

Somerset County Council Scrutiny for Children & Families Committee

Social Care – The Experience of Younger Children in Care

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The Experience of Younger Children in Care

- What we are trying to achieve in Somerset
- What we know about younger children in our care – for the purpose of this presentation we will be looking at those under 8 years of age
- What we want to know more about



What we are trying to achieve in Somerset...

- Best outcomes for all children
- Keeping children in families wherever it is safe do so
 - recognising that all children have the right to family life and that where consistent with their welfare this should be within the birth family or with a 'connected person'
 - Importance of connection, reconnection and reunification
- For those children who come into our care, achieving permanence at the earliest opportunity
- As a corporate parent we should always consider with our partner agencies how we promote and enable children to achieve their full potential in life - 'is this good enough for my child?'



What do we mean by permanence?

- We define permanence as the framework of legal, physical and emotional permanence which gives a child a sense of security, continuity, commitment and identity throughout childhood and into adulthood and believe this is achieved by the provision of consistent care, stable relationships and a secure family base in life.



What do we mean by permanence?

- We recognise that delay in planning and implementing plans for permanence is detrimental to good outcomes for children.
- We recognise placement moves prior to permanence are detrimental to good outcomes and any unnecessary moves should be avoided.
- Decisions about achieving permanence must take into account the wishes and feelings of children and young people, their birth parents and families.



What do we mean by permanence?

Somerset County Council considers that the routes to permanence are:

- Staying / returning home
- Family and friends care
- Adoption
- Special Guardianship / Child Arrangement Orders
- Long-term foster care

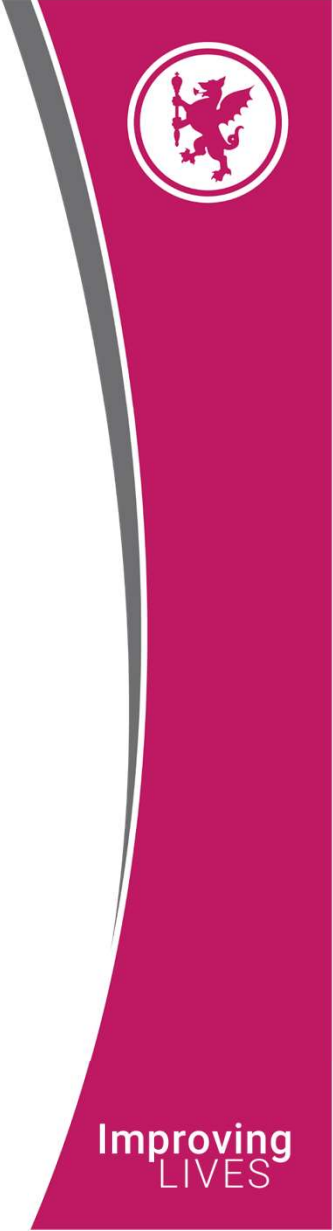
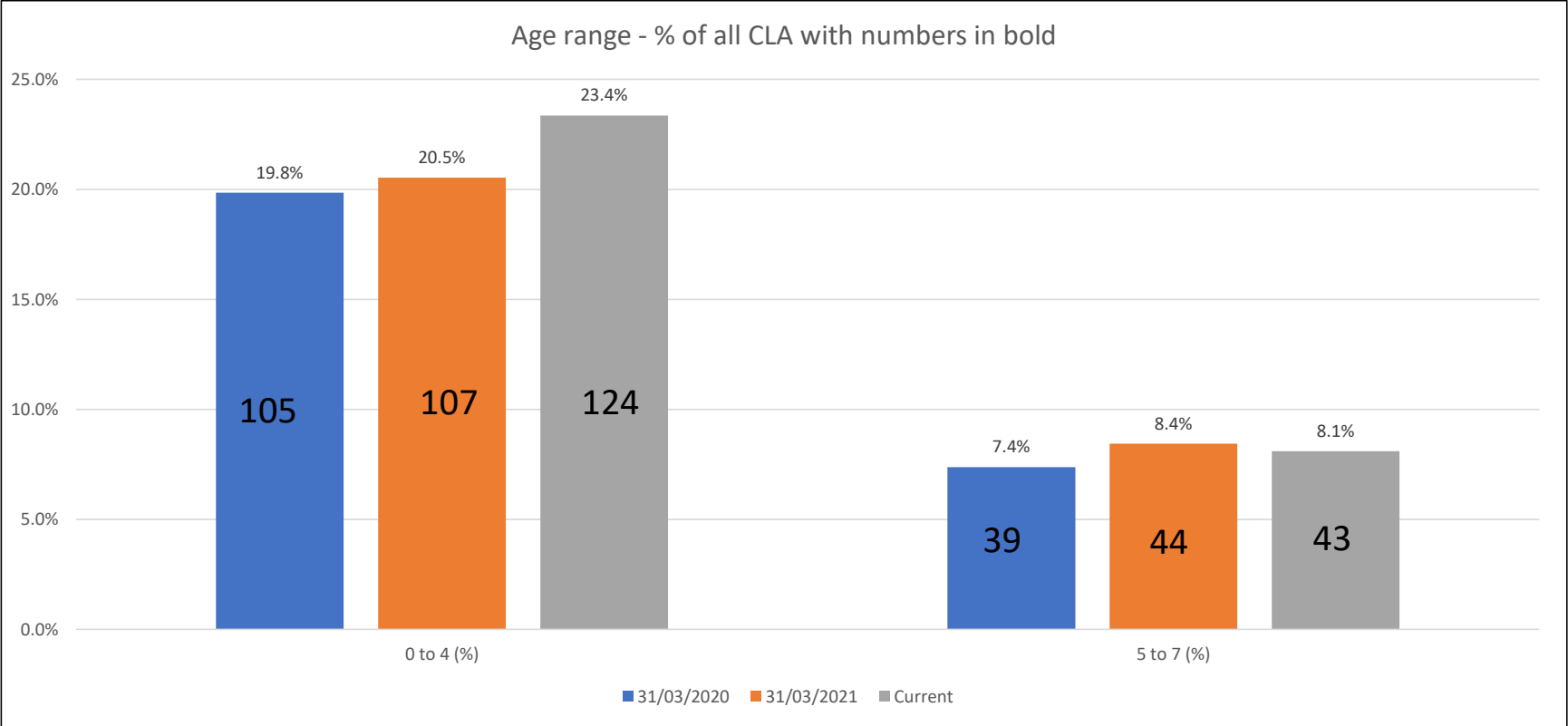


What we know about younger children in our care

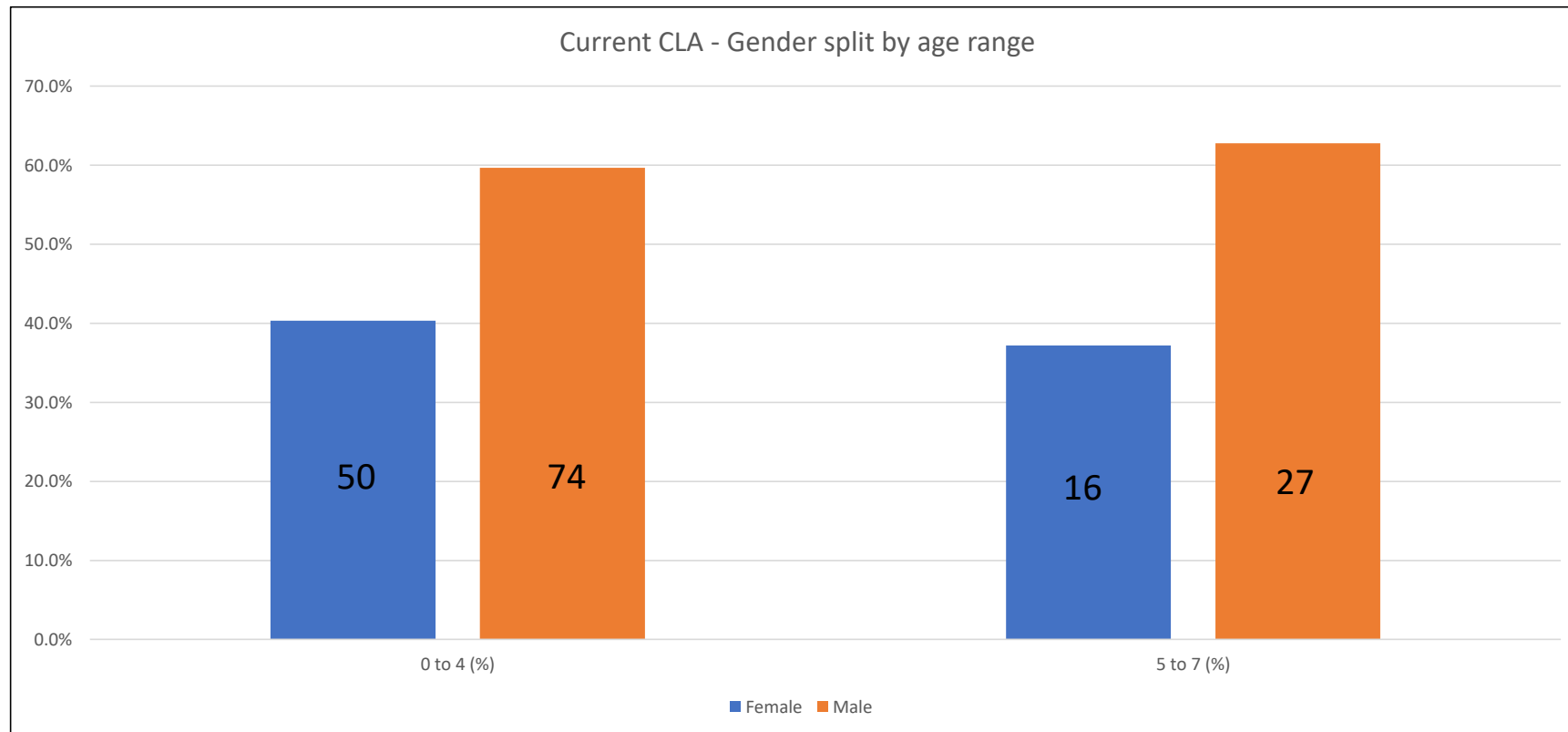
- How many children
- Gender
- Living arrangements
- Time spent in care before achieving permanence
- Number of placement moves



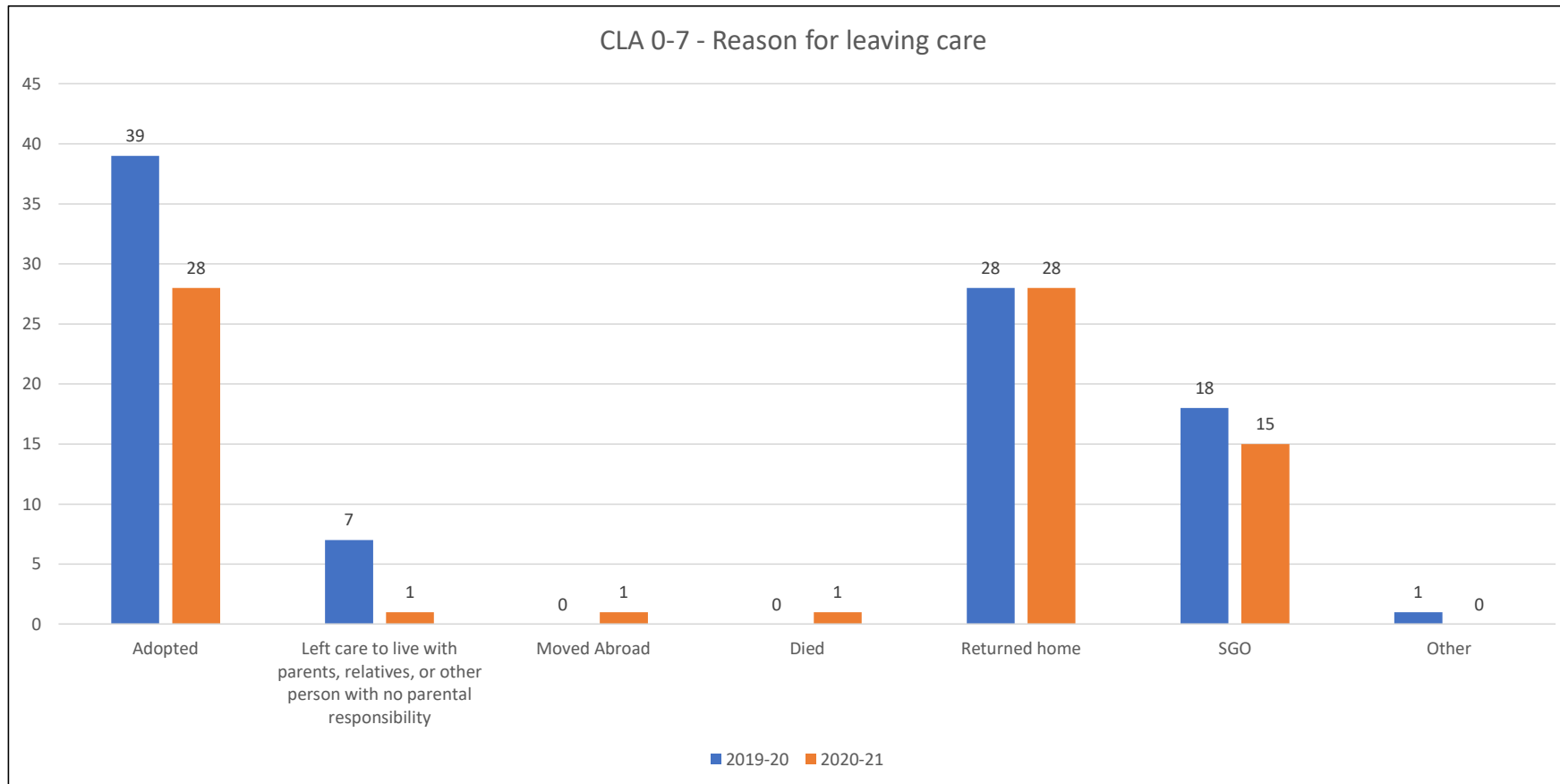
Age range of our CLA under the age of 8 years



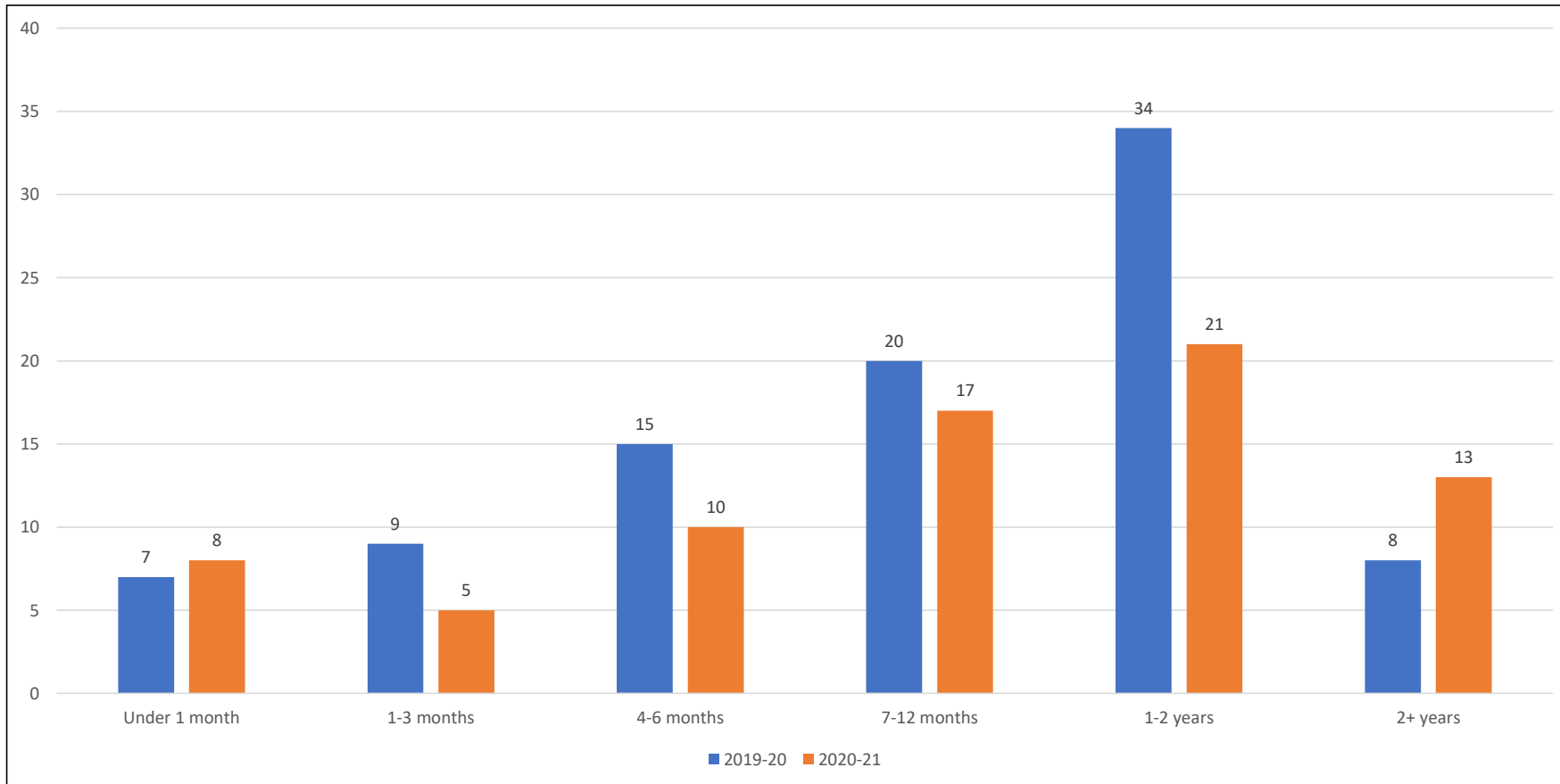
Gender split of our CLA under the age of 8 years



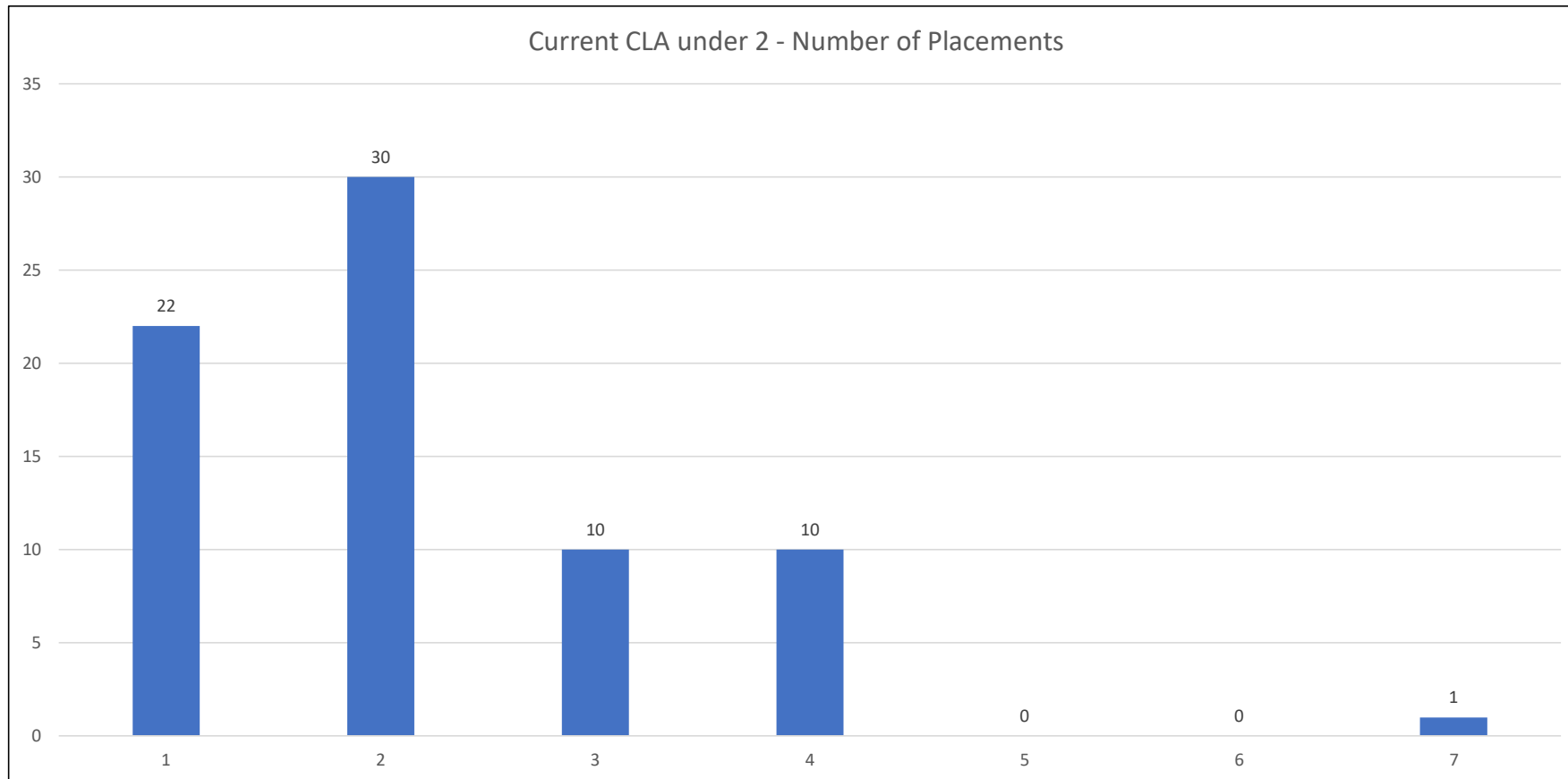
Reason for leaving our care



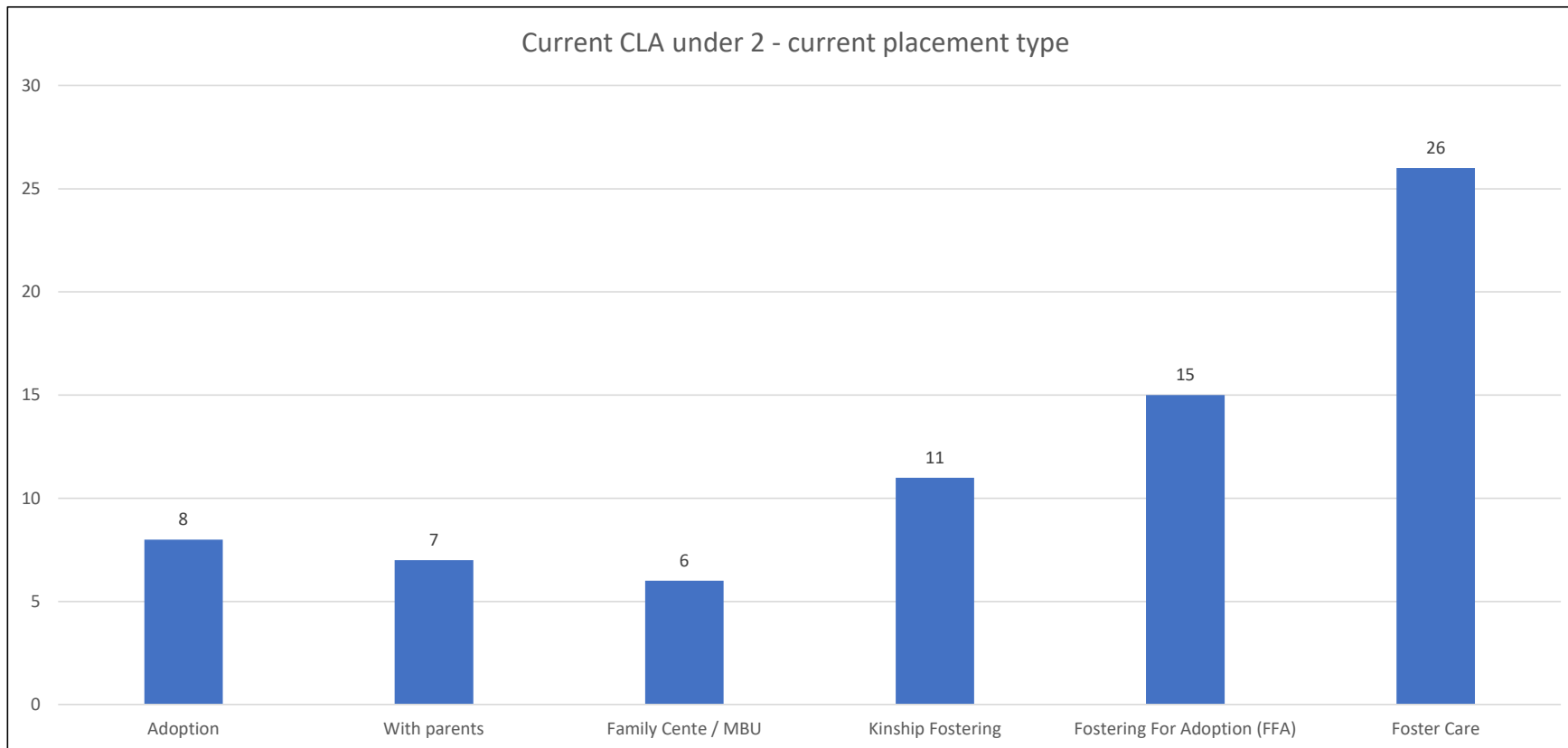
Time spent in our care



Number of placements (moves)



Number of placements (moves)



What we want to better understand

- For those that return home –
 - What the changes were that enabled this to happen and in what timeframe
 - What we can learn from this as a multi-agency partnership to further improve prevention services
- What the blocks are around Special Guardianship Orders
- Time spent in our care – is this linked with the work being undertaken or delays, e.g. courts?
- Placement moves – for under 2's, almost 70% had at least 1 move
- Placement moves for those in fostering – the commentary behind this.



What young children say about being looked after in Somerset

- What we know about participation
- What we know from the Independent Reviewing Service



Questions?

Further areas you would like us to consider?



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