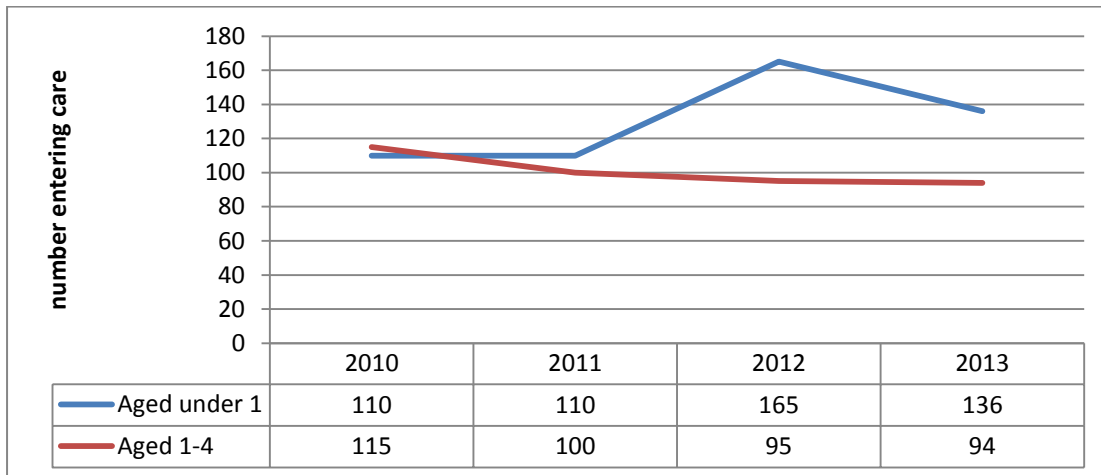


## 0-5s entering care OBA event: data summary

The number of children entering care: the curve to turn

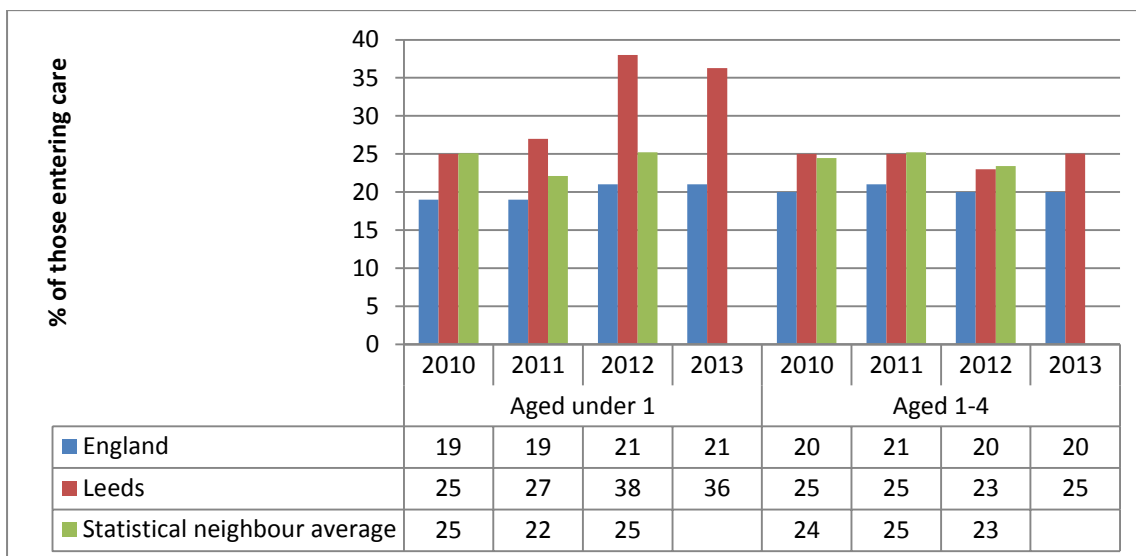


Source: 2010 – 2012 DfE statistical first releases, 2013 local data

The number of children aged under 1 taken into care in Leeds increased significantly in the 2011/12 financial year. Although the number has fallen back in 2013, the number is still high. The proportion of those entering care that are under 1 is significantly higher than national (over a third of those entering care are aged under 1 in Leeds, compared to a quarter nationally). The proportion of children entering care that are aged 1-4 is also higher in Leeds than nationally.

Under 5s make up a greater proportion of the care cohort in Leeds than nationally and in statistical neighbour authorities. At the end of March 2013, 31% of children looked after in Leeds were aged under 5, compared to 24% nationally. The proportion of the care cohort that are under 5 has increased from 25% in 2010. This increase has coincided with the increase in the number of under 5s entering care.

The percentage of children entering care: comparative data



Source: 2010 – 2012 DfE statistical first releases, 2013 local data for Leeds

## **Demographic change**

The increase in numbers of under 5s taken into care in recent years is in the context of a rising population in this age group. The birth rate in Leeds has risen significantly in recent years, with the number of births increasing by 38% from 7562 in 2001 to 10350 in 2012. This will impact on the number of under 5s coming into care, particularly as the areas with the highest increase in births tend to be where demand for social care services is higher.

However, the birth rate began to rise before the rise in under 5s entering care, therefore the increase in birth rate, whilst contributing to this issue is not the only causal factor.

## **Local research**

In 2012 and 2013, local research was undertaken to investigate the parental factors and circumstances leading to under 1s coming into care. The 2013 study looked at a sample of 38 cases of children who came into care between January and March 2013. This research highlighted a number of issues for parents of these children:

- Alcohol and substance misuse
- Domestic violence
- Parental mental health
- Parental learning difficulties
- Previous experience of care
- A high proportion of mothers had previously had children removed.

## **Referrals**

- There were 2,154 new referrals for unborn children or those aged under 1 in 2011/12 and 3,581 for children aged one to four. The number of referrals for under 1s decreased by 28% to 1,556 in 2012/13 and by 18% to 2,946 for one to fours.
- In 2011/12 47% of referrals for under 1s and 38% for 1-4s were from the police, these proportions fell in 2012/13.
- The proportion of referrals for 0-4s was 12% coming from hospitals and other health; and 9% from primary and community health in 2012/13/.
- Over a third of referrals for the 0-4 age group were for domestic violence, with the proportion higher for under 1s than for 1-4s. The other referral reasons making up the majority of other referrals were; parenting support, suspected neglect and suspected physical abuse.
- In 2011/12 66% (62% in 2012/13) of referrals for 0-4s went on to initial assessments. This is in-line with the conversion of referrals to initial assessments for all age groups.

## **Geographical variation**

The map overleaf shows that there are areas of the city where there are clusters of young children taken into care:

- Harehills
- Richmond Hill

- Beeston
- Holbeck
- Burley



