

By 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017 all children looked after and accommodated before 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017, will have a LAC review that makes a permanence decision.

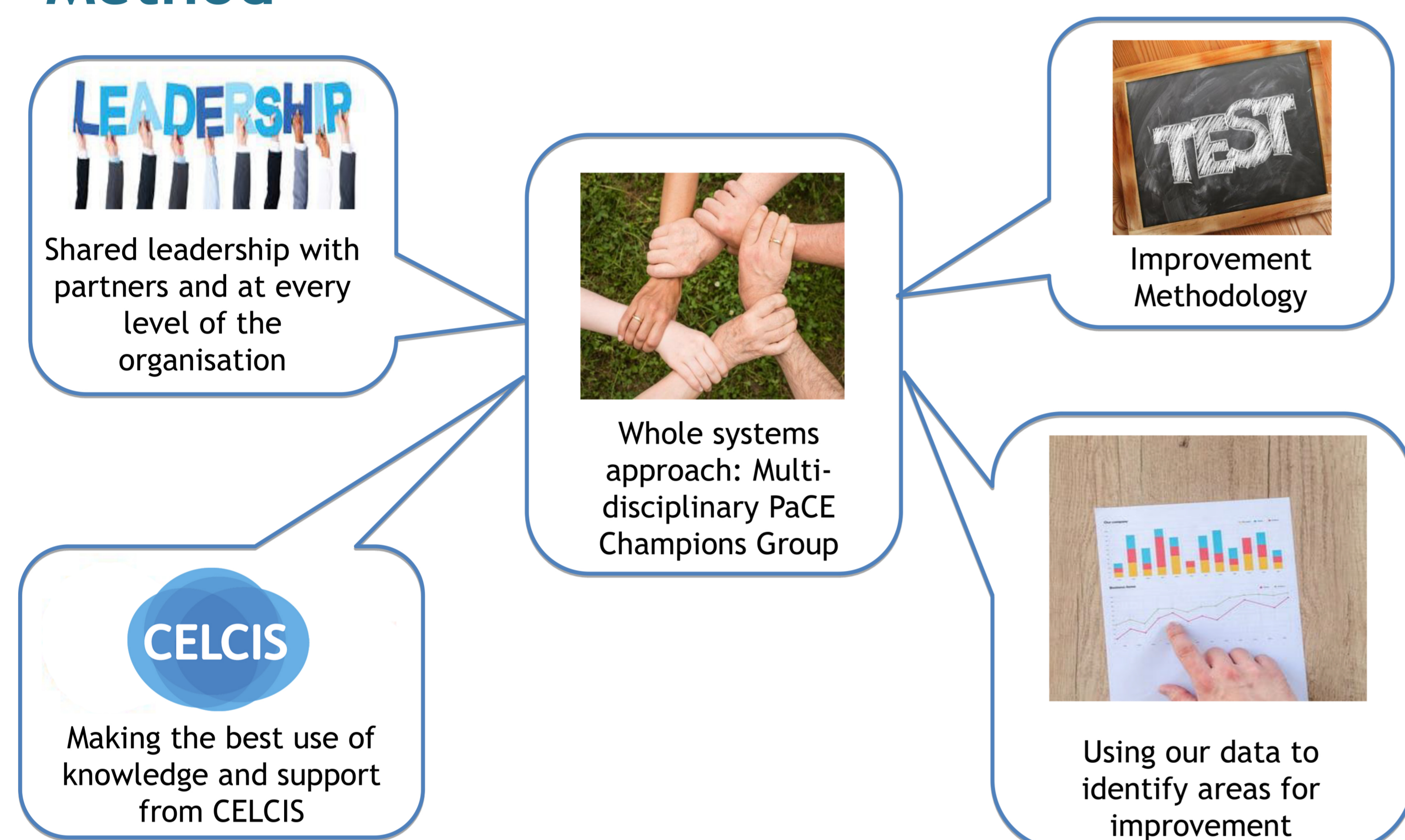
From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017, any child accommodated will wait no longer than 6 months for a LAC review to make a permanence decision.



East Renfrewshire's Community Plan, Integrated Children's Services Plan and Corporate Parenting Plan made a commitment that children will experience a stable and secure start to their lives; and, are valued, nurtured, inspired and empowered to reach their full potential. One theme of the Corporate Parenting Plan is permanence which is represented by a number of partners who already have positive working relationships and all of whom contribute to improving the permanence work. The PaCE programme is a core part of this theme. We have incorporated the four permanence options (to remain with / return home to birth parents; to remain in / be placed in kinship care; legal security and permanence through a Permanence Order; or, adoption) in our policies and procedures.

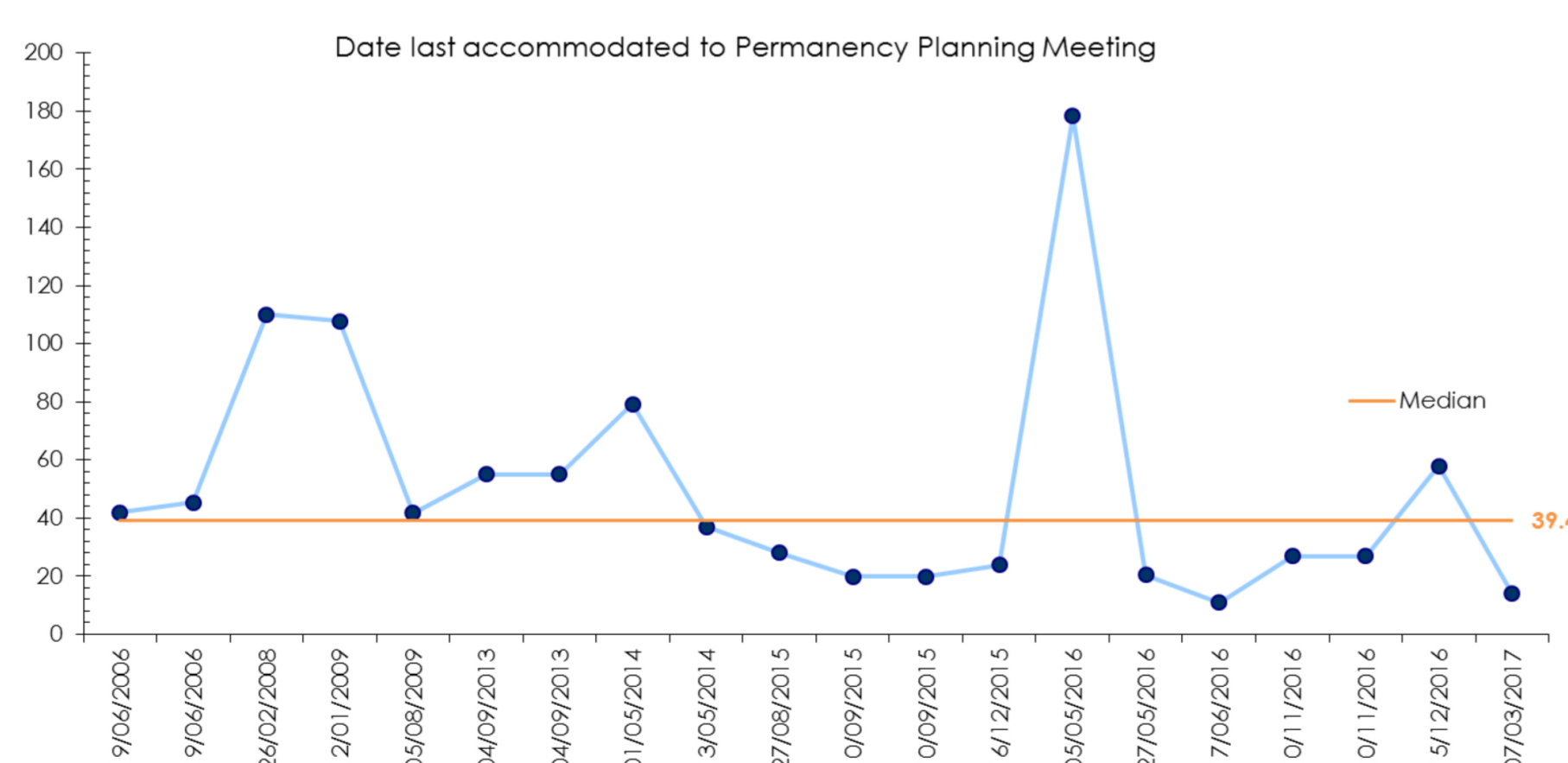
Our Children's Services underwent a redesign in 2015 which allowed resources to be focussed on providing the right help at the right time to children, young people, their families and carers in line with the principles of GIRFEC. This means that service provision can focus on supporting families to allow their children to remain at home, if it is safe to do so. Where this is not possible, there is a clear focus on exploring all options of kinship care. For a small number of children Permanence Orders may be the most suitable route and for this we have a process in place to obtain legal advice to ensure that we will meet the tests for this. If all these options have been exhausted we would look to secure a child's permanence and legal future through adoption. We have established a number of processes and policies that support care planning and allow for parallel planning without waiting for any of the preceding options to be ruled in or out.

## Method



## Process Change

Using the chart to the right, we were able to identify that if rehabilitation to birth parents was ruled out, it was taking nearly 40 weeks on average to then agree a legal route to secure permanence. This meant that we were out with the statutory timescales and that there was unnecessary drift occurring for children who were not returning home.



### Test Ideas

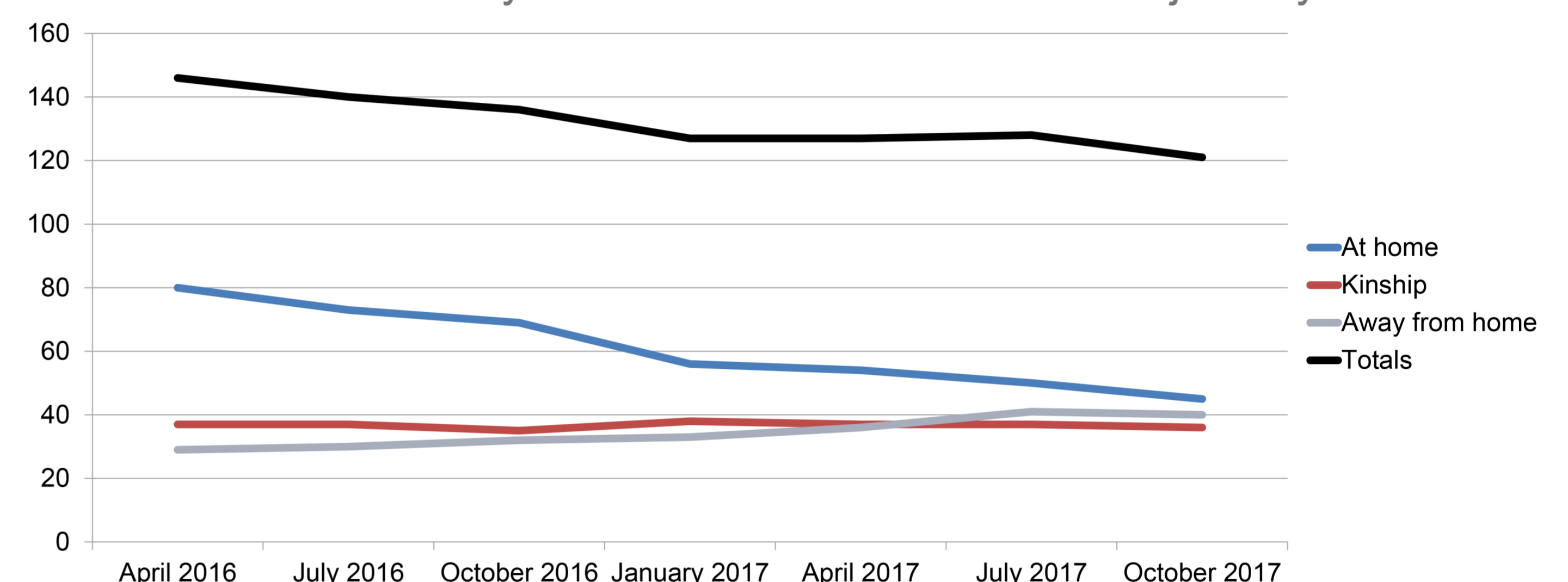
1. Do multi-agency chronologies support permanence decision making?
2. Does Permanence Order with Authority to Adopt secure permanence quicker than direct petition (where no prospective adopters are identified)?
3. Can thorough and robust parenting capacity to change assessments inform better permanence decision making?

## Achievements

- Continued membership from whole system on PaCE Champions Group
- Shared leadership and commitment across the organisation and with partners = positive working relationships
- Our looked after at home population has reduced by 43% since April 2016
- Better understanding our data collation and analysis
- Rota for Independent Chairs and six monthly workshops
- New LAAC Review Agenda – to incorporate explicit consideration of at least one of the permanence options
- Permanence Planning Procedures
- Number of single (social work) and multi-agency (social work, health, education and Children's Panel members) training focusing specifically on outcomes and permanence planning
- Leaflet explaining permanence to parents
- New Kinship Care Guidance and Procedures

## Results

Since the PaCE programme has started in East Renfrewshire we have seen a steady decline in our overall looked after population. This is as a result of establishing new procedures, shared vision across the service as well as continued positive relationships with partners and staff 'buy in' as well as the introduction of systems to monitor children's care journeys.



	April 2016	July 2016	October 2016	January 2017	April 2017	July 2017	October 2017
At home	80	73	69	56	54	50	45
Kinship	37	37	35	38	37	37	36
Away from home	29	30	32	33	36	41	40
Totals	146	140	136	127	127	128	121

## Conclusions

- Data is key to understanding trends
- The whole system needs to work together and understand each other's roles
- Shared leadership is important
- Raising the profile of permanence planning has an effect on general culture, but processes and procedures are needed to embed this in practice

## Key Learning Points

- "Explicit consideration of all the permanence options, choosing the best and most suitable for each individual child." – *Team Manager, Community Social Work Team*
- "The importance of the procedures...to improve communication and co-ordination... between services." – *Legal Services*
- "Through discussion able to understand others roles and responsibilities better." – *Team Manager, Fostering and Adoption Team*
- "Better understanding of the process that leads to reports arriving at Children's Hearings." – *Area Convener, Area Support Team*
- "Having an understanding of each agency's role, systems and processes...facilitates effective partnership working to support planning for children and families." – *Education Development Officer*
- "Understanding the importance of data: how we input it, collate it and analyse it." – *PaCE Lead*

## Next steps

- Continue to improve data capturing and collation which will help identify where to focus our next areas for improvement
- Review our PaCE aim
- Scale up tests of change
- Continue to meet regularly as a 'whole systems group' to consolidate progress and learning