

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee/Panel:	Children and Families Advisory Panel
Date:	18 October 2016
Title:	Adoption (ALB) Benchmarking 2015-16
Reference:	7805
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

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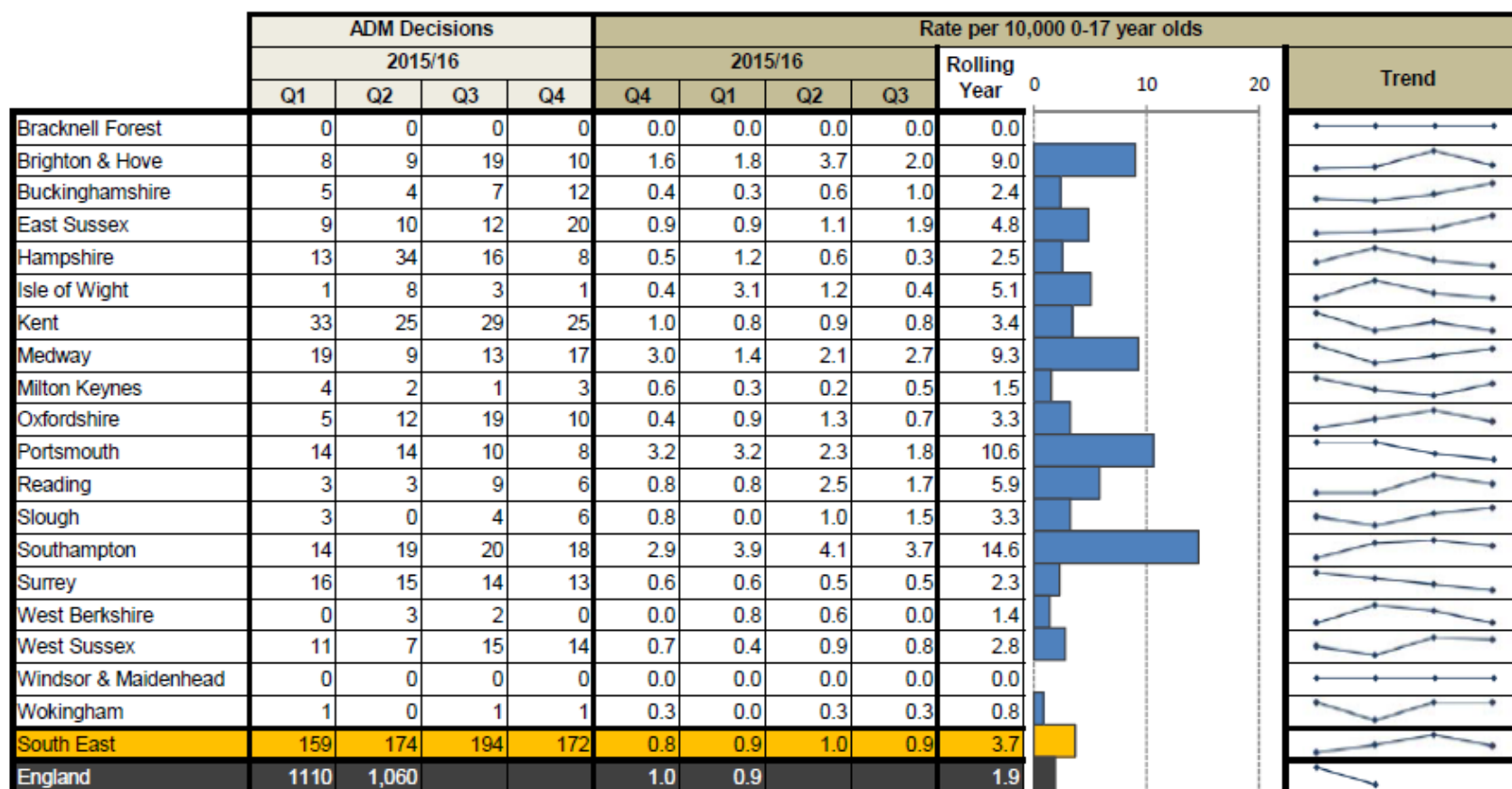
1. Summary

- 1.1 The Adoption (ALB) Benchmarking Report for 2015-16 was published on 30 June 2016. This report analyses Hampshire's data and performance against the other local authorities in the South East Region and against national data where it has been published. The conclusion outlines the areas where Hampshire is strong compared to other local authorities, alongside areas where improvement is being addressed.
- 1.2 A more detailed report is available.
- 1.3 This report considers the adoption data that has been published and analyses Hampshire's performance against the other local authorities in the South East Region. Comparisons have been especially focussed on the larger local authorities in the region, Kent, Surrey, West Sussex, East Sussex, alongside comparisons with our Regional Adoption Agency partners, Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight.

2. Contextual Information

2:1 ADM Decisions

ADM Decisions



Summary

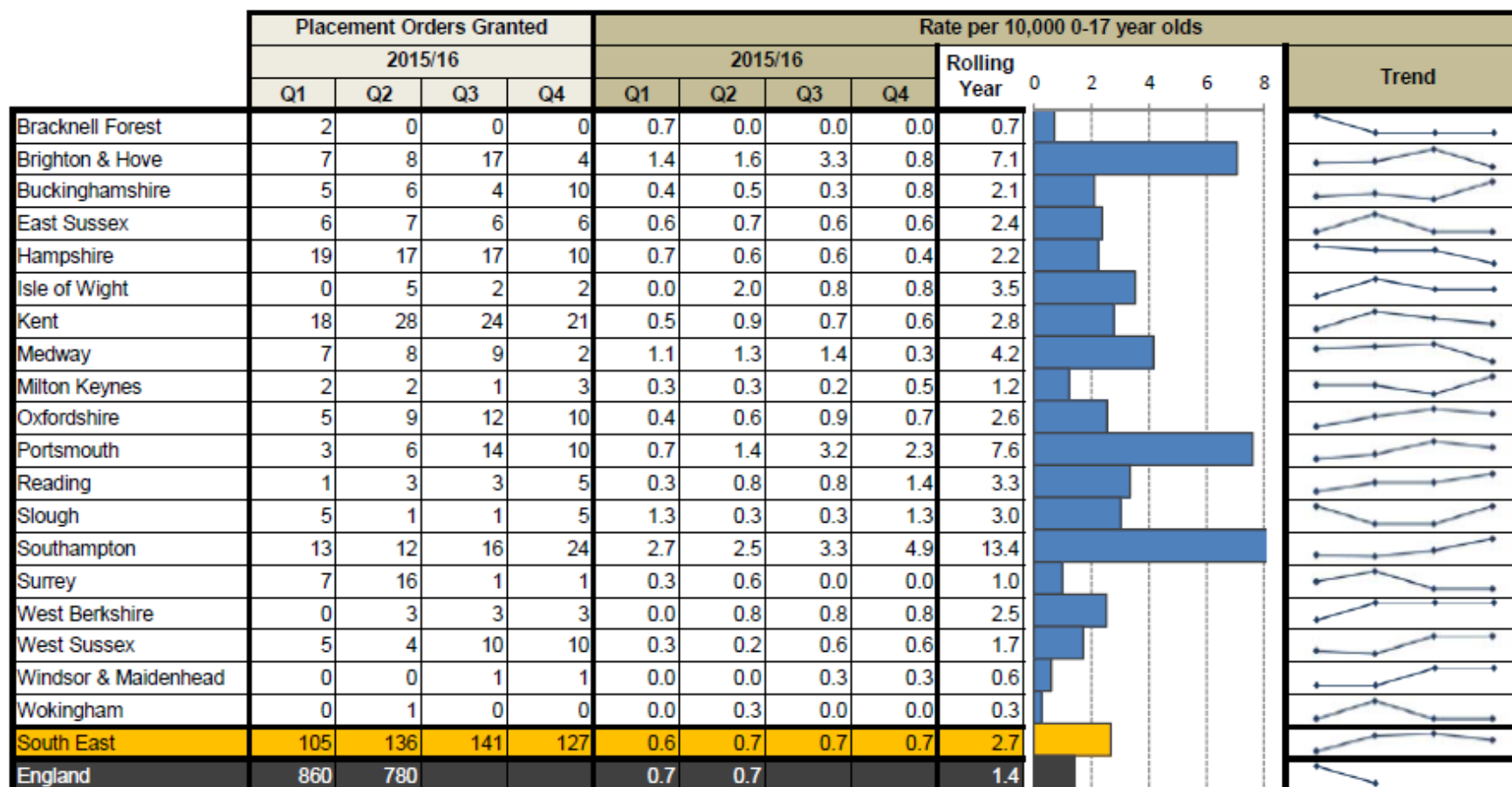
There were 71 children's plans referred to Hampshire's Agency Decision Maker (ADM) or Adoption Panel (where the child is relinquished) during 2015-16. Although numbers rose steeply in Q2 where there were 34 plans referred, Q3 and Q4 saw a significant downward trend, with there being just 8 plans referred in Q4. Overall figures, however, were very similar to 2014-15 when there were 70 referred.

Comparative figures show that Kent had 112 children's plans referred; Surrey 58; East Sussex 47; Portsmouth 46; Southampton 71 and the Isle of Wight 13. Similarly to Hampshire, Kent, the Isle of Wight, Surrey and Portsmouth also saw a downward trend in Q4.

Overall figures for the South East Region (as with the national data) show a slight increase in the number of ADM decisions during 2015-16 compared to 2014-15 with the highest number being in Q3 followed by a downward trend. Hampshire's rate of ADM per 10,000 0-17 year olds is within the average range for the South East.

2:2 Placement Orders

Placement Orders Granted



Summary

Between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2016, 63 Placement Orders were made in Hampshire. Although Q4 saw a downward trend in line with the lower number of children's plan referred, Q1, Q2 and Q3 were very similar and figures do not reflect the sharp increase in children's plans in Q2.

Comparative figures show that Kent had 91 Placement Orders made; Surrey 25; East Sussex 25; West Sussex 29; Portsmouth 33; Southampton 65 and the Isle of Wight 9 during the year.

Overall figures for the South East Region show a slight increase in the number of Placement Orders during 2015-16 compared to 2014-15, with the highest number being in Q3 followed by a slight downward trend. The national data, however, shows a plateauing of Placement Orders.

Hampshire is within the average range for Placement Orders per 10.000 across the South East Region.

2:3 Children Waiting with a Placement Order

Children Waiting with a Placement Order who have been Looked After for 18+ Months- Rate per 10,000 0-17 Year Olds

	0-17 Population mid-2014	Children with a Placement Order but not yet placed		Those waiting 18 months or more since entering care		
		Q4 Number	Rate per 10000	Q4 Number	Rate per 10000	%
Bracknell Forest	27,823	0	0.0	0	0.0	
Brighton & Hove	50,951	17	3.3	3	0.6	17.6%
Buckinghamshire	118,909	16	1.3	4	0.3	25.0%
East Sussex	105,392	19	1.8	7	0.7	36.8%
Hampshire	281,459	36	1.3	15	0.5	41.7%
Isle of Wight	25,542	9	3.5	4	1.6	44.4%
Kent	328,250	45	1.4	20	0.6	44.4%
Medway	62,536	18	2.9	6	1.0	33.3%
Milton Keynes	65,229	3	0.5	0	0.0	0.0%
Oxfordshire	141,153	29	2.1	5	0.4	17.2%
Portsmouth	43,360	32	7.4	5	1.2	15.6%
Reading	35,850	8	2.2	1	0.3	12.5%
Slough	39,867	7	1.8	1	0.3	14.3%
Southampton	48,583	46	9.5	13	2.7	28.3%
Surrey	254,586	20	0.8	12	0.5	60.0%
West Berkshire	35,631	2	0.6	1	0.3	50.0%
West Sussex	168,834	20	1.2	4	0.2	20.0%
Windsor & Maidenhead	33,397	0	0.0	0	0.0	
Wokingham	36,864	2	0.5	0	0.0	0.0%
South East	1,904,216	329	1.7	101	0.5	30.7%
England (Q2)	11,591,701	2,030	1.8	780	0.7	38.4%

Summary

As at 31st March 2016 there were 15 children in Hampshire waiting with a Placement Order who had been looked after for 18+ months which equates to 41.7%. There were 26 children waiting in Q1, with numbers falling to 14 in Q2 and 15 in Q3 and Q4.

This compares to East Sussex who had 7 waiting with a Placement Order (36.8%) in Q4; Kent who had 20 waiting (44.4%); Surrey who had 12 waiting (60%); West Sussex 4 (20%); Isle of Wight 4 (44.4%); Portsmouth 5 (15.6%) Southampton 13 (28.3%).

Reasons for the delays in finding an adoptive family for our 15 children include the complex needs of the children, their ages (over 5), gender (boys) and sibling groups which has led to difficulty in finding families.

Since 31st March 2016, however, out of the 15, 3 adoption order applications have been filed in court, 2 have applications due to be filed within the next month, 3 have since had the Placement Order revoked and 3 are now placed with an adoptive family. We are still family finding for the remaining 4 children and alongside this will review their plans.

Across the region, there was a 37% reduction in children waiting by Q4, which reflects national data of a reduction of 32%. Hampshire is following this trend unlike East Sussex, Kent, Medway and Surrey.

2:4 Children waiting with a Placement Order- average days waiting from Looked After Children (LAC) Start

Children Waiting with a Placement Order- Average days waiting from LAC Start

	Children Waiting with PO				Total Days from LAC Start				Average Days Waiting at Quarter End from LAC Start											
	2015/16				2015/16				2015/16				Year Avg.	0	400	800	1,200	Trend		
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4								
Bracknell Forest	7	3	2	0	4,278	2,370	1,246		611	790	623		658							
Brighton & Hove	7	11	22	17	2,579	4,011	8,134	7,579	368	365	370	446	391							
Buckinghamshire	24	18	14	16	17,245	12,072	9,962	8,658	719	671	712	541	666							
East Sussex	20	18	19	19	9,590	7,032	8,067	8,893	480	391	425	468	442							
Hampshire	55	40	45	36	29,431	20,440	23,986	19,967	535	511	533	555	533							
Isle of Wight	6	7	8	9	3,918	3,318	4,410	5,050	653	474	551	561	557							
Kent	35	42	30	45	17,743	32,217	10,493	45,149	507	767	350	1003	695							
Medway	21	18	23	18	11,127	11,311	12,908	10,248	530	628	561	569	570							
Milton Keynes	8	7	6	3	8,443	4,573	4,570	544	1055	653	762	181	755							
Oxfordshire	22	20	26	29	17,733	16,201	15,049	14,709	806	810	579	507	657							
Portsmouth	20	22	33	32	12,645	12,258	12,417	13,695	632	557	376	428	477							
Reading	4	6	6	8	3,628	4,321	4,382	4,304	907	720	730	538	693							
Slough	9	4	3	7	3,488	2,412	2,115	2,587	388	603	705	370	461							
Southampton	44	35	42	46	31,213	25,616	30,126	30,409	709	732	717	661	703							
Surrey	32	33	27	20	23,267	19,135	19,102	14,821	727	580	707	741	681							
West Berkshire	8	3	5	2	4,582	2,305	2,663	1,616	573	768	533	808	620							
West Sussex	23	19	23	20	25,718	25,708	25,770	10,360	1118	1353	1120	518	1030							
Windsor & Maidenhead	1	0	1	0	1,078		199		1078		199		639							
Wokingham	1	2	2	2	878	1,271	1,455	784	878	636	728	392	627							
South East	347	308	337	329	228,584	206,571	197,054	199,373	659	671	585	606	630							
England	2540	2,030			—	—	—	—	665	624			624							

Summary

As at 31 March 2016, there were 36 children waiting for adoption with a Placement Order, compared to 46 children last year. 22 of these children had families identified (already approved or in assessment); 5 matches were being explored; 5 plans were being reviewed as their adoptive placements had disrupted.

This compares to East Sussex who had 19 children waiting; Kent 45; West Sussex 20; Surrey 30; Southampton 46; Portsmouth 32; Isle of Wight 9.

Between 1st April 2015 and 31 March 2016, the average time waiting from LAC Start in Hampshire was 533 days which is the 5th lowest in the South East. Whilst East Sussex and Portsmouth averaged lower with 442 and 477 days respectively, Kent averaged 695 days; West Sussex 1030 days; Surrey 681 days ; Southampton 703 days and the Isle of Wight 557 days.

Average timescales overall for the South East were 630 days whilst England's average is 624 days.

2:5 Children waiting with a Placement Order aged over 5

Children Waiting with a Placement Order Aged 5 and Over at Quarter-end

	Children Waiting with PO				Aged 5 and Over				% Children Waiting Aged 5 and Over				Q4 0% 25% 50% 75% 100%	Trend
	2015/16				2015/16				2015/16					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Bracknell Forest	7	3	2	0	4	3	2		57.1%	100.0%	100.0%	#N/A		
Brighton & Hove	7	11	22	17	2	3	6	5	28.6%	27.3%	27.3%	29.4%		
Buckinghamshire	24	18	14	16	11	7	5	3	45.8%	38.9%	35.7%	18.8%		
East Sussex	20	18	19	19	5	5	6	6	25.0%	27.8%	31.6%	31.6%		
Hampshire	55	40	45	36	17	7	10	8	30.9%	17.5%	22.2%	22.2%		
Isle of Wight	6	7	8	9	1	1	1	2	16.7%	14.3%	12.5%	22.2%		
Kent	35	42	30	45	11	21	9	24	31.4%	50.0%	30.0%	53.3%		
Medway	21	18	23	18	3	1	4	3	14.3%	5.6%	17.4%	16.7%		
Milton Keynes	8	7	6	3	5	3	3	0	62.5%	42.9%	50.0%	0.0%		
Oxfordshire	22	20	26	29	10	11	13	9	45.5%	55.0%	50.0%	31.0%		
Portsmouth	20	22	33	32	2	3	7	9	10.0%	13.6%	21.2%	28.1%		
Reading	4	6	6	8	2	2	1	1	50.0%	33.3%	16.7%	12.5%		
Slough	9	4	3	7	1	1	1	1	11.1%	25.0%	33.3%	14.3%		
Southampton	44	35	42	46	14	17	13	11	31.8%	48.6%	31.0%	23.9%		
Surrey	32	33	27	20	17	11	11	7	53.1%	33.3%	40.7%	35.0%		
West Berkshire	8	3	5	2	2	1	2	2	25.0%	33.3%	40.0%	100.0%		
West Sussex	23	19	23	20	11	11	14	6	47.8%	57.9%	60.9%	30.0%		
Windsor & Maidenhead	1	0	1	0	1		0		100.0%	#N/A	0.0%	#N/A		
Wokingham	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	0	100.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%		
South East	347	308	337	329	120	109	109	97	34.6%	35.4%	32.3%	29.5%		
England	2540	2,030	0		800	600			31.5%	29.6%				

Summary

As at 31st March 2016, there were 8 children over 5 years old (22%) who were waiting with a Placement Order. This compares to East Sussex 31.6%; Kent 53.3%; Surrey 35%; West Sussex 30%; Portsmouth 28.1%; Southampton 23.9%; Isle of Wight 22.2%. Overall in the South East Region, 29.5% were over 5 at the end of Q4.

Of Hampshire's 8 children waiting, 3 are now placed and we have applications for adoption orders in court; 2 we are continuing to family find for nationally; 3 have experienced disruptions and are waiting for the Placement Orders to be revoked. All 3 have moved back to live with their previous foster carers where they will be remaining. Their plans will be changed to long-term fostering.

2:6 Children waiting with a Placement Order who are part of a Sibling Group

Children Waiting with a Placement Order who are part of a Sibling Group

	Children Waiting with PO				Part of Sibling Group				% Children Waiting who are part of a Sibling Group				Q4 0% 25% 50% 75% 100%	Trend
	2015/16				2015/16				2015/16					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Bracknell Forest	7	3	2	0	3	2	2	0	42.9%	66.7%	100.0%	#N/A		
Brighton & Hove	7	11	22	17	1	2	9	6	14.3%	18.2%	40.9%	35.3%		
Buckinghamshire	24	18	14	16	13	11	6	10	54.2%	61.1%	42.9%	62.5%		
East Sussex	20	18	19	19	16	9	10	10	80.0%	50.0%	52.6%	52.6%		
Hampshire	55	40	45	36	33	19	20	18	60.0%	47.5%	44.4%	50.0%		
Isle of Wight	6	7	8	9	5	4	4	4	83.3%	57.1%	50.0%	44.4%		
Kent	35	42	30	45	20	22	23	17	57.1%	52.4%	76.7%	37.8%		
Medway	21	18	23	18	12	10	14	10	57.1%	55.6%	60.9%	55.6%		
Milton Keynes	8	7	6	3		0	0	2	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	66.7%		
Oxfordshire	22	20	26	29	15	13	18	18	68.2%	65.0%	69.2%	62.1%		
Portsmouth	20	22	33	32	5	3	7	7	25.0%	13.6%	21.2%	21.9%		
Reading	4	6	6	8	1	3	2	2	25.0%	50.0%	33.3%	25.0%		
Slough	9	4	3	7	1	1	1	4	11.1%	25.0%	33.3%	57.1%		
Southampton	44	35	42	46	0	14	19	23	0.0%	40.0%	45.2%	50.0%		
Surrey	32	33	27	20	19	18	18	11	59.4%	54.5%	66.7%	55.0%		
West Berkshire	8	3	5	2	4	0	0	0	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%		
West Sussex	23	19	23	20	9	7	12	12	39.1%	36.8%	52.2%	60.0%		
Windsor & Maidenhead	1	0	1	0	0		0	0	0.0%	#N/A	0.0%	#N/A		
Wokingham	1	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%		
South East	347	308	337	329	157	138	165	154	45.2%	44.8%	49.0%	46.8%		
England	2540	2,030	0		1,190	1,040			46.9%	51.2%				

Summary

As at 31st March 2016, there were 18 children waiting with a Placement Order who were part of a sibling group (50%).

This compares to East Sussex 52.6%; Kent 37.8%; Surrey 55%; West Sussex 60%; Portsmouth 21.9%; Southampton 50%; Isle of Wight 44.4%. Overall in the South East Region, 46.8% were part of a sibling group at the end of Q4.

Of Hampshire's 18 children waiting, all 18 have now been placed for adoption.

2:7 Children waiting with a Placement Order who are under 5 and NOT part of a Sibling Group

Children Waiting with a Placement Order who are Aged under 5 and NOT part of a Sibling Group

	Children Waiting with PO				Age <5 & NOT in Sibling Group				% Children Waiting who are aged <5 and NOT part of a Sibling Group				Q4 0% 25% 50% 75% 100%	Trend
	2015/16				2015/16				2015/16					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Bracknell Forest	7	3	2	0	2	0	0		28.6%	0.0%	0.0%	#N/A		
Brighton & Hove	7	11	22	17	4	7	10	9	57.1%	63.6%	45.5%	52.9%		
Buckinghamshire	24	18	14	16	6	4	6	4	25.0%	22.2%	42.9%	25.0%		
East Sussex	20	18	19	19	4	6	6	6	20.0%	33.3%	31.6%	31.6%		
Hampshire	55	40	45	36	17	14	23	16	30.9%	35.0%	51.1%	44.4%		
Isle of Wight	6	7	8	9	1	3	4	5	16.7%	42.9%	50.0%	55.6%		
Kent	35	42	30	45	13	14	7	11	37.1%	33.3%	23.3%	24.4%		
Medway	21	18	23	18	7	7	8	8	33.3%	38.9%	34.8%	44.4%		
Milton Keynes	8	7	6	3	2	4	3	1	25.0%	57.1%	50.0%	33.3%		
Oxfordshire	22	20	26	29	3	5	5	9	13.6%	25.0%	19.2%	31.0%		
Portsmouth	20	22	33	32	13	16	19	19	65.0%	72.7%	57.6%	59.4%		
Reading	4	6	6	8	2	2	3	6	50.0%	33.3%	50.0%	75.0%		
Slough	9	4	3	7	7	2	1	3	77.8%	50.0%	33.3%	42.9%		
Southampton	44	35	42	46	14	12	11	20	31.8%	34.3%	26.2%	43.5%		
Surrey	32	33	27	20	8	13	8	7	25.0%	39.4%	29.6%	35.0%		
West Berkshire	8	3	5	2	3	2	3	0	37.5%	66.7%	60.0%	0.0%		
West Sussex	23	19	23	20	8	6	5	8	34.8%	31.6%	21.7%	40.0%		
Windsor & Maidenhead	1	0	1	0	0	0	1		0.0%	#N/A	100.0%	#N/A		
Wokingham	1	2	2	2	0	1	1	2	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%		
South East	347	308	337	329	114	118	124	134	32.9%	38.3%	36.8%	40.7%		
England	2540	2,030			—	—	—	—	#N/A	#N/A				

Summary

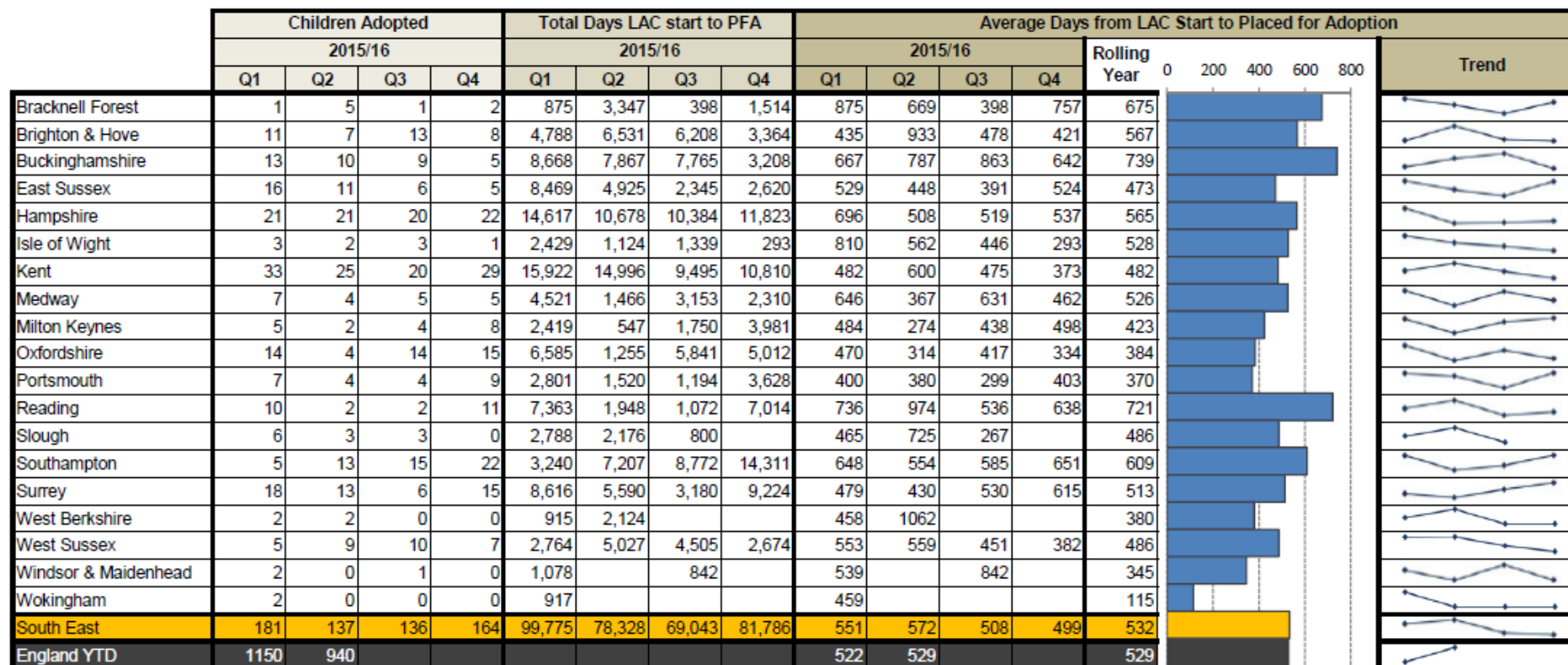
As at 31st March 2016, there were 16 children waiting with a Placement Order aged under 5 and who were not part of a sibling group (44.4%). This compares to East Sussex 31.6%; Kent 24.4%; Surrey 35%; West Sussex 40%; Portsmouth 59.4%; Southampton 43.5%; Isle of Wight 55.6%.

Overall in the South East Region, 40.7% were aged under 5 and not part of a sibling group at the end of Q4.

Of Hampshire's 16 children waiting, 15 have now been placed for adoption. 1 we are continuing to family find for due to him being of a black and ethnic minority group.

2:8 Average time in days between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family

Average time in Days between a Child entering Care and moving in with their Adoptive Family (Children adopted in period)



Summary

For the 84 children who were adopted between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2016, the average time in days between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family was 565 days (18.83 months). This is an increase of 14 days on 2014-15, when the average time was 552 days. The government's threshold is 426 days.

Comparative figures show that our timescales are higher than the South East Region average, which is 532 days, and of the national average, which is 529 days.

The average time being longer was due to a variety of reasons, including a number of cases where there was a delay in court proceedings, family members coming forward to offer care at a late stage and late expert reports. It was also due to having a number of children who were particularly hard to place at the beginning of last year and having to purchase adopters due to having insufficient adopters in house for our hard to place children. (A high number of our adopters lacked child care skills and experience and others had limited preferences.) 50% of the children who were outside of timescales were sibling groups. The remaining children were aged 5 or over/had complex needs. In one case, there was a legal challenge and in two cases, the first link disrupted. 7 of the children adopted in the first 6 months of the year, had over 1000 days between entering care and placement, compared to 2 in the previous 6 months.

The table below shows that those adopted under 5 moved in with their adoptive family within 433 days, whilst males averaged 595 days, sibling groups averaged 604 days, BME 1023 days and those adopted with a disability 1235 days.

Through improving recruitment and targeting adopters with skills and experience to meet the needs of our children waiting, alongside interagency funding being available until October for hard to place children, timescales improved significantly from the beginning of last year. The average timescale in Q1 in 2015 was 696 days compared to 537 days in Q4.

Measures are continuing to be put in place to urgently address timescales which are as follows;

- A new recruitment strategy is now in place, the drive is to pull in adopters who have the child care skills and experience to meet the needs of the children we have waiting.
- Clear expectations and timescales around matching processes have been set.
- Reviewing plans for children over the age of 5 and those with disabilities in a much more timely manner and whether adoption is the appropriate plan.

- Progressing the structural changes for the East and West Adoption Teams to become one County Team, which will result in consistency of processes. An Away Day has been arranged in September to draw up processes in the new team, with a particular emphasis on timescales.

Average time in Days between a Child entering Care and moving in with their Adoptive Family (Children adopted in period)

	All Children Adopted		Under 5 when Adopted		Male		Sibling Group		BME		Disability	
	2014/15	2015/16	2014/15	2015/16	2014/15	2015/16	2014/15	2015/16	2014/15	2015/16	2014/15	2015/16
Bracknell Forest	640	682	428	548	359	707		507	670	655	1065	398
Brighton & Hove	552	536	432	388	563	590	540	641	580	347	638	766
Buckinghamshire	733	743	666	630	746	685	814	711	860	922	585	1138
East Sussex	532	483	396	425	533	433	579	640	566	652		230
Hampshire	552	566	420	433	548	595	741	604	340	1023	954	1235
Isle of Wight	655	576	493	430	370	549	1143	716				
Kent	531	479	473	332	555	524	528	565	590	752	720	759
Medway	656	545	570	471	590	761	913		859	434	897	1461
Milton Keynes	350	483	339	325	262	290	472	455	395	1414		286
Oxfordshire	358	406	299	333	434	430	440	428	332	480		
Portsmouth	617	416	524	411	537	397	811	451	863	569	1195	
Reading	611	696	617	450	616	505	496	903	749	702	1413	1609
Slough	720	480	620	411	874	340	1175	879	705	802	985	
Southampton	628	610	571	435	654	594	666	733		374		1127
Surrey	484	512	457	423	527	475	531	667	658	527	556	906
West Berkshire	423	760	419	458	504			1062				
West Sussex	499	483	496	449	466	563	462	490	365	513	813	958
Windsor & Maidenhead	648	640	570	650	853	640	1138		316	640		
Wokingham	593	459	593	333	720	584			269			
South East	558	536	484	418	568	534	643	618	616	657	784	969
England	533											

2:9 Children Adopted within 16 months of LAC start

Children Adopted within 16 months of LAC start

	Children Adopted				PFA within 16 months of LAC start				% Placed for Adoption within 16 months of LAC start				Q4 0%50%100%	Trend
	2015/16				2015/16				2015/16					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Bracknell Forest	1	5	1	2	0	0	1	0	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%		
Brighton & Hove	11	7	13	8	6	1	6	6	54.5%	14.3%	46.2%	75.0%		
Buckinghamshire	13	10	9	5	4	4	0	1	30.8%	40.0%	0.0%	20.0%		
East Sussex	16	11	6	5	7	7	5	3	43.8%	63.6%	83.3%	60.0%		
Hampshire	21	21	20	22	10	12	11	14	47.6%	57.1%	55.0%	63.6%		
Isle of Wight	3	2	3	1	1	0	1	1	33.3%	0.0%	33.3%	100.0%		
Kent	33	25	20	29	19	14	12	25	57.6%	56.0%	60.0%	86.2%		
Medway	7	4	5	5	5	3	3	4	71.4%	75.0%	60.0%	80.0%		
Milton Keynes	5	3	4	8	3	2	2	7	60.0%	66.7%	50.0%	87.5%		
Oxfordshire	14	4	14	15	10	4	10	13	71.4%	100.0%	71.4%	86.7%		
Portsmouth	7	4	4	9	6	3	1	4	85.7%	75.0%	25.0%	44.4%		
Reading	10	2	2	11	4	1	1	5	40.0%	50.0%	50.0%	45.5%		
Slough	6	3	3	0	4	1	3		66.7%	33.3%	100.0%			
Southampton	5	13	16	22	2	5	8	10	40.0%	38.5%	50.0%	45.5%		
Surrey	18	13	6	15	11	8	3	8	61.1%	61.5%	50.0%	53.3%		
West Berkshire	2	2	0	0	1	0			50.0%	0.0%				
West Sussex	5	9	10	7	2	5	9	5	40.0%	55.6%	90.0%	71.4%		
Windsor & Maidenhead	2	0	1	0	1		0		50.0%		0.0%			
Wokingham	2	0	0	0	1				50.0%					
South East	181	138	137	164	97	70	76	106	53.6%	50.7%	55.5%	64.6%		
England	1150	940												

Summary

During 2015-16, 55.9% of children (47 out of 84) waited less than 16 months between entering care and moving in with an adoptive family. Timescales improved throughout the year from 47.6% being placed within 16 months during Q1 to 63.6% in Q4.

Our 63.6% Q4 figures compare to East Sussex 60%; Kent 86.2%; Surrey 53.3%; West Sussex 71.4%; Portsmouth 44.4%; Southampton 45.5%; Isle of Wight 100%. Overall in the South East Region, 64.6% were adopted within 16 months.

Hampshire's figures are, therefore, very similar to the regions average.

2:10 Characteristics of Adopted Children

Characteristics of Adopted Children

	Children Adopted				Under 5 when Adopted				Male				Sibling Group				BME				Disability			
	2015/16				2015/16				2015/16				2015/16				2015/16				2015/16			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Bracknell Forest	1	5	1	2	0%	80%	100%	50%	100%	40%	0%	50%	0%	40%	100%	0%	0%	40%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%
Brighton & Hove	11	7	13	8	91%	57%	31%	88%	36%	57%	38%	50%	18%	43%	54%	50%	0%	29%	0%	13%	9%	43%	8%	13%
Buckinghamshire	13	10	9	5	100%	80%	44%	80%	54%	40%	0%	60%	38%	50%	67%	80%	15%	40%	33%	40%	8%	0%	11%	0%
East Sussex	16	11	6	5	88%	82%	100%	60%	50%	64%	67%	60%	44%	18%	0%	60%	38%	9%	0%	0%	6%	0%	0%	0%
Hampshire	21	21	20	22	67%	76%	70%	77%	57%	76%	50%	68%	57%	43%	25%	41%	5%	0%	15%	0%	5%	14%	10%	0%
Isle of Wight	3	2	3	1	33%	50%	100%	100%	67%	0%	33%	100%	67%	100%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Kent	33	25	20	29	79%	68%	70%	72%	70%	68%	55%	66%	45%	36%	35%	34%	6%	24%	5%	3%	3%	0%	5%	10%
Medway	7	4	5	5	71%	100%	100%	100%	43%	25%	80%	40%	0%	0%	0%	0%	14%	0%	0%	0%	14%	0%	20%	20%
Milton Keynes	5	2	4	8	80%	50%	50%	50%	20%	50%	25%	50%	40%	50%	50%	50%	0%	0%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%	13%
Oxfordshire	14	4	14	15	86%	75%	86%	73%	57%	25%	86%	27%	50%	25%	36%	60%	29%	0%	29%	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Portsmouth	7	4	4	9	86%	75%	75%	67%	57%	50%	75%	67%	43%	25%	0%	44%	0%	0%	0%	22%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Reading	10	2	2	11	50%	50%	100%	45%	50%	50%	50%	45%	60%	50%	0%	64%	70%	0%	100%	27%	0%	50%	0%	0%
Slough	6	3	3	0	67%	100%	100%		50%	33%	67%		17%	33%	0%		0%	33%	33%		0%	0%	0%	
Southampton	5	13	15	22	80%	69%	80%	68%	40%	62%	73%	68%	0%	15%	53%	27%	0%	15%	20%	14%	0%	0%	0%	9%
Surrey	18	13	6	15	83%	85%	83%	67%	44%	38%	83%	40%	39%	15%	50%	60%	11%	31%	0%	13%	0%	0%	0%	7%
West Berkshire	2	2	0	0	100%	0%			0%	0%			0%	100%			0%	0%			0%	0%		
West Sussex	5	9	10	7	60%	89%	70%	71%	40%	56%	70%	43%	40%	0%	60%	57%	0%	11%	20%	14%	20%	11%	0%	0%
Windsor & Maidenhead	2	0	1	0	50%		100%		100%		100%		0%		0%		100%		100%		0%		0%	
Wokingham	2	0	0	0	50%				50%				0%				0%				0%			
South East	181	137	136	164	77%	74%	72%	70%	53%	55%	57%	55%	39%	31%	38%	45%	15%	17%	15%	12%	4%	6%	5%	5%
England (YTD for 2015/16)	1150	940			83%	85%			58%	51%			40%	39%			17%	15%			4%	4%		

Summary

84 children were adopted between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2016. Out of these;

- 61 were under 5;
- 53 were male;
- 35 were part of a sibling group.
- 6 had a disability

4 children adopted were from minority backgrounds, equating to 4.8%. This compares to 8.1% for 2014-15 when 7 out of the 86 children were adopted from minority ethnic backgrounds and 10.7% for 2013-14 when 6 out of the 56 children adopted were from minority ethnic backgrounds.

23 (27.4%) were aged 5 years or over. This compares to 22.1% for 2014-15 when 19 of the 86 children adopted were aged 5 or over and 25% for 2013-14 when 14 children of the 56 adopted were aged 5 years or over.

Comparative figures show that;

Kent had 107 children adopted; 29 were over 5; 70 were male; 41 were part of a sibling group; 10 were BME; 5 had a disability.

East Sussex had 38 adopted; 6 were over 5; 22 were male; 12 were part of a sibling group; 7 were BME; 1 had a disability.

West Sussex had 31 adopted; 8 were over 5; 17 were male; 12 were part of a sibling group; 4 were BME; 2 had a disability.

Surrey had 52 adopted; 11 were over 5; 24 were male; 21 were part of a sibling group; 8 were BME; 1 had a disability.

Isle of Wight had 9 adopted; 3 were over 5; 4 were male; 6 were part of a sibling group; 0 were BME; 0 had a disability.

Portsmouth had 24 adopted; 6 were over 5; 15 were male; 8 were part of a sibling group; 2 were BME;) had a disability.

Southampton had 55 adopted; 15 were over 5; 36 were male. 16 were part of a sibling group; 8 were BME; 2 had a disability.

Children Adopted

The number of children adopted as a percentage of the number of LAC in the South East Region has fallen throughout 2015-16 from 2.0% in Q1 to 1.8% in Q4. There was a similar fall through 2014-15 from 2.2% to 1.7%. The national data suggests that the number of adoptions have been falling since Q2 2014-15.

Hampshire's figures, however, have remained consistent at 1.6% throughout the year with just two less children adopted than 2014-15.

2:11 Adopters Approved during 2015-16

Adopters Approved in Quarter

	Adopters Approved					Rolling Year 0 20 40 60 80 100	Children Awaiting Match/ Place.				Approvals as % of Children Awaiting Match/ Place.				Trend
	2015/16				2015/16				2015/16						
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1		Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Adopt Berkshire	6	11	6	8		20	11	12	5	30.0%	100.0%	50.0%	160.0%		
Brighton & Hove	2	3	5	7		19	21	33	33	10.5%	14.3%	15.2%	21.2%		
Buckinghamshire	9	11	12	5		29	24	22	23	31.0%	45.8%	54.5%	21.7%		
East Sussex	14	8	5	13		32	29	33	42	43.8%	27.6%	15.2%	31.0%		
Hampshire	23	19	12	20		68	70	70	49	33.8%	27.1%	17.1%	40.8%		
Isle of Wight	3	3	3	0		11	14	16	11	27.3%	21.4%	18.8%	0.0%		
Kent	24	22	13	7		67	77	60	83	35.8%	28.6%	21.7%	8.4%		
Medway	4	4	4	5		44	44	50	59	9.1%	9.1%	8.0%	8.5%		
Milton Keynes	6	3	6	1		11	10	7	4	54.5%	30.0%	85.7%	25.0%		
Oxfordshire	4	4	4	2		31	28	39	41	12.9%	14.3%	10.3%	4.9%		
Portsmouth	4	8	7	2		34	41	43	39	11.8%	19.5%	16.3%	5.1%		
Reading	2	4	2	6		6	8	13	16	33.3%	50.0%	15.4%	37.5%		
Slough	7	4	1	1		10	4	7	9	70.0%	100.0%	14.3%	11.1%		
Southampton	7	8	7	10		128	58	42	73	5.5%	13.8%	16.7%	13.7%		
Surrey	12	8	9	2		45	42	45	42	26.7%	19.0%	20.0%	4.8%		
West Sussex	5	6	8	7		34	39	41	33	14.7%	15.4%	19.5%	21.2%		
PACT	8	15	22												
South East	140	141	126	96		589	520	533	562	23.8%	27.1%	23.6%	17.1%		
England	890	740				3,720	3,240			23.9%	22.8%				

Summary

Hampshire adopter approval rates continue to be strong with 76 approved households between April 2015- March 2016. This compares to 73 adopters being approved during 2014-15 and 39 adopters in 2013-14.

Comparative figures for 2015-16, show that Hampshire approved significantly more adopters than any other local authority in the region. (Kent approved 66 households; West Sussex 26; Surrey 31; East Sussex 40; Portsmouth 21; Southampton 32; Isle of Wight 9.)

Hampshire has had a steady approval rate across all 4 quarters with 23 being approved in Q1; 20 in Q2; 13 in Q3; 20 in Q4. As at 31 March 2016, there were 23 adopters approved and waiting to be matched. This number has remained constant throughout the year and demonstrates a consistent level of adopters being approved to replace those matched with children awaiting adoptive placements. It has provided a good level of choice for children's social workers and, additionally, has resulted in a high number of adopters profiling themselves nationally, leading to an increase in out of county placements and generating an income for the Local Authority. During 2015-16, 7 sets of adopters were linked and had children placed from other local authorities, compared to 4 the previous year.

The national data suggests that the number of adopter approvals has been falling since Q2 2014/15 to the end of Q3 2015/16, with approvals falling overall by 28% compared to 2014/15. This trend, however, is not true for Hampshire.

2:12 Proportion of Adopters approved within 6 months

Proportion of Adopters Approved within 6 Months of Registration- Either Process (Excluding Fast Track)

	2014/15 Full Year			Q2 Rolling Year to Date			2015/16 Full Year			% within 6 Months Trend
	Within 6 months	Over 6 months	% within 6 Months	Within 6 months	Over 6 months	% within 6 Months	Within 6 months	Over 6 months	% within 6 Months	
Adopt Berkshire	6	39	13.3%	1	9	10.0%	1	21	4.5%	
Brighton & Hove	5	20	20.0%	5	11	31.3%	4	9	30.8%	
Buckinghamshire	2	38	5.0%	1	42	2.3%	0	36	0.0%	
East Sussex	6	41	12.8%	6	43	12.2%	3	24	11.1%	
Hampshire	0	64	0.0%	0	70	0.0%	1	73	1.4%	
Isle of Wight	1	6	14.3%	1	6	14.3%	1	6	14.3%	
Kent	58	106	35.4%	32	83	27.8%	7	45	13.5%	
Medway	1	11	8.3%	0	11	0.0%	0	13	0.0%	
Milton Keynes	0	19	0.0%	0	18	0.0%	0	10	0.0%	
Oxfordshire	6	15	28.6%	2	12	14.3%	3	12	20.0%	
Portsmouth	5	18	21.7%	3	17	15.0%	0	16	0.0%	
Reading	2	7	22.2%	0	10	0.0%	0	14	0.0%	
Slough	4	17	19.0%	2	20	9.1%	2	12	14.3%	
Southampton	11	1	91.7%	12	5	70.6%	14	16	46.7%	
Surrey	12	62	16.2%	5	42	10.6%	3	27	10.0%	
West Sussex	42	1	97.7%	28	5	84.8%	8	18	30.8%	
PACT (2015-16 YTD)	7	90	7.2%	0	15	0.0%				
South East	168	555	23.2%	98	404	19.5%	47	352	11.8%	
England				460		28.2%				

Summary

The data above states that Hampshire approved 1.4% of households within a 6 month period which is an increase on 0% of the previous year 2014-2015. Our data (and the figure submitted to the ALB) shows, however, that 7.2% of adopters were approved within a 6 month period.

Comparative data suggests that East Sussex approved 11.1% in 6 months; West Sussex 30.8%; Surrey 10%; Kent 13.5%; Southampton 46.7%; Portsmouth 0%; Isle of Wight 14.3%.

The average time from adopters registering their interest to approval was 7 months during 2015-16. This compares to 8 months for 2014-15 and 8.63 months for 2013-14. Although timescales have improved from the two previous years, the majority of assessments have continued to be outside of the government's timescales of 6 months (Stage 1- 2 months; Stage 2 – 4 months).

Stage 1 has been taking significantly longer than 2 months for the following reasons;

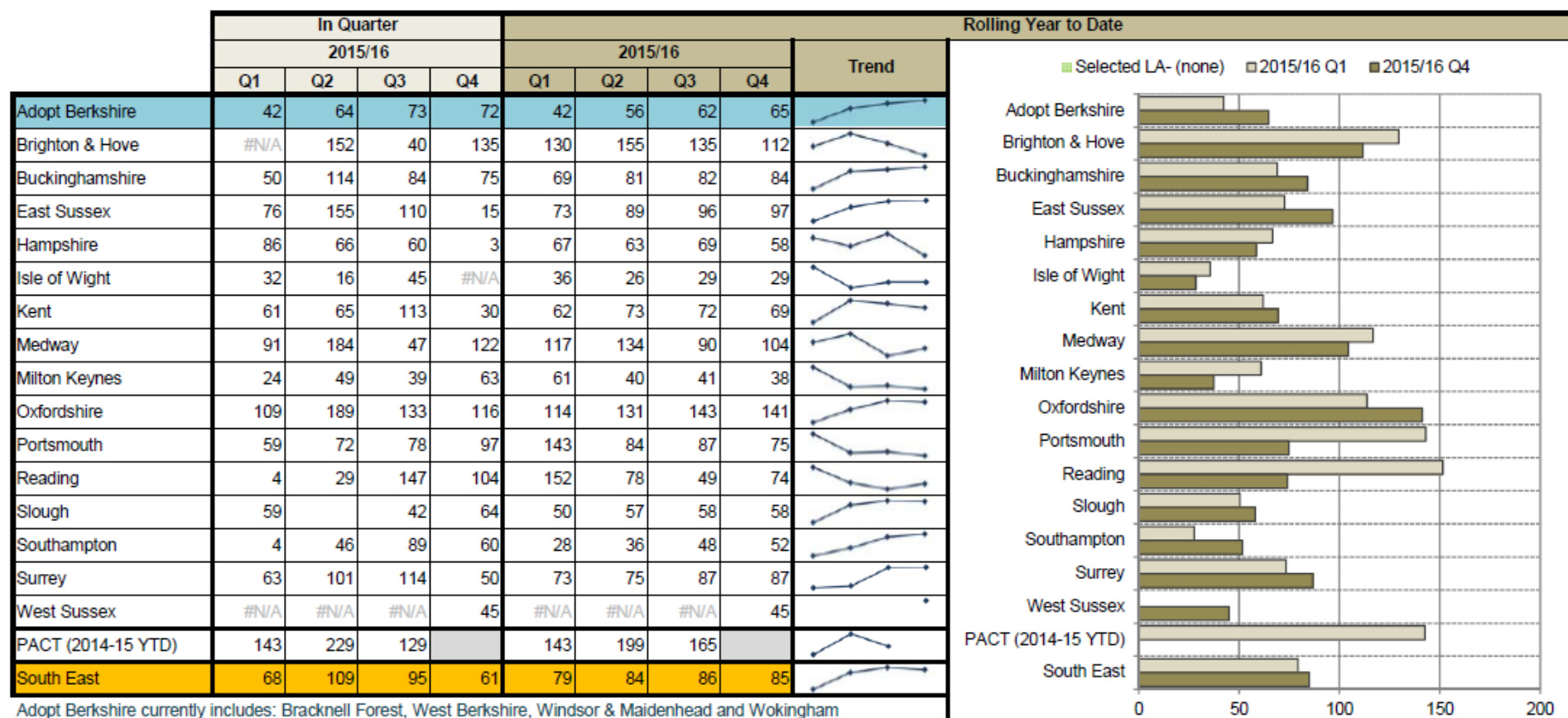
- Delays in applicants sending in their references and checks forms.
- Delays in obtaining GP medicals, Medical Advisor comments and DBS checks, both of which are an issue nationally.
- Within the last quarter, we have put the following in place to address this;
- The references and checks have been added to the initial application form so all of the information required for checks to be actioned has been received by the service at the time of the initial application.
- When the 2 month timescale has been reached with the majority of checks returned being satisfactorily, then a decision has been made to progress to Stage 2 if the GP medical has raised no concerns and no offences have been disclosed by the applicant at the time of processing the DBS check.

This has already had a positive impact on timescales, with Q1 2016-17 data showing the average timescale for Stage 1 being completed in 2.95 months, a significant improvement to the previous quarter (Q4 2015-16) which was 4.32 months.

Overall figures show that in the South East Region, the number of adopters approved within 6 months has fallen in 2015/16, with only 12.4% (46 of 326) being within 6 months. In 2014/15, 23.2% (168 of 555) were within this time. The national data reflects this drop; in Q2 2013/14, 50% of approvals were made within 6 months of registration, while in Q3 2015/16, this was 25% of registrations.

2:13 Average days between Enquiry and Stage 1 Start

Average Days between Enquiry and Stage 1 Start for Newly Approved Adopters (2 Stage Process)



Summary

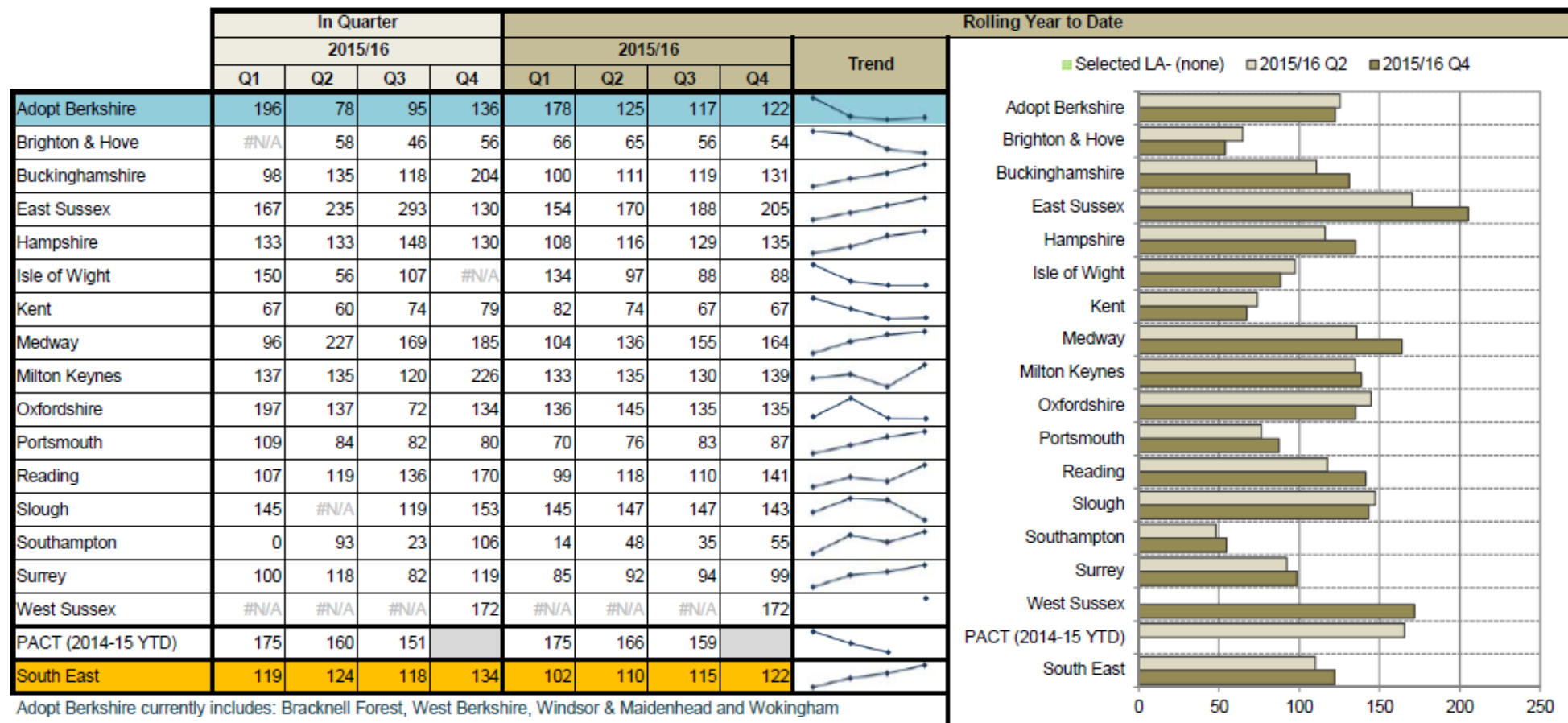
The reported data for average days between enquiry to the start of stage 1 (acceptance into the assessment process) shows an average of 58 days during 2015-16. In comparison, Kent shows an average of 69 days; East Sussex 97 days; West Sussex 45 days; Surrey 87 days. Our neighbours and RAA partners show Southampton averaging 52 days, Portsmouth 75 days and the Isle of Wight 29 days. The data reflects an average of 85 days across the South East Region as a whole.

Hampshire's averages are showing a downward trend and a significant reduction in Q4 (just 3 days compared to 60 days in Q3) due to Hampshire re-examining their data.

Discussions with our RAA partners have highlighted that what an 'enquiry' is classed as is open to interpretation. Hampshire has re-examined their data and have noted that we have previously taken the date of enquiry as when households make their first contact with the department regarding adoption. However, often prospective adopters are just seeking information at this stage and it may then be many months before an application is made and accepted (start of stage 1). We are, therefore, now reporting data that reflects an enquiry date as being when a Registration of Interest is received which should result in the average number of days reducing to a maximum of 5 working days as per the 2014 statutory guidance. Data for 2015-2016 was submitted in Q4 to reflect this but it is apparent that this has not had a significant impact within the Rolling Year to Date average of 58 days. The data should, however, look very different next year.

2:14 Average Days between Stage 1 and Stage 1 End.

Average Days between Stage 1 Start and Stage 1 End for Newly Approved Adopters (2 Stage Process)



Summary

The table above shows the average number of days from the start of Stage 1 to the end of Stage 1. Statutory Guidance states that Stage 1 should take no more than two months unless there is good reason for it to take longer or at the request of the applicants.

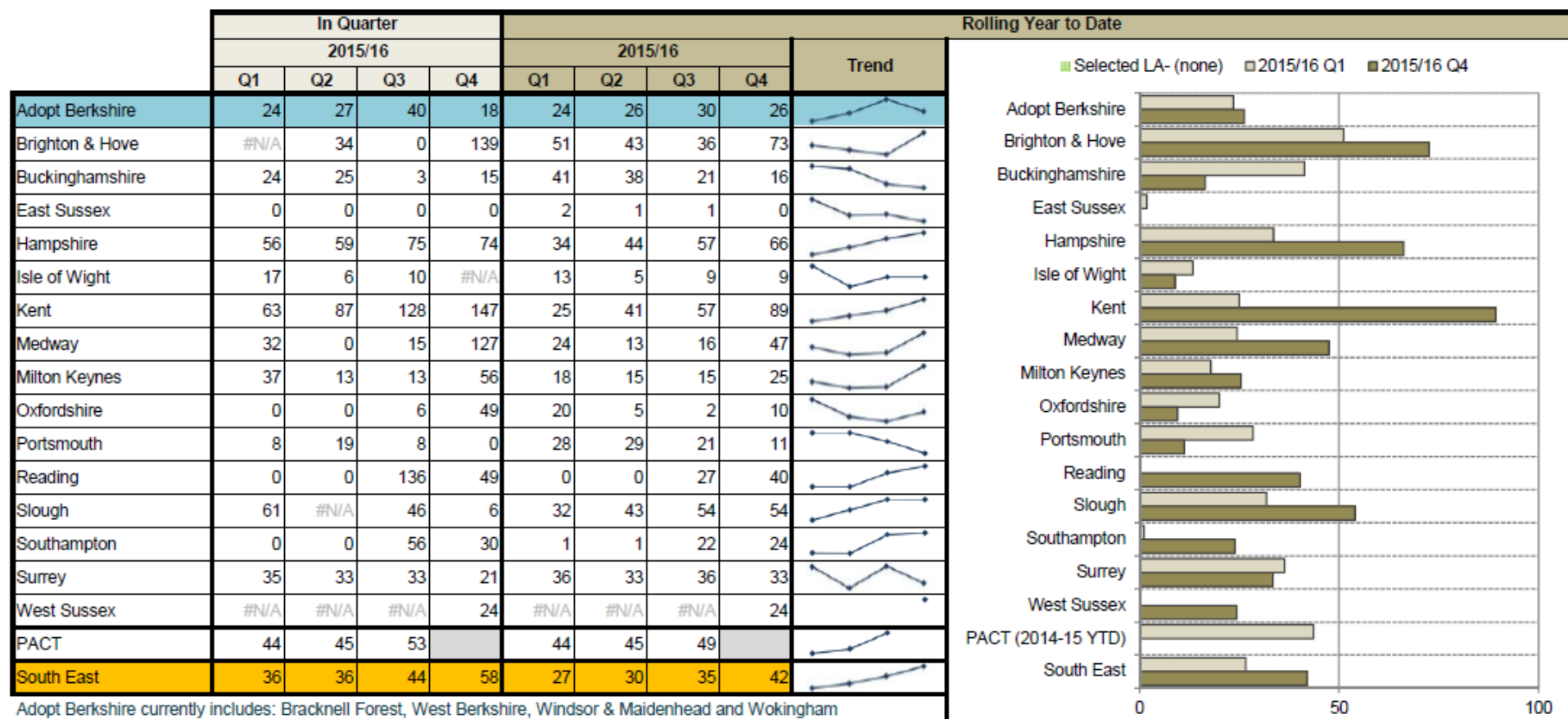
Hampshire's figures show an upward trend across the four quarters with an average of 135 days (4.5 months). This mirrors the upward trend across the whole of the South East Region, which averages 122 days (4 months). In comparison, Kent shows an average of 67 days (2.2 months); West Sussex 172 days (5.7 months); East Sussex 205 (6.8 months); Surrey 99 days (3.3 months). Our neighbours and RAA partners show Southampton as averaging 55 days (1.8 months), Portsmouth, 87 days (2.9 months) and the Isle Of Wight 88 days (2.9 months). Whilst Kent is showing a downwards trend in average number of days, Southampton, Portsmouth, Surrey and East Sussex have an increasing trend in average timescales for this measure.

As outlined earlier, Hampshire is addressing the concerns regarding timeliness and are now undertaking pre-stage visits prior to applicants completing a Registration of Interest Form, which includes gathering all the information required for checks to be actioned as soon as the application is received. As is the process of most other local authorities, at the end of the 2 month timescale, if the majority of the checks have been returned and all are satisfactory, alongside the GP medical raising no concerns and no offences being disclosed by the applicant at the time the DBS is progressed, then a decision is made on balance of the information received to progress to Stage 2 and avoid undue delay.

Within the first quarter of 2016-2017 this has resulted in a significant downward trend to 82 days (2.95 months). This continued approach should show a significant improvement in this measure at the end of 2016-2017 year. However, there continues to be some challenges to this which include applicants with significant health needs where specialist advice is required outside of the standard Medical Advisor process. In such cases, it would not be appropriate to progress to Stage 2 without the specialist guidance, impacting on average timescales.

2:15 Average Days between Stage 1 end Stage 2 Start

Average Days between Stage 1 End and Stage 2 Start for Newly Approved Adopters (2 Stage Process)



Summary

The table above shows the average number of days between the end of Stage 1 and the start of Stage 2 (face to face assessment) across the 2015-2016 year.

Hampshire's figures show an upward trend in the average number of days which mirrors that of the overall figures for the South East Region.

Hampshire averaged 66 days (2.2 months) from the end of Stage 1 to applicants signing their notification to proceed into Stage 2 during 2015-16. This compares to Kent, who averaged 89 days (3 months); Surrey 33 (1.1 month) ; West Sussex 24; Southampton 24; Portsmouth 11 and the Isle Of Wight 9. Average figures for the South East region overall were 42 days (1.4 months).

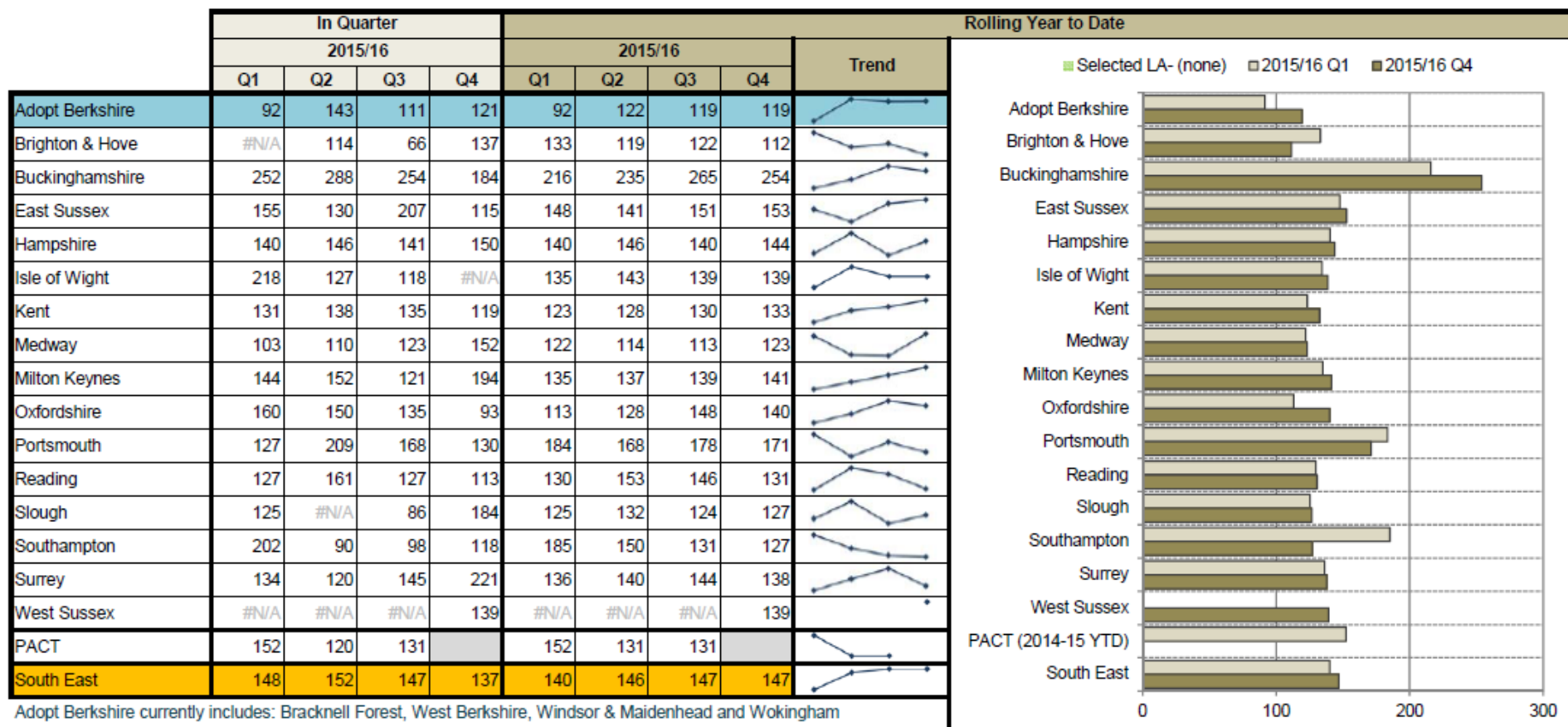
We are urgently addressing the concerns regarding timeliness in this area as during 2015-2016 there were periods of time when applicants were waiting for training places or a worker to be identified to start the assessment. This is no longer the case and all Stage 2 cases are now allocated on completion of Stage 1 and adequate training places are available from Hampshire or neighbouring authorities. Our new training and learning development pathway is also addressing a previous lack of flexibility and courses will now include evenings and weekends.

The only Stage 2 cases currently awaiting allocation are those applicants who have asked to be on hold between stages. The figures for 2016-2017 for this measure should, therefore, show a significant improvement as a result.

We will also discuss with the ALB the data around applicants who have asked to be put 'on hold'. Although the statutory guidance allows for applicants to request to be put on hold for up to 6 months should they wish, it appears that the on hold data is still included in the calculations. If other local authorities are removing this before submitting their data, their calculations would look very differently.

2:16 Average Days between Stage 2 Start and Stage 2 End

Average Days between Stage 2 Start and Stage 2 End for Newly Approved Adopters (2 Stage Process)



Summary

The table above shows the average number of days between the start of Stage 2 and end of Stage 2 for applicants in the two stage process. Stage 2 should take four months unless there are exceptional circumstances that lead to the agency not being able to make a decision within that time, or the prospective adopter requests that the decision is delayed.

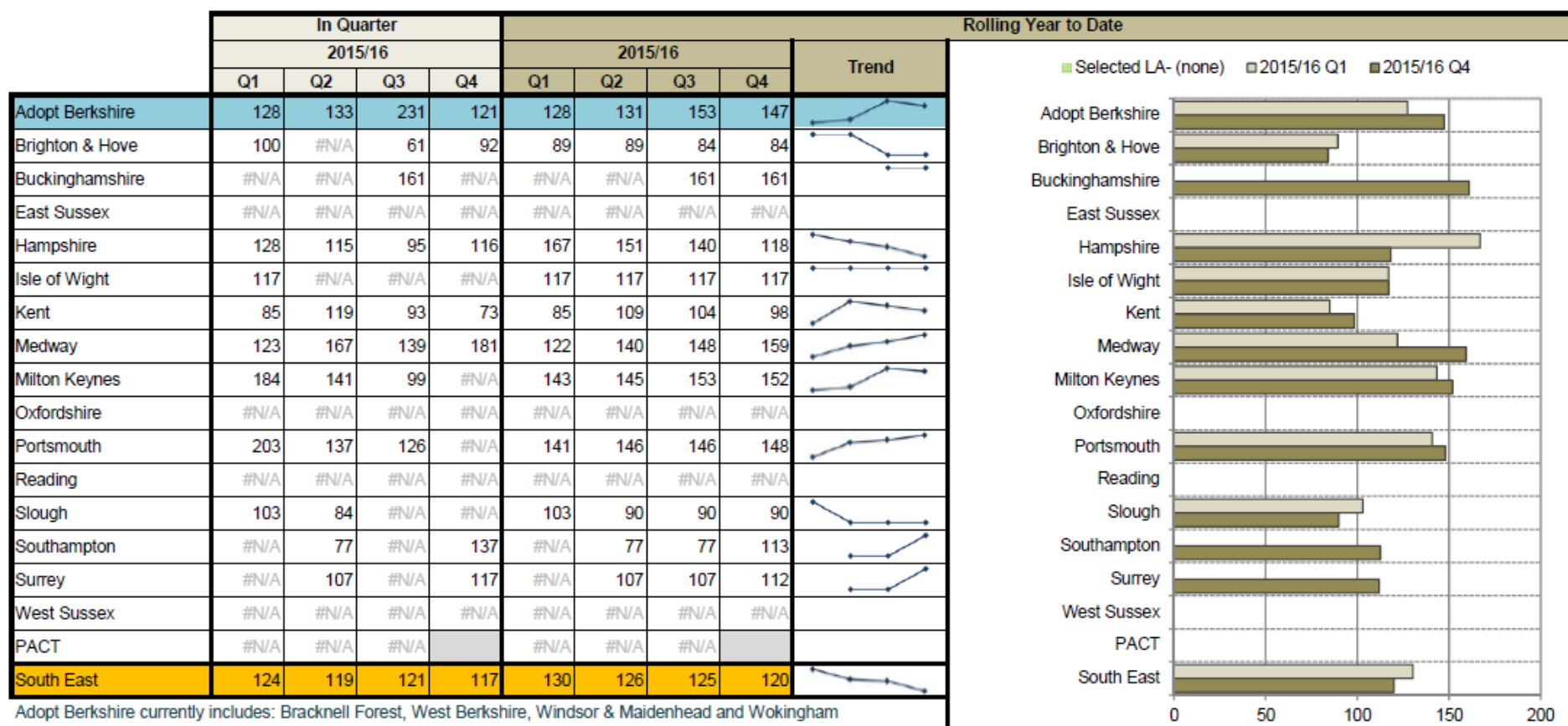
The trend for the South East Region shows an increase which plateaus in the final quarter with the average number of days being 147 days (4.9 months) across the agencies. In comparison, the data that has been reported across the year for Hampshire shows a slight upward trend in the number of days to complete Stage 2 with an average of 144 days (4.8 months). However, our own internally held data (which was submitted to the ALB) shows an average of 4.62 months and a slight downward trend. (Q1- 4.78 months; Q2- 4.65 months; Q3- 4.66 months; Q4- 4.5 months.)

In comparison to other local authorities, Kent averaged 133 days (4.43 months); East Sussex 153 days (5.1 months); Surrey 138 days (4.6 months) ; Southampton 127 days (4.2 months); Portsmouth 171 days (5.7 months); Isle of Wight 139 days (4.6 months).

We are addressing the delays in the timeliness of Stage 2 through performance managing staff and setting clear expectations for assessment visits and the writing up of assessments. Expectations have also been set for the typing up of panel minutes and panel chairs signing off the minutes which has contributed to some delays in minutes reaching ADM.

2:17 Average Days between Stage 2 Start and Stage 2 End (Fast Track)

Average Days between Stage 2 Start and Stage 2 End for Newly Approved Adopters (2 Stage Process- Fast Track)



Summary

Fast Track assessments relate to those applicants who are 2nd time adopters or are foster carers applying to adopt. The statutory guidance allows these applicants to by-pass Stage 1 of the process and enter straight into Stage 2 once their application has been accepted by an agency

The guidance for Fast Track assessments states that timescales from acceptance of the application to the end of Stage 2 (ADM) should be a period of no more than 4 months. Hampshire is showing a trend whereby our timeliness is improving in this measure with an overall average for the 2015-2016 period of 118 days (3.9 months) which is within the statutory timescales. In comparison to other local authorities, Kent has an average of 98 days (3.2 months); Surrey 112 days (3.7 months); Southampton 113 days (3.7 months); Portsmouth 148 days (4.9 months) and the Isle of Wight 117 days (3.9 months). Regionally the average is 120 days (4 months).

There remain specific challenges to achieving this measure which include receipt of Medicals and DBS reports within the four month assessment period, alongside issues relating to adoption allowances, specifically in respect of foster care conversions. It is hoped that the new adoption allowance policy will address what has previously been a drawn out process and has often lead to many months of delay in some assessments whilst allowances are resolved.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 Analysis of the data shows a number of areas where Hampshire is strong compared to other local authorities in the South East Region. Strengths include;
- Timeliness of children waiting with a Placement Order from LAC Start.
 - Timeliness of children under 5 entering care and moving in with an adoptive family.
 - Improving timescales of children waiting less than 16 months between entering care and moving in with an adoptive family.
 - Numbers of children adopted.
 - Numbers of adopters approved.
 - Timeliness of Fast Tracked assessments.
 - Pool of adopters approved and waiting to be matched.
- 3.2 There are also a number of areas where improvement is needed;
- Timeliness of males, sibling groups, children with disabilities and of black and ethnic minority groups entering care and moving in with an adoptive family. This is being addressed as outlined in section 2:8.
 - Timeliness of Stage 1 and Stage 2. This is being addressed as outlined in section 2.12 and 2.16.
 - Delay between end of Stage 1 and start of Stage 2 which has now been addressed as outlined in section 2.15.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 That the Children and Families Advisory Panel note the contents of the report and the conclusions reached.
- 4.2 That a follow up report be presented to the Children and Families Advisory Panel in twelve months time.