



Infants born into care of local authorities in Scotland: working together with the data

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The policy and legal contexts in Scotland

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Policy context in Scotland

- Getting it right for every child (*girfec*) - multi-agency co-operation, prevention and early support for children and families to improve children's wellbeing
- Child protection embedded within *girfec* - holistic assessment of child's needs not just safety needs in formation of child's plan
- National Child Protection Guidance 2014 – multi-agency case conferences and local authority registers
- Getting it right for looked after children and young people - to improve the lives of looked after children and young people.
- Report of the Independent Review of the Care system #KeepThe Promise

Legal context in Scotland – looked after children

- ***Compulsory supervision orders (CSO)*** through the Children's Hearings Tribunals System
 - Child can be under supervision at home or placed away from home in foster care, kinship care, residential care, school, secure care.
 - Interim CSO – risk to child or risk from child
- ***Voluntary arrangements*** – child can be accommodated by the local authority with the agreement of parents/person with parental responsibility (*section 25, Children (Scotland) Act 1995*) (*similar to section 20 Children Act 1989*)
- ***Permanence orders*** – application to the Court
 - Intended for long-term placements and may have 'authority to adopt' attached

All children subject to these orders are classified as looked after children

Child Protection Order (CPO) emergency child protection

time limited to 8 days after implementation

Child to be treated as looked after child – so counted in the statistics

Background to data on looked after children

Cecilia Macintyre

ADR Scotland's Data Acquisition Team in Scottish
Government



History of the Looked After Children (LAC) data collection

- Data supplied annually by local authorities
- Aggregate-level collection before 2008/09
- Scope and complexity increased in digital age
- Led to individual-level collection commencing in 2008/09

Content of the collection

- Child's identifying information – DoB, gender, Child ID are the basics
 - Other equalities information if known
 - Scottish Candidate Number if available
 - Details of care episodes and placements
 - Details of legal reasons applying to episodes of care
 - Reviewed annually
-
- Annual publications produced and requests for further analysis

Data developments

Benefit of a longitudinal dataset

- Better meet user need by describing care experience e.g.
 - Of those in care combining multiple episodes
 - Of birth cohorts of young people
 - Depending on initial placement
- Improve data quality
- Enable revisions of time series
- Increase the amount of secondary analyses possible

An example of madeup clean data

Year of data collection	Episode start	Placement start	Placement end	Type of placement
2010/11	24APR2011	24APR2011	.	3
2011/12	24APR2011	24APR2011	.	3
2012/13	24APR2011	24APR2011	28FEB2013	3
2012/13	24APR2011	28FEB2013	.	3
2013/14	24APR2011	24APR2011	28FEB2013	3
2013/14	24APR2011	28FEB2013	27JUL2014	3

Longitudinal file contains
one episode with two
placements

Examples of data issues

- Changes in child characteristics between extracts
- Changes in placement dates
- Last episode marked as open, but not in current extract
- Initial placement removed

ADR Scotland products

Longitudinal dataset 2019:

- Child: 59,507 records
 - Episodes: 69,040 records
 - Placements: 143,534 records
 - Legal reasons: 180,427 records
-
- Data includes flags to identify issues and guidance provided on how to use
 - A guide for users of data

Next steps

- Work with local authorities to scope out resources required to address data quality issues
- Build in feedback from users to improve data in future
- Address linkage issues in collaboration with data controller (currently Social work ID or Scottish candidate number)

Infants born into care in Scotland: Initial findings

Gillian M Raab

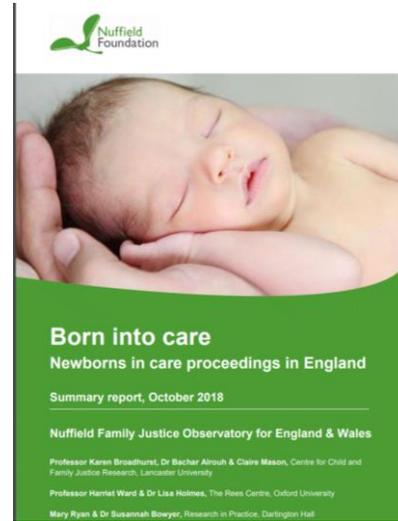
School of Geosciences, University of Edinburgh



Working together



Welsh report
October 2019



English report
October 2018

Scottish?

Scottish report using LAC-S data



Welsh report
October 2019



English report
October 2018



Scottish report
November 2020

<https://www.scadr.ac.uk/news-and-events/new-report-infants-born-care-scotland>

Publication with LAC-E data



Welsh report

October 2019

Cafcass data



English report

October 2018

Cafcass data



Scottish report

November 2020

LAC-S data

Born into care: Evidence of a failed state

[BBC Radio 5 live coverage](#) starts 11 minutes in to program

My [new research](#) (link works until 1st August 2020) with Paul Bywaters shows that the number of children entering care within a week of birth almost doubled between 2007/8 and 2017/18. Less than 10% returned to parents so care was not being used to provide support to a struggling mother.

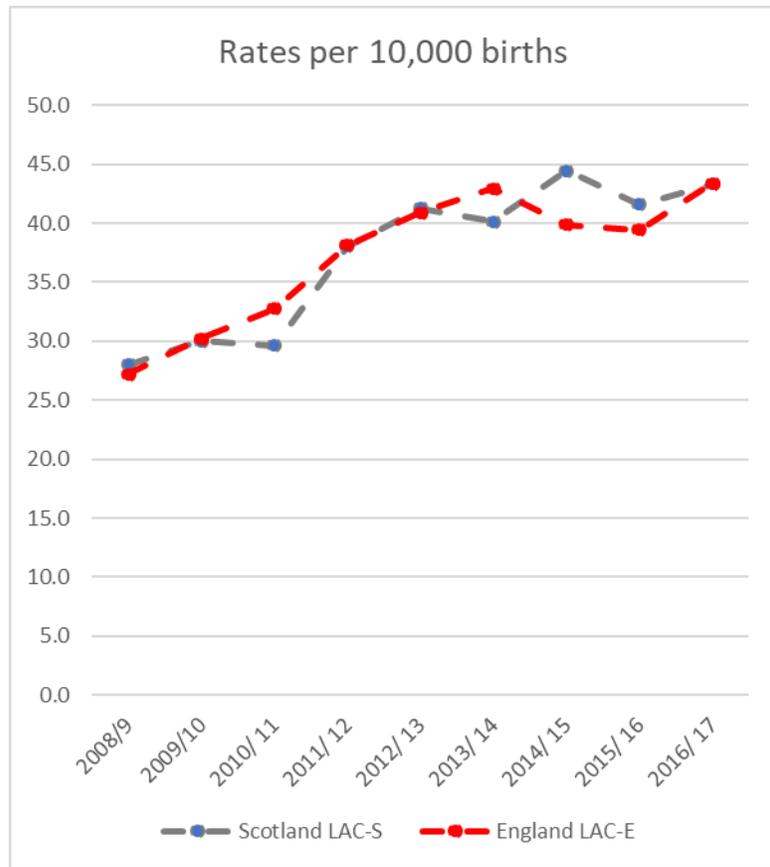


Further English report

August 2020

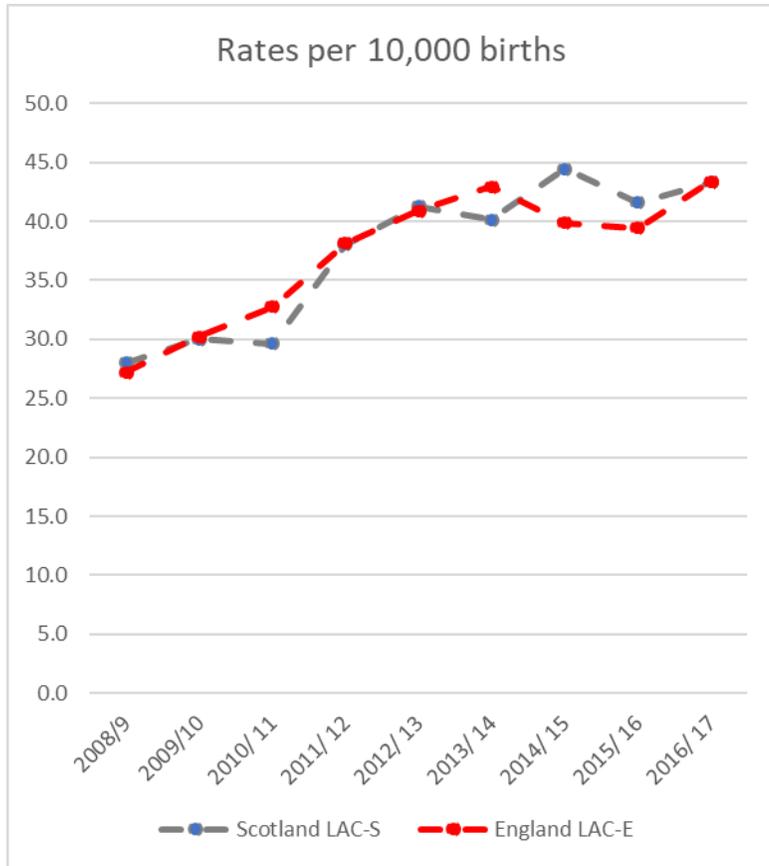
LAC-E data

Rates of becoming looked after under 1 week

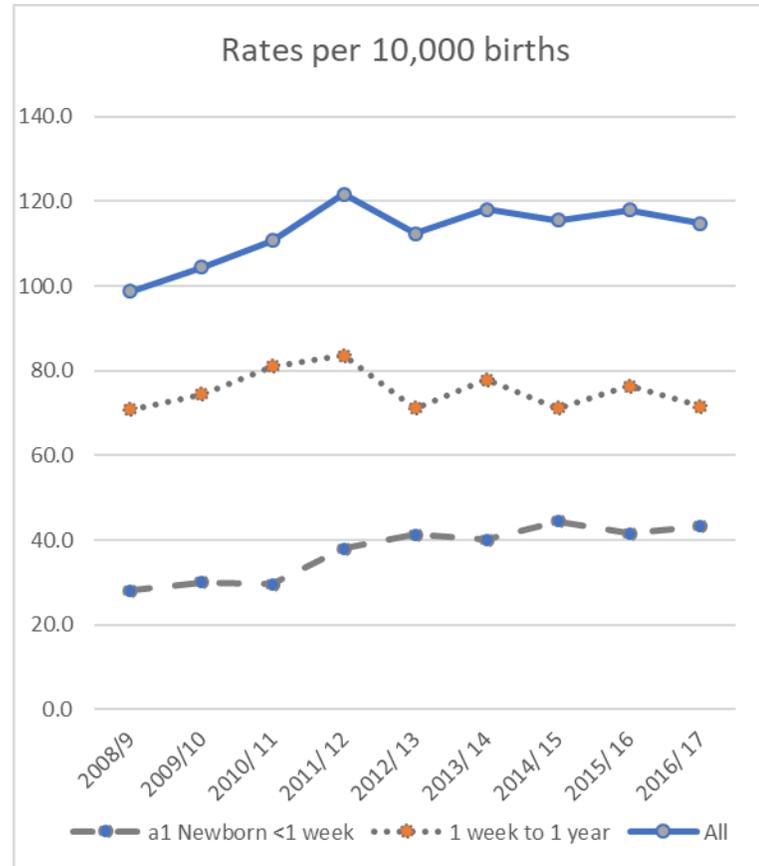


Rates of becoming looked after

Under 1 week



Under 1 year Scotland



Under 1 year England

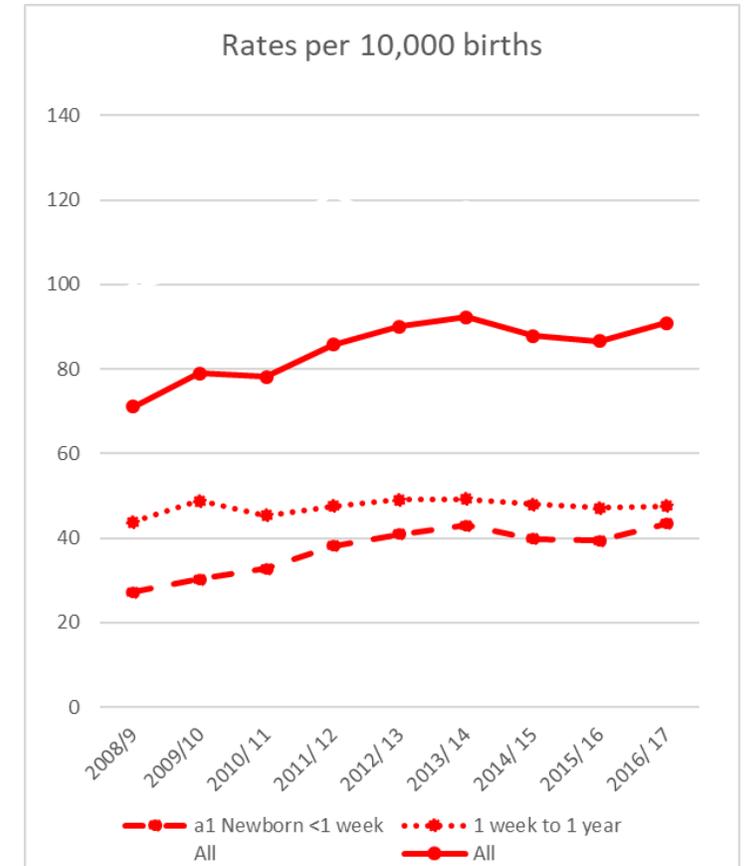
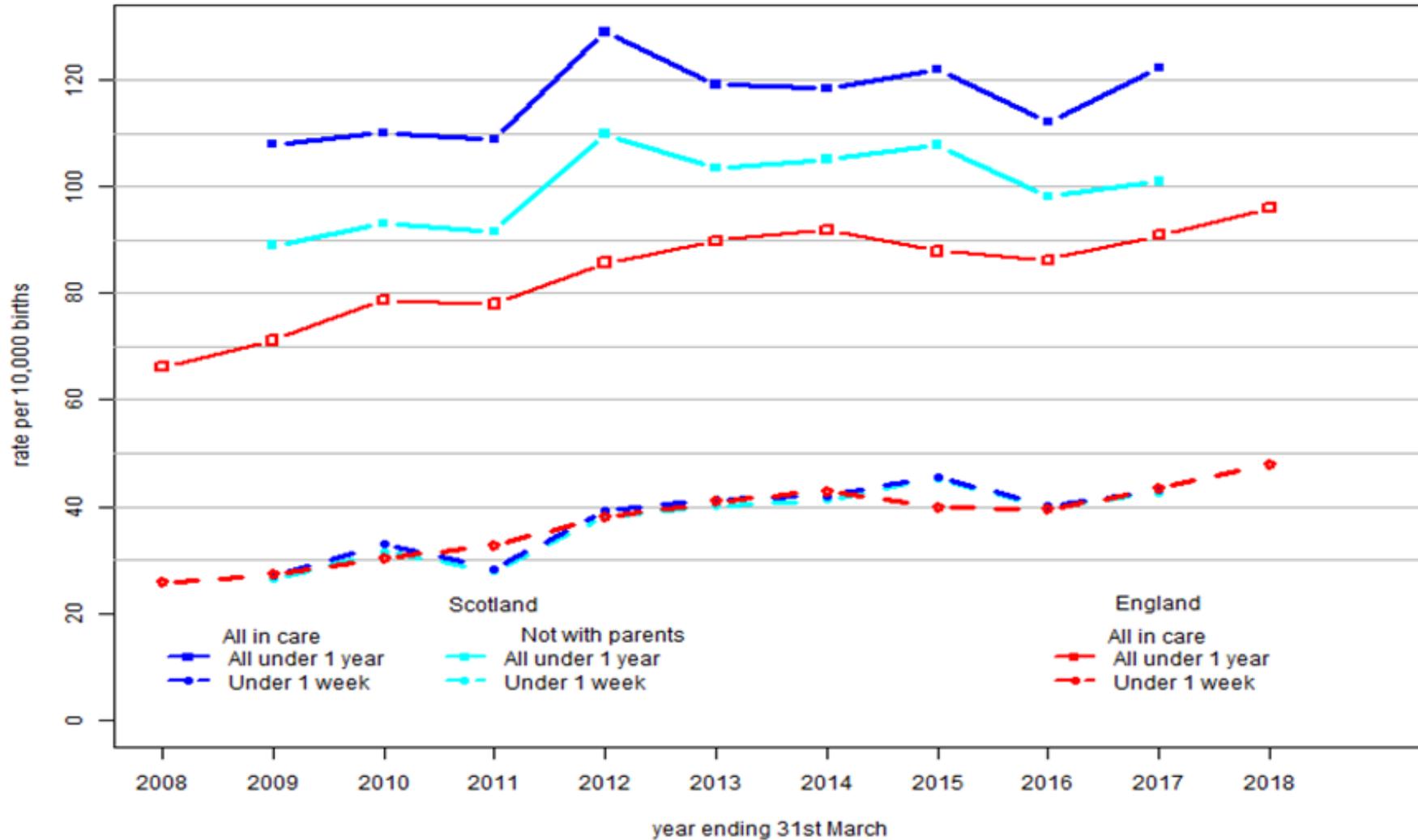


Figure 1 from report



Placements at start of care and at age 5

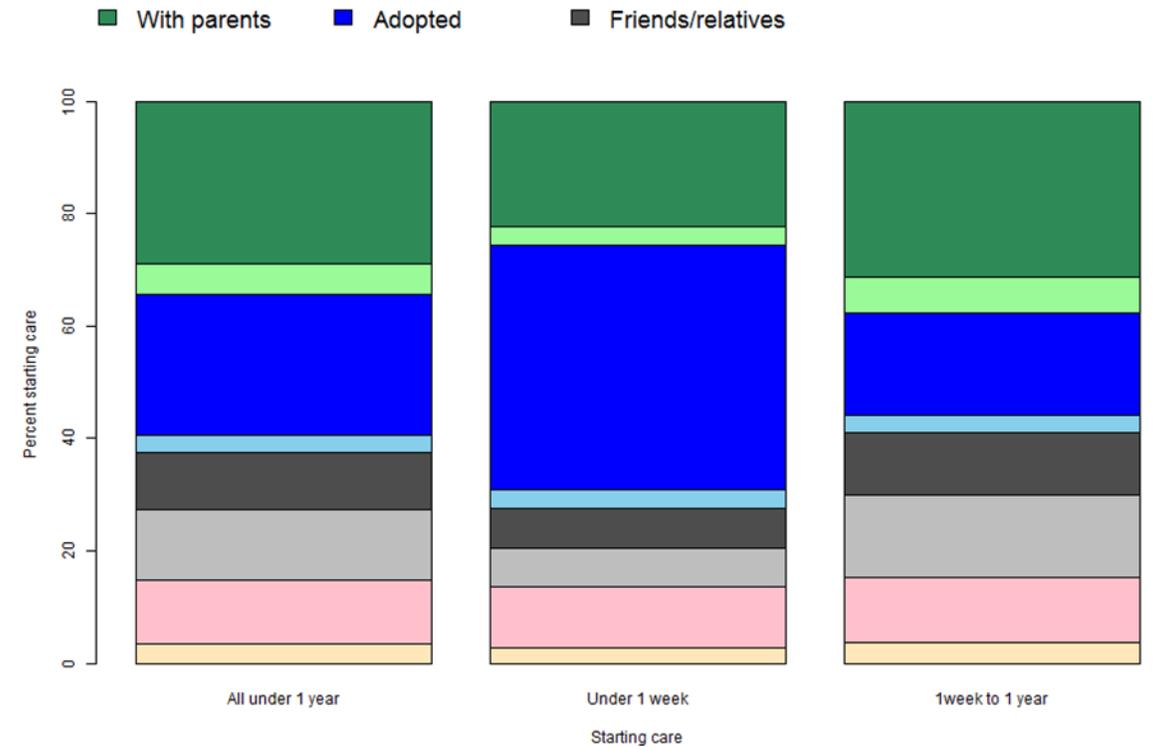
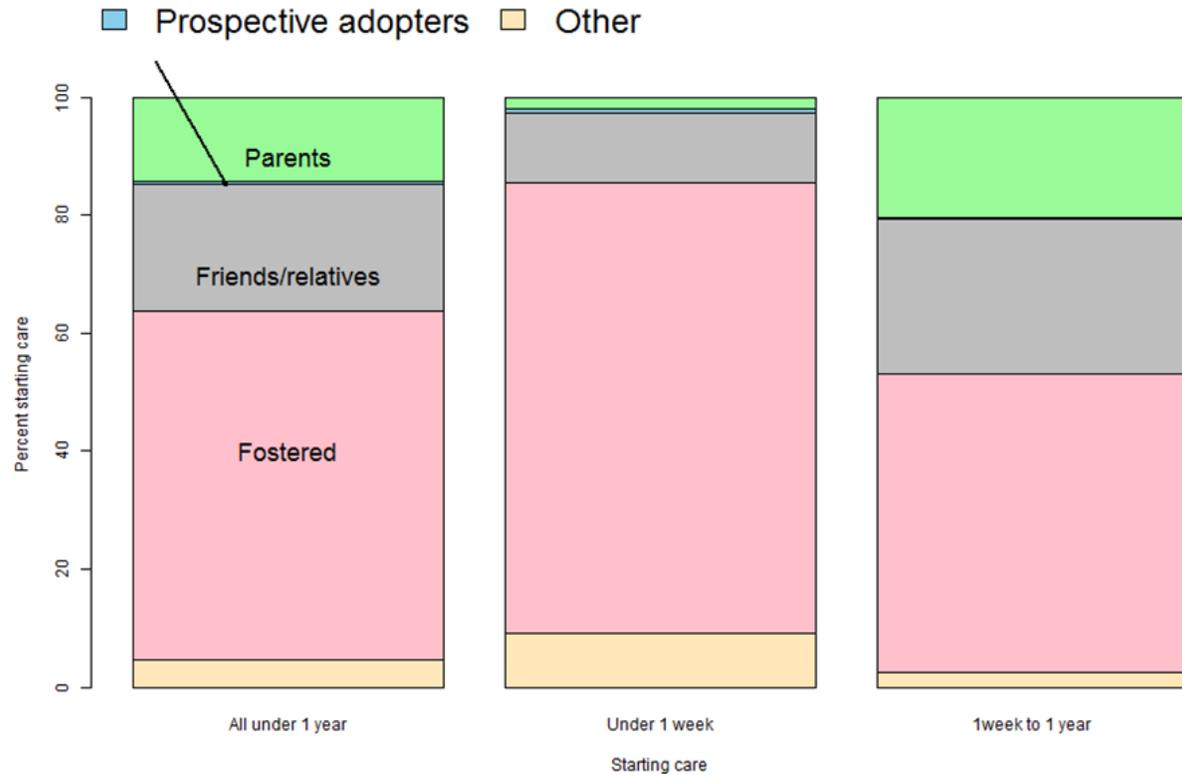


Figure 6 from report

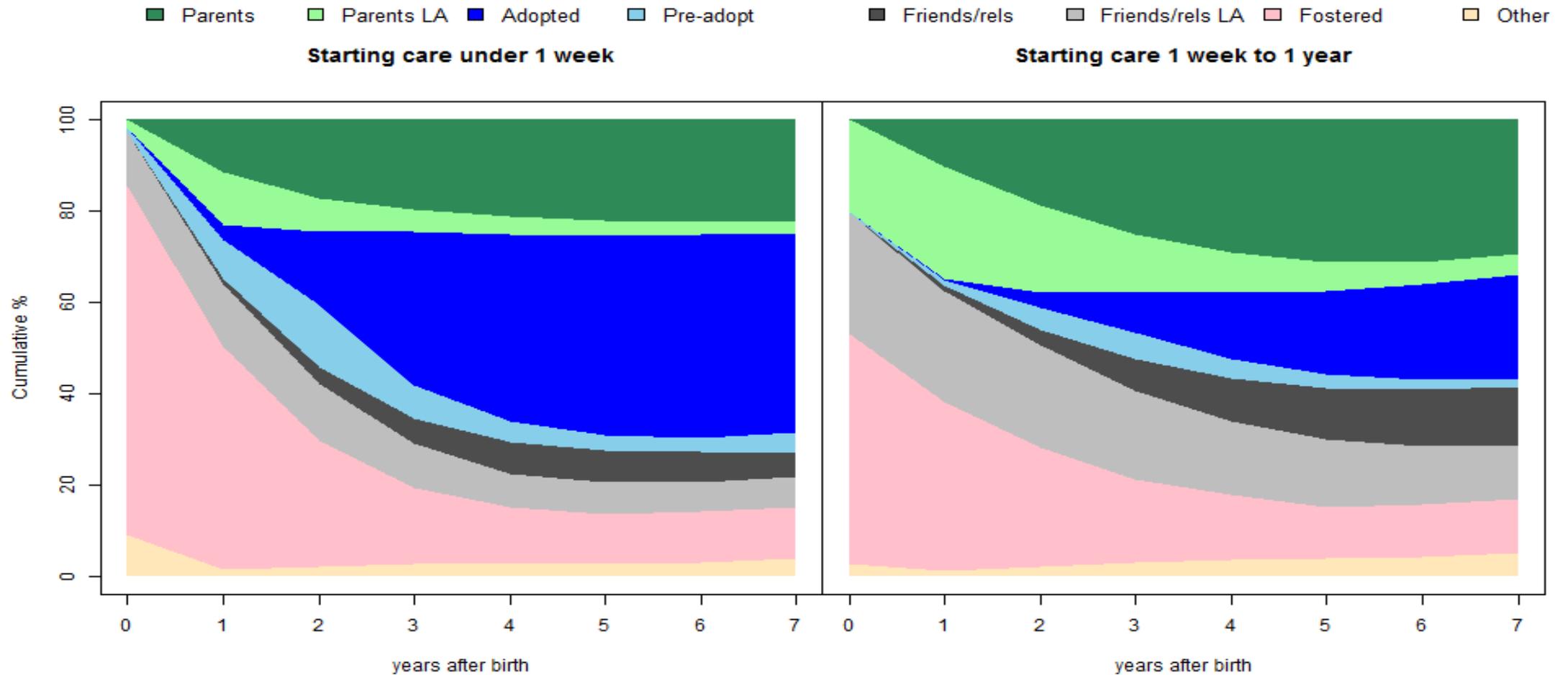


Figure 6: Percentage of children by location at start of care and on their birthdays from ages 1 to 7,

Legal reasons in first two years of care

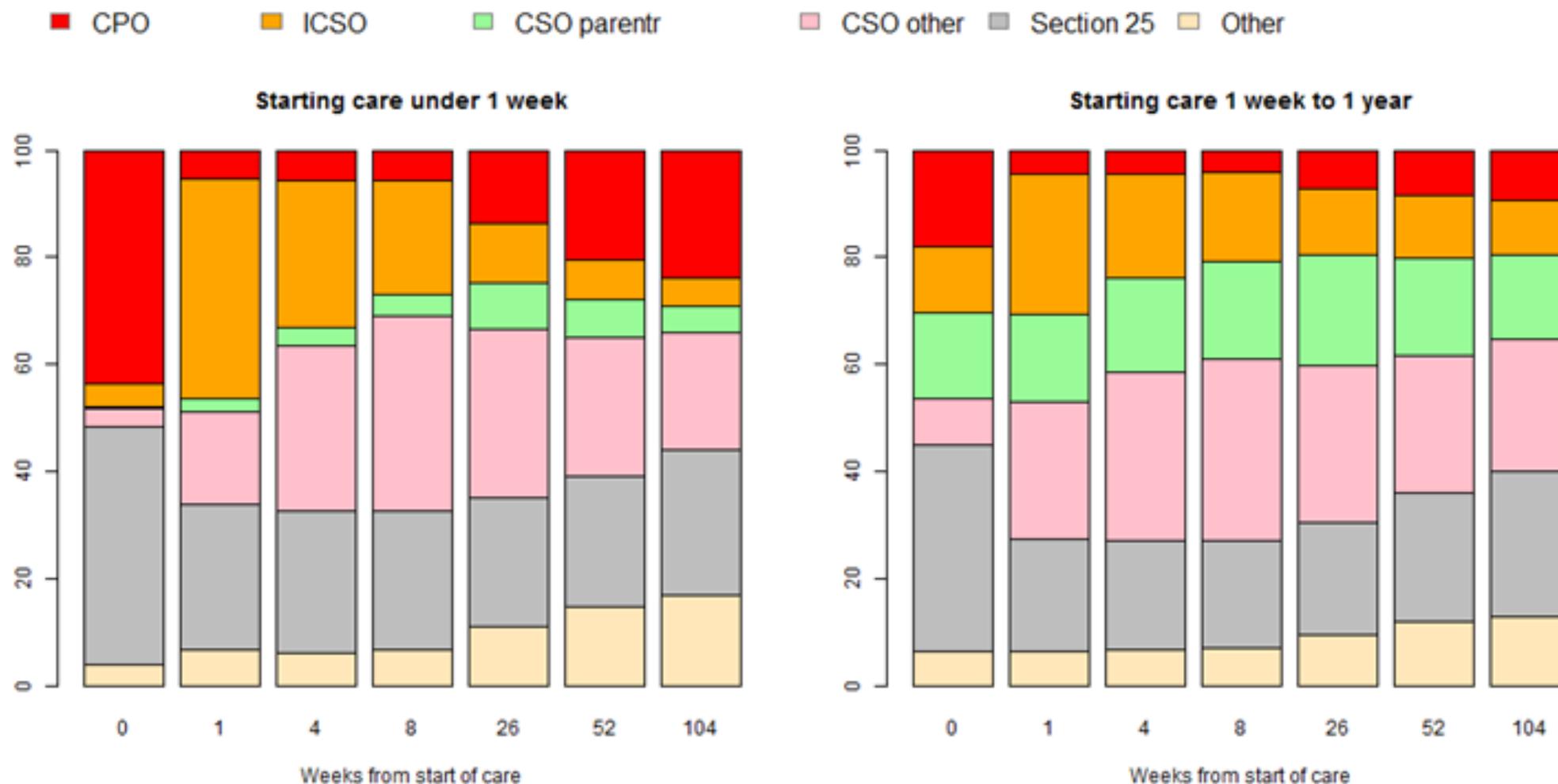
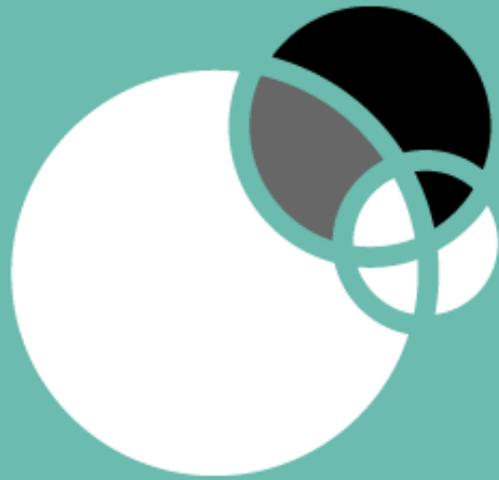


Figure 7 Percentage of first legal reasons by weeks from start of care

A few extracts from summary

- Rates of entering care in Scotland under 1 week have increased between 2008 and 2017 – similar to England
- One in 85 children born in Scotland became looked after before their first birthday (2008-2017). Higher rate than in England.
- Some, but not all, of this higher rate is due to children in Scotland in care with their parents.
- Episodes of care are shorter for those returning home to their parents but longer and more complex for those being adopted.
- Young children and their parents often have many complex interactions with children's hearings



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