

Born into Care



Mewn gofal o'u geni

Temple of Peace, Cardiff
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#BornIntoCare

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The Nuffield FJO Data Partnership team

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The Nuffield FJO Data Partnership team



Introduction

- First picture of newborn babies and infants in care proceedings in Wales using **full service population data**
- Builds on work undertaken in England
- Speaks to current concerns & recommendations outlined in the **Public Law Working Group** (England and Wales)
- Some differences in **available data** and therefore, our methodology (England and Wales)
- First in a series of reports – which will use **linked data** in SAIL

- Policy emphasis on effective early intervention
- Little evidence of how care proceedings are conducted at, or soon after, birth
 - Illuminate shortfalls
 - Identify best practice
- Need for an understanding of trends over time and area variations
- Considerable practice innovation regarding ‘recurrent mothers’ (Reflect in Wales)

Background and legal framework

- Children Act 1989
- UNCRC
- Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014
- All Wales Child Protection Procedures and local area guidelines

- Council of Europe “Borzova Report” 2015
- Timescales for the Child

Objectives

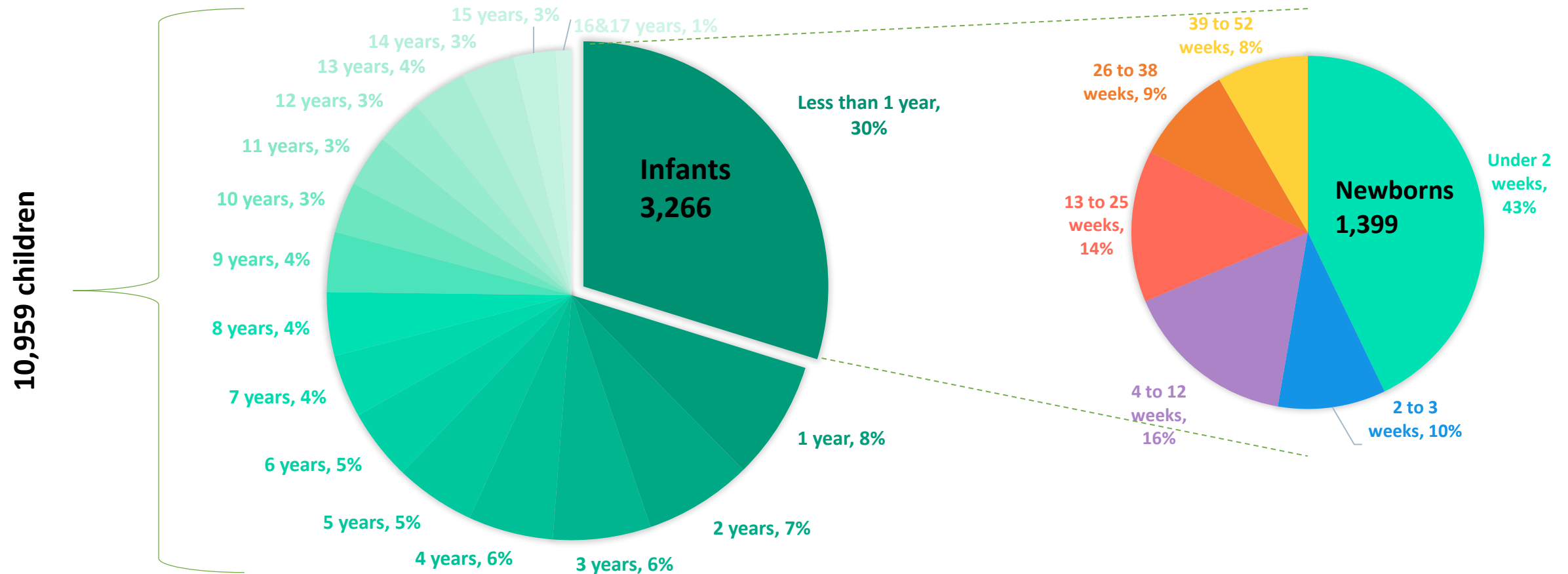
Focus specifically on cases of newborns subject to s.31 care proceedings to:

- quantify the volume and proportion of newborn cases and incidence rates over time
- describe variation in incidence rates between Designated Family Judge (DFJ) areas and local authorities over time
- identify the number of newborn cases in which an older sibling had previously been subject to care proceedings (“subsequent infants”)
- quantify the proportions of newborns appearing in urgent/short-notice applications
- quantify the duration of care proceedings over time
- describe the pattern of legal orders made and trends over time
- provide a first view of the relationship between rates of care proceedings for newborns and levels of local authority deprivation

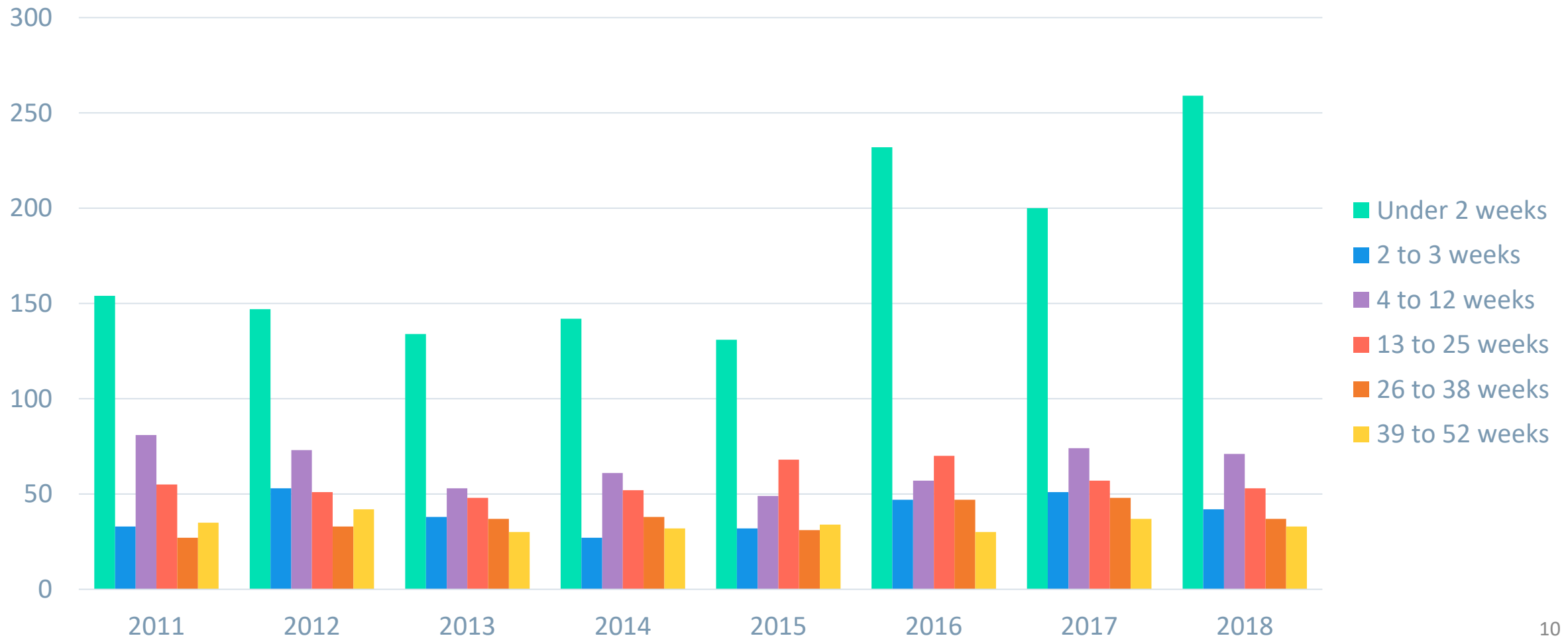
Methodology

- Cafcass Cymru data within SAIL databank
- 2011 to 2018
- Definitions
 - Newborns – under 2 weeks
 - Babies – under 4 weeks
 - Infants – under 12 months
 - Subsequent infants
- Limitations
 - Administrative data
 - Does not include s.76 ‘voluntary accommodation’
 - Legal order data

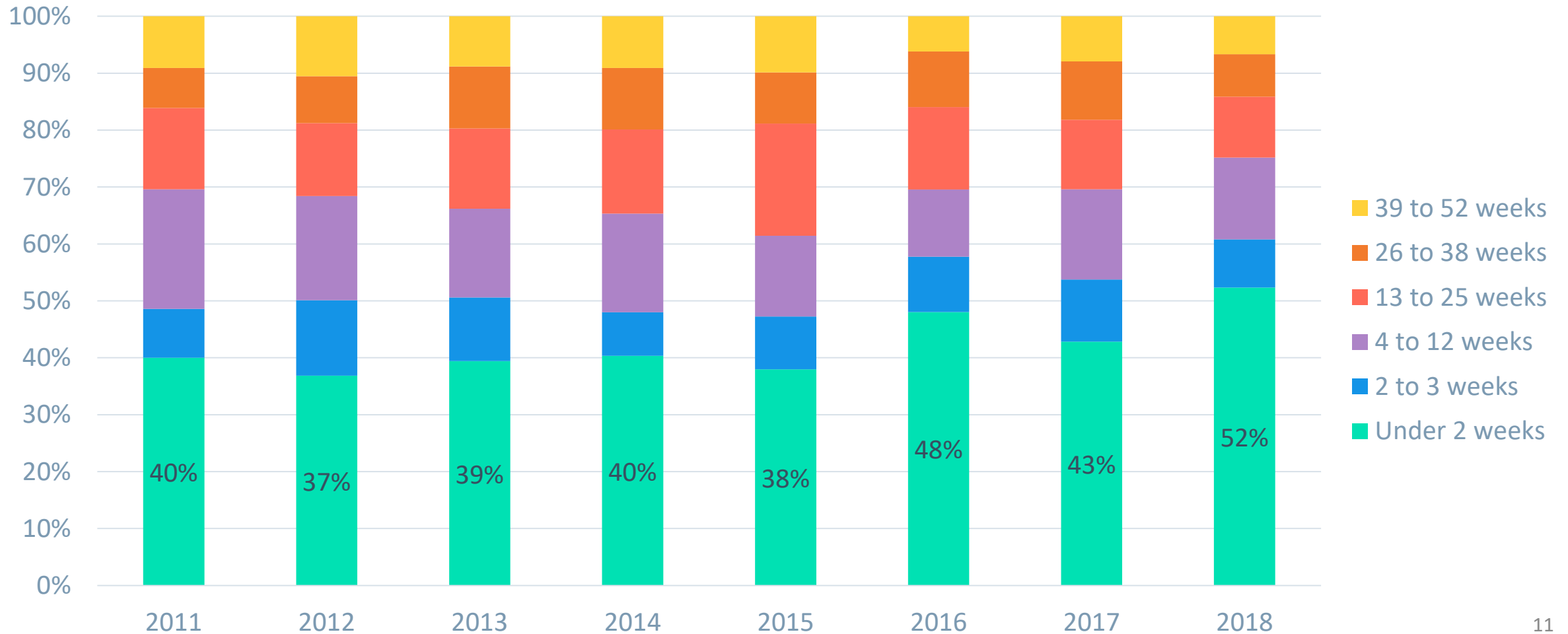
Age of children in care proceedings in Wales [2011 to 2018]



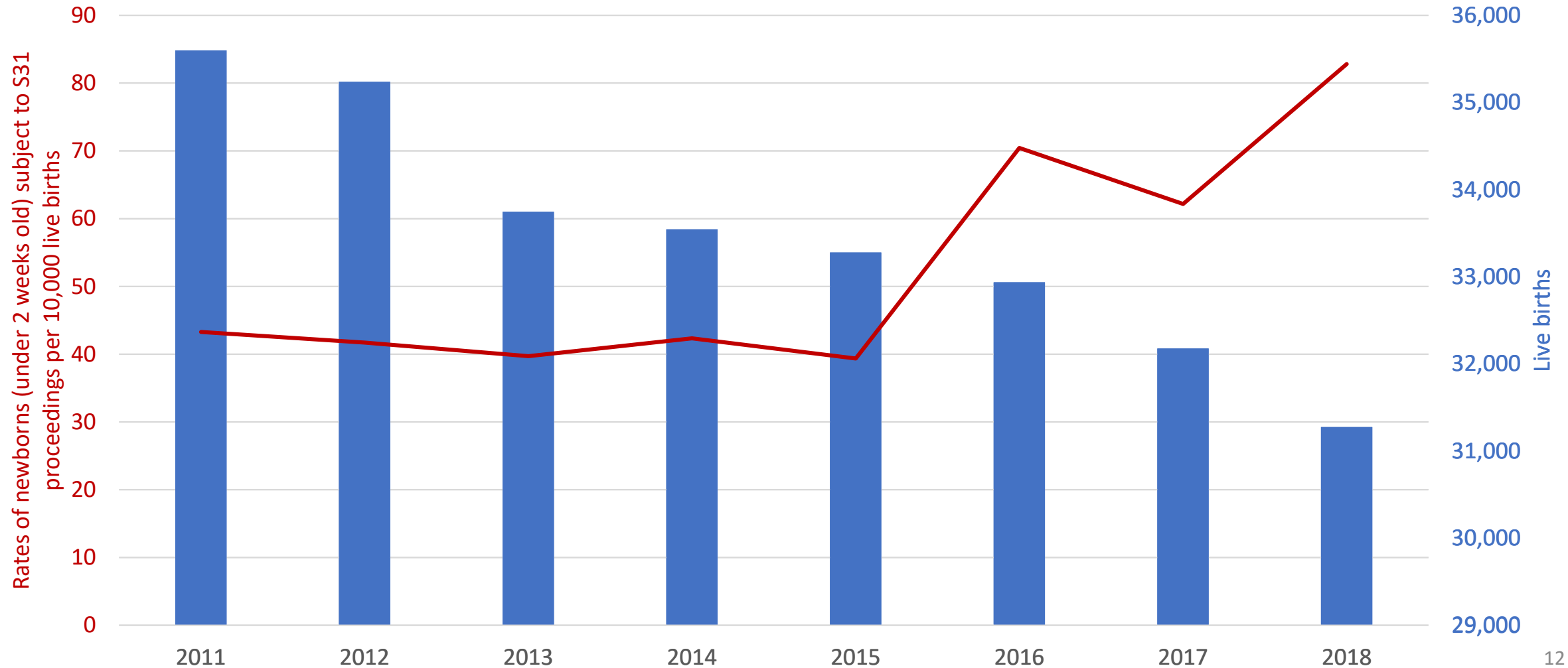
Number of newborns/infants in care proceedings in Wales



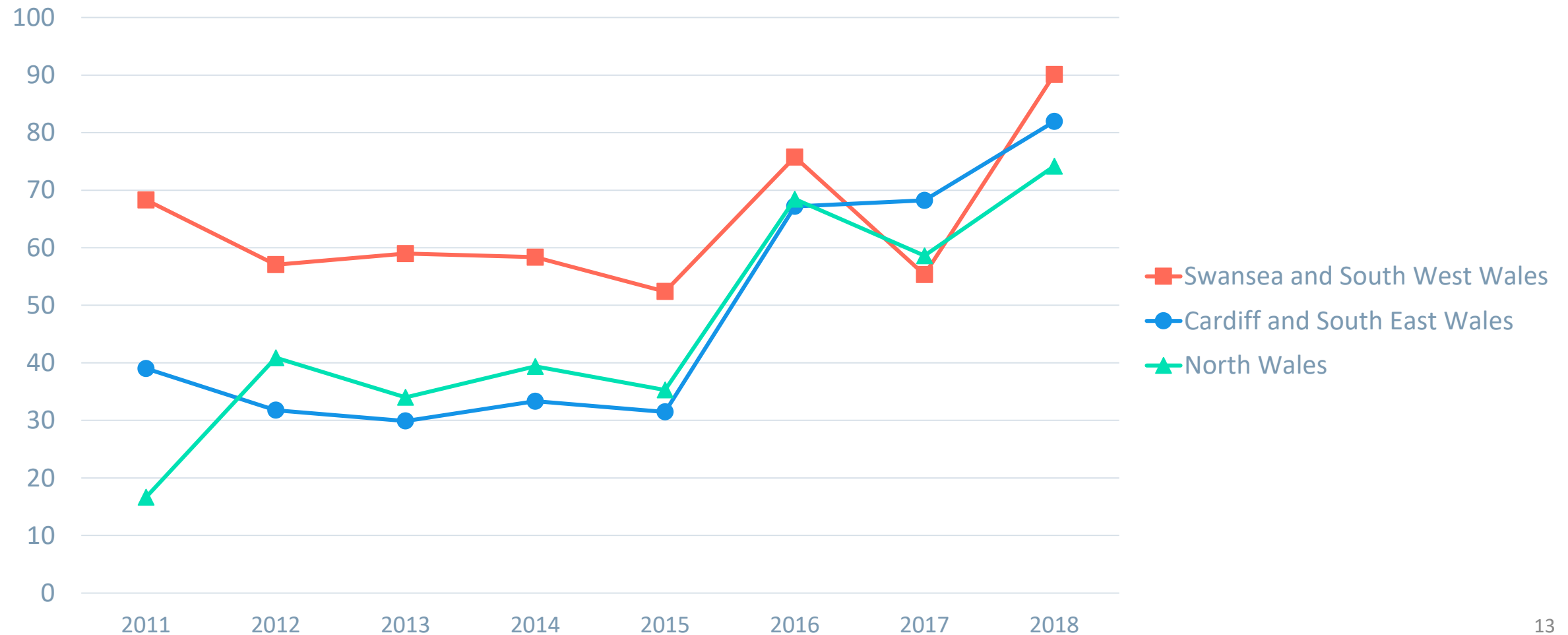
Proportion of newborns/infants in care proceedings in Wales



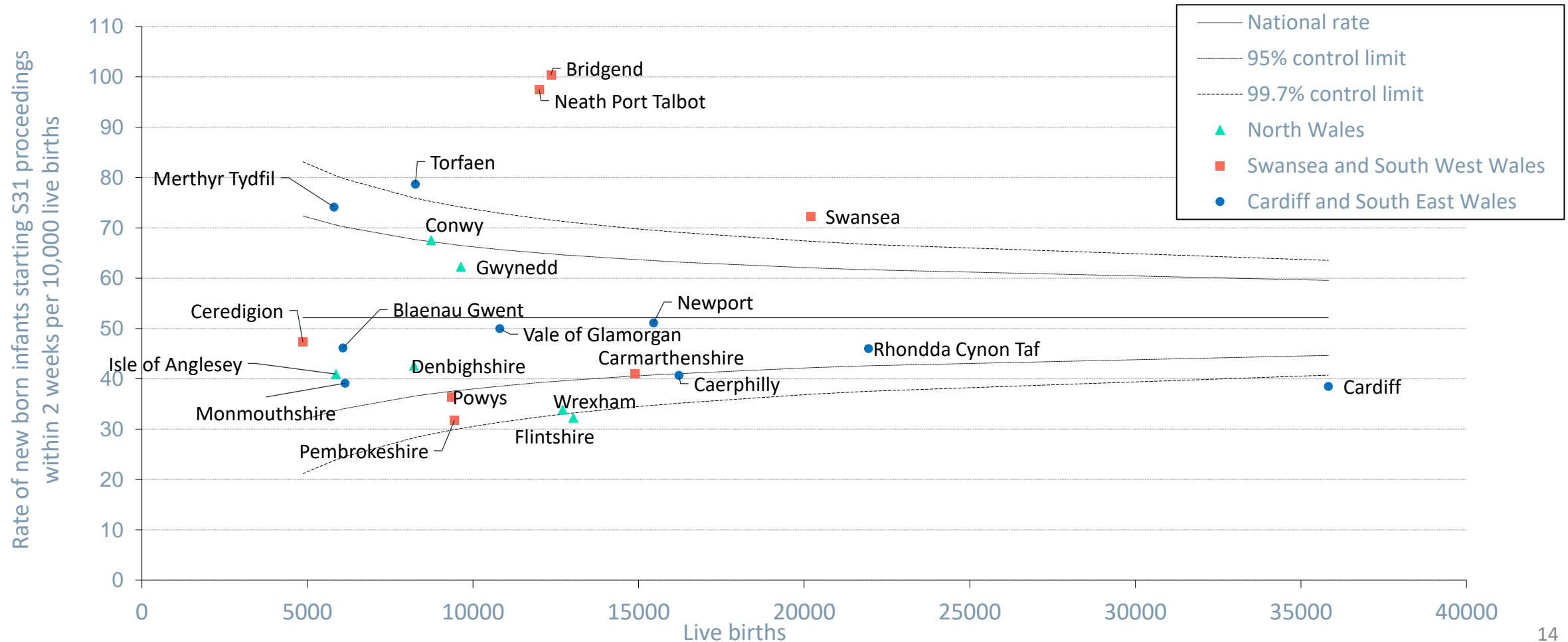
Incidence rate – newborns in care proceedings per 10,000 births



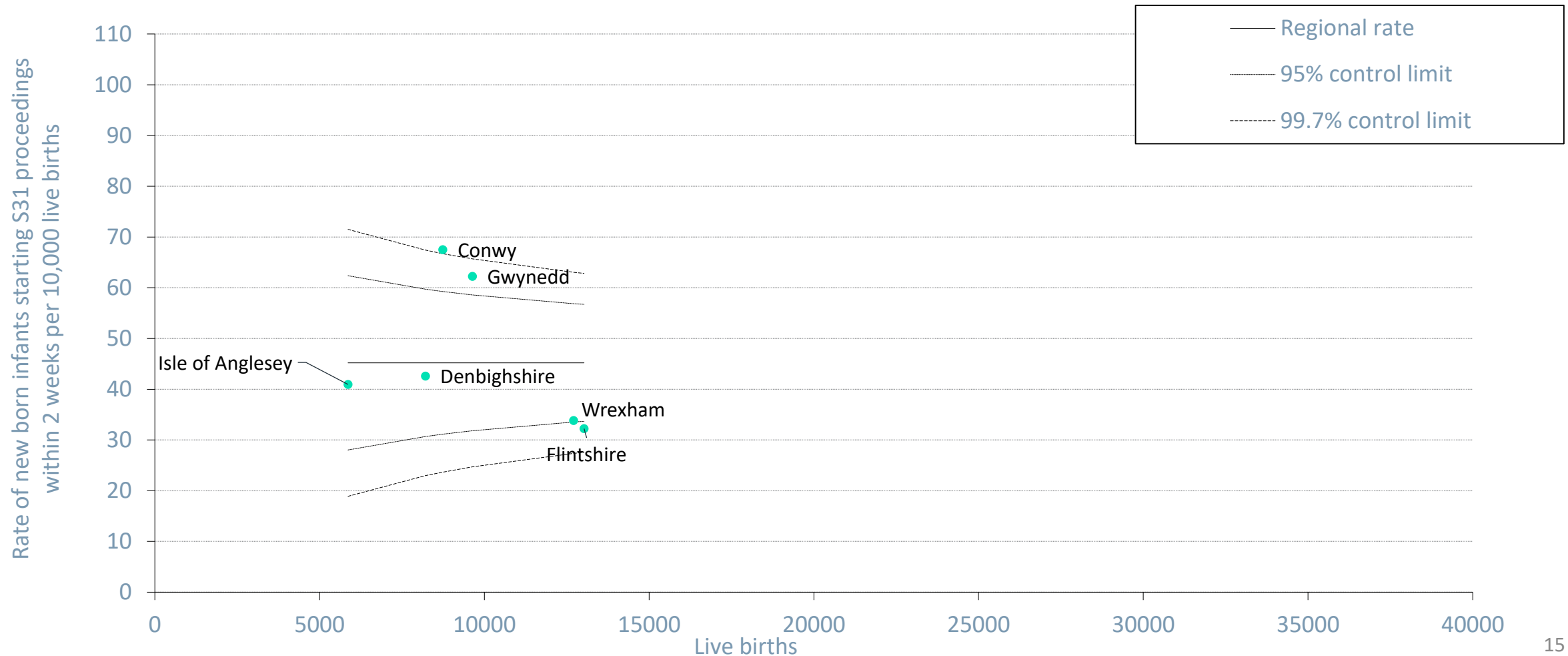
Incidence rate – newborns in care proceedings per 10,000 live births, by DFJ area and year



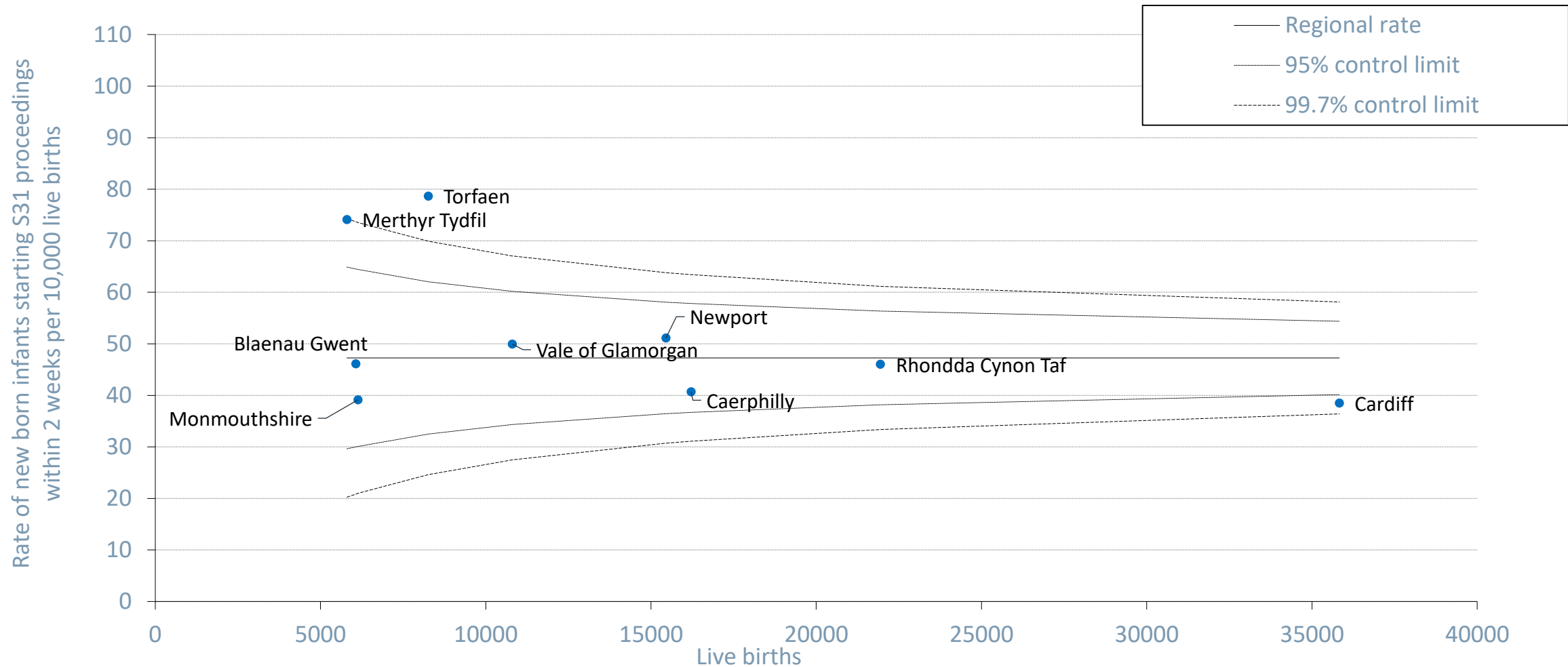
Incidence rate – newborn s.31 care proceedings per 10,000 live births, by DFJ area and local authority [2011 to 2018]



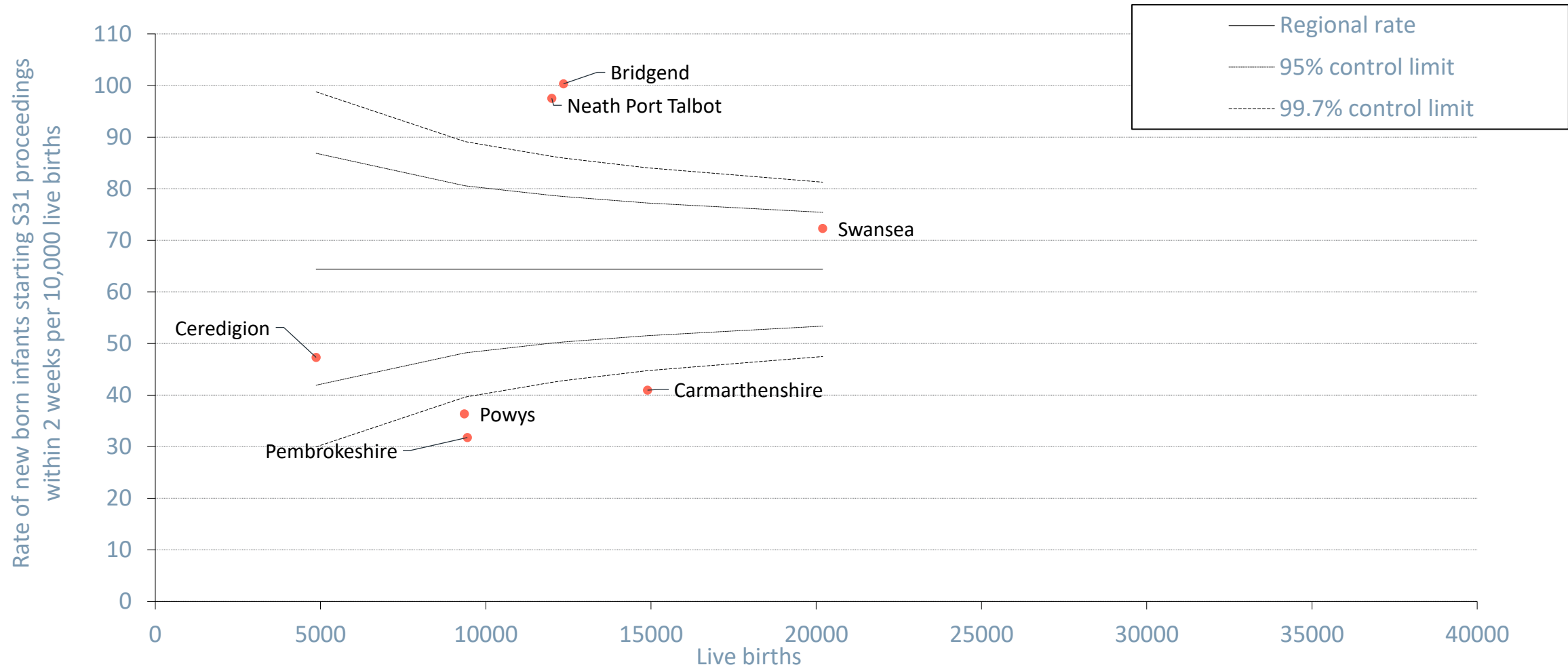
Incidence rate – newborn s.31 care proceedings per 10,000 live births, by local authority [2011 to 2018] – North Wales



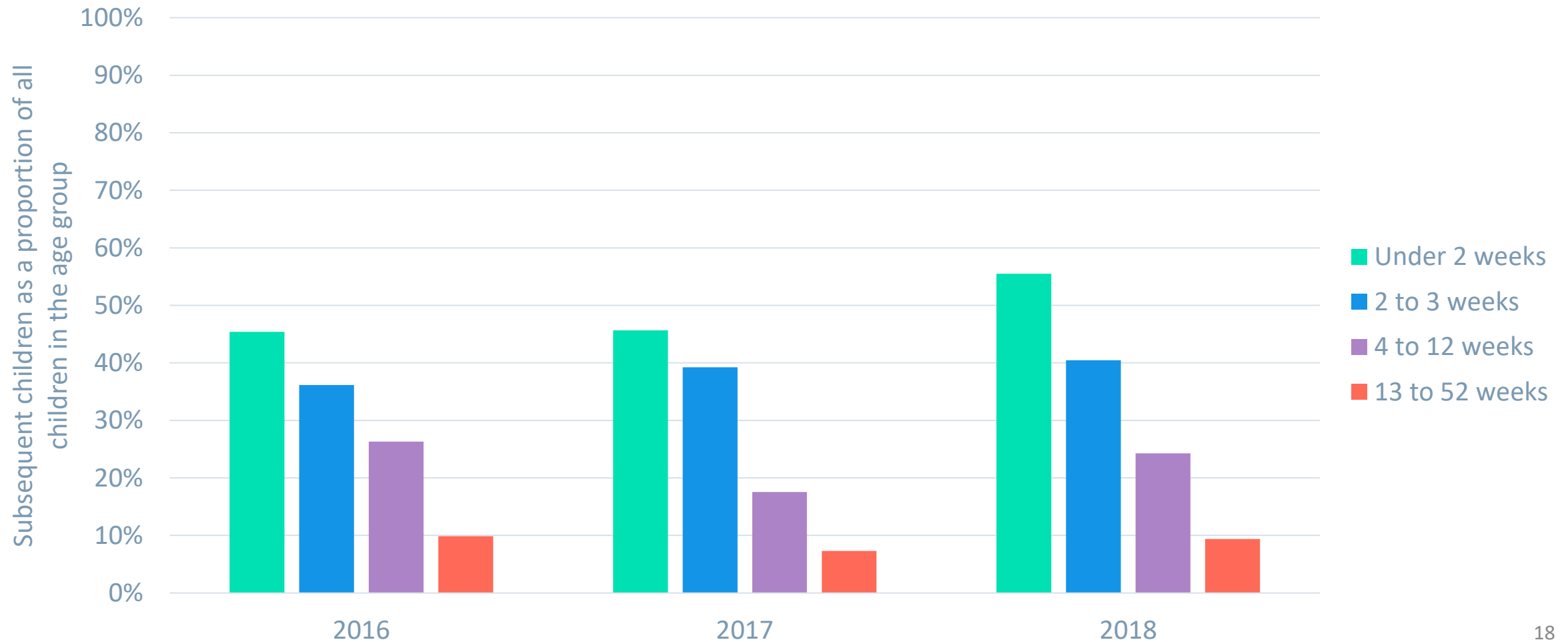
Incidence rate – newborn s.31 care proceedings per 10,000 live births, by local authority [2011 to 2018] – Cardiff and South East Wales



Incidence rate – newborn s.31 care proceedings per 10,000 live births, by local authority [2011 to 2018] – Swansea and South West Wales



Proportions of “subsequent infants”, by age-band

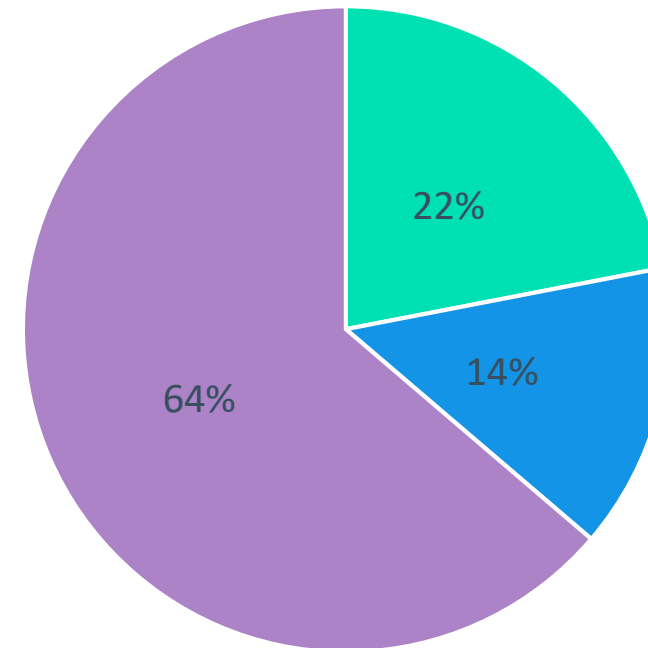
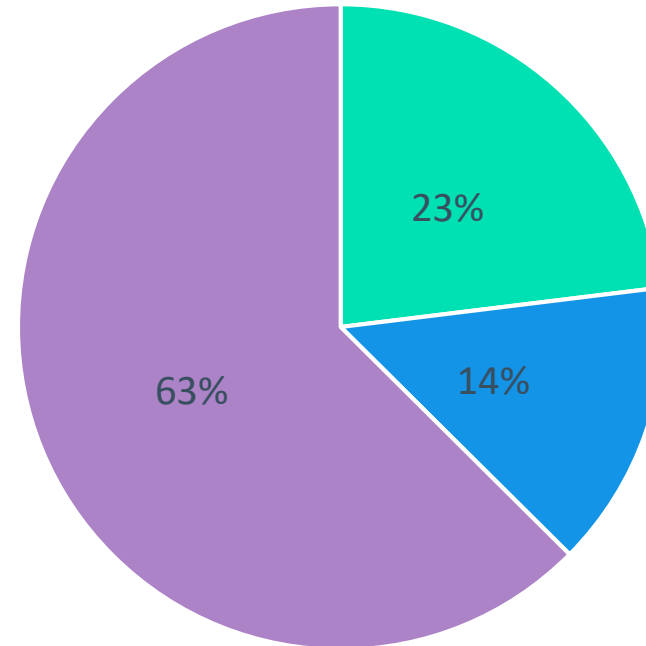
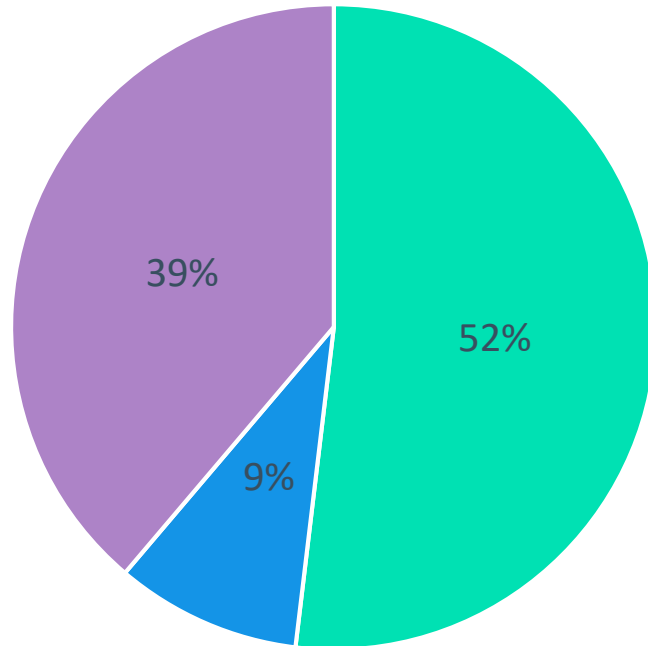


Urgent / non-standard hearings [2015-2018]

Newborns (under 2 weeks)

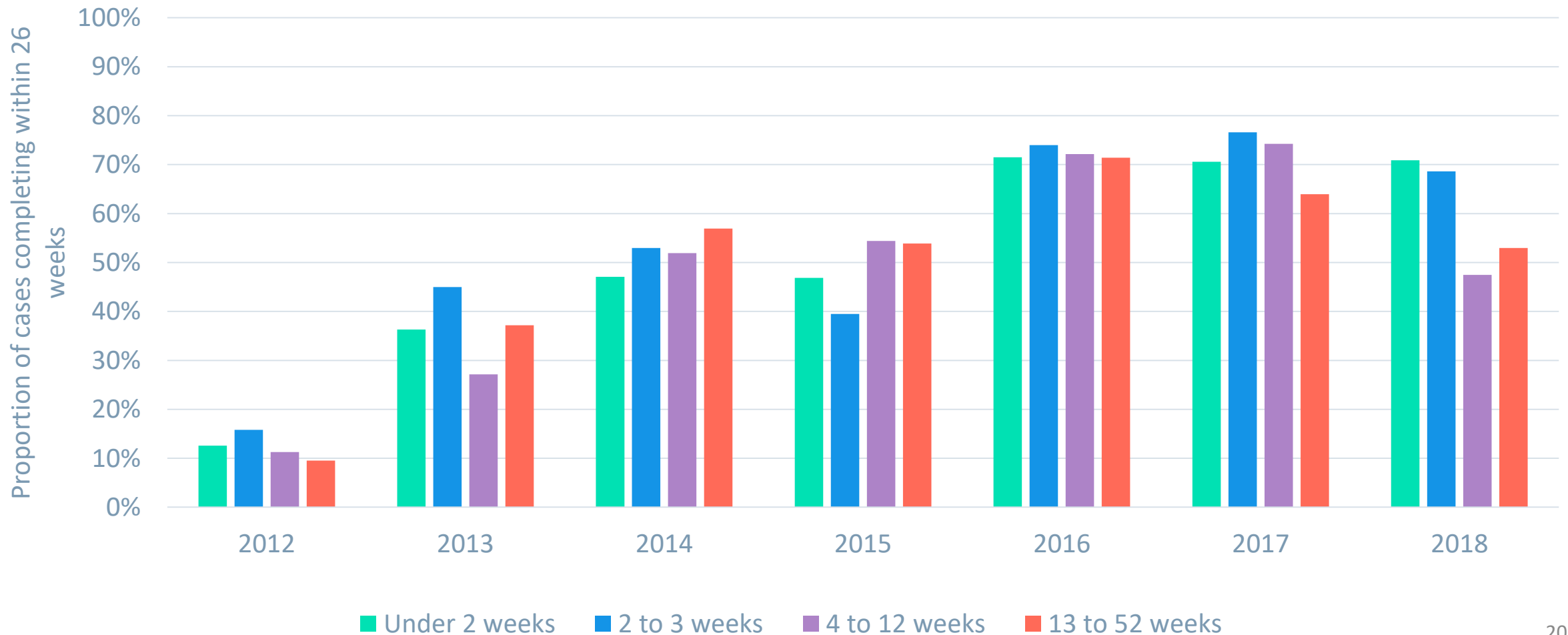
Older Infants (2 to 52 weeks)

Older Children (1 to 17 years)

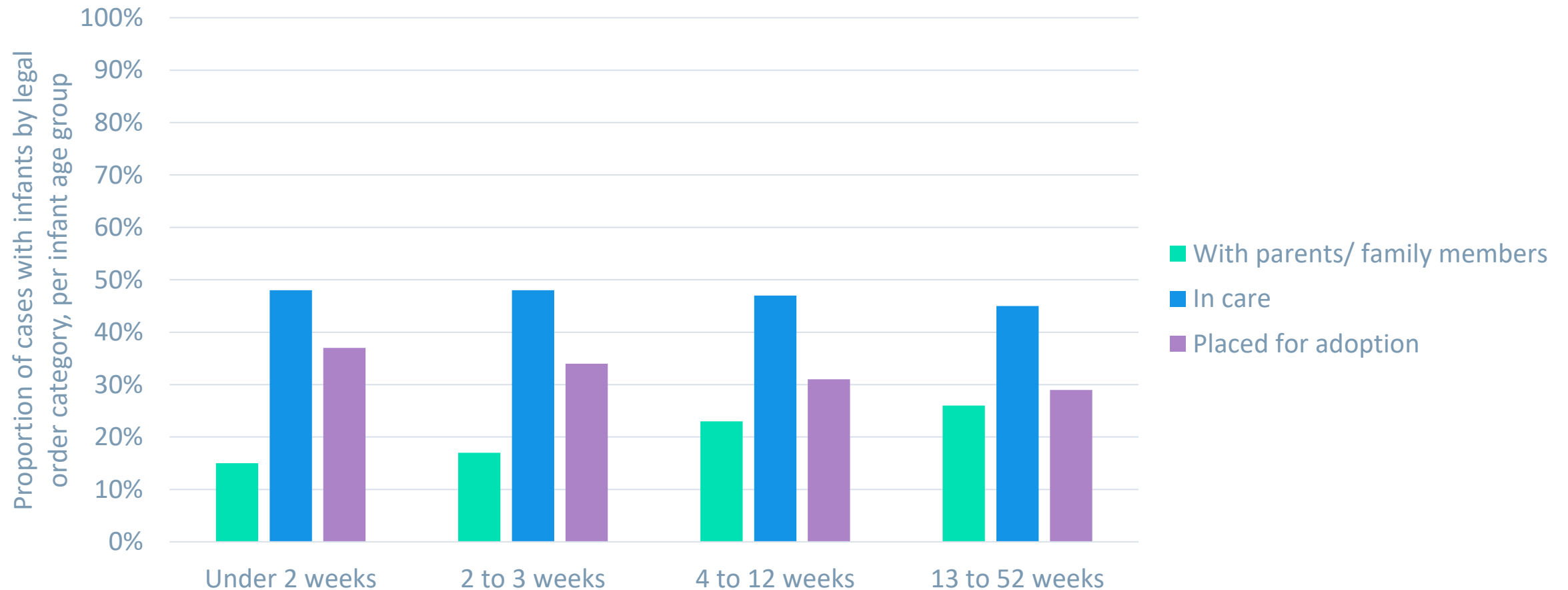


- 1 to 6 days
- 7 to 11 days
- 12 days or more

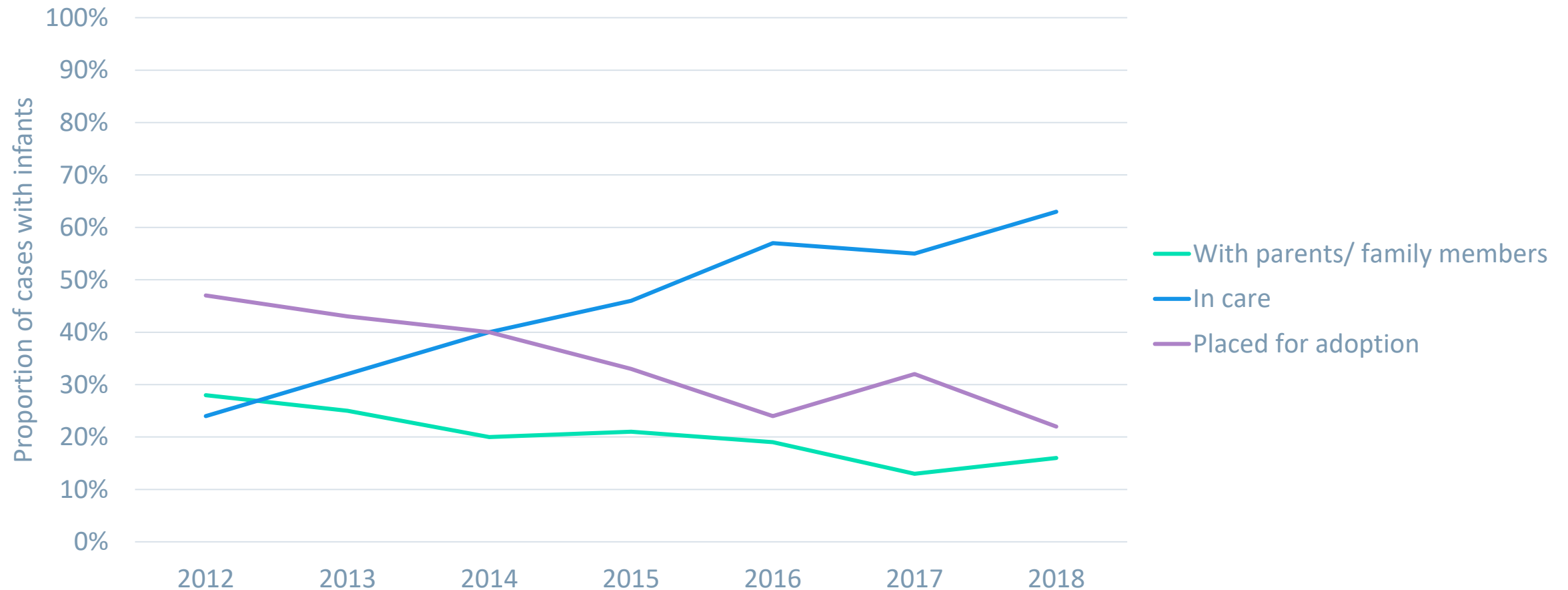
Proportions of cases completing within 26 weeks, by age-band



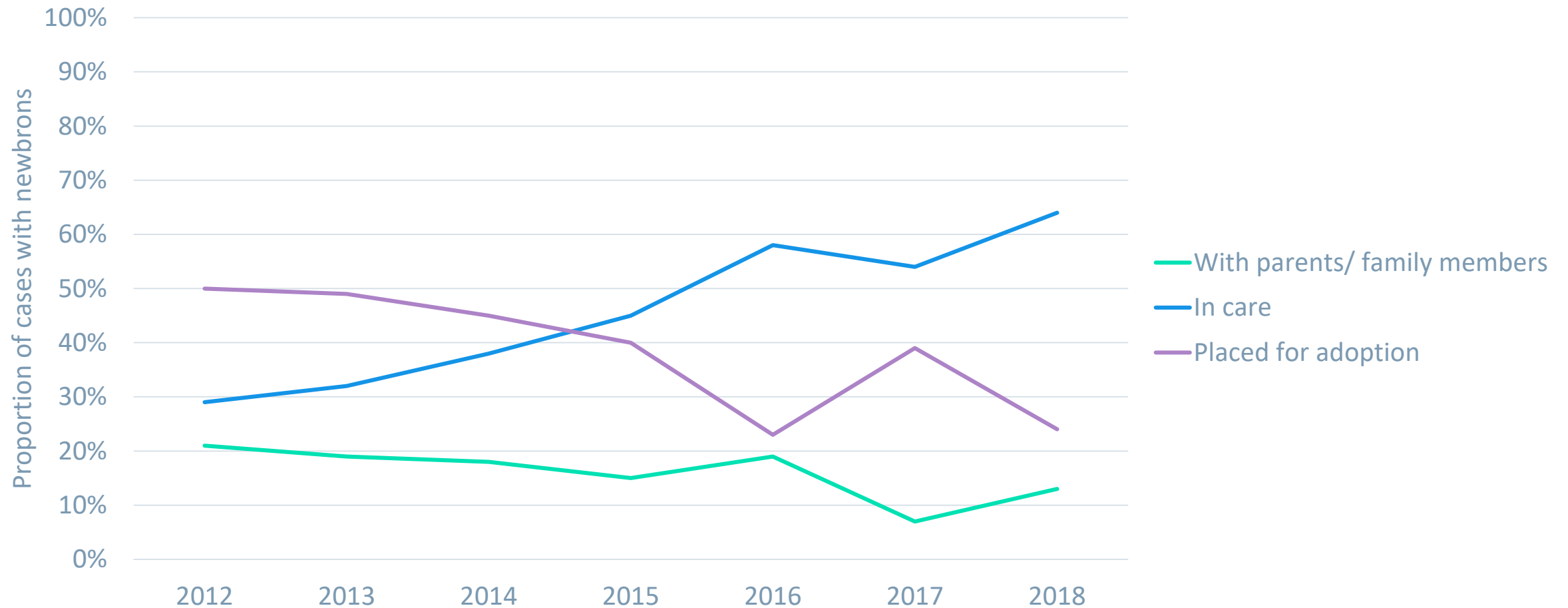
Legal order outcomes, by age-band [cases that completed 2012 to 2018]



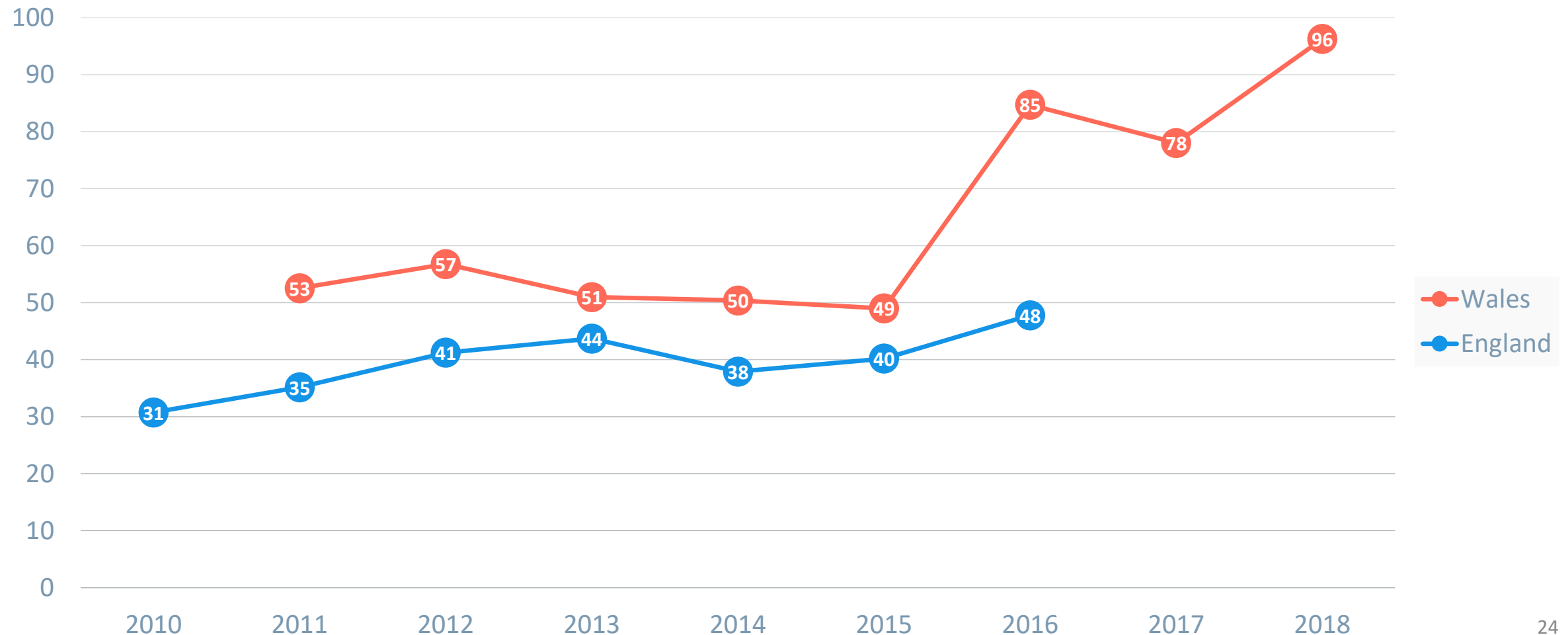
Legal order outcomes – all infants [cases that completed 2012 to 2018]



Legal order outcomes – newborns [cases that completed 2012 to 2018]

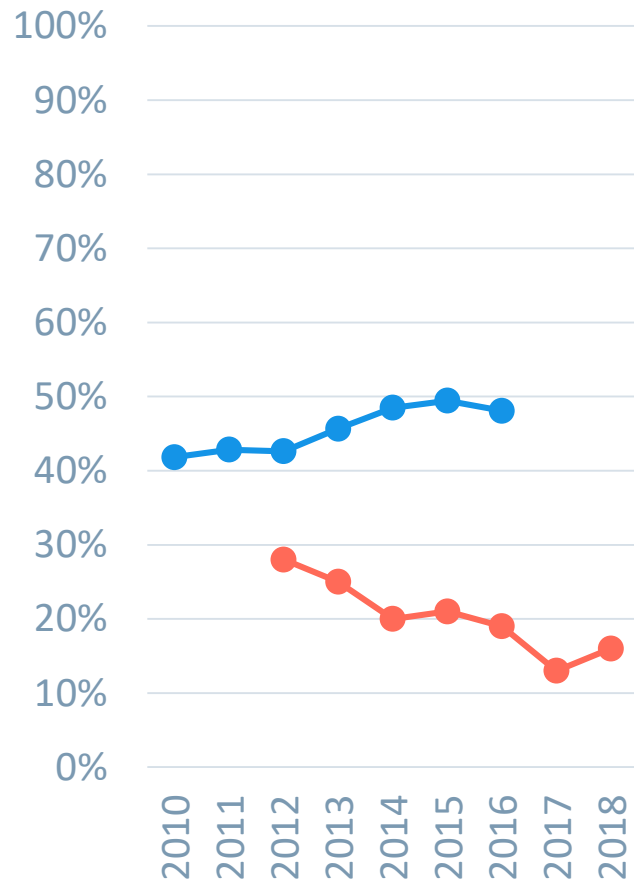


Incidence rates - babies (under 4 weeks) in care proceedings per 10,000 live births [Wales & England]

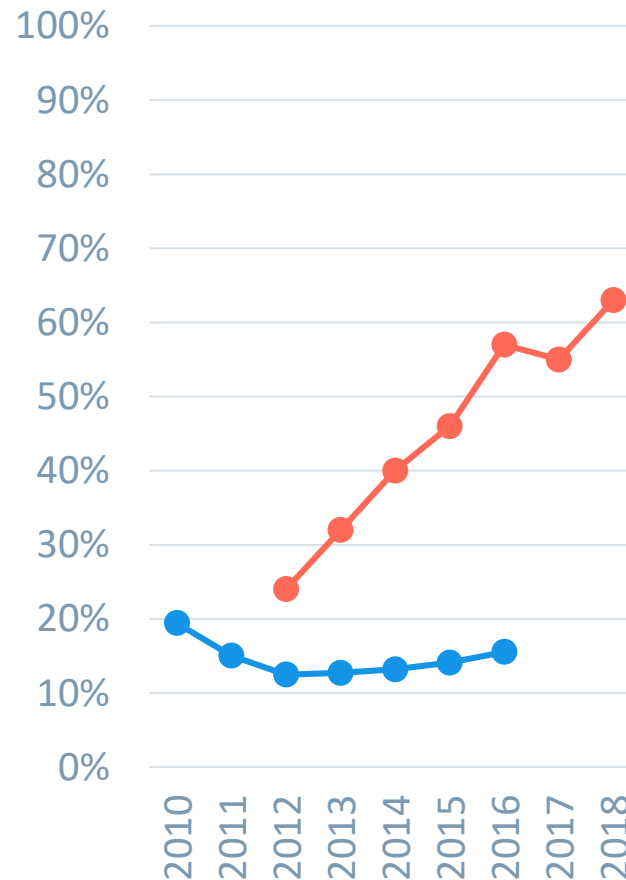


Legal order outcomes – all infants [Wales & England]

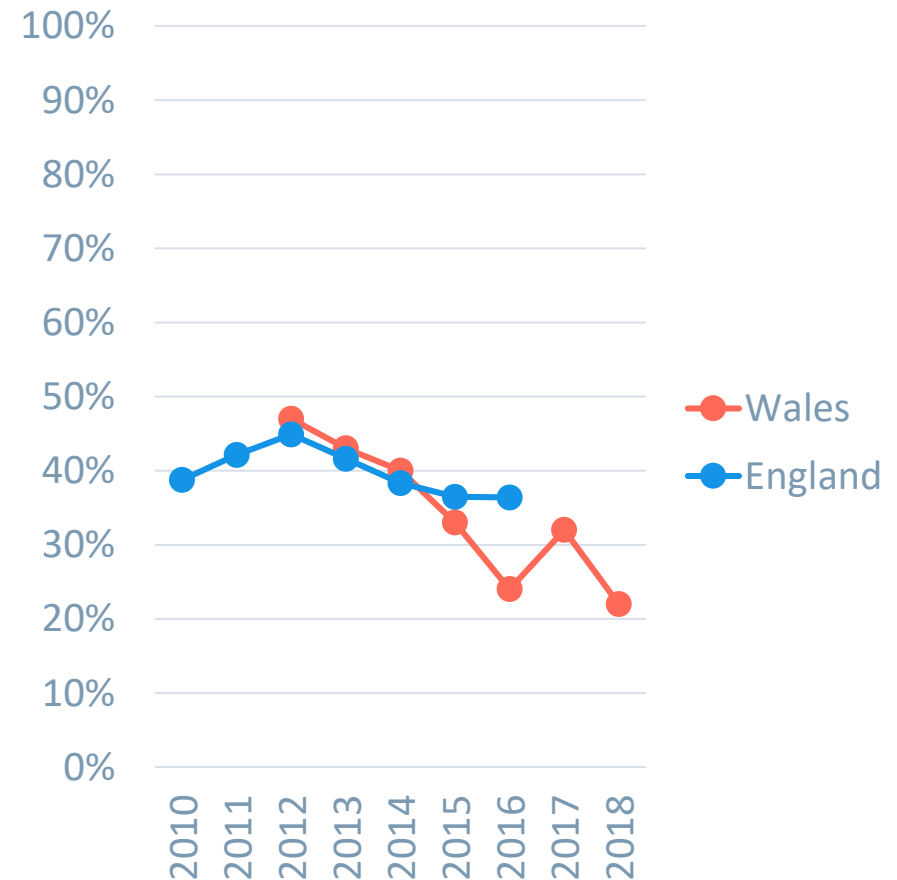
With parents/family members



In care



Placed for adoption



Policy and practice implications

Volumes, timing and urgency of newborn cases

- A **greater focus** is needed on pre-birth assessment and planning – if 30% of all children appearing in care proceedings are infants
- The practice of issuing care proceedings at birth also warrants **closer scrutiny** – given the high and increasing proportion of infant cases issued within 2 weeks of birth & the proportion of urgent/non-standard ICO hearings that feature newborns

“Subsequent infants”

- **Firm endorsement** of Reflect programme – given 49% of newborns are “subsequent infants”
- Query assessment of ‘new cases’ – particularly given shorter timeframe for proceedings

Policy and Practice Implications

DFJ and local authority variation

- Infants have an **'unequal' chance** of being born into care – we know that a proportion of variance is attributed to deprivation based on published research – but other factors are at play
- To effectively inform policy and practice, further analysis needed of the **interplay** of geography, deprivation, need and service responses

Legal order usage

- Given the changing pattern of legal order usage over time in Wales and **high number of newborns and infants recording care orders at close of proceedings**, priority needs to be placed on understanding reasons for **changing practice and implications for services and families**
- Revisions to the Cafcass dataset are underway to improve accuracy of future analyses

Discussion questions

- What are your thoughts on the analysis presented this afternoon?
- Should we be concerned about family court or local authority variation?
- Can you comment on the challenges of issuing care proceedings at birth and the management of urgent/non-standard proceedings?
- Why do you think the family courts in Wales are making so many care orders for both newborns and infants at the close of care proceedings?
- What would you add to our analysis of the policy and practice implications?

Looking Ahead

- What is top of your wish list, regarding services or policies that might reduce the current volume of infants in care proceedings?
- What questions do you want this research team – or other research teams to answer next?
- How do you want to be involved in the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory and Data Partnership going forward?