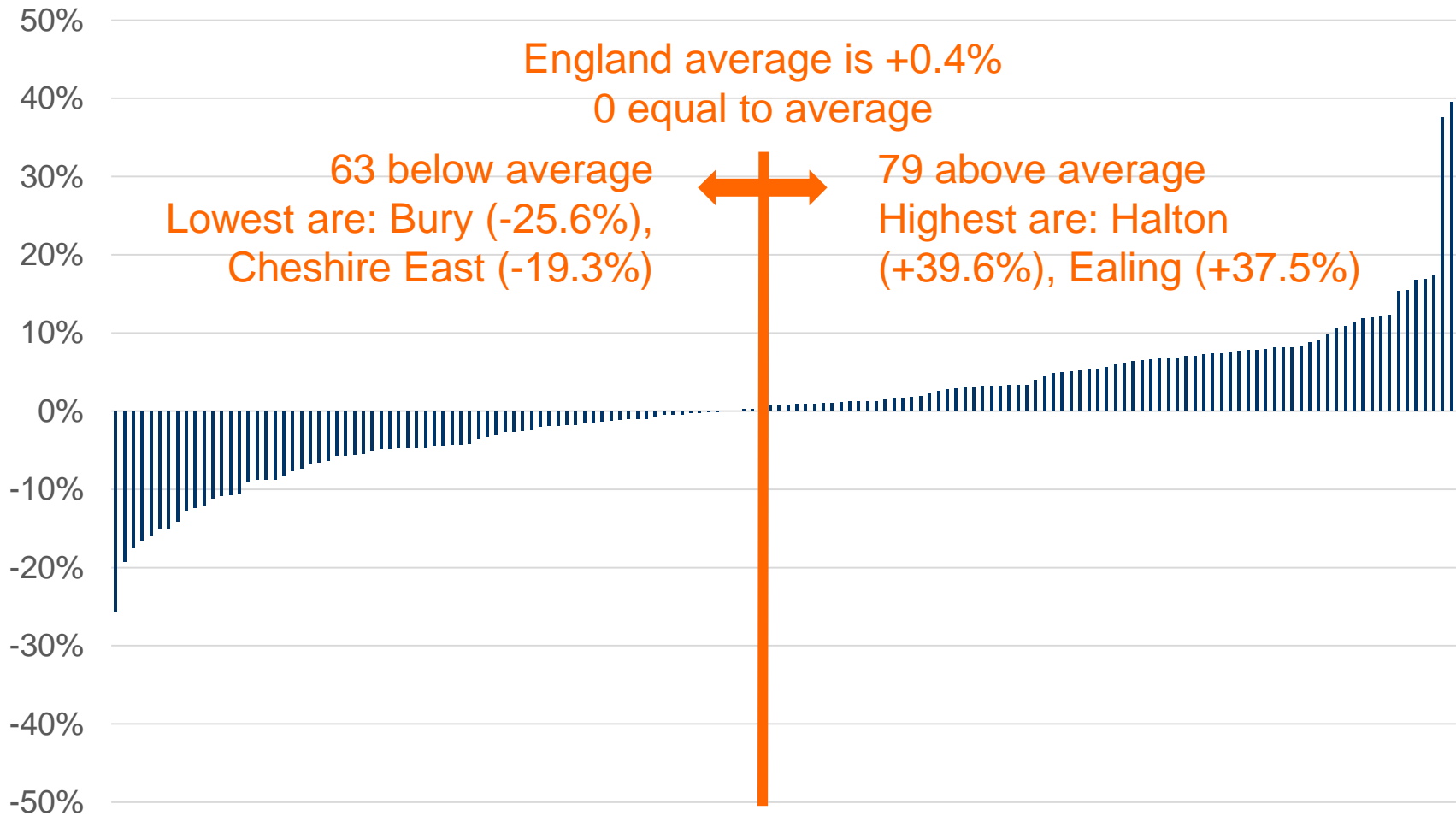
Change in percentage of children's services budget spent on LAC (2013-17)



Percentage of LAC budget spent on residential care (2017)



Change in percentage of LAC budget spent on residential care (2013 - 2017)



Top 20 'most stressed' local authorities

- The tables overleaf show the c.20 'most stressed' local authorities for each indicator in the stress-test.

20 most “stressed” local authorities



Rate of LAC		Residential care		20 miles out of LA	
Rate	Change in rate	%	Change in %	%	Change in %
Blackpool	Halton	Camden	Camden	Rutland	Wokingham
Middlesbrough	Hartlepool	Barnet	Richmond Upon	Wokingham	Rutland
Hartlepool	Warrington	Richmond Upon	Thames	Greenwich	Blackpool
Kingston Upon	North East	Thames	Kingston Upon	Reading	Sutton
Hull, City of	Lincolnshire	Brent	Thames	Buckinghamshire	Cumbria
Liverpool	Stoke-On-Trent	Havering	Brent	Slough	Greenwich
St Helens	Tameside	Kensington and	Barnet	Cambridgeshire	Southampton
Stoke-On-Trent	Herefordshire	Chelsea	Waltham Forest	Sutton	East Riding of
Wirral	Middlesbrough	Waltham Forest	Havering	Derby	Yorkshire
Torbay	Oldham	West Sussex	Hackney	Torbay	Derby
Southampton	Redcar and	Merton	Wokingham	North Somerset	Reading
Wolverhampton	Cleveland	Kingston Upon	Surrey	Luton	Oxfordshire
Tameside	Isle Of Wight	Thames	Kensington and	Cumbria	North Somerset
City Of London	Sunderland	Ealing	Chelsea	Oxfordshire	Luton
Stockton-On-Tees	Blackpool	Cambridgeshire	Southwark	Surrey	Kingston Upon
Sunderland	Dorset	Harrow	North Tyneside	Southwark	Thames
Dudley	Durham	Coventry	Birmingham	Peterborough	Devon
Walsall	Leicester	Haringey	South Tyneside	Richmond Upon	Windsor and
Darlington	North Lincolnshire	Windsor and	Lewisham	Thames	Maidenhead
Manchester	Northumberland	Maidenhead	Luton	Kingston Upon	Medway Towns
Blackburn with	Oxfordshire	Bracknell Forest	Bristol, City of	Thames	Somerset
Darwen	Knowsley	Hackney	West Sussex	Bracknell Forest	North East
Telford and Wrekin	Liverpool	Bromley	Cambridgeshire	East Riding of	Lincolnshire
	Rotherham	Islington	Windsor and	Yorkshire	Gloucestershire
		Wokingham	Maidenhead		Dorset
		Birmingham	Bromley		Bracknell Forest
		Surrey	Islington		Leicestershire
		Tameside	Bury		Wakefield
		Hillingdon			Stoke-On-Trent
					Cornwall
					Hackney

20 most “stressed” local authorities

% of children’s services budget spent on LAC		% of LAC budget spent on residential care	
%	Change in %	%	Change in %
St Helens	St Helens	Ealing	Halton
Peterborough	Halton	Halton	Ealing
Tameside	Thurrock	Worcestershire	Central Bedfordshire
Norfolk	Slough	Shropshire	Worcestershire
Middlesbrough	Plymouth	Leicester	Medway Towns
Thurrock	Northamptonshire	Stockton-On-Tees	Darlington
Northamptonshire	Herefordshire	Darlington	Southwark
Staffordshire	Luton	Middlesbrough	St Helens
Shropshire	Barking and Dagenham	Blackpool	Slough
Dudley	Barnsley	Cumbria	Bexley
Slough	Portsmouth	Warrington	Poole
Cheshire East	North Tyneside	Wakefield	Barking and Dagenham
Hampshire	Wakefield	Wokingham	Gloucestershire
Liverpool	Hampshire	Isle Of Wight	Lancashire
Herefordshire	Wirral	Tameside	Hartlepool
Nottingham	Milton Keynes	Derby	Hammersmith and Fulham
Halton	Blackburn with Darwen	Lancashire	Leicester
Barking and Dagenham	Sutton	North Tyneside	Herefordshire
Plymouth	Cornwall	St Helens	Wakefield
Portsmouth	Bolton	Wiltshire	Tameside
Coventry	Liverpool	Stoke-On-Trent	Richmond Upon Thames
Stockton-On-Tees	Dorset	Salford	
Stoke-On-Trent			
Cheshire West and Chester			
Kingston Upon Hull, City of			

Ones to watch in 2018



Local Authority	Number of indicators in which LA is in top 20 “most stressed” (2017)
Tameside	6
Halton	5
St Helens	5
Stoke-on-Trent	5
Wokingham	5
Blackpool	4
Herefordshire	4
Kingston-Upon-Thames	4
Liverpool	4
Luton	4
Middlesbrough	4
Richmond-Upon-Thames	4
Slough	4
Wakefield	4

In 2017, 14 local authorities were in the top 20 for at least four indicators of stress. One local authority, Tameside, was in the top 20 for six indicators. Four local authorities were in the top 20 for five indicators, i.e. Halton, St Helens, Stoke-on-Trent, and Wokingham.

There is some evidence to suggest that pressures are increasing over time. For instance, in 2016 there were a total of 54 local authorities experiencing no indicators of stress. In 2017 this had reduced to 44 local authorities.


Ones to watch in recent years...



2017	2016
Tameside (6)	Ealing (5)
Halton (5)	North East Lincolnshire (5)
St Helens (5)	St Helens (5)
Stoke-on-Trent (5)	Coventry (4)
Wokingham (5)	Derby (4)
Blackpool (4)	Halton (4)
Herefordshire (4)	Luton (4)
Kingston-Upon-Thames (4)	Richmond Upon Thames (4)
Liverpool (4)	Southwark (4)
Luton (4)	Torbay (4)
Middlesbrough (4)	
Richmond-Upon-Thames(4)	
Slough (4)	
Wakefield (4)	

Four local authorities have been in the 'most stressed' category for two years in a row, i.e. Halton, St Helens, Luton, and Richmond Upon Thames.

This means that 10 local authorities experienced a rapid increase in stress between 2016 to 2017...

Key
 On list for past 2 years 

Change in level of stress over time – increasing pressures



Local authority	2017 # of stress indicators	2016 # of stress indicators	Change
Tameside	6	2	↑
Halton	5	4	↑
St Helens	5	5	→
Stoke on Trent	5	3	↑
Wokingham	5	3	↑
Blackpool	4	2	↑
Herefordshire	4	1	↑
Kingston Upon Thames	4	1	↑
Liverpool	4	3	↑
Luton	4	4	→
Middlesbrough	4	3	↑
Richmond Upon Thames	4	4	→
Slough	4	2	↑
Wakefield	4	1	↑

...this is further demonstrated here. 11 out of 14 'most stressed' local authorities experienced increases in stress typically across multiple indicators between 2016 and 2017. This suggests a relatively volatile picture in terms of performance and pressures at a local authority level.

Change in level of stress over time – reducing pressures



Local authority	2017 # of stress indicators	2016 # of stress indicators	Change
North East Lincolnshire	2	5	↓
Coventry	2	4	↓
Torbay	2	4	↓
Ealing	3	5	↓
Derby	3	4	↓
Southwark	3	4	↓

Between 2016 and 2017, six local authorities fell off the 'most stressed' list. Of particular note are North East Lincolnshire, Coventry and Torbay who moved from 4-5 indicators to two indicators.

Local authorities with relatively low pressures

Relatively low pressures			
Bath & North East Somerset	Essex	Newcastle-Upon-Tyne	Stockport
Bedford Brough	Gateshead	Newham	Suffolk
Bradford	Hertfordshire	North Yorkshire	Swindon
Brighton and Hove	Hounslow	Redbridge	Tower Hamlets
Calderdale	Isles of Scilly	Sandwell	Trafford
Croydon	Kirklees	Sheffield	Westminster
Doncaster	Lambeth	Solihull	York
East Sussex	Leeds	South Gloucestershire	
Enfield	Lincolnshire	Southend-on-Sea	

34 local authorities were not in the top 20 'most-stressed' for any indicators in both 2016 and 2017. These sites could potentially provide some useful evidence on how services are helping to anticipate or reduce demand for more intensive statutory provision.

References I

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-looked-after-children>

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-looked-after-children>

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-looked-after-children>

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-looked-after-children>

Slide 7 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/la-and-school-expenditure-2015-to-2016-financial-year>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/la-and-school-expenditure-2016-to-2017-financial-year>

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/la-and-school-expenditure-2016-to-2017-financial-year>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/section-251-2016-to-2017>

Inflation calculator: <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/education/Pages/resources/inflationtools/calculator/default.aspx>

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-looked-after-children>

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<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/section-251-2016-to-2017>

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References II

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-looked-after-children>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/la-and-school-expenditure-2016-to-2017-financial-year>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/section-251-2016-to-2017>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/outturn-2012-to-2013-data-section-251>

Inflation calculator: <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/education/Pages/resources/inflationtools/calculator/default.aspx>

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2016-to-2017>

Slides 14

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2016-to-2017>

Slide 15

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2016-to-2017>

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2016-to-2017>

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2016-to-2017>

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2016-to-2017>

References III

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/la-and-school-expenditure-2015-to-2016-financial-year>

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<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/section-251-2016-to-2017>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/la-and-school-expenditure-2015-to-2016-financial-year>

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<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/section-251-2016-to-2017>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/outturn-2012-to-2013-data-section-251>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/la-and-school-expenditure-2015-to-2016-financial-year>

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<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/section-251-2016-to-2017>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/outturn-2012-to-2013-data-section-251>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/la-and-school-expenditure-2015-to-2016-financial-year>



CordisBright Limited

23/24 Smithfield Street, London EC1A 9LF

Telephone	020 7330 9170
Email	info@cordisbright.co.uk
Internet	www.cordisbright.co.uk