



Looked After Children

Children's Services and Culture Scrutiny
Committee

8th Feb 2017

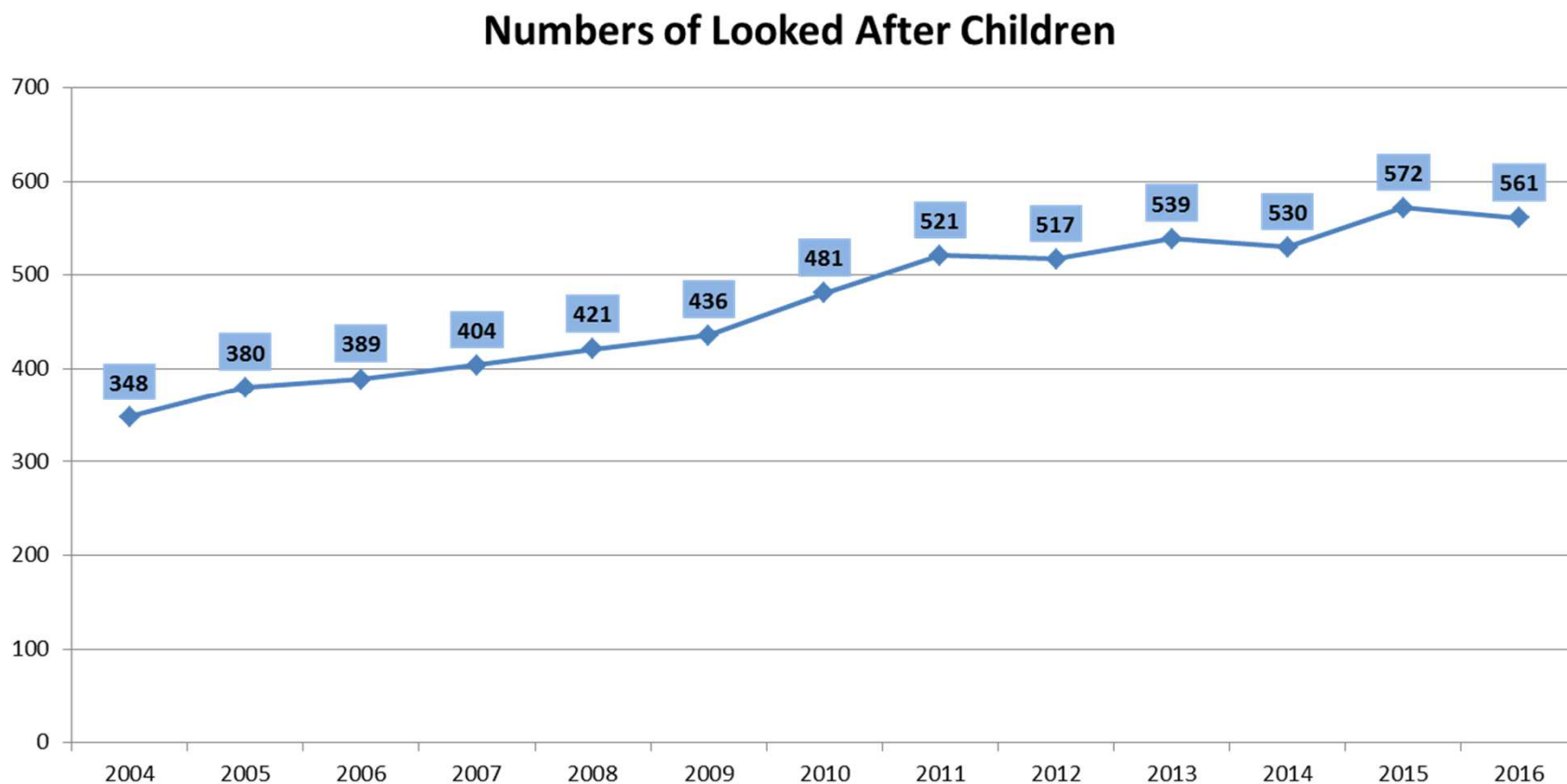


Looked After Children

- The terms 'looked-after children' or 'children in care' refer to all children under the age of 18 in the care of a local authority.
- It includes both those subject to a care order (full or interim) and those looked after by a voluntary agreement with their parents.
- Once they become looked-after, children may be placed by the local authority with family members, foster carers or in a residential children's home.
- The purpose of the 'care' system is to look after children where parents are unable to do so, for a variety of reasons.



Numbers of Looked After Children in Bolton

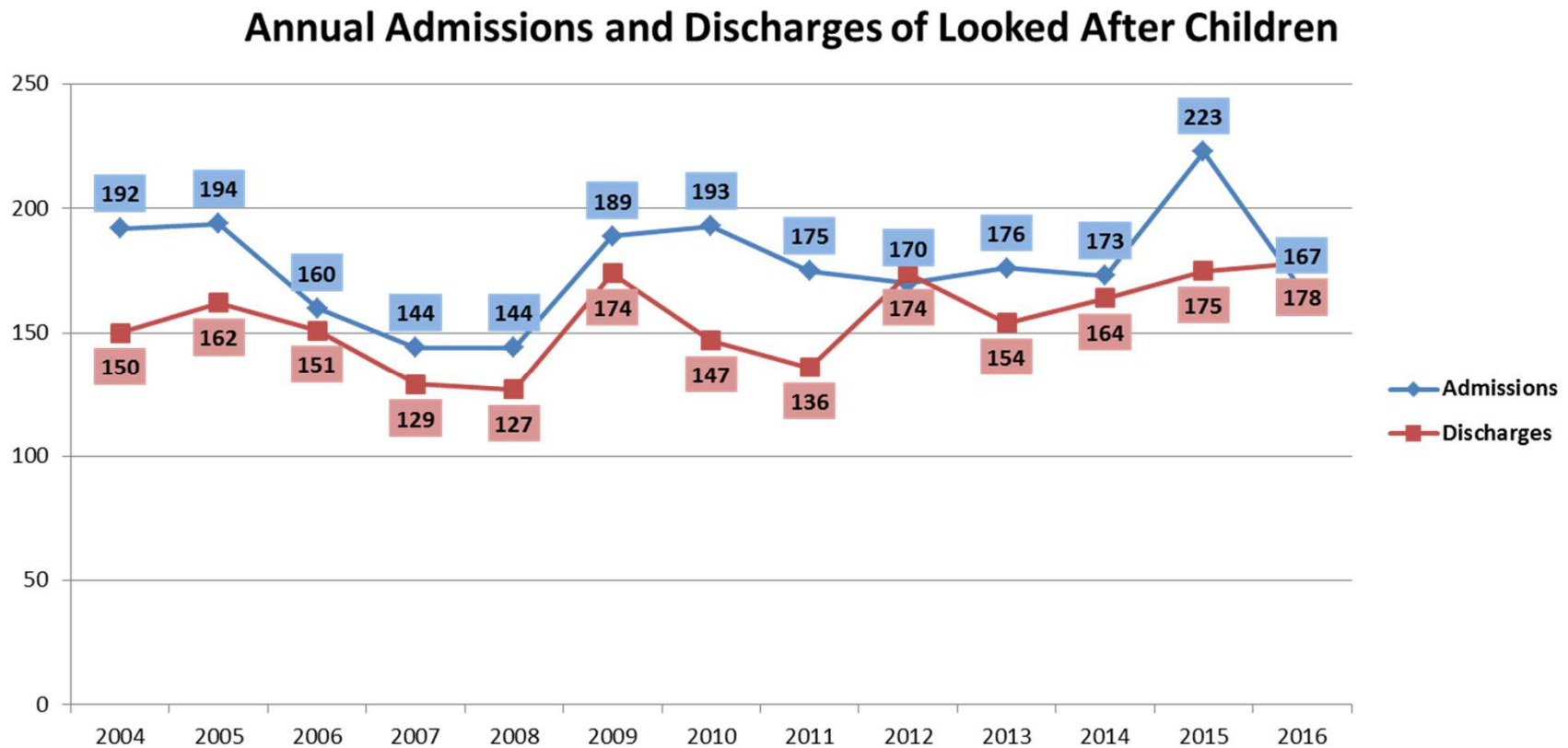


There has been a reasonably steady increase over last 12 years – 62% increase on numbers in 2004.



Numbers of Looked After Children

fluctuate depending on admissions and discharges

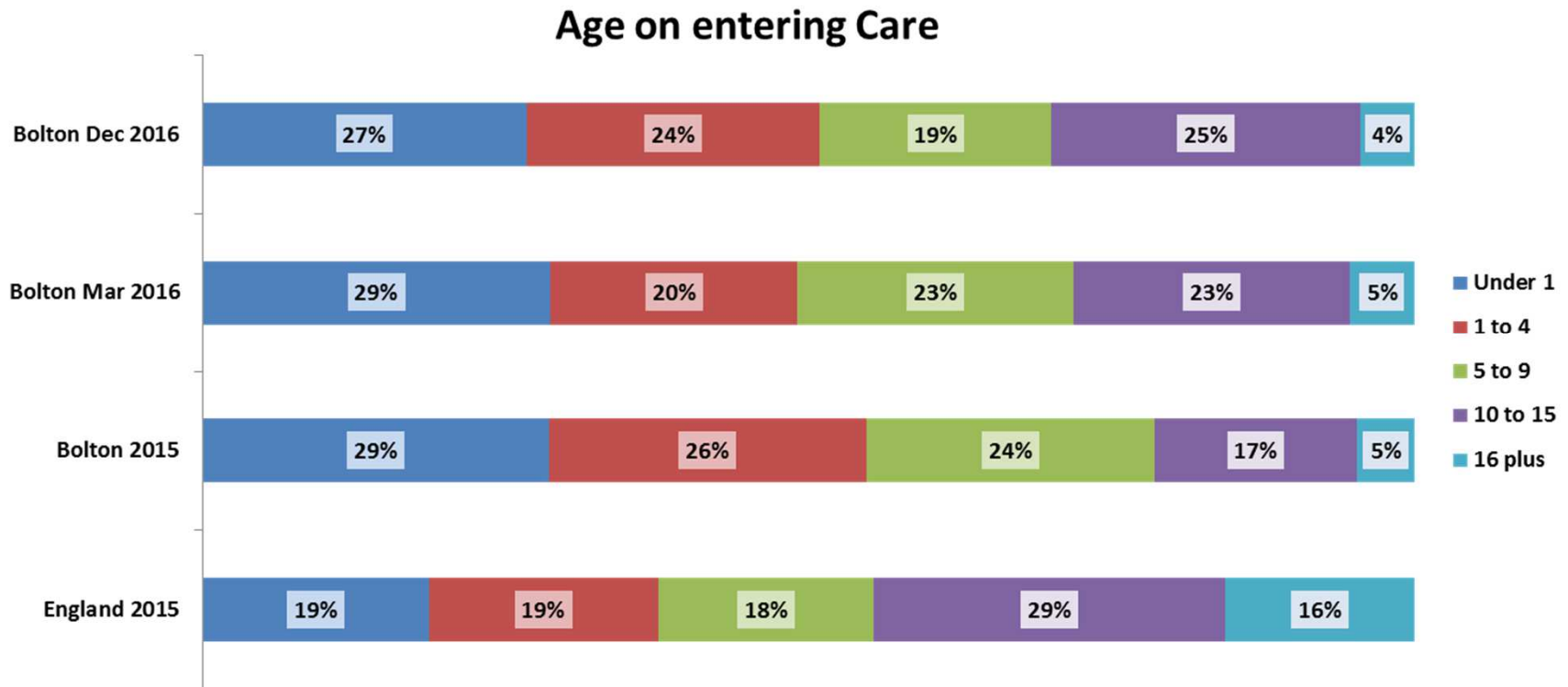


During 2015-16, discharges were greater than admissions, leading to a small decrease in the looked-after cohort. However, the cohort is increasing again during 2016-17.



Age of Looked After Children

age profile of those entering care

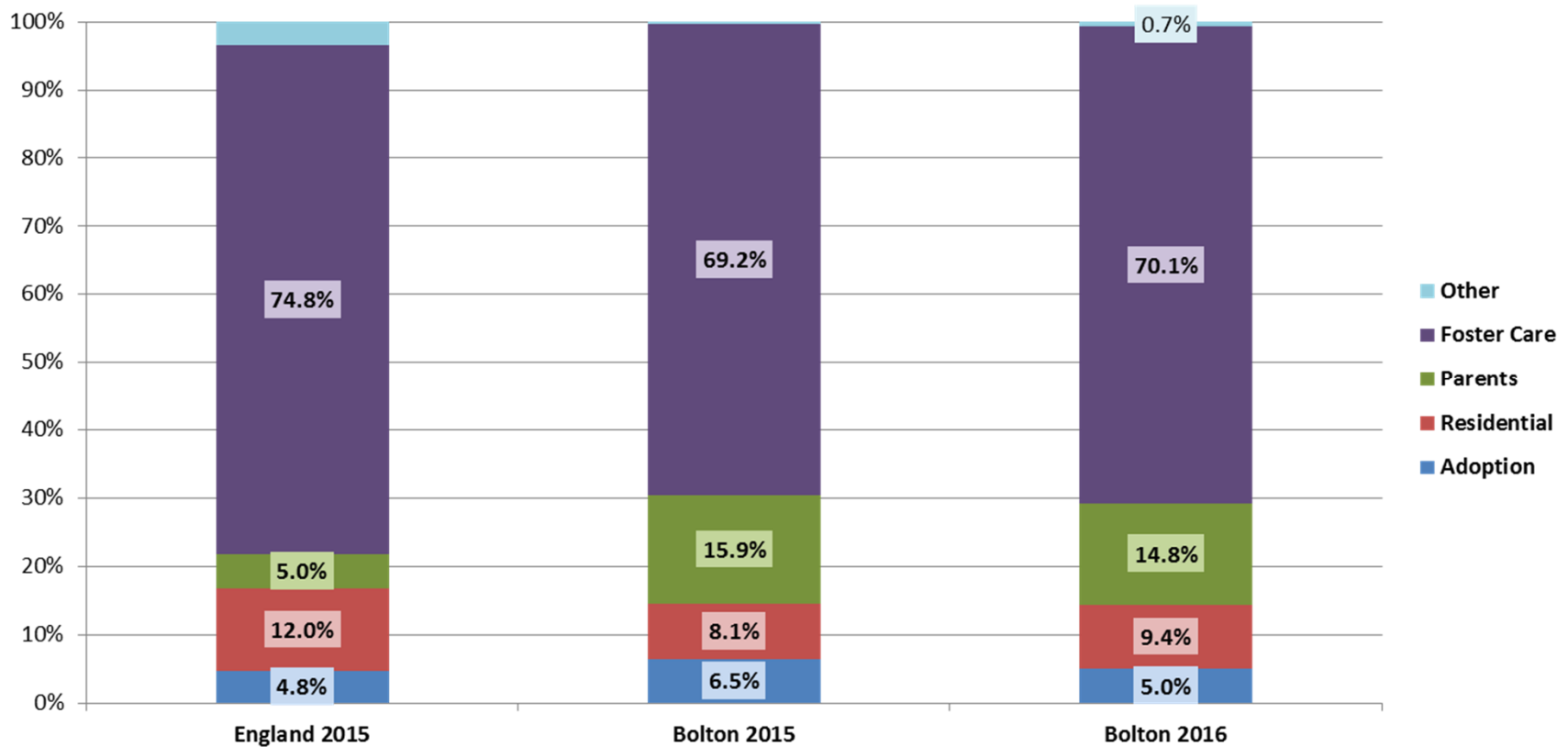


Bolton has a higher proportion of young children entering care than the national average but this is reducing



Placements

where children are placed



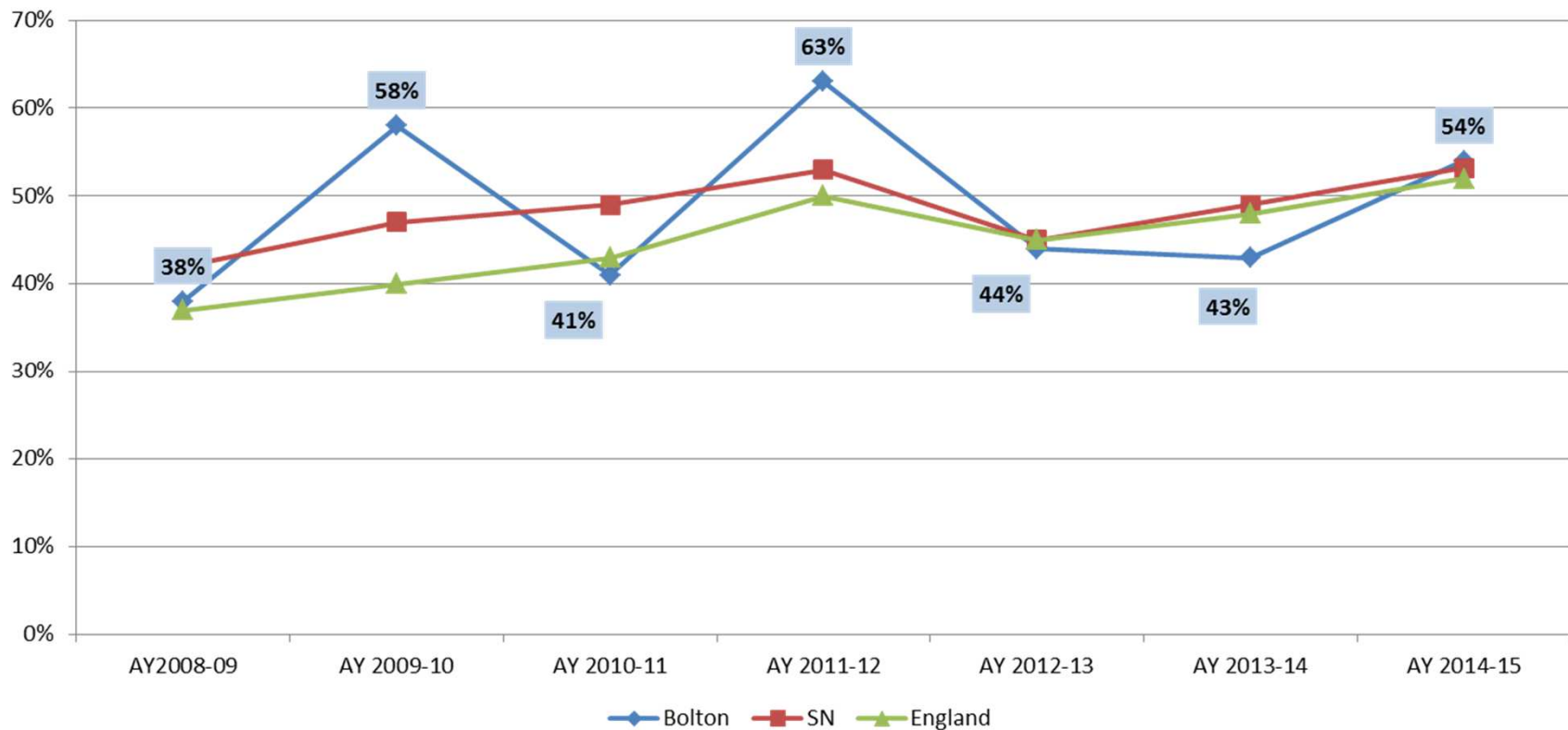
**Most of the children are placed with foster carers.
Smaller proportion in residential care.**



Educational attainment of Looked After Children

LAC attainment

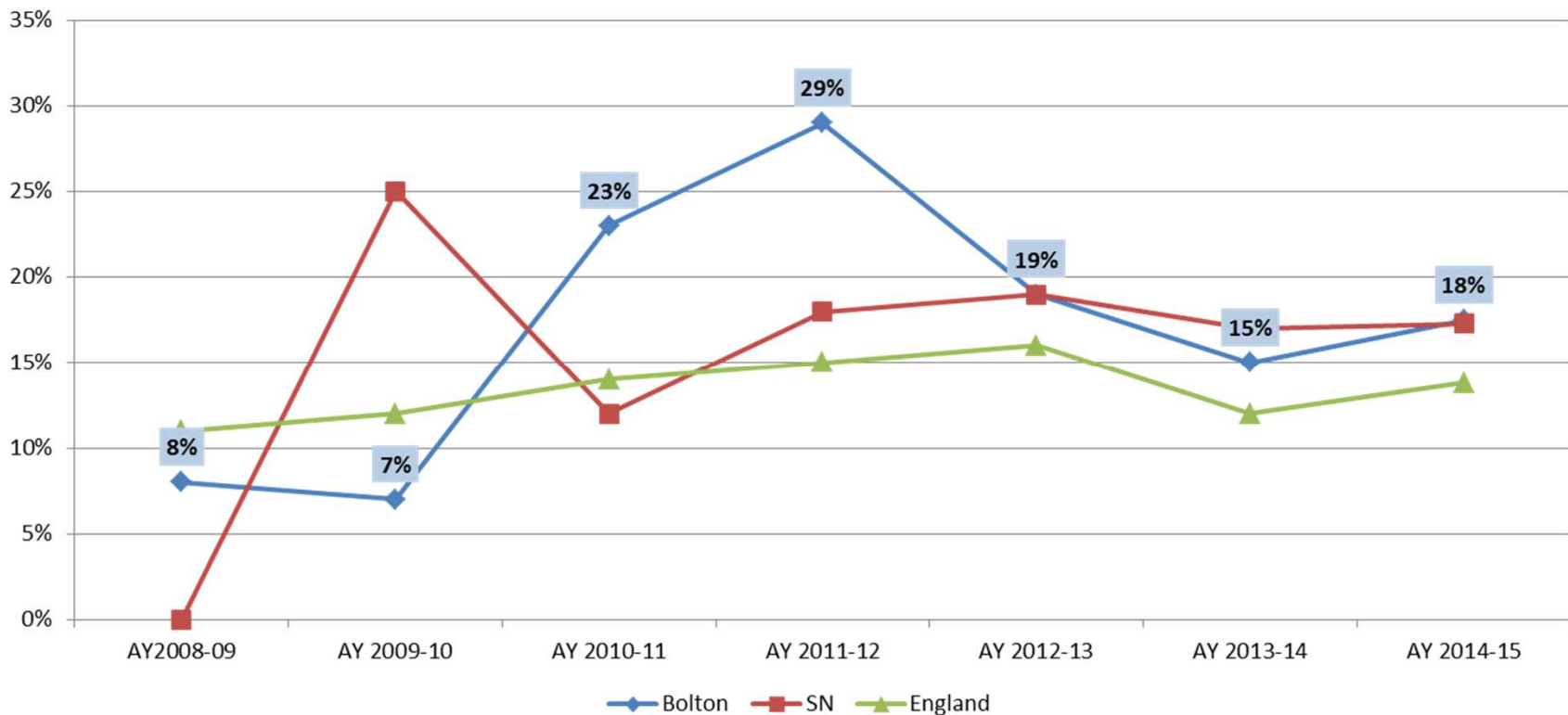
% LAC reaching level 4 in reading, writing and maths at KS2



Volatile indicator dependent on the needs and abilities of the children in the cohort eligible for KS2 tests.

LAC attainment

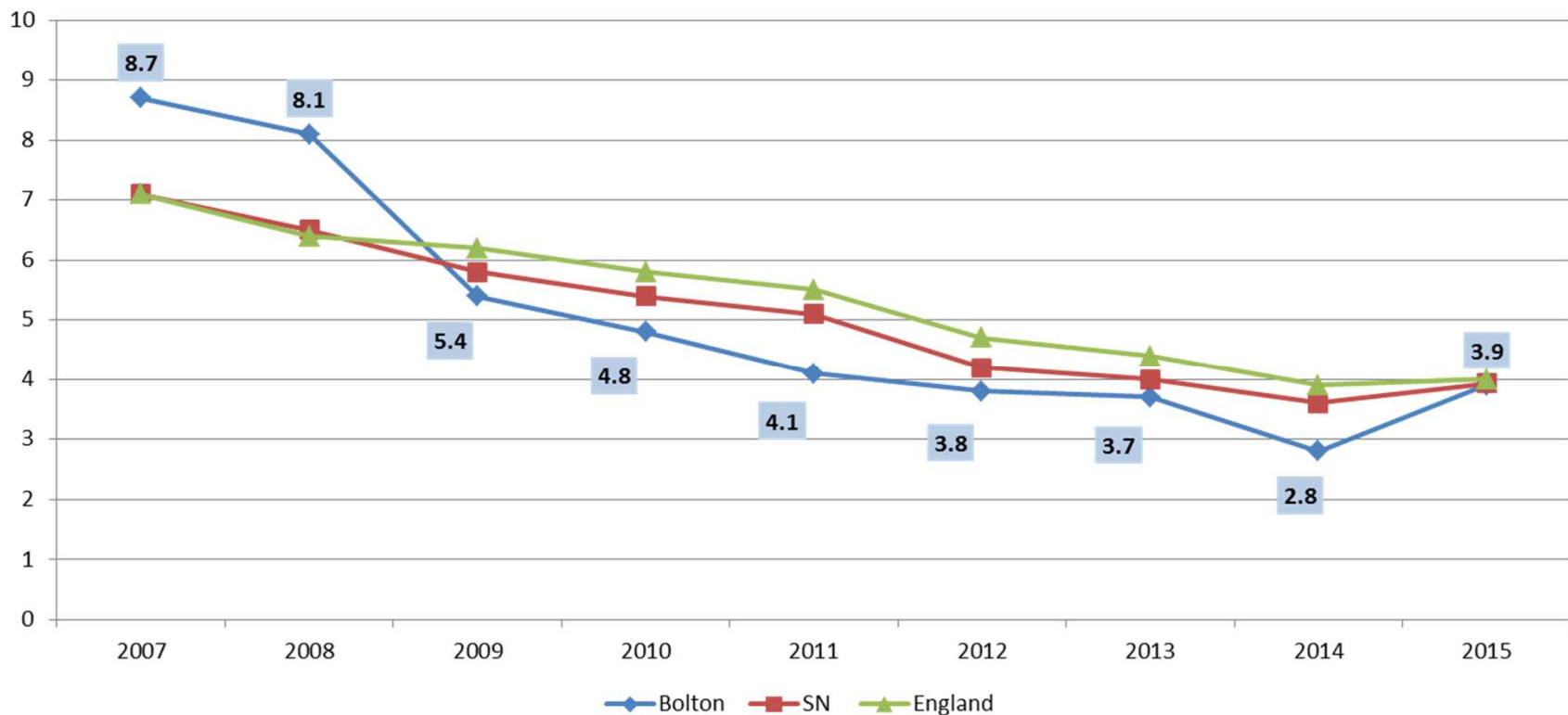
% LAC reaching 5 or more A*-C GCSEs including E&M



Again, a volatile indicator. Bolton ranked 5th in England in 2011-12 and has remained above England average since.

LAC attainment

% absence from school of Looked After Children

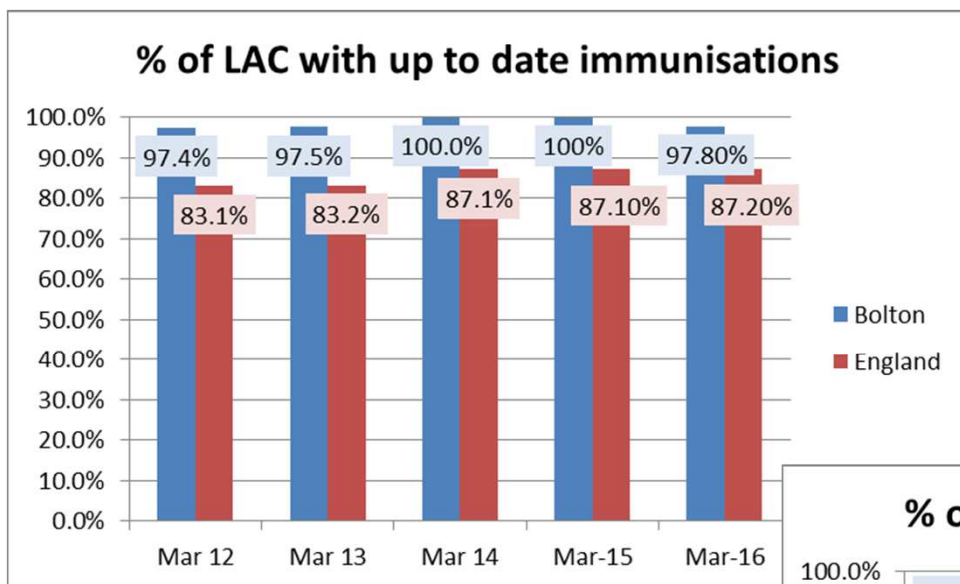


Although this has increased, Bolton remains in line with England average



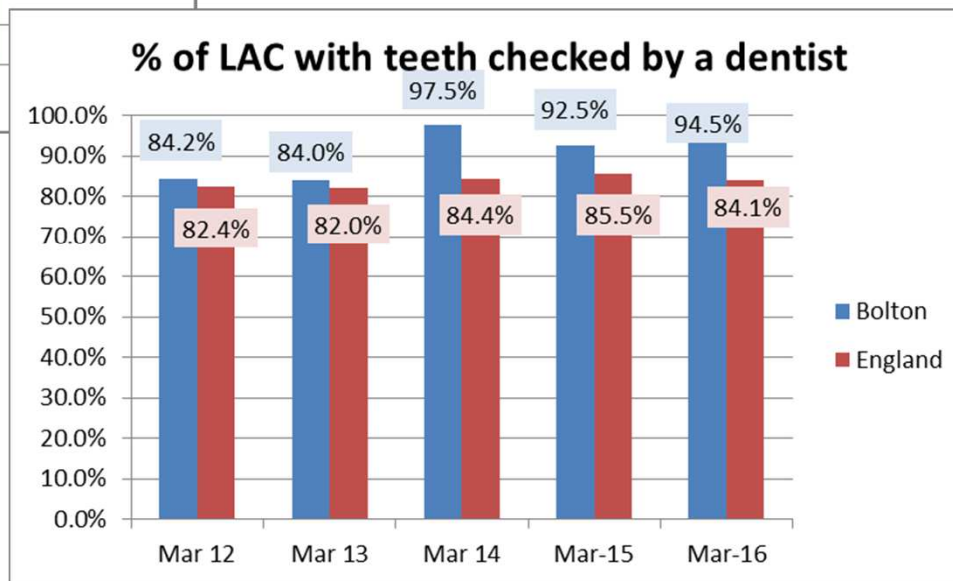
Health of Looked After Children

Looked After Children's Health

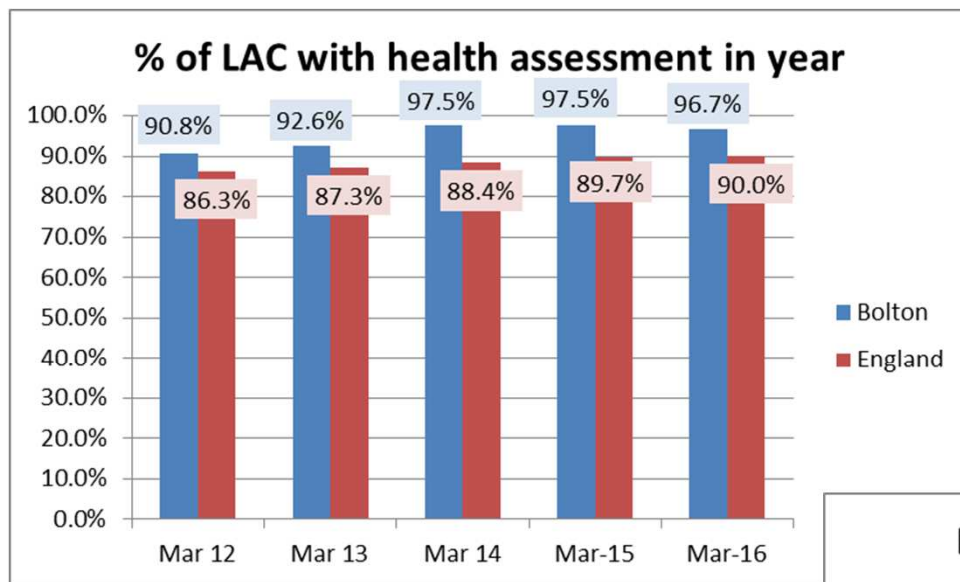


The nationally published immunisation figures for 2015-6 show that coverage for Bolton remains well above the national average

Dental checks are also consistently high

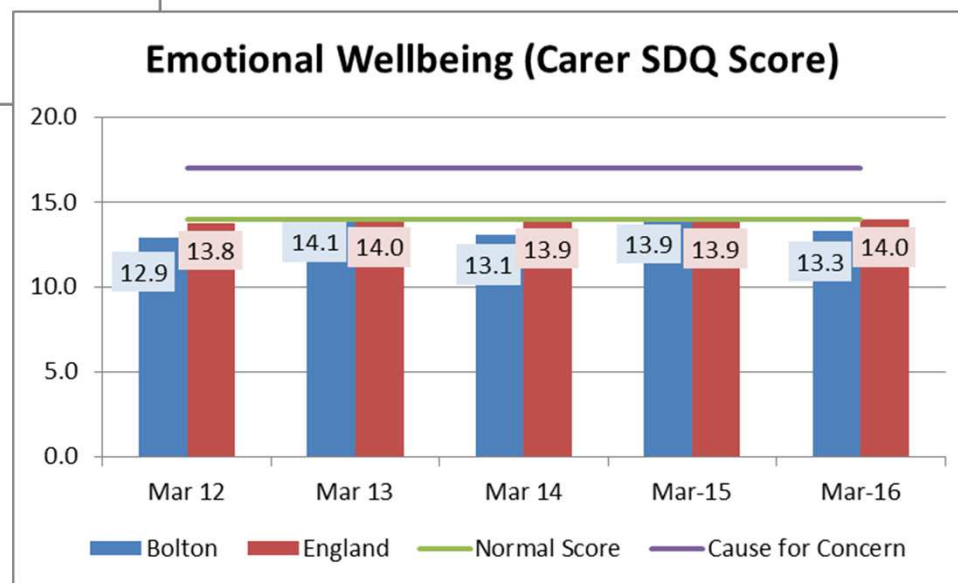


Looked After Children's Health



Almost all LAC receive an annual health assessment; a very small number of older children refuse.

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire is completed annually by carers. Normal scores are 0-14. Cause for concern is 17 or over.





Corporate Parenting

- Looking after other people's children is one of the most important things councils do.
- It is the responsibility of all councillors and officers. Partners too have a duty to co-operate to ensure looked after children's needs are met.
- Corporate parenting is not just about making sure the right boxes are ticked to fulfil a statutory duty.
- Children and young people in care are some of the most vulnerable people in society and often do not have the benefit of strong support networks others have through family and friends.
- Our Corporate Parenting Board is being refreshed to enable key agencies and councillors to look more specifically at issues facing our looked after children



Leaving Care



Care Leavers

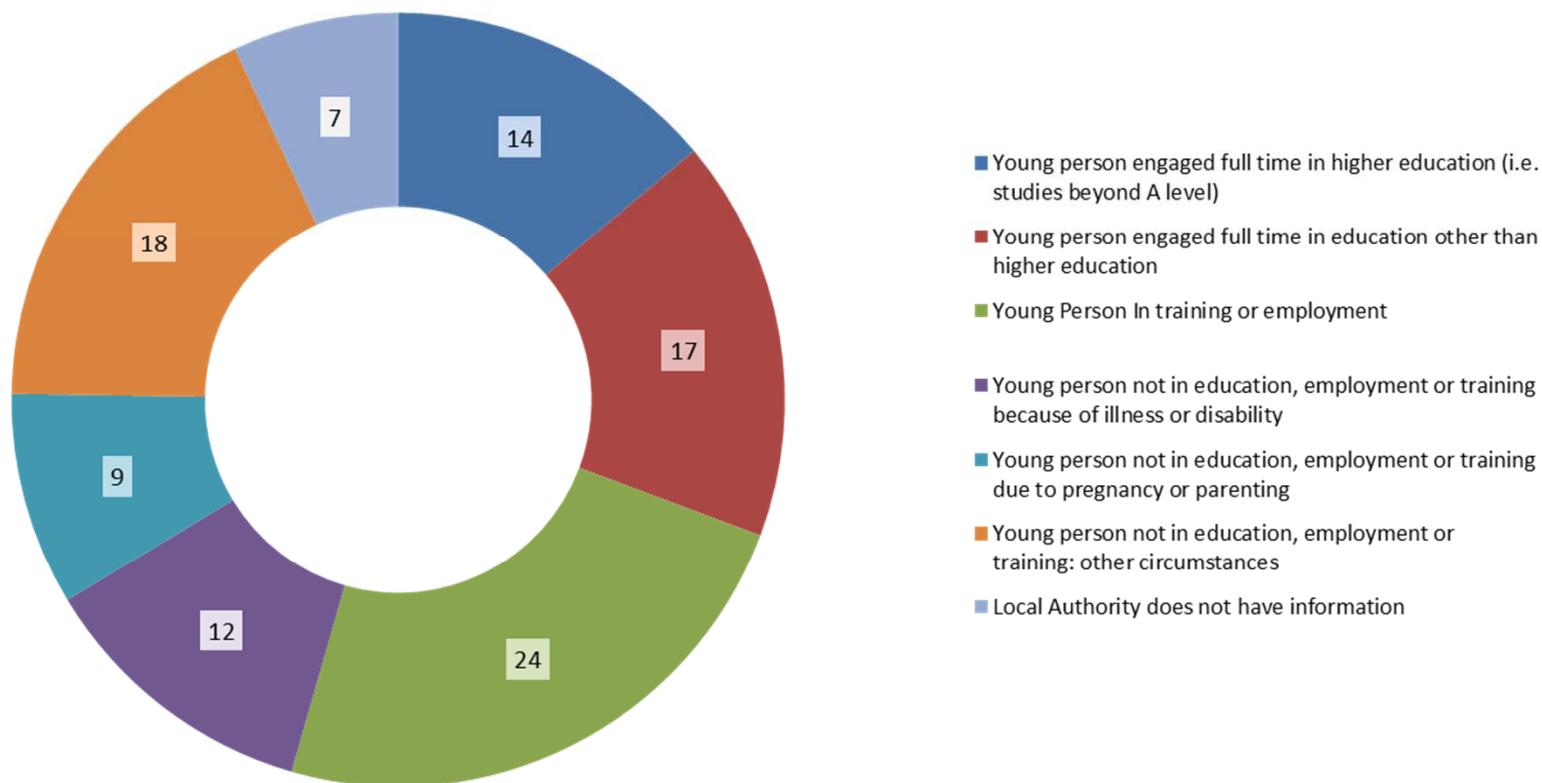
National strategy for care leavers includes:

- **Care Leavers Charter**
- **Staying Put – can remain with foster carers until 21**
- **Junior ISAs**
- **Bursaries for participation in F&HE**
- **Personal Advisor support for education & training**
- **Consideration of outcomes for care leavers up to age 21**
- **Care Leaver ‘marker’ on DWP database enabling tracking of support and outcomes**



Care leavers

Activity of care leavers aged 19, 20 and 21 in 2016 -



^{BA1} 35% of Bolton's care leavers were NEET c.f. 40% nationally. 14% were in HE compared with 7% nationally.

Slide 17

BA1

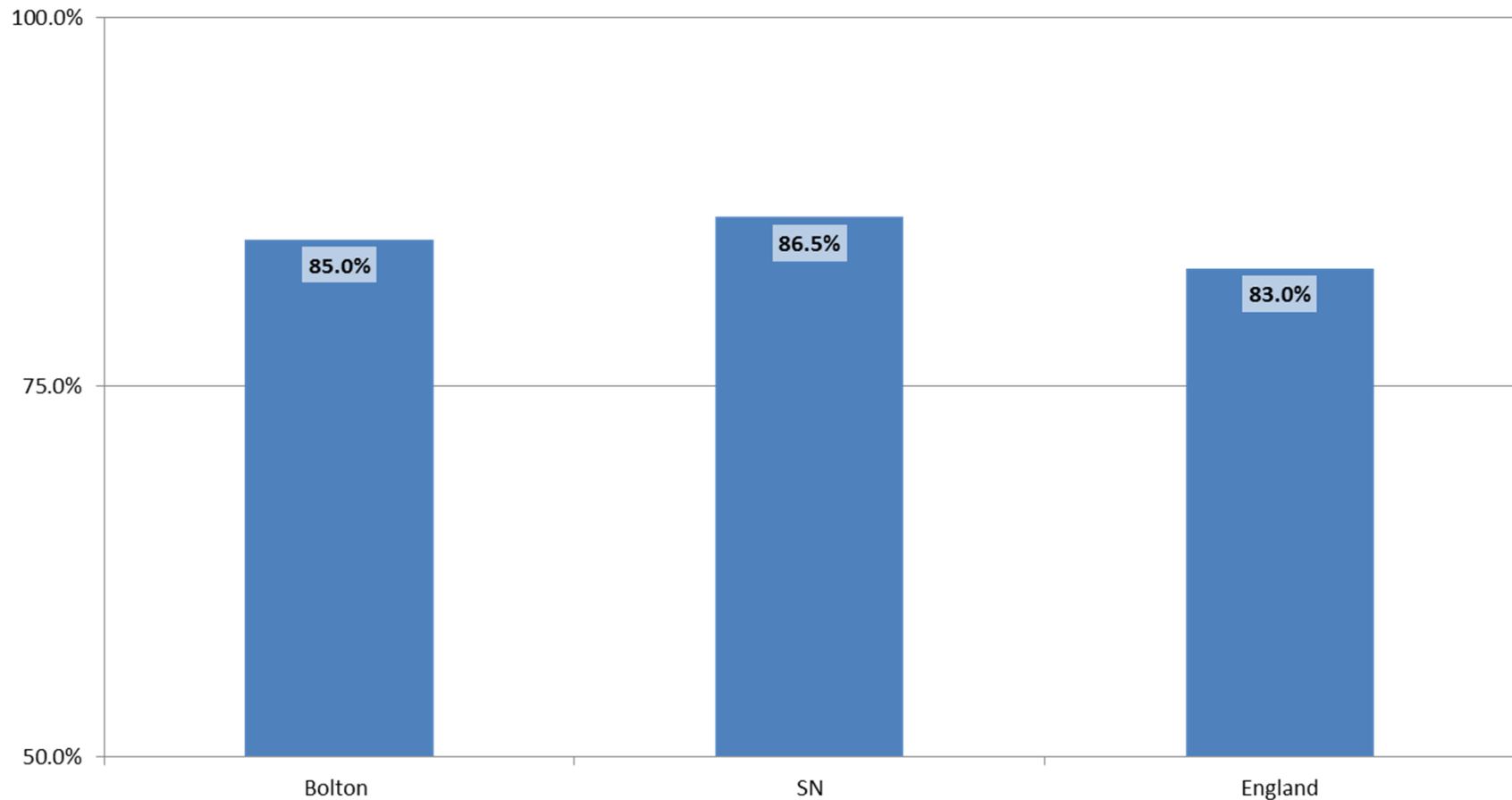
NB double check these - Bolton stats are from local data, more up to date with SFR and don't quite tally

Bent, Andy, 30/01/2017



Care leavers

19, 20 and 21 year olds in suitable accommodation 2016



Now ranked 74th nationally, up from 125th in 2012